

EVERGREEN PARK

# Economy's latest victim: Hospital expansion

Little Company of Mary  
postpones tower project

» MAURA POSSLEY REPORTS, A5



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# Hospital won't build just yet

## EVERGREEN PARK Little Company of Mary blames poor economy

BY MAURA POSSLEY  
STAFF WRITER

Little Company of Mary Hospital has postponed its new tower project, which would add beds and services, officials at the Evergreen Park hospital said this week.

Citing the economic recession but reiterating a commitment to its "Transformation" project, the hospital said the expected April start on the tower was delayed.

"We're going to have to wait until the conditions are a little more favorable," hospital spokeswoman Kelly Cusack said.

She declined to comment on how much money the hospital has available or could be lacking for the \$190 million project.

The hospital will be looking at its investment portfolio and watching the market in the coming months to decide when to press ahead, she said.

Still in the works, however, is the project to add 200 new parking spaces west of the hospital's campus at 2800 W. 95th St. That portion of the project should be completed this summer.

The new tower, also planned for the west side of the hospital, would feature 96 new medical and surgical beds with private rooms and baths, a women's center for life and health, one-day surgery pre- and post-operative care, outpatient behavioral health, pediatrics and dining.

The project still must gain approval from the state Health Facilities Planning Board, which oversees capital projects and was expected to take up the issue this spring.

Cusack said hospital executives will reassess a groundbreaking date for the tower after going before that board.

"We're moving ahead, just a little slower than we had anticipated," she said. "We remain committed to transforming the campus."



Little Company of Mary Hospital in Evergreen Park is postponing plans to build a new tower. FILE PHOTO



*We are — like everybody else — disappointed. I just think it's a little bump in the road.*

JAMES SEXTON,  
EVERGREEN PARK MAYOR

The entire transformation project would add 295,000 square feet and modernize 40,000 square feet.

"We are — like everybody else — disappointed," Evergreen Park Mayor James Sexton said. "I just think it's a little bump in the road."

The hospital plans to send a letter to residents informing them of the decision to delay the project.

"We are postponing the groundbreaking on the West Pavilion until market conditions are more favorable to ensure a successful

and timely completion of the project," the hospital said in a draft of that letter obtained by the SouthtownStar.

Last summer, some residents railed against the new tower, which required razing 13 homes nearby. But Sexton said that — through a series of discussions between the village, hospital and residents — a consensus was reached on concerns about street closures, traffic and demolition. The homes since have been purchased by the hospital and demolished to make way for the proj-

ect, Cusack said.

Sexton said he expected the delay would postpone the project's completion by a year to two years, though the hospital did not elaborate on an end date. It originally was forecast to be finished by 2013.

"There are communities losing hospitals or proposing to close," the mayor said. "We're really happy they're proposing to spend \$2 million (for the parking expansion) in our neighborhood. It shows the viability of the hospital and the neighborhood. I think everybody is as happy as could be."

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