

Wilhelm Borntraeger, AIA
180 East Pearson St., # 5801
Chicago, IL 60611

Chicago, May 29, 2011

IDOT, Illinois Department of Transportation
Division of Aeronautics
Attention: Mr. Gary Hannig, Secretary

2300 S. Dirksen Parkway
Springfield, IL 62764

Re: Helicopter Landing Pad
Children's Memorial Hospital, Chicago
CMH Helipad Hearing

Dear Mr. Hannig:

This letter is on behalf of myself and my wife, Thea Berggren, expressing our deep concern for a permit by IDOT to CMH for patient transports by helicopter to a landing pad on top of the new hospital.

We live exactly opposite the new facility, separated by Seneca Park, in the Water Tower, overlooking the new building, its roof top mechanical equipment setting and the helipad.

We welcome the new construction of Children's Hospital with integration of pediatrics into the Northwestern Medical Campus to foster comprehensive care, teaching and medical research.

We oppose GMH's plan to transport patients, and transplantation organs and tissues by helicopters to the roof top pad.

We question the daring concept of flying helicopters in Streeter-ville, a dense urban setting of numerous highrise buildings in the proposed flight path. Changing weather and wind conditions, no back-up landing site in the vicinity for several city blocks, and the possibility of helicopter engine trouble or pilot error, would render a patient transport to the roof a dangerous, irresponsible and reckless undertaking. Parents would hardly allow their child's transport with so many possible adverse flight conditions, when ambulance transport would appear much safer.

For comparison, Chicago police stop pedestrians and traffic for several blocks when pieces of equipment (HVAC, motors) get lifted by helicopter to the top of highrises. There is no taking chances by the police and IDOT!

With regard to the immediate vicinity of the hospital, in case of more than a hard landing, like a crash, debris from the fuselage and rotor would fall to the ground with catastrophic results:

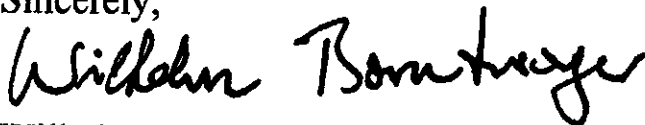
- . To the side of the pad, directly below, lies the intersection of Chicago Avenue and Mies van der Rohe Way with pedestrians and cars being held by traffic lights, the main entrance to CMH, the emergency driveway to the Women's Hospital, the MCA museum plaza and entry, Seneca Park, CTA buses and waiting school buses.**

- . Adjacent hospital, office and residential buildings could be damaged by flying debris from the rotor, and the hospital's own roof top equipment, including HVAC and ventilation /exhaust systems, vital for the constant operation of the building, could be damaged or even destroyed, causing an unthinkable, possible long term interruption (replacement / repair time) of mechanical services for the most important departments of CMH.
(Has IDOT visited and evaluated all the equipment on the roof?)**

Mr. Hannig, I appeal to the Division of Aeronautics to deny CMH a permit to use the roof top landing pad for the above indicated reasons. CMH should instead use the existing pad of the Coast Guard on the Lakefront and use ambulances for transport to the hospital. In cooperation with CDOT and Police, a "Green Wave" signal system, as existing in some European cities, should be developed for the streets from the lakefront landing pad to the CMH emergency doors to facilitate ambulance movements.

We trust, our arguments against a landing permit for CMH will receive your earnest consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wilhelm Borntraeger". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Wilhelm Borntraeger

**Cc: Streeterville Organization of Active Residents,
Att. Ms. Patty Frost (with permission to present
in the hearing due to my absence)**

JAN SUDAK
211 E. Ohio Street - #716
Chicago, IL 60611

May 29, 2011

Ms. Betty Eaton & Ms. Patty Frost
SOAR Campus Task Force Co-Chairs
244 E. Pearson Street - Ste. #102
Chicago, IL 60611

Re: The Proposed Rooftop Heliport for CMH

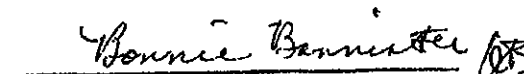
Dear Friends:

Thank you for keeping us informed of developments in our residential neighborhood. This letter is from myself and my neighbor, Ms. Bonnie Bannister of 211 East Ohio. We represent a group of residents from our building and are all in the strongest opposition to the proposed heliport. Unfortunately, neither Ms. Bannister or myself are able to attend the hearings on June 23rd and 24th and are writing this letter to you to ask that you add our names to those opposed to this folly. Not only are the winds which develop around our high rise buildings unpredictable and often swirling so that a definite direction cannot be determined but, as all of us in the area are aware, heavy fog, mists and clouds can suddenly form without warning. The tests that have been done in a wind tunnel do not mimic the wind conditions in this area and **THE PUBLIC SAFETY AS WELL AS THE SAFETY OF THE HELICOPTER CREW AND PASSENGER(S) ARE COMPROMISED SHOULD THIS PLAN COME TO FRUITION.**

Thank you for your continued efforts on behalf of our community.

Sincerely,


Jan Sudak


Bonnie Bannister

**161 East Chicago Ave., 40F
Chicago, IL 60611
June 24, 2011**

Ellen Schanzle-Haskins
Chief Counsel
Illinois Dept. of Transportation
State of Illinois Center
100 W. Randolph, 6th Floor
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Ms. Schanzle-Haskins:

Thanks to you and the IDOT team for thoroughly reviewing Children Memorial Hospital's application to operate a helipad atop their new hospital in our neighborhood.

I applaud IDOT's past statements that "safety is IDOT's primary concern" in this matter. It is in this light that I offer the following comments and opinions for the public record.

Helicopters involve more complicated mechanics than airplanes. The US Helicopter accident rate in 2004 (*latest comparative data I could quickly find) was 30% greater than General Aviation aircraft: 8.09 accidents/100,000 flying hrs vs. 6.09. Whereas, the US Air Carrier rate was just 0.159.

IDOT's presentation on June 23 dealt mostly with the weather aspects attendant to operation of the proposed helipad from the top of the new CMH. Fine; that is all the IDOT consultants were asked to do.

However, it seems to me that safe operations are dependent on many factors. From my reading, the primary causes of accidents seem to fall into four buckets:

- Mechanical malfunction, including engine failure
- Electrical malfunction
- Pilot error
- Weather conditions

We can collect a lot of data on the weather conditions. Some of it is conflicting, as borne out by the testimony of experts at the IDOT hearing two summers ago and from the materials submitted for the current hearing.

However, what about the other three factors? The chance of pilot error can be reduced by the training programs and policies outlined by Mr. Alexander. However, even the

most highly trained pilots make errors – particularly in bad weather or emergency situations.

Mechanical and electrical malfunctions cannot be predicted. We just know that “stuff” happens.

I do not believe CMH has given enough credence to whether or not operating helicopters from a platform, 411 feet-high, amongst tall buildings, in a very congested downtown environment is a good idea. There are no good emergency landing zones – particularly on the lengthy southeast approach/departure route, or also to the west and north.

To that end, I believe CMH has not thoroughly investigated and critically evaluated the proposed alternative landing site recommended by Alderman Reilly two years ago – the Coast Guard/Police helipad just south of the river.

When asked last night where the helicopters would go if the pilot determined the weather conditions at CMH were too hazardous to land, Mr. Alexander said: to a nearby airport, with follow-on ground transport to CMH. In my opinion, Children’s Memorial has never adequately demonstrated that the ground transfer from this site would be more harmful to the child patient (with the associated expert care the child would continue to receive from the transfer team) vs. the risk to the community of a catastrophic crash in the congested Streeterville environs.

It seems that the safety discussions over the past two years have coalesced to just a disagreement about swirling wind patterns. Operational safety is a much broader issue. I hope that IDOT will take that broader view in balancing the risks in determining whether or not helicopters should operate over and in Streeterville on a day-to-day basis. Safety is the primary concern.

Sincerely,


Lawrence L. McCracken
312-482-9566

**Data from the International Helicopter Safety Symposium,
Final Report, Sept. 2005, Montreal*

CC: SOAR (Patty Frost)
Alderman Reilly