

## **Coalition to Preserve Historic Eastern High School and Promote Mental Health**

Dear Lansing City Council Members,

We are a Coalition of Eastern High School alumni, Lansing residents, Eastside neighbors, and historic preservationists who came together in June after the initial announcement of UMH-Sparrow's plans to construct a new behavioral health facility on its E. Michigan Avenue campus. Let us state clearly that we strongly support these plans, as they will bring new and improved neurological and mental health services to mid-Michigan.

As you know, part of the area on which UMH-Sparrow plans to build the new facility contains the historic Lansing Eastern High School, built in 1926. Since UMH-Sparrow first announced their hospital expansion plans, we have advocated for a modified site plan enabling UMH-Sparrow's expansion AND the preservation of Eastern's Pennsylvania Avenue wing and auditorium. Our Coalition believes that it is possible to build the new health facility AND preserve *a small part* of this treasured historic building. Notably, this neighborhood-facing wing comprises only a small part of the school footprint.

We are not talking about repurposing the Pennsylvania Ave. wing and auditorium into a medical facility. UMH-Sparrow has made it clear that a 100-year-old school building is not suitable for in-patient mental health care, and we agree. We simply wish to explore repurposing options that could support other hospital or community uses in a restored wing and auditorium.

UMH is a newcomer to our community. They may be unfamiliar with the decades of successful relationship-building between Sparrow Hospital and the Eastside community and other stakeholder groups that preceded their arrival. The last three major Sparrow expansions involved community collaboration. UMH-Sparrow's proposed expansion provides a chance to reaffirm what has been a strong collaborative relationship.

We share with council members an appreciation for the economic, social, health, and community benefits UMH-Sparrow's expansion will bring. We believe that preserving the neighborhood-facing wing of Eastern High School will establish the legacy of UMH-Sparrow in Lansing. We ask your support in encouraging UMH-Sparrow to engage with community stakeholders on this very important development.

Thank you very much for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Grau, Andrew Muylle, Joan Nelson of the Coalition to Preserve Historic Eastern High School & Promote Mental Health

Bill Castanier, President, Historical Society of Greater Lansing

Linda Peckham, Past President, Historical Society of Greater Lansing

Nancy Mahlow, President, Eastside Neighborhood Organization

Ryan Kost, Ward 1 Lansing City Council Member

Mary Toshach, President, Preservation Lansing

Jim Lynch, President of Eastern Alumni Association

Rebecca Stimson, Kittie Lynch, Mark Langschwager – Eastern Alumni

CC:

Bob Tresize, Lansing Economic Area Partnership

Tim Daman, Lansing Chamber of Commerce

Mayor Andy Schor

Rawley Van Fossen, Economic Development & Planning

Margaret Diamond, UMH-Sparrow

Sara Lurie, Clinton-Eaton-Ingham Community Mental Health

Senator Sarah Anthony

Representative Emily Dievendorf

Representative Sam Singh