

# Medical center's expansion passes hurdle

Planning Commission OKs rezoning for Osborn update

By Lynh Bui

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Scottsdale Healthcare Osborn Medical Center could soon start its face lift.

The Scottsdale Planning Commission unanimously approved Scottsdale Healthcare's rezoning request that would allow for expansion and improvements at the nearly 50-year-old hospital downtown.

Commissioners roundly praised Scottsdale Healthcare's proposal when they considered the case on Wednesday. They were so supportive of the request that they recommended Scottsdale Healthcare be allowed an additional 10 feet in height for two new main patient towers.

The expansion could add more than 240 beds to the Osborn Medical Center, bringing the total to more than 630.

Scottsdale Healthcare had asked for the current maximum of 140 feet. But the commission allowed for 150 feet, matching a recent recommendation from the city's Downtown Task Force suggesting increased height limits for the hospital.

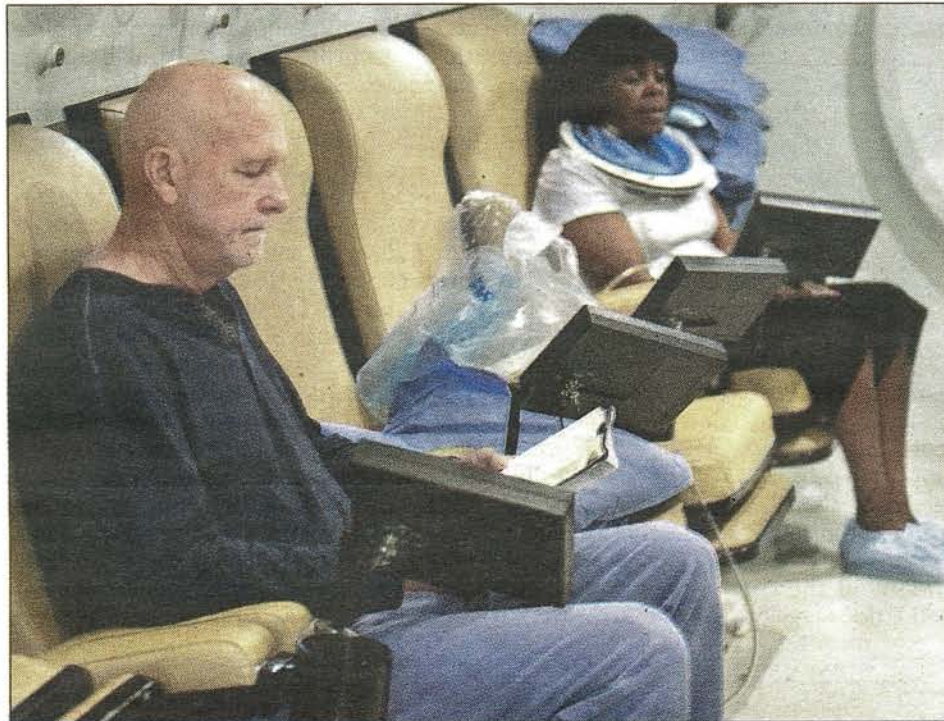
The Planning Commission's recommendation will be forwarded to the Scottsdale City Council, which has the final say on the rezoning request and is expected to consider the issue in July.

If the council approves, it would allow Scottsdale Healthcare to move forward with development improvements over the next two decades.

Plans call for expanded inpatient and outpatient surgical services, more private patient rooms and additional intensive care beds. Plans also call for developing a new main entry, more parking, a neurosciences center and a conference center.

The rezoning would provide the hospital with the "certainty and the flexibility" the non-profit medical provider needs to respond to changes over time, said John Berry, a zoning attorney for Scottsdale Healthcare.

The aging of Baby Boomers and health-care reform signed into law earlier this year by President Barack Obama will increase the demand for medical ser-



PHOTOS BY CRYSTAL OCHOA/THE REPUBLIC

Rick Crandall and Dolores Montgomery undergo hyperbaric oxygen therapy at Scottsdale Healthcare Osborn. An expansion of patient areas is in the works there.

**“This needs to be an important place.”**

**Michael Schmitt**

*Member of the Scottsdale Planning Commission, on Scottsdale Healthcare Osborn Medical Center's role as an anchor in downtown Scottsdale*

vices, and the rezoning would allow Scottsdale Healthcare to meet those needs, Berry said.

“Certainly health care in Scottsdale is important to our quality of life,” Berry said.

The City Council recently approved a similar rezoning request for Scottsdale Healthcare's Shea Medical Center.

Commissioner Michael Schmitt said the additional height for the hospital is appropriate for the campus.

But he emphasized that future improvements should boast high-quality architecture and pedestrian-friendly design.

“This needs to be an important place,”



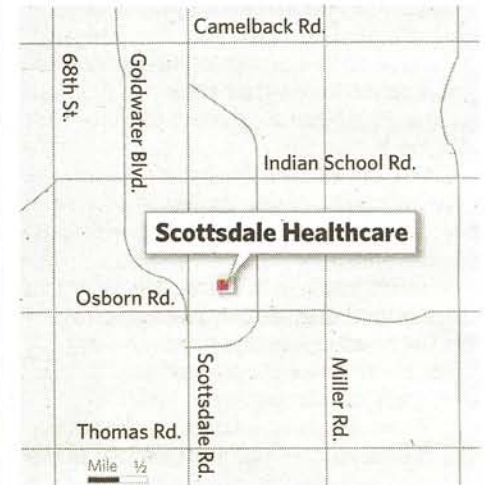
Scottsdale Healthcare Osborn would get a new look with the addition of two main patient towers up to 150 feet tall.

Schmitt said of the hospital.

The request is high-profile not only be-

## Scottsdale Healthcare Osborn Medical Center

Scottsdale Healthcare is requesting a rezoning that would allow the hospital to expand its campus downtown.



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cause of the important service Scottsdale Healthcare provides but also because the hospital is an important anchor in the downtown area. Design standards likely will be carefully watched to ensure they meet the character of the city's urban core and blend with Old Town Scottsdale, one of the most historic parts of the city.

Michelle Pabis, Scottsdale Healthcare's government relations director, said the non-profit has invested more than \$90 million since 2000 in improving the Osborn Medical Center and the rezoning would “make sure that the Osborn campus remains vital.”

Scottsdale Healthcare, which operates a third campus on Thompson Peak Parkway east of Scottsdale Road, is the city's largest employer.

Currently at the Osborn Campus, the non-profit is working on a \$1.6 million expansion of its military-training simulation center.

Scottsdale Healthcare also will expand its operating center, increasing the number of inpatient operating rooms from nine to 11.

Scottsdale Healthcare has committed to providing \$1 million in additional public art in the area.