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University of Louisville officials still hope for VA hospital downtown

University of Louisville officials are holding out hope that the new Veterans Affairs hospital will be built downtown rather than at the designated site at the Watterson Expressway and Brownsboro Road.

“We have not given up hope on the VA medical center coming downtown,” Dr. David Dunn, executive vice president of health affairs, said Tuesday during a meeting of Nucleus, the life sciences affiliate of the University of Louisville Foundation.

U of L favors locating the new hospital downtown to link up with its medical school and University Hospital. But in November, the VA said the 38-acre Midlands site — owned by a partnership involving Louisville developer Jonathan Blue — is its preferred choice. Barring unforeseen complications, the agency is expected to start negotiating a purchase price this spring.

After the Nucleus meeting, Dunn said he has no information indicating the VA might change its mind about the location, but he had heard second-hand that some veterans have expressed concerns about traffic congestion at the suburban site.

U of L President James Ramsey added that the university is “not doing anything” to reopen the debate.

“We’re not trying to change the decision, but I do know there have been various veterans in particular that have expressed concerns about number one, traffic, and (number) two, the further distance from the specialty care that may be needed in certain circumstances,” Ramsey said.

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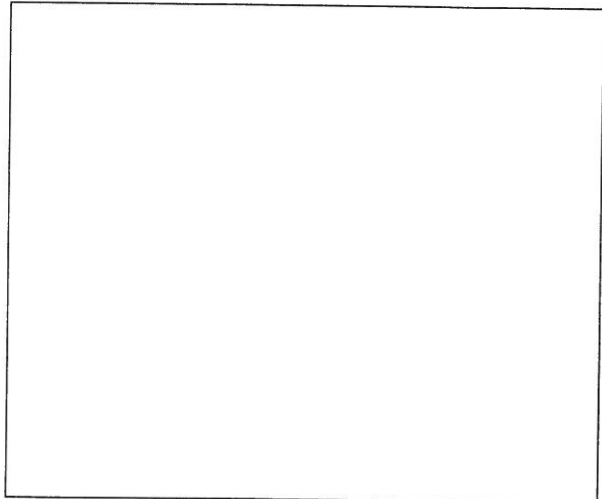
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