

## Methodist Makes 'Great Commitment' to Memphis With Expansion

By Andy Meek

Methodist University Hospital CEO Jeff Liebman sees the \$275 million that Methodist Healthcare is investing into the system's flagship hospital as a "great commitment" to Memphis.

"Planning for this been going on for a year," Liebman told The Daily News, as the expansive project Methodist announced in December for his campus – including the teardown of a physician parking facility to make room for a new parking garage – is now well under way. "Other than possibly St. Jude's expansion, over the next three to four years we're pouring more money into the city than anyone else I know. And whatever we eke out in terms of bottom line, we pour that back into the community."

That new parking garage, for example, which Methodist is building at the hospital at [1265 Union Ave.](#) will expand its total parking by 100 spaces. Work on that project is expected to be completed by late fall.

The new garage also is part of a larger master plan for the hospital that includes application for a certificate of need to modernize the facility. The additions and changes include creating room to bring services that are now scattered throughout the hospital into one centralized area to promote efficiency for medical staff, patients and visitors.

Methodist's board in December approved the filing of a certificate of need for the master campus plan. The hearing for that approval from state officials is expected to take place in May.

"Some of our buildings go back to the 1950s, so we're going to build more modern rooms," Liebman said. "The campus itself and the way to navigate it will also be simpler.

"Right now we have seven towers where we have clinical activities, and we have outpatient activities spread among them. This plan creates one freestanding building and has almost all outpatient activities in one building. It also allows us to bring outpatient cancer activities closer to our inpatient campus."

The Memphis office of Turner Construction was tapped to work on the project at Methodist's campus. Turner is working with [HKS Architects Inc.](#) and Self-Tucker Architects on the project.

"We brought in a lot of outside people and also our own internal people who know about these things," Liebman said. "We brought in architects to assess the buildings and the useful life of the buildings going forward. We put that all together, and it's not that different when looking at something like a house, where you ask what's worth sustaining, is it worth keeping this kitchen or not. ...



**Work has begun to clear the way for a new parking structure at Methodist University Hospital. The renovated campus, when complete, will make it easier to navigate the campus, officials say.**

(Daily News/Andrew J. Breig)

“We asked, what makes sense economically over the next few decades and what are things that would cost too much to maintain the upkeep of building.”

Methodist’s expansion of its campus, meanwhile, also comes at a time of significant redevelopment happening elsewhere in the surrounding Memphis Medical Center.

The newly formed Medical District Collaborative, which held its inaugural board meeting Feb. 1, is working on a sweeping, unified plan for the area. Part of that process involves generating input from the district’s major anchors, such as Regional One Health, Methodist, the Memphis Bioworks Foundation and others.

Medical District Collaborative president Tommy Pacello told The Daily News that Methodist is a key partner in that effort on a number of fronts and that participation from stakeholders will help amplify the investments they’re making in their own campuses and properties.