

University of Rochester Plans \$240 Million Orthopaedics Campus to Expand Surgical, Outpatient Care

Project combines essential services in one location, answers rising demand across region

Patients with bone and joint conditions could receive treatment at one of the most comprehensive centers for orthopaedic surgery and outpatient care in the United States upon completion of a medical campus to be built alongside The Marketplace Mall, in a project plan announced today by the University of Rochester.

The UR Medicine Orthopaedics & Physical Performance Center would be the biggest offsite building project in University of Rochester history, covering approximately 330,000 square feet. URMCM aims to create an orthopaedics center unlike any other in the Northeast: an expansive facility that would combine ambulatory surgery and other essential orthopaedic services in one convenient spot, with every detail of the building and its surrounding campus designed for patients with painful mobility challenges.

Plans call for repurposing the vacant Sears building as the shell for the new ambulatory surgery center, with new operating rooms and procedure rooms. New construction would create a multi-story tower above the surgery center to house virtually everything a patient might need for diagnosis and treatment of a bone, spine, muscle or joint condition: diagnostic imaging; clinic exam rooms; physical, occupational, and hand therapy; sports medicine facilities; athletic training; injury prevention programs; and nutrition/mind-body wellness services.

Officials of Wilmorite, owner of The Marketplace Mall, and the medical center explained that they have signed an agreement under which URMCM will purchase the vacant Sears building and surrounding mall property on which the new center will be built. They noted that the plans announced today are subject to approval by the University of Rochester Board of Trustees, and would then require approval by the New York State Department of Health and Town of Henrietta to move forward. Trustees have approved \$11 million for project design. If the approvals and construction proceed as expected, the campus could be completed by 2023.

“The University of Rochester is proud to be the leading healthcare provider across much of upstate New York and the Southern Tier,” said President Sarah C. Mangelsdorf. “We are delighted to be expanding our services with the creation of this innovative new orthopaedic facility.”

The project is UR Medicine’s response to skyrocketing demand for orthopaedic care in recent years, and the need for additional capacity as patients of all ages in the region experience more orthopaedic issues. Additionally, UR Medicine is anticipating that more orthopaedic care will move from hospital to ambulatory settings in the years ahead.

“UR Medicine is nationally recognized for its top-ranking orthopaedic research and teaching faculty, and is among upstate New York’s leading providers of exceptional orthopaedic surgery and specialty care,” said Mark Taubman, MD, Chief Executive Officer of the University of Rochester Medical Center. “We’ve seen a 25 percent increase in orthopaedic surgery cases over the past seven years, and a 60 percent increase in ambulatory visits in the same period of time.

“We expanded our team of providers and opened additional clinics around Rochester as volumes increased, but our surgical and outpatient spaces are now at capacity,” Taubman added. “This progressive orthopaedics campus matches the caliber of our faculty, staff, and trainees, and will ensure prompt and convenient access for the tens of thousands of people in the region who will turn to us for care, now and in the future.”

Paul T. Rubery, MD, Chair of the Department of Orthopaedics and Marjorie Strong Wehle Professor of Orthopaedics, said the project is an opportunity to build a center that’s not only right-sized for patient volumes, but also expands on treatment options and convenience for patients.

“We’re seeing patients of all ages – from infants to people in their 90s and older – who need our care to keep their bones and joints healthy so they can remain as active and well as possible,” Rubery said. “This project answers an urgent, unmet need for patients: faster access to surgery and provider appointments, a convenient location, and a campus and treatment space designed precisely for their needs. We understand our patients’ challenges with painful orthopaedic conditions, and the difficulty many of them have in walking. This campus will be built with our patients’ specific needs in mind. It will employ design strategies to make navigating the space as easy and comfortable as possible.”

The UR Medicine Orthopaedics & Physical Performance Center would include:

- Ambulatory surgery operating rooms and procedure rooms
- Clinical exam rooms for outpatient visits
- The Center for Human Athleticism and Musculoskeletal Performance and Prevention (CHAMPP), a multidisciplinary center for proactive health care – combining Sports Medicine clinical teams, athletic performance training, physical therapy and rehabilitation, nutrition, and behavioral health.
- Physical therapy, occupational therapy, hand therapy, and rehabilitation
- A diagnostic imaging suite dedicated to orthopaedics, with X-ray devices, MRI machines, computed tomography and an EOS device that simultaneously captures frontal and lateral radiography images while limiting the X-ray dose the patient absorbs.

The center would be nearly three times the size of UR Medicine’s largest orthopaedic outpatient facility at Clinton Crossings, which is 120,000 square feet and sees 17,000 patients a month. Built in 2000, it was designed to co-locate multiple resources patients might need in the course of treatment.

“Over the past 20 years, patients have experienced great value in having outpatient orthopaedic services integrated in one facility at Clinton Crossings,” Rubery said. “We expect further benefits by having our ambulatory programs in a space that can accommodate high numbers of patients, and that

includes outpatient surgery. More orthopaedic surgeries are being done on an outpatient basis, and having surgery, pre-op and post-op services in the same place makes sense for patients.

“And as medical providers, we have achieved significant efficiencies in co-locating multiple orthopaedic services at Clinton Crossings. It’s helpful for care teams from different disciplines – surgery, imaging, physical therapy, and rehabilitation – to be in the same location and collaborate in caring for patients they share.”

Most outpatient programs now at Clinton Crossings would move to the new site. UR Medicine Orthopaedics plans to retain its other suburban locations, including those in Victor, Webster, Greece, and Penfield.

In choosing The Marketplace Mall, URMC is in line with a growing national trend: reclamation and repurposing of massive mall properties by academic medical centers. As the nation’s shopping habits have changed, retailers have lost foot traffic and closed mall properties, but large-scale stores are finding new lives as medical complexes. As one example, Vanderbilt University Medical Center adapted Nashville’s One Hundred Oaks Mall to create a hospital-based outpatient clinic.

Paul Wilmot, President of Wilmorite, said, “This will truly be a ‘transformative’ development for The Marketplace Mall, reinventing the property for mixed-use, and providing retail, entertainment and services all under one roof. Mixed-use is the wave of the future for many enclosed shopping centers and we are pleased to be able to bring this to The Marketplace Mall so quickly after the exiting of a department store. We are very proud and grateful for the support and collaboration between the University of Rochester, the Rueckwald Family, the Town of Henrietta, Monroe County and Imagine Monroe.

“We see the University of Rochester project as an opportunity to attract exciting new tenants. The Marketplace Mall currently has nearly 100 tenants and will remain open throughout the process. We hope the community continues to support our retailers and restaurants as we work to transform The Marketplace Mall.”

Taubman explained that over the past two years, URMC had conducted market research with consumers in the region, medical providers, and staff members about their preferences for a new site.

“In evaluating different sites around Rochester, we weighed critical factors such as proximity to the Thruway and Interstate 390 for patients who seek our Orthopaedics care from across Upstate New York; availability of public transportation for patients closer to Rochester; and assets such as existing utilities with ample space for parking and expansion. This site meets all of those objectives quite well.”

UR Medicine has additional plans for the orthopaedic campus, including construction of an athletic fieldhouse for CHAMPP, and facilities to incorporate orthopaedic research and physician training. These would be considered after the initial phase of the campus is completed.

The center will enable the Department of Orthopaedics to offer forward-thinking approaches to care, Rubery said.

“In the United States, the number of Americans over the age of 65 is expected to double from roughly 50 million today to nearly 100 million by 2060. With the growing demand for orthopaedic care in the nation, it’s clear that providers must take a more proactive approach to helping patients stay healthy, mobile, and fit. That will contribute to the population’s overall wellness and help patients delay or even prevent many orthopaedic conditions from affecting their lives.

“This center would give us the space and resources to expand on several innovative programs that our team has developed to reduce risk of orthopaedic injury and promote overall wellness, which are already yielding very promising results.”

Examples include:

- **Fitness Science at CHAMPP**, which combines movement analysis and training, nutrition consultation, and mental skills coaching to improve physical fitness and athletic performance. Already used by several University of Rochester and local high school sports teams, the program has been shown to reduce propensity to injury and improve athletes’ fitness, mindset, and athletic performance.
- **Workplace Wellness**, which uses movement-capture technology and data analysis to identify workers at risk of injury, and employs individualized wellness consultation to improve their health and safety. Participants receive nutrition and weight management coaching, physical therapy and fitness conditioning to improve their physical performance and reduce preventable work absences.
- **Sports-specific health clinics** that combine medical care, physical therapy, nutrition counseling, and athletic training to prevent injury, assist recovery from injury or surgery, and deliver peak performance for elite athletes and enthusiasts. Orthopaedics has launched two such clinics to date, for runners and rowers. Participants have reduced instances of injuries such as stress fractures, and improved their athletic results.

The project costs of up to \$240 million for the Orthopaedics & Physical Performance Center would be paid for through a combination of philanthropy, University funds and borrowing.

Wilmorite and URMC hope to present initial plans to the Henrietta Town Board on Nov. 25 as the first step in seeking approvals for the project to move forward.

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