

Brenda Wheeler

From: Banner, Manny <mbanner@mchhs.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 6, 2026 1:09 PM
To: Mindy Rump; Phil Green; C.J. Heaton; Rick Paulsen; Kent Long; Frank Wolff; Brent Clark; Kevin Willis; Kirk Highfill; James Letcher; Gary Banner
Cc: Mike Rooks; City Clerk
Subject: Proposed apartments by the YMCA



External (mbanner@mchhs.org)

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Dear Mayor, City Staff and Members of the Blair City Council,

Please accept this email as testimony in support of the proposed project and related TIF funding as it comes back before the Council for consideration.

As Blair and Washington County continue to experience economic growth and investment, one of the most pressing challenges facing our community is the availability of workforce housing.

Through both my role at Memorial Community Hospital & Health System and my board involvement with Gateway Development Corporation, I have had the opportunity to participate in many discussions surrounding workforce development, economic growth, recruitment, and long-term community sustainability. A consistent concern raised by employers across our region is the limited availability of quality housing options within Blair.

Our community has experienced significant business investment and employment growth over the past several years. While this growth is extremely positive, it has also increased demand for market-rate apartments and attainable housing for employees, young professionals, and families who want to live in the community where they work.

Housing availability directly impacts workforce recruitment and retention. This challenge extends across industries, including healthcare, education, manufacturing, retail, and service sectors. At Memorial Community Hospital, we regularly recruit professionals from outside the immediate area, and housing availability is often part of the conversation for candidates considering relocation to Blair.

The proposed development represents a substantial private investment in our community and would add meaningful housing capacity at a time when demand continues to grow. In addition to residential units, the project may also create opportunities for future commercial growth and community partnerships.

I recognize that projects of this size appropriately generate discussion regarding infrastructure, incentives, growth management, and long-term planning. Those conversations are important and healthy for any community. However, I also believe it is important that Blair continue to proactively address housing needs if we want to sustain economic momentum and remain competitive for future workforce and business attraction.

Economic development tools such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and LB840 exist to help communities encourage strategic projects that may otherwise be difficult to accomplish due to rising construction, infrastructure, and financing costs. When used thoughtfully and responsibly, these tools can support projects that provide long-term economic and community benefit.

Blair is at an important point in its growth, and thoughtful housing development will play a critical role in ensuring our community remains an attractive place to live, work, and raise families.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued service to our community.

Sincerely,

Manuela “Manny” Banner, RN, MHA, FACHE
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