

THE RIDGEWOOD NEWS

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50 CENTS

OPINION

The price of progress

Staff members from North Jersey Media Group, the parent company of *The Ridgewood News*, played a softball game a few weeks back. One of the players, a Ridgewood resident, got dizzy during the game. We were unaware of the cause and there wasn't any immediate concern. The player simply said, "If it gets worse, Valley is right around the corner."

Not everyone has that luxury – a top-ranked hospital right around the corner. But we are at risk of not having this benefit into the future.

Valley Hospital's "Renewal" plan has sparked a heated debate, leading to the creation of opposition groups like Concerned Citizens of Ridgewood. Valley is asking the Ridgewood Planning Board to amend the village's Master Plan concerning the Hospital Zone. Specifically, Valley is asking for a "modern hospital zone" which changes parameters on set-backs, heights, and lot coverage.

Valley's objective is to modernize the hospital with single-patient rooms allowing

the hospital to meet federal and state standards and to enhance space for medical technology like the DiVinci robot for prostate cancer surgery. Put simply, much of the hospital is not suited for the needs of today's patients and modern medical equipment.

While the hospital is not expanding its property line, the overall height of the building is increasing. The number of stories is not changing but each story is higher. Construction creates noise and other inconveniences. There is no doubt that Ridgewood will be affected for some time.

But *The Ridgewood News* feels that this is the price of progress. Ridgewood residents should not fall behind in receiving world-class care in their backyard. We ask that the planning board, which has been reviewing the issue for almost three years, come to a conclusion. Due to the inconveniences cited above, we ask the hospital, the village and the residents work together to minimize the impact. This change is for everybody's long-term benefit.