



Officers

March 4, 2026

Jason Parson
Chair
Parson + Associates

Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council,

Paul Neidlein
1st Vice Chair
JE Dunn Construction

On behalf of the Downtown Council, I am writing to express our support for Kansas City University's (KCU) proposal to replace Smith Hall with a new, state-of-the-art research and health sciences facility on its northeast campus.

Elizabeth Danforth
2nd Vice-chair
Evergry

KCU is an anchor institution in Kansas City's historic northeast neighborhood. The University is a long-standing stakeholder in the community, has invested millions in the neighborhood, and is committed to remaining long-term.

Pat Contreras
3rd Vice-chair
McCownGordon

KCU's planned replacement of the aging and obsolete Smith Hall with a proposed \$40 million research facility will advance our community's health goals and ensure the University remains relevant in a competitive health sciences and innovation marketplace. This project will generate substantial economic benefits for our community and create hundreds of quality jobs within our design and build industries.

Alissa Wehmueller
Secretary
Helix Architecture + Design

This investment will allow KCU to expand its research and academic capacity, enabling it to grow and build upon both existing and new partnerships. In doing so, KCU will maintain its position as a keystone organization in the region's healthcare network. We also appreciate the University's commitment to honoring the site's history by preserving items of historic significance, such as the clock tower.

Christopher Briggs
Treasurer
PWC

As a central institution in the region's health sciences community, KCU plays a unique leadership role in advancing our healthcare goals and building on its meaningful community investment. We respectfully request your support for KCU's plan to replace Smith Hall with a research facility that creates jobs, strengthens our community's health, and contributes to our long-term economic resiliency.

Thank you for your consideration of this important project.

Respectfully,

Bill Dietrich
President & CEO
Downtown Council of Kansas City