

From: [Andy Hatem](#)
To: [Public Testimony](#)
Subject: Public Testimony re: City Harvest apartment project
Date: Thursday, March 2, 2023 2:01:34 PM

Good afternoon,

I live downtown, a 5-minute walk from the site of the proposed City Harvest project. I'm writing to express my strong support for advancing the City Harvest project as it stands. The developer designed this project in response to specifications from the city, and their proposal included parking that met the needs of the area and then some. Studies have shown that increasing the number of residents who can access a business on foot and by other means [leads to increased spending at neighborhood shops and restaurants](#), despite predictions to the contrary before such changes are made. Adding 300 units of housing in River Market would mean 300+ potential customers for local businesses, including many with minimal reliance on parking. City planning staff recommended approval for these reasons and others.

Beyond the local benefits for businesses and shoppers, ensuring this project moves forward would serve the city in several ways. Kansas City would add a \$95.6 million development to property tax rolls, providing much-needed revenue to a city budget under strain. Renters would have additional options thanks to 300 new units of housing, 20% of them set aside as affordable units. And construction on this project would sustain businesses and jobs in the local construction sector, ensuring we have businesses and workers with local experience for future projects.

I understand some businesses have expressed opposition to limiting their use of free parking. As for-profit businesses, these companies want to keep costs to a minimum, and use public funds to cover any expenses they can. But I question whether the city should devote even more taxpayer dollars, and even more prime downtown land, to keeping parking cheap for private businesses while making housing more expensive for residents. The alternative to 4 parking spots (currently available for \$85 a month or less in River Market - just over \$300 for the 4) is an apartment that currently rents for \$1000 or more in that same area. One short walk through the neighborhood will show this imbalance; as a resident, I pass block after block of nearly-empty parking lots each time I visit the city market - and see lights on in the windows of most if not all apartments. We have an imbalance downtown between the supply of parking and the supply of housing - and the more acute need for most residents is in housing.

There are few things the city needs less than higher property taxes on fewer improved lots; higher rents on fewer housing options; and higher costs as well as longer waitlists for local construction firms that serve public as well as private projects. Derailing this project and others like it would worsen all of these problems; advancing it would help address each one. I hope the City Council will consider advancing the City Harvest project without delay, and ensure speedy approval for projects like it in the future.

Sincerely,
Andy Hatem