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March 26, 2024

The Honorable Quinton Lucas, Mayor of Kansas City, Missouri
City of Kansas City, Missouri
414 E 12th Street
Kansas City, MO 64106

Andrea.Bough@kcmo.org

The Honorable Andrea Bough, Chair, Finance, Governance and Public Safety Committee
City of Kansas City
414 E 12th Street
Kansas City, MO 64106

Re: Ordinance No. 240313 to Continue the Barney Allis Redevelopment Project

Dear Mayor Lucas, Chairwoman Bough, and Members of the Committee:

The Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce (KC Chamber) supports Ordinance No. 240313 to fund the redevelopment of one of our city's key economic assets—the Barney Allis Plaza and the parking garage below. The KC Chamber urges the City Finance and Governance Committee and the full City Council to approve this important measure which we believe provides a responsible, data-informed investment in vital city-owned infrastructure that supports the city's critical convention, meeting, and sports tourism sector.

In its 2023-24 KCMO Public Policy Agenda, the KC Chamber committed itself to working with policymakers and civic leaders to support sustainable, growth-oriented and inclusive development that builds on Kansas City's competitive advantages, advancing prosperity throughout the city with special attention to distressed neighborhoods and key commerce centers. Barney Allis Plaza is the centerpiece of one of our most important commerce centers: downtown Kansas City near the convention center, T-Mobile Center, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts and the Power and Light District. Barney Allis Plaza is the front door to our downtown where visitors and residents gather daily. That front door, and the critically important garage below it, are in desperate need of extensive renovation and rebuilding.

The outdated Plaza is an underutilized asset and the city-owned garage, with nearly 200 furloughed parking spaces, is a costly money pit for the city to maintain with chronic temporary repairs and upkeep. The garage is currently insufficient to accommodate all of downtown's exciting activities, including arts performances, sports events, conventions, and evening and weekend entertainment for residents.

Barney Allis Plaza, which sits atop the garage, is currently a large crumbling blank space creating the impression of decay in the center of our dynamic downtown. The plans for a re-imagined Plaza will create a thriving, people-focused greenspace with arts and recreation activities destined to result in a world-class gathering place for residents and visitors.

Kansas City has the enviable opportunity of attracting national and international attention by hosting the NFL Draft, FIFA World Cup 26™, and being the home of the first-ever purpose-built stadium for women's sports, and a new world-class airport. The KC Chamber believes we must leverage this elevated profile by developing and maintaining state-of-the-art infrastructure and city assets like Barney Allis Plaza and the garage below the Plaza to advance prosperity for all of Kansas City.

The KC Chamber calls on this Committee and the full City Council to pass Ordinance No. 240313 to provide a sustainable long-term solution for the garage and to reimagine the Plaza as the civic asset and community gathering space we need in the heart of our downtown. The redevelopment of this city-owned asset is vital to accommodating the upcoming hotel and tourism commitments for the FIFA World Cup 26™, downtown baseball and the South Loop Link project.

Cathy Bennett

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