FROM THE DESK OF

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Neighborhood Planning & Development Committee
Mayor Pro Tem Parks-Shaw, Chair
414 E 12th Street
Kansas City, MO 64106

RE: Ordinances 250871, 250876; Resolution 250906

Dear Mayor Pro Tem and Councilmembers,

Please accept this consolidated letter regarding multiple docket items being heard by the Neighborhood Planning & Development Committee on Tuesday, October 21, 2025.

Ordinance #250871, Norman School Historic District

As the unfortunate dialogue of this or that related to development continues, it's important to recognize that the intrinsic value represented by the unique fabric of Kansas City business districts and neighborhoods is the foundation of our city's value to development. Stripping away recognizable landmarks and features in the name of "progress" will have the long-term effect of reducing our streetscape to a generic urban view that doesn't retain legacy community members, attract new residents and business owners, or showcase Kansas City to the rest of the world.

It is in everyone's best interest to support development that complements existing, historic, and unique spaces within our urban fabric. And while it would be ideal for this process to take place without formal protections, that is not our current reality. **I support the Norman School Historic District, which, alongside several other important historic districts in Kansas City, will help to ensure this neighborhood doesn't become a footnote in history.**

Resolution #250906, Public Engagement Plan

I support the request by the Kansas City Neighborhood Advisory Committee to remove the reference to their involvement in the analysis of the information presented in the report. Further I request that this resolution be held until such a time that the report can be provided to KCNAC and others for a robust discussion of the findings and intended approach to the implementation.

It is unlikely an entire implementation plan that holistically addresses all aspects of the Code of Ordinances can be developed within 90 days without unintended consequences or disruptive policy changes.

Improved public engagement is welcomed and necessary, however it is also deserving of thoughtful approach that aligns with existing priorities and without bogging down other initiatives and projects.

Ordinance #250876, Digital Signs in Residential Districts

I oppose the broad expansion of digital signage in residential districts and ask the member of the NPDC to consider the same criteria as the previous evaluation of expansion in commercial districts and not allow this ordinance to move forward.

The impacts associated with digital signage are significant and special use permits place an onerous burden on neighborhoods. The desire to allow a singular application or user category for expanded signage is not only in conflict with neighborhoods across the City, but it has also been found to violate the First Amendment as it relates to content.

Sincerely,

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Enclosures:
250876, Previous testimony, 10/14/2025

I am here to continue advocating for the protection of existing sign codes, particularly those in residential zoning districts. The sheer nature of allowing non-residential uses to exist in residential zoning facilitates access by and proximity to users. This integration limits use of some commercial tools, such as lighting and signage, to be consistent with the residential nature of the zoning district. Approving individual adjustments eroding this relationship will have the realized impact of rezoning the property without meeting the requirements of that action.

I want to draw your attention to key details of the CPC Staff Report for this ordinance. Each addresses criteria for consideration of the proposed amendments:

A. ……changing condition: *The proposed amendments address changing conditions in signage technology and* ***widespread adoption of digital signs***.
B. ……consistent with adopted plans and the stated purpose of this Zoning and Development Code: *intended to prevent unsightly signage by establishing reasonable restrictions on the location and operation of such signs*.
C. ……..in the best interests of the City as a whole: *The proposed amendment seeks to find a balance between the communication* ***needs of institutional uses*** *with the* ***interests of residential neighborhoods*** *in the quiet enjoyment of their environment*.

The Docket Memo goes on to confirm no fiscal or service level impacts, no impacts to health or sustainability of Kansas City. No engagement is required, but the use of digital signage does ensure quality, lasting development of new growth. Without the opportunity for engagement, the only avenue for presenting traffic and pedestrian safety data, environmental issues associated with illuminated signage, or broadly evaluate the staffing costs associated with managing the lifespan of even more special use permits are emails and short public testimony.

My testimony to the City Plan Commission included a recommendation that the communication NEEDS of institutions and the merits of that justification be both presented and validated, and significant public input be considered. What information was used to determine these criteria were met?

This ordinance was presented as narrowly filling a need for public school districts in the Northland, however, as other testimony demonstrates, the ordinance language considers ALL PERMITTED USES as eligible to seek a special use permit for digital signage.

That list would include all types of day care facilities, nursing and care facilities, club/lodge/fraternal organizations, libraries/museums/cultural exhibits, neighborhoods (!), religious assembly (more than just churches), funeral homes, bed & breakfast establishments, and the entire category of office/admin/professional buildings. Not every example occurs in every zoning district nor does every parcel meet all criteria for signage, however, this represents an extremely broad range of eligibility that grossly exceeds the example provided as justification for this ordinance. And again, it erodes important distinctions between commercial and residential zoning districts that prioritize the very nature of the residential districts that Kansas Citians call home.

The staff report does highlight the history of the effort to expand digital signage, most importantly that there has been no consensus on the details of digital signage in residential districts. Specific details presented in this amendment failed in previous attempts because there simply is no appetite for the

signage from residential communities and the restrictions proposed, such as large setbacks, were unacceptable to institutions. Notably, that same protection, a setback requirement of 100 feet from any public right-of-way, was present in the language approved by the City Plan Commission, but has been removed from this version, introduced as ordinance 250876.

Broadly expanding the use of digital technology, adding the burden of special use permits, and increasing the enforcement obligation of the City (which is complaint-based), are not in the best interests of the public. Special use permits are regressive, burdensome, create unnecessary conflict across communities, and shift the duty of the City to maintain consistent implementation of zoning policy to individuals and neighborhood organizations.

I oppose ordinance 250876 and ask that the Neighborhood Planning & Development Committee members vote against the proposed amendments to 88-445-06 and not expand the use of digital technology in residential districts.