



April 30, 2026

Neighborhood Planning and Development Committee
Mayor Pro Tem Ryana Parks-Shaw, Chairperson
4th District Councilmember Eric Bunch, Vice Chairperson
1st District Councilmember Nathan Willett, Committee Member
3rd District At Large Councilmember, Melissa Patterson-Hazley, Committee Member
Supplemental Copy to City Clerk at public.testimony@kcmo.org
Courtesy Copy to Larisa Chambi, Planning Supervisor

Dear Committee Members and Planning Supervisor Chambi,

Over the last decade, Historic Kansas City worked closely with other stakeholders in a years-long planning process leading up to the adoption of the Westport Overlay District. We were a partner alongside the City and Westport Business League in developing the Westport District Master Plan, and we conducted a comprehensive historic survey of the area at significant cost to document its buildings, development patterns, and character. The overlay that followed in 2023—the result of eight years put in by all the partners behind this plan—reflects the thoughtful study of the district’s character and was adopted to maintain Westport’s historic building fabric and reinforce its pedestrian-oriented, human-scaled development pattern.

The proposal before you would amend that overlay to allow special use permits for drive-through facilities in or adjacent to our city’s most historic commercial district. City staff have recommended denial, and we support that recommendation. Drive-throughs are not consistent with the intent of the overlay, which prioritizes active street-front development and pedestrian circulation. This amendment does not correct an error or respond to a broader change in conditions. It is being advanced to accommodate a specific request, apart from any district-wide planning effort.

Allowing drive-throughs introduces curb cuts, vehicle stacking, and circulation patterns that interrupt sidewalk continuity and shift activity away from the street. Staff have identified the likely effects, including increased conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians and added traffic within a compact, walkable area. The Midtown Plaza Area Plan discourages these uses in mixed-use areas, and Westport has consistently been planned and understood as a pedestrian-oriented place through years of public planning and community input. The overlay was adopted with clear expectations. Changing those standards in response to a single request, rather than through a broader public process, undermines that framework. A major change to a process- and engagement-based planning initiative such as the overlay should not be undertaken to accommodate a single property owner.

Vicki Noteis, President

Ethan Starr, Executive Director