



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

Re: Ordinance No. 260401 — Vacant Property Registration and Monitoring

Dear Chair and members of the Committee:

Historic Kansas City appreciates the opportunity to speak in support of Ordinance No. 260401, expanding the City's vacant property registration program. As City Council recognized in adopting Resolution No. 250912, demolition by neglect is not limited to the moment of demolition. It is the result of prolonged vacancy, deferred maintenance, and the absence of consistent oversight. Vacant buildings—particularly those left unsecured or unmonitored—are among the most visible indicators of this pattern and are often the point at which deterioration accelerates.

This ordinance addresses that condition by strengthening the City's ability to identify, register, and monitor vacant properties. Requirements for registration, disclosure of ownership intent, and ongoing oversight introduce a level of accountability that has not previously been a part of the monitoring and enforcement procedure for cases of vacant buildings. By empowering staff to track building vacancy, the City is better positioned to intervene before buildings decline to a point where demolition is pursued.

We recognize that Ordinance No. 260401 is broader in scope than historic preservation alone. Its provisions address vacant and underutilized properties more generally, including unimproved lots. The implications of new enforcement mechanisms are clear: absentee owners of vacant properties need to proactively formulate a development plan or consider disposing of the property to another party with the resources to reinvest in a building's future.

This ordinance has great potential for addressing prolonged vacancy and deferred maintenance, though it will require sustained engagement—and manpower engaged—on the part of City staff to ensure monitoring schema are oriented toward building rehabilitation and prompt productive engagement with neighborhood stakeholders.

Strengthening the City's ability to track and respond to vacancy is an important step toward ensuring that historically significant buildings are not lost through prolonged inaction. When paired with stabilization standards and reforms to dangerous building procedures, this type of monitoring framework can help shift the City's approach from reactive demolition to earlier intervention. We appreciate the Committee's consideration and look forward to continued work on the broader set of tools needed to address this issue.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Vicki L. Noteis".

Vicki Noteis, President

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ethan Starr".

Ethan Starr, Executive Director