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Via Email: public.testimony@kcmo.org
Mayor Lucas and City Council Members
City of Kansas City, Missouri
414 E. 12th Street
Kansas City, Missouri 64106

Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council:

From the time our work to transform Downtown Kansas City began in 1980, the Downtown Council has learned that the timeline for bringing catalytic projects from vision and planning to reality can take years, and sometimes decades. In November of 2004, the Downtown Council's Annual Luncheon highlighted a bold vision of bringing major league baseball back to the city's historic core. After years of planning, research, and advocacy, we had the pleasure of celebrating with you the exciting new plan to bring the Kansas City Royals Downtown at our 2026 Annual Luncheon last week.

From the beginning, now over the span of twenty years, the Downtown Council has been a constant advocate for Downtown baseball, consistently stepping up to provide support, planning, and research to advance this project forward. Today, we remain strong and vocal supporters of bringing the Royals Downtown. We are grateful for the plan you and the City Council introduced last week to bring baseball back home to our urban core.

Kansas City has reached a pivotal decision point, with a unique opportunity to correct past mistakes of misplacing critical community assets in isolation from other key amenities and neighborhoods. A new Royals stadium in Downtown Kansas City would integrate with surrounding neighborhoods and activity centers while simultaneously creating better access to the entire region. The new ballpark would no longer stand alone, separated from communities and activity centers, but would now live in the heart of our city, where legacy buildings, businesses, and culture have been built.

In addition, we believe accessibility is key to removing barriers to participation by many of our citizens, and Downtown's existing infrastructure provides seamless connectivity and accessibility to neighborhoods throughout the region. Downtown Kansas City is a hub for our city, with 33 existing bus routes connecting the region's core to neighborhoods throughout the metropolitan area. In addition, Downtown sits at the geographic center of the Royals' fanbase, with 5 major interstates and more than 20 ingress and egress routes converging on the area from every direction. This provides fans with the flexibility to create their own routes, traditions, and game-day experiences.

A ballpark Downtown is uniquely positioned to leverage the city's most transformative transportation investment, the KC Streetcar. Now extending from the Riverfront to the north, through Downtown, and south to Midtown, the Plaza, and

UMKC, the KC Streetcar fundamentally changes how fans can access a game - creating options that previously did not exist. This expanded system means fewer cars on game day, improving the overall experience. However, for those driving, Downtown still offers more than 40,000 existing parking spaces conveniently located to accommodate different routes. The result is flexibility, choice, and a modern urban game-day experience that works for the entire region.

Unique assets like a Downtown ballpark have synergy with these key amenities. They mutually benefit each other and exponentially add to the economic impact of the region. New office, residential, and retail components within a new ballpark district would have the support of these activity generators to keep the district vibrant and successful throughout the year. However, that relationship is mutually supportive, as millions of Royals fans will have the opportunity to experience all the amazing offerings Downtown provides, supporting and experiencing our neighborhoods, rich with diverse entertainment venues, restaurants, and retail.

As our *Imagine Downtown KC* strategic plan notes, "Cities that have developed Downtown ballparks have experienced substantial secondary economic development. These assets have a multiplier effect in an urban context." The plan also reminds us that "Baseball grew up in America's cities, and early parks were embedded into urban neighborhoods and districts."

Now, Kansas City has the opportunity to bring baseball back to where it originally started - woven into the daily life of our city. Our history is full of baseball teams and ballparks that laid the foundation for baseball in our urban core - Unions at Athletic Park, The Kansas City Cowboys at League Park, The Royal Giants at Shelley Park, The Packers at Gordon and Koppel Field, The Kansas City Blues at Association Park, The Kansas City Monarchs at Muehlebach Field, and the Kansas City Athletics and Kansas City Royals at Municipal Stadium, before moving to Royals Stadium in 1973.

Today, we are full of optimism and will continue to advocate for Downtown baseball as the details of this new plan emerge. While this process continues to play out, we are excited about the opportunity to bring baseball back to the place where it all began. It is time to welcome Downtown baseball home once again, for all of Kansas City.

Sincerely,

Jason Parson, Chairman, Downtown Council

William Dietrich, President & CEO, Downtown Council