



Officers

Lynn Carlton

Vice Chair
HOK

Richard Wetzel

Vice Chair
Centric

Mike Klamm

Vice Chair
CBRE

Leonard Graham

Vice Chair
Taliaferro & Browne, Inc.

Charles Miller

Secretary
Lewis Rice

Christopher Briggs

Treasurer
PricewaterhouseCoopers

Monday, January 25, 2021

Honorable Quinton Lucas, Mayor, and
Honorable Members of the City Council
City of Kansas City, Missouri
414 East 12th Street
Kansas City, Missouri 64106

RE: BARNEY ALLIS PLAZA & AUDITORIUM GARAGE

Dear Mayor Lucas and members of the City Council:

On behalf of the Downtown Council of Kansas City, we encourage you to support Ordinance No. 201080 which authorizes \$1.3 million to enable the development team on the Barney Allis Plaza and garage project to calculate total project costs, including the guaranteed maximum price, financing strategies, design, and schedule to rebuild the facility.

As you know, Barney Allis Plaza, located in the heart of Downtown Kansas City, has been the center of Kansas City and its convention industry going back to 1899. It serves national and international visitors and conventions, regional citizens, businesses, residents, and schools.

The current Barney Allis Plaza was built in 1955. It has been the lynchpin of the convention center, Municipal Auditorium, Music Hall, and the hotel district for over 65 years. It has served us well, hosting millions of guests, but today it shows the wear and tear of that service, it is well past time to reinvest in Barney Allis Plaza. Today the garage is in terrible condition. Approximately 25% of all stalls are unusable. The city is currently spending approximately \$1 million annually on basic life safety systems just to keep the facility operating. The garage is a blighted and dangerous facility.

The Barney Allis complex is also a primary civic gathering space at the heart of our region. It is a unique asset important to preserving and building our regional economy. The hospitality and tourism industry generates \$5.6 billion for our regional economy, attracts 25.2 million visitors, and employs over 48,000 people annually. Barney Allis Plaza and garage are a primary asset supporting the visitor/tourism industry. Not acting now to re-invest in this asset will result in damage to the local hotel and convention economy. Every visitor dollar is a net new dollar to our community.

Now when conventions are canceled and hotel activity low is the time to prepare for the spotlight when Kansas City is on a national and international stage for major upcoming confirmed events.

The Downtown Council is currently finalizing a [10-year strategic plan for greater downtown](#). Through focus groups, surveys, interviews and community

Downtown Council of Kansas City

1000 Walnut, Suite 200
Kansas City, MO 64106

www.downtownkc.org

conversations we have learned that creating and enhancing well-programmed, vibrant public open and green spaces is universally a top priority for a diverse collection of urban stakeholders, including Downtown residents.

The project costs for Barney Allis break down into approximately 40 percent for the civic plaza and 60 percent for the garage. Surrounding businesses and our convention/visitor industry rely on the garage. The civic plaza is a unique community amenity to visitors, employees, residents, and over 500 school children from Crossroads Academy who use the plaza daily for recess.

Considerable design work has already been completed on Barney Allis that envisions a vibrant, actively programmed public space operated by a private/public/non-profit partnership. Worth noting, Daniel Biederman, the person responsible for transforming Bryant Park from an abandoned crime scene behind the New York City Public Library to one of the most beloved public spaces in NYC has been working with our local team to lead our redesign efforts.

In closing, Barney Allis Plaza and garage is an imminent needs project; and it provides an opportunity to be prepared with a "shovel ready infrastructure project" for anticipated federal stimulus recovery funds.

We request your support as an organization and as business leaders for Ordinance 201080.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MD Dietrich', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William Dietrich
President & CEO
Downtown Council of Kansas City