

April 1, 2014

Columbia City Council  
City of Columbia  
Eighth & Broadway  
Columbia, Missouri 65201

Dear Mayor & Members of Council,

Mayor Bob McDavid has asked the Downtown Columbia Leadership Council to lead the way on gathering public input to help inform the Columbia City Council and city administrators on what funding sources they should seek to pay for central-city infrastructure improvements.

In addition, Fourth Ward Councilman Ian Thomas has asked the Downtown Leadership Council to host one or more public meetings with a focus on “transparent staff presentations of the technical issues, unfettered opportunity for public comments and questions, and a visible policy discussion by City Council” with a priority towards restoring public trust in city government.

The Downtown Columbia Leadership Council is well-qualified to help lead this discussion. Appointed by the City Council, the Downtown Columbia Leadership Council has broad representation from three at-large community residents, Stephens College, Columbia College, University of Missouri, the Downtown Community Improvement District, Planning & Zoning and neighborhood associations. As such, the DCLC offers a perspective from neighborhoods, residents, academia, and the public. We look forward to providing that input to Council.

Section 2-263 of the City Code of Ordinances gives the Downtown Columbia Leadership Council broad authority to “review and comment on downtown public finance mechanisms, monitor implementation of downtown planning projects, conduct downtown planning activities and provide downtown awareness and outreach.”

The scope of work suggested by Mayor McDavid and Councilman Thomas may be best accomplished under the Downtown Columbia Leadership Council’s authority to “work on other projects requested by the City Council” in Section 2-263(10).

If requested by Council, the Downtown Leadership Council proposes the following scope of process, review, and resources designed to improve public trust in the decision-making process:

**Scope:**

- Define infrastructure including a clear analysis of existing capacity, maps of existing insufficient infrastructure, and projections of future needs.
- Develop a broad citizen-engagement process including one or more public hearings and listening sessions that include:
  - Facilitation of public comment.
  - Presentations by City Manager and staff.
  - Questions and comments by developers and property owners.
  - Questions and comments by members of the public.
  - Questions and comments by City Council members.
- Investigate cause(s) of current infrastructure situation.
- Provide an independent analysis of infrastructure shortfall, if any.
- Make recommendations to improve future infrastructure planning processes.

- Identify potential revenue sources to fund infrastructure shortfall.
- Assess the pros and cons of ways to address capacity shortage.
- Make recommendations designed to restore public confidence in planning process.
- Coordinate future downtown (20-year) infrastructure needs with the C-2 rezoning “build-out”.

**Resources required:**

The Downtown Leadership Council will require access to city staff and data. Assuming the City waives any research and production costs for reports, public records, and data, the Downtown Leadership Council may require additional resources to promote public hearings and for staff time to help prepare the report to Council.

**Timeframe:**

The DLC’s work will culminate in a Report to Council that helps the City Council achieve consensus on downtown infrastructure needs and funding options. The Downtown Leadership Council will complete a draft report within 4-5 months. A final report to Council will be delivered in 8-9 months but before the end of 2014.

We look forward to the opportunity to provide continued input to build a Downtown Columbia that illustrates the best aspirations of its residents, stakeholders, property owners, citizens, and community.

Sincerely,

DOWNTOWN COLUMBIA LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Brent Gardner, Chair