

January 23, 2015

Dear Mayor and Members of Council:

In April 2014, the City Council asked the Downtown Leadership Council to study the City's infrastructure crisis and make recommendations to restore public confidence in the planning process. After hundreds of hours of work including infrastructure committee meetings, DLC meetings, and two town hall meetings, the Downtown Leadership Council completed our 61-page report and recommendations to City Council in November 2014 (REP 106-14).

At the November 3, 2014 meeting of the City Council, the Mayor requested additional detail regarding our recommendation to create a Blue Ribbon Commission to prioritize, reduce, and finance Columbia's infrastructure backlog. The Downtown Columbia Leadership Council considered the Mayor's request at our December 2014 and January 2015 meetings. Our recommendation including suggested size, makeup, and charge of the Blue Ribbon Commission is attached for your review and action.

We would also encourage the City Council to further consider the DLC's fifteen recommendations designed to restore public confidence and improve the infrastructure planning process. Several members of the City Council have suggested a work session to further discuss our recommendations. Respectfully, we believe the City would benefit from addressing these foundational concerns before asking voters to approve additional financing proposals.

Sincerely,

Brent Gardner, Chair

The Downtown Leadership Council recommends the creation of an 11-member, city-council appointed Blue Ribbon Infrastructure Commission charged with advising the City Council on how Columbia's infrastructure backlog might be prioritized, reduced, and financed.

The Blue Ribbon Commission shall:

- Create an 'Infrastructure Strategic Plan' for Columbia 2050 with 5-year benchmarks. The plan shall prioritize Columbia's infrastructure projects and make recommendations for financing.
- Create an 'Infrastructure Development Code'.
- Review all forms of infrastructure to identify sustainable practices.
- Develop a "smart streets" design protocol that works hand-in-hand with the "complete streets" policy that integrates infrastructure for paving, landscape and underground infrastructure.
- Monitor implementation of 2050 proposed future build-out.
- Contract with independent professionals to help implement the charge of the Commission with funds appropriated by Council.
- Implement Recommendations of the Downtown Columbia Leadership Council to restore public confidence in the City's infrastructure planning process.
- and other infrastructure projects as requested by Council.

Members of the Blue Ribbon Infrastructure Commission shall have expertise in planning, engineering, sewer pipes, water lines, or electric generation and transmission, municipal finance, public communications and may include retired members of city staff and other citizen appointees with interest and expertise in municipal infrastructure.

The City Council shall appoint 1 member of the commission from the City at large who shall serve as chair for the first year of the commission's work.

The City Council shall appoint 6 members of the commission, 1 from each ward.

The City Council shall appoint 1 members of the Blue Ribbon Commission nominated by the Downtown Columbia Leadership Council.

The City Council shall appoint 1 member of the Blue Ribbon Commission nominated by the Water & Light Advisory Board.

The City Council shall appoint 2 members of the Blue Ribbon Commission nominated by a recognized neighborhood association contiguous to the expanded study area of the Downtown Columbia Leadership Council.

The length of terms shall be three years, except that the first four appointees shall serve for 1 year, four appointees shall serve for 2 years, and 4 appointees shall serve for 3 years so as to stagger the terms.