



December 12, 2017

Lawrence City Commission
c/o City Hall
6 E. 6th St.
Lawrence, KS 66044

RE: Statement of Support for Proposed Downtown Conference Center Project

Dear Commission members:

We are glad to be here tonight to take part in the discussion of building a Conference Center in Downtown Lawrence. As members of the Downtown Lawrence, Inc. board it is our responsibility to preserve, protect and promote Downtown Lawrence to ensure it continues to be a diverse and bustling destination for locals and visitors, alike.

We see the Conference Center as key part of supporting our mission. Having a Conference Center in Downtown Lawrence will help in three key areas to promote the health and stability of our historic Downtown:

1. To provide critical Sunday through Thursday business that all of our hotels and local businesses – restaurants, retail and services - need and depend upon to remain stable and successful and, in many cases, to grow.
2. To stay relevant and competitive as a community. According to the Nov. 2017 Lost Business Report compiled by eXplore Lawrence, Lawrence has lost over \$1.5 million of business in the last year and a half due to a lack of hotel rooms and meeting space. This business is going to other Kansas communities – Overland Park, Topeka, Manhattan.
3. Increased revenue for hotels, retail, restaurants and service businesses in turn supports our general fund and our community:
 - increased sales tax collected goes to our general fund
 - increased liquor tax collected helps our non-profit agencies
 - increased Transient Guest Tax supports more marketing and business development for Lawrence as a business and tourist destination

In addition to these key points, there are many other benefits we are continuing to explore, including increased parking and increased residential density, which is good for all types of business: retail, restaurant, personal and professional services.

We are here to support the Commission in continuing to explore this critical development for our Downtown Community.

Thank you
Downtown Lawrence, Inc. Board of Directors

Cc: Tom Markus, City Manager