

Professional Corporation Certified Public Accountants January 20, 2012

Mayor Bob McDavid & Columbia City Council Members City of Columbia 701 E. Broadway Columbia, MO 65201

Dear Mayor and Council Members,

20 South Fifth Street Columbia, MO 65201 (573) 449-1599 Fax: (573) 443-8603

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At its December general board meeting, the Downtown Leadership Council (DLC) heard a brief presentation from Phil Steinhaus, Director of the Columbia Housing Authority (CHA), regarding CHA's plans for streetscaping and improvements along Providence Road. During the ensuing discussion, DLC members realized that this project almost exactly mirrors the College Avenue improvements called for in H3 Studio's Charrette Report, and the group asked that I write a letter to you to express our support for CHA's plans.

Mr. Steinhaus explained to us that during the coming year, the City of Columbia, CHA, and Get About Columbia will be constructing a landscaped pedestrian median down the middle of Providence Road, stretching from Switzler Street on the north to the pedestrian overpass on the south. The overpass that connects the Blind Boone Center and Douglass High School will be removed as part of the safety and beautification enhancements for this corridor.

PARTHERS

Rabert A. Gerding Fred W. Korte, Jr. Joseph E. Chitwood James R. McGinnis Travis W. Hundley

The landscaped median will include a pedestrian-activated signal and highly-visible brick crosswalks, which will allow pedestrians to safely cross Providence Road between Douglass High School and the housing authority's Family Townhomes. Additionally, both sides of the Providence corridor will be landscaped to enhance the beauty of the area. The chain-link fence will be removed and a new sidewalk pathway with landscaped berms will be installed.

The DLC wholeheartedly supports this terrific project, not the least because it is strikingly similar to the Charrette Report's proposed streetscape improvements for College Avenue, particularly where it intersects Walnut Street. We think it will be terrific for both major arteries leading into opposite sides of the Downtown area to mirror each other. People will recognize the landscaped areas and distinctive brick intersections and know that they are officially Downtown!

The construction of new apartment buildings at the northwest corner of College & Walnut Streets is currently under way; the project will include wider sidewalks and the addition of a traffic light. This is the perfect time to add the Charrette Report's proposed streetscape improvements on that side of Downtown. Together these two projects, which can feasibly be completed in 2012, could serve as the catalyst to proceed with similar landscaping enhancements at other intersections along Providence and College, and eventually to the main Gateway intersections of Downtown: Providence at Broadway, and College at Broadway. All of these projects are anticipated in the Charrette Report.

Finally, I also wanted to point out that the CHA streetscape plan contemplates the possibility of adding a memorial to the late Beulah Ralph, and the creation of an African American heritage trail beginning along Providence Road. The trail would highlight the numerous landmarks and historical areas that have contributed to the rich history of African Americans in Columbia, including historic churches, Sharp's End, the J.W. "Blind" Boone home, and the gravesite of James T. Scott in Columbia Cemetery. The DLC members expressed a great deal of interest when Mr. Steinhaus described these plans, and we wanted you to know that we strongly support this part of the project as well.

If you have any questions about the Charrette Report and the various Downtown projects that it contemplates, or if there is any particular project in the greater Downtown area that you would like the DLC to study and advise you on, please don't hesitate to let us know. And of course you are always invited to attend our meetings, which are held on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 4:00 in City Hall. We are here to serve you!

Sincerely yours,

Rosalie J. Gerding, CPA

Chair, Downtown Columbia Leadership Council

cc: Mike Matthes, City Manager

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Tony St. Romaine, Deputy City Manager