

From: The Downtown Leadership Council (DLC)
To: Mayor Buffaloe and City Council
Date: December 16, 2022
Re: Assuming control of the Business Loop from MoDOT

Dear Mayor Buffaloe and Members of the Council:

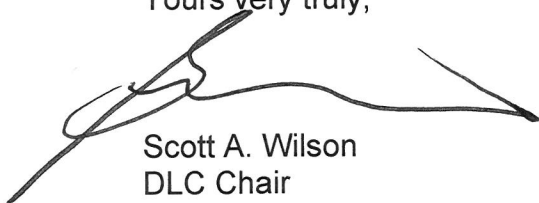
The Business Loop is a key gateway into Columbia and downtown, yet its appearance and lack of proper infrastructure makes it a poor introduction to our city. A portion of the Business Loop falls within the scope of the Downtown Leadership Council and, as such, we are advocating the City of Columbia assume control of the street so that improvements can be made.

MoDOT prioritizes interstates and highways, so the Business Loop has seen minimal investments over the years. That is not likely to change in the future. As a result, we have a major city street that fails to serve the needs of Columbians. Simply put, the city and our residents would never allow a street like the Business Loop to be built today.

Furthermore, the corridor is unsafe for pedestrians and bicyclists, a particular problem for the surrounding neighborhoods where residents rely heavily on alternative methods of transportation. As a MoDOT street, the sidewalks, curb cuts, crosswalks, pedestrian crossing signals, and other critical infrastructure are not a priority. As such, we have a gap in our transportation network in an area with low-income housing and numerous social service agencies.

The Business Loop CID has made marked improvements, but they are somewhat hamstrung by MoDOT's internal restrictions or authority limitations regarding potential projects to improve the street. Making improvements to the street in keeping with what Columbians need and expect, as well as beautifying this gateway to downtown, is an issue best addressed by city government, not the highway department. The Business Loop CID has funded a public planning process for the street and has an approved plan to upgrade the corridor, but they cannot implement it alone. They can serve as an active partner, but the city is best positioned to undertake needed infrastructure improvements. Given the number of new federal grants from the Department of Transportation—many dedicated to low-income areas which have been neglected in the past—this would be an opportune time to make this move. Although the area of the Business Loop CID is critical, we would defer to the city to determine the extent of the transfer from MoDOT to the City of Columbia.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott A. Wilson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Scott A. Wilson
DLC Chair