



**Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce  
Testimony Regarding Proposed 2020-2021 City Budget, Ordinance 200171  
Submitted to Kansas City Finance, Governance and Public Safety Committee  
Wednesday, March 18, 2020**

The Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce recognizes that balancing a budget for a city as large and diverse as Kansas City with all the opportunities and challenges we face is not an easy task. This is particularly true as our community and our nation face the tremendous health and financial crisis due to the coronavirus. We recognize the additional burden that has been added to your important fiduciary responsibility.

We applaud Mayor Lucas, the City Council and the Finance, Governance and Public Safety Committee for your diligent work on the proposed 2020-21 city budget and efforts to support improved public services, reduce crime, and invest in economic prosperity for all citizens and across all corridors of the city.

We know that you will be looking at ways to support small business and employees as they struggle with the economic fallout of this crisis. Know that the Chamber is here to collaborate with you on addressing these serious issues in the short and long term. Ultimately, we are aligned with you as you seek to address the economic and health issues of all Kansas Citizens.

As you work to complete this budget, we want to call your attention to a few key areas of the proposed budget for your consideration.

As part of our commitment to inclusive prosperity, the KC Chamber supports the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority's Zero-Fare Initiative concept and will continue to work with KCATA, MARC and other transportation partners to develop a regional funding strategy to enhance transportation infrastructure and transit access in the region.

In light of growing uncertainty about the financial health of many in our city due to coronavirus, The Chamber believes now is not the time to reduce funding to Children's Mercy or any of our health care providers that serve as safety nets for the city's most vulnerable, underserved and often un-insured children. Children's Mercy provides vital resources including housing services, behavioral and mental health services, exams for abused and foster children, and home-based care for pregnant women effected by alcohol and drug abuse. The KC Chamber respectfully urges the Finance, Governance and Public Safety Committee to restore—at the least - the Mayor's recommendation of \$400,000 in funding to Children's Mercy.

The coronavirus will have a significant, and perhaps unprecedented, impact on our businesses, their workforces and the economy. Our small businesses and entrepreneurs are already enduring supply chain bottlenecks, lost sales and layoffs. The Chamber has been consulting with local partners and state and federal officials to open relief funding streams for our area businesses and we believe now is not the time to reduce available city economic development and entrepreneur funding that could be so vital to our businesses trying to stay afloat during this economic downturn. We urge this Committee and the City Council to consider reinstating proposed budget cuts for economic development and entrepreneur programs in order to address the rapidly evolving needs of the city's small businesses, startups and entrepreneurs.

The KC Chamber is strongly committed to growing both our local economy and our entrepreneurial community. We value your leadership and the difficult decisions you are having to make. We stand ready to partner with you to develop and implement an effective strategy to appropriately address the rapidly changing economic needs of our city and advance and invest in inclusive development. Thank you for your consideration, leadership and public service.

**JOE REARDON**  
*President and CEO*