



News from City Hall

Mayor Kay Barnes
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Mayor Kay Barnes, Sports Commission Announce Findings of Downtown Arena Study

At a news conference today, Kansas City Mayor Kay Barnes and the Greater Kansas City Sports Commission and Foundation released the findings of the Commission's study of the potential for a new arena in downtown Kansas City and potential alternate uses for Kemper Arena.

Based on the results of the study, the Mayor announced that the Greater Downtown Development Authority will assume the lead in moving forward into Phase Two of developing a new arena for downtown Kansas City, in conjunction with the Sports Commission, the Chamber of Commerce, Civic Council, the Downtown Council and the Economic Development Corporation.

"I asked the Sports Commission to take the lead in undertaking a thorough market and financial study in order to determine the feasibility for a successful new arena," said Mayor Kay Barnes. "We are very pleased and encouraged with the initial results, and we are moving forward immediately with phase two of this arena development initiative."

The Sports Commission has agreed with the findings of the study, subject to the identification and authorization of financing, the availability of a site which can be purchased at a reasonable price, and the identification of appropriate reuse and financial arrangements related to Kemper Arena. In addition, the Sports Commission recommends pursuing private management. The Commission also recommends that the arena should enhance the use of Bartle Hall and create additional sports and entertainment opportunities in the metropolitan area, while complementing development of the central core, including simultaneous improvements to historic Municipal Auditorium. The Sports Commission believes that a new arena will play a key role in the decision process of the Big 12 Conference when awarding future Men's and Women's Basketball Tournaments.

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“With the construction of newer, state of the art arenas around the country, Kemper Arena now lacks many of the features and amenities that facility users and patrons have come to expect in a sports and entertainment facility,” said Ron Labinski, Sports Commission Executive Committee and co-chair of the Downtown Arena Committee.

“In an effort to keep Kansas City competitive with other markets of similar size and characteristics, the Sports Commission concluded that the city of Kansas City, Missouri should plan for a new downtown arena and we have made this issue a priority,” said Bill Hall, chair of the Sports Commission.

Phase Two will involve further, detailed analysis of each potential site identified in Phase One and will determine the most appropriate location for the arena. This analysis will include an evaluation of each area in relation to the specific site selection criteria outlined in Phase One. The selection criteria will be evaluated in detail for each potential site with the positives and negatives for each summarized to determine the most appropriate location for the proposed arena.

Further refinement of the operating analysis, the cost and design analysis and the arena financing plan will also be undertaken in Phase Two. The operating analysis will evaluate the estimated operating results to be achieved from the new arena while looking in particular at the potential to maximize revenue generated from creative sponsorships. Options to generate new sources of revenue not currently available from Kemper Arena, event utilization estimates and the estimated number and price of premium seating will also be analyzed.

Potential financing options available for construction of the arena will be further identified. This analysis will include the potential for private equity participation in addition to public funding sources such as G.O. bond debt; sales/hotel/restaurant/gaming tax revenues; and user fees. Funding of reuse-related expenses for Kemper Arena may be part of a comprehensive funding package.

Phase I recommendations regarding reuse of Kemper Arena will be referred to the American Royal Association for further refinement. Several options for reuse of the Arena will be evaluated. These options will focus on renovation of the Arena to enhance its use by the American Royal in staging equestrian and agriculturally-related events. George Guastello, President and CEO of the American Royal, will serve as an ex-officio member of the Phase II Implementation Committee and act as a liaison between the two groups.

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The Phase Two Implementation Committee will begin meeting immediately and will complete their work by Monday, March 31, 2003.

Mayor Barnes announced that the Committee will fall under the auspices of the Greater Downtown Development Authority (GDDA) with continuing support from the Sports Commission, Chamber of Commerce, Civic Council, Downtown Council and Economic Development Corporation.

The Phase Two Implementation Committee consists of the following individuals:

- * John Edgar - Co-chair (Economic Development Corporation);
- * Jeff Dobbs - Co-chair (Sports Commission & Chamber of Commerce)
- * Mayor Kay Barnes
- * Teresa Loar - City Council
- * Tom McDonnell - (GDDA)
- * Jan Kreamer - Community Foundation;
- * Kevin Pistilli - Chamber of Commerce & Sports Commission
- * Vicki Noteis - City Planning & Development
- * Ron Pressman - Civic Council
- * Warren Erdman - Downtown Council
- * Bill Nelson - Civic Council
- * Ron Labinski - Sports Commission
- * Deron Cherry - Sports Commission
- * Mike Carter - Chamber of Commerce and Sports Commission
- * Janet Justus - Sports Commission
- * Mike Goff - Sports Commission
- * Sandra Aust -- Kansas City Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners
- * Ann Dickinson - Civic Leader
- * Ex-officio Kevin M. Gray; Andi Udris (Economic Development Corporation & GDDA)
- * George Guastello (American Royal)