***General Letter***

To Mayor Bryan Paterson and Kingston City Councillors:

I am excited to offer my support for development of a conference/convention centre in downtown Kingston. I have spent time considering if and how a conference centre will benefit my business, downtown Kingston, and the city as a whole. I am convinced that this investment and the long-term continuous business that will come from it is a critical next step in the evolution of life in downtown Kingston.

I’ve seen what events at the Leon Centre have done to build the night economy downtown, and I know that a conference centre will only enhance and expand this. When people go to conferences and stay in nearby hotels, they also dine out, take in shows, go shopping, and immerse themselves in the life of the city they are visiting.

I also know how vital tourism is to the economy of the city, and how the tourism economy ebbs and flows through the year with a huge peak in summer, and a deep trough in winter. I can see clearly how an active conference centre will help to even out that flow by attracting incremental business during shoulder periods and even the depths of winter. This will lead to more sustainable employment across sectors and help businesses across the downtown thrive and grow.

Finally, I feel strongly that introducing the history, beauty, and vibrancy of Kingston to a broad audience of business travelers and event attendees will have follow-on benefits for all sectors of tourism as people attending conferences here will want to come back with family and friends to dive more deeply into all the city has to offer.

I hope City Councillors will endorse moving forward with the Kingston Conference Centre idea as a next and critical step in building our city, supporting its economy, and enhancing the lives of its citizens.

Sincerely,

***Restaurateur Letter***

To Mayor Bryan Paterson and City Councillors,

As a restaurant operator in Kingston, I would like to express my support for the Kingston Convention Centre development project. The benefits of the convention centre development will apply to not just the restaurant sector, but to all of downtown, and to the entire city.

Building a conference centre will help Kingston achieve its full potential, creating year-round business activity during the peak and non-peak tourism seasons. For restaurants this will help us maintain stable employment and grow our business in ways we can’t right now. We are convinced a conference centre will attract large business events that could not otherwise come to Kingston, as well as activity in creative industries, like music, film, and the arts.

I know what happens in my business when we have large events taking place at the Leon’s Centre, and those nights make a huge positive difference to my bottom line. I’d like nothing more than to see an expansion of that type of activity, and I know that an active and vibrant conference centre will add so much that way. More of that high-volume night-time activity will allow me to grow, and potentially to expand my opening hours and increase my staff complement.

I look forward to the day a conference centre opens in downtown Kingston because I have no doubt how I, my fellow restaurateurs, other downtown businesses, and the whole city will benefit. We need to look at this as the next step in building our city and realizing its full potential and I hope City Council will elect to do just that.

Sincerely,

***Retailer Letter***

To Mayor Bryan Paterson and Kinston City Councillors:

I have a retail business in downtown Kingston, and I want to voice my full support for a Conference Centre development. My business currently experiences significant swings based on time of year, with tourism being a key driver during the busiest times. I will welcome a balancing of that pattern, and I know that with meetings and conferences taking place more in the spring, fall, and winter periods, development of a conference centre will go a long way to helping do just that. A more balanced business flow will help me predict future growth and plan for it, including how and when I hire staff.

I also believe that a conference centre will play an important role in keeping our downtown vibrant and safe. We’re fortunate in Kingston to have one of the most intact historic downtown streetscapes in Canada, and maintaining and growing foot traffic both day and night is vital to maintaining it. Increasing the number and size of conferences coming to the city will be a huge help in this regard as conference attendees tend to stay for longer periods and they are more likely to get out to explore because they do have the time. And when they explore, they spend.

We have an opportunity with a conference centre development to engage in a significant expansion of our civic infrastructure, an expansion that will serve us well for decades to come. Kingston already has a reputation that far exceeds its size, and building a conference centre will give us the ability to bring significant high-value events to the city that will only enhance that reputation. The economic impact will be tremendous, as will the positive social impact.

I urge Council to move forward with the conference centre development as a key element of Kingston’s future.

Sincerely,