



December 22, 2016

The Honorable Board of Commissioners of Johnston County  
Johnston County Courthouse, Suite B-206  
PO Box 1049  
Smithfield, NC 27577

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation's Board of Directors to share our desire that the Public Safety Center Complex be located downtown because of the economic impact of the facility and long-term savings for the County.

As you all know, the courthouse and county government are major economic drivers for Downtown Smithfield, and many of our small business owners are reliant on County and courthouse employees and visitors for sustainability. According to Donovan Rypkema, principal of Place Economics, a Washington, D.C.-based consulting firm, "A downtown worker will spend between \$2,500 and \$3,500 a year in the downtown economy."

Perhaps equally important to the economic benefit to existing small businesses, the central location of the County's institutional leadership provides for easy and cost-effective collaboration, which benefits the entire county. By locating the Public Safety Center Complex in close proximity to the courthouse, there would be substantial savings in ongoing operational expenses relative to the expected expenses associated with the Buffalo Road site. For these reasons, the DSDC asks that the Commissioners consider locating the Public Safety Center Complex in Downtown Smithfield, and has identified two sites on the enclosed map for your consideration.

The first location, the block bound by Johnston, Church, Second, and Third streets, includes land currently owned by the County. There are six other properties located within this block, including two that are currently for sale. The operation of the jail and courthouse at one location, with the addition of a skybridge or tunnel across Johnston Street connecting the courthouse with the Public Safety Center Complex, would eliminate

the need to transport detainees and the duplication of resources and staff at the Buffalo Road site, reducing the County's ongoing costs.

The second location we pose for consideration is the vacant land between Market and Church streets and Fifth Street and US 301/Bright Leaf Boulevard. Just blocks from the courthouse, the location of the Public Safety Center Complex on this site would also offer savings on the expense of transporting detainees, while having a minimal impact on surrounding property and business owners.

We believe that the facility could be creatively designed in such a way to provide parking, the square footage required for the jail and additional county offices, and recreational space, and still be complementary to the surrounding building styles in Downtown Smithfield. These sites are comparable in size to the 4.05-acre block in Downtown Raleigh that houses Wake County's John H. Baker, Jr. Public Safety Center, which has a capacity of 480, as well as Emergency Medical Services, Fire/Rescue, the City-County Bureau of Identification and the Wake County Sheriff's Office.

The DSDC firmly believes that there are options to accommodate the County's needs in Downtown Smithfield, and would like to work with the County Commissioners to retain the County's institutional leadership downtown and spend taxpayer funds in the most responsible way possible. I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss those possibilities with you.

Sincerely,

Sarah Edwards  
Executive Director

Enclosure: Map of Proposed Sites

cc: Rick Hester, Johnston County Manager  
Chris Johnson, Johnston County Economic Development Director  
The Honorable Andy Moore, Mayor of Smithfield  
Smithfield Town Council  
Michael Scott, Smithfield Town Manager  
Rick Childrey, Smithfield-Selma Chamber of Commerce President  
Smithfield-Selma Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors  
Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation Board of Directors