

**MINORITY REPORT**  
**Docking State Office Building**  
October 19, 2021

We agree with the decision of the committee that the new laboratory for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) can be appropriately sited at the Kansas Neurological Institute.

We object to the proposal adopted by a vote of 6-4 by the committee to tear down a minimum of nine occupiable floors in the Docking State Office Building and to only provide meeting and event space. After more than two years of study and public meetings, the motion was the first to limit the scope in this way.

**We object to the idea that the renovated building should only house event and meeting spaces.**

The vision for the future of the Capitol Complex presented to the Joint Committee on State Building Construction (JCSBC) by the Department of Administration included the provision of modern, secure, and energy-efficient office space for state agencies. The program for the Docking Building developed by the planning team and presented to members of the JCSBC on January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 included a conference/training center along with office space, a “grab and go” food venue, interactive state exhibits, and outdoor event space. The vision statement noted that nearly one-third of state agencies are split between multiple physical locations within Topeka; cabinet agencies have an average of five separate locations.

There was no supporting evidence for the need for more meeting/event space than called for in the program; it was not clear on what basis the suggestion was made. Meeting and event space used by the legislature and our constituents would not be year-round. Space for new employee training would be far more convenient if it were located adjacent to a state agency’s office. It was not demonstrated that we have an abundance of office space. A spur-of-the-moment decision to change the programming of the Docking building without adequate data and vetting is likely to result in an expensive mistake.

No reference was made in the motion for housing the Capitol Police in the building.

**We suggest that, if no additional state-owned office space is needed, the state should keep and maintain its most desirable and efficient office space and sell or demolish less efficient and less useful space.**

The Docking State Office Building is the largest state office building in Topeka and is part of the Capitol Complex. It is the Department of Administration’s best opportunity to centralize and co-locate agencies.

Docking is a fully-concrete-encased steel building and is extremely robust. This building has been well-studied and its structure is shown to be in remarkably good condition. Studies done by HTK, McCownGordon Construction, and Clark|Huesemann all have slightly different details but they ALL support the feasibility of a full renovation.

The renovated building would be energy efficient. The *DOCKING BUILDING STUDY UPDATE 2021 09 01* notes that “The upgrades to the building infrastructure significantly improve energy performance, capitalizing on the existing central plant, and saving energy and operational costs into the future. The renovated building’s energy performance would rank within the top 3% of similar buildings that are located within the Topeka area (p1 of the Executive Summary).

In a 2011 article published in *Kansas Preservation*, architect Dave Griffin states that Docking “was an important building, at the time, and the quality of materials exemplifies this importance.” These materials

included Vermont Greenstone, a metamorphic rock harder than marble, cut limestone, and polished marble, with these materials being “handsome, durable, and easily maintained”.

Before demolishing the office floors in Docking, comparisons should be made with the office space in the other 23 state-owned buildings in Topeka.

**The building is an investment that was made by the taxpayers of Kansas.**

Over two million dollars were wasted on the ill-conceived proposal to replace the power plant systems in 2016. Why add to that waste by ignoring all the studies that have been done to date? Why begin again to come up with plans and a feasibility study for something we are not sure that we even need?

The Docking State Office Building has been one of the most efficient state-owned buildings, providing over sixty years of quality service to Kansas. The cost comparisons made it clear that a fully-renovated building would cost less per square foot than the alternative to remove nine of the floors and build back three. There are NO cost estimates for the additional demolition.

Federal funds may be available for renovation, and perhaps more likely to be obtained for office rather than event space. If they are not granted, keeping four floors as “shell space” and eliminating the pedestrian bridge to the parking lot would bring the cost estimates below the \$120 million identified for bonding.

The Docking State Office Building is treasured as an example of mid-century modern architecture. It is considered to be historic and was nominated by the Topeka Landmarks Commission to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Let's not send nine stories of sound building materials to the landfill. Let's work to conserve, not waste, additional tax-payer dollars.

  
Senator Marci Francisco

  
Representative Jarrod Ousley

Electronic Attachments:

[Testimony from the Dept. of Administration to the Joint Committee on State Building Construction](#)

[Statement of the Program from DOCKING BUILDING STUDY UPDATE 2021 09 01 \(p 28, 29\)](#)

[The Docking State Office Building, Revisiting the Energy Performance of a Modern Glass Tower](#)

[Nomination of the Docking State Office Building to the National Register of Historic Places](#)

[Testimony in support of Option A](#)