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Mayor John Hamilton Urges Support of Convention Center Expansion

Tonight Mayor John Hamilton will ask the Bloomington Common Council to join him in support of a 1% Food and Beverage Tax on prepared foods to fund the expansion of the Monroe County Convention Center located in downtown Bloomington.

"Time is of the essence on this project. With the changed dynamics that I-69 brings, we must protect the vitality of our downtown and make sure this much needed Convention Center expansion happens where it will best enhance, compliment and support our existing amenities and be the most attractive product possible for prospective convention business. I strongly believe that the heart of our vibrant downtown is both where convention visitors want to be and where it is in the best interest of our community for them to be. As a community we should be highly motivated to continue to build on the kind of city center that attracts visitors from far and wide.

We have demand, we have desirable land, we have basic infrastructure, we have studies that prove the need for the facility. Now is the time to join the 27 other Indiana communities that use this funding tool and stand with our County elected officials to support the missing piece – a Food and Beverage Tax. I have said for years that this tax is the support we need to turn this vital economic development project – which would generate \$17 million annually – into a reality in our downtown. I'm asking the City Council to pledge its portion of a food and beverage tax, if enacted, toward the construction and operation of an expanded Convention Center.

When done well, Convention Centers are hubs within a community. They are civic and architectural landmarks. They generate jobs, attract visitors, support nearby enterprises and activate the areas in which they are located. They are where many collective memories in a community are made. I suggest that Bloomington and Monroe County not only pursue this Convention Center expansion, but pursue a convention center that will make this community proud for decades to come."

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