

January 8, 2010

Steve Whittmann
Chair of the Downtown Commission

Dear Mr. Whittman:

The Downtown Residents' Association of Columbus (DRAC) is excited to see construction of the new hotel near the convention center. However, DRAC is concerned about the impact of the proposed skywalk.

The vibrancy of any area comes from its' people. The hotel will draw more people to downtown, but the impact of these visitors to downtown will be diminished. Visitors who are always in a structure and never set foot on downtown sidewalks, will impact businesses along High Street negatively. If visitors do not walk by, businesses cannot survive. Taking visitors off the street will also reduce the potential number of eyes and ears on the sidewalks, thus reducing the potential to further reduce crime or improve perceptions of safety.

Other solutions are available if there are concerns about visitors safely moving between the hotel and convention center. A signalized intersection at Vine Street, near the north end of the new hotel, already exists. The south end of the new hotel will line up near the convention center drop-off. This could become a new signalized intersection which would also help cars and buses get back onto High Street safely. The City could also look at other traffic calming measures.

DRAC welcomes the new hotel and the activity that it will bring, but not at the expense of the Downtown businesses that have been the backbone of our City.

Sincerely,



Donna Carstens
President Downtown Residents' Association of Columbus