



October 6, 2016

Dear Economic Development Commission Members:

As you may be aware Franklin Heritage, Inc. has been around since 1983, and is one of the oldest Historic Preservation groups in Indiana. FHI has been fortunate to have been a recipient of EDC funds in the past years for which we are grateful. Over these many years we have witnessed Franklin's gradual revitalization of the downtown core.

Having purchased the historic Artcraft Theatre in April of 2004, one of the largest underutilized buildings at that time, we have seen first-hand how the restoration of one historic structure can have a springboard effect on other neighboring buildings. The foot traffic generated from a fully operating theatre helped bring more potential customers to the downtown. These efforts combined with our non-profit partners Discover Downtown Franklin, the Franklin Chamber of Commerce, the Franklin Development Corporation and The Johnson County Museum of History have helped to create vibrant shops, unique eateries and a backdrop for a variety of festivals, which in turn have led to the City of Franklin to become the destination place it now is.

Our once quiet city has now become the model for how to bring dormant downtowns back to life. As we continue to add pieces to this urban renaissance, we feel we are missing an opportunity for another kind of economic engine in shared work spaces. These are places where a small farmer's market vendor may turn into a shop owner with their own bricks and mortar storefront in one of our many restored buildings. These Co-working facilities bring their own kind of energized buzz and help spur on creativity within the building. FHI fully supports the idea of using this year's EDC funding to bring a co-working space to life in downtown Franklin.

Sincerely,

Rob Shilts  
Executive Director  
Franklin Heritage, Inc. and  
The Historic Artcraft Theatre