



FAYETTE ALLIANCE

603 W. Short Street
Lexington, Kentucky 40508
info@fayettealliance.com
fayettealliance.com

April 11, 2017

Dear Vice Mayor Kay and Council Members,

Please accept this letter on behalf of the Fayette Alliance with respect to the Public Infrastructure Program (PIP).

Founded in 2006, the Fayette Alliance is a coalition of citizens dedicated to achieving sustainable growth in Lexington-Fayette County through land use advocacy, education and promotion. The Fayette Alliance believes that preserving our unique and productive Bluegrass farmland, advancing innovative development and improving our infrastructure are essential to our collective success in Lexington.

In furtherance of this mission, the Fayette Alliance supports the Ordinance creating the PIP and respectfully requests consideration and adoption of our recommendations outlined below.

Infill and redevelopment (I/R) has long been Lexington's primary growth strategy. I/R is considered a smart,¹ fiscally responsible, and sustainable growth strategy for many reasons, including that it directs economic investment into established communities and commercial centers—improving and repairing what we've already built.²

While the benefits of I/R are clear, it can also be difficult and costly to developers because of the unique challenges associated with I/R. In 2000, the LFUCG Infill and Redevelopment Steering Committee was formed to guide policy and to create an infill and

¹ According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, "smart growth" "covers a range of development and conservation strategies that help protect our health and natural environment and make our communities more attractive, economically stronger, and more socially diverse." <https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/about-smart-growth>.

² Other benefits of this growth strategy include: Conserving resources by reinvesting in existing infrastructure and rehabilitating historic buildings; promoting walkable neighborhoods near necessities and amenities thereby making multi-modal transportation options more feasible; promoting a diversity of housing types thereby meeting the needs of all citizens; creating economically competitive communities that create business opportunities and strengthen the local tax base. <https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/about-smart-growth>.

Board of Directors

Eunice A. Beatty, Ph.D.
James G. Bell
Price Bell, Jr.
Sandra Noble Canon
Todd Clark
Kip Cornett
Susan Enlow
Greg Goodman
Gay Haggin VanMeter
Stan Harvey
Barry Holmes
Matt Hovekamp
Michael Karpf, M.D.
Chauncey Morris
John Phillips
Tom Poskin
Walt Robertson
Don Robinson
Knox van Nagell
Griffin VanMeter
Holly Wiedemann
Anthony Wright

Sustainers

Josephine Abercrombie
Helen Alexander
Andover Management Group
Ann Bakhaus
Ian Banwell
Antony & Angela Beck
Gary Bisantz
Alex Campbell
Darley
Fayette Co. Farm Bureau
David & Philippa Fogg
Greg Goodman
Dave Harper
John Hendrickson
Larry & Marsha Hester
Watts & Sally Humphrey
Bill Justice
Keeneland Association
KTOB
Murray & Teri Kessler
Lane's End Farm
Langley Properties Co.
Lisa Lourie
Deirdre Lyons
Richard & Sue Ann Masson
Joe & Jacqueline Murphy
Don Robinson
Dr. Kim & Rob Rosenstein
Bill Shively
Tom VanMeter
Derek Vaughan
Fra Vaughan
Brian & Lori Wood
Misdee Wrigley Miller
Chris & Josefina Young

Executive Director

Susan B. Speckert, J.D.



redevelopment program.³ Since its creation, the Steering Committee has addressed multiple issues and developed numerous revisions to the Zoning Ordinance.

One of the long-standing recommendations of the Steering Committee is the creation of an incentive program to encourage appropriate infill and redevelopment. Incentives are also a primary recommendation of the 2013 Comprehensive Plan,⁴ as well as the 2014 Economic Development Land Committee convened by Commissioner of Planning, Preservation and Development Derek Paulsen.

In order to preserve and improve our quality of life and make our city work for all our citizens, we must facilitate appropriate infill and redevelopment. Doing so makes it easier and more likely that blighted, underutilized and vacant land will be reclaimed for commercial, residential and industrial uses—improving public safety and real estate values in our city, while also providing for more affordable housing and a variety of economic development opportunities.

We applaud the administration and Commissioner Paulsen for proposing the PIP and addressing a long-standing need. The purpose of the PIP is “attracting innovative businesses, promoting the expansion of existing businesses and attracting innovative residential or infill projects within the urban core area.”⁵ If properly administered, the PIP can leverage private investment to create jobs, increase affordable housing and provide much needed improvements to neglected areas of our community--a win all around for our community and quality of life for all our citizens.

Therefore, Fayette Alliance supports the Ordinance to create the PIP. In addition, we respectfully make the following recommendations to ensure the success of the program:

1. Objective policies and criteria by which the Board will award funds and administer the PIP should be expressly adopted. Public monies will support the program. To ensure transparency and objectivity, the taxpayer must be informed of the criteria used to rank and prioritize funding proposals.
2. The PIP should include a transparent, open process by which funding priorities are identified on a regular basis. Because our community needs change over time, some flexibility is appropriate. However, community members should have an opportunity to participate in an open process to determine funding priorities.

³ The Mission of the Infill and Redevelopment Steering Committee is “to recognize and improve an effective, efficient, and rational process that allows the Infill and Redevelopment Program to address the outstanding infill and redevelopment challenges facing our community...”

⁴ See LFUCG 2013 Comprehensive Plan, Implementation no. 7, pg. 119.

⁵ Ordinance No. ____ -2017, Draft 03-22-17, § 3.

3. The Board should include qualified representatives from key community stakeholder organizations, including neighborhood representatives.
4. The Board should include representatives from the private sector with strong credentials in the financing, construction, and real estate sectors relevant to the PIP. Conflicts of interest must be avoided, but having input from experienced individuals will strengthen the program.
5. The PIP criteria should require context-sensitive projects that respect the character of the surrounding area and that promote sustainability in both form and function. The PIP should advance exemplary design and development that create value for the entire community.
6. The PIP's criteria should only support projects with evidence of solid financing. Projects that leverage additional monies from state and/or federal sources should be given priority. Projects that have been vetted and approved by other regulatory bodies will reduce risk and increase the success of the PIP.

The PIP has the potential to stimulate much needed infill and redevelopment projects to encourage investment and improvement of our urban areas. If properly administered, the PIP is an essential and exciting opportunity for our community that affirms our commitment to innovative land-use policy. With strong leadership and clear objectives, the PIP will move us closer to sustainably growing our city and promoting our farms.

Therefore, Fayette Alliance supports the Public Infrastructure Program, and respectfully requests that you adopt our recommendations moving forward.

Thank you for your consideration and commitment to our community.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan B. Speckert". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Susan B. Speckert, J.D.
Executive Director

cc: Honorable Jim Gray, Mayor
Derek Paulsen, Commissioner of Planning, Preservation & Development