



## The Fayette Alliance

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[www.fayettealliance.com](http://www.fayettealliance.com)

*“Planning Our World-Class City, Preserving Our World-Class Landscape”*

June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012

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Knox van Nagell, J.D.

Open Spaces Sacred Places  
TKF Foundation  
410 Severn Avenue., Suite 216  
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In Re: Creative Pathway & Portal at The University of Kentucky

To whom it may concern,

My name is Knox van Nagell, and I am writing this letter on behalf of The Fayette Alliance.

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.

As the voice for sustainable growth, 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.

Through our efforts and beyond, Lexington can become the model for sustainable growth and development, by connecting and balancing its vibrant city with its unique and productive Bluegrass farmland.

In furtherance of this mission, The Fayette Alliance supports the University of Kentucky Department of Landscape Architecture's \$4 million grant proposal for the "Creative Pathway and Portal" project.

If awarded the grant, UK will

*[C]ombine its faculty and research expertise with the design excellence of two nationally recognized landscape architecture firms, and individual perspectives of students, residents, and community leaders to create a "Creative Pathway and Portal" for campus. The project will adaptively reuse an abandoned railroad spur, restoring its transportation use to connect campus with the city of Lexington, while renewing its brown and barren soil to support native plants and public art.*

*Specifically, the proposed site is on University-owned portions of the former Norfolk Southern railroad spur that connects Scott to Boliver Streets in Lexington Kentucky. This linear site runs approximately 800 feet, crossing a former commercial/industrial area that once served as a center of tobacco markets for the central Bluegrass Region. As such, it holds a particular historic, economic, and cultural interest to the community.*

*Over the last twenty years, the areas immediately adjacent to this area have been transformed through substantial private investment in residential neighborhoods containing both student apartments and high-end condominiums. The site includes the former Reynolds Tobacco Warehouse complex, currently used as storage, and the present home of the UK Art Department.*

*In years past, this area of campus has been seen as marginal to the University. The situation will change radically in the coming years with the construction of the “Newtown Pike Extension” that will directly connect this area to two interstate corridors (I-75, I-64)—transforming it from a neglected “backdoor” to a new “front door” to main campus. Current campus plans call for the area’s transition through intensive development for academic purposes. These plans are quickly coming to fruition as UK recently announced plans to purchase and renovate a neighboring warehouse into academic space for the Department of Art.*

*This project will provide the center of Lexington with an open, urban landscape that, through the use of sustainable landscape practices, will promote physical and spiritual health through walking and meditation...having a significant social and environmental impact on the University of Kentucky and the city of Lexington.<sup>1</sup>*

The Fayette Alliance supports this application.

Lexington-Fayette County has a remarkable opportunity to become a model for sustainable growth, by innovatively developing roughly twelve thousand acres of vacant and underutilized property inside its city limits—and by doing so, removing the need to “sprawl-out” into its acclaimed and endangered Bluegrass farmland. Design, density, multi-modal transportation, greenspace and parks, and infrastructural efficiency are cornerstones of this strategy, and the “Creative Pathway and Portal” project is a transformational step in the right direction.

By creating a meaningful “town-gown” connection, the “Creative Pathway and Portal” can leverage the very best of what the University of Kentucky and the city of Lexington have to offer—and establish a needed stage for social, artistic, and environmental expression in an otherwise neglected area of our urban core.

The U.K. Creative Pathway and Portal Project is a remarkable opportunity for the University, the city of Lexington, and the Bluegrass Region. By using public-private partnerships, this community initiative can happen even in today’s weakened economic climate—and this is a very good thing.

Thank you for your consideration and review of our letter. We very much appreciate TKF Foundation’s dedication to, and leadership in the sustainability movement. Our economy, environment, and quality of life stand to benefit immensely.

All my best-

Knox van Nagell, J.D.

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<sup>1</sup> 2012 University of Kentucky OSSP Grant Proposal, pgs. 2-7.