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Executive Director

Knox van Nagell, JD.

The Honorable Jim Gray, Mayor
Government Center
200 East Main Street
Lexington, KY 40507

May 22nd, 2015

Dear Mayor Gray,

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

Through our land-use advocacy efforts at government and beyond, Lexington can become the model for sustainable growth, by connecting and balancing its vibrant city with its unique and productive Bluegrass farmland.

In furtherance of this mission, Fayette Alliance supports LFUCG's Federal TIGER grant application for the Town Branch Linear Park.

If secured, the \$13,180,620 federal grant will combine with \$10,970,000 in budgeted, local matching funds to finance \$24,150,620 in transportation infrastructure for Town Branch. This significant investment in Lexington's urban core will anchor the emerging park project, and transform how the city grows and functions into the future.

As with most American cities in the twentieth century, Lexington's growth model favored an approach where people, goods, and capital moved outward to the perimeter of the community.

This approach created new markets...but it came at a price that Lexington is addressing today.

Over time, downtown and older neighborhoods suffered from depressed property values, reduced economic activity, social disparity, and diminished quality of life. We also lost Bluegrass farmland at an alarming rate to suburban sprawl, leading to a World Monument Fund designation for Lexington and the inner Bluegrass Region in 2006. As we grew, new carbon footprint and water infrastructure challenges also surfaced throughout the community, confronting Lexington in unprecedented ways.



These factors, along with the great recession, the rise of the knowledge-based economy, demographic changes, and limited natural resources require that Lexington—and cities across America—operate in a more compact, efficient, and sustainable way.

Town Branch will play critical role in this movement. The park will provide a well-programmed and much-needed greenspace that will make downtown a more attractive place to live, work, and invest—drawing market forces inward to the core of our city, and alleviating development pressure from our signature rural landscape.

It will leverage the best of what the Bluegrass has to offer, by seismically reinforcing urban infill redevelopment, and in turn farmland preservation efforts in Lexington-Fayette County.

This hand-in-glove approach will result in the creation of a world-class city in a world-class landscape...forever changing the conversation in Lexington, and unlocking its economic development and quality of life potential in innumerable ways.

Lexington is not reinventing the wheel, and the transformative power of park and trail facilities has happened across the U.S. For example, in 2013, Indianapolis built a \$63 million, eight-mile bike path connecting cultural districts, neighborhoods, and parks—with an economic impact of \$864,599,000.

While Town Branch has promise, much work must be done...from building private sector support and implementing a strategic plan, to constructing and operating a feasible, first component of the linear park system. In particular, the initial phase of Town Branch is estimated to cost \$75 million, of which \$25 million is transportation infrastructure:

\$25 million: Transportation Infrastructure

\$30million: New Park or Parks, and Improvements to Existing Parks

\$8million: Initial Decade of Operations

\$12million: Operating Endowment (generates \$500k/annum)

***Please see the enclosed strategic plan for additional details.**

This is a big deal and a historic challenge for Lexington. With pragmatism and community buy-in, it can be done. Securing a TIGER grant is a fundamental step in making the Town Branch Commons a reality, and we respectfully request and urge its approval.

Thank you for your consideration of our position, and your leadership as we sustainably grow our city and promote our farms in Lexington-Fayette County.

All my best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Knox van Nagell". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Knox van Nagell, J.D.