



FAYETTE ALLIANCE

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Dear Chairman and Planning Commission Members,

Please accept this letter on behalf of the Fayette Alliance with respect to SRA 2019-1: Amendment to Article 6: Sidewalks and Share-Use Paths (“SRA 2019-1”).

Founded in 2006, Fayette Alliance is a coalition of citizens dedicated to achieving sustainable growth in Lexington-Fayette County through land use advocacy, education, and research. We believe that preserving our unique and productive Bluegrass farmland, advancing smart growth, innovative development and improving our infrastructure are all essential to Lexington’s continued success.

In furtherance of this mission, we respectfully submit the following with regard to our support for SRA 2019-1.

Well planned infrastructure strengthens communities, boosts economies, expands opportunity and promotes equitable development. Fayette Alliance commends the Planning Staff for working on updates to our ordinances that help make our community for people and not just for automobiles. While Imagine Lexington states our city’s vision for sustainable development, the amendments brought forward by Planning Staff lay out the ways we will actually achieve this vision and this work is critical.

Diversifying transit opportunities and making communities more pedestrian friendly has been shown to reap benefits in many areas; economic development, quality of life, accessibility and more. Research indicates that projects in walkable neighborhoods command price premiums and can earn developers and investors a higher return on investment, as they are more appealing to pedestrians and can also benefit local businesses by attracting more customers.¹ Because many prefer to live, work and shop in walkable places with good transit access, a correlation between transit and property values has been shown and with demographics continuing to change, is even more robust.² Focusing on improvements and enhancements to streetscape and infrastructure projects which improve cycling and walking conditions increases local economic activity³ and improves quality of life for all citizens. As businesses and individuals’ preferences for

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¹ United States Environmental Protection Agency, “Smart Growth and Economic Success: Benefits for Real Estate Developers, Investors, Businesses and Local Governments”, December 2012, Id., pg. 4.

² Id. at pg. 11.

³ Victoria Transport Policy Institute, “Economic Value of Walkability,” July 24, 2018, Id., pg 15.

accessibility have been shifting, companies are now frequently searching for locations with access to amenities and diverse transit, and demographic trends are driving increasing preference for “more compact, diverse and walkable development”.⁴ Improved design, planning and building of streets and public spaces are crucial to provide citizens with what they desire from their city, and the proposed amendment is an example of how our Planning Staff is diligently working toward those goals that our community outlined in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan.

By updating our ordinance to require appropriate bicycle facilities and shared use paths in the right of way and increasing the required sidewalk width, our city, at the very least, becomes compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet’s Design Guidelines and the US Access Board’s standards for public right-of-way access. Luckily for Lexington, these seemingly small changes can have significant positive impacts; providing connectivity and equity in our transportation network, making our roadways and urban development safer and more accessible for more people and improving our overall quality of life as citizens. Lexington residents and visitors alike will benefit from these amendments.

The amendments contemplated, on their face, are consistent with Theme D, Goal # 1 of Imagine Lexington; working to achieve an effective and comprehensive transportation system, diversifying transit options and prioritizing pedestrian-first design while also accommodating the needs of other vehicles. Our City’s work towards implementation of Imagine Lexington is evident in these types of changes and we applaud Planning Staff for their hard work in making this vision a reality.

Fayette Alliance appreciates the Planning Staff’s and Planning Commission’s leadership and foresight in moving forward with the proposed amendments. We respectfully recommend the approval of the same for the betterment of our community.

I know how committed each of you are to Lexington. On behalf of the Fayette Alliance, I sincerely thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Brittany M. Roethemeier, J.D.
Executive Director

⁴ Id. “Smart Growth and Economic Success...” at pg. 16.