



**FAYETTE ALLIANCE**  
GROWING OUR CITY, PROMOTING OUR FARMS

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LFUCG Urban County Council, Planning Committee  
Government Center  
200 East Main Street  
Lexington, KY 40507

November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013

**Board Members**

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Price Bell, Jr.  
Todd Clark  
Kip Cornett  
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**Community Partners**

Bluegrass Conservancy  
Dudley's on Short  
FCNC  
Fayette Co. Farm Bureau  
KY Horse Park  
KTA

**Sustainers**

Andover Mgmt Group  
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Helen Alexander  
Ian Banwell  
Antony Beck  
Gary Biszantz  
Darley  
Fayette Co. Farm Bureau  
David & Philippa Fogg  
Greg Goodman  
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John Hendrickson  
Sally Humphrey  
Keeneland Association  
KTA  
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Lane's End Farm  
Langley Properties Co.  
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Tom VanMeter  
Derek Vaughan  
Fra Vaughan  
Brian & Lori Wood  
Misdee Wrigley Miller

**Executive Director**

Knox van Nagell, J.D.

Dear Chairman Farmer and Council members,

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.

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 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, the Fayette Alliance supports the goals and principles of the proposed Design Excellence initiative for downtown Lexington, and we would like to commend the work of the Downtown Development Authority, Division of Planning, and Design Excellence Taskforce—of which we have been a member since the beginning.

However, there are large, related issues that need to be resolved prior to formally initiating the Design Excellence program, including giving clarity to the question of building demolition in the Design Excellence District, advancing a feasible and effective development incentives package for infill projects, and determining how the Design Excellence guidelines will interact with ongoing parking, traffic, and public space planning efforts in downtown Lexington.

To move Design Excellence forward without resolving these issues, is to create an environment that will demand improved development quality—and added expense—without the needed regulatory clarity, financial programs, or collaboration with our traffic, parking, and public space master planning to make it a success.

It's akin to setting the rules of tennis, and not giving the players the racquets or net to actually play the game.

We ask you to slow down the Design Excellence initiative, and harness its momentum to complete needed work on the aforementioned issues before it is rolled out to Council and the Planning Commission for implementation. To move forward now before these issues are resolved, you run the risk of losing key political support for this very important effort.



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Now is the time, as we are on brink of a new budget planning process for FY 2015. Over the next three months, this government along with community stakeholders, could collaborate on researching and reporting clear demolition standards for the Design Excellence District, a feasible incentives program, and ways to connect the Design Excellence program with ongoing traffic, parking, and public space initiatives. DDA along could serve as the nerve center of such efforts.

If done right, the Design Excellence proposal, along with these related programs can be a template for facilitating well-designed infill development, not only for downtown, but also for other parts of the Lexington. A collaborative—not a siloed— approach is essential for success. This is a very big deal for the entire city.

To do otherwise, we may frustrate, instead of encourage needed development in our urban core. And this Fayette Alliance cannot support.

On the heels of the 2013 Comprehensive Plan Update and recent political polls, it's clear that Lexingtonians are committed to responsibly growing up, not out...and government must set the regulatory stage to make it easier—not harder—for the private market to accomplish this vision.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns, and we stand ready to help this most important initiative moving forward.

All my best,

Knox van Nagell, J.D.

Cc: Dr. Derek Paulsen, Planning Commissioner; Mr. Jeff Fugate, DDA