



Lexington Fayette County Health Department

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April 26, 2016

The Honorable Jim Gray, Mayor
Lexington Fayette Urban County Government
Office of the Mayor
200 E. Main Street
Lexington, KY 40507

Dear Mayor Gray:

This is to support the Town Branch Commons Corridor project because it offers real public health benefits in addition to its positive impact on improved transportation and ease of getting around Lexington. Others can comment more effectively than I can on the environmental, economic, and recreation benefits so I will limit my comments to the public health benefits of the project.

This department convened a broad based community group in 2011 to develop a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) based on several health assessments by the health department and others. After several discussions the CHIP team selected obesity, lack of jobs, and safe neighborhoods as their long range objectives. This project has elements that apply to each of these initiatives. Obesity is a condition that impacts people and the economy and is a measure where Lexington ranks below the national average in the recent County Health Survey report. The parks, the walk ways, the ease of moving about on foot and the overall benefit of the project can only increase the probability that people will walk and play in the area and this increased activity will help us address obesity as a health risk in Lexington.

One has to assume that such outdoor activity will attract businesses similar to those along the River Walk in San Antonio and the mall in Washington, DC. The jobs that support those businesses are frequently the kind that otherwise unemployed people can fill. From a public health perspective, there is good data to show that an adequate income is essential if a family is to have a healthy life style. The project will contribute to a healthy community through job growth.

The CHIP team also selected safe neighborhoods as a health objective because safe neighborhoods increase the chances that children will play outside and reduce the chances that they will be harmed by risky behaviors being exhibited by others. This project emphasizes increased safety for those using the developed space and will help Lexington reduce another of its below national health averages—premature death.

Easier access to public transportation will help patients who use the bus service to reach the health department clinics and will increase participation in the many health education and clinical services available from the health department.

Finally let me add that the Lexington-Fayette County Health Department welcomes opportunities to support ideas like this and to participate in them as they develop and become active. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this worthwhile project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Julie Wrenn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Acting-Commissioner of Health

Cc: Paula Anderson, Board Chair
Lexington-Fayette County Board of Health