



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

April 8, 2016

The Honorable Jim Gray, Mayor
Office of the Mayor
200 E. Main St.
Lexington, KY 40507

Dear Mayor Gray,

Families, fitness, social responsibility – those are the watchwords for the YMCA of Central Kentucky. And nowhere are those priorities more apparent than our High Street YMCA, which is located in the heart of downtown Lexington.

We serve those who work and live in the city. And at this downtown location, we provide temporary shelter for people in need. We strive every day to advance the health of Lexington residents through fitness, diabetes classes and other offerings.

We are excited to support the Town Branch Commons Corridor project – particularly the improvements to the Transit Center area – because it will further our efforts to serve people at all socioeconomic levels.

As neighbors, we know the Town Branch Commons Corridor project will enhance and connect people to other downtown amenities, jobs and social services. It will remove barriers to public transportation and encourage more people to walk and bike.

We must reverse the unhealthy state of the Commonwealth, which ranks near the top in smoking, obesity, diabetes and cancer. Too many of those illnesses can be traced back to lifestyles and behavior. The Y is working with individuals and families to develop healthy lifestyles while they are in our facilities and as they go about their daily lives. But people need additional opportunities to incorporate exercise into their daily routines.

Because a lack of physical activity is one of the most important indicators for a host of health problems, including obesity, linear parks that connect



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neighborhoods and provide opportunities for walking, running and biking have potential to significantly improve the health of residents.

A 2014 UCLA study found that linear recreational/commuting pathways, especially around water, appeared to have an impact on public health, specifically citing one study that found that "every \$1 investment in trails for physical activity led to \$2.94 in direct medical benefit."

An investment from the city and a TIGER grant will be an important step to transforming lives through healthier living and connectedness to community, jobs and downtown amenities.

Sincerely,

David Martorano
President & CEO