



April 10, 2017

Dear Mayor Soden and City Commissioners:

I am writing on behalf of the Lawrence LiveWell Healthy Built Environment Work Group to express our support for capital improvement projects that address our community's needs for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. We encourage you to make Lawrence citizens who rely on sidewalks and trails for transportation and recreation a priority during the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) development process. Continued investment in these important assets for our community promote recreation, provide multi-modal transportation options, and capitalize on economic development opportunities.

The Healthy Built Environment Work Group promotes active lifestyles in Lawrence and Douglas County by working with policymakers to increase and improve trails, sidewalks, public transit, parks and other community resources. We are especially interested in promoting the development of safe routes for bicycling and walking to school, work, recreation sites and other destinations. This group is a coalition of community members, organizations, and associations, including such partners as Independence, Inc., Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department, Lawrence Pedestrian Coalition, Sustainability Action Network, and various stakeholders representing the school district and the University of Kansas.

As part of our 2016-2017 policy platform, our work group is focused on supporting implementation of the recommendations from the 2016 Pedestrian-Bicycle Issues Task Force Report. As a coalition, *we believe it is essential to retain the \$450,000 dedicated to pedestrian and bicycle projects in the city budget last year.* Despite the statement in the April 11 Work Session memo highlighting inclusion of “funding for sidewalk/ADA improvements, bike/pedestrian improvements, neighborhood parks and trails,” it is not clear from the draft CIP that this Critical Success Factor is being addressed. The plan does include \$100,000 annually in CDBC funds for sidewalk gaps, and funding for one segment of Lawrence Loop (\$600,000), but this falls far short of the annual \$450,000 goal. *We urge the Commission to address this deficit before a final CIP is approved.*

In reviewing the draft CIP, there is no direct alignment with projects recommended by the Task Force report. At least four of those projects were submitted through this year's CIP development process. Two were listed as unfunded, and two were not even included in the documents provided for the April 11 Work Session. These projects, which are supported by the Healthy Built Environment Work Group include:

- Create a protected bikeway on South Massachusetts St. (from 23rd St. to South Park)
- Develop a bicycle boulevard on 13th St. from Massachusetts St. to Haskell Ave. (continuation to Oak Hill Ave. has been proposed)
- Install a shared-use path on the north side of 6th St. between Monterey Way and Wisconsin St.
- Install sidewalks on Naismith Dr. from 19th to 23rd St. (a shared-use path has been proposed)

In addition to these projects, we continue to support the completion of the Lawrence Loop, the 22-mile loop of shared-use path that nearly encircles the city. While we appreciate inclusion of the Downtown Section of the Loop, we are hopeful that additional funding will be included so our community can take important steps toward completing this loop and building on this unique recreational, cultural, and environmental resource. As the MPO is just beginning with an alignment study for two of the remaining segments, which will better position the city when applying for grant funds, it will be important to dedicate funding in future years that can be leveraged as a grant match or be invested directly into Loop segments.

Thank you for considering these projects for the 2018-2022 Capital Improvement Plan. Our bicycle and pedestrian pathways are essential to the character of our neighborhoods, the accessibility and inclusiveness of our community, and the healthy and active lifestyles of our citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Jeffrey R. Severin', is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Jeffrey R. Severin, Chair
LiveWell Healthy Built Environment Work Group