



OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

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NEWS RELEASE

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Jackson County, KCATA Agree to Funding Deal to Purchase Rock Island Corridor

Jackson County nears deal with Union Pacific

SEPTEMBER 30, 2015 (KANSAS CITY, MO) – Jackson County Executive Mike Sanders and Kansas City Area Transportation Authority President and CEO Joe Reardon announced a cooperative agreement today that will provide the financing necessary for the future acquisition of the 17.7 miles of the Rock Island Corridor from Union Pacific Railroad.

"This is an historic step forward for our entire community. The significance of this announcement, and its potential to shape our county's growth for generations to come, cannot be overstated," said Sanders.

Dozens of supporters attended the announcement at the Truman Sports Complex, including community leaders, proponents of walking and biking, trail enthusiasts, and transit supporters. Kansas City Mayor Sly James, Raytown Mayor Mike McDonough, and Lee's Summit Mayor Randy Rhoads, whose communities will be directly affected, attended the announcement to show their support.

"Imagine being able to leave your seat at the top of Arrowhead Stadium and get home before most cars leave the parking lot," said Sanders. "Imagine the economic development in Kansas City, Raytown and Lee's Summit spurred by trailheads and transit stops. Imagine connecting to the Katy Trail so that you can ride a bike from the Truman Sports Complex to the St. Louis Arch."

The Rock Island project has received federal support in the past, and is ready for even more. U.S. Congressman Emanuel Cleaver hopes support comes soon.

"This announcement is a major step forward for our community," said Cleaver. "This partnership shows the federal government what local communities can do with leaders like Mike Sanders and Joe Reardon. Now it is time for the federal

government to do its part and support worthy projects like the Rock Island corridor."

KCATA will provide part of the funding to acquire the corridor. The KCATA Board of Commissioners approved the cooperative agreement at a meeting shortly before the announcement.

"The opportunity to secure this invaluable corridor for public access and future transportation and development will benefit our entire region for years to come. We are excited about our partnership with Jackson County. I applaud Mike Sanders for his efforts to secure the Rock Island Corridor over the last four years without which we would not be where we are today," said Reardon

While discussions with Union Pacific continue, the parties announced that they are nearing a final agreement.

"All major issues involving the acquisition of the Rock Island corridor have been agreed to. We anticipate having a final agreement very soon" said Sanders. "In addition, \$10 million in federal funds has already been set aside to help clear the way for future construction on the trail."

"Union Pacific is proud to be a partner in this project with Jackson County," said Lindsey Douglas, Director of Public Affairs – KS & MO for Union Pacific. "We have addressed the major points related to the purchase of the Rock Island line and expect to finalize the agreement soon."

The corridor extends from the Truman Sports Complex southeast to Lee's Summit. With plans already in place to extend the Katy Trail from Windsor to Pleasant Hill, only a small gap will remain to connect the corridor with the Katy Trail.

"Connecting the Rock Island corridor to the Katy Trail will make that trail one of the longest in our country," said Sanders. "The economic impact of the Katy Trail on mid-Missouri has been immense, generating almost \$20 million annually for local economies."

Over 56,000 residents, 23,000 households and 25,000 jobs are within one mile of the Rock Island corridor.

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