

SAMPLE LETTER KANSAS CITY AREA LEVEE DISTRICTS

Dear XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX,

Opening up the Missouri and Kaw Rivers to allow citizens to enjoy the rivers as historic, scenic, natural, and recreational attractions has been a goal of the region's leaders and citizens for many years.

The simplest and most inexpensive way to accomplish this is to allow walking and bicycling trails to be built in riverfront areas.

Missouri law allows and encourages levee districts to work together with trail building organizations to develop, build, and maintain bikeways and bike trails. Missouri Code Chapter 246 (Provisions Relating to All Drainage and Levee Districts) Section 283 states:

Any district formed pursuant to the laws of this state shall have authority to cooperate with other entities, public and private, in the development of bikeways and bike trails . . .

I understand and acknowledge that there are financial and engineering challenges to building trails on and near levee areas. However, levee districts in areas like Council Bluffs, Iowa, Salina, Kansas, Louisville, Kentucky, and St. Louis, Missouri have been able to deal with these problems successfully. I hope that you will work with trail building organizations and trail advocates in the Kansas City area so that we, too, can successfully overcome these problems.

Creating a riverfront trails system in the Kansas City area will have these benefits for levees and the areas protected by them:

- Creating levee trails makes the riverfront areas more attractive to potential residents, employees, and employers. This helps spur development and economic activity, making these areas more productive and sustainable and improving the levee district's ability to collect the drainage and levee taxes needed to maintain the levees.
- Allowing trails to be built on and near levees means that trail funding sources can be used to help mitigate existing problems where trails are built--for instance to take measures to solve erosion problems in areas where trails are built.
- Public use of the riverfront areas will build public support for the large amounts of federal funding that will be needed to improve the levees and protect vulnerable riverfront areas. The networks of contacts and support you will build in working with cities, counties, metropolitan planning organizations, and community groups in building trails will also serve you well in building the political support needed to secure federal funding for levee improvement.

I urge and encourage XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX to work with trail-building groups in the Kansas City area to allow trails to be built in levee areas. Creating a complete trail network is an identified regional priority that impacts health, tourism, and economic development across the entire metropolitan area. Access to levee areas and the riverfront is a key and irreplaceable aspect of the planned trail system and an important missing element in our effort to make Kansas City a truly world-class city.

Sincerely yours,

Contact information and addresses:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Kansas City District
601 E. 12th Street
Kansas City, Mo 64106

Kansas City Water Services
Frank Pogge, Director
4800 E. 63rd St.
Kansas City, MO 64130
E-mail: water@kcmo.org

Brent Hugh, Executive Director
Missouri Bicycle Federation, Inc
5916 Arlington Ave
Raytown MO 64133
Director@mobikefed.org

Mr. Leon Staab
North Kansas City Levee District
c/o Burns & McDonnell
9400 Ward Parkway
Kansas City, MO 64114

Kaw Valley Drainage District
719 Osage Avenue
Kansas City, KS 66105-2023

Fairfax Drainage District
1620 Fairfax Trfy
Kansas City, KS 66115
(913) 321-2260

