

INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT BACKGROUND

Over the past decade, the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) has been working with many local agencies and trail advocates to move our community toward a regional system of greenways and multi-use trails. MARC supported this effort to ensure that a key component of our regional system is put in place – a Kansas City Area connection to the Katy Trail.

The abandonment and public acquisition of the old Rock Island rail line was once considered the best possibility for the final leg of the Katy but a full conversion does not look promising in the near term. Interest has recently grown among varied public and private groups to identify all of the available options from the current Katy Trail alignment to our region.

The project focused on opportunities to connect the existing Katy Trail to the Kansas City area. Many local communities within the metro area, including but not limited to Lee's Summit, Jackson County, Kansas City, MO, and Pleasant Hill are actively planning and construct-

ing trails. Once a connection to the Katy Trail is determined and developed, connections into the metro area would be made in cooperation with area local governments and state government agencies.

This effort was a unique approach to finding solutions for this connection. Rather than conduct a traditional corridor study, MARC chose to bring together many interested agencies and communities in a widened study area. Each of the participants brought a distinctive knowledge of the Katy and possible routes into the Kansas City region. It was this deeper understanding of each jurisdiction that was needed. The project proceeded as a series of discussion sessions designed to gain information and momentum on possible trail solutions.

The conclusions in this report are the results of this eight month long effort. Finally, the conclusions and direction drawn from the report are constructed to move forward in similar fashion to the process itself. Participating agencies and individuals have taken ownership of the desired goals to ensure continued success.