

January 26, 2018



Agricultural Committee
Kansas Senate

Honorable Senators:

RE: Support for Flint Hills Nature Trail Transfer

The City of Ottawa is pleased to support the efforts of the Flint Hills Nature Trail to enable the clear management and growth of this valuable tourism and quality of life amenity through the transfer to the State of Kansas Wildlife & Parks Department.

Ottawa is thrilled to be the only location in Kansas with two trails intersecting, particularly as that intersection occurs in our downtown. We have supported the efforts of both the Prairie Spirit Rail Trail development and the Flint Hills Nature Trail. The City has devoted resources to both trails to improve them for the citizens of Ottawa and others from around the country. We also have developed our own trails within the community as well as on-street facilities. We believe these amenities can and do affect the health of our children and adults in both the city limits and the region. We also feel strongly that the opportunities for tourism are growing. Just this last fall we supported the Rush the Rails event as an opening celebration of the FHNT and know it can become a signature annual event.

We have always enjoyed a strong relationship with the staff of the Wildlife & Parks Department to work to maintain, improve, and even respond to issues along the trail. We know that adding the FHNT to the network has its benefits along with costs. But we also would be encouraged that the trail would be monitored and patrolled by state officers. This would ensure the economic opportunities that we see from a tourism standpoint as well as make it safe for our local users.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter of support and if we can provide additional information or support, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Skidmore".

Mike Skidmore
Mayor

Cc: Senator Tyson
Representative Finch
Representative Jones