

# LEVEE TRAIL NETWORK

## EARLY PLANNING PHASE

Engagement Summary





# 1.0 PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

The Unified Government (UG), the local sponsor for the KC Levees, is working with project sponsors and the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to raise the existing Argentine, Armourdale, and Central Industrial District (CID) levees and floodwalls to reduce flood risk to the areas. Improvements for the KC Levees project include \$453.8 million in improvements including pump stations, underseepage, and levee and floodwall raises.

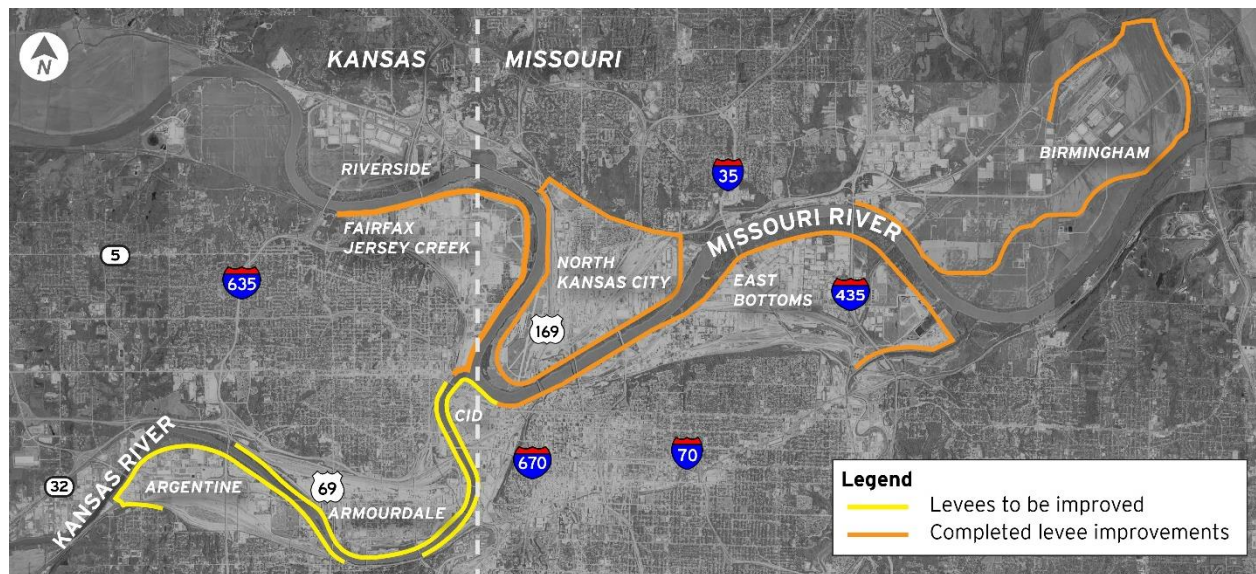
The KC Levees project presents a unique opportunity for the UG to leverage the levee investment to improve the levee trails network. This report summarizes the engagement and public feedback received in the feasibility and early planning phase for the UG Levee Trail network.

## 1.1 Project Area

The Argentine, Armourdale, and CID levees are a part of a large KC Levees Program spanning seven levee units and more than 60 miles of levees and floodwalls along the banks of the Missouri and Kansas Rivers. The total system protects 32 square mile of residential, industrial, and commercial areas offering 100,000 jobs, 7,000 structures, and \$25 billion in investments. The planned Argentine, Armourdale, and CID levees improvements follow previous investment in the other four levee units (Fairfax Jersey Creek, North Kansas City, east Bottoms, and Birmingham Levees). The planned improvements provide a unique opportunity for the UG to invest in a network of levee trails that would connect to other regional investments and recreational trails including the Riverfront Heritage Trail which connects Kaw Point, the West Bottoms, downtown Kansas City, Missouri, and Berkley Riverfront.

The planned improvements are focused along the Kansas River between the Argentine area to the CID levee which spans the state line and is the southern bank at the mouth of the Kansas River where it meets the Missouri River. A high-level project map in Figure 1 shows the full KC levees program area and the three UG levee’s planned for future improvement are highlighted in yellow.

Figure 1: KC Levees System



## 1.2 Charrette

The study team held a charrette with internal UG staff members across several departments including Parks and Recreation, Health Department, Public Works, Planning, Economic Development, and County Administration. The majority of the charrette focused on evaluating the future potential levee trail system and supporting roadway and other trail networks in the county and in adjacent municipalities.

A few additional key conclusions were made at the charrette including:

- At a minimum, the UG intends to improve the trail surface condition with a finer crushed aggregate (limestone screenings), however, the UG would prefer to invest in a hard surface trail improvement (concrete).
- Trails must be designed for all ages and must be accessible.
- The UG has struggled to use removable bollards and swing gates are preferred.
- The levee trail system’s “open hours” will match those of park hours after implementation.

## 1.3 Stakeholder and Public Feedback

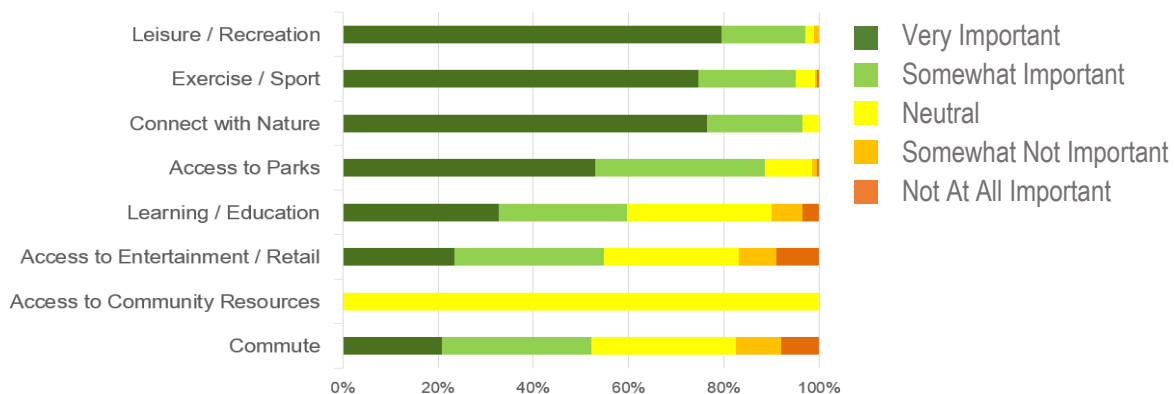
The study team held a public open house in January 2020. The purpose of the open house was to educate the public about the project and receive feedback on the proposed trail design, surface type, and amenities. The study team also developed an online survey for community members and stakeholders in tangent with the public open house. In total, the team received more than 220 responses to the survey. Below are some of the key findings and takeaways from the public survey.

### Trail Importance & Benefits

- *86 percent of survey respondents think it is very important to have a recreational trail system in the community; 10 percent think it is somewhat important.*
- *Recreation, healthy communities, and economic development were identified as the primary benefits of levee trails (followed by transportation options, tourism, and educational opportunities).*

### Trail Use

- *56 percent of respondents will use the trail for biking*
- *37 percent of respondents will use the trail for walking/running*



## Trail Access

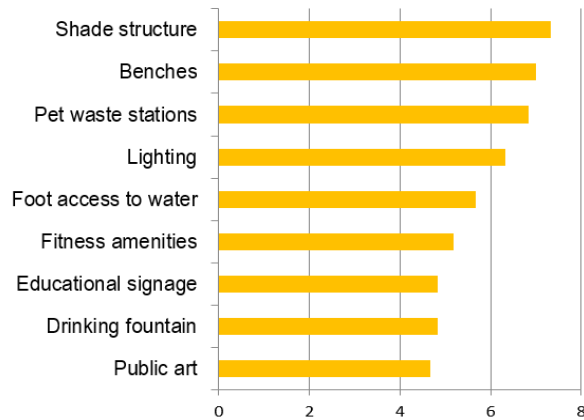
- 13 percent of respondents will access the trail by walking.
- 37 percent of respondents will access the trail by bicycle.
- 46 percent of respondents will access the trail by vehicle.

Most people accessing the trails by biking are willing to bike from more than 2 miles away

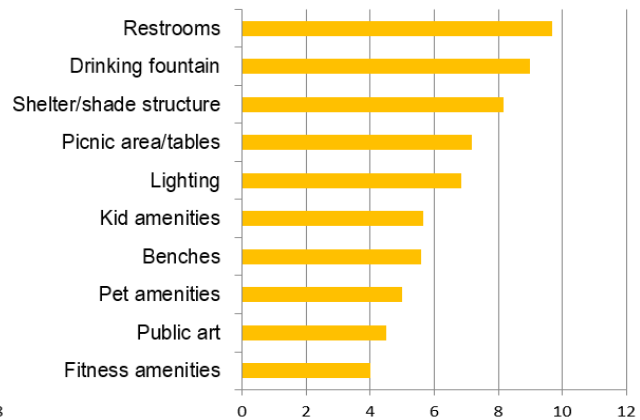
Wide range in responses from less than 5 minutes up to 20 minutes

## Trail Amenities

Important trail amenities:



Important access point amenities:



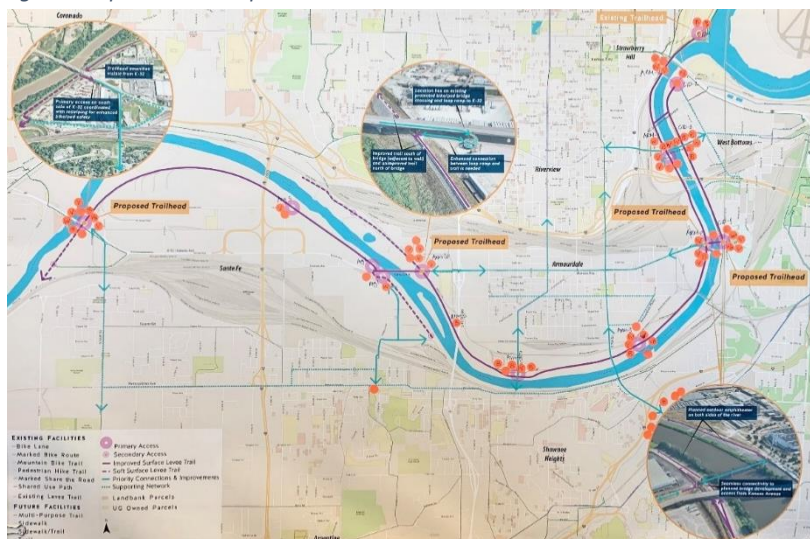
## Trail Signage Preferences

Signage is an important component of any trail network. Trail maps, wayfinding, and directional signage were identified as the top signage priority. This was followed by distance signage (mile markers) and key locations and landmark identifiers.

## Open House Map of Access Points

Open house attendees were asked to identify where they would access the trails by placing orange dots on the proposed network map. They also indicated their anticipated access mode (walk, bike, vehicle, or multi-modal) which will be used by the study team in the next phase to help with access point site layouts and design. The open house board is shown in Figure 4.

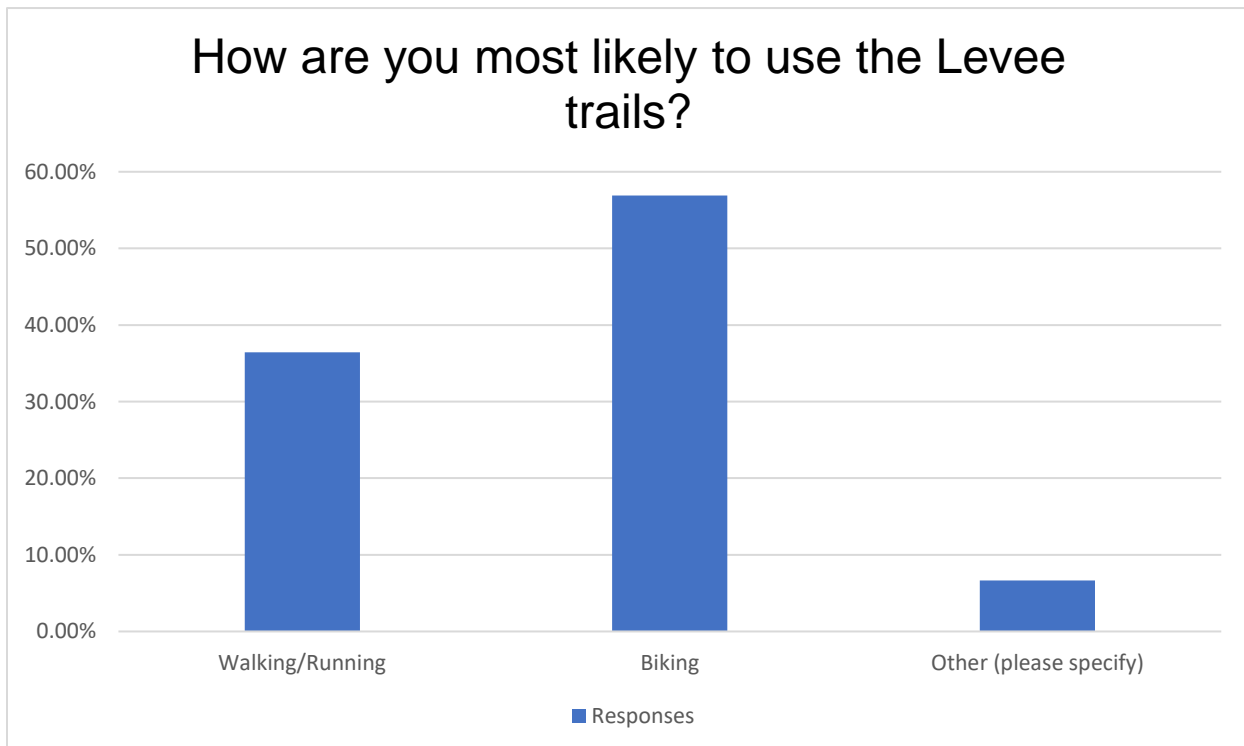
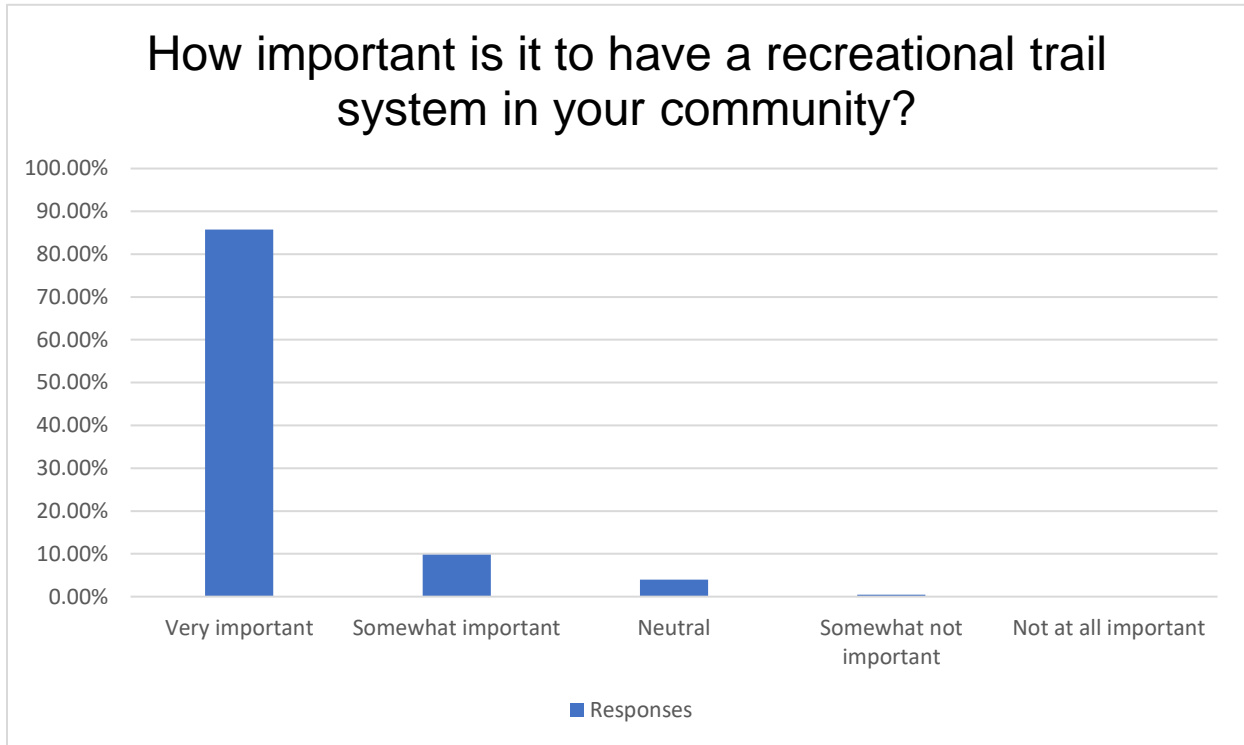
Figure 2: Open House Proposed Network & Access Points



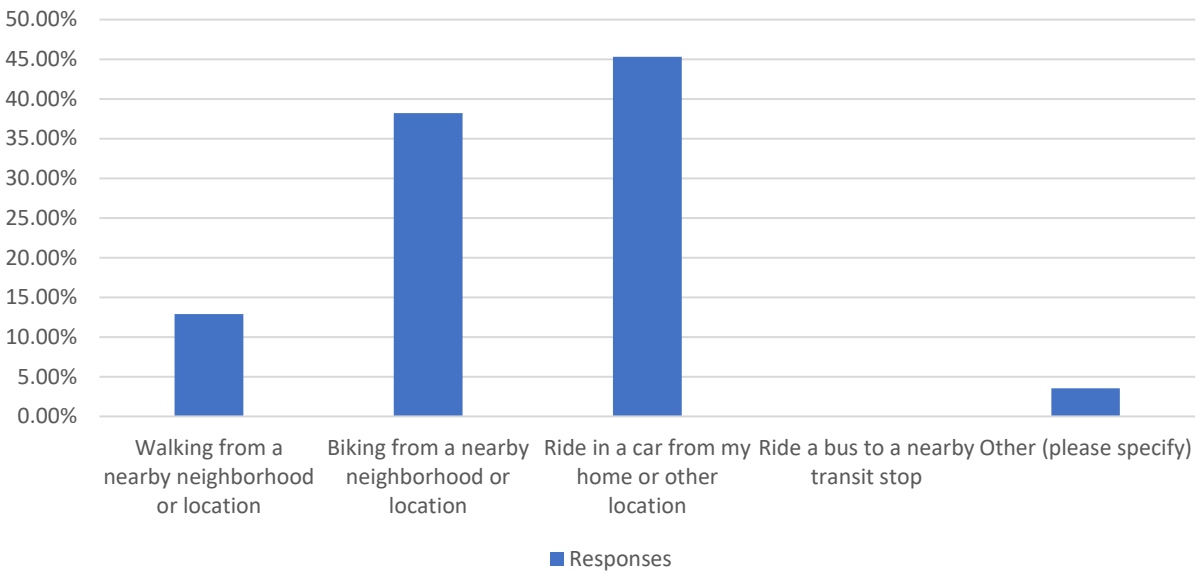
## 1.4 Full Results from Public Survey

---

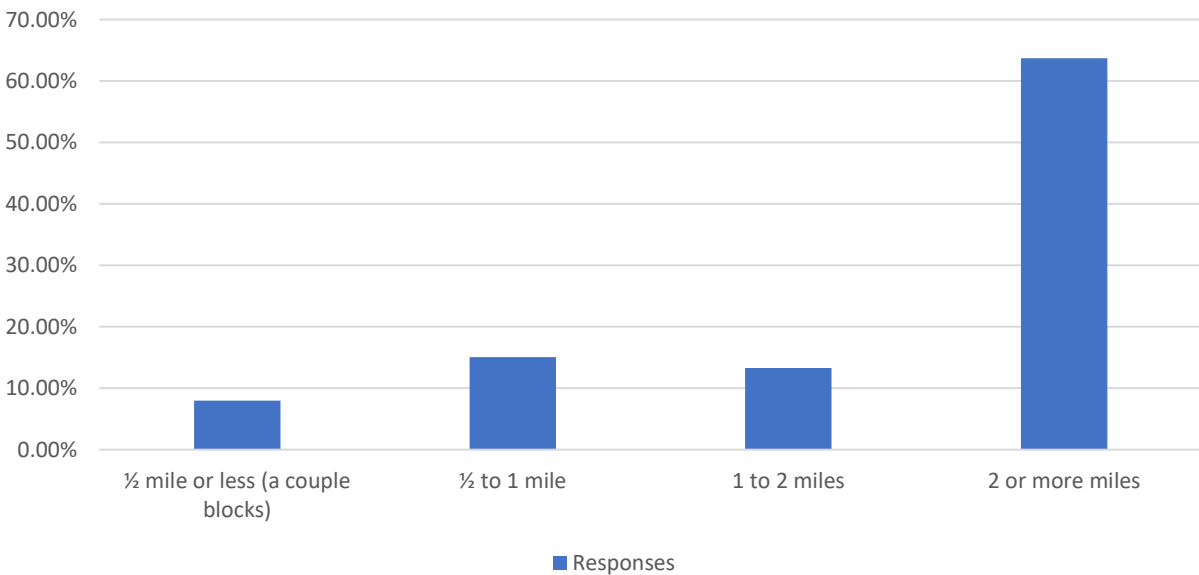
Total Respondents: 225



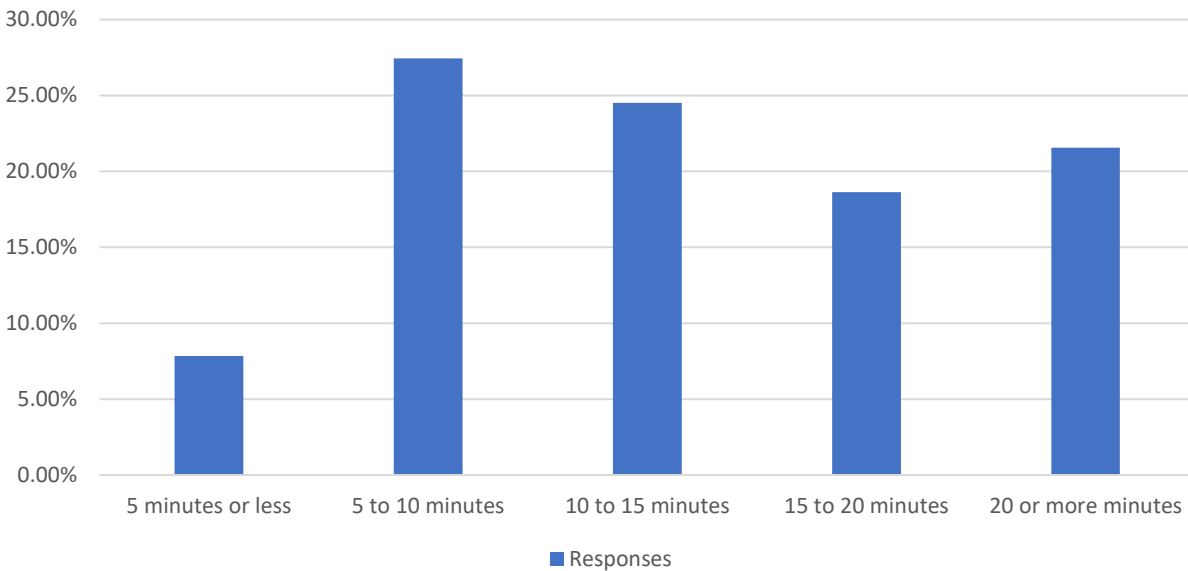
## How are you most likely to get to the Levee trails?



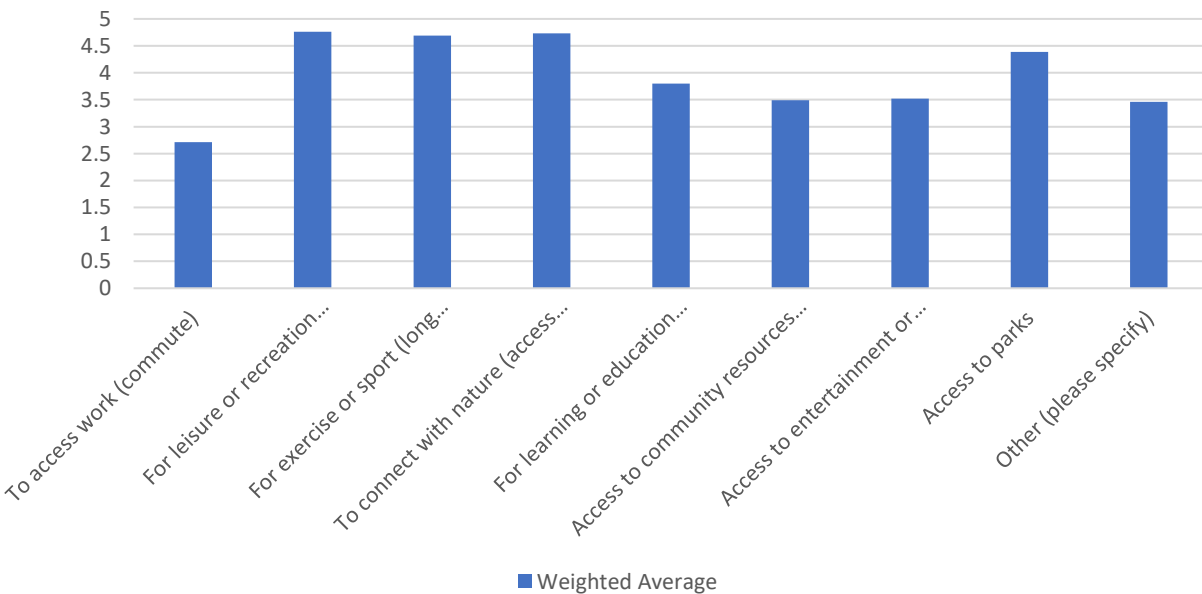
## How far would you be willing to walk or bike to get to the Levee trails?



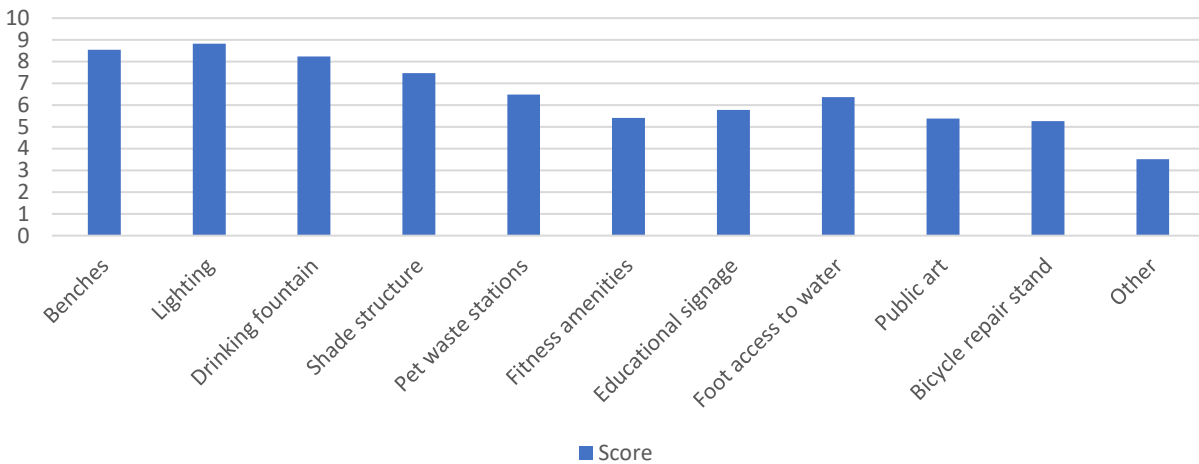
## How far would you be willing to drive to get to the Levee trails?



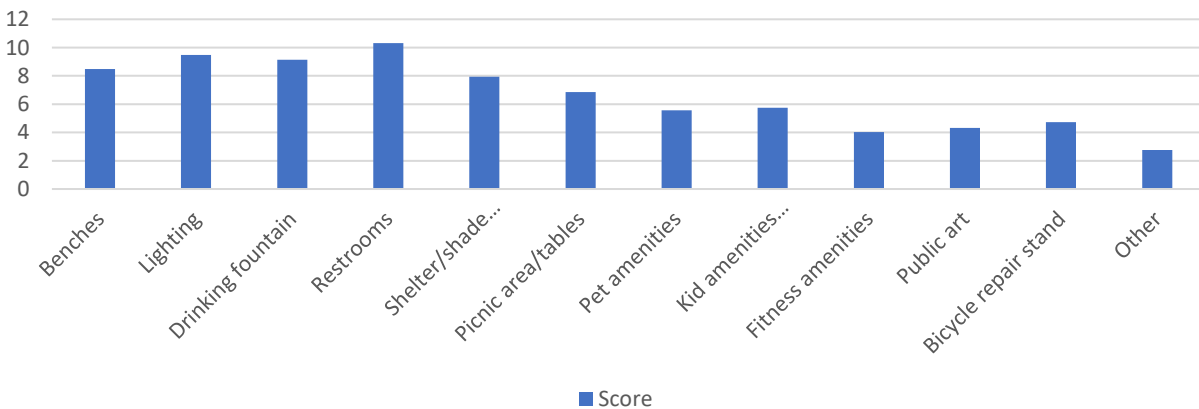
## How would you or your family use the Levee trails? (Select how important each of the following uses is to you or your family)



What amenities are most important to you on the trail? (Please rank in order of most important [1] to least important [10] by dragging the options).

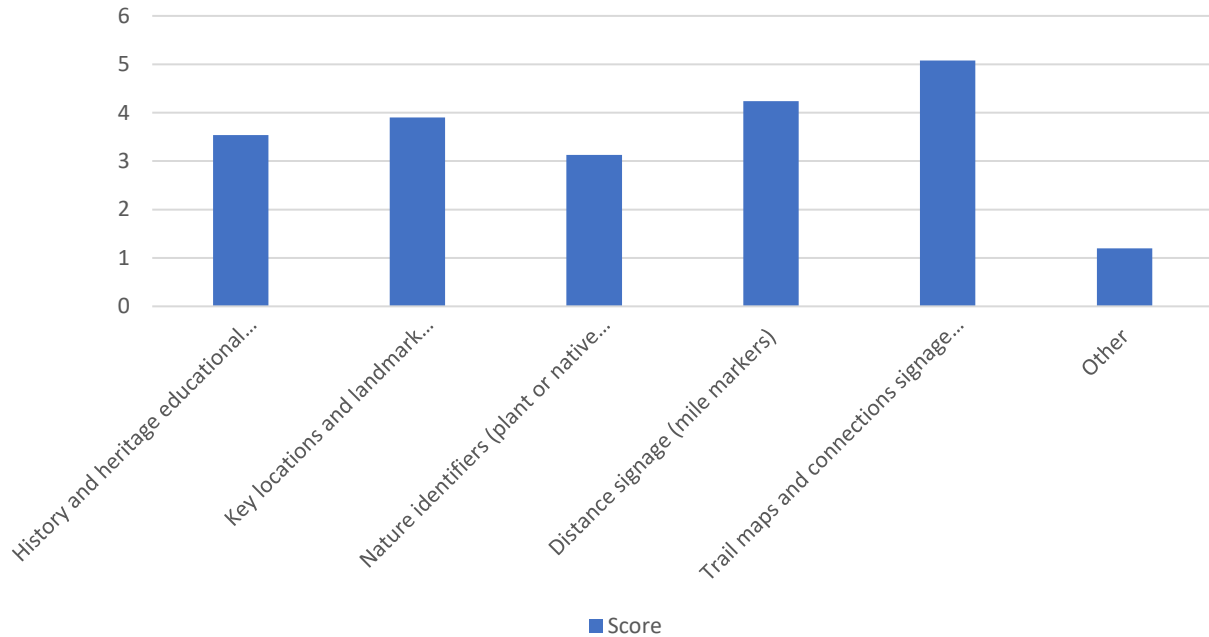


What amenities are most important you at primary access points and trail heads? (Please rank in order of most important [1] to least important [10] by dragging the various options).

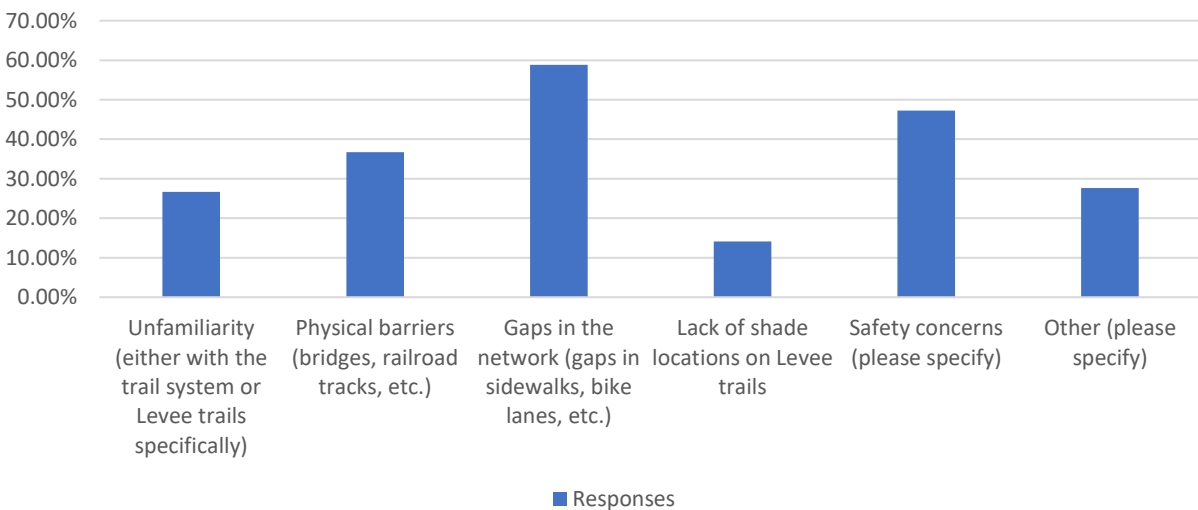




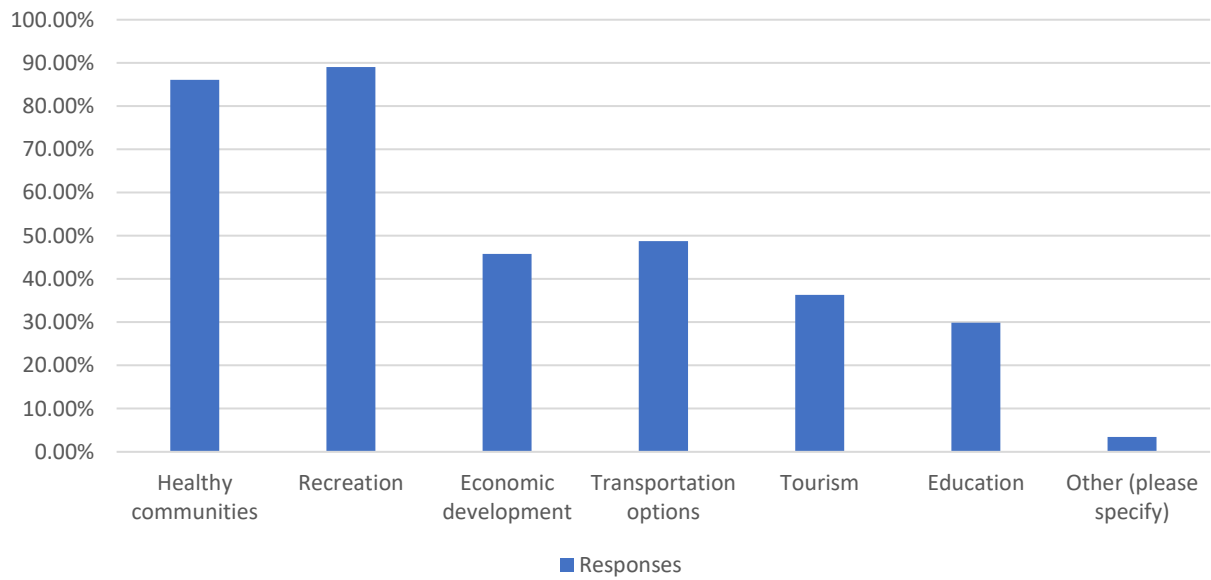
## What type of signage would be most important to you? (Please rank in order of most important to least important)



## What may keep you from using the Levee trails?



## What do you see as the primary benefits of Levee trails? (Select all)



<b>Additional Comments from Public Survey</b>
My husband and I love to walk and bike these trails, we would love to see them upgraded to encourage an outdoor community that encourages healthy lifestyles, education, and interaction with nature.
Keep it up Grow it make this happen what a great amenity for the community.
To be honest, I currently use the levee trails and will continue to do so. It would be great to not have to worry about being hassled. The trails are a useful asset for the communities they connect to.
thank you!
Fix the gunfire problem or else it won't matter what you put on the river.
If protected bike and pedestrian access can be created to funnel users from multiple neighborhoods, this will be such a boon for recreation, health, and yes, commuting! I'd really like to see a way to go by foot/bike from Central Ave to the levee, which would also promote West Bottoms access for pedestrians/bikers/commuters. Right now there's a big gap, as we would have to first go south to Armourdale or the north to the northernmost part of Strawberry Hill to access the trail. Walking along the Central Ave viaduct is NOT a ped-friendly experience.
please look at river access as an important part of this project
Turner Community Garden is ideal location for a trail head at South 55th and Klamm Avenue.
Safe bike routes connecting trail segments. Longer trail segments more satisfying to cycling enthusiasts.
Please do this. KC has been behind the curve on this kind of access for far too long.
There are many benefits to making this happen. Thank you for doing your best to make this community better.
Dog park and river access is important. Public Art will enhance the trail.
Thank you for all your hard work on this project.
Build the trails, and connect to the Heritage Riverfront Trail
Great idea long time in coming. I wish we already had the trails
I use the levee trails and welcome any improvements especially asphalt or concrete trails
There are so many opportunities here. Thank you for the consideration of opening up the levée têt trails.
Please do this.
I would like to see the Trail system expanded to the Western part of the county, since that is where I live. I have a run group that meets at least once a week, twice a week in warmer seasons (March thru Oct.) I could see my group using the whole trail system at some point. We drive to Johnson County to use their Trail System. Thank You
Having a well connected trail system can bring cyclists into our community to spend money at restaurants. I personally go on trips to bike between small towns along levee trails in other parts of KS, and usually buy snacks and drinks at different places along the way. A trail access point near 6th & Central would bring more visitors into our commercial corridor.
linking to other trails will get more people to WYCO. I think safety is going to be the primary concern of people outside our community so safety call or emergency call capability would be good. If we are going to encourage people to sue the trails then we should have rangers/community police or someone that is visible to show that things are being monitored. People should feel safe to exercise/walk alone
I have not used the levee trails in the past because I need asphalt to ride my road bike on. Last time I remember they are rock.

I just drove to Louisiana and spent a few thousand to ride a 60 miles levee called atchafalaya.
I've been trying to get this done for years, finally some gates are open! Fairfax needs to be open for access to the bridge to Riverside levee/trails. That city gets it, WyCo is way behind them, and every other city with a riverfront. The absolute cheapest, safest cycling infrastructure is the levee, please use it!
There are many homeless people who live near the trail in the woods.
Es hermoso caminar al bordo del rio. Hopefully, there are no nasty smells on the trail.
Bike trails on levees is a natural fit which would greatly reduce trail construction costs.
Please consider access from 7th street (such as a ramp from the street to the levee top) so people can get there without crossing the railroad tracks, etc.
Thank you for letting us participate!
Ghis would be great! I hope it happens.
I would love to see this happen! Please do it!!!
I think the trail repairs are a great idea if we focus on what a family from age zero to over fifty would like and specifically need when outdoors and enjoying family or quality time over all.
Would like to see neighborhood and community stakeholders have some say in how the Levee serves the residents in the community, and not be beholden to only the formal Levee committees elected by businesses only.
I have to leave my neighbor Hood and drive to Shawnee Mission Area to get to an area like this. I would like something closer so that my family couple go more often.
question 15: what keeps us from using system.... gaps... as in exactly what is depicted on the map. a trail that stops and starts but doesn't actually connect basically breaks the system. if you're going to do it, do it right. coming back to 'fix' later has already soured the opinion of those who tried to use it.
Trails along rivers allow people to connect with the amenities that define their home. They inspire civic pride, create a nice place for people to connect with their neighbors, and provide a safe and affordable fitness opportunity.
I am a regular user of the levee trails and very excited to see more investment in this important community resource! I hope in the future the levee trails can be connected to the Turkey Creek trails in Rosedale and those trail opened to the public.
The trail is has beautiful scenery since it follows the river. I would be nice if the trail could be connected from side to side but i understand the expense that would come with that. Safety should be the number one priority when it comes to developing this trail.
Keep dirt bikes off the levee. Also establish a place to rest and watch the birds, especially the bald eagles.
It would be wonderful to not have to drive to surrounding counties/communities to utilize their trails systems and to be able to use our own. Exciting!
My biggest concern is unfamiliarity, as I know there are levee trails now but I do not know enough about them and still have not used them. Once this project is complete, there should be a detailed guide/app/signage/something that says where you can park, where the trail starts and ends, etc.
State avenue trail from 74 to 94 street is not kept clean from debris and glass and trash
the trail along State ave between 74th street and 94th street is covered with broken glass and other trash. like to see the path brushed or a street sweeper used one a month or so. This is a great asset to the community it is just poorly maintained.
Plans should include a provision for an eventual extension to connect with the mill creek trail in Johnson County.



I commute on foot often between KCK and Merriam, and would love to be able to hop on the levee from Riverfront Heritage and be able to take it into the Argentine! So much less stressful than risking pancake by texting driver.
I am retired and live two hours away but would bring my bicycle to enjoy the trails.
Thank you for sending this survey. Rhiannon Caballero - 8162176860
This would be a great idea for our community.
Any effort to expand dedicated bike infrastructure in Wyandotte County is a welcome change.
The more we get connected to our rivers and nature as well as providing a safe place to run/bike benefits the entire metro region as a whole!
Police patrol/presence. Can you bring back the River Queen (not sure if that was KS or MO). It was very enjoyable to take that relaxing trip. A lot of us are older and would enjoy it even more
I have already identified a new favorite restaurant in Armourdale that we regularly return to because we can use the levee trail by bike to get there. The economic impact is real!
This is very exciting! I have multiple friends who moved to KCK and then moved back to KCMO because the bicycle/pedestrian connections were just too dangerous and uncomfortable. These trails could be excellent routes for people getting to work, services, and recreation in KCK-- can't wait to see how you make it happen!