



City of Cleveland
Frank G. Jackson, Mayor

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January 29, 2010

Mr. David T. Abbott
Executive Director
The George Gund Foundation
1845 Guildhall Building
45 Prospect Avenue West
Cleveland, Ohio 44115

Dear Mr. Abbott:

I am writing to endorse Cleveland Rowing Foundation's grant request to support the acquisition of the former Commodore's Club and establish a new aquatic sports facility on the Cuyahoga River called Rivergate Park. Rivergate Park is important to the city for a number of reasons:

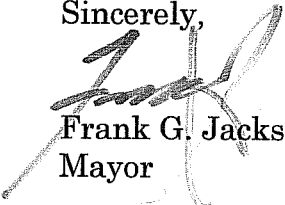
- This project represents a rare window of opportunity to preserve public access to our river and will provide a wonderful amenity that will attract urban dwellers and visitors from outside the city seeking a unique recreational experience. It will promote healthy lifestyles and bring more people to the river.
- Similar boathouse projects in Philadelphia, Oklahoma City and Pittsburgh have had a catalytic effect, promoting residential and commercial development by making their cities a more attractive place to work, live and play. We think Rivergate Park can have a similar impact in Cleveland.
- Cleveland Rowing Foundation (CRF) plans to leverage the additional space in Rivergate to expand programming to urban youth. In other cities, similar programs have had great success instilling self-confidence and leadership and in improving access to four year colleges. CRF is also interested in offering sports programming to students at Cleveland's new STEM schools.

- Rivergate will become the new home for the eight existing college and high school crew programs in Northeast Ohio.
- In collaboration with ParkWorks, CRF plans to restore what is now a concrete-paved site to an area with much more green space. This will create an attractive park area for visitors and wildlife.
- Rivergate will become one of the lynchpins of the 'Verdant Valley', an overarching plan for the Flats and adjoining neighborhoods that anticipates a network of linked bicycle trails, city parks, and recreational amenities to create a vibrant, appealing urban space.
- Regattas already bring thousands to the Flats each year. Rivergate's increased capacity will accommodate larger crowds and serve to attract national caliber rowing events to the area.

I am very enthusiastic about this project and its impact on our city. Although municipal finances are extremely constrained, the City has offered to provide a loan of \$300,000 to help secure the site.

I appreciate your consideration of CRF's grant request and hope your foundation will consider the project's many merits.

Sincerely,



Frank G. Jackson
Mayor