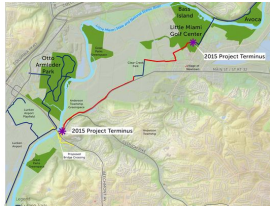


Scenic Trail extension brings Cincy connection in reach

Sheila Vilvens, svilvens@communitypress.com 9:34 a.m. EDT July 9, 2015



(Photo: Thanks to Great Parks of Hamilton County)

Work is officially under way on the 3.2-mile extension to the Little Miami Scenic Trail running through the Village of Newtown and Anderson Township.

Local dignitaries and officials gathered at the Little Miami Golf Center June 8 for a ceremonial groundbreaking for the \$2.6 million extension that is the next step in connecting the Little Miami Scenic Trail to the city of Cincinnati and beyond. The continuation will extend the more than 75-mile trail from the Little Miami Golf Center in Newtown to Ohio 32 and Beechmont Avenue. Work on this stretch of bikeway is expected to be complete by December of this year.

Great Parks of Hamilton County Executive Director Jack Sutton said the extension of this section of the trail was a long-time coming.

“There’s an old expression that we don’t like to hear but is often true; good things come to those who wait,” he said. “Twenty-one years ago, we made the first land acquisition that would become part of this trail. Now we’re just a couple steps away from downtown Cincinnati.”

Getting to this point has been a joint effort by many including Great Parks, Anderson Township, Anderson Township Park District, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, OKI and others. Great Parks and Anderson Township provided the local share of the project’s cost.

Anderson Township Park District secured funds years ago to build a trail extension in Clear Creek Park. Anderson Township provided a trail easement through the Walls Greenspace property (located between Clough and Beechmont on Ohio 32) which was bought in 1994.

OKI Regional Council of Governments, along with the Ohio Department of Transportation, provided nearly 80 percent of the construction costs through a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grant, and the Ohio Department of Transportation will manage project construction.

Anderson Township Board of Trustees President Russ Jackson said that many in Anderson Township, including assistant Administrator for Operations Steve Sievers, have worked passionately to bring this project from the drawing board to reality.

He then thanked the many property owners along the trail corridor who worked with Great Parks to provide the land for this project including Turp Fisher and family, Linda Hafner, EME Fence and Speedway/SuperAmerica.

This extension will complete one of two phases of the Little Miami Scenic Trail in Anderson Township. A future trail extension includes building a bridge over the Little Miami River, a tunnel under one ramp from Ohio 32, then construction of the trail under the Beechmont overpass. Great Parks is working on funding for the bridge which will require another reported \$6 million.

The Downtown-to-Lunken and Lunken-to-Newtown stretches are the missing parts of the trail system between here and Columbus. Once a 30-mile stretch between Columbus and Cleveland is completed, the trail will link Cincinnati to Northeast Ohio.

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