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Walking, riding and cycling paths could connect county's communities

By Andrea Uhde

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One day, Oldham County could have a network of trails linking neighborhoods, parks and even counties.

People could hike along Harrod's Creek, ride horses on a designated trail, or follow a route that allows Westport residents to safely walk to La Grange.

Get a room full of walkers, bicyclists and horse-riders together, and the ideas flow for hours. That's what happened last week during a Bike, Pedestrian and Greenways Summit at the Fiscal Court building that drew people from across the county.

"We have so much interest ... people just wanted to be a part of this," said Emily Liu, assistant director of Oldham County Planning and Zoning.

Lisa Hite, who is with Louisville Metro Parks, said it's working on trails that could be linked to Oldham County's.

"We're dying to figure out how to connect our trails with your trails," she told the group.

The meeting, the first of its kind, was held so that people could share what they want and can contribute, Oldham Judge-Executive Duane Murner said.

Oldham does not have any formal greenways. The county recently hired a consultant to start a master plan for trails and greenways.

An \$80,000 grant from the Kentuckiana Regional Planning and Development Agency is paying for the effort.

The ideas shared last week make up a major piece of the master plan, which also will include a public workshop, review meetings and a final plan with a timeline, phasing and funding options.

On Oct. 17, Patrick Hoagland with Brandstetter Carroll Inc. will present more information on the topic, including specific areas for possible greenways.

"We are today light-years ahead of where we were six, seven, eight years ago," Murner told the group of more than 60 people at the meeting last Wednesday.

The county's long-range plan is to have a trail snaking from Main Street in La Grange to Pewee Valley.

So far, there are concrete plans for a trail from the Oldham 8 theater on Ky. 53 in La Grange to Allen Lane, from Allen Lane along Commerce Parkway to Ky. 393 and north along Ky. 393 to the Buckner area.

Almost all of these projects are completely funded, and the county hopes to get a \$1.1 million grant to build a greenway from Buckner through Crestwood and into Pewee Valley.

"Hopefully we all within our lifetime can see the greenways constructed and put to use," Liu said.

A number of groups have vowed to help the process. Greenways for Oldham County, a group formed in about a decade ago to promote the idea of greenways and trails, hopes to get more support and strengthen its mission, said Ashli Collins, vice president of the group.

Ed Tonini with the Louisville Bicycle Club said members often ride in Oldham, and they would like to see a system of trails, bike and walking facilities.

"Anything we can do for you, just call us," he said.

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