

# The Oldham Era

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Path leads to plan

by Elizabeth Troutman

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A realtor, doctor and developer are just a handful of presenters who spoke at an Oldham County bike, pedestrian and greenways summit Sept. 26 and are pushing for a network of trails and pedestrian paths in Oldham County.

The meeting, organized by Oldham County Planning and Zoning and Greenways for Oldham County, gave designers the opportunity to hear input from the community for a master plan.

Presenters from 29 organizations focused on possible ways to utilize the county's land as a trail system.

A bid to create a master plan for the trail system was awarded to designers at Brandstetter Carroll Inc. in July.

Designers are scheduled to release a draft of the plan for public viewing on Oct. 17.

Pat Hoagland, the plan's designer, said the meeting established community support of the project.

He said he was impressed by the wealth of information each organization provided.

"The main thing was getting all the people in the room interested in terms of greenways," Hoagland said. "Now that everybody is out in the open, we have to find a certain thread to combine them all together."

Greenways for Oldham County Inc. started in 1999 with the goal of creating connectivity through trail systems in Oldham County.

In its July report, the Oldham County Vision Council identified greenways and park plans as initiatives that "should be planned, programmed and funded" by the county.

The Kentuckiana Regional Planning and Development Agency granted \$80,000 for an updated Greenways master plan in May. The former master plan was adopted in 2003.

The new Greenways master plan will include a Commerce Parkway trail, which will run 13 miles from downtown La Grange to Pewee Valley.

The portion of the trail from La Grange to Buckner, which will be finished in the next five years, is fully funded. Planners hope to receive additional funding through grants to complete the trail.

The updated master plan will establish a final version of this trail as well as additional paths that will provide connectivity throughout the county.

Ashli Collins, vice president of Greenways of Oldham County, emphasized that trails and pedestrian paths are scarce in the county. She said she is wary of oncoming traffic during her early morning runs on Ky. 393. If an alternative to her road running route were available, she said she would feel safer.

Collins, a pediatrician, sees trails as an incentive for Oldham Countians to stay physically fit.

“Anybody that lives in a neighborhood where there are trails feels like they are more likely to get out and be active,” she said.

Ed Tonnini, president of Louisville Bicycle Club, said he admires the landscape of Oldham County - it’s a popular place to ride.

He said more cyclists will be attracted to the county if there are safer riding conditions, meaning designated trails.

And Oldham Countians will have reason to start biking when these trails become available, he said.

“You will grow cyclists who will become avid cyclists on trails,” he said.

Oldham County Judge-Executive Duane Murner said he was astonished by research presented by the public and delighted to see strong support of this incentive.

“I cannot tell you how impressed I am with the breadth and depth of the information that passed through today,” he said. “This has been an incredible experience for me.”

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