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News

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**Happy trails: City gets \$1M grant**

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Greenwood is getting a \$1 million grant to help build a network of biking and walking trails.

The grant from the Indiana Department of Transportation was announced Monday and was part of more than \$17.5 million awarded to 29 projects across the state.

Greenwood park officials plan to use the money to build Tracy Trail, about a 2.5-mile asphalt pathway from Summerfield Park to Greenwood Community High School, and from the high school to the middle school and then to Craig Park.

"It will be the gem of the trail system," said Don Cummings, chairman of the Greenwood Trails Advisory Committee.

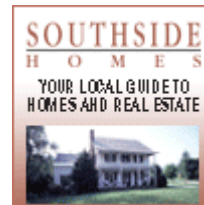
Greenwood is planning more than 63 miles of park trails. The city is paying for and building trails in sections as money from grants and donations becomes available. The city currently is not using taxpayer dollars to build trails.

Lack of funding delayed trail construction by at least a year, and the state denied two requests from the city for money to fund trails in 2004.

Now the trail is starting to take shape as park officials start planning Tracy Trail, which will run along Tracy Ditch and cross U.S. 31 in the form of a crosswalk.

The city parks department estimates the Tracy Trail project will take about two years to finish. The department plans to start acquiring land for the trail and hiring a company to build it this summer, said Chip Orner, director of recreation.

The new trail will connect with Polk Hill Trail, which opened in April. Polk Hill Trail, which is about a mile long, runs east from Craig Park, skirts Polk Hill and runs north along the Smith Valley Road bypass.



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Showing how proposed trails will link up helped the city get its grant request approved this year, Cummings said. The state transportation department was interested in awarding grants based on whether the project made transportation more efficient, so it was important to show how the city trails linked various places around the community, Cummings said.

The trail advisory board will likely focus on planning a bridge over U.S. 31 now that the city has funding for its top trail priorities, Cummings said.

Group members want to build a timber pedestrian bridge over U.S. 31, south of Smith Valley Road, to connect the city's trail system. Timber bridges last longer than metal and are less expensive to maintain, Cummings said.

The city still needs enough money to build a pedestrian bridge and a place to put it.

Cummings said he expects the city will apply for a grant next year to pay for building a pedestrian bridge over U.S. 31. The bridge could cost more than \$500,000, including architect fees, he said.

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