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MOUNTAIN BIKERS ON A MISSION



BIKE WALK BRENTWOOD IS PARTNERING WITH CITY OFFICIALS TO DESIGN BIKE TRAIL SYSTEM AT MARCELLA VIVRETTE SMITH PARK

Brentwood is home of the sixth-grade girls' first and third place finishers at the 2021 Tennessee National Interscholastic Cycling League state championship races, as well as the fourth place freshman boys' finishers. Yet, the process of creating Brentwood-based mountain bike trails to date has been a decade in the making. Local cyclists say they're starting to see better flow days ahead, though.

"Think about how Ravenwood and Brentwood High School and Middle School mountain bike league teams could thrive even more by having a local practice training location, and it should

drive up the value of the land and the region," says Brentwood resident Edward Stanworth, whose son, Andrew, started mountain biking when he was 14 years old.

Community mountain biking enthusiasts recently made progress regarding the city's acreage set aside for this purpose 10 to 15 years ago. Local nonprofit Bike Walk Brentwood representatives are partnering through a signed memo of understanding with Brentwood city officials to initiate design work on a mountain bike trail system at Marcella Vivrette Smith Park, 1825 Wilson Pike. The park currently includes 6

miles of hiking trails as well as a bike path south of Ravenswood Mansion, which was completed in 2017, according to city staffers.

Plans for mountain biking at the park stalled after a lack of interest in having shared trails. Additionally, city officials signalled that access from parking was challenging.

Bike Walk Brentwood supporters, such as board member Ed, have been securing funding from private donations for the design since 2021. He says they now have raised the \$15,000 necessary for the design phase of the new mountain bike trail system.

The proposed trail, which would be 4-5 miles in length, will serve as a new amenity for mountain bikers throughout the Brentwood area, as well as for students wishing to compete in interscholastic competitions. Ed, who is an executive search partner with the Global Leader Group, says the objective is to link the new mountain bike park with the one in Franklin's Liberty Park and to Columbia State Park.

Franklin's mountain bike trail is located at 7062 Southstar Drive, and the Williamson County trail is within Wilkins Branch Mountain Bike Park, 5664 Wilkins Branch Road.

"People eventually would be able to bike from the [John P. Holt] Brentwood Library all the way to I-65," exclaims Ed. "It'll be the largest trail system in middle Tennessee."

Bike Walk Brentwood members indicate they've contracted with Rock Solid Trail Contracting to design and construct the mountain bike trails at Smith Park. "Rock Solid Trail Contracting has designed and built some of the best trails in the country, including mountain bike destinations Bentonville [Arkansas], Copper Harbor [Michigan] and Cuyun [Minnesota]. They're among the best mountain bike trail builders and designers in the country, and we're excited to work with them on this project," says Ed.

He adds that they expect to meet with Rock Solid planners during April.

"Once we have a city-approved trail design in place, we'll begin the trail building phase of the project. We hope to host a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the park this fall, and to break ground this winter so we can cut sections and create a new access while the weather is right," he says. "Then we hope to open the trail during the spring of 2023."

Ed says the trail-building cost is expected to be approximately \$100,000, however the exact amount won't be known until the trail design and exact length is complete.

He says local supporters will take care of the trail once it's established by trimming bushes, clearing branches and taking care of drainage or post-rain elements.

"Mountain biking is great for all ages. Some people ride through their 80s. Mountain biking teaches a lot. My son now understands so many mechanical things he wouldn't have otherwise. And the sport makes everyone invested in keeping the trails in good shape," says Ed.

He adds that he's seen that mountain biking unlocks valuable time outside for families, links people, and provides an organic activity that's healthy. "Cyclists can express their individuality. It gives youths something to do outdoors that doesn't require organized sports. It also gives you the freedom to set your own times for training and competing," he says.

"Mountain biking can kick you in the pants, but it's an exercise that you'll absolutely love doing while having fun, too."

To donate to Bike Walk Brentwood efforts, visit online BikeWalkTN.org/BWBrentwood_Donate.

To ask questions or comment, email marty.tank@bikewalktn.org.

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