

LICKING RIVER GREENWAY AND TRAILS

Initial Focus: Randolph Park to Holmes High School

Scope of Plan: The Licking River Master Plan, commissioned by Vision 2015 in 2008, proposes to establish a continuous green corridor in the Licking River valley adjacent to the communities of Newport, Covington, Wilder, and Taylor Mill. The Greenway plan calls for the stabilization of the riverbanks, the removal of invasive species and the restoration of native plants, trees, and wildlife in the riparian corridor. In addition to the Greenway, the 5-mile corridor, between the confluence with the Ohio River and the I-275 overpass, includes plans for establishing a multi-level trail system that connects neighborhoods with historical, educational, and cultural institutions and recreational facilities. The proposed trail system provides for nature trails, paved trails and water trails.

Initial Work. The City of Covington and residents of the Historic Riverside, Eastside, Helentown, Austinburg, Wallace Woods, and Levassor Park neighborhoods have begun working on detailed plans for the segment of the proposed trail between Randolph Park and Holmes High School. This plan includes the clearing of nature trails, the building of a multi use paved trail, and beginning to develop the greenway corridor. The City owns the land on which the proposed trails will be built. No property will be purchased. Easements have been acquired from two local utilities.

The Nature Trail. This trail is intended for use by hikers and mountain bikers. The initial segment of the trail is in place, but will be improved by the work of a Boy Scout, seeking to earn an Eagle Scout Badge. The Scout will organize and supervise volunteers to construct 3 Leopold benches and 3 picnic tables to be placed along the trails. Establishing cleared areas for these rest areas will also be included within the scope of his project. The City of Covington will support the project with financial and professional resources to assist the Scout. The previous surface trail will run between the levee passageway at 16th Street and the levee terminus at Oakland Avenue. The City of Covington has already cleared debris from the trail and opened this section of trail to mountain bikers and hikers.

The Multi Use Paved Trail. This recreational trail is intended for use by pedestrians, joggers, strollers, skaters, skate boarders, cyclists, and other non motorized vehicles. The City of Covington has prepared a plan to pave 3,756 linear feet, just short of 1 mile on the top of the flood wall. The initial phase of the trail will be 8 feet wide and will utilize a combination of asphalt and dense grade aggregate. This trail segment will begin at Clayton-Meyer Park, ascend the levee for the Licking River, follow the levee capitalizing on the scenic views it provides, and then descend along the riverbank where it will convene with the nature trail and end at Levassor Ave, just across the street from Holmes High School. The City of Covington just received an \$80,000 grant from the Kentucky Recreational Trails program to fund a portion of this trail. The total cost for this portion of trail is over \$260,000. A private citizen has also contributed \$20,000 towards this portion of the project and the remaining funds will be ascertained from the City of Covington.

The Greenway. The restoration of the natural assets of the Licking River corridor and the development of recreational facilities there could have long lasting impact on our economy and health. We are planning a multi phase approach to habitat restoration of the riparian corridor. The first component of the Greenway restoration project includes an assessment conducted by the Center for Applied Ecology at Northern Kentucky University and development of a work plan which will be used to engage the community in restoring the natural habitat of the riparian corridor. The work of the Center for Applied Ecology was funded by the Greater Cincinnati Foundation and was completed in June of this year. Now, we are planning a fall community work day where volunteers will use the assessment and work plan to remove invasive species in a certain section of the greenway corridor.