

NEWS RELEASE

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CITY UNVEILS PLANS FOR TRAIL SYSTEM

Branson officials are moving forward on plans to build an 89-mile network of hiking and biking trails in and around the city.

The Master Trails Plan was presented at a public informational meeting April 24 with about 20 people attending and all strongly supporting the plan. As proposed, the trail network would run along the shore of Lake Taneycomo, through midtown along Roark Creek westward to the Henning Conservation Area and then southward to the Shepherd of the Hills Hatchery by Table Rock Dam. There would be several other connecting trails throughout the city to link parks, neighborhoods, retail centers, and historical points of community interest.

The Trail Master Plan is the result of increasing interest from the community and visitors to enjoy a safe and convenient transportation alternative and enhanced outdoor opportunities. Hiking and biking trails will reduce our dependence on gas engine vehicles resulting in less air pollution and traffic congestion.

Following another public hearing in June, the Master Plan goes before the Board of Aldermen for approval. If the Board gives the green light, \$100,000 will be included in the fiscal 2004 budget for start-up funding. A complete cost estimate of the whole project has not been made, and it could take up to 10 years to construct, according to Branson Planning/Development Director Don Stephens.

Stephens also said the city welcomes donations of materials and labor for the trail project.

Branson residents are not alone in having a desire for more walking and bicycling opportunities. Across the nation, more communities, counties and states are adopting and implementing trail plans.