

## “Clearing Up Misconceptions About Greenway Trail”

Dear Editor:

If you haven't had a chance to walk, run, or bike the City's Greenway Trail, please do. You might see a friend while enjoying this beautiful city. Paducah has two trail segments with at least two more planned. The next phase involves linking Noble Park with the concrete trail on the floodwall levee on the east side of U.S. 45. near the Brookport Bridge.

There has been some inaccurate information about this phase including an incorrect length of the proposed U.S. 45 underpass mentioned in the February 22 editorial. The City has researched several options to safely cross U.S. 45 while adhering to numerous state and federal guidelines. But the U.S. 45 trail crossing is unique with a 10% cross slope which doesn't meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards for a pedestrian crossing and a sharp curve that limits sight distance.

One option researched was an overpass, a bridge. The structure would cost an estimated \$700,000 due to the height and length required to provide a gentle slope to maintain ADA compliance. However, the foundation for an overpass structure would NOT be permitted in the levee.

Another option would be signage for an at-grade crossing. That sounds simple, but U.S. 45's complicated geometry would require the flattening of approximately 800 feet of road to reduce the 10% slope to meet ADA standards. Plus, the limited sight distance requires a pedestrian traffic signal. These improvements are estimated to cost \$239,000. However, the State has informed the City verbally that a signal would NOT be permitted.

The third option is an estimated \$436,000 underpass. The 52-foot long lighted tunnel would allow everyone to safely cross U.S. 45. The underpass involves trail-users taking a gentle path off the floodwall levee, traversing the short underpass, and then going back up onto the levee. Retaining walls will be on either end of the underpass as you go up and down the levee. The City Commission voted to send the underpass option to the State for final approval.

This segment of trail also crosses Cairo Road, but Cairo Road has a different geometry compared to U.S. 45. With an ADA compliant cross slope and good sight distance, Cairo Road doesn't need to be reconfigured. Due to the topography and drainage issues, an underpass is not an option. There will be signage and striping to make trail-users and drivers aware of the crossing.

The City has \$947,000 available to complete this phase including a grant, interest from an endowment, leftover funds from previous trail projects, and bond funding. The construction estimate places the project near the funding cap.

The City of Paducah wants people to enjoy its parks and facilities, and we look forward to providing more trail opportunities. But, safety is our number one priority. State and federal guidelines may increase the cost of a project, but they also ensure its safety.

To learn more, please watch the February 19 City Commission meeting posted on the City's website.

---Mayor Gayle Kaler and City Manager Jeff Pederson