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## Herald-Leader Editorial

# Proceed with Arboretum trail; Safer way for cyclists, pedestrians

Published: April 17, 2013



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This map shows the route for the proposed path through the Arboretum. The path would deposit cyclists onto busy, off-campus backroads. Some residents are unhappy with the trail proposal. The path will cut through Walnut Woods at the Arboretum and run adjacent to the back yards of about a dozen homes on McDonald Drive. Map by Chris Ware | Staff

Safer way for cyclists, pedestrians

Lexington has made steady, if slow, progress building trails that can handle both foot and bicycle traffic. The trouble with our trails, as a story earlier this month explained, is that most of them don't go anywhere.

"When you look at a map of where we have shared-used trails, it looks like someone threw a handful of spaghetti up there," Keith Lovan, a project manager at the city's Division of Engineering, who has been working on trails in Lexington since 1998, told reporter Beverly Fortune in a story earlier this month.

So, it's hard to see anything but good in plans, reported this week, to connect the University of Kentucky — recently recognized for encouraging bicycle use — with neighborhoods to the south.

The existing broken-spaghetti pattern has cyclists riding through campus on shared-use roads only to wind up at a dead end.

That would change with the proposed path on the western side of The Arboretum's small woodland that would link the campus and the neighborhoods to the south.

The Arboretum is a gift to the entire community and especially to the neighborhoods that surround it. It provides breathing space, a botanical tour of Kentucky and calming views. It's a great place to stroll, walk or run.

But it is not a great, or even a good, place to ride a bicycle. There's really not room for cyclists to share the paved trails with the humans, strollers and dogs that frequent the paths. Commuters on bikes must brave a deep rut through hard dirt or mud, depending on the weather, near Alumni Drive to go to and from campus.

Neighbors have expressed concerns about the proposed path, which will run behind the backyards of several homes that abut The Arboretum. That's how people often react but their fears almost always disappear once a trail is in use.

When the Brighton East Trail was proposed for the Andover neighborhood several years ago, one resident told Fortune that some people were apprehensive.

Now, he says, "its a tremendous asset," and people in nearby neighborhoods want the trail extended into their areas.

Building a shared-use trail around this edge of The Arboretum will provide a safe way for cyclists to commute to work and school at UK and the UK hospital, and make foot traffic in The Arboretum safer and more relaxing.

UK should move forward quickly to complete the design for the trail, allocate the money and get it built.

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