



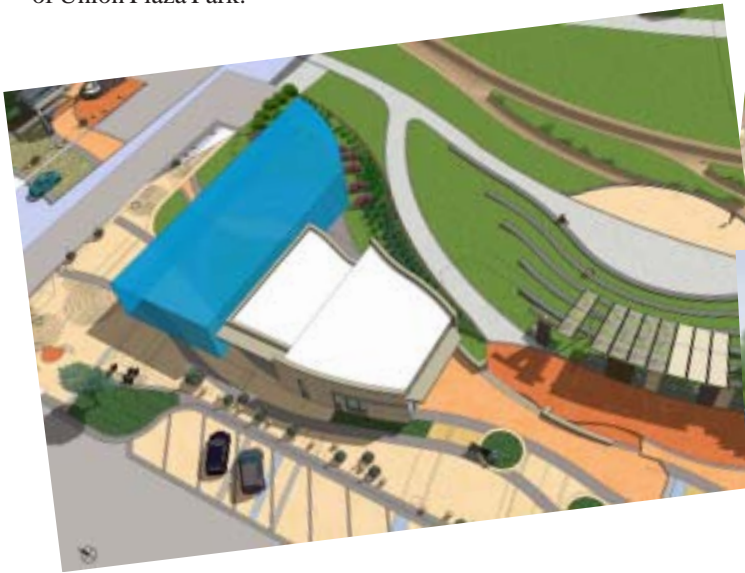
Great Plains Trails Network

December 2009

Issue 99

GREAT PLAINS TRAILS CENTER PLANNED

GPTN is really excited about the Trails Center project which will be built at 21st and Q Streets. It is an opportunity to showcase the trails we have worked to build over 20 years and provide a rest area ensconced in the best features of Union Plaza Park.



The site will have immediate access to and from the trails within the Antelope Valley system and provide easy connections to the major trail routes in all directions. Users of the John Dietrich, MoPac, Billy Wolff, and Rock Island Trails converge at this natural hub. The Center will be the “zero point” for all new mile/km markers on these trails. Routes to access the Jamaica North and Salt Creek Levee Trails will be short commutes from this center.

The contemporary building will complement the design features of the Plaza and amphitheater facilities currently under construction in the park. The public areas are designed to flow along the elevations of the channel and contain many graceful curves, both structural and decorative. The building will echo those themes and conservation and sustainable construction practices will be heavily regarded. Natural lighting, cooling and heating systems will be used. The exterior will reflect attention to sustainable and green concepts.

It will be a popular gathering and rest area. Public space will include open lounging areas, rest room facilities and a multi-purpose, covered shelter area. It will be capable of hosting meetings, social events, festival support, classes and many similar activities. Additional development is expected on the North side of the building in conjunction with private involvement. Possible uses include a



food and beverage vendor and a bicycle rental and repair shop. Interested parties may respond to a Request for Proposals the City will initiate in the very near future. GPTN needs to contribute \$250,000 to build the public portions of the facility. The generous support of the trails community will be needed to bring this feature to life for our trails system. In addition to monetary contributions, we will need volunteers to help with special events and management of the project. All gifts should be considered a lasting contribution to the health and enjoyment of all within our community.



GREAT PLAINS TRAILS NETWORK
since 1988

dedicated to the goal of developing a network of commuter and recreational trails within Lincoln and Lancaster County

2009

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TRAILS UPDATE


Delays—Many of the trail projects are experiencing long delays because of increasing complex federal administrative requirements, primarily dealing with environmental impact and right-of-way issues. Justification for some projects had to begin anew to meet the changed requirements. It now appears that a minimum of 3 years may ensue between project initiation and completion. In some cases fund-raising may be completed before final approval.


Billy Wolff—Pending approval of funding by the RTP Selection Committee the 8-ft. wide section on the north side of Van Dorn between 56th and 58th is scheduled to be replaced with a new 10 ft. wide concrete trail segment. Total cost \$62,100, GPTN committed to provide \$12,400. (This marks the first of an ongoing effort to gradually replace 8 ft. trails with 10 or 12 ft. concrete.)

Restriping—Priority is being given to 8 ft. wide trails. As these are completed work will move on to others. GPTN considers this an important safety issue.

Stonebridge—Parks and Recreation has applied to the Federal Enhancement Program for funding this project. Matching funds are coming from Impact fees. Pending approval of the grant,

Continued page 6







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MARKET TO MARKET 2

After the second year for the successful Market to Market Relay on October 10th, —which incidentally used most of the MoPac Trail—it seemed appropriate to get some in-depth information from Ben Cohoon. He and co-founder Jason Bakewell are both new GPTN Board members.

What gave you the idea of establishing such an event?? I started running about three years ago and really enjoyed it. While I was training for the Lincoln Marathon I learned about other relay races and thought that they sounded like a lot of fun. So I decided that Nebraska needed a relay race of its own. I talked to a few people that currently were organizing events and they encouraged me to do it and that it was a good idea. At that time I knew Jason was thinking about coming back to town from Utah. I told him about what I was thinking about doing and asked him if he wanted to help out in a major way.

How did you decide on the two “Market” end points? Because they are the most iconic spots of both cities and in the heart of downtown, plus Market To Market had a better ring to it than Omaha to Lincoln.

What are some of the features of this event that make it different from a standard, long-distance race? The main differences are that you compete as a team and you run multiple times in a day. Basically if you can think of a track relay where each participant runs once around the track and passes the baton off to the next runner. The Market to Market Relay is similar only over a longer distance. A runner will run 3 to 5 miles and then pass the baton off to the next runner on the team. The interesting part is doing the 3 to 5 mile leg a few hours later once it is your turn again and then for a third time for most participants.

So it's about more than just seeing who can have the fastest time? Although this race is very competitive with top teams from across the Midwest, at the end of the day running is about competing against yourself and having fun. We wanted that to come across in the race so we developed some fun contest including Best Team Costume and Best Team Van. The winners are voted on by their peers with each team getting one vote.



When you conceived this event, did you anticipate how popular it would be? How many entries this year? From how wide a geographic area? We thought the concept was unique and fun enough that it had potential to attract a lot of people. If you look at the original plan we wanted to have 500 teams by year 5. But I am a bit shocked by how quickly it grew. The first year we were hoping to get 100 teams and we had 150 teams three months before the start. In 2009 we had 165 teams, but we had many more apply. We capped the race at a certain level to make sure that the all the parking lots could handle it. After this year we are pretty confident that we can grow to a least 200 teams if not a few more. I don't know if we will ever allow for 500 teams to enter the race because I just don't think the course can handle it. Participants are from all around the midwest, but actually the popularity of the event limited the out of state teams because the local teams outnumbered the out of state teams so when you pick from the lottery we got many local teams.

Did the weather affect the number of entries / participants? Weather didn't have any effect on the number of entries because we sold out in May, but it may for 2010. And only three teams dropped out that day because of the snow and cold weather, which is really quite amazing and shows you how crazy runners are.



A.W.O.L.—Amazing Women of Lincoln.
(l to r): Amy Alderman, Lauren Thacker-Lynn, Rosina Paolini, Katie Joseph-Johnson, Melanie Simpson, Beth Thacker, Therese Liegl (Frankie Petersen not pictured).

How many runners on a team? How many stages and what is the variation in length? There can be 6, 7, or 8 runners on a team, most choose 7 or 8. Less than ten take 6. There are currently 21 exchange points on the course with lengths as short as 3 miles and as far as 6 miles. The distance was determined by available areas to park vans, low traffic roads, and existing trails... the goal was to get to as close to 3 miles as possible but sometimes it had to be longer because there wasn't an area to park 80 to 90 large vehicles at around 3 miles.

How many volunteers? The race had about 300 volunteers this year. The volunteers make the race happen. Without them the race would just be chaos. Everyone that volunteered did such a great job and it is really amazing that they stood outside for several hours in cold, wet or snowy conditions to help people have a fun.

Continued page 4

SCULPTURE RETURNS

Market to Market continued

Remember the 2003 Tour d Lincoln and all the bicycle sculptures? GPTN was involved in the initial sponsorship of one work entitled “Rest Area” by Danny Moore and Tom Spahn. Some members even entertained hope that the sculpture could be purchased at the auction and stand as a reminder of the many contributions that have made a trails system in Lincoln possible. But alas, the bidding reached \$11,000—far more than we could afford.



Through recent efforts and the generosity of several individuals, the sculpture is headed back to its original site—a high traffic area near the junction of the Rock Island and Billy Wolff Trails. The key player in this scenario was Doug Nelsen whose history includes BRAN participation, bicycle commuting before it became popular and utilizing has both pedal and powered two-wheeled transport. He talked about the sculpture with Dale Breed, former GPTN board member.

Doug approached Mark Tallman, President of Data Source Media, who was the original purchaser, to see if he could find a way to return the sculpture to its original location. After some negotiation it was decided that if the work could serve as a memorial to Greg Dunbar, former part owner of Deluxe Bicycle, Mr. Tallman would donate the sculpture to the City. A plaque to this effect will be added to the seat of the sculpture

To facilitate the transfer Doug Nelsen had the sculpture sandblasted and repowercoated and purchased a trailer sturdy enough to handle the heavy structure—all at his own expense. Employees of TMCO aided in the refurbishing and have generously agreed to handle any ongoing maintenance. The piece will most likely be resited sometime after the first of the year.

A profound thank you is in order to Mark Tallman, Doug Wilson and the others who assisted in this project. The sculpture will be enjoyed by trail users for many years to come and is certainly a handsome addition to the community.

But I think the volunteers have a lot of fun themselves. I really can't thank the volunteers enough for what they do.

Were there any changes from last year? We made several major changes from year 1 to year 2. The biggest was that we changed the course route a bit, changed the number of exchanges from 24 to 21, and switched how we stacked the waves. All these changes were to create a safer race and ease the congestion at exchange points. The main major change is that we want to increase the number of teams/participants in the race to at least 200. We have a plan on how we can do that and now we need to work with cities, volunteers, and police to see if we can make this plan happen. Planning for the next race starts the day after race ends. Really the month after the race is critical to implement changes and adjust how we do things. It is a yearlong planning process but the number of hours a week changes depending on what is due.

Do the two of you handle everything? No Jason and I don't handle everything we have an organizing committee that consists of about 8 people that deal with everything from volunteer recruitment, exchange point coordination, race course optimization, safety/medical, and the shindig.

Tell us a little about the post-relay party? The post race party or as we call it the shindig is a fun event that allows the runners to celebrate running 80+ miles from Omaha to Lincoln. We have food, drinks, and live music. It is a great vibe full of people that are excited. Anyone is welcome to come, so if you want to stop by next year it is going to be October 9th, 2010 in the Haymarket by the pedestrian bridge.

Give us one example of a problem or issue that you never imagined you'd have to deal with when you conceived this type of event. Snow and Ice in the middle of October: The emergency action plan had this listed on it, but it was highlighted as low probability. This year we got the snow and the ice which I don't think has happened that early in the year since the 1800's.

Thanks. Congratulations on a well-staged event. We'll be looking forward to Market to Market 3 next year.

GPTN ANNUAL MEETING

Circle February 21 on your calendar and plan to attend the annual meeting of your trails organization.

√ Up-to- date information on trail progress and programs

√ Elect the board of directors

√ Refreshments

A NEW CENSUS TWIST

GPTN has been involved in counting trail users for a long time—20 years to date. For many years the plan involved an all-day count and categorization of users on the first Sunday in July. To avoid the ups and downs created by July's sometimes inclement weather the date was recently switched to early September, but using the same format. The 2008 census marked a significant departure from past assessments.

At the request of Lincoln's Parks and Recreation Department this year's census was modified to conform to standards established by the National Bicycle & Pedestrian Documentation Project (NBPD). By using their methodology Lincoln's results can be incorporated into a national database.

A fundamental objective of the NBPD is to develop methods similar to other modes, all of which rely on quantifiable measures. The lack of quantifiable methodologies for the non-motorized modes is a likely reason the modes are often under-funded and an afterthought in policy decision-making. The NBPD Project is designed to address the deficiency in accumulating accurate and consistent data on walking and bicycling patterns and relationships. Unlike other transportation modes that have consistent data collection methods bicycle/walk data collection is inconsistent and/or incomplete, resulting in a lack of understanding of the existing and potential role and benefits from these modes. The NBPD will have four basic applications: (1) safety – through exposure analysis, (2) trip generation—as part of impact analysis, land use and transport policy, ordinances, etc., (3) monitoring – identifying changes and trends in overall activity use, and (4) modeling – projecting existing/future activity, identifying the relationship between walking/bicycling and land use, multi-modal analysis.

The basic changes to the local data collection included more survey sites (24), shorter time periods (2 hours) and two different days. The September dates were Thursday the 17th from noon to 2:00 PM (to include some commuters) and Sunday the 20th from 4 to 6 PM. Census volunteers attempted to get trail users to stop and fill out a questionnaire or to agree to fill one out on line later.

The two-day count totaled just over 3700 users with 2160 on Thursday and 1549 on Sunday. Bikers outnumbered pedestrians a bit more than 2 to 1. The Rock Island Trail sustained its past popularity with high use at two sites—27th and Capital Parkway and 27th and Highway 2. Close behind were the MoPac at 21st and Vine and the Billy Wolff at 27th and Capital Parkway. The actual count at 27th and Capital Parkway had to be reduced by some 1100 pedestrians who participated in the Memory Walk. Helmet use among cyclists remained too low at 45%.

Over 300 trail users completed a written survey. The most common age groups were between 45 and 65. The cyclists indicated that they chose to use the trails because of accessibility, scenic qualities and separation from traffic. They indicated a desire for improved bike lanes and crossings. Pedestrians also chose accessibility

and scenic qualities and thought more shade trees would be a desirable improvement. Ninety percent rated trail maintenance excellent or good.

While cautioning against the accuracy of extrapolation from such limited data, census organizer Dave Scoby stated that prediction models can be used to make estimates of annual trail use. Applying this methodology, Lincoln registers 3.16 million "users" per year at our sites--which, on a per capita basis, is about 12.6 times per year that the citizens of Lincoln use the trails. Future counts will be needed to verify or adjust these figures.

Thanks to Scoby who organized everything and the many volunteers who made it work. A follow-up in January? Yet to be determined.

NEW GPTN WEBSITE HITS THE TRAILS

GPTN is pleased to announce the release of our new website at www.GPTN.org. Our new site has been redesigned with a fresh new look and has been updated with information about trails and our latest projects. The website now offers an easy option to join GPTN or renew your membership with a secure online credit card checkout. In addition, the website provides photographs and trail maps with mileage for the over 120 miles of trails in the Lincoln area. Other resources available on the site include a trail news blog, newsletter archive (with pictures in color), links to other trail-related websites, and events calendar. The website is always a work-in-progress and we appreciate any comments on how to make it a better resource for you. You can submit suggestions at the GPTN website.



**JOIN GPTN,
AN ORGANIZATION
THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE.**

LINCOLN'S BIKE CORRAL HAS ROOM FOR YOU!

Looking for down town bicycle parking that is a few steps above on-street bike racks? Then Lincoln's first bike corral is for you!

The facility, which is located in the east side of the CenterPark garage at 12th and N Streets, is a state-of-the-art bicycle parking structure that is fully enclosed so that your "ride" is out of the elements and doubly secured by being inside a fenced enclosure that is accessible by use of an electronic card swipe lock system. It offers an enhanced peace of mind particularly for those cyclists who for a variety of reasons need to park their bicycles for several hours at a stretch.

The facility is open to anyone at the low fee of \$5 per month, unlimited use. Those motorists who pay for monthly vehicle parking can choose to use the facility at no extra charge. Permits may be purchased through the parking division of the Department of Urban Development. A recent query revealed that 12 such permits had been issued. The enclosure's vertical bike racks can accommodate 20 bicycles. As the funding for more racks becomes available the corral can eventually hold up to 40 bicycles. At present there is no provision for drop-in parking.

Take advantage of this safe and convenient facility by purchasing your permit today!



Trails Update Continued

this planned trail will be located between I-80 and Alvo Road and east of 14th Street, going through the Stonebridge neighborhood. This trail will connect on the south at 14th and Humphrey. Public Works will be improving 14th Street between Superior Street and Alvo Road. The improvement project will include a trail along the west side of 14th Street and will connect on the north with the new Kooser Elementary School just west of 14th and Alvo Road.

Cavett—Extending from the south end of the Tierra/Williamsburg Trail that now ends at San Mataeo Drive, this new trail will go west connecting with Cavett Elementary School and then south to join the trail along Yankee Hill Road.

Antelope Valley—Work is progressing. Expect the trails north from the J Street bridge to be open as early as next spring. Parks and Recreation is coordinating with Lower Platte South NRD on the bridge across Antelope Creek and movement of the north part of the Billy Wolff to the east side of the creek. When completed that will be the final connection to the Antelope Valley Trails.

MoPac East--In Elmwood the connecting spur between the parking area and the trail proper to the east is closed due to work being done on the city's wastewater treatment system. Signs are to be posted guiding trail users to alternate access routes.

The Lower Platte South NRD and Cass County have entered into an interlocal agreement to jointly plan for the trail extension joining the MoPac East and the Lied Platte River Bridge.

Oak Creek--End of deer hunting season. Trail reopened.

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Trails related	\$75
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BIKE RACKS ON BUSES ARE COMING!

Local bicyclists' dreams of being able to transport their bikes on city buses is closer to becoming a reality. The funding for purchasing bus bike racks for all of Lincoln's buses has been secured. The installation of said racks will occur when a new round of StarTran buses, which will be ordered in 2010 and delivered some time in 2011, arrives. The racks, which will be mounted on the front of the buses, can accommodate two bicycles and are very user-friendly.

This is just another step that the City of Lincoln is taking to move Lincoln towards more alternative modes of transportation and thus a healthier and greener city.



GPTN NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

September - November, 2009

Welcome to new members: Heartland Optical, Inc. – Tom & Casey Conrad, Larry Loomis, J. Robert Duncan, Lynn & Sara Hartzell, Matthew Baxa, Butch & Dobey Haws, Therese C. Liegl, Ken May, Lauren Davis, Garry & Kathy Duncan, Betty Thacker, Ward F. Hoppe, Tom & Rogene Silletto, Ray Gebhard, Paul Couture, Claire Fredstrom, Beth & Steve Lau, Tim Dalton, Barb & Chuck Francis, Mary & Paul Burrow, Bill & Mary Stahly, Pam Chandler, Mark Brunner, Brent Johnson, Phillip Riley, Scott Riley, Karen O'Connor, Steve Clements, Luke Wilke, Ann Seacrest, Gerald B. & Ket Dimon, Dusty & Stacey Walsh, Greg & Mary Heidrick, Jim Carwell, Sean Barry, Jean Hellman, Alvin & Emily Raef, Dan & Cathy Pudenz, Oak Williams, Robin & Janet Goracke, Mark & Heather Fusco, Ann McFall, Phil & Barb Bohaty, Al Jensen, Olsson Associates, Bradley & Kimberly Walker, Ann Heydt, Kent Imig, Alice L. Lane, Charles Focht, Bronson & Andrea Riley

Thank you to renewing members: Kathryn Witte, Ruthann Nahorny, Michael James, Wesley Trout, Linda Tesch, Paul Wisnieski, Carl Bouges, Mick & Meri Eschenbrenner, Vincent Goeres, Bob & Karen Truba, Betty & Arlen Beam, Kyle & Tracy Haefele, Charles & Marcille Ansorge, David & Rhonda Schoenmaker, Dee Morgan, Peg Ogea, Frank Chavira, Marilyn Hutchinson, Kathie Putensen, Con & Barbara Keating, Pam Conover, David & Trixie Schmidt, Paul & Janet Zillig, Lil Gibson, David & Jan McChesney, Dean L. Petersen, Laird Watkins, Donald & Pattie Niven, Rita Weber, Sue Guild, Elly Hardekopf, Betty Castan, Douglas Oxley, Gerald Luedtke, Dorothy Ladman, Tim, Sheila & Hannah Terrell, Rose Quackenbush, Susan Melcher, Linda Breen, Craig MacPhee, Mark Rolland, Ken & Peggy Volker, Ted & Mary LaGrange, Tom Armstrong, Pat & Bruce Hammond, Duteau Chevrolet & Subaru, Valerie & Will Jones, Sandra Hilsabeck, Mike Boosalis, Fred & Patricia Ullrich, Mike & Melissa Renn, Bob & Lisa Rauner, Ruth Jensen, Highlands Animal Hospital, Jim & Laurie Haszard, Mary Heidrick, Jeff & Kylee Pohl, Debby Kerr, Joy Ritchie, Bill Walker, Alice M. Dittman, Sherry Taylor, Margaret C. Tyler, Mike & Vicki Mjelde, Bill & Jean Baker, Bill & Sandy Spielman, Patrick Lorenze, Tom & Marilyn Tabor, Ronald C. Hill, Steve & Nancy Green, and Norman & Betty Mapes.

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EAGLE REST STOP

A new amenity is taking shape on the MoPac East Trail. While heading east and just before reaching Eagle, watch for a fork to the right. After a hairpin turn and descent you will find yourself in Eagle's Park. A parking area will be provided just south of the down-sloping trail. Follow the limestone trail and you will come to a new restroom facility. At last visit there was some work being undertaken to install a drainage system and limestone had yet to be laid down on the first part of the spur, but even if the work is in progress the restrooms can be found by turning right on the first street (5th) and right again on D St. Availability of the rest rooms during winter is yet to be determined. Thanks to the Lower Platte South NRD and the City of Eagle for jointly funding this effort which is a valuable addition to other MoPac East improvements-including a drinking fountain and the port-a-john at Walton.



**GPTN HAS COMMITTED TO RAISE \$250,000
FOR THE GREAT PLAINS TRAILS CENTER
TO BE LOCATED IN ANTELOPE VALLEY**

This 2500 sq. ft. building will provide restrooms, bicycle rentals, vending and a large public meeting room that can be opened onto the plaza for special events.

Your contribution will help make this facility a reality.

**Make contributions payable to the Nebraska Trails Foundation
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