

Novi T O D A Y

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ITC Trail will eventually connect into Maybury Park and beyond

Rachelle Smith loves the ITC Trail in Novi because it allows her a little quiet time.

"I'm an exercise buff," said Smith. "I work out six days a week and the trail is a break

and not have to worry about traffic and possibly a distracted driver."

Built along the International Transmission Co. utility corridor, the ITC Trail is yet another way for

Novi residents to enjoy nature's landscape. The trail, which will stretch approximately five miles when completed, is a key component of the city's Non-Motorized Master Plan that was adopted in 2011.

"It's a 10-foot-wide asphalt trail that's easily

accessible to just about everyone," Novi Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Director Jeffrey Muck said about the pathway. "Eventually, it will connect into Maybury State Park, which will then lead to Northville and Hines Park."

So far, more than 1.5 miles of the trail is completed, from

10 Mile Road up Wixom Road to the Medilodge pathway connector. Muck said the city recently broke ground on a second segment, from the ITC Sports Park to Nine Mile Road.

"We still need to go from Nine Mile to 10 Mile, and that will be the most expensive part of the trail," Muck said. "It's a straight mile of pathway and it travels through a lot of woodland and wetlands. This segment will require a significant amount of boardwalk to be constructed, which costs an estimated \$500 a foot."

HIDDEN JEWEL

Smith, who runs a business consulting firm and does motivational speaking, is a huge fan of the trail.

"It really is a hidden jewel," she said. "Most of it runs through the woods and you'll see people of all age groups along the way. You'll see families with kids, people walking their dogs, plenty of bicyclists and plenty of seniors wanting to get in

some exercise. It's pretty flat and accessible."

Migrin, who built his home off West Nine Mile Road in 1990, is passionate about promoting the city's woodlands and wildlife. Prior to retiring in 2012, he used to walk one or two miles around Domino's Farms to maintain a healthy blood sugar level.

Today, he has an exercise route that starts just outside his front door.

"It's nice because you can sit in my backyard and I have nothing but the forest and the trees behind me," Migrin said. "The wild turkeys roost at night and the deer come around all the time. You can still hear the road traffic in the background, but overall I think the city is doing a pretty good job with protecting our wetlands and other natural features."

SUPPORT A GOOD CAUSE

While city dollars are helping with construction of the trail, outside agencies are also chipping in with donations. The Novi Parks



Construction crews are currently working on extending the ITC Trail.

for me. It's very serene, well-maintained and very peaceful."

Karl Migrin walks the trail because it's off the beaten path.

"It's a means of getting exercise," he said. "I just turned 59 and I'm a diabetic — I want a trail where I can get away from the main roads

Foundation, for example, donated \$118,000 to complete the current segment of the trail that's under construction.

"It's a great project," Muck said. "It will connect all these areas and give people a really nice trail to follow, along with providing some healthy activity."

Construction on the trail began in 2013 and will continue over the next several years. Anyone interested in helping out with this project or similar park-related projects can learn more about the foundation at www.noviparksfoundation.org.

ITC certainly played a key role in the trail by allowing the city to build along the

electricity transmission company's vast utility corridor. Luba Sitar, the Customers Relations & Community Education

Manager for ITC, said in many instances the utility corridors are the best place to build a pathway in a developed community.

"We really like to think of ourselves as active community partners and these trails fit right into that philosophy," Sitar said. "This is our second trail in Novi. We completed one in Canton and we're

involved in over a dozen other trail projects that are in various stages of development."

Sitar said the trails also

prove beneficial to the safe and reliable delivery of electric power. Trails are compatible

with ITC's overall management of the corridor. Residents walking the trails have also proven helpful in notifying the company of any concerns on the corridor.

"We've been fortunate to have a number of residents contact us if they see a piece

of equipment that looks like it needs to be repaired," she said. "So it works both ways: we're providing the space for this beautiful trail, and we benefit as a company from having the greater community awareness of concerns in the corridor."

Of course, the best reason to build a trail is to promote good health.

"A gym isn't for everyone," Smith said. "Parks give you an alternative — you have an alternative place to walk or jog. And it's free. This is an avenue to get healthy and enjoy nature. We're talking about quality of life, and the ITC Trail provides you with that opportunity."

How to support the Novi Parks Foundation

Anyone interested in helping out with this project or similar park-related projects can learn more at noviparksfoundation.org.

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