

Greenway project opens another link

Key half-mile section of Little Sugar Creek Greenway will connect Metropolitan and CMC.

By Karen Sullivan

Posted: Sunday, Aug. 01, 2010



The city skyline is visible from Little Sugar Creek Greenway. The bridge carrying traffic on Pearl Park Way is in the foreground. The opening celebration for the greenway will be Friday.
PHOTOS BY JEFF SINER

There will be a celebration in Midtown Charlotte on Friday for the opening of a new half-mile stretch of Little Sugar Creek Greenway.

The new section, along Kings Drive between Pearl Park Way and Morehead Street, fills a gap between the recently completed trail at the Metropolitan development and an older trail at Carolinas Medical Center.

Walkers, runners, bikers and skaters now can get on the trail at Charlottetowne Avenue and continue for 3.3 miles to the Park Road Shopping Center, passing through Freedom Park along the way.

Yet, as the opening draws near, construction is continuing on the new linear park that surrounds the trail. Some areas might still be a bit untidy for the celebration.

"We knew that it would come down to the wire," said Gwen Cook, a park planner for Mecklenburg

County Park and Recreation. "Some construction remains, but the linking of this new greenway to adjacent Liz Hair Nature Walk at Carolinas Medical Center is significant."

Mecklenburg County approved a plan in 1980 that called for more than 73 miles of greenway trails along 22 creeks.

Greenways serve as an alternative means of transportation for those not using a car. They also are used for recreation.

When completed, the planned 12.5-mile trail along Little Sugar Creek will stretch from Cordelia Park to the S.C. border. It is projected to connect there to the Carolina Thread Trail, a regional network of trails.

For years, the section of Little Sugar Creek at Metropolitan was covered by concrete. Demolishing Midtown Square mall and removing



The central fountain at the Little Sugar Creek Greenway on Kings Drive will be the site of the grand opening ceremony Friday.

the creek cap allowed Pappas Properties to develop a mixed-use project there. Metropolitan has residences, offices, retail stores and restaurants, many overlooking the creek.



The fountain will be one of the access areas for the Little Sugar Creek Greenway, not far from Uptown.

The new trail section opening Friday along Kings Drive is a showpiece for the greenway system. The park setting around the trail includes ornate stonework, including a plaza with a fountain as the park's centerpiece, a lower plaza with stone stairways and a pedestrian bridge that extends over the creek. Several public art pieces are scattered throughout the park. The program Friday will include a bike ride on the greenway prior to opening festivities.

"It's a celebration of public art, destination, greenway trail, stream restoration - lots of wonderful things that this (trail) section represents," Cook said.

<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2010/08/01/1589699/greenway-project-opens-another.html#ixzz0vIWZNxk1>