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By: Joanna Owen Clouston

City-wide walking trails taking shape

"Quality of Life" projects are a main component of what the city is working on, according to Assistant City Manager Mike Brice.

Brice took part in a walking trails discussion Tuesday, August 15 in the Chamber of Commerce conference room.

Chamber President Marilyn Feaver said the meeting was held to "Turn up the Volume" on the city's walking trails.

Brice answered questions about the first phase of city's new walking trails.

He said the grants to build the trails linking Shannon Springs Park to the USAO campus have been approved. The new walking trail will be 10-foot wide and approximately one and a half miles long. The city has budgeted \$135,000 for the project. The engineering contract went out to Garver Engineering of Norman on August 7. The Engineering results must be submitted and approved by the Department of Transportation and then construction on the walking trails can begin.

The trails will begin at the park, work their way down Montana Ave. to 15th Street, over to Grand Ave. and ending just past the college at Alabama and 19th Street.

The next trails project on the list will begin at 19th Street and Alabama, and go all the way past the hospital and high school to Illinois Ave.

Funding is now being sought for that project. This area is being tackled next because, according to Brice, there is already enough lighting down 19th Street, and it seems to be one place where there will be the most impact.

"We'll be encompassing a fairly large neighborhood," Brice said.

He said it is the goal of the city to eventually have the trails encompass the entire town. Little off shoot trails will eventually be constructed at various high traffic areas off the original path.

"The major and council we have now are very committed to this," Brice said.

Although it is not part of the plan to date, Brice said an area of interest is finding a way to connect two of the educational institutes together. The two in question are the high school and technology center.

"These projects may take some time, but we want it to be nice, and a first rate job," Brice said.

Feaver asked if the chamber or the Interagency Coalition could do anything to help, she was told finding funding would be helpful.

"We need the money," Brice said. "The length of time it takes to finish the projects is dependent on the funding we can get and when we get it."