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Galt works on plans for future city parks

Nature trails, BMX track on wish list

By [Chris Nichols](#)
News-Sentinel Staff Writer
Updated: **Thursday, August 14, 2008 12:38 AM PDT**
Comments (1 comment(s))

Boyce Jeffries never imagined a day when Bicycle Motocross tracks, equestrian trails or rock climbing centers would edge to the top of this city's park needs.

But after hearing from residents last night during a workshop on Galt's future park plans, it appears that day is coming.

"If 10 years ago, you were to tell me 'I need a dog park,' I'd say, 'A dog park? What are you talking about?'" the city's veteran parks and recreation director said, noting the city opened its first-ever canine play area this spring due to popular demand.

More than 20 residents dreamed, debated, sketched ideas with red and green markers and helped nudge a new Galt Parks Master Plan forward Wednesday night during a two-hour meeting at the Chabolla Center.

The plan, last updated more than a decade ago, will help Galt build new parks and improve existing ones through 2025.

Though a relatively small crowd turned out, the workshop was abuzz with talk of everything from the need for nature trails to a Frisbee golf course.

There was support for building traditional parks with more softball diamonds and soccer fields. But several residents like Barbara Woods said they're ready to see something different in their hometown.

"What about not making this so devoted to ball parks ... but more toward the natural setting that it's in?" asked Woods, pointing to a black and white sketch of the 80-acre Hauschildt Road Site, displayed on the center's wall. The city-owned property, in line to become a new park, is bisected by Skunk Creek and bordered by McKenzie Road to the east.

Perhaps a creekside amphitheater, where drama clubs or school bands could practice, should be the focus of that future park, noted Woods, a math and science teacher at Marengo Ranch Elementary School. Maybe a collection of boulders, instead of plastic play equipment, should be placed nearby for rockclimbing, she and others offered.

The city is already set on plans for one large, traditional park: The 40-acre Walker Park at West Elm Street and Sargent Avenue. The \$30 million project will be included in the master plan. It's scheduled to include soccer and softball fields, lighted basketball and tennis courts and even a 30,000 square-foot community center. Construction on its first phase is set for next spring, Jeffries said.

Funding for it depends on fees collected from new residential development, something that has slowed to a trickle across the region.

Two other Galt parcels have been identified as future parks. They include the 20-acre Kost Road Site north of Dry Creek, and the half-acre Harvey Park "Annex," across from Harvey Park on D Street.

There is no timeline for when they or the Hauschildt Road site would be built. Funding plans and city approvals must still be achieved for all three.

Kate Kirsh, a vice president with Rocklin-based Foothill Associates and the lead consultant for the city plan, said her company will present a cost analysis for all suggestions made by the public.

That will be part of a draft master plan submitted by the firm this fall for public study. Galt's Parks and Recreation Commission and later the City Council will review it along with a final plan, expected by April.

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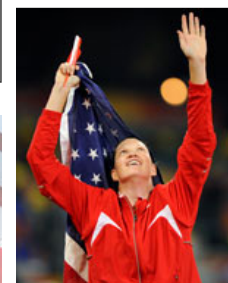
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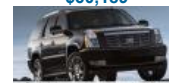
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Last night's workshop, Kirsh noted, was still an early part of the process.

"It's a place to say, 'Ideally, what do people want?'" she said.

For Brenda Renfrow, whose daughter has grown up playing softball on Galt's diamonds, the future needs to include more space for softball.

The Galt Sports Complex is the only place Galt Illusion, the city's traveling girls softball league, can play, she noted.

Renfrow noted the girls are often squeezed out by other youth or adult programs. A class of martial arts students, not softball players, was practicing near the complex as the hot afternoon turned to evening.

"That's really the only complex we have," Renfrow said.

Contact reporter *Chris Nichols* at chrisn@lodinews.com.



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