

Tunnel proposed for greenway

Path would dip underneath bypass

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When the Georgia Department of Transportation gets rolling with completing the four-laning of Veteran's Memorial Parkway, they will likely be digging a tunnel as well.

Bulloch County Commissioners listened to plans for extending the S&S Greenway from Memorial Parkway to Brooklet as Statesboro-Bulloch Parks and Recreation Director Mike Rollins described the proposed project that could bring new life and new purpose to the old S&S

Railroad bed.

Just south of the future location of Franklin Toyota on Veteran's Memorial Parkway, a tunnel will be dug underneath the area where the two new lanes are to be constructed, said Bulloch County Manager Tom Couch.

Then, workers will burrow

underneath the existing lanes to complete the tunnel which will be part of the greenway, he said.

Eventually the greenway will connect Statesboro's Linear Park to downtown Brooklet, Rollins said. The first phase will link the city greenway to Cawana Road.

The DOT has agreed to fund the tunnel when they construct the two new lanes, he said.

For the rest of the greenway, the county hopes to secure a

grant, Couch said.

Rollins asked for county approval to request \$1 million - "the maximum amount available," and added that the law requires local government to match 20 percent of funds granted.

The deadline for grant application is Friday, he said. Commissioners will learn whether the grant is approved by the spring.

Couch said the tunnel will be

lighted, and land acquisition is not an issue, because the county already owns the land.

"It really should be a very simple project," Rollins said.

He described proposed plans for two "trail-head parks" at the ends of the greenway, with a rest area and bathrooms. The course will consist of a 12-foot wide paved pathway for pedestrians and cyclists, and will fol-

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low alongside Railroad Bed Road in some areas.

There would be "access points and bathrooms" along the way as well, he said.

Rollins and some commissioners expressed concern about traffic at the "Five Points" intersection that includes the intersection of Pretoria-Rushing and Burkhalter roads.

Rollins said if the grant is

approved, "we hope to begin the first phase within a month."

"Predesign on subsequent phases" would likely follow shortly, he said.

An "educated guesstimate" of the project is around \$1.4 million, he said. "These are very broad cost estimates."

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