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HAPPY TRAILS

New hike-and-bike lanes add value to residential properties

Dallas is building 104 miles of outdoor trails, making nearby homes more attractive.

One thing Paige Dawson did not like about the Preston Hollow house she and her husband were thinking of buying was the easement for the utility lines behind it. But that was before her Realtor told her about the coming Northaven Trail.

The new hike-and-bike trail, which will be completed in the next few weeks behind her house, turned a question mark into a dazzling asset.

With the help of millions of dollars in bond money and other grants, Dallas is building 104 miles of outdoor trails that will be linked to one another and provide something Dallas is not known for — access to schools, businesses and transit stations across the city without a car.

A side benefit of the trails, which are being completed over the next few years, is they are making housing along the trails much more attractive.

"People want to be close to the activity, particularly because the trails lead to shopping. The trails are a big, big plus," Grant Van Cleave with Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage says. "This is a great thing the city has done."

Van Cleave, who specializes in mar-



Homeowner Paige Dawson is thrilled that the city of Dallas is building 104 miles of outdoor trails, including the Northaven Trail, which passes behind her Preston Hollow home.

Photo by Steve Reed

Eric Holmes with REMAX DFW Associates says most homebuyers have not been looking to be near the new trails because they haven't known about them.

"The park system in Dallas has been fractured. So, as the trail system becomes more interconnected, it will become more and more desirable," he says.

The Santa Fe trail, an abandoned rail line, has always been viewed by potential homebuyers as a negative, he says. "Take that off the books and replace it with a hike-and-bike trail that runs from Baylor to White Rock Lake and you make those houses very attractive," Holmes says.

"Homes on the Katy Trail used to back up to a railroad track. Now they back up to the trail. The area has gone from being undesirable to desirable. That is quite a turnaround," Player says.

As the Northaven Trail path is built, Dawson has enjoyed watching people using the trails from her home office. Now that the trail is nearing completion, she is even more excited. If it is finished by Jan. 1, she says, "I will have no excuse for not keeping my New Year's resolution."

Stewart Lytle (stewart_lytle@yahoo.

"I love the idea that I can walk out my backyard and find this interesting trail," Dawson says. She believes the trail that is being built and landscaped block by block between the Jewish Community Center and Preston Road enhances the neigh-

back without worrying about being hit by a car.

Dawson says her Realtor, Lydia Player with Ebby Halliday Realtors, pointed out that the three-bedroom Preston Hollow house was "a hidden gem" because few had

want to be near the trail. (For full details, see www.northaventrail.org/trail-plans.)

Monica Berkley is typical. She moved into a Turtle Creek high-rise from the San Francisco Bay area three years ago. A priority for her was to be near the Katy