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Tiki bar will be steps away from Katy Trail October opening of Harwood Grove paves way for more pedestrian-friendly projects near path

SHERYL JEAN, Staff Writer sjean@dallasnews.com

People who pedal, run or walk along Dallas' popular Katy Trail soon will have a new option: chillin' out.

The Harwood Grove at the Katy Trail, which plans to open next month, will provide a small Tiki bar and outdoor picnic tables. It will be nestled among the trees along the east side of the trail between McKinnon Street and Harry Hines Boulevard just north of Goat Hill.

Developer Harwood International plans to start construction within a couple of weeks, officials said. It also will build stairs up a hillside behind the rustic cafe to serve as a trail entry from Harwood Street.

The cafe is the brainchild of Oliver Barbier-Mueller, 21, the son of Harwood CEO Gabriel Barbier-Mueller.

"When I was living back home in Dallas this summer, I used the Katy Trail pretty frequently," said Oliver Barbier-Mueller, a student at Texas Christian University. "I was one of the people in the worst shape, looking for some way to refresh myself."

The cafe is part of Harwood's plan to develop 17 blocks it owns nearby into a pedestrian-friendly village of shops, restaurants, homes and offices. So far, six of 17 buildings are up.

The Harwood Grove plans to offer snacks and drinks, including wine and beer. Games, such as checkers and chess, will be free to use.

"This concept doesn't exist," said Spence Sowa, Harwood's vice president of development. "Do you use the trail? Do you see how populated it is at Knox [Street] at Toulouse?"

Sowa declined to reveal the cost of building the cafe.

About 15,000 people use the Katy Trail each week. The 3.5-mile paved path along an old railroad track opened in May 2000.

"I endorse it," said Philip Henderson, chairman of Friends of the Katy Trail, which has been working with Harwood. "We're very interested in getting the community connected to the trail."

Eric Van Steenburg, former executive director of Friends of the Katy Trail, wrote in an Aug. 23 editorial in *The Dallas Morning News* that a cafe could be built at half a dozen

places along the trail to improve Dallas' quality of life. He resigned in August to pursue a doctorate in marketing.

"We're always looking to expand and add amenities" for people who work and live in the Harwood district, Sowa said. He estimates that 11,000 people live within a half-mile of the district, and 2,800 more are expected to move to the area within a few years.

Harwood has been working with Friends of the Katy Trail about an extension through the Harwood district, Sowa said.

"Harwood Grove is the first step," he said.

MAP(S): (Staff graphic) The Harwood Grove cafe

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