



Fayetteville to introduce 500 e-scooters to city, UA campus

continued from page 1

setbacks in terms of just coming to terms with the design and the cost,” Eifling said. “That’s still kind of ongoing. We were hoping to start construction as early as next summer, but it’s kind of TBD right now. I would like to say that yes, it is definitely going to happen. There is always a possibility that it could be derailed.”

Garrett Lampson, a senior who is vice president of the UA cycling club and a member of the UA Bicycle Advocacy Committee, said that although he will have graduated by the time it happens, he is eager for Maple Street to get a protected bike lane. Lampson thinks campus has become more bike-friendly since he was a freshman, thanks to the introduction of the VeoRide program in fall 2018 and the opening of the Discovery Bikeway in January, he said. However, there are several improvements he thinks should be made to improve sustainable transportation, Lampson said.

Lampson thinks one of the most necessary developments is a bike lane connecting campus to the Razorback Greenway, he said. More protected bike lanes, covered bike parking and racks throughout campus would also encourage more students to commute by bicycle, Lampson said.

Lampson thinks continuing to foster a bike-friendly environment will be important for the city because alternative transportation methods have benefits such as eco-friendliness and affordability, he said.

“It’s a lot more environmentally sustainable, it does a lot for increasing people’s overall happiness, it promotes a healthier community,” Lampson said. “It increases accessibility for a lot more impoverished people.”

The UofA was upgraded from silver to gold Bicycle-Friendly University status when The League of American Bicyclists announced its 2019 BFU awards Oct. 17. The university joins 24 other schools who have ever earned that award, with only the eight platinum-awarded schools ranking higher in bike friendliness.

However, the university is not done trying to make campus an easily accessible environment for cycling and the use of other alternative transportation, Eifling said.

“Our transportation needs are growing and intensifying

more as we’ve grown our student population. People aren’t going to be able to drive a car by themselves to this campus and find a parking spot,” Eifling said. “Given all the investment that’s gone on in the region into building trail infrastructure, we’d be foolish not to tap into that to meet our transportation needs.”

The other major project in the works for the university and the city is the introduction of 500 e-scooters, half of which will be

owned—and serviced by the

company Lime, and half by the company Spin, Eifling said. Officials decided to split the scooter contract between the two companies so that if one vendor does not have success in the region and has to pull out, it can be replaced with less disruption to customers, he said.

The success of the VeoRide rollout encouraged members of the Office of Sustainability to add more alternative transit options, Eifling said. Riders throughout Fayetteville have taken just over 96,000 rides on the fleet of manual and electronic bicycles since the program launched.

At its peak, the Fayetteville VeoRide program had 400 bicycles, but that number is down to about 350 because of

vandalism and mechanical issues, Eifling said.

The Fayetteville City Council voted in July to limit the number of e-scooters that could be operated by private companies to 500, although the law allows that the cap can be raised. There is no set rollout date for the scooters, but the project is moving along as UA and city officials negotiate with Spin and Lime and discuss ways to keep riders safe, Eifling said.

“It’s never been done in Fayetteville before, so we haven’t really tried to pin ourselves into a date because we want to make sure that we don’t do anything hastily or prematurely,” Eifling said. “That said, it has been a while in the process of getting them here and getting them permitted, so they’re at the point where they’re ready to launch sooner than later.”

Will Blasingame, a senior,

said he thinks e-scooters are an excellent idea because, like VeoRide bikes, they are affordable, eco-friendly and convenient. Blasingame thinks e-scooters have been beneficial in his home city of Dallas, and Fayetteville needs them too, he said.

“Parking on campus can get really bad, and who wants to have a lot of parking lots everywhere?” Blasingame said. “For sustainable growth, you kind of need inventive modes of transportation.”

Blasingame often has a hard time finding a VeoRide bike when he needs one and thinks having e-scooters on campus will allow more short-distance transportation to be readily available to students who need it, he said.

Jack Freeland, a senior who rides his electric skateboard to campus most days, is a big fan of alternative transportation, he said. While he worries that there might be a community-wide learning curve in regards to safety and road sharing, Freeland thinks e-scooters will benefit those who don’t have cars and will get even more use than the VeoRide bikes, he said.

“It’s sort of a gap we have. I know that a lot of freshmen are afraid to move off campus because they don’t have a car, so they don’t know what they’re going to do,” Freeland said. “The university itself can’t cover the entire town (with Razorback Transit), and I think scooters and things are convenient, even if you’re not commuting to or from campus.”



Garrett Lampson, vice president of the UA cycling club, rides his bike to campus Oct. 30 as he does daily. Lampson said the addition of a bike lane would greatly improve his route to campus.

Heidi Kirk Staff Photographer

Renovations, construction on resources for homeless fail to beat cold weather

Abbi Ross

Staff Reporter
@AbbiRoss10

A new housing community for homeless people in Fayetteville will not be opening its doors in late 2019 as originally planned.

The New Beginnings Bridge Housing Community is set to open in late summer of 2020, said Kevin Fitzpatrick, NWA Serve board vice president and UA sociology professor.

The community, which was originally slated to open in the fall of 2019, will be similar to other Bridge Housing communities across the United States and takes a “housing first” approach, according to the NWA Serve website.

“With our original time schedule, we felt going into this it would get us to a place where we would have a majority of the work completed before winter,” Fitzpatrick said. “That was the timeline in our head, sometimes our head doesn’t match with reality. We got a good dose of reality.”

Construction plans have been submitted to the city and the review of them was completed last week, but a few changes must be addressed first, Fitzpatrick said.

“The process is slow, part of it has to do with the fact that it is a negotiation and a back and forth with architects first,” Fitzpatrick said. “All of the engineers, all of the people who are working on the project submit their drawings to the architect.”

Those plans are approved twice by the board before being submitted to the city, Fitzpatrick said.

One of the changes requires a letter from the Arkansas Department of Health regarding the drain that the community will be using for draining garbage grease, Fitzpatrick said.

The goal is to have all of that done in two weeks, Fitzpatrick said.

Another snag the board has



A group of men and women gather at the 7Hills Homeless Center to get out of the rain September 21, 2018.

Traveler Archive

encountered is an ordinance from the city that will accommodate up to \$5,000 in fees when reworded and voted at the Nov. 5 city council meeting, Fitzpatrick said.

“Once that ordinance passes in order to have the fees waived, we will not be able to pull a permit for 32 days,” Fitzpatrick said.

The project will take six to nine months from construction to final inspection, Fitzpatrick said.

Board members are looking at hiring a director and a community engagement coordinator, who will oversee volunteer efforts and other service providers, Fitzpatrick said.

Serve NWA, an organization that serves underprivileged communities in Northwest Arkansas, bought the land for the project from the UofA in 2018.

The 4.69 acres of undeveloped land was sold to the Serve NWA for \$72,571 by the UofA.

The area was cleaned up and cleared off before being sold, Mike Johnson, vice chancellor for Facilities Management.

The organization is aiming

to improve the conditions of unsheltered homeless people living in Fayetteville, according to their webpage.

Renovations are also scheduled for the Salvation Army’s Fayetteville shelter, but the start date for construction is unknown.

Charles Thorpe has been housed for two months but stayed at the Salvation Army when the shelter renovations were originally supposed to take place, he said.

Thorpe thinks that bad attitudes between clients are an issue with the resources and that if action on those behaviors is taken there will be change and the new community will be successful, he said.

“If those behaviors can be curbed then they have a shot,” Thorpe said about the New Beginnings Bridge Housing Community.

A count conducted showed 529 people in Fayetteville were facing homelessness on Jan. 24, 2019, according to the Northwest Arkansas Continuum of Care’s point-in-time count graphic on their website.

The point-in-time count displays total numbers of

sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January that the Department of Housing and Urban Development requires Continuums of Care to conduct, according to the HUD Exchange website.

Renovations to the Salvation Army’s Fayetteville shelter do not have a set completion date, said Blair Cook, public relations and volunteer coordinator.

“We are wanting to start as soon as possible, we are waiting on the city,” Cook said.

“We want to be done with it before it gets too cold, we do not want our cold shelter to be out of commission too long,” Cook said.

The renovations will more than double the sheltering capacity, expand the dining and kitchen area, add a computer lab for guests and increase the rehabilitation housing capacity from 21 to 25, Cook said.

Two family-style apartments will also be added, Cook said.

Clients will still be housed during the renovations, but the cold shelter will be affected since it is where part of the renovations will be taking place, Cook said.

Women in politics inspire political science students



Courtesy of the Celeste Williams for Arkansas Campaign

Several Northwest Arkansas female politicians discuss “From the Second Wave to the Tidal Wave,” a film documenting the progression of the feminist movement, Oct. 28 at the Bentonville Skylight Cinema.

Karina Veira

Staff Reporter
@karina_veira

Northwest Arkansas women in politics have inspired UA political science students to pursue government careers and speak out against inequality.

A group of NWA politicians including Nicole Clowney (D-86) met at the Bentonville Skylight Cinema on Oct. 28 for a screening and panel discussion of “From the Second Wave to the Tidal Wave,” a film about the progression of the feminist movement from the 1920s to the present day. There, they discussed the different forms of feminism.

Billie Firmin, a freshman majoring in political science, was first introduced to politics when her mother became a justice of the peace, she said.

“She showed me from an early age that women can be in positions of power and that it’s not an unusual thing to see,” Firmin said. “My grandma has also been super active with social initiatives around here.”

Having role models like her mother and grandmother showed

Firmin that she could be successful in a political career if that was what she chose to pursue, she said.

Panelist Judith Yanez, a justice of the peace (D-4) and first Latina elected official in NWA, decided to run for office because in many cases, she was the first teacher that her students could identify with in terms of ethnicity, she said.

Yanez grew up with undocumented parents in severe poverty, she said. She returned to school as a single mom and finished her bachelor’s and master’s degrees.

Yanez is open with her story because she wants the Latino community to know that while it is hard to achieve what she has achieved, it is still possible, she said.

Chloe Briggs, a graduate student studying political science, said she thinks it is important for young girls to see women in power, she said in an email.

“I hope they know politics is a place for them too, to pursue the changes they wish to make in our world,” Briggs said.

Allison “Fred” Hayes, a sophomore, said she has

See “NWA women” on page 9