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# Boynton to start a downtown "Heritage Trail"

*Walking trail to highlight city's history*

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By Attiyya Anthony, Sun Sentinel

4:42 p.m. EDT, July 28, 2013

A recently awarded state grant will give people in **Boynton Beach** the opportunity to go on a walk to remember.

Earlier this month the state's Division of Historical Resources awarded the city \$18,250 to create a walking trail to highlight the city's history.

"The tour is designed to reflect the history of the city and how the city grew," said Warren Adams, the city's historic preservation planner.

The "Downtown Heritage Trail" will feature 30 sites along a one-and-a-half mile foot-trail.

Some of the sites on the trail include historic homes and churches, parks, the city library, City Hall, the Marina and the Old **Boynton Beach** High School, which was built in 1927.

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Mangrove Walk — a boardwalk that cuts through a natural mangrove habitat — is on the trail to represent Florida before any development happened, Adams said.

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Other sites on the trail, like the Harvey E. Oyer building, draw attention to some of Boynton's first settlers and paint an architectural picture of the city's early development.

The trail will go along Ocean Avenue, **Boynton Beach** Boulevard and cross over Federal Highway.

At each site, there will be an informational board with pictures, a map and a code for people with smartphones to scan for more information.

Aside from educating residents and visitors about Boynton's cultural importance, city officials hope that it will lead people to some of Boynton's downtown businesses.

"A lot of people are into [historic walks], I hope they do the tour and stop in and eat," said Mayor Jerry Taylor.

Taylor said the trail would also be a nice educational pull for teachers and students in the area. "It's a good thing, it gets them up and out and gives them the history of the city."

In addition to the state's funding, the Community Redevelopment Agency put up \$2,000 for the project.

CRA director Vivian Brooks said that city's history is important to its redevelopment and chose to financially support the program because "most of the properties are within the CRA district."

City officials say that the walking trail is just the beginning of the **Boynton Beach** Heritage Education Program, which is designed to show the city's "ongoing commitment to heritage education."

Adams said that he has applied for another grant to include 20 more historic sites into the trail, and if the project is successful, Boynton will create a smartphone app to give more information about the city's history.

Trail expansion would begin in 2014 if Boynton receives the second grant.

"It's ambitious, but I think it'll serve Boynton well," Adams said. "It's educational, there are economic possibilities, highlighting what **Boynton Beach** has to offer and it's tourism. There are a lot of advantages here."

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