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## **Officials break ground on trail**

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KENNESAW - Dirt is finally moving on the long-anticipated Noonday Creek Trail in north Cobb.

At a ceremonial groundbreaking Tuesday morning, the county commissioners, members of the Town Center Community Improvement District, and officials from the county transportation department and the National Park Service lauded the paved trail, which will span six miles.

The \$10 million trail will be built in phases, with some expected to open by the end of this year. Completion is targeted for 2012.

"We're most excited about enhancing the quality of life for Cobb residents who live and work up here," said Mason Zimmerman, chairman of the Town Center CID.

The CID began engineering and design studies for the trail more than 10 years ago. The CID has spent \$876,000 on the studies.

Commissioner Tim Lee, who represents northeast Cobb, said the trail is one of the Town Center CID's biggest successes.

"One of the top-ranking issues with any business that comes to Cobb County is the quality of life," he said. "Noonday Creek will add to that quality of life."

West Cobb Commissioner Helen Goreham said the trail would be used by people across the county.

"Even though the trail is primarily in districts one and three, it's going to serve all of Cobb County and beyond," she said. "The potential users of this trail will be huge numbers."

The trail ultimately will begin on Old Highway 41, where it will connect with the existing Kennesaw Mountain trail. It is to follow Old 41 to Barrett Parkway, and then meander northeast behind Town Center mall. It will end at Bells Ferry Road.

Construction is being paid for with money from the county's Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax, the state Department of Transportation, the Town Center CID and the federal government.

Kennesaw-based Ace Grading Company LLC is constructing the first phase, a 2.28-mile stretch in the middle of the trail, between Cobb Parkway and Barrett Lakes at Duncan Road.

That portion and the next part of the trail to be built, a .76-mile phase from the mountain trail west to the national park's border, are both expected to be complete by the end of the year, although they will not connect until 2012, when the Barrett Parkway widening is finished. The Barrett portion of the trail is part of the road project.

"The whole beauty of the project is it has the potential to link up to the national battlefield, link up with Marietta and Smyrna's trail, connect with the Silver Comet Trail and go all the way to Atlanta," Cobb Chairman Sam Olens said. "It connects and expands the trail network in the entire region."