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## Devou Park plan earns award

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**COVINGTON** - The firm that created the Devou Park master plan has won a prestigious award from Kentucky's chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

Human Nature, based in Cincinnati's Eden Park, won an Honor Award, the highest award a state chapter can present, said Louisville landscape architect Scott Hannah, the state group's president-elect.

The award's judges decided the master plan was worthy because of the impact it will have on the community, and because it addressed issues of sustainability and environmental responsibility, among other factors.

A state's Honor Award is presented with the hope that the winner will move on to compete in the national contest.

David Whittaker, design manager for Human Nature, said one highlight of the effort was, "We really stressed to try to make connections to the surrounding neighborhoods."

Currently area neighborhoods must either use narrow sidewalks or have no sidewalks at all to reach the park.

The effort also stressed a desire to connect with trails elsewhere, such as the proposed Riverfront Commons walking and biking path along the Ohio River.

"That was sort of our big concept - that's always a big hurdle (because of costs and property acquisition), but if you put a vision out there, sometimes it gets legs and walks around," Whittaker said.

The plan already has led to volunteers blazing mountain-bike trails through seldom-used parts of the park - a rare use for woods in the urban core.

"Part of our firm's approach to projects is to immerse ourselves as much as we can about various natural and cultural resources that make a site unique," Whittaker said. "We do a lot of inventory and analysis work using geographical information systems, and we hold lots of public meetings, so we get a feel for what stakeholders want.

"It sort of grows from a community, as opposed to being imposed on it from outside," Whittaker said.

The master plan can be found at [www.covingtonky.com](http://www.covingtonky.com), in the gray bar on the left side of the page.

Hannah said: "The chapter was pleased the Human Nature took the time to share this excellent example of landscape architecture with the state and happy to see the firm and city awarded such a high honor."