

BMX

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road. Then we have a weekend off and then we go to a national event.”

Lickteig said there are probably about 100 BMX racers of all ages in the area. All that travel — and the cost — makes the prospect of having a local, year-round indoor venue appealing, he said.

He and the other organizers also foresee it becoming a destination for people from four hours in every direction, serving not just BMX racers and freestylers but also mountain bikers and the entire cycling community.

Luke Hoffman, executive director of the Iowa Bicycle Coalition, which is partnering on the project, said the track could be a place to host educational and advocacy programs. The immediate goal is to raise \$47,000 for a feasibility study.

Neumann Monson Architects has contributed early renderings for the project, which show an airy, skylighted

arena with room for both BMX courses and spectators.

The goal of the feasibility study is to identify a potential location for the track, come up with a design that can serve riders of all skill levels, and devise a sustainable business plan. According to the Iowa Central BMX fundraising page for the project, CSL International, a sports, entertainment, convention and leisure industry consultancy, has been tapped to conduct the study.

Bobby Kennedy, operations manager at Des Moines Street Collective and a member of the West Des Moines Bicycle Advisory Commission, said he has been talking to West Des Moines city officials about the idea. But the track could be located somewhere else in the metro, depending on what the feasibility study shows.

“I want to keep it accessible and affordable,” Kennedy said. “I want normal people to be able to go there. The beauty of BMX and mountain biking is that you don’t really need a fancy bike. You can go out and have fun on anything,” he added.

Lickteig said once the study starts, it could take six months to complete.

What is BMX?

BMX stands for bicycle motocross and it includes racing as well as freestyle. The sport gained attention in the early 1970s in southern California and made its Olympic Games debut in 2008 in Beijing.

USA Cycling says BMX riders are “tested on dirt tracks with rollers, jumps, and turns to challenge their skills.”

Tracks can range from about 900 feet to 1,300 feet long. USA BMX, which claims to have more than 70,000 members, says there are in excess of 370 tracks across the U.S. and Canada.

No indoor tracks near Des Moines

USA BMX lists three tracks in Iowa, including the outdoor 80/35 BMX track at 1701 E. McKinley Ave. in Des Moines. But only one is indoors: Mississippi Valley BMX Raceway in Davenport, about a 2½-hour drive from Des Moines.

Housed in a cavernous building on the Mississippi Valley Fairgrounds, “It’s a throwback to the way that BMX racing used to be, which was flat track, flat corners, basically,” Lickteig said. “So, you’re in a warehouse, and then you put in wood jumps, hay bales in the corner.”

That’s where he and his son have spent the past three weekends. He said they like it, but the Des Moines organizers are looking to build something more sophisticated.

“I think our vision is a full-blown dirt racetrack, asphalt corners, a full-on BMX racetrack inside,” he said, along with spaces for “pump” bikes, which riders propel on wave-like “rollers” without pedaling, and for demonstrating dirt jumping and mountain biking skills.

“We’re thinking big,” Lickteig said.

“We want to be world class,” he added.

“I think this can be such an epicenter for those kids that are looking for something and just haven’t found it.”

Kennedy said he wants the track to become a “living breathing hub for the cycling community.”