

Study to determine trail path from Moon into Beaver County

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February 11, 2015 SEWICKLEY, PA — A study to determine how a 15-mile bike trail will travel from Moon to the Beaver County Jail site soon will get under way.

“We'll be taking a look at the routes and coming up with the best recommendation for improving those routes for safety and way-finding for bicyclists,” Findlay-based Mackin Engineering Co. Director Robert Genter said. The engineering firm is conducting the study for the Ohio River Trail Council, which is overseeing the project.

The path would use already established roadways.

“We'll be looking at local streets to make local connections,” he said. “It's an on-road route.” The Ohio River Trail study was made possible after a year and a half of fundraising led by Glen Osborne resident John Orndorff, director of the Ohio River Trail Council. In addition to the \$1,400 raised from individual donations, leaders in Sewickley, Leetsdale, Edgeworth and Glen Osborne each contributed \$200, Orndorff said. He said he hopes Ambridge leaders will contribute this month.

“The reason for getting these municipalities on board was not so much for the financial contributions as it was for their awareness,” he said. “I know that once this engineering study is complete, they're going to come back with recommendations. I want the boroughs involved to be there in the beginning and have some input.”

A \$2,000 grant from the Sewickley Valley Community Fund was enough for the trail council to agree to supply the remaining funds needed to reach the \$8,500 mark that would be needed to proceed with the second phase, Orndorff said.

The study is expected to continue through much of 2015.

A desired bike route covers paths already allocated by the state as “PA Bicycle Route A,” which stretches nearly 200 miles from Erie to Greene County, Genter said. Mackin's job is to find ways to make the route safer for cyclists and motorists, who may not be aware of its existence, Genter said.

“The bigger picture is there are people that bicycle some of these routes now, and if you travel out through there, you see some of the conditions,” he said. “There's no way-finding. For safety, there's barely any signage that alerts motorists that cyclists could be in the area.”

The larger goal for the Ohio River Trail project is for the involved communities to see improved quality of life and economic viability — something Orndorff said he has seen happen in other communities with established bikeways such as the Great Allegheny Passage.

A 2012 study performed by Frostburg State University and St. Vincent College estimated the Great Allegheny Passage was directly responsible for more than 30 percent of all revenue generated by businesses along the trail in 2011 — up from nearly 26 percent in 2007.

Eric Boerer — advocacy director for Bike Pittsburgh, an organization seeking to make the Pittsburgh region safer for bicyclists — said he has seen the transformation brought by the trail.

“The communities along the Great Allegheny Passage were kind of dying coal towns,” Boerer said. “The trail has completely revitalized a lot of these towns. I’ve been riding that trail since about 2001, and every year it gets built up.”

Source: <http://triblive.com/neighborhoods/yoursewickley/yoursewickleymore/7716856-74/trail-bike-ohio#axzz3SmuSaiuh>