

## **Elevated rec trail to be constructed along Allegheny River**

By Matthew Santoni  
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PennDOT contractors plan to start work soon on a half-mile elevated trail along the Allegheny River that will connect trails between Pittsburgh and Millvale, officials said Thursday.

PennDOT is assisting with the \$5 million project, funded with grants and donations, because the state is starting to relocate railroad tracks closer to the river and widen Route 28 in that area.

The tracks will move to an abandoned railbed, which runners and bicyclists now use as an unofficial trail, said Thomas Baxter, executive director of Friends of the Riverfront.

"On average there are close to 200 individuals going through, back and forth each day," Baxter said. "In the summer it goes much higher. We're looking at 500 people per day."

The plan is to build a 12-foot-wide concrete structure, much like a bridge, over the riverbank, since the road widening and rail line relocation will take up most of the land, said Jeff Clatty, PennDOT project manager. Trees along the river's back channel and Herr's Island should not be disturbed, he said.

The trail will be among the first parts of the widening project to be finished, so that bikers and pedestrians can be separated from the construction area, Clatty said.

When the segment is complete, a continuous trail will run about eight miles along the Allegheny and Ohio rivers from the penitentiary in the North Side to Millvale.

A ceremonial opening is planned for April, Baxter said, and the trail segment will be transferred to City of Pittsburgh ownership as part of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail.

The next phase of the trail, which would continue up the Allegheny River past Millvale to connect with the Armstrong Trail, will be discussed in public meetings after New Year's Day, Baxter said.

*Matthew Santoni can be reached at [msantoni@tribweb.com](mailto:msantoni@tribweb.com) or 412-380-5625.*