

## County hires firm to plot Allegheny Valley Trail

By Tim Puko  
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Allegheny County could have a plan ready by the end of the year for a 32-mile trail along the Allegheny River.

County officials selected McTish Kunkel & Associates to complete a development plan for the Allegheny Valley Trail from Millvale through Harrison, county Executive Dan Onorato said Thursday. The Allentown-based planning and engineering firm will plot the best route and identify all the landowners to create a comprehensive plan for the trail probably within 10 months, Onorato's spokesman Kevin Evanto said.

"Trail development is sort of a complex process because you have all the different property owners," Evanto said.

McTish is getting a \$62,000 contract for the work. Half of that money will come from a state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources grant, \$10,000 from the county budget, and the rest from conservation groups and community agencies, Evanto said. Officials will have a cost estimate for construction after the study.

The trail is penciled in to go through 18 municipalities. Pittsburgh, Millvale and O'Hara already have parts of the path completed.

McTish officials are planning their first meeting with community leaders on March 10. One of those communities is Tarentum, where officials are planning part of the trail through a riverside park. Meetings with other community leaders, school officials, park advocates and then the public should happen later in the year, Onorato spokeswoman Megan Dardanell said.

Once built, the trail will link with the Erie-to-Pittsburgh Greenway and the Pittsburgh-to-Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway, which follows a 320-mile path of the historic Pennsylvania Mainline Canal. It also will connect to the Rachel Carson Trail.

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