

Grant to help identify new use for local land

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Work is getting under way on a pilot program to help four local communities identify ways they can put "brownfield" sites to good use.

A \$150,000 grant through the Environmental Protection Agency is giving Monaca, Aliquippa, Midland and Coraopolis a chance to study riverfront property in each of the municipalities to see how it could best be used to benefit the community.

"Brownfield" sites are those areas of land on which the expansion or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant, according to the EPA.

The grant is a pilot program through the EPA that was awarded to 23 communities nationwide, Amy Storm of the EPA said. She said the communities in the Beaver County area are the only Pennsylvania communities to receive the grant, and they are the only communities across the country that are working jointly.

Each of the communities lies along the Ohio River and are slated to be part of a recreation trail that would lead from Moon Township to Midland.

There is a steering committee being led by a landscape, architecture and planning company, Stromberg/Garrigan & Associates from Somerset. There will be a series of meetings -- including meetings with the public and property owners of identified brownfield sites -- that will result in the committee identifying projects or future uses for the land. The uses can range from industrial to commercial to recreational.

After potential land uses are identified it will be up to the counties and individual communities to take the next steps to bring the projects to fruition.

A representative from Stromberg/Garrigan will give presentations to each of the community councils over the next several weeks.