

## Plans for riverfront bike path, park developing

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The physical landscape along the Ohio River in western Allegheny County hasn't changed, but a blueprint for evolution is emerging in two locations.

The Ohio River Trail Council received a \$200,000 federal grant this month to begin development of a bicycle trail that will link the Montour Trail to the Sewickley Bridge, according to Vince Troia of Monaca, council chairman.

And the Moon Township Parks and Recreation Department is waiting for its development consultant to return with plans for a 17-acre riverfront park, according to Director Dana Kasler.

The bicycle trail — part of the Ohio River South Shore Trail that will eventually extend to Monaca — will eventually link the Montour Trail with four riverside recreation sites, according to Troia: Allegheny County's proposed Montour Junction, the boat launch in Coraopolis, the proposed riverfront park in Moon and the riverfront park in Sewickley. It could stretch to Shouse Park in Crescent Township.

Montour Junction, which received a \$500,000 grant from the Richard King Mellon Foundation in August 2011, is progressing through “pre-development” work, according to the county website. The 78-acre former railroad site sits in Coraopolis, Moon Township and Robinson Township.

The Ohio River Trail Council received its grant from the Federal Highway Administration's Transportation Community and System Preservation Program. It requires a 20 percent matching contribution, and Troia said the council must provide \$40,000 for the project.

The grant is for “engineering, specifications, bid documents and permits,” according to the highway administration website.

The trail council, like Moon Parks, is employing Stromberg & Garrigan & Associates, a Somerset-based firm, to develop plans.

Kasler said he expects the development firm to return in the next two months with its initial plan for the park. It will be “a framework” for development, including multiple options, and not a final plan.

The process began with a public meeting in which residents “gave Stromberg & Garrigan & Associates a million options,” Kasler said.

Stromberg & Garrigan & Associates conducted a survey of residents attending the meeting that listed 56 potential park activities. Kasler has not yet received the results of the survey.

While the park will probably include water access, it will not include a launch facility for big, motorized boats. Kasler said a parking facility to accommodate trucks and trailers would require too much park property.

“I think we’re envisioning some kind of dock that could be using for fishing and small boats,” Kasler said.

The park, which will sit between the Sewickley Bridge and Coraopolis, will not include team sports facilities, but may have a fountain/splash element. Kasler said.

“Water next to water works well,” Kasler said.

The fountain would have an element that would allow children to play in the spray, but provide adults with something visually attractive. It won’t be a water playground.

“There will be no dinosaurs,” Kasler said. “It would have to be something that fits into the landscape down there.”