

Tentative plans suggested for abandoned industrial river sites

By Rachel Morgan | Posted: Wednesday, September 26, 2012 9:30 pm

MONACA (Calkins Media) — Local municipalities and the Ohio River Trail Council announced tentative plans Wednesday for the repurposing of brownfields along the Ohio River.

Monaca, Midland, Aliquippa and Coraopolis and the Ohio River Trail Council are collaborating on the Ohio River Area-Wide Brownfields Planning Project, a regional effort that repurposes abandoned industrial and manufacturing sites along the river.

“Hopefully, you will make this dream come alive,” said Monaca Borough Manager Mario Leone Jr., also the manager of the project.

The 18-month planning process focused on redeveloping brownfields in the four municipalities. Monaca received \$175,000 in federal grant money from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to support the project, one of 23 community grants totaling \$4 million allocated through the pilot program.

Suggested improvements in Monaca included improving access to both the riverfront and industrial areas, addressing a problematic intersection and turn, extending Indiana Avenue and creating an indoor recreational space.

Midland’s suggested improvements included creating an alternate road for truck traffic to bypass Main Street, increasing municipal parking, building recreational areas along the river and restoring streams and tributaries.

In Aliquippa, suggestions included reconnecting the community to the riverfront and bicycle access to the river, improving the environmental quality of the stream that runs under Franklin Street and improving truck traffic flow to industrial areas.

In Coraopolis, suggestions varied from creating a collegiate-level crew facility along the river to building more multi-family housing, an extension of Third Avenue and the restoration of a historic train station.

“We want to clean the (brownfields) and make them safe,” said David Lloyd, director of the U.S. EPA Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization. “(This project) is tremendous in its ability to leverage dollars and leverage jobs. Infrastructure is a huge issue and could be the solution to some of things you want to do.”

The draft plan is still taking recommendations and will be finalized in about a month, officials said.