

# Trail planners seek input in Monaca, Midland

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MONACA — Two of the municipalities working to build a recreational trail along the Ohio River in Beaver and Allegheny counties want to hear what you think about some of their plans for reuse of brownfield areas.

Officials in Monaca and Midland, two of the towns that would host the Ohio River Trail, will hold meetings later this month so a consultant hired to manage a \$150,000 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grant can present its initial recommendations and collect feedback from the public.

Organizers hope the Ohio River Trail will stretch along the river from Moon Township to Ohioville, linking with the Montour Trail in Allegheny County and other trail networks in Ohio.

Residents will get a chance to hear the plans of Stromberg/Garrigan & Associates in Midland on Feb. 20 and in Monaca Feb. 22, said Monaca Manager Mario Leone Jr. Comments could be incorporated into the final report issued by Stromberg/Garrigan later this year.

“The consultants have been working on the plan for almost a year now, and they’re ready to make some recommendations about the things they think would work in those areas,” Leone said. “And they’ll use whatever feedback they get from the meetings to tweak the plans before they’re completed.”

Four towns that would host the trail — Aliquippa and Coraopolis are the others — were among just 23 communities across the country to receive the EPA grant, which targets old industrial sites for reuse. Leone said the site in Monaca — along Route 51 between 17th Street and the Center Township border — would primarily be used for recreation.

“We know the trail will go through there along the riverside,” Leone said. “But the consultants are also looking at other things; they’re looking at census data and trying to figure out if Monaca can support an indoor sports center there.”

Not all the property is suitable for reuse because remediation of the industrial sites would be too expensive, Leone said. That’s the case with much of the Midland site — along Railroad Avenue and between Railroad Avenue and the river.

“In Midland, the plan includes moving truck traffic off (Route 68) and through the industrial park where it belongs; that will help make the town a lot more pedestrian friendly,” he said. “And in one area where remediation would be costly, they’re looking at installing a solar energy farm.”

Leone said a component of the study is to identify additional grants, as is the case for the solar farm.

“We’re hoping the original grant will turn into additional financial help for us,” he said.

Community meetings for Aliquippa and Coraopolis will be held in March, Leone said, although dates have not yet been scheduled.