

## Communities gather to discuss Phase 2 of Ohio River Bike Trail

By FELICIA MYCYK, [Ambridge Connection](#)

February 25, 2015 AMBRIDGE, PA — Stewart Wicker believes Ambridge already has the best bicycle shop in western Pennsylvania.

If a designated bikeway happens to roll past that Merchant Street shop, the Ambridge resident offered ways to protect the safety of cyclists like himself.

He was among a large group of people who gathered Tuesday in the Visitor's Center at Old Economy Village to discuss the next phase of a multi-community bike route known as the Ohio River Trail Project study.

The Ohio River Trail Council is looking to develop bicycle-friendly communities and is working to design a trail along a designated statewide bike route from the Sewickley Bridge to Ambridge and over the Ambridge-Aliquippa Bridge to the Beaver County Jail.

Pennsylvania has a nine designated statewide bike routes, with the closest to the local area being Route A, which travels from Greene County, PA to Erie.

Bob Genter, a consultant with Mackin Engineering Company, for Ohio River Trail Council said that Route A runs on Route 51, considered a high-volume, high-speed road.

"What we would like to do is make it safe route," Genter said. "We want to take a new look at this route and make it safer and community oriented and tied into each community assets and resources," he added.

If the 15-mile bicycle route ends up along Merchant Street, where the local bike shop is also located, Wicker suggested eliminating one side of the on-street parking so that cyclists won't have a hard time with people pulling out and opening doors.

"Buses can be scary because they don't have a lot of clearance and they don't give you a lot of clearance sometimes as a cyclist," Wicker said.

The ORTC started the Ohio River Greenway Trail Project with a goal to link the Great Ohio Lake to River Greenway in Columbiana County, OH to the Great Allegheny Passage in Allegheny County, PA. ORTC is doing this by working with the 28 riverfront communities in southwestern Pennsylvania.

They are starting the study for Ambridge, which includes looking at bus routes and parking.

"We'll look at Merchant. We'll look at Duss, and we will look at different routes coming in, but we also want to point out where the resources and amenities are that we want to go by," said Genter.

"Then we will come up with alternative A, B, and C, measure the road curb to curb, look at the parking versus on and off the street, bus routes..."

The study will investigate routes primarily along state, county and local roads to find the most suited, safest and most direct connection for cyclists.

Several local municipalities that will tie in were represented at the meeting including Glen Osborne, Sewickley, Leetsdale and Ambridge.

"I'm ecstatic that they came out. This seems to be a unified interest to make sure this happens," said Jack Manning, Town Center Associates, a consulting firm based in Beaver.

Ambridge Manager Joe Kauer said the borough has a traditional main street that is narrow, with parking on both sides, and not large sidewalks. He added that real estate is at a premium and there isn't much to take from.

"But that is why there are engineers," Kauer said. "We'll see what they put together."

The design schedule is anticipated to be finished in six to eight months and is targeted for completion this year.

"This would be good for the community," said Ross "Larry" McCoy, an Ambridge resident and cyclist.

"When you are on a bike or walking, you see a lot more than you do when you're driving with a car," McCoy said.

Source: <http://www.ambridgeconnection.com/local-news/phase-2-ohio-trail>