

Ohio River Trail moves on to Phase II planning

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March 6, 2015 MONACA, PA — Mackin Engineering, the company commissioned to complete the Ohio River Trail phase II project study of a 15-mile bikeway between the Sewickley Bridge and Center is emphasizing safety for the bicyclists.

Robert Genter, director of Mackin Engineering Company, outlined preliminary plans for the phase II study at a meeting Feb. 24 in the Old Economy Village Visitor Center.

Phase II is part of a larger trail network planned by the Ohio River Trail Council that will parallel the Ohio River through western Allegheny County and the center of Beaver County, linking Coraopolis and Ohio.

Plans call for linking this trail with others to stretch from Lake Erie in Ohio, through Pittsburgh, to Washington D.C.

The Ohio River Trail is being designed to accommodate walkers, bicyclists, and even canoeists and kayakers at various segments, while linking the river towns together and creating a transportation alternative to motor vehicle travel.

Mackin engineers and landscape architects, specializing in bikeway, trail, and ADA compliance projects, have already been out along the proposed phase II route.

A key part of their work is developing strategies for making the route safer for bicyclists, while accommodating motorist along sections of the trail where there will be a shared roadway.

“Wayfinding signs, pavement markings, and signs to alert motorists to bicyclists are planned in the area. We want people to feel safer riding on the roads,” Mr. Genter said.

The study is being paid for by the Ohio River Tail Council, with municipalities along phase II contributing sums averaging about \$200.

“We want to make cycling a safer and more appealing transportation alternative,” John Orndorff said.

He is the borough council vice-president in Glen Osborne, one of the phase II communities, and also chairman of phase II planning for the Ohio River Trail Council.

Phase II will encompass Moon, Sewickley, Glen Osborne, Edgeworth and Leetsdale in Allegheny County and Ambridge, Hopewell, Aliquippa, and Center in Beaver County.

The phase II section will end at the Beaver County Jail, in Center.

Stimulating the economy of the communities the trail will pass through is also an important element of the planning process, Mr. Genter said.

The trail is being designed to connect existing, schools, parks and communities together and make them more attractive to visitors while creating a recreational amenity for people who live in the towns.

Safety, however, is the main element being emphasized in all the planning in the Mackin plan.

About one bicyclist is being killed a year in the phase II study area.

“This project addresses those losses,” Mr. Genter said.

The Ohio River Trail Council expects the design work to be finished in 2015, and to be completed in six to eight months.

Source: <http://www.post-gazette.com/local/west/2015/03/06/Ohio-River-Trail-moves-on-to-phase-II-planning/stories/201503060090>