

Sewickley council makes bike route recommendation

By LARISSA DUDKIEWICZ, Tribe LIVE

July 22, 2015 SEWICKLEY, PA — Bicyclists who roll through Sewickley on the Ohio River Greenway Trail likely will not be directed through the business district, but they should have safe trips on low speed, low traffic roads, borough officials said. Sewickley Council recommended a path to Findlay based Mackin Engineering Co. that would take bicyclists coming from Moon along the river via Chadwick Street, rather than across busy Route 65 into the heart of town.

The recommended route differs from a preliminary suggestion for bikes to cross Route 65 from the Sewickley Bridge and travel along Broad and Beaver streets. The Ohio River Trail Council is awaiting PennDOT's approval to use federal grant money and is working to secure other grants for the greenway trail. The Mackin firm is conducting feasibility studies. Construction could begin in 2016 on phase one of the route, which would extend the Montour Trail through Coraopolis to the Sewickley Bridge in Moon and could cost about \$1.5 million. Phase two would run on municipal roads from the bridge to Center, Beaver County. John Orndorff, a trail council director and Glen Osborne councilman, presented Sewickley Council with preliminary route suggestions last month.

Sewickley Manager Kevin Flannery said borough officials agree the safest route instead would encourage cycling along Riverfront Park and deter bicyclists from crossing Route 65 to Broad Street. Orndorff told borough officials the objective is to connect the Sewickley Bridge to Sewickley and other local communities via the greenway trail, which would feature paved and well-marked bike lanes. The trail would give cyclists a safer alternative to the heavily traveled Pennsylvania Bike Route A that runs along state Route 51.

The local portion, according to Sewickley officials' suggestions, would direct bicyclists coming into Sewickley from the Sewickley Bridge right onto Kramer Street, right onto Chestnut, and right again onto Chadwick. The route would take the Route 65 underpass up Grant Street to Beaver Street and into Edgeworth. Pavement markings would be placed to show the direction cyclists are expected to travel. "I worry that if we say it's OK to cross the boulevard on a bicycle that we create some sort of potential liability," Flannery said.

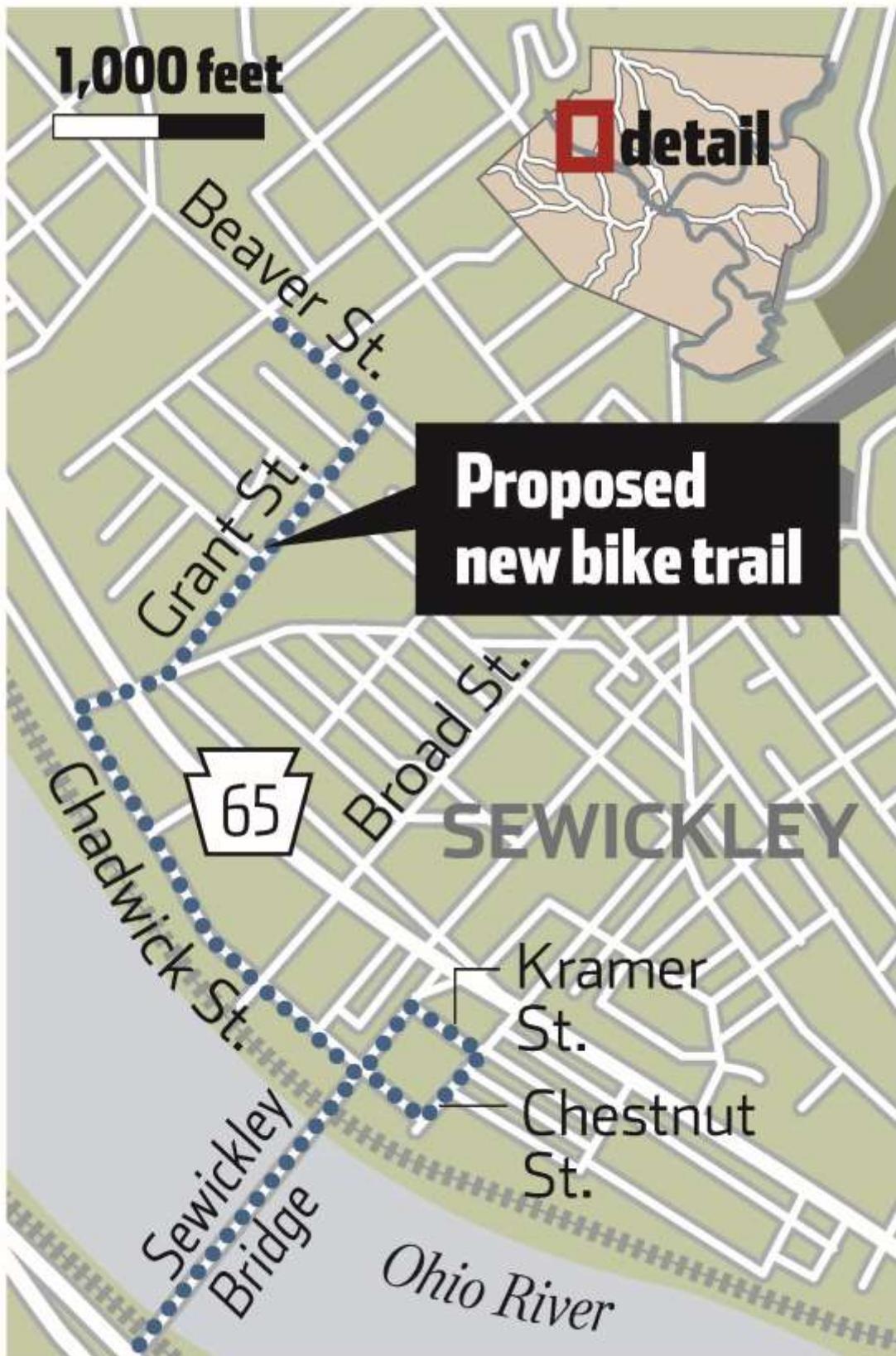
Heading in the opposite direction from Edgeworth, cyclists would take Chadwick to River Street, up to Ohio River Boulevard and into a designated lane to cross back onto the bridge toward Moon. Flannery said he understands the route may detour cyclists away from the business district. However, he said the police chief and mayor agree there is not enough space on Broad and Beaver streets to accommodate bicycle lanes.

In some municipalities, narrow roads and limited parking are posing a challenge, he said. An initial proposal included narrowing lanes on Beaver Street from 12 feet to 11 feet. The speed limit in that area, 25 mph, would have stayed the same. Grant Street is wide enough and offers a clear view to make a left to Edgeworth, he added.

Flannery said bicyclists are entitled to ride on any road in Pennsylvania except for an interstate, such as I-79, and the Pennsylvania Turnpike. He suggested, "Share the Road Signs" and a couple bike racks be installed in the business district to convey its bike friendliness. "I fully realize that people on bicycles, they may come down Broad Street and try to cross the bridge," Flannery said. "They may ride in traffic."

Councilman Jeff Neff, who is the borough fire chief, said he was sitting at a red light last week and watched a bicyclist cross in front of him through oncoming traffic without a helmet. Neff said he is seeing more bikes on Beaver Street lately, and most appear to be traveling through and not patronizing businesses, which he said is fine. "Realistically, I don't think (bicyclists are) going to stop into Sewickley and grab Starbucks, or if they do, it's one or two," Neff said.

Source: <http://triblive.com/neighborhoods/yoursewickley/yoursewickleymore/8697810-74/sewickley-route-street#axzz3ILA1Sl2u>



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