

Council budget change would fund bike trail

South Park would have direct link with Montour Trail

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By Len Barcoucky, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Walkers and bike riders visiting South Park next year should have a direct link to the Montour Trail.

Allegheny County Council's budget and finance committee on Tuesday night recommended a capital budget change that will complete funding for the 2-mile-long proposed connector trail.

The committee's action opens the way for accepting a \$320,000 contribution from the Allegheny County Parks Foundation toward costs for the \$1.4 million project.

Final approval of the funds transfer by full council is likely when members next meet on April 26.

Linking the county's extensive park system to regional hiking and biking trails is one of the recommended goals in the county's comprehensive plan, Dave Wright told council members. Mr. Wright, a project manager with the county's Public Works Department, and Guy Costa, project manager for the parks foundation, briefed committee members on the trail plan.

The South Park trail will be the first partnership between the county and the parks foundation. County Executive Dan Onorato established the foundation in 2007. He recommended and county council agreed to set aside \$10 million to match dollar-for-dollar money raised by the foundation for park improvements and maintenance.

When complete, the Montour Trail will provide almost 50 miles of traffic-free biking and hiking lanes connecting Coraopolis and Clairton. The route of the trail, which features multiple tunnels, trestles and bridges, passes the southern tip of South Park at Brownsville Road.

A tentative construction timetable calls for work to begin on the new trail early in 2012 and take about six months to complete. A map presented to council shows the route starting at Brownsville Road and running approximately parallel to Sleepy Hollow Road for the first mile. It will then continue north past a model airplane field and the game preserve, ending at Corrigan Drive.

In addition to money from the parks foundation and a county bond issue, the South Park trail will be paid for with funds from the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and Regional Asset District money raised through a 1 percent county sales tax.

Read more: <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/11103/1138946-55.stm#ixzz1S6E51xDQ>