

## Hawk Eye, The (Burlington, IA)

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### City seeks funds for bike trail

*JEFF ABELL*

**City** officials moved this week to secure financing **for** the first phase of a recreational **trail** that will stretch 17 miles from Burlington's riverfront to the Big Hollow Recreational Area in rural Des Moines County. During regular session on Monday, the Burlington **City** Council OK'd pursuing a 25 percent local match to fund the construction of a mile section of the **trail** from the Port of Burlington to the defunct Burlington Basket Co.

"This **trail**, when it's finished, will be a community asset. We hope the news that construction is right around the corner will get people excited about it," said Joe Haley, assistant **city** planner.

**City** officials will shell out nearly \$66,000 **for** first-phase construction, which would be paid out of general obligation bonds. The remaining \$262,000 would come from a **state grant**.

"The recreational **trails grant** will be announced in November. Work on the **trail** would begin after that," Haley said. "Our timetable is based on getting federal and **state grants**. We're looking at two to four years down the road before our portion of the **trail** is complete."

The total cost of the **city's** four-mile section of Flint River Recreation **Trail** is estimated at about \$1.2 million.

**For** the county's part, 73 percent of land easements needed to complete the **trail** have been secured. After the **trail** is constructed, the county will abate property taxes on the easements. The abatements will cost the county about \$1,500 annually.

County officials say it's too early to set a timetable **for** construction of their portion of the \$3.2 million **trail** project. However, based on the number of easements expected to be purchased in the next few months, officials haven't ruled out construction beginning as early as next year.

In other business, the council approved vacating and, selling **for** \$1 to the Burlington School District, a 33-foot wide portion of Bock Street. The land will be used **for** construction of new middle school.

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