

## Hawk Eye, The (Burlington, IA)

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### City seeks state grant for trail *Jeff Abell*

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**City** officials moved this week to secure financing **for** a planned recreational **trail** that will stretch from Burlington's riverfront to the Big Hollow Recreational Area near Sperry.

During regular session Monday, Burlington **City** Council members gave the go-ahead to the **city's** planning department to submit an application **for** a \$150,000 **grant** offered through the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Funds from the Resource Enhancement and Protection **grant** program, which will be awarded in November, will be used toward completing the **city's** portion of the recreation **trail**.

"The **city** and the county are working together to make this **trail** a reality," said Joe Haley, associate **city** planner. "Most of the money needed to complete this **trail** will come from **grants**."

The total cost of the **city's** four-mile section of the 21-mile **trail** is about \$1.2 million, with \$5.2 million needed to complete the remainder of the project.

The first phase of the **city's** portion includes a mile from the Port of Burlington to the shuttered Burlington Basket Co. building.

"Case (New Holland), Bluff Harbor Marina and other land owners have been very cooperative," Haley said. "This is a project that residents can be excited about."

**For** the county's part, 19 of 24 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.

"The county has been very successful working with property owners to secure these easements," said Kris Ackerson of the Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission.

Ackerson said it's too early to set a timetable **for** construction, however, he hasn't ruled out work beginning in 2008.

"It will be contingent on financing and finalizing the route. We could see construction may be a year from now, but that's not set in stone," he said.

In a related matter, the **city** followed suit with the county in adopting Flint River Recreation **Trail** as the project's official name. The measure was more than just symbolic, according to Haley.

"It puts both the **city** and the county on the same page," he said. "It gives residents a name to rally behind."

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