



State ponies up \$25K for Upper Charles Trail

By **Leslie H. Dixon / Daily News Staff**
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MILFORD – The state has agreed to pay a \$25,000 overrun on Milford's Upper Charles Trail project, but local officials say they hope to recover even more money.

Upper Charles River Trail Committee Chairman Reno DeLuzio said yesterday that while grateful for the \$25,000 he now hopes the state will consider restoring some of the other approximately \$100,000 in design costs the town cut to reduce what was originally a \$225,000 overrun on the project.

"The town reduced the scope by \$100,000. We're settling for less than what we originally agreed to be done," he said.

DeLuzio said the \$1.4 million bike trail will still be lined with grass, but many plants and shrubs originally proposed along the route will be eliminated unless final project numbers improve or the state assumes some or all of the other cost overruns.

The state is responsible for overruns up to 10 percent of the \$1.4 million construction cost after which the town is responsible for any additional overruns.

Last month, DeLuzio told selectmen the project ran over cost because more fill was needed than originally planned and underground railroad tracks had to be removed. DeLuzio said no one could be faulted for the unforeseen problems.

"It's the reality," he said.

Town officials agreed to cut \$67,000 in interior landscaping and modify fencing to cut another \$25,000 earlier this summer to meet the overrun costs of the trail, part of the proposed 27-mile Upper Charles Trail which runs through Framingham, Sherborn, Holliston, Milford, Hopkinton and Ashland.

Last month, state Sen. Richard T. Moore, D-Uxbridge, asked state Transportation Secretary John Cogliano if the Massachusetts Highway Department would cover the overrun, and state Rep. Marie J. Parente, D-Milford, came back with the information local officials were looking for.

The request was made as part of a meeting with state transportation officials, Selectman Bill Buckley and Parente in her State House office to discuss Milford transportation issues.

"I am delighted that Secretary Cogliano has been so helpful in helping to make this project fit within our local budget constraints," Moore said in a statement issued yesterday after Cogliano notified him.

Buckley, who requested the meeting with state transportation officials, praised Moore and Parente for their efforts.

Buckley called Moore a deeply committed advocate for Milford. "Helping offset the cost of the trail is very valuable when we look at the financial pressure the town is under," he said yesterday.

Buckley said he also appreciated Parente's impact. Construction of the 3-mile trail through Milford began in May and is expected to end next spring. When complete, it will allow for biking, jogging, and in-line skating from the commuter parking lot across from Sacred Heart Church on East Main Street to Deer Street just north of the Interstate 495/Rte. 85 Overpass.

Milford's Upper Charles Trail still needs Town Meeting approval for the town's share of funding for the second phase, which will link the trail to the Hopkinton and Holliston town lines.

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