Marblehead Current

NEWS FOR PEOPLE, NOT FOR PROFIT

LETTER: Let trail be trail

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To the editor:

As the town prepares to lock in the design for the Marblehead Rail Trail, I want to echo Marblehead Conservancy and urge our planners to rethink over-developing large portions of the trail.

According to the town, the main driver for paving the trail near Lead Mills is to mitigate erosion for concrete vaults installed by our electric utility company. While protecting infrastructure is rational, surely engineering has evolved past “just pour asphalt over it” as a primary means of waterproofing. There must be creative, eco-friendly solutions that don’t involve paving the surface.

Paving this segment also creates a major safety issue. Modern e-bikes are essentially lightweight motorcycles, and higher speeds on the paved surface creates risk for children, walkers, runners and seniors. Keeping the natural surface discourages speeding and keeps the trail safe and inviting for everyone moving at a normal pace.

Finally, the proposed bike repair stations are a solution in search of a problem. The chances of someone suffering a mechanical issue precisely within walking distance of a public repair station are astronomical compared to the certainty that exposed, unused tools will rust and deteriorate (take a visit to any of the similar stations in Boston as evidence).

Our rail trail is a fantastic town asset because it feels like an escape into nature right in our backyards. Let’s let the trail be trail and only use our public funds for targeted and necessary improvements.

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