

The Hour

Chet Valiante PUBLISHER

Jerrold Ferrari CO-MANAGING EDITOR

Chris Bosak CO-MANAGING EDITOR

John P. Reilly EDITOR EMERITUS

Route 7 land must be kept for highway

The latest proposal advanced for land that the state owns and which was supposed to be the path for continuing a new Route 7 northward has surfaced, this time in form of creating a greenway.

The land, mostly in Wilton and Ridgefield, would become the site of a greenway for pedestrians and bicyclists, according to its proponents who include Senator Antoinette Boucher, R-26th District, who has made opposition to a new Route 7 her campaign centerpiece while serving in the House and now in the Senate.

We have no hard objections to using the land for such a pathway but are concerned that this is just another attempt to permanently trash any plans to extend the highway.

Unfortunately, the General Assembly overrode Gov. M. Jodi Rell's transportation bill in July, ending restrictions on the use of the 890 acres. We think that was the first step in a campaign to deep-six any highway extension.

We agree with Senator Bob Duff, D-25th District, that a greenway could be built as well as the highway and that the land should be retained firstly as the path of a new highway and only secondly for uses such as the proposed greenway.

We know those critics of an extended Route 7 who haven't moved out of Wilton yet will center their opposition on the cost of the highway in these tough economic times.

Unfortunately, if it had been built without the endless obstructions raised by opponents years ago, we wouldn't be having this discussion today.

Even Senator Boucher admits the proposal for the greenway must address concerns for safety and for funding. Let's examine all aspects of the proposal before advancing it.