



TOWN OF HOPKINTON
TOWN MANAGER'S OFFICE
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Administrative Order Establishing the Trails Committee

Pursuant to Section 6-1(b) of the Hopkinton Town Charter, The Town Manager hereby establishes a new Town body known as the Trails Committee.

I. Purpose

The goal of the reorganization is to provide for a coordinated and efficient approach to planning, constructing, developing, maintaining and enhancing the network of trails throughout Hopkinton, which shall include a variety of trail types. This shall include shared use paths, accommodating users of all abilities, increasing accessibility in key locations, and improving connectivity.

II. Authority

Under Section 6-1(b) of the Town Charter, the Town Manager may prepare an Administrative Order to “Establish new Town Departments, boards or committees, or offices” and “Prescribe the functions and administrative procedures to be followed by all such Departments, boards or committees, or offices, and transfer the appropriations of one Town Department, board or committee, or office to another insofar as such transfer is not inconsistent with the use for which the funds were appropriated....”

III. Trails Committee

A. General Duties

There shall be a Trails Committee (“Committee” which shall take the place of the Upper Charles Trail Committee and the Trail Coordination and Management Committee (each of which shall hereafter be abolished), which will:

- 1) Make the Town more pedestrian-friendly including enhancing connectivity between trails, shared use paths, sidewalks, conservation land/open space, Schools and other Town properties and facilities, and community points of interest such as commercial areas and for civic uses. To that end, prepare a town-wide trail network plan that fosters connectivity and accessibility. Conduct a planning process that includes robust community input and fosters openness and inclusion through dialogue and communication with stakeholders. Set annual goals and priorities, and establish decision-making criteria as needed.

- 2) Act as the Town's primary point of contact with regard to trail-related issues; provide a sounding board for residents and others with respect to trails. Conduct public outreach on trail-related issues. Work with residents to address concerns, problems or conflicts related to trails, and seek solutions. Communicate with abutters prior to undertaking projects that involve development of new trails or significant upgrades to existing trails.
- 3) Develop the Upper Charles Trail (which will connect to Ashland and Milford) and connections to other regional trails and transportation resources. Undertake the necessary permitting required to develop trails. Promote and encourage partnerships with neighboring towns and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to develop trail networks.
- 4) Manage trail development to respect the natural environment and wildlife habitats, and to work to enhance, rather than fragment, natural open spaces.
- 5) Conduct public outreach on trail-related issues. Forms of outreach may include a trail "hub" on or accessible from the Town website, developing and establishing standardized trailhead signs and trail markers, preparing trail maps, and establishing rules and regulations for trail use as needed. The Committee is encouraged to coordinate with other public and private trail groups in outreach efforts.
- 6) Develop and implement plans for management, operations, and maintenance of trails. Working with the Town Manager/Select Board office and the Grantees of Conservation Restrictions where applicable, submit an annual budget request for funding. The budget may include such items as the design, permitting and construction of trails and parking areas, grant matching funds, signage, trash removal, tree work, mowing, resurfacing, drainage work, and repairs.
- 7) Identify public and private grant funding opportunities and work with Town staff to apply for trail-related grants, including Community Preservation funds.
- 8) Advise Town officials, the Select Board, and other boards/committees on trail planning and trail-related issues, and coordinate trail development with other public and private entities that develop and maintain trails in Hopkinton, including the Open Space Preservation Commission, Trails Club, and the Hopkinton Area Land Trust. As part of this effort, recommend acquisition of specific parcels of land and/or easements by the Town for trail development and connectivity. Provide regular updates to the Select Board and the community on trail planning and development.

B. Membership

- 1) The Committee shall consist of 9 members at-large who are Hopkinton residents and appointed by the Select Board. Initial members shall be appointed to 1, 2 and 3 year terms to achieve staggered terms, and all members appointed thereafter will serve 3 year terms. No member may serve more than three consecutive terms. .

- 2) A quorum of the Committee shall be 5 members, regardless of the number of members appointed.
- 3) The Committee shall elect its own Chair, Vice Chair, and Clerk from among its members.
- 4) All members shall have a demonstrated interest in the development, management and use of public trails. Membership should reflect a balanced cross-section of the community, and will provide a mix of needed skills such as trail planning and construction, communications, and engineering.

C. Financial Considerations

In Fiscal Year 2025, the Upper Charles Trail Committee and the Trail Coordination and Management Committee received budget appropriations for their activities. For the remainder of FY25, those budget appropriations are hereby transferred to the Trails Committee. For FY26 and thereafter, there will be one budget appropriation for the Trails Committee. Unspent and unencumbered FY25 funds shall be returned to the General Fund.

Both the Upper Charles Trail Committee and Trail Coordination and Management Committee have received Community Preservation Act funding for certain projects, with the following projects not completed and/or with remaining balances:

Trail Coordination and Management Committee:

- 1) Chamberlain Connector Trail Phase 2 - Art. 38H ATM 2024
- 2) Trailhead Parking on Ash St - Art. 24E ATM 2023
- 3) Trail bridges and Boardwalks - Art. 24H ATM 2023
- 4) Engineering Western Route - Art. 24M ATM 2023
- 5) Middle School Drainage - Art. 32C ATM 2022
- 6) Trail Head Parking Lot Pond St - Art. 32D ATM 2022
- 7) Chamberlain Connector Trail - Art. 28F ATM 2021

Upper Charles Trail Committee:

- 1) Engineering Segment One - Art. 24N ATM 2023

By this order, and contingent upon approval from the Community Preservation Committee, the remaining balances on each of those appropriations shall be transferred to the Committee. The Trails Committee shall proceed with and/or continue with implementation of the previously approved projects, if desired by the Committee. If the Committee determines, by majority vote, that a project will not be undertaken or continued, the Committee shall notify the Community Preservation Committee of that decision.

IV. Effective Date

Pursuant to Section 6-1(b) of the Town Charter, following a public hearing, an administrative order submitted by the Town Manager to the Select Board shall become effective at the expiration of sixty (60) days following the date of its first submission, unless the Select Board by an affirmative vote of at least three (3) members has sooner approved, amended or disapproved it.