



TOWN OF HOPKINTON

OFFICE OF THE SELECT BOARD

Trails Committee Charge

Approved by the Select Board: Dec 3, 2024

Town of Hopkinton Overarching Vision: *Hopkinton is a vibrant welcoming community centrally located in New England and nestled 26.2 miles west of Boston. We are endowed with open spaces, natural resources, facilities and programs that promote a well educated and healthy community. We are respectful of our past, engaged in our present, and actively preparing for our future.*

Vision Theme: *In 2025, Hopkinton has protected additional lands for ensuring water quality, and for active and passive open space; created more recreational opportunities for a variety of age groups; and conserved additional natural resources and view sheds that help define the rural quality that is characteristic of much of the town.*

HISTORY: The Trails Committee has been created by merging most of the duties and functions of the Upper Charles Trail Committee and the Trail Coordination and Management Committee into one public body. The overall mission and purpose of each is intended to be retained and strengthened by this action. The Upper Charles Trail Committee was disbanded on Sept. 17, 2024. The Trail Coordination and Management Committee will be disbanded following the appointment of the Trails Committee.

Pursuant to the powers granted to the Select Board by Section 3-1 of the Town Charter, the Select Board hereby charges the Trails Committee as follows:

PURPOSE: The Trails Committee shall plan, construct, develop, maintain and enhance 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.

CHARGE: The Trails Committee will:

1. Work to 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 civic uses. To that end, prepare a townwide trail network plan that fosters connectivity. 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.

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 Holliston) 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 Mass. 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. Such work shall 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.
6. Develop plans for management and maintenance of trails, and working with the Town Manager/Select Board office, submit an annual budget request for funding of the maintenance. Such maintenance may include items such as trash removal, tree work, mowing, resurfacing, drainage work, and repairs.
7. Identify grant funding opportunities and work with Town staff to apply for trail-related grants.
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 and the Hopkinton Area Land Trust. As part of this effort, recommend acquisition of specific parcels of land by the Town for trail development and connectivity. Provide regular updates to the Select Board and the community on trail planning and development.

COMPOSITION: The Trails Committee shall consist of 7 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, although a member having served three consecutive terms may be appointed as an associate member.

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.

The Select Board may appoint up to 3 associate (non-voting) members if desired, in order to broaden the perspective, representation, or to facilitate the Charge of the Committee. Associate members may not count toward a quorum of the Committee. Associate members may serve an unlimited number of terms as associate members.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS: In FY25, 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 intended to be available to the Trails Committee. For FY26, there shall be only one budget appropriation for the Trails Committee, with unspent FY25 funds to be returned to the General Fund.

Both the Upper Charles Trail Committee and Trail Coordination and Management Committee have received Community Preservation Act funding in the past, 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 ATM2023

It is the intent that the Trails Committee may proceed with implementation of the previously approved projects if desired, and it may submit requests for funding of new projects.

QUORUM: A quorum of the Committee shall be 4 members, regardless of the number of members appointed.

OPEN MEETING LAW & PUBLIC RECORDS LAW: The Trails Committee shall comply with the Open Meeting Law, Public Records Law, Procurement Law, and any other laws and regulations relative to public officials and public processes, as applicable. The Committee is responsible for creating and posting its meeting agendas and for creating and approving its meeting minutes.