



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS



2019 MASSTRAILS GRANTS PROGRAM

Grant Application Template

*This application template is provided for reference purposes only. All proposals must be submitted electronically through the program's online application portal. Please refer to the 2019 MassTrails Grant Guidelines and FAQ's for assistance. An * indicates a required field.*

SECTION I: APPLICANT INFORMATION

1.1: ***Organization: Town of Ashland MA; Upper Charles Trail Committee; Friends of the Ashland Trail**

1.2: ***Contact Name: Mike Herbert**

1.3: ***Contact Phone: 508-881-0100 ext. 7911**

1.4: ***Contact Email: mherbert@ashlandmass.com**

1.5: ***Mailing Address: 101 Main Street Ashland, MA 01721**

Additional contact: Joel Arbeitman, Chair, Ashland Upper Charles Trail Committee. Phone (redacted for privacy)

Email: joelarbeitman@gmail.com

1.6: ***Has this entity received state trail grant funding in previous years (i.e. Recreational Trails Program Grants)? Yes / No**

1.7: **If yes, please indicate the funding source, project name(s) and year(s) awarded.**

SECTION II: PROJECT INFORMATION

2.1: ***Project Title:** Eastern Rail Transit District Section of Ashland Upper Charles Trail

2.2: ***Municipality(s) where the project will take place:** Ashland MA

2.3: ***Brief Project Description:** The Eastern Rail Transit District section of the Ashland Upper Charles Trail is Phase One of a projected 6.5 mile multi-use trail through the heart of Ashland which will help complete the regional 25-30 mile loop trail known as the “Upper Charles Trail” – large portions of which have been completed by Milford and Holliston and are well used. Future connection to other regional trail systems (the Bruce Freeman Trail and the Boston-Worcester Airline Trail among others) are envisioned.

By itself, the ERTD piece of the Ashland Trail will provide a key connection between the downtown business and administrative center of town and Ashland Middle School, the Ashland MBTA commuter rail station and the residential and commercial developments along the MBTA access road.

This Mass Trails request will fund engineering, survey and environmental analysis/permitting needed prior to requesting construction bids.

Please provide a brief description of the proposed project in 2-3 sentences. This description will be used to describe the project in abbreviated form for various purposes including approvals, press and announcements going forward.

2.4: ***Total Project Value:** *See Budget Worksheet and attach at the end of this application.*
\$128,000

2.5: ***Grant Amount Requested:** (Up to 80% of Total Project Value)
\$100,00

2.6: ***Matching Amount Committed:** (Minimum of 20% of Total Project Value)
\$28,000

2.7: ***What is the primary activity of the project?** (Bold)

Project Development

Design / Engineering / Permitting

Construction

Maintenance

Maintenance Equipment Purchase

Other:

2.8: *** What type of trail will this project build?** (Bold)

Shared-Use Path (Accessible / Bike and Pedestrian Path)

Woodland Trail (Hiking / Mt Biking / Other Non-Motorized Trail)

Motorized Trail (Snowmobile / ATV / Off-Highway Motorcycle, 4-Wheel Drive)

Other:

2.9: ***What user group will this trail/pathway serve/allow?** (Bold all that apply)

Walkers / Runners / Hikers / Bicyclists / Mountain Bikers / Cross-Country Skiers / Equestrians / Snowmobiles / ATV Riders / Off-Road Motorcyclists / 4-Wheel Drive Trucks / Paddlers/Rowers
Other: Commuters and middle school students/teachers

2.10: *Briefly describe the project site/location.

The proposed project is the first section of the “Ashland Upper Charles Trail”. This section starts at the “MBTA access road” that runs from Rte. 135 to the Ashland MBTA commuter rail station. This access road incorporates a paved 10’ wide multi-use path along its full length. The proposed section of trail (the “ERTD section”) will meet the MBTA access road at a point close to the middle school playing fields and adjacent to the future site of the Metrowest YMCA campus. From here the trail will follow the line of the “Trolley Line Trail” through lightly wooded /wetland terrain for approx. .5 mile, skirting the Nyanza Cap site to Megunko Road. From there, the trail will run along the street for approx. .1 mile to the corner of Park Road and Cherry Sreet and continue along the edge of Stone Park (connecting with park trails under development), finally arriving at Main St. and the core of the downtown business district. Control of the Trolley Line stretch was transferred to the Town of Ashland as part of a large land acquisition in the “Rail Transit District” (RTD). With this transfer, the full length of this section of proposed trail is under direct town control.

2.11: *Is the land where the project will take place publicly owned?

Yes / No

2.12: For land that is owned by a non-profit or private entity, is there guaranteed public access to the project site for at least 10 years after the project is completed? What agreement(s) are in place to ensure public access? The agreement for the Town of Ashland to control this property is documented in the appendix

2.13: *Does this project meet the minimum state and federal requirements for accessibility?

This section of the will be paved and easily accessible to all.

All MassTrails projects must comply with state and federal regulations for accessibility, depending on the structure and intended use of the pathway or trail system. See the MassTrails FAQ and Grant Guidelines document for assessing a project's regulatory requirements for accessible trails and pathways

Yes / No

2.14: *Does the project involve the purchase of steel or iron, including construction supplies (ie: bridges, culverts) or equipment with steel or iron parts (ie: tractors, snowmobiles), with a value of \$2,500 or more? *MassTrails projects may be required to comply with the U.S. DOT Buy America provision. See FAQ and Grant Guidelines document for details.*

Yes / **No**

2.15: If applicable, has a Project Need Form (PNF) / Project Initiation Form (PIF) been submitted to MassDOT? What is the project number (if one has been assigned)?

N/A

SECTION III: NARRATIVE

MassTrails Grant Criteria

MassTrails seeks strong projects that:

Plan, Design or Construct off-road shared-use pathway and recreational trail connections between where Massachusetts residents live, learn, work, shop, and recreate (Connect)

- MassTrails favors building out the longer distance shared-use pathways and recreational trails across the state
- MassTrails prioritizes filling in critical gaps in existing networks, or overcoming current barriers to connectivity
- MassTrails considers the number of people that will potentially access a given project

Serve the diversity of Massachusetts residents, especially: (Equitable)

- Minority and Low-Income populations (Environmental Justice Communities)
- Other Underserved or Vulnerable Populations including Elderly, Limited English Proficiency, and Persons with Disabilities
- Youth

Allow for efficient use of grant funds (Efficient)

- Have a detailed and reasonable budget
- Have a strong local match
- Have funding in place or a plan for funding subsequent required phases

Are ready for the proposed phase (Ready)

- Previous planning work supports proposed phase
- Appropriate community input and outreach has been completed
- Environmental, permitting and right-of-way challenges have been identified and alternatives and solutions have been fully explored
- Have a plan in place for ongoing required maintenance once the project is complete

Adequately address safety (Safe)

Adequately address accessibility (Accessible)

Create diverse, high quality recreational experiences and connect users to the natural and cultural wealth of Massachusetts (Experiential)

3.1: ***What kind of trail do you want to build?** This piece of the trail will be a fully paved “multi-use” path approximately 1 mile long and 10-12 feet wide. The off-road pieces of the ERTD section of the Ashland Upper Charles Trail need to be constructed and the on-road pieces marked and branded and, where possible, separated from traffic in order to safely serve the largest possible portion of the population.

Describe the characteristics of the proposed trail (ie: length, width, terrain, surface, amenities, accessibility).

3.2: ***Describe the specific tasks required to complete this project.**

We are currently requesting funds for the following tasks related to the “ERTD” portion of the AUCT.:

- Survey for the off-road portion of this trail section (approx. .5 mile)
- Preliminary through final design of the off-road (half-mile) trail section
- Safety analysis and preliminary through final design of the on-street section (approx. .4 mile)
- Environmental impact assessment and necessary permitting

The next step will be to fund construction of this section which we hope to complete in 2020 primarily using a mix of funds from the Environmental Bond Bill and CPA funds..

Be as specific as possible about the steps the grant project will take and the results you hope to achieve. Include the specific trails location(s), starting and ending points, and trail distances. Describe the trail surface material, and any proposed structures involved. All tasks should also match the project's budget.

3.3 *Describe how this project will fill in a critical network gap and/or connect to residential, commercial and recreational destinations.

The Ashland portion of the Upper Charles Trail is a key connector both within Ashland and between Ashland and surrounding towns. Within Ashland it will ultimately tie together 2 state parks, the commuter rail station, downtown Ashland, Ashland High School and Middle School and the business district along route 126. Equally important, it will provide the key link between the Holliston, Sherborn, and Hopkinton sections of the trail and thus facilitate the connection of all of these towns to the wider network of trails in eastern Massachusetts.

Completion of the Eastern Rail Transit District section will be the first step in implementing the broad Ashland section Upper Charles Trail. The Eastern Rail Transit District is our choice for the first section because it is the part of the Trail that is likely to be most heavily used by walkers, runners, bikers etc., and thus will increase awareness of the larger trail and its potential. This project will provide safe, handicap accessible, multi-use path right in the heart of the town that will serve as a “poster child” for the rest of the AUCT project, building momentum and demonstrating how even a small piece of multi-use path can make a huge difference in town.

3.4: *Is the project located in or near an Environmental Justice Community (indicate proximity)? If applicable, how will this project improve access, mobility, safety, health and/or quality of life for an underserved population?

The population of Ashland is 18.5% minority. In addition, the Ashland section of the trail will be less than 2 miles from South Framingham which has greater than 50% minority populations, nearly 15% below the poverty level and 20 to 30% foreign born. It has been identified as an environmental justice area. Many Framingham residents shop at Market Basket in Ashland and could easily combine a pleasant walk on the Ashland trail with a shopping trip. We plan to do outreach to these Framingham communities to insure awareness of this new resource. We will work with social agencies in Framingham to ensure that the ~13% of the population with limited English skills will be aware of the Upper Charles trail resource.

See Grant Guidelines for the information and resources on Environmental Justice Communities. "Underserved" can encompass additional population groups such as low income, minority, elderly, children, Limited English Proficiency, geographically isolated communities (i.e.: rural) or persons with disabilities.

3.5: *Describe the "readiness" of this project for the proposed phase.

A preliminary routing and feasibility study for the entire Ashland section of the Upper Charles Trail was completed in 2017 by Alta Planning and Design and accepted by the Ashland Select Board in 2018. The plan is to construct the trail in phases as funding and land access allow. The town of Ashland controls the full length of the ERTD section of the trail. Once permits are obtained and engineering analysis completed, construction will be straightforward. Support for the trail project – both from citizens and town officials – has been strong. The recently formed Friends of the Trail is putting together fundraising plans that will cover expenses associated with signage and routine cleanups. It is anticipated that the town will assist with plowing and some basic maintenance.

What planning / engineering steps have already been accomplished? What permits are anticipated, which ones are already in place? Is there a plan in place for ongoing maintenance?

3.6: *Describe community support for this project. The Ashland trail committee was created by the Board of Selectmen (BOS) in November, 2014. In February 2017, the Town hired Alta Planning and Design do a preliminary routing and feasibility study. That study included three well-attended town forums and generated positive press and discussion in town. The BOS approved Alta's tentative routing recommendations at their meeting on 9/5/18. Since then a community-based group, Friends of the Ashland Trail, has formed and now has approximately 80 members. The group is actively working multiple tasks including applying for 501C non-profit status to facilitate fund raising and creating a website and print collateral in support of the trail. Support from the Ashland business community has been strong. Support letters are appended.

How was the public involved in the project's selection and planning and what is the public's role going forward? What votes are required and have those taken place and passed? Describe any existing or anticipated opposition to the project and how that is being addressed.

3.7: *Does this project specifically address an existing or potential safety issue? If yes, describe the proposed installation/enhancement and how it will improve safety on the trail.

NA

All projects must meet minimum safety requirements for the intended use. This question only applies to projects which are specifically applying for funds to address an existing or potential safety issue.

3.8: *Does this project specifically address or improve accessibility?

The RTD portion of the trail is planned to be completely accessible to all persons.

*If applicable, provide a brief overview of how the project will facilitate new or improved access for populations with limited mobility and/or persons with disabilities, including but not limited to elderly, blind and wheelchair users. *Note that all projects must meet the minimum regulatory requirements for accessibility according to the designed use of the trail (see the MassTrails FAQ and Grant Guidelines for details in assessing your project's requirements).*

3.9: *What distinguishes this project as a unique, high-quality recreational experience for the visitors and residents of Massachusetts?

This is the first stage for the Ashland trail that will ultimately connect two state parks, downtown Ashland, commuter rail, the high school and the middle school. It will serve as an example of creatively building a multi-use trail when no abandoned rail bed is available. Ashland residents and students will have a safe path for walking or biking to school as well as the Ashland commuter rail station. The diverse population of

Framingham will have easy access to the entire Upper Charles trail. The Upper Charles Trail passes through beautiful wetlands, past Milford's historical sites of the granite industry and will connect both Ashland State Park and Hopkinton State Park.

SECTION IV: CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION

Any project that receives state or federal funding must comply with various laws and regulations to protect natural and cultural resources including, but not necessarily limited to:

Historic Resources
Below-Ground Archaeology
Wetlands and Waterways
Rare and Endangered Species
Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act

The below questions will assist us in evaluating your project and helping us guide you through the natural and cultural permitting processes.

4.1: *To the best of your knowledge, is your project near any historic or archaeological resources?

Yes / No

4.2: If Yes, please describe the resources and how your project will avoid, minimize or mitigate any impacts to these resources.

4.3: *Will your project involve even minimal excavation?

Yes / No

4.4: Please describe the locations and extents of excavation.

4.5: *Will your project require Wetland Protection Act permitting (i.e. will any part occur within 100 feet of a wetland or 200 feet of a perennial stream?)

Yes / No

4.6: If yes, please describe what communications you have had with the local Conservation Commission, and what steps you are taking to avoid wetland impacts.

During 2017, Ashland hired an engineering firm (Kleinfelder Engineering) with a specialty in addressing wetlands issues to work with us to address any issues with our local Conservation Commission. We presented our planned trail route to the Commission and received very positive feedback from them.

The most difficult section of the trail (not part of the current application) which will eventually connect the dam in Ashland State Park to Main St will run through a wetlands area that is immediately adjacent to Cold Spring Brook. The commission thought this was manageable and encouraged us to use a boardwalk with a specific post design to minimize any wetland impacts.

The trail section covered by the current grant application is unlikely to raise significant wetland concerns. We are planning to build the off-road section of the trail on an abandoned trolley line dike which is already raised up above any nearby wetlands.

4.7: ***Will the project occur within Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife and/or Priority Habitats of Rare Species, according to MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's Natural Heritage Atlas? (available at http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/PRI_EST_HAB/viewer.htm)**

Yes / No

4.8: **If yes, please describe what communications you have had with the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, and what steps you are taking to avoid impacts to rare species.**

4.9: ***Does the project meet or exceed any thresholds for MEPA review set in 301 CMR 11.03? List all relevant thresholds and indicate if ENF and/or EIR are required.** The proposed route utilizes an abandoned street car right of way and dike. No alteration of wetlands or waterbodies is anticipated. We do not believe that MEPA thresholds will be met or that an ENF or EIR will be required but this final determination will be part of the funded project.

4.10: **Are there any other permits required for this project? Please indicate the permit type and how/when it will be obtained.** The scope of this grant proposal is to determine which permits are required and to obtain them.

SECTION V: EQUIPMENT WORKSHEET (Required for Equipment Purchases Only)

Equipment purchases are permitted under the MassTrails grant program. This can include equipment necessary for trail construction and maintenance activities, such as mowers, chainsaws, snow grooming machines and all-terrain vehicles (for hauling people and materials). Equipment is defined as tangible personal property having a useful life of at least five years and a per-unit acquisition cost of \$1,000 or greater. Equipment must be purchased in full with the title held by the grantee and must be used for the proper authorized use as stated in the project proposal.

Three bids **MUST** be solicited for all equipment purchases with a value of \$1,000 or more. Attach three quotes to the last section of this application.

Please answer each question listed below for ALL proposals to purchase equipment with a value of \$1,000 or more. This is **REQUIRED** in order to be considered for a grant award.

NA

5.1: **Have three quotes been obtained for this particular piece of equipment?**

Yes / No

5.2: **What need will the purchase of this equipment fulfill? For multiple pieces of equipment, describe the individual benefit for each.**

5.3: **Describe the trail or trail system where the equipment will be used. Include the type of trail, length, surface, user groups and condition of the trail/system.**

5.4: **What is the estimated daily use of the section of trail/system where the equipment will be used?**

5.6: Where and how will the equipment be stored (during both the winter and summer months, if different)?

5.7: Is this equipment replacing an older piece of equipment that was purchased using previous grant funds (i.e.: Recreational Trails Program)? If so, what is the plan for that piece of equipment's disposal/re-allocation?

5.8: If proposing to purchase accessories, justify each individual addition with an explanation, if applicable.

SECTION VI: REQUIRED DOCUMENTS AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Uploaded Documents will not be saved until your final submission. Do not upload documents until you are ready to submit your application.

In this section, when you are ready to submit your application, you will upload:

Project Budget and Timeline Worksheets

Map(s) of Project Location and Extent (or Zipped GIS Files)

Project Specifications, Plans, Drawings, Photos (as a single PDF)

Landowner Permission Documentation/Assurance of Continuing Public Access (as a single PDF)

Additional Project Information (Completed Permits, Conservation Restriction/Easement/Right of Way, Bids/Quotes, Town Votes)

MassTrails Grant Budget and Timeline Worksheet (Required)*

Template Worksheet can be downloaded at the MassTrails Grants website

(<https://www.mass.gov/guides/masstrails-grants>)

6.1: *Project Map(s) (Required). *Submit a map of the project location and extent (as detailed as possible) or a single zipped GIS file of the project extent. Submit additional maps as needed using various imagery and data to depict the project as accurately as possible.*

6.2: Project Documents (Photos, Plans, Drawings, etc.) *Submit a single PDF file of photos showing the typical trail / location conditions. Be sure to clearly label each picture and provide a description of its context. Also include any plans, drawings, and other specification documents of the proposed structures to be built (bridges, boardwalks, kiosks, signage, platforms, trail drainage structures, culverts, etc.)*

6.3: *Documentation of Landowner(s) Permission / Authorization (Required)

6.4: Additional Project Information. *Submit a single PDF file with any additional project information that reviewers may need in order to make informed determinations.*