

## Charlotte Trails Committee

### Preliminary Budget Request for 2025-2026

November 18, 2024

The Charlotte Trails Committee was formed in 2003. From as far back as I can see, the annual budget for the Trails Committee has been stuck at \$1500/fiscal year. There has never been a trail maintenance plan or enough money in the budget to successfully keep up with the trail system. As a result, there are years of deferred trail maintenance. Currently, we have close to 10 miles of trails that are under the responsibility of the Trails Committee including: Pease Mtn, Town Link Trail, Village Loop, Plouffe Lane, Cowboy Lewis Trail, Dunbar Trail. We are in the process of putting together a comprehensive trail maintenance plan but at present we will need to catch up on the deferred maintenance to make the trails safe and useable for our trail users.

**Trail Costs include Regular Maintenance plus Maintenance to be performed As Needed.**

**Some of the immediate needs are:**

Resurfacing costs approx. \$24,000/mile includes Harley raking, stone and delivery, spreading and compacting. (Using 3/8 stone with fines, 3" deep, 8 ft wide.)

**Town Link Trail from Mt. Philo to the Mack Trail: (½ mile long). PRIORITY,** the trail is in desperate need of resurfacing. When the trail was built in 2020, the wrong stone was used (based on the RFP that was distributed by Dean Bloch and approved by the Charlotte Selectboard) thus creating an unstable trail surface, not only unsuitable for bikes but also unsafe for bikes. Bikes will use State Park Rd instead of using this section of trail. This larger drainage stone that was used instead of a finer finish stone also traps more organic matter increasing the weed growth. If you look at the trail today, many sections that were originally 8 feet in width are now 1 1/2 to 2 ft wide. The entire ½ mile of trail will need to be tilled, leveled, resurfaced with 3" of the correct stone and compacted. The material alone trucked to site to resurface this trail will cost nearly \$10,000. In addition is the labor involved in tilling the path, leveling, dispersing the stone and compacting which could cost an additional.

**Resurfacing State Park Rd: \$ 12,000+.**

**Town Link Trail (Mack Trail) to the Rt 7 Underpass.** (.7 miles long). Needs reditching along the west side for more than half of this section to prevent constant overflowing of water onto the trail. Also weed control and more material overall is needed as normal maintenance. By the Rt. 7 Underpass, we have just repaired the east side from storm damage with major tractor work and loads of gravel but to decrease the possibility of future washouts, reditching will be needed along the north and south sides. In addition, cleaning out a major 30 ft x 2 ft culvert that is currently half filled with drainage stone is needed which is blocking the necessary flow of water.

**Resurfacing Mack Trail: \$16,800. + Ditching: \$4000. + Culvert Cleaning: \$850. = \$21,600.**

**Town Link Trail from Rt 7 Underpass to Cohousing**, (1 mile long). Resurfacing of the trail to regain trail width and additional material is needed. But first we need to fix the major washouts from this summer's storms.

**Resurfacing to Co-Housing: \$24,000**

**Other expenses:**

Signage: New **Trailhead** signage for the trail from the Town Hall onto the Dunbar Trail connecting to the other Village Loop Trails and Town Link Trails. **(\$1400)** And other signs as needed.

Maps. Paper maps are still being used by trail users.

Doggie Bags to keep trails clean of animal waste.

Bog bridge on the Dunbar trail to make it accessible year-round. Approximately 100 feet long.

Other bridges along the Village Loop Trail to make it more accessible and so the mowers can get through.

Money to fix future storm damage as it occurs in a timely manner.

**The Charlotte Trails Committee is requesting an annual operating budget for the 2025-2026 fiscal year in the amount of \$10,000** which is still not enough to do what is needed but will give us working capital to get some of the work done and get us on a regular maintenance schedule. Even with an annual budget of \$10,000, it will take years to get caught up with deferred maintenance.

The request for an annual budget of \$10,000 is also way lower than some of the other committees and organizations and random expenses. For instance, The Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge, with about 3 miles of trails, has an annual budget of \$19,000 plus an additional cost of \$7,300 to open and close the gate.

We do have some money in the Trail Reserve Fund to build trails, (Note, this is not trail maintenance money) but at present, there is not enough money in there to do the next section of trail that we are working on. So, look for a request for an Article to raise funds for that. Last year the SB denied our request.

The Trails Committee is made up of all volunteers. We have spent countless hours working on the trails trying to keep them safe and accessible, but we can't do it all and need proper funding and support to maintain and build trails for this community.

Thanks,

Jack Pilla

Co-Chair Charlotte Trails Committee

## **Trail Work to do:**

**State Park Rd/Town Link Trail:** Entire ½ mile section needs to be Harley raked to remove surface existing weeds/grass. Followed by 3" of new stone re-surfacing with the correct smaller/packable trail stone suitable for biking similar to what is on the Co-housing trail and on the new trail along the old Health Ctr. The current drainage stone put down is unstable for bikers and allows weeds to grow up easier. (Many trail users have complained about the stone and won't bike on it as they feel it is not safe).

**Mack Trail along the Town Link Trail:** Full resurfacing is needed along entire .70 miles. Harley raking, new stone and compacting. The swale needs to be dug out. There is significant water flowing from the swale to the trail causing an overflow of water onto the trail and ice in the winter. The 30 foot long culvert by the parking area needs to be cleaned out.

**Rt 7 Underpass:** Parking area has a huge hole. Needs gravel to fill in hole and to resurface parking area. The area needs to be expanded for more cars.

**Rt 7 to Co-Housing:** Repair damage from summer floods just south of the ball fields. Resurface entire 1-mile-long trail by Harley raking, adding stone and compacting.

**Burns Meadow and Village Loop Trail:** Additional bog bridges needed.

**Dunbar Trail:** New Trailhead sign needed. New bog bridge needed approximately 100 feet in length.

**Barber Hill:** Sumac trees need to be cut back along south line.

**New Trail by the Old Health Ctr:** Clear any organics off the trail. Repair damaged tread on boardwalk.

**Ferry Road Cowboy Lewis Trail:** Some basic signage needed so people know this is a town trail.

**Pease Mtn:** Some smaller trees down along the trail. Additional drainage work is needed overall to keep up with the wet conditions. Water bars could use some re-digging as the dirt has settled.

**Plouffe Lane:** Cut back brush.

## Maintenance to be performed on a continuous, scheduled basis:

### 1. Trail user safety

Safety is central to all maintenance operations, and is the single most important trail maintenance concern. Items for consideration include scheduling and documentation of inspections, the condition of railings, bridges, and trail surfaces, proper and adequate signage, removal of debris, and coordination with other agencies associated with trail maintenance.

### 2. Trails inspection

Trails inspections are integral to all trail maintenance operations. Inspections will occur on a regularly scheduled basis, the frequency of which will depend on the amount of trail use, location, age, and the type of construction. All trail inspections are to be documented.

### 3. Trail sweeping

Trail sweeping is one of the most important aspects of trail maintenance, helping ensure trail user safety. The type of sweeping to be performed depends on trail design and location. Trails that require sweeping of the whole system will be swept by machine. Trails that require only spot sweeping of bad areas will be swept by hand or with blowers. Some trails require a combination of methods. Sweeping will be performed on a regular schedule.

### 4. Trash removal

Trash removal from trail corridors is important from both a safety and an aesthetic viewpoint, and includes removing ground debris and emptying trash containers. Trash removal will take place on a regularly scheduled basis, the frequency of which will depend on trail use and location.

### 5. Tree and shrub pruning

Tree and shrub pruning will be performed for the safety of trail users. Pruning will be performed to established specifications on a scheduled and as needed basis, the frequency of which will be fairly low.

### 6. Mowing of vegetation

Trails maintenance personnel will mow vegetation along trail corridors on a scheduled basis only where mowing is not performed by other agencies or park districts.

### 7. Scheduling maintenance tasks

Inspections, maintenance, and repair of trail-related concerns will be regularly scheduled. Inspection and repair priorities should be dictated by trail use, location, and design. Scheduling maintenance tasks is a key item towards the goal of consistently clean and safe trails.

# Maintenance to be performed on an irregular or as needed basis:

## 1. Trail Repair

Repair of trails will be closely tied to the inspection schedule. Prioritization of repairs is part of the process. The time between observation and repair of a trail will depend on whether the needed repair is deemed a hazard, to what degree the needed repair will affect the safety of the trail user, and whether the needed repair can be performed by the trails maintenance crew or if it is so extensive that it needs to be repaired by outside entities.

## 2. Trail Replacement

The decision to replace a trail and the type of replacement depends on many factors. These factors include the age of the trail, and the money available for replacement. Replacement involves either completely overlaying and asphalt trail with a new asphalt surface, or replacement of an asphalt trail with a concrete trail.

## 3. Snow and ice removal

As needed.

## 4. Weed control

Weed control along trails will be limited to areas in which certain weeds create a hazard to users. Environmentally safe weed removal methods should be used, especially along waterways.

## 5. Trail edging

Trail edging maintains trail width, and improves drainage. Problem areas include trail edges where berms tend to build up, and where uphill slopes erode onto the trails. Removal of this material will allow proper draining of the trail surface, allow the flowing action of the water to clean the trail, and limit standing water on trail surfaces. Proper drainage of trail surfaces will also limit ice build-up during winter months.

## 6. Trail drainage control

In places where low spots on the trail catch water, trail surfaces should be raised or drains built to carry away water. Some trail drainage control can be achieved through the proper edging of trails. If trail drainage is corrected near steep slopes, the possibility of erosion must be considered.

## 7. Trail signage

Trail signs fall into two categories: safety and information. Trail users should be informed where they are, where they are going, and how to use trails safely. Signs related to safety are most important and should be considered first. Information signage can enhance the trail users experience.

## 8. Revegetation

Areas adjacent to trails that have been disturbed for any reason should be revegetated to minimize erosion.

## 9. Habitat enhancement and control

Habitat enhancement is achieved by planting vegetation along trails, mainly trees and shrubs. This can improve the aesthetics of the trail, help prevent erosion, and provide for wildlife habitat. Habitat control involves mitigation of damage caused by wildlife. An example is the protection of trees along waterways from damage caused by beavers.

#### 10. Public awareness

Creating an understanding among trail users of the purpose of trails and their proper use is a goal of public awareness. Basic concepts of trail use include resolution of user conflicts, and speed limitations. The representatives should be easily accessible to field questions and concerns.

#### 11. Trail program budget development

A detailed budget should be created for the trails program and revised on an annual basis.

#### 12. Volunteer coordination

The use of volunteers can help increase public awareness of trails, and provide a good source of labor for the program. Understanding volunteers' concerns is important, as are possible incentives or recognition of work performed. Implementation of an "Adopt-a-Trail" program should be considered.

#### 13. Records

Good record-keeping techniques are essential to an organized program. Accurate logs should be kept on items such as daily activities, hazards found and action taken, maintenance needed and performed, etc. Records can also include surveys of the types and frequency of use of certain trail sections. This information can be used to prioritize trail management needs.

#### 14. Graffiti control

The key to graffiti control is prompt observation and removal. During scheduled trail inspections any graffiti should be noted and the graffiti removal crew promptly notified.

#### 15. Mapping

Several maps are privately marketed and available for trail users. From a maintenance standpoint, an accurate, detailed map of the trail system is important for internal park use.

#### 16. Coordination with other agencies

Maintenance of trails located within more than one jurisdiction. A clear understanding of maintenance responsibilities needs to be established to avoid duplicating efforts or missing maintenance on sections of the trails.

#### 17. Education and interpretation

Many segments of the trail system contain a wealth of opportunities for education and interpretation. Educational opportunities range from interpretive signage to educational tours.

#### 18. Law enforcement

A greater law-enforcement effort might be made toward the goal of a safer trail system. Law enforcement agencies should be aware about the location of trails, and the types and levels of use they receive. Increased law enforcement awareness will be addressed on an as needed basis.