



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS



2022 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. For assistance, refer to the MassTrails Grant Guidelines or contact the MassTrails Grants Administrator. READ ALL APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS and GUIDANCE NOTES under each question for the most accurate submittal. An asterisk () indicates a required field.*

All application materials and guidance documents (including the Grant Guidelines and the Budget and Timeline Worksheet) are located online here: <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-a-masstrails-grant>

SECTION I: APPLICANT INFORMATION

1.1: ***Organization:** Town of Hanover

1.2: ***Contact Name:** Joseph Colangelo

1.3: ***Contact Phone:** (339) 214-5303

1.4: ***Contact Email:** joseph.colangelo@hanover-ma.gov

1.5: ***Mailing Address:** 550 Hanover Street, Hanover MA 02339

1.6: ***Has this entity received state trail grant funding in previous years (i.e., MassTrails, Recreational Trails Program Grants)?**

Yes

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

2017 MA Recreational Trails Program; Indian Head River Trail Loop - Co-sponsored with the Towns of Hanson and Abington, and organizations Wildlands Trust and North and South River Watershed Association.

SECTION II: PROJECT INFORMATION

2.1: ***Project Title:** *Please limit the project Title to a maximum of 5 words.*

Hanover Branch Rail Trail Extension

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

Hanover, Massachusetts

2.3: ***Brief Project Description:** *Please provide a brief description of the proposed project in 3-4 sentences. This description will be used to describe the project in abbreviated form for various purposes including approvals, press and announcements going forward.*

The Town of Hanover plans to construct a shared-use pathway that extends the Hanover Branch Rail Trail across West Hanover to the Drinkwater River. This project will connect Hanover with the successful shared-use pathway that travels through neighboring towns of Abington and Rockland. Trail users can experience a quintessential New England journey through the natural beauty of woods and wetlands, historic village centers, and suburban post-industrial town settings while enjoying the natural and cultural wealth of Massachusetts and spending time outdoors. The Hanover Branch Rail Trail is an iconic multi-community project that provides direct pedestrian connections between our historic village centers, commerce centers, school campuses, and local recreation areas located along the rail line.

2.4: ***Total Project Value:** *See the “MassTrails Budget and Timeline Worksheet” and attach at the end of this application. The worksheet can be accessed on the MassTrails Grants website.*

\$336,160.00

2.5: ***Grant Amount Requested:** (Up to 80% of Total Project Value)

\$268,960.00

2.6: ***Matching Amount Committed:** (Minimum of 20% of Total Project Value)

\$250,000.00

2.7: **What is the source of Match funding?**

Community Preservation Act funding approved at Hanover Town Meeting 5/3/2021

2.8: ***What is the primary activity of the project?** (Check one)

Design / Engineering / Permitting / Construction

2.9: *** What type of trail will this project build?** (Check one)

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

Note that if this is a design/engineering/permitting project, indicate what type of trail is being planned. And, if this is an equipment purchase only, indicate what type of trail the equipment will serve.

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

Walkers / Runners / Hikers / Bicyclists / Mountain Bikers / Cross-Country Skiers / Equestrians

Note that if this is a design/engineering/permitting project, indicate the intended user group of the planned trail. And, if this is an equipment purchase only, indicate the intended user group of the benefiting trail.

2.11: ***Briefly describe the project site/location. Include the closest address to the site.** *Describe the specific project site and limits, starting/terminus points and destinations.*

This trail project takes place on a strip of DCR owned land in Hanover MA, 02339. The trail follows the historic Hanover Branch Rail Line from the Rockland town line to the Drinkwater River in Hanover. It can be accessed from the end of Circuit Street adjacent to 970 Circuit St, and in West Hanover Square across from the Post Office on Hanover Street.

2.12: **List the name of the landowner(s) and other relevant interest held on the property and by what entity (e.g., Conservation Restriction, Leasehold, Right of Way, Easement).** *Carefully provide accurate information on all landowners and CR holders on land where the project will take place. Documentation of permissions for project work by all required entities is required in Section 6.4 of this application, using the MassTrails Grants – Landowner Permission Forms uploaded as an attachment. For more information on required permissions, see the MassTrails Grant Guidelines.*

Commonwealth of Massachusetts – Department of Conservation and Recreation

2.13: ***Has landowner permission been obtained using the MassTrails Grant – Private/Public Landowner Permission Form?** *If the project involves work on land with a Conservation Restriction, the MassTrails Grants – Conservation Restriction Work Authorization Form or letter from CR holder is required **in addition to** land ownership permission forms. For more information on land ownership forms, see the MassTrails Grant Guidelines.*

Yes

2.14: ***Does this project meet the minimum state and federal requirements for accessibility?** *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 Grant Guidelines document for assessing a project's regulatory requirements for accessible trails and pathways.*

Yes

2.15: *Does the project involve the purchase of steel or iron, including construction supplies (e.g., bridges, culverts) or equipment with steel or iron parts (e.g., tractors, snowmobiles), with a value of \$2,500 or more? *MassTrails projects are required to comply with the U.S. DOT Buy America provision. See Grant Guidelines document for details. For projects which include the purchase of equipment or applicable materials, certification of Buy America compliance must be included in the application to qualify for MassTrails funding. Certification can be uploaded in Section 6 of this application.*

Yes

2.16: 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)? *If Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) or State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) funding is anticipated for the project, a PNF must be submitted to MassDOT to qualify for MassTrails funding.*

TIP funding is not anticipated for this project.

2.17: If applicable, is this project currently on the regional Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) or on the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP)?

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: *Describe specifically what kind of trail your project proposes to design and/or build? Describe in detail the characteristics of the proposed trail (including length, width, surface material, grades / terrain, structures, signage, and amenities).

This project will extend the Hanover Branch Rail Trail into the Town of Hanover from the Town of Rockland. This extension project adds .81 miles of shared-use trail with a 10 ft. wide paved pathway and 3 ft. minimum graded shoulders within a 20 to 24 ft. wide cleared area.

This format will be a continuation of the Hanover Branch Rail Trail project in neighboring towns. Surface material will remain consistent with asphalt paving over a gravel base. The terrain is flat railroad bed and access grades will be gradual to provide handicap accessibility.

The existing railroad bridge over the Drinkwater River is wood with granite embankments. The embankments appear solid and will receive a full assessment for safety. A steel replacement bridge is included in cost estimates.

Two parking areas will be improved for visitors, with a parking area at the end of Circuit Street and a parking area adjacent to the trail on Hanover Street in West Hanover Square. Signage will be installed at both lots with an informational kiosk. Benches and picnic tables will be installed at convenient locations at Circuit Street, at the West Hanover Square lot, and at the Drinkwater River scenic area.

3.2: *Describe the specific tasks required to complete this project. *Be as specific as possible about the steps the grant project will take and the results you hope to achieve. Include the specific trail location(s), starting and ending points, and trail distances. Describe the trail surface material, and any proposed structures involved. All tasks must coincide with the project's budget.*

Survey of property

Removal of rails and ties

Grading / Compaction

Paving

3.3: *Describe how this project will fill in a critical network gap and/or connect directly to other existing trails, trail segments or trail networks, and to residential, commercial, and recreational “community anchors.” *Please describe how the proposed project connects directly to existing trails and trail networks. Describe how it will connect directly to important community anchors. If this project creates an off-road trail connection under, over or around a significant barrier (e.g., major roadway) describe and highlight that. In supporting materials, include a map that shows these specific direct connections to support your narrative.*

This project connects the Town of Hanover directly to the existing Hanover Branch Rail Trail in the towns of Rockland and Abington. This shared-use pathway connects important residential and commercial community anchors providing a pedestrian link between North Abington, Rockland Center and West Hanover. This project also connects to the Hanover Open Space trail network, including The Hanover Greenway, The Colby Phillips Trails, and The Wildlands Trust Land Preserve. This project fills in a critical network gap in that the Town of Hanover is currently not connected to the Hanover Branch Rail Trail and this project will establish that connection.

3.4: *Is the project located in or near an Environmental Justice Community or in close proximity to an “underserved” community? If applicable, describe the impacted EJ or underserved community. What is the proximity of the community to the trail (does the trail intersect with the population block, run adjacent, or is it a certain distance away?) How will this project improve access, mobility, safety, health and/or quality of life for these populations? *See Grant Guidelines for information and resources on Environmental Justice Communities. “Underserved” can encompass population groups such as low income, minority, elderly, children, limited English proficiency, geographically isolated communities (e.g., rural) or persons with disabilities.*

This trail will provide handicap accessibility to our natural environment. Hanover has many trails and walking paths but none allow handicapped residents to travel through the forested environment in our town. This project will benefit disabled and senior residents from local housing locations including Legion Senior Housing and The Cushing Residences by providing a smooth handicap accessible multi-use pathway suitable for any level of mobility. Low income populations along the trail will also benefit from this free recreational amenity in our community.

3.5: *Describe the steps already taken during this project or planned in future steps to ensure that the project is inclusive of under-represented voices and populations in the community, region, or state. For example, how has the project solicited feedback and comments from non-English speaking or low-income populations or populations of color and integrated those into project planning and implementation?

This project has solicited feedback from diverse members of the public in advertised public meetings, town social media group postings, in person discussions, and at our Annual Town Meeting. We intend to continue soliciting feedback from all members of the community to assure that the project meets expectations and needs.

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

A feasibility study has been completed and provides an analysis of existing conditions, project scope, and planning documents. An application for the DCR Construction Access Permit has been submitted and is under review. Conservation filings will be submitted for areas that fall within the resource area protected by the Wetlands Protection Act and Hanover Wetlands Protection By-Law 6-14.

Ongoing maintenance will be provided by the Hanover DPW, Hanover Open Space Committee, and Hanover Trail Team.

3.7: *Describe community support for this project. 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.

This project was proposed by the Hanover Open Space Committee and selected by the Hanover Community Preservation Committee to receive \$250,000 in CPA funding. This process included many posted public meetings, social media postings, and site walk opportunities for community engagement. This project received a unanimous vote of support from the Community Preservation Committee in January 2021.

This project was subsequently voted on at Hanover Town Meeting in May 2021. Town Meeting participants asked questions, expressed their interest, and overwhelmingly approved this project and its CPA funding.

3.8: *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. 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.

The current state of the rail bed is a safety challenge. Residents trying to access the Rockland Rail Trail from points in Hanover try and walk bicycles or other equipment over the uneven tracks. The tracks are difficult to navigate, and clearly present tripping hazards. This project would eliminate that concern with the implementation of smooth grade transitions and a paved walking surface.

3.9: *How does this project specifically address or improve accessibility for people with disabilities?

*Provide a brief overview of how the project will facilitate new or improved access for populations with limited mobility, including but not limited to elderly, visually impaired 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 Grant Guidelines for accessibility information and resources).*

This project will provide new handicap accessibility to the Hanover Branch Rail Trail with accessible entrances in Hanover. This project will provide direct exposure to nature for those who cannot navigate existing walking trails in Hanover. Currently, the only handicapped accessible recreational trail in Hanover is at Forge Pond Park which is a circuit loop around grass playing fields and does not enter the woods.

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

This project is a unique high quality recreational experience because it allows users to visit three diverse communities on the South Shore. Trail users can experience a quintessential New England journey through the natural beauty of woods and wetlands, historic village centers, and suburban post-industrial town settings while enjoying the natural and cultural wealth of Massachusetts and spending time outdoors. The Hanover Branch Rail Trail is an iconic multi-community project that provides direct pedestrian connections between our historic village centers, commerce centers, school campuses, and local recreation areas located along the rail line.

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?

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

4.4: Please describe the locations and extents of excavation.

Excavation will be surficial to remove remaining train tracks and organic growth that has encroached the trail area. Grading requirements may call for some light excavation to build up the trail surface to improve site drainage and handicap accessibility.

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

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.

There have been many discussions with the Conservation Agent and individual Conservation Commission Members regarding wetland impacts of the proposed project. Preliminary review identified some wetland areas including isolated and bordering vegetated wetlands, FEMA flood zone, and riverfront area. Although these areas were found adjacent to the proposed trail, they will not be impacted by either filling or other alteration during any proposed work to prepare the trail for public use. Although paving is planned for the trail, there will be areas where permeable aggregate is laid in areas that abut wetlands, inner riparian, and buffer. Additionally, any such areas will be identified with educational signage and conservation setback markers where necessary to avoid negative impacts. We are aware that Conservation permitting will be necessary in a few areas.

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)

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.

We do not believe that this project triggers MEPA thresholds.

4.10: Are there any other permits required for this project? Please indicate the permit type and how/when it will be obtained.

A DCR construction permit has been applied for and is under review currently. DCR Landowner Permission has already been granted. Conservation filings will be submitted for areas within the resource area protected by the Wetlands Protection Act and Hanover Wetlands Protection By-Law 6-14 as they are needed.

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.

Equipment MUST be Buy America compliant. Certification must be obtained and attached to the last section of this application for the project to be considered for funding.

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.

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

N/A

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

N/A

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.

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

5.6: 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?

N/A

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

N/A

5.8: Is this equipment "Buy America" compliant? *See Grant Guidelines for more information on Buy America. Certification of Buy America compliance for the specific piece of equipment is required to be submitted WITH THE APPLICATION. An application for an equipment purchase of \$2,500 value or more will not be considered if Buy America documentation is not included!*

N/A

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.

Please remember that:

MassTrails grants are REIMBURSABLE, meaning grantees must first pay for expenditures themselves and then submit for reimbursement using the required documentation.

MassTrails grants are MATCHING grants and require that proponents provide at least 20% of the total project value.

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 Forms and Conservation Restriction Work Authorization Form (as a single PDF)

Buy America Certification

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

6.1: ***MassTrails Grant Budget and Timeline Worksheets (Required - Note that there are two (2) tabs on this spreadsheet - BOTH should be completed)**. *The Worksheet can be downloaded at the MassTrails Grants website (<https://www.mass.gov/guides/masstrails-grants>)*

Budget and Timeline Worksheets

6.2: ***Project Map(s) (Required)**. *Submit a map of the project location and extent (as detailed as possible). Submit additional maps as needed using various imagery and data to depict the project as accurately as possible. We also encourage you to submit a single zipped GIS file of the project extent under Additional Project Information below, though this is not required.*

GIS File

6.3: **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.)*

Photos / Trail Design Plans / Bridge Design / Kiosk Design / Signage Photos

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

DCR Landowner Permission Form

If applicable: **Buy America Documentation (Required for applicable projects)**

Optional, submit up to three files containing additional information that reviewers may need in order to make informed determinations.

6.5: **Additional Project Information**. *Submit a file with any additional project information.*

Merrill Engineering – Feasibility Study

6.6: **Additional Project Information**. *Submit a file with any additional project information.*

6.7: **Additional Project Information**. *Submit a file with any additional project information.*