

ARTICLE 14. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate **\$60,000 from the Community Preservation Committee Undesignated Fund balance to help fund** engineering and environmental services design for the segment of the Border to Boston Rail Trail between Pond St and Georgetown Rd as part of a 25% Design Submission for MassDOT to review and comment; the CPC funds would serve as a 25% match for the total cost of \$232,000 for this phase of design, with the remaining \$172,000 costs of the project funded by a MassTrails grant for which an application has been submitted; and that as a condition to the CPC funding, the MassTrails grant shall have been awarded; said funds to be expended under the direction of the Town Administrator in consultation with the Community Preservation Committee, or take any other action thereon.

Sponsored and supported by the Community Preservation Committee
Finance Committee recommends adoption of this article
Select Board recommends adoption of this article

MOTION: I move to **appropriate \$60,000 from the Community Preservation Committee Undesignated Fund Balance to help fund engineering and environmental services design for the segment of the Boarder to Boston Rail Trail** between Pond St and Georgetown Rd as part of a 25% Design Submission for MassDOT to review and comment; and that as a condition to the CPC funding, the MassTrails grant shall have been awarded; said funds to be expended under the direction of the Town Administrator in consultation with the Community Preservation Committee.

COMMENTS: The \$60,000 would help fund engineering and environmental services design for the segment of the Border to Boston (B2B) Rail Trail between Pond St and Georgetown Rd as part of a 25% Design Submission for MassDOT to review and comment. The \$60,000 request would serve as a 25% match for the entire cost of \$232,000 for this phase of design. The remainder of the project (\$172,000) would be funded by a MassTails grant. That application was submitted to the state on Tuesday, February 1, and is pending review. The goal of this project is to advance design of the southern segment of rail located entirely in Boxford off-road on a former railroad bed. This includes designing an approximately 500 ft boardwalk bridge that would provide access through wetlands near Kelsey Rd. Getting to the 25% design would demonstrate to the state a level of commitment by the Town of Boxford, which in turn would help place this project on the state's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) for construction funding and oversight by MassDOT. It could also potentially open up additional funding from the state or other sources to complete the design.

The rail trail segment from Georgetown Rd north into Georgetown to West Main St is well on the path to final design. 75% construction plans to MassDOT for review. This project is on the FY25 TIP (Transportation Improvement Plan) with an estimated construction cost of \$4.2 Million.

Name of Applicant: Town of Boxford, Matt Coogan, Town Administrator
Sponsoring Organization:
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Name of Proposal: Boxford Rail Trail – 25% Design
CPA Category: Recreation
CPA Funding Requested: \$60,000
Total Cost of Proposed Project: \$232,000

1. *Goals: What are the goals of the proposed project?*

On behalf of the Town of Boxford Select Board, I am pleased to submit a CPA application of \$60,000 to help fund engineering and environmental services design for the segment the Border to Boston (B2B) Rail Trail between Pond St and Georgetown Rd as part of a 25% Design Submission for MassDOT to review and comment. The \$60,000 request would serve as a 25% match for the entire cost of \$232,000 for this phase of design. The remainder of the project (\$172,000) would be funded by a MassTails grant. That application was submitted to the state on Tuesday, February 1, and is pending review. The goal of this project is to advance design of the southern segment of rail located entirely in Boxford off-road on a former railroad bed. Getting to the 25% design would demonstrate to the state a level of commitment by the Town of Boxford, which in turn would help place this project on the state's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) for construction funding and oversight by MassDOT. It could also potentially open up additional funding from the state or other sources to complete the design.

2. *Community Need: Why is this project important? Does it address needs identified in existing town plans?*

The Boxford Rail Trail project will supply a critically important missing link in the larger Border to Boston Rail Trail, and will provide a safe, accessible, off-road shared use path for bicyclists and pedestrians. The original northern section of the Border to Boston Rail Trail project consisted of one project combining the communities of Boxford, Georgetown, Newbury, and Salisbury. Now split up into four distinct projects, this Boxford Section will provide 1.2 miles extending from Pond Street in Boxford to Georgetown Road in Boxford. The Border to Boston Trail Network is a 70-mile trail through approximately 20 communities between Boston and the New Hampshire State Border. The Town has been an active participant in B2B regional planning for over ten years.

3. *Community Support: What is the nature and level of support for this project? Include letters of support, if any.*

The Town of Boxford, through a trail feasibility study, hosted public meetings in 2009 and 2010 to collect public feedback about what the community preference is for the Trail. Then again, when the four northern communities of the Border to Boston Trail were combined as one project, design charrettes and public meetings were held in each of the communities in 2011. The other segment of the B2B Rail Trail partially in Boxford, which begins at Georgetown Rd and extends into the Town of Georgetown, is scheduled to be constructed beginning in fiscal year 2025. The design phase is nearly complete and the Town has been coordinating with the Town of Georgetown, Stantec, and MassDOT on this TIP project. Last month the Select Board voted unanimously to support efforts to obtain funding for this design through the CPC and MassTrails Program. The Merrimack Valley Regional Planning Commission has also submitted a letter of recommendation on behalf of the Town.

4. *Timeline: What is the schedule for project implementation, including a timeline for all critical elements?*

MassTrails grant awards are expected by June 2022. If the Town were to receive the grant and the matching CPA funds, we can proceed with contracting with the engineering design firm Stantec. Stantec has been working with several Towns on various segments of B2B trail, including the Boxford-Georgetown segment, scheduled to be constructed in fiscal year 2025. The 25% design process would begin over the summer of 2022 and extend into 2023.

5. *Credentials: How will the experience of the applicant contribute to the success of this project?*

The Town of Boxford has been an active participant in B2B regional planning efforts for over ten years. The Town has experience managing large public infrastructure projects, and has the capacity and resources to contract and oversee an engineering design firm for this phase of the project. The Town is prepared, upon award of both state grants and CPA funds, to contract with Stantec on design.

6. *Success Factors: How will the success of this project be measured? Be as specific as possible.*

Reaching 25% design would allow the project to be programmed into the state Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), which means construction would be funded and managed by MassDOT. This would be a great success, since construction is most likely to cost over \$5M. Completion of 25% is a display of commitment by the Town to complete a critical gap in the B2B Rail Trail, which in turn could open up additional state and federal grant opportunities to complete the design phase.

7. *Budget: What is the total budget for the project and how will CPA funds be spent? All items of expenditure must be clearly identified. Distinguish between hard and soft costs.*

Stantec has provided a scope of services and fee proposal to complete a 25% design that can be submitted to MassDOT totaling \$232,000. Stantec, through the MassTrails grant process, has provided a breakdown of all costs and how the CPA matching funds would be utilized in this phase of the project. The breakdown is included in this application submission.

8. *Other funding: The Boxford CPA Committee expects that applicants will offer alternative sources of funding to cover a portion of the total cost of the project. What additional funding sources are available, committed or under consideration? Include commitment letters, if available, and describe any other attempts to secure funding for this project.*

The Town would like to use the \$60,000 CPA request as a 25% local match for a \$172,000 MassTrails grant application submitted on February 1st. The MassTrails grant administrators should be announcing grant awards in June, after Boxford Annual Town Meeting, May 10th. If the Town is not awarded state grant funds, other funding would be pursued, including applying for another round of MassTrails grant funds in 2023.

9. *Maintenance: If ongoing maintenance is required for your project, how will it be funded?*

The Trail would be an ADA-compliant, bituminous concrete trail. It would be maintained by the Town of Boxford Department of Public Works through its maintenance operating budget.

11. *Documentation that you have or will have control over the site, such as Purchase and Sale Agreement, option or deed.*

The Rail Trail land is owned by National Grid, and the Town has a long-standing relationship with regards to the unimproved access to the trail. The Town will be working with National Grid this spring on improving a portion of the trail east of Interstate 95 in the Pye Brook neighborhood and will be coordinating for this project. As part of the design process, the Town of Boxford anticipates that they will undertake a right-of-way process to acquire property rights. That includes coordination with residents on Kelsey Road, where Stantec intends to design a boardwalk that bridges over wetlands, a portion of which are located on private property. The Town will reach out to property owners when appropriate as part of the design process.