

Trails Budget for 2016/2017

The Trails Committee had a very good year.

Progress on the Charlotte Town Link Trail continues and many Charlotters are out enjoying the Trail. The Co-Housing section is being used by many, including young families on bikes.

It is with great anticipation that we watch the Route 7 upgrade and the preparations for the pedestrian underpass which are slated for next summer. This will connect two completed sections of the Trail: The Melissa and Trevor Mack Trail and the Co-Housing Trail. The last section needed to get to Mount Philo is the portion on State Park Road.

Our biggest news of the year is the recent announcement of a VTRANS grant for \$50,000 to plan and scope State Park Rd and the portion of the Trail from Co-Housing to the West Village. This is very exciting and will certainly propel the Link Trail forward.

We also worked with the Vermont Land Trust to finalize the Trails on the Burns property. This section of the Trail is called the Charlotte 250 Loop.

We did have record rainfall early in the summer with a resulting washout at the steepest section of the Co-Housing trail. We completed an engineering study to build this section to sustain the heavy water flow and we have chosen a contractor to build it before the year end.

The Trails annual budget of \$1000 continues to be consistent and adequate for our maintenance needs. For the fiscal year 2014/2015 we spent:

- one time brush hog:\$210
- signage wood and materials:\$111
- Postage for development mailing:\$163
- development materials:\$185
- lumber for trails bench:\$300

Total:\$969

So far this fiscal year we have spent:

- Signage:\$42
- engineering study:\$455

The development mailing will likely cost similar to last year. We will not be buying material for benches this year. We should be spending more on signage. If we were to have a professional make the signs and kiosks as advised by the Champlain Byways plan, our budget would need to be much higher. For now, a Trails member has been graciously making signs in critical areas. We do get requests for signages that we have been unable to provide.

We continue to request money for matching funds and for Trail construction. We are having quite a bit of success with the \$5,000 matching funds we currently receive from the town. Most of the grants we apply for require 10-20% town matching. This most recent large VTRANS grant is our third grant received so far and with each new grant the Link Trail is more usable and a greater asset to the town.

We are making slow steady progress. The Trails Committee does get frequent inquiries about when the Link Trail will be complete, about when a child will be able to ride safely to the west Village or to the beach. We will continue to make slow progress, and if the Town decides that safe off road pedestrian travel is a high enough priority to set aside real funding for this project, then the Link Trail would be available for use much sooner. We request a minimum of \$5,000 a year from the town, which many grants require. We would be able to make more steady progress if our funding was higher while we are in construction phase.

We will also continue our end of the year development mailing, and have targeted the completion of underpass construction to start our second phase of concerted fundraising efforts.