

**Town Link Trail
State Park Road Portion
Detailed Layout**

Options



Submitted by:

Broadreach Planning & Design

October 28, 2018

A. INTRODUCTION

1. OVERVIEW

The Town of Charlotte completed a scoping study for two segments of the Town Link Trail in 2017. The Charlotte Trails Committee is now moving forward on detailed layout work for the portion of the Trail along State Park Road, from the southern end of the Trevor and Mellissa Mack Trail to the entrance to Mount Philo State Park. As the first step in this work, the existing conditions reported in the Scoping Study have been updated and expanded. Broadreach Planning & Design (BRPD) is working with the Town to complete this project.

An initial report provided information on new or expanded information provided in the *Charlotte Town Link Trail Scoping Study* (Scoping Study), completed by the Town with the assistance of Dubois & King, dated July 13, 2017.

2. PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of the overall Town Trail Link project is to provide a non-motorized trail through the Town, linking many of the locations that residents want to reach by bicycling or walking, including the Town Beach, the Town Offices, and Mount Philo State Park. This particular portion of the project's purpose is to find the most appropriate detailed alignment of the portion of the Trail that lies along State Park Road, following the general recommendations of the Scoping Study.

3. ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Following an examination of the updated existing conditions, Town Steering Committee conducted a work session to identify as many ways of locating the trail along State Park Road, either in the right-of-way or adjacent easements. They also worked together to do an initial analysis of alternatives to refine or eliminate those that did not meet the purpose and need or were otherwise unsuitable. BRPD then refined the descriptions; including the No-Action Alternative; did further analysis; eliminated alternatives that did not appear to work or meet the purpose of the project; and developed a concise viable set of options. The Steering Committee reviewed and finalized the options information in preparation for a second public work session for the project.

Table 1 at the end of the text shows all of the alternatives that the Steering Committee initially developed; it also highlights whether these initial alternatives were kept as part of the refined set of alternatives, or eliminated prior to the public work session. If the Steering Committee decided to eliminate an alternative, **Table 1** explains the basis for

the elimination. **Figure 5** shows the final set of State Park Road Town Link Trail options that remained after the initial review process. **Figures 6, 7, 8, and 9** provide more detailed look at the options. **Tables 2a, 2b, and 2c** provide an analysis of the remaining options, including the No-Action Alternative. The refined set of options is meant for public review and consideration.

The Tables provide a ballpark cost estimate for each of the options, meant primarily for comparison purposes. The final plans will include a more detailed cost estimate for the preferred option.

4. USE OF THIS REPORT & NEXT STEPS

This report is meant to serve as a guide to the alternatives under consideration for the detailed layout of the Town Link Trail along State Park Road. It presents this information for public review.

Figures 6, 7, 8, and 9 in this report present the options that are currently under consideration. The **Figures** do not imply that all of the options are meant to be developed. None of the options are recommended at this point in the project.

The options will be considered at a public work session, during which the attendees will have a chance to express their opinions on which option, or group of options, would make the most sense to pursue first. By the end of the public work session, the Steering Committee hopes that consensus on the preferred option(s) will emerge.

The Steering Committee will review the results of the public work session and make a draft set of final recommendations for one final public review before the study is finished. They will prepare a draft final report and plans for the project, which will outline the preferred option(s). It will include both the *Existing Conditions* report and this *Options* report.

B. OPTIONS

1. OVERVIEW

The trail options are each based on a trail that is ten feet wide with a solid crushed gravel base, similar to the existing trail on the Co-housing property west of Route 7.

In order to easily present the various alternatives, the Steering Committee divided State Park Road into three sections:

- Melissa & Trevor Mack Trail to Vineyard View Drive - From the southern end of the existing trail as it meets State Park Road east to the intersection of State Park Road with Vineyard View Drive;

- Vineyard View Drive to the Four Meadows Farm - From the intersection of Vineyard View Drive with State Park Road to the western property line of the parcel proposed for development as the Four Meadows Farm; and
- The western property line of the parcel proposed for development as Four Meadows Farm to the intersection of State Park Road and Mount Philo Road.

There are generally two options:

- Option A: placing the trail close to the road with a grassed separation of approximately four feet between the trail and the edge of State Park Road; and
- Option B: placing the Road farther away from the road where possible, with the existing tree row along the edge of State Park Road between the trail and the edge of the road; this option includes several different ways of crossing the wetlands adjacent to Thorpe Brook.

2. MELISSA & TREVOR MACK TRAIL TO VINEYARD VIEW DRIVE

a. Option A - Close to the Road

The trail would lie close the road in the existing grassed area. It would lie over the existing drainage ditch on either side of the existing driveway in this section, requiring that the ditches be relocated or converted to culverts.

b. Option B - Away from the Road

The trail would lie at the outer edge of the existing easement, approximately five feet away from the edge of the road at the western end and about ten feet away from the road at the eastern end, where there is a five foot easement available to the Town for placement of the trail.

3. VINEYARD VIEW DRIVE TO FOUR MEADOWS FARM

a. Option A - Close the Road

The trail would lie approximately four feet away from the road, separated from it by a four-foot wide grassed area. In those locations where the existing shoulder area is less than ten-feet wide, a retaining wall would be added on the down side and fill placed behind it to create enough space for the trail. Alternately, the trail could be narrowed or placed closer to the road to avoid the need for the retaining wall and fill. The ballpark cost estimate for this option is based on using the retaining walls and fill. There are several prominent trees along this section of State Park Road that might need to be removed as part of the construction of the trail.

b. Option B - Away from the Road with Boardwalk

The trail for this option would be located behind the existing tree row. It would be placed far enough back from the road to be significantly separated and screened from the road. This setback would require crossing the wetland near Thorpe Brook. The crossing would be via boardwalk, raised approximately two to four feet above the level of the wetland. The path would use small retaining walls to maintain an existing slope of five percent or less as it descends from the higher areas on either side of the wetland down to the level of the wetland.

c. Option B - Away from the Road with Bridge

This variation of Option B would use several sections of prefabricated bridge to cross the wetland. The bridge would replace the boardwalk and would eliminate the need to use the retaining walls on the slopes on either side of the wetland. The bridge would be divided into at least three sections, requiring the construction of two foundations in the wetland, one on either side of Thorpe Brook.

d. Option B1 - At the Edge of the Wetland with Boardwalk

This variation on Option B would reroute the trail as it nears the wetland to the southern end of the trail, close to the State Park Road right-of-way. The boardwalk would be close the edge of the wetland. It would still use small retaining walls to negotiate the slopes down to the wetland on either side.

e. Option B1 - At the Edge of the Wetland with Bridge

This variation on Option B would also reroute the trail as it nears the wetland to be close to the southern road. It would use prefabricated bridges to cross the wetland. The trail would need at least three sections of bridge to cross the wetland, with two foundations placed in the wetland.

4. FOUR MEADOWS FARM TO MOUNT PHILO ROAD

a. Option A - Close the Road

This option would place the trail close to State Park Road, divided from the edge of the pavement by a four-foot wide grassed area. For those locations where the existing shoulder area is less than ten feet wide, a retaining wall would support fill to create a wider area for the path. The ballpark cost for this section of trail is based on suing the retaining wall and fill. The Town could also narrow the trail and/or place it close to the road to avoid the need to use the retaining wall.

b. Option B - Away from the Road

This option would place the trial in the western portion of this section on the north side of the existing tree row along State Park Road. This would place the trail in the

outer edges of the forested wetland. This portion of the trail would be placed on fill rather than on a boardwalk. Further east in the grassed area, the trail would lie at the outer edges of the wetland, requiring the relocation of the existing drainage ditch close to the road. In those areas where there is no wetland, the trail would move further away from the road.

5. PARKING

a. Overview

As part of the trail construction along State Park Road, the Town would like to include a trail head the eastern end. The trail head would include a small kiosk with information about the trail, as well as up to four parking spaces for vehicles. Two options are under consideration. **Figure 10** shows the location of the two options. In each option, the kiosk would be located close to the corner.

b. Mount Philo Road

The parking spaces along Mount Philo Road would be parallel spaces at the edge of the right-of-way. They would require some fill along the edge of the existing level area along the road to create a wide enough space for vehicles to park. It also appears that the available space within the right-of-way is only approximately eight-feet wide, and it might be necessary to obtain a small easement from the Four Meadows Farm to extend the parking slightly onto their property.

c. State Park Road

The potential parking spaces along State Park Road would be parallel spaces located close to the intersection with Mount Philo Road. There appears to be sufficient room and right of way to easily create the spaces.

6. TRAFFIC CALMING

At a minimum, the construction of the trail would also include the installation of a marked crosswalk and appropriate crosswalk signs on Mount Philo Road to the driveway into Mount Philo State Park.