

**Draft  
MEMORANDUM**

TO: Cape Elizabeth Town Council  
FROM: Conservation Commission  
DATE: December 10, 2014  
SUBJECT: Conservation Commission CIP/Budget request

Introduction

In the last four years, the Conservation Commission has invested most of its time in preparing the Management of Greenbelt and Open Space Plan (2011) and the 2013 Greenbelt Plan. With these two large policy efforts complete, the Conservation Commission is excited to refocus on greenbelt trail stewardship and implementation of these plans. This fall, it has become apparent that an infusion of capital improvement funding is needed to supplement the annual greenbelt trail maintenance funding.

Potential Needs

The Conservation Commission remains strongly supportive of the seasonal Public Works position where 1/2 of the position is devoted to vegetation management along existing greenbelt trails. This employee, supplemented by other Public Works staff, has also taken on some of the straight-forward trail improvements.

Several greenbelt trails, however, are showing wear or needs that exceed current staffing availability and funding for materials. Below is a list of some of the projects the Conservation Commission has identified for more robust work.

Gull Crest: After years of considering options, the town installed a 2 plank wide boardwalk along the muddiest portions of the Outer Loop Trail. The Conservation Commission is considering adding 400' of boardwalk on the ends of the existing boardwalk and also considering installing a 3-plank wide boardwalk, necessitating adding one plank to the existing system.

Installing 400' plus 1 more plank:	\$8,300
Installing only 1 more plank:	\$4,900

Great Pond: The town maintains an extensive boardwalk system and trails. This year, one section of boardwalk was damaged by a falling tree and will be replaced with existing greenbelt trail funds. The stone steps that transition from the boardwalk are in poor condition. The town solicited bids to replace the steps. The sole bidder submitted a permanent improvement project for \$20,000. The steps are located on property owned

by the Cape Elizabeth Land Trust, so no work can be done without their consent and CELT may be able to fund all or part of a step improvement project.

Step replacement/upgrade \$20,000

Winnick Woods: The Conservation Commission is looking at an additional trail connection from Winnick Woods to Eastman Meadows. The connection may need a state permit in addition to construction of about 100' of bridging.

Trail connection \$3,500

Spurwink River Pedestrian bridge: The bridge, which is a key north/south town greenbelt connection, was built in 2005. It is nearing its 10th year and more robust maintenance is anticipated. No cost estimate has been developed at this time.

Bridge maintenance \$

Encroachments: With over 1200 acres in open space protection, the town is shifting from a primarily acquisition focus to more of a management focus. This includes preserving public open space from private encroachment. Currently, encroachments are addressed when they are discovered. Costs to reverse an encroachment include surveying property boundaries and mitigation measures, such as adding plantings along the open space boundary line or installing a fence or other physical boundary marker. The town may want to fund annual encroachment mitigation. Surveying a boundary typically costs about \$1,000 and mitigation measures range from \$750 - \$5,000. Assuming each encroachment includes costs of \$2,000 - \$4,000, an annual budget of \$4,000 would make it possible for the town to address 1-2 encroachment issues each year.

Encroachments \$4,000

Town Farm brook crossing: The Town Farm trail used to cross Pollack Brook and connect to the Riverside Cemetary. The 51' long bridge has slipped its banks and the Conservation Commission has not yet decided on a replacement option.

Pollack Creek crossing \$

Town Center Trail: The Town Center trail is located over a sewer line and is one of the best maintained trails in town. It has a mostly grass surface, with a 1'-2' wide worn dirt path and gentle grade changes, except for one wetland overflow location. The Conservation Commission has been asked to consider improving this trail to make it a premier, accessible to all trail. One treatment under consideration is to upgrade the trail from Starboard Drive to the Village Crossings intersection to a 4' wide stone dust path

similar to the Cliff Walk in Fort Williams. This would also require constructing a bridge across the wetland overflow channel.

Town Center Trail upgrade \$

### Conclusion

The Conservation Commission is recommending greenbelt and open space capital funding to address these types of projects, which are beyond the financial reach of the annual greenbelt funding of \$8,000. We are recommending \$25,000 for the next 2 years, which would include \$4,000 for encroachments.