

MEMORANDUM

TO: Matt Sturgis, Town Manager
Deb Lane, Town Clerk/ Assistant Town Manager
FROM: Maureen O'Meara, Town Planner
DATE: July 2, 2019
SUBJECT: Relocation of trail south of Pollack Brook

Introduction

The Conservation Committee is recommending that the proposed trail extending south from Pollack Brook bridge be adjusted to include existing roads in Riverside Cemetery.

Background

The Conservation Committee, as stewards of the greenbelt trail system, is proposing to establish a trail from the southern end of Pollack Brook bridge westerly to the Spurwink River, terminating across from the overlook located in the Town of Scarborough. (See map)

Necessary permitting has been obtained from the DEP and the town Planning Board. The trail alignment, however, is challenging, located in close proximity to the Spurwink Marsh, a salt-water marsh rated high value for wildlife. In particular, there is a narrow 25' wide strip where the trail would be located downslope of the mowed area of the cemetery.

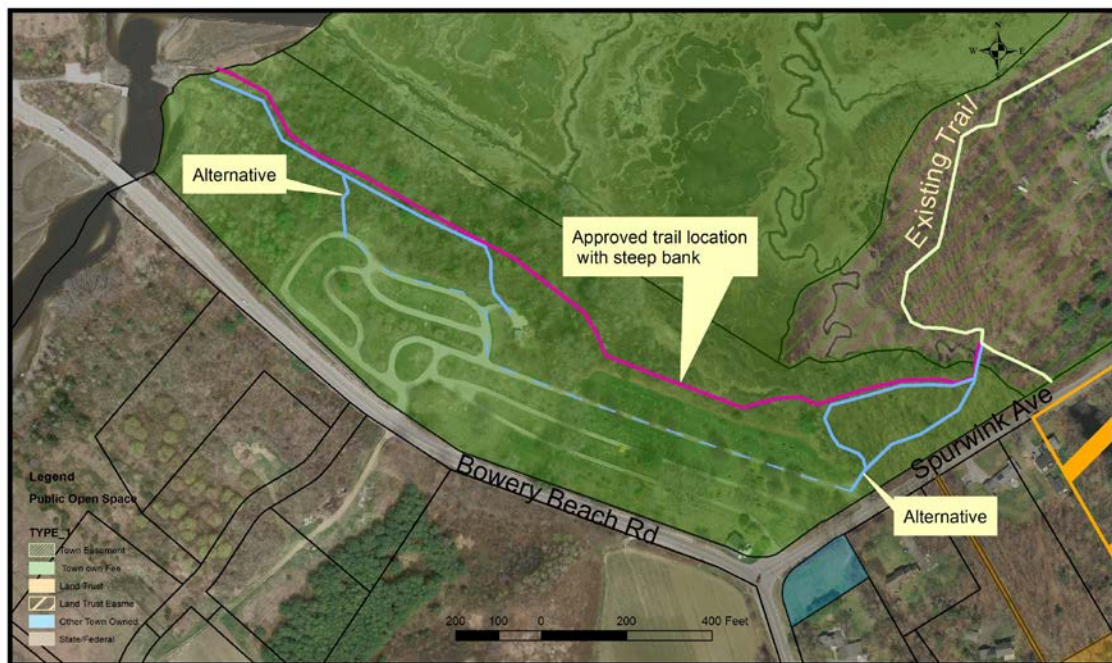
Permitting allows removal of surface vegetation to create the trail, but prohibits disturbance of the ground surface. The Conservation Committee is concerned that the existing cross slope, without ground alteration such as a bench cut, will result in a poor quality trail. Once beyond the narrow bank, much of the proposed trail will require significant removal of dense vegetation.

Proposed alternative

The Conservation Committee would like to modify the current proposal to incorporate some of the cemetery roadway system into the greenbelt trail. A trail would be extended from the bridge through the woods to the cemetery entrance on Spurwink Ave. Trail users would then use the cemetery roads. At the western end of the cemetery, a new trail would then exit the cemetery and continue to the point across from the overlook.

Compatibility

It is long-accepted practice to incorporate cemeteries into open space systems. No changes to the existing roads are suggested and no substantial increase in wear and tear is expected. Trail users are generally walkers and cyclists, who are allowed to use the cemetery roads now. Greenbelt trail users generally tend to be more respectful of the surrounding environment, and the town's experience has been that once a public access trail is established, illicit activity declines because there are more "eyes" on the area.



Process

What permission should be pursued to implement the proposed alternative?

Staff is prepared to provide the Riverside Cemetery Committee an informational presentation. Because the committee is advisory, staff will not seek a formal recommendation unless authorized to do so.

The proposed trail additions will be the same rustic treatment of most greenbelt trails, with no pavement and limited vegetated clearing, which will not trigger local review or significant costs.

cc: Conservation Committee