

It's a Grand Opening Rolling Party and You're Invited!

The official opening of the new section of the Manhan Rail Trail connecting Easthampton to Northampton will be celebrated in grand style! The big event will be held Sunday, May 22, and will include food, music and a ribbon cutting.

Mayors from both cities as well as other dignitaries are expected to attend.

The celebration comes after years of planning and momentous efforts by the planning departments and rail trail and greenway groups in both cities, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and MassDOT.

This 2.4 mile connector was a pipe dream for many years due to lack of funding. But when Federal Stimulus dollars became available, officials quickly mobilized to take advantage of the opportunity.

Schedule of Events May 22

- 10:00 AM - Music in the bandshell & breakfast at Millside Park, Easthampton (corner of Ferry and Pleasant Streets)
- 11:00 AM - Trail walk/ride towards Northampton, musical groups along the way
- 12:00 noon - Ribbon Cutting on the Manhan Rail Trail bridge over Route 10
- 12:30 - Music and food vendors at Veterans Field Park in Northampton



Members of the Manhan Rail Trail committee pose in front of the new trail split off to Northampton near Ferry Street.

New Trail Map, Brochure

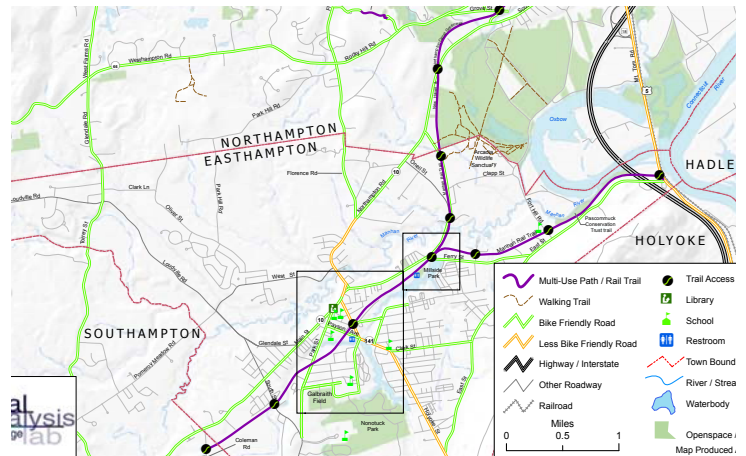
Be on the lookout for a brand new color map and brochure of the rail trails and bike paths in the Easthampton/Northampton area.

The map project, led by Friends of the Northampton Greenways and Trails President Nick Horton, includes “zoom ins” on the downtowns of both cities.

The map indicates parking, restrooms, walking trails, conservation areas and parks in addition to the multi-use trails. The project was sparked by the recent addition of several new sections of trails in the Valley, including the Manhan Rail Trail connector between Northampton and Easthampton.

Some 20,000 of the new maps will be printed and distributed. Small advertisements were placed on the map to cover the cost of printing.

Thanks to Jon Caris and others who worked so hard on this map project!



A section of a draft of the new map being developed jointly by the Friends of the Northampton Trails and Greenways and the Friends of the Manhan Rail Trail.

Nickel Slips from Big E's Add Up

In June of 2009, Big E's Supermarket started a program that rewards its customers with a five-cent credit slip for each re-useable grocery bag they used. Customers could then donate their .05 slips to one of four local environmental causes – the Manhan Rail Trail is one of those organizations!

Big E's then matched the amount donated and has so far handed over \$347.60 to be used for continued trail preservation.

So...the next time you're at Big E's, bring in your re-useable grocery bag and put your slip in the "Friends of the Manhan Rail Trail" box on your way out the door!

Rail Trail Tidbits

Adaptive Cycles Available

Adaptive cycles are available to individuals with disabilities who would like to use the Manhan Rail Trail. All Out Adventures has posted their spring schedule (April - June) for the trail at www.alloutadventures.org. Programs include cycling for seniors, Easthampton residents, and individuals with brain injuries.

Derrill's Race on Trail

The 8th Annual Derrill's Race will take place on the Manhan Rail Trail Sunday, May 1. This year's theme is "Get Outside Easthampton." The 5K Run/Walk benefits Leukemia research and other charitable causes. Visit www.derrillsrace.com for details.

Volunteers Needed April 30!

Grab your shovel, rake, gloves and other tools and meet at the mural (on the trail at Payson Ave.) to help clean up along the trail. Volunteers are needed anytime between 8:30 and noon.

Summer Concerts on the Trail

Keep your eyes peeled for the list of Friday night concerts scheduled for Millside Park on the Manhan Rail Trail. (corner of Ferry and Pleasant Streets) Sponsored by the Easthampton Parks and Recreation Department, the concerts are held in the new band shell overlooking the pond. Check the City's web site, www.easthampton.org for the schedule.

This newsletter is published by the Friends of the Manhan Rail Trail and edited by Wendy Hammerle.

Comments or questions may be directed to: (413)529-1460 - info@manhanrailtrail.org or visit our web site at:

www.manhanrailtrail.org

Donations may be sent to:
Manhan Rail Trail

Easthampton Municipal Office Building
50 Payson Ave.
Easthampton, MA 01027

Trail Construction Updates

Coleman Road Section

Clean up work at the asbestos-contaminated site of the proposed southern extension of the rail trail is nearly complete and construction is expected to begin this summer.

The three-quarter mile section of proposed trail runs from South Street in Easthampton to Coleman Road in Southamptn.

MassDOT opened bids in January and the lowest of the 18 bids came in 38% below the \$1.18 million dollar estimate. A notice to proceed was issued March 31 and a pre-construction meeting is planned for late April.

The city of Easthampton will install a sewer extension alongside the trail bed before the trail is paved. Construction of the bike path and sewer line should take about six to nine months.

Lovefield Street Bridge

The bridge over the Manhan River at Lovefield Street (part of the new connector to Northampton) is expected to be installed late summer. The contractor has been selected and work is expected to begin later this spring.

The pre-constructed metal bridge will be dropped into place after supporting walls are completed. In the meantime, trail users have to ride on Lovefield Street for about 50 yards before picking up the trail on the other side.



Clean up of the asbestos contaminated soil along the trail bed behind Wemelco Way (photo courtesy EPA)

Trees to be Removed

by Barb Labombard



A tree that has been marked for removal due to root damage to the trail near South Street.

Plans are in the works to remove a number of "problem trees" on the South Street end of the trail.

As is obvious to those of you who use this section of the trail, the roots from trees are pushing up through the path's surface creating a tripping hazard.

And while cutting trees may seem drastic, this action comes only after attempting to halt the damage using other methods, including installing root barriers and repaving sections of the path.

Many of the trees to be removed are black locusts which are considered invasive species. Other desirable trees and bushes have been planted along the trail in other areas.