



East Coast  
Greenway  
ALLIANCE

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## **PRESS ADVISORY**

### **Let's Connect the Parks! Local and National Trail Leaders organize Bike/Walk to raise awareness of project to link parks on National Trail Day, June 7<sup>th</sup>**

The New Jersey Committee for the East Coast Greenway and the Middlesex Greenway Coalition are hosting a bike/walk this Saturday to raise awareness about a project to link Roosevelt Park in Edison and Merrill Park in Woodbridge with bicycle/pedestrian path.

The bike/walk begins at 9:00 AM at Roosevelt Park – participants will travel to Merrill Park and then have the option of walking or cycling back to Roosevelt Park, or taking a shuttle. Helmets are required and children under 14 must be accompanied by an adult.

The event signals the beginning of the two groups' efforts to develop awareness of this proposed path linking the parks. The project has been in the planning stages for several years and the groups are now building the public support necessary to make the path a reality. The Roosevelt Park – Merrill Park path will be three and one-half miles long, which seems like an easy enough task, but it doesn't end there. This path will ultimately be part of an inter-state, traffic-free trail that will stretch 3000 miles from the Canadian border in Maine to Key West, Florida. Ambitious? Yes. Possible? Definitely.

The New Jersey Committee for the East Coast Greenway is part of a larger national non-profit called the East Coast Greenway Alliance. The Alliance is working with communities throughout the east coast to promote the vision of a long distance trail called the East Coast Greenway (ECG).

Often referred to as an "urban Appalachian Trail", the ECG passes through 15 states and Washington, D.C., linking cities and towns along the way using urban greenways, park paths, abandoned railroad corridors, waterfront esplanades, and scenic roads. 20% of the 3000-mile route is already on traffic-free, firm-surface trail, while much of the remainder – largely on safe and scenic roads for now – is currently in development. Eventually the entire trail will be off-road, allowing families and people of all abilities to travel safely from city-to-city, state-to-state, or within their own community without the use of motorized transportation.

Mike Kruimer, Chairman of the New Jersey Committee, says he can't wait until the entire trail is finished so that he can ride the route with his two granddaughters in fifteen years. And he's not alone in these thoughts. With rising gas prices, the obesity epidemic, and the realization that many communities offer few options for safe places to walk and bike, people throughout the

region are looking to the ECG and its component local trails to provide a safe, healthy, and close-to-home way to get exercise, commute, and travel.

The ECG is gaining momentum quickly, in large part because of the focused efforts of groups like the NJ Committee for the ECG and the Middlesex Greenway Coalition. The NJ Committee advocates for development of the ECG in New Jersey, and has been highly successful. So far, 48% of the route from Jersey City to Trenton is complete in NJ, and last year a NJ DOT-funded map & guide became the first of its kind for a Greenway travelers.

While the Alliance itself does not build the trail, it promotes the vision for connecting local trails, such as the one that will link Roosevelt and Merrill Parks, and provides strategic assistance for states, counties and municipalities that do build trail. The entire route will be publicly owned and operated and free for all to use.

For more information about the East Coast Greenway, visit: [www.greenway.org](http://www.greenway.org)

For information about the East Coast Greenway in New Jersey, visit: [www.greenwaynj.org](http://www.greenwaynj.org)

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