



MASS CENTRAL RAIL TRAIL —BOSTON TO NORTHAMPTON—104 MILES

First Annual Mass Central Rail Trail End-to-End Tour

Developing a three-day cycling adventure across the heart of Massachusetts, along a historical rail corridor that's becoming the longest rail trail in New England. This will become one of the classic bike tourism destinations in North America – just like the Erie Canal, Great Allegheny Passage, and Route Verte in Quebec.

Background:

The Massachusetts Central Rail Trail (MCRT) follows an old railroad corridor from Boston to Northampton, traveling through small towns, rural landscapes, next to free-flowing rivers and wide-open fields. Currently, 60% of this corridor is complete and open as a safe, pleasant off-road trail – enough to begin developing cross-state cycling tourism. Completion of the remaining portions is a State priority, given the potential for economic and recreational development. A recent, [high-profile study](#) demonstrated that a completed Trail could bring upwards of \$200 million in new revenue, help thousands of residents become more active and healthier, and revitalize Gateway cities and towns. The 2024 Tour will highlight this opportunity for both participants and the communities along the trail.

Goals:

Showcase the potential of a complete Boston – Northampton route – scenery, history, unique communities, variety, opportunity for safe recreation, tourism and economic development along the trail

- Publicize Complete the Trail effort (<https://www.FinishTheRailTrail.org>)
- Engage and motivate communities along MCRT (through rider-ambassadors)
- Visualize critical gaps and better understand priorities for completion
- The test run for an annual cycling event

Logistics:

-Sept 20-22 2024. Northampton to Boston, 3 days with overnight stays in Ware , Hudson

-12-15 riders for the whole route, other riders encouraged to join for parts of each day.

-12 stops along the route – presentations by local advocates, community leaders, historians

-Van with bike carrier and minor repair tools, food - available along entire route

Publicity: Engage local and regional elected officials, tourism and econ development, regional planning, relevant State agencies, feature participating land trusts and trail development groups and advocates. Encourage business engagement and participation – restaurants, lodging, bike shops, local media, etc.

Financial: Riders will pay for cost of lodging; org costs and transportation will be supported through grants and sponsorships. Plan to hire a part-time staffer to coordinate publicity – volunteers asked to provide connections and ideas.

Key contacts:

Glenn Pransky, lead organizer glenn.pransky@gmail.com

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