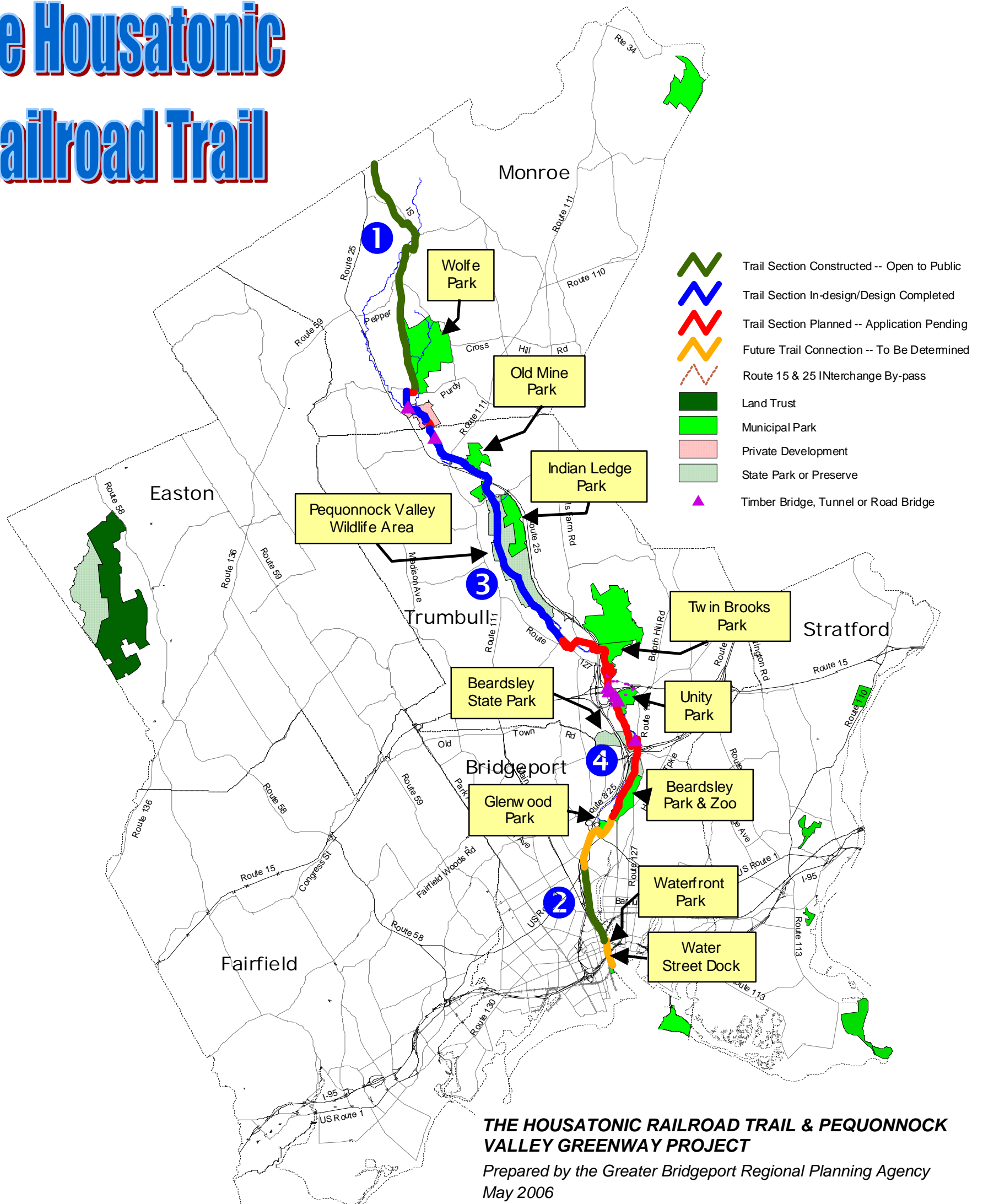


The Housatonic Railroad Trail



The **Regional Trail Project** for the Greater Bridgeport Planning Region is a concept to develop a continuous and interconnected shared-use trail for bicyclists, pedestrians and others within the corridor of the old Housatonic Railroad and the Pequonnock River Valley. The trail begins at the Water Street Dock in downtown Bridgeport and ends at the Monroe-Newtown town line. The approximate 16-mile trail links urban and suburban communities and provides non-motorized connections to a variety of activities, including residential, retail and business areas, state and municipal parks and open space, and the state's only zoo. Transfer to commuter rail, local bus and passenger ferry are possible in downtown Bridgeport. Most of the trail is separated from the road, providing a safe and protected transportation corridor.

Planning for the shared-use trail began in 1992 with the announcement of the federal Transportation Enhancement program. As the region's municipalities began developing individual trail proposals, an extraordinary opportunity was realized to undertake a coordinated, "regional" approach to trail development. Over the years, three federal aid projects have been approved and one is in the works to design and construct various sections of the regional trail project in Bridgeport, Monroe and Trumbull. These trails sections are:

- ❶ **Housatonic Railway Trail (Monroe):** This 4.1-mile section extends from Purdy Hill Road at the entrance to Wolfe Park to the Newtown town line. It follows the old rail bed over most of its length. The surface is compacted stone dust. Status = Open
- ❷ **Berkshire Rail Spur (Bridgeport):** This 1.2-mile section follows the former Berkshire Spur branch line from downtown Bridgeport at Stratford Avenue to North Avenue. This project involved demolition of the elevated viaduct and removal of track and ties. The 8-foot wide path is paved and is separated from Housatonic Avenue by a 4-foot buffer. Status = Open
- ❸ **Pequonnock Valley Greenway (Trumbull):** The 5.2-mile section extends from the beginning of the Pequonnock Valley State Wildlife Area to Wolfe Park in Monroe. It will pass through Parlor Rock and Old Mine parks and follow the old rail bed over much of its alignment. A unique feature is that the trail will pass through a private office park development in Monroe. Status = In Design; Construction Underway (partial)
- ❹ **Pequonnock Valley Extension (Trumbull and Bridgeport):** This 4.0-mile section will extend from the Pequonnock Valley, through Twin Brooks Park, across the Route 15 and 25 interchange and into Beardsley State Park (formerly Fairchild Memorial Park and Beardsley Park and Zoo). The old rail bed is gone through this area and the path will follow existing park trails as much as feasible. A unique feature of this section is the reuse of an abandoned road/rail bridge over the Merritt Parkway and construction of two tunnels under Route 25 ramps. Status = Application Pending

These projects, combined, comprise 14.5 miles of the planned shared-use trail. Two remaining sections are needed to complete missing links. The more critical is the gap between the Berkshire spur trail and Beardsley Park. This 1.2 section passes through an intensely developed area with several high volume roads. A safe alignment needs to be found. The second missing link involves extension of the Waterfront Park to provide a direct link with the Water Street Dock.