

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Joins Local Officials in Newark to Break Ground on Landmark Greenway Project

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Nine-Mile, 100-Foot-Wide Former Rail Line Will Extend From Jersey City to Montclair

Greenway Includes Paths for Pedestrians and Cyclists, Green Spaces, and Community Gathering Areas

NEWARK – Governor Phil Murphy joined local, county, and state officials today in Newark to break ground on the first phase of the Greenway project – a nine-mile, 100-foot-wide former rail line spanning Essex and Hudson Counties which will be transformed into New Jersey’s newest state park. The groundbreaking took place at the future Newark Central Activity Center, located between Summer Avenue and Broadway.

The Murphy Administration is developing the [Greenway \(https://dep.nj.gov/greenway/\)](https://dep.nj.gov/greenway/) to provide outdoor recreation and alternative transportation opportunities in the state’s most densely populated region. Its design elements will reflect the corridor’s historic use, when the former rail line played a vital role in transporting iron ore and blocks of ice from northern New Jersey to the major ports of Jersey City and New York City.

“Spanning two of the most densely populated counties in the country, the Greenway will be a new landmark that reflects who we are and where we’re going,” **said Governor Phil Murphy**. “When it’s complete, the Greenway will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with some of the best urban parks in the country and will create opportunities for economic growth in the surrounding communities. It will belong to the people who live here, ride it, walk it, and raise their kids alongside it.”

Once complete, the Greenway will connect eight communities across Essex and Hudson Counties – Jersey City, Secaucus, Kearny, Newark, Belleville, Bloomfield, Glen Ridge, and Montclair. The project aims to create a linear, multi-use corridor that supports walking, biking, and active transportation while fostering community connections and enhancing regional environmental quality.

“This groundbreaking ceremony in historic Newark marks a milestone, beginning the long-awaited transformation of an abandoned rail-line into a world-class urban park that will be a significant recreational and economic asset for New Jersey,” **said Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn M.**



LaTourette. “Thanks to the dedicated efforts of our partners across the Murphy Administration, with strong local support, we are forging a legacy that will connect communities, celebrate history, and conserve open space for people from across the state and the region.”

“Under Governor Murphy’s leadership, underutilized properties throughout the state are being converted into transformative local assets and improving quality of life for residents,” **said NJEDA Chief Executive Officer Tim Sullivan.** “The NJEDA is proud to partner with the NJDEP on the construction of the Greenway project, which exemplifies the state’s commitment to the revitalization of communities and sustainable economic development.”

“NJ TRANSIT is pleased to collaborate on a project that envisions public transit as part of a greener, more connected future for our communities,” **said NJ TRANSIT President & CEO Kris Kolluri.** “Exploring opportunities to integrate the Secaucus-Meadowlands Transitway into the Greenway reflects our commitment to improving access and mobility for the people we serve.”

“Today’s groundbreaking marks a huge step forward in New Jersey’s ongoing commitment to promoting equity, sustainability, and a better quality of life for our residents. The Greenway is not only a park, but a transformative investment in our state’s urban infrastructure that will give hundreds of thousands of people access to open space and protected biking and walking paths from Montclair to Jersey City,” **said Senate President Nick Scutari.** “I want to commend Governor Murphy and Commissioner LaTourette for their continued leadership on this project, and I look forward to seeing its positive impact grow as work continues.”

“Reclaiming this old rail line and transforming it into a state park speaks to our commitment to preserving New Jersey’s natural beauty and making it accessible to everyone,” **said Assembly Speaker Craig J. Coughlin.** “The Greenway is a bold and forward-thinking investment in public space, and thanks in part to the FY2025 budget, we are bringing new life to this corridor and creating a place that will bring lasting value to families, children, and neighborhoods for generations.”

“The Greenway is more than a new park, it is an innovative rebirth of a long-neglected rail line that for years burdened communities with pollution and illegal dumping,” **said Senate Majority Leader M. Teresa Ruiz.** “This first phase in Newark lays the foundation for a transformative nine-mile corridor that will knit together neighborhoods with safe, accessible pathways for walking, biking, and transit. Green infrastructure is an investment in equity, health, and quality of life – delivering lasting benefits for commuters heading to work, children enjoying a sunny afternoon of play, and residents gaining a cleaner environment. This reimagined public space will serve people first and build a more connected, sustainable future that links us all.”

“Where others saw an abandoned railroad, we saw the potential to unite communities,” **said Assemblywoman Eliana Pintor Marin.** “The Greenway is a chance to transform forgotten space into a corridor that connects neighborhoods, opens up access to green space, and creates new opportunities for recreation and mobility. Today’s groundbreaking is the beginning of a legacy that will benefit families across Essex and Hudson Counties for generations.”

“I applaud Governor Phil Murphy for his stewardship of the Greenway and getting the project to the groundbreaking of its first phase of development,” **said Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr.** “In

Essex County, I have always stressed the importance that parks and recreation facilities have in improving our quality of life. The nine miles of linear open space connecting Newark to Montclair complements our initiative to revitalize our parks and creates a unique space that residents of all ages can enjoy and benefit from.”

“Hudson County is thrilled to see the Greenway Project advancing towards completion with this groundbreaking – bringing us one step closer to offering 135 acres of new green space for residents to enjoy. This nearly nine-mile linear park will run through 3 of our municipalities – Kearny, Secaucus, and Jersey City – and will bring a host of new recreation opportunities for walkers, cyclists, and nature-lovers alike,” **said Hudson County Executive Craig Guy**. “I want to thank Governor Phil Murphy and his team for their partnership in expanding open spaces, and we look forward to this project's progress moving east into Hudson in the near future so that our residents will be able to enjoy all the direct environmental and transportation benefits that this once-in-a-lifetime project has to offer.”

“This Greenway project has been years in the making, and I’m thrilled that we’re finally breaking ground on what will become New Jersey’s newest and most innovative state park,” **said Essex County Commissioner-at-Large Brendan Gill**. “The Greenway will connect communities in ways we’ve never seen before, creating green spaces, public gathering areas, and safe biking and pedestrian infrastructure that will draw people outdoors and build a sense of shared community. I’m proud of the time and effort invested by the Governor Murphy, NJDEP, local municipalities, and the Essex and Hudson County governments, whose collaboration made the Greenway possible. Opportunities like this don’t come around often, and I’m grateful for the passion and dedication that turned this idea into a reality. I can’t wait to see the finished product in the years ahead.

“There isn’t a single aspect of the Greenway that isn’t exactly what Newark needs – and we are grateful to everyone who has made this project possible,” **said Newark Mayor Ras J. Baraka**. “Transportation enhancements that facilitate travel through and beyond our city boost its economic health. Upgrading our soil quality and landscape makes Newark a more healthful and resilient habitat. Breathing life and beauty into a long-neglected part of our city, breathes life and beauty into our hearts. And creating a natural sanctuary for meeting loved ones, playing, or resting, invites a sense of spaciousness, joy, and ease. More than simply the start of another development project, this groundbreaking truly marks a transformative milestone in our region’s history and a collective revival in our communities.”

“Development of the Greenway marks a transformative moment for the New Jersey State Park System. The Greenway extends the Park Service’s reach into the heart of New Jersey’s two most densely populated counties,” **said John Cecil, Assistant Commissioner for State Parks, Forests & Historic Sites**. “Further, the Greenway exemplifies the Park Service’s commitment to accessibility by expanding access to green space beyond the traditional rural landscapes that come to mind when thinking of a state park.”

“Breaking ground on the Greenway is not only the result of two and-a-half years of community outreach, planning and design, but the realization of a vision long championed by local residents and nonprofit organizations who saw the potential in this unused rail corridor,” **said Maggie McCann, DEP Administrator for Urban State Parks & Initiatives**. “With construction soon to be underway on the Newark segment, we’re excited to continue this momentum as we plan for the next phase of the Greenway.”

“The Greenway will be available for hundreds of thousands of people,” **said Kennedy Fuller, a Girl Scout of Troop 10910**, which has long advocated for the Greenway. “It is a way to bring us together. To share experiences and

laughs. Spaces like these are vital for our cities. Because without unity and community, we have nothing. Spaces like these allow us to build our neighbors up and increase social connections. They offer us spaces to run, to play, to move. It is an opportunity to connect the people of New Jersey. A place where we can coexist and share our happiness.”

“The Greenway will be transformative, not only for New Jersey but for the East Coast Greenway, a 3,000-mile walking and biking route connecting cities from Maine to Florida,” **said Sofia Barandiaran, New Jersey & New York Greenway Manager, East Coast Greenway Alliance.** We applaud Governor Murphy and NJDEP, as well as the community members and nonprofit partners who have championed this project from the start. Their work and dedication have brought us to this moment. The part of the Greenway that overlaps with the East Coast Greenway will be one of the most impactful new segments on our 3,000 mile route: a completely off-road connection between the Garden State’s two largest cities, Newark and Jersey City. The Greenway will be an invaluable resource for getting outdoors, moving safely and connecting with neighbors – not just for the people of Essex and Hudson counties, but for all of New Jersey and the entire East Coast Greenway corridor.”

“New Jersey’s newest state park might be our most important, because it will be the green equivalent of the railroad tracks that it replaces – a literal nine-mile green ribbon that connects our urban core and two largest cities with suburban towns,” **said Doug O’Malley, Director of Environment New Jersey.** “It will replace an urban dumping ground with a green oasis, it will provide the ultimate green commute for bike riders and a corridor that will bring all of us closer to our natural environment in the Meadowlands, the Hackensack River, and Newark’s Branch Brook Park. This will be New Jersey’s High Line supersized – and it almost didn’t happen. We thank Governor Murphy and his Administration for securing the funds to cement the creation of the Greenway and the work over decades of towns and activists to ensure that old train tracks didn’t rust away and then get sold off to the highest bidder. This park will quickly become one of the most heavily used in the state.”

“Today’s Greenway groundbreaking marks the moment we go from having a vision to building a game-changer for active transportation and recreation in New Jersey. This is a step into a better future with more safe spaces for walking and biking that will boost our local economies, help us all to live healthier lives and build connections between our diverse communities,” **said Debra Kagan, Executive Director, New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition.** “We are proud to have played a role in bringing this project to life, and we want to thank all the many advocates who worked tirelessly over the years; your dedication and perseverance are at the heart of the creation of this Greenway. We want to thank Governor Murphy and Commissioner LaTourette for seeing the potential of our vision for the Greenway and making it a reality as New Jersey’s next outstanding state park.”

“The Greenway will be transformative, finally connecting the state’s two largest cities and surrounding towns with a safe bike/walk route for the first time,” **said Ayla Schermer, President of Bike Jersey City.** “Complete, contiguous connections like this route, away from motor vehicle traffic, are extremely rare in densely populated northeastern New Jersey, and so are green, natural spaces available to the public. This project will provide both for many generations to come.”

“Rails to Trails Conservancy is thrilled to celebrate the groundbreaking of the Greenway with Governor Murphy, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, and the countless organizations across the region who have helped to make this possible,” **said Upendra Sapkota, RTC’s New Jersey Project Director.** “This is more than a pathway—the Greenway will provide critical connections between eight North Jersey communities, including Newark and Jersey City, and marks progress

toward a broader regional trail network. This is a significant step toward connecting communities and advancing active transportation for all of North Jersey.”

“What was once seen as impossible is now a reality: following decades of community efforts to bring green spaces to this region, it is deeply gratifying to see the Greenway taking shape,” **said Erik Kulleseid, President and CEO, Open Space Institute.** “OSI congratulates Governor Murphy, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, and the legion of local leaders, elected officials, and dedicated supporters who never gave up. I also send special thanks to my predecessor, Kim Elliman, and to the Thomas L. Kempner Jr. Foundation, for all they did to make this moment possible. Today is a day worth celebrating as we break ground on something wonderful and transformative for the people of northern New Jersey and beyond.”

“Supporting the New Jersey Greenway was an easy decision for our foundation. Every time we invest in a project like this, it makes other communities want to create something like that for their people,” **said Thomas L. Kempner Jr. of the Thomas L. Kempner Jr. Foundation.** “The impact of this goes much further than northern New Jersey – it’s shining a light on how great greenways are, how important access to nature is, even in urban places, and inspiring new greenways everywhere – it’s a virtuous cycle where you keep making more trails and having more happy users. I applaud Governor Murphy, the Open Space Institute, and the many local leaders, elected officials, and community organizations for all they have done to bring the Greenway to life.”

“The 2024 Operation Grow + NJDEP Garden Pop Up was heart work that informed the NJDEP of how our garden can positively impact Urban residents,” **said Sharonda Allen, MPA, Founder and Executive Director of Operation Grow Inc.** “We look forward to continuing to host the Operation Grow + NJDEP Garden on the Greenway at the Tiffany Manor Hub. The neighbors deserve to have the fresh produce that we gave away and the enjoyment of our community engagement in the Garden. We look forward to hosting more events, like our Halloween Party, and our back-to-school giveaway for the families. Urban Agriculture is much needed for that community, with the neighbors having access to fresh, nutritious vegetables.”

“On behalf of the 1400+ homes within the Forest Hill Historic District, we are thrilled to celebrate the groundbreaking of the highly anticipated Greenway,” **said Jackie Jay, President of the Forest Hill Community Association.** “This project marks a new era for North Jersey, safely joining our communities from the Hudson River and westward for the many residents and visitors eager to take advantage of outdoor space between these destinations. Myself a cyclist, I also represent the biking community in celebrating the addition of this safe and uninhibited offroad space. The Forest Hill residents are excited for this next chapter in Newark’s North Ward and look forward to the restorative impact and improved quality of life that this development will bring to our community.”

“The Greenway is an ambitious concept – a nine-mile, 135-acre network of trails that connects communities across northern New Jersey,” **said Evan Weiss, President & CEO of the Newark Alliance.** “Today’s groundbreaking in Newark represents the reclamation of what was once an abandoned eyesore and the start of its transformation into a regional asset that will bring recreation, transportation access, and the benefits of green spaces to thousands of Newarkers and our neighbors. Today, we celebrate a grand vision for this beautiful, multi-use linear park and honor the collective efforts of Governor Murphy, County Executives DiVincenzo and Guy, Mayor Baraka, Majority Leader Ruiz, County Commissioners, City Council Members, advocates, and community leaders in taking the first steps to bring it to life.”

“Today marks a transformative moment for New Jersey’s urban communities. The groundbreaking of the Greenway isn’t just about building a trail, it’s about correcting decades of disinvestment in urban green spaces and creating vibrant, healthy places for recreation and refuge,” **said Ed Potosnak, Executive Director of New Jersey LCV.** “This nine-mile linear park will connect Montclair to Jersey City, offering a safe space for recreational activities including walking, biking, and birding as well as connecting communities between nearly a million residents. We are proud to be part of this once-in-a-generation investment in improving equity, our environment, and quality of life for all New Jerseyans.”

Whole-of-Government Undertaking

The nearly one-mile Newark segment marks the largest single investment in state history for the acquisition and development of a new state park, with this phase of construction totaling \$69.2 million.

Expected to open by the end of 2026, the Newark phase of the project will allow walkers, joggers and cyclists to travel from Branch Brook Park Drive to Broadway on a meandering ADA-accessible trail lined with native plantings.

In a whole-of-government approach, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) is spearheading the project, engaging with stakeholders and managing the completed Greenway through the State Park Service.

As DEP’s delivery partner, the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) is overseeing construction of the overall project, including the Newark segment. AECOM Tishman was selected as construction manager through a competitive bidding process.

NJ TRANSIT is collaborating with the Greenway design team to potentially extend the Secaucus-Meadowlands Transitway into the future state park, adding a dedicated lane for public transit.

Places to Gather

The Greenway’s design includes several features that enhance safety and user experience while preserving the surrounding environment. Downward-facing lighting will ensure pathways are well-lit without disturbing nearby residents or natural habitats. The project also features separate paths for pedestrians and cyclists, designed to promote safe speeds and provide places to sit and enjoy the trail’s natural setting. Three community gathering areas spaced throughout the segment will feature numerous amenities.

The Newark Central Activity Center (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=he0tPVKZ-k4>), the largest of these spaces, is between Summer Avenue and Broadway. Designed with inclusivity in mind, the activity center will feature amenities for people of all ages and abilities. The space includes a performance stage with an expansive lawn area to accommodate audiences of varying sizes, as well as an ADA-accessible adventure playground complete with slides, swings, climbing features, and a water play area. Additional amenities include ADA-accessible restroom facilities, outdoor exercise stations, space for a community garden, a shaded picnic grove and multi-sport courts suitable for basketball, street hockey and other organized sports.

Tiffany Manor Community Space (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mv-bEiuzpFs>) will be located between

Manchester Place and Greenwood Lake Street, directly across from the historic Tiffany Manor, which once served as Tiffany & Company's silver plate jewelry factory that was converted into apartments in 1996. The spot will feature a central seating area and a designated space for short-term amenities such as food trucks. Visitors will have picturesque views of Tiffany Manor, grassy lawn areas and a dedicated picnic space. Stormwater management features, including rain gardens and native plantings, will support the surrounding ecosystem.

The Branch Brook Park Overlook (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GILx4oHw9dw>) will be west of Tiffany Manor and feature an observation deck offering sweeping views of Branch Brook Park and the Second River. The space will enable visitors to connect to the neighboring 360-acre Branch Brook Park, which offers access to the 36-mile Lenape Trail. Visitors will also be just steps away from Belleville Park and the Hendricks Field Golf Course.

Community Engagement

Public input and involvement have played key roles in the development of the Greenway to ensure the reclaimed urban green space reflects the needs of host communities and surrounding areas. Outreach began in 2023 and has included events in every municipality along the Greenway's route, from informal gatherings at farmers markets and block parties to formal open houses and listening sessions at libraries, schools, and parks.

Most recently, the Greenway development team led a walk-through along the future Newark segment for National Trails Day on June 7 to preview the future park, and [hosted a volunteer cleanup \(https://www.youtube.com/shorts/QTx5SQCLEAE\)](https://www.youtube.com/shorts/QTx5SQCLEAE) in Kearny on June 28 that removed 30 cubic yards of trash and illegal dumping that had built up from years of misuse.

Additional public engagement events and volunteer opportunities are planned in the coming months. To get involved, sign up for the Greenway's email list at dep.nj.gov/greenway/ (<https://dep.nj.gov/greenway/>).

The NJDEP, along with its interagency partners at the NJEDA and NJ TRANSIT, will continue to utilize a robust public engagement process to guide decisions about the park's development.

Greenway Background

The DEP acquired the Greenway property from Norfolk Southern Corporation in 2022, following years of advocacy to transform the abandoned rail line into a recreational and transportation corridor.

The rail line last served commuters in 2002, when NJ TRANSIT discontinued operations due to the opening of an alternate line with direct service to New York and high repair costs associated with two bridges on the line. Freight service on the line east of Newark ended in the 1990s, and no freight traffic has operated between Newark and Montclair since 2009. The NJEDA is evaluating economic opportunities that may arise from the creation of the new state park.

More information about the project may be found at dep.nj.gov/greenway/ (<https://dep.nj.gov/greenway/>).

Governor Phil Murphy

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