

EAST SIDE TRAIL

Worcester, Mass.

(REVISED 01/07/08)

The East Side Trail was initially conceived in the mid 1980's and envisioned as a continuous greenbelt linking East Park (Cristoforo Columbo Park) with Lake Quinsigamond. Construction of the trail commenced in the spring of 1997 with the original route being completed in a span of just over three weeks. With the construction of the Worcester Technical High School at Green Hill Park, a major portion of the trail was relocated away from the school site in the fall of 2003.

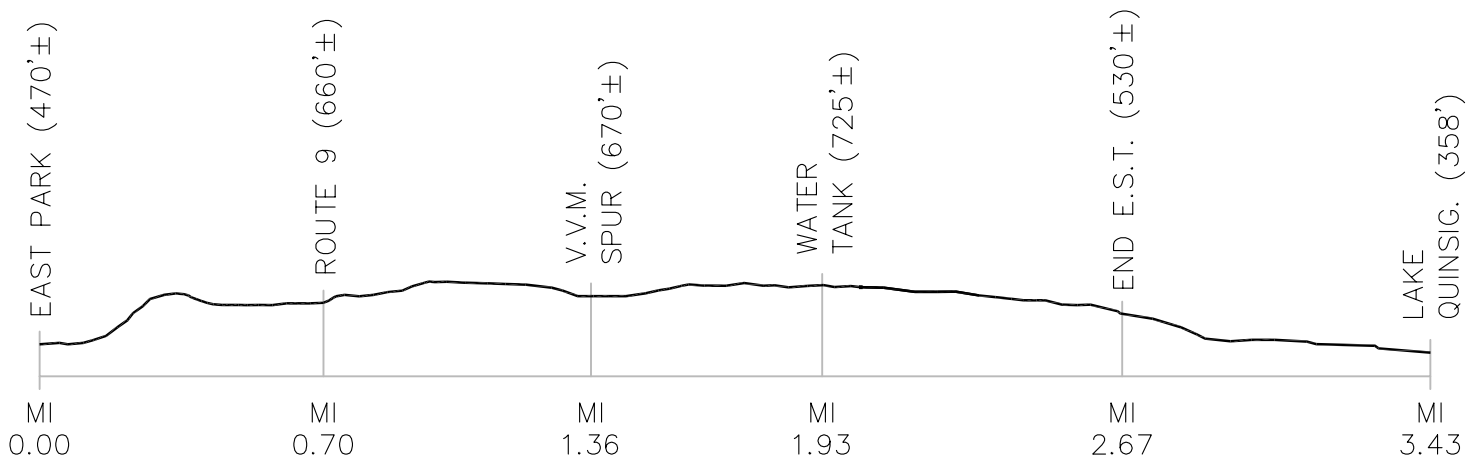
The current trail route begins at the stone lions marking the entrance to East Park on Shrewsbury Street. Following a walkway through the park, it then climbs steeply to the summit of Bell Hill. The once cleared summit with 360 degree panoramic views, has given way to successive reforestation, beginning with the regrowth of poplar and birch groves. In time, as the forest matures, hardwood species such as oak and maple will become more dominant. Mount Wachusett can still be seen to the northwest from the summit vista. Skirting the westerly shores of Bell Pond the trail soon crosses Route 9 and ascends a ledge slope entering into Green Hill Park.

The lands comprising Green Hill Park were first settled in 1755 by Thomas Green. The property passed from father to son until it was deeded to the City in 1905 with the understanding it would remain as a park in perpetuity. Passing an overlook of Bell Pond, the trail reenters the woods following cartpaths and a foot trail to the site of an old stone quarry, one of several on Millstone Hill. Much of early Worcester's foundation stone and curbing was quarried from here.

Moving into the core of Green Hill Park the trail travels along a section of Lucy Lane, passing a spur trail on the left to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, before turning back onto a network of serpentine foot trails. Continuing past the Barnyard Zoo and a small quarry the trail turns east and crosses Skyline Drive. At a cart road junction just north of the blue water tank, the East Side Trail rejoins its original route. The many stone walls in this section were constructed by a patient of Worcester State Hospital. Working six days a week, never on Sunday and always alone, the several miles of remaining walls are testament to his more than thirty years of efforts.

Entering a grassy field the trail runs alongside, then crosses a stone wall, entering the northerly portions of Green Hill Park. The trail descends through a high canopied forest to its present terminus, one hundred feet east of a brook crossing and junction with the Coal Mine Brook Loop. A short distance to the east – on private property – is the site of the old coal mine. Known as Nackor's mine it produced much coal at first but the coal was of poor quality and the mine was finally abandoned. Nearby Indians used the black lead as part of their war paint.

A short section of the trail is also in place between Plantation Street and Lake Quinsigamond. Talks continue with private landowners in an effort to secure a route allowing passage over private land to the trail terminus at Lake Quinsigamond. Presently it is possible to hike three miles from Shrewsbury Street to Trinity Avenue with limited parking available at both trailheads.



1" = 2500'

EAST SIDE TRAIL ELEVATION PROFILE