

Walk/Bike Path Could Connect Jersey City and Montclair

By **Jared Kofsky** - February 6, 2018



Ice & Iron Greenway, Essex County section. Rendering via New Jersey Digs

More people could soon travel on foot or by bicycle as a rail-trail proposal continues to advance.

The 11-mile [Ice & Iron Greenway](#), which is also [Greenway](#), would run along the former Boonton [Bergen Arches](#) and [Sixth Street Embankment](#). It would pass through the Meadowlands on the existing [Passaic River](#) waterfront, crossing the Passaic River using an [ice and iron](#) bridge, passing through the Meadowlands on the existing [ice and iron](#) bridge, through residential neighborhoods and business districts in Bloomfield, Newark's North Ward, and Kearny and Jersey City.

Cyndi Steiner, the Executive Director of the New Jersey Digs, said that "the greenway would provide safe, off-road

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themselves,” adding that it could “enable bike commuting for those who work in the towns along the way, and for those looking to reach mass transit in Jersey City, to ultimately reach Manhattan by bike.”

Renderings from the NJBWC list Strauss and Associates of Trenton as the project manager and Campbell Thomas & Co. of Philadelphia at the mapping and design subcontractor. The organization’s website states that the proposed greenway is being called ‘Iron & Ice’ because those materials were once carried on freight trains that traveled along this corridor.

This path would be one of the only ways aside from the Lincoln Highway bridges to walk or bike between the peninsula containing the Hudson River waterfront communities of Hudson County and the mainland. If completed, it could potentially join the East Coast Greenway, according to Baristanet.

A resolution of the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders calls this a “tremendous and unique opportunity.” An op-ed written last year by the resolution’s sponsor, Freeholder Brendan Gill, stated that “the right-of-way is currently showing signs of neglect, garbage accumulation and evidence of crime and drug use.”



Ice & Iron Greenway, Essex County section. Rendering via New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition (NJBWC).

In addition, municipal officials in every community except for one along the route of the former Boonton Line have announced their support, according [to](#) the Friends of the Ice & Iron Rail Trail. The one exception is Montclair, but that could change this week. The Township Council is expected [to](#) vote on a resolution during its meeting on Tuesday night, Feb. 6, that would lend its support to the project.

Service on this stretch of New Jersey Transit's Boonton Line ceased 16 years ago when a short stretch of track called the 'Montclair Connection' was installed, allowing trains to operate directly from Upper Montclair to the Newark Broad Street Station and New York Penn Station.

Although the creation of the Montclair Connection allowed for some commuters to finally access one-seat service to New York, all service along the old Boonton Line corridor was rerouted to pass through the Montclair Connection. This meant that stations on the former route, including the Benson Street Station in Glen Ridge, the Rowe Street Station in Bloomfield, and the Arlington Station in Kearny, were closed after over a century of service. Today, they are owned by Norfolk Southern, according [to](#) Montclair Local.

Should the Ice & Iron Greenway open, it would mark a return of commuters and visitors traveling along this once busy Northern New Jersey corridor and be one of the first rail-trails of its kind in the region. With thousands of people living within a few yards of the railroad right-of-way, however, it remains to be seen how much resident support the project will receive.

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