

Lehigh Valley Greenways Conservation Landscape SUCCESS STORY

By: North Whitehall Township
Northwhitehall.org

Ironton Rail Trail Extension to Municipal Trail Head

SUMMARY

The project entailed constructing a trail extension along the eastern boundary of the Township municipal complex to a proposed trail head location with its own parking area. The extension joined the original rail trail and a link constructed by the Township.

FUNDING

Grant Award:
\$12,500.00

Match:
\$21,425.43

Total Project Cost:
\$ 33,925.43

PARTNERSHIP IS KEY

- Ironton Rail Trail Commission
- North Whitehall Township Board of Supervisors
- North Whitehall Department of Public Works.



CHALLENGE

The final Phase of the Ironton Rail Trail was designed to reach the rear property of the Municipal Complex. Once the trail was completed it was obvious it had become very popular. The trail termination area was very congested with athletic field parking, municipal vehicles and a yard waste drop off facility. It became evident that the trail's popularity would cause too many close calls with walkers/riders and many vehicles. Additional signage was installed but this would only be a temporary fix. The challenge was to find a safe solution to keep trail users away from a busy vehicle location.



SOLUTION

The Ironton Rail Trail Commission and the Township Public Works staff, combined their efforts to design and build a trail extension along the boundary of the Township Complex. The extension would join the original DCNR funded trail and a short, township constructed by-pass to the newly constructed trail extension. The difficulty of this project hinged on attaining ADA compliant grades as well as navigating the outfield areas of several ball fields. Unfavorable soil conditions required removal of soil layers and adding a stable rock base under the trail bed. A great number of old tree stumps also added to the challenges the crew faced.

RESULTS

The constructed trail extension added 600 feet of trail to reach the existing trail head parking area. While it is difficult to determine quantifiable numbers, early visible indications show that the trail extension has been well received. The number of trail users who previously parked in the congested area has dropped significantly and the dedicated parking area at the proposed trail head is getting significant use. As time goes on and trail users see where the trail extension takes them, it is likely that the trail access will be closed off in its original location and the trailhead area will be the main entrance to the trail.

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