



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



Narrow-Gauge Rail-Trail

Massachusetts



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Even though the Narrow-Gauge Rail-Trail traces the nation's first narrow-gauge railroad for 3 miles from Bedford toward Billerica, the mostly crushed-stone path is plenty wide enough now to accommodate people passing on foot or bicycle.

The trail follows the route of the Billerica & Bedford Railroad, built in 1877 with a narrow 2-foot-wide track to save money on construction costs. The company soon went bankrupt anyway, and in 1885 the Boston & Lowell Railroad used the corridor to build a standard-gauge railroad. The tracks went out of use in 1962, and the town of Bedford purchased its share of the right-of-way to build a 10-foot-wide trail. The town of Billerica is seeking funds to do the same for a future trail tentatively named Yankee Doodle Bike Path.

The route starts across Loomis Street from Bedford Depot Park, where it meets the [Minuteman Bikeway](#). An old railroad building that served as an engine house for the Billerica & Bedford Railroad and later as a freight house for the Boston and Maine Railroad has been restored there and is open on weekends April–October with displays of railroad memorabilia. Park visitors also can see a restored diesel passenger car that ran on the line.

The first 0.3 mile of the trail to MA 4/Great Road is paved, but the rest is stone dust. Mountain or hybrid bikes are recommended for this surface. Use caution at this road crossing as a commercial district is located nearby.

Entering a wooded residential area, you'll pass the former site of a passenger station on Springs Road. The trail passes the sprawling Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital (built in 1928) on the right about a mile past MA 4/Great Road. The York Conservation Area on the left offers a welcome stop for a picnic on the green or a stroll around the pond. Bikes are not permitted on paths in the conservation area, but you can explore on foot.

Sweetwater Avenue crosses the trail about 0.8 mile past the hospital. The former site of the Bedford Springs Station, nearby Fawn Lake served as a health resort for well-to-do visitors from Boston and New York in the late 19th century. A self-guided path encircles the pond. The trail ends at Springs Road, just across the Billerica town line.



Narrow-Gauge Rail-Trail

Massachusetts

States: Massachusetts

Counties: Middlesex

Length: 3 miles

Trail end points: Depot Park at Loomis Street to Springs Road (Bedford)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt, Crushed Stone, Dirt

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike, Mountain

Biking, Walking, Cross Country Skiing

Parking & Trail Access

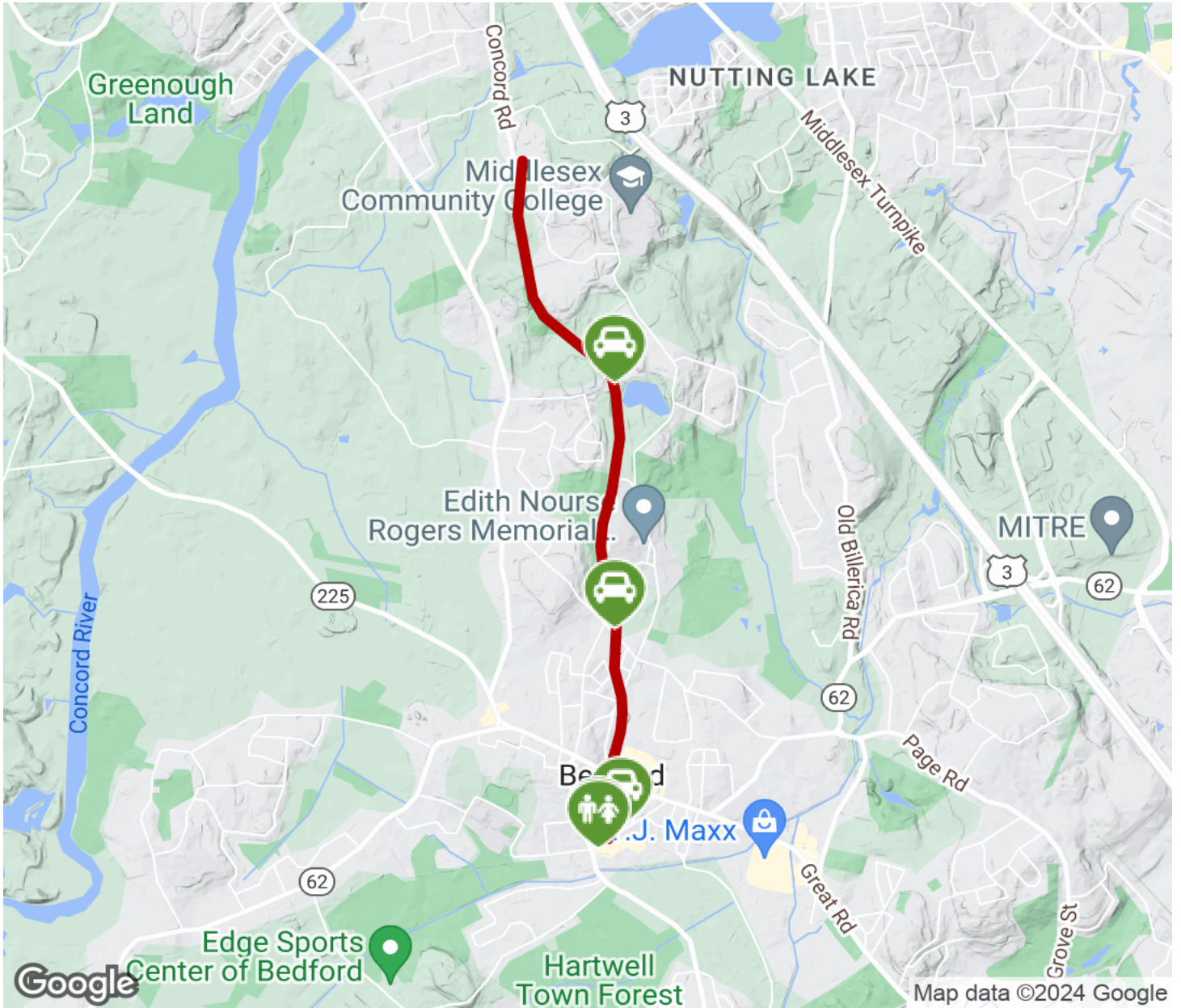
To reach the trailhead at Bedford Depot Park from I-95, take Exit 31B onto MA 4 N/MA 225 W toward Bedford. Turn right, and go 1.8 miles. Turn left onto Loomis St. Go 0.4 mile and turn left into the park just past Hartford St. on the right. The trail starts at the northeast end of the park at a crosswalk across Loomis St.

To reach parking near the north end of the trail from I-95, take Exit 31B onto MA 4 N/MA 225 W toward Bedford. Turn right, and go 2.6 miles. Bear right onto MA 4/North Road, and then go 1.3 miles and turn right onto Sweetwater Ave. Go 0.4 mile and look for parking on the right, just past the trail crossing. The trail ends 1.1 miles north on Springs Road.



Narrow-Gauge Rail-Trail

Massachusetts



Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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