



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



## Canalside Rail Trail

*Massachusetts*



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The well-maintained Canalside Rail Trail provides users with a variety of trestle bridges, views of waterbirds stalking fish and frogs, and gentle grades that alternate between open sky and forested shade. The majority of the trail lies within historic Turners Falls—the largest of the five villages that comprise the town of Montague.

From the public parking lot at Unity Park in Montague, begin your journey by turning left onto the paved trail, starting with views of the Connecticut River Reservoir and Turners Falls Dam to your right. You can also see the Turners Falls Fishway, composed of three fish ladders that enable fish to travel beyond the dam. The fish ladders are located at the Cabot Hydroelectric Station, the dam, and the gatehouse.

Once you cross Avenue A, you'll pass the Great Falls Discovery Center on your left. After this point, the trail parallels the canal for about 2 miles—crossing Turners Falls Road, Power Street, and 11th Street—and offers ample opportunities to see several small trestle bridges. The rail-trail takes a left onto Depot Street to leave the canal, making several turns through neighborhood streets and a light industry area, requiring users to travel on the public roadway for a short distance. Street traffic is light and the crossings are well marked, suitable for users of all ages.

In 0.4 mile, the path returns to dedicated foot and bike usage and leads to a gorgeous trestle bridge near the confluence of the Connecticut and Deerfield Rivers. The bridge was constructed in 1880, with sections repaired following a flood in 1936. From the bridge, you may hear the sound of nearby train horns. Following the route to its southern endpoint will take you past farmland to the East Deerfield Yard, an active rail yard at the end of the trail. While travel within the rail yard is not permitted, the trail is close enough to see and smell the locomotives in action—an intriguing observation point for railroad buffs.

Retracing your path will return you to Unity Park, where nearby restaurants and shops offer numerous opportunities for local cuisine and wares. Near the Unity Park parking lot, a large, well-designed playground—featuring wheelchair-accessible equipment—presents a great stopping point for families after enjoying the trail. The Fishway Visitor and Education Center (no admission fee) is also nearby, located behind Unity Park at First and Maple Streets in Turners Falls. If that puts you in the mood for fishing, you can do that at Unity Park too.

While the suggested starting point is Unity Park in Montague, trail parking is also provided near the rail yard in Deerfield. The trail may be accessed at either point.



# Canalside Rail Trail

Massachusetts

**States:** Massachusetts

**Counties:** Franklin

Length: 3.6 miles

**Trail end points:** McClelland Farm Road (Deerfield) to Unity Park, Village of Turners Falls (Montague)

**Trail surfaces:** Asphalt

**Trail category:** Rail-Trail

**Trail activities:** Bike, Inline

Skating, Fishing, Wheelchair

Accessible, Walking

## Parking & Trail Access

To reach the Unity Park endpoint in Montague from I-91, take Exit 27 for MA 2 E toward Boston. Continue on MA 2 E for 2.5 miles, then turn right onto Main Road/Ave. A. Go 0.3 mile, then turn left onto First St. Unity Park will be on your right in 0.3 mile. Parking is located in several places, just past Montague Town Hall or at the ball fields a little farther down First St. The paved trailhead is located to the left of the parking lot behind the town hall.

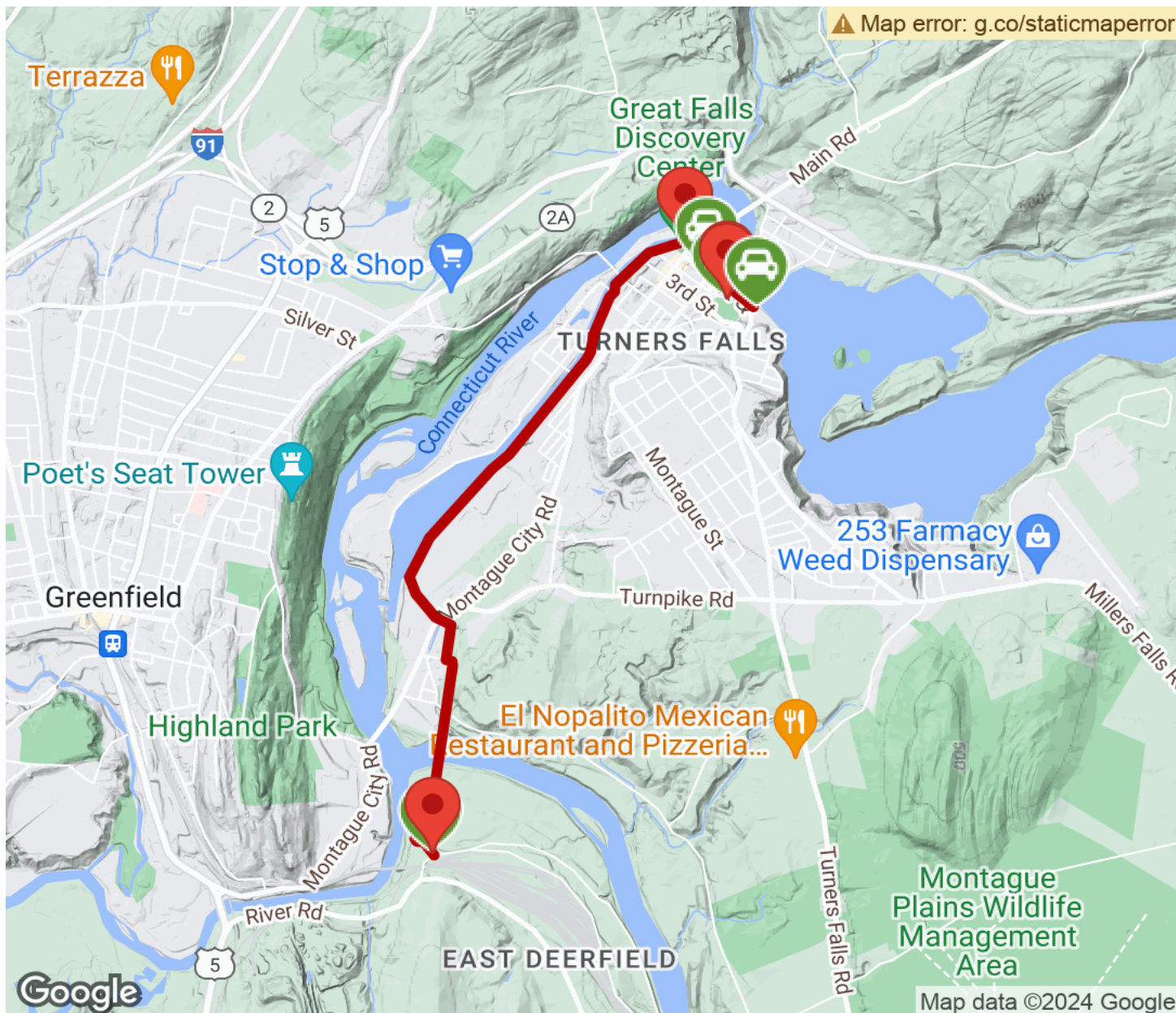
To reach the southern endpoint in Deerfield from I-91, take Exit 26 for MA 2 W/MA 2A E toward Greenfield Center/North Adams. At the traffic circle, exit onto MA 2A E (the third exit if coming from the north, or the first exit if coming from the south). Go 0.6 mile, and turn right onto River St. Go 0.5 mile, continuing onto Mill St. In 0.3 mile, turn right onto Bank Row/Deerfield St. Go 1.1 miles, continuing onto Greenfield Road 0.2 mile. Turn left onto E. Deerfield Road/River Road, and go 0.9 mile. Turn left onto McClelland Farm Road. Parking at Railroad Yard Road, and the southern trailhead, will be on the left in 0.2 mile.

To reach the southern endpoint in Deerfield from US 5/MA 10, in Greenfield turn left onto River Road (at the Deerfield River) if coming from the north, or right if coming from the south. Go 0.9 mile. Turn left onto McClelland Farm Road. Parking at Railroad Yard Road, and the southern trailhead, will be on the left in 0.2 mile.



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- Trailhead
- Restroom
- Parking
- Water Fountain
- Tunnel