TrailLink

by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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TrailLink Unlimited ∞

Guides

Capital Area Greenbelt

Pennsylvania

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Every year, tens of thousands of people take to the Capital Area Greenbelt looping around Harrisburg to play, exercise, and commute. The greenway completely encircles Pennsylvania's capital city as it connects parks, museums, and a stretch of gardens and woods along the Susquehanna River.

Originally conceived by landscape architect Warren Manning in the early 1900s to improve livability in what was a gritty steel town, the Greenbelt project was forgotten as more pressing matters arose and many residents migrated to the suburbs. Then in 1991, volunteers with the Capital Area Greenbelt Association (CAGA) resurrected the spirit of those plans and began building trails using wood chips and gravel. Today, private foundations and local and state agencies have adopted the Greenbelt, which benefits from state grants totaling millions of dollars.

The 24-mile Capital Area Greenbelt trail system includes the 20.6-mile main loop, a 1.5-mile spur trail to Fort Hunter Park, and a 2-mile spur to Veterans Memorial Park. Although not part of the official trail system, additional pathways in Phoenix Park and along the west side of Wildwood Lake create small loops when combined with the Greenbelt route. The Capital Area Greenbelt loop passes through the Five Senses Gardens, Reservoir Park, Wildwood Park, and Riverfront Park. The trails are comprised of paved and crushed-stone paths, wide sidewalks next to streets, low-traffic streets, and road shoulders. Wayfaring signs with mileage markers direct visitors throughout. In 2018 CAGA paved or repaved four sections of trail, and in early 2019, CAGA completed safety upgrades on six intersections, with work including pedestrian-activated flashing beacons, improved crosswalks, and curbs and buffers to separate pedestrians from traffic. Additionally, the Susquehanna Area Mountain Bike Association (SAMBA) has added novice- to expert-level singletrack throughout the Greenbelt that can be accessed from many points. Capital Area Greenbelt Loop A central place to start is City Island in the Susquehanna River. You'll find parking here, as well as recreational activities. The eastern half of the circa 1890 Walnut Street Bridge carries pedestrians to the Greenbelt's Riverfront Park; ice floes washed away the western span in 1996.

Cross the bridge and turn left to head upstream through Riverfront Park, which stretches along the Susquehanna River from Vaughn street to Hanna Street. For those interested in a sightseeing detour, leave the trail and turn right onto State Street to head to the Pennsylvania State Capitol and historic South Capitol Park. As the trail continues north along river, it passes the waterfront Sunken Garden and the Peace Garden. Just over 3 miles from Riverfront Park (200 S Front St), follow the signs through neighborhoods north of downtown to Linglestown Road: turn right onto Vaughn

Capital Area Greenbelt
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States: Pennsylvania

Counties: Dauphin

Length: 24miles

Trail end points: Loop: PA 39/Linglestown Rd & Industrial Rd to S Cameron St & S 13th St (Harrisburg)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt,Cinder,Concrete, Crushed Stone

Trail category: Greenway/Non-RT

Trail activities: Fishing,Wheelchair Accessible,Mountain Biking,Walking,Cross
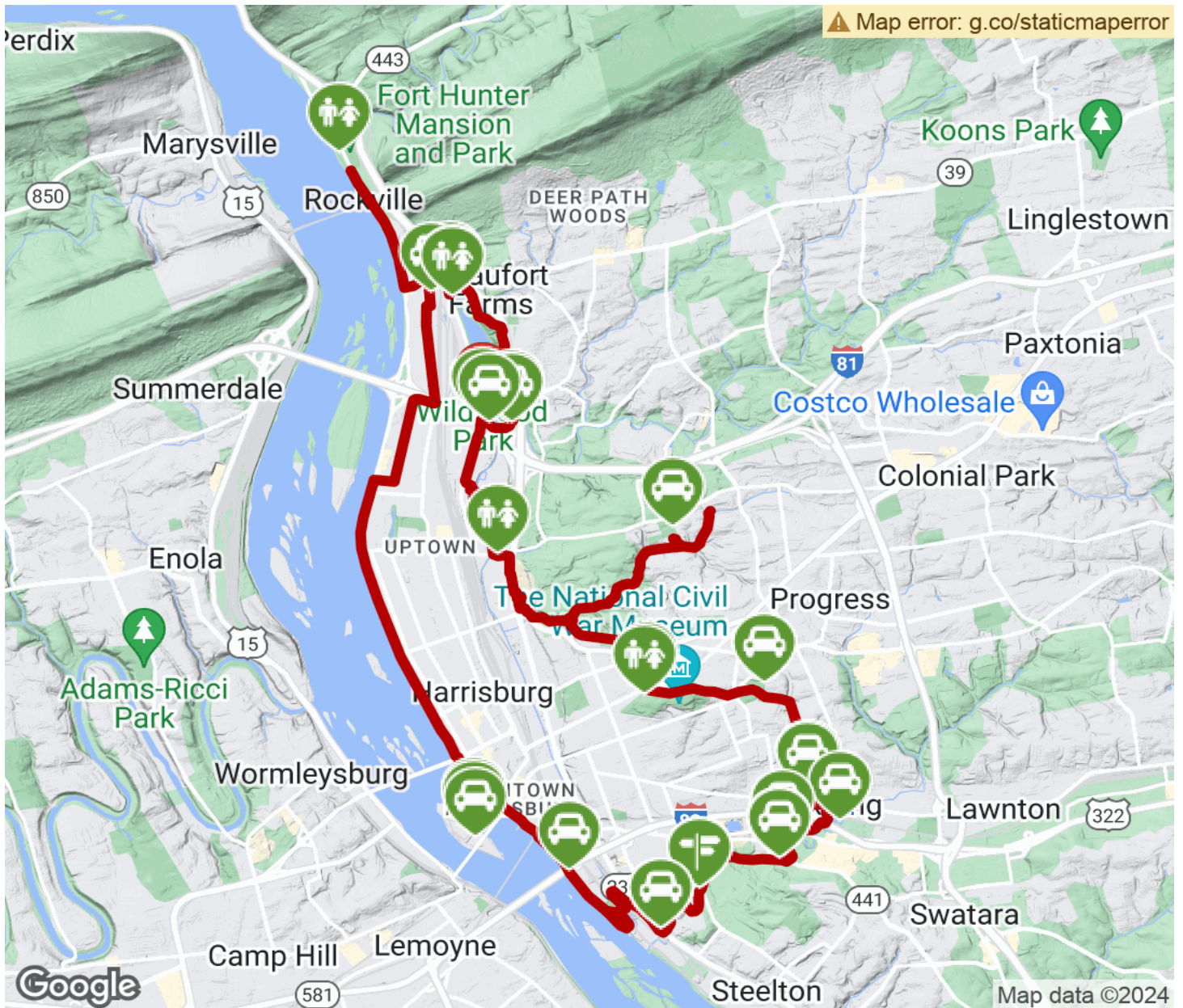
Parking & Trail Access

Parking is available at multiple locations as the trail winds its way through Harrisburg. Many of the parks along the route have parking options including Wildwood Park (100 Wildwood Way), Reservoir Park (100 Concert Dr), and Stabler Memorial Park (on Kaby St, just south of Linglestown Rd in Susquehanna Township). Park at Veterans Park (1955 Elmerton Ave, Harrisburg) in Susquehanna Township to pick up the trail spur via the switchbacks behind the equipment garage.

Visit the TrailLink map for all options, available transit lines, and detailed directions.

TrailLink.com

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Legend:
- **Trailhead**
- **Restroom**
- **Parking**
- **Water Fountain**
- **Tunnel**