

Plans for trails unveiled

Highland Park hopes to open network by April

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HIGHLAND PARK — The borough is aiming to open the first phase of a riverfront trail by April, said Mayor Meryl Frank.

Representatives from the borough and the Edison Wetlands Association yesterday unveiled plans for a public trail network in the 16-acre Highland Park Meadows at the Raritan River waterfront.

The first leg of the trail will be about 600 yards long, beginning at the intersection of Valentine Street and South Fifth Avenue and ending at the Raritan River. It will eventually loop through the meadows and back to Valentine Street.

A \$10,000 recreational trails grant from the state Department of Environmental Protection may fund the entire first phase, and Frank said the rest of the trail will be funded completely by grant money.

"We're applying for more money to expand it," said Frank, who noted the borough will pursue state, federal, county and private funding.

The borough will be working in conjunction with the Edison Wetlands Association to obtain additional funding.

The trail will be made of wood chips and will likely be between 1.2 and 1.5 miles long, said David Wheeler, the director of operations for the Edison Wetlands Association. The exact length will depend on the trail layout, which has not been finalized yet.

The trail's open date and total cost will depend on general trail-maintenance concerns such as gopher holes, trip-and-fall hazards and the presence of invasive plant species such as poison ivy and poison oak. The borough will also have to conduct environmental studies to ensure the area's safety.

Frank hopes to hold an opening celebration for the trail on Earth Day, which falls on April 22.

She said the trail will give borough visitors a new perspective on their surroundings.

"We don't have anything like this in Highland Park," Frank said. "It gives you a different orientation when you get to the river and see the bridge."

Erica Harbatkin:



Photos by GEORGE OLIVAR/Special to the Home News T
Visitors take a walk down a section of the new Highland Park
Meadows Trail Network, opened yesterday by the Edison
Wetlands Association and Highland Park.

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"We don't have anything like this in Highland
Park."

Meryl Frank
MAYOR



The new section of the riverfront trail network runs down to the edge of the Raritan River overlooking the Route 1 bridge.

