

Bicycle Wayfinding Signage: Neponset River Trail to Ponkapoag Pond

Proposal to the Milton Community Preservation Commission
from the Randolph Greenway group, [www. RandolphGreenway.com](http://www.RandolphGreenway.com)

by Randolph Town Councilor Jesse Gordon

(617) 320-6989 jgordon@randolph-ma.gov

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Online at www.RandolphGreenway.com/Bicycle_Wayfinding_Signage.pdf

Project Description

The Neponset River Greenway and the Blue Hills Reservation provide bicycling opportunities to Milton's north and to Milton's south. This proposal aims to provide "wayfinding signage" between the two amenities, directing bicyclists via the Blue Hills Parkway and Unquity Road.

This proposal echoes a similar successful project on the Randolph side of the Blue Hills Reservation, where the Randolph Community Preservation Commission funded wayfinding signage from residential neighborhoods toward Ponkapoag Pond. The same methods for producing the signage would be applied to the new proposal.

The timing of this project coincides with two state projects, one to the north and one to the south. To the north, the Neponset River Greenway extension should open by July. To the south, the Ponkapoag Pond Fisherman's Cove Improvements project is at the 100% planned stage.

This proposal is organized by the Randolph Greenway group, who organized the Randolph signage project too. That group will contribute some of the project cost and any unexpected cost overruns, as was done with the Randolph CPC. The group is headed by Randolph Town Councilor Jesse Gordon, who will publicize the project.

Project Budget

Estimated cost for each wayfinding sign:

- \$900 construction of map kiosk
- \$500 installation of map kiosk
- \$500 graphic artwork for maps (two per sign)
- \$500 printing and adhering map to kiosk framework

- = \$2,400 per wayfinding sign
- X 5 locations
- = \$12,000 total project cost
- \$9,500 CPA funding requested

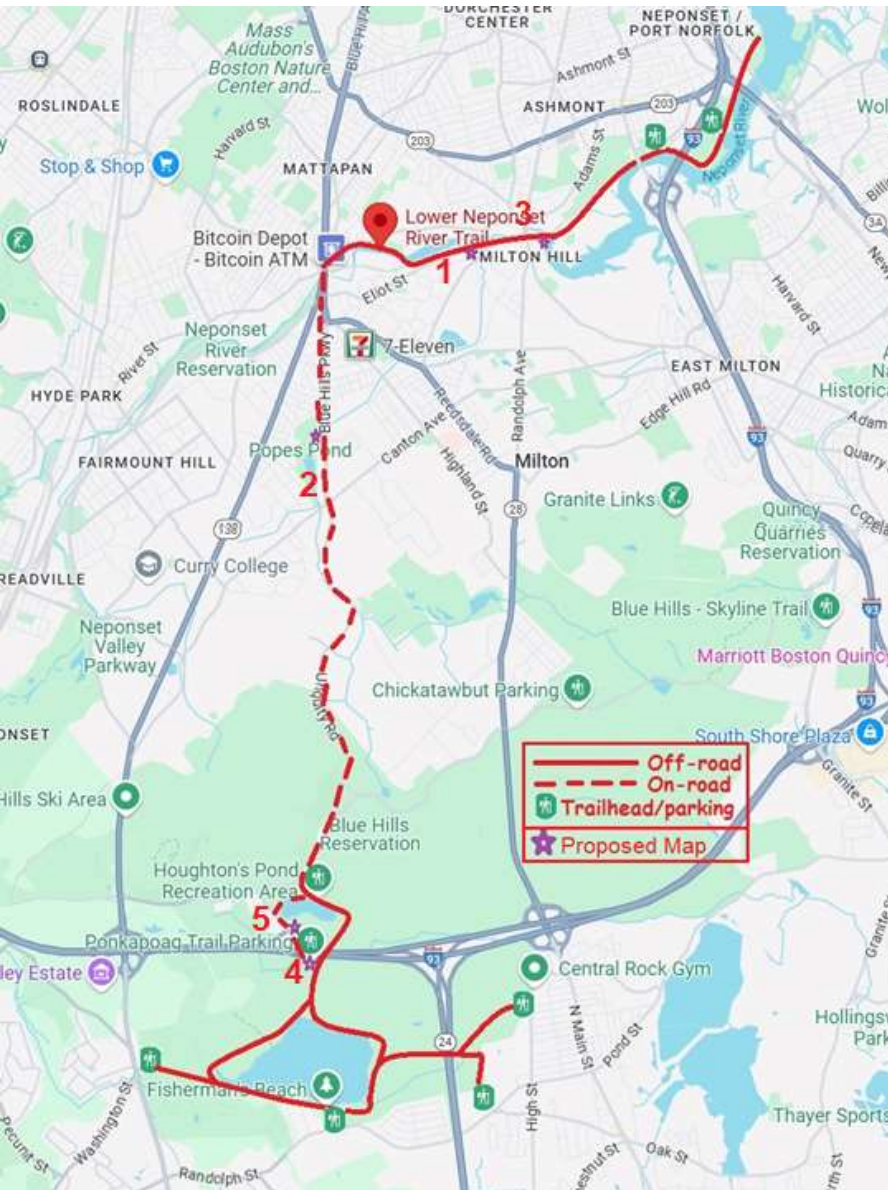
5 proposed maps

Overview map connecting Neponset, Ponkapoag, and beyond:

- Add to existing Neponset maps (on solid red “off-road” segment, north)
- Add to existing Ponkapoag maps (on solid red “off-road” segment, south)
- Create new maps for wayfinding between the two (dashed red “on-road” segment)

5 proposed locations for maps:

1. At ConComm sign on Neponset Trail
2. At ConComm sign on Blue Hills Parkway
3. At Milton-Boston border on Neponset Trail
4. At Milton-Randolph border at I-93 Exit 3
5. At ConComm property on Blue Hill River Rd



Detail Map (South)



- Exit 3 on I-93 has an existing very small parking area, and a gate that opens to allow off-road car access to the YMCA camp in Canton. (sign “4”)
- Existing DCR signage at Exit 3 shows the Blue Hills Reservation, with no indication that the bridge over I-93 leads safely and directly to Houghton’s Pond
- Existing signage on the Houghton’s Pond side also has no indication that there’s safe and direct access over the highway to Ponkapoag Pond. (sign “5”)
- Proposal is to add one sign on each side, on Milton property instead of DCR property, indicating the highway overpass, plus access to the Neponset Greenway to the north.
- Our previous project placed similar signs on south side of the Blue Hills (“6” & “7”)



Detail Map (North)

- Neponset River Greenway maps already populate several neglected DCR map kiosks.
- The neglected kiosks extend into Boston, and we already presented to the Neponset River Greenway group proposing to fill those neglected kiosks north of Milton.
- The new overview map, in miniature form, would be tacked up here too (the map shown is Styrofoam-backed laminated paper).

1: At ConComm sign on Neponset Trail



- The Neponset Greenway Trail parallels the Milton Trolley tracks from Mattapan station to Butler station.
- It's a wonderful pedestrian/ bicycle/ multi-use trail that is well-marked ON the trail, but not to destinations OFF the trail.
- The Milton ConComm owns some slivers of property along this trail; those slivers could serve for the proposed signs.
- This sliver is just west of the Central trolley stop (just west of Central Ave).

2: At ConComm sign on Blue Hills Parkway



- Another ConComm property along Blue Hills Parkway (this is the eastern edge of a larger property).
- The Blue Hills Parkway, along with Unquity Road, directly connects the Neponset Greenway with the Blue Hills Reservation.
- Both roads are bicycle-friendly, with marked bicycle lanes on the Blue Hills Parkway, and a shoulder and trailheads on Unquity Road.
- Our proposed wayfinding maps suggests this as a safe and direct bicycle route between the two existing bicycle amenities.

3: At Milton-Boston border on Neponset Trail



- This bridge is where the multi-use trail crosses the Neponset River into Boston.
- The building at the left is 88 Wharf Street (including the Madre Osteria restaurant) and the Milton trolley station is just west.
- We propose a wayfinding sign near here, welcoming pedestrians and bicyclists and showing the safe and direct route from here to the Blue Hills Reservation.
- Perhaps the ConComm owns a sliver a property near here too? (there's a "pocket park" – that grassy area to the right just past the bridge).

4: Milton-Randolph border at I-93 Exit 3



- There's an existing parking area at Exit 3 on the south side of I-93, which currently accommodates 5 or 6 cars.
- DCR plans to expand this parking area, plus improvements such as picnic tables (the map kiosk shown will likely be removed).
- The purpose of the expansion is to allow car access to the YMCA camp in Canton.
- The gate shown in foreground is the Randolph-Milton border (it opens to allow in cars to the YMCA)
- Proposed map would be on Milton side of the border.

5: At ConComm property on Blue Hill River Rd



- Signage at Houghton's Pond focuses on automobile needs and parking access to several amenities.
- Wayfinding signs indicate nearby amenities such as the ski area, but no indication of further bicycle destinations.
- Proposed sign near here would focus on bicycle and pedestrian needs (with a detailed map for wayfinding, and where to find safe and direct access)
- Many visitors would learn from the proposed signs that they could get to Ponkapoag Pond and to the Neponset Trail, from this point.

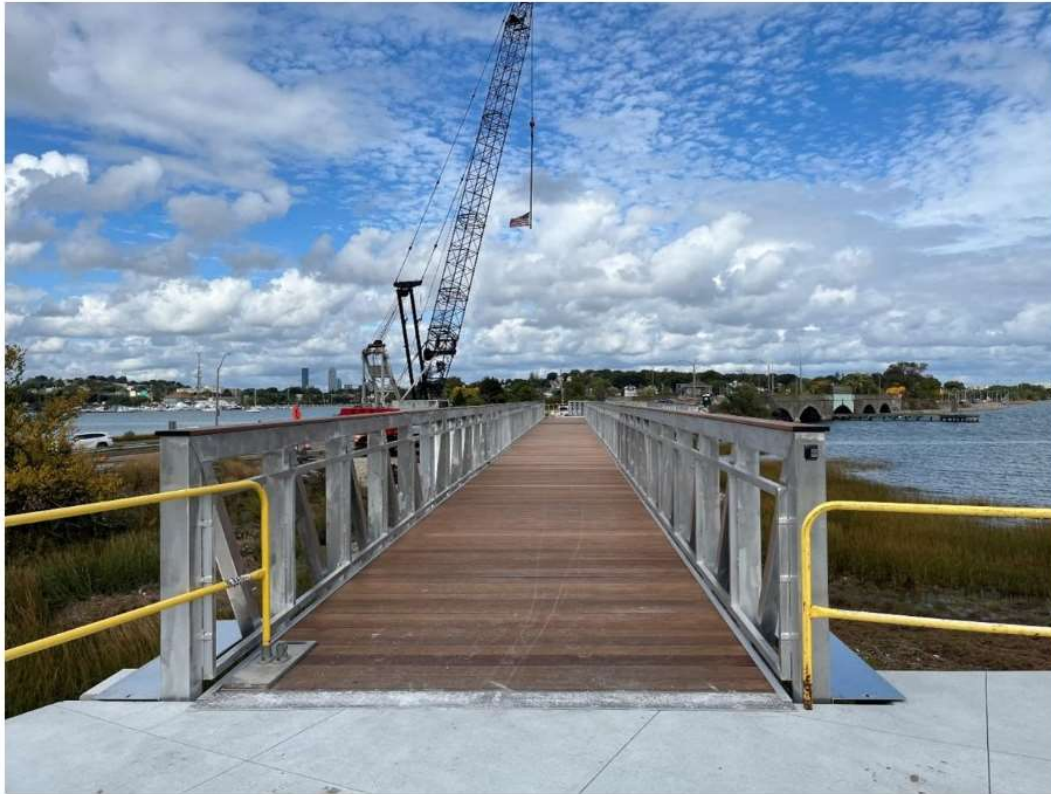


Why the Milton CPC?

- The MBTA property extends alongside the Neponset Trail and could provide excellent locations for wayfinding signs.
- But MBTA property in Milton has long been neglected, including this spot between Milton Station and Central Station (photo taken from on the Neponset Trail; the trolley tracks are on the other side of the barbed-wire fence).
- MBTA properties in Milton are characterized by barbed wire, crumbling concrete, and unmaintained murals.
- Nevertheless, the Randolph Greenway group will contact the MBTA to ask about placing a wayfinding sign near here (but we don't expect any response).

DCR project: Neponset Trail extension

Neponset River Greenway extension north from Tenean Beach to Morrissey Boulevard in
Dorchester: completion expected soon.



Boardwalk connecting to Morrissey Boulevard, November 2024

- The Neponset Greenway currently terminates at Pope John Paul II Park just over the Boston border.
- DCR is extending the Greenway north of that spot, including the boardwalk shown to the left. (Open as of July 4th)
- The extension avoids much of the trail to the “HarborWalk” on Morrissey Boulevard (past the Rainbow Gas Tank).
- We presented to the Neponset Greenway group to fill in, with similar wayfinding signage, up to this boardwalk .
- Their decision was “let’s see what DCR does and add to that afterwards.”
- Aug.2025 update: DCR placed wayfinding maps ON the new boardwalk, but didn’t update any signage OFF the boardwalk.

DCR project info: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/neponset-river-reservation-and-greenway-project>

Ponkapoag Pond Master Plan and Fisherman's Cove Improvements

The project includes three phases over the course of 12 months



- DCR has planned (100% completed on plans) to improve the Ponkapoag Pond section of the Reservation.
- The project focuses on funding improvements to the YMCA Camp, the AMC Huts, and Fisherman's Beach.
- At our request, DCR added improvements at Exit 3, and wayfinding signage at Randolph Road in Canton, plus east to Rt 24.
- At Exit 3, there'll be more parking, plus signs, plus picnic tables.

DCR Project Info: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/ponkapoag-pond-master-plan-and-fishermans-cove-improvements>

Existing Randolph signs



- Here's the Randolph Greenway sign installed on High Street, the eastmost point of the Blue Hills Ponkapoag Pond section.
- The parking lot where the sign is installed is Town property; the baseball field behind it is DCR property which is leased by the Town.
- The map shows a suggested route to walk or bicycle from High Street to the Pond (bold red dashed line).
- Many people have said this this sign was installed, "I didn't know we could get into the Blue Hills from there, much less walk to the Pond."
→ That is our purpose!

Existing Randolph signs: #2



- Here's the second installed sign, at the Donovan School parking lot on Reed Street.
- We chose this spot because several horse farms routinely bring horses to that parking lot, and lead the riders up the trail shown.
- The parking lot itself is school property; at the top of the hill behind the sign is DCR property.
- We're planning a similar wayfinding sign at Smith Trail, a privately-reconstructed trailhead northward on High Street, maybe next year.
- Other wayfinding signs appear at other recreational locations around Randolph, too.

Existing Randolph signs



- Details of the sign design itself.
- The kiosk (mounting) follows DCR guidelines, at the suggestion of the Randolph CPC.
- We used Ruffo Signs, a Town-designated signmaker, for construction and installation.
- We paid for the graphic art work separately from the CPC funding, as proposed for Milton too.

Massachusetts Interactive Property Map

https://massgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/OnePane/basicviewer/index.html?

