

PRESS RELEASE INFORMATION

Town of Portland
Portland Air Line Trail Groundbreaking Ceremony
Saturday, October 28, 2017, 10 AM
Keegan Property Trail Head
(Across the street from 83 Middle Haddam Road, Portland CT 06480)

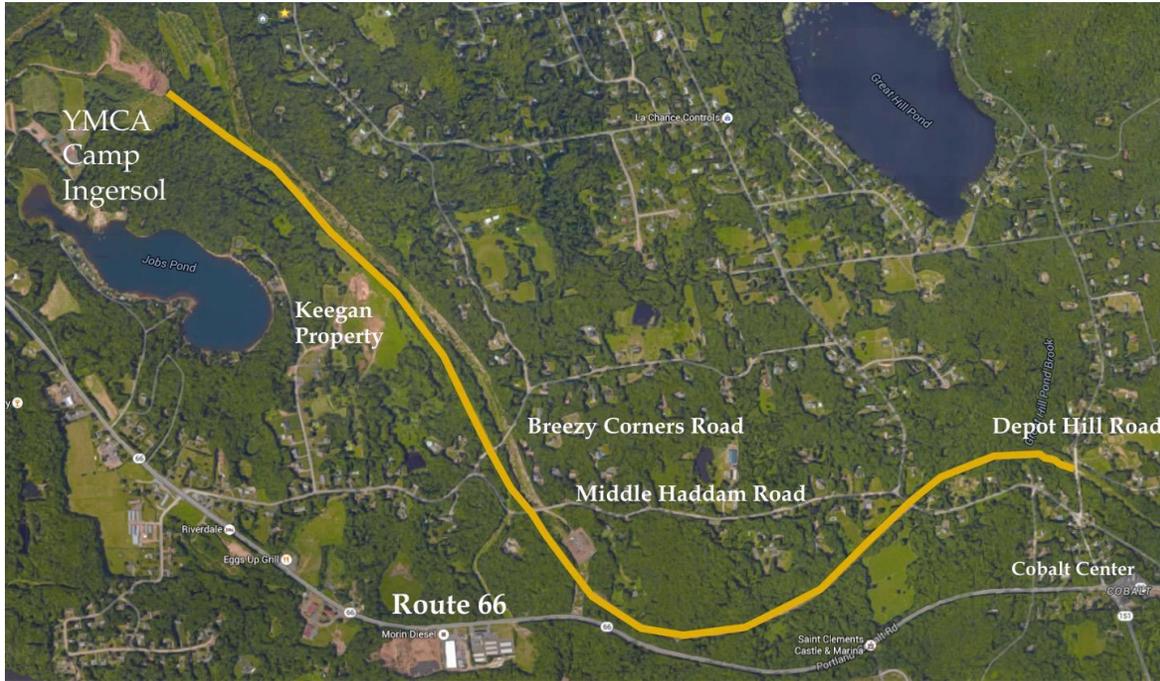
The town of Portland is conducting a groundbreaking ceremony on Saturday, October 28 to celebrate the beginning of construction on the first phase of the Portland Air Line Trail – a 2.3 section of a linear park trail for recreational use that will connect to the Connecticut Air Line State Park Trail that runs from East Hampton to Putnam, CT. Ultimately, the town hopes to take the trail to the Arrigoni Bridge and Middletown.

The ceremony will include representatives from various organizations that have supported or been involved in the development of the trail. These include: Jamie Lintner from Eversource Energy, who provided a lease for the land; Rob Klee, State Parks Director for CT DEEP, who provided grant funding for construction; Christie Carpino, CT State Representative, who provided legislative support; Portland First Selectwoman, Susan Bransfield, who directed the town's involvement for the Board of Selectmen; and Rosario (Riz) Rizzo and Louis Pear, co-chairs of the Portland Air Line Trail Steering Committee that oversaw development of the trail.

The section of the trail to be constructed runs 2.3 miles from Depot Hill Road to the YMCA Camp Ingersoll property with a trail head parking area located on the former Keegan property located off Middle Haddam Road. Dichello Construction will be doing the actual trail work under the direction of Jacobson Engineering and town officials. Construction is scheduled to be completed and the trail opened for public use by spring 2018.

The first phase of The Portland Air Line Trail will be constructed on land used by the Air Line railroad that ran between New York and Boston between 1873 and 1955. The Connecticut portion of the railroad east of Portland ceased operations in 1968, the tracks were abandoned, and the land between East Hampton and Massachusetts was purchased by the state for recreational use. Since then, it has been gradually developed into the current Air Line State Park Trail. Due to a lack of interest at the time, the land in Portland was sold to private property owners, including CL&P -- now Eversource Energy. In 2013, John Hall and John Shafer, members of the Jonah Center, initiated an effort to develop the trail in Portland. This led to the formation of a town steering committee initially led by John Shafer and later led by Rosario Rizzo and Louis Pear. Working with town leaders, including First Selectwoman, Susan Bransfield, and former town planner, Deana Rhodes, the committee was able to successfully negotiate a lease agreement with Eversource Energy to use a 2.3-

mile portion of their land for trail use (referred to as “Phase 1”). They subsequently developed a site plan, purchased additional property, and received grant funding from CT DEEP. After 3 years of preparations, construction of Phase 1 of the Portland section of the Air Line Trail is ready to commence and connect to the new East Hampton section.



Map showing Phase 1 of the Portland section of the Air Line Trail.

For further information, contact:

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