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Amanda Viliocco Smith
Madison County Transit
618-797-4600

New MCT Ridge Prairie Trail Brings Historic Railroad Corridor Back to Life

Funded in Large Part by MEPRD, 1.5 Mile Trail Connects Collinsville to MCT Trail Network.

PONTOON BEACH, IL - September 24, 2026... Thanks to financial support from Metro East Park and Recreation District (MEPRD), Madison County Transit (MCT) opened the new MCT Ridge Prairie Trail Thursday morning, adding approximately 1.5 miles to the MCT Trails system and creating a new connection between Collinsville and MCT's expansive trail network.

The MCT Ridge Prairie Trail begins near the Collinwood subdivision at Barbara Street in Collinsville and travels northeast to connect with the MCT Goshen Trail at Formosa Junction. The new trail gives nearby residents direct bicycle and pedestrian access to MCT's network of interconnected trails throughout Madison County.

"The MCT Ridge Prairie Trail is a great example of what the MCT Trails system is designed to do - connect neighborhoods and communities while creating and expanding opportunities for people to walk, bike, and explore Madison County," said MCT Managing Director SJ Morrison. "Like many of our trails, we were able to take a former railroad corridor that once connected communities and give it a new purpose."

Building the MCT Ridge Prairie Trail required MCT to reassemble a former Pennsylvania Railroad corridor, acquiring 13 separate parcels of property along the abandoned alignment to create a continuous trail.

This corridor's connection to its rich history is especially evident at its eastern end at Formosa Junction. The small community originally known as West Troy developed after the railroad reached the area in 1868 and was renamed Formosa in 1884. At its height, Formosa included a railroad depot and tower, post office, school, and grain elevator, while nearby dairy farms used the railroad to ship milk to St. Louis. President Theodore Roosevelt also traveled through Formosa by train on his way to the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis.

The railroad eventually shifted traffic away from Formosa, thanks to MCT a century later, the area will once again serve as a vital transportation crossroads. Today, Formosa Junction is where MCT's new Ridge Prairie Trail meets the Goshen Trail.

The project also included construction of an approximately 170-foot bridge over Canteen Creek and a new "Ridge Prairie" wall mural located on an abandoned railroad bridge abutment at the east end of the trail.

The project began in November 2024 and was completed in September 2026. Keller Construction served as the project contractor, with engineering services provided by Juneau Associates.

The project represents an investment of approximately \$3 million. The majority of the project was funded by MEPRD, with additional funding from MCT.

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MCT RIDGE PRAIRIE TRAIL OPENS FIRST & FINAL ADD

The MCT Ridge Prairie Trail is part of MCT's ongoing expansion of the MCT Trails to new destinations. From Formosa Junction, trail users can access the Goshen Trail and the broader MCT Trails network. In the future, the MCT Ridge Prairie Trail is expected to connect toward Troy through the planned Formosa East project, currently in design, which will extend the trail across U.S. Route 40 to the MCT Silver Creek Trail.

"This project would not have happened without the hard work and persistence of our Capital Projects team, the support of multiple MCT Boards, and the generosity of MERPD," said Morrison.

MCT marked the opening September 24 with a small ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by representatives from MCT, MEPRD, the City of Collinsville, elected officials, and project partners. Following the ribbon cutting, guests were invited to walk or ride the new trail to the Ridge Prairie mural, located at Formosa Junction.

For more information about the MCT Trails visit **MCTtrails.org** or contact MCT at trails@mct.org.

MCT Ridge Prairie Trail Ribbon Cutting Photo (from left to right): Bryan Werner (Executive Director of MEPRD), Andy Economy (MCT Board Member), Ron Jedda (ACT Board Vice President), SJ Morrison (MCT Managing Director), Derrick Cox (Collinsville Township Supervisor), Dave Massey (ACT Project Engineer), Jerry Kane (former MCT Managing Director, Current MEPRD Board Member), Mark Achenbach (ACT Board President), Katie Stewart (Illinois State Representative), Al Adomite (MCT Board Chairman), Erica Harriss (Illinois State Senator), Jeff Stehman (City of Collinsville Mayor), Phil Roggio (ACT Director of Capital Projects), Mark Steyer (ACT Engineering Assistant).

MCT Ridge Prairie at Formosa Junction Photo: Located where MCT's new Ridge Prairie Trail meets the MCT Goshen Trail.

Madison County Transit (MCT) provides multi-modal transportation services for Madison County, Illinois. MCT operates a fixed-route bus service, connecting to MetroLink; express weekday commuter service directly to and from downtown St. Louis; and seasonal express service to the Muny. For elderly and disabled residents who are unable to use the fixed-route buses, MCT provides complementary door to door service. MCT is also responsible for the construction and maintenance of more than 138 miles of bikeways that comprise the MCT Trails system, as well as overseeing RideFinders, the St. Louis region's FREE carpooling and vanpooling program.

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