



The Camp Follower's Guide to the Mohawk Hudson River Marathon

For several years I have volunteered to work on the Mohawk Hudson River Marathon in various capacities that required traveling to and fro along the course. Whenever I stopped at any point, I witnessed friends and families of runners attempting to follow along and find the best vantage point for viewing the runners as they pass by and perhaps take a photograph or two. I have seen small clutches of these marathon camp followers huddled with a road map discussing how and where to go next. A few times I have interjected a bit of advice on the best route or vantage point and it was always appreciated, or so they said, maybe they were just humoring this old fogey.

One year I thought it would be helpful if I could spread the joy, so I constructed these pages with routes specifically directed toward the MHRM camp followers. The majority of the marathon course follows paved bike paths along the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers and it is not always easily accessible by road. There are however, if you know where to go and the routes to get there, plenty of places with a very good vantage point for viewing, cheering and photographing. Here, in excruciating detail are a number of local street maps (available on maps.yahoo.com) that can assist you in sharing your intrepid marathoner's progress.

After the Start, Leaving the Park

Forget about the first three miles. You want to get yourself out of the park and beyond the 5 Km point before traffic gets blocked. There will be a full mile where you can see the runners along River Rd once you are past 5 Km, but if you try to work your way along the first three miles of the course, you'll be stopped and may not catch up with the runners until much later.

Once the runners have exited that park, go out the main gate by the rose garden, turn right onto Central Parkway and find Dean St. It's the straightest route to where you need to go.

You've got a little over 15 minutes to get there before they start to block the traffic. Just a couple blocks out of the park, on Union St there are a several places where you can stop and grab a coffee and a bagel or something, just don't dwell too long.



Dean St

Dean St crosses Union St, a main thoroughfare most days, but on Sunday morning not especially busy, and then goes through a very pleasant residential neighborhood. The other streets to the right and left of it look as though they'll go straight through but don't be fooled, a mile or so into the neighborhood you'll get all turned around and balled up. See the next map if you don't believe me.

The runners are going over Palmer Ave, two blocks away and then diverging off to the right of this view.



Dean St to Providence Ave to River Rd

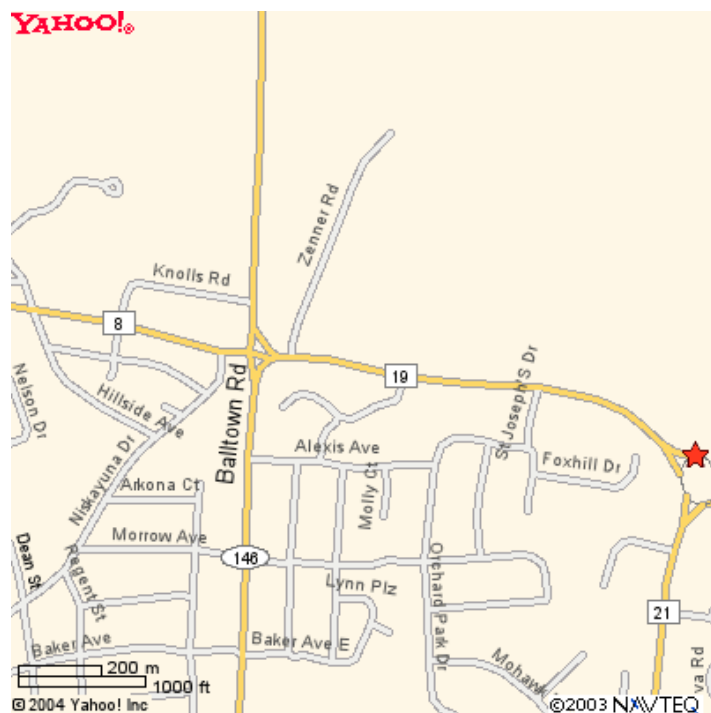
Dean St [25] terminates at Providence Ave [8]. The map looks like it says Rosa Rd, but where the [8] is on the map isn't showing the road name, that's Providence. You'll come out at an apartment complex with kids playing kickball on the front lawn. Well, perhaps not at that time of the morning on a Sunday, but at any other time of the day that's what you'd see.

Turn right and go across Balltown Rd (Rte 146) at the traffic light. On the other side of Rte 146, where it shows County Rte [19], the road changes it's name again to River Rd. Don't ask why. That's just the way it is.



River Rd to Research Circle

Proceed on River Rd. When you reach Research Circle (red star) go all the way around the circle and park about 200 yards farther down the hill near the baseball fields on your right. The roadway coming into the circle from the right is where the runners are coming from. That's VanAntwerp Rd [21]. You'll see them come towards the circle and cross the road to the bike path on the left. If you didn't get beyond this crossover point your car is stuck there until the pack of runners thins out which can be quite a long time.



River Rd - Mile 4

Now you have more than a mile from the circle to Blatnick Park where the marathoners are on the bike path within a few feet of River Rd. It's a good stretch where you can park, get out, take some pictures (because they still look human at this stage of the race, just wait til you see what they look like towards the end, you might not want pictures of them then.) and also shout some encouragement.

The runners go left at about 4.5 miles on Line Drive which leads to a baseball park, Line Drive, hah, get it? Somebody was a bit too cute for their own good.

Back to the runners. You can't follow them down Line Drive, you might get caught. Ouch, now I'm doing it. The bike path to mile 5 and 6 is not accessible by car. You have to drive 3 miles farther down River Rd to reach the marathon route again.



The Marathon course goes off-road

The thin red line shows the marathon route. There are no roads down there although it's a beautiful trail, very scenic this time of year. The long sloping hill descending to the river is a great view now. It wasn't always so, it used to be the town dump.

Speaking of dumps, there is a public restroom at Blatnick Park, just a few yards beyond Line Dr.

Where you are heading next is straight on down River Rd to, y'know, head 'em off at the pass.



River Rd to Rosendale Rd

River Rd [1] terminates at Rosendale Rd [158] and Rosendale will snake along near the race route for the next several miles.

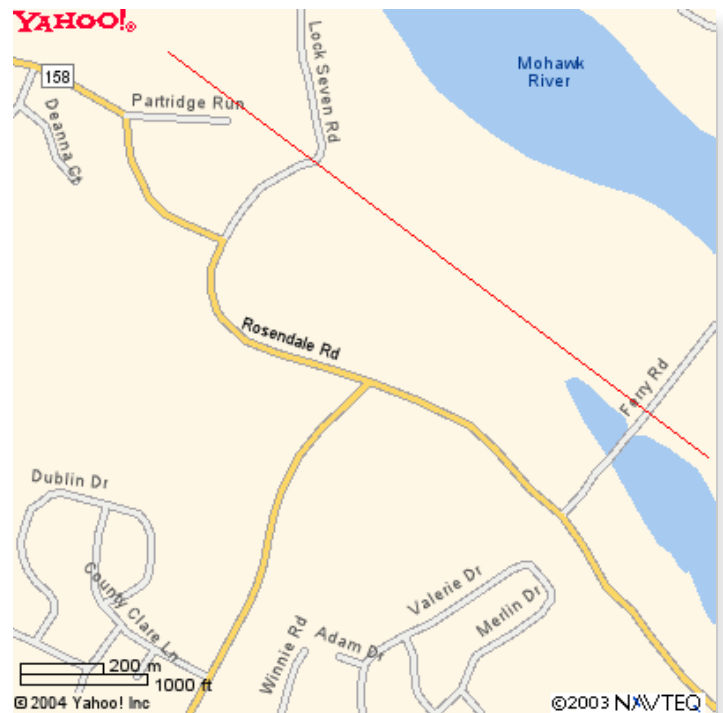
You can get down to mile 6 via Lock 7 Rd. As you can see, it's a dead end. This is a narrow, rural lane leading to the Erie Canal locks. The problem down there is that there really aren't many parking spots. And that's also a water stop, so all of the parking is taken up by the volunteers before you even get there. People tend to clog it up by parking on the side, turning it into a one-lane road and it gets pretty snarled up.

It might be better to just skip over mile 6 and go straight on out to mile 8.



Rosendale Rd

Next, you want to get out of this neighborhood by reversing your direction on Dunsbach Ferry and going out to Rte 9 (aka Loudon Rd or New London Rd, yahoo maps can't seem to make up their mind). Turn left heading north. The next good viewing spot is at mile 14.



Lions Park - BIG meeting spot

OK, pay attention. This is the primary meeting spot for most runners and their cheering sections. There's a park at mile 8 that the bike path passes right through with at least a hundred parking spaces. There will be dozens if not hundreds of people gathering here. After several miles of lonely bike path without many spectators, this is one place where they get some crowd noise. Add your voice to the throng.

There is another public restroom in this park in case the kids insisted they didn't have to go when you suggested the last one. But note well, it'll be a long time before you will find another one.

Coming out of Lions Park go left on Rosendale. It takes a sharp right turn up the hill within 100 yards. Don't go there. You want to bear to the left, on to River Rd. This is a different town now, so it's not the same River Rd you were on a few miles back.



River Rd Colonie

The bike path parallels River Rd in the town of Colonie. From mile 9 to 10 it's a mere 10 or 20 feet off the left shoulder. You'll find a number of spots where you can pull over to the left and see your runner and snap some pics.

Mile 9 is right near the base of Buhmaster Rd. There are stopping areas at 9.5 and 10 miles as well.



River Rd to Forts Ferry Rd

Mile 10 is near the dashed blue line where a bridge crosses Shaker Creek. That's the picture at the top of this guide. Unfortunately, the beaver that used to live under the bridge and was trying to dam that stream is no longer there and her lodge has gone to weeds or that too would be an extraordinary picture to snap.

When you come to a fork in the road take it. That was Yogi Barra's advice. I'll give you 3 options. If you go left, then left again, on Forts Ferry Rd you get to a spot where the marathon crosses the road. There are very few parking spaces there. If you go left, then right, on to Onderdonk Rd the marathon crosses down there too, but there are a few more spaces for parking and there's a water table down there, so there'll be a bit of noise for the runners.

If you choose to skip the crossing points, go right on Forts Ferry Rd and skip ahead a map or two.

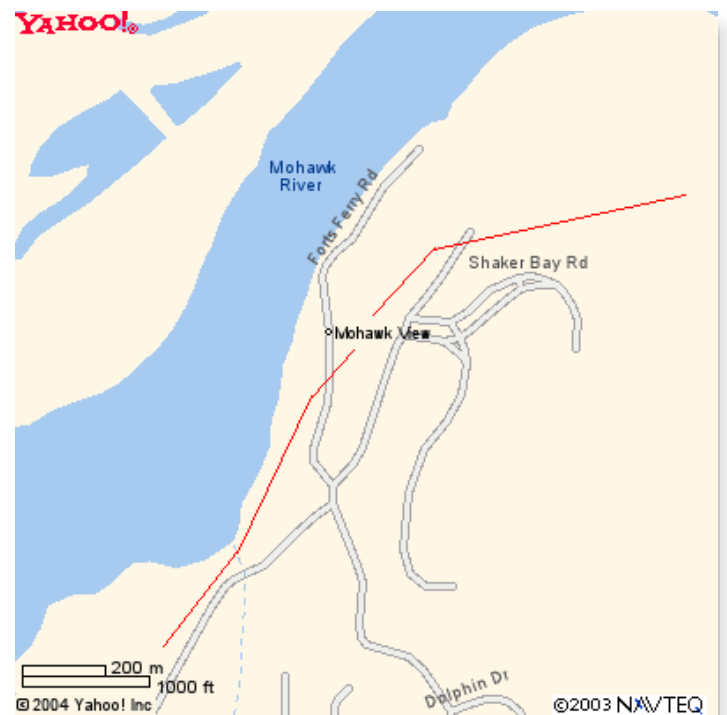


Onderdonk Rd

The thin red line shows the marathon route crossing at the end of Onderdonk Rd. There is no auto access from here to mile 13. It's a pretty desolate stretch. Besides, the main point of interest midway between mile 11 and 12 is the town sewage treatment plant. No big thrill.

The whole stretch from mile 9 out to mile 12 is a big duck hunting area, so don't be terrified if you hear gun shots. Nobody's ever shot any marathoners, as far as I know, lately.

A road does go into mile 12 from the other end but it will be blocked. So this is the last you'll see of your pedestrian friend for quite a while.



Pollock Rd to Dunsbach Ferry Rd

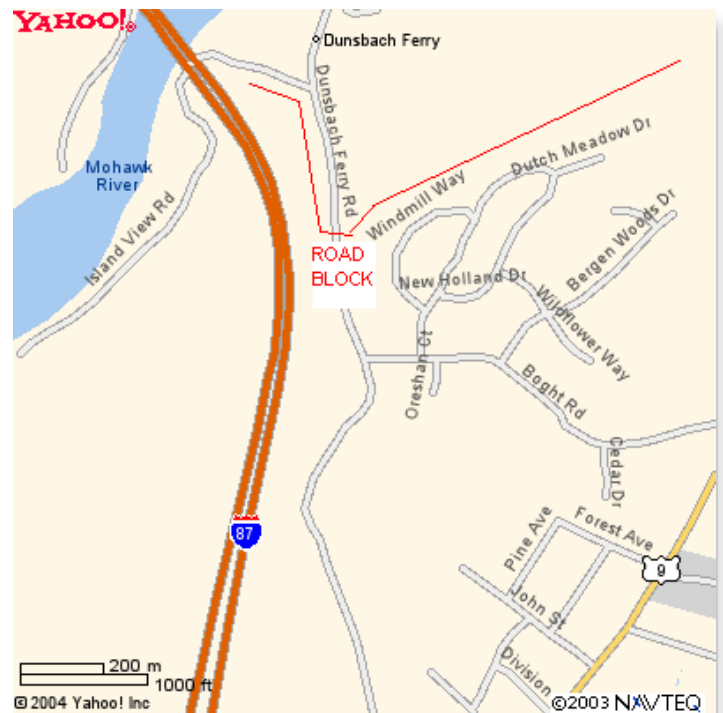
Pollock Rd terminates at Dunsbach Ferry Rd which also comes off of Rte 9 if you took the long route coming out of Forts Ferry Rd. Dunsbach Ferry leads to another place where runners are crossing the road and re-entering the bike path at about mile 12.5.

You'll notice this town has a lot of Ferry's, not that there's anything wrong with that.



Dunsbach Ferry Crossover

You'll see by the thin red line that the runners are again crossing the road on Dunsbach Ferry and returning to the bike path again. There is no place where you can pull over to the side of the road there, but if you stop a quarter mile before the crossing, you can see them by walking down the bike path a bit. It's really an inconvenient place to stop.



Dunsbach Ferry to Rte 9

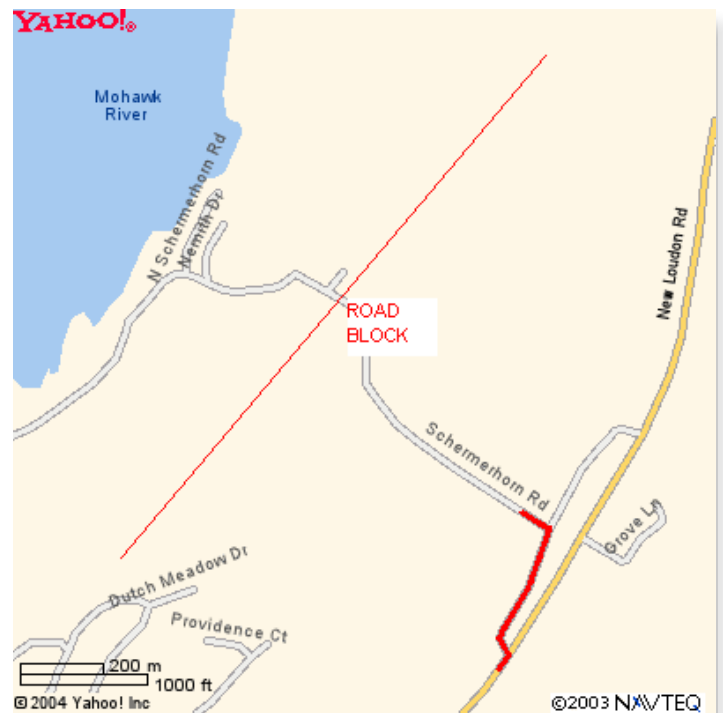
Next, you want to get out of this neighborhood by reversing your direction on Dunsbach Ferry and going out to Rte 9 (aka Loudon Rd or New Loudon Rd, yahoo maps can't seem to make up their mind). Turn left heading north. The next good viewing spot is at mile 14.



Schermerhorn Rd

If you didn't go to Dunsbach Ferry Rd, another place to see the runners crossing is on Schermerhorn Rd at the Colonie Town Park. The turn-in access road for Schermerhorn is Old Loudon Rd, it's on the left about 1/4 mile beyond the Boght Rd traffic light.

You will be able to park along the side of the road near where they cross but you won't be able to get into the parking lot by the park entrance because of another road block. A real shame too, because this park also has public restrooms and now the kids are whining for a bathroom, but you can't get there, and by now you've had at least 4 cups of coffee yourself, so you're in dire straights too. Well, you should have listened to me before.



Fonda Rd

The next big meeting spot is on Fonda Rd just beyond Mile 14. Turn right off Rte 9 and it is on the immediate right. The bike path passes through a tunnel under Rte 9. At that point there is another aid station and a good size crowd making lots of noise.

I've never actually run the whole marathon but many times have accompanied other runners in the back of the pack all the way up to here and the aid station volunteers are just as enthusiastic as they had been for the front runners an hour before. Or maybe they were just glad to see the end. In either case they cheer real well and that's a good thing.

By the way, they still look pretty good at this point. A bit sweaty perhaps but they still move well and appear to have their wits about them. A few miles from now, they'll look like something the cat dragged in. So snap some more pics.



Fonda Rd to the City of Cohoes

The course turns away from Fonda Rd for mile 15 so the next opportunity will be at Manor Ave where they cross over. Continue on Fonda Rd to the end, go right on Cohoes Crescent Rd (aka North Mohawk St), then right again on Manor Ave at the blinking lights

After you've seen them cross Manor Ave, back up a bit to North Reservoir St. or North Mohawk to go to Lansing Ln or Vliet St at Mile 16.



Manor Ave to North Reservoir St

If there are too many cars already clogging up Manor Ave, go left on North Reservoir St. There is a spot on Lansing Ln where the bike path is just a few yards away.

If you make your way to Vliet St you will find it passes through another tunnel beneath the roadway.



Dudley St to Columbia St

Make your way to Columbia St (Rte 470). The bike path passes over the road, not under this time. But skip the rest of the city and make your way down to Rte 32. Don't try to follow them along Central Ave. There are no places to stop along there and certainly no coffee shops.



Alexander St and Bridge St to Rte 32

The Mohawk River bike path ends at Alexander St in Cohoes, mile 17, so for the next few miles the marathon route runs on a main thoroughfare Rte 32, first Cohoes, then through the little village of Maplewood and finally into Watervliet.

Since Rte 32 is the only through road through this area, we'll skip a couple miles and a few maps until the next turn in the course. You would be better off taking Spring St to Rte 787 to 23rd St in Watervliet. With runners crossing the road at Bridge St, traffic will be temporarily blocked.



Rte 32 to 21st St

If you don't get off I-787 at 23rd St in Watervliet, you'll overshoot by several miles to the next exit and end up in Menands.

After mile 19 on Rte 32, the course jogs over one block to the left on 21st St from Rte 32 to Broadway in Watervliet. They will then stay on Broadway until mile 21 when the course picks up the Hudson River bike path. Just about anywhere along here is a good place to stop. If traffic is restricted along Broadway when the runners are passing through, you can still parallel them by staying on Rte 32 (2nd Ave)

On Broadway, a block past the Rte 2 (19th St) crossing there's a McDonalds if you have a hankering for another coffee, or for that matter need to purge the bladder of the remnants of some previous coffee.



Broadway to bike path

They'll continue on Broadway in Watervliet until you reach the entrance to the Hudson River bike path at about mile 21. The runners turn into an access road passing under I-787. This will be the last you can see of them until they emerge at mile 25 in Albany.

A point of interest along the way is the Watervliet Arsenal where the Army has been building cannons for well over 200 years. It's very historic but truth be told, cannons without their ammo are not very exciting. Not much more than big steel tubes. Now, get some gun powder and shells in them and they get a whole lot more interesting.



3rd Ave, Watervliet to Broadway, Menands

After they have gone onto the Hudson River bike path, go back over to 3rd Ave and head south. At 1st St it becomes Broadway again, and Rte 32 again, but this is now in the village of Menands and it's not exactly, but sort of, the same Broadway which you just left in Watervliet. It remains Broadway and Rte 32 all the way into Albany.

You'll find a number of fast food outlets along this route for maybe another good cup of Java or to drain the tanks of the last 6 cups whichever you feel is appropriate at the time.

Again we're going to skip ahead several miles and several maps because there is no easy access to the bike path at miles 22, 23 and 24.



Broadway to Albany

This is where it gets complicated, although it doesn't have to be. Ignore this map and go straight to the next one for the easy way.

Oh, there you go again, now for the complicated part. If you want to pace them in for the final mile, they emerge at mile 25.5 at the Boat Launch. Turn left on N. Ferry St, 4 blocks past the RCA dog (you'll know it when you see it) go across Erie Blvd to Colonie St and there's ample parking.

You could also park in Corning Park itself at mile 26 (there are public restrooms here too), but to get there, you have to overshoot by a few blocks to the south. Go all the way through downtown, past State St, and follow the signs for I-787 North, then go right on Colonie St to the park.

I'd say forget it and just go to the Columbia St parking garage, but then you haven't seen them since mile 21.



Corning Preserve, Columbia St, Finish area

Here's your best bet. Take Broadway downtown to Columbia St. and park in the big Municipal Parking Garage. Walk just 100 yards over the Hudson River Way and you are at the finish area. The River Way is the photo on the last page of this guide and you can see the parking garage at the right center. Over the bridge is an amphitheater where they hold concerts and plays and stuff, but not where they throw Christians to the lions. Lions Park was back at mile 8.

There you have it. Put down this stupid guide, go hug your sweaty, exhausted, elated runner. You've both had a busy day.

Your's Truly,
SumoRunner





Hudson River Way, Albany, NY

If you liked this guide, if you liked how the race itself was organized and executed, if you liked how the event volunteers treated you and your running pal, if you liked anything about it, please drop us a line at www.HMRRC.com. Race director Maureen Cox deserves a few good words for her work as well. Naturally, no one else is responsible for what I write, so any comments about the Camp Followers Guide itself can be directed to me through my personal web site.

