

Short bio of *Craig Della Penna*

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CraigDP.com TrailsideCompanies.com

I have had an interesting life journey. Today, I have a unique, niche real estate practice—specializing in houses near to walking or biking pathways and antique or historic houses. I am the 1st REALTOR in the U.S. with this niche and I have been featured in two National Realtor Association magazines, the Certified Residential Specialist Magazine—twice, the Massachusetts Association of Realtors magazine—twice, a *Boston Globe* editorial, an article in the *Wall Street Journal*, and even in United Airlines in-flight magazine, *Hemispheres* in a story called *Roads Less Traveled*.



In November, 2017, at the National Association of Realtors annual conference in Chicago, I was awarded the 2017 EverGreen Award for being the first Realtor in the U.S. to have not only this special niche in my RE practice but for my accomplishments in getting trails built all over the Northeast U.S.



I am also one of only a small handful of REALTORS in the Northeast to receive Green designations from both the National Association of REALTORS' U.S. Green Building Council and the EcoBroker designation.

I also hold the Certified Residential Specialist

designation—CRS. Only around 2% of REALTORS in my service area have this designation.

How I got here is quite different from most people in this industry.

I worked in the railroad industry for many years, marketing rail-freight and planning the start-up and management of large scale, contemporary, transloading facilities. In the mid-1990s, while working for the railroad, I was invited to write a series of books on the history of old railroad lines converted to walking and biking trails (rail trails).

Two years after the first of three books on this subject came out, I got involved in the politics of



how these paths did or did not get built and I began to actively organize "friends of the trail" groups in scores of communities all across New England and eastern New York.

In the late 1990s, I was hired by the national organization, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, [RTC] as a political organizer/lobbyist in the New England region to not only prevent bad policy at the state and local level, but to also "parachute" into some of the most notable rail trail wars in the northeast. I am a "battle-hardened veteran" of nearly every rail trail war in the Northeast.

In late 2001, while working for RTC, my wife Kathleen and I bought a badly run-down, 1865, farmhouse next to (eight feet from) the rail trail in Northampton's historic Florence village center. We began a far-reaching renovation and had contractors there for fourteen months. Then, in the spring of 2003, we opened as a bed & breakfast called [Sugar Maple Trailside Inn](http://SugarMapleTrailsideInn.com). The renovation was even featured on [HGTV's](http://HGTV.com) [Restore America](http://RestoreAmerica.com) television program.

In 2004, I left RTC and entered the real estate field and focused on developing my niche—selling houses near trails and greenways. This was of course in spite of what



all those anti-path folks said was quite impossible.

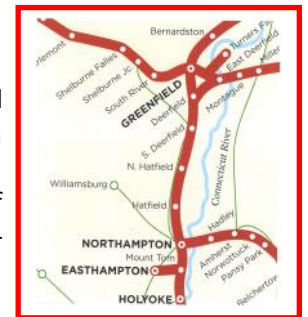
In their 10th anniversary issue, *The Ride* magazine named me as the most effective advocate for rail-to-trail issues on the Eastern seaboard, and I have helped build over 1,000 miles of rail trails in scores of communities in New England and New York.



Today, having given over 1,200 lectures in twenty one states, I am one of the country's most in-demand public speakers on the subjects of rail-to-trail conversions and their tie-in to the issues surrounding smart-growth, brownfield redevelopment, sustainability issues, land preservation, place-making, effects on nearby residential real estate values, and other similar topics.

Just in the past few years, I have been the key note or plenary speaker at state or regional conferences in New York, California, Virginia, Connecticut, Michigan, and Massachusetts.

And in 2016, I became an accredited teacher of REALTORS in both Massachusetts and Vermont where I began teaching a course about these issues to scores of REALTORS for their Continuing Education requirements.



In late 2016 and early 2017 I was invited to do a series of national webinars by American Trails about trail development tying in the effects on nearby real estate.

Your expertise, wisdom and delivery of the key facts was impressive. You no doubt helped to propel us on to victory at last evenings town meeting vote on the Rail Trail initiative. Thank You!

Vincent Inglese, Chair of the Friends of the Lynnfield Rail Trail.

Curriculum Vitae for Craig Della Penna

Work History:

The Murphys Realtors, Inc. Associate Broker
www.CraigDP.com 2003-to present

I am a Realtor based in Northampton, MA, but with a special, niche practice. I specialize in properties near to bike and pedestrian pathways and other conservation lands. I also specialize in historic or antique houses in walkable or bikeable neighborhoods. Because of this, I'm generally the top realtor at one of the largest firms in the area and am in the top percentile of Realtors in the Five College Area of Western Massachusetts.

Sugar Maple Trailside Inn Owner

www.sugar-maple-inn.com 2003 to present

SMTI is an award-winning renovation of a Civil War era residence that we operate as a two-room bed & breakfast. The house sits 8' away from one of the oldest muni-built rail trail in the state. This is the closest B&B to both Smith College and downtown Northampton and we typically book-up the entire summer by the end of April in a given year. I get several real estate transactions a year from people who start off as B&B guests and they love our valley so much, they end up relocating here.

Northeast Greenway Solutions Executive Director

www.GreenwaySolutions.org 2005 to present

NEGS is a small consulting firm set up to assist communities or local groups in the conversion of former steam railroad or electric trolley corridor into linear parks. I've been in the background of most of the rail trail efforts that began to organize since the early 2000s and have helped convert about 1,000 miles of former railroad corridor into trails.

Central Highlands Conservancy, LLC. Manager

2005 to present

CHC is a hybrid land acquisition vehicle I set up to prevent the sale of former railroad corridor in Massachusetts to adjoining land owners. Since its inception, CHC has directly saved 3.2 miles and indirectly saved another 9+ miles of former railroad corridor that would have been sold to adjoining landowners. As a part of the land transactions, CHC has also saved several rare railroad bridges.

Info on all the above entities can be found at:

www.TrailsideCompanies.com

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy New England Representative

1998 to 2004 I was an organizer for a national non-profit based in Washington DC. I prevented bad policy from happening at the state level and travelled to communities all over the 6-state region to assist them in developing linear parks.

Railroad Distribution Services Terminal Manager 1986-2000

I planned the start-up and managed the operations of several railroad-owned transloading facilities. One of which was the largest single-wholesaler, forest-products distribution center in the northeast.

Education

Holyoke High School. 1970

UMass Amherst. Attended several courses but dropped out.

Professional Qualifications

1. Certified Residential Specialist [CRS] Only 1-2% of the Realtors in my market place have achieved this designation.
2. Graduate of Realtor Institute [GRI]
3. Eco-Broker
4. Green Realtor
5. I am an accredited teacher of Realtors for their CEU credits.

Awards

1. In their 10th anniversary issue, THE RIDE MAGAZINE named me as the most effective advocate for bicycle and rail-to-trail issues on the eastern seaboard.
2. In November 2008, American Trails--a national organization--gave me a similar award for advocacy work in Massachusetts.
3. The extreme makeover / renovation of our historic house and B&B was featured on Home and Garden Television's [HGTV] Restore America program and we were awarded the Historic Preservation Award from the City of Northampton's Historical Commission.
4. Since 2009, four books have been written that feature me in them as a case study for courage to quit a corporate job, creative trail-building, 21st century marketing and branding. [see below.]
5. The National Assoc. of Realtors awarded me the 2017 Ever-Green Award for my work in both converting rails into trails and my being the first Realtor in the U.S. to specialize in selling houses near them.

Publications I've authored

1. *TRAILSIDE family of companies: "What They Are: How They Came to Be: And Why I Just Might be Living Your Dream Life."* 2. *Home Sales near Two Massachusetts Rail Trails*
3. *Life adjacent to a rail trail: the Sugar Maple Trailside Inn*
4. *Where rails cross trails: the safety solution*
5. *Railroad rail: should it be preserved on rail trails?*

All these can be found on www.AmericanTrails.org I've also written several Op-Ed pieces in various newspapers in the northeast. And my real estate practice and trail advocacy has been featured in two National Assoc. of Realtors trade magazines, the Massachusetts Assoc. of Realtors trade magazine, the *Wall St. Journal*, the *Boston Globe*, and even United Airlines in-flight magazine, *Hemispheres*.

Books I've authored or co-authored:

1. *Great Rail-Trails of the Northeast: Guide to 26 Rec Trails and their RR History.* 1995 Northeast Cartographics
2. *24 Great Rail-Trails of New Jersey.* 1998 Northeast Cartographics
3. *Rails-to-Trails: New York: The Official Rails-to-Trails Con-*

servancy Guidebook. 2002 Falcon Press

4. *Images of America: HOLYOKE.* 1998 Arcadia Publishing

5. *Images of America: FLORENCE* 2013 Arcadia Publishing

Books I've written the forwards for:

1. *New Hampshire Rail Trails:* by Charles F. Martin 2008 [and 2015] Branch Line Press
2. *Marblehead's Emerald Necklace:* by Dennis Curtin. 2012 Marblehead Conservancy

Books that have featured me in them as a case study in four different realms:

1. *Why Not Do What You Love.* Martha Johnson. Pearl Meadow Press. 2010
2. *PATHFINDER.* Ron Strickland. Oregon State University Press. 2012
3. *Re-Inventing You.* Dorie Clark. Harvard Business Review Press. 2013
4. *Legendary Locals of Holyoke.* Jacqueline Sears. Arcadia Publishing. 2015

Professional Memberships

National Association of Realtors

Massachusetts Association of Realtors

Realtor Assoc of the Pioneer Valley

Former member of the Massachusetts DOT Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Board

Former Board Member for Mass DCR's Recreational Trail Advisory Board

Former Co-chair of MassDOT's Trails & Greenways Task-force

Former Chair of the East Coast Greenway's Massachusetts Committee

Volunteer Coordinator for the Mass Central Rail Trail Coalition

Member of the Northampton Historical Commission Board

Member of the Hampshire Regional Tourism Council

Keynote speaker at state level or regional conferences in the past four years in:

California, Michigan, New York, New Hampshire, Virginia, Connecticut, Vermont and Massachusetts. In 2016 and 2017, I did a series of four national webinars hosted by American Trails.

Interests

Public speaking. I have given over 1200 lectures in 21 states and Canadian provinces and am the most in-demand speaker in the U.S. on a number of topics related to rail trail development and impacts on residential real estate. It is common for me to learn that people have driven an hour or more to hear me speak.

"The keynote speaker, Craig Della Penna, alone was well worth the day. His depth of knowledge and experience is of international significance. You guys did well to get him." Larry Keniston, NH DOT Bike-Ped Coordinator.