



## Empire State Trail Day March 2, 2017 Talking Points

### BACKGROUND

#### *What is the Empire State Trail?*

A 750-mile multi-use trail that will connect New York City to the Canadian border, and Buffalo to Albany.

#### *How will it be accomplished?*

By completing unfinished sections of the Erie and Champlain Canalway Trails, building a connected trail system in the Hudson Valley, and making enhancements to NYS Bike Route 9 between Lake George and the Canadian border.

#### *Why is it so special?*

Once complete in 2020, it will be the nation's longest multi-use trail, and serve as the "spine" for New York's wider trail network, making connections to and spurring development of other trails throughout the State.

#### *How will it be funded?*

The Executive Budget includes \$53M in capital funding for Phase I of the Empire State Trail, the first 72 miles of the project.

#### More funding information:

- Funding proposed for the Empire State Trail does not come at the expense of State Parks capital funding, the Environmental Protection Fund, or other recreation or environmental initiatives
- Overall cost is \$200 M, with \$123 M directed toward the Hudson River Valley Greenway and \$77M to the New York Power Authority/Canal Corporation

#### *Other information*

By completing and connecting existing multi-use trails, the Empire State Trail builds on decades of trail development at the local and regional level, in communities across the state. Existing trails that will be utilized include the following:

- Erie Canalway Trail

- North & South County Trailways
  - Walkway Over the Hudson
  - Dutchess County Rail Trail
  - Hudson Valley Rail Trail
  - Wallkill Valley Rail Trail
  - Champlain Canalway Trail
- Routing maximizes use of existing corridors and publicly-held rights of way, eliminating the need for costly acquisition
  - 70% off road for the full 750 miles; along the Erie Canalway Trail and Hudson Valley Greenway (NYC to Lake George) the Empire State Trail will be 85% off road

## TALKING POINTS

### ***Tourism***

- Will secure New York's place as a national and international destination for outdoor recreation and heritage tourism
- 750-mile Empire State Trail will be the nation's longest multi-use trail

### ***Recreation***

- Will bring increased recreational opportunities for communities across the state, providing a safe and seamless connection between urban, suburban and rural areas
- Will link existing parks, historic sites and cultural amenities across the state
- Will provide a spine for and spur a wider network of hiking and biking trails that connect every part of the state

### ***Economic development and jobs***

- Will bring economic development to communities around the state, augmenting the significant impact that trail use already has on the state's economy (\$253 million in annual economic impact and 3,400 jobs for the Buffalo to Albany Erie Canalway Trail alone)
- Every \$1 million invested in multi-use trail construction creates an estimated 9.6 jobs
- Home buyers rank off-road trails as one of the most important community assets when purchasing a home, so the Empire State Trail will help New York to attract and keep residents, including millennials and young families

### ***Environment, Health & Complete Streets***

- Encourages healthy lifestyles and supports public health programming
- Provides an emission-free, active transportation option, and supports Complete Streets in communities across the state

**Let's get rolling on the nation's longest multi-use trail! #EmpireStateTrail #NYTrailTales**