



**Bicyclists Bring Business Roundtable  
Knight's Inn  
Little Falls, NY  
October 27, 2011**



Parks & Trails New York and the New York State Canal Corporation held its tenth Bicyclists Bring Business Roundtable on October 27 in Little Falls.

While the eight mile gap in the Canalway Trail to the west of Little Falls was noted as a deterrent to some cyclists, much of the discussion focused on how best to meet the unique needs of cycling tourists while also enhancing their visit. Readily available information on lodging, rest facilities, and parking were among some of the factors noted as being essential. Attendees offered the following specific ideas to promote bicycling and the region to cycling tourists.

**Information needs of cycling tourists**

- Bicycle tourists have different needs than Car Tourists. They need advanced info, often following published tours such as those found in *Adventure Cyclist* magazine.
- The availability of emergency information for cycling tourists is crucial.
- Would a smart phone app be a good way to share information with cyclists?

**Other needs of cyclists**

- Parking - Designated parking for trail users would help them feel more welcome. There may be some already in the community but it needs to be advertised.
- Campsites - Is 30mi campsite separation effective? It may be too long for cyclists with children and too short for those wishing to travel further in a day. John Dimura from Canal Corp stated that they are placing them where they can.
- Cyclist friendly infrastructure (bike lanes, bike racks) encourages cyclists. The City of Little Falls is working on bike lane designation on bridge.
- Good trail conditions - the surface on the Mindenville segment was mentioned as being too soft to the point that it's deterring use.

**Tips for marketing the trail**

- Stories of a bike trip are the selling point. Consider interpretation as a way to share your community's story with your visitors.
- A trail notebook in restaurants/lodging is a good way to capture traveler's stories.
- Cyclist guests are interesting in the local culture such as the history, restaurants and cuisine, and the roots of local place names.

- Availability of a bike shuttle would be an asset.
- What about forming a Canalway Trail Chamber of Commerce? CanalNY (<http://www.canalny.com/>) was mentioned as a possibility that already exists, but others mentioned that its focus is more on boating than biking
- What about using AAA for promotion? AAA has promoted a Little Falls bike/boat package in their regional magazine. A group has already visited the area and stayed at local B&Bs.
- Place an ad in *Adventure Cycling*
  - Ad could be sponsored jointly by a number of businesses in a section of trail
  - Has the Canal Corp and PTNY considered an ad? Cost is significant. Is there any I Love NY funding available to assist with this?
- A welcome map of the community, based on a walkable/bikeable scale is important PR piece to offer to trail users. There may be some information catering to boaters that can be used as a base to develop these materials.

### **Complete the Trail to the west of Little Falls**

- A Facebook group has been formed to help coordinate efforts. It can be found by searching CNY Erie Canalway Trailblazers or directly at <http://www.facebook.com/groups/302993713049842/>
- The connectivity of the trail is vital. Right now Little Falls is an endpoint and doesn't entice the cyclists into the city.
- Canal Corp is submitting a TIGER III grant application to apply for funding to bridge some of the gaps in the Canalway Trail. Support letters from local elected officials would help the application.
- Upcoming dates for local Close the Gaps meetings. 11/9 Ilion. 11/15 at the Rome City Chambers