

“Closing the Gaps” in the Erie Canalway Trail” Roundtable

Lockport, April 14, 2011

presented by
The Office of

Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand

in partnership with

New York State Canal Corporation and Parks & Trails New York

Please see the accompanying agenda for the full content of the roundtable. The presentations of the Canal Corporation and Parks & Trails New York will be available online at www.ptny.org. The following notes capture the questions, concerns and ideas expressed during the open discussion portion of the roundtable (“What’s next?”). The discussion was prompted by questions posed by Melissa Fratello, Western New York Regional Director for Senator Gillibrand.

1. Are there possibilities for segmenting the gap?
 - Lockport to Robinson Road
 - Robinson Road to Amherst (follows canal in this segment)
 - Remove the new pedestrian bridge at Amherst from the project – could present safety concerns
 - Use shoulders in Amherst for about 1.5 miles
2. Have Amherst and Lockport combined strategies? No
3. The trail is not a significant economic generator for Amherst according to the supervisor of the town
 - Suggestion: Invite Canal Corporation and PTNY to come to a town board meeting to talk about the trail’s benefits
4. How have other Canalway Trail efforts been funded?
 - Transportation Enhancements Project (TEP) funds is the primary source of funding
 - In the past, the Canal Corporation did not compete for federal TEP funds as 10% was taken off the top to complete the trail; this is no longer happening so it needs to be revisited; if money is not taken off the top, funding would be constrained by a \$2.5 M/ per project cap on TEP funds
 - Next round of grants to be announced the end of 2011 or beginning of 2012 with ~\$40-50M available (less than previously)
 - Recreational Trails Program – no new funds available for 1.5 years
 - Environmental Protection Fund
 - 2005 Transportation Bond Act
 - Stimulus funds
5. Assistance with funding

- **Melissa Fratello will involve John Cardinal who works on economic development and grants as part of Senator Gillibrand's Washington staff and ask for his help in identifying specific funding opportunities - Melissa will report back to the group**
 - **Senator Gillibrand's office is willing to support any application for funding**
 - **Joint applications are encouraged and would be more competitive**
6. Offer of assistance from Western Erie Canal Alliance (WECA)
 - WECA works across five counties – Erie, Niagara, Orleans, Monroe, Wayne
 - WECA can energize and help facilitate any efforts
 - Lockport is a pilot National Main Street program of WECA focused on revitalization of the downtown
 7. What has been done about branding?
 - Example given of P'tit train du nord trail in Quebec
 8. Who would be the point person to work on grants, etc. to get the gap closed?
 - Depends on who is the owner of the ROW
 - If the project is done as one piece there needs to be a way to raise \$5M
 - NYSDOT stated that \$3.2M is still identified for this project resulting in \$4M considering the state match; DOT believed that the reason there has been no progress is that the state match was not available

Gregory Szewczyk, Regional Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator, NYSDOT - Region 5 - Planning & Program Management followed up on the question concerning funding availability for PIN 5756.64, Amherst to Lockport Canalway Trail, which was raised at the meeting. He established that TEP funding is no longer available for this project-

9. Other suggestion
 - Partnerships with other environmental interests such as birding groups like Audubon can be a way to increase visitors and aid economic development
10. Concern
 - Dump along the south side of the canal (trail on north side) in Orleans County