



# BICYCLISTS BRING BUSINESS WORKSHOP FINAL REPORT

TONAWANDA & NORTH TONAWANDA, NY

October 14-15, 2014



Prepared by Parks & Trails New York for  
the New York State Canal Corporation

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*The Bicyclists Bring Business Roundtable and Bike-a-Round are made possible by financial support from the New York State Canal Corporation.*

## 2014 Bicyclists Bring Business Workshop – Tonawanda & North Tonawanda, NY

### Background

According to the Outdoor Industry Association, bicycling is second only to running and jogging as the most popular outdoor activity in America by frequency of participation for adults. Studies in Michigan, Montana, and Oregon have demonstrated that bicycle tourists are a growing market, generating hundreds of millions of dollars per year in realized or potential economic impact. In New York, the state's longest multi-use trail, the Erie Canalway Trail (ECT), has an abundance of almost everything this growing market of bicycle tourists seek, including safe, mostly off-road cycling between historic communities; scenic landscapes, historic sites, parks and other attractions; detailed maps and route descriptions; and cycling options ranging from daytrips to week-long adventures. According to the economic impact study of the ECT published by PTNY in 2014, these factors – along with the widespread name recognition of the Erie Canal – help the ECT to attract nearly 1.6 million annual visits, and generate over \$250 million in annual sales.

In order to help Canalway Trail communities capitalize on ECT tourism, Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) has conducted 12 Bicyclists Bring Business roundtables in communities across the state since 2006. In 2008, PTNY also produced *Bicyclists Bring Business: A Guide for Attracting Bicyclists to New York's Canal Communities* to bring the message to an even wider audience. The goal of the roundtables and the guide is to help local business people, elected and tourism officials, and community members discover what services and amenities are important to bicyclists

so that they can better attract and profit from the growing bicycle tourism market.

In 2012, PTNY added a community Bike-a-Round the morning following the roundtable, a field component to enable program participants to experience their community's services and infrastructure first-hand from the perspective of a visiting cyclist.

### October 2014 Program Location

Parks & Trails New York, the New York State Canal Corporation and the cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda presented a free Bicyclists Bring Business roundtable at the Niawanda Park Pavilion in the City of Tonawanda on October 14, 2014. The Pavilion is located adjacent to the Erie Canalway Trail/Niagara River Greenway on the banks of the Niagara River.

The Tonawandas were chosen as co-hosts because of the strong links that exist between the two communities located across the Canal from each other and because of the strategic location that they occupy at the intersection of the Erie Canalway Trail and Niagara River Greenway which offer connections to Niagara Falls and the City of Buffalo.

In addition, on the southern side of the Canal, in the City of Tonawanda, the Tonawanda Rails-to-Trails project will provide an additional, new connection four miles south to North Buffalo. Connections to Buffalo's large population and the vicinity to a major tourist attraction such as Niagara Falls bode well for recreation and trail tourism in Tonawanda and North Tonawanda.

The Tonawandas are also known as a center for boating on the Erie Canal, with overnight docking available on both sides of the Canal at Gateway Harbor Park. There is a strong nexus between boaters and bicyclists, and interest in boating along the canal has had positive effects on trail usage.

### Evening Roundtable

Approximately 45 people from across Western New York, as well as Ontario, Canada, participated in the evening roundtable at Niawanda Park Pavilion. The roundtable was held from 6:00-8:00 p.m. so that business owners could attend on their way home from work.

After light refreshments and introductions, NYS Canal Corporation Trails Director John Dimura began the roundtable with a presentation designed to review accomplishments and ongoing work along the ECT. Subsequently, PTNY Executive Director Robin Dropkin presented insights and ideas gleaned from other bicycle-friendly communities and cited statistics that substantiated the impact of bicycle tourism on local economies. Photos from her visits to the Le P'tit Train du Nord in Quebec and the Katy Trail in Missouri illustrated how trail-side communities have created programs and developed infrastructure to cater to the bicycling tourist.

In the discussion following the presentations, roundtable participants pointed out the need for consistent signage between the various trail systems that converge in Tonawanda and improved bike facilities in downtown areas on each side of the Canal, as well as highlighted opportunities to promote the region and its festivals and events to cyclists.

All participants received a copy of Parks & Trails New York's *Bicyclists Bring Business: A Guide for Attracting Bicyclists to New York's Canal Communities*.

*"It is imperative to see the community from a cyclist's perspective, especially for decision makers who do not often ride through their communities on bicycle."*

- B3 Bike-a-Round participant

### Morning Bike-a-Round

The morning after the roundtable, PTNY and Canal Corporation staff joined area residents, business owners, and local government representatives to visit Tonawanda and North Tonawanda by bike. Looking at the trail and the community from the perspective of a first-time tourist was an eye-opening experience.

As the group made their way around the area, the cyclists referenced checklists found in PTNY's *Bicyclists Bring Business* guide, which generated suggestions for improvements to the trail, signage, street infrastructure, and businesses and attractions that could increase the likelihood that a cyclist would stop and visit and even stay overnight. Discussions at key stops along the route identified a number of needs and opportunities for Tonawanda and North Tonawanda, including signage drawing cyclists to the businesses and attractions close to the trail, such as the Herschell Carrousel Factory Museum and Riviera Theatre, and wayfinding signage to direct trail users to destinations further along the ECT or on other trails such as the Niagara River Greenway which connects with Niagara Falls. Participants also stopped at some of the facilities currently available to boaters at Gateway Harbor Park and discussed opening these amenities to cyclists.

The robust conversation about leveraging the Erie Canalway Trail and attracting bicyclists to the Tonawandas continued over lunch at Risa and David's Restaurant on Webster Street in North Tonawanda.

*For notes from the roundtable and bike-a-round, see Appendix A.*

### Publicity

The Canal Corporation, Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, Canalway Trails Association New York, GOBike Buffalo, Western Erie Canal Alliance (WECA), Niagara River Greenway Commission, Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council, GrowWNY, and the municipalities of North Tonawanda and Tonawanda assisted PTNY in publicizing the event by e-mailing an invitation letter and flyer to a comprehensive list of bike clubs, shopkeepers, civic organizations and local governments across Western New York.

PTNY also sent the invitation to area state and federal legislators, and flyers were posted at key locations in the Tonawandas

A press release was sent to media outlets in Western New York, including the *Buffalo News*, *Niagara-Falls Gazette*, the *Tonawanda News*, other local and regional papers, and all the major television stations.

Prior to the event an article appeared in the [Lockport Union-Sun & Journal](#) and in the [Western New York Sun](#).

Articles announcing the roundtables were included in a PTNY [e-alert](#) and [e-newsletter](#), as well as on Facebook and Twitter. The event was also highlighted on the PTNY homepage for nearly one month.

After the event, PTNY posted slides from the roundtable presentations on its website. PTNY also published summaries of the event in its [e-newsletter](#) and in the newsletter for the Canalway Trail, [Canalway Trail Times](#).

*“The roundtable also gave me the chance to meet representatives from various bicycle organizations in Ontario and New York State, as well as meet individuals who are passionate about cycling.”*

- B3 Roundtable participant

### Participant Survey

The 44 people who attended the roundtable and/or the bike-a-round and provided an e-mail address were asked to provide feedback on both events via an online survey.

Of those who received the survey, 13 people (30%) submitted responses. All survey respondents stated that the roundtable and/or bike-a-round were worthwhile. And 10 (77%) indicated they were willing to work with other members of their community or neighboring communities to encourage more Canalway Trail tourists to visit the Tonawandas.

When asked what their community needs most to benefit from Canalway Trail tourism, 69% of respondents chose bike/ped infrastructure (bikes lanes, sidewalks, etc.). Second in popularity, with 61% of respondents, was a bicycle friendly business designation. Wayfinding signage and community maps available in central locations also garnered significant support, at 54% of respondents.

*The full results of the participant survey – including answers to open-ended questions – are provided in Appendix B.*

## Recommendations

In order to help further Tonawanda and North Tonawanda's ongoing efforts to capitalize on ECT tourism and translate their visions for bicycle tourism into successful realities, PTNY has prepared recommendations for next steps that are an outgrowth of the ideas shared by community members, business owners, and government officials.

*Appendix C features a table outlining the recommendations and prioritized action items.*

### **Recommendation 1: Improve consistency of signage/nomenclature among area trails and install wayfinding signage on ECT**

There are several different signage styles among segments of the Erie Canalway Trail in the Tonawanda area and on other area trails such as the Niagara River Greenway. Also, there is currently little signage that directs ECT users to the many amenities available in Tonawanda and North Tonawanda.

### **Recommendation 2: Encourage businesses to become more bicycle friendly**

Demonstrating the potential value of catering to bicyclists and encouraging business owners to become more bike friendly could make the community as a whole more attractive to bicycle tourists.

### **Recommendation 3: Capitalize on the strategic location of the Tonawandas by increasing cycling and trail-related amenities**

Tonawanda and North Tonawanda occupy a unique location with great access to water and trail resources, and proximity to major urban centers and recognized tourist destinations. Building and/or adapting existing facilities and amenities

to take advantage of this location will bring visitors and economic development.

### **Recommendation 4: Coordinate local tourism promotion, trail development, and bike/ped advocacy efforts**

It is critical that local and regional stakeholders work together to pursue tourism and economic development goals related to cycling and the area trail system. Moreover, bicycle and pedestrian planning related to the local street and sidewalk network, such as installation of bike lanes or pedestrian amenities, serves both visitors and local residents, and so should be coordinated with tourism and trail promotion.

### **Recommendation 5: Market and promote the Tonawandas as a bicycle destination/base for cycling outings in Western New York**

Collectively marketing Tonawanda and North Tonawanda as bicycle destinations and starting point for active exploration could increase visitation and visibility of these communities to potential bicycle tourists.

### **Recommendation 6: Secure funding to complete recommendations**

Many recommendations may not require any additional funding, but a plan should be created to identify a variety of private and public grants and contributions, as well as in-kind donations, that can help implement recommended infrastructure and programming. Securing outside funding for recommendations that will require public investment would allow progress to move forward.



## APPENDIX A BICYCLISTS BRING BUSINESS WORKSHOP SUMMARY



### ROUNDTABLE COMMENTS OCTOBER 14, 2014

1. Cycling audience
  - a. Where are they coming from? – Assume everywhere.
  - b. Need numbers regarding recreational users vs. tourists
    - i. PTNY economic impact study
    - ii. AARP study
  - c. Municipalities and Small Business Development agencies should have numbers in order to get funding, promote trail system, encourage new trail-related businesses
2. Accommodations
  - a. Lack of hotel, B & B rooms in Tonawanda area
3. “Welcome Cyclists” program et al.
  - d. Examples in Canada of certification program for bike-friendly businesses
  - e. Symbol/logo to display in window, in guidebooks, on websites
  - f. Discount programs with local businesses
4. Trail amenities
  - a. Water and ice
  - b. Luggage moving service
  - c. Bike and other rentals along trail – fishing poles/permits, kayaks, etc.
5. Cycling-related businesses
  - a. “What does it take to start a business on the trail?” – Need to document a viable market
6. Bike parking
  - a. Need more
  - b. Safe, accessible locations
7. Signage
  - a. Need consistent signage
  - b. Signs for bathrooms, restaurants, etc. will draw users downtown
  - c. “5 minutes to Downtown” and other sign variations could be helpful
8. Parking
  - a. Long-term parking like they have in Niagara would be great asset
  - b. Online registration is nice feature



*Bike-a-round participants discuss the route*

## 9. Publicity/Visibility

- a. Local events need to be posted to popular, ECT trip-planning websites such as Canal Corporation, PTNY's new ECT website, municipal, county sites, TPAs, I Love NY site

## 10. Mapping

- b. Need physical bike map or area
- c. Must be available at lots of locations locally, also in Buffalo, Niagara Falls
- d. Also online map of ALL local bikeways, lanes, trails

## 11. Other ideas

- a. Bike valet at community events
- b. Visit Buffalo Niagara is open to conferences and conventions that are bike-related
- c. Tonawanda should form a bike/ped tourism committee
  - i. PTNY will distribute list of attendees with contacts to facilitate formation of group

## BIKE-A-ROUND OBSERVATIONS

### 1. Overall Impressions

- a. "Beautiful" scenery along the canal, river
- b. As the number of trails increases, the number of people coming into town increases
- c. Most think of Tonawanda as a "day-trip" destination, not an overnight destination
- d. A lot of work needs to be done, but the traditional urban form (concentrated commercial districts where most businesses are visible as you cross "Main St.") makes for a pleasant cycling experience
- e. While Tonawandas have large senior populations, many trail users and boaters are younger, "yuppies;"



### 2. Signage – considered a high priority item *Examples of signage from Tonawanda and North Tonawanda* by participants

- a. Current signage is inadequate and lacks consistency
  - i. Updated signage should include ECT "bull's-eye" or other Canal Corp logos
  - ii. Good signage could help simplify separate trail systems (Riverway, Greenway Shoreline Trail, ECT)
- b. Needed to direct cyclists to business districts, restaurants, public restrooms, tourist destinations (i.e. Herschell Carrousel Factory Museum and Riviera Theatre in N. Tonawanda)
- c. Could install temporary signage as a short-term aid to trail users

- d. Greenway grants from Niagara River Greenway Commission/Canal Corporation are a possible funding source; pair greenway grants with City of North Tonawanda Lumber City Development Corporation, Mike Zimmerman
- e. Introduce kiosk versions of sections of annual visitor guide



*Harbormaster Office in Tonawanda, offering services to boaters and possibly cyclists in the future*

- 3. Amenities for cyclists
  - a. Tonawanda and North Tonawanda are good at attracting boaters, but could attract cyclists with the same resources
  - b. Possibility to share resources with boaters (restrooms, showers, camping sites)
  - c. Think about amenities for day trips v. longer visits
    - i. Hotels and lodging
      - 1. Lots of options in Town of Tonawanda, Amherst, Niagara Falls, but little in the Tonawandas
      - 2. Introduce camping along trail sections in the Tonawandas
    - ii. Coordination with state tourism agencies, Canal Corp, new ECT website (PTNY) so that Tonawanda events, amenities, and points of interest are properly publicized
- 4. Visibility
  - a. Establishing the Tonawandas as a cyclists' gateway to the Niagara Falls region for visitors/residents of Buffalo area
  - b. Advertising/connecting with bike clubs
  - c. Spreading the perception of the Tonawandas as a hub for cyclists can happen now, even though the timeline for a physical hub is uncertain
  - d. Thinking regionally about implementation of improvements for cyclists, especially with Niagara Falls and Buffalo
  - e. Working with Joyce Santiago (Chamber of Commerce of the Tonawandas) to promote cycling
- 5. Complete Streets
  - a. Would be positive steps for both N. Tonawanda and Towanda and demonstrate commitment to cyclists and non-motorists
  - b. See examples from Chautauqua County
  - c. Should be part of overall strategy of bringing cyclists to downtown business districts, attractions, etc.
  - d. Oliver Street, N. Tonawanda
    - i. Plans exist for revitalization of facades, etc.
    - ii. Encourage complete streets to be included in this by presenting B3 discussion to Chamber and planning committee
  - e. Develop intermodal hub in Tonawanda
    - i. Could combat day-trip mentality with easy parking, amenities for touring cyclists and boaters





## APPENDIX B BICYCLISTS BRING BUSINESS WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT SURVEY



**1. Please enter your zip code:**

- 14075 - Hamburg
- 14120 - North Tonawanda (2)
- 14150 – Tonawanda (2)
- 14202 - Buffalo
- 14216 - Buffalo
- 14220 - Buffalo
- 14222 - Buffalo
- 14223 - Buffalo
- 14302 - Niagara Falls
- 14304 - Niagara Falls
- LOS 1E4 - Fonthill, Ontario

**2. Please select any affiliation you may have that influenced your decision to attend the event(s):**

	Response Percent	Response Count
Business Owner	7.69%	1
Member/employee of a recreation based organization	23.08%	3
Member/employee of a community organization	15.38%	2
Village/town employee	15.38%	2
County employee	7.69%	1
Municipal Official	7.69%	1
Tourism Official	0%	0
Natural, recreational or historic site employee/volunteer	15.38%	2
Outdoor Enthusiast	30.77%	4
Other	46.15%	6

Other responses: Completed Cycle the Erie this summer; interested in promoting the area and starting a business; Citizen Committee of Town Council – Active Transportation; Bike shop manager; bike rider; just an old bicyclist

### 3. Why are you interested in bicycle tourism?

1. Options where to ride/visit/explore/vacation/exercise/destination spot
2. I enjoy fitness and exercising outside, especially along the Niagara River. I would like to see more people involved in health and wellness and would love to promote the area because I feel we have a lot to offer.
3. Want to promote/encourage local economic development
4. Potential positive impact on businesses in my community. Leverage to improve pedestrian and cycling infrastructure
5. Any way to promote bicycling and the economy is good.
6. Promoting WNY, cycling, and as a way to increase business at my bike shop
7. Because it is just one part of a larger bicycle strategy that can be implemented to make bicycle use more common.
8. Both personal and professional: personally a bicycle tourist, professionally work with increasing physical activity and agri-tourism.
9. I am a biker and member of the board of Lumber City Development Corp.
10. Interested in bicycling in general. Tourism adds to it, and hopefully to businesses.
11. Looking to understand how bicycle tourism can create economic development.
12. A comprehensive network of bicycle infrastructure is important in terms of providing an alternative mode of transportation for individuals. In terms of the Canalway Trail it allows for individuals to travel NYS in a healthier and more environmentally-sound way than by car, bus, train or plane. Bicycle tourism generates high revenues and is important for New York State's economy.
13. Helps justify multimodal investments to government leaders

### 4. Did you attend the evening Bicyclists Bring Business roundtable discussion in Tonawanda on October 14th?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	100.00%	13
No	0.00%	0

### 5. Was the roundtable worthwhile?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	100.00%	13
No	0%	0

### 6. Why was the roundtable worthwhile, or not?

1. Boost bicycle tourism and just bike riding in general
2. Lots of good representation and good ideas, a very good discussion

3. Important to hear ideas/concerns/suggestions directly from business people. I was also impressed by the consumer research conducted by government
4. Yes, it was good to hear the perspectives of several business owners or aspiring business owners. All who came because they are interested, but not sure how they can benefit from increased bicycle tourism.
5. I learned a great deal, especially having completion of the canal trail and the summer ride from Buffalo to Albany.
6. Expanded my scope of bicycle tourism.
7. Heard different perspectives.
8. I was able to get more information and data about the Canalway Trail. The roundtable also gave me the chance to meet representatives from various bicycle organizations in Ontario and New York State, as well as meet individuals who are passionate about cycling. This gave me a broader network of contacts who are actively seeking to create a more cohesive Trailway System.
9. Good round table discussions and opportunity to get updated on trends and initiatives.

**7. Did you attend the Tonawanda/N. Tonawanda bike-a-round on the morning of October 15th?**

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	23.08%	3
No	76.92%	10

**8. Was the bike-a-round worthwhile?**

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	100.00%	3
No	0.00%	0

**9. Why was the bike-a-round worthwhile?**

1. I'm sure it was worthwhile to actually show the potential biking and tourism has and how accessible everything is and can be.
2. Weather is so iffy in October, consider running a future event of this type in late summer.
3. I think it is imperative to get to see the community from a cyclist's perspective. This is especially important for decision makers who do not often ride through their communities on bicycle.
4. Was unable to attend.
5. Saw the Canal terminus first hand.

6. I am from South Buffalo, and I am more familiar with the bike infrastructure in the City of Buffalo, so it was a great opportunity to physically explore the bike infrastructure in Tonawanda/N. Tonawanda.

**10. Would you be willing to work with other members of your community or neighboring communities to encourage more Canalway Trail tourists to stop in your community? If so, please input your email address.**

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	76.92%	10
No	23.08%	3

Emails:

1. [misangel420@yahoo.com](mailto:misangel420@yahoo.com)
2. [lpaonessa@yahoo.com](mailto:lpaonessa@yahoo.com)
3. [mzimmerman@lumbercitydc.com](mailto:mzimmerman@lumbercitydc.com)
4. [jjansen@bertsbikes.com](mailto:jjansen@bertsbikes.com)
5. [patricktgooch@gmail.com](mailto:patricktgooch@gmail.com)
6. [nmc55@cornell.edu](mailto:nmc55@cornell.edu)
7. [Brian@3passociates.com](mailto:Brian@3passociates.com)
8. [bfwaldman@twc.com](mailto:bfwaldman@twc.com)
9. [jmulderig@gbnrtc.org](mailto:jmulderig@gbnrtc.org)
10. [jjones@tonawanda.ny.us](mailto:jjones@tonawanda.ny.us)

**11. In your opinion, what does your community need most to benefit from Canalway Trail tourism?**

	Response Percent	Response Count
Bike/pedestrian infrastructure (sidewalks, bike lanes, etc.)	69.23%	9
Bike racks	30.77%	4
Benches	15.38%	2
Kiosks	15.38%	2
Community maps in central locations	53.85%	7
Visitor-friendly business hours	7.69%	1
Bicycle friendly business designation	61.54%	8
Welcome center	15.38%	2
Wayfinding signs	53.85%	7

Cooperative advertisements in cycling magazines	38.46%	5
Bicycle tour packages	15.38%	2
Luggage/bike transportation service	7.69%	1

Other responses:

1. Hydration stations for bicyclists, drop off and pick up points for bicyclists, pet friendly strollers that attach to bikes, shuttles that transport you from an event back to your car if someone for instance is riding from Tonawanda to Gratwick Park for a concert instead of worrying about parking their car they could bike ride and drop the bike off at Gratwick Park and then get shuttled back to their car.) Clean bathrooms along the trails. Poop stations if they are traveling with a dog. Other suggestions: bed and breakfasts along the river, more restaurants, allowing people to picnic and providing grills at different locations to keep people in the area. Keeping people interested in the area by marketing effectively through social media and via signs at specific locations where an event will be held. Providing fishing licenses and fishing poles along the river for people that want to fish but don't want to drive to a building to obtain the license. Having something at the location that allows them to do this so it's right there.
2. Facilities for overnight stays are key. Even though the area is generally a beginning or end. People still need to stay for the night after or at the beginning of a ride.
3. Restrooms. Outhouses with solar power fans to pull fresh air. Pennsylvania "Grand Canyon of the East" has the best.



## APPENDIX C BICYCLISTS BRING BUSINESS WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS



### RECOMMENDATION 1: IMPROVE CONSISTENCY OF SIGNAGE/NOMENCLATURE AMONG AREA TRAILS AND INSTALL WAYFINDING SIGNAGE ON ECT

There are several different signage styles among segments of the Erie Canalway Trail in the Tonawanda area, and on other area trails such as the Niagara River Greenway. Also, there is currently little signage that directs ECT users to the many amenities available in Tonawanda and North Tonawanda.

Action Item	Priority Level
<b>Action 1-1:</b> Bring representatives from NYS Canal Corporation and Niagara River Greenway Commission together to discuss co-branding area trail signs and pavement markings, so that trail users can identify the regional and statewide trail networks. The section which most needs this is the 14-mile Riverwalk portion of the state-wide Erie Canalway Trail from Buffalo to Tonawanda. This issue is currently being addressed in the City of Buffalo, with gateway signage planned for the ECT and ECT blazers incorporated into new signage designs as part of the Riverwalk revitalization process.	Short-term Priority
<b>Action 1-2:</b> Improve local trail wayfinding and informational signage, first with temporary signs. Trail users should be aware of retail offerings and other services available in downtown districts on either side of the canal. Efforts to bring greater uniformity to local wayfinding and informational signage should also be pursued. Remove outdated signs such as at Gateway Park. Niagara River Greenway and Erie County have signage guidelines available; these should be consulted when designing new signage in Tonawanda/N. Tonawanda. Canal Corporation will also provide input.	Short-term Priority (temporary signage); Medium-term Priority (other action items)

## RECOMMENDATION 2: ENCOURAGE BUSINESSES TO BECOME MORE BIKE FRIENDLY

Demonstrating the potential value of catering to bicyclists and encouraging business owners to become more bike friendly could make the community as a whole more attractive to bicycle tourists.

Action Item	Priority Level
<p><b>Action 2-1:</b> Encourage local businesses to become more bike friendly. Below is a list of ideas that businesses could implement to achieve this objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Install bike racks/bike parking (may be opportunities with/through GO Bike Buffalo)</li> <li>○ Ensure businesses have websites and adequate web presence so cyclists on the trail can find them (entries in Yelp, Google Maps, TripAdvisor, etc.)</li> <li>○ Let bicyclists know they are welcome on business websites and advertisements</li> <li>○ Participate in reward programs such as Bicycle Benefits (<a href="http://www.bicyclebenefits.org">http://www.bicyclebenefits.org</a>)</li> <li>○ Ensure shopkeepers can answer questions about ECT and other area trail systems</li> </ul>	Short-Term Priority
<p><b>Action 2-1:</b> Involve the B3 committee and local chamber of commerce groups, including Twin City Promotions, in creating a bicycle-friendly business program. This group should review checklists at the back of PTNY B3 guide and consult B3 participants from Ontario who have created a similar program.</p>	Medium-Term Priority

## RECOMMENDATION 3: CAPITALIZE ON STRATEGIC LOCATION BY INCREASING CYCLING AND TRAIL-RELATED AMENITIES

Tonawanda and North Tonawanda occupy a unique location with great access to water and trail resources, and proximity to major urban centers and recognized tourist destinations. Building and/or adapting existing facilities and amenities to take advantage of this location will bring visitors and economic development.

Action Item	Priority Level
<p><b>Action 3-1:</b> Consider opening amenities currently only available to boaters to cyclists. Some possibilities include water/ice, showers, and laundry at the Harbormaster's Office in Tonawanda and bathrooms in North Tonawanda. Another possibility is to offer</p>	Short-Term Priority

<p>camping accommodations for cyclists along the canal. Possible camping locations include behind the Harbor Master's office and Benjamin Long Homestead in Tonawanda, where the Ellicott Creek meets the Tonawanda Creek, or park space in North Tonawanda, Tonawanda, or the Town of Tonawanda.</p>	
<p><b>Action 3-2:</b> Improve/add bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure on local streets in order to improve connectivity and safety for all non-motorized users, and to encourage trail users to more comfortably access off-trail amenities and attractions. Examples include bike parking, on-streets bike lanes and/or shared lanes, and pedestrian crosswalks and signals. Possible locations for these improvements include Main Street in Tonawanda, Webster Street in North Tonawanda. As planning for streetscaping and resurfacing on Oliver Street in North Tonawanda is underway, there may be an opportunity to add bicycle lanes or shared lane markings ("sharrows") there.</p>	<p>Medium-term Priority</p>
<p><b>Action 3-3:</b> Encourage passage of Complete Streets and other policies that will build on physical improvements to create a more welcoming environment for all road users. These policies may be passed as stand-alone items or as part of larger planning efforts such as Tonawanda's Waterfront Revitalization and Comprehensive Plans, which are currently being revised.</p>	<p>Medium-term Priority</p>
<p><b>Action 3-4:</b> Develop intermodal hub in Tonawanda, with long-term parking, showers and lockers, water, secure bicycle parking, and information regarding area attractions, lodging, and equipment rental. Some funding has already been allotted for this project, with additional work scheduled for 2016.</p>	<p>Long-Term Priority</p>
<p><b>Action 3-5:</b> Local economic development agencies should address the lack of hotels, motels, and B &amp; B's in Tonawanda and N. Tonawanda, and work to attract these businesses. Buffalo State's Small Business Development Center may also be able to provide assistance.</p>	<p>Long-Term Priority</p>



**RECOMMENDATION 4: COORDINATE LOCAL TOURISM PROMOTION, TRAIL DEVELOPMENT, AND BIKE/PED ADVOCACY EFFORTS**

It is critical that local and regional stakeholders work together to pursue tourism and economic development goals related to cycling and the area trail system. Moreover, bicycle and pedestrian planning related to the local street and sidewalk network, such as installation of bike lanes or pedestrian amenities, serves both visitors and local residents, and so should be coordinated with tourism and trail promotion.

Action Item	Priority Level
<p><b>Action 4-1:</b> Encourage WECA and the new Main Street Program Manager to form an advisory committee to discuss the implementation of the recommendations proposed in this document. As a starting point, Bicyclists Bring Business participants can be considered a working group. Contacts for this group have been distributed. The North Towns Planning Coalition is another active group that could be used to coordinate efforts.</p>	<p>Short-term Priority</p>
<p><b>Action 4-2:</b> Hold a spring community Bike-a-Round event in order to generate enthusiasm and create awareness among stakeholders about the upcoming trail season. A bike ride that follows local trails and highlights new trail-related amenities, local businesses, and available services (i.e. public bathrooms, ice, lockers) could be a good start. There also may be an opportunity in June to schedule a ride on the Sunday following the Ride for Roswell, which occurs on Saturday.</p>	<p>Short-Term Priority</p>
<p><b>Action 4-3:</b> Involve committee members in the planning processes for local and regional trail projects, including those funded by federal Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) in 2014: \$980,160 to Erie County and \$1,580,000 to the City of Buffalo for improvements to the Shoreline Trail/Erie Canalway Trail, and \$760,000 to Erie County for the Tonawanda Rails-to-Trails Extension. The City of Tonawanda has also applied for Greenway Commission funding for its Intermodal Transit Hub, and the Commission will be accepting public comments on the plan until January 10, 2015.</p>	<p>Medium-Term Priority</p>

**RECOMMENDATION 5: MARKET AND PROMOTE THE TONAWANDAS AS A BICYCLE DESTINATION/BASE FOR CYCLING OUTINGS IN WESTERN NEW YORK**

Collectively marketing Tonawanda and North Tonawanda as bicycle destinations and starting point for active exploration could increase visitation and visibility of these communities to potential bicycle tourists.

Action Item	Priority Level
<p><b>Action 5-1:</b> Work with the Chamber of Commerce of the Tonawandas to add a section about bicycling and trails in the next <i>Tonawanda Book</i> community guide. The Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council has bicycle maps available on its website that can be used as starting point for this section.</p>	<p>Short-Term Priority</p>
<p><b>Action 5-2:</b> Work with Visit Buffalo Niagara and other local and regional tourism entities to market the Tonawandas as an ideal base for active exploration in Western New York. A slogan that references the area’s location at the mouth of the modern canal and proximity to popular cycling destinations may help (E.g. <i>“It all starts here,” “The starting point for your Western New York adventure”</i>) Ensure that the growing network of trails and trail-related facilities are highlighted in tourism brochures, trip planners and associated websites.</p>	<p>Medium-Term Priority</p>
<p><b>Action 5-3:</b> Create regional bicycle maps to be distributed locally at trail kiosks, local businesses, and public buildings, as well as at visitor centers in Buffalo, Lockport, and Niagara Falls. Maps and suggested local routes – e.g. canal history ride, architecture tour, lumber history ride, Niagara Falls day trip - should also be available online through municipal, county, and other websites.</p>	<p>Long-Term Priority</p>

## RECOMMENDATION 6: SECURE FUNDING TO COMPLETE RECOMMENDATIONS

Many recommendations may not require any additional funding, but a plan should be created to identify a variety of private and public grants and contributions, as well as in-kind donations, that can help implement recommended infrastructure and programming. Securing outside funding for recommendations that will require public investment would allow progress to move forward.

Action Item	Priority Level
<p><b>Action 6-1:</b> Assign local economic development staff to be responsible for grant writing and research the following grant programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ NYS Canal Corporation:</li> <li>○ <a href="http://www.canals.ny.gov/community/grant.html">http://www.canals.ny.gov/community/grant.html</a></li> <li>○ NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation: <a href="http://nysparks.com/grants/">http://nysparks.com/grants/</a></li> <li>○ Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor: <a href="http://www.eriecanalway.org/get-involved_grants-fund.html">http://www.eriecanalway.org/get-involved_grants-fund.html</a></li> <li>○ Niagara River Greenway Commission: <a href="http://www.niagaragreenway.org/">http://www.niagaragreenway.org/</a></li> <li>○ Other NYS agencies offering grants through the CFA process: <a href="http://www.esd.ny.gov/ConsolidatedFundingApplication.html">http://www.esd.ny.gov/ConsolidatedFundingApplication.html</a></li> <li>○ New York State Department of Transportation, Transportation Alternatives Program: <a href="https://www.dot.ny.gov/tap">https://www.dot.ny.gov/tap</a></li> <li>○ Community foundations</li> <li>○ Corporations</li> <li>○ HMOs and health care providers</li> </ul>	<p>Short-Term Priority</p>