



## **Summary of Comments On Draft Statewide Greenway Trails Plan/ Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

The Draft Greenway Trails Plan provides New York State residents with a comprehensive summary of the importance of greenway trails and the benefits that greenway trails offer communities. The Draft Plan takes advantage of the current momentum for trails and proposes steps to create an interconnected statewide network of greenway trails that serves all New Yorkers.

While we are appreciative of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Recreation (OPRHP) and the stakeholders that have contributed towards this planning process, we believe that the final plan can be strengthened by addressing certain issues. We look forward to seeing a final plan that presents a comprehensive roadmap to guide future trail planning efforts and puts New York State in the strongest position to achieve its goals and build upon its trail legacy when the plan is updated in five years and thereafter.

### **Recommendations:**

- Revise the Plan's vision to include primary corridors, beyond the Empire State Trail, that will provide the foundation for the state's trail network.
- Revise the Plan's vision to include the importance of closing gaps in the existing trail network, including replacing on-road sections of trail with off-road trails.
- Establish a specific goal for geographic distribution of greenway trails, including place-based recommendations, and outline a clear process for accomplishing this goal
- Specify, beyond a generic list of potential stakeholders, which partners should be leading implementation efforts, particularly the groups that will be responsible for development and expansion of greenway trails in underserved communities.
- Add specific recommendations that detail how the state can achieve universal accessibility on greenway trails in the future.
- Establish a level of accountability by identifying instances in which OPRHP or another entity would be responsible for implementing a recommendation, establishing a clear set of expectations.
- Specify ways to take advantage of corridors that are potential greenway trail opportunities.
- Include steps required to prioritize closing gaps in existing greenway trail networks.
- Include a short-term plan to carry out the recommendations for implementation, ensuring that the identified goals are realized.
- Integrate recommendations into the planning document.

We strongly recommend that OPRHP revisit the legislative requirements for the plan and explicitly address them. Moreover, we recommend that the vision statement that is intended to guide planning efforts make specific reference to the goals that offer a comprehensive and tangible blueprint for future development opportunities. The goals and recommendations for implementation found in Chapters 7 and 8 will form the core of this effort; however, a clear strategy is necessary to illustrate how this process will unfold. The plan states that "future versions of this plan may focus directly on specific topics, goals, and recommendations identified in this plan," but we strongly suggest that the final plan identify exactly which topics, goals, and recommendations will be pursued as a result of the 2020 planning process and which organizations will lead this effort.