

[Official Letterhead of Municipal Executive]

[Date]

Parks & Trails New York
1 Steuben Place
Albany, NY 12207

Dear Parks & Trails New York,

I write on behalf of [Municipality Name] in application to the 2025 Empire State Trail Town program. I recognize that the Empire State Trail is a trail network of national significance, spanning 750 miles via the Erie Canalway Trail from Buffalo to Albany and via the Hudson and Champlain Valleys from New York City to the Canadian border. With the Erie Canalway Trail receiving nearly 4 million visits each year, the trail provides economic, quality of life, and health benefits to my community.

With [Municipality Name]'s close proximity to the Empire State Trail, I recognize that it is in the best interest of the [Municipality Name] to identify and understand opportunities related to the connection to and enhancement of the Empire State/Canalway Trail Systems. Participation in the Empire State Trail Town Program will help [Municipality Name] identify strategies to harness visitation to the Canalway Trail to increase opportunities for residents to access high-quality recreational opportunities and support and advance economic development along the canal corridor.

To this end, the [Municipality Name] desires to apply for nine months of technical assistance and promotional support from April 2025 to December 2025 from Parks & Trails New York through the Empire State Trail Town program. If selected, the [Municipality Name], with assistance from Parks & Trails New York, will develop a steering committee of local individuals and organizations committed to the success of the Trail Town initiative, host and participate in public workshops to educate business owners, community leaders, and others about the needs of trail users, conduct trail use research and assessment of current conditions, promote the [Municipality Name] as a destination for trail users, and develop an Action Agenda, with recommendations to guide future Trail Town work.

If selected, the steering committee established by the [Municipality Name] will provide a reasonable level of participation and engagement to execute the Empire State Trail Town scope of work, including but not limited to:

- Assist with planning and promotion, and attend and participate in meetings, trainings and workshops hosted by Parks & Trails New York, including the Trail Town Orientation, check-in meetings, and the Placemaking and Bike Around Workshop;
- Complete the Trail Town Self-Assessment;
- Host, participate, or support in another way a Canal Clean Sweep clean-up event on the trail;
- Encourage local businesses to apply for Bike Friendly New York certification;
- Assist PTNY with electronic trail counter data retrieval as needed;
- Coordinate meeting venue for Placemaking workshop and lunch venue for post-Bike Around debrief;

- Coordinate or participate in welcome event for the Cycle the Erie Canal bike tour riders or other event as applicable, and ensure business community knows about the bike tour in advance;
- Develop content based on framework provided by PTNY for Trail Town landing page, including a tagline, high quality images;
- Update municipal website with information about the trail and other recreational opportunities;
- Provide feedback on draft Trail Town Action Agenda and assist in developing strategies for implementation to be included in the Action Agenda; and

It is my hope that through selection and subsequent completion of the program and adoption of the Action Agenda, the [Municipality Name] will be recognized by Parks & Trails New York and the NYS Canal Corporation as a certified Empire State Trail Town. With this letter, I provide my approval and endorsement of the 2025 Empire State Trail Town application.

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
between PARKS & TRAILS NEW YORK (PTNY)
and the **VILLAGE/TOWN/CITY OF X**
for participation in the 2024 Empire State Trail Town program

Date: _____

Purpose

This Memorandum of Agreement outlines the relationship between Parks & Trails New York and the **VILLAGE/TOWN/CITY** as relates to the participation in the Empire State Trail Town Program.

The Empire State Trail Town Program will help communities harness visitation to the Canalway Trail to support and advance economic development along the canal corridor. Participation of the **VILLAGE/TOWN/CITY** as a provisional Empire State Trail Town will begin in March 2024 and end in December 2024.

Background

The Empire State Trail Town program is funded by the New York State Canal Corporation. The Empire State Trail Town program was created to help communities take full advantage of their location along the Canalway Trail. Through participation in the Empire State Trail Town program, communities will work towards meeting a consistent baseline of expectations for visitors, in terms of what services to expect and how to find them. Establishing this baseline and promoting the services and amenities available will help guarantee that trail users have a positive experience, boosting the Trail Towns' reputations as outdoor recreation destinations.

This program will also support local tourism by offering a platform to talk about the importance of creating a sense of place and safe places for both visitors and residents to recreate. Through the creation of a "trail culture," communities will begin to see the trail as part of their community's identity and see the success of the trail as a tourist attraction as part of their community's success.

This program follows a step-by-step process for PTNY and participating trail town communities to help transform communities into places where a "trail culture" drives decision-making and future planning efforts.

Responsibilities

PTNY Scope of Work

- Review previously completed planning documents relating to the Canalway Trail and outdoor recreation.
- Assist with the establishment of trail town steering committees, including providing recommendations for roles and structure.
- Provide resources for provisional trail town steering committees to carry out partnership building and data collection activities, including hosting the Trail Town Orientation, providing a Trail Town Self-Assessment framework, and providing tools to encourage businesses to apply for Bike Friendly New York certification.
- Meet individually with the Trail Town steering committee at least three times during the program period

- Install one Eco-Counter Electronic Trail Use Counter on the Canalway Trail in **VILLAGE/TOWN/CITY**; Analyze and interpret collected electronic trail use data
- Facilitate a Placemaking and Bike Around Two-Day Workshop in **VILLAGE/TOWN/CITY**
- Provide special recognition for provisional trail towns during annual Cycle the Erie Canal bike tour or other event as applicable
- Provide framework for content creation for the Trail Town landing page on www.CycletheErieCanal.com; Develop webpage.
- Develop Trail Town Action Agenda by crafting short-term and long-term priorities based on research and assessment, with opportunities for feedback from the trail town steering committee.
- Deliver a logo and corresponding branding to represent participation in the Empire State Trail Town program upon certification as an Empire State Trail Town.
- Other tasks and responsibilities as laid out in the [2024 Empire State Trail Town Handbook](#).

Provisional Trail Town Scope of Work

Establish a Trail Town Steering Committee, consisting of representatives from relevant municipalities, local businesses, non-profits, civic groups, local government, and any other trail advocates or interested parties. The steering committee members will be asked to provide a reasonable level of commitment to executing the Empire State Trail Town scope of work as outlined below.

- Attend and participate in meetings, trainings and workshops hosted by Parks & Trails New York, including the Trail Town Orientation, the Bike Friendly NY business certification webinar, check-in meetings, and the Placemaking and Bike Around Workshop.
- Complete the Trail Town Self-Assessment.
- Host, participate, or support in another way a [Canal Clean Sweep](#) clean-up event on the trail.
- Encourage local businesses to apply for Bike Friendly New York certification.
- Assist PTNY with electronic trail counter data retrieval.
- Coordinate meeting venue for Placemaking workshop and lunch venue for post-Bike Around debrief; Provide feedback on Bike Around route; Promote the workshop in the community; Participate in workshop and Bike Around.
- Coordinate or participate in welcome event for the Cycle the Erie Canal bike tour riders or other event as applicable; Ensure business community knows about the bike tour in advance.
- Develop content based on framework provided by PTNY for Trail Town landing page, including a tagline, high quality images that represents the community, key assets, attractions, and events, trail access information, and certified BFNYS; Update municipal website with information about the trail and other recreational opportunities.
- Provide feedback on draft Trail Town Action Agenda; Develop strategies for implementation to be included in the Action Agenda
- Adopt final Action Agenda and share with the public and other stakeholders and leaders.
- Other tasks and responsibilities as laid out in the [2024 Empire State Trail Town Handbook](#).

Recognition as Certified Empire State Trail Town

Upon completion of the tasks outlined in this Agreement, **VILLAGE/TOWN/CITY** will be officially recognized by Parks & Trails New York and the New York State Canal Corporation as a certified Empire State Trail Town. Continued certification as an Empire State Trail Town is dependent on meeting the following requirements on an annual basis, as outlined in the [2024 Empire State Trail Town Handbook](#).

- Continue to meet the provisional Trail Town requirements.
- Verify content on the community’s Empire State Trail Town landing page for.
- Attend annual Trail Town update and networking virtual meeting.

Duration of Agreement

This Memorandum of Agreement will be in effect from the date of the last signature until December 31, 2024. Upon completion of the term of agreement, and fulfillment of the requirements herein, **VILLAGE/TOWN/CITY** will be officially recognized by Parks & Trails New York and the New York State Canal Corporation as a certified Empire State Trail Town. The Agreement may be terminated at any time upon written notification by one party to the other.

Points of Contact

Points of Contact for Parks & Trails New York:

1. Erica Schneider, Policy & Planning Manager (eschneider@ptny.org, 518-218-6539)
2. Dylan Carey, Director of Policy & Planning (dcarey@ptny.org, 518-217-8640)

Points of Contact for **VILLAGE/TOWN/CITY**

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Signatories

for Parks & Trails New York

for **VILLAGE/TOWN/CITY**

Dylan Carey, Director of Policy & Planning

(typed name and title)

Date

Date