



[Parks & Trails New York](#) (PTNY), with support from the New York State Canal Corporation and the New York Power Authority, is requesting applications from municipalities located along the Erie and Champlain Canalway Trails interested in maximizing the economic benefits of being located close to the trail through the Empire State Trail Town Program.

The [Empire State Trail Town program](#) is an official designation available through a competitive application and certification process, with technical assistance provided by Parks & Trails New York. In order to be considered, a municipality must complete the following application. PTNY will accept up to three qualified communities to participate in a ten-month program as a “provisional trail town.” The three selected communities will work with PTNY to develop a network of partners committed to the Trail Town initiative, conduct research and assessment, develop promotional resources and strategies, and create and adopt an action agenda to guide future Trail Town work.

PTNY will evaluate all submissions based on the Trail Town criteria laid out below, as well as the quality of the responses to the open-ended questions and the extent to which they indicate that the community is prepared to be an Empire State Trail Town. If fewer than three applications are received that have completely met the Trail Town criteria, PTNY will review and select those communities that offer the most promise for meeting the trail town criteria.

Please review the [2024 Empire State Trail Town Handbook](#) available on the [program website](#) prior to filling out the application for a detailed description of the program components, objectives and timeline. All questions regarding the application or the program should be directed to eschneider@ptny.org.

An informational webinar will be held on Wednesday, January 10 at 10:00am. The session will provide an overview of the program and application process, as well as provide an opportunity for Q&A. [Register here](#). The recording will also be posted.

All submissions are due by **Friday, February 2 at 5:00 pm**. Receipt of this application does not commit PTNY to award a contract, to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation of the application, or to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation of the contract for services. PTNY reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received.

This PDF is intended to be used as a preview of the application questions. All application should be submitted through the online application available here: <https://arcg.is/0i8C9P0>

Trail Town Applicant

Community Name

Contact Information

Municipal Representative Contact Information

PTNY requires that the Empire State Trail Town application be spearheaded by a representative of the community's municipality. In the past, the lead applicant has usually been part of the planning department, but in smaller communities, it may be the mayor, village manager, or some other position.

Name

Title

Email

Phone Number

Supporting Community Organization Contact Information

A community partner (non-profit or other community organization) must commit to investing time and resources into the trail and the Trail Town initiative. This can be a bicycle/pedestrian advocacy group, an environmental group, a merchants association, or a community volunteer group like a Rotary or Lions club. PTNY requires letters or emails indicating support and commitment from any such partners.

Name of Community Organization

Title

Email

Attach the letter of support form the community organization

Empire State Trail Town Criteria

These questions are designed to ensure that the community meets the baseline needs of trail users, and is set up to become an Empire State Trail Town. If your community does not meet the criteria for whatever reason, please describe any active efforts or alternatives that may be present in the community.

The community is located directly on or near the Erie or Champlain Canalway Trail.
Preferably, the community is within three miles of a trail access point, and preferably via another trail or on low-traffic roads.

Yes

No

Describe the best route for cyclists and pedestrians between the trail and the downtown business district.

The community has publicly accessible restrooms and drinking water.*
This can be a municipally operated restroom/drinking fountain or be a business whose restrooms are open to the public and/or that offers drinking water to trail users.

Describe where visitors can access restrooms and drinking water in the community.*
Is it clear where visitors can go for these services?

The community has at least one overnight accommodation that is welcoming to trail users.*
This can be a camping area, hotel, motel, hostel, bed & breakfast, etc. Check all that apply.

Camping area

Hotel

Motel

Bed & Breakfast

Hostel

Short Term Rental (AirBnB, VRBO, etc)

Warm Showers host

Other

Give a brief description of the accommodations available for visiting trail users in the community or provide more context if needed.*

Are there any accommodations that are located right on the trail? Are there any that go out of their way to attract trail users? Are any of them certified as Bike Friendly NY certified businesses?

The community has at least one place that trail users can get food and drinks.*

This can be a grocery or convenience store or a restaurant that welcomes trail users. Check all that apply.

- Cafe/Restaurant
- Coffee Shop
- Ice Cream Shop
- Convenience Store
- Grocery Store
- Craft Beverage Establishment (brewery, winery, etc)
- Other

Describe the availability of food/drink options for visiting trail users in the community.*
Are there any establishments that are right on the trail? Any that go out of their way to attract trail users? Are any of them certified as Bike Friendly NY certified businesses?

The community has at least one physical outlet for information on the community.*
This can be a visitors/welcome center, chamber of commerce, library, or village hall, or a regularly updated trail-oriented bulletin board or kiosk.

- Visitor/welcome center
- Chamber of commerce
- Library
- Municipal hall
- Regularly updated, trail-oriented bulletin board/kiosk
- Other

Describe where visiting trail users may obtain information about the community.*
Beyond physical locations, what promotional resources are available online for finding out more about your community. Link to them in your response.

The community has at least one bike rack in the community's downtown area for bicyclists to safely park their bikes.*

- Municipal bike racks
- Business-owned bike racks
- Trailhead bike racks near downtown
- Other

Describe where trail users can park their bikes while exploring the community.*

Trail Town Preparedness

The following questions seek to gauge the community's level of preparedness to promote itself as an Empire State Trail Town and readiness to commit to the work outlined in the 2024 Empire State Trail Town program handbook.

Why should your community be certified as an Empire State Trail Town? What makes your community unique among trailside communities?*

What notable sites or attractions serve as draws for trail users?*

These can be businesses, historic sites, museums, natural features, etc. Pay attention to specifically highlight sites that are accessible by biking/walking from the trail.

What notable festivals and events in the community are currently or could potentially be a draw for trail users or could incorporate the trail in the event's execution?*

List and describe any trail-friendly or active transportation policies or ordinances in place or being pursued by the municipality.*

These could include a complete streets ordinance, Vision Zero policy, 25 mph municipality-wide speed limit, etc.

List and link to any relevant planning initiatives or development projects underway in the community, especially work that integrates or supports the growth of a trail culture.*

Are there any projects or other circumstances that may detract from the ability of the municipality to commit to the Empire State Trail Town program this year?*

Explain how a Trail Town effort in the community would incorporate historically underserved populations, such as low-income neighborhoods, communities of color, people with physical or intellectual disabilities, older adults and/or people with limited English proficiency.*

Provide a list of the proposed Trail Town steering committee, including potential committee members, along with their contact info (email preferred), the organization, if any, that each member represents, and a brief description of the committee's proposed structure.*

By checking the following box, I certify that I have reviewed the Empire State Trail Town handbook and understand the scope of work.*

If selected, I agree to provide a meaningful level of commitment in an effort to achieve the goals, objectives and strategies laid out in the Empire State Trail Town handbook for the duration of the program, March 6, 2024 through December 31, 2024.