



Trails Across New York 2020

Talking Points

Thank legislators! Both the Assembly and Senate supported the Empire State Trail's \$200M appropriation and many have been strong advocates for their local trails.

Our goal is to encourage legislators to support various ways to grow and enhance statewide trail networks and connect them with communities across the state. Our main asks are:

1. Support \$200M for multi-use trails in the Bond Act

The allocation of \$200 million for multi-use trails would be used to construct new trails, provide significant repairs and enhancements to existing trails, and acquire land needed to complete trail networks.

The biggest hurdle facing the continued expansion of our state's multi-use trail network is the availability of funding. There are many corridors already in public ownership that only require funding in order to develop them as multi-use trails, while other corridors would benefit from funding to acquire key parcels to tie together disconnected trail segments.

- ✓ **ASK: Support the proposal for the \$3 Billion Restore Mother Nature Bond Act.**
- ✓ **ASK: Support a \$200 million allocation for trail connections and enhancements within the proposed Bond Act.**

2. Legalize E-Bikes

E-bikes are safe, environmentally-friendly modes of transportation that can make cities more livable and address last-mile transportation issues. Legalizing e-bikes has bipartisan support, and would remove uncertainty for users, enforcement agencies, and retailers. More importantly, legalizing and regulating e-bikes will make another healthy, low-emission transportation mode available to New Yorkers.

The Governor's budget proposes legalizing e-bikes while providing municipalities the flexibility needed to safely regulate their use. Legalization and reclassification has the potential to benefit the environment, limit road congestion, support healthy living, and promote tourism across the State.

- ✓ **ASK: Legalize electronic bicycles in this year's budget.**

3. Provide Safe Streets

Bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure and public transit are critical elements in a transportation system that prioritizes safety of users, economic development, and accessibility for all New Yorkers. By investing in our multi-modal transportation system, we can save lives, encourage healthy lifestyles, and improve economic vitality in communities across the State.

There are a wide range of proposed changes to state law that would make it safer for cyclists and pedestrians to get to their local trails and make trail usage more accessible for all New Yorkers.

- Maintenance projects should be made subject to the state's complete streets law, requiring that transportation projects consider the needs of all users.
 - Drivers overtaking cyclists on roads should be required to leave 3 feet of space to ensure cyclist safety.
 - Instruction in pedestrian and bicyclist safety should be included as part of the driver's pre-licensing course to ensure that drivers are equipped with the skills needed to safely operate motor vehicles in a way that respects the rights of all roadway users.
- ✓ **ASK: Support A.6029/S.1549 to close the complete streets loophole.**
 - ✓ **ASK: Support A.283/S.1439 to establish a statewide 3-foot standard when passing bicyclists.**
 - ✓ **ASK: Support A.7828A/S.5228C to add a bicycle and pedestrian safety component to the pre-licensing driver's education course.**

4. Provide legal protection and incentives to private landowners who allow trail development on their land.

While many trails have been constructed to follow publicly owned rights of way, other trails rely on the generosity of private landowners to ensure that they form a continuous trail that allows users to reach their destinations. Removing the liability to landowners who allow a recreational trail to cross their property would incentivize the creation of additional trails across the state. Similarly, providing a tax credit to landowners who provide access to their land for recreational trail use would open valuable private property for public use.

- ✓ **ASK: Support A.4774A/S.5934A to amend the recreational use statute to remove liability for landowners who allow a recreational trail to cross their property.**
- ✓ **ASK: Support amending A.1632/S.6017 to provide a tax credit to landowners who allow recreational trail use on their property.**