

Long Island Greenway; An Extension to the Empire State Trail

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Trails connect people to nature and communities to their neighbors. We're planning a bike and pedestrian multi-use path for more than seven million New Yorkers. The **Long Island Greenway** – a 175-mile extension to the Empire State Trail – will complete a truly statewide trail from Buffalo and Plattsburgh to Montauk. By providing new open space connecting state and local parks and transit connections, it will change how Long Islanders and all New Yorkers play, commute, and live healthy lives.

Project Background and Public Need

The Empire State Trail, announced in Governor Cuomo's 2017 State of the State message, is a bold vision: a 750-mile, world class multi-use path from the Canadian borders near both Plattsburgh and Buffalo to Manhattan. The Empire State Trail provides an innovative and uniquely New York response to explosive interest in bicycling and walking-hiking for recreation, health and wellness and in driving local as well as regional economic development via enhanced tourism related opportunities. By ending at the Battery in lower Manhattan, however, it left out the seven million residents of Kings (Brooklyn), Queens, Nassau, and Suffolk Counties.

Project Goal

The goal of the **Long Island Greenway** is to extend the Empire State Trail across Long Island and to link together many existing trails, parks, and communities, as well as to provide a central spine for future trails. We have closely coordinated with State Parks as it works to complete the Buffalo and Plattsburgh to Manhattan trails by the end of 2020.

Feasibility Studies

In 2018, the Trust for Public Land mapped out a potential east-west multi-use trail across Long Island. The focus of our feasibility study was electric transmission line rights of way that could contain off-road bike paths, as is increasingly common across the country. In fact, the Long Island Power Authority has agreed to allow Suffolk County to build the **10-mile North Shore Bike Path** on one of its rights of way. Building on these developments, we have identified a feasible route across Long Island, with input and support from Nassau and Suffolk Counties, key business leaders, and biking and hiking clubs. The **proposed 175-mile route is 60% off-road**. We also identified a potential first phase segment spanning Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

Phase 1 Project Feasibility Study

In 2019, we conducted an in-depth existing conditions report and feasibility study of the **24-mile Phase 1 segment, which is 75% off road and runs from Eisenhower Park through Bethpage State Park to Brentwood State Park**. We conducted a detailed ground survey, analyzed infrastructure issues, identified trail access points, developed a list of trail amenities, addressed maintenance issues, and identified potential funding sources.

We also obtained feedback from extensive outreach to stakeholders, business leaders, government officials, and biking and hiking communities. The report will be published in early 2020.

In December 2019 the project was awarded a **\$600,000 matching grant** from the State for additional pre-design studies.

Economic Benefits

- A 2010 study found that Long Island's parks and open space provide quantifiable economic benefits worth over \$2.74 billion a year, including \$600 million spent in parks that alone generated \$27 million in tax revenue. These figures are even larger today.
- Nationwide, homeowners adjacent to trails see a 3% increase in home value.
- Statewide, the high-growth outdoor recreation industry represents **\$42 billion in consumer spending, 313,000 direct jobs (4th highest sector), and \$3.6 billion in state and local tax revenue**.
- Trails anchor economic revitalization and complement redevelopment areas such as the **Nassau Hub**.

Schedule

- ✓ Overall feasibility study (2018)
- ✓ Phase 1 feasibility study (2019)
- ❑ Outreach, community support (2020)
- ❑ Survey, LIDAR, and environmental studies; 30% design (2020-2021)
- ❑ Design and construction documents (2021-2022)
- ❑ Construction (2022-2023)



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for people, ensuring healthy,
livable communities for
generations to come.

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