



Bicyclists Bring Business Workshop Report Waterford/Cohoes

September 24 and 25, 2018



**Canal
Corporation**

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The Bicyclists Bring Business Roundtable and Bike-a-Round are made possible by financial support from the New York State Canal Corporation.

Visit www.ptny.org to learn more about Bicyclists Bring Business, including previous years' workshops.



BACKGROUND

Bicycling's popularity and the growth of bicycle tourism are well documented, with the Outdoor Industry Association declaring bicycling second only to running and jogging as the most popular outdoor activity in America by frequency of participation for adults. Additional studies in states around the country have demonstrated that bicycle tourists are a growing market, generating hundreds of millions of dollars per year in realized or potential economic impact.

New York is well-positioned to respond to the increased demand for cycling routes, both on and off-road. The Erie Canalway Trail (ECT), the spine of New York's multi-use trail system, and one of the nation's longest, has an abundance of everything this growing market of bicycle tourists seek: safe, off-road cycling between historic communities; scenic landscapes, trailside attractions; detailed maps and route descriptions; and cycling options ranging from day trips to week-long adventures.

According to a 2014 economic impact study, the ECT attracts nearly 1.6 million annual visits and generates over \$250 million in annual economic impact.

But that's only the tip of the iceberg! New York's multi-use trail network and the state's profile among cyclo-tourists received a significant boost in 2017 when Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced \$200 million in funding to build the nation's largest state trail system, the Empire State Trail. (EST) This mega trail project will complete the ECT as an off-road route, and connect it to the Champlain Canalway Trail and Hudson River Valley Greenway, connecting



the east-west system to New York City and the Canadian border.

The EST will bring new tourists and economic development to trailside communities, with some projections as high as eight million annual users. Building new trail sections will also bring “backyard” recreational opportunities to many communities along the route.

In order to help Canalway Trail communities capitalize on ECT tourism (and, future EST tourism) Parks & Trails New York (PTNY)

and the New York State Canal Corporation have conducted 14 Bicyclists Bring Business roundtables in communities across the state since 2006.

In 2008, *Bicyclists Bring Business: A Guide for Attracting Bicyclists to New York's Canal Communities* was produced by PTNY and the Canal Corporation to bring the message to an even wider audience. The goal of the roundtables and the guide is to help local businesses, elected officials, tourism professionals, and community members discover what services and amenities are important to bicyclists so that they can better attract and profit from the growing bicycle tourism market.



Cyclists at Cohoes Falls

In 2012, a community Bike-a-Round the morning following the roundtable was added, a field component that enables program participants to experience their community's services and infrastructure from the perspective of a visiting cyclist.

"The number of visitors who come to the Canalway Trail to ride and explore our historic Canal System continues to grow. We have made closing the gaps in the trail a top priority. The Canalway Trail will be a key piece of Governor Cuomo's Empire State Trail, which will become that nation's largest state multi-use trail network. It will attract more riders, help fuel local economies and enable cyclists to explore the many towns and villages eager to show off their rich canal heritage."

- NYS Canal Corporation Director Brian U. Stratton

SEPTEMBER 2018 PROGRAM LOCATION

Parks & Trails New York and the New York State Canal Corporation presented a free Bicyclists Bring Business roundtable at Waterford Harbor Visitor Center on September 24, 2018. The Harbor Visitor Center is an established boating center, located downstream from the Barge Canal's Waterford Flight of locks, close to the confluence of the Canal/Mohawk River and the Hudson River, and representing the southern terminus of the Champlain Canal and Lakes to Locks passage. The confluence marks the coming together of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Water Trail and the NYS Canalway Water Trail, with over 700 miles of calm water available to paddlers and other boaters, and an ever-increasing suite of planning resources, including guidebooks and interactive maps and infrastructure such as put ins.

The Visitor Center caters to both boaters and cyclists, with showers and an information

center located on the lower level, and free camping available.

The Waterford/Cohoes area is also a strategic location from a cycling perspective; it marks the junction of the Champlain and Erie Canalway Trails, and serves as an overnight stop for long-distance cyclists through the Canal Corporation's Biker-Hiker-Boater campsites on the grounds. Once the Empire State Trail is complete, the Waterford/Cohoes area will serve as the "T", where the three major legs meet.

Moreover, the area marks the first "service area" for Canalway Trail cyclists north of Albany, with dining, lodging and shopping options located close to the trail in both downtown Cohoes and Waterford.

The area sits in the middle of the Capital Region, with Schenectady to the west linked by the Erie Canalway Trail. Troy, across the Hudson River to the east, is accessible from Waterford and Cohoes by several bridges. Troy's cycling and trail network is rapidly developing. Downtown Albany and the Corning Riverfront Park is a short ride south on the Erie Canalway Trail. Beyond their vibrant downtowns and



Remsen Street in Downtown Cohoes is a major regional commercial strip

connections to the Capital Region's larger urban centers, Cohoes and Waterford boast several renowned tourism destinations. Across from the Harbor Visitor Center sits Peebles Island State Park and the Matton Shipyard. Peebles Island is a popular day use area featuring hiking trails, picnic shelters, as well as the offices for the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, an important partner in promoting Canalway Trail tourism and trailside economic development.

Matton Shipyard is a historic canal boat service yard which operated from 1916 to 1983. The site is not currently open to the public, but plans

exist to turn the shipyard into an educational center, museum, and home for historic vessels.

Cohoes Falls is the area's dominant natural feature. It is generally regarded as New York's second largest waterfall, with only Niagara Falls carrying more water. Since 1831, the Cohoes Falls have been harnessed for power generation, with one beneficiary being the textile industry. Harmony Mills, formerly the nation's largest cotton producer, has been converted to residential housing located directly downstream from Cohoes Falls.

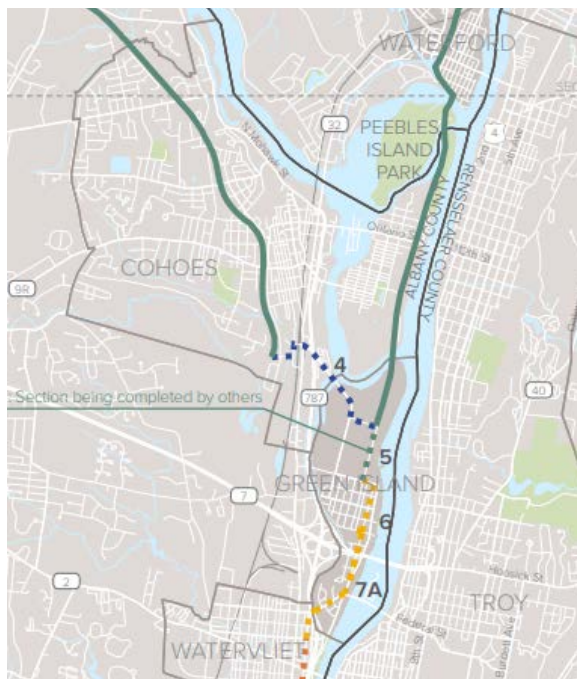


The view of Waterford Harbor from the Visitor Center

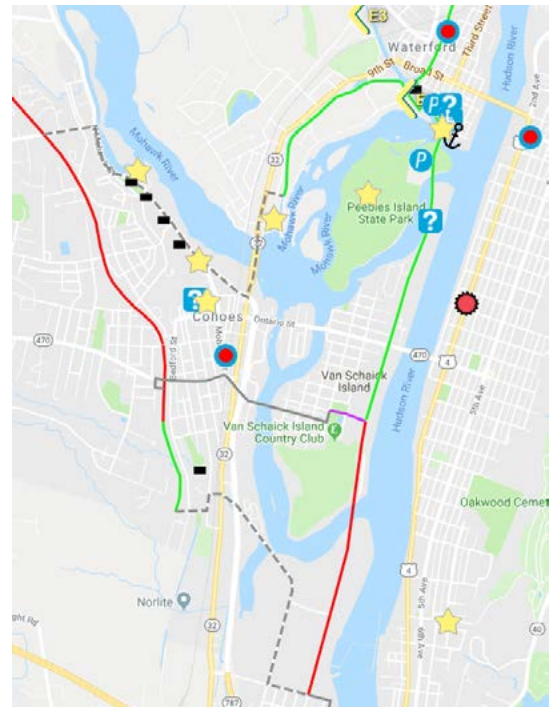
TRAIL ROUTING ISSUES

While multi-use trails are plentiful, the Waterford/Cohoes area presents multiple navigation and connection challenges to trail users. These issues will grow as the Empire State Trail comes to fruition and additional users come to experience a fully off-road Erie Canalway Trail and better-connected Champlain Canalway Trail.

The Cohoes/Green Island area marks a transition point for cross-state cyclists on the Erie Canalway Trail. After negotiating an on-road gap section in Watervliet and Green Island, trail users must cross over busy Cohoes Boulevard from the Black Bridge Trail to the ECT (known locally as the Mohawk Hudson Bike Hike Trail or MHBHT) trailhead at Alexander Road in Cohoes. While some of this route is signed, this connection currently lacks on- or off-road facilities such as sidepaths or bike lanes. Crossing Cohoes Boulevard exposes cyclists and pedestrians to high traffic volumes, and the roadway is quite wide.



Proposed Empire State Trail Routing



Current trail routes from CycleTheErieCanal.com

A similarly difficult connection confronts trails users on the Champlain who wish to link up with the Erie Canalway Trail/MHBHT from the Champlain's terminus at Fulton Street in Waterford over the Route 32 bridge to Cohoes.

The Empire State Trail project will add on-street cycling facilities such as a raised intersection and a contraflow bike lane for the crossing of Cohoes Boulevard on Dyke Street. No additional facilities are planned to improve the connection between the CCT terminus and downtown Cohoes. Instead, the Empire State Trail route directs Champlain users over Peebles Island and onto the Delaware Avenue Trail, connecting the Erie Canalway Trail route south of the Black Bridge in Green Island.

In addition to multi-use trails mentioned above, the Cohoes Heritage Trail provides off-road access from downtown Cohoes to the Harmony Mills residences, about 0.6 miles. This trail does not connect with the Erie Canalway Trail/MHBHT to the south.



The newly improved Black Bridge Trail connects Cohoes with neighboring Green Island

EVENING ROUNDTABLE

Several dozen people from across the Capital Region participated in the evening roundtable, held from 6 to 8 p.m.

New York State Canal Corporation Director Brian U. Stratton kicked off the slate of presentations with an update on the work the Canal Corporation is doing statewide, including a summary of the annual Canalway Grants Program and the [Reimagine the Canals competition](#). Canal Corporation Trails Manager Sasha Eisenstein followed this with an update on the status of the state Empire State Trail, the 750-mile statewide multi-use trail project scheduled to be complete by 2020, which, when complete, will be the longest such trail in the nation. The presentation gave highlights on a number of specific projects that will help close gaps in the existing trail and better connect local communities to the statewide trail.

After the Canal Corporation presentation, attendees were treated to an update from the Champlain Canalway Trail Working Group.

The 62-mile Champlain Canalway Trail is rapidly developing, as presenters Wally Elton and Dave Perkins noted. Much of the group's recent success can be attributed to the funding and attention brought by the Empire State Trail project. The group hopes to release a revised Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan in early 2019. Construction on the Champlain Canalway Trail north of Waterford is expected to begin in 2019.

The final presentation consisted of best practices in catering to cyclists and cycling tourists gleaned from other trail systems. PTNY's James Meerdink presented ideas from other popular multi-use trails, including Le Petit Tren du Nord in Quebec's Laurentian mountains, and the Great Allegheny Passage in Maryland and Pennsylvania. A brief but lively discussion followed about funding trail development and involvement of the local business community in catering to cyclists, among other topics.

See Appendix A for a more detailed summary of the discussion.



The Waterford Harbor Visitor Center is a regional center for the boating community

VIRTUAL BIKE-A-ROUND

Due to heavy rain, the Community Bike-a-Round planned for Tuesday was transformed to a “virtual ride,” with participants gathering at Peebles Island Visitor Center for a survey of local trail needs and brainstorming around how to bring trail cyclists to local business districts and important destinations.

This effort was aided by technology, including PTNY’s [Interactive Canalway Trail Map](#) and Google Streetview, and the participants’ knowledge of local routes - a great resource for sure.

Tuesday’s discussions often returned to the Empire State Trail, and the central location in the statewide system that Waterford and Cohoes have. Participants were very eager to create better connections between the two towns, and their respective trails. With better connections and visibility, the area could become a cycling hub on the Empire State Trail system. Other planning projects that could have beneficial impact on local connection were also mentioned, including the Cohoes Boulevard project and CDTC’s Regional Trails Plan.

Participants were treated to lunch from LePage’s Market, a popular trailside stop for many area cyclists and visitors to Cohoes Falls.

“There is ample infrastructure surrounding these areas, and it’s a matter of doing some maintenance, branding and attracting businesses and stakeholders to want to promote these areas. It will take local stakeholders seeing the value to make this a reality.”

- B3 Virtual Bike-a-Round participant



Virtual Bike-a-Round participants discuss local trail conditions and cycling amenities

PUBLICITY

The Canal Corporation assisted PTNY in publicizing the event through email alerts, physical mailings, and social media. A hard-copy invite was sent to area elected officials, businesses, and civic organizations. Invitations were also sent to area state and federal legislators, and flyers and posters were posted at key locations in the area. A press release was sent to media outlets in the Capital Region, including local and regional papers, and all the major television stations.

The event was publicized with an e-alert and an article in the PTNY e-newsletter, as well as posts on [PTNY](#) and [ECT Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages, reaching more than 10,000 people.

After the event, summaries were published in [PTNY’s e-newsletter](#) and in the newsletter for the statewide Canalway Trail system, [Canalway Trail Times](#).

PARTICIPANT SURVEY

PTNY asked attendees from the evening presentation in Waterford and virtual Bike-a-Round participants to provide feedback via an online survey.

Nine people submitted responses. When asked what Waterford and Cohoes needed to do to attract more bicycle tourists, all respondents indicated that additional bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure, such as sidewalks and bike lanes, was desirable. Eight of nine respondents also indicated a need for bike racks, for the presence of community maps in central locations, and for the installation of wayfinding signs.

*Survey responses to
“What does your community need most to
benefit from Canalway Trail tourism?”*

	Response Count	Response Percent
Bike/pedestrian infrastructure (sidewalks, bike lanes, etc.)	9	100.0%
Bike racks	8	88.9%
Benches	5	55.6%
Kiosks	5	55.6%
Community maps in central locations	8	88.9%
Visitor-friendly business hours	2	22.2%
Bicycle-friendly business designation	7	77.8%
Welcome center	4	44.4%
Wayfinding signs	8	88.9%
Cooperative advertisements in cycling magazines	3	33.3%
Bicycle tour packages	4	44.4%
Luggage/bike transportation service	3	33.3%

Other interventions that were seen as important to encouraging cycling tourism included the creation of a bicycle friendly business designation and the installation of benches and kiosks.

See Appendix B for a full summary of survey responses.

OTHER INPUT

Participants at the September 25 Virtual Bike-a-Round filled out the Assessment Checklist (How Bicycle-Friendly is Your Canal Community?) from PTNY’s Bicyclists Bring Business Guide. Several themes emerged from respondent answers and comments.

The first is that communities have many resources for bicyclists passing through. All respondents noted the availability of benches and picnic tables, and 60% indicated that bathrooms and water were also readily available. Similarly, respondents indicated police visibly patrol public areas utilized by bicyclists.

The assessment results suggest respondents wish to see more of a “share the road” outlook cultivated among communities. This can be accomplished by ensuring surfaces are paved, well-maintained, and free of gravel or debris. Additionally, the quantity of cautionary signage for motorists along routes can be improved.

All respondents identified that their communities lack a “bicyclists welcome” program. 80% also said that emergency contact information is not made easily available.

Other respondents stated that they would like to see more secure overnight bike parking and catchier signage that attracts attention. Several said that public areas are clean and well maintained, but many of the paved areas are not firm and/or free of debris.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

Capitalize on the location of Waterford and Cohoes at the intersection between the three components of the Empire State Trail through the creation of a cycling “hub” in the Waterford/Cohoes area.



RECOMMENDATION 2

Improve signage, wayfinding, and local business amenities to ensure that cyclists can easily access businesses and attractions from the Erie Canalway and Champlain Canalway Trails, can get to the trail from business and residential areas, and can seamlessly connect the trail systems together.



RECOMMENDATION 3

Increase bicycle-friendliness throughout Waterford and Cohoes’ downtown and residential areas by adding bicycle-friendly amenities such as bike lanes, cycle-tracks, and covered bicycle parking.



RECOMMENDATION 4

Coordinate local tourism promotion, trail development, and bike/pedestrian advocacy efforts.



RECOMMENDATION 5

Secure funding to complete recommendations.

Please see Appendix C for more detail on recommended next steps

APPENDIX A

BICYCLISTS BRING BUSINESS WORKSHOP

ROUNDTABLE & BIKE-A-ROUND SUMMARIES

Roundtable Comments

September 24

1. Funding for gateways and trail projects – including maintenance
 - a. Gateways: design is forthcoming; Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) may be good source of funding
 - b. Design guidelines for trail sections do exist – both older Canalway Trail specs and newer Empire State Trail
 - c. Maintenance needs are widespread, but Watervliet section of ECT and Champlain section near Momentive were singled out
 - d. Counties can apply for CFA, including Canalway Grants administered by the Canal Corporation
2. Local vs. statewide perspective
 - a. Local entities don't always have a grasp of the impact their trail sections and amenities have on perceptions of the overall trail network
 - b. PTNY and Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor both work statewide and can provide continuity across trail owners, counties
 - c. CDTC's Regional Trail Plan should be consulted; includes tools for communities when planning trails
3. Advocacy for trails
 - a. Local, regional groups must advocate for additional funding for their trails from a variety of sources – there is no substitute for local voices
4. Involvement of the business community - What can municipalities do to encourage Bike Friendly business creation?
 - a. PTNY & CC Bike Friendly New York program is a good start
 - b. Other business plans and resources available elsewhere
 - c. Outreach to businesses is important, as they are first contact with many trail users
 - d. Local ambassadors important – cyclists, advocates, muni staff

Virtual Bike-a-Round Observations

September 25

1. Empire State Trail Route (also Erie and Champlain Canalway Trails) in Waterford and Cohoes
 - a. Is it finalized? – need to check for report
 - b. Need maps at convenient locations – Waterford Harbor, Peebles Island, downtown Cohoes - Both system-wide map and “how to get from ECT to Champlain” etc., local turn- by-turn map; ECNHC has some experience creating these types of maps
2. Champlain Canalway Trail through Waterford
 - a. Current routing, as indicated by signage: (S to N) 4th St across Canal, left on Middle St, right on 5th, cross Broad to Trail
 - b. Will trail be moved from 5th St to along water S of Broad?
 - c. Crossing improvements needed wherever trail crosses Broad; maybe Rapid Rectangular Flashing

- Beacon (RRFB) with push button
 - d. Additional signage needed on Village Streets, both on-route and directing to trail; some older signs may need refresh; EST signage to be added
 - e. Kiosk and other improvements needed at the terminus of CCT; also signage that clearly indicates how to access ECT/Mohawk Hudson BHT
 - f. Surface improvements needed on multiple CCT sections in Waterford – trail is essentially single-track south of Canal, not ideal
3. Black Bridge Trail (runs south from Peebles Island SP)
- a. Again, will it be official part of ECT Route?
 - b. Kiosks and other amenities now at southern end of Black Bridge in Green Island – need to be filled with maps, etc.
4. Cohoes (Mohawk Hudson BHT/Cohoes Heritage Trail/Erie Canalway Trail)
- a. Need to review Cohoes Boulevard project plans for report
 - b. Crossing of Cohoes Boulevard is an important decision; appears that Dyke St is location, and that there will not be a roundabout
 - c. Signage audit needed in Cohoes to ensure that proper connections made from/to ECT and CCT, but also Cohoes Heritage Trail and on city streets (on-route and directing to trail).
 - d. Additional signage and amenities related to Cohoes Falls, as it is a major attraction; signage from trail directing cyclists at Manor Street, ½ mile off-shoot
5. Cohoes and Waterford as Empires State Trail HUB
- a. Area is strategically important to entire system
 - b. Existing on-road stretches are not ideal, especially when viewing area as “hub”; however, there are limited opportunities for off-road on some stretches
 - i. Route 32 bridge from Cohoes to Waterford: Can sidewalk be uses as trail, maybe with barrier or other improvements?
 - ii. Can bike lanes be installed on other road stretches, connection between Mohawk Hudson BHT through downtown Cohoes then over Cohoes Boulevard?
 - c. Empire State Trail Visitor Center – potential sites in Waterford/Cohoes
 - i. Peebles Island
 - ii. Waterford Harbor Visitor Center
 - iii. Matton Shipyard Site
 - iv. Downtown Cohoes – Bike Barn Cycling and Fitness
6. Other discussion
- a. Bike share – look into getting bike share in area; makes sense with boating center in Waterford and new businesses and residential development in downtown Cohoes
 - b. Connections to Saratoga County road routes are pretty limited from Waterford – something to work on in the future; also makes improving/connecting Champlain CT heading north critical
 - c. Trail ownership and maintenance confusion – should be publicly available map of entire system to aid in development, maintenance, as well as providing users with easy point of contact

APPENDIX B

BICYCLISTS BRING BUSINESS WORKSHOP

PARTICIPANT SURVEY

1. Please enter your zip code:

12047 – Cohoes
 12188 – Waterford (2)
 12203 – Albany
 12208 – Albany
 12304 – Schenectady
 12308 – Schenectady
 12804 – Queensbury
 12866 – Saratoga Springs

2. Please select any affiliation you may have that influenced your decision to attend the event(s):

	Response Count	Response Percent
Business Owner	0	0.0%
Member/employee of a recreation based organization	2	22.2%
Member/employee of a community organization	6	66.7%
Municipal Official	1	11.1%
Tourism Official	0	0.0%
Natural, recreational or historic site employee/volunteer	3	33.3%
Outdoor Enthusiast	6	66.7%
Other (Tourism College Professor)	1	11.1%

3. Why are you interested in bicycle tourism?

- Bike tourism provides an opportunity for communities and businesses to reap benefits that far exceed the investment in infrastructure that makes a place ideal for cycling. Bike tourism allows businesses such as restaurants, bars, and lodging to flourish while also providing a means for residents and outside visitors to enjoy amenities, attractions, and live a healthier lifestyle. An additional benefit is that cycling is environmentally friendly and reduces the GHG emissions entering the atmosphere from other auto-oriented recreational activities.
- Mostly as a bicycle rider
- As a member of the Warren County Safe & Quality Bicycling Organization, I am interested in promoting biking in our region to help support the economy
- Because I enjoy bicycling myself and believe such tourism can help revitalize local economies by sustainable means.
- My wife and I are enthusiastic cyclists in our area and at other destinations. We are also members of a volunteer organization that supports the local State Park and hope to promote businesses in our area. I am a cyclist myself and teach a Tourism Development course at SUNY Schenectady. In this course students explore how communities can become more tourist/visitor friendly. I use cycling tourism as one example.
- I enjoy cycling for the exercise and being able to see historic sites.

- g. Anything that encourages people to ride bicycles is of interest.
- h. Long-time enthusiastic cyclist, member of Friends of Mohawk-Hudson Bike Trail

4. What attractions, amenities or business areas in the Waterford and Cohoes area are most important to connect cycling tourists with?

- a. Cohoes Visitor Center, Cohoes Falls, Cohoes' Downtown (and related restaurants and bars such as Spindles, Donnie Magoo's, Cascade, Cake Street Sweets, Smith's, LePage's, Pig Pit, etc.), Van Schaick Island Park, Van Schaick Island Golf Course, Matton Shipyard, Peebles Island, Van Schaick Mansion
- b. The confluence of Erie and Champlain trails along with the Waterford visitor center and Peebles Island
- c. Historic Champlain Canal, Erie Canal, Harbor visitor center, Cohoes Falls, Peebles Island State Park.
- d. Peebles Island State Park, Cohoes Falls, Harbor Visitor Center, lock system, Van Schaick Mansion and businesses in Waterford and Cohoes.
- e. Harbor Waterfront & all downtown businesses
- f. Signage for historic sites, food, equipment support, camping and bath facilities.
- g. The big attraction is the junction of the two canals and canal trails. Secondary is the history of the same.
- h. Not very familiar with this area, but cycling tourists need accessible refreshment/meal options, kid-friendly amusements, and the occasional cycling shop!

5. In your opinion, what does your community need most to benefit from Erie Canalway Trail tourism?

	Response Count	Response Percent
Bike/pedestrian infrastructure (sidewalks, bike lanes, etc.)	9	100.0%
Bike racks	8	88.9%
Benches	5	55.6%
Kiosks	5	55.6%
Community maps in central locations	8	88.9%
Visitor-friendly business hours	2	22.2%
Bicycle friendly business designation	7	77.8%
Welcome center	4	44.4%
Wayfinding signs	8	88.9%
Cooperative advertisements in cycling magazines	3	33.3%
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Luggage/bike transportation service	3	33.3%

6. What sections of trail or other cycling infrastructure are most in need of maintenance to improve connections with local businesses for cyclists?

- a. The on-road connectors through Downtown need the most attention, as does the Cohoes Heritage Trail
- b. Near Waterford Visitor Center -- it's not bike friendly, but great asset.

- c. Need bike lanes and signage within Waterford to guide cyclists to services.
- d. Champlain Canal Trail leaving the village of Waterford and heading north. Southern terminus of Champlain Canal if that is to be used. Signage, road crossings and on road lanes throughout Waterford and Cohoes.
- e. In Albany, the stretch that goes from Corning Preserve to the end is in desperate need of maintenance. There are no wayfinding signs or options to get off the trail, unless you want to go on the main (busy) roads.
- f. The section from the village of Waterford to the Halfmoon section is in need of major repair and completion of a portion of this is still needed. Signage thru the Village is currently absent.
- g. All urban areas need attention so that people on bicycles can find the trails and find the services and attractions in each community. Most communities seem to ignore this feature at their own (economic) peril.

7. What are the most significant barriers in Waterford and Cohoes to attracting cyclists to local businesses?

- a. Awareness, signage, marketing
- b. Trail is isolated and it's not clear to riders what services are available.
- c. Lack of a safe, pleasant and clearly marked link from Erie Canalway Trail to Waterford and the Champlain Trail.
- d. Current condition of the Champlain Canal and inadequacy of on road cycling infrastructure through Waterford and Cohoes, signage regarding businesses and promotion to cyclists.
- e. Currently there are no bike racks, the signage is absent and there is no dedicated or marked trail from Cohoes to Waterford.
- f. Poorly designed roadways with an "all cars-all the time" design philosophy. Example: Rt 32 Bridge connecting Cohoes and Waterford - a DOT disaster.

8. What recommendations do you have for developing the Cohoes and Waterford area as a "hub" for cycling at the confluence of the three major sections of the Empire State Trail?

- a. There need to be more opportunities for Airbnbs, lodging, camping, and businesses that cater to cyclists. There should also be a better branding and marketing scheme to note the importance of this area for various bicycle trips. The City is moving forward to install more cycling infrastructure in Downtown (bike lanes, bike racks), but more can be done on this effort. The City is also moving forward to establish bike share in the City, but this would be a great addition to firmly secure the Cohoes-Waterford area as bike-friendly.
- b. Tie the trail into the old Erie canal trail
- c. Create a clear junction between the trails and identify and develop a center for information about all options and basic services for cyclists. Publicize this center widely and install wayfinding signage to it from all directions.
- d. Improve the Champlain Canal trail and on road cycling through the area - see improvements in other sections. Create a Welcome Center in the Peebles Island Visitor Center for the EST. As a State facility, the State has full control of the Center. It can serve cyclists and canal traffic. The Friends of the Peebles Island can help support the Center. Cohoes and Waterford government officials need to understand and support the value of the area being a hub. Develop local business support and action for the area as a hub. Business involvement will be somewhat dependent on the actual route of the EST.
- e. All of the maintenance/ upkeep areas checked above.
- f. Since Waterford is at the crossroad of the North and South trails I feel that it should offer a full range of facilities for the cyclists. Camping, bath facilities etc. should all be available in this immediate area. The use of the Matton Shipyard would be an ideal place to build a facility.

- g. The two communities could work together on a “one-stop shopping” approach - marketing the entire area for both day use and through riders.

9. Do you have any other comments on attracting cyclists to businesses in local communities?

- a. As PTNY noted, more bike ambassadors and cycling enthusiasts need to be front and center to cement the identity of the area as being open for bike-business. The Cohoes-Waterford area is flush with trails, amenities, and attractions, but has not made the tangible connection as being known for this.
- b. We need to promote it using businesses to help support us
- c. Educate businesses on being bicycle friendly and provide information to cyclists about all services available.
- d. I would be willing to participate in further planning for the EST in the area.
- e. Having bike racks outside businesses that allow cyclist to lock bikes is a big help and a great start!
- f. A better connection between the existing trails of Cohoes and Halfmoon, would bring cyclists into the Village.
- g. Give communities more clout in resisting NYSDOT design pressure on roadways and streets. Cohoes is a particular victim of the state’s power to destroy the urban fabric.

10. What opportunities for the installation of signage and kiosks should be considered in this area?

Where should these be located?

- a. Signage and kiosks should be along all trail entrances/exits and sporadically through the downtown area at key intersections that see a lot of foot traffic.
- b. Signs from Vliet Street to the end could highlight the businesses as well as the old Erie Canal
- c. See “hub” response above. Need to identify the best place. The Harbor VC. Along the CCT. Am concerned that several organizations are proceeding independently with plans for kiosks, etc. Needs to be coordination.
- d. There are many opportunities at a number of locations. This requires the determination of the actual routes.
- e. Signage is necessary thru out the Village.
- f. Every place there is a turn and every place where riders might need assurance that they are (still) on the correct route.

11. Do you have any additional comments regarding attracting cyclists to local businesses in the Waterford and Cohoes area?

- a. There is ample infrastructure surrounding these areas, and it’s a matter of doing some maintenance, branding and attracting businesses and stakeholders to want to promote these areas. Some of the recent and upcoming plans (Empire State Trail, Regional Trails Plan) will assist with these efforts, but it will take local stakeholders seeing the value to make this a reality.
- b. The junction of three parts of the Empire State Trail here gives this area a unique opportunity compared to other canal/trail communities.
- c. Keep going in the direction you are. Awareness of the need is the first step!
- d. Signs indicating how far a business is from the trail, discount for customers with a bike helmet.
- e. Yes. Much of the presentation I attended was focused on “what we are doing to the ECT, the Champlain, and the EST.” The conference was supposed to have been on how to use these features to attract business. I would guess the business owner does not need to know that a specific area has now been paved, etc., etc.

APPENDIX C

BICYCLISTS BRING BUSINESS WORKSHOP

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Capitalize on the location of Waterford and Cohoes at the intersection of the three components of the Empire State Trail through the creation of a cycling “hub” in the Waterford/Cohoes area.

This hub can serve as a regional information center and gathering place for cyclists and trail users. In many ways, Waterford Harbor already serves this purpose for the boating community; locating a cycling hub at or in close proximity to the Visitor Center can build off of this existing work.

Action Item	Lead Agency or Agencies
Action 1-1: Promote the Waterford and Cohoes area as a hub of cycling created by the Empire State Trail integrating cycling messaging into general promotions undertaken by local tourism promotion agencies, chambers of commerce, and others, and by exploring the potential for additional marketing campaigns, building off of models such as the Mohawk Valley’s Bike Thru History campaign.	Discover Albany, Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce,
Action 1-2: Host an annual “Empire State Trail Festival” in the Waterford/Cohoes area to highlight the utility of the region as a hub for cyclists. The festival would be a weekend of rides, runs, networking and opportunity for vendors to come together. Such a festival would create momentum towards the creation of a physical visitor center to serve as the home of the cycling hub.	NYS Empire State Trail
Action 1-3: Install additional amenities that cater to bicycle tourists such as Fix-It stations, public restrooms and showers, and secured bike storage. Ensure that the amenities at the Waterford Harbor Visitor Center has the capacity to serve cyclists as well as boaters and is promoted as a resource for bicycle tourists.	NYS Parks, City of Cohoes, Town/Village of Waterford
Action 1-4: Create an Empire State Trail Visitor Center to serve as a physical location for the “hub” of the trail. The hub would include information about cycling opportunities along the whole length of the Empire State Trail in addition to information about local amenities and attractions. The design for the hub would be based on existing Canal Corporation designs. The hub would also include public restrooms and showers with secured bike storage and could include dining or other amenity options geared towards cyclists. Potential sites for this hub include the Matton Shipyard site, the Waterford Harbor Visitor Center, Peebles Island, and Downtown Cohoes.	Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

RECOMMENDATION 2

Improve signage and wayfinding to ensure that cyclists can easily access businesses and attractions from the Erie Canalway and Champlain Canalway Trails, can get to the trail from business and residential areas, and can seamlessly connect from one trail system to another.

Cyclists passing through Cohoes on the Erie Canalway Trail have little information available about the services and amenities located in Cohoes and across the river in Waterford, including the presence of the Champlain Canalway Trail as a major route. Enhanced wayfinding signage should direct cyclists from the trail to Waterford and Cohoes' businesses and attractions, clearly indicating their location and amenities such as public parking, public restrooms and Wi-Fi.

Action Item	Lead Agency or Agencies
<p>Action 2-1: Improve the connection between trailheads and business areas or clusters of attractions. Prominent candidates for improvement include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manor Ave, Lansing Lane, Vliet Street and Johnston Ave to the Cohoes Falls/Harmony Mills area• Younglove Ave, Trull Street, and Alexander Street to the Remsen-Mohawk Street business district;• Black Bridge Trail across Van Schaick Island to downtown Cohoes;• Champlain Canalway Trail to businesses in Waterford along Broad Street. <p>Connections can be strengthened through the installation of wayfinding signage and pavement markings.</p>	City of Cohoes, Town/Village of Waterford
<p>Action 2-2: Create a map detailing cycling amenities in the Cohoes-Waterford area, identifying both off-road trails and preferred on-road cycling routes, and showing links to local attractions and other amenities. This map should both be made available electronically and as a print version; the print version should be made available at all local attractions.</p>	Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor
<p>Action 2-3: Install kiosks at Erie Canalway and Champlain Canalway Trail trailheads, in downtown Waterford and Cohoes, at Peebles Island, and at other locations as identified, detailing attractions and services available to cyclists, and mapping the regional trail network. Also consider adding signage or information on Cohoes and Waterford's services and attractions at Corning Preserve in Albany and along the Canalway Trail in Schenectady.</p>	NYS Parks, NYS Canal Corporation
<p>Action 2-4: Create wayfinding and signage plans for both on- and off-road cycling facilities in Waterford and Cohoes that reference Erie Canalway and Empire State Trail Design Guides, as well as standards such as Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and NACTO guide.</p>	Capital District Transportation Committee

RECOMMENDATION 3

Increase bicycle-friendliness throughout Waterford and Cohoes' downtown and residential areas.

Adding bicycle-friendly amenities such as bike lanes, cycle-tracks, and covered bicycle parking will ensure that both visitors and local residents can safely and comfortably reach destinations by bicycle. These improvements will also provide an incentive for commuters and customers to ride their bikes downtown, reducing air pollution caused by traffic congestion and reducing the amount of space dedicated to automobile parking.

Action Item	Lead Agency or Agencies
Action 3-1: Install separated multi-use paths and/or protected cycling lanes to connect the existing Erie Canalway Trail running west with the trail coming from the south, either following the ECT along Dyke Ave in Green Island or across Van Schaick Island, crossing either the Bridge Avenue or Ontario Street bridges. Multi-use paths and/or protected cycling lanes should be installed at other suitable locations throughout the region as well. Installation of bike facilities should correspond to the paving schedule when possible. Other signage, treatments and pavement markings should also be considered to increase cyclist safety and comfort. [Consult the NACTO guide (https://nacto.org/publication/urban-bikeway-design-guide) for examples and standards.]	City of Cohoes, Town/Village of Waterford, Town/Village of Green Island, NYS DOT
Action 3-2: Install bicycle racks in business districts and other well-used destinations (Downtown Cohoes, Downtown Waterford, Peebles Island, Waterford Harbor Visitor Center, Van Schaick Mansion, etc.) Creatively designed bike racks can be used to aid in neighborhood place-making, and should be considered.	City of Cohoes, Town/Village of Waterford
Action 3-3: Encourage businesses to participate in PTNY/NYS Canal Corporation's Bike Friendly New York business certification program, www.ptny.org/bikefriendly . Also, Cohoes and Waterford should consider working to achieve Bike Friendly Community designation through the League of American Cyclists, http://bikeleague.org/community .	Parks & Trails New York
Action 3-4: Expand CDPHP Cycle!, CDTA's bike-share program, to provide service in downtown Cohoes and at developing residential areas near Cohoes Falls and along the Hudson River, in downtown Waterford, at major Erie Canalway Trail and Champlain Canalway Trail trailheads, and on Peebles Island. Once an Empire State Trail hub is established, a kiosk should be located there as well.	Capital District Transportation Authority

RECOMMENDATION 4

Coordinate local tourism promotion, trail development, and bike/pedestrian advocacy efforts.

It is critical that local and regional stakeholders work together to pursue tourism and economic development goals related to cycling and usage of the Cohoes and Waterford trail systems. Bicycling and pedestrian improvements related to the local street and sidewalk network, such as installation of bike lanes or pedestrian amenities, serve both visitors and local residents, and should be coordinated with tourism and trail promotion.

Action Item	Lead Agency or Agencies
Action 4-1: Establish a joint bicycle/ped advisory committees for Cohoes and Waterford to advocate for additional cycling facilities, contribute to planning and execution of cycling events, and provide input on bicycle tourism marketing efforts. Watervliet and Green Island representative should also be included as Empire State Trail-related decisions in those communities have direct impacts on the overall hub idea. Committee members may also represent local organizations, businesses and other recreational interests.	Capital District Transportation Committee
Action 4-2: Take these recommendations before the Cohoes City Council, Albany County Legislature, Waterford Village and Town Boards and Saratoga County Board of Supervisors to raise awareness regarding the importance of trail tourism to the local economy and the community benefits that walking and biking infrastructure bring.	Any interested local cycling advocates
Action 4-3: Involve committee members in the planning processes for local and regional transportation projects with bike/ped and trail implications, including planning and construction of bike lanes in Cohoes and Waterford, NYSDOT's improvements to Cohoes Boulevard and the ongoing construction of the Empire State Trail.	Capital District Transportation Committee
Action 4-4: Work with local governments and trail owners including the Canal Corporation and NY State Parks to address surface conditions and maintenance issues on the trail by repaving/resurfacing. Focus should be given to the lower Champlain Canalway Trail near Momentive Performance Materials and the Erie Canalway Trail north out of Albany and through Watervliet.	Parks & Trails New York

RECOMMENDATION 5

Secure funding to complete recommendations.

Action Item

Action 5-1: Assign local economic development staff the responsibility for grant writing. Research the following grant programs:

- NYS Canal Corporation: <http://www.canals.ny.gov/community/grant.html>
- NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation: <http://nysparks.com/grants/>
- Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor: <http://www.eriecanalway.org/get-involved-grants-fund.htm>
- Capital District Transportation Committee: <http://www.cdtcmpo.org/>
- Other NYS agencies offering grants through the CFA process: <http://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/>
- New York State Department of Transportation, Transportation Alternatives/ Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Programs: <https://www.dot.ny.gov/TAP-CMAQ>
- Community foundations
- Corporations
- HMOs and health care providers

