

2024

Empire State Trail Town Action Agenda



Town of Fort Edward

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The Trail Town Program

Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) and the New York State Canal Corporation developed the Empire State Trail Town program to help upstate communities recognize and capture the economic value of the Empire State Trail, the nation's longest single-state multi-use trail. With the 750-mile trail's completion in 2020, New York's Canalway Trails form a big part of one of the state's premier outdoor recreation destinations. The Empire State Trail Town program was designed to build capacity and guide communities through the process of identifying ways they can transform into trail-friendly destinations where visitors want to stay, explore, and spend.

The Empire State Trail Town program began in 2022 with the Village of Brockport as a pilot community, and continued in 2023 with three additional communities: City of Lockport, Village of Newark and City of Rome. The program now has eight participating communities, with the addition of the City of Amsterdam and City of Little Falls along the Erie Canalway Trail and Village of Schuylerville

and Town of Fort Edward along the Champlain Canalway Trail in 2024. Having been selected for their already high quality trail-based services and amenities and demonstrated commitment to policies geared towards trail users, the selected communities worked with PTNY throughout the year to identify opportunities and develop the tools to more effectively harness visitation to the renowned long-distance trail in their backyard and enhance quality of life for their residents.

Over the course of nine months, Fort Edward worked with PTNY to develop a network of local partners committed to the Trail Town initiative, conduct research and assessment, and develop promotional resources and strategies. In this document, the work completed through the course of the program is summarized to guide Fort Edward's advancement as a Trail Town. Upon adoption of this Action Agenda, Fort Edward will be recognized as an officially certified Empire State Trail Town.

Empire State Trail Town Goals

Make communities more trail-user friendly.

- Increase the frequency with which residents and visitors walk or bike both on and off the trail.



Help communities realize economic benefits of the Canalway Trail.

- Increase the number of Canalway Trail users who spend money either at retail businesses or at a bar or restaurant as part of their trip
- Increase the number of Canalway Trail users who choose the community for an overnight stay



Empire State Trail Town Objectives

NETWORK: Form a network of individuals (including representatives of the municipality, engaged residents, volunteers, and members of the business community) dedicated to the Trail Town vision

RESEARCH: Conduct research and assessment to identify each Trail Town's strengths and areas for improvement, as well as understand current use of the trail

PROMOTION: Increase the visibility of the Trail Towns as destinations

ADVANCEMENT: Establish a plan and process to guide continued work toward Trail Town goals beyond the direct assistance provided by PTNY



Trail Town Framework

What makes a great Trail Town? Thriving vibrant Trail Towns are places where trail users can find the amenities and services they need, where they can safely travel by foot or by bike around the community (often their primary mode of transportation), where they can find information out about what’s around them, whether ahead of time online or in the moment through wayfinding and welcome centers, and finally, probably the least tangible, is that the community is welcoming and has a unique sense of character.

Thriving, vibrant Trail Towns are successful because they exhibit four key qualities and invest in these areas. Each of the Trail Towns embarked on their journey with these four qualities in mind:

Trail-oriented services and amenities

Trail users can find exactly what they need, whether they’re just passing through, spending a few hours exploring, or staying the night.

- Restrooms & drinking water
- Overnight accommodations - indoor lodging and camping
- Food and drink - especially local fare
- Attractions/destinations
- Information center
- Bike amenities

High-quality and safe bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure

Pedestrians and cyclists can safely travel around the community, both on the trail and off the trail to explore other parts of the community

- Trail conditions
- Connecting trails
- On-road connections to points of interest

Wayfinding and informational resources

Information is crucial for introducing potential visitors to the community or encouraging residents to get out and explore their own trails, be it ahead of time trip-planning resources or signage and welcome centers that help direct trail users in the moment.

- Pedestrian scale wayfinding signage
- Online & print promotional materials

Welcoming atmosphere and unique community character

Successful Trail Towns embrace and showcase what makes them unique, highlighting local history, culture, events and food. Visitors get to know what makes each town along the trail unique, and have more incentive to visit– and spread the word. Residents for their part get to share the best parts of their community and gain an enhanced sense of local pride.

- Festivals, events & programs
- Public art & history

Program Process & Timeline

After the four selected communities for 2024 were finalized, the technical assistance provided through the program began with a virtual Trail Town Orientation. This first virtual convening provided an introduction to the program and space to network with the other trail towns in the program.

Following the orientation, Fort Edward’s first task was to form a Trail Town steering committee that incorporated representatives from the Town and village as well as committed partners, local businesses and trail advocates. Fort Edward’s steering committee was spearheaded by Kyle Cozzens, the president of the local parks, recreation, and tourism advocacy group, Promote Fort Edward, and co-owner of Evergreen Bicycle Works.

Fort Edward Trail Town Committee Representatives

- Kyle Cozzens, Promote Fort Edward/ Evergreen Bicycle Works
- Mike Dickinson, Promote Fort Edward/Canal Street Marketplace
- Kimberly Collier, Town of Fort Edward Councilmember
- Peter Williams, Village of Fort Edward
- John Huggins, Glens Falls Hospital
- Mary Ward, Champlain Canalway Trail Working Group
- Pattie Simone, Feeder Canal Alliance
- Pamela Landi, Washington County Planning Dept.

With the steering committee in place, Fort Edward was able to begin the first task - a Trail Town Self-Assessment. The assessment encouraged Fort Edward to take initial stock of their recreation and hospitality assets, and to start thinking about the strengths and weaknesses of the town and village in terms of attracting bicycle tourists and encouraging residents to walk or bike.

While the Trail Town program usually involves a trail visitor count collection effort, a construction project on Fort Edward’s only stretch of off-road trail made it impossible to install a counter this season. A counter will be installed in the future once the trail is reopened. In order to provide some context for trail use, this report includes trail use data collected in 2022 and 2023 at a counter installed just north of the Town of Fort Edward in the Town of Kingsbury at the intersection with NY Route 196.

In June, PTNY held a two-part participatory workshop in Fort Edward with an evening Placemaking Workshop on June 12 and a morning Bike Around Workshop the following day. The Placemaking Workshop provided a hands-on opportunity for about five Trail Town steering committee members and other interested community members to learn more about outdoor recreation tourism and continue the conversations that the Trail Town Self-Assessment started. Through an interactive mapping exercise, workshop participants identified Fort Edward’s top assets (including places, businesses, events, and experiences), as well as gaps or areas for improved connectivity, services, or amenities.

The following morning, PTNY led a group a bike ride around Fort Edward to highlight some of the assets and gaps identified during the previous evening’s workshop. In order to capitalize on the momentum and ideas generated during the workshop, PTNY compiled the notes from the workshops along with several short-term recommendations, outlining actions that the city could take immediately to improve the trail user experience and start better capitalizing on trail tourism that same summer.



Later in the summer, Fort Edward turned its attention to the next phase of the program, which involved taking a look at its assets with the eye of compiling them into an web-based resource that trail users could use to plan their visits. PTNY used this information to inform the development of **Fort Edward’s Trail Town landing page**, hosted on the promotional website for the trail, www.cycletheeriecanal.com.

2024 Trail Town Highlights

Even while undertaking the planning process, Fort Edward has advanced several projects and initiatives that contribute to its trail friendliness and its designation as a Trail Town. In addition to these highlights, Fort Edward has continued to advance programs and the implementation of projects that enhance the community and the trail.

- **Adaptive Kayak Launch installed at the Fort Edward Yacht Basin:** This past summer, a new adaptive boat launch was installed at the Fort Edward Yacht Basin in the heart of Fort Edward's downtown, made possible by a Canal Corp Tourism & Amenities grant.
- **Tuesdays on the Hudson:** Promote Fort Edward hosted a full season of 'Tuesdays on the Hudson' events. Daytime activities included exploring Fort Edward's downtown and Rogers Island by bike and foot and kayaking the Hudson River, while happy hour activities included free yoga, and specials at local restaurants, the brewery, and guest vendors.
- **Evergreen Bicycle Works Bike Rentals:** With an expanded fleet, Evergreen Bicycle Works offered bikes for rent for periods ranging from daily use up to a full week.
- **Repainted buffered shoulder on US Route 4:** After a repaving project, the buffered shoulder that was installed as part of the Empire State Trail project was not repainted. Over the summer, the shoulder was repainted with a buffer, enhancing cyclist safety.



A Major Unforeseen Challenge

In spring 2024, construction on the Champlain Hudson Power Express transmission line project that will bring energy from Hydro-Quebec in Canada to New York City began along the Champlain Canalway/Empire State Trail corridor in Fort Edward. Initially, the work was not communicated to the impacted communities and "trail closed" signs were posted, even though the trail was supposed to remain open. As a result of local advocacy and the efforts of the NYS Canal Corporation, Kiewit Corporation re-opened the trail and provided flaggers to coordinate trail access with ongoing construction access. Even with these efforts however, the trail condition was negatively impacted during the 2024 tourism season, with poor trail surface conditions and fast-moving construction traffic on the trail route.

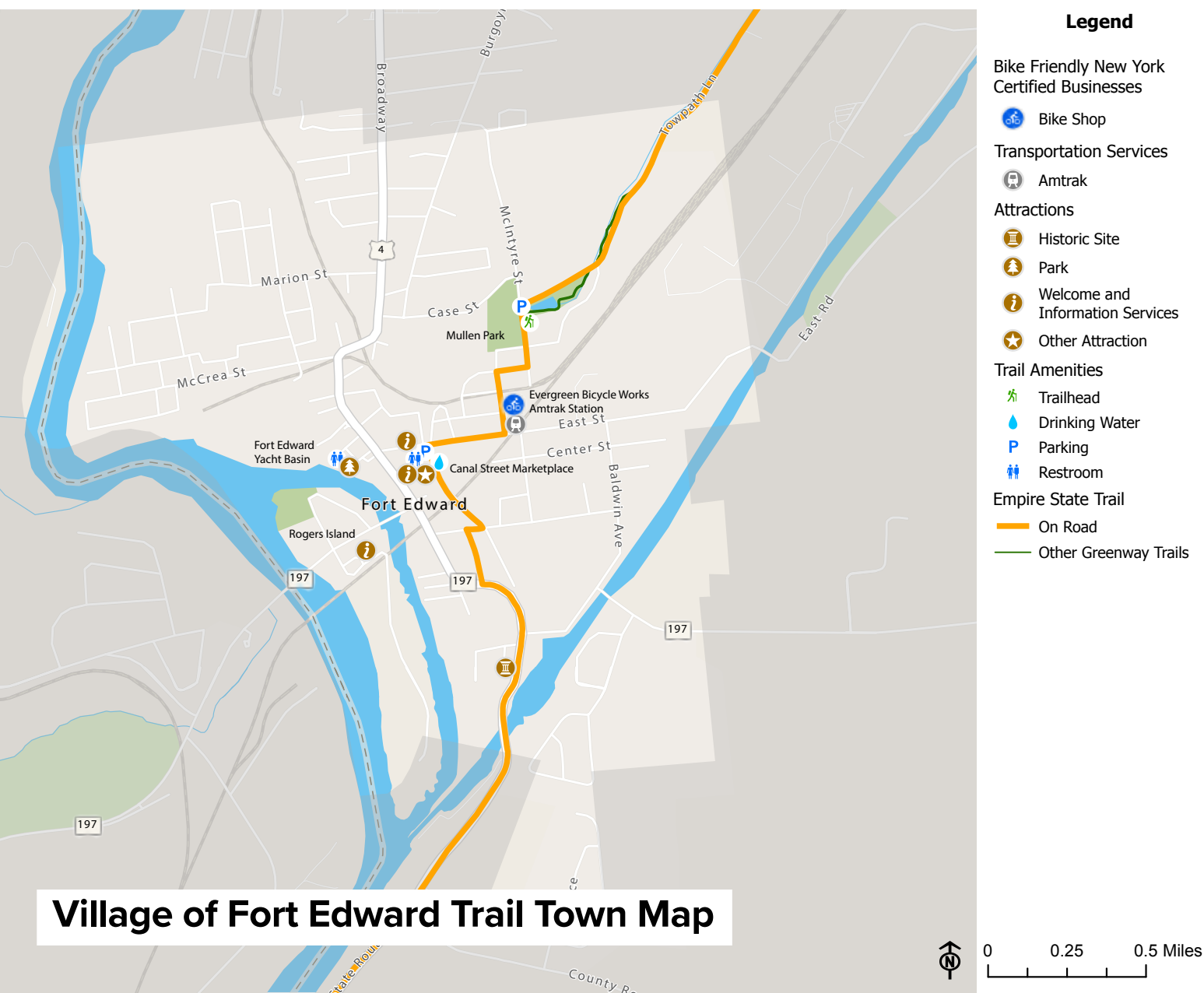


Existing Conditions

This section provides an overview of the community, an inventory of the Champlain Canalway/Empire State Trail, a trail count analysis, and a summary of existing plans and upcoming projects.

About Fort Edward

Riverfront views, lively community events, abundant historical attractions, and a welcoming small town atmosphere - these are just a few of the many great reasons to visit Fort Edward. Situated on the beautiful upper Hudson River just south of the Adirondack Park, Fort Edward is an idyllic place to stop and rest on the Empire State Trail. With train access via Amtrak’s Ethan Allen Express, it’s also the perfect place to start or end your journey. While in town, grab a drink or bite to eat at one of the locally owned breweries and restaurants, learn about history at the Rogers Island Visitors Center and Old Fort House Museum, and visit the locally owned bicycle shop inside the historic D&H Rail Station to make sure the trip continues safely and smoothly. The Town of Fort Edward is home to 5,991 residents, with about 3,108 of them living within the Village of Fort Edward.

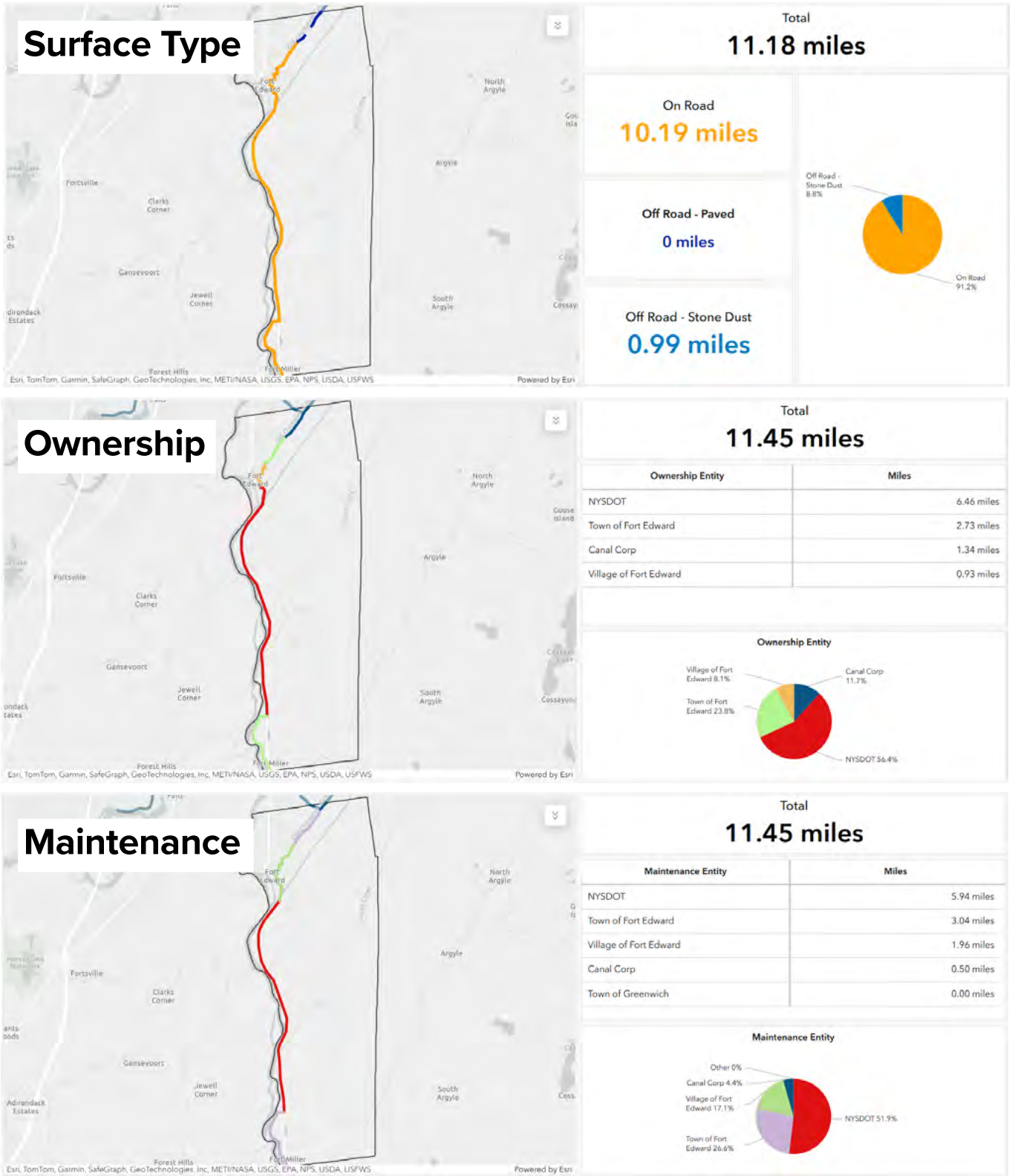


Empire State Trail Inventory

Surface Type, Ownership & Maintenance Responsibilities

Fort Edward is home to 11.18 miles of the Empire State Trail, and an additional 0.27 miles of the Feeder Canal Trail (reflected in the ownership and maintenance dashboards below). Most of the Empire State Trail through the town is on paved road, with about a mile of stonedust trail that continues north past the intersection with the Feeder Canal Trail. Trail ownership and maintenance responsibilities are split between the NYS Department of Transportation, Village of Fort Edward, Town of Fort Edward, and the NYS Canal Corporation. It should be noted that there are quite a few instances where the trail is not owned and maintained by the same entity.

Data source: **NYS Canal Corporation Trail Data Inventory (2021)**



Trail Use Counts & Analysis

Trail use data can help businesses and decision makers understand the potential market for trail user-oriented services and amenities, as well as when people are using the trail so that the community can best serve their needs.

As a result of the Champlain Hudson Power Express transmission line project and corresponding disruption to Fort Edward's section of trail, no counter was installed in 2024. In order to provide some information about trail use, this report includes an analysis of trail use data collected from June 4, 2022 to May 6, 2023 at a counter installed just north of the Town of Fort Edward in the Town of Kingsbury at the intersection with NY Route 196. The electronic trail counter used infrared pyroelectric technology to count the trail users passing within range of the sensor by detecting body temperature. The counter collected data 24 hours a day at one hour intervals for the period it was installed. Analysis was then conducted on the trail use data from the electronic counter to determine trends across different time scales. It should be noted that factors such as weather conditions, accessibility of the trail, and special events may have impacted the trail use patterns seen throughout the year.

Once work is completed and the trail is restored to its original condition in Fort Edward, another counter will be installed in Fort Edward to capture more recent data.

Monthly & Daily Trail Use

The Canalway Trail in Kingsbury sees visitors all year, but the months of April to November see the highest, most consistent use. The month of July saw the highest number of visitors, with a median of 89 visits to the trail per day, increasing to an average of 143 visits on weekends. Throughout the summer and fall, the trail is more popular on weekends, while in the cooler months, trail use is more evenly distributed between weekends and weekdays.

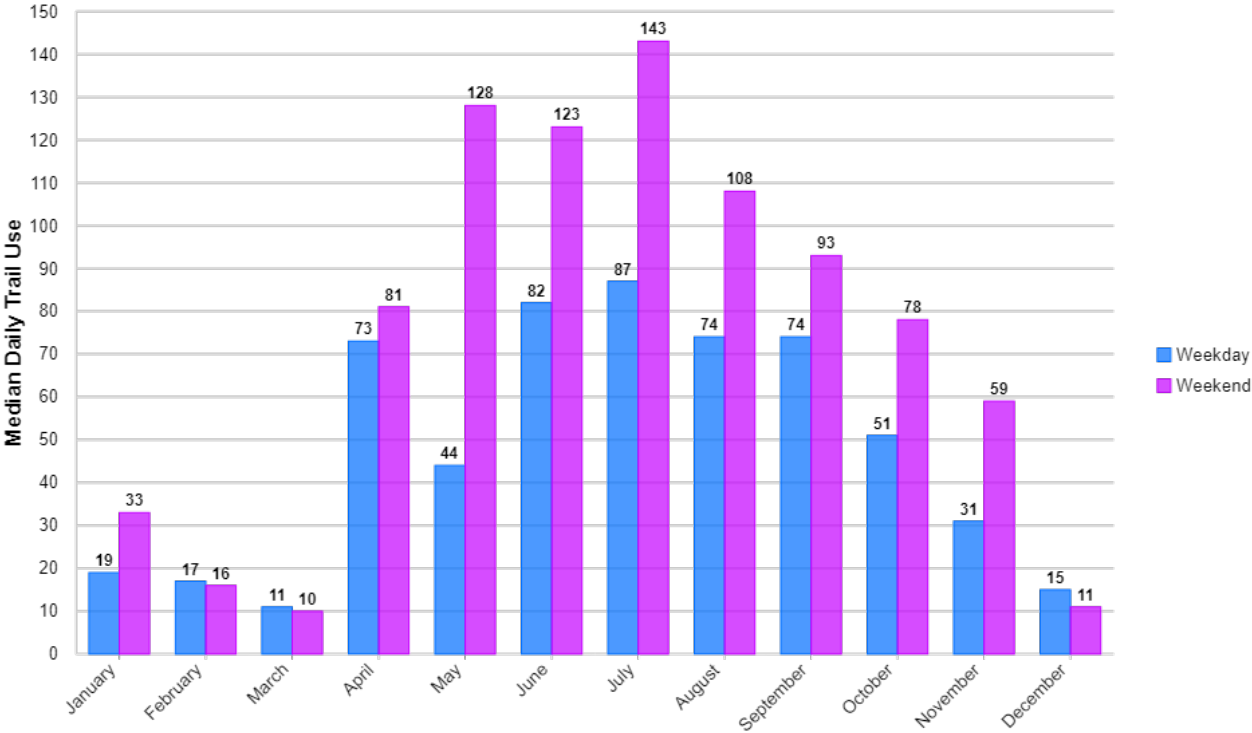
Hourly Trail Use

Trail use trends reveal that the trail is used throughout the day from 8am to 5pm on weekdays and from 8am to 6pm on weekends. On weekdays, trail use peaks from 11am to 1pm, whereas on weekends, trail use is highest between 10am and 3pm. These statistics may indicate that businesses offering lunch may have success marketing to trail users, or that after 3pm, trail users may be coming off the trail looking for a bite to eat or something to drink.

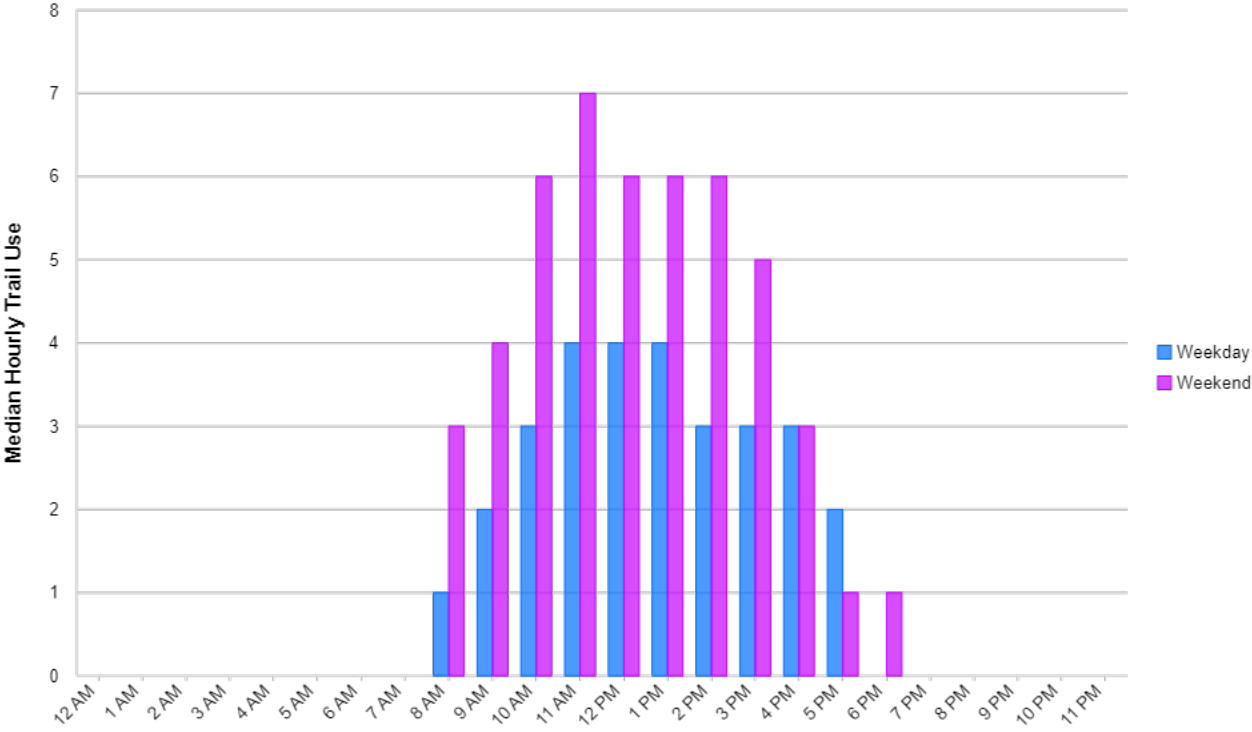
Trail Use in Kingsbury by Month (June 4, 2022 - May 6, 2023)

Month	Days Counted	Total Count	Median Daily Use	Median Daily Use - Weekday	Daily Median Use - Weekend
January	31	843	843	19	33
February	28	596	596	17	16
March	31	685	685	11	10
April	30	2,718	2,718	73	81
May	6	386	386	44	128
June	27	2,621	2,621	82	123
July	31	3,188	3,188	87	143
August	31	2,612	2,612	74	108
September	30	2,275	2,275	74	93
October	31	1,897	1,897	51	78
November	30	1,287	1,287	31	59
December	31	460	460	15	11
Total	337	19,568	19,568	45	67

Median Daily Trail Use by Month

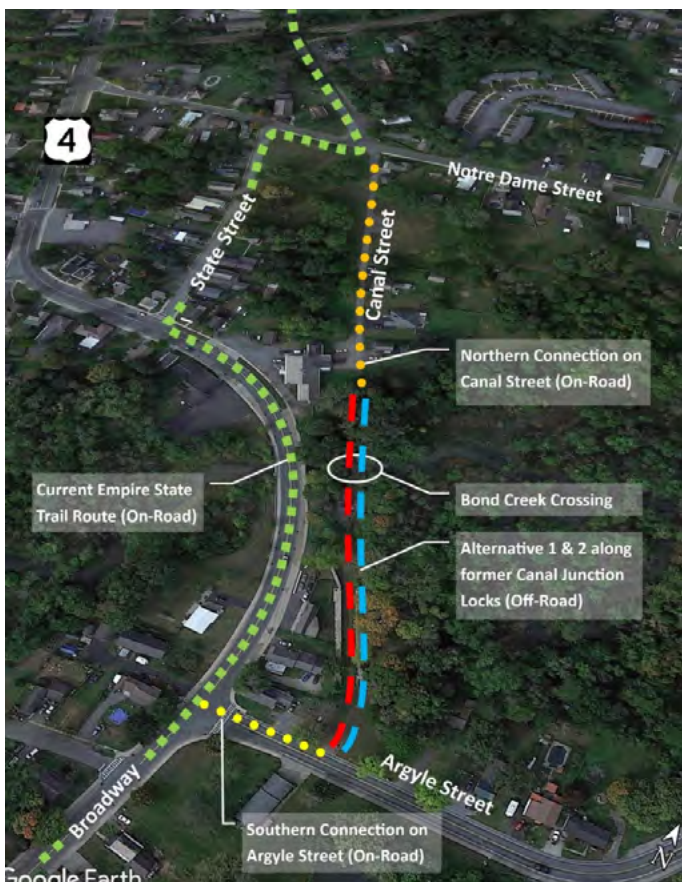


Median Hourly Trail Use



Plans & Upcoming Projects

- **Old Fort Edward Junction Locks Trail Extension Feasibility Report (2023):** The Village of Fort Edward and the Adirondack/Glens Falls Transportation Council commissioned a study to examine the feasibility of creating an off road trail section between Canal St and Argyle St. This would remedy the issue of trail users entering & exiting Route 4 between two blind curves. It will add approximately 725 ft of off road trail where users will be able to ride through the historic Fort Edward Junction Locks.
- **Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan (2019):** This 2019 Action Plan represents the vision of the Champlain Canalway Trail Working Group, a volunteer partnership that includes local and regional canal and trail groups, public agencies, and park and preservation organizations. The Working Group seeks to establish the Champlain Canalway Trail, a continuous public multi-use trail from Waterford to Whitehall. A trail profile was developed for Fort Edward, consisting of a description of the trail and how the Empire State Trail interfaces with the Champlain Canalway Trail in that community. To give locational context, a short inventory of water access points, public facilities and events, and locations for important trail connectors are also provided.
- Promote Fort Edward/Canal Street Marketplace have secured a fix-it station and a bike rack, to be installed at the Canal Street Marketplace. An additional bike rack will be installed at the corner of East St and Broadway in the business district. These amenities are planned to be installed in spring 2025.
- Promote Fort Edward is working with Schuylerville-based consultant Flatley Reed on a project to build an amphitheater at the Fort Edward Yacht Basin.
- While Complete Streets policies have been pursued by the Town and Village of Fort Edward in the past, neither entity has adopted them.



Old Fort Edward Junction Locks Trail Extension Project Overview Map.



Current conditions at the Old Fort Edward Junction Locks.

Assessment

The assessment sought to understand the community's strengths and weaknesses in each of the overarching categories as identified in the Trail Town Framework: Services & Amenities, Bike & Pedestrian Infrastructure, Wayfinding & Informational Resources, and Welcoming Community Character.

Trail-oriented services and amenities

This section assesses whether trail users can find what they need while visiting Fort Edward, whether they're just passing through, spending a few hours exploring, or staying the night.

- Restrooms & drinking water
- Businesses & attractions
 - Overnight accommodations - indoor lodging and camping
 - Food and drink - especially local fare
 - Attractions/destinations
 - Information center
- Bike amenities

Restrooms & Drinking Water

There are a number of places to use the restroom and get water in Fort Edward, but they are not all immediately apparent from the trail, and/or are not all consistently open when people will be out using the trail.

Fort Edward Yacht Basin: Restrooms with running water, including coin operated showers (about 0.25 miles off the trail).

Canal Street Marketplace: A restroom and water fill-up station, located directly on the trail at the Canal Street Marketplace. The water station is accessible on the outside of the building. The restrooms are also on the outside, but are only unlocked during opening hours of the Marketplace.

Local businesses: Most of the downtown businesses have their restrooms open to the public. Evergreen Bicycle Works is about 0.2 miles past the Canal Street Marketplace (heading north) and has a bathroom and drinking water available to the public during hours of operation.

Businesses & Attractions

Fort Edward has one certified Bike Friendly business. Launched in 2017, Bike Friendly New York (BFNY) is a bicycle friendly business certification program administered by Parks & Trails New York and the New York State Canal Corporation. BFNY aims to recognize and promote businesses that provide accommodations for bicyclists and value them as customers. A wide range of businesses are eligible for bike-friendly certification, including restaurants and bars, lodging, shops, and museums.



At the most basic level, businesses must meet the following requirements:

1. Have a physical location, which is open to the general public and has hours of operation clearly posted at the location and/or online.
2. Be located near, and easily accessible from, a greenway trail.
3. Have an identified parking area for bicycles (this can be a public bike rack, a bike parking area in front of the business, covered and secure bike parking indoors, or another solution)

In addition, businesses must meet a few category-specific criteria. For example, Food and Drink Service establishments must have a menu posted outside and/or online and overnight accommodations must offer one night stays and provide covered and secured bike storage. All criteria can be found at ptny.org/bikefriendly.

Bike Friendly NY Certified Businesses in Fort Edward

Business Name	Category
Evergreen Bicycle Works	Bike Shop

As of March 2025

Accommodations

Overnight accommodations are not plentiful in the Village, but there is at least one Airbnb directly in the village and a few other options outside of town for camping (Lock C9) or indoor lodging (Queensbury Hotel in Glens Falls). Promote Fort Edward is working with the Village of Fort Edward to create camping opportunities within the Village at the Fort Edward Yacht Basin, which already has overnight amenities for boaters, including coin operated showers.

Indoor Lodging

- There is at least one AirBnB full rental unit in a Victorian home directly in the village. The description specifies that there is a private entrance with a closet and room to store a bicycle.
- The Queensbury Hotel, a Bike Friendly NY certified hotel, is located 7.5 miles northwest of Fort Edward on the Feeder Canal Trail (last mile is on the road).

Camping

- Primitive camping is available at Lock C9 six miles north of Fort Edward on the Empire State Trail

Progress on Offering Hiker/Biker Camping at the Fort Edward Yacht Basin:

One of the goals identified early on by the Trail Town committee was to permit hiker/biker/boater camping at the Fort Edward Yacht Basin. In 2024, Fort Edward began working with NYS Canal Corporation to modify the village's permit at the Yacht Basin to include camping. In 2025, the Village Board voted to approve a pilot program to permit camping at the Yacht Basin, under the condition that Promote Fort Edward would manage the program and take on liability for the program. Discussions are ongoing and issues of liability have not been resolved.

Note: Located just south of the village, NYS Canal Corporation does not permit primitive camping at Lock C7, with reasons cited including poor stewardship by existing users of the lock for fishing and other recreational activities and lack of visibility of the site by local authorities.

Warm Showers

Warm Showers is a reciprocal hospitality website and app designed for touring cyclists. Many touring cyclists use the platform to find hosts to stay with while traveling along the trail. There are no WarmShowers hosts in the Town or its surroundings.

Food & Drink

- A variety of food & drink options are available to trail users in downtown Fort Edward on Broadway, less than 0.5 miles from the trail. The Anvil Inn, Mamma's Cafe, Stumpy's Pizzeria, Ye Olde Fort Diner, Cue and Brew, and Dalia's on the Hudson are all locally owned restaurants. Slickfin Brewing Company is the local brewery, which participates in the Bicycle Benefits program, offering a promotion or discount to participating cyclists.
- There is a Stewart's Shop, where trail users can purchase ice cream, snacks, beverages, & other supplies. The Stewart's location does not have a bike rack.
-

- On Thursday evenings, food vendors & other local food and produce can be found at the Canal Street Marketplace.
- Evergreen Bicycle Works sells nutrition products and beverages.
- On Tuesday evenings in July and August, trail users can find a variety of food trucks at the Yacht Basin participating in “Tuesdays on the Hudson.”
- In the Town of Fort Edward, Rookies Cookies & Creme, a locally owned ice cream shop. Cumberland Farms, Pizza Hut, Subway & Market 32 can all be found within sight of each other, however they are located off the trail on NY Route 4 and are not easy to access by bike.

Destinations & Attractions

Canal Street Marketplace: Located in a beautifully renovated former canal barn, the Canal Street Marketplace hosts a weekly farmer’s market from June through September and the Locktoberfest celebration in October.

Rogers Island Visitors Center: Explore the grounds and building exhibits on Rogers Island to learn about the area’s earliest known Native American inhabitants and Fort Edward’s important role in the French & Indian War and early American history.

The Old Fort House Museum: The Old Fort House Museum features five historic buildings, an apothecary garden, and a gift shop. Visitors can explore the grounds on their own or participate in guided tours.

Fort Edward Yacht Basin / Underwood Park: This charming waterfront park offers restrooms and showers, an accessible kayak launch, and picnic tables to enjoy the views right along the water.

Feeder Canal Towpath Trail: This stone dust trail follows the Feeder Canal to neighboring Glens Falls. Continue on to the Warren County Bikeway to explore Lake George Village. The Feeder Canal Towpath Trail is perfect for day touring or as an alternate ending to your northbound Empire State Trail ride.



Information Centers

There are at least four visitor information centers throughout the village, although Evergreen Bicycle Works is the only location directly on the trail, and is where most trail users will likely go for information. Evergreen Bicycle Works provides local community information as well as brochures & maps for area attractions. There is an info/event billboard located inside and a map of the community, with points of interest, located outside of the building.

The Canal Street Marketplace also has the potential to be a trail information and visitor hub. Promote Fort Edward, the Canal Street Marketplace Committee, & the Fort Edward Village Board are working together to designate an area at the Canal Street Marketplace to serve as a Welcome Center for EST users and other visitors to the community. It is directly on the trail, and will be visible to users from traveling from both directions on Canal St.

- Evergreen Bicycle Works (Mar 1st - Oct 31st: Fri through Tue 11a-6p / Nov 1st - Feb 28th/29th Fri through Sun 11a-5p) - Restrooms, Visitor Information, Bicycle Rentals & Repair Services
- Rogers Island Visitors Center (Wed through Saturday 10a-4p, Sun 1-4p) - Restrooms, Visitor Information
- Fort Edward Village/Town Hall (Mon through Fri 8a-4p) - Visitor Information
- Fort Edward Free Library (Mon through Wed 9:30a-1:30p & 3-6p, Thu 9:30a-1:30p, Fri & Sat 9:30a-12p) - Restrooms, Computers, Visitor Information

Bike Amenities

The Village has a few bike racks located at specific trailheads and at various attractions, however it is lacking a more comprehensive bike parking strategy in the main business district. A few bike racks and a new fix-it station have been purchased, with plans to install them at strategic locations downtown. Fort Edward's biggest asset is Evergreen Bicycle Works, which serves as a full-service bike shop, provides rentals, and serves as a resource for visiting trail users.

Bike parking - There are a few bike racks at EST trailheads, but bike parking is lacking downtown. A few bike racks have been purchased, but they have not yet been installed.

Fix-it stations - There is one fix-it station at the Fort Edward EST trailhead on the north side of the village, and one that has been bought and is planned to be installed at the Canal Street Marketplace.

Bike shops - Evergreen Bicycle Works is a full-service bicycle shop offering new and used bicycles, gear & apparel, bicycle maintenance & repair, and bicycle rentals. The store is so much more than the products and services they offer. Evergreen Bicycle Works is the heart of the cycling community in Fort Edward and aims to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all riders, regardless of ability.

Bike Rentals - Evergreen Bicycle Works offers a fleet of hybrid style bicycles, available to rent for day rides up to a full week.

High-quality and safe bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure

This section looks at the extent to which pedestrians and cyclists can safely travel around the community, both on the trail and off the trail to explore other parts of the community, looking specifically at

- Champlain Canalway/Empire State Trail conditions
- Connecting trails
- On-road connections to points of interest

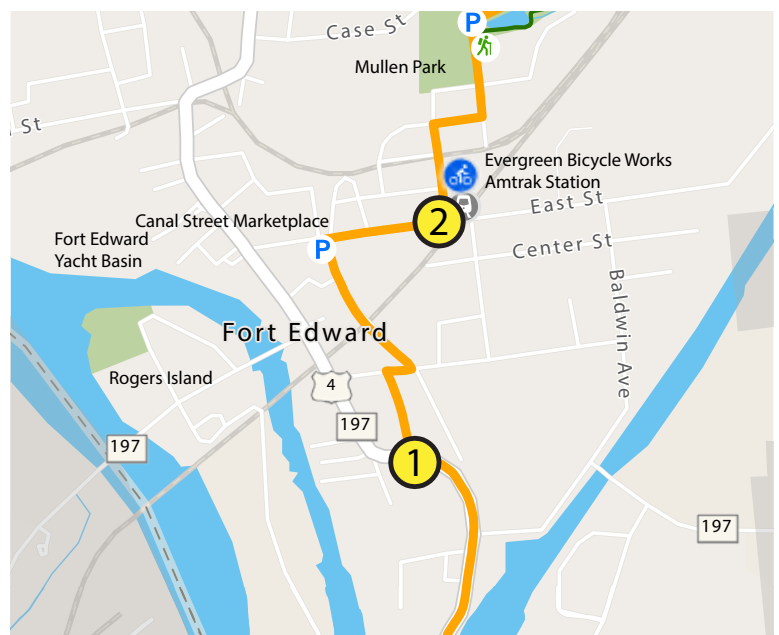
Champlain Canalway/Empire State Trail Conditions

Most of the trail through the town is on-road and is in good condition. The section on Route 4 was recently repaved, and the shoulder was recently repainted with a buffer. The on-road segments of the route through the village are relatively low trafficked.

The 1-mile off-road, stonedust segment of the Champlain Canalway/Empire State Trail was recently resurfaced as part of the Empire State Trail project. However, as of the end of 2024, the surface has been severely damaged during the Champlain Hudson Power Express transmission line project.

Conflict Points:

- 1 Intersection of State St and NY Rt 4/Broadway. Southbound trail users have to make a left onto NY Rt 4 on a blind turn
- 2 Crossing of East St in front of Evergreen Bicycle Works/Amtrak Station can be hazardous to pedestrians and cyclists due to high traffic generated by the Amtrak station



Connecting Trails

Feeder Canal Trail

The Feeder Canal Trail, which runs seven miles to Glens Falls and connects to the Warren County Bikeway in Lake George, connects to the Champlain Canalway/Empire State Trail at the northern edge of the Town.

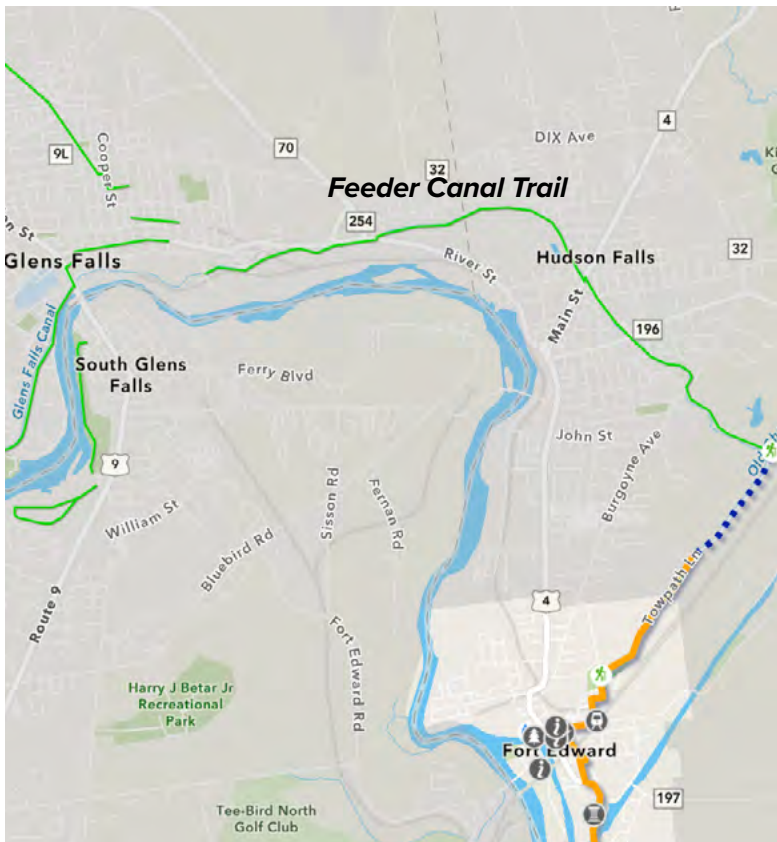
Mullen Park

There is a short, paved multi-use path through Mullen Park that is not part of the CCT/EST

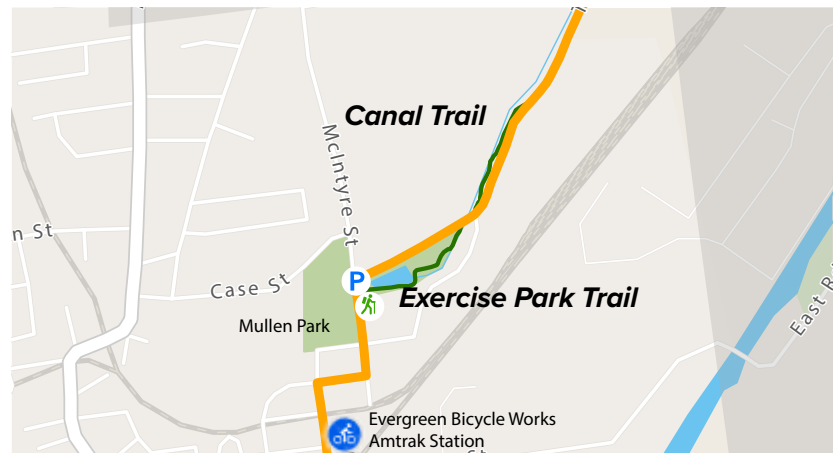
Village of Fort Edward Exercise Park and Canal Trails

There is a stonedust/natural surface path through the Village of Fort Edward Exercise Park and along Towpath Road/Lane between the road and the old canal, ending at the northern village boundary. The trails are not well-maintained, and are more appropriate for walking than biking. The Village of Fort Edward owns and maintains these trails.

Feeder Canal Trail



Village Trails



Connecting to Key Destinations

Accessing downtown businesses and the Yacht Basin

The downtown business district is located on NY Rt 4/Broadway, a few blocks to the west of the Empire State Trail. The easiest way to access it is by traveling on East Street. There are no bike facilities on East Street, but there are sidewalks on both sides.

NY Rt 4/Broadway is a state highway. There are no bike facilities, but there are sidewalks on both sides.

From NY Rt 4/Broadway, the Yacht Basin can be easily accessed on Terminal Lane, however this road does not have sidewalks. It can also be accessed via the archway to Underwood Park, which is more pleasant for pedestrians.

The business district can also be reached on foot from the Canal Street Marketplace by cutting through the Fort Edward Municipal Parking Lot.

Accessing Rogers Island Visitor Center

Rogers Island is located in the Hudson River and can only be accessed via NY Rt 197/Bridge Street. The bridge itself is narrow and does not feel comfortable for riding in the road, but there is a sidewalk. Once on the island, Bridge St has sidewalks in poor condition, and they end before reaching Rogers Island Visitor Center.

Accessing Town of Fort Edward Rt 4 amenities (Grocery store, ice cream shop, convenience store)

There are services and amenities located north of the village that are important or attractive for trail users, however there is no good way to reach them by bike on high-traffic NY Rt 4.

Wayfinding & Informational Resources

Information is crucial for introducing potential visitors to the community or encouraging residents to get out and explore their own trails, be it ahead of time trip-planning resources or signage and welcome centers that help direct trail users in the moment. This section looks at the quality of the signage on the ground and the trip-planning resources available online.

- Pedestrian scale signage
- Online & print promotional materials

Signage

Trailhead Signage

- There is an EST trailhead sign for the Empire State Trail trailhead at Mullen Park
- Canal Street Marketplace serves as an informal trailhead, but there is no signage indicating it as such.

CCT/EST blazes

Empire State Trail blazes are easy to follow through the town and village, but there are no Champlain Canalway Trail blazes



EST/CCT Trailhead signage at Mullen Park

Kiosks

There are several kiosks located around the village, including on Broadway, at the Yacht Basin, and at Mullen Park EST Trailhead.

There are several challenges facing the kiosks:

- Some of the kiosks are not in good condition, allowing water to leak in and the cork backing to be damaged.
- The village lacks of a comprehensive strategy for keeping them filled and up-to-date.



Gateway & directional signage into the village

Northern Gateway: Intersection with Feeder Canal Trail:

There is limited wayfinding signage at the intersection of the Feeder Canal Trail and Champlain Canalway Trail.

- There is a “Feeder Canal Trail” sign pointing west to the Feeder Canal Trail, but it is not clear where the Feeder Canal Trail goes.
- There is no sign on the Feeder Canal Trail indicating that there is an intersection with the Champlain Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail, or that the Village of Fort Edward is nearby to the south.

The Visit Fort Edward “Welcome to Fort Edward” lawn signs are a welcoming presence, especially those placed along the northern section of off-road trail, although work along the trail may have left them in poor condition.

Mullen Park/EST Trailhead:

There had been two directional signs at the Mullen Park EST Trailhead directing trail users to the Amtrak Station and Downtown Fort Edward, however these signs appear to have been taken down or stolen.

There is a Feeder Canal Trail map and an Empire State Trail map at this trailhead that provide some context for visitors.

Wayfinding in the village:

There are two high-quality signs to Trail Town amenities:

- Fort Edward Yacht Basin and Restrooms sign at the Yacht Basin
- Fort Edward wayfinding map outside Evergreen Bicycle Works/Amtrak Station. The map will likely need to be updated soon.

There is no directional signage directing trail users to the downtown business district at the intersection of the trail route with East Street, where trail users would most likely make a decision to visit.



Intersection with the Feeder Canal Trail.

Southern Gateway: Fort Miller Mill Park

At the southern end of the Town of Fort Edward, Fort Miller's Mill Park could serve as a gateway to Fort Edward, but there is currently no trailhead or gateway signage.



Southern Gateway at Fort Miller

Informational Resources

Visit Fort Edward: Promote Fort Edward manages a promotional website for the Town and Village, as well as active Facebook and Instagram accounts highlighting events and other successes.

Village of Fort Edward Municipal Website: The Village of Fort Edward has a page for attractions, but does not have information about the Empire State Trail/Champlain Canalway Trail or visiting as a cyclist.

Town of Fort Edward Municipal Website: The Town of Fort Edward does not have any information about the Empire State Trail/Champlain Canalway Trail or visiting as a cyclist.

Champlain Canalway Trail Community Page: Fort Edward has a community page on the Champlain Canalway Trail website, with information about the Champlain Canalway/Empire State Trail, attractions, amenities, and other information.

Washington County Tourism: Washington County Tourism has some information on the Empire State Trail, but is more focused on attractions, destinations, and things to do, with limited applicability for cyclists.

Fort Edward: All Paths Lead Here: As part of the Empire State Trail Town program, PTNY worked with the Trail Town Committee to develop a Trail Town Landing Page, which highlights what makes the Town and Village unique and contains everything a trail user would need to plan their visit.

Fort Edward: All Paths Lead Here

Screenshot of Fort Edward's Trail Town landing page.



Riverfront views, lively community events, abundant historical attractions, and a welcoming small town atmosphere - these are just a few of the many great reasons to visit Fort Edward. Situated on the beautiful upper Hudson River just south of the Adirondack Park, Fort Edward is an idyllic place to stop and rest as you pass through on the Empire State Trail. With train access via Amtrak's Ethan Allen Express, it's also the perfect place to start or end your journey. While you're here, grab a drink or bite to eat at our locally owned brewery and restaurants, learn about our history at the Rogers Island Visitors Center and Old Fort House Museum, and visit our locally owned bicycle shop inside the historic D&H Rail Station to make sure your trip continues safely and smoothly.

Why visit Fort Edward?

- **Canal Street Marketplace** Located in a beautifully renovated former canal barn, the Canal Street Marketplace hosts a weekly farmer's market from June through September and the Locktoberfest celebration in October.
- **Rogers Island Visitors Center** Explore the grounds and building exhibits on Rogers Island to learn about the area's earliest known Native American inhabitants and Fort Edward's important role in the French & Indian War and early American history.
- **The Old Fort House Museum** The Old Fort House Museum features five historic buildings, an apothecary garden, and a gift shop. Visitors can explore the grounds on their own or participate in guided tours.
- **Fort Edward Yacht Basin / Underwood Park** This charming waterfront park offers restrooms and showers, an accessible kayak launch, and picnic tables to enjoy the views right along the water.
- **Feeder Canal Towpath Trail** This stone dust trail follows the Feeder Canal to neighboring Glens Falls. Continue on to the Warren County Bikeway to explore Lake George Village. The Feeder Canal Towpath Trail is perfect for day touring or as an alternate ending to your northbound Empire State Trail ride.

Welcoming Atmosphere & Unique Community Character

Successful Trail Towns embrace and showcase what makes them unique, highlighting local history, culture, events and food. Visitors get to know what makes each town along the trail unique, and have more incentive to visit– and spread the word. Residents for their part get to share the best parts of their community and gain an enhanced sense of local pride.

- Festivals, events & programs
- Public art & history

Festivals, Events & Programs

Fort Edward is home to a vibrant season of events:

Tuesdays on the Hudson (4-8pm on Tuesdays in July & August)

Tuesdays on the Hudson is a weekly summer event featuring food trucks, happy hour specials, live music, pick-up volleyball, and more!

Canal Street Market (4-7pm on Thursdays from June through September)

This evening farmers market includes vendors from the local area and live music. From fresh produce to hand made soaps and balms, there's something for everyone at the Canal Street Market.

Locktoberfest (October)

Locktoberfest is a celebration of the Harvest season on New York State's Canals that brings the best local products to the heart of Historic Fort Edward for a festive day of food, drinks, and fun for the whole family.

Public Art & History

Historically known as the “Great Carrying Place” (Wahcoloosencoochaleva), Fort Edward is steeped in layers of pre and post colonial history, having played a major role in the French and Indian Wars and the American Revolution, a history that is interpreted at the Rogers Island Visitor Center. Fort Edward is located at the intersection of the Hudson River and Champlain Canal, and has a historic train station where Amtrak's Adirondack and Ethan Allan's Express passenger lines stop daily.

This identity as a crossroads is represented in the iconic mural at the corner of East St and Broadway, with the inscription “By River, By Road, By Rail, All Paths Lead to Fort Edward.” If this mural were to be updated, it could also include “By Trail”! The building that the mural is on is owned by the Village and is part of a grant program where a developer can redevelop the buildings and receive the grant amount discounted from the sale price when the Village sells them the buildings. There is a contract in the works, and the developer has said they will try to get the mural repainted.

As a historic Champlain Canal community, Fort Edward is home to the Old Fort Edward Junction Locks where the Old Canal ran through town. If the Old Fort Edward Junction Locks Trail Extension is pursued, the remains of the locks will be more visible and will serve to enhance the interpretation of Fort Edward's history.

Fort Edward is also known for the Fort Edward Grasslands, a rare and unique important bird habitat. At one point, an on-road loop was being developed, branching off the Empire State Trail to incorporate the rural roads that pass by the Grasslands, an effort that could be revived.



Recommendations

Keep in mind that when planning for projects on land owned by the NYS Canal Corporation (NYSCC), all necessary permits and approvals will be required. Signage on land owned by the Canal Corporation must conform to the forthcoming Canal Corporation Design Guidelines (anticipated spring 2025).

Trail Oriented Services & Amenities

Short Term

1. Increase the availability of bike parking in the village.

- ☒ Work with the Village and Town of Fort Edward and local businesses to procure and install cohesive and recognizable bike racks and fix-it stations throughout the Village and Town of Fort Edward. Priority locations for bike racks include: Broadway near the East Street intersection, at the Canal Street Marketplace, at the Yacht Basin, and at the top of Underwood Park.
- ☒ Refer to the [Essentials of Bike Parking](#) guide for best practices. Companies like [CycleHoop](#), [Dero](#), and [Saris Infrastructure](#) are good options for purchasing racks and have options for custom racks.

2. Continue to engage and educate the business community about how to be bike friendly and attract more cyclists.

- ☒ Work with local businesses and attractions to help them apply for Bike Friendly NY certification and to find ways to promote themselves to trail users.

3. Expand overnight options for visiting trail users in the Village of Fort Edward.

- ☒ Continue to work with the Village of Fort Edward to permit hiker/biker camping at the Fort Edward Yacht Basin, capitalizing on the existing amenities of showers and restrooms already provided for boaters.
- ☒ Encourage Fort Edward residents to join the reciprocal hospitality network of [Warm Showers](#).

Long Term

1. Work with the Canal Street Marketplace (CSM) Committee to create a mini "Welcome Center" at the Marketplace.

- ☒ Install the bike rack and fix-it station that has been procured for the CSM.
- ☒ Expand access to the restrooms at the CSM beyond opening hours. A lock on a timer or controlled by an app could be a solution.
- ☒ Formalize the Welcome Center and trailhead parking area by adding signage.
- ☒ Provide information about Fort Edward and its trail and other recreational opportunities with a kiosk (fixed or mobile) - utilize the existing fillable kiosk sign in the meantime.
- ☒ Consider establishing a Fort Edward volunteer greeter program to welcome cyclists and to manage the Welcome Center aspect of the CSM.

2. Elevate the Fort Edward Yacht Basin as a recreational destination for residents and visitors.

- ☒ Investigate the steps needed to install a self-serve kayak kiosk. Upstate Kayak Rentals has several locations along New York's canals and could be a good option to pursue. This site is on NYS Canal Corporation-owned land and would require the modification of the permit.
- ☒ Consider renaming the Yacht Basin to something more welcoming and community-oriented.

High-quality and safe bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure

Short Term

- 1. Implement the Fort Edward Old Junction Lock Trail Extension project.**
 - ✓ Pursue grant opportunities to implement the Fort Edward Old Junction Lock Trail Extension
- 2. Pursue traffic calming and pedestrian safety enhancements on East St between the Amtrak Station and Broadway.**
 - ✓ Improve the pedestrian crossing of East St at the intersection with Wing St across from the Amtrak Station. Ensure that the crosswalk is refreshed at the beginning of each warm-weather season and is painted according to **MUTCD crosswalk standards (p. 589)**. Consider pursuing other safety elements, such as a raised crosswalk or the installation of a Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacon to enhance the visibility of the crossing.
 - ✓ Install Shared Lane Markings or other traffic calming measures on East St to encourage cyclists to continue to visit the business district on Broadway
- 3. Create and promote more routes for cyclists, capitalizing on rural roads.**
 - ✓ Develop and promote a “Grasslands Loop” route that branches off from the Empire State Trail and utilizes back roads along the ridge, highlighting the unique ecosystems of the Grasslands and potentially partnering with local businesses.

Long Term

- 1. Develop and pass municipality-wide policies to enhance bike and pedestrian safety.**

 - ✓ Reduce the Village-wide speed limit to 25 mph. Refer to the growing **list of municipalities** that have lowered their speed limit to 25 mph for sample legislation and other tips
 - ✓ Develop and pass Town and Village Complete Streets policies.
- 2. Close Canal Street between Notre Dame St and East St to thru-traffic or make it a Bike Boulevard or “Slow Street” that prioritizes cyclists and pedestrians.**
- 3. Refresh the Village of Fort Edward Exercise Park trail by resurfacing it with stone dust and develop a maintenance plan.**



Page from the **2019 Champlain
Canalway Trail Action Plan**
*highlighting a potential Grasslands
Loop route*

Wayfinding & Informational Resources

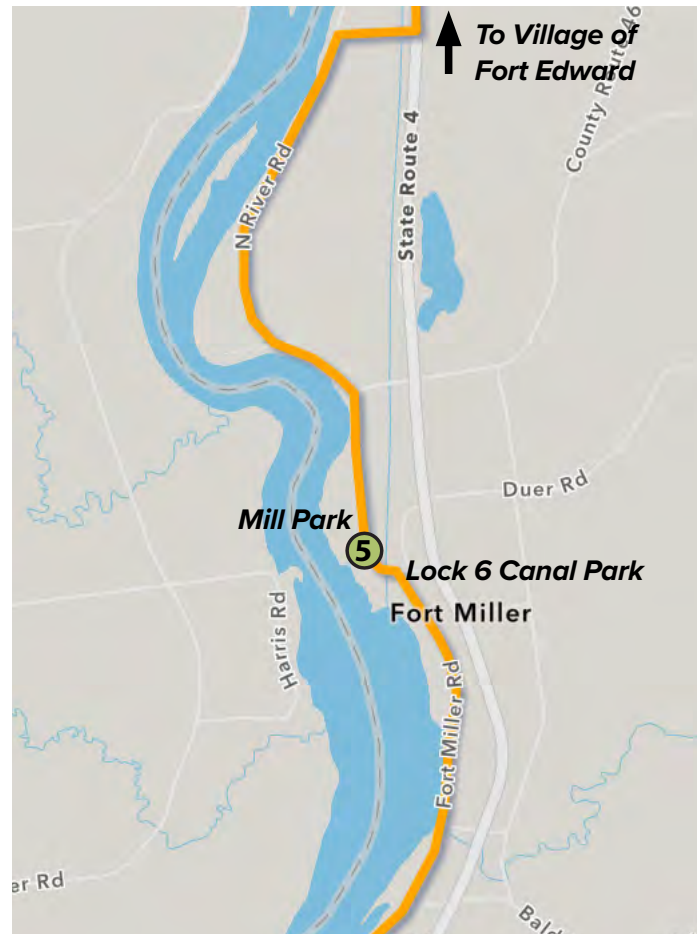
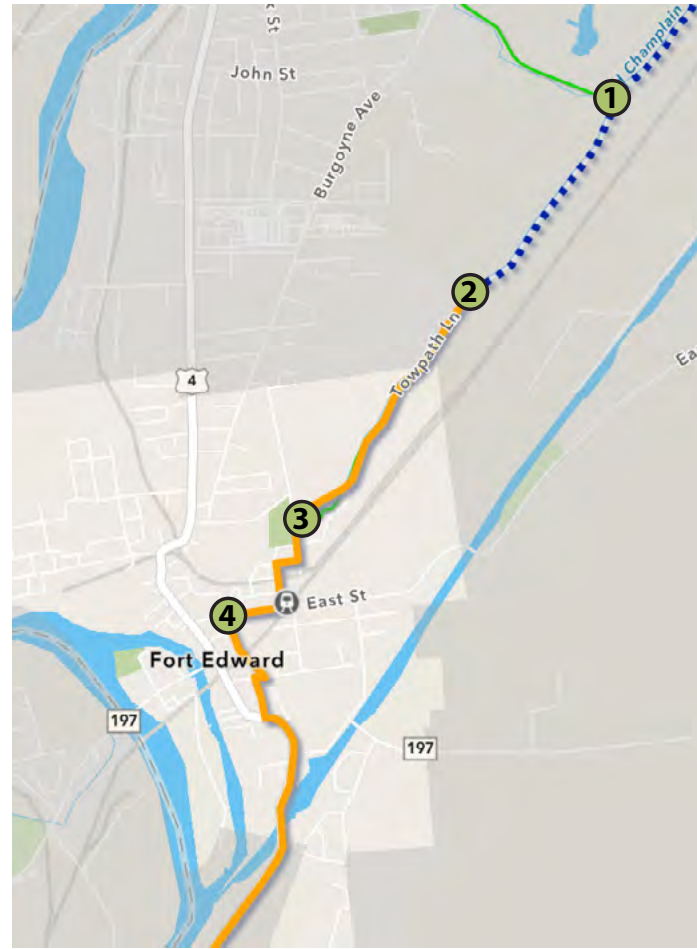
Short Term

1. Refresh and put out “Welcome to Fort Edward” lawn signs in the approaches to Fort Edward on the Empire State Trail.
2. Develop a plan and materials to ensure Village kiosks are filled prior to each tourism season.
3. Provide information for trail users on municipal websites.
 - ✓ Work with the Village and Town of Fort Edward to provide information on municipal websites about the [Empire State Trail](#), [Fort Edward’s Empire State Trail Town page](#), and [Visit Fort Edward](#).

Long Term

1. Develop a plan to address aging kiosks.
2. Work with the Village and Town of Fort Edward to create cohesive and recognizable gateway and wayfinding signage. Priority signage locations include:
 - ① Northern entrance gateway signage to the Town of Fort Edward & wayfinding to downtown businesses and the Fort Edward Yacht Basin at the intersection of East St and Canal St for both southbound and northbound trail users.
 - ② Wayfinding to downtown Fort Edward at the intersection of the Feeder Canal Trail and Empire State Trail.
 - ③ Wayfinding to downtown from the end of the end of the off-road trail.
 - ④ Wayfinding to downtown from the Empire State Trail trailhead at Mullen Park.
 - ⑤ Southern entrance gateway signage at Fort Miller’s Mill Park.

The Southern Gateway at Fort Miller could start as something as simple as a welcome sign and information kiosk. Longterm, additional elements could include a repair station and bike parking, water fill-up station, and shade pavilion to set the tone and welcome bicyclists and other trail users into the Town of Fort Edward.



Welcoming Atmosphere & Community Character

Short Term

1. **Continue to host Tuesdays on the Hudson during the summers to highlight the recreational opportunities and build community in Fort Edward.**
2. **Encourage businesses to “put a bike on it” or otherwise embrace the trail as a part of their identity.**
 - ☒ Ideas could include naming a beer after the trail; putting bike decorations outside or in the window
3. **Host an annual or a series of community bike rides.**
 - ☒ Consider reviving “Tour de Fort Edward” or partnering with external groups like the Friends of the Champlain Canalway Trail, the Feeder Canal Alliance, or Glens Falls Social Cycling on a social ride.
 - ☒ Partner with existing initiatives like NYS Canal Corporation’s **On the Canals** excursions or the Erie Canal Museum’s Beers, Bikes, and Barges series.

Long Term

1. **Refresh the “All Paths Lead to Fort Edward” mural.** This iconic mural could be updated to include “By Trail,” to reflect the village’s identity as a Trail Town.



Example of an Antique Store in Lockport "putting a bike on it" with decorations out front.

Implementation

In order for Fort Edward to fully capture the benefits of being an Empire State Trail Town, the recommendations on the preceding pages need to be implemented. Taking the following steps will help the community reach its goals.

» **Adopt this Action Agenda with a Municipal Resolution**

The town and village of Fort Edward should recognize the progress the Trail Town committee has made by formally adopting this Action Agenda.

» **Establish a Group to Implement this Action Agenda**

The Trail Town Steering Committee will transition to Bicycle Friendly Fort Edward. This new group will be focused on bike specific initiatives such as assisting existing and new businesses in registering as Bicycle Friendly Businesses, working with the Village/Town to procure and install bike racks, advocating for bicycle friendly streets and infrastructure, organizing bike specific events, etc. The group will also continue to work closely with the Friends of the Champlain Canalway Trail, and has the potential to partner with and learn from the Village of Schuylerville, the other certified Trail Town on the Champlain Canalway Trail.

» **Celebrating Certification as an Empire State Trail Town**

Once the new Action Agenda has been adopted and the implementing group formed, the Trail Town committee will coordinate with local partners, PTNY, and the NYS Canal Corporation to celebrate the Village's official designation as an Empire State Trail Town.

» **Maintaining Empire State Trail Town designation**

- Continue to meet Trail Town criteria as set forth in the Empire State Trail Town handbook.
- Prior to each tourism season (April of each year), the Trail Town steering committee shall verify with PTNY that the information on the Trail Town landing page is accurate.
- Each year, PTNY will host a virtual meeting for all Trail Towns to provide updates about the Empire State Trail and Trail Town initiative and allow Trail Towns to share progress on their action agendas. The Trail Town committee shall send at least one representative and will submit a brief written update prior to the meeting on progress and challenges.

Potential Funding Sources

A sampling of available funding sources is listed below. For a complete list, visit PTNY's [funding webpage](#).

State Grants

- [Recreational Trails Program \(Available in odd-numbered years\)](#)
- [Environmental Protection Fund Grant Program for Parks, Preservation and Heritage \(EPF\)](#)
- [Canalway Grant Program](#)
- [NEW: Municipal Parks & Recreation Grant Program \(open spring 2025\)](#)
- [Hudson River Valley Greenway Grants](#)
- [NYS Canal System Tourism Infrastructure and Events Grants](#)

Other Funding

- [Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Grants](#)
- [Project for Public Spaces Community Placemaking Grants](#)
- [League of American Bicyclists Community Spark Grants](#)
- [People for Bikes](#)
- [Adirondack/Glens Falls Transportation Council Make the Connection Grant Program](#)

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About Parks & Trails New York

Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) is New York's leading statewide advocate for parks and trails, dedicated since 1985 to improving our health, economy, and quality of life through the use and enjoyment of green space. PTNY works to expand, protect, and promote a network of parks, trails, and open spaces throughout our state for use and enjoyment by all. For more information, visit www.ptny.org.



About the New York State Canal Corporation

The New York State Canal Corporation runs the New York State Canal System, which includes the Erie, Champlain, Oswego and Cayuga-Seneca canals. Spanning 524 miles, the waterway links the Hudson River with the Great Lakes, the Finger Lakes and Lake Champlain. In 2017, the Canal Corporation celebrated the 200th anniversary of the groundbreaking for the Erie Canal, which occurred in the city of Rome on July 4, 1817. The Canal System includes the Canalway Trails, a network of approximately 420 miles of multiple-use trails across upstate New York. The Canalway Trails follows the towpaths of both active and historic sections of the New York State Canal System as well as adjacent abandoned rail corridors. Together, the canals and trails create a world-class recreationway that is a vibrant, scenic, and unique New York resource. To learn more about the New York State Canal and Canalway Trail System or to obtain a free map, please call 1-800-4CANAL4 or visit the Canal Corporation's website at www.canals.ny.gov.