

2024

Empire State Trail Town Action Agenda



Village of Schuylerville

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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 Village 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, Schuylerville 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 Schuylerville's advancement as a Trail Town. In January 2025, Schuylerville adopted a version of this Action Agenda and is now officially recognized as a 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, Schuylerville’s first task was to form a Trail Town steering committee that incorporated representatives from the village as well as committed partners, local businesses and trail advocates. Schuylerville’s steering committee was a true community effort, with representatives from the village government, local businesses, local parks and other invested community nonprofits.

Schuylerville Trail Town Committee Representatives

- Village of Schuylerville
- National Park Service
- Adirondack Ultra Cycling
- Amigos Cantina
- Hudson Crossing Park
- Friends of Fort Hardy Park
- Schuylerville Community Council
- Hudson Hoosic Historic River Partnership
- Glens Falls National Bank
- Hair Divas

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

In May, a trail count effort was launched to collect information on use of the Empire State Trail throughout the summer. With input from the Trail Town steering committee, PTNY installed an EcoVisio electronic trail counter on the Champlain Canalway/Empire State Trail along the Champlain Canal about 0.3 miles south of the intersection with County Route 42.

In June, PTNY held a two-part participatory workshop in Schuylerville with an evening Placemaking Workshop on June 11th and a morning Bike Around Workshop the following day. The Placemaking Workshop provided a

hands-on opportunity for about fifteen 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 Schuylerville’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 Schuylerville 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 village could take immediately to improve the trail user experience and start better capitalizing on trail tourism that same summer.



One of the priorities identified through this process was the need for more bike racks downtown and to continue to educate local businesses on the value of trail tourism. To that end, a Schuylerville Trail Town committee member purchased bike racks in bulk to be sold to and installed at businesses that requested them. In conjunction with this effort, the committee continued outreach to encourage more businesses to apply to be certified as “Bike Friendly New York” businesses. As a result of these efforts, Schuylerville now has a total of 18 Bike Friendly New York certified businesses.

In August, Schuylerville 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 Schuylerville’s Trail Town landing page, hosted on the promotional website for the Canalway Trail, www.cycletheeriecanal.com.

2024 Trail Town Highlights

Even while undertaking this planning process, Schuylerville has advanced several projects and initiatives that contribute to its trail friendliness and its designation as a Trail Town:

Infrastructure Enhancements

- Installed a water bottle filling station and bike rack at the Champlain Canal Region Gateway Visitor Center
- Procured and installed 25 bike racks in the downtown business district
- Began planning for resurfacing of 0.3 miles of Towpath Road (Champlain Canalway/Empire State Trail).

Community Engagement

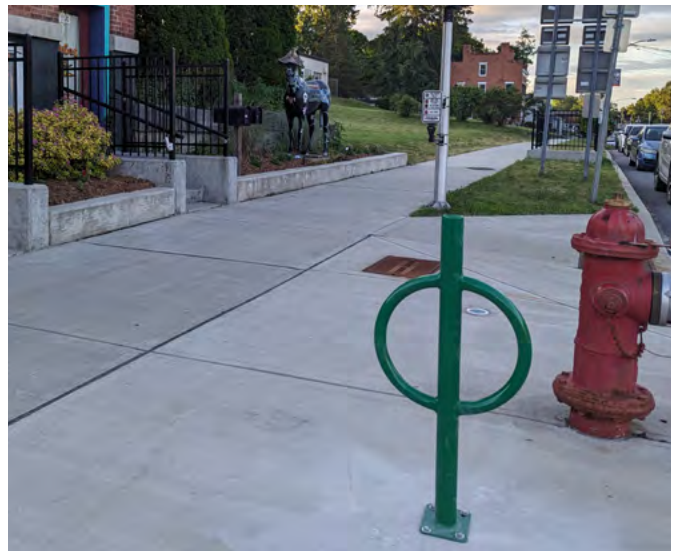
- Hosted On the Canals excursions in partnership with Adirondack Ultra Cycling
- Certified 12 new Bike Friendly NY businesses, including Stewart's Shops, which led to the certification of all qualifying Stewart's locations along the Empire State Trail

Promotional Efforts

- Developed a dedicated Trail Town landing page on www.cycletheeriecanal.com.
- Conducted outreach to improve local businesses' online presence.



Bike rack at the Champlain Canal Region Gateway Visitor Center



One of the many new bike racks installed around downtown



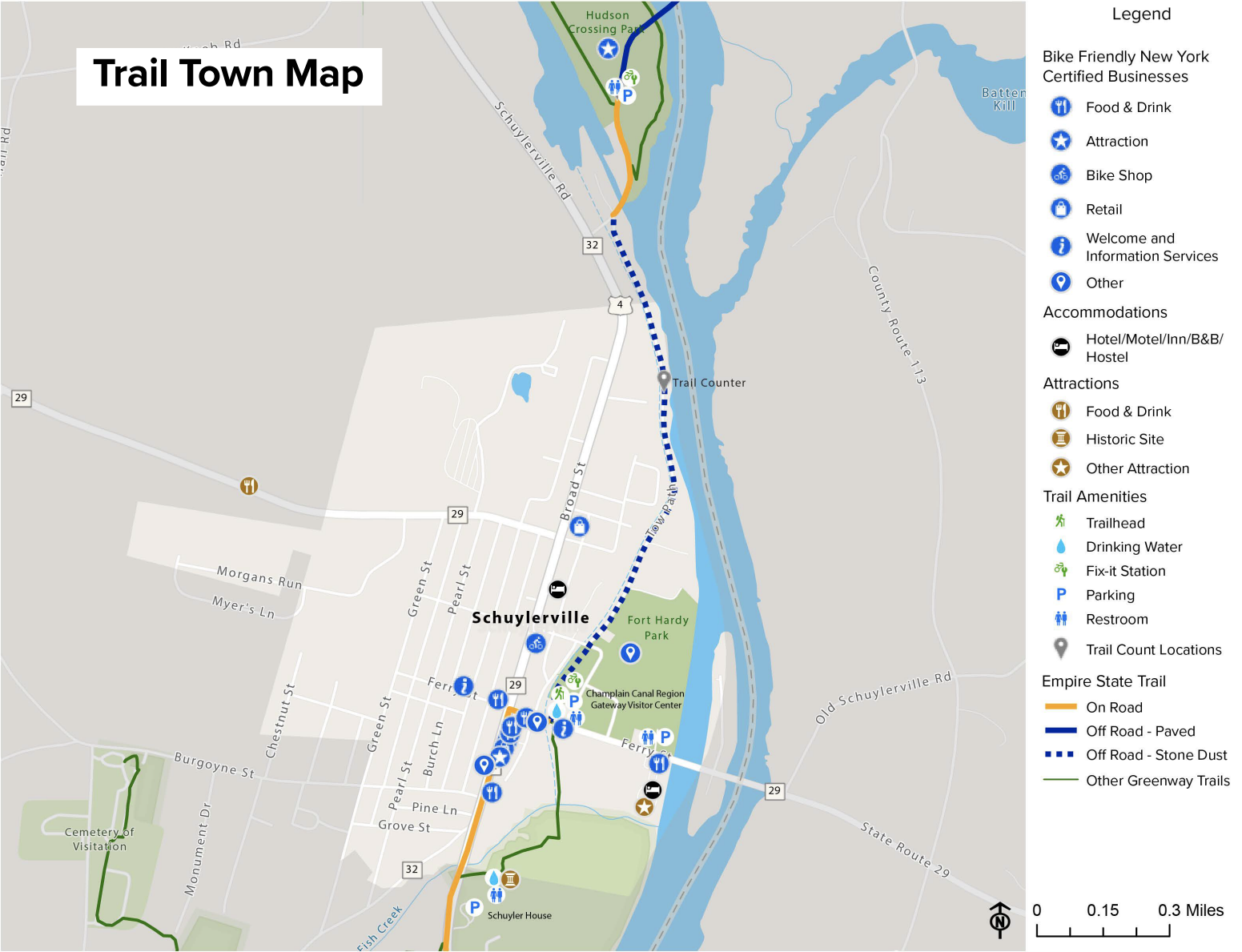
Cyclists preparing for an On the Canals excursion

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 Schuylerville

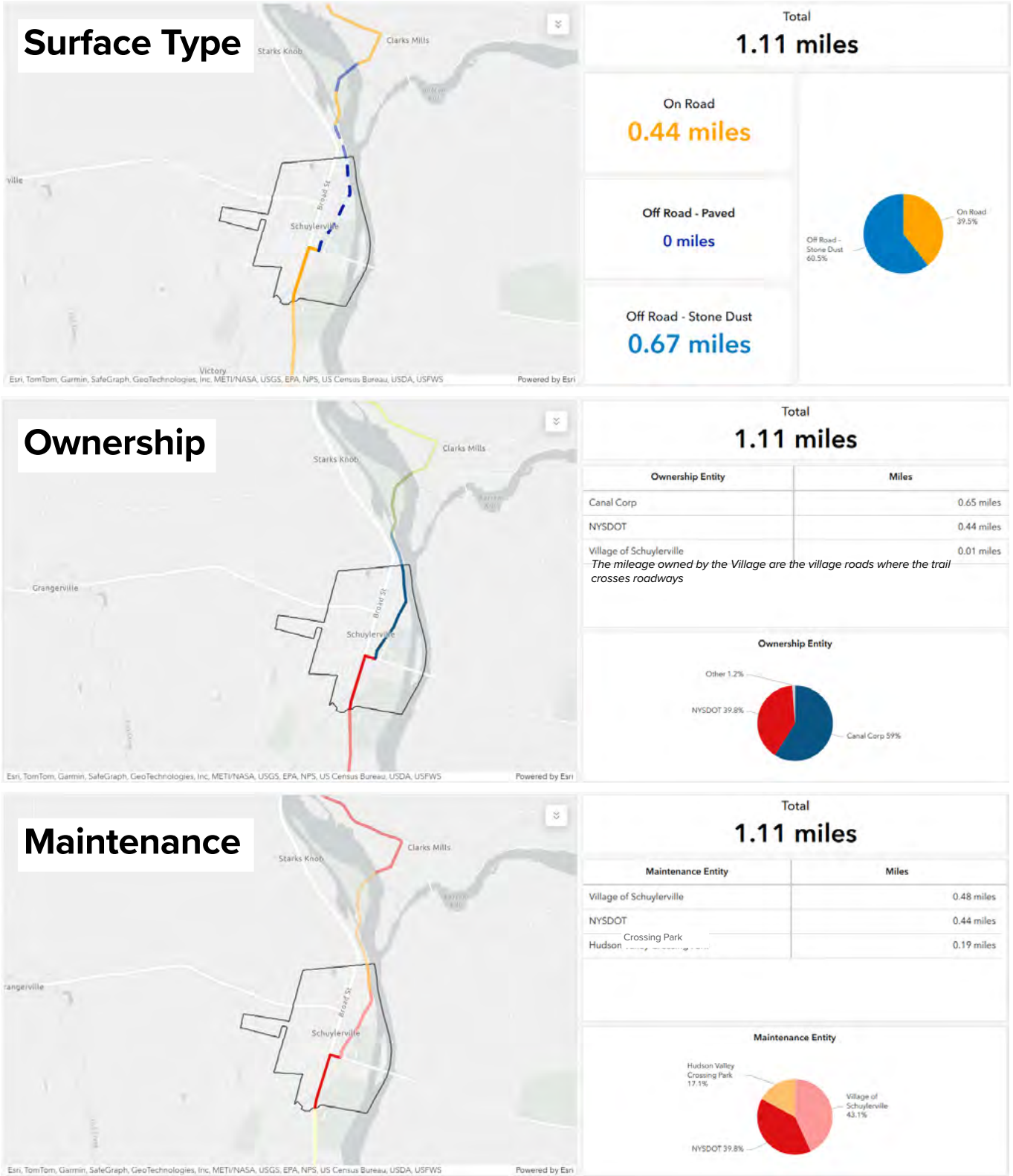
Rich with history, Schuylerville is home to a variety of galleries, gift shops, lodging, and culinary experiences offering American, international, and gluten-free fare in a peaceful setting. Visit parks, historical sites, obtain expert bicycle repair, and explore a network of trails while enjoying expansive views of the Hudson River, the Old Champlain Canal, and the Vermont mountains. The Village has a population of 1,370 residents.



Empire State Trail Inventory

Surface Type, Ownership & Maintenance Responsibilities

The Village of Schuylerville is home to 1.11 miles of the Champlain Canalway/Empire State Trail. The southern portion of the trail is on road, and is owned and maintained by NYS Department of Transportation. North of Ferry St, the trail is stonedust and is owned by the NYS Canal Corporation (NYSCC). Part of this towpath is shared with vehicles, but it is primarily a bike/pedestrian facility. The section shared with vehicles is maintained by the Village of Schuylerville. There are discrepancies in who maintains the section of trail where it becomes an off-road facility. NYSCC records indicate that it is Hudson Crossing Park, but discussions have revealed that this is likely not the case. Follow up with Saratoga County, the Town of Saratoga, and NYS Canal Corporation is required.

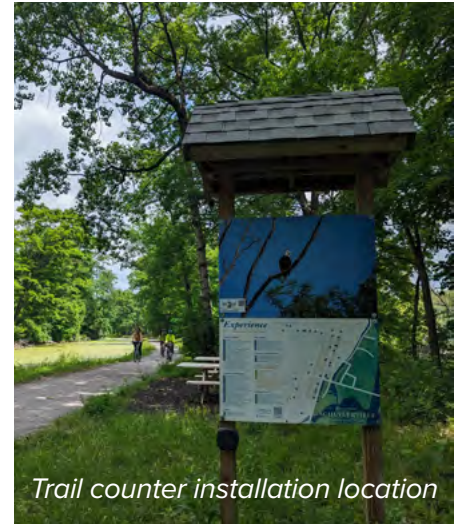


Data source: **NYS Canal Corporation Trail Data Inventory (2021)**

Trail Use Counts & Analysis

Trail use data was collected to help 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.

PTNY installed an EcoVisio electronic trail counter on the Champlain Canalway/Empire State Trail along the Champlain Canal about 0.3 miles south of the intersection with County Route 42 on a signpost. The counter was installed for a one-year period from Nov 2, 2023 to November 1, 2024. 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



Trail counter installation location

Annual Trail Use

Over the course of the year, the trail counter recorded 30,494 trail user visits. In 2020, PTNY had a trail counter installed along the trail at Hudson Crossing Park at the decorative vehicular barrier gate, and estimated that the trail saw 23,763 trail visits to the trail at the park ([2020 Who's on the Trail: Canalway Trail](#)). Because of the counter installation placement however, it is anticipated that this counter did not capture all visitors to the trail in the park. There is a 28% increase in annual use from 2020 to 2023/2024, however this could be explained by the poor placement of the counter in 2020, the trail along the canal being more popular than the trail through the park, or an increase in trail use over time.

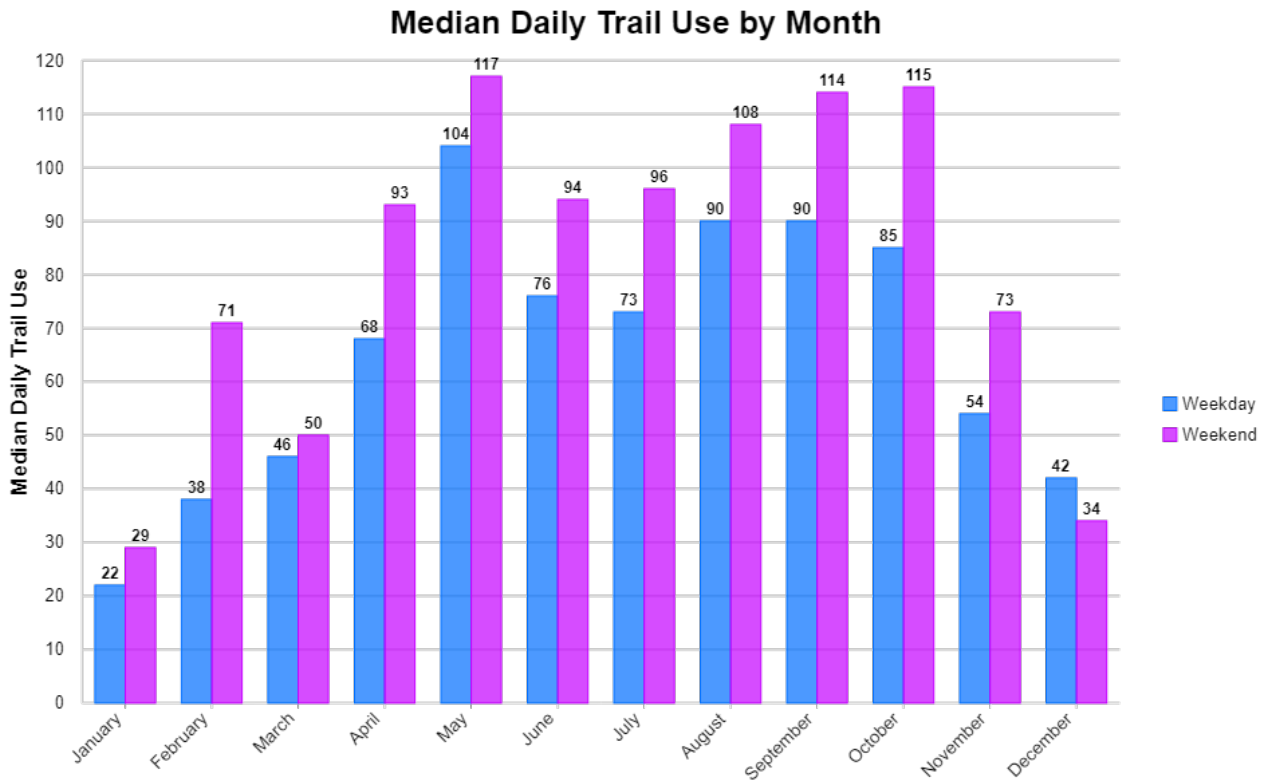
Monthly & Daily Trail Use

The Canalway Trail in Schuylerville sees high use throughout the year, especially during the months of April through October. July saw the highest number of trail visits, with a peak on July 1, 2024 when the trail saw nearly 3,000 visits in one day. On average though, May saw the highest consistent trail use, with a daily median of over 100 trail users per day. This could be explained by the good weather upstate New York experienced in spring 2024.

In general, weekend use is higher than weekday use, especially during the warmer months. During the summer, close to, if not more than, 100 trail users passed the counter on each weekend day.

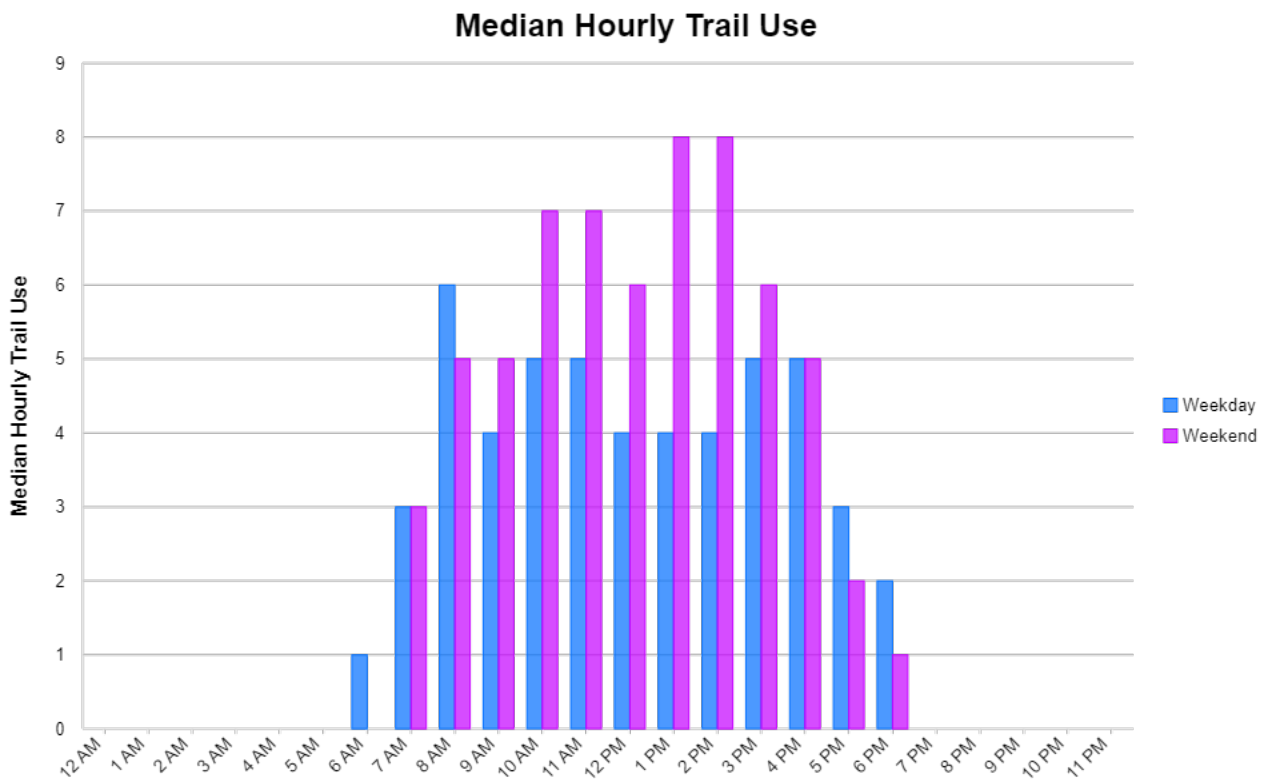
Trail Use in Schuylerville by Month (November 2, 2023 - November 1, 2024)

Month	Days Counted	Total Count	Median Daily Use	Median Daily Use - Weekday	Daily Median Use - Weekend
January	31	999	23	22	29
February	29	1,543	40	38	71
March	31	1,896	49	46	50
April	30	2,559	69	68	93
May	31	3,033	104	104	117
June	30	2,586	80	76	94
July	31	5,451	81	73	96
August	31	3,056	92	90	108
September	30	3,100	97	90	114
October	31	2,720	87	85	115
November	30	2,253	60	54	73
December	31	1,298	39	42	34
Total	366	30,494	73	71	86



Hourly Trail Use

Trail use trends reveal that the trail is used consistently throughout the day on weekdays, peaking at 8am and staying relatively constant until 4pm. From 5-6pm, evening trail use on weekdays is higher than it is on weekends. In contrast, weekend trail use is highest in the middle of the day, peaking between 10am-3pm.



Plans & Upcoming Projects

Comprehensive Plan Update

This project is an update of the 2005 Schuylerville Comprehensive Plan. The comprehensive plan update will complement and provide the foundation for the NY Forward grant that is expected to start in late spring. The comprehensive plan boundary is the entire Village whereas the NY Forward program has a much smaller boundary that will concentrate on the downtown area.

NY Forward

In December 2023, the Village of Schuylerville was awarded a grant of \$4.5 million as part of the NY Forward program. In 2024, Schuylerville was paired with a consultant team and a project manager from the Department of State who has guided them through a targeted, community-based planning process focused on the development of a Strategic Investment Plan (SIP). The SIP will build upon the community's NY Forward application, including the preliminary community vision for revitalization and the proposed project list. The planning process has refined the vision, developed actionable goals and strategies, and identified a suite of complementary and transformative projects to help the community achieve its vision for downtown revitalization.

Many of the projects identified will enhance the village's status as a Trail Town, but a few specific, high-impact projects include:

Reconnecting the Old Champlain Canal under Ferry Street

This project proposes the construction of a clear span bridge (or potentially a box culvert) over the Champlain Canal to carry two lanes of traffic (Route 29) and a pedestrian and bike path. There is an additional short-span bridge option, with mass-timber structure proposed for study. This bridge would create a new water trail in the Village by allowing small watercraft to travel between the Olde Champlain Canal and Turning Basin as well as a much greater flow of fresh water, helping to reduce algae. The bridge would include enhanced facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists, greatly improving safety in this location while also improving connectivity to Fort Hardy Park and the Canal Visitors Center.

Enhance Signage and Wayfinding around the Village

This project seeks to improve signage and wayfinding within the Village, specifically for visitors, pedestrians, bicyclists, and users of the Empire State Trail. The signage will also present historical information in Fort Hardy Park and promote various businesses within the main business district. The project will increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists with clear route markers, enhance the visitor experience by directing them to amenities and services, and promote local businesses by directing trail users to local restaurants and shops.

Several of the other proposed projects would enhance the visitor experience through providing more gathering spaces, enhanced facades and streetscapes, and more options for overnight accommodation.

Schuylerville NY Forward Revitalization Goals

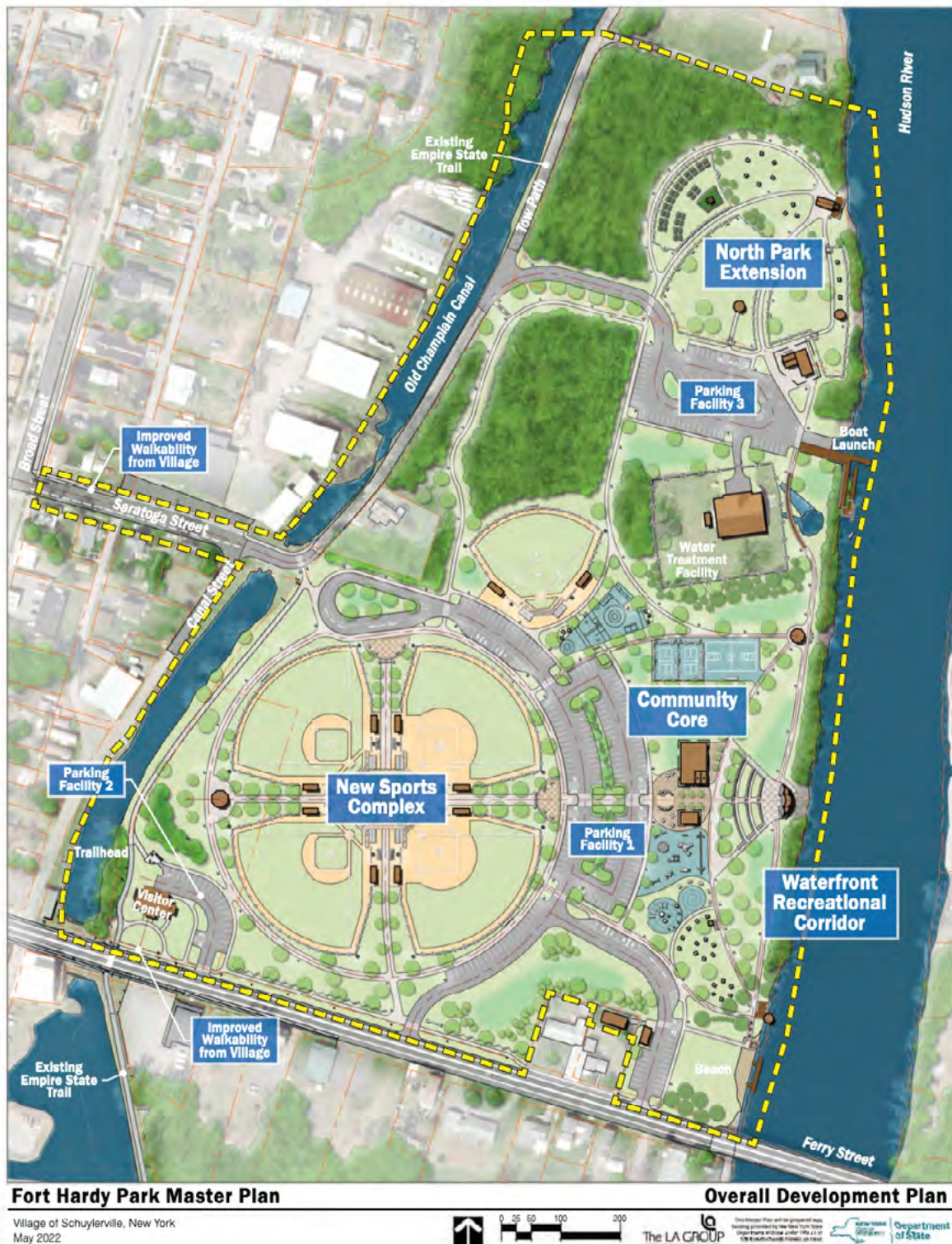


Diagram from the NY Forward Reconnecting the Canal Project Proposal

Fort Hardy Park Master Plan

In 2022, the Fort Hardy Park Master Plan was published, creating a strategic roadmap that strives to maintain a balance between the natural, recreational, and historic elements of the 37.5-acre park, while providing enhanced recreation spaces, new trail opportunities, and universal access to the waterfront. In 2023, a new group, the Friends of Fort Hardy Park was established to help the gradual implementation of the plan.

Among the relevant features in the plan are a community center and a pavilion. The community center would serve to provide an extended season for restroom facilities in the park and the pavilion could serve as a venue for farmers markets, live music, art shows and private events. Additional improvements to the park would incorporate the CCT/EST more directly into the park and connect it better to the village. The proposed elimination of Reds Road would remove an existing conflict point between trail users and vehicles.



Fort Hardy Park Master Plan Overall Development Plan (2022)

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 Schuylerville, 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

Restrooms and water are available at multiple locations within the village, however many of them are limited by the hours of operation of the facility.

Champlain Canal Region Gateway Visitor Center - Restrooms and drinking water during open hours

Fort Hardy Park & Schuylerville Boat Launch - Restrooms are unlocked on a timer during the day, however it is not evident how to reach them from the trail.

General Philip Schuyler House - Restrooms open during visitor hours; Water fountain outside.

Hudson Crossing Park - Portable toilets are available.

Stewart's Shops - Restrooms and water available during business hours.

Adirondack Ultra Cycling - Occasional portable toilet installed out back behind the shop during the tourism season.

Businesses & Attractions

Schuylerville has 18 certified Bike Friendly businesses providing a range of services for trail users and community members. 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 Schuylerville

Business Name	Category
Hudson Crossing Park	Attractions (Museums, Galleries, etc.)
Fort Hardy Park	Attractions (Museums, Galleries, etc.)
Canal Crossing Mosaic Workshop	Attractions (Museums, Galleries, etc.)
Adirondack Ultra Cycling	Bike Shop
The Basin Grill	Food & Drink
Amigos Cantina	Food & Drink
Byron's Village Market	Food & Drink
King Brothers Dairy	Food & Drink
Mama Bear's Diner	Food & Drink
Old Saratoga Eatery	Food & Drink
Bound By Fate Brewing Taproom	Food & Drink
Glens Falls National Bank and Trust Company	other
Katie Veltum Bodywork	other
Stewart's Shops	Retail
Bullard Block (4 businesses)	Retail
EarthBeat Music Shop	Retail
Champlain Canal Region Gateway Visitor Center	Welcome and Information Service
Schuylerville Public Library	Welcome and Information Service

As of January 2025



Accommodations

Schuylerville offers a range of indoor lodging accommodations as well as camping. Information about indoor lodging is easy to find for the Schuyler Yacht Basin and Dovegate Inn, however the lack of online presence for the Old Saratoga Motor Inn does not inspire confidence for visitors.

It is also difficult to find information about tent camping at the Yacht Basin, and camping is more expensive than what traveling cyclists are usually looking for when they are self-contained and just looking for a place to pitch a tent.

There is one Warm Showers host located near Schuylerville to the south of the village. 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.

Food & Drink

Schuylerville is home to an impressive array of local businesses, with no shortage of great places to stop and grab a drink or bite to eat. Seven of the establishments have already been certified as Bike Friendly NY, and more continue to be approached about certification.

Destinations & Attractions

Schuylerville's parks and recreational assets are some of the community's strongest assets, including Saratoga National Historical Park, Hudson Crossing Park, Fort Hardy Park, and the Schuyler Yacht Basin. Local businesses are also significant draws, notably Adirondack Ultra Cycling, Saratoga Apple, and the wide array of local eateries in the village's downtown.

Information Centers

The Champlain Canal Region Gateway Visitor Center is the primary welcome center for trail users, and has information, restrooms, and a water bottle filling station. The Schuylerville Village Hall and Library can both be resources for trail users as well, however they are further off the trail.

Bike Amenities

Bike parking

As a result of the Trail Town committee's efforts, there are now a significant number of bike racks positioned around downtown, creating a welcoming environment for cyclists and making it easy for cyclists to find bike parking.

Fix-it stations

There are two fix-it stations:

- Classic fix-it station at the EST Trailhead behind the Champlain Canal Region Gateway Visitor Center
- Wall-mounted fix-it station at Hudson Crossing Park on the side of the garden shed directly off parking lot. This station is difficult to see from the trail.

Bike shops

Adirondack Ultra Cycling is a huge asset for the community. From repair and gear to organizing events, this bike shop is a hub for the cycling community.

Bike share or bike rental

There is no bike share or bike rental present in Schuylerville.

Importance of an Online Presence: Digital Audit

Many travelers make decisions about where to visit based on the information they are able to find online. A robust, consistent online presence is therefore important for attracting potential visitors. To this end, the Trail Town committee conducted a comprehensive **digital audit** of Village attractions and businesses to determine the quality of their online presence.

For the most part, Schuylerville's business community has a pretty strong online presence. Almost all of the attractions and businesses have some sort of online presence, with most having a website and google maps listing. When businesses did have a listing on other platforms however, it was common for there to be inconsistencies across the listings, especially in regards to hours.

As more businesses are introduced to the Trail Town concept, it is important to continue to have conversations about the importance of an online presence and encourage businesses to maintain their listings.

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

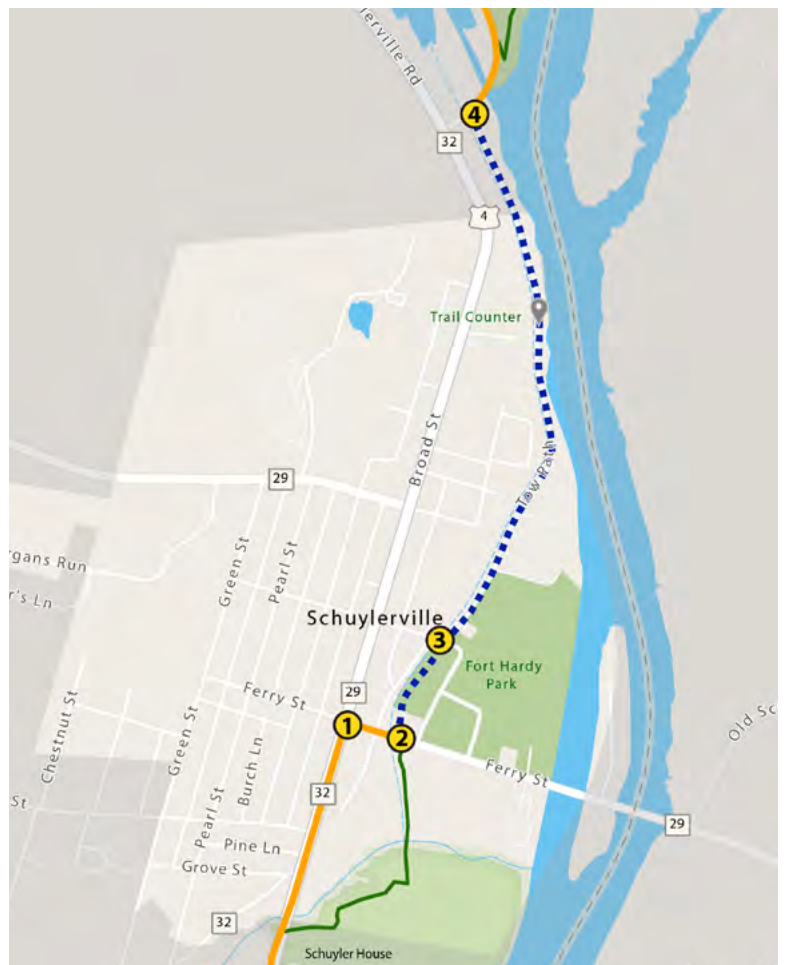
The current trail conditions vary throughout the village. Entering the village from the south, the trail is on-road on NYS Route 4, with large buffered shoulders. The road is maintained by NYS DOT and is relatively free of potholes. After crossing the bridge over Fish Creek, approximately 1000 feet before the intersection with Route 29, the trail becomes more difficult to navigate as there are vehicles parked on the street and there is no bike lane. Turning from Broad Street (Route 4) to Ferry Street (Route 29) the same conditions continue for approximately 200 feet until you reach the convergence of the Empire State Trail and the Champlain Canalway towpath. At this point the trail is safe and easily negotiated.

Approximately 800 feet later, the trail crosses Saratoga St/Reds Road and turns into Towpath Road, which is shared with vehicles, however, it is mostly the 7 residents that live on the road or the occasional vehicle traveling to the boat launch. At the end of the towpath road, the trail returns to an off-road, stone dust trail until the junction with County Route 42. The surface leading up to County Route 42 is washed out and steep, creating dangerous conditions. The trail continues on low-traffic County Route 42 into Hudson Crossing Park. The trail then crosses the pedestrianized Dix Bridge over the Hudson River, where the trail continues on road through the Town of Greenwich.

TRAIL CONFLICT POINTS:

The biggest conflict points for trail users are at intersections and trail crossings, specifically:

- ❶ Intersection of NY Route 4 and NY Route 29. There are no bicycle accommodations on either of these roads nor through the intersection, with both of these roads carrying a significant amount of truck traffic. It should also be noted that the timing of intersection lights at Broad St and Ferry St is very long for pedestrians.
- ❷ Trail crossing of NYS Route 4/Ferry St. The crosswalk does not feel safe for pedestrians.
- ❸ Trail crossing of Saratoga St/Reds Road. The crossing is not marked with a crosswalk or any signs to alert either trail users or vehicles that they are approaching an intersection. This road is used as a cut-through, and vehicle traffic will often pick up speed coming around the corner and will not expect trail users to be crossing.
- ❹ Trail intersection with County Route 42. The CCT/EST just south of County Route 42 is steep and washed out, creating dangerous conditions.



Connecting Trails

The Village of Schuylerville has worked with the many partners, including the Town of Saratoga and several other groups including Hudson Crossing Park, the Gateway Visitors Center of the Hudson Hoosick Rivers Partnership and the Champlain Canalway Trail Working Group to create Urban Greenways that link the Village's many parks and trails. They are primarily a system of walking trails.

There are two trails on the east side of NYS Route 4 that currently run parallel to the on-road Empire State Trail, with a 0.6-mile gap between them.

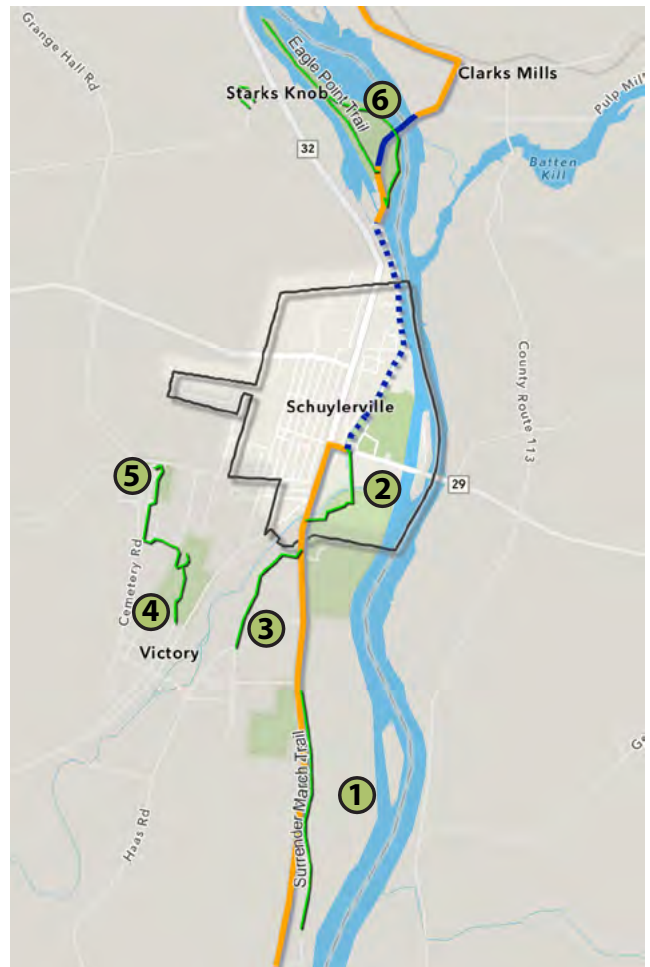
- ① The **March to Surrender Trail** is a rough gravel trail that travels approximately 0.8 miles from Garnsey Lane to the Saratoga Surrender Site. This trail is owned by the Town of Saratoga.
- ② The **Old Champlain Canal Trail** is a grass pedestrian trail that runs behind the General Philip Schuyler House 0.4 miles to the intersection with NYS Route 29/Ferry St. Half of this trail is owned by the National Park Service, while the other half is owned by the NYS Canal Corporation.

The village has also been pursuing the **Victory Trail** (see map on next page), which creates a roughly 3-mile loop on the west side of NYS Route 4. This trail includes the Saratoga Siege Trail and the Victory Woods Trail, and is primarily intended for pedestrians.

- ③ The **Saratoga Siege Trail** is a flat half mile walking trail which follows along the south side of Fish Creek. The trail starts at the Schuyler House on the west side of Route 4. There is currently pedestrian crossing signage but no crosswalk in place to connect visitors across the road from the parking lot to the trailhead.
- ④ From the Siege Trail, an 11-minute walk away, just under a half mile on paved roads, is the **Victory Woods Trail**. The trail is self-guided and offers a raised, accessible 1/2-mile pathway with interpretive signs.
- ⑤ The Victory Woods Trail connects to **Prospect Cemetery and Saratoga Monument**, where it links up with a sidewalk on Burgoyne Street to bring trail users back into downtown.

Hudson Crossing Park Trails

- ⑥ Hudson Crossing Park is home to over two miles of nature trails, including a **Sensory Trail** along the Hudson River as well as trails overlooking historic Champlain Canal Lock 5. A perfect place for all ages to walk, run, or bike, the trails are open from dawn until dusk every day of the year. The Riverwalk Sensory Trail is an especially unique asset. Opened in 2013, it is designed to provide a riverside outdoor experience for individuals who are mobility or visually impaired. The nearest similar trail is over 100 miles away in the Mohonk Preserve west of New Paltz, New York.





Map showing the route of the Victory Trail.

Connecting to Key Destinations

Accessing downtown businesses

The lack of a pedestrian facility on the NYS Rt 29/Ferry St bridge over the canal creates a gap in connectivity between the trail and downtown businesses

Sidewalks on Broad Street are good. Cycling is not very comfortable on Broad Street. Parking lanes on both sides mean cyclists have to mix with vehicles and trucks in the roadway.

Accessing Fort Hardy Park & Schuylerville Yacht Basin

The pedestrian experience traveling east on NYS Route 29/Ferry St is not very pleasant. There are no sidewalks on the north side to help pedestrians get into Fort Hardy Park and the sidewalk on the south side to the Yacht Basin is narrow and overgrown.

The cycling experience is also not pleasant. Despite 4 ft shoulders on both sides of the road, heavy traffic and trucks make this section unpleasant.

Accessing the Saratoga Siege Trail (pictured below)

There is no pedestrian crossing infrastructure between the Schuyler House and the Saratoga Siege Trail across NY Rt 4, creating a hazard for pedestrians seeking to connect these assets.



Lack of crossing infrastructure across 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

Business directory maps

There are business directory maps developed by the **Saratoga Chamber** (pictured right), but they do not show the route of the Empire State Trail where it travels on-road, nor does it show restrooms, water, or parking. It is hard to tell if it's up-to-date or accurate since there is no created date.

CCT/EST blazes

Blazes are mostly good throughout the village. The only issues include:

- On Broad St traveling north, it is difficult to see the EST signage indicating the right turn onto Ferry St when there are cars parked or there is traffic
- The trail crossing at Saratoga St/Reds St lacks CCT/EST signage on both sides of the road

Traffic control signage (*map to the right*)

The “Dead End” and “Bridge Closed” signs do not indicate that the roadway, trail, or bridge is still passable to cyclists. This can cause confusion for trail users, and is not inviting.

- ① Southern end of Tow Path at intersection with Saratoga St
- ② Southern Entrance to Hudson Crossing Park
- ③ Northern entrance to Dix Bridge
- ④ Northern approach to Dix Bridge (pictured below)

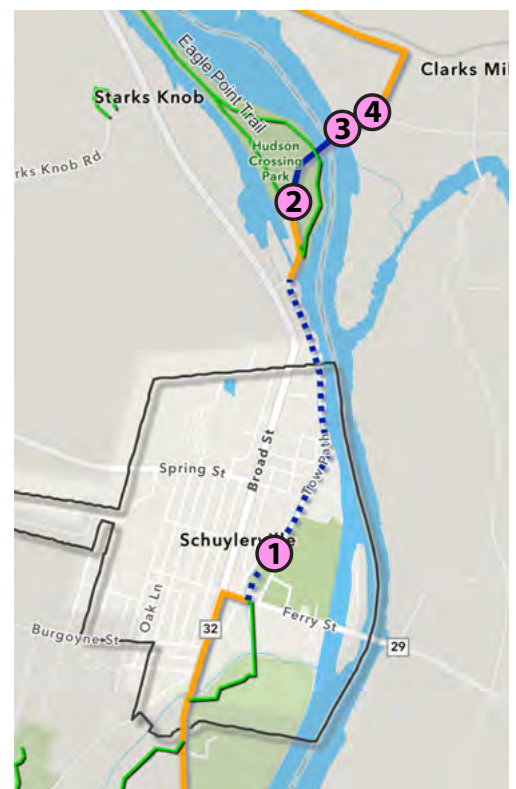


Gateway signage and directional signage into town

The EST trailhead signage and art at the Champlain Canal Gateway Visitor Center serve as a welcoming gateway experience.

Traveling from the south on Broadway, it is clear that trail users are entering Schuylerville because the route goes right through the business district.

Traveling from the north, there is no signage at the trail crossing with Saratoga St/Reds Road to let trail users know that there is a commercial district, lodging, etc one block to the west.



Informational Resources

There are quite a few online resources where trail users can find information about the village and events. The Village does maintain a website, however it does not have a clear section for information for visitors. There is also no active social media for the village specifically, but many of the parks and community partners do have active social media accounts.

Village of Schuylerville Website: The Village website has information for residents but nothing geared toward visitors or any information about the Champlain Canalway/Empire State Trail.

Village of Schuylerville Trails Guide: A Walk Through History: This guide, hosted on the Village's website, contains great content on the village's trails, but it is difficult to picture how they all connect. As an example of what is possible, PTNY created a **storymap version** of this guide.

Champlain Canalway Trail: A Path Through History: Information and event listings along the 62-mile multi-use trail from Waterford to Whitehall that largely follows the path of the Empire State Trail.

Saratoga 250: Information on historical sites and events around the area commemorating the 250th anniversary of the Battle of Saratoga in the fall of 2027.

Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce has a feature webpage highlighting Schuylerville, however it is unclear if it is kept updated and it does not mention the Champlain Canalway/Empire State Trail tourism opportunities.

Village of Schuylerville: Experience Old Saratoga on the Hudson: 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 village unique and contains everything a trail user would need to plan their visit.

Schuylerville: Experience Old Saratoga on the Hudson



Screenshot of Schuylerville's Trail Town landing page.

Rich with history, Schuylerville is home to a variety of galleries, gift shops, lodging, and culinary experiences offering American, international, and gluten-free fare in a peaceful setting. Visit parks, historical sites, obtain expert bicycle repair, and visit our hometown grocery store (across from the laundromat). Explore a network of trails while enjoying expansive views of the Hudson River, the Old Champlain Canal, and the Vermont mountains.

Why visit Schuylerville?

- **Saratoga National Historical Park:** Explore how a key strategic victory during the Revolutionary War changed the course of world history. Tour the General Philip Schuyler House, climb to the top of the 155-ft Saratoga Monument, look out from the Sword Surrender Site, and walk the Victory Woods Trail. The **Saratoga Siege Trail** connects these sites. Follow the Empire State Trail south along Route 4 eight miles to the Saratoga Battlefield to traverse the popular 10-mile battlefield tour road – a picturesque trip by bicycle or car.
- **Hudson Crossing Park:** Located on an island formed by Lock 5 of the Champlain Canal, spot wildlife and remnants of the past on the nature trails, enjoy the picnic pavilion, public art, play garden, restrooms, and a bike repair station.
- **Fort Hardy Park:** Situated between the Old Champlain Canal and the Hudson River, this village park has two boat launches, recreation fields, a playground, picnic area, free WiFi, and public restroom facilities.
- **Schuyler Yacht Basin:** At the confluence of the Hudson River and Fish Creek, find canoe, kayak, and paddleboard rentals, as well as camping, RV parking, and container cabins for overnight stays. The Basin Grill's riverside patio and bar offers dining, drinks, and entertainment.
- **Adirondack Ultra Cycling:** 160 Broad Street. Repairs, parts, and service for all makes of bicycles. Full line of bike touring accessories and clothing, along with Cinelli and Bianchi bicycles and more. Owner, master mechanic, and long-time ultracyclist John Ceceri hosts long-distance tours all around NYS and beyond, as well as year-round short excursions along the Champlain Canal (bring your own bike). To request after hours appointments and emergency repairs, call or text 518-583-3708.

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

Schuylerville has public events and festivals, some of which focus more on the trail than others:

- The Turning Point Parade and Festival: (August) Celebrate the American victory at the Battle of Saratoga in 1777 with live music, food trucks, beverages, and fireworks in Fort Hardy Park.
- The Cardboard Boat Race: (August) Hosted by Hudson Crossing Park and held at Fort Hardy Park featuring boat building, live music, and fun for all ages. Cheer on the adventurous sailors as they compete for titles including Most Enthusiastic Crew, Most Sailors Left Afloat, and the (always highly contested) Titanic Award.
- The Revolutionary Run for Veterans: (November) Annual Masters 5k on the Champlain and Empire Trail as well as children's foot races in historic Fort Hardy Park.
- Schuylerville Lilac Tour: (May) Schuylerville boasts the largest display of lilacs in the state between the Brooklyn Botanical Garden and Rochester. Follow the online map to view 77 lilacs of 53 different cultivars in bloom.
- On the Canals activities with Adirondack Ultra Cycling

Public Art & History

The village has a strong tradition of public art, with horses being a central theme. Kiosks along the trail showcase the work of a local photographer. A canal-themed mural is also in the works.

The village has many historical monuments and sites, creating a rich experience for visitors to learn about the history of the area.



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).

Short Term Actions

Strategies that can be implemented with minimal lead time before or during the next tourism season.

1. Enhance signage and wayfinding

- ☒ Address faded signage and add directional markers at critical trail junctions, specifically targeting the intersection with Saratoga St/Reds Road. **The trail here is owned by NYSCC.**
- ☒ Work with the Saratoga Chamber to ensure that the route of the Empire State Trail is marked on the business directory map. Consider working with them to include other relevant information for visitors, like restrooms and parking, and a "map created" date.
- ☒ Work with relevant owners of roadways to install "EXCEPT BICYCLES" plaques (**sign R3-7bP**) underneath "Dead End" and "Bridge Closed" signs, as laid out in the **Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices 11th Edition**.
- ☒ Develop a "Halfway Point" sign to install on or near the trail to celebrate Schuylerville's halfway location between Montreal and New York City.



Example of a "Halfway Point" sign on the Erie Canal at Camillus Erie Canal Park, west of Syracuse.

2. Increase low-cost overnight accommodations for trail users

- ☒ Work with the Schuyler Yacht Basin to update policies and promote the availability of camping for hikers/bikers/boaters. The website should reflect that tent camping is permitted and welcomed, one-night stays are permitted, and should publicize a fee structure for hikerbiker/boaters - Camping for is usually no more than \$20 per person at the most.
- ☒ Encourage local members of the community to join **Warmshowers**, a reciprocal hospitality website and app designed for touring cyclists by promoting it on the Village's social media and partner platforms.

3. Business Engagement: Encourage local businesses to adopt Bike Friendly NY certification.

- ☑ Communicate the benefits of **Bike Friendly NY certification** (attracting more trail users, listing on the **Schuylerville Trail Town** map, visual identification through window decal and access to logo) and help businesses apply for certification. Work with businesses to ensure they have an online presence.
- ☑ Encourage businesses to signal that they value trail users by “putting a bike on it.” This can look like anything from bicycle-related storefront displays, a beer, ice cream, or sandwich named to commemorate the trail, bike or trail-themed souvenirs, or other little details. These visual cues will help trail users know that they are welcome.

Long Term Goals

Strategies that require increased investment and/or a longer time to be accomplished (2-5 years)

1. Trail Connectivity: Improve connections between trail segments and downtown areas and between trail segments themselves.

- ☑ Reconnect the Old Champlain Canal under Ferry Street/NY Rt 29 and add a sidewalk on the north side of the road to better connect to Broad St..
- ☑ Engage partners to formalize the trail from General Phillip Schuyler House to Ferry St/NY Rt 29 as a multi-use trail and designate it as the Empire State Trail. The NYS Canal Corporation and National Park Service will be primary partners in resolving land ownership and trail use issues.
- ☑ Initiate discussions with the land-owning entities on the east side of NY Rt 4 to make a 1.5-mile off-road stretch of the Empire State/Champlain Canalway Trail, south of Schuylerville.
 - Encourage the Town of Saratoga to pursue resurfacing of the Surrender March Trail to improve accessibility of this trail stretch that is currently in rough condition.
 - Coordinate with the National Park Service to build an off-road trail to connect from the end of the Town of Saratoga's Surrender March Trail at the Surrender Site to the Schuyler House.
- ☑ Continue to implement the Fort Hardy Park Master Plan recommendations to enhance connections to the Champlain Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail.
 - Build out the trail network within the park, including along the river to the dog park, and trail connectivity between the CCT/EST and the rest of the park.
 - Close off Red's Road, eliminating a dangerous crossing.
 - Ensure that increased traffic on Towpath Road to the newly developed parking area on the north side of the park does not impact the trail user experience.



Map of local trails, showing the gaps between them.

2. Infrastructure Development: Pursue funding for pedestrian-scale wayfinding signage and enhanced trail crossings.

- ☒ Pursue funding to create pedestrian-scale wayfinding to better connect the trail and downtown.
- ☒ Improve the road crossing of NY Route 4 between the Saratoga Siegfried Trail and Schuyler House
 - Coordinate with NYSDOT to install a crosswalk across Route 4 and potentially add Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacons.
 - Coordinate with NYSDOT and the Village of Victory to lower the speed limit on NYS Route 4 through the Village of Victory to 25 or 30 mph.
- ☒ Coordinate with NYSDOT to advocate for a Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacon at the crossing of the Champlain Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail across Ferry St/NY Route 29
- ☒ Improve the trail crossing at Saratoga St/Reds Rd. **The trail here is owned by NYSCC and the street is owned by the Village of Schuylerville.**
 - Coordinate with the Village of Schuylerville DPW to paint a crosswalk across the road.
 - Consider installing trail crossing warning signs for vehicles on Saratoga St/Red's Road.
 - Consider installing stop or yield signs on CCT/EST on south side of road for trail users and on Towpath Road for all road users on north side.
 - Consider paving the wings at intersection to address washouts.



Lack of crossing infrastructure across Saratoga St/Red's Rd

3. Community Promotion: Develop a printed and digital trail guide featuring Schuylerville's unique attractions and services.

- ☒ Develop a printed and digital trail guide to highlight all of Schuylerville's trails so that residents and visitors can easily see how they all connect. Use this [storymap](#) as inspiration, or create your own interactive map using Google MyMaps or other platform.

Implementation

Schuylerville is poised to become a model Empire State Trail Town, showcasing its rich history, vibrant community, and commitment to enhancing the trail user experience.

» **Municipal Resolution Establishing a Trail Town Committee**

The village of Schuylerville passed a resolution on January 13, 2025 to establish a seven-person Trail Town committee to oversee, coordinate, and implement efforts related to the development, maintenance and promotion of the Village's status as a Trail Town.

The committee shall be tasked with:

- Developing strategies and initiatives to promote Schuylerville as a Trail Town
- Coordinating efforts with local, regional, and state partners to enhance trail-related resources and infrastructures
- Identifying opportunity for grants and funding to support trail initiatives
- Engaging with community members and stakeholders to solicit input and participation
- Reporting regularly to the village board on its activities and progress.

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

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](#).

Cosolidated Funding Application (CFA) Grants

- [Recreational Trails Program \(Available in odd-numbered years\)](#)
- [Environmental Protection Fund Grant Program for Parks, Preservation and Heritage \(EPF\)](#)
- [Canalway Grant Program](#)

Non-CFA State Funding

- [Hudson River Valley Greenway Grants](#)
- [NYS Canal System Tourism Infrastructure and Events Grants](#)

Private/Non-profit Funding

- [Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Grants](#)
- [Project for Public Spaces Community Placemaking Grants](#)
- [League of American Bicyclists Community Spark Grants](#)
- [People for Bikes](#)

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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.