

EMPIRE STATE TRAIL TOWN HANDBOOK



2026



*A guide for Canalway Trail communities to become certified
Empire State Trail Towns*



Canal
Corporation



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Empire State Trail Town Program

An Empire State Trail Town is more than a destination with access to trail-based services, amenities, and facilities. It's a community that recognizes the value of the trail and has committed its time and resources to foster a "trail culture" and make the associated improvements in process, policy, and physical infrastructure.

Recognition as a "Trail Town" signifies a community-wide commitment to the surrounding trail network. The Empire State Trail Town program, managed by Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) and sponsored by the New York State Canal Corporation and New York Power Authority, will offer technical assistance to select communities along the Empire State Trail that offer high-quality trail-based services and amenities and demonstrate a commitment to policies and programs geared towards cyclists and pedestrians. Through participation in the program, selected communities receive expert guidance from PTNY to help identify opportunities to boost local access to high-quality outdoor recreation, create welcoming, trail-friendly destinations, strengthen their identity as a trail town, support local businesses, and promote tourism.

The goal? To help communities turn their location on the iconic Empire State Trail into a lasting advantage, making them great places to live, visit, and explore.

Please note that this is not a grant program, but rather an opportunity to grow capacity, make cultural changes, and identify priorities for future funding opportunities.

Background

Trail-based tourism can be leveraged as an economic driver and foundation for community-building in municipalities along the Empire State Trail. Across the country, programs have been developed to demonstrate the valuable relationship between a community and a neighboring long-distance trail. The Empire State Trail Town program builds on the successes of these various programs, pulling in different aspects from each that fit the unique context of the Erie and Champlain Canalway Trails.

The Erie and Champlain Canalway Trails receive nearly [4 million visits each year](#), including everyone from locals out for jog to visitors from out of state who are there to travel the 360-mile trail from Buffalo to Albany and beyond. Trail users stop in trailside communities along the way to refuel and rest up, boosting spending at local businesses in the process. Each of these visitors sees the trail and the communities along it as a destination and wants to know what makes each community unique, whether that's by spending the night in a historic bed & breakfast or fueling up on donuts at the local bakery. According to a [2014 study of the economic impact of the Erie Canalway Trail](#), non-local visitors who stay at least one night as part of their trip spend over \$1,100 per visit (nearly \$1,500 in 2025 dollars)--spending that ends up having multiplier effects within the local economy. PTNY is currently undertaking a groundbreaking [economic impact study](#) of the entire Empire State Trail, and is looking forward to sharing updated statistics by spring 2026.

This guide outlines a step-by-step process for PTNY and participating trail town communities to help transform into places where a “trail culture” drives decision-making and future planning efforts.

Goals

Participation in this program will enable each community to think about achieving long-term goals as a result of its dedication to the program objectives. The following goals are intended to serve as long-term targets for trail towns:

- Make communities more trail-user friendly.
 1. Increase the frequency with which residents and visitors walk or bike both on and off the trail
 2. Embrace the trail as a core asset around which future planning and investment should be oriented
- Help communities realize economic benefits of the Canalway Trail.
 1. 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
 2. Increase the number of Canalway Trail users who choose the community for an overnight stay

Objectives

To reach these long-term goals, the Empire State Trail Town program uses specific targeted strategies to achieve the following objectives. While the strategies are organized under the primary objective they seek to achieve, many of the strategies will help to accomplish several of the objectives simultaneously.



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

Strategies:

- a. Form a Trail Town steering committee and delegate roles
- b. Engage with the greater community and invite them to learn more about the Trail Town effort
- c. Certify qualifying visitor-oriented businesses as [Bike Friendly New York](#)
- d. Host or participate in a Canal Clean Sweep event in April and engage volunteer groups to adopt eligible sections of trail



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

Strategies:

- a. Complete the Trail Town Self-Assessment
- b. Coordinate logistics for, promote, and participate in an in-person Placemaking Workshop and Bike Around assessment to evaluate the existing strengths and areas for

- improvement in relation to visiting trail users, to be hosted by each Trail Town and facilitated by Parks & Trails New York during the summer.
- c. Distribute the Trail Town online survey and ensure it reaches the greater community.
- d. Collect trail use data using electronic counters



PROMOTION: Increase the visibility of the Trail Towns as destinations

Strategies:

- a. Identify and compile content including a community tagline, signature assets and events to be included in efforts to promote the community as an Empire State Trail Town
- b. Update municipal websites and community resources with information on the Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail



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

Strategies:

- a. Develop and adopt a Trail Town Action Agenda, which will outline short and long-term priorities as well as a plan for implementation, to be prepared jointly between PTNY and the Trail Town steering committee
- b. Participate in Empire State Trail Town virtual and in-person events to share progress and network with other Trail Towns

Trail Town Framework

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, where they can find information out about what's around them, where the community is welcoming and has a unique sense of character, and have plans and policies in place that integrate outdoor recreation into the community's long-term vision. Thriving, vibrant Trail Towns are successful because they invest in the following five key areas:

1. 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
- Other outdoor recreational activities
- Information center
- Bike amenities

2. 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

- Well-maintained trail
- Connecting trails
- On-road connections to points of interest

3. 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

4. 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
- Volunteer presence

5. Trail-Friendly municipal plans & policies

Trail-friendly municipal plans and policies integrate outdoor recreation, trail access, and active transportation into the community's long-term vision. By maintaining up-to-date planning documents and adopting policies that prioritize safety, connectivity, and the protection of natural and cultural assets, municipalities create an environment where trail use is supported and encouraged. :

- Up-to-date plans & policies that support and protect outdoor recreation and heritage assets (e.g. comprehensive plans, complete street policies, Vision Zero policies, speed management policies, etc.)
- A common vision and cohesive working relationship among municipality, community groups and businesses.

Benefits of Becoming an Empire State Trail Town

Short-term Benefits of becoming an Empire State Trail Town

Two-day, in-person workshop facilitated by PTNY to include a placemaking workshop and Bike Around assessment
Installation of one Eco-Visio electronic trail counter on the community's trail during the tourism season and analysis and interpretation of collected trail use data by PTNY
Training resources to help volunteers learn how to conduct outreach and certify Bike Friendly businesses
Access to a network of other Trail Towns for sharing of successes and strategies for overcoming challenges
Preparation of a Trail Town Action Agenda by PTNY in collaboration with Trail Town committee
Dedicated online promotion of the community as a Trail Town

Long-term Benefits of becoming an Empire State Trail Town

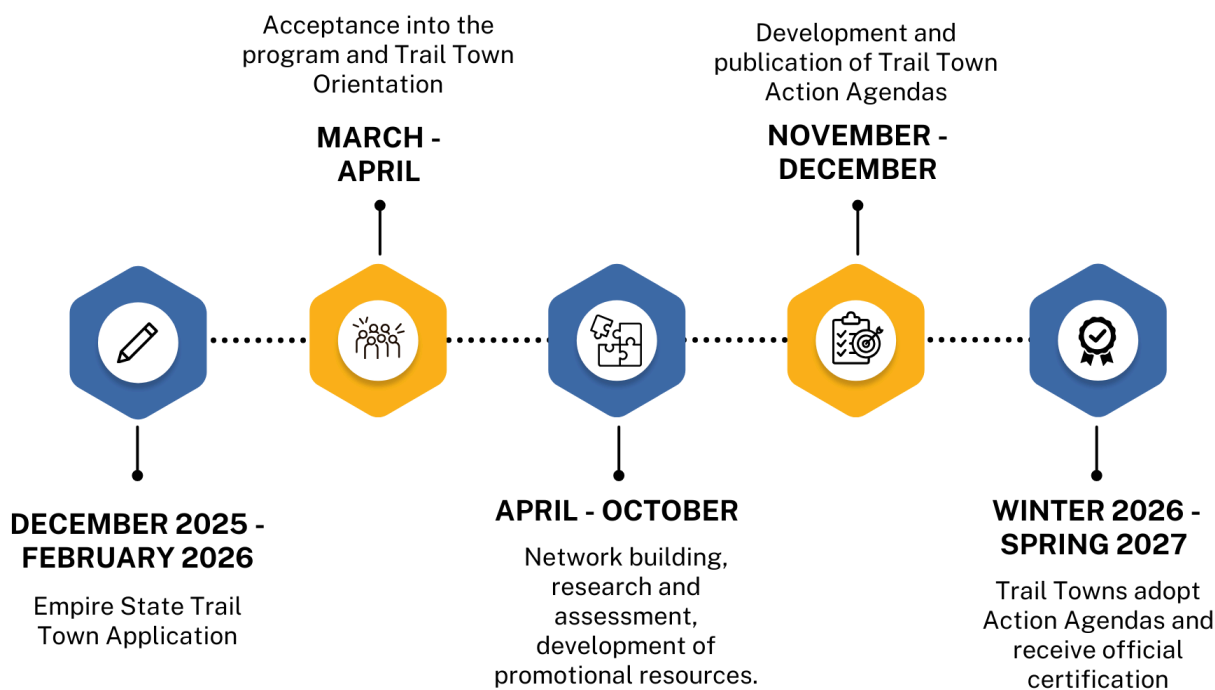
More vibrant local economies boosted by increased visitation to the trail
Increased sense of place and cultural sustainability
New developments and businesses focused along the trail and trailheads
More walkable, bikeable streets throughout the community
Higher quality of life for residents and more desirable place to live

Applying to Become an Empire State Trail Town

Process Overview

The Empire State Trail Town program is an official designation available through a competitive application and certification process with guidance provided by Parks & Trails New York. In order to become certified, a community must be accepted to participate in a ten-month technical assistance program as a “provisional trail town.” The selected communities will work with PTNY to develop a network of groups and individuals committed to the Trail Town initiative, conduct research and assessment, develop promotional resources and strategies, and create and adopt an action agenda to guide future Trail Town work. The program is not intended to be onerous, so the work focuses on proven strategies that provide municipalities with the tools to embrace and benefit from their location along a long-distance trail.

Upon completion of the Trail Town program and adoption of the Trail Town Action Agenda, the participating communities will be publicly designated as official Empire State Trail Towns.



Application Requirements

Municipalities along the Erie and Champlain Canalway Trails are invited to apply using a [web-based application](#) to become a provisional trail town. A preview PDF of the application can be downloaded

[here](#). Note that this application requires the creation of an account to log into PTNY's online grants and programs application. For questions about using this software to apply for the Trail Town program, please contact Erica Schneider at eschneider@ptny.org.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants include cities, villages or towns located directly on or in close proximity to the Erie or Champlain Canalway Trail. For both **cities larger than 25,000 people** and **towns of any population**, a proposed Trail Town sub-area should be identified as the focus area for the program. The purpose of this sub-area is to focus the program on a neighborhood or neighborhoods within a city or a hamlet or urbanized area within a town that cyclists traveling on the trail would be most likely to interact with.

Municipal resolution

To demonstrate that the municipality supports participation in the Trail Town program, **a municipal resolution (preferred) or a letter on official letterhead from the mayor or supervisor in support of the application** is required.

Sample letters:

[Empire State Trail Town 2026 Application Sample Resolution](#)

[Empire State Trail Town 2026 Application Sample Letter from Mayor/Supervisor](#)

Letter of support from a community organization

In addition to municipal support, the municipality must demonstrate that they have the support of at least one community partner (non-profit or other community organization) willing to commit time and resources to the Trail Town planning process. PTNY will require a letter of support demonstrating this commitment from the identified partner organization. Partner organizations in the past have included bicycle/pedestrian advocacy groups, Main Street Associations, Lions Clubs, Rotary Clubs, and Friends groups of local parks or trails, but this list is not restrictive.

Online Application & Criteria

Towns are invited to apply using a web-based application to receive technical planning assistance through the Trail Town program. Note that this application requires the creation of an account to log into Foundant, PTNY's online grants and programs application. For questions about using this software to apply for the Trail Town program, please contact Erica Schneider at eschneider@ptny.org.

Applicants will be asked to outline how they currently create a trail-friendly atmosphere, providing information about the following Trail Town components. Applicants should primarily describe conditions and amenities within the Trail Town sub-area, but amenities outside the sub-area will also be considered:

- Proximity and connection to the Empire State Trail. If the trail does not go directly through the municipality, it should be within three miles of a trail access point and connected via another trail or along low-traffic roads.
- Inventory of recreational opportunities in the municipality or nearby.

- Publicly accessible restrooms and drinking water (can be a business whose restrooms are open to the public and/or that offers access to water to the public.)
- Overnight accommodations that are welcoming to cyclists (this can be hotels, motels, bed & breakfasts, short-term rentals, or camping areas.)
- Food and drink (can be a grocery or convenience stores, cafes, or restaurants that welcome outdoor recreation visitors.)
- Information on the community (can be a visitors/welcome center, chamber of commerce, library, or village hall, or a regularly updated trail-oriented bulletin board or kiosk.)
- Bike parking.

The application will also require prospective Trail Town communities to address the following:

- Proposed Trail Town steering committee, including potential committee members, along with their contact information (email preferred), the organization, if any, that each member represents, and a brief description of the committee's proposed structure.
- Why the community should be certified as an Empire State Trail Town, including what makes the community unique among trailside communities, including notable attractions in the community, or notable festivals and events that currently serve or could potentially serve as a draw for trail users.
- Trail-friendly or active transportation policies or ordinances in place or being pursued by the municipality or municipalities, such as a complete streets ordinance, Vision Zero policy, or 25 mph municipality-wide speed limit.
- Plans, planning initiatives or projects underway in the community, especially work that integrates or supports the growth of a trail culture (can be Comprehensive Plans, NY Forward or DRI applications, Brownfield Opportunity Area Plans, Local Waterfront Revitalization Plans, or others)
- Challenges or barriers to creating trail-friendly conditions and connections.
- Goals and aspirations for participating in the Trail Town program.
- Why now is an ideal time to participate in the Trail Town program.
- An explanation of how a Trail Town effort in the community would incorporate historically underserved populations, such as low-income neighborhoods, communities of color, people with physical or intellectual disabilities, older adults and/or people with limited English proficiency.

Note that this portion of the application is not intended to be a comprehensive list of assets present in the community (as that will be completed by the selected communities as part of the Trail Town Self-Assessment). Rather, the application should demonstrate what assets, attractions, or other factors make the community unique and suited for selection as an Empire State Trail Town.

Important Dates

December 2025	Online application opens
Thursday, December 11, 2025 @ 10am	Application & program info session webinar - REGISTER NOW
February 16, 2026 @ 11:59 PM	Application period closes
Late February	Interviews as needed
Mid-March	Trail Towns notified of selection
Tuesday, March 17 @ 10am-12pm*	Trail Town Virtual Orientation

** SAVE THE DATE: Representatives from the application team MUST be able to attend the orientation, to be held via Zoom on Tuesday, March 17.*

PTNY will evaluate all submissions based on the extent to which they meet the Trail Town criteria, as well as the quality of the responses to the open-ended questions. The extent to which the application indicates that the community is prepared to fully participate in the Empire State Trail Town program will also be considered. Based upon the evaluation, PTNY reserves the right to invite any or all applicants for a virtual interview before making a final selection. PTNY expects to select up to three communities or applications for participation in the 2026 Empire State Trail Town program. If fewer than three applications are received that have completely met the Trail Town criteria, PTNY will review and select those communities that offer the most promise for meeting the trail town criteria.

2026 Empire State Trail Town Program

PTNY will provide direct assistance to the selected applicants in 2026, guiding each through a series of strategies designed to create a sustainable process for advancing each Trail Town as a community with high quality of life for residents and services and amenities for visitors. Work will result in the establishment of baseline trail use data, a promotional Trail Town landing webpage, and an action agenda, to be adopted by the provisional trail towns at the end of the program. The action agenda will include an existing conditions analysis informed by the Trail Town self-assessment and participatory workshop and will identify both short and long-term priorities. The action agenda will conclude with an implementation strategy, developed by the Trail Town committee for accomplishing these priorities, enabling the community to pursue Trail Town goals in subsequent years.

Throughout the duration of the program, the selected communities will be considered “provisional Trail Towns,” although for the purposes of this handbook, they may be simply referred to as “Trail Towns.” Upon completion of the ten-month program and the adoption of the action agenda, the participating communities will then be certified as official Empire State Trail Towns. The following pages outline the main program elements and activities that will make up the rest of the year. They are organized essentially by timeline, but it should be noted that some efforts may overlap.

Important 2026 Dates

Tuesday, March 17 @ 10am-12pm	Trail Town Virtual Orientation
April 17-19	Canal Clean Sweep
Late April (date TBD)	All Trail Towns Virtual Networking Session
May/June (date TBD)	Placemaking Workshops & Bike Around Assessments
July 11-19	Cycle the Erie Canal Bike Tour

Orientation (March)

Upon acceptance as a provisional Empire State Trail Town, communities will be invited to attend the virtual Trail Town Orientation, facilitated by Parks & Trails New York. At minimum, one representative of the Trail Town’s municipal applicant team and one representative of the Trail Town’s supporting community organization is required to attend, however this is an opportunity to introduce anyone who may play a role in the effort to the Trail Town program. Trail Towns are encouraged to invite anyone they identified as potential members of the steering committee in their application, as well as members of the local business community, tourism council, or interested residents.

This two-hour workshop will introduce the accepted provisional Trail Towns to outdoor recreation tourism, outline what trail users are looking for, and demonstrate how the program will help Trail Towns

become high-quality recreation destinations. The orientation will also provide a space for participating communities to network with the other Trail Towns. Representatives from previously designated Empire State Trail Towns will give a brief overview of their Trail Town experience, and be on hand to answer questions that the new communities might have.

A portion of this session will be devoted to next steps, including developing the Trail Town steering committee and conducting the self-assessment. This section will include recommendations as to what types of groups could be represented in the steering committee, as well as ideas for how the committee could be structured.

The last segment will consist of breakout rooms for each community, in which the participants from each Trail Town will evaluate who is already represented and what additional stakeholders might add value to the steering committee. At the end of this orientation, participants should have a solid understanding of the responsibilities of each Trail Town and what steps should be taken to form the steering committee.

Steering Committee Formation (March/April)

After the orientation, Trail Towns will be responsible for conducting the necessary outreach identified during the orientation to form their steering committee. Potential groups to include in the steering committee are trail or recreation groups, business owners, chambers of commerce, merchant associations, community organizations, Main Street organizations, town council and officials, county government, and interested citizens/advocates. At this point, it is also wise to consider the roles that each committee member will take on.

At minimum, the committee must establish a **steering committee coordinator** and **primary contact with PTNY** (these will most likely be the same person), but we also recommend designating the following positions:

- **A business liaison.** This person will be responsible for coordinating with local businesses for Bike Friendly NY certification and lead-up to the Cycle the Erie Canal bike tour. Someone already involved with the business community through the Chamber of Commerce, BID, or a business owner themselves, may be a good fit.
- **A promotion and marketing liaison.** This person will be responsible for or help with communicating about the Trail Town effort and events to the general public and the media
- **Events liaison.** This person will be responsible for assisting with planning the logistics of in-person events, including the Placemaking and Bike Around Workshop and the Cycle the Erie Canal celebration

These positions may overlap, or they may end up being committees, but thinking about them early on will help set the committee up for success.

Self-Assessment (March - May)

Once a committee has been established, each Trail Town steering committee must meet on its own to complete their Trail Town Self-Assessment. This assessment is designed to encourage communities to

take initial stock of their recreation and hospitality assets, and to start thinking about the strengths and weaknesses of their communities in terms of attracting bicycle tourists and encouraging residents to walk or bike.

This assessment will require deep thinking, and it is recommended that groups set aside several hours to complete it. There will be a copy available as a document for steering committee members to brainstorm; however, the final assessment should be submitted through the online form provided.

Bike Friendly New York Business Certification (Ongoing throughout the year)

Parks & Trails New York will provide each Trail Town with the tools to help tourism-oriented businesses in their community apply to become certified as “[Bike Friendly New York](#)” businesses. Part of the Trail Town assessment will include identifying potential Bike Friendly businesses which should serve as the initial list that the Trail Town targets for certification.

Trail User Counts (May - September)

Parks & Trails New York will facilitate trail use data collection and analysis through installation of electronic trail counters. PTNY will install one EcoVisio electronic trail counter in each Trail Town during the spring, to remain in place through at least the fall, in order to capture trail use during the tourism season. While PTNY will be responsible for installation and take-down, one steering committee member will be tasked with retrieving the data through an app when requested by PTNY. PTNY will include an analysis of this trail count data as part of the action agenda, to be developed in the fall.

Trail Town Community Survey (Summer)

PTNY will create a survey and invite residents, trail users, business owners, and visitors to share their insights on the community’s top assets, including important places, businesses, events, and outdoor recreation experiences. Survey respondents will also be able to identify gaps or areas for improvement and contribute ideas for enhancing the town’s trail connections, amenities, and overall visitor experience.

The online survey will feature opportunities to map points of interest, highlight issues or needs in specific locations, and provide input on the community’s unique identity within the broader regional trail network. Feedback gathered through this survey will be combined with insights from the in-person workshops to help guide future Trail Town planning and investment. The Trail Town committee will be responsible for distributing the survey and ensuring it reaches the greater community.

Placemaking and Bike Around Two-Day Workshop (May/June)

The Trail Town, in partnership with PTNY, will host, promote, and participate in an in-person Placemaking Workshop and Bike Around assessment to identify the Trail Town’s unique identity and evaluate the existing strengths and areas for improvement for the community as an outdoor recreation destination, to be led by Parks & Trails New York during the summer. These two workshops will build on the Trail Town self-assessment and will serve as the foundation for developing the web-based promotional resources as well as the Action Agenda.

a. Placemaking Workshop

This workshop will take place in the evening and kick off with an introduction to the Trail Town model and a background on outdoor recreation tourism. From there, the workshop will serve as an opportunity for participants to brainstorm the community's top assets (places, businesses, events, and experiences), and gaps or areas for improvement. All are welcome to join the placemaking workshop, and it is recommended that the Trail Town steering committee advertise the opportunity widely. The Trail Town steering committee will be responsible for coordinating the venue for the placemaking workshop (a library or other community space that facilitates a powerpoint presentation from PTNY staff and small group discussions at tables), and for promoting the opportunity to the community.

b. Bike Around Assessment

The Bike Around Assessment will take place the morning following the Placemaking Workshop. The goal of the Bike Around is to help the Trail Town experience their community from a visiting cyclist's perspective. The route of the Bike Around will take riders from the trail to the business district and any other identified points of interest, and finally back to the trail. The ride is intended to be conducted at a slow pace to allow for observation and assessment and will include many opportunities to stop and discuss specific elements or conditions of the built environment, including trail or road surface, wayfinding signage, litter or debris, pedestrian and bike infrastructure, and other amenities and services for cyclists. The ride will finish around lunchtime so that the group can convene at a local trail-friendly restaurant to debrief and discuss what they experienced.

PTNY will propose a route, but the Trail Town steering committee will be responsible for reviewing the route to ensure that it is a reasonable and safe ride for all involved, and hits the major points of interest. The steering committee will also be responsible for coordinating a location to have lunch and debrief after the ride.

As an outcome of the two-part workshop, PTNY will compile a list of short-term recommendations that the Trail Towns can implement immediately to improve the trail user experience and take advantage of trail tourism that very season.

Web-based Promotional Resource Development (June - August)

Based on ideas generated during the placemaking workshop, the steering committee will have the tools to complete a worksheet that will inform the development of the Trail Town landing page. This worksheet will request a community tagline, a list of community assets and events to be highlighted, and trail access information.

Note: to maintain designation as an Empire State Trail Town, this information will need to be verified and updated in April (prior to the tourism season) each year.

Turning Assessment into Action (June/July)

PTNY will check in individually with each Trail Town to debrief about the Placemaking and Bike Around Workshops and Cycle the Erie Canal celebrations/other trail events. PTNY will then outline the next steps for developing the Trail Town landing page and creating the action agenda.

The Action Agenda

a. Action Agenda Development (August-November)

Based on data gathered from the self-assessment, placemaking workshop and bike around, PTNY will develop an action agenda that includes an analysis of existing conditions (including an analysis of trail use) and a list of long- and short-term priorities tailored to each community. During this process, PTNY may need to reach out for more information or clarification on certain subjects. When the draft priorities are complete, PTNY will provide the steering committees with the action agenda for feedback, as well as provide them with an “Implementation Worksheet,” which will help the committee think through how the recommendations will be implemented. The committee will be required to identify who will be responsible for the effort after this year, who will be the primary contact with PTNY, how progress on the priorities will be tracked, and how the action agenda will be adopted. This strategy will then serve as the final section of the action agenda.

b. Individual PTNY/Trail Town Check-Ins: Moving the Action Agenda Forward (November/December)

After the Trail Town steering committees have reviewed the draft priorities and completed the implementation worksheets, PTNY will facilitate a conversation to discuss feedback.

c. Finalization of the action agenda (December/January)

Upon submission of the implementation worksheet, PTNY will include this language into the final action agenda. The final version of the action agenda will then be returned to the Trail Town steering committee for approval.

Action Agenda Adoption and Promotion of Designation (Winter/Spring 2027)

Once the final Action Agenda is in the hands of the Trail Towns, the steering committees must then pursue a commitment on behalf of the municipality to make an effort to carry out the recommendations. The specific strategy will be identified in the implementation worksheet completed as part of the Action Agenda development, but in most cases it will be a municipal resolution. This type of public commitment will be the last component of the program, taking the community from a provisional Trail Town to an officially designated Empire State Trail Town. This will be a cause for celebration and the Trail Town steering committee should communicate it to the world. A press release and social media posts that outline some of the Trail Town’s victories, high-priority next steps, and the publication of the Trail Town landing page should be developed and published. The trail towns are also encouraged to hold a public press event in the spring, which PTNY would make every effort to attend and help make a success.

Maintaining the Empire State Trail Town Designation (Ongoing)

Once each Trail Town is certified as an official Empire State Trail Town, its continued certification will be dependent on fulfillment of the following requirements each year:

1. Continue to meet the Trail Town criteria

Certified Trail Towns will be required to continue to meet the baseline Trail Town criteria, including:

- Publicly accessible restrooms and water (can be a business whose restrooms are open to the public and/or that offers access to water to trail users/the public)
- At least one overnight accommodation that is welcoming to trail users
- At least one place that trail users can get food and drink (this can be a grocery or convenience store or a restaurant that welcomes trail users)
- At least one outlet for information on the community (this can be a visitors/welcome center, chamber of commerce, library, or village hall, or a regularly updated trail-oriented bulletin board or kiosk.
- At least one bike rack in the community's downtown area for bicyclists to safely park their bikes

2. Annually verify Trail Town landing page content (April)

Prior to each tourism season (April of each year), each Trail Town steering committee must verify with PTNY that the information on their promotional materials is up to date. This will ensure that PTNY is able to provide the most up-to-date information to prospective visitors.

3. Attend the annual Trail Town Updates and Networking Virtual Meeting (Spring)

PTNY will host periodic virtual meetings 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. Each Trail Town will be required to submit a brief written update prior to the meeting and must send at least one representative. This will provide an opportunity for communities to share victories and strategies for overcoming challenges.

For More Information Contact:

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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 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 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.