PARKS & TRAILS
NEW YORK
40th

Western New York Greenways Planning Summit Report
2025

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Parks & Trails New York is the leading nonprofit working statewide to create a network of parks, trails, and greenways so that New Yorkers can more easily access and fully enjoy the outdoors. Since 1985, Parks & Trails New York has helped create more than 1,500 miles of greenways, bike paths, river walks, and trails across New York and has led a campaign to promote and enhance one of the nation's largest state park systems.
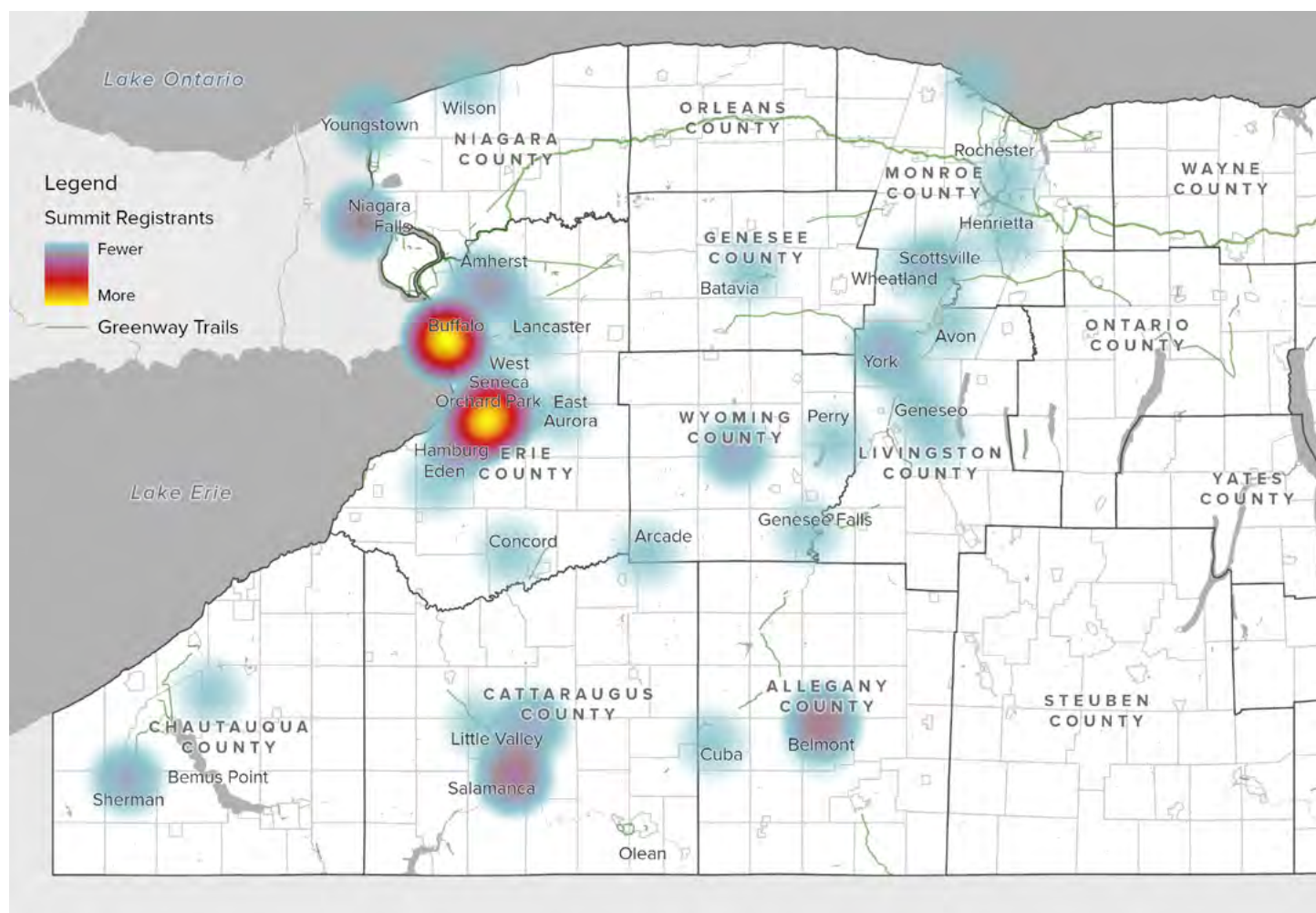
2025 Western New York Greenways Planning Summit

On March 28, 2025, Parks & Trails New York was joined by nearly 100 partners from around the Western New York region in Buffalo for the first annual Western New York Regional Greenways Planning Summit. The summit was hosted with support from the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation.
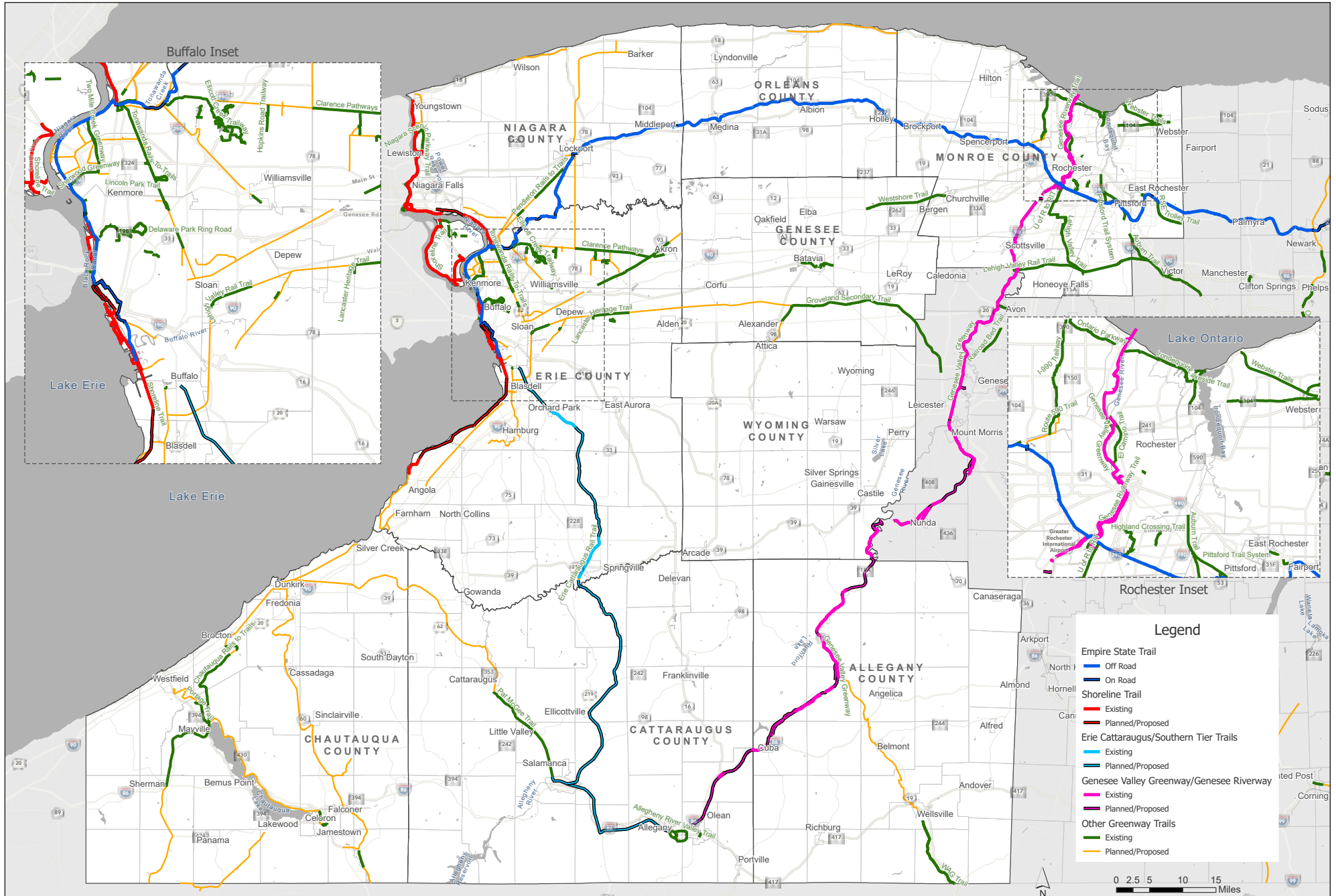
The first-of-its-kind day-long event explored current plans in place to build out Western New York's regional greenway trail network and the challenges and opportunities for expansion. Planners, advocates, agency representatives, elected leaders, and others from around the region came together to collectively brainstorm how best to advance construction of the region's greenway network and to overcome and address any barriers to expansion. The stated goal of the summit was to galvanize stakeholders and focus planning efforts to advance closing gaps in the Western NY greenway trail network.

Heatmap of registered participants for the summit.

The morning consisted of presentations from representatives of greenway trail initiatives across the region, summarized below. In the afternoon, attendees regrouped for participatory discussions, using both pen and paper and interactive digital tools to capture current challenges and opportunities facing trail planning, development, and activation in Western NY. An analysis of the challenges and opportunities are summarized in the next section.

This summit was conceived as the first of three such annual summits. Any such summit, by its nature, can only collect the insight and thoughts of those in attendance, and undoubtedly missed many critical perspectives and insights around the current challenges and future opportunities of the region's greenway network. The map on page 5 shows where summit attendees hailed from across the region. There are clear gaps in the attendance, with entire counties from which no or very few attendees were present. Additionally, attendees were overwhelmingly either municipal or county government planners or other staff, non-profit organization staff, or trail advocates. While the summit saw robust discussions that incorporated a variety of perspectives, the lack of input from the business and economic development community, or from the healthcare, education, or tourism sectors was notable by its absence. Future greenways summits will aim to build on this initial conversation by incorporating a wider range of views from a diverse range of backgrounds and encompassing the full geography of the region.

At the beginning of the summit, participants were asked, "What topics are you excited to discuss today?"

History of Greenway Trail Development in WNY

For centuries, Western New York has played a critical role in the state and the nation's transportation network. The Great Lakes, and the Niagara River as the connection between Lakes Erie and Ontario, were the pathway by which French explorers first reached the interior of the continent. In the 19th century, first the Erie Canal and then various railroad networks sought to provide a speedier, more convenient connection for freight and people between New York City and the Great Lakes. As transportation modes evolved throughout the 20th century and most traffic switched to highways, former rail and canal corridors were abandoned and left available for new uses.

As early as the 1960s, some canal communities that had lost most of their commercial traffic sought new ways to benefit from the canal and began building local trails on remnants of the old towpath. The first public expression of the Canalway Trail concept came with the release of the NYS Canal Recreation Development Plan in the early 1970s. Many sections of the Canalway Trail were constructed during the next two decades. In 1995, the NYS Canal Corporation adopted the New York State Canal Recreationway Plan, which proposed a revitalization of the Canal System by enhancing recreational opportunities, including by building out a connected Erie Canalway Trail that ran 360 miles from Buffalo to Albany. This trail today stands as a critical spine of the Western New York regional greenways network.

The Erie Canalway Trail is only one of the corridors to receive new life as a greenway over the past forty years. Numerous former rail corridors have been revitalized as rail-to-trail conversions - known as rail trails or, in a uniquely Western New York formulation, as "rails-to-trails". Major corridors such as the Genesee Valley Greenway, Chautauqua Rails-to-Trails, Pat McGee Trail, the Clarence Pathway Trail, and more have seen new life as greenways after being abandoned as railroads. In places, the greenways network also follows the course of major water bodies, as with the Shoreline Trail which runs along the Niagara River from Buffalo north to Niagara Falls and beyond to Lake Ontario.

In January 2017, New York State announced the creation of the Empire State Trail. The Empire State Trail incorporated the Erie Canalway Trail from Buffalo to Albany, and connected it to an additional 400 miles of routing from New York City north to Canada. The state's effort provided $200 million for the construction of trails to close remaining gaps in the Canalway Trail and to provide enhancements to existing trails. Today, wayfinding signage for the Empire State Trail can be found along the entire length of the Erie Canalway Trail, along with improved gateways and access points that include parking facilities, welcome and orientation signage, picnic tables and benches, and bicycle racks and self-service bicycle "fix-it" stations.

Western New York's greenways network received a further boost in 2018, when the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation was set up to honor the wishes of the former owner of the Buffalo Bills to improve the quality of life in the region. In October of 2018, the Foundation launched its Parks & Trails Initiative with $50 million in commitments to help make connections and eliminate gaps in the burgeoning regional trail systems. Since that time, support from the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation has been transformative in advancing greenway projects and planning initiatives in communities around the region and helping to ensure that all communities can benefit from providing safe places to walk, bike, or otherwise enjoy using trails.

Updates & Resources from Partners

» **Statewide & Regional Non-Profit Presentations**

Parks & Trails New York - Dylan Carey

PTNY's Director of Policy and Planning, Dylan Carey, kicked off the morning with a statewide perspective on Greenway Trail development and promotion, as well as the resources and programs that PTNY has created and manages to support the expanding greenway network. PTNY has especially devoted a lot of resources to demonstrating how trails can be used to support sustainable economic development, through Trail Town programs, a Bike Friendly NY business certification program, and cross-state organized bike tours on the Empire State Trail.

Plans, Initiatives, & Resources:

- **Statewide Greenway Trails Plan** and **Trail Inventory** (2021): The Statewide Greenways Plan represents a culmination of a year-long effort to develop a comprehensive document addressing New York's statewide system of non-motorized multi-use trails (Greenway Trails). The plan has a very thorough analysis of the benefits of greenway trails from a variety of perspectives. The plan also includes a GIS inventory of existing, planned, and proposed greenway trails across the state.

- Greenway Trails Progress Reports: Since the publication of the Statewide Greenway Trails Plan, PTNY has published two reports documenting trail projects that were completed or have advanced, progress made on collaboration and sharing of best practices, and funding opportunities made available for trails projects.

    - **NYS Greenway Trails Progress Report (Aug 2021 - Dec 2022)**
    - **NYS Greenway Trails Progress Report (Jan 2023 - June 2024)**

- **Trails Across New York: A Grassroots Guide for Developing Greenway Trails** (2024): PTNY and the NYS OPRHP have published a handbook to guide grassroots advocates through the steps to take the vision for a new multi-use path from concept to reality. This resource provides detailed information to support Greenway trails development in communities around the state. The steps outlined in the guide provide a high-level overview of the various aspects of trail development from initial concept to construction, as well as how participation from a broad range of individuals, agencies, organizations, and landowners will factor in throughout the process.

- **Greenways Guides - State Funding for Greenway Trails:** This new resource from PTNY lays out funding opportunities for every step of the greenway trail development process, from planning to construction, organized by grants within the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) and non-CFA grants.

- **Western NY Trail Town Grants:** Administered by Parks & Trails New York (PTNY), and with funding provided by the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation, PTNY is offering $60,000 in 2025, 2026 and 2027 in competitive grants to support a broader initiative aimed at boosting local economies by leveraging visitation to nearby public lands.

- **Tailored technical assistance & support:** PTNY staff is happy to provide advice, make connections, and facilitate relationships. Staff can also write letters of support for greenways projects.

GObike Buffalo - Justin Booth

GObike Buffalo Executive Director Justin Booth continued the conersation by providing additional regional context, emphasizing the critical nature of continuing to develop safe, off-road facilities to encourage mode shift, address the traffic violence crisis on our roadways, enhance public health, and create equitable, vibrant communities.

Initiatives, Projects and Plans:

* **Healthy Streets Initiative**: GObike is working to facilitate more welcoming streets for walking and biking in a variety of communities in Western NY.
* **Trails Feasibility Studies**: GObike is working on or has worked on many feasibility studies for greenways in Western NY, including the **East Side Trails Feasibility Study**. A full list of past and current projects can be found **here**.

» Regional County & High-Profile Trail Project Presentations

Chautauqua County - Jacob Bodway

Chautauqua County highly values their trail network and recognizes its significance for their residents and visitors. The County has a robust Chautauqua County Greenways Master Plan (2012) and recently founded the Friends of Chautauqua County Greenways in 2022, which is housed under the Chautauqua County Partnership for Economic Growth. The county recently completed a mapping project of all trails, and have been promoting trails as a driving force for attracting new residents to the county.

Initiatives, Projects and Plans:
* **Chautauqua County Greenways Plan** (2012)
* **Chautauqua County Greenways Group Action Plan** (2022)
* **Interactive Chautauqua County Trails Map,** including Avenza Maps Application for on-the-trail accessibility.
* **Chautauqua County Relocation Guide**
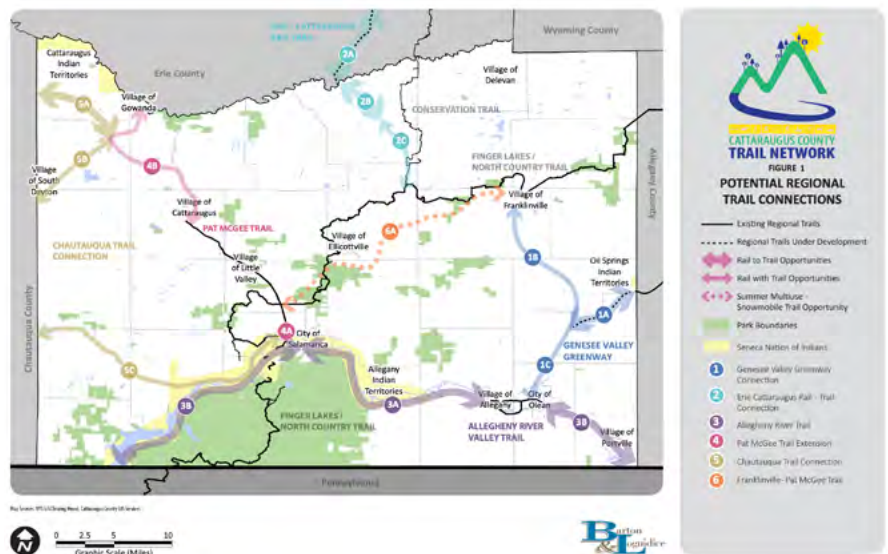
Allegany County - Kier Dirlam

Allegany County is undertaking their first Countywide Trails Plan, funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission. The county has not traditionally understood the value of trails, so this will be a big step forward. Allegany County is home to the southern section of the Genesee Valley Greenway, and has studied potential routes for a Triple Divide Connector trail, which would connect the GVG in Belfast to the WAG trail in Wellsville 20 miles away. A few challenges facing the County are how to engage with gas and electric utilities to use their corridors as trails and who will take ownership over future trails over concerns about maintenance.

Initiatives, Projects and Plans:
* **Allegany Countywide Trails Plan** (in progress)

Cattaraugus County - Kate O'Stricker

In 2017, Cattaraugus County released their Countywide Trail System Plan, funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and prepared by Barton & Longuidice. The major priorities identified in the study were enhanced signage, better mapping, and connections to larger trail systems. Since the plan was published, they have made progress on all of these goals. The County has made progress on each of these goals. With additional funds from the ARC, the county completed a countywide GIS trail mapping and signage guidelines project. In 2022, they completed a Trail Wayfinding Signage Handbook, and in 2024, launched a new interactive web mapping platform of trails. For many of their smaller trails, the county faced difficulty securing funding. To address this, the county pursued the concept of the Southern Tier trail which they undertook with GObike Buffalo to brand and connect separate trails together into one greenway. Building on the Southern Tier Trail Feasibility Study, Cattaraugus County secured a $7M federal RAISE grant with the help of GObike to complete the design and alignment of the Cattaraugus County 52-mile section of the Southern Tier Trail The County is working with GObike and Colliers as their consultants. One of the biggest challenges the County is facing is determining who will hold the easements for the future trail.

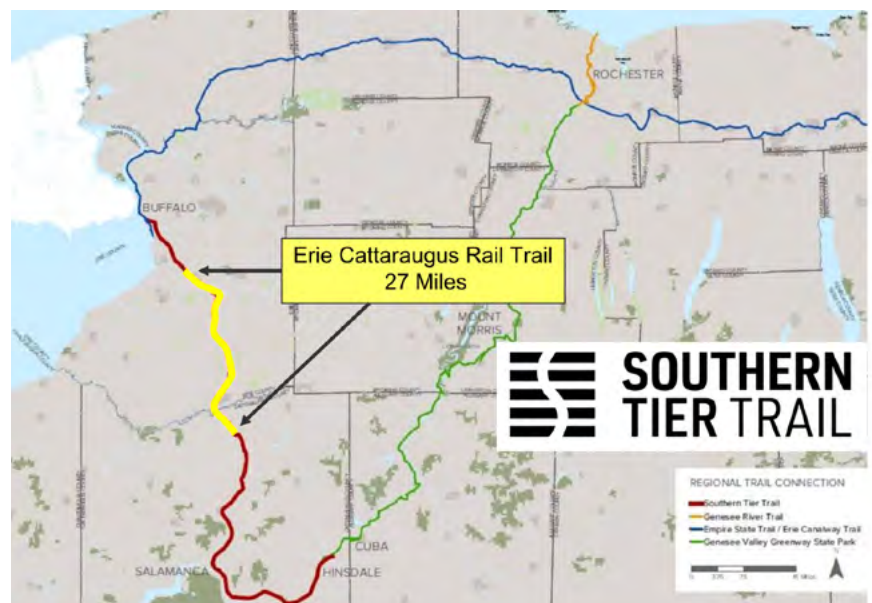**Initiatives, Projects and Plans:**

- **Cattaraugus County Trail System Plan** (2017)
- **Cattaraugus County Trail Signage Program & Handbook** (2022)
- **Cattaraugus County Trail Map Viewer** (2024)
- **Southern Tier Trail Feasibility Study** (2021)

Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail, Inc. - Mary Brummer

The Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail (ECRT) Inc.'s mission is to preserve the 27-mile Buffalo-Pittsburgh rail corridor and transform it into a multi-use recreational trail between Orchard Park and Ashford, New York. It represents a crucial segment of the future Southern Tier Trail. Between one third to one half of the trail is currently open, with a strategy to continue to develop the trail as funding becomes available. Recent progress includes the opening of the Orchard Park section in 2023. The snowmobiling community has been integral to the opening of seven miles of the trail. The group has also held highly successful charity bike rides to raise funds for the organization.

Initiatives, Projects and Plans:

- **Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail Inc website**

Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) - Amy Weymouth

GBNRTC published the Bike Buffalo Niagara Regional Bicycle Master Plan in 2020, which provides a long-term vision for increasing bicycle connectivity and active transportation options.

The plan includes 182 recommendations, with 41 focused on the greenway network, with a goal to develop an "all ages and all abilities" bicycling network. Since the plan was released, GBNRTC has focused on developing feasibility studies for future priority trails by allocating funds in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for feasibility studies. In 2023/24, GBNRTC with a contract with GObike and support from municipalities developed feasibility studies for Cheektowaga Trails, the Peanut Line Trail and the Niagara Communities Joint Trail. The next steps will entail using the feasibility studies to apply for grants for design & construction.

Initiatives, Projects and Plans:

- **Bike Buffalo Niagara Regional Bicycle Master Plan** (2020)
- **Cheektowaga Area Trails Study** (2023)
- **Niagara Communities Joint Trails Study** (2024)
- **Peanut Line Trail Study** (2025)

Erie County - Mark Rountree

Erie County primarily gave an update on progress to maintain and build out the Shoreline Trail. The County is revitalizing and enhancing 6 miles of the existing shoreline trail in the Town and City of Tonawanda. They are also building a new ramp connection at Isle View Park to provide a physical connection to overcome the 25' grade difference between the Park / Shoreline Trail and River Road and the proposed Mile View Trail network which will connect to Two Mile Creek Trail. For extending the trail south, a concept plan has been developed for the Bethlehem and Woodlawn Phases, and will involve going through the Bethlehem Steel Brownfield. Extending the trail through the Town of Hamburg requires more study. In the Town of Evans, work is progressing, with construction on 2.5 miles of greenway expected to be completed by the end of 2026. Had to compromise on the design of the trail, with some sections reduced to 5-6 feet in width.
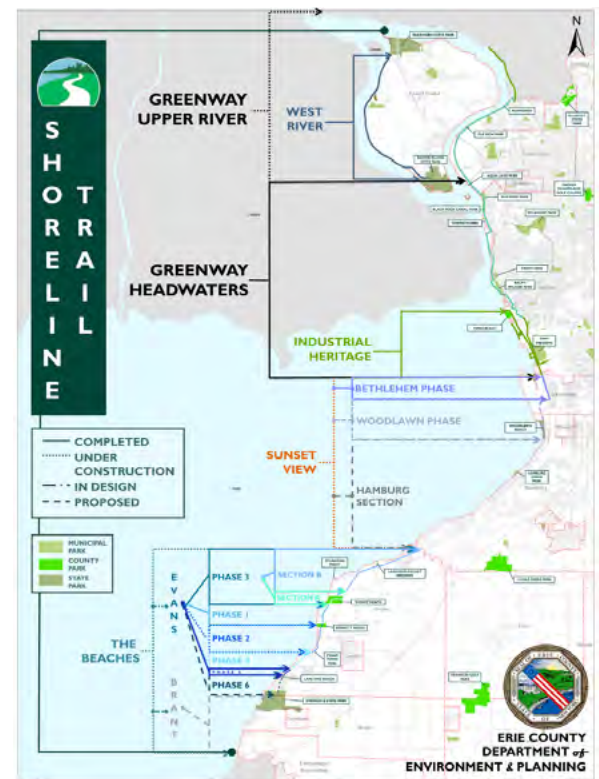

Initiatives, Projects and Plans:

- **Erie County Shoreline Trail website**

Niagara River Greenway - Greg Stevens

The Niagara River Greenway Commission presented on the ways it is continuing to build out the greenway trail network in Western NY through regional planning, project support, and stewardship. Some of the major goals include the full build-out of the Shoreline Trail to connect Buffalo's Outer Harbor to Fort Niagara and connectivity from this "Greenway spine" to link upland and interior communities to promote access to the waterfront. Recent successes include the opening of a new 2.5-mile segment of the Niagara River Shoreline Trail running through the Town of Wheatfield.
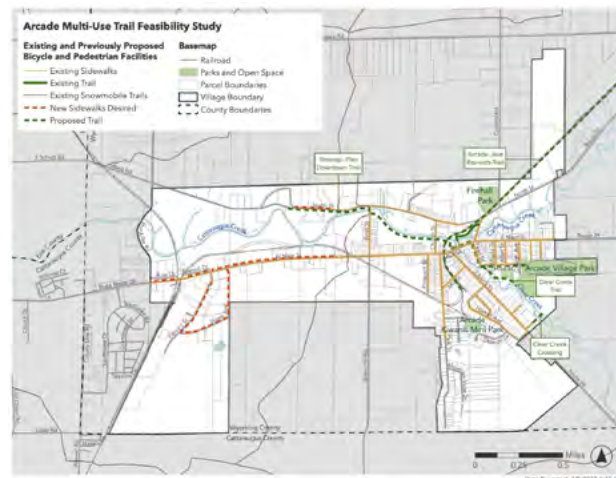
Initiatives, Projects and Plans:

- **Niagara River Greenway Plan** (2007)
- **Niagara River Greenway Wayfinding Standards & Design Manual** (2012)
- **Niagara River Greenway website**

Wyoming County - James Bragg

Wyoming County has not done a lot of trails planning to-date, but there is a growing understanding that trails are essential for economic development and quality of life. The primary trails within the county are the Genesee Valley Greenway and the Silver Lake Trail. Municipalities within the county have pursued UPWP funds for trails planning through the Genesee Transportation Council. The Village of Arcade has a Trails Plan, and Perry has received the DRI, with plans to include some trail enhancements. Wyoming County has also been awarded a federal Thriving Communities grant through NYSDOT to create connections between villages, with the plan to address social isolation in rural communities through trails. The Town of Genesee Falls is interested in pursuing trails projects.
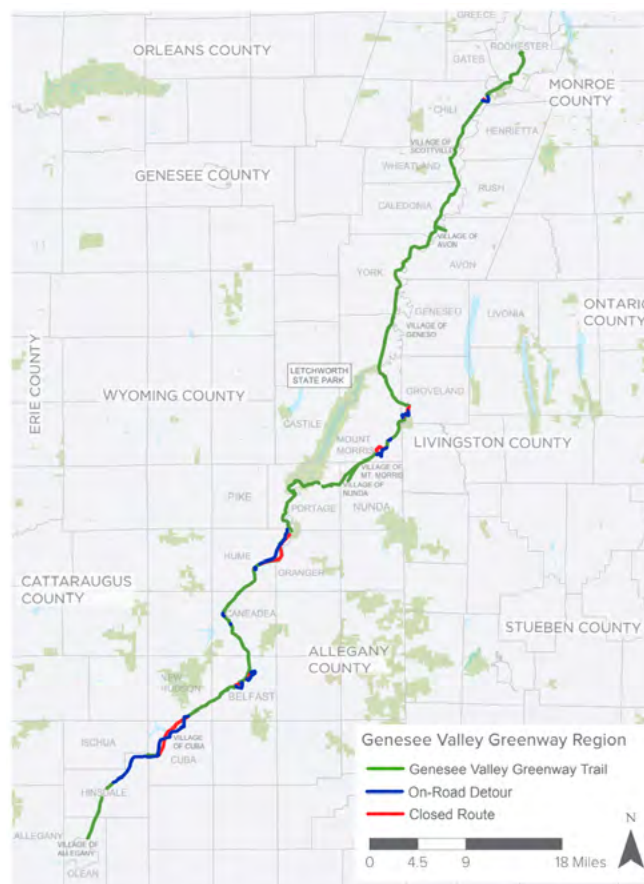

Initiatives, Projects, and Plans:

* **Village of Arcade Multi-use Trail Feasibility Study (**2023)
* **Village of Perry Silver Lake Trail Feasibility Study** (2017)

Genesee Valley Greenway - Carl Schoenthal

The Genesee Valley Greenway State Park (GVGSP) is a 90-mile greenway trail in development from Rochester to Hinsdale. The trail is planned to connect to the future Southern Tier Trail, which will create a loop with the Empire State Trail, roughly shaped like a buffalo. In 2021, funded by the Ralph C. Wilson Jr Foundation, GVGSP developed an Action Plan to identify priority projects for funding in order to enhance and complete the trail. Currently, GVGSP is working on several projects. One is the Bridges of Allegany County, funded by the RCWJF and a NYSDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant to connect seven communities and improve safety. GVGSP is also conducting a study of the I-86 corridor at the southern end of the trail to investigate connecting the trail from Cuba to Olean. Other projects include culvert replacement on Rt 19/19A, resurfacing of 7 miles of trail from Avon to York Landing, possible loop/spur trails in Allegany County, and enhanced trail amenities and parking lots in Livingston County. GVGSP is also supported by the Friends of the Genesee Valley Greenway. In addition, there has been a lot of momentum around Trail Towns and investments to enhance connectivity and placemaking from the communities along the Greenway.

Initiatives, Projects, and Plans:
* **Genesee Valley Greenway State Park Action Plan** (2021)

City of Rochester - Brent Irving

The City of Rochester is working on the Genesee Riverway Trail North Completion Study, focused on the 9-mile north portion of the GRT from downtown Rochester to Lake Ontario, with the goal of creating a seamless trail system on both sides of the river. Primary barriers to trail development have been difficult terrain and private property ownership. As the study moves from public outreach to concept design, the City is considering how other projects will impact this trail and its alignment, including the Inner Loop North Transformation Project, the Running Track Bridge restoration, and the new High Falls State Park.

Initiatives, Projects, and Plans:
*   **Genesee Riverway North Trail Feasibility Study** (ongoing)
*   **City of Rochester Active Transportation Plan (**2023)
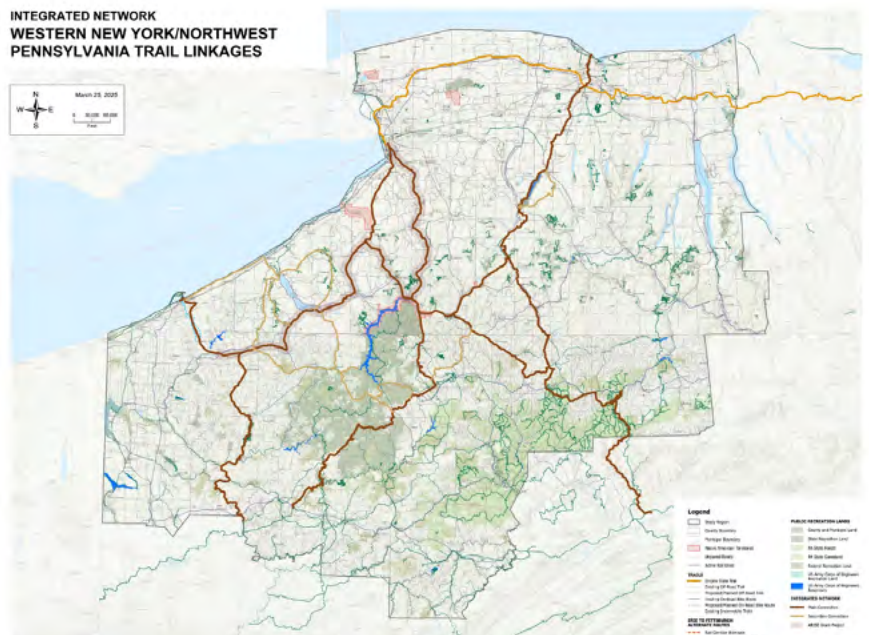
» Keynote Presentation

Pennsylvania Environmental Coalition (PEC) - AJ Schwartz & Brett Hollern

The keynote address for the summit came from the Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC), an organization with a long history of involvement both in developing long-distance trails and celebrating the economic success of trail communities. PEC's presentation highlighted lessons learned from the organization's involvement with the Great Allegheny Passage, one of the country's most well-known rail trails, spanning 150 miles from Pittsburgh to Cumberland, Maryland, focusing on the need for a consistent vision for the visitor experience, including signage.

As part of the keynote, PEC also introduced attendees to the Western New York and Northwestern Pennsylvania Integrated Trail Network project. PEC and the project team were awarded funding through an ARC ARISE Planning grant to conduct a comprehensive study on multi-use trail connectivity between the Southern Tier of New York and Northern Pennsylvania. This project will leverage the existing trail networks including Industrial Heartlands Trails Coalition, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail, PA Wilds Loop, Southern Tier Trail, and Empire State Trail. PEC envisions a trail system spanning the western half of both states, with the potential to connect Pittsburgh and Buffalo, linking into established trail systems throughout the Northeast. The project partners currently include GObike Buffalo, Cattaraugus County Department of Economic Development, Planning & Tourism, and Parks & Trails New York. Environmental Design & Planning has been brought on as a consultant for the project.

Initiatives, Projects, and Plans:

*   **WNY-NWPA Regional Trails Sandbox Map**
*   **Western New York & Northwestern Pennsylvania Integrated Trail Network Questionnaire**

Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Following the morning's presentations, summit attendees gathered in groups for active discussions and to participate in a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis for the region's trail network. The purpose of the SWOT analysis is to identify internal and external factors that contribute to the development, implementation, and maintenance of greenway trails in the WNY region. There are four main components to a SWOT analysis:

Strengths - The positive internal assets that may contribute to the success of trail development, such as solid foundational infrastructure or strong natural assets.
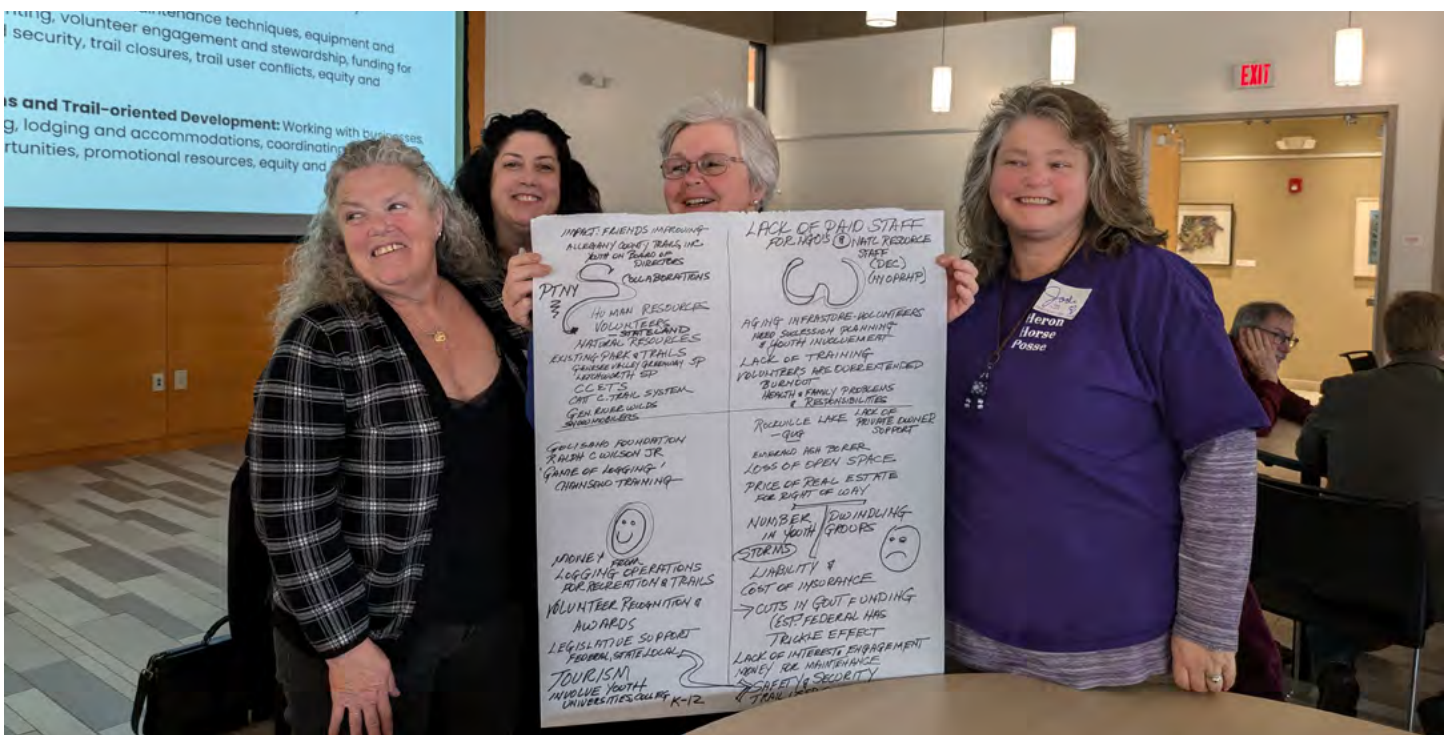
Weaknesses - Internal challenges or obstacles that may hinder trail development efforts, such as community opposition or lack of funding.

Opportunities - External factors that may be leveraged to benefit trail development, such as access to grant opportunities or strong community partnerships.

Threats - External challenges that may hinder trail development, such as an uncertain political landscape or regulatory barriers.

Two rounds of the SWOT analysis were conducted. First, participants were seated with other attendees from the same general geographic region, and were asked to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats surrounding the greenway trail network in their geographic area. Next, participants were regrouped randomly and were asked to repeat the SWOT, and were allowed to focus on a specific topic, such as trail planning and development, trail management and maintenance, and trail towns & trail tourism.

The overall SWOT results for the entire region are grouped thematically and summarized below. Full SWOT summaries for specific topics or sub-regions may be found in the appendix.

Strengths

Category	Key Strengths
Community & Stakeholder Support	- High public interest & growing awareness of benefits of trails - Outdoor engagement and social interaction - Dedicated individuals & skilled resources - Active friends/volunteer groups - Existing advocacy organizations (e.g., GObike, PTNY) - Shared vision and experiences between communities
Institutional & Political Alignment	- Municipalities on board early with maintenance responsibilities on some trails - Strong interjurisdictional coordination - Political connections - NY State government support on key state trails - Clear leadership (DEC, DOT, Parks) - Maintenance agreements in place on existing trails (VSAs, MOUs)
Planning & Strategic Resources	- Planning grants available - Support from Ralph Wilson Foundation & trail maintenance fund - Strategic regional plans already exist - Multimodal and mixed-use planning frameworks - Trail user and economic impact data on some trails - Successful existing trail precedents (Erie Canalway/Empire State Trail)
Infrastructure & Natural Assets	- Existing infrastructure (bike share, NFTA, built spine) - Strong natural features and topography - Amassed land ownership (railroads) - Good spacing of communities for long/multi-day rides - Greenspace and recreation opportunities - Brownfield remediation underway in some areas
Economic & Environmental Benefits	- Job growth potential from trail development - Boosts to local economy and tourism - Increases residential appeal - Supports climate mitigation and environmental restoration.

Weaknesses

Category	Key Weaknesses
Governance & Coordination Challenges	- Too many entities involved (NGOs, counties, towns, state agencies) - Lack of centralized leadership or organizing body - Poor financial/administrative coordination - Bureaucratic silos and conflicts between agencies (OPRHP, DEC, DOT, etc.) - Missed opportunities due to poor coordination
Funding & Resources Limitations	- Insufficient funding overall, and especially for maintenance - Limited access to grants and philanthropic support - Small philanthropic base - Rural communities have fewer financial resources - No coordinated effort for trail counters or data collection - Lack of professional trail builders and landscape architects
Planning & Maintenance Gaps	- Inadequate early planning for long-term maintenance (e.g., bridges, washouts) - Maintenance takes a back seat to development - Different entities responsible for maintenance - Facility type influences maintenance but not always planned for - Failing infrastructure - Gaps in trail system
Connectivity & Infrastructure Issues	- Poor east-west connectivity - On-road segments (e.g., Route 5) are unsafe - Lack of connections to village centers - Few protected bike lanes - No car share program - Insufficient wayfinding and signage - Mediocre existing trail facilities
Cultural & Perception Barriers	- Trails seen primarily as recreational, not as transportation - Lack of youth interest - Limited public enthusiasm or engagement - Motorists unaware or inattentive to trail users - Distracted drivers create safety concerns - Recognition and integration of the Seneca Nation is lacking
Demographic & Land Use Challenges	- Rural population decline and lack of housing - Low density/user numbers - Lack of development around many trail segments - Zoning and existing land use issues - Affordability and housing quality concerns - Infrastructure is fragmented or divided
Technical & Mapping Limitations	- No integrated, connected mapping systems - Ebike infrastructure lacking - Gaps in data collection and monitoring - Few trail counters and limited user data

Opportunities

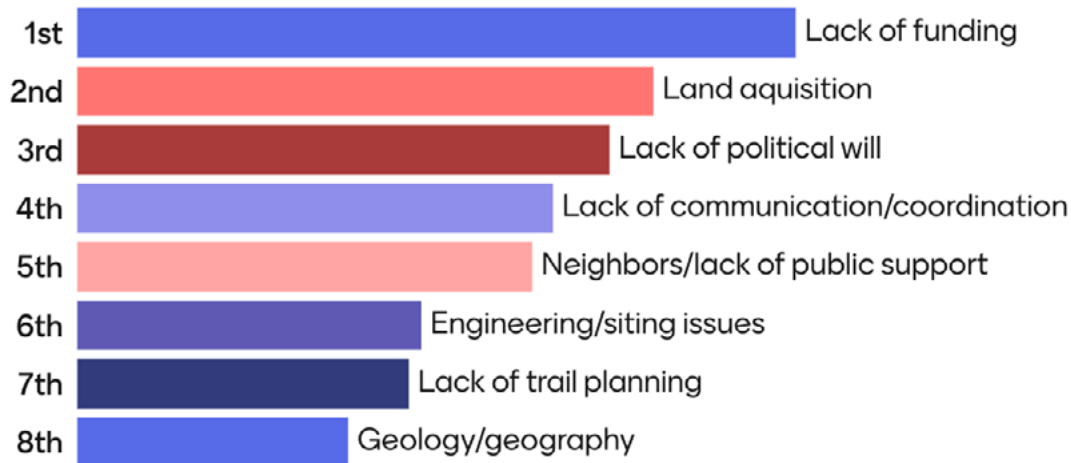| Category	Key Opportunities
Economic Development & Tourism	- Outdoor recreation to attract employees (work/life balance) - Build on existing recreation tourism (ski resorts, ATV parks) - Events and tourism to boost local economies - Trail riders and general economic growth - Connecting communities and building local resilience
Community Engagement & Youth Involvement	- Engage youth through walking/biking and trail programs - Involve campus communities and students (college/universities) - Educate stakeholders and the public on trail benefits - Preserve institutional knowledge - Increase winter activity opportunities
Partnerships & Collaboration	- Collaborate with Seneca Nation, community nonprofits, and local groups - Cross-county/regional collaboration - Leverage volunteers, retirees, second-homeowners - Engage existing community groups (e.g., snowmobile clubs) - Coordinate with agencies (OPRHP, DOT, DEC)
Planning, Design & Accessibility	- Improve or upgrade regional trail plans - Apply design standards and best practices - Design for universal accessibility (parking, signage, non-digital info) - Brownfields-to-greenfields conversions - Use constructive and regionally themed signage
Technology & Tools for Maintenance	- Maintenance toolkits (inspired by PEC-developed apps/web/tools) - User-reported condition reports (Strava/mapping apps) - Shared maintenance with local groups (cost-sharing with water & soil agencies) - Investment in tech and shared resource systems
Health & Quality of Life	- Promote health and wellness for residents - Improve overall quality of life - Link to broader active transportation and wellness goals
Infrastructure Expansion & Connectivity	- Enhance amenities (bike parking, security, repair stations) - Waterfront opportunities - Multimodal mapping and connectivity - Good regional geography for trail expansion - Connect with other major trails (FLT, WNYMBA)
Funding & Advocacy	- Use trail user estimates to justify funding - Tap into philanthropic maintenance funds - Align with broader marketing efforts (e.g., I LOVE NY) - Work with DOT/regional legislators to improve access to support and resources

Threats

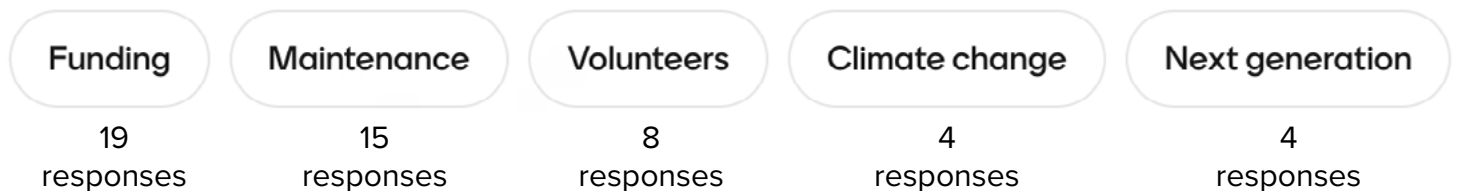| Category	Key Threats
Funding & Financial Risks	- Competition for funding (local, state, federal) - Changes or cuts in federal/state funding - Slow pace of grant distribution - Rising costs of design, construction, and maintenance - Lack of sustainable funding mechanisms - Loss of funds or delayed reimbursement
Governance & Policy Uncertainty	- Administrative changes (federal or local) - Policy shifts in funding or climate regulations - Jurisdictional conflicts and competing priorities - Political differences across borders (e.g., U.S. and Canada)
Legal, Regulatory & Ownership Issues	- Complicated right-of-way/easement ownership - Fear of lawsuits or liability for municipalities - Environmental clean-up or contamination (brownfields, legacy pollution) - Deregulation risks - Railroad conflicts
Public Perception & Social Resistance	- NIMBY opposition and anti-"outsider" sentiment - Negative perceptions about safety/security on trails - Trails seen only for recreation, not transportation or commerce - Lack of private developer interest
Environmental & Climate Concerns	- Extreme weather, limited seasonal use (e.g., winter) - Climate change impacts (flooding, erosion, infrastructure damage) - Natural threats (environmental hazards, ecological degradation)
Demographic & Workforce Challenges	- "Brain drain" - youth/students leave after education - Aging population (loss of institutional memory and volunteers) - Lack of money/support for youth orgs (e.g., 4H, Scouts)
Operational & Maintenance Risks	- High long-term maintenance costs and lack of tech support - Fear of ownership and upkeep responsibilities by municipalities - Inconsistent user counts for justifying funding - Lack of feeder trails to support the main network
Community Disconnection	- Short-term rentals and absentee property owners - Disconnection between trail system and local economic drivers - View that trails benefit visitors more than residents

Interactive Brainstorming Session

Following the conclusion of the SWOT activity, the group participated in an interactive brainstorming session utilizing the digital participation tool **Mentimeter**. Questions were displayed on a screen, and participants used their mobile devices to submit their answers, and the results were summarized and displayed in real-time. The session was highly engaging and resulted in productive discussions of the themes identified in the SWOT analysis. The following are a few of the highlights and key takeaways from the interactive session.

Rank the biggest challenges preventing greenway network development:

1st	Lack of funding
2nd	Land aquisition
3rd	Lack of political will
4th	Lack of communication/coordination
5th	Neighbors/lack of public support
6th	Engineering/siting issues
7th	Lack of trail planning
8th	Geology/geography

What challenges may face the trail system over the next 10-20 years?

Funding	Maintenance	Volunteers	Climate change	Next generation
19 responses	15 responses	8 responses	4 responses	4 responses

What makes WNY a great destination for outdoor recreation and trail tourism?

waterfronts wildlifebirds passionate people cultural amenities outdoor opportunities local businesses impeccable weather big water multiple options rr towns natural features destinations tonawanda rural character food culture outdoor culture 2 week summer architecture natural resources diversity of environments go bills people waterfront lakes josh allen 4 seasons flat beauty community culture communities historic trails fall seasons state parks diversity cultural best summer level grade history waterways scenic parks agriculture food weather beautiful communities affordabilty seasonality friendly people scenery wine topography open areas breweries small towns relatively safe seneca nation natural beauty letchworth inexpensive olean allegany diversity of destingation different season acvities ice cream terrain great lakes rivers variety of activities ava pretty views long trails railroad corridors historical significance

What is your top takeaway from today?

There is real potential in WNY to have a great regional trail system

We have a lot of people working towards the same goals

Need coordinated effort and organizing

More momentum than I realized

Lots is happening and many great things planned

Willingness to support the process

Recommendations for 2025 and Beyond

The following recommendations were identified by PTNY staff as a response to the discussions at the March summit. These are intended as preliminary recommendations, moving the regional network forward while discussions and other planning efforts continue over the next three years, working towards a more robust set of recommendations as a follow-up to the final, 2027, regional summit. Notably, the recommendations below have not assigned responsibility for their execution to any one specific responsible person or group of people. We hope to see the summit participants actively engage with these recommendations over the course of the upcoming year and will work towards ascribing specific responsibilities as a goal of the final summit in 2027.

Recommendation 1: *Coalesce greenways advocates across Western New York into a regional greenways coalition.*

The first Western New York Greenways Planning Summit pulled together a compelling range of advocates, transportation planners, trail user groups, and other leaders invested in the future of the region's greenways network. Beyond those in attendance, regional leaders such as those involved in environmental protection, economic development, public health, the business community, the tourism sector, and more stand to benefit from and be leading advocates for growing the greenway trails network. Additionally, efforts should be made to ensure that those advocating for the growth of the greenways network more accurately reflect the full community.

To strengthen this growing network, we recommend formalizing a regional network or coalition. This proposed Western NY Greenways Network would allow partners to stay engaged, collaborate, advocate jointly, share best practices, address shared barriers, facilitate discussions, and pursue regional grant opportunities. Numerous models from around the country exist that can be built upon, such as the New York City Greenways Coalition and the Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition. This coalition can assist in the planning for future Western New York Greenways Planning Summits, casting a wider net for potential attendees, and can lead efforts to continue dialogue with statewide partners and partners in Pennsylvania and Ontario to ensure connectivity with trail networks in neighboring regions.

Recommendation 2: *Create systems to allow for sharing of data and other resources to support ongoing greenways planning efforts.*

While there are complex challenges that efforts to expand Western New York's Greenways Network face, numerous resources exist already that can facilitate ongoing efforts. These resources should be gathered in such a way to facilitate their easy use by regional advocates and planners. These resources can include information on ongoing trails projects and the challenges faced seeing those projects realized, potential funding sources, information on consultants used for feasibility studies, planning, and construction projects, and more. The information could be presented in multiple formats, such as through the use of a "Wiki" database that participating partners could contribute to.

In addition, regional partners should collaborate on efforts to gather additional data on greenway use and the potential impacts of building out greenway networks, including through tracking trail use, surveying trail visitors for more information, and aggregating other data used to support advocacy efforts.

Recommendation 3: *Engage with elected and appointed leaders at all levels to underscore the importance, need, opportunity, and potential benefit of building out the region's greenways network.*

Continuing the growth of Western New York's Greenways Network will require ongoing advocacy, critical work by planning and other professionals, and leadership from elected officials at all levels committed to seeing the continued growth of the greenways network. It is the burden of advocates to convince elected leaders to prioritize greenways projects in the face of multiple competing demands for time and resources. This can be done by inviting elected officials to visit planning meetings, ribbon cuttings, events hosted on greenway trails, and more. Greenway projects have the advantage of allowing elected officials to experience the joy of spending time outside.

As part of this ongoing engagement, advocacy efforts should work to have Western New York's legislators understand the need to make broader structural and policy changes to support greenways expansion efforts. These include advocacy to dedicate funding for greenway trail development in the annual New York State budget and to pass critical legislation such as the Greenway Trails for a Green Future bill package.

Recommendation 4: *Document challenges facing the current greenways network, including the need for and any current efforts to maintain existing greenway trails.*

As efforts continue to expand the regional greenway trails network, so too must efforts to ensure that greenway trails are well maintained and can safely serve users. At the summit, attendees identified a number of challenges specific to their individual trails, however, many of these challenges were common across multiple trails or reflected similar themes. Chief among these was the need for additional maintenance on existing greenway trails, and for a dedicated source of funding to ensure any newly built greenway trails are appropriately maintained. Current maintenance practices and efforts are not sufficiently documented, given the array of different means by which trails are currently maintained. For efforts to be successful to improve maintenance practices, current efforts must be studied to provide a baseline from which to work.

To understand the scope of the need and to ensure that any challenges can be overcome, these issues must be well documented. Challenges that are defined by policy decisions or by a lack of funding can be overcome with sufficient political will, but an understanding of what the limiting policies or funding needs are are a crucial prerequisite.

Recommendation 5: *Encourage every county to develop and adopt a Countywide Trails Plan, and make sure plans are updated at least every 10 years.*

One of the clearest themes to emerge from the presentations given as part of the Western New York Planning Summit was the need to have a countywide or other regional planning document to guide and encourage efforts to build out each county's respective component of the greenway trails network. Allegany County is in the process of preparing a Countywide Trails Plan in 2025; when complete, the document stands poised to be a spur for developing additional segments of greenway trail within the county. For those counties that have completed a countywide trails plan, those plans should be reviewed to ensure that they are fully up-to-date and efforts should begin when necessary to update them. For those counties without a trails plan, efforts should begin to encourage the creation of a Countywide Trails Plan.

County	Countywide Trails or Greenways Plan?	Multi-County MPO Plan?
Niagara	None	Regional Bike Buffalo Niagara Master Plan (2020)
Erie	None	
Chautauqua	Chautauqua County Greenway Plan (2012)	n/a
Cattaraugus	Cattaraugus County Trail System Plan (2017)	n/a
Allegany	Allegany Countywide Trail Master Plan (In Progress)	n/a
Wyoming	None	Genesee-Finger Lakes Regional Trails Initiative - Phase III (2016)
Monroe	Monroe County Active Transportation Plan (2023)	
Genesee	None	
Orleans	None	

Appendix 1: List of Summit Registrants

First Name	Last Name	Organization	County or Town
Pamela	Sander	Adirondack Mountain Club-Niagara Frontier Chapter	Erie County
Chuck	DiSalvo	AdventuringwChuckD	Henrietta
Stacy	Beardsley	Allegany County	Allegany County
Kier	Dirlam	Allegany County Planning	Belmont
Brian	Manktelow	Assembly	Lyons
Anne	McCooey	BRRAlliance	Buffalo
Tracy	Fletcher	Buffalo Niagara River Land Trust	Buffalo
Kate	O'Stricker	Cattaraugus County Department of Economic Development, Planning, and Tourism	Little Valley
Dalton	Fries	Cattaraugus County Economic Development Planning and Tourism	Cattaraugus County
Connor	Maxwell	Cattaraugus County Economic Development, Planning & Tourism	Cattaraugus County
Jodi	Gray	Chautauqua County Equestrian Trail System, Inc.	Sherman, NY
Pamela	Leith	Chautauqua County Equestrian Trail System, Inc.	Sherman, NY
Jacob	Bodway	Chautauqua County Partnership for Economic Growth	Chautauqua County
Kelley	St. John	City of Buffalo	Buffalo, Erie County
Jake	Anastasia	City of Buffalo	Buffalo
Mike	Pesarchick	City of Niagara Falls Office of Planning & Environmental Services	Niagara
Brent	Irving	City of Rochester	Monroe
Andrew	Schwartz	environmental planning and design	pittsburgh, pa
Brian	Godfrey	Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail	Orchard Park
Karen	Parysek	Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail	Eden
Mary	Brummer	Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail	Erie
Dale	Morris	Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail	Erie County
Steve	Musso	Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail	Erie
MaryCarol	Dearing	Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail	Concord
Timothy	Bienkowski	Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail	Orchard Park
Deborah	Fenn	Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail, Inc	Erie
Mark	Rountree	Erie County	Erie County
Sarah	Gatti	Erie County	Erie County
Mariely	Ortiz	Erie County DEP	Erie
Colette	McDonald	Erie County Department of Environment and Planning	Erie County
Wendy	Paterson	Erie County Parks	Buffalo

Jody	Valdes	Friends of Knox Farm	Erie
Allen	Kerkeslager	Friends of the Genesee Valley Greenway	Allegany County
Fran	Gotcsik	Friends of the Genesee Valley Greenway, Inc.	Livingston
Carl	Schoenthal	Friends of the Genesee Valley Greenway, Inc.	Monroe County / Wheatland
Davies	Nagel	Friends of the Genesee Valley Greenway, Inc./Town of York Trail Town Committee	York
Jeffrey	Lebsack	Friends of The Riverline	City of Buffalo
Christine	Rath	Friends of Youngstown, Inc.	Village of Youngstown
Angelica	Gonzalez	GBNRTC	
David	Staas	Genesee Transportation Council	Monroe
Justin	Booth	GOBike	Buffalo
Brendan	Seney	GObike Buffalo	Buffalo
Kevin	Marks	GVTTI, PTNY	Monroe, Wheatland
Thomas	Nemmer	Hamburg Moves	Hamburg
Kathryn	Walsh	Hamburg Trail Committee	Hamburg
Daniel	Rosati	Hamburg Trails Committee	Hamburg
Pauline	Burnes	IMPACT:Friends Improving Allegany County Trails, Inc.	Allegany County
Ashley	McKnight	Larson Design Group	
Sandy	Schneible	Letchworth Gateway Villages	Genesee Valley Trail Towns
Marlene	Hamman Whitmor	LGV/GVTT, Village of Geneseo	Geneseo
Tyra	Johnson Hux	LISC NY	Buffalo
Jim	Page	Member and volunteer of GoBike and Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail	Lancaster
Charlotte	Brett	New York Green	Genesee County
Ashley	Smith	NFTA	Erie, Niagara
Michelle	Lockett	Niagara River Greenway	Erie & Niagara
Gregory	Stevens	Niagara River Greenway	Niagara Falls
Mark	Mistretta	NY State Parks	Niagara Falls
Joe	Popiolkowski	NYS Assemblymember Karen McMahon	Amherst
Samantha	Aldrich	NYS Department of State	Erie
Sean	Ryan	NYS Senate	District 61
Kayla	Baker	NYSDEC	Buffalo
Angela	Keppel	NYSDOS	WNY Region

James	Cuozzo	NYSDOT	State of NY
Haris	Ismail	NYSDOT	State of NY
Alexandra	Long	Pennsylvania Environmental Council	Pittsburgh
Brett	Hollern	Pennsylvania Environmental Council	State College
Dylan	Carey	PTNY	
Will	Cote	PTNY	
Paula	Jones	PTNY	
Erica	Schneider	PTNY	
Katie	Campos	Ralph Wilson Park Conservancy	Buffalo
Sarah	Hrywnak	River Trails Roads & Rails	Youngstown, Porter
Amy	Lehman	Rockville Lake Property & Cottage Owners Assoc., Inc.	Rockville Lake, Allegany Co.
Laura	Waller	Rockville Lake Property & Cottage Owners Assoc., Inc.	Rockville Lake, Allegany Co.
Thomas	Johnston	Roswell Park Alliance Foundation	Erie
Katie	Menke	Roswell Park Alliance Foundation	Buffalo
Angie	Kennedy	Seneca Nation	SALAMANCA
Timothy	Waterman	Seneca Nation of Indians	Salamanca
Sharon	Ray	Seneca Nation of Indians	Salamanca
Scott	Abrams	Seneca Nation of Indians	Salamanca
Richard	Swanson	Silver Lake Trail Stewards	Perry
Margaret	Riter	Steadfast City Economic & Community Partners	Monroe County
Jeffrey	Szatkowski	Town of Amherst	Erie
Jonathan	Enzinna	Town of Cuba	Cuba, Allegany, NY
LuAnne	Roberts	Town of Genesee Falls, Wyoming County	Genesee Falls
Michelangelo	Lieberman	Trust for Public Land	watermill
Noemi	Waight	University of Buffalo, STEMcycle	Buffalo
Lindsay	Zefting	Verity Engineering	
Donna	Schiener	Village of Arcade	Arcade
Robert	Hayes	Village of Avon, NY	Avon
Sophie	Kephart	Village of Williamsville	Village of Williamsville
Alexandria	McKenzie	Village of Wilson	Wilson
Chris	Holmes	West Seneca Bikes	West Seneca
Josh	Balisteri	Western New York Land Conservancy	EAST AURORA
Scott	Schrader	Wyoming County	Wyoming
James	Bragg	Wyoming County Planning Department	Wyoming County
Becky	Lewis	York Trail Town Committee	York

Appendix 2: Subject Area & Geography-based SWOTs

Theme: TRAIL TOURISM

Category	Strengths
Natural & Cultural Assets	- Scenic natural resources (waterways, forests, etc.) - Cultural and historic villages - Tourism attractions (Letchworth, Niagara Falls, Empire State Trail)
Trail Infrastructure	- Existing built trail infrastructure - Level grade (good for accessibility) - Year-round, multi-use trail potential
Partnerships & Support	- Strong institutional and agency support (DEC, PTNY, GOBike)
Mapping & Planning	- Existing mapping resources

Category	Weaknesses
Market & Visibility	- Small population base (small market) - Limited philanthropic and corporate sponsorship
Connectivity & Access	- Limited east-west connections - Gaps in trail connectivity - Insufficient amenities and parking in less developed areas
Organizational Challenges	- Lack of cohesive vision/trail focus - Weak agency communication and coordination

Category	Opportunities
Tourism & Recreation Growth	- Northern tourism & water trail connections - Cultural shift toward outdoor recreation - Infill development
Marketing & Education	- Education on trail benefits - Coordinated marketing across trail towns - General marketing campaigns
Community & Partnerships	- Economic development through trails - Collaboration with Amish communities - Regional collaborations and promos

Category	Threats
Climate & Environment	- Short recreational season due to climate - Severe weather and erosion risks
Social & Community Issues	- NIMBYism - Community resistance to addressing legacy inequalities (e.g., redlining)
Policy & Regulation	- Federal funding uncertainty - Regulatory hurdles and land use limitations
Liability & Risk	- Legal liability concerns - Municipal fear of maintenance responsibility
Readiness & Behavior	- Lack of preparedness for trail success - Lack of user trail etiquette

Geography: GENESEE VALLEY-GENESEE RIVER

Category	Strengths
Urban Infrastructure	- Strong trail spine within the city - Trail potential on both west and east sides
Municipal Support	- City has ability to raise funds - City shows political will (low siloing)

Category	Weaknesses
Governance	- Trail maintenance split among multiple city departments (Planning, DES, Engineering, Recreation & Human Services)
Ownership Issues	- Property ownership challenges (e.g., power company holdings)
Funding	- Availability of funding remains uncertain
Public Perception	- Safety perception concerns

Geography: WYOMING COUNTY

Category	Strengths
Infrastructure & Planning	- Existing corridors and landscaping for trails - Park assets and recent Village updates (e.g., LWRP) - Municipal trail ideas in Warsaw, Arcade, and Perry
Natural & Recreational Assets	- Seasonal appeal - Headwaters for 5 major waterways - Gravel road network - Natural resources and beautiful topography/viewsheds
Community & Grassroots	- Strong community and Village support - Silver Lake Trail Stewards - Grassroots ideas for Silver Lake–Letchworth multi-modal connectivity
Tourism & Engagement	- Recreational/tourism rail potential - High traffic in Letchworth State Park - Village of Perry programming and momentum

Category	Weaknesses
Policy & Planning Gaps	- No county-level trail plan - Differences between counties/towns (zoning, policies) - Minimal county support/capacity for trail planning
Community & Engagement	- Lack of education on trail benefits - Community apathy - Short volunteer list - Trails not prioritized locally
Infrastructure & Access	- Minimal existing trails - Many former RR corridors now privately owned - Land acquisition issues (esp. reverted rail land)
Regional Coordination	- Limited regional collaboration, even within county - Local governments stretched thin - Low density rural population
Seasonality	- Seasonal limitations reduce year-round usability

Category	Opportunities
Trail Expansion	- Strong regional trail network nearby (Genesee Valley Greenway, GVG) - Oatka Creek corridor - DEC lands near Middlebury - Heaven's Gate area

Strategic Partnerships	- GTC (Genesee Transportation Council) & regional partners - Part of WNY Wildways conservation/greenway network
Funding & Investment	- $12.5M in Village DRI for Silver Lake Outlet Trail
Recreational Tourism	- Regional attraction draw- 4-season trail programming (e.g., cross-country skiing)

Category	Threats
Geographic Challenges	- Vast size and low-density areas in the County - Lack of internal connectivity - Perceived isolation
Climate & Seasonality	- Harsh winter weather can limit trail usability
Funding & Resources	- Redundant challenge: ongoing funding limitations (capital, maintenance, programming)
Sociopolitical Climate	- Political apathy or cynicism - Polarized political environment potentially affecting tourism (esp. from Canada)
Collaboration Barriers	- Risk of inter-municipal competition instead of collaboration

Geography: SOUTH TOWNS/HAMBURG

Category	Strengths
Community & Governance	- Strong local interest- Supportive municipalities (villages and towns) - Multiple aligned groups
Partnerships	- Active partnerships between local governments and organizations
Infrastructure Planning	- Existing Complete Streets initiatives

Category	Weaknesses
Strategic Gaps	- Lack of planning or cohesive vision at the county level (specifically Erie County)

Category	Opportunities
Collaboration	- Possible collaboration with regional and community partners - Work with GObike Buffalo - Work with Western New York Mountain Bicycling Association (WNYMBA)
Innovation	- Wide open for new ideas and grassroots input

Category	Threats
Politics	- Politics
Land Ownership	- Private Landowners

Geography: SOUTHERN TIER, CHAUTAUQUA-CATTARAUGUS-ALLEGANY

Category	Strengths
Organizational Capacity	- Strong board leadership - Youth representation on the board - Human resources and volunteer support - Friends groups - PTNY collaborations - CCETS support
Infrastructure Readiness	- Shovel-ready trail projects - Railbanked trail corridor - Part of the larger Southern Tier Trail network
Trail Network & Regional Integration	- Strong existing trail network - Regional trail connections - Genesee Valley Greenway State Park - Cattaraugus County Trail System - Genesee River Wilds
Community & Economic Development	- Anchor villages with population concentrations - Trail towns strategy - Economic development studios
Natural & Recreational Assets	- Scenic landscapes - Natural resources and state land - Existing parks and trails (e.g., Letchworth SP) - Snowmobilers as user and maintenance group

Category	Weaknesses
Organizational Capacity & Staffing	- Gaps in board skills - Lack of paid staff for NGOs and public agencies (DEC, NY OPRHP) - Lack of training for volunteers - Volunteer burnout and overextension - Health/family obligations impact involvement
Volunteer Management & Sustainability	- Volunteers need succession planning - Limited youth involvement - Lack of volunteers and declining capacity
Funding & Resources	- Lack of money - Inadequate financial support for trail maintenance and expansion - Challenges securing government support and grants
Trail Infrastructure & Physical Barriers	- Active rail lines and interstate highways create fragmentation - Gaps in small trails and feeder networks

	- Trail ownership and unclear responsibilities - Aging infrastructure - Topographic challenges
Public Engagement & Support	- Limited public support and awareness - Weak municipal engagement or commitment
Data & Evaluation	- Insufficient data on trail use and impact

Category	Opportunities
Funding & Grants	- Grant funding (state, federal, foundations) - Golisano Foundation, Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation - APEX university funding - Money from logging operations
Strategic Partnerships & Alliances	- Coalition/alliance of regional trail organizations - Engage Chambers of Commerce, service orgs, Scouts - Connect with outdoor rec orgs (WNYMBA, Ski Clubs, etc.)
Economic Development	- Tourism growth and trail-based special events - Small business development - Economic development agencies - Legislative support at all levels
Youth & Education Engagement	- Engage K–12, college, university students - Scholarships, student involvement - Student Conservation Association (SCA) - Training & certification programs
Public & Private Land Resources	- Abandoned rail corridors - Public forest land - Leverage existing land for trail expansion
Trail Workforce & Skill Building	- Chainsaw training / Game of Logging - Certifications (e.g., Professional Trailbuilders of America) - Volunteer recognition programs
Events & Community Engagement	- Host special events on trails - Increase visibility and use - Recognition awards to build community support

Category	Threats
Funding & Financial Stability	- Federal/state funding cuts - Reduced private foundation opportunities - High cost of land/ROW acquisition

	- Maintenance funding gaps - Insurance costs
Land Use & Ownership Issues	- Land use priority conflicts - Adjacent property owner resistance (e.g., Rockville Lake) - Calverts and ROW challenges - Loss of open space
Environmental & Natural Hazards	- Severe weather events (storms, erosion, beaver dams) - Poor soil conditions - Emerald ash borer - Climate instability
Social & Demographic Trends	- Declining youth engagement - Aging/outdated user groups - Dwindling volunteer base - Lack of public interest
Safety & Legal Concerns	- Liability and insurance issues - Safety and security risks - Trail user conflicts
Administrative & Policy Barriers	- Cuts in government funding (especially federal) - Bureaucratic hurdles and slow grant execution - Varying priorities across jurisdictions

Geography: BUFFALO-NIAGARA

Category	Strengths
Planning & Implementation	- Existing trail plans ready for adoption and implementation - Strong interest from stakeholders for buy-in
Trail Network & Connectivity	- Well-developed, extensive network of trails - Central location with access to Canada
Institutional Support & Resources	- Support from GObike, Greenways Commission, Ride for Roswell
Amenities & Natural Assets	- Presence of amenities and state parks

Category	Weaknesses
Organizational Challenges	- Fragmentation and siloed resources/organizations
Funding	- Lack of funding
Leadership Engagement	- Difficulty engaging and mobilizing local/state leaders
Administrative Complexity	- Labor-intensive process requiring multiple municipalities' permission
Trail Design	- Fingers/extensions to main trail spine
Education & Outreach	- Challenges in educating the public about trails and benefits

Category	Opportunities
Infrastructure	- Opportunities for rail lines to be developed
Park System	- Re-connect Olmstead Park system
Cultural Shift	- Use trails and connected pathways to reduce car culture
Collaboration	- Share resources and information to build coalition
Accessibility & Inclusion	- Opportunity to expand access for everyone

Category	Threats
Funding	- Lack of funding; Competitive funding domain
Opposition/Politics	- How to challenge self-interest that opposes trails & safe streets
Environmental Concerns	- Displaced wildlife—need design to ensure environmental health and sustainability