



New York State  
Parks, Recreation and  
Historic Preservation

New York State

# Greenway Trails Progress Report

*August 2021 - December 2022*

Published  
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**Parks & Trails New York**

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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](http://www.ptny.org).

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**About the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation**

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation oversees more than 250 parks, historic sites, recreational trails, golf courses, boat launches and more, which saw a record 79.5 million visits in 2022. These resources offer New Yorkers opportunities to escape the daily grind, explore their natural environment, and experience the state's rich cultural heritage. For more information, visit [parks.ny.gov](http://parks.ny.gov).



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# Introduction

In April 2021, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) published the *Statewide Greenway Trails Plan*, which spelled out a vision of a “network of shared use paths that provide all New Yorkers and visitors opportunities for healthy and active recreation, routes for alternative transportation, and the ability to connect to and enrich our communities and natural landscapes in urban, suburban, and rural settings.” Since the plan was published, many efforts have advanced across the state to achieve this vision and the accompanying goals. Pursuant to the plan, its vision and accompanying goals, this report outlines the accomplishments achieved, the projects initiated, and the funding secured by state, local, and non-profit partners between August 2021 and December 2022.



Major highlights for greenway trails across New York State include the advancement of the Empire State Trail as a high quality, world-class destination trail, with several surface upgrades completed across the corridor, as well as many significant construction projects and planning initiatives underway to better connect communities with the statewide trail. Efforts have also been made over the last two years to activate the Empire State Trail by developing new trip-planning resources, augmenting programs and events to encourage residents and visitors alike to engage with the trail in new ways. In 2022, for example, Parks & Trails New York launched the Empire State Trail Town program to promote the trail and the communities along it as a destination and build the outdoor recreation economy along the corridor.

Other major corridors to see significant investment over the last two years include the Adirondack Rail Trail, which, when complete, will run 34 stunning miles through the central Adirondacks from Tupper Lake to Lake Placid, and the Genesee Valley Greenway, a 90-mile corridor in western New York running south from Rochester to Hinsdale. In conjunction with these physical improvements, both the Adirondack Rail Trail and Genesee Valley Greenway have robust coalitions behind them to support the growth of the trails as well as the vibrant communities along them.

Several major planning efforts have also advanced, especially concentrated in the state’s most populous regions. Planning for phase one of the future Long Island Greenway has started and New York City was awarded a federal transportation planning grant for a major expansion of the greenway network with a focus on historically underserved, lower-income communities. In the Hudson Valley, a greenway vision plan was published, outlining the opportunity to create a truly regional, 250+ mile network of greenways in Ulster, Orange, and Sullivan counties.

Efforts are underway to support the development of greenway trails across the state, including through the collection of trail count data as well as the creation of a Greenway Trails Development Guide. Once published, this guide will provide an overview of effective steps for non-profits, local governments,








planning organizations, and other trail groups seeking to develop greenway trails in New York.

Exciting new funding opportunities are providing additional momentum for greenway trail projects. The new federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, authorizes record funding to the Transportation Alternatives program, maintains the Recreational Trails Program, and introduces a new Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program. At the state level, record funding amounts for New York State Parks’ capital budget and for the Environmental Protection Fund are advancing critical projects, and the newly authorized Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act may provide additional critical investment in greenway trail projects.

This report begins with an overview of greenway trail development progress by region. The next section captures a summary of the many on-going programs, resources and initiatives dedicated to advancing the goals of the greenway trails plan. Finally, the report concludes with major funding highlights that will bring New York closer to its vision of an interconnected, equitable greenway trails network.



## Goals of the Statewide Greenway Trails Plan

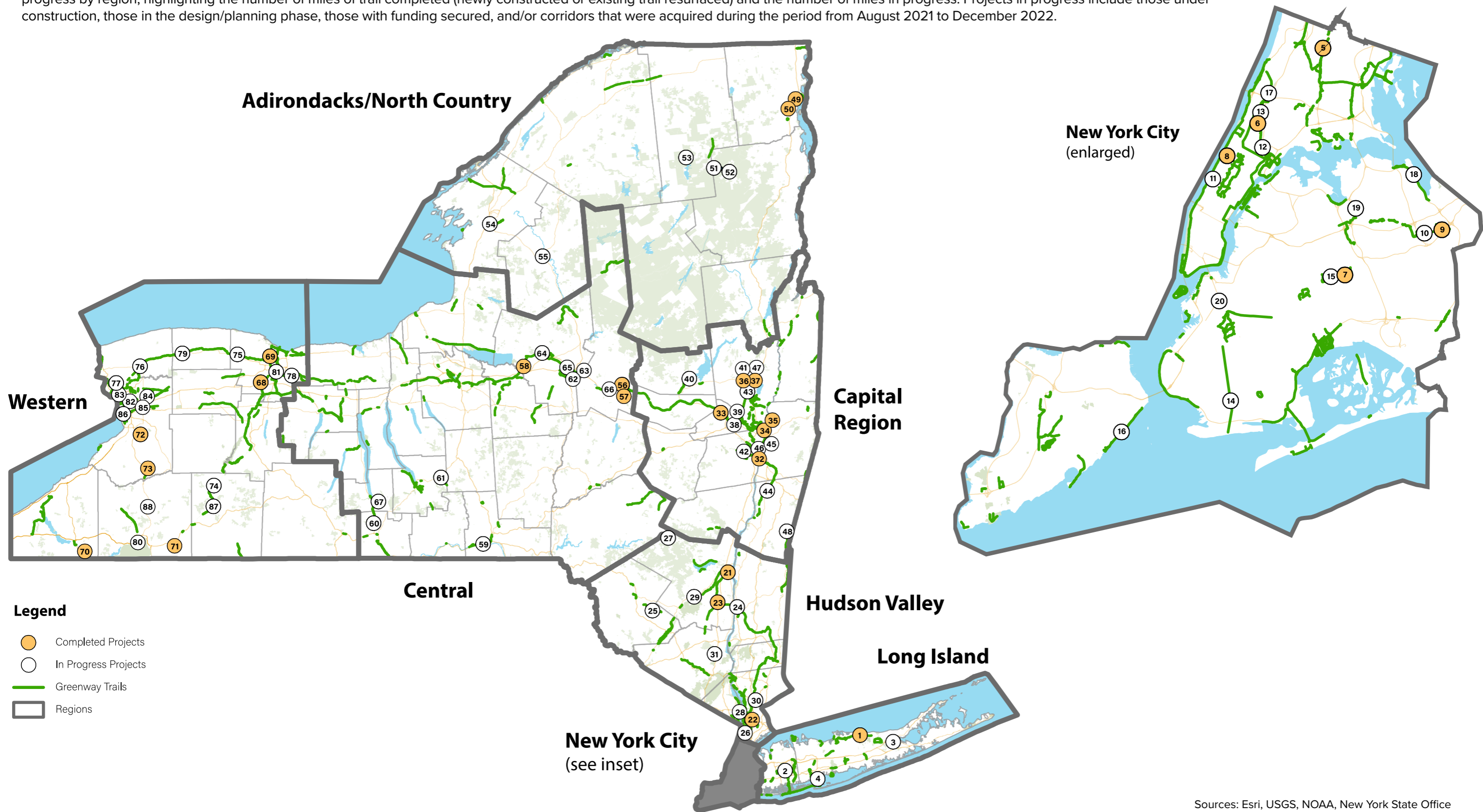
-  1. Prioritize the development and expansion of greenway trails in underserved communities.
-  2. Collect and publish information to aid in the planning, development, and management of greenway trails.
-  3. Expand the state’s greenway trails system to reach more New Yorkers in more areas.
-  4. Identify funding opportunities for the acquisition, planning, development, and maintenance of greenway trails.
-  5. Foster greater collaboration among agencies and stakeholders to advance greenway trails in New York.
-  6. Promote the greenway trails system as a destination for tourism, healthy recreation, and active lifestyles.
-  7. Enhance bicycle and pedestrian transportation options by connecting greenway trails and communities.

**Greenway Trail Development Across New York State** (Aug 2021 - Dec 2022)

**97.1 miles** of trail completed  
**372.7 miles** of trail in progress

# Regional Greenway Trail Updates

The map below shows greenway trails projects that were recently completed or are in progress, with the existing greenway trails network shown as well. Numbers correspond to the table on the following pages. For the purposes of this report, New York State has been divided into seven regions, as reflected in the map on this page. Following the map and table, starting on page 10, the report outlines greenway trail development progress by region, highlighting the number of miles of trail completed (newly constructed or existing trail resurfaced) and the number of miles in progress. Projects in progress include those under construction, those in the design/planning phase, those with funding secured, and/or corridors that were acquired during the period from August 2021 to December 2022.



Sources: Esri, USGS, NOAA, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

### Greenway Trail Projects Advanced Between August 2021-December 2022

	Project	Status	Miles constructed/ in progress
<b>Long Island</b>			
1	North Shore Rail Trail	Construction Completed	10
2	Phase I Long Island Greenway	In Design	25
3	Phase II Long Island Greenway (Long Island Greenway East)	Proposed	50
4	Great South Bay Greenway	Proposed	5.5
<b>New York City</b>			
5	Bronx River Greenway through Shoelace Park	Construction Completed	1.05
6	Extension of Harlem River Greenway in Manhattan's Frederick Johnson Playground	Construction Completed	0.1
7	Greenway Construction in Queens' Forest Park	Construction Completed	0.5
8	Reconstruction of Hudson River Greenway/Empire State Trail	Construction Completed	0.1
9	Phase I Reconstruction of Vanderbilt Motor Parkway	Construction Completed	0.8
10	Phase II Reconstruction of Vanderbilt Motor Parkway	Construction in Progress	2
11	Hudson River Greenway (Riverside Park South Construction 72-70)/Empire State Trail	Construction in Progress	0.15
12	Manhattan Waterfront Greenway	Construction in Progress	3.2
13	Harlem River Greenway Extension in Percy E. Sutton Playground	Construction in Progress	0.2
14	Ocean Parkway Malls Reconstruction from Avenue R to Avenue X	Construction in Progress	1
15	Phase I of the QueensWay	Construction Funded	0.7
16	East Shore Greenway Construction and Improvements	In Design	5.9
17	Bridge Park South Greenway	In Design	0.25
18	Phase II reconstruction of the Joe Michaels Mile Greenway	In Design	1.05
19	Destination Greenways Queens	Plan in Progress	7.55
20	Destination Greenways Brooklyn	Plan in Progress	8.25
<b>Hudson Valley</b>			
21	Midtown Linear Park - Kingston	Construction Completed	0.8
22	Reconstruction of South County Trailway/Empire State Trail	Construction Completed	6.4
23	Wallkill Valley Rail Trail Renovation - New Paltz and New Paltz to Gardiner	Construction Completed	9
24	Phase I Dutchess County Urban Trail/Northside Line	Construction in Progress	1.4
25	Sullivan O&W Rail Trail - Neversink Crossing	Construction Funded	0
26	Yonkers Greenway	Construction Funded	3.1
27	Phase I Shandaken Rail Trail	Construction Funded	2.5
28	Route 9-Westchester RiverWalk Transit Connector	Construction Funded	0.9
29	Ulster County O&W Trail Improvements	Construction Funded	5.2
30	ChapLine Trail	Construction Funded	1.6
31	Schunnemunk Rail Trail	Corridor Acquired	10
<b>Capital Region</b>			
32	Albany Skyway	Construction Completed	0.5
33	Erie Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail Reconstruction - Rotterdam Junction	Construction Completed	1.65
34	Erie Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail Rehabilitation - City of Cohoes	Construction Completed	3
35	Champlain Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail Rehabilitation - Village and Town of Waterford	Construction Completed	1.2
36	Geyser Road Trail	Construction Completed	2.8
37	Saratoga Downtown Connector	Construction Completed	1.66
38	Reconstruction of Scotia-Glenville Mohawk Hudson Bike Hike Trail	Construction in Progress	1.3
39	Freemans Bridge Road Multi-Use Path	Construction in Progress	0.95
40	FJ&G Rail Trail Extension	Construction in Progress	0.8
41	North-South Rd. multi-use trail extension in Saratoga Spa State Park	Construction Funded	0.5
42	Cherry Avenue Extension Multiuse Path	Construction Funded	0.9
43	Zim Smith Trail - Northern Trail Extension	Construction Funded	0.8

	Project	Status	Miles constructed/ in progress
44	Albany Hudson Electric Trail/Empire State Trail Amenities	Amenities Funded	0
45	Livingston Avenue Bridge Replacement	Funding Secured	1
46	Patroon Creek Greenway Feasibility Study	Plan Completed	8.8
47	Saratoga Wilton Connector Trail	Plan Completed	2
48	Harlem Valley Rail Trail Extension	Plans Funded	9.5
<b>Adirondacks/North Country</b>			
49	Saranac River Trail Phase II	Construction Completed	1.3
50	Saranac River Greenway - Treadwell Mills Connector Trail	Construction Completed	1.5
51	Adirondack Rail Trail Phase I	Construction in Progress	9
52	Adirondack Rail Trail Lake Placid Trailhead	Construction Funded	0
53	Adirondack Rail Trail Phases II and III	In Design	25
54	Black River Trail Extension Feasibility Study	Plan Completed	6
55	Lewis County Purchase of Former Railbeds	Corridor Acquired	31
<b>Central</b>			
56	Erie Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail Rehabilitation - Little Falls to Herkimer Home	Construction Completed	2.5
57	Erie Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail Resurfacing - Herkimer Home to Montgomery County line	Construction Completed	5
58	Erie Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail Resurfacing - Canastota to Rome	Construction Completed	16
59	Route 434 Greenway	Construction in Progress	2.5
60	Catharine Valley Trail - Southern End Resurfacing	Construction in Progress	1.5
61	Dryden Rail Trail Bridge over Route 13	Construction Funded	0.02
62	North Genesee Street Gateway Bridge & Multi-Modal Connector Project (Utica)	Construction Funded	1
63	Utica Harbor Pedestrian Bridge	Construction Funded	1
64	Erie Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail Improvements - City of Rome	Construction Funded	1.2
65	Erie Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail Restoration - Utica area	Construction Funded	8
66	Little Falls Connector and Lockview Park	In Design	0
67	Village of Odessa Rail Corridor Acquisition	Corridor Acquired	2.5
<b>Western</b>			
68	Genesee Valley Greenway - Rehabilitation of Northern End	Construction Completed	17
69	Route 390 Multi-Use Trail Extension	Construction Completed	1.2
70	Carroll Area Nature Trail	Construction Completed	2
71	Allegheny River Valley Trail Extension	Construction Completed	0.05
72	Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail - Orchard Park	Construction Completed	2
73	Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail Southern End Trail Opening	Construction Completed	9
74	Genesee Valley Greenway - Bridges of Allegany County	Construction Funded	22.1
75	Brockport Pedestrian Bridge	Construction Funded	0
76	Phase II Lockport Rail Trail	Construction Funded	0.5
77	Riverwalk Parkway Multiuse Trail project	Construction Funded	1.33
78	Erie Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail - Schoen Place Improvements	Construction Funded	0
79	Erie Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail Rehabilitation - Village of Medina	Construction Funded	0.85
80	Red House Multi-Use Trail in Allegany State Park	Construction Funded	3
81	Erie Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail Restoration - Rochester area	In Design	4
82	Buffalo Northeast Greenway	Plan in Progress	3.5
83	Scajaquada Creek Extension to Cheektowaga	Plan in Progress	3.3
84	Clarence Pathway Buffalo Extension	Plan in Progress	7.8
85	Lancaster Heritage Trail West Extension	Plan in Progress	5.1
86	Buffalo Riverline Trail	Plans Funded	1.5
87	Genesee Valley Greenway - Rail Corridor Acquisition	Corridor Acquired	17
88	Southern Tier Trail - Cattaraugus County	Proposed	52



# Long Island

## Nassau and Suffolk Counties

In 2018, the Trust for Public Land (TPL) completed a feasibility study that identified a route to create the **Long Island Greenway** from Manhattan along the length of Long Island to Montauk Point. The 175-mile route would connect 27 communities and 26 existing parks. Advocates have proposed this as a logical extension of the Empire State Trail fully connecting one end of the state to the other.

A detailed feasibility study was completed in 2020 for Phase 1 of the project, a 25-mile trail spanning Nassau and Suffolk Counties, running from Eisenhower Park through Bethpage State Park to Brentwood State Park. With State grants obtained in 2019 and 2021 (\$1.1 million total), and matching federal funds granted in 2022 (\$2.5 million total, grant agreement still to be finalized), TPL has engaged the planning firm NV5 for conceptual design of Phase 1, and later this year expects to hire a consultant to undertake final design, so that the project is construction ready by the end of 2024.

Separately, TPL is working with Suffolk County and the Towns of Southampton and East Hampton on a grant application to the US Department of Transportation "RAISE" grant program for planning and design of Phase 2, a 50-mile segment on the East End of Long Island that would terminate at Montauk Point.

In June 2021, Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone announced a proposal for a 5.5-mile **Great South Bay Greenway** along the Robert Moses Causeway, extending the Ocean Parkway Coastal Greenway completed earlier that year across Captree Island and the Robert Moses Causeway, and connecting the path to Gardiner County Park.

In June 2022, a long-awaited project finally came to fruition, as the 10-mile **North Shore Rail Trail** was officially opened to the public. The nearly \$10 million project, first conceived of in the 1970s, runs from Port Jefferson to Wading River in Suffolk County, following the route of a rail line that closed in 1939 and is now owned by the Long Island Power Authority.



**10 miles** of trail completed  
**80.5 miles** of trail in progress



Bethpage Bikeway (Rails-to-Trails Conservancy)

Trust for Public Land





# New York City

## Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens, and Richmond Counties

The last two years have seen a major resurgence in actively planning for the future of New York City’s greenways network.

In May 2022, the New York City Greenways Coalition, led by the Brooklyn Greenway Initiative, hosted the first New York City Greenways Summit. The two day conference featured remarks and presentations from a wide range of government leaders, planners, and advocates on the opportunities and challenges in growing New York City’s greenway network in a meaningful, equitable way.

At the conference, New York City announced a historic \$47.6 million investment in greenway improvements in Brooklyn and Queens to implement the Destination: Greenways! Plans in Brooklyn and Queens. The funding advanced a total of six projects in Brooklyn and Queens. Specific projects include the construction of new greenway segments along the **Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway** in southern Brooklyn’s Leif Ericson Park and reconstructing the existing greenway in part of Shore Road Park, and building new greenway segments along the **Central Queens Greenway** in Flushing Meadows Corona Park, Kissena Corridor Park, and Kissena Park.

In August 2022, New York City was named a recipient of a \$7.25 million federal RAISE grant to plan for a major expansion of the greenway network, with a focus on historically underserved, lower-income communities. The funding will allow the NYC Department of Transportation, NYC Parks Department, and NYC Economic Development Corporation to develop a comprehensive vision plan to fill critical gaps in the greenway network, improve cyclist and pedestrian safety, and enhance quality of life.

In September 2022, Mayor Adams announced a \$35 million investment in Phase One of the **QueensWay**. The first apportion, known as the “Metropolitan Hub” or Met Hub, would result in the construction of a five-acre park with 0.7 miles of greenway. Once complete, the QueensWay will extend 3.5 miles through six neighborhoods in Queens, from Rego Park to Ozone Park.

**2.5 miles** of trail completed  
**30.3 miles** of trail in progress

Credit: Jason Scott Jones / The City

## Other significant greenway trail projects

### Completed Projects

- Construction of a new 1-mile greenway path in Shoelace Park in the Bronx, part of the **Bronx River Greenway**.
- Construction of a 0.1-mile extension of the **Harlem River Greenway** in Manhattan’s Frederick Johnson Playground.
- Construction of a new 0.5-mile greenway path into Queens’ Forest Park from Myrtle Avenue and Union Turnpike.
- Reconstruction of 0.8 miles (from Winchester Boulevard to Springfield Boulevard) of the **Vanderbilt Motor Parkway** in Queens, with Phase 2, reconstruction of an additional 2 miles (from Springfield Boulevard to 199th Street/67th Avenue) under construction currently.
- Reconstruction of three segments of the **Hudson River Greenway** in Manhattan, providing improved resilience and shoreline protection.

### Upcoming Projects

- Completion of the **Manhattan Waterfront Greenway**, by closing 3.2 miles of gaps, including at Andrew Haswell Green park, between 125th and 132nd Streets along the Harlem River, at North Cove and Academy Street Parks in Inwood, and at the United Nations Esplanade along the East River
- Extension of the **Putnam Greenway**, part of a broader project to daylight Tibbett’s Brook in the Bronx, which will extend 0.5 miles from the southern terminus of the greenway in Van Cortlandt Park south along a former railroad right-of-way.
- Construction of 1.1 miles, and reconstruction of 4.8 additional miles of Staten Island’s **East Shore Greenway**, as part of a project by the US Army Corps of Engineers to construct a seawall from Fort Wadsworth to Oakwood Beach.
- Construction of a new 0.25 mile greenway path in the Bronx’s new Bridge Park South.
- Construction of a new 0.2-mile extension of the **Harlem River Greenway** in Manhattan’s Percy E. Sutton Playground.
- Phase 2 reconstruction of the **Joe Michaels Mile** greenway, from Bayside Marina to Fort Totten in Queens.
- Reconstruction of one mile of the **Ocean Parkway Malls** from Avenue R to Avenue X.

### Advancing Goal #1: Prioritize the development and expansion of greenway trails in underserved communities

Through the commitment to major planning efforts and projects like Destination: Greenways!, New York City is taking steps to develop a comprehensive vision plan that will allow the City to fill critical gaps in the greenway network, improve cyclist and pedestrian safety, and enhance quality of life.





# Hudson Valley

## Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, and Westchester Counties

Already home to numerous well-used, beloved greenways - including the north-south spine of the Empire State Trail, the Hudson Valley has seen new greenway mileage completed, additional projects take shape, and significant planning efforts underway to complete a comprehensive regional network.

Building on the 2019 acquisition of a 2.7-mile former rail corridor in Poughkeepsie by Scenic Hudson, in February 2022, Dutchess County announced the beginning of work on phase one of the **Dutchess County Urban Trail**, running 1.4 miles through Poughkeepsie neighborhoods and connecting numerous community assets including the Walkway Over The Hudson, a centerpiece of the Empire State Trail.

In Sullivan County, multiple projects are underway to advance the **O&W Rail Trail** as a 50+ mile regional trail connecting to Orange and Ulster Counties. A major bridge project will close gaps in the existing trail, resulting in a continuous, 14-mile stretch of trail. The Neversink Crossing project received \$11 million in federal funding to construct a bridge for the trail over the Neversink River, connecting two existing sections of trail.

Construction is poised to begin in 2023 on the **Yonkers Greenway** along a 3.1-mile former railbed, a project that seeks to redress the historic impacts of redlining and environmental racism. The \$14 million project will connect primarily Black and Latino neighborhoods on the south side of Yonkers to New York City's Van Cortlandt Park and to downtown Yonkers.

### THINKING REGIONALLY ►

In January 2023, the Open Space Institute (OSI) released the *Growing Greenways: West of Hudson Greenway Trails Vision Plan*, which outlined the opportunity to create a truly regional, 250+ mile network of greenways in Ulster, Orange, and Sullivan counties. The report explores the potential for extending existing greenway trails, such as the **Wallkill Valley Rail Trail**, the **O&W Rail Trail**, and the **Orange County Heritage Trail**, and building new trails, such as the **Schunneunk Rail Trail**, to create new community linkages, boost economic activity and tourism, and make it easier for all people to access the outdoors.

## Other significant greenway trail projects

### Completed Projects

- Completion of the 0.8-mile **Midtown Linear Park** in Kingston, a part of the Kingston Greenline which will eventually serve as a link between the O&W Rail Trail and the Empire State Trail.
- Reconstruction of 6.4 miles of the **South County Trailway** from Yonkers to Elmsford as part of a \$3.1 million capital project that rebuilt draining, piping, fencing, crosswalks, gates, and parking lots.
- Renovation of 9 total miles of the **Wallkill Valley Rail Trail**, including 3.5 miles from Cragwood Road to Sojourner Truth Park in New Paltz, completed in November 2021, and 5.5 miles from New Paltz to Gardiner, completed in November 2022.

### Upcoming Projects

- Construction of Phase 1 of the **Shandaken Rail Trail** in western Ulster County, which received a \$3.96 million Federal Highway Administration grant to construct a 2.5-mile trail.
- The **Route 9-Westchester RiverWalk Transit Connector** in Tarrytown (Westchester County), received \$2.8M in federal funding thanks to Sen. Schumer and former Rep. Jones, part of the Westchester RiverWalk, and a critical connection to the Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge Shared Use Path.
- The Open Space Institute (OSI) has partnered with Ulster County to use \$2.1 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act funds to restore 5.2 miles of the **Ontario & Western (O&W) Rail Trail** running from Accord to Kerhonkson and from Napanoch to Ellenville, with construction slated to begin in 2023. Additionally, OSI has begun work on a comprehensive study of the entire O&W Railroad corridor stretching 57 miles from Kingston to Port Jervis.



- In 2021, the Town of New Castle received a \$500,000 Climate Smart Communities grant for planning of the 1.6-mile **ChapLine trail**, which would run alongside Metro-North Railroad's Harlem line in Chappaqua.
- In December 2022, OSI purchased a 10-mile, unused section of the former Erie Railroad in Orange County, which sets the stage for the future construction of a **Schunneunk Rail Trail**, with the goal of creating a new multi-use recreational trail. The property is expected to be transferred to Orange County, which will design, construct, and manage the rail trail.



Ribbon cutting for the Midtown Linear Park in Kingston, August 2022 (Ulster County)



**16.2 miles** of trail completed  
**24.7 miles** of trail in progress

# Capital Region

**Albany, Columbia, Fulton, Greene, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, and Washington Counties**

The nexus of the three legs of the Empire State Trail, the Capital Region has seen a proliferation of planning and construction of greenway trail connections.

Just within the state capital, the City of Albany has experienced significant progress in connecting residents to greenway trails. In April 2022, the City unveiled the **Albany Skyway**, a 0.5-mile, elevated park that used an underutilized highway ramp to connect the Empire State Trail to downtown Albany. The City also identified a 9-mile, east-west trail to connect the Hudson River waterfront to Six Mile Waterworks park, through the development of the **Patroon Creek Greenway** feasibility study. When completed, this greenway will create safe linkages to green spaces and connect some of Albany's most underserved neighborhoods. The proposed Patroon Creek Greenway will connect at the eastern end to the **Livingston Avenue bridge**. In May 2022, the Governor announced up to \$400 million in funding to replace the century-old bridge, notably including provisions that the bridge over the Hudson is to include bicycle-pedestrian access, better connecting the cities of Albany and Rensselaer and potentially providing a future alternate route for the Empire State Trail.

Several sections of the **Empire State Trail** were improved throughout the region. In Rotterdam Junction, 1.65 miles of trail were paved, marking the completion of a series of improvements made to the **Erie Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail** in that area. In the City of Cohoes, OPRHP completed the rehabilitation of a 3-mile section of trail, resurfacing the 20-year-old trail and improving road crossings. In the Village and Town of Waterford, a 1.2-mile stretch of the **Champlain Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail** was resurfaced and improved with new drainage infrastructure and wooden fencing.

The **Saratoga Greenbelt**, a planned 24-mile shared use path that will form a continuous, figure-eight loop providing pedestrian and bicycle connections across the city of Saratoga Springs, has advanced over the last few years as well. Two segments of the Saratoga Greenbelt, the 2.8-mile **Geyser Road Trail** and the 1.7-mile **Downtown Connector** were completed. Another section of the planned trail system is moving forward, with the completion of a technical feasibility study for the **Saratoga Wilton Connector Trail**. Within Saratoga Spa State Park, OPRHP was awarded a matching grant of up to \$392,000 from the Recreational Trails Program for a 0.5 mile extension to the **North-South Road multi-use trail**, which will connect to the Saratoga Springs greenway network.

**10.8 miles** of trail completed  
**36.6 miles** of trail in progress

## Other significant greenway trail projects

### Upcoming Projects

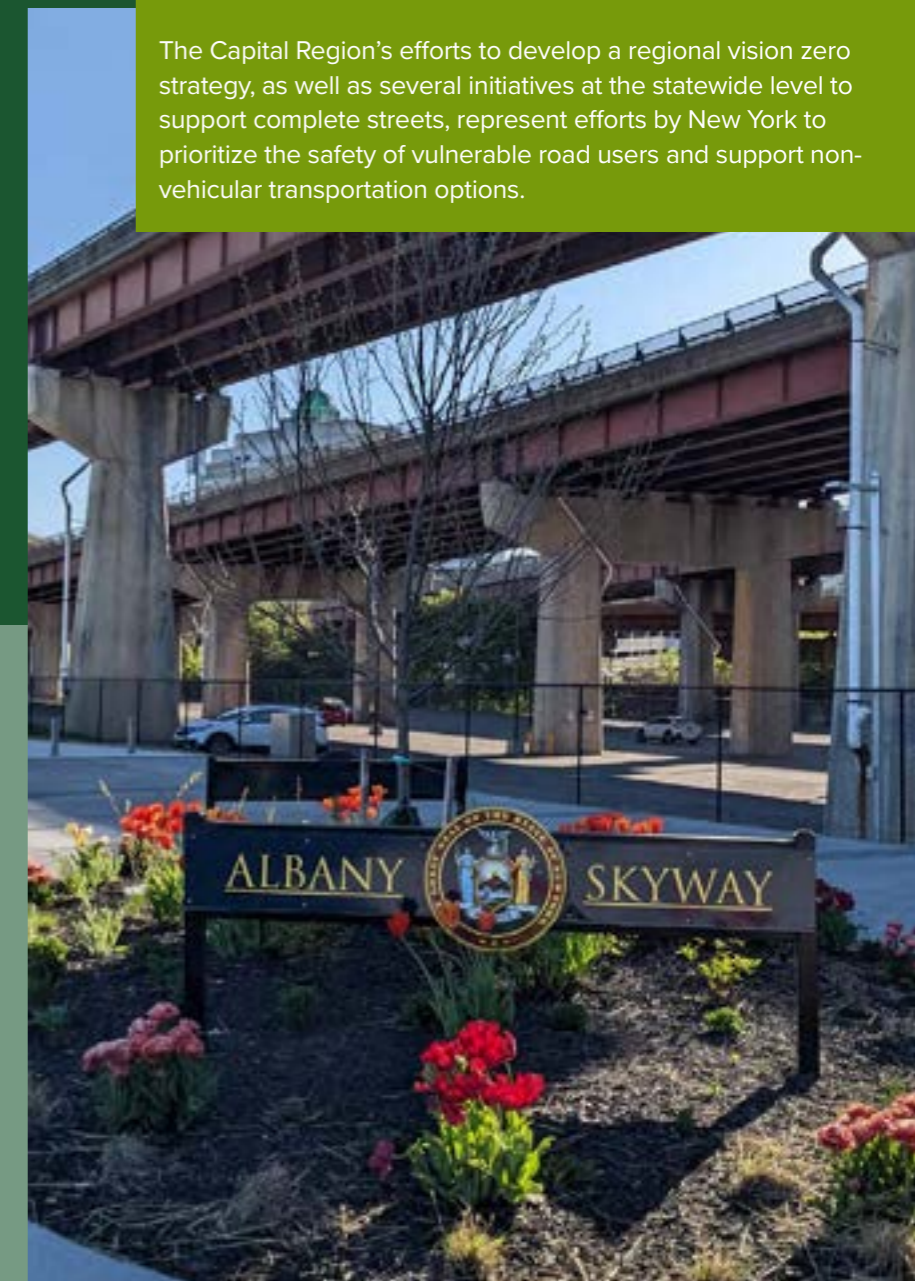
- Reconstruction of 1.3 miles of the **Scotia-Glenville Mohawk Hudson Bike Hike Trail**, which will provide a long awaited paved connection between the Village of Scotia and the Town of Glenville.
- Construction of a new multi-use path on the west side of **Freemans Bridge Road** from Freemans Bridge to Dutch Meadows Lane, which will allow bicyclists and pedestrians to travel to the existing businesses along Freemans Bridge Road. To be completed July 2023.
- Purchase and grading of a 0.8-mile segment of FJ&G railroad right-of-way by Fulton County for the **FJ&G Rail Trail**, to be completed summer 2023.
- Dedication of a half-mile connector trail between the Village of Menands and the Empire State Trail as the **Ronald H. Miller Memorial Bike Trail**.
- Funding from the New York State Department of Transportation through its Transportation Alternatives Grant Program for construction of the **Cherry Avenue Extension Multiuse Path** in the Town of Bethlehem, which will provide a connection between the Albany County Helderberg-Hudson Rail Trail and the commercial district in Slingerlands, to be completed in 2024.
- Federal Transportation Alternatives funding administered by the New York State Department of Transportation for Saratoga County to construct a Northern Trail Extension of the **Zim Smith Trail** from the Town of Ballston to Town of Milton.
- Activation of the **Albany Hudson Electric Trail**, with the installation of eight park benches along the Albany Hudson Electric Trail, funded through the Environmental Protection Fund's Park and Trail Partnership Grant.
- Funding through the Environmental Protection Fund's Parks Program to complete the planning, surveying, bridge engineering, design, wetland studies, permitting and construction documents for a section of abandoned railbed to become the northern terminus of the **Harlem Valley Rail Trail**. This section will run from the Village of Chatham to the Village of Philmont.

### Advancing Goal #7: Enhance bicycle and pedestrian transportation options by connecting greenway trails and communities.

The Capital Region's efforts to develop a regional vision zero strategy, as well as several initiatives at the statewide level to support complete streets, represent efforts by New York to prioritize the safety of vulnerable road users and support non-vehicular transportation options.

## THINKING REGIONALLY

The Capital Region has recognized the need for a more concerted, collaborative effort to combat traffic violence, with greenway trails and other complete streets design elements playing a major role in reaching this goal. To that end, several efforts have emerged to help coordinate this momentum, including the formation of the Capital District Vision Zero Alliance, as well as the announcement of funding through the Federal Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program for the Capital District Transportation Committee to develop a comprehensive safety action plan and regional vision zero strategy.



# Adirondacks/ North Country

## Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence, and Warren Counties

Perhaps the most transformative trail project in the state to advance over the past two years is the **Adirondack Rail Trail**, which when complete will run 34 miles through the central Adirondacks from Tupper Lake to Lake Placid. This former rail corridor is being rehabilitated and turned into an accessible rail trail by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. Construction on phase one of the trail, running 9 miles from Lake Placid to Saranac Lake began in November 2022, after all necessary permits were awarded. Phases 2 and 3, extending the trail to Tupper Lake, are slated to have construction begin in 2024 and likely completed by 2025.

In Lake Placid, at the eastern end of the trail corridor, the Open Space Institute (OSI) received a \$500,000 grant in early 2023 to acquire the land needed for a primary trailhead for the trail, which would include parking, visitor orientation, bathrooms, and a park-like entry.

Further east, Plattsburgh saw phase two of the **Saranac River Trail** completed in late 2021, including the installation of two new bridges. The 1.3-mile trail now provides a direct connection along its namesake river from the center of the SUNY Plattsburgh campus to the heart of downtown (and a connection with the Empire State Trail). Heading west from downtown, a new 1.5-mile spur of the **Saranac River Trail Greenway**, known as the **Treadwell Mills Connector Trail**, opened in the town of Plattsburgh, also in fall 2021. The two projects will eventually help connect communities along a 27-mile route following the Saranac River.

**Advancing Goal #3: Expand the state's greenway trails system to reach more New Yorkers in more areas.**

While a great destination for hiking, the Adirondacks have a very limited number of greenway trails. The advancement of the Adirondack Rail Trail will help provide accessible outdoor recreation opportunities to more New Yorkers.

**2.8 miles** of trail completed  
**71 miles** of trail in progress



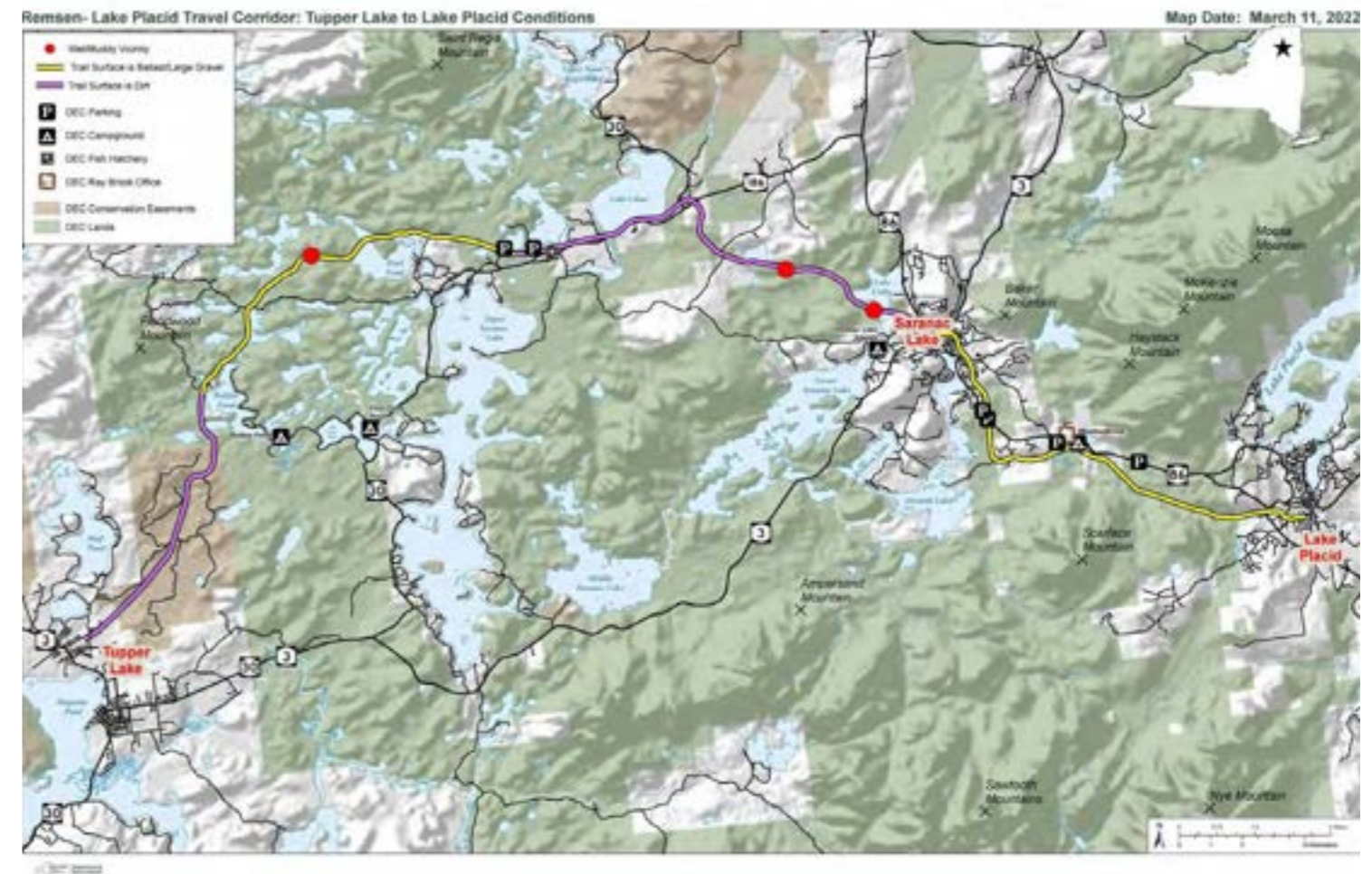
## Other significant greenway trail projects

### Upcoming Projects

- Warren County received a \$160,000 grant from the Northern Border Regional Commission to develop an improvement plan for the **Warren County Bikeway and Feeder Canal Trail**.
- Lewis County agreed to purchase 31 miles of former rail corridors, running from Lowville to Croghan, Lowville to Carthage, and in the village of Lyons Falls, for \$2.5 million, setting up their future re-use as rail trail corridors.
- As part of a regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity Study, the Watertown-Jefferson County Transportation Council evaluated the feasibility of extending the **Black River Trail** approximately 6 miles from the current terminus in the Village of Black River to the NYS Route 26 in Fort Drum.



Adirondack Rail Trail Phase I groundbreaking (right) and Adirondack Rail Trail map from NYS DEC (below)





# Central New York

**Broome, Cayuga, Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Herkimer, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Ontario, Oswego, Otsego, Schuyler, Seneca, Tioga, Tompkins, Wayne, and Yates Counties**

Over the last couple of years, communities in Central New York have been actively pursuing greenway trail upgrades and expansions, with the advancement of several major projects across the region.

As part of the **Two Rivers Greenway** system in Broome County, construction of the 2.5-mile **Route 434 Greenway** advanced, with the project expected to be complete in May 2023. Once finished, this new greenway will connect the Binghamton University campus in the Town of Vestal and the Downtown Binghamton business district, as well as several residential and commercial areas along the way. In 2021, Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study published the Two Rivers Greenway Trail Maintenance Report, which includes a basic assessment of pavement scores and maintenance condition, and takes note of issues with signage and any pressing corrective actions needed to ensure proper upkeep of the trail and its surroundings.

In Tompkins County, the **Dryden Rail Trail** overcame a significant hurdle, as the Town of Dryden secured \$700,000 in federal funding to cover the final costs of constructing a \$2.9 million bike & pedestrian bridge over Route 13. The bridge is expected to be completed in 2023. Once finished, the Dryden Rail Trail will connect the Town of Dryden to the City

of Ithaca, providing more opportunities for active transportation and recreation.

In the City of Utica, two major sources of federal funding came through in 2022 to increase bike and pedestrian connectivity, including an \$18.2 million federal RAISE grant to transform N. Genesee St. into a gateway to downtown Utica. The project will replace two aging bridges that cross over the Mohawk River and Historic Erie Canal, connecting the business area and Erie Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail to the north with Utica's downtown to the south. An additional \$2 million in federal Community Project funding was secured for the Utica Harbor Pedestrian Bridge, which will connect Utica's harbor area to the Nexus Center. In the Utica area, the **Erie Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail** itself is also poised to get some upgrades, with in-kind replacement of the trail surface of 8 miles of NYS Canal Corporation owned segments poised to begin in April 2023.

The **Erie Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail** in Herkimer, Oneida and Madison Counties saw significant improvements, with the completion of a \$1.2 million project by OPRHP to rehabilitate 2.5 miles of trail from the City of Little Falls east to the Herkimer Home State Historic Site. The project

removed the trail's 20-year-old asphalt and stone-dust surface, widened the original 5-foot-wide trail to a more standard 10-foot width, installed drainage improvements to prevent erosion, and made safety improvements. Just east of this section, OPRHP undertook the resurfacing of a 5-mile section of the **Erie Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail**, from Herkimer Home State Historic Site east to the Montgomery County line at Mindenville, replacing the trail's loose gravel surface with a stone dust

surface suitable for bicycling. Further west, OPRHP invested \$850,000 for the resurfacing of 16 miles of the **Erie Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail** in Old Erie Canal State Historic Park from Canastota to Rome.

## Other significant greenway trail projects

### Upcoming Projects

- The Finger Lakes Land Trust helped the Village of Odessa acquire 2.5 miles of rail in Schuyler County, intended to be managed as a multi-use trail.
- 8,000 feet of the **Catharine Valley Trail** are being resurfaced, thanks to funding through the Environmental Protection Fund's Park and Trail Partnership Grant received by the Friends of the Catharine Valley Trail.
- The City of Rome received funding from the Environmental Protection Fund's Parks Program to rehabilitate the existing off-road section of the **Erie Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail** located between the Erie Canal Village Museum and South Charles Street in the City of Rome. The project will design and construct a 10-foot-wide stone dust off-road ADA compliant multi-use trail.
- In the City of Little Falls, a new pedestrian bridge will connect the **Erie Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail** directly to the north side of Lock E-17 so that pedestrians and cyclists can easily access Moss Island, Seeley Street, and the City of Little Falls. The project is expected to be completed in 2026.



*Dryden Rail Trail Bridge Concept (Erdman Anthony)*

**23.5 miles** of trail completed

**17.7 miles** of trail in progress



# Western New York

**Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Niagara, Orleans, Steuben, and Wyoming Counties**

Western New York is home to several long-distance greenway trails, including the statewide Empire State Trail, Genesee Valley Greenway and the Niagara River Greenway, and the last few years have been a testament to the region’s commitment to building out the network even further.

Many exciting projects are underway in the Buffalo area. In 2022, GoBike Buffalo, with support from the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation, embarked on a planning project to connect residents of Buffalo’s East Side to the existing system of trails, greenways, and on-street bicycle facilities in Buffalo, and invest in safe infrastructure within East Side neighborhoods. This feasibility study examines two proposed trailways: the **Northeast Greenway** and the **Scajaquada Corridor Trail Extension**. In addition, GoBike has launched feasibility studies for the **Clarence Pathway Buffalo Extension**, which would run 7.8 miles through Cheektowaga, from Bailey Ave in Buffalo to Harris Hill Rd in Lancaster, as well as the **Lancaster Heritage Trail West Extension**, which would build connectivity and increase safety for people in Lancaster, Depew and Cheektowaga by addressing the 5.1-mile gap in connectivity between the Lehigh Valley Trail and Lancaster Heritage Trail. At the end of 2022, the Western New York Land Conservancy received funding from the Environmental Protection Fund’s Parks Program to create preliminary and detailed design of an initial

segment of the **Riverline Trail** to transform the unused 1.5 mile, 40-acre DL&W rail corridor into an iconic, innovative, and inspiring multi-use nature trail and greenway.

The **Genesee Valley Greenway**, running 90 miles from Rochester to Hinsdale, has seen significant investment over the last few years. Following recommendations made in June 2021’s Genesee Valley Greenway State Park Action Plan, OPRHP secured funding in April 2022 for the construction of four pedestrian bridges and resurfacing to create a continuous 22-mile route through Allegany County. In August 2022, OPRHP acquired a 17-mile former rail corridor from the Genesee River north of Belfast south to Cuba, NY, which will help close gaps in the greenway and provide opportunities for loops. In October 2022, the good news continued, with the completion of a major trail renovation project, which improved a 17-mile stretch of trail between Rochester and Avon with a new stone dust surface, signage, and new features like benches and bike racks.

Several initiatives are underway in the greater Rochester area to expand the greenway trail network. The Village of Brockport will be the site of the new **Brockport Pedestrian Bridge**, funded by NYPA/Reimagine the Canals and the Ralph C. Wilson Foundation. When complete the bridge will better connect SUNY Brockport to the Erie Canalway Trail/

Empire State Trail. Construction is expected to begin in 2023. During the summer of 2022, two concurrent planning efforts kicked off in Monroe County: the Monroe County Countywide Active Transportation Plan and the Rochester Active Transportation Plan. Both are expected to assess greenway network connections and will be completed in 2023. In December 2022, the **Route 390 Multi-Use Trail Extension**, a 1.2-mile addition to the Route 390 Multi-Use Trail in the town of Greece was completed, extending the trail from its previous southern terminus at State Route 104 to Ridgeway Avenue and creating a direct link to the City of Rochester’s Eastman Trail.

In Chautauqua County, the 2-mile **Carroll Area Nature Trail** was completed in October 2022, financed by Chautauqua Rails to Trails. There has also been a renewed interest countywide in investing in greenway trails. The Chautauqua Region Economic Development Corp. was recently awarded a \$25,000 grant from the Ralph C. Sheldon Foundation to explore the feasibility of establishing a “Friends of Chautauqua County Greenways Group.” The effort will bring various trail organizations together and determine how best to work together to provide mutual support and seek funding.

## Other significant greenway trail projects

### Completed Projects

- A new 300-foot section of the **Allegheny River Valley Trail** was completed, a loop trail that connects the City of Olean and the Town of Allegany.
- The **Quaker/ O’Neil Road Pedestrian Bridge** over the Erie Canal in Macedon, Wayne County was awarded the Excellence in Historic Preservation Consultation award. *(Pictured right)*

### Upcoming Projects

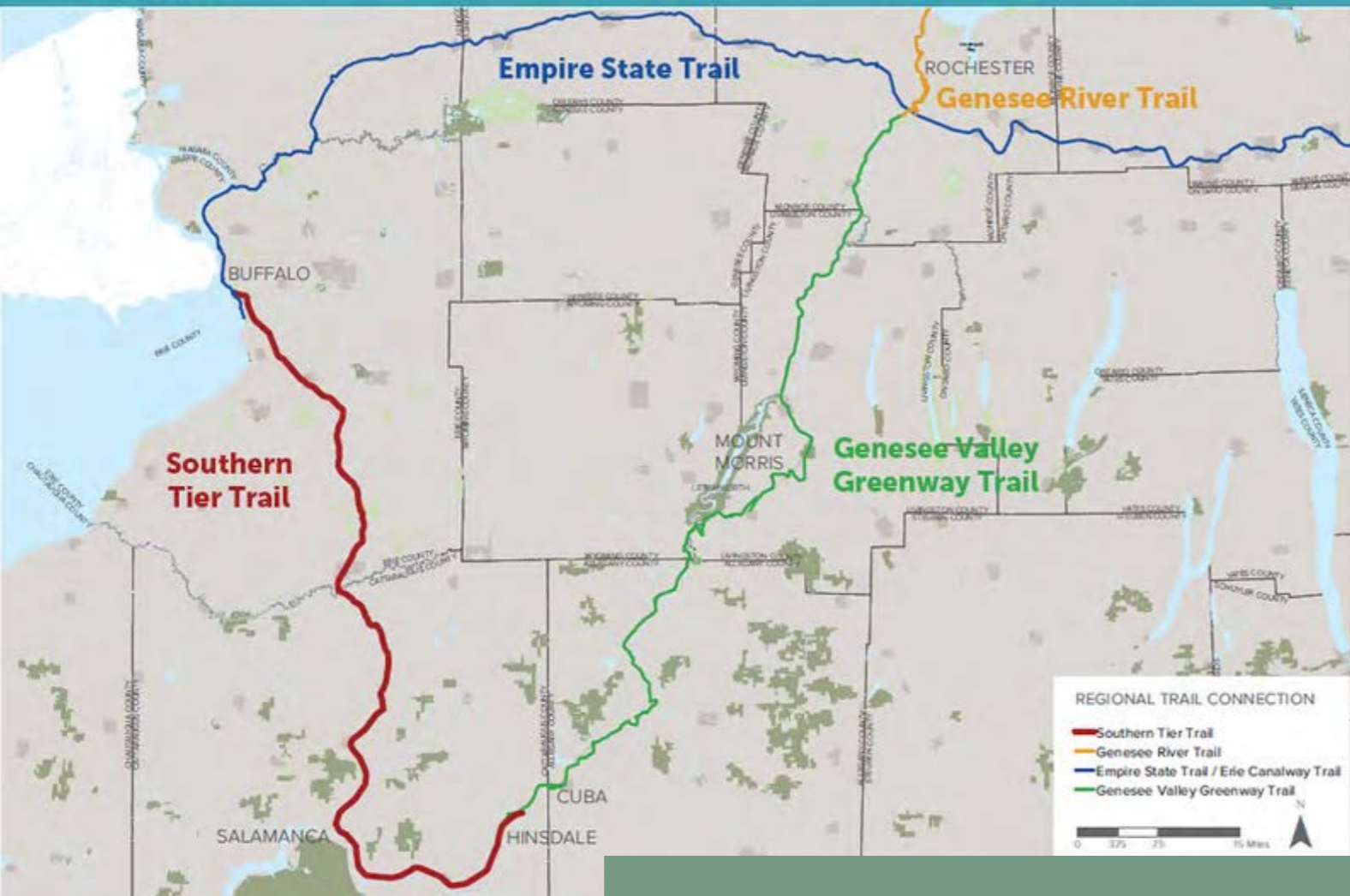
- The City of Lockport received funding through the Recreation Trails Program to extend the **Lockport Rail Trail** by 2,800 feet to the city line.
- In August 2022, the Town of Tonawanda announced that \$2 million in funding has been secured for the **Riverwalk Parkway Multiuse Trail** project, which will create a brand-new, 1.33-mile trail along Riverwalk Parkway, connecting the Two-Mile Creek Greenway Trail with the Niagara River Greenway Trail.
- In late 2022, funding through the Environmental Protection Fund’s Parks Program was announced for the village of Pittsford to pursue improvements along the **Erie Canalway Trail/ Empire State Trail** adjoining Schoen Place. Enhancements will include stabilization and adjacent roadway improvements to further support the local businesses, tourists, and recreational users along the Canalway.
- OPRHP was awarded a matching grant of up to \$500,000 from the Recreational Trails Program for rehabilitation of 3 miles of the **Red House Multiuse Trail** in Allegany State Park.
- The **Erie Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail** from Horan Road to Bates Avenue in the Village of Medina will be rehabilitated, involving the repair and replacement of the existing stone dust surface trail as well as landscaping, signage and amenities. Project to begin in 2024 and be completed in 2026.
- The New York State Canal Corporation will rehab the trail surface of 4 miles of the **Erie Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail** from W. Henrietta Road to Kendrick Road and Scottsville Rd to Lyell Avenue in the Rochester area. Design began in December 2022, with construction expected to be complete in 2025.



New York State Parks

**31.3 miles** of trail completed  
**122 miles** of trail in progress





### THINKING REGIONALLY

In February 2021, GoBike published the **Southern Tier Trail** Feasibility Study, with the mission to envision and plan for the development of a community-supported, multi-use trail connection between Buffalo and Hinsdale, NY. The study examines identified rail to trail corridors, such as the Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail along the Buffalo & Pittsburgh Railroad, and reviews existing and proposed resources to accommodate the wide variety of trail user types in the WNY region. The proposed 80-mile Southern Tier Trail will connect tourists and residents of more than 20 towns, cities, and villages to environmental resources and scenic destinations in the WNY region. Beginning with a connection to the Shoreline Trail in Buffalo, the Southern Tier Trail together with the 90-mile Genesee Valley Greenway forms a regional loop with the Erie Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail. Since the study's publication GoBike has been working to move the 52 miles identified in the study in Cattaraugus County to construction. In Erie County, the non-profit Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail Inc. is advancing the Southern Tier Trail, having opened 11 total miles of unimproved trail in the last year.



Map of potential Southern Tier Trail route (top) and rendering of Cascade Bridge from Southern Tier Trail Feasibility Study (GoBike Buffalo)

# Programs & Resources

Not only have the last two years seen substantial growth in New York State's greenway trail network, significant efforts are underway to activate the trail system and ensure that every trail user has a positive experience.

## Trail Town Initiatives

Across the state, there are Trail Town programs underway along four of New York's long-distance trail systems. While every Trail Town program is different, all the initiatives seek to help trail-adjacent communities realize long-term economic, health, and quality of life benefits from their proximity to the trail while promoting a consistent, coordinated identity and experience along the corridor.

Along the Erie Canalway Trail/Empire State Trail, Parks & Trails New York, with support from the NYS Canal Corporation, piloted the **Empire State Trail Town** program in 2022 by working with one community, the village of Brockport. Through the program, the village received technical assistance to identify short- and long-term strategies to increase connectivity between the trail and the town, as well as promotional support to advance Brockport as a recreational destination. The City of Lockport, Village of Newark, and City of Rome were selected as the next communities to work with PTNY and the NYS Canal Corporation over the course of 2023.

In conjunction with the Empire State Trail Town program which highlights specific communities, Parks & Trails New York also manages the **Bike Friendly New York** business certification program, which recognizes and promotes participating businesses across the state for their accommodation of trail users. As of the end of 2022, there were 160 businesses participating in the program, mostly along the Erie and Champlain Canalway trails.

The **Genesee Valley Trail Town initiative**, a collaborative effort between Parks & Trails New York, Letchworth Gateway Villages, and the Friends of the Genesee Valley Greenway, has brought together community leaders and regional partners in an effort to create a vibrant, sustainable network of "trail towns" that increases the visibility of the Genesee Valley as a recreation destination and supports the outdoor recreation economy. Centered around the Genesee Valley Greenway, the program currently supports ten communities.

While not a traditional Trail Town program, the **Adirondack Rail Trail Association (ARTA)** has taken steps to help communities around the trail prepare to welcome the numerous visitors the trail is expected to attract. The Adirondack Rail Trail Association, long-time advocates for getting the trail constructed, marked a substantial milestone with the appointment of its first Executive Director, Brian Woods, in October 2022. ARTA has been working with communities and businesses to ensure they have the resources needed to promote and benefit from the new trail.

The O&W Rail Trail Alliance launched the **Sullivan O&W Trail Town** program to help communities along the developing O&W Rail Trail in Sullivan County grow outdoor tourism and support small businesses. Following the Trail Town model developed by the Progress Fund, the O&W Rail Trail Alliance has started taking steps to develop partnerships, conduct research and assessment, better connect the towns to the trail, support growth in the business districts, and market the trail with consistent branding and events. As of June 2022, the Alliance planned to conduct community assessments, hold an annual "Taste of the Trail" event, and develop a loan program and training opportunities geared toward trail businesses.

**Advancing Goal #6: Promote the Greenway Trails System as a destination for tourism, healthy recreation, and active lifestyles.**

The rapid spread of Trail Town programs has helped local communities promote the use of greenway trails by both residents and visitors, and are an important tool for enhancing the trail user experience.

## Events & Programming

Over the last two years, organizations across the state have developed new programs or have continued to host long-time events that showcase New York's greenway trails, especially the statewide Empire State Trail.

In 2021, Parks & Trails New York held the annual **Cycle the Erie Canal bike tour** at half capacity, after the event went virtual in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2022, PTNY was able to host the tour back at full capacity, with over 750 riders and volunteers traveling roughly 400 miles on the Erie Canalway Trail between Buffalo and Albany.

PTNY received funding in 2022 to launch a new multi-day bike tour—**Empire State Trail Adventure: Cycle the Hudson Valley**—from Empire State Development's Market New York program. The event, to kick off in 2023, will be an annual fully-supported, seven-day ride between Albany and NYC on the Empire State Trail, highlighting the communities, small businesses, culture, and history of the iconic Hudson Valley.

The New York State Canal Corporation has continued its popular **"On the Canals"** excursions in 2021 and 2022. Initially piloted in the summer of 2020 as "NY Canal Staycations," the "On the Canals" program has expanded as a year-round recreation initiative in New York State after participation nearly tripled in 2021. Many of the excursions incorporate activities on the Erie and Champlain Canalway Trails. Activities have included bike rides and snowshoe hikes in Brockport with adaptive equipment available, cycling tours in Schuylerville and surrounding areas, and "plein-air" painting along the canal in Amsterdam.

The **Canalway Challenge**, developed and managed by the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, saw successful seasons in both 2021 and 2022. To complete the challenge, participants choose a personal mileage goal and then walk, run, cycle, or paddle on the New York State Canal System and Canalway Trail to achieve their goal and receive recognition. In 2022, 1,848 challenges were created and 362,681 miles were logged in the Canalway corridor.

In 2022, Albany Symphony's **TrailBlaze NY** Concerts celebrated the completion of New York's Empire State Trail. Over five weekends and across nine counties, the Albany Symphony presented free new music concerts, multimedia art, interactive family fun,

and recreation events to thousands of people along New York's scenic trails and rivers.

## Greenway Trail Trip Planning Resources

During the last two years, PTNY published two major Empire State Trail guidebooks: ***Cycling the Erie Canal: A Guide to 360 Miles of Adventure and History Along the Erie Canalway Trail (5th edition)*** and ***Cycling the Hudson and Champlain Valleys: A Guide to History, Art, and Nature Along the North-South Route of the Empire State Trail (1st edition)***. Together, these guidebooks offer trail users information on the entirety of the statewide Empire State Trail, complete with full-color maps and information about lodging and dining, historic and scenic sites, and services for cyclists.

In June 2021, Brooklyn Greenway Initiative launched **Greenway Adventures NYC** presented by National Grid, a free, self-guided summer event and online resource to explore greenways in all five of the city's boroughs. BGI worked with more than 15 partners across the city to develop a comprehensive greenway guide featuring more than 24 routes and adventures across all five boroughs.

In 2022, OPRHP released an update to the official **Empire State Trail website** and map, including a new "Trip Planning" feature. The site now provides information about trail routes, parking, nearby attractions, and a variety of overnight accommodations available along or near the Empire State Trail route, including hotels, inns, bed & breakfasts, resorts and campgrounds



Programs & Resources

# Collaboration & Greenway Trail Advancement

## Collaborative Planning and Management Efforts

Since spring 2022, Parks & Trails New York and OPRHP have convened the Statewide Greenway Trails Working Group, facilitating quarterly meetings with statewide stakeholders and partners involved in the ownership, planning, development, and maintenance of greenway trails. The meetings have served to cultivate connections, solicit information and data, and review and prioritize the goals and recommendations of the Statewide Greenway Trails Plan. Stakeholder and partner groups have included MPO and transportation planning organizations, county planning offices, bicycle and pedestrian advocacy groups, non-profit organizations, other relevant state and local groups, and state agency partners.

On a regional basis, the Western New York Regional Trails Coalition, a collaboration of non-profit organizations, foundations, and agencies, is working to advance completion of a connected network of trails throughout WNY. Their goal is to raise the profile of regionally significant bicycle and pedestrian trails and their public benefits, so that building these becomes a priority. Tasks include hosting quarterly meetings throughout the year, developing a collaborative map to identify overlapping regional projects that align with identified regional projects, and developing a scorecard of performance measures to track progress on implementation of the regional bicycle master plan.

## Advancing Goal #5: Foster greater collaboration among agencies and stakeholders to advance greenway trails in New York.

Collaborative efforts, such as the Statewide Greenway Trails Working Group and the Western New York Regional Trails Coalition have served as platforms to share resources and best practices, and advance greenway trail development.

In May 2022, OPRHP launched the Empire State Trail Program. Building on the significant success and accomplishments of the Hudson River Valley Greenway (HRVG) to establish the EST, the Program will sustain the EST as an important statewide greenway trail and economic development driver. The EST Program will oversee communications, including management of the **EST website**, stakeholder partnerships, marketing, and programming promotion.

## Greenway Trail Development Guide

Parks & Trails New York is in the process of developing a new guide to help communities identify and develop greenway trails. This guide will provide an overview of effective steps for non-profits, local governments, planning organizations, and other trail groups seeking to develop greenway trails in New York. The document will contain recent example projects and success stories from across the state, cost estimates, ideas for partnerships, and more.

## Advancing Goal #2: Collect and publish information to aid in the planning, development, and management of greenway trails.

The upcoming publication of the Greenway Trail Development Guide and coordination around statewide trail count efforts will provide resources to New Yorkers seeking to develop new trails or manage existing trails.

## Trail Counts

Decisions regarding design, funding, operation, maintenance, and promotion of New York State's growing network of multi-use trails are based in large part on understanding the level and type of trail usage. Estimates of annual trail traffic volume inform current and future expenditures for construction and maintenance; they also demonstrate the economic impact of these trails on the counties, towns, villages, and cities across the state.

In 2021, PTNY measured trail use using electronic eco-counters at nine locations along the Erie Canalway Trail. In 2022, PTNY released **Who's on the Trail 2021: Canalway Trail**, which analyzed trail use metrics and trends. PTNY estimates that the Canalway Trail system as a whole saw over 3.3 million visits in 2021, including approximately 3.1 million visits to the Erie Canalway Trail and approximately 215,000 visits to the Champlain Canalway Trail. PTNY also collected and analyzed trail use data on the Genesee Valley Greenway. In 2021, PTNY recorded data at three locations: Scottsville (Monroe County), Mount Morris (Livingston County), and Cuba (Allegany County). In 2022, PTNY released **Who's on the Trail 2021: Genesee Valley Greenway**, which included estimated annual use and an analysis of use trends at each location.

The Hudson River Valley Greenway collected trail use data at ten locations along the Hudson and Champlain Valleys in 2022. Using this data, plus data from four additional sites, they published a **2022 Trail Visitation Report**. In total, more than 1.25 million visits were counted across the 14 counting sites.

Since 2017, the **Genesee Transportation Council** (GTC) has evaluated trails and counting bicyclists and pedestrians to build a solid foundation of data for future planning with a multi-pronged approach. GTC counts data along 25 trails covering approximately 300 miles in Rochester and the surrounding counties. The **Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study** (BMTS) also has bicyclist and pedestrian counters installed in locations along the Binghamton area's Two Rivers Greenway system. BMTS publishes a monthly report discussing the counts and trends experienced that month across the region, as well as an interactive map that showcases monthly and running total counts broken down by user type.

# Funding Highlights

## Federal Funding

In November 2021, the **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act** was signed into law, a \$1.2 trillion federal spending package that included \$550 billion in new spending in a five-year reauthorization of federal surface transportation programs.

The bill authorized funding (subject to the annual appropriations process) for a number of federal programs that provide funding for trails, including:

- **Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside** - increased from \$850 million in FY21 to \$1.38 billion in FY22 and \$1.41 billion in FY23.
- **Recreational Trails Program (part of the Transportation Alternatives program)** - maintained at \$84 million per year.
- **Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program** - a new funding program, authorized at up to \$200 million per year.

As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government passed the **American Rescue**

**Plan Act** in March 2021. As part of this \$1.9 trillion package, the legislation created the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, which awarded funding directly to state, county, and local governments with broad flexibility to meet local needs. This flexibility has allowed the funding to support local trail projects.

Many other federal grant programs can be used for trail-related projects, either as a standalone project or as part of a larger effort. This includes regionally focused agencies, such as the **Northern Border Regional Commission**, which funds economic and infrastructure projects in a 28-county region in upstate New York.

Recent Federal Budgets have also included Congressionally Directed Spending, also known as earmarks, which have supported trail-related projects. The past two fiscal years have seen a total of \$10 million secured thanks to the efforts of Sen. Charles Schumer, Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, Rep. Brian Higgins, Rep. Claudia Tenney, former Rep. Antonio Delgado, and former Rep. Mondaire Jones.

## State Funding

In addition to administering federal grant funds, such as the Recreational Trails Program, New York State has multiple funding lines that help advance trail projects across the state.

The FY 2023 New York State Budget was approved by the legislature and signed by Governor Kathy Hochul in spring 2022, and provided record amounts of funding for multiple key programs that support trail projects. This included a record \$250 million in New York Works capital funding for New York State Parks, a \$140 million (or 127 percent) increase from the previous year.

**Advancing Goal #4: Identify funding opportunities for the acquisition, planning, development, and maintenance of greenway trails.**

A wide array of federal funding programs have been used to advance greenway trails projects, including transportation funding, COVID relief funding, Congressional member items, and funding from various economic development programs.

The budget also included a record \$400 million Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), an increase of \$100 million over the previous year. The EPF includes numerous programs that explicitly support trails:

- Open space and land conservation funding (\$40 million)
- State Land Stewardship funding (\$48.7 million), which includes the \$2 million Park and Trail Partnership Grant program, which is administered by Parks & Trails New York.
- Waterfront Revitalization Program funding (\$16.5 million)
- Municipal Parks funding (\$26 million), which in 2022 included a one-time \$3.5 million for Scenic Hudson's Westchester RiverWalk project. This funding also includes \$500,000 in dedicated grants for Hudson River Valley trails, separately administered by the Hudson River Valley Greenway.

Finally, in November 2022, voters approved the historic \$4.2 billion Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act. While exact projects are yet to be determined from this funding source, it is hoped that significant investments will be made in acquiring land and for construction to drastically expand the state's greenway trails network.

## Private Funding

While most trail projects are funded through public support, some greenway trail projects also received support from private sources, such as foundations. In recent years, the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation has supported the growth of the trail network in Western New York, spurred by an urgency to have all funds spent within 20 years. This funding source has helped support a wide array of trails projects and programs in Western New York, including large-scale capital funding awarded directly by the Wilson Foundation that has been critical in seeing major renovation and trail construction projects in the region come to fruition; medium-size grants to support planning efforts through the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo's Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Legacy Funds Design and Access Grant; and smaller seed grants administered by Parks & Trails New York as part of the Genesee Valley Trail Town Initiative.

