

 **Empire State Trail:
 Connecting Waterford to Whitehall, NY
September 12, 2017**

In January, 2017, Governor Cuomo announced creation of the Empire State Trail, which when completed in 2020 will be a 750-mile trail bicycle and walking pathway running from New York City through the Hudson and Champlain Valleys to Canada, and from Albany to Buffalo on the Erie Canalway Trail. The Empire State Trail will be the longest state multi-use trail in the nation. More information about the statewide trail is available in the 25-page Empire State Trail Plan which can be downloaded from the “Trails & Scenic Byways” section of the Hudson River Valley Greenway website, or by using the following link: <http://hudsongreenway.ny.gov/Libraries/PDF_s/EST_SummaryReport_DRAFT_20170808.sflb.ashx>

**As part of the larger Empire State Trail initiative, New York State will make significant investments – totaling $12 million – to build new sections of the Champlain Canalway Trail and to improve on-road bicycling routes connecting Waterford to Whitehall, New York, a distance of 61 miles.**

**Governor Cuomo’s initiative will dramatically extend existing sections of the Champlain Canalway Trail, which is a stone-dust bicycling and walking trail largely built on the towpath adjacent to both the historic and active canal. Trail construction projects will be completed through a partnership involving the New York State Canal Corporation, the New York State Department of Transportation, and involved county and town agencies. As depicted on the attached map, when completed in 2020, the Empire State Trail will encompass three major off-road trail sections totaling 22 miles in length:**

1. **Waterford to Mechanicville – 7-Mile Off-Road Path**. The Empire State Trail is funding construction of two new trail segments that connect and extend existing but isolated trails – creating a continuous off-road Champlain Canalway running 7 miles from Waterford (at Broad Street/Route 32) to south Mechanicville (where Main Street intersects with Route 4). State funding will be provided to the Towns of Waterford and Halfmoon to enable them to construct the new trail segments.
2. **Schuylerville Section – 3-Mile Off-Road Path**. There is an existing section of Champlain Canalway Trail that runs north from Schuylerville to Dix Bridge in Hudson Crossing Park. Empire State Trail funding is being allocated to extend the trail 1.5-miles south of Schuylerville (the new trail section will run from Ferry Street to Route 4 at Garnsey Lane). When completed, the existing and new sections will total 3 miles of continuous off-road trail.
3. **Fort Edward to Fort Ann – 12-Mile Off-Road Path**. The existing Feeder Canal Trail starts in Fort Edward and runs 2 miles north, where it then turns northwest toward Glens Falls. The NYS Canal Corporation will complete four projects in this area: a) a stonedust surface will be installed on the historic Champlain towpath running 1-mile north from the Feeder Canal; b) two pedestrian/bicycles bridges and an underpass will constructed to create safe passage under Route 196 in Kingsbury; c) from there the trail will follow Towpath Road 3 miles north to New Swamp Road (Towpath and New Swamp are very low-traffic, gravel roads); and d) the NYS Canal Corporation will build a new 6-mile section of stonedust canalway trail from New Swamp Road north to Fort Ann. When all projects are completed, a continuous 12-mile Champlain Canalway Trail will connect Fort Edward to Fort Ann.

In addition to construction of off-road trails, Empire State Trail funding will allow the NYS Department of Transportation and local governments to make strategic improvements to on-road sections, providing a safe, well-marked bicycle route from Waterford to Whitehall:

* Empire State Trail wayfinding signage will be installed marking the entire 61-mile route. Informational signage will also be installed to direct bicyclists and pedestrians to nearby businesses, historic sites, and tourism attractions.
* Examples of locations where on-road bicycling improvements will be made include Main Street in Mechanicville and Route 4 from Comstock to Whitehall.
* Finally, New York State is studying options to determine the best on-road route from Fort Ann to Comstock, NY.

These improvements will directly connect to the larger 750-mile Empire State Trail:

* South of Waterford, bicyclists and pedestrians can access the Hudson Valley section of Empire State Trail (via Peebles Island State Park toward Van Schaick Island and the Corning Preserve Trail).
* A second route south of Waterford will connect to the Erie Canalway Trail toward Buffalo (using an on-street route through the City of Cohoes).
* North of Whitehall, the Empire State Trail will be an on-road bicycle route, running 120 miles through the Champlain Valley to the Canada Border at Rouses Point, NY.

For more information about these projects, contact:

Andy Beers
Director, Empire State Trail
(518 473-3835)
andy.beers@hudsongreenway.ny.gov
For additional information about the Hudson River Valley Greenway, see [hudsongreenway.ny.gov](http://www.hudsongreenway.ny.gov/home.aspx).