

EMPIRE STATE TRAIL

PROGRESS REPORT - SEPTEMBER 2019

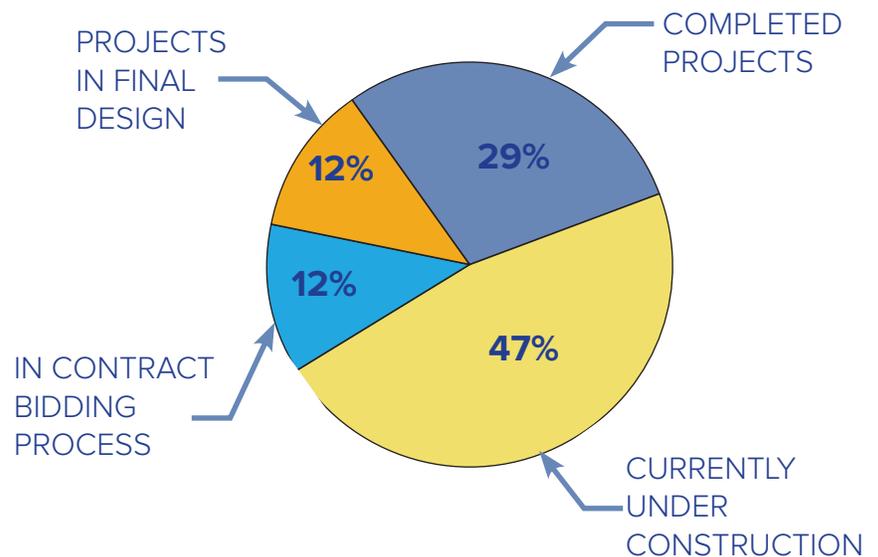




EMPIRE STATE TRAIL SEPTEMBER 2019 PROGRESS REPORT

In January 2017, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced creation of the Empire State Trail, a 750-mile bicycle and walking trail that will span New York State, from Buffalo to Albany, and from New York City through the Hudson and Champlain Valleys to Canada. In order to create the Trail, New York State and local government partners are completing more than 60 construction projects across the state, to develop new off-road “rail-trail” and “canalway trail” segments, as well as make improvements to on-road route connections.

Rapid progress is being made on creating the Empire State Trail. As of September 2019, three quarters (76%) of the 60 Trail construction projects are either under construction or complete. The remaining projects are in the contract bidding or final design stage. All Empire State Trail construction projects are on schedule for completion no later than the end of 2020.



Organizations and individuals seeking additional information can address questions to:

Empire State Trail Program

c/o Hudson River Valley Greenway Office
625 Broadway, 4th Floor
Albany, NY 12207-2995
hrvg@hudsongreenway.ny.gov
(518) 473-3835

**Additional information is available on New York State’s Empire State Trail website:
www.ny.gov/programs/empire-state-trail**

Thank you for your interest in the Empire State Trail.

Pictured on cover: Newly opened Empire State Trail section along the Erie Canal in Herkimer County.

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THE EMPIRE STATE TRAIL

New York State celebrates boldness and diversity – cultural, physical, social, geographic – and welcomes experiences that weave these qualities together.

The magnitude of the Empire State Trail isn't measured only its unrivaled 750-mile length. On a human level, the Trail connects people to New York's natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, and unparalleled outdoor recreation opportunities.

The Empire State Trail provides New Yorkers and visitors the freedom and opportunity to explore and embrace New York's special places, diverse history, and iconic landscapes. The Trail promotes healthy lifestyles and provides a place for friends and families to experience everything the Empire State has to offer – connecting urban centers, village main streets, and rural communities.

Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature have provided \$200 million to fund construction of the Trail. An additional \$80 million in matching funds have been secured from various federal, state, local, and private sources – providing a total capital construction budget of \$280 million. When completed by the end of 2020, the Trail will be a continuous 750-mile route spanning the Empire State, and will be the longest multi-use state trail in the nation.



In October 2018, New York State Parks, joined by local officials and trail enthusiasts, celebrated completion of a new 5-mile Empire State Trail section from Amsterdam to Pattersonville in Schenectady and Montgomery County.



CREATING THE 750-MILE TRAIL ROUTE

- Approximately 400 miles of the Empire State Trail already exists in discrete, disconnected segments.
- Empire State Trail funding will improve the remaining 350 miles, “closing the gaps” to create a continuous statewide route.
- Wherever possible, the Trail is “off-road,” utilizing historic railway routes (e.g. rail-trails) and canal tow paths along sections of the Erie and Champlain canals. For the 550 miles from Manhattan to Buffalo, 85% of the Empire State Trail will be off-road.
- Wayfinding signage utilizing a distinctive Empire State Trail logo and directional arrows are being installed along the entire 750-mile route, making it easy to follow the trail.
- A mobile website will be launched in 2020 to direct trail users to nearby local attractions and businesses, such as restaurants and lodging, bike repair shops, farm stands, historic sites, and downtown business districts.
- The Trail is open to winter uses such as hiking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. Snowmobiling will continue on designated off-road trail segments where it currently exists.

The Empire State Trail will be a multi-use path designed to accommodate shared use by pedestrians and bicyclists.

- Typical trail construction features a 10 to 12-foot wide asphalt or stonedust surface with moderate grades, welcoming walkers, hikers, runners, people pushing strollers, and bicyclists of all abilities, from experienced long-distance cyclists to family groups with children just learning to ride.
- In areas where it’s not feasible to create an off-road route, the Empire State Trail follows public roadways. Spot improvements, such as marking crosswalks, installing share the road markings, and paving shoulders, are being made at strategic on-road locations.
- The trail surface and associated improvements are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, providing accessibility to seniors and users with mobility challenges.



LEGEND

- Off-Road Trail – Open to the Public
- On-Road Route
- Future Trail – Open By December 2020

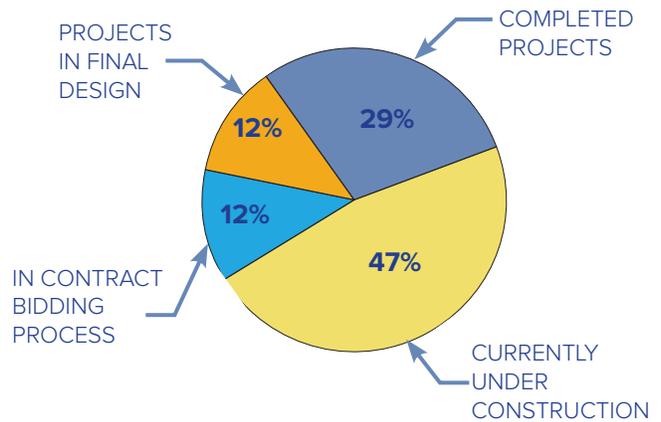
0 5 10 20 30 40 Miles

September 2019

STATUS REPORT: EMPIRE STATE TRAIL SEGMENTS

Since 2017, the Hudson River Valley Greenway, New York State Canal Corporation, New York State Parks, the New York State Department of Transportation, MTA/Metro North Railroad, and many local communities have been working to implement the Empire State Trail vision.

The following sections detail the status of the Hudson Valley, Erie Canalway Trail, and Champlain Valley sections of the Empire State Trail.



Several Empire State Trail projects have been completed in Ulster County, and the remainder will be completed in 2020. Pictured above: ribbon cutting for the refurbished Walkkill Valley Rail Trail bridge.

LOWER HUDSON VALLEY

Running north from the Battery at the tip of Manhattan to Poughkeepsie:

- **Hudson River Park / Riverside Park / Manhattan Greenway Trail.**
Status: Existing trail open to the public.
- **On-road bicycle route from Upper Manhattan to the Bronx.**
Status: The route will be signed in 2020.
- **Van Cortlandt Park / Putnam Greenway Trail.**
Status: NYC Parks will complete construction of this new trail segment in the fall of 2019.
- **Westchester South & North County Trails.**
Status: Existing trail, Westchester is resurfacing and improving 22 miles of the

North County Trail, for fall 2019 completion.

- **Putnam Trailway.**
Status: Existing trail open to the public.
- **Maybrook Trailway (Brewster to Hopewell Junction).**
Status: Metro North has started construction of this 22-mile trail section, which will open to the public in November 2020.
- **Dutchess Rail Trail.**
Status: Existing trail open to the public.
- **Walkway Over the Hudson.**
Status: Existing trail open to the public. New York State Parks has opened new visitor centers on the Dutchess and Ulster sides of the Walkway.



Pictured above: Rough grading of the subbase for the Maybrook Trailway which MTA / Metro North Railroad is constructing on an inactive rail corridor.



UPPER HUDSON VALLEY

Running north from Poughkeepsie to Albany:

- **Hudson Valley Rail Trail.**
Status: NYSDOT, Ulster County, and the Town of Lloyd completed construction of new trail segments in 2019 creating a continuous off-road trail from the Walkway to the Village of New Paltz.
- **Wallkill Valley Rail Trail.**
Status: In 2018, the Town of New Paltz refurbished the Wallkill rail-trail bridge. In 2020, the Open Space Institute and Wallkill Valley Land Trust will refurbish the trail from Rosendale to Kingston.
- **Kingston Trails.**
Status: The City of Kingston completed the Kingston Point Rail Trail in August 2019 and will build the Kingston Landing Trail in 2020.
- **On-Road Connection: North of Kingston to the City of Hudson.**
Status: By the fall of 2020, NYSDOT, the NYS Bridge Authority, and local government partners will install signage and markings, and improve this 35-mile on-road segment.
- **Albany-Hudson Electric Trail.**
Status: The Hudson River Valley Greenway broke ground in May 2019 on this new 36-mile rail-trail from the City of Hudson to the City of Rensselaer. The trail will be completed in November 2020.
- **Corning Preserve Trail & Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail.**
Status: Existing trail open to the public.



Construction started in May 2019 to create the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail, which will run 36 miles from the City of Hudson in Columbia County to the City of Rensselaer. The AHET Trail will be completed in November 2020, connecting to the Corning Preserve trail across the Hudson River in the City of Albany.

WESTERN ERIE CANALWAY TRAIL

Starting in Buffalo and heading east through Rochester to Syracuse:

- Buffalo Connection/Shoreline Trail.**
 Status: The trail route through Erie and Niagara Counties is complete and open to the public. During 2020, NYSDOT will make strategic improvements to sections of the route.
- Pendleton Connection.**
 Status: the NYS Canal Corporation has completed construction of a new 2.2 trail section between Pendleton and Amherst. The EST route is now complete from Buffalo to Rochester.
- Wayne County Projects.**
 Status: In 2020, NYSDOT will complete improvements to both off-road and on-road trail segments through Wayne County.
- Camillus to Onondaga Lake.**
 Status: The Honeywell Corporation has started construction of a new 3-mile segment that will extend the trail from Camillus, through the State Fairgrounds, to the Loop the Lake Trail on Onondaga Lake. This section will open to the public by spring 2020.
- Onondaga Lake to Syracuse.**
 Status: Onondaga County will construct a trail connection from the Loop the Lake Trail to downtown Syracuse. This project is slated for December 2020 completion.

- Syracuse to DeWitt.**
 Status: During 2020, NYSDOT will make improvements to the on-road EST route through the City of Syracuse, and will build a bicycle/pedestrian path along Erie Boulevard, completing a seamless connection to existing trail in DeWitt.



Brian Stratton, Director of the New York State Canal Corporation, speaks at the ground breaking for the Pendleton-Amherst Trail section, which eliminates the last remaining Western New York Gap. The Erie Canalway Trail is now a continuous route for 135 miles between Buffalo and east of Rochester.



EASTERN ERIE CANALWAY TRAIL

Heading east from Syracuse to Albany:

- **Old Erie Canal State Historic Park.**
Status: In 2019, New York State Parks completed rehabilitation of 12 miles of trail from DeWitt through Chittenango to Canastota.
- **Rome On-Road Connection.**
Status: In 2020, the City of Rome will complete improvements to the on-road EST route through the City.
- **Utica to Schuyler.**
Status: In the fall of 2020, the NYS Canal Corporation will complete construction of a new 3.5-mile trail section from Utica running east to Schuyler.
- **Schuyler to Frankfort.**
Status: By December 2019, NYSDOT will complete improvements to this on-road section.
- **Frankfort to Little Falls.**
Status: By December 2020, the NYS Canal Corporation will complete four separate projects creating a continuous trail in this section. The first of the four sections – Fort Herkimer Church to Lock E-18, opened in August 2019.
- **Amsterdam to Pattersonville.**
Status: New York State Parks opened this new 5-mile trail section in October 2018.
- **Rotterdam Projects.**
Status: In December 2020, NYSDOT will complete construction of tunnels under two active railroad lines, creating continuous off-road trail from Pattersonville to Schenectady.
- **Schenectady to Albany.**
Status: Existing Mohawk Hudson Bike-Hike Trail is open to the public.



Pictured left is a photo of an existing section of the Erie Canal Trail.

CHAMPLAIN VALLEY

From the Capital District north to Whitehall, several new off-road sections of Champlain Canalway Trail are being constructed through the Empire State Trail initiative:

- **Waterford to Mechanicville.**
Status: In the fall of 2019, Saratoga County will open a new trail section north of Waterford. In December 2020, the Town of Halfmoon will complete a second project, creating continuous trail to Mechanicville.
- **Schuylerville.**
Status: In June 2019, the Town of Saratoga opened a new off-road trail section connecting to Hudson Crossing Park and Washington County.
- **Fort Edward to Fort Ann.**
Status: The NYS Canal Corporation has started construction of this new 9-mile trail section, which will open to the public in November 2020.
- **Fort Ann to Whitehall.**
Status: In the fall of 2020, NYSDOT will complete a series of on-road and off-road improvements to this trail section.

The 110-mile Empire State Trail from Whitehall north to Canada Border at Rouses Point will be designated on the shoulders of public roadways, creating an on-road route appropriate for experienced bicyclists. By the end of 2020, NYSDOT will complete installation of signage designating the entire Champlain Valley route.



Construction is underway for the off-road trail between Fort Edward and Fort Ann as part of the Champlain Canalway Trail.



WAYFINDING SIGNAGE

To assist long-distance trail users, New York State is installing Empire State Trail wayfinding signage along the entire 750-mile Empire State Trail route. Directional arrows will also be installed where needed to identify the EST route.

As of August 2019, EST wayfinding signage has been installed on 35% of the 750-mile Empire State Trail route. Signage will be installed on all remaining sections by November 2020.



By November 2020, Empire State Trail wayfinding signage will be installed along the entire 750 mile statewide route.



Pictured above: The recently completed Syracuse Gateway inside the New York State Fairgrounds.

EMPIRE STATE TRAIL GATEWAYS AND TRAILHEADS

To promote public awareness and use, New York State is creating more than 50 Trailheads and Gateways to welcome visitors to the trail. Located in state and local parks with existing parking and visitor amenities, the Gateways and Trailheads are landscaped locations that include welcome and orientation signage, maps of the trail route, benches, bicycle racks, and self-service “fix-it” stations. Thirty of the 50 Trailheads and Gateways currently are under construction. The remainder will be completed by fall 2020.

More than 50 Empire State Trail Gateways and Trailheads are being constructed along the 750-mile route.



TRAIL USER ESTIMATES

The Trail User Projection, released in July 2018, answers the question “How many people will use the Empire State Trail annually?” The report utilized a statistical analysis to generate a projection of the number of walkers, runners, and bicyclists that will utilize sample points along the trail, and extrapolates a statewide visitor projection.

Visitation for the entire 750-mile EST is projected to be approximately 8.6 million trail users annually. Trail usage is expected to be highest within urban population centers, but every segment of the trail will attract significant visitation. The full User Projection Report is available on the Empire State Trail website.

STATEWIDE TRAIL USE ESTIMATES	
TOTAL BIKES	3,060,093
TOTAL PEDESTRIANS	5,589,607
TOTAL TRAIL USE	8,649,700

A projected 8.6 million bicyclists, hikers, and runners will visit the Empire State Trail each year.





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