

Tompkins Priority Trails Strategy

Key Action Summary – 10/23/17 Updates and Accomplishments

A: Black Diamond Trail (BDT)

- The Northern section between Cass Park and Taughannock Falls State Park is complete. This 8.5 mile section of trail formally opened earlier this year to great celebration by local users.
- The County sold a parcel to the Town of Ulysses which is north of Perry City Road and abuts the trail to serve as a buffer. We are further providing financial assistance to the FLLT to secure a 12 acre portion that abuts the trail at Glenwood Heights Road which will eventually be sold to State Parks.
- City (Middle) Section: A study by Cornell engineering students recently found that a bike and pedestrian bridge can cover the flood control channel span without an in-stream abutment, significantly lowering the potential cost of this portion of the project.
- The County Planning Department is actively working in coordination with NYS Parks and the Town of Ithaca on negotiations with the three landowners for the section between Buttermilk Falls State Park and Robert Treman State Park. State Parks is leading the negotiation with one property owner and the Town of Ithaca, with County support, is working with the other two landowners on acquisition. It appears possible that the trail corridor could be secured in the short term.

The implementation timeline for construction of the Middle and Southern Sections will most likely be determined by NYS Parks capital project budget timeline.

B: Ithaca- Dryden Trail

The Town of Ithaca's Rail Trail Task Force has made tremendous progress since forming in March of 2016. Highlights include:

- Community Design workshop – June, 2017.
- Letter of intent by DEC to allow the trail signed by Executive Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation Grant application submitted for 5.5 miles of trail – the “Varna Section” referenced in this application.
- Meeting with DOT and Barbara Lifton regarding a Rte 13 crossing.
- William George Agency approved an easement, and the trail between the Village of Freeville and the Village of Dryden was completed this fall.
- Of 48 total easements needed for 10.5 miles of the old rail bed, easements are in-hand for 27 parcels, pledged on an additional 10 parcels, with work remaining on just 11 of the original 48.

Additional information, including meeting minutes, is available on the Task Force's website:
<http://dryden.ny.us/board-commission-list/rail-trail-task-force/>

C: Extension of South Hill Recreation Way

- The County Planning Department in leading negotiations with NYSEG on a license agreement on behalf of the four towns through which the extension would pass.
- The Planning Department co-hosted an open house at Coddington Road Community Center in November 2016. More than 100 community members attended and provided input on the project.
- The Planning Department has been in discussion with staff of the four towns regarding a proposed process for trail planning and development.
- A website with information about the project has been developed:
<https://southhillrecway.wordpress.com/>.

The next step is for NYSEG to confirm agreement of the terms in the draft license agreement.

D: Cayuga Waterfront Trail, Gateway Trail, and Urban Connectors

- The Cayuga Waterfront Trail is complete.
- Crew Cove Overlook opened, supported by a grant from the Tompkins County Tourism Program.
- Signage, trailhead and other improvements continue.
- Bike Walk Tompkins secured a grant from NYSERDA, with assistance from the Planning Department, to develop a Blueprint for Better Bicycling for Ithaca and Tompkins County which will deal in part with on-street trail connections in the urban Ithaca area.
- The Gateway Trail still in the works.

E: Finger Lakes Trail (FLT)

- Several key easements and acquisitions have recently been completed, including two acquisitions in the White Church Valley:
 - a 200 acre acquisition by the Finger Lakes Land Trust securing a one mile trail section to Coddington Road, and
 - a 66 acre acquisition by the Finger Lakes Trail Conference, connecting Shindagin Hollow to White Church.
- The Land Trust is engaged in negotiations to secure part of the trail corridor at Rte 79. If successful, this will provide an opening to move ahead with developing a formal trailhead with interpretation where the Trail crosses Rte 79.

Sustaining the Network: Key Actions to sustain all priority trails

- The County Planning Department has committed to convening twice annual meetings of and Ad-Hoc trails group, Tompkins County Parks and Trails Network. The next meeting is January 18th.
- Trumansburg and the Town of Ulysses have expressed interest in developing a formal connection between the North end of the Trail in the Park and the Village, and a connection on State Park land from the top of the park to the bottom of the park is also being worked on as a possibility.
- IthacaTrails.org website launched April 2017, an initiative of the Parks and Trails Network. Liz Thomas and Todd Bitter provided leadership. The site will be maintained by the County Planning Department.