



# Long Island Greenway

Trails connect people to nature and communities to their neighbors. We're planning a bike and pedestrian multi-use path for more than seven million New Yorkers. The **Long Island Greenway** – a 175-mile extension to the Empire State Trail – will complete a truly statewide trail from Buffalo and Plattsburgh to Montauk. By providing new open space connecting state and local parks and transit connections, it will change how Long Islanders and all New Yorkers play, commute, and live healthy lives.

## Project Background

The Empire State Trail is a 750-mile, world class multi-use path from the Canadian borders near both Plattsburgh and Buffalo to Manhattan. Using \$200 million in State funding and \$100 million in private funding, 350 miles of new trail were built between 2017 and 2020 to link up 400 miles of existing trail. Now, the Empire State Trail provides an innovative and uniquely New York response to explosive interest in bicycling and walking-hiking for recreation, health and wellness and in driving local as well as regional economic development via enhanced tourism related opportunities. Because the Empire State Trail ends at the Battery in lower Manhattan, however, it leaves out the eight million residents of Kings (Brooklyn), Queens, Nassau, and Suffolk Counties.

## Project Goal

The goal of the Long Island Greenway is to extend the Empire State Trail across Long Island and to link together many existing trails, parks, and communities, as well as to provide a central spine for future trails, and we have closely coordinated with State Parks, Nassau and Suffolk Counties, elected officials, Long Island Power Authority, community groups, and other stakeholders.

## Feasibility Studies

In 2018, the Trust for Public Land mapped out a potential east-west multi-use trail across Long Island. The focus of our feasibility study was electric transmission line rights of way that could contain off-road bike paths, as is increasingly common across the country. In fact, the Long Island Power Authority allowed Suffolk County to build the 10-mile North Shore Bike Path on one of its rights of way, and that recently completed segment is a model for what can be done.

Building on these developments, we have identified a feasible route across Long Island, with input and support from Nassau and Suffolk Counties, key business leaders, and biking and hiking clubs. The proposed 175-mile route is 60% off-road. We also identified a potential first phase segment spanning Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

## Section 1 Design

In 2019, we conducted an in-depth existing conditions report and feasibility study of the 25-mile Section 1 segment, which is 75% off road and runs from Eisenhower Park through Bethpage State Park to Brentwood State Park. We undertook field assessments, identified trail access points and road crossings, developed a list of trail amenities, addressed maintenance issues, and identified potential funding sources. We also obtained feedback from extensive outreach to stakeholders, business leaders, government officials, and biking and hiking communities. The report was published in early 2020.

Design of Section 1 is under way. In December 2019 the project was awarded a \$600,000 grant from the State for pre-design studies and conceptual design (30%), including LIDAR overflights, surveys, and environmental studies, and we are in the field. In December 2021 we were awarded an additional \$500,000 state grant and in March 2022 were awarded \$2.5 million from U.S. Senators Schumer and Gillibrand, which will allow us to complete design (100%) and construction documents.

## Economic and Other Benefits

- A 2010 study found that Long Island's parks and open space provide quantifiable economic benefits worth over \$2.74 billion a year, including \$600 million spent in parks that alone generated \$27 million in tax revenue. These figures are even larger today.
- Nationwide, homeowners adjacent to trails see a 3% increase in home value.
- Statewide, the high-growth outdoor recreation industry represents \$42 billion in consumer spending, 313,000 direct jobs (4th highest sector), and \$3.6 billion in state and local tax revenue.
- Trails anchor economic revitalization and complement redevelopment areas such as the Nassau Hub.
- Trails provide significant health and recreational benefits.
- Section 1 alone will link 128,000 residents who live within a mile (31% non-white, 35% < 75% MHI) to 13 parks (including Eisenhower, Bethpage, Edgewood, Brentwood), 9 communities, and 36 schools and universities that are within a mile

## Schedule

- ✓ Overall feasibility study (2018)
- ✓ Section 1: feasibility study (2019)
- ❑ Outreach, community support (ongoing)
- ❑ Section 1: survey, LIDAR, and environmental studies; 30% design (2021-2023)
- ❑ Section 1: design and construction documents (2023-2024)
- ❑ Section 1: construction (2025-2026)



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Contact:

Mike Lieberman

Senior Program Manager, NY Community Trails

mike.lieberman@tpl.org