



Active Transportation Advisory Committee

Date: July 8, 2026

Start – End Time: 9:30 AM-10:35 AM

Location: 1 Park Place, Suite 101, Colonie, NY 12205

Facilitator: Ethan Townsend

Name	Title	Representing
Erica Schneider	Policy and Planning Manager	Parks & Trails New York
Tim Lane	Deputy Mayor	Village of Menands
Peter Comenzo	Senior Planner	Town of Rotterdam
Ivan Vamos	Emeritus Member	New York Bicycle Coalition Board
Scott Miller	Secretary	Saratoga PLAN Trails Committee
Linda von der Heide	Principal Planner	Rensselaer County
Andrew Kretschmar	Community Development Specialist	Rensselaer County
Valerie Deane	Senior Transportation Analyst	NYS Department of Transportation – Region 1
Ethan Warren	Senior Planner	CDTA
Charles Welge	Director, Public Health Planning & Education	Albany County Department of Health
Benjamin Luke	Public Health Educator	Albany County Department of Health
John Mitchell	Interested Resident	Public
Gail Mitchell	Interested Resident	Public
Ethan Townsend	Transportation Planner	Capital Region Transportation Council
Martin Hull	Director of Regional Planning	Capital Region Transportation Council
Adam McCarvill	Transportation Planner	Capital Region Transportation Council
Christie Shea	Administrative Specialist	Capital Region Transportation Council

YouTube Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1jBXagfsX5M>

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Welcome & Introductions

Ethan Townsend began the meeting at 9:30 AM. Those attending in person introduced themselves. Ethan introduced those attending virtually and reviewed the agenda.

2. Feature Presentation: The Economic Impact of the Empire State Trail – Erica Schneider, Parks & Trails New York

Erica Schnieder gave a presentation on Parks & Trail New York's (PTNY) recently released *The Economic Impact of the Empire State Trail* report. The report was developed by Labella Associates, in association with the Institute for Transportation Research and Education and Verity Engineering.

The purpose of this report is to quantify the impact the Empire State Trail system has on the economy of New York State. Highlights of the report include the \$1.87 billion overall economic impact, including \$206 million in annual local tax revenue, and \$640.9 million in annual employee earnings. These economic numbers are driven by the human numbers, which show that the trail system receives 9.75 million visits annually and supports nearly 10,000 jobs. The report found that every \$1 invested in the trail returns an average of \$5.43 in sales revenue, with off-road trail segments generating 4x the economic impact of on-road segments. The report also quantifies the environmental and human health benefits of the trail, and the economic impact of those benefits.

Erica was also able to prepare and share county level "profiles" for each of the Transportation Council's four counties. These county profiles include the trail milage, annual visits and economic output (among other statistics) for each of the counties.

There was discussion in the room about the impact on underserved communities, the impact of the new Livingston Avenue bridge, and home property values.

The full report can be found online on PTNY's website: [Economic Impact of the Empire State Trail 2026](#)

3. Discussion Items:

a. 2026 Walk, Bike, Roll New York Symposium

Ethan shared his experience at the 2026 Walk Bike, & Roll NY Symposium that took place June 2-3 in Tarrytown, NY. The keynote presentation of the symposium was about the Shredders MTB that started in Saratoga County, aiming to get children on bikes in schools and promoting active lifestyles through mountain biking clubs. There were interactive "Access for All" sessions led by NYSDOT staff which demonstrated how it feels to navigate road crossings with a variety of physical constraints including limited mobility and limited vision. Trail planning was a big emphasis of the symposium with several presentations on how to make safe and legible trails that serve communities for both recreation and transportation. The plenary panel discussed the growth of e-bike use, and how communities are grappling with managing their use, including federal legislation that has been proposed.

b. 2025 Trail Count Program Report

Ethan shared that the Transportation Council's 2025 Trail Count Program Report has been completed. In 2025 the transportation council successfully counted eight trails across the region.

The report can be found on the Transportation Council's website: [2025 Trail Count Program Report](#)

c. Hudson River Valley Greenway Conservancy Trail Grant Program

Ethan shared that the Hudson River Valley Greenway (HRVG) has opened its summer 2026 Conservancy Trail Grant Program. The 50/50 matching grants can be up to \$250,000 for trail construction. This round of the grant program is placing specific emphasis on connections to the Empire State Trail. The application window for this grant opportunity is July 6 – August 7, 2026. The next grant window is anticipated in January or February 2027.

For more information, visit HRVG's grants webpage: [Grants & Funding | HRVG](#)

d. Status of Planning Initiatives

Ethan provided an update on the Transportation Council's various planning initiatives.

4. Participant Updates

Scott Miller shared that the Freeman's Bridge to Ballston Lake trail feasibility study had its kickoff meeting, with the engineering Verity Engineering. He also shared that at a recent public meeting for a trail in Halfmoon he heard NYSDOT would not be open to having a trail run along I-87 in this area.

Aimee McKane asked about what the process would be to start a process to develop complete streets starting with Route 9 in the Town of Colonie. Ethan explained the various routes the Town could engage the Transportation Council with to develop a plan if the Town desired, either through a linkage study or a technical assistance project.

John Mitchell gave an update about his effort to improve bike and pedestrian access and safety along Route 146 in Mechanicville.

5. Upcoming ATAC Meetings: October 21, 2026

Meeting ended at 10:35 AM.