

## WELCOME TO THE RAILROAD RUN TRAIL!

The flat, .5 mile, Railroad Run Trail is the perfect place for a first letterboxing experience for young children and families. Kids can walk or ride this easy trail in the heart of Saratoga Springs.

With stone dust on one side and asphalt on the other, the trail is used for walking, bicycling, rollerblading and skateboarding, and connects West Circular Street to Congress Avenue. In June of 2013, after 10 years of planning, the trail was extended south across Route 50, and a crosswalk and traffic light were installed, linking Railroad Run to the Saratoga Spa State Park for pedestrians, wheelchairs, and bicyclists. Plans are to eventually connect the trail to the Zim Smith Trail, which runs through Malta, Round Lake, Ballston, Clifton Park, and Halfmoon.

### What is Letterboxing?

Letterboxing is an old English tradition dating back to 1854 where people began leaving a self-addressed post card or note in a jar, hoping for them to be returned by mail by the next visitor. Today we've adapted this English tradition and put it to use on Saratoga PLAN's nature preserves and trails. Each preserve has a letterbox ranging in difficulty for participants and gives each type of adventurer an exciting opportunity to explore our preserves and have fun while doing so. When you find the letterbox, feel free to take a postcard, and mail it back to us with your comments about your journey. You can also use the stamp from within the letterbox and mark your PLAN Preserve Passport on the appropriate page (Passports are available at Saratoga PLAN's office in Saratoga Springs, or an online version can be downloaded at [www.saratogaplan.org](http://www.saratogaplan.org)). Once you have collected at least five stamps (or listed three species observed during five visits) stop by PLAN's offices for a FREE Saratoga PLAN t-shirt!

**We hope you enjoy your letterboxing experience on this trail!**  
**Interspersed within the clues *in italics* are observations and questions to enhance your trail experience.**

### LETTERBOX CLUES FOR RAILROAD RUN

Whether you're walking, running, riding or skipping:

1. **Start your journey at the trail head off West Circular Street, where you find the Railroad Run historical sign.**

*The Railroad Run Trail follows a part of the D&H railway track, built in 1862, that ran between Schenectady and Saratoga Springs. The train was important because it brought many visitors to Saratoga Springs, which helped the city grow.*

2. **As you journey down the flat, paved trail that follows the old railroad tracks, look for trees and flowers that have been planted along the path.**

*Depending on the time of year, you'll see different animals and plants too. Can you identify at least two different types of birds, 2 different trees and 2 different plants that grow along the trail?*

3. **The trail continues after crossing New Street.**
4. **Follow the trail to a small YMCA sign on your right that welcomes you to the bike trail.**

*Look to your left to see a tall, dead tree covered with holes made by birds looking for food. What type of food do you think a bird could find inside a tree?*

5. **Pass the YMCA on your right.**

*As you walk past the YMCA, notice a fallen pine tree woven in among the other tree trunks on your left. Can you guess what might have caused this tree to fall?*

6. **The trail will curve to the left, and you will notice that there are no trees on the left side of the trail for a short distance.**
7. **Before you reach the next curve in the trail, you should see three large trees on the left, close to the edge of the trail.**
8. **Across from these three trees, on the right side of the trail, look for part of an old decaying stump lying on its side. Can you see a round hole that looks almost like a window in the stump?**

*What do you think could have caused this perfectly round hole in the tree stump?*

9. **Investigate the stump closer to find the letterbox!**

### GREAT WORK!

We hope you enjoyed your letterboxing adventure at the Railroad Run Trail! The trail continues across Ballston Avenue (Route 50) and into the Saratoga Spa State Park. You can continue your adventure into the park if you'd like, or turn around and head back to the beginning of the trail. Please make sure to return the letterbox as you found it before leaving.

**Thank you!**

*- Your Friends at Saratoga PLAN*

The mission of Saratoga PLAN is to preserve the rural character, natural habitats and scenic beauty of Saratoga County so that these irreplaceable assets are accessible to all and survive for future generations. To learn more, please visit us at [www.saratogaplan.org](http://www.saratogaplan.org).