

# Countywide Trails Initiative Notes

Tuesday, May 20, 2025, 4:00 pm

50 W. High Street, Ballston Spa, NY 12020

## Chairman's Remarks

## Old Business

Champlain Canalway Trail (CCT). The Friends of the Champlain Canalway Trail held its annual Supervisors and Mayors Gathering on May 13th at the Champlain Gateway Visitor Center in Schuylerville. This is the first meeting since the pandemic. About 30 people from Saratoga and Washington counties attended. Sessions on tourism, spin-off business, grant opportunities, off-road possibilities, goals for enhancing the Trail and associated amenities as well as users stories were shared.

Saratoga County is currently focused on extending the Zim Smith trail to Saratoga State Park. This effort will absorb its resources for about the next five years. As the Zim Smith completed extension draws near, the County plans on shifting efforts towards improving the Champlain Canal Trail which includes moving sections off road, including completion of the Halfmoon to Mechanicville portion.

It was suggested that the upcoming 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battles of Saratoga (2027) could be an opportunity for securing funding for trail development in the Towns of Stillwater and Saratoga.

NYS DOT Saratoga I-87 trail crossing. Matt DeSimone reports initial review by the regional manager determined that the Route 29 crossing should be where to focus for improvements and the best near-term solution. A lane restriping (and potential abnormal lining) would make room for larger shoulders for a bike path or multiuse trail passage under I-87, if a retaining wall under the bridge is coordinated for additional room. This could take place when this section of Lake Avenue is scheduled for repaving. The surface rating is currently "fair" or a 6/10, with "10" being in "Excellent" condition. A distant future (decades) opportunity may occur if the culvert for Spring Run is rebuilt – current DEC intentions are for converting larger culverts to bridge culverts where feasible – a trail crossing might be possible. This plan is consistent with the Saratoga Springs Greenbelt plan. See Appendix C for area maps.

Erie - Zim connection (formerly Ballston- Glenville connection). Working group assembled, Steve Strichman acting as chairman. It has met once and toured proposed route. Land donation to Mohawk- Hudson Land Conservancy (MHLC) in Alplaus could eliminate about a mile of on road trail. Still targeting 2025 feasibility study – need Ballston and Clifton Park to

apply for Saratoga County trail grant program. See Appendix B for full status report and a map of the proposed route.

Zim Smith extension: Environmental assessment is underway for entire extension from Oak Street to Saratoga Spa Park

Vision Zero. Ted Orosz (Saratoga Springs complete streets advisory committee) reports that consultants have recommended a 25 MPH speed limit in the city as well as intersection improvements to improve pedestrian safety. It appears at this time that the 25 MPH speed limit will be adopted.

## **New Business**

Long Path: Andy Garrison, the Volunteer Long Path Trail Committee Chair of the New York/New Jersey Trail Conference (NYNJTC)) reported on extending the Long Path hiking trail (currently NYC to Thacher park) as an off road routing option from Rotterdam Junction to Northville that would utilize the proposed EZ connector and Zim Smith Extension to Milton. Then using preserves and trails in the Kayderosseras valley as well as state forest parcels (old camp Boyhaven, Middle Grove state forest) to get to the Lake Desolation area and extensive state forest lands. The existing nominal LP route north of the Mohawk River now is mostly on road. See Appendix D for maps and links to NYNJ long path website.

## **Story time**

Moreau State Park: Phil Corney, Regional Trails Manager for NYS OPRHP reports that he is undergoing planning & coordination efforts amongst the OPRHP Team for an expired 2002 MOU agreement between OPRHP(Moreau Lake SP) & National Grid for 12 trail crossings at Moreau Lake State Park that go through power line ROW corridors. With the addition of the Big Bend and other parcels expanding the park since the original agreement (2002), there is a need for additional trail crossings and adjustments to the original ones set forth in 2002. Additionally, 3 trail crossings on the Saratoga County Forest Land to the East of Moreau Lake are needed to complete a regional trail connection between the Mud Pond area of the park and the Big Bend area of the park. This connection is essential towards the overall Palmertown Trail Initiative. OPRHP is fully supportive of the trail connection proposed across Potter Rd & Spier Falls Rd between the County Forest Land and Mud Pond.

Friends of Saratoga Horse Trails (Friends) provided materials and labor for a hitching post in Big Bend by the riverside. The materials were carted in by NYS Parks and helped with the install.

County Forest/Moreau: A joint effort between the Friends of Saratoga Horse Trails and Saratoga County resulted in the installation of a kiosk, hitching post and mounting block in the Redmond Rd parking lot in Moreau County Forest. The County provided the kiosk,

hitching post material and manpower while Friends provided plans and materials for the mounting block and hitching posts. Friends are really appreciative of the county support. Friends also installed some arrow signage along the trails to help guide riders to the Big Bend trails. Friends are waiting on National Grid ROW issues (above) to be resolved before public maps are created.

2025 County trails grants: Saratoga County has announced the 2025 trails grant program. Grants up to \$10k each with equal matching. Total awards are limited to \$100k. Applications need to be made through a municipality and the application due date is July 11, 2025.

## Appendix A: Attendees:

Corney, Phillip	NYS OPRHP, Moreau	Rhillip.Corney@parks.ny.gov
DeSimone, Matthew	NYS DOT, region 2, trail coordinator	matthew.desimone@dot.ny.gov
Davies, Rob	Director, Saratoga PLAN	robertd@saratogaplan.org
Dietershagen, Paul	ADK Mt. Club, Saratoga - Glens Falls Chapter	d2hagen@yahoo.com
Filkins, Kayleigh	WWPP	kayliegh@wiltonpreserve.org
Fitzgerald, William	NY DOT	william.fitzgerald@dot.ny.gov
Garrison, Andy	NYNJTC –long path	srtmaintaner@gmail.com
Laloe, Anna	Saratoga Trails Alliance	annaelizabethlaloe@gmail.com
Herman, Bill	Chair, Town of Halfmoon Trail and Open Space Committee, PLAN board, CWT chairman	wherman1@nycap.rr.com
Lambert, Kim	Saratoga county planning	Klambert@saratogacountyny.gov
Miller, Scott	CWT secretary, PLAN advisory Council	millerrs@mindspring.com
Orosz, Ted	Saratoga Springs, Complete Streetsw	tedvorosz@gmail.com
Osborn, Bella	Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park Outreach Coordinator	bella@wiltonpreserve.org
Riper, Ryan	Town of Wilton, Dir of Planning	rriper@townofwilton.com
Roosa, Magnolia	PLAN Stewardship coordinator	magnolia@saratogaplan.org
Way, Sallie	Friends of Saratoga Horse Trails	salway@nycap.rr.com
Williams, Jeff	Saratoga county Planning	jwilliams@saratogacountyny.gov
Woodin, Dave	Town of Waterford, director of planning, Champlain Canalway liaison	woodind@town.waterford.ny.us

## **Appendix B: Status report EZ connector**

From: Steven Strichman – Schenectady Metroplex

Date: May 16, 2025

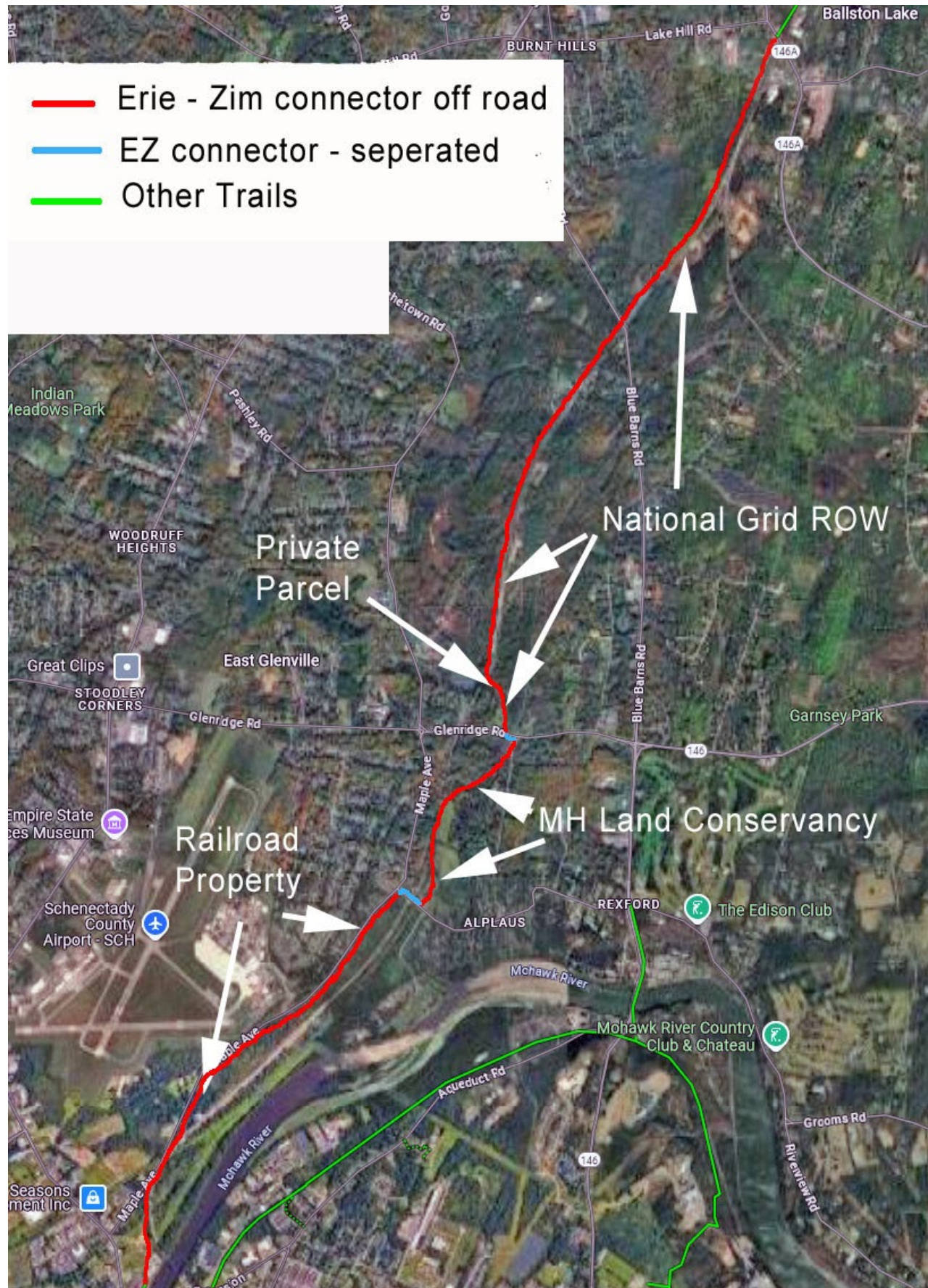
Re: Erie/Zim Connector – (Erie to Veteran's Trail Component)

The Erie/Zim Connection Committee met on March 17<sup>th</sup> in Glenville, with representatives from Saratoga and Schenectady Counties and Clifton Park, Ballston, Charlton, Glenville, and Metroplex.

The route being investigated would start at the Freemans Bridge boat launch in Glenville, which already connects to the Empire State/Erie Canal Trail. It would parallel Maple Avenue north, to Alplaus Avenue East, then north, either along Bruce Drive or through a newly acquired Mohawk Valley Land Conservancy Preserve to Glenridge Road. Once Glenridge Road is crossed, the trail would continue north, into Saratoga County along the National Grid right-of-way until it connects to the existing Town of Ballston Veteran's Trail in Ballston Lake. Separately, the Town of Ballston is investigating extending the Veteran's Trail northward to the Zim Smith Trail in the Village of Ballston Spa.

On May 6<sup>th</sup>, the committee met again for a van tour of the route. We are pursuing local funding from various stakeholders for an engineering feasibility study to be undertaken in the near future, estimated to be in the \$30-\$40K range.

I'm scheduling another meeting with Jason Kemper and Supervisors Connolly and Grasso to discuss funding, and travel the route again, which Supervisors Connolly and Grasso were unable to attend the first time.



## Appendix C: DOT project area for I-87 crossing in Saratoga Springs.



Figure C 1: DOT preferred options overlay on SS greenbelt plan

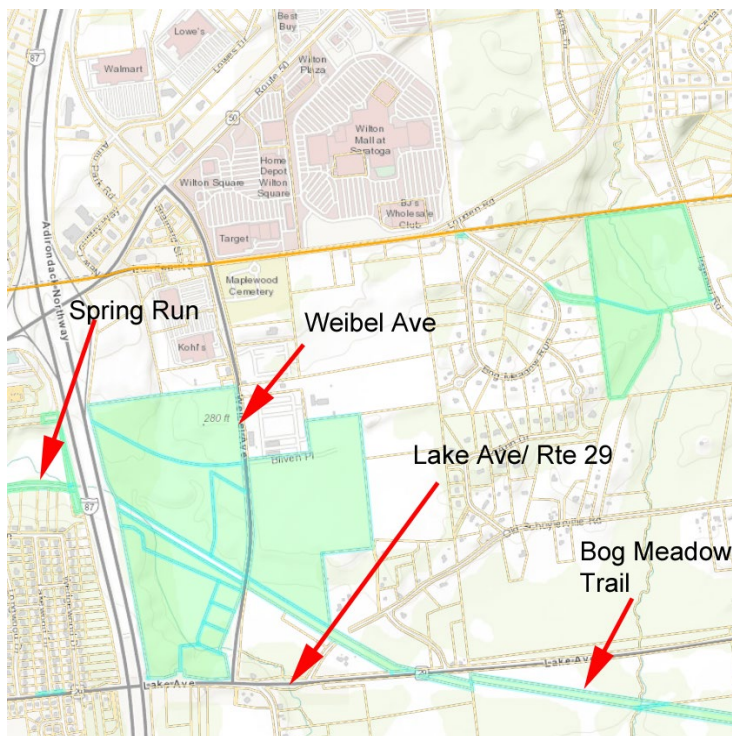
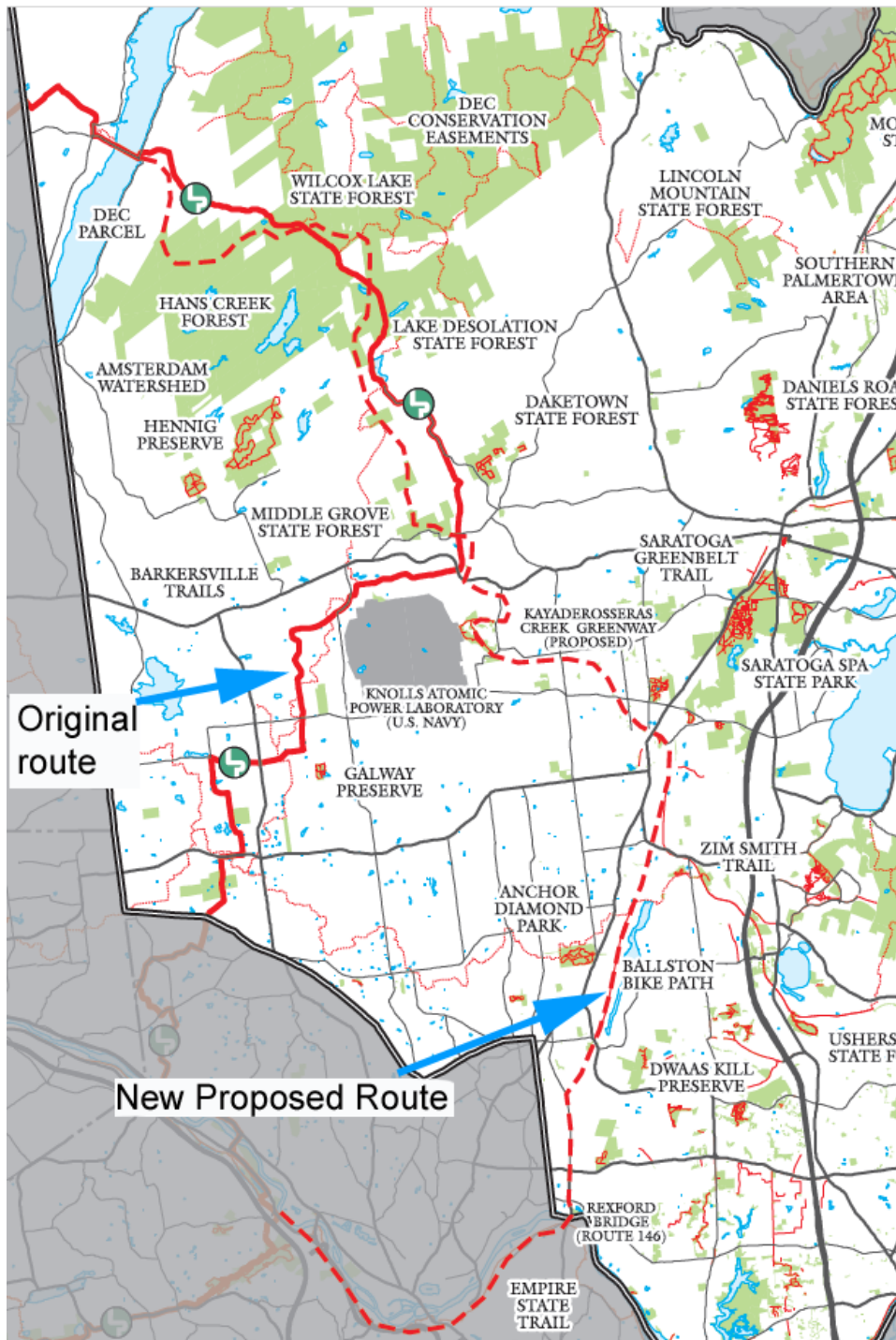


Figure C 2: Study area showing City owned parcels

## Appendix D: Long Path in Saratoga County



Links to the Long path Website, including overall and section maps.

[Long Path in NY & NJ](#) or

<https://nynjtc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=7788c124680e4496b8ddda2bc71e8231&center=-74.2396;42.0535&level=8>

## Appendix E: Moreau Lake State Park, County forest lands and National Grid ROW

