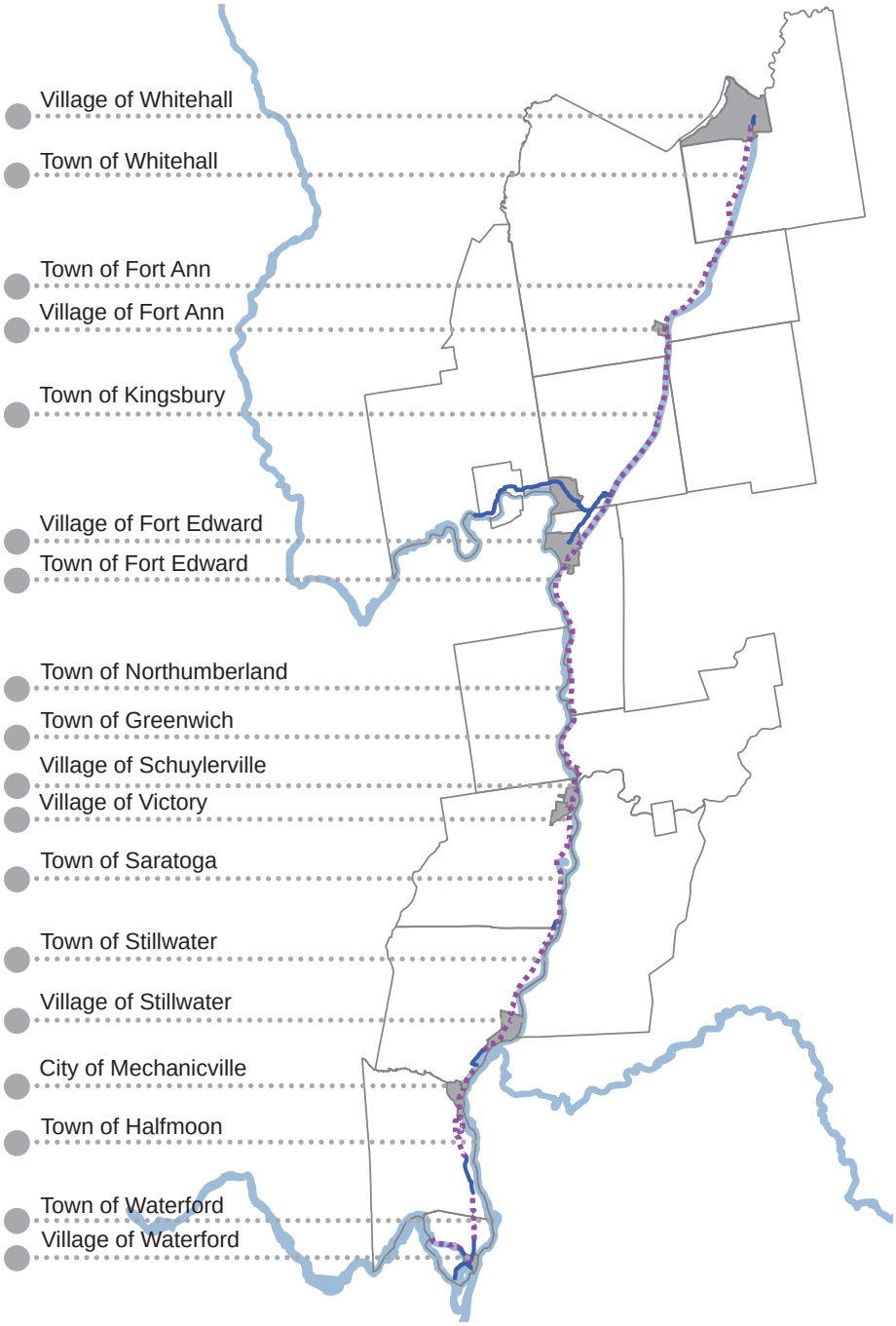
Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Waterford to Whitehall



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The Champlain Canalway Trail Working Group (Working Group) is a volunteer, ad hoc partnership that includes local and regional canal and trail groups, public agencies, and park and preservation organizations. The Working Group benefits from the existing network of the Canalway Trail Association of New York, a statewide, all-volunteer organization of trail owners and managers formed to assist localities to develop, manage, and maintain the Canalway Trail. The Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan (Action Plan) was funded by a grant from the National Park Service Challenge Cost Share Program, administered by the Rails to Trails Conservancy. The Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program of the National Park Service provided outreach and planning assistance to the Working Group.

The following organizations contributed to the Action Plan:

Agricultural Stewardship Association
Canalway Trails Association New York
Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor
Feeder Canal Alliance
Hudson Crossing Park, INC
Hudson River Valley Greenway
Lakes to Locks Passage
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Parks and Trails New York
Rogers Island Heritage Development Alliance
Saratoga County Snowmobile Association
Saratoga National Historical Park
Saratoga PLAN
Town of Halfmoon
Washington County Association of Snowmobile Clubs

In addition, the Action Plan was developed with input and support from communities in Saratoga, Washington and Warren counties.

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Hudson River

We Have a Vision

… for an attractive and continuous Champlain Canalway Trail route from Waterford to Whitehall, that utilizes historic towpaths, Champlain Canal shoreline, existing local and regional trails, on-street bicycle routes and links to regional and community attractions.

Parts of this vision have been developed through state and local plans and projects over several years. Some communities already have trail sections completed or underway, or are cultivating local attractions. Nearly 200 local residents came together in a series of public workshops from 2008 to 2010 to help refine the vision for the Champlain Canalway Trail. People talked, viewed pictures, slideshows, maps and flipcharts, listened to programs about bicycle and heritage tourism, and explored alternatives from a variety of viewpoints. A few clear goals emerged:

- Establish trails, linear parks, bike routes and water trails that connect along the Champlain Canal corridor. These build upon historic towpaths, trails, portions of the present-day canal, abandoned railroad corridors and low-traffic roads.

- Link key historic and cultural sites and features along the way.

- Provide downtown and neighborhood trail connections in historic river and canal communities. Bring trail benefits to places where people live and businesses operate.

- Establish links with a regional network of trails. These include the Crescent Trail (Mohawk River), Glens Falls Feeder Canal Trail, Warren County Bikeway, the Zim Smith Trail, Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail, Erie Canalway Trail, regional snowmobile trails, on-road bicycle touring routes, and water trails.

- Communicate and strengthen a corridor-wide identity linking historic, recreational and economic resources, and help local communities to capture their benefits.

- Coordinate local action. Encourage and support local projects by sharing the resources and technical assistance needed to get the job done.

1916 Junction Lock at Fort Edward

Lock 12 in Whitehall

A History of Movement

The Champlain Canalway Trail weaves through a long and beautiful valley from Lake Champlain to the Hudson River Valley. It picks up stories along the way, and ties them together.

To Native Americans, the river and carry route between the Hudson River and Lake Champlain was a pathway for trade, settlement and conflict for centuries before Europeans arrived. As the main travel corridor between New York and Canada, the long valley also proved to be of pivotal importance during the French and Indian War, the American Revolution and the War of 1812. Over time these travel routes were supplemented by wagon roads. The Champlain Canal opened in 1822, establishing the first all-water route through the valley and a direct link between New York and Montreal.

New York's canal system was enlarged several times to accommodate larger vessels and increased traffic. The latest version of the Champlain Canal, constructed between 1905 and 1915, had far larger locks and channels than its predecessors. It was built for self-propelled vessels and followed a slightly different route utilizing a modified channel in the Hudson River from Waterford to Fort Edward and a parallel land-cut from there north to Whitehall.

Railroads and trolleys sprang up alongside and began operating year-round, competing with the seasonal canal. The invention of the automobile and truck spurred road improvements, and eventually highways gained dominance over both the canal and railroads.

The Champlain Canalway Trail builds upon all of these stories, and many others that are still written in the landscapes and communities of the Champlain Canal corridor. It follows their footsteps and wheel tracks.

Old Lock 16 in Fort Ann

Purpose and Development of this Action Plan

First, this Action Plan conveys a vision for the Champlain Canalway Trail corridor. Several communities are already bringing parts of this vision to life. Some have already completed

Labyrinth at Hudson Crossing Park

sections of trail along historic canal or railroad routes, or have prepared formal plans to build them. Many communities are home to historic sites, parks and other attractions that can be better served by trails linking them to each other and to other parts of the community. This Action Plan helps unify these trails within a single vision.

Second, this Action Plan offers recommendations to help support and coordinate regional as well as community-based efforts, showing how you, your business and your community can get involved. The Action Plan provides some general recommendations that apply corridor-wide. It also breaks the corridor into segments within each community, each with its own recommendations. This helps keep trail projects to a manageable scale that is practical to implement at the local level.

This Action Plan grew from the informal Champlain Canalway Trail Working Group, which convened in 2008 to find ways to complete the Champlain Canalway Trail. The initial conveners, Lakes to Locks Passage and the Town of Halfmoon, applied for and received assistance from the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA). RTCA helped convene local and regional canal and trail groups, public agencies, and town and county park and preservation organizations. The Working Group quickly began meeting with local communities and learning from dozens of maps and planning reports. To gather additional ideas and information, the group convened two public workshops in 2008 -2009. In 2009 and 2010, they sponsored two Bicycles Bring Business workshops to explore how other New York communities, notably those along the Canalway Trail system, are reaping economic benefits of bicycle tourism and trails.

The Working Group benefits from the Canalway Trails Association New York (CTANY), a statewide, all-volunteer network of trail managers and supporters formed to help localities develop, manage and maintain the Canalway Trail. CTANY works in partnership with the NYS Canal Corporation, as well as with municipal, county, and state officials who build, manage and maintain trail segments.

Bike Route 9 in the Town of Saratoga

Historic Dix Bridge

Trail Benefits

In addition to providing recreational opportunities, the Champlain Canalway Trail will provide a variety of other benefits to our communities, including economic, public health and transportation benefits. It can also have a positive effect on community pride and identity. Taken as a whole, the evidence about the benefits of trails and greenways is compelling, especially given the modest level of public investment needed compared to other undertakings with similar community goals.

Economic Benefits: The economic effects of trails and greenways are generally viewed in two ways. The first is the impact of expenditures by trail users, both direct and indirect; the second is the impact of trails upon property values near the trail.

Over the past two decades, many studies from all around the country have shown that day-users of trails spend between $1 to over $30 per visit. Overnight and multi-day trail users spend significantly more, including food, lodging and other items. Depending upon the locality, this can total $100 to $300 per day.

An economic impact study of the Erie Canalway Trail was conducted by Eric Mower and Associates in 2007. The study examined the results of previous trail traffic studies conducted at different locations along the Canalway Trail, and also examined daily expenditures by trail users. By combining the trail usage rates with the average daily expenditure per trail user (averaging $11.50 per day), the study estimated the annual revenue generated by Canalway Trail users statewide to be between $27 million and $28 million.

Local Business Support of Snowmobilers

Snowmobiling is a popular activity in the Champlain Canalway Trail corridor, and it is an important source of business income. New York has more than 10,000 miles of snowmobile trails which host an estimated 70% of the state's snowmobile activity. The NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation estimated the total economic impact of snowmobiling during the 1996-97season to be $476.2 million. By 2003, the snowmobiling industry was estimated to be contributing about $850 million statewide, including $217 million in direct expenditures.

When new trails are proposed, neighboring property owners often express understandable concern that their property values might be negatively impacted. This is an important issue that has also been studied by many around the country. Findings from these studies have been fairly consistent, that proximity to

Bikers along the Erie Canal

trails and greenways tend to bolster values of nearby property, and also make them easier to sell. A study of communities along the Minuteman Trail in Massachusetts found that homes along the trail sold for a higher percentage of the asking price and sold faster than homes in the same towns that were farther away from the trail. A survey by the National Association of Homebuilders in 2000 took a different approach, asking prospective buyers what local amenities could influence them in their purchase of a new home. Proximity of greenway trails was listed by 36% of respondents, exceeded only by highway access.

Health Benefits: The Champlain Canalway Trail can play an integral role in improving the health and well being of the people living in the corridor by a providing close-to-home place for physical activity. Research by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has shown that providing access to places for physical activity, such as trails, increases the level of physical activity in a community. Trails and greenways provide people of all ages with attractive, safe, accessible and low-cost places to walk, hike, jog, bicycle or in-line skate. And trails help people incorporate exercise into their daily routines by connecting them to places where they want or need to go. According to the American Heart Association, even a moderate walk can help a 150-pound person burn 240 calories per hour. The American Heart Association and the American College of Sports Medicine recommend 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise (a brisk walk) five times per week.

Transportation / Livability Benefits: Greenways and trails often function as transportation corridors, and they can be a crucial element in a seamless local or regional multimodal transportation system. The ability to avoid streets and highways, and travel though natural areas on foot or by other non-motorized means, is a large factor in a community's overall "livability." In addition, many boaters traveling along the NYS Canal system carry bikes for landside transportation when they are docked. The Champlain Canalway Trail will enhance the non-motorized transportation facilities available to boaters.

Bicyclists along Bunker Hill Road

Conservation and Environmental Benefits: Trail and greenway corridors can help preserve natural landscapes, and can also provide "green" corridors for various plant and animal communities, linking otherwise fragmented habitats. They can help protect the quality of wetland areas by providing vegetated buffers, and trees within the trail corridor can help improve air quality, especially in developed areas. In addition, trails can help bring people closer to the natural world with minimal environmental impact.

Old Lock Remnant

Historic Preservation and Community Identity: The Champlain Canalway Trail will help highlight and preserve a historically significant transportation corridor – the Old Champlain Canal. Many communities along New York's Canalway Trail corridor (and elsewhere) have found that their trails become a source of community identity and pride. Trails that link or provide access to historic and cultural resources can help a community understand and better appreciate its own distinctive character. By "packaging" interesting places together, these trails may also attract visitors interested in seeking a variety of historic and recreational experiences. The Champlain Canalway corridor is rich in variety, ranging from individual canal locks and sections of waterways to the Saratoga National Historical Park, along with other important parks, historic sites and downtown areas.

The Champlain Canalway Trail in Context

The Champlain Canalway Trail is one of four in New York State's Canalway Trail system, and it is the second longest. The other Canalway Trails are the Erie (365 mi), Oswego (37 mi) and Cayuga-Seneca (22mi). When completed, the Champlain Canalway Trail will extend 62 miles between Whitehall and Waterford, plus an additional 9 miles along the connecting Glens Falls Feeder Canal Trail. Together, these form a major connective spine through the region.

Stillwater Canalway Tralil

When completed, New York's Canalway Trail system will extend over 524 miles, making it one of the nation's longest continuous recreational trail systems. This vision was promoted by the "NYS Canal Recreationway Plan," which was formally adopted by the New York State Canal Recreationway Commission in 1995. The following year, the "Saratoga County Heritage Trails Handbook for Action" portrayed a county-wide vision for trails, which included the Champlain Canalway Trail. In Warren and Washington Counties, the Canal Corporation began doing its part by working with the local community to complete the Glens Falls Feeder Canal Trail.

The potential for establishing a trail through the Champlain Canal corridor was evaluated in a set of studies from 2000 to 2003, which included three "Canalway Trail Gap Assessment" reports and the "Saratoga County, NY Champlain Canal Trail Concept Plan." Since then, elements of the Champlain Canalway Trail

Waterfront in Waterford

have also been reflected in a variety of transportation plans and Local Waterfront Revitalization Plans undertaken by individual communities. It has also been embraced by regional plans such as the Lakes to Locks Passage Scenic Byway, and the New York State Trails Plan.

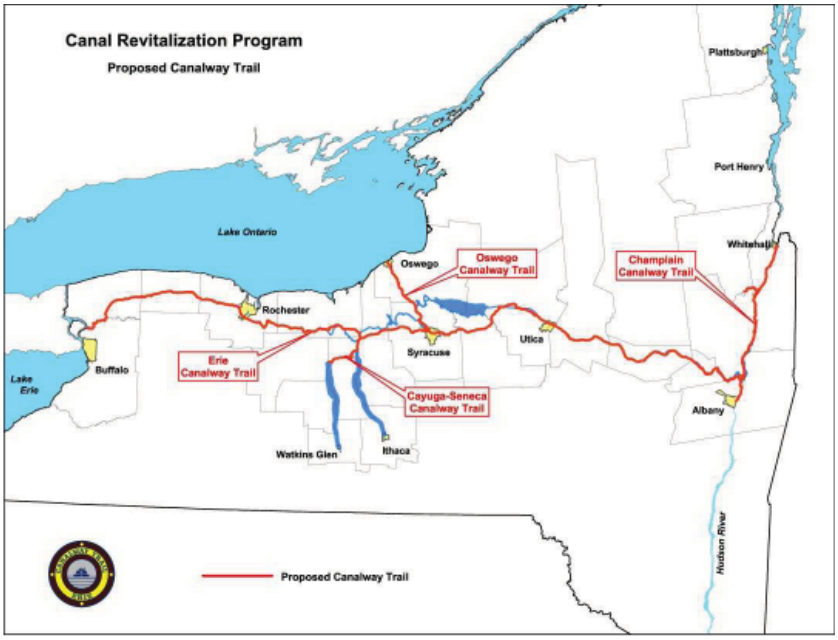
This Action Plan builds upon these previous studies and plans. A general goal is to keep the Champlain Canalway Trail consistent with the design standards of the rest of New York's Canalway Trail system. This means placing the trail off of roads and along historic towpaths and abandoned railroad corridors to the greatest extent possible. It also means respecting private property rights where these historic routes are not in public ownership but are owned by private companies or individuals. A snapshot of the Trail's status in 2010 is shown in the accompanying table.

"Vital Signs" of the Champlain Canalway Trail

Trail Status in 2010	Miles	Percent of Total
Champlain Canalway Trail completed and in use	8	11%
Glens Falls Feeder Canal Trail completed and in use	9	13%
Trail planned or in construction	14	20%
Trail route defined but not pieced together	14	20%
Trail route undefined	26	37%
Total Length	**71**	**100%**

Fort Edward Lock Tumble Door

Dix Bridge Linking Saratoga/Washington Counties



Local and regional efforts to complete and promote the Champlain Canalway Trail can benefit from coordination with other trail and bikeways systems that either overlap parts of the Champlain Canal corridor, or provide outward linkages. Some of these are described below.

Erie Canalway Trail: The NYS Canal Corporation is working with NYS Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation, the nonprofit Parks and Trails New York and many others to establish the NYS Canalway Trail system all across the state. Over three-fourths of the Erie Canalway Trail's 365 miles are now built and complete. An annual bicycle event, *Cycling the Erie Canal*, travels the trail end-to-end each year, and the trail is becoming a national and international destination. The Champlain and Erie Canalway Trails connect with each other at Waterford / Cohoes.

NYS Bike Route 9: The New York State Department of Transportation maintains three long-distance, on-road bicycle routes for experienced cyclists. Bike Route 9 extends 340 miles from New York City to Montreal and traverses the Champlain Canal corridor. Within the Champlain Canal corridor, Bike Route 9 follows US Route 4 and parts of State Routes 32 and 22. In addition to being an important bicycling route in its own right, Bike Route 9 can provide on-road linkages between trail sections in areas where an off-road trail route has not been established or is not feasible.

Joggers along the Canal

Lake Champlain Bikeways: A network of bicycle routes more than 1,300 miles long winds through the Lake Champlain Valley of

Old Champlain Canal Locks in Fort Ann

New York, Vermont and Quebec. The on-road network includes 35 loops and tours ranging from 10 to 60 miles in length, in addition to a 363-mile principal route around the entire Lake and along the Richelieu River to Chambly, Quebec. The routes are based on a rich array of natural, cultural and historic themes, and mostly follow quiet back roads highlighting the Valley's incomparable scenery. The southern end of the Champlain Bikeways system connects to the Champlain Canalway Trail at Whitehall.

Hudson River Valley Greenway: A major goal of New York State's Hudson River Valley Greenway is to help communities establish a system of trails along the Hudson River from the northern borders of Saratoga and Washington Counties to Manhattan. There are two main trail components: a system of land trails along both sides of the Hudson River, and a water trail for paddling and boating. NYS Bike Route 9 is an important component of the land trail system. The Hudson River Greenway overlaps the Champlain Canalway Trail corridor, and also provides potential linkages southward along the Hudson River.

Fort Edward Train Station

Glens Falls Feeder Canal Trail: This 9-mile walking and biking trail extends from Glens Falls to Fort Edward along the historic Glens Falls Feeder Canal. Although technically separate from the Champlain Canalway Trail, it is managed by the NYS Canal Corporation in partnership with the Feeder Canal Alliance - - and it also provides an important trail linkage to the City of Glens Falls and other major resources and destinations. For purposes of this Action Plan, it is treated as a functional part of the Champlain Canalway Trail.

Warren County Bikeway: The Warren County Bikeway extends 9.5 miles from Lake George Village to downtown Glens Falls, where it connects to the Glens Falls Feeder Canal Trail. Most of the Warren County Bikeway is a paved, off-road trail for non-motorized use. Some sections of the route share the shoulder of local roads.

Snowmobilers on Champlain Canal

Snowmobile Trails: A network of active snowmobile trails extends throughout Washington and Saratoga counties. The Washington County Association of Snowmobile Clubs has 9 member clubs who together maintain over 60 miles of groomed trails. The Saratoga County Association of Snowmobile Clubs is comprised of 6 clubs who maintain more than 180 miles of groomed trails. Sections of the Champlain Canalway Trail are important components of these trail systems, and the Dix Bridge will provide an important off-road trail connection between the snowmobile trail systems in Saratoga and Washington counties.

Canalway Trail Sign in Fort Ann

Saratoga County Trails: The Champlain Canalway Trail is a major component of the Saratoga County Trail System envisioned in Saratoga County's Green Infrastructure Plan. It will connect to the Zim Smith Trail, in Mechanicville, and five towns and two villages as well as the Luther Forest Technology Campus. The southern terminus of the Canalway connects to the Vischer Ferry Road Trail and other town and city trail systems in Halfmoon, Ballston, Stillwater, Saratoga and Malta already planned to connect to the two trail systems that make up the beginning of the county-wide trail.

Short Term Recommendations
(1-3 years)

- Plan, design and build new Champlain Canalway Trail segments where feasible.
- Engage local communities by promoting the trail through local and regional events. The Canal Splash, the Tour de Farm and triathlons are examples of events that can help promote trails and trail-related benefits. Events like National Trails Day and the Canal Clean Sweep can help gain publicity and promote volunteer stewardship.
- Work with touring businesses, local businesses, and cycle groups to create a working prototype cycle tour to jump-start tourism-based economic development and boost awareness.
- Expand the role of the Canalway Trails Association of NY (CTANY) as a regional coordinating body to continue supporting local projects, such as events and promotions, trail construction and linkages to other regional trails.
- Utilize Champlain Canalway Trail signage, publications and the web to enhance visibility. Develop interpretive signage at appropriate locations based on the distinctive history, communities and resources that distinguish the Champlain Canal corridor. Draw on the strength by association with the Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership, Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, and NYS Canal Corporation and Lakes To Locks Passage.
- Identify and sign lesser traveled on-street routes to incorporate

Built Canalway Trail in Town of Saratoga

Rebuilt Clay Hill Bridge in Fort Ann

as part of the Champlain Canalway Trail route.

- Explore new business opportunities through a next generation of *Bicycles Bring Business* workshops and other business growth programs.

Longer Term Recommendations
(3-10 years)

- Plan, design and build new Champlain Canalway Trail segments where feasible.

- Enhance NYS Bike Route 9 through the entire corridor, as an on-road bicycle transportation route. Work with NYS Department of Transportation (DOT) to promote bicycle and pedestrian enhancements through the entire corridor.

- Market the trail more broadly using on-line tools such as Google maps, the Lakes to Locks Passage Geotourism Initiative and the Parks and Trails New York (PTNY) Trail Finder website. Produce, and post online, recommended trail tours or multi-day tourism itineraries for various types of trail users.

- Boost the local business base by expanding services for trail and canal users. The historic building stock of many communities offers distinctive appeal for adaptive re-use.

- Include key elements of Canalway Trail and related local projects into major plans, such as the NYS Trails Plan, and state and regional Transportation Improvement Plans (TIP).

- Explore establishment of additional specialty attraction, such as a birding theme trail.

- Establish a clear Canalway Trail “gateway” presence in key communities. Gateway features may include:
  - Directional signage and kiosks guiding residents and visitors to nearby trail sections;
  - Murals and other public art;
  - Enhanced physical and thematic linkages between business districts and the trail;
  - Interpretive signage and thematic mileage markers along the trail; and
  - Adopt-a-trail programs involving community groups.

Trail along Old Champlain Canal

Old Champlain Canal Chamber in Fort Edward

- Target certain areas for special planning studies. Parts of the potential trail corridor face complications or blockages that demand thoughtful solutions. Seek additional funding and assistance to focus on developing alternative solutions for these, one at a time.

- Incorporate water trail access and accommodations into planning for the land-side trail. Canal locks are obvious places to consider for water trail access or overnight stopovers as well as trailheads or interpretive locations for the land trail. Consider establishing other shared-purpose services and linkages, involving parks, marinas or waterfront accommodations.

- Create side loops and connections to cultural/tourism attractions and downtown business districts to provide all day or multi-day tourism activities. Create linkages to and from Amtrak Stations, shoreline access points, and scenic corridors. Improve connectivity and access between water resources and land attractions throughout Saratoga and Washington counties.

- Support appropriate amenities such as bike racks, kayak launch areas and lockers, transient docking facilities and other multi-modal facilities to secure personal property and provide a safe and enjoyable visit. Identify comfort stations at strategic points along major routes.

Implementation and Funding

The NYS Canal Corporation serves to maintain, operate and promote the historic 520-mile Canal system, including the Champlain Canal. The Canal Corporation plans to build trails on those parts of the corridor it owns. However, since most of the potential trail route is owned by local municipalities and other entities, most Champlain Canalway Trail projects will need to be initiated and implemented at the local level.

Taking a coordinated, partnership approach to the elements suggested in this Action Plan will help position Champlain Canal communities to obtain trail funding while minimizing competition with each other. Increased coordination and support between communities can help complete the entire trail, and ensure that all local communities capture the full range of benefits for local residents and visitors alike.

Hudson Crossing Park Canal Event

Whitehall Heritage Area Visitor Center

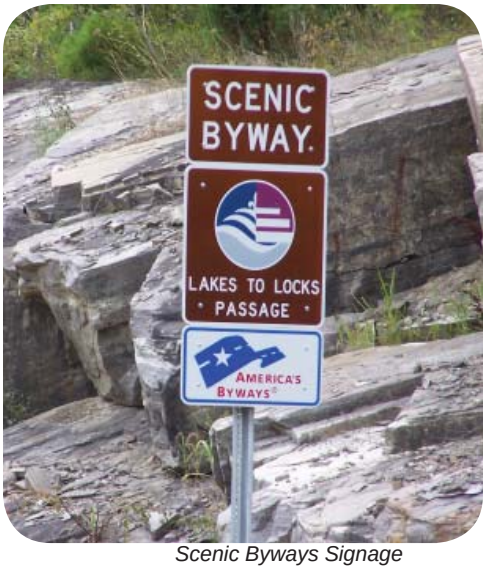
Sources for funding the Champlain Canalway Trail are subject to change. The following are programs that focus on trail planning and development.

Federal Transportation Funding: Federal transportation funds, especially the Transportation Enhancements Program, have funded most large-scale trail projects nationwide. These programs are typically administered by NYS Department of Transportation. (www.nysdot.gov/funding)

National Scenic Byways Program: NYS Department of the Transportation manages the Scenic Byways Program, which consists of roadways that provide access to outstanding scenic, natural, cultural or recreational resources. Projects that support and enhance National Scenic Byways are eligible include trails, signage and kiosks, and bicycle-pedestrian amenities. The entire Champlain Canal corridor is within the Lakes to Locks Passage Scenic Byway, which also tracks available grants. (www.lakestolocks.com/news1.cfm)

General information on Scenic Byways grants is also available from the National Scenic Byways Program. (www.bywaysonline.org/grants/)

Hudson River Valley Greenway: HRVG Conservancy Grants offer funding for trail projects. Eligible trail projects include planning and design, construction and rehabilitation, and education and interpretation. Small grants are also available for designated water trail sites. (http://hudsongreenway.ny.gov/GrantFunding/GrantsOverview.aspx)



Scenic Byways Signage

NYS Department of State Waterfront Revitalization: NYS DOS works with communities through the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program to promote community revitalization and resource protection through community-based plans and projects that enhance public access to waterways and state lands for water-based recreation, promoting sustainable economic development, protecting and improving water quality, and revitalizing hamlets and downtowns. Communities are eligible for grants from the Environmental Protection Fund for a wide variety of planning, design, and construction projects including waterfront trails, blueway trails, enhanced access to waterways, and strengthening linkages between waterfronts and downtowns. (www.nyswaterfronts.com/grantopps_epf.asp)

NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation: The Recreational Trails Program is a matching grant program for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation and maintenance of

Skenesborough Museum in Whitehall

trails and trail-related projects. Funded projects must be identified in, or further a specific goal of the NYS Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and must be available to the general public. The source of funds is the Federal Highway Administration.

The Snowmobile Trail Grant Program allocates funds to local governments that engage in the development and maintenance of snowmobile trails as part of the State Snowmobile Trails system. (www.nysparks.com/grants/state-funded-programs.aspx)

Parks and Trails New York: PTNY offers advice and technical assistance to communities who are trying to get a new trail started, or expanding an existing trail. Small grants for capacity building are also available. (www.ptny.org)

Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership: While the LCBP traditionally focuses on the landscape that drains into Lake Champlain, the area of consideration for the CVNHP includes any historic site or community along the "linked navigable waterways" of Lake Champlain, Lake George, the Champlain Canal, and the Upper Hudson River that contains a physical, cultural, or historical resource that represent the CVNHP's interpretive themes. The Vermont and New York counties within the Partnership include Grand Isle, Franklin, Chittenden, Addison, Rutland, Bennington, Clinton, Essex, Warren, Saratoga and Washington.

Grants are available through the Lake Champlain Basin Program. (http://www.lcbp.org/grant_search.aspx)

Canal Waterfront in Whitehall

The Trail Route, One Piece at a Time

The Champlain Canalway Trail will never equal the Erie in overall length or in the number of cities along its route. But whatever the numbers, the Champlain Canal corridor is rich in its history, scenery and communities. It includes many parks and historic sites, farmlands and active waterways, as well as quiet sections of old canal, towpath and abandoned railroad. The smaller-scale cities and villages along the way all include attractive historic sections, business districts and residential areas. The New York State Trails Plan calls trails "a quiet economic engine." The distinctive elements of the Champlain Canal corridor provide all the working parts of that engine.

Stillwater Canalway Trail

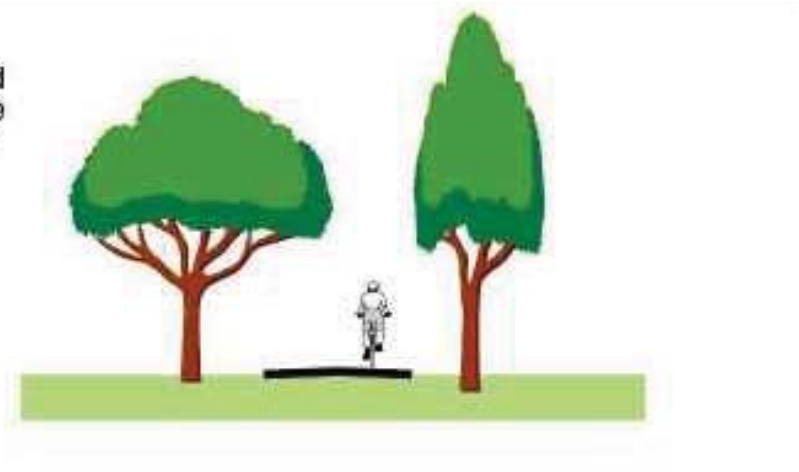
To create a trail that is equal to the Erie Canalway Trail in quality and appeal, trail building efforts throughout the Champlain Canalway corridor must be coordinated. At the same time, creating a trail that is truly distinctive, that fits within each individual community and that serves its local residents effectively will depend heavily upon local interest and initiative.

This Action Plan is intended to help foster and inform locally-based efforts to complete the Champlain Canalway Trail. The following pages use narrative, maps and photographs to describe the existing conditions, issues and opportunities along the proposed trail route. The entire trail route is separated into 30 segments, each 1 to 3 miles in length. These are the building blocks for the complete trail. Each segment can be used as a stand-alone by an individual community, to help focus attention and prompt constructive dialog. Taken all together, the segments present a complete vision for the trail.

Many segments offer one or more alternative routes where there are known obstacles or issues along the “preferred” route, which is marked in purple. The preferred route generally represents a high standard of trail: a route that is consistent with the design standards of the rest of New York’s Canalway Trail system, and that is placed off of roads and along canal banks, historic towpaths, and similar corridors to the greatest extent possible. The preferred route is not always the most feasible route. In places where these historic routes are not in public ownership but are owned by private companies or individuals, it is imperative to respect the rights and interests of private property owners. Far from imposing a uniform standard, this Action Plan offers both recommendations and alternatives to help guide local action.

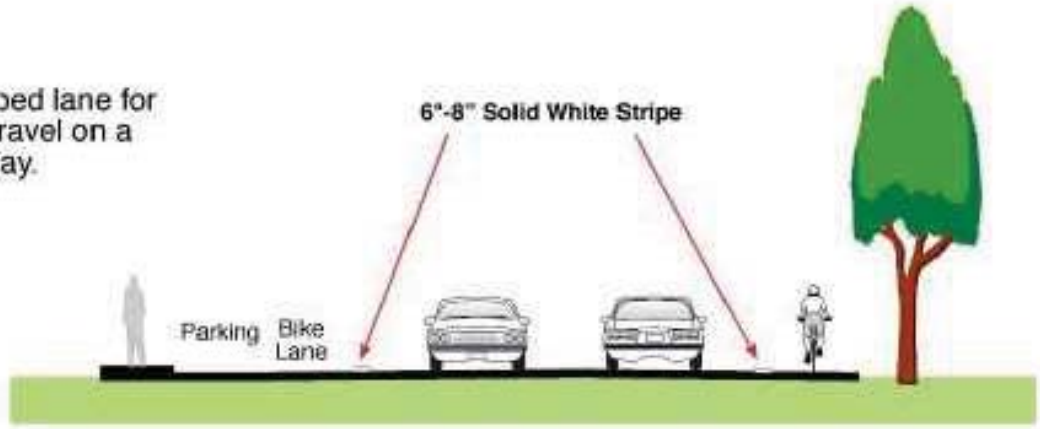
Shared Use Path

Provides a completely separated right of way for the exclusive use of bicycles and pedestrians with crossflow minimized.



Bike Lane

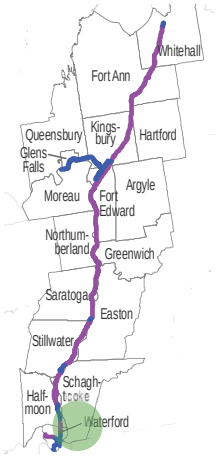
Provides a striped lane for one-way bike travel on a street or highway.



Bike Route
Signed Shared Roadway

Provides for shared use with pedestrian or motor vehicle traffic, typically on lower volume roadways.

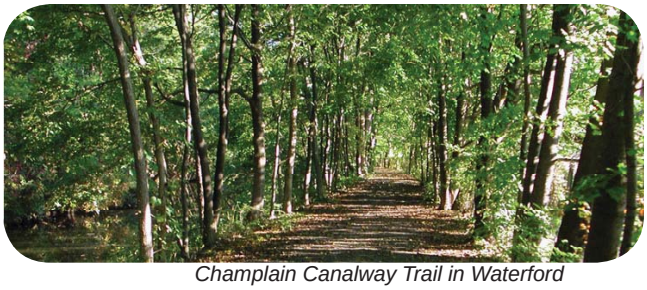
The Champlain Canalway Trail is envisioned primarily as an off-road, shared-use path, similar to other parts of New York's world-class Canalway Trail system. Bike routes and bike lanes can provide links between off-road trail sections, or serve where an off-road route is not feasible. Bike routes can also provide links or loops to nearby neighborhoods or downtowns, or to the broader region. NYS Bike Route 9 provides an on-road link through the Champlain Canal corridor.



Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Mohawk River to Old Champlain Canal Lock 5

Waterford Tugboat Roundup



Champlain Canalway Trail in Waterford

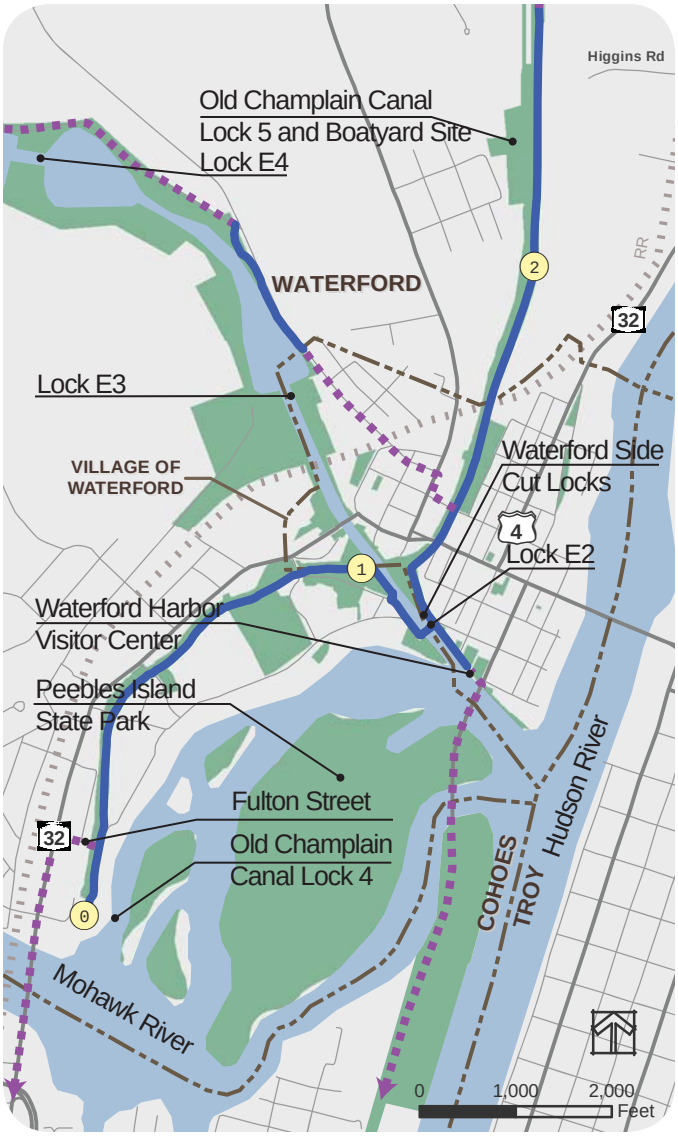
Location	Length
Town of Waterford and Village of Waterford	2.5 Miles

Existing Conditions

- Resources Include: Old Champlain Canal Locks 4 and 5, Waterford Visitors Center, Peebles Island State Park, and Mattens Shipyard.
- Stone dust trail sections constructed, owned by Canal Corp and maintained by Waterford.
- Parking available at Visitors Center and Fulton Street.
- Connections to Peebles Island, Waterford, Crescent Trail, and Mohawk Towpath Trail.

Recommendations & Actions

1. Establish trail gateway linkages in Waterford using public art, appropriate signage and other amenities.
2. Formalize the trail link to Peebles Island State Park, Flight of Locks and Waterford Side-Cut:
   - Coordinate with OPRHP and Waterford Harbor Visitors Center.
3. Establish National Recreation Trail and Hudson Greenway Trail designation.
4. Enhance and interpret Old Champlain Canal Lock 5 and Historic Boatyard.



Old Stone Supported Railroad Bridge

Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			

Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Old Champlain Canal Lock 5 to Clute Street

New Water Line on Closed Landfill

Existing Trail Section at Old Champlain Canal Lock 5

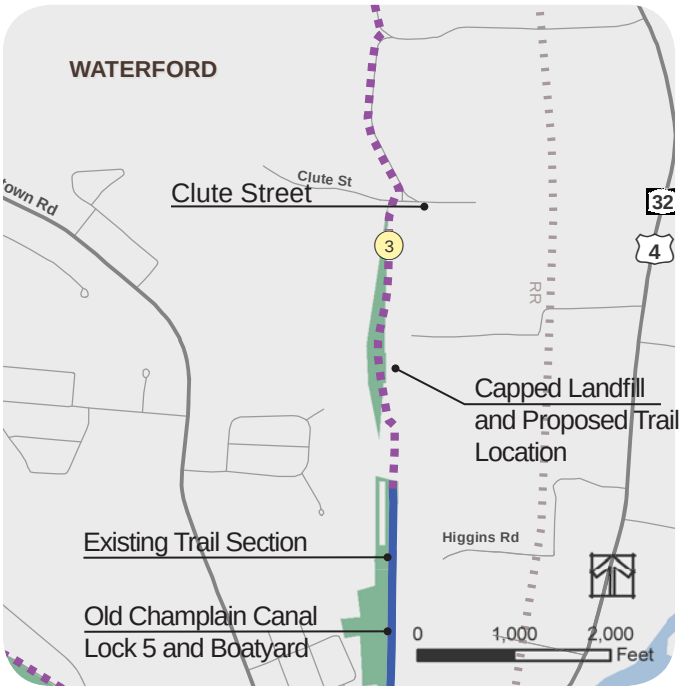
Location	Length
Town of Waterford	.5 Miles

Existing Conditions

- Resources Include: Old Champlain Canal, Old Champlain Canal Lock 5, and existing trail section.
- Most of proposed trail section owned by City of Mechanicville.
- Access to Old Champlain Canal along eastern base of landfill.
- Site is complicated by landfill and adjacent industrial activity.

Recommendations & Actions

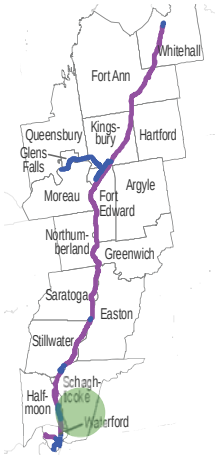
1. Explore the potential to use waterline on top of closed landfill for trail alignment.
2. Work with the Town of Waterford and City of Mechanicville to determine a workable strategy for ownership, construction, maintenance and stewardship.



Trail along Old Champlain Canal

Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			



Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Clute Street to Schoolhouse Lane

Canalway Trail

Bells Lane

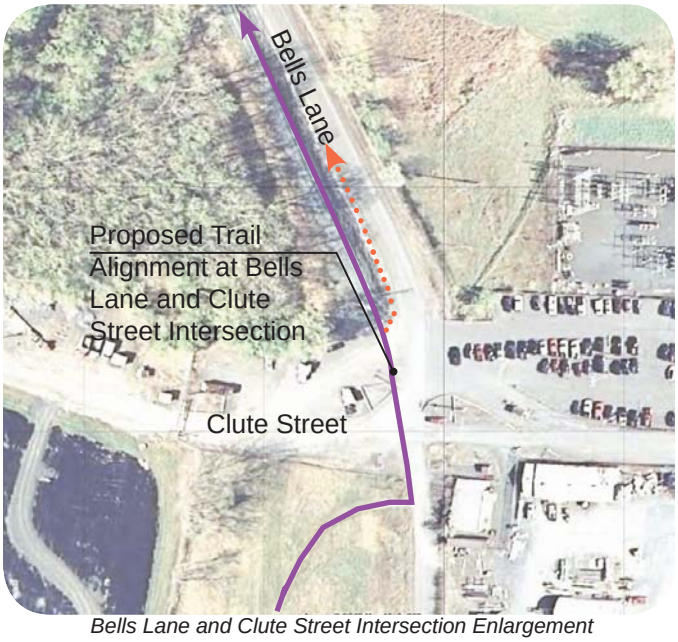
Location	Length
Town of Waterford	.4 Miles

Existing Conditions

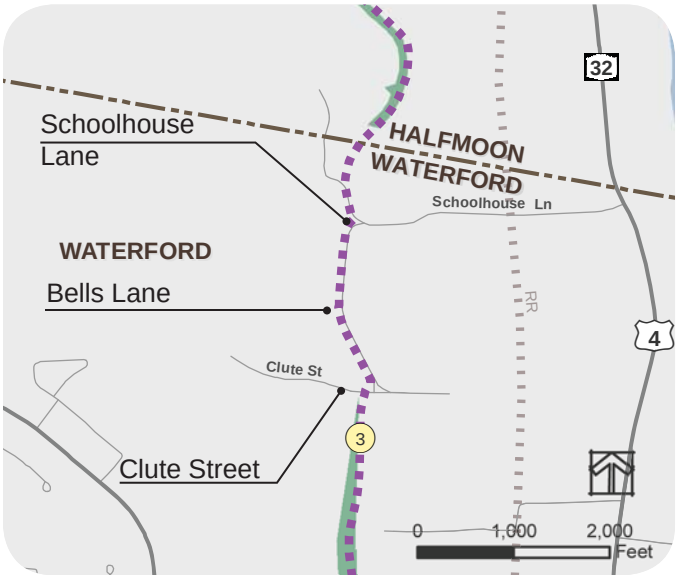
- Resources Include: Old Champlain Canal and partially watered prism and riprap embankment along Bells Lane; most of route owned by the City of Mechanicville.
- Industrial road crossings at Schoolhouse Lane an issue.

Recommendations & Actions

1. Place trail on top riprap berm parallel to Bells Lane or explore potential shared uses of Bells Lane.
2. Work with Town of Waterford and City of Mechanicville to determine a workable ownership, construction, and stewardship strategy.
3. Explore issues of industrial road crossings at Clute Street and Schoolhouse Lane:
   - Assess needs for signage and pavement markings needed.



Bells Lane and Clute Street Intersection Enlargement



Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			

Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Schoolhouse Lane to Brookwood Road

Informal Trail at Halfmoon

Stream Crossing in Need of Replacement

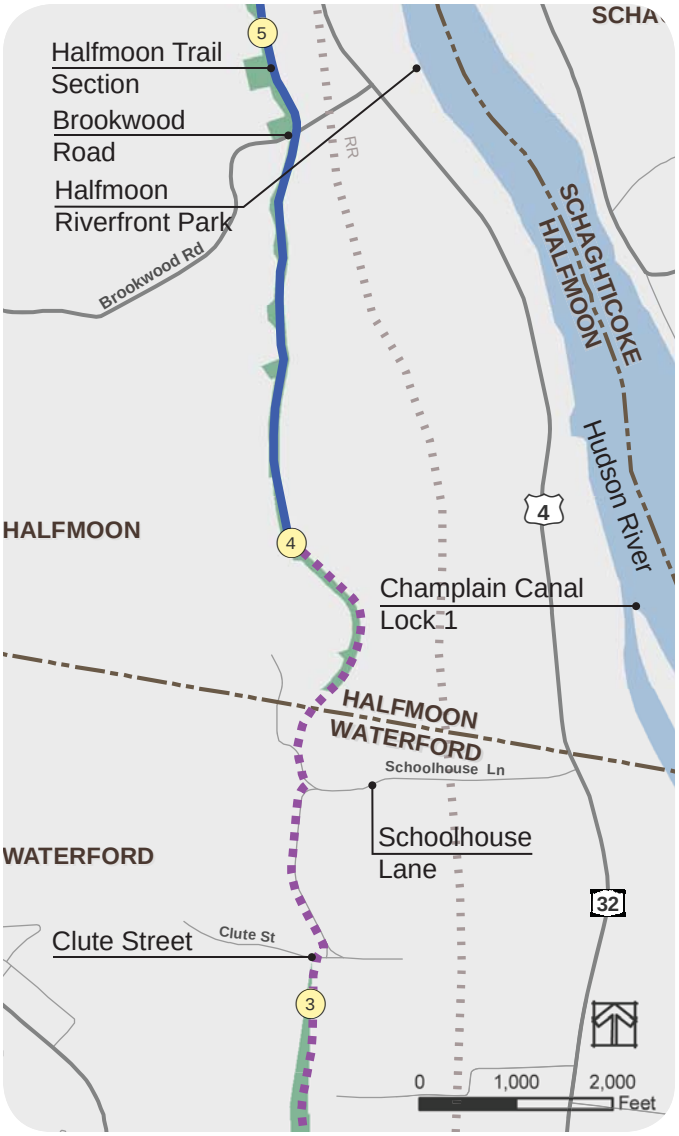
Location	Length
Town of Waterford and Town of Halfmoon	1.3 Miles

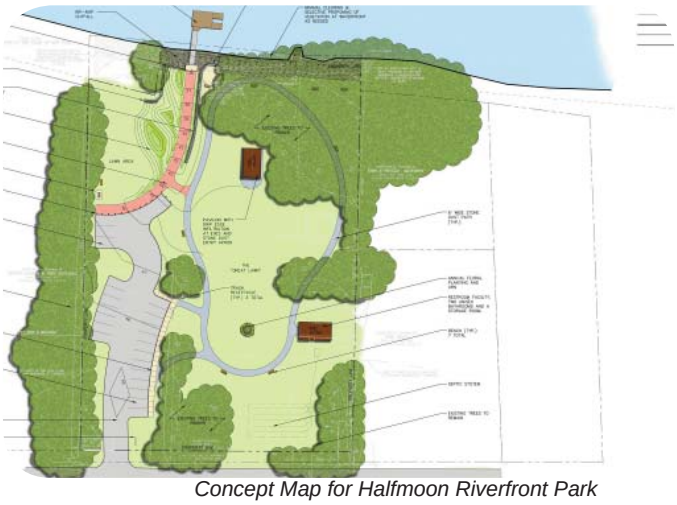
Existing Conditions

- Resources Include: Halfmoon Riverfront Park, Champlain Canal Lock 1, Old Champlain Canal, and Halfmoon Trail Section.
- Short section of proposed trail owned by the City of Mechanicville between Schoolhouse Lane and Halfmoon town line.
- Stream crossing needs new bridge to replace existing informal bridge crossing.
- Towpath section receives informal trail use (mostly snowmobiles) but is not actively maintained.
- Occasional flooding from beaver activity.

Recommendations & Actions

1. Work with municipalities to determine a workable ownership, construction, maintenance, and stewardship strategy to complete trail from Schoolhouse Lane to town boundary.



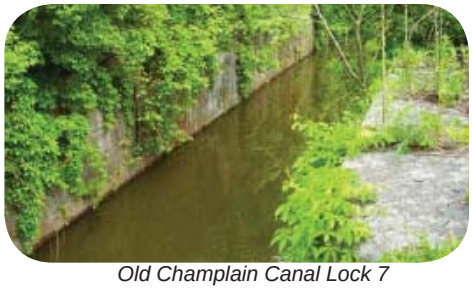

Concept Map for Halfmoon Riverfront Park

Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			

Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Brookwood Road to Upper Newtown Road



Old Champlain Canal Lock 7

Hudson Crossing Park

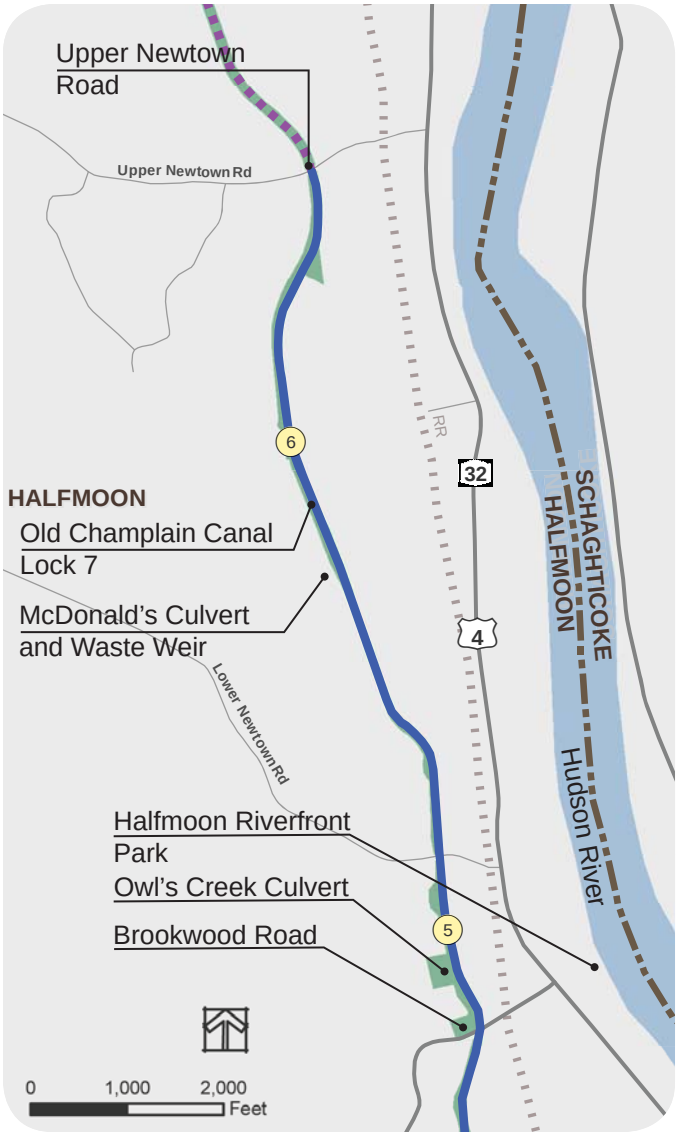
Location	Length
Town of Halfmoon	2.3 Miles

Existing Conditions

- Resources Include: McDonald's Creek Culvert and waste weir, Halfmoon Riverfront Park, Old Champlain Canal Lock 7, and Owl Creek Culvert.
- Trail follows Old Champlain Canal (partially watered) and towpath route owned by town of Halfmoon.
- Stone dust trail with trail head parking on both ends completed, and signage installed.
- Trail connection to new Riverfront Park funded and easement acquired.
- Resource protection has been established through the Town of Halfmoon Champlain Canalway Overlay Historic District.
- McDonald's Culvert received restoration funding from EPF.

Recommendations & Actions

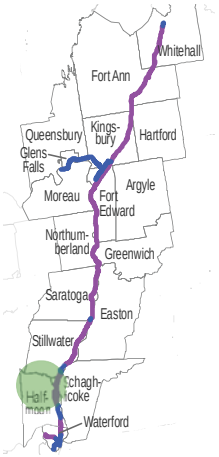
1. Enhance and expand trail use:
   - Identify partner and develop interpretive trails brochure and map.
   - Develop events, programming, and stewardship.
   - Form an Adopt-a-Trail stewardship committee.



McDonald Creek with Old Champlain Canal Towpath Trail

Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			



Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Upper Newtown Road to Route 146 and Route 4 Intersection

Unimproved Towpath

Hydro Dam

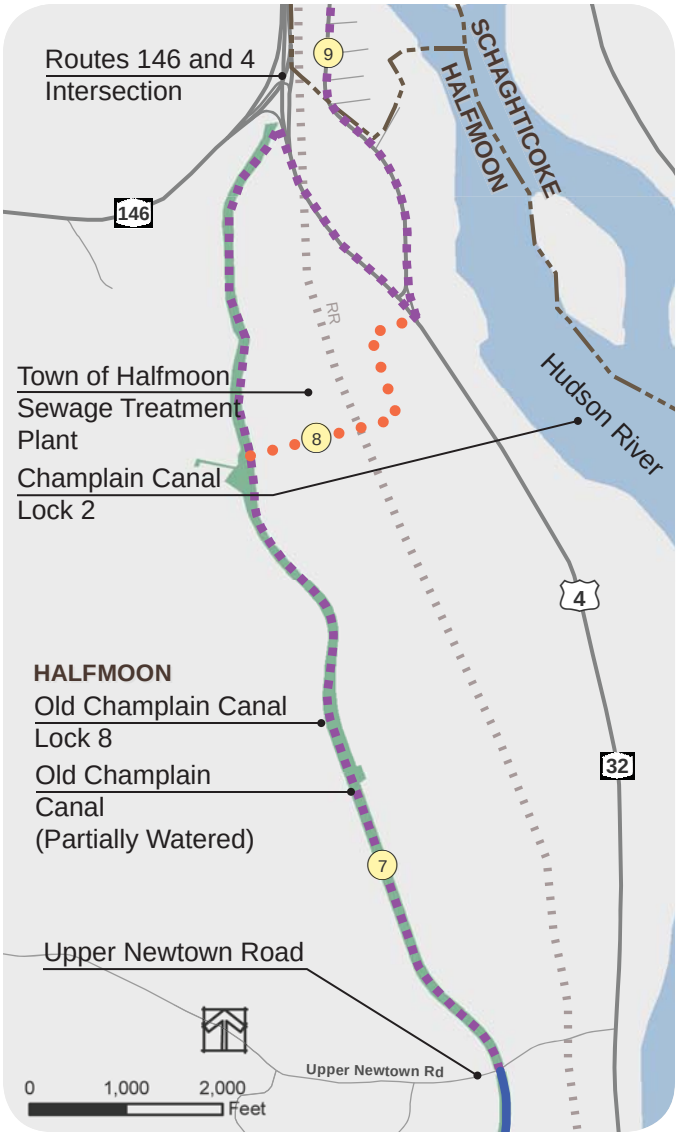
Location	Length
Town of Halfmoon and City of Mechanicville	2.0 Miles

Existing Conditions

- Resources Include: Champlain Canal Lock 2 and Old Champlain Canal Lock 8.
- Trail follows Old Champlain Canal (partially watered) and towpath route.
- Informal unimproved path owned by Town of Halfmoon.
- Access at the north end constrained by Route 146 crossing, railroad, and county sewage treatment plant.

Recommendations & Actions

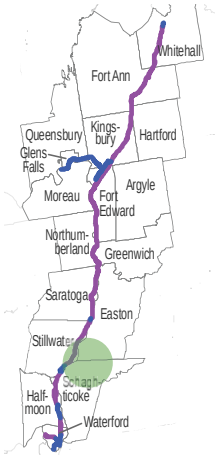
1. Meet with County, Town of Halfmoon, and City of Mechanicville to evaluate possible options for linking the trail into Mechanicivlle.
2. Develop feasibility / planning study on this trail section that considers options such as:
   - Develop existing trail along Halfmoon towpath route to a logical destination.
   - Create parking and access at the Route 146 and Route 4 intersection.
   - Design trail to outlet near county sewage treatment plant.
3. Incorporate trail connection with future reconstruction of Route 146 and Route 4 intersection.



Active Candian Pacific Rail LIne

Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			



Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Route 146 and Route 4 Intersection to Route 67

Route 146 and Route 4 Intersection

Mechanicville City Dock and Terminal

Location	Length
City of Mechanicville and Town of Halfmoon	1.5 Miles

Existing Conditions

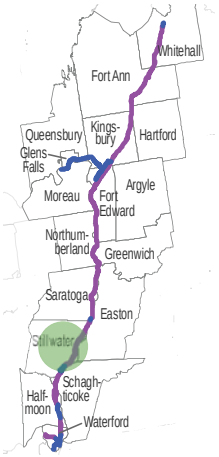
- Resources Include: Mechanicville Terminal, Business District, and Anthony Kill.
- City streets cover up the Old Champlain Canal.
- Potential crossing of Route 4 and 32 south of Route 146 to South Main Street.
- Potential connections to the waterfront redevelopment area and shopping areas.
- Potential to continue trail north of City Dock and boat launch along Hudson River and Champlain Canal.
- Connection to Anthony Kill Greenway Trail between river and old railroad station.
- Potential linkage to the Zim Smith Trail and central Saratoga County.

Recommendations & Actions

1. Establish an on-road route along South Main Street and north through business district:
   - Plan bike and pedestrian friendly amenities.
   - Provide wayfinding signage.
   - Establish linkages to waterfront.
2. Establish a trail north of the City Dock along the Hudson River.
3. Work with private landowners to acquire lands for trail access where needed.
4. Establish a link to the Zim Smith Trail.
5. Engage a focused planning effort to safely run trail from west side of Route 4 and 32 to South Main Street.

Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			



Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Route 67 to Gurba Drive

Stillwater Canalway Trail

Champlain Canal Lock 3

Location	Length
City of Mechanicville and Town of Stillwater	1.9 Miles

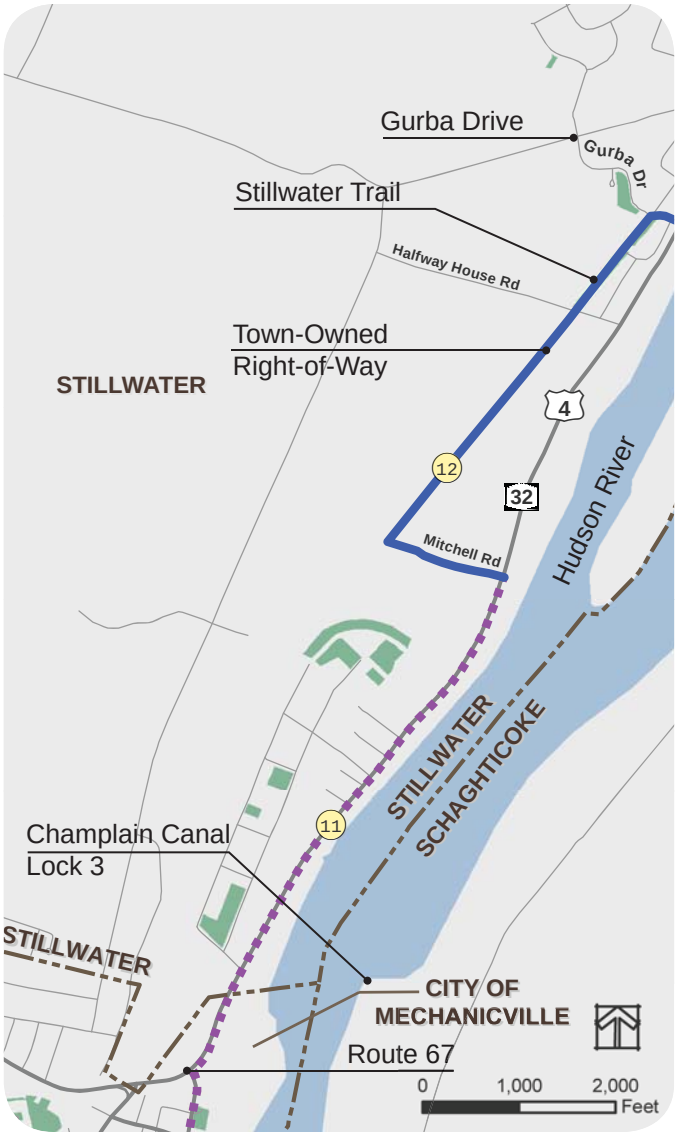
Existing Conditions

- Resources Include: Champlain Canal Lock 3, and existing Stillwater trail segment.
- Stillwater Trail is nearly one mile of paved rail-trail owned by Town along old trolley line.
- Portions of Route 4 have narrow shoulders.
- Lower-volume roads may offer alternate on-road routes north of Mechanicville.
- Old Champlain Canal is visible in places north of Mechanicville and is mostly privately owned.

Recommendations & Actions

1. Establish on-road linkage along Route 4:
   - Work with DOT to include pedestrian-friendly features in future road improvements.
2. Evaluate potential parallel routes to Route 4.
3. Consider potential for extending the existing trail.
4. Form an Adopt-a-Trail stewardship committee.

Existing Trail Section



Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			

Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Gurba Drive to Stratton Lane

Champlain Canal Lock 4

Winter Image at Block House Park

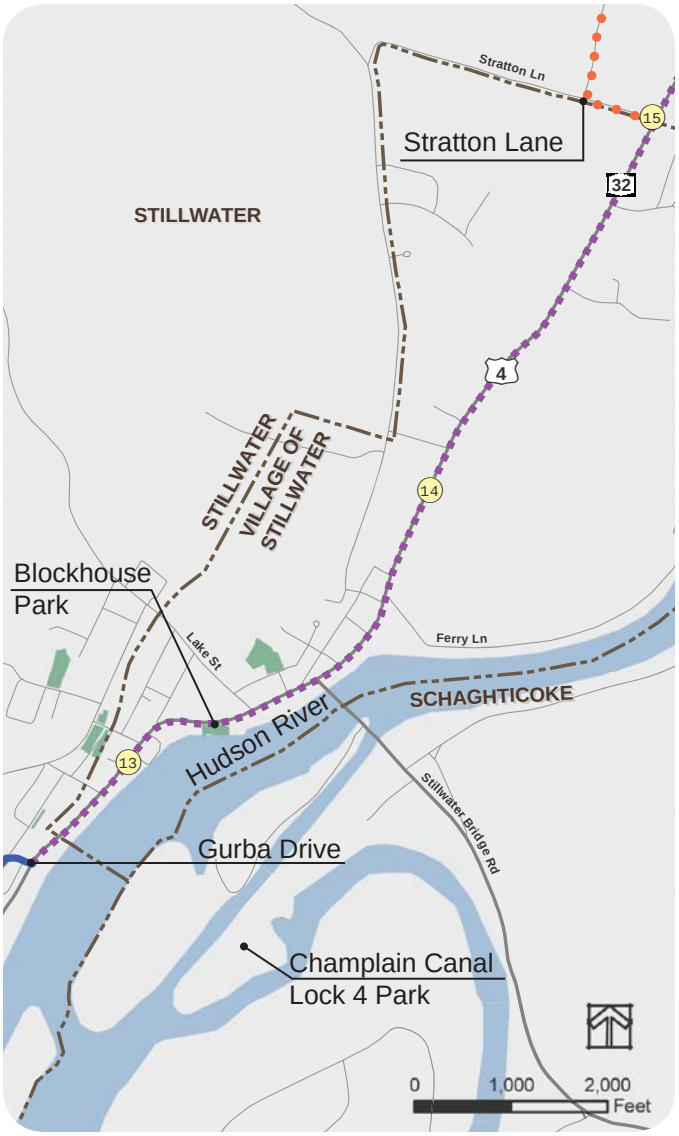
Location	Length
Town of Stillwater and Village of Stillwater	2.3 Miles

Existing Conditions

- Resources Include: Blockhouse Park and Champlain Canal Lock 4 Park.
- Intermittent exposed sections of Old Champlain Canal and towpath route.
- Old Champlain Canal lands in private ownership and largely undeveloped.
- Route 4 is an established mixed residential and business corridor.

Recommendations & Actions

1. Explore potential interest of landowners along privately-owned segment of Old Champlain Canal and prepare a trail feasibility study.
2. Establish on-road trail linkage along Route 4:
   - Work with DOT to include pedestrian friendly features in future road improvements.



Stillwater Blockhouse

Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			

Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Stratton Lane to Wrights Loop

SNHP Trail along Old Champlain Canal

Old Champlain Canal Prism at Price Road

Location	Length
Town of Stillwater	2.3 Miles

Existing Conditions

- Resources include: Saratoga National Historical Park, Old Champlain Canal prism (partially watered), and towpath route.
- Stratton Lane leads to towpath route. (Price Road)
- Section owned by local land trust (Saratoga PLAN) extends one-mile north of Stratton Lane. Remaining section is one-quarter mile distance to Route 32.
- Flooding issues in Old Champlain Canal need resolution north of Route 32
- Portions of Route 4 has wide but deteriorated shoulders.

Recommendations & Actions

1. Build trail on publicly-owned Old Champlain Canal sections.
2. Explore potential interest of landowners along privately-owned section of Old Champlain Canal.
3. Establish on-road trail linkage along Route 4.
4. Consider including bike-ped-friendly features in future improvements.
5. Consider loop trail link through Saratoga National Historical Park.

SNHP Overlooking the Hudson River

Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			

Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Wrights Loop to Route 4 and River Road Intersection

Wilbur Road Trail Section

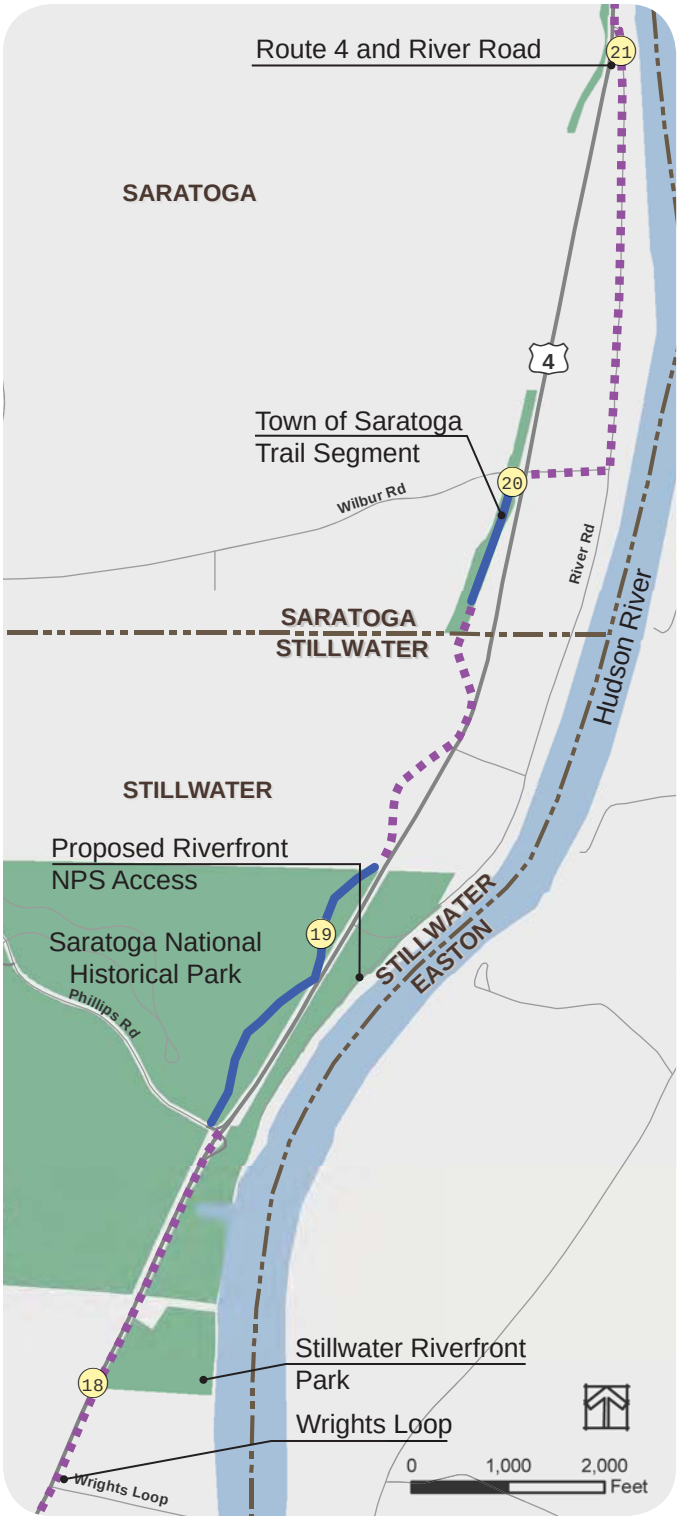
Location	Length
Town of Stillwater and Town of Saratoga	3.2 Miles

Existing Conditions

- Resources include: Saratoga National Historical Park, sections of Old Champlain Canal and towpath.
- Town of Saratoga completed a section of stone-dust trail from Wilbur Road to the Stillwater town line.
- A section of Old Champlain Canal towpath within Saratoga NHP is open as a turf-surfaced trail.
- A section of unimproved Old Canal and towpath owned by Open Space Institute links between the existing NPS and Town of Saratoga trail sections.
- Additional sections of the Old Champlain Canal and towpath are owned by a mix of Town, National Park and private owners, and are constrained by topography.
- NPS has a conceptual plan for a "Battlefield Spur" trail that would loop between NPS-owned sections of the Old Champlain Canal corridor and connect with the park's internal trail network.
- NPS has a conceptual plan for a riverfront boat access point that could also link with the trail system.
- Route 4 is currently designated as Bike Route 9.
- River Road is a low-volume, scenic road running near the current Champlain Canal.

Recommendations & Actions

1. Pursue funding and complete a continuous segment of towpath trail from Phillips Road to Wilbur Road.
2. Construct sections of trail on publicly-owned Old Champlain Canal sections where feasible.
3. Explore potential interests of landowners along privately-owned sections of Old Champlain Canal, and prepare a trail feasibility study.
4. Where property ownership and topography are limiting, consider combining off-road trail sections on public lands with on-road linkages within the Route 4 corridor.
5. Implement the Battlefield Spur as a link with existing NPS trails and potential off-road alternative and/or loop trail.
6. Implement the NPS river access point, and consider ways of linking it with the trail system.
7. Utilize River Road as an on-road route and/or loop route with Route 4.



Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			

Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Route 4 and River Road Intersection to Route 69 (Coveville Road)

Bike Route 9 along Routes 4/32

Proposed Town Boat Launch Site

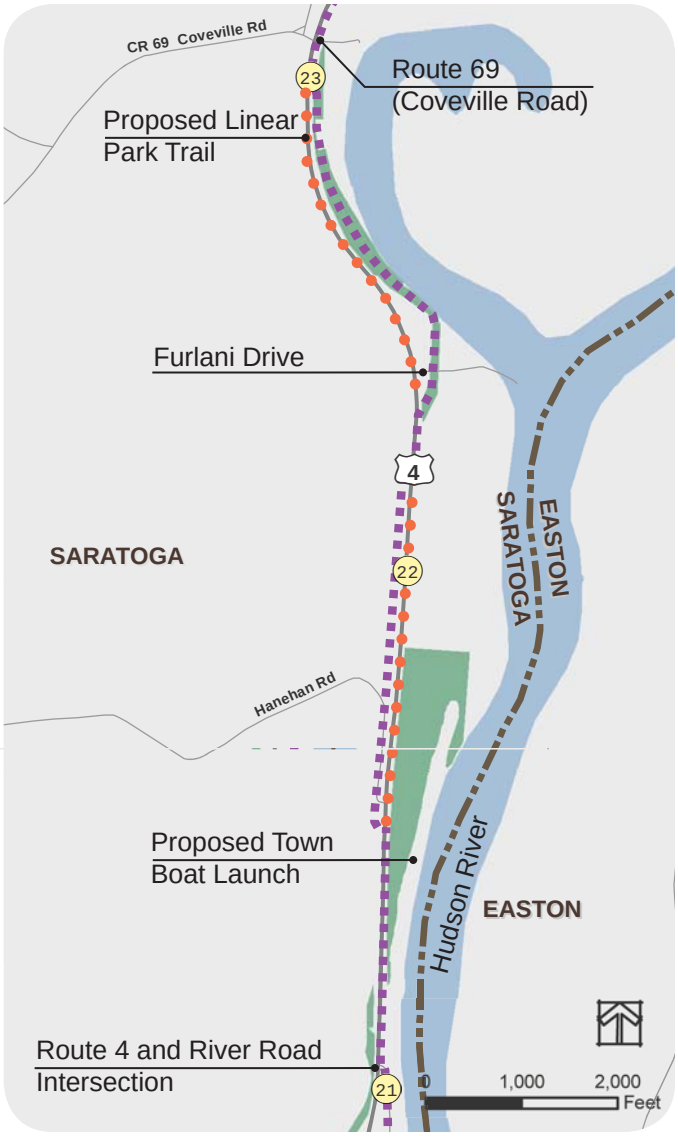
Location	Length
Town of Saratoga	2.1 Miles

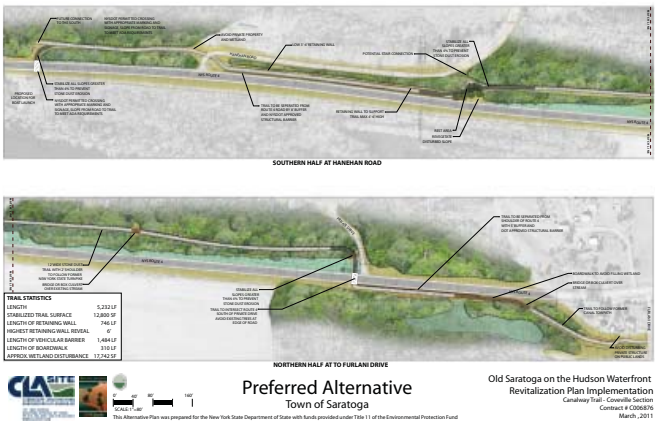
Existing Conditions

- Resources Include: Proposed town boat launch, old trolley bed, and sections of Old Champlain Canal.
- Old Champlain Canal traverses Route 4; some Canal sections destroyed by Route 4.
- Old trolley berm and old turnpike offer possible foundations for trail route.
- Design underway by Town of Saratoga for trail section between the proposed boat launch and Furlani Drive .
- Route 4 currently designated Bike Route 9.

Recommendations & Actions

1. Construct trail under design by Town of Saratoga between proposed boat launch and Furlani Drive.
2. Work with DOT to include bike and pedestrian friendly features in future road improvements.
3. Consider an off-road trail section between River Road and proposed boat launch.
4. Design and construct trail/linear park section from Furlani Drive vicinity to near Coveville Road.
5. Where towpath or trolley routes are infeasible, include a separate trail within the DOT ROW in plans for future Route 4 reconstruction.

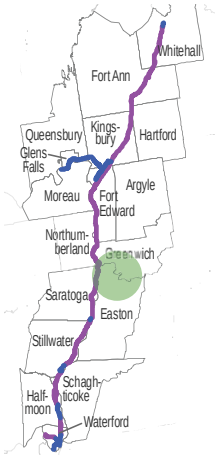




Designed Trail Segment

Legend

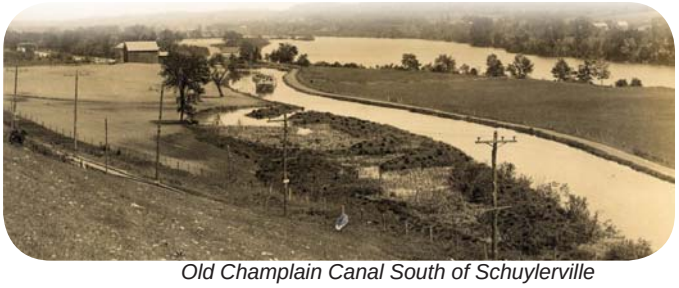
Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			



Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Route 69 (Coveville Road) to Garnsey Lane

Bike Route 9 along Route 4 Shoulder



Old Champlain Canal South of Schuylerville

Location	Length
Town of Saratoga	1.2 Miles

Existing Conditions

- Resources Include: Old Champlain Canal and Towpath Sections, nearly all in private ownership.
- Route 4 currently designated as Bike Route 9.

Recommendations & Actions

1. Short-term, work with DOT to include bike and pedestrian friendly road improvements on Route 4.
2. Where a towpath route is infeasible, consider including a separated trail within the DOT ROW in plans for future Route 4 reconstruction.

Old Coveville Roadhouse

Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			

Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Garnsey Lane to Route 29 (Ferry Street)

Schuylerville Bike Racks

Schuyler House

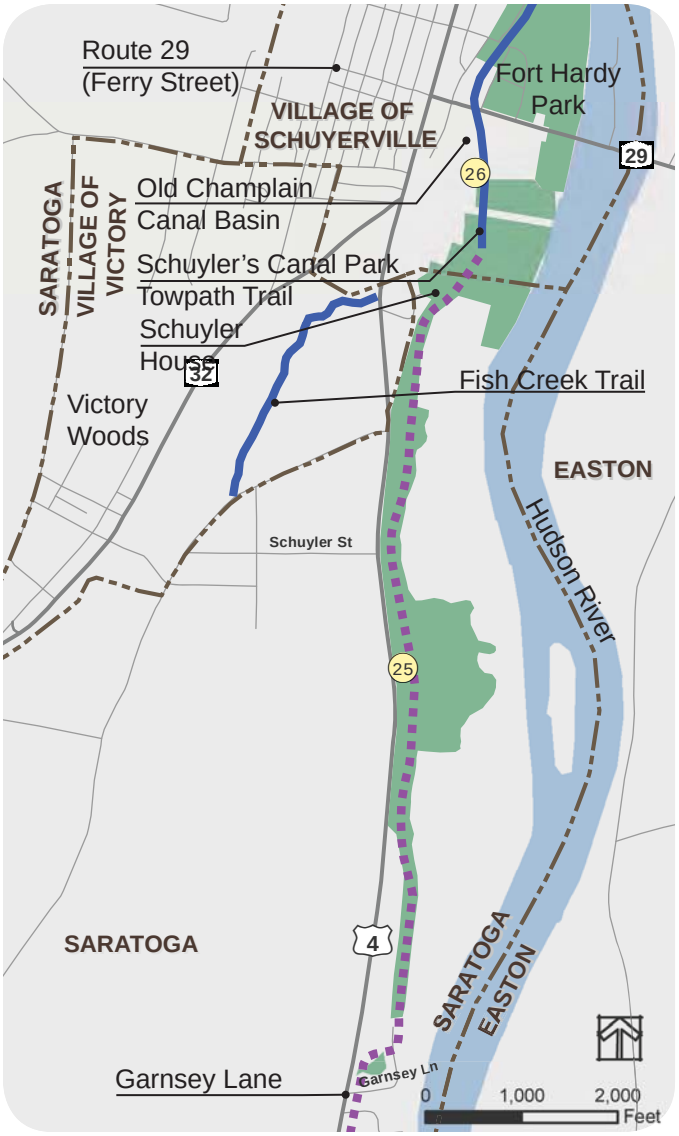
Location	Length
Town of Saratoga, Village of Victory and Village of Schuylerville	1.9 Miles

Existing Conditions

- Resources Include: Schuyler House, Sword Surrender Site, Victory Woods, Fish Creek Trail, and Schuyler's Canal Park Towpath Trail.
- Nearly all of the Old Champlain Canal and towpath are owned by NYSOGS or Canal Corp
- Route 4 is currently designated as Bike Route 9.

Recommendations & Actions

1. Construct an off-road trail along publicly-owned Old Champlain Canal and towpath from near Garnsey Lane to Schuyler House.
2. Explore improvements along state-owned section including access and parking on Route 4 and consider further trail upgrades between Schuyler House and Route 29.
3. Alternatively develop on-road trail linkage along Route 4.
4. Short-term, work with community and DOT to include bike and pedestrian friendly features in future road improvements.
5. Incorporate trail linkage to Victory Woods.



Canalway Trail Footbridge over Fish Creek

Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			

Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Route 29 (Ferry Street) to Dix Bridge

Labyrinth at Hudson Crossing Park

Public Boat Docks at Hudson Crossing

Location	Length
Village of Schuylerville, Town of Saratoga, and Town of Northumberland	1.2 Miles

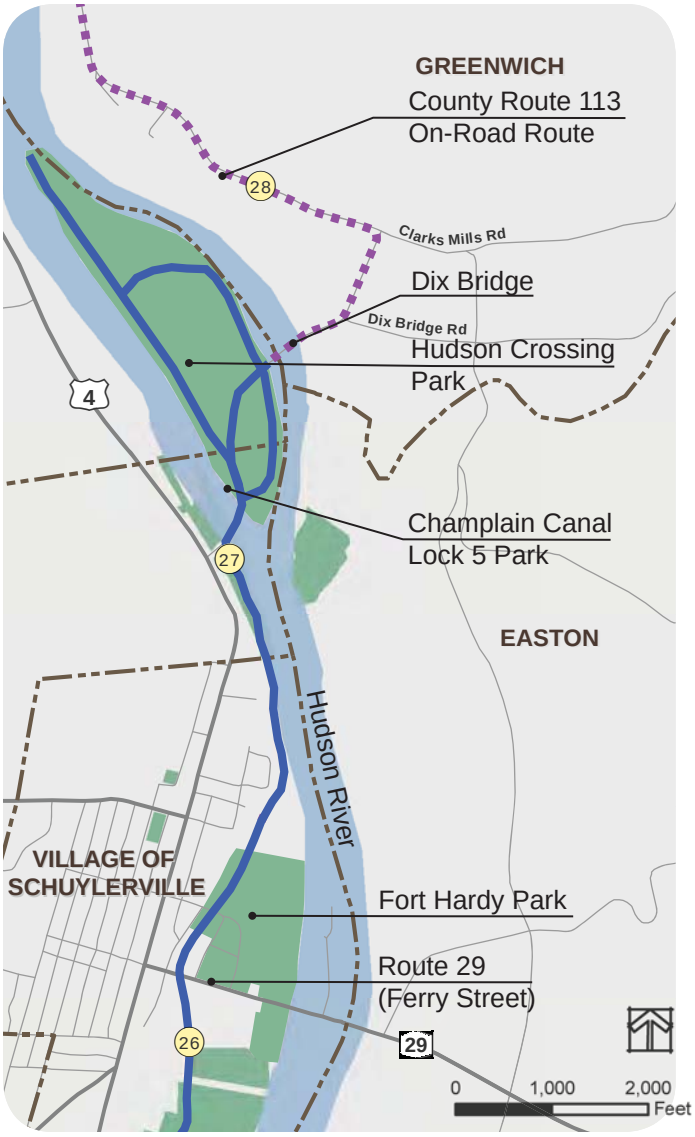
Existing Conditions

- Resources Include: Schuylerville Visitor Center, Fort Hardy Park Boat Launch, Schuyler Yacht Basin, RV Park, Junction/Guard Lock, Historic Dix Bridge connection to Washington County, and Hudson Crossing Park including existing trail system on Lock 5 Island.
- Champlain Canal Lock 5 Island and Public Docks owned by Canal Corp
- Dix Bridge in deteriorated condition and closed to vehicular and pedestrian access. This is the only potential snowmobilie trail link between Saratoga and Washington Counties.
- Unimproved trail from Fort Hardy Park to Champlain Canal Lock 5 Island designed. Grants for construction have been secured. Additional matching funds needed.
- $2.5 Million in Transportation Funds secured for Dix Bridge rehabilitation. Additional matching funds needed.

Recommendations & Actions

1. Construct trail sections from Route 29 to Champlain Canal Lock 5 Island.
2. Complete rehabilitation of Dix Bridge as a park attraction and multi-use trail link across the Hudson River.
3. Establish a snowmobile trail route across Lock 5 Island and Dix Bridge, uniting snowmobile trail systems in Saratoga and Washington counties.

View of Hudson River from Starks Knob



Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			

Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Dix Bridge to Northumberland Bridge

Triathalon at Lock 5 Island

Aerial View of Lock 5 Island

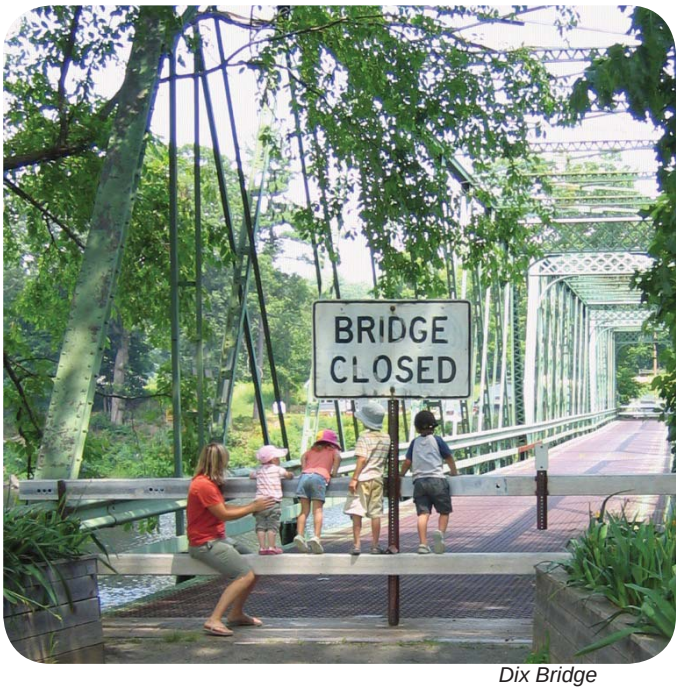
Location	Length
Town of Northumberland and Town of Greenwich	1.4 Miles

Existing Conditions

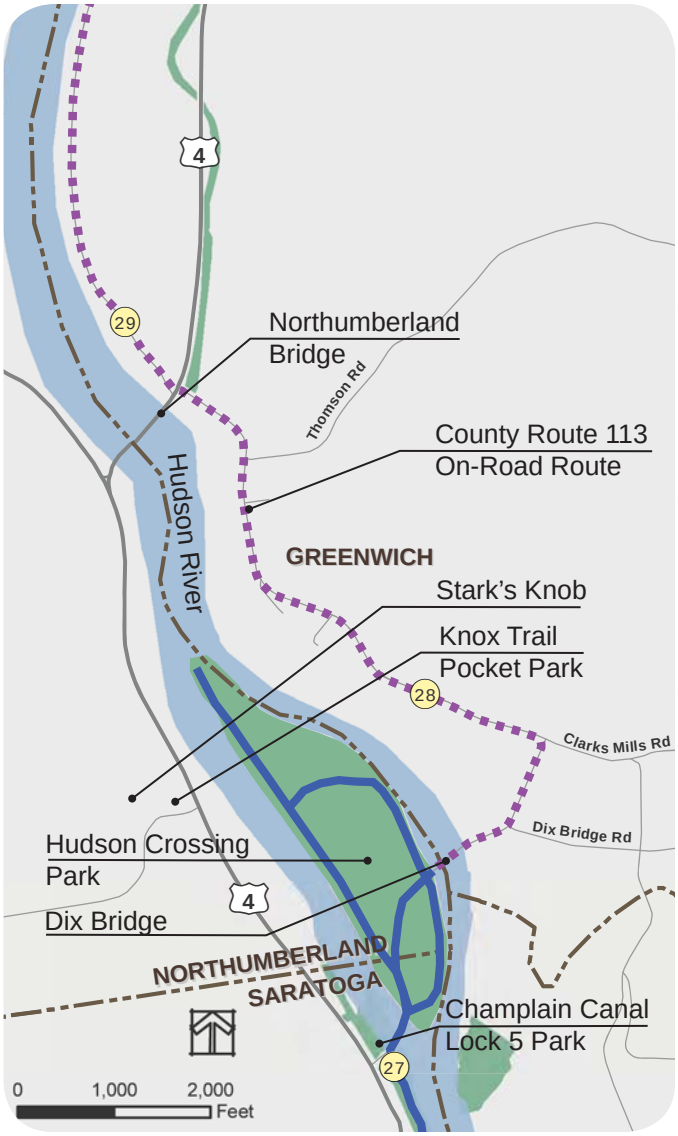
- Resources Include: Champlain Canal Lock 5 Island, Old Champlain Canal Lock 9, Junction/Guard Lock, and Stark's Knob.
- Dix Bridge rehabilitation project anticipated.
- Route 70 and Route 113 are fairly low-volume roads and highly scenic.
- Connects to Georgia Pacific Redevelopment Area.

Recommendations & Actions

1. With Dix Bridge completed, work with Washington County to establish an on-road shared route along Route 70 and Route 113 to Northumberland Bridge.
2. Include bicycle and pedestrian-friendly features in future road improvements.
3. Connect snowmobile routes across Dix Bridge linking Saratoga and Washington Counties.



Dix Bridge

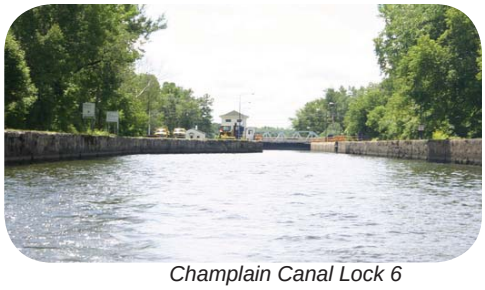


Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			

Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Northumberland Bridge to Intersection of County Route 46



Champlain Canal Lock 6

Location	Length
Town of Greenwich and Town of Fort Edward	2.8 Miles

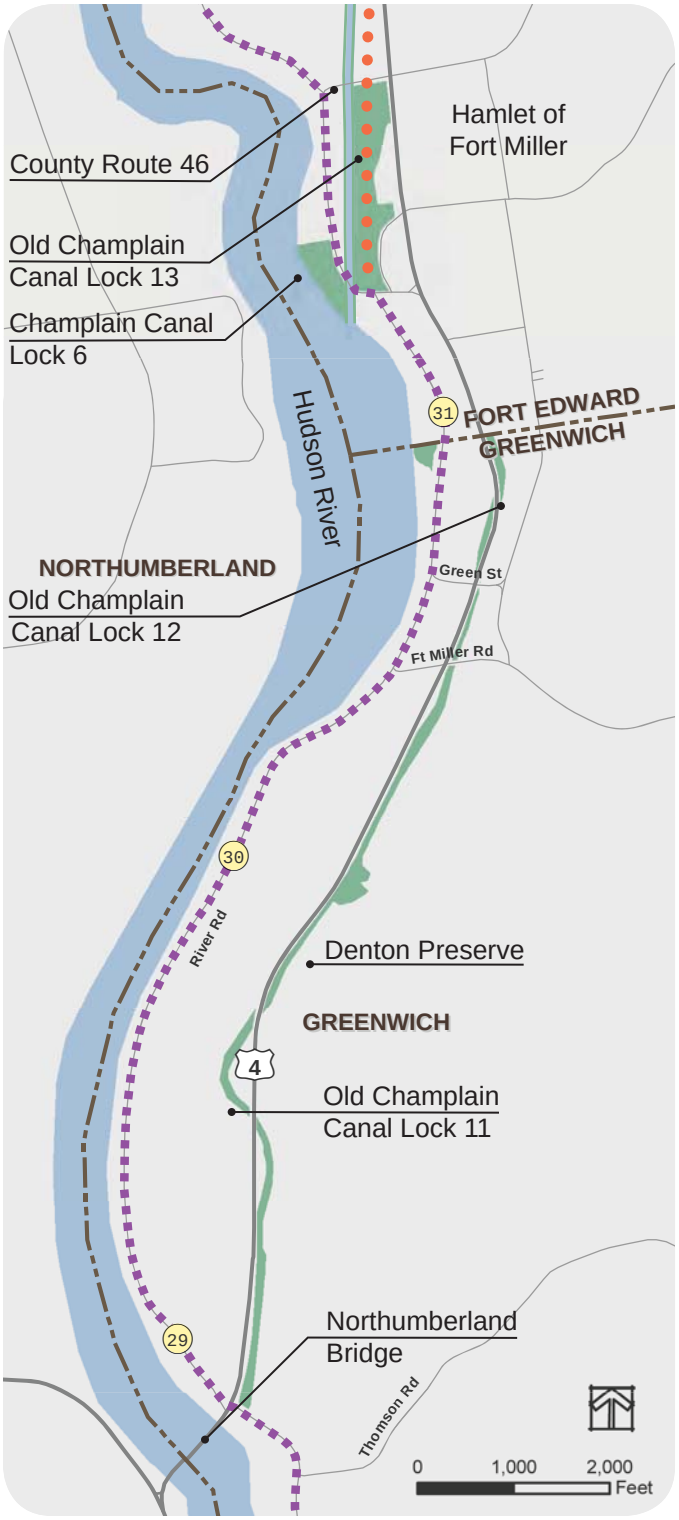
Existing Conditions

- Resources Include: Denton Preserve; Old Champlain Canal Locks 11 and 13, Hamlet of Fort Miller, and Champlain Canal Lock 6.
- Potential greenway between Route 4 and existing Champlain Barge Canal on the section between Champlain Canal Lock 6 and the guard gate and dam to the north.
- Section of Old Champlain Canal owned by Canal Corp mostly along Route 4.
- River Road owned by Town of Greenwich and a low-volume road that runs parallel to the Canal.

Recommendations & Actions

1. Work with Towns of Fort Edward and Greenwich to establish River Road as an on-road linkage adjacent to Canal Corp lands and the Hudson River.
2. Consider establishing a greenway section and pocket park near the Champlain Canal Lock 6.

Bridge Abutment at North Old Route 4



Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			

Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

County Route 46 to Patterson Road

Hudson River

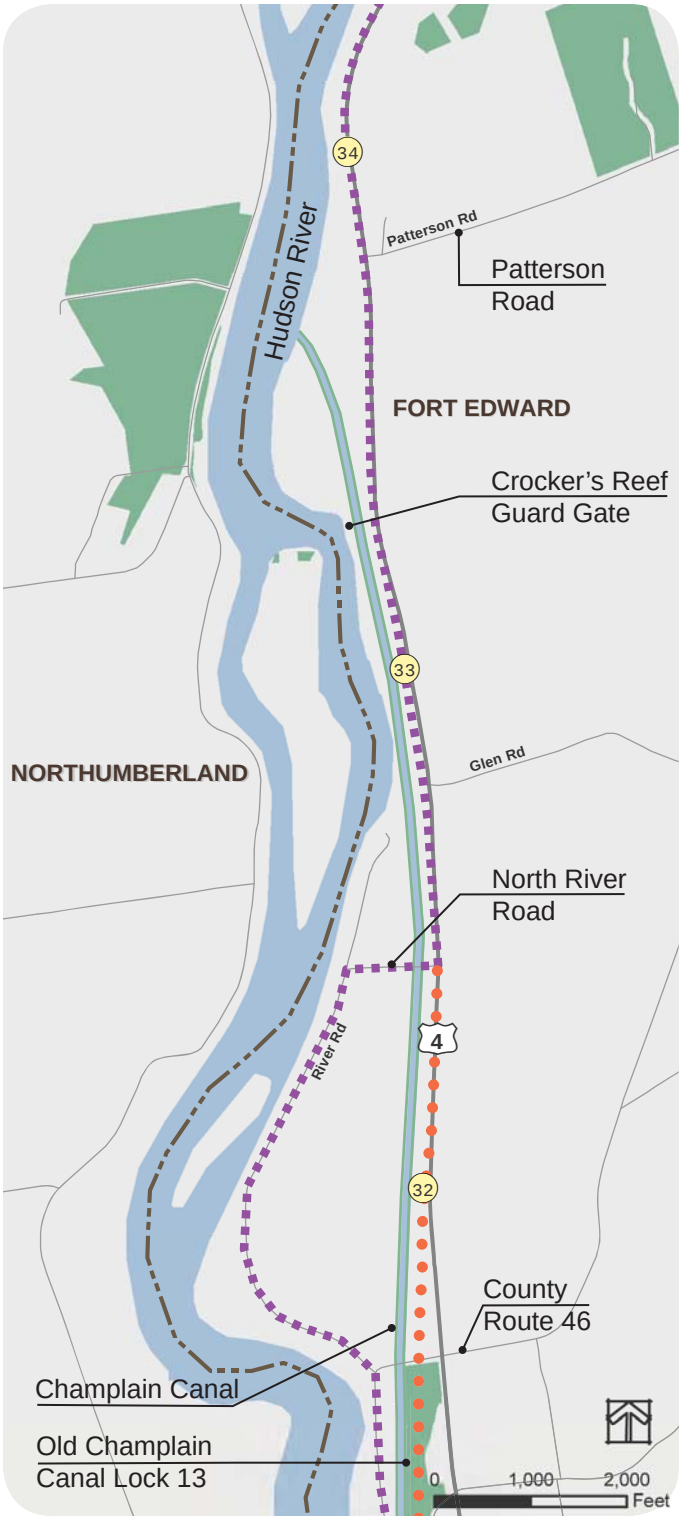
Location	Length
Town of Fort Edward	2 Miles

Existing Conditions

- Resources Include: Current Champlain Canal including Crocker's Reef Guard Gate.
- North River Road is along the Hudson River, has low volume and is highly scenic.
- Route 4 corridor is designated Bike Route 9.
- Scenic greenway area between Route 4 and current Canal is owned by Canal Corp.

Recommendations & Actions

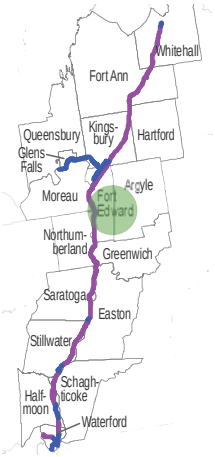
1. Work with Town of Fort Edward to use North River Road as an on-road linkage adjacent to Canal Corp lands.
2. Consider an alternate trail allowing for a linkage to the west side of Bike Route 9 through County Route 46.
3. Longer-term, consider a separated trail within the Route 4 corridor in plans for future highway reconstruction.



Crocker's Reef Guardgate

Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			



Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Patterson Road to Black House Road

View of Hudson River from Route 4

Location	Length
Town of Fort Edward	2.5 Miles

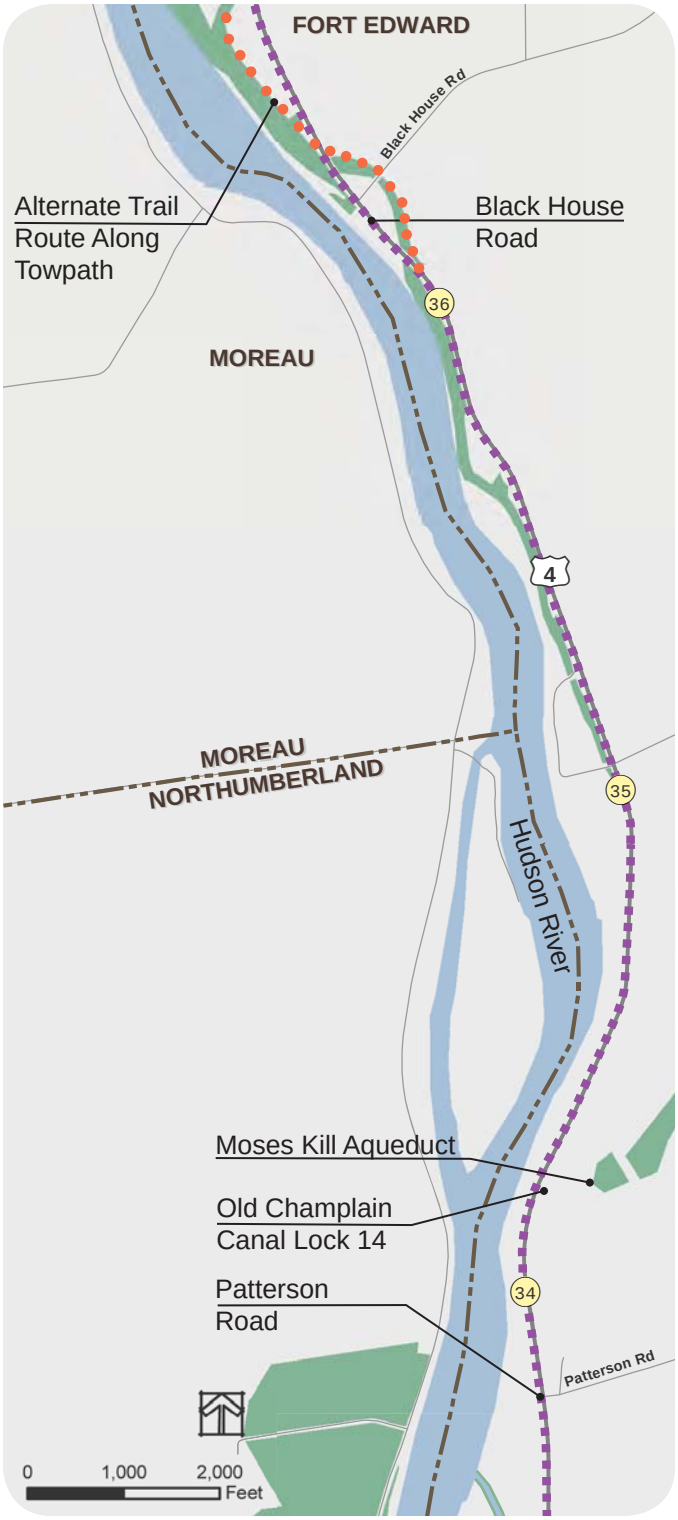
Existing Conditions

- Resources Include: the Moses Kill Aqueduct, Old Champlain Canal Lock 14, and sections of the Old Champlain Canal and towpath along the Route 4 corridor owned by Canal Corp.
- Route 4 is currently designated Bike Route 9.

Recommendations & Actions

1. Short-term, work with DOT to establish on-road trail linkage along the Route 4 corridor.
2. Interpret Old Champlain Canal Lock 14.
3. Long-term, consider a separated trail within the Route 4 corridor in plans for future highway reconstruction, perhaps combined with greenway sections on portion of the Old Champlain Canal towpath owned by Canal Corp.

Moses Kill Aquaduct Foundation



Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			

Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Black House Road to Champlain Canal Lock 7

Rogers Island Visitor Center

Champlain Canal Lock 7

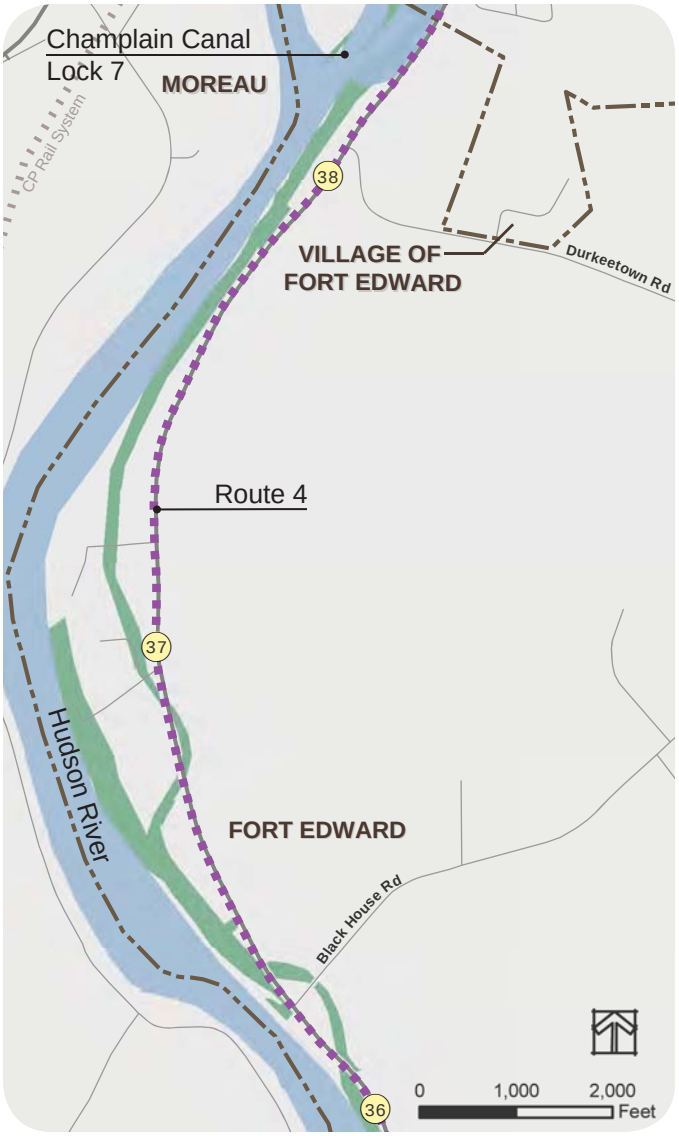
Location	Length
Town of Fort Edward and Village of Fort Edward	2 Miles

Existing Conditions

- Resources include: Champlain Canal Lock 7 and Village of Fort Edward.
- Sections of Old Champlain Canal and townpath along Route 4 corridor owned by Canal Corp.
- Route 4 is currently designated Bike Route 9.

Recommendations & Actions

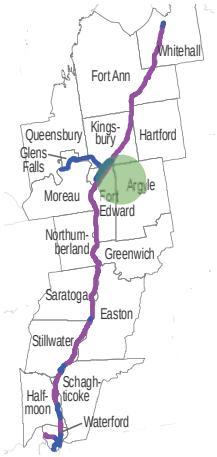
1. Short-term, work with DOT to establish on-road trail route on Route 4.
2. Long-term, consider a separated trail within the Route 4 corridor in plans for future highway reconstruction, perhaps combined with greenway sections on portion of the Old Champlain Canal towpath owned by Canal Corp.



Rogers Island Re-enactment Site

Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			



Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Champlain Canal Lock 7 to Champlain Canal Lock 8

Old Champlain Canal Junction Lock Adjacent to Argyle Street

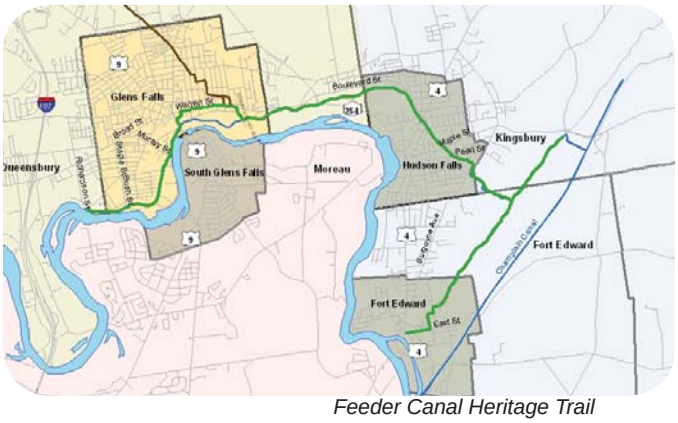
Location	Length
Town of Fort Edward and Village of Fort Edward	Miles 2.0

Existing Conditions

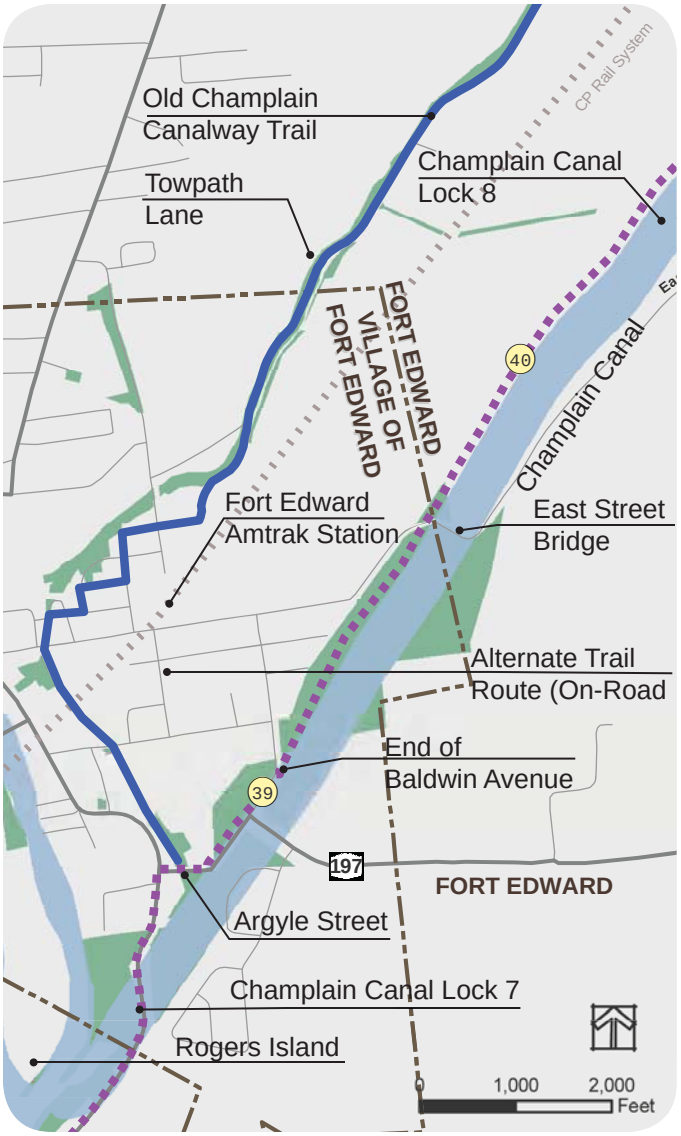
- Resources include: Old Champlain Canal and towpath trail, Glens Falls Feeder Canal Trail (links to Warren County Bikeway), Champlain Canal Lock 8, and Amtrak Station.
- The west bank of the current Champlain Canal between the end of Baldwin Avenue and the East Street bridge is owned by Canal Corp, and is used informally as a linear / canal waterfront park.
- Portions of the current Champlain Canal waterfront between East Street and Lock 8 (and beyond) are constrained by the GE dredging project.
- Route 4 is designated NY Bike Route 9.

Recommendations & Actions

1. Construct trail from Lock 7 to Lock 8 after completion of GE dredging project.
2. Establish alternate, on-road linkages between Lock 7, Rogers Island, the historic downtown area and the Old Champlain Canal towpath trail linkage to the Glens Falls Feeder Canal Trail.
3. Stabilize, enhance and interpret historic canal features within the Village of Fort Edward, and link them to the trail where feasible.
4. Identify potential snowmobile trail connections to the Village of Fort Edward.



Feeder Canal Heritage Trail



Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			

Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Champlain Canal Lock 8 to Route 196

Feeder Canal Park

Dewatering Facility Access Road

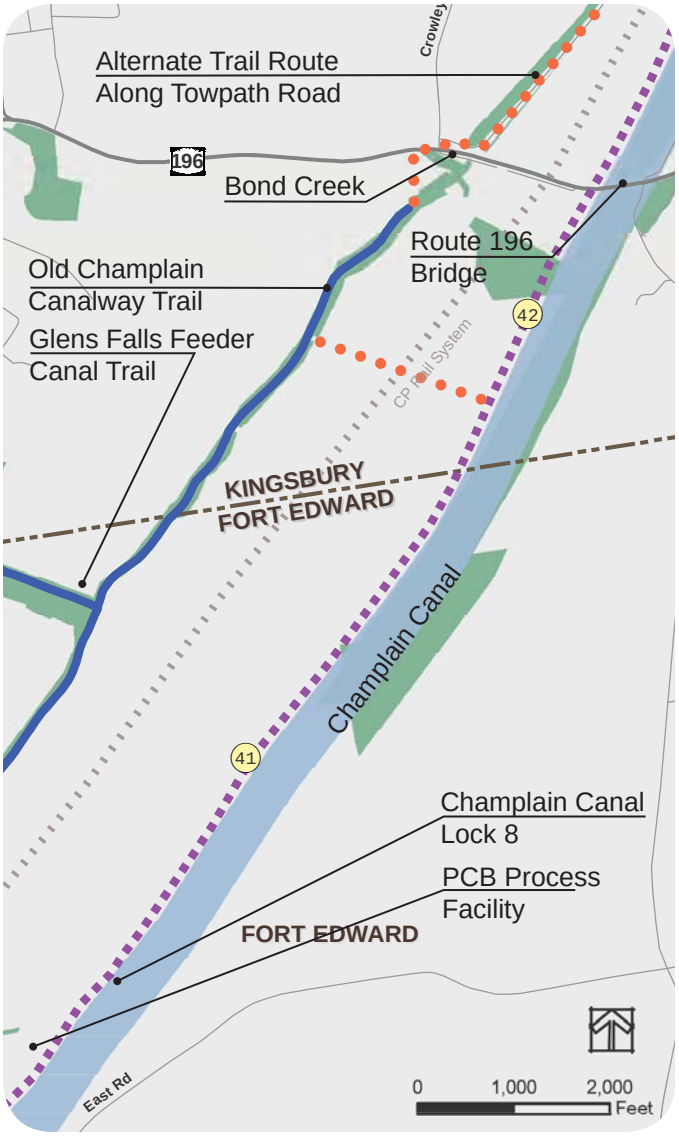
Location	Length
Town of Fort Edward and Town of Kingsbury	Miles 1.5

Existing Conditions

- Resources include: Old Champlain Canal and towpath trail, connection to Glens Falls Feeder Canal Trail (which links to Warren County Bikeway), current Champlain Canal and Champlain Canal Lock 8.
- The Old Champlain Canal towpath is an unimproved trail from Fort Edward to Bond Creek near Route 196.
- Potential trail linkages from the northern terminus of the Old Champlain Canal towpath are constrained by the Bond Creek washout of the canal towpath, Route 196, the active railroad corridor and private property.
- The access road from Route 196 to Lock 8 is the main access to the GE dewatering facility. Its use as a trail through-route is not feasible until completion of the dredging project.
- Snowmobile Route C4B (designated by NYS OPRHP) uses the drawn-down bed of the current Champlain Canal in this area. It enters and exits the canal to link with trail systems on both sides of the canal.

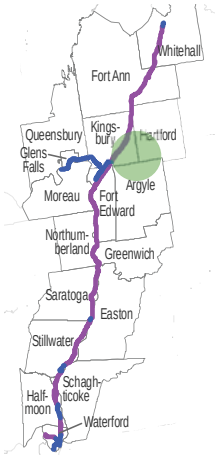
Recommendations & Actions

1. Establish a trail though-route along the current Champlain Canal and Lock 8, from East Street to Route 196 upon completion of the GE dredging project. Encourage continuous public access to the canal waterfront to the greatest extent possible, separated from traffic, establishing this section as a community linear park, as opposed to an on-road linkage.
2. Undertake a focused study to examine the feasibility of linkages to the Old Champlain Canal towpath near Route 196.
3. Consider combining (1) and (2) above to establish a mostly off-road trail loop system embracing both towpath-era and current Champlain Canals, linking to the downtown area and Rogers Island, and positioning Fort Edward as a junction uniting major trail systems.
4. Identify a sustainable snowmobile trail route between Route 196 and Fort Edward, as well as safe entry and exit points from the canal bed to enable trail linkages.



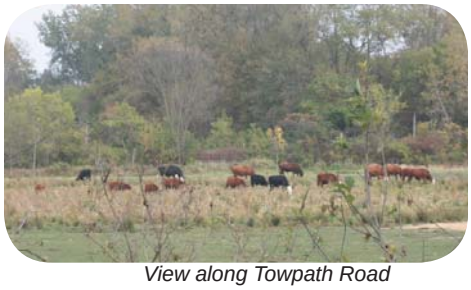
Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			



Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Route 196 to Mile Point 44



View along Towpath Road

Proposed Route Under Route 196 Bridge

Location	Length
Town of Kingsbury	1.2 Miles

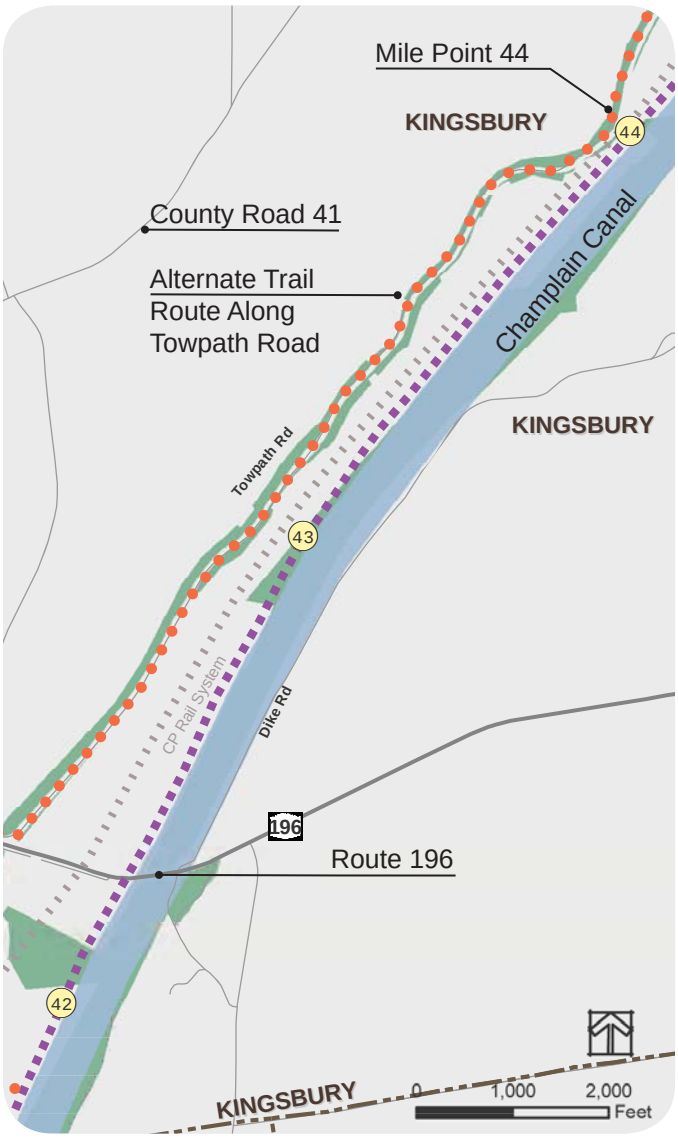
Existing Conditions

- Resources include: Old Champlain Canal and Towpath Road, and current Champlain Canal.
- The west bank of the current Champlain Canal is owned by Canal Corp. Transportation Bond Act funding has been secured by Canal Corp to construct sections of trail from Route 196 to Fort Ann.
- Towpath Road is a low-volume gravel road which runs alongside the Old Champlain Canal. Both are owned by Canal Corp. The road is plowed in winter.
- A snowmobile trail route currently uses the drawn-down bed of the current Champlain Canal from Route 196 to Lock 9. It links to trail systems on both sides of the canal. A safer, on-land route is preferred.

Recommendations & Actions

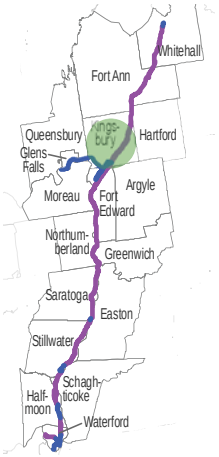
1. Construct sections of trail along the west bank of the current Champlain Canal utilizing Transportation Bond Act monies. This would facilitate multiple uses, such as seasonal use by snowmobilers.
2. Consider an alternate, on-road linkage or loop bicycle route along Towpath Road, recognizing that the gravel road surface is not suitable for all types of on-road bicyclists, and is not suitable for snowmobilers.
3. Identify a sustainable snowmobile trail route between Route 196 and Fort Ann, as well as safe entry and exit points from the canal bed to enable trail linkages.

View of Eastern Shoulder of Champlain Canal



Legend

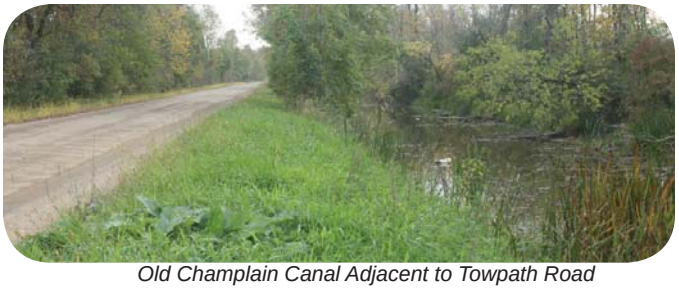
Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			



Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Mile Point 44 to Company Bridge Road

Champlain Canal



Old Champlain Canal Adjacent to Towpath Road

Location	Length
Town of Kingsbury	1.2 Miles

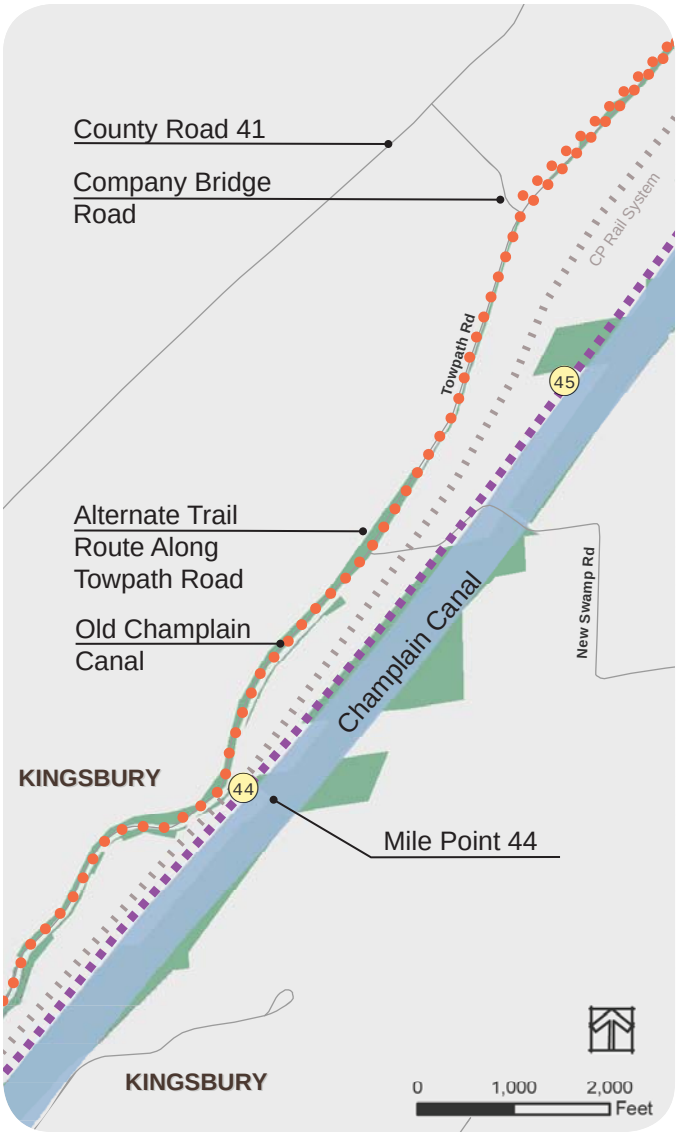
Existing Conditions

- Resources include: Old Champlain Canal and Towpath Road, and current Champlain Canal.
- The west bank of the current Champlain Canal is owned by Canal Corp. Transportation Bond Act funding has been secured by Canal Corp to construct sections of trail from Route 196 to Fort Ann.
- Towpath Road is a low-volume gravel road which runs alongside the Old Champlain Canal. Both are owned by Canal Corp. The road is plowed in winter.
- A major snowmobile trail route (OPRHP route C4B) currently crosses the Old Champlain Canal and Towpath Road, and runs parallel to New Swamp Road to cross the railroad tracks and gain access to its continuation in the drawn-down bed of the current Champlain Canal.

Recommendations & Actions

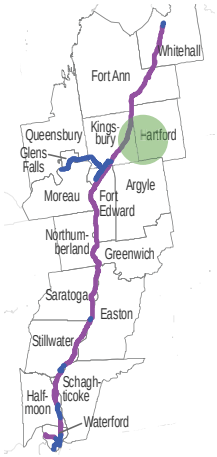
1. Construct sections of trail along the west bank of the current Champlain Canal utilizing Transportation Bond Act monies. This would facilitate multiple uses, such as seasonal use by snowmobilers.
2. Consider an alternate, on-road linkage or loop bicycle route along Towpath Road, recognizing that the gravel road surface is not suitable for all types of on-road bicyclists, and is not suitable for snowmobilers.
3. Identify a sustainable north-south snowmobile trail route, as well as safe entry and exit points from the canal bed to enable trail linkages.

Old Champlain Canal Adjacent to Towpath Road



Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			



Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Company Bridge Road to Route149 Bridge

Lock 9

Towpath Road

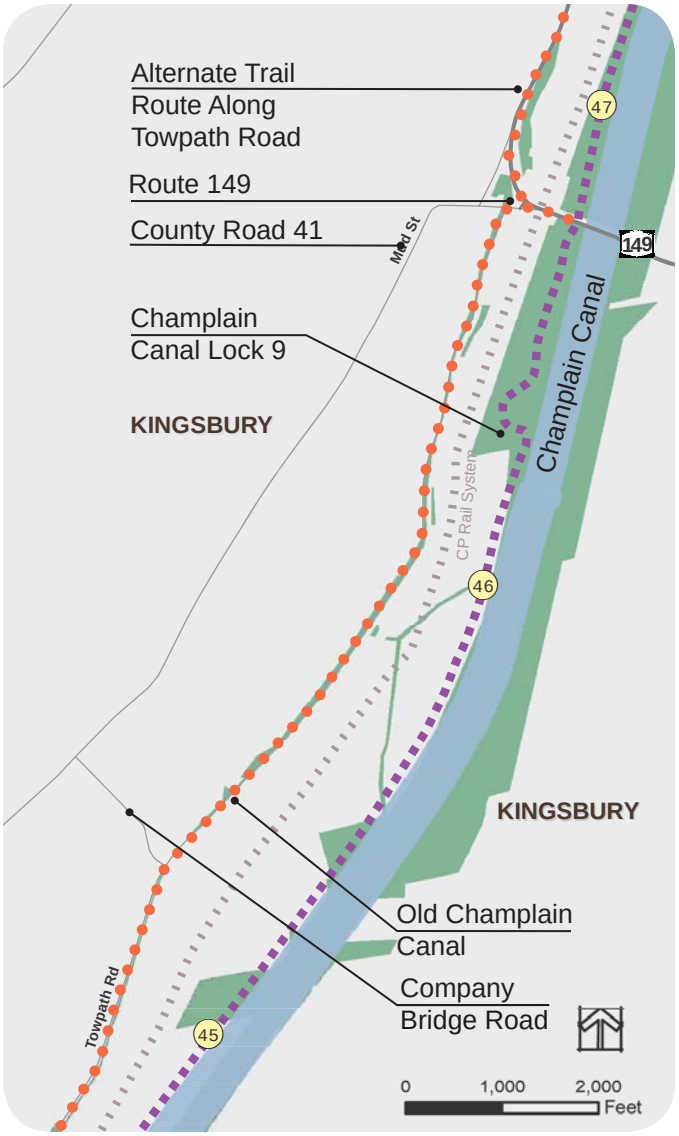
Location	Length
Town of Kingsbury	1.2 Miles

Existing Conditions

- Resources include: Old Champlain Canal and Towpath Road, current Champlain Canal and Champlain Canal Lock 9.
- The west bank of the current Champlain Canal is owned by Canal Corp. Transportation Bond Act funding has been secured by Canal Corp to construct sections of trail from Route 196 to Fort Ann.
- Towpath Road is a low-volume gravel road which runs alongside the Old Champlain Canal. Both are owned by Canal Corp. Sections of the Old Champlain Canal contain water. The road is plowed in winter.
- Champlain Canal Lock 9 has public restroom and picnic facilities, as well as interpretive panels.
- South of Lock 9, a snowmobile trail currently uses the drawn-down bed of the current Champlain Canal. North of Lock 9, the canal retains water and the route continues (as OPRHP route C4) atop the ice. It links to trail systems on both sides of the canal. A safer, on-land route is preferred.

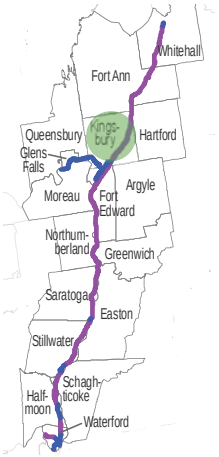
Recommendations & Actions

1. Construct sections of trail along the west bank of the current Champlain Canal utilizing Transportation Bond Act monies. This would facilitate multiple uses, such as seasonal use by snowmobilers.
2. Consider an alternate, on-road linkage or loop bicycle route along Towpath Road, recognizing that the gravel road surface is not suitable for all types of on-road bicyclists, and is not suitable for snowmobilers.
3. Identify a sustainable north-south snowmobile trail route, as well as safe entry and exit points from the canal bed to enable trail linkages.



Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			



Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Route 149 Bridge to Baldwin Corners Road

South End of Fort Ann Canalway Trail Spur

Location	Length
Town of Kingsbury	2.2 Miles

Existing Conditions

- Resources include: Old Champlain Canal and towpath, and current Champlain Canal.
- The west bank of the current Champlain Canal is owned by Canal Corp. Transportation Bond Act funding has been secured by Canal Corp to construct sections of trail from Route 196 to Fort Ann.
- Some sections of Old Champlain Canal and towpath are owned by Canal Corp, while others are in private ownership. The historic canal route is fragmented by farms, residences and Route 149.
- A snowmobile trail route (OPRHP route C4) runs on the ice of the current Champlain Canal from Lock 9 to a point near Baldwin Corners Road, where it leaves the Canal and follows a land route to Baldwin Corners. It links to trail systems on both sides of the canal.
- Route 4 is currently designated Bike Route 9.

Recommendations & Actions

1. Construct sections of trail along the west bank of the current Champlain Canal utilizing Transportation Bond Act monies. This would facilitate multiple uses, such as seasonal use by snowmobilers.
2. Establish linkages to loop routes or alternate on-road linkages along Route 149 and Baldwin Corners Road.

Champlain Canal

Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			

Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Baldwin Corners Road to Mile Point 52

Restored Old Champlain Locks 16 and 17

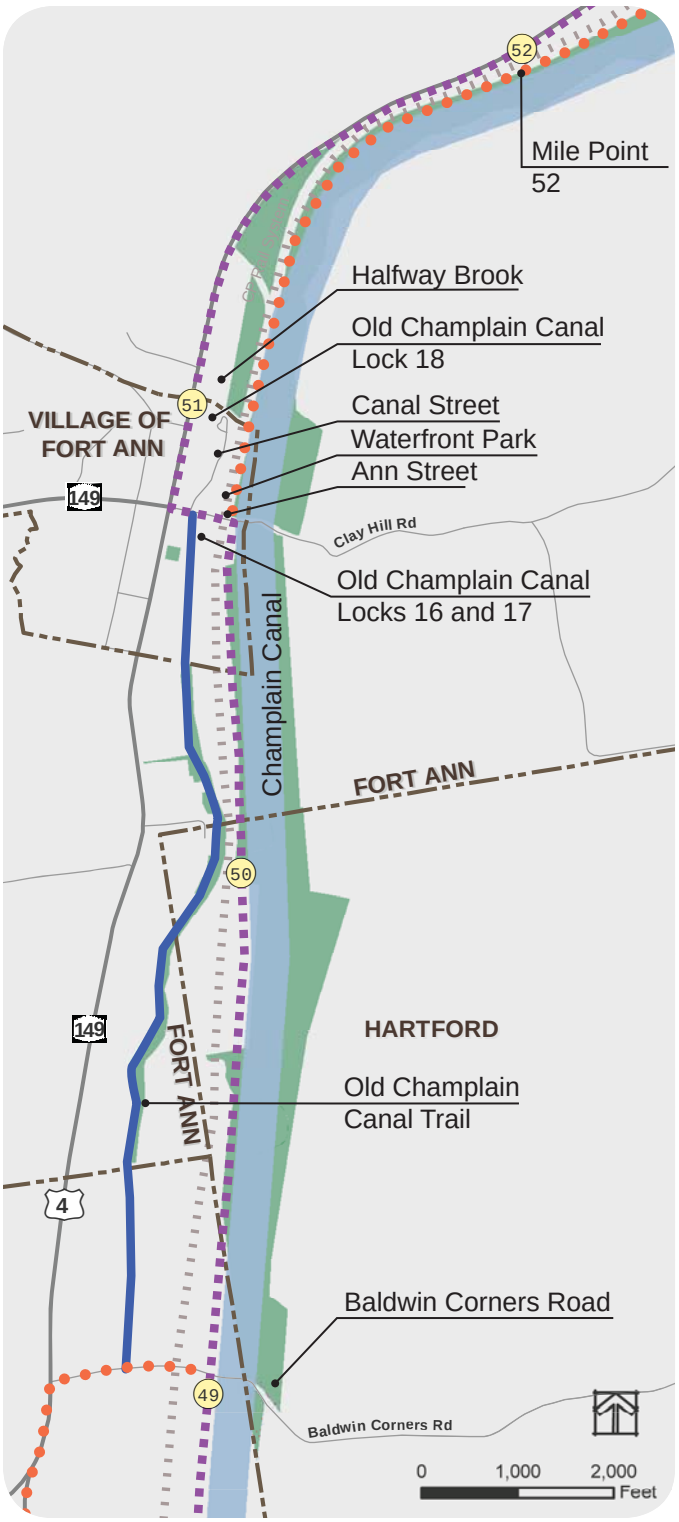
Location	Length
Town of Kingsbury, Town of Fort Ann and Village of Fort Ann	3 Miles

Existing Conditions

- Resources include: Old Champlain Canal and towpath, Old Champlain Canal Locks 16-18, Waterfront Park and Fort Ann Canal Port, and current Champlain Canal.
- The Old Champlain Canal towpath is an unimproved, turf-surfaced trail from Baldwin Corners Road to Ann Street, and is currently maintained as a footpath and snowmobile trail route (OPRHP route C4).
- Canal Corp owns the west bank of the current Champlain Canal. Funding has been secured by Canal Corp to construct sections of trail from Route 196 to Fort Ann.
- The Village of Fort Ann is actively redesigning the streetscape including sidewalk linkages and a trailhead for the village-owned section of Old Champlain Canal.
- The Old Champlain Canal and towpath are owned by Canal Corp from Baldwin Corners Road to Village of Fort Ann line; the section from the Village line to Ann Street is owned by the Village.
- Route 4 is a high-volume, two-lane highway. It is currently designated Bike Route 9.
- North of Ann Street, the railroad runs very close to the bank of the current Champlain Canal.
- A snowmobile trail (OPRHP route S47C) enters the bed of the current Champlain Canal near Ann Street and extends north to Comstock and Whitehall. It links to trail systems on both sides of the canal.

Recommendations & Actions

1. Construct sections of trail along the west bank of the current Champlain Canal to facilitate multiple uses.
2. Establish an alternate / loop trail alignment along the Old Champlain Canal towpath from Baldwin Corners Road to Ann Street., including linkages to the Village center, School and Route 149 corridor.
3. Interpret Old Champlain Canal locks 16-18, and highlight the historic Village of Fort Ann landscape.
4. Identify a sustainable north-south snowmobile trail route, as well as safe entry and exit points from the canal bed to enable trail linkages.



Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			

Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Mile Point 52 to Kelsey Pond Lane

Proposed Canalway Trail

View From Deweys Bridge South

Location	Length
Town of Fort Ann	1.2 Miles

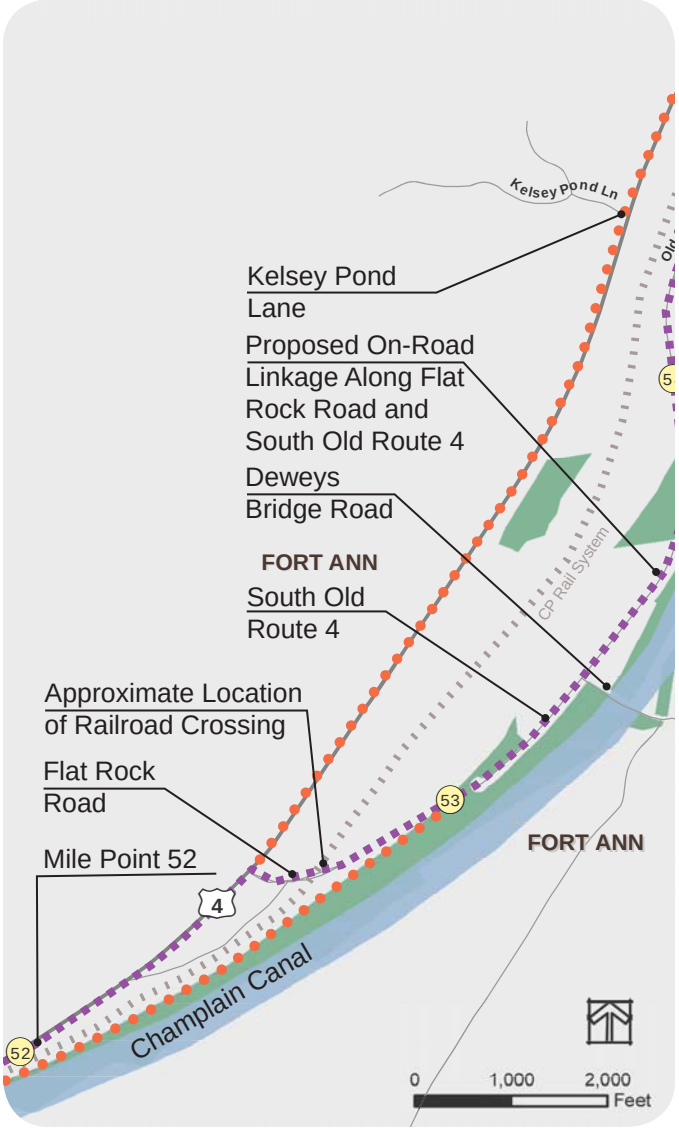
Existing Conditions

- Resources include: Current Champlain Canal.
- Route 4 is a high-volume highway, and is currently designated Bike Route 9.
- Flat Rock Road and S. Old Route 4 are low-volume, dead-end roads that are separated from each other by the railroad tracks and private property. These roads run closer to the current Champlain Canal than Route 4.
- The west bank of the current Champlain Canal is owned by Canal Corp between Flat Rock Road and S. Old Route 4.
- A snowmobile trail extends from Fort Ann to Comstock and Whitehall on the ice of the current Champlain Canal linking trail systems on both sides of the canal.

Recommendations & Actions

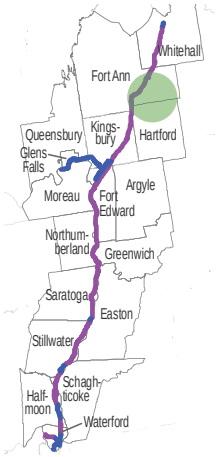
1. Include bicycle-pedestrian features in future improvements to Route 4 (Bike Route 9).
2. If a new, grade-separated crossing could be constructed across the railroad tracks, consider establishing an on-road linkage along Flat Rock Road and S. Old Route 4, including a short section of new canal waterfront trail between them.
3. Identify a sustainable north-south snowmobile trail route, as well as safe entry and exit points from the canal bed to enable trail linkages.

View From Clay Hill Road Bridge North



Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			



Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Kelsey Pond Lane to Champlain Canal Lock 11

Champlain Canal Lock 11

Location	Length
Town of Fort Ann	1.8 Miles

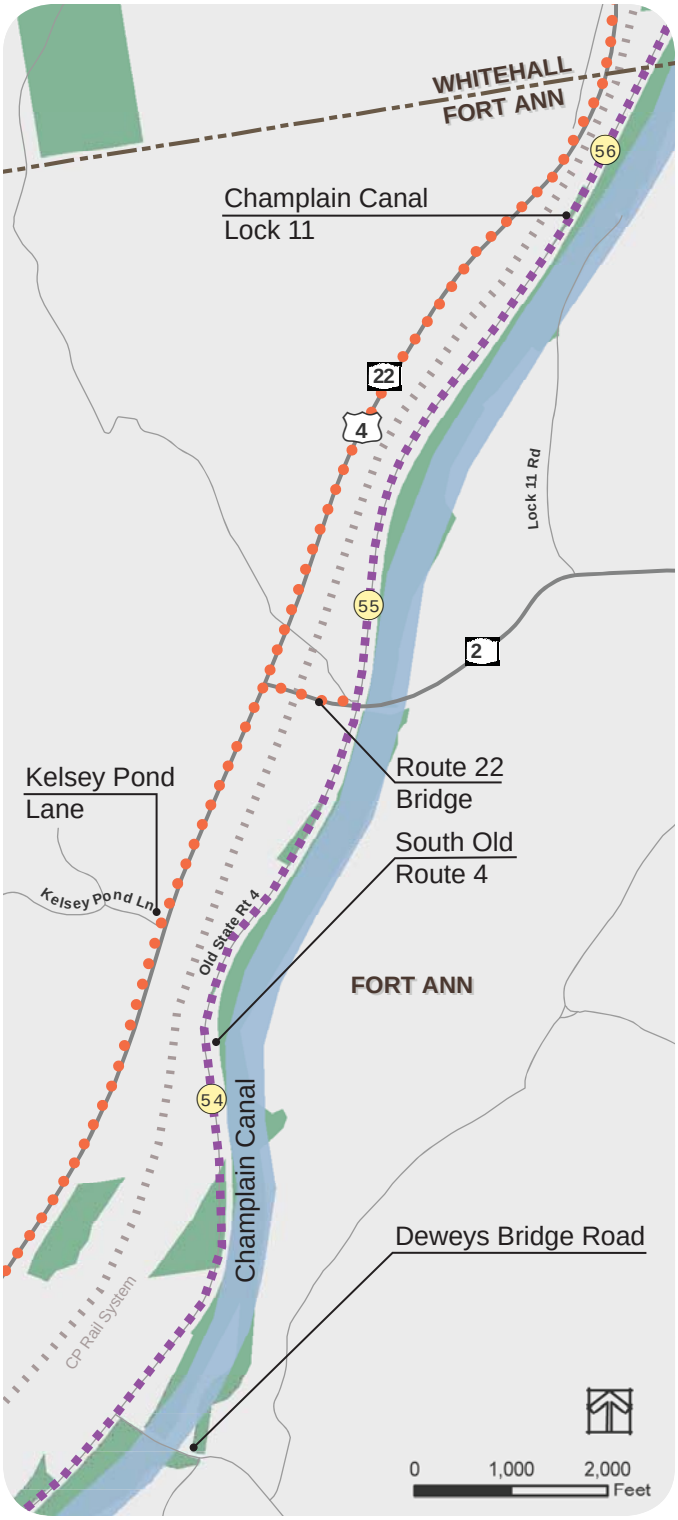
Existing Conditions

- Resources include: Current Champlain Canal and Champlain Canal Lock 11.
- Route 4 is a high-volume highway, and is currently designated Bike Route 9.
- Champlain Canal Lock 11 includes public restrooms and a picnic area.
- Old Route 4 is a low-volume road which runs along the current Champlain Canalway Trail between Dewey's Bridge Road and Lock 11. North of the Route 22 crossing, it becomes a dead-end road that terminates just north of Lock 11.
- The west bank of the current Champlain Canal is owned by Canal Corp for a short distance north of Lock 11, to the end of Old Route 4. Between the end of Old Route 4 and Route 22, the west bank is in private ownership.
- A snowmobile trail extends from Fort Ann to Comstock and Whitehall, largely on the ice of the current Champlain Canal. It links to trail systems on both sides of the canal.

Recommendations & Actions

1. Include bicycle-pedestrian features in future improvements to Route 4 (Bike Route 9).
2. Consider establishing an on-road linkage or loop route along Old Route 4 between Dewey's Bridge Road and Route 22.
3. Identify a sustainable north-south snowmobile trail route, as well as safe entry and exit points from the canal bed to enable trail linkages.

Old Route 4



Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			

Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Champlain Canal Lock 11 to Mile Point 58

Champlain Canal Lock 11 Looking South

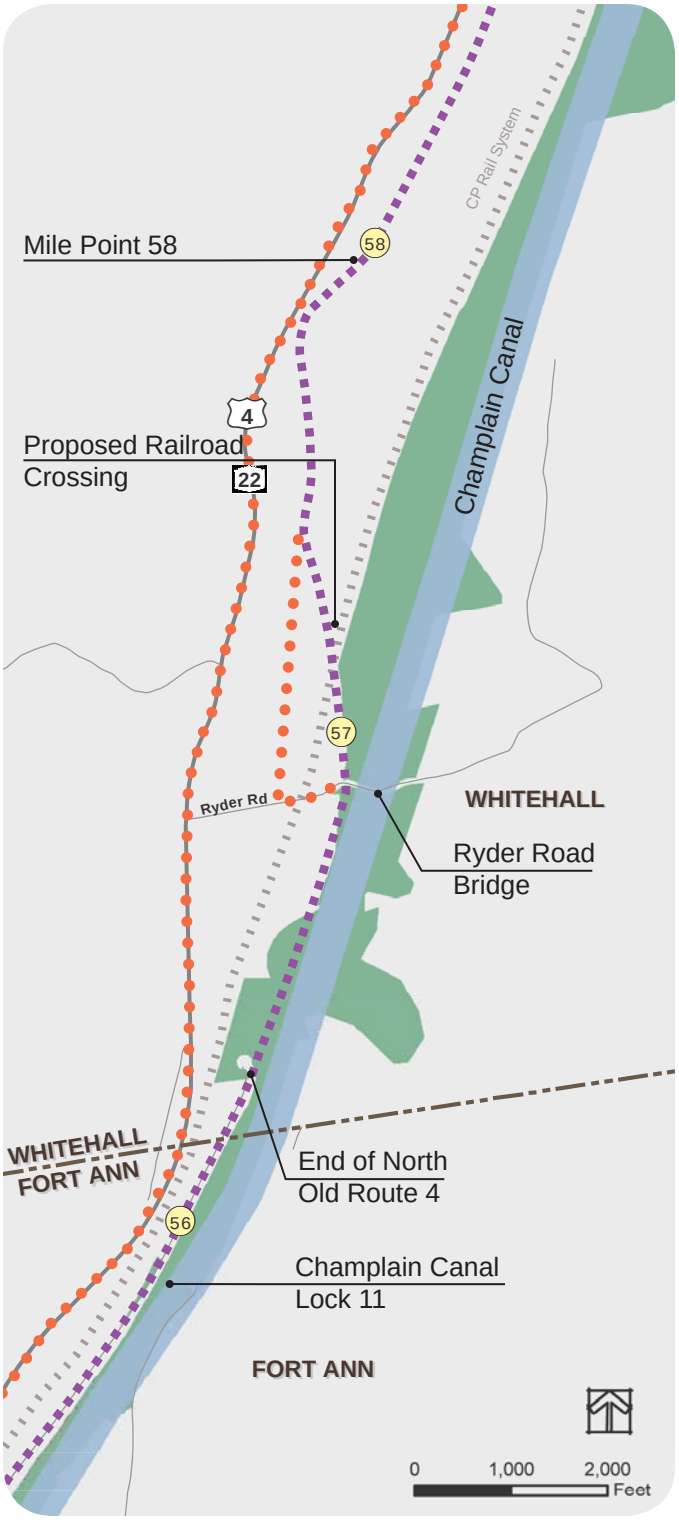
Location	Length
Town of Fort Ann & Town of Whitehall	2.2 Miles

Existing Conditions

- Resources include: Old Champlain Canal and towpath, and current Champlain Canal.
- Route 4 is a high-volume highway, and is currently designated Bike Route 9.
- Large sections of the west bank of the current Champlain Canal are owned by Canal Corp. Much of it includes wetlands that limit the potential for trail use. In places, the available land area is constricted by the railroad.
- Large sections of the Old Champlain Canal and towpath are intact. North of the point where the railroad crosses the old canal route, it is owned by a railroad company, but not used for railroad purposes. The route of the Old Champlain Canal the railroad south to Ryder Road is owned by Canal Corp.
- Ryder Road is a low-volume road that is mostly privately used. It includes an at-grade railroad crossing.
- A snowmobile trail extends from Fort Ann to Comstock and Whitehall, largely on the ice of the current Champlain Canal. It links to trail systems on both sides of the canal.

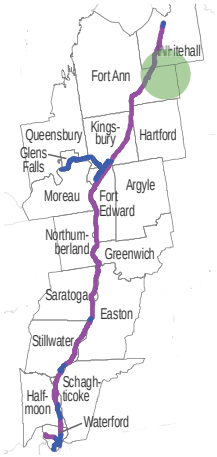
Recommendations & Actions

1. Include bicycle-pedestrian features in future improvements to Route 4 (Bike Route 9).
2. Evaluate the feasibility of establishing a trail connection along the west bank of the canal between the end of Old Route 4 and Ryder Road, as well as from Ryder Road to the route of the Old Champlain Canal. Any route must address the needs and interests of private landowners as well as challenges of cost and engineering.
3. Work with the railroad company to determine the potential of revitalizing the Old Champlain Canal and towpath as a trail route.
4. Identify a sustainable north-south snowmobile trail route, as well as safe entry and exit points from the canal bed to enable trail linkages.



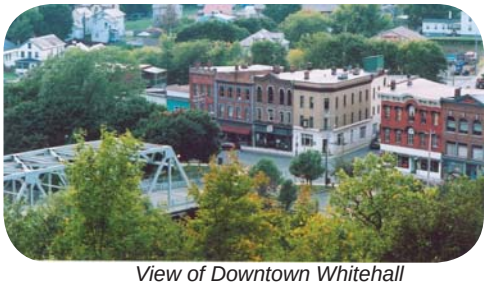
Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			



Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

Mile Point 58 to End of Old Champlain Canal



View of Downtown Whitehall

Location	Length
Town of Whitehall & Village of Whitehall	3.1 Miles

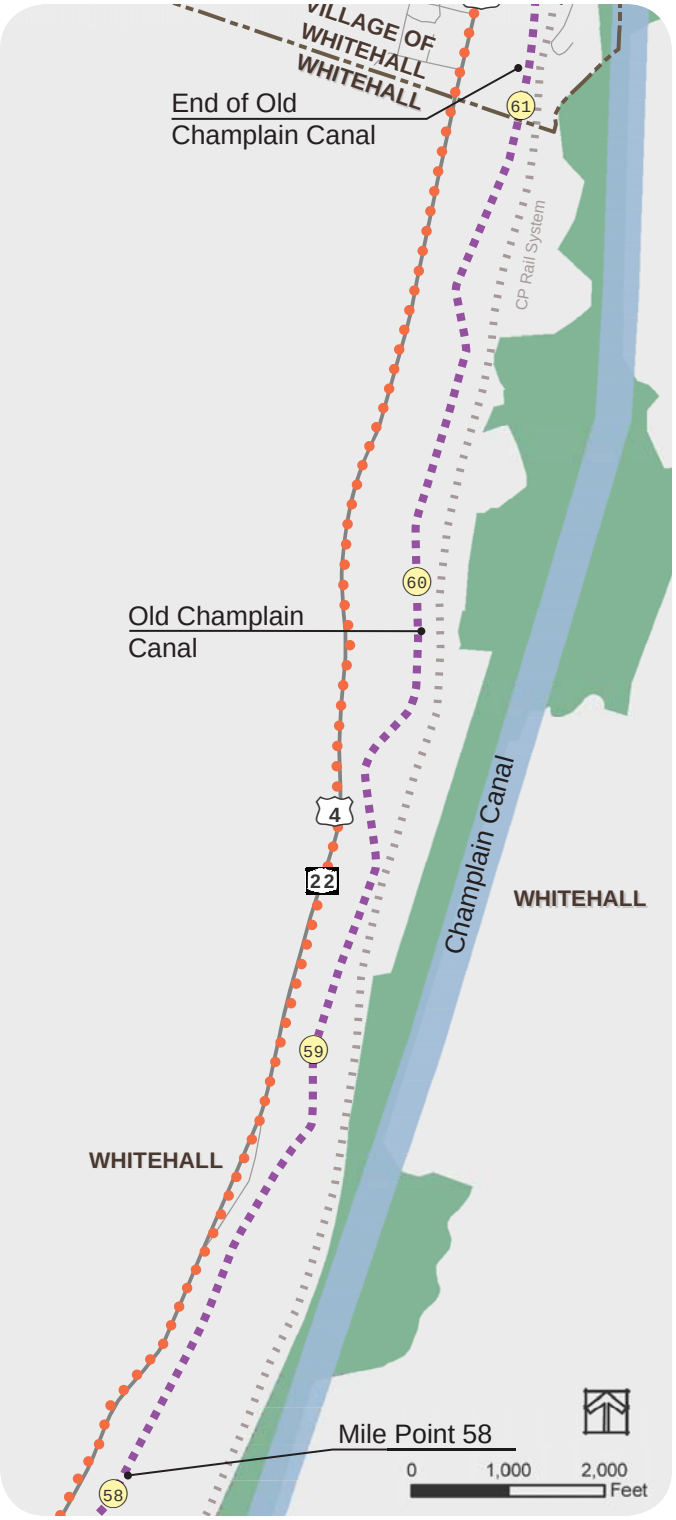
Existing Conditions

- Resources include: Old Champlain Canal and towpath, and current Champlain Canal.
- Route 4 is a high-volume highway, and is currently designated Bike Route 9.
- Large sections of the Old Champlain Canal and towpath are intact, and are owned by a railroad company. The canal and towpath are not used for railroad purposes.
- A snowmobile trail extends from Fort Ann to Comstock and Whitehall, largely on the ice of the current Champlain Canal. It links to trail systems on both sides of the canal.

Recommendations & Actions

1. Include bicycle-pedestrian features in future improvements to Route 4 (Bike Route 9).
2. Work with the railroad company to determine the potential of revitalizing the Old Champlain Canal and towpath as a trail route.
3. Identify a sustainable north-south snowmobile trail route, and enable other regional snowmobile trail linkages.

Canal Waterfront in Whitehall



Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			

Champlain Canalway Trail Action Plan

End of Old Champlain Canal to Champlain Canal Lock 12

Champlain Canal Lock 12

Whitehall Canal Harbor Park

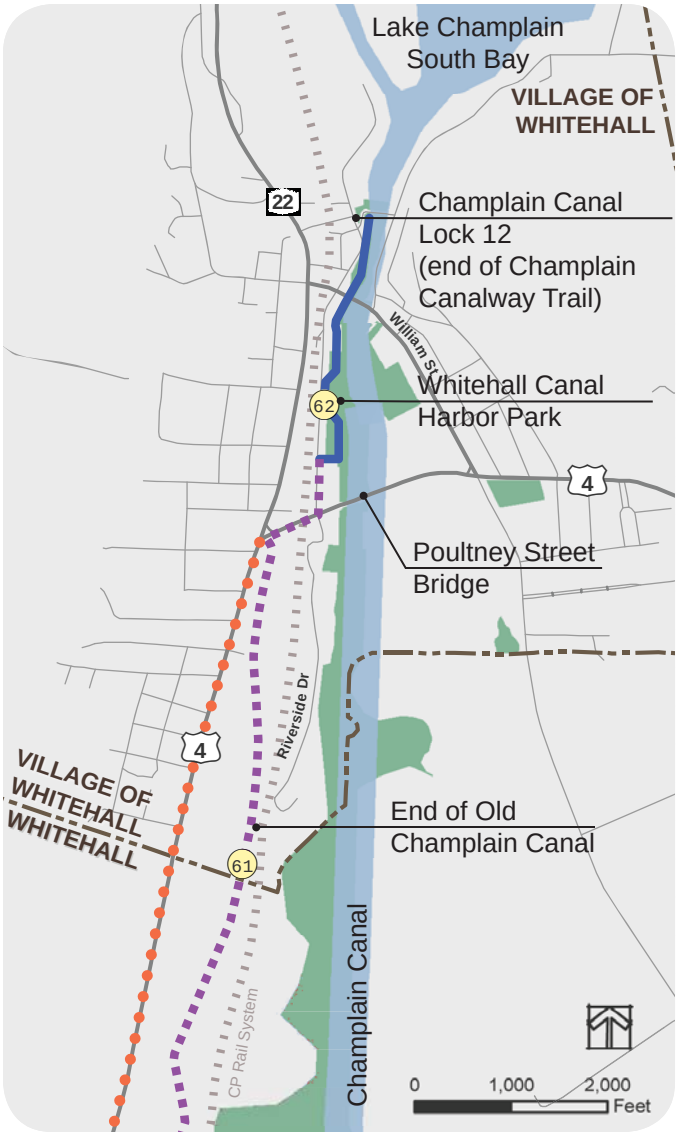
Location	Length
Town of Whitehall and Village of Whitehall	1.2 Miles

Existing Conditions

- Resources include: Old Champlain Canal and towpath, current Champlain Canal and Champlain Canal Lock 12, Whitehall Canal Harbor, and Amtrak railroad station.
- Whitehall is the "anchor" community at the northern terminus of the Champlain Canalway Trail.
- The Whitehall Canal Harbor Park includes facilities and a waterfront promenade.
- Route 4 is currently designated Bike Route 9.
- The continuous section of Old Champlain Canal and towpath terminates where the railroad crosses the old canal route near the south end of the Village of Whitehall. Extensive areas of industrial and railroad use and private property separate the old canal from the Champlain Canal harbor and Whitehall commercial district. Some remnants of the old canal remain alongside Riverside Drive.
- A snowmobile trail extends from Fort Ann to Comstock and Whitehall, largely on the ice of the current Champlain Canal linking to trail systems on both sides of the canal.

Recommendations & Actions

1. Create a stronger identity for Whitehall as a primary destination and/or departure point on the Champlain Canalway Trail, by establishing a high-quality section of trail linking with the community.
2. Work with the railroad company to determine the potential of revitalizing the Old Champlain Canal and towpath as a trail route.
3. Work with the railroad, the business community and private landowners to identify a feasible trail route linking the Canal Harbor to the Old Champlain Canal.
4. Include bicycle-pedestrian features in future improvements to Route 4 (Bike Route 9) through the commercial district.
5. Establish physical, thematic and programmatic linkages with Lake Champlain Bikeways system and the Lakes to Locks Passage Scenic Byway.
6. Identify a sustainable snowmobile trail route linking with Whitehall and other regional trails.



Legend

Existing Trail		Mile Point	1
Proposed Trail		Alternate Trail Alignment	
Public Lands			

Conclusion: Putting it all Together

Taken one piece at a time, the vision for the Champlain Canalway Trail is within reach. And the successes of other trails, and especially other parts of the Canalway Trail system, show that the benefits of completing the Champlain Canalway Trail are both tangible and worthwhile.

This Action Plan offers steps along the way - - suggestions and alternatives for where the trail can go - - and recommendations for making them happen. No single agency or political jurisdiction has the funds or resources to complete the trail on its own. What is needed is continued partnership, both within individual communities as well as between all communities along the Champlain Canalway Trail.

The amount of available information about creating trails is growing all the time. Most of the organizations listed in the beginning of this Action Plan have websites that can be helpful to Canalway Trail communities. The following are some that should be "first stops" on your search for the best available ideas and answers for your trail-related questions.

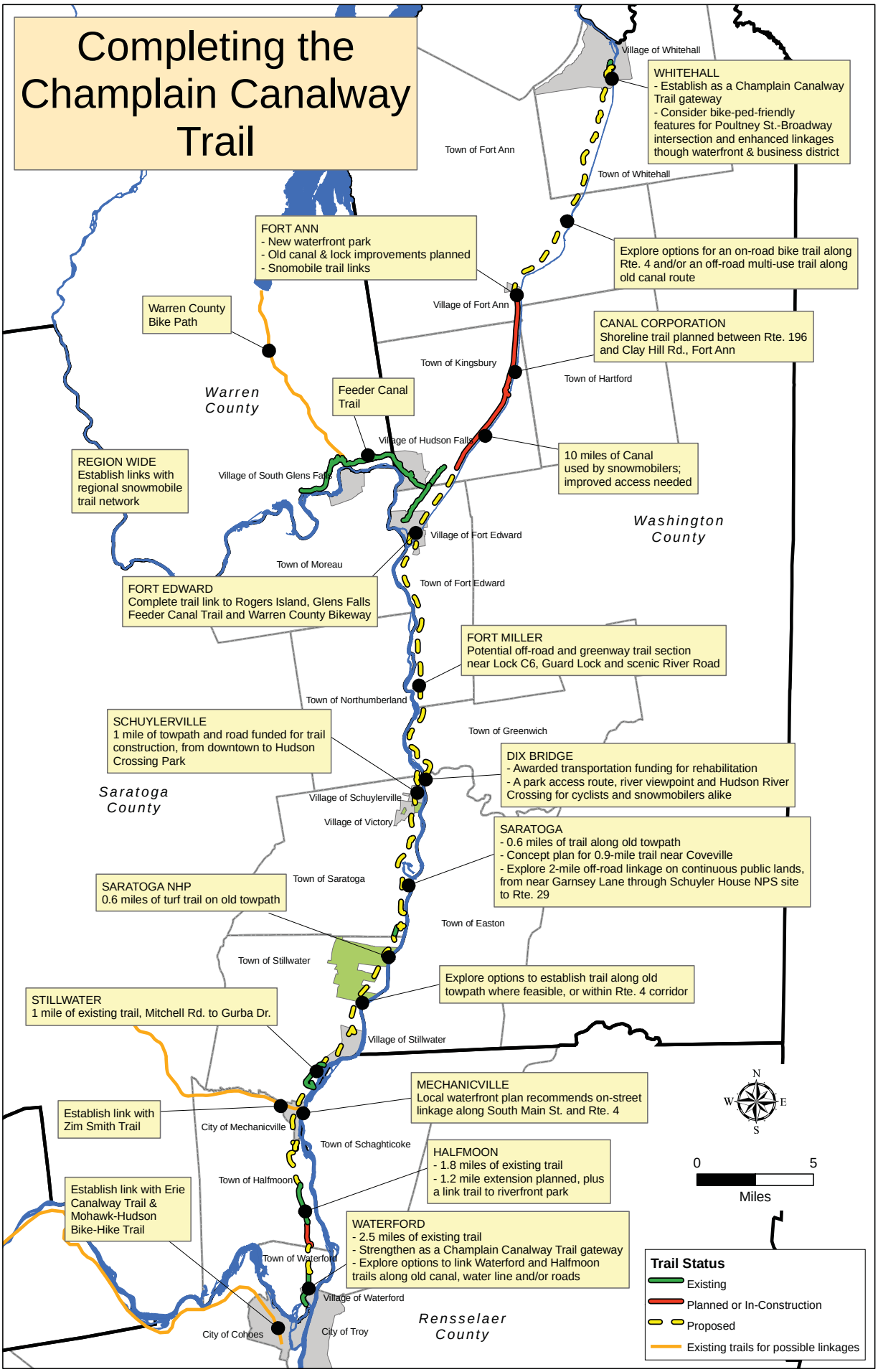
NYS Canal Corporation: The Canal Corporation owns and operates the NYS Canal system, including the Champlain and Glens Falls Feeder Canals. For information about the Canals themselves or the Canalway Trail system, go to www.canals.ny.gov

Parks and Trails New York: PTNY is a nonprofit organization that promotes parks, greenways and community trails statewide. PTNY's website includes information specific to the Canalway Trail system, as well as many helpful resources for planning and promoting trails and trail-related activity. (www.ptny.org)

Hudson River Valley Greenway: The Greenway offers information on trails, water trails, grants and many other programs serving Greenway communities. (www.hudsongreenway.ny.gov)

NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation: The New York State Trails Plan provides the framework for all major trail systems in the state. Go to www.nysparks.state.ny.us. Under the "Recreation" header, click on "Trails" and then "Statewide Plans."

Rails to Trails Conservancy: Canal trails and rail trails have much in common. This nationwide organization offers studies and other information about creating new trails as well as promoting existing trails. Go to www.railstotrails.org and click on "Build a Trail."

American Trails: This website includes a wealth of information about all aspects of trails, compiled from examples nationwide. Go to www.americantrails.org and click on "Resources."

Completing the Champlain Canalway Trail