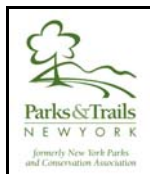


Cohoes—Waterford Canalway Trail Connection Study



Prepared for New York State Canal Corporation
By Parks and Trails New York
Final Draft Version



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Executive Summary

The cross-state Erie Canalway Trail currently ends in Cohoes, with no definable terminus. The purpose of this study is to provide a recommended route for linking the Erie Canalway Trail to Waterford, the Eastern Gateway of the New York State Canal System. At this location, the Erie Canal and Mohawk River meet the Champlain Canal and Hudson River. There is a Canal Harbor facility in Waterford, with restrooms, showers and a primitive camping site. In addition, there are restaurants and other services in Waterford that are of use to bicyclists and hikers. It is a logical eastern endpoint for the Erie Canalway Trail.

Various routes were studied. All of the options involve on-street portions due to the urban character of this area and the lack of possible rights of way that could accommodate an off-road trail for the length of the study area.

Several of the bridges and roads in the study area are scheduled for rehabilitation or replacement over the next few years, creating some uncertainty about these routes when they are under construction. However, the proposed projects also create the opportunity for improving pedestrian and bicycle facilities along these routes.

The study area is rich in historic canal infrastructure and contains a host of parks and visitor centers, making it an interesting and hospitable destination for trail users.

The study makes two recommendations:

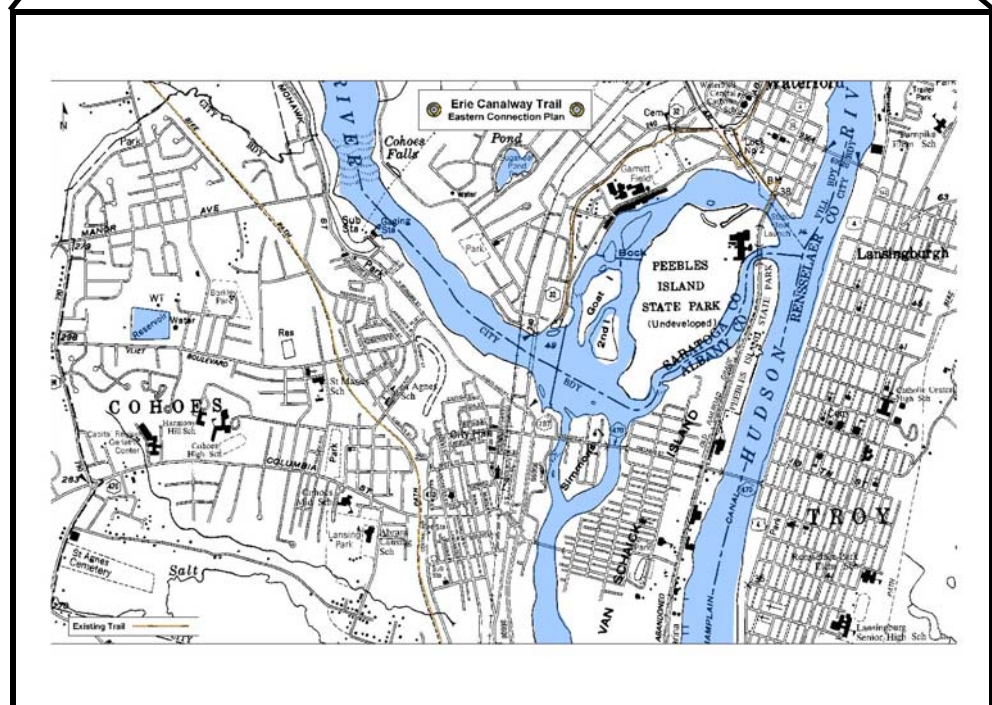
1. A primary Erie Canalway Trail route between the Manor Avenue trailhead in Cohoes and the Waterford Canal Visitor Center via Mohawk Street, Route 32 and part of the Champlain Canalway Trail.
2. Interpretation of the historic highlights of this route including views of the Cohoes Falls, and new Interpretive display on Mohawk Street.

In addition, the study suggests that in the long term it would be desirable to develop a loop trail from Manor Avenue to High Street that follows an existing path along the Enlarged Erie Canal.

Maps of Study Area



Location of Study Area Location in New York State



Study Area Detail

Introduction

The study area in this report includes the Town of Cohoes, the Town and Village of Waterford, the Village of Green Island and Peebles Island State Park (see figures 1 and 2). The area is at the junction of three important multi-use trails. These are the Erie Canalway Trail (ECT), the Hudson Valley Greenway Trail (HVGT) and the Champlain Canalway Trail (CCT).

The ECT extends from Cohoes west through New York State, following the historic Erie Canal corridor. At this writing over half of its 348 miles are completed, with an expected total completion in 2007. The CCT begins across the Mohawk River in the Village of Waterford. Its proposed route follows the Champlain Canal north to the Village of Whitehall. At this writing, approximately 1 1/2 miles of completed trail exists through the Town and Village of Waterford. Other short segments exists in locations to the north in Fort Edward, Fort Ann, Schuylerville and Whitehall.

The HVGT runs North-South along the Hudson River. In the study area the trail includes the Corning Preserve Trail and part of the Mohawk Hudson Bike Hike trail, which leads to Albany approximately 10 miles to the south.

Connections between these trails will enhance the tourism impact generated by each of them individually. Trail users on any of the three trails will be able to easily navigate from one to the other and continue a trip to many areas of interest. Cyclists coming north from the southern parts of the Hudson Valley will be able to navigate through the region to the trails that will lead them north and west. Additionally, and importantly, it is anticipated that leading trail users through these localities will encourage them to visit attractions and businesses. The area will become a hub of three major trails and the trail users will require many services that can be provided locally. These services include restaurants, bike repair shops, clothing stores, grocery stores, hotel and motel and bed and breakfasts, souvenir shops and others.

This document is a product of the Canalway Trail Partnership Project. Under this project, Park & Trails New York (PTNY), in partnership with the NYS Canal Corporation, is organizing and assisting canal communities to plan, develop, and maintain the Canalway Trail. When completed, the Canalway Trail will be a 524-mile continuous multi-use pathway along the New York State Canal System. PTNY is a statewide non-profit organization working to expand, protect and promote a network of parks, trails and open spaces throughout the state for the use and enjoyment of all.

Existing trail initiatives in the study area

Erie Canalway Trail (ECT)

The Erie Canalway Trail is a cross state multi use trail extending from Tonawanda to Cohoes. It follows the route of the historic Erie Canal. Wherever possible the trail is on the towpath. The trail is approximately 348 miles long and as of this writing almost 240 miles have been completed. The trail enters Cohoes from the west and is known in this area as part of the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail. There is currently trail access at Manor Ave, Vliet Street and Alexander Street.

The ECT is a system of trails under multiple jurisdictions at the state, and local levels. In the study area the trail is owned by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). Albany County and the Village of Cohoes help to maintain the trail. There is also a Regional Canalway Trail Group (RCTG) that meets regularly and is supportive of grass-roots initiatives on the trail. Among those initiatives are Adopt-a-Trail programs and trail planning activities. (See pg 23 for more information on the Canalway Trails Association of New York (CTANY))

Champlain Canalway Trail (CCT)

The Champlain Canalway Trail, like the ECT is a multi-use trail that follows the historic Champlain Canal. The trail starts in Waterford and is intended to extend through the Champlain Canal Corridor to Whitehall. Presently the trail exists in Waterford for approximately 1.5 miles and in Whitehall in the Canal Terminal area. Between these two ends the trail is mostly on road, using Rt NY 4, or off road in unimproved sections for short distances in Schuylerville, Ft. Edward and Ft. Ann.

Hudson Valley Greenway Trail (HVGT)

The Hudson Valley Greenway Trail is a north-south multi-use trail that, when completed will extend from New York City to Waterford. It is administered by the Hudson Valley Greenway Corridor.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to provide a recommended route for linking the Erie Canalway Trail to Waterford, the Eastern Gateway of the New York State Canal System. At this location, the Erie Canal and Mohawk River meet the Champlain Canal and Hudson. There is a Canal Harbor facility in Waterford, with restrooms, showers and a primitive camping site. In addition, there are restaurants and other services in Waterford that are of use to bicyclists and hikers. It is a logical eastern endpoint for the Erie Canalway Trail. The cross-state Erie Canalway Trail currently ends in Cohoes, with no definable terminus.

Additionally, the study provides information about various resources and options within the study area for enhancing the trail experience and taking advantage of the tourism and quality of life opportunities provided by the trail.

Inventory and Analysis of Study Area

Canalway Trail Resources

Erie Canalway Trail



Manor Avenue Trail Intersection

The Erie Canalway Trail enters Cohoes from the west on an abandoned Rail Road bed currently owned by New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) and maintained by Albany County and the City of Cohoes. The western end of the trail in Cohoes is at its intersection with Manor Avenue. This intersection is at grade and is marked with bollards and simple signage. There is no indication of coming into Cohoes or the user's location. In addition, there is no parking or trail head.

The trail continues east on the OPRHP property through the city to Alexander Street. This eastern gateway is also at street level. This crossing has some parking but also lacks any indication of the user's location in relation to the surrounding area.

The trail crosses several other streets below and above grade. Significant crossings are at Vliet Street, where the trail passes under



Alexander Avenue Trail Head

the street, and High Street where the trail passes over the street. At both of these locations there are entrances allowing access between the trail and the street. Although they are not as convenient as the at-grade crossings at Manor and Alexander Avenues, they provide alternate ways to move between the city streets and the trail.

The trail in the City of Cohoes is often not visible from the surrounding neighborhoods. In addition, inefficient vehicle barriers, poor lighting and lack of police patrols due to poor vehicle access have resulted in the perception that the trail is a less than desirable place for recreation by some Cohoes residents.

Albany County is planning to rehabilitate the off road portion of the ECT trail in the City of Cohoes. The project will include a new 10 foot wide asphalt trail surface, signage and other amenities. Work is scheduled to begin in August 2004 and to be completed by November 2004. The improvements made under this project may help to ameliorate many of the negative perceptions raised above.

Champlain Canalway Trail

The Champlain Canalway Trail begins near the confluence of the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers across from Peebles Island. The southernmost section of the trail is accessible by pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic over the Fulton Street bridge off of NY Rt. 32 in the Town of Waterford.

The small park at the south end of the trail overlooks a dam and the waterways at the confluence. Aside from a communications tower, the site is nice and offers users an escape from the city streets. Picnic tables are available and a remnant of the Old Champlain canal can be viewed although it is not interpreted.



Champlain Canal Trail Crossing

The trail goes north from Fulton Street following the towpath of the Old Champlain Canal into the Village of Waterford. The trail is approximately six to eight feet wide with a stone dust surface, which is rough in some locations. There are two at-grade crossings with local streets that provide access off NY Rt. 32 to several large industrial businesses. The roads also provide alternate traffic access to the Village of Waterford via the Fourth Street bridge. The crossings are not well maintained. The signs and pavement markings are inconsistent. The vehicle barriers at these trail entrance points are unconventional and do not meet ADA requirements. The narrow spaces between the barriers require cy-

clists to dismount. Worn paths around the barriers indicate that trail users find them difficult to maneuver through.

Despite these issues the Old Champlain Canalway Trail route is still preferable to NY Rt. 32.

Waterford Canal Harbor Visitors' Center



Waterford Visitors' Center

Just south of Lock E-2 the Champlain Canalway Trail ends. Trail traffic is routed onto South Street and over the Fourth Street bridge to the Waterford Canal Harbor. The Waterford Canal Harbor Visitor's Center is located along the north shore of the Erie Canal and is accessed via the promenade. On the way to the Visitor's Center, the trail user is treated to a view of Erie Canal Lock 2 and a view of the Old Champlain Canal "sidecut."

The park at Lock E-2 is spacious and offers a pleasant resting spot for trail users. It is also possible to view boats locking through the current day Erie Canal from this location.

The Visitor's Center was constructed in 2003, crowning the new Waterford Harbor project. The Visitor's Center has meeting rooms and interpretive exhibits relating to Waterford's canal history, a new State trooper sub-station, a dock-master's office, and restrooms, including showers, for boaters and trail users.

The Town of Waterford has also received a grant to install a hiker-biker-boater campsite adjacent to the Visitor's Center that will accommodate up to four tents for trail users and boaters.



The Waterford Sidecut

The harbor also offers facilities for boat dockage with water and electricity and is

easily accessible to downtown Waterford and to the Champlain Canal Trail to the north and south.

The visitor's center is the northern boundary of this study, however it is germane to point out that the trail does continue north of the Village of Waterford. Approximately 1.5 miles exist proceeding north from NY Rt. 4. This segment ends at the Half-moon Town Line. There are plans to try and continue this trail north to the City of Mechanicville. Eventually, it is hoped that there will be continuous trail to Whitehall.



Entrance to Visitors' Center

Hudson Valley Greenway Trail

The Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail (HRVGT) will run north-south along the Hudson River from Waterford to New York City. In the study area the



New Bridge from Peebles Island to Waterford Visitor Center

HRVGT is not yet complete. However, the Hudson River Valley Greenway Council, Albany County and the Capital District Transportation Committee completed a study in 2003 that proposed a route from the existing trailhead in Watervliet to Peebles Island State Park. The route recommended in the plan crosses an abandoned railroad bridge between Green Island and Van Schaick Island and then continues north along an abandoned railroad bed parallel to Delaware Avenue to Peebles

Island State Park. The trail will then cross the newly rehabilitated bridge over the Mohawk River and Erie Canal to the Waterford Canal Harbor Visitor's Center.

One significant development is that funding has been secured by the City of Cohoes to purchase and rehabilitate the abandoned railroad bridge discussed above for bicycle and pedestrian use. The bridge will connect Cohoes and

Green Island and eliminates a formidable obstacle to completing the Hudson River Greenway Trail in the study area.

The intended route of the HVGT is of extreme interest to this study as it offers a connection to the trail going south to Albany and through the Hudson Valley to New York City. That, and its proximity to Peebles Island State Park and the new visitor center there make it a good choice for the expected tourism use of the trails.

Street System Resources

Streets

In evaluating Erie Canalway connections between Cohoes and Waterford the use of local streets is unavoidable since potential off-road rights of way do not exist to accommodate an off-road trail for the length of the study area. The potential on-street connections are assessed below.

It is important to note that several major roadway and bridge projects are being planned in the study area for the 2005-2009 time period that may affect the configuration of these streets. The projects are mentioned below. Plans have not been finalized, however. Therefore, it is uncertain what the impact will be. Hopefully, the projects will result in improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the study area.

During the construction of these projects various street routes will be closed. Detours will be established, resulting in increased traffic on these streets. It should therefore be noted that the routes recommended in this study may be impacted during the time of construction due to detouring.

Ontario Street (NY Rt. 470) is a major East-West connector through the city, across NY Rt. 787, and through Van Schaick Island to Delaware Ave. The road actually continues across the Hudson River into Troy making an important connection to that city and its offerings. It is important to note that this route serves as a link to the study area from Troy.

Ontario Street is a busy two-lane urban road lined with businesses and residences. Its width is 40' curb to curb with two travel lanes and parking on both sides. These factors raise potential conflicts between bicyclists and motor vehicles as bicyclists may be subjected to opening car doors, extended mirrors that narrow the travel space, and obscured views of intersecting traffic. There-



Parking on Ontario Street

fore, according to AASHTO, 12 feet of combined bicycle travel and parking width should be the minimum considered for this type of shared use. This would limit the travel lanes to 8' in each direction, which is below AASHTO standards. The bridge to Van Schaick Island is 28 feet wide curb to curb without shoulders. Which is the 14 feet of lane recommended by AASHTO for shared roadways.



Ontario Street Bridge to Troy



Bridge Narrowing

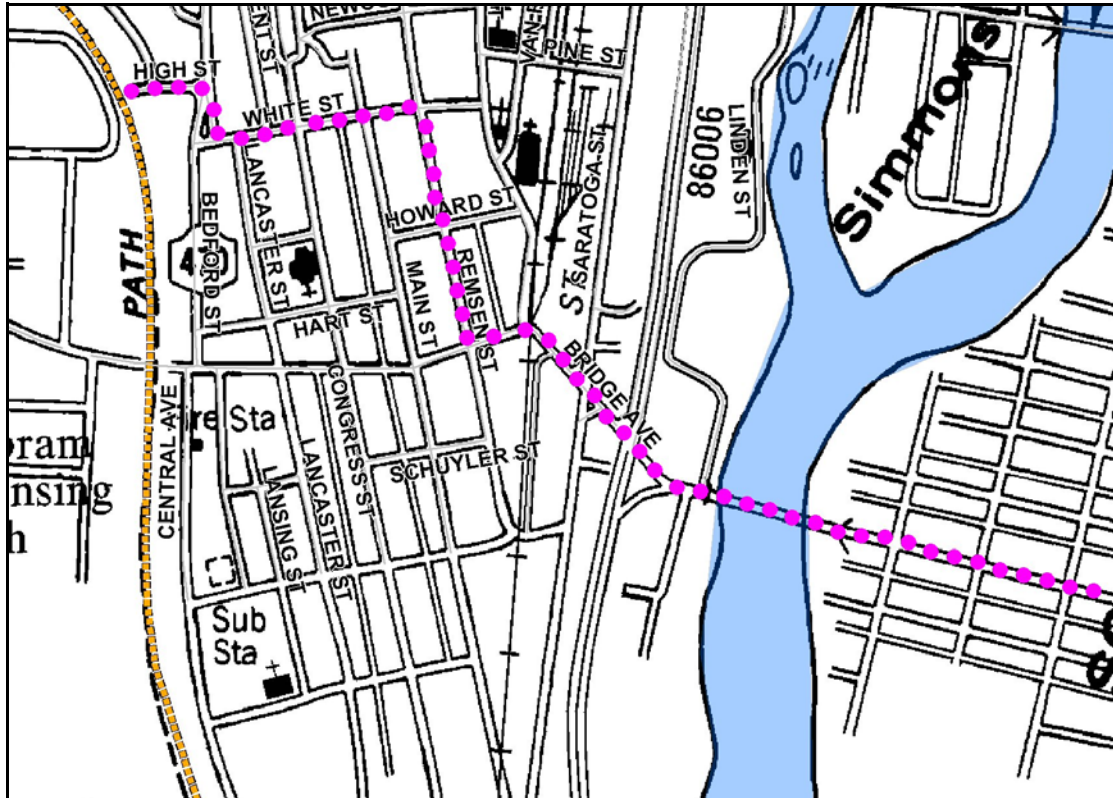
Another issue with the Ontario Street corridor is the intersection with NY Rt. 787, which is essentially an arterial with stop lights and involves crossing four lanes of traffic and 2 right turn lanes. This is typical of all the street crossings with NY Rt. 787 described in this report and will be discussed in greater detail below.

High Street-Bridge Avenue. The route that was examined is illustrated on page 13. This route through the city west of NY Rt. 787 has many of the same issues that exist on the Ontario Street route. Its is urban in character with on-street parking raising potential conflicts between bicyclists and motor vehicles as bicyclists may be subjected to opening car doors, extended mirrors that narrow the travel space, and obscured views of intersecting traffic. Bridge Street is 37 feet, curb to curb. There are two travel lanes and parking on both sides of the street putting this street below the AASHTO standards for Shared Roadway use. Additionally, there is an intersection with NY Rt. 787.



Bridge Avenue Bridge to Van Schaick Island

On the east side of NY Rt. 787, the High Street/ Bridge Street route improves due to less on-street parking, and a bridge which includes sidewalks, but still does not meet the AASHTO standards for Shared Roadway use.



High Street-Bridge Ave. Route

This route would go past a park on Van Schaick Island, offering some respite and greensward opportunities.

NY Route 787. The major artery feeding traffic into Cohoes from the south is NY Rt. 787. This is classified as an interstate highway and there are several restrictions on it as far as pedestrian/bicycle traffic are concerned.

Within the study area however, the concern is for crossing NY Rt. 787 to get to and from Van Schaick Island. The intersections at Ontario Street and Bridge Avenue are undesirable for bicyclists and pedestrians given the arterial nature of the roadway and since four to six lanes of traffic must be crossed. These intersections do have pedestrian signals, however. The City of Cohoes and the New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) are currently studying the NY Rt. 787 corridor to determine possible improvements to be made to calm traffic, improve the pedestrian crossings at intersecting



NY Rt. 787-Bridge Avenue Intersection

streets, and create a “gateway” experience. Conversations with representatives of the City of Cohoes and the DOT indicated that the improvements at intersections may be extensive. This project provides the opportunity to significantly enhance the street crossings at NY Rt. 787 bicyclists and pedestrians.

Mohawk Street. This East-West roadway was rehabilitated in 2003. New alignments, streetscape and landscaping have improved this gateway to the city from the west. Although no bicycle lanes have been striped as a part of the project, the travel lanes are wide and easily shared. Additionally, there is little on-street parking. Mohawk Street would provide a desirable link between the intersection with Manor Avenue and NY Route 32.



Rt. 32 in Waterford

NY Route 32 is a major North-South roadway linking Cohoes and Waterford. South of Cohoes it is an extremely busy road carrying heavy commercial as well as passenger vehicles. North of Cohoes it crosses a bridge across the Mohawk to Waterford. In Waterford it connects to NY Rt. 4 which goes North to Mechanicville and Whitehall or South to Troy. NY Rt. 32 is 41 feet curb to curb with sidewalks on both sides. This is acceptable for shared use roadway.

Bridges



Rt. 32 Bridge (looking south)

NY Rt. 32 Bridge. This bridge crosses the Mohawk River between the City of Cohoes and the Town of Waterford. It is an old bridge and the DOT is currently examining options for its replacement. A discussion with various members of the DOT team that is looking into this revealed that there are currently three options being considered. Of these three, one would involve rehabilitating the existing bridge, one would replace the bridge with a new one in the same location and the third would replace the bridge with a new, relocated bridge. The selection has

not been made as of this writing.

If the DOT decides to build a new, relocated bridge then the southern end of the bridge would meet a new “straightened” NY Rt 787 that would also include improvements to the intersection of NY Rt. 787 and NY Rt. 32. The northern end of the bridge would meet the current location of NY Rt. 32 in Waterford. This new configuration could also include a connection from the new bridge to the

end of the Champlain Canalway Trail.

The existing bridge has 6 foot sidewalks for pedestrians and the bridge is 41' curb to curb. It is hoped that if a new bridge is built, either in the present location or a new one, that the design will include the needs of pedestrians and bicycles.

Rail Road Bridge. This bridge, part of an abandoned rail road corridor, connects the southern end of Van Schaick Island with the Town of Green Island. The Open Space Institute, in cooperation with the towns has purchased the bridge and is currently examining a process for rehabilitating it for pedestrian and bicycle use. This is an important factor in that it will offer a means of connection for the Hudson River Greenway to Van Schaick Island from the Corning Preserve Trail.

NY Rt. 470 and Bridge Street. Both of these streets include bridges to Van Schaick Island. They are both heavily traveled and both are marked for replacement in the near future. As in the Rt. 32 bridge (above) it is hoped that the new bridge designs will include pedestrian and bicycle considerations.

Natural and Cultural Resources

Original Erie Canal and Enlarged Erie Canal

There are many remnants of the Enlarged Erie Canal within this study area. The most significant are between Vliet and High Streets along the original route of that canal. The remnants include locks, canal walls and towpath.

The City of Cohoes has, in the past, built a walking trail connecting some of these remnants. In the past, however, this path has not been maintained and the locks and canal towpath and prism have been illegally used for dumping garbage and unwanted household items. A cleanup along this area happened in early 2004 but it is unknown at this time if this cleanup will be repeated. This condition is a problem for developing a trail along these canal remnants.



Enlarged Erie Canal Lock Remnant

Additionally, several locks are close to private homes and have become perceived as being a part of the homeowners' property. A detailed survey of lands owned by the City of Cohoes should be made to determine the boundary between private and public ownership.



**Enlarged Erie Towpath Trail and Lock
Remnant**

Several remnants of water works from the Old Erie Canal and the Enlarged Erie Canal have been uncovered and interpreted as part of the improvements to Mohawk Street. This is an extremely important new facility for viewing the history of Cohoes and the Erie Canal.

Cohoes Falls

Cohoes Falls is a natural wonder of the area. It is the first set of falls on the Mohawk River going west from the Hudson. In the Spring the display is quite spectacular. At other times of the year the water volume traversing the falls is less due to the reduced outflow from the canal and from the diversion of water to the power plant on the south side of the river. The view of the falls from Fall View Street is quite spectacular and this opportunity should at the very least be noted with signage on the trail and interpreted as to the history of the power generation there.

As this study was being written the Town of Green Island put forth a proposal to build a new power plant on the Mohawk River at the Cohoes Falls. This plant would replace the existing facility and offer more recreational opportunities on the south side of the river. This would be an ideal match for connecting the trail both physically and through interpretation with the falls.



Cohoes Falls March 2004

Old Champlain Canal

There are remnants of the Old Champlain Canal along the Champlain Canalway Trail in the Town and Village of Waterford. Canal lock remnants, prism, wall and towpath are present.

Peebles Island State Park and Visitor Center

The Delaware Avenue route takes trail users through a part of Peebles Island State Park and past the OPRHP offices and the new Peebles Island Visitor Center.

Co-sponsored by OPRHP and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

Commission, this visitor center has information on the history of the region and serves as a clearing house for tourism in the capital district and areas to the north. It is a very important facility for trail users who are looking for specific types of activities at their destination and points along the way.

The state park on Peebles Island is a valuable resource in and of itself. It has hiking trails that provide views of the Hudson and Mohawk River Confluence that are not available anywhere else. It is positioned ideally as a respite for hikers and bikers on the trail and is just a short ride or walk on the new bridge across the river to the Waterford Visitor Center.

Ownership

The existing route of the Erie Canalway Trail through the study area is owned by OPRHP. It is maintained by Albany County through an agreement with OPRHP.

The pathway that parallels the Enlarged Erie Canal remnants from Vliet Street to High Street is owned by the City of Cohoes.

The portions of the proposed connectors that are on streets will be owned by the municipalities or by the State of New York.

The abandoned Rail Road right of way along Delaware Ave is owned by OPRHP.

Mapping

The accompanying maps show the study area with the routes of the existing Erie and Champlain Canalway Trail, the proposed Hudson River Greenway Trail, the location of Natural and Cultural Resources, and the proposed connector routes.

Methodology

Community Information Meetings

Several community information meetings were held in the preparation of this study. The first was at a meeting of the Mohawk-Hudson Regional Canalway Trail Group. Those attending were interested in interpreting the remnants of previous iterations of the Erie Canal as well as using the existing portions of the Champlain Canalway Trail. Voice was also given to the importance of safety on the route and the use of the new bridge between Peebles Island State Park and the Waterford Visitor Center.

A second meeting was held and sponsored by the City of Cohoes Department

of Economic Development. A large number of persons from various organizations interested in the community were invited but only 7 people attended the meeting. Again the interest in interpreting the historic resources of the canals was voiced. At this meeting the question of crime on the existing trail was brought up. It is known to have become a night time hang-out for youth. However it was mentioned that there is a need for this kind of plan to fit in with the ideas of economic development that are beginning to be discussed in the city government.

Other Meetings

A meeting was held with representatives from NYSDOT to discuss plans for the proposed NY Rt. 32 Bridge. At this meeting the three alternatives that have previously been mentioned were discussed. Also discussed at the meeting were the proposed changes to NY Rt. 787 in the city and the intersections with Ontario Street and Bridge Avenue.

In a discussion with OPRHP staff it was indicated that there would be no objection from OPRHP to including Canalway Trail on a proposed route past the Peebles Island Visitor's Center. However, more discussion would be necessary if that route were chosen, in order to finalize that plan.

The author is a member of the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Panel. This plan has been discussed with that panel as well as with staff of the CDTC. The comments discussed were compatibility with present plans, effects of the intention of the plan to the city, safety of bicyclists and pedestrians at the NY Rt. 787 intersections. Interaction with CDTC staff is considered important in the completion of this plan.

Staff of the City of Cohoes Department of Economic Development were interviewed. The staff expressed an interest in seeing the completion of this plan, especially as it related the trail to the downtown area. The staff discussed several projects planned in the downtown area and along Delaware Avenue that might influence the recommendations made. The re-design of the NY Rt. 787 corridor and intersections were also discussed.

A second community meeting was held in Cohoes to gain comments on the proposed recommendations. The recommendations made in this final document includes changes made in response to both.

Analysis

Possible Linkage Points

There are several locations on the existing Erie Canalway Trail in Cohoes that

could serve as departure points to potential routes that link to Waterford. The crossing at Manor Avenue in the western end of the study area, and the crossing at High Street in the central part of the study area, and the current trail terminus at Alexander Street provide potential departure points from the trail to on-road linkage routes to Waterford.

Constraints

There are no major constraints to the development of a linkage route. There are no missing bridges or heavily wooded areas or privately owned rights-of-way needed. The potential linkage routes all entail established trails or city streets.

Other than the limitation of the streets and bridges already mentioned above there are no looming physical barriers to the development of any of the recommended routes.

Mapping

Maps of the existing trail routes, historic and natural resources and proposed routes will be found at the end of this document. In addition a large scale composite map will be found in a folder on the printed version and as a PDF file on the CD-Rom version of this document.

Recommendations

Introduction to Recommendations

The recommendations made in this study are based on three factors: the conditions of the condition and geometry of the potential roadway and trail linkages, including intersections and bridges. In this case, these facilities have been assessed in terms of suitability for bicycle and pedestrian use. In some cases, recommendations may also include suggestions for improving facilities for these uses.

The second factor tries to take into account the intentions of trail users in so far as they would be using the trail for recreation and transportation related trips. It is assumed in this study that many of the trail users who would want to connect from the East-West Erie Canalway Trail to the North-South Champlain Canalway Trail or Hudson Valley Greenway Trail are on long-distance trips. These trips may be multiple day trips or a day's outing—for instance from Schenectady to Mechanicville or Albany. In these cases it is felt that the most direct route would be desired by the trail users.

The third factor is the location of resources. The resources included in this study are the historic and natural resources as well as the economic resources of

shopping, lodging and restaurants.

Recommended Routing Descriptions

The study makes two recommendations that can be implemented together or separately. The primary recommendation will be the officially designated Erie Canalway Trail route between Cohoes and Waterford. The secondary recommendation shall be considered as a historic alternate route that would be developed in tandem with the primary route or at a later date. In addition, a long term suggestion is made below for developing a historic loop trail along the historic flight of locks in Cohoes.

Manor Avenue/Mohawk Street/NY Rt 32

This is the primary recommended route for designation as the Erie Canalway Trail link between Cohoes and Waterford.

West to East this route exits the Erie Canalway Trail at Manor Avenue, proceeds north along Manor Ave to Mohawk Street. At this point, a short side trip can be made to the overlook of the Cohoes Falls or to the proposed waterside recreation area at the New Green Island Power Plant. This side trip should be signed on the main route and interpreted. The trail route proceeds east on Mohawk Street to the intersection with the NY Rt. 32 Bridge where it turns north and crosses the Mohawk River. The route continues north to Fulton Street where it turns west and joins with the existing Champlain Canal Trail to the Waterford Visitor Center.

This route connects the Erie Canalway Trail directly with the Champlain Canalway Trail, downtown Cohoes and the RiverSpark Visitor Center. It connects indirectly with the Hudson Valley Greenway Trail and Peebles Island State Park and Visitor Center

Improvements to the trail head at Manor Avenue are recommended, such as an improved kiosk, vehicle barriers, and benches. These improvements could be easily accommodated on the east and west sides of Manor Avenue. Improvements to the street signs, warning motorists of the trail crossings are needed, as well as improved crossing striping. Signage on Mohawk Street indicating it is a Shared Use Roadway is recommended.

This route also assumes that the NY Rt. 32 bridge will either remain as it is, or that the new bridge will be in the same location as the present one. If, however, the bridge is relocated to the end of a straightened NY Rt. 787 then the trail would come east on Mohawk Street to the new intersection with NY Rt. 787 and cross the Mohawk River. As has been discussed above, it is likely that a new bridge in this location could include a direct connection to the Champlain Canal-

way Trail. This would be highly desirable, assuming that the Rt. 787 intersection also has design accommodations for pedestrian and bicycle use.

High Street/NY Route 470/Delaware Avenue

This route is the secondary recommendation for designation as an historic alternate route for the Canalway Trail. Going West to East this route exits/enters the Erie Canalway Trail at High Street. It then proceeds along NY Rt. 470 (Ontario Street) onto Van Schaick Island to Delaware Avenue. The route continues north on Delaware Avenue, through Peebles Island State Park passing the new visitor center there and across the bridge to the Waterford Visitor Center.

This historic alternate route is recommended because of its direct connection between the three trail systems in the study area. It connects the Erie Canalway Trail with the Hudson Valley Greenway Trail and the Champlain Canalway Trail. It also connects the major commercial center of downtown Cohoes and the RiverSpark Visitor Center, two other major visitor centers and the historic resources of the enlarged Erie Canal.

Although there are pedestrian crossings and pedestrian lights at the intersection of NY Route 787 and NY Route 470, the heavy traffic at this location and the number of lanes that must be crossed create an unfriendly atmosphere for bicyclists and pedestrians. It is hoped that any redesign of the NY Route 787 corridor in Cohoes will involve traffic calming features that improve conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians at this location.

Enlarged Erie Canal Loop Trail

This trail, would, going West—East exit the Erie Canalway Trail at Manor Avenue and proceed north to Mohawk Street. At this point, this trail too can include a side trip to the Cohoes Falls or Recreation area as in the description above. However, in this case the trail turns west on Mohawk street and onto Lafayette Street to join with the existing, although un-maintained trail along the towpath of the Enlarged Erie Canal. The path re-joins the city streets near High Street and given adequate signage, users could either choose to re-join the Erie Canalway Trail going East or West, or take the designated connector trail west.

This path passes several old canal locks and canal prism and old walls. Additionally, this path passes nearby two other canal locks that are behind the main streets close to private property. It would be important to survey these resources to determine the location of the public property and re-claim it.

Much of the path had been paved in the past and was cleared in the spring of 2004 by the City of Cohoes. It has not been maintained, however, and would need a plan for its rehabilitation and maintenance.

This route also passes the new park being constructed to interpret the old waterworks at Harmony Mills, a strong interpretive connection should be made.

Signage

It is important that at every node or point of connection adequate signage be provided. This would include directional signage and trail blazers. In addition, interpretive signs and map sign panels would also be beneficial. These types of signage are recommended at the following locations.

- Manor Avenue Trail Head
- High Street Trail Head
- Alexander Avenue Trail Head
- Waterford Visitor Center
- Pebbles Island Visitor Center

Canalway Trail blazers should be used liberally throughout each of the routes that are used. The Canalway Trail blazers should be the same as those used across the state with the addition of a sign indicating "TO" below Canalway Trail Erie for on-road segments (see illustration). They should be located at the very least at every turn on the route. Interim blazer signs should also be placed where the trail user may become unsure he or she is on the correct route due a long distance between signs.

Signs indicating the location of cultural, natural and commercial resources should be available where appropriate.

Implementation

In the near term (one to two years), the Canal Corporation should discuss implementing the primary recommended route with the various involved parties, i.e., the City of Cohoes and the Town of Waterford. This would help establish the eastern terminus of the Erie Canalway Trail in Waterford. Implementation would mostly involve coordination with regard to signing the route.

In the medium term (two to three years), it is recommended that the secondary route be implemented. This would also require coordination with the involved agencies, the City of Cohoes, the NYSDOT, the Hudson River Valley Greenway and OPRHP.

In the long term (three to five years), it would be beneficial for the City of Cohoes or perhaps an interested non-profit organization to implement the Old Erie Canal Loop.

Canalway Trails Association of New York

The Canalway Trails Association of New York (CTANY) is a voluntary organization dedicated to making the Canalway Trail a world class multi-use recreational trail. CTANY assists state agencies, local municipalities, counties, and organizations in developing and maintaining the Canalway Trail System.

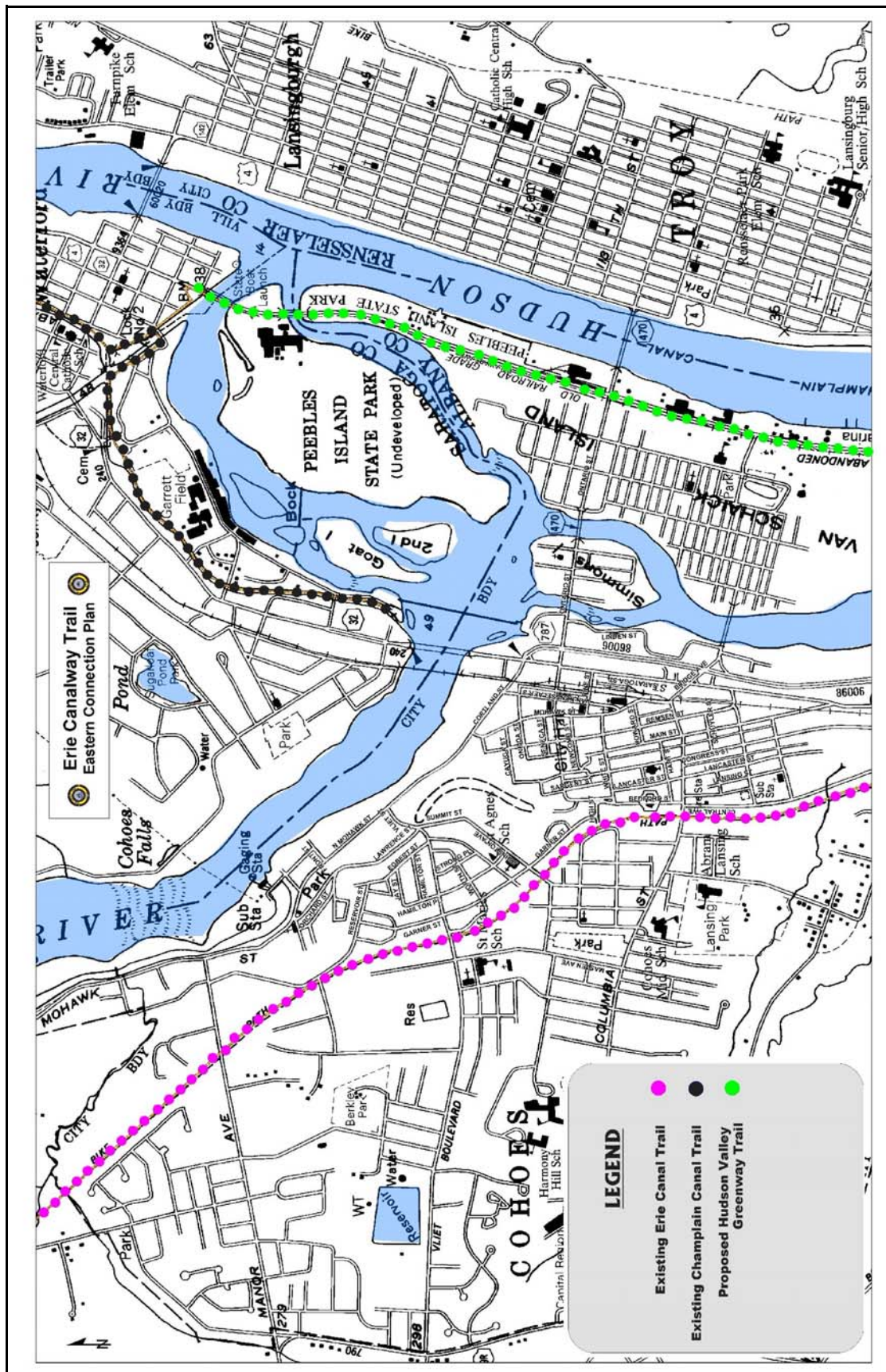
CTANY functions in partnership with the New York State Canal Corporation, and operates under the non-profit status of Parks & Trails New York.

The purpose of CTANY is to promote the completion and proper maintenance of the Canalway Trail across New York State. CTANY acts as a coordination and communication group for Canalway Trail Stakeholders, including state agencies, local municipalities, civic organizations, individual volunteers and trail users. In cooperation with NYS Canal Corporation, CTANY also organizes and guides participation in the Canalway Trail Adopt-a-Trail Program.

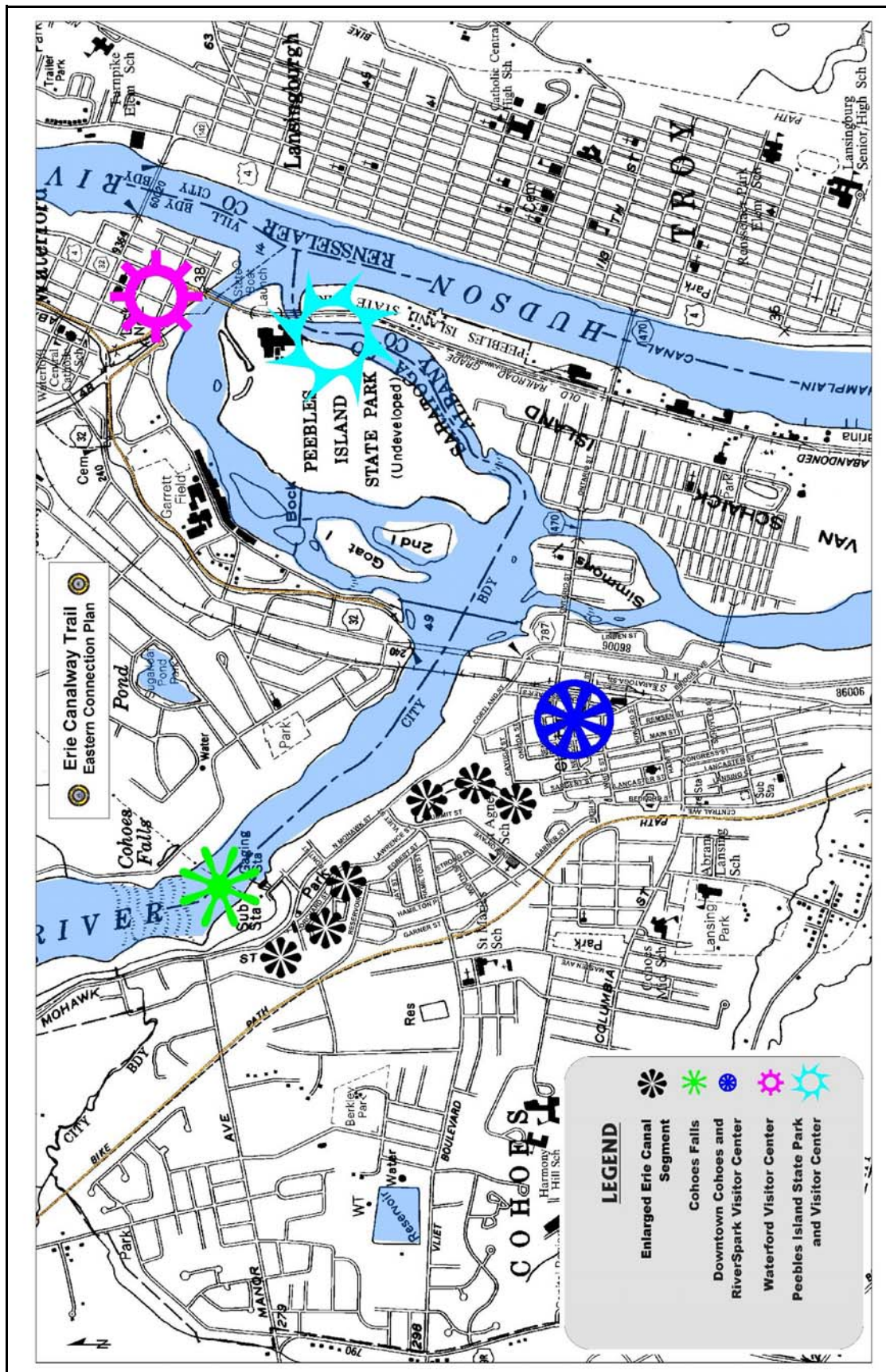
Maps

On following pages and in end envelope (print edition) or PDF file (on CD-ROM edition)

1. Route of Erie and Champlain Canalway Trail and proposed route of Hudson Valley Greenway Trail.
2. Existing Natural, Historical/Cultural and Commercial Resources.
3. Proposed Designated and Alternate Routes.
4. (In End Envelope) Composite plan.



Existing Trails



Natural and Cultural Resources

