

Trails deserve public support because of the many benefits

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The process of rail-banking the historic Buffalo and Pittsburg Rail Corridor, which runs from Springville to the village of Orchard Park, has begun.

Ultimately, ownership of the corridor will transfer from the railroad to the New York Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and will be available for use as a multiuse trail. In Erie County, the corridor runs through the Towns of Concord, Colden, Aurora and Orchard Park.

Towns must give approval for development of the trail within their jurisdiction before state money is released to convert the corridor into a multiuse trail. The source of the money is the New York State real estate transfer tax, which by law, can only be used for open space protection, including the development of trails. If not used here, these funds will be used for open space protection in other parts of New York State.

Trails benefit neighboring communities. It is proven that economic and health benefits arise when people walk, run, bike, cross-country ski, etc., on multiuse trails. It is also proven that crime neither increases nor decreases with the presence of trails. Trails are certainly a safer place than streets or roads for seniors, kids, dog walkers and those with disabilities. Towns set the rules for trail use within their jurisdiction: who can use the trails, hours of operation, etc. Where it is not practical or reasonable for the trail to continue on the rail bed, detours and other arrangements can be made.

The rail corridor runs through one of the most scenic and historically significant areas in Erie County. A trail along this corridor would connect communities and provide recreational opportunities for all who use it. If you support the development of a trail on the Buffalo and Pittsburg Rail Corridor, then contact your town supervisor and town council and tell them.

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