

BINGHAMTON METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION STUDY

BINGHAMTON
METROPOLITAN
GREENWAY SYSTEM



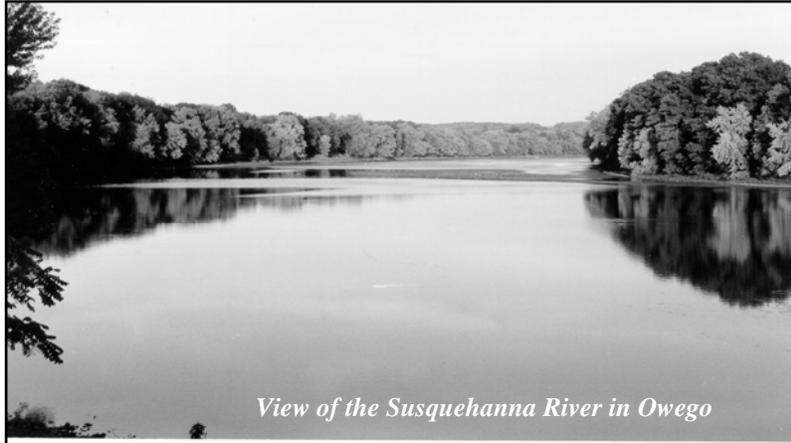
IMPLEMENTATION
PLAN

ADOPTED BY THE BMTS POLICY COMMITTEE
MARCH 2000

BINGHAMTON METROPOLITAN GREENWAY SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study in 1999 commissioned a study of the feasibility of developing a regional system of riverbank bicycle and pedestrian trails, known as greenways. During October 1999, the Binghamton Metropolitan Greenway Study was completed. The consultant team who performed this study, led by Trowbridge & Wolf Landscape Architects (Ithaca, NY), have determined where riverbank trails are feasible



throughout the urban area based on access, land use, engineering, and cost criteria. They have also indicated how a continuous system can be developed by using on-road links, and noted the safety improvements that would be required on those links. Finally, they provided recommendations for phased implementation that recognizes how the cost of constructing the system can be spread over a number of years. In order to facilitate the development of the proposed greenway system, this Implementation Plan outlines how BMTS will proceed. It is based on the consultant's recommendations, public input, and opportunities for trail implementation.

BASIS OF IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Consultant Recommendations

The following is a list of the most important projects with proposed phasing over the next twenty years, provided by the Greenway Study consultant team. The project prioritization is based on four principles. Principle 1 (Build on Existing Trail Successes) and Principal 2 (Develop New Park Loops) are viewed as being equally important, and are considered higher priority projects, to be implemented before projects listed under Principle 3 (Develop Additional New Trail Linkages). Projects listed under Principle 4 (Develop New or Improve Existing Bicycle and Pedestrian River Crossings), are considered mid-term and long term projects.

A description of each trail segment can be found in Chapters 3 & 5 of the Greenway Study report. Maps of each trail are located in Appendix A.

Phase One: Short Term – (Years 1 – 2)

- Otsiningo Park Trail Extension (to Town of Chenango Riverfront Park)
- Vestal Rail-Trail (African Rd. to North Main St.)

Phase Two: Mid-Term – (Years 3 – 10)

- The Hickories Trail Loop
- Owego to the Hickories Trail
- Tri-Cities Airport Loop

- Union Trail Extension from Proposed Airport Loop Trail to Glendale Park
- Chugnut Trail West Extension
- Vestal Trail West Extension – Vestal Rail-Trail to Castle Gardens
- Vestal Trail East Extension
- City of Binghamton – Chenango River East Bank Trail
- Bevier Street Bridge Restriping
- Port Dickinson Park Trail Extension
- Chenango Bridge Trail
- Schnurbush Park Trail Loop and Trail Extension to Woodcrest Way
- Veterans River Park Trail Loop

Phase Three: Long Term – (Years 11 – 20)

- I-86 Trail
- Union Trail – River Road to Boland Park
- Vestal Trail West Extension – Castle Gardens to County Line/I-86 Trail
- Vestal Parkway Trail – Route 201 Bridge to Washington Street Bridge
- City of Binghamton – Chenango River West Bank Trail
- City of Binghamton – Susquehanna River Trails

CORNERSTONE PROJECTS

The following projects and mid-term projects that the study team feels have a regional significance. Their implementation is critical to the development of a comprehensive riverbank trail network:

- Otsiningo Park Trail Extension
- Vestal Rail Trail
- Tri-Cities Airport Loop
- The Hickories Trail Loop
- Chenango River East Bank Trail
- Port Dickinson Park Trail Extension

Public Input

BMTS conducted two public informational open houses in November 1999 to generate public input on the Greenway Study recommendations. A total of about 150 people attended the meetings. Comments received from the meetings were overwhelmingly supportive of developing the recommended greenway system. A summary of responses is provided in Appendix B. Binghamton Press & Sun Bulletin articles, the BMTS Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and a display at the UHS Stay Healthy Center in the Oakdale Mall also generated public response.

Opportunities for Trail Implementation

Existing and emergent funding opportunities may influence the order of trail implementation. The following is a list of trail implementation opportunities.

New York State Resources

- Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP)
 - ⇒ The NYS Department of State encourages local waterfront communities to participate in the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. The preparation of Local Waterfront Revitalization Plans by the municipalities in Broome County is an important next step for riverfront trail development in the region. Preparing an LWRP provides a community with the opportunity to evaluate its waterfront resources and develop a plan for their best uses. The Department of State provides Implementation Grants for waterfront projects identified in the LWRP (50/50 state and local matching grants). Many of the trail projects could be easily incorporated into an LWRP.

- ⇒ The Greenway Study strongly recommends that the riverfront municipalities cooperatively work with Broome County to prepare Local Waterfront Revitalization Plans (LWRP).
- ⇒ Tioga County is in the final stages of completing their LWRP. Follow its project implementation plan & schedule for trail projects in the Village & Town of Owego.
- ⇒ The City of Binghamton has initiated a Comprehensive Plan update, and indicated that the effort may include an LWRP.
- Environmental Bond Act/Environmental Protection Fund – New York State seeks grant applications on an annual basis for funds from the Environmental Bond Act and the Environmental Protection Fund. Like the LWRP Implementation Grants, Environmental Bond Act and EPF grants are a 50/50 matching grant program. Most funds for trail development are applied for through the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation.
- State Legislature ‘Member Items’ – Members of the New York State Legislature may seek to include in the annual State budget funding for projects they deem important to their local districts. The Greenway Study consultant team has noted cases where unsuccessful EPF grant applications have been funded with member item funds. State legislators should be kept informed about the community’s vision and funding needs for a riverbank trail network.

Federal Resources

- Federal & State funded capital projects (TIP 2000-2004)
 - ⇒ Surface Transportation Program – This program typically focuses on road construction, reconstruction, and repair. However, a permitted use of STP funds is the development of bicycle transportation facilities in conjunction with road improvements. STP funds can also be used for maps, brochures, and public service announcements.
 - ⇒ National Highway System Funds – NHS funds can be used to develop multi-use trails and shoulder improvements in highway corridors, including interstate highways.
 - ⇒ Currently programmed projects that may provide an opportunity for trail construction include Front Street R&P (BCC to I-81 Exit 6), NY Route 17C (Harrison to North), NY 434 (Court St to Marshland), NY Route 17C (Village of Johnson City)
- Transportation Enhancements Program – The Transportation Enhancements Program (TEP) has been and continues to be the most common funding source for bicycle and pedestrian projects. This program requires states to utilize 10% of their Federal Surface Transportation Program allocations for enhancing the transportation system. Project awards for the first round of TEP funding are scheduled to be announced in March 2000. It is anticipated that there will be another round of TEP funding under TEA-21 will occur within two years.
- Hazard Elimination Program – The purpose of the Hazard Elimination Program is to identify and correct locations that may constitute a danger to motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. These funds can be used for trail development where it is documented that use of the roadways has resulted in a significant number of accidents involving cyclists and/or pedestrians, and that off-road facilities are the best alternative.
- Recreational Trails Program – The Recreational Trails Program can be used for the development of multi-use trails, trailhead facilities, and educational programs. Grants are typically small in size.
- Results of Vestal & other Corridor Studies – Corridor studies may indicate that needs for pedestrians and cyclists cannot be adequately met by road treatments alone, and developing a multi-use trail through the corridor would serve to fully meet their needs. Resulting capital projects that are not currently programmed could offer additional opportunities to incorporate a multi-use trail into its design.

Local Government

County and local governments will be required to provide matching funds and/or in-kind contributions for all state (50% match) and federally (20% match) funded projects. They can, of course, choose to take on trail construction with their own funding, if unsuccessful with state and federal funding applications. Local funds may be required to construct trails within local park facilities, as these will generally not be eligible for transportation program funding.

- Local municipal initiative for project implementation
- Locally funded capital projects

- Gravel Mine Reclamation Requirements. There are riverbank gravel mines in the Towns of Fenton and Vestal. Development of the necessary reclamation plans by the mining interests could provide an additional opportunity for trail development through those properties. In each case, the property in question has been identified as a feasible trail segment.

Business and Non-Profit Agency Involvement

- Public or organizations' advocacy for a project
- Private, Corporate, and Non-Profit Funding
 - ⇒ Fund Raisers
 - ⇒ Donations
 - ⇒ Grants

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Based on the information above, the Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study has developed the following implementation plan. The preliminary cost estimate for construction of the entire trail system is on the order of \$15 million, exclusive of right-of-way acquisition and engineering costs. Given that magnitude of investment, it is appropriate that implementation be phased over a number of years.

This Implementation Plan is seen as a guide, but understood to be flexible. The overall time horizon may be influenced by the public's interest in the trail system. In many communities that have built trail systems, the popularity of the facilities constructed in an initial phase has driven public investment, sometimes leveraged by private investment. It is also recognized that as external opportunities transpire for construction of individual trail segments, the original order of the implementation plan may not be strictly followed.

1. The following trail segments are viewed as key elements and important building blocks of the proposed regional greenway system, and should be implemented in the short term.

Short Term – (Immediate)

- Otsiningo Park Trail Extension (to Town of Chenango Riverfront Park) [cost: \$390,000]
- Vestal Rail-Trail (African Rd. to North Main St.) [cost: \$490,215]

Broome County and the Town of Vestal have applied for Transportation Enhancements Program funding respectively for these projects. Announcement of project awards is expected in March 2000. Should either project not be funded, BMTS would support following through on these trail projects.



Trail at Otsiningo Park

- Preparation of Local Waterfront Revitalization Plans (2001 or 2002)

The NYS Department of State encourages local waterfront communities to participate in the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. Currently, Tioga County is preparing an LWRP for the Susquehanna River Corridor, including the Town and Village of Owego. The preparation of Local Waterfront Revitalization Plans for municipalities in Broome County is an important next step for riverfront trail development in the region. Preparing an LWRP provides a community with the opportunity to evaluate its waterfront resources and develop a plan for their best uses. One component of an LWRP is the identification of specific waterfront projects that can be implemented over the short term. Many of the trail projects could be easily incorporated into an LWRP. Municipalities can produce an LWRP individually or in a cooperative effort, which would produce a cohesive regional plan. The Broome County Planning Department could play a coordinating role in producing a multi-municipal LWRP.

2. The following trail segments are also viewed as key elements and important building blocks of the proposed greenway system, and should be implemented within the near and mid-term time frames.

Near-Term – (Years 2 - 5)

- Vestal Trail West Extension – Vestal Rail-Trail to Castle Gardens [cost: \$642,000]
- Bevier Street Bridge Restriping [cost: \$ 5,600]
- Port Dickinson Park Trail Extension [pending Town of Fenton mine reclamation plan] [cost: \$290,000]
- Chenango Bridge Trail [potential to fund in part in PIN 9043.35] [cost: \$990,000]
- Chugnut Trail - East Extension → Existing trail to Argonne Ave. [cost: \$200,000]
- Trail & bike/pedestrian treatments as part of Vestal Ave. reconstruction project, City of Binghamton
- Upgrade Existing Facilities
 - ⇒Otsiningo Park Trail Widening
 - ⇒Port Dickinson Park Trail Widening
 - ⇒Chugnut Trail Widening (allow bicycle use) [cost: \$ 56,000]
- The Hickories Trail Loop * [cost: \$171,000]
- Tri-Cities Airport Loop * [cost: \$451,000]
- Schnurbush Park Trail Loop* and Extension to Woodcrest Way [cost: \$270,000]

* Trails wholly within parks are recreational facilities and are not generally eligible for Federal funding



Trail at Port Dickinson Park

Mid-Term – (Years 6 – 10)

- Owego to the Hickories Trail [cost: \$417,000+ Riverrow Project]
- Chugnut Trail West Extension [cost: \$756,000]
- Union Trail Extension from Proposed Airport Loop Trail to Glendale Park
- Vestal Trail East Extension – Rail-Trail to NYS. 201 Bridge [cost: \$480,000]
- City of Binghamton – Chenango River East Bank Trail [cost: \$300,000]
- I-86 Trail [pending funding opportunities in Route 17 improvements] [cost: \$890,000]
- Mersereau Park Trail Loop * [cost: \$ 70,000]
- Kirkwood Veterans River Park Trail Loop * [cost: \$106,000]

* Trails wholly within parks are recreational facilities and are not generally eligible for Federal funding

3. The following trail segments should be implemented as connections to trails or when opportunities may arise, and are thus considered long term projects.

Long Term – (Years 11 – 20)

- Union Trail – River Road to Boland Park [cost: \$695,000]
- Vestal Trail West Extension – Castle Gardens to County Line/I-86 Trail [cost: \$552,000]
- Vestal Parkway Trail – Route 201 Bridge to Washington Street Bridge [cost: \$710,000]
- City of Binghamton – Chenango River West Bank Trail [cost: \$2,860,000]
- City of Binghamton – Susquehanna River Trails [cost: \$210,000]

New River Crossings

- ⇒ I-88 Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge (connecting Otsiningo Park & Port Dickinson Park) \$1,300,000
- ⇒ Chenango Valley State Park Bridge \$1,100,000
- ⇒ Vestal Rail Spur (using unused section of railroad bridge stone abutments) \$700,000



Example of a pedestrian bridge suspended underneath an existing highway river crossing.

BMTS's Role in Greenway Implementation

It is critical that the Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study, through its Planning and Policy Committee structure, continue to play a role in establishing priorities and coordinating the implementation of projects that will contribute to the overall development of a comprehensive, regional greenway network.

It is not the role of BMTS to be an advocate, but rather, as with all the modes that make up the metropolitan transportation system, to use the planning process to balance investment in the transportation system that benefits the safe travel of all users and is responsive to the community's stated goals. As implementation proceeds, it is important that BMTS continue to explore funding opportunities for constructing successive trail segments.



Rollerbladers at Otsiningo Park