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Madison County breaks ground on the newest section of the Oneida Rail Trail

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City of Oneida - Today the Oneida Rail Trail is one shovel closer to being completed. Madison County Administrator Mark Scimone and members of the Madison County Planning Department joined the Oneida Rail Trail Committee, City of Oneida Mayor Leo Matzke, City of Oneida Parks and Recreation and members of the community at Clinch Park in downtown Oneida to break ground on the next section of the trail.

The 3.9-mile section of the trail is being developed through funding awarded by the NYS DOT Transportation Alternatives Program. It will stretch from the Old Erie Canal Historic State Park through the Village of Wampsville and then east along the former New York Central railbed into downtown City of Oneida.

The project will enhance portions of the West Shore Railbed and the New York Central Railbed and repurpose a historic railroad bridge over the Cowaselon Creek. Included in the project are some downtown improvements such as the resurfacing of Oneida Street, an added 10 ft wide multi-use path, new landscaping, new sidewalks and curbing, and a new pedestrian plaza for the City Center.

The Madison County Planning Department has been working tirelessly alongside the City of Oneida and the Oneida Improvement Committee to make the Oneida Rail Trail a reality. "The Oneida Rail Trail will be a great asset to the community. It will link neighborhoods, businesses, schools and become a tourist destination," said Jamie Kowalczyk, Assistant Director of the Madison County Planning Department. "This funding for the 3.9-mile section of the trail isn't just for a trail, but will provide significant improvements to Oneida City Center and represents one of the biggest infrastructure improvements to downtown in many years. We are excited for its potential to bring more people back to downtown."

The project is identified as a goal in the City's Comprehensive Plan. When complete, the entire Oneida Rail Trail will be an 11.3-mile non-motorized, multi-use trail encircling the City of Oneida. The trail will preserve, utilize and repurpose the existing historic railbeds that stem from three former railroads that traversed in and around the City of Oneida. The trail will be open to hiking and biking as well as cross-country skiing and snow shoeing in the winter. Leashed pets are also welcome on the trail. Trail users are asked to please respect private property and stay on the trail.

Currently, two sections of the Oneida Rail Trail are officially open to the public; a 1-mile section along the former West Shore Railbed, with parking at Hubbard Place, and the other is a half-mile section adjacent to the Oneida High School.

For more information, please visit www.ImproveOneida.com or www.MadisonCounty.ny.gov.

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