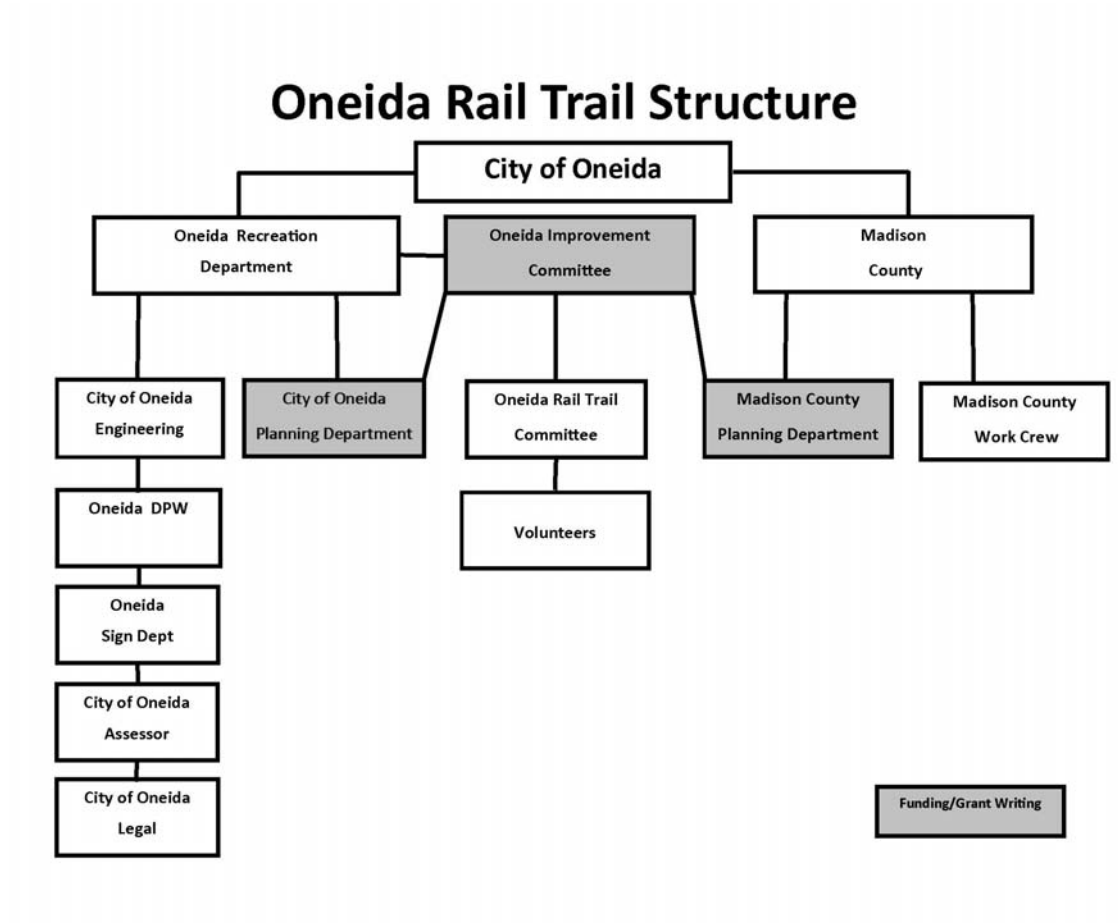
Oneida Rail Trail

2013 ANNUAL REPORT
and 2014 Goals

PROJECT PARTNERS

The ORT represents a collaboration across municipalities and agencies. This report was prepared by the ORT Committee.



Oneida Rail Trail Committee

John Taibi

Steve Blair

Luke Griff

Joe Magliocca

Jim Chamberlain

Patti Meakin

Jamie Hart

Jon Rauscher

Danielle Krol

Mission: "formerly designate railroad right-of-ways as greenways and initiate implementation of trail system."

-City of Oneida Comprehensive Plan

January 22, 2014

2013 was a year when we saw the vision of the Oneida Rail Trail take shape. It started with momentum from the votes from our community resulting in the winning of Central New York Community Foundation's CNY85 grant. $8,500 went to the Oneida Improvement Committee, Inc. who is the not for profit partner of the Oneida Rail Trail. There was no looking back. The Oneida Rail Trail Committee was then formed. Members selected for this committee have many positive attributes to see the ORT project through to completion. Experience, passion, commitment, and humor are all positives that are relied upon from our committee members.

Businesses have come on board seeing the potential for the ORT to bring economic development to a community hungry for it. One of those businesses who saw the potential was NuTech Biosciences who donated two properties to be used for the ORT project. Volunteers have been sought and added to a database that receives updates on upcoming trail days and invites to ORT meetings. Several people have come forward using their individual expertise to move this project forward. 1 mile of the ORT was cleared on National Trails Day in June with the help of some of these volunteers. We will continue to seek those volunteers to ensure the ORT will be maintained for years to come.

Members of the ORT committee spent many hours sharing the concept of the ORT with a powerpoint presentation. Several organizations hosted us at their monthly meetings and luncheons during 2013. We were pleasantly surprised with a generous donation from the Ralph & JoAnn Stevens Fund which is administered by the CNY Community Foundation. Dr. Stevens attend one of those presentations. As we continued to educate people on the ORT, this local community project quickly attracted the attention of regional and state organizations and officials.

The ORT was recognized in our Region's Sustainability Plan (Vision CNY) as a project to watch in 2014. Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) selected the City of Oneida to host the Bicyclists Bring Business workshop in October. This workshop and bike-a- round brought out people and businesses from several surrounding counties to take part in determining how to attract bicycle tourists to their communities from the Erie Canalway Trail. PTNY was particularly interested in the side trip Erie Canal tourists could take along the Oneida Rail Trail and continue to take an active role in helping the project.

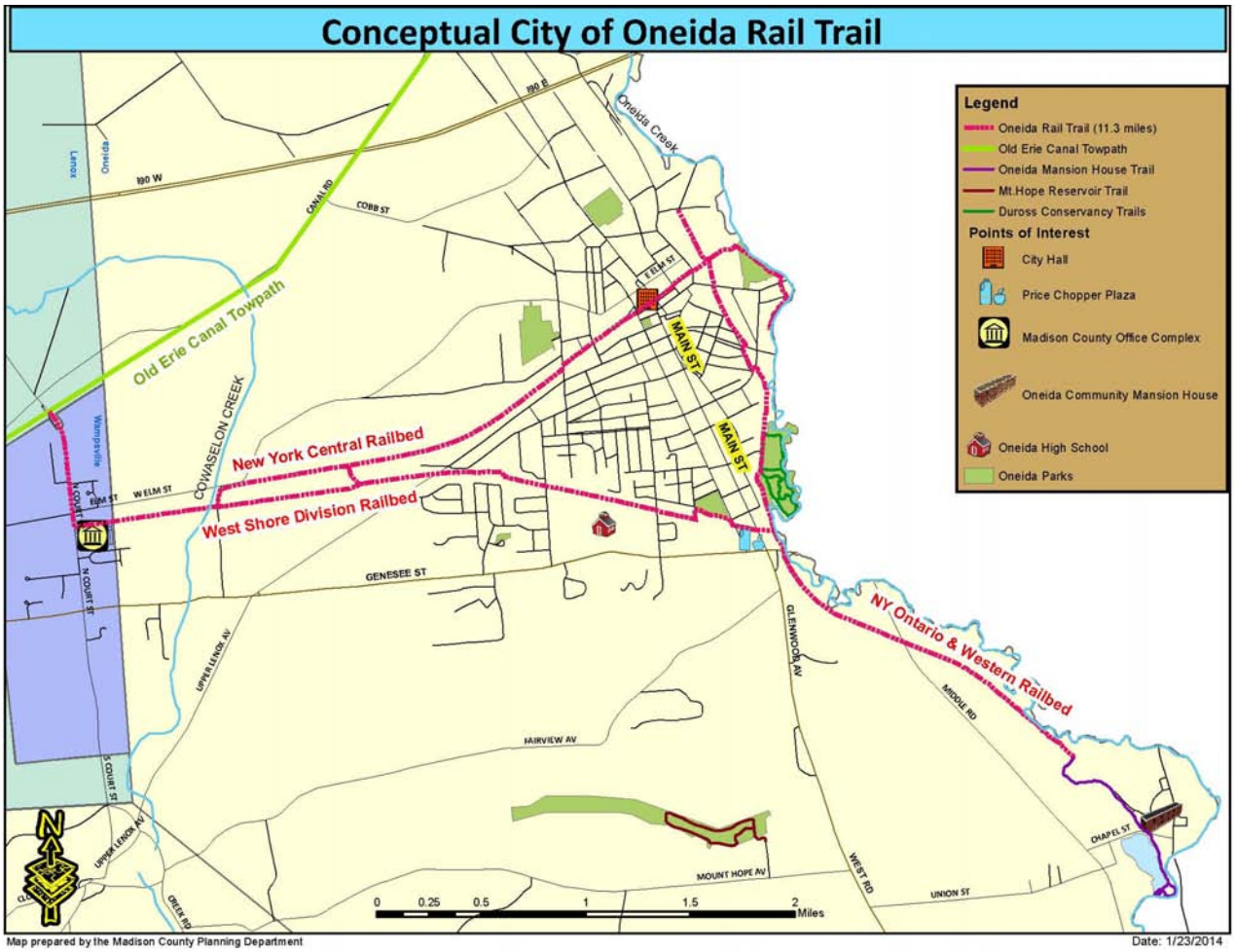
Our local officials have been very supportive of the Oneida Rail Trail project. The City of Oneida partnered with the Madison County Planning Department to submit an application to the NYS DOT Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP). The application was successful in securing close to $550,000 to construct a fully handicapped accessible 3.1 mile segment of the Oneida Rail Trail from the Erie Canal Trailhead in Wampsville to N. Willow Street in Oneida.

The ORT Committee will continue to seek out funding and grants to provide cost savings for this highly anticipated project. The ORT Committee will continue to work on outreach and building awareness to cultivate even more partnerships for the project. 2014 proves to be a challenging and exciting year for the Oneida Rail Trail. We look forward to a day when the City of Oneida can boast they have a state of the art multi-use trail system that encompasses their city.

Regards,

Oneida Rail Trail Committee Members

BACKGROUND



The Oneida Rail Trail is a proposed11.3-mile non-motorized, multi-use trail located in the City of Oneida. The Oneida Rail Trail (ORT) will preserve and utilize existing rail beds (no tracks remain) to create a cultural corridor along three former rail lines: the New York Central, West Shore Division, and New York Ontario & Western. These former rail beds run through the heart of downtown Oneida and connect to the Village of Wampsville to the west and the City of Sherrill to the southeast.

Through the use of these rail beds, the Oneida Rail Trail will link three communities, multiple neighborhoods, businesses, offices, parks, tourist destinations, education facilities, and other trails including the Old Erie Canal Towpath to create a new economic engine in the area and source of community pride.

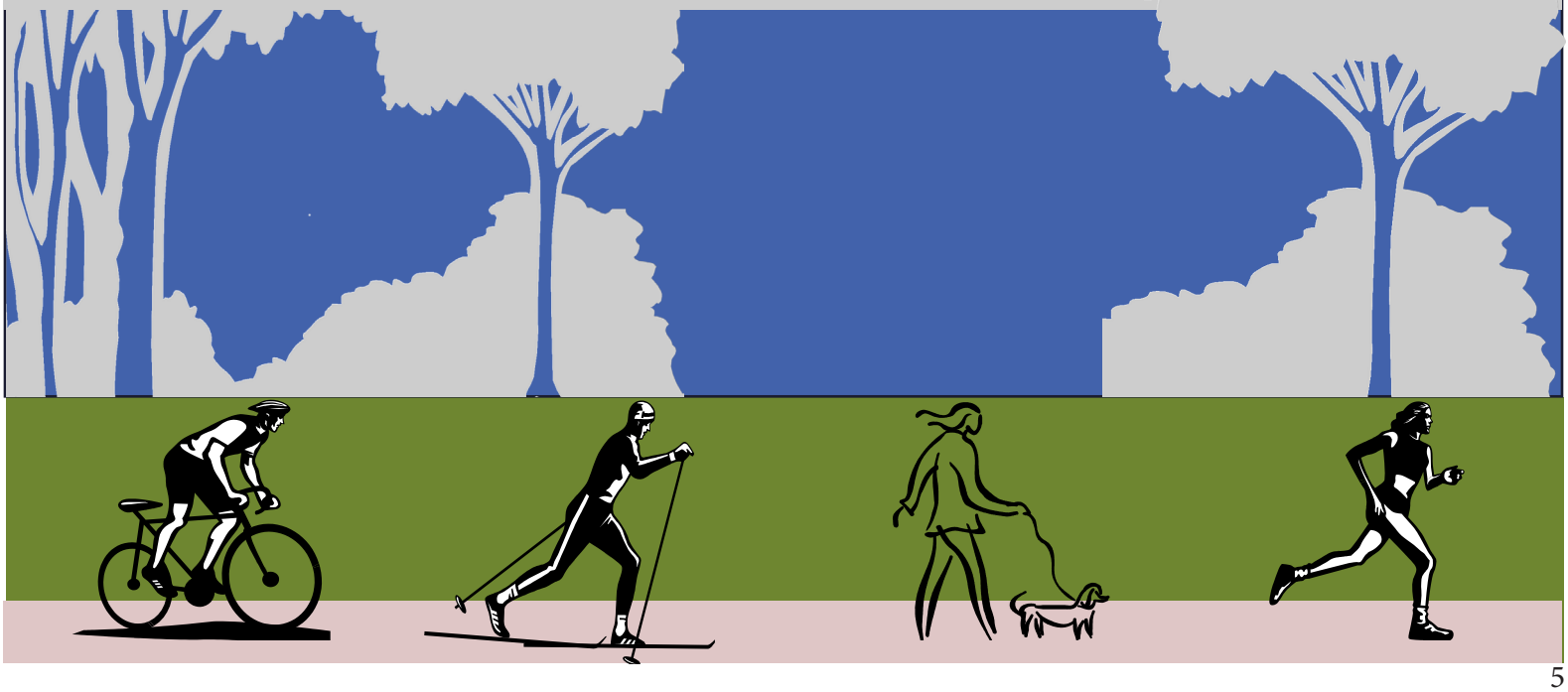
The ORT is an identified project in the City of Oneida's current Comprehensive Plan with the goal to "formerly designate the railroad right-of-ways as greenways and initiate implementation of trail system." The City of Oneida owns the majority of the properties that make up the trail and much of the proposed project area is already being used by the community as an unofficial trail.

One of the unique features of the ORT project is that because it involves three intersecting railbeds it is not just an out and back trail but instead will offer the option for a 5.7 mile loop.

The ORT Committee was created to lead the effort to transform this historic asset into an official City trail system and into the envisioned resource desired by the community.

2013 HIGHLIGHTS

- January 2013 - ORT Committee forms...Page 6
- January 2013 - ORT wins $8,500 grant from the CNY Community Foundation...Page 7
- February 2013 - NuTech Biosciences donates two properties to be used for the ORT project...Page 8
- June 2013 - Community volunteers clear the West Shore spur of the ORT for National Trails Day...Page 9
- August 2013 - Oneida submits an application for NYS DOT Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP) for development of the 3.1 mile segment of the ORT project; ultimately selected and awarded $545,830...Page 10
- September 2013 - CNY Community Foundation awards the ORT the $100 Dr. Ralph and JoAnn Stevens Fund...Page 11
- October 2013 - Parks & Trails NY selects Oneida (based on the work done on the ORT) to host the annual Bicyclists Bring Business Workshop...Page 12
- 2014 Goals...Page 13



ORT Committee

Nine members currently serve on the Oneida Rail Trail Committee which was created in 2013 to advocate for the creation of the Oneida Rail Trail. The Committee's first meeting was held January 29, 2013. The Committee meets the last Thursday of every month at the Oneida Recreation Center at 6:00 pm. The public in encouraged to attend. Members on the ORT Committee include:

John Taibi is a local railroad historian. He has published 12 books on the subject and even lives in a railroad depot built in 1881 by the O&W.

Steve Blair is an ISA Certified Arborist as well as a cyclist, hiker, and skier.

Luke Griff is the Director of the Parks and Recreation Department for the City of Oneida.

Joe Magliocca grew up in Oneida and has biked the rail beds throughout Oneida for most of his life. He is also the President of the Oneida Improvement Committee.

Jim Chamberlain is the Ward 5 Councilman for the City of Oneida.

Patti Meakin has worked for the Parks and Recreation Department for 10 years. She also serves as the Secretary/Treasurer for the Oneida Improvement Committee.

Jamie Hart is a Senior Planner for the Madison County Planning Department.

Jon Rauscher is the City Engineer for the City of Oneida's Department of Public Works.

Danielle Krol lives in Oneida and shares her expertise as a Senior Transportation Planner from the Syracuse MetropolitanTransportation Council.

Attend an ORT Committee Meeting!

Last Thursday of every month
Oneida Recreation Center
217 Cedar Street, Oneida
6:00 pm

Public welcome

ORT Wins $8,500 Grant

CENTRAL NEW YORK COMMUNITY FOUNDATION, INC.

January 2013 - The Oneida Rail Trail project was announced the winner of an $8,500 grant from the Central New York (CNY) Community Foundation.

As part of its 85th Anniversary, the CNY Community Foundation created the CNY85 Giving Project to award (4) $8,500 grants over four rounds. The CNY85 grant was unique because it was based only on public voting: the project to receive the most public votes (in each of the 4 rounds) would receive an $8,500 grant.

As a 501-3C, the Oneida Improvement Committee was able to enter the Oneida Rail Trail project into the 4th round which focused on "Arts, Culture, Recreation & Civic Engagement." A total of 27 projects from Madison and Onondaga County entered this 4th round.

Public voting was open December 1-31st. Individuals could vote once every day.

After the first day of voting the ORT was only in 6th place, but then an incredible momentum started to build. Over the course of the month, word started to spread and more and more of the community got behind the project. Local businesses, like Pepi's, were distributing flyers and community members were reminding each other to vote everyday through Facebook and e-mail.

After a very exciting build up, the Oneida community voted the ORT to the #1 spot! Out of 27 projects, the Oneida project earned about 12,500 votes to come out on top and win the $8,500 grant!

Thank you to everyone who voted the Oneida Rail Trail to #1!!

Nu-Tech donates land for the ORT

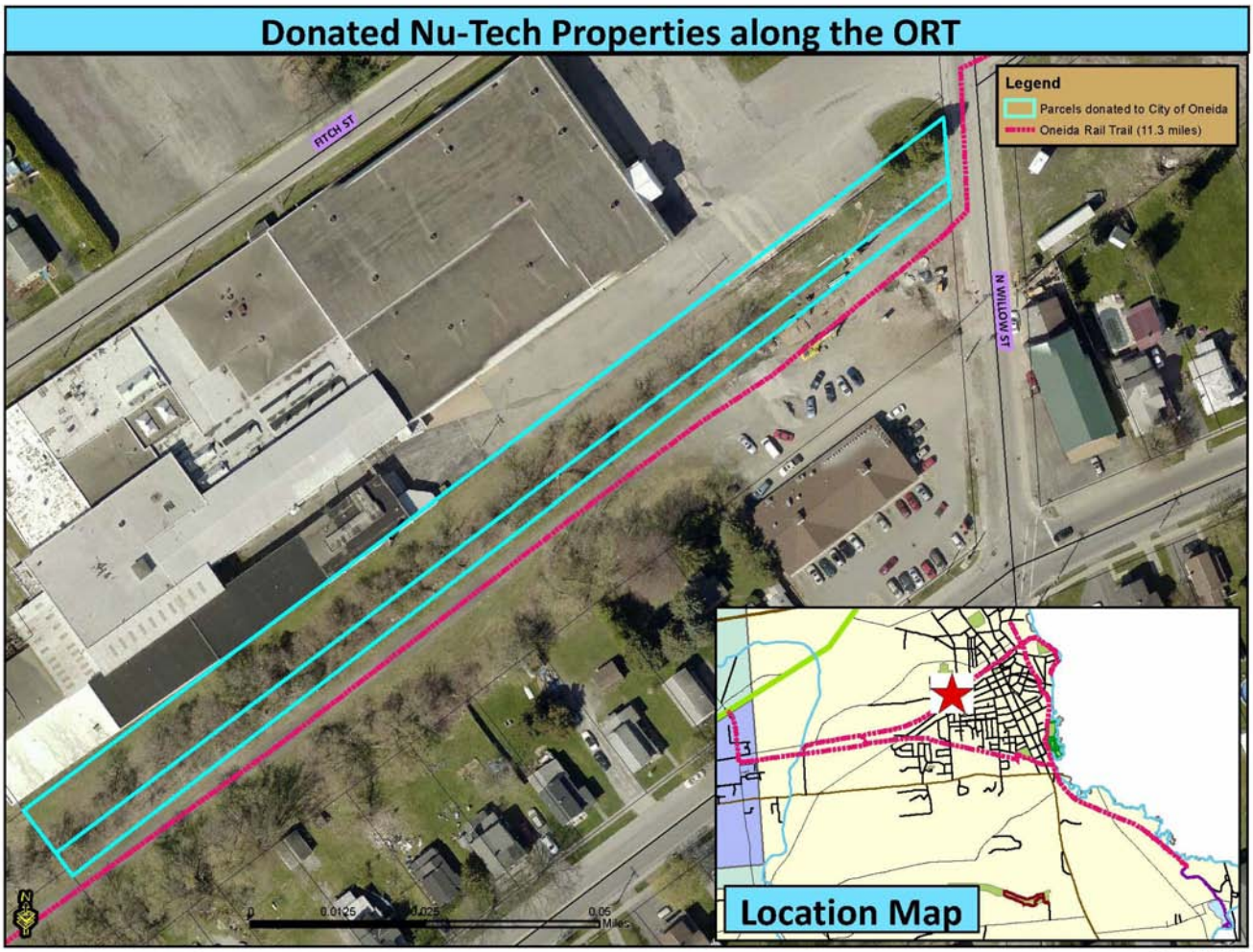
February 2013 - NuTech Biosciences, Inc offers to donate two properties along the ORT to the City of Oneida. The Oneida Common Council voted unanimously to accept the two properties to facilitate the development of the ORT.

EXISTING

The 2 currently vacant properties are located on the west side of N.Willow Street and total approximately 1.13 acres.

PROPOSED

The rendering above shows examples of enhancements that could be made along the ORT in this section including a trailhead, wayfinding signage, an enhanced trail surface, and designated parking.



National Trails Day

June 1, 2013- In recognition of National Trails Day, the Oneida Rail Trail Committee hosted its first clean-up event.

The event focused on a section of the ORT that lies along the former West Shore Railbed between Hubbard Place and Lenox Ave. The work involved, clearing/cutting/pruning back overgrowth, garbage pick up, and some hard raking.

12 very motivated volunteers participated! Thank you to: Andrew Sullivan, Mark Spooner, Jim & Penny Haugli, Dave Shay, Jim Chamberlain, Tony Lumbrazo, Joe Magliocca, and Patti & Charlie Meakin! A special thank you to Tri-Valley Trail Rider members Jaimie Warner and Chris Wright who brought their equipment and expertise.

Look out for even more volunteer clean-up events in 2014!

Mark your calendars!

National Trails Day occurs on **June 7** in 2014

NYS DOT TEP Award

August 2013 - The City of Oneida partnered with Madison County to submit an application to the NYS DOT Transportation Enhancement Program for a 3.1 mile section of the ORT.

This 3.1 mile segment of the ORT extends from N. Willow St in Oneida along the NY Central Railbed and will connect northwest through Wampsville to the NYS Erie Canalway trail.

Proposed improvements include a fully handicapped accessible stone dust trail, restoration of a historic rail bridge, trailheads, and signage. See rendering below.

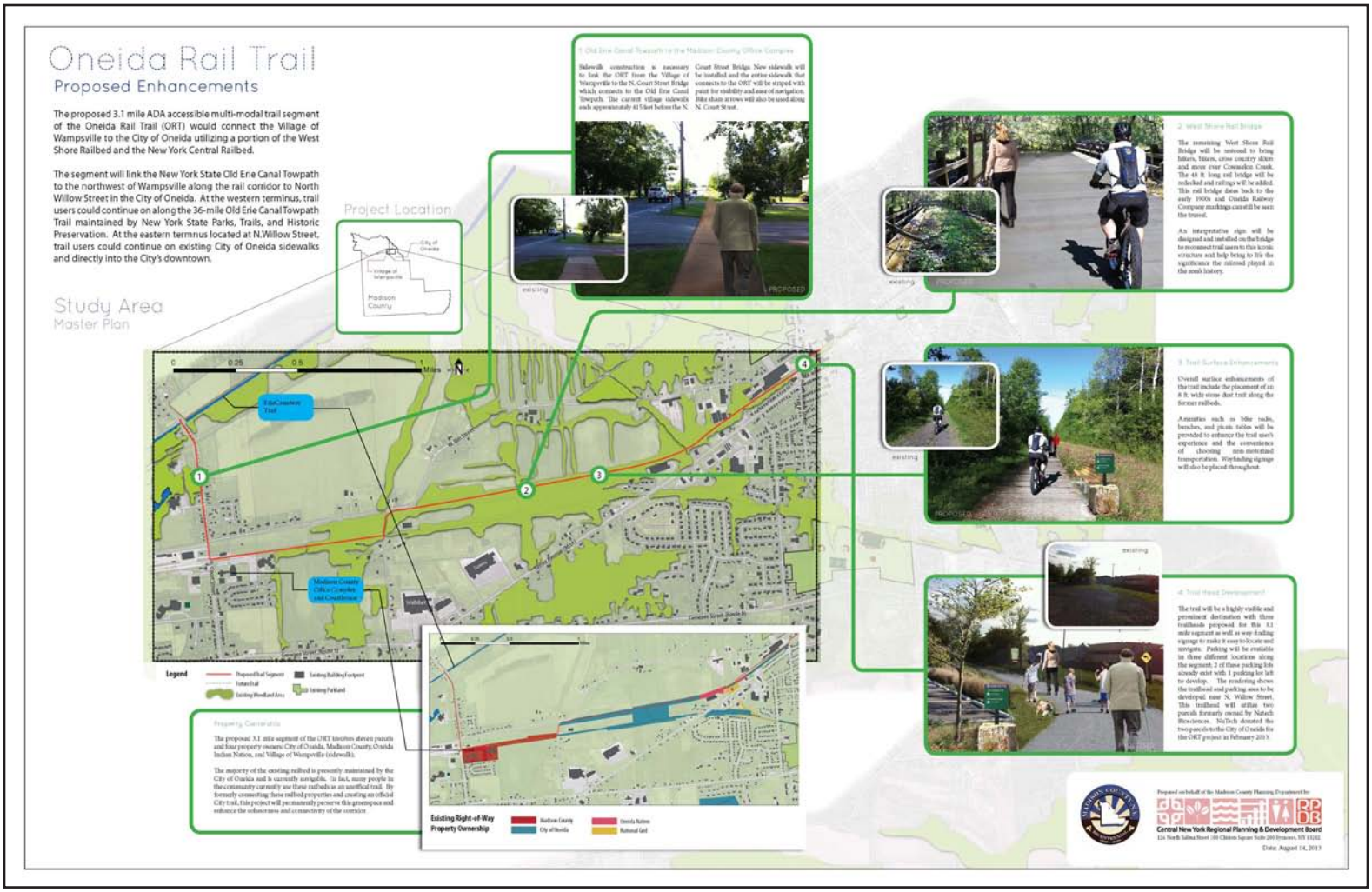
Prior to construction, design work and environmental review will have to be complete. NYS DOT states it is usually two years between TEP funding approval and the start of construction.

Background on TEP

The Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP) is a federal reimbursement program administered in New York by NYS DOT.

TEP funding is dedicated for strategic investments in non-motorized transportation alternatives. The intent of the program is to encourage tourism and economic development opportunities Statewide. The funds cover up to 80 percent of the cost of a project, with the remaining 20 percent or more coming from the project sponsor.

UPDATE: January 2014 - The City of Oneida's application was successful! ***The ORT was 1 of only 63 projects statewide to be selected and will receive $545,830 for the development of this 3.1 mile segment.***



Dr. Ralph & JoAnn Stevens Fund

September 2013 - CNY Community Foundation sent the ORT $100 from the Dr. Ralph and JoAnn Stevens Fund.

Dr. Stevens saw a presentation about the ORT at the Oneida's Club in April, and then decided to give $100 for the project.

The picture to the right is of a presentation members of the ORT Committee made to the Oneida Retired Teacher's Association in May 2013.

The ORT Committee welcomes any request to make a presentation or educate groups/ organizations about the project.

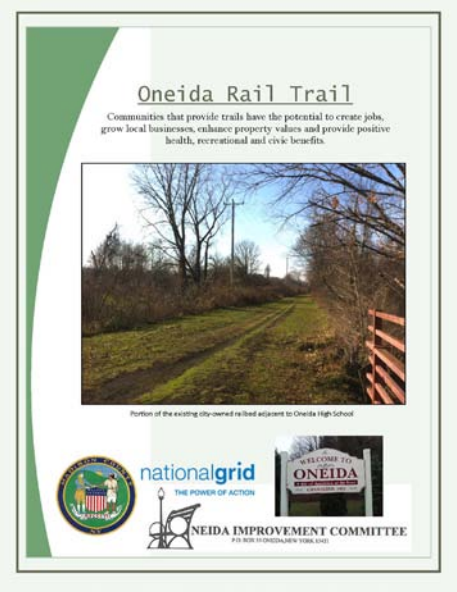
Thank you to Dr. Ralph and JoAnn Stevens!
Thanks to the support and generosity of community members like you the Oneida Rail Trail will come to fruition.

Ralph L. Stevens, M.D. is the founder and medical director of Oneida Medical Imaging Center located in Oneida, New York. Dr. Stevens has been a Director of Oneida Financial Corp. and Oneida Savings Bank since December 2008. He has been an active member of the Madison County Medical Society, Oneida Rotary Club, Yale Club of Central New York and other civic and philanthropic organizations.

JoAnn Stevens is the eldest daughter of the 6 children of Terry and Carrie Quain from Canastota, and was trained as a pharmacist at the Albany College of Pharmacy.

The Dr. Ralph & JoAnn Stevens Fund was established in 2002 through the CNY Community Foundation.

In addition to giving presentations, the ORT Committee has created a brochure about the project. For a copy, please send an e-mail to jamie.hart@madisoncounty.ny.gov



Oneida Rail Trail

Communities that provide trails have the potential to create jobs, grow local businesses, enhance property values and provide positive health, recreational and civic benefits.

Portion of the existing city-owned railbed adjacent to Oneida High School

nationalgrid
THE POWER OF ACTION

WELCOME TO ONEIDA

NEIDA IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

Bicyclists Bring Business

Parks & Trails NY selects one community in the state a year to host their Bicyclists Bring Business (B3) Workshop, and this year they selected the City of Oneida!

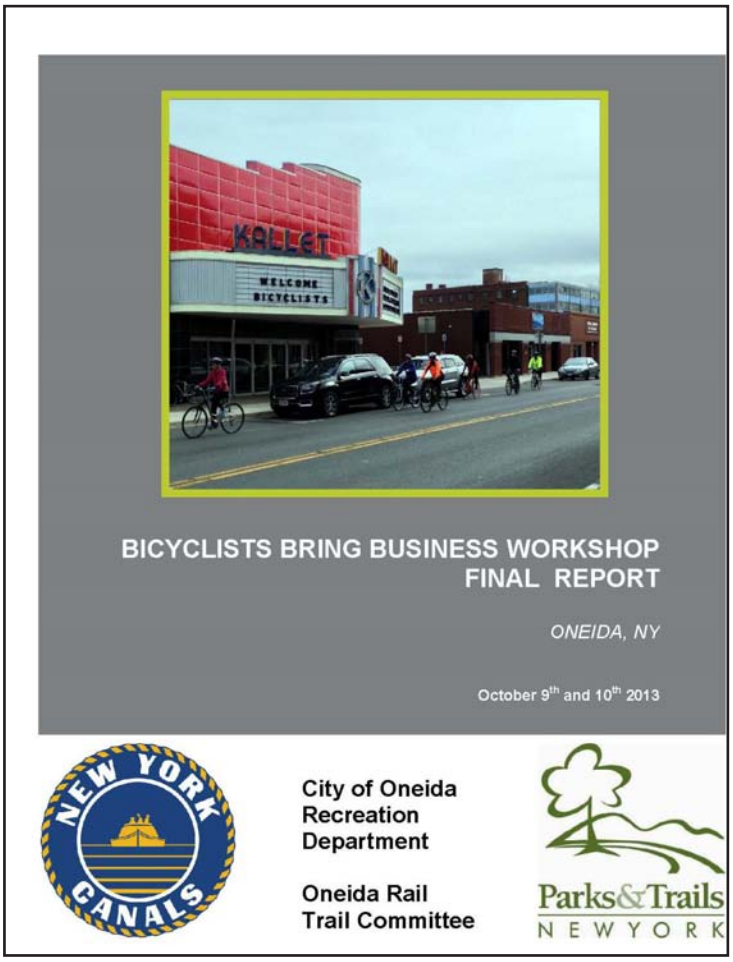
A key factor in Parks & Trails NY decision to select Oneida was the Oneida Rail Trail.

The City of Oneida Parks and Recreation Department in collaboration with the ORT Committee worked with Parks & Trails NY to host the two day B3 event held on October 9th and 10th.

A special thanks to our local businesses for welcoming B3 participants into Oneida!

Oneida Mayor Max Smith opening the workshop and welcoming Parks & Trails New York to the City

Participants in the B3 bike-a-round stopped into local Oneida businesses such as ChooChoo Charlies, La Vie Boheme, and Oneida Commons



Through the B3 Workshop, Parks & Trails NY provided free technical assistance to help our local business owners, elected officials, local tourism industry, and those in charge of local land use decisions discover what services, amenities, and street designs make a difference to bicyclists when choosing a touring destination.

Based on information gathered during the two day workshop, Parks & Trails NY developed a Final Report with 7 recommendations to help Oneida better attract and profit from the growing bicycle tourism market. The ORT was identified as "the most desirable" type of trail bicycling tourists are seeking.

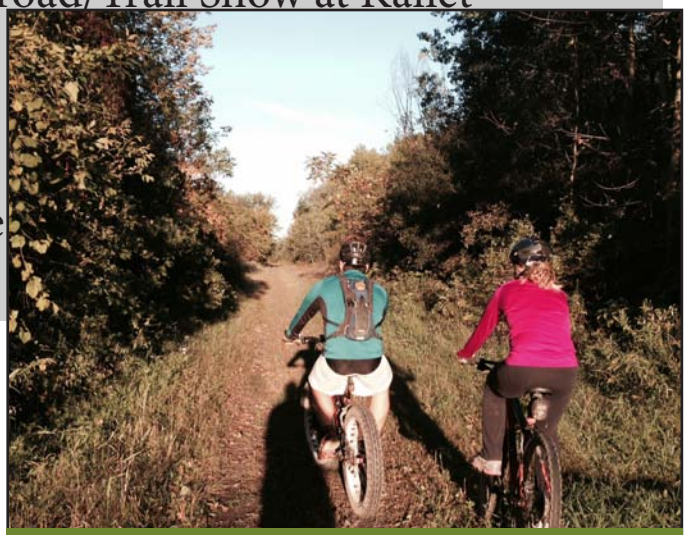
The B3 Final Report was released January 2014 and is available to read online at www.madisoncounty.ny.gov/planning/madison-county-planning-department

2014 Goals

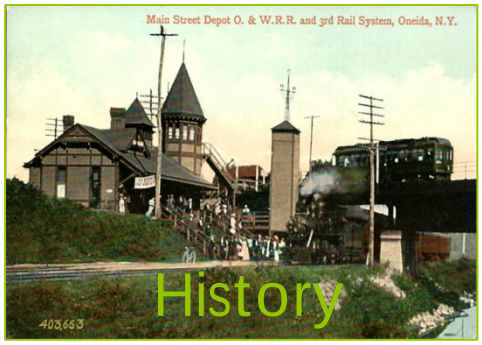
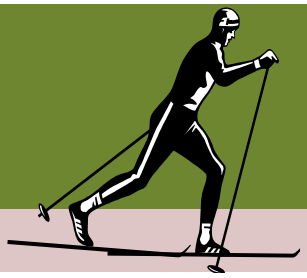
As you can see, 2013 was an extraordinary kick-off year for the Oneida Rail Trail. The ORT Committee looks forward to advancing even further in 2014. Here are the goals of the ORT Committee for 2014:

- Work with the OIC to develop a website to house info on the ORT
- Develop an ORT logo
- Work with the City to officially open the section of the ORT from Hubbard Place to Lenox Ave
- Develop an Action Plan to prioritize tasks
- Continue to seek out grants and fundraising opportunities
- Continue to educate the community on the project through public presentations and promotional materials
- Schedule and advertise community clean-up events along the ORT
- Organize public walks/rides along currently open sections of the ORT
- Develop a West Shore Railbed Corridor Study to describe ownership, unique features, and existing conditions (similar to the document created for the NY Central Railbed)
- Develop a NY Ontario & Western Railbed Corridor Study to describe ownership, unique features, and existing (similar to the document created for the NY Central Railbed)
- Open an ORT display in Oneida Commons for Railroad History/ORT products
- Explore the feasibility of holding a Railroad/Trail Show at Kallet
- Work with the City of Oneida to help implement the NYS DOT TEP grant for the 3.1 mile section of the ORT extending from N. Willow St in Oneida to the Old Erie Canalway Trailhead in Wampsville.

"If there is one essential ingredient to creating trails and trail systems, it's people. All the land and financing in the world won't blaze a trail if there aren't people championing the project"
- Bay Area Ridge Trail Council



Bicyclists along the NY Central Railbed

The Oneida Rail Trail.....

Connecting People to Community Destinations...