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Clerk

138 N. Court St., PO Box 635

Wampsville, NY 13163

Phone: 315/366-2201

Fax: 315/366-2502

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Patti Meakin, City of Oneida Parks and Recreation Department
pmeakin@oneidacity.com (315)-363-3590

First 1 Mile Segment of the Oneida Rail Trail to Open

Grand Opening Celebration planned for September 8

A ribbon-cutting event will be held on September 8, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. to officially open a 1 mile section of the City of Oneida's Oneida Rail Trail (ORT). Utilizing existing railbeds, the envisioned ORT trail system will eventually circle the City. While many portions of the railbeds are used by the community now, the 1 mile section represents the first portion to be officially open and designated for public use.

The ribbon-cutting event will be held at the new trailhead along Hubbard Place and is open to the public to attend. Events include opening remarks by Mayor Max Smith and a guided walking tour by local rail historian John Taibi.

The 1 mile section stretches from Hubbard Place along a former railbed east to Lenox Avenue. Parking is along Hubbard Place. Eventually, the trail will cross Lenox Avenue and continue east, but for now the trail is an out-and-back.

The Oneida Improvement Committee, the non-profit partner helping to develop the trail system, will hold a clean-up event on Saturday, September 6th from 9:00 a.m. to noon to get the section ready for opening. During the clean-up event, volunteers can help install gates at both ends of the trail, trail markers, and the trailhead sign. Those interested in volunteering should contact the Oneida Improvement Committee at info@improveoneida.com.

"We are thrilled to have this first section opening and for the community to come out and use it. This is just the beginning: we believe the Oneida Rail Trail is going to be much more than a trail but a catalyst for new opportunities in Oneida," says Mayor Max Smith.

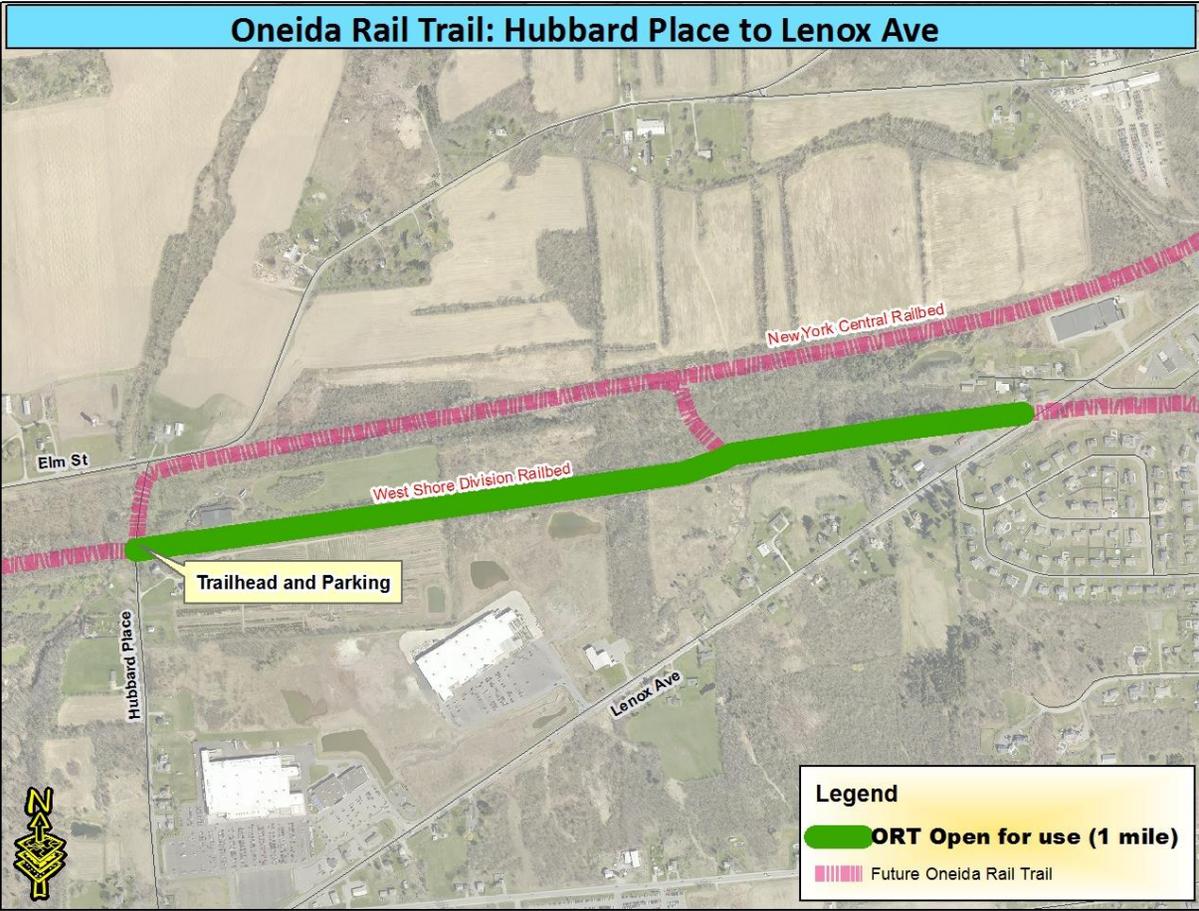
The trail will be open to hiking and biking as well as cross-country skiing and snow shoeing in the winter. Leashed pets are also welcome on the trail. Motorized vehicles are not permitted on the trail. Trail users are asked to please respect private property and stay on the trail.

In January 2014, the City received funding from NYS DOT Transportation Enhancement Program for a 3.1 mile segment of the ORT. Eventually this 3.1 mile segment will connect to the 1 mile segment being opened now.

“One of the unique features of the Oneida Rail Trail is that unlike a typical rail trail, which is usually just an out-and-back, Oneida has the opportunity to use three bisecting railbeds to create a loop around the City,” said Luke Griff, City of Oneida Parks and Recreation Department. In terms of the 1 mile segment very little was needed to open it as the City owns the property. “The trail has been an envisioned City project for years and many sections are already being used. We just have to stitch the pieces together,” says Griff.



A trial user walks along the 1 mile section of the ORT, officially to open for public use on September 8th.



A trail map of the 1 mile section; the newly opened trail lies between Hubbard Place and Lenox Ave

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