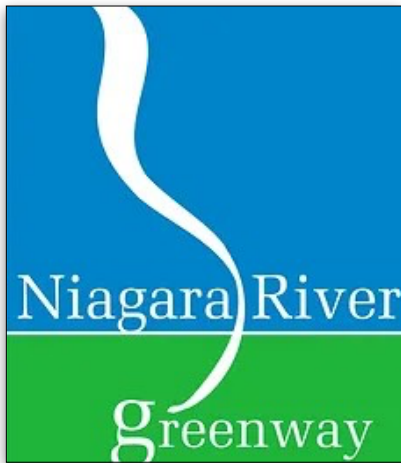


## Lower Niagara Recreation Trail

Consisting of two planned projects, A trail in Youngstown that will connect with a Trail in Town of Porter

### Proposal for connecting Fort Niagara State Park to the Youngstown Estates Neighborhood via a Bike Path with Amenities



Prepared for: Niagara River Greenway Ad-hoc Committee on Recreation & Tourism

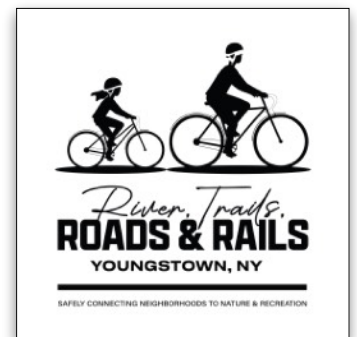
Prepared by: Christine Rath for the Village of Youngstown

Submitted by: Rob Reisman, Mayor of Youngstown NY and Duffy Johnson, Supervisor of Town of Porter

Supported by: Irene Myers, Niagara County Legislator, 1st Dist.

December 2024

Proposal number: 1 - 2024



# TRAIL MAPS

## Youngstown Trail Project 1



## Town of Porter Trail Project 2



Project 1 is the focus of this grant request.

---

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Project Overview

New York State Greenway trails offer an opportunity for active, healthy lifestyles and enrich our communities with a sense of history, access to nature, and safe places to exercise and play. The Village of Youngstown (VOY), Town of Porter (TOP) and Niagara County are collaborating under a non-profit organization, Friends of Youngstown, Inc. (FOY) to complete the final section of the Greenway Trail between Manhattan to Fort Niagara, specifically from Fort Niagara State Park to Joseph Davis State Park. A subcommittee of FOY was formed consisting of local residents called Rivers Trails, Roads & Rails (RTRR). They are driving the community voice and needs for this trail.

There are two projects:

### Project 1

**Village of Youngstown:** 2025 - The trail contained within the Village of Youngstown, NY; running from Fort Niagara State Park to the Youngstown Estates neighborhood.

### Project 2

**Town of Porter:** 2026 to 2027 - The trail contained in the Town of Porter from Youngstown Estates to Joseph Davis State Park including Collingwood and Runaway Bay neighborhoods.



**The subject of this grant request is Project 1 with an estimated total cost of \$358,492.**

**The Village of Youngstown is requesting \$240,993** from the Niagara River Greenway Ad-hoc Committee on Recreation and Tourism to build the Youngstown Trail including selected amenities.

This page is intentionally left blank.

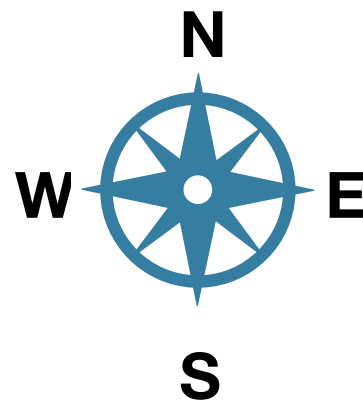
## YOUNGSTOWN TRAIL PROJECT BACKGROUND & OVERVIEW OF THE LOWER NIAGARA RECREATION TRAIL

The Village of Youngstown (VOY) has identified an overall need to improve physical, social-emotional, and cognitive benefits (mind/body/soul building activities) of our residents by providing a safe and engaging environment for families, and visitors. The Village has undertaken several recent projects to improve the community including revitalizing the ball fields in Veteran’s Park, adding more disc golf holes and many other outdoor activity relevant improvements. The next major project is connecting our neighborhoods and parks via a bike trail.

A local community group of residents from VOY and TOP have come together to further improve the overall community by revitalizing the Greenway Trail concept from Fort Niagara State Park to Joseph Davis State Park. The collaboration between VOY & TOP has generated two projects for the Lower Niagara Recreation Trail. The goal is to connect Fort Niagara State Park through the various communities along River Rd. to Joseph Davis State Park. The TOP approved Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) also contains this project concept and various other improvements to Lower River Rd.

This grant request is strictly focused on the Village of Youngstown Trail, connecting Fort Niagara State Park (northern border of VOY) to Youngstown Estates (southern border of VOY). The trail will run through Veteran’s and Falkner Parks providing easy and safe access to community activity centers for physical play and events, along with a direct connection to Fort Niagara State Park.

A separate project will address the Town of Porter Trail from Youngstown Estates to Joseph Davis State Park, running through Collingwood and Runaway Bay neighborhoods.



This page is intentionally left blank.

## THE PARKS ALONG THE TRAIL FROM FORT NIAGARA STATE PARK TO YOUNGSTOWN ESTATES:

Fort Niagara State Park has a boat launch providing access to the Lower Niagara River and Lake Ontario, woodland hiking trails, swimming pools, a view of Lake Ontario, picnic grounds, playgrounds, water fowl hunting, and 18 soccer fields. In winter, visitors can cross-country ski, snowshoe, and sled. The park is adjacent to Old Fort Niagara State Historic Site. Old Fort Niagara offers living-history programs year round, plus a museum and original 18th-century buildings. It is operated by the Old Fort Niagara Association, a not-for-profit organization, and is a Registered National Historic Landmark and New York State Historic Site. Based on NY State Park press releases, the Fort Niagara State Park leads in number of visitors each year from 600,000 to over 800,000 in recent years. (Reference: <https://parks.ny.gov>)

Falkner Park is the second park within the Village of Youngstown which has a well-established recreation program with the renovated splash pad, play-sets and planned programs. The park hosts many weekly musical events throughout the summer in the pavilion. There is an existing brick walking path and beautiful gardens established in the park. Falkner Park also boasts a rich history with the War of 1812 and the underground railroad. The gazebo across from Falkner Park provides a scenic overlook with beautiful river and sunset views.

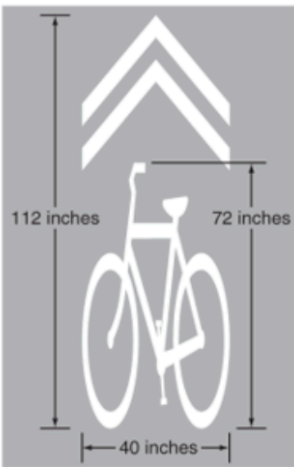
Veteran's Park is the 3rd park within the Village of Youngstown. The park is the home of the Town of Lewiston Girl's softball league (in which Youngstown and Town of Porter residents participate), the recently installed 9-hole disc golf course, resurfaced basketball courts, tennis courts with pickleball being added, a swing set, summer recreation programs, a community dog-park and the new Project Play programs. This park also hosts many family/community picnics and events throughout the year including major music events that have drawn over 1,000 attendees. The Village has also recently renovated the ball fields (a collaborative effort between Village of Youngstown, Town of Porter and the Town of Lewiston), and pending installation of donated new benches and picnic tables.

## PROJECT 1 TRAIL SIGNAGE CONTENT:

The following pages include the project content proposal to the Niagara River Greenway Ad-hoc Committee on Recreation and Tourism.

The signage which will be used in the project will adhere to the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Laws and Ordinances as contained in the manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and in the Empire State Trail Design Guide.

Figure 9C-9. Shared Lane Marking



R7-1



D4-3

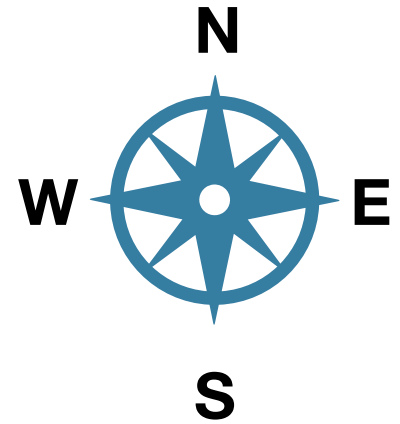


AKA: Greenway sign



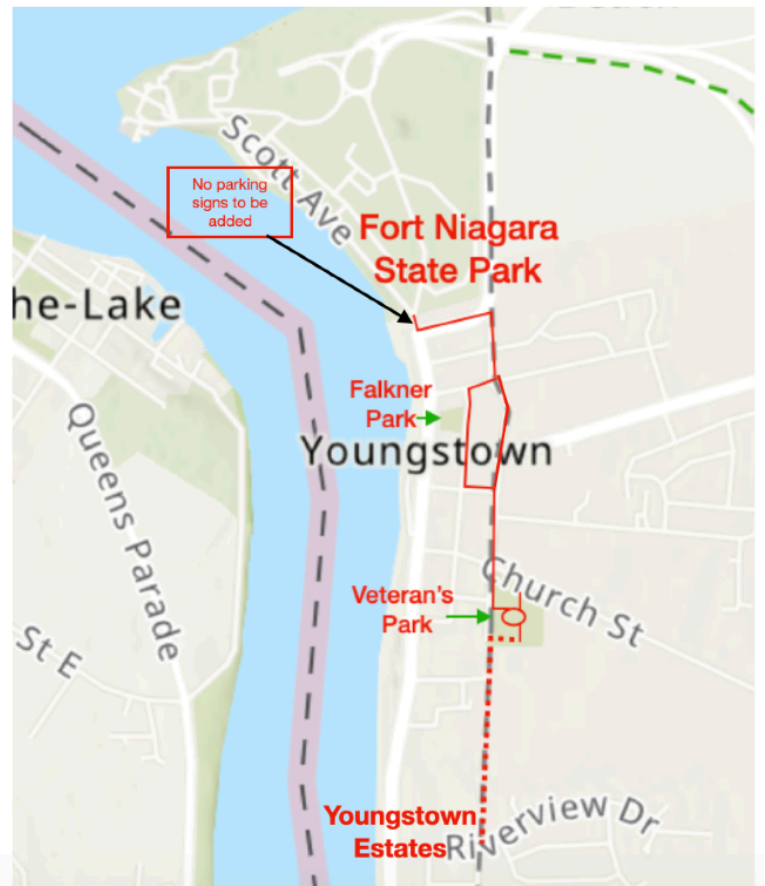
## Project 1 Trail Content:

The following pages include the project content proposal to the Niagara River Greenway Ad-hoc Committee on Recreation and Tourism.



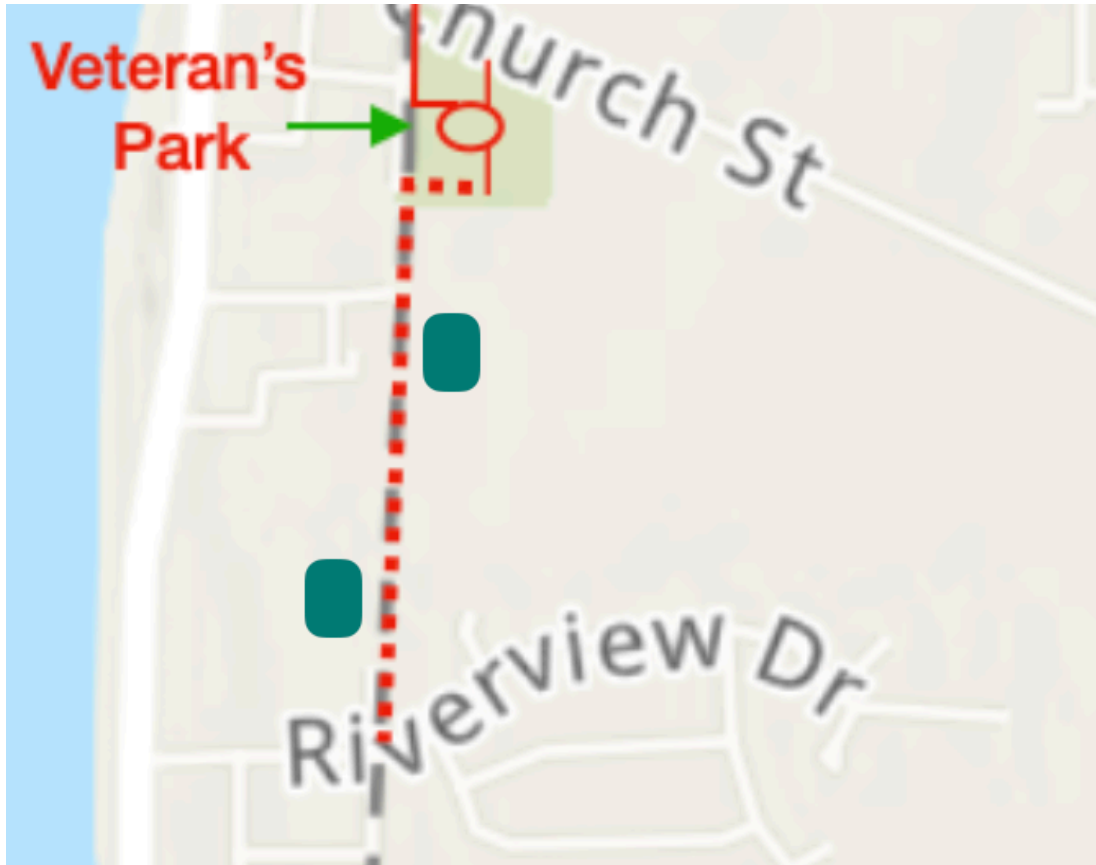
## Proposed Youngstown Bike Path

- Youngstown Estates to Veteran's Park.
- Loop in Veteran's Park
- Direct to Fort Niagara:
  - ➡ North on 3rd St. (Nancy Price Dr.)
  - ➡ North on S. Lake St.
  - ➡ West on Jackson St.
  - ➡ North on Main St. to entrance of Fort Niagara
- To Downtown shopping & Restaurants:
  - ➡ Go west on Hinman St.
  - ➡ North on 2nd St. to Falkner Park
- To Fort Niagara from Falkner Park:
  - ➡ North on 2nd St. to East on Williams St.
  - ➡ North on S. Lake St.
  - ➡ West on Jackson St.
  - ➡ North on Main St. to entrance of Fort Niagara



**➡ County supports the use of 18F: Jackson and north on Main St. to Fort Niagara State Park with "no parking" signs added on Main St entrance)**

## FROM YOUNGSTOWN ESTATES TO VETERAN'S PARK



The trail will be 12 feet wide and approximately 1,800 feet long made of tamped crushed stone with a cinder finish with an option to black top for smooth finish.

Two benches and landscaping to attract butterflies will be installed along the path.

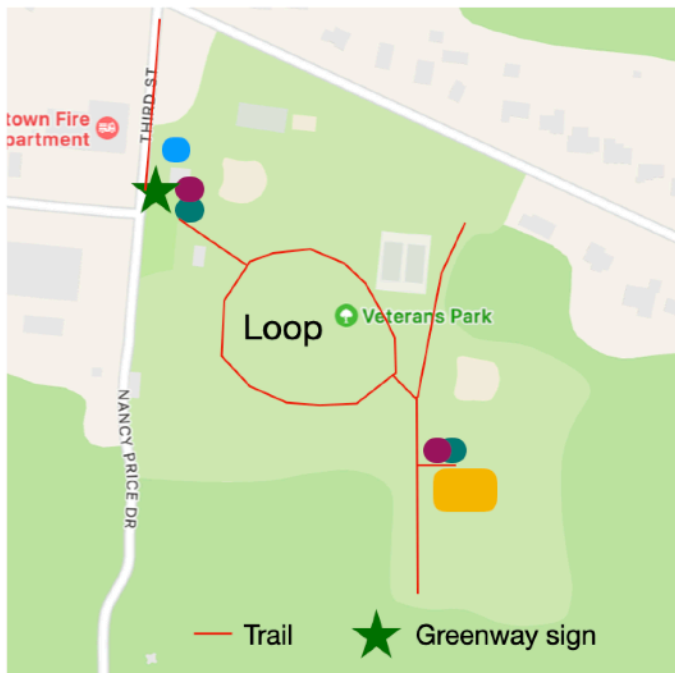


## VETERAN'S PARK LOOP

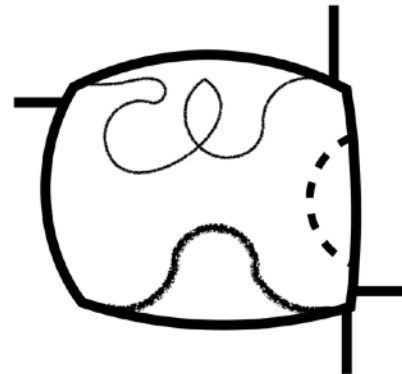
The walking/cycling loop within Veteran's Park will be a paved 8 foot wide by approximately 1,400 feet trail connecting the play activity centers, parking and dog-park. The "loop" design will have a "bike park" theme that will combine a walking path with parallel sections that will have bike specific activities for children such as riding hills and swerves. The intent would allow parents to ride or walk next to their children while performing these fun activities. This provides a unique opportunity in the area differentiating Veteran's Park from others.

Convert the existing dog-park from grass to crushed stone to facilitate winter-time/wet weather use. The trail from the east parking lot to dog-park will be maintained in the winter to ensure access. The remainder of the trail will be planned for seasonal use, allowing for cross country skiing and snow shoeing.

The Empire State (Greenway) information sign, two benches, two bike racks, a water station and landscaping (10 shade trees and butterflies bushes) will also be installed within the park.



Legend:  
Dog park (yellow square)  
Bench (teal circle)  
Bike rack (purple circle)  
Water station at Recreation Bldg (blue circle)

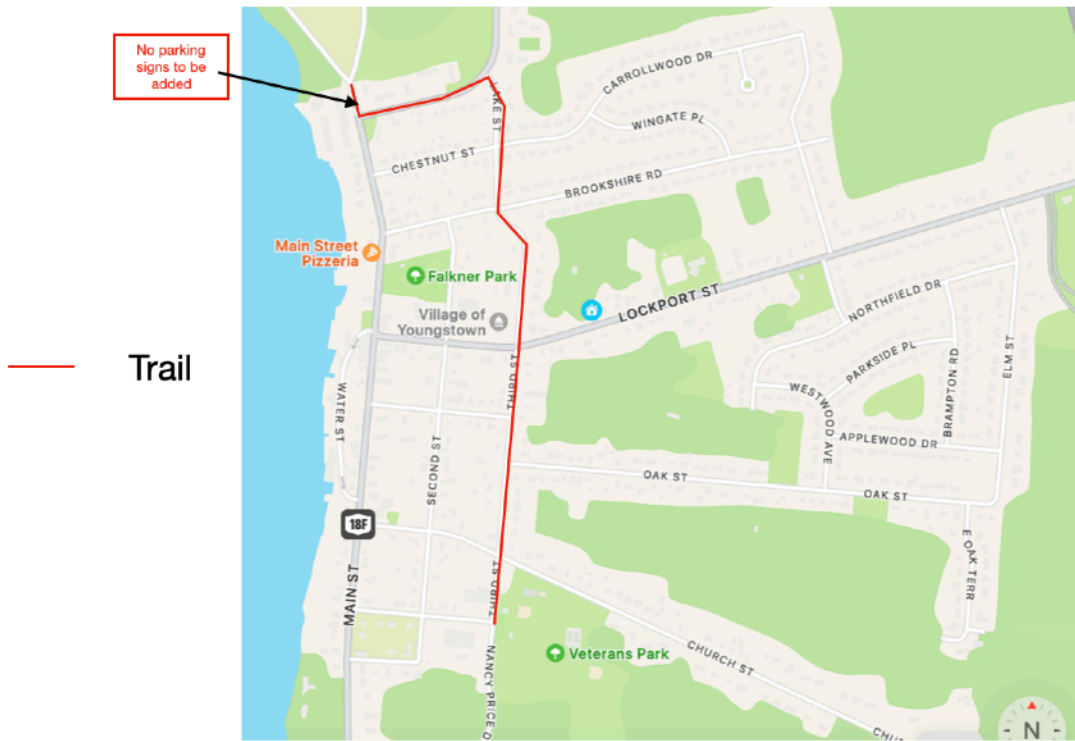


The "Loop" Walking/bike path concept:

Walking path is solid black

Bike path would merge with walking path at several locations with some type of obstacle course to ride on (bumps), rallies, and curves.

# VETERAN'S PARK STRAIGHT TO FORT NIAGARA



**➔ County supports the use of 18F: Jackson and north on Main St. to Fort Niagara State Park with “no parking” signs added on Main St entrance)**

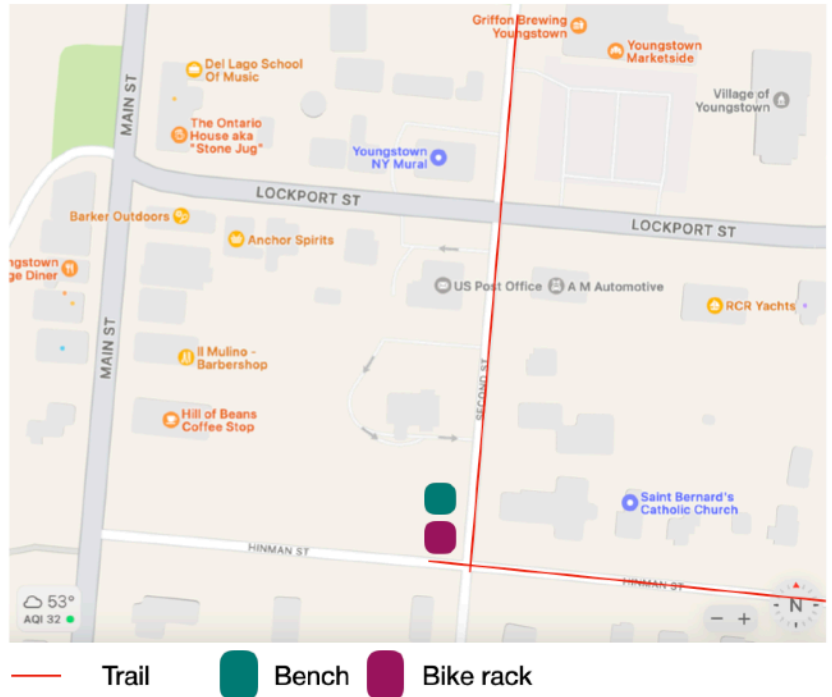
The trail will then continue north with directions straight to Fort Niagara (shown above) and also directions to Falkner Park (details on the following page).

Pavement markings will be painted on the local Village Roads indicating the roads are shared with the bicycle trail.

## HINMAN & 2ND ST.

The trail from Veteran’s Park will continue north on Nancy Price Dr/3rd St, then turns left onto Hinman St.

At 2nd St, a bike rack, and a bench will be provided so individuals can rest and walk to the Village downtown businesses.

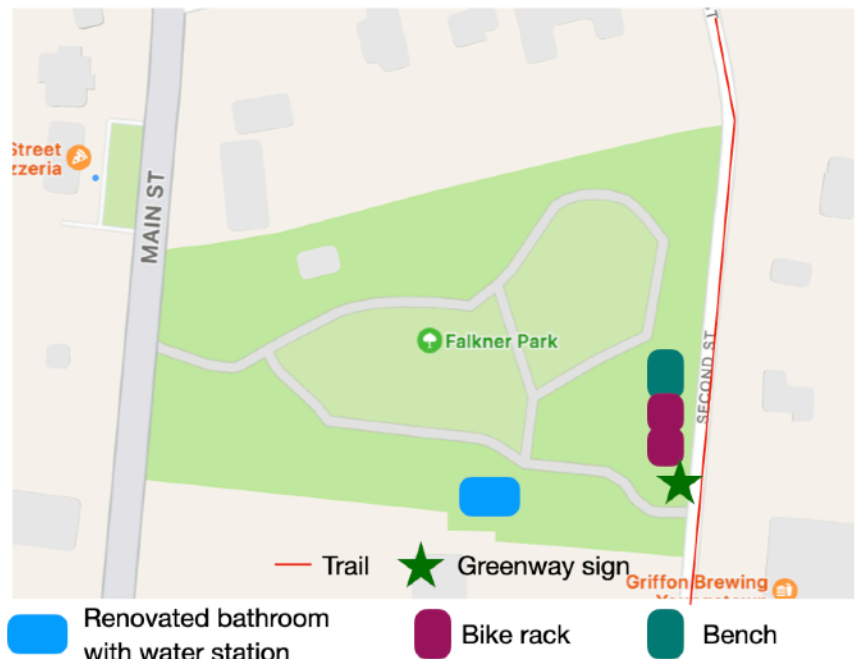


## FALKNER PARK

The trail will continue north on 2nd St to Falkner Park where additional bike racks and benches will be located.

The proposal also includes replacing or renovating the existing bathrooms to be ADA compliant, along with adding a new water station.

A new Empire State (Greenway) sign will be installed to provide directions, locations of businesses and key historical information. This will be the same sign as installed in Veteran’s Park.



## FALKNER PARK TO FORT NIAGARA

The trail will then continue from Falkner Park north on 2nd St. to William St, connecting to 3rd/S.Lake St.

The trail will continue on Jackson St. (18F) and then north onto Main.

No Parking signs will be installed on the east side of Main St. to ensure sufficient room and safety for the trail.



— Trail

Note: We are in process of proposing a new Fort Niagara trail head to Mark Mistretta, NYS Parks to be located across from S. Lake St with direct access into the park. This would be similar to the recent installation at Joseph Davis State Park, thus would eliminating the path down Jackson and on Main St.

## Advancing the Niagara River Greenway Vision

Recreation Trail project strives to meet and advance the vision, goals and objectives outlined in the Niagara River Greenway Plan consistent with the following **Greenway goals**:

- **Improve Access:** The Lower Niagara Recreation Trail Project 1 will improve safe access to the local parks, activities and events that are held in Veteran's Park, Falkner Park, Fort Niagara State Park and the Village of Youngstown.
- **Make Connections:** This project of the Lower Niagara Recreation Trail plan will connect Fort Niagara State Park to Joseph Davis State Park by connecting Fort Niagara to Youngstown Estates via a direct trail vs. access by various roadways. Veteran's Park, Faulkner Park and the amenities included in this plan will make these parks ideal resting/leisure stations for people traveling along the Greenway Trail.
- **Protect & Restore Environmental Systems:** This project transforms the old Niagara Rail corridor into a useable public space. Residents and visitors will enjoy what nature has to offer on the trail and add to the local Butterfly trail initiative. The project will clean up, restore and maintain the trail and allow it to be used throughout all seasons.
- **Celebrate History & Heritage:** This project targets the Village's rich history and heritage as a quaint waterfront village with beautiful views of the Niagara River, Lake Ontario and the Old Fort Niagara. The trail provides access to residents and visitors to take advantage of events and daily activities within the historic area. There will be signage placed along the trail to educate visitors.
- **Spark Revitalization & Renewal:** This project is a significant part of the overall Village of Youngstown revitalization and renewal by focusing on accessibility to our parks, improved physical, social-emotional, and cognitive benefits (mind/body/soul building activities) of our residents by providing a safe and engaging environment for families and visitors.

## Community & Government Support

A community input event was held on June 15, 2024 with over 100 local residents in attendance. The FOY River Trails, Roads & Rails Sub-Committee shared the vision of the overall plan of the Lower Niagara Recreation Trail to connect Fort Niagara State Park all the way to Joseph Davis State Park. The community support was overwhelmingly positive. We have a petition of support with over 180 signatures from the community.

The overall input received is that the community would absolutely utilize the trail when installed as there is significant concern regarding the safety of Lower River Road for cyclists and walkers.



**Attachment 1** of this proposal provides +180 signatures of community support for the overall Lower Niagara Recreation Trail from local residents and visitors.

**Attachment 2** of this proposal provides the survey results from local residents citing their current experiences and identifying their preference for changes to support walking and cycling the Lower Niagara area supporting this project.

**Attachment 3** of this proposal contained letters of support.

The Village of Youngstown is in the process of updating their LWRP and Comprehensive plan with an outside consultant. This will take significant time to complete but the project content is well aligned with previous documents and the overall revitalization/renewal plan that has been developed collaboratively between Youngstown Recreation Commission and Friends of Youngstown, Inc. Friends of Youngstown, Inc. is a non-profit organization that was formed to support the community of Youngstown in their efforts to revitalize, improve and ensure long term sustainability of the community for generations to come.



## Existing Conditions at Veteran's Park:

- Aged pavilion
- Veteran's Memorial
- Swing-set and climbing mound
- Historic Niagara Frontier Railway Station & Corridor (needs substantial renovation)
- Village of Youngstown Volunteer Fire Department Helicopter landing pad
- Community dog-park (grass based)
- Recreation building: bathrooms and snack bar require renovation.
- Two parking lots
- No sidewalks or paths leading to the park, thus limiting access.

## Current renovations completed in the Village of Youngstown:

- Recreation Building: Office (renovated May 2024)
- Two renovated ballfields (completed June 2024)
- 9-hole disc golf course (completed May 2024)
- Basketball courts (Resurfaced June 2024)
- Removed & replaced existing sidewalk around Recreation building (completed August 2024)
- New benches & picnic tables for pavilion (target Spring 2025)
- Total cost of the above renovations completed in 2024 is \$49,500.

## Project Implementation

Dependent on funding being granted, the trail project is targeted to begin in Spring of 2025 with full completion by Fall of 2025.

This page is intentionally left blank.

## BUDGET - FUNDING PLAN:



**The estimated total cost of this project \$358,492.**

**The project team is requesting funding from Greenway in the amount of \$240,993.**

**Village of Youngstown has committed to funding of \$108,000.**

**Friends of Youngstown has committed to fund \$9,500.**

Cost breakdown as follows:

Description	Quantity	Unit Price	Cost	Funding Source
Trail installation - from Estates to Veteran's Park (stone - linear feet of trail x 12 feet wide)	1800		\$92,315	Greenway
The Loop installation - In Veteran's Park (stone base and paved- linear feet of trail X 8 feet wide)	1400		\$72,800	Greenway
Dog park stone	1	\$20,000	\$20,000	Greenway
Butterfly trail landscaping	1	\$5,000	\$5,000	Greenway
Benches	6	\$1,189	\$7,133	Greenway
Water stations	2	\$3,476	\$6,953	Greenway
Bike racks	8	\$974	\$7,791	Greenway
Signage (10 medium sized signs)	10	\$500	\$5,000	Greenway
Signage (2 Greenway signs)	2	\$12,000	\$24,000	Greenway
Falkner Park bathroom renovation	1	\$60,000	\$60,000	Village of Youngstown
Department of Public Works	1	\$40,000	\$40,000	Village of Youngstown
Shade trees	10	\$800	\$8,000	Village of Youngstown
Ball field fence renovation	1	\$9,500	\$9,500	Friends of Youngstown
<b>Total project cost</b>			<b>\$358,492</b>	

## **WORK COMPLETION / RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The Village DPW will work jointly with Town of Porter to contract out the installation of the tamped crush stone base with cinder finished pathway and paved loop trail. The project team will work to procure road millings from local municipalities to reduce the amount of crushed stone to potentially save on the total project costs.

The Village of Youngstown DPW will handle the painting of the sharrows on the Village roads, as well as installation of the benches, signs and bike racks. The renovations of the bathrooms and installation of the water stations will be contracted out.

Operation and maintenance of the trail and facilities will be handled exclusively by the Village of Youngstown DPW which is currently responsible for all other maintenance in the Village.

All administrative aspects of grant management will be administered by the Village of Youngstown Clerk's Office as In-Kind work.

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

- Attachment #1 - Community Petition Signatures in Support of Overall Trail Project obtained by FOY
- Attachment #2 - Community Survey Results obtained by FOY
- Attachment #3 - Letters of support
- Attachment #4 - Village of Youngstown Resolution
- Attachment #5 - Historical summary of the Lewiston - Youngstown Railroad