



The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
President Pro Tempore and Majority Leader of the New York State Senate
Legislative Office Building, Room 907
Albany, NY 12247

The Honorable Carl Heastie
Speaker of the New York State Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 932
Albany, NY 11247

January X, 2022

Dear President Pro Tempore Stewart-Cousins and Speaker Heastie,

On behalf of the residents of New York, we the undersigned Senators and Assembly Members request the Senate Majority and Assembly Majority one-house budget resolutions for FY2023 include \$180 million in capital funding allocation, and a \$20 million allocation in aid to localities for planning, to accelerate greenway and trail development in the downstate metropolitan region. This funding would mirror the \$200 million allocated in the 2017 budget for the Empire State Trail program.

We are proud to see the initiatives put forth in the Empire State Trail program, but want to recognize that the majority of its designated \$200 million was distributed to rural areas outside of downstate metropolitan New York area. We believe that new funds appropriated in this year's budget should be designated to New York City, and Nassau, Suffolk, Orange, Rockland, and Westchester Counties to ensure that the funding is distributed to specific projects that fall within the areas that need it most. This funding would allow localities to use state dollars to match federal funding increasing urban, suburban trail, and greenway development resources.

The COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated the importance of accessible outdoor spaces and cycling infrastructure. But the need for greenway infrastructure in our communities will extend beyond the pandemic. Greenways improve safety for the thousands of New Yorkers who rely on cycling in their work or as part of their daily commutes, including delivery workers. They enhance the sustainability of our communities and improve quality of life, especially for neighborhoods

underserved by our transportation system.¹ This funding could help the New York City Department of Transportation plan and begin greenway projects in low income neighborhoods and communities of color with little or no greenway infrastructure.

New York City and the surrounding downstate metropolitan areas have enormous potential as they possess numerous unbuilt greenway segments that can serve as accessible open spaces throughout the region. This funding will allow the City and surrounding counties to expand greenway access, thus improving sustainability and quality of life for more New Yorkers.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

With Gratitude,



Alessandra Biaggi
New York State Senator, District 34



Emily Gallagher
New York State Assembly Member, District 50

¹ New York Parks & Conservation Association and the Business Council of New York State, Inc. [Greenways and Trails: Bringing Economic Benefits to New York : ConservationTools](#). Accessed Jan 19, 2022.