



## A BICYCLE FRIENDLY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

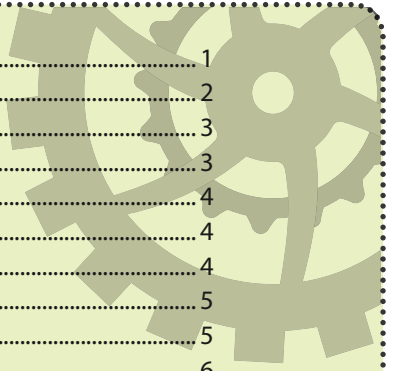
For businesses along the Canalway Trail  
and throughout New York State

# BIKE FRIENDLY NEW YORK



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## INTRODUCTION

Cycling is a great way to explore New York’s great outdoors, charming communities, and numerous cultural and historic sites. There’s so much to see in New York, and no better way to see it than on a bike.

Beyond its recreational appeal, cycling is also an economic development opportunity for communities across New York. Bicycling is the second most popular outdoor activity in the U.S. and a major part of the fast-growing adventure travel sector.<sup>1</sup> In fact, cycling is now the third most common vacation activity, with nearly 30 million Americans taking a bicycling vacation within the last five years.<sup>2</sup> Factoring in day-to-day riding and bike vacation spending, cycling contributes approximately \$133 billion to the U.S. economy.<sup>3</sup>

With the cross-state Erie Canalway Trail forming the backbone of a growing statewide trail network, plus diverse terrain for road and mountain biking, New York State is a cycling destination with great growth potential. A 2014 study found that the 1.6 million annual visits to the Erie Canalway Trail generate \$253 million in annual economic impact and support 3,400 jobs.

It’s not just about a nice ride or economic impact, however. Cycling is an affordable and sustainable mode of transportation, and where infrastructure such as bike lanes and multi-use trails have been built, a great option for commuting or running errands.

However, creating a positive cycling environment doesn’t just happen. Cyclists, especially those who travel significant distances for a vacation, are often deliberate in their choices of lodging, food, and other amenities. They’re looking for proximity to trails and routes, local information on where to ride and lodge, convenience, security for their bikes and gear, and an overall welcoming environment.

That’s where certified Bike Friendly Businesses come in. They provide the connection between a great trail or route and communities along the way, providing services that make cyclists feel comfortable and welcome as they pedal through an area. They also spread the message of cycling as an economic and community development tool.

<sup>1</sup> Outdoor Foundation, Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report 2015, <http://www.outdoorfoundation.org/pdf/ResearchParticipation2015Topline.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> United States Travel Association (formerly Travel Industry Association of America), Trends in U.S. Domestic Travel and Activities

<sup>3</sup> Outdoor Industry Foundation, The Active Outdoor Recreation Economy: A \$730 Billion Annual Contribution to the U.S. Economy, [www.outdoorindustryfoundation.org](http://www.outdoorindustryfoundation.org)

## PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This guide outlines eligibility requirements for businesses in Canalway Trail communities and other parts of New York State that are looking to be certified as bike friendly through the new Bike Friendly New York program, administered by Parks & Trails New York and the NYS Canal Corporation. It provides background information on the economic benefits of cycling and bike tourism, as well as some suggestions on how businesses of all types can better serve cyclists.

## WHY CYCLISTS?

With the popularity of cycling growing, an increasing number of people are seeking out new places to enjoy a nice ride, whether for a few hours or a week-long trip. Thus, bike trails and routes attract bike tourists. Research has shown that the longer the trail or route, the farther people will travel to experience it.

Bike tourists, especially those who engage in trips of more than a single day, spend money in the places they visit. They need food and drink, they stay in hotels and B&B's, and they buy gas and souvenirs. The pace of bike touring also lends itself to "experiencing" communities along the route. Cyclists are generally traveling at a speed that allows them to see what's in the front window of a business, or notice the specials board outside of a trailside restaurant. Without the need to park a car, cyclists often will make short stops at shops, historic sites, and museums. They'll browse the local farmers market, and might even take a walking or boat tour.

In addition to their use for recreation, bikes are also a means of transportation, sometimes during the same trip. Studies have shown that there's reason for businesses to encourage and cater to the day-to-day cyclist, since money saved on travel costs leaves more money to spend at local businesses.<sup>4</sup>

## THE BIKE FRIENDLY NEW YORK PROGRAM

Parks & Trails New York, in partnership with the New York State Canal Corporation, has created a bicycle-friendly business certification for Canalway Trail communities and other businesses throughout New York. The purpose of the Bike Friendly New York program is to recognize businesses that currently cater to cyclists by offering services and amenities that make two-wheeled exploration easier and more enjoyable and to encourage other businesses to do so.

Although the Bike Friendly New York program was conceived with businesses along the statewide Canalway Trail in mind, businesses throughout the state are encouraged to participate.

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<sup>4</sup> Advocacy Advance, *Bicycling Means Business: The Economic Benefits of Bicycle Infrastructure*, [www.advocacyadvance.org](http://www.advocacyadvance.org)

## Bike Friendly Business

### Chittenango Landing Canal Boat

Museum's historic canal boats and preserved maintenance facilities are visible from the Erie Canalway Trail and located across from a popular trailhead. The Museum hosts a Trail Ambassador group, organizes weekly trail rides, and serves as a regional information center for cyclists passing through. It also allows cyclists to use bathrooms, refill water bottles, and has bikes available for rental.





*With money saved on travel costs, people on bikes often have more money to spend at local businesses. Armed with a basket or pannier, people on bikes are ready consumers; studies in NYC, Toronto, and Portland found that people who biked and walked to commercial areas came more often and spent more money per month than those who drove.*

## CERTIFICATION

The Bike Friendly New York program awards certification to businesses in New York State that fulfill certain eligibility requirements and offer a specified number of bicycle-friendly amenities that demonstrate a high degree of support for cyclists.

Certification confers a host of benefits on businesses that cater to cyclists or hope to tap into the cycling market, as well as offering increased levels of service for cyclists themselves. The “Bike Friendly” sign provides businesses with recognition of their efforts to welcome cyclists and cycling tourists. For cycling customers, the Bike Friendly Business decal and online listing represent a quick way to find supportive service providers. Moreover, the program’s eligibility requirements and suggested bicycle-friendly amenities establish a baseline for “bike friendliness” throughout New York State.

Businesses will be listed as Bike Friendly in various online locations, including the official trip-planning website for the Erie Canalway Trail, [CycletheErieCanal.com](http://CycletheErieCanal.com), and PTNY’s statewide Trailfinder site resource.



## WHAT IS A BIKE FRIENDLY BUSINESS?

Bike friendliness is not a “yes or no” quality, but a matter of degree. The steps that businesses take to cater to cyclists will vary with the nature of the business, location, and other factors. Some business may want to take an incremental approach, adding a few bike friendly amenities and services and evaluating the results. Others may want to jump right in.

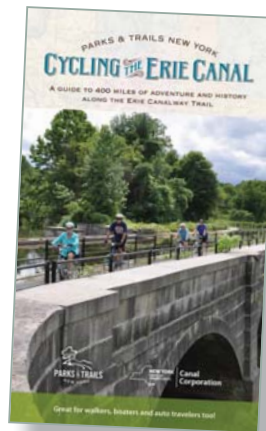
There are some general characteristics that define Bike Friendly Businesses, and these form the basis for the requirements of the Bike Friendly New York program. First and foremost, Bike Friendly Businesses value cyclists’ business. They strive to understand and anticipate the unique needs that cyclists have and work to provide amenities that meet these needs. Beyond the basics, there is a wide range of ways that businesses can serve cyclists. Bike Friendly New York’s eligibility requirements and suggested amenities attempt to capture this range.



## RECOGNITION & PROMOTION

Certified Bike Friendly Businesses will be highlighted in a number of ways. These include but are not limited to the following:

- Certified Bike Friendly Businesses listed on CycletheErieCanal.com and PTNY.org; certified hotels, B&B's and campgrounds will also be indicated on CycletheErieCanal.com lodgings page
- Inclusion in PTNY's interactive Trailfinder and Erie Canalway Trail maps
- Printed registry to be included with all new purchases of PTNY's Cycling the Erie Canal and Cycling the Hudson Valley guidebook
- Inclusion in Bike Friendly Business list released to statewide and regional media each spring



*Self-serve bike repair stations, like the one shown below, provide cyclists with an easily accessible bike stand and all the tools needed for a quick tune-up. Local cycling maps, safe parking, and assistance with luggage transport are other useful “tools” that bike-friendly businesses can provide.*

## PROGRAM GOALS

- Enhance level of service for touring and other cyclists
- Educate business owners on the cycling market and local and regional bike routes and trail networks
- Help business owners reach and serve a new lucrative market Increase awareness of the economic impact of trails and long-distance trails and bike routes among community stakeholders, including business owners
- Create new opportunities for data gathering and further economic impact determination
- Build excitement around the Erie Canalway Trail and cycling in New York State

## PROGRAM DETAILS

Bike Friendly New York certification is free. The Bike Friendly New York certification was designed and conceived with business along the Canalway Trail system in mind. However, businesses throughout New York State are eligible for certification, and welcome to apply.

Bike Friendly New York certification is good for three years from the date of certification. Re-certification can be accomplished through an online form, similar to the original application.

For those businesses with multiple locations that wish to be certified, each location must submit a separate Bike Friendly Business application.

## APPLICATION & CERTIFICATION

Businesses interested in Bike Friendly Business certification can complete the online application located at [www.CycletheErieCanal.com/bikefriendly](http://www.CycletheErieCanal.com/bikefriendly).

Successful applicants will be notified of their certification via email. They will also be sent written confirmation, program materials, and a decal for display.





*Businesses along trails and cycling routes have an opportunity to attract and benefit from an eager and growing clientele—cyclists! But they have to know what cyclists want and how to cater to them.*

## BASELINE CERTIFICATION CRITERIA

Bike Friendly New York applicants must demonstrate that they satisfy the following criteria, according to their business type.

BUSINESS TYPE	BASE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	REQUIRED AMENITIES*
<b>Accommodations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Covered and secured bike storage area (preferably on first floor) and/or allowing bike storage in rooms</li> <li>2. Basic bicycle repair tools and pump available</li> <li>3. Knowledge of local trails and cycling routes, local bike shops, bike rentals, tour operators, and tourist information centers</li> </ol>	+2 Bike Friendly Business amenities or services
<b>Campgrounds</b> <i>(can be public or private facilities)</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reserved spaces for cyclists with no reservation required</li> <li>2. One-night stays for cyclists</li> <li>3. Nearby bike parking area</li> <li>4. Basic bicycle repair tools and pump available</li> <li>5. Knowledge of local trails and cycling routes, local bike shops, bike rentals, tour operators, and tourist information centers</li> </ol>	+2 Bike Friendly Business amenities or services
<b>Other businesses</b> <i>(includes tourism-related services such as tour providers and equipment rentals, museums and other attractions)</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identified bike parking area (can be public rack)</li> <li>2. Knowledge of local trails and cycling routes, local bike shops, bike rentals, tour operators, and tourist information centers</li> </ol>	+1 Bike Friendly Business amenity or service
<b>Food &amp; Drink Service</b> <i>(includes restaurants, taverns, breweries, wineries)</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identified bike parking area (can be public rack)</li> <li>2. Healthy, local food and/or drink options available</li> <li>3. Knowledge of local cycling routes, local bike shops, bike rentals, tour operators, and tourist information centers</li> </ol>	+1 Bike Friendly Business amenity or service
<b>Bike Shops</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Basic bicycle repair tools and pump available for public use</li> <li>2. Bike rental and/or bike shipping services</li> <li>3. Knowledge of local trail and cycling routes, local bike shops, bike rentals, tour operators, and tourist information centers</li> </ol>	No additional requirements

## ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Businesses must keep posted business hours at a physical location to be eligible for Bike Friendly New York certification. Businesses with no retail or storefront presence are not eligible for certification at this time. For seasonal businesses including tour vendors and other tourism services, keeping posted hours at a primary location during their season of operation meets this requirement.

All participating businesses should inform frontline staff about participation in the Bike Friendly New York program.

## BIKE FRIENDLY AMENITIES

In addition to satisfying the baseline criteria for their business category, certified businesses must offer a minimum of one (restaurants and other businesses) or two (accommodations and campgrounds) bike friendly amenities. Bike shops have no required bike friendly amenities beyond the baseline criteria.

Allowing participating businesses to choose the amenities they offer in addition to satisfying the baseline criteria is meant to provide flexibility and to encourage creativity in how they cater to cyclists.

### \*QUALIFYING AMENITIES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- One-night stays for cyclists (for accommodations)
- Basic bicycle repair tools and pump available (if not included as baseline criteria), or self-serve bicycle repair stand
- Local cycling maps displayed or access to computer with local/regional interactive cycling resources bookmarked
- Discounts offered to cyclists
- Designated bike boxing area, or assistance offered with bike packing and shipping
- Shuttle services offered
- Long-term vehicle parking
- Self-serve laundry
- Bicycle cleaning station
- Bike supplies, tools, and/or apparel for sale
- Bike rental/share offered
- Public charging station for phones, tablets, etc

In addition to the amenities listed above, business applicants have the ability to suggest new qualifying amenities on the application, along with a brief explanation as to how the proposed amenity serves cyclists. These amenities will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

## LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

“Knowledge of local trails and cycling routes, local bike shops, bike rentals, tour operators, and tourist information centers” means that a Bike Friendly Business will, first and foremost, be aware of its proximity and the nearest point of access to the Canalway Trail, or other major trail networks or routes. For long-distance Canalway Trail users, or those on the cross-country Northern Tier route, knowing how to reach the next town or nearby landmarks, is important. In other areas of the state, proximity to obvious destinations for recreational cyclists such as local mountain bike trails or a state park is important. Bike Friendly Businesses should also be able to point visiting cyclists to nearby bike shops. They should also be able to direct cyclists to the local attractions, tourism information centers, and local tour operators as they would with other visitors.



## Bike Friendly Business

**Hostel Buffalo Niagara** is Buffalo's hippest lodging, and most bike-friendly, with an in-house bike share program and strong ties to local cycling advocacy groups. The Hostel hosts cross-state and cross-country riders from around the world, and regularly shares stories of bike tourists who pass through on social media.



## Bike Friendly Business

Erie Canalway Trail travelers passing through Hulberton in Orleans County are treated to the ultimate trailside amenity – **Trailside Bikes** – a full-service bike shop right on the trail. Trailside offers repairs and sells used and new bikes and bike accessories that benefit short- and long-distance riders. During peak riding season, most of the Trailside's customers arrive via the Erie Canalway Trail.



The ability of Bike Friendly Business staff to be familiar with all of this information depends to some degree on the size of their community. Businesses in larger cities aren't expected to know every bike shop or bike lane. However, it is important that Bike Friendly Business staff know where to direct questions and to provide materials that lead cyclists in the right direction. In communities with bike lanes and trail networks, providing copies of a local biking map is a great practice. (It is included as a qualifying Bike Friendly Amenity.) Websites for local cycling groups and resources provided by regional transportation planning agencies are often good sources of additional information.

## SIGNAGE

The certification packet that is sent to each participating business contains a window decal so that businesses can advertise their participation as a Bike Friendly Business. Additional signage can be purchased, including durable exterior signage and/or additional decal.

Certified businesses should display the decal and/or purchased signage in a highly-visible location on their premises.

## TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Beyond providing services tailored to cyclists, participating businesses can take further steps to reach out to the bicycling community to benefit from bike tourism, and ultimately to grow the New York cycling market. First, Bike Friendly Businesses are encouraged to mention their certification and participation in the Bike Friendly New York program in their advertising and marketing efforts. Without including this information, how is a prospective customer to know about the great steps taken? Certified Bike Friendly Businesses should tout the program to, and be prepared to answer questions from, local residents or other businesses after putting up the decal.



The next level of integrating bike-friendly thinking into standard business practices could be choosing to market directly to a cycling audience by purchasing advertising in specific publications or tabling at local cycling events. Another method might be integrating trail or cycling messaging or imagery into a business's brand identity or name. Hosting cycling events at the business or posting information on local cycling advocacy and events are additional means of getting known in the cycling community.

Word of mouth is key, as bike tourists and other cyclists often discuss travel plans, pose questions, and share experiences within their networks.



# HOW DO BIKE TOURISTS SPEND MONEY?



**THEY EAT** – bicycling burns up to 450 calories per hour, with food serving as a bicyclist's “fuel”

**THEY DRINK** – staying hydrated is critical, but it can also be fun when passing lemonade stands, breweries, and wineries

**THEY EXPLORE** – take in the sights, visit museums, art galleries and historic sites, and learn about the places they visit

**THEY SLEEP** – in B & B's, inns, hotels/motels, and campgrounds

**THEY DRIVE** – to and from starting and ending points, requiring fuel; take public transportation, taxis, etc

*Being bike friendly requires making certain choices, but it doesn't need to be overly complicated or expensive.*

*Many different types of businesses can be bicycle friendly. This includes large and small businesses, and those providing a wide variety of products and services.*





*Bike Friendly New York aims to provide common-sense ways in which businesses can better serve cyclists and a straightforward process to recognize and promote their efforts.*

## THANK YOU TO OUR PROGRAM PARTNERS

PTNY administers the Bike Friendly New York program, with financial support from the NYS Canal Corporation. Valuable input on the design and execution of the Bike Friendly Business program was received from Canalway Trail Tourism Advisory Group members, as well as existing Bike Friendly Businesses, tourism agencies, and others.

## ABOUT THE NEW YORK STATE CANAL CORPORATION

Created by the New York State Legislature in 1992, the New York State Canal Corporation operates, maintains and promotes the 524-mile New York State Canal System, comprised of the Erie, Champlain, Cayuga-Seneca, and Oswego Canals.



A recreationway and resurgent commercial waterway, the iconic Canal System has been enlarged twice and has been in continuous operation for 190 years. Today, though still used for commercial transportation, New York's Canals are primarily seen as a world-class destination for tourism and recreation, and the Canal System remains vital to many communities, businesses, industries and farming operations for its abundant, reliable and inexpensive supply of water. The Canal Corporation also oversees the development and promotion of the statewide Canalway Trail System and has directed the construction of more than 200 miles of Canalway Trail since 1995.

## ABOUT PARKS & TRAILS NEW YORK

Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) is New York's leading statewide advocate for parks and trails, dedicated since 1985 to improving our health, economy, and quality of life through the use and enjoyment of green space. PTNY is a leading voice in the protection of New York's magnificent state park system and the creation and promotion of more than 1,500 miles of greenways, canal and bike paths, river walks, and trails.



In partnership with the NYS Canal Corporation, PTNY has developed programming and resources to promote use of the state's longest and most well-known cycling destination, the Erie Canalway Trail. In 2015, PTNY released CycletheErieCanal.com, the first trip-planning website for the Erie Canalway Trail. PTNY has organized supported bike tours along the Erie Canalway Trail and in the Hudson Valley, and has worked to develop trails and greenways in communities across the state. Along the way, PTNY has learned firsthand the needs and desires of bicycle tourists.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the Bike Friendly New York certification program contact Parks & Trails New York at 518-434-15833, email [bikefriendly@ptny.org](mailto:bikefriendly@ptny.org), or visit [www.CycletheErieCanal.com/bikefriendly](http://www.CycletheErieCanal.com/bikefriendly).

## THE ERIE CANALWAY TRAIL: A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY ALONG AMERICA'S MOST FAMOUS WATERWAY

In New York State, the Erie Canalway Trail (ECT), along the historic Erie Canal, is becoming a world-class bike touring destination, drawing enthusiasts from throughout the state, across the country and around the world.

The ECT offers options for trips of almost any length. The trail passes through scenic countryside, picturesque canal towns, and the large urban centers of Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and Albany. It is both an internationally-known historic corridor and a modern travel corridor with convenient air, auto, and rail connections. Food and lodging are available nearby, and cell phone service is generally good.



## QUICK ERIE CANALWAY TRAIL STATS

- The ECT stretches 360 miles between Buffalo and Albany, and will be the longest trail of its kind in the United States when completed.
- Currently, 80% of the trail is finished as an off-road route, with 72 miles of road “gaps” remaining.
- The ECT’s flat elevation profile makes it accessible to cyclists of all ages and abilities and an attractive venue for a first extended cycling vacation.
- The ECT’s reach across the state results in its use by many trans-continental cyclists, who may prefer it to other on-road routes.
- PTNY’s annual Cycle the Erie Canal bike tour brings over 650 cyclists to the trail as they make the cross-state journey from Buffalo to Albany.



[WWW.PTNY.ORG/BIKEFRIENDLY](http://WWW.PTNY.ORG/BIKEFRIENDLY)



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