

# Making Activity Accessible

Enjoying being active on the Cayuga Waterfront Trail is easy for everyone

Easy access to greenery and public open spaces allows people to be much more physically active and so reduce their risk of a variety of diseases<sup>1,2,4,7</sup>. Visitors will be able to access the Cayuga Waterfront Trail from multiple locations along its 6-mile length, many of which are already popular community destinations with convenient places to park. The trail itself is smooth and flat, providing an unchallenging surface for everyone from walkers to cyclists to skaters. The length of the trail will feature welcoming amenities such as benches, restrooms, maps

and places to picnic, chat and enjoy the view.

Parks that are designed with features that encourage people to be active are all the more likely to be successful<sup>4</sup>. In particular, trails have been proven to be a good way to get people moving, as are open spaces, exercise facilities, sports facilities and golf courses<sup>6,7</sup>, all of which can be found on the Cayuga Waterfront.

The easier and more fun it is, the more likely people are to be physically active.



# Connecting Our Community

When people can get safely and conveniently between destinations, they are more likely to be physically active as part of their everyday life<sup>8</sup>. By linking some of the most popular destinations in Ithaca, like the Farmer's Market, Inlet Island, and Stewart Park, people will be able to have fun and enjoy fresh air on journeys they would otherwise have had to make by car.

One of our key goals is making connections between people and places in the community.

Connecting with others also helps us stay healthy. We can laugh and relax together when times are good, and offer each other support when times are bad. The beautiful trail will bring people together to exercise, learn and play. Evidence indicates that areas with natural features, like the trees of the trail, encourage people to congregate together<sup>10</sup> and many destinations on the trail are already centers of community activity.



Staying healthy is easier when people are connected to their community.



# Restoring Our Spirits



We've all heard that people "feel refreshed" after taking a walk in the park. The Cayuga Waterfront Trail will offer our community a welcoming, accessible, natural environment. Evidence indicates that our seeing and interacting with nature can cause measurable improvements in a range of aspects of our mental health (which can also impact our physical health), including:

**Mood:** Spending time in a natural environment, like the shores of Cayuga Lake, can leave people simply *feeling happier*.<sup>5,9</sup>

**Stress:** Enjoying nature can reduce stress. For children, proximity to nature can help them cope with stressful events<sup>12</sup> and, for adults, spending time with nature can lower blood pressure.<sup>5</sup> The longer they stay, the greater the impact, especially for older adults.<sup>9</sup> And so features that encourage people to extend their stays, such as the trails, seating areas and educational panels on the Cayuga Waterfront may be also help people be healthy.

**Recovery:** Views of a natural environment may even help people recover faster from illness<sup>11</sup>.

The Cayuga Waterfront Trail can help restore the physical and mental health of the community.

# Inspiring our Minds

The Trail will help visitors engage with their environment by encouraging them to learn as they travel. By introducing visitors to the history of the local area, through guided walks and informational panels, and the flora and fauna, through features such as the bird house, the trail will inspire them to move through the park and feel connected with the heritage of their community.

Spending time on the trail may even help people work better on challenging activities, like learning, schoolwork and having great ideas. Researchers have found that people who have spent time in a natural setting are better at *focussing* on tasks than those in an urban setting<sup>5</sup>. This finding even applies to people with particular problems such as ADHD, for whom a walk in a natural environment can improve their ability to concentrate, in comparison to a downtown or neighborhood walk<sup>3</sup>.



The Cayuga Waterfront Trail can help our residents achieve their goals.



## The Cayuga Waterfront Trail and Community Health

The Cayuga Waterfront Trail will allow our community to travel actively, safely and conveniently between some of Ithaca's focal destinations, while enjoying all the natural beauty of the Fingerlakes.

The trail can do more than offer Ithaca residents a pleasant stroll in the park- it **can actively contribute to our community's well-being**, by promoting:

**Higher levels of physical activity:** which will help to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes and maintain a healthy weight.



**Better Mental Health and Functioning:** including improved psychological well-being<sup>12</sup>, greater ability to concentrate on tasks<sup>5</sup>, and improved symptoms of ADHD in children<sup>3</sup>.



# Help us

## Want more Waterfront Trail?



### To learn more visit

[www.cayugawaterfronttrail.com](http://www.cayugawaterfronttrail.com), email [info@cayugawaterfronttrail.com](mailto:info@cayugawaterfronttrail.com) or call the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce at **607-273-7080**.

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