

"Peanut Line" Multi-Use Trail Project

TOWN OF AMHERST

History & Background

Historic "Peanut Line" Railroad Corridor

- 1853 The "Batavia Branch" of the New York Central began in 1853 operating between Canandaigua, NY and Niagara Falls, NY
- The first passenger train, operated as an excursion train.
- Late 1800's It became known as the "Peanut Line" after Dean Richmond, a company vice-president, referred to the acquisition as "only a peanut of a line."
- 1964 The NYS Central Railroad corridor was purchased by the Town of Amherst.



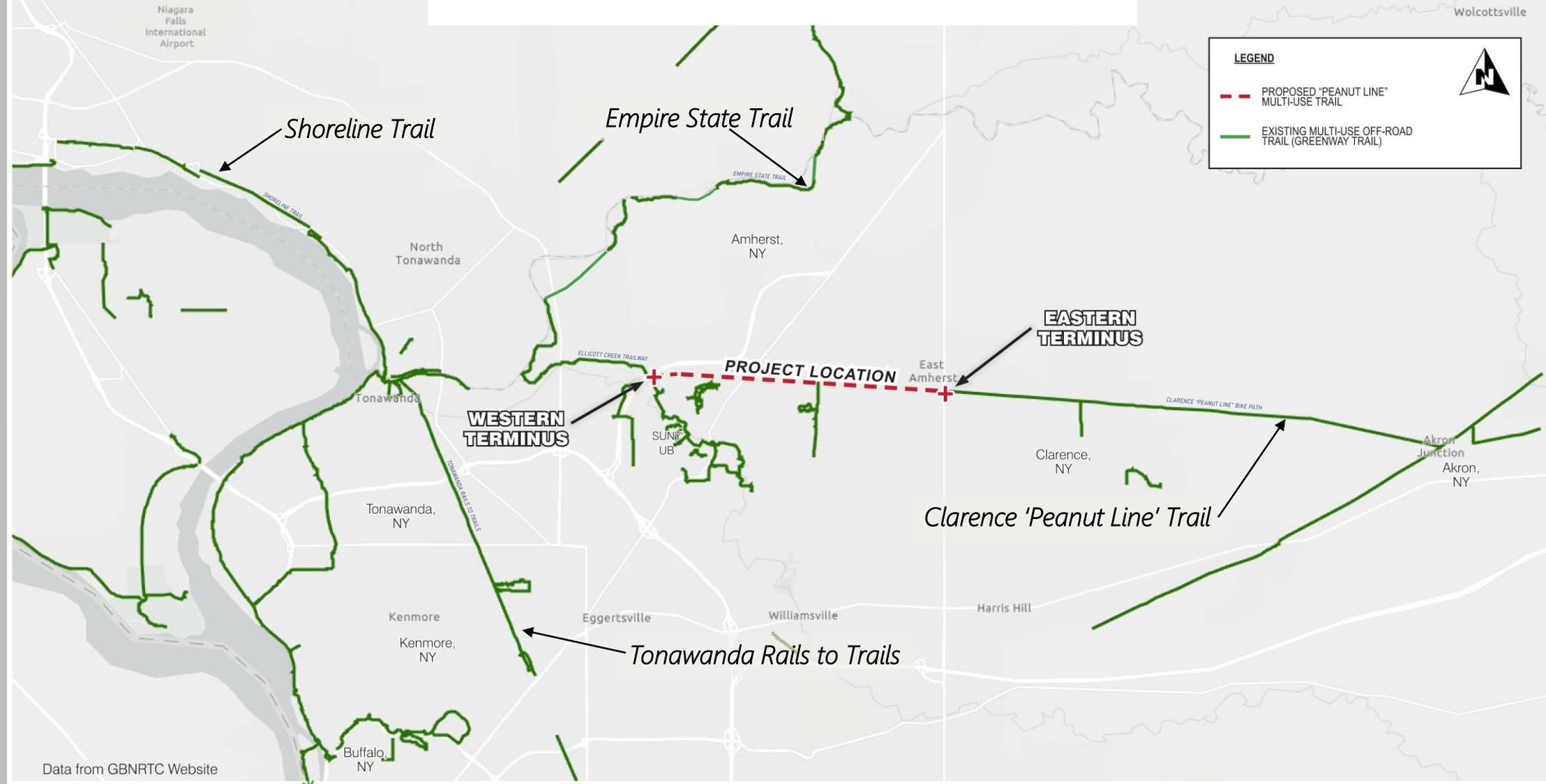
"Peanut Line"

History of Planning

- May 1992 Former railroad Right-of-Way is included in the "Town of Amherst Bicycle Plan"
- March 1998 Former railroad Right-of-Way is included in the "Bicycle Master Plan for Erie/Niagara Counties" (Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council 'GBNRTC')
- April 2018 Town of Amherst's recent update to its "2018 Recreation and Parks Master Plan" revealed that the top priority for residents is to improve pedestrian connections and a goal of the plan was to complete the "Peanut Line" project.
- June 2020 "Bicycle Master Plan for Erie/Niagara Counties" ('GBNRTC'). The "Peanut Line" Trail was selected as one of the top-ten highest ranking off-road corridors in this GBNRTC Plan.
- January 2025 The GBNRTC hired GObike as a consultant in 2024 to complete a feasibility study for an off-road multi-use trail project. The "Peanut Line" Study Final Report was completed in 2025 and provided recommendations on trail development.

REGIONAL CONTEXT MAP

"PEANUT LINE" MULTI-USE TRAIL PROJECT



Data from GBNRTC Website



Amherst, NY

AMHERST, NY

- The current rail corridor is considered unused open space
- The former rail corridor is mowed periodically down the centerline
- The Town Highway and Engineering Sanitary Division actively maintain and operate within the right-of-way for drainage and sanitary operations.



Clarence, NY

CLARENCE, NY

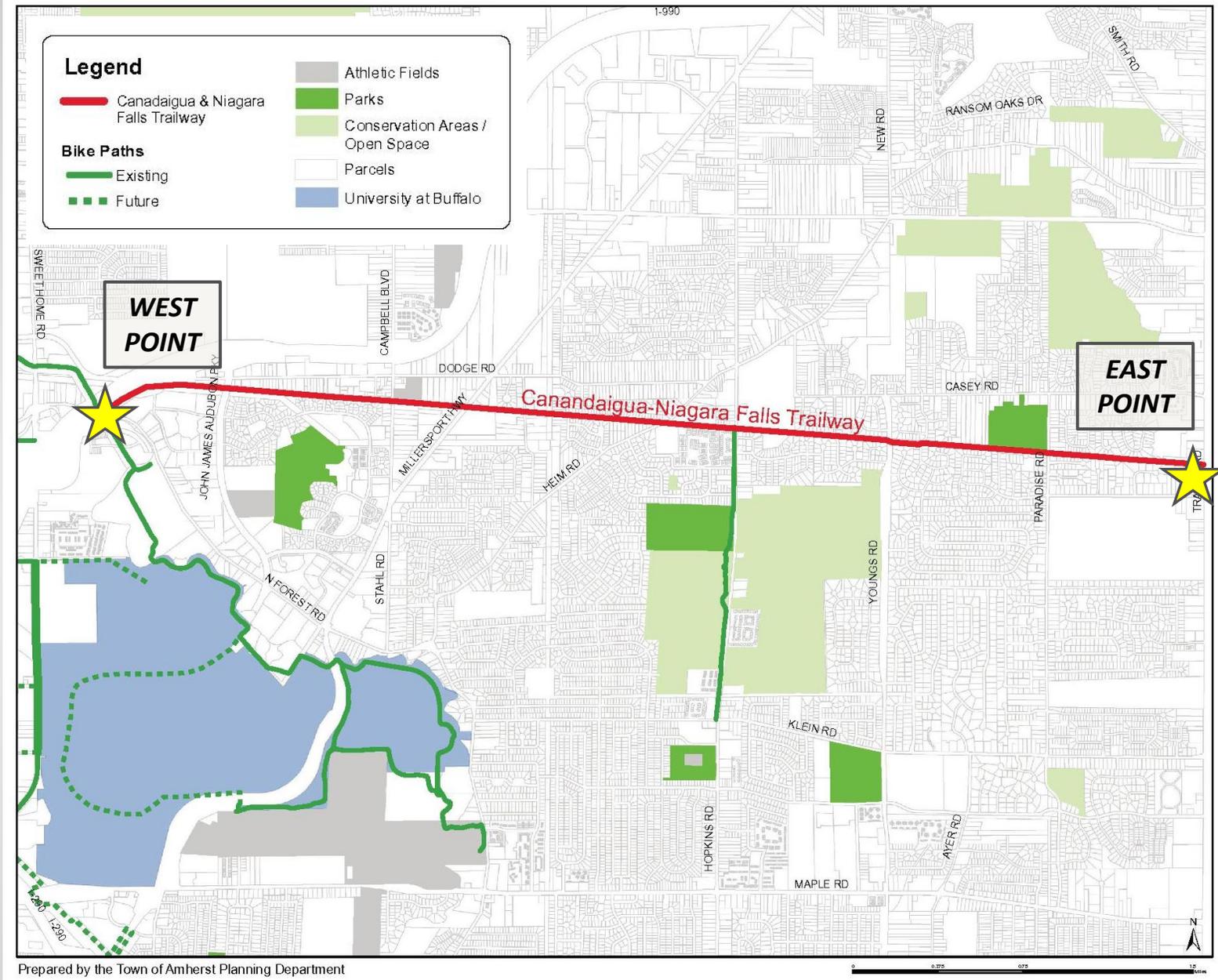
- The Peanut Line Trail is actively being used in Clarence and Akron, NY.
- Clarence has completed paving their section of the Rail Trail

**PROPOSED
PROJECT
CHARACTERISTICS**

Project Description

Type: Multi-Use Trail, Rails-to-Trails Project
Distance: 4.9 Miles
West Point: Ellicott Creek Trailway & North Forest Rd)
East Point: Transit Road (Route 78) in Clarence, NY

Purpose: Connect The Ellicott Creek Trailway to Transit Road Clarence 'Peanut Line' multi-use path providing a west to east multi-use transportation corridor within the Town of Amherst. The 4.9 mile multi-use path will be paved. The project is breakdown by segments based on the road crossings.



MULTI-USE BIKE PATH PROPOSED CHARACTER OF THE TRAILWAY

PLAN VIEW

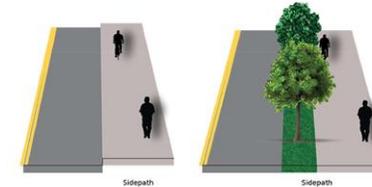


TYPICAL MULTI-USE BIKE PATH SCHEMATIC PLAN VIEW

AXON VIEW



TYPICAL 10-FOOT WIDE TRAIL



TYPICAL BIKE TRAIL WITH
SIDEPATH OPTION

PHOTO SIMULATIONS



PHOTO SIMULATION OF TYPICAL TRAILWAY CONDITIONS ALONG THE CENTERLINE OF THE EXISTING RAILROAD CORRIDOR. THE EXISTING VEGETATION ALONG THE RIGHT-OF-WAY REMAINS INTACT.



PHOTO SIMULATION OF GOTT CREEK CROSSING



PHOTO SIMULATION OF DITCH 26B CROSSING



PHOTO SIMULATION NEAR YOUNGS ROAD



PHOTO SIMULATION OF TRANSIT RD CROSSING

Excerpts from "Peanut Line Trail Study Final Report January 2025" Prepared by GObike & Vertity Engineering for the Greater Buffalo Niagara Transportation Council & Empire State Trail Design Guide

MULTI-USE BIKE PATH PROPOSED ROAD CROSSINGS

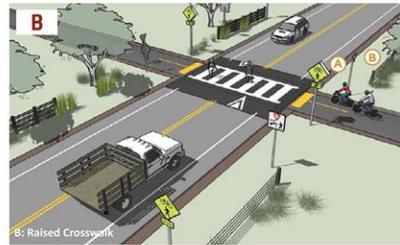


A. Signed Crossing

A Crosswalk: This treatment includes a high visibility crosswalk and crosswalk signage, both at the crossing and prior to the crossing.
(Byrant Wood S, Robin Ridge Road, Schimwood Court, E. Pinelake Drive, Wood Acres Drive)



Typical Crosswalk



B. Raised Crossing

B Raised Crosswalk: These combine a marked crosswalk with a raised and wide speed table. This slows traffic, increases visibility, and increases yield compliance.
(Haussauer Road)



Median Island
FHWA, FHWA-SA-21-044



C. Median Island

C Median Island: This treatment creates a median island in the center of the roadway to allow trail users to cross one direction of travel at a time, reducing exposure times and increasing the number of available gaps in traffic for crossings.
(Heim Road, Hopkins Road with RRFB)



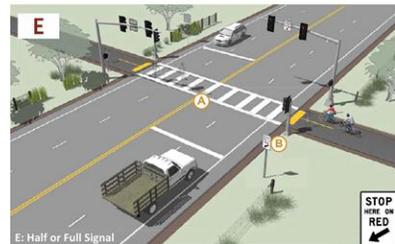
D. RRFB Signal

D Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB): RRFBs are user activated beacons mounted on the trail crossing signs on either side of the crosswalk. The beacons flash when activated by a push button or some other video or motion sensor detection. These have been shown to significantly increase yield compliance and are particularly useful when sight distance is limited. Advanced detection should be incorporated where feasible to trigger the RRFB for trail users without having to push the activation button.

(Campbell Boulevard, Youngs Road, Paradise Road)



Typical RRFB Signal



E. Half or Full Signal

E Half or Full Signal: This crossing treatment uses a standard traffic signal (with red, yellow, green traffic signal heads) to stop conflicting motor vehicle traffic. Similar to the RRFBs, these are often push buttons activated by trail users. This crossing treatment should be limited to crossings where gaps in traffic for trail users would be infrequent.

(John James Audubon Parkway, Millersport Highway, Transit Road - HAWK)



Transit Road
Proposed HAWK Signal

Excerpts from "Peanut Line Trail Study Final Report January 2025" Prepared by GObike & Verity Engineering for the Greater Buffalo Niagara Transportation Council & Empire State Trail Design Guide



Asphalt Pavement



Entry Signs



HAWK Signal



RRFB Signal



Typical Road Crossing



Curb Cut and Apron

Characteristics of the Proposed Bicycle Facility

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS



Gott Creek (west of Transit Rd)

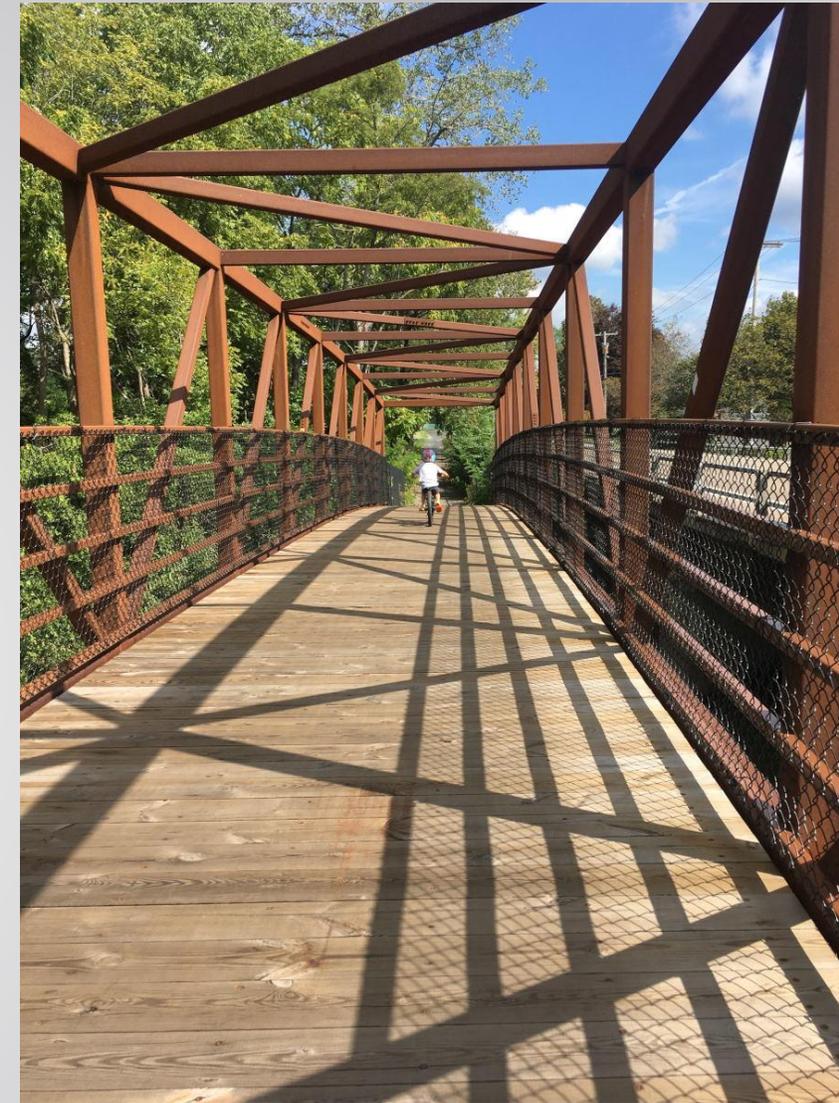


Stream Crossing near E. Pinelake Dr



Gott Creek Existing Bridge

- ❑ The current rail corridor has one existing bridge and one bridge removed from the stream crossing
- ❑ The Town will evaluate these crossings
- ❑ A new bridge will be needed near E. Pine Lake Drive
- ❑ The existing bridge along Tonawanda Creek Road over Ransom Creek provides an example of a newer bridge crossing



Proposed Bridge Type

COMMUNITY BENEFIT

Community Benefit – Regional Connectivity

- The Peanut Line project will complete a critical missing segment in Western New York's regional non-motorized transportation network.
- Upon completion, the Peanut Line will link the Town of Clarence's multi-use trail network, including the 8.3-mile Clarence Peanut Line Trail and the 7.2-mile Clarence–Akron Trail, to the 7.2-mile Ellicott Creek Trailway in the Town of Amherst.
- The Ellicott Creek Trailway connects directly to the 94-mile Buffalo Erie Canalway Trail, which in turn connects to the Buffalo and Erie County Riverwalk system.
- Collectively, these facilities form a continuous regional corridor extending from the Village of Akron through the Towns of Newstead, Clarence, Amherst, and Tonawanda to the City of Buffalo.
- By closing this network gap, the Peanut Line project transforms a series of disconnected trail segments into a continuous regional transportation system serving commuters, students, residents, and visitors.
- The project strengthens regional mobility, supports inter-municipal connectivity, and advances long-range transportation planning goals adopted by state, regional, and local agencies.

Economic Benefits

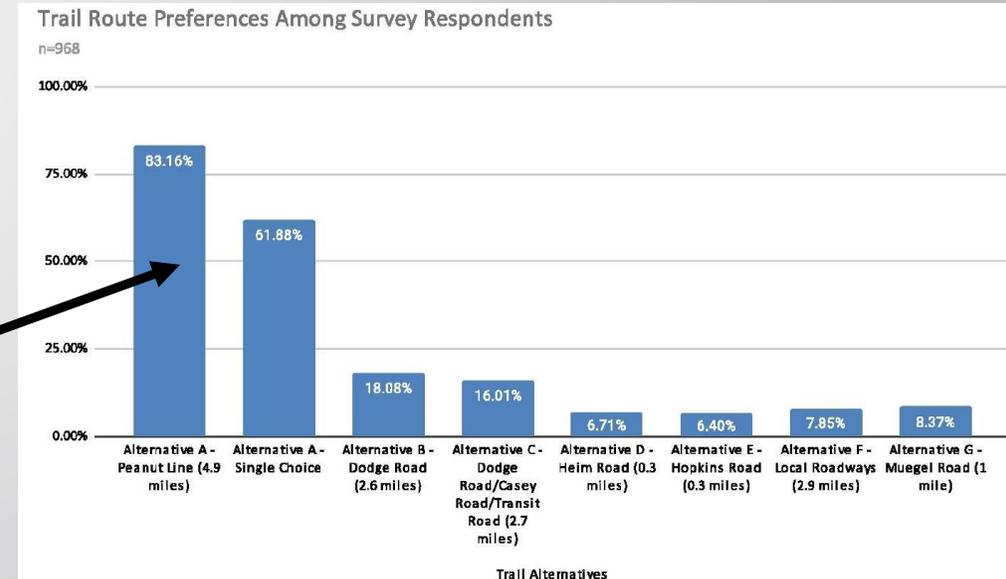
- The Peanut Line project will support local economic activity by improving access to commercial corridors, employment centers, and small businesses along the Hopkins Road and Transit Road corridors and throughout the project area.
- By providing a safe and direct non-motorized route between residential neighborhoods, retail areas, educational institutions, and regional trail systems, the project expands the customer base for local businesses and improves workforce access for employees who walk, bike, or use transit.
- The project will also generate near-term economic benefits through design and construction activity, supporting local engineering, construction, and materials industries.
- In the longer term, the Peanut Line's integration into the regional trail network will strengthen tourism and visitor activity associated with Western New York's growing system of interconnected trails, including the Buffalo Erie Canalway Trail, Riverwalk, and Empire State Trail.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

2025 GOBike Peanut Line Community Engagement Results

- Beginning in June 2024 GOBike initiated a community visioning survey, using mailers, outreach events and public meetings.
- The public and resident input identified in the GOBike Feasibility Study demonstrated a clear preference for a fully off-road, paved trail along the former rail corridor.
- If the Peanut Line Trail is built, 94% of all respondents say they are likely or very likely to use the trail.
- Most respondents (90%) said they are likely or very likely to use the Peanut Line to connect to other regional trails if built.
- Alternative A which follows the Peanut Line rail corridor, was the most-preferred route among respondents. Respondents were able to choose multiple alternatives, but nearly 2 in 3 respondents chose Alternative A as a single choice.
- The GOBike community engagement process supports recommendations and preferences for this off-road multi-use trail alternative transportation project.

83.16%
(Prefer the former
railroad corridor
centerline)



2018 Recreation and Parks Master Plan Survey Results

- The top priority for residents to improve pedestrian connections and a goal of the plan was to complete the “Peanut Line” project. Specifically, to “reevaluate the potential for trail development within the “Peanut Line” corridor as an opportunity to increase connectivity and expand opportunities for walking and biking”.
- Developing a multi-use trail within the former Canandaigua-Niagara Falls Railroad corridor is a goal of the 2018 Recreation and Parks Master Plan.
- A finding of the master plan through public outreach and analysis was that the overall connectivity (by foot or bicycle) within and between parks in Town is limited.
- The findings suggest that current overall connectivity (by foot or bicycle) within and between parks is limited. The existing system of multi-use paths, sidewalks, and trails has potential to be expanded to provide better pedestrian and bicycle connections within the Town.
- A key finding of the survey is that both baby boomers and millennials place a high priority on having sidewalks, hiking trails, bike paths, and fitness choices available to them in their community.
- 30% of survey respondents ranked trail and pathway connectivity as their top priority, and nearly three-quarters of all surveyed respondents consider trail and pathway connectivity among their top three priorities for future improvement.
- General recommendations of the plan include the integration of parks and recreational facilities into an interconnected open space system of parklands, greenways and trails.

May 2018 Town Neighborhood Forums

Results from 10 community meetings had the following common themes:

- Connection to the Peanut Line is desired
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements are needed
- Improved Walkability and Safety for Pedestrians is needed
- More Parks and Trails and more Bike Amenities are needed

Plans Supporting the Peanut Line Project

- Town of Amherst Recreation and Parks Master Plan
- Town of Amherst Local Waterfront Revitalization Program Plan
- Bike Buffalo Niagara Regional Bicycle Master Plan 2020
- "Peanut Line" Study Final Report January 2025
- Final Statewide Greenway Trails Plan & Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement.

Supporting Plans for Multi-Use Trails and Multi-Modal Transportation

- Town of Amherst Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan
- Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)
- Comprehensive Transit-Oriented Development Plan Strategic Implementation Plan
- Transportation Master Plan 2050 Draft Plan June 2025
- Erie County Parks Master Plan Update
- Moving Forward a Regional Transportation Plan for Buffalo Niagara
- One Region Forward. A New Way to Plan for Buffalo Niagara: One Region Forward Final Plan.

49 PEANUT LINE TRAIL

This off-road corridor would extend 4.6 miles west from the existing Clarence Pathway Trails to North Forest Rd in Amherst. This is a critical abandoned rail corridor that local advocates have been working tirelessly to see implemented by the Town. It also aims to provide an improved pedestrian/bicycle connection to the various trails and bike paths that surround the UB campus.

Municipality: Amherst
Corridor Ownership: Amherst
Mileage: 4.6
Relative Cost: \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$
Phase: 3-5 years



TOP 15 PRIORITY GREENWAY TRAIL CORRIDORS (REGION-WIDE)

GBNRTC Masterplan

FUNDING

Potential Funding Sources

- Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation
- NYSDOT Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) Grant
- BUILD "RAISE" Grants
- NYSDOT Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)
- NYSDOS Local Waterfront Revitalization Program Environmental Protection Fund
- NYSOPRHP Recreation Trails Program

Agency / Stakeholders

- Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC)
- NYSDOT
- Erie County DPW
- NYSOPRHP
- GObike Buffalo
- Town of Amherst Recreation Commission
- NFTA
- Williamsville Central School District

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM (TAP) GRANT FUNDING SUMMARY

- \$7 million Maximum Award Amount
- Minimum Local Match of \$7 million Award is \$1.75 million
- Local Funds can be Matched with Other Funding Sources; RTP, NYSDEC, EPF, DASNY, SAM, CDBG.
- For projects greater than \$8.75 million the applicant is responsible for all additional costs.
- Project Types include *"Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, and non-motorized transportation users"*.
- Application Due: March 12, 2026
- Projects Awarded: November/December 2026
- State and Local Agreement: August 2027
- Design Starts: September 2027

TAP Project Evaluation Criteria

Category	Evaluation Criteria	Available Points
Project Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project benefits and proposed solutions (10)• Safety improvements (5)• Community Support (5)	20
Project Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alignment with TAP program and other surface transportation plans, projects, and systems (20)	20
Essential Project Management Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schedule (15)• Budget (15)• Right-of-way assurance (15)• Match assurance and ability to deliver the project (15)	60
Total Points:		100

Next Steps

References/Citations

- *Town of Amherst Recreation and Parks Master Plan*, April 2018. Prepared by Green play LLC, Weston & Sampson and RRC Associates. Accepted by Town Board April 16, 2018. (Accessed April 17, 2024). https://www.amherst.ny.us/pdf/youthrec/180608_parks_rec_master_plan.pdf
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- New York State Office of Park, Recreation and Historic Preservation. *Final Statewide Greenway Trails Plan & Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement*. 2021 (Accessed December 10, 2025). <https://parks.ny.gov/sites/default/files/FinalStatewideGreenwayTrailsPlan2020.pdf>
- 2025 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) <https://www.dot.ny.gov/tap-cmaq>
- Grande, Joseph A. 2000. *Glancing Back. A Pictorial History of Amherst, NY*. (Historic Photos of Amherst, NY)