

Oneida Rail Trail

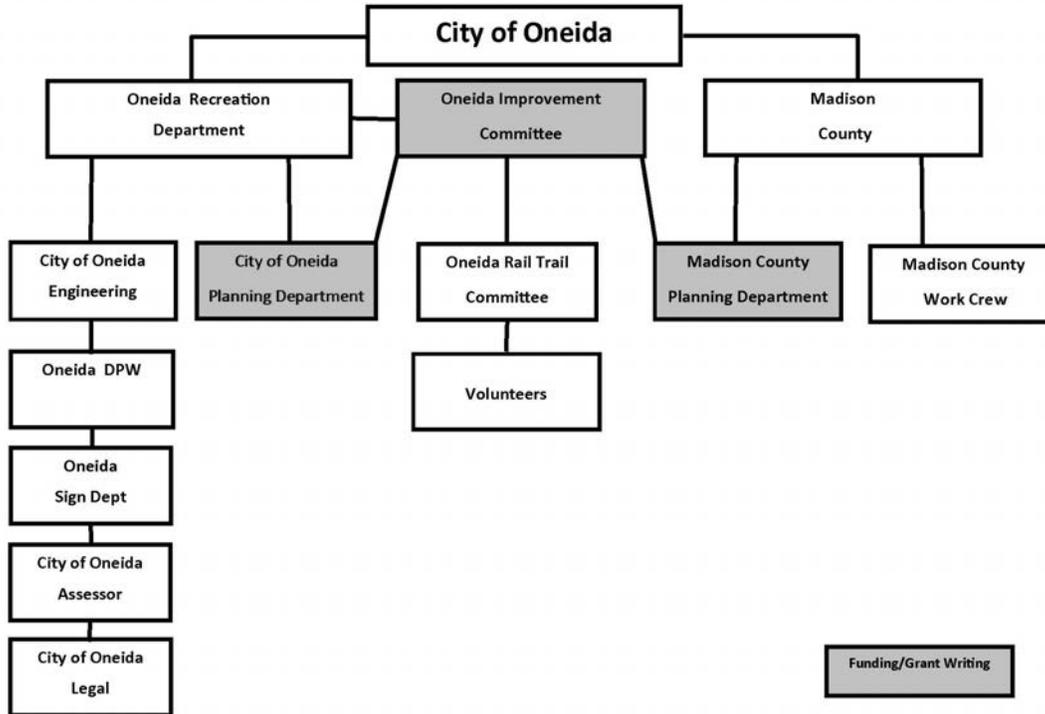
2015 ANNUAL REPORT
and 2016 Goals



PROJECT PARTNERS

The ORT is a City of Oneida trail system. The project partners represent a collaboration across various City departments with support from Madison County and the Oneida Improvement Committee, the non-profit partner. An ORT Committee was assembled to help move the project from a goal in the City's Comprehensive Plan to reality.

Oneida Rail Trail Structure



Oneida Rail Trail Committee

*John Taibi
 Steve Blair
 Luke Griff
 Joe Magliocca
 Jim Chamberlain
 Patti Meakin
 Jamie (Hart) Kowalczk
 Jon Rauscher
 Danielle Krol*

Attend an ORT Committee Meeting!
 Last Thursday of every month
 Oneida Recreation Center
 217 Cedar Street, Oneida
 6:00 pm

Public welcome!

Mission:
 “formally designate railroad right-of-ways as greenways and initiate implementation of trail system.”

-City of Oneida Comprehensive Plan

April 28, 2016

Could this really be the Oneida Rail Trail's third annual report? Putting together the 2015 annual report puts a smile on our faces as we pour through pictures and articles. We continue to be in awe at the support we receive as we work to develop the ORT and watch it become a community destination.

Our NYS DOT TEP and TAP funded sections continue to steam along. After a thorough search and interview process with several design companies, C & S Company was selected to design the 3.9 mile funded section of the ORT. With the formality of selecting a design company in the rear view mirror, we started to give input on the design. A public information meeting was held in June to allow interested community members to weigh in on the project. Many ideas were recorded and are being taken in consideration by the designers. Anticipation builds as we look for a preliminary design from C & S Company in the Spring of 2016.

The Oneida Rail Trail is being considered in the planning of other projects around the county too. The Madison County Highway Department worked with us on incorporating wider shoulders into the bridge on North Court Street in Wampsville. It's easy to see the big picture and how the ORT will connect to the Erie Canalway Trail allowing for a richer user experience and offering out of town travelers the opportunity to come into our communities to explore.

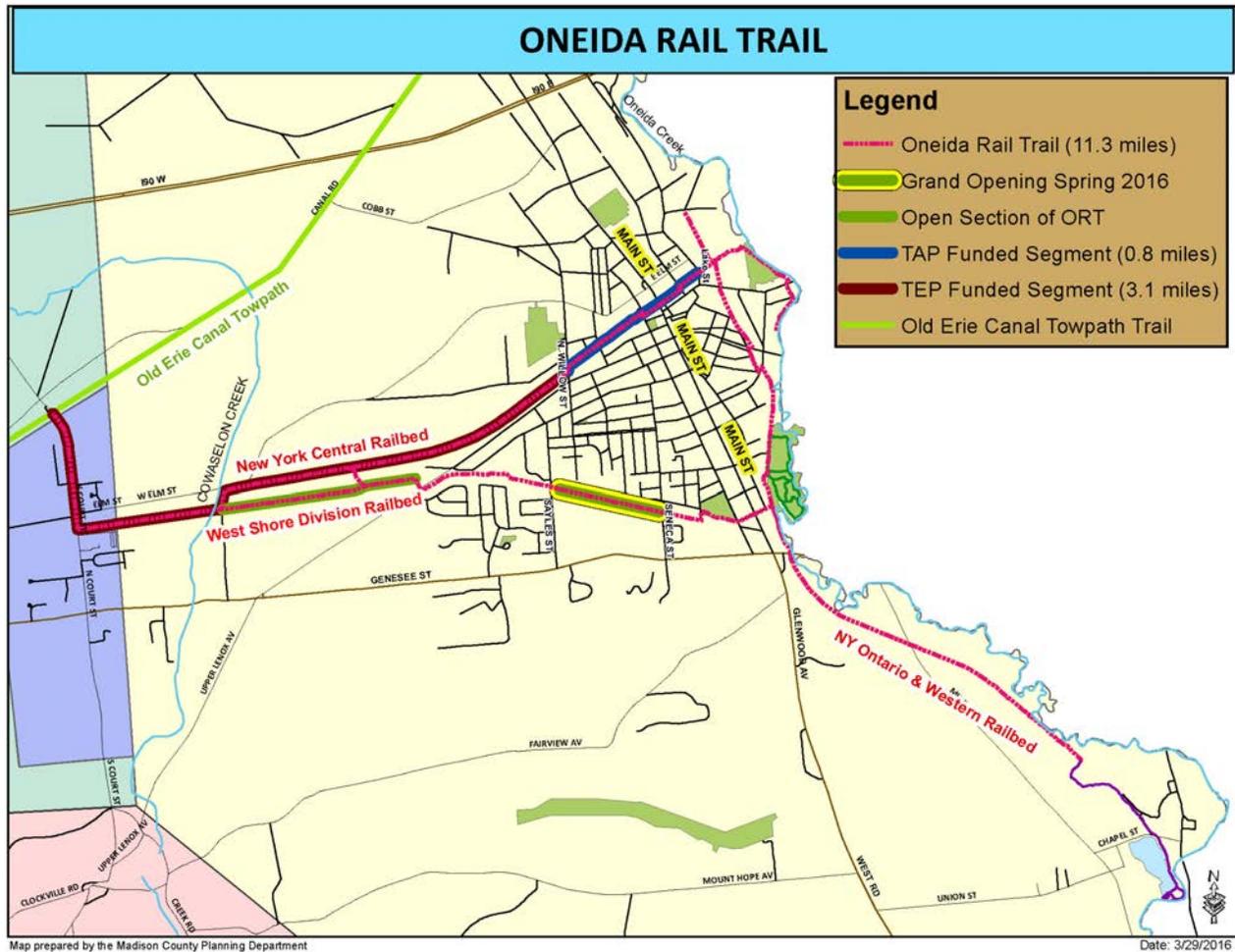
We are thrilled to have the support of organizations, groups and members of the community who continue to help with stewardship on the ORT. Some of those being: A local Boy Scout working towards his Eagle Scout Badge, Madison County Motivators helping us clean our three mile adopted section of the Erie Canalway Trail, the Madison County Summer Youth Employment Program widening the one mile section of the ORT at Hubbard Place and the neighbors who came out of their houses to help with a trail work day. Fundraising is a big part of keeping the Oneida Rail Trail alive and well. It allows us to pay for surveys, hardware for gates and ORT flyers. We have Spring, Summer and Fall fundraisers that continue to grow with your help. A car wash week at Community Car Wash, our 2nd Annual Tasting Along the Towpath Brewfest and our 4th Annual "Mums the Word" mum sale are all very popular. Be on the lookout for these events in 2016! We need you to make them a success!! Don't forget about our Oneida Rail Trail Store in the Oneida Commons. There you can find T-shirts, stickers, historical local railroad postcards and railroad books by local railroad historian John Taibi.

In 2015 we were invited to attend the Madison County Historical Society's Craft Days at Cottage Lawn. We jumped at the chance to attend and the opportunity to spread the word about the ORT. At our booth we provided a craft for kids and they got to make their own walking sticks with colored tape, feathers and beads. Each one unique in their own way, just as each child is. Educating the kids, parents and grandparents about the ORT was a complete joy! What a popular event, we ran out of sticks the first day. Look for us in 2016. We will be sure not to run out of walking sticks!

We hope you enjoy reading about our accomplishments from the past year. As the dots continue to be connected we are focused on our mission: "To formally designate railroad right-of-ways as greenways and initiate the implementation of a trail system". Want to hop on board our project? Whether it's helping out at a trail work day, giving us your thoughts about the design or just staying in touch with periodic email updates, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. See you on the trail!

Regards,
Oneida Rail Trail Committee Members





The Oneida Rail Trail is a proposed 11.3-mile non-motorized, multi-use trail located in the City of Oneida. The Oneida Rail Trail (ORT) will preserve and utilize existing rail beds (no tracks remain) to create a cultural corridor along three former rail lines: the New York Central, West Shore Division, and New York Ontario & Western. These former rail beds run through the heart of downtown Oneida and connect to the Village of Wampsville to the west and the City of Sherrill to the southeast.

Through the use of these rail beds, the Oneida Rail Trail will link three communities, multiple neighborhoods, businesses, offices, parks, tourist destinations, education facilities, and other trails including the Old Erie Canal Towpath to create a new economic engine in the area and source of community pride.

Currently a 1 mile section is officially open for public use. This 1 mile section stretches from Hubbard Place to Lenox Avenue. The trailhead and parking are located at Hubbard Place. A 0.5 mile section is anticipated to open in Spring 2016.

Another 3.9 miles of the trail is in the process of being developed through funding awarded by the NYS Department of Transportation. This section stretches from the Old Erie Canal State Park through the Village of Wampsville and then east along the former New York Central Railbed into the downtown of Oneida.

One of the unique features of the ORT project is that because it involves three intersecting railbeds it is not just an out and back trail but instead will offer the option for a loop around the city.



Trail Development

NYS DOT TAP/TEP funding update

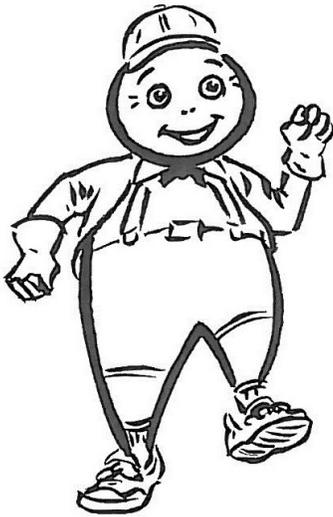
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Do you
know who
this guy is?
Find out on
page 16!

NYS DOT TAP/TEP Funding Update

The City got underway with the 3.9 miles of the ORT funded through NYS DOT. The City of Oneida selected C&S Companies as the consultant to assist with the design, ROW acquisition, and environmental review process.

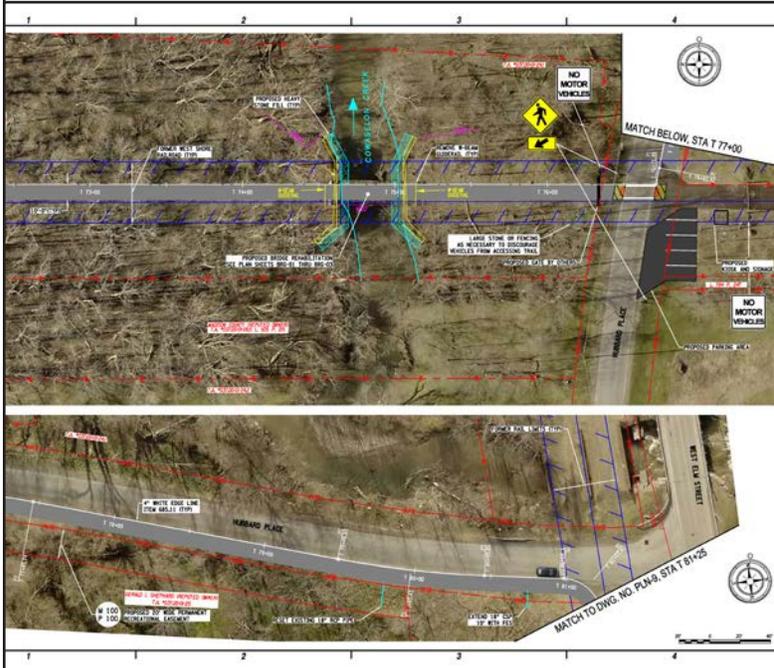
The TEP funded segment is 3.1 miles and extends from the Old Erie Canal State Historic Park and Erie Canalway Trail through Wampsville along the former West Shore and NY Central railbed to N. Willow Street. Proposed improvements to this section include enhancing the trail surface with stone dust, extending the sidewalk along N. Court Street to link to the Erie Canalway Trail, and the redecking of the historic rail bridge over Cowaselon Creek.

The TAP funded segment is a 0.8 mile segment that picks up at N. Willow Street continuing along the NY Central Railbed and traverses into the

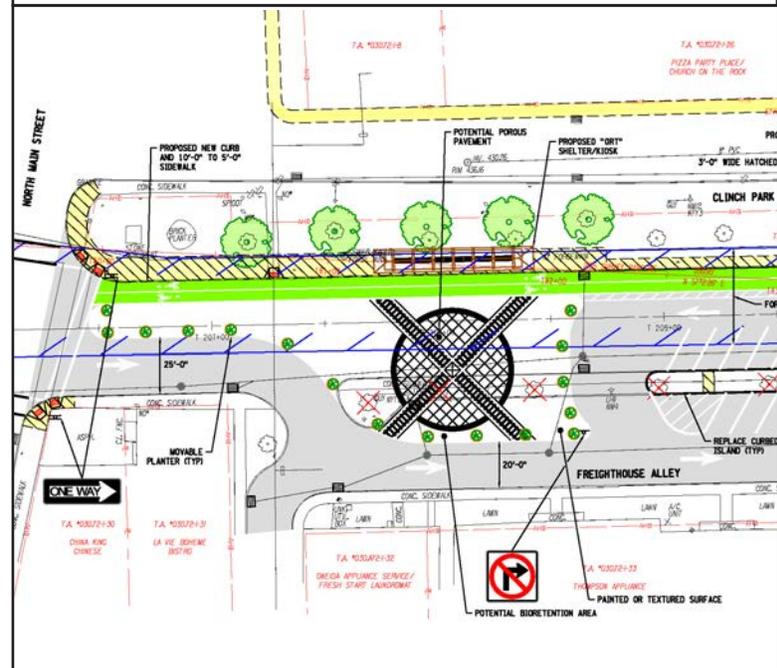
heart of Oneida City Center ending at N. Lake Street. This highly visible section of the ORT has proposed improvements that integrate complete street design concepts. Design features include a protected bike lane with bump outs, a new pedestrian plaza along Clinch Park as well as trail kiosks and new curbing and sidewalk.

Background: In 2013, the City submitted and was awarded funding from the NYS DOT Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP) for a 3.1 mile segment of the ORT. In 2014, the City applied for the NYS DOT Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) for a second phase of the ORT, a 0.8 mile segment through City Center. Combined, these two DOT funded segments of the ORT are bringing over \$1.6 Million in new investment to the City of Oneida.

Proposed trail enhancement and redecking of former rail bridge near Hubbard Place



Proposed trail enhancement and new pedestrian plaza along Clinch Park in Oneida City Center



To view the full proposed design go to the City's website at www.OneidaCity.com or contact Jon Rauscher at jrauscher@oneidacity.com

NYS DOT TAP/TEP Funding Update

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

for the
ONEIDA RAIL TRAIL PROJECT
CITY OF ONEIDA & MADISON COUNTY

KALLET CIVIC CENTER
169 Main Street
Oneida, New York 13421

June 30, 2015
4:00 pm to 8:00 pm



MEETING PURPOSE

The purpose of this informational meeting is to provide an opportunity for interested individuals to become acquainted with the Oneida Rail Trail (ORT) project and express comments to the City of Oneida. This meeting is an "Open House" format. Feel free to review the exhibits provided and to ask questions of the staff. And we encourage you to leave your written comments with us tonight or email to the address listed on the form.

PROJECT LOCATION AND PROPOSED AMENITIES

The ORT is comprised of several segments along existing abandoned rail beds from the Village of Wampsville to the City of Oneida. The first segment is a TEP Funded 3.1 mile trail section that begins at the Erie Canalway Trail parking area in Wampsville and will consist of sidewalk and bike accommodation along Court Street, then east through the Madison County Office Complex, including rehabilitation of the former West Shore Railroad bridge over Cowascony Creek near railroad bridge. The trail will consist of a crushed stone leveling base (over existing ballast) with a compacted stone dust surface ending at N. Willow Street. The second segment is a TAP Funded 0.8 mile section of renewed sidewalks and shared roadway that continues to N. Lake Street with shared use bike markings, crosswalks and signage through the heart of downtown Oneida using a complete street concept streetscape that will revitalize the surface conditions of this area. New curbing, enhanced drainage, street trees and porous pavement are planned improvements to be the focal and connecting point of the trail system. In addition, proposed wayfinding and destination signage will be placed along all sections of the trail to increase the visibility and convenience of the trail, and to increase use of the trail. A downtown pedestrian plaza at Clanch Park will reconfigure the traffic flow slightly to provide better pedestrian usage and offer an attractive place for downtown events to be held.

This is a Locally Administered Federal Aid project. 80% of the project costs are borne by Federal Government, 20% by City of Oneida, much in the form of work done by City public works employees and equipment.

NEED FOR THE PROJECT

The proposed trail is unique in that it will be traversing a variety of settings as it progresses from the developed Erie Canalway Trail in Wampsville, along abandoned railroad property, and past former industrial facilities, and reaching the heart of the city on Oneida Street. The ORT is an envisioned project in the City of Oneida's current Comprehensive Plan. Many of the former rail beds are already being used by the community as unofficial trails, but this project will bring all the elements together to preserve and enhance this distinctive historical asset. This multi-faceted trail project is a great opportunity to capitalize on existing resources and leverage federal funding to complete a trail system and enhance the walking and bicycling environment in the City and surrounding community. The City and Madison County Planning have created a clear vision to develop untapped resources into a high quality trail network, linking former rail beds, city streets, and parks for recreation and to improve and attract business.

TRAIL OWNERSHIP AND MAINTENANCE

A majority of the ORT project will be built on abandoned railroad property already owned by the City of Oneida and Madison County. Several private properties and others owned by the Oneida Indian Nation will require easements, and support for the project from many private owners has already been expressed. Maintenance of the trail will be the responsibility of the City and County.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Provide a safer corridor for pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles by incorporating high-visibility crosswalks and bike lanes.
- Provide infrastructure to promote healthy activity alternatives for the community.
- Promote sustainable design features where possible, this may include storm-water rain gardens, absorbent pavers, energy efficient lighting, and new tree plantings.
- Bring Erie Canalway Trail and outside trail users to downtown businesses and attractions.
- Improve downtown aesthetics to attract people and increase the potential for more downtown events.
- Revitalize a long-dormant but important part of our local history. Where once the New York Central and West Shore Railroads passed through our community, recreational users will soon be able to traverse the same routes that the mighty trains did.
- Get started on what could eventually be an 11.5 mile, multi-use trail involving three historic railroads that will be more than just an out-and-back trail, but create a complete 5.7 mile loop by including the former New York, Ontario and Western Railroad alignment. Future extensions could connect to the Durso Conservancy trails and south to Kenwood and the Oneida Mansion House Trail.

BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT

The ORT will provide a common transportation corridor and public space that will link the City of Oneida to the established Erie Canalway Trail, which itself is part of the larger North Country National Scenic Trail. Future connections are possible, making this the potential hub of many miles of recreational trail. The easily accessible, shared-use trail will provide low cost opportunities for users to increase their level of physical activity and therefore improve their health and longevity. This trail will also encourage the use of non-motorized modes of transportation contributing to improving area congestion and air quality. Proposed enhancements along the trail include ADA accessibility, way-finding signage, informational kiosks displaying important historical places, parking areas, bike racks, benches and picnic tables, a pedestrian plaza, improved roadway striping for safety, and other features designed to promote the usage of the trail by all residents and visitors to the area.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

There has been a tremendous amount of community support for this project. The ORT is a shared project of the Oneida Rail Trail Committee, the City of Oneida, Madison County, and The Oneida Improvement Committee. The ORT committee holds meetings the last Thursday of each month at 6:00 pm at the Oneida Recreation Center on 217 Cedar Street. Meetings are open to the public. Trail Work Days are held throughout the year, where volunteers help clear the trail and accomplish other important tasks. See the website below or check out the Oneida Rail Trail Facebook Page to register as a volunteer, for work dates and planned work areas, and other ORT-related information such as Oneida railroad history, photos and videos, maps and directions, and links to other trail information.

<http://www.improvenoidea.com/groups/oneida-rail-trail/>

A public input meeting was held at the Kallet on June 30, 2015 from 4:00 pm - 8:00 pm. C&S had handouts and map displays available for the public to comment on the proposed improvements to this 3.9 mile segment of the ORT.



Photos of the June 30th Public Information Meeting



NYS DOT TEP/TAP timeline: The target for finalizing the preliminary design and getting it approved by DOT is Spring 2016 with construction anticipated to begin in Summer 2016 and completed in Summer 2017.

N. Court St Bridge Reopens

The County bridge along N. Court Street was reconstructed over the summer of 2015 and reopened in December 2015.

The ORT Committee worked with the Madison County Highway Department to help incorporate wider shoulders for the bridge to better accommodate the pedestrians, bicyclists and snowmobilers that travel over it. The new design features expanded 5 ft wide shoulders on both sides of the bridge. The bridge is an important connecting piece to safely link the Oneida Rail Trail to the Erie Canalway Trail and Old Erie Canal State Historic Park.



Photos of the N. Court St Bridge Grand Opening event (above)
and the expanded 5 ft shoulders (below)



Oneida High School student and Eagle Scout Candidate, Chase Ortlieb, volunteered to construct two gates for the Oneida Rail Trail as his Eagle Scout project.

These two gates are planned to be installed on both ends of the trail adjacent to Oneida High School. One near Seneca Street and the other near Sayles Street. The gates will keep motorized vehicles off the trail.

THANK YOU CHASE!!

Once complete the gates will look very similar to the ones used at the Old Erie Canal State Historic Park like the photo below



I LOVE My Park Day!

A big thanks to all the volunteers who came out for I Love My Park Day on May 2, 2015! A special thanks to *Madison County Motivators* for all their help at the clean-up.

For the second year in a row, volunteers joined the City and the Oneida Improvement Committee for the annual state-wide I Love My Park Day to clean up a 3 mile section of the Erie Canalway Trail within the Old Erie Canal State Historic Park. The Oneida Improvement Committee on behalf of the Oneida Rail Trail adopted this 3 mile segment as the Oneida Rail Trail will one day connect into this state-wide trail system.



I Love My Park Day is a statewide event to improve and enhance New York's parks and historic sites and bring visibility to the entire park system and its needs



Summer Youth Employment Program

The City of Oneida partnered with Madison County's Summer Youth Employment Program to help clean-up and beautify City Parks including the 1-mile section of the Oneida Rail Trail at Hubbard Place. The Madison County Summer Youth Program provides hands on experience and summer employment opportunities for youth, ages 14-20. The workers in the program did a tremendous job working along the ORT in August!

Photos of the Summer Youth Employment Program working along the 1-mile segment of the ORT at Hubbard Place in August 2015



ORT Clean-up Event

The Oneida Rail Trail Committee sponsored a volunteer clean-up on Saturday, May 30th from 9:00 am –noon. The work concentrated on cleaning up around the storm water detention ponds along the former West Shore Division/ Oneida Railway Company rail bed behind Hunt Valley Road and Willow Meadow Way. The maintenance of that area has been a challenge because access is limited, but the volunteers did manage to clear and clean.



ORT attends Craft Days

The Oneida Rail Trail sponsored a booth at the Oneida Craft Days festival. Sticks, feathers, beads, and other decorations were on hand for kids to make their own walking sticks! The ORT is inspiring the next generation to love the outdoors.



Remember to pick up your ORT merchandise and more at the ORT Store in Oneida Commons!

Oneida Commons is located at 157 Cedar Street, Oneida.

What can you find at the ORT Store?

- Bike Supplies!
- ORT Merchandise!
- Historic Railroad picture cards!
- Books by local author and Rail Historian John Taibi!
- Free Cycling Guides!



Community Carwash!

Thank you to Community Carwash in Oneida!

For the week of May 10- May 16, 2015, 20% of the proceeds of all car washes at the Community Car Wash went to the Oneida Rail Trail.



Tasting Along the Towpath!

The OIC held the second annual Tasting Along the Towpath craft beer tasting fundraiser at Jacks-or- Better near the Canalway Trail on Saturday, July 18, 2015. Pre-sale tickets were \$20.

27 breweries were providing tastings as part of the event. Prizes! Live music! Everyone who attended also received an ORT glass. A fun time was had by all. Proceeds raised went to the OIC for initiatives such as the Oneida Rail Trail.



4th Annual Fall Mum Sale!

The OIC held its 4th Annual Mum Sale in September 2015.

9 inch potted mums of all colors: 1 for \$10, 2 for \$15, and 3 for \$20. Proceeds go to help the Oneida Rail Trail! Over 315 sold!



The Oneida Rail Trail would not be possible without the support of our community! Thank you!!

New ORT Logo

Oneida native John Rice created a new logo for the ORT! The logo merges the past with the present and shows a former railroad turning into a community trail system!! So cool! Thank you John Rice!

John has been working as an outdoor artist and illustrator for more than three decades. Born and raised in Oneida, John's roots are firmly reflected in much of his work. Clients include: Outdoor Life, Field and Stream, Ralph Lauren Fabric, Sweetheart Designs, Highlights for Children, Scholastic, NY Times Magazine, Esquire, ESPN Sports and now he can add the Oneida Rail Trail to his list!

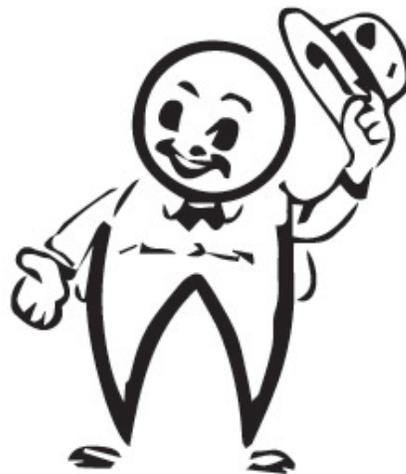


Meet Owen W!

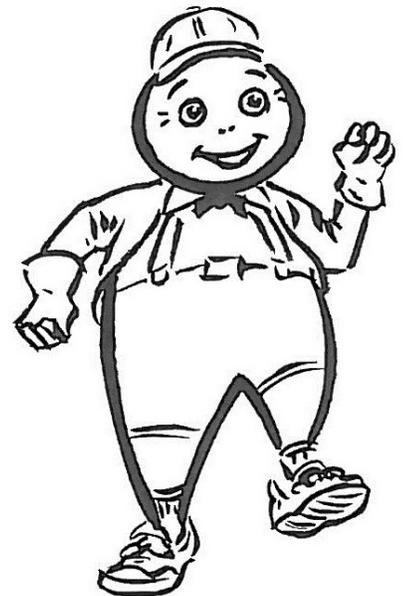
He was the mascot of the New York Ontario & Western Railway, often shortened to NY O&W for which Owen W got his name. John Rice updated Owen W to be a new mascot of the ORT!

The NY O&W was established in 1873 and ran through 1957. See it in Oneida below!

Main Street Depot O. & W.R.R. and 3rd Rail System, Oneida, N.Y.



The Original Owen W.



The 21st century Owen W.
created by John Rice!

The Oneida Rail Trail accomplished a lot in 2015. The main focus of the year was on the NYS DOT TEP/TAP funded segments. Through stewardship and community events, the ORT continues to attract attention to the City of Oneida. With many of the initiatives already launched, the goals remain similar for 2016:

- Continue to implement the NYS DOT TEP and NYS DOT TAP grants for the 3.9 mile section of the ORT extending from the Old Erie Canalway Trailhead in Wampsville to Lake St in Oneida
- Work to open the section of the West Shore Division between Seneca St to Sayles St and host a Grand Opening event in Spring 2016
- Continue to educate the community on the project through public presentations and promotional materials
- Develop a promotional video of the ORT
- Continue to seek out grants and fundraising opportunities
- Schedule and advertise community clean-up events along the ORT
- Organize public walks/rides along currently open sections of the ORT
- Continue to work with Stoneleigh housing and other adjacent business owners to integrate, promote, and connect businesses to the trail system
- Work with private property owners who own portions of the railbed along the West Shore division to determine the best alignment for the ORT
- Continue to coordinate with NYS DOT for improvements to and trail crossing at Lenox Ave
- Work with local businesses to promote bike friendliness in Oneida

For more information on the Oneida Rail Trail
visit: www.OneidaCity.com
or
www.ImproveOneida.com

Trails, according to a National Association of Homebuilders study cited by The New York Times, are the number one amenity potential homeowners cite when they are looking at moving into a new community.



A walker and their dog out enjoying the ORT along the West Shore railbed near the Madison County offices.

The Oneida Rail Trail.....



Connecting People to Community Destinations...

