



SARAH S. ANKER
Suffolk County Legislator, Sixth District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INFORMATION RELEASE:

June 13, 2022

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Legislator Anker Announces the Official Opening of the North Shore Rail Trail



Suffolk County Legislator Sarah Anker and County Executive Steve Bellone join elected officials, LIPA/PSEG, Suffolk County Departments, community leaders, local bike clubs, community members, and volunteers to celebrate the ribbon cutting of the North Shore Rail Trail.

SHOREHAM, NY- On Friday, June 10th, Suffolk County Legislator Sarah Anker joined Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone, other elected officials, Suffolk County Departments, Civic Associations, nonprofit organizations, advocates, and community members to celebrate the official ribbon cutting ceremony for the North Shore Rail Trail. The North Shore Rail Trail, formerly known as the Rails to Trails project, is a 10-mile, multi-use recreational path that runs along the former Long Island Rail Road right-of-way that is now owned by Long Island Power Authority (LIPA). The trail route runs parallel to Route 25A, from Crystal Brook Hollow Road in Mt. Sinai to Wading River Manor Road in Wading River.

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“It’s wonderful to finally celebrate the official opening of the North Shore Rail Trail,” said Legislator Anker. “This is a project that is over 50 years in the making, and was only made possible by the tremendous collaboration and support from all levels of government, our Suffolk County Department of Public Works (DPW) and Department of Parks, PSEG/LIPA, our local Civic Associations, engineers and planners, advocates, community members and steward volunteers. When I took office in 2011, I knew the completion of this trail was going to be one of my top priorities. This beautiful recreational path will provide a safer outlet for people to run, walk and bike. It will also create a green transportation alternative that will help economic development, reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality and encourage healthier lifestyles. Thank you again to everyone who helped make this possible.”

“This is an exciting day,” said Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone. “Because you know any time a project is on the drawing board for 50 years and you’re actually at the ribbon cutting, that’s a great day. This will be a driving force and model for what we need to be doing all across this county. We have all the natural resources and we have done a tremendous job in this county preserving and protecting open space. Let’s utilize it to do the right thing in the street network to connect them and create one of the best places in America for hiking and biking.”

“I want to say thank you to Legislator Sarah Anker and County Executive Steve Bellone,” said Legislator Kara Hahn “It is because both of you that we have this path. We could train for a full marathon between this trail and the Port Jeff Station-Setauket Greenway Trail. Suffolk County’s roads have consistently fallen on a national list of the most dangerous roads for bicyclists and pedestrians. This is the kind of vision we need to turn that around. Every LIPA right-of-way should have this to connect communities, to increase property values, and to have safer roadways.”

“I couldn’t think of a better way to spend tax payer money, than to invest it in something that is a free, recreational, healthy activity for not only the residents of Suffolk County, but all of New York State,” said Assemblywoman Jodi Giglio. “With Sarah’s leadership, Steve’s partnership and the rest of the Suffolk County Legislature, they got it done.”

The project was first suggested over 50 years ago by local civic members, and re-introduced in 2001 by advocates of bicycle organizations, the Setauket-Port Jefferson Greenway Trail and



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community residents. Many individuals and elected officials have assisted in facilitating the path that is funded by a federal grant totaling close to \$10 million, with a \$500,000 match from Suffolk County. Due to the county's rigorous bidding process, the cost was reduced to \$8 million after Suffolk County DPW selected DF Stone Contracting to construct the trail. Suffolk County entered into a licensing agreement with LIPA to utilize the right-of-way for the trail. The engineering group NV5 was chosen by Suffolk County DPW to plan and design the trail. The final design was approved by Suffolk County DPW, New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in 2018. The design incorporates the Tesla Science Museum in Shoreham, as well as the many parks, businesses, and schools adjacent to the trail.

"I am proud and pleased that LIPA is a partner on this project," said LIPA's Vice President of Environmental Affairs Michael Deering. "We partnered with the county to come up with the memorandum of agreement for a 25 year lease, so the county can utilize the property long term. We also worked with our service provider, PSEG Long Island, and with DPW to make certain changes, so that this was safe for the public."

"It is really remarkable to stand here today with various elected officials and community members that have been involved in this project for decades," said Executive Director of the Tesla Science Center Marc Alessi. "At Tesla, we're looking to start construction this summer. We have already done a forecast, and we are going to see visitors from around the globe. They're going to come here to Shoreham, and this community asset is going to keep them here and encourage them to visit other downtowns."

"This is a long time coming," said Town of Brookhaven Highway Superintendent Dan Losquadro. "During the seven years I spent as a Suffolk County Legislator, we had to renew the federal grant for this project twice so I could hand the still-smoldering torch off to Sarah who lit that torch back up with the help of the County Executive to move this project along. It was very fitting that I came into the role as Highway Superintendent 9 years ago to work with DPW on this project, because there are over 30 crossings, and all of them are town roads. So we had to work closely on making sure that the design provided safe passage for our bikers and walkers. This is something that I am proud to have been a part of and I am so happy that the Highway Department continues to play a role in something that is near and dear to my heart."



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“For the second time in five years, I have been the survivor of what could have been a fatal bike crash,” said New York Bicycling Coalition Board of Directors Member Martin Buchman. “Bike trails are essential. Suffolk County was never designed to hold this kind of automobile infrastructure. It’s time for bikes to stop competing with cars. I have three taglines for bike trails: first, if you build it, people will come and they will come without their cars; second, each trail paves the way for the next one; and third, have you ever seen someone in a bad mood on a bike trail?”

“We want to thank Sarah Anker for paving the way to create this world-class bike path,” said Concerned Long Island Mountain Bicyclists (CLIMB) President Michael Vitti. “It will connect the local communities with car-free access to downtown and nearby mountain biking facilities. Paved paths are a great way to avoid ticks. Kids and parents will especially like the traffic-free environment.”

“I want to also remind residents to continue to exercise caution while utilizing the trail,” said Legislator Anker. “We all need to take responsibility for our safety. Please be on the lookout for signage and ensure you are stopping at each intersection to watch for cars before you cross the street.”

The trail will be maintained by a partnership between the Suffolk County Parks Department, who will be responsible for mowing, Suffolk County Police Department, who will provide law enforcement oversight, and community stewards that have volunteered their time to assist in cleanup efforts. The North Shore Rail Trail is a carry in, carry out path. Residents are reminded to please take any garbage with them as they exit the trail.

“Thank you to the North Shore Rail Trail Advisory Roundtable members, the Friends of the Greenway Trail, local biking clubs Concerned Long Island Mountain Bicyclists (CLIMB) and New York Bicycling Coalition, and the community stewards for volunteering to help maintain this beautiful community asset,” said Legislator Anker.

For more information, please contact Legislator Sarah Anker’s office at 631-854-1600.