

LONG ISLAND / SUFFOLK

Lindenhurst gets \$350G grant from Suffolk to boost walkability downtown



Lindenhurst Mayor Michael Lavorata, left, and Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone celebrate at Villa Pizza after Bellone signed legislation awarding the village with a \$350,000 grant. Credit: Newsday/John Paraskevas

By Denise M. Bonilla

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Updated October 22, 2019 7:16 PM

Lindenhurst will receive \$350,000 from Suffolk County to help improve walkability in the village's downtown.

County Executive Steve Bellone announced the award Tuesday inside a recently opened pizza restaurant on Wellwood Avenue. Bellone lauded the village's successful efforts to fill empty downtown storefronts in the past few years, as well as the 260-unit apartment complex that recently broke ground nearby on East Hoffman Avenue. Bellone, who was flanked by Assemb. Kimberly Jean-Pierre (D-Wheatley Heights), State Sen. John Brooks (D-Seafood), and former Assemb. Robert Sweeney, said the village is "charting a great course" and is "critical" to the county.

"Our whole economic development program here in Suffolk County is based on supporting local communities who have a vision and are making the kind of investments that are not only going to help the local communities ... but that are doing things that will help the entire region," he said. "To a great extent, what happens in Lindenhurst and how Lindenhurst goes, is how Suffolk County goes."

The money comes from Jumpstart Suffolk, which provides capital funds to help with the planning and development of "regionally significant, vibrant mixed-use transit-oriented development" in downtowns and adjacent areas.

The grant is one of eight totaling more than \$3 million given to communities across the county this year for projects ranging from \$100,000 toward the restoration of waterfalls in Babylon Village to \$625,000 toward a municipal parking garage in Patchogue Village.

Lindenhurst Mayor Mike Lavorata said the village board has not decided how to use the money. He said the village would like to make improvements based off a recently completed walkability study, or use the grant to purchase land to add needed parking.

“We’re just so excited,” Lavorata said of the grant. “In three years, we’ve seen so much go on, that it’s an exciting time.”

The walkability study, completed in July by Babylon-based Greenman-Pedersen Inc., using a \$200,000 county grant, offered suggestions such as adding medians, bike racks and pedestrian warning signs to the downtown.

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Lindenhurst trustee RJ Renna said the study was “chalked up to a joke” by many residents. “But it’s not a joke,” he said. “We want to be able to provide safe streets ... we know that we can make some serious improvements in Lindenhurst to make it more handicap accessible and more attractive to both older generations and new generations to come.”

By Denise M. Bonilla

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Denise Bonilla has worked at Newsday since 2003 and covers the Town of Babylon, including the villages of Lindenhurst and Amityville.

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STATE LAW

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→

100

Bikes

18

Stations

160

Hours ridden

79K

Calories burned

“ Residents and visitors will be able to leave their cars behind with the knowledge that a healthy, fun, convenient option is waiting for them. ”

—Steve Bellone, County Executive



RIDERS

46% | 54%

Female | Male split

18-24

Age of majority of riders

11a&5p

Peak Riding Times

39%

Repeat riders



TRIPS

1.15 MI

Average trip distance

35 MINS

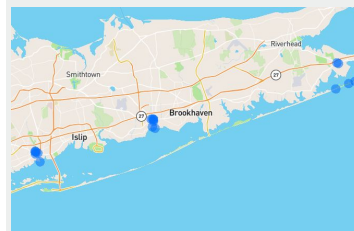
Median trip duration

337

Total trips taken

85

Reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)



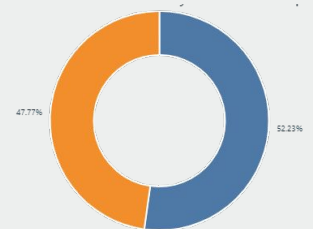
TOP STATIONS

Argyle Park - 27%
Park Ave - 18%
Mascot Dock - 8%
Patchogue LIRR - 7%
Good Ground Park - 6%

337 trips

52% weekday

48% weekend

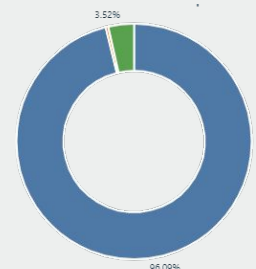


512 members

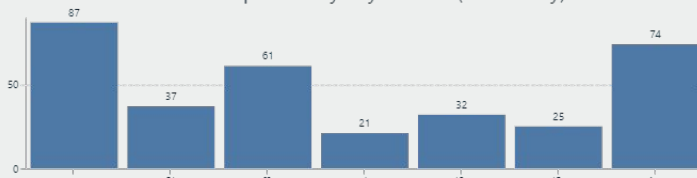
96% Pay As You Go


3% Monthly

1% Annual



Trip Count by Day of Week (1 = Sunday)





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\$400K to Connect Montauk Train Station to Downtown

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Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone signed legislation providing a \$400,000 grant for a multi-use path connecting Montauk's Long Island Rail Road station to the hamlet's downtown.

Christopher Walsh

station-

downtown) **By Christopher Walsh (/index.php/node/49)**

October 17, 2019



(mailto:?)

Subject=%24400K%20to%20Connect%20Montauk%20Train%20Station%20to%20Downtown

connect-

montauk-

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downtown)

Asserting that Suffolk County should be known nationwide as a

cyclist and pedestrian-friendly place, County Executive Steve Bellone signed legislation at East Hampton Town Hall on Friday awarding a

\$400,000 grant to the town toward creation of a multiuse path

extending from the Long Island Rail Road station on Flamingo

Avenue in Montauk to the hamlet's downtown.

The path along Flamingo Avenue and Edgemere Street has yet to be designed but is envisioned as a means of connecting the two points in order to promote alternative modes of transportation, such as cycling and walking, as well as to enhance the South Fork Commuter Connection, the additional train service launched in March, by allowing commuters to safely bike or walk from the train station to their destination. It is to be contained entirely within the road right of way, and will be designed to avoid impacts to wetlands adjacent to Fort Pond, according to a statement issued by the town on Friday.

A connection between the two points is among the goals outlined in the draft Montauk hamlet study. It is hoped that the 5,000-linear-foot multiuse path will encourage train travel to Montauk and a consequent reduction in vehicular traffic, particularly during the summer season.

The project is one of eight funded by the Legislature's recent vote to award \$5 million for revitalization and renovation projects through Jumpstart Suffolk, a program sponsored by the county's Department of Economic Development and Planning. The program is designed to fund infrastructure projects to facilitate the development of mixed-use, transit-oriented downtowns.

From the county's perspective, Mr. Bellone said, "we should be supporting the efforts that are happening in local communities, the important work that is happening there that not only is strengthening

and benefiting the local community, but also has benefits to the region as a whole.”

Montauk, said the county executive, “is a very important place, an iconic place in the community, and we want to do everything we can . . . to be promoting alternative modes of transportation.” That involves infrastructure, he said. “That means making investments, capital improvements, and that’s what we’re doing here today.”

Mr. Bellone said that train service is important, and acknowledged the South Fork Commuter Connection, which grew in popularity after an initially tepid response from commuters. “What we’re doing in the county is continuing to push to drive infrastructure farther east.” Such initiatives “create the conditions on the ground that will encourage further investments from the state, from the [Metropolitan Transportation Authority], that are needed and deserved here on the East End. Anything we can do to enhance and encourage people to take train service, by providing additional transportation options once they arrive there, that’s a positive thing.”

Legislator Bridget Fleming also attended the signing. Noting that county officials were late in arriving in East Hampton owing to their earlier inspection of the Shinnecock Inlet in Hampton Bays, “where we were this close to a full breach” during last week’s northeaster, she linked the Montauk project to efforts to reduce fossil-fuel emissions. “We have to be mindful of climate change,” she said. “Any effort, such as this, that is going to get people out of their cars is an effort that’s going to mean not only a lot for the Town of East Hampton and the hamlet of Montauk but for the region as a whole and, really, for the globe.”

The multiuse path represents “more help for the ‘last mile,’” the final distance L.I.R.R. commuters must transit to reach their destination, “so folks can get off the train and on their bikes . . . instead of getting into a car or a rideshare or another fossil fuel-combusting way of transportation.”

“This one is really near and dear to my heart,” said Councilwoman Sylvia Overby, the board’s liaison to Montauk. “This is something that Montauk has wanted for quite some time. They need that connectivity between the train station and the downtown area. This certainly is going to go a long way in helping us get that project completed.”

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Bike-share program set

BY RACHELLE BLIDNER
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A bike-share program will roll out next month in Patchogue and Babylon villages after two years of planning, Suffolk County officials announced Wednesday.

Suffolk's Bethpage Ride will launch in August with 100 bikes available for rent at train stations, parks and downtowns, officials said.

The bike-share program, which is modeled after Citi Bike in New York City, will "help solve that critical last-mile connection when using public transit," Deputy County Executive Theresa Ward said.

Riders can use a phone app called Pace to unlock the orange bikes at 24 stations in four communities, two of which have yet to be determined, officials said. Despite the program's name — Bethpage Federal Credit Union is the sponsor — there won't be stations in Bethpage, which is a hamlet in Nassau.

Officials said they aim to eventually have 400 bikes available throughout the county. The program will be similar to one in Long Beach, which has a bike-share program with 100 bikes at 11 stations, city spokesman Gordon Tepper said.

To demonstrate the benefits of biking, officials took the five-speed orange bikes with white baskets for a spin. But while still circling a parking lot where a news conference was held, Patchogue Village Mayor Paul Pontieri — who later said he had not ridden a bike in at least a decade — crashed into Ward's bike, sending him tumbling and Ward flying off her bike.

"Nobody got that, did they?" Pontieri joked to a row of television cameras and reporters as he stood up.

A crew of about five officials — only some of which wore helmets — averaged about 8 mph as they rode about a mile down South Ocean Avenue, from the Patchogue Long Island Rail Road Station to Mascot Dock.

Most officials then got in cars to get to their next destinations. When three officials cycled back — including Patchogue Village trustee Joseph Keyes and his son,



Bethpage Ride bicycles on display at a news conference.

Jonathan Keyes, who spearheaded the program as county director of downtown and transit-oriented development — a car honked at them, prompting them to move farther into the shoulder.

County officials did not outline specific safety measures for the program, which will launch even as an increasing number of bicyclist fatalities in New York City — 14 this year — has raised concerns about bike safety.

In the past 5½ years, there have been 24 bicyclist fatalities from motor vehicle accidents in Suffolk, according to county police data from between Jan. 1, 2014, and June 30, 2019. There has been one fatality this year.

Ward said she is confident the program will launch in places that are most compatible with biking and that getting more bikes on the road will increase cycling safety awareness. Riders will have to bring their own helmets, just like with Citi Bike.

Ward added that a county hike-bike master plan, expected to be unveiled later this year, will show paths available throughout Suffolk. There is also a \$10 million plan for a bike-and-hike trail on the North Shore of Suffolk, connecting Port Jefferson Station to Wading River.

The program will be run at no cost to the county. Boston-based Zagster Inc., which runs more than 200 such programs throughout the country, will pay for operations, maintain the bikes and collect revenue.

Rides will cost \$1 per 30-minute ride, \$10 per month or \$60 for an annual membership, said Dave Reed, Zagster's sales manager.



Players representing the Mets and Orioles shake hands after a Bristol All-Stars softball game

OCTOGENARIAN NOD

Players celebrate 50th anniversary of winning team

BY CRAIG SCHNEIDER
craig.schneider@newsday.com

These guys were swinging for the fences, hustling around the bases and carrying on like a bunch of kids. And virtually all were more than 80 years old.

The Bristol All-Stars, a group of Long Island's elder softball players, gathered Wednesday on a Hicksville baseball field to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the 1969 Mets World Series championship.

The 34 men, who play weekly in the New York Senior Softball Association, recalled that miraculous New York team as they showed some pretty amazing skills themselves.

"Here we are octogenarians,



Nick Derosa, 81, of East Rockaway, belts a fly ball.

but we're playing like Little Leaguers," said Bernie Rosen, 87, of Old Bethpage. "Lucky, lucky, lucky."

Each year, following Major League Baseball's All-Star Game, these men play a game to honor a certain theme. This year, they celebrated the team that shook off expectations to win it all. In the process, they shook off some expectations about people their age.

Rosen recalled he had seats to every Mets home game during that championship series against the Baltimore Orioles. He was in the right field stands when Mets right-fielder Ron Swoboda made that famous diving backhanded grab off a shot to right in Game 4.

Today, the retiree has seven great-grandchildren.

"It was a magical time," said Rosen, wearing his first baseman's glove. "You have to remember that the Jets beat the Colts in January, the Knicks won, the Mets won, and, most importantly, we landed on the moon."

The men, who are pretty close in age to those Met legends, also recognized the challenges that those players — and themselves — face as they confront the realities of aging. They noted that players Tom Seaver and Bud Harrelson are battling dementia, and that Ed Kranepool received a lifesaving kidney transplant.

RIC OCASEK | 1944 - 2019

★ ICONIC NEW WAVE ROCK PIONEER

Cars frontman found dead in Manhattan pad

BY RAFAEL GUZMÁN
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Someone once said that the formula for a hit song was simple: Sad lyrics, happy melody. Ric Ocasek, lead singer of the quintessential new wave band The Cars, was one of the masters of that formula.

Ocasek, 75, was found dead in his Manhattan apartment Sunday, an NYPD spokesman said. No foul play is suspected.

The legendary singer, inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame last year, spent years turning out upbeat yet subliminally dark pop-rock that perfectly captured the mood of the late 1970s and 1980s. That was when The Cars produced its best-known hits, from “My Best Friend’s Girl” to “Shake It Up” to “You Might Think.”

It’s easy to forget The Cars were initially a ’70s band, formed in 1976 in Boston, a town whose musical output consisted mainly of the classic rock stalwarts Aerosmith and,



The Cars: Ric Ocasek, Elliot Easton, Greg Harkes, David Robinson and Ben Orr in 1984.

of course, Boston. The Cars were nothing like those shaggy-haired bands, which were essentially still steeped in the ’60s. The Cars were, like their name, a sleek and modern machine. Their spiffed-up version of power-pop, driven by dynamic guitars and cool synthesizers,

pointed the way toward the 1980s that were yet to come.

Looking back at that cusp-of-the-decade era — when punk bands like the Ramones existed side by side with new wave bands like Blondie and Talking Heads — Ocasek stands out as a definitive figure. Tall, lanky,

dressed in a slim suit, skinny tie and ever-present sunglasses, Ocasek came off as a modern-day Roy Orbison, cultivating an aloof persona, a mystique. He wasn’t exactly Mr. Charisma on stage, and The Cars were never known as a particularly galvanizing live band. Ocasek let the

music speak for itself.

And it did. A Cars song was always a work of cool detachment and irony with a strong undercurrent of yearning and heartbreak. “Just What I Needed,” a deceptively propulsive rock tune, told the age-old story of a toxic relationship; “Since You’re Gone” builds on the rhythm of a pair of stilettos walking out a door; “Good Times Roll” is a wondrously depressing pop tune.

“Drive” — one of their biggest and most straightforward hits, written by Ocasek but sung by bassist Benjamin Orr — is a ballad whose nightmarishness is easy to overlook unless you focus on the words: “Who’s gonna pay attention to your dreams? And who’s gonna plug their ears when you scream?”

You could even connect The Cars with the Cold War anxieties of the 1980s — they turned those anxieties into some of the catchiest pop tunes ever written. “If someone can walk out in the street and shoot John Lennon, somebody can launch a nuclear attack,” Ocasek told The New York Times in 1983. “It’s scary. But you start to take it in stride after a while. If you’re going to live in a world of absurdities, you have to learn to laugh at them.”

With Nicole Fuller

Bike sharing rolls into 3 Suffolk communities

BY DANDAN ZOU
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Ride more, drive less.

That is the message county officials hope to send by rolling out a bike-share program in three Suffolk communities to encourage people to ride a bike to go places.

Bethpage Ride, which was launched on Sunday, includes 100 orange bikes at 17 stations in the Village of Babylon, the Village of Patchogue and Hampton Bays.

“Residents and visitors will be able to leave their cars behind with the knowledge that a healthy, fun, convenient option is waiting for them,” County Executive Steve Bellone said Sunday.

The for-rent bike program,

which is modeled after Citi Bike in New York City, is named after its sponsor Bethpage Federal Credit Union. On Long Island, similar programs are in place in Long Beach and Stony Brook University.

Officials, who called the program “the first of its kind” because of its regional reach, said it would help reduce traffic congestion, encourage a healthier lifestyle and expand the county’s transit options.

“It is ready to change the landscape of mobility in Suffolk County,” Bellone said as he stood by the lake in Babylon’s Argyle Park where people walked past and dogs barked intermittently on a sunny morning. “We’re effectively extending the reach of our existing transit system.”

By placing the bike stations near train stations, downtowns and waterfront areas, officials said the program would also boost tourism by solving “the last-mile connection” problem without increasing traffic.

“From the mobility perspective of people that take the train out to come to our beaches and to Fire Island, you have that last mile,” said Linda Armyrn, Bethpage Federal Credit Union’s senior vice president of corporate affairs, who declined to disclose the cost of its sponsorship. They could “just take a bike from a train station down to the ferry.”

To officials at Sunday’s launch, the program was merely a start.

“I’m a firm believer that community by community, village by village, town by town, you

can change mindsets,” said Joseph Keyes, a Patchogue Village trustee. “The more bikes that are going to be on the road over the next few months or years, the more people [will] become aware of it and we can see them adopting that.”

Officials previously said they plan to extend the program to have 400 bikes available throughout the county.

To use a bike, riders first need to download Pace, a phone app, and create an account. A 30-minute ride costs \$1 while a membership costs \$10 per month or \$60 per year for unlimited trips of up to 30 minutes. Ridership fees will go to Boston-based Zagster Inc., which runs more than 200 such programs in 38 states, to help cover maintenance and operational costs.

nance and operational costs.

Clarissa and Paul Buen Camino of Babylon Village noticed the 10-bike rack by the park’s entrance as they walked past with their 7-year-old son, Joseph, on Sunday. The couple has been teaching Joseph how to ride a bike at home.

“We would definitely use it at least once or twice,” Paul Buen Camino said.

“It’s something new to try,” Clarissa Buen Camino added.

For George and Lesley Johnson of Farmingdale, who came to Argyle Park at least once a week to walk, the program sounds like a good idea.

“If I had worked in the city, and I had come to Babylon to take the train, I would take the bike over to the train, maybe,” said George Johnson, 72.

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Let's Ride!

SPOKES FOR FOLKS



Robert and Christina Santos of Babylon use bikes from the ride-share program near Argyle Lake in Babylon. The bikes are named after sponsor Bethpage Federal Credit Union.

Program makes it easier to rent bikes in three communities

BY LISA IRIZARRY
lisa.irizarry@newsday.com

Although Christina Santos and her husband, Robert, own their own bikes, she says it can be a “schlep” to get them ready for a ride if the couple wants to venture outside of their Babylon Village neighborhood.

“We usually just ride around the neighborhood, but there’s traffic so it’s safer to

go someplace like Argyle Lake,” Santos says. “But if we want to take a quick ride around Argyle Lake we have to drag the bikes from our shed, put them in bike racks on the car and then drive about one-and-a-half miles to take a ride around the lake, which is about three-quarters of a mile, then after that there’s the car ride back home,” Santos says.

“Bethpage Ride” — a new regional bike share program that started this month in Babylon Village, Patchogue and Hampton

Bays — makes the couple’s bike ride around Argyle Lake much easier, Santos says. It offers a total of 100 orange bicycles for rent in the three communities to those who want to ride a bike for recreation or as part of their commute, and it’s starting just in time for riders to take in the fall foliage.

Babylon Village Trustee Robyn Silverstri says that Babylon Village in particular is a great place to take in the sights during a leisurely bike ride.



"Bethpage Ride" offers 100 bikes in Babylon, Patchogue and Hampton Bays.

"It was great, we loved them [the rented bikes]," Santos recalls after the couple's recent ride. "We'd do it again. You just park your car in the parking lot and hop on the bike."

HOW IT WORKS

The program, named after its sponsor, Bethpage Federal Credit Union, is designed to be flexible to meet the needs of many kinds of users, says Jonathan Keyes, director of Downtown and Transit-Oriented Development for the Suffolk County Department of Economic Development & Planning.

Babylon has six bike rental stations located throughout the downtown, at the train station and the waterfront. Riders pay \$1 per 15 minutes, but they can also opt for a \$10 monthly plan or \$60 yearly plan and get unlimited trips of up to 30 minutes. College students and EBT (electronic benefit transfer) recipients receive half-off pricing. Riders should bring their own bike helmets.

Smartphone users can download the Pace app to map bike share stations, check up-to-date bike and parking availability and pay for rides. System members get universal access to other Pace bike share programs on Long Island and throughout the United States.

The program will be suspended during the winter. Plans are to put the bikes in storage from approximately late November to late March.

FOR A SHORT RIDE Argyle Lake loop

Bike share stations in Babylon:

- Babylon Long Island Rail Road station
- Babylon Village Pool
- Argyle Park/Carlston Place
- Locust Avenue
- Park Avenue
- Totten Place

DISTANCE About 3/4 mile

PICK UP STATION Carlston Avenue
Argyle Lake is in the heart of the village. There's a shared paved and hard gravel pedestrian/bike path that provides a lovely backdrop. You'll pass by Argyle Falls, swans, and beautiful landscaping.

FOR A LONGER RIDE Belmont Lake loop

DISTANCE 6 miles

PICK UP STATION Park Avenue

The Park Avenue rack sits at the entrance to a 6-mile loop that is a well-maintained, off-road path running past Southards Pond, up and around Belmont Lake. This is mostly flat, tree-shaded route and you may encounter horses on trail rides from the Babylon Riding Stable (riders are asked to please be courteous and dismount while the horses pass). The path has mile markers along the serene western-most path, which is also used by walkers, joggers and even bird-watchers. In addition Belmont Lake State Park has many amenities including seasonal paddleboat rides and bathrooms.

ON THE COVER Robert Santos of Babylon cruises around Argyle Lake on a bike from the Bethpage ride-share program.

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This post was contributed by a community member. The views expressed here are the author's own.

Neighbor News (<https://Patch.Com/New-York/Millerplace-Rockypoint/Posts>)

Suffolk County Breaks Ground on 'North Shore Rail Trail'

The new trail is a 10-mile span along a former Long Island Rail Road right-of-way from Mount Sinai to Wading River.

By Office of Legislator Sarah Anker, Patch Contributor (<https://patch.com/users/amy-ellis2075e06d6e22dc5f034102ea188cf8aa7e5fe07e427287acbe72eb40caf411d9>)
Oct 28, 2019 11:02 am ET | Updated Oct 29, 2019 4:29 pm ET

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suffolk%20County%20Breaks%20Ground%20on%20%27North%20Shore%20Rail%20Trail%27&body=Suffolk%20County%20Breaks%20Ground%20on%20%27North%20Shore%20Rail
pan%20along%20a%20former%20Long%20Island%20Rail%20Road%20right-

Pictured L-R: Friends of the Setauket Greenway Trail Co-Founder and Trustee Herb Mones, New York State Assemblyman Steve Englebright, Suffolk County Legislator Kara Hahn, Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone, Suffolk County Legislator Sarah Anker, Town of Brookhaven Superintendent of Highways Dan Losquadro and his daughter, Wading River Resident and Trail Advocate Bruce Kagan, Miller Place Civic Association President Woody Brown, and Shoreham Village Mayor Brian Vail.

MILLER PLACE, NY – On Friday, October 25th, Suffolk County Legislator Sarah Anker joined Suffolk County Legislator Kara Hahn, Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone, New York State Assemblyman Steve Englebright, Town of Brookhaven Highway Superintendent Dan Losquadro, local bicycle organizations and community members at the Rails to Trails recreational path groundbreaking ceremony at Pipe Stave Hollow Road in Miller Place. The path will be named the "North Shore Rail Trail" referencing its 10-mile span along the former Long Island Rail Road right-of-way, from Mount Sinai to Wading River, parallel to NYS Route 112 (<https://>

"It's been a long journey after waiting 50 years since the Rails to Trails Recreation Path's original inception, but I'm happy to say we are moving forward with construction of Long Island's most anticipated recreational project," said Legislator Anker. "The path will not only provide a safer location to bike, walk, jog, or run in our community, it will also support our local businesses along Route 25A across my district. The hurdles that I have experienced in this process have strengthened my skills at facilitating significant community projects. In addition to overcoming many obstacles, I am proud to have brought all levels of government onboard and worked with local not-for-profit organizations and the community that will compliment an ecotourism hub in my district. Just as the railroad linked adjoining towns together increasing community unity, so will the North Shore Rail Trail which is now on track and moving full steam ahead."

long-island-weekly.com

The project has received community support and support from numerous clubs and organizations, including Friends of the Greenway Trails, New York Bicycling Coalition, and Concerned Long Island Mountain Bikers (CLIMB). The Suffolk County Department of Public Works and Legislator Anker are currently working with these groups on maintenance agreements to assist in upkeep of the trail. In addition, Legislator Anker continues to seek private funding for additional privacy fencing and landscaping along the trail and looks forward to working with other organizations like the Boys and Girls Scouts for community improvement projects.

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For more information, please call Legislator Anker's office at (631) 854-1600.

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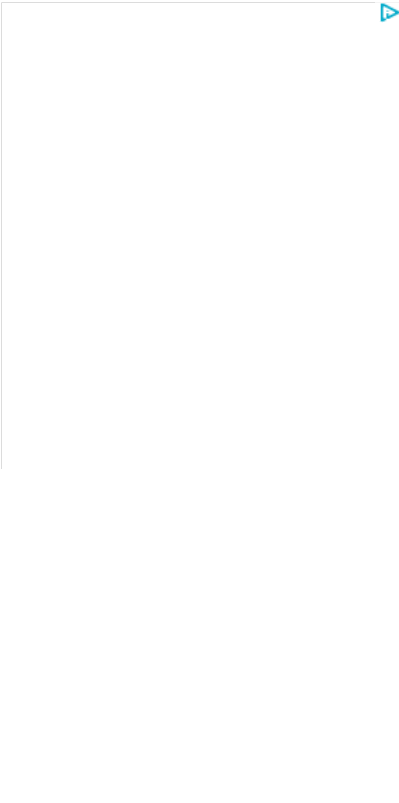
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Featured Story

Riverhead to receive \$400K to improve pedestrian, bicycle paths

by Tim Gannon | 10/07/2019 3:20 PM

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Riverhead Town has received a \$400,000 "Jumpstart" grant from Suffolk County that will help in the design and creation of bicycle and pedestrian paths connecting train and bus riders to downtown.

Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone announced the grant Monday at the Riverhead train station.

"The ultimate goal is to be able to transport people from the train station or bus station to our downtown," Riverhead Supervisor Laura Jens-Smith said.

Mr. Bellone said: "The Jumpstart program is part of a comprehensive economic development plan designed to encourage, foster and enhance the planning and development of regionally significant developments in and around Suffolk's downtown."

Since 2013, the county has awarded \$11.3 million in Jumpstart funding.

The County Legislature approved \$5 million in Jumpstart grants Oct. 2. Riverhead was one of eight communities to receive funding. Mr. Bellone signed it into law Monday.

"So many exciting things are happening here," Mr. Bellone said, listing the town's ongoing cleanup of the train station, the MTA's recent 10-year contract to locate a coffee shop in the train station,

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and some of the development in downtown Riverhead, such as the 116-unit Riverview Lofts affordable apartments.

“This is a really significant, really important downtown,” Mr. Bellone said.

“When people come off the train and they see something attractive like that, that really makes a difference,” he said.

He said the town needs to create affordable housing in and around downtown to support the local businesses and restaurants and to retain young people.

“We need to give them those places to live and put them in environments that are really vibrant, because that’s where they want to live, and that’s what’s happening in the Town of Riverhead,” he said.

Ms. Jens-Smith said the revitalization has been a community effort.

“To revitalize a downtown, we need to connect our transportation with our downtown, and this is the step toward doing that,” she said. “We have a lot of community input in this, we’ve revitalized our train station with our plantings, and it’s all been a community effort.”

She said, “To be able to have safe transportation other than using a car to our downtown, bike paths and safe crosswalks really help enhance what we have going on in our historical downtown.”

She said new apartments and shops will attract people to walk around Riverhead.

Mr. Bellone said electrification of the rail lines leading to Riverhead is the long-range goal, “and the only reason for that is because the MTA sees great things happening in town.”

County Legislator Al Krupski (D-Cutchogue) said bicyclists are getting hit by cars on a regular basis, and communities are based on cars.

“Spending time and effort to make it safer for pedestrians and bicyclists is well worth the effort,” he said.

The town and county also recently partnered with Bethpage Ride and Zagster to initiate a bike share program at Enterprise Park at Calverton as well as downtown

The bikes are expected to be available in a couple of weeks, according to Jonathan Keyes of the county’s Department of Economic Development.

“We need to make this the most bike-friendly county around,” Mr. Bellone said.

The town and county will partner on the project. Ms. Jens-Smith said they will begin the design work “as soon as possible. We’re looking to have this move forward very quickly. The bikes will be coming in and then we will need safe places for people to be able to use those bikes and connect in our neighborhoods.”

Photo caption: County Executive Steve Bellone speaks at a press conference Monday morning at the Riverhead Train Station along with town and county officials. (Credit: Tim Gannon)

tgannon@timesreview.com

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