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# Ballston Veterans Bike Path

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The Ballston Veterans Bike Path is located in the Town of Ballston in Saratoga County in close proximity to the southern terminus of Ballston Lake. This delightful trail is nearly flat and was built along a former trolley line that ran parallel to the railroad present today. The journey offers a series of historical markers and an ever-changing panorama of seasonally blooming plants. The description in this outline takes a traveler from the southern entrance in the Village of Ballston Lake north to Outlet Road. As the trail's name suggests, it is popular with bicyclists seeking a short, easy ride.

**Directions:** From Route 50 in the Town of Ballston, take 146A diagonally southeast for 1 mile into the village where Lake Hill Road joins from the right. Continue on 146A south a short distance (1/8 mile) to the trail entrance on the left just before the railroad tracks. From the Northway (I-87), get off at Exit 10. Driving from the southeast on the Northway (I-87), take Exit 9 where 146A travels 5.4-miles from its intersection with Route 146 in Clifton Park to the trailhead in Ballston Lake Village.

**Access Points:** There is access to the trail from the parking area on 146A and also from Outlet Road.

**Parking:** The parking area on Route 146A is one car length deep and has room for 12 cars. The surface has large loose stones and there was no accessible parking. Outlet Road has unpaved parking for a few cars next to the railroad track. There is additional

parking past the railroad tracks a short distance.

**Distance:** 3.5 miles one way.

**Trailhead:** At the 146A entrance there is a short pathway connecting the parking lot with the trailhead. There is a bench with arms and signage reading "Welcome to the Town of Ballston Bike Path. Hidden away from the eye are memorials of the stirring days of the early frontier which are deserving of your recognition and preservation."

**Surface:** Most of the trail is paved with the following exceptions: At 10,840, 12,397, 13,621 and 13,580 feet from trailhead there are sections of broken pavement which may present obstacles for people using manually powered mobility devices.

**Width:** Most of the trail is 10 feet wide.

**Slope:** The entire trail is under 5% with most of the slope under 2%.

**Cross slope:** The trail is well designed with a slight crown and most of the trail is under 2%. At 10,100 feet from the trailhead there is a section of cross slope that is 6% for 360 feet.

**Features:** Bench with arms at 43, and benches without arms at 1,647, 8,286, 11,166, 13,580, 15,362, and 17,821 feet from trailhead at 146A.

**Cautions and Prohibitions:** Hours of operation are dawn



until dusk. Pets are allowed with a leash.

**Description:** The trail is connected by a short walkway to 146A. There are two poles at the entrance connected by a long wide board that blocks the middle of the trail to prevent motorized vehicles from entering. There is over 36 inches around this barrier to enable wheelchair use. The entrance area is well manicured, horticulturally enriched and aesthetically pleasing and has a bench for travelers. The trail is flat with a barely noticeable crowning in the center to assist drainage after rain. The grass on either side of the trail is mowed to widen the open space.

As one walks along the trail there are mile markers present to help track progress and interpretive signs that provide information about the early settlers of the area. The area is rich with historical content dating back to the 1700s.

In summer, the shrubs, vines, and wildflowers on the east side of the trail obscure the railroad track that runs parallel, but now and then, a train may blow its whistle as it passes by.

The west side of the trail offers a varied landscape - cliffs of shale (rock deposited over 350 million years ago as mud and sand in an ancient ocean) with some protruding layers of the more erosion resistant sandstone. The forest edge reveals a variety of shrubs and trees including maples, sumac, poplars, elms, basswood, oaks, beech, and willow. Traveling north,

this edge varies from wetlands to pasture to more forest. Occasionally there are side paths leading uphill, some to posted properties. For over two miles there are no roads crossings the bike trail. Toward the northern end, three roads leading to lakeside houses do cross the trail.

During summer months, you may see green frogs in the drainage ditch next to the trail and dragonflies and butterflies in abundance. You may also see a variety of birds. In mid-July, the southernmost mile of the trail has a splendid display of knapweed, valerian, avens, yarrow, wild carrot, bladder campion, various clovers, birdsfoot trefoil, pokeweed, purple flowered raspberry, chickory, thimble weed, vervain, fleabane, daisy, dock, daylily, mullein, maiden pink, fringed loosestrife, St. John's wort, and various grasses and sedges.

At 2,700 feet from the trailhead and again at 3,700 feet, there is poison ivy in view along the woods edge.

One bridge crosses a stream at about 2.5 miles. It had 36-inch railings and wood planks with no spaces between them. There are several feet of rough pavement on either side of the bridge.

There is no shade along this trail in the middle of the day, but by 4 p.m. much of the trail is shaded by the west side trees.

**Owner:** Town of Ballston and Saratoga County

**For more information:** Contact Town of Ballston (518) 885-8502, [www.townofballstonny.org](http://www.townofballstonny.org)

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## TRAILS FOR ALL IN SARATOGA COUNTY

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This trail report is part of a series of documents describing outdoor spaces with accessible features in Saratoga County. It was created by ECOS: The Environmental Clearinghouse, a regional environmental organization. For more information, or to find more descriptions of trails for users of different ability levels, go to [ecosny.org](http://ecosny.org). ECOS also publishes a series of guides describing natural areas in Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady counties.