



Department
of State

This announcement was prepared with funding provided by the New York State Department of State under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund and the Brownfield Opportunity Area Program.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 5, 2016

CONTACT: Samuel Gordon, Director of Planning and Zoning Town of DeWitt
T: (315) 446-3910 ext. 148
C: (315) 870-0300
sgordon@townofdewitt.com

Alexander Marion, City of Syracuse Press Secretary
(315) 448-8044
amarion@syrgov.net

ELEVATING ERIE: AN EXHIBITION OF BIG IDEAS

#WhatsYourBigIdea

SYRACUSE, N.Y. – In the Fall of 2015, the City of Syracuse and Town of DeWitt launched Elevating Erie, a competition to identify innovative ideas that could stimulate and guide the future development of the Canalway corridor within both the Town and the City. This jointly-sponsored solicitation, made possible with funding from the New York State Department of State and the Central New York Community Foundation, solicited ideas from the international design community through an open call for ideas. 64 different proposals were received representing ideas from 16 different countries.

The Town of Dewitt and the City of Syracuse are showcasing the Elevating Erie proposals during a public exhibition at the Erie Canal Museum in Downtown Syracuse from May 5 – August 14 2016. The ELEVATING ERIE: Exhibition of Big Ideas opens Thursday May 5th at 4:30pm. At 5:45pm a panel discussion featuring national experts Chris Reed of the design firm Stoss of Boston and Jeff Olson a principal with ALTA, one of the premier alternative transportation planning firms in North America will discuss these ideas and their application along the Erie Boulevard East corridor.

A jury of local and national experts reviewed the submissions and awarded winners based on the project sites of BLVD, BLOCK, BRANCH, and BRIDGE. The winner of the BLVD received \$3,000, and the others were awarded iPad Pros.

While the original Erie Canal has been paved over for 100 years, the corridor has remained significant to the region by transporting people and goods. It now has the potential to become part of the longest continuous bicycle and pedestrian trail in North America. The Canalway Trail is a network of approximately 400-miles of multi-use trails across upstate New York. The Canalway Trail follows the towpaths of both active and historic sections of the New York State Canal System, as well as adjacent abandoned rail corridors. Major portions of



Department
of State

This announcement was prepared with funding provided by the New York State Department of State under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund and the Brownfield Opportunity Area Program.

the Canalway Trail follow the legendary Erie Canal route from Buffalo to Albany. Along the way, the Erie Canalway Trail links the cities of Rochester, Syracuse, and Utica. Over 75% of the Erie Canalway Trail is completed off-road.

The Canalway Trail is not only a long-distance bicycling destination, but also a recreational resource for biking, walking, jogging, and other types of seasonal trail activities. In Syracuse the Canalway Trail has an entry point in DeWitt heading east and an entry point in Camillus heading west with a roughly 14-mile gap between them. Arguably the most challenging section of that gap, and the area with the most opportunity, is the segment of Erie Boulevard in question.

Bicycle tourism is one of the fastest growing forms of tourism in North America. When cyclists come to town, they do so seeking good food, drink, sightseeing, a good place to sleep, and a safe place to store their bike(s). According to a recent study conducted by Park and Trails NY, the Erie Canalway Trail gets more than 1.58 million visits per year. Spending by those visitors generates \$253 million annually in economic impact and \$28.5 million in sales and income taxes. Trail traffic also supports 3,440 jobs in the local economies within the trail corridor.

Additional information on the competition, as well as the submissions, are available to be viewed through the competition website www.elevatingerie.com. The website also includes a link to a public survey to solicit feedback on the ideas that were submitted, as well as to help to gauge community priorities for the corridor.

“This project has the potential to have a positive impact on the pedestrian and bike infrastructure in our community,” said **Syracuse Mayor Stephanie A. Miner**. “I support this work and encourage the community to come learn more during the course of the exhibition.”

“This project in an exciting step forward for our efforts in the Town of DeWitt to make the community more pedestrian and bicycle friendly,” said **Edward Michelanko, PhD. Town Supervisor for DeWitt**, “The historical Canal corridor lies at the heart of DeWitt and has the potential to link our neighborhoods to our commercial centers along Erie Boulevard, making them more accessible and more attractive for our residents and property owners. The focus on increasing biodiversity and improving ecological function will help to improve the quality of life for all of Central New York as well.”

“The Department of State is pleased to support DeWitt and Syracuse to advance projects for the revitalization of this key portion of the Erie Boulevard and Old Erie Canal alignment,” said **Acting Secretary of State Rossana Rosado**. “The ideas from the Elevating Erie competition are an inspiring launch to the planning that will help to capitalize on the historic Canal corridor and promote access and economic development.”



**Department
of State**

This announcement was prepared with funding provided by the New York State Department of State under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund and the Brownfield Opportunity Area Program.

The Erie Canal Museum is proud to be a partner in this innovative and forward-thinking project. Hosting the exhibition in the Syracuse Weighlock Building, which has been located on what is now Erie Boulevard for over 160 years, is fitting. An important part of the Museum's mission is to promote an awareness of the Canal's transforming effects not only on the past and present, but also to look to the future, said **Natalie Stetson Director of the Erie Canal Museum**

"The Central New York Community Foundation was happy to support this effort to inspire new and creative ideas on how to best develop what will be an amazing resource for the Central New York community," said **John Eberle, Vice President, Grantmaking and Community Initiatives at the Central New York Community Foundation**. "Connecting the Erie Canalway Trail from Dewitt to Syracuse will honor the legacy of one of our region's most honored treasures – the Erie Canal – which is so deeply rooted in the history of our great city. This community collaboration is sure to have a great effect on our local residents by offering opportunities for health, recreation and education."

###