



# Amenities Study

Conditions Evaluation and Long-Term Planning for  
Recreational Amenities on the Erie Canal

MARCH 2025



## Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

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### About Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor



The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor works to preserve and share our extraordinary heritage, to promote the Corridor as a world class tourism destination, and to foster vibrant communities connected by more than 500 miles of waterway. It achieves its mission in partnership with the National Park Service, New York State agencies, non-profit organizations, local residents, and more than 200 communities across upstate New York.

### About New York State Canal Corporation



The New York State Canal System is operated and maintained by the New York State Canal Corporation, a subsidiary of the New York Power Authority. The New York State Canal System is the nation's largest state-run inland waterway system—operating since 1825 and including the Erie, Champlain, Oswego, and Cayuga-Seneca canals—plus more than 150 miles of recreational trails.

### About the Mohawk River Basin Program



New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Mohawk River Basin Program works to promote the integrated and coordinated management of the many environmental resources of the Mohawk River and its unique watershed. As a partnership-based initiative, the MRBP fosters collaborative decision-making based on an understanding of the entire ecosystem.

*Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and NYS Canalway Corporation would like to acknowledge the many partners, stakeholders, and trail users who shared their knowledge, experience, and expertise to help guide this study.*

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# SECTION 1.

# **Introduction**

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This section provides the background and rationale for the recreational amenities assessment, along with an overview of methodology and stakeholder engagement.





# Introduction

*The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor (Erie Canalway), in partnership with New York State Canal Corporation (Canal Corporation) have undertaken a conditions evaluation and needs assessment of amenities for recreational users of the Erie Canal, NYS Canalway Water Trail, and Erie Canalway Trail.*

## About the Erie Canal, NYS Canalway Water Trail, and Erie Canalway Trail

Spanning the State of New York from Waterford to the Tonawandas, the Erie Canal, NYS Canalway Water Trail, and Erie Canalway Trail are valued recreational assets that link history, community, culture, and recreation across New York State. The trails are widely used for walking, running, bicycling, paddling, and boating access. The trails are well loved by users of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities that include casual users, day trippers, commuters, and long-distance travelers.

### Erie Canal and NYS Canalway Water Trail (338 miles)



The Erie Canal and NYS Canalway Water Trail are used by boaters and paddlers alike. Although this is a man-made structure, it traverses or intersects many naturally occurring water bodies, including lakes and rivers. The Mohawk River, a 140-mile river draining into the Hudson River in Waterford, is synonymous with the Erie Canal and NYS Canalway Water Trail from Rome to Waterford. Both power boats and paddle craft of all types are permitted, with marinas, boat launches, and hand launches available throughout.

### Erie Canalway Trail (365 miles)



The Erie Canalway Trail varies widely along its length. As it traverses urban, suburban, and rural contexts, the trail surface ranges from wide paved paths, to stone dust trails, to dirt paths in some of the most remote areas. The trail follows the Erie Canal and NYS Canalway Water Trail closely in some places but deviates in other places. Although the majority of the Erie Canalway Trail is separated from the road, parts of it rely on on-road connections, about 60 miles in total. The trail is popular for walking, running, and bicycling. The Erie Canalway Trail is part of the Empire State Trail, which runs from New York City to Canada and Albany to Buffalo.

## Trail Entities

Although the New York State Canal Corporation (Canal Corporation), a subsidiary of the New York Power Authority, operates, maintains, and promotes the New York State Canal System, there are countless entities who invest in and maintain the trails and their recreational amenities. This creates a unique experience as users encounter a wide variety of environments. However, it also poses a challenge for creating a consistent and predictable experience for users. This study considers how to overcome those challenges.

### *Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor*

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor (Erie Canalway) is managed by a federal commission and not-for-profit that works together to preserve the Nation's extraordinary canal heritage, promote the Corridor as a world-class tourism destination, and foster vibrant communities connected by the water trail.

Erie Canalway manages the NYS Canalway Water Trail Stewardship program of over 85 volunteers who maintain and report maintenance concerns at Water Trail access points such as launches and locks. They also act as Water Trail ambassadors.

### *New York State Canal Corporation*

The New York State Canal Corporation (Canal Corporation), a subsidiary of the New York Power Authority, operates, maintains, and promotes the New York State Canal System, which includes the Erie Canal, NYS Canalway Water Trail, and Erie Canalway Trail. Canal Corporation owns over 100 miles of the Erie Canalway Trail and over 35,000 acres of land along the Erie Canal and NYS Canalway Water Trail. In total, Canal Corporation maintains 524 miles of waterways.

### *Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)*

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) owns and maintains land at several sites along the Erie Canal and NYS Canalway Water Trail, including several publicly accessible boat launches. DEC also created the Mohawk River Basin Program (MRBP), an initiative to preserve and restore the Mohawk River and its watershed's environmental quality and manage its resources for the future.

### *Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP)*

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) is a state agency that oversees more than 250 parks and open spaces across the state, including the Old Erie Canal State Historic Park, a 36-mile linear park that is synonymous with the Erie Canalway Trail from DeWitt to Rome.

OPRHP oversees the Empire State Trail (EST), a 750-mile trail stretching north from New York City to the Canadian border and west from Albany to Buffalo. The trail overlaps the entire length of the Erie Canalway Trail. There are signature Empire State Trail gateways and trailheads along the Erie Canalway Trail with consistent amenities and furnishings to welcome users.

### *Parks & Trails New York (PTNY)*

Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) is a statewide advocate for parks and trails in New York State. They run the annual Cycle the Erie Canal event, a week-long guided cycling tour of the entire Erie Canalway Trail.

PTNY operates an Adopt-a-Trail Stewards program, where individuals adopt portions of the Erie Canalway Trail in their community to perform volunteer maintenance and ambassadorship. The program is active on the Erie Canalway Trail from Pendleton to Newark and Rome to Fort Herkimer.

### *Counties and Municipalities*

There are over 200 trailside communities who either have jurisdiction over some portion of the Erie Canal, NYS Canalway Water Trail, and Erie Canalway Trail or trailside land, or have some other stake in its continued investment and enhancement. Some communities have implemented recreational amenities on land they own, including trailside parks, while others have entered into maintenance agreements with Canal Corporation to install amenities on Canal Corporation land.



## Guiding Framework

A series of goals and guiding principles were established to provide a framework for data analysis and recommendations. The findings and recommendations detailed in this report will be used to prioritize future investments, provide justification for grant applications, support ongoing maintenance and operations, and encourage private investment on the trail.



## A Vision for the Erie Canal

*The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and NYS Canal Corporation aspire to establish the Erie Canal, NYS Canalway Water Trail, and Erie Canalway Trail as a world-class destination for recreation and to gain recognition as one of the most accessible trails in the country.*

*As laid out in the NYS Canal Corporation's Canal Recreationway Commission's 2050 Plan, we envision an evolution of the New York State Canal System from a linear recreationway to a complete network of waterways, parks, and trails.*

### Study Questions

The overarching goal of the recreational user amenities study was to answer the following study questions:

- What types of amenities exist on the system?
- What is the condition of amenities on the system?
- What types of amenities are desired by recreational users?
- Where are there gaps in amenities along the system?
- What opportunities exist to enhance amenities to improve the user experience?

### Program Goals

The findings and recommendations from this study will support the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and NYS Canal Corporation's broader program goals, identified below. These goals helped frame data collection, analysis, and recommendations.

- Improve the recreational user experience
- Enhance the Canalway Corridor's distinct sense of place
- Improve amenities for people of all abilities
- Strengthen long-term stewardship of the system by users

### Key Themes

Several key themes emerged during the course of this study that were identified as critical to achieving the programmatic goals. They are:

- Creating a consistent and predictable experience on the system
- Strengthening partnerships among various entities who own land or have another stake in the success of the system

The study questions, broader program goals, and key themes together created a framework for this study.

## Study Area

The study area consists of the entirety of the Erie Canalway Trail (365 miles) and the Erie Canal and NYS Canalway Water Trail (338 miles), both stretching from the eastern terminus at Waterford Harbor Visitor Center in Waterford to the western terminus at Gateway Harbor Park in Tonawanda. The project team inventoried recreational amenities along the entire length of the Erie Canalway Trail and at public access points along the Erie Canal and NYS Canalway Water Trail.

### *Study Area Regions*

For the purpose of analysis and recommendations, the system was divided into four regions, numbered from east to west, as listed below.

- **Region 1: Rome to Waterford**
- **Region 2: Baldwinsville (Erie Canal/ NYS Canalway Water Trail) or Camillus (Erie Canalway Trail) to Rome**
- **Region 3: Fairport to Baldwinsville (Erie Canal/NYS Canalway Water Trail) or Camillus (Erie Canalway Trail)**
- **Region 4: North Tonawanda to Fairport**



## Study Area Regions

The Erie Canal, NYS Canalway Water Trail, and Erie Canalway Trail were divided into four regions, each with their own unique characteristics. Below is representative imagery from each region.



Paddling on the Mohawk River near Fort Hunter (Region 1)



Resting during a bike ride near Chittenango Landing (Region 2)



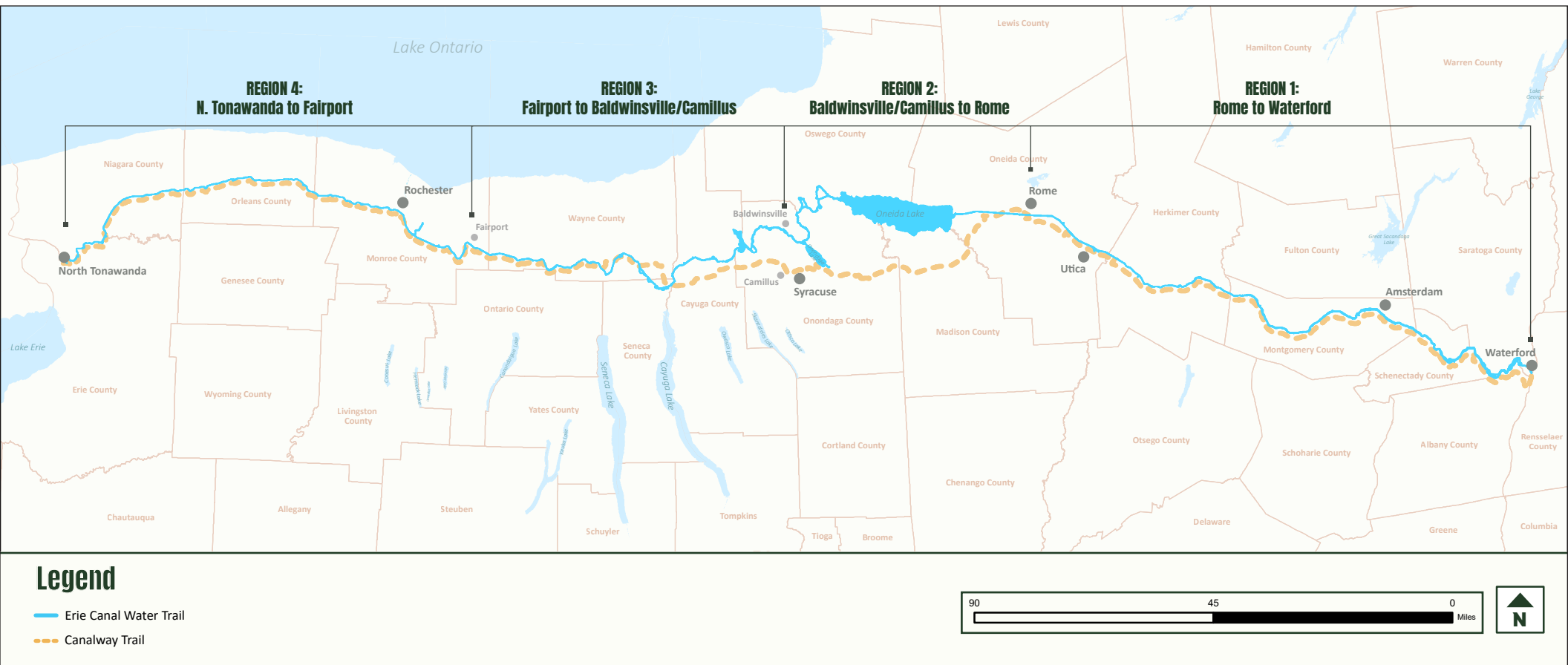
Paddling near Macedon (Region 3)



Boats moored in the Village of Fairport (Region 4)



## MAP 1.1 Study Area Regions



## Methodology

Developing findings and recommendations for recreational user amenities drew on a number of sources of information, including stakeholder interviews, data collection and analysis, and best practices research. The various methods are described below.

### Guiding Documents

A number of planning and design guides were referenced to inform data collection, analysis, and recommendations. These included the *Canal Standard Site Amenities* document [forthcoming], the *New York State Canal System Hand-Launch Facility Design Guide*, and the *Empire State Trail Design Guide*.

*The Mohawk River Basin Action Agenda (2021-2026)* was referenced as it includes goals related to enhancing the recreational user experience, including creating an inventory of public access points along the Mohawk River region of the Erie Canal/NYS Canalway Water Trail, performing a gap analysis, and enhancing accessibility.

Several guidebooks were used to assist with locating trail access points and amenities, including the *NYS Canalway Water Trail Guidebook and Map Set*, the *PTNY Cycle the Erie Canal Map*, and the *PTNY Interactive Map of Camping along the Canalway Trail*.

### Stakeholder Engagement

A series of 16 interviews and focus groups were held with stakeholders including partnering agencies, advocacy groups, and trail user groups. These meetings were held virtually and were designed to capture key user groups and interests from across the state.

Trail managers and trail use advocates such as Canal Corporation, PTNY, and Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) provided insight into the broad opportunities, challenges, and considerations for amenities investment. They noted the logistical challenges associated with managing a system of this size with more than thirty different ownership entities and maintenance jurisdictions. Rural, remote areas can be particularly challenging to maintain, making it difficult to install too many amenities in those areas. The challenge of creating a consistent user experience was highlighted consistently among stakeholder groups.

User groups provided local insight into what it is like to be trail user, the key amenities they need access to, the opportunities and challenges they have experienced, the locations they consider to be exceptional or aspirational in terms of access to amenities, and the places



## Stakeholder Groups

The following entities and user groups were consulted through stakeholder meetings to inform analysis and recommendations.

*NYS Canal Corporation*

*Mohawk River Watershed Basin Program, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation*

*NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation*

*Parks & Trails New York*

*NYS Canalway Water Trail Stewards*

*Accessibility*

*Paddling Rentals/Outfitters*

*Boating Groups/Associations*

*Tourism Hubs/Visitor Centers*

*Paddling User Groups*

*Rowing User Groups*

*Bicycling User Groups*

*Running User Groups*



that are in need of investment. The amenity needs identified through engagement informed best practices for amenity spacing and the gap analysis, as well as the identification of hubs and nodes of activity.

Professionals in the accessible recreation space provided insights into best practices for investing in accessible amenities, including affordability, providing convenient locations that are well connected by transit, and seeking opportunities to create networks of accessible locations. This group in particular noted the importance of working with community partners who are invested in continually enhancing accessibility and maintaining adaptive equipment in the long term, understanding that continued maintenance and improvement is key to maintaining trust among this user group. Access to information about what to expect was also highlighted. Knowing what to expect before venturing out helps users make their own decisions in planning their trip.

Stakeholder interviews and focus groups yielded a wide range of needs and opportunities, but several focus areas were identified as ubiquitous to the recreational user experience.

- **Consistency and Predictability**  
The need for consistency and predictability, whether in terms of amenity type, condition, spacing, clustering, or the condition of the Erie Canalway Trail surface itself, was highlighted as paramount to enhancing the user experience, as it gives users confidence in knowing what to expect, especially on long-distance trips.
- **Wayfinding** The lack of consistent and adequate wayfinding was identified as a critical barrier to use. Users noted that mile markers and trail markers are not consistently used or appropriately spaced, and this can present a particular challenge to bicyclists navigating on-road portions of the Erie Canalway Trail where trail direction is not obvious. Users also noted the importance of consistent directional signage to point users to off-trail services and conveniences, as well as indicating the distance to the next milestone or amenity center.



## Key Themes - Stakeholder Input

*Maintenance*

*Variations in Amenities*

*Accessibility*

*Partnerships*

*Information Dissemination*

- **Key Shared Amenities** Though different user groups make use of different types of amenities, most stakeholder groups noted that restrooms and drinking water were minimum amenities for all users. Stakeholders noted that there are portions of the system where these critical amenities are difficult to come by, making long-distance trips especially challenging.

### Data Collection

The project team undertook a comprehensive data collection effort along the Erie Canal, NYS Canalway Water Trail, and Erie Canalway Trail, inventorying and assessing the condition of amenities geared towards recreational users. A full list of amenities inventoried is shown to the right. The list includes common amenities that would be shared by multiple user types, such as restrooms and drinking fountains, as well as user-specific amenities such as bike repair stations (bicyclists), hand launches (paddlers), and marinas (boaters).

The project team traversed the entire Erie Canalway Trail by bicycle and inventoried recreational amenities within the immediate vicinity of this trail. For the Erie Canal and NYS Canalway Water Trail, the project team visited public access points identified in the *NYS Canalway Water Trail Guidebook*, including parks, launches, locks, and marinas.

Data collection was limited to amenities that were readily visible from the trail. For example, many portions of the Erie Canalway Trail pass through community parks. In this scenario, a key amenity such as a restroom or drinking fountain that could be reasonably seen from the trail

was inventoried. Likewise, a bench or picnic area near the trail was inventoried. However, data collection did not include a full inventory of all amenities within a park just because the trail passed through it.

Amenities located on private property were not included in this analysis as they are not publicly accessible. For example, many users noted that restrooms and drinking water are often available in restaurants, convenience stores, and gas stations. Amenities at these locations were outside the scope of this study and were not collected. Likewise, the project team did not enter privately-owned campgrounds or marinas to collect individual amenities. Recognizing that these amenities were important to the gap analysis in Section 4, these locations were mapped based on secondary sources of information but were not assessed for condition.

### Data Analysis

Following data collection, amenities were mapped to identify patterns and trends for amenity condition, gaps in amenities, and locations where amenities are concentrated. The data was also used to identify hubs and nodes of amenities where investment should be focused.



## List of Amenities

The following trail amenities were inventoried for this study.

**Bench**  
**Bike Parking**  
**Bike Rental**  
**Bike Repair Station**  
**Campsite**  
**Drinking Fountain**  
**EV Charging**  
**Hand Launch**  
**High Dock**  
**Laundry**  
**Marina**  
**Parking**  
**Pavilion**  
**Picnic Area**  
**Potable Water Spigot**  
**Power Pedestal**  
**Restroom**  
**Sewage Pumpout**  
**Shower**  
**Sign**  
**Table**  
**Waste Receptacle**

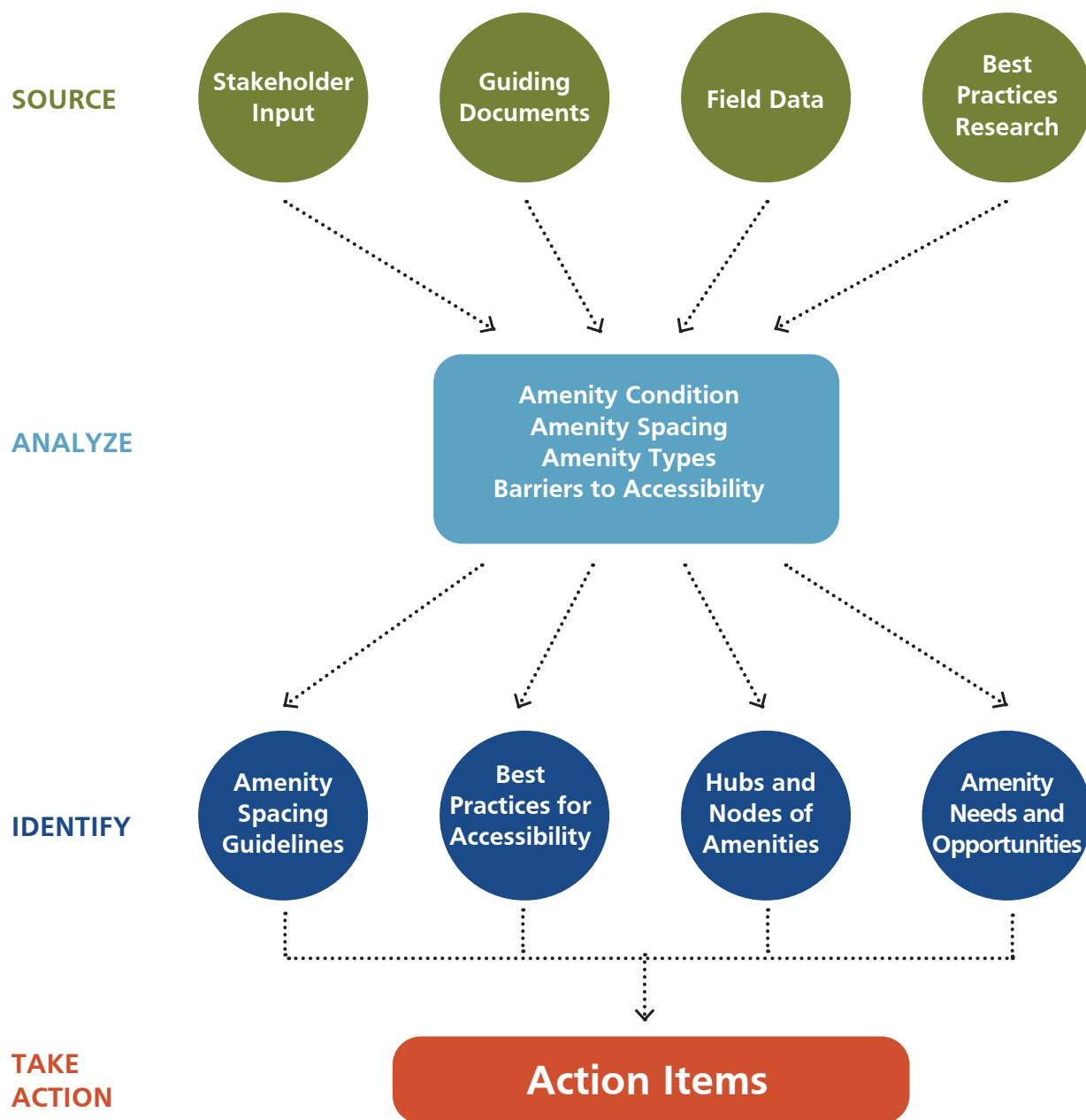
### Best Practices Research

The project team conducted research on best practices for spacing amenities along the trail system. Peer trails such as the Great Allegheny Passage and the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal trails were explored to identify their strengths. Guidelines and standards for designing accessible amenities were also reviewed to develop guidance for enhancing accessibility along the trail.

### Summary

The study process is summarized in the graphic to the right. A variety of sources, including guiding documents, stakeholder input, field data collection and observations, and best practices research were used to inform various data analyses (Section 2), amenity best practices (Section 3), and the needs assessment and recommendations (Section 4). They also informed key action items to build on the momentum of this study (Section 5).

**FIGURE 1.1 Study Process**









## SECTION 2.

# Existing Conditions

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This section discusses the existing conditions of amenities on the system, including their condition and accessibility as evaluated during field data collection. Representative images of amenities of varying conditions are presented, as well as aspirational examples to guide future investment.

# Existing Conditions

## Overview

The project team inventoried amenities and collected physical attribute information, took photos, and assessed their condition and general barriers to accessibility. Over 6,500 amenities were inventoried across the system. Of those amenities inventoried, approximately 25% (1,629) are located on land owned by Canal Corporation.

## Condition Rating System

The following definitions were used to guide amenity condition evaluations. These definitions were based on a recent Erie Canalway Trail asset inventory completed by Canal Corporation to maintain consistency in evaluation across studies.

- Good**  
Limited surface material wear, structural elements are fully intact
- Fair**  
Some sign of surface material wear and/or structural wear, but still functional
- Poor**  
Significant surface material and/or structural wear; severely damaged or could fail if used

## Systemwide Findings

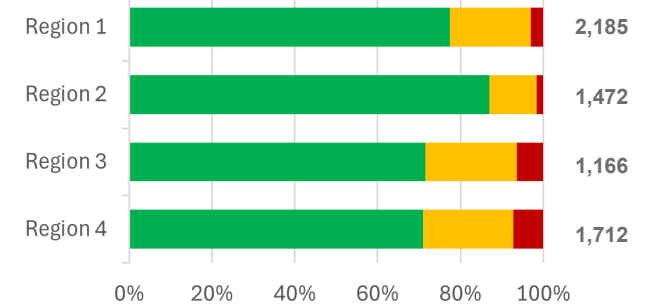
Figure 2.1 illustrates a systemwide view of the proportion of amenities in good, fair, and poor condition for the Erie Canal/NYS Canalway Trail and the Erie Canalway Trail. The numeric values to the right indicate the total number of amenities inventoried in each region. The overall condition of amenities was high, with over 75% of amenities rated as "good," less than 20% rated as "fair," and less than 5% rated as "poor." This breakdown tends to be consistent across the system, as shown in the summary charts.

Amenities on the Erie Canal and NYS Canalway Water Trail are in better condition than Erie Canalway Trail amenities overall. However, amenities on the eastern portion of the Erie Canal/NYS Canalway Water Trail (Regions 1 and 2) are in worse condition as compared to the western portion (Regions 3 and 4), pointing to a greater need for investment in repairs and replacement in these regions. On the Erie Canalway Trail, the opposite is true, with amenities in the western portion (Regions 3 and 4) in worse condition overall.

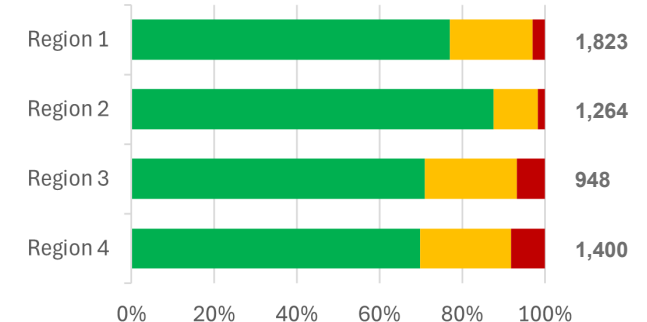
The following pages break down condition rating data by amenity and by region to give a more precise indication of where investments may be needed.

**FIGURE 2.1 Amenity Condition by Trail**

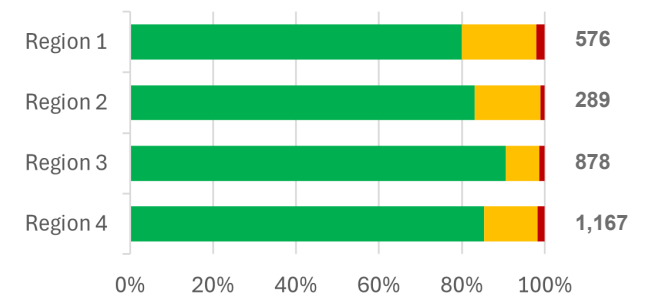
### All Amenities



### All Erie Canalway Trail Amenities



### All Erie Canal/NYS Canalway Water Trail Amenities



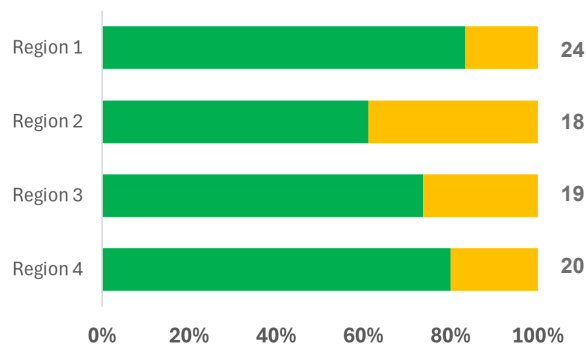


## Restrooms

Restrooms were one of the most critical amenities identified by stakeholders to create a positive trail experience. The inventory included permanent restrooms, portable toilets, and compostable toilets. Stakeholders noted that most users do not mind using portable toilets as long as they are well maintained. Portable toilets provide an affordable alternative to permanent restrooms, which are one of the most expensive amenities to install and maintain.

As shown in Figure 2.2, restrooms were in good condition overall; there were no restrooms found to be in poor condition. The images to the right provide good condition examples of the range of restroom types inventoried.

**FIGURE 2.2 Restroom Condition**



### GOOD - Permanent Restroom



These single-occupancy permanent restrooms were clean, functional, and well maintained. They were designed to maximize accessibility for all users. (Fairport)

### GOOD - Composting Toilet



This self-composting toilet is well positioned near a picnic area and parking lot and enhances the aesthetics of the area. (Montezuma)

### GOOD - Portable Toilet

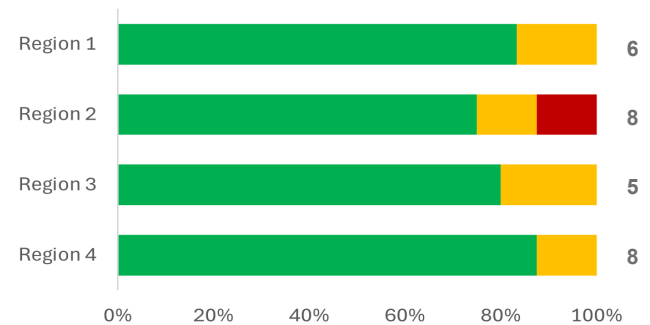


This portable toilet near Lock 33 is visible, located on a paved surface, and well maintained. It is also sized appropriately for those who use a mobility device or need assistance. (Rochester)

## Drinking Fountains

Drinking fountains, like restrooms, were noted by stakeholders as critical to a positive trail experience. Overall drinking fountains were in good condition but were in worse condition in Regions 2 (Baldwinsville/Camillus to Rome) and 3 (Fairport to Baldwinsville/Camillus). The small total number of drinking fountains inventoried should be taken into consideration in reviewing Figure 2.3. The needs assessment in Section 4 will discuss the lack of drinking water access on the system in more detail.

FIGURE 2.3 Drinking Fountain Condition



### GOOD



This drinking fountain provides options for users of all abilities as well as dogs. The material is in good condition, it is easily visible from the Erie Canalway Trail, and can be accessed from a paved surface. (Pattersonville)

### GOOD



This drinking fountain provides options for bottle filling as well as drinking. Because it is located indoors, signage would help to direct users to it. (Amherst)

### FAIR



The stone drinking fountain is beginning to deteriorate but is still functional. Its location is tucked away from the Erie Canal/NYS Canalway Water Trail. (Baldwinsville)

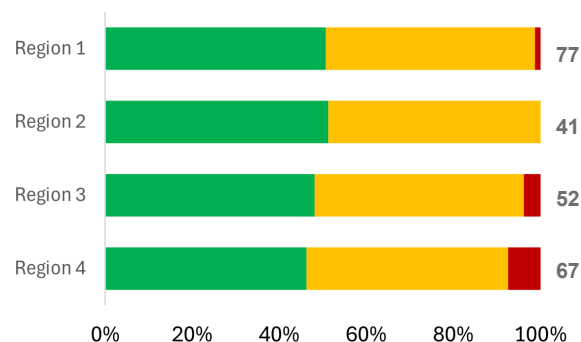


## Parking Lots

Parking lots are a key amenity for recreational users. Whether a user plans to bike, run, walk, boat, or paddle, parking lots are often the first point of access. Parking lots were in need of investment throughout the system, with about 50% in fair condition in each region. A phased maintenance schedule would prevent these amenities from reaching a state of disrepair all at once.

Parking lots are required by code to have a certain number of ADA-compliant stalls included. These stalls should be located closest to amenities to maximize accessibility.

**FIGURE 2.4 Parking Lot Condition**



### GOOD

The pavement in this parking lot is in good condition and the spaces were clearly striped and signed. The parking lot also has designated spaces for boat trailers. (Ayrault Road Boat Launch, Perinton)



### FAIR

This lot is beginning to show cracks and signs of wear. (Canajoharie)



### POOR

Significant ponding prevented much of this parking lot from being used. (Sprakers)

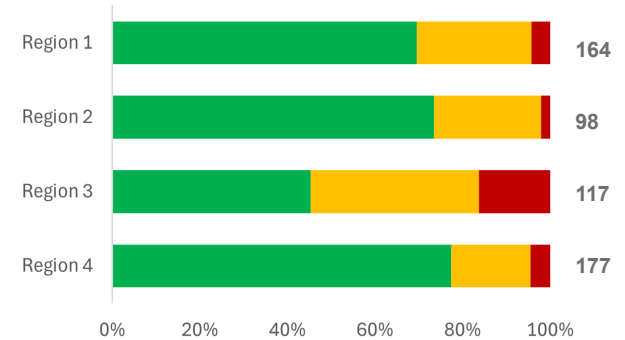




## Benches

Benches provide opportunities for users to take breaks and rest along the trail. Benches were in moderate condition as compared to other amenity types, as shown in Figure 2.5. A significant percentage of benches in each region (20-40%) are in fair condition. In Region 3 (Fairport to Baldwinsville/Camillus), only 50% of benches were in good condition. In many areas, it was observed that there were more benches than might be needed. Though some may warrant replacement, there may be opportunities for selective removal of redundant benches that have exceeded their useful life.

FIGURE 2.5 Bench Condition



### GOOD



This bench was securely installed, its surface was free of wear, and it was well positioned along the waterfront. (Pittsford)

### GOOD



This wooden bench was in good condition but was not connected to the paved path, creating a barrier to accessibility. (Baldwinsville)

### POOR

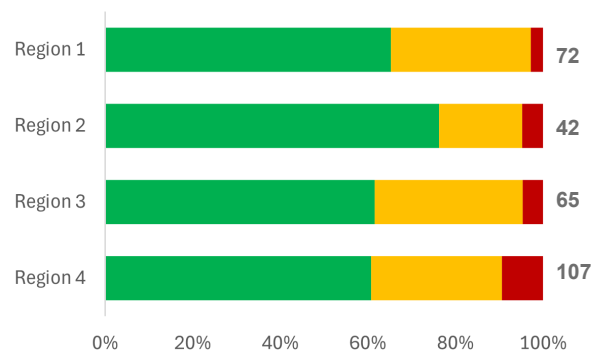


The material of this bench was deteriorating, the bench structure was in disrepair, and it is not accessible from the Erie Canalway Trail. (Rome)

## Picnic Areas

Picnic areas range from formal sheltered dining areas, to grassy areas with tables and grills, to a single table. These are important resting places for short-distance and long-distance users alike, providing a comfortable place to take a break and have a meal or snack. Picnic areas are in need of investment throughout the system. As shown in Figure 2.6, 5-10% are in poor condition and another 20-30% are in fair condition depending on the region. Picnic areas should be positioned close to the trail as appropriate to make them as visible and accessible as possible.

**FIGURE 2.6 Picnic Area Condition**



### GOOD

The shelter, tables, and waste receptacles are in good condition, the area is clean and well maintained, and there is a clearly marked, concrete path with no visible barriers to accessibility. (Baldwinsville)



### FAIR

This picnic area shows signs of wear on the tables, grills, and grounds, but is still functional. (Marcy)



### POOR

The benches are sagging and the material is worn and splintered. Its placement against a guard rail prevents full use. Picnic areas like these should be re-evaluated for better placement. (Kirkville)

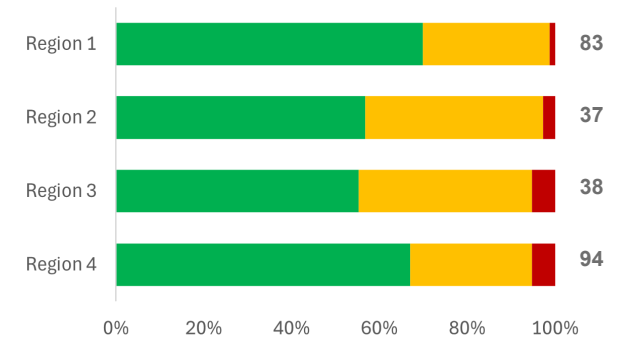




## Waste Receptacles

Waste receptacles were cited by users as a key amenity, especially when embarking on a trip or returning to your vehicle at the end of a trip. This inventory and analysis included both trash and recycling bins, though recycling bins were rarely encountered in the inventory. Waste receptacles are in need of upgrades throughout the system, with 30-40% in fair condition as shown in Figure 2.7. Though there were adequate waste receptacles overall, their placement was not always conducive to convenient use. When replacing or installing new waste receptacles, they should be placed near parking lots, restrooms, and picnic areas.

FIGURE 2.7 Waste Receptacle Condition



### GOOD



This waste receptacle is made of durable material and shows no signs of wear. It is logically located near a picnic area. (Paper Mill Island, Baldwinsville)

### FAIR



This waste receptacle shows some signs of wear but is generally functional and conveniently positioned at a public marina. (Utica)

### POOR



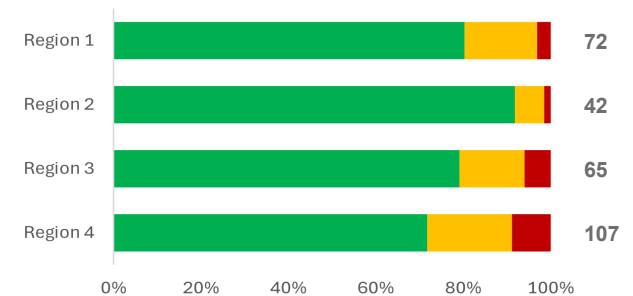
This receptacle is dented and damaged with noticeable surface wear, making it difficult to use and detracting from a positive experience. (Jordan)



## Signage

A range of sign types were assessed as part of this inventory, including trail markers, wayfinding signs for destinations both on and off trail, and interpretive signs, which are used to highlight history, culture, and natural resources. Signs were in good condition overall, but were significantly worse in Region 4 (Tonawanda to Fairport) compared to other regions (see Figure 2.8). In evaluating signs in poor condition for replacement, there may be an opportunity to consolidate multiple signs on a single post to reduce sign clutter. As noted in Section 5, Canal Corporation has developed signage and wayfinding standards for their portions of the system but they have not yet been implemented.

FIGURE 2.8 Sign Condition



### GOOD



NYS Canalway Water Trail Markers, which were installed in 2020, were generally in good condition. (Palmyra Aqueduct Park)

### GOOD



These Erie Canalway Trail and Empire State Trail markers are easy to see and the color is intact. Co-locating these two markers helps with branding and navigation. (Canajoharie)

### FAIR



In this example, the Empire State Trail marker is in good condition but the Erie Canalway Trail marker is beginning to fade and the arrow is damaged. (Camillus)

### POOR



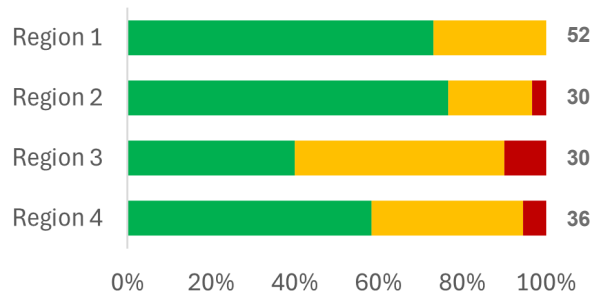
The Empire State Trail marker has been vandalized, making it illegible, and there is no Erie Canalway Trail marker visible, which can cause confusion. (Newark)

## Hand Launches

For the purpose of this study, hand launches are defined as any facility that allows paddlecraft to enter the water, including roller docks, floating docks, banks, and concrete ramps. Hand launches are generally in need of investment, with nearly 40% in fair or poor condition overall. When comparing regions, Region 3 (Fairport to Baldwinsville) and Region 4 (Tonawanda to Fairport) are in significantly worse condition and require the most investment (see Figure 2.9). There may also be an opportunity to decommission launches that are not easy to access from a parking lot or roadway, such as the image to the bottom right.

While many types of launches were inventoried as part of this effort, low-profile dock examples are used in the images to the right to illustrate a comparison of condition.

**FIGURE 2.9 Hand Launch Condition**



### GOOD

This low profile dock is connected to a stable surface that makes it easy to carry a kayak or canoe to the water. The material is durable and well maintained. (Amsterdam)



### FAIR

This low profile dock is made of a composite of rubber tiles that show wear in some places. A smooth, stable connection from land to the dock would make it easier to access. (Oneida)



### POOR

This low profile dock is sagging and does not protrude beyond the rocky bank into the water, making it extremely difficult to use. Launches like this should be evaluated for decommissioning. (Pittsford)





## Adaptive Hand Launches

For the purpose of this study, adaptive hand launches are defined as any paddlecraft launch facility with design elements that enhance accessibility to the greatest extent possible. Features such as gangways with handrails, transition plates, transfer benches, edge protection, and launch ramps are common adaptive components.

Only seven adaptive hand launches were identified through field data collection. Four were in good condition, two were in fair condition, and one was in poor condition. Examples of each are shown in the images to the right.

### GOOD

This launch had all components in good working condition and was free from debris or wear. (Pittsford)



### FAIR

Some overgrowth can be seen at this adaptive launch but it was well maintained overall and had clear signage. (Baldwinsville)



### POOR

This adaptive hand launch has overgrowth inhibiting use of the launch ramp. This launch was inventoried at Syracuse Inner Harbor and is technically outside the bounds of the NYS Canalway Water Trail.



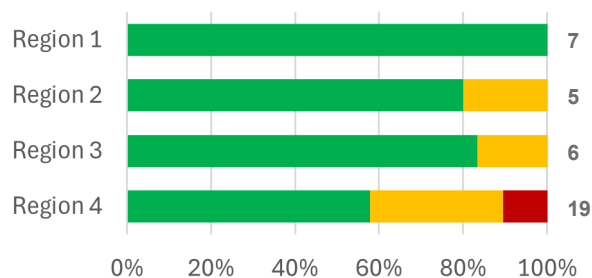


## Marinas

For the purpose of this study, marinas are defined as any publicly or privately owned place where boats may dock for longer periods of time, such as several hours or overnight. They typically are accompanied by amenities such as picnic areas, power and water pedestals for boater use, sewage pumpouts, restrooms, and showers.

Figure 2.10 shows a summary of marina conditions for publicly-owned marinas only. These were in good condition overall. Region 4 (Tonawanda to Fairport) marinas were in worse condition than other regions, but also contained significantly more marinas than any other region.

FIGURE 2.10 Marina Condition



### GOOD

This marina has a new, durable surface and has no grade separation between the Erie Canalway Trail and the dock. Power and water pedestals are available, along with showers and restrooms. (Fairport)



### FAIR

This image shows the northern side of the marina in Lyons. There are signs of the wall deteriorating but it generally functions well, amenities are easy to connect to, and it remains a popular stop for boaters. (Lyons)



### POOR

This image shows the southern side of the marina in Lyons, where the wall is significantly deteriorated, power pedestals were padlocked to prevent use, and a post-and-chain fence separates the water's edge from amenities in the adjacent park. (Lyons)

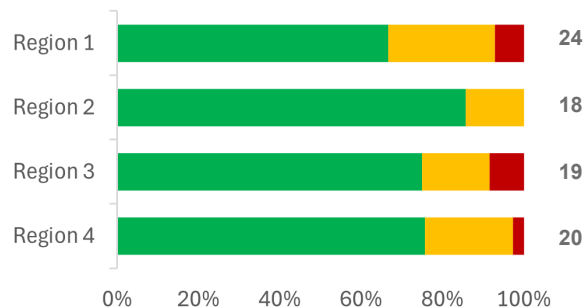


## Bicycle Parking

Bicycle parking is in need of investment throughout the Erie Canalway Trail. Region 1 (Rome to Waterford) was in the worst condition overall, with over 30% in fair or poor condition. In many cases those in poor condition are older models that no longer reflect best practices, such as ensuring a bicycle can be affixed in two places and that the rack is bolted to a firm, stable surface such as pavement or concrete.

In some cases, newer, more functional bike racks may have been installed nearby and those that have reached the end of their useful life may be candidates for selective removal.

**FIGURE 2.11 Bicycle Parking Condition**



### GOOD

This bike rack is a simple and effective model that allows bicycles to be secured at two points without falling down. The material is in good condition and the rack is secured to a concrete pad. (Middleport)



### GOOD

This bike rack is well positioned in an activated area and shows no signs of rust or wear. The rack is secured and on a firm, stable surface that is easy to access with a bicycle. (Tonawanda)



### POOR

These outdated bike racks only secure the wheel and leave the rest of the bike vulnerable to theft. The surface is rusted, the rack is not secured to the ground, and it isn't intuitive to use. (Macedon)

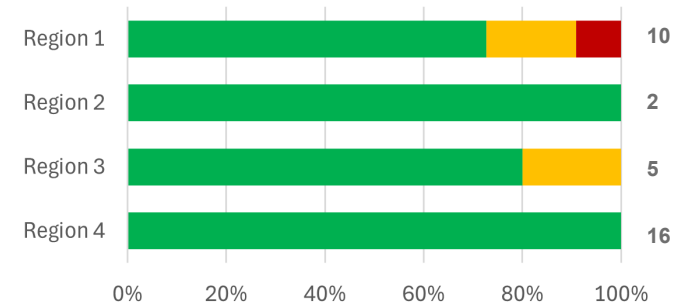




## Bicycle Repair Stations

Bicycle repair stations are standalone fixtures where cyclists can hang their bicycle and use the tethered tools to perform simple repairs, such as seat height adjustments. Some also include pumps for inflating tires. There were relatively few inventoried along the Erie Canalway Trail, but the majority were in good condition. This is not surprising given that they are a relatively new amenity. Due to their many working parts, it is important that they receive regular maintenance to prevent deterioration and remain usable. In Region 1, 10% were in poor condition, however given the low number inventoried this only equates to one station.

FIGURE 2.12 Bike Repair Station Condition



### GOOD



This repair station is installed on a firm, stable surface in a visible location along the Erie Canalway Trail. The components are commercial quality and show no signs of wear. (Rochester)

### FAIR



This repair station appears to have been custom built to serve this need, adding a retail air pump. Those designed for heavy public use are more durable, like the one in the image to the left. (Mohawk)

### POOR



Several tools at this repair station appear to be rusted beyond use and the pump is broken. (Cohoes)



## Condition Rating by Location

A series of heat maps were developed to better illustrate location-based patterns for condition rating, revealing concentrations of amenities in good, fair, and poor condition. County boundaries are shown on the maps as a reference when considering potential partnerships for investment to repair or replace amenities. Throughout the four regions there are large bands of amenities in good condition with few concentrations of amenities in poor condition.

### *Region 1 (Rome to Waterford)*

Overall, amenities in this region are either in good or fair condition. The segment from Amsterdam to Waterford has a greater concentration of amenities in fair condition than good condition, as well as a small concentration of amenities in poor condition in the Niskayuna area.

### *Region 2 (Baldwinsville/Camillus to Rome)*

There is a consistent concentration of amenities in good condition with only a few locations with fair condition amenities in the Oneida area.

### *Region 3 (Fairport to Baldwinsville/Camillus)*

There is a concentration of amenities in fair and poor condition between Palmyra, Lyons, and Clyde. However, a noticeable concentration of amenities in good condition may be indicative of recent investment in this area. Investments in Lyons and Newark were specifically mentioned in stakeholder meetings.

The segment of the Erie Canalway Trail passing through Camillus shows a high concentration of amenities in fair condition.

### *Region 4 (North Tonawanda to Fairport)*

The segment from Brockport to Rochester shows a large swath of amenities in fair condition, a high concentration of amenities in poor condition in the City of Rochester, and a low concentration of amenities in good condition overall. This points to a need for targeted investment along this segment. Conversely, the segment from North Tonawanda to Lockport shows a high concentration of amenities in good condition.

The area that includes Pittsford and Fairport tends to have equal amounts of good, fair, and poor condition amenities. Knowing that there is a high concentration of amenities in this area overall, there may be opportunity for selective removal of amenities in poor condition that may be redundant, such as benches and signs.



## Areas in Need of Further Evaluation

For repair, replacement, or selective removal of amenities based on condition heat maps.

**Brockport to Rochester**

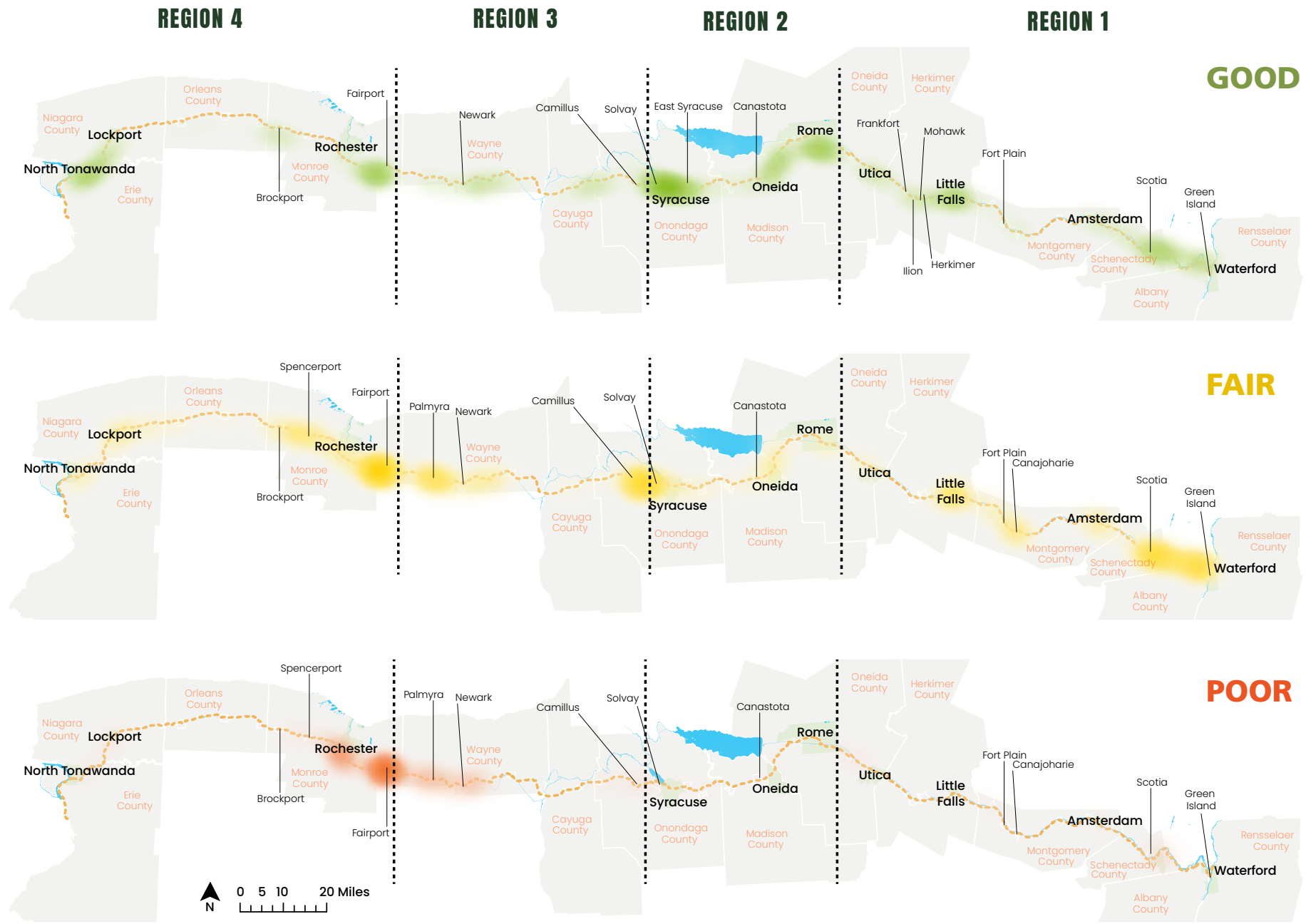
**Pittsford to Fairport**

**Palmyra to Clyde**

**Camillus**

**Amsterdam to Waterford**

# MAP 2.1 Amenity Condition Heat Maps



## Accessibility Assessment

As part of the existing conditions assessment, amenities were assessed for barriers to accessibility. This assessment was based on a high-level, visual evaluation of the amenity and its immediate surroundings. A complete accessibility assessment of ADA compliance requires exact measurements of elements such as vertical clearance, slope, and turning radius, as well as a review of the path of travel from an origin point to the amenity. This level of analysis was beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, accessibility findings are for informational purposes only and are meant to provide a starting point from which further investigation can be undertaken.

## Accessibility Rating by Location

Similar to the condition assessment, a series of heat maps were developed to better illustrate location-based patterns for accessibility ratings, revealing concentrations of amenities that generally meet, partially meet, or do not meet accessibility standards based on a high-level visual assessment. County boundaries are shown on the maps as a reference when considering potential partnerships for investment to repair or replace amenities.

The series of accessibility rating heat maps tells a markedly different story from the condition rating maps, with a high concentration of amenities that do not meet accessibility standards throughout the trail. This result is not surprising, as

the Americans with Disabilities Act is relatively recent, having been signed into law in 1990. Amenities that meet ADA standards do not tend to happen by accident; rather, they are the result of intentional design to meet specific requirements and therefore require planned and coordinated investment. The areas where this targeted investment has taken place are apparent in the heat map for amenities that meet accessibility standards. This includes North Tonawanda, Lockport, Pittsford, Fairport, Syracuse, and Rome. The relatively recent investments in these locations may be considered as examples for other communities to adapt to their own contexts. The Needs Assessment section of this report describes opportunities to continually enhance accessibility along the trail systems.



Adaptive hand launch located in Fairport. Adaptive elements include a transition bench, overhead grab bars, clear instructions for use, and guardrails at the edge of the dock.



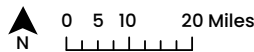
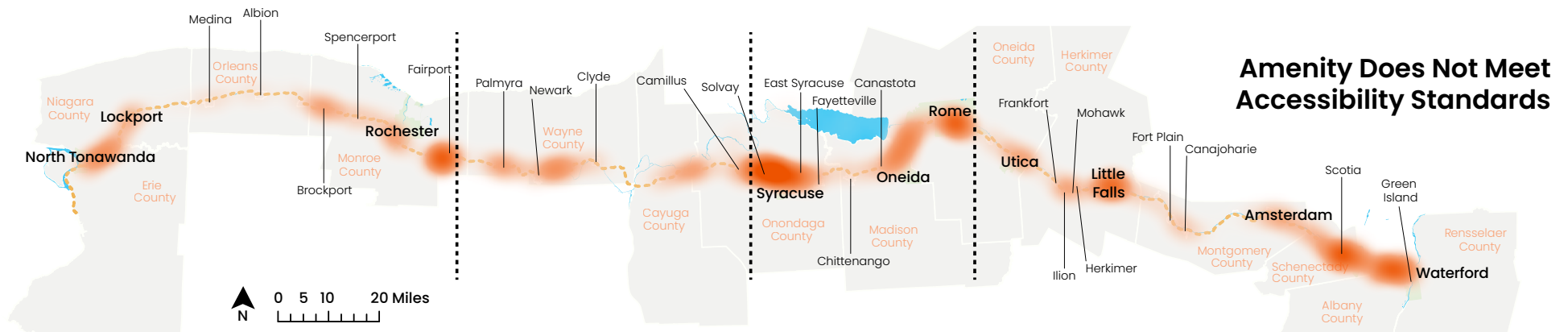
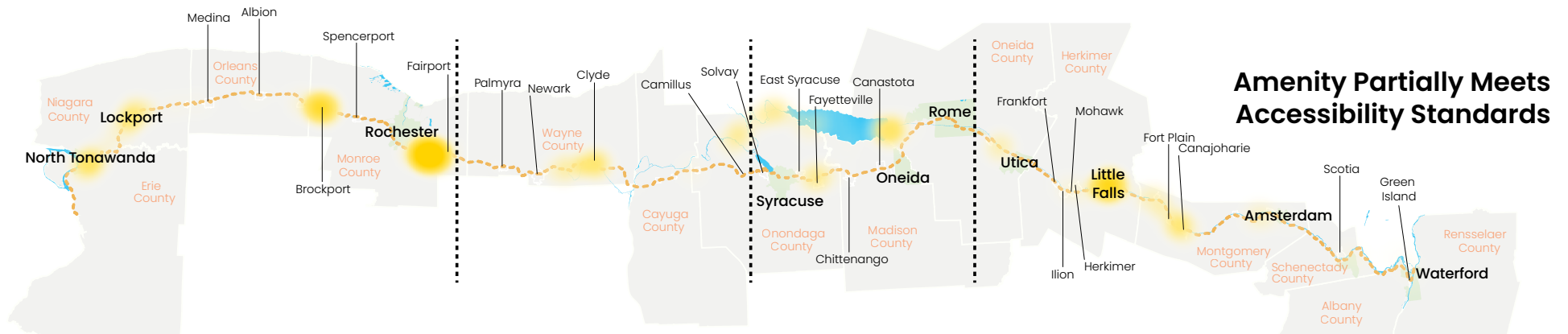
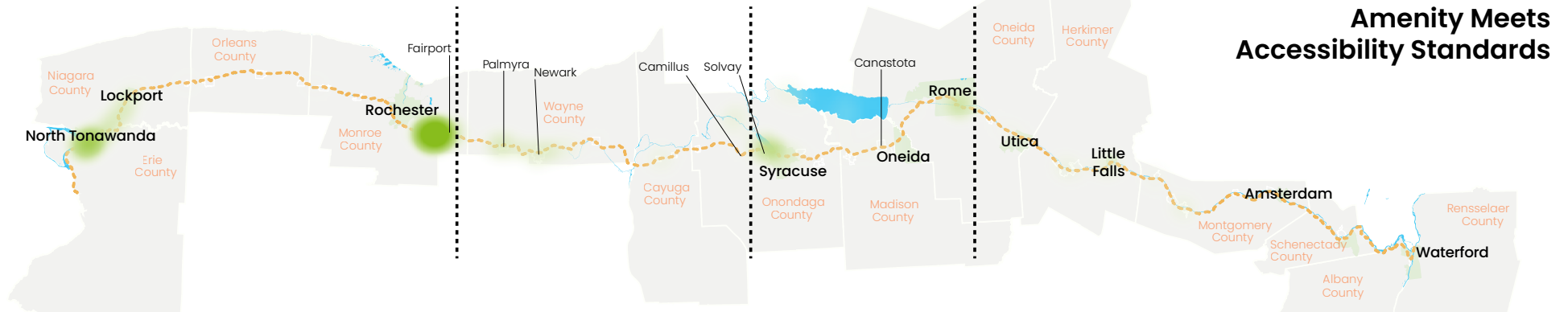
# MAP 2.2 Amenity Accessibility Heat Maps

REGION 4

REGION 3

REGION 2

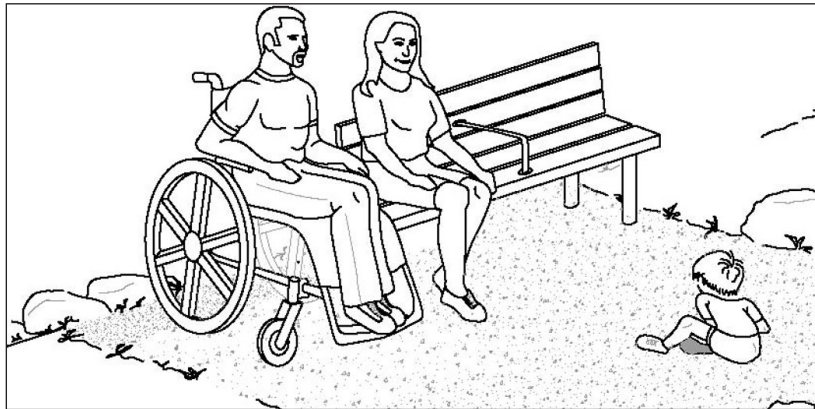
REGION 1



## Accessibility Rating Examples

The following pages depict selected amenities inventoried to illustrate examples where intentional investment has been made to enhance accessibility as well as examples of common barriers to accessibility. This is intended to show opportunities where investments to existing amenities could contribute to a more inclusive experience for people of all abilities.

### Benches



The diagram to the left illustrates several key features for an accessible bench. The bench is installed on a firm, stable surface that is connected to the path or trail. There is adequate space at one end so that those using a mobility device can position themselves alongside it. Lastly, an upright back and armrest provide additional support for users. (Image Credit: [www.access-board.gov](http://www.access-board.gov))

### PARTIAL



Benches were often disconnected from the Erie Canalway Trail and paved walkways near the Erie Canal and NYS Canalway Water Trail, posing a challenge for those using a mobility device. A firm, stable connection to the walkway with adequate clearance on one side of the bench would enhance accessibility. (Baldwinsville)

### PARTIAL



This bench is affixed to a larger concrete pad that connects to the Erie Canalway Trail. Connections like this not only provide a firm, stable surface for those with mobility impairments, but they also create a tactile cue for those with visual impairment. Accessibility for this bench would be further enhanced with a firm, stable area on one side of the bench.

### Picnic Areas



**MEETS STANDARDS**

This table is installed on a firm, stable surface and has an extension so those in a wheelchair would have adequate clearance. (Cleveland)



**PARTIAL**

This picnic area is in close proximity to an adaptive launch and connected by a firm, stable surface, however the table does not have an extension for someone using a wheelchair. (Baldwinsville)



**DOES NOT MEET STANDARDS**

A wheelchair may have adequate clearance to roll up to the end of this table but it is not connected to the paved trail or grill by a firm, stable surface, creating a barrier for those using a mobility device. (Rochester)



## Connections to Adaptive Launches

Considering connections to adaptive amenities is critical for creating an inclusive recreational experience. Though not completed as part of this study, designers and project managers should consider the total path of travel for a user, from the parking lot to the water.

### MEETS STANDARDS



This adaptive launch has a plate connecting the paved walkway to the gangway to enhance access for those using a mobility device. (Baldwinsville)

### PARTIAL



This adaptive launch connects to an uneven concrete/asphalt surface and has a steep incline, which may pose issues for those using a mobility device. (Halfmoon)

### PARTIAL



This adaptive launch has a noticeable lip from the rocky path to the concrete landing, both of which would pose a challenge for access. (Palmyra)

## Designing for Assistance

Though designing adaptive equipment to be used independently is critical, there are those for whom assistance may be required. Designers and project managers should consider how a second person might assist when designing adaptive launches.

### MEETS STANDARDS



At this launch, someone can stand on the opposite side of the rollers to assist a person with a disability. (Pittsford)

### PARTIAL



There is no landing on the far side of the rollers for someone to place themselves and assist a person with a disability to launch. (Palmyra)



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## SECTION 3.

# Best Practices

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This section provides an overview of the best practices for amenity spacing, clustering, and accessibility, as informed by stakeholder interviews and guiding documents.



# Best Practices

*Through stakeholder interviews and additional research, a series of best practices were developed to guide analysis and recommendations. Best practices focus on how to group and concentrate amenities, amenity spacing, and promoting accessibility.*

## Hubs and Nodes

A central theme identified through stakeholder interviews was the importance of consistency and predictability in creating an exceptional recreational experience. Participants noted that users would feel more confident about embarking on trips of any length if there was a reasonable expectation that amenities would be consistently available at certain intervals. In order to meet this need, the project team established a hierarchy of amenity centers with the goal of providing the same types of amenities at each. This hierarchy includes two levels, hubs for major amenity centers and nodes for minor amenity centers.

### Hubs and Nodes Defined

Figure 3.1 provides an overview of how hubs and nodes are defined. There are key commonalities between hubs and nodes, in that both are located near a center of activity, both have strong trail connections, and both have a noticeable concentration of amenities. The key differences between hubs and nodes relate to scale.

- Hubs tend to be located in major activity centers such as trailside cities, villages, or visitor centers, whereas nodes may be in minor activity centers such as community parks.
- Hubs tend to have a greater concentration of amenities that are targeted to a wider variety of users. For example, amenities geared towards beginners and casual users, such as rental equipment, should be prioritized at hubs as opposed to nodes.
- There are fewer hubs than nodes and they tend to be spaced between 20 and 50 miles apart, whereas nodes, which are more plentiful, may be anywhere from 2 to 20 miles apart.

These definitions and differences between hubs and nodes provide general guidelines, but there will be exceptions throughout the system.

### Relationship to Empire State Trail

OPRHP released its *Empire State Trail Design Guide* in 2017. The guidelines include a hierarchy of amenity clusters at gateways (most amenities), trailheads (some amenities), and access points (fewest amenities) along the Erie Canalway Trail, but does not consider the Erie Canal or NYS Canalway Water Trail. While there is not a direct correlation between the ways hubs and nodes were defined or identified as compared to EST's gateways, trailheads, and access points, the hierarchy concept is similar and there is strong synergy between the designated locations on each trail. Approximately 60% of EST gateways and trailheads are also designated as hubs and nodes as shown in Section 4 of this study. Consideration should be given to maximizing amenity impact through coordinated investment between the Erie Canalway Trail and the Empire State Trail.

## FIGURE 3.1. Hub and Node Attributes

*The table below defines hubs and nodes by indicating their attributes and highlighting their commonalities and differences. These are generalized guidelines; there will always be exceptions to these definitions.*

	A hub tends to have:	A node tends to have:
Proximity	Proximity to a major center of activity with off-trail amenities	Proximity to a minor center of activity
Connections	Connectivity to the NYS Canalway Water Trail, except in places where the trail diverges	Most have connectivity to the NYS Canalway Water Trail
Amenities	A higher concentration of amenities targeted to a range of user types (day trips and overnight trips, first-timers and experienced user, etc.)	A lesser concentration of amenities that may be geared more towards experienced users going out for a few hours or a single day

## Amenities at Hubs and Nodes

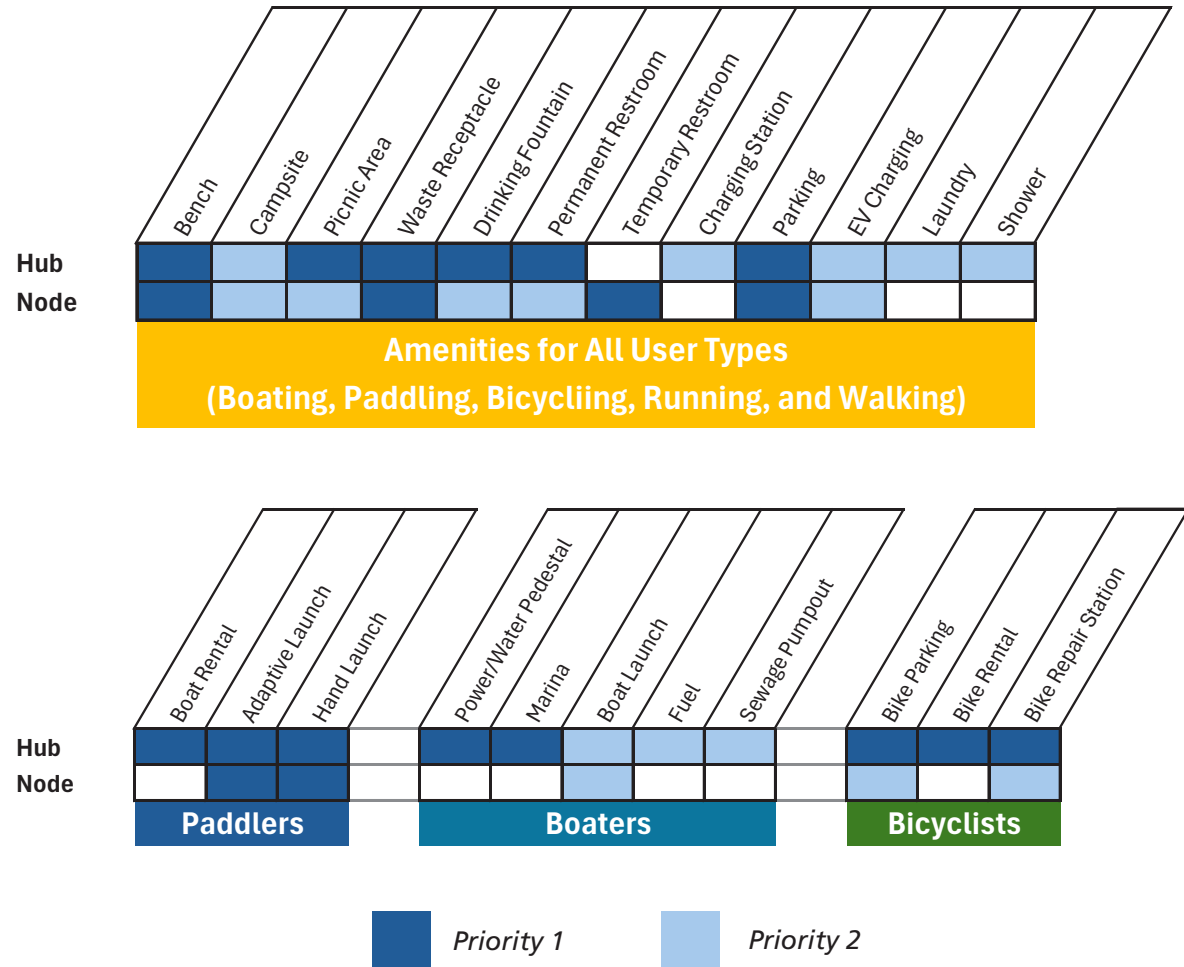
Figure 3.2 provides a closer look at the types of amenities that are recommended for inclusion at hubs and nodes.

Amenities are categorized by priority. Priority 1 amenities are those that are recommended to always include at hubs and nodes. Priority 2 amenities are those that would be helpful to include but are not as critical to the user experience.

For example, while it is recommended that permanent restrooms and drinking fountains are both included at hubs, drinking fountains are nice to have at nodes but not required. Similarly, a restroom of some sort should be available at nodes, but at these smaller scale locations, a temporary restroom is adequate. For boaters, boat launches intended for shorter trips are recommended at nodes, whereas marinas and power/water pedestals, which are intended for users who are staying for longer periods of time or overnight, are recommended at hubs where other overnight facilities such as showers and laundry facilities are recommended.

**FIGURE 3.2. Hub and Node Amenities**

*The matrix below provides best practice recommendations for the amenities that should be consistently available at hubs and nodes.*





## Amenity Spacing Guidelines

Figure 3.3 details the recommended spacing between amenities. Stakeholders provided input on how often users need to use these amenities, which informed the “frequency” column. Research into how far users might travel within this frequency in turn informed the “spacing” column. These amenity spacing guidelines informed the gap analysis in the following section.

Amenity spacing guidelines are geared towards long-distance users such as bike packers, thru paddlers, and boaters. For these types of users, a sequence of connected amenities, such as a restroom available every 20-30 miles or a campsite available every 30-50 miles are critical to a positive experience.

Casual users or those who go out for short periods of time tend to start and end their trips at a single location, such as a hub or node, and would not rely as heavily on this type of spacing. However, the recommended spacing for benches is geared toward shorter-distance users. For amenities like bike rentals, bike repair stations, and boat rentals, regular spacing is less important than ensuring they are located at centers of activity such as hubs and nodes.

**FIGURE 3.3. Amenity Spacing Guidelines**

	Frequency	Spacing	Spacing Notes
<b>SHARED AMENITIES</b>			
Drinking Fountain	Every few hours	20-30 miles	In remote locations, greater spacing may be necessary due to lack of infrastructure.
Restroom	Every few hours	20-30 miles	In remote locations, portable toilets provide a useful alternative.
Showers	Every day	30-50 miles	
Laundry	Every few days	50-100 miles	
Campsite	Every day	30-50 miles bicycling 20 miles paddling	
Picnic Area	Every few hours	Locate at trail access, every 10-15 miles	
Bench	Varies	At trail access, every 1/2 mile within 2 miles of hubs and nodes	
<b>BICYCLIST AMENITIES</b>			
Bike Rental	One-time use	30-50 miles	Strive to be available at all hubs.
Bike Repair Station	Every few hours	Locate at trail access, every 10-15 miles	Strive to be available at all hubs, some nodes.
<b>BOATER AMENITIES</b>			
Marina	Every day	25 miles	
Power/Water Pedestals	Every day	25 miles	
Sewage Pump Out	Every few days	100 miles	
<b>PADDLER AMENITIES</b>			
Hand Launch	Every few hours	10-15 miles	Include adaptive launches at hubs. Paddlers typically travel 20 miles in a day but need breaks.
Boat Rental	One-time use	30-50 miles	Include at all hubs, some nodes. Locate with adaptive launches, roller docks, and bank launches.

## Enhancing Accessibility

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and Canal Corporation are committed to making the Erie Canal, NYS Canalway Water Trail, and the Erie Canalway Trail one of the most accessible trail systems in the country. Recognizing that this requires targeted and intentional investment to enhance amenities, the following best practices will guide investment towards achieving this goal.

### *Leverage Existing Guides and Standards to Promote Accessibility*

There are several standards and guidelines that can assist in designing for accessibility. The *2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design* set minimum requirements for public buildings and structures such as restrooms, showers, and laundry facilities to be accessible to those with a disability. In addition, the *2024 Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG)* includes guidelines for shared use paths such as the Erie Canalway Trail. Any new investment of amenities is subject to these standards, but it is more challenging to encourage retrofitting of existing facilities to meet these standards.

Erie Canalway's *New York State Canal System Hand Launch Facility Design Guide* provides partner communities the information they need to design, permit, and install hand launches. Among other elements, the guide details the components that make a hand launch site accessible and provides examples of ways

to retrofit and enhance existing launches to improve accessibility.

Canal Corporation is currently developing a *Canal Standard Site Amenities* document with site furnishing standards that will be required on land owned by Canal Corporation. The standards include amenity designs that are either ADA compliant or can be modified in order to achieve compliance.

Recognizing that ADA compliance is a minimum standard, those installing new amenities should consider exceeding minimums and incorporating principles of inclusive design and universal design. Inclusive design focuses on reducing barriers based on culture, gender, age, and ability. Universal design aims to create a single solution or experience that is as accessible as possible without adaptation.

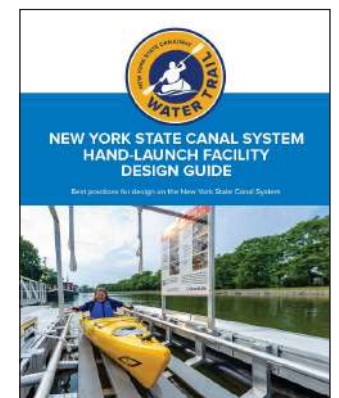
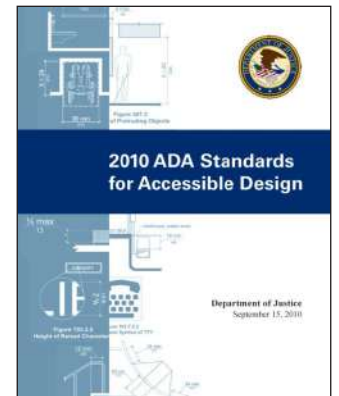
### *Make Accessibility a Focus of New Investment*

Erie Canalway and Canal Corporation should proactively work with partners to encourage retrofits that achieve ADA compliance. Additional guidebooks similar to the *Hand Launch Facility Design Guide* for other types of amenities could help to achieve this.

### *Create Networks of Accessibility*

In focus group discussions regarding accessibility, stakeholders stressed the importance of creating networks of accessible trail access points, so that users have the flexibility to embark on a longer distance trip

**These guidelines and standards help to advance investment in accessible amenities and retrofit those that are already in place.**



and stop at several points along the way rather than being tied to one starting point. This is especially relevant to paddlers who may rely on adaptive launches at either end of a trip. Being able to launch at one location and land at another location further down the NYS Canalway Water Trail is appealing to users and would allow them to explore more of the trail than would otherwise be possible.

In order to build these networks, investment should be focused in areas proximate to locations that already have accessible amenities. For example, in Region 4, there are adaptive launches in Fairport, Pittsford, and Brockport. Investment in adaptive launches in Rochester and Spencerport would help to build a network of accessible paddling amenities.

#### **Create Strong Partnerships**

In discussing accessibility, stakeholders recognized that it would be difficult to make the entire system accessible in the short term and noted the importance of strategically identifying locations where accessibility investments should be prioritized. Rather than installing accessible equipment and amenities opportunistically, they recommended identifying partner communities who would be committed to accessibility in the long term. This includes ensuring that adaptive equipment such as hand launches are maintained and in working order year after year. It would also require that the community continually enhance accessibility, perhaps by starting with a single accessible amenity such as a hand launch, and building on this achievement with additional accessible amenities and enhanced connections between the community and the trail.

## **Accessibility Investment in Fairport**

Fairport is celebrated as a destination for accessible recreation. The journey to enhance accessibility started with private recreational equipment rental services who operate on the canal. They saw a need for those with mobility limitations to access and enjoy the canal and began offering adaptive paddling and cycling equipment rentals. Over the years, a strong demand was created for accessible amenities in this area, and private and non-profit entities continually advocated at the local and state level for inclusivity, noting that a key component to establishing the canal as a world-class destination is to make it as inclusive as possible for people of all abilities. The State and Village have put accessibility at the forefront of new investment, including docks, paddlecraft launches, and restrooms, and have collaborated with private and non-profit entities to seek input on design. This truly collective effort is a model for other communities seeking to enhance accessibility along the canal.



*The docks are flush with the paved trail, which provides access to shops and services in the Village.*



*Fairport's adaptive launch is located adjacent to a paddlecraft rental company that offers adaptive equipment rentals.*



*ADA-compliant, single-occupancy public restrooms are available next to the canal.*



*Adult changing tables were identified as a key need in design of the restrooms.*



## Data Maintenance and Stewardship

The data collected for this project is the first comprehensive recreational amenities inventory undertaken for the Erie Canal, NYS Canalway Water Trail, and the Erie Canalway Trail. It reflects a static inventory and conditions assessment taken at a single point in time. In order to leverage the data to support planning and maintenance activities in the future, opportunities are identified to continually update the data.

### *Why Maintain the Data?*

Going forward, the recreational amenities inventory will be used to identify gaps in the system and pinpoint locations where investment is needed. Understanding how many restrooms may need to be added and in which regions or communities have the greatest need will help with capital planning. Using GIS analysis, the data can be overlaid on land ownership data to understand which trail jurisdictions may have opportunities to invest in amenities. The data may also be used to evaluate grant applications and determine the greatest needs based on where there are gaps in amenities. Furthermore, the data can be used to identify and evaluate amenities in poor condition for repair, replacement, or removal.

### *Opportunities for Data Maintenance*

Recognizing the many jurisdictions that own and maintain portions of the system throughout the state, keeping this data up to date presents challenges. Information sharing and creative use of local resources will be necessary to maintain the data. The following potential strategies were identified for further exploration.

- OPRHP maintains a program for local communities to report new investments along the Empire State Trail. OPRHP could increase engagement with communities to convey the importance of data maintenance and encourage them to submit regular updates when new amenities are installed.
- Increase reporting of new investments on Canal Corporation land by requiring those installing amenities to submit georeferenced points that could be incorporated into the amenities database.
- Leverage volunteerism and internships. In particular, Water Trail Stewards and Adopt-a-Trail Stewards could receive training to update the amenity inventory within their stewardship regions.



Water Trail Stewards are local resources who are familiar with NYS Canalway Water Trail access points and visit them regularly for maintenance. They are valuable resources that could be utilized for ongoing data maintenance.

### *Tools and Technology*

There are several Esri GIS tools, both mobile and web-based, that can facilitate efficient data collection, maintenance, and disseminations going forward.



#### **ArcGIS Online**

ArcGIS Online (AGOL) is a web-based platform for collaborative mapping, analysis, and data management. The amenities database is currently stored in AGOL and can be reviewed, analyzed, and edited by anyone with access. GIS data, combined with tools available within AGOL, can be combined to develop published web maps so the data can be leveraged by a wider audience. Users can customize how they view the data to suit their needs.



#### **Field Maps**

Field Maps is a mobile application that can be used to update and maintain data. The app can be configured so that multiple users, such as volunteers or interns located throughout the state, can update fields such as amenity condition that will be reflected in the amenities database on AGOL.



#### **Survey123**

Survey123 is a mobile app designed for collecting new data. This app could be used by communities to submit georeferenced amenity data after new investments are made. Submissions can be reviewed, edited, and incorporated into the master database. Survey123 can also be leveraged for trail users or volunteers to report amenities in poor condition or other concerns that would be tied to a precise location. These reports can be reviewed and delegated to the appropriate representative based on the location.







## SECTION 4.

# Needs Assessment

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This section presents both systemwide and regional needs for the Erie Canal, NYS Canalway Water Trail, and the Erie Canalway Trail. Hubs and nodes for amenities are identified in each region, along with the amenity needs in each. A detailed gap analysis of key amenities is also presented.

## Systemwide Needs and Opportunities

Through evaluation of amenities and activity centers, several systemwide needs and opportunities were identified to enhance the recreational user experience. These include:

1. investing in standardized wayfinding
2. enhancing placemaking at campsites
3. leveraging opportunities to encourage shared use of amenities by multiple user types
4. strengthening maintenance agreement processes

These targeted investments will support the goal of elevating the Erie Canal, NYS Canalway Water Trail, and the Erie Canalway Trail to a world class recreational destination.

### 1 Invest in Wayfinding

Wayfinding was one of the most commonly cited challenges expressed by stakeholder groups. They noted several sign types in need of enhancement, some of which are identified to the right. Canal Corporation is in the process of developing a comprehensive wayfinding system that will be implemented on land they own, but this would not apply to segments owned by other entities. The following sections identify specific wayfinding needs.



#### On-Road Trail Markers

Some portions of the Erie Canalway Trail are located on roads, which can pose a challenge for navigation. Users noted that increased signage for on-road portions, especially at turns or other decision points, would help with navigation. It should be noted that placement of these markers is regulated by the Federal Highway Administration's *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)* and NYS Department of Transportation's *TSMI-17-08, Guidance for the Empire State Trail*.



#### Mile Markers

Mile markers help users track their progress and convey their location in the event of an emergency. Though mile markers were well spaced in places where they have been installed, they are not consistently present and there are a variety of mile marker types. Two examples are provided above. A standard mile marker system is recommended. It should be noted that if on-road portions of the Erie Canalway Trail are converted to off-road, distances will change and a mile marker system would need to be updated, which would be a considerable capital expense.



### NYS Canalway Water Trail Markers

Water Trail markers were recently installed at public access points on the NYS Canalway Water Trail. They are intended for users on the water to identify public take-outs by differentiating from private docks, as well as for landside users to identify public launch points. There are instances where these signs might be visible from the water but not from the road or nearby parking lot, which would be the first point of arrival for those launching. There may be an opportunity to add supplemental markers closer to landside access points.



### Trail Destination Signs

Trail destination signs indicate the distance to the next milestone or destination along the Erie Canal, NYS Canalway Water Trail, and Erie Canalway Trail. Users rely on signs like these to track progress and make decisions about whether to stop and rest or continue to the next destination. There are a variety of sign types like these with varying designs and levels of detail. Users prefer signs that note both the distance to the next stopping point and what amenities they will be able to access when they arrive.



### Off-Trail Destination Signs

Off-trail wayfinding signs are those that direct users to destinations and services located near the trail. There are a wide variety of these types of signs, including maps, arrows, and distances. Users prefer signs that provide direction to general centers of activity, such as downtowns and Central Business Districts. This is consistent with the wayfinding system that Canal Corporation is developing.



## 2 Enhance Placemaking at Campsites

Campsites were highlighted among users as a key resource for those who want to complete an affordable long-distance trip by bicycle, boat, or paddlecraft. In particular, users rely on primitive campsites, such as those located at locks and through community partnerships, for camping, but these locations often lack any sense of arrival, such as clear signage. Investment in these locations to create clear and consistent signage that indicates to users that they have arrived at a designated campsite and that they are permitted to stay overnight would create a more consistent and predictable experience, increasing confidence among users.



A typical primitive campsite at a lock has few defining characteristics to indicate that a user is permitted to camp there. (Lock 23, Clay)

## 3 Maximize Impact through Shared Amenities

The Erie Canal/NYS Canalway Water Trail and the Erie Canalway Trail are unique in that they are two parallel trails geared towards different types of users, however many amenities can benefit multiple user types. For example, a restroom located at a marina on the Erie Canal might have been intended for boater use, but bicyclists on the nearby Erie Canalway Trail would benefit from knowing it exists and having easy access to it. Finding opportunities to share amenities among user types maximizes the benefit from capital investment, supports maintenance efficiency, and creates a stronger nexus of activity. The following opportunities were identified to make amenities more widely available to multiple user types.

- **Expand use of long-distance trip amenities such as showers and laundry facilities**, which currently tend to be located at marinas and geared towards Erie Canal users. As the Erie Canalway Trail gains popularity for long-distance bicycling, enhanced wayfinding to direct Erie Canalway Trail users to these amenities would enhance access.

- **Enhance the paddler experience at locks and marinas.** Locks and marinas are designed for use by boaters and therefore feel out of scale for paddlers. Paddling stakeholders noted frustration when they arrive by water at a hub of activity but cannot access it due to high vertical walls or inadequate launches. Identifying key locations where hand launches such as low docks with rollers or adaptive launches can be installed would enhance the experience for paddlers. Similarly, as paddlers are not always comfortable locking through alongside larger boats, well-defined portage trails and highly visible signage would encourage paddlers to land and portage around the locks.
- **Cluster amenities at community gateways.** It was noted that although the trails pass directly through many communities, there is not always a clear connection to those communities, which is a missed opportunity. Placemaking, the process of designing and building public places that are inviting and uplifting to the community, can be used at points of connection to the community to strengthen ties to the trails, encourage trail users to visit the community, and create a nexus of activity among users.

## 4 Strengthen Maintenance Agreement Processes

It is imperative that recommended investments are implemented in compliance with state and local regulations and that they are maintained in the long term. With roughly 100 jurisdictions owning portions of the trail system, and countless private and non-profit entities operating on the trails, this can present a unique challenge. Maintenance agreements define responsibilities between entities, such as a community installing amenities on Canal Corporation land or non-profits installing amenities on municipal land. Strong maintenance agreements ensure the safety, functionality, and attractiveness of trail amenities long after they are installed.

Maintenance agreements currently exist in some cases but are not consistently used. Model agreements, combined with strong community engagement around the importance of maintenance agreements, could make this practice more commonplace to ensure amenity investments reach their maximum potential.



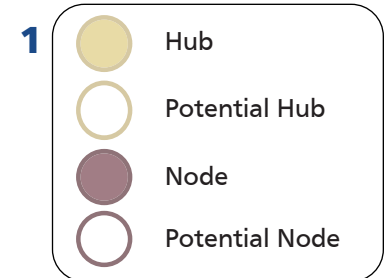
Cyclists on the Erie Canalway Trail in Niskayuna.

## Regional Needs

For the purpose of this study, analysis and recommendations were divided into four regions, shown in Map 4.1. The following pages detail location-based recommendations specific to each region. In each region, there is a narrative description of needs and opportunities followed by a series of maps. Specifically, the following six elements will be included for each region.

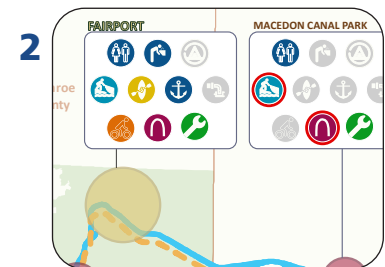
### 1 Locations of Hubs and Nodes

A map of the general locations of hubs and nodes is shown for each region based on the criteria outlined in Section 3. Existing hubs and nodes are places where the hub and node criteria outlined in Section 2 are currently met. Proposed hubs and nodes are places where there is potential based on proximity to an activity center or strategic location along the trail, but would require significant amenity investment.



### 2 Existing Amenities at Hubs and Nodes

A summary map of the key amenities currently available at each hub and node is provided for each region. Amenities that do not currently exist are greyed out. Amenities in poor condition are outlined in red.



### 3 Gap Analysis by Amenity Type and User Group

A series of five maps shows the locations of key amenities along the trails, with specific needs and opportunities called out. These maps are not specific to hub and node locations. Poor condition amenities are outlined in red.



### 4 Needs and Opportunities at Hubs and Nodes

A narrative description of the location context of each hub and node is provided to highlight key needs and opportunities at each location. These are based on field observations as well as stakeholder input.

### 5 Additional Needs and Opportunities

A narrative description of needs and opportunities not specific to a hub or node is also provided. These are based on field observations as well as stakeholder input. They may note needs identified for the region overall or for a specific user group, such as bicyclists.

### 6 Summary Table

Each region concludes with a summary table of the recommended amenity investments at each hub and node, including the municipality and county where the hub or node is located along with the jurisdiction of the trail and whether trailside land is owned by Canal Corporation, DEC, OPRHP, or another entity.



## MAP 4.1 Study Area Regions





# Region 1: Rome to Waterford

## Overview

Region 1 is the easternmost region, beginning at Bellamy Harbor Park in the City of Rome and continuing to the eastern terminus at the Waterford Harbor Visitor Center in Waterford. In this region, the Erie Canal is synonymous with the Mohawk River. Because the river is prone to flooding, there is limited waterfront development along the canal, which creates a challenge to activate it and connect users to nearby communities and activity centers.

Although the Erie Canal/NYS Canalway Water Trail and the Erie Canalway Trail run parallel to each other in this region, the Erie Canalway Trail is often located a few streets away from the waterfront, creating a visual disconnect. Enhancing wayfinding signage is especially important here to connect users to amenities.



## At a Glance

**115 miles**

ERIE CANAL  
NYS CANALWAY WATER TRAIL

**118 miles**

ERIE CANALWAY TRAIL

**5**

EXISTING  
HUBS

**9**

EXISTING  
NODES

## MAP 4.2 Locations of Hubs and Nodes, Region 1



Note: Region 1 map includes overlap with Region 2.



## Region 1 Hubs and Nodes

Map 4.2 illustrates the locations of hubs and nodes identified for Region 1. There are five existing hubs and nine existing nodes in this region.

### Overview of Hubs

In Region 1, the five hubs are located at Bellamy Harbor Park in Rome, Little Falls, Amsterdam, Mohawk Harbor, and Waterford Harbor. Hubs are between 20 and 40 miles apart in this region. Map 4.3 indicates the amenities currently available at hubs, showing a strong concentration of amenities catering to the needs of both Erie Canal/NYS Canalway Water Trail and Erie Canalway Trail users.

#### *Bellamy Harbor Park, Rome*

Bellamy Harbor Park is a trailside park in Rome. The park has several large docks and hand launch facilities clearly marked with NYS Canalway Water Trail signage, along with the Rome Navigation Center which offers restrooms, drinking fountains, and showers. Since the Erie Canalway Trail runs along the road, many waterfront amenities are not easily visible from the trail. The park is far from any center of activity in the City of Rome. Enhanced wayfinding signage could assist users in connecting to off-trail amenities.

#### *Little Falls*

The Little Falls Marina is in excellent condition and offers several amenities for Erie Canalway Trail users, paddlers, and boaters. The Marina has a large building which includes visitor resources, ADA-compliant restrooms, meeting space, drinking water, and kayak and canoe rentals. There is a long dockwall for motorized boats, a concrete ramp for launching boats, and a floating dock for hand launches. The grounds at the marina are well-shaded and feature beautiful views of the water. Because the park and marina are about one mile west and on the opposite side of the river from the downtown area, it can be a challenge to access most shops and restaurants located downtown. Likewise, the Erie Canalway Trail is not visible from the marina, which makes it difficult for users to connect. An evaluation of the connections between the trails and downtown Little Falls should be considered, along with opportunities to enhance wayfinding.

#### *Amsterdam*

Amsterdam has amenities on both sides of the canal, with the northern side geared towards boaters and the southern side geared towards paddlers and bicyclists. There are considerable accessibility and connectivity challenges to consider, including steps leading down to the marina, but the many recent

investments in this area along with a dedicated pedestrian bridge connecting the two sides make it an excellent opportunity for a recreational hub.

#### *Mohawk Harbor*

Mohawk Harbor is a relatively new development with several shops, restaurants, and luxury apartments overlooking the harbor. Though geared towards Erie Canal users, the Erie Canalway Trail is located nearby and is well connected. A bike share station at Mohawk Harbor creates an opportunity for connection between land and water. This area is well activated with both indoor and outdoor public space, but the location feels private due to the lack of publicly available amenities. A public restroom near the water's edge would enhance the welcoming nature of the harbor (Map 4.4). Although there is a kayak rental and kayak launch located here, it's at the very end of the marina, a long walk from the parking lot. Stakeholders noted the importance of launches being located close to parking lots as paddlers must carry their watercraft to the launch. There may be an opportunity to relocate the launch closer to the parking lot. Paddlers generally noted that this location does not feel welcoming as you approach from the water. Additional signage to welcome paddlers would create a more engaging atmosphere.

## **Waterford**

Waterford Harbor Visitor Center is the eastern terminus of the Erie Canal/ NYS Canalway Water Trail and the Erie Canalway Trail. This is a popular stop for long-distance boaters completing the Great Loop. Ample amenities serve both day trippers and long-distance users, and the area is activated with markets and events during the summer. The location is highly visible from the water and is close to downtown shops and services. Among the investments needed is an adaptive paddlecraft launch, but the topography presents a challenge for finding a logical location.

## **Overview of Nodes**

In Region 1, there are nine nodes identified, including one identified as a potential node at Lock 20. Nodes tend to be located at locks, marinas, and local parks. Like the hubs, they have a strong concentration of amenities geared towards all user types. Map 4.3 shows amenities currently available at nodes.

### ***Lock 20, Marcy***

Lock 20 is a State Canal Park located in Marcy. Though there is not a center of activity close by, the park provides amenities for multiple user types and has clearly marked campsite locations. The amenities are easily visible from the trails.

### ***Frankfort Harbor***

Frankfort Harbor Marina is located in the center of Frankfort, with amenities for boaters and paddlers. The Erie Canalway Trail is on-road in this area and is a few blocks removed from the marina. Wayfinding signage could help to connect bicyclists to amenities at the harbor.

### ***Ilion***

The Village of Ilion Marina is in the heart of Ilion and is well connected to the Erie Canalway Trail as well as nearby shops and restaurants. The Erie Canalway Trail runs through the marina parking lot

which is also an RV parking area. The marina serves both boaters and paddlers, and amenities are visible from the Erie Canalway Trail.

### ***St. Johnsville Municipal Marina***

This marina works well for boaters, with amenities such as camping, restrooms, and showers, but is poorly connected to the surrounding community and the Erie Canalway Trail is on the opposite side of the river. Enhanced bicycle and pedestrian connections, along with wayfinding, would help all users take advantage of these amenities.

### ***Riverfront Park, Canajoharie***

Canajoharie's Riverfront Park is a medium-sized park along the Mohawk River on the Erie Canal. While not far away, the park is also physically separated from downtown Canajoharie by I-90. The park features a large gazebo, picnic benches, swings, several interpretive signs, and a large dockwall for boats. A large parking lot is adjacent to the park and includes a single portable restroom facility. The only water access point for paddlers is just outside of the park, on the far side of the parking lot.

### ***Kiwanis Park, Rotterdam***

This park serves both paddlers and bicyclists in a small, well-contained area.

Because the park is cut off from other destinations by highways, it would be difficult to access off-trail amenities, but it serves as a good resting spot for trail users.

#### ***Aqueduct Park, Niskayuna***

Amenities in this park are geared towards paddlers, but the Erie Canalway Trail runs adjacent to the park. Bicyclists and pedestrians would benefit from wayfinding to access the restrooms and drinking fountain.

#### ***Lions Park, Niskayuna***

Amenities in this local park are well clustered and can be easily accessed by both paddlers and bicyclists, except in late summer when water chestnut buildup can make it nearly impossible to access the water.

#### ***Crescent Terminal Wall/Crescent Park, Halfmoon***

This park has few amenities but has potential to be activated due to the adaptive paddlecraft launch installed here. Additional amenity investments could elevate this location to a paddling destination.

## **Region 1 Amenity Needs and Opportunities**

Maps 4.4-4.8 illustrate gaps between specific amenity types, indicating potential opportunities to fill these gaps. Specific needs and opportunities are described below.



### ***Gaps in Drinking Fountains***

Along the Erie Canal/NYS Canalway Water Trail, there is one large gap, about 55 miles, between drinking fountains at Little Falls and Kiwanis Park in Rotterdam. Based on best practices, the maximum spacing between drinking fountains should be 30 miles. There are two locations within this segment, St. Johnsville Municipal Marina and the City of Amsterdam, where permanent restrooms with plumbing may present opportunities to install additional drinking fountains to close this gap.

### ***Activating Crescent Park, Halfmoon***

Crescent Park in Halfmoon is an appealing location for investment because it is home to one of the few accessible hand launches on the NYS Canalway Water Trail. This is an important amenity that attracts a wide range of users in terms of ability and experience level. This location would benefit from additional

comfort amenities such as a portable restroom (Map 4.4) that could form the basis for building a nexus of activity and encouraging additional investment.

Stakeholders noted that there is a private convenience store within walking distance that allows users to use the restroom, which should be taken into consideration in determining the level of investment here.



### ***Bike Rack Investments***

While most amenities within this region are in good or fair condition, bike racks stand out as an amenity type where many are in poor condition (Map 4.8). These amenities should be evaluated for replacement.



### ***Boat Rentals and Accessible Launches***



Boat rentals are readily available in Region 1, especially in the eastern portion of the region between Schenectady and Waterford (Map 4.6). Three out of five hubs have boat rentals, as well as two nodes with boat rentals at Aqueduct Park in Niskayuna and Crescent Park in Halfmoon.

Bellamy Harbor Park and Amsterdam would benefit from boat rental opportunities and this would achieve the goal of including boat rentals at all hubs in this region.



Although there are countless hand launches in this region, there are only two fully accessible launches and three low docks with rollers (Map 4.6). Existing launch locations at hubs and nodes should be evaluated for opportunities to retrofit an adaptive launch.

### ***Invasive Species***

Invasive water chestnuts were mentioned by several stakeholders as a particular challenge for accessing the Erie Canal in this region. Aqueduct Park and Lions Park, both located in Niskayuna, have such severe growth that it can be impossible to access the water at certain times of year. Both paid and volunteer maintenance efforts should be explored to identify and remove this invasive species to enhance these locations.



### ***Boater Amenities***

As in the other three regions, amenities geared towards boaters were plentiful and well spaced. The majority of marinas in this region tend to be privately owned, though key public marinas like St. Johnsville and Frankfort Harbor are popular destinations. Waterford Harbor was noted as an important stopping point for long-distance boaters and Great Loopers, who enjoy stopping here to take part in the farmer's market and stop in the Visitor's Center.



### ***Expanding Bike Rental Options***

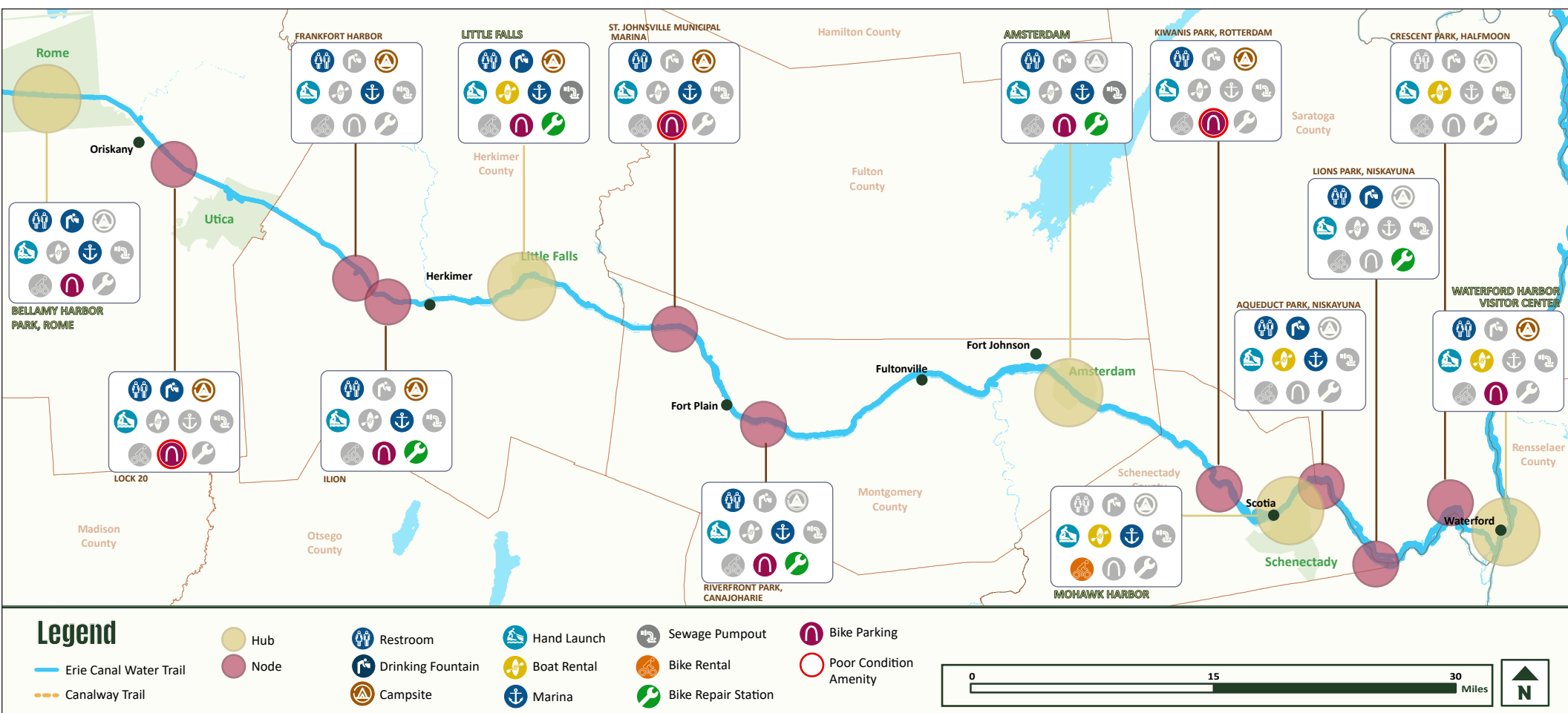
In the eastern segment of Region 1, Capital Bikeshare provides some opportunity for the community to try out bicycling on the Erie Canalway Trail. However, bike share tends to operate more as a public transit option, with shorter rental periods and heavy, slow moving bikes, as opposed to a recreation option. Bicycle rentals geared towards recreational trail use tend to allow for longer rental periods, such as a full day or multiple days, and would have bicycles well suited for trail use, along with accessories such as helmets, baskets, and bike locks. The Erie Canalway Trail inventory did not reveal any true bike rental locations like those seen further west. This region presents an opportunity to expand bike rental offerings, especially at hubs (Map 4.8). Bike rentals remove a barrier to use of the Erie Canalway Trail, allowing those who have never considered biking recreationally to try it for the first time.

### ***City of Amsterdam***

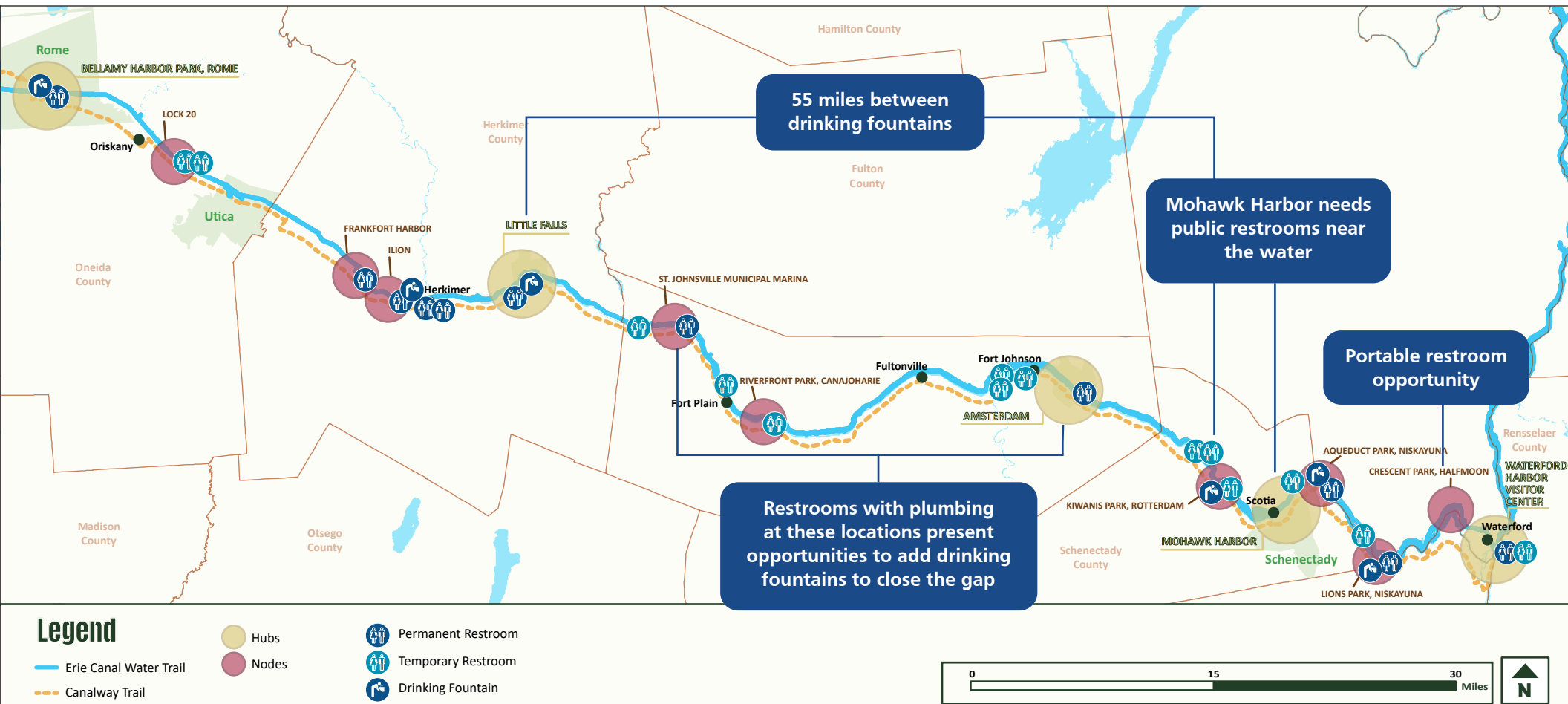
Amsterdam presents both opportunities and challenges for recreational use. There has been significant investment in the downtown, and the County is currently working to expand paddling amenities

on the southern shore, which is only a couple blocks removed from the Erie Canalway Trail. On the northern shore are many boater amenities, including showers and restrooms at a public marina. These two amenity centers are connected by a footbridge. However, the area's topography creates deep accessibility and connectivity issues. For example, the north shore amenities can only be reached through a staircase, which is not ADA compliant. This location has excellent potential for increased recreational use if these barriers to accessibility and connectivity can be overcome.

# MAP 4.3 Existing Hub and Node Amenities, Region 1

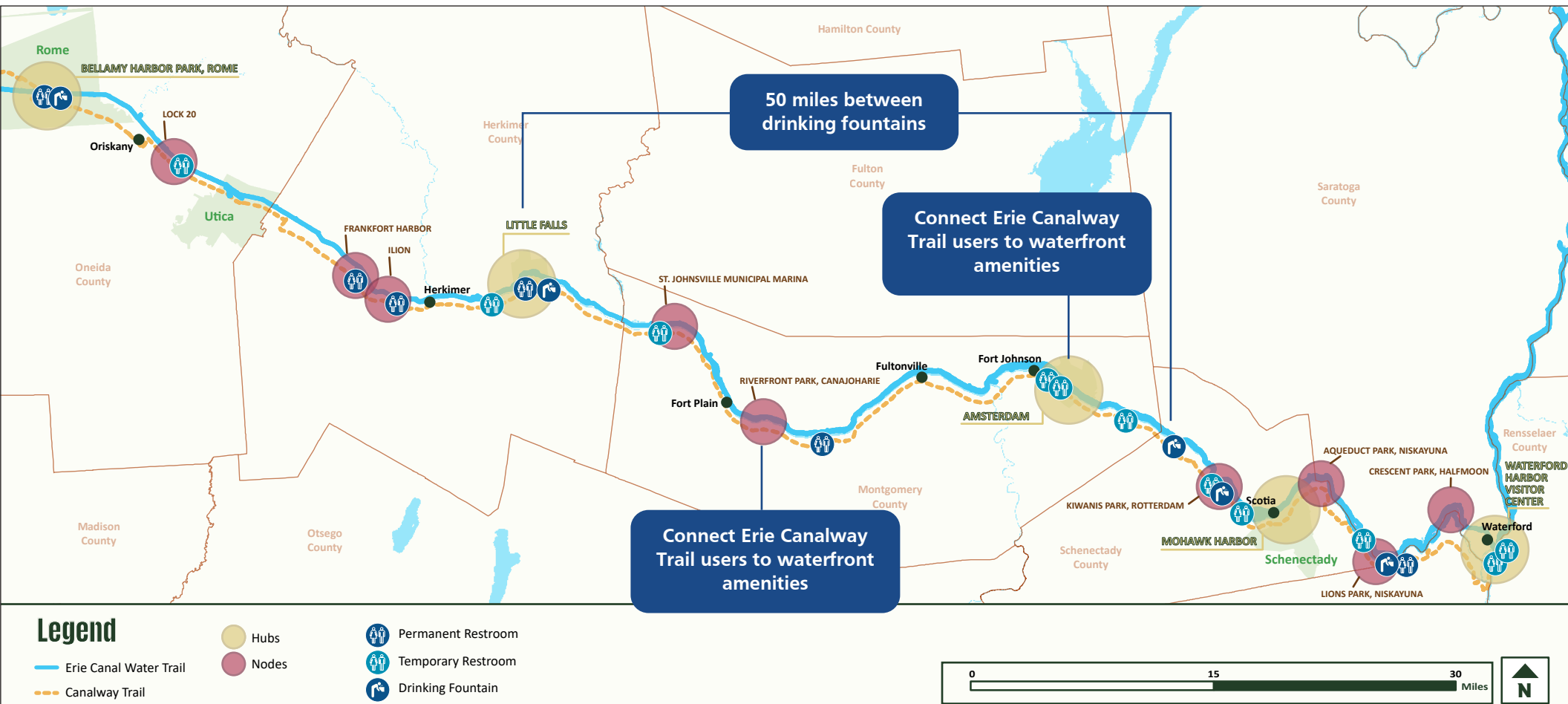


## MAP 4.4 Existing Shared Amenities, Erie Canal and NYS Canalway Water Trail, Region 1

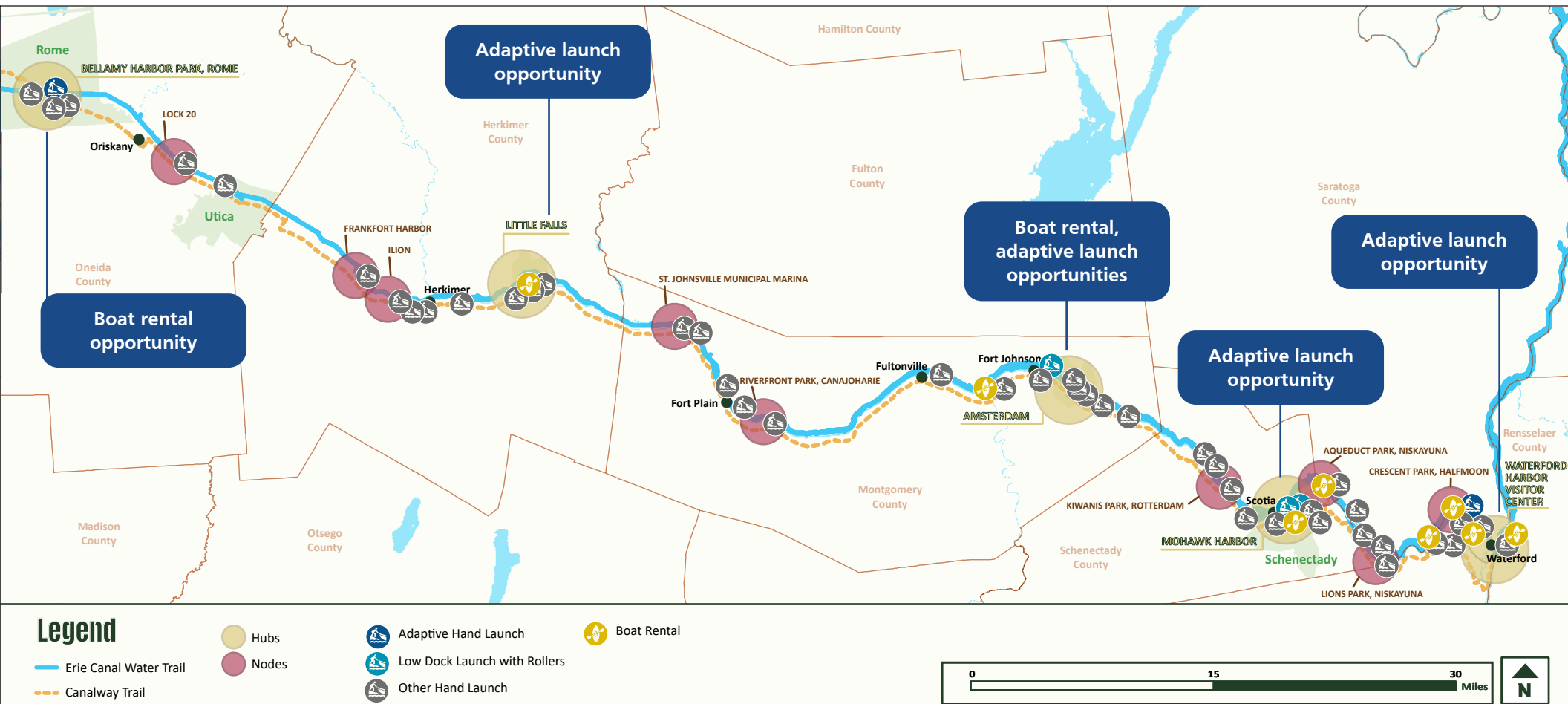




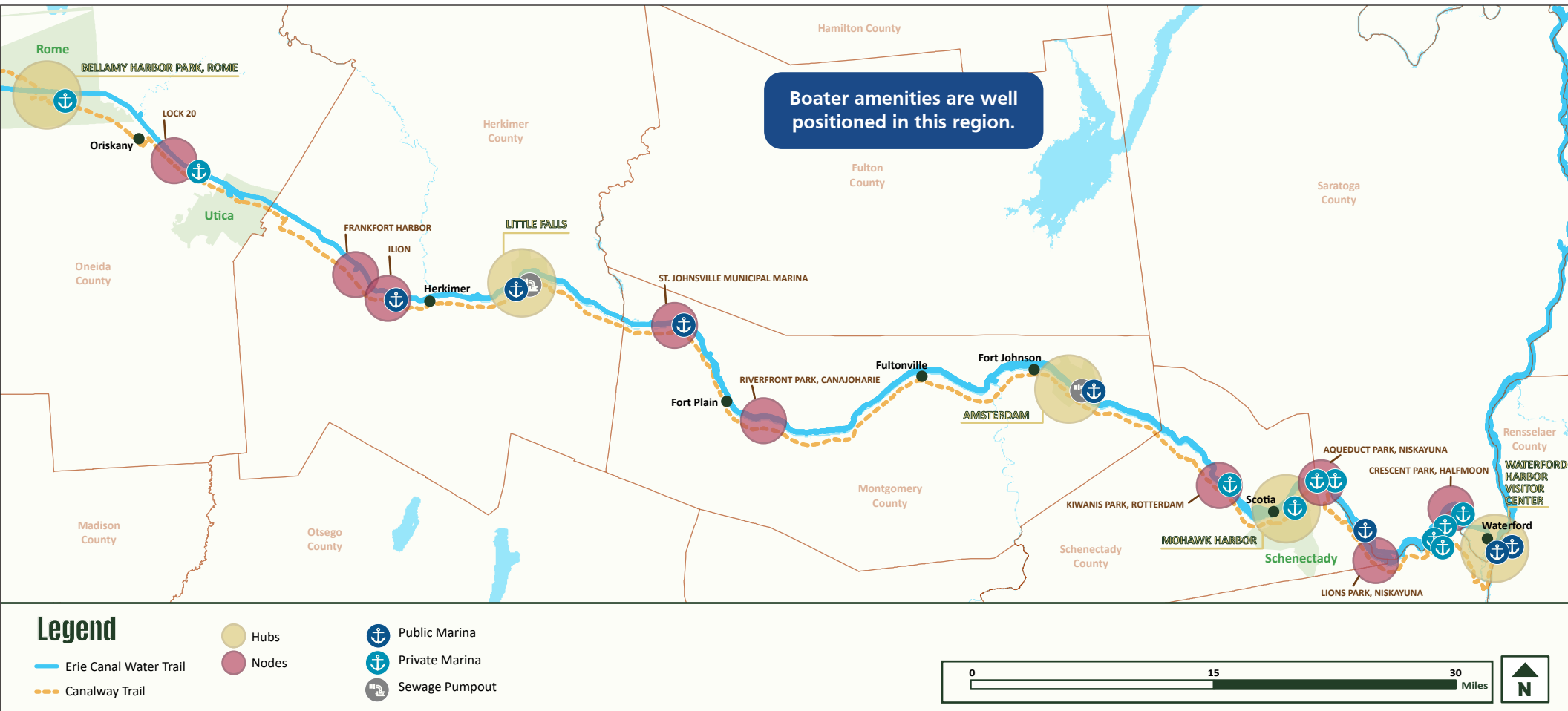
## MAP 4.5 Existing Shared Amenities, Erie Canalway Trail, Region 1



## MAP 4.6 Existing Paddler Amenities, Region 1

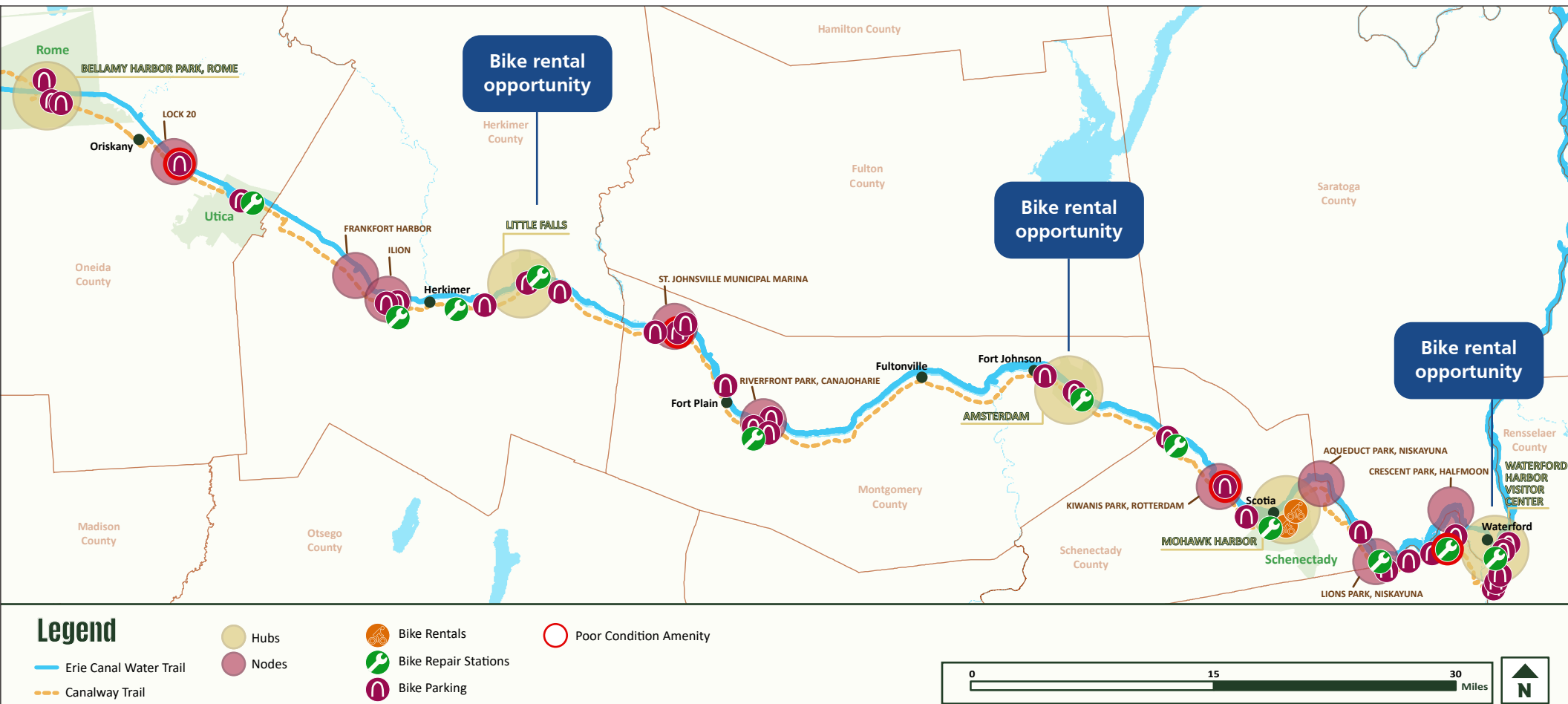


## MAP 4.7 Existing Boater Amenities, Region 1





## MAP 4.8 Existing Bicyclist Amenities, Region 1



## TABLE 4.1 Summary of Amenity Needs, Region 1

Hub/Node Name	Type	Amenities Needed	Municipality	County	Erie Canalway Trail Jurisdiction(s)	Land Jurisdiction(s)
Bellamy Harbor Park, Rome	Hub	Boat Rental Bike Rental Bike Repair Station	Rome	Oneida	NYSDOT	Canal Corporation Other
Lock 20, Marcy	Node	Bike Rack (poor condition) Bike Repair Station	Marcy	Oneida	Canal Corporation	Canal Corporation
Frankfort Harbor	Node	Bike Rack Bike Repair Station	Frankfort	Herkimer	Village of Frankfort	Canal Corporation
Ilion	Node		Ilion	Herkimer	Canal Corporation	Canal Corporation
Little Falls	Hub	Bike Rental Adaptive Hand Launch	Little Falls	Herkimer	City of Little Falls	Canal Corporation Other
St. Johnsville Municipal Marina	Node	Bike Rack (poor condition) Bike Repair Station Drinking Fountain (potential)	St. Johnsville	Montgomery	OPRHP	Canal Corporation
Riverfront Park, Canajoharie	Node		Canajoharie	Montgomery	Village of Canajoharie OPRHP	Canal Corporation Other
Amsterdam	Hub	Boat Rental Adaptive Hand Launch Bike Rental Drinking Fountain (potential)	Amsterdam	Montgomery	City of Amsterdam OPRHP	Canal Corporation Other

“Erie Canalway Trail Jurisdiction” refers to the entity or entities that own this segment of the Erie Canalway Trail. “Land Jurisdiction” refers to the entity or entities that own either the land surrounding the Erie Canalway Trail, such as a park with amenities that the trail passes through, or land used for Erie Canal/NYS Canalway Water Trail access points.

Hub/Node Name	Type	Amenities Needed	Municipality	County	Erie Canalway Trail Jurisdiction(s)	Land Jurisdiction(s)
Kiwanis Park, Rotterdam	Node	Bike Rack (poor condition) Bike Repair Station	Rotterdam	Schenectaday	Schenectady County	Canal Corporation Other
Mohawk Harbor	Hub	Restroom Bike Rack Bike Repair Station	Schenectady	Schenectady	OPRHP	Other
Aqueduct Park, Niskayuna	Node	Adaptive Hand Launch Bike Rack Bike Repair Station	Niskayuna	Schenectady	OPRHP	Canal Corporation
Lions Park, Niskayuna	Node	Bike Rack	Niskayuna	Schenectady	Town of Niskayuna	Canal Corporation Other
Crescent Park/Terminal Wall, Halfmoon	Node	Restroom Bike Rack Bike Repair Station	Halfmoon	Saratoga	n/a	Canal Corporation Other
Waterford Harbor Visitor Center	Hub	Adaptive Hand Launch Bike Rental Bike Repair Station	Waterford	Saratoga	Village of Waterford OPRHP	Canal Corporation OPRHP Other

“Erie Canalway Trail Jurisdiction” refers to the entity or entities that own this segment of the Erie Canalway Trail. “Land Jurisdiction” refers to the entity or entities that own either the land surrounding the Erie Canalway Trail, such as a park with amenities that the trail passes through, or land used for Erie Canal/NYS Canalway Water Trail access points.





## Region 2: Baldwinsville/Camillus to Rome

### Overview

The Erie Canalway Trail diverges from the Erie Canal and NYS Canalway Water Trail for the majority of Region 2. The Erie Canal follows the Seneca River in this region, stretching from Baldwinsville in the west to Bellamy Harbor Park in Rome to the east. The Erie Canalway Trail in this region begins in Camillus and travels through the City of Syracuse and surrounding suburbs before reconnecting with the Erie Canal in Rome.

For both the Erie Canal/NYS Canalway Water Trail and the Erie Canalway Trail, amenities are relatively sparse, especially at proposed hub and node locations (Map 4.9). Stakeholders who have embarked on long-distance trips noted that this area is one of the most difficult for camping because there are so few locks, which are a key camping location. This region should be a focus of investment to enhance the recreational experience in Central New York.



### At a Glance

**57 miles**

ERIE CANAL  
NYS CANALWAY WATER TRAIL

**57 miles**

ERIE CANALWAY TRAIL

**3**

EXISTING  
HUBS

**1**

PROPOSED  
HUB

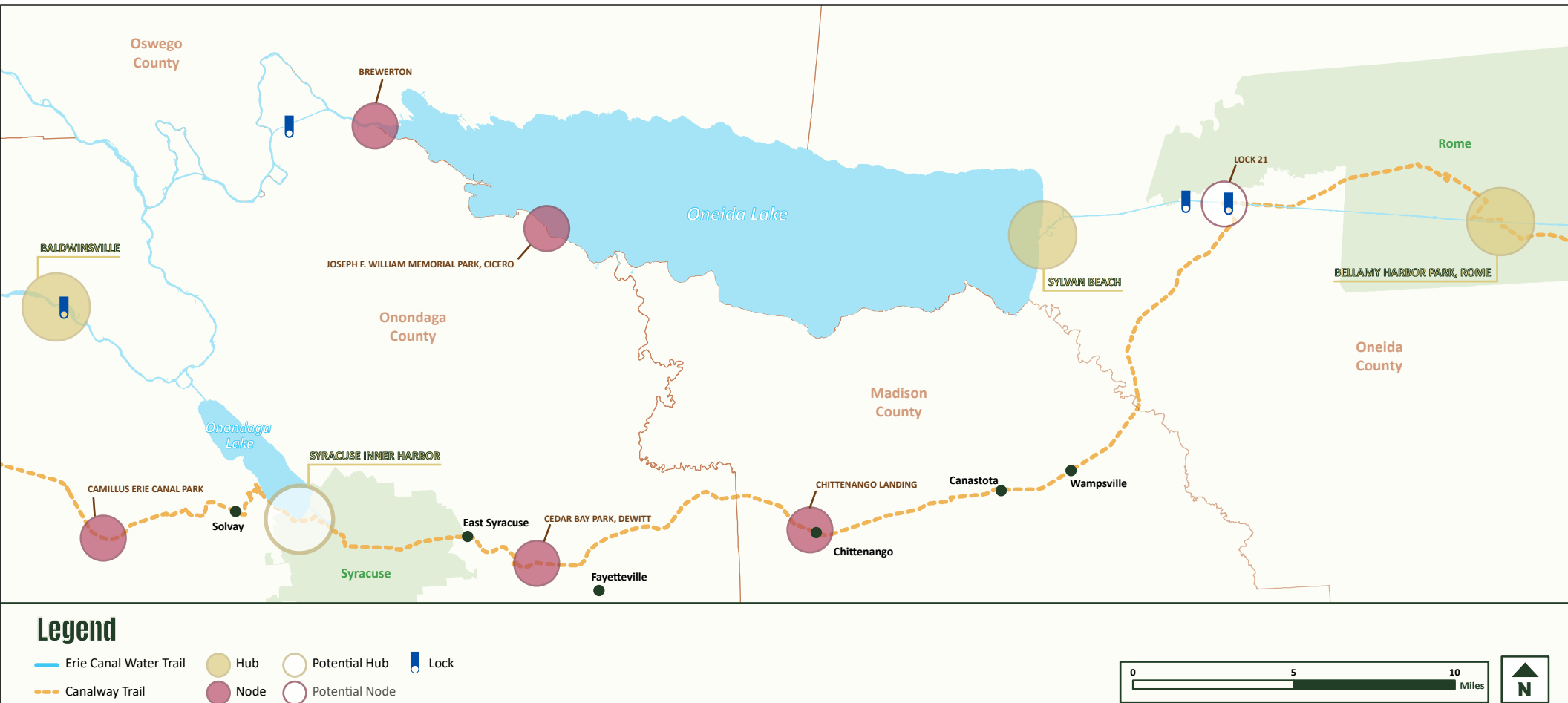
**5**

EXISTING  
NODES

**1**

PROPOSED  
NODE

## MAP 4.9 Locations of Hubs and Nodes, Region 2



## Region 2 Hubs and Nodes

Map 4.9 illustrates the locations of hubs and nodes identified for Region 2. There are three existing hubs, one proposed hub, five existing nodes, and one proposed node.

### Overview of Hubs

In Region 2, the three hubs are located at Baldwinsville, Sylvan Beach, and Bellamy Harbor Park in Rome. Hubs are between 15 and 40 miles apart in this region. Map 4.10 indicates the amenities currently available at hubs. Though paddlers and boaters have strong access to amenities in this region, the Erie Canalway Trail is in need of investment to enhance the experience for bicyclists and pedestrians. A potential hub is identified at Syracuse Inner Harbor because it would be a strategic location for Erie Canalway Trail users, but would require significant investment.

#### *Baldwinsville*

Baldwinsville contains several amenity clusters for boaters and paddlers within a dense, walkable downtown. The marina is a popular social destination for boaters and is quite activated on weekends. Paddlers have access to excellent amenities such as an adaptive launch, picnic area, and restrooms at nearby Mercer Park, but may not be aware of the showers located at the marina. Enhanced wayfinding could

connect these two locations to maximize the potential for recreational use.

#### *Syracuse Inner Harbor*

On the Erie Canalway Trail, there are no obvious hubs. Given the amount of planning and investment taking place at the Syracuse Inner Harbor, this location is a logical place for a hub, but there are currently very few amenities geared towards trail use. This would need to be a focus of investment in order to capitalize on the location as a hub for recreation.

#### *Sylvan Beach*

Sylvan Beach is a well-established destination for boaters, paddlers, and tourists, with private marinas, a beach, and waterside attractions such as an amusement park and restaurants. Near the public beach is the Cove Road boat launch, which is a popular kayak launch site. Verona Beach State Park also has many amenities for paddlers. There is an opportunity to capitalize on the popularity of the State Park by promoting it to long-distance paddlers.

#### *Bellamy Harbor Park, Rome*

Bellamy Harbor Park is the point of confluence between the Erie Canal and the Mohawk River. The location has ample amenities, chief among them the recently completed Rome Navigation Center, an ADA-compliant facility with comfort

amenities such as restrooms, showers, and laundry. The location is easily visible to trail users. Because the park lacks a clear connection to downtown Rome, destination wayfinding would reduce the psychological barrier for users to venture out and access off-trail services.

### Overview of Nodes

Map 4.10 indicates the amenities currently available at nodes. There are five existing nodes and one potential node located in Region 2. Most nodes are between 5 and 15 miles apart, although there is a 20-mile gap between the Baldwinsville hub and the next node in Brewerton. Lock 20 is identified as a potential node, but would require enhanced paddler access.

#### *Brewerton*

Brewerton is shown as a node and is a key location for boaters looking to refuel, seek repairs, or store their boats. In fact, many Great Loopers will store their boats at a marina in Brewerton for the winter so they can return the following spring and continue their journey, thereby extending the trip over two boating seasons.

#### *Joseph F. William Memorial Park*

Joseph F. William Memorial Park in the Town of Cicero provides simple amenities and a picnic area for paddlers.



### *Lock 21, Rome*

Lock 21 is another useful stopping point for bicyclists and boaters and has a large flat area ideal for camping. Additional placemaking would enhance the camping experience here. Paddlers have difficulty accessing amenities here due to high vertical walls. A launch would open these amenities to paddlers.

### *Camillus Erie Canal Park, Cedar Bay Park, and Chittenango Landing*

Nodes for the Erie Canalway Trail are shown in Camillus, DeWitt, and Chittenango, primarily because they have restrooms, but each of these nodes would benefit from additional investment such as bike repair stations and enhanced wayfinding to nearby downtowns to enhance the trail experience for bicyclists and pedestrians.

## **Region 2 Amenity Needs and Opportunities**

Maps 4.11-4.14 show key amenities by user type in Region 2 and identify gaps that detract from the user experience. The narrative below describes specific needs and opportunities for this region.



### ***Restrooms and Drinking Fountains***



The Erie Canal is well equipped with these key resources in Region 2, in part thanks to the many waterfront parks and developments along Oneida Lake. There is a permanent restroom at Sylvan Beach that could present an opportunity to add a drinking fountain. It has been noted by stakeholders that paddlers cannot access the restroom located at Lock 21 because there are steep vertical walls and no kayak launches.



### ***Boat Rentals and Adaptive Launches***



Based on stakeholder input, boat rentals and adaptive launches should be co-located within centers of activity. There are adaptive launches located at either end of this region, but overall they are lacking and should be prioritized at hubs and nodes. The Town of Cicero is in the planning stages for a new kayak launch on the south side of the Canal in Brewerton, which could be an opportunity to add an adaptive launch. Baldwinsville has an adaptive launch but it is located at Mercer Park, several blocks away

from the heart of activity within downtown. Enhanced wayfinding from the park to the rest of downtown Baldwinsville could help to connect recreational users in this area. Boat rentals should be prioritized at hubs in this region.

Lock 21 should be evaluated for potential installation of a launch. Without paddler access here, paddlers have to travel 15 miles between Sylvan Beach and Rome without a break, which is on the upper limit for paddlers.



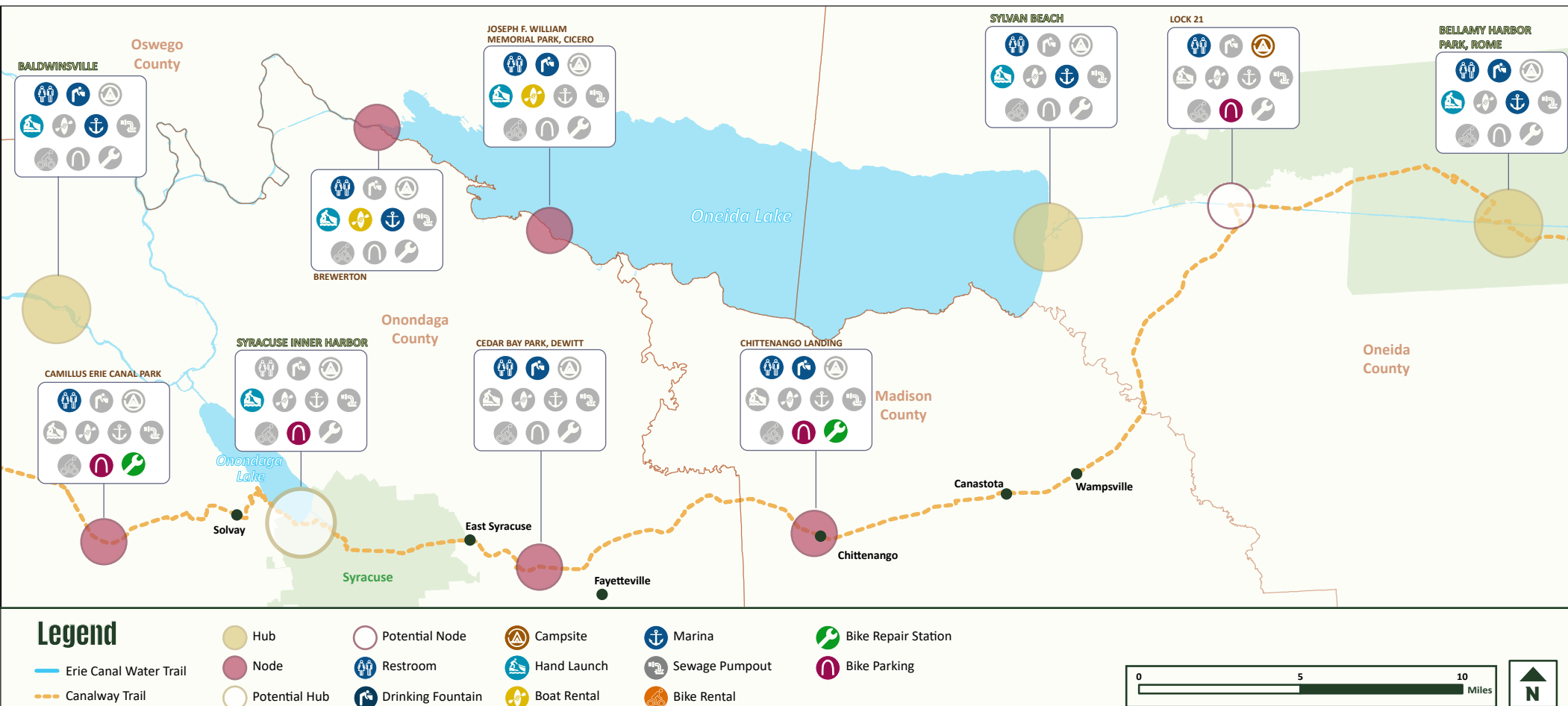
### ***Bicycling Amenities***



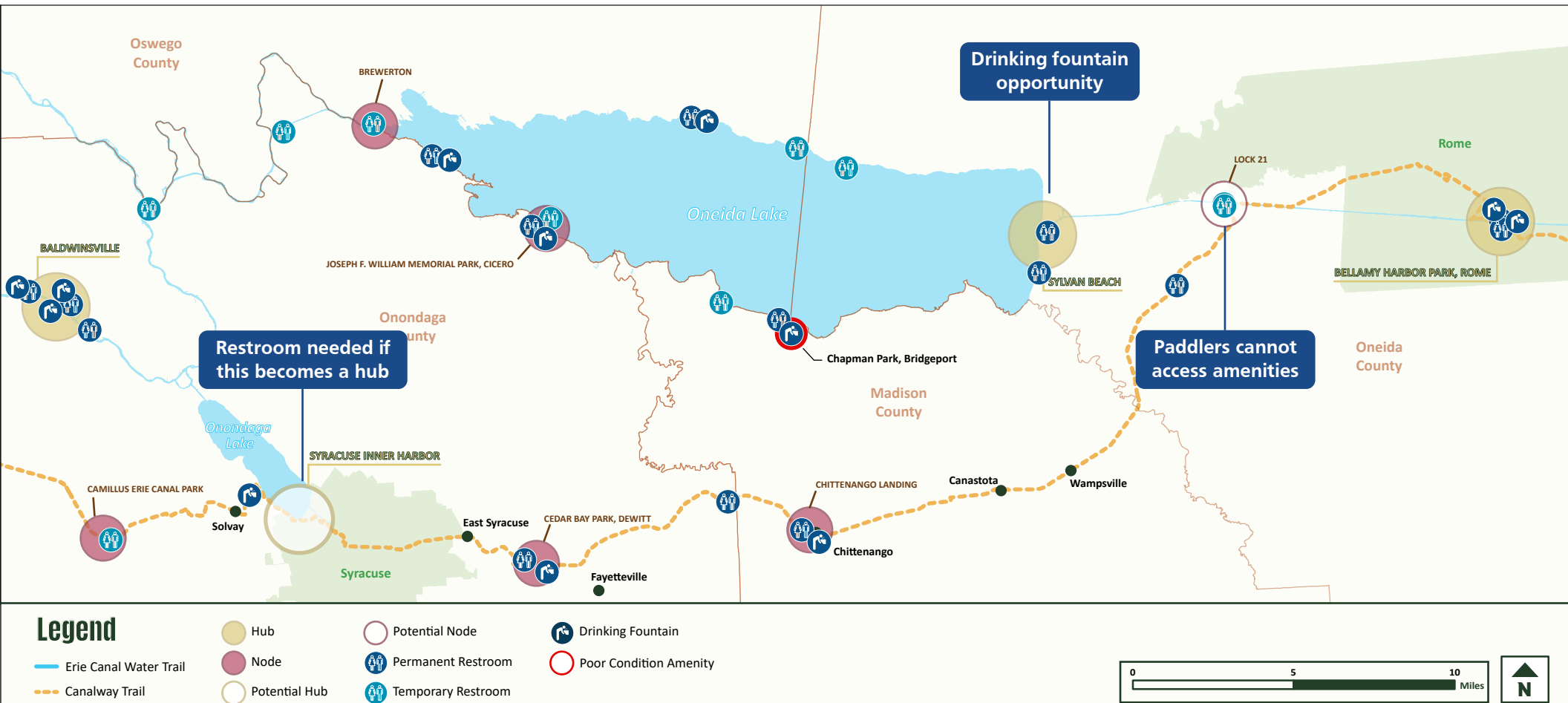
Bicycle amenities are generally lacking in this region. They are more plentiful on the western end between Camillus and the City of Syracuse. The Syracuse bike share program provides one option for the community to try biking on the Erie Canalway Trail, but similar to Capital Bikeshare in Albany, this service is designed to act more like transit for users to travel from point A to point B rather than experiencing a recreational trip at a leisurely pace with stops along the way. This region would benefit from the addition of true bike rental offerings.

Consistent bicycling amenities such as repair stations and bike racks at all hubs and nodes would contribute to the sense of place in this region. Cedar Bay Park in DeWitt in particular is in need of bicycling amenities (Map 4.14).

## MAP 4.10. Existing Hub and Node Amenities, Region 2

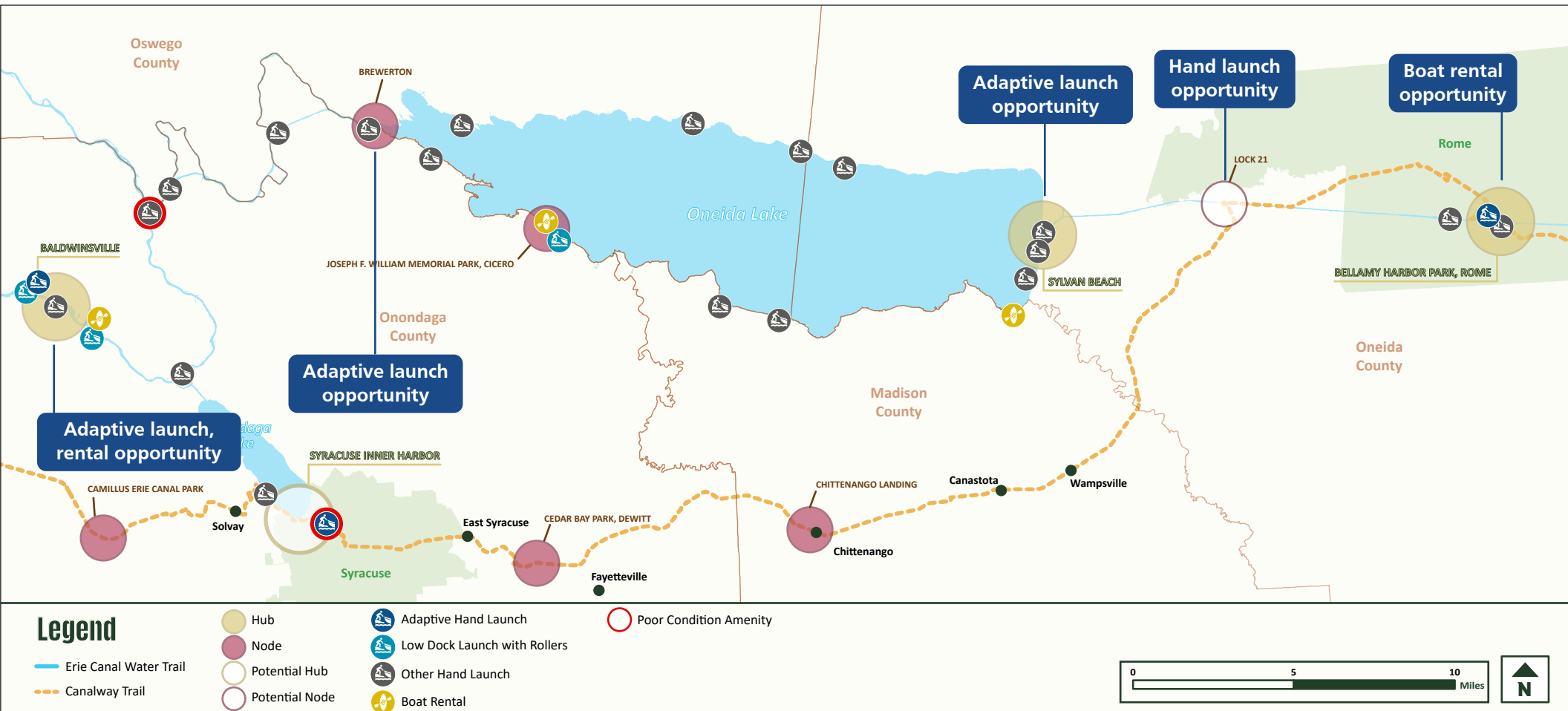


## MAP 4.11. Existing Shared Amenities, Region 2

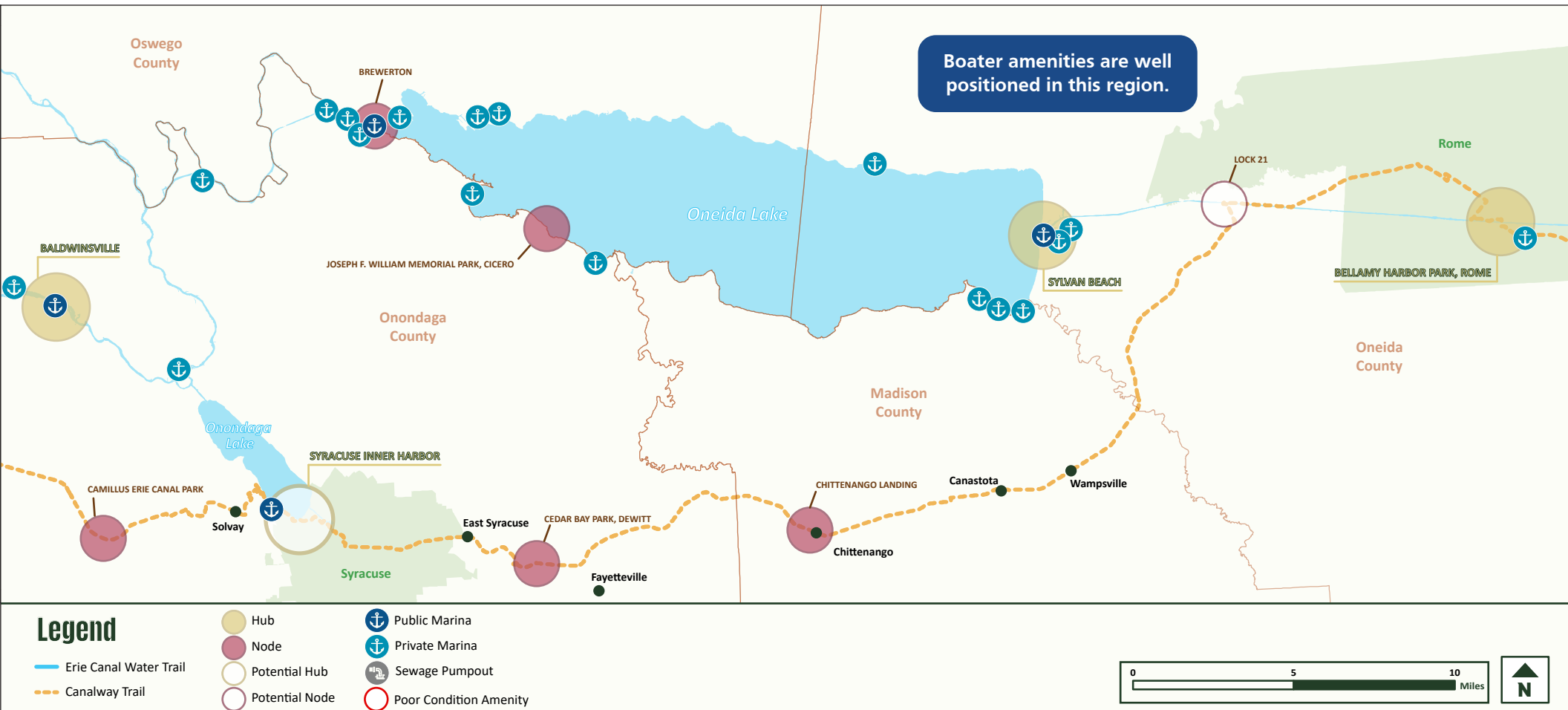




## MAP 4.12. Existing Paddler Amenities, Region 2



## MAP 4.13. Existing Boater Amenities, Region 2



## MAP 4.14. Existing Bicyclist Amenities, Region 2





## TABLE 4.2 Summary of Amenity Needs, Region 2

Hub/Node Name	Type	Amenities Needed	Municipality	County	Erie Canalway Trail Jurisdiction(s)	Land Jurisdiction(s)
Baldwinsville	Hub	Boat Rental Adaptive Hand Launch	Baldwinsville	Onondaga	n/a	Canal Corporation Other
Camillus Erie Canal Park	Node		Camillus	Onondaga	Town of Camillus Onondaga County	Other
Syracuse Inner Harbor	Potential Hub	Restroom Boat Rental Bike Rental Bike Repair Station	Syracuse	Onondaga	Onondaga County	Canal Corporation Other
Brewerton	Node		Cicero Hastings	Onondaga Oswego	n/a	Canal Corporation Other
Joseph F. William Memorial Park, Cicero	Node		Cicero	Onondaga	n/a	Other
Cedar Bay Park, DeWitt	Node	Bike Rack Bike Repair Station	DeWitt	Onondaga	OPRHP	OPRHP
Chittenango Landing	Node		Sullivan	Madison	OPRHP Madison County	OPRHP Other
Sylvan Beach	Hub	Boat Rental Drinking Fountain	Verona	Oneida	n/a	Canal Corporation Other
Lock 21, Rome	Potential Node	Hand Launch Bike Repair Station	Verona	Oneida	n/a	Canal Corporation
Bellamy Harbor Park, Rome	Hub	Boat Rental Bike Rental Bike Repair Station	Rome	Oneida	NYSDOT	Canal Corporation Other

“Erie Canalway Trail Jurisdiction” refers to the entity or entities that own this segment of the Erie Canalway Trail. “Land Jurisdiction” refers to the entity or entities that own either the land surrounding the Erie Canalway Trail, such as a park with amenities that the trail passes through, or land used for Erie Canal/NYS Canalway Water Trail access points.



## Region 3: Fairport to Baldwinsville/Camillus

### Overview

Region 3 begins at the Village of Fairport. The Erie Canal/NYS Canalway Water Trail and the Erie Canalway Trail are co-located from Fairport to Lyons. East of Lyons, the trails diverge but cross over at certain points. Nodes have been identified at these crossing points to maximize on opportunities to share amenities.

This region is home to some of the most rural portions of the system. The Erie Canalway Trail is characterized by long stretches of woods and farmland broken up by smaller towns and villages, which makes the points of arrival in hubs and nodes especially important for long-distance travelers. There are significant



### At a Glance

**75 miles**

ERIE CANAL  
NYS CANALWAY WATER TRAIL

**70 miles**

ERIE CANALWAY TRAIL

**3**

EXISTING  
HUBS

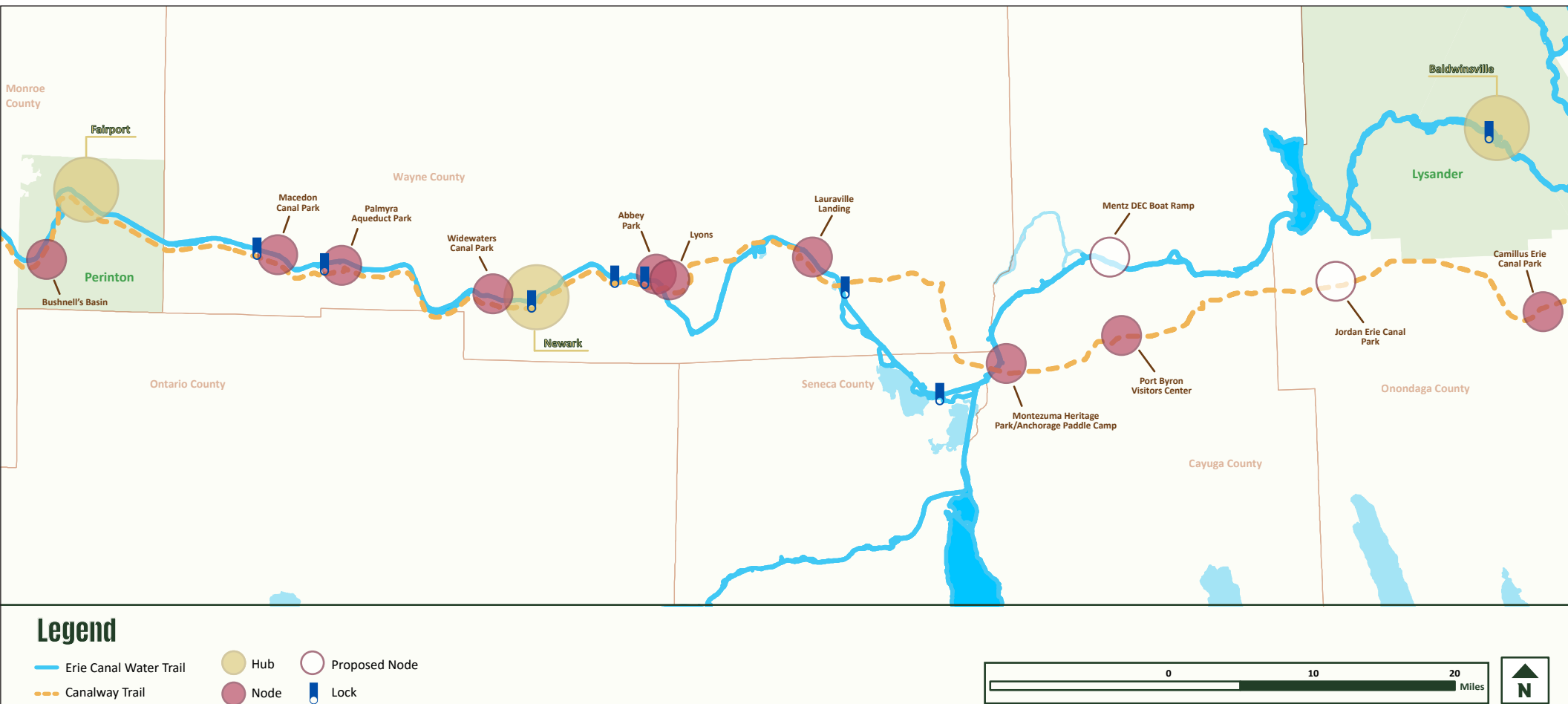
**9**

EXISTING  
NODES

**2**

PROPOSED  
NODES

## MAP 4.15. Locations of Hubs and Nodes, Region 3



Note: Region 3 maps include overlap with Regions 2 and 4.



on-road portions of the Erie Canalway Trail, which has been noted as a challenge for long-distance cyclists trying to navigate with limited trail signage.

Despite the rural nature of this region, the western portion contains many locations that work well as nodes, with a strong sense of arrival into downtown centers and dense concentrations of amenities. There are adequate restrooms and drinking fountains along the majority of this region. Although the Erie Canalway Trail diverges from the water at certain points, locations like Lauraville Landing, Lyons, and Montezuma Heritage Park/ Anchorage Paddle Camp are strategically located at places where it meets the water, providing opportunities for multiple user types to share amenities.

## Region 3 Hubs and Nodes

Map 4.15 illustrates the locations of hubs and nodes in Region 3. There are three existing hubs, nine existing nodes, and two proposed nodes in this region.

### Overview of Hubs

Map 4.16 illustrates amenities currently available at hubs in Region 3. Hubs are between 20 and 50 miles apart in this region. The hubs at Fairport and Newark serve both the Erie Canal/NYS Canalway Water Trail and the Erie Canalway Trail,

while the Baldwinsville hub only serves boaters and paddlers.

### *Village of Fairport*

Fairport has capitalized on its connection to the canal and created a strong nexus of activity along the water. Users can easily access the local shops, restaurants, and lodging options. As noted previously, this hub is an exemplary model of investment in enhancing accessibility.

### *Village of Newark*

Newark is unique in that it is one of the few places with a campsite located in its downtown, close to local goods and services. This hub is geared more towards boaters than paddlers, and would benefit from a kayak launch so paddlers could access the amenities.

### *Baldwinsville*

The Village of Baldwinsville is a strong center of activity, with amenities for boaters and paddlers alike. Shops, dining, and entertainment are available directly adjacent to the marina, where local boaters often spend weekend evenings socializing. The paddler amenities are located nearby in Mercer Park. Long-distance paddlers would benefit from wayfinding signage to connect to amenities like showers, as well as shops and services.

## Overview of Nodes

Map 4.16 illustrates the amenities currently available at nodes in Region 3. The majority of nodes are located at canalside parks, along with smaller villages and the Port Byron Visitors Center. Potential nodes are shown at the Mentz DEC Boat Ramp and Jordan Erie Canal Park.

### *Macedon Canal Park*

There are points of access to amenities on both sides of the water at this park, and signage suggests that bicyclists may cross the lock bridge to access the southern side. A new adaptive kayak launch and ample parking and picnic areas make this location attractive, though the amenities are not concentrated to create a strong sense of arrival. Several amenities, including an older boat ramp, are in poor condition and should be evaluated for investment. This node would be a good candidate for a kayak rental vendor. Shops and restaurants on Main Street are a short walk away.

### *Palmyra Aqueduct Park*

This linear park stretches along the length of the canal, but has several key amenities such as restrooms, a kayak launch, and a new self-serve kayak rental kiosk.

#### ***Widewaters Canal Park, Newark***

This is a useful node for paddlers but does not have a way for boaters to access it. Bicyclists could cross a nearby bridge to access the restroom but would benefit from wayfinding signage. Because there is an adaptive launch located here, this node is a good candidate for a kayak rental vendor.

#### ***Abbey Park, Lyons***

Abbey Park is a county park located just a short walk from the Village of Lyons. The Erie Canalway Trail passes through the park and the park is located along the canal with several hand launch facilities that are clearly marked with Water Trail signage. The small scale of the park makes it so that amenities are easily visible from both trails. There is ample parking, a permanent restroom, and a picnic area with a pavilion and grills.

#### ***Village of Lyons***

Lyons was noted by many stakeholders as a strong example of the way a community can create a welcoming atmosphere for long-distance trail users. A volunteer organization welcomes boaters and connects them with services. The fire department allows camping on their lawn and access to

their restrooms and showers. Ample signage points visitors to destinations in town.

#### ***Lauraville Landing Park, Clyde***

Similar to Abbey Park, Lauraville Landing has amenities for multiple user types that are well concentrated and visible from both trails. Shops and restaurants in Clyde are short walk away.

#### ***Montezuma Heritage Park/Anchorage Paddle Camp***

The Erie Canal and Canalway Trail cross over at this location. Although these are two nodes of amenities located across the street from each other, one geared towards Canalway Trail users and the other towards Water Trail users, with adequate signage there is opportunity for multiple user groups to take advantage of amenities here. With additional investment, this location could develop into a hub in the future.

#### ***Mentz DEC Boat Ramp***

This node is located in one of the most remote parts of the canal. Without a node here, long-distance paddlers would have to travel over 30 miles without a restroom. This location currently only has a parking area, a concrete ramp, and a fishing dock, but with some investment

could serve as a key stopping point for paddlers.

#### ***Port Byron Visitor Center***

This visitor center is often used as a gathering point for bicyclists to start a trip on the Erie Canalway Trail. The staffed facility allows trail users to use the restroom and drinking fountain. Additional bicycling amenities such as a repair station would be helpful.

#### ***Jordan Erie Canal Park***

Similar to the Mentz Boat Ramp on the Erie Canal/NYS Canalway Water Trail, this location could be an opportunity to close the gap between nodes for long-distance cyclists, but would require some investment in basic amenities like a portable restroom.

#### ***Camillus Erie Canal Park***

This park has basic amenities for Erie Canalway Trail users and serves as a simple resting point along the trail.

## Region 3 Amenity Needs and Opportunities

Maps 4.17-4.20 illustrate the locations of key amenities in Region 3 and identify elements that work well along with needed investments.



### *Shared Amenities (Map 4.17, 4.18)*



Though drinking fountains are generally well positioned in this region, there is a 30-mile gap between Fairport and Lauraville Landing. Although this is within an acceptable range based on the Best Practices section, there is a permanent restroom with plumbing at Abbey Park which could present an opportunity for a drinking fountain to shorten this gap.

There are 20 miles between restrooms along the Erie Canalway Trail along the eastern portion of this region (Map 4.19). Although this is an acceptable range based on best practices, there could be an opportunity to add a low-maintenance option such as a portable restroom or self-composting toilet at Jordan Erie Canal Park. There may also be an opportunity to create a partnership with a private campground in Weedsport to allow trail users to use their restrooms.



### *Paddlers (Map 4.19)*



The eastern portion of this region of the Canal is especially remote, which creates a challenge for paddler amenities. A low-maintenance restroom at the Mentz DEC Boat Ramp, such as a portable or self-composting toilet, is key to providing long-distance paddlers with a critical amenity here.

Locations like Abbey Park, Lauraville Landing, and Widewaters Canal Park have strong amenities for paddlers and are located near centers of activity. These locations would benefit from adding adaptive launches and boat rentals to open them to a wider array of users.

The Village of Baldwinsville, which is a key hub for boaters and paddlers, should strive to better connect paddler and boater amenities, or otherwise invest in paddler amenities near the center of activity at the marina near Lock 24.

Several hand launches in this region are in poor condition and should be further evaluated for repair or replacement. This could present an opportunity to add more adaptive launches.



### *Boaters (Map 4.20)*

Boater amenities are well-positioned within this region. A mix of public and private marinas provide boaters with places to rest and recharge. Private marinas help to close the gap in services along the eastern portion of this region, which is more remote. Given the remote nature of much of this region, enhanced awareness of amenities available is especially important here for trip planning and decision-making.



### *Bicyclists (Map 4.21)*

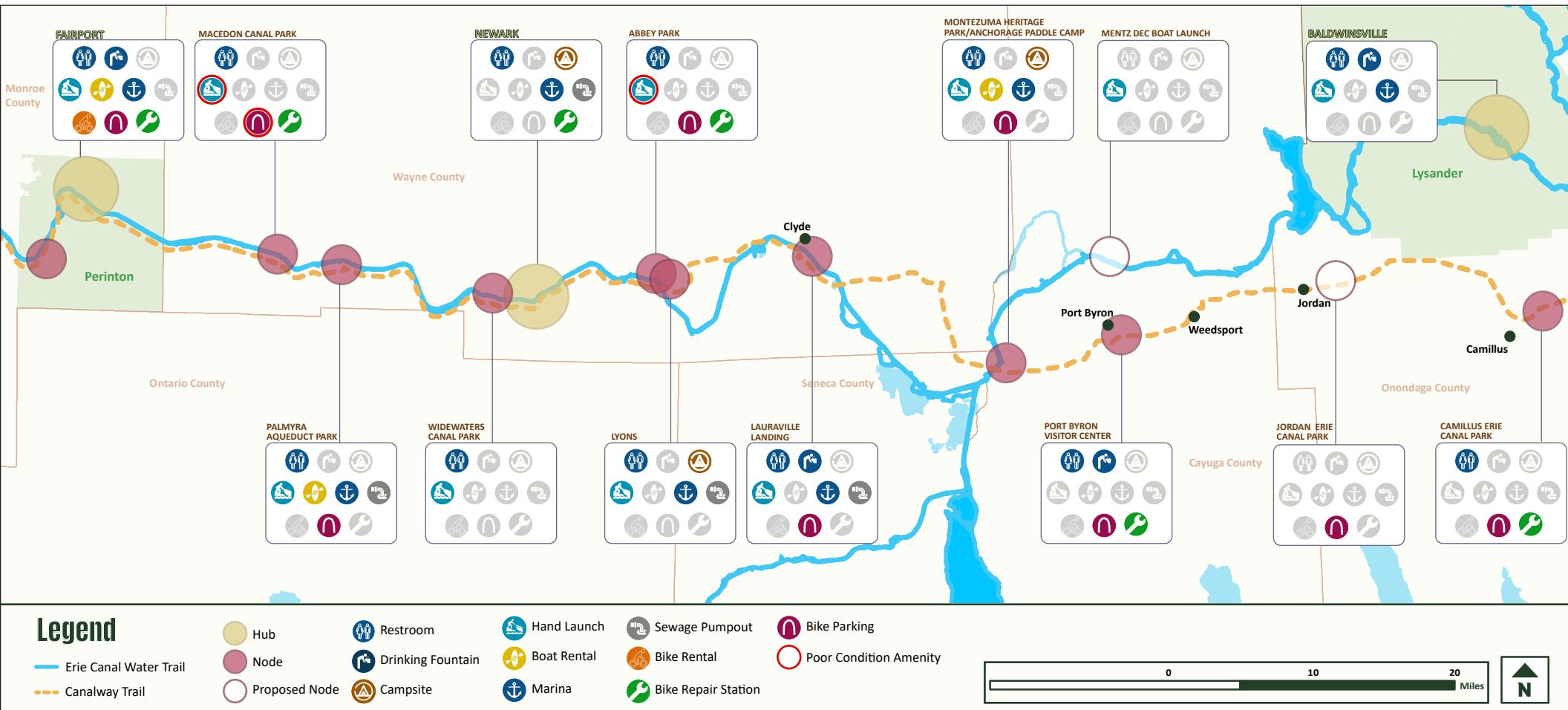


Several locations were identified where amenities geared towards bicyclists should be added to enhance their experience on the Erie Canalway Trail.

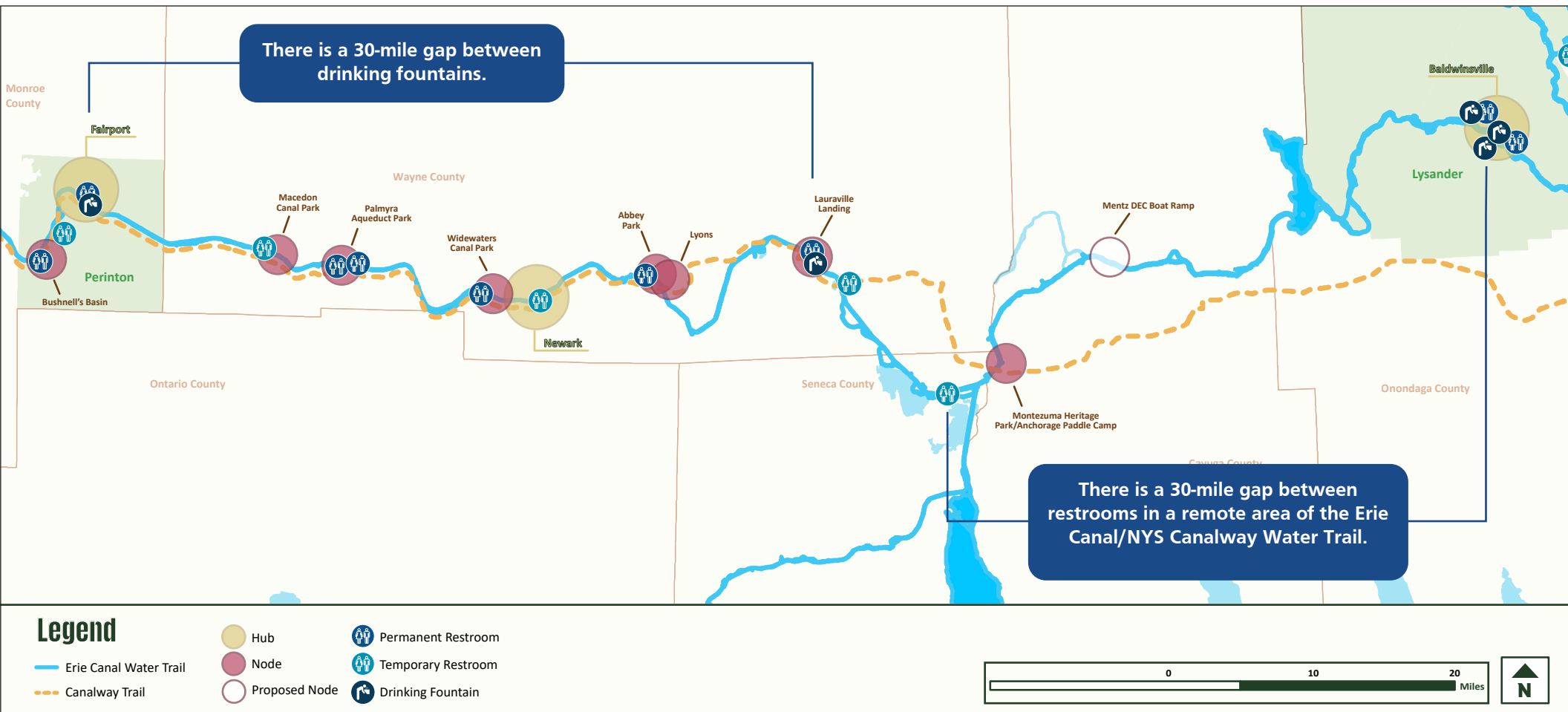
- The addition of bike racks and bike rentals in Newark would enhance this hub, which is geared towards boaters, for bicyclists
- A bike repair station at Lauraville Landing and Montezuma Anchorage Park would assist bicyclists in closing this gap.
- Jordan Erie Canal Park would benefit from a concentration of bicycling amenities



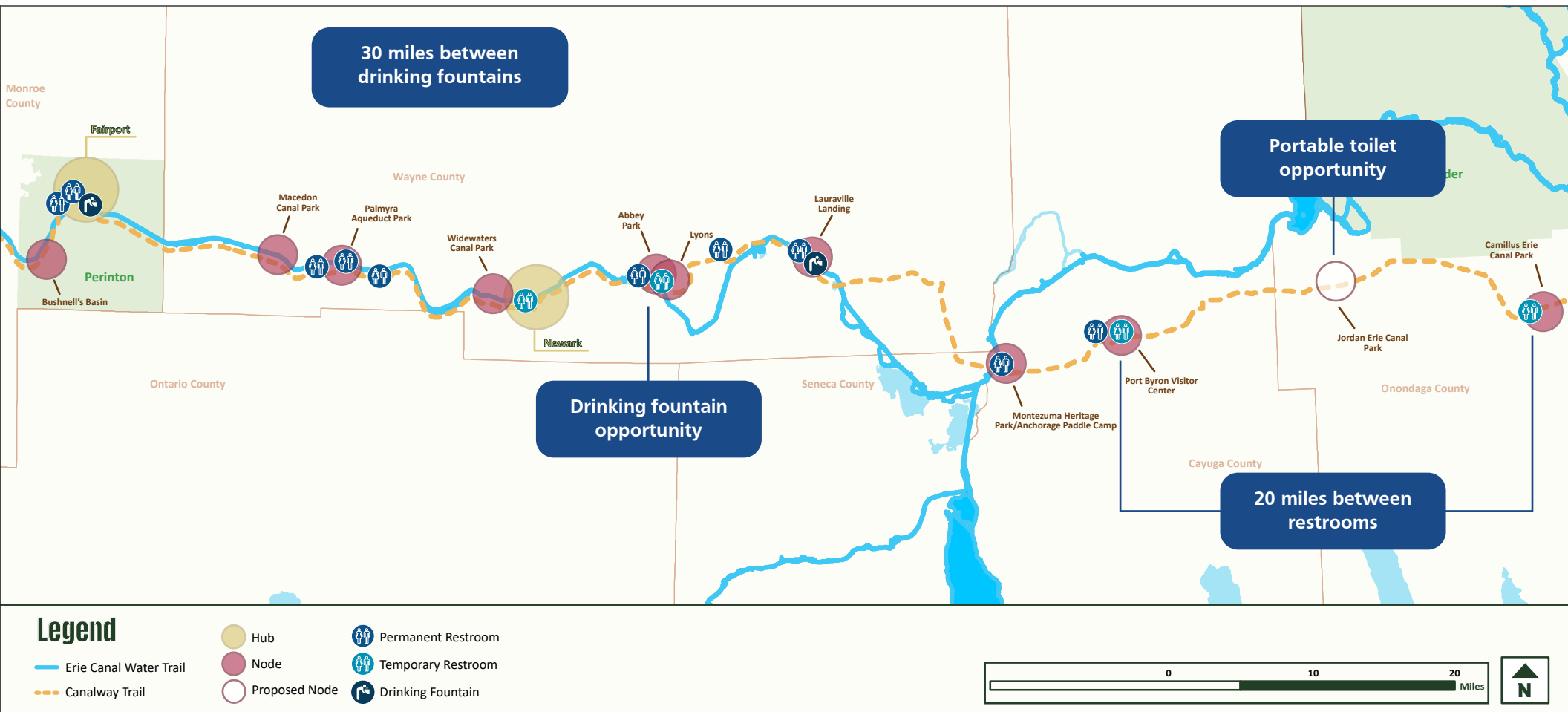
## MAP 4.16. Existing Hub and Node Amenities, Region 3



## MAP 4.17. Existing Shared Amenities, Erie Canal and NYS Canalway Water Trail, Region 3

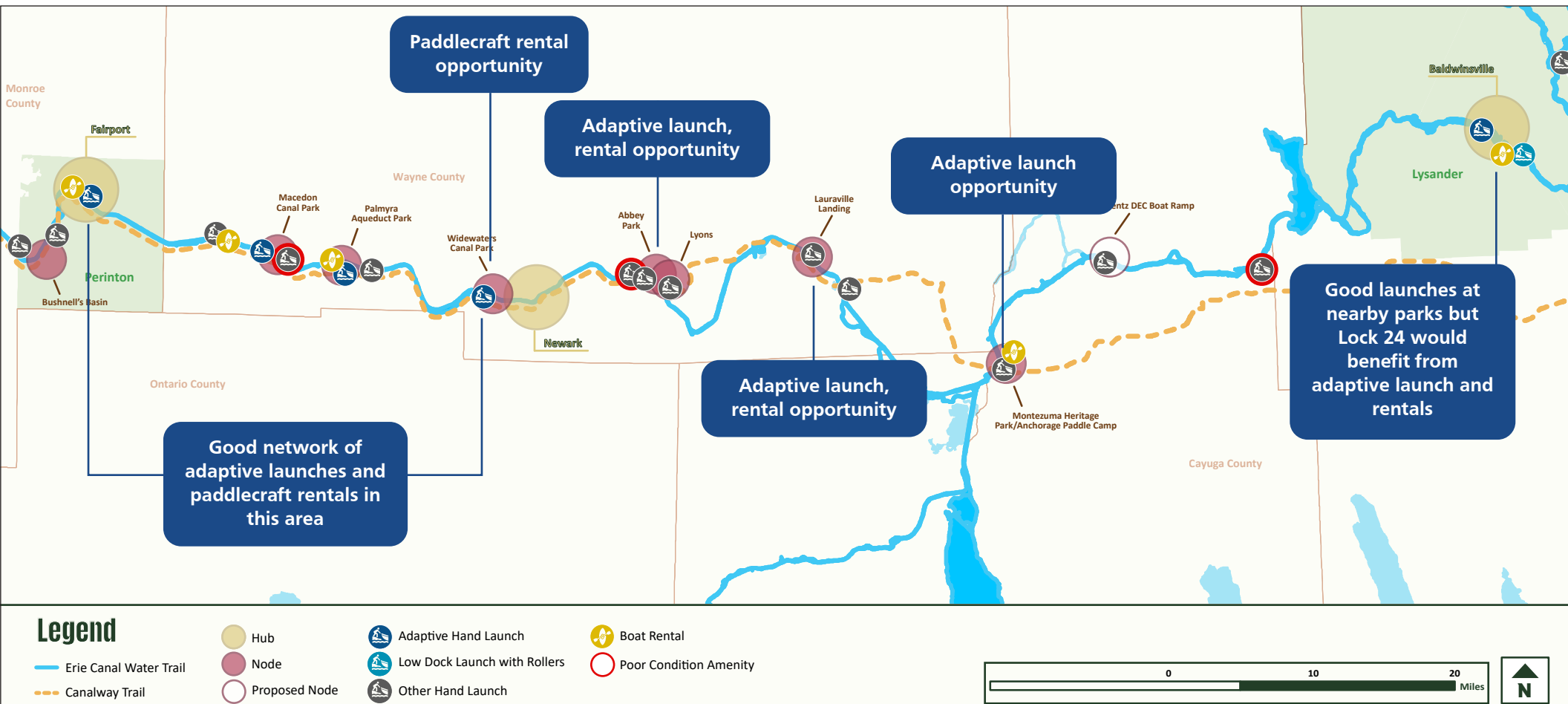


## MAP 4.18. Existing Shared Amenities, Erie Canalway Trail, Region 3

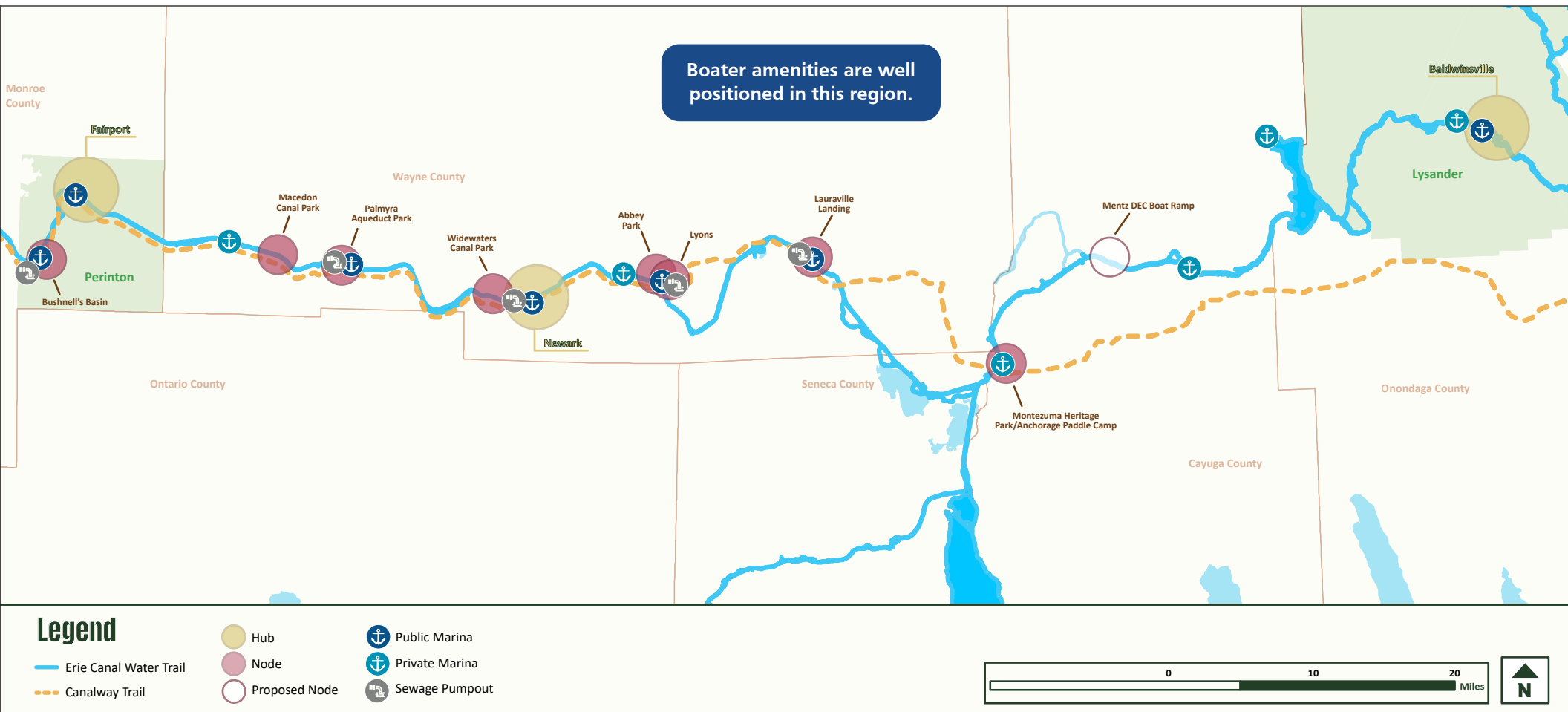




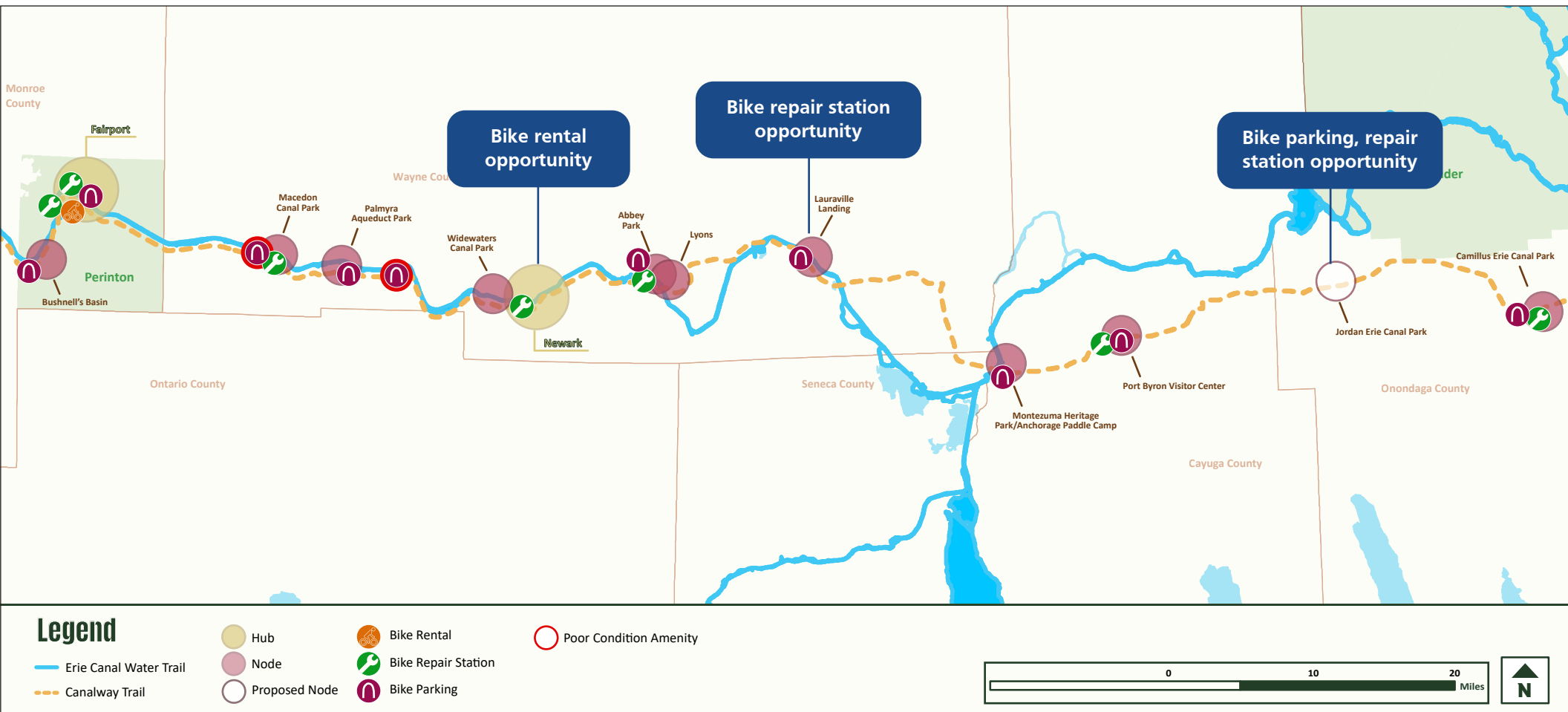
## MAP 4.19. Existing Paddler Amenities, Region 3



## MAP 4.20. Existing Boater Amenities, Region 3



## MAP 4.21. Existing Bicyclist Amenities, Region 3



## TABLE 4.3 Summary of Amenity Needs, Region 3

Hub/Node Name	Type	Amenities Needed	Municipality	County	Erie Canalway Trail Jurisdiction(s)	Land Jurisdiction(s)
Fairport	Hub		Fairport	Monroe	Village of Fairport Canal Corporation	Other
Macedon Canal Park	Node	Bike Rack (poor condition)	Macedon	Wayne	Canal Corporation	Canal Corporation
Palmyra Aqueduct Park	Node	Bike Repair Station	Palmyra	Wayne	Canal Corporation	Canal Corporation
Widewaters Canal Park, Arcadia	Node	Bike Rack Bike Repair Station Boat Rental	Arcadia	Wayne	Canal Corporation	Canal Corporation
Newark	Hub	Boat Rental Adaptive Hand Launch Bike Rental Bike Rack	Newark	Wayne	Canal Corporation	Canal Corporation
Abbey Park, Lyons	Node	Drinking Fountain (potential) Adaptive Hand Launch Boat Rental	Lyons	Wayne	Town of Lyons	Canal Corporation Other
Lyons	Node	Bike Rack Bike Repair Station	Lyons	Wayne	Town of Lyons	Canal Corporation Other
Lauraville Landing, Clyde	Node	Bike Repair Station	Clyde	Wayne	Village of Clyde	Other
Montezuma Heritage Park/ Anchorage Paddle Camp	Node	Bike Repair Station	Montezuma	Cayuga	NYSDOT	Canal Corporation NYSDEC Other
Port Byron Visitor Center	Node		Port Byron	Cayuga	NYSDOT	Other
Mentz DEC Boat Ramp	Potential Node	Restroom	Mentz	Cayuga	n/a	Canal Corporation
Jordan Erie Canal Park	Potential Node	Restroom Bike Repair Station	Jordan	Onondaga	Village of Jordan	Other
Camillus Erie Canal Park	Node		Camillus	Onondaga	Town of Camillus Onondaga County	Other
Baldwinsville	Hub	Boat Rental Adaptive Hand Launch	Baldwinsville	Onondaga	n/a	Canal Corporation Other

"Erie Canalway Trail Jurisdiction" refers to the entity or entities that own this segment of the Erie Canalway Trail. "Land Jurisdiction" refers to the entity or entities that own either the land surrounding the Erie Canalway Trail, such as a park with amenities that the trail passes through, or land used for Erie Canal/NYS Canalway Water Trail access points.





# Region 4: North Tonawanda to Fairport

## Overview

Region 4 begins at the western terminus of the trails at Gateway Harbor Park in North Tonawanda and stretches east to the Village of Fairport, just east of the City of Rochester. This is one of the more amenity-rich regions, and was noted by many stakeholders as a place where the historic nature of the Erie Canal is particularly celebrated. Historic structures such as lift bridges are common in this region and the canal is entirely man-made and is therefore narrow, measuring only about 125 feet across in most areas. This

scale creates a comfortable environment for recreational use and creates a strong feeling of connection to the water. In this area, the Erie Canalway Trail tends to run directly alongside the Erie Canal, making it feasible for users of both trails to benefit from shared amenities.



## At a Glance

**91 miles**

ERIE CANAL  
NYS CANALWAY WATER TRAIL

**94 miles**

ERIE CANALWAY TRAIL

**4**

EXISTING  
HUBS

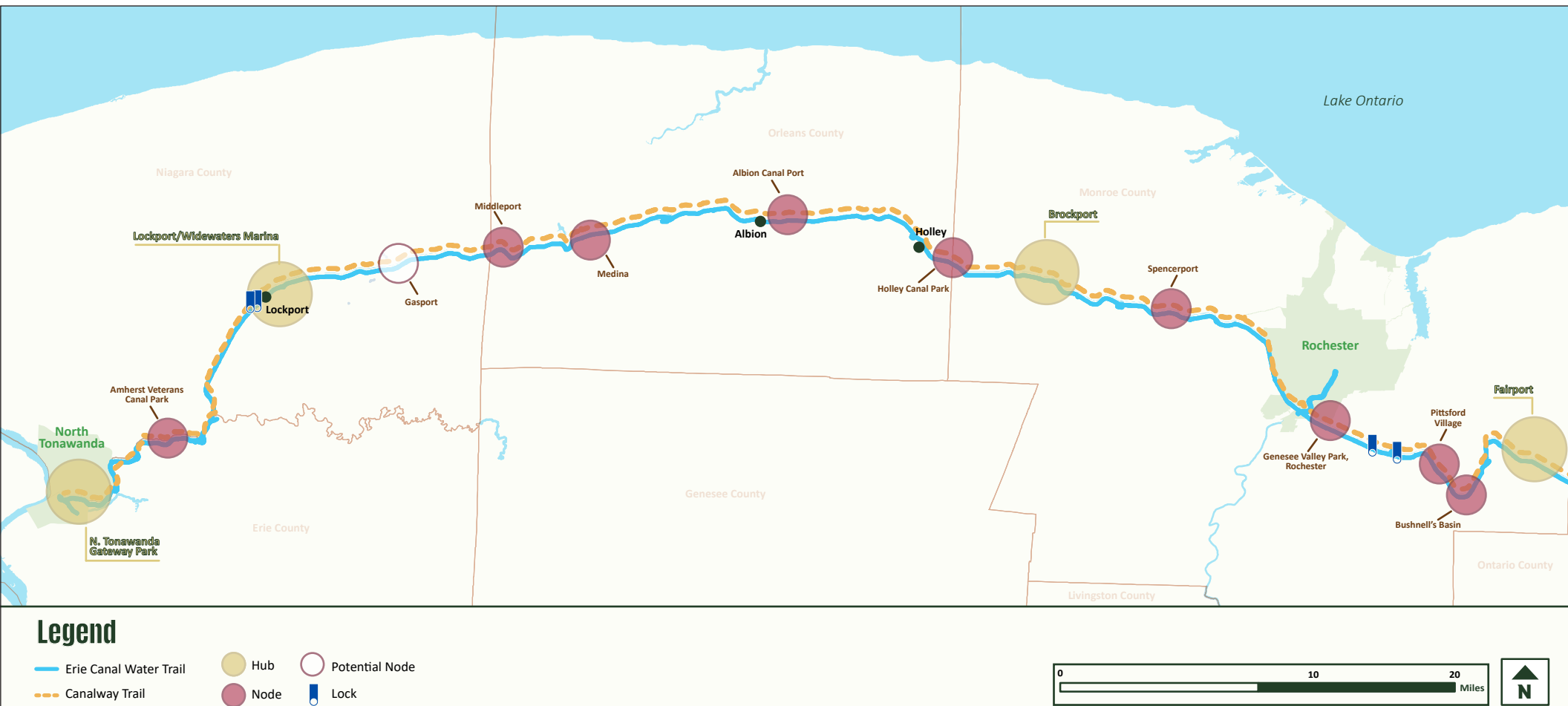
**9**

EXISTING  
NODES

**1**

PROPOSED  
NODE

## MAP 4.22. Locations of Hubs and Nodes, Region 4



Note: Region 4 maps include overlap with Region 3.

## Region 4 Hubs and Nodes

Map 4.22 illustrates the locations of hubs and nodes identified for Region 4. There are four existing hubs, nine existing nodes, and one proposed node identified in this region.

### Overview of Hubs

Map 4.23 illustrates the amenities currently available at hubs in Region 4. Hubs are between 20 and 40 miles apart in this region. Hubs are shown at North Tonawanda Gateway Park, Lockport, Brockport, and Fairport. Hubs in this region have a large variety of amenities geared toward several user types.

#### *North Tonawanda Gateway Park*

The western terminus of the Canalway Trail is located at the Tonawandas Gateway Harbor, steps away from Main Street, the primary commercial in the City of Tonawanda. Gateway Harbor and adjacent Canal Street Plaza are lively and activated places with a wide range of amenities for all user types.

#### *Lockport*

The Canal passes through the historic downtown of the City of Lockport, where users can see the restored Locks 69 and 70, as well as Locks 34 and 35, which

enable today's canal traffic to climb the Niagara Escarpment. There are a variety of attractions in the area, including several restaurants, coffee and ice cream shops, and a bike repair station, but amenities for paddlers and boaters are limited, as well as key shared amenities like restrooms and drinking fountains. The portion of the Erie Canalway Trail from the city limits to Downtown Lockport is primarily on-road and not well marked. The area is very active, with a community farmers' market and other events.

Widewaters Marina, two miles northeast of Downtown Lockport, provides excellent amenities for paddlers and boaters but is not well connected to the Erie Canalway Trail. Enhanced wayfinding signage could make this amenity center more accessible to bicyclists, pedestrians, and runners.

#### *Brockport*

At Harvester Park, south of the Canal, there are a wide range of amenities available to trail users, and many are accessible, including the hand launch, restrooms, and showers. The Welcome Center is an aspirational example of the type of experience users would like to have throughout the system. Staff greet and orient visitors seven days per week from May to October. Boaters can register

for access to power and water and users can register to camp overnight.

#### *Village of Fairport*

Fairport has capitalized on its connection to the Canal and created an epicenter of activity along the water. Users can easily access the local shops, restaurants, and lodging options. As noted previously, this hub is an exemplary model of investment in enhancing accessibility.

### Overview of Nodes

Map 4.23 shows the amenities currently available at nodes in Region 4. In this region, nodes are primarily shown in town, village, and hamlet centers, however several parks are also shown as nodes. In this region, nodes have a particularly strong concentration of amenities for multiple user types, especially the Village of Middleport, Amherst Veterans Canal Park, and the Village of Pittsford.

#### *Amherst Veterans Canal Park*

Amherst Veterans Canal Park is located in a rural section of the Town of Amherst. The main feature of the park is the boat ramp, which allows access to Ellicott Creek for larger boats, as well as a hand launch for canoes and kayaks. The park

also offers restrooms, a drinking fountain, picnic tables, and a bike repair station. There is ample parking, including boat trailer parking. Overall, the facilities are in good condition and the Erie Canalway Trail is well-marked in this area.

#### ***Gasport***

Gasport has a marina and provides a logical stopping point between Lockport and Middleport, but it does not offer many amenities. With investment in public amenities such as restrooms, potable water, and electricity, both the community and the Canal could capitalize on an enhanced nexus of activity.

#### ***Middleport***

The trail is well connected to the restaurants and other businesses on Main Street. This is one of the few locations with a primitive campsite served by public restrooms within a downtown.

#### ***Medina***

The Village of Medina offers a plethora of businesses, including restaurants, pharmacies, and a movie theater. There is ample parking at Medina Harbor. This location would benefit from public amenities like restrooms and drinking water.

#### ***Albion Canal Port***

Downtown Albion offers a number of restaurants and other conveniences within a 5-minute walk from the Erie Canalway Trail. Amenities for boaters, paddlers, and bicyclists are available in this area.

#### ***Holley Canal Park***

Holley Canal Park offers a number of amenities to trail users. The park includes pavilions, drinking fountains, an accessible port-a-potty, ample parking, a playground, and scenic views of the Holley Canal Falls. A 10-minute walk or 2-minute bike ride brings users to the downtown of the Village of Holley, which has several restaurants and other conveniences.

#### ***Genesee Valley Park, Rochester***

This city park is an Empire State Trail designated trailhead and has amenities clustered together within a short walk from the Erie Canalway Trail. In this area, the Erie Canalway Trail also connects to the Genesee Waterways Trail into downtown Rochester and other points north. The Genesee Waterways Center is located nearby on the Genesee River, and it's easy for paddlers to connect to the NYS Canalway Water Trail from this location. However, the restrooms and other amenities in the park are not directly accessible to boaters and paddlers via a launch or marina.

#### ***Village of Pittsford***

The Village of Pittsford has a strong connection to the Canal and the Erie Canalway Trail, with shops and restaurants lining the water. This area is home to several regattas throughout the year, and rowing stakeholders noted how unique these events are because spectators can be so close to the water. Although there are many opportunities to find restrooms at nearby private establishments, there are no dedicated public restrooms for trail users.

#### ***Bushnell's Basin, Perinton***

This historic hamlet is a beloved stopping point for boaters who visit the restaurants along the water. Showers and restrooms are located here, which is helpful for overnight stays. Although there is low-profile docking here, it is difficult for paddlers to launch or land. The Erie Canalway Trail is on the opposite side of the water, but a nearby bridge connects the two sides. Dedicated kayak launches and wayfinding signage would help bicyclists and paddlers utilize this node.



## Region 4 Amenity Needs and Opportunities

Maps 4.24-4.28 illustrate the gaps between amenities and present needs and opportunities identified for future investment to enhance the recreational user experience. Overall, this region has ample amenities for paddlers, boaters, and bicyclists. Because the Erie Canal/ NYS Canalway Water Trail and the Erie Canalway Trail are directly adjacent to each other and the scale is small, it is easy for users of both trails to take advantage of shared amenities.



### *Restroom and Drinking Water Gap*



There is a noticeable gap between Lockport and Brockport, where key amenities like restrooms and drinking fountains are sparse or nonexistent. This segment should be a focus of further evaluation for future investment at nodes.

### *Lockport's Potential*

Lockport is a key destination for trail users and tourists alike but lacks publicly available amenities (Map 4.23). Given the popularity of this location as a tourist destination, where attractions like the Flight of Five Locks bring visitors from near and far, there is opportunity to capitalize on it as a recreational destination through amenity investment.



### *Enhancing Paddler Access*

Although paddler amenities are generally well positioned in this region, two locations were identified where they would benefit from investment.

- Widewaters Marina near downtown Lockport provides ample amenities for paddlers and boaters alike but is located about two miles from downtown Lockport, which would be a long walk for visitors who want to access off-trail services. To the extent that a launch could be installed closer to downtown, paddlers would have better access to the active downtown.
- Bushnell's Basin is a popular local destination for boating, with restaurants, a Canal Walk, and ice cream located along the water. Paddlers have a difficult time accessing this location because the low profile docks are too high out of the water to land. A purpose-built launch would open this location to paddlers.



### *Enhancing the Bicycling Experience*



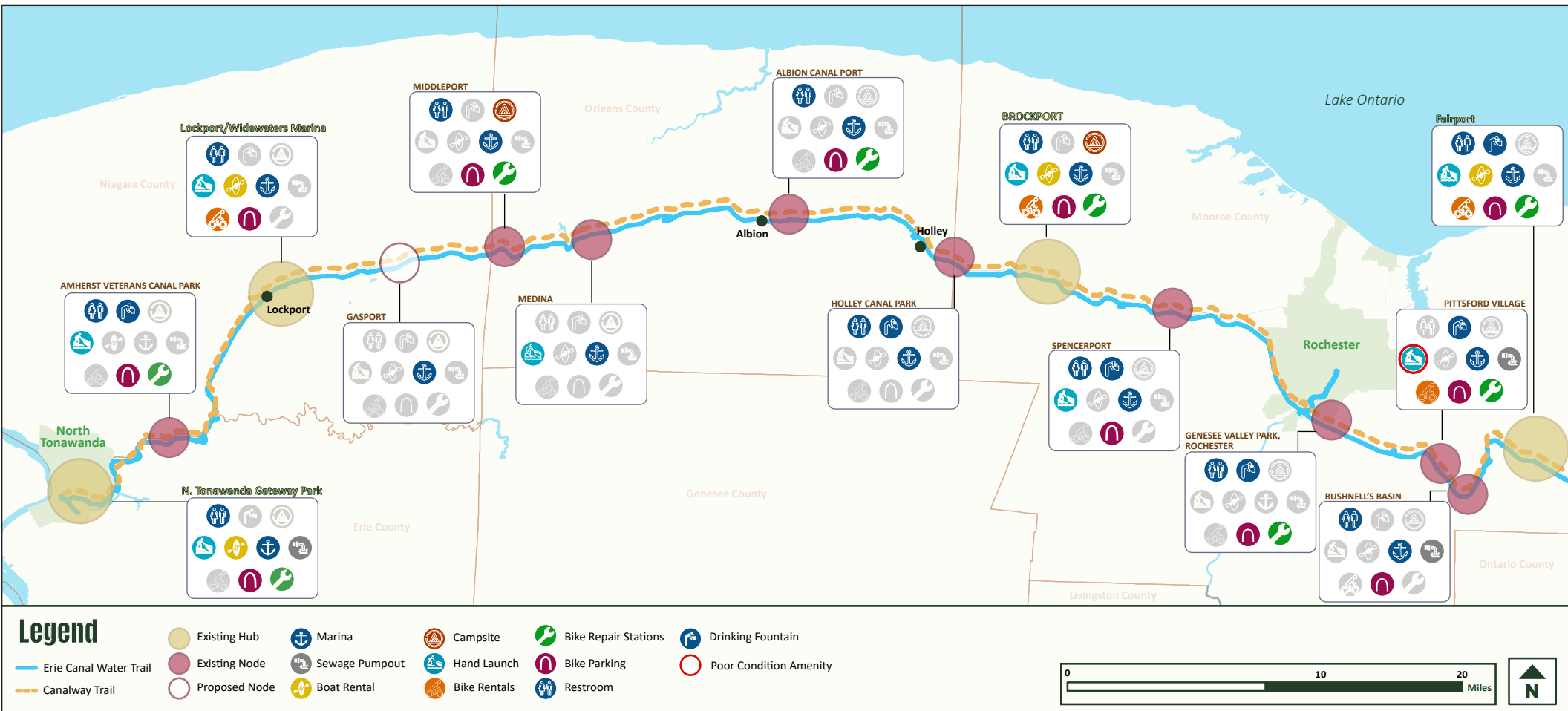
Similar to paddlers, amenities geared towards bicyclists are generally plentiful.



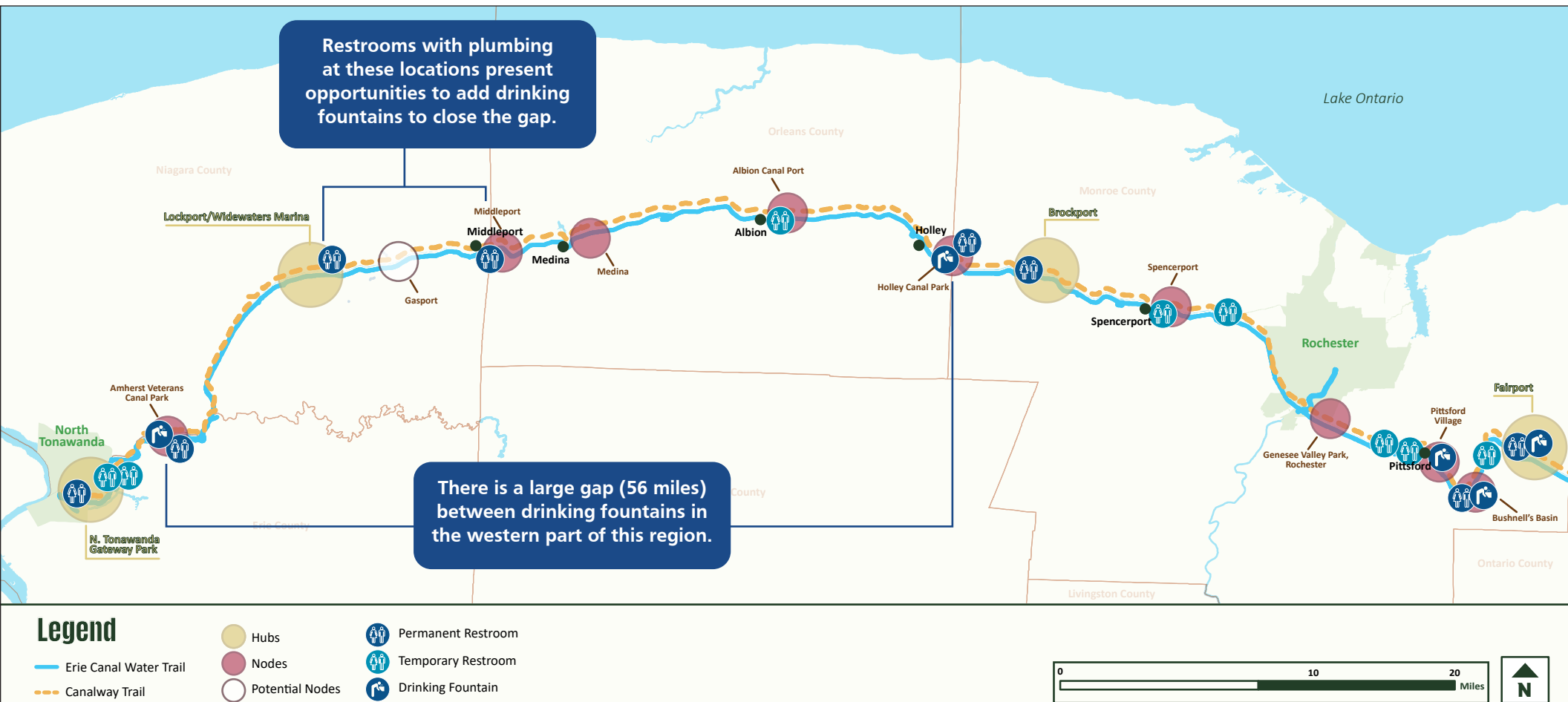
Two needs were identified for this user group.

- Hubs have strong amenities for bicyclists such as bike repair stations and bike rentals, but these are less plentiful at nodes. Additional bike repair stations should be added to node locations.
- Though the Erie Canalway Trail runs alongside the Canal throughout this region, it crosses back and forth and at times is on the opposite side of amenity centers. For example, near Bushnell's Basin, bicyclists can see shops, restaurants, and restrooms on the opposite side of the canal but it isn't obvious how to get to them. Enhanced wayfinding in this region could increase awareness of shared amenities like restrooms and drinking fountains for Erie Canalway Trail users.

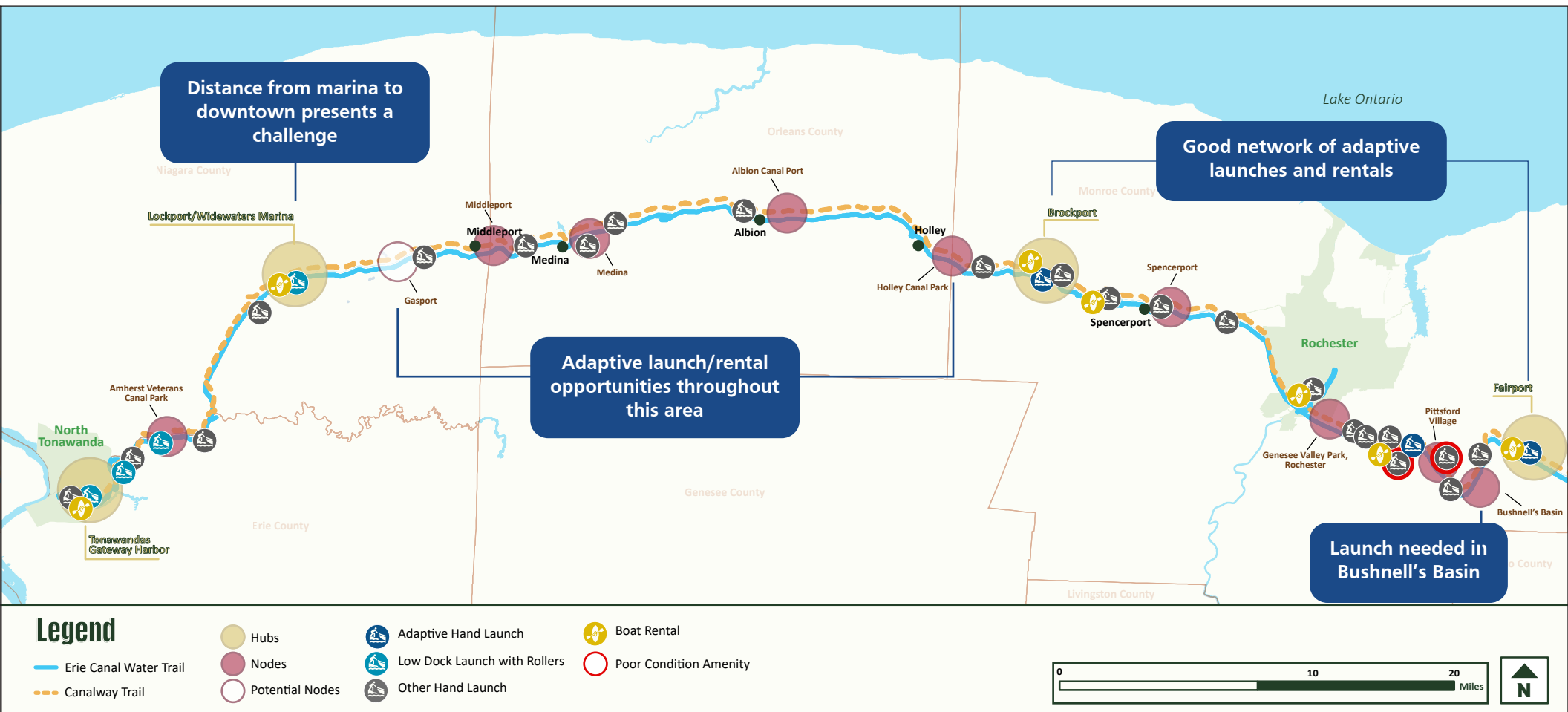
## MAP 4.23. Existing Hub and Node Amenities, Region 4



## MAP 4.24. Existing Shared Amenities, Erie Canal and NYS Canalway Water Trail, Region 4



## MAP 4.25. Existing Paddler Amenities, Region 4

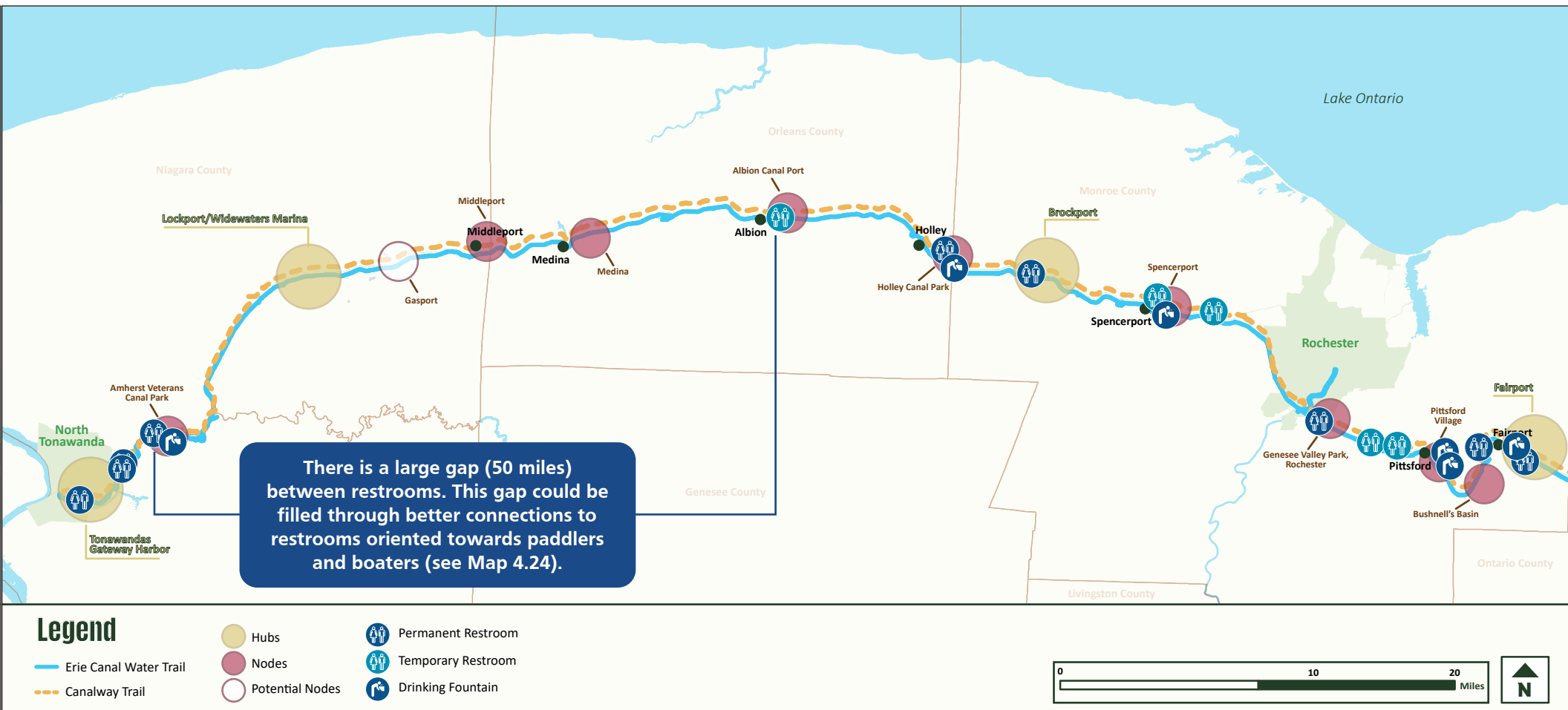




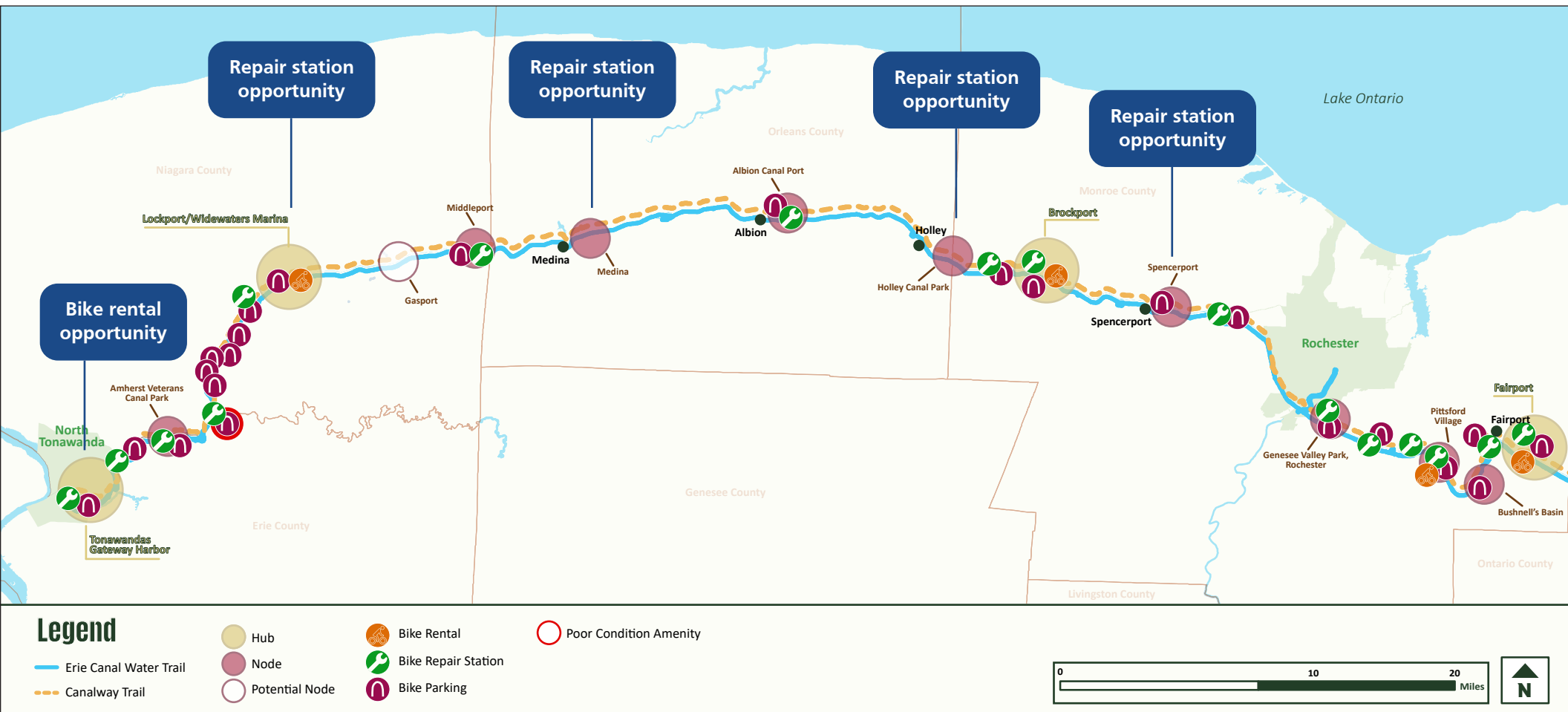
## MAP 4.26. Existing Boater Amenities, Region 4



## MAP 4.27. Existing Shared Amenities, Erie Canalway Trail, Region 4



**MAP 4.28. Existing Bicyclist Amenities, Region 4**



## TABLE 4.4 Summary of Amenity Needs, Region 4

Hub/Node Name	Type	Amenities Needed	Municipality	County	Erie Canalway Trail Jurisdiction(s)	Land Jurisdiction(s)
Tonawanda Gateway Park	Hub	Drinking Fountain Bike Rental Adaptive Hand Launch	Tonawanda	Erie	Canal Corporation	Other
Amherst Veterans Canal Park	Node		Amherst	Erie	Canal Corporation	Canal Corporation
Lockport/Widewaters Marina	Hub	Drinking Fountain (potential) Bike Repair Station Adaptive Hand Launch	Lockport	Niagara	Clty of Lockport Canal Corporation	Canal Corporation Other
Gasport	Potential Node	Restroom Hand Launch Bike Rack Bike Repair Station	Royalton	Niagara	Canal Corporation	Canal Corporation Other
Middleport	Node	Hand Launch Drinking Fountain (potential)	Middleport	Niagara	Niagara County Canal Corporation	Canal Corporation Other
Medina	Node	Bike Rack Bike Repair Station	Medina	Orleans	Canal Corporation	Canal Corporation Other
Albion Canal Port	Node	Hand Launch	Albion	Orleans	Village of Albion Canal Corporation	Canal Corporation Other
Holley Canal Park	Node	Hand Launch Bike Rack Bike Repair Station	Holley	Orleans	Village of Holley Canal Corporation	Canal Corporation Other
Brockport	Hub	Drinking Fountain	Brockport	Monroe	Village of Brockport NYSDOT Canal Corporation	Canal Corporation Other
Spencerport	Node	Bike Repair Station	Spencerport	Monroe	NYSDOT Canal Corporation	Canal Corporation Other
Genesee Valley Park, Rochester	Node		Rochester	Monroe	Monroe County Canal Corporation	Canal Corporation Other
Pittsford Village	Node	Hand Launch Restroom	Pittsford Village	Monroe	Village of Pittsford Canal Corporation	Canal Corporation Other
Bushnell's Basin	Node	Hand Launch Bike Repair Station	Perinton	Monroe	Canal Corporation	Other
Fairport Village	Hub		Fairport	Monroe	Village of Fairport Canal Corporation	Other

"Erie Canalway Trail Jurisdiction" refers to the entity or entities that own this segment of the Erie Canalway Trail. "Land Jurisdiction" refers to the entity or entities that own either the land surrounding the Erie Canalway Trail, such as a park with amenities that the trail passes through, or land used for Erie Canal/NYS Canalway Water Trail access points.







## SECTION 5.

# Action Items

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This section identifies next steps based on the findings and recommendations from this study.

## Action Items

The following action items have been identified based on findings and recommendations of the existing amenity conditions analysis, best practices, and needs assessment. These actions will help to build on recent and ongoing investments in the recreational user experience to promote the Corridor's distinct sense of place, enhance the recreational user experience, and increase access for a wide range of users.



### Establish an Implementation Plan

Based on the needs and opportunities identified in this study, it is recommended that Erie Canalway work with owning jurisdictions to develop an implementation plan that prioritizes investments, establishes roles and responsibilities, identifies an implementation schedule, and aligns investments with capital budgets and grant funding opportunities. An implementation plan for Canal Corporation-owned land may be more specific than one for land owned by other entities, which would require buy-in from partner communities.



### Complete an Accessibility Assessment of Hubs and Nodes

Since hubs and nodes have been identified as places where investment should be focused, these locations are recommended as a first priority for detailed accessibility evaluation. The assessment would evaluate these areas against ADA standards, provide order of magnitude cost estimates to achieve compliance, and prioritize investments by location. Investments identified through this assessment could be included in the implementation plan.



### Engage with Community Partners

The findings and recommendations from this study should be shared with partner communities and stakeholders for their awareness and guidance on enhancing the recreational user experience. This will help communities understand where need for new investment has been demonstrated and help to focus investment on the system. This would also help position these communities to take advantage of future grant applications.



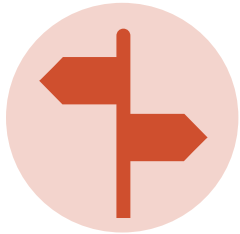
### Prepare Cost Estimates

Based on the needs identified in hubs and nodes in Section 4 and the above-noted accessibility assessment, Erie Canalway should work with owning jurisdictions to prepare an itemized priority list for amenity investments, assign a unit cost to each, and prepare an overall budget for amenity investments across the system. These estimates will provide a basis for obtaining additional funding for investments through grants and other programs. Order of magnitude unit cost ranges for key amenities are provided at the end of this section.



### Explore Opportunities for Private Partnership

Communities like Fairport have benefited greatly from private rental vendors operating along the Erie Canal/NYS Canalway Water Trail and the Erie Canalway Trail. Not only do these businesses fill a need by offering rental equipment that reduces barriers to first-time trail use, but they also activate the trail and trailside communities, serve as eyes and ears on the ground to identify unmet needs, and can become advocates to further enhance the system. With logical locations for rentals identified through the needs assessment, entities interested in investment are positioned to explore these opportunities and potential models.



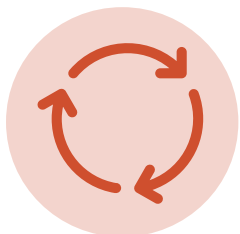
### Develop a Signage and Wayfinding Guidance Document

Enhanced wayfinding was one of the key needs identified through this study. A wayfinding guidance document would provide consistent guidelines to all trail jurisdictions as to signage typologies, level of detail for information included on signs, identify logical locations for signs, and identify opportunities for signage investment. Canal Corporation is in the process of developing wayfinding standards for signage on land they own. OPRHP also has wayfinding and signage standards for the Empire State Trail, which have been implemented on parts of the Erie Canalway Trail. Recognizing that there are many other jurisdictions along the Corridor who would not use these standards, this document could enhance consistency among jurisdictions while understanding that some amount of variation is likely across the trail system. Coordination among all entities installing signage on the trail is critical to achieving greater consistency of signage. This document would serve as a tool to aid in coordination.



### Establish Amenities Design Guide

Increased standardization of amenities along the Corridor through design guidelines would foster continuity along the Corridor and contribute to its distinct sense of place. Canal Corporation has already developed standards for amenities on land they own. While a design guide cannot be used to compel other entities who own land along the Corridor to comply, it can offer best practices for amenity types, grouping of amenities, and placement along the trail. The guide could also incorporate best practices for accessible and inclusive design, which would make it easier for the many communities along the Corridor to contribute to this goal. Erie Canalway has created a valuable resource in its *Hand Launch Facility Design Guide*. While it does not prescribe exactly the types of launches that must be installed, it provides details on the types of hand launch components that work well in various contexts. Similarly, an amenities design guide could expand this type of information to additional amenities.



### Develop a Workflow for Maintaining Data

In order to ensure the inventory completed for this study remains useful in the future and does not become outdated, a regular data maintenance workflow should be established. Best practices for data maintenance were identified in Section 3. A protocol that determines who will maintain data, how it will be maintained, and how frequently it will be updated should be established. Erie Canalway and Canal Corporation have discussed using volunteer resources and mobile data collection apps to support data maintenance. A potential first step would be to establish a pilot program with the Water Trail Stewards to train them on data maintenance and test out the process for making updates.



## Unit Costs

The following unit costs were developed to serve as a reference for planning and budgeting for amenity investments. The following caveats should be considered:

- This table reflects rough order of magnitude estimates.
- Costs presented are in 2024 dollars and do not account for escalation or inflation.
- Costs do not take into account the specific site characteristics of a given location. Further evaluation would be required through design to arrive at exact project cost estimates.
- Estimates include the cost of the amenity and shipping. Costs associated with installation, such as labor, supporting materials like concrete pads and footings, and any necessary infrastructure are not included. Costs associated with installation can be significant and must be considered in the total cost of installing any new amenity.
- Estimates do not include the cost of extending water or sewer infrastructure. The cost of extending water/sewer infrastructure will increase the total cost of drinking fountains and restrooms. The added cost of infrastructure will depend on proximity of existing public utilities, among other factors.

**TABLE 5.1. Amenity Unit Costs**

Amenity	Unit Cost Range of Equipment (not including installation)
Permanent Restroom	\$650,000+
Temporary Restroom	\$800 - \$2,000
Self-Composting Restroom	\$5,000 - \$15,000
Drinking Fountain	\$7,000 - \$8,500
Adaptive Hand Launch	\$30,000 - \$75,000
Bike Rack	\$1,000 - \$2,000
Bike Repair Station	\$2,200 - \$3,500

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