

PARKS AND RECREATION

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Saratoga County

The Zim Smith Trail Use Policy Committee

The Zim Smith Trail Use Policy Committee was established by the Economic Development Committee in September of 2007 to craft a series of policies that will guide the responsible development of an integrated, multiuse trail system for the use and enjoyment of County residents.

This report presents a series of draft policies for review and approval by the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors.

The draft policies cover four main areas:

- **Administration** – Guidelines for ongoing oversight and planning of the County trails system, trail maintenance, management of grant funds, and interagency coordination.
- **Public Safety** – Guidelines for evaluating the public safety impact of trail projects and integrating the input and concerns of town public safety officials in the planning process.
- **Strategic Planning** – Guidelines for establishing and maintaining a long-range strategic plan for trail development and maintenance, including coordination with trail development efforts in the municipalities located in Saratoga County. Future development of the Zim Smith Trail and other County-owned trails to connect an integrated trail network.
- **Usage Rules** – Guidelines for establishing, modifying, interpreting, and enforcing allowable uses and rules/laws to preserve and protect established trail systems and adjoining property.

POLICY GUIDELINES

I. Administration

Policy Goal

To provide the framework and infrastructure necessary to carry out the goals and policies contained throughout this document, including ongoing oversight and planning of the County trails system, trail maintenance, management of grant funds, and interagency/intermunicipality coordination.

Guidelines

1. The Economic Development Committee, as representatives of the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors, shall be authorized to apply for grants that are available to improve and maintain the County's trails system, and shall, acting on behalf of the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors, maintain fiduciary oversight of grant funds and the execution thereof.

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2. The Economic Development Committee shall be charged with prioritizing and coordinating trail development and maintenance projects.
3. The Saratoga County Planning Department shall serve as an information resource for voluntary organizations involved in the development and maintenance of trails, with the goal of directing volunteer resources in accordance with the County's strategic priorities.
4. The Economic Development Committee shall be charged with coordinating and, as necessary, developing, rules and guidelines associated with trail development and usage.
5. The Economic Development Committee, on behalf of the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors, shall be responsible for overseeing planning of the County trail system improvements, including improving existing trails with the use of volunteers; improving parking at the trail heads; and procuring signs for trail heads.

II. Strategic Planning and Management.

Policy Goal

To provide a Countywide blueprint that supports the coordinated planning and development of Saratoga County's trail system.

Guideline

1. The Economic Development Committee shall draft, monitor, and maintain a strategic plan to guide the development and ongoing maintenance of the County's trail system.

III. Public Safety

Policy Goal

To insure that all trail projects are appropriately assessed for potential public safety impacts, and that the County's trail system is designed in a manner that supports effective systems of emergency response.

Guidelines

1. The Economic Development Committee shall, as part of its standing review process for all trail projects, consult with, and integrate the concerns of the Saratoga County Sheriff's Department, Saratoga County Office of Emergency Services, and the DPW Director and their designees prior to final approval.
2. The Economic Development Committee shall work with the Fire and Police Chiefs or their Designees to establish appropriate signage and systems of trail markings that provide GPS coordinates for trail users to communicate with emergency response personnel in the event of emergency.

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APPENDIX A: GENERAL USAGE GUIDELINES

NOTE: These guidelines are intended as a starting point for the Economic Committee's development of trail-specific usage rules for projects not already governed by existing conservation restrictions or by state law. They are deliberately framed to be broadly inclusive in nature, with the Economic Development Committee (on behalf of the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors) authorized to develop special additional restrictions pursuant to public review as set forth in the policy.

Saratoga County's trails are multiuse and are open to all trail users, their animals, equipment and nonmotorized vehicles. Courtesy and consideration are of paramount importance to making and keeping the County-owned trails safe and usable for the community.

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

The provisions of this policy shall be construed to permit Saratoga County to define and enforce the proper multiuses of the trails and associated areas in accordance with these regulations and the intended use of said trails.

II. GUIDELINES FOR USE OF TRAILS AND ASSOCIATED AREAS

- a. No person shall enter upon private property from a Saratoga County-owned trail, or any area related thereto, except upon authorization of the owner or person having control of said property.
- b. Snowmobiles shall be permitted in season with no time restrictions on the Zim Smith Trail. Snowmobiles cannot exceed 25 mph on the trail system. Snowmobiles must yield to all other users of the trail system. The Economic Development Committee, with input from the Planning Department, will determine when the trail opens and closes for snowmobile use.
- c. No person shall use or operate a motorized vehicle (other than a snowmobile in season) or device of any kind, or a device or vehicle capable of motorized operation, with the exception of: authorized maintenance and County vehicles, emergency vehicles of the Police Department, Fire Department, Emergency Medical Services, or other emergency service.
- d. When approaching a walker, jogger, or runner, a bicycle or mountain bicycle rider must give the pedestrian the right-of-way. Wherever possible, pedestrians and bicyclists should keep to the right side of the trail. When passing, users should alert others with an audible signal, and should pass to the left only when it is safe to do so.
- e. Individuals with animals must have a leash or halter and lead rope available and keep animals under control at all times. Trail users must pick up after their animals.

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- f. Equine uses are allowed on the County trail system. Equine usage must occur only on the shoulders of the trail system. No equine usage is allowed on the paved or stonedust portion of the trail. Equine users must clean up after their animals.
- g. Trail users must stop at intersection where trails intersect with paved roads, and must obey all regulatory signs and pavement markings.
- h. All trail users must yield the right of way to police, fire, emergency medical services or other emergency vehicles.
- i. No person shall engage in disorderly conduct while within the confines of a Saratoga County Trail.
- j. No person shall consume or possess an open container of alcoholic beverages while within the confines of a Saratoga County Trail, or any area associated therewith.
- k. No person shall leave, place or dispose of trash or other material upon said Saratoga County Trail.
- l. No person shall solicit, sell, rent, advertise or display upon any Saratoga County Trail, or associated areas.
- m. No person shall distribute or fix any sign or any printed matter in or upon any Saratoga County Trail.
- n. All laws, by-laws, ordinances, regulations, executive orders, pertaining to public places shall apply to all paths, trails and areas related to Saratoga County.
- o. The following activities are prohibited on the County-owned trail system: ATV use, camping, open fires, removing resources, loitering, possession of firearms, hunting or trapping.