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RALPH LAUREN
Established 67

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KIPP
TECH VALLEY
MIDDLE SCHOOL

to see incorporated along the
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ARTISTIC LIGHTING

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CHAPTER 4

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

This chapter summarizes the different types of public engagement conducted throughout the planning process. To provide convenient, fun, and diverse opportunities for the public to participate, several different engagement strategies were used, including:

- Project and Citizen Advisory Committee
- Community Liaisons
- Stakeholder Meetings
- Public Events
- Project Website
- Online Survey

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

This section provides an overview of the public engagement conducted as part of the Patroon Creek Greenway Feasibility Study. Public engagement was a critical part of the planning and design process; it provided important opportunities to increase awareness about the project, gather local knowledge, better understand the community's needs, and identify, develop, and vet alternative trail alignments and proposed trail facilities.

Advisory Committees

Two advisory committees were established at the beginning of the project to guide the project and provide feedback on all project deliverables. Meetings were held approximately every three months and/or at major project milestones.

PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Project Advisory Committee (PAC) provided direction, technical support, and assisted with the coordination of other City projects and/or initiatives that may affect the Patroon Creek Greenway Feasibility Study. Additionally, the PAC reviewed interim project deliverables and provided feedback and guidance to the Project Team. The following organizations participated in the PAC:

- City of Albany, Dept. of Engineering
- City of Albany, Dept. of Fire & Emergency Services
- City of Albany, Dept. of General Services

- City of Albany, Dept. of Planning & Development
- City of Albany, Dept. of Police, Division of Traffic Engineering
- City of Albany, Dept. of Recreation
- City of Albany, Dept. of Water
- City of Albany, Office of Special Events
- Albany County Water Purification District
- Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA)
- Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC)
- Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC)
- NYS Department of Transportation, Region 1

CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) was comprised of a diverse group of stakeholders who were able to represent community concerns, needs, and desires. The CAC helped review and resolve feedback received from stakeholders and community members, reviewed and provided feedback on draft project deliverables, advised the Project Team on public outreach strategies, and assisted with the advertisement of public events. The following organizations participated in the CAC:

- Arbor Hill Neighborhood Association
- West Hill Neighborhood Association
- Sheridan Hollow Neighborhood Association
- Ten Broeck Triangle Neighborhood Association

- Upper Washington Neighborhood Association
- Albany Public Library
- Albany School District
- University at Albany (SUNY), Facilities Management
- Common Councils, Ward 3, 5, 11, & 12
- Downtown BID
- Albany Bicycle Coalition
- Albany Pine Bush Preserve
- Friends of Tivoli

Community Liaisons

Inclusive engagement that empowers the local community and builds a sense of ownership was an important component of the planning process and will continue to be critical aspect of the project as it moves forward into design and implementation. Several portions of the proposed Greenway trail overlap with or are adjacent to Environmental Justice populations and a variety of engagement strategies were used to engage the communities impacted by this project.

To effectively engage local residents and affected stakeholders, two part-time Community Liaisons were hired to assist the Project Team throughout the entirety of the Patroon Creek Greenway Feasibility Study. The Community Liaisons were responsible for identifying stakeholders and appropriate methods of outreach, assisting with event advertisement, facilitating and participating in public events, and reviewing and providing feedback on draft project deliverables.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: OVERVIEW

**PAC****CAC****2** Advisory Committees**50+** Stakeholder Interviews**8+** Public Events + Targeted Outreach**350+**
responses generated from the
online public survey**1** Project Website

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT (CONT.)

Stakeholder Meetings

Stakeholder Meetings were designed to obtain key information from individual stakeholders and/or interested/affected groups and organizations regarding the project. The Project Team worked with the advisory committees and community liaisons to identify key stakeholders.

Stakeholder meetings were conducted with the following organizations and agencies to discuss project challenges, opportunities, concerns, and answer any questions:

- National Grid
- Albany Housing Authority
- Albany County Water Purification District
- City of Albany Department of Water and Water Supply
- New York State Department of Transportation, Region 1
- Federal Highway Administration

Additionally, over 40 individual conversations were held with community organizations, business owners, and residents.

Public Events

Public events were held at key milestones in the planning process to gather local knowledge and solicit feedback on proposed improvements and opportunities along the Patroon Creek Greenway corridor. All public events were designed to be convenient, fun, and interactive.

KIPP TECH VALLEY TRUNK OR TREAT EVENT

The Project Team participated in KIPP Tech Valley's Trunk or Treat event that was held on October 27, 2022. The event was well attended (over 50 students and families), and people of all ages showed interest in the Patroon Creek Greenway project. The Project Team set-up boards to gather feedback related to the community's vision for the trail and trail amenity preferences.

DEMONSTRATION EVENT

The Project Team hosted an event on November 3, 2021 along the public right-of-way in front of KIPP Tech Valley Middle School. As part of this event, the proposed trail location was temporarily defined by a mowed path that included artwork from the students at KIPP and a "Story Walk" that included facts about Patroon Creek and Tivoli Preserve in order to demonstrate how an off-road multi-use trail would "feel" in this location. Approximately twelve people attended this event.

POP-UP EVENTS

A series of public pop-up events were hosted in May and June 2022 to share the proposed Patroon Creek Greenway alignment with the community and solicit feedback on potential trail facility types and amenities. The public pop-ups were held at the following locations:

- Tulip Fest under the Sustainability Tent on Saturday May 7 (11AM-6PM)
- Empire State Plaza Farmer's Market on Wednesday May 18 (10AM-2PM)
- Honest Weight Food Co-op on Thursday May 19 (4:30PM-6:30PM)
- In front of the Washington Avenue Library Branch on Thursday June 2 (4PM-7PM)

Public feedback at all events reinforced the community's desire for more protected trail facilities that provide a safe space for all ages and abilities.

OTHER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The Patroon Greenway community liaisons also hosted and tabled at several community events over the course of the project to increase awareness about the project and gather feedback. These additional activities included:

- Tabling at UAlbany to gather feedback from University students
- Tabling at the Albany Youth Employment Fair
- Engagement with students and teachers at Sheridan Hollow Preparatory Academy and Albany School of Humanities

Project Website

A project website (<https://patroongreenway.com/>) was created at the onset of the planning process. The website was frequently updated and provided information regarding public events, draft project deliverables, and an overview of the project's purpose. The website also included a comment form, enabling the public to submit questions and feedback directly to the Project Team.

ONLINE PUBLIC SURVEY

An online public survey was launched in January 2022, and a total of 361 responses were collected from the two-part survey. The first part of the survey focused on bicycle access, current comfort cycling in the City of Albany, and preferred bicycle facility types and trail amenities. The second part of the survey solicited feedback regarding the public's preferred route for the Patroon Creek Greenway. The survey also provided the opportunity to submit open-ended comments and suggestions related to other potential trail routes and connections.

The survey was advertised by posting 11x17 laminated posters in several local businesses, offices, and bus shelters in and adjacent to the study area. Public notices advertising the survey were also displayed utilizing various social media platforms. Full survey results can be found in Appendix C.

BENITA LAW-DIAO | COMMUNITY LIAISON

Benita Law-Diao is a licensed dietitian and public health nutritionist who worked for the New York State Department of Health for 32 years. Much of her career has focused on public health, nutrition, and hunger prevention. She also worked as a Commissioned Officer and Contract Worker for the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Benita continues to be an active volunteer with several community organizations. She is also passionate about enhancing recreation access and resources to the City of Albany's youth. Benita assisted the Project Team by conducting over 40 individual stakeholder conversations, facilitating public events, and providing feedback on project deliverables.



▲ Benita Law-Diao tabling at the demonstration project at KIPP Middle School

SALAH HARRIS | COMMUNITY LIAISON

Salah Harris is currently a student at UAlbany where is active member of the student body. As a native to the Albany area, much of his work outside of his studies is community-focused. In addition to his activity on campus, Salah runs a non-profit that provides opportunities and mentorship to local youth. Salah also works with the City's Office of Community Engagement and the Violence Prevention Task Force.

Salah assisted the Project Team by conducting stakeholder interviews, tabling at UAlbany, facilitating public events, providing feedback on public engagement and project materials, and managing the project's Instagram account.



▲ Salah Harris providing project information to students at UAlbany

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT (CONT.)

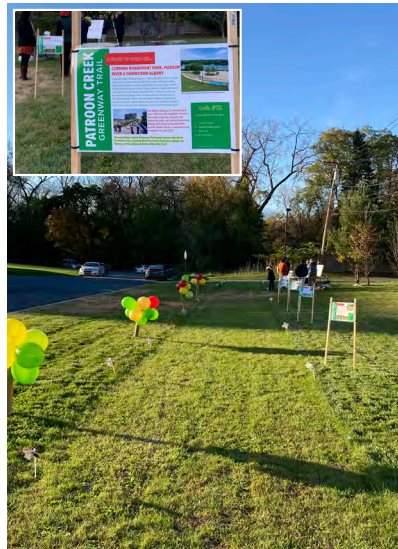


▲ KIPP Tech Valley Trunk or Treat Event. Parents and students shown placing sticker dots on preferred amenities for the Greenway.

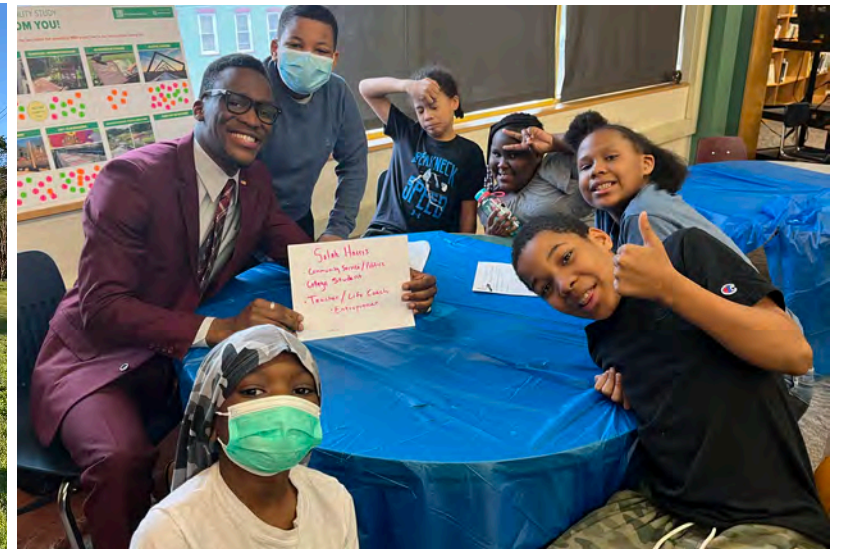
▲ KIPP Tech Valley Trunk or Treat Event. Student artwork displayed on the sidewalk as part of the “Slow Streets, Safe Streets” temporary demonstration project,



◀ **Albany Bike Coalition Slow Ride Event.** Bike tour through the Arbor Hill / West Hill neighborhoods and tour of the Underground Railroad Education Center.



▲ **Temporary Demonstration Event.** Attendees shown participating in the “Story Walk” along the temporary multi-use path proposed in front of KIPP Tech Vally Middle School



▲ **Youth Engagement.** Community Liaison, Salah Harris interacting with students from Sheridan Preparatory Academy.