



**New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation**

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

ERIK KULLESEID
Commissioner



**Niagara River Greenway Commission
Greenway Related Projects and Programs**

**Artpark Trail Connector Project Submission
May 4th, 2022**

Niagara River Greenway Commission Consultation and Review Form

Date of Submittal:

Project Registration Number (*office use only*):

Type of Review Required (please check one):

- Mandatory Consultation for proposals seeking Greenway Funding**
 Voluntary Review and/or Endorsement for proposals not seeking Greenway Funding

PROJECT SPONSOR INFORMATION

Name:	New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Mailing Address:	P.O. Box 1132, Niagara Falls
State:	NY
Zip Code:	14303-0132
Federal ID#:	14-740026K
Charities Registration #:	

PROJECT TYPE (Please check only ONE)

- Trail Development / Improvement Interpretation / Cultural Monuments
 Ecosystem / Riparian Habitat Restoration Stewardship
 Niagara River Greenway Placemaking / Public Access / Wayfinding

FUNDING COMMITTEE

- Host Community Standing Committee Ecological Standing Committee
 Buffalo and Erie County Standing Committee State Parks Standing Committee
 Unsure at this time / N/A

TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED

ADDITIONAL FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES

Source	Amount
New York Power Authority	\$3 Million
New York Works	\$1.5 Million
Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation	\$3 Million

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name:	<u>Artpark Trail Connector Project</u>
Location (include GPS coordinates if possible):	Earl W. Brydges Artpark State Park (43.163667, -79.040507)
Project Site Address:	450 S 4th St, Lewiston
State:	New York
Zip Code:	14092
Minor Civil Division(s):	
County:	Niagara
Project Proponent Property Interest (own, lease, easement or other):	

AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL

Name:	<u>Michael Petti</u>
Title:	Assistant Capital District Manager
Business Address:	1 Letchworth State Park, Castile
State:	New York
Zip Code:	14427
Work Number:	585-493-3608
Cell Number:	585-469-5271
E-Mail Address:	michael.petti@parks.ny.gov

PROJECT POINT OF CONTACT

Name:	<u>Eleanor Gaddi</u>
Title:	Landscape Architect
Organization / Firm:	New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Business Address:	3160 DeVeaux Woods Drive, Niagara Falls
State:	New York
Zip Code:	14305
Work Number:	716-299-0810
Cell Number:	716-338-5598
E-Mail Address:	eleanor.gaddi@parks.ny.gov

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Please attach material which responds to the following six items in the order that they are presented.

1. **In a brief paragraph, describe the project and its purpose, how and when it will be accomplished, and why it is important.**

The Artpark Trail Connector Project offers the opportunity to link the Shoreline Trail to the heart of Artpark State Park through an experiential switchback route and a direct path down the Niagara Escarpment. Pedestrians and bicyclists shall both benefit from this new connection. The design of the Switchback is developed organically, bearing in mind existing site conditions such as topography, slopes, and vegetation, to produce an intuitive accessible route that will have the least impact to the site. The total project cost of \$9 million encompasses planning, design, and construction of various trail improvements throughout the entire park. The \$1.5 million requested from the Niagara River Greenway will solely be allocated towards construction of the Switchback and Scramble along the Escarpment. The Switchback will be a 6' wide asphalt trail and shall be a continuation of the same surfacing as the Shoreline Trail. Another way to access the park is through a direct path called the Scramble which will be built utilizing locally sourced stone blocks and will provide a more exploratory and informal stepping-stone approach down the Escarpment. A scenic overlook is also proposed at the top of the Scramble, allowing visitors to take in the views of Artpark and the Niagara River Gorge and also to provide interpretation about the park and surrounding trails. A landscape architecture firm shall be hired to complete the design and construction documents and a construction management firm shall be hired to oversee the construction progress.

2. **Referring to the Niagara River Greenway Plan, clearly document and describe how the proposed project will advance the Niagara River Greenway vision including the goals, principles, and criteria that define that vision.**

Referring to Chapter 3 of the Niagara River Greenway Plan, the Artpark Connector Trails Project adheres by the following guiding principles and goals of the Niagara River Greenway Commission:

Guidelines

- **Accessibility:** The goal of the project is to improve public access for all patrons to Parks along the Niagara Gorge. The Switchback will be a multi-use path that will be constructed with a gradual slope to make it accessible to all people of any age or physical condition. The Switchback trail connection shall not have a slope that exceeds 4.5% to eliminate the need for handrails on both sides of the trail. The use of guard rail is not desired to maintain the rustic aesthetic of the Niagara Escarpment.
- **Connectivity:** There currently is not a direct link to Artpark from other gorge parks such as Niagara Falls, Whirlpool, and Devil's Hole State Parks. The proposed project will fill in this gap in the Niagara Gorge Trail System while also filling in a gap between Artpark and the Shoreline Trail. This new connection to the Shoreline Trail would broaden the appeal of the trail system and link this upland trail closer to the waterfront.
- **Public Well-Being:** The Switchback Trail will promote physical wellness to patrons as they bike, walk or run on the trail. The location of the trail along the Niagara Gorge and in the forested area will promote emotional wellness and allow patrons make stronger connections to nature and Parks.

Goals

Improve Access/ Make Connections: Parks will follow the Greenways goals of improving access by bridging a gap between the Parks and the Shoreline Trail. The trail will also follow ADA guidelines, making this an accessible trail to all people of any age or physical condition.

3. **Define the budget for the total proposed project and include costs for the following:**

Planning	\$1,400,000
Construction	\$7,600,000
Acquisition	\$0
Administration	\$0
Operation and Maintenance / Year	\$0
TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$9,000,000

4. **Identify all sources of funding and the amount of funding expected from each source. Identify and quantify funds that are already on hand or have been allocated for the proposed project. Explain how the project will be operated and maintained.**

There are three other sources of funding for the Artpark Connector Trails Project. New York Power Authority and Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation are both contributing \$3,000,000 each and New York Works (Parks) is contributing \$1,500,000. All Niagara River Greenway requested funding will go towards construction of the Switchback and Scramble portion of the project. The remainder of the total project cost will be allocated towards planning and construction of other project components such as parking lot improvements. Once construction of the Switchback and Scramble is finished, it will be operated and maintained by New York State Parks.

5. **Describe the measures taken at the local level to gain community and government support for this project (hearings, petitions, public surveys, resolutions of support or other methods). If this project has been cited or described in a local planning document or some equivalent thereof, attach copies of that documentation highlighting the sections that are relevant to the proposed project. Describe the role of municipal agencies, stakeholder groups, consultants, volunteers or others who will be involved in the proposed project.**

Artpark and the design consultants, SO-IL and West 8, developed the Power Artpark 2030 Vision Plan, which also identified the importance of the connection between Artpark and the Shoreline Trail. The Vision Plan identified a direct connection to the Shoreline Trail via a switchback trail.

The purpose of the project is to create this connection and make a unique, interactive, and artistic experience that provides breathtaking views of the Niagara Gorge. The Plan will further develop Artpark as an internationally recognized, financially sustainable destination where the arts, ecology, technology and culture interact on a broad scale with unprecedented impact year-round.

Design of the Switchback Trail started at the beginning of 2022; implementing the project goals outlined in

the vision plan. A committee was formed to bring together critical stakeholders from Artpark & Company and Parks. The committee has worked with the design consultant, Bergmann & Associates, Inc., to give feedback and direction on the design of the project.

Discussions at regularly scheduled bi-weekly meetings and on-site meetings resulted in the identification of design criteria to incorporate through the design process. Overall, both groups decided that this project should take advantage of the views of the Niagara Gorge by treating this trail as a main entrance into the park. The trail design will provide opportunities for potential future art installations to further connect Artpark with arts and nature.

6. **Describe and document the environmental setting and existing conditions at the proposed project site. If you are not the owner of the property include a letter(s) or resolution(s) evidencing support for the project by the owner. Provide photographs, conceptual plans and drawings that show the site as it presently exists and how the site will change with the addition of the proposed project. Describe how your project will comply with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). The existence of wetlands, significant upland and aquatic habitats, and plant or animal species that are classified as rare, threatened, or endangered should be noted. Explain how such natural resources will be protected and/or enhanced. Cite any relevant project-related studies.**

The steering committee has prioritized environmental conservation while designing this project. The Environmental Analyst for the NYS Parks Niagara Region has been involved in multiple project design meetings and is currently reviewing this project as a Type 1. The project site was select to lessen the impact on mature trees and follow the existing grade of the land. Cut and fill will be minimized as much as possible to reduce impacts to existing vegetation. There are no rare, threatened, or endangered species, wetlands, or significant communities in the project area, thus minimizing the projects potential to negatively impact the existing environment. Refer to Attachment A for photographs

7. **Please attach the proposed project timeline, identify any relevant milestones, and provide an estimated date for project completion/opening. If funded, it is expected that the project sponsor or point of contact will notify the Commission of the project opening date as it nears completion. (Note: This addition to the application was made September 2018.)**

The proposed project timeline is listed below:

Artpark Trails Connector Project Timeline	
Design	2/4/2022
Advertisement	10/3/2022
Bid opening	11/1/2022
Construction Start	3/1/2023
Construction Complete	12/31/2023

Attachments:

Attachment A: Maps

Attachment B: Site Photos

Attachment C: Concept Design from Bergmann & Associates, Inc.

Attachment D: Excerpts from the Power Artpark 2030 Vision Plan

Attachment A: Maps

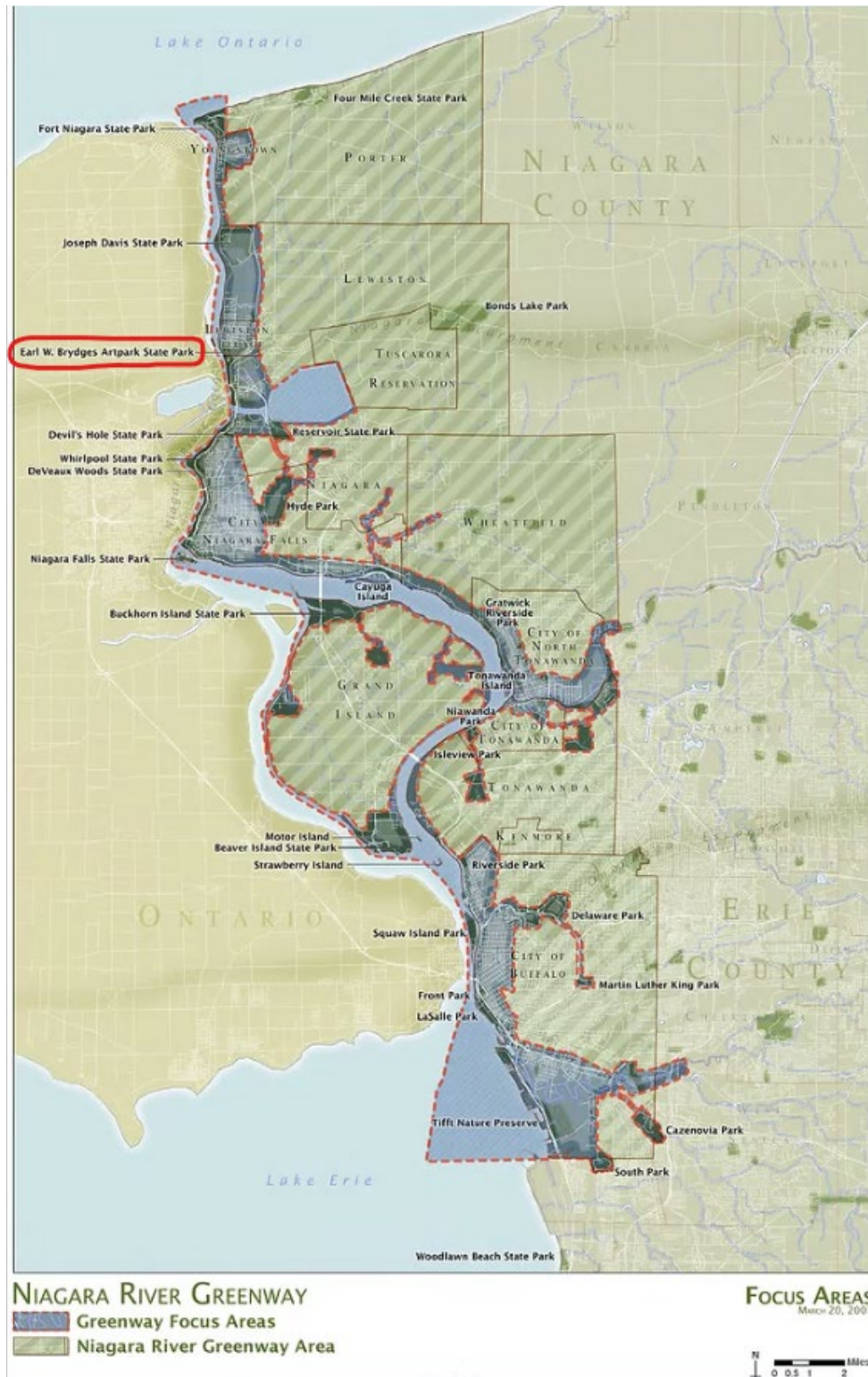


Figure 1. Is the Niagara River Greenway Map which outlines focus areas for potential projects. Artpark is circled in red and falls within the focus area.

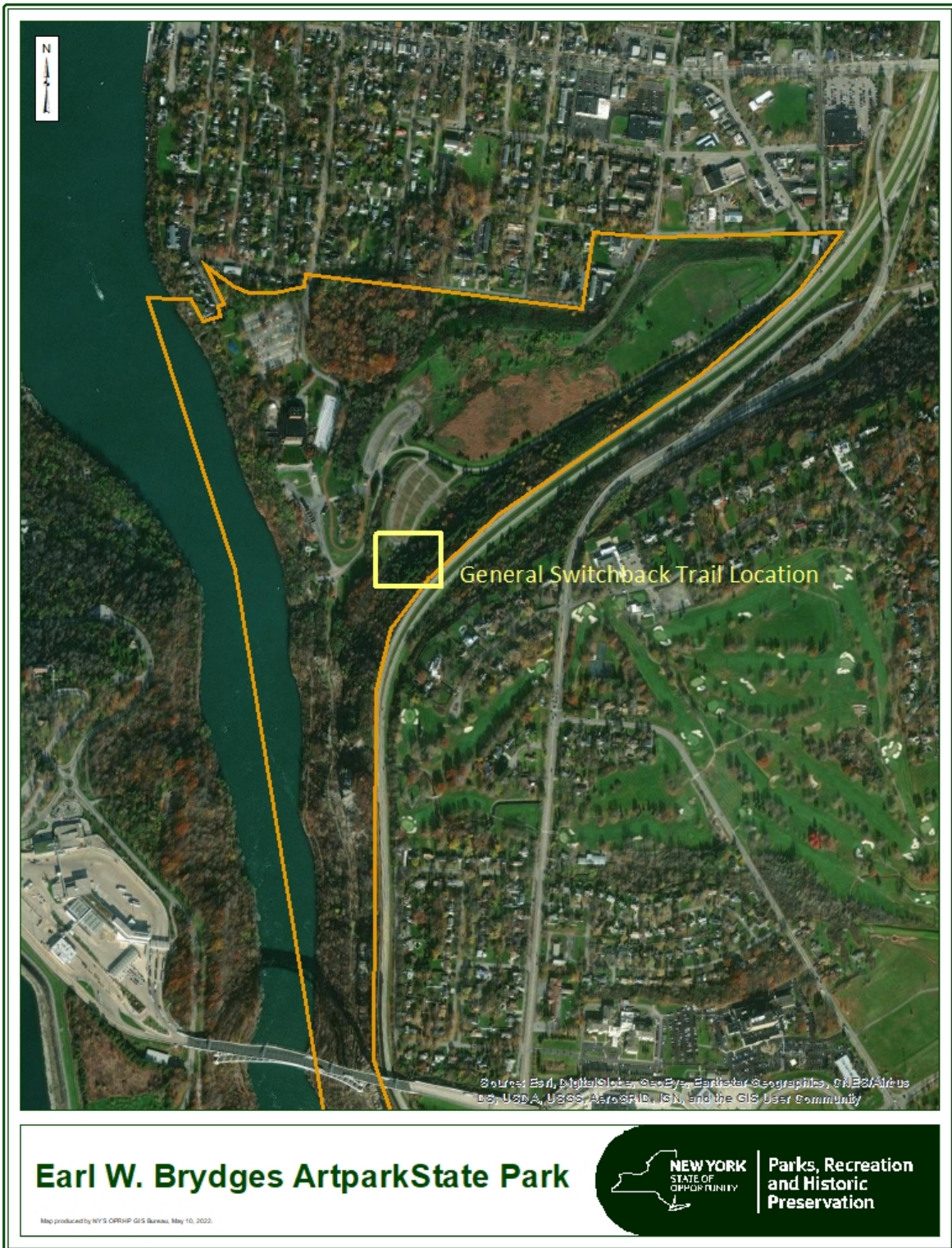


Figure 2. Outlines Artpark and the Switchback Trail location.

Attachment B: Site Photos



Photo 1. Shoreline Trail along the escarpment, facing north.



Photo 2. Shoreline Trail along the escarpment, facing north.



Photo 3. View of the Niagara Gorge, facing north.



Photo 4. Shoreline Trail at the top of the escarpment, facing east.



Photo 5. Approximate location of the proposed overlook.

Attachment C: Concept Design from Bergmann & Associates, Inc.



Figure 4. Concept Design for Switchback Trail created by Bergmann & Associates, Inc..

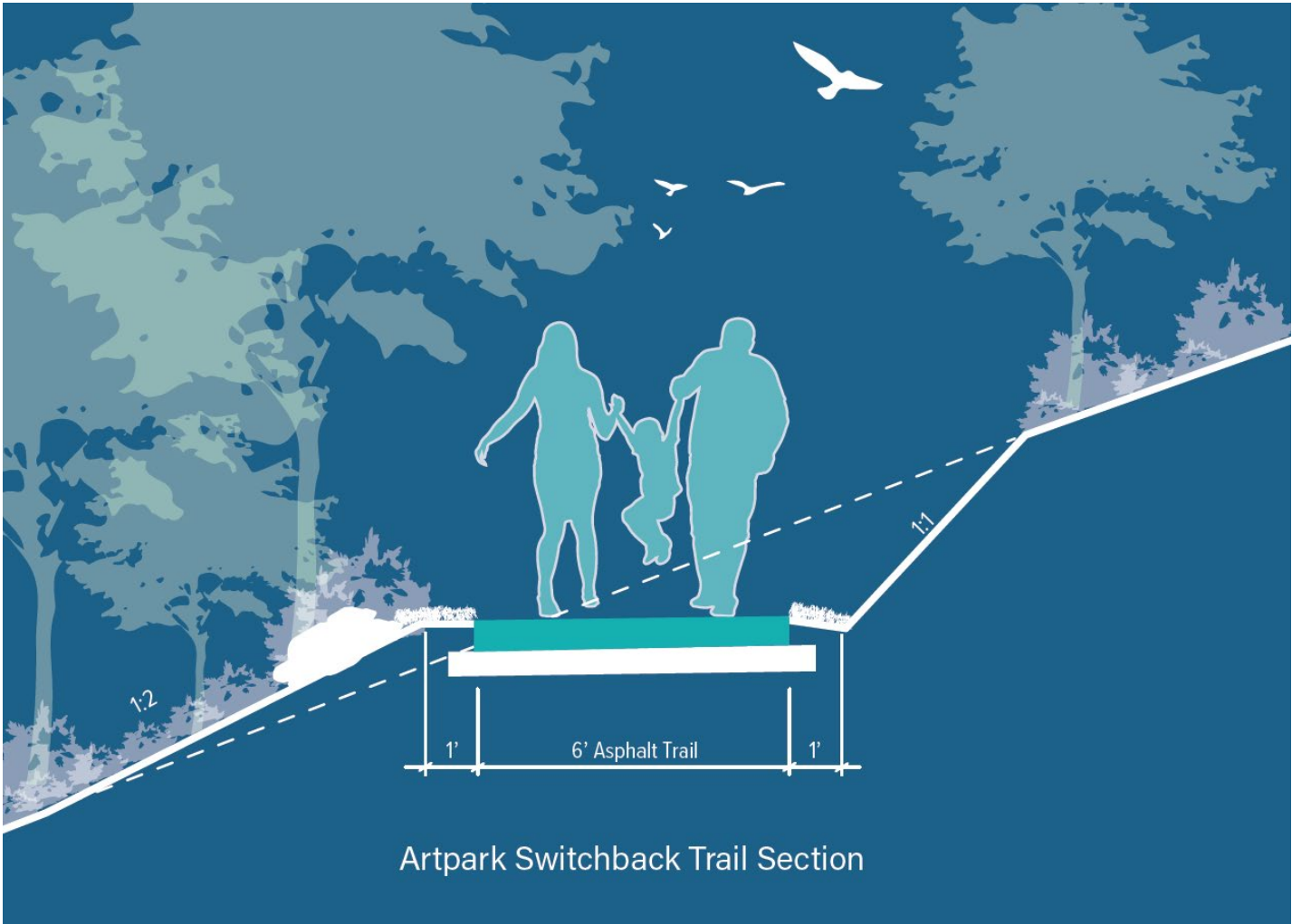
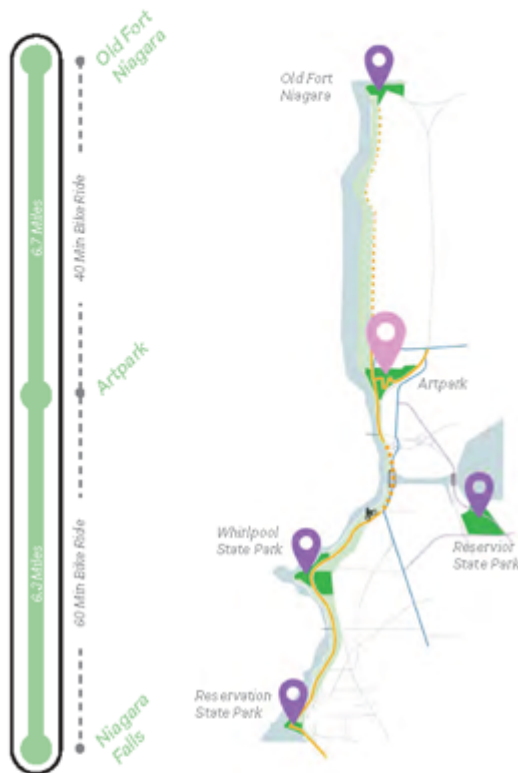


Figure 5. Is a design example from Bergmann & Associates, Inc.. The figure outlines the dimensions of the trail in relation to the slope of the escarpment.

TAPPING INTO REGIONAL CONNECTIONS



Connect to Regional Bike Routes



Proposed Empire State Trail Route



Bikeway Connection from Niagara Scenic Parkway

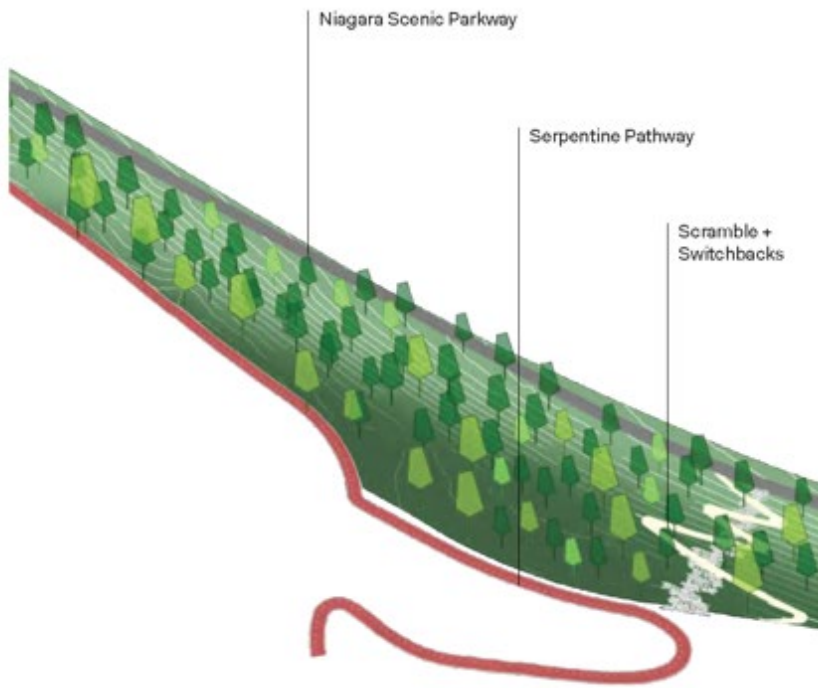
Starting from Niagara Falls, cyclists can embark on a 60-minute ride to Artpark, followed by a 40-minute bike ride to Old Fort Niagara. Artpark is integrated into the Niagara River trail system and becomes a key destination in the ideal sequence for a regional biking experience. The Greenway Ridge access is a great segway to experience Artpark by allowing visitors to travel through the heart, without passing by on the periphery. This connection puts Artpark on the local map as a cultural destination, but also regionally connects it to the Shoreline Trail.

Locally, the Serpentine Pathway expands past Artpark along S 4th Street, loops on Center Street, and returns to Artpark along Portage Road to generate a circuit for better circulation to the village of Lewiston. This route can also be used as a shuttle route to enhance events circulation and parking strategies.

LOOPING THROUGH THE VILLAGE



Local Connections



Niagara Scenic Parkway Bike Path Connection + Scramble



Key



Governors Island Switchback

The design of the Greenway Ridge is developed organically, working with the existing ridge topography to produce an intuitive access route. The site contours will guide the switchbacks while providing universally accessible slopes. This path will be accompanied by locally sourced stone blocks, which provide an additional, more exploratory stepping-stone approach: the Scramble. On the right, is the precedent of Governors Island as a reference to be explored in future design phases.



Governors Island Rock Scramble