



*Suffolk County Legislator Sarah S. Anker*

## **Rails to Trails Recreational Path 2016 Fall Update**



- The Rails to Trails Recreational Path runs along a 10-mile strip of abandoned LIRR right-of-way which is presently owned by LIPA. The path runs east-west and parallel to Route 25A through the hamlets of Mount Sinai, Miller Place, Sound Beach, Rocky Point, Shoreham, and Wading River. Part of the project design will consider incorporating the new Tesla Science Museum in Shoreham as a “trail head” that will provide a parking location for the use of the recreational trail.
- The Rails to Trails project, currently being facilitated by my office, was introduced in 2001 by advocates of the Setauket-Port Jefferson Greenway Trail, which was recently completed by the NYS Department of Transportation. The project is currently funded by a little over \$10 million in Federal and State grants. The majority of the funding is under the Federal Highway Administration’s Scenic Byways grant and must be utilized exclusively for a recreational path project.
- The Suffolk County Department of Public Works has chosen the RBA Group, a qualified engineering firm, to complete the planning and design for the construction of the path. Throughout the design phase, RBA will implement a community outreach program and solicit feedback from the local communities through multiple public hearings.
- The trail will be a walkable connection between local businesses, recreational areas, schools, and athletic fields. It will provide a safe outlet for residents to walk, run, and bike. The project will be a green transportation alternative that will reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, and encourage healthier lifestyles. In addition, the trail is in close proximity to many locally-owned businesses along 25A and will improve the local economy and promote ecotourism.
- In February 2016, Legislator Anker formed the Rails to Trails Civic Advisory Roundtable in an effort to keep the community informed and involved in the design phase of the project and to address issues and concerns residents may have as the project progresses. Each civic organization in the 6<sup>th</sup> legislative district has a representative at the roundtable meetings to provide valuable information and input in the development of the trail. This is supplemental to public hearings that will occur as the project moves forward.
- After overcoming several initial hurdles, the Rails to Trails project is back on track and moving full-steam-ahead. Currently, LIPA/PSEG is conducting and evaluating an aerial survey of the property. Simultaneously, The RBA Group is working on their conceptual plan to be presented and reviewed by the public at upcoming community meetings in early 2017.