



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



**Joseph B.  
Clarke Rail  
Trail**  
*New York*



## Joseph B. Clarke Rail Trail

New York

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You might expect a 4-mile rail-trail that passes through three downtowns to be excessively urban, but the quaint town centers on the Joseph B. Clarke Rail Trail are compact and surrounded by woodlands, sanctuaries, and parks.

Beginning in Tappan, the trail runs through the hamlets of Sparkill, Orangeburg, and Blauvelt in Rockland County. Although it rolls inland, it joins two other rail-trails that overlook the Hudson River from The Palisades. Already popular with local residents, the trail is expecting more visitors with the 2019 opening of a multiuse path on the Gov. Mario M. Cuomo Bridge, formerly known as the Tappan Zee Bridge.

The trail is named for Joseph B. Clarke, the 1969–1996

superintendent for Orangetown's parks and recreation department. He saw the possibilities of using two former railroad corridors in the area for recreation and commuting. His interest also sparked the creation of the connecting Old Erie Path and the Raymond G. Esposito Memorial Trail in nearby riverfront communities.

The three trails follow the corridors of the old New York & Erie Railroad and its affiliate, the Northern Railroad of New Jersey, which was primarily a passenger carrier. The Clarke trail traces the Northern Railroad from Tappan to Sparkill and the Erie main line from Sparkill through Orangeburg and Blauvelt. Northern's ridership dwindled in the 1930s. It was acquired by the Erie Railroad in 1942, and passenger service ended in 1966. The Erie survived under a variety of names until it became part of Conrail in 1976.

The trail starts in Tappan, a town steeped in Revolutionary War history. The DeWint House, which was built in 1700 and served as a temporary headquarters for George Washington during the war, is located 0.4 mile east on Oak Tree Road.

Heading north through hardwood forest alongside Sparkill Creek, the trail comes to a fork at Depot Square in Sparkill. The right fork joins the [Old Erie Path](#), which follows the old Northern Railroad corridor to the riverfront villages of Piermont and Grand View-on-Hudson and connects to the [Raymond G. Esposito Memorial Trail](#) in South Nyack. Take the left fork to stay on the Clarke trail and follow the Erie Railroad's main line.

In 1.3 miles, the path arrives in Orangeburg at a pedestrian bridge over NY 303 and crosses Greenbush Road. The hamlet is the former home of Camp Shanks, where 1.3 million GIs stopped before being shipped out to Europe and North Africa from Piermont during World War II. A museum in a simulated barracks about 400 feet north at 20 Greenbush Road tells their story.



# Joseph B. Clarke Rail Trail

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**States:** New York

**Counties:** Rockland

Length: 4.1miles

**Trail end points:** Oak Tree Road between Lawrence St. and Rockland Park Ave. (Tappan) to Western Hwy. S between Blauvelt Road and N. Troop Road (Blauvelt)

**Trail surfaces:** Asphalt

**Trail category:** Rail-Trail

**Trail activities:** Bike, Inline Skating, Wheelchair Accessible, Walking, Cross

## Parking & Trail Access

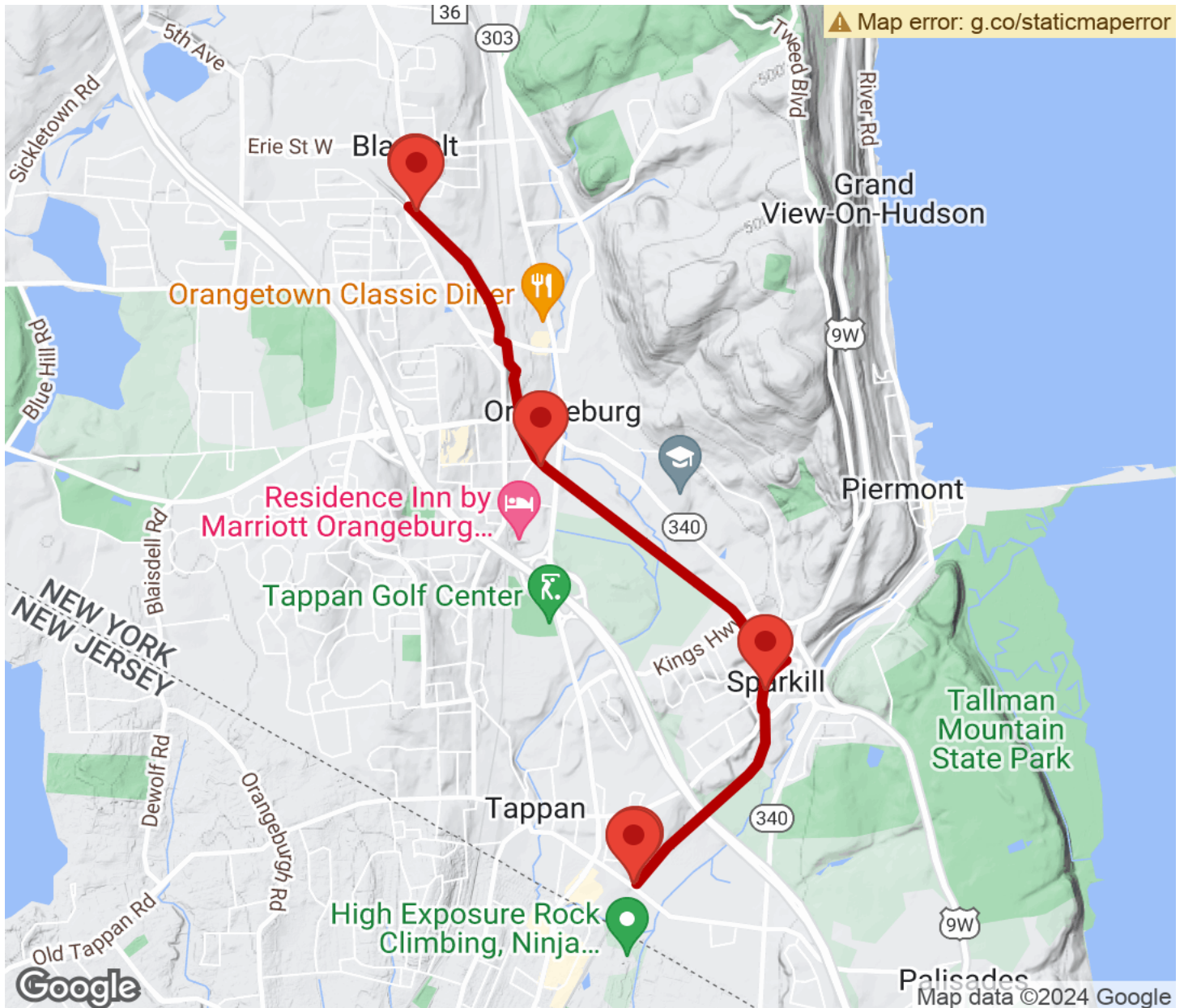
To reach the endpoint in Tappan from I-87/I-287, take Exit 13S to merge onto Palisades Interstate Pkwy. heading south. Go 5.4 miles, and take Exit 5S onto NY 303 S. Go 1.2 miles, and turn left onto Oak Tree Road. Go 0.2 mile, and look for trail parking on the left.

To reach the endpoint in Blauvelt from I-87/I-287, take Exit 13S to merge onto Palisades Interstate Pkwy. heading south. Go 4.2 miles, and take Exit 6E onto Orangeburg Road/County Road 20. Go 0.5 mile east, and turn left onto Western Hwy. S/ CR 15. Go 1.0 mile and look for the Blauvelt Free Library on your right. Trail parking is available here.



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- Trailhead
- Restroom
- Parking
- Water Fountain
- Tunnel