Trails = $$$

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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Topics of Discussion

- Amazing Progress
  - National Picture & RTC
  - Economic Benefits
- Applied Policy Strategies
  - FAST Act & Other Funding Sources
  - National Trail Town Program
- RTC’s Trail Policy Tools
  - T-MAP Suite
  - Policy-In-Action Strategies
- Q&A

Opportunity

U.S. Rail Network: 275,000 miles at the height

Today: 138,000 miles active

Voice of a Movement

- 1986, RTC founded, <250 miles of rail-trail
- 2014, >22,000 miles of rail-trail
- 160,000+ members and supporters

In the mid 1980’s 4-8K miles a year were being abandoned.
What We DO

We transform unused rail corridors into vibrant public spaces that engage, inspire and empower communities.

Our Take On Policy

Active transportation—human-powered mobility such as walking & bicycling—increases physical activity, provides balanced transportation choices & fosters economically vibrant communities with high quality of life.

Why Trails?

- Economic Development & Job Creation
- Health
- Community Connections
- Mobility
- Inclusion & Accessibility
- Environmental Protection

Where Are We Now?

- 22,389 miles of trail!
- Focus on networks
- Potential for 8,438 more miles of trail

Not Always Easy!

- NIMBY - Not In My Back Yard
- CAVE - Citizens Against Virtually Everything
- BANANA - Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anything

Transportation Potential

- ½ trips taken in America are under a 20-min bike ride (3 Miles), ¼ under 20-min walk (1 Mile).
- 30% traffic increase during school start/end.
- 50% walked/biked to school in 1969, 14% in 2004.
- 28% of trips in Minneapolis include walking/biking.
- Hundreds of millions of miles traveled on trails.
Equity
Trails provide a mode of traveling for people who cannot drive or do not own an automobile.
- 10 million+ US households do not own an automobile (2009)
- 40% of US adults cannot or do not drive (U.S. Census)

Economic Impact
- Recent Great Allegheny Passage studies have found $50 million in annual direct spending attributed to the trail, up from $7.26 million in 2002. Also, $7.5 million in annual wages.
- Outer Banks of North Carolina study found that the annual impact of cycling is more than nine times the one time cost of building the facilities!
- Bicycle recreation currently supports more than $924 million in tourism and resident spending each year, of which nearly $533 million is direct impact occurring annually, such as travel, equipment sales and restaurant expenditures.

Property Values

Health Care Savings
36% adults are overweight & 23% are obese
78% of kids don’t exercise 30 minutes per day
Less than half of Americans get 30 minutes of exercise daily
Per capita annual cost of using trails is $209 ($59 construction & maintenance, $150 equipment & travel). Per capita annual direct medical benefit of using trails is $564.
$1 trail investment = $2.94 medical benefit

Applied Policy
- The Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act
- Other Funding Opportunities
- National Trail Town Program
- RTC Legislative Policy Center

FAST Act Highlights
- Transportation Alternatives (TAP) increases
  - 5-year funding – $820M to $835M to $850M
- Transportation Infrastructure Finance & Innovation Act (TIFIA) expanded
  - Minimum threshold lowered to $10M
  - Segments of trail network can be bundled
  - Streamlined application process – $2M per year to defray application costs
  - Capitalize State Infrastructure Banks
What Does TAP Fund?

- Planning
- Design
- Construction
- Wayfinding Signage

Build Now & Reap the Benefits

- TIFIA is a newly accessible federal financing tool to help communities to more quickly complete their trail and active transportation networks.
- Provides low-interest federal loans and other credit assistance.
- Learn More at railstotrails.org.

TIFIA Priorities

- Project of Regional Significance
- Impact on Environment
- Significance to Transportation System
- Generation of Economic Benefit
- Leverage Private Capital
- Promote Innovative Technology

TIFIA In A Trail Context

Riverwalk Expansion

- Designed to improve transportation along an important corridor and enhance safety for pedestrians with bicycle paths & pedestrian trails along the continuous promenade.
- The leveraging of innovative financing streams generated by the project to advance the final phases

Other Funding Sources

- Recreational Trails Program - $1.6M in 2016
  Provides funds to states to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both nonmotorized and motorized recreational trail uses. The RTP is a program of the Department of Transportation’s Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).
- Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) - $500M (nationwide) in 2016
  This grant program funds capital investments in surface transportation infrastructure and targets projects that will have a significant impact on the nation, a metropolitan area or a region with a focus on capital projects that generate economic development and improve access to reliable, safe & affordable transportation for urban & rural communities.

Trail Town USA

- Focus on trail tourism for community/economic development.
- Ensure that trail communities and businesses maximize economic potential of the regional trails.
- Address trail-wide issues and opportunities through regional collaboration.
- Since 2007, 93 new trail-related businesses opened in Trail Towns on the GAP, most kept doors open.
Trails Mean Business!

The Progress Fund has established these program goals:

• Retain, expand and increase revenues of existing businesses
• Recruit sustainable new businesses
• Facilitate collective action by the Trail Towns to create a world class recreational destination
• Improve the buildings and infrastructure in each town to create a visitor friendly destination

Outdoor Recreation is Major

Americans spend a great deal on outdoor recreation.

A 2006 Outdoor Industry Foundation study found that “Active Outdoor Recreation” contributes $730 billion annually to the U.S. economy, supports 6.5 million jobs, and generates $88 billion in annual state and national tax revenue.

Economic Activity in Many Forms

There are many ways that trails and greenways affect the local and national economies, including:

• Tourism
• Events
• Urban redevelopment
• Community improvement
• Property value
• Health care savings
• Jobs and investment
• General consumer spending

RTC’s Trail Policy Tools

• Trail Traffic Modeling
• T-MAP Suite
• Economic Impact

Trail Traffic Modeling

• Efficient, accurate way to track trail traffic
• Baseline counts to enable tracking trends over time
• Enable coalition partners access to hardware to conduct counts locally moving forward

T-MAP

Trail Modeling and Assessment Platform

• GIS-based method measures trail connectivity
• Modeling tool forecasts trail-use demand
• Impact assessment tools translate trail use into dollars related to health and transportation

www.railstotrails.org/TMAP
The Suite

- Go Counter App (Trail Score)
- Trail Travel Forecaster
- BikeAble™ Connectivity Analysis
- Equity Analysis
- Health Savings Calculator
- Transportation Calculator

Policy-In-Action Strategies

- Trail Hub Alliance
- Sojourns / Bipartisan Bike Rides
- Trail$ App

Happy Trails!

ITS Comes To The Midwest!

2017 International Trails Symposium
May 7-10, 2017
Dayton, Ohio

Call for Submissions!

Theme: “Trails Take Flight – Connecting People, Places & Possibilities”

Topic areas:
- Trail Planning, Development and Building
- Trail Management
- Trail Policy
- Technology
- Community Development
- Communications Strategy
- Inclusion
- Network

Submit proposals online by December 9, 2016:
surveymonkey.com/r/95F3BPZ

Questions?

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