



# Urban Pathways Initiative

*Beyond the Trail and Into the Community*

Many low-income populations and communities of color in urban areas confront the problems of obesity, congestion and scarcity of open space on a daily basis. Promoting neighborhood use of shared-use pathways can help address these challenges.

## Part of the Solution

Urban pathways provide safe routes for active transportation, integrate physical activity into daily routines and connect residents with green spaces such as community gardens. These opportunities for healthier living effect positive change in neighborhoods where the demand for improved health and community empowerment is greatest.

**African-Americans in urban areas make 13.2 percent of trips on foot or by bicycle, as compared to 12.6 percent for Hispanics, and 9.6 percent for non-Hispanic whites.<sup>1</sup>**

**A family making \$35,000 a year can save \$5,000 in annual transportation costs when they live in walkable neighborhoods with good transit.<sup>2</sup>**

By providing attractive, safe, accessible places for people of all ages to bike, walk, jog and skate, trails create opportunities for both healthy recreation and active transportation. Neighborhoods that integrate biking and walking into daily life provide residents accessible and affordable physical activity opportunities, which are most needed in communities bearing the brunt of the obesity epidemic.

*Leadership funding for the Urban Pathways Initiative comes from The Kresge Foundation.*

**For more information, contact: Stephen Miller at 202.974.5123, or [stephen@railstotrails.org](mailto:stephen@railstotrails.org)**

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) is a nonprofit organization based in Washington, D.C., serving as the national voice for more than 150,000 members and supporters.

National Office / 2121 Ward Court, NW / 5th Floor / Washington, DC 20037  
main 202.331.9696 / fax 202.223.9257 / [www.railstotrails.org](http://www.railstotrails.org)

## Our Work

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) advocates for equitable investment in underserved communities while promoting the health, transportation and environmental benefits of trail use. RTC staff has engaged local partners, focusing on programs and improvements that enhance access and foster community ownership of trails in urban areas.

RTC has supported trail-focused community groups and provided technical assistance to our local partners. To increase local awareness of trails, we have implemented trailside amenities, facilitated bicycle helmet giveaways, connected trails with nearby schools, and hosted trail events.

RTC is deeply engaged with pathways in these communities:  
Washington, D.C. • Camden, N.J. • Jacksonville, Fla. • Compton, Calif. • New Orleans, La. • Springfield, Mass. • Cleveland, Ohio

## Join the Network

An online network of case studies, resources, workshops and discussion threads allows advocates and professionals from cities of all sizes nationwide to learn from each other by engaging in a dialogue about challenges and successes. We also host an annual conference of network members to discover the best methods for encouraging physical activity in our urban neighborhoods. Get started at [www.railstotrails.org/urbanpathways](http://www.railstotrails.org/urbanpathways).

<sup>1</sup> Pucher, John and John L. Renne. Socioeconomics of Urban Travel: Evidence from the 2001 NHTS, Transportation Quarterly, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> "Where You Live Impacts Affordability." Reconnecting America. 2007. Retrieved from: [www.reconnectingamerica.org/public/factoids/171](http://www.reconnectingamerica.org/public/factoids/171).



**rails-to-trails**  
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