TRAIL NETWORKS AND HOUSING STABILITY
PART 1: EXPLORING THE EVIDENCE BASE
MAY 3, 2022 WEBINAR
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Sign up for the Trail Expert Network: https://rtc.li/TEN
Ryan Chao, RTC's president, oversees the organization’s national leadership in trail development, policy advocacy and movement building. Ryan came to RTC after serving as vice president of civic sites and community change at the Annie E. Casey Foundation and as executive director of the San Francisco Bay Area-based Satellite Housing, where he led the development of affordable housing communities throughout Northern California.
Webinar Speakers

Dr. Torsha Bhattacharya
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Dr. Greg Lindsey
linds301@umn.edu

Mac McComas
macmccomas@jhu.edu

Moderated by Ryan Chao rychao@railstotrails.org
Dr. Torsha Bhattacharyya leads Rails-to-Trails Conservancy’s (RTC) research efforts to quantify the numerous benefits of trails and make the case for trail building, increased walking and bicycling and TA funding. Her research interests include exploring the relationship between built environment and health, national planning and policy for active transportation infrastructure, equity, and social justice issues in active transportation planning.
Trails and Property Values Research

Torsha Bhattacharya
Director of Research
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Trail Development Research Progression

- Equitable Trail development
- Gentrification/Displacement/Disinvestment
- Property Value Change associated with Trail development

Park Access

Nationwide, 100 million people, including 28 million children, do not have a park within a 10-minute walk of home.

https://www.tpl.org/city/washington-district-columbia
Trail Access

Opportunity Zones and TrailLink Trails

The dashboard displays two main layers of data:

- Open trails from RTC's master database
  - green = trails within an Opportunity Zone
  - red = trails outside an Opportunity Zone
- Census tracts that have been designated as "Qualified Opportunity Zones" by the U.S. Treasury Department's Community Development Financial Institutions Fund (CDFI)
  - green = contains RTC trail
  - red = does not contain RTC trail

The figures along the bottom and pie charts on the right are displaying attribute information filtered and grouped from those layers. The figures at the bottom will update automatically to display information within the map extent as you pan and zoom.

- For FAQs on Opportunity Zones from the AO, please visit [https://www.cta.gov/newsite/opportunity-zones-frequently-asked-questions](https://www.cta.gov/newsite/opportunity-zones-frequently-asked-questions)
- For more information on CDFI, please visit [https://www.cdfi.gov/p3/p3vodot/default.aspx](https://www.cdfi.gov/p3/p3vodot/default.aspx)
- For a web map of original CDF data, please visit [https://www.statistical-vision.com/](https://www.statistical-vision.com/)

50 longest trail segments within Opportunity Zones

Click to zoom
- Anacostia Riverwalk Trail
- Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park
- WV Route 9 Bike Path
- Guyan Falls Trail
- Anacostia Tributary Trail System
- Indian Head Rail Trail
- Easton Rails-to-Trails

RTC open trails within OZs: 32
People in OZs with an RTC open trail: 227,978
Project Scope

➢ **Goal** – To better understand the impact of trail development on property values and use that knowledge to encourage more equitable development which minimizes displacement and maximizes benefits to communities that have experienced chronic disinvestment

➢ **Objectives** – To estimate the impact of different neighborhood trails on residential developments, on people, and locations

➢ **Problem Statement** – Does trail development impact property values?
Constraints and Assumptions

➢ Case studies - housing properties at three trail sites
  ➢ Urban Trails
  ➢ In operation around 2010

➢ Key Assumptions
  ➢ Housing values are more likely to change within 3-5 years after trail opening
  ➢ Trail development is likely associated with property value change
  ➢ A time series analysis will allow for assessment of causality
  ➢ Three selected case study communities will provide a spectrum of impacts
Case study-site selection

- Economically and racially diverse neighborhoods. Some experiencing gentrification, disinvestment and somewhere in between.

- **Urban Pathways Initiative** - Metropolitan Branch Trail, Washington, D.C., Lafitte Greenway, New Orleans, La., Morgana Run Trail, Cleveland, Ohio

- Destination trails - 606 in Chicago, High Line in NY, Beltline in Atlanta
Metropolitan Branch Trail, DC

Shelby Farms Greenline, Memphis

Lafitte Greenway
Organization

- **Project Manager** – Torsha Bhattacharya, Director of Research

- **Project Team** – Dr. Greg Lindsey (Univ. Of Minnesota), Dr. Yunlei Qi (Sun Yat-Sen University), Dr. Torsha Bhattacharya (Rails-to-Trails Conservancy), Dr. Tracy Loh (Brookings Institute).

- Research advisory committee
Dr. Greg Lindsey is a Professor at the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. His research includes monitoring and modeling bicycle and pedestrian traffic and the use and impacts of urban trails.
Neighborhood Change and Gentrification Near Three Urban Trails

Dr. Greg Lindsey
Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota

Dr. Yunlei Qi
Sun Yat-sen University, China

Dr. Torsha Bhattacharya
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

Dr. Tracy Loh
Brookings Institution
Neighborhood Change and Gentrification Near Three Urban Trails

- **What are the effects of urban trails on nearby property values?**

**Perspective**
- Trails, contexts are heterogeneous
- Effects on property values are context-dependent & may be highly localized
- Gentrification occurs; not universal, after 3 years
- Trail-related redevelopment occurs over long periods
What are the effects of urban trails on nearby property values?

- **Do urban trails reduce** nearby property values?
  - 1980s – 2000s (NIMBY era)
  - Proximity to trails (< 0.5 miles) associated with 3-5% premiums in property values (Crompton and Nicholls, 2019)
  - Gentrification associated with some high-profile trails
    - Highline, NYC; Bloomingdale/606, Chicago

- **Do urban trails gentrify** nearby neighborhoods?
  - 2000s – present (Equity, environmental justice era)
  - Reflects experiences, evidence from Highline & 606
  - Research ongoing
Context & Research Design

- **Policy context**: debate over potential for green gentrification and displacement of poor

- **Research design**: case-control, pre-post test

- **Cases**
  - Metropolitan Branch Trail, Washington DC
  - Shelby Farms Greenline, Memphis TN
  - Lafitte Greenway, New Orleans LA
Gentrifiable, Gentrification, Displacement

- **Gentrifiable** (economic measure)
  - Median household income < citywide median
  - Median home value < citywide median home value

- **Gentrification**
  - Changing from gentrifiable to non-gentrifiable

- **Displacement**
  - Potential outcome of gentrification
  - Poor residents (often disproportionately minority) being forced to move because of increases in rents or property values

(Hammel and Wyly 1996; Freeman 2005; McKinnish, Walsh, and White 2010)
## Case-control, pre-post design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case-Control Census Block Groups (CBGs)</th>
<th>Pre-Test Year Trail Opened</th>
<th>Post-Test 3 Years Post-Opening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBGs adjacent to trails (&lt; ¼ mile)</td>
<td>Gentrifiable</td>
<td>Gentrifiable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-gentrifiable</td>
<td>Non-gentrifiable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBGs adjacent to treatment CBGs (&gt; ¼ mile, &lt; ½ mile)</td>
<td>Gentrifiable</td>
<td>Gentrifiable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-gentrifiable</td>
<td>Non-gentrifiable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Metropolitan Branch Trail
- Opened in 2010
- 8 miles
- Adjacent to active railroad
- Built through gentrifiable and non-gentrifiable neighborhoods
Shelby Farms Greenline
- Opened in 2010
- 10.7 miles
- Links parks to city
- Built through economically & racially segregated neighborhoods
Lafitte Greenway
- Opened in 2015
- 2.7 miles
- Developed along canal right-of-way
- Built through mostly non-gentrifiable neighborhoods
# Results: Variation in Gentrification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total CBGs</th>
<th>Gentrifiable CBGs (2010)</th>
<th>Gentrified CBGs (Non-gentrifiable, 2013)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metropolitan Branch</strong></td>
<td>67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Treatment group</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Control group</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shelby farms Greenway</strong></td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Treatment group</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Control group</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lafitte Greenway</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Treatment group</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Control group</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total – All Trails</strong></td>
<td>135</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Observations & Limitations

▪ Trails, urban contexts are heterogeneous
  ▪ Each trail built through gentrifiable & non-gentrifiable neighborhoods

▪ Gentrification occurred in each case
  ▪ Degree of gentrification varied
    ▪ Metropolitan Branch: gentrification in control group greater
    ▪ Shelby Farms: gentrification in treatment group greater; historic economic & racial segregation influences dominate
    ▪ Lafitte Greenway: built in area mostly gentrified, gentrification nearly complete

▪ Limitations
  ▪ Small samples, short test periods, no measures of displacement
Conclusions & Implications

- Context, urban dynamics essential to understanding likelihood and rates of gentrification induced by new urban trails
- Risky to generalize about effects of urban trails
- Given evidence of gentrification, essential to address needs for affordable housing
- Longer-term studies needed to better assess effects of new urban trail
Mac McComas

Mac McComas is the senior program manager at Johns Hopkins’ 21st Century Cities Initiative. His research focuses on urban economics and neighborhood quality of life dynamics in cities. He is the co-author, with Matthew Kahn, of Unlocking the Potential of Post-Industrial Cities (2021).
Strategies to Preserve and Build Affordable Housing Near Green Amenities and Urban Trails

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Strategies to Preserve and Build Affordable Housing Near Green Amenities and Urban Trails

Motivation

- Increased demand for access to “green city” amenities such as waterfronts and parks (Kahn and Walsh, 2014)
- Risk of “green” or “environmental” gentrification, especially when a transit component is included (Rigolon and Nemeth, 2019)
- Many strategies and policies for affordable housing. What is the evidence base?
Strategies to Preserve and Build Affordable Housing Near Green Amenities and Urban Trails

Community Engagement and Planning

• Affordable housing easier to plan for up front rather than address retroactively (Bogle, Cohen and Rodriguez, 2021)

• Both preservation and creation of new housing units should be considered (Immergluck and Balan, 2018)

• Focus on resident capacity building, high capacity CBOs, and sustained engagement (Way, Mueller and Wegmann, 2018)

• Avoid participant self-selection. Consensus building. Conversation, not speeches (Fung, 2015)
Inclusionary Zoning and Rent Control

**Inclusionary Zoning**
- Wide range of effectiveness – Baltimore and Boston vs DC (Hamilton, 2021; Freeman and Schuetz, 2015)
- Well designed programs may be one tool, but unlikely to meet entire need

**Rent Control**
- Not efficient – no targeting, negative spillovers
- San Francisco study – incumbent renters more likely to stay in units, but increased rents in other neighborhoods and decreased housing supply
- May make sense in emergency situations - WWII, Hurricane Katrina, COVID-19 pandemic
- Context and program design are key!
Strategies to Preserve and Build Affordable Housing Near Green Amenities and Urban Trails

Zoning and Permitting

- Large body of evidence that zoning restrictions and onerous permitting reduce housing supply
  - Boston area minimum lot sizes – 40% reduction in permits (Glaeser & Ward, 2009)
  - Mixed evidence that upzoning leads to increase in affordability
  - 11 city study 2010-2019 – new housing construction reduced nearby rents by 5-7% (Asquith, Mast, and Reed, 2020)
  - Study of upzoning in Chicago found increased land prices and no more units (Freemark, 2019)
  - Upzoning and demographic change in NYC (Aravena et al, 2020)
  - Politically unpopular
  - Again, context is key
Strategies to Preserve and Build Affordable Housing Near Green Amenities and Urban Trails

Shared Equity Homeownership Models

**Community Land Trusts (CLT)**
- 2000 to 2010 study of CLT ability to guard against gentrification (Choi et al, 2017)
- Washington, DC Douglass CLT and 11th Street Bridge (Bogle, Cohen and Rodriguez, 2021)
- Relatively new and small. Need more causal research on impact.

**Limited Equity Cooperatives (LEC)**
- Cost-effective, high quality housing, sustainable, wealth building potential, and popular
- LEC design can vary a lot and be flexible to local conditions
- Have been around for decades
Tax relief and Targeted subsidies

- Philadelphia 2013 Longtime Owner Occupants Program (Ding & Hwang, 2020)
- Homestead tax credits
- Targeted renter subsidies on rent increases
Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs)

- Mostly used to attenuate gentrification associated with large scale developments
- Los Angeles Sports and Entertainment District (LASED) CBA
- Non-legally binding provisions and weak reporting requirements
- Need strong CBOs

Photo: Press Conference at City Hall Called by the Community Benefits Agreement Coalition Chicago Illinois 4-19-18
Community Shareholding Models

- Community Equity Endowments (CEEs) give residents a direct stake in economic growth of their neighborhood
- Community equity investing – opportunity to invest in development similar to a real estate investment trust (REIT)
- These models are relatively new and research on them is sparse
Next Webinars in this series

➢ **Webinar 2: How do you integrate affordable housing with trails-partnership between real estate developers, affordable housing advocates and trail managers.**
  ➢ Date: May 18, 2022

➢ **Webinar 3: How advocates, funders and public agencies work to implement policies that maintain and create affordable housing near trails**
  ➢ Date: June 8, 2022
Have examples of relevant trail networks you want to share with us? Email at torsha@railstotrails.org

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Questions?

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Thank You!

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