



rails·to·trails
conservancy

For Immediate Release:

Jan. 17, 2018

CONTACT:

Patricia Brooks, patricia@matchmapmedia.com, 202.351.1757

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy to Congress and the White House: Federal Investment in Connected Trail Networks Priority for American Economy

Business leaders and public officials from Louisville, Ky., Miami, Morgantown, W. Va., and San Diego join RTC to showcase power of connected trail infrastructure to meet federal infrastructure goals

WASHINGTON—Today, a bipartisan panel of business leaders and public officials came together in agreement that federal investment in trail infrastructure is necessary to the vitality of communities, states and regions and should be included in any future infrastructure legislation.

The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) briefing spelled out the effect that pending federal infrastructure legislation could have on regional trail networks and active transportation, calling on Congress and the Trump Administration to include robust funding for trail, walking and biking infrastructure.

“Trail infrastructure is as vital to the modern American economy as roads and railroads, delivering more return on investment than traditional projects; per dollar in project costs, trails produce about a third more jobs than roads. And when you connect that infrastructure, the transformational benefits are impressive—from transportation connections within and between communities and states, to tax revenues from trail user spending, reduced health-care spending and regional competitive advantage,” said Kevin Mills, senior vice president of policy at RTC.

“As the debate surrounding a federal infrastructure bill heats up, we have an opportunity to prioritize trails, walking and biking in Congress and secure the federal investment that’s needed to catalyze the development of trail networks nationally,” said Mills.

During the briefing, panelists addressed the role that trail networks play in meeting the call for transformative projects put forth by the Administration, illustrating the significant benefits that trail networks deliver to communities, including affordable mobility, economic growth and job creation, and improved public health.

- John Callihan, director of transportation with Louisville Metro Government, pointed to the Louisville Loop as an essential component of the city’s economic development strategy and a tool for attracting new businesses to the region.
- Jenny Selin, city council member-ward 4 and former mayor of Morgantown, showcased research that has found property located within close proximity to the Mon River Trail in West Virginia has seen a 173 percent increase in median value since 2004.
- Greg Cox, county supervisor in San Diego, shared that—among other benefits—the city’s connected bike network will have a dramatic effect on bicycling mode share, with projections indicating that connectivity will increase mode share more than 4 percent (for a total of 7 percent) by 2030.

—more—

- And Husein Cumber, executive vice president of corporate development at Florida East Coast Industries and former deputy chief of staff at the U.S. Department of Transportation under President George W. Bush, discussed the economic gains that trails bring, from sales tax revenue to property values and trail-oriented development.

“Transportation alternatives are needed as the shift to urbanism continues to occur in densely populated areas of the country,” said Cumber. “Inactive rail corridors anchored by ‘trail-oriented developments’ not only revitalize neighborhoods, but provide one such transportation alternative while delivering economic benefits that would otherwise be unrealized.”

RTC’s briefing marked the launch of the organization’s campaign to ensure that trails and trail networks are included in any future federal infrastructure legislation—specifically calling for an increase in funding dedicated for active transportation; eligibility for active transportation projects across federal transportation programs; and focused investment in completing trail and active transportation networks.

Campaign details, project case studies and resources are available at railstotrails.org/trailstransform.

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is the nation’s largest trails organization—with a grassroots community more than 1 million strong—dedicated to connecting people and communities by creating a nationwide network of public trails, many from former rail lines. Connect with RTC at railstotrails.org and @railstotrails on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).