

Meeting in a Box

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's Toolkit for Building Rail-Trails

Introduction

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) offers Meeting in a Box as a toolkit to assist in organizing your project and building your rail-trail. We provide tips and suggestions, as well as models for you to adapt to your particular community and trail situation. Use this guide as you rally your first supporters, meet with the public to sell the rail-trail concept, and interact with the media.

A. Getting Started

Rail-trail projects are successful because they involve diverse groups of people throughout their development. But getting everyone together, or building a coalition, requires careful planning and thought.

The first step is to organize a local group of enthusiastic rail-trail supporters—the folks who'll help you persuade the greater community of the project's value later on. Here are a few important tips for this early stage of gathering troops:

- **Reserve a space in a neutral location** (a library or community center) that is easily accessible, safe for anyone traveling at night, and large enough to accommodate your expected audience. Check as well on the availability of audio/visual equipment and chairs.
- **Invite a wide variety of people and groups** with potential interest in a trail (someone with a business adjacent to the trail site, local health professionals who support active lifestyles, a realtor who can discuss increased trailside property values). Send a concise, attractive invitation, and provide a name and number for further information.
- **Plan an agenda**, have copies for everyone who attends, and clearly identify the desired outcome of the meeting. Include a get-acquainted time during which people will give their name, the name of the organization they represent, and why they are interested in this rail-trail project.
- **Do your homework.** Know everything you can about the corridor—where it's located, its history, current status, position of politicians, and anything else relevant to the trail and its development.
- **Respect people's busy schedules by starting and ending on time.** Estimate (and write it on your copy of the agenda) the amount of time to be spent on each item, and then try to stick to it. Allow some cushion for questions and diversions, and if the meeting is still running long, ask the group what they would like to do. You can suggest another meeting be scheduled to cover a particular topic, or you can offer to stay after the meeting to talk.

Meeting in a Box Includes:

- A. **Getting Started:** how to organize your local coalition-building meeting. **1**
- B. **Meeting Checklist:** a step-by-step guide to planning a successful meeting with the public. **3**
- C. **Speaker Tips:** a crash-course in preparedness and public speaking. **6**
- D. **Model Speech Outline:** a practical tool for drafting a persuasive pitch. **7**
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- **Be open to questions and discussion.** You may not have all the answers at this point, and don't be afraid to admit that you are not sure of a particular response. But do offer to find the answer and get back to the person as soon as possible. This back-and-forth will help you to get a sense of the level of support and enthusiasm or opposition.
- **Achieve the goal of your agenda.** If you set out to agree on another meeting, get someone from the audience to assist in planning it and establish a time frame. If you wanted to elect a chair and establish committees, be prepared to recommend what committees will be needed (others may be added by the group) and have a candidate in mind, but discuss it with her or him before the meeting. Be prepared with ballot paper if more than one person is nominated.
- **Get names, addresses and phone numbers** of every person who attends. This list will be the core of your coalition.

As soon as you've built this solid groundwork of support—friends of the rail-trail—the next step is to 'go public' with your project and convince the broader community, including media and government agencies. The "Meeting Checklist," "Model Speech Outline," and "Contacting the Media" sections are designed to be of special assistance during this phase of trail development. Keep looking for opportunities, at this point, to speak about your trail project at civic groups, schools and community organizations, as well as to city boards and commissions.

B. Meeting Checklist

Successful meetings are carefully and thoughtfully planned. Even if you are not responsible for the entire meeting, your portion will be remembered and valued if you have properly prepared.

This Meeting Checklist is designed to be copied and completed for each meeting in which you are involved or will speak. Check off the answers, add notes or comments in the margins, and fill in the blanks. After the event, jot down your thoughts on how it went, things to do differently next time, names of people to contact, or any follow-up that you need to do. Use this framework as your worksheet.

Before the Meeting

Understand the Meeting

- What is your role? To...
- Be part of a larger agenda
 - Introduce the concept of a rail-trail
 - Build support for a rail-trail
 - Respond to issues and concerns expressed about the rail-trail
 - Be decisive in your support for the rail-trail
 - Other:

Know Your Audience Knowing the types of people who will attend will help you prepare your remarks, so try to get a sense of their attitudes toward rail-trails before you begin. Who will be there?

- Friends and supporters of the rail-trail project
- Public officials/decision makers
- Community leaders
- Opponents of the trail
- People without a firm opinion about the rail-trail project
- Reporters from newspapers and/or broadcast media
- Business people from the community
- Adjacent property owners

Time and Location

Meeting day/date: _____

Address of meeting: _____

Directions to location: _____

Starting time: _____

Details for Presentation

Time allotted for presentation: _____

Other agenda items: _____

My place on agenda: _____

Person who will introduce me: _____

Number of people expected to attend: _____

Equipment needed:

- Microphones and speakers for audience Q&A
- Podium
- Computer (and projector for PowerPoint)
- Extension cord
- Table for handouts
- Other:

Room set-up:

- Location of head table (behind or alongside speaker?)
- Visual obstructions (pillars, people entering/exiting/moving about)
- Audio/visual equipment (easy viewing/hearing by everyone in attendance, accessible to electrical outlet)

Handout Materials

- At the door when people arrive. Attendees will have an opportunity to look through them before your presentation. But if the information needs explanation, unnecessary questions may arise before you have presented the material in a larger context. And if the information is controversial, audience members have more time to plan potential arguments. However, if you reference the material in your presentation, then early distribution has the benefit of reinforcing your points.
- At the time of your presentation. People always shuffle through papers when they receive them, so plan accordingly. Give them time to shuffle and settle, then keep them focused by identifying the page you are referencing.
- At the conclusion of the meeting. If the materials replicate any visuals you use and repeat the information you give, then a take-home flier may be your best approach to keep your points fresh on their minds.

Introduction

If someone will introduce you, write the introduction for him/her. They will greatly appreciate it, and you will know exactly what will be said—no surprises or errors. Make the introduction short and relevant to why you are speaking on this topic.

Day of the Meeting

- Verify** Call the sponsoring office or host to verify:
- Meeting time
 - Room number
 - Agenda
 - Number of expected attendees
 - VIPs
 - Audio/visual equipment
 - Other equipment needs
 - That the room will be open approximately one hour before the meeting
- Review** Look over your presentation, practice and rehearse your remarks, and double-check your handout materials.
- Visualize** Close your eyes and envision the meeting and your role in it. See yourself walking to the podium, laying out your notes, and looking over the audience. How will you look and sound to them? Imagine the Q&A period. See yourself as calm, in control, knowledgeable, able to respond to even the toughest questions.
- Relax** If you've done the work, you're ready.

One Hour Before the Meeting

- Arrive** Check room set-up and acquaint yourself with the audio/visual equipment. Is everything:
- Plugged in
 - Turned on
 - Organized with remote control and ideal sound level (go to back of room and listen)
- How about the:**
- Microphone: ___on/off switch ___volume
 - Materials: ___table set up ___materials arranged
 - Visuals and/or maps
- Greet Attendees** If appropriate, be at the door to say hello to the people you know and also introduce yourself to unfamiliar faces.
- Compose Yourself** About five minutes before the meeting is to start, remove yourself from the crowd. Get a drink of water, collect your thoughts and focus on what you are going to be saying. Block out all distractions and do a quick visual re-run of the meeting.

C. Speaker Tips

Speaking to an audience should be little different than talking with your best friend over coffee. Your subject matter is something you believe in and want to share with others. Your audience is made up of ordinary people—just like you and your friends—from the community. You work together, shop together, do business with one another. Think of them as friends and supporters and you will feel more comfortable speaking to them.

Here are a few valuable pointers to assist you in your presentation:

Appearance

You have five seconds to make your first impression. Recognize that some people in your audience may be rather conservative in their dress and appearance, and conservative dressers are more uncomfortable with 'under-dressed' speakers than casual dressers are with 'overdressed' speakers. So unless you are speaking to a bike club or a trail group, save your hiking boots and bicycle shorts for the trail. The impression you leave will be their impression of the trail.

Organize

Have your notes in order, clearly marked, in large type. Number the pages in case you drop or mislay them. Don't take 'play things,' like pens, pencils or paper clips, to the podium with you. These fidget items can be very distracting to the audience. Indeed many speakers carry their speech inside a folder to keep everything tight and together; this easy step adds a polished "look."

Look at your audience

Find a friendly face or two for ready reference throughout the talk. Notice if the audience is restless or tired, as these are clues for how to pace your presentation. If they look weary and the meeting has already gone on for a while, then invite them to stand for a minute and suggest that your topic ties right in to the benefits of movement and exercise.

Breathe

When speakers are tense, their breathing is shallow, which further contributes to nervousness. Take a deep breath, hold it for a count of five, exhale and begin. If you feel yourself getting tense, breathe deeply again.

Jokes

Don't tell them unless jokes fit your style and personality, and you are experienced and comfortable telling them. A flat joke can disrupt an audience as much as a good joke can disarm and endear them to you.

Speak up

Volume and tone are important parts of your message. People must be able to hear you, and your tone tells your audience about your attitude (enthusiasm, confidence, uncertainty) on the subject. Also be sure to maintain eye-contact and speak to your audience, not to your notes or the podium.

Speak clearly

Pronounce your words correctly and clearly, and talk a little slower than you think you should. Your nervous instincts may tell you to speed along as quickly as possible, but remember that the message you are sharing is new to your audience. The faster and more monotonous your tone, the more you risk sacrificing your effectiveness—lines have to be delivered, not just recited. So avoid slang, jargon and acronyms, and keep your sentences short and simple. Also beware of verbal tics, like saying "um" between thoughts or using "like" repetitively, which can distract from your message.

Variety

Your presentation will be more interesting if you vary the pace and the volume. Slow way down when you make your key points, but then speed up again when you are telling a more narrative story. And never be afraid of a pause. Silence, appropriately and deliberately placed, gives your audience time to catch up and think about what you're telling them.

Summarize

Be sure to summarize each major point after you make it, and then again—briefly, in a few words—at the end of the presentation. These summaries should be "take-home" phrases, memorable, often catchy thoughts that your audience will remember most clearly.

Relax

Enjoy yourself! You have the best message in town, and this is your opportunity to talk about it.

D. Model Speech Outline for Public Meeting Presentation

Introduction (*an example*):

Acknowledge VIPs It's good to see each of you here tonight, but I'd especially like to acknowledge our Mayor, Elizabeth Smith. Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule for this important discussion.

Purpose _____ I'm here tonight to introduce you to an exciting opportunity right here in our community. This is...

- an opportunity to capture history, and at the same time to preserve a wonderful resource for the future
- an opportunity to join with other communities all across the country
- an opportunity to make a difference in the quality of life here in _____.

This opportunity is known around town as the old _____ rail line that runs between _____ and _____.

Today it's an eyesore with overgrown weeds and fallen trees. For some it's a place to dump their trash, and for others to hold wild parties. But that old rail corridor can become a point of community pride. It can become our neighborhood rail-trail where you and I can ride our bicycles or jog, where walkers can go for vigorous exercise, the elderly can go for a quiet stroll, our young people can roll along on their inline skates—all without worrying about motorized vehicles on our busy streets.

A rail-trail here in _____ can make a difference to all of us, and tonight I am here to challenge us to meet this opportunity.

Outline your speech I'd like to accomplish **three** things this evening:

- First, I'd like to show you a presentation about the benefits of rail-trails.
- Then I'd like to share some more detailed information about our particular rail-trail possibility.
- Finally, I'd like to answer your questions.

Building a Presentation

If your audience has limited knowledge about rail-trails, consider preparing a brief presentation about rail-trails and the benefits they provide to communities. Use the RTC Web site (www.railstotrails.org) as a resource to collect information about rail-trails across the country, and the benefits that will be most appealing to your audience.

One option is to develop a PowerPoint presentation that uses images to illustrate other successful rail-trails and also highlights rail-trail facts and statistics. Much of this information can be found on our Web site in the “Fact Sheets and Reports” section of the online resource library at:

www.railstotrails.org/whatwedo/railtrailinfo/resources/documents.html

Be creative in designing your presentation, but choose images and examples that are comparable to the area of your proposed rail-trail. An audience in rural Mississippi may not respond to images of rail-trails in large metropolitan cities, and vice versa. Is there a town of similar size, demographics and topography with an existing successful rail-trail? Try contacting the trail manager for permission to use photos and relay the town’s experience. Refer to studies that show the benefits of rail-trails and spend a minute or two discussing each:

- Economic
- Health
- Environmental
- Historical/Cultural Preservation
- Recreational

The following websites provide excellent images of rail-trails, multi-use trails and design considerations for route connections (remember to cite the photo source in any documentation/presentation):

- American Trails provides a photo gallery of their annual photo contest for National Recreational Trails (NRT):
www.americantrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails/photocon.html
- The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (PBIC):
www.pedbikeimages.org/
- The Capital Bike and Walk Society of Vancouver, B.C., hosts a rail-with-trail photo gallery:
www.capitalbikeandwalk.org/en_gallery.html
- RTC’s trail-finder engine, www.traillink.com, provides information and links to specific rail-trails.

You’ve educated your audience on the many benefits of rail-trails and piqued their interest in trail development. Now it’s time to propose the idea of creating a rail-trail locally.

About OUR Rail-Trail

Describe the project, and use large maps, if possible. Contact your local Metropolitan Planning Organization (<http://tmip.fhwa.dot.gov/contacts/mpos.stm>) if you need assistance acquiring maps or aerial photography. (But resist the temptation during your presentation to talk to the map rather than your audience.)

Where is it located? Give end points, but also include accessible landmarks and community resources along the trail. Which community activities will be tied together with the trail? Will residents at the nursing home be able to get to a local park? Will children be able to ride to school or reach sports fields? Who or what else could benefit from the trail's development?

How long could the trail be? If this is a phased project, give the biggest picture. (Be sure to explore as well how your trail might fit into a state-wide and nation-wide trail network.)

Identify the next **action steps** that must occur for your trail to succeed. Try not to have more than three, and for each step add clarity, facts and figures, examples, timelines and resource requirements:

- Step X** —
1. What must be done? Describe the action in broad terms and then in more specific terms.
 2. How will this action advance the trail project?
 3. Who has responsibility for this action?
 4. What resources will be required?
 5. What is the timeline? How long will it take? Are there any set deadlines that must be met?

Summarize

This is our opportunity to build a ___-mile rail-trail for our community, but we must begin now by:

(Step One from above)

(Step Two ...)

(Step Three ...)

Q & A (Watch your time!)

Now I'd like to hear your questions and comments.

Conclusion

We've talked about an exciting possibility for our community, a possibility that I believe will truly enhance our lifestyles. For this trail to become reality, though, we must act now and work together. Thank you all for your interest. I will stay after the meeting for a while to answer further questions.

E. Managing the Q & A

A Question and Answer session following your presentation can be very valuable and informative for both you and the audience. As the speaker, you benefit from the questions in two ways: first, they help define the concerns of people in your audience, and second, you have an opportunity to expand on some of the points in your presentation and clear up any misconceptions.

A Q & A session can pose problems, however, if you are not prepared. So here are some pointers to ensure your effective handling of the audience's questions and concerns.

- Know more about your topic than time allows in your presentation. RTC's fact sheets and studies are a good source of information, and they provide important fodder for answering specific questions that you may not have been able to address up front.
- Anticipate questions that might be asked—both hostile and friendly—beforehand to avoid being surprised or unsettled by any remarks. Work with a friend to create a list of likely questions and then practice your answers.
- Listen carefully to each person who asks a question, and look directly at them while they are speaking. They deserve your full attention, regardless of the quality of the question. Don't be dismissive of anyone's interests.
- Understand the question. If it's not obvious what someone is asking, or even if you are not absolutely certain, then ask for clarification. You might say, "As I understand your question, you would like to know... ." If the question is perfectly clear, then it's still a good idea to repeat the question in your answer. For example, someone asks, "Isn't crime going to be a really big problem?" You might reply, "The problem of crime along trails has been researched and... ." Also, in large rooms, some people may have difficulty hearing the question, so repeating it can perform a double service to make sure everyone understands what's being discussed.
- Stay calm and in control. No matter how annoying a person may be or how utterly ridiculous the question may seem, it is important that you maintain a level head. If a person is shouting and obviously angry, respond quietly and slowly. Simply keeping your cool can help defuse the meeting's tone from negative and hostile to positive and friendly.
- Never argue with the person asking the question. Give your answer and if the individual insists on challenging you, suggest that the two of you continue the discussion after the meeting because there are others in the audience with questions. Then politely move on to the next question.
- Correct inaccuracies immediately and in a positive manner. It's better to say, "Let me correct something you just said..." than to confront the person with, "What you just said is wrong."
- Be positive in your answers. You can use connector phrases to steer discussions and questions in more productive directions:
 - The real issue is... *or* We might be overlooking...
 - It's equally important to know...
 - Let me add... *or* You can go a step further...
 - For instance... *or* For example...
 - Let me give you some facts...
 - You should also know... *or* Let me explain...
- Be honest. If you don't know the answer, say so, but also commit to find the answer after the meeting. Be sure you get the questioner's name, phone number or e-mail so you can get back to them.

- Double-check to make sure your answer is clearly understood. If the person asking the question has a puzzled look, use that behavioral feedback as a clue that you might need to be clearer. If you can't read their facial expression, then you can also plainly ask, "Did that answer your question?"
- Be friendly, sincere, non-defensive and proud of your project. You want these people to share your enthusiasm and your vision for the rail-trail. If you can win them over from their skepticism or their doubts, you will have that many more hands to work and voices to encourage other similar trail projects.
- Be available after the meeting to answer further questions, and invite people to stop by and discuss the project with you anytime.

F. Contacting the Media

Newspapers and broadcast outlets in your community are powerful tools that can be of great assistance to your trail project. Policy makers are influenced by what they read and hear in the media, and positive, wide-spread recognition of a project reflects well when decision makers are evaluating what to support. Also, to have members of your community involved, they must be kept informed about your meetings, activities and actions.

Here are some ways to reach out to the media and make them a part of your team.

- **Identify what is news.** Be clear on why you are contacting the media in the first place. This means knowing what is newsworthy about your trail; what makes your trail story timely, important, informative, urgent and engaging. A good rule of thumb is to ask yourself: Has an **action** been taken that moves the trail's progress forward or increases the impact the trail can make? Examples include a trail opening, a new mile of trail acquired, a new surface, a new connection with a local amenity, a new source of funding, a new trail leader, a new program on the trail, etc. . . .
- **Identify your target audience.** Take into consideration elements such as geography (Does your trail impact the city, county, region, state and/or nation?), and special interests (Does your trail specifically court equestrian users? Will the trail connect local business and spur economic development? Does the trail connect to area schools? Does it pass through a neighborhood revitalization project?).
- **Identify the best media outlets.** Develop a list of print (this includes hard copy and online), television, and radio publications and sources of information that are most frequently read and seen by your target audience. Look at radio talk shows, weekly and daily newspapers, community newsletters and bulletin boards, and television stations. Note: News sent to a person is more likely to get attention than news sent to the press outlet as a whole. To get a reporter's name, read the bylines on articles that cover related topics, or call the paper and ask who should receive your information. Keep this list current. Take every opportunity to meet media people; become a reliable source of good, accurate data.
- **Match the news, target audience and media outlet.** You'll get the best results when you send your news item to the reporters most interested in that subject who will then deliver it to the audience most impacted by the news.

Presenting Information to the Media

- Press releases are commonly used to announce activities to the public and the media. A sample release is included in this packet, but here are a few basic 'rules' to follow when doing one.
 - o Include the earliest date the information can become public knowledge. If it is not time-sensitive, identify it for "Immediate Release." Include the date the release was mailed.
 - o Include the name(s) and phone numbers of people from your group that can answer any questions or provide further information.
 - o Give your release a strong and descriptive headline.
 - o Type your release with double spacing, one inch margins and keep it contained to one or two pages.
 - o Answer the "who, what, where and when" in the first paragraph, and make it succinct and captivating.
 - o Use a quote from some noted person in your community or a leader in your group. This quote is a good place to answer the "why."
 - o Type -more- at the bottom of each page that has a following page. End your release with ### signs.

- o Send along fact sheets about the trails movement, your group, etc.
- Talking points are concise, important and interesting statements and phrases used in preparing for an interview. These `sound bites' are of particular value for television news since those stories are so short. Always have a few of these ready for use.
- Editorial opinion articles (op-eds) can be a point-of-view piece or an article that presents an analysis of some issue. Because these are not news pieces, they go on the editorial page of the paper. Newspapers vary in the way they prefer to receive these pieces so it is best to call your paper for the name of the appropriate person.
- Letters to the editor are a way to express your own or your organization's point of view or to counter an editorial or news report that was previously published. Check with the newspaper on specific guidelines.

Methods of Delivery

E-mail is a generally acceptable and inexpensive format for delivering press releases. If you send a press release via e-mail, it is better to paste the text into the body of the e-mail rather than attach the document. An attachment from an unknown sender can raise a recipient's suspicions of spam or computer viruses. If you have extra information to provide the reporter, make it clear in the press release that additional fact sheets and photos can be sent if the reporter is interested. Sending a hard copy or fax of a press release is also a fine delivery method.

G. The Layout of a Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Insert Date Mailed)

MEDIA CONTACT:

(Insert Contact Name)

(Insert Phone Number)

(Insert E-mail Address)

TITLE THAT ENCAPULATES THE NEWS OF YOUR TRAIL

CITY, STATE, DATE—In this paragraph you need to cover Who, What, When and Where, right from the beginning. Be clear, concise and clever. This is your best opportunity to “hook” the reporter.

“This is where a quote from an expert or leader in your organization is useful, and you can use it to address the Why of your news item,” says NAME AND TITLE.

Add supporting information and expand on themes and any relevant history in the following paragraphs. The idea is that if the reporter wants to simply rerun this press release rather than create their own, independently researched story, they should be able to do so with your text.

“Include additional quotes if applicable, keeping them to their own line.”

Consider running the mission of your trail group or organization here along with a statement such as “For more information visit www.yourwebsite.com.”

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H. Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 20, 2007

Contact: Jeff Ciabotti

202-974-5119

jeff@railstotrails.org

INNOVATIVE, ELEVATED TRAIL RECEIVES FUNDING AND FRIENDS

Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail, with Rails-to-Trails Conservancy,
Invite Communities to Shape Their Trail and Transportation Future

Washington, D.C., March 20, 2007—Chicago's Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail, with the support of Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC), will help develop a visionary, 2.7-mile elevated rail-trail in northwest Chicago by seeking community involvement on Saturday, March 24. The event will include the presentation of a \$20,000 check from RTC, made possible by a grant from Coca-Cola North America, and feature a "Community Visioning Workshop" attended by members of the Logan Square, Humboldt Park, Bucktown and Wicker Park neighborhoods—all adjacent to the proposed trail as it travels on a former railroad corridor along and above Bloomingdale Avenue.

"We're excited that the community is taking a lead to set the vision [for the trail]," says President of the Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail Josh Deth. "This event will be a really hands-on exercise for residents to talk about how they're going to be using the facility in their daily lives."

Like the Highline popularized in New York City, the Bloomingdale Trail is part of an exciting national trend that twists the definition of a trail. Elevated 15 feet above street level in a culturally diverse residential area, the development of this linear park on the unused Canadian Pacific corridor will literally give Chicagoans a new community viewpoint.

"Creating the Bloomingdale Trail in the heart of Chicago meets all the requirements of smart urban planning," says RTC Vice President of Trail Development Jeff Ciabotti. "It will provide a safe and accessible way to get healthy; a viable transportation alternative; reuse of a valuable community resource; enhance "walkable" close-knit neighborhoods; and preserve open space. What a perfect combination of benefits for Chicago."

The RTC and Coca-Cola North America grant will also help Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail implement a Wellness Walk program wherein the trail serves as the landscape to inspire, delight and motivate people to make wellness-oriented lifestyle changes. This, and the upcoming workshop, will inform Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail when they formally present the community's vision in the fall to Mayor Richard M. Daley, a supporter of the project.

"We're trying to be proactive," says Deth. "Getting community involved early and showing the public support for the trail has helped us open doors in City Hall to start talking about design and funding."

For more information on the Bloomingdale Trail or to attend the March 24 event, contact Josh Deth of the Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail at 773.489.3222.

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, a nonprofit organization with more than 100,000 members and supporters, advocates for healthier lifestyles by creating a nationwide network of public trails, many from former rail lines and connecting corridors. Founded in 1986, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's national office is located in Washington, D.C.

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