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New Report Finds 35-Mile Citywide Trail System Can Generate Millions in Economic Opportunity and Inclusive Growth in Baltimore

Investment in Baltimore Greenway Trails Network will connect 75 neighborhoods with safe, healthy transportation and recreation options and generate broad economic and social benefits for Baltimore City

Baltimore, MD – Today, Ernst & Young LLP (EY US), on behalf of the Greater Washington Partnership released a report on the [Economic and Social Benefits of Completing the Baltimore Greenway Trails Network](#). The study examines the potential economic and social benefits of a \$28 million plan to expand and connect existing trails in Baltimore City to complete the Greenway Trails Network.

Only 10 miles of trail construction is needed to complete a 35-mile trail system that will provide access to a safe, car-free trail network that connects 75 neighborhoods to new recreational and economic opportunities. When finished, the trail network has the potential to unlock new economic, health and social benefits for city residents.

“At EY, we believe in building a better working world, which starts in the communities where we live, and we are delighted to be able to support the Greater Washington Partnership with this initiative,” said **EY Global Chairman and CEO and Greater Washington Partnership board member Carmine Di Sibio**. “This report illustrates the potential economic and social benefits to the City of Baltimore and the surrounding communities from investment in the Greenway Trails Network.”





Arun Subhas, EY Baltimore Office Managing Partner, added that “investing in our infrastructure is central to vibrant communities, elevation of opportunities and attraction of new businesses to support economic growth.”

“The COVID pandemic is accelerating inequities and has shown how essential equal access to active transportation infrastructure is to our collective well-being,” said **JB Holston, CEO of the Greater Washington Partnership**. “The Greenway Trails Network is a critical, sustainable solution that will catalyze inclusive economic growth, which is the path forward toward a stronger Capital Region. The GWP is committed to completion of the trail network with our partners.”

“Since the start of the pandemic, we’ve seen surging demand nationwide for safe, close-to-home spaces where people can be active outside—bringing into sharp focus the disparities that exist in who has access to these spaces,” said **Ryan Chao, President of RTC**. “We have an incredible opportunity in Baltimore to create new access to a safe, interconnected trail system that will deliver powerful health, environmental, and economic benefits to thousands of people across the city. For a small fraction of the cost of a highway expansion or tunnel project, the Greenway Trails Network can place Baltimore as a national leader in creating a healthier, more sustainable, more equitable future.”

Through an economic impact analysis, the report outlines the economic and social benefits that completing the trail network could generate for the City of Baltimore. Job creation, improved property values, reduced vehicle miles traveled, new business activity surrounding the trail, and reduced CO₂ emissions are just a few of the many benefits the trail network will deliver for Baltimore’s residents and neighborhoods. Benefits highlighted in the report include:

- ✓ Gross Economic Output Generated from Trail Construction: up to \$48 million total
- ✓ Residential Property Value Increase: up to \$314 million total
- ✓ New Biking or Walking Trips: up to 6.9 million per year
- ✓ New Public Transportation Trips: up to 700,000 per year
- ✓ Decline in Vehicle Miles Traveled: up to 8.6 million per year
- ✓ Avoided Health Costs of Residents: up to \$2.4 million per year
- ✓ Local Business Activity Near Trail: up to \$113 million annual

The Greenway Trails Network would connect the incredible trails in Baltimore, including the Gwynns Falls, Herring Run, and Jones Falls trails to job and education centers, as well as other essential destinations throughout the city. The projected timeline for the Greenway Trails Network suggests that planning, design, and construction can occur within four years, allowing residents to realize the trail network’s benefits far earlier than most transportation and infrastructure projects allow.





The report has received key endorsements from elected officials across the region:

U.S. Senator Ben Cardin, Baltimore, Mayor Bernard C. “Jack” Young, Baltimore City Council President Brandon Scott, Maryland Senate President Bill Ferguson, Maryland State Delegate Maggie McIntosh, and Maryland Transportation Secretary Gregory Slater.

U.S. Senator Ben Cardin of Maryland: “Expanding and developing trails and greenways has always been a high priority of mine because of all they give back to our communities and neighborhoods,” said Senator Ben Cardin. “The Baltimore Greenway Trails Network project continues to build on many years of diligent work by so many in advocating and planning for the original vision of connecting Baltimore’s parks and communities with greenways. This new study adds more data supporting investment in greenways and quantifying their many benefits to communities.”

Baltimore Mayor Bernard C. “Jack” Young: “Baltimore has wonderful trails and this project will link them into a comprehensive network while connecting 75 of our neighborhoods. Multiple city agencies have been working with partners such as Rails-to-Trails and Greater Washington Partnership to advance this transformational project. This project will create jobs and when it’s done, help people get to jobs. It will help our residents have new beautiful places to walk, jog, and bicycle. These trails will connect to many of our businesses and institutions, our neighborhoods, and our parks. This is one of those projects that will have an instant benefit. People will be using and enjoying the Baltimore Greenway Trails Network for many generations to come. My administration and I are committed to advancing the Baltimore Greenway Trails Network and we continue to make significant progress to bring this critical project to fruition. This economic impact study provides important data supporting my decision to prioritize this project.”

Baltimore City Council President Brandon Scott: “The Baltimore Greenway Trails Network will increase equitable access to public open space and essential destinations. As this study shows, it will bring substantial social, health, environmental, and economic benefits to Baltimore City communities. The work of partners like EY, the Greater Washington Partnership, and Rails-to-Trails continues to be valuable in supporting the City in this crucial effort.”

Maryland Senate President Bill Ferguson: “This economic impact study shows just how valuable trails projects are to the communities along the alignment, giving families new recreation options and safe routes to schools. The Greenway will connect over more than 50 Baltimore City neighborhoods and lead to even greater trail connections throughout Central Maryland, significantly enhancing our quality of life.”





Maryland State Delegate Maggie McIntosh: “The economic impact study shows just how smart of an investment the Baltimore Greenway Trails Network is, paying for itself many times over through the economic and social benefits it will generate. COVID-19 has only underscored just how important it is for every community to have access to these amenities.”

Maryland State Delegate Robbyn Lewis: “The best idea for connecting people is through trails like the Greenway that will allow people to walk, bike, and move back and forth in a way that’s healthy, that enhances quality of life, and that connects them to opportunity. There are so many ways this project is important. Symbolically, it demonstrates a commitment on the part of the city and the residents to reconnect with nature, to reconnect with each other in a way that hasn’t been tried before. This is a game changer for Baltimore City. It says that we’re thinking of the future while being grounded in our past.”

Maryland Transportation Secretary Gregory Slater: “Maryland is committed to a truly integrated transportation network that provides safe transportation options from riding transit and traveling by car to cycling and walking. The Baltimore Greenway Trails Network represents an expansion of those travel choices. The current pandemic has encouraged more people to turn to cycling and walking for transportation, recreation, and to support health and well-being. This study reiterates the economic and social benefits of investing in projects like the Greenway, particularly for Marylanders that count on walking or cycling to get work, healthcare and school.”

This report was prepared by EY in cooperation with RAILS to TRAILS Conservancy (RTC) for the Greater Washington Partnership. The Greater Washington Partnership and RTC will use the report’s results to support the City of Baltimore in conducting an equitable development planning process that ensures that all existing and future residents near the trail can benefit from the Greenway Trails Network investment.

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About EY

EY is a global leader in assurance, tax, consulting, strategy and transaction services. The insights and quality services we deliver help build trust and confidence in the capital markets and in economies the world over. We develop outstanding leaders who team to deliver on our promises to all of our stakeholders. In so doing, we play a critical role in building a better working world for our people, for our clients and for our communities.

About the Greater Washington Partnership

The Greater Washington Partnership is a first-of-its-kind civic alliance of leading employers and entrepreneurs in the region, drawing from the leading employers and entrepreneurs committed to making the Capital Region—from Baltimore to Richmond—one of the world’s best places to live, work, and build a business. Working in collaboration with leaders across our communities, the Partnership connects and leverages the region’s extraordinary assets to advance inclusive,





actionable solutions that strengthen the Capital Region as a leading global region and center for commerce and innovation.

About the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) 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. The Baltimore Greenway Trails Network is one of RTC’s TrailNation™ projects—regional demonstration projects designed to prove what is possible when people and places are connected by trail. Learn more at railstotrails.org/baltimore. Connect with RTC at railstotrails.org and @railstotrails on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

