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**CONTACT:** Patricia Brooks, [patricia@matchmapmedia.com](mailto:patricia@matchmapmedia.com), 202.351.1757

## **Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Part of Main Street America Thriving Communities Team, Supporting Equitable Rural and Tribal Commercial District Development**

*USDOT Awards Main Street America \$5.9 Million as part of the Thriving Communities Program to help communities across the country access infrastructure funding*

**WASHINGTON, DC**—Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) announced today that it is part of the National Main Street Center/Main Street America team awarded \$5.9 million by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) as part of the Thriving Communities Program to help 64 communities across the country access historic funding opportunities provided by the Biden-Harris Administration’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

“Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is thrilled to be part of [Main Street America’s Thriving Communities](#) team. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to leverage historic infrastructure funding to advance trail and active transportation network projects that will serve to strengthen the economic health of communities,” said Liz Thorstensen, RTC’s vice president of trail development.

Through this program, RTC joins the capacity building team led by Main Street America that includes [E.L. Robinson](#), [Equiticity](#), [National Association of Development Organizations](#), [Project for Public Spaces](#) and [Rural Community Assistance Partnership](#) supporting 20 communities in equitable rural and Tribal commercial district development.

A \$21.15 million program driven by four “Capacity Builder Organizations,” including National Main Street Center/Main Street America, Thriving Communities provides two years of no-cost intensive technical assistance to under-resourced and disadvantaged communities to help identify, develop and deliver transportation projects that strengthen communities. The Thriving Communities Program will grow the pipeline of communities that can successfully compete for federal funding.

“The historic investments we are making in America’s infrastructure must reach the communities that need them the most,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg in a statement. “With the new Thriving Communities program, we are helping under-resourced communities better access federal funding for transportation projects that will create jobs, improve safety and strengthen their economies.”

The Main Street America Thriving Communities team will focus on downtowns in rural and Tribal areas to develop an increased awareness of Federal opportunities, prepare community leaders to implement infrastructure and community development projects and build lasting local capacity for carrying out projects. The team will provide subgrants to each community over a two-year period, matching technical assistance providers with communities based on assessment results, and providing specialized grant assistance from application to project execution.

“This program will deliver more trail systems to communities that have limited capacity to pursue the infrastructure they need to thrive. Trail and active transportation networks are essential infrastructure for America, offering solutions to

important issues that directly affect the quality of life and well-being of people and places,” said Kevin Mills, RTC’s vice president of policy.

To read more about the Thriving Communities announcement, [see the USDOT’s press release here](#). For more information on the Thriving Communities Program, [visit this webpage](#).

*Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC), the nation’s largest trails organization—with a grassroots community more than 1 million strong. RTC is dedicated to building a nation connected by trails, reimagining public spaces to create safe ways for everyone to walk, bike and be active outdoors. Connect with RTC at [railstotrails.org](http://railstotrails.org) and @railstotrails on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).*