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TRAIL NETWORKS AND HOUSING STABILITY PART 1: EXPLORING THE EVIDENCE BASE

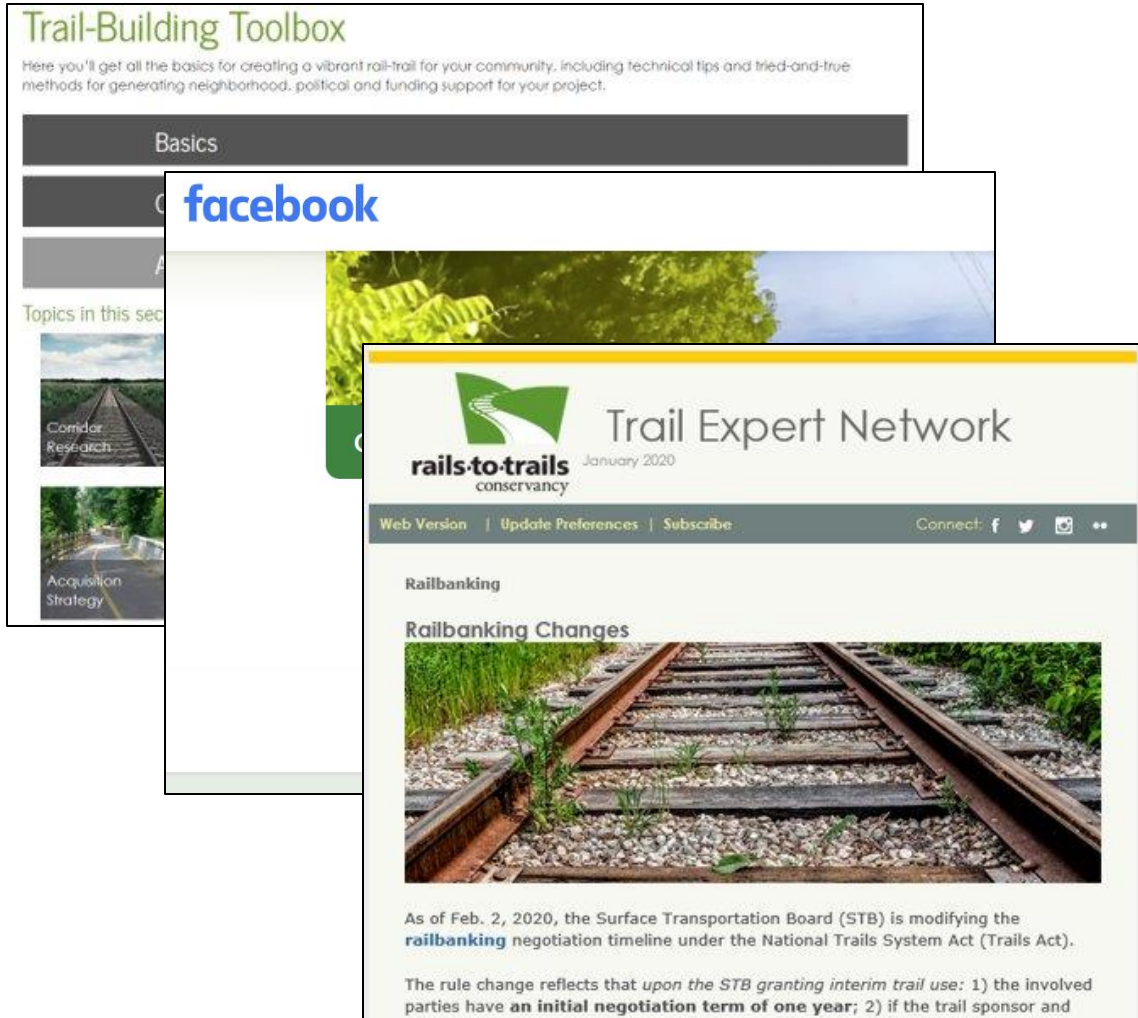
MAY 3, 2022 WEBINAR

HOLMES RUN TRAIL | PHOTO BY LAURA STARK

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Ryan Chao

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
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Mac McComas
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Moderated by Ryan Chao ryanchao@railstotrails.org



Torsha Bhattacharya

Dr. Torsha Bhattacharya 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



Park Access

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

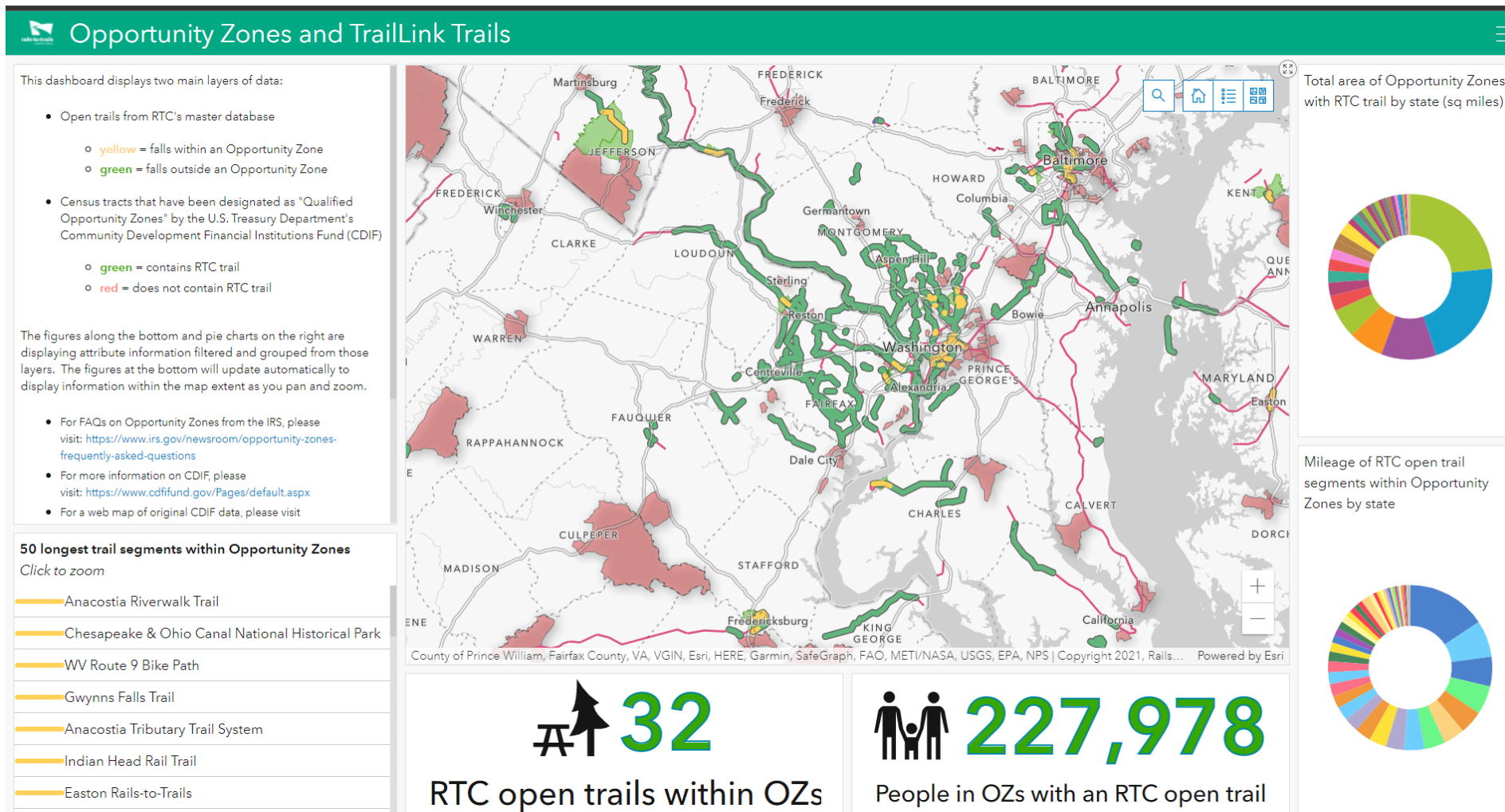


<https://www.tpl.org/city/washington-district-columbia>



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Trail Access



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**



Greg Lindsey

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

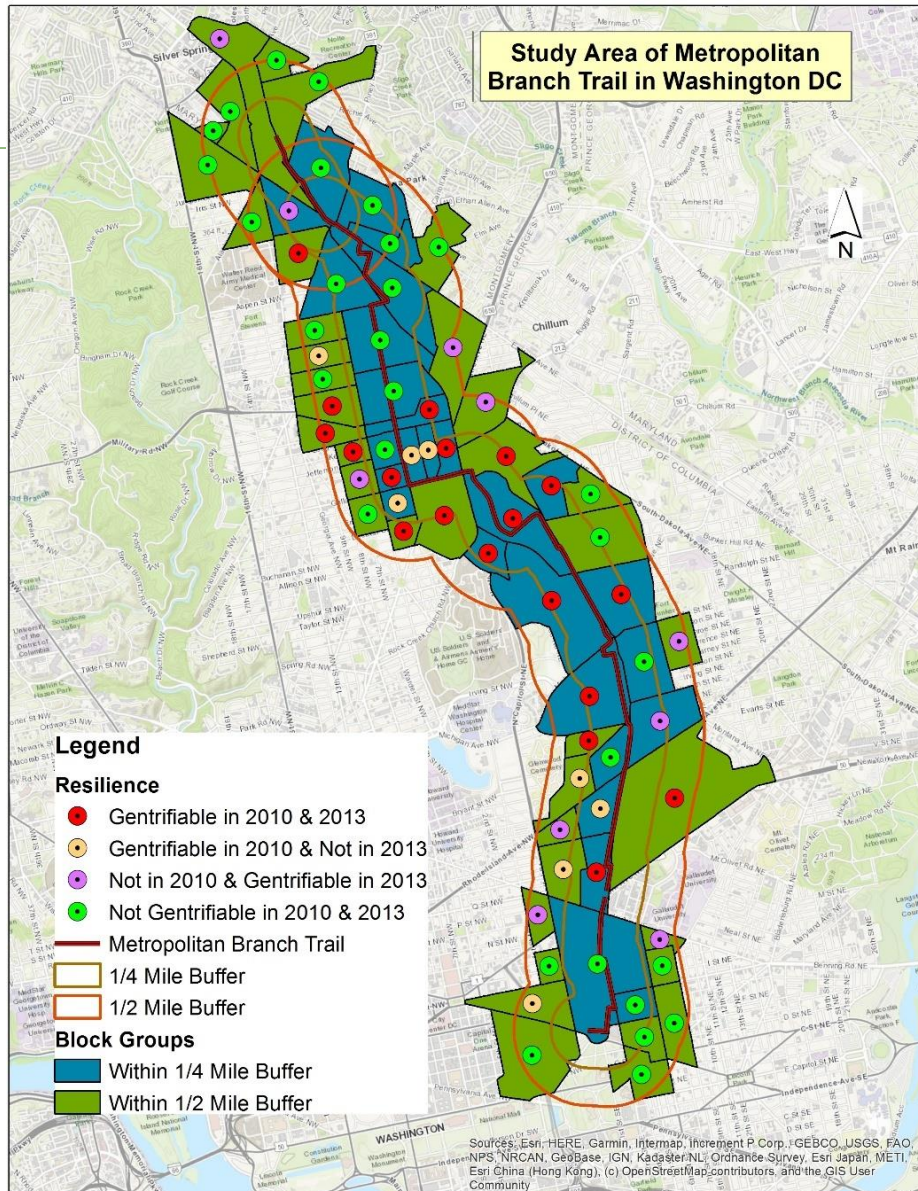
Gentrifiable, Gentrification, Displacement

- **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

Case-Control Census Block Groups (CBGs)	Pre-Test Year Trail Opened	Post-Test 3 Years Post-Opening
Treatment Group <i>CBGs adjacent to trails ($< \frac{1}{4}$ mile)</i>	Gentrifiable	Gentrifiable
	Non-gentrifiable	Non-gentrifiable
Control Group <i>CBGs adjacent to treatment CBGs ($> \frac{1}{4}$ mile, $< \frac{1}{2}$ mile)</i>	Gentrifiable	Gentrifiable
	Non-gentrifiable	Non-gentrifiable

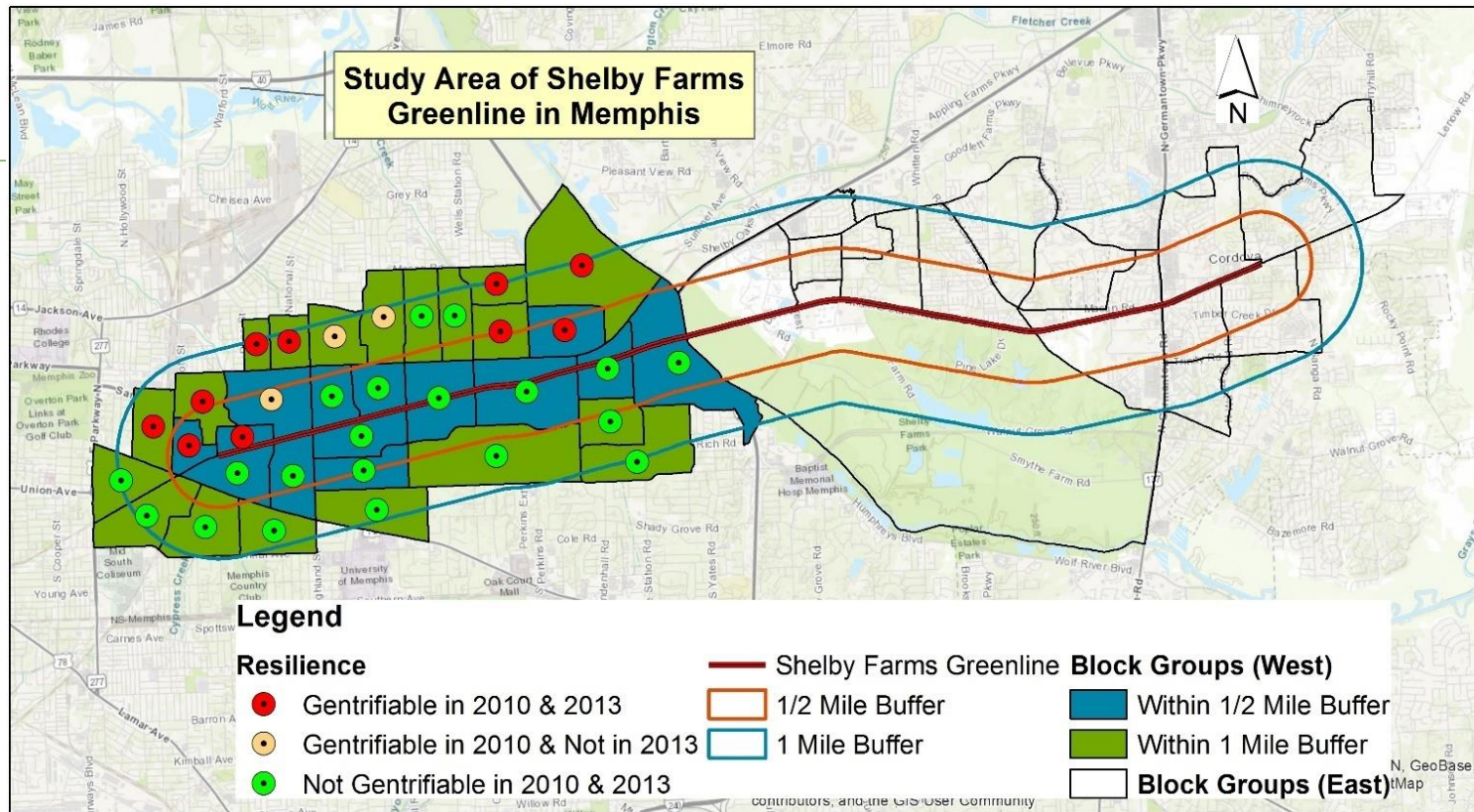


Metropolitan Branch Trail

- Opened in 2010
- 8 miles
- Adjacent to active railroad
- Built through gentrifiable and non-gentrifiable neighborhoods

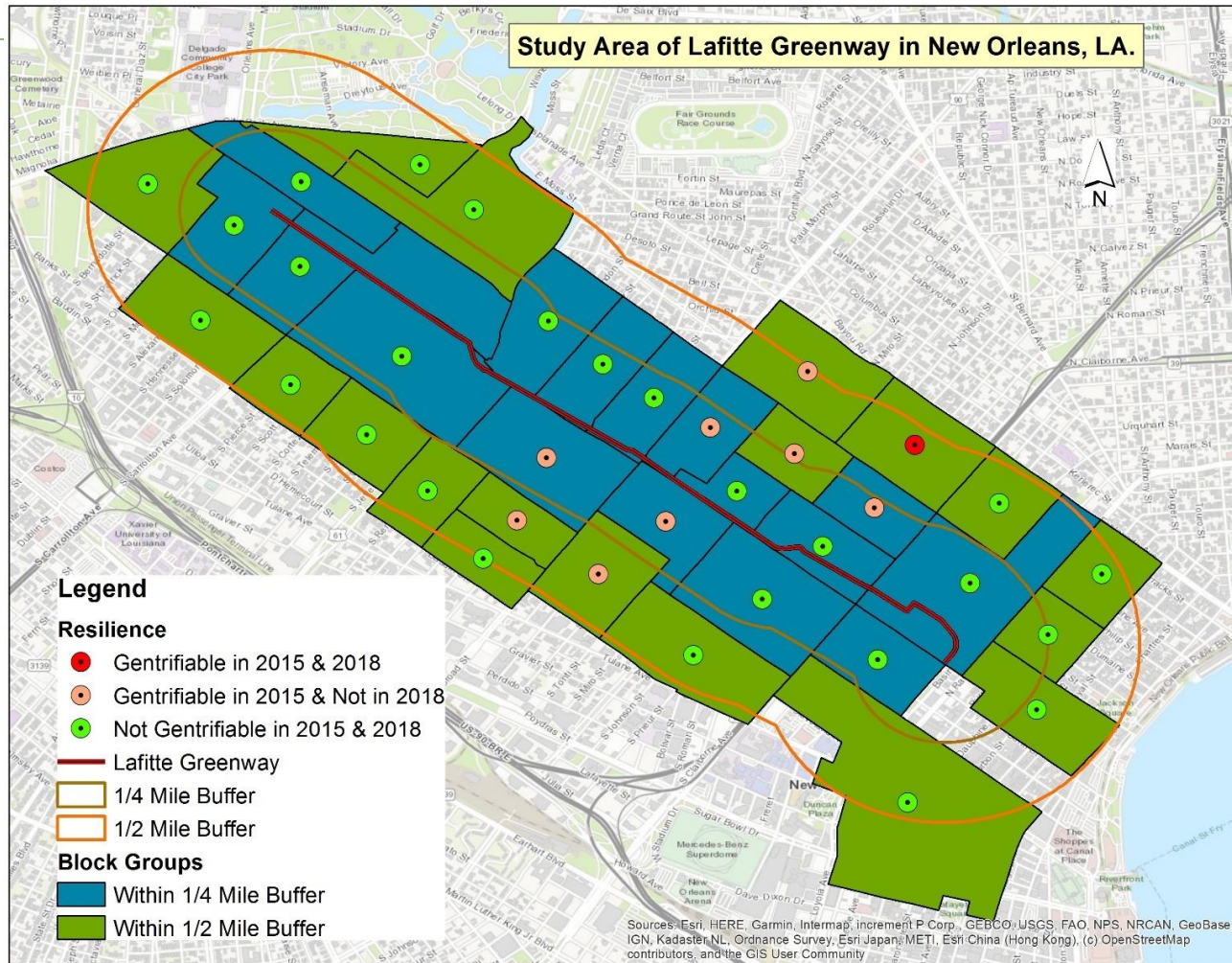


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Shelby Farms Greenline

- 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

	Total CBGs	Gentrifiable CBGs (2010)	Gentrified (Non- gentrifiable, 2013)	
Metropolitan Branch	67			
• Treatment group	28	14	4	
• Control group	39	13	4	
Shelby farms Greenway	33			
• Treatment group	14	4	1	
• Control group	19	9	2	
	Total CBGs	Gentrifiable CBGs (2018)	Gentrified (Non- gentrifiable, 2018)	
Lafitte Greenway	35			
• Treatment group	16	4	4	
• Control group	19	5	4	
Total – All Trails	135	49	19	

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**

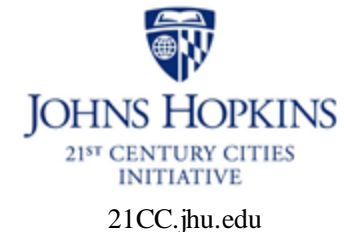
Mac McComas

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).

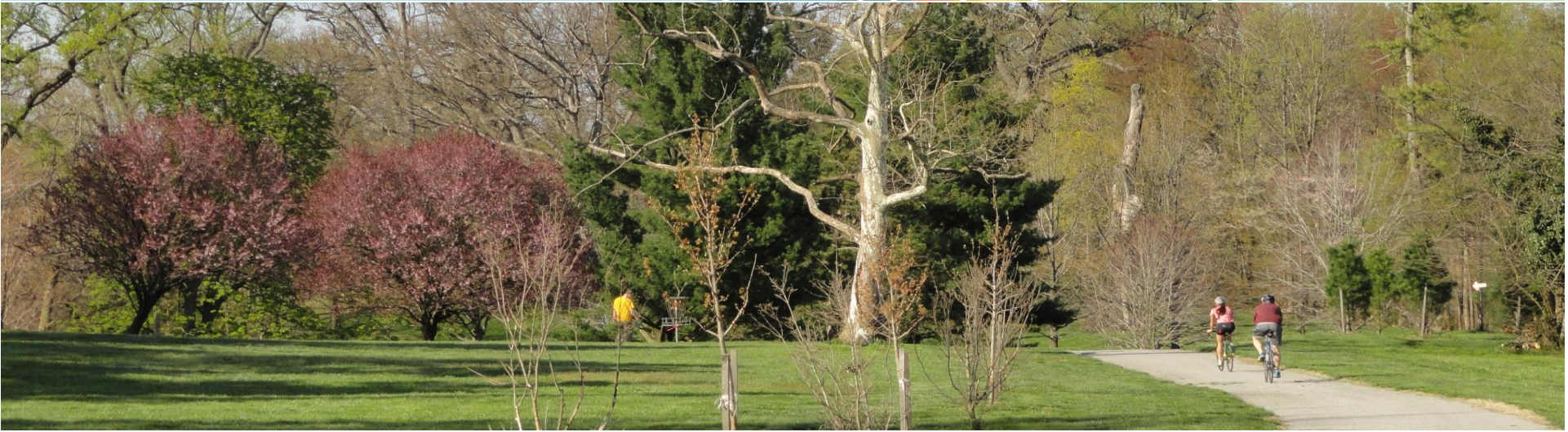


Strategies to Preserve and Build Affordable Housing Near Green Amenities and Urban Trails

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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?

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)



Photo: Bike Share Planning Workshop Harlem, New York City Department of Transportation

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!

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

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.



Photo: South Baltimore Community Land Trust

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



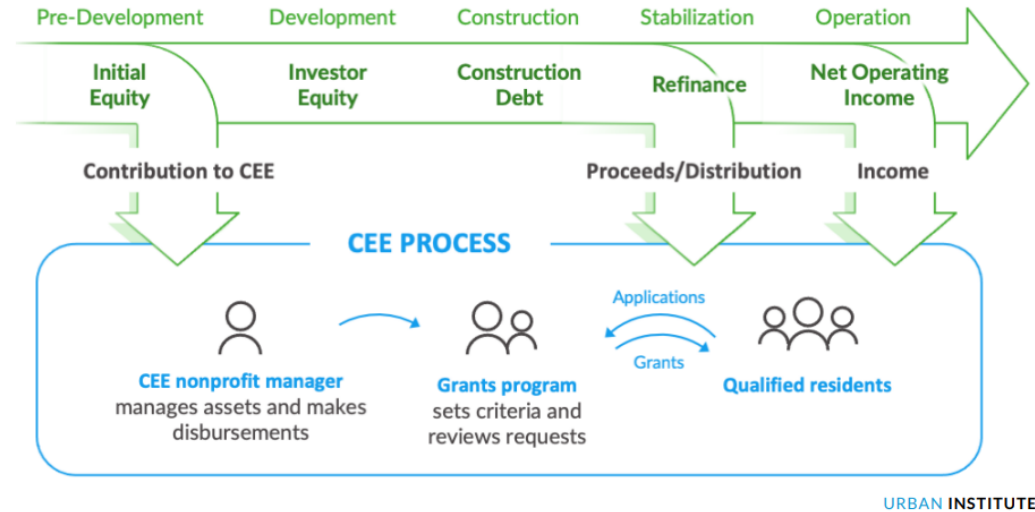
Photo: Press Conference at City Hall Called by the Community Benefits Agreement Coalition Chicago Illinois 4-19-18

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

FIGURE 1

Community Equity Endowment Process



Source: Authors' analysis.



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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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