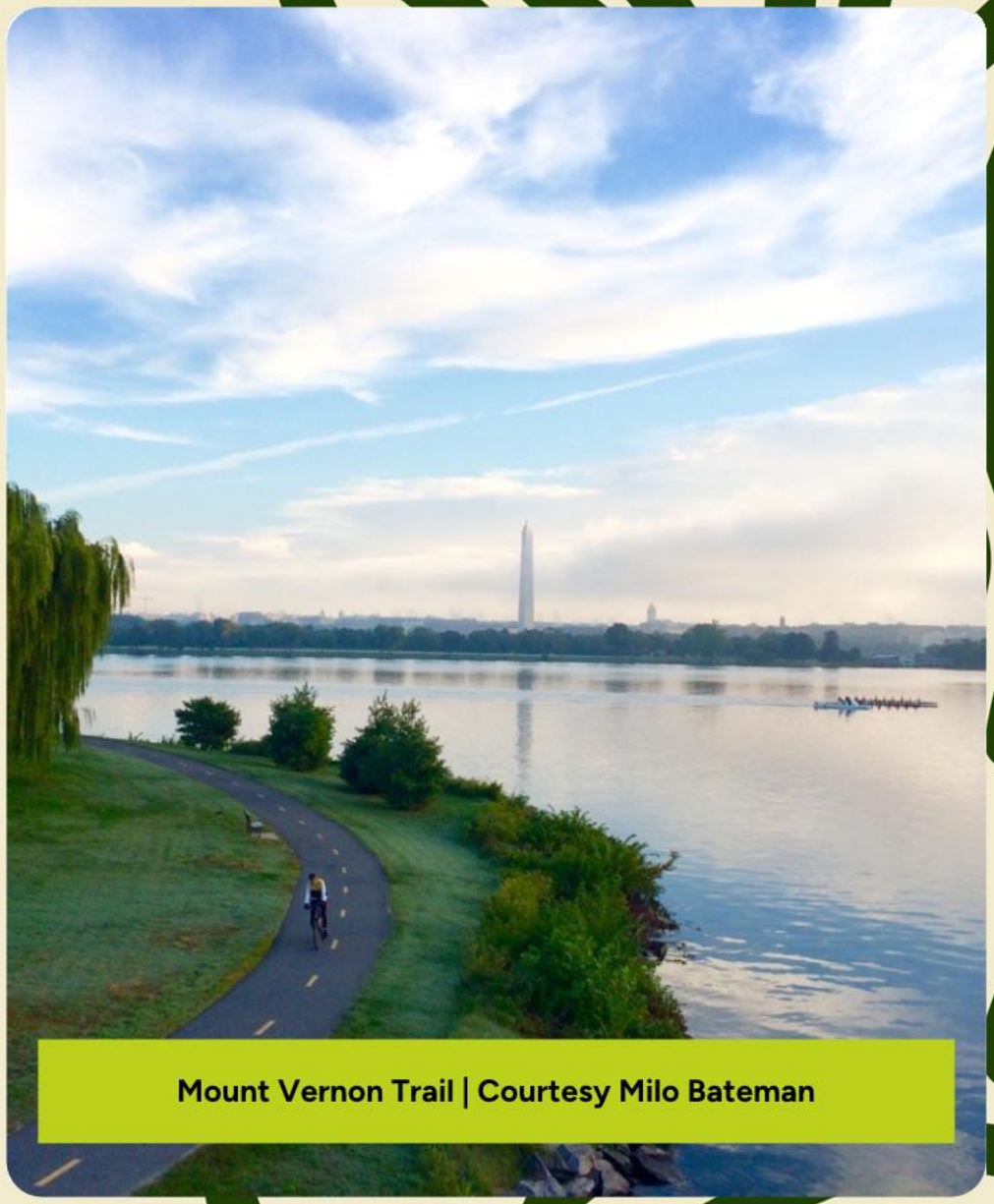
November 10, 2026

Midterm Election Results:

What's Next for Trails, Biking, and Walking



Mount Vernon Trail | Courtesy Milo Bateman

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Before we begin:

- Drop your questions in the Q&A box.
- Live transcription is enabled for this webinar.
- Recording and slides will be made available after the webinar.
- In the event you run into technical difficulties during the webinar, here's how to troubleshoot:
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On the Call: RTC Federal and State Policy Staff



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Framing: Midterm Election Results

- Active transportation infrastructure - essential and popular
- Trails were on the ballot - It is on us to harness this moment
- Historic leadership change at all levels of government
  - Significant new majorities in Congress
  - 18 states with new governors
  - Thousands of new state legislators
- *Key Insight*: Cannot assume new leaders will prioritize trails, walking and biking

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Federal Results

- Democrats will control House & Senate
- Departing and Returning Supporters
  - Departing: House (Ciscomani, over a dozen losses on T&I)
  - Returning: Senate (Pappas, Markey, Sullivan?)
- Committees will start over on transportation law



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Federal Results: New Leadership

- House:
  - Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I)Committee: Rep. Larsen (D-WA) expected to be Chairman / Rep. Rouzer (R-NC) expected to be Ranking Member.
  - Appropriations: Rep. DeLauro (D-CT) expected to be Chairwoman / Rep. Cole (R-OK) expected to be Ranking Member
- Senate:
  - Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee: Sen. Merkley (D-OR) expected to be Chairman / Sen. Capito (R-WV) expected to be Ranking Member
  - Appropriations: Sen. Murray (D-WA) expected to be Chairwoman / Vice Chair is unknown

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Contrasting Policy Themes

Last reauthorization (IIJA, 2021) aimed to address growing needs:

- Invest in climate, safety, and equity
- Foster multi-modal transportation with more mobility options
- Initiate new programs & larger direct federal role (but formula still dominates)

2026 aimed to go *back to the future:*

- Give $ to states with flexibility with less accountability
- Re-emphasize building highways
- Project 2025: walking and biking not the federal role
- Consolidate programs

2027 *TBD*

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Federal Results: New Opportunities & Challenges

Opportunities:

- Reject BUILD America 250
- Write a new transportation law that prioritizes trails, walking and biking
- New Supporters

Challenges:

- Is passing a transportation law a priority for Congress?
- Are trails, walking and biking federal transportation policy priorities?
- Staff turnover
- Emboldened opponents

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State and Local Results

Major wins for Democrats in Governorships

- Six states' governors changed from Republican to Democrat (AK, GA, IA, NV, OH, TX), which Dem-held KS still uncalled (Democrat has a slight lead). Democrats hold majority of Governorships.
- An additional 14 states elected new governors from same party.
    - New Governors likely mean new nominees for secretaries of departments of Transportation and Natural Resources, policy agendas for governors and their agencies. (Even with a re-elected governor, a secretary may decide to leave post now.)

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State Legislative Results

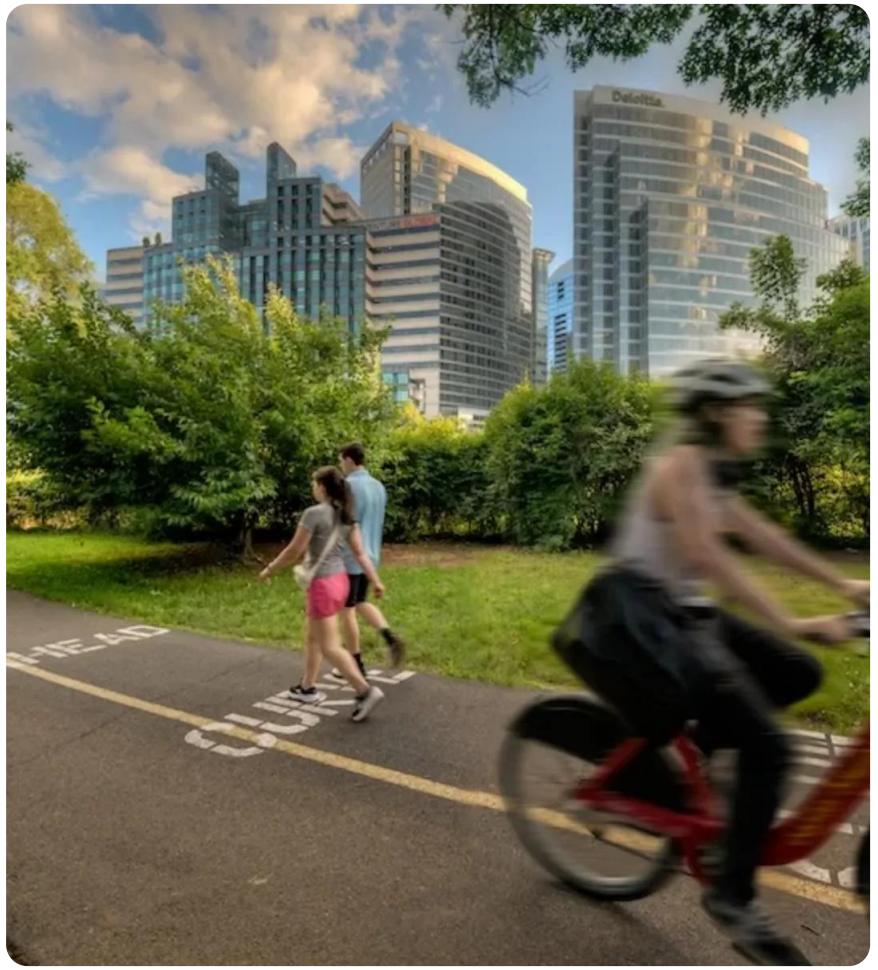
New Democratic Majorities in State Legislatures

- Democrats gained six new trifectas (AZ, MI, MN, NV, PA, WI)
- Flipped at least a dozen legislative chambers (including lower chambers in GA, NC, TX) and gained supermajorities in 4 chambers (CO, NV, NY, VT)
- Broke several GOP trifectas and supermajorities in 11 chambers (within 8 states)
- Impact: even though trails have been a bipartisan issue, new members and leadership may have appetite for funding that didn't previously exist.
- Impact: New leadership (House speaker/Senate leader) will appoint new committee chairs & members.

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State and Local Ballot Measures

- In last few years, state legislatures have not appropriated as much new funding for active transportation, including trails, as in 2010s. Voters, however, have continued to do so at the ballot box.
- In 2026, 12 of 15 ballot measures, in 10 states, supported by RTC passed. (November-only: 10 of 13, in 8 states.) These accounted for at least $360 million in identified funding for bicycling, pedestrian, and trail infrastructure, with trails and other active transportation eligible within an additional $3.7 *billion* in funding for open space conservation, outdoor recreation, etc.



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State and Local Ballot Measures Cont.

- Ballot measures supported by ally and partner organizations were also popular. Voted passed:
  - 20 of 22 of Trust for Public Land's priority measures, accounting for $19 billion
  - 81-85% of transit measures highlighted by the American Public Transportation Association's CFTE
  - 81% of nearly 300 transportation measures tracked by American Road and Transportation Builders Association's Transportation Investment Advocacy Center



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2027 State Forecast & Agenda

- Budget forecasts (and analysis from enacted FY27 budgets) are a mixed bag
  - National Association of State Budget Officers called FY27 budgets "stable but constrained."
  - Decent revenue projects may be offset by long-term structural obligations, Democrats' wish lists
- Micromobility (e-bike and e-moto legislation) will be a hot topic, with good, bad & ugly bills.
- Elected official education, cultivation, advocacy
  - Find contacts for new Governor, advocate for pro-active transportation agenda, secretaries of DOT/DNR
  - Meet with new Speaker/Senate leader to educate them about importance of trails, request allies as chairs and members of relevant committees
  - Educate newly-elected members in your area, invite them to see local trail project.
- Consider future ballot measures, adding trails/active transportation/safety to proposed ones (i.e. transit)

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Call to Action - What's Next?

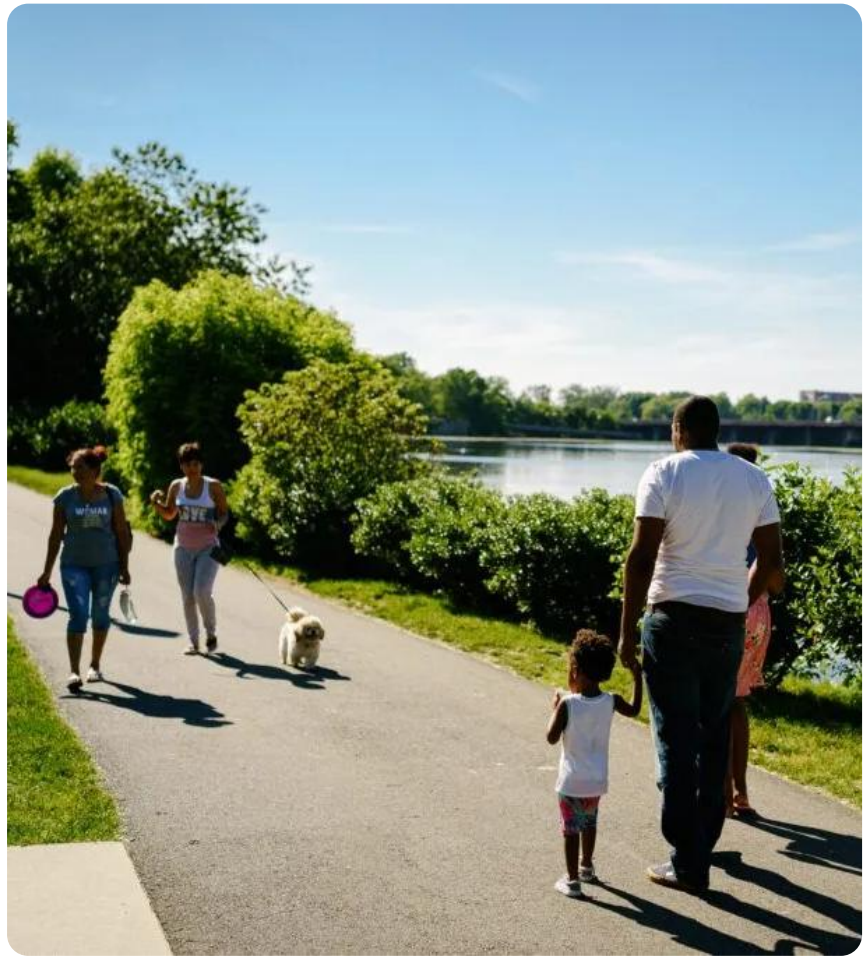
- Decisions will be made early—even during this transition period
- Critical to engage early, and often
- Tell your elected officials that active transportation is a priority
- In Congress and in states and municipalities nationwide, we need to make sure that trails, walking and biking top the list of priorities.



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Next Steps: What You Can Do

- Tell your local, state and federal representatives that state and federal active transportation programs are a priority for your community
    - Share your trail network plans and visions with them
    - Take them out to see your trail and gaps left to fill
- Sign up for RTC's policy advocacy list (registration links in the chat!)
- Prepare your projects for future funding: get them ready for delivery



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Upcoming Events

Webinar – State Legislative Landscape: Building Your 2027 Agenda for Walking, Biking and Trails

November 18, 2026 | 1:00 pm ET

Online Dialogue – Successes and Missed Opportunities: How to Make Your Community a Federal Funding Winner

December 3, 2026 | 1:00 pm ET

Webinar – E-bikes and E-motos: Advocating for Effective Policies to Promote Safety on Trails

December 10, 2026 | 1:00 pm ET

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Audience Q&A



Thank you!

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