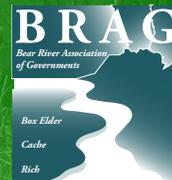


Building Trails; Building Communities



Why are Trails Important?

Utah residents view trails and trail systems as important and integral parts of their lives.

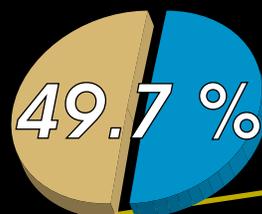
Vibrant trail networks improve resident's quality of life, provide local economic benefits, preserve rural character, and enhance connections to green space and natural amenities.

A 2010 Envision Utah Study¹ found that access to "nature, trails and parks" consistently ranked among the top three priorities that influence a Utahan's quality of life. The Envision Utah study respondents chose what an ideal community would look like. Along with elements such as bus and rail access, and a village community type, "All kinds of parks, gardens, recreational fields, and trails nearby" was a top priority of an ideal community across all surveys.

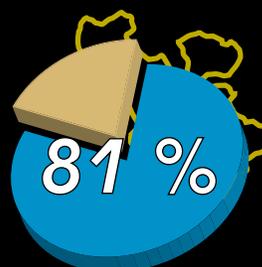
These findings are echoed by the state government with Govern Gary Herbert's issuing the Utah Outdoor Recreation Vision in 2013, with specific recommendations strengthening the state's commitment to maintaining and developing recreational opportunities, both as benefit to residents quality of life, and as an important part of Utah's economic engine. The full document can be found online at <http://www.utah.gov/governor/docs/OutdoorRecreationVision.pdf>

In addition to the Envision Utah Survey, a 2001 survey of Utah resident's attitudes towards recreational trails demonstrated strong support for the use of public funds to further develop non-motorized trails. These results are illustrated in the sidebar on this page.²

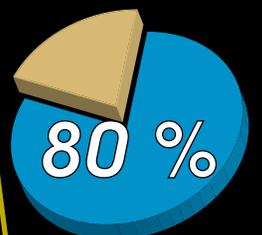
Do Utah Residents Want Trails?



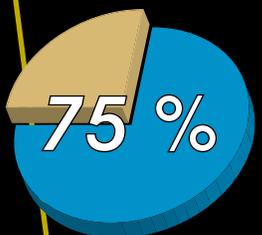
Have used trails in the last 12 months.
Avg Age:
40 yrs, 51.5% Male, 48.5% Female



Feel that trails are important to them.



Recognize that trails near their home contribute a great deal to their quality of life.



Support the use of public funds for the development of non-motorized trails

In 2001, USU's institute for Outdoor recreation and Tourism published the results of a in depth phone survey of state residents' attitudes towards recreational trails and trail development. 2590 adults were surveyed with respondents selected from each of Utah's 7 planning districts.

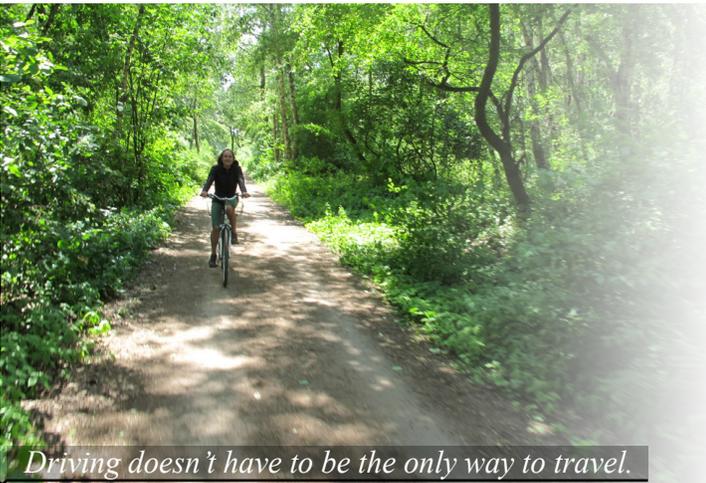
¹ Envision Utah 2010 [envisionutah.org](http://www.envisionutah.org)

² Burr et al, Institute for Outdoor Recreation and Tourism, Utah State University, 2001

What are the economic benefits of trails?

The fact that Utah residents value trails leads to direct economic benefits. A 2010 compilation of research studies by AmericanTrails.org finds that open spaces such as parks and recreation areas have positive effects on nearby residential property values and lead to proportionately higher property tax revenues for local governments. For example, canal trails, a trail type that presents ample opportunity in Northern Utah, have been found to increase home values. James Amon, the Executive Director of the Delaware & Raritan Canal Commission states the following: “Realtors show the canal park to potential home buyers and have reported that proximity to the trail raises the value of these homes. Industrial recruiters tell us that they always show the canal park to prospective employees. Senior citizens have said that it is the number one reason they stay in the region”³

Trails and open space amenities can improve local economies. After considering several potential locations, Ruby Tuesday, Inc., moved its restaurant support center to a site adjacent to the Greenway Trail in Maryville, Tennessee. Samuel E. Beall, III, chairman and CEO stated, “I was very impressed with the beauty of the park, which helps provide a sense of community to this area, as well as the many benefits it provides to our more than 300 employees.”⁴



Driving doesn't have to be the only way to travel.

Small rural communities and larger regions alike have seen economic benefits from increased tourism related to a quality trail network. In the months following the opening of the Mineral Belt Trail in Leadville, CO (population 2,740) the city reported a 19% increase in sales tax revenues. Owners of restaurants and lodging facilities reported serving customers who have come into town specifically to ride the trail. The trail has been credited with helping Leadville recover from the economic blow of a mine closure in 1999.⁵

Research by BRAG staffer Dayton Crites shows that within Cache Valley, recreational facilities such as trails, trailheads and community parks have a direct influence on home prices. The following page illustrates how single family homes within walking distance of recreation facilities are worth, on average, 29% more than homes outside of that radius.

Is there local support for trails?

The majority of municipal master plans in Utah have already identified trail development as a key priority. As Envision Utah and the Utah State recreational attitudes studies have found, Utahans generally support and desire furthered trail development in their communities. See the appendix for trail related language from local planning documents.



3 Rails to Trails Conservancy and National Park Service, 1995

4 *Enhancing America's Communities: A Guide to Transportation Enhancements*, National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse, November 2002

5 Railstotrails conservancy, Ibid, p.11

CASE STUDY // CACHE COUNTY

Source: Cache County Assessor's Office, 2012

single family homes
located LESS than
500' from trailhead,
park, or trail

\$25.24
Per Square Foot

single family homes
located MORE than
500' from trailhead,
park, or trail

\$17.35
Per Square Foot

Recreational facilities in Cache Valley increase
single family home property value, on average

+29%

Residential Parcels

-  Less than 500' from recreation
-  More than 500' from recreation

Recreational Facilities

-  Trail
-  Community Park
-  Trailhead



Scale: 1" = 1.5 miles



KEY

How do trails improve quality of life for residents?

As growth occurs, trails can help maintain a region's rural and pastoral quality of life. Trails can provide important connections between home and nature, and can provide buffers between agricultural and industrial uses. One of the greatest potential value of trail networks comes from the importance that residents place on green space and recreation, which results in more desirable places to live, which result in higher real estate values and revenues.

A trail network that connects major residential developments within a city or town is a simple way to provide opportunities for residents to experience the outdoors, preserve the quality of a town's landscape, and to offer opportunities for a healthier and more satisfying life.

Northern Utah success stories

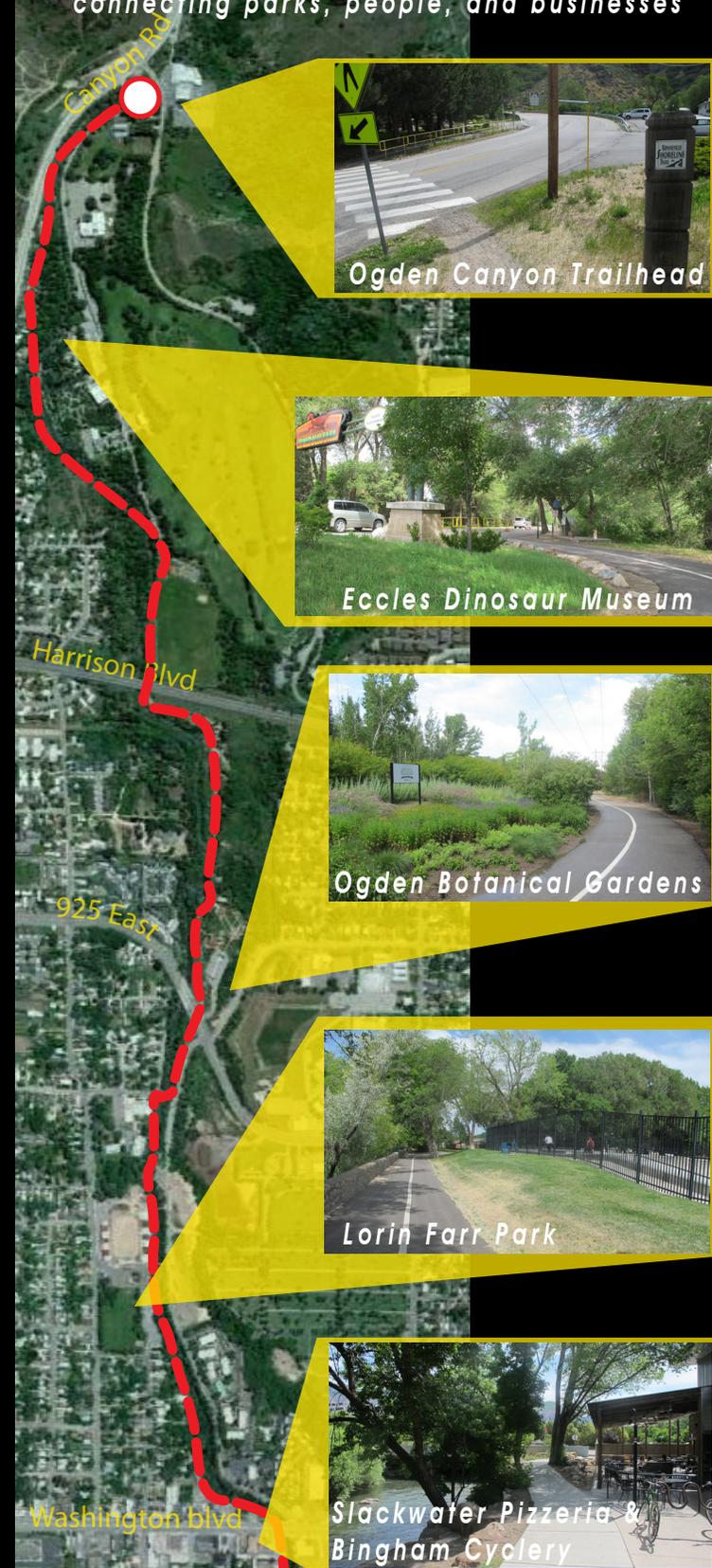
Many communities in Utah have seen the growth of their region bolstered by trails development. A particularly successful approach has been through private-public partnerships. Weber Pathways, a non-profit organization developed to promote trails within Weber County, has partnered with local governments to link trailheads, parks, and downtown businesses through exemplary trails such as the Ogden River Parkway and Bonneville Shoreline Trail.

Ogden's commitment to trail networks has been cited as a reason a number of large sporting goods companies, such as QBP and Amer Sports have brought their headquarters and workforces to the county, as opposed to elsewhere along the Wasatch front. Weber Pathways recently approached Box Elder County regarding a trail connection southwest of Willard, where the County is currently working to modify an abandoned rail bridge for pedestrian use. This trail will eventually connect Ogden to Willard providing a cross county connection between town and the mountains beyond.

Brigham City recently began implementing bike lanes as part of a comprehensive bike and pedestrian master plan and has developed recreational trails near Mantua. Tremonton City also recently completed and

Ogden River Parkway

connecting parks, people, and businesses



A collaborative effort between Weber pathways and the city of Ogden, the Ogden river parkway connects people, businesses & parks, providing a unique amenity and draw to the community.

adopted a Parks and Trails Master Plan. This plan is being used by the city to begin implementing a coordinated trails system. The beginnings of this trail system have begun with the city being awarded 20,000\$ to purchase trail right-of-way in the Malad river basin.

Willard City is now creating a Trails Master Plan with the assistance of the National Parks Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program and the Bear River Association of Governments. These efforts will help the County continue towards a unified vision of county-wide trails as a means to preserve the region's rural and natural character while providing opportunities for economic development.

Implementation

Trail development initiatives often find themselves at the bottom of funding lists, and put off indefinitely. Though roadways and other critical infrastructure often take precedence, the benefits brought to a community by a trail network should not be overlooked. As years pass, the community that places a priority on outdoor recreation will undoubtedly be a more desirable place to live than the community that does not.



*Willard's Bamberger Railway Corridor:
Existing (L) and Proposed (R)*

Cache County is currently investing in a new sidewalk and pedestrian bridge that will provide a connection from Bonneville shoreline trail to River Trail and the entire Logan-Cache National Forest trail network. These connections allow pedestrians and cyclists to reach the mountain trails without ever setting foot on an automotive roadway.

Rich County and the Bear Lake communities are currently working to develop a trail that circles the entirety of Bear Lake, as a method to improve connectivity between towns and create a more significant tourist draw - no small thing in an economy largely based on seasonal tourism.

The sooner communities create a vision for trails, prioritize regionally significant routes, and begin planning, the sooner trails will be constructed and their benefits realized.

Once growth occurs and roads expand into highways and orchards give way to suburban developments, the task of developing pedestrian and non-motorized corridors linking cities' amenities will become exponentially more difficult. The task of creating trail networks for current and future residents will never be less complicated or less expensive than it is right now.