

BENEFITS OF TRAILS

Increased property values

- Trails are the most desired community amenity that homeowners seek when buying a home.
– *Robert Charles Lesser and Co, 2018*
- Homes closer to a regional trail/greenway are valued 5-9% more than similar homes that are farther away
(ITRE 2018)

Promote healthy living

- One study has shown that for every \$1 spent on trail development, \$3 are saved in healthcare costs
(*American Heart Association, 2011*)
- There is a direct and measurable correlation between how close (up to 2.5 miles) people live to biking and walking infrastructure and how much exercise they get. Those living within 1 mile of a trail get an average of 45 minutes/week more exercise than they did before a trail was available.
(*American Journal of Public Health, 2014*)

Protect the environment

- Vegetated trail corridors provide safe passage to wildlife traveling in increasingly urbanized environments
- The vegetation protected within a trail corridor traps sediments and slows water in riparian habitats, which increases water quality
- Trails help air quality both by reducing motor vehicle use and by maintaining trees which absorb pollutants
- Provide habitat for native species

Provide recreational opportunities

- Hiking and walking are consistently ranked as the #1 outdoor activity across age groups (Adventure Travel Trade Association, 2017)

Encourage economic development

- Retail shops, restaurants, accommodations and other industries in local and regional economies can experience notable economic benefits when in proximity to a shared use path (ITRE, 2018)
- The American Tobacco Trail (22+ mile trail in Triangle area) contributes \$6.1M to the local economy annually; supports 78 jobs and generates \$2.2M annually in labor income (ITRE, 2018)
- Contribute to a community's identity
- The Town of Elkin is a prime example. Since promoting the MST, they have seen new trail-based businesses rejuvenate an economy that was formerly dependent on the textile industry
- Provide alternative transportation opportunities
- Reduces motor vehicle emissions and the amount of traffic on roads as commuters take advantage of alternative ways to get to work and school.

Please contact the state trails program if you have any questions about state trails.



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