



Appendix A:
Texas Trail Study
Technical Report

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1. Why Trails? Why Now?

1.1 Introduction

Texas has a long and storied history regarding trails, dating back to 18th century Spanish Texas and the El Camino Real de los Tejas. Many of today's streets and railroads are based on Native American footpaths or historic cattle trails. Trails are an important part of Texan culture and heritage. As we near 2036, the celebration of the 200th year of marking Texas's independence from Mexico, now is the perfect time to expand access to trails for all Texans to promote the natural beauty and culture of our state.

Trail usage across Texas has vastly increased, especially in recent years when COVID-19 impacts encouraged many Texans to spend more time visiting trails. In fact, recreation opinion surveys from all across the state consistently highlight trails as the first or second highest preference for recreation facilities. Trails are an important quality of life feature for people and contribute to livable communities. They provide numerous benefits, not just for recreation and health, but also for environmental preservation, transportation connectivity, and economic growth.

1.2 Purpose

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, with the help of other State agencies and partners, have conducted this study to determine the potential for historic, scenic, and/or recreational trails to be created in Texas and also to identify and foster potential partners and strategies to promote local, regional, and statewide development of trails that enhance the lives of all Texans. This study is intended to initiate the conversation about the opportunity for the development of a future statewide system of regionally-connected trails.

This study recognizes that a vision for trail networks in Texas will be ultimately carried out by entities and organizations prioritizing and developing trails at the local and regional level. However, the three state agencies focused on parks, historic sites, and trails within Texas – Texas Department of Transportation, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and the Texas Historical Commission – do not have a mandate or adequate existing staffing capacity to coordinate the planning and development of a regional or statewide trails network. How, therefore, can and should the State of Texas assist and promote the further development of trails?

This study fulfills the requirements of a legislative mandate of Rider 40, an additional provision added to House Bill 4499 of the 87th Texas Legislature Session, titled "*Rider 40: Trail Study. Out of amounts appropriated above, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) shall work jointly with the Texas Historical Commission and the Department of Transportation to conduct a study to determine the potential for historic, scenic, and/or recreational trails to be created in Texas and to identify potential partners to promote local and regional preservation efforts related to the trails studied. TPWD shall provide a report to the Legislative Budget Board by December 1, 2022.*"

1.3 Definitions

Trails vary in length and regional significance and may cross varying jurisdictions or boundaries. Trails can include:

- **Interregional Spine Trail** – A trail of regional significance that spans multiple jurisdictions and covers most or a significant portion of a region. By linking major urban areas, these trails serve as a backbone for a region's trail network and a system for smaller trail networks to connect to. Interregional spine trails are longer than most regional trails, often connecting other systems, and have organized groups leading maintenance and construction.

- **Regional Trail** – A multi-jurisdictional trail accessible to the general public, which provides recreational opportunities and enhances regional mobility on a local scale.
- **Local and In-Park Trails** – A trail located entirely within a single jurisdiction, which may be a linear trail connecting places within a city or loop trail located entirely within one park.
- Trails in the **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD)** system include non-motorized, motorized, paddling, and equestrian trails built primarily for recreation uses.
- Trails in the **Texas Historical Commission (THC)** system include ten regional driving routes, designated by blue road signs along Texas highways and labeled as “trails,” which serve as tourist pathways that highlight historical towns, areas of scenic beauty, and cultural attractions throughout the trail region.
- Trails in the **Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)** system include routes intended for active transportation, including but not limited to various types of bike paths, pedestrian paths, and multi-use shared paths.

Trail Typologies

- **Natural** – A trail consisting of natural or hard surface materials which traverses natural open spaces such as parks and open spaces, abandoned railroad corridors, or water courses.
- **Near Road** – A shared-use trail or pathway located adjacent and parallel to a roadway but separated from the main roadway.
- **Roadway/Bike Lane** – A vehicle thoroughfare which may serve as a trail corridor, typically in places where a separated path or trail network is absent.
- **Aquatic** – Recreational water routes that are designated for travel using either motorized or non-motorized watercraft.

Trail Users

- **Hikers** – Hikers typically utilize trails for recreation purposes, especially trails in natural settings.
- **Walkers and Runners** – Runners and joggers may find trail networks an ideal setting for fitness, sport, and leisure.
- **People/Persons with Disabilities** – Many trail systems accommodate trail users who utilize a walker, wheelchair, stroller, or similar wheeled assistive device.
- **Equestrian Riders** – Equestrian users, or horseback riders, may use trails for recreational use.
- **Cyclists** – General cyclists may feel most comfortable riding in parks, along shared- and multi-use paths, or on-street in neighborhoods with low traffic. There is increasing use of e-bikes.
- **Mountain Bikers** – Mountain bikers will typically utilize trails found in large natural settings and programmed specifically for off-road cycling.
- **Paddlers** – Some trails systems include coastal and inland paddling trails which accommodate stand-up paddle boarders, canoers, and kayakers, and sometimes boats.
- **In-line Skaters and Skateboarders** – Paved multi-use trails that accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists are likely to attract in-line skaters and skateboarders as well.
- **Off-Highway Vehicle/Motorized Users** – Some natural trail systems may be designed for motorized users on a variety of vehicles, which may include all-terrain vehicles or off-road motor bikes.

1.4 Texas Demographics

Texas is not only the second largest state in the United States by land mass but also the second largest in population with around 27 million residents. Of those residents, the median age is 35 years old, evenly split between men and women. During the past decade, urbanized metropolitan areas in Texas have been growing dramatically, while many

rural counties are experiencing slow growth or population decline. According to estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately 72 percent of the state's population lives in the six largest metropolitan areas.

Texas State Health, Spending, and Growth Statistics

- Disabled population: 12%
- Obese population: 36%
- Population with anxiety/depression: 34%
- 31st healthiest state in the United States
- 79% of Texas youth fail to meet the recommended daily 60+ minutes of physical activity
- 42% of the adult population in Texas is aerobically active for the recommended minimum of 150 minutes per week
- \$6,923: annual health care costs per person
- \$323: annual sports, recreation, and exercise spending per person
- \$35: annual bike spending per person
- \$15,012: annual transportation costs (for a family of 4)
- Over the past two years, more than 9 million people have visited the Texas State Parks system; each year the number of visitors continues to increase
- Texas's population is projected to increase by more than 70 percent, from 29.7 million in 2020 to nearly 51.5 million in 2070.
- Over 60 percent of statewide population growth between 2020 and 2070 is projected to occur within the regions of Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, and South Central Texas (San Antonio Area)

2. Status of Trails in Texas Today

2.1 Existing Statewide Efforts

Trail efforts are concentrated locally with most efforts undertaken by municipalities or counties. Though in recent years efforts towards regional trails are beginning. Notably there are three statewide agencies involved in trail planning or development: Texas Historical Commission (THC), Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). The following is a summary of their most recent plans or initiatives:

- Texas Heritage Trails (THC)
- Bicycle Tourism Trails Study (TxDOT)
- Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan (TPWD)

Texas Heritage Trails (THC)

The Texas Heritage Trails Program (THTP) is the Texas Historical Commissions (THC) economic development initiative to encourage communities, heritage regions, and the state to promote historic and cultural resources. The program is based around ten (10) scenic driving trails created in 1968 by Governor John Connally and TxDOT as a marketing tool. Local preservation efforts combined with statewide marketing have increased tourism to cultural and historic sites across Texas. This brings economic value to Texas communities and supports the THC's mission to protect and preserve the state's historic and prehistoric resources for the use, education economic benefit, and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Bicycle Tourism Trails Study (TxDOT)

In response to the 2005 Texas Bicycle Tourism Trails Act (Texas Transportation Code § 201.9025), TxDOT collaborated with the Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) to investigate the development of a statewide bicycle tourism trail network. TxDOT's Bicycle Tourism Trails Study applied quantitative and qualitative routing criteria to provide an example network of tourism bikeways statewide. The products resulting from this study serve as an initial high-level network analysis for statewide bicycle tourism consideration and future development. A more thorough analysis of local conditions and extensive stakeholder engagement will be needed to advance example network routes. While highlighting the large impact bicycling has on the Texas economy, this analysis has also highlighted a lack of bicycle-related data available in the State. Data is critical to the accuracy and continued study of how bicycling affects both state and local economies.

Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan (TPWD)

The 2018 Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan (TORP) fulfills an eligibility requirement allowing Texas to continue receiving its allotted appropriation through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program. The plan identifies important outdoor recreation issues, evaluate supply and demand for outdoor recreation, provide implementation program for LWCF apportionment, and includes a section on wetlands. The Mission of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is to manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas and to provide hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation opportunities for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

A scientific multi-modal survey was conducted to determine Texas residents' participation in outdoor recreation, as well as their attitudes toward a variety of issues related to outdoor recreation in the state. Survey results show that "walking for pleasure" was the number one outdoor activity for Texas residents. When asked about outdoor facilities that are missing in their communities, five of the six regions of Texas listed "trails" as the most common missing amenity.

2.2 Status by Region

There is no comprehensive inventory of all trails within Texas. This report focuses on larger, regional trails as well as trails within State Parks. The goal is to generally identify regions that have successfully implemented regional trails, regions that mostly lack regional trails, and regions whose residents desire more trails. For the purposes of this study, Texas is divided into the following six regions that best align with Texas Park and Wildlife Department's State Park regions.

Region 1: West Texas

Region 1 is located in West Texas and is primarily comprised of the following eco-regions: Chihuahuan Desert, High Plain, Edwards Plateau, and small portions of Central Great Plain and Southwestern Tableland. The major cities in this region include Midland, Odessa, and El Paso. One of the regional trail efforts in this region includes the Paso del Norte Trail.

Planned Spine Trails Group

Paso del Norte. The Paso del Norte Trail is a community-driven, collaborative effort to develop a county-wide trail in El Paso County. The roughly 68-mile span of the Paso del Norte Trail is divided into five distinct districts, each broadly defined by their unique geographical, historical, and cultural context, as well as various amenities and attractions that help define them.

Development of the Paso del Norte Trail is guided by a Trail Advisory Committee and conceptual master plan to maximize community support and county-wide collaboration. The project supports regional connectivity, preserves the area's history and culture, including the Rio Grande River, and builds advocacy

support through educational and volunteer opportunities. The identification of priority segments carries forth the momentum of the system's existing 20 miles of trails.

As of 2022, approximately 25 of the 68 miles have been developed through primarily private fundraising and grants from TxDOT or federal Community Development Block Grants. The trail was launched in June 2017, and the Paso del Norte Health Foundation initially partnered with Sites Southwest and Alta Planning & Design to develop the conceptual master plan which was published in October 2018; The Paso del Norte Health Foundation has since partnered with the Institute for Healthy Living for project funding and coordination. The Paso del Norte Trail has been approved and formally supported by multiple agencies, including El Paso County, City of El Paso, Texas Tech University, and the National Park Service. This organization is guided by a Trail Advisory Committee comprised of seven members from both the public and private sectors.

TPWD Parks and Trails

Texas Parks and Wildlife trails only exist within state parks, the following state parks with trails can be found in this region:

- Big Bend Trails, 238 miles of trail
- Big Spring Trails, 9 miles of trail
- Davis Mountains Trails, 14.9 miles of trail
- Devils River Trails, 14.5 miles of trail
- Devil's Sinkhole Trails
- Franklin Mountains Trails, 100 miles of trail
- Hueco Tanks Trails, 1.8 miles of trail
- Kickapoo Cavern Trails, 14.6 miles of trail
- Lake Colorado City Trails, 2.8 miles of trail
- Monahans Sandhills Trails, 0.25 miles of trail (no marked trails)
- San Angelo Trails, 50 miles of trail
- Seminole Canyon Trails, 9.4 miles of trail

Municipalities with Trail Networks

The West Texas region is less densely populated compared to other regions of Texas. Though most cities aspire to have a trail network there are few that have dedicated resources to either building trails or creating a consolidated list of trails. To date trail development within most of the state has taken place erratically and piecemeal. The City of El Paso has more than 220 parks though only a few of them have trails for walking, jogging, or cycling.

Texas Historical Commission Cultural/Historic Sites

- Fort Lancaster, Sheffield
- Magoffin Home, El Paso
- Old Socorro Mission, Socorro

Recent Public Input

Community engagement and public input surveys, conducted as part of a comprehensive planning process, for the major cities within the West Texas region found that community support for hike and bike trails is generally strong. In each instance where citizens were asked the importance of walking and biking trail development, approximately half of the respondents indicated these were a high or important priority. Respondents to the most recent TORP in Region 1 indicated bicycling and hiking were the most formative outdoor activities growing up, compared to other trail-related activities such as equestrian and running or

walking. Additionally, in public engagement efforts, some cities indicated that off-street paved trails and trail connections to parks were the most desired. While multiple regions answered with a high preference for city-wide trail connectivity, some Region 1 cities, such as Sweetwater and Brownwood, specified a desire for connections to parks. Unlike Regions 2, 3, and 6, TORP survey respondents in Region 1 indicated sidewalks were lacking in their communities and indicated trails were lacking within their community, but at the lowest percentage of the regions.

Region 2: South Texas/Gulf

Region 2 is located in Southern Texas bordering Mexico and the lower portion of the Texas Gulf Coast. It is primarily comprised of the following eco-regions: Southern Texas Plain, Gulf Coast Prairie and Marsh, East Central Texas Plain, and a small portion of Texas Blackland Prairie. The major cities in this region include Corpus Christi and Brownsville. One of the regional trail efforts in this region includes the Caracara Trails.

Planned Spine Trails Group

Caracara Trail.

The Caracara Trails is a vision for a 428-mile trail network that will link the rich natural, cultural and historical resources the area is known for – creating a unified regional identity for outdoor tourism, promoting healthier lifestyles and generating a new sense of community pride for everyone who lives there.

Through partnership between The Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation, the University of Texas School of Public Health, and local municipalities, the Caracara Trails is enhancing the momentum and direction of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Active Transportation and Tourism Plan to amplify regional connectivity.

The Caracara Trails system will further drive economic development of the Lower Rio Grande Valley and boost local economies while conserving the area's unique ecological value. In the 10-year period following completion of the Caracara Trails, upwards of \$40 million is expected in tourist spending, and the construction phase for six projects of the trail is expected to generate \$56 million in economic impacts.

This regional effort among cities of the Lower Rio Grande Valley will include 230 miles of multiuse trails, 120 miles of U.S. Bicycle Routes, and 78 miles of paddling trails, with six catalyst projects serving as the foundation for this overall trail network.

TPWD Parks and Trails

Texas Parks and Wildlife trails only exist within state parks, the following state parks with trails can be found in this region:

- Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley Trails, 7 miles of trail
- Choke Canyon Trails, 4.2 miles of trail
- Estero Llano Grande Trails, 4.8 miles of trail
- Falcon Trails, 2.8 miles of trail
- Goliad Trails, 3.7 miles of trail
- Goose Island Trails, 0.6 miles of trail
- Lake Casa Blanca Trails, 4.25 miles of trail
- Lake Corpus Christi Trails
- Lockhart Trails, 3.7 miles of trail
- Mustang Island Trails, 20.54 miles of paddling trails
- Palmetto Trails, 4.92 miles of trail

- Resaca de la Palma, 10.56 miles of trail

Municipalities with Trail Networks

The majority of trails within the South and Gulf region of Texas are located in the region's major cities such as Brownsville and Corpus Christi. To date, Brownsville contains just over 23 miles of trails, both linear and within parks, and the city has an additional 11.25 miles of trails planned and/or in progress. Corpus Christi maintains four hike and bike trails in addition to three nature parks with walking trails and other trails within city parks.

Texas Historical Commission Cultural/Historic Sites

- Fannin Battleground, Fannin
- Fulton Mansion, Rockport
- Kreische Brewery, La Grange
- Lipantitlan, Mathis
- Monument Hill, La Grange
- Palmito Ranch Battlefield, Brownsville
- Port Isabel Lighthouse, Port Isabel

Recent Public Input

Citizens within the South Texas region frequently use off-street multi-use trails, with survey results stating these facilities are typically used several times per month. For example, Brownsville residents answered that off-street multi-use trails were utilized a few times per month and 60 percent of survey respondents in Victoria had utilized walking, hiking, and biking trails in the previous two years. A common response from the recent public input within this region was a desire for acquiring and developing additional trails or places to ride a bicycle. In the 2018 TORP survey, Region 2 survey respondents did not indicate that sidewalks were lacking in their communities but indicated that trails were lacking in both the community and within parks with the strongest response percentage of the six regions.

Region 3: Central Texas

Region 3 is located in Central Texas and is primarily comprised of the following eco-regions: Edwards Plateau, Texas Blackland Prairie, and a small portion of Southern Texas Plain. Major cities in this region include Austin and San Antonio. One of the regional trail efforts in this region includes the Great Springs Project.

Planned Spine Trails Group

Great Springs Trail. The Great Springs Project is a non-profit organization creating a network of spring-to-spring trails and a corridor of protected lands over the Edwards Aquifer recharge zone, between Austin and San Antonio. This green corridor will link the four iconic springs of Central Texas: Barton Springs, San Marcos Springs, Comal Springs, and San Antonio Springs. Great Springs Project is leveraging momentum complete the Great Springs Trail by 2036 by maximizing their partnerships with organizations and municipalities which have existing and ongoing trail development. Great Springs Project is closing the gap on funding by clearly identifying sources as well as serving as an advocate for their partners to gain funding. The completed project will enhance conservation and connectivity of the region. The Great Springs Trail will provide an estimated \$55,920,000 in total annual benefits.

This effort is done through the use of conservation easements, land acquisition, and partnerships with local entities. Additional funding for this project comes mainly from grants and private fundraising efforts or donations. Great Springs Project was formed in 2018 and released a trail master plan in April 2022; this

organization is comprised of 13 staff members and led by a 5-person Board of Directors and 11-person Advisory Board.

TPWD Parks and Trails

Texas Parks and Wildlife trails only exist within state parks, the following state parks with trails can be found in this region:

- Bastrop Trails, 12.5 miles
- Blanco Trails, 1.1 miles
- Buescher Trails, 5.73 miles
- Colorado Bend Trails, 31.1 miles
- Enchanted Rock Trails, 8.6 miles
- Garner Trails, 11.4 miles
- Government Canyon Trails, 42.7 miles
- Guadalupe River Trails, 11.1 miles
- Hill Country Trails, 18.4 miles
- Inks Lake Trails, 9.1 miles
- Longhorn Cavern Trails, 1.17 miles
- Lost Maples Trails, 11 miles
- Lyndon B Johnson Trails, 1.2 miles
- McKinney Falls Trails, 10.6 miles
- Old Tunnel Trails, 0.5 miles
- Pedernales Falls Trails, 43.2 miles
- South Llano River Trails, 17.3 miles

Municipalities with Trail Networks

Trails within the Central Texas region have been more strongly developed than other regions, although they have not crossed regional jurisdictions to date. Austin has developed a significant greenbelt and trail system, notably the Barton Creek Greenbelt and the Ann and Roy Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail, in addition to trails built within city parks. The City of San Marcos contains trails within each of their seven natural areas. Cedar Park contains in-park trails, as well as the 10.4-mile Brushy Creek Regional Trail, and San Antonio is home to more than 140 miles of trails in City parks.

Texas Historical Commission Cultural/Historic Sites

- Casa Navarro, San Antonio
- French Legation, Austin
- Fort McKavett, Menard
- Landmark Inn, Castroville
- National Museum of the Pacific War, Fredericksburg

Recent Public Input

The greatest amount of public input data from community engagement efforts was available for Region 3. Walking and nature trails were strongly supported within recent public input efforts, especially for pedestrian only trails within this region. Survey results from cities throughout this region, such as San Marcos, Georgetown, Buda, and Marble Falls, noted that walking/hiking and nature trails were considered one of the most important types of recreational facility in the community. Several municipalities within the Central Texas region indicated a particular desire for improved local and regional trail connectivity, especially to connect various areas of the city, in areas near residents, and connecting city park systems. For example,

about 61 percent of survey respondents in Marble Falls desire more trails as an alternative mean of transportation, and about 80 percent of survey respondents in Round Rock “want Round Rock to have one of the best trails systems in the entire state.” From the 2018 TORP survey, Region 3 survey results did not indicate that sidewalks were lacking, similar to Regions 2 and 6; of the six regions, Region 3 fell within the middle for feeling that trails were lacking within the community and within parks.

Region 4: Houston/East Texas

Region 4 is located in East Texas and is primarily comprised of the following eco-regions: Western Gulf Coastal Plain, East Central Texas Plain, Gulf Coast Prairie and Marsh, and some Texas Blackland Prairie. The major cities in this region include Houston and Beaumont.

Planned Spine Trails Group

There are many urban and in-park trails across the Greater Houston metropolitan area, as well as within state and national parkland, yet there are not currently any prominent regional spine trail planning entities focused on developing trails across the region. The 129-mile Lone Star Trail through the Sam Houston National Forest provides potential for connection with a future spine trail although the region is currently lacking a champion to lead this effort.

TPWD Parks and Trails

Texas Parks and Wildlife trails only exist within state parks, the following state parks can be found in this region:

- Brazos Bend Trails, 10.7 miles
- Fort Boggy Trails, 3.5 miles
- Galveston Island Trails, 13.7 miles (9.9 of which are paddling trails)
- Huntsville Trails, 19.6 miles
- Lake Livingston Trails, 5.7 miles
- Lake Somerville Trails, 24.8 miles
- Martin Dies, Jr. Trails, 6.4 miles (plus additional 13.9 miles of paddling trails)
- Mission Tejas Trails, 8.57 miles
- Sea Rim Trails, 0.8 miles (plus 18.2 miles paddling trails)
- Sheldon Lake Trails, 2.03 miles
- Stephen F Austin Trails, 5.11 miles
- Village Creek Trails, 10.5 miles

Municipalities with Trail Networks

With the Houston metroplex included within this region, this area is much more populated than other regions. The City of Houston has the most notable trail network within the region, with the Bayou Greenways Project, which will link the city’s major bayous with 150 miles of trails.

Texas Historical Commission Cultural/Historic Sites

- Barrington Plantation, Washington
- Fanthorp Inn, Anderson
- Levi Jordan Plantation, Brazoria
- Sabine Pass Battleground, Sabine Pass
- San Felipe de Austin, San Felipe
- San Jacinto Battleground, La Porte

- Start of the Republic Museum, Washington
- Varner-Hogg Plantation, West Columbia
- Washington-on-the-Brazos, Washington

Recent Public Input

Trails, both paved multi-use and nature trails, were listed within the top three most important or favorite recreational facilities for families and households, when asked, for several municipalities within the Gulf region. Citizens within this area placed a high priority for greater trail connections to neighborhoods and neighborhood parks. Region 4 had the highest number of respondents in the 2018 TORP survey. From this survey data, hiking was listed as the trail-related activity that was most significant to respondents. Survey respondents in Region 4 also indicated, with the highest number of responses of all regions, that sidewalks and trails are lacking in their communities and parks.

Region 5: Panhandle/North Texas

Region 5 is located in the Panhandle/North Texas region and is comprised of the following eco-regions: High Plain, Southwestern Tableland, Central Great Plain, Cross Timber, and small portions of Texas Blackland Prairie and Edwards Plateau. The major cities in this region include Amarillo and Lubbock.

Planned Spine Trails Group

Most trails within this region are found in city parks or state parks and currently there are not any prominent planning entities focused on developing spine trails across the region. The nearly 25-mile Caprock Canyon Trail, maintained by TPWD, provides potential for a connection with a future spine trail although the region is currently lacking a champion to lead this effort.

TPWD Parks and Trails

Texas Parks and Wildlife trails only exist within state parks, the following state parks can be found in this region:

- Abilene State Park Trails, 5.42 mile
- Caprock Canyons Trails, 93.6 miles
- Cleburne Trails, 13 miles
- Copper Breaks Trails, 11.3 miles
- Dinosaur Valley Trails, 21.1 miles
- Fairfield Lake Trails, 11.4 miles
- Fort Richardson Trails, 12 miles
- Lake Arrowhead Trails, 5 miles
- Lake Brownwood Trails, 5.62 miles
- Lake Mineral Wells Trails, 12.8 miles
- Lake Whitney Trails, 2.1 miles
- Meridian Trails, 5.2 miles
- Mother Neff Trails, 2.9 miles
- Palo Duro Canyon Trails, 35.4 miles
- Possum Kingdom Trails, 2.3 miles

Texas Historical Commission Cultural/Historic Sites

- Acton, Acton (near Granbury)
- Charles and Mary Ann Goodnight Ranch, near Claude

- Confederate Reunion Grounds, Mexia
- Fort Griffin, Albany

Municipalities with Trail Networks

The Panhandle region of Texas is less densely populated than other regions of the state and many areas of the region lack the resources to realize the vision for trails within the area. The City of Amarillo currently maintains 22 miles of trails within City parks. The City of Lubbock has trails within some of its public parks, notably there are some walking trails along the Canyon Lakes system in the north part of Lubbock. The City of Waco, in the bottom portion of this region, has a more extensive trails system within its parks, notably the Cameron Park Trails System.

Recent Public Input

Few data were available from recent public engagement for Region 5; however, the available public input within the Panhandle and North Texas regions did indicate that trails are supported amenities and are frequently used, where available. Survey respondents in Waco were most likely to use trails one to two times per week, mainly for fitness and exercise, and 63 percent of survey respondents in Lubbock noted that hike and bike trails were the recreational facility their family was most interested in. Respondents in Canadian indicated that the city should pursue the addition of sidewalks, walking trails, and bike paths, and more than half of survey respondents in Amarillo feel that off-street paved trails are the most needed type of trail within the community. In the 2018 TORP public survey, Region 5 respondents noted a need for sidewalks, unlike Regions 2, 3, or 6; while Region 5 responses indicated trails were lacking within the community and parks, Regions 2, 3, 4 had higher response rates.

Region 6: North/East Texas

Region 6 is located in the Northeast area of the state and is primarily comprised of the following eco-regions: Western Gulf Coastal Plain, East Central Texas Plain, Texas Blackland Prairie, and some Cross Timber. The major cities in this region include Dallas, Fort Worth, Tyler, Longview, Lufkin, and Nacogdoches. One of the regional trail efforts in this region includes the Northeast Texas Trail project.

Planned Spine Trails Group

Northeast Texas Trail. The Northeast Texas Trail Coalition is a group overseeing the planning and development of a 130-mile-long hiking, biking, and equestrian trail from Farmersville to New Boston to bring connectivity to the region. Development of the Northeast Texas Trail (NETT) leverages the 1983 federal law called the National Trails System Act Amendments and the railbanking process to acquire land for the construction of the NETT project at no cost. The first acquisition of land towards what is now the Northeast Texas Trail occurred by the City of New Boston in 2001. Funding for this trail is primarily found through grants or private fundraising efforts. The first acquisition of land towards what is now the Northeast Texas Trail was led by the City of New Boston in 2001, and the Northeast Texas Trail Coalition, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, has carried existing momentum for the project with the guidance of an Executive Committee, Board of Directors, by-laws, and construction and marketing committees.

TPWD Parks and Trails

- Atlanta Trails, 4.8 miles
- Bonham Trails, 8.75 miles
- Caddo Lake Trails, 1.8 miles
- Cedar Hill Trails, 27.5 miles
- Cooper Lake Trails, 18.4 miles

- Daingerfield Trails, 3.6 miles
- Eisenhower Trails, 6.5 miles
- Lake Bob Sandlin Trails, 3.3 miles
- Lake Tawakoni Trails, 4.5 miles
- Martin Creek Lake Trails, 3.8 miles
- Purtis Creek Trails, 5.8 miles
- Ray Roberts Lake Trails, 83.2 miles
- Tyler State Park Trails, 13.6 miles

Texas Historical Commission Cultural/Historic Sites

- Caddo Mounds, Alto
- Eisenhower Birthplace, Denison
- Mission Dolores, San Augustine
- Sam Bell Maxey House, Paris
- Sam Rayburn House, Bonham
- Starr Family Home, Marshall

Municipalities with Trail Networks

Most of the population within this Northeast region is located within the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex, which has developed a strong trails network, notably the Dallas Trail Network, which contains the AT&T Trail, Trinity Forest Trail, and the White Rock Creek Trail, among others. Smaller cities to the east of DFW, such as Tyler and Longview, have developed about fifty miles and ten miles of trails, respectively.

Recent Public Input

Recent public input data gathered from the Northeast Texas region indicated a high frequency of use for local walking trails, with fitness and leisure indicated as the primary reasons for use. For example, Denison respondents use trail or bikeway facilities several times per week to several times per month. In each instance where survey respondents were asked to rank the importance of adding trails, more than half of the survey respondents indicated this as a “very important” or “important” priority; residents of Denton, Denison, Hurst, Granbury, Plano, Fort Worth, Arlington, Dallas, and Sherman, in public engagement surveys, identified trails, both nature and multi-use, as facilities most often used or of higher priority. Respondents in several cities favor enhanced connectivity through the city’s trail system, specifically to locations such as local schools, other parks and in scenic areas, sports fields and recreational facilities, and in major sectors of the city. In the 2018 TORP survey, Region 6 had the third highest number of responses; sidewalks were not found to be lacking, and trails were found to be lacking within communities and parks, but with a lower response than Regions 2, 3, and 4.

2.3 Key Takeaways and Summary from the Texas Regions

It is clear that within the six defined regions of Texas, there are only a few groups and agencies planning for a connected system of trails beyond cities and counties. Public opinion surveys indicate, however, that Texans are increasingly desiring trails and trail connections for outdoor recreation. While many of the larger cities in Texas have a growing network of trails, many rural communities do not and oftentimes lack the funds and capabilities to build trails.

Beyond trail development in Texas cities, there are many private entities and grassroots organizations that are dedicated to the planning and development of trails. However, these entities tend to be focused on shorter, inter-city trails that do not typically extend to a regional level. As a result, these entities do not currently have the tools to communicate with each other and effectively coordinate on a larger scale. There are a few examples of groups pursuing regional trail connectivity but even those do not span more than one of the six regions. In Texas, grassroots organizations dedicated to regional trails have made the greatest strides towards regional trail connectivity. As mentioned in section 2.3 Status by Region, four of the six regions of Texas have a group focused on creating a regional trail in that region. However, these groups have not examined the potential to expand beyond the region they're located in and so far, have not communicated with one another. The three State agencies focused on parks, historic sites, and trails within Texas – Texas Department of Transportation, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and the Texas Historical Commission – do not have a mandate or adequate existing staffing capacity to coordinate the planning and development of a regional or statewide trails network.

3. Other State's Efforts

To provide perspective of the current status of trails in Texas, a review of trail planning efforts in other states can serve as a valuable baseline comparison. However, it is important to examine states with similar characteristics in order to gain meaningful comparisons. In total, 15 states from across the nation were studied for applicability to Texas. Several states were selected for a comparison with Texas because they share one or more characteristics such as similar political, geographic, and socio-economic characteristics, and in some cases, provide to Texas for tourists. Additionally, most of these states have statewide coordination for their trail programs, and thus, present strong case studies for Texas to review.

See **Appendix B** for more research on other state's efforts.

3.1 Case Studies

Arkansas

Arkansas does not have a statewide trail master plan; instead, the State uses the Northwest Arkansas Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, which was completed in 2014. This plan focuses on connecting communities to the successful Razorback Regional Greenway project and builds upon the momentum created by this project. With the Razorback Regional Greenway serving as a regional 'spine,' this Plan focuses on connecting communities to the regional greenway system, and helping each community to be a safer, healthier and more enjoyable place for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Authority for the statewide trails system within Arkansas is held by the State Parks Division of the Department of Parks and Tourism. The overseeing body within this division is the Arkansas Trails Council. While not specifically considered a statewide trail plan, in 2013 the Arkansas Department of Transportation initiated an update to the 1998 Arkansas State Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to address state policies related to bicycling and walking, as well as the development of roads, trails, sidewalks, and other related infrastructure.

Successes

- The Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission, supported by the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission, has successfully developed the Razorback Regional Greenway, a primarily off-road, 37.5-mile shared-use trail which links dozens of community destinations.
- The Northwest Arkansas Heritage Trail is a regional network within two counties of Northwest Arkansas which connect historical and cultural assets, such as the Trail of Tears and Civil War trails, through bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- The Delta Heritage Trail State Park is a rail-to-trail project in Southeast Arkansas that will be 84.5-miles long at completion. This state park, operated by the Arkansas State Parks Division, currently has more than half of the trail completed.

Applicability to Texas

- With the Razorback Regional Greenway serving as a regional 'spine,' the NWA Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian master Plan focuses on connecting communities to the regional greenway system, and helping each community to be a safer, healthier and more enjoyable place for residents, businesses, and visitors. This model could also be applied to Texas due to the State's size and successful regional 'spine' trails. Whereas Texas has the TxDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Program with regional coordinators across the state that communicate with transportation planners, a statewide plan such as in Arkansas could provide

consistent guidance, cohesive strategies for statewide networks, and streamline the development process of trail networks and bicycling and pedestrian facilities.

Funding

- The FHWA's Recreational Trail Grant is administered by the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department; this program has contributed roughly \$1.3 million per year for the construction and rehabilitation of trails in Arkansas, providing 80 percent of the cost of trail construction.
- The Trails for Life grant program provides funds for the development of facilities in local neighborhoods and parks. No match is required for this grant which is funded through the Arkansas Department of Health from the Tobacco Settlement Proceeds Act.

California

Directed by statute, the first California Recreational Trails Plan was completed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation in 1978, with an update completed in 2002 and progress reports required every two years. The goals within the 2002 Phase I update remain relatively general and serve as a guideline for the more targeted Phase II update; these goals relate to funding, inventory, regional and statewide planning, advocacy, research, stewardship, encouraging public use, accessibility, cooperation, and leadership. The Plan, through these goals, provides guidance for integrating state trails systems with local and private trail systems efforts.

The Roads and Trails Program (RTP) is within the Planning Division of the California Department of Parks and Recreation. The RTP oversees the California Recreational Trails Plan, organizes and hosts the Trails and Greenways Conference, provides support and tools on trail management, and generally assists in the development of Road and Trail Management Plans for individual parks.

Successes

- The California Coastal Trail, a 1,200-mile-long trail, was recognized in 2001 by the state legislature. This recognition also required that the California Coastal Conservancy, assisted by the state's Department of Parks and Recreation, complete a comprehensive trails plan.
- Prioritization of improving relationships and interactions between and among regulatory entities and the private sector to promote greater effectiveness in the development of a well-planned and managed trail network.
- The development of 12 program goals across various priorities guide the plan and development of the trail network and future updates. The goals have inherent flexibility, yet have extensive strategies outlined to provide solid direction in ensuring partial or complete accomplishment of the goals.

Applicability to Texas

- Statewide and regional trail conferences, like the California Trails and Greenways Conference, could be held for the State of Texas in order to disseminate current information on trail planning, and to promote diversity, encourage widespread use, and plan future actions with coordination across jurisdictional levels.
- Support and continued dialogue among private property owners can be utilized in Texas, where the majority of land is privately owned.
- California legislature established the California Recreational Trails Committee which is comprised of seven Governor-appointed members. The Committee's role is to coordinate trail planning and development among various jurisdictional and municipality levels, advise the director of the Department of Parks and Recreation on matters related to the Recreational Trails Plan, and study and advise on issues related to recreational trail use on private property.

Funding

- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) operates the Active Transportation Program (ATP) to encourage increased use of active modes of transportation such as walking and biking. The ATP is funded by the following sources:
 - State and federal funding: 100% of federal Transportation Alternative Program funds, \$21 million of federal Highway Safety Improvement Program funds
 - \$100 million annually from the Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account (SB1)

- Over the 2023 ATP Fund Estimate, ATP is expected to provide approximately \$651 million for active transportation projects
- Funds are available for eligible projects which include infrastructure projects, non-infrastructure projects, combination projects, and plans. Eligible applicants include local, regional or state agencies, Caltrans, transit agencies, natural resources or public land agencies, public schools or school districts, tribal governments, private nonprofit organizations (for the Recreational Trails Program only), and any other entity with responsibility for oversight of transportation or recreational trails.
- The funds are distributed in the following shares:
 - 50% to the State for statewide competitive program
 - 40% to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) in urban areas with populations greater than 200,000
 - 10% to small urban and rural regions with populations of 200,000 or less
- The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) provides funds annually for recreational trails and trails-related projects. The RTP is administered at the federal level by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). It is administered at the state level by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and the Department of Transportation Active Transportation Program.

Florida

The State of Florida has developed the Florida Greenways and Trails System Plan, which was originally adopted in 1998, updated for the 2013 – 2017 time frame, and recently updated again for the 2019 – 2023 time frame. This plan update advances the state’s existing greenways and trails system by identifying regional trail corridors within a prioritized system, providing funding and development strategies, and establishing partnerships for the development and management of trails within the system. This document serves as a companion to Florida’s Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), and serves the important function of facilitating communication, cooperation, and coordination among governmental organizations and relevant stakeholders such as landowners and recreational user groups, and other groups involved in the planning, development, and maintenance of trails.

The State of Florida created the Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT) to oversee administration of the Florida Greenways and Trails System Plan. The OGT is a part of the Department of Environmental Protection’s Division of Recreation and Parks. The OGT provides statewide leadership and coordination to establish, expand and promote non-motorized trails that make up the Florida Greenways and Trails System.

Successes

- In 2008, the Office of Greenways and Trails, on behalf of the State of Florida, receives the first ever Best Trails State in America award by American Trails. According to American Trails, under the leadership of the Florida Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT), Florida is facilitating the establishment of an outstanding statewide system of trails through a multi-faceted approach reaching throughout the Sunshine State.
- Palatka recently completed Palatka-to-St. Augustine State Trail, the St. Johns River Blueway, the historic Bartram Trail in Putnam County, and the Florida National Scenic Trail. The town’s St. Johns River Center provides trail information and maps and they’ve turned their riverfront into an aesthetic linear park.
- Everglades City was designated a trail town in January 2019. The town’s trail town committee set several goals which were adopted. Six months later, several of the goals were being executed, including putting out bids for 90 dark skies compliant solar streetlights, installing a decorative dolphin bike rack and bike repair station, creating updated city maps, and purchasing eight new bike racks for town businesses and the Everglades City School.

Applicability to Texas

- “Trail Town” is a designation created by Florida to boost ecotourism in small towns. Each Trail Town is officially recognized and receives free Trail Town signs, stickers, and publicity. The Trail Town Designation is one program that could be brought to Texas to encourage trail use in small communities. This designation could increase tourism in these areas through the promotion of walkability to unique destinations in each community.
- Since 1979 the state of Florida has adopted legislature that prioritizes establishing a network of recreational trails. This legislation spurred the creation of the Office of Greenways and Trails, The Florida Greenways and Trails System Plan, the Shared-Use Non-motorized (SUN) Trail Program, and other agencies and funding sources that make statewide trail development possible.

Funding

- The Recreational Trails Program, through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, provides federal grants for projects that provide, renovate or maintain motorized and non-motorized recreational trails, trail heads and trailside facilities. The following amounts are the maximum awarded grant amounts:

- Non-motorized trail: \$400,000
 - Mixed-use trail: \$500,000
 - Motorized trail: \$1,000,000
- The Shared-Use Non-motorized (SUN) Trail program provides funding for the development of a statewide system of interconnected paved multi-use trails (SUN Trail network) for bicyclists and pedestrians, physically separated from the road. Administration of the SUN Trail program is by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT or Department), Strategic Development Division, Systems Implementation Office (SIO), namely the SUN Trail Program Manager. The SUN Trail Program receives funding from an annual allocation of new vehicle tag revenues.

Georgia

Georgia is one of two states studied and included in this section without a statewide trails organization (Arkansas being the other), and currently there is not a statewide trail network nor a statewide plan for trail development. Trails managed and maintained by the State include those located within Georgia State Parks, which are operated by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

Successes

- The Beltline, a 22-mile trail located along former railroad lines, encompasses the City of Atlanta and has garnered strong support for greater trail network connectivity. Community groups have since pushed for the connection of the Beltline with the Silver Comet trail, which would allow a user to travel from Atlanta to Alabama without vehicle interference.

Applicability to Texas

- Grassroots momentum has led to the push for a statewide trail network. The organization of a coalition of trail enthusiasts has led to what is informally known as the “Georgia Trail Summit.” The organization aims to foster partnerships with local governments, nonprofits and education groups, as well as to advocate for policy improvements.

Funding

- Georgia has received \$102 million in federal Land and Water Conservation Fund grants for the improvement of outdoor spaces. The State of Georgia also receives federal funding from the FHWA for the Recreational Trails Program grants. In the previous funding cycle, the Department of Natural Resources provided grants for 12 different projects in public parks, water trail projects, community greenway paths, rails-to-trails, and off-road motorized trails. Apart from a grant of \$582,900 for the U.S. Forest Service, the recipients include local municipalities, and the highest award was \$200,000.
- The Georgia Department of Transportation administers federal funds for transportation alternatives; in the previous funding cycle, Georgia DOT provided over \$4.5 million across nine different projects for multi-use trails, sidewalk improvements, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- The Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program is administered by the state’s Department of Natural Resources and provides funding to support parks and trails as well as to provide stewardship and acquisition of critical conservation lands. Eligible projects include those that support state trails or local trails of state and regional significance.

The Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Act dedicates 40 percent of existing state sales and use taxes on outdoor sporting goods to fund the stewardship projects eligible in this program. For local projects, the grant amount is between \$500,000 and \$3 million, but there is no minimum or maximum amount set for state projects. A minimum 25 percent match is required. Funds through this grant are provided to:

- Local governments
- State agencies
- Nongovernmental organizations with missions for conservation

Minnesota

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources first adopted the Minnesota State Parks and Trails System Plan in 2015 and updated the plan in 2019. This plan is uniquely focused upon providing strategic guidance for state parks, state trails, and state recreation areas. The plan provides direction on future investments of these state assets, connecting more citizens to these outdoor opportunities, and optimal distribution of limited state funds for state parks, trails, and recreation areas. Because of the significant maintenance and rehabilitation needs faced by many of the existing trails within Minnesota, this plan specifically details investment criteria for determining the trail system’s “fit and function” and statewide significance. Additionally, the plan discusses the benefits that might be realized by creating a unified trail brand through state and local partnerships, as opposed to piecemeal trail branding along corridors. The Minnesota Parks and Trails Division is within the Department of Natural Resources and oversees state trails and parks. Much like Texas, trails outside of state parks in Minnesota are not managed by the Department of Natural Resources.

Successes

- The Cuyuna State Recreation Area Mountain bike system is a 50-mile-long mountain bike trail system with over thirty routes available for all skill levels. Favoring quality of investments over the quantity and geographic location of investments allowed for the development of this “silver level” ride, as ranked by the International Mountain Bicycling Association.
- As of 2019, Minnesota had 25 authorized trails, with over 2,900 miles of trails, within its state trail system. Most of these trails were created along former railroad routes.
- The differentiated system of recreational facility investment is achieved in part through partnership with friends’ groups, such as the Gateway Brown’s Creek Trail Association, which supports the Gateway Trail, an 18-mile multi-use trail along the former Soo Line Railroad. The Association volunteers to maintain the trail, advocate for the trail, and assist with funding trail amenities, thus reducing dependence upon state resources for maintenance funding.

Applicability to Texas

- The Minnesota Parks and Trails Division developed eight criteria to assess how well existing, or planned and proposed, trails meet the “fit and function” of the authorized state trail system. How well a trail corridor satisfies the eight criteria determines whether the corridor is deemed primary or secondary, thus directing investment priority. The development of a standard criteria in Texas could streamline the planning and funding process for trails within Texas and focus trail completion efforts to certain corridors. A statutory definition of a state trail, encompassing its statewide significance, was the basis for assessing the investment criteria of a trail corridor.
- The Minnesota Parks and Trails Division coordinates with partners, such as non-profits and local municipalities, so that activities are consistent with statute, policy, and Division guidelines. Partners enhance trail level-of-service capacity. Local partners have authority to develop and manage their own trail segments within authorized state corridors, which benefits trail users with a single identifiable trail route. Partnerships with trail support groups are the cornerstone of Minnesota’s successful trails system, along with legislative support, proactive trail providers, and recognition for tourism potential.

Funding

- The Minnesota Department of Transportation supports the Active Transportation (AT) Program which provides grants for planning, education and encouragement, engineering studies, and infrastructure investment related to walking, biking, and rolling.
 - Upon establishment in the Minnesota legislature, the AT Program was funded with \$5 million.
 - Eligible agencies for the grants include nonprofit organizations, townships, state aid and non-state aid cities, counties, and tribal governments; grant requests must be between \$50,000 and \$500,000.
- The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources supports the Regional Trail Grant Program which provides grants to local governments for the acquisition and development of trail facilities outside the seven-county metropolitan area that are considered of regional or statewide significance.
 - The Regional Trail Grant program receives funding from “In Lieu Of” lottery proceeds; funding is subject to appropriation from the state legislature and signature of the governor.
 - Eligible applicants include counties, cities, and townships; grant requests must be from \$5,000 to \$300,000.

New York

In 2021, the State of New York adopted a Statewide Greenway Trails Plan that aims to expand and increase the connectivity and cohesiveness of New York's existing network of greenway trails. The seven goals that form the foundation of the Statewide plan focus upon identifying existing trail inventory in order to prioritize underserved communities, publish information to aid in the planning and development of the trail network, identify funding opportunities, foster greater collaboration among relevant parties, and enhance the greenway trails network as a means for healthy recreation and alternative transportation. A major component of this effort was the creation of a publicly accessible spatial inventory of existing, planned, and proposed trails across the state; the completed inventory allows for assessment, in conjunction with the plan framework, and identification of new and priority trail corridors or connections. Trails are overseen by the Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation within the New York State Government.

Successes

- Empire State Trail is a 750-mile bicycle and walking trail spanning the state of New York, from Buffalo to Albany, and from New York City through the Hudson and Champlain Valleys to Canada. Though the project started with 400 miles of existing, disconnected segments, the entire state trail was completed in just 4 years through 58 trail construction projects.
- Eerie Canalway Trail, a segment of the Empire State Trail from Buffalo to Albany, goes through many small communities. These communities, which used to be primarily bedroom communities or former industrial towns, are now seeing large amounts of tourism generated from the trail.

Applicability to Texas

- One of the results from the statewide trail plan was the creation of an online spatial inventory of existing, planned, and proposed trails across the entire state. Codifying everything into one place, using the state as a coordinating resource, and consolidating data helps local efforts for trail planning.
- Legislation enacted in November 2019 requires that the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation (OPRHP) prepare a plan to help shape future development of the State's comprehensive statewide system of non-motorized multi-use trails. Though this legislation came after the start of the Empire State Trail and the funding from the state, this mandate further committed the State of New York to continue planning, maintenance, and development of trails.

Funding

- The Empire State Trail was able to be completed so quickly due to an enormous funding push from the state level. In 2017, the New York State Legislature appropriated \$200 million of state capital funds to create the Trail. The state commitment leveraged almost \$97 million of additional funds from various federal, state, local, and private sources, providing a total program budget of \$297 million.
- The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is supported by the State of New York's Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Funds for the RTP are sourced by the Federal Highway Administration and are distributed in the following manner:
 - Non-motorized trail: 30%
 - Motorized trail: 30%
 - Diverse recreational trail use: 40%

Tennessee

In 2008, Tennessee adopted the Tennessee Greenways and Trails Plan, which is an update to the 2001 plan of the same name. The main goal of the Plan was to have a greenway or trail planned in every Tennessee county by 2016. The Plan references numerous real world examples and organizations that have developed greenways and trails in innovative and creative ways and focuses on the benefits of greenways and trails from an economic, personal health, alternative transportation, recreation and environmental protection perspectives.

The Greenways and Trails Program is housed within the Recreation Resources Division of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation. There is a Tennessee Greenways and Trails Coordinator who oversees the program and a Commissioner's Council on Greenways and Trails. The council meets annually to assist the Greenways and Trails Program administer funding and planning for statewide trail connectivity.

Successes

- In April 1971, Tennessee became the first state to enact legislation establishing a state trails system. Seven scenic trails were designated as part of the initial state system, including the Cumberland Trail.
- Also known as water trails, blueways are designated paths on water for which put-ins, take-outs, and various points of interest have been pre-identified. In essence, blueways make waterways more accessible to non-motorized users. Several blueways currently exist in Tennessee, including the French Broad Blueway linking Asheville to Knoxville via the French Broad River and the Tennessee River Blueway for which an initial 50-mile section near Chattanooga was first designated in 2002. It is anticipated that more of the Tennessee River and its tributaries will be developed as blueways in the future, making our state's waterways more accessible to future generations of paddlers

Applicability to Texas

- Tennessee has started compiling a statewide GIS trail inventory and map. The goal is to use this resource to find potential trail linkages to create connectivity, identify areas of the state lacking in trails, and target revitalization opportunities.

Funding

- Trail funding is structured similarly to Texas. A majority of grant funding is derived from federal grants funneled through state agencies like the Tennessee Department of Transportation, various metropolitan planning organizations, and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation.
- State and Federal Grants
 - TDOT: Transportation Alternatives Program
 - Approximately \$7.5 million, 20% monetary match
 - TDOT: Safe Routes to Schools Program
 - Approximately \$2 million, 0% match
 - TDOT: Multimodal Access Fund
 - Approximately \$10 million, 5% monetary match
 - MPO: Transportation Alternatives Program & Active Transportation Program
 - Approximately \$12.1 million, 20% monetary match

- Local Parks and Recreation Fund
 - Approximately \$3.5 million, 50% match
- Recreational Trails Program
 - Varies, 20% match

Texas

Texas does not currently have a statewide trails plan or program; without a singular body leading trail development within Texas, trail development efforts are led at local levels. State agencies with responsibility associated to recreational trails include the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). TPWD manages trails located within State Parks and natural areas and also administers recreational trail grants to localities throughout the state. TxDOT is not directly involved with the creation or maintenance of recreational trails but provides funding for alternative transportation.

There is a biennial Texas Trails and Active Transportation Conference which brings together those involved with bicycle, pedestrian, and other active transportation and recreation modes from around Texas and the world. The conference focuses on issues of economic development, health, safety, and many other topics relevant to advancing active transportation and trails.

The Texas Statewide Trails Advisory Committee is comprised of trail advocates from across the State. Their role is to review submitted trail project proposals and provide guidance on the distribution of federal recreation trails grant funding.

The closest thing Texas has to a statewide trail planning effort is TxDOT's Bicycle Tourism Trails Study. The purpose of that study was to investigate the development of a statewide bicycle tourism trail network. The study concluded that Texans would benefit greatly from more connected bikeways across the state. The provision of bikeways can increase spending in local economies, improve the health of local residents, and improve the quality of life for all Texans. Since the completion of the Texas Bicycle Tourism Trails Study, TxDOT has incorporated the identified bicycle tourism trail network into the Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan as well as created standards and requirements for bicycle infrastructure on/along identified routes.

Successes

- Through a Bicycle Tourism Trails Study, TxDOT has gathered Bikeway maps and bicycle planning maps from towns and cities throughout Texas. While the database is not comprehensive, it is an example of a statewide trails inventory, which can improve opportunities by local municipalities for developing trails near existing infrastructure.

Funding

- National Recreational Trail Funds are administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to TPWD's Texas Statewide Trails Advisory Board, who then provides guidance on the distribution of these funds to applicable municipalities.
 - Reimbursable grants can up to 80 percent of the project cost
 - Maximum award is \$300,000 for non-motorized trail grants; \$600,000 for motorized (off-highway vehicle) grants
 - Grants can be utilized for bot motorized and non-motorized trail projects such as construction of new trails, improvement of existing trails, trailhead or trailside facility development, and trail corridor acquisition
- The TxDOT Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program provides funding for alternative transportation projects that improve mobility for non-motorized users and mitigate congestion. Funding for this program comes from the FHWA through the FAST Act. Funds through this program are for construction activities only, and TxDOT administers funds for areas with a population of 200,000 or less; areas with a larger population must seek this funding through the local MPO.

- A minimum 20 percent local funding match is required in the form of cash, an in-kind contribution, or combination of the two
- The following entities are eligible to receive TA Set-Aside funds:
 - Local government, Regional transportation authority, Transit agency, Natural resource or public land agency, School district, local education agency, or school, Tribal government, nonprofit entity, other local or regional governmental entity with responsibility to transportation or recreational trails

4. Benefits of Trails to Texans

4.1 Health

The benefits that trails provide to the health of trail users are perhaps the most well-known benefits provided by recreational hiking and biking trails. Simply being exposed to nature, even in passive ways, has clear benefits which begin accruing immediately on exposure to natural environments, then increase continually with sustained mild to moderate physical activity in nature.¹

Most local trails require no entrance fee, additional equipment, or special skills and are geographically accessible, thus trails serve as a low-barrier opportunity for people to be active. In 2014, the American Journal of Public Health reported there is a direct and significant measurable correlation between how close people live to biking and walking infrastructure and the amount of weekly exercise they get.² A survey of 1,211 people in Texas found those living near a walking/biking trail were more likely to walk 150 min/week compared to those not living close to a walking/biking trail.¹ Regular exercise has been proven to reduce heart disease, hypertension (high blood pressure), and cholesterol, and is believed to slow the aging process, reduce symptoms of osteoporosis, prevent and control diabetes, strengthen the immune system, improve arthritis, and relieve pain.³ Physical activity, such as hiking and biking on local trails, contributes to greater weight control and lower instances of obesity. Healthy weight control has been shown to decrease the prevalence of adverse health conditions, such as heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure, and several studies have shown positive effects of recreational cycling and walking on health outcomes and reduction of all-cause mortality rate. A 2014 study conducted in Greenville County, South Carolina examined the association between trail use and weight status. Weight status is a consistent predictor of mortality rates (i.e., greater weights tend to cause higher rates of morbidity), and the study found that trail users were significantly less likely to be overweight or obese compared with trail nonusers. Additionally, trail users were significantly more likely to report high self-rated health than were trail nonusers.⁴

Compared to the United States overall, Texas had a higher rate of obesity between 1990 and 2019, and obesity-related health impacts, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and even cancer cases, are expected to significantly increase by the year 2030. As of 2020, Texas had an overall prevalence of obesity of 35.7 percent.⁵

¹ Smiley, A., et al. (2020). Association between trail use and self-rated wellness and health. *BMC Public Health*. 20, (128).

² Goodman A, Sahlqvist S, Ogilvie D; iConnect Consortium. (2014). New walking and cycling routes and increased physical activity: one- and 2-year findings from the UK iConnect Study. *Am J Public Health*.

³ State of California Department of Parks and Recreation Planning Division, Statewide Trails Office. (2002). California Recreational Trails Plan – Phase 1.

⁴ Hughey, SM, et al. (2016). Pathways to Health: Association Between Trail Use, Weight Status, and Self-Rated Health Among Adults in Greenville County, South Carolina, 2014. *Preventing Chronic Disease*. 13.160197.

⁵ Texas Department of State Health Services. (2022, May 27). Obesity Data. Texas Health and Human Services. <https://dshs.texas.gov/Obesity/Data/>

Increasing trails throughout Texas could provide greater access to low-barrier recreational and wellness activities to citizens; this could be of even greater significance for the nearly 130 rural counties in Texas, as the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) states that adults living in non-metropolitan (rural) counties are still more likely to be obese than adults in metro (urban) counties with some of the highest differences in prevalence found in the South.⁶ Health benefits are seen across all trail user groups. For example, equestrian riders are exercising core muscle groups while on a horse, building muscle tone, flexibility, and coordination. And paddling and water trail use builds muscle tone in the upper body, including arms, back, and abdominal muscles.⁷

The health benefits of trail use are not restricted to physical health, but also provide significant mental and spiritual health benefits to users as well. Spending time in nature, such as on recreational trails, has been shown to reduce levels of anxiety and depression, thereby contributing to improved life longevity and quality of life. People with greater connectivity to nature have been shown to demonstrate greater trait mindfulness and overall psychological well-being. Even small levels of exposure to natural elements can improve attention span and overall quality of life.² While nature alone has been shown to contribute to these benefits, trail usage has also been linked to increased socialization such as gathering with friends for a regular walk or jog, which also supports improved mental and spiritual wellness. Research shows that people engage in physical activity more consistently when they do so with others. Hiking is an activity to share in families, friendship groups, and with pets.

The benefits of physical activity on trails are not only bound to weight and illness indicators in adults, but activities on trails, such as hiking and biking, also play a significant role in the developmental health for all age ranges and the health of family units. Children who regularly play in natural environments show more advanced motor fitness, including coordination, balance and agility, and are sick less often. Hiking has been linked to active aging in a way that promotes resistance to essentialism (providing a sense of control over the aging body and lessening dependence on medication), increased physical activity, and camaraderie.⁸

Post COVID-19

Trails have become an even greater asset to the health and wellness of communities following the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Regular routines and lifestyles were drastically disrupted and many sought new forms of activity, socialization, and simply a change of scenery. During this time trail usage soared, as traditional fitness facilities were closed, and social distancing requirements were in place. In a May 2020 survey, the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) found that 46 percent of the respondents said that access to open spaces had reduced stress levels during the pandemic, and 66 percent of respondents said they were getting outside at the same level or greater than before the coronavirus. The same survey found that across the country, trail count data [showed] surging trail use, with numbers of people out on trails spiking to levels more than 200% higher than last year (2019) at the same time. Since March

⁶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018, June 14). CDC: More obesity in U.S. rural counties than in urban counties. <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2018/s0614-obesity-rates.html>

⁷ American Trails. (2021). Health Benefits of Trails. <https://www.americantrails.org/health-benefits>

⁸ Smiley, A., et al. (2020). Association between trail use and self-rated wellness and health. *BMC Public Health*. 20, (128).

(2020), trails nationwide [had] seen an average surge of trail use that is 79% higher than last year.⁹ Specifically, in Texas, as of August 2020, the Violet Crown Trail in Austin had seen an average of 10,000 monthly users since April 2020, more than double the 4,000 to 5,000 monthly users in the previous summer.¹⁰ The importance of both bike and pedestrian facilities as a means of alternative transportation increased during this time with the halt of most public transportation options. Demand for trail facilities has remained high since.

Another notable consequence of the pandemic was cleaner air quality. As a result of the drastic reduction in private automobile use, industrial soot, tailpipe emissions, greenhouse gases dropped to levels not seen in decades.¹¹ Poor air quality is a contributing cause of health problems especially for children, the elderly, and people with existing conditions.¹²

4.2 Economic

Trails also provide direct, measurable economic benefits. Texas is currently ranked as a top state for economic activity and trail development can only further that. Improvements to citizen health through trail activity in turn provides economic benefits to Texas through costs saved and avoided. Walking or hiking a few times per week can improve a person's health and lower health care costs. A National Park Service study compared people who lead sedentary lifestyles to those who exercise regularly. The exercisers filed 14% fewer healthcare claims, spent 30% fewer days in the hospital, and had 41% fewer claims greater than \$5,000.¹³ For each dollar spent on building and maintaining the trails, approximately three dollars are realized in reduced health care costs by trail users in annualized terms. This equates to approximately \$1,600 annual health care savings per trail user and up to \$2.4 million in annual health care costs avoided.¹⁴

⁹ Brooks, P. (2020, July 2). New Data Underscores needs for safe places to walk and bike close to home. Rails to Trails Conservancy. <https://www.railstotrails.org/resource-library/resources/new-data-underscores-need-for-safe-places-to-walk-and-bike-close-to-home/>

¹⁰ Cicale, N. (2020, August 28). After summer of increased use, Violet Crown Trail work to resume this fall in South Austin. Community Impact. <https://beta.communityimpact.com/austin/southwest-austin-dripping-springs/environment/2020/08/28/after-summer-of-increased-use-violet-crown-trail-work-to-resume-this-fall-in-south-austin/>

¹¹ Davenport, C. (2020, June 25). Pandemic's Cleaner Air Could Reshape What We Know About the Atmosphere. The New York Times.

¹² New York Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. (April 7, 2021). Final Statewide Greenway Trails Plan & Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement.

¹³ Loza, A., Richman, E. (2011). Economic Benefits of Trails. WeConservePA (formerly Pennsylvania Land Trust Association).

¹⁴ Ernst & Young LLP (2020). Economic and Social benefits of completing the Baltimore Greenway Trails Network.

Trails make communities more attractive places to live. When considering where to move, homebuyers rank walking and biking paths as one of the most important features of a new community.¹⁵ Constructing trails and green spaces can often go hand-in-hand with the redevelopment of underutilized spaces, such as abandoned industrial areas and railroad corridors, or neglected waterfronts, bringing vibrancy to an area. Enhancement of such spaces contributes to community identity and the placemaking of an area, thus increasing the desirability of an area. Proximity to trails and green spaces, and especially economically and culturally vibrant areas with trails, results in increased property values and thus, generates greater revenue from increased property taxes. Across the several studies conducted prior to 2001, there was broad consensus that trails have no negative impact on either the sale ability of property (easier or more difficult to sell) or its value. There was a belief among some, typically between 20% and 40% of people interviewed, that there was a positive impact on sale ability and value.¹⁶ This trend has only continued, as more trails have been built and people have experience positive impacts. Today residents are often willing to pay more for every foot closer that a residence is to a trail or green space, and properties within a distance of up to one-half mile from trails and outdoor amenities may have increased values of 20 percent or more.¹⁷ In the example of completing the 35-mile Baltimore Greenway, Ernst & Young, LLC estimate a 0.7 to 3.7 percent increase in residential property value for properties located within a quarter to half mile of the greenway and an even higher value increase of 4.0 to 7.0 percent for residential properties located within a quarter mile of the greenway. These value increases would contribute to an additional \$2.8 million to \$7.1 million in tax revenues.¹⁴ In Austin, Texas, increased property values associated with a single greenway were estimated to result in \$13.64 million of new property tax revenue.¹⁸

The presence of trails near businesses and local destinations has been found to increase general business activity in both short- and long-term time frames. Trails connected to local destinations might increase patronage and business activity while regional and longer-distance trails might bring tourists from outside the area to visit the trail facility. These visitors contribute to the local economy through increased sales for lodging, dining, and perhaps equipment rentals or tour guides. A 2013 study of 3,133 national participants found that participants of trail-based recreational day trips spent an average of \$60.26 per trip and \$43.81 for bicycle related recreational day trips.¹⁹ In a more recent analysis conducted for Great Springs Project, trail users spend an average of 300 dollars in the tourism and service sectors, which could amount to more than \$23 million in estimated annual trail-related spending from non-local trail users for a proposed trail from Austin to San Antonio, Texas.²⁰

¹⁵ Loza, A., Richman, E. (2011). Economic Benefits of Trails. WeConservePA (formerly Pennsylvania Land Trust Association).

¹⁶ Crompton, J. L. (2001c). Perceptions of how the presence of greenway trails affect the value of proximate properties. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 19, 114-132

¹⁷ University of Washington. (2018, August 16). Local Economics Green Cities: Good Health. http://depts.washington.edu/hhwb/Thm_Economics.html

¹⁸ Nicholls, S., Crompton, J (2005) "The impact of greenways and trails on property values: evidence from Austin, Texas." *Journal of Leisure Research* 37: 321-341

¹⁹ McDonald, J. Brown, L. (2015). The Economic Impact of Greenways and Multi-Use Trails

²⁰ Great Springs Project. (2022). Great Springs Project Trail Plan. Retrieved August 12, 2022, from <https://greatspringsproject.org/vision/>

Trail and outdoor related consumption directly benefit the local economy as well as providing job creation within this field. The greatest increase of jobs is likely to be from trail construction and maintenance¹⁹ and bicycle recreation spending has been found to contribute to the creation of 848,000 jobs; the generated labor income of these new employment positions creates spillover effects within the community from spending.²¹ According to the Land and Water Conservation Fund, outdoor recreation is responsible for 6.5 million jobs and contributes \$730 billion to the national economy. That means that 1 in 20 employed Americans works in some form with the outdoor recreation industry.²¹ In Texas specifically, in 2020 there were 299,940 jobs reported in the outdoor recreation industry.²² Furthermore, use of local trails and increased levels of physical activity, have been shown to improve worker productivity, especially for those that utilize active transportation methods for their commute as exercising before work has been shown to raise an employee's productivity by an average of 15 percent.²³

Improved safety and connectivity of bicycle and pedestrian paths may increase regular use of such paths to access local destinations, such as work or commercial centers. Increased use of trails in place of vehicular travel in turn reduces costs spent on transportation, such as for gas and fuel. The Great Springs Project alone, within the Central Texas region, anticipates transportation benefits of more than \$11 million dollars distributed between reduced vehicle emission costs, traffic congestion costs, vehicle crash costs, road maintenance costs, and savings in household vehicle operation costs.²⁰ In a 2014 Economic Impact Analysis, the Northeast Texas Trail system estimates a long-term benefit from the project of \$10,483,006.²⁴

Aside from the revenue generated from trail visitation and the savings related to public health, nature trails also provide economic benefits to communities, both locally and regionally, through public cost reduction and ecosystem services. Greenways can reduce public costs by serving as utility corridors and protecting high risk areas (e.g., flood prone) from development.²⁵ The buffers preserved by nature also provides ecosystem services, which can be difficult to quantify but ultimately save community costs in public infrastructure and health. These services broadly can include water filtration and quality, carbon sequestration, and maintaining ecosystem balance.

²¹ Outdoor Industry Foundation. *The Active Outdoor Recreation Economy*. Boulder Colorado, 2006, pp. 6

²² Bureau of Economic Analysis. (n.d.). *2020 – Texas Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account*. Outdoor Recreation. <https://www.bea.gov/data/special-topics/outdoor-recreation>

²³ Seigel, RP. (2013, August 20). *How Biking Improves Employee Productivity*. Triple Pundit. <https://www.triplepundit.com/story/2013/how-biking-improves-employee-productivity/59136>

²⁴ Northeast Texas Trail. (2014). *Northeast Texas Trail Economic Impact Assessment*. <https://netexastrail.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/NETX-Trail-Economic-Benefits-Final-Report-10-28.pdf>

²⁵ USDA National Agroforestry Center. (n.d.). 4.10 Economic Impact of Trails. Retrieved August 12, 2022, from https://www.fs.usda.gov/nac/buffers/guidelines/4_opportunities/10.html#:~:text=Buffers%20or%20greenways%20that%20include%20trails%20can%20generate,high%20risk%20areas%20%28e.g.%2C%20flood%20prone%29%20from%20development.

4.3 Connectivity to Cultural, Historical, and Natural Resources

The State of Texas boasts a multitude of cultural and historical resources, as well as natural resources across the ecoregions of the state, and it's no secret that Texans have always been proud of this culture and their history. Trails benefit Texans by allowing and improving access to connect with and learn from these resources, perhaps in ways that traditional means, such as museums, cannot provide. Considered an embodiment of the idea of continuity, trails and greenways are an important part of preserving the past for future generations.²⁶ As author, Paul Gruchow, puts it, walking on a trail “transcends time in a way that connects us with those who walked through the wood 10,000 years ago and those who will walk this way 10,000 years from now²⁷.” The National Park Service (NPS), for example, maintains National Historic Trails which follow past routes of exploration, migration, struggle, trade, and military action. National Historic Trails offer the opportunity to re-trace these past events through historic sites, points of interests, trail segments, and waterways. One such trail is the El Camino Real de los Tejas trail, which has been active for more than 150 years and traverses from the Rio Grande Valle through Central Texas to the Red River Valley of Louisiana. Along this trail are histories of indigenous trade routes, Spanish missionaries, cattle ranching, and Texan independence and statehood.²⁸ In a similar manner to the recreational trails provided by NPS, the Texas Historical Commission maintains the Texas Heritage Trails Program, a statewide program of ten scenic driving trails across the state, demarcated by road signs throughout the region. Each of these trails celebrates the history of these ten heritage regions by highlighting historic communities and sites along the trails.²⁹

Trails are ideal destinations for school field trips and support outdoor classrooms for universities and colleges. Interpretive displays can assist trail users in developing appreciation for our state's many fragile resources through observation, photography, interpretive signs, publications, and presentations. Enjoyable and interesting trail experiences can spur personal commitments to support parks financially, politically, as a volunteer or as an employee.²⁷ Through recognition of the cultural, historical, and natural assets of places, trails and greenways can enhance a sense of community identity. By incorporating recreation, education and interaction into a single-user experience, trail and greenway systems bring a community to a level greater than the sum of its parts.²⁶ The Tejano Trails, for example, in East Austin is an urban trail which preserves the history, diversity, and cultural assets in East

²⁶ Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. (n.d.). Historic Preservation & Community Identity. Retrieved August 12, 2020, from https://www.railstotrails.org/resourcehandler.ashx?name=historic-preservation--community-identity&id=3074&fileName=tgc_historic.pdf

²⁷ American Trails. (May 2003). The Benefits that Trails Provide to Communities. Retrieved September 8, 2022, from <https://www.americantrails.org/resources/the-benefits-that-trails-provide-to-communities>

²⁸ National Park Service. (2020, August 17). National Trails System. <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationaltrailssystem/national-historic-trails.htm>

²⁹ Texas Historical Commission. (2022, June 14). Texas Heritage Trails. <https://www.thc.texas.gov/preserve/projects-and-programs/texas-heritage-trails>

Austin by taking visitors to sites which were foundational in the creation of the neighborhood. The organization's mission is to preserve historic structures, educate newcomers, and to encourage a healthier lifestyle.³⁰

Public art and partnerships with local artists can be incorporated into this single-user experience to highlight a community's history and heritage. Public art can help elevate a trail from practical infrastructure to an inviting space cherished by the community by adding an element of surprise or inspiration along the path and by involving more of the community in the trails. Art along trails establish the trails not only as a community asset, but also as a tourist destination.³¹

On top of lessons in Texas's history, trails provide visitors with lessons on ecology and natural resources. With ten different ecoregions across Texas, trails throughout the state will have a variation in landscapes and climate and contain unique habitats throughout. With increasing development, critical habitats become fragmented or are reduced. Reduced habitat area results in displaced wildlife, which can occasionally cause harm to humans; fragmented habitats isolate and harm certain wildlife populations by preventing access to food sources or breeding grounds, which can in turn impact the greater ecosystem chain. Natural areas and open space, such as those associated with trails, can serve as connections between fragmented habitat areas for the purpose of protecting plant and animal species.

4.4 Accessibility and Equity

In general, the benefits gained from use of public recreation space and trails are greatest for those who live closest to these resources. Conversely, a lack of public open space can have significant health, social, and economic implications.³² Because trails, compared to other recreational activities, have relatively low barriers to usage and are generally easily accessible, trails can be egalitarian and equitably distributed. However, low-income neighborhoods or communities whose residents are primarily individuals or households of color, elderly, single female heads of households with minor children, limited English proficiency, and persons with disabilities communities whose residents are primarily among those that have been traditionally underserved, mis-served, or left out of decision-making and planning processes including the development of parks, trails and safe active transportation facilities. The development of trails within Texas, when prioritized to reach underserved communities, can help to reduce and mitigate health and overall quality of life inequities currently faced in Texas. For example, communities of color experience disproportionately higher rates of chronic illnesses, including asthma, diabetes and obesity. Lower-income and minority communities often lack access to trails, or do not necessarily feel safe utilizing existing trails, and thus, are disproportionately deprived of the health and wellness benefits provided by trails. In fact, Non-white and lower-

³⁰ The Tejano Trails. (2022). About Us. <http://www.tejanotrails.com/about/>

³¹ Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (2019, June 18). Webinar – Public Art on Trails. <https://www.railstotrails.org/resource-library/resources/webinar-public-art-on-trails/?type=Webinar#:~:text=Public%20art%20can%20help%20elevate%20a%20trail%20from,community%20asset%2C%20but%20also%20as%20a%20tourist%20destination.>

³² Mehl, C. (2018, August 16). City Trails: Improving Equitable Access. <https://headwaterseconomics.org/economic-development/trails-pathways/city-trails-improving-equitable-access/>. Accessed July 13, 2020.

income residents are three times more likely to live in communities lacking access to trees, parks and other green space, or areas considered to be “nature-deprived.” With fewer areas where they can safely walk, people of color and lower-income residents are more vulnerable to fatal crashes while walking. In addition to safety concerns from lack of safe walking trails, concerns such as racial profiling, harassment and stereotyping has made people of color feel unwelcome, uncomfortable and even unsafe in the outdoors.³³ Developing trails within these underserved areas addresses both the access and safety disparities currently associated with trails.

Inclusive and equitable trails also pertain to all age and ability levels. Trails can incorporate these issues through features like accessible pathways and wayfinding signage in multiple languages. When trails are equitable and inclusive, they contribute to social infrastructure and enhance social resilience by providing a place in which people feel safe to gather with others and build social networks to lean on. Leveling out health and social inequities within a city benefits not only the individual community, but the greater city as a whole as cities with lower levels of inequity have been shown to be more culturally vibrant and economically productive places.

4.5 Infrastructure

As corridors of public land recognized for the ability to connect people and places together, trails are an important component of the state’s infrastructure. According to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), there are over 3,000 miles of Interstate Highways in Texas alone.³⁴ A representative cost of reconstructing an existing lane of a major urban highway (in 2014 dollars) is approximately \$7.7 million, although there is a wide range associated with this estimate.³⁵ The average cost of constructing a mile of trail, however, is \$700,000.³⁶ Expanding a connected trail network that is able to serve as a mean of alternative transportation has the potential to move commuters from cars and highways to trails and bike paths, thus saving commuters time spent sitting in traffic. The Texas A&M Transportation Institute found this to be an average of 75 hours per year for people from Houston³⁷, and a study by

³³ Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. (n.d.). Equitable and Inclusive Trails. <https://www.railstotrails.org/build-trails/trail-building-toolbox/basics/equitable-and-inclusive-trails/>

³⁴ Texas Department of Transportation. (2022). Interstate and U.S. Highway Facts. TxDOT Expressway. <https://www.dot.state.tx.us/tpp/hwy/ihhwyfacts.htm>

³⁵ Strong Towns. (2020, January 27). How Much Does a Mile of Road Actually Cost? *Strong Towns*. <https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2020/1/27/how-much-does-a-mile-of-road-actually-cost>

³⁶ Toole Design. (2019). Memorandum: Indiana State Bicycle & Trails Report, Shared Use Path Opinion of Probable Unit Costs. https://www.in.gov/indot/files/INDOT_TrailsCostCalculator_Memo.pdf

³⁷ Texas A&M Transportation Institute. (2019). At a Glance – New Study Underscores Economy-Traffic Jam Link. Texas Transportation Researcher. <https://tti.tamu.edu/researcher/at-a-glance-new-study-underscores-economy-traffic-jam-link/>

INRIX found people in Austin spent an average of 104 hours per year in traffic.³⁸ A shift towards active transportation can help to remove some of the stress placed on the state's highway and road infrastructure.

Trails, and their associated natural areas, act as a natural water filtration system protecting streams, rivers, and lakes from runoff, and can potentially reduce the amount of expenses towards artificial water treatment systems.³⁹ Similar to the state's highway system, gray infrastructure, such as wastewater treatment facilities and water filtration plants, requires updates after its operating lifespan has been exceeded. Green infrastructure may not completely replace traditional gray infrastructure systems, but natural ecosystem services have the capability to supplement gray infrastructure utilities and lower costs of maintenance and regular operation. Green infrastructure also acts as a natural defense against increasing impact from natural hazards and disasters such as flooding, erosion, and wildfires.⁴⁰

4.6 Resiliency

Trails can be a tool for natural resource protection. As the landscape of Texas changes, due to increased development and scarcer water resources, among other things, the need for greater resiliency becomes more apparent, especially in the face of stronger natural hazards and protecting natural resources. Trails contribute to such resiliency by conserving environmentally significant land such as areas over aquifers and near rivers, and mature trees which benefit air quality. Vegetated open space provides wildlife habitat, offers carbon sequestration, protects the built environment from flood damage, and a multitude of other valuable functions. Each mile driven releases the equivalent of one pound of carbon dioxide; a 2019 Active Transportation Report released by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy found that even a moderate shift towards active transportation could reduce carbon dioxide emissions within the United States by 27 million tons.⁴¹

Many trails follow the course of ancient waterways. Over time, human development has altered these waterbodies - filling in the floodplains and riparian areas that once buffered runoff and pollution. When designed with protecting and restoring these natural features in mind, trails along floodplains can help bring back healthy riparian areas along rivers and streams and provide vegetated areas to slow and infiltrate flood water.⁸ In flooding events, areas with natural vegetation slow down and absorb water, unlike paved surfaces, and help to mitigate damage created by

³⁸ Menchaca, M. (2019, February 13). How many hours did the average Austin driver spend in traffic last year? Over 100. Austin-American Statesman. <https://www.statesman.com/story/news/local/flash-briefing/2019/02/13/how-many-hours-did-average-austin-driver-spend-in-traffic-last-year-over-100/5998795007/>

³⁹ Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse. (1999). Enhancing the Environment with Trails and Greenways. https://www.railstotrails.org/resourcehandler.ashx?name=enhancing-the-environment-with-trails-and-greenways&id=3062&fileName=tgc_conenv.pdf

⁴⁰ Clark, J. (2012). Using Nature to Protect Against Natural Disasters. HuffPost. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/using-nature-to-protect-against-natural-disasters_b_1577780

⁴¹ Bhattacharya, T., Mills, K., Mulally, T., (2019). *Active Transportation Transforms America: The Case for Increased Public Investment in Walking and Biking Connectivity*. Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. https://www.railstotrails.org/media/847675/activetransport_2019-report_finalreduced.pdf

flooding events. Trails and greenspace can be designed to function as natural overflow areas during the more frequent and intensive storm events seen in recent years. Restoring or protecting floodplains and improving riparian buffers as part of greenway trail development are a method that can be built into the design to help mitigate potential flood damage and related costs.¹⁵ The natural areas conserved by trails are important in mitigating dry periods as well since natural areas retain and slowly release moisture. In areas over aquifers, these natural areas further contribute to protecting water supply because these areas slowly release water into the aquifer and filter out pollutants in the process, whereas water over impervious surfaces is released into the water system quickly and has the potential to accumulate pollutants. In areas such as Central Texas, where development is rapidly occurring, and the region is prone to flash flooding, trails and associated greenways mitigate the potential damage from such events. According to the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), 1 in 10 Texans is exposed to moderate or high-risk riverine flooding each year.⁴²

The ecosystem services provided by trails and their associated natural areas contribute to a society's resilience, but furthermore, trails contribute to individual and community resilience as well. The health benefits that trails bring have previously been mentioned for getting people active and moving, but improvements in overall health also increase an individual's resilience and ability to recover. For example, throughout the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic, individuals with greater levels of health were and have been considered at less risk of serious complications and had higher probability of returning to health again. It is important to note that this was a generalization and not all individuals experienced the same outcomes.

⁴² Texas Water Development Board. (2019). State Flood Assessment. 86th Legislative Session.

5. Opportunities for Texas

Texas has a long history of trails and Texans have expressed a strong interest in trails and trail development across the state. Despite this interest, Texas does not have a comprehensive statewide initiative to plan, develop, or coordinate trails. Nor, is there a statewide catalog or clearinghouse of trail data. If Texas wants to attract national tourism, recognition, and the economic benefits associated with statewide trails, there should be a purposeful, coordinated effort towards trail planning and development of regional trails across all of Texas. It is important to note that the keeper of this data will need adequate resources to compile and regularly update this database for it to remain useful.

The following opportunities can enable the State of Texas to determine a role in the coordination and planning for a statewide system of historic, scenic, and recreational trails of regional significance for Texans today and generations to come.

Statewide Trails Inventory/Database

A statewide inventory or database of trails in Texas would create a foundational clearinghouse of resources for all future State, regional, and local trail planning and help support current and long-term decision-making. Similar to the Texas Water Development Board's (TWDB) Data Hub, this inventory/database would provide a common starting point for future compilation and consistent analysis of trail-related data and information. After the establishment of a statewide inventory/data, dedicated resources are needed to ensure continual resources are allocated for its periodic update and long-term maintenance.

This resource could be leveraged to reduce inefficiencies and duplicative efforts, identify gaps in connectivity and prioritize potential critical trail linkages, target underserved areas and opportunities for revitalization, help identify and quantify the future need for funding, and support targeted tourism attraction and associated economic development efforts. This resource would also inform the development and implementation of a subsequent Texas Trails Plan.

Online Resources/Communications

Building on the statewide inventory/database of trails, a centralized online resource for tools, communications, and assistance for trail planning and development would benefit Texans across the state, especially those in smaller communities and rural areas.

This online clearinghouse can be used for providing best practices and resources to regional and local partners regarding trail design, opportunities for technical assistance and funding, and for tourism promotion. It can also be used by everyday Texans to learn more about the health and wellness benefits of trail use and where to access local or statewide opportunities of historic, scenic, and recreational significance.

Collaboration and Potential Partners

The State of Texas has a long-standing history of protecting areas of state significance and providing access to them for all Texans (e.g., the Texas State Park system). Similarly, to allow access to trails for all Texans and the many benefits that come from them, the future focus on developing a network of trails across the state can benefit from collaboration and partnerships. This is a necessity in that future regional trails of significance will cross many jurisdictional boundaries and be built, managed, and maintained by numerous entities, both public and semi-public.

The following are some potential partners that could help promote, design, develop, maintain, and fund trails and who should be part of follow-up efforts to develop the next steps of a statewide trails system. State entities include, but are not limited to, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas Department of Transportation, Texas Historical Commission, and the Governor's Office of Economic Development and Tourism (OEDT). Regional trail groups such as the Great Springs Project, Paso del Norte Community Foundation, Caracara Trails, the Northeast Texas Trail

Coalition, to name just a few, can help connect a statewide vision to regional and local context. Each of these entities, and others, will contribute efforts and play various roles in the future of statewide trail system.

Trail Standards/Design Assistance

Trails of all shapes, sizes, and types are planned, designed, built, and maintained by various public and private entities all across the state. Development of a consistent set of guidelines and common language, whether statewide or regional, helps to define best practices and increases predictability for all stakeholders. Shared standards and specifications for general trail design would promote efficiency and consistency across the state and help to define minimum standards for future designation of state trails of regional significance (e.g., designation and uniform branding of state interregional trail spines or corridors).

At a minimum these standards should include design guidelines for configuration, crossings, signage, accessibility, and safety features. Smaller and rural communities across Texas have reported difficulties planning and designing trails due to staffing experience and capacity. Design assistance, through direct assistance or through grants, could be provided to smaller communities and rural areas to help establish or expand a connected system of trails. Additionally, a uniform trail grading system could be developed to expand tourism and help people plan accordingly.

Economic Benefit of Trails

Tourism, in all its many forms across the state, is already among the top 10 largest economic drivers in Texas (generating \$83 billion in spending in 2019). Multiple analyses in other states and in a few areas of Texas confirm the more specific economic benefits of trails as a component of tourism, travel and leisure. A statewide effort to evaluate and estimate those economic benefits could be conducted, focusing on employment gains, opportunities for small businesses, benefits to rural and smaller communities, and the added benefit of conveying Texas's story as a great place to live and do business. Using best practices methods, calculate the potential annual benefit to each region of the state. This effort will help inform the continued development of statewide trails connectivity across Texas.

Texas Trails Plan

The purpose of a statewide trails plan would be to undertake a statewide assessment of trails and opportunities for the future development of trails of regional significance across Texas. This would be a first-ever statewide assessment of trails in Texas. The State has a long history of developing statewide assessments for many of its key priorities, including the State Water Plan, the Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan, and more recently, the State Flood Plan. Many of these State plans are updated on five-year cycles. As highlighted in the case study section, many of Texas' comparison states already have state trail plans.

A Texas Trails Plan could coordinate and facilitate a statewide system of trails across Texas. The Plan could utilize a strong public engagement process to define and advance a statewide connected system of historic, scenic, and recreational trails of regional significance. The study would form a critical foundation for all future trails planning and development in Texas and could be used to undertake many of the strategies identified in this report. Components of a statewide trails plan could and should include:

- A strong public engagement process
- Development of a statewide trails vision, goals, and guiding principles
- Establishment of a comprehensive inventory, geodatabase, and online mapping of existing and planned trails
- Development of a needs assessment for trail needs and opportunities
- Identification of interregional spines or corridor target network of regionally significance trails
- Establishment of criteria and standards for designated state trail corridors of regional significance
- Establishment of "Trail Towns" or similar type program to promote recreational tourism in small communities

- Identification of appropriate trail topologies for trail types and special design considerations
- Recommendations for funding opportunities, partnerships, and programs

The creation of the inaugural Texas Trails Plan could be managed through multiple types of processes. One opportunity is for the plan to be developed under the oversight of a single entity, like how the TPWD develops the TORP. Another possibility is for the plan to be developed through single-entity oversight, but with the assistance of regional sponsors and committees, like how the inaugural State Flood Plan is being developed. See the following opportunity for additional information about these options.

Statewide Trails Program

Moving forward, there are numerous decisions to determine the role and process for coordinating and facilitating a statewide system of regional trails of significance. One of the most important is the establishment of a Statewide Trails Program and designation of oversight. Using information gathered from the various state case studies, and from similar examples already being used in Texas, the following two frameworks are presented as potential models for establishing oversight over future statewide trail planning and development efforts. These include state-led and regional-sponsor oversight.

State-Led Model

Many states have benefited from comprehensive approaches to statewide trail planning – like New York, Tennessee, and Florida. This typically takes the form of a state department or program whose sole mission is to oversee and coordinate statewide trail planning and development and a committee of stakeholders to assist the program or department.

Establish Program Within Existing State Agency

This program could exist within an existing State agency such as TPWD or TxDOT. This program would oversee statewide efforts to coordinate trail planning and development, manage the online resource database, be a resource for communications with small and rural communities for assistance, coordinate state and federal funding, and coordinate development of, and updates to, the Texas Trails Plan.

Establish a Statewide Coordinating Committee

A Trail Statewide Coordinating Committee could be developed to include representation from applicable state agencies, such as members from TPWD, TxDOT, THC, the OEDT, any other applicable agency or national group, and preferably at least one member from each region from the various regional trail groups (e.g., Great Springs Project, Caracara, Paso del Norte Foundation, NETT, and others which may be created in the future). This committee could meet at least quarterly and provide support to the Statewide Trails Program.

Example Model

The Land and Water Conservation Act of 1965 authorized the distribution of matching grants to states and local governments for statewide recreation planning. Each state is required to produce a statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation plan (SCORP) at least once every five years. In Texas, the plan is called the Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan (TORP).

Oversight over the development of the TORP is by the Recreation Grants Branch, Local Park Grants Program of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), the state agency that holds the authority to represent and act for the State of Texas regarding the LWCF assistance program.

The TORP goals are to:

1. Assess current statewide outdoor recreation and conservation needs and areas of concern
2. Act as a guide on how to best administer Texas' apportionment of the LWCF
3. Align with the TPWD Land and Water Resources Conservation and Recreation Plan

Benefits to Texans

- Keeps all efforts centrally-coordinated
- Maintains momentum at a high level
- Dedicates full-time staff to implementation and support of regional trail groups and entities

Regional Sponsor Model

Following a model used in the Texas State Flood Plan and the State Water Plan, the State could designate regional trail planning groups (RTPGs) to help oversee trail planning issues in specific regions. These RTPGs could be overseen by regional sponsors which would have authority and oversight of trail planning and development within their region. Under this model, the State could need to take on a coordinating role to assist these groups in meeting minimum standards and in collaboration with other regions.

Establish a Statewide Trails Coordinator

A Statewide Trails Coordinator could be housed in an existing state agency involved in trail planning and development. This position could provide coordination and support to the regional sponsors, including but not limited to, managing the online resources, facilitating communication between regional sponsors and between other state entities, and assisting with statewide trails plan development.

Utilize Regional Sponsors

Regional sponsors could oversee trail planning and development within their region. Each group could work to connect trails inter-regionally, provide support to other municipalities or groups pursuing trail planning and development within their region, oversee development of statewide trails plan in coordination with the Statewide Coordinator.

Example Model

Senate Bill 8 of the 86th Texas Legislature established a framework for the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) to institute flood planning across the state. The Texas Water Code requires that the TWDB prepare and adopt a comprehensive state flood plan every five years.

The Texas Water Code also required TWDB to designate flood planning regions, designate representatives from each region to serve as a Regional Flood Planning Group (RFPG), provide technical and financial support, and adopt guidance principles for regional and state flood planning. Local sponsor agencies were given the legal authority to conduct the procurement of professional services and enter into the contracts necessary for regional flood planning activities.

The overarching intent of the plans are to protect against the loss of life and property to:

4. Identify and reduce the risk and impact to life and property that already exists, and
5. Avoid increasing or creating new flood risk by addressing future development within the areas known to have existing or future flood risk.

The inaugural State Flood Plan process was preceded by a separate assessment which sought to better understand the state of flooding in Texas. The findings, titled State Flood Assessment – Report to the 86th Texas Legislature were used to justify the need for a comprehensive state flood planning process and the necessary funding to implement it.

Benefits to Texans

- Builds momentum on existing grassroots efforts, while providing State support
- Delegates the implementation to the organizations and entities that are already highly involved in trail development
- Gives more ownership to local organizations and entities

Funding

Establishment of a Statewide Trails Program, development of a Texas Trails Plan, and resources to implement both programmatic recommendations and future trail projects requires funding.

In Texas, there are various funding programs (described on pg. 45) which allocate funding resources for trail-related facilities. There is no specific funding source focused on growing a connected statewide system of historic, scenic, and recreational trails of regional significance across Texas.

As seen in the case studies from around the U.S., many states dedicate more than only transportation funding to the development of trails. There are a variety of potential funding sources that Texas could consider including vehicle tag revenue, sale of state-owned property, lottery sales, and many more. At right, is a brief summary of some innovative funding examples from other states.

Continued Coordination with Regional Partners and Stakeholders Across Texas

Engagement with potential trail partners and key stakeholders across all regions of the state should be incorporated into all of the actions and strategies discussed above. While several key groups have provided insights into these recommendations, they and many others can offer significant additional insights towards statewide trail efforts.

6. Conclusion

Due to the enormous size of Texas, a statewide trail network would be a great undertaking that would likely take decades to accomplish. Without a strong group guiding a coordinated effort to connect local trail systems, even large regional systems may never develop. Therefore, an opportunity exists to coordinate trail systems, planning, and development, among local and regional trail organizations. Further, a coordinated effort could create and maintain a statewide trail database, enhance communication, and foster collaborations and partnerships throughout the State. After speaking with several groups focused on regional trail connectivity, the emerging thought is that statewide trail planning would best be served by a coordinated, top-down effort from the State to provide resources, create/maintain a statewide trail database, enhance communication, and foster coordination.

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Appendix B:

Texas Trail Study

Public Survey and State Comparison Study Data

Appendix B: Public Survey Data

This public survey data was gathered from available recent comprehensive or parks/trails master plans. Due to the varying survey formats used across available plans, the data presented may vary in format or be unavailable.

Region 1	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Respondents
	Sweetwater	10,622	685	If additional trails were constructed to the following locations in the City of Sweetwater, how important would connections to the following locations be?	Parks	43.9%	367
	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Respondents
	Brownwood	18,862	1,238	If additional trails were constructed to the following locations in the City of Brownwood, what would be your top three locations to connect to?	Parks	70.8%	727
				Question #2	Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Respondents
				The following statements are related to a trail system or sidewalks and bike lanes use to connect destinations. Please rank the statements.	Amenities along trails such as benches	5.98 (ranked score)	719
	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Respondents
	Odessa	114,428	823	Please rate the importance of the following actions the Parks and Rec Dept. could take:	Develop additional walking and biking trails, (2nd top response)	61.5%	812
	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Respondents
	Midland	142,344	602	Within the past 12 months, how often have you used Midland's walking trails or bike paths?	More than 6 times	28.2%	602
City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Respondents	
Abilene	125,182	N/A	Please tell me how important or unimportant you think it would be to either build new or additional (blank) in Abilene?	Jogging/biking trails - 25% "very important" and 52% "important"	N/A	N/A	
			Question #2	Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Respondents	
			From the previous list, what would you consider to be the most important recreational facility to construct?	Jogging/biking trails (2nd top response)	16.0%	N/A	
			Question #3	Answer #3	Answer #3 Value	Answer #3 Respondents	
			How important or unimportant is it for the city to provide the following types of facilities or programs over the next five to ten years?	Trails for walking and biking throughout the city - 32% "very important" and 47% "important"	N/A	N/A	

Region 2	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
	Corpus Christi	317,863	N/A	Parks and recreation facilities that are most important to households	Walking and biking trails	28.7%	N/A
	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
	Brownsville	186,738	1,031	On average, how often do you use Brownsville's Off-Street Multi-Use Trails?	A few times a month	26.3%	893
	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
	Victoria	67,015	337	In the last two years (including time prior to the coronavirus pandemic), which of the following existing city recreation facilities have you or a family member used or visited?	Walking, hiking, and biking trails	60.0%	150
				Question #2	Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Responses
				If additional funds were available for Victoria Parks & Rec. Dept. trails, parks, sports, and recreation facilities, how would you allocate the funds among the categories of funding listed below?	Acquisition and development of walking and biking trails - 2nd top answer	3.73 (ranked score)	193
	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
	Harlingen	71,829	N/A	Which recreational item is the most important for the city to address?	Add more trails or places to ride a bicycle	18.0%	N/A
Region 3	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
	San Marcos	67,553	N/A	Please indicate how important or unimportant it is for the following park facilities to be provided or added in San Marcos.	Nature trails (2nd top response)	N/A	N/A
				Question #2	Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Responses
				Please indicate how important or unimportant it is for the following passive recreation items to be provided or added in San Marcos parks.	More hike and bike trails throughout the city (3rd top response)	N/A	N/A
				Question #3	Answer #3	Answer #3 Value	Answer #3 Responses
When considering the types of facilities and activities which typically occur, or could occur, in the City's greenspace areas, how important the following to you?	Additional nature trails for walking or hiking	N/A	N/A				

Appendix B: Public Survey Data

Region 3 (cont.)	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #4	Answer #4	Answer #4 Value	Answer #4 Responses
	San Marcos (cont.)	67,553	N/A	The following questions are related to a trail system or linear parks used to connect destination, as opposed to looping trails within a park. Please check the box that best describes how strongly you agree or disagree with the following trail-related statements.	I would like to see trails near where I live to walk or bicycle to destinations throughout San Marcos	N/A	N/A
				Question #5	Answer #5	Answer #5 Value	Answer #5 Responses
				What activities do you use trails for?	Walking for liesure	86.0%	N/A
	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
	Kyle	45,697	1006	Please check the box that best describes how strongly you agree or disagree with the following trail-related statements.	I would like to see more trails near where I live	N/A	609
	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
	Georgetown	67,176	N/A	On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being most important), the most important facilities or amenities to households:	Trails and pathways - 2nd top answer (value of 4.3)	N/A	N/A
				Question #2	Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Responses
				Facilities and services meeting needs of the community on scale of 1 to 5	Trails and pathways - needs best met	4.3 (ranked score)	N/A
Question #3				Answer #3	Answer #3 Value	Answer #3 Responses	
Most important items to focus on for future faciilites and amenities (scale of 1 to 5)	Adding trails in neighborhood parks and/ or connecting parks to city trail systems	4.2 (ranked score)	N/A				
City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses	
Temple	82,073	989	Please indicate how important or unimportant it is for the following items to be provided or added in Temple's parks.	Trails for walking, jogging, and bicycling	93.0%	849	
City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses	
Buda	15,108	300	Using the list below, identify which of the following park activities you would most like to participate in.	Walking/hiking on trails	97.1%	300	
			Question #2	Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Responses	
			How would you rate the importance of trail-connected open space within the community?	Very Important	67.0%	300	

Region 3 (cont.)	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #3	Answer #3	Answer #3 Value	Answer #3 Responses
	Buda (cont.)	15108	300	What are the primary reasons that you would use new trails in Buda?	Exercise	76.3%	300
				Question #4	Answer #4	Answer #4 Value	Answer #4 Responses
				What type of trail/pathway should have the highest priority in Buda?	Nature trails (pedestrians only)	29.2%	298
	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
	Round Rock	119468	146	Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about the trails in the City of Round Rock?	I want Round Rock to have one of the best trails systems in the entire state	4.51 (weighted score)	116
	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
	Llano	3325	413	How safe do you feel while in Llano parks and on trails?	Safe	48.5%	342
				Question #2	Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Responses
				What would make you feel safer in Llano parks and on trails?	Additional lighting	60.0%	295
City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses	
Marble Falls	7037	588	Choose you and your family's top five favorite recreation activities.	Walking/hiking on trails	2.95 (weighted average)	426	
			Question #2	Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Responses	
			Please check the box that best describes how strongly you agree or disagree with the following trail-related statements.	I would like to see more trails developed as an alternative means of transportation in Marble Falls	N/A	356	
			Question #3	Answer #3	Answer #3 Value	Answer #3 Responses	
			Using the list above, what is the ONE passive recreation facility/activity you or your family feel is most needed?	More hike and bike trails throughout the city	N/A	293	
City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses	
Cedar Park	77595	331	Rate how important or unimportant it is for the City to provide the following types of facilities over the next five to ten years.	Trails that link areas of the city	89.0%	315	
			Question #2	Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Responses	
			Of the following facilities, which are the most important to construct in Cedar Park?	Trails	79.5%	303	

Appendix B: Public Survey Data

Region 3 (cont.)	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #3	Answer #3	Answer #3 Value	Answer #3 Responses
		Cedar Park (cont.)	77,595	331	How often do you or your family use trails?	More than once a week	39.4%
Region 4	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
	Pearland	125,828	726	Within the past month, how often have you used Pearland's walking trails or bike paths?	Haven't visited in the past month	36.9%	723
				Question #2	Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Responses
				Identify your TOP 10 park facilities/elements:	Nature trails (2nd top response)	N/A	712
	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
	Sugarland	111,026	N/A	Parks, Trails, or Recreation Facilities respondent households have a need for	Paved walking and biking trails within parks	74.0%	N/A
				Question #2	Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Responses
				Facilities that are most important to households	Paved walking and biking trails within parks - top response	45.0%	N/A
	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
	Bay City	18,061	196	Using the list below, choose you or your family's top five favorite recreation activities.	Walking/hiking on trails (3rd top response)	33.2%	196
				Question #2	Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Responses
				If additional trails were constructed in Bay City, how important would connections to the following locations be?	Parks	43.8%	195
City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses	
Missouri City	74,259	293	Using the list below, what are you or your family's favorite recreation activities?	Walking/hiking on trails	78.4%	291	
			Question #2	Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Responses	
			How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following trail-related statements?	I would like trails to connect to nearby cities	85.0%	235	

Region 4 (cont.)	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #3	Answer #3	Answer #3 Value	Answer #3 Responses
	Missouri City (cont.)	74,259	293	If additional trails were constructed in Missouri City, to which of the following destinations would you like to see them connect?	Neighborhood parks	77.0%	231
	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
	Houston	2,300,000	1,864	Please choose the level of priority which should be given consideration by HPARD for the following statements.	Develop neighborhood connections to parks or trails	65.0%	1,846
				Question #2	Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Responses
				Are there any new connections needed to access existing parks or trails?	No	39.0%	1,734
				Question #3	Answer #3	Answer #3 Value	Answer #3 Responses
	How far would you walk or ride a bicycle to a park or trail?	1 mile	28.4%	1,819			
	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
	La Porte	35,124	210	Within the past 12 months, how often have you used La Porte non-motorized trails?	More than 6 times	33.2%	208
City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses	
Baytown	78,392	1,789	Within the past 12 months, how often have you used the Baytown's recreational trails?	More than 6 times	39.4%	1,723	
Region 5	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
	Lubbock	258,871	2,069	Please select the recreational facilities that you or members of your family are interested in? Select all that apply.	Hike and Bike Trails	63.0%	1,613
	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
	Amarillo	200,393	N/A	What types of trails and pathways are most needed?	Off-street paved trails for bicycling, rollerblading, skateboarding, etc.	56.0%	764
	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
	Canadian	2,683	N/A	Are sidewalks, walking trails, and bike paths amenities that the City should pursue?	Yes	61.7%	N/A

Appendix B: Public Survey Data

Region 5 (cont.)							
City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses	
Waco	138,486	1,197	What is the principle reason that you use trails in Waco?	Fitness/exercise	59.7%	1,164	
			Question #2	Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Responses	
			What is the amount of time you spend on a city trail during a typical visit?	1 to 2 hours	51.3%	1,157	
			Question #3	Answer #3	Answer #3 Value	Answer #3 Responses	
			Have the available trails increased your level of physical activity?	Yes	90.2%	1,163	
			Question #4	Answer #4	Answer #4 Value	Answer #4 Responses	
			How often, on average, do you use a trail?	1 to 2 times a week	29.3%	1,119	
Region 6							
City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses	
Denton	139,869	1283	Which three outdoor amenities from the list above are most important to your household?	Natural trails	52.6%	960	
City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses	
Denison	24,479	601	What type of pedestrian or bicycle facilities do you generally use? Select all that apply.	Trails within parks	74.2%	535	
			Question #2	Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Responses	
			How often do you use trail or bikeway facilities in Denison?	Several times per week / Several times per month	28.7%	534	
			Question #3	Answer #3	Answer #3 Value	Answer #3 Responses	
			How satisfied are you with the quality of trail and bikeway facilities in Denison?	Satisfied	50.8%	532	
			Question #4	Answer #4	Answer #4 Value	Answer #4 Responses	
			If off-street trails connected your residence to the following destinations, what is the likelihood that you would walk or cycle for at least some of your trips?	Leisure or exercise	N/A	534	
			Question #5	Answer #5	Answer #5 Value	Answer #5 Responses	
			Please indicate how important or unimportant it is for the following amenities to be provided or added to Loy Lake Park	Hiking trails	N/A	316	

Region 6 (cont.)	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
	McKinney	195,308	N/A	The city is establishing a series of priorities to direct the future Parks Department actions. Please tell me how important or unimportant you feel it is for McKinney to...	Develop major hike and bike trails in each sector of the city	53.3%	N/A
				Question #2	Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Responses
				How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about hike and bike trails: Hike and bike trails should be developed...	...in or near scenic areas (top answer)	57.2%	N/A
	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
	Hurst	40,413	358	Using the list below, what are you and your family's favorite recreation activities?	Walking/hiking on trails	61.4%	334
				Question #2	Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Responses
				How strongly would you support or oppose the following projects being funded by the city in the next 5 to 10 years?	Expansion of the city's trail system	54.4%	330
	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
	Granbury	10,958	N/A	How important or unimportant are the following facilities?	Multi-use trails (2nd top response)	85.0%	N/A
Question #2				Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Responses	
How strongly do you agree with the following:				Expand the city's trail system (2nd top response)	80.0%	N/A	
City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses	
Irving	256,684	N/A	In the past 12 months have you or anyone in your household done the following? (check all that apply)	Used a City of Irving hike and bike trail (4th top response)	0.4877	1222	
			Question #2	Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Responses	
			How frequently do you visit a park, recreation facility, aquatic facility, or trail in Irving?	Trail Top Answer - Once a year or less	0.2877	1289	
			Question #3	Answer #3	Answer #3 Value	Answer #3 Responses	
			Regarding bicycle and trail opportunities, please rank the following in terms of what you think the priorities of the city should be.	Connect to schools	0.3689	1077	

Appendix B: Public Survey Data

Region 6 (cont.)	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
	Plano	285,494	N/A	Choose the responses that best describe the park or recreational facilities in Plano you have utilized.	A trail - 2nd top response (behind park)	77.0%	N/A
				Question #2	Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Responses
				In the past 12 months, have you or anyone in your household:	Used a municipal hike and bike trail (2nd top response)	79.0%	N/A
				Question #3	Answer #3	Answer #3 Value	Answer #3 Responses
				From the previous list of recreational amenities, choose the response you would consider to be most important in terms of the city constructing additional ones in the future?	Multi-use trails (2nd top response)	25.0%	N/A
				Question #4	Answer #4	Answer #4 Value	Answer #4 Responses
				Write down the one recreational facility in your part of the city you believe is lacking.	Trails/hiking/biking (2nd top response)	14.0%	N/A
	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
	Fort Worth	958692	N/A	How often do you or other household members use or visit these park facilities in the City of Fort Worth?	Trails: At least monthly	45.0%	1,446
Question #2				Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Responses	
			Which facilities do you feel are MOST needed in Fort Worth parks?	Hike, bike, walking trails	55.0%	1,203	
City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses	
Arlington	394,266	1,247	Walking/biking trails considered some of most important facilities & highest needs	N/A	N/A	N/A	
			Question #2	Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Responses	
			Most important actions respondents would support with tax dollars include:	Improving connectivity via the hike and bike network	N/A	N/A	
City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses	
Dallas	1,300,000	N/A	Parks, recreation facilities, and special use facilities identified as needing most attention:	Trails were a top response	N/A	N/A	

Region 6 (cont.)	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
	Garland	24,6018	1,097	What type of trail or bikeway facility in Garland do you generally use?	Walking trails within parks	64.0%	1,095
				Question #2	Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Responses
				What is your primary purpose for using a trail or bikeway in Garland?	Fitness/exercise	57.0%	1,095
				Question #3	Answer #3	Answer #3 Value	Answer #3 Responses
				If sidewalks or trails connected your residence to the following destinations, what is the likelihood that you would walk to each for at least some of your trips?	Leisure or exercise	76.9%	1,011
				Question #4	Answer #4	Answer #4 Value	Answer #4 Responses
			How important are each of the following features of trail facilities?	Feeling safe on trails	83.8%	922	
City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses	
Tyler	107,441	985	What facilities would you want added to the Tyler park system?	Nature trails	N/A	N/A	
City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses	
Sherman	43,645	1,632	How important are the following trail features and amenities to you and your family?	Nature trails (4th highest "Very Important" rating)	28.9%	1,484	
			Question #2	Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Responses	
			What would be your primary activity on a trail?	Walking or hiking was top response	83.6%	1,470	
			Question #3	Answer #3	Answer #3 Value	Answer #3 Responses	
			In your opinion, what are the top two (2) greatest benefits you feel trails can provide?	Trails provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and social connection - top response	71.5%	1,490	

Appendix B: Public Survey Data

Region 6 (cont.)	City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
	Flower Mound	75,956	947	What type of trail or bikeway in Flower Mound do you generally use?	Off-street trails (trails located away from a street such as along a creek)	69.7%	943
				Question #2	Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Responses
				What is your primary purpose for using a trail or bikeway in Flower Mound?	Fitness/exercise	62.4%	912
				Question #3	Answer #3	Answer #3 Value	Answer #3 Responses
				If sidewalks or trails connected your residence to the following destinations, what is the likelihood that you would walk to each for at least some of your trips?	Parks, sports fields, recreational facilities	64.8%	898
				Question #4	Answer #4	Answer #4 Value	Answer #4 Responses
				How often did you use trails or bikeways in Flower Mound before the Covid-19 pandemic started (prior to March 2020)?	Few times a week	44.3%	869
				Question #5	Answer #5	Answer #5 Value	Answer #5 Responses
				How often have you used trails or bikeways in Flower Mound since the Covid-19 pandemic started (since March 2020)?	Few times a week	45.7%	866
				Question #6	Answer #6	Answer #6 Value	Answer #6 Responses
				Below is a list of potential improvements that could be made to trails in Flower Mound. Please rank their level of importance to you.	Adding more trails and fillin missing gaps in the trail network	7.21 (ranked score)	831
				Question #7	Answer #7	Answer #7 Value	Answer #7 Responses
				How important are each of the following features of trail facilities?	Feeling safe on trails	73.1%	775
				Question #8	Answer #8	Answer #8 Value	Answer #8 Responses
In your opinion, what type of trail is most needed in Flower Mound?	Off-street trail located away from roadway	53.7%	777				
City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses	
Allen	104,627	1,460	Regional trail connectivity and upgrading undersized and/or damaged trails	2nd and 3rd top ranked priorities	N/A	N/A	

City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
Longview	81,683	606	What type of facilities do you need?	Connected bike paths; Planning trails are important; walking trails are very appreciated; more sidewalks; more walking trails	N/A	N/A
			Question #2	Answer #2	Answer #2 Value	Answer #2 Responses
			How often do you use the Longview trails for walking, running, and other?	Several times a week	20.3%	N/A
			Question #3	Answer #3	Answer #3 Value	Answer #3 Responses
			How important or unimportant are the following outdoor/special facilities for how YOU would use future park and trail improvements?	Trails (2nd top response)	89.1%	N/A
			Question #4	Answer #4	Answer #4 Value	Answer #4 Responses
			How would you describe the quality and physical condition of EXISTING parks and trails in Longview?	Good	54.9%	581
			Question #5	Answer #5	Answer #5 Value	Answer #5 Responses
			What would you consider the greatest opportunity for future Longview's parks and trails?	Adding trails (2nd top response)	20.6%	553
			Question #6	Answer #6	Answer #6 Pct.	Answer #6 Responses
			Which of the following recreation uses would your household be most willing to support with tax dollars?	Trails	0.592	556
			Question #7	Answer #7	Answer #7 Pct.	Answer #7 Responses
			What is your number one recreation desire?	Trails	0.255	546
City	Population	Total Responses	Question #1	Answer #1	Answer #1 Value	Answer #1 Responses
Midlothian	35,125	400	What one recreational facility would you say Midlothian is lacking?	Multi-use trails (3rd top response)	13.0%	400

Appendix B: State Comparison Study Data

Arkansas	
Plan Name	Northwest Arkansas Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan
Plan Timeframe	2014
Brief Summary	To build upon previous regional bike/ped initiatives; set a clear path for NWA to link communities and regional destinations
Types of Trails Discussed	Shared use facilities, bicycle facilities, pedestrian facilities, multi-modal connections
Goal(s)	Connect communities; connect points of interest; connect to natural environment; preserve existing trails; encourage youth bike/ped activity; provide access across all socioeconomic groups; economic value of bike/ped system; provide design tools for each community
Focus Area(s)	Five (plus 1) E's for a Bike/Walk Friendly Region - Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Evaluation, Equity; Safety of Bike/Ped Users & Crash data
Key Challenges	Auto-centric corridors, geographic constraints, auto-centric land use, ROW limitations; lacking public transit; wayfinding; needed education and support
Opportunities	Build upon existing and planned trail network (especially Razorback Regional Greenway) and groups/programming; local knowledge; regional and local destinations
Justification for Plan	None identified
Benefits of Trails Listed	None identified
Prioritization	None identified
Legislation	None identified

California	
Plan Name	California Recreational Trails Plan
Plan Timeframe	2002
Brief Summary	Started in 1978, updated in 2002, summary progress reports generated every 2 years. The plan provided many examples of how to lead statewide trail support, a good example for Texas though it was driven by mandate.
Types of Trails Discussed	Non-motorized recreational trails and greenways; hiking and riding trails
Goal(s)	Develop adequate and stable funding for planning, acquisition, development and management of trails. Prepare regional and statewide inventories of existing, planned, and potential trails. Promote and encourage the incorporation of trails and greenways development and linkages into all local and statewide land use planning processes. Develop and encourage expanded cooperation and collaboration among trail advocates, wildlife advocates, and cultural resource advocates to maximize resource protection, education, and trail use opportunities. Promote research that documents trail usage, environmental impacts and trail-based recreational trends and identifies future issues and needs. Promote adequate design, construction, relocation, and maintenance of trails in order to optimize public access and resource conservation. Encourage public use of and support for trails programs throughout California. Provide trail users with easily accessible trails and accurate information on trail locations and conditions. Provide the maximum opportunities for the public use of trails by encouraging the appropriate expansion of multi-use trails. Work to identify and resolve conflicts between property owners and trail users and advocates. The Department's Statewide Trails Office will continue its guidance and leadership roles in promoting the advancement of trails and trails programs throughout California. Evaluate the status of previously secured easements for the California Riding and Hiking Trail and evaluate the feasibility for continuance of the trails expansion.
Focus Area(s)	None identified
Key Challenges	The need to improve relationships and interaction between government entities and the private sector or private landowners.
Opportunities	Linking communities and trail advocates in trail planning will help to minimize land use conflict and allow for optimal resource use. A united effort will lead to stronger trail advancement.
Justification for Plan	Directed by statute, joint planning emphasizes the development of interconnected trails in natural settings, and a united effort creates a stronger voice for advancing trail proposals.
Benefits of Trails Listed	Environmental (energy conservation, clean air, open space/habitat preservation), economic (increased tax revenue, property values, spending, etc.), cultural resource protection, transportation, health, social interaction, education about culture/history,
Prioritization	None identified
Legislation	This publication is an element of the California Outdoor Recreation Planning Program prepared under the provisions of the Land and Water Conservation Act of 1965 (Public Law 88-578, as amended).

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Colorado	
Plan Name	Colorado Parks & Wildlife 2016-2026 Statewide Trails Strategic Plan
Plan Timeframe	2016-2026
Brief Summary	Statewide Trails Plan compliments and advances the goals of the CPW Strategic Plan (which is mandated by legislation)
Types of Trails Discussed	Motorized, non-motorized
Goal(s)	Overall Goal: Have every Coloradan live within ten minutes of a park, trail or open space
Focus Area(s)	None identified
Key Challenges	Population growth and changing age demographics creating a need for more trails and various types of trails = funding is a key challenge associated with this
Opportunities	Statewide leadership; facilitate trail development and management; advocate for trails; responsible stewardship among trail recreationists; advance ethical use and cooperation among trail users; financial sustainability
Justification for Plan	Statewide Trails Strategic Plan compliments and aims to advance direction and goals of CPW Strategic Plan which is legislative mandated; as a program under CPW and DNR, the Plan incorporates and functions to advance the missions and goals of those agencies as well as direction from General Assembly and Governor
Benefits of Trails Listed	Trails promote health, fitness, and connection with nature, and continue to be the most popular type of outdoor recreation in Colorado. Trails contribute to Colorado's quality of life and state economy.
Prioritization	None identified
Legislation	The State Trails Program arose from the "Colorado the Beautiful" Initiative in 2015 and statutory direction is found in C.R.S. 33-11-102(2013). Colorado Parks & Wildlife is to periodically complete a strategic plan and report to the Colorado General Assembly.

Florida	
Plan Name	Florida Greenways & Trails System Plan
Plan Timeframe	2019-2023
Brief Summary	Second update to the state planning effort started in 1998, this plan provides a foundation from which to substantively advance the Florida Greenways and Trails System.
Types of Trails Discussed	Trails and Greenways
Goal(s)	1. Delineating distinct long-distance regional trail corridors within the Priority Greenways and Trails System. 2. Providing strategies to plan, fund, develop and market Florida's Priority Regional Greenways and Trails to advance Florida's economy, tourism, public health, transportation choices, recreation, conservation and quality of life. 3. Establishing partnerships between public and private sectors to provide leadership in the acquisition, development, designation, management and long-term maintenance of Greenways and Trails projects that fulfill the FGTS plan and vision. 4. Communicating and promoting the benefits of Greenways and Trails to Florida residents and visitors.
Focus Area(s)	None identified
Key Challenges	None identified
Opportunities	Florida's year-round tourism, tourists want multi-modal options; Trail Town designations established by legislation boosts local economies,
Justification for Plan	Economic and tourism, improved health, transportation choices, outdoor recreation, and conservation. Futhers efforts of state plans regarding public health and economic development
Benefits of Trails Listed	Economic impact of outdoor recreation and trails: \$17.9 billion in wages, \$3.5 billion in local and state taxes, and 485,000 direct jobs
Prioritization	Map of trail priorities, based off criteria list including funding availability, benefit of project, and co-benefits
Legislation	Florida Legislature, section 375.031(1), Florida Statutes section 258.004(3), Chapter 260, Florida Statutes, the Florida Greenways and Trails Act.

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Georgia	
Plan Name	No statewide plan
Plan Timeframe	N/A
Brief Summary	Georgia does not currently have a statewide trails plan.
Types of Trails Discussed	Recreational Trails; Rails-to-Trails
Goal(s)	Greater trail connectivity in and around the City of Atlanta
Focus Area(s)	Atlanta Beltline
Key Challenges	No statewide plan
Opportunities	Connection of the Atlanta Beltline with the Silver Comet Trail would allow travel via trail from Atlanta to Alabama
Justification for Plan	No statewide plan
Benefits of Trails Listed	None identified
Prioritization	None identified
Legislation	None identified

Kansas	
Plan Name	2013 Kansas Statewide Rail-to-Trails Plan: Linking Communities through Trails
Plan Timeframe	2013
Brief Summary	When completed, the plan will be a supporting document for the future statewide trail plan; the plan's purpose is to review existing rail-to-trails, identify the benefits of rail-to-trails, and to provide information on how local trail supporters can develop trails in their own communities.
Types of Trails Discussed	Rails-to-Trails for walking, biking, horseback riding
Goal(s)	"Establish an interconnected network of rail-to-trails for the enjoyment, health and economic wellbeing of the residents of the Sunflower State." 1. Make rail-to-trails the core of a state-wide trail system; 2. leverage multiple sources of funding to pay for trail development; 3. use trails to increase tourism opportunities; 4. assist communities to successfully develop and maintain rail-to-trails
Focus Area(s)	Rails-to-Trails
Key Challenges	None identified
Opportunities	The use of railbanking has allowed for the development of long-distance trails throughout various regions of the state. Several grassroots organizations have generated momentum in local trail development and support. An early-warning system will be established with the assistance of the Office of Freight and Rail to railbank corridors as they are taken out of service.
Justification for Plan	Kansas has been able to create a system of well-located rail-to-trails and needs to take the opportunity to preserve rail corridors. Kansas is in the position to be able to tie many rail-to-trails with community trails.
Benefits of Trails Listed	Trails promote a healthy lifestyle, provide a safe environment for children and adults to travel from their neighborhoods to schools, open spaces, and retail areas. Trails-related tourism can attract visitors to a community or region, creating jobs, putting money into the community.
Prioritization	Identified geographic priorities for land acquisition: Quad-States Trails; North-South Trails; Kansas MetroGreen; KS Highway 7 (NE Kansas); Flint Hills to Santa Fe Trails; Scenic Byway Regions
Legislation	The National Trails System Act (Railbanking Act)

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Louisiana	
Plan Name	Louisiana Recreational Trails Program Plan
Plan Timeframe	2020
Brief Summary	Provide a review of Louisiana Recreational Trails Program (LRTP) outcomes and collect stakeholder and public input to guide future LRTP implementation; in conjunction with future updates to Louisiana's SCORP which is updated every 5 years by mandate
Types of Trails Discussed	Paved and unpaved multi-use trails
Goal(s)	Overall goal: integrated trail networks and increased trail access for all user types across Louisiana; support improved accessibility and connectivity of communities, maximize active transportation and public health impacts
Focus Area(s)	None identified
Key Challenges	Trails maintenance; securing land suited for trails; community opposition; insufficient local capacity; trail user safety concerns; interagency coordination; lack of trails information and marketing; lack of overall vision and funding
Opportunities	Creation of spatial inventory of existing, planned, and proposed trails across the state, with identification of potential trail corridors
Justification for Plan	Statewide trail development through the implementation of the Federal Highway Administration's Recreational Trails Program
Benefits of Trails Listed	Exercise, transportation, access to natural, cultural, and economic resources; support physical activity, growth of vibrant local economies, preservation of culturally, historically, and ecologically significant areas, improved accessibility and community resilience
Prioritization	None identified
Legislation	None identified

Michigan	
Plan Name	Connecting Michigan: A statewide trailways vision and action plan
Plan Timeframe	2007
Brief Summary	Statewide trails vision and action plan
Types of Trails Discussed	Multi-use trailways; Off-Road Vehicle trails; state forest pathwas; state park and recreation area trails
Goal(s)	None identified
Focus Area(s)	None identified
Key Challenges	Lack of cooperative communication, Recommendation: state government encourage local units of government to form partnerships for trail development; establish a state trailways council with a representative on the Governor's council. Lack of design standards
Opportunities	None identified
Justification for Plan	None identified
Benefits of Trails Listed	Provide opportunities for recreational pursuits, health and fitness, nonmotorized transportation, environmental enhancement, ecnomic and educational benefits, and tourism
Prioritization	None identified
Legislation	Michigan Trailsway Act of 1993

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Minnesota	
Plan Name	Minnesota State Parks and Trails System Plan: Charting a course for the future
Plan Timeframe	2019
Brief Summary	Update to 2015 Plan which was mandated by legislature for DNR to submit report on long-term funding options, ensuring future investments, and increased participation in outdoor recreation
Types of Trails Discussed	Motorized trails
Goal(s)	Plan builds on previous collaborative planning efforts; seeks to provide division direction to ensure 1. future investments focus on Minnesota's most important natural resources and highest-quality recreational opportunities; 2. system provides a diverse array of opportunities to connect more people to the outdoors; 3. limited General Fund support for parks and trails, which has not kept pace with rising costs and increased scope of responsibilities, is optimally distributed across the system; create a differentiated trail system that offers a wide range of uses and experiences which provides basic trail experiences across the system
Focus Area(s)	None identified
Key Challenges	Increasing gap between authorized trail miles and developed trail miles; significant maintenance and rehabilitation needs
Opportunities	Commitments from partners to complete annual trail maintenance
Justification for Plan	None identified
Benefits of Trails Listed	None identified
Prioritization	Primary corridors are first priority for investments - highest priority for new development, rehabilitation, and trailhead amenities. Primary corridors are those that better satisfy the investment criteria; Secondary corridors will be a lower priority
Legislation	None identified

New York	
Plan Name	Final Statewide Greenway Trails Plan & Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement
Plan Timeframe	2021
Brief Summary	Legislative mandate to prepare a plan for future development of statewide trail system; Identify and prioritize new connections to provide framework to expand and cohere network of trails
Types of Trails Discussed	Non-motorized, multi-use trails; paved trails (rail trails, waterfront trails, canal trails)
Goal(s)	A cohesive and comprehensive trails system that serves all New Yorkers - offers new trail corridors, closes gaps between existing trails; 1. prioritize development and expansion of greenway trails in underserved communities; 2. collect / publish information to aid in the planning, development, and management of greenway trails; 3. expand the greenway trails system to reach more New Yorkers in more areas; 4. identify funding opportunities; 5. greater collaboration among agencies and stakeholders; 6. promote trails as destination for tourism, recreation, and active lifestyles; 7. enhance bike/ped opportunities
Focus Area(s)	Accessibility and equity; public and stakeholder engagement
Key Challenges	Increasing public access; ensuring environmental justice; statewide collaboration
Opportunities	Federal and state grant opportunities
Justification for Plan	Nov. 2019 legislation requires the preparation of a plan to help shape future development of the State's comprehensive statewide system of non-motorized multi-use trails; the plan will act as a guide for development of this trail type across the State. Plan includes a spatial inventory of trails and identifies implementation strategies; will be incorporated as a component to updated Statewide Trails Plan for all trail types
Benefits of Trails Listed	Trails and shared-use paths provide healthy, fun recreation, transportation opportunities; tourism generators; social connection; physical and psychological benefits; economic benefits of trails; environmental benefits
Prioritization	Underserved communities and closing trail gaps
Legislation	November 2019 legislation (Bill No. A05035B) requires that the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation prepare a plan regarding non-motorized multi-use trails

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North Carolina	
Plan Name	Mountains-to-Sea: North Carolina State Trail Master Plan
Plan Timeframe	2014
Brief Summary	To promote completion of the Mountains-to-Sea State Trail (MST)
Types of Trails Discussed	Off-road hiking trail; multi-use paved trails; multi-use unpaved trails; natural surface trails
Goal(s)	Focus trail planning efforts to achieve more detailed trail alignments, funding, construction, and management of trail segments
Focus Area(s)	Stakeholder engagement and details on each segment of the MST; trail design
Key Challenges	Funding for design and construction of trail; lack of plan for trail development
Opportunities	Grants; Trail Planning Toolbox; clear communication of trail partner/stakeholder roles; volunteer use; land acquisition; economic impact
Justification for Plan	None identified
Benefits of Trails Listed	None identified
Prioritization	Segments that are either currently moving forward or have a high implementation potential; looked at criterion such as percent completed, level of planning, anticipated construction activity, timeframe for completion, connectivity, large parcels, implementation challenges, etc.
Legislation	North Carolina Trails System Act, 1973

Ohio	
Plan Name	The Ohio Trails Vision
Plan Timeframe	2019
Brief Summary	Update to the 2005 comprehensive trails plan (mandated by legislation)
Types of Trails Discussed	Multi-Use, Natural Surface Trails, Motorized, Mountain Biking, Equestrian, and Water.
Goal(s)	Overall Goal: Provide a trail experience within 5 miles of every Ohioan.
Focus Area(s)	Good statewide public engagement strategy, details on each trail type
Key Challenges	Finding: There is a need for a more coordinated approach across the appropriate state agencies regarding all types of trails. Recommendation: Create a cross-agency working group that meets several times a year to discuss how state government can work together to ensure progress toward meeting the goals of the Ohio Trails Vision.
Opportunities	None identified
Justification for Plan	Trails provide both economic and health benefits, stimulate local economies and provide opportunities to improve the health and wellness of Ohioans.
Benefits of Trails Listed	None identified
Prioritization	None identified
Legislation	The law (ORC 1519) mandated ODNR to publish the first state trails plan by 1975. 2000 Clean Ohio Trails Fund caused Ohio to create updated plan in 2005. Bi-partisan Ohio Legislative Trails Caucus created in 2017 decided to update the 2005 plan (this is that plan)

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Pennsylvania	
Plan Name	Pennsylvania Land and Water Trail Network Strategic Plan
Plan Timeframe	2020-2024
Brief Summary	This plan provides a five-year blueprint for state and local governments, trail providers, and other stakeholders to guide trail stewardship and expansion. The plan highlights successes since 2014 and outlines factors impacting trail development.
Types of Trails Discussed	Hiking, off-highway vehicle, equestrian, mountain biking trails, shared-use
Goal(s)	“provide the vision and strategy for all trail stakeholders to work together...” improve connectivity, closing gaps to complete long-distance trails, create regional networks, improve motorized trail opportunities, connect trails to destinations. Specific goals include: 1. close priority trail gaps with overall goal of trail within 10 minutes of every resident; 2. coordinate state and federal funding and programs to leverage maximum investment in priority projects; 3. cultivate a variety of partnerships to build capacity to address local and regional needs; 4. provide more opportunities and connections for everyone to regularly use a trail; 5. establish and expand regional trail networks to connect communities and community assets; 6. maintain and improve existing land and water trails and related infrastructure; 7. promote PA’s trails and their economic, environmental, and health benefits
Focus Area(s)	Shared-use trails
Key Challenges	None identified
Opportunities	State agency, Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), maintains a list of statewide major greenways, land or water, that are at least 50 miles long; DCNR appoints the 20-member PA Trails Advisory Committee (PTAC) to advise Commonwealth on use of state and federal trail funding
Justification for Plan	Trails were identified as highest priority for facility investment by three-quarters of outdoor enthusiasts in the 2020-2024 Outdoor Recreation Plan
Benefits of Trails Listed	Outdoor amenities, such as parks and trails, attract new residents and businesses; PA state parks and trails have experienced unprecedented use for mental and physical health since Spring 2020 and outdoor recreation equipment sales soared
Prioritization	Priority Trail Gaps must meet the following criteria: along a statewide major greenway or regionally significant trail; connects two existing segments of trail or connects an existing trail to a state park, state forest, or key community; gap is five miles or less; trail itself has been formalized in an official planning document
Legislation	None identified

Tennessee	
Plan Name	Building Connections...2008 Tennessee Greenways and Trails Plan
Plan Timeframe	2008
Brief Summary	The 2008 Tennessee Greenways and Trails Plan (G&T Plan) is the result of over 18 months of research, planning and collaboration between the TDEC Commissioner's Council on Greenways and Trails, TDEC-RRD staff and numerous federal, state and local government agencies as well as the trail users groups from across the state. The G&T Plan references numerous locations and organizations that have developed Greenways and Trails in innovative and creative ways The G&T Plan focuses on the Benefits of Greenways and Trails from an Economic, Personal Health, Alternative Transportation, Recreation and Environmental Protection perspectives.
Types of Trails Discussed	Greenways and trails
Goal(s)	The 2008-2010 Action Program is designed to address current deficiencies, provide proactive resolutions to critical shortcomings and new approaches to achieving a statewide system of greenways and trails. The key objectives are organized into the following Action categories: Connections: People to Trails...Trails to Community, Health and Safety, Economic Development and Tourism, Alternative Transportation, Natural Resource Conservation & Education, Off Highway Vehicles (Motorized Trails), Educational Outreach and Technical Assistance, Trails for the Future
Focus Area(s)	Tennessee is to have a greenway or trail planned in every county of the state by the year 2016.
Key Challenges	No concrete effort or guidance to build trails, recommendations delegate responsibility to external parties (EDC's, etc.)
Opportunities	Tennessee has a good statewide GIS trail Inventory, state provides some funding in addition to federal funding
Justification for Plan	The number of greenways and miles of trails available to citizens will increase. Lifestyle changes will occur as greenway and trails make it easier for citizens to get on the move and enjoy the natural world outdoors. Individual and public health will improve due to increased fitness and recreational activities available through local greenways and trails. Greenways and trails will create connections between locations to encourage walking and bicycle riding to school, work and shopping. Greenways and trails will protect open spaces that promote environmentally sustainable economic development. Improved awareness and information about greenways and trails will increase participation with activities involving and advocacy for greenways and trails, e.g. National Trails Day events. More partnerships between parks and recreation departments, schools, health agencies and local law enforcement agencies will support the expansion of greenways and trails. More programs will be available to organize trail user volunteers to build and maintain the state's trail system. Connecting greenways and trails throughout Tennessee will result in creating positive linkages between communities.
Benefits of Trails Listed	The Greenways and Trails Advisory Council believes Tennessee will realize the following benefits by taking actions included in this plan: 1. The number of greenways and miles of trails available to citizens will increase. 2. Lifestyle changes will occur as greenway and trails make it easier for citizens to get on the move and enjoy the natural world outdoors. 3. Individual and public health will improve due to increased fitness and recreational activities available through local greenways and trails. 4. Greenways and trails will create connections between locations to encourage walking and bicycle riding to school, work and shopping. 5. Greenways and trails will protect open spaces that promote environmentally sustainable economic development. 6. Improved awareness and information about greenways and trails will increase participation with activities involving and advocacy for greenways and trails, e.g. National Trails Day events. 7. More partnerships between parks and recreation departments, schools, health agencies and local law enforcement agencies will support the expansion of greenways and trails. 8. More programs will be available to organize trail user volunteers to build and maintain the state's trail system. 9. Connecting greenways and trails throughout Tennessee will result in creating positive linkages between communities.
Prioritization	None identified
Legislation	None identified

Appendix B: State Comparison Study Data

Wisconsin	
Plan Name	Wisconsin Trails Network Plan
Plan Timeframe	2003
Brief Summary	Identify a statewide network of trails and provide guidance to the Dept. of Natl. Resources for effectively using limited funding for land acquisition and development
Types of Trails Discussed	Rail-based trails and utility corridors; natural features trail corridors; water trails
Goal(s)	Identify a statewide network of trails and provide guidance to the Dept. of Natl. Resources for effectively using limited funding for land acquisition and development
Focus Area(s)	Connectivity of existing trails, public lands, and communities.
Key Challenges	None identified
Opportunities	Identifies potential trail corridors within five geographic subcategories of the state; Cooperative trail partnerships are an important part of the trail system and in many cases, counties develop and maintain the trail with little help from the state besides land acquisition
Justification for Plan	Trails were identified as highest priority for facility investment by three-quarters of outdoor enthusiasts in the 2020-2024 Outdoor Recreation Plan
Benefits of Trails Listed	Environmental and aesthetic benefits through alternative transportation and resulting air quality improvements, reduced traffic congestion, noise, and air pollution; habitat for birds and other wildlife and drivers plant communities that include prairie remnants, protect species diversity. Economic benefits: money spent on bicycles and other equipment related to recreation; tourist spending on lodging and dining; quality of life improvements, new jobs and controlled medical costs. Social benefits: create a sense of place and community pride, improve overall character of a region, outdoor classrooms. Health benefits: outdoor exercise to prevent chronic illness
Prioritization	1. Proximity to population centers that offer connections to statewide network of recreational trails; 2. existing rail corridors with high potential for abandonment; 3. existing historical sites, tourist attractions, state and county parks, and other significant features; 4. links to federal, state, county and municipal trails; 5. links to interstate trails in IL, IA, MN, MI; 6. "natural feature" corridors tied to rivers and other scenic landscape patterns
Legislation	None identified



Appendix C:
Texas Trail Study
Technical Committee Meeting Summaries

Appendix C: Technical Committee Meeting Summaries

Over the course of the Trails Study process, four technical committee meetings were held between Halff Associates staff and staff from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), the Texas Historical Commission (THC), and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). The purpose of each of these meetings was to discuss and review the work conducted up to the date of each meeting with regard to the study's purpose, and to discuss necessary next steps in the creation of the Statewide Trails Study. A summary of the key points of each meeting is included below.

Technical Committee Meeting #1 – April 12, 2022

The first technical committee meeting included 10 attendees from THC, TPWD, TxDOT in addition to Halff Associates staff. This meeting was held at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department headquarters in Austin, TX and was entirely in-person.

The strategy for the document content was discussed including the actors that led to the passage of Rider 40 for a Trails Study, such as the Hays County State Representative, Erin Zwiener, and the Great Springs Project. TPWD was identified as the lead agency for the project. The committee discussed who they thought the intended audience for the study was, and its purpose. They indicated that it should serve as a communication tool to help identify opportunities for future trail development, improved connectivity, and increased funding. The following are other notable items to include in the document:

- Studies of the health and economic benefits derived from trails
- Defining types of trails
- Changing demographics of Texas
- Effective implementation strategies, lessons from other examples, and examples of existing efforts

Other plans or states to review as examples: Paso del Norte, Caracara Trails, Circle Trail, Katy Trail (Missouri), Rodgers/Bentonville (AR), East Coast Greenway

Type of trail involvement from Texas agencies (THC, TPWD, TxDOT)

- THC
 - Mostly tourism, not pedestrian, roadway loops and highway
 - Western Trail and Chisolm Trail – awaiting congressional action for trail designation
- TxDOT
 - RAISE Grants for completion of Northeast Texas Trail and Paso del Norte Trail
 - Off-road trails preferred for safety aspect
 - Grants could be a tool for local TxDOT districts to revise tourism bicycle trail to include greater safety
 - Funding for transportation alternatives and recreational trails has increased
 - RTA Program is a new funding category for larger projects
 - The Bicycle Tourism Trails system includes mostly roads
 - There are four district bike plans, including San Antonio, Bryan, Laredo, and Pharr
- TPWD
 - Park prescription program

- No legislative agreement to increase trail funding

Recommendations for creating document or following the completion of the document

- Hot zone map of trail demand and use
- Focus group meetings with variety of trail stakeholders

Technical Committee Meeting #2 – June 23, 2022

The second technical committee meeting for the Trails Study had 12 committee members present. This meeting was held at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department headquarters in Austin, TX and was entirely in-person. The meeting's discussion was focused upon a review of the work-to-date, including notable takeaways from stakeholder interviews and other data collection, as well as a review of initial ideas and strategies for the study.

A notable topic of this meeting included trail and entity funding. TPWD formerly contained a department dedicated to trails and waterways, which was removed due to budget cuts; however, TPWD is still responsible for scoring applications and administering funds within the Recreational Trail Program. Additionally, the committee agreed that it is important for communities to have responsibility in matching funds to ensure continued trail maintenance, as operations and maintenance requires a large amount of funding.

Trail stewardship was also discussed as being a difficult responsibility; thus, State agencies are hesitant to brand trails as an agency facility due to the significant funding needed for maintenance and stewardship. The committee discussed the potential for the State to provide funding for stewardship activities, potentially to regional trail groups that could take the lead in trail stewardship roles.

Lastly, the importance of connecting the benefits of trails to local communities was discussed. Specifically, the health and economic benefits of trails for smaller, rural communities needed to be addressed, as these communities often lack the amount of trail facilities compared to urban and suburban counterparts.

Technical Committee Meeting #3 – August 23, 2022

The third technical committee meeting for the Trails Study included six attendees. This meeting was held at the Halff Associates, Inc. office in north Austin, TX and was held primarily in person, although some attendees participated virtually. The meeting's focus was to review the draft study and discuss the needed next steps.

The committee felt that funding should be further explored by the study and the importance of funding was understated. The importance for highly graphic and concise information was also discussed during this meeting. Since the study will be public facing and likely shared across the state, the committee agreed that a visually appealing plan with concise, summarized information would better convey the intended message of the study.

Technical Committee Meeting #4 – October 14, 2022

The fourth and final technical committee meeting had 11 committee members present. This meeting was held at the Texas Department of Transportation headquarters in Austin, TX and was held in-person but with a virtual option. The purpose of this meeting was to review the final draft and give committee members a chance to discuss any final comments on the study. Comments were emailed to Halff Associates, Inc. both before and after the meeting. During the meeting, the committee expressed that the study substantively met the goals and intent set out in Rider 40. Most of the meeting was spent focused on clarifications and opportunities for continued improvement.