

TENNESSEE

TRAILS & TRACKS

RESOURCE GUIDE



**A COMPREHENSIVE
TRACK AND TRAIL GUIDE**

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Executive Summary:

Imagine a community where the homes have sidewalks, the sidewalks connect with the nearby elementary and middle schools as well as the retail shopping area less than a mile away that has a grocery store along with numerous other retail outlets. This community also has small parks with open space where kids can run and play, a playground where the kids can explore and build strong muscles. Larger parks with soccer fields are only a 15 minute bike ride away and the city greenway connects the neighborhood with the other schools and the parks.

If this doesn't describe your community, this resource guide can help you make positive steps forward (pun intended) in order to change the community landscape. Maybe you will not have a linear greenway trail, but you can help be the catalyst to construct a new trail at your nearest park or track at the school your children attend. Maybe your kids have grown and left home and you are looking for a place to go walk and get your 30 minutes of daily physical activity.

With your individual efforts and helping others understand that trails and tracks can help your community, these ideas can become a reality. This resource guide provides information to help you understand how to develop a trail/track in your community.

This Resource Guide includes opportunities for trails in the following locations:

- 1. Parks**
- 2. Schools**
- 3. Faith Based Institutions**
- 4. Others include residential, commercial, hospitals, industrial, non- profit partners**

Within the community there are many potential partners, you just have to find them. These include state funded Coordinated School Health programs, local School Districts, school related Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO) and Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), local city or county park and recreation departments and faith based institutions. Other interested groups include chambers of commerce, civic groups and clubs, building supply and paving companies and state or private universities and community colleges.



Definitions:

A Trail is a defined path that can have a natural or hard surface. These are generally non-motorized trails used by walkers, hikers and mountain bikes users and are found in local or state parks. Natural surfaced trails tend to be 24-36 inches wide while hard surfaced trails are 5-6 feet wide for pedestrians and 10-12 feet wide for two way bicycle use.

A Track is generally a defined path that is on level or gently sloping ground and found at a school, church or commercial business or industrial plant/park. These tracks are surfaced with compacted fine gravel, concrete or asphalt.

Purpose:

The focus of the Trails/Tracks Resource Guide is to give people an understanding about how to develop nearby opportunities for recreation/transportation routes and assist with increasing the understanding about providing access to the places people want to go. Providing close to home trail/track facilities increases the opportunities to become more physically active and thus, combined with healthy eating, will improve the health of all citizens.

Overview:

Trails and Tracks can be as simple as finding an overgrown field, bush hogging the overgrowth and then mowing the grass 2-3 inches high and 5-6 feet wide to define the walking trail. Another example is to take an open area on school property and to use wood stakes to mark a trail route that students and their teachers can use to begin walking. Once the trail/track is established and parents find out about the new facility, people will start walking. Once the trail/track is established by mowing and marking with the wood stakes, the next step, Phase 2, would be to surface the trail/track with gravel. Phase 3 would be to pave the trail/track with asphalt.

See Figure 1 for a Flowchart with typical questions asked by each group that wants to construct a track.

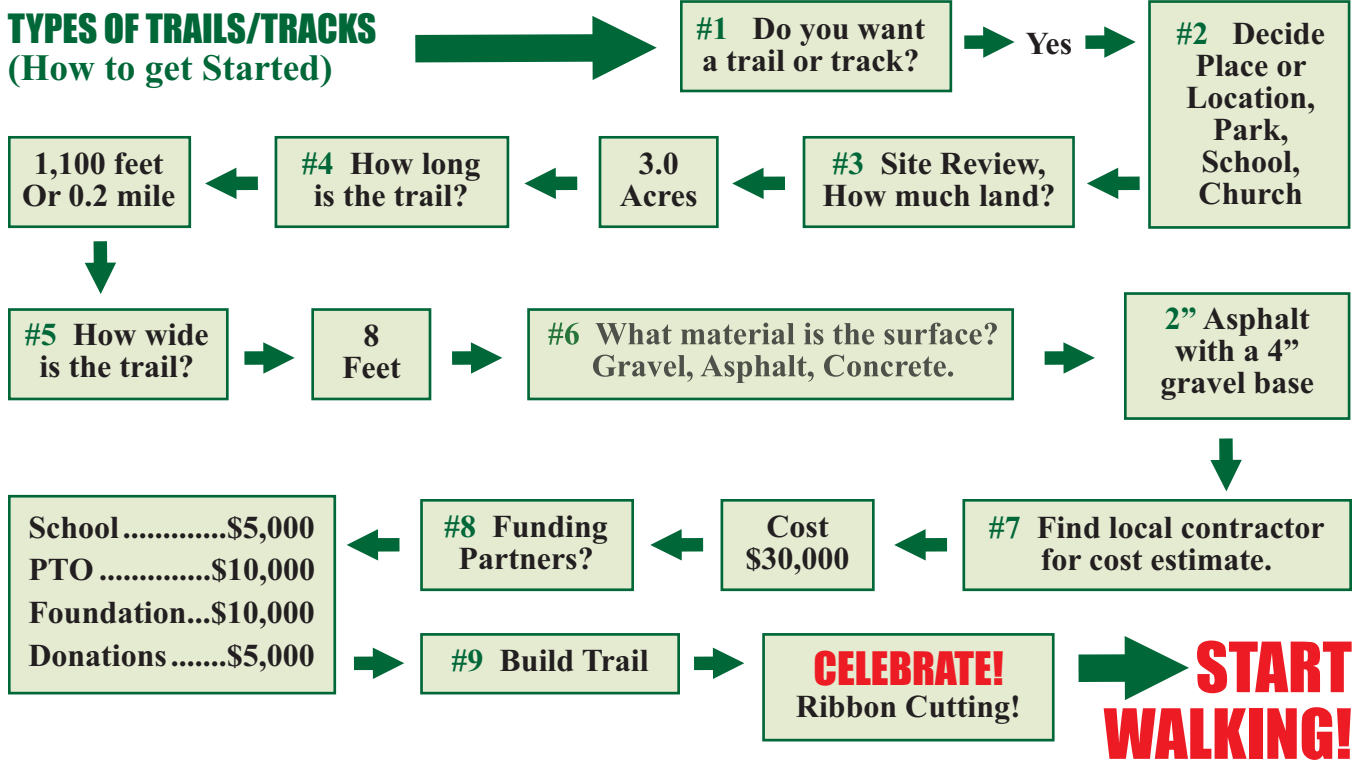


Figure 1



Planning:

Of special note: water is the enemy of trails and tracks so where it comes from and where it wants to go is the critical determining factor if the project will be successful. When building hard surfaced trails, it is best to determine where low places are, where the water flows and to proactively install 4-6" PVC drainage pipes under the trail. These drainage pipes will allow the water to flow under the trail, not over.

Information about the process of trail design and construction can be found at the following websites:

- **Pathways to Trail Building** - <http://www.tn.gov/environment/recreation/pdf/pathways.pdf>

This booklet explains how to design and build natural surfaced non-motorized trails.

- **Texas Department of Health “How to Build a Walking Trail”** - <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/wellness/resource/trail.pdf>

This resource provides additional information on the process of designing and developing trails/tracks.

- **Rails to Trails “Trail Building Toolbox”** - <http://www.railstotrails.org/ourWork/trailBuilding/toolbox/informationSummaries/plandesignbuild.html>

Benefits of a Trail/Track

- **2008 Tennessee Greenways and Trails Plan** - http://www.tn.gov/environment/recreation/plan/gt_plan2008.pdf
- **Benefits of Trails and Greenways** - <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/benefits/index.html>
- **Benefits of Rails - Trails** - <http://www.railstotrails.org/ourWork/trailBasics/benefits.html>
- **Economic Benefits of Trails and Greenways** - http://www.railstotrails.org/resources/documents/resource_docs/tgc_economic.pdf
- **Economic Impact of Trails** - <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/economics/index.html>
- **Benefits of Walking for Health** - <http://www.c3health.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/C3-report-on-walking-v-1-20120911.pdf>
- **Benefits of Trails and Greenways** - <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/benefits/index.html>

Funding a Community Trails/Tracks

- **National Trails Training Partnership** - <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/funding/index.html>
- **Walking Information** - <http://www.walkinginfo.org/funding/resources.cfm?&maxRows=0>
- **International Mountain Biking Association** - <http://www.imba.com/resources/grants/index.html>
- **Tennessee Department of Transportation** - <http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/local/grants.htm>
- **Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Recreation Educational Services; Recreation Trails Program (RTP)** – <http://www.state.tn.us/environment/recreation/grants.shtml>
- **Tennessee Department of Economic & Community Development (Community Development Block Grant Program & Appalachian Regional Commission Program grants)** - http://www.state.tn.us/ecd/progman_cdbg.htm
- **Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (Wetland Acquisition Fund, Stream Access Program)** - <http://www.tennessee.gov/twra/index.html>
- **Tennessee Urban Forestry Council (Urban Forestry Grants)** - <http://www.tennessee.gov/agriculture/forestry/urbanforestry>
- **Tennessee Wars Commission (battlefield preservation)** - <http://www.state.tn.us/environment/hist/TnWarsCom.shtml>
- **Blue Cross-Blue Shield of Tennessee – Community Trust** - http://www.bcbst.com/about/community/Community_Trust/

Maintenance Plan (Sustainability)

- **California State Parks and Recreation “Trail Maintenance”** - <http://www.foothill.net/fta/work/maintnotes.html>
- **Trail Maintenance 101** - <http://atfiles.org/files/pdf/NYNJMaint101.pdf>
- **Trail Maintenance and Management** - <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/ManageMaintain/index.html>



Outdoor Classrooms in conjunction with trails/tracks

Trails and tracks are not just surfaces to walk on. Many can and are being used as outdoor classrooms. There is a national movement to get Every Child Outdoors (ECO) to conquer our national epidemic of “nature deficit” in children. The following website lists resources on design, construction, and maintenance of school grounds for outdoor learning.

- **National Clearinghouse of Educational Facilities** - <http://www.ncef.org/rl/outdoor.cfm>

Additional Resources

- **Map your own walking routes** - <http://www.mapmywalk.com>
- **Find a walking track/trail** - http://www.startwalkingnow.org/start_walking_paths.jsp
- **Find a place to walk in Tennessee** - <http://trpa.net>
- **International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA), Trail Solutions book**, <http://www.imba.com/catalog/book-trail-solutions>
- **State of Tennessee Greenways and Trails Program, Pathways to Trail Building booklet**, <http://www.tn.gov/environment/recreation/pdf/pathways.pdf>
- **State of Tennessee, 2008 Tennessee Greenways and Trails Plan**, http://www.tn.gov/environment/recreation/plan/gt_plan2008.pdf
- **State of Tennessee, Tennessee 2020 State Recreation Plan**, http://www.tn.gov/environment/recreation/pdf/2020_full_version.pdf
- **Tennessee Obesity Task Force, Eat Well, Play More State Plan** - <http://www.eatwellplaymoretn.org/>
- **Federal Highway Administration, Recreational Trails Program, Technical Resources Section**, http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/publications/

Glossary of terms

<http://www.americantrails.org/resources/info/glossary.html>



Success Story

Faith Based Initiative - Christ Church, Franklin, TN

In 2009, the Christ Community Church in Franklin had the idea to create a walking trail around a large portion of the church campus. They were able to get all the wood chips they wanted for free from several local tree companies who were more than glad to get rid of the chips instead of having to make a long trip to the landfill. Several of the Garden Board members worked together to arrange a “trail work day” in which people came together on a Saturday and began to clear the brush necessary to create a walking path. The church property borders the Harpeth River, so there is a portion of the trail meandering along the river with the rest of the trail around the periphery of a large field and community garde. The walking trail extends from Hillsboro road along the river all the way to the back of the property, and then makes a loop around the field. It’s about a mile (5,280 feet) in length. It is now beginning to be used by people in the community as well as church members. Currently, the trail project is under the church Garden Board. Attached below are a few pictures of the project.



Building the trail using hand tools



Free wood chips



Finished trail at Christ Community Church in Franklin, TN



Success Story

Developing the Alexander Trail in Thompson's Station, TN

By: Rebecca Wynd, Founder/Director of Outdoor Encounter

<http://www.outdoorencounter.org/>

Southern Williamson County lacks outdoor opportunities for residents to be active and recreate in a natural setting. There are over 27,000 residents in the Spring Hill and Thompson's Station area. Within these two cities, there are approximately five public parks. Of those five parks only two have walking trails. The two walking trails are 1 mile in length each; one gravel and one asphalt. Residents of these two communities drive between 30 – 60 minutes, one way, to access hiking trails and parks that allow them to experience nature and recreate in the outdoors.

Vision:

Outdoor Encounter ("OE"), a local non-profit was founded to create opportunities for families and local residents to get outside, recreate, socialize and explore within a natural environment.

Process of Identifying a solution:

OE's founder began the process of talking to local government officials about the issue of residents being underserved in this area. Through these conversations, OE saw the opportunity to develop a natural surfaced trail connecting two established parks. These parks happened to be adjacent parcels of land.

1. Thompson's Station Park, owned and operated by the Town of Thompson's Station, was an established park with a playground, 1 mile gravel trail, and open space. It had land in the back of the park that was not being used due to its steep and wooded terrain.
2. Heritage Park, leased and operated by Williamson County Parks and Recreation, was an established park with ball fields. It had land that was not being used due its steep and wooded terrain.

Approval Process to build the trail

1. Thompson's Station Board of Mayor and Alderman gave OE the approval to use – free of charge - the land for the purposes of a natural surface trail. The agreement stated that OE was responsible for the construction process and its costs as well as the maintenance for the 1st year. Thompson's Station would then take over maintenance of their section after the 1st year.
2. Williamson County Parks and Recreation gave OE the approval to use – free of charge – the land for the purposes of a natural surface trail. The agreement stated that OE was responsible for the construction process and costs as well as the maintenance for the 1st year. Williamson County Parks and Recreation would then take over maintenance of their section after the 1st year.

Cost

Once OE was given the permission to build the trail, OE started researching the costs.

1. OE developed a Request for Bid, ("RFB") based off of local expertise that was sought;
2. OE posted the RFB on a free outdoor website as well as sent it to known local contractors;
3. Once bids were received, OE then had an idea of what the project would cost.

The trail was going to cost around \$50,000 and take approximately three weeks to build.



Fundraising

Due to the time restraints on building the trail (could not build in winter), OE ruled out a general fundraising campaign as an option and instead went directly to sources they felt could contribute.

1. The Town of Thompson's Station gave \$15,000
2. Barry Alexander, local business owner and resident of Thompson's Station donated \$15,000.
3. Middle TN Electric cooperation - Customers Care; A \$10,000 grant awarded.
4. Kiosks at both trail heads were built as an Eagle Scout Project - \$0 cost.

Choosing a local contractor was very helpful as the company wanted to improve the community. And they donated some of the work labor and supplies, which lowered the cost to \$40,000. A contract was developed, construction began and was completed within 30 days and the Alexander Trail was open to the public.

End Result

The 2.5 mile, single track, dirt trail winds through the woods and connects two local parks. It is the only nature trail in the area. The amount of foot traffic is unknown at this point, however, due to feedback through Facebook posts, emails and word of mouth we know that the trail is used daily and enjoyed by many local residents.

February of 2012 marked its first event. Show the Love 5K was held on the trail. Over 200 runners came out in the freezing weather to run on the Alexander Trail. The trail is being maintained by local volunteers with monthly trail work days.



Success Story

Peter Jenkins Walking Trail connection to Allendale Elementary School

By: Rebecca Wynd, Founder/Director of Outdoor Encounter

<http://www.outdoorencounter.org/>

Project Summary

Located within 17 acres of community open space in Wyngate Estates, a residential subdivision of 555 homes in Spring Hill, TN, an existing paved multi-use walking trail constructed in 2007 lacked a direct connection to Williamson County Allendale Elementary School campus located adjacent to the subdivision. Approximately 233 students (1/3 of enrollment) at the school, reside within the subdivision. Without the trail connection, students were not able to walk or bicycle to school. 700 linear feet is the distance to connect the existing walking trail with the school.

Project Challenges

The primary challenge that hampered the project from being completed was a 30 foot long pedestrian bridge required to traverse a swale that serves as storm water drainage for the subdivision. An additional challenge included the task of coordinating multiple governmental and community organizations.

In order to complete the \$65,000 project, a partnership was formed by Wyngate Estates Home Owners Association and Outdoor Encounter, an existing local 501(c)(3) Non-Profit with a mission to preserve green space and make it accessible to people of all ages. Additional support was pledged or provided by the City of Spring Hill, local author Peter Jenkins, Williamson County Schools and Allendale Elementary PTO. Without the coordination and support of these organizations, the completion of the project would not have been possible.

Fundraising for the project began in March 2012. The City of Spring Hill Board of Mayor and Aldermen pledged \$20,000 in funding for the project with a challenge that the remaining funding would be raised in the community by the partnership. By July, over \$35,000 in funding had been raised through community organizations, corporate sponsors and individual donations. An additional \$10,000 had been pledged through in-kind donations, including the design and professional engineer services by CDM Smith, a local engineering firm.

Construction of the Walking Trail began mid-July by CD Construction, the project was complete in August 2012.

Project Benefits

The Peter Jenkins Walking Trail in Wyngate Estates now connects directly to the campus of Allendale Elementary School and serves to provide safe and convenient access for parents and students walking and bicycling to school. The school has experienced a positive increase in students who walk or bike to the school. Allendale PTO remains involved by encouraging the



use of the walking trail by hosting monthly Walk To School days, which recently experienced over 300 participants.

In November 2012, the City of Spring Hill completed a Parks, Recreation and Greenway Master Plan that includes this segment as a backbone to a new Greenway Network throughout the city. As a direct result of the success of this project, the Spring Hill Board of Mayor and Aldermen has adopted a Capital Improvement Program that provides funding for additional projects that can be completed using a similar public-private partnership arrangement.



Success Story

Johnson Cities Rails-to-Trails Project

By: Dan Reese, Chair, TDEC Commissioner's Council on Greenways and Trails

Service on a ten and one half mile rail link connecting Johnson City and Elizabethton, Tennessee ended in 2003. The East Tennessee Railway company, a subsidiary the Genessee and Wyoming, Inc., had no customers requiring switching services between the two cities. The rail line was offered to be sold to the city of Elizabethton but the offer was declined. With the help of possible user groups in the Northeast Tennessee Region a public movement was begun to convince local elected officials the rail property would be a valuable recreational asset for Johnson City. By means of emails, letters, petitions, personal visits, and telephone calls this public movement grew and made it known that the community was strongly behind such a civic investment in green infrastructure. Groups participating included hiking clubs, bicycle clubs, seniors, college students and athletes, nature lovers, and the birding community.

With this strong public expression of interest in 2005 the city of Johnson City made a proposal to Genessee and Wyoming, Inc. to purchase the property. An offer was made to the railroad to purchase the property after an appraisal set its value at \$650,000. For several years negotiations between the city and the railroad company dragged on with very little active communication between the two parties.

In the meantime a support group was organized in the form of the Tweetsie Historic Trail Association. This group set up a web site for updating information on the progress of the project and a Face Book page soon took form as the Friends of the Tweetsie Trail. Donations were received to assist in administering the group and cover web, communication, and printing costs.

In 2009 the railroad filed an Intent to Abandon notice with the Surface Transportation board (STB) and in 2011 Johnson City accepted a contract proposal from the railroad and petitioned the STB to rail bank the property to prevent its reversion to the original landowner families. This petition was successful and Johnson City became the rightful owner with the intent to preserve the rail corridor as a multi-use trail.

The city has enlisted the help of a professional trail building and design company to prepare a Master Plan for the property and also looking at how the trail might connect with the city's expanding and already existing greenway and trail system, parks, schools, shopping areas, downtown business district, and health facilities.



Success Story

Three Tracks for Three Schools

By: Nancy West, Dyer County Coordinated School Health

Dyersburg Intermediate School – 2007-2008 School Year

Location of school: Nestled in a lower, middle income neighborhood

Grades: 3rd through 5th

Student Population: Approximately 625

Length: Slightly less than ¼ mile

Composition: 8-foot wide asphalt, on a sand/gravel base

Approximate Cost: \$14,000.00

Contractor: Ford Construction Company

The track was wrapped around the large, rectangular, west side playground. The family of locally owned construction company had all attended Dyersburg City Schools. They were instrumental in the site planning and technical details of the track. The track became the inspiration for the “Morning Milers” program for students who arrive at school early. Students that were formerly waiting for breakfast in the gym are now able to walk the track each morning. In the event of inclement weather a “walking path” has been mapped out inside the school building. The student’s laps are calculated each day, and incentives are given as rewards. After school hours, the track can be utilized by community members.

Dyersburg Middle School – 2008-2009 School Year

Location of school: Near a by-pass around the city of Dyersburg

Grades: 6th through 8th

Student Population: Approximately 700

Length: Less than ¼ mile

Composition: 8-foot wide asphalt, on a sand/gravel base

Approximate Cost: \$12,000.00

Contractor: Ford Construction Company

The middle school had an outdoor classroom and arboretum with ADA access from the school through sidewalks and asphalt paths. The classroom had wooden bleachers for students and a platform for teachers to deliver lectures. With additional asphalt track/trail provided by CSH funding, a circular loop was completed. The track/trail winds through the classroom area, down a slope, across a flatter area where a Pole Climb & Horizontal ladder has been installed along the side, and then back up the slope to the classroom. After school hours, the track can be utilized by the community.



Dyersburg Primary School – 2009-2010 School Year

Location of school: Near a bypass around the city of Dyersburg

Grades: Pre-K through 2nd

Student Population: Approximate 625

Length: Approx. 1/8th mile

Composition: 8-foot wide asphalt, on sand/gravel base

Approximate Cost: \$ 8,500.00

Contractor: RFW Construction

The primary school campus is not flat. A site selection was difficult. Due to the age of the students, the track did not need to be a great distance from the school building. A triangular shape was selected to fit the site. The principal set up a use of track schedule for teachers. All classes have an assigned time for their class to utilize the track. This school participates in the Walking Works for Schools program and logs the minutes they spend on the short track. After school hours, the track can be utilized by the community.



Success Story

Bradley County Coordinated School Health Project

By: Andrea Lockerby, Bradley County Coordinated School Health
Alockerby@bradleyschools.org

Project Summary

Bradley County Schools Coordinated School Health (CSH) in Cleveland, TN had a vision for every school in our district to have access to a walking track for students, families, and the community. In three years, 10 paved walking tracks were completed. These tracks vary in size from 1/5 mile to 1/3 mile, 8-9 feet wide, and are now part of our Cleveland/Bradley Greenway network. In 2010, the district was awarded a Project Diabetes grant which included \$90,000 for the construction and expansion of seven school walking tracks. Walking track planning, design, and research took place fall 2010 with help from the TN Greenway and Trails Program Coordinator. Through the Bradley County Healthy Community Initiative, \$50,000 additional funds were matched that allowed all seven tracks to be paved. In 2011, CSH applied for a \$20,000 Eat Well Play More TN grant for two additional walking tracks. Through the matching of school funds, community funds, and CSH funds, \$15,990 was leveraged to complete two additional tracks. In, 2012 our 10th walking track was completed.

Project Challenges and Lessons Learned

- The first step in building a track/trail is to put on some good shoes and walk the grounds of the future site. Utilizing a cell phone walking app as well as a GPS program, we were quickly able to determine approximate distance of future tracks and anything in the path that needed to be moved. We discovered two spillways on a future track site that needed bridges. Bob Richards, TN Greenways and Trails Specialist, completed a bridge design. We then partnered with Lowes Home improvement and their Local Heroes grant to donate bridge materials and our high school building trades class to build the bridge according to Richards' specs. Together, Lowe's employees and high school students set the bridges that completed the walking track. Without these partnerships, the walking track would not have been completed.
- Go after funding after you determine your estimated expenses for your track. This is determined by the width, length and surface material(s). You will most likely have to leverage funding to get to your goal. We received \$110,000 in grant awards from the Tennessee Department of Health, but secured \$72,000 additional matching grant funds through various grants, businesses, school funding, CSH funding, and donations. We cut costs by utilizing local government road department bid prices for rock and asphalt and using contractors who support education and believed in our project and mission.
- Be sure to finish off the track with signage that not only provides distance information, but also recognizes and celebrates all those partners who made the track possible. These can be expensive but well worth the marketing efforts for years to come.

Project Benefits

All 15 schools in the district, with the exception of one landlocked school, now have access to a walking track. Schools have had ribbon cutting ceremonies and celebrations. Classroom teachers are incorporating the tracks



in academic instruction such as walking the Trail of Tears. PE teachers are teaching running and completing physical fitness testing. After-school programs and newly formed running clubs utilize the



track daily. Teachers, parents, and community members are walking, running, and hosting events such as carnivals and festivals on the tracks. Through the Cleveland/Bradley Greenway network, the newly created tracks are part of a larger picture of health for our community.

