



Metro

Bicycle Paths: Safety Concerns and Property Values

There are many misconceptions about the safety of bicycle paths/trails and their relationship to property values/the real estate market. Below is a collection of *excerpts* from various websites, journals and other online resources that provide information on the often misunderstood nature of bicycle paths/trails and their affect on the community.

Safety

Frequently Asked Questions about Bikeways by Adjacent Residents: City of Vancouver, 2007.ⁱ

“Previous studies indicate that property values and crime rates are not affected by bike routes. Cyclists on bike routes, like commuters in cars, are generally headed to a specific destination and are not interested in lingering in neighborhoods. Unlike automobile commuters, cyclists travel at slower speeds and may provide an “eyes on the street” presence in the neighborhood.

Bike Path Phobia: Selling Skeptics on Urban Greenway Bike Paths, Parks & Recreation 2000.ⁱⁱ Tod Schneider

- “Crime rates are generally based on the rate of crime per 100,000 people, not on geographic area.”
- “A number of studies have now shown that urban greenway trails do not increase crime and, in fact, are commonly regarded as improvements by adjacent property owners. Comparisons of mugging, assault, rape, and murder make it quite clear that rail-trail crime rates are almost non-existent on a per capita comparison to other areas.”

Rail-Trails and Safe Communities: The Experience on 372 Trails. National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, January 1998.ⁱⁱⁱ Tammy Tracy & Hugh Morris.

- “Stories of trails attracting drug dealers, murderers and rapists are perpetuated by trail opponents with only a handful of newspaper headlines to back up their assertions rather than empirical research.”
- “The research that has been conducted, along with anecdotal evidence, suggests that converting an abandoned rail corridor to a trail actually tends to reduce crime by cleaning up the landscape and attracting people who use the trail for recreation and transportation.”
- “The study found that incidents of vandalism and burglary did not increase as a result of the trail.”

- “The rate of vandalism and break-ins to adjacent property was well below the neighborhood average. Police said that they did not anticipate crime being a problem as long as motor vehicle use on the trail was prohibited, citing that the separation of a criminal from his/her escape vehicle as being a primary deterrent.”
- “Bedford Police began riding bikes along the Bedford to Lexington portion of the Minuteman Trail (as a part of public relations campaign. Approximately a year and a half later, they initiated a unique youth patrol, the Bedford Police Explorers to assist them. After completing first aid and CPR certification, the Explorers began conducting daily patrols of the trail wearing police t-shirts and carrying radios and first aid kits.”

Property Value

Home Sales Near Two Massachusetts Trails, Jan. 25, 2006.^{iv} Craig Della Penna.

- “Municipalities through out the United States have found economic benefits in Bike Trails within close proximity to residential areas.”
- “Homes sales were examined in the seven Massachusetts towns through which the Minuteman Bikeway and Nashua River Rail Trail run. Statistics on list and selling prices and on days on the market were analyzed. The analysis shows that homes near these rail trails sold at 99.3% of the list price as compared to 98.1% of the list price for other homes sold in these towns. The most significant feature of home sales near rail trails is that these homes sold in an average of 29.3 days as compared to 50.4 days for other homes.”

Economic Benefits of Trails and Greenways, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, 2004.^v

- “A 1998 study of property values along the Mountain Bay Trail in Brown County, Wisconsin shows that lots adjacent to the rail sold faster and for an average of 9 percent more than similar property not located next to the trail.”
- “Realizing the selling power of greenways, developers of the Shepherd’s Vineyard housing development in Apex, North Carolina added \$5,000 to the price of 40 homes adjacent to the regional greenway, Those homes were still the first to sell.”

Public Choices and Property Values: Evidence from Greenways in Indianapolis, Center for Urban Policy and the Environment, December 2003.^{vi}

- “The average price for all homes sold in greenway corridors was nearly 10 percent higher than the average price for all homes. Similarly, the average prices for all homes near greenways with trails and in conservation corridors were higher than the overall average sale price. For homes near the Monon Trail, the average sale price was 11 percent higher than for all homes that sold in 1999.”

Economic Impacts of Rivers, Trails and Greenways: Property Values. Resource Guide published by the National Parks Service, 1995.^{vii}

- “A study of property values near greenbelts in Boulder, Colorado, noted that...other variables being equal, the average value of property adjacent to the greenbelt would be 32 percent higher than those 3,200 feet away.”
- “A study completed by the Office of Planning in Seattle, Washington, for the 12 mile Burke-Gilman trail was based upon surveys of homeowners and real estate agents. The survey of real estate agents revealed that property near, but not immediately adjacent to the trail, sells for an average of 6 percent more.”
- “In a survey of adjacent landowners along the Luce Line rail-trail in Minnesota, 61 percent of the suburban residential owners noted an increase in their property value as a result of the trail. New owners felt the trail had a more positive effect on adjacent property values than did continuing owners. Appraisers and real estate agents claimed that trails were a positive selling point for suburban residential property.”
- “A survey of Denver residential neighborhoods by the Rocky Mountain Research Institute shows the public's increasing interest in greenways and trails. From 1980 to 1990, those who said they would pay extra for greenbelts and parks in their neighborhood rose from 16 percent to 48 percent.”

Perceptions of How the Presence of Greenway Trails Affects the Value of Proximate Properties. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, Fall 2001.^{viii} John L. Crompton

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- “A comparison of the lots within the original Highridge Estates subdivision indicated that those lots located immediately adjacent to the trail sold for an average of nine percent higher than other lots. In addition to selling for more, the lots along the trail also sold faster.”
- “Recognizing what had happened, the realty companies decided to restructure the pricing of future lots located along the Mountain-Bay Trail. Thus, in the addition of Highridge Estates, the average lot located along the trail was priced 26 percent higher than slightly larger lots not located along the trail.”
- “Up to this point, impact on property values has been gauged from surveys of the attitudes and opinions of homeowners and realtors toward the price and saleability of homes located adjacent or close to greenway trails. These data are weak surrogates offering only general impressions whose accuracy cannot be verified, rather than the quantifiable dollar impacts that are needed to enlighten the debate.”

The Social and Economic Benefits of Transportation Enhancements. National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse, 2005. Ryan Greene-Roesel

- Interstate 4 In Seminole County, Florida isolated two large networks of bicycle and multi-use trails. By building a bicycle/pedestrian bridge over the highway, county officials united two communities and connected the trail networks. As a result, County Commissioner Daryl McLain noted that “property values along the new [connected] trail have already shown increases.”

URLs

ⁱ <http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/engsvcs/transport/cycling/faqresidents.htm#4v>

ⁱⁱ http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1145/is_8_35/ai_65132250/print

ⁱⁱⁱ http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/docs/rt_safecomm.pdf

^{iv} <http://www.sudbury.ma.us/documents/dl/2470/HomeSalesNear2MARailTrails.pdf>

^v http://www.railtrails.org/resources/documents/resource_docs/tgc_economic.pdf

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vi <http://atfiles.org/files/pdf/lindseypropvalues.pdf>

vii <http://www.nps.gov/pwro/rtca/econindx.htm>

viii <http://rptsweb.tamu.edu/faculty/Crompton/Crompton/Articles/4.8.pdf>