

References

Below is a sample of the many studies that have been conducted on the effect of trails on property values and crime to adjacent neighborhoods.

1. Summary: The survey (conducted throughout the State of Minnesota) was conducted in an effort to provide trail planners, law enforcement officers, community leaders, and citizens a more complete understanding of the extent to which unlawful activity occurs and the conflicts most common to trails.

“It is clear that law enforcement officers responding to the survey consider trails to be safe. A vast majority (87%) of respondents report that trails account for less than 5% of all unlawful activity in their jurisdiction, with nearly 50% saying that it is actually less than 1%... Furthermore, incidences and unlawful activity that do occur on trails tend to be issues among and between users, along with depreciative behavior toward the trail... Issues of more serious crimes against persons or property were cited as being very infrequent.”

Schoenbauer Consulting, LLC. “Survey Research Regarding: Trails Survey of Law Enforcement Agencies & Officers” (unpublished report, Schoenbauer Consulting, LLC, Minneapolis, MN, 2010), p. 1

<http://atfiles.org/files/pdf/trail-survey-law-enforcement-agencies-officers.pdf>

2. Summary: Literature review of a dozen locations regarding property value and crime in places such as Omaha, Seattle, Santa Rosa, Colorado, and Vancouver.

“The majority of studies indicate that the presence of a bike path/trail either increases property values and ease of sale slightly, or has no effect. ... There is definitely a large portion of the population that sees bike paths as an amenity and will seek out residences near trails, parks, and other natural resource areas.”

“Crime on bike and pedestrian trails is minimal and must be considered in perspective with risks associated with other activities. The amount of crime present in and around recreational facilities is often very correlated with the amount of crime in the neighboring area.”

Racca, David P., Amardeep Dhanju. “Property Value/Desirability Effects of Bike Paths Adjacent to Residential Areas” Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research, University of Delaware. Prepared for the Delaware Center for Transportation and the Delaware Department of Transportation, 2006.

http://headwaterseconomics.org/wp-content/uploads/Trail_Study_51-property-value-bike-paths-residential-areas.pdf

3. Summary: See pg 5 and pg 8 for rates of major and minor crimes, respectively, associated with rail trails, compared to national crime statistics.

“Rail Trails are not crime-free. No place on earth can make that claim. However, when compared to the communities in which they exist, compared to highways and parking lots, and compared to many other public and private places, rail-trails have an excellent public safety record.”

“Past studies, our survey results, letters from law enforcement officials, and comparisons to national crime figures all indicate that rail-trails are safe places for local residents and visitors to enjoy”

“Crime occurs on roads, parking lots, in shopping malls, office buildings, airports, and at zoos. However, no one would rationally argue that we shouldn’t build any of the above because crime will occur there. The same should be true for trails.”

Tracy, Tammy, Hugh Morris. *Rail Trails and Safe Communities; the experience of 372 trails*. Rails to Trails Conservancy, 1998, p. 5, p. 8.
https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/docs/rt_safecomm.pdf

4. Summary:

“Among other things, our study shows that trails, greenbelts, and trails with greenbelts (or greenways) are associated with roughly 2, 4, and 5% price premiums, respectively.”

Asabere, Paul K., Forrest E. Huffman. The Relative Impacts of Trails and Greenbelts on Home Price. *The Journal of Real Estate Finance and Economics*. (2009) 38:408–419. DOI 10.1007/s11146-007-9089-8

5. Summary: Property values increase with closer proximity to the trail.

Karadeniz, Duygu. *The Impact of the Little Miami Scenic Trail on Single Family Residential Property Values* (unpublished graduate thesis, University of Cincinnati, 2008), p. 71
http://headwaterseconomics.org/wp-content/uploads/Trail_Study_22-miami-scenic-trail.pdf

6. Summary: Homes sales were examined in the seven Massachusetts towns through which the Minuteman Bikeway and Nashua River Rail Trail run. “The results show that the houses near the trail sell for a higher proportion of the asking price in about half the time that it took for houses in the general inventory to sell. If living near a rail trail were a negative in any way, the results would be the opposite.”

Craig Della Penna, Murphy’s Realtors, Inc. *Home Sales near Two Massachusetts Rail Trails*. 2006. <https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/cdn.sudbury.ma.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/334/2014/08/HomeSalesNear2MARailTrails.pdf?version=00a63230fa3bf399849bbba01b72bb29>

7. Summary: A study of the perceptions of adjacent landowners about a trail, pre- and post-construction.

“Concerns mentioned by RPOs often have to do with privacy, trespassing, and liability (Kaylen et al. 1993). The most frequent problems cited include cars parked on private property, unleashed dogs, dog waste on their property, and damage to property (Moore et al. 1994; Wolter et al. 2001). Studies suggest that many of these concerns are never realized (Kaylen et al. 1993; Moore et al. 1994; Parker and Moore 1998). Moore et al. (1994) suggested that trail officials should create relationships with RPOs before a trail is built and then continue the relationships to address and then limit problems.”

“Some longtime owners felt the trails were forced upon them, though after the trail was built, many did not have problems with the trail. This shift in attitudes was also reported by Kaylen et al. (1993) as concerns between presurveys and postsurveys diminished as respondents became acquainted with rails.”

“Almost all postconstruction residential neighbors reflected the comments given by a respondent who said, “[We] bought the lot because it’s on the trail” (daily walker who moved for the trail, Clear Creek Trail).”

“Guided grand tour questions were asked during the interview process concerning house distance from the trail, backyard developments, and fencing. Distance of a home to the trail did not seem to matter in relation to use or benefits. “People have asked us, ‘Doesn’t that bother you that the trail is there?’ And we said, ‘Why should it? It’s not an extended visit by any means; they just drift by” (grandparents and active users of the trail, Clear Creek Trail). This idea that people on the trail just kept moving was a common observation among many neighbors...”

Corning, Sarah E., Rasul A. Mowatt, H. Charles Chancellor. Multiuse Trails: Benefits and Concerns of Residents and Property Owners. *Journal of Urban Planning and Development*. (2012) 138(4): 277-285.