America’s Rails-with-Trails: A Resource for Planners, Agencies and Advocates on Trails Along Active Railroad Corridors
Rails-with-Trails 2013:
Safe, Common and Growing
RWT = shared-use path directly adjacent to active rail corridor

Pinole, CA
2013 Rail-with-Trail Report

- National scope
- PA DCNR funded
- 88 Trail managers from 33 states participated
- On-line resources for trail managers, staff, and advocates
Rails-with-Trails: Lessons Learned
Literature Review, Current Practices, Conclusions

California Rails-with-Trails
A Survey of Trails Along Active Rail Lines

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Rails-to-Trail Conservancy (RTC) serves as the national voice for the nation’s rail-trails, the thousands of miles of former railroad right-of-way that have been preserved and transformed into walking and biking paths for the enjoyment of millions of people nationwide. RTC is committed to ensuring the success of America’s rail-trails, promoting environmental stewardship, and connecting people—creating better places for all to enjoy.
Rails-with-Trails are Common

- 167 RWT (9% of rail-trails)
- 1,437 miles of trail (39% or 560 miles adjacent to rail)
- 41 states
- 33 RWT in CA

Martin Luther King Jr. Promenade, San Diego, CA
CA Trails Included in Survey

- Oceanside Coastal Rail Trail
- Folsom Parkway Rail Trail
- Solana Beach Coastal Rail Trail
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Promenade
- Santa Clara River Trail
- Carlsbad Coastal Rail Trail
- Rose Canyon Bike Path
- Fillmore Trail
- Mission City Bike Trail
- Richmond Greenway
- Alton Bike Trail
- Escondido-San Marcos Inland Rail Trail
- Manteca Tidewater Bikeway
- Old US 40 Bike Path
- Sacramento River Parkway Trail
- San Clemente Beach Trail
- San Francisco Bay Trail (Pinole, Hercules)
- San Luis Obispo Railroad Safety Trail
- Santa Maria Valley Railroad Trail
- Walnut Trail
- Watts Towers Crescent Greenway
- Westminster Hoover Street Trail
## Rail-with-Trail Growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number of Trails</th>
<th>Total Trail Length (in miles)</th>
<th># of states with existing RWTs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 total</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>1,437</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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+60 rail-with-trail projects in development
Rails-with-Trails Under Development in CA

Cal Park Tunnel, Marin County, CA
Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART)

- Cloverdale to Larkspur
- 70 miles
- 54 miles of Class I facilities
- Estimated 7,000-10,000 trail users/day
- Multi-modal: rail, trail, connections to airport and ferry terminal
- Multi-jurisdictional: SMART responsible for constructing and maintaining all w/in ROW
- Target completion date 2016
Impact on Communities

- 14 stations
- Trail provides solution to “last mile”
- Transit-oriented development = Trail-oriented development
Coastal Rail Trail

• 44 miles from Oceanside to San Diego

• MOU between Oceanside, Del Mar, Carlsbad, Encenitas, Solana Beach, and San Diego

• Identified as priority by SANDAG, which has approved $200 million for priority bicycle projects over 10 years
Rails-with-Trails are Safe

Manteca Tidewater Bikeway, Manteca, CA
Range of Designs

- Findings similar to characteristics reported in 2000.
- US DOT’s “RWT: Lessons Learned” report remains the most comprehensive design guidance available.
- Several trail managers reported setback and fencing requirements imposed by the railroad.
- The California MUTCD includes guidance for shared use paths that cross railroad corridors at grade.
Multiple crossing types were reported for some trails.
Barriers
Ohlone Greenway, Berkeley, CA

Richmond Greenway, Richmond, CA
Several trails reported multiple barrier types.
Setback
Setback

Distance between trail and railroad tracks

- 0-10 ft.
- 11-20 ft.
- 21-30 ft.
- 31-50 ft.
- 51-75 ft.
- 76-100 ft.
- >100 ft.
- No answer
Railroads

• Class I railroads are increasingly resistant to RWT development. CSX, BNSF and UP have policies prohibiting new RWT development in their ROW.

• Most railroads with trails located within their rights-of-way are in publicly owned corridors.

• 44% trail managers report the current attitude of the railroad as “supportive or cooperative.”
Multiple types of service exist along many RWTs

Characteristics of railroad operations similar to those reported in 2000 (majority of corridors have freight service, frequency is daily, speeds average 30-40 mph)

*Multiple types of service exist along many RWTs*
San Clemente Beach Trail, California
Lance Armstrong Bikeway, Texas
Liability

Indemnification of Railroad
- 32% Trail manager required to indemnify railroad
- 32% No indemnification requirement
- 36% Unknown/no answer

Insurance Coverage
- 70% Trail is insured under its own policy or umbrella policy of managing agency
- 23% No insurance
- 7% Unknown/no answer
Policies & Encouragement

- Recreational use Statutes (VA, ME)
- State agency policies (MassDOT)
- Design standards (SEDA-COG, PA)
MassDOT will as a matter of policy permit the construction of shared-use paths along active or planned railroad rights-of-way provided appropriate fencing separates the two uses. Further, the design and construction of such fencing is an eligible project cost for such projects.
The SEDA-COG Joint Rail Authority (JRA) is opposed, in principle, to pedestrian/bike trails on its property. The Authority may consent to working with a trail sponsor if its proposal meets the following criteria:

**TYPICAL CROSS-SECTIONS:**

Where the SEDA-COG Joint Rail Authority has property in excess of 50 feet from centerline - no fence required

![Diagram](image1)

Minimum 50 feet of clear area

Minimum 30 feet of clear area

Track centerline

Trail

Where the SEDA-COG Joint Rail Authority has property LESS THAN 50 feet from centerline - fence required

To be approved only as per "Exceptions to Standards" enumerated below

![Diagram](image2)

No less than 25 feet of clear area

Minimum 25 feet of clear area

Minimum 50 inches high

Track centerline

Trail

Standard R/W is 30-33 feet from track centerline. Where the Authority R/W extends beyond 30-33 feet and there is no other parallel track, a trail may be considered. If accepted by the Authority, separation by a chain link fence (minimum 60 inches high) installed no less than 25 feet from track center shall be required.
Conclusions

Rails-with-Trails are:

- **Safe**
  In nearly 20 years of examining RWTs, one fatality revealed.

- **Common**
  167 RWTs (9% of rail-trails in RTC’s database) have been identified to date.

- **Growing**
  Nearly a quarter of the trails included in our study have been developed since 2002.
  60 more RWT project in development.
Next Steps

• Convene advocates, agencies & railroads
• Encourage collection of detailed metrics
RWT Online Resources

• Individual survey and interview responses
• Recreational Use Statutes
• Legal Agreements
• Rail-with-Trail Feasibility Studies
• Image Library
• List of known Rail-with-Trails, links to descriptions