

Quick Facts

Greenways

What Is a Greenway?

A greenway is a park with paved or unpaved paths that connect people and places. Greenways create convenient, safe, and accessible opportunities for walking, recreation, and fitness activities, and provide an alternative route to get to the bus or train, jobs, schools, shopping, and more.

Popular greenways in Metro Boston include the East Boston Greenway, Minuteman Bikeway, Neponset Greenway, Watertown-Cambridge Greenway, and the Charles River Paths.



Greenway Benefits



Improve Public Health: According to the Boston Public Health Commission, “Health starts where people live, work, and play.” Living near a greenway encourages free, easy physical activity, and can help residents combat obesity, diabetes, and other health issues.

Foster a Resilient Environment: Greenways can benefit the environment by improving air and water quality, conserving plant and animal habitats, and providing space for people to connect with nature.



Boost the Economy: Greenways can increase residential property values and boost business for shops located along or near pathways.

Enhance Cultural Awareness & Community Identity: Greenways can create valuable connections to cultural and historical sites, community gardens, and other local resources. A greenway can serve as the backbone for a well-connected community and allow residents to experience a higher quality of life.



Greenways and Safety

One common misconception about greenways is that they can make areas less safe, leading some people to feel uncomfortable with having one built near their home. The good news is that a number of studies have shown that urban greenway trails actually tend to reduce crime by cleaning up the existing landscape and attracting many people to the trail for recreation and transportation.¹ People using the trail may also have more positive interactions, creating a greater sense of community among neighborhoods and prompting them to take ownership in the trail.

¹ 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. https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/docs/rt_safecomm.pdf

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LivableStreets Alliance
www.livablestreets.info
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Case Study: Chicago's "606"



The Bloomington Trail is a 2.7-mile elevated greenway also known as the 606. Scientists analyzed crime statistics from surrounding neighborhoods before and after its construction and found a reduction in crime in neighborhoods closest to the trail, with the largest decrease seen in lower-income neighborhoods along the western part of the trail.²

What You Can Do

-  **Advocate:** Participate in public meetings and speak up about the benefits of greenways.
-  **Educate:** Share this fact sheet, talk to neighbors, build community support and then meet with decision makers, the media, experts and others to discuss the benefits of greenways.
-  **Activate:** Get involved with the Emerald Network -- subscribe, join, volunteer or donate! www.emeraldnetwork.info

² Study shows parks, greenways may help reduce crime in Chicago. Brooks Hays. Chicago (UPI) Feb 24, 2017.
http://www.terraviva.com/reports/Study_shows_parks_greenways_may_help_reduce_crime_in_Chicago_999.html

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