

**THE  
CIRCUIT  
TRAILS**

Circuit Trails JEDI Task Force

**Market Research: Equity of Access to Trails**

100s OF MILES  
OF HAPPY

How do underrepresented communities use trails?



Do you agree with the statement:  
"When I am in the parks or on the trails around here, I see other people like me."



**Biggest barriers to trail use in focus communities:**

- 1 COVID-19 anxiety
- 2 Public safety concerns
- 3 Unwelcoming public spaces

How can trail organizations engage, motivate, and welcome underrepresented trail users?

- welcoming Programming
- appropriate Security
- inviting Infrastructure
- creative Greening
- authentic Outreach

Flip for more info on each of these actions. There's a lot we can do to make our trails more inclusive.

The study results reveal that people want to access and care for nature, but need to feel welcomed first.

# 10 actions to take right now for more inclusive trails

welcoming

Programming

## 1. Invite everyone to **have their fun on the trail**

The best way to overcome a subtle lack of welcome is to offer compelling activities geared towards the tastes of the audience. Live music, festivals, family-oriented activities, pop-up shops, local artisans, historical commemorations, and food trucks were key ideas.

## 2. Extend an **overt welcome**

Imagery can be meaningful. Stakeholders suggested that public art at trail access points feature people of color, and posting the message “Black Lives Matter” in key locations would also convey a sense of respect and welcome.

## 3. Host organized **group activities**

Many people want to be on the trail with a friend or in a group, both for fellowship and to alleviate their safety concerns. Post-COVID, offer opportunities to join up with other people along the trail to pursue similar interests, with activities such as guided nature hikes or birdwatching walks, yoga along the trail, exercise groups, and activities for children.

appropriate

Security

## 4. Create spaces where people **feel safe**.

With few exceptions, people insisted they did not want to see a police presence on the trail. Most people would welcome “ambassadors” or “park rangers,” whom they felt would use a friendly approach, or simply callboxes along the trail in areas where safety is a concern.

inviting

Infrastructure

## 5. Develop places to **gather and relax**

Numerous people asked for amenities that would allow them to gather with family and friends, entertain their children, or just sit and read a book or enjoy nature. These could include places to picnic and barbecue, playgrounds, and benches and other places to sit.

## 6. **Prioritize trail maintenance and amenities**

People hoped for better maintenance of the trail surface, lighting in certain areas, and easier or safer access points including adequate parking. In addition, they hoped for amenities along the trail, such as bikeshare, restrooms, sports courts or fields, and boat rentals.

## 7. Install **useful signage**

Study participants asked for signs in their neighborhoods to point the direction to the trail. It was also suggested that signage could tie into the Circuit Trails Network, not just pointing the way to the local trail, but also indicating further destinations that could be accessed through the regional trail network, to enhance that thirst for exploration.

creative

Greening

## 8. Build an urban **oasis**

Residents want trails that provide a respite from the urban environment. They want a creatively designed trail that offers glimpses of water, the sound of birds, splashes of color. Residents hope for accessible places where they can dip out of their normal world and dip in to a peaceful, green environment, even if only for a short time.

authentic

Outreach

## 9. Show **people enjoying the trail**

People want to see images of people who look like them enjoying the trail. They want to imagine themselves on the trail, and know that they belong there. The Circuit’s website and outreach should show real people from these neighborhoods having fun on the trail.

## 10. Leverage Local **Social Media and Traditional Door-to-Door**

Getting social media influencers on the trail and curating images to their local followers would help create a new constituency for the trails. At the same time, many people asked for more traditional means of communication – flyers, conversations, and traditional mail.