

Connecticut Trail Census

Statewide multi-use trail user study



2021 Intercept Survey

Aggregated Data Report

May 20, 2022

By Laura Brown, Kimberly Bradley, Emily Wilson, and Aaron Budris



Acknowledgments

Trail Census Staff, Faculty and Students

Current

Kimberly Bradley - Connecticut Trails Program Coordinator UConn Extension
Aaron Budris - Senior Regional Planner, Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
Emely Ricci – Connecticut Trail Finder Intern & Communications Coordinator
Emily Wilson – Geospatial Educator, Center for Land Use Education and Research, UConn Extension

Former

Laura Brown - Community & Economic Development Educator, UConn Extension
Eniola Fasola - Data Analyst
Khadija Shaikh – CAHNR Summer Intern for Connecticut Trail Finder/Connecticut Trail Census
Neva Taylor- Communications Coordinator

Trail Census Volunteers

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The Trail Census Advisory Committee meets quarterly and provides invaluable support to our staff and programs:

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Prepared by: Laura Brown, Kimberly Bradley, Emily Wilson, and Aaron Budris. For more information contact Kimberly Bradley at kimberly.bradley@uconn.edu. To view online visit <https://cttrailcensus.uconn.edu/>

Executive Summary ~ Key Takeaways

This report provides a summary of intercept survey data collected from multi-use trail users by volunteer surveyors at sites participating in the 2021 [Connecticut Trail Census](#). These data were collected through 676 surveys by respondents to a web-based survey accessed by QR code deployed through posters and lawn signs from January 1, 2021-December 31, 2021. This analysis provides a general picture of those surveyed on these trails and how the trails are being used.

- **While many respondents indicated using trails frequently, more users surveyed reported using the trails once or being first time users of that trail.** In 2021, 23.4% of respondents were first time users of that trail, compared to just 9.5% in 2020.
- **Walking is the most prominent use.** Consistent with previous years, 78.8% of trail users surveyed indicated using the trail to walk.
- **Average time spent on the trail is 81.5 minutes.** Cyclists spend the most time on trails averaging 127.9 minutes (over 36.2 minutes above the average of 91.7 minutes noted in 2019) followed by walkers with 74.3 minutes.
- **More trail users surveyed are female than male.** In 2021, 58.3% of respondents identified as female. This was consistent with data from previous years (2020, 50.9%, 2019, 54.6%)
- **Trail users surveyed are largely older than the general population of Connecticut.** 60.3% of those responding to the surveys were over 45 years of age and this has not changed in recent years. According to the US Census, 44.7% of the general population of Connecticut is over age 45.¹
- **A majority of respondents have household incomes over \$100,000.** 51.9% of all respondents in 2021 reported household incomes of \$100,000 or more compared to 52.1% in 2020, 54.5% in 2019 and 47.2% in 2018.
- **Respondents overwhelmingly identified as white.** In 2021, 86.3% of respondents identified as white which is consistent with previous years (84.3% in 2020, 87.0% in 2019).
- **Respondents in 2021 represented 189 unique zip codes and 16 states.**
- **Most users drive to trails.** In 2021, 43.2% of people drove a car or motorcycle alone, and 43.8% drove a car or motorcycle with someone else. Fewer people biked (3.9%) or walked (7.3%) to the trail, and 1.3% ran or jogged. 0.2% of respondents reported using public transportation, slightly up from 2020.
- **A greater share of respondents indicated using the trails for bicycling in 2021.** Bicyclers represent 33.3% of respondents in 2021, while 32.5% indicated use for bicycling in 2020, and 25.6% in 2019.
- **Respondents use the trails primarily for exercise, recreation, and relaxation while use of trails for family time was up.** The majority of users, 83.6%, indicated using the trails for the purpose of exercise, 51% for recreation, and 58.3% for relaxation. Use of trails for “Family time,” was 35% in 2021, greater than 29.5% in 2020 and 16.3% in 2019.

¹ US Census Bureau (2017). *American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*. Retrieved from <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>

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Background

This report provides a summary of intercept survey data collected from multi-use trail users by volunteer surveyors at sites participating in the [Connecticut Trail Census](#). The Connecticut Trail Census is a statewide volunteer data collection program intended to inform a better understanding of multi-use trail use in the state of Connecticut and to make this valuable information available to trail user groups, administrators, government agencies, and the public. The Census involves a trail user intercept survey, as well as infrared user counts on 21 multi-use trail sites throughout the state of Connecticut (Figure 1). The goals of the Connecticut Trail Census are to: understand when, who, how, and why people make use of Connecticut's multi-use trails; educate stakeholders about trail use patterns and trends and user demographics; promote active citizen participation in monitoring and communicating the value of trails; and encourage sound trail building and maintenance programs based on data. The project is funded by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) Recreational Trails Program, and project partners include the Connecticut State Greenways Council and the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments.

Methods

The survey tool and methods were developed in accordance with best practices in survey design methods with guidance from a survey advisory team consisting of trail administrators

from around the state, the Connecticut Trail Census Advisory Committee, partners from Councils of Government and CT DEEP, and Connecticut Trail Census staff. Survey questions were based on those identified from similar surveys around the country as well as the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Data Collection Project. It included questions about how and why respondents use the trails, spending, health, and demographic information. The survey takes about five minutes to complete. Some survey questions and procedures have been modified to decrease error from year to year. These have been noted, where applicable, in the charts and narrative below. A copy of the survey tool can be found in Appendix A.

In 2021 due to restrictions imposed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, data were collected via an online survey using Qualtrics software accessed via a QR code posted on lawn signs and posters in the vicinity of trailheads at all participating sites. Data were collected from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021. Twenty-five (25) trails were included as selectable from the drop-down menu in the survey. To meet the goals of a specific study implemented this year as part of the Airline State Park Trail Master Plan development, respondents who chose the Airline Trail could choose from an additional 38 specific parking locations.



Example survey signage at trail heads for 2020-2021 QR based data collection.

The University of Connecticut Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed the project and determined it to be exempt by Exemption #XI5-174. However, under IRB guidelines, data received from minors under the age of 18 were removed prior to analysis. Survey responses that were incomplete or indicated non-consent were destroyed leaving a total of 676 surveys for analysis in 2021 (Table 1), 1,372 in 2020, 978 in 2019, 1,131 in 2018 and 1,003 in 2017. Some data from 2017 through 2020 are included in this report for comparison. Details about data collection in previous years can be found in previous years' aggregated survey data reports. Additional information about how errors were handled for each question was documented and is available on request. For more information about the survey results or the Connecticut Trail Census, visit <http://cttrailcensus.uconn.edu>.

Respondents by Location

Answer	Respondents	Percent of Total
Air Line State Park Trail	177	31%
Bluff Point State Park, Groton	108	19%
Charter Oak Greenway, Manchester	6	1%
CTFastrak Trail in New Britain	0	0%
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, Avon	6	1%
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, Canton	1	0%
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, Cheshire	2	0%
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, East Granby	9	2%
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, Farmington	7	1%
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, Hamden	2	0%
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, New Haven	0	0%
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, Simsbury	6	1%
G&S Trolley Trail, Groton (Haley Farm State Park)	8	1%
Hop River Trail, Bolton	42	7%
Hop River Trail, Vernon	29	5%
Larkin State Bridle Trail, Naugatuck	13	2%
Larkin State Bridle Trail, Oxford	4	1%
Middlebury Greenway, Middlebury	6	1%
Naugatuck River Greenway, Derby	22	4%
Norwalk River Valley Trail, Wilton	0	0%
Riverwalk Trail, East Hartford	10	2%
Riverwalk Trail, Hartford	20	3%
Shoreline Greenway, Madison	14	2%
Still River Greenway, Brookfield	30	5%
Sue Grossman Trail, Torrington	22	4%
I used another multi-use trail in 2021.	23	4%
I use multi-use trails, but have not used any in 2021.	3	1%
I do not use multi-use trails.	3	1%
Total	573	100%

Table 1. Number and percentage of surveys/respondents by trail location.

Respondents by Location – Airline State Park Trail

Air Line State Park Trail Parking Area	Respondents	Percent of Total
Rt. 149, Colchester	27	15%
Smith St., East Hampton	20	11%
Rt. 85, Hebron	19	11%
Other. Please specify.	16	9%
Thompson Rd., Thompson	14	8%
CT 196, East Hampton	12	7%
No response	11	6%
Bull Hill Rd., Colchester	9	5%
Old Colchester Rd., Hebron	9	5%
Salmon River State Forest, Colchester	9	5%
Bridge Street, Windham/Willimantic	8	4%
Old Hartford Rd., Hebron	4	2%

Potter Road, Hampton	4	2%
Grayville Rd., Hebron	3	2%
Rt. 2 Commuter Lot	3	2%
Cook Hill Road, Lebanon	2	1%
Goodwin Conservation Center, Hampton	2	1%
I don't know.	2	1%
Lowell Davis Road, East Hampton	2	1%
Railroad Street, Pomfret	2	1%
Chesbro Bridge Road, Columbia	1	1%
Estabrooks Road, Hampton	1	1%
RT 207 Hebron	1	1%

Table 2. Number and percentage of surveys/respondents on Air Line State Park Trail by parking location.

In previous years, data were collected by local volunteers who received supplies and training from the Connecticut Trail Census, and data were provided on a voluntary and de-identified basis to the University of Connecticut Extension for analysis. By comparison with previous years, in 2019, thirteen of the twenty participating sites (65%) collected an aggregated total of 993 surveys. In 2018, ten of the sixteen participating (63%) sites collected an aggregated total of 1,146 surveys, and in 2017, eleven of the fifteen sites (73%) collected an aggregated total of 1,042 surveys.

Specific locations for data collection were chosen by trail administrators familiar with trail use to represent normal use along the trail segment. In 2020 and 2021 this involved placing lawn signs and posters at the site that urged people to visit the survey on a device (Figure 1). From 2017-2019 it involved in-person intercept surveying and asking people to stop during an activity, usually near a trailhead or parking area. These sites varied slightly from the locations chosen for infrared counts to avoid interference of the survey with accurate infrared counting. Count summaries are not included in this report but are available on the Trail Census website.

In 2021, additional survey signs were placed along the Air Line State Park Trail (Table 2, Figure 2), to provide additional trail user input to support CT Resource Conservation and Development lead Air Line State Park Trail Mast Plan Development.

This report includes analysis of survey data collected in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021. While some comparison is provided, they should be viewed with caution. The trails selected and the sample of users who completed the surveys are not random and therefore, may not accurately represent the general trail user population, either for the individual trails or for trail users statewide. Participating trails also changed from year to year based on the ability of each community to mobilize volunteers. Additionally, because the samples collected by volunteers are not necessarily random, calculations of margins of error are not appropriate for these data. However, we report these data to provide a general picture of those users who did complete the survey. We believe these data are sufficient to inform local programming and policy decisions and to identify needs for further investigation. A full report of prescribed data collection methods along with additional discussion about methods and estimated margins of error used to inform surveying recommendations can be found at <https://cttrailcensus.uconn.edu>.

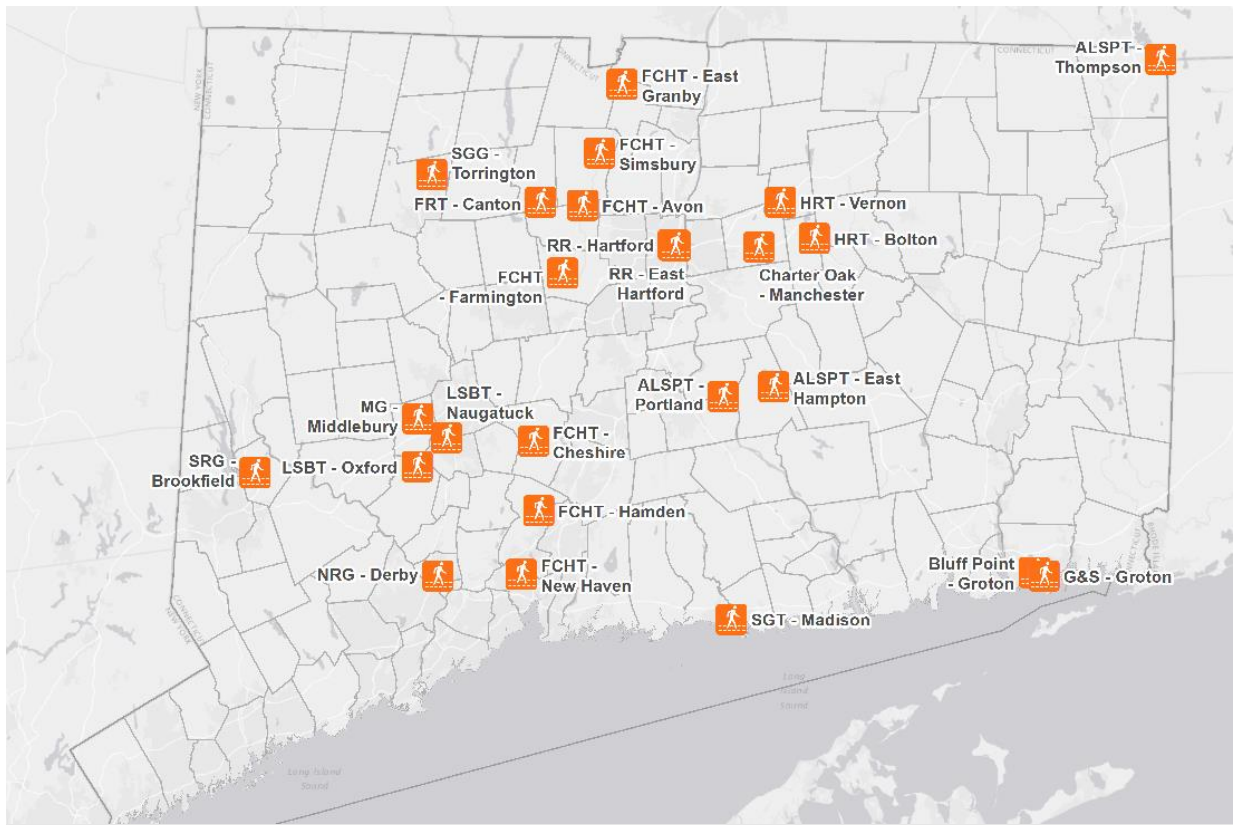


Figure 1: Survey data collection sites – CT Trail Census.



Figure 2: Survey data collection sites on Air Line State Park Trail.

Figures 3-8 below compare the survey data collection months, days, and hours to overall trail use across all the trails for which infrared counter data was available. This demonstrates that while usage declined from December through March, trails are still used during these months. In past years, survey samples were heavily skewed to warmer months and may not have been representative of winter users. The QR based survey methods allowed data to be collected throughout the seasons at all times of day (although the time of survey completion may not be indicative of actual trail use time). Overall, this also demonstrated that the QR based sampling is representative of users across the week, between weekend and weekdays, and throughout the day. Further statistical analysis would be necessary to confirm the accuracy of the sampling. Figures 4, 6 and 8 (in red) show 2020 data included here for reference.

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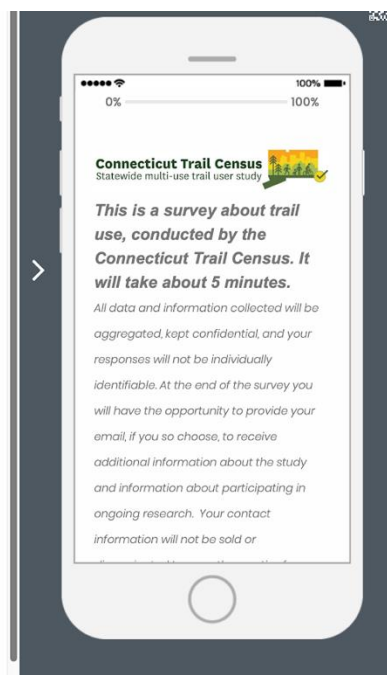


This is a survey about trail use, conducted by the Connecticut Trail Census. It will take about 5 minutes.

All data and information collected will be aggregated, kept confidential, and your responses will not be individually identifiable. At the end of the survey you will have the opportunity to provide your email, if you so choose, to receive additional information about the study and information about participating in ongoing research. Your contact information will not be sold or disseminated to any other parties for any other purpose. The aggregated data set and data report will be made publicly available for researchers and the general public at <http://ctrailcensus.uconn.edu>. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you agree to complete this survey, but later change your mind, you may stop at any time. There are no penalties or consequences of any kind if you decide that you do not want to participate. This project has been approved under UConn IRB Exempt Study Number X16-181. [Click to view the participant information sheet.](#)

For more information contact the Principal Investigator: Laura Brown, University of Connecticut Department of Extension, 203-407-3157, laurabrown@uconn.edu

☐ Yes, I would like to participate in the survey.



Online format of QR based survey (and mobile example).

Percent of Total Surveys Received by Month Compares to Count Use Data 2021

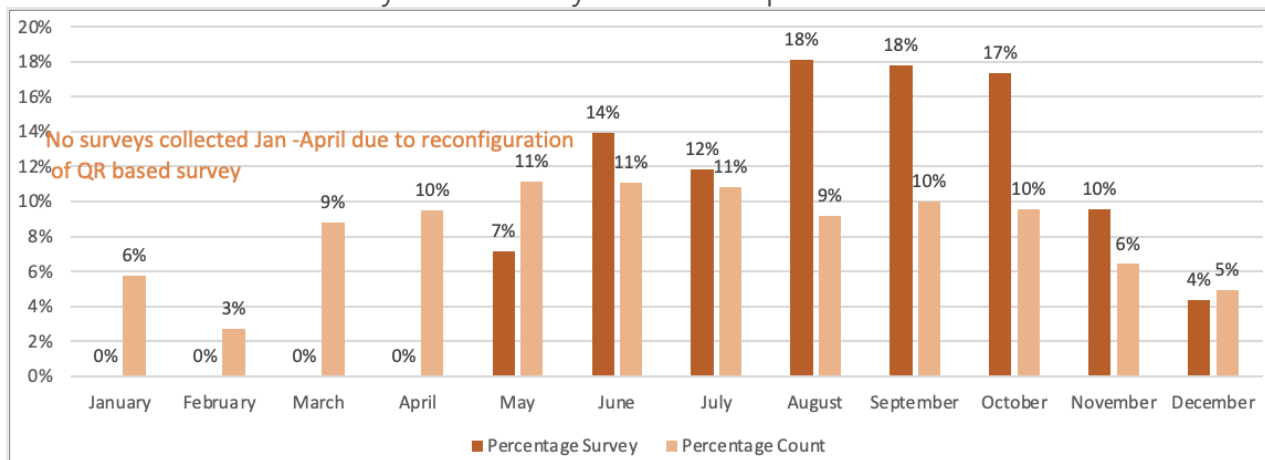


Figure 3. Percent of surveys collected compared to count use data estimates by month in 2021.

Percent of Total Surveys Received by Month of Year Compared to Counter Use Data 2020

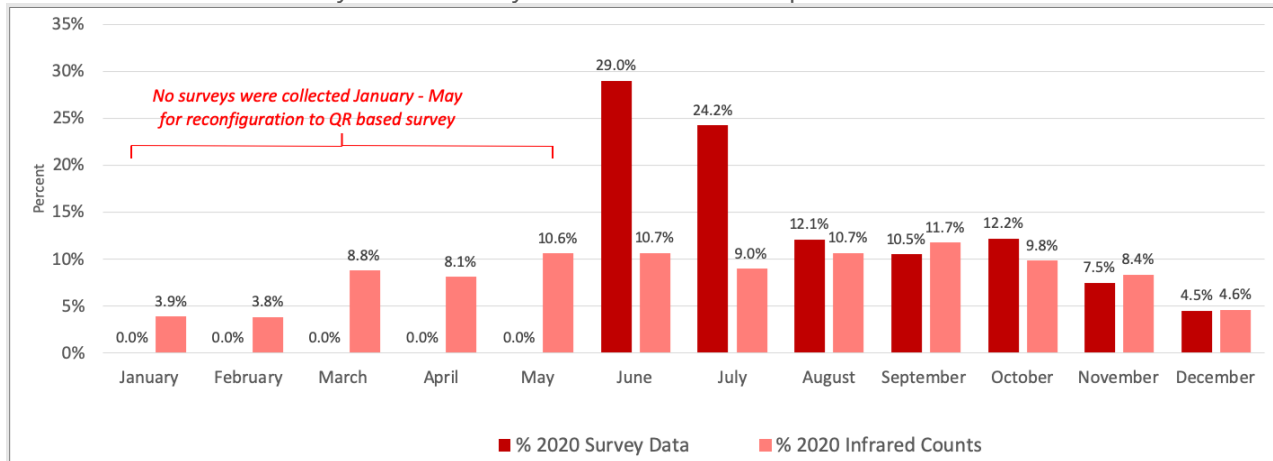


Figure 4. Percent of surveys collected compared to count use data estimates by month in 2020

Percent of Total Surveys Received by Day of Week Compared to Counter Use Data 2021

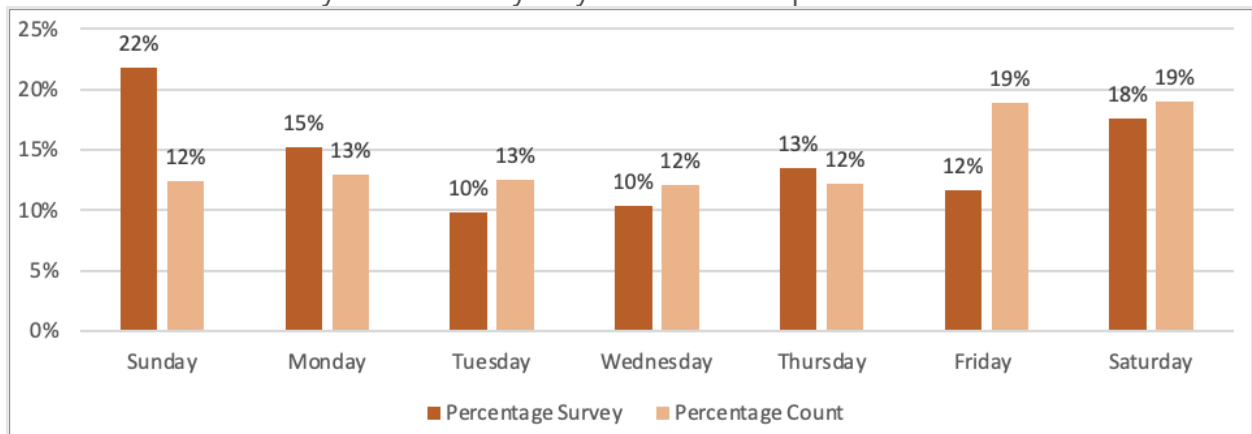


Figure 5: Percent of surveys collected compared to count use estimates by day of the week in 2021.

Percent of Total Surveys Received by Day of Week Compared to Counter Use Data 2020

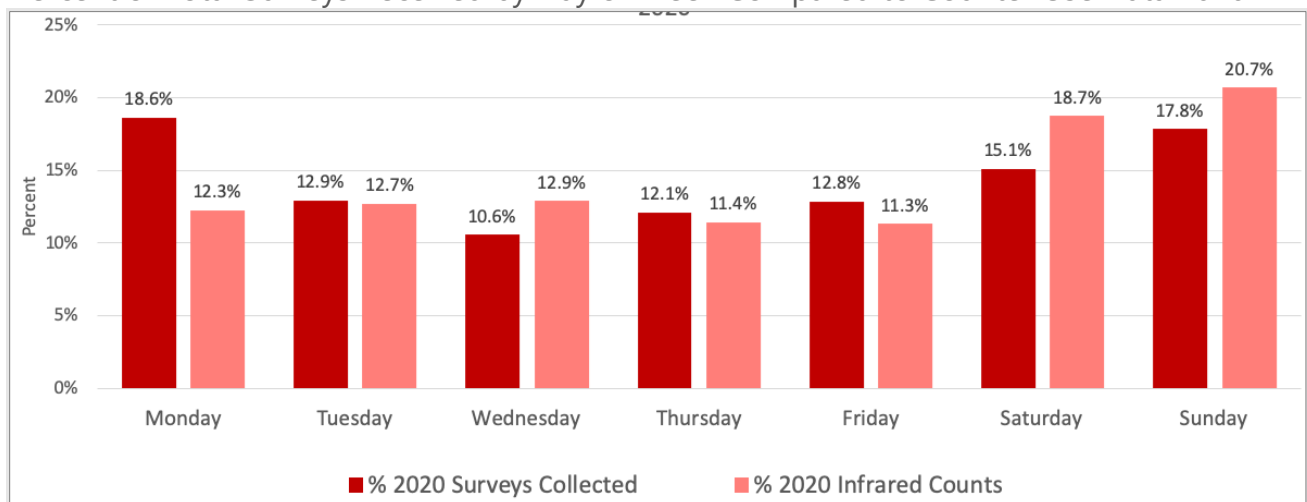


Figure 6: Percent of surveys collected compared to count use estimates by day of the week in 2020.

Percent of Total Surveys Received by Time of Data Compared to Counter Use Data 2021

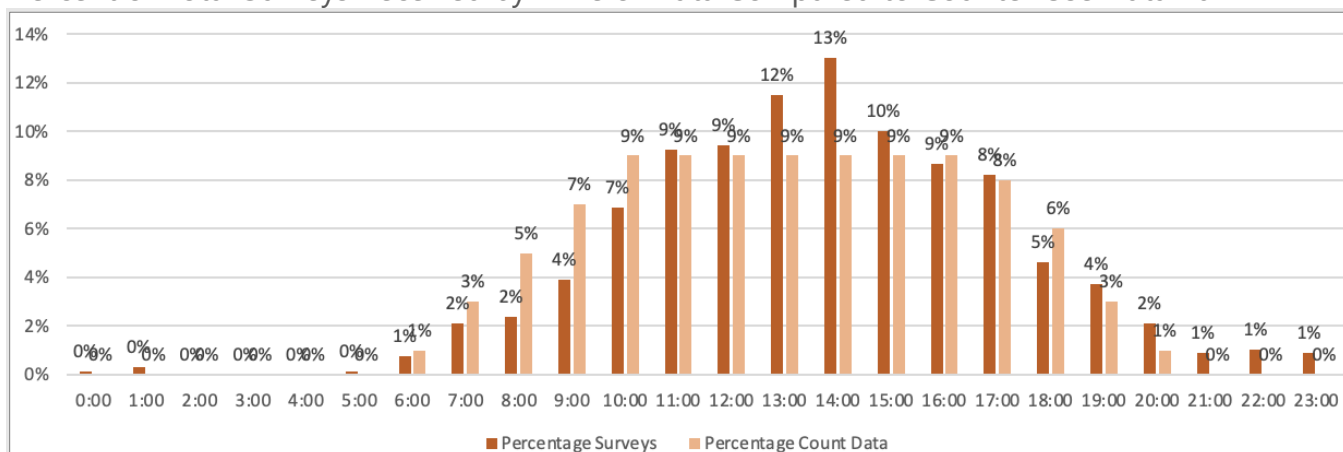


Figure 7: Percent of surveys collected compared to count use estimates by hour of the day in 2021.

Percent of Total Surveys Received by State Time Compared to Counter Use Data 2020

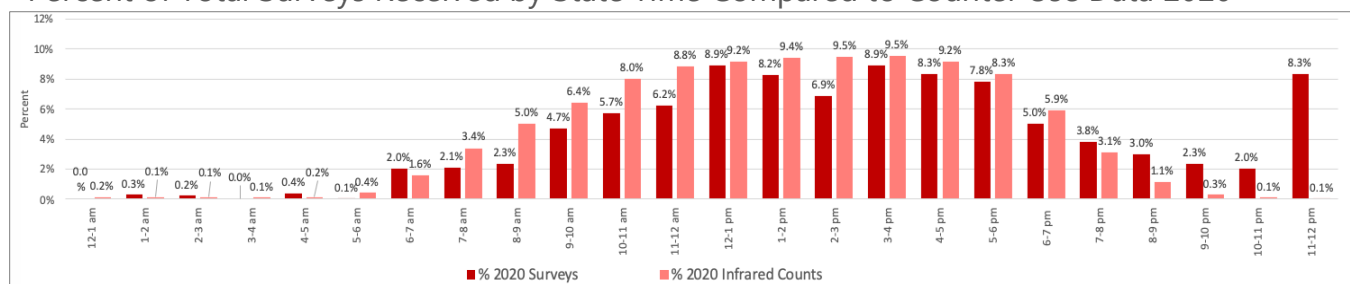


Figure 8: Percent of surveys collected compared to count use estimates by hour of the day in 2020.

Survey Results

Trail User Demographics: Gender, Income, and Race

More trail users surveyed are female than male. Consistent across all three years of data is the predominance of female users on these trails. In 2021, 58.3% of respondents identified as female while 39.3% identified as male and 2.4% preferred to self-describe. In 2020, 50.9% of respondents identified as female while 48.4% identified as male and 0.7% preferred to self-describe. In 2019, 54.6 % of respondents identified as female and 45.2% as male, with 0.2% preferring to self-describe. In 2018, 53.3% identified as female and 46.7% as male, and in 2017, 56.5% identified as female and 43.5% as male.² There is a greater proportion of persons identifying as female among those who responded to the survey than the population of the state of Connecticut as a whole, which is 48.8% male and 51.2% female.

Trail users surveyed are older than the general population of Connecticut. The total percentage of users over age 45 has dropped over the past several years. In 2021 60.4 % of

² Gender was observed by the interceptor in the 2017 survey, which likely created some error. In 2018, this was a respondent question.

users were over age 45 compared to 63.8% in 2020 (Figure 9). According to the US Census only 44.7% of the general population of Connecticut is over age 45.³ In 2021 users under the age of 34 represented 23.2% of those surveyed compared to 17.9% in 2020. While this appears to be an upward trend given the likelihood that the COVID-19 pandemic may have shifted the user base, further data would be needed to confirm this.

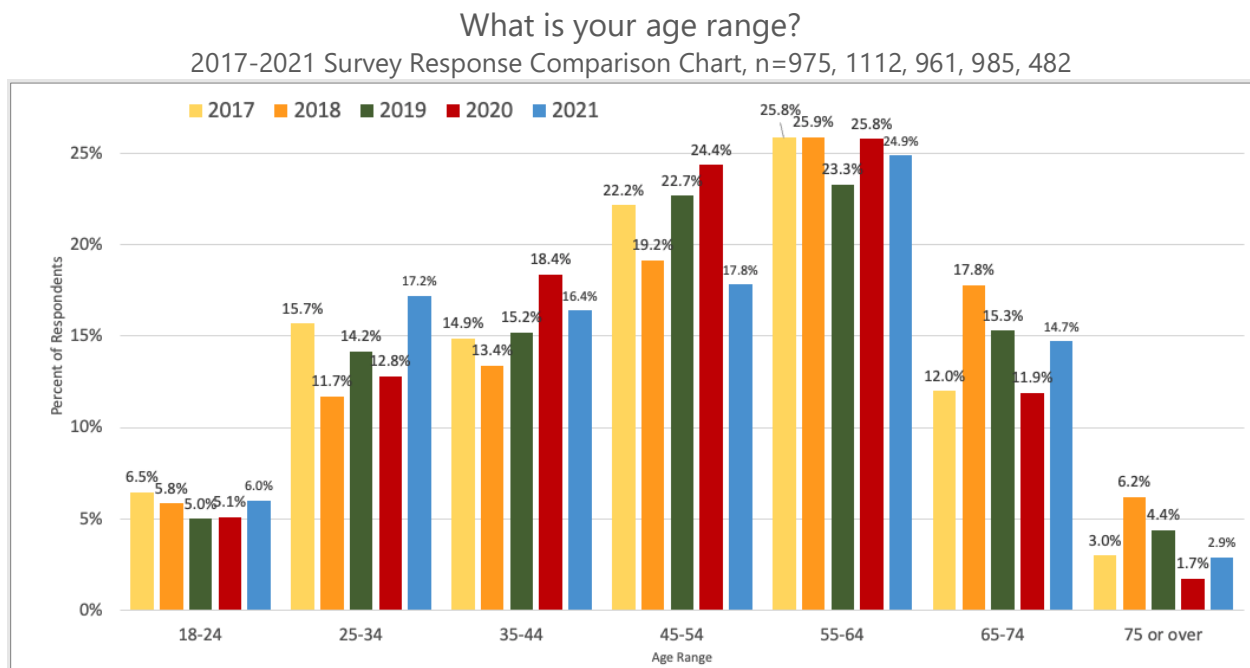


Figure 9: Age distribution of survey respondents 2017-2021.

Most respondents have household incomes over \$100,000.

As shown in Figure 10, 51.9% of all respondents in 2021 reported household incomes of \$100,000 or more compared to 52.1 % in 2020, 54.5% in 2019, and 47.2% in 2018. In 2021 14.1% of respondents reported household incomes of less than \$50,000. These data alone do not explain if this represents a shift in the types of users on these trails or if the same users simply increased their income.

³ US Census Bureau (2017). *American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*. Retrieved from <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>

What best represents your income range?
2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, Survey Data n=827, 962, 817, 803, 376

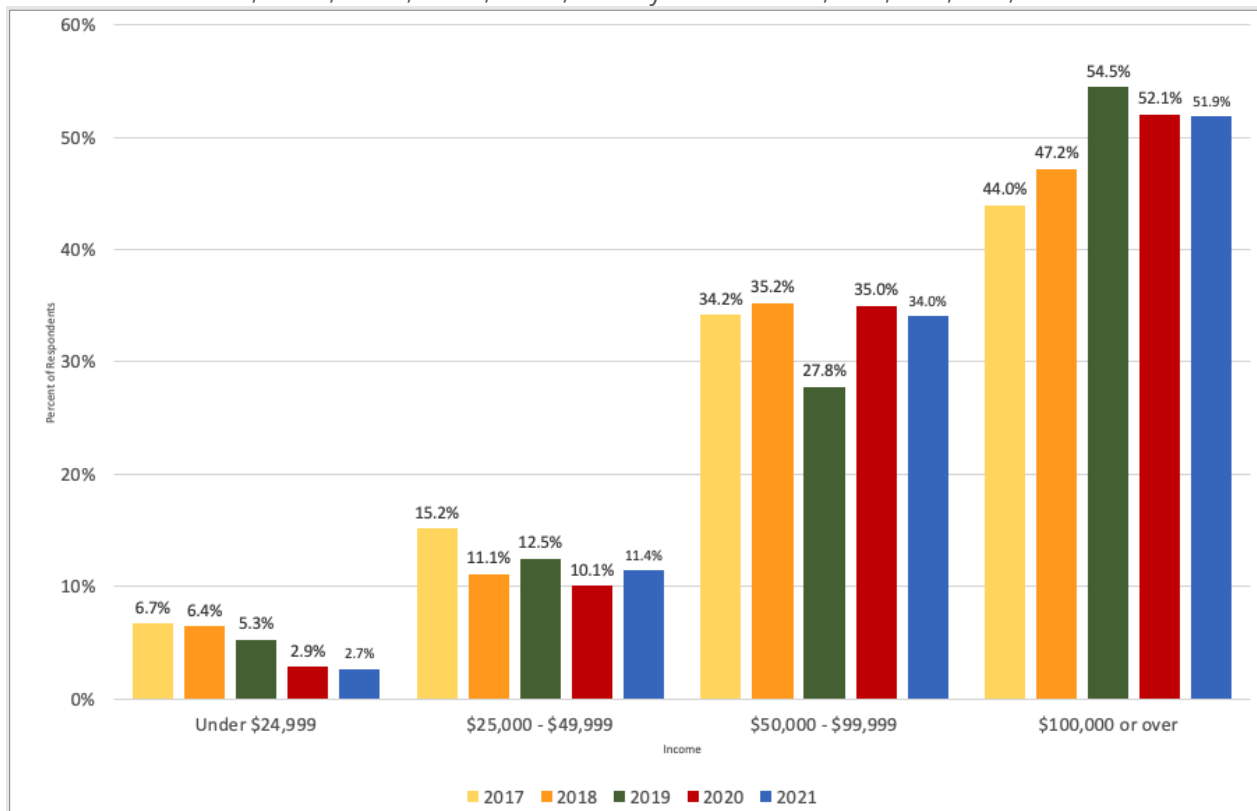


Figure 10: Income range of survey respondents 2017-2021.

Respondents overwhelmingly identified as white.

In 2021 86.3% of respondents identified as white, and this was consistent with previous years' data (84.3% in 2020, 87.0 % in 2019, 90.5% in 2018, and 86.6% in 2017). 2.1% of respondents identified as Black or African American, 1.2% as Spanish, Hispanic or Latino, 1.9% as Asian, 0.4% as Native American, 0.4% as Middle Eastern 0% as Pacific Islander and 3.9% as Other. For comparison, according to the US Census⁴ the Connecticut population is 79.9% White, 12.2% Black, 16.9% Hispanic or Latino, 5.0% Asian, 0.6% Native American and 0.1% Pacific Islander (Figure 11).

⁴ State of Connecticut QuickFacts. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/CT>

What is your race or ethnicity (Select all that apply)
Survey Data Comparison Chart 2017-2021, n=971, 1081, 931, 483

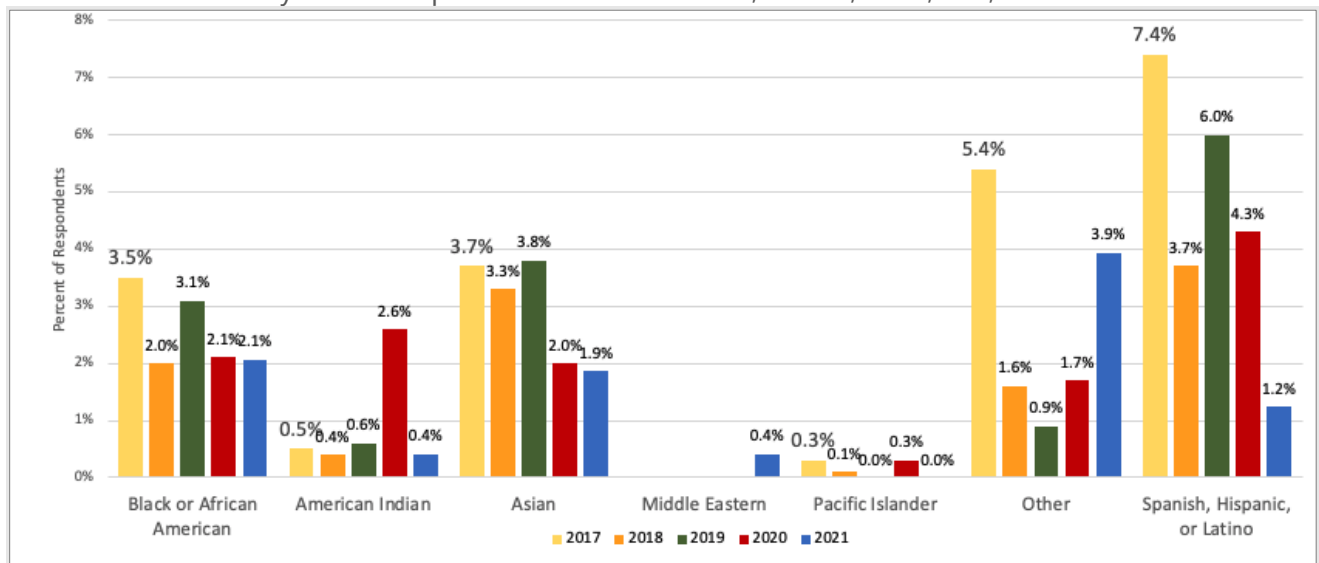


Figure 11. Race or ethnicity of survey respondents 2017-2021.

Trail User Zip Codes

Respondents in 2021 represented 189 unique zip codes and 16 states. Respondents in 2020 represented 237 unique zip codes and 12 states. Respondents in 2019 represented 188 unique zip codes and 20 states. The zip code analysis was conducted using 442 unique data points from the 2021 data set. Figure 12 shows the zip codes where respondents live. Responses from zip codes in California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Ohio, Virginia, and Washington are not displayed.

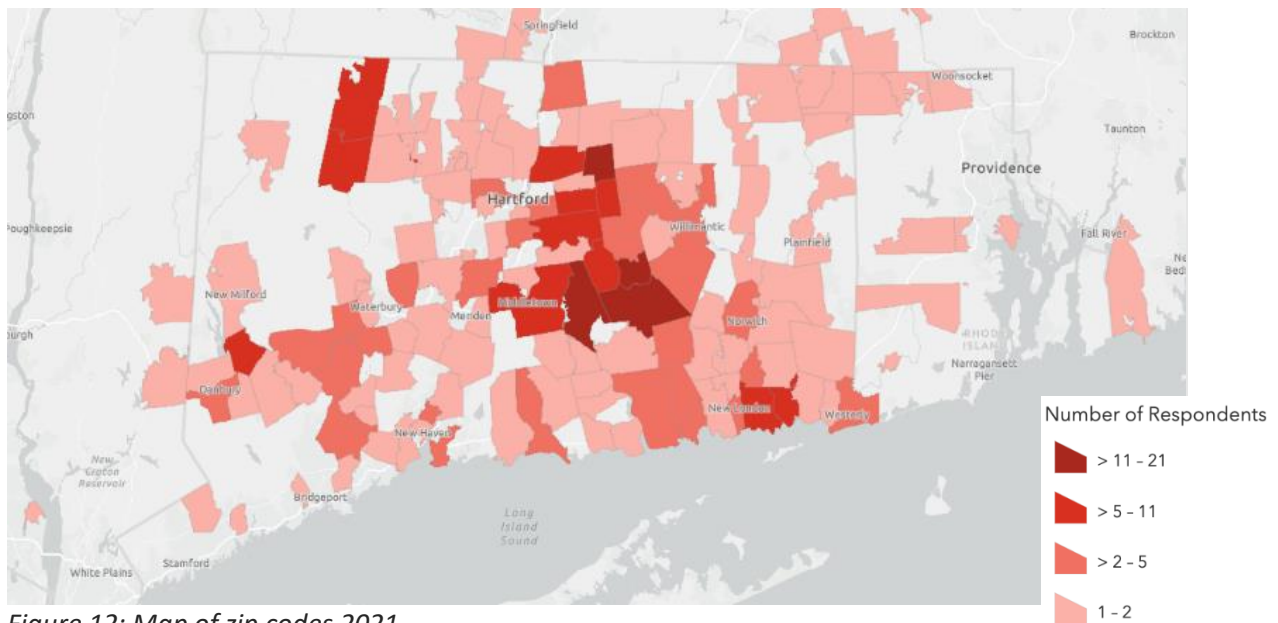


Figure 12: Map of zip codes 2021.

Mode of Transportation

An overwhelming majority of users drive to trails.

In 2021, 43.2% of people drove a car or motorcycle alone and 43.8% drove a car or motorcycle with someone else. In 2020, 39.6% of respondents drove a car or motorcycle alone (compared to 55.4% in 2019) to get to a trail, and 40.3% drove with someone else. Fewer people biked (3.9%) or walked (7.3%) to the trail, and 1.3% ran or jogged. Only 0.2% of respondents reported using public transportation, slightly up from 2020. Some shifts may represent changes in family activity due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic which encouraged people to visit outdoor recreational facilities with family members but discouraged use of public transportation.



How did you get to the trail today?

Survey Data Comparison Chart 2017-2021, n=537, 983, 1127, 977, 1092

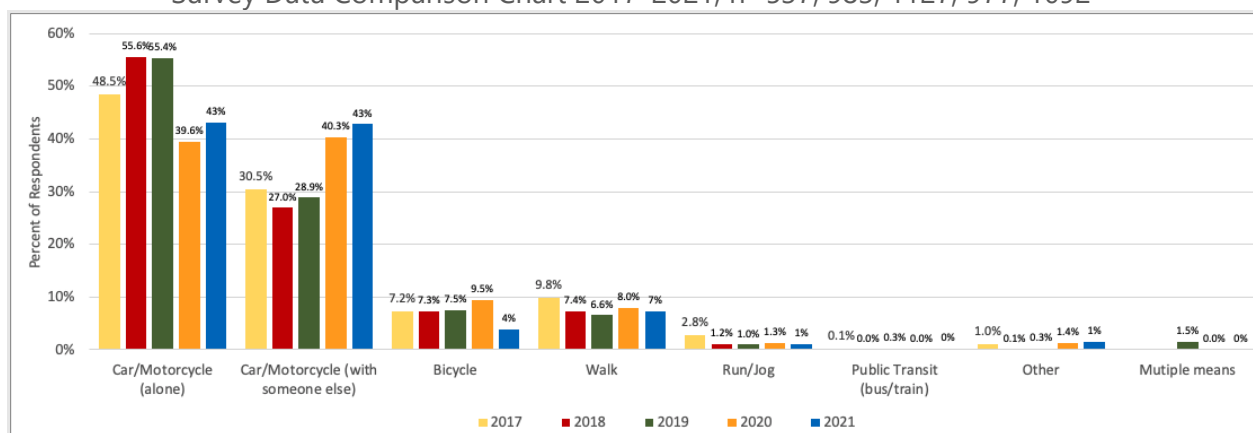


Figure 13: Mode of Transportation to the trail.

Mode of Use & Purpose

Consistent with previous years' data, the overwhelming majority of users surveyed, 78.8%, walked on the trails. Close to twenty-three percent (22.9%) of users reported using the trails for running/jogging, 33.3% for bicycling, 0.8% used a wheelchair or mobility aid, and 2.5% indicated other (Figure 14). The total number of users walking appears to be rising, but data would need to be analyzed on a trail-by-trail basis to verify these trends. This question was an interceptor observed question in 2017 so 2017 is not included in Figure 14. Question responses were modified in 2019 to include "Wheelchair or mobility aid" and to consolidate infrequent

responses to “Other.” This question allowed multiple responses, so n values were calculated by total respondents, not responses.

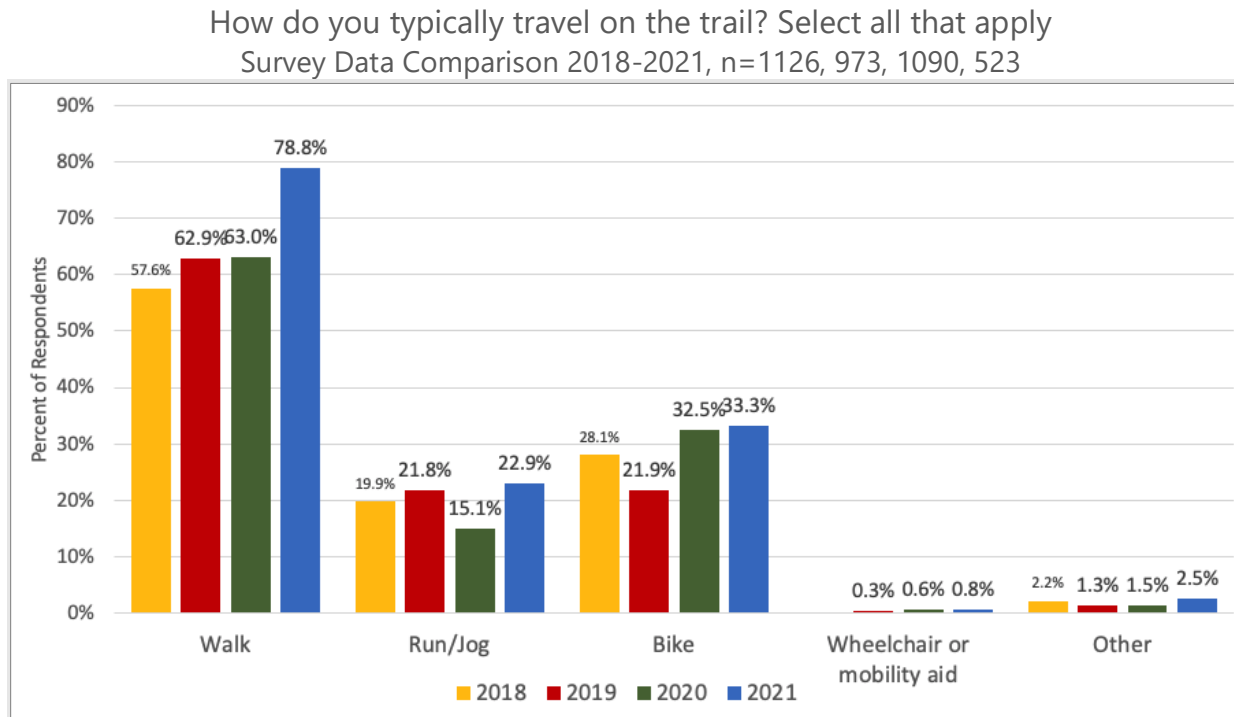


Figure 14: Mode of travel on the trail.

Respondents use the trails primarily for exercise, recreation, and relaxation.

Most users, 83.6%, indicated using the trails for the purpose of exercise, 51% for recreation, and 58.3% for relaxation (Figure 15). Recreational use appeared to drop in 2020 from 2019 possibly because of COVID-19 restrictions or reductions in group activities. In 2021, a far greater percentage of users indicated using the trails for relaxation, 58.3%, than in previous years (47.8% in 2020 and 43.6% in 2019), speaking to the value of trails for mental health and well-being. This question allowed multiple responses to this question, so no values were calculated by total respondents.

Use of trails for family time increased.

Use of trails for “Family time” increased with 35% in 2021, up from 29.5% in 2020 and 16.3% in 2019. This may be an impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Other uses (n=33) included birding, bike camping, horse conditioning, fresh air, crew regatta, and being in a place of beauty and no vehicles.

Surveyed trails are not used significantly for transportation.

As in previous years, the use of these trails for travel was small, representing less than 3% of respondents, but this was slightly up from previous years.

What is your purpose when you use the trail? Select all that apply.
Survey Data Comparison Chart 2018-2021, n=1130, 976, 1091, 525

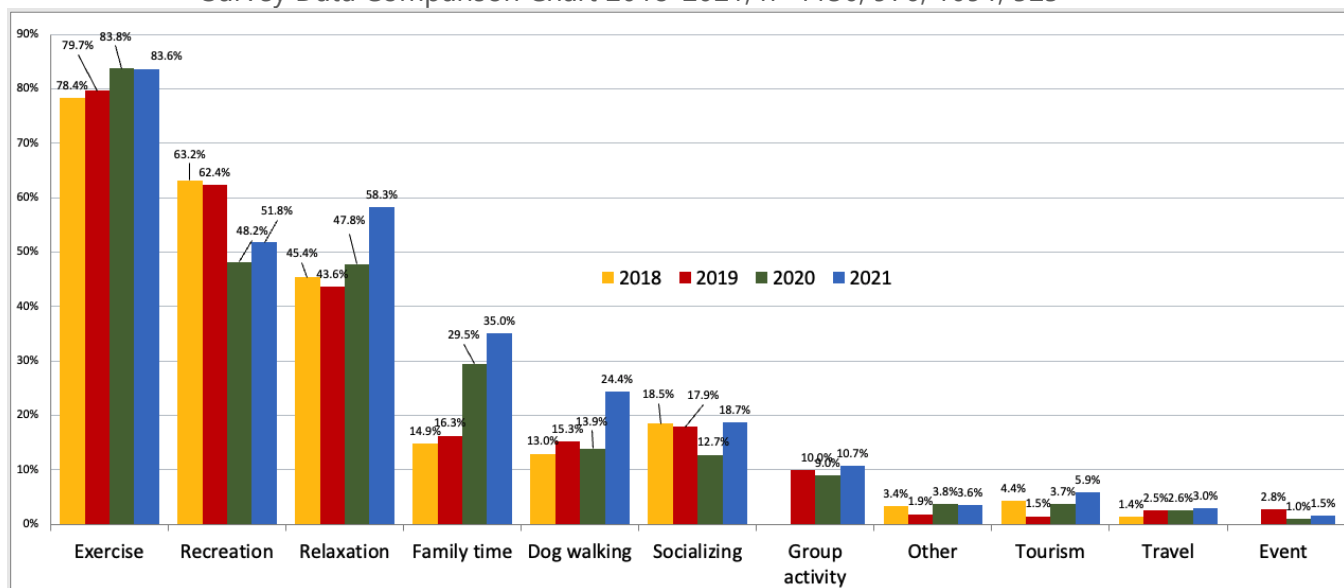


Figure 15: Purpose for using trail.

Health

The 2021 survey was simplified to make health questions less burdensome for respondents. While previous year's surveys included a question about percentage of exercise completed on the trail, the 2021 survey included only the question: *Are you exercising more, less, or about the same since you began using the trail?* Respondents to this question demonstrated minor change from 2020 to 2021 (Figures 16 & 17). 38.6% of respondents reported exercising more since they began using the trail, 54.9 indicated they are exercising about the same and 1.9% are exercising less (Figure 16). 4.7% were not sure.

Are you exercising more, less, or about the same since you began using the trail?
2021 n=428

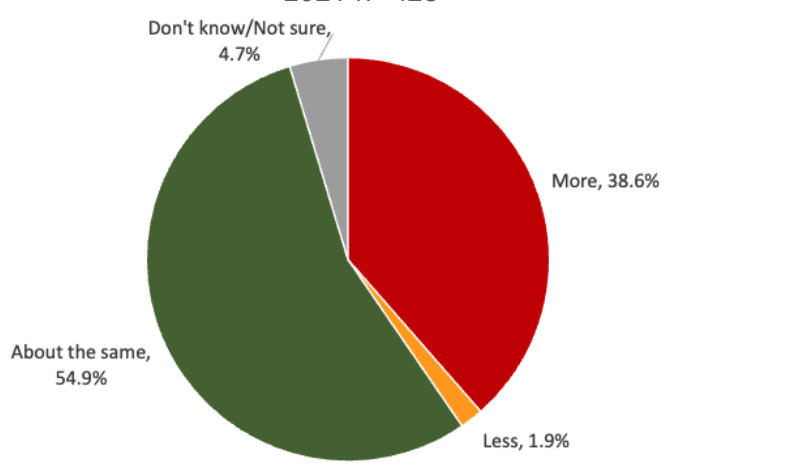


Figure 16: Level of exercise based on use of trail 2021.

Are you exercising more, less, or about the same since you began using the trail?

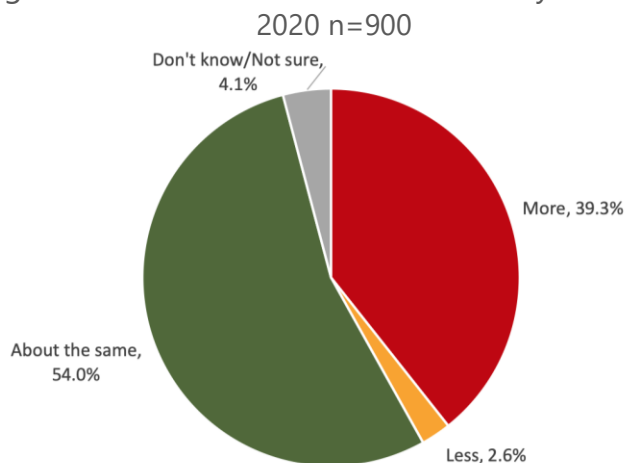


Figure 17: Level of exercise based on use of trail 2020.

The 2020 survey included several questions about physical activity for respondents who indicated using the trail for exercise. The first question asked users: *During an average week, about what percentage of your physical activity do you complete using the trail?*

In 2020, 23.5% of users completed less than 10% of their physical activity on the trail, much higher than the 14.5% in 2019 indicating that more of the users are using the trail for doing smaller amounts of their weekly exercise (Figure 18). In 2020, only 2.5% of the 1,034 respondents completed 100% of their physical activity on the trail while in 2019, 8.1% (69) of users completed 100% of their physical activity on the trail exclusively. This may mirror the change in demographics of trail users in 2020, reflecting a larger percentage of people using the trail for light activity or socializing due to social distancing requirements. There is also potential for engaging existing users in utilizing these amenities for more of their regular physical activity. Additional analysis for physical health data can be found in the 2019 data report.

During an average week, about what percent of your physical activity do you complete using the trail?
Survey Data Comparison Chart 2019-2020, n=848, 1034

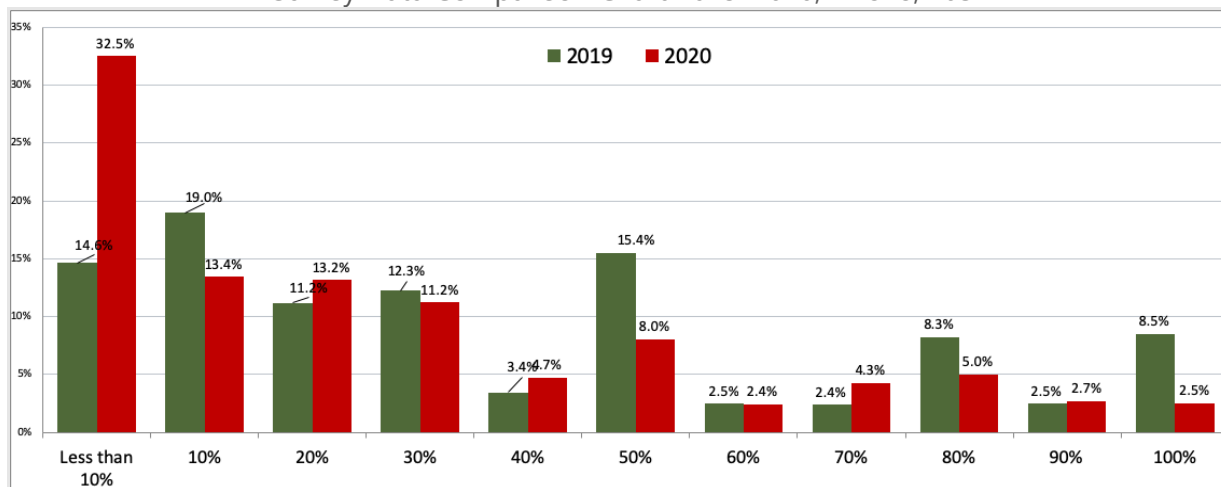


Figure 18: Percentage of exercise on trail 2019-2020.

Time, Frequency of Use, and COVID-19 Impacts

While many respondents indicated using trails frequently, the greatest percentage of users surveyed indicated being new visitors. In 2021, 23.4% of respondents were first time users of that trail, compared to just 9.5% in 2020 (Figure 19). Note that the question text varied slightly from 2020 to 2021.

In 2021, 27.7% of respondents reported being frequent users or using the trail 2 or more times a week. This is less than 2020, when 43.0% of users reported using the trail 2 or more times per week. This is also less than previous years - in 2019, 52.6% of users surveyed indicated using the trails two or more times per week (in 2018 this was 55.7%).

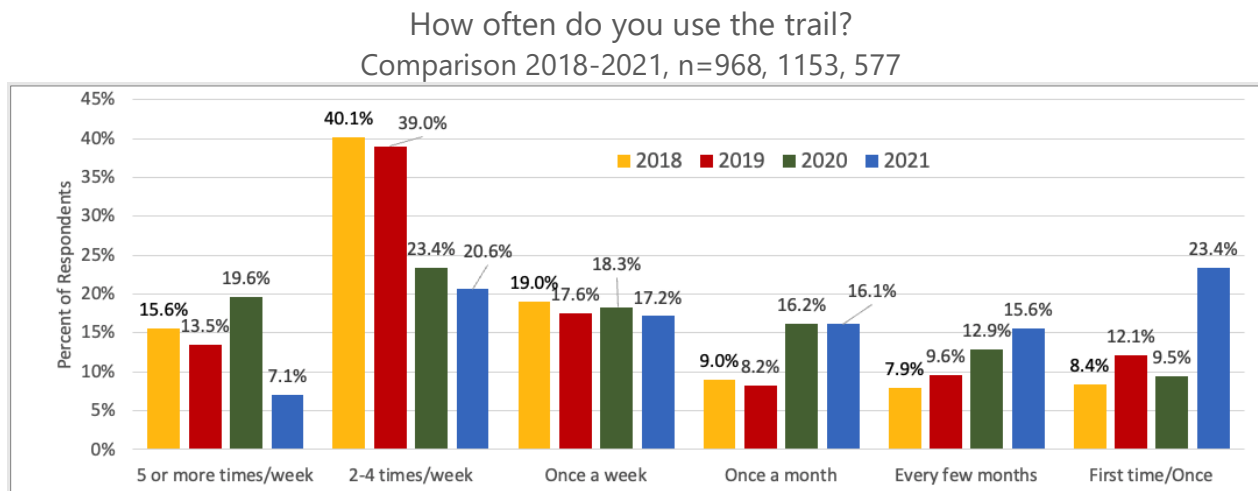


Figure 19: Frequency of use 2018-2021.

Respondents were asked to provide the number of minutes spent on the trail. The average time spent on the trail across all users was higher than all previous years with an average of 80.2 minutes in 2021, up from 79.3 minutes in 2020, 74.1 minutes in 2019, and 72 minutes in 2018 (Figure 20).

This data was also analyzed by mode of use. As in previous years, bicyclists spend the most time on the trail, an average of 127.9 minutes (about 2 hours), followed by: walkers with 74.3 minutes and those doing some combination of walk/run (but not exclusively walking) with 71.8 minutes. Those using a wheelchair or mobility aid (or some combination of wheelchair or mobility aid and other mode) spent 67.5 minutes on the trail, but only 2 respondents used this mode in 2021. Additional analysis might aim to discern if there are significant differences between new or existing trails users and time spent on the trail.

Average Minutes Spent on Trail by Mode of Use Survey Data Comparison 2019-2021, n=953, 1199, 528

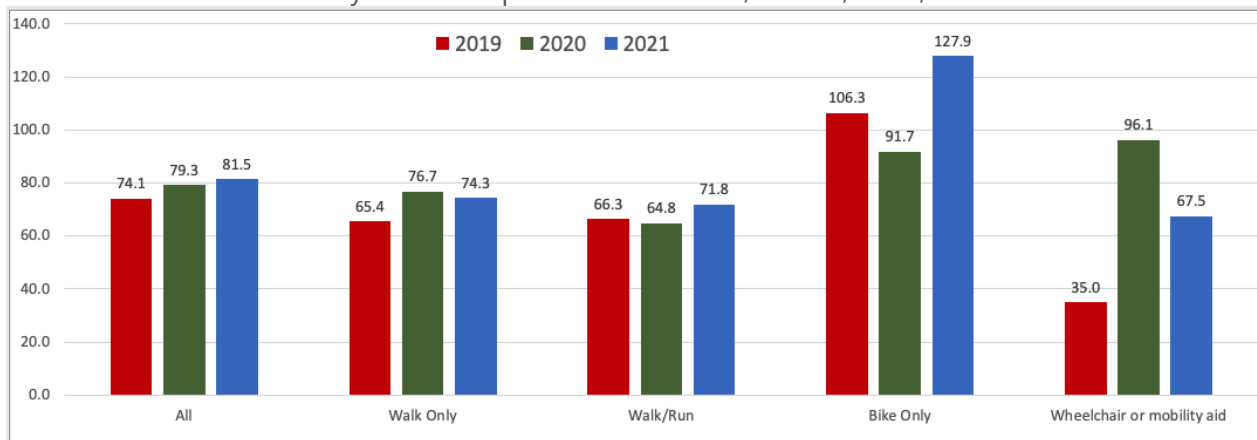


Figure 20. Time spent on the trail 2019-2021.

Those surveyed use the trails most often in the summer (82.7%), fall (83.5%) and spring (74.3%), but a surprising percentage also use them in winter (39.7%, Figure 21). Prior to 2020, these data were collected on a seasonal basis in person, but in 2020 surveys were collected exclusively by QR code throughout the year. The 2020 data reflects a better distribution of use throughout the year by users, likely due to the implementation of the online survey which was accessible to users at any time. Previous years had utilized a trail interceptor approach which favored warmer months. It is not surprising then that the 2020 results demonstrated the greatest percentage of people indicating winter use since the start of surveying in 2017. Subsequent year data collection may inform the overall pattern of use across seasons, which may have implications for suggested maintenance.

Respondents indicated traveling an average of about 10.4 miles on the trail during an average trip (across all uses). Those who engaged in some combination of walking and running (no bicycling) traveled about 4.49 miles, walkers alone traveled about 4.6 miles and bicyclists (no other modes) traveled an average of 17.2 miles. Only 2 respondents indicated using a wheelchair or mobility aid and indicated they traveled 15-20 miles.

In 2020 and 2021 respondents were asked how the COVID-19 pandemic changed their use (Figure 21). In 2021 16% of respondents indicated that they had not used that trail before the pandemic (compared to 21% in 2020). 50% of users reported using the trail about the same way they would have otherwise, 22% used the trail more, and 12% used the trail less.

What seasons do you use the trail?
Comparison Chart 2017-2021, n=990, 1112, 955, 1149, 573

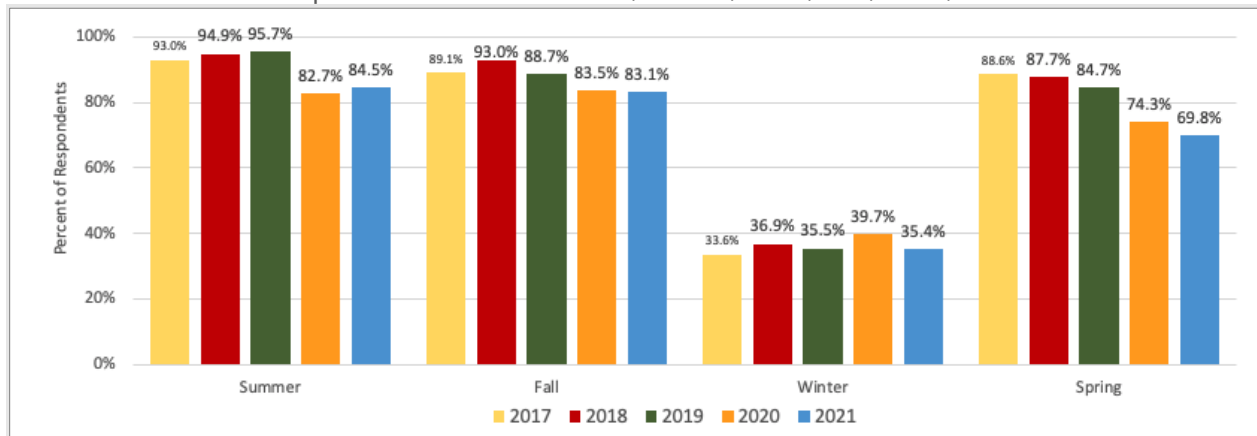


Figure 21: Use by season 2017-2021.

How has your use of this trail changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?
2020-2021, n=1013, 574

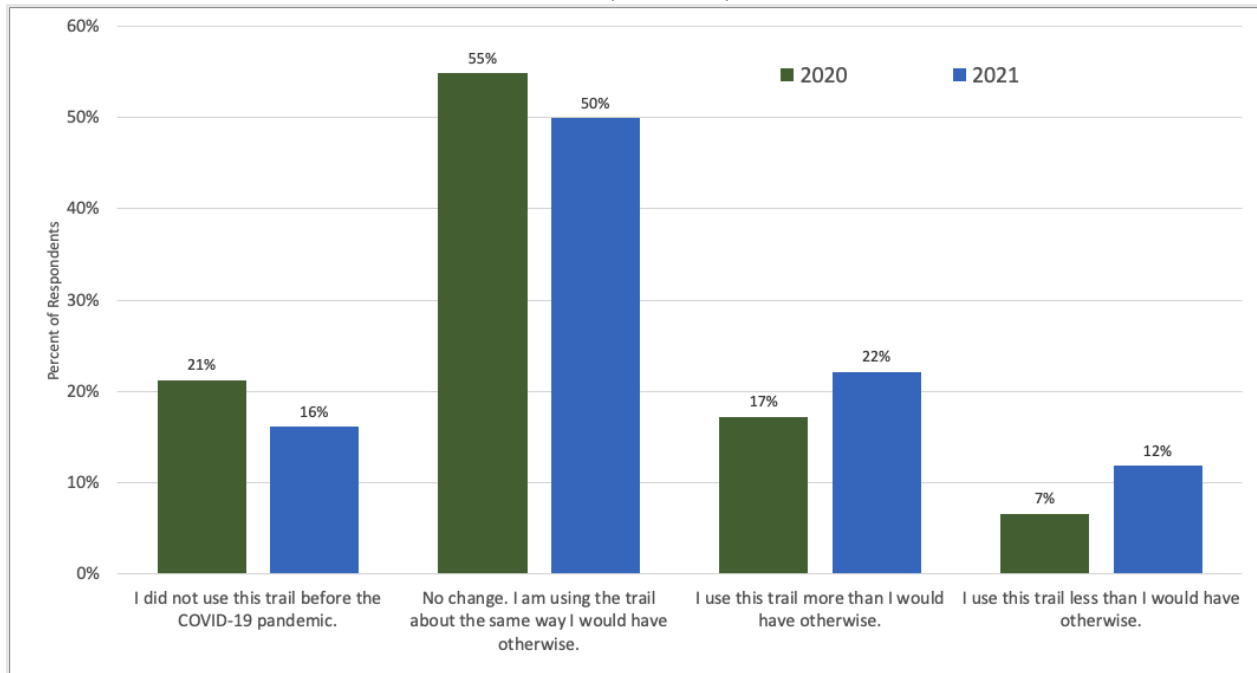


Figure 22: COVID-19 impacts on use 2020-2021.

Spending and Business Patronage

Survey participants were asked “Do you patronize any businesses on a typical visit to the trail?” In a typical visit, 16.2% of respondents visit a business and 78.5% do not. 5.3 % chose not to respond (n=321). Those businesses are listed below in Table 3.

Businesses Patronized					
Local Restaurants	4	Pleasant Pizza	1	Bank	1
Ice Cream Shop	3	Froyo	1	Post Office	1
Bj's	3	Barn Restaurant	1	Dunkin Donuts	1
Coffee Shop	3	Blue State Coffee	1	Local Shops	1
Bike Shop	2	Wadsworth	1	Freshies	1
Dexter's	2	Zach and Lou BBQ	1	Red Riding Hood	1
Eco Coffee	2	Lenny and Joe's Seafood	1	Reins Deli	1
Po's Rice & Spice	2	There are none	1	Riverfront Boathouse Rowing	1
Varies	2	Benny's of Simsbury	1	Aldi's Grocery Store	1
Willy Brew	1	Dairy Queen	1	CVS	1
Sunshine Cycles	1	KFC	1	Rusty Nail	1
East Hampton Shops	1	Bicycle Cellar	1	Sea Swirl	1
Brewery	1	Fitzgerald's	1	DeRoco's Deli	1

Table 3. Business patronage 2021.

Participants were asked “What types of business or services would you patronize if they existed along this section of the trail?” Text analysis top responses include ice cream, food (including restaurants and snacks), coffee, and bike shops. These data were analyzed in aggregate using a word analyzer⁵, and results are provided in Table 4.

	Description	Number	%
1.	food	28	7.69
2.	coffee	11	3.02
3.	cream	11	3.02
4.	ice	11	3.02
5.	none	11	3.02
6.	shops	10	2.75
7.	bike	9	2.47
8.	and	9	2.47
9.	restaurants	8	2.20
10.	shop	8	2.20

Table 4. Responses to “What types of business or services would you patronize if they existed along this section of the trail?” 2021 responses, Top Single Words.

Some top phrases containing 2 words (without punctuation marks)	Occurrences
ice cream	11
food and	5
bike shops	5
food food	3
and beverage	3
coffee shops	3
none restaurants	3
brewery food	2

Table 5. Types of Business Patronage 2021 - Top Two Words

⁵ Text analyzer online utility. <https://www.online-utility.org/text/analyzer.jsp>

Survey spending questions in the 2021 survey were simplified and respondents were asked, “In the past year, approximately how much did you spend on gear, supplies, equipment or rentals that you used or plan to use on this trail? (Please enter your total estimated spending as a whole dollar value, no decimals).” Additional information about spending by category can be found in the 2020 report.

Only 272 respondents, 22.9%, reported spending money on that visit to the trail. This was consistent with previous years. Overall, the percentage of respondents indicating any spending at all in each category was also consistent from previous years, with the exception of 5.9% of respondents spending on “other” which was more than previous years. It is important to note the significant value in these responses, particularly the small number of responses for retail, equipment rental, and lodging. Most trail users on these trails are spending primarily on food, beverages, and gas.

% Respondents Reporting Annual Expenditures				
2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
52.30%	60.3%	29.8%	73.6%	61.40%

Average Expense Per Respondent (Includes respondents who spent nothing)				
2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
\$202.10	\$387.10	\$355.27	\$168.73	\$229.67

Average Expense (Only respondents with expenditures)				
2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
\$355.71	\$367.19	\$361.92	\$229.67	\$338.54

Table 6: Annual expenditures.

Amenity Preferences

Past survey questions about user preferences were open ended and analyzed as qualitative data. In 2021 the most common responses were converted to a multiple select list. Survey respondents were asked to comment on their favorite things about the trail and things they would improve about their trail experience.

The 2020 data was analyzed in aggregate using a word analyzer.⁶ This data was not coded for duplicative answers so some similar phrases may appear in Figure 23. Phrase analysis was selected for those which would be more meaningful and informative. Overall, these data will be most meaningful for trail managers on a trail-by-trail basis, particularly due to the heavy response pool for specific trails and acknowledging that these data cover a wide variety of trail types. To receive specific trail data or custom analysis please contact trails@uconn.edu.

⁶ Text analyzer online utility. <https://www.online-utility.org/text/analyzer.jsp>

What is your favorite thing about this trail?

In 2021 there were 492 responses regarding favorite things about the trail (Figure 23). Table 7 includes single words that appeared most in responses. Similar to 2020, “scenery/view” was the top response to favorite things about the trail (83.5%). “Being in nature” was a close second at 80.1%. “Close to home” which was a top response in 2020, was 6th in responses with only 50.2% in 2021. This may reflect trail users' interest in exploring new opportunities once COVID-19 restrictions eased.

What is your favorite thing about this trail? Select all that apply
2021 n=492

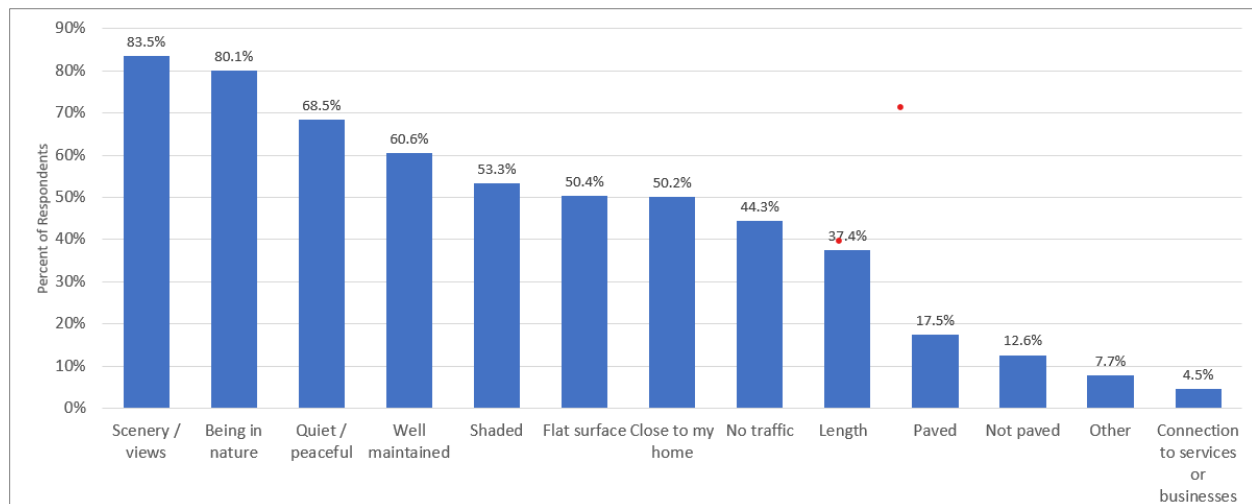


Figure 23: Favorite things about trail.

In 2020, there were 914 responses regarding favorite things about the trail. The following chart includes single words that appeared most in responses. Some differences can be noted from the 2019 data. Top phrases in the 2020 analysis highlighted the focus on convenience, proximity, and ease of use. The three top word phrases were “close to home,” “to my house” and “ease of access.” This may reflect the use of the trails for outdoor recreational activity during the pandemic. The word cloud (Figure 24) illustrates the most frequently appearing words among all responses. Larger words occurred more frequently.

2020 Favorite Things by Word Count			
	Description	#	%
1	scenery	62	1.36
2	close	54	1.19
3	flat	51	1.12
4	maintained	49	1.08
5	home	45	0.99
6	nature	41	0.90
7	easy	39	0.86
8	beautiful	36	0.79
9	quiet	34	0.75
10	peaceful	32	0.70
11	clean	27	0.60

2019 Favorite Things by Word Count			
	Description	#	%
1	scenery	89	2.78
2	quiet	71	2.22
3	clean	70	2.19
4	flat	70	2.19
5	nature	64	2.00
6	shade	63	1.97
7	safe	61	1.91
8	maintained	44	1.38
9	people	44	1.38
10	cars	41	1.28
11	beautiful	39	1.22

What would improve your experience on this trail? Select all that apply.
2021 n=479

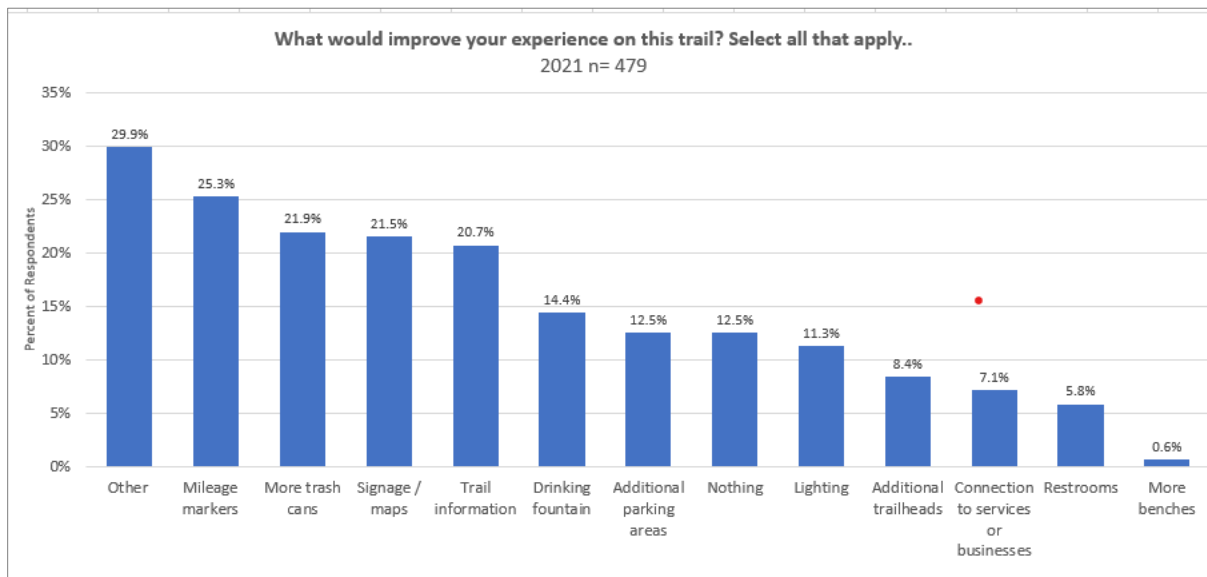


Figure 25: What would improve your experience?

Similar to 2020, 2021 respondents referenced specific trails where they felt improvements could be made. In 2021, respondents identified more specific improvements and a negligible number identified “nothing,” which was the most prevalent response in 2019. The top two-word phrases defined as “Other” included “the tunnel,” “dog poop” “cleanup,” “portable toilet,” garbage cans,” and “lights.” Changes in the way this question was answered may have been impacted by shifts in the surveying methods. For example, users who had a particular complaint or issue might have been more likely to respond to the QR survey, whereas the intercept survey method used in 2019 might have been more likely to include respondents who were overall satisfied with the trail.

2020 Improve Experience by Word Count			
	Description	#	%
1	the tunnel	23	1.62
2	dog poop	14	0.99
3	clean up	13	0.92
4	portable toilet	11	0.78
5	garbage cans	11	0.78
6	pick up	10	0.71
7	lights in	10	0.71
8	bolton notch	9	0.64
9	access to	9	0.64
10	fix the	9	0.64
11	single track	8	0.56

2019 Improve Experience by Word Count			
	Description	#	%
1	nothing	86	3.80
2	more	75	3.32
3	longer	51	2.26
4	lights	34	1.50
5	water	30	1.33
6	tunnel	25	1.11
7	bathrooms	23	1.02
8	poop	22	0.97
9	bathroom	20	0.88
10	less	17	0.75
11	people	17	0.75

Note: 2019 data was analyzed by single word count.

Some top phrases containing 4 words (without punctuation marks)	Occurrences
lights in the tunnel	7
lighting in the tunnel	3
it was closer to	3
it is hard to	3
south of the tunnel	3
if I lived closer	3
pick up after their	3
can't think of anything	3
tunnel at Bolton notch	3
up after their dogs	3

Table 8. What would improve the trail experience.

In 2019, when asked about what would improve the trail experience in an open ended format, 3.8% (86) responses selected “nothing”, while 2.3% (51) noted “longer” and 1.5% (34) referenced lighting. Response phrases focused on increasing length, improvements to lighting, more bathrooms, water fountains, winter maintenance, pick up dog poop, and mile markers. The 2021 survey was updated to the multiple choice format with response detailed above

What would encourage you to use this trail more often?

In 2020 respondents were asked to identify what would encourage them to use the trail more often. In 2021 this question was asked only of users who indicated they did not use multi-use trails. There were only two respondents to this question so data could not be analyzed, however this was added to test potential formatting of the question for a potential future survey of the resident population that would include non-trail users. This should be considered in the forthcoming update of the State of Connecticut Outdoor Recreation Plan.

The 2020 data for this question was analyzed based on the top two-word phrases. Access and ease topped this list, including “closer to,” “parking,” and “less people” as well as individual lifestyle challenges including “more time” and “free time.” Surprisingly, another top answer referenced a specific trail type, “single track” (cycling).

2020 What Would Encourage by Word Count			
	Description	#	%
1	closer to	20	1.53
2	more parking	16	1.23
3	less people	14	1.07
4	single track	10	0.77
5	more time	8	0.61
6	nothing	8	0.61
7	more access	8	0.61
8	access points	8	0.61
9	free time	7	0.54
10	parking lot	7	0.54
11	easier access	6	0.46

Table 9. What would encourage you to use the trail more often? (2020)

Conclusions and Recommendations

These results can help communities better understand who is using trails and then make sound investments in both physical infrastructural amenities and programming. The results of this report should be used to inform trail planning, development, and policy. Despite the variation of trails participating in the survey from year to year, the data collected through the Census from 2017 to 2021 shows clear trends that inform the following recommendations and actions.

- 1. Understand barriers to trail access and increase use by a diverse range of users** - Since *walking, jogging, and running* are the most frequent uses on these trails, communities may consider developing amenities for these types of users. It is clear from the 2021 data that users are seeking ease and proximity. However, given that most users are white, older, and upper income and that a vast majority of our state's trails are in suburban and rural areas, there is a substantial portion of the state population for whom trails are inaccessible. While the results cannot answer why additional populations are not using the trails, efforts to increase use will need to engage a broader and more diverse audience than existing trail users. These efforts should engage a diverse range of audiences in the planning and design process, with the goal of understanding what prevents a wide variety of users from using trails, and what would motivate people to use the trails more. Given that these trails are public resources for the promotion of physical activity and potentially alternative routes for transportation, these are significant and relevant issues.
- 2. Build connectivity and networks** - Trails included in the Census clearly serve a social purpose, but the trails themselves often are not connected to places where people naturally congregate in communities, such as downtowns, business districts, schools, or other park areas. The extremely low use of these trails for travel as well as the exceptionally low expenditures of users on the trails indicate that users may not be interacting with their community during trail use. That is, the trails are disconnected amenities. Additionally, while trail use itself has increased, pedestrian deaths due to unsafe walking and bicycling routes have skyrocketed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Particularly in the post-COVID era where people have grown more accustomed or had the opportunity of being outdoors but are seeking ease of access, communities, the CTDOT and CT DEEP should think systematically about how to better integrate trail and outdoor resource amenities with transportation needs, where people naturally travel, as well as connections to schools, parks, playgrounds, and business districts. This includes creating cohesive safe routes – sidewalks and bike lanes, for instance for biking or walking from neighborhoods to trails and to other community nodes.
- 3. Increase tourism** - The results of the Census also point to the potential to increase use by bicyclists and especially bicycle tourists. Bicyclists, particularly those from out of state, make more investments in equipment, time, and spending during visits. However, many of our trails may not be conducive, either in length or amenities, to attracting these types of users. Communities and trail advocates should focus on understanding what amenities currently exist, what amenities bicycle users seek, and how trails might be better networked to attract longer distance tourism.

Next Steps and Research Needs

As a statewide project housed within the state's land grant university, the CT Trail Census is in a unique position to serve as a platform for statewide information sharing and coordinating efforts around trail monitoring and use. This has significant potential to inform methods for the Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan update. The public facing Connecticut Trail Finder project launched in June 2020 serves as an important next step in increasing access to the state's trail systems. There remains a significant need for more analysis of the rich existing data in the count and intercept surveys. The Census has also started a process of improving the quality of count data using predictive modeling and trail typologies. This research, along with the rich survey data should continue to inform trail-based decision making. Additional research could include more significant statistical analysis of the data by user type or mode, location of trail, location of user, demographics, and more in-depth qualitative analysis.

Appendix A 2021 Trail Census QR Survey

2021 Trail Census QR Survey – FINAL

Start of Block: Administration

Q1.1

This is a survey about trail use, conducted by the Connecticut Trail Census.

It will take about 5 minutes to complete.

All data and information collected will be aggregated, kept confidential, and your responses will not be individually identifiable. At the end of the survey, you will have the opportunity to provide your email, if you so choose, to receive additional information about the study and information about participating in ongoing research. Your contact information will not be sold or disseminated to any other parties for any other purpose. The aggregated data set and data report will be made publicly available for researchers and the general public at <http://cttrailcensus.uconn.edu>. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you agree to complete this survey, but later change your mind, you may stop at any time. There are no penalties or consequences of any kind if you decide that you do not want to participate. This project has been approved under UConn IRB Exempt Study Number X16-181. [Click to view the participant information sheet.](#)

For more information contact the Principal Investigator: Laura Brown, University of Connecticut Department of Extension, laura.brown@uconn.edu

- ☐ **Yes, I would like to participate in the survey. (4)**
- ☐ **I do not wish to participate at this time. (5)**

Skip To: End of Survey If This is a survey about trail use, conducted by the Connecticut Trail Census. It will take about... = I do not wish to participate at this time.

Q1.2 This survey asks about multi-use trails in Connecticut. These trails are typically paved or stone dust, allow multiple uses like walking and bicycling, and are physically separated from vehicle traffic.

Please select the Connecticut multi-use trail you are using or used most often in 2021:

- Air Line State Park Trail (34)
- Bluff Point State Park, Groton (28)
- Charter Oak Greenway, Manchester (6)
- CTFastrak Trail in New Britain (7)
- Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, Avon (32)
- Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, Canton (33)
- Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, Cheshire (8)
- Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, East Granby (29)
- Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, Farmington (30)
- Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, New Haven (9)
- Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, Hamden (10)

- Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, Simsbury (31)
- G&S Trolley Trail, Groton (Haley Farm State Park) (22)
- Hop River Trail, Bolton (11)
- Hop River Trail, Vernon (12)
- Larkin State Bridle Trail, Oxford (13)
- Larkin State Bridle Trail, Naugatuck (27)
- Middlebury Greenway, Middlebury (14)
- Naugatuck River Greenway, Derby (15)
- Norwalk River Valley Trail, Wilton (16)
- Riverwalk Trail, Hartford (17)
- Riverwalk Trail, East Hartford (18)
- Shoreline Greenway, Madison (19)
- Still River Greenway, Brookfield (20)
- Sue Grossman Trail, Torrington (21)
- I used another multi-use trail in 2021. (24)
- I use multi-use trails, but have not used any in 2021. (25)
- I do not use multi-use trails. (26)

Display This Question:

If This survey asks about multi-use trails in Connecticut. These trails are typically paved or stone... = I used another multi-use trail in 2021.

Q1.3 What is the name and location of the trail you used most often in 2021? *Use this format:*
"Farmington Canal Trail, Hamden"

Display This Question:

If This survey asks about multi-use trails in Connecticut. These trails are typically paved or stone... = Air Line State Park Trail

Q67 Please specify the parking area nearest to where you entered the Airline Trail:

- I don't know. (43)
- Bridge Street, Windham/Willimantic (44)
- Bull Hill Rd., Colchester (45)
- Chesbro Bridge Road, Columbia (46)
- Chewink Rd., Chaplin (47)
- Cook Hill Road, Lebanon (48)
- Covell Road, Pomfret (49)
- CT 12, Putnam (50)
- CT 196, East Hampton (51)
- Estabrooks Road, Hampton (52)
- Goodwin Conservation Center, Hampton (53)
- Grayville Rd., Hebron (54)
- Haven Road, Pomfret (55)
- Jackson St, Windham/Willimantic (57)
- Kenyon Road, Hampton (58)

- Kingsley Road, Lebanon (59)
- Krazy Lane, Pomfret (60)
- Leonard Bridge Road, Columbia (61)
- Lowell Davis Road, East Hampton (62)
- Needles Eye Road, Pomfret (63)
- Old Colchester Rd., Hebron (64)
- Old Hartford Rd., Hebron (65)
- Potter Road, Hampton (66)
- Railroad Street, Pomfret (67)
- River Rd., Pomfret (68)
- Rt. 149, Colchester (69)
- Rt. 2 Commuter Lot (70)
- Rt. 203, Windham (71)
- Rt. 207, Hebron (72)
- Rt. 44, Pomfret (73)
- Rt. 85, Hebron (56)
- Salmon River State Forest, Colchester (74)
- Smith St., East Hampton (75)
- South Brook Road, Hampton (76)
- Station Road, Hampton (77)
- Sunset Hill Rd., Thompson (78)
- Thompson Rd., Thompson (79)
- US 44 (80)
- Village Hill Road, Lebanon (81)
- Other. Please specify. (82) _____

End of Block: Administration

Start of Block: Use block

Q2.1 How often do you use this trail?

- I have used the trail once. (1)
- 5 or more times per week (2)
- 2-4 times per week (3)
- Once per week (4)
- Once per month (5)
- Every few months (6)

Q2.2 During which seasons do you typically use this trail? *Select all that apply.*

- Summer (1)
- Fall (4)
- Winter (5)
- Spring (6)

Q2.3 How has your use of this trail changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

- I did not use this trail before the COVID-19 pandemic. (4)
- No change. I am using the trail about the same way I would have otherwise. (1)
- I use this trail more than I would have otherwise. (2)
- I use this trail less than I would have otherwise. (3)

Q65 What is the distance from your residence to the point where you entered the trail?

- ¼ mile or less (1)
- ¼-1 mile (11)
- 1-3 miles (12)
- 4-5 miles (13)
- 6-10 miles (14)
- 10-20 miles (15)
- More than 20 miles (16)

Q2.6 How did you typically get to the trail?

- Car or Motorcycle (Alone) (1)
- Car or Motorcycle (With Others) (2)
- Public Transit (Bus/Train) (3)
- Bicycle (4)
- Walk (5)
- Run/Jog (6)
- Other (7) _____

Q2.7 How many minutes did you typically spend on the trail? _____

Q66 About how many miles do you typically travel on the trail? _____

Q2.8 How do you typically travel on the trail? *Select all that apply.*

- Walk (1)
- Run/Jog (2)
- Bike (3)
- Wheelchair or mobility aid (4)
- Other (5) _____

Q2.9 What is your purpose when you use the trail? *Select all that apply.*

- Recreation (1)
- Relaxation (2)
- Dog walking (3)
- Travel (4)
- Exercise (5)
- Exercise - Prescribed (6)
- Family Time (7)

- Socializing (8)
- Group Activity (9)
- Event (10)
- Tourism (11)
- Other (12) _____

Display This Question:

If What is your purpose when you use the trail? Select all that apply. = Exercise

Or What is your purpose when you use the trail? Select all that apply. = Exercise - Prescribed

Q2.10 Are you exercising more, less, or about the same since you began using the trail?

- More (1)
- Less (2)
- About the same (3)
- Don't know/Not sure (4)

Q2.13 In the past year, approximately how much did you spend on gear, supplies, equipment or rentals that you used or plan to use on this trail? *(Please enter your total estimated spending as a whole dollar value, no decimals).* _____

Q2.14 What is your favorite thing about this trail? *Select all that apply.*

- Scenery / views (4)
- Being in nature (5)
- Close to my home (6)
- Well maintained (7)
- Flat surface (8)
- Quiet / peaceful (9)
- Shaded (10)
- No traffic (11)
- Paved (12)
- Not paved (13)
- Connection to community services or businesses. Please specify. (14) _____
- Length (15)
- Other. Please specify or elaborate on your answers above. (16) _____

Q2.15 What would improve your experience on this trail? *Select all that apply.*

- Additional trailheads (4)
- Additional parking areas (5)
- More benches (6)
- Restrooms (7)
- More trash cans (8)
- Drinking fountains (9)
- Trail information (10)
- Lighting (14)

- Nothing (15)
- Signage / maps (11)
- Mileage markers (17)
- Connection to community services or businesses. Please specify. (12) _____
- Other. Please specify or elaborate on your answers above. (13) _____

Q69 Do you patronize any businesses on a typical visit to the trail?

- Yes. If yes, please specify. (1) _____
- No. (2)
- I prefer not to answer. (3)

Q68 What types of business or services would you patronize if they existed along this section of the trail?

End of Block: Use block

Start of Block: Non use block

Page Break

Q3.1 What prevents you from using multi-use trails? _____

Q3.2 What would encourage you to use multi-use trails more often? _____

End of Block: Non use block

Start of Block: Demographic block

Q5.1 What is your home zip code? _____

Q5.2 What is your age range?

- Under 18 (1)
- 18-24 (2)
- 25-34 (3)
- 35-44 (4)
- 45-54 (5)
- 55-64 (6)
- 65-74 (7)
- 75 or over (8)
- I prefer not to answer. (9)

Q5.3 What best represents your household income?

- Under \$24,999 (1)
- \$25,000 - \$49,999 (2)
- \$50,000 - \$74,999 (3)
- \$75,000 - \$99,999 (4)

- Over \$100,000 (5)
- I prefer not to answer. (8)

Q5.4 What is your race or ethnicity? *Select all that apply.*

- White (1)
- Black or African American (2)
- American Indian or Alaska Native (3)
- Asian (4)
- Middle Eastern (8)
- Pacific Islander (5)
- Spanish, Hispanic or Latino (6)
- Other (7) _____
- I prefer not to answer. (9)

Q5.5 How do you describe your gender identity?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Prefer to self describe (3) _____
- I prefer not to answer. (4)

Q64 If there is anything else you would like to share please use the space below. _____

Q5.6 Would you like to be notified about future data releases and studies from the Connecticut Trail Census? Your email will not be associated with any of your previous survey responses or sold or shared for any other purpose.

- ☐ Yes! (1)
- ☐ No, thank you. (2)

End of Block: Demographic block

Start of Block: Exit Block Email Collection

Appendix B Open Ended Text Responses

Open Ended Text responses to the CTTC 2021 survey are best analyzed on a trail by trail basis but included as a reference in the Appendix to this report.

What is your favorite thing about this trail? Select all that apply. - Connection to community services or businesses. Please specify. - Text

- I bike to work from Est Hartford to Hartford Connection to other trails- Salmon River and Day Pond state parks.
- The bike shop I love that the trail connects to east Hampton downtown village center
- Can walk into Downtown Hartford Convenient bike access to shops and Performing Arts Center in Simsbury.
- Place looks like trash
- Riverfront Boathouse, connects to East Hartford Riverfront
- NEMBA
- Native plant sale, nature center, etc...
- Restaurants

TEXT RESPONSES

What is your favorite thing about this trail? Select all that apply. - Other. Please specify or elaborate on your answers above. - Text

- Seen many improvements over 50 years available for XC ski use
- Close to my work
- I have muscular dystrophy and these flat trails are safer for me to use to get my walking in. They do need larger openings to fit wheelchairs and adapted bikes etc. through gates.
- Variety of trails, technical and flat
- The recent surface was improvements make cycling much safer and I appreciate the improvements tremendously!!!
- Spending time with grandkids
- The history
- The trail is a major asset for where I live.
- I am very grateful to have it so close.
- I use it all year round and it definitely contributes to improved physical and mental health.
- Tunnel
- Historic connections
- Tri state marker
- Beach
- Awesome how well maintained the trail is by Greenway volunteers!
- I like how Bluff Point and Hayley Farm connect. I use both trails each time I visit!
- Multiple uses and semiprivate
- Appropriate level of difficulty for mountain biking with my pre-teen an elementary school age kids
- On the migration flyway plus shorebirds and resident forest birds like great horned owl

- Beautiful walk to a beautiful beach
- Just wanted to see the tri state marker
- collect acorns
- The wildlife is pretty great. I've seen herons, beavers, hawks, deer, etc.
- I've ridden the whole length of the Airline trail from East Hampton to Putnam. Waiting for the Pomfret section to get finished. Also ridden the whole Hop River trail several times including starting in Manchester and going through Vernon and Bolton. Also the new and old paved trail from Bolton through Manchester Community College to Wickham park.
- I really like having all of these trails.
- Being with peers.
- Mutual meeting point Riverside It gives me a lot of exercise.
- No ticks
- Beautiful scenery - we do photography on the trail.
- Look forward to when it will connect through to Cobalt & Portland.
- I use it primarily for running and walking - it's great to have a nice long walk in nature in the shade.
- We see all sorts of wildlife and enjoy seeing our neighbors on the trail.
- Close parking Sculptures and art are a nice bonus
- Good place to socialize.
- Privacy
- Historical.
- Thinking of past when it was a train track serving many towns.
- Adds route (not simply parallel to road) that when combined with local roads enables a loop route that would not otherwise exist
- Safe, clean Trails are kept up well, parking area is large
- No vehicles!
- There are sheep to look at :)

TEXT

What would improve your experience on this trail? Select all that apply.

- Connection to community services or businesses.
- Connection to downtown areas
- Bugs
- A ramp needs to be made to ride a bike from the river to the bridge to get downtown. You have to carry a bike up the stairs TO GET TO THE BRIDGE.
- Ice cream shops or restaurants
- Restaurants
- Arrow to restaurants etc. like on state roads
- History of RR use, why and when it was used.
- None
- Walk to restaurant
- Bicyclists to warn " on your left " !!!!
- Fill washouts.

- If the trail connected to other local villages & town centers, I'd use the trail rather than driving in certain circumstances..
- Even more places should be accessible by the trail.
- And more parking at small trail heads There are some major sunken pot holes on the Hebron 85 trail Connections to other destinations.
- Restaurants, breweries, campgrounds bike shops
- I would like to be able to access businesses on Rt 44 in Avon
- Less dirt bikes, more leashes
- To the East Hampton part of the trail and get to downtown Portland
- Adjacency to restaurants, breweries, shops.
- Picking up the dog poop bags

What would improve your experience on this trail? Select all that apply. - Other. Please specify or elaborate on your answers above. - Text

- I rode the entire length of the Larkin Trail, from Southbury to Naugatuck and back. At the Southbury end, there is room only for 1 car to park off the road, and this should be expanded.
- Parts of the trail at the Oxford end urgently need drainage work, as it was completely submerged for about 150 yards, and walkers would likely turn around, or use the narrow trail braids off to the side.
- My requests aren't really necessary.
- The trail is Fine as is
- Longer trail Connection to Airline North and South in Willimantic area
- There is absolutely no shade, brutal!
- More shade (more trees have been cut down, reducing amount of shade)
- Paving the trail would be great.
- We'd be able to ride longer and would come more often.
- We drive much further to the Farmington trail and ride much longer because it is paved.
- Better control/mitigation of invasive plants (Japanese knotweed) enforced restriction of motorized vehicles, including locked gates and barred access from nearby power line trail
- Maps of side trails with mileage Connection to east Hampton and downtown Portland
- Kill all poison ivy on sides of trail- only seen after 1mile mark.
- There is a massive dead tree that fell halfway onto another tree. It is leaning in the direction of the trailway. If it falls on someone, it will kill them. It's a lawsuit waiting to happen. I don't even want to walk here until it's gone.
- Removing horse poop
- wider gates for ADA access
- Gates should be widened. Right now trikes and wheel chairs cannot maneuver through the narrow openings.
- Bike accidents frequently occur there.
- Wider openings for adapted bikes and wider wheelchairs to be used for handicapped
- Widen or eliminate gates for bike safety and adaptive bike access
- Lighting in tunnel at Bolton Notch,
- wider gates to make ADC accessible,

- smooth out rough section by Railroad Brook
- If it were more accessible to those in wheelchairs or different types of vehicles for handicapped individuals- the entrance at the trailhead is blocked by a gate with a very small path to get around. I used to take my grandmother and it was easy for her walker on the rest of the trail but getting past these was very difficult. Ada biking get rid of barriers that do not allow for wider vehicles (adaptive trikes, e.g.)
- Access to all, make the gates accessible for disabled use and use of wider strollers
- ADA accessibility at gates
- Easier access for our disabled trail visitors
- Handicapped accessible for my family and friends
- A map with the interconnecting MTB trails on a topo map
- Please keep an eye on the small washout damage and keep repairs up: Thank you
- Better handicapped access Signage
- suggesting to keep yourself between your dog and oncoming traffic and encouraging people to stay to the right side of the trail.
- Dangerous trees need to be taken down.
- Repair trail (pavement) imperfections Shading and Length Less bumps on the paved paths, makes biking uncomfortable
- Portable potties needed cleaning.
- Unusable Art
- Be more dog friendly
- It is very unfortunate that the Hop River Trail is not connected to the town centers and town amenities for the most part.
- This trail could become more than a recreational asset but contribute to safe routes to school and allow people to consider riding their bikes to go places they need to go.
- I live so close to the trail but I can't legally ride to the trail because Bolton Notch is not accessible by bike. is not Mowing needed
- The part of the trail just after the park and rode at Rt 2 needs to be better marked and direct riders to road or trail.
- If road need signage and lanes; if trail need signage and to widen trail.
- Bridge is narrow and has poor sight distance.
- Need bathrooms or porta-johns at trailheads
- Restricting what people carry in because there is a lot that isn't carried out.
- Better maintained
- Too many ducks
- Markers for train stuff that goes along with print out map
- The map included does not describe the numbers for the historic markers.
- There are no markers on the trail, so it is completely useless and frustrating.
- Needs trail markers and descriptions on map.
- Extend the trail further
- When the trail ends at a road,. It's is not always clear where to pickup the trail again.
- Signs are needed to teach bike riders proper etiquette when passing walkers &/ or other riders. Rarely does anyone holler "ON YOUR LEFT" and it's downright frightening at times.

- I was trying to get to the tri point marker, but the signage was bad and I had no idea how long it was going to be since there weren't many mile markers. It took forever and wasn't enjoyable.
- Half way marker
- Needs to be repaved Improve maintenance, mow sides, repair washed out sections.
- Fix road crossing after Long Meadow, dangerous , add trailer parking at other end, cars fill, up lot and prevent horse trailers
- Less people
- informative signs about the osprey nests
- Improve the quality of the trail bed from Sand Dam to Lowell Davis Road
- extending the trail
- Permanent bathrooms
- Smoother parking lot and access road
- Paving so I could roller skate. I have to go to Farmington or Southington to skate
- Removal of invasive species like bittersweet, barberry and multi flora rose
- Better maintenance (mowing-a lot of areas overgrown into trail, signage/road markings from RT2 commuter lot to Old Hartford RD, trimming of trees overhanging trail in Rt85 area, better Yield signs at State rd. crossings-the small ones now are a joke)
- Information about the woods, nature, local animals, the history of the trail
- We came looking for the Tristate marker. The trail was marked clearly for that , and we were unable to find it .
- This was disappointing
- Dog poop bags. I carry my own but sometimes forget. And others clearly aren't bringing theirs.
- Camping options for longer distance travel
- Some of the trail surface is too stony. The stones are too big. More drainage would help too.
- The parking area is in terrible shape and should be fixed.
- Needs trimming- trail is now overgrown. You cannot sit on bench and see anything- vegetation too high
- Finish the Hop River trail from Willimantic to Coventry, fix the bridge over the Hop River.
- fewer inconsiderate speeding bicyclists
- Maintenance- the trail used to be mowed and cut back regularly - it is now very overgrown
- Crosswalks on sections between Goodwin State Forest and Pomfret.
- Flashing lights at busy road crossings i.e.. Rte. 75 Hebron, Rte. 207.
- Mowed more often,
- drainage
- Please widen the trail or mow-the plants are taking over the trail. Also there are spots that have eroded due to weather
- Over grown
- I bring my dog and there's only one trash can I'm very responsible and I carry it with me but I imagine others may not
- Clean-up of horse and dog manure
- Longer distance

- Open restrooms along trail
- Lighting in the tunnels
- Moving the highway away from the riverfront.
- Get rid of 91 along the river
- Connectivity to other trails,
- allow shops to open adjacent to the trail- model maybe like the Atlanta belt line
- Better paved
- Finish these Hampton trails!
- Crappy material was put down and the top layer never was.
- This is the only stretch and they have been ruined want to never fixed (they were fine the way they were.) So angry and disappointed.
- Don't feel safe early am & in the evening
- Fencing along the length as it has very steep embankments the whole way.
- Environmentally friendly dog poop bags. People keep leaving plastic bags of dog poop on the trail.
- I would love if they could get on top cleaning up the horse poop*. Today I came and there were huge loads of horse poop* on the beach and at multiple points throughout the trail. I was extremely unhappy to find a huge pile of stinking horse poop* in the middle of the beach. Dog owners are expected to clean up their animal's poop. Why not the same for people on horse's when it's twice as much and on the beach (**word changed by report authors*)
- Longer Rules clearly posted and enforced, no dogs.
- I would like camping
- My major complaint is the lack of uniformity and over abundance of vehicle barriers at trail heads. There is no need for more than one per trail head. Motorcycles and ATVs can easily get around any number of barriers so reduce them to one paint them bright yellow with reflective stripes. In many cases, these barriers can be Eliminated for bicycle safety.
- Extremely rude bikers have caused me and others to leave earlier than planned
- More history. "Almost 200 years ago this was built by hand with shovels, wheelbarrows and some dynamite..."
- I haven't been on the trail since Covid started and was shocked by the amount of garbage along the river. It's turning into a landfill. Very disappointing
- Having Port O potty at every parking
- Security at night. Gangs are taking over our parks.
- Runners like to use the soft gravel path that runs next to the trail because it is easier on their knees and their joints.
- Parts of the trail have the dirt/gravel path next to it and other parts don't.
- It would be lovely to have the gravel or dirt path next to the entire trail in Simsbury/Avon.
- A foot bridge connecting the trail over Main Street in East Hampton.
- Informational signs on trail re: local history, wildlife & ecosystems.
- Better water runoff management and maintenance of trail bed.
- Better behavior by other bicyclist who fail to provide a horn, bell, or shout out that they are passing "on the left." This has been a somewhat dangerous situation when speeding cyclists fail to announce themselves and go by at a fast speed. This is definitely a hazard to other

cyclists and pedestrians. There should definitely be more signage at trail crossing points or bulletin boards, even on the trails, that it is courteous and safe to announce passing, either with a horn, bell, or a LOUD voice. Also, the trail is sometimes used by horse owners (this is truer of Hop River Trail), and they fail to pick up the horse droppings from the trail. There should be signage which insists that trail users, be they dog or horse owners, should scoop and dispose of waste far off the trail or take it out with them. Dog owners are much better about this than horse owners!

- Less rocks
- Mowing vegetation on the edges of trails more often. Between Cook Hill Rd and Village Hill Rd. At the big marsh near Rt 85
- Simply being outdoors on a known trail is sufficient
- The pot-a toilet is never ever cleaned out. Toilet paper is replaced, sanitize soap is replaced but the pot is never vacuumed out. What the hey? This is a problem that should not be ignored.
- Better maintenance of pavement, trailside vegetation and fencing. Improved surface repairs
Better maintenance, there are areas where more dirt stone needs to be brought in.
- Too many homeless people, some right on the trailhead. NEEDLES!
- Community runs
- Most of the trail is well maintained, but there are a few isolated areas that are washed out or sandy, presenting biking hazards
- More bridges and tunnels to bypass crossing roads.
- Uniformity.
- Most of the trail is in good shape but each towns uses it own type of dirt gravel stone drainage. Most of trail is great for biking. But just did the last 7 miles in Thompson to MA border and that is very poorly maintained for bikes.
- Loose sand, big stones, large gravel, washouts, poor drainage, steep areas at road crossing.
- Can't wait for the next section in Pomfret to open with its bridges and tunnels and I hope a smooth gravel surface. Don't want it paved.
- Signage in Colchester at the road connection, more direct access to businesses
- We'd love to see airline trail connected to downtown Hebron If it were extended and connected to more trails
- I have seen 17 dogs on the trail today, 15 which have not been on lease. About a third of those seemed friendly, about a third it was unclear and about a third definitely not. We should have some one patrolling the trail every weekend and handing out tickets. Some one is going to get seriously injured from some of the dogs that are not on lease
- Fix Railroad Brook Section Benches that were easier to get on for toddlers/kids. The bench heights are extremely high that we couldn't use them on breaks Handicap accessible gates
The rugged drive into the park.
- Fix the driveway then right way.
- Find a way to enforce leashes on dogs and picking up dog waste.
- there was a homeless man potentially dead on the trail. clean the fucking city up
- I realize that maintenance is mighty but beautiful welcome signs at both ends of the parks would make me feel less out of place on early morning runs when the parks are empty.

- Charter Oak Bridge pedestrian lane is always filthy! That is creepy. Otherwise the two parks are lovely. This year the rain created lots of maintenance! Maybe next year the overgrowth along the river could be thinned. Some bench seating no longer has a view of the river. Regattas can only be viewed in a couple of spots. There should be an area where graffiti is welcomed; maybe behind the Colt Bldg. Graffiti is culture. Granted gang encouragement is not good so graffiti would require monitoring. Alternatively this is a great space for a commissioned mural.
- Honestly, I am grateful for all that has already been accomplished!
- Better maintenance of the single porta john that is available It would be nice to have an etiquette sign.
- For example A deep officer to monitor there are many homeless and very odd characters that walk this trail.
- I would have collected trash along the trail if there were a trash can in the parking lot
- The access road is horrible! Unpaved and more potholes than there are craters on the moon. We need to pave the access road.
- Beaver dam at Raymond Marsh floods trail. Hebron knows; they do nothing
- The road in is full of pot holes. I've never seen it this bad and this park is used by a lot of people.
- Guardrail for the areas with steep sides
- A quicker maintenance after the areas where the water has eroded the path.
- Disposal of horse feces Stop the horse poop
- Maintenance on the Southbury side near IBM, clearing of brush, better parking. Always overgrown and full of ticks
- Less dirt bikes, more use of leashes
- Management of invasive plants, shrubs and grasses, many areas of this park have excessive invasive populations with no work being done to maintain the areas natural heritage
- Grading the low wet areas
- Have horses clean up their enormous poop piles just like other animal owners I wish horse owners were required to Remove horse poop like dog owners are!
- Improve cellular service add towers!
- Bit better maintenance