

# The Trail Modeling & Assessment Platform



A continuous counter composed of an infrared sensor and induction loop.

**T**here are more than 21,000 miles of rail-trails in rural, suburban and urban communities. We are now on the verge of linking many of these trails to form expansive networks, which will connect people and destinations across the country.

Decision-makers give considerable credence to quantitative methods for planning and prioritizing transportation investments. Such forecasting tools have been used in the highway planning process for decades, but have only recently begun to be developed for trail, bicycle and pedestrian investments. As a result, road projects are defined as needs, while trail projects are often considered amenities.

The three components of the proposed platform are data collection, analytical models, and communication of outcomes. An advisory committee comprised of leading researchers and practitioners from transportation, health, and economics will oversee T-MAP's development to ensure that each platform component is both accurate and credible.

The core of the platform is a suite of general analytical models that can be used independently for a specific purpose or in concert, depending upon the needs of a community. There are three core models:

- **A GIS-based method for measuring trail system connectivity**
- **A trail use demand factoring and forecasting model**
- **A set of impact assessment tools that translate trail use into dollars related to health and transportation impacts.**

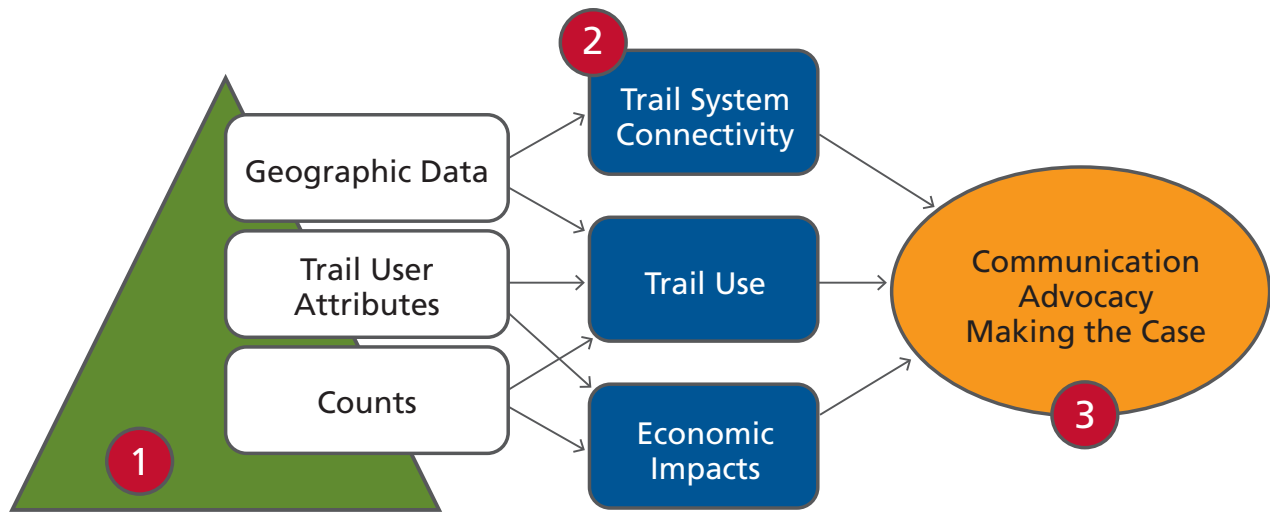
## T-MAP

The Trail Modeling and Assessment Platform (T-MAP) is a \$1.2 million, three-year initiative to create the next generation of trail planning data collection instruments, methodologies and analysis tools.

For the first time, the trail movement will have access to sophisticated analytical tools similar to those that have traditionally been used in the development of road projects. T-MAP will empower our movement with a powerful suite of tools that will permit us to demonstrate convincingly how trail investment can create healthier places for healthier people.



**rails-to-trails**  
conservancy



Models are only as good as the data available to calibrate them, however. The platform includes a set of data collection instruments that will set a next-generation standard for active transportation research. To develop T-MAP, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) will collect data on trail use and trail users in 12 urban areas throughout the U.S.

While the foundation of T-MAP is data, and the core is sophisticated modeling, the usefulness and reach of the platform can only be maximized through communications tools and products for understanding, explaining

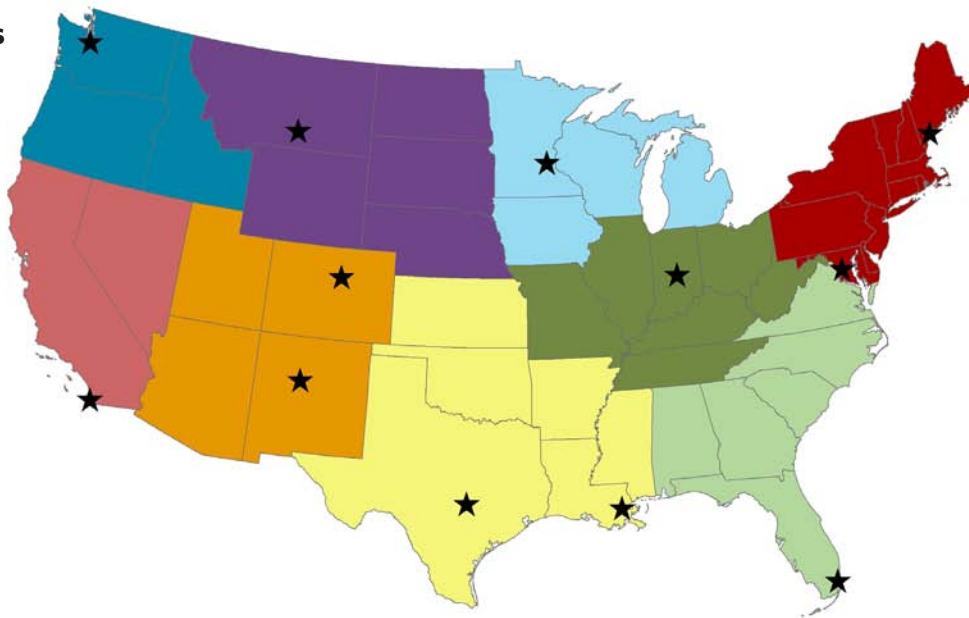
and persuading. Storytelling and compelling communications product will be a key component of T-MAP in order to reach key audiences. Communities will be able to convert model output into tables, graphs and factsheets.

**Project Year 1 and 2:** Data collection and creation of modeling and assessment tools.

**Project Year 3:** Initial deployment of T-MAP with trail building partners.

### Proposed Study Areas

- ★ Albuquerque, NM
- ★ Austin, TX
- ★ Billings, MT
- ★ Denver, CO
- ★ Indianapolis, IN
- ★ Miami, FL
- ★ Minneapolis, MN
- ★ New Orleans, LA
- ★ Portland, ME
- ★ San Diego, CA
- ★ Seattle, WA
- ★ Washington, DC



**For more information, contact: Tracy Hadden Loh at 202.974.5110**

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) is a nonprofit organization based in Washington, D.C., serving as the national voice for more than 150,000 members and supporters.

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