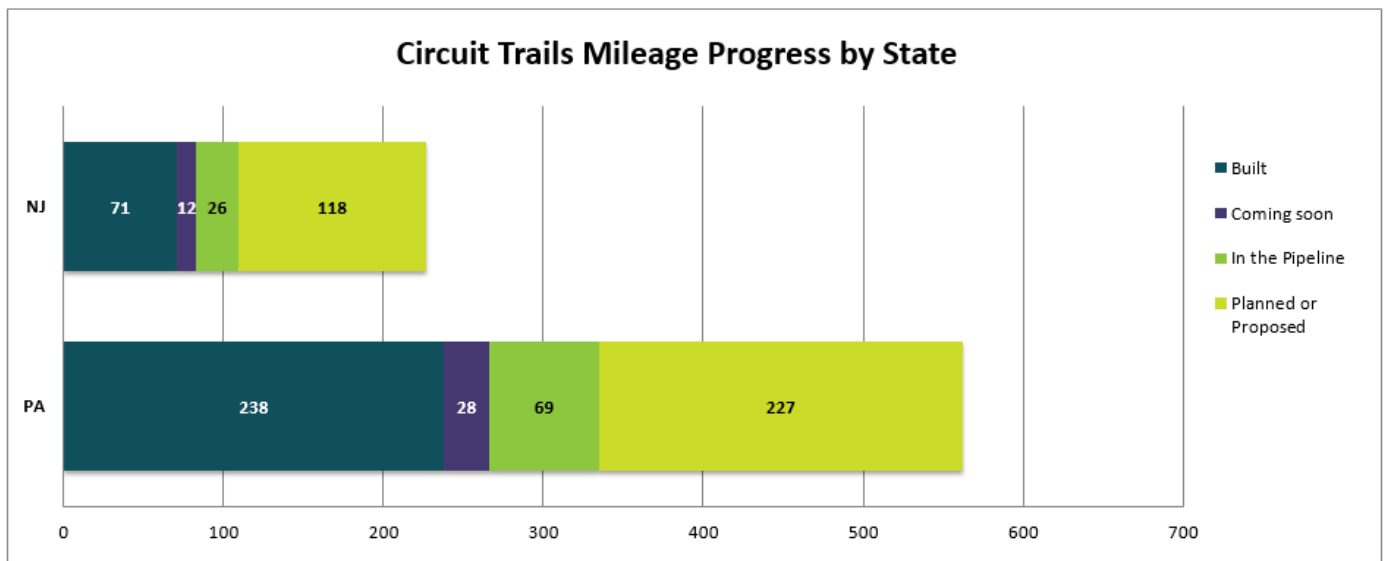


The Circuit Trails continued to make important connections in 2015. Perhaps the most notable was the opening of the iconic Manayunk Bridge over the Schuylkill River. The Manayunk Bridge establishes key links between the city and the suburbs, Lower Merion and Main Street Manayunk, and the Cynwyd Heritage Trail and the Schuylkill River Trail.

Circuit Trails advocates made progress in 2015 by laying the groundwork for future success through:

- **new funding streams** for trail construction in Pennsylvania;
- **refreshed branding and youth outreach** for the Circuit Trails;
- and the collection of **new data** through counters and surveys.



Note: Miles Coming Soon indicates projects that have partial or complete funding. Miles in the Pipeline indicates projects which have a completed feasibility study.

Funding

In 2010, the William Penn Foundation provided \$10 million in grant money specifically for trail building. These funds, administered by Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), funded many Circuit Trails projects over the last four years. As the money was spent down, advocates sought to renew and increase funding for trails in the region. New and renewed sources include:

William Penn Foundation made an additional \$7.5 million available for the Circuit Trails in December 2014. These funds will be distributed 60% in urban areas and 40% rural areas in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

TIP Line Item: The DVRPC administers the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which is the regionally agreed upon list of all transportation projects and programs for which any action by a federal agency is expected

Trail Segments Completed in 2015:

<u>Trail Segment</u>	<u>Mileage</u>
Manayunk Bridge	0.40
Chalfont Neshaminy Creek Greenway Trail	0.40
Pennypack Trail - Rt. 63 to Byberry Road	2.70
Schuylkill Canal Towpath	1.25
Camden Greenway Bike Lanes	2.00
Kaighn Avenue Connector	0.35
SRT Phoenixville Phase II	0.80
Haverford Twp. Darby Creek Trail	1.20
Canal Towpath Spillway Bridge	0.05
2015 Total	9.15

The new trails improved access for residents in West Philadelphia, Bala Cynwyd, Manayunk, Chalfont, Camden, Cooper River, Phoenixville, Rockledge, Center City Philadelphia and Phoenixville.

(including, but not limited to funding). It covers all modes of transportation and is, therefore, of great interest to trail advocates. Getting a project included in the TIP is not a guarantee of federal funding, but rather the first step to getting funded and facilitates a more streamlined review process by state and local agencies.

In 2015, planning staff for five Pennsylvania counties worked with the DVRPC and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) staff to have a line item for Circuit Trails funding added to the TIP for Pennsylvania. The five counties dedicated \$5 million in federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) transportation funds for the Circuit Trails line item. The seven specific Circuit Trails segments named in the line item will be able to draw upon these funds for construction. The Circuit Trails Coalition will work to get a similar funding structure in place in New Jersey.

Trail Funding Workshops: In the fall of 2015, Circuit Trails representatives organized outreach in each of

the five Pennsylvania counties to explain the various sources of trail funding including the TIP funding. Circuit Trails representatives held one-hour workshops on Circuit Trails funding in conjunction with DVRPC's Transportation Alternatives workshops in five Pennsylvania counties. Trail advocates learned about the various sources of funding for trail design and construction and, also, how to best position their project to be eligible for available trail funding.

New Branding & Outreach for the Circuit Trails

Rebranding with Devine + Partners: As the Circuit Trails develop, the identity of trails becomes increasingly important. Led by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC), the Circuit Trails went through a rebranding planning process in 2015. One goal of the rebranding effort is to have the public face of the Circuit Trails be as professional and consistent as the work being done behind the scenes. The outcome is a new logo, a refined name (with the addition of "Trails" to the coalition and network name) and a comprehensive brand campaign that will roll out in April of 2016 along with a new website.

Working with Devine + Partners, RTC helped grow the Circuit Trails social media audience significantly in 2015. In fact, the Facebook audience increased tenfold between June and December! Thanks to the work being done by Devine + Partners, the Circuit Trails reached over 130 million people in 2015 through broadcast, print and online media placements.

New Circuit Trails Map: In 2015, Joel Katz Design Associates created the diagrammatic map of the Circuit Trails. Much like the NYC subway map, though not fine-grained, this new map gives a sense of the overall network and the kind of connections the Circuit Trails foster. This map will be released in April 2016 as part of the launch of the Circuit Trails re-brand and awareness campaign.

Youth Engagement: The Circuit Trails and RTC conducted youth programming that included trail-to-water events, pop-up bike clinics, and a three-day Youth Sojourn. The goals of these events were to introduce students to the Circuit Trails and help them understand their important role in protecting our local waterways. The

programming reached 510 students, totaling 1,524 total youth hours. RTC also hosted 12 pop-up bike clinics on Circuit Trails throughout Philadelphia where young people learned how to repair their bikes. New Jersey Conservation Foundation, as part of the Camden Collaborative Initiative and Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority's Green Ambassadors Program, has also supported youth engagement on the Circuit Trails through conducting neighborhood walkability assessments along the Camden Greenway stretch of the Cooper River Trail.

More Data

Permanent Trail Counters: There are now twelve (12) permanent counters providing data on trail usage throughout the region, in addition to temporary counters. Data is available on the [DVRPC website](#). These counters allow us to track usage in order to make the case for more, better-connected trails.

Telephone Survey: In May of 2015, the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia (BCGP) and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) hired Research America to survey the nine-county region on awareness of the Circuit Trails. 1300 respondents in nine counties yielded the following the results:

- 74% of respondents were aware that trails for recreation or transportation exist in the Delaware Valley
- 80% reported using a trail for recreation or transportation
- 60% would like to see a trail within 10 minutes of their home
- 44% use a trail at least once a week
- 69% reported walking as their primary trail activity; 36% reported biking as their primary trail activity
- 85% supported construction of new trails
- 70% support spending \$2 of tax dollars per person per year to add 450 miles to the Circuit Trails

Knowing that this public support exists for Circuit Trails gives advocates leverage with their local officials. To see the full report go to: http://connectthecircuit.org/uploads/media_items/the-circuit-2015-assessment-report-6-18-15.original.pdf.

Further data was collected by RTC from a total of 1,834 individuals via telephone surveys and trailside surveys in 2015. The results of the trailside and telephone surveys are consistent and show that 30% of respondents are familiar with the Circuit Trails and 80% answered that waterways impact their enjoyment of the trail experience. The trailside survey also showed the economic benefit of the trail network. The average trail user spends \$391 on hard goods and over \$13 on consumables per trip. To learn more go to: http://connectthecircuit.org/uploads/media_items/survey-pres.original.pdf.

Highlights from 2015

Collaborative Coup of the Year: The opening of the **Manayunk Bridge Trail** for transportation and recreation marked a high-point of cooperation across agencies and municipalities. The City of Philadelphia worked together with Lower Merion Township to bring this project to fruition with the help of partners from Philadelphia Parks & Recreation, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), Friends of the Cynwyd Heritage Trail, Lower Merion Historical Society, Ivy Ridge Green, Manayunk Development Corporation, Schuylkill River Development Corporation, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, William Penn Foundation, Penn DOT, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, and Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

National Recognition: The Circuit Trails received nationwide recognition when readers of USA Today's 10 Best voted the Schuylkill River Trail the Best Urban Trail in the nation!

A New Vice Chair: Join us in welcoming Olivia Glenn as our new Circuit Trails Vice Chair representing New Jersey. Olivia became involved with the Circuit Trails in 2014 through her work as the South Jersey Metro Regional Manager of the New Jersey Conservation Foundation. Her role at the foundation includes land preservation, park planning and trails in Gloucester, Camden, Burlington and Mercer Counties. Olivia sees the Circuit Trails as providing benefits on many levels, including improving our regional connectivity and connecting us to the watershed. She sees the Circuit Trails as providing environmental, economic and social benefits in addition to providing an alternative mode of transportation. We are lucky to have Olivia bringing her energy and expertise to the Circuit Trails.



Looking Forward

The Circuit Trails, with the help of Circuit partner RTC, continues to focus on developing relationships between hospitals and trail organizations to develop on-trail programming. Clinicians from area hospitals will lead walks on Circuit Trails and provide information to participants on various health topics. Participants will include Lankenau Medical Center, Kennedy Health, Paoli Hospital, Phoenixville Hospital, and Aria Health.

For years we have referred to the Circuit Trails as a network of 750 miles of trails. But that number is not static. Look for additional miles to be added to the Circuit Trails in 2016 or 2017 as more trails become part of the region's branded network of trails.

Trail Segments Coming Soon

- Baxter Trail (Paved Trail; Philadelphia)
- Cobbs Creek Segment A (Paved Trail; Philadelphia)
- SRT – South St. to Christian (Paved Trail; Philadelphia)
- Bartram's Mile (Paved Trail; Philadelphia)
- Pennypack Trail – Crossing of Frankford Ave. (Protected Bike Lane; Philadelphia)
- Tyburn Road Underpass (Trail; Bucks County)
- Chester Creek Trail, Phase 1 (Paved Trail; Delaware County)
- Marcus Hook ECG (Bike Lanes; Delaware County)
- Tinicum Route 291 ECG (Trail/Sidepath; Delaware County)
- SRT – Keystone Blvd to Lower Pottsgrove Phase 1 (Trail/Sidepath; Montgomery County)
- Betzwood Bridge (Bridge; Montgomery County)
- Tookany Creek (Paved Trail; Montgomery County)
- Kinkora Trail (Trail; Burlington County)
- Lawrence-Hopewell Trail – Carter Road Section (Trail; Mercer County)