Market Research: Equity of Access to Trails

How do underrepresented communities use trails?

- 65% Walking
- 40% Relaxing in nature
- 25% Biking

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasion</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/LatinX</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>55%</td>
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<tr>
<td>People of Color (Total)</td>
<td>55%</td>
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</tbody>
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Biggest barriers to trail use in focus communities:
1. COVID-19 anxiety
2. Public safety concerns
3. Unwelcoming public spaces

How can trail organizations engage, motivate, and welcome underrepresented trail users?
- Welcoming Programming
- Appropriate Security
- Inviting Infrastructure
- Creative Greening
- Authentic Outreach

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

The study results reveal that people want to access and care for nature, but need to feel welcomed first.
1. Invite everyone to have their fun on the trail
The best way to overcome a subtle lack of welcome is to offer compelling activities geared towards the tastes of the audience. Live music, festivals, family-oriented activities, pop-up shops, local artisans, historical commemorations, and food trucks were key ideas.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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