



Nashua HEAL CASE STUDY: Tree Streets Project

Heritage Rail Trail Improvements Bring Community Together While Providing Healthy Food and Physical Activity

The Heritage Rail Trail and community garden project started as a collaboration with the City of Nashua's Division of Public Health and Community Service and HEAL NH to bring healthier food options and opportunities for safe physical activity to the Tree Streets Neighborhood of Nashua.



Residents and organizations in this neighborhood have embraced the project, volunteering with the trail clean-up efforts and the build-out of the community garden.

A mural from Positive Street Art helped beautify the area around the trail. Once considered unsafe and neglected, people are now on the trail more and growing fresh produce in the garden.

According to Shaun Nelson, Executive Director of Nashua Police Athletic League (PAL), a lead organization in the development of the community garden, "There seems to be more of a sense of community, residents are stopping and having conversations with their neighbors. And neighborhood kids and their families are using the garden and enjoying the Rail Trail more."

After only a few months, the garden had 60 to 100 people using it regularly. In addition to residents, organizations are using it as part of their programming: PAL brings the kids to work on the garden; Marguerite's Place early childcare center has four- and five-year-olds at the garden weekly as part of their programming; and the Plus Company, an organization that serves individuals with special needs, also uses the garden.



Other members of the community have contributed to the project's success. Positive Street Art, painted a mural that helped beautify the trail and bring a sense of pride to the community.

"Positive Street Art's mission is to use art to build stronger communities, so when we heard about this project we really wanted to collaborate," said Ramirez. "As soon as I started on the mural, people would stop and want to talk about it. They were really interested and they said they thought it was really great for the community."

Ramirez said that he now uses the Rail Trail all the time and sees other community members using it more too.

"I hope that the mural will inspire others to go out there in the community and get involved, use the trail and the garden and enjoy the neighborhood," said Ramirez.