



FROM VISION TO REALITY

A Four Year Plan to Spur Funding to Complete the East Coast Greenway

EAST COAST GREENWAY ALLIANCE
STRATEGIC PLAN: 2021 – 2025



“With the support of the East Coast Greenway Alliance, the City of Charleston received an \$18.1 million federal grant for a dedicated bike and pedestrian bridge making over 73,000 jobs accessible within a 20-minute radius and activating over 12 miles of greenway. We understand that as we balance mobility, resiliency and affordability, elevating equitable transportation not only solves problems today but helps us reimagine what community should look like in the future.”

—Keith Benjamin, Director of the Department of Traffic and Transportation, City of Charleston, S.C.



A PATH FORWARD:

The East Coast Greenway Alliance's Bold Vision and Strategic Priorities

Our Bold Vision

We commit to work in partnership with communities across our 15-state model of active transportation and movement for health, equitable public space, and sustainability by closing gaps in our 3,000-mile route, attracting a doubling of use this decade.

Strategic Priorities

From 2021 – 2025, the East Coast Greenway Alliance will focus on the following four strategic priorities:

1

Build the Greenway by securing funding and deploying it effectively

2

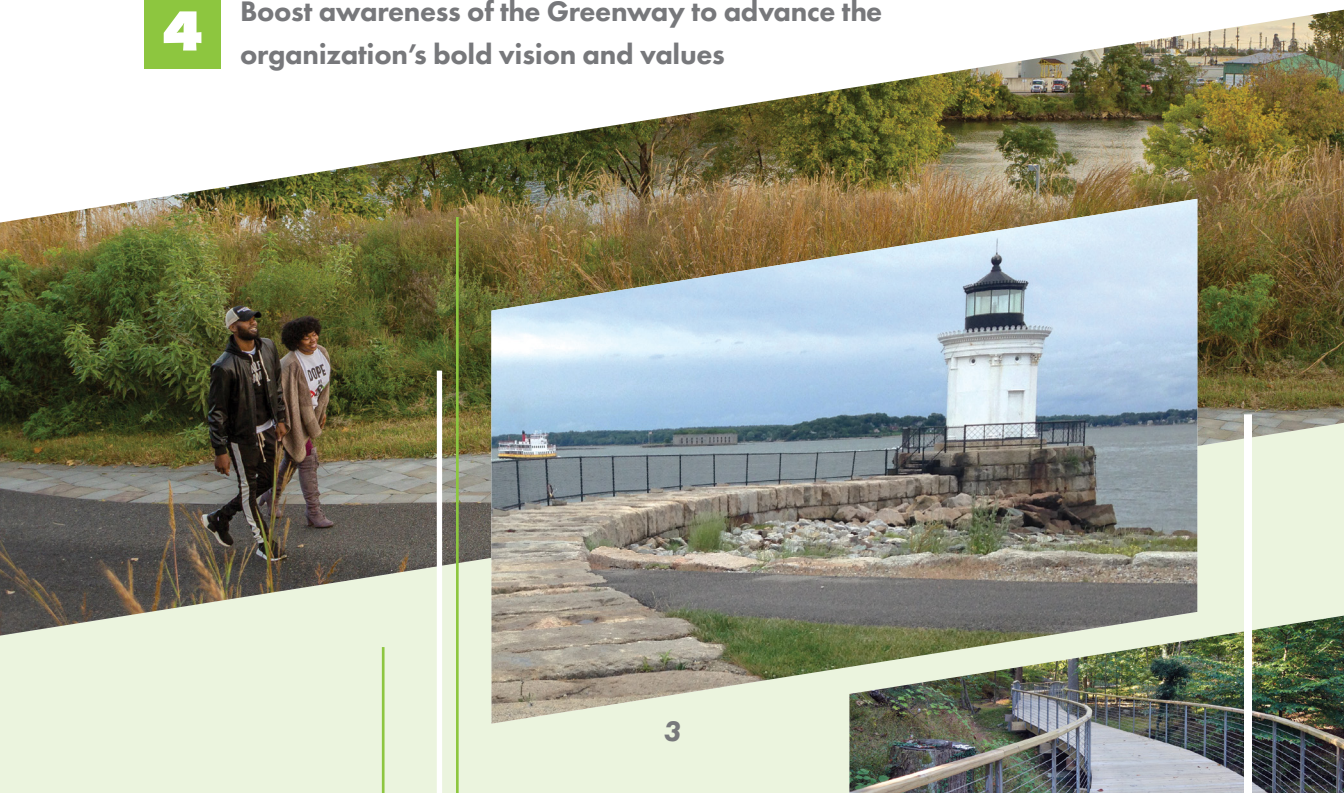
Strengthen the Alliance as an organization to enact systemic change

3

Develop strategic, collaborative partnerships that lead to equitable investment in the communities along the Greenway route

4

Boost awareness of the Greenway to advance the organization's bold vision and values





The East Coast Greenway Alliance

The vision of a trail that connects people to place from Maine to Florida is bold—bold enough to meet the scale and urgency of the challenges communities face along the Eastern Seaboard. The East Coast Greenway Alliance is the champion behind the formation of the East Coast Greenway route, which will offer cyclists, wheelchair users, walkers, runners, skaters, skiers and more the opportunity to travel in a healthy, safe, and sustainable way. And as public health and climate crises compound while disproportionately impacting communities of color, the Alliance’s work is more vital than ever. For all to benefit from the Greenway, the Alliance must tackle the systemic racism and barriers that have historically denied underinvested communities equal access to funding. By rallying to provide accessible infrastructure for all, the Alliance will help change this story and continue to foster prosperous, connected communities throughout the Eastern Seaboard.

THE SITUATION

The ambitious goal of forming a continuous, equitably designed 3,000-mile trail through the United States’ most populated corridor, which will reach 450 communities across 15 states, is a dream becoming reality through collaboration and public buy-in. The effort has attracted \$1.5 billion in public investment in its first 25 years, and with more than 35% of the Greenway developed and over 50 million visits in 2020, many people are already seeing themselves as part of this vision.

As the East Coast Greenway Alliance enters these next four years, the country is reeling from the COVID-19 pandemic, and there’s an urgent need to meaningfully address climate change. A national reckoning with racial injustice impels us to move forward with health, justice, and people at the center. With a federal administration in place that also believes sustainable infrastructure can advance climate resilience, public health, and racial justice, the Alliance is poised to make vital progress in its mission.

THE RESPONSE

The East Coast Greenway Alliance seeks to secure the funding and partnerships necessary to build a safe, accessible trail, while ensuring communities across the corridor are engaged in the process. The Alliance commits to intentionally prioritize equity, including learning more about and addressing the needs and priorities of the diverse communities along the route, as well as the potential impacts of the Greenway. Through its efforts to build awareness, work closely with government officials, leverage value-aligned partnerships, and meaningfully engage with communities, the East Coast Greenway Alliance can create a significant impact for millions of people who will visit and live near the Greenway—supporting commuters, explorers, athletes, and neighbors in forging a special connection to place.

Strategic Priority 1

Build the Greenway by securing funding and deploying it effectively

By 2025, the East Coast Greenway Alliance will secure at least \$500M from a diverse set of funding sources for community-driven building of the Greenway, with a priority to funnel dollars to underinvested communities on the Greenway. The Alliance has identified \$3B as the goal dollar amount to be raised—securing at least \$500M over the next four years will be critical to ensure that the organization stays on track with its goal.

To do this we will:

- Advocate for a Greenway Stimulus, collaborating with partners and representatives from underinvested communities.
- Share the Alliance’s vision with all state and federal legislators representing districts on the Greenway corridor, and create opportunities for registering and publicizing their support for the Greenway.
- Identify diversity benchmarks, gaps, and goals for each state along the Greenway using GIS data.
- Compile an online library of economic impact studies for states and regions along the Greenway, conduct and support additional studies, and leverage media and communications strategies to drive awareness and engagement.
- Ensure equitable distribution of funding along the Greenway, and—whenever possible—drive increased funding in underinvested communities.

\$500
million



Strategic Priority 2

Strengthen the East Coast Greenway Alliance as an organization to enact systemic change

By 2025, the East Coast Greenway Alliance will increase the strength of the organization to enact systemic change. Streamlined and efficient operations combined with an engaged staff that holds a deep commitment to the mission and an authentic sense of belonging will provide the Alliance with the foundation to reach its bold vision. It is critical that every layer of the organization reflect the diversity of ability, use, experience, and geographic location of the regions represented along the Greenway.

To do this we will:

- Revisit and refine donor strategy, including annual giving, corporate philanthropy, and endowment.
- Revise all employee policies and procedures and leverage in person trainings and retreats to prioritize a shared knowledge, language, and commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (J.E.D.I.).
- Update the ECGA Equity Action Plan to specify key priorities and timelines for building a more equitable organization, with increased diversity across staff, board, and partners.
- Evaluate contracting processes and procedures and create a threshold at which RFPs are deployed to ensure equity and consistency.
- Use project management models to evaluate staffing needs by organizational function and to guide future hiring.

J.E.D.I.



Strategic Priority 3

Develop strategic, collaborative partnerships that lead to equitable investment in the communities along the Greenway route

By 2025, the East Coast Greenway Alliance will strengthen and expand strategic alliances—particularly focused on communities of color, as well as historically underinvested communities—so that the Alliance accurately reflects the communities it serves. With a physical presence in fifteen states and more than 450 communities, it is critical that the leadership, staff, board, and partners of the Alliance reflect the diverse set of communities served by the organization. By strengthening relationships with and learning from the communities along the route, the Alliance will be better able to design a truly equitable Greenway that meets the needs of local and regional communities.

To do this we will:

- Compile local, state, and regional data on Greenway corridor demographics to better inform our efforts to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Catalog existing partnerships in each state, identifying partnership gaps—particularly as they relate to diversity, equity, and inclusion—and detail an explicit timeline to fill gaps.
- Continue distributing inclusionary trail toolkits and greenway design guides; develop a schedule to manage ongoing updates.
- Build, diversify, and engage all state committees, increasing representation of underinvested communities in each state, and engaging state coalitions and partners in advancing the Alliance’s vision.
- Identify opportunities to more deeply engage with partners, keeping in mind the needs of each partner when it comes to technical assistance.

450+
communities



Strategic Priority 4

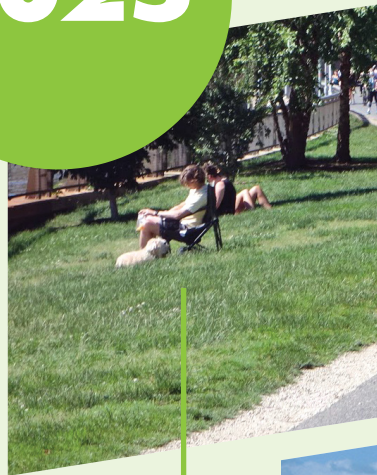
Boost awareness of the East Coast Greenway to advance the Alliance's bold vision and values

By 2025, the East Coast Greenway Alliance will achieve increased national media recognition for and visits to the Greenway through awareness building activities. While the Greenway has seen measurable growth of awareness over the past thirty years, there is an opportunity to increase awareness across the corridor, becoming a “household name” among residents and receiving more explicit support from state, local, and federal leaders. Through community events, continued signage efforts, and an amplification of stories focusing on equity, more people will be able to enjoy the benefits of the Greenway.

To do this we will:

- Leverage tools—such as an audience survey—to better understand the members of our network and categorize by region and interest.
- Develop a storytelling strategy to build a bank of stories by region and interest for advocacy, fundraising, and awareness needs.
- Continue to develop signature fundraising events, like the New York-to-Philadelphia Greenway Ride, securing support from local leaders and building activation kits that can be used at the local level to support the ride.
- Develop customer relationship management strategies to boost awareness and retain donors.
- Identify the timeline and process needed for pursuing National Trail designation.
- Build a segmented engagement strategy to reach key audiences with relevant stories and advocacy efforts that matter most to them.
- Work with state committees and Regional Coordinators on a supplementary state-based communications strategy that includes a campaign-like wave of Op-Ed articles, Letters to the Editor, and public forums.
- Escalate signage strategy on all completed and officially-designated ECG segments.

2025



“One thing that makes the East Coast Greenway so dynamic is how much distance it covers and how many cities, towns, and communities it goes through. People can take advantage of it in so many different ways. Some might use a few miles to commute to work while others make a weekend outing with the family. Serious adventurers can bike their whole state, or even take on the entire length over the course of several weeks.”

—Bicycling Magazine

“Building a protected, continuous path for cyclists, runners, cross-country skiers, horseback riders and wheelchair users through 15 states is no small logistical feat. It’s also a hefty financial investment. Each mile of greenway built costs about \$1 million (mostly funded by the federal government, which partners with states and cities). ‘But the return on investment is extremely strong...’”

—USA Today

East Coast



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