

## AT A GLANCE

Residents in Savannah, Georgia struggle to meet recommended physical activity guidelines. The lack of safe and accessible spaces to engage in outdoor physical activities presents a significant obstacle. Tide to Town, a planned 30-mile network of walking and biking trails, will provide protected spaces for physical activity and serve an important role in transportation. Early phases of Tide to Town are complete and opened to the public. Growing support by the City of Savannah and the people will help to secure the future of the project.



## PUBLIC HEALTH CHALLENGE

Many people in Savannah-Chatham County, Georgia are not meeting the physical activity guidelines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Approximately 28% of adults in Chatham County report no leisure time physical activity. Lack of safe space to engage in outdoor activities is one major barrier. Only 27% of Savannah streets have sidewalks, and the few multiuse paths available are not easily accessible to all members of the community, particularly low wealth and low mobility residents. Safety and accessibility concerns inhibit opportunities to enjoy the benefits of physical activity, from decreased risk to chronic illness to better sleep, enhanced mood, and increased focus.

**“I love seeing [the trail] here in Savannah. I’m looking forward to it going further. I’m looking forward to the dream of Tide to Town. I cannot wait.”**

*-Michelle Koncul*

## APPROACH

According to the 2018 Chatham County Parks and Recreation Survey, trails and bike facilities were ranked the most desired improvement throughout the county. 65% of respondents to Healthy Savannah’s 2021 Community Survey ranked bike lanes and walking paths as extremely important. Meetings with neighborhood associations and walking audits conducted via app reinforced the desire to have safe, maintained, and accessible multiuse paths and sidewalks throughout the city. Tide to Town, a local initiative supported by the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health grant, meets the needs of the community.

Tide to Town, Savannah’s Urban Trail System, is a planned 30-mile network of walking and biking trails connecting all of Savannah’s neighborhoods. In addition to serving a critical transportation function by offering activity friendly routes to everyday destinations, Tide to Town will provide safe, protected, and accessible spaces for all people to engage in physical activity. A Rapid Health Impact Assessment conducted in 2020 offered several recommendations related to opportunities for physical activity, city connectivity, and methods to prevent displacement of residents during construction.

## RESULTS

The first two phases of Tide to Town are complete. The Truman Linear Park Trail opened in November 2020, followed by the Police Memorial Trail in November 2021. The open trails are popular with members of the community. A survey of Truman Linear Park Trail users was conducted in early July 2021. Users reported satisfaction with the existing trail, happiness at its safety and separation from city traffic, and a desire to see more progress on the completion of the trail network.

## SUSTAINING SUCCESS

Support for the future of Tide to Town is growing. The project has received extensive media coverage in late 2021 and early 2022, and a well-attended ribbon cutting ceremony was held for the opening of Police Memorial Trail in November 2021. In December 2021, the City of Savannah showed its support for Tide to Town by allocating \$4 million in SPLOST funding and earmarking an additional \$3 million for the trail network. Construction of three more phases of the trail network is planned for 2022, with significant progress to follow in the years to come.

## FIND OUT MORE

To learn more about Tide to Town, visit [www.tidetotown.org](http://www.tidetotown.org).

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## CONTACT

Armand Turner  
REACH Physical Activity Program Manager  
6400 Habersham Street  
Savannah, GA 31401  
P: 219.801.1477

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
<http://nccd.cdc.gov/nccdsuccessstories/>

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