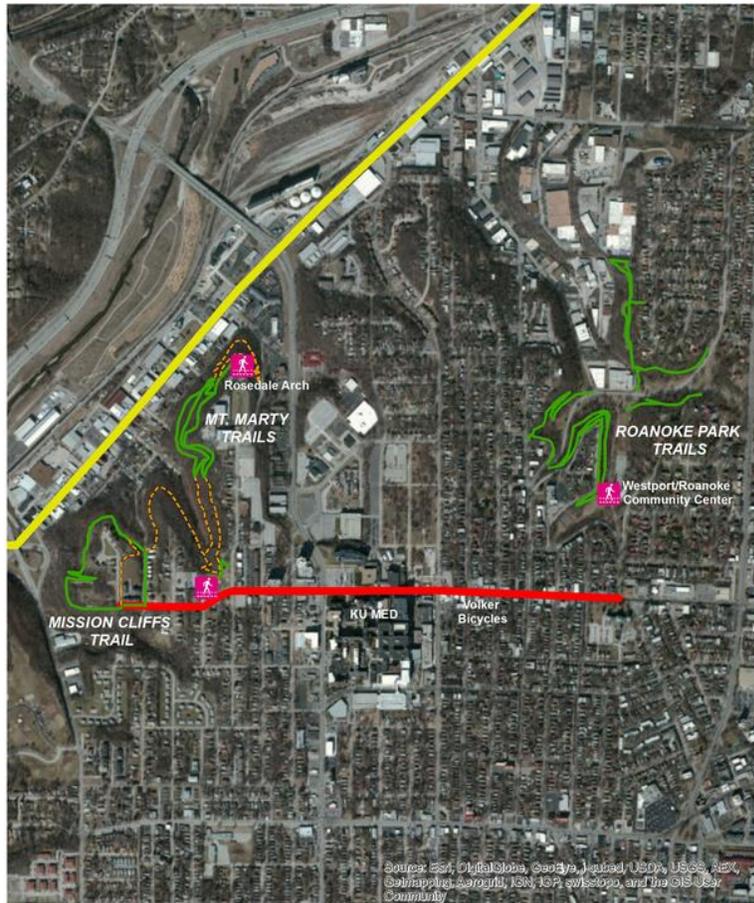


Salud America!

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Research Network to Prevent Obesity Among Latino Children



The Rozarks

- Trailhead/Parking
- Open Trail
- Trail to Complete (2014/2015)
- 39th Street West
- Southwest Boulevard

ERTA
earnyourdirt.org

Rosedale
DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

ROANOKE PARK
CONSERVANCY
Honoring the Past, Planting the Future



*Ecological
Placemakers*



0 0.4 0.8
Miles



For more information:
earnyourdirt.org
rosedale.org
roanokeparkkc.org
map by: b. shoffner - 06.12.14

A map of that depicts plans for the Rozarks trail network. The green lines signify open trails, while the dashed lines represent trails to be complete in 2014-2015.

SUCCESS STORY: 2014



Rozarks Nature Trail Brings Physical Activity to Underserved Neighborhood in Kansas City, KS

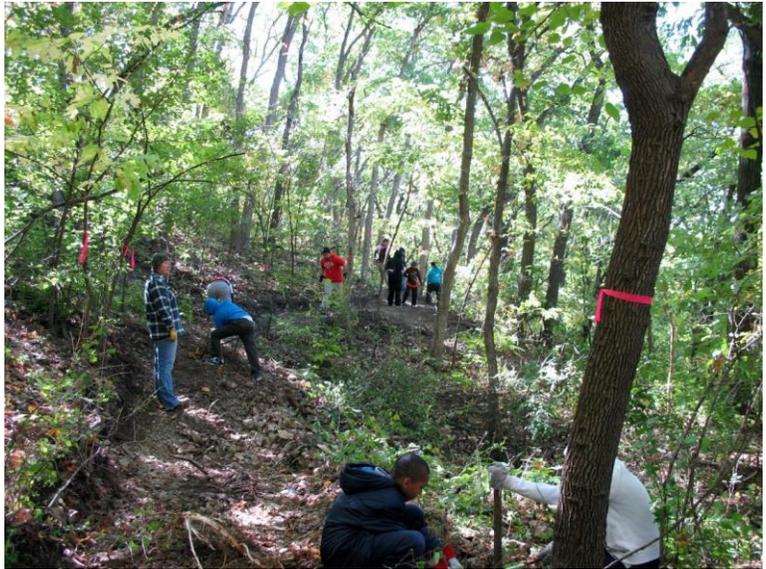
After learning that kids in Rosedale were at a high risk for childhood obesity, the Rosedale Development Association (RDA) decided it was time to do something about it. They learned that the community wanted more trails so they hired an expert who developed plans for a hike & bike nature trail to connect the community to parks and other key spots. With support from various groups and the local government, the RDA built over 2.3 miles of nature trail, all at a minimal expense. Families and children in the community are already benefitting from the trail and the group continues expanding the Rozarks trail network.

EMERGENCE

Awareness: The [Rosedale Development Association \(RDA\)](#), a Kansas City, Kan., non-profit community development corporation, has worked since the 1940s to solve neighborhood issues such as graffiti, crime, zoning, flooding and abandoned properties.

By 2009, RDA member became increasingly aware of a new issue to solve—childhood obesity.

The RDA learned that children attending Rosedale Elementary School faced higher than average overweight/obesity rates (51% vs. national average of 33%).



A group of volunteers work on flagging the area where a portion of the Rozarks trail is to be built.

They also knew that this [33% Latino community](#) lacked a full-service grocery store and that safe places for activity were limited.

Learn: As a result of these concerns, the RDA, the Rosedale Ministerial Alliance, KC Healthy Kids and the [University of Kansas Medical Center](#) (KU) joined forces to prioritize bringing healthy options to residents.

This strategic alliance was called the Rosedale Healthy Kids Initiative (RHKI).

Initial efforts to increase access to healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity were funded through grants from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's [Healthy Kids Healthy Communities](#) (Healthy Kids) initiative, [KC Healthy Kids](#), and the [Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City](#).

Later, as data from the 2012 County Health Rankings was released, members of the RDA learned that [Wyandotte County ranked No. 97 of 100 counties](#) for health outcomes, and that adult obesity rates were at 38%, a number that was 8% higher than the state average.

This data only confirmed the urgent need to continue bringing healthy changes to their community.

Frame Issue: The RHKI had already started several initiatives to improve the health of local residents.

Erin Stryka, RDA's RHKI program manager, said signature projects of the group included: establishing a walking school bus (walk to school) program at Noble Prentis Elementary School, launching a mobile market initiative, expanding community garden reach, and conducting several assessments of the built environment.

To do more work in areas with the greatest need, KU sent students to assess parks and walkability.

“Some of those priorities that the community identified were trails, sidewalks, bike lanes, grocery stores, and also a community center,” Stryka said.

They set their sights on how to improve the local trail system.

To get started, RDA hired trail-planning expert Brett Shoffner, a former RDA volunteer, in Spring 2013.

DEVELOPMENT

Education: To get ideas for where new trails could be built, Shoffner studied Rosedale’s existing trails.

He gathered data from the city’s master plan, the Rosedale Master Plan, the Rosedale Green Corridor Trail Network Study, and other local plans.

Shoffner and the RDA soon found an ideal location for nature trails: a forested area of Southeast Rosedale.

The forest had a few narrow bike trails, but according to Shoffner, the majority of existing trails were either crowded by overgrown plants, or unusable and unsustainable.

He began to draft a map of a possible trail system that, if completed, would enable walkers and bikers to travel between two states (Kansas and Missouri) and three counties, without ever leaving a bike lane.

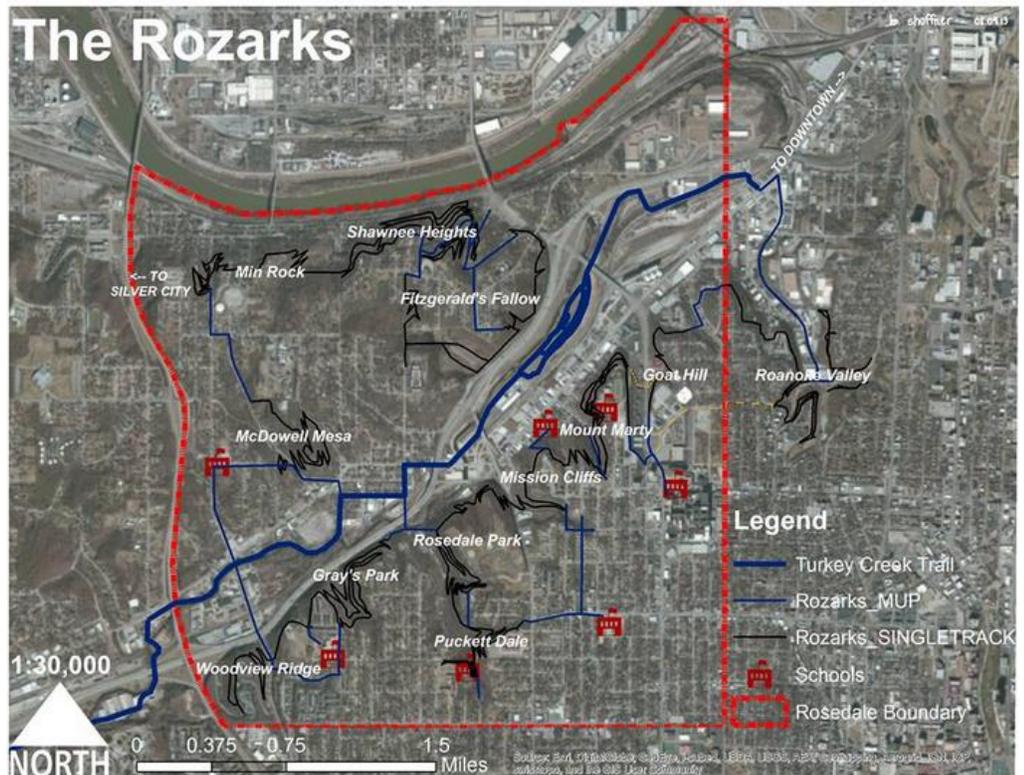
The project was named the Rozarks Trail—because the hilly terrain reminded Shoffner of the Ozark Mountains. He jokingly thought, “The area is like Rosedale’s mini version of the Ozarks.”

“He put together an overall plan of ways we could move trails through all those woods and connect it to existing trails and bike lanes, so that we would have five miles or so of nature trails,” Stryka said.

Costs (including labor) for the whole 4.246 miles of trail were estimated to be \$170,383.49.

Mobilization: The RDA then formally presented its idea for a trail system at a community meeting, where people voiced support.

The RDA plans also got a positive response from city parks officials and the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City.



A map of Rosedale, its schools and the proposed Rozarks trails.

“The local government officials are really open and willing to say yes,” Stryka said.

Debate: One of the more challenging aspects of this project was getting the support of a private landowner who would have to consent to having parts of the trails run through his property.

“The biggest thing was just communicating well and presenting our plans to him.” Shoffner said. “I showed him what we were doing and how this would connect to his land.”

Another challenge was that the RDA didn’t have the financial capability to develop the trails.

Luckily Shoffner served as advisory board member of and the regional director of all the urban core trail systems in Kansas City for the [Urban Trail Co](#) (formerly the Earth Riders Trails Association [ERTA]), a non-profit that advocates for single-tract nature trails in the Midwest.

“RDA didn’t have all the equipment and tools that we needed, but the trail association already had all that stuff available,” Shoffner said. “They’re the ones that helped us out a lot with the more technical aspects.”

ENACTMENT

Activation/Frame Policy: RDA officials worked with several entities to lay the ground work for the trails.

First, they formally partnered with the Urban Trail Co., and agreed to:

1. protect the land;
2. increase the number of visitors to the land; and
3. accomplish their objectives by using a combination of volunteer and professional labor.

RDA officials also worked to get support and help from the Mission Cliff Home Owners Association and the Hilltop Neighborhood Association.

They then joined forces with [Free Wheels for Kids](#), a bike club at Rosedale Middle School, to develop an environmental curriculum, which allows students to learn basic STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) concepts, while building trails.

As part of the curriculum, members of the bike club get to go out into the field, measure the planned trail, mark the land with flags, and use global positioning system (GPS) locators to map it.



645 working hours...
 101 different volunteers...
 1.0 miles of trail constructed...
 1.0 miles of trail reopened...
 \$0 budget
 3 machines...
 2 professional trail builders...
 1 goal...

Make Rosedale a Healthy, Safe, and Connected Place

Join us NOW as we work to complete another 2 miles.



The Rozarks
 Southeast Rosedale Trails Plan

Progress Report

September 2013

through
 March 2014

Brett Shoffner, MPA
 Rosedale Bike/Ped Coordinator

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An RDA progress report for September to March 2014. As of March 2014, 2.3 miles of the Rozarks trail were open to the community.

The RDA also needed to formalize its partnership with the county parks and recreation department.

They sought to do this with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)—a written agreement between two parties that outlines expectations with a common goal in mind—which would allow RDA to design, construct, and maintain trail operations on public land located at Mount Marty Park.

Change: On Dec. 13, 2013, members of the Unified Government’s standing committee met and approved the MOU, which officially gave the RDA permission to proceed with constructing parts of the Rozarks Nature Trails, which are located on public land.

Plans for the Mount Marty Park trail sections are being implemented in four different phases, in addition to other trails that are complete or in progress, as described below:

- Mission Cliffs: 1 mile (opened Nov 2013)
- Mt. Marty Phase I: .75 mile (opened December 2013)
- Mt. Marty Phase II: .50 mile (opened May 2014)
- Mt. Marty Phase III: .33 mile(plans in progress)
- Mt. Marty Phase IV: .55 mile (plans in progress)
- Skeetee’s Slopes: 1.17 miles (plans in progress)

Construction for Phase I of the Mt. Marty trail occurred from September to December 2013.

Phase I reopened 1 mile of old trail and built another mile of new trail that would connect users to Mount Marty Park, Rosedale Middle School and to the historic [World War I Rosedale Memorial Arch](#).

Stryka said nearly 70 volunteers—students, church members, youth groups helped complete the first phase.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation: Altogether, by March 2014, the RDA opened 2.3 miles of trail to the public, thanks to the help of more than 100 volunteers who put in more than 645 hours of service.

As a result of their partnership with Urban Trail Co., the RDA has had help from two professional trail builders and access to three machines to clear land for the trail—despite having a nearly \$0 budget.

When the first part of the Mt. Marty Trail opened, the bike club at Rosedale Middle School started to frequently use it.

To get more people using the trail, the RDA also hosted [Rozark trail rides](#).



Part of the new trails connect to The Rosedale Arch. (Source: <http://ow.ly/CVe5g>)

Equity: Plans for the Rozark Forest Trail remain in progress and the RDA continues working to complete the remaining parts of the trail.

In fall 2014, after several discussions with a private landowner, the RDA was able to secure permission to develop parts of the trail on private land. They are currently in the process of formalizing this agreement.

Sustainability: As new segments of the trail continue to be built, with the help of the Unified Government, the RDA plans to install signage at trail heads. They also plan on enlisting the help of RDA volunteers, who will serve as “trail stewards” to help maintain the trail.

“By involving people throughout the process, we hope that people will remain involved in their communities after project completion,” Stryka said.

Although Healthy Kids is now solely a program of the RDA, the other three organizations who founded the initiative—the Rosedale Ministerial Alliance, KC Healthy Kids and the [University of Kansas Medical Center](#) (KU)—stay very involved and remain on the RDA’s steering committee.

Additional Links:

[The Rozarks- Southeast Rosedale Trails Plan](#)

[Wyandotte Daily: Plan a trip to the ‘Rozarks’ Saturday for a new nature trail opening](#)

This success story was produced by Salud America! with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Salud America! The RWJF Research Network to Prevent Obesity Among Latino Children is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The program aims to educate researchers, decision-makers, community leaders, and the public in contributing toward healthier Latino communities and seeking environmental and policy solutions to the epidemic of Latino childhood obesity. The network is directed by the Institute for Health Promotion Research at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.

For more information, visit <http://www.salud-america.org>.