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**FRESHWATER LAND TRUST PARTNERS WITH CITY OF BIRMINGHAM TO ACQUIRE CSX RAIL
LINE TO BE CONVERTED TO NEW TRAIL ALONG VALLEY CREEK**

On June 18, 2025, Freshwater Land Trust, Congresswoman Terri Sewell, the City of Birmingham, the Jefferson County Commission, and CSX Transportation will come together at the CrossPlex to celebrate the purchase of an inactive rail line that will be transformed into the Valley Creek Rail-to-Trail. The \$1.1 million acquisition was made possible thanks to financial contributions by Freshwater Land Trust; the Jefferson County Commission; Birmingham City Councilors Carol Clarke, District 8; Wardine Alexander, District 7; and Crystal Smitherman, District 6; the Jefferson County Department of Health; the Mike & Gillian Goodrich Foundation; the Robert F. Meyer Foundation; the Hugh Kaul Foundation; the Rails to Trails Conservancy; and Olivia Barton Ferriter.

The 4.5-mile Valley Creek Rail-to-Trail will be a high-quality recreational and alternative transportation shared-use path connecting west Birmingham residents to the popular 1,500-acre Red Mountain Park, three-mile High Ore Line Greenway, and Birmingham CrossPlex. Moreover, it will connect residents living near the trail to important community amenities such as the Jefferson County Department of Health's Western Clinic and Max Transit's CrossPlex Transit Center.

Birmingham Mayor Randall L. Woodfin emphasized the importance of collaboration and community connection through this project, stating: "In Birmingham, we continue to work with our partners like Freshwater Land Trust, CSX, and U.S. Rep. Terri Sewell to connect our communities and provide outdoor recreational opportunities for our residents. These connections to some of our most important city attractions provide health benefits, alternative transportation options and economic development, directly benefiting the citizens of

Birmingham and our surrounding communities. This project is a valuable asset for the western neighborhoods of Birmingham.”

“CSX deeply appreciates our ongoing partnership with the State of Alabama, which continues to foster a thriving local economy and vibrant communities,” said Rashard Howard, CSX Director of Industrial Development. “Rail plays a vital role in connecting people and creating opportunities, and we’re proud to support a project that underscores these shared values.”

The Valley Creek Rail-to-Trail was originally identified as a priority trail project by the City of Birmingham and Freshwater Land Trust in 2012, receiving a Department of Transportation grant to fund the initial design of the trail. However, due to a lack of construction funding at the time, the project stalled for several years until Congresswoman Terri Sewell provided a \$4 million Community Grant for the project in 2023 as part of her appropriations. Under Congresswoman Sewell’s leadership, the City of Birmingham and Freshwater Land Trust restarted negotiations with CSX Transportation to purchase the almost three-mile rail corridor needed for the project, kicking off two years of due diligence and fundraising activities.

"What an exciting day! Today's closure brings us one step closer to connecting Birmingham residents to new opportunities for health and wellbeing. The Valley Creek Rail-to-Trail has been a long time coming, and I am so thankful to all of the amazing partners who are helping to bring this project to our community!" expressed Congresswoman Sewell.

Funders from across the county recognized the importance of the project and chipped in, with three Birmingham city councilors and the Jefferson County Commission allocating a portion of their discretionary American Rescue Plan Act funds to make the purchase possible.

Birmingham City Councilor Carol Clarke shared her reasons for supporting this project, noting: “Having walkable assets like this will continue to pay dividends for years and years — not only for promoting health, but also for connecting our communities with stress-free transportation options.”

Freshwater Land Trust’s Red Rock Trail System Director Carolyn Buck said, “The Valley Creek Rail-to-Trail is not only a critical piece of the Red Rock Trail System’s proposed 36+-mile trail loop, but it connects residents to some of west Birmingham’s most popular amenities. We are excited to see this project moving forward and are so thankful to our partners that have continued to support this project.”

With the acquisition of the former CSX Transportation rail corridor, the project will officially kick off this summer. Kimley Horn will be leading the design update, alongside Studio A Design and Place Associates, and community engagement activities are being planned for the fall.

The 4.5-mile Valley Creek Rail-to-Trail planned for west Birmingham is a key corridor of the Red Rock Trail System's proposed 36+ mile trail loop around the greater Birmingham metropolitan area, connecting the Cities of Birmingham, Fairfield, Homewood, and Irondale via multi-use trail. For more information about the planned trail loop, please visit www.freshwaterlandtrust.org.

Photos:

[Valley Creek Rail-to-Trail map](#)

[Red Rock Action Plan Loop](#)