



# American Discovery Trail

*Making connections coast-to-coast*

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## AMERICAN DISCOVERY TRAIL TRAIL TOWN INITIATIVE

### I. Goal and Vision:

The American Discovery Trail Society seeks to designate a network of Trail Towns, communities on the American Discovery Trail, that enhances recognition of the ADT while simultaneously helping those communities expand their access to outdoor recreation and reap the benefits of being located on America's only coast-to-coast non-motorized trail.

#### The American Discovery Trail:

The majestic American Discovery Trail is multi-use, stretching across 6,800 miles and 15 states. Its route links existing trails, rail-trails, country lanes, small town sidewalks and big city greenways. It connects rural towns and cities with parks and wilderness, allows people to hike, bike or ride horses for an afternoon or a cross country adventure. The route uses existing public lands, connecting 5 National Scenic, 12 National Historic, 34 National Recreation Trails, 14 National Parks and 16 National Forests. It is a "sea-to-shining-sea" showcase of America's scenic, historic, and cultural treasures.

### II. Benefits of Trail Towns:

For Towns: Ready access to outdoor recreation is increasingly recognized as a prime benefit. It promotes a healthier community, enhances the quality of life, attracts homeowners and businesses who seek to enjoy nature and outdoor sports, fosters economic development, and brings greater recognition to those towns located on a major national trail. Knowing that a town on the trail is an officially designated ADT Trail Town encourages hikers and bikers to plan their visit, knowing that they will be welcome and have opportunities to rest, resupply, and recharge.

For the American Discovery Trail: The ADT will likewise become better known throughout the nation as a jewel among national trails. It helps thousands expand their access to nature and the outdoors. It facilitates enjoying outdoor recreation and healthier lifestyles. A network of trail towns enhances the ADT's recognition, membership, and volunteer engagement.

### III. Becoming an ADT Trail Town:

The ADT Society does not seek to pressure communities to become trail towns. This must be a genuine partnership, with both the town and the ADT valuing the mutual benefits and constructive relationship. Both sides should have a clear understanding of the rewards and responsibilities. Trail towns are active, attractive, and interesting places with accessible and comfortable public places. Interested communities conclude an agreement with the American Discovery Trail Society. There is no cost, and the ADT does not seek any payments from towns. The town is not required to buy any land for trails or become responsible for any additional upkeep or maintenance of the ADT. There could be small costs as towns enhance the benefits they offer visiting hikers and bikers, such as information kiosks.

### Application:

Interested towns submit an application to the ADT Society. The intent of the application is to demonstrate the interest of the town and the breadth of support. Towns will typically establish a small committee, perhaps connected with the town parks or recreation departments, that links diverse interests, including city officials, businesses, outdoor enthusiasts, service clubs, and even schools. Having an official point of contact facilitates communication and cooperation between the town and the ADTS. Town leaders, such as the City Council, need to affirm their support, typically through a Council Resolution or Proclamation. The ADT Society works with the community during these steps and processes the application.

### Requirements:

The town should be located on or near the ADT. It needs to demonstrate a sufficient level of support for the ADT. The town must also be a welcoming community for visiting hikers and bikers. The town could provide some services to hikers or bikers, but the list of desirable amenities depends on the size and capacity of the town. These could include:

- Restaurants; drinking fountains;
- overnight accommodations, perhaps including a campground;
- public restrooms; benches;
- grocery and sporting goods stores; charging capabilities;
- maps or signs showing the route of the ADT through the town;
- window decals showing business supporters; and
- a post office, and possibly \_\_\_\_\_ others.

#### IV. Official Designation:

After an application has been approved, the ADT Society officially designates the community as an "American Discovery Trail Town." In a public ceremony, the ADT Society will award two distinct signs for the town to install.

#### V. Ongoing Relationship:

In conjunction with the designation, the town and the ADTS should conclude a simple Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which commits the town to embrace and support the ADT, in some way, such as including it in town land use planning documents, or installing relevant signage, and for the ADT to assist the town with enhanced publicity, broader nation-wide recognition, and opportunities to participate in trail town learning and support activities. Promotion should be two-ways: The ADT should promote trail towns as interesting places to visit, stay, resupply, and enjoy along the trail. The trail town should promote the ADT and its use, development, volunteer needs and protection among their community and visitors.