



Running is one of the most popular and affordable forms of exercise to get and keep people fit and healthy. Running with a group can also be a positive social experience. Running can generate significant economic impact dollars for communities that host events and support the running community. Pedestrian networks that include sidewalks, trails, paths, and share lanes often increase property values and overall quality of living in a community. While runners do not require a lot of expensive equipment, there are several ways that local communities can invest to ensure that running is safe, affordable, accessible, and enjoyable for anyone that wants to run. Many communities support a variety of sports and sporting facilities and at the heart of almost every sport is running. Being a Runner Friendly Community not only supports the running community, but running as the foundation for many other community-based sports (soccer, football, tennis, basketball, etc.). The goal of this program is to shine a national spotlight on communities that stand out as *runner friendly* and to provide incentive and ideas for communities to work towards becoming runner friendly communities. Runner friendly communities can increase the quality of life, can improve physical activity for residents as outlined in the National Physical Activity Plan, and can provide for increased economic impact for the community.

### **The Road Runners Club of America is seeking applications for the Inaugural Runner Friendly Community designation:**

The RRCA will review three primary segments: (1) community infrastructure, (2) community support, and (3) local government support. Each segment includes important criteria as part of the designation process. The goal is for applicants to prove that their community works together to promote running as healthy exercise for their community while ensuring runners safety. All applications will be reviewed and scored by a selection panel consisting of RRCA board and staff members. Applicants will be scored based on their ability to prove that they meet most of the criteria outlined below. The review panel will determine the number of communities that will receive the designation each quarter of the year, and all applicants will receive feedback. One top city will be selected by the review panel and awarded as the Outstanding Runner Friendly Community. The application deadline to be considered for the first round of Runner Friendly Community designations and the first Outstanding Runner Friendly Community is **February 1**. Second quarter deadline is May 1; third quarter deadline is August 1; and fourth quarter deadline is November 1.



## Selection Criteria

### 1. Community Infrastructure – A Runner Friendly Community should be able to prove that it has an infrastructure that can foster physical activity in a safe environment.

- a. A Runner Friendly Community is pedestrian friendly, because there is a clear network of sidewalks, multi-use trails, paths, share lanes, etc. (pedestrian networks) designated for pedestrians with minimal road crossings and vehicle traffic control at intersections (stop signs as opposed to yields, clearly marked cross walks, etc).
- b. The pedestrian networks should allow a person to complete 3-10 miles of distance, either continuously in one direction or through a loop course, before the network completely ends. This may include a mix of trails, sidewalks, and share lanes that interconnect and that a person can use before having no other alternative than to run on a road.
- c. A Runner Friendly Community would also ideally have a running track that is maintained, well lit, and open to the public for as many hours as possible.
- d. Additional community infrastructure would ideally include:
  - i. Water fountains along a trail or pedestrian network, bathrooms (portajohns), and available parking near a trail or path system;
  - ii. Trails/paths maintained year round with snow removal in winter;
  - iii. Emergency phones on pedestrian networks and pedestrian networks well lit after dark

### 2. Community Support – A Runner Friendly Community should be able to prove that organizations and businesses work together in a positive manner to promote running as a healthy exercise and sport.

- a. A Runner Friendly Community is home to one or more nonprofit RRCA running clubs or events whose missions are to promote running as healthy exercise and a sport. Nonprofit running organizations are designed to benefit society. While for-profit businesses may have a similar mission, nonprofit running organizations are an important element of a runner friendly community. The running clubs should host regular group runs, host races, and host social events. The membership fees for these running clubs should be affordable.
- b. The nonprofit running club should show that it is working in collaboration with both public and private organizations to support and promote running throughout the community.
- c. A Runner Friendly Community ideally has a specialty running store along with other runner friendly businesses. Runner friendly businesses (coffee shops, restaurants, other merchants, etc) are engaged with the running community. They host group runs and offer discounts to local running club members; are willing to serve as a pre or post run meeting spot; share their parking lots during non-business hours; allow runners to use their bathroom facilities as needed; serve as safe places that runners can stop at if they need to use the phone or get out of unsafe weather, or fill a water bottle to prevent dehydration; and support clubs through race sponsorships including in-kind donations, publicity, etc.
- d. Runner friendly businesses should be willing to hang the *RRCA Runner Friendly Business* static window decals in a window letting runners know the business supports the running community and is a safe place for runners in times of need. Businesses or RRCA members can purchase *RRCA Runner Friendly Business* static window decals to hang in advance of applying for the designation to show that local businesses are runner friendly.



**3. Local Government Support – A Runner Friendly Community Should be able to prove that it has positive relationships between the running community and local government:**

- a. Runner Friendly Communities have officials that work closely with the local running community to secure race permits for safe and desirable racecourses with a reasonable permit pricing structure.
- b. Race permits issued for preferred course locations and dates.
- c. Local government should not impose excessive liability insurance requirements on the running community. The RRCA considers anything above \$1 million per occurrence excessive required coverage for events hosted by nonprofit organizations and anything above \$2 million per occurrence excessive coverage for events hosted by for-profit race directing companies. The RRCA has decades of claims history to justify this criterion.
- d. Law enforcement is a positive partner in event planning as opposed to a roadblock – excessive fees, scheduling challenges, etc.
- e. Law enforcement pro-actively supports pedestrian rights, address complaints about pedestrian safety including monitoring dangerous intersections, etc.
- f. No to low reports of crime on pedestrian networks with runner/pedestrian safety measures in place and areas patrolled regularly by law enforcement. Community responds to runner complaints by sending officers to locations.
- g. Community (park board, city officials, local health dept, running clubs and stores) actively promote physical fitness, including running, as part of a healthy lifestyle.

**Additional bonus criteria:**

- h. Youth running programs (track, cross country, youth clubs) are in place in area schools (grade, middle, high) or hosted through the local running club.
- i. Community should have a physical activity promotion outreach plan that includes information about local running clubs and events. The local community plan should relate to the National Physical Activity Plan\*.
- j. Trail/path system has mile markers, directional signs, and/or maps on the course.
- k. Pedestrian networks should have safety guidelines posted at various locations. See the RRCA Multi-use trail safety guidelines for more information. These guidelines should include information about safe use of personal music devices.
- l. Trails/paths provide soft surface in additional to paved surfaces.
- m. Community has a reclaiming program for old/unused land i.e. “rails to trails”.
- n. Run@Work Day event hosted by local businesses or local government entities.
- o. Water fountains are dog friendly.
- p. Local community involved with volunteerism at running events.
- q. Community has indoor running facility available.
- r. Local media supports and promotes running activities by promoting up-coming races and race results. Local media should support runners’ safety by including safety tips in reports about running.

**The nomination requirements include the following:**

**(to be submitted by an RRCA member with endorsement from community leaders as outlined below)**

1. An official representative from an RRCA member running club, event, or specialty running shoe store must submit an official online nomination outlining how your community meets some or all of the criteria outlined above.
2. The nomination must demonstrate that the community is working in collaboration with both public and private organizations to support running.



3. Three to six letters of support for the nomination must be mailed or emailed to the RRCA National Office. All letters must be on official letterhead. One letter must be from the president of an RRCA nonprofit member running club or event endorsing the nomination on behalf of their organization. The remaining letters must be from a mix of public leaders (mayor, government department heads, city council members, etc.) and private business owners (corporate CEOs, restaurant owners, store owners, for-profit events, etc.) for a total of six letters maximum. The letters should be scanned and emailed as a packet or mailed as a packet from the official representative making the nomination.
4. Optional submission: submit one (1) MPG video showcasing how the community meets some or all of the criteria outlined above. The video should include statements from the applicant, local official(s), business owners, and local runners along with spotlights of marquee community infrastructure. This video must be no longer than five (5) minutes and no larger than 500 megabytes. Video must be saved in MPG format if mailed on disc or thumb drive. A link to the video can be posted on YouTube or other video hosting service with the URL noted in the online nomination form.

### **Benefits of receiving the RRCA Runner Friendly Community designation:**

1. Community listed as a Runner Friendly Community on RRCA website for a 5-year period. After 5 years, a community should resubmit a nomination to prove they continue to be a Runner Friendly Community.
2. Receive a plaque to be placed in city hall or community's location of choice. Additional plaques will be available for purchase.
3. Community featured as a Runner Friendly Community in a national press release from the RRCA, featured in one issue of *Club Running* magazine, and in the RRCA Annual Report.
4. Receive up to 50 RRCA Runner Friendly Community window decals to be placed in runner-friendly businesses by the local running club. This will help local runners know which businesses are runner friendly and safe places for runners in times of need. Additional stickers are available for purchase.
5. RRCA will fund attendance (up to \$400) for a designated community representative (Mayor, city council member, running club president, etc.) from the Outstanding Runner Friendly Community to be honored at the RRCA National Convention during the Saturday luncheon.
6. Royalty free use of *RRCA Runner Friendly Community* logo for 5-year period for use on city owned websites, in newsletters, and more.

**APPLY TODAY AT**

**[WWW.RRCA.ORG/PROGRAMS/RUNNER-FRIENDLY-COMMUNITY/](http://WWW.RRCA.ORG/PROGRAMS/RUNNER-FRIENDLY-COMMUNITY/)**

\*The RRCA: Runner Friendly Community program links five of the societal sectors and promotes many of the strategies outlined in the National Physical Activity Plan (details about the Plan can be found at [www.physicalactivityplan.org/index.htm](http://www.physicalactivityplan.org/index.htm))

