

Beyond Greenways

*The Next Step for City Trails
and Walking Routes*

Robert Searns

*Walking connects us with
those who walked here
10,000 years ago and those
who will walk this way
10,000 years from now.*

—Paul Gruchow



Benefits of Walking (and biking, running, hiking, etc.)

- **Improve mood**
- **Maintain a healthy weight**
- **Reduce heart, chronic diseases risks**
- **Reduce stress/improve sleep.**
- **Boost brainpower.**
- **Alleviate joint pain.**
- **Stimulate digestive system.**
- **Kickstart immune system.**
- **Enhance creativity.**
- **Make other goals seem more attainable.**
- **Live longer!**

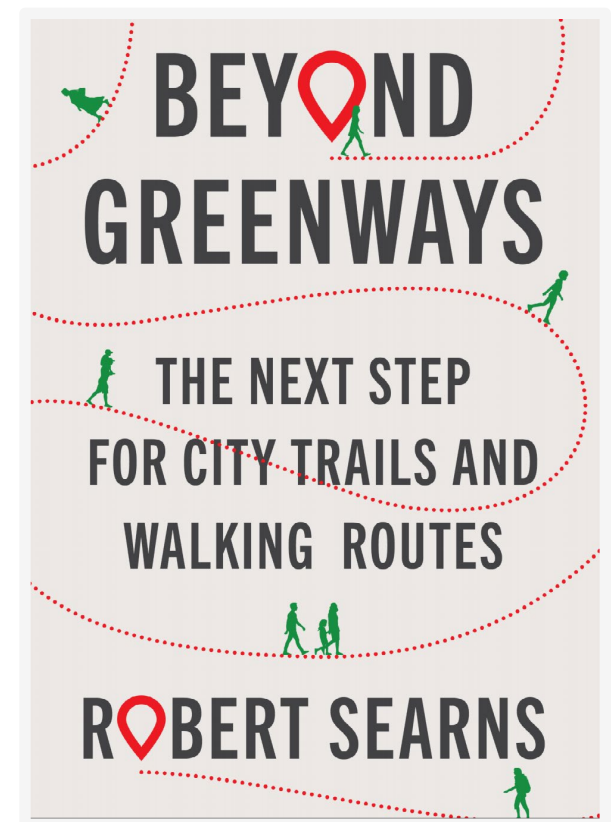
-Prevention Magazine





**This takes
infrastructure!**

This message is about creating a new mode of *green* infrastructure



A New Geometry & New Type of Park Overlay

Frontcountryways!

A New Geometry & New Type of Park Overlay

Walking: The Human ATV



Two Elements:

Grand Loop Trails

Along the edges where city meets countryside

Link green nodes like state/provincial parks & regional open spaces



Town Walks

Connect neighborhoods, parks, civic spaces & social destinations

Routine access & use/an overlay “park”





**Primarily walking--
hiking, trekking, running.**

**Integrated single-track
biking and equestrian as
appropriate**

Grand Loops Around:

Phoenix
Las Vegas
Louisville
Rio de Janeiro
Portland
(Olmsted 40-M Loop)

Dallas?
Buffalo?
Denver?
Toronto?
Sarasota?
Cleveland?
Paris?

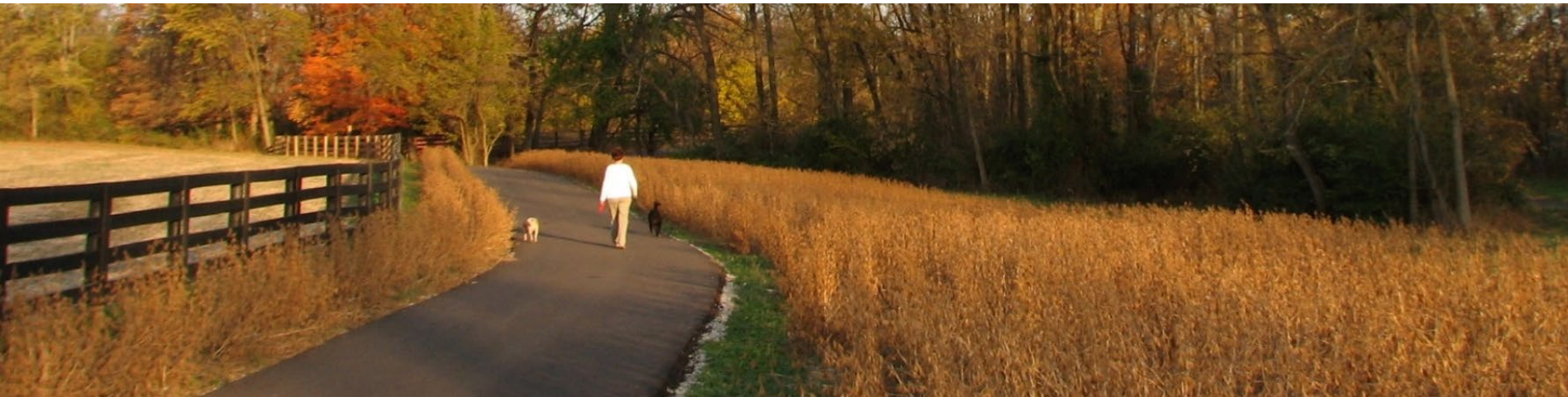
A DAY-TRIP OR A MUTLI-DAY PILGRIMAGE!

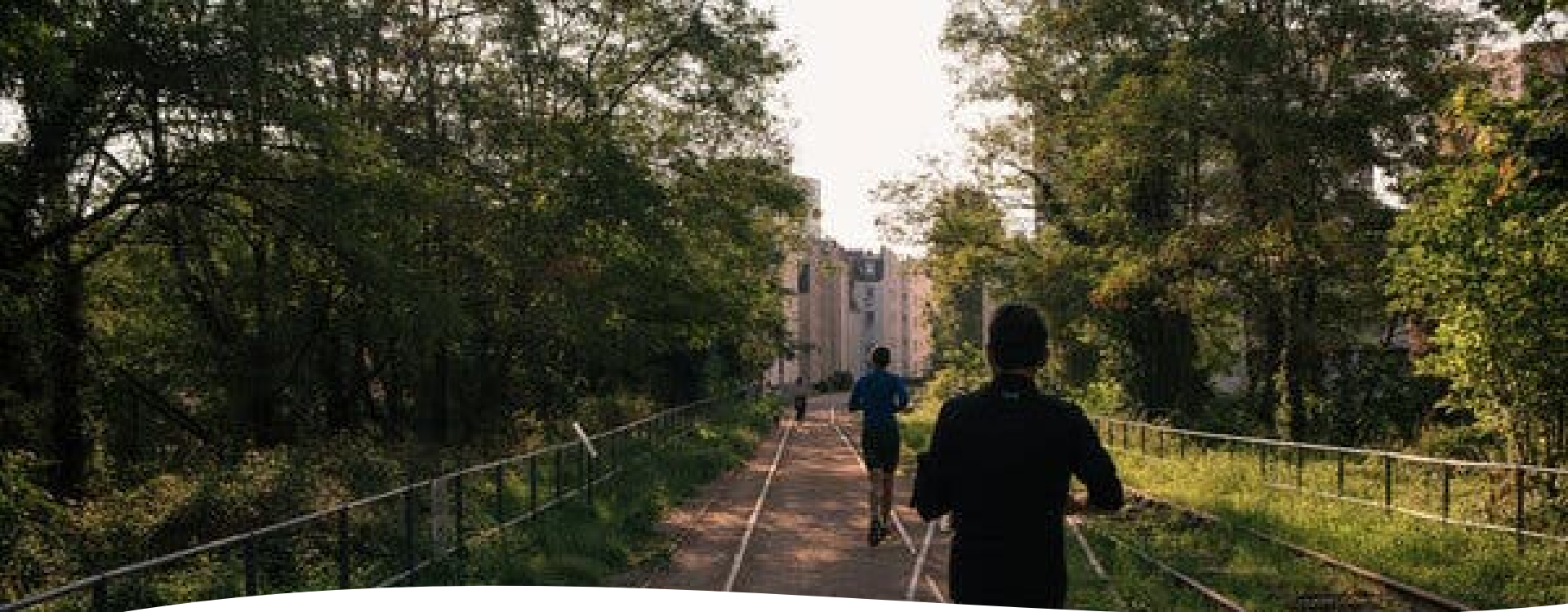
INITIAL STEP: Create a vision plan for the trail with timeline and potential catalytic projects. Initiate partnerships.

Through a cooperative effort among jurisdictions, non-governmental agencies and stewardship partners, create—over the next five years—a continuous, inter-connected, soft-surface grand loop trail around the edges of the Metro Area that accesses and highlights the region's best scenic landscapes, points of cultural interest, state parks, and open spaces. The trail will form a complete "beltway", through the foothills and high plains, totally encircling Metro Denver, roughly 200 miles in length.

Existing greenways and trails will link communities and backcountry destinations to the grand loop. The project will be completed by interconnecting existing—and adding—high quality trails and routes. Significant segments are already in place. Goal is to close gaps, enhance quality, add amenities, establish wayfinding and brand the corridor as a signature destination.

The Peak-to-Prairie Trek Committee
Bart Miller, Chair, Attorney, Collins Cockrel & Cole
John Brackney, Webolutions
Ann Backer Eastley, Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado
Julie George, Livewell Colorado



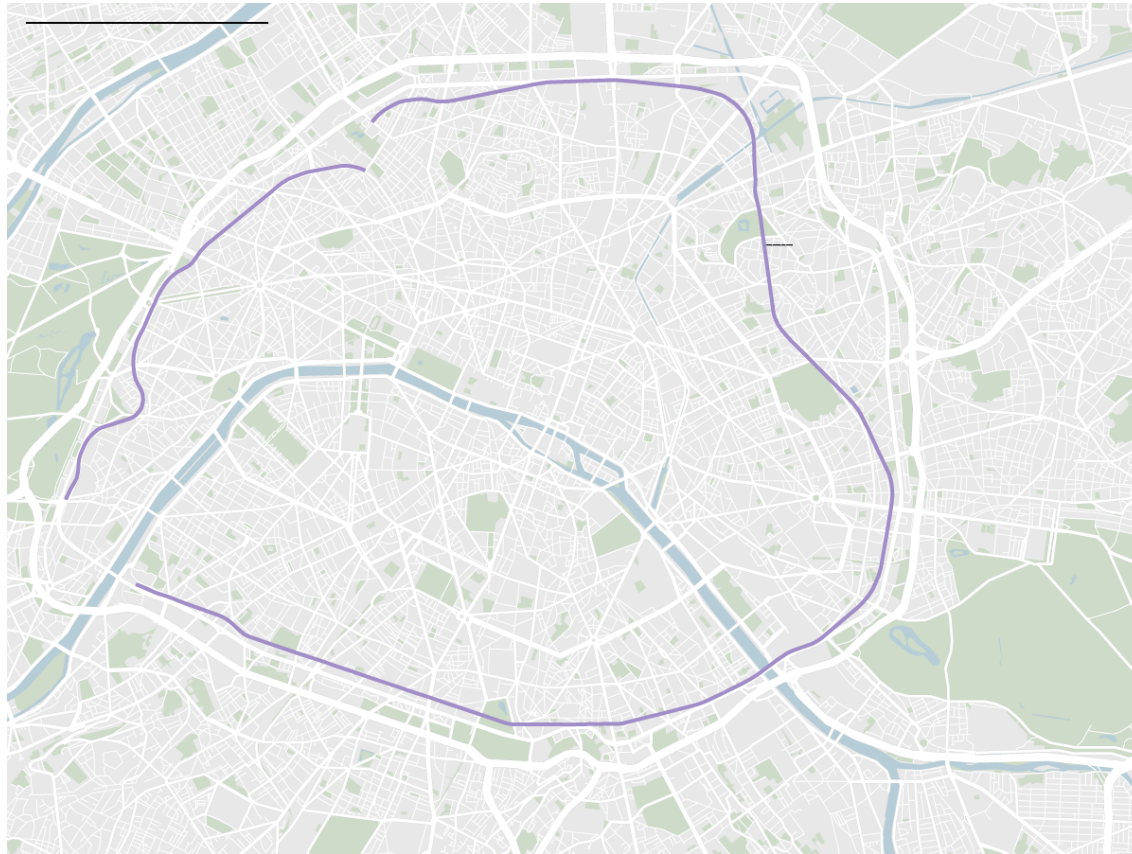


Source Dmitry Kostyukov for the New York Times

The Paris *Little Belt*

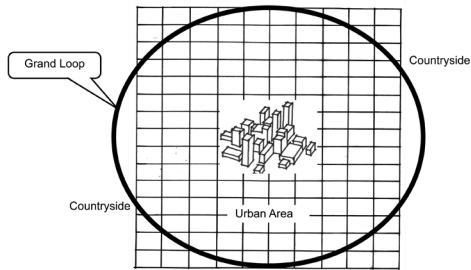
The French capital is converting the tracks into semi-wild oases to provide relief as climate change brings hotter days, although the nature that has flourished there may pay a price.

Juliette Gueron-Gabrielle

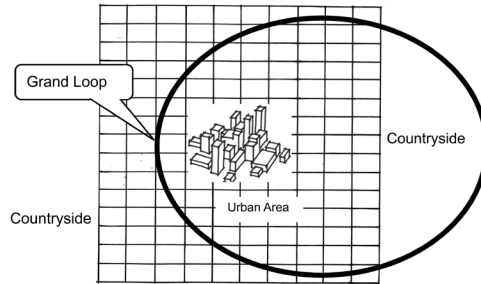


Source New York Times and Petit Ceinture info

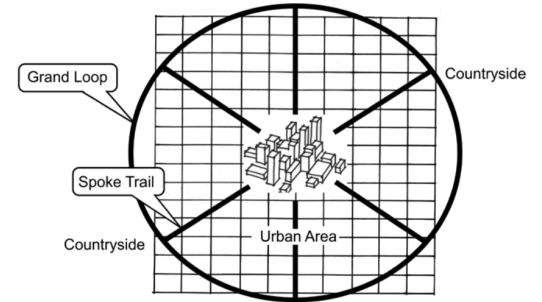
Grand Loop Trail Configurations



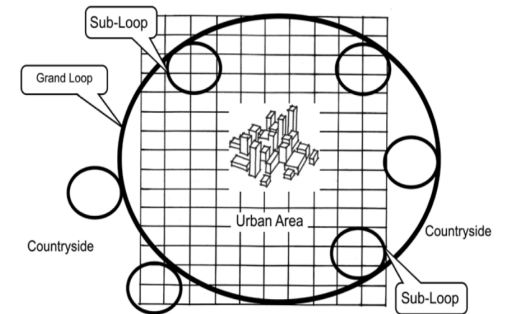
Urban Edge



Hybrid



Wedges to the Edges



Daisy Chain

Grand Loops: Where City Meets Countryside



An alternative to crowded hard-to-get-to outdoor destinations



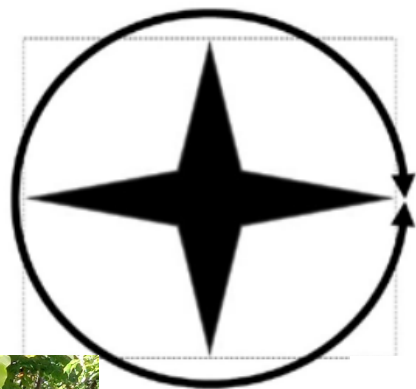
Town Walks: For Everyday Outings

**Routine
Exercise...and
Solace**

**Every Day: Like
Brushing your
Teeth!**



Town Walks



Destination



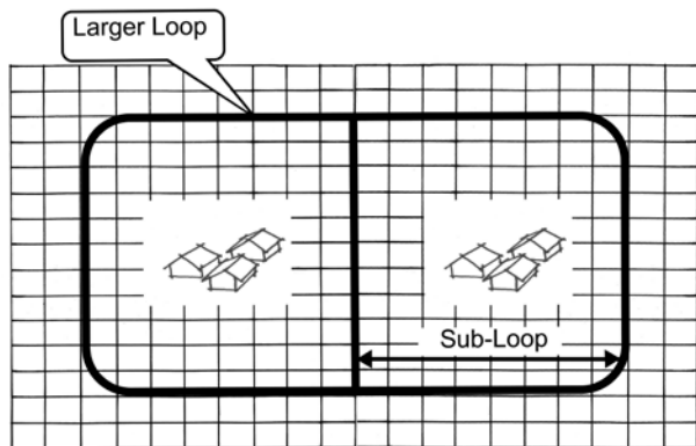
Community



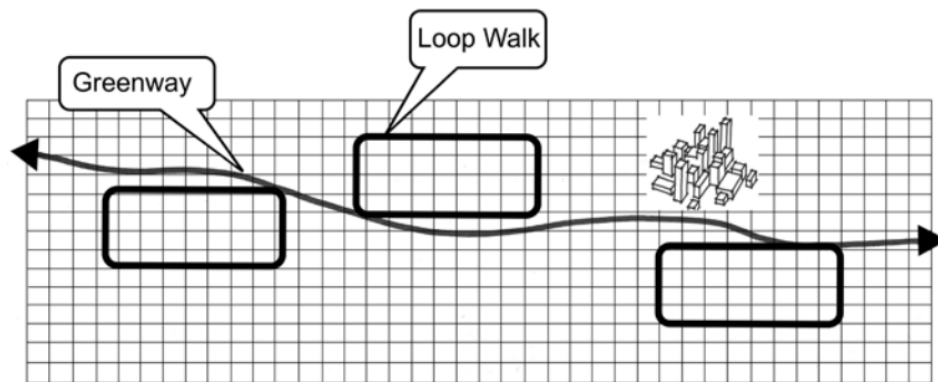
Doorstep



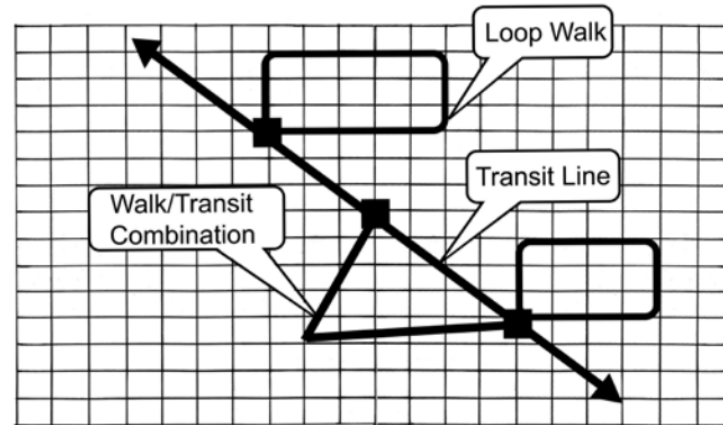
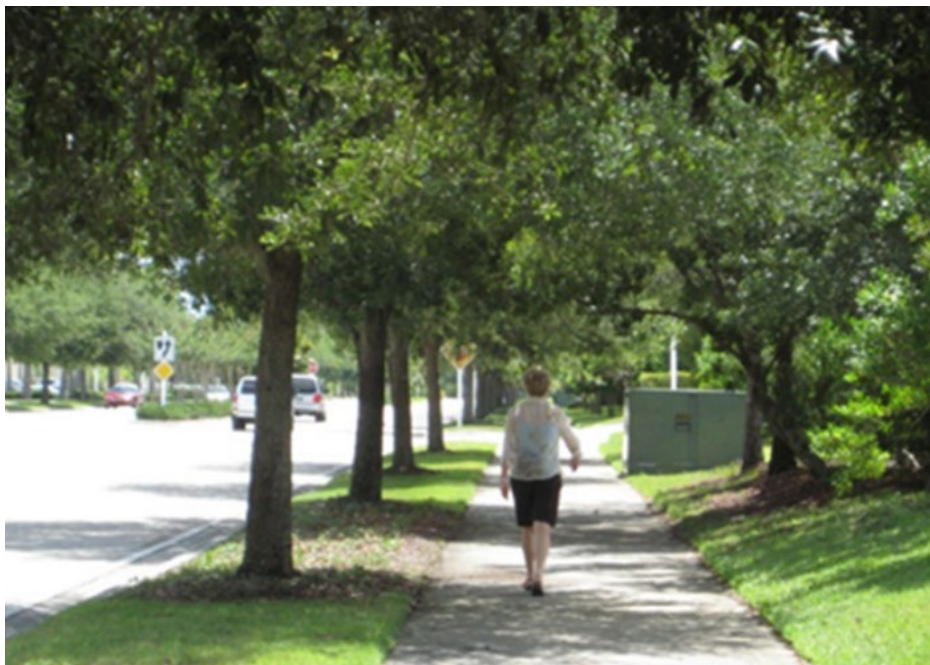
Town Walks Configurations



Prototypical

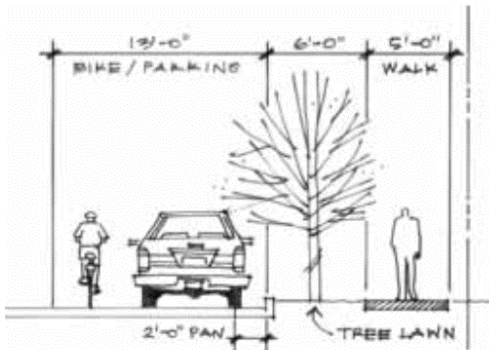


Attached to a Greenway



Attached to Transit Stops

Town Walks (Every Doorstep a Trail Head)



Line art: Bill Neumann

The Turquoise Trail:

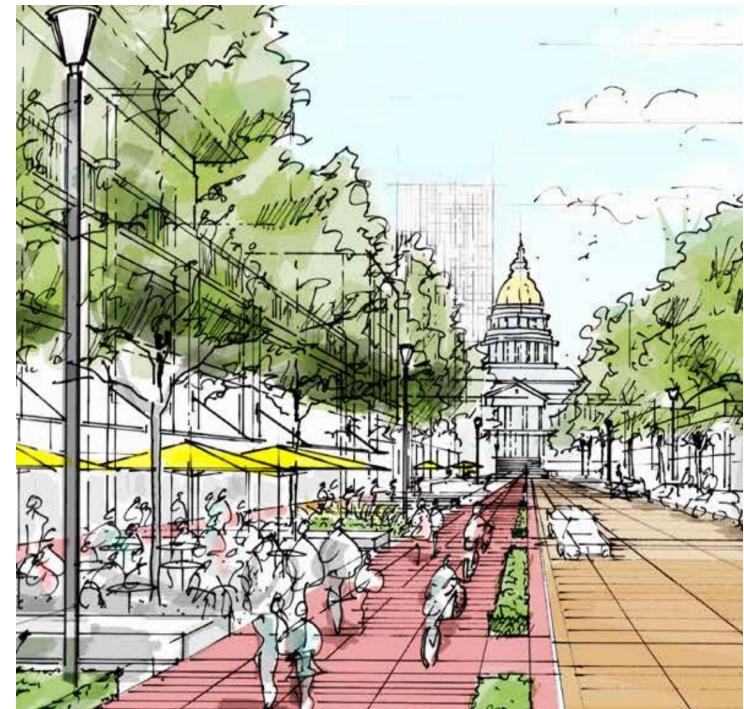
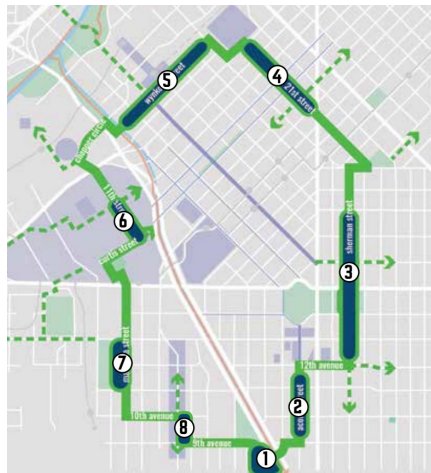
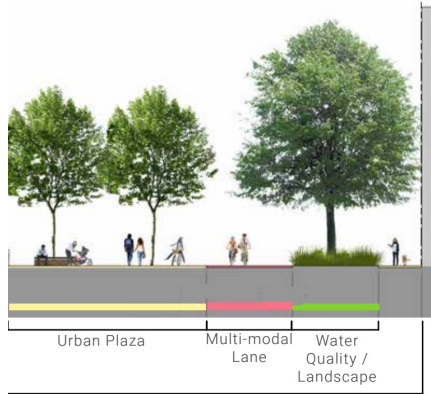
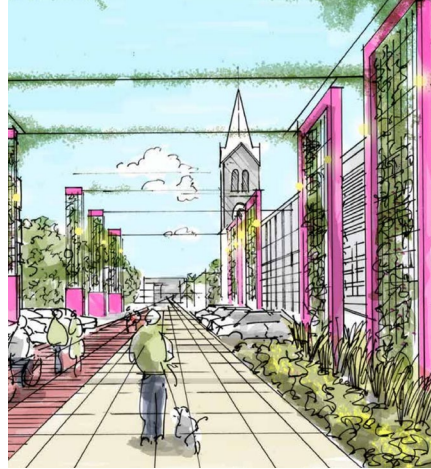
Two Ladies & A Bucket of Paint

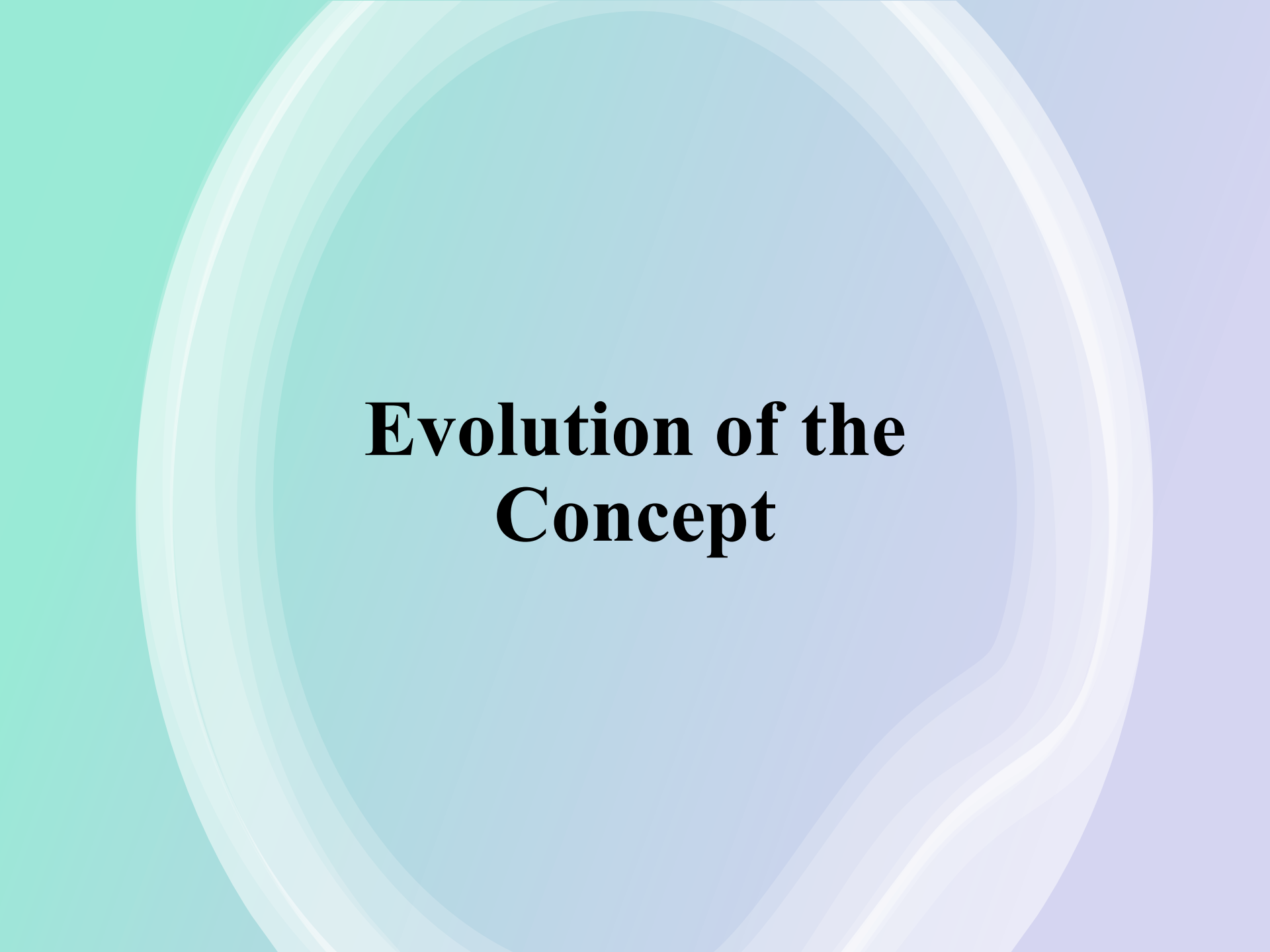


The 5280 Trail

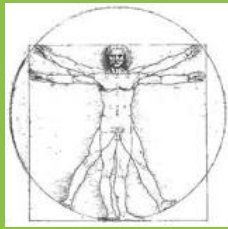
A High-End Town Walk

Art: Civitas and Denver Partnership





Evolution of the Concept



Evolution:

Green space as an adaptive urban form

From

- *boulevards*
- *to parkways*
- *greenways*
- *grand loops & town walks*

1st Gen:
Boulevards
Since ancient China

The Grands Boulevards by Renoir Philadelphia Museum of Art



**2nd Gen:
Parkways
*19th Century***

Bidwell Parkway Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy



3rd Gen:
Greenways
1974-Present Times







*4th Gen:
Grand Loops & Town Walks
(Frontcountryways)
Present Times--Forward*

Painting by Sally Preston



Greenways: Linear—Rivers, Rails & Ridges (Hike & Bike)

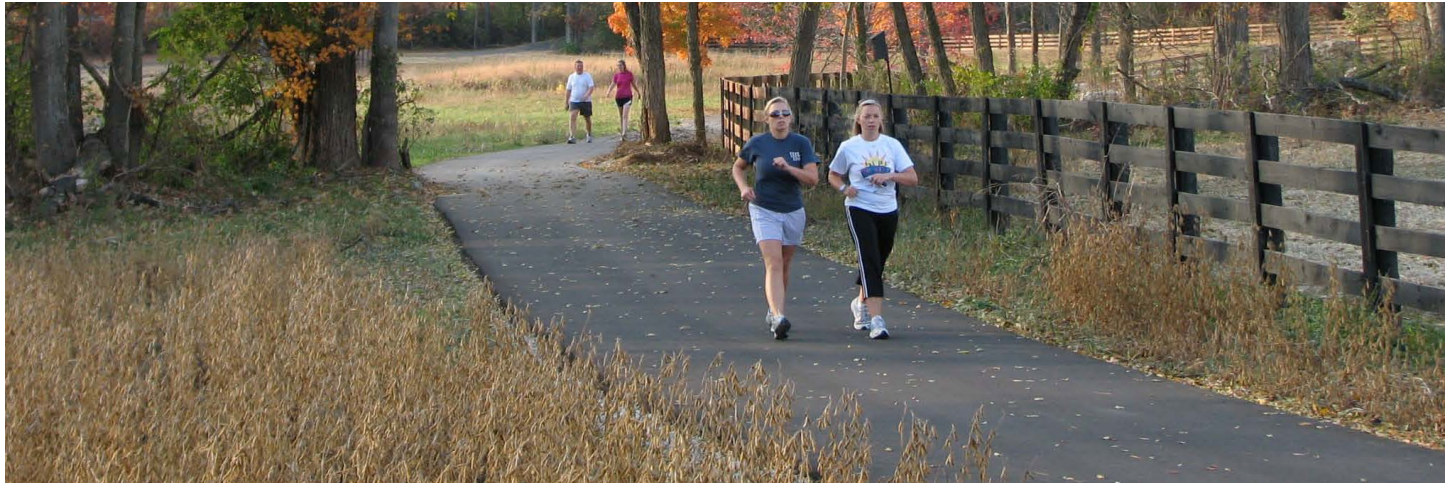
They follow the grain shaped by terrain. Defined by “topography”.

Grand Loops and Town Walks—Circular (Foot travel emphasis)

*They flow against the grain shaped by opportunity & the experience.
More Flexible.*



Ultimately, they can create a network of locally accessible paths by adapting and defining routes within the existing urban fabric.





Diverse Equitable Access

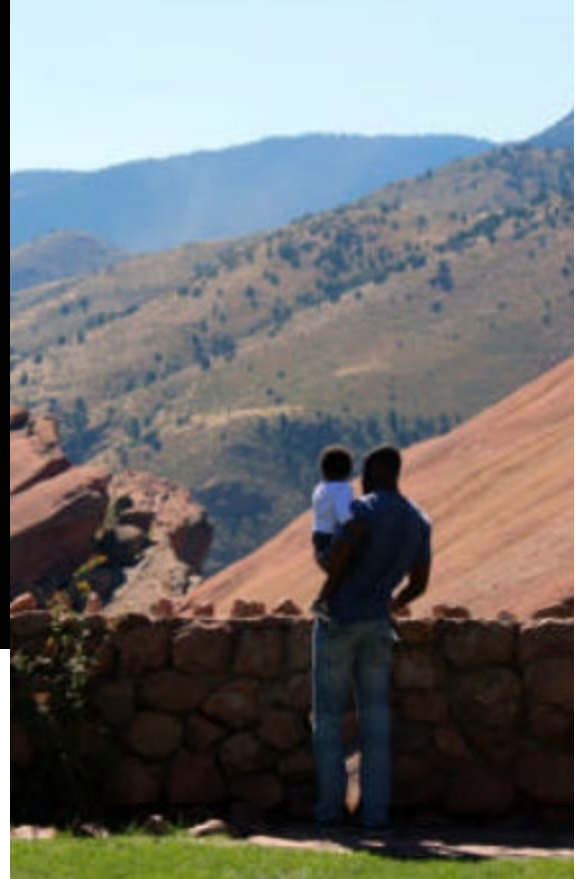
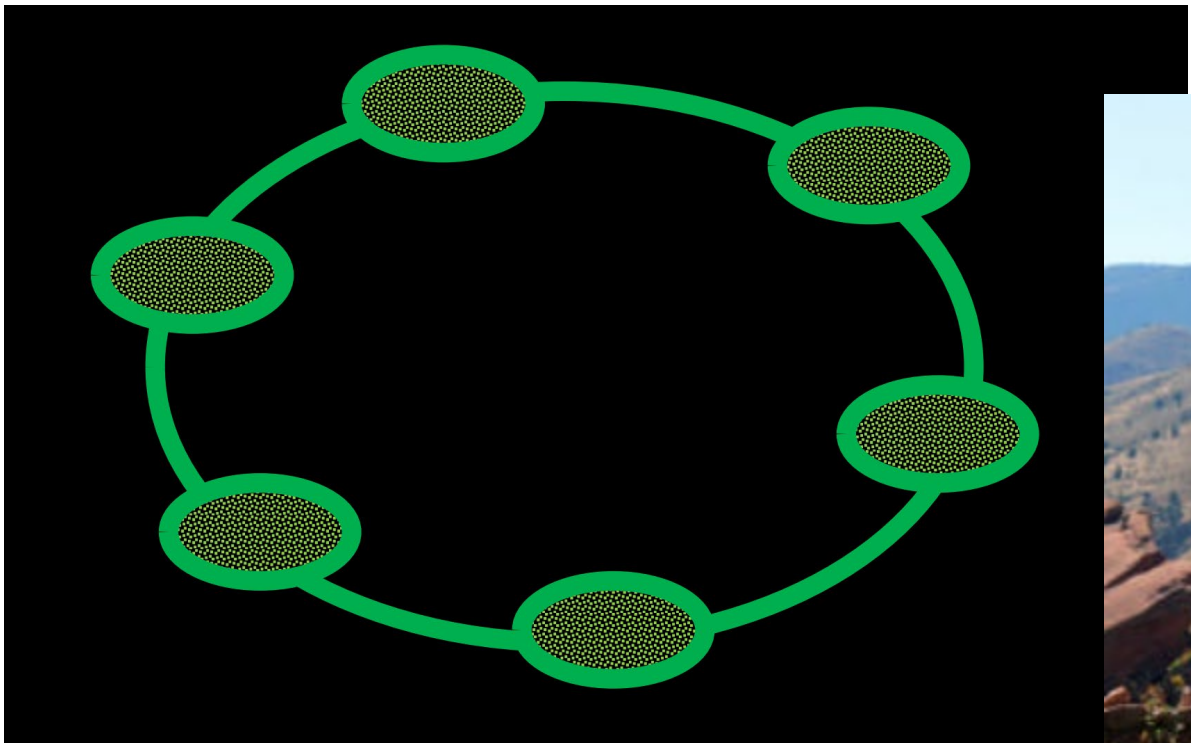


Diverse Equitable Access



And Lightweight Travel

They can link green nodes (places) like regional parks & open spaces
Into a *daisy chain*—A green *charm bracelet*!



**A Legacy of
*The Right to Roam***



“The Old Ways” The ethos of pathways and trails as a right of passage in Europe created centuries ago.

-Robert Macfarlane



***Allemansrätten* (everyman's right) The right of any citizen to walk anywhere on uncultivated land provided he does no harm...to ramble, to sleep, to light a campfire, to swim in a stream, to pick nuts and berries...the routes of liberty**

--Robert Macfarlane



The eroding right to roam





**Planning & Design
The Experience!**

It's All About the Experience!



Pathways of Perception:

The Sensory Experience

Close & Long views

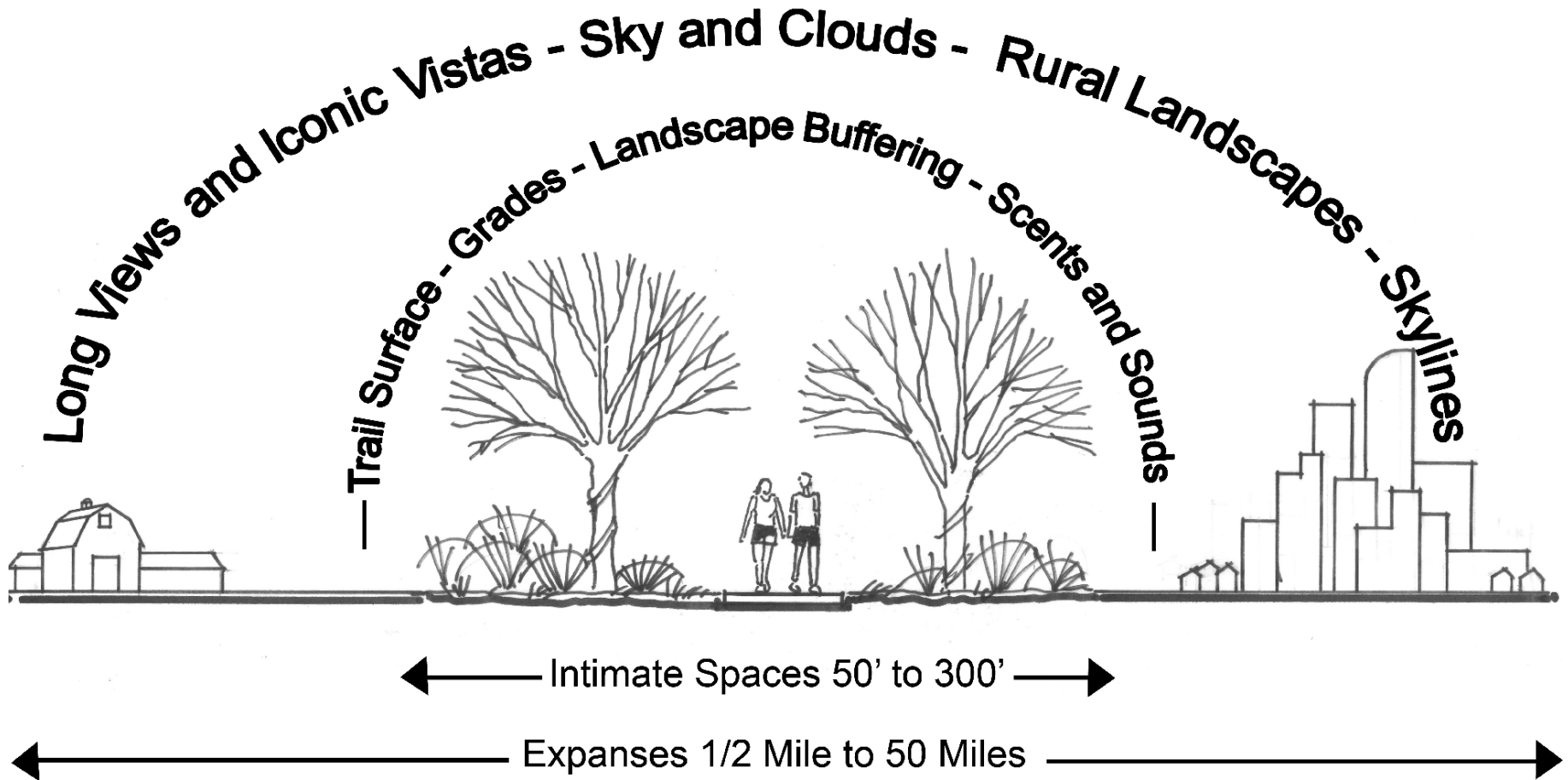
Amenities and Comforts

Variety & Interest

Character Districts



Pathways of Perception



Route Characteristics

Pleasant, stimulating routes that promote regular use

Interesting waypoints such as parks, greenways, landscaping, architecture, and cultural icons

Practical local and regular trip destinations such as schools, convenience stores, transit stops, rec. centers, coffee shops, etc.

**Strategically placed rest points, shelters and amenities
(water/snacks)**



Components

The Tread:

Dirt surface

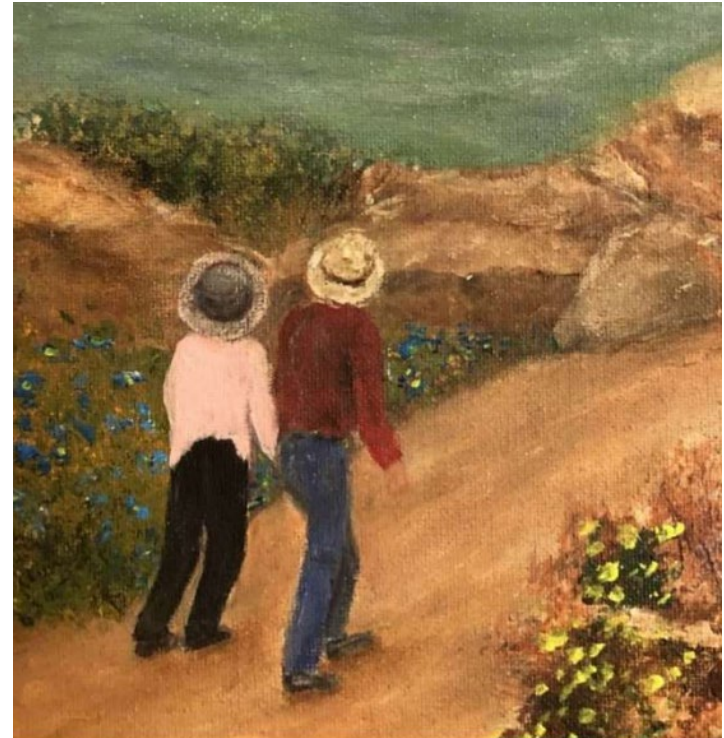
Improved sidewalk

Gravel/crusher fines

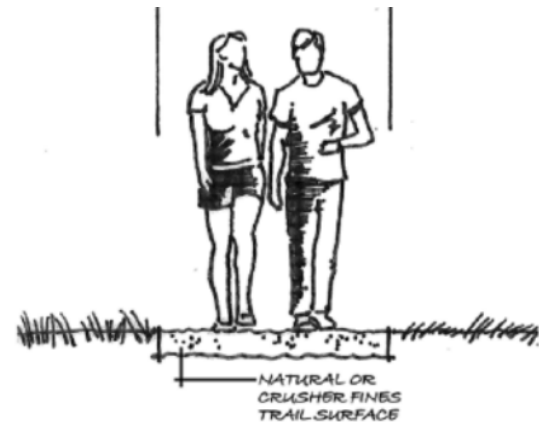
Walkable Streets

Paved/Hike Bike

Snow

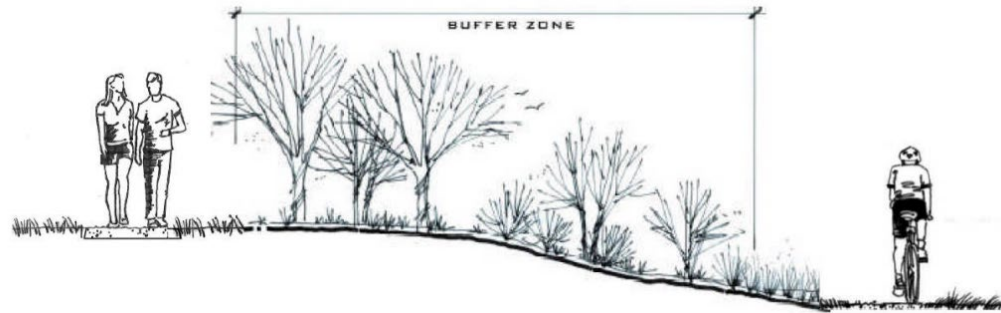


Grand Loops Tread--Ideally two people can walk side by side



Line art: Bill Neumann

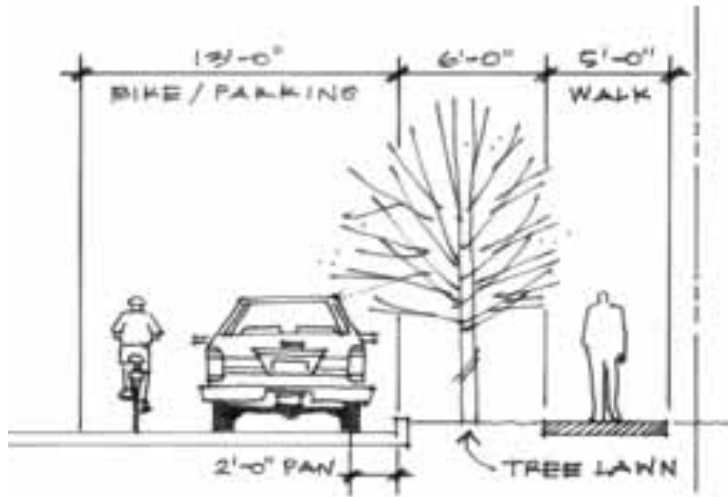
If possible, separate bikes & peds.



Line art: Bill Neumann

Town Walks:

Quality sidewalks—(Min 5'-wide with tree median)



Line art: Bill Neumann

Upgraded and deluxe routes



On-street treads: People have already created their own walking streets! (assure low volume, low speeds and visibility)



The background features several overlapping, semi-transparent circles in shades of teal and light blue. The largest circle is centered and contains the text. Other smaller circles are visible in the top-left and bottom-right corners.

Creature Comforts & Necessities

Wayfinding

Rest points

Water & Food

Toilets

Shelter, shade

Places to sleep

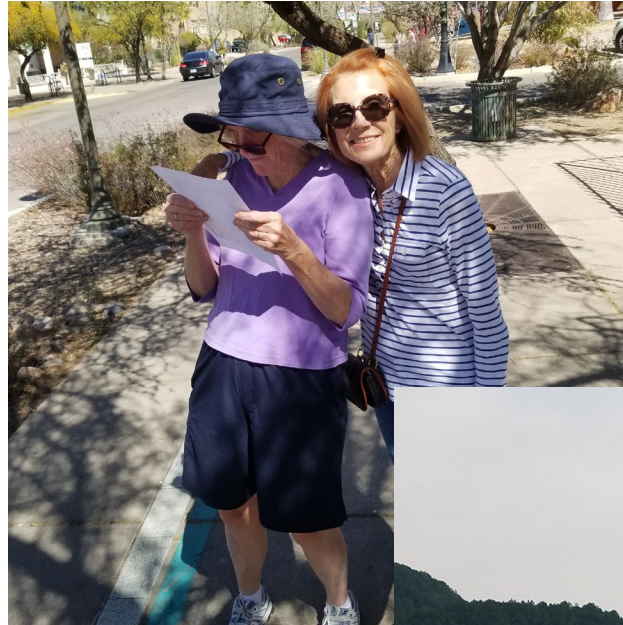
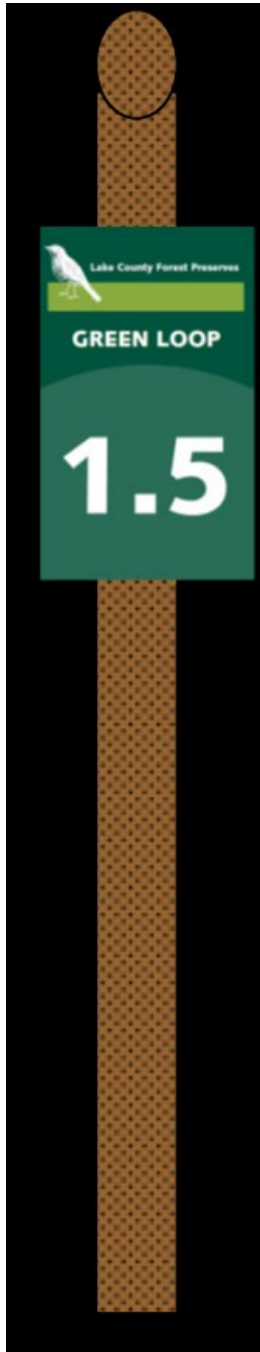
& Places to duck out

The question of “range anxiety”

-Vanny Mwamba



Wayfinding, Branding, Interpretation



Creature Comforts: hydration, nutrition, places to rest, use the toilet, sleep, find shade and places to duck out



Conveniently and regularly spaced

Creature Comforts



Conveniently and regularly spaced

Places to duck out (*waypoints*)



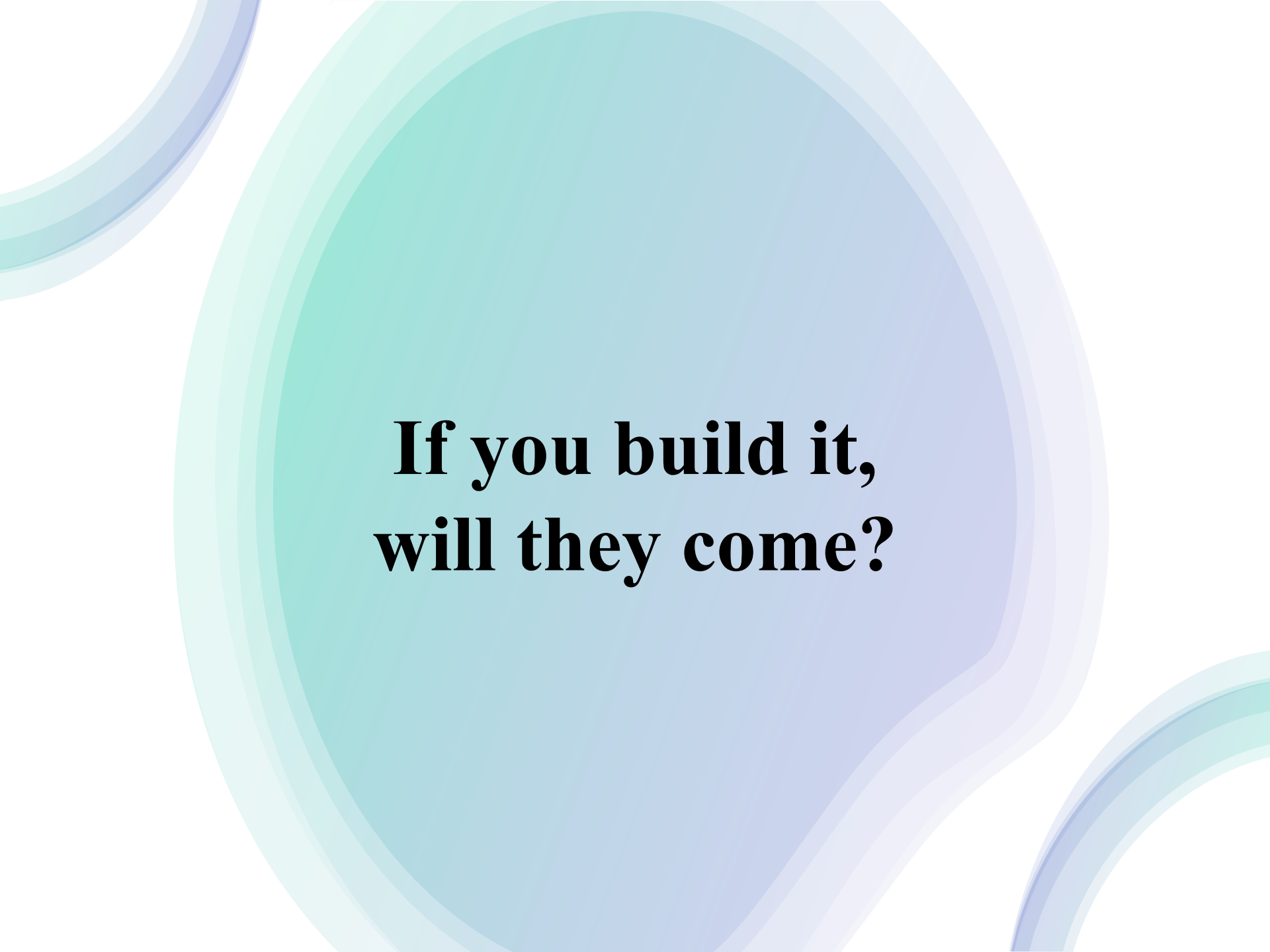
Conveniently and regularly spaced

ADA Accessibility

***Town Walks*—always meet standards of accessibility**

***Grand Loops* –Wherever feasible—or pursue parallel routes for people with mobility challenges.**





**If you build it,
will they come?**

Enable, encourage & motivate

Make hiking “a walk in the park”.

-New York Times *wirecutter* July 23,2023





The question of engagement:

Walking, running, and hiking are the first, second, and third most popular activities in the United States, with more than 145 million people (6 in 10) participating.

But...

There are tens of millions who don't participate, with dire health and wellbeing consequences.

What Gets People Walking Daily? (Goal of Total 30 min/Day)

Purpose and Destinations

Pleasant, Interesting Routes

Fitness Goals

Safe, Comfortable Corridor

Amenities

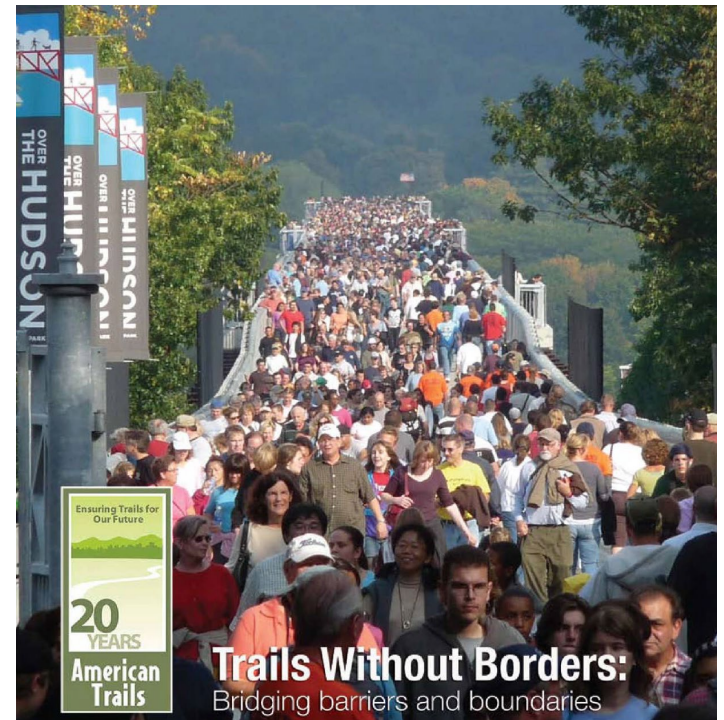
Pets

Opportunity for Socializing

Branding and Wayfinding

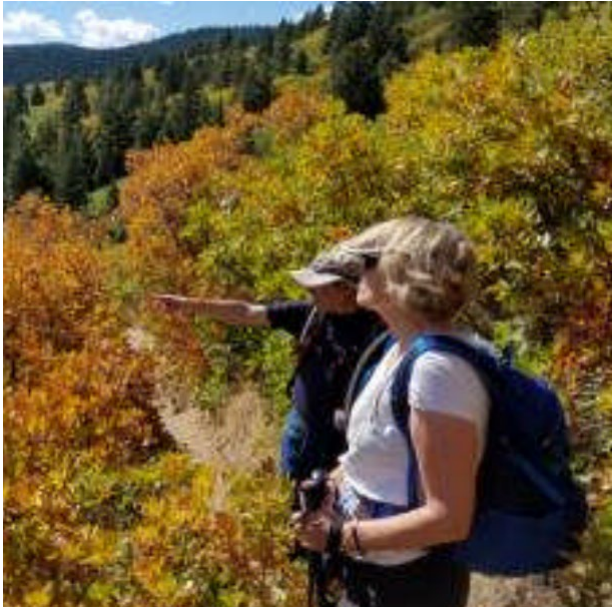
Convenience and Available Time

Overcoming *range anxiety*

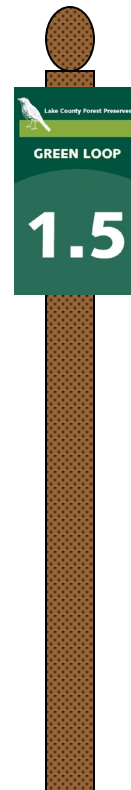


Destinations, Waypoints, Gathering and Social Spaces

“3rd place” concept



Enable and promote local daily access with strategic placement of routes, branding and clear in-the-field (as well as on-line) demarcation and way-finding.



& access/transportation to them



lyft

W A L K S



Welcoming

A

L

K

S



Welcoming Accessible

L

K

S



Welcoming
Accessible
Layout quality
K
S



Welcoming
Accessible
Layout quality
Konnectivty
S



Welcoming
Accessible
Layout quality
Konnectivty
Stimulating





Making Them Happen

The Advantage of the Human ATV



Gravel Bike Where Appropriate

Some Hip Tips

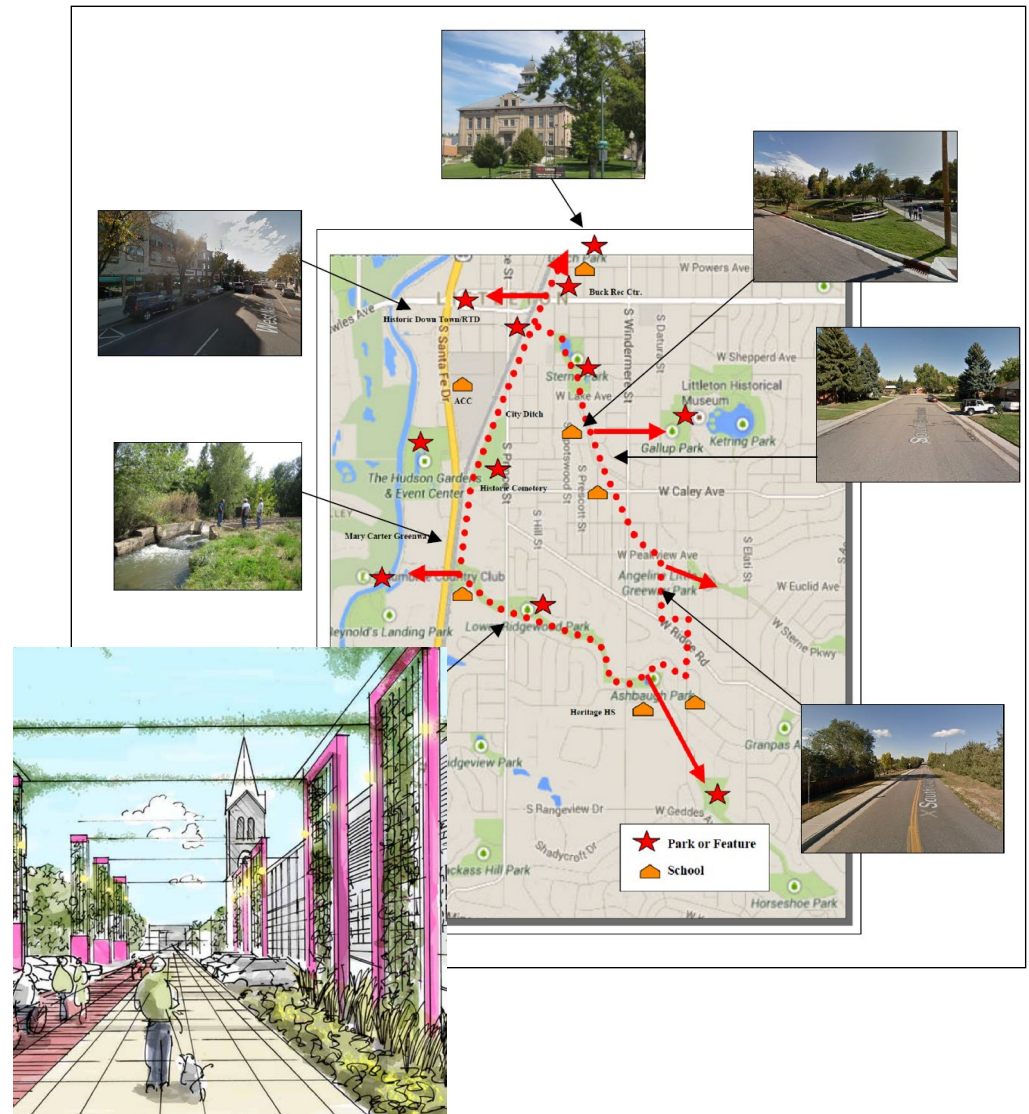
Plant the seed with an inspiring vision

Identify catalytic projects

Identify seed funds and work toward potential public & philanthropic grants

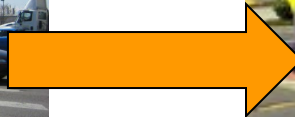
Build a proof-of-concept logical, usable pilot project

Initiate similar projects ongoing & cut ribbons yearly



Art: Civitas and Denver Partnership

Identify critical barriers & connect!



Adapt existing infrastructure

With tweaks & enhancements, use existing walks, trails & greenways provided they offer safe, pleasant, easy-to-access routes.



The background features several overlapping, semi-transparent circles in shades of teal and light blue. The largest circle is centered and contains the text. Other smaller circles are partially visible at the top-left and bottom-right corners.

The Benefits

An Investment!



- **Enjoyment/Pleasure (Park Overlay)**
- **Green Infrastructure**
- **Public Health/Fitness Mental and Physical**
- **Tourism and Sustainable Travel—Walk Like a Local”**
- **Economic/Neighborhood Improvement**
- **Social Place Making (“the 3rd place”)**
- **Active Transportation**

And more....



- **Alternative to overcrowded outdoor destinations**
- **Enables ultra-light hiking**
- **Addresses loss of places to roam**
- **Less costly type of trail to build and maintain**
- **Youth and volunteer engagement in projects**
- **Help reduce \$4.3 Trillion on health costs**



Beyond Silo Thinking: Synergistic Opportunities & Interfaces

- **Urban Shaping—greenbelts, overlay parks (*The 15-min City?*)**
- **Wildfire Management/Grazing Commons**
- **Stormwater Management Wetland and Floodplain Nodes**
- **Rehabilitation Spaces (Walking and trail building to engage at-risk youth per French and Korean models)**
- **Climate resilience (urban forestry, places to get cool and places that cool the city off.)**
- **Artistic Expression**
- **Event routes such as “free streets”, first Fridays, marathons and Ciclovía**

Others ???





**A Trek Around the
“City of No Illusions”**

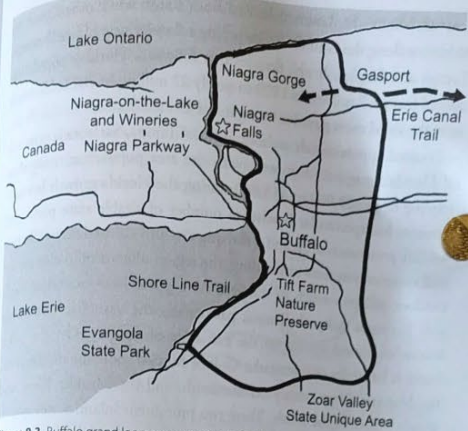
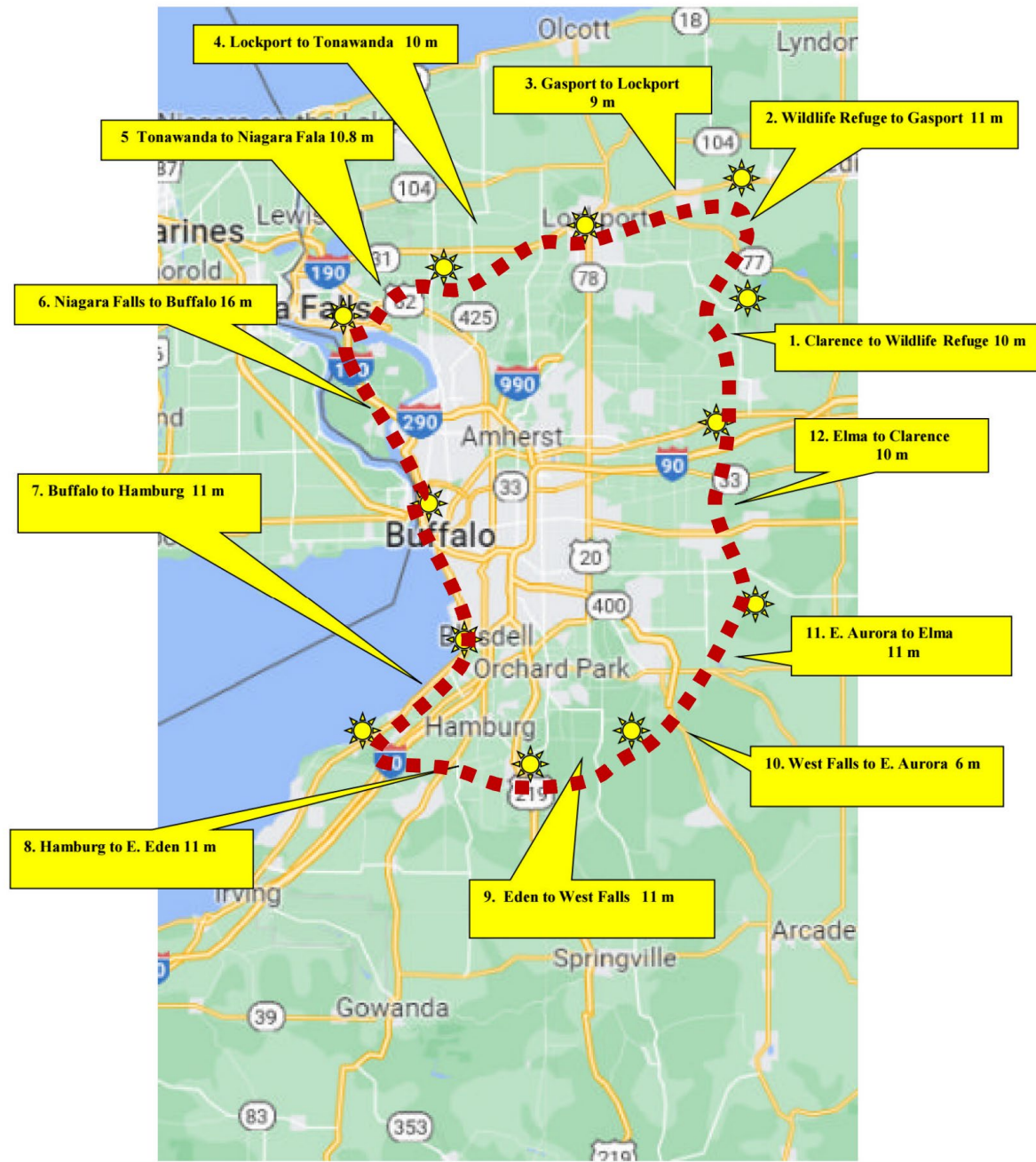


Figure 8.3. Buffalo grand loop concept. (Credit: Bill Neumann)

route could head further north, following the Somerset Rail Trail to the Lake Ontario shore. It would then head west along an already proposed extension of the Shoreline Trail to Youngstown and to the lake.



From Print to the Foot: Walking the Talk

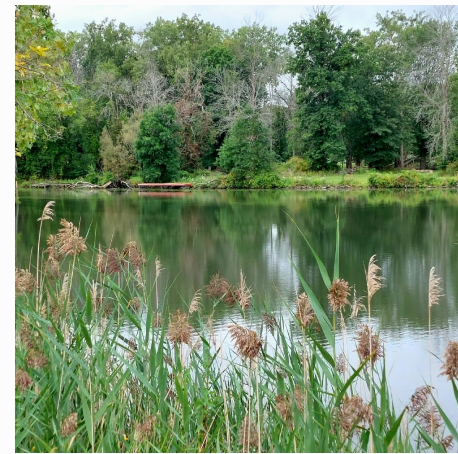


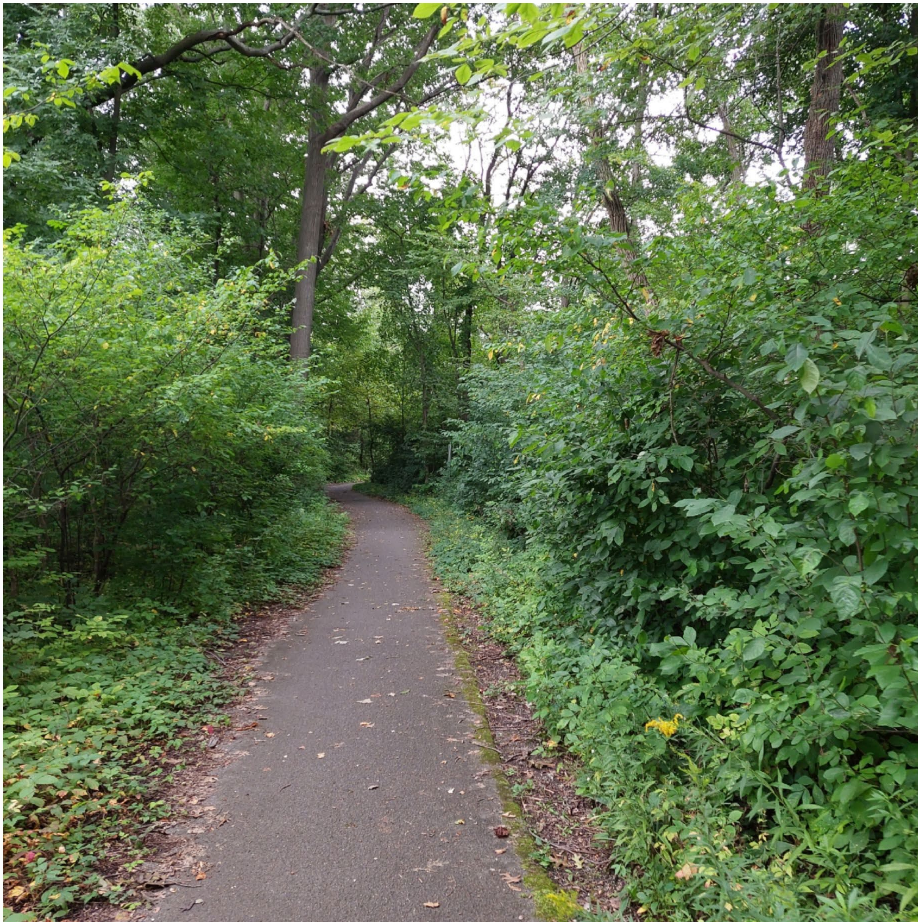
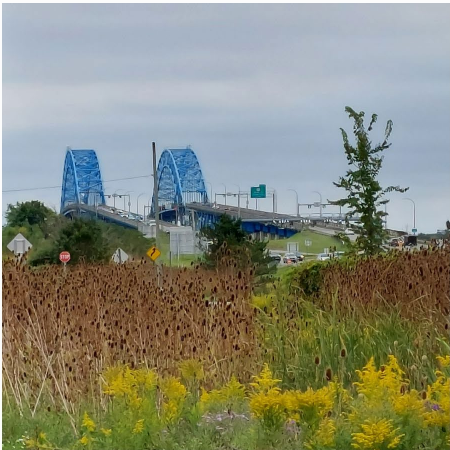
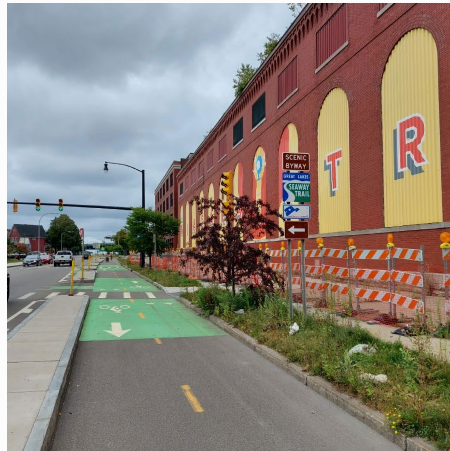
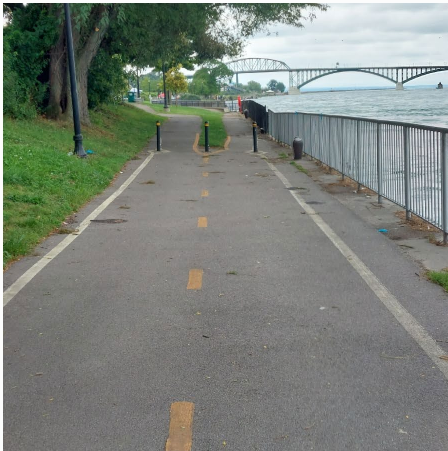
10 mi 

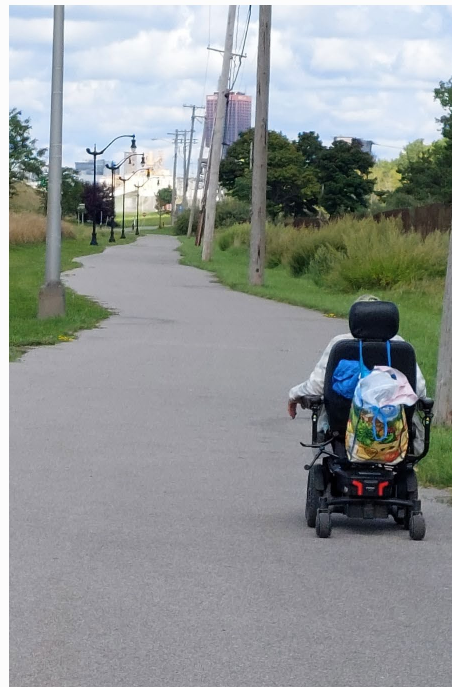
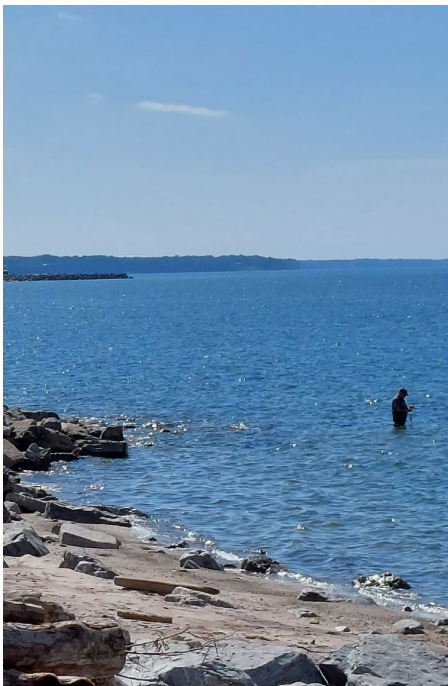
















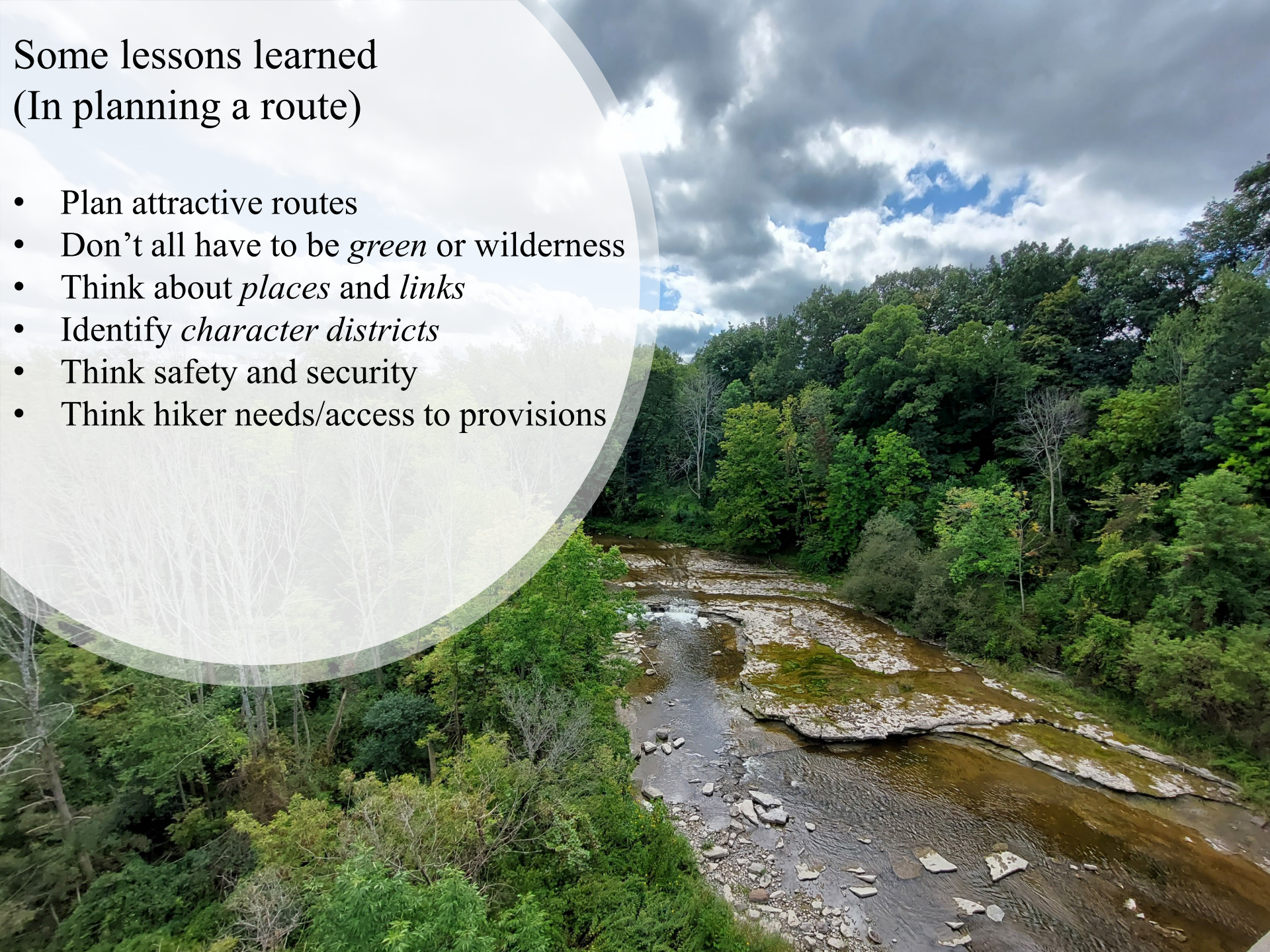
Lessons Learned

(In laying out a trek and to help overcome *range anxiety*)

- ***Google Maps* priceless!**
- **Places to stay, find hydration/food, lodging, to duck out in weather**
- **10-12 mi. optimal walk**
- **Establish *waypoints* (Go point to point)**
- **Rideshares a huge help!**
- **Country roads can be busy**
- **Walk facing the traffic**
- **Coordinate check-in/check out times at lodging**
- **Cell is critical/extra battery**
- **Prep to trek**

Some lessons learned (In planning a route)

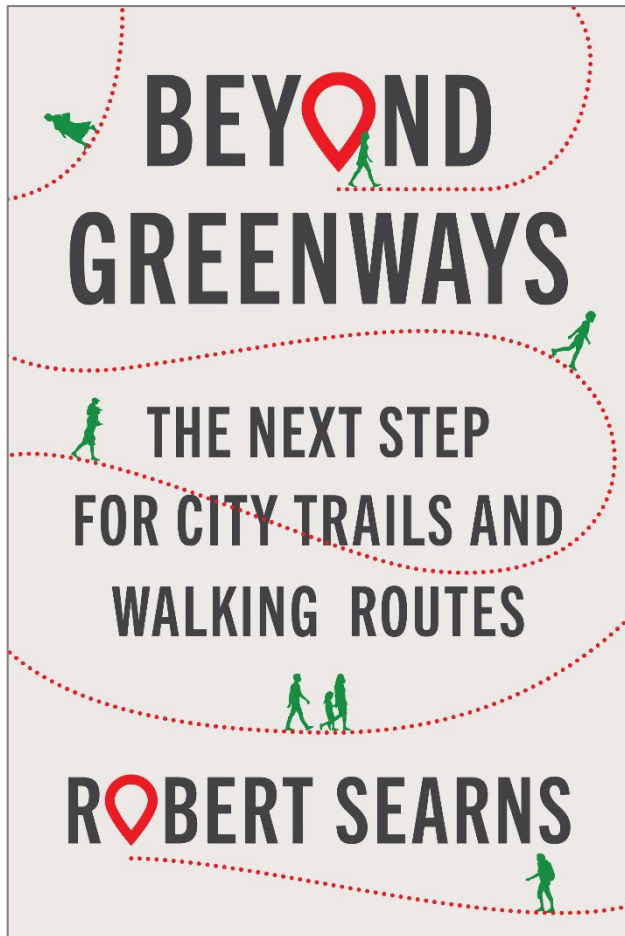
- Plan attractive routes
- Don't all have to be *green* or wilderness
- Think about *places* and *links*
- Identify *character districts*
- Think safety and security
- Think hiker needs/access to provisions



Some lessons learned (In planning a route)

- Think about users and motorists
- Aim for off-street or buffered lanes
- Seek out streams and shore corridors
- Leverage green spaces/conservation





Beyond Greenways

The Next Step for City Trails
and Walking Routes

Robert Searns

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beyond-greenways](http://www.islandpress.org/books/beyond-greenways)

Thank you!!!!

