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Greenways and the making of urban form

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Abstract

One aspect of greenways which is exciting popular interest in the US is the durability of nineteenth-century parkways and park systems to stitch together fragmenting cities and urbanizing areas. What the Olmsteds, Cleveland, Eliot and Kessler achieved in their regional open-space plans can be the model for a new version of Howard's "town/country" in which greenways/ greenbelts/greenspaces together make a comprehensive "green" infrastructure.

Some of the literature and the highlights of historic greenway planning and design in the US are reviewed. Their adaptation to current projects is illustrated through a series of case studies of gradually increasing scale—villages, towns, cities and regions. Such common strategies as "green" streets, parks and playgrounds structuring walkable neighborhoods, intra-neighborhood parkways connecting town/city districts, and regional park systems protecting natural areas for recreation/conservation still confer similar social, economic and environmental benefits. Whether Pedestrian Pockets or Co-housing, expanding historic settlements or preserving the countryside, planning new

“urban villages” or neo-traditional towns, greenways can be powerful makers and shapers of urban form at both macro- and micro-scales.



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Keywords

Greenways; Landscape history; Town and country planning; Urban design; Regional planning

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