

Why a Greenway?



Connect You to
nature and your
neighbors via
your backdoor

Give Kids
A reason to stay
in NYA or
move back

Preserve
NYA's greatest
natural assets

Promote
Tourism,
quality of life,
physical
activity, and
community
wellness



The concept of connecting open spaces and special places through public linear greenways/trails has been around for over a century:

- The origin of greenways dates back to late 19th Century planning theories such as the “City Beautiful Movement”.
- Fredric Law Olmstead designed Boston’s ‘Emerald Necklace’ and coined the term parkway in 1865.
- Benton MacKaye proposed the Appalachian Trail in 1921.
- The President’s Commission on Americans Outdoors in 1986 reported “. . . if greenways truly captured the American spirit, they could eventually form the corridors that connect open spaces, parks, forest, and deserts – and Americans – from sea to shining sea”.
- In the 1990’s the Mayors of both Denver and Pittsburgh characterized the creation and maintenance of greenways as their cities’ most important economic revitalization program.
- In 1997, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources issued a “Greenprint” for the metropolitan area. The Greenprint includes areas within NYA.
- The 2008 NYA Comprehensive Plan embraces a vision which includes a greenway connecting five area lakes to community gathering spots.

NYA’s leaders have embraced the concept of a Legacy Greenway for its potential to connect places within the community to nature, to each other, and to spots where the community gathers for different occasions. Leaders view these connections as being integral to the retaining a sense of small-town, community atmosphere and quality of life.

The benefits of multi-purpose greenways are clear and convincing. Formal studies confirm greenways: contribute to livable communities, preserve natural landscapes (rural atmosphere), encourage physical activity, provide recreational benefits, promote alternative transportation, and draw visitors/tourists.