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Bridging the Divide: Connecting North Jersey Communities and Nature Through Greenway Design

Urban greenways are important to communities for their ability to provide important recreational space, transportation options, ecological services, social connections, and scenic beauty. However, in many urban environments, the process of planning and implementing greenways is difficult. Bergen County has had plans to increase access and recreation opportunities around the Hackensack River since the 1970s. However, none of the large visions have been achieved. Recently, local organizations have begun work on creating a greenway along the Hackensack River. This thesis is meant to give a vision on how to program, plan and design this greenway while considering common challenges and strategies for urban greenway design.

As starting point of this thesis, a suitability analysis was developed in order to identify parcels of land along the Hackensack River ideal for early-stage greenway intervention projects. Additionally, a visual assessment and regional GIS assessment were conducted to inform the route of the greenway. This resulted in a 9.38-mile path system from Overpeck County Park to Van Buskirk Island County Park. Hackensack River County Park was a specific location along the river that was identified as being particularly important to the success of the greenway. Reasons for this include its proximity

to existing open space along the river, county ownership of the land, important habitat for bald eagles, potential for connecting important places of interest along the river, and the diversity of landscape elements found at the park. A site design was created using the guidelines set forth during the overall greenway design.

The process resulted in an overall 9.38-mile greenway route through eight municipalities in North Jersey along the Hackensack River, a site design for Hackensack River County Park, and recommendations for moving forward with the Greenway Plan. Organized on a regional level by the Bergen County Parks Department and carried out with the help of local municipalities, the effort to achieve the greenway plan should include partnerships with local businesses. Ultimately, the Hackensack Greenway has the potential to have long-lasting positive impacts on the local communities around the Hackensack River.

Click here for the full thesis:

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by John Hayton



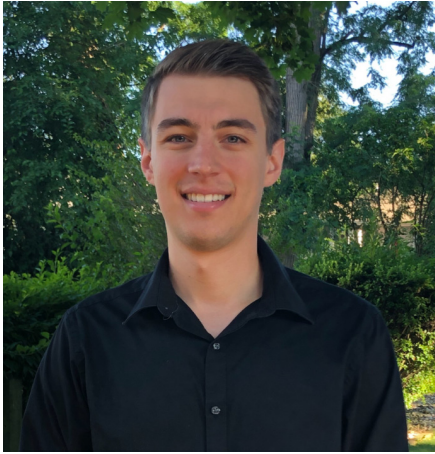
Overall Greenway Concept with path typologies



Section of Hackensack River County Park connecting to Shops at Riverside Mall in Hackensack, New Jersey.



Section of proposed pedestrian bridge entrance to Hackensack River County Park.



John Hayton is a recent graduate of the Rutgers MLA Program. Before entering the program in 2017, he received a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science from Allegheny College. He spent a year working as a staff scientist for Handex Consulting and Remediation, an environmental services and remediation firm in New Jersey. Discovering more interest in creative solutions and designing spaces for people to experience connections to the natural world, he was drawn to the Rutgers Landscape Architecture Program in 2017. His interests include environmental planning, public space design, and ecological design.

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