

The Moshassuck River Greenway:

A Feasibility Study

by

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Thesis

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ABSTRACT

The Principal objective of this thesis has been to determine the overall feasibility of designing and implementing a "greenway" along the Moshassuck River. To make conclusions and provide recommendations for a greenway along an urban river system first requires a comprehension of the physical, ecological and political conditions surrounding the river. In addition, a firm understanding is necessary of what greenways are, their historical evolution and context, their many functions, and the gamut of greenway design theory which governs their development.

The Moshassuck Greenway study has been undertaken primarily from a design perspective, however, I also consider attitudes and perceptions of each of the three very different communities through which the river flows. It is interesting to note from this study the lack of a cohesive vision for the Moshassuck and the land adjacent to it. Cooperation among local communities is critical to the successful design and implementation of a functionally connected greenway, and this is one important criterion which may reduce the overall feasibility of creating a *functionally continuous* greenway. The lack of a cohesive vision among the three communities is in large part a result of the widely varying conditions of the river and its adjacent land uses. These differences are likely to affect what roles, either passive or active, the State and local agencies will play in orchestrating the project.

The Moshassuck River presents some problems and barriers which need to be addressed. A significant design problem is how to functionally connect a single greenway through both highly developed and less developed land uses. Another more specific issue is the uncertain prospect of a proposed industrial access route along the river in Pawtucket, raising the questions, "is an industrial access route compatible with a greenway? How might the road facilitate the creation of the greenway?" There are, of course, opportunities for a greenway as well. The feasibility of a greenway, and ideas for creating at least segments of a greenway are considered in part by evaluating the physical, ecological, and political status and context of the river, understanding greenway design theory, and presenting specific ideas for the study corridor through design drawings.