



Great Rivers Greenway

INTERPRETIVE STRATEGY

FEBRUARY 2017



LIFE OUTSIDE FESTIVALGOERS TRY NEW ACTIVITIES, LIKE TREE CLIMBING

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTERPRETATION IS...

“a mission-driven communication process that forges intellectual and emotional connections between the interests of the audience and the inherent meanings of the resource.”

—National Association for Interpretation



GRAVOIS GREENWAY (GRANT'S TRAIL)

WHY PLAN?

Interpretation is a tool for increasing a visitor's awareness and appreciation for natural and cultural resources. Interpretive products and programming help agencies like Great Rivers Greenway and their partners turn visitors into stewards that connect with these places, support the mission and want to engage further.

This interpretive strategy provides a guide for us and our partners in the St. Louis region to make decisions about interpretation on the greenways, including priorities for what to interpret, to whom, when, where and by what means.

As a purposeful method for changing visitor behavior in ways that are relevant, interesting and inspiring to the visitor, interpretation is an essential tool for us to engage with the community regarding the relevance of the greenways and the conservation of the natural, cultural and historical resources located on and adjacent to greenways.

With a growing number of greenways, this planning process helps us, our partners and our vendors decide the most effective ways of reaching those current audiences with the most important messages across the network of greenways and on any given greenway.

This Interpretive Strategy presents a broad planning approach that establishes the reasons to engage in and support interpretation, along with the messaging to ensure thematic connectivity and consistency throughout the greenways.

WHY NOW?

A comprehensive look at the organization's interpretive efforts has never been conducted until now. Since we were established in 2000, our emphasis has been on building greenways. During that time, interpretation has occurred primarily through signs and programs. Now, as the organization and our partners shift into a phase of promoting and sustaining the greenways, we recognize that a comprehensive strategy is needed in order to provide consistent interpretive products and programs and effectively plan for the future.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

A variety of recommendations have been developed to improve the visitor experience and further our efforts to create a more connected St. Louis region.

Partners in Interpretation

Growing the existing network of partners will further interpretive efforts, particularly in the realm of content expertise.

Staff

Training staff, volunteers and interested partners in best practices for interpretation will help ensure that our visitors experience high quality interpretive products and programs on the greenways.

Themed Itineraries

Developing suggested itineraries for interpretive “tracks” will encourage visitors to explore the greenways while learning more about the St. Louis region.

Website

Enhancing our website with select assets will improve interpretive delivery of each greenway’s natural, cultural and historical significance.

Social Media Channels

One opportunity is to work with partners to deliver interpretive content for featured greenways through regular cross-promotion of our social media accounts.

Interpretive Signage

As new and replacement interpretive signage is created for greenways, using sign design and content development guidelines, will result in smaller, more appealing signage.

Greenway Maps & Trip Guides

The individual fold-out brochures for each trail will be replaced by one overall map encompassing all of the built greenways and single page trip guides for each trip. Both of these resources will incorporate the interpretive theme structure.

Docent-Led Programs

Guided programs can be expanded by creating a trained cadre of docents, including Great Rivers Greenway staff and volunteer ambassadors, as well as partner personnel and volunteers, equipped with the tools they need to deliver consistent, thematic programs for each greenway.

HOW TO DECIDE WHAT TO DO NEXT

All potential interpretive projects will be evaluated in terms of their contribution and support of the goals, desired outcomes and interpretive themes presented in the following pages.

ASSUMPTIONS & LIMITATIONS OF THIS DOCUMENT

The themes and goals developed in this document are conceptual and broad. More in-depth analysis will be conducted for each greenway when feasible.

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS INTERPRETATION?

Interpretation is a communication process that seeks to impart information on natural, cultural, and/or historical resources in ways that leave people with a greater sense of appreciation and stewardship for those resources.

Interpretation helps to bring people along the spectrum, from the first introduction to a sense of ownership and responsibility. First, an interpretive program creates awareness, then people can gain understanding, then they can be invited to care *about* the resource, then feel compelled to care *for* the resource.

Interpretation is about sparking curiosity, thoughts and feelings, leaving people wanting to learn more.

WHY DO WE NEED AN INTERPRETIVE STRATEGY?

As Great Rivers Greenway plans how to more effectively utilize interpretation, this strategy evaluates how visitor communication can best support organization's mission, and identifies overarching goals, objectives and themes for interpretation throughout the greenways.

This interpretive strategy provides an opportunity for a holistic understanding of diverse natural and cultural assets of the greenways, and the potential stories that can be presented to visitors about those assets. This process will help to determine which stories and messages to tell, where to best tell them, to whom and when. It is an effort to formalize our interpretive products and programs, and demonstrate the value of interpretation. Interpretation should both enhance the visitor experience and increase support for the organization.

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—National Association for Interpretation



WILDLIFE ON THE BUSCH GREENWAY
UNLESS OTHERWISE CREDITED, ALL IMAGES
APPEAR COURTESY OF GREAT RIVERS
GREENWAY

THE SETTING

Located at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers, the St. Louis region lies at the nation's crossroads and at the heart of the continent. Just as with other great rivers of the world, ours have shaped and defined civilization, culture and trade along their routes.

Though our society was once dependent on our rivers for trade and transportation, over the last century, people have lost touch with them. People now travel and ship and receive goods by rail, highway and air, while access to our creeks, streams and lakes is often limited.

INTRODUCTION



GREAT RIVERS GREENWAY'S 2017 PROJECTS

Citizens today, however, are eager to restore that connection to the waterways and green spaces that wind through and shape the St. Louis region, as a new realization and understanding of the importance of these resources grows.



WILDLIFE ON THE BUSCH GREENWAY

ABOUT GREAT RIVERS GREENWAY

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

WHO IS GREAT RIVERS GREENWAY?

Great Rivers Greenway is the public agency connecting the St. Louis region with greenways. In 2000, a vote of the people created a sales tax to leave a legacy for future generations by investing in and connecting together some of our region's best assets – rivers & parks. Those funds allow us to collaborate with partners and communities to build, care for and bring to life your network of greenways, creating healthy habitats and watersheds along the way.

We serve the 2 million people throughout our 1,200 square mile district of St. Louis City, St. Louis County and St. Charles County. We collaborate with municipalities, agencies and organizations across the region to deliver on the community's vision for a vibrant, connected region.

Great Rivers Greenway is governed by a 12-member appointed Board of Directors that represent the region, is led by a staff of 24 people, works with 265+ partners and is accountable to the taxpayers through annual reports, collaborative regional plans every 5 years and ongoing community engagement at multiple levels.

Mission: Great Rivers Greenway makes the St. Louis region a more vibrant place to live, work and play by developing a regional network of greenways.

Vision: The dynamic network of greenways connects rivers, parks and communities, strengthening the social, economic and environmental well-being of our region. Community members proudly invest in, care for and champion greenways for years to come.

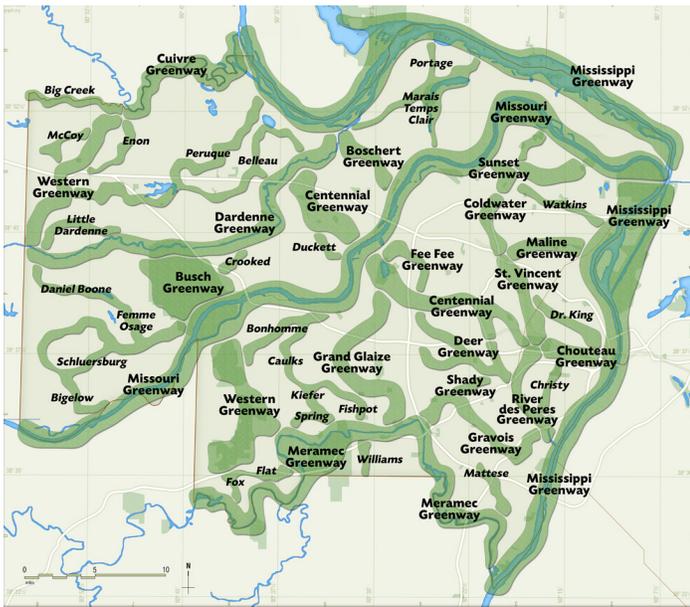


COMMUNITY GATHERS AT AN EVENT HELD ON THE ST. VINCENT GREENWAY



RIBBON-CUTTING ON THE ST. VINCENT GREENWAY

ABOUT GREAT RIVERS GREENWAY



THE RIVER RING—A VISION FOR A CONNECTED ST. LOUIS REGION

Great Rivers Greenway's district of St. Louis City, St. Louis County and St. Charles County currently includes 117 miles of greenways and counting. Sixteen greenways are currently active and open to public access; a total of 45 greenways are planned at full build-out of the envisioned River Ring¹.

ACTIVE GREENWAYS

- Boschert Greenway
- Busch Greenway
- Centennial Greenway
- Chouteau Greenway
- Dardenne Greenway
- Fee Fee Greenway
- Gravois Greenway (Grant's Trail)
- Maline Greenway
- Meramec Greenway
- Mississippi Greenway
- Missouri Greenway
- River de Peres Greenway
- Shady & Deer Creek Greenway
- St. Vincent Greenway
- Sunset Greenway
- Western Greenway



RIVER DES PERES GREENWAY

For detailed information and photos of each greenway, visit www.greatriversgreenway.org

¹ The River Ring is the clear, bold vision that the residents of the St. Louis region voted for and invested in – a dynamic network of parks and open spaces linked together by greenways, connecting our communities so people can live life outside.

What is a greenway?

Greenways are outdoor spaces that connect people and places. Each greenway is unique, reflecting the character of the communities it connects. Greenways can include:

- Trails where you can take a walk, go for a run, ride a bike or just get some fresh air. These are almost always paved and accessible for all.
- Conservation projects to maintain healthy habitats & watersheds, such as rain gardens, native plants, restored prairies, wetlands & floodplains.
- Amenities like restrooms, water fountains, benches, bike racks, signage, parking & playgrounds.
- Connections to business districts, neighborhoods, transit, jobs, schools, cultural destinations, rivers, creeks, parks & conservation areas.

Greenways encourage active lifestyles and connect people to their rivers, parks and communities.

- The St. Louis region has an abundance of incredible parks, open spaces, rivers and creeks. Experience the roaring sounds of the mighty Mississippi as you ponder our region's past. Meander along Dardenne Creek for some fresh air amongst the wildlife. Don't miss the stunning bluebell wildflowers along the Meramec Greenway in the springtime!
- Greenways are an easy, free and fun place to exercise outside. Take your pet for a walk along the River des Peres Greenway, go for a run or bike ride through St. Vincent County Park or get some fresh air with your family on a weekend adventure.
- You can use the greenway to visit a friend for lunch, run to the grocery store by way of the Centennial Greenway, get to work or school or explore without a destination in mind. Greenway connections to Metro transit and street routes give you options. We invite you to live life outside as you visit your favorite places and fall in love with new ones.
- Greenways connect communities, breaking down real and perceived barriers like highways, rivers throughout our region, city limits or neighborhood boundaries. Out on the greenways, you meet new people, share unique experiences and find common ground.
- Events and programs bring our greenways to life. There is always something to see, try or learn. Show up to a bike ride on the Busch Greenway or nature walk along the Sunset Greenway to meet your neighbors that love the same things you do!

ABOUT GREAT RIVERS GREENWAY

We strengthen our region's vibrancy through collaboration.

We believe many hands make light work, and partnerships increase impact. Our citizens benefit when we work together.

- As a collaborator in the community, we bring people together, from citizens to government agencies, nonprofits to private companies and everyone in between to deliver the best possible greenway project.
- The greenways are planned, brought to life and cared for in partnership with the 100+ municipalities and institutions they connect. We help our partners with training, volunteer workdays and support to ensure that your experience is great no matter where you explore. These projects transcend political boundaries and unite us based on watersheds, not zip codes or city limits.
- We support and promote the many groups doing events and programs that invite our community to see, try and learn out on the greenways. Whether it's sharing resources, celebrating success or troubleshooting problems, working together strengthens the way our communities can connect and live life outside.

We're building connections to a vibrant future.

We're committed to the long-term well-being of the St. Louis region – our people, our environment and our economy. The network of greenways strengthens the health of all three. When our communities connect and grow together, the whole region thrives.

- Our citizens are at the core of what we do. We are here because of the vote and the voice of the people. We listen to their needs to deliver a great return on their investment. The greenways help create healthy, connected communities.
- To sustain our region, we must protect and enhance our natural resources and the watersheds that surround them. Our conservation efforts improve quality of life for all by creating and restoring healthy habitats and engaging people to take care of our region's watersheds.
- From increasing property values to hiring local companies to aiding in attracting businesses, talent and tourists alike, the greenways enhance our economy. 93 cents of every dollar the taxpayers' invest goes back to the community to build, promote and sustain the system.

OUR VISITORS

The network of greenways (River Ring) makes connections to Illinois and spans more than 1,200 miles, including St. Louis City, St. Louis County and St. Charles County, and serves a population of more than 1.6 million residents.

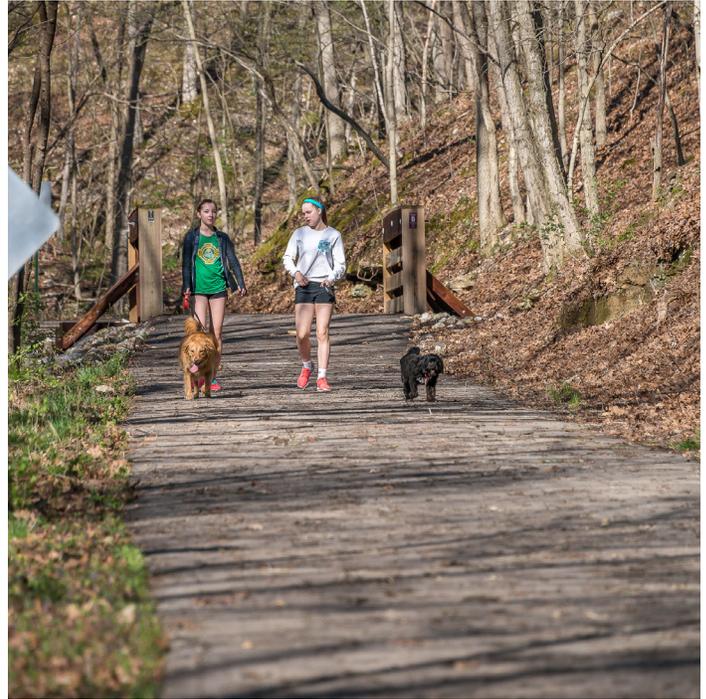
VISITATION PATTERNS

Greenways are common destinations for area and regional residents who utilize them for recreation purposes, such as walking, running, bicycling and dog-walking, as well as for transportation purposes like getting to work, school or around town.

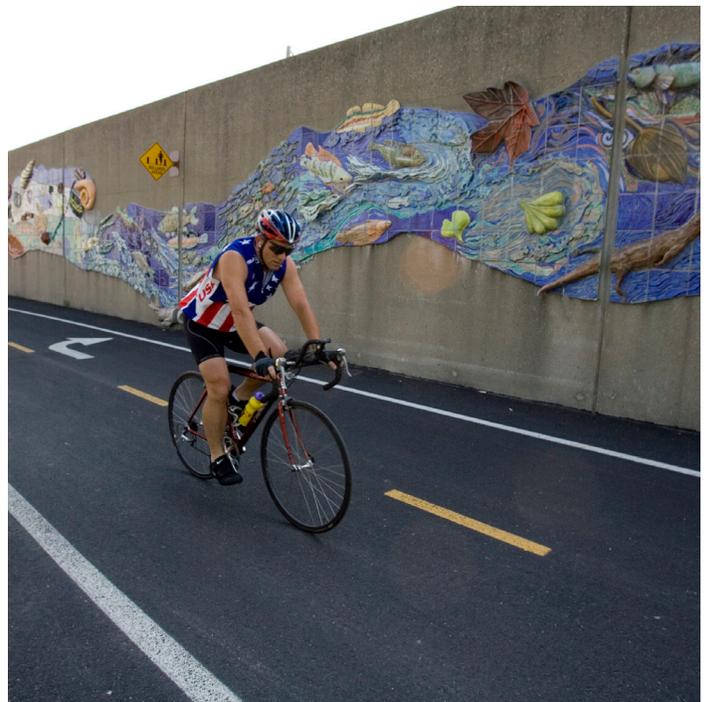
People counters (manual and mechanized) documented more than 2 million greenway visits annually, with nearly half of those visits occurring on just 2 popular greenways—Centennial Greenway and Gravois Greenway (Grant’s Trail).

Visitor surveys were done at seven greenways in 2015, and gathered visitor input related to proximity, transportation method, frequency and patterns of use, primary activity, and impressions regarding maintenance, safety and cleanliness. Visitors were also asked how they found out about the greenway, and what their knowledge and/or use was of other greenways in the region.

As part of the 2016 Regional Plan update, almost 1,000 citizens were surveyed online with similar questions. From both of these methods, plus an abundance of outreach and community engagement, we know the greenway users to fall into the following categories:



DOG WALKING ON THE MERAMEC GREENWAY



CYCLING ON THE MISSISSIPPI GREENWAY



A FALL SUNSET ON THE MERAMEC GREENWAY



SNOW ON THE RIVER DES PERES GREENWAY

EXISTING USERS

Movement-Based Recreationists use greenways for regular or occasional recreation or fitness activities like running, biking, walking dogs, rollerblading or just going for a stroll. These users may go short or long distances.

Destination-Based Recreationists go to specific sites on greenways, such as playgrounds or areas where they fish or watch birds.

Routine Commuters use greenways as an alternative transportation route, primarily by bicycle but also on foot.

Points of Interest Pursuers visit greenways to access a particular site or attraction, such as visiting blooming bluebells in the spring or seeing a site of architectural interest.

Special Interest Groups such as scouts, fitness clubs, birders, institution-based sports clubs, artists and photography clubs use greenways as a venue for their activities.

Urban Explorers use greenways as a means of exploring neighborhoods and checking out new restaurants, businesses and parks.

Solitude Seekers use greenways to “get away from it all” and value greenways for the natural environments and reduced presence of people.

Tourists use greenways to explore sites of natural, cultural and historic significance. Some touring cyclists travel on greenways as an extension of their tour on the Katy Trail.

OUR VISITORS

Water Seekers use greenways for access to a creek, stream or river.

Environmental Stewards use greenways as a venue to conduct water quality monitoring and service projects like trash clean-up.

Students of all ages use greenways as a venue for curriculum-based studies and field trips.

POTENTIAL USERS

We know some types of use are underutilized. We will encourage and promote:

Casual Visitors who might use the nearest greenway as a spot to eat lunch or for a quick break to experience nature and rejuvenate.

Casual Commuters who might prefer an alternative route to streets or public transportation.

Neighborhood Residents including urban youth who might use the closest greenway as a safe place for play and relaxation.

Senior Citizens who might need and value facilitated access opportunities to get outside and experience nature.



VOLUNTEER PLANTING SESSION
ON THE CENTENNIAL GREENWAY



GRAFFITI CLEANUP
ON THE MISSISSIPPI GREENWAY



GATHERING COMMUNITY INPUT

SCOPE OF THE STRATEGY

This document is meant to provide a broad, conceptual framework for developing an integrated network of interpretive opportunities. It takes the strategies we presented in our 2016 Regional Plan Update and provides specific interpretive themes, as well as goals for interpretation. This document will guide the development of products and programs to meet these goals and desired outcomes.

The Recommendations section of this document contains high level strategies for interpretation, and suggests criteria for prioritizing the phasing, selection and types of projects for implementation. Projects will only move forward if they have demonstrated how they will help address the goals, desired outcomes and themes set forth in this strategy.

The guidelines presented in this document will help Great Rivers Greenway and its community partners select and develop programs and projects that complement other interpretive efforts in the region in a coordinated way.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

With the help of our interpretive consultant, Conservation by Design, two rounds of workshops with staff and community partners let us all discuss the factors affecting interpretation, including visitor characteristics, goals for interpretation, key messages and existing interpretive programs, products and policies from many different perspectives.

Thank you to all who contributed!



GOALS FOR INTERPRETATION

Interpretation should serve a purpose and create results for the organization, the resource and the greenway user. We will use interpretation to:

1. Increase public knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and historic resources along the greenways, and support for their care.

Desired Outcome A: Greenway users will report learning something new about the St. Louis region's nature, culture or history.

Desired Outcome B: Greenway users will know where the closest creek, stream or river is located and where that water goes.

2. Promote the values and benefits of trails and greenways.

Desired Outcome A: Regional residents will be able to cite at least one way that greenways contribute to a better quality of life.

Desired Outcome B: Greenway users will express an interest in visiting another greenway.

Desired Outcome C: Regional residents will express support for further enhancement and maintenance of greenways.

Desired Outcome D: Regional residents will feel welcome at greenways.

3. Increase the public sense of civic pride in the St. Louis region.

Desired Outcome A: Greenway users will report feeling a sense of obligation to future generations.

Desired Outcome B: Greenway users will be able to cite at least one thing that is special about the St. Louis region.

Desired Outcome C: Greenway users will be able to explain that greenways are being connected according to a community-driven vision, established by a vote and funded by a sales tax.



VOLUNTEER PLANTING SESSION
ON THE CENTENNIAL GREENWAY

INTERPRETIVE THEMES

Interpretation is thematic. It tells one powerful, compelling story using a multitude of smaller illustrative stories. That one central story should be compelling, relevant and reveal the uniqueness and significance of the site.

It should also be memorable. Social science research shows that information organized around a central theme gets more attention, keeps visitors focused, and creates messages that stay in the mind (and heart) long after a visit is over. People may or may not recall facts, but if those tidbits are tied to a story or theme, that invites people into the content and provides a topic they can remember long-term.

The central theme and sub-themes developed here are meant to be overarching, with applicability through the entire greenway district. More detailed storylines will be developed as location-specific products and programs are produced.



ST. LOUIS LEVEE CIRCA 1852



LEARNING TO RIDE ON THE GRAVOIS GREENWAY

INTERPRETIVE THEMES

CENTRAL THEME

Greenways trace the network of waterways that form the foundation of our communities in the St. Louis region—connecting us to each other, the nature that surrounds us, and to the region.

SUB-THEMES & STORYLINES

1. Natural and built features impact the past, present and future of the St. Louis region.

- a. Since prehistoric times, our rivers have been used to transport people and goods.
- b. Many of our greenways follow the routes of the rail lines that converged upon St. Louis.
- c. Engineering feats such as bridges are an important feature in our region, with direct impacts on daily life.
- d. Due to its location and economy, the St. Louis region has long attracted a multicultural population.
- e. These places hold stories of the people and events that shape the culture of the St. Louis region.

2. Watersheds are home to people, plants and animals.

- a. The waterways, wetlands and woodlands of the St. Louis region are an important resting point for the migratory birds traveling the Mississippi Flyway.
- b. Greenways are a refuge for nature, serving as native seed banks and important corridors for wildlife.
- c. Everyone lives in a watershed, and all



FOX SPOTTED IN CARONDELET PARK

water flows into our creeks, rivers and streams. Our actions impact the water quality in our region and downstream.

3. Greenways benefit us all.

- a. Greenways are a path to greater health.
- b. Greenways provide public access to explore new areas and neighborhoods, serving as bridges through physical and social barriers.
- c. Greenways are an investment in our economy. They create returns through increased property values and jobs and attract and retain companies and residents who value communities with greenways.
- d. Greenways provide valuable ecosystem services by filtering stormwater, absorbing floodwater and providing transportation options.
- e. People in the St. Louis region care about these benefits so much that they voted to invest in a sales tax to build, promote and sustain greenways.

EXISTING INTERPRETATION

The Great Rivers Greenway Promote Department, which includes communications, programs, events, engagement and all forms of outreach, is our main vehicle for communicating with the community. Staff and partners frequently give presentations, run programs and staff outreach events.

The organization currently offers the following interpretive products and programs:

SELF-GUIDED

Interpretive Signage

Interpretive signs are one of the most common forms of interpretation currently in place across the greenways. Generally, these signs provide site-specific information about the natural, cultural and/or historic significance of a place, as well as a map to help visitors with wayfinding. Because of the size and scope of our current signs, research suggests that visitors are likely discouraged from reading all of the information presented. As we work on these sign projects with our partners, we must remember that interpretive signs would be more approachable if they were smaller, contained less text, and featured interpretive writing written in an engaging yet relevant voice, to ensure that interpretation is enjoyable!

Interpretive Trail Brochures

In order for people to see as much regional context and vision as possible, individual fold-out brochures for each trail are being replaced with two things: one overall map encompassing all of the built greenways and single page guides for each trip. Both of these resources will incorporate the interpretive theme structure, keeping in mind that detailed storylines could be delivered in an alternate format for those who want more information (such as through single-page itineraries focused on particular interests, like historic architecture).

Environmental Graphics

We feature environmental graphics like murals, posters or public art on the greenways or in other places like flood walls, bus shelters, etc. We will look for opportunities to feature interpretive information where feasible.

Social Media Channels

We provide frequent content on core social media channels (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter), delivering announcements on greenway closures, project updates, event advertisements and volunteer opportunities. Greenway users and fans regularly contribute content.

Website

We offer some introductory interpretive information on each greenway's web page, and provide links to resources where visitors can learn more.

EXISTING INTERPRETATION

GUIDED

We partner with a wide range of organizations to offer interpretive tours and special events on the greenways. There are no shortage of content experts in our region, and our citizens benefit when we work together. In 2015, 12,533 people enjoyed 66 programs. Past offerings have included:

Guided Tours

Bike rides, boating trips and themed walks offer interpretive programming in a recreation atmosphere.

Stewardship Events

A range of organizations conduct stewardship activities such as trash clean-up, invasive plant removal, planting of native species, and trail maintenance.

Outreach Activities and Events

Whether we host an event, partner with others, or just participate, community events generate awareness about the greenways, such as swap meets, movie nights, bike rides, boating events, races, scavenger hunts, ribbon-cuttings, open houses, fairs, festivals, living history demonstrations, featured speakers, bike skills classes, multimodal transit races and other special events.

Volunteer Appreciation

In 2017 alone, 4,538 volunteers gave more than 13,238 hours to benefit the greenways. When volunteers give back to the greenways, the training or appreciation events are opportunities to educate these local champions about interpretive themes and ideas.



EAGLE DAY EVENT
ON THE MISSISSIPPI GREENWAY



EXISTING INTERPRETIVE SIGN
ON THE BUSCH GREENWAY

ISSUES, CONCERNS & OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunity – Social Media Partnerships

The greenways are a venue to explore St. Louis, and we have an active following on social media. Social media partnerships with compatible content sources like museums, historical societies, etc., are a great way to cross-promote. For example, a partner with historic information might agree to provide historical content related to a greenway to “take over” our social media channels for a day or a week. This might include information (short text blocks + historic imagery) on the history of a particular park or architectural feature along a greenway, or a railroad line that’s been converted to a greenway. Such a partner would likely benefit from increased exposure, possibly yielding increased memberships as a result.

Opportunity – Go Deeper

With so many partners, interpretive content can go beyond printed maps and handouts. Themed itineraries connect greenway resources with suggestions on where to go to learn more, or perhaps partners can co-brand a publication together.

Opportunity – Community Catalyst

Partner organizations don’t always have the staff time or other resources to dedicate to new ventures. As an organization that works as a catalyst in our communities, we’ll explore pursuing and supporting new partnerships, with the goal of mutually beneficial arrangements.

Concern – Consistency

A lack of content development standards has created a large variation in the readability and approachability of interpretive signage and trail brochures. These best practices and guidelines for interpretation will help in-house staff, consultants and partners who plan the greenways and create the content for our self-guided interpretive products.

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations will further enhance interpretation on the greenways. All recommendations included here are overarching and apply to the greenway system overall. Greenway-specific recommendations are not included in this broad strategy; recommendations for each greenway will be developed during the interpretive assessment conducted for each greenway at a future time. An interpretive assessment template is included in Appendix A.

PARTNERS IN INTERPRETATION

Just as the St. Louis region is defined by its waterways, Great Rivers Greenway is defined by its partnerships. While maintaining existing partnerships, we'll seek out new collaborations of mutual benefit that further our work to build, promote and sustain our greenways. Potential new partnerships might include:

Local Museums/Archive Institutions

Collections of photographs, historic maps, blueprints, manuscripts and other important documentation is often housed in museums or archive institutions. These organizations may be interested in collaborating on interpretive products and programs and, at minimum, are a great resource when developing interpretive content.

Neighboring Agencies

Managing agencies of adjacent lands might be interested in partnering on interpretive media such as historic walking tours, themed itineraries or scavenger hunts (print or mobile). We'll improve our coordination with neighboring agencies regarding signage in an effort to avoid duplication, set clear expectations for maintenance, and protect the integrity of the Great Rivers Greenway brand.

Neighborhood Groups

Local neighborhood groups have a special connection to greenways in their backyards, and likely have stories and archives to share that do not appear anywhere else. Local neighbors might be willing to sit for oral history interviews.

Universities

Local university faculty and students might be willing to partner on conducting interpretive assessments for individual greenways. This could include conducting research and compiling natural, cultural and historical information specific to each greenway. This partnership would help build the library of information for each greenway, while giving students hands-on, locally relevant professional experience.

TRAINING

We'll provide interpretive training to our staff, interns and volunteers, following the training standards and best practices as set forth by the National Association for Interpretation, the interpretive field's professional organization.

Chicago Architecture Tour | Birth of the Skyscraper



Join our Chicago Architecture Tour to learn about the birth of the Skyscraper. The South Loop is Chicago's downtown area and commercial core, but it is so much more than that. Chicago is known not for antiquity but for innovation and creativity in architecture. In the architecture of the South Loop, you'll discover some of the very first skyscrapers mixed with a range of contrasting modern-styled buildings effectively creating a living architectural museum.

Your guide will take you on a fun and interesting walk filled with stories about Chicago architecture. Discover the oldest operating el train station in Chicago and gaze upon the building that held the record for the World's tallest from 1973-1993. Take in the scenery of our man-made "canyon" of La Salle Street and get a taste for Frank Lloyd Wright's artistry. The tour ends in Grant Park a few steps from Lake Michigan at the magnificent rococo-style Buckingham Fountain.

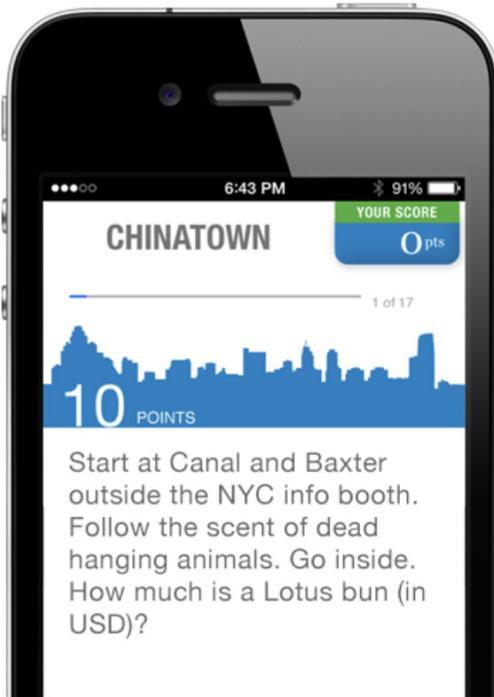
Some topics we will cover on the Chicago Architecture Tour

- Sears/Willis Tower
- The Rookery
- The Board of Trade building
- Federal Plaza
- The Monadnock
- Grant Park
- Buckingham Fountain



EXAMPLE OF A THEMED ITINERARY

©www.freetoursbyfoot.com



Receive challenges asking you to find things, solve riddles, take crazy photos, and answer trivia.



After each challenge, you'll get fun facts about the area. So you're not just exploring the city, but learning about it as you go.

SELF-GUIDED PRODUCTS

Themed Itineraries

A series of themed itineraries that appeal to various interests will be available both in print and online. These itineraries will take the form of slightly veiled scavenger hunts that encourage visitors to explore the greenways. A mobile version could be delivered via an app¹, while print versions would be available to hand out at events. Itineraries could be developed to trace a stream course, see places of architectural interest, discover engineering feats, or even learn who's who in cemeteries.

Website

We'll keep our website nimble, but add select digital assets that can offer self-guided interpretation. Enhancements would include more detailed interpretive information, such as downloadable and/or mobile-friendly versions of the greenway trail guides, and links to the mobile scavenger hunts discussed above.

Social Media Channels

A combination of in-house efforts and partner take-overs will offer more consistent interpretive content about featured greenways. This content might include historic photos and/or maps, with brief captions that support the theme structure. This would also include sharing of relevant articles developed by others. Users could be invited to contribute to specific requests for contribution, such as what's blooming now.

¹ Stray Boots is an **example** of an app-based scavenger hunt that is customized for your project or site. See screenshots at left.

RECOMMENDATIONS

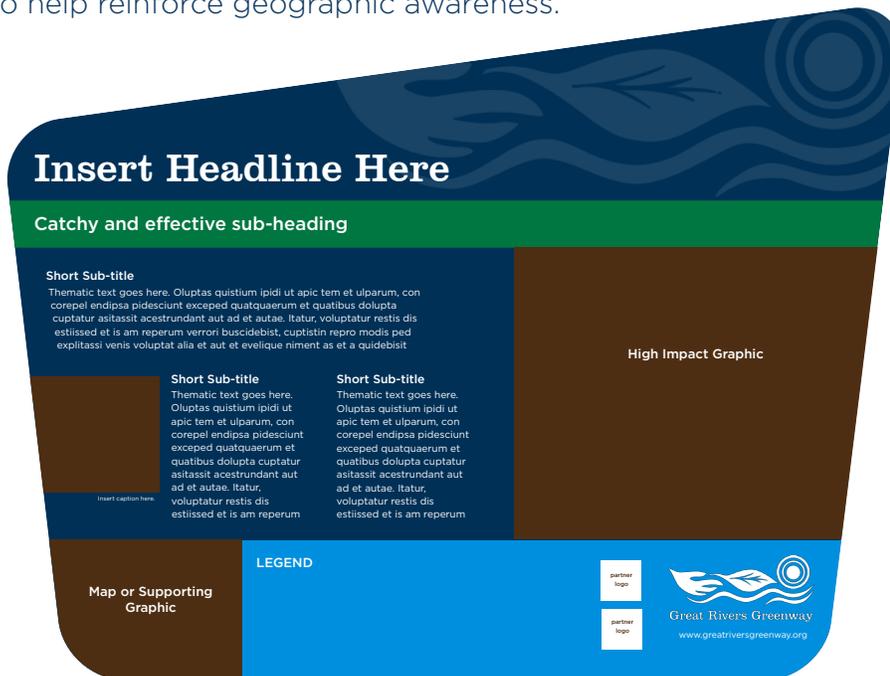
Interpretive Signage

Interpretive signage remains an important component of the district's interpretation efforts, and will be utilized as just one component of communicating the unique heritage of a particular greenway. In keeping with that knowledge, interpretive content guidelines will be developed that guide the style of writing, limit the number of words per sign, and create a hierarchy of information that makes sign content more "digestible" to viewers with varying interest levels. An example of an interpretive sign that follows these guidelines is included in this document. These content guidelines will be used in conjunction with the 2016 Sign Design Standards.

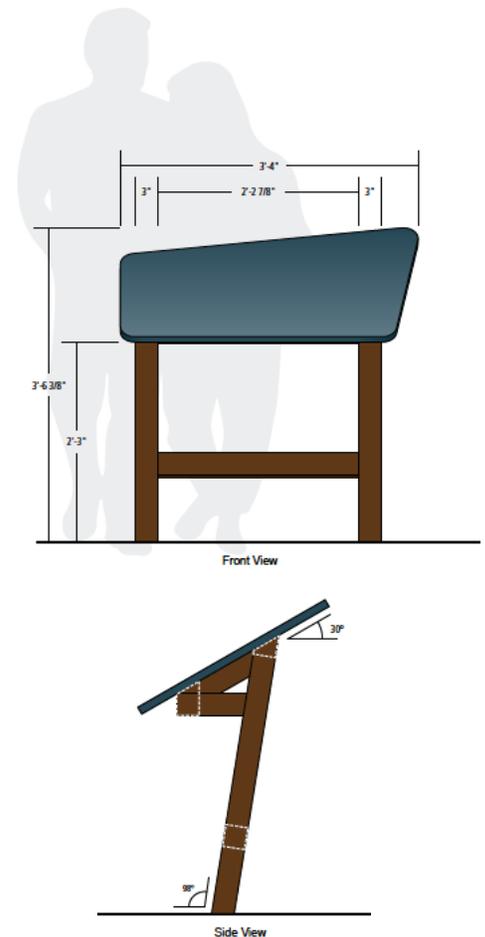
If adequate wayfinding signage appears throughout a greenway, a map may not be required on each interpretive sign. If a map does appear on any interpretive sign, however, a "You Are Here" marker should be prominent in order to help reinforce geographic awareness.

Remember the 3-30-3 rule: Some people will pay attention for 3 seconds, they'll see your title and an image. Some will stop and look for 30 seconds, they will likely pick up one concept or paragraph, take in the images and maybe even captions. The most dedicated visitor will spend no more than 3 minutes, so make your content digestible in that amount of time. The recommendations below help quickly deliver a message to all visitors:

- Signs should have no more than 150 words (total on the entire sign)
- Text should be sized in the following point-sizes: headings at 100-120, sub-heading at 54-60, sub-title at 36, body text preferably 30, but can go to 24 if needed, and captions at 18.



INTERPRETIVE SIGN DESIGN TEMPLATE BASED UPON 2016 SIGN DESIGN STANDARDS



2016 SIGN DESIGN STANDARDS

Centennial Greenway - Heritage Crossing



also provide a glimpse into his farming operations. At the time of his death, Mr. Cribbin had a large holding of livestock, including hogs, cows and sheep, along with 500 bushels of corn and the materials associated with harvesting wheat and corn. Following his father's death, Mr. William Cribbin continued to live on and farm the property until 1891, when he sold the house to Fritz and Anna Kuhlmann.

Kuhlmann's Grove
William Cribbin sold the house to Fritz and Anna Kuhlmann. The Kuhlmanns continued to live on and farm the land and provided their own source of St. Charles County's more popular spots for recreation known as Kuhlmann's Grove. In front of the field house built by St. Charles County's more popular spots for recreation known as Kuhlmann's Grove. In front of the field house built by St. Charles County's more popular spots for recreation known as Kuhlmann's Grove.

Cribbin's Home

This park, historically known as the Cribbin's Home, Kuhlmann's Grove, and Cedar Grove in 1897, features a well-known home built in the mid-1800s.

The home was built by Lawrence Cribbin (commonly spelled Cribbin), a son of the land and farmer by trade. Mr. Cribbin and his family came to St. Charles County from Louisiana in 1844. He succeeded in farming and began to acquire a large land holding in the area. In 1851, he purchased approximately 264 acres from William and Nancy M. Douglas for the sum of \$4,500.

Mr. Cribbin benefited from the location of his home and farm. Records show he had his own boat landing on the Missouri River that he used for shipping his grain and livestock. In addition to shipping goods on the river, his farm incorporated Boone's Lick Road, which provided an overland route to the western cities and markets of the state. Lawrence Cribbin understood the importance of the "trade route," and he and a group of citizens helped create a "grade route" on the Boone's Lick Road.

In 1877, thirty-three years after arriving in St. Charles County and establishing his successful farm, Lawrence Cribbin passed away. Probate records at the time of his death indicate he had amassed a substantial fortune while farming his land, which was valued at \$180,000 dollars. He had several children, and his personal property was valued at \$2,000. These records

Boone's Lick Road

For many years, Boone's Lick Road was the beginning of the main trail leading west for most settlers seeking new and prosperous life in the American West. This historic route ran west to Utah, where Highway 89 is today. Boone's Lick Road was Missouri's first east-west highway providing a route to Fort Dodge (located in present day Jackson County) and linking St. Charles with important western settlements and networks. Wagons began rolling along the Santa Fe Trail in 1820 and Boone's Lick Trail became the connector to this route in 1827.

The trail was probably first created by simply stripping vegetation as they scavenged for the food and materials required in their area (as well). This path was then used by Native Americans for hunting, trading, and occasionally as a war party route when conflict erupted with neighboring tribes. When the first European and later American settlers arrived in the area, they used the trail to access the resources and exceptional farmland in the most remote areas of the new territory. Initially, however, travelers faced trouble by removing bark from trees using the path, creating what was called a "tree vine".

The name originates from the salt works in Howard County where Daniel Morgan Boone Jr. and Nathan Boone (sons of pioneer Daniel Boone) processed the saline springs.

This trail evolved into one of the most important routes for early St. Charles County citizens and pioneer journeying west. Boone's Lick Trail expanded over time and later became Boone's Lick Road to begin and improve traffic flow.

Rain and snow made travel along the trail difficult and often impossible. In May 1828, a group of citizens incorporated to create the St. Charles Western Plank Road Company to build a plank road from St. Charles to Warrenton.

Though plank roads began as an earnest attempt to improve road surface conditions, the solution was expensive and impractical. Boards soon warped and rotted, making road conditions no better than if they remained dirt. Some accounts claim that road boards may have even been stolen and burned as firewood during winter.

People forgot the trail's significance in Western Expansion until 1871, when the Congress of the American West began to mark greater markers on historic sites along the route.

Optimists Grove

The Centennial Greenway was made possible by the generous donation of land by the Optimist Club of St. Charles.

To complement the Centennial Greenway project, the Hersey-Hill Down Optimist Club (HMDOC) donated a 15-acre parcel known as Optimists Grove to the Centennial Greenway District. The property is located adjacent to Heritage Trail Community Center and the 1820s right-of-way north of Highway 54. The donated land was a portion of farmland originally owned by Michael and Laura Schaefer. The area, dedicated as "Optimists Grove," will undergo restoration with the planting of native plant species to ensure a healthy habitat.

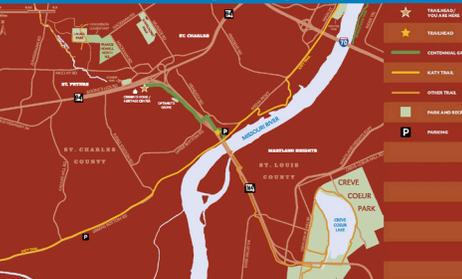
The Hersey-Hill Down Optimist Club is a local chapter of Optimist International, recognized best practice as the premier volunteer organization that values all children and helps them to develop to their full potential.

For more information on the Optimist Club of St. Charles, visit www.optimists.org.

The Optimist Creed

- To be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.
- To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.
- To make all your friends feel that there is something in them.
- To look to the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.
- To think only of the best, to work only for the best and to expect only the best.
- To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.
- To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.
- To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.
- To give so much love to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others.
- To be so large hearted that you make four angels and lose happy to permit the presence of trouble.

Centennial Greenway - Heritage Crossing to Katy Trail State Park



Building the River Ring



HERITAGE CROSSING INTERPRETIVE SIGN – BEFORE (60" w x 33" h)

From Farm to Social Hotspot

This land is located along a historic trade route.

Getting Goods to Market

When Lawrence Cribbin built his home here in 1851, he had big aspirations. He was a successful farmer and knew that this location along Boone's Lick Road and the Missouri River was a good one.

For more than 40 years, he shipped livestock and grain to St. Charles by boat and by road to markets further west.



Insert caption here.

Party at the Grove

In 1897, the farm was purchased by the Kuhlmann family, who hosted countless social gatherings. Generations of area residents enjoyed picnicking under these trees and baseball games in the fields. This tradition of recreation continues today.

Pathway to Prosperity

Boone's Lick Road, Missouri's first east-west highway traced by Hwy 94 today, was an important link to the Santa Fe Trail. Settlers traveled this route by stagecoach and wagon on their journey to territories, settlements and new opportunities out West.



Great Rivers Greenway
www.greatriversgreenway.org

HERITAGE CROSSING INTERPRETIVE SIGN – AFTER (40" w x 28.5" h)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Trail Maps & Trip Guides

As individual fold-out brochures for each trail are retired, we will move forward with one overall map encompassing all of the built greenways. Single page trip guides will be developed for each trip.

Both products will utilize an engaging writing style, a hierarchy of information, and minimal text. In the overall map for all greenways, text will describe the overarching theme structure for the greenway district as appropriate. Individual printed trip guides will feature thematic text and graphics that incorporate the significance of interpretive assets along the trail.

Public Art

We'll continue to incorporate public art installations along our greenways, where appropriate, and will ensure that any installations are relevant to the interpretive themes for each greenway.

GUIDED PROGRAMS

Building upon the many stewardship and outreach events, and working with our partners to present guided tours, we think we can do more, including:

Docent-Led Programs

More guided programs that provide interpretation to participants will use Great Rivers Greenway staff and volunteer ambassadors, or partner organization docents. Just as with our standards for sign design and content development, we'll provide training to docents in best practices for program delivery and location-specific messages and goals for interpretation.

Docents will also be equipped with docent toolkits. Developed for each greenway, these toolkits would provide staff or volunteer



EXISTING GREENWAY SCULPTURE

docents with everything they'd need to conduct a public interpretive program. In addition to topical research and background information for each greenway, toolkits should include location-specific interpretive storylines, three to five sample program outlines, and a collection of location-specific artifacts, photos or maps.

By recruiting and supporting a cadre of docents interested in one or more greenways and engaging them with participants, we will create greenway champions who are inspired to learn even more and build a collective body of knowledge surrounding each greenway.

RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPLEMENTATION

Initiative	Estimated Cost	Priority Level
<p>Apply New Standards to Interpretive Signage Utilize new content and design standards when developing new or replacement interpretive signage.</p>	In-house	High for greenways in active build phase Medium for greenways already completed or still in planning
<p>Develop Themed Itineraries Research and packaging of one-page itineraries</p>	In-house	High
<p>Develop a Mobile Scavenger Hunt App Using research compiled above, develop a free downloadable scavenger hunt to promote exploring the greenway network.</p>	\$10,000-\$12,000 each mobile scavenger hunt	Medium
<p>Host Interpretive Guide Training Host an annual or biennial interpretive training session for individuals who deliver interpretive programming on or related to greenways (for staff, volunteers, and partners). This training combines theoretical foundations of interpretation with practical strategies in interpretive program delivery. Consider sponsoring the base training fee for each qualified/committed participant. Participants may elect to pay an additional \$150 each for professional certification by the National Association for Interpretation as a Certified Interpretive Guide.</p>	\$6,000-8,000	Ongoing
<p>Conduct Interpretive Assessments Conduct interpretive assessments for each greenway.</p>	In-house	High for greenways in active build phase Medium for greenways already completed or still in planning
<p>Develop Docent Toolkits Apply newly-developed Great Rivers Greenway interpretive themes and goals to a docent toolkit tailored for each greenway. Each docent toolkit would present the overarching theme structure and goals for the entire organization, with storylines and objectives specific to that property. Topical research and background information for each greenway would be compiled and presented in concise form along with best practices for interpretive programming. Three to five sample program outlines would also be conceptualized and included for each greenway property.</p>	\$5,000-7,000 each greenway	High for greenways in active build phase Medium for greenways already completed or still in planning

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – INTERPRETIVE ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

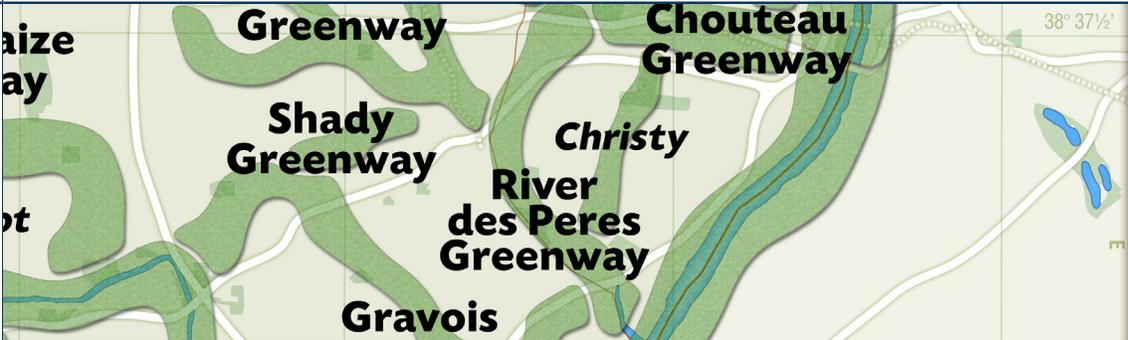
Greenway Name	
Segment	
Date of Assessment	
Map	
<p>Interpretive Opportunities</p> <p><i>What features are located on or along this greenway?</i></p>	
<p>Interpretive Resources</p> <p><i>What informational or photographic resources provide documentation about this greenway and its resources?</i></p>	
<p>Operational or Management Constraints</p> <p><i>Are there any limitations or concerns that need to be addressed along this greenway (safety, invasive plants, cell coverage, etc.)?</i></p>	
<p>Greenway Users</p> <p><i>What types of use occur along this greenway?</i></p>	

APPENDIX A – INTERPRETIVE ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

<p>Existing Interpretive Media</p> <p><i>Are there signs, programs or events that occur on this greenway? (insert photos below)</i></p>	
<p>Interpretive Partners</p>	
<p>Photos</p>	
<p>Recommended Interpretive Improvements</p> <p><i>How can we improve interpretation on this greenway?</i></p>	

APPENDICES

APPENDIX B – INTERPRETIVE ASSESSMENT EXAMPLE

Greenway Name	River des Peres Greenway
Segment	Metrolink to Carondelet Park
Date of Assessment	10/25/16
Map	
<p>Interpretive Opportunities</p> <p><i>What features are located on or along this greenway?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River des Peres serves as the main backbone of the sewer and stormwater systems for the City and County of St. Louis. Historic pump houses located along its banks are visible reminders of this important function. The River des Peres Sewerage and Drainage Works has received recognition as a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark. • The greenway now serves as a buffer during flood stage. Bioretention basins, like the one located at the park, help absorb floodwaters during flooding events. • Despite its primary use as a utility corridor, the River des Peres is also an important corridor for wildlife such as herons and other migratory birds. • The River des Peres serves as a retreat for fish during floodstage on the Mississippi. • River des Peres, or “River of the Fathers,” was named after two Jesuit priests who founded a mission on its banks around 1700.
<p>Interpretive Resources</p> <p><i>What informational or photographic resources provide documentation about this greenway and its resources?</i></p>	<p>Publications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Founding St. Louis: First City of the New West</i>, J. Frederick Fausz <p>Websites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://preservationresearch.com/infrastructure/the-harnessed-channel-how-the-river-des-peres-became-a-sewer/ • http://cio.slpl.org/2015/04/29/river-des-peres-how-disaster-led-to-a-st-louis-landmark/ • http://www.riverfronttimes.com/stlouis/a-sewer-runs-through-it/Content?oid=2473041 • http://www.riverdesperes.org/ <p>Institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History Museum <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to find source for water quality data

APPENDIX B – INTERPRETIVE ASSESSMENT EXAMPLE

<p>Operational or Management Constraints</p> <p><i>Are there any limitations or concerns that need to be addressed along this greenway (safety, invasive plants, cell coverage, etc.)?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greenway maintained by City of St. Louis parks department Poor water quality limits physical contact with the river Opportunity: River des Peres Greenway will be one of the first fully completed greenways, scheduled for completion within the next 10 years Many creeks in the region have a negative connotation for residents, due to their historical use as dumping grounds
<p>Greenway Users</p> <p><i>What types of use occur along this greenway?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately 300 people/day (~60% walking, 40% bicycling) Locals use the greenway when shopping Walking tours (Neighborhood Learning Group, Outdoor Afro, Citizens for Modern Transit, various conferences)
<p>Existing Interpretive Media</p> <p><i>Are there signs, programs or events that occur on this greenway? (insert photos below)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events: River des Peres Trash Bash Programs: ongoing water quality monitoring and trash clean-up, photo contest, common destination for guided walks due to easy access to public transit. Schools conduct water quality education here. No signage
<p>Interpretive Partners</p>	<p>River des Peres Watershed Coalition (raise awareness)</p>
<p>Photos</p>	
<p>Recommended Interpretive Improvements</p> <p><i>How can we improve interpretation on this greenway?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue emphasis on programs and events that bring people to the River des Peres. Install interpretive signage in high traffic locations All interpretation should feature the RDP as a real example of a working river, emphasizing functionality and generating awareness of the implications of water quality. The River des Peres provides an excellent opportunity to showcase the balance necessary in managing rivers for people and wildlife, and to shift the perception of rivers in the St. Louis region away from serving solely as drainage ditches.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX C – RESOURCES FOR INTERPRETIVE DEVELOPMENT

Publications

- **Common Fields: An Environmental History of St. Louis**, edited by Andrew Hurley, Missouri Historical Society, 1997
- **The Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri, 1764-1980**, by James Neal Primm, Missouri History Museum, 2013
- **Lost Caves of St. Louis**, by Hubert and Charlotte Rother, Virginia Publishing, 1996
- **Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City**, by Colin Gordon, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008

Institutions

- Missouri History Museum
- Museum of Westward Expansion
- Libraries
- Campbell House Museum (downtown St. Louis)
- St. Charles County Heritage Museum
- Daniel Boone Home
- Lewis & Clark State Historic Site
- Cahokia Mounds
- St. Louis Zoo

APPENDIX D – CONTENT DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

- What's the goal of interpreting this object, place, concept?
- How does this fit into a larger story?
- What universal concept/big idea do you want your audience to be aware of?
- What are the important tangible features of the resource?
- What are the intangible attributes of the resource?
- What might your audience already know about similar things/places?
- What emotional connections might you be able to make?
- What do you want your audience to do, think or feel as a result?
- What is your guiding theme statement?
- What is the output method for this written interpretation?

THANK YOU

As with many of our plans, we'd like to close out with a thank you to our community—to our community members, elected officials, partners, staff and Board of Directors:

Thank you for voting to invest in this legacy for future generations.

Thank you for entrusting us with your hard-earned tax dollars.

Thank you for giving us crucial feedback.

Thank you for voting a second time to invest in greenways.

Thank you for taking a walk, for riding your bike, for going for a run, for breathing fresh air on the greenways.

Thank you for volunteering, for pitching in, for reporting conditions, for asking questions, for sending pictures, for sharing stories.

Thank you for thinking about how you can help us in the work of interpretation.

Thank you for making this amazing region a more vibrant place to live, work and play.

LIVING DOCUMENT

While it's good to document what we know, we will never be done learning.

As communities, projects, technology and best practices evolve, so will this strategy. If you ever have feedback or ideas to share, please contact us at **(314) 436-7009** or **info@grgstl.org**.

