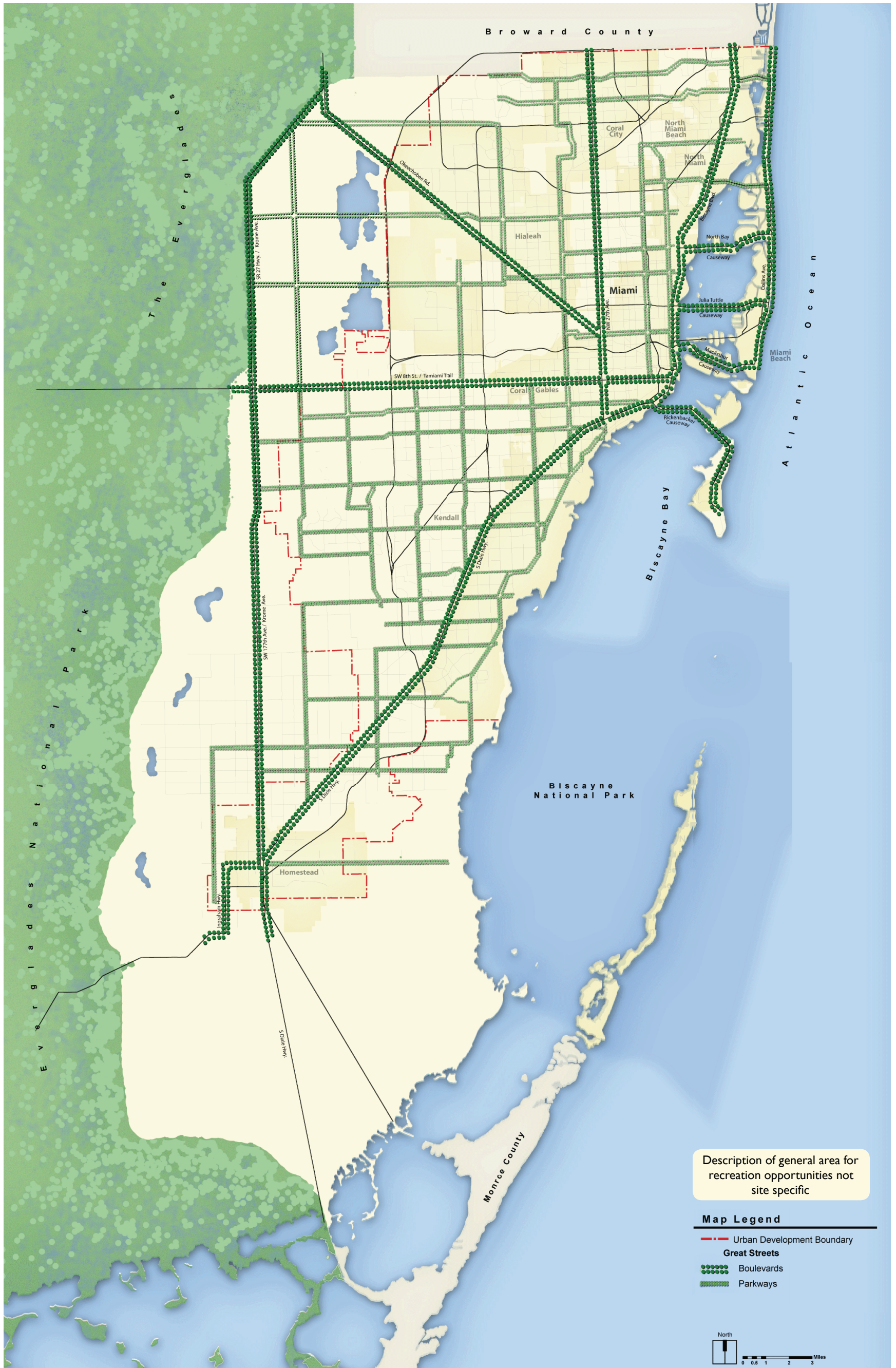


Great Streets Vision



Great Streets Design Guidelines



Comfortable walking room. Before streets were moving cars, they were moving people. This function continues today, though modern street design has relegated the pedestrian to a smaller portion of the street, if this portion has been retained at all. Pedestrians need ample room to move in groups, to pass one another and to be clear of buildings.

'Comfort' in the walking space also refers to protection from the elements and moving vehicle traffic. Trees and landscaping not only provide shade for pedestrians, they also buffer pedestrians from moving vehicles and give a sense of comfort in the walking experience.

Design elements

- **Sidewalks** of a width that responds to expected pedestrian volumes. In neighborhoods, this is likely to be less than immediately around schools, by parks and civic buildings, and, most notably, along commercial streets.
- **Clearly defined crosswalks** that not only provide ample width for pedestrians but that are also visible to motorists. Sometimes, depending on the context of the built environment, these crosswalks can be raised above the surface on speed tables to calm traffic and further raise motorist awareness to the need for pedestrians to cross.
- **Signalization** that recognizes pedestrian activity and treats it as movement through street intersections just as vehicles. Pedestrian signals in urban areas should not be activated but should reflect an understanding that pedestrians should always be given protection of movement when crossing. They should also accommodate sight-impaired pedestrians in giving an audible signal of when it is safe to cross a street.



Trees and landscaping. As implied previously, street trees give pedestrians shade and comfort and buffer them from the moving vehicles of the street. But perhaps more importantly, they reinforce the street's purpose as a public space and resource by enriching aesthetics. They 'soften' what can sometimes be a stark landscape of hard surfaces and buildings and give streets a connection to nature.

Safe passage and accommodation of all moving conveyances. Even aside from the pedestrian, streets carry more than cars. Well-designed streets allow bicyclists to feel comfortable close to moving traffic, whether through the addition of a designated bicycle lane or through other design characteristics that slow vehicle speeds and allow cyclists to safely mix with automobile traffic. They also support transit use, both in terms of physical dimensions of the traveled way that fit transit vehicles and through adjacent land uses that allow pedestrian access to transit.

Design elements

- **Bicycle lanes** that give the cyclist adequate buffering from moving vehicles and from parked cars.
- **Special bus lanes** when transit use is high enough to justify them or when the nature of transit vehicles (buses for rapid transit, light rail cars) requires a dedication portion of the street for normal operations
- **Design streets** that fit the environment.



To be sure, some streets have the responsibility of carrying heavy vehicle traffic. Though the rise of automobile-based street design has often emphasized vehicular carrying capacity at the expense of other street elements, great streets can certainly be designed to carry large volumes of cars. The key to this is to base the design on the conditions and needs of the built environment: streets serving urban areas with high pedestrian activity should control vehicle speeds with such elements as trees and smaller cross-section dimensions. Yet in these same environments the primacy of pedestrian access to buildings and destinations means that driveways, left turns into properties and other complications to traffic flow may not be needed as often, allowing high vehicle traffic loads to move along streets (even if at slower speeds that improve pedestrian safety conditions).

Design elements

- **Medians** not only separate the two directions of travel, they also provide space for additional landscaping (which can aid the street trees on the sides of the traveled way in slowing travel speeds) and potentially a refuge for pedestrians crossing the street.
- **Narrower lanes** and a generally 'tighter' street cross section creates a psychological sensation of relative enclosure that encourage motorists to drive more slowly and responsively to their environments.
- **On-street parking** to serve the land uses along streets (especially businesses) and minimize the need for on-site parking in land development, thus improving the efficiency and return on urban land.

Defined edges. Streets are one of the fundamental public spaces in cities and towns and as such need to have clear definitions of where their public space ends and adjacent private space begins. In dense urban areas these edges are usually provided by the placement of buildings along the public right-of-way edge, though the edges can still be defined by landscaping, yards and fences.

As the moving vehicle assumed prominence among users of streets and consequently became the primary driver of decisions on their design, attention to these different elements of the street has declined. The Great Streets Vision is based on an understanding of all of these elements having a place in Miami-Dade's streets, adding to the sense of place and quality of the built environment and balancing the transportation system.

Great Streets Hierarchy

Imagine a system where a street's character is defined by its role in the community rather than its function and capacity in moving vehicles. While all streets should have a minimum level of accessibility to all modes of transportation, not all streets require the same finishes. A hierarchy helps to determine the level of effort required to retrofit existing streets and guide new street development; it also helps to establish funding mechanisms and priorities for creating an entire network of great streets.

GATEWAY STREETS

Streets that are historically significant and may trace back to the original settlement patterns of the Miami-Dade area; those that have become regionally significant throughout the county and beyond; and those that house premium transit. Access to these streets should not be limited, but development along these corridors should reduce driveway cuts and provide access from perpendicular streets.



Examples of Gateway Streets in Miami-Dade

- Sunset & Tamiami-Trail (US 441)
- US 1
- US 27 – Okeechobee Road
- 27th Avenue
- Krome Avenue
- 88th Street (Kendall)



Tamiami Trail - Existing



Tamiami Trail - Proposed

CIVIC STREETS

Streets that provide access to recreational and civic facilities, as well as to pedestrian-oriented shopping and entertainment districts.



Examples of Civic Streets in Miami-Dade

- SW 137th Avenue
- Miracle Mile
- Washington Avenue
- Alton Road
- Broad Causeway



SW 137th Avenue - Existing



SW 137th Avenue - Proposed

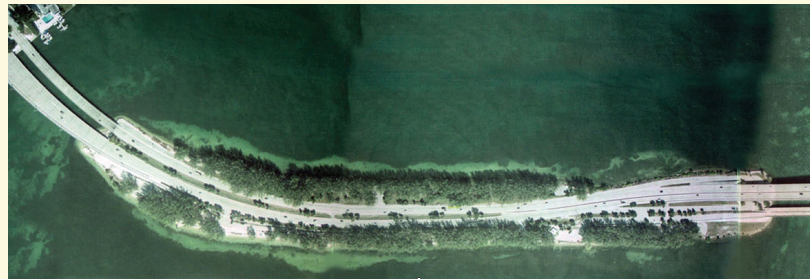
HERITAGE/SCENIC STREETS

The streets that provide access to heritage sites, historic or cultural districts, or are historic corridors. Additionally, these streets may also provide access to scenic natural resources or significant archeological sites.



Examples of Heritage/Scenic Streets in Miami-Dade

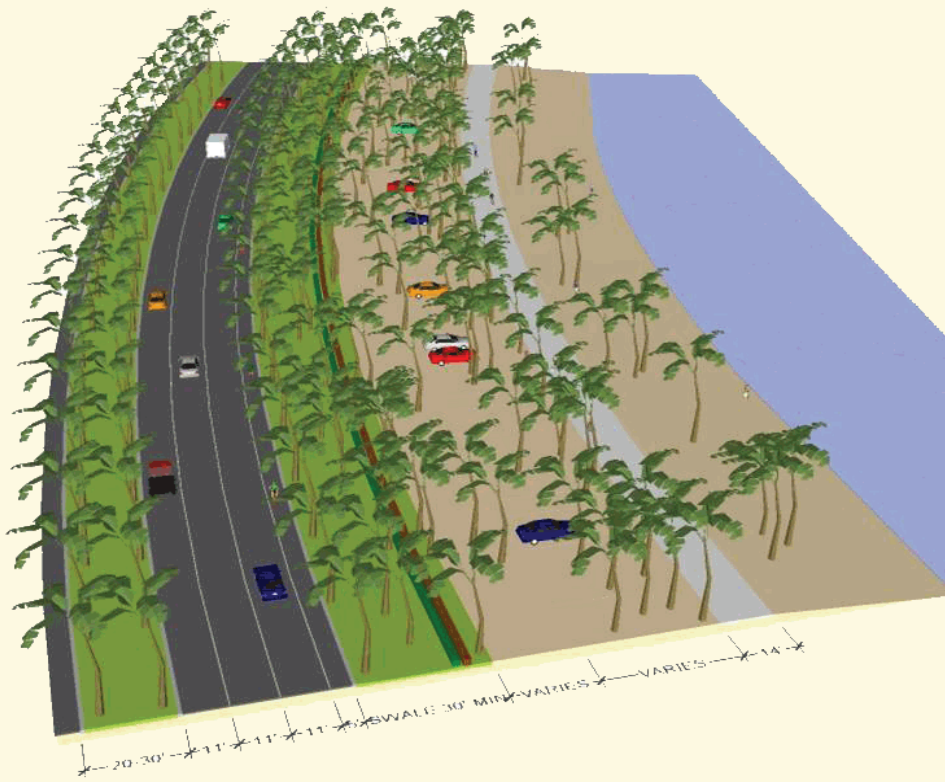
- Ocean Drive
- Collins Avenue (A1A)
- Old Cutler Road
- Coral Way
- Rickenbacker Causeway/ Commodore Trail



Rickenbacker Causeway - Existing



Rickenbacker Causeway - Proposed



NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS

Local residential streets, and streets within a ten-minute walk, or approximately a half-mile, of an existing and future park, school or civic facility.



Existing



Proposed

The Economics of Great Streets

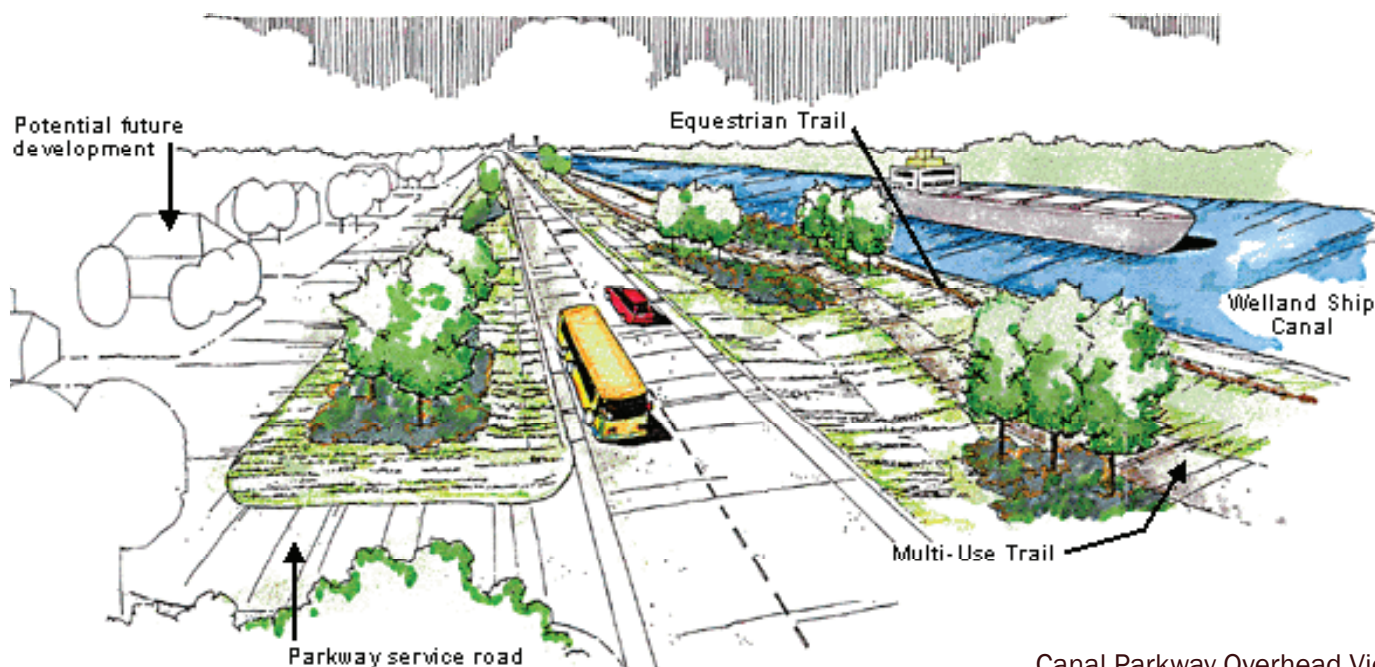
Great Streets often create economic impact through the linking of other park and recreation features such as trails, trailheads, and waterfront communities. The addition of a cohesive feature to create a destination area benefits existing parks and communities, and creates an opportunity for businesses, residents, and services in the surrounding areas to benefit from these attractions as well.

CASE STUDY: Welland Canals Parkway - Lake Ontario area, Canada

The Welland Canals Parkway will serve as a connection between the many strong and growing trail systems on the Lake Ontario region in Southern Canada, adjacent to Niagara Falls. Plans call for a parkway featuring lanes for automobile traffic surrounded by bicycle, pedestrian, and equestrian trails. It will follow the Welland Canal, and also pass through historic downtowns along the way. The construction is being completed in phases, with the accompanying trails completed first. Figure 1 shows the vision for the completed parkway.

George Nicholson of the Ontario Regional Planning Office reports that the original idea was to provide a service to the over 15 million tourists to the Niagara region, in the hopes of lengthening their stay, increasing spending, and spreading the wealth amongst the communities. In addition, industrial employment in the area has suffered in recent years, causing political officials to look elsewhere for employment. With Niagara Falls and a burgeoning wine region, tourism looked like a good candidate to focus municipal dollars. Nicholson reports that the preventative aspect of providing recreation to improve the health of residents was a strong selling point with area officials who were willing to “pay now” on outdoor recreation facilities instead of “pay later” on healthcare. Also, the urban areas nearby are growing in density, and officials hoped that outdoor space would draw urban dwellers for day getaways.

Almost \$200 million per year is expected in tourist spending. This is anticipated to support over 7,600 jobs and create almost \$14 million in local sales tax revenue. The combined economic impact from the construction and operation of the Welland Canals Parkway will grow from about \$40 million in Year One to over \$200 million by Year 15.



Canal Parkway Overhead View
Source: Regional Municipality of Niagara, Welland Canals Parkway and Trails Plan

OTHER EXAMPLES

- In urban Trenton, New Jersey, the state's Department of Transportation spent \$150 million on the new 6.5 acre Riverwalk deck over a highway, linking the city to the Delaware River, spurring an increase in sales of local properties. One lot, valued at \$120,000 prior to the park's construction, was developed with six housing units that sold for \$200,000 each. The addition of the park was also instrumental in the construction of a new 82-unit residential building.
- The U.S. Department of Transportation reports that in 1988, one month's traveler-generated spending on the Blue Ridge Parkway in rural Page County, Virginia (90 miles from Washington, D.C.) was \$10,845,600 or \$471,500 per highway mile, despite the fact that this portion of the highway has few commercial establishments.
- A 1990 study reported that in 1987 "in North Carolina, approximately 77 percent of the lodging jobs are supported by Blue Ridge Parkway visitors' expenditures, as are 48 percent of the restaurant jobs, 51 percent of the jobs in miscellaneous retail establishments, 41 percent in amusement and recreational services, 31 percent in gasoline service stations, and 9 percent in food stores." In all, the analysis suggests that 17,287 jobs in counties contiguous to the Parkway were supported by Parkway visitors' expenditures. This total comprised 6.6 percent of all the jobs in these counties.