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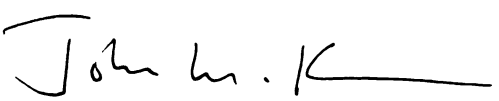
PROMISES AND CHALLENGES OF URBAN COMMUNITY-ORIENTED CONSERVATION: THE CASE OF GREENWAYS IN DETROIT

presented by

Maite Paulina Salazar

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Doctoral degree in Resource Development



Major Professor's Signature

December 12, 2005

Date

PROMISES AND CHALLENGES OF URBAN COMMUNITY-ORIENTED CONSERVATION: THE CASE OF GREENWAYS IN DETROIT

By

Maite Paulina Salazar

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Resource Development

2005

ABSTRACT

PROMISES AND CHALLENGES OF URBAN COMMUNITY-ORIENTED CONSERVATION: THE CASE OF GREENWAYS IN DETROIT

By

Maite Paulina Salazar

It has become evident that urban quality of life is linked to how resources and natural areas are managed within the urban environment. Yet, in distressed areas conservation initiatives often compete with critical community needs for scare resources, raising important equity concerns. Community approaches to conservation, which seek to involve local communities and to link community needs with conservation goals, are often seen as a means to address equity concerns. Two key, often overlooked, elements in the development of these approaches are the nature of community participation and the divergent ways in which actors interpret and conceptualize project goals. This dissertation takes a qualitative case study approach to understanding issues of equity in the planning of one urban conservation strategy, greenways in Detroit. More specifically, the study explores: 1) The degree to which the planning of greenways reflects a "participatory process" and, 2) the nature of relevant actors and they way in which they interpret and conceptualize greenways. Historically, greenways efforts have been led primarily by environmental and professional actors, with marginal presence from community groups. In some ways, the current catalyst for greenways development in Detroit, the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan's GreenWays program seeks to redress this issue. The program has, albeit slowly and with difficulty, increased opportunities for involvement by community organizations in Detroit. This dissertation unravels the complexity underlying participation and the implications for equitable

conservation in urban areas. Race, ethnicity and their ensuing power dimensions were critical elements that shaped participation in greenways planning. In addition, subtle and explicit messages coming from the donor organization and the values of project leaders contributed to a specific planning approach. In many cases, a technical focus in the planning limited participation. Overall, community oriented strategies were more effective at overcoming barriers to participation, particularly when greenways were contextualized within a broader community development strategy. Today, greenways in Detroit are invariably defined as part of a general discourse relating to the need to "rebuild", "revitalize," and/or "redevelop" the city. In spite of this shared understanding, greenways meanings and definitions reflect different, sometimes opposing, views of redevelopment. Some greenways interpretations reflect the values and views of a suburban white middle class, with redevelopment as a process driven by, and for, external actors. Conversely, some Detroit activists and community organizations interpret greenways primarily as a means for more equitable redevelopment. They view greenways first and foremost as a set of opportunities for the city's mostly minority residents. Overall, this study illustrates the centrality of the community (re)development context for generating effective and participatory greenways planning. In Detroit, greenways plans cannot be viewed as separate and distinct from the racial and ethnic tensions. If they are to contribute to community-centered redevelopment greenways plans must account for and address issues of race. Furthermore, participation should not be seen solely as the means by which conservation goals can be legitimized within a community. As this research shows, participation has a direct impact in the generation of more inclusive conservation ideals and goals.

To my parents, Rodrigo and Aurora, for their wisdom

To my accomplice in life, Rodrigo A., for always believing in me

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first of all like to thank my advisor John Kerr, for his tremendous support and guidance throughout the various stages of this dissertation. He was always there to discuss ideas, provide feedback and help me to overcome the difficulties of carrying out a research project, and later on writing a dissertation. He always gave me the freedom to pursue my own ideas while at the same time providing critical feedback that helped keep me on track (especially when I was writing from a distance!). For this I am indebted; *Thank-you John.*

I would like to thank the RD community for their help, friendship and support: my fellow-graduates students (Peggy, Brian...); the secretaries and support staff (Cheryl, Sue...); faculty members, for their interest and discussions (JoAnn Beckwith especially). I would especially like to thank past committee members for their tremendous support, and helping me through the labyrinth of RD graduate life: Cynthia Fridgen, for encouraging me to purse the Ph.D.; Jim Bingen, for so many interesting conversations which helped shape my research ideas and for introducing me to the standards research group in Sociology. I am also indebted to Larry Busch in Sociology, for providing me with the opportunity to pursue research in another field, in an interesting, stimulating and fun environment (and for providing a much needed RA!) I learned a lot about research from Larry and from the many Sociology graduate students that populated his offices. Thanks to you all!

I would like to thank my committee members: Angela Mertig, Geoffry Habron, Peter Kakela for their continued interest in my work, comments, support and many

rewarding discussions. I would especially like to acknowledge Peter Kakela, for his tremendous support and wonderful advice at various stages of my program.

To the many people I interviewed and with whom I talked about greenways, redevelopment, conservation and the great city of Detroit. The generosity with which they gave me their time, knowledge and ideas greatly inspired this work.

I am indebted to the department of Resource Development, particularly its past and current chairpersons, Cynthia Fridgen and Scott Witter, for the financial support provided, and for the vote of confidence they both expressed in my ability. In particular, I would like to mention the completion fellowship provided by the Department, which greatly assisted me in the last and final stage of the Ph.D.

The graduate school provided me with a Dissertation Completion Fellowship which greatly assisted the writing process. This work was also supported by a grant from the Victor Institute at MSU which allowed me to carry out the field research. This project would not have been possible without their financial support.

I would like to thank many friends with whom I have crossed paths during these years, for wonderful conversations, fun times and for letting me into their lives. Too many to mention: Hilary, for so many, many wonderful conversations; her mom Janet and sister Alison Jones, for their generosity and many insights into Detroit; Peggy, for many shared moments in grad school and so many other aspects of our lives; to many in the "international crowd", for an opportunity to see into different worlds; my friends from African dance and yoga in Lansing, for helping to keep me sane!; my friends and neighbors in the "Key Park" in NYC, for your kind words of encouragement and friendship to this newcomer.

Many thanks to my parents, Rodrigo and Aurora for their wisdom and approach to life; even from afar it helped me to keep things in perspective. To my wonderful and joyous family, for bringing laughter into life!

Last, but certainly not the least, I would like to thank my genius of a husband, Rodrigo, for his unwavering faith in me and the multiple ways in which he made it possible for me to pursue this path. For encouraging me to pursue my dreams and not give up, for taking the time to read this manuscript many, many times, for "picking up the pieces" on those many times when I fell apart, for being a great father to our son...And alas, many thanks to my little one, Dante, born when I started writing, who did his best to prevent me from sitting down at my computer to write this dissertation (succeeding most of the time), for being the true *joy of my life. The end, Dante, it's done!*

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ABBREVIATIONS

CDC	:	Community Development Corporations
CEO	:	Chief Executive Officer.
CFSEM	:	Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan.
DECC	:	Detroit Eastside Community Collaborative
DEGA	:	Detroit's Economic Growth Association.
DTE	:	DTE Energy Corporation
EJ/EJM	:	Environmental Justice/Environmental Justice Movement
EZ	:	Empowerment Zone
FDR	:	Friends of the Detroit River.
NHC	:	National Heritage Corridors
NPS	:	National Park Service
NRM	:	Natural resource management
RTC	:	Rails-to Trail Conservancy.

CHAPTER 1

Communities and Conservation

1.1. Introduction

The prominence of urban areas as places to protect natural resources has increased as human activities continue to expand and exert pressure on the environment. At the same time, it has become evident that the quality of life of urban residents is linked to how resources and natural areas are managed within the urban environment. Initiatives aimed at conserving resources and enhancing the quality of life of urban residents can take various forms, such as greenways planning, urban gardening, brownfield redevelopment and habitat restoration. In their effort to link resource protection to quality of life issues, these initiatives often seek, to varying degrees, to involve local communities and to link conservation and community development goals. This research looks at the ability of one of these initiatives - greenways - to reconcile resource protection and community development goals in the city of Detroit.

Greenways are networks of linear parks or open spaces along natural or human made corridors such as rivers or historic railroad tracks, with the multiple purposes of bringing people together, protecting natural resources and providing public access to natural areas. The greenways "movement" is rooted in the traditions and ideas of three groups concerned with environmental issues: 1) conservationists, 2) environmentally oriented planners and landscape architects and, 3) outdoor recreation enthusiasts interested in trail related activities (for example the organization, Rails-to-Trail Conservancy is a key greenways advocate). (See Ahern 1995; Fabos 2004; Little 1990) for various accounts of the movement's history.)

Promoted in suburban, rural and urban settings, greenways share a focus on addressing the negative implications of the development and expansion of metropolitan

areas. In broad terms advocates are concerned with issues relating to inner city decay, suburbanization and the reliance on the automobile as the sole means of transportation that currently prevails in U.S. society. Their popularity as an urban "greening" strategy has increased in recent years with city planners and advocates often viewing greenways as an opportunity to meet neighborhood revitalization needs (Fabos and Ahern 1996; Walmsley 1995).

Yet in distressed areas initiatives such as greenways often compete with health care, education and other community needs for the declining resources of local government. Establishing greenways a necessary and effective mechanism for urban revitalization (alongside conservation objectives) will depend in part on their ability to echo and respond to the needs of inner city residents. In this sense, in spite of their potential as an urban revitalization tool, greenways may encounter difficulties in their application to the inner city context.

One of these difficulties resides in the fact that greenways have historically been linked to trail and nature related activities typical of the elites. Thus in spite of their potential contributions to urban revitalization, greenways may be viewed by many as an endeavor for the middle and upper class, often white, elites. From this perspective their application to an inner city context can raise important equity concerns. Indeed, research in related areas of scholarship warns us to the validity of this concern, and provides some ground for equity concerns. First, leisure research indicates that young, upper middle class whites tend to participate more in outdoor recreation[1] (Lee, Scott and Floyd 2001).

[1] The research also indicates that the reasons for lack of minority participation in recreation activities are often complex. They go beyond mere "cultural differences" and are reflective of broader inequities both within the institutions that manage and shape outdoor recreation opportunities and within society as a whole. See chapter four for a more detailed discussion.

More specifically, survey research in greenways related trail recreation suggests that users tend to be middle and upper-middle class residents and that the location of trails in urban areas affects who uses them and how (Furuseth and Altman 1991; Gobster 1995). Second, as various scholars have suggested, the management of natural and recreational resources largely *by* and *for* middle class interests can contribute to an ideal of outdoor recreation which may not generalize across ethnic and socioeconomic lines (reviewed in Loyd and Johnson 2002). Third, scholars who have studied the race and class based nature of the traditional environmental movement have clearly indicated the need for a more inclusive agenda, one that can reach out to minority and low income people (Taylor 2002).

This is not to say that greenways as an urban conservation strategy cannot be adapted to meet the needs of inner city residents. Nor am I denying the right of all citizens to a clean and pleasant living environment (in the broad sense of the term), where nature, work and culture play a role. Inner city greenways could potentially function as a way to make nature-based (and other) activities more accessible to those currently, and historically, lacking in them. However, to the extent that greenways are part of a more traditional recreation and environmental agenda they may not appeal to or may tend to exclude certain groups of residents. This raises the question of whether greenways, as currently promoted, can effectively respond to the needs and desires of inner city, lower income, mostly minority residents.

These questions and concerns are particularly relevant in places like Detroit, in which the struggle to recover from industrial decline and unresolved racial tensions affect the city's ability to address issues related to environmental quality. Once home to the

highest paid blue-collar workers, Detroit has experienced a process of deindustrialization in the last 60 years which has resulted in out-migration of both businesses and residents, with a consequent loss of jobs and tax base. Racial discrimination has played a pivotal role in the city's transformation, both in terms of the factors driving the process and its effects on the city's African-Americans residents (Sugrue 1996).

At the same time as the city declined, out-migration together with various forms of development subsidies (housing, freeway system etc) successfully spurred the growth of suburban areas in Southeast Michigan (their population is now near 5 million) (Thomas 1997). Altogether these processes have further enhanced racial and economic segregation patterns within the region; today it is one of the most racially segregated metropolitan areas in the U.S. Deindustrialization also left the city with many abandoned buildings, low quality housing, vacant lots - many of which are brownfields - and a legacy of industry related pollution problems.

Thus industrial decline, the explosive growth of suburbia along with historical patterns of racial discrimination has shaped, and continues to shape, planning and development in Detroit region. The aging city and its poor, mostly minority residents are hit the hardest, bringing to the forefront the importance of equity in the development of strategies for urban conservation. It is against this backdrop that we must understand greenways initiatives promoted and carried out in Detroit.

1.1.2 Statement of research purpose and questions

This dissertation takes a qualitative case study approach to understanding issues of equity in the planning of greenways in Detroit. More specifically, I wish to explore

and analyze two fundamental aspects of greenways development in the city: 1) The degree to which the planning of greenways reflects a "participatory process" and the nature of the actors involved in it and, 2) the way in which relevant actors interpret and conceptualize greenways. Towards this objective, five sub-questions guide the research:

1. What is the history of greenways development in the Detroit region?
2. Who are the actors driving the development of greenways ideas and plans in the Detroit?
3. How do various community actors define and understand greenways? Is the greenways concept, and opportunities derived from it, used as a community development tool by local groups?
4. What is the nature of participation in greenways planning efforts?
5. How do racial inequalities affect greenways planning efforts?

The next two sections provide the background to understanding issues of equity in conservation, particularly their increasing importance for many conservation strategies throughout the world. The discussion highlights the lessons learned, their relevance and importance to further research. The sections that follow establish the importance of these insights to research on greenways in Detroit; they set the stage for the questions listed above. The final sections provide the theoretical and analytical framework guiding this research as well as the research purpose and questions that stem from it.

1.2. Issues of equity in conservation and natural resource management

1.2.1. The new conservation paradigm: participatory approaches to conservation

Integration of community needs with environmental protection goals has become a critical component of many conservation[2] strategies. Concerns over social justice or equity emerged in the arena of conservation as practitioners and scholars began to recognize the need to reconcile advocacy for nature with advocacy for people. In the international arena for example, concerns initially surfaced in the 1970s as practitioners and scholars became disenchanted with large-scale, capital intensive and centrally planned conservation and development projects in developing countries in the areas of agriculture, water management and forestry (reviewed in Kellert 2000; Little 1994). In the 1980s, conservationists and community advocates began to question top-down, often coercive nature conservation strategies that prevailed throughout the world. On the one hand the conflicts that ensued from these strategies often undermined conservation goals (Ghimire and Pimbert 1997; Western and Wright 1994). On the other hand, the hardships faced by many local communities brought to the forefront the fact those suffering the costs of conservation have traditionally been excluded from the decision making process, raising important equity concerns (Ghimire and Pimbert 1997).

[2] For the sake of brevity, the term "conservation" will be used in a broad sense to refer to strategies aimed at the protection and management of nature and natural resources. Many areas of practice and scholarship use the term natural resource management (NRM) to refer to the protection of resources. Conservation is most often used to refer to the protection of natural areas, such as parks and reserves. In this dissertation the terms natural resource management (NRM) and conservation are used interchangeably. These strategies share common tenants from an environmental protection and management perspective.

As a result, attention to the needs of local communities has become an important component of many conservation strategies throughout the world. In the arena of international development in particular this has translated into new versions of conservation agendas, often called community-based, which emphasize working with local communities in a participatory manner, (Brechin et al. 2002; Brosius, Trsing and Zerner 1998; Kellert 2000; Western and Wright 1994).

Conservation practice in the U.S. also changed in response to a perceived failure of centralized and rational approaches to resource management. Historically resource planning in the U.S. has tended to overvalue economic efficiency and science as the exclusive basis for making decisions about resources (Cortner and Moote 1999). Within this context the distributional consequences of resource management, particularly for minorities, have often been overlooked or simply ignored.

As a response to this instrumental rationality in resource planning, conservation strategies in the U.S. increasingly advocate public (and community) participation, in alignment with the international trend. These new strategies, which emerged in the late 80s and early 90s, are referred to by various names - ecological stewardship, integrated resource or ecosystem management, landscape ecology, collaborative management, ecosystem management - but they all represent a shift away from top-down strategies to more community oriented conservation. The development of ecosystem management, an ecological approach to the study and management of resources increasingly endorsed by scholars and public agencies, for example specifically sought to redress the overly technocratic nature of conservation in the U.S. (Cortner and Moote 1999; Weber 2000).

The global trend towards "sustainable development" has no doubt contributed to the development of new approaches to conservation. Calls for sustainable development advocate the reconciliation of economic, environmental and social justice goals (WCED 1987). Participatory approaches to conservation are also seen as an opportunity to advance sustainable development goals by addressing both ecological sustainability and social equity. Indeed, some definitions of sustainable development explicitly relate quality of human life to the conservation of ecosystems (IUCN/UNEP/WWF 1991).

The policy implications of various definitions of sustainable development depend to a great extent on context specific interpretation, but the acceptance and use of the concept suggests the degree to which conservation has become linked to quality of life worldwide. However, and perhaps due to the ambiguity imbedded in the term, there is a growing tension between what and whose needs should be sustained, to what extent resources should be conserved, which specific ecological systems should be prioritized and which groups and societies should bear the costs.

In summary, local realities and global political trends gave impetus to the idea that conservation is not only about ecological and biophysical factors but also social and political change. Within this context the conservation world embraced participatory approaches to nature and resource protection. Participatory conservation approaches share two major, interconnected tenets: 1) they aim to involve local communities in conservation decisions, and 2) they seek to reconcile community economic development and conservation goals.

1.2.2. Critiques and challenges to participatory conservation

In spite of their promise, the practical implementation of more participatory approaches to conservation have often fallen short of expectations, generating debate both on empirical and theoretical grounds (see Agrawal and Gibson 1999; Belsky 1999; Kellert 2000; Leach, Mearns and Scoones 1999). In some cases, advocates have begun to question the feasibility of a "people approach" to conservation, particularly in the developing world (for one review of the debate and a middle ground opinion see Brechin et al. 2002; Wilshusen et al. 2002).

As the research and practice of participatory conservation evolves, they provide important lessons for further study and critical analysis. Scholars point out that both practice and research have often ignored power imbalances and the heterogeneous character of communities (see Agrawal and Gibson 1999; Brown 1998) for critical perspectives). More specifically, work in developing countries suggests four areas requiring more attention, both in practice and research:

1. Process and history are important: *i.e.* understanding the context in which a particular conservation strategy is imbedded. This suggests that we need to understand how and why inequities arise in addition to what they are. History is important to understanding present conditions.
2. Communities are not homogeneous entities: intra-community differences, class, race and gender for example all affect conservation projects and programs
3. Defining participation is important: few initiatives indicate what they mean by participation and how participation will be influenced by intra-community differences.

4. Equity refers to how decisions are made as well as to the effects of these decisions on communities. Therefore access to the decision-making process is a critical component of equity in conservation.

1.2.3. The environmental justice movement and communities of color

The emergence of the environmental justice (EJ) movement in the early 1980s also brought to the forefront social justice concerns with regard to the environment. In a departure from traditional forms of environmental advocacy, the EJ movement sought to link class and race struggles with environmental concerns. In the U.S. in particular the unequal distribution of environmental hazards on people of color and low-income residents, coupled with dissatisfaction with existing environmental organizations fueled a movement that developed independently of the traditional conservation movement (Taylor 2000b; Taylor 2002). As Taylor characterizes it:

> *"..the EJM examines how discrimination results in humans harming each other, how racial minorities bear the brunt of the discrimination, and how discriminatory practices hasten the degradation of environments. The EJM also examines corporate and governmental environmental behavior and the effects of those actions on the aggrievedcommunities." (page 523)*

In response to these inequalities, the EJM developed an agenda and form of action in which community participation in environmental decisions took center stage. It has also highlighted issues pertaining to and arising within the inner city context, in a departure from more mainstream agendas. Advocacy and research has focused largely on

environmental hazards, although some researchers have examined other environmental issues using an EJ frame (see Taylor's study on central park (1999) and wildlands (2000a)).

Much of the work carried out in the field of EJ to date has focused on the burden created by environmental decisions, and less on the process by which these burdens arise (Pellow 2000). Pellow (2000), in his critical review of EJ research, proposes the term "environmental inequality" which he defines as "[a focus] on broader dimensions of the intersection between environmental quality and social hierarchies...[that] addresses more structural questions that focus on social inequality (unequal distribution of power and resources in society) and environmental burdens" (pg. 582). In this sense EJ scholars are becoming more concerned with the complexities, processes and histories which generate environmental inequalities, in convergence with some of the critical analysis emerging in the field of conservation. Pellow's work focuses on environmental hazards, but his definition is useful to understanding a broader range of EJ issues, including the absence of environmental amenities in many low-income and minority communities in the U.S.

1.2.4. Environmental politics, experts and participation

Much of the critical analysis related to both conservation and EJ are driven by and reflect basic questions on the role of experts and local citizens in the making of environmental policy. In the western world, and the U.S. in particular, there has been an on-going debate about the democratic prospect of a society that is increasingly technical and complex (reviewed in Fisher 2000). Social theorists and activists in particular argue that policy making has become an increasingly technocratic endeavor. At the crux of the

debate lie basic questions about epistemology, the role of values and expertise, and their intricate relationship to power in a democratic society.

Fischer (2000) contends that in the environmental policy arena public (non-expert) participation is critical on both practical and ethical grounds. First, participation helps to legitimize decisions, particularly in highly contentious scenarios. Second, if given a chance citizens can bring contextual knowledge to bear on the discussion, which in turn generates more effective and locally relevant decisions. Third, in a truly "democratic society," citizens should have real opportunities to deliberate on issues that affect their everyday lives. The highly technical nature and historical preponderance of expert opinion in environmental policy illustrates both the difficulties and practical relevance of participatory approaches.

Research in the social sciences has brought to the forefront the tension between expertise and values in various environmental contexts. More specifically scholars have pointed out the hidden values that reside in expert knowledge and the ways in which power affects decision-making. Alario's (Alario 2000a; Alario 2000b) study of urban ecological restoration in Chicago reveals the complexity of values that underlie dissent about restoration goals, even among environmentalists. Her study illustrates how dissent is based on differences in scientific understanding as well as special interests and value differences. She suggests that "a synthesis of scientific knowledge and democratic deliberation must occur as part of the decision making process" (page 60 Alario 2000b). Concurring, (Fischer 2000a), whose analysis focuses primarily on environmental risk, suggests that the crux of the matter is how to create effective mechanisms for both experts and local citizens to engage in a meaningful participation. Referring to watershed

management in the U.S., (Rhoads *et al.* 1999) point out that effective communication between experts and non-experts requires time, energy and commitment, not merely the formalization of a "community process". Without these mechanisms participation is merely a token statement.

1.3. The social construction of the environment

The theory of social construction developed in the social sciences and humanities has greatly influenced the way in which we conceptualize and understand the nature and effects of human-environment interactions. Social construction perspectives suggest that scholars who study environmental problems should focus on how human actors construct symbols and meanings related to the environment (Greider and Garkovich 1994). More recently environmental sociologists suggest moving towards understanding that what we take to be "physical facts" have been shaped by human construction and interpretation, and what we have traditionally viewed as "strictly social" phenomena have also been shaped by responses to the physical world (see Freudenburg, Frickel and Grambling 1995; Woodgate and Redclift 1998).

Social constructivist perspectives provide a framework for understanding human-environment relationships which challenges us to understand "nature" as a mediated, negotiated concept that is both "material" and "socially constructed." Viewed from this lens conflicts over conservation are in part due to the multiple interpretations that various groups of people give to the "environment," "nature" or even the idea of "conservation." Issues of equity arise due to the prevalence of some interpretations over others in the development of a particular conservation strategy. Conservation viewed

from this perspective is not just about the conservation of ecosystems or "natural areas," but also about constructed meanings and the links between conservation and development.

Indeed as experience and research has shown the intersection between conservation and community development goals is critical to the development of participatory strategies. At the same time, the intersection between these two realms is full of conceptual complexities arising from these multiple interpretations, and more often than not the resulting power struggles. In this sense a social constructivist framework for research helps us to look for and understand this multiplicity of viewpoints.

Likewise in the field of EJ research, social constructivist perspectives have challenged traditional definitions of the "environment", giving voice to those typically marginalized from the mainstream environmental agenda. Thus within an EJ framework the poor living conditions of the inner city become an environmental issue which should be given as much prominence as the plight of endangered species and wild areas. A social constructivist perspective thus forces us to try to understand how, for example, inner city actors construct and interpret the "environment" and its relationship to their development needs.

1.4. Relevance of greenways to the study of urban communities and conservation

Part of the broader international and national trend aimed at promoting and developing strategies which reconcile quality of life issues with resource protection,

greenways are both a conservation strategy and an approach to planning. From a conservationist perspective the linear and linked character of greenways creates their potential to redress the scarcity and/or high cost of conserving large tracks of contiguous land (Little 1990; Zube 1995). In the U.S. they emerged in part as a response to the need to provide public open spaces in areas where acquiring land was not feasible due to its high cost, such as urban and/or developed areas. Furthermore the disproportionate public land ownership patterns in the U.S (most federally owned land is in the Western U.S.) left important land extensions without any type of (public) protection. Greenways, which can involve a mix of private and public ownership patterns, were seen as an alternative to purely public ownership for protecting natural areas, particularly where this was impossible or too expensive (Zube 1995).

From a planning perspective, greenways offer an opportunity to incorporate and reconcile multiple values and interests into the planning process. They advance the goals of creating "sustainable landscapes" where environmental values typically absent from the traditional planning process, such as biodiversity and ecological infrastructure, can be incorporated (Ahern 1995).

Beyond their ecological relevance greenways reflect an attempt to create conservation systems that are meaningful both ecologically and socially. They are typically promoted as a means for reconciling social, economic and environmental objectives within a single project. In that sense they share a key tenet with othercommunity oriented conservation strategies. Most importantly advocates ascribe a "community" building aspect to greenways. Little (1990), for example, in his seminal work on greenways indicates that "linkages" are the "philosophical core of the greenways

movement" (page 37). They convey the notion of linking natural (land), as well as human and social resources. As he puts it, "to make a greenway...is to make a community. And that is above all what the movement is about" (page 38).

Thus while greenways efforts vary a great deal in terms of specific goals they tend to share the notion that community input and valuation are key aspects of the project, much like other community based approaches to conservation. They also involve both private and public lands, and formal and informal partnerships between the private sector, NGOs and different levels of government units as well as citizen groups.

Although greenways share important characteristics with other community-based conservation efforts, research on greenways has not been influenced by the critical perspectives emerging in the environmental field, as revealed by my review of the literature. References to issues of social justice and their relationship to the greenways concept are largely absent from the literature on greenways.

In one exception, Lindsey et al. (Lindsey, Maraj and Kuan 2001) explored whether residents in Indianapolis have equal access to the greenways system, by mapping the distance of various census tracts to the trail system. Their research indicates that minorities and low-income residents reside proportionally closer to the trail than their white, middle class counterparts. At the same time, they conclude that the degree of segregation along the trail is high. Paradoxically, the authors indicate that while not conclusive their data also suggests that minorities and low-income residents tend to use the trails less than middle class whites.

While the research is important in its attention to equity, the authors assume that proximity to trail is an indicator of access, thereby ignoring other important factors that

affect trail use (safety, maintenance, ability of the trail system to meet user needs etc). It also views greenways exclusively as a trail system, as opposed to a conservation strategy in which multiple objectives co-exist (and where recreation trails are only one of these). Most importantly the research does not explore the social processes which shape the greenways system as it currently exists, assuming the objectivity of the conditions which generated the route. In this sense a focus on greenways planning would provide important insights into how competing visions of greenways emerge, are debated and reconciled. As we have discussed above, this is an important aspect of understanding the equity implications of conservation.

Nor does greenways research (or practice for that matter) appear to be influenced by the long standing theoretical debate on the political versus the rational nature of planning, in spite of its connections to the field. To varying degrees, schools of thought guiding contemporary planning emphasize participation, social learning and community empowerment (reviewed in Lane 2001). In reference to park management, Lane suggests (2001) that the debate within the planning field has important points of convergence with the questions and issues that arise in the "planning" of conservation activities. I argue that greenways reside in the intersection of planning, conservation, and community development. Moreover in urban areas they present an opportunity to explore issues of equity in the development and construction of both environmental and redevelopment strategies.

1.5. The case of Detroit: deindustrialization, suburban development and race

Detroit reached its peak prosperity during the 1940s and 1950s, as it became a center piece of the military-industrial complex of the nation. The city's auto workers, organized in the powerful United Automobile Workers, were among the nation's highest paid blue collar workers. The promise of better paying jobs in manufacturing, specifically in the motor industry, lured African Americans from the south to Detroit in waves of migration that started in the early 1900s (Metzger and Booza 2002). Although discrimination existed within the manufacturing industry, it still offered opportunities for upward mobility for African American families, particularly compared to their poor prospects in other parts of the country. By the 1940s the city was home to a prosperous and vibrant African American community.

However, the opportunities for many African-American families in Detroit changed dramatically after World War II. Like many other industrial cities in the north, Detroit underwent a process of deindustrialization, in which major plants and sometimes whole industries were closed, downsized or relocated in response to economic and technological changes of the 20th century. In post World War II Detroit in particular, major auto makers began to restructure their assembly process to reduce production costs. As part of the restructuring, industry moved to the suburbs alleging the need for more space to set-up plants based on the newer assembly line technology[3]. Non-automobile

[3] Industry also moved from Detroit to other states altogether, in search of labor cost cutting measures (i.e. non-unionized work force). Subsidies, in the form of lower taxes, also lured industries from Detroit to non-metropolitan areas.

related businesses soon followed. As a result, the opportunities for many African-American families in Detroit changed dramatically (Sugrue 1996).

In Detroit, like other cities, suburban development exploded in the 1940s when the Federal Housing Administration and the Home Owner's Loan Corporation underwrote new housing construction for World War II veterans on vacant land at the city's north-east and north-west edges. The massive outward flight from the city that followed was further encouraged by the 1950s federal highway project and the movement of major industries to the suburbs (Sugrue 1996; Thomas 1997). By the 1970s, the metropolitan area had spread considerably to cover a six county area. In contrast, in 2000, Detroit's population fell below the one million mark for the first time since the 1930s census. It had peaked at almost 2 million in 1950 (Metzger and Booza 2002).

Suburbanization was accompanied by greater and greater segregation. African Americans were barred from suburban housing by the racially discriminatory housing covenants enforced by federal loan policies and by the resistance of many white residents to integrated housing[4] (Sugrue 1996; Thomas 1997). Thus African American residents, particularly lower income people, were in practice barred from accessing better paying jobs and improved housing. The city was left without an economic base, without jobs and with an increasingly low income population.

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[4] Both Sugrue 1996 and Thomas 1997, analyze and describe the multiple ways in which federal housing policy combined with local resistance by whites to integrated housing perpetuated discrimination against African-Americans in housing developments. For example, the Federal Housing Administration regularly refused loans for the construction of homes for African Americans, while at the same time underwriting construction in similar conditions for whites. Private neighborhood associations routinely included racially discriminatory restrictive covenants; enacted to maintain "*desirable residential characteristics* of a neighborhood" (page 44. Sugrue, 1996). To complicate matters even further, the appraisals by the Home Owners Loan Corporation (a government entity) awarded higher ratings to white neighborhoods whose homes were covered by these types of covenants, as they were seen as providing "stability" and ensuring property values. At the same time, public housing in Detroit was racially segregated, concentrated in the inner city and insufficient in amount. As Sugrue (1996) succinctly puts it: "Federal housing policy legitimated systematic discrimination against African-Americans in housing." (page 44)

The social tensions created by unfair housing policies and unemployment[5], coupled with racial discrimination in other aspects of daily life finally exploded in the turmoil of the 1967 riot. The riot left many people dead, destroyed downtown property and scarred the city for many years to come. While many people view the 1967 riot as generating the demise of Detroit, in reality it was but a symptom or result of a highly racialized deindustrialization process that began in the early 40s (Sugrue 1996). The riot and the chaos that ensued further accentuated an on-going white flight from the city and reinforced its isolation. Today the city remains one of the most segregated areas in the nation[6] (Metzger and Booza 2002). Moreover, the massive flight of industry and residents, along with the social and physical destruction of many neighborhoods, left behind a city of abandoned buildings, vacant lots, poor housing stock and a legacy of industry related contamination problems. Today, many of its residents, local organizations and city government work towards revitalizing, redeveloping and in some cases reconstructing the social, economic and cultural basis upon which the city can thrive.

Within the context of an urban crisis, the role of environmental protection may appear urgent yet at the same time superfluous to other multiple needs of the city and its residents. Concern for the environment is often portrayed as belonging to the middle and upper-middle class, often white, members of society (reviewed in Mohai and Bryant 1998). Yet a survey of residents in metropolitan Detroit indicated that African-American

[5] Unemployment was particularly high among young African American men as new entry level jobs were no longer being created in the city. In addition many older skilled black workers were fired and had to take important wage cuts when they were able to find new jobs. Thus the inability - in the practice - to move to the suburbs in search of these jobs devastated the social pillars of Detroit's black community (Sugrue, 1996).

[6] At 81.6%, Detroit ranks second nationwide in its share of African-American residents for cities with a population larger than 100,000 (Metzger and Booza, 2002)

residents are just as concerned with environmental issues as whites (Mohai and Bryant 1998). In fact, African-American residents tended to show stronger concern over local environmental issues than did whites, most likely as a result of the disproportionate burden of low environmental quality in African American neighborhoods. Other work has also indicated that socio-economic status is weakly correlated to concern for environmental quality (Jones and Dunlap 1992) and Mohai's research confirmed this trend for Detroit residents.

While these surveys provide an indication of community concern for the environment, they suggest a lot of questions that are relevant to understanding equity and greenways. For example, how is this environmental concern expressed by Detroiters? What types of conservation and environmental initiatives predominate in the city? How might this affect greenways planning in Detroit? In this sense, which community actors are relevant to greenways planning? In the practice, which actors shape the greenways vision for Detroit? Lastly, are greenways an appropriate conservation strategy for the city of Detroit? How do they complement and/or detract from other environmental initiatives that are relevant to the communities?

1.6. Theoretical and analytical framework

This research is guided by a theoretical frame of reference which recognizes both the material and social construction of our world, and more specifically those ideas and concepts which define our environmental actions. In my research I highlight the construction of meanings, symbols and ideas because they have been less explored in the

realm of the environment, particularly in the urban conservation context in which this research takes place.

In addition, I use and build upon those insights from international and U.S. based experiences to construct an analytical framework for research in order to better understand issues of equity in the environmental arena. This analytical framework, guided by a social constructivist lens, pays attention to 1) the context and history in which specific environmental actions are embedded; 2) the social position and multiple meanings held by relevant actors 3) the type and nature of participatory approaches; and especially, 4) the processes which drive decision-making and potential inequalities.

I therefore sought to use these insights to study conservation in an urban context. Choosing an urban context for the research is important because 1) issues of equity in conservation have been less explored in urban environments; 2) the defining line between "nature" and "human environment" is easily blurred, providing an excellent opportunity to observe the interplay between multiple meanings and interpretations; and 3) while nature reserves and other rural strategies will continue to be important to conservation, the prominence of urban areas as a place to protect our resources has increased. From an equity perspective, this is particularly so since many low-income residents reside in urban centers with low environmental quality, and often lack the means to access environmental amenities in places like national parks, etc.

In addition, because of their relevance to present and future conservation agendas, I decided to focus the research on urban conservation strategies that have explicit community development goals and seek to involve local communities. In this sense, greenways present an interesting case; their amorphous character would suggest that to

some extent they are shaped by the planning process, as well as by the constraints and opportunities of the specific landscape. Thus, issues of equity first arise as greenway elements are debated and created in the early planning stages.

1.7. Dissertation plan

As introduced above, the key questions that this dissertation addresses concern 1) the degree to which the planning of greenways reflects a "participatory process" and the nature of the actors involved in it and, 2) the way in which relevant actors interpret and conceptualize greenways. To address these questions the dissertation is organized as follows.

Chapter two describes the research design and methods used in the study and data analysis. Chapter three provides a brief history of greenways with a focus on understanding the genesis of the idea in the Detroit region. In it, I describe the principal efforts and main actors critical to the development of greenways ideas in the region. I analyze the way in which these ideas and efforts gave way and lead up to the current catalyst for greenways development in the region: the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan's GreenWays program. Chapter four provides background information for the two projects in Detroit funded by the GreenWays program that served as the basis of this study. Taken together the latter two provide the historical and contextual information needed to understand current greenways developments in the city. Chapter five then analyzes the multiple ways in which greenways actors' interpret greenways, and specifically greenways role in the city's revitalization process. In this chapter, I specifically seek to understand the degree to which the greenways concept

embodies an ideal driven by community versus external interests. Chapter six analyses the nature of participation in greenways planning for the case of Detroit, drawing on both my original data and the theory of participation in the field of natural resource management. It unravels the complexity underlying the reality of participation and the implications for equitable conservation in urban areas.

CHAPTER 2

Research Methods and Design

2.1. Qualitative research and the case study tradition

A qualitative approach is suitable for this study because the research seeks to understand 1) the different perspectives on greenways and their relationship to general community goals and, 2) the social processes by which these perspectives are contested and negotiated. The study specifically wishes to understand the meanings held by various actors of key concepts such as "greenways", "community", and "participation". In this sense, the study does not seek to quantify perspectives along pre-determined categories but rather to explore what those categories may be. A key aspect of the research is to understand how people shape and give meaning to the "greenways" concept and how it relates to conservation and development in the area.

A case study is an exploration of a bounded system through in-depth data collection from multiple sources of information (Creswell 1998). It is particularly useful in this case because it can provide a context rich understanding of the social justice and equity concerns that arise in the development of urban conservation. While this not a historical study, attention to context involves understanding the role of history in the development of present day environmental inequalities as well as contested views about the meaning of urban conservation in the inner city. In addition by focusing on the planning process the research can document which actors have access to the process, and which may be left out. As I have stated earlier this is a key, often neglected, element to a more in-depth understanding of the social dynamics of conservation in general.

The research approach is based on what Stake (Stake 2000) refers to as an instrumental case study, which is examined to "provide insight into an issue or redraw generalizations" (ibid. p. 437). In this instance the case - greenways planning in Detroit -

is chosen because it facilitates an understanding of participatory approaches to natural resource management in an urban, developed nation context.

2.2. Triangulation

Case study research uses multiple methods and data sources as a means to reduce misinterpretation and ensure validity of the research results, a process often referred to as triangulation. Triangulation is used to 1) clarify meaning by identifying different ways a phenomenon is perceived and/or 2) verify repeatability of an observation or interpretation (Stake 2000).

The research design for this study was emergent but focused, *i.e.* initial questions and respondents were identified as a point of departure, with room for flexibility and change as the research proceeded (see Figure 1). Initial interviews and field observations generated information about other potential key informant, activities and so forth. The collection and analysis of documents complemented and confirmed the issues and themes emerging from observation and interviewing, as well as generating new lines of inquiry for the research. It is important to note that the emergent design served two main goals 1) to confirm assertions and themes as they evolved during the research, and 2) to refocus the research in order to make it more meaningful and valid to the case at hand. However it is important to note that limitations related to travel time and budget were incompatible with a stronger focus on participant observation methods and document analysis. For the most part, interviews served as the primary source of data, with document analysis and observation playing a secondary role in the data collection process. In the case of one of the two projects studied, due to the nature of its planning process, I was able to

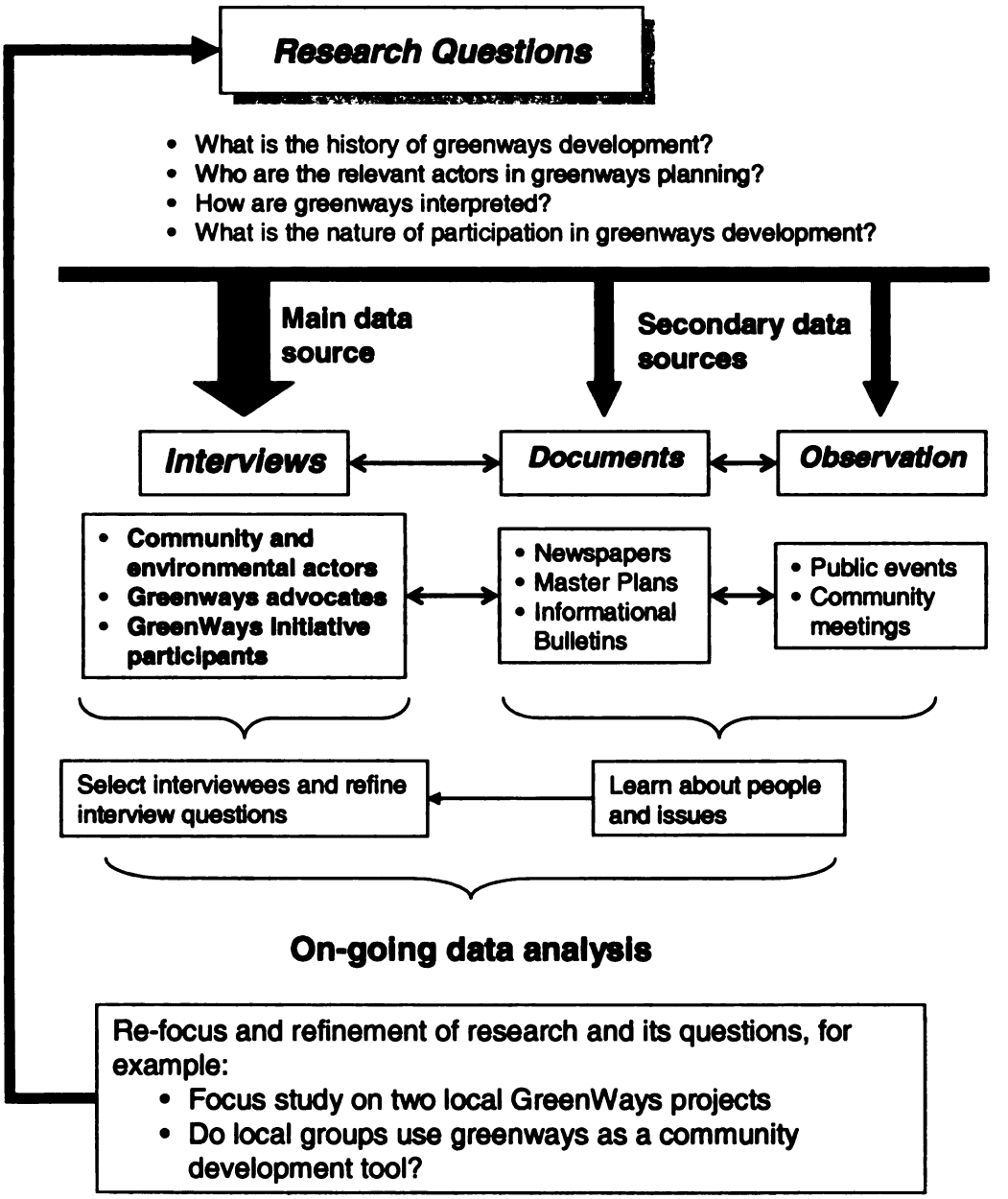

Figure 1. Emergent research design

participate and observe regular meetings as well as other planning activities. Thus observation played a more prominently role in the collection of data pertaining to that particular project. In all instances, I attempted to gather a wide range of perspectives, whether via interviews, documents or observation activities, so as to ensure the validity of my assertions.

2.3. Data collection procedures

This study collected data from three types of sources: qualitative interviews, documents and participant observation during the period between November 2001 and January 2003. On-going data analysis from these three sources was used to reformulate and further focus research questions as the study proceeded. Interviewing was the main research methodology due to its appropriateness for understanding people's meanings and perspectives (Fontana and Frey. 2000; Yow 1994) and the practical constraints (see next two sections below).

For interviews, potential interviewees were contacted by mail (or in some cases by email) with a letter indicating the nature of the research and a request for an interview date (see Appendix A for a sample letter). The letter or email was followed-up by a phone call and a request for an interview if the person was willing. All of those contacted responded positively to the request for an interview, and the total number of interviews was 29. Interviews lasted, on average, and hour to an hour and half. At the interview, informants were informed of their rights as participants in the study, and asked to read and sign a consent form in to indicate their agreement (see Appendix B for a sample consent form).

Table 1 indicates the race, gender and residency of key informants. An effort was made to include the voice of minorities, and the perspectives of both Detroit residents and non-residents. Thus interviewees included both white and minority residents, and whites who did not live in the city. (See Tables 6-8 in the next section for more interviewee descriptions)

In the case of observation, all of the activities attended were public, thus requiring no special consent or permission in order to be present. Table 2 indicates the geographical area, type and number of meetings attended. In the case of the planning meetings I attended regularly, participants were given a letter explaining the nature and objectives of the research on two different occasions and asked both via email and during the meeting if they objected to my presence and/or if they had any questions about the research (see Appendix C). Because these meetings occurred regularly and participants knew each other due to their regular attendance, it was both possible and appropriate to inform the reason for my presence and objectives of the research. In the case of sporadic public meetings attended, there was no intent to conceal the nature of my presence but informing in a public manner was not deemed necessary. Except for a couple of large community events, public meeting organizers knew the reason for my presence and nature of the research. I, of course, provided the information freely to anyone interested or with whom I engaged in conservation during these events.

Documents were collected from various community meetings, as well as from key organizations and informants. These included brochures describing community events and organizations, vision statements, planning documents, greenways master plans for the region and Detroit, newspapers articles and other documents which could provide

Table 1. Interviews by race, gender and residency. The total number of interviews was 29, carried out in 27 sessions. In two cases members of the same organization were interviewed together. The "numbers" in this and in all tables are shown for reader clarity. They are not meant as identifiers, so that they cannot be used to cross index information between tables and thus preserve confidentiality.

Number	Race	Gender	Residency
1	African American	F	Detroit
2	African American	F	Detroit
3	African American	F	Detroit
4	African American	M	Detroit
5	African American	M	Detroit
6	African American	M	Detroit
7	African American	M	outside Detroit
8	Hispanic	F	Detroit
9	Hispanic	M	Detroit
10	Asian American	F	Detroit
11	white	F	Detroit
12	white	F	Detroit
13	white	F	Detroit
14	white	F	Detroit
15	white	F	Detroit
16	white	F	Detroit
17	white	F	Detroit
18	white	M	Detroit
19	white	M	Detroit
20	white	F	outside Detroit
21	white	F	outside Detroit
22	white	M	outside Detroit
23	white	M	outside Detroit
24	white	M	outside Detroit
25	white	M	outside Detroit
26	white	M	outside Detroit
27	white	M	outside Detroit
28	white	F	unknown
29	white	F	unknown

Table 2. Meetings attended by type and geographic area.

Area	Type of meeting	Number
Eastside	monthly greenways planning	11
	greenways town forum	1
	greenways stakeholder meeting	1
Southwest	public involvement	2
	non-greenways community events	2
Southeast Michigan	GreenWays Forums	2
Detroit	Community Development Conferences "Tours of Neighborhood Revitalization"	1

information about the community in general, and more specifically conservation and greenways efforts. Tables 3, 4 and 5 provide a comprehensive, though not exhaustive, list of the types of documents used for the research. Websites, in general, were used to collect information on the types of activities promoted by specific organizations, their history, mission statements etc. The websites listed in Table 4 refer to key websites on organizations relevant to the overall analysis; other sites were also consulted and used throughout the research but are not listed in this table. Table 5 provides a list of organizations from which smaller documents such as brochures, pamphlets and newsletters were collected, and some examples of these types of documents. In addition to the documents listed in these Tables, the newspapers *Detroit Free Press*, *Detroit News*, *El Central*, *Metrotimes*, *The Michigan Citizen* were analyzed for articles pertaining to greenways, conservation, redevelopment and community during the period of field research (2002). Articles related to the launching of the GreenWays program in Detroit,

which occurred in 2001, were analyzed for that year and in other newspapers (e.g. Oakland Press, Macomb Daily). Occasionally articles for other years and/or newspapers were analyzed.

References to specific books, government publications and other documents not listed in these tables, but which were used for analytical (as well as bibliographical) purposes, are made throughout the manuscript where relevant.

Table 3. Master plans and vision documents analyzed.

Master plans and vision documents	Organization
A vision of Southeast Michigan greenways	Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and the National Park Service
Building the riverfront greenways: the state of greenways investments along the Detroit River	Greater Detroit American Heritage River Initiative and Metropolitan Affairs Coalition Project
Detroit's new front porch: a riverfront greenway in Southwest Detroit	Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative	Downriver Community Conference
GreenWays Initiative: program description, grantmaking guidelines, policies and application information	Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan

Table 4. Websites analyzed.

URL	Organization
http://greenways.cfsem.org	Greenways Initiative
http://www.ci.detroit.mi.us/plandevl/crs/strat_design.htm	City of Detroit Planning Department
http://www.boggscenter.org	The Boggs Center
http://www.cfsem.org	Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan
http://www.conservationfund.org	Conservation Fund
http://www.detroitriver.org	Friends of the Detroit River
http://www.dwej.org	Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice
http://www.greeningofdetroit.com	The Greening of Detroit
http://www.nwf.org.urbanlandscapes/keepdetroitbeautiful	National Wildlife Federation
http://www.railstrails.org / www.trailsandgreenways.org	Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

Table 5. Brochures, newsletters, mission statements and reports analyzed.

Examples of documents analized	Organization
Brochure: *Eastside Community Policing Partnership*	Eastside Community Policing Partnership
Brochure: *Growing People and Community*	Detroit Agricultural Network
Brochures :*Cycle Detroit 1985: Pedal Past Tomorrow*; *Adopt-a-Park*	Recreation Department
Internal memo:*1988 Review of riverfront redevelopment efforts*	Recreation Department
Invitations and promotional brochures	The GreenWays Initiative
Listserve information;	Adamah Project and Detroit Summer
Magazine:*Land and People*	The Trust for Public Land
Mission Statement; *Hood Campaing Fact Sheet*	Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice
Mission statement; Newsletter: *We Care*	Nortown CDC/ We Care Inc.5
Newsletter: *Creekside News and Views*	Newsletter: *Neighborhood Notes*
Newsletter: *Green Zones Grapevine*	Healthy Detroit
Newsletter: *Jefferson East News*	Jefferson East Business Association
Newsletter: *Real report: the resident's voice of Detroit's East Riverfront*	Riverfront East Alliance
Newsletter: *River Current*	Friends of the Detroit River
Newsletter: *SDBA Community News*	Southwest Detroit Business Association
Newsletter: *SDEV Issues*	Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision
Newsletter: *The Pipeline; mission statement*	Wanner Conner Development Coalition
Publication and Video: *Habitat, Health & Hope: The National Wildlife Federation in the city*	National Wildlife Federation
Report:*Lyndon Greenway Fact Sheet;* Newsletter: *Directions*	Northwest Detroit Neighborhood Development
Working statements, notices and promotional brochures related to the greenways	Detroit Eastiside Community Collaborative

2.4. Sampling strategy

Purposeful sampling constitutes the basis for most qualitative research and refers to the selection of participants and events not on a random basis but rather because they can provide information about a given topic or issue (Creswell 1998). In this research, the sampling strategy can best be described as occurring in two main "stages". While not strictly sequential due to the iterative nature of the research process, the two stages can best be described as occurring in a sequential order. In the first stage I focused on 1) key informants involved with greenways development in Detroit, 2) key actors involved with specific projects related to the GreenWays program, 3) key actors that could provide information about environmental issues and initiatives in Detroit in general and finally, 4) actors who could provide insights into the community development issues in the city, particularly revitalization efforts. Often, informants were knowledgeable and party to different aspects of community life, thus providing information on various aspects and levels. All together this "initial" stage helped to set the broader context in which greenways initiatives occur. These interviews were especially important to understanding where greenways fit within the "discourse on the environment" occurring in Detroit and why some people were involved but not others.

The information gathered in this "first stage" of the research provided the basis for deciding to focus on two specific greenways planning projects for a more in-depth study. These two projects were chosen based on the following criteria: 1) opportunity and timing: project organizers did not object to the research (and in fact key actors seemed interested in it), and both planning processes were in their initial stages; 2) they provided an interesting contrast from a community participation perspective as they represented

two types of planning process; 3) both projects were occurring in communities with high percentage of racial minorities (one largely Hispanic, the other African-American), making them interesting from an equity perspective.

Thus in the second stage, the majority of the interviews involved actors connected or involved with these two projects and their communities. The emphasis was on obtaining a range on perspectives regarding each project, particularly the connections between the proposed greenways and other area needs. In this spirit, interviews were carried out with residents, staff from community organizations, and city employees serving the area (see Tables 6 and 7). In terms of observation, this stage of the research presented more opportunities for data collection via this methodology. To the extent possible, I participated in as many of these as possible given the time, distance and budget constraints (see Table 2).

Tables 6-8 provide more detailed and descriptive information on all interviewees[7]. Table 6 shows interviews by geographical area, indicating that overall 19/29 interviews pertained, in equal proportions, to the two projects, which were the focus of the "second stage" of the research. The rest of the interviews refer to city-wide and regional perspectives which, as previously mentioned, helped to set the broader perspective for the research. (For example the perspective of informants involved with other projects occurring as part of the GreenWays Initiative, but which were not part of the more detailed focus in the "second stage"). As I mentioned before, many actors played multiple roles within the development context, and thus provided simultaneous perspectives on regional, city and neighborhood issues. Table 7, specifically shows interviews by type of

[7] Interviewee information is provided and detailed in several tables, as opposed to one in which all data is cross-tabulated, in order to preserve confidentiality.

Table 6. Interviews by geographical area represented. SEMI refers to the Southeast Michigan seven country region. City-wide refers the city of Detroit. As indicated some interviewees provided information and/or perspectives on more than one geographical area, either because of the nature of their work or multiple roles.

Geographical area	Number of interviewees
Eastside	**9**
Southwest	**6**
Southwest and Eastside	**3**
Southwest and SEMI	**1**
Cultural Center	**1**
Northwest	**2**
city-wide and SEMI	**1**
city-wide	**5**
SEMI	**1**

Table 7. Interviews by type of actor. Professional refers to either planners or landscape architects. CDC refers to Community Development Corporation. In some cases, actors held multiple roles relevant to the study and are listed accordingly. Therefore the total number of interviewees listed (33) exceeds the actual interviewee total (29). Only main roles were taken into consideration when categorizing.

Type of Actor	Affiliation	Number of interviewees
Community	**CDC staff**	**9**
	community organization member	**5**
	resident	**4**
Professional	**city government**	**4**
	private sector	**3**
Environmental	**national organization**	**2**
	local organization	**5**
	GreenWays Initiative	**1**

Table 8. Interviews by type of involvement in the GreenWays Initiative. An advocate refers to anyone who actively participated in and supported the events that lead to the creation of the GreenWays program, and who - at the time of the research - continued to be involved with the program in some capacity or another. A passive advocate refers to someone who was well informed of the program, supported it but who may not have a direct involvement or whose involvement was minimal. Public meeting attendance refers, in general, to a one-time participation in either local or city-wide public forums or events relating to the GreenWays program. Planning process participant refers to a non-grantee involved in local level greenways planning on a regular basis. Planning consultant refers to a professional hired to assist in local greenways planning. While some interviewees could be categorized in more than one way, only one, main type of involvement is listed for each person.

Type of involvement *	Number of interviewees
advocate	**6**
passive advocate	**5**
grantee	**8**
public meeting participant	**6**
planning process participant	**1**
planning consultant	**1**
none	**2**

actor (community, professional and environmental) and their affiliation, providing a general idea of the range of perspectives gathered. The categories are not necessarily clear cut or mutually exclusive; rather they are intended to provide a picture of the range of perspectives gathered. For example, in some cases local environmental actors also provided a "community perspective", particularly when the type of organizations they represented focused on grassroots, neighborhood issues. Finally, Table 8 indicates the type involvement interviewee's had with the GreenWays Initiative. This is relevant given the importance of the program to greenways development, and more specifically to the case.

2.5. Data analysis

An initial set of codes reflecting the themes which emerged during the interviews[8] and found in the literature (concepts such as participation and community for example) were created "freely"; they were not initially categorized into predetermined groups nor were the relationships between them necessarily established. I used NVivo (QSR International Pty. Ltd. Cambridge, MA. http://www.qsrinternational.com) to assist the data analysis. This program facilitates a more emergent coding approach, as initial "free" codes can later be categorized or grouped to reflect relationships among codes and between these and themes from the literature. Once there was a saturation of "free" codes, I organized them according to the following categories suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (1998): "setting/context" codes, "definition of the situation" codes and "perspectives held" codes. I created sub-categories within the groups as analysis and coding proceeded. Codes were grouped, merged and moved from categories as the analysis proceeded, and as new codes emerged (some codes were used as "free" codes). Codes were also grouped into sets (or more transient categories) in later stages of data analysis and in the writing process, for example codes having to do with a particular chapter or theme within a chapter. Figure 2 shows the principal codes created and illustrates one of the ways in which they were organized. Thus formed this coding scheme was used for further coding and analysis. Transcripts were reviewed several times during the data analysis stage until no new codes emerge (data saturation). In later stages of analysis and writing, codes were used also organized via models depicting

[8] Coding was carried out using full transcripts. In the initial stages of the research, tapes were indexed to assist the process of creating codes as it provided a preliminary means to organize the contents of the interview while tapes were transcribed. But as transcription became simultaneous with analysis, only full transcripts were used.

relationships between themes and ideas emerging from the research as well as from the literature. In summary, I looked for patterns, relationships, differences and commonalties in the interviews. From these I developed assertions and generalizations about the case, which were also contrasted with those found in the literature.

The information from documents and field notes from observation were analyzed in a similar manner, but without the use of NVivo. Documents and field notes were used primarily to complement, and verify, themes and ideas emerging from interview data analysis. In this sense analysis of these data focused on specific themes, primarily referring to the different perspectives and definitions of key concepts, for example 1) greenways, 2) revitalization and 3) race relations in the city. I also used data from these sources to complement the descriptive aspect of the analysis (for example referring to the history of greenways in the region). In both cases the analysis was, for the most part, done manually, primarily for practical reasons: the volume of the data was small making it easier to manage in this manner, documents were mostly in a paper format etc. In terms of validity, as I mentioned before emerging themes and patterns were verified using the different sources of information (triangulation). In addition interpretations and assertions were verified by sharing these with some informants at different stages of the research, a process called member checking.

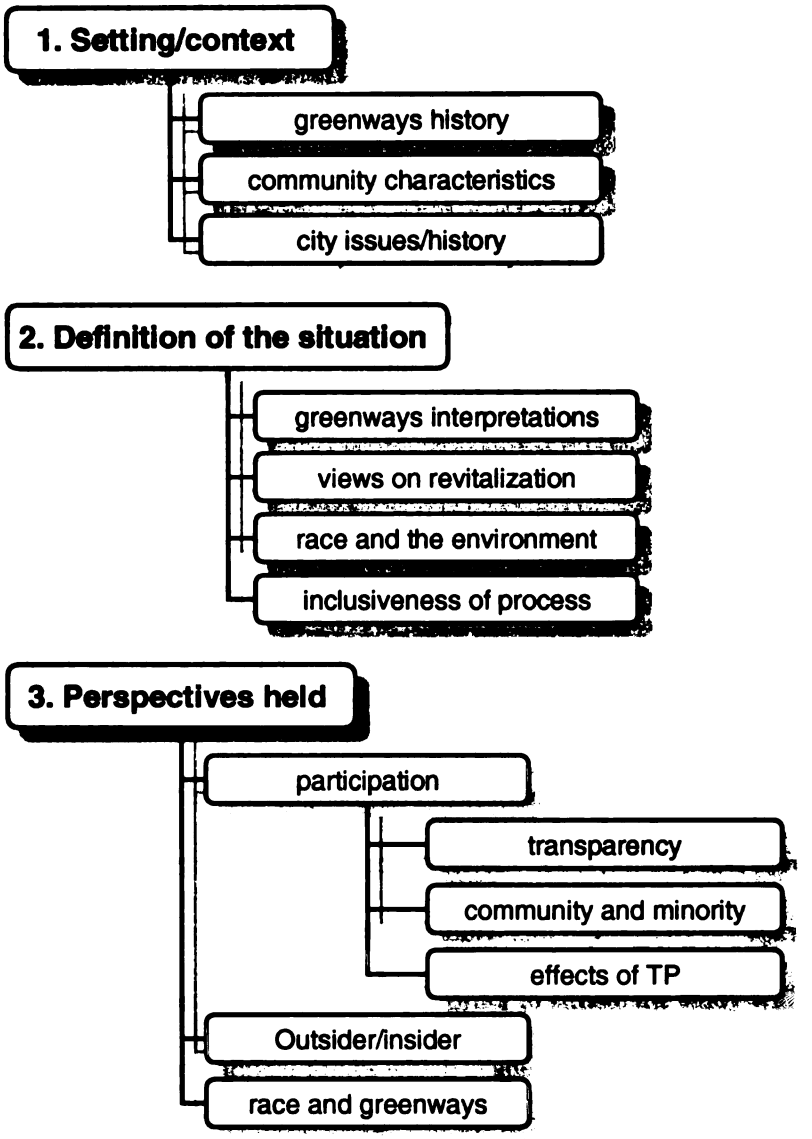

Figure 2. Creation and organization of codes. The scheme partially illustrates the coding scheme used for data analysis. Codes were created and organized according to the three main categories depicted in the tree diagrams. Sub-codes emerged and further refined the analysis. Not all codes are listed nor was their organization limited to that shown in the figure. TP: technical perspective

2.6. Limitations of the study

Though the research can reveal insights relevant to other conservation contexts especially by illustrating critical issues in the field of conservation, the assertions and findings do not necessarily apply to these other contexts. In this sense the data gathered is not representative of other contexts, and hence generalizations cannot be made from the case (such as for example "all greenways face barriers related to..."). It is important to be cognizant of this limitation when stating the implications of the study for other contexts and program.

In addition, the research relied heavily on interview data because of constraints imposed by the site's location. This meant that I was not immersed in the everyday activities of the community and therefore observation data played an important albeit secondary role. In this sense, I made an effort to include a wide range of perspectives so as to inform the research as well as my decisions about which observation activities were most informative. I also relied on observations and findings by scholars in other fields, particularly the urban studies literature, in order to situate the study within the cultural, social, economic and political forces which shape Detroit communities today.

CHAPTER 3

The History of Greenways in Detroit

3.1. Introduction

In Detroit, greenways ideas occur within the wider context of redevelopment efforts in the city. As I argued earlier, understanding the history and context of a particular conservation program is critical to a better understanding of the issues that are at stake. This chapter will therefore provide the background and context information needed to understand issues of equity, participation and meanings of greenways in Detroit. The chapter draws from my original data, secondary sources and the literature on the environment in order to weave a more in-depth understanding of the evolution of greenways in Detroit.

I start the chapter with a general discussion of the historical forces shaping greenways throughout time. The section follows the development of the concept from its origins in the ideas of Olmstead and other influential planners and landscape architects, through to its inclusion as part of the broader discourse promoted by the conservation and environmental movement. Section two traces the evolution of greenways ideas in the Detroit region by providing a chronology of key efforts related to the city.

3.2. Reconnecting people to nature: Origin and history of the greenways ideas

The idea of reconnecting people to nature is an underlying force throughout the development of the greenways ideal. From its early days through to modern day greenways, contact with nature has been seen as a necessary, versus an expendable, element contributing to quality of life.

"Greenways could be part of a new order, realizing open space networks envisioned for reconnecting cities to their rural hinterlands and people to nature".

Furthermore, greenways advocates have historically promoted this contact with nature as an antidote to the daily stresses of urban life. Greenways advocates often invoke their own personal, childhood experiences with nature to stress the importance of greenways to our everyday life experience. Their narratives underscore a desire to stop what is perceived as the on-going destruction of nature, and to conserve it for the enjoyment of future generations.

"... we would hike down to the Rouge River and catch frogs and go to Rouge Park and catch butterflies and take them home in jars. I mean do all the things that little kids do... There is a benefit for people to have the opportunity to do the things that I did. That in fact, it contributes directly to the quality of life and the way we live" (Michigan greenways advocate)

"then a tragic thing happened...one day the bulldozers came and cleared everything...the woods were cleared, the brook was put in pipe and covered with asphalt...the woods became apartment houses. It was a traumatic experience...I often think about that; sometimes I still experience that feeling of loss." (National greenways advocate, as quoted in Little (1990), page 2001)

Outdoor recreation, in the form of hiking and biking, has been an important means for connecting people to nature within the greenways ideal. In this sense, greenways follow in the path of early environmentalists which looked to walking and hiking in the woods as a means to find peace and solace.

3.2.1. Olmstead's legacy: links between the early environmental and urban park movement and greenways ideas

Greenways advocates and scholars often trace the origins of the movement to ideas developed by the landscape architect and planner F. Olmstead (Fabos 2004; Little 1990; Searns 1995). Olmstead advocated urban parks as a way to provide city dwellers with the benefits of nature. Within this context he talked about parkways, mostly in the form of carriage pleasure drives and other linear connections seen as early precursors of greenways (Little 1990). These ideas went into the making of such prominent linear parks as Boston's Emerald Necklace (proposed in 1887) and Prospect Park in Brooklyn (proposed in 1866).

Olmstead was one of the pioneers of the urban park movement promoted by the middle class elites, mainly planners and landscape architects, in the United States of the 1800s (Taylor 1999). According to Taylor (2002) the movement constituted an "urban branch" of the environmental paths taken by the middle class mostly male, environmental activists of the 1800s (the other path being the "wilderness, wildlife, recreation branch")[9].

[9]Taylor (2002) argues that the middle classes took two main paths of environmental activism during the 19th century, both leading to the creation of today's mainstream environmental movement. The "wilderness, wildlife and recreation" branch was lead by such environmental icons as Emerson, Muir, Marsh and Thoreau among others. This branch gives rise to the early environmental movement at the turn of the 20th century, lead by Muir, Leopold, Pinchot and Marsh. However both branches - the "urban" and the "wilderness"- are constituted by males belonging to the elites of the time; they share ideals and social

Like their contemporary nature and wilderness advocates, early urban parks advocates were influenced by cultural nationalist ideas and prevailing anti-urban sentiments of the time. Cultural nationalist, mostly elites and intelligentsia of the time, wanted to re-value the American wilderness and landscape, viewing it as a national treasure that compared favorably with those existing in Europe. According to Taylor (1999), Olmstead conformed more to European ideals of nature than to the American ones represented by Emerson, and later on by Muir, Thoreau and other romantics of the time. His promotion and creation of urban parks tended to highlight pastoral, rural landscapes rather than the spectacular vistas offered by "wild lands" which captivated early American environmentalist. Nevertheless he and other park planners shared the social networks and common experiences of wilderness advocates of the time. They too valued nature, wilderness, and its tranquilizing effect on the human spirit (Taylor 1999).

Thus the connections between Olmstead, the early park urban park movement and modern greenways ideas extend beyond the similarities in form and shape between greenways and parkways. Many of the goals of the early park movement continue to permeate greenways thinking today. Olmstead and other park planners argued that contact with nature would help to improve the lives of the lower classes, thus civilizing them into middle class values and norms (Taylor 1999). Parks were supposed to provide a "rural, country" experience to the city residents. By improving the living conditions in the city, parks would help to improve public health conditions for urban dwellers. However as Taylor indicates in her study of Central Park (Taylor 1999) their values

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networks. In her classification Taylor differentiates these actors and the issues they addressed from those that formed the basis of the struggles of people of color and which gave rise to today's environmental justice movement. In this sense Olmstead and other urban parks advocates conform more to the standards and values of mainstream environmentalism.

reflected middle class ideas about nature and recreation, and often clashed with those of the working classes.

Modern greenways advocates share some of the same values imbued into the creation of parks. Just like the early park movement sought to placate problems associated with rapid industrialization and its trail of dirty, congested cities, greenways seek to change how we go about urbanization. And just like early park advocates wanted to preserve nature so that urban dwellers could experience its tranquilizing effect so too greenways advocates value nature preservation as a critical goal.

3.2.2. Beyond Olmstead: planners and the preservation of open space

The promotion and creation of metropolitan open space systems in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were especially influential to the development of greenways ideas. Within this context planners continued to play a pivotal role in the evolution of greenways ideas, as illustrated in Table 9. The planner Benton MacKaye for example, one of the influential figures in the advocacy of open space systems in the 1920s, proposed specific elements that would become critical to the greenways ideal (Little 1990). Influenced by the British "greenbelt"[10] concept, MacKaye pioneered policy prescriptions to contain what he perceived as "uncontrolled urban growth" or, in modern terms, urban sprawl[11]. He specifically talked about creating public areas with "open

[10] The greenbelt concept originated in Britain around the turn of the century as a means for preventing one town or community from growing into another. The idea is to maintain a city or town's urban integrity by maintaining the rural integrity of its surroundings via "country belts" or "greenbelts", usually in the form of agricultural land. In the U.S. the term is used more loosely to mean any relatively wide stretch of open land. (the relationship of greenbelts and greenways is reviewed in Little 1990 and Sears 1995)

[11] Sprawl as a modern day phenomenon is generally defined as the process of expansion of metropolitan areas in the U.S into suburban and rural areas at increasingly lower population densities. This growth and expansion of urbanized land use occurs at the expense of farmland and natural areas (and the inner city, as

ways" and "numberless walking units", giving more prominence to the idea of a walking trail (cited in Little (1990), page 19).

In addition to open space systems MacKaye also championed wilderness preservation. He was the co-founder, with Leopold, of the Wilderness Society in 1936, illustrating the continued connections between traditional conservationist and greenways advocates. In fact as Taylor (2002) suggests, urban and rural environmentalism came together in the 1920s in a common agenda in which open space preservation was a key issue. These ideas would later become part of the modern day environmental movement.

Planners continued to be influential to the development of the open space preservation discourse of the 1960s, and consequently the greenways ideal. They promoted an ecological approach to planning and helped to emphasize the non-motorized element of open space preservation and thus of greenways (Little 1990; Zube 1995). Greenways ideas became part of the open space, anti-sprawl discourse that permeated the environmental movement of the 1960s and beyond.

3.2.3. The role of conservation organizations in the late 20th century

According to Little (page 33, 1990), conservationists became increasingly attracted to greenways because the high cost of purchasing land to put away for conservation, the basis of the conservation movement throughout the 60s and 1970s,

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wealthier residents and jobs migrate to suburbia). Sprawl also requires more travel in the form of automobile use, which in turn creates more pollution and contributes to sedentary life styles.

Table 9. Key Actors and Concepts in the Greenways Timeline. This timeline was constructed from secondary data and timelines described in the greenways literature. Key references and sources are indicated in the respective column.

Year	Key actors	Concept	Reference
1865-1866; 1887	F. Olmstead (planner)	Parkways Strip Parks	Zube, 1995; Little, 1990; Searns, 1995; Fabos, 2004
1892	National Park System (Adirondack Park)	Greenline; mixed land uses and ownership	Zube, 1995
1895	Cleaveland (planner)	Metropolitan Park System	Fabos, 2004; Little 1990
1898	Ebenezer Howard (planner)	British Greenbelt concept	Little 1990; Searns, 1990
Early 1900	Olmstead Brothers (planners - F. Olmstead's sons)	Loop park system	Little 1990, Fabos, 2004
1906-1913	G. D. Clarke (planner)	River Parkway	Little, 1990
1920s	Benton MacKaye (planner)	Public open space: walking and recreational elements	Little, 1990
1959; 1968	W. Whyte (planner)	Coined the term; "greenways" Open space; non-motorized transport; linkage element	Little, 1990

Table 9 (cont'd).

1966	Mc Harg (planner)	Ecological Planning	Little, 1990
1960s	P. Lewis (landscape architect)	Environmental Corridor	Little, 1990; Fabos, 2004
Late 1960s-1970s	National Park Service	Metropolitan Open Space; conservation corridors	Zube, 1995; Fabos 2004
1960s - to date	Rails-to-Trails Conservancy	Rails-to-Trails. Smart growth	http://www.trailsandgreenways.org; Searns, 1995
1987- to date	Conservation Fund and other environmental organizations, the National Park Service	Greenways, Smart Growth	http://www.conservationfund.org; Morris, 2002
1990s - to date	Conservation Fund, Sprawl Watch Clearinghouse, USDA Forest Service	Green infrastructure: ecological corridors	Benedict and McMahon, 2002

became unsustainable in economic terms. In a haste to buy whatever land was available before developers, much of the land purchased was disconnected, isolated and did not have a lot of meaning socially or ecologically. Greenways offered a practical and affordable way to further the conservation agenda.

Following this trend, the National Park Service (NPS) became an actor in the greenways movement from the 1960s onward as a way to expand metropolitan open space. Throughout the 1980s, the NPS supported and advocated planning and developing river corridors and linear trail systems including support for local actions and plans (see Zube (1995) for a review).The NPS also developed the National Heritage Corridors (NHC), which are linear systems with mixed ownership and land use patterns designated by congress and affiliated to the NPS. In essence the NPS began promoting preservation of valued linear landscape in the form of greenways, NHC and other formats as one more element in their toolbox of conservation strategies. Greenways ideas can therefore be directly linked to the conservation agenda advanced by the National Park Service.

Besides the public sector, non-governmental organizations involved with conservation also embraced and promoted greenways ideas. The Conservation Fund created the American Greenways Program to encourage local and regional greenways projects in 1987. The program included a greenways project database, grants for demonstration projects, publication of technical monograms on various aspects of greenways, etc. It funded key works in the field such as Little's "Greenways for America" (Little 1990) and Flink and Sears' "Greenways: A guide to planning and development" (Flink and Robert M. Searns 1993). Clearly the Conservation Fund envisioned greenways as part of a package to conserve natural areas.

> *"[greenways can]...help us achieve the goal of protecting <u>those remaining special places in the city and the country side where nature still reigns,</u> and where the opportunity to find tranquility still abounds, and where our*

quality of life can be enriched" (Excerpt from the afterword in Little's book (Little 1990), by Keith G. Hay, Director of the American Greenways Program. Emphasis added)

One of the most prominent conservation oriented organizations connected with greenways is the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC). The RTC originated in the 1960s within the context of growing societal concern for the environment and in the midst of the birth of the modern environmental movement. Thus they can be seen as representing the typical values and concerns of the middle class environmentalists. They have championed a particular form of linear open space or greenway which takes advantage of the opportunities created by abandoned railroad tracks. The organization was created to promote the conversion of abandoned railroads to trails, again as a response to declining open space and the need for new conservation strategies (from the history of the organization on: www.railstrails.org). Today, the RTC and NPS promote a website of greenways information called "Greenways Clearinghouse" (www.trailsandgreenways.org), further suggesting the importance of greenways to these organizations.

A considerable part of the RTC's work has historically focused on the creation of rural and suburban trails, although interest in urban areas has grown in recent years. Recreation, in the form of biking and hiking are the predominant images of greenways promoted by this organization. The images promoted by the RTC often convey the idea of a backside, secluded trail. They have been particularly successful in the conversion of rails to trails in Michigan, especially in the northern, more rural part of the state.

3.2.4. The links between the smart growth movement and greenways ideas

Smart growth is a loosely knit movement that seeks to address problems associated with sprawl, primarily via land use planning and market based approaches to controlling metropolitan growth. The movement is composed of scholars, practitioners and advocates. Smart growth shares many tenets and objectives with other anti-sprawl approaches, in particular the New Urbanism paradigm in planning and architecture (Baum 2004; Till 2001). The connections between greenways and smart growth stem from both the influence of planning and architecture ideas to greenways and the growing concern for the effects of sprawl on quality of life issues among citizens.

Many key environmental organizations and related professional associations belong to the smart growth network including the RTC, The American Planning Association and the Conservation Fund (see www.smartgrowth.org for a list of organizations). Greenways advocates and organizations that embrace the smart growth movement, often frame their mission as part of an anti-sprawl effort.

> *"The development of green infrastructure, such as trails and greenways, are an important element in the smart growth arsenal, and can help us grow in a more balanced and sustainable way"* (Trails and Greenways: advancing the smart growth agenda, page 2 in (Morris 2002))
>
> "*Greenways are essential elements "in the emerging national movement to encourage smart growth and build healthier, more livable*

communities." (Excerpt of editorial letter by its president, in the RTC magazine 2001)

In fact, the RTC places a particularly strong emphasis on the non-motorized and alternative transportation element of the policies embraced by the smart growth movement. Not surprisingly, given the centrality of the RTC to the movement, the predominant interpretation of smart growth found in the greenways literature and voiced by key advocates also places a strong emphasis on these elements.

Some critics suggest that to date, smart growth and other anti-sprawl development approaches have tended to focus on the issues and problems of the suburban, white middle class. Its practice has occurred primarily in the suburbs in spite of the strong connections between inner city issues and sprawl (Baum 2004; Till 2001). According to Baum (2004) part of the explanation resides in the fact that smart growth emerged as a result of suburban concerns and interests, and thus the inner city is only peripheral to the analysis. But in addition, Baum suggests that the smart growth movement by focusing on "growth" rather than "development," ignores the social and political nature of the forces leading to sprawl, in lieu of an approach more based on a physical determinism. As a result social issues, like those related to race, are for the most part not central to the smart growth analysis or agenda, in spite of their ubiquitous nature in U.S. society.

In summary, in their origins and subsequent evolution greenways ideas have been strongly connected to the mainstream environmental movement and its agenda. Its early roots can be traced to the work of professional elites, mainly landscape architects and planners, and other middle class men who championed urban parks and conservation.

Table 9 illustrates the evolution of the concept in time and the pivotal role played by planners throughout the development of greenways ideas. These actors promoted - for the most part - a pastoral ideal of nature, one that sought to bring the "tranquilizing" effect of nature to urban dwellers. Traditional conservation organizations and institutions embraced the concept later on in the 20th century, in large part because it presented an opportunity for cost effective yet ecologically meaningful conservation. Outdoor recreation, in the form of hiking and biking in pristine landscapes became an icon for greenways as the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy embraced and promoted the concept. Greenways advocates also embrace the tenets and objectives of smart growth, sharing in the suburban constituency and interests that tend to fuel this movement.

In many ways, greenways ideas are consistent with a mainstream environmental agenda which 1) tends to focus more on the preservation of natural, pristine areas and less on issues related to environmental justice, and 2) often reflects a preference for certain outdoor activities such as hiking, biking and camping. This agenda has typically been reflective of white, middle class values and its ideal of nature as a pristine uninhabited area (DeLuca 1999, see Taylor (2000b) for a review). Participation in outdoor recreation in particular has been an arena where minorities and women are underrepresented (Lee, Scott and Floyd 2001). While the reasons for low minority participation are complex, the management of outdoor recreation largely by and for middle class, typically white interests is no doubt a contributing factor (reviewed in Loyd and Johnson 2002).

Today greenways ideas are championed by planners, landscape architects, outdoor enthusiast and mainstream environmentalists. This also happens in the Detroit area, as I will discuss below. It is only more recently that local community development

organizations have become players in the development of greenways plans and ideas in Detroit.

3.3. Tracing the idea of greenways in Detroit

3.3.1. Greenways and riverfront redevelopment efforts

The idea of using greenways in Detroit can be traced back to efforts to redevelop and create public access to the Detroit River in the downtown area in the early 1970s. While the word greenways may not have been used early on, the ideas are recognized as clearly related to the current concept of greenways.

> *"So, we started on a number of things that had to do with linear connections, but I wouldn't have used the word greenways until maybe the 80's or little bit after that. But there were linkages and connections."(Community planner and greenways advocate)*

Recreation, the energy crisis and the implicit concern for a process which would later be known as "urban sprawl" drove this initial interest in creating some kind of linked access to Detroit's Riverfront. In the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s this concern found expression in the Recreation Department's Linked Riverfront Parks Projects. As described in documents and promotional material from that time, the recreation department's Linked Riverfront Parks Project emphasized the potential for private sector development in addition to new areas for park land and public access. In conjunction with this the recreation department also organized free bicycle tours of the

riverfront called "Pedal Past Tomorrow" to showcase the downtown and riverfront area. These tours were attended largely by suburban residents with some interest in the city, as well as middle class Detroiters. These ideas emerged from and were largely driven by professionals, mostly planners and landscape architects working within the city administration. The activities they generated focused mainly on technical studies, planning and in promoting a vision for redeveloping the riverfront area.

However this interest in Detroit's river, as a resource and potential point of attraction also found support in more grassroots environmental organizations such as the "Friends of the Detroit River" (FDR). Like other community based environmental organizations, the FDR is dedicated to protecting the river resource "*through citizen involvement and community action*" (excerpt from FDR's mission statement). Similar to other river organizations, the FDR functions exclusively on a volunteer basis and tends to focus more on community-based activities such as river clean-ups, restoration and preservation programs in addition to participating in and organizing coalitions which further their goals.

Interest in the Riverfront also found expression in initiatives aimed at gathering support for the concept across a wide range of city actors such as the "Detroit River Greenways Partnership". The partnership was an agreement between various private sector organizations, community groups and units of government. Signatories to the agreement included organizations such as the Friends of the Detroit River, Detroit Recreation Department, Rivertown Business Association, Southeast Michigan Greenways, Detroit City Council, Detroiters Workers for Environmental Justice among others. The initiative sponsored a series of forums and workshops beginning in 1995,

with speakers from the Detroit Chamber of Commerce, Parks and Recreation and other conservation professionals. One of the forums focused specifically on greenways as a social and economic development tool. In this case the initiative was largely driven by professionals in the Recreation Department, consultants and citizens with connections to the Linked Riverfront Parks initiative.

Thus most of these initiatives aimed at protecting the Detroit River and enhancing the riverfront were institutional efforts. The main intent behind these efforts was to promote the idea of linked green spaces, bring on board local government and private sector players, in addition to some environmental organizations. Thus they served mainly to create collaboration around the notion of green linked spaces, and to bring into the discussion the "greenways or green space" concept creating what one interviewee referred to as the *"currency of communication"*.

> *"The act and the process of developing these plans and this has been particularly true in greenways 20 years later, 10 to 15 years, or 20 years later, is important because it depends on what I call the currency of communication. We went around trying to say to people - when we said "linked riverfront parks" I wanted people to shake their head, and know. We did slide shows and we had pictures...I gave a talk to the architects of Lawrence Tech., and guys at the U of D and community groups all over. So that it became what you thought about and what you did."*

While key players recognized the importance of grassroots and community involvement in these projects, their main intent was to obtain the support of institutions and to gather basic technical information. They felt this was the most effective means to move the idea forward.

> *"...it's not always community based at any one time. If you don't have community at the grassroots level, at some point you are not going to get any where. But it's not always true, you need grassroots people to get things moving and to get things started."*

It is also important to note that the idea of creating greenways along the Detroit River existed within a general framework of increasing public concern for urban river corridors (Little 1990). In many cities in North America, river commissions have been established in an effort to protect and restore urban rivers. Later on, ideas about riverfront redevelopment in Detroit found expression in broader initiatives such as the River Heritage and activities related to Detroit's 300th anniversary. The latter resulted in the development of a riverfront promenade along the Detroit River which has dramatically changed the façade of the city's river along its downtown area.

3.3.2. The rails-to-trails greenways initiative

Parallel to riverfront-based interest in greenways, conversations around a regional initiative called the Southeast Michigan Greenways began in the early 1990s between various environmental professionals and organizations. In contrast to riverfront efforts,

The Southeast Michigan Greenways Initiative was driven by the Lansing-based branch of the national organization Rails-to Trails Conservancy (RTC). The initiative had two main objectives 1) to link the population in southeast Michigan to the Discover Michigan Trail in the northern region and, 2) to provide and protect open space from the pressures of urban sprawl and inner city decay. While the initial focus was primarily rail to trail conversions the scope of the project broadened early on so as to include the metropolitan Detroit area.

> *"[The] Rails to Trails Conservancy... wanted to create something called the Discover Michigan Trails, using abandoned rail corridors to connect to cities and all parts of Michigan together... and quickly realized [that] in Southeast Michigan, where half of our population lies...there was not anything that would constitute a real system...that would do justice to all of the people that lived in that part of the state. So [they] decided to undertake something called Southeast Michigan Greenways to say well we can't do justice to this with just simply Rails to Trails, we need to look broader. And in many ways they were years, many years ahead of the national Rails to Trails Conservancy... the organization has simply come around since looking at greenways, connecting open space, kind of a whole greenway system."(greenways advocate)*

The initiative included technical studies such as an inventory of potential greenways in the region in conjunction with a series of public meetings and small group

workshops with various stakeholders from the region. This process culminated with the publication in 1998 of the document "A Vision for Southeast Michigan Greenways" which highlighted the vision developed by the loose network.

The meetings and workshops were attended largely by government officials, key representatives from local agencies and departments (mainly Parks and Recreation and Planning and Development), some environmental organizations and citizens. Thus most participants were planners, landscape architects or other environmental professionals in addition to recreation and outdoor advocates. At the start of the process most of the participating organizations and individuals were not Detroit based or, as one interviewee expressed, *"not a lot of inner city Detroit"* was present in these initial conversations. In addition due to the types of organizations and professional areas represented, the presence of minorities relevant in Detroit, such as African American and Hispanics, was low. However, as participants recalled one of the objectives of the initiative was to reach out and create change in Detroit.

In the mid-90s promoters of the Southeast Michigan Greenways became more involved with environmental organizations based in Detroit such as the Friends of the Detroit River, the Greening of Detroit and Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision and with other efforts to create greenways such as the Detroit River Greenways Partnership. In addition the initiative sponsored two demonstration projects, one of which was located in Southwest Detroit. The project consisted mostly of conversations with local environmental and community development organizations around the notion of developing greenways for Southwest Detroit. It also included some public meetings, presentations and conversations with professionals from local government departments.

One again it served to introduce and promote the idea of greenways as a possible revitalization tool, as well as to gather the technical information needed to develop a general plan or vision for a specific area. These "local" efforts also lead to the publication of a document outlining a greenways project for the area: "Detroit's New Front Porch Report" (The Greenways Collaborative Inc. 1999).

Area organizations and some city government professionals were supportive of the concept yet the project did not lead to further steps aimed at implementation. Interviewees indicate that this may have been due to lack of funding, buy in from key city leadership, a leading organization wishing to take on the project and in general the fact that while the project was seen as necessary it was not a high priority for area organizations given other development needs of the area.

> *"Because after we were done with the Southeast Michigan Greenways Project, I thought right, people are going to plan the greenways in Southwest Detroit when we're struggling with economic development issues, when we're struggling with social issues, when we're struggling with housing blah, blah, blah."(Community and economic development organization staff)*

At the regional level the process also slowed down and encountered barriers in moving forward. The initial process of outlining a vision for the region, carrying out technical studies and conducting meetings had received financial support from the Community Foundation and some federal grants. But while proponents had been

successful at funding the process up to that point, simultaneous efforts at creating a mechanism to implement the vision were not fruitful. Key informants recall that their struggle to obtain further funding arose partly from the fact that they were seen as outsiders to the Detroit area and that they were a "new face with a new idea".

> *"There was some resistance there. I guess, I think we [RTC] were kind of seen as outsiders because we were a Washington based organization. We hadn't been active in the Detroit area prior to this. We had tried - we had all these public input sessions - but as far as the foundations and as far as community leadership, we hadn't really tapped into them as well as we wanted to. So they were leery about just handing all this money. So we needed to form an advisory board." (greenways advocate)*

In addition, the time spent gathering technical information delayed the process in terms of meeting and maintaining interest at more local levels. This may have been particularly so for some of the Detroit-based environmental organizations. In effect while there was support around the region, the initiative was maintained largely by the efforts of a few people instead of driven by local level organizations. In general the problem seemed to be that the initiative could not move from the regional vision to an effective mechanism for developing it at the local level, particularly given the disparate needs of the various counties and regions. The idea of creating a funding program thus seemed to be an effective way to overcome these barriers. It also seemed like an effective way to

leverage federal and state funds for projects in areas like Detroit, by providing the matching dollars these funds often call for.

> *"... part of the problem was that the match is difficult to come up with... Federal and state sources wanting to direct money towards areas that desperately need it. We have some projects and God knows when you see them in the early stages they definitely needed it...How can we make this work? Because you know Detroit...can't cough up a 20% to 30% match. That hatched the whole greenway fund idea. And so we sat down with the Kresge Foundation, I think right around '96..." (greenways advocate)*

However, in order to do that potential sponsors needed to be assured that the program would be successful at creating dramatic changes. In their view the region had, up to this point, been recalcitrant to change. Participants of the process at that time agree that what was perceived as lacking were key leaders from the region which could bestow credibility to a program. When asked what they meant by "key leaders", one interviewee referred to *"the movers and shakers,"* meaning people with both corporate and government connections and with access to the closed decision-making circles in Detroit.

The idea of creating a fund to support local efforts thus began to take shape in the midst of these conversations between promoters of the project and members of the philanthropic community. Most importantly the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan (CFSEM), a key financial supporter of the RTC initiative, decided to take on a more prominent role in the promotion of greenways in the region. As a result, they

established the Greenways Program as a catalyst for greenways development in the Detroit metropolitan region.

3.3.3. The Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan's GreenWays Initiative

The CFSEM, one of the largest and most prominent funding organizations in the metro Detroit region, is dedicated primarily to local community and economic development issues. The organization's leadership position, via its Greenways Program, thus represents an important change in strategy from past attempts at promoting greenways in the region. The organization's traditional focus on community and economic development sets it apart from the more environmentally inclined agenda of previous actors. Presumably it would better position them to overcome the barriers faced by the RTC initiative and thus to create an effective mechanism for implementing greenways in the region, and most importantly in Detroit.

The CFSEM brought new actors on board in order to develop its program, particularly ones which could provide the much needed institutional and financial support. Clearly, the CFSEM felt that new leadership was required in order to overcome the barriers faced by previous efforts and to lead this new phase. The organization hired the former Director of the Lansing office of the Nature Conservancy to spearhead the project, raise the funds and develop the criteria necessary to set up the program.

Thus the CFSEM's program, called the "GreenWays Initiative" is perceived and promoted by its leadership as distinct to the RTC lead initiative. Key actors defined the essence of their difference by contrasting the two efforts and pointing out those key

elements perceived as missing from the RTC's initiative: infrastructure, financial support, local relevance and leadership.

> *"Well you have to understand that the greenways initiative that [we] own is not the Southwest Greenways initiative that Rails to Trails Conservancy spent eight years constructing... it's very difficult to understand the distinction, but there is a distinction.*

> *" Now if you read the [1998 RTC] document...it had four major flaws to it. And this is not made to be a criticism of that plan at all, it's a terrific document. The problems with it...there was no implementation. There was no infrastructure there. It also and because of that it didn't have any money. It didn't have leadership and it wasn't local. And so you have those four problems and what you end up with is essentially this very well written, very thoughtful document that's going to sit on somebody's shelf."*

In effect the program raised an impressive 25 million dollars in private funding, which would leverage an additional 50 million in matching funds from state and federal sources. As such it was hailed by the media as "Michigan's largest and most expansive preservation program with private dollars" (Pearce 2001) and news coverage of the program in the local media has been widespread. In terms of leadership, the CFSEM clearly recruited key players in Michigan's philanthropic community in the establishment of the program (see Table 10). The program has for example received a 10 million dollar

Table 10. Major funders of the CFSM's GreenWays Initiative

Institution
The Kresge Foundation
McGregor Fund
The Skillman Foundation
The Carls Foundation
W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Hudson-Webber Foundation
DTE Energy Foundation
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
Matilda R. Wilson Fund
Americana Foundation
Whitney Fund
Frey Foundation

grant from the Kresge Foundation, the largest awarded through its Detroit Initiative program. The McGregor Foundation donated 2.5 million dollars, the largest in it's history, to the program. In addition its advisory board (Table 11) includes among others such personalities as the President of the Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village; the president of DTE Energy Corporation, the General Manager of General Motors, and the Chairman and CEO of Ford Motor Co. Thus the program seems to have provided the institutional, financial support and leadership lacking in the RTC's initiative.

It is also interesting to note that besides the financial and institutional elements, the "local nature" of the initiative is often mentioned by many actors as a key difference between the two efforts. Clearly many felt this had been a limiting factor in previous efforts at promoting greenways in Detroit. Most actors illustrated the local nature by referring to the make-up of the advisory board, as well as the support of the philanthropic community.

However not all Detroiters would call this leadership "local", although they might concede to the importance of having support from these actors. As some city actors suggested, some might question whether the leadership behind the GreenWays program really reflects the "community". The ties to and interest in the city of many elite actors have often been questioned by Detroiters. Since leaving the city, many of the big

Table 11. Advisory board for the CFSM's GreenWays Initiative

Name	Position	Affiliation
Steven K. Hamp (***Chairman***)	President	Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village
Gerard M. Anderson (***Vice-Chair***)	President and COO	DTE Energy Resources Group
Melvin Hollowell Jr. (***Vice-Chair***)	Partner	Butzel Long
The Hon. Trudy DunCombe Archer	Judge	36th District Court
Matthew P. Cullen	General Manager	General Motors Corp. Economic Development and Enterprise Services
Paul R. Dimond	Attorney	Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone PLC
William C. Ford Jr.	Chairman and CEO	Ford Motor Co.
W. Frank Fountain	Sr. VP, Government Affairs	DaimlerChrysler Corp.
Ralph J. Gerson	Executive Vice President	Guardian Industries Corp.
Yousif B. Ghafari, P.E.	Chairman	The Ghafari Cos.
Paul Hillegonds	President	Detroit Renaissance
Renee Jennings	Area General Manager	Johnson Controls Inc.
Ron L. Kagan	Director	Detroit Zoological Institute
Keith Laughlin	President	Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
John E. Marshall III	President	The Kresge Foundation
Heath J Meriwether	Publisher	Detroit Free Press
Timothy J. O'Brien	Vice President, Real Estate	Ford Motor Co.
William F. Pickard	Chairman and CEO	Global Automotive Alliance
Kari Schlachtenhaufen	President	The Skillman Foundation
Shirley R. Stancato	President	New Detroit Inc.
Paul Tait	Executive Director	Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG)

businesses, like the three big auto companies, have had much bigger economic stakes in the suburbs. More recently some big companies have tried to move back to the city. GM for example, now has its main headquarters in Detroit. But in general, the professed interest in the city manifested itself largely through fundraising for physical renewal and predates any actual movement of the business's infrastructure and human capital from the suburbs to the city (Orr and Stoker 1994). From this perspective, their continued interest in the city most likely stems from a "moral stand" rather than from an economic stake. Yet, it is this very fact, along with a perceived record of not coming through that often makes Detroiters question the "interest" many of these businesses actors have in helping the city.

The actual process of developing the program began sometime in 2000 with the official launching in April of 2001. The GreenWays Initiative was constructed as a 5 year program "designed to improve and enhance southeast Michigan" through the construction of greenways. It represents the first time such an extensive program for funding greenways has been developed in the region. Indeed the overall comprehensive nature of the program also represents a first for the region. To achieve its goals the program established three components: public education and outreach, capacity building programs and, grantmaking.

3.3.3.1. The GreenWays Initiative's grantmaking objectives

Grantmaking is clearly the GreenWays Initiative's most prominent and visible component, and the means by which greenways can be implemented at the local level.

The program provides funding to organizations in the seven counties[12] of Southeast Michigan for the planning and implementation of greenways via two types of grants: (1) predevelopment grants, which support planning activities and, (2) land grants which support the physical creation of greenways. To date predevelopment grants have been more relevant to Detroit.

Analysis of the grant guidelines shows that these place a strong emphasis on the technical aspects that are necessary for building greenways in the region (see: http://greenways.cfsem.org/apply/grantmaking_guidelines.html). For example, grants for predevelopment activities are described as:

> *"engineering studies, design, activities to increase collaboration between program participants, final planning work or hiring technical experts or project related staff"* (emphasis added).

In the practice, the most important outcome for the predevelopment grants are construction documents, as this is believed to be a good predictor that a project will then lead to a second stage of actual physical construction of greenways. The emphasis on construction documents as a key objective of these grants is corroborated by data from interviews with applicants, grantees and program staff. As we will see in subsequent chapters, this "technical" aspect has shaped and been very important to the dynamics of greenways development at the local level, from greenways definitions to the issue of participation in the planning process.

[12] The seven county region encompasses Oakland, Macomb, Washtenaw, Livingston, Wayne, Monroe, and St. Clair and includes the entire metro Detroit area.

3.3.3.2. Grants made to Detroit applicants

During the first two rounds of funding the program awarded a total of 31 grants, six of them to Detroit-based applicants. Five of these were predevelopment grants, *i.e.* for planning (see Table 12); the land grant was in effect part of a larger greenway predevelopment grant. Therefore in the practice there were five on-going greenways activities in the city of Detroit funded by the CFSEM. The proportion of city/suburbs grants might seem satisfactory for a target region that spans seven counties. Yet in light of the importance of allocating conservation funds to Detroit via the program the proportion seems low.

Table 12. GreenWays Detroit grants during first two rounds of funding.

Name of Organization	Type of Organization	Type of grant (date awarded)	Location	Dollar Amount
City of Detroit Recreation Department	City Government	Predevelopment (Sept. 2001)	Southwest	$63,000.00
Nortown Community Development Corp[1]	Community Development Corporation	Land grant (Sept. 2001)	Northeast side	$75,000.00
Detroit East Side Community Collaborative	Consortium of community organizations	Predevelopment (April 2002)	East side	$98,800.00
Northwest Detroit Neighborhood Development	Community Development Corporation	Predevelopment (Sept. 2001)	Northwest	$37,930.00
Southwest Detroit Business Association	Community Economic development organization	Predevelopment (April 2002)	Southwest and Dearborn	$100,000.00
Detroit Economic Growth Association	Business Development	Predevelopment (April 2002)	Downtown Riverfront	$12,000.00

[1] This organization is a member of the Detroit East Side Community Collaborative. Their project is part of the predevelopment grant awarded to the collaborative in April 2002.

Indeed, interviewees echoed the notion that grant-making to Detroit still had a long way to go to satisfy the original intent of the program[13].

> *"[They are] just looking for some good applications in Detroit because some of their money is earmarked for Detroit and they've had a hard time getting projects..."*
>
> *"I knew 80% of the money was targeted for Detroit and rural poor areas. A lot of the big donors were very Detroit centered. The regional effort, yes, I'm going to have to get some token money to the different areas, but this is Detroit."*

Most of the organizations receiving the grants can be described as focused on community and economic development issues, and range in size from consortiums of various types of organizations to smaller more neighborhood focused CDCs. In addition one grant has been given to the central office of the City of Detroit Recreation Department and one to Detroit's Economic Growth Association (DEGA). The DEGA grant focuses on connecting two already existing walkways along the riverfront in the downtown area. This area has received significant attention in recent years as efforts at redeveloping the downtown and riverfront area have been debated and carried out with various degrees of success. In this sense the comparatively small amount of the greenways grant awarded to DEGA suggests that this is probably a small and specific

[13] By grant round seven (Sept. 2001 - Sept. 2004), total grants had increased to 76 total (including land, technical assistance and predevelopment grants) of which 21 went to Detroit organizations. In addition one of the technical grants, developed by the RTC, focused on Detroit. Therefore is would seem that grant making to city organizations was improving.

complement to on-going efforts. The other grant proposals focus on what might be described as "neighborhood areas" of the city such as Mexican Town, the Brightmoore community area and a large extension of Detroit's Eastside encompassing several neighborhoods. While these areas vary in terms of their current growth pattern, population, and social characteristics, they share some characteristics: a history of economic disinvestment, issues related to poor environmental quality, and lack of affordable housing, among others.

3.4. Summary

In summary each of the greenways efforts promoted in the Detroit region throughout the years had a particular focus and was initiated by a somewhat distinct set of actors. Yet to some extent they shared an interest in creating change in Detroit and proposed that greenways were an effective means to achieve this. In the case of riverfront related efforts, they were clearly part of the city's revitalization policy which focused on promoting investments in the downtown area. Later efforts which emerged from the RTC were initiated by actors from outside the city and had a more regional focus. Nevertheless, the RTC lead initiative professed a strong interest in Detroit, even though most of the actors were not Detroit based. This reflected the RTC leadership's interest in expanding a primarily suburban movement to the city. Yet in spite of its efforts, the RTC faced many barriers to implementing greenways, particularly in Detroit. In an effort to overcome these, new actors came on board to promote a more comprehensive and practical means for promoting greenways in the region, especially in Detroit. The CFSEM spearheaded this new phase in greenways development. They supported and

developed a program called the "GreenWays Initiative", designed to fund and promote greenways in the Detroit metropolitan region. Like previous greenways efforts, the program also professes a strong interest and commitment to creating change in Detroit.

The overwhelming majority of actors that participated in the evolution of greenways ideas in the region were professionals (mostly planners and architects) and parks and outdoor advocates, much in accordance with the history of the idea. Overall, and to varying degrees during the different stages, community level organizations in the city have been peripheral to the greenways development process. Moreover, minorities have been largely absent from the genesis of these efforts, an issue I will discuss in more detail in chapter six. The GreenWays program, which has effectively channeled funds and support for greenways development in the city, has been slower than expected at incorporating local level organizations. Nevertheless it has created opportunities for local level organizations to become involved. The form and extent of this involvement is the topic of the next chapters.

CHAPTER 4

Two cases of greenways planning in Detroit: the Eastside and Southwest Detroit

4.1. Introduction

This dissertation focuses on two greenways projects occurring in Detroit, both within the framework of the CFSEM's GreenWays predevelopment grants, one in the eastern and the other in the southwest part of the city. (Throughout the dissertation I will refer to the eastern area as "the Eastside" and to the southwest area as "Southwest" for convenience and because those are the local names given to these areas.) Thus they were both under a one year grant cycle, focused on the planning process (*i.e.* on obtaining construction documents as the final product). However they varied in the type of organization involved and the actual development of the planning process, as well as in the genesis of the idea. They represent two different planning models: one headed by a city department and the other by a coalition of community based organizations. This chapter will provide background information about these projects. Later chapters will analyze in more detail issues related to participation in the planning and interpretation of greenways ideals and issues.

4.2. Linked Parks Southwest Detroit Greenways Projects

4.2.1. Geographical focus and objectives of the project

The city of Detroit's Recreation Department was awarded a predevelopment grant in the amount of $63,000 to support a project called "Linked Parks Southwest Detroit Greenway Project" on Sept. 2001 (I will refer to it as the "Linked Parks" project from now on). The project focused on the idea of linking three elements of Southwest, two community parks (Clark Park and Riverside Park) and a historic site Fort Wayne, which

dates from the 1840s and houses several museums[14]. The general area affected by the project is bounded by Livernois, Vernor Highway, the Detroit River and West Grand Boulevard. A major expressway highway (I-75) separates the two parks and a former industrial site. A warehouse and the city's power plant separate Riverside Park from Fort Wayne.

The main objective of the project was to fund the design, engineering and cost analysis of these potential links. The analysis "will assess how to best improve the existing green spaces and nonvehicular routes, so residents will have non-motorized access to the parks and public venues to which these trails will lead" (excerpt from project description on the CFSEM's website. www.cfsem.org). The proposal also seeks to create a "framework for connections" (idem) to other greenways efforts nearby such as those of communities in the downriver area, and along the Rouge and Detroit rivers.

At the time of writing this dissertation, construction documents for the first phase of the Linked Parks project, covering one segment of the proposed greenway, had been finalized. A master plan outlining a vision for the remaining links had also been developed. The first phase will focus on creating a greenways link from Clark Park to Riverside Park located along Detroit's riverfront. According to project leaders, the recreation department intended to apply for a development grant from the CFSEM to construct this initial phase of the greenways.[15]

[14] Historic Fort Wayne is currently closed to the public, except on special occasions. It has suffered from funding problems and has changed overseeing authority in recent years, It is now run by Wayne County.
[15] As of Oct 2004 the city had not been awarded additional grants for the Linked Parks project. Presumably, further development of the project had been halted. Other GreenWays predevelopment grantees have been successful at obtaining further funding from the program, in the form land grants and additional predevelopment money to further their projects.

4.2.2. Community characteristics

Southwest is home to Detroit's Hispanic community[16]. While the area's population includes African American, Native Americans, Caucasians and other ethnic groups many people identify Southwest with Detroit's Mexican town and its population of Mexican-Americans, Xicanos, as well as more recent migrants from Central and South America. This is partly due to the strength of Latino-based organizations and to the growing business sector in the Mexican town area. It is also due to the fact that unlike other neighborhoods in the city, Southwest's population is actually growing due largely to migration from "Hispanics".

The area, once home to the auto and manufacturing industry, now suffers from many environmental problems associated with its industrial heritage as well as new ones created by the disinvestment affecting Detroit in general. The presence of brownfields, vacant lots which serve as targets for illegal dumping, air pollution and lead poisoning in many of its old and ill repaired housing stock, are some of the pressing issues affecting the community. In addition, the area is subject to heavy truck traffic which further compounds air pollution and safety issues in the community.

In spite of these problems the community is often described in interviews and documents as "vibrant" and "growing," with high levels of community organization and a growing business sector. Southwest has been designated as an Empowerment Zone and

[16] The term Hispanics or Latinos is often used as a generic label to identify people who originate, in general, from Spanish speaking countries in the American continent. While they may share some cultural determinants, they really represent a wide range of ethnic origins. In fact, they may self-identify in different and varied ways ("Latinos", "Xicanos" "Hispanics" "South American" "Caribbean", "Spanish", "Native American" etc). Indeed some people of Native or African origin who originate from Spanish speaking countries (or the southern U.S. states) resent the use of the terms Hispanics or Latinos. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to address these differences in ethnic identification but I wish to acknowledge the inaccuracy and misconception that is embedded in these generic terms. The term Hispanic or Latinos is therefore used to simplify the description and with an understanding of its limitations.

its population is mostly low income, working class. Part of the riverfront in Southwest has also received a Renaissance Zone designation, a state tax abatement program for encouraging economic development. Hence Southwest has received both federal and state funds to encourage economic development in recent years. In addition, key informants working in community development issues in the area indicate that many of the newer migrants are part of a skilled labor force relocated from other parts of the country in search of better paying jobs in the construction industry. Interviewees felt that these new residents together with various community economic development initiatives have given the area an important boost in recent years.

Clark Park, a key component of the greenways proposal, is located in a residential neighborhood known as Mexican Town. It is widely used by citizens and community groups alike, hosting a variety of community events and activities throughout the year. While the park is city owned, its programming is run by the Clark Park Coalition. This citizen coalition formed and fought to keep the park open when the city was planning to close it for lack of funds. Disinvestment, lack of programs and park maintenance had created a scenario in which the park was used for illicit activities during the drug wars of the 1980s in Detroit. The coalition now runs a community center with a broad range of activities for residents and also maintains an ice rink that is widely used in the winter. A walk in the park at any time and day is clear evidence of its place in the community. Riverside Park on the other hand is much more underutilized and abandoned, being located in an isolated and non-residential area. It does not possess any of the facilities or programs found in Clark Park and residents often complain of illicit activity occurring at night.

4.2.3. Project history and leadership

The idea for the Linked Parks project dates back to the demonstration project carried out in Southwest in the mid-1990s, within the context of the RTC's regional initiative. The concept of linking Clark and Riverside parks to Fort Wayne was part of the proposal developed by the demonstration project at that time. The Recreation Department used the concept and information that came out of the demonstration project as the basis for its proposal to the CFSEM's GreenWays Program. The impulse for the department's grant application came from professionals who had worked on the demonstration project and from efforts by various actors seeking to encourage greenways projects in Detroit.

Like all of the department's grant applications, the proposal for the foundation was developed and written by their grant writer in collaboration with a consultant. Once the grant was awarded different staff took leadership of the project. The professionals involved with the project were not employed at the recreation department in the mid-1990s and did not participate in the demonstration project. The project was managed by the Landscape and Design unit of the Recreation Department's downtown office. In addition, the department hired a consultant to carry out the planning process, a common procedure for these types of projects. The consulting team includes a landscape architect involved with the previous demonstration project. The consulting firm also holds contracts for other greenways efforts in Southwest and for the project in the city's Eastside area (discussed in the next section).

4.3. Conner Creek Greenways

4.3.1. Geographical focus and objectives of the project

The Detroit Eastside Community Collaborative (DECC) was awarded a $98,000 predevelopment grant to support the planning and development of the "Conner Creek Greenways" located in the Eastside (I will refer to it as "Conner Creek" from now on). The project specifically focused on linking Eight Mile Road to the Detroit River, traversing several neighborhoods in the Eastside. The proposed greenways would follow somewhat the route of the historic Conner Creek, tunneled underground as part of the City of Detroit Sewer System in the early 1900s. The proposal has the potential to create links between parks, recreation centers and cultural institutions located in the area. In some segments it would follow main avenues such as St. Jean and Conner. The project is fairly large in scale compared with other Detroit projects. The completed greenways route would eventually cover over eight miles of pathway.

Again the main focus of the grant was to support "the planning, design and cost analyses for over eight miles" of greenways. The route has been divided into segments and the planning process includes prioritizing and developing the necessary construction documents so that one of these can be implemented subsequently. In addition Nortown CDC, a member of DECC, was awarded an implementation grant for a particular segment of the project (called Milbank or phase I) prior to the predevelopment grant for Conner Creek. Hence the Milbank segment of the project is currently in the process of development.

The planning process instituted by DECC resulted in the formulation of a general vision and strategy for developing the entire greenways in the future. The greenways was

divided into several segments (called phases I to IV), which could be planned and constructed incrementally over a period of time and according to the priorities established by DECC and the community. Thus one of the main objectives of the planning process was to determine which segment to prioritize, and to develop the corresponding construction documents for this first phase. At the time of dissertation writing, construction documents for the first phase of the Conner Creek had been finalized.[17]

4.3.2. Community characteristics

The Eastside was once one of the more vibrant areas of the city, with an important amount of business, industrial and commercial activity. The lower Eastside in particular was important to the development of a vibrant African American community (Thomas 1997). The Eastside was also one of the hardest hit by the deindustrialization process as industry relocated to the suburbs, followed by business and commercial sectors. Highway development and "Urban Renewal" further eroded the social and economic fabric of the area, as entire neighborhoods were cleared and/or isolated from each other.

The Eastside is adjacent to the upper-middle class neighborhoods sometimes referred by locals as the "Grosses Pointes" (one of which is Grosse Point), which are among the older and wealthier suburbs in the metropolitan area. Stepping - or most likely driving - from the Eastside to its adjacent suburban neighbors provides a sharp and painful reminder of the racial and economic differences that can separate residents in Detroit's metropolitan area. There is unlikely to be a cruder, more surreal illustration of

[17] As of October 2004, DECC had received two additional GreenWays grants: 1) a land grant in April 2004 in the amount of $164,000 for construction of the initial phase and, 2) a predevelopment grant in Sept. 2004 in the amount of $100, 000 to support the planning of another segment of the greenways, one which would connect to the first phase under construction.

these differences than the actual wall that separates Grosse Point - with its pristine lawns and overwhelmingly white residents - from its Detroit neighbors.

Today the Eastside is home to a predominantly African-American population, many with deep and strong ties to the community. The neighborhoods in the Eastside, and along the greenways path, vary from stable with attractive housing stock including some historic districts to other areas where there is significant disinvestment, abandoned houses and vacant land. Some of the sectors in the Eastside - and along the proposed greenways path - have EZ designation. The area is also home to important institutional actors such as Wayne County Community College and several hospitals (St. John, Riverview and Mercy).

A large number of housing improvement initiatives are currently underway by non-profit and for profit organizations in the Eastside. Among these is the Detroit Eastside Community Collaborative (DECC), one of the most prominent organizations in the area, and indeed in the city. Established in 1992, DECC is a private, nonprofit consortium of over 20 Eastside neighborhood-based community organizations.

> *"DECC works as a coalition to build the capacity of its member organizations by providing technical assistance for the implementation of housing and economic development projects, serving as a clearinghouse of information for coordinating community development strategies, and acting as a unified voice to address land use issues of common concern."*
> (Excerpt from DECC's mission statement)

Most of the organizations in DECC tend to focus on housing and commercial development issues, but the coalition also includes environmental organizations, the local YMCA and smaller neighborhood development associations.

4.3.3. Project history and leadership

The Conner Creek project arose from a shared interest in greenways held by several DECC organizations and actors. Some organizations like Warren Conner had been interested in the general idea of building and maintaining green spaces for many years. For them the project provided an opportunity to pursue and further develop ideas debated during the Community Reinvestment Strategy (CRS), a city-wide community planning process that took place during 1994-1997. Other key actors were interested in the alternative transportation possibilities that could be provided by the proposed greenways and its overall impact in revitalizing the Eastside. Most of the DECC actors prominent in promoting the greenways idea initially professed a strong concern for environmental issues, and particularly their relationship to revitalization in the city.

The idea was given impetus in its early formulation by the fact that Nortown CDC, a small neighborhood organization belonging to DECC, was awarded a development grant by the CFSEM for a one mile stretch of greenways. However, the CFSEM conditioned the grant to the development of a larger scale greenways project in the Eastside, in which Nortown's proposal would be but a segment. Nortown's interest in greenways stemmed partially from an interest in historic preservation as a means to prevent the disintegration of their neighborhood and community. The condition set forward for Nortown's grant pushed the idea of a greenways in the Eastside to the center

of the discussion by DECC. The fact that Warren Conner, one of the larger and older CDCs in the area, became interested in pursuing the grant idea likely provided an additional force.

Initially project leadership resided in staff members from a few DECC organizations, largely due to their personal interest in the project, such as the Jefferson East Business Association (JEBA), Nortown CDC, and the Catholic Pastoral Alliance to cite a few prominent ones. Warren Conner, as I indicated earlier, showed an active interest in the project from early on. Their leadership was evident throughout the process.

In order to coordinate the project, DECC developed a greenways planning committee which met monthly and was open to participation by non-DECC community actors (including government actors). This committee began meeting early on in the formulation of the idea and development of the grant. Once the grant was awarded, a consulting team was chosen and became part of the process, attending the monthly planning meetings.

The nature and dynamics of decision making for both the Linked Parks and Conner Creek projects will be discussed in more detail in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

The meaning of greenways in Detroit: a "white middle class" construct?

5.1. Introduction

Traditionally, greenways arise from the interests and ideas of white-middle class professionals and environmentalists as introduced in chapter 1. In Detroit many actors and members of the community perceive greenways as such, particularly in regards to the way in which they are promoted by program sponsors. Nevertheless some city actors are attempting to develop an alternative and more community-centered ideal of greenways. This chapter explores the social processes that shape greenways ideas and plans in Detroit, drawing primarily from my original data. I use an interpretive approach that assumes ideas are not static or objective, but rather the result of their context and history.

In the first section I explore four key elements of the social processes that drive and shape greenways meanings and interpretations in Detroit: 1) the influence emanating from the GreenWays program, 2) the racialized nature of the region's development, 3) the legacy of deindustrialization, and 4) and the emerging ecological perspective on redevelopment. The second part of the chapter analyzes two predominant greenways interpretations in Detroit: 1) one which sees greenways as part of an externally driven redevelopment perspective, and 2) another which positions greenways as part of a community centered redevelopment process. The section illustrates how greenways meanings are strongly connected to ideas about the redevelopment process in the city. In this sense different interpretations are constructed in accordance to different views and beliefs about the needs of the city. The last part analyzes how these two different greenways interpretations are translated and developed at the local level. The section presents and contrasts two specific greenways projects in terms of their goals, values and perceptions.

Taken together, my research suggests that greenways in Detroit to some extent continue to reflect the values and views of a suburban white middle class. In many ways greenways interpretations and definitions are a reflection of the background and social position of advocates and sponsors. Nevertheless, some activists and community organizations in Detroit have been effective in using greenways to advance a neighborhood driven revitalization strategy. Their interpretation of the concept reflects a more community and neighborhood centered ideal. From this perspective, their contribution is particularly valuable to redevelopment efforts in the inner city.

5.2. Elements that shape the meaning of greenways

5.2.1. The influence of program sponsors

As I discussed in chapter three, the CFSEM's GreenWays program is the most important catalyst for greenways development in the region. The program was formulated to infuse greenways ideas with new energy, and especially promote them in Detroit as a means for redevelopment. Consequently, both overt and subtle messages coming from the program and its leaders shape people's interpretations of greenways within the city. Their influence on greenways ideas occurred primarily through: 1) the subtext of the program's grant guidelines, and 2) its overall mission of creating change at the landscape level. For a range of actors, the program was perceived as promoting a suburban rather than an "inner city" view of greenways. Indeed, local environmental and community actors along with some professionals (those who appeared to have stronger ties and sensibility for community issues) expressed this concern about the program. The majority

of these actors were also city residents. In a few exceptions, non-residents also expressed this concern, particularly those who expressed an interest and concern for community and neighborhood driven development.

5.2.1.1. The GreenWays Initiative grant guidelines promote a suburban ideal of greenways

These critical actors felt overall that the GreenWays Initiative fit the reality of the suburban communities of the region much better than that of Detroit, in spite of the city's importance to the program's goals. Most importantly the majority of these actors were, to different degrees, advocates of greenways. Their perception stemmed in large part from the way in which program sponsors formulated and then further interpreted the program's guidelines, at least during the initial rounds of grantmaking when this study took place.

One of their main criticisms refers to the program's apparent disinterest in funding streetscaping and beautification type projects. Streetscaping and taking advantage of the street system, they claimed, is paramount to any kind of beautification and "greening" effort in Detroit. Thus by downplaying the role of the city streets in the development of greenways, the program - via its guidelines - tended to exclude Detroit projects. Interviewees felt this "exclusion" of the city street was the result of a greenway ideal more akin to a pristine, natural area. Such an ideal in their opinion better reflects the types of environments one would find in a suburban or rural community.

> *"But they wrote the grant in such a way [that] it excluded urban places...They didn't want to get involved in streetscape improvement and sidewalk stuff... It's not going to be a clean you know a pristine park. And*

the parks there probably have a coal gasification plant underneath them!"

(Greenways advocate)

Ideas like daylighting a creek, vacating and closing streets and connecting across large tracts of land were perceived by many Detroit actors as being priorities for the foundation. And indeed those elements were often highlighted in conversations with foundation staff, public presentations and somewhat indirectly in their promotional materials[18]. While many interviewees did not object to these elements in principle, they confessed that the city was "years away" from the political, economic and environmental conditions in which those types of proposals could be promoted and developed.

"Why don't they [potential grantees propose projects to] vacate one of these streets, which has been abandoned, vacate the street, plant a couple of trees, narrow the street so that it is a boulevard for pedestrian walkways...It's not something that most of the planners think about and I don't even pretend that these hair brained schemes that we come up with are realistic. And that's exactly the point. We don't want them to be realistic! [We want them to dream]" (Donor organization representative)

"I think that they really thought they could go in these urban areas and they were going to do some really radical kind of like greening in natural

[18] See their grant guidelines on their webpage: http://www.cfsem. These tend to highlight trails and rail trail conversions as opposed to the urban street space, in their portrayal of greenways. In at least one of the public forums a member of the public posing a question was specifically told by foundation staff that the program did not fund street beautification projects.

areas. Well I think that's a great idea and I think that our green infrastructure should be just as important as our water system, really. It's not that way right now and it's going to take a long time for that to get that way. But that takes a commitment and you know you've got a one year grant cycle and if you want to do something, you can't be closing streets in a year in the city of Detroit."(Detroit greenways advocate)

Some community actors were more critical in their appraisal of the program, indicating that it was largely a suburban construct out of touch with the needs of the city. Others spoke more generally of a suburban bias present in the way the program was promoted. In this case they pointed out that the images used, the leadership and typical issues debated at forums all seemed to convey a suburban focus.

"Well only so far as they are still real stuck on greenways in urban areas as being off road, jogging, biking... basic streetscaping and enhancements that would include public arts, interactive kind of art, heritage interpretation programs... that's just not what they are interested in... we understand their perspective too, they're doing more traditional greenways stuff, but we feel that it's just as important to aesthetically upgrade all the greenway and the amenities and the major streets and then attempt to create a more pedestrian friendly environment. Because the reality today here in this neighborhood what we're really trying to do is to get people to take steps to get out of their cars and walking around. In

Detroit, that's Step A. We're not to the point where you can get people out of their cars and jogging or out of their cars and taking their bikes off their bike racks. Now maybe in Ann Arbor, we can. At Michigan State, okay. But Wayne State, no. OK? [laughs] So I mean I do feel that the traditional greenway model is not for a city that's disinvested and rebuilding" (CDO staff)

"Well I think their focus is much more suburban and rural than it is urban. And they don't quite know what to do with this [Detroit]. You know I think like the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan would like to figure it out, but-" (Resident and city employee)

Some interviewees questioned whether the restrictions imposed by the guidelines would constrain and limit greenways development in Detroit. They essentially worried that the program didn't focus on aspects that were critical for the inner city. For example one interviewee questioned whether the strong emphasis on creating linkages between green spaces would divert attention from the need to create incentives for residents to use community spaces more actively. Some interviewees, based on their own personal experience predicted that unless some flexibility was built into the program, it would be hard pressed to generate interest among Detroit organizations.

"I said to her you know I want to do trails in our parks because that's where people come. And they keep talking about you've got to link this

and that. Yeah, but in the first place we've got a population which is obese and we've got a high obesity rate, unfit kids. So you've got to make it real easy or people are not going to take advantage of what's out there. And you may have to do programs to bring people there" (City resident and employee)

"I don't think for most community organizations in Detroit, dealing with the kinds of issues that they are dealing with that this would necessarily come out on the radar as a priority, to be perfectly honest. I mean anymore than it really is a priority for us other than enhancing parks and street paving. But I don't think the whole greenway thing right now in the evolution of where Detroit is economically will ever come out as like right now. ...I think it's Pollyanna if anybody thinks that this is - especially if they are going to be fairly impossible about how they really interpret a greenway. I can't even imagine when they have all these neighborhoods who have a house by a vacant lot, no commercial, crime, no trash pick up, lights that don't work. That they are going to get up in the morning and saying gee, I'd like to get involved in the greenway project. I mean you know what is that now?" (CDO staff)

In essence, differences regarding the grant guidelines and their interpretation go beyond the purely technical; in many ways the "city street" vs. "off-road jogging" debate and the "city park" vs. "linkages" debate underlie and illustrate differences in values and

perceptions surrounding greenways ideas, in this case between some advocates (mostly Detroiters) and program leaders (non-Detroiters). Interestingly, Walmsley (Walmsley 1995) argued that many of the greenways examples typically highlighted in the seminal book "Greenways for America" lacked attention to a key element in the inner city: the city street. Thus it may be the case that the predominant ideal undervalues a critical element of the inner city context.

As Walmsley (1995) suggests, while the origins of greenways lie in the preservation of open space in metropolitan areas, many of the greenways precursors were laid out in advance of urbanization. Thus, at least in this sense the tradition is much closer to a suburban context than to the realities of today's inner cities, where greenways must be superimposed on an existing urban grid[19]. Thus the narratives emerging from Detroit further underscore and illustrate the centrality of the "city street" to greenways development in the inner city today. But most importantly, they illustrate how mainstream greenways ideas and values may contrast with the needs and realities of the inner city. Furthermore, that interviewees often supported the idea of greenways further suggests that their criticism is more indicative of differences between non-Detroit and Detroit advocates rather than advocates and opponents.

[19] There are examples of greenways development in highly urbanized and even disinvested inner cities (such as Toledo, Ohio, to cite one example). However, at least in their early years greenways were more representative of trail development in suburban or rural areas. It may be that this is the image that still prevails in the mind of the general public.

5.2.1.2. The Program's landscape perspective contributes to a suburban, white middle class bias

Program sponsors frame greenways as a way to transform the urban landscape in Detroit. They feel that in order to change the face of the city, greenways must have an impact at the landscape level. The landscape perspective promoted by the GreenWays program, while an ecologically and technically sound and meaningful principle, contributes indirectly to promoting an ideal that is perceived as extraneous to the city's reality. As I discuss in more detail in chapter six, the concept requires that organizations collaborate across neighborhood boundaries and beyond. This tends to limit the funding to either large umbrella type organizations or to projects that can somehow demonstrate they will have an impact at larger scales. However, community organizations focused on neighborhood issues may not have the time or staff to engage in such collaboration, making the program unappealing or inaccessible. By "excluding" groups in this manner, the program loses an opportunity to create projects more in tune with the needs of the city, and which may incorporate other city-oriented elements into the greenways ideal. One such example refers to the urban gardening community in Detroit. To date, city urban gardening efforts have not used the GreenWays grants program to further their aims[20]. Urban gardening projects tend to function at the neighborhood level, making landscape level projects more difficult to implement.

One community actor and resident involved with urban gardening projects pointed out that while the greenways program was good for the city, its interpretation of the word "green" was too narrow. Thus it may be the case that in addition to issues of

[20] The Eastside in particular has a significant amount of community organizing around the concept of urban gardens.

organizational participation, the landscape perspective may also shape meanings by reinforcing a specific notion of what a "green" landscape should look like. This influence is subtle and likely occurs through the subtext of the ideas emanating from the program. There is obviously no clear or overt intention to exclude specific landscapes on the part of program sponsors. Nevertheless, as the following narratives illustrate, the influence is indeed present among actors involved with the program.

> *"To tell you the truth, I'm just kind of reconnecting with some of the original thinking... We looked at urban farming as being an alternative use for redeveloping the area... [but]I think this grant really focused in on greenways and green spaces and then our tree farm kind of idea didn't necessarily fall neatly inside that idea."* (GreenWays grantee)

> *"... the one person whom I have talked to who has a really interesting take on the landscape, but who we will never fund [is]...the urban farmer guy...Yeah, I mean we'll never give somebody money to grow tomatoes. That's clearly not what the greenways initiative does. Now if he can tie with-[other people]that would be really cool. And what he's doing is really quite remarkable..."* (GreenWays Initiative Program Director)

In addition to the grant guidelines and the landscape perspective concept, the strong presence of professionals, predominantly middle class whites, in the promotion and development of GreenWays Initiative grants, reinforces the notion of greenways as

white, suburban idea (an issue I will discuss in detail in chapter six). The perceived suburban, middle class bias in the greenways ideal promoted by the GreenWays Initiative was no doubt reinforced by the history of greenways development in the state and nationwide. Not surprisingly interviewees referred to the "traditional greenways model" and "the rails to trails model" to illustrate its inappropriateness in Detroit. As I discussed in the previous chapter greenways are strongly linked to the development of the conservation movement, which has typically focused on more rural, natural areas. In the case of Michigan, the RTC has been particularly successful at promoting rail trail conversions in the northern, more rural part of the state.

5.2.2. The importance of race: who are these greenways for?

Greenways ideas deal directly with issues of regional development. As such they cannot escape the histories of racial and class inequalities that permeate the relationship between the city and its surrounding suburbs. As one white interviewee explained, people in the region *"are concerned about where you are and where you live."* Feelings of hostility, ambivalence or indifference can run both ways as inner city residents often regard suburbanites with suspicion and vice versa. Allusions to race are present in most interpretations of greenways. They vary from subtle, almost imperceptible messages that illustrate how race shapes people's understandings of greenways to more explicit accounts of the racial undertones of greenways in Detroit.

At one level race appears as subtle, hidden subtext in many of the narratives which refer to the *"tension"* or *"differences"* between *"suburbs"* and *"the city."* To some extent all greenways efforts, from the early days on, developed a message which

proposed that greenways could assist in overcoming the "tensions in the region." In some cases these tensions are acknowledged indirectly through, for example, reference to the negative impacts of highway construction on the region.

"Highways tend to divide us and green spaces could connect Detroit and the suburbs" (John Marshal III, president of the Kresge Foundation and one of the major funders of the GreenWays Initiative, quoted in the Detroit Free Press March 1, 2001)

> *"Unlike the region's sprawling highway grid which was planned behind closed doors and built over protests of dozens of since-bulldozed communities, southeast Michigan's greenways will be created through community partnerships"* (Excerpt from the 1998 document: "A Vision for Southeast Michigan Greenways").

The unequal burden of these impacts on Detroit's African American community has been thoroughly documented by scholars and has been the subject of public documentaries (for example work by (Darden and Thomas 1987; Sugrue 1996; Thomas 1997) and the documentary The Sprawling of America: Inner City Blues (Cook 2001). Yet acknowledgement of the racial underpinnings of highway development within the public discourse on greenways is at best subtle and more often nonexistent. Nevertheless the use of the issue as a way to promote ideas illustrates the importance of the racial divide to greenways definitions.

Indeed, most interviewees rarely talked freely and explicitly about issues of race and their relationship to greenways development in the city. Even interviewees who

criticized the "suburban bias" of the GreenWays program did not initially volunteer an explanation of the meaning and implications of the term "suburban" in Detroit. However upon probing, these actors often explained that in Detroit the term "suburban" typically translates into white, middle class.

Interestingly, minorities and whites with a strong connection to the community (for example residents) talked more freely about the racial undertones that came along with the suburban image. However, even among residents and community activists, the issue race came up more freely amongst minority actors. Nevertheless, both white and minority residents and community activists interviewed were often adamant and explicit in highlighting the implications of a racial bias in the greenways ideal. For them the problem with a potential suburban focus was its race and class connotations; in other words suburban obviously implies white middle class.

> *"Because I think they are operating in a suburban mode. I think they operate - it's kind of like white folks thinking [laughs]. Because there are a lot of white people involved in conservation."*

These actors were especially wary of the social justice implications of a greenways ideal driven by suburban, middle class values. Their concern was rooted in the city's history of community displacement to make way for redevelopment. Community development activists and staff worried that the projects could generate valid apprehensions and fears among the community, an issue echoed by some residents interviewed. In a city where there is a physical wall dividing one of the oldest and most

exclusive suburbs from the city, it easy to understand the apprehension expressed in the narratives of those on "the other side of the wall".

> *"They were talking about putting a greenway in there. So, of course it would be within walking distance to me, and all that. I like the river and that is the reason I am here. I am trying to think, okay...greenway and me. I am here, I have got my house already, I am in the hood, and I don't have to move there. Then I am starting to think, well, is it me? Are they going to let neighborhood people participate in a greenway? Because there are still some very, very stereotypical assumptions that whites have about black people. Especially about Detroit... So it's kind of like progress means progress for only certain people. The people who are not included in that are just kind of left out. So, then getting back to the greenway thing, I was getting all excited with, oh, greenways, oh fun, fun, fun. Then I am thinking back to Graymark, I am thinking back to also Black Bottom[21]."* (Detroit resident)

> *"... [a greenway] might be seen like oh, who is this for? You know is this to bring "suburbanites" into our city?"* (Resident and city employee)

[21] According to the interviewee Graymark was a primarily African American neighborhood along the riverside that was targeted for redevelopment into an upscale housing project. Having been displaced for the redevelopment, residents could not afford to move back into the neighborhood once the project was completed. Black Bottom, a neighborhood in the lower Eastside, was settled by African Americans as early as the mid-nineteenth century. Urban renewal programs in the 1950s, intent on "slum clearance", cleared the area for the construction of better, cleaner housing (a proposed middle income apartment complex). Plans to relocate displaced residents, mostly low income, were a complete failure (Thomas 1997, Sugrue, 1996).

In some cases, these interviewees mentioned race and cultural differences that could affect greenways development in the city versus the suburbs. For example they talked about the recreational and socializing preferences of African Americans and Hispanics that might be missed by a "race blind" approach to greenways development, and the importance of ensuring safety. But rather than any specific element, they were most concerned about the general idea and leadership behind greenways. Their assumption seemed to be that a greenways promoted largely by a suburban, white middle class constituency would surely leave out the interests of the city's mostly minority and lower income residents. This assumption probably was based on personal as well as historic experience.

Race was often intermingled with class issues, as many also perceived the poor socio-economic conditions of the city and its residents as an important element affecting greenways development in the city. While many community activists and residents felt the city needed and indeed deserved access to green space and environmental amenities, some were ambivalent about the projects at times. Others simply echoed a concern that residents would not see the importance of greenways and consider them to be low in their scale of priorities. In essence they wondered whether greenways were possible when people still struggled with the basic necessities of life. Thus it seems that even among Detroit supporters it is hard to shake the idea of greenways as hiking and biking trails in a rural context; a luxury for the middle class. This implies that existing projects in Detroit must work towards creating an alternative vision of greenways that provides a counterpart to the prevailing image.

"I think, right now dealing with what... is going on our block. Something like the greenway would be down on the priority list. Because the first thing would be their houses and the second thing might be the school situation; the third thing might be the accessibility to certain types of jobs. So I think that maybe an initiative like a greenway is very white middle class. These folks will look around here and say we got trees and weeds. Literally, and that's green enough; we have some other issues that are much more a priority."

"I mean we do have young African American professionals who would like more amenities like parks and older African Americans who would like to have more amenities like bike trails. You know work out and stuff. Those kinds of things are the foundations of a world class city, so those are the types of things that we should kind of want. But then it seems like I'll never see them in my lifetime, you know when streetlights aren't on and these lots are overgrown..."

In general, those concerned with the racial and class undertones of the concept still felt greenways could address real community needs. However the suburban image associated with the concept along with its racial connotation, whether promoted or perceived, meant that work was needed to convince residents and other stakeholders of the need for greenways in the city. Thus many of these interviewees conditioned the potential of greenways in the inner city to the creation of a culturally acceptable ideal.

And they indicated that effective mechanisms for community participation were necessary for the generation of this idea:

> *"I think it would if it's done correctly. If the people, the residents are here, if they feel that they are being catered to and this is not you know some pie in the sky suburban little idea. If they felt a part of it, they would be really proud of it and it would be a part of revitalization."*

The concern expressed by residents, community activists, and minority actors in general, stands in stark contrast to the lack of attention that most non-resident whites involved in greenways paid to race and class issues. In some cases this lack of attention represented a belief that race, class and culture were not important factors in greenways development, or a professed ignorance on the matter. Others admitted to its importance but felt that either they were unable to address those issues or that their efforts at creating a more inclusive image were unsuccessful.

5.2.3. The urban crisis: the background to greenways ideas in Detroit

The legacy of Detroit's transformation in the post-World War II years is a recurring theme in conversations with a wide range of actors involved in greenways in Detroit. The city was once home to the highest paid blue collar workers, and known both as the "Motor Capital" and the "Arsenal of Democracy"[22] for its central role in

[22] The name "Arsenal of Democracy" referred to the city's central role in the military-industrial complex during World War II, as the auto industry recovered from the depression and turned its full power to military related production. To illustrate, the Willow Run bomber plant is cited as employing 100,000 workers and producing a B-24 bomber every hour (Micheal, 2001).

manufacturing in the mid-20th century. However, it was transformed as major industries, businesses and residents begun abandoning it for the suburbs in the 1940s as a result of post-World War II restructuring of the auto industry, and highway and housing subsidies promoting suburban development.

Racial discrimination played a pivotal role in this transformation process. Suburbia may have offered new opportunities for inner city whites but African-American residents were in practice barred from suburbia as a result of federal housing policies and regulations set up by private neighborhood associations[23]. Indeed, white residents and businesses alike abandoned the city partly in search of the segregated neighborhoods and life styles offered by the suburbs. Furthermore home rule laws in Michigan facilitated incorporation and limited annexation of territory, thus impeding the inner city from growing and increasing its tax base[24]. As a result the inner city became increasingly poor as businesses, jobs and more affluent residents moved out. The city was left with high unemployment rates and an increasingly low-income, segregated population (Sugrue 1996; Thomas 1997).

To different degrees, all interviewees reflected upon the social and/or environmental conditions resulting from the city's transformation as they framed

[23] Both Sugrue (1996) and Thomas (1997) describe and analyze the multiple ways in which federal housing policy combined with local resistance by whites to integrated housing perpetuated discrimination against African-Americans in housing developments. For example, the Federal Housing Administration regularly refused loans for the construction of homes for African Americans, while at the same time underwriting construction in similar conditions for whites. Private neighborhood associations routinely included racially discriminatory restrictive covenants enacted to maintain "*desirable residential characteristics* of a neighborhood" (page 44. Sugrue, 1996). To complicate matters even further, the appraisals by the Home Owners Loan Corporation (a government entity) awarded higher ratings to white neighborhoods whose homes were covered by these types of covenants, as they were seen as providing "stability" and ensuring property values. At the same time, public housing in Detroit was racially segregated, concentrated in the inner city and insufficient in amount. As Sugrue (1996, pg 44) succinctly puts it: "Federal housing policy legitimated systematic discrimination against African-Americans in housing."

[24] Facilitating annexation would have required nothing short of changing state law. Given the state's legal framework, adjacent territories continued to incorporate, making it increasingly harder for the city to expand via annexation. In effect, Detroit's boundaries stopped expanding in 1926 (Thomas, 1997).

greenways ideas. On one hand, the city's industrial past has left behind many environmental problems which the city must now redress. Toxic waste (brownfields), abandoned lots and the poor water quality of the Detroit River represent but a few examples. Industrial zoning and the nature of current industrial development continue to create and contribute to the poor environmental conditions of the city.

> *"You know that we have the only oil refinery, we have the only steel mills in the state, we have the only waste facilities in the state. You know, talk about dirty industry!"* (Member of an environmental organization)

> *"We currently have 2000 trucks that go through this community every single day. They want to expand... [the] pressures on the residential community and the commercial corridor and clearly this industrial encroachment and kind of fragmenting the residential area and this is a real concern that if we have 16,000 trucks... "* (CDC staff from southwest Detroit)

Thus the dramatic effect of deindustrialization – understood as the closing, downsizing and relocation of industry - on the landscape of the city was one of the most prominent elements shaping the way in which actors interpreted and defined greenways and their potential contribution to the city. Many interviewees talked about the difficulties of working with a landscape so highly urbanized and adversely affected by

industrialization. For some non-Detroiters the post-industrial landscape clashed with their visions, plans and desires to change the face of the city.

> *"And coincident with that is the condition of the physical landscape, so not only is it urbanized but there have been so many areas that have been contaminated or so adversely altered that the restoration or the return is going to be daunting."* (non-resident Greenways advocate)

On the other hand, the racially discriminatory development policies that have accompanied deindustrialization have increasingly segregated the region as industry and jobs moved to the suburbs. "White flight" from the city and the on-going suburbanization of the region at the expense of the inner city are prominent threads in the complex tapestry against which greenways ideas are set. The image of a "wasteland" used by one interviewee is a particularly powerful and recurring metaphor that illustrates the importance of these processes to greenways ideas.

> *"...that's why neighborhoods like ours are left, I call it discard, use and throw away. Our whole history of Detroit has been: use it and throw it away. I mean I didn't live here all of my life. I lived in the lower Eastside. That whole neighborhood was used and thrown away. It's a wasteland right now... you don't use a neighborhood and throw it away, you make that neighborhood, you recycle that neighborhood. And that's basically what we're trying [to do]..."*

Thus the need to "rebuild", "revitalize" or "redevelop" the city in the aftermath the city's decline emerges as a shared value embraced by different actors. Many felt a sense of mission about the role of greenways in the city. Greenways definitions are constructed as part of a particular view of the rebuilding process. On the surface this appears to create shared meanings about greenways and their role in the city. However different actors contextualize issues that arise from the city's transformation in different ways, creating different greenways discourses. At the heart of these different discourses lie different views and beliefs about revitalization and the needs of the city.

5.2.4. Ecology and greenways: taking advantage of deindustrialization

Ecology is an important defining element of greenways, as community, environmental and professional actors often expressed the importance of incorporating ecological principles into the rebuilding process. To some extent interviewees felt that the adverse effects of deindustrialization provided a unique opportunity for ecologically sound (re)development. Thus redevelopment, defined as a change in land use that converts formerly industrial (often contaminated) sites to green spaces, constituted a key element of this particular greenways definition. Through this lens abandoned lots and low property values are seen as possibilities, in terms of land availability, for reorganizing the urban landscape. Unlike at the national level, land scarcity does not appear to be an important element of greenways driven conservation in Detroit.

Some environmental actors expressed this desire within a traditional environmental framework, where ecological conservation is the primary goal. This is

especially true for those involved with traditional environmental organizations. In this case greenways are equated with preserving nature and the ecological principles that sustain it.

> *"...we have a lot more than I think any inner city that I know of, of vacant land. And I was hoping for kind of a concerted urban planning effort that would go toward creating a greenway that would preserve some of the open space that we have for longevity sake. ...To me, green space is valuable as green space, whether or not it has a bike path on it. Connective, I think is good because I think there is a sound ecological reason for connecting green space and the value of that for preserving ecology and for the sort of more sound science. I wasn't concerned as much for recreational use in the city."* (Member of a Detroit-based environmental organization)

However for most community actors the ecology of greenways was an important element because of its contribution to the quality of life of city residents. Some actors echoed the conservation ethic, which values nature independent of the human experience, expressed in the above narrative. However their ideal tended to highlight the utility of greenways in combating inner city problems. Thus while preserving nature was an important goal, it was always mentioned within the context of resolving other issues in the city.

"So this is a step for the future of trying to create a better world and if we can throw in some wildlife habitats where birds will enjoy another resting place or have a water hole to feed from, or we can create a commercial shopping center with a creek running through it? What a wonderful world it could be. So the whole ecology side of it is very much a part of this improving the urban quality of life. You know not everybody can live on a farm with four acres... if we're going to solve the problems that a densely populated world is creating, then somehow those habitats for humans as well as wildlife, have to coexist..." (resident and CDC staff)

5.3. Meanings and perceptions emerging from Detroit

As I described in chapter three, a range of actors from professional elites, environmental groups and more recently community organizations have contributed to the development of greenways in Detroit. In the development of their own particular greenways vision these actors have been greatly influenced by the peculiarities of the region's development and its detrimental impact on the inner city, as I discussed in the previous section. However, views of what the city needs and how greenways can contribute to its redevelopment differ between program sponsors, greenways advocates, organizations active in Detroit, and residents. These views tend to represent two types of perspectives on redevelopment: one that I will call "externally driven" and another that I will refer to as "community-centered" (See Figure 3). The line dividing these two views, and their corresponding greenways ideal, was not always clearly delineated, as definitions and interpretations often merged this distinction. However, these two

categories are useful for analytical purposes and to help us understand important, albeit sometimes subtle, differences in the way in which people framed greenways in relation to the city.

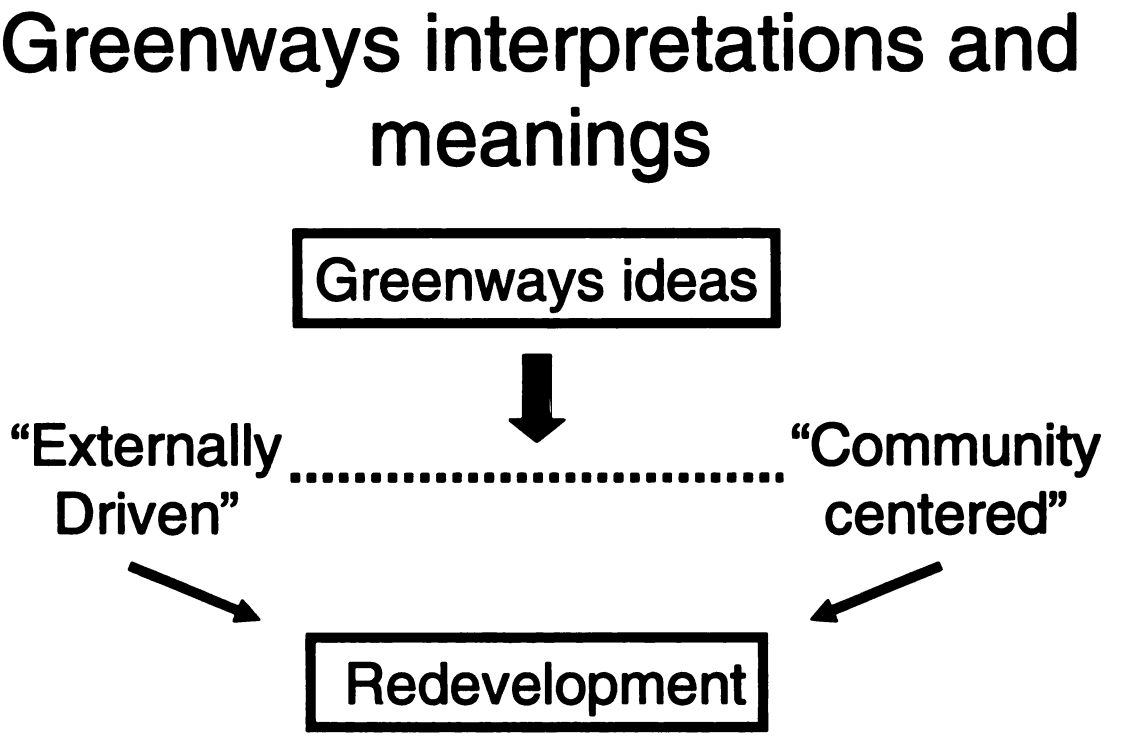

Figure 3. Greenways interpretations and meanings. Greenways ideas and interpretations tend to represent two, sometimes opposing, views of redevelopment. One perspective can be described as reflecting external interests and ideas about the needs of the city. The other tends to reflect a more community centered ideal of redevelopment; i.e. one that occurs primarily by and for the community.

5.3.1. Greenways defined as part of an externally-driven redevelopment perspective

Some actors interpreted greenways as part of a redevelopment paradigm in which agents and forces external to the city play a predominant role. The majority of these interviewees did not live in the city, and they were for the most part professional and environmental actors. Not surprisingly there were all whites, as most professionals and all non-Detroit residents interviewed were whites. Their involvement with greenways varied, from a historical connection to the various attempt to promote greenways in the region to active involvement in current greenways developments. Their particular interpretation of greenways is characterized by two key, related themes. First, these actors tended to highlight and emphasize the role that investments and people with spending power play in pushing forward redevelopment in the city. Secondly, greenways were seen as a means to reconcile the city with the suburbs. Reconciliation was emphasized in part because of its potential to bring suburbanites - and their higher incomes - back to the city. But it was also valued as part of general feeling that the animosity or indifference between the city and its neighbors perpetuate negative patterns of regional development.

Thus for example, early efforts of the 70s interpreted greenways as riverfront redevelopment in the form of walkways and bikeways, so as to beautify and provide amenities in the downtown area. These early greenways ideas were in line with prevailing views on revitalization, particularly those arising from the mayoral office, which prioritized the need to recapture lost revenue via downtown revitalization over a more neighborhood focused strategy. This particular view of greenways is shaped by deindustrialization in its concern for the estrangement between the city and the "outside

world" particularly the suburbs. Greenways were to provide a resource for the region, a connection to the outside world:

> *"Again, one of the problems with Detroit is that Detroit and the suburbs, partly because of class, partly because of race, can have, if not ambivalence, if not hostility, indifference. It's more ambivalence, it's some hostility, but indifference. You are concerned about where you are and where you live. Therefore, it was very important for me to make sure that the riverfront wasn't just Detroit's riverfront. It is a linear park. It's a greenway for the region."* (community planner)

The official greenways discourse that ensued in the region continued to promote greenways as a means to reconcile the city with the suburbs. The message of "reconciliation" is conveyed in the promotional material published throughout the different stages of greenways development in the region and in the narratives of advocates, particularly non-Detroiters.

> *"...it requires comprehensive thinking, careful planning and lots of communication between groups who may have never before spoken to each other."* (Excerpt from the 1998 "A Vision for Southeast Michigan Greenways")

Bringing back the spending power of suburbanites - mostly whites - continued to be an important and recurring theme within this greenways interpretation.

> *"The one thing it's going to do is bring white people back downtown... I shouldn't say white people, I should say people with money. People that would bring their disposable income downtown and spend it on the attractions down there. I'm so excited that we are going to do that but I don't want to get disillusioned."*(Lansing greenways advocate)

In many ways, the permanence of this idea as part of the greenways ideal reflects the degree to which deindustrialization, and its accompanying segregation of the region, has estranged the inner city from the suburbs. Nevertheless the emphasis on making Detroit attractive to outsiders (via greenways) is more representative of an "outsider's" view of revitalization. White suburbanites, professional and environmentalist have predominated amongst promoters of greenways throughout the different stages of the "movement." (While the '70s efforts were Detroit-based, most of the actors were white middle class professionals.) From their perspective the city needs to recapture what has been lost as the middle classes and whites left the city.

Interestingly race is present in this particular view of greenways in a subtle manner through general expressions that speak of "linking the city to the suburbs;" *i.e.* linking the lower income, mostly minority residents to their wealthier, mostly white neighbors. A few key, white and suburban actors that participated in the early greenways efforts were very concerned with the racialized character of the region's development.

However, this concern did not seem to extend in an explicit manner to the greenways ideal promoted. The language in key documents and in the narratives of actors rarely makes the racial explicit. Most often "suburbs" and "inner city" are used as proxy for black and white. The racial component of these inequalities is intermingled with class differences as suburbia is seen to represent upper middle class whites while the city is seen as populated by lower income minorities.

5.3.1.1. "Saving Detroit" by creating a world class city

Current sponsors of the GreenWays Initiative extend the notion of making Detroit a tourist attraction via greenways even further. They aspire to create a "world class city" through landscape change and ecological restoration. Once again, Detroit is seen as a place requiring rescue - in the form of external input - in order to bring about a dramatic turnaround to its current situation. Overall the greenways ideal they promote tends to be more consistent with an externally driven redevelopment perspective.

> *"And I would suggest that people think of Detroit, that the public image of Detroit is that it's an unlivable city. You go outside this city and you hear about the murder rate, the fact that it's not a physically clean city. That the city downtown has been abandoned, that a few people are moving out in droves, all of which is true... What you don't hear about are the networks of parks in the city, you don't hear about Belle Isle. You don't hear about the Detroit River. And so when I was thinking about what I*

want the city of Detroit to look like... I want people to come to the city of Detroit in the same way that they go to Portland, Oregon. To think about it the same way they think of Portland, Oregon or they think about Minneapolis, or they think about San Francisco. I want people around the world to think about Detroit as a vacation spot, as a cultural Mecca, as an environment in which virtually everybody can enjoy the amenities. In order to do that you've got to do something with the landscape. And in order to do that, you've got to start putting some money into this city."(GreenWays promoter)

Their perspective is also consistent with the physical determinism that tends to prevail in the way planners and architects promote greenways; that changes to the physical infrastructure per se bring about social change. Indeed the narrative above contains an interesting contrast between the "natural" elements in the city which can bring about this change and the social characteristics which make the city an undesirable place.

The concept of "landscape change" embraced by program sponsors emerges as one type of ecological perspective on redevelopment, which proposes that greenways can create both ecological impact *and* social change in the city. From their point of view the "linkages" created by greenways facilitate impact at a landscape (larger) scale and define the strategy as one which can sustain much needed changes. Although linkages are defined as social and physical, their view tends to emphasize the physical/natural infrastructure as opposed to the social. The positive elements usually highlighted by this

perspective - Belle Isle and the city's parks - are "natural infrastructure" rather than social elements that arise from the communities that populate the city. As the following narrative illustrates, changes to the physical infrastructure are seen as potentially changing the nature of even the most devastated neighborhoods.

> *"That changes the landscape. That changes the neighborhood, it changes the community entirely. Can you imagine what the Eastside of Detroit would look like if they had a river that is not quite this size, but a river of some substance flowing through them? What a cool neighborhood that would be. You would see massive - I'm convinced you would see massive investment in that neighborhood, in new and probably very sizable residential areas."*

Furthermore, potentially problematic issues that arise from the proposed redevelopment scenario are overlooked or ignored. For example, whether new residential areas will accommodate existing residents does not come up as a critical issue, in spite of the city's history of displacement and segregation. Here too race becomes an element that is ignored or overlooked in the way in which greenways are promoted. Like other interpretations of greenways, race shapes ideas and views through the social position and experience of their advocates. The fact that most greenways actors and advocates are middle class whites, and many of them suburbanites, no doubt contributes to a message which relegates "the racial" to the shadows of unspoken messages.

This is not to say that the ideas promoted by this perspective, and particularly those connected to the GreenWays Initiative, are not innovative, good for the city or even feasible within a more community driven framework. Indeed I have already pointed out the importance of the GreenWays Initiative in terms of providing innovation and concrete incentives for change in Detroit. The point is that their predominant interpretation of greenways can often be formulated without a lot of attention to the issues and needs of city residents. Rather they respond to an outsider's view of what Detroit should look like, and as I have discussed before they are likely to be perceived as promoting a suburban - mostly "white" - perspective on redevelopment.

Another interesting characteristic of this perspective is the sense of personal mission that some key actors have relating to the plight of the city. In some ways the strength and personal connection is symbolic of the ties and desires that bind many middle and upper middle class whites - often "expatriates" - to the city. It also constitutes part of a broader perspective embraced and promoted by elite actors connected to the city.

> *"They would say there isn't another institution that can save Detroit and there isn't another individual that can save Detroit, you have to save Detroit. Well for 20 years, I struggled with that because in fact, looking at it from afar, I kept thinking that's what I want to do. I mean I want to figure out how to do that."* (GreenWays advocate)

"If I was going to do what Bill Ford and Peter Stroh and Dean Richardson told me to do, which is I had to save Detroit..." (GreenWays advocate)

The conviction and strength expressed by this actor is particularly striking as it appears to embody a nostalgic desire to do something for a city, which while estranged in the present, constitutes a central part of one's personal history.

"I have a personal attachment in Detroit. My parents in fact, actually still live in the city...I'm in my mid 50's, so my recollection of Detroit of years gone by is quite different than the city that I've seen today. But in my recollection is, as I thought about my experiences, my personal experiences, I remember very vividly playing baseball in the streets for example, football in the streets. I mean I'm a concrete canyon boy, I'm a city boy...and then for our... outdoor adventure, we would hike down to the Rouge River..." (GreenWays advocate)

Perhaps it is the case that having left the city, these actors are now ready and willing to rebuild and recapture its past glory. However, saving the city, from their perspective, implies making it acceptable to the standards of middle class, typically white suburban residents. In this sense, they are likely to promote a greenways ideal that looks more to satisfy an external demand rather than an internal one.

It is important to note that "community" elements are not completely absent from these "externally driven" greenways interpretations. Indeed as key actors indicated, in the 1970s the interest in public access to the riverfront was also driven by a desire to provide access to city residents. Particularly in these early efforts, some groups and key actors that participated were community oriented, and thus interested in neighborhood redevelopment. However the majority belonged to professional circles, and admittedly represented the views of institutions rather than communities. The GreenWays Initiative too has an important community component via their grants program and many if not all of the local projects sponsored are neighborhood centered. However the message that prevails in the discourse of its leaders is about making or "remaking" Detroit into place that is attractive in the eyes of outsiders. Thus the common denominator of these interpretations is that of greenways as part of an "incentive package" to lure investments and people back to Detroit.

5.3.2. Greenways defined as part of a neighborhood driven redevelopment perspective

Unlike the externally driven perspective, the potential for more equitable redevelopment was a key and explicit element of the greenways discourse of community actors in Detroit, particularly activist involved with local level organizations and development. These actors include both white and minority city residents, many of whom work or volunteer in the community development field. But it was also expressed by environmental actors, both white and minority, directly involved with local level organizations. These narratives reflected their belief that city residents, most often low

income minorities, suffer the most from the dysfunctions of the region. Greenways were seen as having the potential to alleviate some of the burdens created by the region's unequal development. For many of them the "green" in greenways is about environmental protection that is compatible with social justice. Thus these actors stress that the benefits of greenways should accrue primarily to local residents. Not surprisingly they often define greenways as community spaces.

> *"I lived in Detroit at the time and Detroit has the most people, it has the most people of color, it's percentages of poor people... there are probably more people here that could benefit from a clean environment, a sense of community, and better health...I believe it would be a major spur to redevelopment and a major deterrent to blight."* (Community activist)

> *"I would like to see a place that's safe for the community because they're missing a lot... We don't need to bring anymore people over there. Let's just make it safe for them and a place where they can go...I think communities need their own spaces... I think Southwest and Eastside need their own places... where the elders can go and feel comfortable and the kids can go and have a barbecue. And maybe people would be more likely to live here and stick around"* (Resident and environmental activist)

In contrast to the physical determinism of more external views, some community actors talked about the social richness of the city, both past and present, as essential elements of a greenways ideal that seeks to change the city.

> *"And these areas are where you tell the story. And that's the whole concept of cultural tourism, which is an economic generator, which brings people in from all over the world to see Detroit's uniqueness in the world. It's the automobile and it's our music and it's our culture. And it's the people like that woman who stood up at that meeting and said so what, these are great plans but what is it going to do for me? Having that you know earth rootedness, being real about something and all the suits and ties [present at the meeting], that [comment] scared the shit out of them, right? Because it [the comment] hit them right there [in their heart and conscience]."* (Activist)

In contrast to more external views on redevelopment, this perspective is not as concerned with decreasing the tensions between the city and the suburbs, or providing amenities for suburbanites. These actors do not ignore the importance of these tensions to redevelopment in the city, but rather their focus is on issues of equity and opportunities for local residents. Indeed greenways are defined as one more element of a redevelopment strategy focused on neighborhoods and driven by the community. In the next sections I will explore in more detail the key elements of this perspective, as constructed by the organizations and individuals involved with local greenways projects.

5.3.2.1. Equity is a central piece of the community perspective on Greenways

Actors from different parts of the city expressed a desire for greenways to contribute to more equitable redevelopment in the city. The perspective prevailed among minorities interviewed but was also expressed by many white city residents, most often community activists. These actors participated at different levels of on-going greenways planning in different parts of the city, from direct participation to peripheral involvement (see Table 8).

The central element of this perspective focused on making greenways part of a bottom-up approach to redevelopment, *i.e.* one that is defined by community participation and equitable distribution of benefits. Equity thus becomes an inherent part of this particular greenways vision. Furthermore greenways should be about creating equity at all levels of greenways project development. Thus the definition of "equity" goes beyond physical access to the green infrastructure. In Detroit, this translates into ensuring that greenways development creates local opportunities, particularly jobs and affordable housing.

> *"My whole thing is, use the young people and use the unemployed and get employment training programs together where the city is spending the money on a contractor to build these projects, force that contractor to hire some people. Because the best way to do community development is to involve the people that live in the community, rebuilding their community.*

Now, if they run into some problems in the process of doing that, then you have to just manage those problems."

As they talked about greenways and the city, they often contrasted the negative consequences of top-down redevelopment scenarios. The issue of non-Detroiters benefiting from redevelopment in the city is a hot topic for area residents (and many of these actors were city residents). The misuse of redevelopment possibilities is seen as further contributing to the abandonment of city residents. In their narratives, key actors illustrated their ideal of redevelopment by contrasting it with the negative consequences accrued by the redevelopment framework that has often prevailed.

"In a crude way, a poverty pimp is somebody who takes advantage of people that are needy to benefit their own agenda and not be real about what they are doing. Detroit has a tremendous history of that - government, private sector, and non-government sectors. And it creates a level of politics where there is a lot of competition for a tremendous amount of money. There has been a tremendous amount of money wasted. The problems of poverty have gotten worse through the years. If you look at the demographics in the City of Detroit, a lot of people said, all these greenways are just for the rich people. Well, my whole idea was no they are not. The greenways are the opposite, especially along the Detroit River. If you look at any major cities in the United States and in the world, the waterfront is where money is. But if you make it

public space where people can walk, can sit and watch the water, I am thinking of those people who don't otherwise - who are just who have to work 60 hours a week and they only get 30 hours a week pay and you know life is hard and this town is tough. We have some tremendous spirited people." (City resident and activist)

"...because people are sick of hair salons, beauty supply places, pager shops. If you build a strip mall in Detroit and don't put any sign on it, people could tell you the four things that are going to be there. It's going to be a beauty supply place, it's going to be a Chinese food place, it's going to be a pager store and maybe a dollar store or something. But it's generic and people are really, really sick of it. At first we were starving, begging for development. And then when they started coming in, in the forms of these little strip mall like - we don't want this, this is not what we imagined!

Because revitalization... doesn't build new homes that residents can't afford and the influx of people from the suburbs. That's not really where I'm coming from when I think of revitalization. But I really think it's reenergizing the residents, the citizenry that we have. And you know making them more proud and making them more of a part of the city...we need revitalization and we need at least affordable housing for the residents that are here. And taking - getting rid of the dilapidated and starting anew. I mean we have to do it a section at a time. We have

the space to do it because of so many people leaving... you know whole areas being abandoned... " (City resident and employee)

The negative consequences of redevelopment "at any cost" are used as way to describe what greenways development in the city should not be about. The greenways concept thus defined implies creating community opportunities. Access to the recreational and environmental amenities offered by greenways is an important part of this set of opportunities. But they are also broadly defined to include access to jobs, having the option to live in the new residential developments and most importantly having some control over the redevelopment process.

... But the needs for the health benefits of the greenway, the community building aspects of it. The fact that people will get out and exercise and the children especially. And the fact there are parks, there are schools, there are bus lines along these places all over the city of Detroit. I believe it would be a major spur to redevelopment and a major deterrent to blight... but the key is the people not only have to get a stake in planning it, but also in the building of it... Whoever the contractor... people that live in the neighborhood should get first cracks at those jobs and somebody is going to have to train them in the proper way... Otherwise, they are going to trash the place. They are going to say ah, so what, you built this. What the hell is it? What does it do for me? They are not going to take ownership in it and the vandalism and the negative stuff will

happen. And it doesn't have to be that way." (Emphasis added. City resident and activist)

"We need to get it-you know we need rooftops and we need new people. And I'm not against people from the suburbs coming back to the city, but we definitely need to serve our population. I think that's kind of being lost in the shuffle. There are new walls along Woodward, new housing along the riverfront and I can't afford that, you know? I mean it's..." (City resident and employee)

"And as a result you know in a 20 year period... about half the housing stock was lost to abandonment, arson, vandalism. And so you have this phenomenal concentration of vacant land that has emerged. And so it's in that context... that if the community was going to be revitalized, rebuilt, we wanted it to happen from a community base... And over a ten year period we kind of took what was a 15-block area and effectively stabilized it... it's a neighborhood where people are in control of and people feel good about raising their children..." (City resident and CDC employee)

Some of these actors also stressed the importance of making nature a part of the everyday life of city residents, and of an equitable redevelopment strategy. Yet in this case access to nature becomes part of a broader environmental justice discourse. Equity in this context implies making nature accessible to the poor. It also means using nature to

address issues that specifically affect the inner city population, such as allergies and noise pollution.

> *"Just because we are from south Detroit means we don't deserve a greenways? Nature doesn't belong to any one class, it belongs to all of us, and we all deserve good health. And to have a polluted environment when we could have strips of trees that could not only beautify but prevent allergies in the hundreds of children that we have with allergies...I see it as extremely functional also. As a public health issue. The noise. I can buffer the noise in two ways: using strips of trees or with a concrete wall which is not very pleasant."* (SWD resident)[25]

> *"For me it's the connection to nature, it's the connection of man to nature, it's the reliving of man and nature, because it's been lost by the concrete. A greyway is very different from a greenways, that's my, it's different, it's the green, it's to revalue that green...[It's] beauty, it's admiration, revaluing and admiring the landscape. It's the rebirthing of that sense of urban landscape in us." (idem)*[26]

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[25] Original in Spanish: *"¿Es que no merecemos porque somos de, somos del sur de Detroit no merecemos tener una...? Es que la naturaleza no es de clases, la naturaleza es para todos, y la salud es para todos, y tener un aire tan contaminado sabiendo que podemos tener un cordón de árboles que nos puede servir, no solamente para embellecer si no para quitarle la alergia a los cientos de niños que tenemos alérgicos. Lo veo extremadamente funcional también. Como salud pública. El ruido. Yo amortiguo el ruido, yo puedo amortiguar el ruido de dos maneras: con una barrera de árboles o con una pared de concreto que no es delicioso."*

[26] Original in Spanish: *"Para mí es la conexión con la naturaleza, es la conexión del hombre con la naturaleza, es el revivir del hombre con la naturaleza porque se ha perdido por el concreto, entonces es muy distinto un greyway a un greenway, ese es mi, es que es distinto, es el verde, es retomar ese verde. [es] Belleza, es admirar, retomar y admirar el paisaje. Volver a renacer en nosotros ese sentido del paisaje citadino."*

5.3.2.2. The importance of CDC participation to greenways definitions in Detroit

The link between neighborhood redevelopment and greenways emerges more clearly for projects lead by Community Development Corporations (CDCs). As the primary recipients of the CF's GreenWays grants, these organizations have become important players in the development of greenways projects in the city. This link is less evident for the city's Linked Parks Project in Southwest (discussed in the next section), thus indicating the importance of CDCs to creating a local greenways vision. CDCs are defined as community based non-profits dedicated to the revitalization of distressed urban areas, usually defined by traditional neighborhood boundaries. They are typically governed by a board consisting primarily of neighborhood residents and business leaders. CDCs have played an important role in Detroit's revitalization process, often filling in the community development vacuum created by public and private sector abandonment of many communities. Many of these organizations are involved with community planning and sponsor programs aimed at creating affordable housing, area business development, job training and community policing among others.

CDCs in different parts of the city share a view which frames greenways as part of a community development strategy. Key community actors indicated that interest in greenways partly dates back to the ideas and plans developed during the Detroit Community Reinvestment Strategy[27] (CRS) of 1996. Green spaces and parks were

[27] The CRS was a city-wide effort instituted to develop a community-based planning strategy for redevelopment in the city. The city developed the CRS as a response to criticism from community groups of the 1994 "Land Use Task Force", formed by Mayor Archer and charged with creating a vision of land

mentioned by many community groups as important for redeveloping their neighborhood and were included in the final CRS reports for the different sectors of the city (see http://www.ci.detroit.mi.us/plandevl/crs/reports.htm). Greenways were specifically mentioned in the CRS final reports for two areas where current projects exist (SmithGroup Technical Assistance Team 1997a and 1997b). While they may struggle to convey the importance of greenways to their constituents, CDCs staff felt that the projects were a good match for their goals.

> *"And that's not to say that we won't be going back to the community as part of this planning process. But I think the one thing that we all feel comfortable about that this is called for and the people would support it... We wouldn't have pursued it if it wouldn't fit. No one has the time or the energy to try to go chasing the money, if it doesn't fit."* (DECC member)

Throughout the city the driving forces for embarking on a greenways project seem to be aligned with the missions and objectives of leading organizations, be they economic development, neighborhood stabilization or revitalization. In Northwest Detroit for example, stabilizing the area and providing a safe family environment for current low income residents is a key goal of the greenways project. The area has undergone several neighborhood transitions in the last decades. Currently, lower income neighborhoods co-exist with more affluent, middle class ones. CDCs in the area struggle to maintain ethnic

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use in the city. Community groups felt that planning process developed by the task force was too centralized and not participatory enough.

and income heterogeneity in the area, an element that they describe as an asset for the community. Their vision of greenways therefore focuses on creating family oriented environmental amenities without increasing the cost of home ownership for current residents.

> *"No, I think that, well, we developed a sense that we were trying to stabilize the neighborhood and thinking about the neighborhood on a broader scale. We've identified its open spaces as of course an important asset... The lack of value placed on the land was an opportunity that we had to pass onto the low-income residents where often in development situations land has an inflated value... it's only rarely that the poor have the opportunity to own land and control land. Our thought was that land in this situation was actually an asset and an amenity that we can offer people given the problems of noise and violence and congestion in our city that you know to the extent that we could just offer family space. That was actually something that would be of value for those families in this overall community. So then if you go through it, it was a preserved sense of attractiveness because of the green that was there. So right from the beginning, we built on larger lots. We've tried to demolish you know if homes are tightly packed together we would demolish a house between two houses in order to create larger lots and we renovated and improved houses."* (Northwest)

In Southwest on the other hand, economic development and the marketability of housing emerge as critical elements of the vision espoused by one community development organization leading a greenways project[28]. This particular greenways vision responds to a perspective on the needs of the area which highlights its population and business growth (a stark contrast to the population loss in the rest of the city). New Latino migrants continue to move into the area attracted by the job market and low cost of living. Area organizations therefore seek to create incentives that will consolidate the neighborhood for current residents and continue to attract new migrants.

> *"Anyway, what made us take this on? It certainly, we see greenways as an economic development asset. We believe if there is a place in the city of Detroit that ought to be addressing this stuff it ought to be in Southwest Detroit. I mean we have so few park spaces, we have no access to the river. If you want to market in a neighborhood, you got to have more than just a great price on a house to market a neighborhood."* (Staff economic development organization)

5.4. Working examples of the two definitions of Greenways

[28] This project is independent of the Linked Parks Project headed by the Recreation Department.

5.4.1. The Eastside's "Conner Creek Greenways" as an example of a community oriented vision

The Conner Creek Greenways project developed by the Eastside coalition DECC, serves as an example of how organizations in Detroit attempt to shape and develop a greenways vision that is more responsive to community needs. DECC's interest in greenways seemed to be especially motivated by past efforts to redefine a revitalization strategy for the area (see chapter four for more details). The Eastside is one of the most devastated areas of the city in terms of poverty, abandoned and decaying property, lack of business investment and segregation. It also borders some of the older, exclusive mostly white suburbs of Detroit, the "Grosse Pointes", making dramatic contrasts between rich and poor and black and white. Eastside actors expressed a range of views on the meaning of greenways in interviews and in discussions throughout the planning sessions. Some equated greenways with bike trails, nature walks and preservation. Others were more interested in recovering their neighborhood's history, while still others were attracted mainly by the alternative transportation possibilities offered by greenways. Many felt that greenways could provide Eastside residents with a much needed refuge from the stress of urban life. A *"slice of nature...getting back to a bucolic presence in the middle of an urban chaos,"* as one interviewee poetically indicated. However, as the following narratives indicate, most community actors defined greenways in terms of how these could contribute to creating change at the neighborhood level.

> *"Warren Conner has a specific interest in the overall planning process that stems from work we are doing within with the community with block*

clubs on beautification. And because of that work, we are constantly wrestling with how you fund greenways and maintain greenways, create greenways, etc?"

"See, as we started to study this history, it made such good sense when we looked from an urban planning position, of how we can fortify our neighborhood and diminish the threats to the quality of life. When you flip that equation around, then you say well then you become proactive and you capture your assets, which is this Connor Creek story and you make it work for you by establishing this greenway to safeguard that quarter of a mile stretch."

"We were totally envisioning it to be something that would be functional and that it would be something people could use as opposed to something that we are preserving, ecologically or whatever, which is still a good thing, but... So the transportation and the recreation and the beautification aspect of it, the bringing more wildlife back into the city and then it can also be like an educational thing too." (emphasis added)

These three narratives reflect the views of actors critical to the development of the Conner Creek project; all three of them define greenways as a community development tool as opposed to a conservation strategy. This is not to say that ecological conservation is not an important element, but rather that the driving force lies elsewhere given

Detroit's urban context. Phrases like "long bike trail," "nature trail, like in DC," "trees and flowers, habitat" were often used to describe greenways during planning meetings. However the key word finally used by DECC to link greenways to community needs is "revitalization".

> *"Vision: a beautiful and functional greenway that revitalizes Detroit's Eastside"* (excerpt from mission statement in the consultant RFP for the Conner Creek Greenways project)

The two key words used to define the greenways in this vision statement, "beautiful" and "functional", attempt to create an image of greenways as a realistic and valid endeavor for the community. Beautification of neighborhoods is already an area of focus for many organizations. Warren Conner for example, the area's largest CDC, already maintains large green spaces through their programming. Greenways are thus linked to on-going programs and efforts. Using the word "functional" is perhaps an attempt to illustrate that green spaces have important uses in a distressed urban area; *i.e.* they are not a luxury item imported from the suburban, middle class world.

The vision statement then goes on to detail a set of objectives, in an effort to clarify how greenways contribute to the overarching goal of revitalization:

- *Improve physical health of people*
- *Improve environmental quality of the Eastside such as air and water quality*
- *Improve economic atmosphere of Detroit's Eastside*

- *Strengthen a sense of community, culture, and history by linking neighborhoods*
- *Improve the appearance of Detroit's Eastside*
- *Connect residents to and educate them on their unique urban environment*
- *Create a safe environment for using alternative modes of transportation*

(From Conner Creek Greenways Vision statement)

To some extent these objectives reflect critical issues that residents of the Eastside are currently facing and which DECC organizations attempt to address. For example the objective related to "strengthen a sense of community", in particular via the linking of neighborhoods, speaks to the physical and social barriers that have eroded away the Eastside's social fabric. Like other areas of the city, entire neighborhoods have been divided and physically cut off from each other by the construction of highways (I-94 is the most acute example). This has further contributed to the social isolation of residents in the Eastside. Thus greenways are portrayed as an element which can help rebuild the social fabric.

The importance of "improving the economic atmosphere" is also rooted in historical needs of area residents. The Eastside was hit hard by deindustrialization. Once a prosperous part of town, it decayed as automobile-related industry started moving out in the early 50s, followed by retail and other commercial businesses. The legacy of abandoned industry and retail space still haunts the area. Thus business and retail development are high up on the list of priorities for many CDCs in the area.

5.4.1.1. Safety, beauty and reconstituting the social fabric of the Eastside

Greenways ideas for the Conner Creek Project evolved and changed throughout the planning process. Initially traditional elements such as biking and hiking trails prevailed among greenways definitions and interpretations. As the planning process in the Eastside progressed, safety, beauty and reconstituting the social fabric became increasingly important defining elements for Eastside greenways. This appears to be a clear attempt to make greenways acceptable to the community, as well as a result of a broader range of actors becoming actively involved in the discussions. While not all actors seemed equally concerned, key leaders who participated in the planning expressed concern that residents might think the project was disconnected to the Eastside reality. Their perspective on greenways seemed to prevail, as those greenways elements which filled a community need became important to the definition of the project and to its public image.

For example, the first time the project was presented to the public was at the annual town forum which focused on increasing safety and reducing crime in the Eastside. Project leaders attempted to frame greenways as one of the many strategies which could be used to combat crime. As I discuss in chapter six this effort was only partly successful, as the overly technical nature of the presentation by the consultants and other barriers to participation prevented a more profound discussion by residents. Nevertheless the effort was a first attempt at defining greenways as a crime fighting strategy, and it helped to position the project as part of larger community endeavor. For example an exchange between project leaders and area police officers present at the

meeting brought to the forefront specific issues relating to the use of specific design elements in order to create safer environments along the greenways. It also raised the possibility of collaboration with area officers interested in assisting the project.

As participants debated and decided on which section of the greenways to prioritize for the construction phase, they really began to make choices about those elements which were more important for their particular definition of greenways. Thus taking advantage of existing community assets and making them accessible to residents became a priority. For example they chose an area where there is a community college, a well-used park and a future public transportation hub. To some extent this area already attracts people. The idea was that the greenways could help to link these resources and create a space where residents of the area could safely congregate as well as move around. Thus greenways could help to consolidate and create incentives for social interaction, ultimately contributing to strengthening the social fabric of the Eastside.

The area community college participated in the planning and expressed great interest in supporting the project as well as future greenways-related programs. This was an important factor in the decision making process, as the institutional backing would help to push the project through. The college was particularly interested in linking the greenways to their educational programs and those of other area organizations. For example they mentioned their work with a black farmer's organization on urban gardens as one collaboration which could be tapped to make greenways part of on-going efforts. And while it's not clear whether this or other collaborations would actually be carried through, the possibility of a greenways linked to broader community efforts begins to emerge.

Other elements, such as transportation, for example, became subordinate to broader objectives as participants began to ask how they could create synergies between their project and other community efforts. Bike paths, envisioned as recreational and alternative transportation modes, were important elements of greenways definitions for many - though not all - participants. However in the end, facilitating residents' access to public transportation became more critical than just the creation of bike paths. For example in choosing the first construction phase, participants focused on an area where synergy with the city's future public transportation hub was the greatest. This is not to say that bike paths are not an important defining element of the Conner Creek Greenways. In many ways the project is still largely about creating urban bike and walking paths. But in some instances at least they take a back seat to other elements - access to public transport, rebuilding the social fabric, combating crime - that appear more related to community needs.

In summary, community organizations and activists involved with greenways in Detroit tended to define greenways as a neighborhood centered redevelopment or revitalization strategy. Within this context greenways were interpreted as community spaces, crime fighting strategy, means to link to existing assets within the community and most importantly as a set of opportunities for existing residents. Traditional definitions of greenways as bike and walking trails were also part of the way in which these actors defined greenways. However as the Eastside case illustrates, they were often part of a broader interpretation centered on community issues.

5.4.2. The Linked Parks project's interpretation of greenways

The Linked Parks project in Southwest illustrates how weak connections between greenways and community development hinder the development of a more neighborhood or community-centered vision of greenways. Historically the ideas behind the Linked Parks Project have been externally driven, never really taking a strong hold among community groups (see chapters three and four for more details). In addition, planning decisions for the project were made largely by (white) professionals with very limited - if not nonexistent - public input, an issue I discuss in detail in chapter six. As a result the vision promoted by the project tended to conform to the greenways ideal held by these professional actors; *i.e.* one which highlights the typical recreational and "environmental linkage" components.

> *"... I'm going to see it as a green connection between - relatively green public use areas and that green connection doesn't necessarily have to be a public way. It can simply be an environmental green connection, a habitat connection... At a minimum, that's what it is... an environmental enhancement from one end to the next. That is at least a connection environmentally."* (Consultant)

> *"We see them as recreational, primarily. And hopefully there are other benefits like going to work, going to school, a safe presence that whole Rails to Conservancy Services program that they're working on. You know the whole mayor's kids, cops, clean, fitting into that, making it safe, a safe*

way to get around your neighborhood and to connect the amenities recreationally." (City professional)

Thus in some ways the Linked Park projects developed a narrower interpretation of greenways as primarily recreational and biking paths. Overall the image conveyed by the project was more reflective of a "textbook" or generic greenway rather than one rooted in the realities of the community. The consultants were more concerned with the technicalities of the greenways, and the city staff with making sure it fit into their departmental and the program sponsors' vision. This is reflected in the written material used to promote the project as well as in public presentations, where technical issues prevailed.

"The greenways will provide residents of Southwest Detroit with new recreational opportunities and safe, environmentally enhanced, non-motorized linkages between the Detroit Riverfront and existing amenities of the area" (Excerpt from public meeting notice)

"Our priority is to provide an amenity that will enhance the quality of life of the city of Detroit, especially. Frankly it's a rubber stamp statement that we use all the time..." (City professional)

To some extent the focus on recreational and non-motorized linkages is expected, an indeed appropriate as this interpretation is well aligned with the Recreation

Department which headed the project. There is nothing inherently wrong with seeing greenways as recreational paths, or even with planning them for Southwest. The narrowness of the interpretation becomes an issue when the project is unable to accommodate other views or respond to community concerns. In this case the project doesn't really get contextualized as a part of other community development efforts in southwest.

Indeed independent actors from Southwest expressed some concern over the concept as it was being promoted by project leaders. This is in spite of the fact that most of these actors tended to support the general idea. The issues raised by community actors really accentuated the distance between the project ideal and the needs of the community. In this sense the project was clearly more responsive to the ideas of program sponsors that than those of the community, insisting on linkages and paths that raised some questions amongst community members but which accommodated the views of program sponsors.

Community members for example raised a set of issues that not only remained unaddressed but were to some extent ignored during the planning process. These actors talked about the need for green spaces and green connections, but they also talked about the need to build safety features into the greenways, to involve not only residents but community organizations at all levels of greenways planning and implementation. Most importantly they indicated the importance of accommodating the specific needs and interests of area users. Some residents for example expressed concerns about loss of already scarce parking space along the greenways route, an issue that did not seem to resonate or greatly concern project leaders.

"No, I think it's beneficial. Yeah, I think it's beneficial in our community. I'm glad they are considering doing it here and I hope that it goes off well. But there are issues that need to be addressed like the truck traffic, like the safety, like you know getting people there and getting people utilizing... You know you want get the community involved in it, otherwise, what's going to happen is you're going to create something that's wonderful and beautiful and you may get the wrong people that are attracted to it. You know you may get people that want to set up shop somewhere along the border...They're not going to have issues about you know lighting and police, safety. They're hoping the police don't go over there... and I wonder how they're going to keep up the beautification part of it. It's going to get tagged and there's graffiti, who's going to clear that off. You know is it going to be the city? Is it going to be community organizations? It might be more effective if it's community organizations. They can do it on a more timely basis you know those types of things. If you have people walking on the path and utilizing, it should go from one place to another. It's going to be - those are the types of people that you're going to attract." (Hispanic Staff from a community organization)

"And my concept, not just as a resident but as a professional in the field, is that for this type of project you have to work with the community. Yes, because I'm not going to enjoy - for example there are some areas where they are proposing the greenways which I would never walk around, not

even if they planted a tree...it's not the tree. It's just that how am I going to go to a warehouse where they sell drugs, where it's dark at night? no! Either I do it where the community walks or I don't do it" (Resident and landscape architect from Latin America)[29]

These independent voices from southwest expressed a desire for a more community based vision of greenways which has parallels with the vision emerging in the eastside, and which I will discuss in the next section. They too shared a concern for community use, safety and crime, and in general making greenways a more integral part of neighborhood life. It is interesting to note that the two projects, Conner Creek and Linked Parks, hired the same consultant for their planning process. As I discuss in chapter six there were clear differences in terms of leadership and participation between the two projects. This underscores the importance of community collaboration and leadership to the development of more context-specific greenways vision for a given area.

The differences that emerged between the professionals leading the project in Southwest and community actors in the area illustrate how values shape the definitions and ideals behind the concept. Clearly each set of actors bring their own values to bear on their particular vision of a greenways. In some ways the professionals behind the Linked Parks project tended to promote - consciously or unconsciously - a technocratic,

[29] Original in Spanish: *"Y, mi concepto ya no como residente de aquí, simplemente como profesional en esa rama, es que para un tipo de proyecto de esos tienes que trabajar con la comunidad. Si, porque yo no voy a ir a disfrutar, por ejemplo hay unas áreas donde van a plantear el greenway, que yo no me voy a ir a caminar por ahí, ni siquiera porque me planten un arbolito...No es el arbolito. Es que cómo voy a ir yo con una bodega donde venden droga, una bodega donde está oscuro en la noche, no. O lo hago por donde la comunidad camina o no lo hago."*

traditional suburban perspective on greenways which aligned more with an external view of redevelopment.

Greenways interpretation by key advocates in the region and particularly by program sponsors greatly influence the development of local greenways interpretations, particularly in the in the absence of mechanisms for community participation. As I discussed earlier in the chapter, sponsors created an environment where greenways were perceived as a suburban idea by some actors in the city. In Detroit, the term "suburban" has a racial connotation, and is often used to imply an idea developed by and for the white middle class. In addition an externally driven redevelopment perspective underlies a prominent - if not dominant - interpretation of greenways amongst advocates. Added to this layered understanding of greenways are images of hiking and biking trails that have historically been associated with the concept. Altogether these elements reinforced in Southwest Detroit, a notion of greenways as a strategy developed by - and perhaps for - outsiders.

5.5. Summary and conclusions

Multiple elements interact and emerge as critical to the development of greenways interpretations in Detroit. At one level program sponsors created an environment that reinforced the traditional notion of greenways as a suburban, white middle class strategy for conservation and outdoor recreation. A strategy that a range of actors felt was out of touch with the needs of the city they live and work in. During the initial grant rounds the guidelines, intended scale of projects and the overall program

image made for some community actors, in particular, to envision greenways as effectively contributing to redevelopment.

Racial segregation and inequality, inextricably linked to the region's development, provided yet another level of complexity to greenways understandings. Race shapes greenways in subtle and not so subtle ways. For those external to the city, race is rarely seen as an explicit part of greenways issues, emerging most often as the hidden subtext of a message that speaks to the "tensions in the region". This was most evident in conversations with whites who live outside of Detroit. In many ways this message ignores and, as a consequence, ascribes only a superficial importance to race. In contrast, greenways interpretations and understandings by community actors raised critical questions about the distribution of benefits accruing from redevelopment potentially spurred by greenways. The question raised by one city actor exemplifies the concern raised by many: *Are these greenways for me?*

On the other hand the conditions created by deindustrialization underlie and permeate all greenways ideas relative to Detroit. The dramatic environmental and infrastructure conditions of the urban landscape together with the social consequences of suburbanization constrain and at the same time provide new possibilities for greenways. The task at hand is often seen as daunting, yet at the same time it provides an opportunity for alternative and ecological redevelopment in the city. Greenways are invariably defined as part of a general discourse relating to the need to "rebuild", "revitalize," and/or "redevelop" the city.

In spite of this shared understanding, greenways meanings and definitions reflect different, and sometimes opposing, views of redevelopment. On the one hand many

advocates in the region have historically promoted greenways as a way to attract investment and people back to the city. This view often forms part of broader perspective on redevelopment in which change occurs by and for suburban, most often white, agents. More recently, program sponsors define greenways as a way to "save Detroit" and create a world class city. Their vision promotes greenways as dramatic changes to the physical infrastructure and landscape, in the belief that social change will ensue. This particular interpretation appears connected to the views of elite actors, often white "outsiders", who claim a deep personal connection to the city.

On the other hand, activists and community actors in the city define greenways as part of a neighborhood centered redevelopment strategy. This interpretation highlights the importance of and potential for greenways to contribute to more equitable redevelopment in the city. Greenways are interpreted first and foremost as a set of opportunities for city residents, which include elements such as green and safe community spaces, access to better transportation, beautification of city streets, and access to jobs and housing opportunities arising from greenways, among others.

The two projects studied further illustrate the importance of the context to the development and evolution of greenways ideas in Detroit. The two projects provide an interesting contrast in ability to create local level greenways interpretations in the inner city. The Linked Parks project in Southwest illustrates how external views of greenways can lead to very weak connections between greenways and community development. Differences in greenways understandings between professionals and community actors highlight the centrality of values to the definitions and ideals behind the concept. In some

ways the white middle class professionals behind the Linked Parks project promoted - consciously or unconsciously - a technocratic, traditional suburban interpretation aligned more closely with an external view of redevelopment, in particular that of the program sponsors. In contrast the Conner Creek project in the Eastside illustrates how community actors interpreted and defined greenways so as to provide clearer and stronger connections to community development goals and objectives. While the projects share elements which can be seen as "universal" to greenways - biking paths, connections between green spaces, etc. - their differences illustrate the importance of having community development actors shaping greenways meanings. Safety for example was a key element of the greenways discourse in the Eastside (Conner Creek), while it received little attention in Southwest (Linked Parks) in spite of its importance to both communities.

CHAPTER 6

The Realities of Participation

6.1. Introduction

Calls for community and citizen participation have become increasingly prominent in a wide range of environmental management contexts. International conservation efforts, environmental impact assessment, public lands management, watershed management and other environmental decision-making scenarios are all part of the trend towards a more participatory paradigm. Participatory approaches have been in fashion for the last decade but intended and actual approaches may diverge. This chapter analyzes the nature of participation in greenways planning for the case of Detroit, drawing on both my original data and the theory of participation in the field of natural resource management. To the extent that the work of scholars in other areas helps us to understand the social and political context of participation in the inner city, I use selected literature from urban studies to enrich the discussion. It unravels the complexity underlying the reality of participation and the implications for equitable conservation in urban areas.

In section two I discuss definitions and typologies of participation, with an emphasis on community empowerment and power sharing, as analytical tools to understand different approaches. Section three analyzes participation at two levels of greenways-related activities: 1) in the CF's GreenWays program and, 2) in local level greenways planning. The section highlights the differences in the nature and roles of organizing entities and opportunities for actual participation of the two Detroit projects. Section four analyzes factors affecting participation and is divided into two parts. The first part addresses the forces leading to a technocratic approach to environmental planning and its impact on participation. The second part analyzes the importance of race

and ethnicity to participation in Detroit. It illustrates how greenways are inextricably imbedded in a community development context where racial politics are a strong, albeit subtle, presence.

6.2. Definitions and typology of participation

6.2.1. Differentiating between top-down and bottom-up approaches to participation

Intended and actual approaches to participation often diverge and contribute to the difficulties encountered in their implementation. In the area of natural resources, scholars differentiate these approaches according to the degree of decision-making power held by citizens or communities. Typically, it is described as a continuum ranging from top-down approaches with little or no participation from the community to self-mobilization. Roberts (1995), writing about public involvement within the context of the National Environmental Protection Act's (NEPA) Social Impact Assessment (SIA) process, specifically differentiates between the widely used terms consultation and participation. He defines consultation as "education, information sharing, and negotiation" and participation as "actually [bringing] the public into the decision-making process". Public involvement, he argues, is typically a consultative process with no intent for greater public participation. In his description of participation within the SIA context, Robert outlines a continuum ranging from "persuasion," defined as a PR exercise, to "self-determination," a process where the organizing entity accepts the outcome of the public's participation (see Figure 4).Within the SIA context organizing entities are assumed to be external to the community.

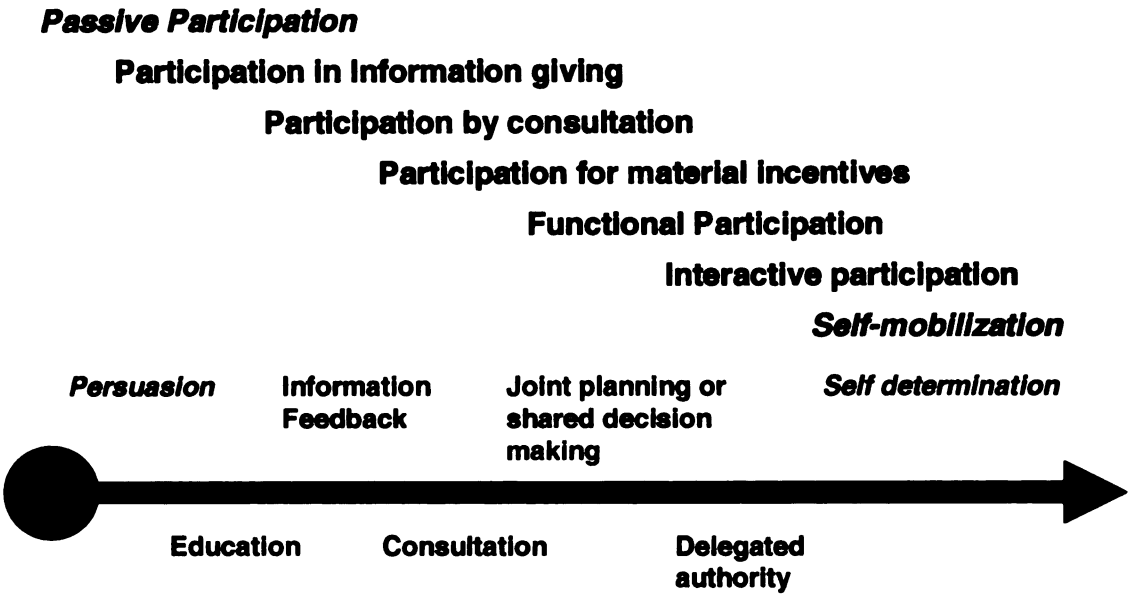

Figure 4. Summary of participation continuums. The red categories represent the continuum described by Roberts' and the black those by Pimpert and Pretty. The arrow direction indicates higher levels of community empowerment and involvement in decision making.

Pimbert and Pretty (1997), whose work focuses on conservation in developing countries, place greater emphasis on problem definition and generation of solutions as one way to gauge the degree to which a process is driven by external versus community interests in their typology (see Table 13). Power is a central element defining the nature of a participation approach according to their definition. As described in Table 13 and

Table 13. Participation typology [1]

Typology	Participation Components
Passive Participation	People participate by being told what is going to happen or what has already happened. It is a unilateral announcement by an administration or by a project management; people's responses are not taken into account. The information being shared belongs only to external professionals.
Participation in information giving	People participate by answering questions posed by extractive researchers and the project managers using questionnaire surveys or similar approaches. People do not have the opportunity to influence proceedings, as the findings of the research project design are neither shared nor checked for accuracy.
Participation by consultation	People participate by being consulted and external agents listen to views. These external agents define both problems and solutions, and may modify these in light of people's responses. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision-making and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views.
Participation for material incentives	People participate by providing incentives, for example labor, in return for food, cash or other material incentives. Much in-situ research and bioprospecting falls in this category as rural people provide resources but are not involved in the experimentation or the process of learning. It is very common to see this called participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging activities when the incentives end.

Table 13 (cont'd).

Functional Participation	People Participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project, which can involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organization. Such involvement does not tend to be at early stages of project cycles or planning but rather after major decisions have been made. These institutions tend to be dependant on external initiators and facilitators, but may become self-dependant.
Interactive participation	People participate in joint analysis, which leads to action plans and the formation of new local groups or the strengthening of old ones. It tends to involve interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systematic and structured learning processes. These groups take control over local decisions, and so people have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.
Self-mobilization	People Participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. Such self-initiated mobilization and collective action may or may not challenge existing inequitable distributions of wealth and power.

[1] Reproduced from Pimpert and Pretty, 1997.

illustrated in Figure 4, at one extreme they identify a passive process where information is generated largely by professionals and shared with the community. This could simply be information about an event that has happened or will happen in the future. In this process, there is no expectation that the community's response (if any) will be taken into account. As we move along this continuum of participation, the level of influence of community members increases. Thus the community may participate in a process where

they give information to project leaders or professionals but receive very little in return. Consultation, according to this typology would involve information sharing both ways. In this case the community still holds no real decision-making power and does not participate in defining problems or issues. Their influence is limited to the degree to which project managers are willing to incorporate community views. Other forms of participation involve information sharing in both directions and varying levels of community involvement in decision making. At the "participatory" extreme, we have a community initiated process where problems and solutions are defined by the community in the absence of an external institution.

Buchy and Race (2001) suggest that rather than typologies, a better distinction is whether participation is an end itself (transformative) or a means to an end (instrumental). Differentiating between these two, they argue, has profound implications for the type of participatory process chosen. In a transformative process, there is the expectation that participation will empower local communities in an enabling way. Instrumental participation on the other hand seeks to disseminate and gather information in order to make better decisions about a specific proposal or problem. Problems usually emerge because organizers see participation as instrumental, while community members may have expectations of social change or empowerment. As many scholars have pointed out, examples of "transformative participation" or actual power sharing in the arena of NR are still rare (Buchy and Race 2001; Little 1994).

In the practice even the most participatory processes are likely to have some influence from external agents. Programs and projects are often a compromise between top-down and bottom-up approaches. In many cases participation is intended to fall along

the middle of a "participatory continuum", as resource planning is mostly directed by external agents. Such is the case for the SIA process, mandated by federal law and lead by government agencies. But it is also true for many conservation projects where the participation component refers mostly to the provision of opportunities for community input.

6.2.2. The importance of quality in participation approaches

Participation typologies tend to imply that more participation is always better. Clearly there are ethical, moral and political reasons that justify the urgent need for participation in resource planning. But not all processes need to be or indeed can be completely "community based". Decisions pertaining to the environment often affect and are affected by people and organizations at various levels, ranging from the local to the international. Participation requires time and energy, and not everyone can be involved at all times. Indeed some forms of non-participation may be a political stance that seeks to challenge existing power structures. The issue thus becomes to identify the most appropriate level of participation for a given issue or problem, and to make the nature of participation explicit.

Buchy and Race (2001) for example suggest that the appropriateness of a particular strategy depends as much on its quality as on the type of technique or process implemented. They suggest four basic "principles of good practice" to guide both the implementation and analysis of various participatory processes: (1) Commitment to and clarity about the process (2) Adequate time and attention to group dynamics, as one measure of commitment (3) Addressing issues of representativity (4) Transfer of skills to

the community. They argue that instrumental participation can play a role in resource planning, if carried out effectively.

Many scholars have pointed out the difficulties and mis-representation of "participation" within the context of resource planning and conservation (Agrawal and Gibson 1999; Belsky 1999; Few 2001; Leach, Mearns and Scoones 1999; Pimpert and Pretty 1997). Participation approaches have often ignored or been oblivious to power differences, particularly within communities, to the detriment of the quality of the process. In some cases, token participation is used as a means to "contain" the public and neutralize opposition and divergent views (Few 2001).

6.3. The role of non-profit and public sector organizations in greenways planning in Detroit

In Detroit participation in greenways events occurs at two principal levels, organizational participation in the CF's GreenWays program, and community (organized entities and residents) participation in local level project planning. As I discussed above, it is important to understand both the type and quality of participation. Furthermore, as the typologies suggest, the degree to which issues and solutions are framed by local entities is one key component of participation. My analysis therefore begins with a description of participation at the two levels, program and local greenways planning.

6.3.1. Participation at the program level: issues of inclusiveness in the GreenWays Program

The GreenWays program developed by the Community Foundation is a typical example of a donor organization [30] attempting to influence environmental decisions at the local level. In this case, as in many others, the influence is through a grants program designed to create incentives for environmentally-friendly local planning. As such it illustrates an attempt to merge top-down with bottom-up strategies. As I discussed in chapter three, the program originated after many years of on-going discussions about greenways in southeast Michigan. It was designed to ground greenways ideas in the realities of the different localities in the region. Getting local organizations interested in greenways was central to their objectives, as was ensuring that there was community support for the projects. As the grant guidelines indicated, "evidence of local community support for the proposed project" was one element of the selection criteria. Program sponsors often highlighted and stressed the importance of community support at public meetings, as well as in private conversations.

Thus the program illustrates the struggles of organizations attempting to merge top-down and bottom-up approaches. As this research shows, the struggle begins with initial attempts to interest and involve local level organizations. In this case the program

[30] The Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan has a long history and tradition of community grant-making in the area. Their offices are located in downtown Detroit, no doubt intended as a sign of their commitment to the city (their work spans the entire metropolitan region). The GreenWays Program was one of their first excursions into the environmental arena. The program was lead by a prominent Michigan environmentalist with a vast experience relating to land conservation issues (including fundraising). Many interviewees felt the GreenWays Program embodied ideas external to Detroit, in spite of the CF's organizational backing. (See chapter five for a more in-depth discussion of this issue.) In addition, even donor organizations committed to a "community based appro The prominence of urban areas as places to protect natural resources has increased as ach" and with a tradition and history in a place may have an agenda that varies from that of community organizations.

wrestled with an apparent lack of interest from Detroit-based organizations. While grantmaking to Detroit increased during the time of writing of this dissertation, the first rounds had low participation from Detroit organizations (see Table 12 in chapter three for more detail). This was not the case for the wider metropolitan region, where the program seemed to be received with greater enthusiasm. Presumably the suburban regions were more in tune with the ideal behind the program.

The Program sponsored a series of "GreenWays Forums", with the purpose of promoting the program and getting a wide range of organizations from the region together to discuss ideas, possibilities and challenges. The forums were free of charge, provided food, included guest speakers and were located in or close to the city. Participation of Detroit community organizations at the forums was low according to organizers and other key actors. The forums were also striking in their lack of ethnic and racial diversity as they were attended by whites, mostly middle class professionals and environmentalists. In a city with an overwhelming minority population the almost complete absence of African Americans, to cite one group, was hard to overlook.

6.3.2. Two contrasting models of greenways planning: differences and similarities between the Eastside and Southwest

As I described in detail in chapter four, both greenways projects that served as the basis for this dissertation were part of activities occurring within the framework of the CF's GreenWays program. The Conner Creek Greenways project in the Eastside and the Linked Parks project in Southwest were both predevelopment grants aimed at planning greenways for their respective areas. They both had a project life cycle of one year, and

presumably some of the same constraints associated with the granting guidelines and specifications. The Conner Creek Greenways covered a larger geographical area than the Linked Parks project, but both spanned more than one neighborhood.

In terms of participation, both projects fall somewhere in the middle of a participation continuum. They advocated community participation as a way to obtain feedback from residents and the community at large, seeing it mostly as an instrumental process. Neither project can be seen as "community-based" in the strict sense of the terminology, as both were partly driven, influenced and constrained by the grants program. Nevertheless there are important differences in the inclusiveness and level of participation of the two planning processes. In the practice, they represented different types of processes and illustrate the importance of quality to participation. Three basic, defining characteristics mark the differences between the two projects: the genesis of project ideas, the nature of project leaders and the both actual and intended opportunities for community involvement. Table 14 provides an overview of the differences, which will be discussed in detail in the next sections.

6.3.2.1. Genesis of project ideas: defining the problem as the first level of participation

One of the differences between the two projects relates to how and by whom the idea and scope of the projects were generated; in other words who defined the problem and its solution. In the Eastside a collaborative of community organizations (DECC)

Table 14. Differences in participation between Southwest and the Eastside. Basic and defining differences in participation approaches between the two planning processes.

	Southwest	Eastside
genesis	*external*	*internal*
leaders	*external*	*community*
	agency	*organization*
opportunities	*limited*	*"multi-Layered"*

defined the issues while professionals from the city's Recreation Department (central office) developed the proposal in Southwest. The Recreation Department received some community feedback at the proposal formulation stage. However it was informal and limited to very few actors. In addition, in contrast to its local offices, the Recreation Department's central office does not have strong links to the community. As I will discuss later, the Recreation Department did not take full advantage of the knowledge and credibility of local representatives in the development of the project.

Both proposals trace their roots to earlier efforts in the community. However in the case of the Eastside, the evolution of greenways ideas appears to be more grounded in the activities of area community development organizations. Some actors trace the origins of the Conner Creek project to the Community Reinvestment Strategy (CRS) of 1994-97, a community planning process that highlighted the importance of green spaces for the community. In at least one of the sectors, the final CRS report identifies a greenways route very similar to that of the current proposal (SmithGroup Technical Assistance Team 1997a). Other reports highlight the importance of green spaces to quality of life in the area, which some see as antecessors to greenways ideas (see

http://www.ci.detroit.mi.us/plandevl/crs/reports). Other area actors trace the origins to earlier attempts to recover and highlight the area's historic Conner Creek.

In the Eastside most of the participating organizations were active during the CRS process. Warren Conner, the area's largest CDC was a key player during the CRS process and continues to be a key player in the development of greenways today. In addition the decision to apply for greenways funding was made because community organizations felt the time was ripe for the project.

In contrast, from the onset greenways ideas in Southwest were more externally driven. The idea for the Linked Parks Greenways can be traced to earlier versions of greenways proposals for the area. These were also presented at area CRS meetings and debated among some community groups. But as I discussed in chapter three, the impetus for these ideas came mostly from external agents and did not achieve prominence in the community. In addition there is some discontinuity between advocates for early greenways ideas and current project leaders. The Recreation Department decided to take on the Linked Parks project largely due to the influence of external agents, mostly professionals and greenways advocates. Thus the city professionals leading the project were relative newcomers to both the geographical area and the proposal.

6.3.2.2. Decision making and participation opportunities during the planning processes

Involvement of "local community groups" is required by the GreenWays granting guidelines, though the nature of that participation is obviously not specified. Figure 5 illustrates intended and actual approaches to participation in the planning of greenways in

Detroit. The model includes a range of opportunities for involvement, lists the different actors and indicates if and at what level they were involved.

At the level of intentions, key actors from both projects maintained that the objectives of participation were to (1) educate residents about greenways in general, (2) inform residents about the specific project and its activities, and (3) incorporate community viewpoints into the proposal. In the specific case of the Eastside, these objectives extended beyond residents to "community actors" in general. In either case participation was constructed to mean a two-way exchange of information, with the intention of letting community viewpoints affect planning decisions.

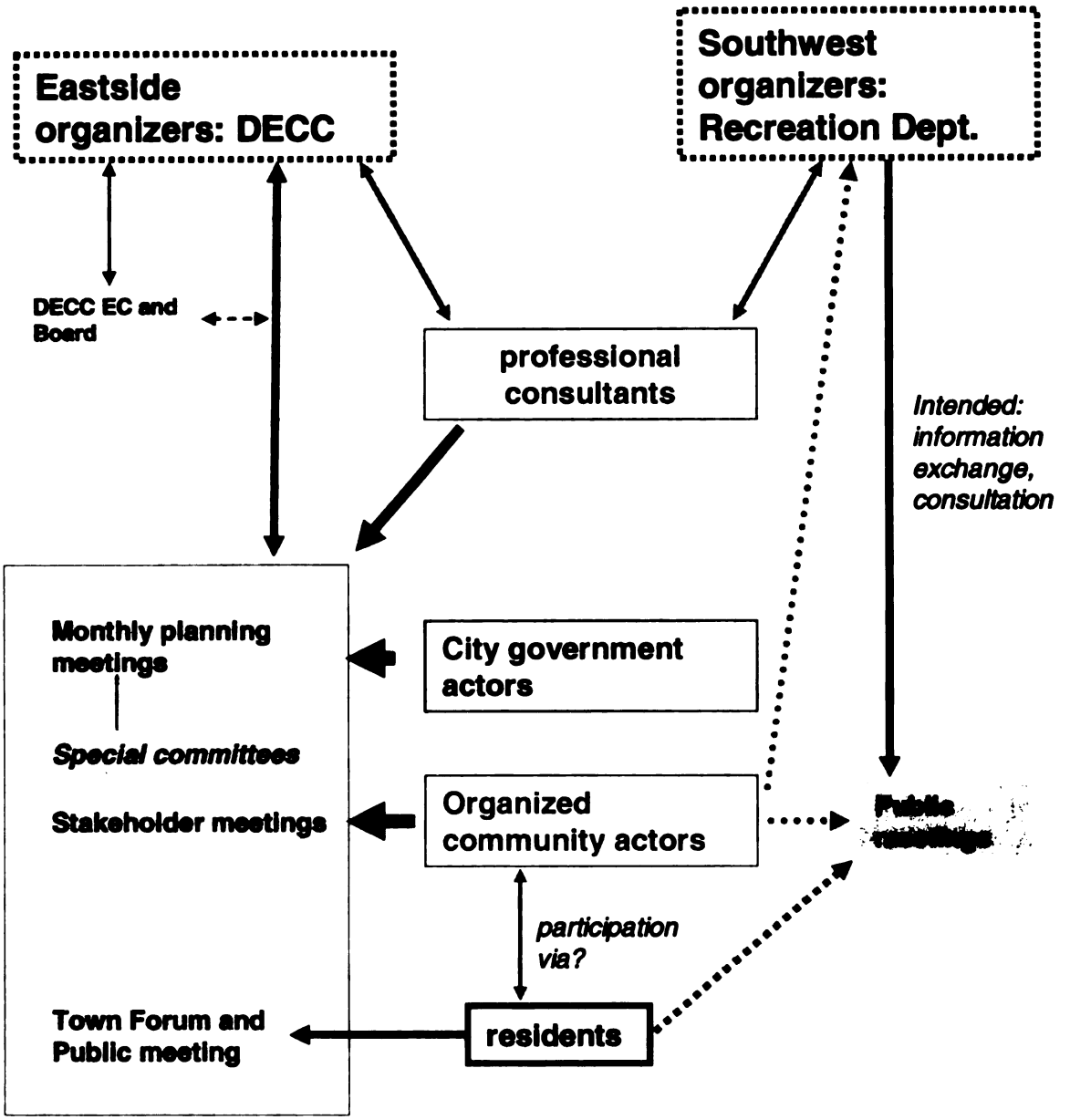

Figure 5. Approaches to participation in greenways planning in Detroit. The grey boxes illustrate participation opportunities for two greenways planning projects in Detroit. The solid line boxes depict the actors involved and the level at which they participated in the process. Two-way arrows indicate that there was an exchange of information between project organizers and the different actors. Dotted lines suggest lower and full lines higher participation levels. EC: Executive committee.

Nevertheless actual participation and decision-making varied greatly between the two projects. In Southwest decisions were made by the city professionals in charge of the project, with the consulting team providing information and technical support. All of these actors were landscape architects. The consultant was in charge of designing and implementing the participation process. Opportunities for community input were limited to two public meetings that focused on the greenways project. The format and style of the meetings provided few opportunities for two-way exchanges of information (though the first presented a more participatory format than the second). The first meeting was moderately successful in terms of attracting local organizations. Resident participation however was very low. Overall "outsiders" still outnumbered the locals. The second meeting was even less successful, attracting less organizations and residents than the first.

The decision making formula also limited potential input by other relevant actors, not just residents. Opportunities for inter and intra-departmental exchange among professionals working for the city was virtually non-existent. As key actors indicated, inter-departmental collaboration is unusual in the development of city projects. Therefore there was little information sharing between local city representatives who work on the ground and those from the central office. In essence decision making was limited to closed door meetings between the city professionals in charge of the project with input from the consultants.

In the Eastside, several layers of participation interact and affect decisions during planning as illustrated in Figure 5. The most prominent instance of participation was the planning committee created by DECC where, at least formally, issues could be debated and decisions made. DECC is a coalition of 20 plus organizations that converge on a

range of topics, all related to Eastside (re)development. The committee provided (1) a way to manage the project and (2) a venue for member organizations most interested in the greenways to become actively involved. Technically the committee was open to the public at large. In the practice it was intended as a space where a range of organized community actors, including non-DECC members and city staff, could converge to discuss the project. In fact meetings were often attended by various representatives of the city at the local level, including staff from the city's planning, transportation and recreation departments. Some local business interests were also present occasionally. Attendance from local organizations varied greatly from meeting to meeting but the presence of a few DECC members provided the basis for continuity. Organizations present at different times represented a wide range of interests, from the local YMCA, housing organizations and community college to city-wide environmental organizations such as The Greening of Detroit.

In addition, smaller ad-hoc committees were set up occasionally to deal with specific issues. One example of these was the committee charged with developing the RFP guidelines at the beginning of the process. These committees also represent instances of decision-making, albeit more limited and temporary ones.

All critical decisions made by the planning committee were ultimately subject to approval by DECC's executive committee and/or board, as is typical for non-profits. Indeed there was a constant flux of formal and informal information sharing between the planning committee and other decision-making structures of DECC via key, influential members. Thus in some cases decisions seemed to be made at other levels and simply communicated at the planning meetings.

The planning process in the Eastside also included two public meetings intended to provide participation opportunities for residents and the broader public. One of these was in the form of a town forum, an event sponsored by DECC annually with the aim of dealing with pressing community issues. The November 2002 town forum focused on "keeping the Eastside safe", and the greenways project was one of several initiatives highlighted at the meeting. Attendance ranged from residents, elected local representatives, city staff, area police officers and community organizations. The second meeting focused solely on greenways and followed a more traditional public-meeting model.

In addition, DECC sponsored 3 semi-public sessions that they called "stakeholders" meetings. The purpose of these was (1) to keep organizations interested in the project informed of progress, particularly when they were not interested in attending monthly planning meetings, (2) inform and generate interest among other key community actors (3) receive feedback on project ideas, scan for and avert potential conflicts of interest. These stakeholder meetings followed the format of a one - to two hour presentation sessions followed by a Q&A sessions. The target audience for these meetings varied greatly in terms of size and type of organization, but there was strong emphasis on attracting business and area institutions (such as the City Airport, the local community college, hospital etc). Nevertheless it still included smaller non-profits from the area and city government departments.

6.3.2.3. The Southwest model conforms to a public involvement format

Participation in the sphere of government environmental decision making was instituted as a result of the NEPA mandate which calls for "public involvement" (Solomon, Yonts-Shepard and II 1997). The practice of including some kind of participation component has extended to governmental decision-making at all levels whether by law or de facto. The planning process in Southwest seems to conform to the public involvement model of NEPA, where an external agency implements a project at the local level and where local participation is at best consultative. Indeed key actors often described participation for the project as "the public involvement component". As Roberts (1995) argues, public involvement is typically a consultative process where there is no intention of bringing the public into the decision making sphere. It is therefore not surprising that project leaders framed participation within the limits of consultation. However, the consultation process was ambiguous and highly ineffective.

The process seemed to suffer from lack of "basic good principles" of participatory practice. Organizers did not allocate the time or resources needed for effective implementation, indicating a lack of commitment and clarity. The process also suffered from a lack of representativity. In the practice, the process can best be typified somewhere in between "passive participation" and "participation by information giving" according to the categories represented in Figure 4. Project leaders attempted to inform the public about the project and collected some feedback (in the form of a "survey") from a limited range of actors. The degree to which the public was informed about the project is questionable as few people and organizations actually attended meetings. Furthermore, in some cases participants came away from the meeting with more questions than

answers. The extent to which the resident feedback was incorporated into decision-making was minimal if at all, further exacerbating the limitations of the process. I will discuss the specific issues and factors that affected participation in more detail in sections three and four.

6.3.2.4. Elements of a "community-based" strategy in the Eastside

In its genesis the Conner Creek greenways project has elements of a community-based strategy. The organizations behind the project have a long history in the implementation of revitalization strategies for the Eastside and indeed the city. DECC is one of the city's largest and most prominent community organizations. Some of its member organizations, such as Warren/Conner and U-SNAP-BAC, are icons for their contributions to community economic development in Detroit (see Bockmeyer 2000), for the role of CDCs in the revitalization of Detroit). Thus planning in the Eastside represents a case of local community organizations taking advantage of an externally created opportunity in order to implement their agenda. As one interviewee explained:

> *"There's a process that happened about four years ago called the CRS Project, Community Reinvestment Strategy, it's a community based planning process. And in that plan it showed Connor Greenway. Several of us and several of our organizations participated. So there was no- like I said, no one out here has the time or the energy to try and force fit funding... but part of why we spent so much time thinking about the feasibility of it, is just to make sure that people were comfortable, there*

was a lot of interest, there's a willingness to go forward. So there wasn't really any modification. It was really all about looking at the history, recognizing the assets, looking at the CRS plan, trying to get a handle on some of the challenges that we have. And then deciding to do it."

From the perspective of devolving power to the local level, the Eastside project could represent a typical example of a community-based planning effort. Key community organizations have identified the issues affecting their community and decided that greenways are part of the solution. They have taken it upon themselves to plan for change in their community, in a proactive approach to development. In some ways, external agents - city government and non-profits - become instrumental to their goals and not vice-versa.

But even a community-initiated planning process needs to have input from a range of local actors, as key Eastside actors commented. The issue then becomes the degree to which the planning process incorporates a broader range of interests. Compared to Southwest, the Eastside process provides many more instances for residents and other community actors to converge. In fact, the planning provided layers of participation which could potentially accommodate the different interests and needs existing within a community.

One of the most unusual and positive elements of the process was the convergence of multiple interests at the monthly planning committee. As interviewees indicated, having the range of actors discussing issues face to face was as unusual as it was beneficial.

"Yeah it is. It doesn't really happen that often, that way. So yeah, it's an experience. I never know what to expect when you know - It's like, 'Gee, can you help me,' and I'm like, 'Wow,' you know? I think it's a good thing though. I learned more about the city. I haven't been here [in the city department] that long. But I learned more about the city after going to one of those meetings, because when I'm asked to do something, I meet new people, making new contacts with a new department and I get information that I have not known before. So while I'm solving their problem, I'm actually you know - [learning]." (City employee and resident)

Thus the committee played the role of a space for information exchange and discussion of ideas very well. The executive nature of the committee seemed more ambiguous, as resolutions were subject to approval by higher levels of DECC's organizational structure. As I mentioned above, decisions often seemed to be made elsewhere. Participants from city departments were present only as "passive" members, participating in discussions and providing feedback but with no expectation of real decision making power (nor should they). From their point of view, the meeting provided an unequaled opportunity to learn about the issues affecting the community they were serving (most of them worked on the ground). Indeed they often abstained from making comments on critical issues, one way or the other, even when they held strong opinions. Nevertheless the information they provided was an important element in the discussion. It

would be fair to say they had some influence on decision-making. But ultimately the decisions rested with DECC members, as they were the leaders of the project.

While there were various levels at which participation from organized entities could occur it tended to be limited to either DECC members or larger institutional actors. DECC for example made an effort to bring on board business and commercial interests from the community, most notably through the stakeholder meetings. Their idea was to build a constituency base in the community which could help move the project forward. But there was no such effort to bring on board a broader range of community organizations, at least at that stage. Presumably, they felt DECC was sufficiently representative of area organizations and/or greater participation would occur at other project stages, as one participant suggested. However some interviewees felt that smaller organizations could potentially be left "out of the loop," in effect limiting resident participation and representation.

Direct resident participation was more limited than that of organized entities, even though the process was far more participatory than in Southwest. In the practice residents participation was limited to two meetings where they received information about the project and were asked for their feedback. Residents were asked to answer a "survey"[31], and provide verbal feedback during the sessions. No other methods of participation were implemented, although they were debated. Ultimately the degree to which the process was participatory depends in part on the degree to which DECC organizations represent area residents. I will discuss this issue later on in section four.

[31] The "survey" presented several problems from the standpoint of a social science method, relating to sample, wording of questions, analysis etc. Furthermore its actual use by the consultants seems debatable. Verbal feedback seemed to be much more effective in this case and often took the form of an exchange between the public, DECC representatives and the consultants.

In summary, planning in the Eastside was much more participatory than in Southwest (see Table 14 for a summary). It presented elements of a community-based strategy in the genesis the proposal and in the nature of the actors making the decisions. At the organizational level participation could be situated close to the self-mobilization extreme. At the level of individual participation (residents) it represents a consultative process, with information sharing both ways and residents' viewpoints having some impact.

6.4. Many factors affect participation

6.4.1. The predominance of a technical approach to environmental planning

The impetus behind the call for more participation in environmental decision-making is rooted, in part, in the growing acceptance of the political nature of environmental problems and the failure of technocratic approaches to solving them. Technocratic approaches, based on the notion that decisions are best made by experts, often exclude citizens and communities from the decision making arena. Furthermore critics contend that they increase the level of conflicts about resources and create inequalities (Cortner and Moote 1999). Similarly, scholars of planning have increasingly shunned the so-called rational planning model, largely a technocratic approach to the practice (see Forester (1989) for a critical reflection on the discipline). Congruent with the trend in the conservation arena, many schools of thought in the planning field are concerned with developing shared solutions to issues. They too advocate participatory,

decentralized styles of planning (see Lane 2001) for a discussion on the convergence between these two fields).

It is therefore telling that one of the key elements affecting participation in greenways planning in Detroit relates to the overly technical approach to the process. This research illustrates that in spite of the academic debate and many experiences, resource planning and environmental decision-making still occur within a technocratic framework. Why does a technical approach predominate even when citizen participation is valued? This section explores the forces that promoted a more technical approach to planning in the two areas studied. Differences between the two planning processes will be highlighted wherever possible. However they may not be indicated at all times in the interest of interviewees' privacy. Some of the data for this section also stems from interviews with key actors involved in greenways planning in other areas of the city.

6.4.1.1. Emphasis on change at the landscape level affects participation in the GreenWays program

Participation by organizations at the program level was affected by the guiding goal of program leaders and of greenways in general: the idea of creating change at the landscape level. Briefly, program leaders felt strongly that projects needed to have an impact at the scale of landscapes, *i.e.* a scale that was larger than the local. Their reasoning is supported by sound ecological principles for nature protection. Projects at smaller scales often result in "green" islands which are disconnected and offer no real advantages for the protection of wildlife and plant species. In addition program sponsors

felt that the degree of devastation in the city was so great, that only projects with an impact at larger scales could make a difference in the city's infrastructure.

However, this expectation meant that smaller organizations had to collaborate outside of their boundaries in order to have an impact beyond their service area. Indeed, the program was set-up with the idea of promoting such collaboration. While a worthy goal in principle, collaborating across boundaries on an issue that likely escapes their central goal is probably as unattractive as it is difficult for many development organizations. Community development organizations typically service neighborhoods. The social scale in which the city's development organizations typically function does not easily find a fit with the physical/technical scale promoted by the program. Indeed DECC is unusual and likely unique in the city in the extent of their territorial scope. They are one of the most prominent development organizations in the city. As such we would expect them to have the capacity to take on such a large scale project. In some cases, small scale projects may have implications at a larger scale without the need for collaboration across boundaries, such as for example having the potential to link an area to existing resources or other on-going projects,. Such is the case for at least one of the grantees. But these examples are likely rare, representing the exception rather than the rule.

On the other hand, the program was, in the practice, unsuccessful at creating and promoting collaboration among organizations in the city. In their beginnings at least they admitted to having difficulties identifying target organizations at the community level, so as to promote the program and find ways to make it attractive to area organizations.

"One of the dilemmas that we have is that we don't know who these people [community groups] are. I mean - yeah, we don't know where to look for them or how to look for them. It's real easy to contact the 249 municipalities...It's real easy to contact them because we just go down the street to SEMCOG[32] and ask them a mailing list of all 249 communities and we send them a letter. The bigger challenge is trying to figure out who is doing what in what neighborhood. I mean the community foundation is - obviously has a shopping list of people they've given money to. And we have a list of people who have shown up at our events, the Belle Isle event or the event out in Birmingham or the- yeah, it is [limited]. It's generally people who have already heard about us, which means that there are groups who haven't heard about us or we haven't figured out to reach yet. And I would say that's probably one of the biggest challenges, wouldn't you say? I don't think we've got actually an answer for that."

In some ways program organizers did not truly connect to the community development world where their target audience would most likely be found. While it is true that the CF has a vast and rich community development history in Detroit, the organizers for the GreenWays program were mostly outsiders to the community development world and to the city. Their expertise and experience resided more in the realm of traditional environmental issues. As a result they tended to focus their energies on other aspects of the program. Altogether, this likely hindered their ability to find recipes for attracting organizations to the program more in tune with Detroit's reality.

[32] Southeast Michigan Council of Government (SEMCOG)

6.4.1.2. The product *vs.* process emphasis of the GreenWays Program

The most important outcome of the GreenWays Program's predevelopment (planning) grants is the generation of a tangible product that advances the goal of greenways construction forward. As I discussed in chapter three, the program was born after many years of discussions about greenways possibilities for the metropolitan area. The city's continued loss of revenue and apparent inability to make a comeback also influenced the predicament in which program sponsors no doubt felt they were in. One interviewee, alluding to the many unsuccessful efforts to change the face of the city, commented, "This city has been planned to death." Thus in the minds of advocates and potential donors, it was necessary for the program to have concrete and tangible outcomes in order to create a real impact. This pragmatism and sense of urgency translated into a strong emphasis on construction documents as the most important outcome of the predevelopment grants. The perception was that this was the best way to channel efforts to the ultimate goal of building greenways, in particular by better positioning organizations to obtain development (construction) grants from the CF.

> *"You hear all of this rhetoric and a lot of things that have been espoused as ways to save Detroit have not happened...And so it's incumbent upon us, especially I mean we're again, a small fish in a pond. Which means that in order for us to have an effect, in order for changes to happen, we have to force them to happen...You're not going to write a plan and put it on somebody's shelf because we're not going to fund a plan. If you're*

going to write a plan, the next thing that happens when that plan is public, is you get a shovel and you get cement and you start building something." (Donor organization representative)

As a result, GreenWays grantees perceived the CF's message as stressing that the grants should give priority to the product, in the form of construction documents, over the process. In this way, program sponsors - unwittingly or not - created incentives for a more technically oriented planning. Within this planning context issues of participation necessarily had to take a back seat to other matters. As a result, when faced with time and resource constraints grantees often compromised quality or reduced instances of participation.

"And we don't have the money or funds ... for that. Because if we had more money for that [public participation] - if everyone thinks it is so important and raves about it, like, 'Oh we have to get the public [involved], we have to get the public, we have to get the public', and then it falls short... We need to somehow reach those people that totally don't give a shit at all... It definitely falls short because the role is a construction document because that's where they, the community foundation, will fund in the future." (Southwest project participant)

"Their focus on construction documents is a little bit ahead of the game... these funders they have strings attached to their money. They want to sort

of have their fingers on you watching all the way to make sure you're spending the money the way that they see fit and I think that these big names, these foundations that have donated this money they, they don't want to be party to something that's just this planning, you know this little study they want to see something for their money. Everyone wants to see something for their money." (Detroit landscape architect)

The CF's sense of urgency about the grants also seemed to translate into a lack of flexibility with deadlines, further reinforcing the grantees' perception of the foundation's priorities. In some cases, community actors involved with the grants program expressed frustration that there wasn't enough time to "do it all." In some cases, grantees genuinely felt that the CF's lack of flexibility undermined their efforts at more optimal participation strategies. As one interviewee candidly expressed, "The community process is driven by funders...It's all very arbitrary".

6.4.1.3. The role and values of organizing entities shapes participation approaches

The planning process in Southwest seemed more affected by the overt and subtle messages coming from the CF than planning in the Eastside. From the selection of the consultant to the formulation of a planning strategy, Southwest focused more on the product and the technicalities involved in generating it. Participation took a back seat to other issues from the start, never receiving the same level of prominence or priority as other issues.

"The one reason why the one [consultant] was picked, I asked both companies, 'What is the most important outcome that you see of this if you get the contract?'... You know what the guy said, without hesitation? He says, 'We are going to produce some construction documents, so when you go for the new round of funding you will be ready to go.' The other group never mentioned construction documents." (Community activist involved with Southwest)

"And you know participation was not always that great. What we finally wanted to get here is to build a greenway, and realizing that we were using this budget. They didn't want to blow all the dough on community input. We wanted to - they definitely want it and they will be holding public meetings for that purpose, but not to overdo it. OK?" (consultant)

The professionals involved with the planning in Southwest cited time and budget constraints as the main reason for relegating participation to the bottom of a priority list. But they also conceded that lack of expertise and community knowledge affected their ability to do a better job, even within the limitations of the project. Narratives from key actors and the dynamics of public meetings suggest that participation was valued to a lesser degree than other technical elements.

"Well the consultants, if we don't make it [participation] a priority then I mean they're not going to put the time into it. And we can't have them spending any additional time on anything really because we need the money for the construction part. Public involvement was a priority, but to the extent of what we did. That was our priority and the meeting and everything. "

In contrast, Eastside organizations gave more attention and prominence to participation the planning process. Participation issues were discussed more often at planning meetings and key actors stressed the importance of having feedback from the broader community (resident and beyond). Thus from the start project leaders conveyed the notion to the consultants that they valued public participation, often stressing that it had to happen in spite of time and budget constraints. (The consultant team was the same as for Southwest.)

This is not to say that planning in the Eastside was a completely participatory process. In the "race" to produce construction documents, budget and time considerations did affect participation in the Eastside. In order to meet deadlines, organizers cut back on opportunities for involvement and decided against using more "participatory" but time-intensive methods, particularly as means for involving local residents. In addition not all actors involved placed the same importance on issues of participation. Many were more concerned with the technical difficulties surrounding the project. However the Eastside seemed more resilient to the subtle messages and constraints that accompanied the grant framework in which the project was imbedded.

The difference with Southwest likely stems from the fact that the Eastside project was lead by a coalition of community groups; key players within the coalition valued and pushed for participation, and the process had built in participation from organized entities in a structured, formal way via the planning meetings. This combination of elements probably buffered the Eastside process from external constraints, thus balancing some of the tendency for a technical approach to planning. Alternatively, project organizers in Southwest may have been more receptive to a message which seemed to call for a technical approach to planning, whether because of their own professional biases or their position as an agency external to the community.

6.4.1.4. The role of professionals in greenways planning

Professionals, mostly landscape architects (and to a lesser degree planners) played a key role in the planning of greenways in Detroit. This is not surprising, as greenways are rooted within the traditions of landscape architecture and planning (an issue I discuss in chapters three and five). In addition to their role as consultants, they played key roles in the development of grant proposals and in general via their contacts and employment in the non-profit sector. The strong presence of professionals during the planning functioned as a sort of feedback mechanism that further reinforced a technical view of planning. Project organizers viewed the technical elements as critical to obtaining their product, assigned more prominence to professionals' role within the process and these, in turn, re-focused attention on technical matters (whether because of a professional bias or as a result of the message conveyed to them by the client).

On the surface the majority of the professionals involved claimed that "public involvement" was important. However views on the role of participation varied greatly among them, illustrating a range of beliefs. Some expressed contradictory disbeliefs, questioning the community's ability to provide meaningful feedback at the same time that they professed the importance of "public involvement." This would help explain the low commitment to participation that seemed to prevail in some instances.

> *"I think, you know half of them [residents] are not even going to know what's going to happen out there, not understand it and the other half that does understand don't care, 'It's not going to do anything for me.'".*

Many admitted they lacked the "expertise" to implement effective participation strategies. Yet they often resigned themselves to disregarding or shrugging off the complexities involved in participation. Sometimes participation events seemed a routine, undesirable chore to be carried out quickly and quietly. In these cases they seemed to attach, in the practice, token importance to the issue as they did little to actually create meaningful participation. In some cases they were surprisingly naïve about issues of race, class and power that could affect participation, even professing "ignorance" on these matters and their relationship to the planning. Indeed these actors seemed more comfortable with the technicalities of the planning process, far from the "public."

> *"ummm...As far as race goes and that? I don't...on this one I'm coming I guess I'm kind of illiterate or ignorant. I don't see it, this thing being as a*

kind of a race issue. I don't know - it's, you know, I don't know any boundaries and borders or anything like that in the area. I don't look at the - You know, people using the greenway, and it could be basically they're opening up so kids can meet other kids and that kind of stuff and it helps bring the neighborhood - help connect." (Professional involved with greenways planning in Southwest)

"And really I don't have time to sit around and think about oh I wonder if we should put welcome in Spanish on this sign, like oh it looks good and it looks nice, but we have to move on here, unfortunately... And maybe it's almost the perception that we can do it adequately, so we don't need someone like that? [a community organizer] I think. And then to pay someone to do that again that you don't have the funds for, so we think that we can accomplish it but then the meeting comes around and then all we get are supporters, people that we already know. Like okay, how are you? How are you? Who know about the project and everything, so I don't know. Does that answer your question?
We just, we feel that we can do it and then we fall short and then we just move on, well we didn't get enough residents. Well we have to move on because we have this year deadline." (Professional involved with greenways planning in Southwest)

Some professionals expressed genuine concern about the lack of meaningful participation that frequently accompanies these types of projects and the implications thereof. In their view budget and time constraints were the usual culprits preventing the development of more effective participation strategies. In a few, rare instances they reflected on the profession's bias towards a technical approach and their narrow academic training, which does not prepare them to address planning in a broader sense. At least in one case, the consultant felt trapped in no-win situation in which they felt more participation was needed for the project to be effective, but no budget (or authority) with which to carry it out. In this case, the consultant felt planning should be more of a collaborative process where basic project ideas and elements are worked out with the community.

The planning process in Southwest was more dominated by professional actors due the nature of the organizing entity and the decision making process. A more technical view of planning prevailed, in the practice, among these actors. In addition, the organization and implementation of a participation component was left entirely in the hands of the consultant. Project leaders relied largely on the consultants to identify and establish links with community organizations and residents. The consultants were also the visible face of the project to the public. Instead of taking advantage of the networks established and nurtured by staff working on the ground, project leaders relied on the knowledge of external professionals. This further reinforced the tendency towards an overly technical approach to planning in Southwest. Professionals in Southwest, in the practice, promoted a process more akin to a PR exercise or "passive participation," where they shared technical information with a scant public.

Again, the Eastside was not immune to issues relating to the influence of professionals, as I illustrate in the section below on the effectiveness of public meetings. But the extent of their influence was to a much lesser degree.

6.4.1.5. The problem with the "public meeting" as the principal vehicle for resident participation

The principal means for participation, especially for residents, was the public meeting. Public meetings for both projects involved informational panels and presentations by the consultants. The public tended to be a passive recipient of information as more participatory methods of engagement were not used. Although meetings took on various styles, they shared the problem of overly technical presentations. Presentations and "information" panels, tended to focus on such details as the width of streets and sidewalks, rather than on how the project related to the everyday lives of people. Information was often presented in the form of maps more accessible to planners and architects than non-specialists. Some professionals were more effective at creating visuals that engaged the non-specialist. But for the most part presentations and panels were surprising in their lack of appeal to a general audience. No doubt this prevented more meaningful participation, even within the limited scope of the public meeting.

As Forester (1993) argues the activity of planners, in the broad sense of the terminology is the "reorganizing (or disorganizing) of citizens' attention to possibilities of public action." In this case by organizing attention around technicalities, professionals can be seen as ignoring the concerns of the public. In some cases, this created

indifference to the project and greatly reduced the chance to engage in meaningful discussions. In other cases it alienated participants, as they felt their concerns went unanswered. For example the attitude of one resident was to simply walk away when told her question would be addressed "at the end of the presentation". Whether intentionally or not, professionals partly controlled what could or could not be discussed by controlling what, where and how information was exchanged.

At the extreme, where the meeting was organized and led by the consultants, the overall effect was an inability to deviate from an a priori written script in order accommodate concerns emerging from the public (scant as it was). Where the meetings were community organized and the consultants played an auxiliary role there was more flexibility to accommodate the format in accordance to the flow and dynamics emerging at the moment. But even then community leaders often had to spend time recasting main ideas presented by the professionals, in an attempt to communicate and interest the residents. This wasted valuable time that could have been spent in dialogue with residents.

Both experience and academic research suggest that despite their wise use in the U.S., public meetings are often ineffective vehicles to meaningfully engage the public (McComas 2001). This study further illustrate the degree to which public meetings - as generally conducted - continue to suffer drawbacks preventing more meaningful citizen participation. The problems with public meetings likely reinforce low participation by residents. In part, because when people do not recognize them as effective means to voice their concerns they simply do not attend. In this sense attendance to the meetings varied a great deal between the two projects. Eastside organizations were more effective

at interesting local residents, no doubt based on their reputation in the area and the context appropriate nature of the meetings. But even then, their ability to discuss project ideas and its implications with local residents was reduced by the format and quality of information exchange.

In summary, the interplay of external and internal forces shaped the views and actions of key actors, resulting in varying degrees of technical predominance in the planning processes. Subtle and explicit messages coming from the donor organization, the strong presence of professionals, the values of project leaders and the use of a public meeting format all contributed to a specific approach to planning. The predominance of a technical approach to planning was notorious in Southwest and more subtle in the Eastside. To the extent that it was present, a technical focus prevented broader and quality participation.

6.4.2. Race, ethnicity and power

This section attempts to bring to the forefront the ways in which issues of race (often accompanied by those of class) and power affected participation in the planning of greenways in Detroit. The data for this section stems from observation of greenways activities, documents and interviews with key actors. All actors interviewed were involved with greenways in some capacity or other. However their degree of involvement varied from, for example, a curious resident attending a single meeting to project organizers. Interviewees were chosen because they could provide a range of perspectives on the issues; an attempt was made to include minorities (approximately 1/3 of total interviews corresponded to minorities; see Table 1 in chapter 2). This was often difficult

as most of the key actors involved in greenways were whites. (See Tables 6-8 in chapter 2 more details of interviewee characteristics) Nevertheless, and while some inferences can be made from the more critical perspectives of a range of actors, the analysis does not include the voices of true non-participants.

6.4.2.1. Minority participation in greenways planning in Detroit

Perhaps the best way to begin to unravel the complexity embedded in the racial and political undercurrents of participation is by analyzing minority participation at greenways planning events and activities. In a city made up largely of African Americas, Hispanics and other minorities, it is telling that whites tended to predominate at greenways events. This was especially so for city-wide events sponsored by the donor agency and local level planning in Southwest. But even the more community oriented planning in the Eastside suffered from low minority participation at some stages in the process.

Low minority representation during the initial stages of planning in the Eastside was somewhat surprising given the community nature of DECC. However as the planning progressed and the range of actors attending the meetings broadened so did the diversity of those sitting at the table. In general representatives of environmental organizations such as the Greening of Detroit, planners and LA tended to be white. Diversity increased when city staff began participating more often, as they tended to be African American. Stakeholder and especially public meetings were mainly attended by African Americans (residents and/or representatives of community organizations). This

speaks to DECC's power of convocation within the community, and their ability to frame greenways as an important redevelopment tool.

Given the scope of the study it is hard to assess minority representation at other levels of DECC's decision-making. There is a history within the African American community of church-based organizing around community development issues which would lead one to expect them to actively participate in organizations such as DECC. On the other hand, community based development organizations in the city have proportionally higher numbers of whites on their staff (most often progressives who have chosen to stay in the city), compared to their share of the city's population (Shaw and Spence 2004). My experience with planning events and interviews suggests that key positions within DECC are held by African Americans with strong connections to the community. In at least one case, this person had a very strong influence on the planning process.

In contrast, minorities tended to be underrepresented in activities organized by the Community Foundation, an issue its representatives acknowledged in interviews. The GreenWays Forums are the most obvious example of the lack of minority presence at greenways activities. The forums were dominated by whites, mostly middle class professionals, usually there on a professional capacity. Minority participation was also low at public meetings in Southwest, in part due to the low number of residents attending. The issue was further exacerbated in the case of Southwest because those directly involved with the planning were white, middle class professional.

6.4.2.2. Towards an explanation of low minority participation in greenways

Key community and environmental actors indicated that minority participation in environmental organizations and events in Detroit is frequently low. They believed that to the extent that greenways represented an "environmental initiative" minorities would be less inclined to participate. Interviewees felt that inner city residents, most often low income minorities, are so busy struggling with everyday issues that concern for the environment just doesn't make their list of priorities.

> *"Because we have very good relations with many of the community organizations in the area and the staff members who work there, but you do have to understand that it's always a struggle to involve people who are actual residents."* (Member of an environmental organization)

> *"But to get African Americans involved, I don't know partly I think it has to come from the leadership of the city of Detroit and I don't think that I - you know maybe there is a disconnect between sort of the natural environment. It feels that that's the thing that always gets dropped to the side, people are hungry and they don't have a house and they don't have a job. But you know people don't want to talk about planting trees. They want to be over here getting a house or whatever. So I don't know, I think that that's part of the challenge is just raise awareness a little bit more."* (Greenways advocate)

"The basic reason is that if you're worrying about survival and you're worrying about economics. You can't quite look at what we'll call some of the fringe activities... When you're dealing with jobs and economic issues, when you're dealing with complicated family structure problems, when you're dealing with those issues, you don't have time or energy to deal with some of the more...long range issues of environmental sustainability, of ecological benefits, etc. If you don't have transportation to get to a job, you can't really care about the greenway in your neighborhood. You've got to think about whether you've got the mass transportation or whether you've got a car or whether you've got a job. So I would view the concept of environmental justice is very much a middle class concept, because you can afford to take the time to think about it. It's not that it shouldn't be part of these minority communities or the working class or the poor. But their energy is expended in a lot of different ways. So that's why you get very little minority representation." (Community planner and greenways advocate)

These explanations echo commonly held beliefs about the environmental concern of minorities. Indeed they are consistent with the "hierarchy of needs" theory, used in the literature to explain differences between whites and people of color in their concern for the environment (reviewed in Mohai and Bryant 1998). This theory predicted that whites are more concerned about the environment than people of color. Presumably the latter,

disproportionately poor, are focused on "survival" concerns (housing, education, crime etc). However, various studies now show that concern for the environment is a widely held value in U.S. society, and that whites and people of color share similar levels of concern (Guber 2003; Mohai 2003). Most importantly Mohai and Bryant (1998), in a survey of metro Detroit residents, found that African Americans were just as concerned about the environment as whites[33]. Other studies have corroborated these findings in the Detroit area (Mohai 2003; Parker and McDonough 1999). These and other national and international studies have also found that contrary to popular belief income does not correlate positively with environmental concern (see Dunlap and Mertig 1995; Guber 2003).

Thus lack of concern for the environment, stemming from race and class, may not be the main barrier for participation in greenways. Lack of participation in greenways activities may be more related to the differences in the environmental paths taken by minorities and whites. Minorities have been historically underrepresented in mainstream environmental organizations, concentrating instead in organizations that gave birth to the environmental justice movement (Taylor 2002). Mohai and Bryant's (Mohai 2003; Mohai and Bryant 1998) research indicates that African Americans expressed greater concern for neighborhood environmental problems than whites. Thus to the extent that

[33] Their survey showed that overall African Americans and whites did not differ significantly in their concern for the environment, even on nature preservation issues. Differences between the two groups did emerge over local environmental problems, with African Americans expressing more concern that whites on local issues. Some differences also existed on global environmental issues, largely due to whites expressing more concern over ozone depletion. The authors proposed the theory of "environmental deprivation" to explain differences at the local level; that is poor environmental conditions in which African Americans live raise their level of concern for local issues. The authors did not analyze results for other minorities in the sample because of their low numbers.

they exist, differences[34] are probably more indicative of the way in which minorities frame environmental issues and express concern for the environment. As this research shows, resident and minority participation in the Eastside, where greenways were clearly linked to neighborhood safety concerns, was much higher.

On the other hand, concern does not always transform into action in the form of participation. Attitudes and behaviors are two different things. Understanding why people choose to whether to participate or not is much more complex than understanding their concern for a specific issue. We commonly (and often erroneously) assume that people participate in areas they care most about, and that they participate in decision-making arenas. Political scientists have long debated issues of participation and non-participation in civic life. As Gaventa's (1980) insightful work suggests, participation is affected by different dimensions of power ranging from its effect on access to resources to the setting of agendas.

In the arena of the environment, various scholars have proposed the barriers theory to explain the lack of environmental participation of minorities. According to this theory limited access to resources and lower sense of personal efficacy (powerlessness) would explain lower minority participation in environmental activities and organizations (Mohai 1985; Mohai 1990; Parker and McDonough 1999). Presumably then, minority participation in greenways might be affected by limited resources and feelings of powerlessness, which correlate with two of the dimensions of power discussed by Gaventa. Some city residents and environmentalists explained issues of participation

[34] Differences may also emerge depending on how researchers define and measure "environmental concern". Environmental concern is a multidimensional concept and as such complex to evaluate. As researchers began to expand what they considered the "environment", differences in overall concern began to decrease. Nevertheless, even on issues such as wilderness preservation - the icon of mainstream environmentalist - whites and blacks express the same level of concern (see Mohai 2003).

more along these lines rather than a lack of concern. Others narratives echoed the feelings of powerlessness that often affect residents in their reflections on resident participation in environmental activities.

"But it's just - I don't think it's you know that they're not concerned, it's just that there is too much going on. There's too much else going on."

"It is the way it turns out. And I think it still - it has to do with - it's kind of like a powerless idea too. We've got no control of it, you know. We're not going to be making those decisions anyways." (Community Planner)

"Because, lets take a look, let's go back to that meeting of the greenways [GreenWays Forum]; I believe that I was the only person of color representing the community. Most of those other black people in there were there because of their job. I am the only community person in there. And then when you start dealing with who is actually writing these policies, I would be interested just in dealing with the Community Foundation. How many people of color were involved in even writing this thing up? You know. So, I just find that it is not necessarily their fault. Because, right now I am finding some challenges just getting people interested in keeping up their front yard. Not everybody, but it's something that has to be taught. I think one reason blacks don't participate in these types of discussions is because for so long and

traditionally they have been excluded. So, they don't feel that they're being included - they don't feel comfortable in coming, or even know about it or what ever the reason. In my following various topics, if you are not included in something you are going to be excluded." (Resident)

As the above narrative suggests agenda setting is another way (whether intentional or not) to limit participation, particularly if greenways issues are framed mainly by mainstream environmentalists and professionals. This could explain poor participation in Southwest and city-wide efforts, where community concerns likely became non-issues. To the extent that greenways activities are seen as part of a mainstream environmental agenda, do not reach out beyond a "mainstream environmental audience", and lack a clear connection to local problems, minority participation may remain low.

6.4.2.3. Mistrust and the tension between "outsiders and insiders" in Detroit

Mistrust emerged as a complex element that affected and shaped people's participation in greenways planning in Detroit, particularly in Southwest. Mistrust is often cited in the literature as a critical element affecting natural resource management. Mistrust can exist between experts and residents, between community groups and central government or external agencies, or even amongst community actors (see Holmes and Scoones 2000; Rhoads et al. 1999). It is often a reflection of power, ethnic and racial differences, the product of historical relationships between actors and institutions. It can

create hostility, indifference and/or opposition to proposals. Participation is often cited a means to reduce mistrust. In the practice they are interdependent, as mistrust also affects the way in which people and organizations participate.

In Detroit mistrust emerges as a multilayered construct arising from the historical antagonisms between groups in their struggle to control regional development; suburbia versus inner city: white versus black, affluent versus poor, residents versus experts/policy-makers. In interviews with various community actors (including residents and members/staff of organizations) it was most clearly expressed as part of a general feeling of suspicion about urban redevelopment plans and policies. This was particularly so if the plans were perceived as coming from agents external to the city or private business interests. Thus at one level greenways plans were seen as part of a long standing regional struggle to appropriate scarce resources (housing, revenue, transportation, jobs etc), which has - in the minds of residents - consistently burdened the inner city. In this context greenways represent clean, safe and pleasant living and recreational resources, a scarcity indeed!

> *"Then I am starting to think, well, is it me? Are they going to let neighborhood people participate in a greenway? Because there are still some very, very stereotypical assumptions that whites have about black people. Especially about Detroit... is there going to be a fence around it so that community people don't have access to it? It is kind of like over in - a blatant example, would be the border between Detroit and Grosse Point where they actually built a wall!"*

"And it will add people being skeptical, people being watchful. People you know wanting to know again, why is this taking place and you know maybe being nervous about what is actually - you know is there a plan to - as so many people say, to start incorporating Detroit, so that its not such a segregated city. It's not 85% African American and 10% Latino, or 5% Latino, whatever the latest figures are. I mean is there a plan to move us out and move them in? I mean these are real issues." (Resident and community organization staff of Southwest)

Key actors often talked about these sentiments as deeply embedded in Detroit's culture, the result of many years of racism and ineffective development policies. These narratives suggest that participation in greenways needs to be understood within the broader context in which Detroit's development policy is made. If people have historically been excluded and are suspicious, then barriers to participation are going to be much harder to break down.

"But it's keen and essential that their input is there from the get go, because they feel that things have gone down without their input and they are suspicious."

"...And I hate to say it, but as an African American in the city, and I kind of have been able to watch people. When people feel like they might be

victimized or something to be pushed upon they get upset and they push back..."

Bockmeyer's (2000) study of community participation in the Detroit EZ[35] provides a deeper understanding of the sentiments expressed by these key actors. Her work indicated that distrust, understood as a lack of trust and the expectation of dishonest and irregular behavior, was deeply imbedded in Detroit's political culture[36]. Some narratives clearly echoed this sentiment of distrust, in the sense of an expectation of dishonest behavior, whether because they felt it personally or encountered them in the community. Others talked more about the absence of trust that stems from a belief that a process is not transparent and/or that like many other ideas and plans, it will not materialize into something that benefits the community. Various community actors noted that in Detroit people usually become suspicious when they feel information is being withheld from them, no doubt a response to the lack of transparency that has characterized development in the region. In these narratives, as in Bockmeyer's work, Detroiters are portrayed as feisty and vigilant participants of everyday life.

The manner in which people participate can however vary greatly. Mistrust may initially breed indifference accompanied by a lack of participation, yet later transform into opposition. In the Eastside for example, key actors in the planning process were cognizant of the importance of these community sentiments to the project. As a result they attempted to develop a planning strategy that would be appropriate for their

[35] Empowerment Zone (EZ)

[36] In the case of the Detroit EZ, a mandate for participation was not enough to decrease distrust between community organizations and the public and private sector. However it did strengthen collaboration and trust among community groups (horizontal trust), as they banded to fight city hall and the private sector for more allocation of resources to neighborhoods.

community. For example, faced with resident indifference, they adapted the meeting format to one in which residents expressed their concerns more willingly. Overall those experienced in working with communities in the city acknowledged the importance of transparency and partnership to their work.

> *"We are not the people who come marching in and tell you what's good for your neighborhood. That's not what we do. We wait until you invite us in. For several reasons, one, the opposite just does not play in Detroit. You're not going to do that with Detroiters. It does not work."* (Member of an environmental organization)

As some of the narratives illustrate there is clear racial component in the construction of mistrust (distrust) as it relates to greenways plans. The racial undertones of mistrust result in part from overt acts of intentional discrimination: the construction of a wall, the legally sanctioned segregation of the past. Most of the time, however, discrimination is manifested through more subtle, discreet ways: in our language, social structures and in our everyday actions. The concept of white privilege, as applied by Pulido (2000) to the study of environmental justice in urban development in southern California, is particularly relevant to understanding mistrust in the Detroit region. Pulido defines white privilege as "the privileges and benefits that accrue to white people by virtue of their whiteness" differentiating it from overt and institutional racism. She identifies white privilege as a less conscious but hegemonic form of racism affecting urban development. In Detroit, overt and intentional discrimination in the region's

suburbanization were reinforced by "white flight" (Sugrue 1996). White flight in Detroit thus represents a form of white privilege in which residents could by virtue of their whiteness benefit from opportunities not available to African Americans.

Mistrust is therefore partly driven by the existence of a *defacto* "suburban privileged class". For minority residents their level of trust will likely depend on the answer to the question: Do these greenways plans reinforce existing privileges? Thus the issue is not whether people view greenways as unnecessary or that they do not value them. But rather, given the context in which these plans occur, they may be perceived as part of an on-going development process which excludes them to the benefit of others.

> *"Which is a travesty. It's the one thing that plagues the Friends of Detroit River with the greenway movement, is that where are minorities sitting? Again, a lot of the - there's distrust, people are busy with their time."*

There is also a racial undertone to the mistrust existing between experts/policy makers and community residents, as professionals involved with greenways tend to be middle class whites. To the extent that they are the visible face of the project, mistrust is likely to inhibit or affect participation as they may be seen as "outsiders". In this sense, mistrust is less of an issue in the Eastside where the project was clearly part of the agenda of community groups, with consultants playing an auxiliary role. But even in the Eastside race issues around the perceived legitimacy of possible consultants were debated, albeit in an indirect and subtle manner.

In Southwest however, there was greater potential for mistrust to emerge in the planning process. The distinction between consultants and project organizers (city professionals) is less obvious to a project outsider; neither has roots in the community, and all are white landscape architects. Indeed one interviewee referred to the project organizers as "the developers", before realizing the city was behind the project. He had assumed that since no recognizable community actors promoted the project, they were all private developers. To the local government's credit, having the city's support gave the project more legitimacy in the interviewee's opinion. However the oversight illustrates the degree to which project organizers were ineffective communicators.

As some interviewees suggested, feelings of mistrust can be exacerbated when they are ignored by "community developers" (whether the private, public or non-profit sector), particularly the racial nature of mistrust. Even whites working in community development tend to overlook these issues, intentionally or not. However as one interviewee insightfully commented that does not make them go away.

> *"These are real issues that the people have. And so when the heads of these development corporations- you know even though they have good hearts and they have the best interest- these might be some issues that they have to deal with. Now some people like to turn a blind ear and act like these issues don't exist or because that isn't their intention, their intention isn't anything negative-they ignore it, because they don't feel that that pertains to them. However, that doesn't take away the feeling that the*

community has and that doesn't take away the discussion that is taking place-in the background, in the community, absolutely."

In this sense, it is interesting to note that whites tended to bring up race issues less when they talked about how trust affected greenways planning. Those whites that mentioned race were often community activists and long-time residents of the city, presumably with stronger connections to the minority communities in which they live and work.

6.4.2.4. Lack of culturally appropriate planning and information sharing reinforce mistrust and exclude residents in Southwest

The planning scenario in Southwest specifically illustrates how ethnic/cultural differences coupled with a technical approach create barriers to participation. In Southwest broader participation from Hispanic residents was greatly hindered by the lack of cultural sensitivity on the part of organizers, in addition to their overly technical focus. Key community actors in Southwest felt that information sharing, from meeting notices to actual plans, was poor. They stressed the fact that this often raises suspicions and feelings of mistrust among resident, with potentially negative consequences to the project.

Rather than budget or time constraints, the issue in Southwest seemed to be largely related to the lack of community organizing expertise and low priority assigned to public participation. First of all organizers did not act through community gatekeepers - at least not visibly enough - nor create an atmosphere at the public meetings were local

residents might feel comfortable. For example, the meeting was full of professionals dressed in business attire which contrasted starkly with the informality of people at the recreation center where the first meeting was held. Secondly, they did not use bilingual material to notify of the meeting or inform about the project during the meeting. In fact they did not use Spanish at all during the meeting, choosing to act through the consultants instead of a more locally visible representative. And lastly the presentations tended to be technical in nature; as one resident who supported the idea suggested "people don't read maps, architects read maps." [37]

These are critical elements in a community characterized by a large Hispanic population, and likely inhibited residents from participating. This is in spite of the fact that at least one meeting was held at a time when the recreation center had a lot of activity, and presumably a potential captive audience. As one interviewee indicated, even if people mingling at the center were curious enough to find out what was going on, they most likely thought "Oh, they're Americans,"[38] meaning it was something not meant for them. The language issue is critical on two levels of communication. First, many Hispanic residents in Southwest are newer migrants who might not have sufficient command of the English language. In this case they are likely to be unaware of a meeting notified in English, or if they know about it be discouraged from attending. But most importantly and as one resident indicated, the critical issue is not whether people attending were fluent or not in English but rather the message conveyed by project organizers. The use of Spanish would indicate that project organizers understand, acknowledge and value the ethnicity of the community. Language communicates at two

[37] Original in Spanish: "La gente no lee planos, los arquitectos leen mapas!"
[38] Original in Spanish: "Ah, son Americanos"

levels; it serves the purpose of understanding each other in dialogue and acts as a symbol conveying respect for the community.

> *"But at least one person translating, to have at least one person at the door telling people, a flyer saying: this is going to happen. People don't go in and say: 'they're Americans'. You know what I mean?...it [affects participation] a lot. I think. That makes you a part of something. You invite them to a soccer game and they all go. Why? Because everyone there speaks Spanish."*[39] (Resident)

One Southwest resident, a South American immigrant, suggested that the lack of "pertenencia", referring to a person's identification with and feelings of belonging to a certain place, of some Hispanic residents in Southwest contributes to low resident participation in general. In her experience, many newcomers long for a return to their homeland for many years before they really accept their new home as permanent.

> *"If I am leaving, why worry about the garden if I am leaving? What do I care if the garbage doesn't get picked up in 10 days if I am leaving... It's the: 'I am leaving, I am not from here, I am Mexican, I am not from here, I am Puerto Rican, I am not from here, I am Colombian, I am not from here, I am Chilean, I am not from here...' of the immigrant that has a hard*

[39] Original in Spanish: "Pero por lo menos que alguien hubiera traducido, una sola personita, que hubiera estado en la puerta contando, un panfletito, diciendo: esto va a pasar. La gente no va y dice: son americanos. ¿Me entiendes?.. .[afecta] Muchísimo. Pienso yo. Eso hace parte. Ustedes los invita a un partido de fútbol y allá están todos. ¿Por qué? Porque todos hablan español."

time. And it is hard. We are different, and will be different. Others are third generation, and they belong here then. But they maintain that same cultural mindframe - not the: 'I am leaving' - but the: 'I don't care because it doesn't belong to me,' it's that feeling of belonging. That's my favorite word: belonging. If you don't take ownership of your things you will never take care of them, you don't make them a part of your life. Then the environment goes to hell, and all cultural, economic and community activity that you do goes to hell."[40]

At least for some residents this may be a factor affecting their investment in and commitment to "community" activities, particularly if they feel an issue does not pertain to them or their near future. This coupled with feelings of powerlessness that stem from everyday life experiences in the inner city likely reinforced barriers to participation in what may have been perceived as an "official" event. As the interviewee explained low participation is partly due the poor response residents typically experience when they do voice concerns.

"Very low, I feel like it's [civic participation of Hispanics] very low...but there is also another thing: and that is that they [authorities] don't act

[40] Original in Spanish: "... Si yo me voy. Para qué voy a tener un jardín si yo me voy. A mí que me importa si la basura se queda 10 días si yo me voy. Ese es el que yo me voy, yo no soy de aquí, yo soy mejicano, yo no soy de aquí, yo soy puertorriqueño, yo no soy de aquí, yo soy colombiano, yo no soy de aquí, yo soy chileno, yo no soy de aquí...del emigrante que le cuesta. Y cuesta. Somos diferentes, y vamos a ser diferente.... Hay otros que son tercera generación ya, entonces ellos ya son de acá. Pero siguen con la misma mentalidad cultural de que no es que me vaya a ir, si no que es que no me importa porque no lo siento propio. Ese es el problema, ya relacionado con la comunidad, es de pertenencia. Entonces, esa es mi palabra favorita: pertenencia, si no te haces dueño de tus cosas, nunca las cuidas, si no te haces dueño de tus cosas, no las haces parte de tu vida. Entonces se va al tarro el medio ambiente, se va al tarro toda actividad cultural, económica, comunitaria que hagas..."

when they should. When they should act, when the government should act there is a time lapse, and then bureaucracy surfaces and it's like everywhere in the world. Just because this is the world power doesn't mean things are different, no...so I call the police, the police that is right there across the street but they are drinking something, or they are having lunch, the police doesn't act. Oh, he's gone [the criminal], the guy, now we don't know who he is, nobody, no they don't act."[41]

The narratives underline the importance of appropriate venues, bilingual material and the presence of community leaders in order to overcome barriers to resident participation in Southwest. Yet, none of these elements relating to the social context of the project were taken into consideration by project organizers when they developed participation strategies. On the surface this may seem merely an oversight, attributed to a lack of expertise and/or time constraints. Certainly these factors played into the way in which organizers went about their business. However, in the practice the development of an ineffective participation strategy becomes an exercise in power (whether intentional or not). In the end decisions are made with little or no community input, and community members lose an opportunity to shape planning efforts for their neighborhood. As one resident commented when asked about the implications of poor participation for the project:

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[41] Original in Spanish: "*Muy baja, presiento que es muy baja [participation civica]...pero también hay otra razón: es que no se actúa en el momento preciso. Cuando ya se tiene que actuar, las autoridades tienen que actuar, cuando ya el gobierno tiene que actuar, ya hay una demora, entonces ya la burocracia aparece y es como en todos los países del mundo. No porque éste sea la potencia mundial es distinta, no... Entonces yo llamo a la policía, la policía que está al frente pero está tomando tinto, o está almorzando, la policía no actúa. Ah, se voló, el tipo, ya no sabemos quién es, nadie, no, no actúan.*"

"I liked the project a lot from my architect's perspective, but not from my community perspective. With my architect's eye, yes, wow, very nice, a summer's dream, well for me it may seem a utopia. Hopefully it won't be. But about possible consequences, there's another thing and that's power. They are going to go ahead whether people like it or not, whether people participate or not. Consequences? We'll see what we do with them later. For now they say: OK. You didn't voice an opinion? We gave you a chance, fine, then we'll do it our way. You didn't like it?"[42]

6.4.2.5. Representativity of community organizations

Community approaches assume that local level organizations, usually voluntary and non-profit organizations, are better representatives of areas residents than external entities. While true in many cases, issues of representativity can also be raised for community organizations. In Detroit two issues relating to representation emerged during the greenways planning process 1) the degree to which a community driven process included smaller neighborhood organizations 2) the ethnicity/race of the community development sector's leadership. The former is illustrated by the dynamics of community

[42] Original in Spanish: *"Me gustó mucho el proyecto, me gustó mucho la presentación, con mi ojo de arquitecto, no con mi ojo de, comunitario. Con mi ojo de arquitecto, sí, uaaau, muy lindo, un sueño de verano, bueno, para mí puede ser una utopía, ojalá no sea. Pero, lo de las consecuencias, hay otra cosa y es el poder. Ellos lo van a hacer, gústele o no le guste a la gente, participe o no participe la gente. ¿Consecuencias? Ah, después veremos qué hacemos con las consecuencias. Por ahora ellos dicen: bueno, ¿no opinaron? Se les dio la oportunidad, bien, entonces lo hacemos a nuestra manera. ¿No les gustó?"*

oriented planning in the Eastside, the latter by concerns voiced by different actors throughout the city.

In the Eastside, the trajectory and commitment of DECC to community development is undisputed. However in order to survive, and be effective at what they do, organizations like DECC have had to "professionalize" and become politically savvy. They've built alliances, generated networks, become familiar with the funding agencies etc. In that process many small organizations (usually neighborhood, resident based-organizations) tend to become marginalized. To varying degrees these smaller organizations lack the resources (time, money, knowledge) which provide entry to the political spheres that shape and determine the community development world. While some make-up for it by networking with the larger community organizations, others simply become more marginal to the process.

Some interviewees cautioned that the inability to reach out to smaller neighborhood organizations can raise questions about the inclusiveness of the process, even when led by an organization like DECC.

> *"DECC is [community based], but I still think that a lot of the smaller fish slip through the net... But they're [DECC] really you know they know the process, they understand the process and they move them forward. A lot of the smaller groups that fall through the cracks, they don't really understand, they just know that they're angry. You know or something is not right. And they've made phone calls and sometimes their concerns are addressed and sometimes they're not. But DECC is more representative of*

just a well-oiled machine, you know these smaller groups come together and they form a powerful connection. A lot of the smaller groups don't even know about DECC, you know...

There's a lot activism going on, but I think they haven't been able to plug into the process to be able to you know gain anything from organizing...I think a lot of times, along that greenway, there are probably organizations that are being left out of the loop. I really...that's my biggest fear... I'm just kind of cautious when I'm dealing with it because I don't know where the community support is going to come from. The reason being... When people feel like they might be victimized or something to be pushed upon they get upset and they push back...You know is this to bring "suburbanites" into our city?" (Community planner commenting on the process in its early stages)

The issue, raised by non-DECC Eastside actors, corroborates similar concerns raised by Bockmeyer's (Bockmeyer 2000) research into participation in Detroit's EZ designation. My observation of planning events also suggests that smaller groups, particularly non-DECC members, participated less actively throughout the planning process. One reason for this relates to the timing of the planning meeting during work hours, no doubt a by-product of the "professionalization" of community development.

Smaller groups are important because they are often directly linked to residents, such as the case of block clubs. Thus they constitute a key vehicle of expression for resident voices. Representation of their interests will depend on the degree to which

DECC organizations retain their connections to these smaller groups, and their attendance, as individual residents, to the general public meetings. In the arena of natural resource management researchers increasingly stress that intracommunity differences - arising from class, race and gender - and their ensuing power dimensions affect participation. In some cases, groups are empowered at the expense of others. In others legitimate claims can be overlooked when smaller groups are not represented in the process. Likewise, in urban environmental planning in Detroit, differences stemming from access to political power circles can have similar effects on the inclusiveness of a process.

In Southwest and the Eastside, issues around the comparatively low number of minorities in staff and leadership positions of community organizations emerged as important for greenways planning. The overrepresentation of whites in the staff and leadership positions of community development organizations has been documented in the urban studies literature (reviewed in Shaw and Spence 2004). In Southwest, the issue is critical because organizers relied largely on a couple of community organizations (staffed predominantly if not exclusively by whites) as one way to gauge the "community". In the Eastside, as I pointed out previously, whites predominated at some point in the planning among the staff of the organizations making decisions. Few people talked candidly and openly about these issues. However upon probing most interviewees indicated that the low minority representation was a problem. In some cases interviewees were more forthcoming about the topic, shedding light on the issue through insightful and complex perspectives.

"If you look on the Eastside, a lot of people that are doing the development stuff, a lot of the people that are getting - you know about doing the housing issues even, you know they're mostly Caucasian. And then of course, there are issues that arise out of that. People want to know why. People want to know why are you here? What makes you care about our community, if you're not from here?" (Hispanic staff of community organization and Detroit resident)

"... and you do have to have community meetings, and you have to have a number of different places that you bring people in and the ideas will percolate up...I don't believe, maybe because I'm a white woman representing a black community that you always have to be exactly a representative class of color. I do agree unquestionably, that if you don't have people that have had some of the representative experiences that people have you do miss things... If you want to know what I care about is I have a passion for community. That's just what I care about. So you are absolutely correct. You do have to have people with representative experiences and those are often related to ones color and ones class. In terms of things changing, I do believe they do percolate up as ideas do come through." (Community development advocate and Detroit resident)

"You know that's basically what we feel, it's fighting against - Detroit is what, 75% to 80% black. And a lot of the people in the decision making

aren't from Detroit or aren't really attached to Detroit. The reason I became a planner is because Detroit was crumbling. I felt like I should be doing something about it. So a lot of that stuff, you know people feel in general that they should help and that's why I'm not really troubled by you know that there are a bunch of white people in the meeting and there's a few black people. Because I feel like their hearts are in the right place. It's just the community doesn't necessarily feel like their hearts are in the right place, or that they have a real connection to the city...A lot of them [non-profit community development organizations] are led by white people...But I think a lot of that is starting to change as groups are starting to get into, learn more about development. You know getting together, getting tax credit partners, for profits, building up. It's slowly but surely changing. So I think we will see more representatives from the black community... [The community might think,] you know, 'What's going on? Who are these people? Why are you making these decisions for my community?' I think they would be truly bothered by it. But like I said, it doesn't bother me as much because I know these people are trying to make the best decisions they can. And in absentia of any other groups stepping up and taking the matter...I believe they have real concern for the city. And even though I was born and raised here and live here now, everything I did in college was basically to come back here and to do this thing. I don't begrudge anybody you know coming from some place else and deciding this is where I want to do my work. This is where I want to

make a difference. Because we can use all the help we can get." (African American community planner and resident)

In Southwest, some community actors felt that ethnically and racially based tensions between development organizations and residents were not as great as those in other parts of the city, perhaps due to a greater heterogeneity of the community[43]. Nevertheless, they and other community actors in Southwest still felt that low minority presence affected the ability of community development organizations to be effective. They mentioned language and culture differences as two critical problems arising from low Hispanics representation among community development advocates in Southwest.

"The people I met were whites also. They are - what happens is that...they understand and they try, but the communication is so different, I mean it gets lost. There is no communication, that's the problem. No, they don't speak [Spanish]. For sure they don't speak it. Most of them don't speak it, so...it's very difficult if one person is trying to do all the work and you can't communicate with these others, with the community. You try, you do one thing, you do another. And the community is hard to reach too..."[44] (Resident)

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[43] Southwest Detroit is home to the city's Mexican town and Latino community. Some areas of Southwest are predominantly Hispanic/Latino. However there are important numbers of African American, whites and residents of other ethnicities/backgrounds in the broader area.

[44] Original in Spanish: *"La gente que yo conocí son también anglosajones. Son, lo que pasa con ellos es que... ellos entienden y tratan, pero es muy diferente la comunicación, o sea, se pierde, no hay comunicación, ese es el problema.. No, no hablan [español]. Con seguridad no hablan. La mayoría no hablan, entonces... Y es muy difícil si es una persona que está haciendo todo el trabajo y no puedes comunicarte con estas otras, con la comunidad. Se trata, se hace una cosa, se hace la otra. Y la comunidad también es reacia..."* (Resident)

The complexity underlying these issues is great indeed, begging the question of whether in order to represent a group, one must share core life experiences. These narratives from the community illustrate that regardless of intentions, the race and ethnicity of development advocates involved in greenways can be a source of community tension for both externally driven and community based planning. In this case, the tension arises through the racial differences between some community development staff and leaders, and the communities they serve. This is in spite of the fact that at least in some cases community development advocates are themselves residents who have chosen to stay and live in the city. However, as some interviewees indicated minority residents may still view these advocates as outsiders, with the ensuing feelings of mistrust and suspicion. The lack of African American representation has been used in the past in Detroit to discredit and generate mistrust of multicultural development organizations (in which whites predominate) opposing city development policies (Shaw and Spence 2004). Thus racial representation is a particularly sensitive and important issue among African American communities, and should not be overlooked even within a community planning scenario. In the case of Southwest, low ethnic and racial representativity of community organizations used to gauge community sentiments and communicate to the public becomes even more problematic as the process is externally driven.

6.5. Summary and conclusions

The difficulties of developing locally based environmental planning strategies begin with the way in which program goals and requirements are framed. The Community Foundation's GreenWays program struggled to create a grant framework that facilitated broader interest and participation from Detroit organizations. Its goal of creating change at the landscape level was difficult to implement at the scale in which Detroit's local organizations tend to work. These difficulties were exacerbated by the fact that program leaders were ineffective at identifying and reaching out to community organizations, and thus in promoting the collaboration that was needed for landscape level proposals.

At the local level, planning in the Eastside was much more participatory than in Southwest. Organizers in both cases tended to view participation as instrumental rather than transformative. In Southwest, organizers were largely ineffective at developing a "public consultation" strategy. In the end there was little feedback from or information exchange with the community, a dynamic that has become typical for public agencies. In the Eastside however, the process presented elements of a community-based strategy. The generation of the proposal and the nature of the actors making the decisions were all "community-based". Indeed viewed from this perspective, greenways planning could represent an empowering process for some Eastside organizations. Given the limitations of the study in terms of scope and time, it is difficult to evaluate whether the process empowered a broader range of community actors. Viewed from the perspective of resident participation however, the process was more akin to consultation. The Eastside case illustrates that in the practice participation approaches can be hybrids presenting

different layers of "community" participation. While participation was not equally effective at all levels, the model of "multi-layered participation" illustrated by the Eastside has the potential to provide for more participatory planning.

This study illustrates the importance of donor values to shaping local level actions. The donor organization's focus on outcomes in the form of construction documents versus process, contributed to a more technically oriented planning. Other factors also contributed to shaping a particular approach to planning. In the end the interplay of external and internal forces shaped the views and actions of key actors, resulting in varying degrees of technical predominance in the planning processes. Subtle and explicit messages coming from the donor organization, the strong presence of professionals, the values of project leaders and the use of a public meeting format all contributed to a specific approach to planning. The predominance of a technical approach to planning was notorious in Southwest and more subtle in the Eastside. To the extent that it was present, a technical focus prevented broader and quality participation.

Minority participation throughout the development of greenways plans in Detroit was low, particularly for local planning in Southwest and in city-wide events sponsored by the CF. Low minority participation in greenways seems to be part of the historical trend in the traditional environmental movement and in the environmental planning professions. Rather than merely issues of representation, this study highlights the importance of feelings of powerlessness, issue framing and the exclusion from decision-making arenas to minority participation in greenways and the environmental movement in general. Community oriented strategies were clearly more effective at overcoming

poor minority participation, particularly when greenways were contextualized within a broader community development strategy.

In Detroit, mistrust was a prominent theme in discussions about participation in greenways. Mistrust, as constructed by key community actors, reflected historical antagonisms between groups in their struggle to control regional development; suburbia versus inner city; white versus black; affluent versus poor; residents versus experts/policy-makers. The racial nature of mistrust was an especially prominent element in the concept's construction. To the degree that greenways are viewed as externally driven and promoted by white environmentalists and/or professionals, residents may regard them with suspicion. Mistrust was further exacerbated by issues of minority representation among community development advocates in Detroit.

Greenways plans will likely be perceived as one more manifestation of a regional struggle for scarce resources, with its accompanying racial dimensions. Within this context race, ethnicity and their ensuing power dimensions are critical elements that can shape participation. In other words, advocates should not forget that greenways plans occur within a particular community (re)development context. This study illustrates the centrality of this context to the development of effective and participatory greenways planning. In Detroit, as in many inner cities of the U.S., greenways plans cannot be viewed as separate or distinct from the racial and ethnic tensions that exist in the region. If they are to contribute to redevelopment that is community-centered, greenways plans must address issues of race.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusions

The generation of locally relevant interpretations is critical to conservation programs developed and driven by actors that are external to the community. The on-going paradigm shift to more participatory approaches to conservation would suggest that locally relevant interpretations have become more incorporated into programs. However, this dissertation suggests that this may not necessarily be the case, even when participation is a valued element within a program. Furthermore, the case illustrates that the difficulties of incorporating local visions into conservation programs also occur in developed nations with strong democratic governance and traditions.

Greenways are predominantly a developed world phenomena, although they are increasing in importance throughout the world. This dissertation contributes to our understanding of the social dynamics of implementing greenways. In the case of greenways in Detroit, some greenways interpretations ignore and to some extent exclude the concerns of key groups and actors in the city. While not necessarily mutually exclusive, the two main greenways interpretations outlined in this research provide a specific example of how this occurs. Figure 6 shows and highlights the differences between these two perspectives. External or suburban views of greenways tended to highlight it as *change*, understood as external investments, dramatic changes to the landscape and making the city attractive to outsiders. On the other hand community perspectives constructed greenways as means to contribute to more *equitable redevelopment*, more specifically equitable access to nature, safety and a set of opportunities for city residents. To the extent that external views were perceived as dominant by some actors, they raised questions about the potential for greenways to serve the city's population. In this sense, where local input and leadership were strong the

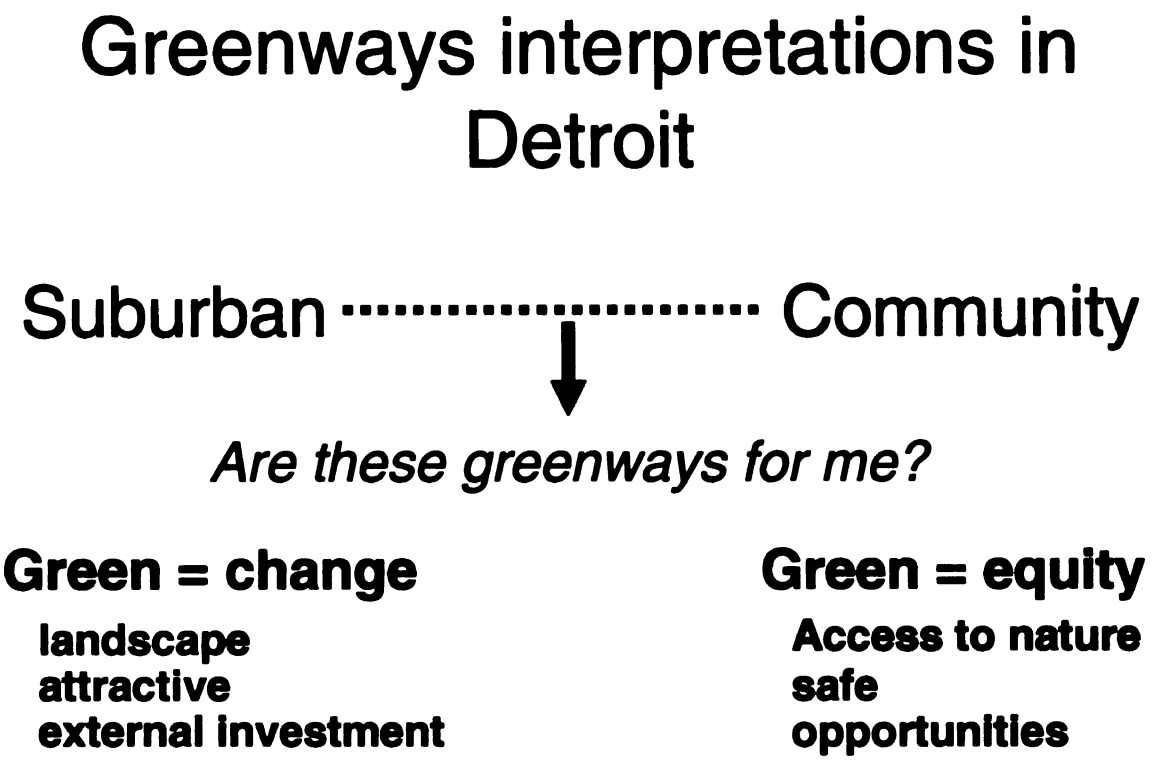

Figure 6. Greenways interpretations in Detroit.

greenways concept differed from that of external agents; it was better adapted and molded to the local reality.

One important yet overlooked aspect is that greenways plans in Detroit must account for and address issues of race. The history of greenways and the way it was promoted reinforced the notion of greenways as suburban, white middle-class construct. Today many of its promoters – more often than not white middle-class suburbanites - tend to overlook the importance of this for greenways development in the city. Greenways thus perceived may alienate residents and reinforce barriers to participation. This can create a vicious cycle, as less participation can on the one hand raise doubts about the validity and/or representativity of a program, and on the other, leave out

precisely those voices which can make a difference in the way the concept is developed in the city.

As this case shows, effective community participation and leadership were critical to the development of more inclusive and locally relevant greenways vision. Project leadership for example, was critical to establishing more effective mechanisms for community participation, particularly in the presence of constraints. In addition because of their knowledge and experience, community leaders were more effective at creating a greenways vision that would resonate with the values and issues of their community. While this may seem obvious to social scientists working in the intersection of development and conservation, key actors, particularly professional ones, involved with greenways ignored or simply overlooked the importance of having the community shape plans and ideas early on in the process.

If greenways are to serve a broader population, different views must be included early on in the process of formulating plans and ideas. In addition, it is equally important to have locally relevant perspectives bear early on in the formulation and creation of the overall program framework, as well as in the implementation of local greenways projects. This is particularly so given the importance of donor values to shaping local level actions.

Overall the research illustrates the centrality of the community (re)development context to generating effective and participatory greenways.

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Interview request letters

Date, 2002

Dear Ms. XXX,

I am a Ph.D. student at the Department of Resource Development, Michigan State University engaged in a study on greenways planning in Detroit. The objectives of the study are to understand how community groups define and plan greenways in Detroit.

You have been identified as an important player in greenways planning activities in Detroit. [Alternatively, when appropriate the latter was replaced with: XX from Y organization suggested I contact you for information about greenways efforts in XX.] I would like to request an interview to ask you some questions about current and past greenways planning efforts in Detroit. Since the study is concerned with the views and activities of those involved with greenways planning, I will not be asking any personal questions or requesting private or sensitive information. Your input and cooperation would be greatly appreciated.

The interview would last approximately an hour to an hour and half. I would like to tape record the interview because it both insures the accuracy of the notes and allows me to concentrate on the substance of the conversation. I value your privacy and will consider your responses confidential to the maximum extent allowable by law.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may feel free to withdraw from the interview, to request that the interview not be taped, to skip any items or request that the recorder be turned off any time during the interview.

I will be contacting you in the following days to answer any questions about our study that you may have and to request your cooperation. Please feel free to contact me at (517)-882-3485 or salazarm@pilot.msu.edu should you have any questions. If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant, please feel free to contact Dr. Ashir Kumar, Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects at 517-355-2180.

Again your time and input would be greatly appreciated,

Maite Salazar

Graduate Research Assistant
Department of Resource Development
Michigan State University

Dear Mr. XXX,

I am a Ph.D. student at the Department of Resource Development, Michigan State University engaged in a study of urban conservation efforts in the city of Detroit. The objectives of this study are to understand how community groups articulate their needs for urban conservation and how conflicting views of land and resource use are reconciled.

Your organization has been identified as an important player in community-based conservation efforts in Detroit. I would like to request an interview to ask you some questions about your organization's involvement with urban conservation and how it is linked to others concerned with conservation in the area. Your input and cooperation would be greatly appreciated.

The interview would last approximately an hour to an hour and half. I would like to tape record the interview because it both insures the accuracy of the notes and allows me to concentrate on the substance of the conversation. I value your privacy and will consider your responses confidential to the maximum extent allowable by law.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may feel free to withdraw from the interview, to request that the interview not be taped, to skip any items or request that the recorder be turned off any time during the interview.

I will be contacting you in the following days to answer any questions about the study that you may have and to request your cooperation. Please feel free to contact me at (517)-882-3485 or salazarm@pilot.msu.edu should you have any questions. If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant, please feel free to contact Dr. Ashir Kumar, Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects at 517-355-2180.

Again your time and input would be greatly appreciated,

Maite Salazar

Graduate Research Assistant
Department of Resource Development
Michigan State University

Appendix B. Sample consent form

Consent Form

You are being asked to participate in a study carried out by Maite Salazar from the Department of Resource Development, Michigan State University on the social role of greenways in the Greater Detroit area. The objectives of this study are to understand how community groups define, plan and implement greenways.

I am interested in asking you some questions about your organization's involvement with greenways and how it is linked to others concerned with greenways in the area. Since the study is concerned with the views and activities of those involved with greenways planning, I will not be asking any personal questions or requesting private or sensitive information. Your input and cooperation would be greatly appreciated.

The interview will last approximately an hour. I would like to tape record the interview because it both insures the accuracy of the notes and allows the investigator to concentrate on the substance of the conversation. All tapes will be transcribed, the contents reviewed and analyzed. Tapes will be destroyed after the research is completed. I value your privacy and will consider your responses confidential to the maximum extent allowable by law.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may feel free to withdraw from the interview, to request that the interview not be taped, to skip any items or request that the recorder be turned off any time during the interview.

Should you have any questions about this study and/or interview please feel free to contact Maite Salazar at (517)-882-3485 or salazarm@pilot.msu.edu. If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant, please feel free to contact Dr. Ashir Kumar from the university's human subjects office at 517-355-2180.

Again your time and input are greatly appreciated.

Your signature indicates your agreement to participate in this study

_____ _____

Signature Date

Please initial below to indicate permission to tape record the interview

_____

Initials

University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) approval for this project expires on Oct. 22, 2002

Appendix C. Disclosure of research purpose

Overview of Research

Maite Salazar and John Kerr
Department of Resource Development
Michigan State University
517-882-3485 salazarm@msu.edu

The purpose of this research is to study community-based, collaborative conservation strategies. Greenways planning is a specific example of community-based conservation in urban areas. The main focus of the research is to understand issues of equity that arise in the planning of greenways in Detroit. In this sense the research seeks to understand:

a) Who are the relevant community actors involved in greenways planning?
b) How is the definition and purpose of greenways shaped by the different participants throughout the planning process?
c) How do existing inequalities affect greenways planning?

We are also interested in understanding how community development and conservation goals are addressed and reconciled in the planning of greenways. This is a key concern and challenge in making conservation efforts more effective.

An important goal of the research is the generation of information that is useful to those involved in greenways, and to others involved in conservation efforts in Detroit and elsewhere. Hence the research design allows for flexibility, to accommodate community input. Should you have any comments and questions, please feel free to contact Maite Salazar at 517-882-3485 or salazarm@msu.edu.

Thank-you for your time and consideration.

Copy of email message sent to planning meeting participants:

As you are all aware I have been attending the Conner Creek Greenway planning meetings as part of my Ph.D. dissertation research. I would like to thank all of you for letting me sit-in on these meetings. My intent in writing this email is to ensure that you are fully informed and feel comfortable with my role.

The main purpose of my attendance is to observe and document the planning process. I am particularly interested in understanding how greenways are defined and shaped by the different participants in the planning process. I also wish to learn about the challenges that community groups encounter as they plan for greenways.

My research will also look at greenways and conservation initiatives going on in other parts of the city. I have been interviewing people from various groups, and hope to attend other community meetings. I expect to finish my data collection in early fall.

Please feel free to let Libby or me know if you have any questions and concerns about the research.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the next greenways meeting.
Thanks!
Maite
PS I will bring a brief summary of my research objectives to the next
meeting for those of you who have not seen it.

Maite Salazar
Ph.D. student
Department of Resource Development
Michigan State University

3100-1A Trapper's Cove Trail
Lansing, Michigan
48910. USA

email: salazarm@msu.edu
phone: (517) 882-3485"

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