

## *Rescuing Derelict Roads, Rails and Rivers for Public Use.*

### **THE PROSPECT.**

Valuable lands and waters are being discarded because their first use has become obsolete and most communities and developers are not clever enough to envision a productive life for the second or subsequent generations of use. Fortunately, some communities, urban designers and philanthropists are envisioning new uses for discarded roads, rails and rivers. Four examples demonstrate the power of envisioning the re-purposing of derelict properties for public use.

### **THE PROJECTS.**

#### **The Atlanta BeltLine.**

Atlanta BeltLine, Atlanta's spectacular outdoor space, comprises 22 miles of unused railroad tracks **circling the core** of the city's in-town neighborhoods. From trails and walkways to open green space and parks, the Atlanta BeltLine connects people to neighborhoods, dining and cool places throughout the city. **Link:** <https://beltline.org/>

#### **The High Line in New York.**

The elevated rail line that is now a terrific pedestrian spine through the City...“the High Line”; it was once designated for demolition. “Joshua David and Robert Hammond founded Friends of the High Line, a non-profit conservancy, to advocate for its preservation and reuse as a public space.” The 1.45 mile linear park is heavily landscaped with access to apartments, hotels, restaurants, shops and artwork. The space is also heavily programmed with performances free and open to all.

**Link:** <https://www.thehighline.org/>

#### **The Miami Underline.**

The Underline is transforming the land below Miami's Metrorail into a 10-mile linear park, urban trail, and public art destination. **Link:** <https://www.theunderline.org/>

#### **The Promenade Plantée in Paris.**

The abandoned rail line sat fallow for nearly 20 years. The 2.8 mile tree-lined linear park is heavily landscaped with accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists. The park is at times on the viaduct, at times in tunnels and at times at grade. Shops, restaurants and apartments have immediate access to the park. **Link:**

[http://www.coolstuffinparis.com/bat\\_watching\\_promenade\\_plantee.php](http://www.coolstuffinparis.com/bat_watching_promenade_plantee.php)

#### **The Bentway in Toronto.**

This 1.0 mile linear park will be built under an expressway starting April 2020. The park will access gardens, markets, restaurants and theaters. Philanthropists “Wil and Judy [Matthews] recognized the unusual beauty underneath the expressway and the potential for the space to connect the city to the waterfront...” The project is led by a project-specific organization. **Link:** <https://thebentway.ca/>

**The West Orange Trail, Winter Garden/Apopka/Orange County, FL.**

This 22-mile trail, formerly a railroad line primarily for the citrus industry, connects Oakland to the west with Apopka to the north, but the City of Winter Garden is the hub, the location of shops and restaurants, bike shops, a renovated live theater, three museums and a public space in the heart of town that is crowded with residents and regional visitors. The federal “rails to trails” program in conjunction with Orange County and the City of Winter Garden was instrumental in the success of the West Orange Trail.

**The Aire, A Small River Canal Reimagined, Geneva.**

Flowing through the idyllic southwestern tip of Switzerland is the Aire, a small river that winds through the countryside close to Geneva, then across the French border, through the village of San-Julien-en-Genevois. LINK:

<https://www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/14273-a-swiss-river-canal-reimagined>

**The Riverwalk in San Antonio.**

This 2.5 mile heavily landscaped waterfront began its resurrection in the 1930s but not until the 1960s did it gain momentum that resulted in today’s successful urban space. Architect Robert H. H. Hugman [1902-1980] is the man behind the dream. The Paseo Del Rio Association was formed in 1969 “to promote the continuous improvement and development of the Riverwalk.” Link: <https://www.thesanantonioriverwalk.com/>

**The Point is to Examine Every Resource for its Potential as a Re-Purposed Community Asset.**

- Someone had a vision and recognized the value of an abandoned space in a great location.
- The vision was executed in a high-quality manner even though some projects took decades.
- The resultant public space is connected to many private and public community venues.
- The vision includes the idea of providing free and full access to the entire community.

**Look around, see what you find, see what no one else sees.**

**The Atlanta BeltLine, The New York HighLine, The Miami UnderLine, The Promenade Plantée in Paris, The West Orange Trail, The Aire River Canal near Geneva and the San Antonio Riverwalk are described in more detail on the following pages.**

# Atlanta BeltLine

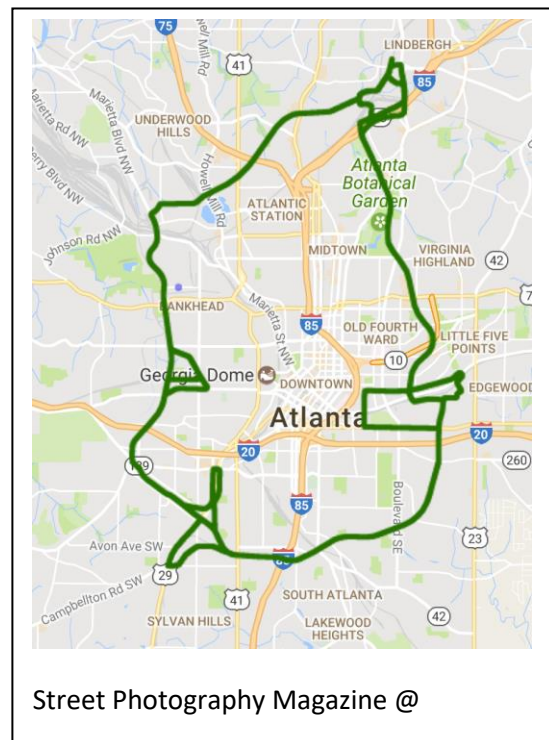
The **Atlanta Beltline** has been a long-time in coming and it has garnered the active support of local, regional, state and federal agencies who provided funds and support as partners. The website provides a wide-range of information about development of the Beltline.

<https://beltline.org/the-project/>

Discover Atlanta invites people to Bike, walk, run or dine on the Atlanta BeltLine; <https://discoveratlanta.com/things-to-do/outdoors/beltline/>

**Atlanta BeltLine, Atlanta's spectacular outdoor space, comprises 22 miles of unused railroad tracks circling the core of the city's in-town neighborhoods. From trails and walkways to open green space and parks, the Atlanta BeltLine connects people to neighborhoods, dining and cool places throughout the city.**

Thousands of visitors flock to the Atlanta BeltLine to exercise, explore Atlanta's neighborhoods and spend time with friends and family. A world-class amenity similar to New York City's High Line, the Atlanta BeltLine is also home to Art on the BeltLine, the Southeast's largest temporary public art project. Make a day of your BeltLine exploration by exploring one of the trail sections and adjacent parks or by grabbing food and drinks at one of the many restaurants situated along some of the BeltLine trails.



**LINKS:** <https://beltline.org/>  
<https://discoveratlanta.com/things-to-do/outdoors/beltline/>

# HIGH LINE

New York City



Photo: [https://www.visitcity.com/en/new-york-city/attractions/the-high-line?campaginid=141831554&adgroupid=4635356895&targetid=kwd-29628109424:loc-190&utm\\_source=bing&utm\\_medium=cpc&utm\\_campaign=New%20York%20Auto%20Attractions%20G3&utm\\_term=the%20high%20line%20nyc&utm\\_content=New%20York%20City%20G3%20-%20The%20High%20Line%20New%20York](https://www.visitcity.com/en/new-york-city/attractions/the-high-line?campaginid=141831554&adgroupid=4635356895&targetid=kwd-29628109424:loc-190&utm_source=bing&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=New%20York%20Auto%20Attractions%20G3&utm_term=the%20high%20line%20nyc&utm_content=New%20York%20City%20G3%20-%20The%20High%20Line%20New%20York)

## OVERVIEW

The High Line is more than a park. It's a public space where you can view art, walk through gardens, experience a performance, savor delicious food, or just connect with friends and neighbors—all while enjoying a unique perspective of the city.

Built on a historic, elevated freight line, the High Line has become a world-renowned inspiration for how cities can transform industrial infrastructure into hybrid public spaces.

Link: <https://www.thehighline.org/about/>



Radial Bench, High Line Park, between west 28th and 29th streets.

[Photo © Iwan Baan, 2011]

Photo: <https://placesjournal.org/article/above-grade-on-the-high-line/?cn-reloaded=1>

## HISTORY

History from: <https://www.thehighline.org/history/>

Believe it or not, the High Line was once destined for demolition. Luckily, the community rallied together to repurpose it instead, creating the park you see today, for everyone to enjoy. It has since become a global inspiration for cities to transform unused industrial zones into dynamic public spaces.

### 1999

[For a complete timeline visit LINK: <https://www.thehighline.org/history/>]

In the decades of disuse, many people were calling the High Line an ugly eyesore (Mayor Giuliani signed a demolition order, one of his last acts in office). But few of these critics saw what had secretly taken over the structure: a thriving garden of wild plants. Inspired by the beauty of this hidden landscape, Joshua David and Robert Hammond founded Friends of the High Line, a non-profit conservancy, to advocate for its preservation and reuse as a public space. Friends of the High Line remains the sole group responsible for maintenance and operation of the High Line (and is funded by supporters just like you).

## Today

The High Line is now one, continuous, 1.45-mile-long greenway featuring 500+ species of plants and trees. The park is maintained, operated, and programmed by Friends of the High Line in partnership with the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation. On top of public space and gardens, the High Line is home to a diverse suite of public programs, community and teen engagement, and world-class artwork and performances, free and open to all.

Note: Friends of the High Line raises nearly 100% of the High Line's annual budget. Owned by the City of New York, the High Line is a public park programmed, maintained, and operated by Friends of the High Line, in partnership with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation.

FROM...[THE MIAMI HERALD, REAL ESTATE NEWS](#)

## Miami's Underline snags a \$22M grant. Now its new phase can be built in Coral Gables.

[BY ANDRES VIGLUCCI](#)

NOVEMBER 06, 2019

Miami's 10-mile Underline trail and park is starting construction. This is what the park, which will extend from downtown Miami to Dadeland under the Metrorail's elevated tracks, will look like. BY [MARTA OLIVER CRAVIOTTO](#)

Ambitious plans for construction of the Underline, a 10-mile-long "linear park" for people on foot and on bikes that would run beneath the elevated Metrorail tracks, got a significant lift with the announcement Wednesday of a \$22.3 million federal grant for the project.

The [BUILD transportation grant](#) to Miami-Dade County's transit agency will pay for design and construction of a two-and-a-half mile segment running through Coral Gables, said Meg Daly, founder of [Friends of the Underline](#), the nonprofit group that has conceived and coordinated the plan.

That means there's now enough funding to complete the full three-mile portion of the Underline through the Gables from Douglas Road south to Red Road, Daly said. Private developers building mixed-use projects along that stretch are responsible for the pieces running along their properties. The city of Coral Gables, meanwhile, expects to contribute about \$5 million from impact fees collected from new development along the planned trail, said Vice Mayor Vince Lago.

“That’s a big win,” Lago said of the federal grant. “This is going to be a world-class amenity.”



LINK: <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/business/real-estate-news/article237087969.html>

## An elevated park on an old railway line Promenade Plantée (Coulée Verte)

51

The Promenade Plantée is a linear park spanning 4.7 kilometres built atop a disused railway line in the east of Paris. Starting from Bastille, the first part of the walkway is elevated on the Viaduc des Arts before crossing the Jardin de Reuilly.

It finally goes down to ground level and through tunnels as you approach the eastern ring road. The first of its kind in the world, Promenade Plantée was one of the inspirations for the High Line park in New York City. This tree-lined park gives you an elevated view of nice modern apartments and open spaces. Take a seat on one of the benches and enjoy the tranquil atmosphere.

<https://www.likealocalguide.com/paris/promenade-plantee-coulee-verte>



# La Promenade Plantée: A Green and Unusual Walk in Paris!

LA PROMENADE PLANTÉE: THE FIRST GREEN SPACE OF THIS KIND

<http://www.goodmorningparis.fr/walks/la-promenade-plantee-a-green-and-unusual-walk-in-paris/>

The 'Promenade Plantée in Paris, also known under the name of 'La Coulée Verté, was created in 1988 and is the first green space of this kind: A way of 4,5kms with a lot of plants, a walking path and a bicycle path on part of it was built on a former railway which was unused since 1969. No doubt that the designers of the Highline in New York (opened in 2009) drew their inspiration from it!

This pedestrian-friendly path runs most of the time above or under the street level through the 12th arrondissement of Paris. It starts behind the Opéra Bastille at the crossroads between the Rue de Lyon and the Avenue Daumesnil and ends at the entrance of the Bois de Vincennes. Several accesses have been built along the path so that one can have a walk on it in whole or in part.



La Coulée Verte – Footpath and cycling lane.





Promenade Plantée – Paris – The path above the Viaduc des Arts.

## The West Orange Trail, Winter Garden FL.

The City of Winter Garden was established in 1903. During most of the twentieth century, the City and its region were the central focus of Florida’s citrus industry. The City had several citrus processing plants with truck and rail lines to move the various types of citrus into the City for processing and out of the City for export to northern markets. A main feature of the City for most of the century were rail tracks in the median of Plant Street, the town’s main street.

By the 1990’s, citrus had declined as an economic activity in the City. The freezes had moved the industry south. In response, the City identified an



W. Plant Street 1950's



W. Plant Street in the 1990's,

asset right in the middle of town that could be re-purposed to become one of the town's economic generators...the railroad line that served the town for decades became the West Orange Trail; a transformative community facility resulting from a vision held by many partners. The Trail now serves as a major element in the City's framework.

The 22-mile trail, formerly a railroad line primarily for the citrus industry, connects Oakland to the west with Apopka to the north, but the City of Winter Garden is the hub, the location of shops and restaurants, bike shops, a renovated live theater, three museums and a public space in the heart of town that is crowded with residents and regional visitors. The federal "rails to trails" program in conjunction with Orange County and the City of inter Garden was instrumental in the success of the West Orange Trail.



From...Architectural Record.

## A Swiss River Canal Reimagined

*Kara Mauros, October 8, 2019*

Geneva

LINK: <https://www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/14273-a-swiss-river-canal-reimagined>



Photo by Fabio Chironi

Flowing through the idyllic southwestern tip of Switzerland is the Aire, a small river that winds through the countryside close to Geneva, then across the French border, through the village of San-Julien-en-Genveois. This temperamental ribbon of water has been a major flood risk to the region's agriculture and neighboring towns: it was reined in by a canal once in 1896 and again in the 1940s before the Canton of Geneva finally launched a competition for a plan to tame the river in 2001. The winner was a multidisciplinary team named Superpositions, composed of architects and landscape architects Georges Descombes and Atelier Descombes & Rampini; B+C Engineers; ZS Structural Engineers, and biologists Biotec SA. In the years since the group won, it has completed three phases of work on the three-mile stretch, redirecting the water from the man-made channel to a newly designed riverbed on the Aire's original footprint. The parallel, now-defunct canal has been adapted into a verdant public promenade. (The fourth and final phase—to demolish a dam in order to redistribute gravel and soil downstream—will be complete by 2022.)

Despite the team’s efforts to influence nature, ultimately, of course, “a river must design itself,” says Greg Bussien of Atelier Descombes & Rampini. This perspective informed the project’s first phases, restoring the riverbed to its original location. After the group’s biologists and hydraulic engineers measured the environmental impact of each phase—water quality and biodiversity had been low in the Aire region due to sewage and pesticide runoff—the landscape architects amended the design to improve conditions for the riverscape. After studying natural sediment deposits in other waterways, the team carved a 200-foot-wide diamond-shaped pattern deep into the raised silt, to manipulate water flow and help curb flooding during the wet winter months.

To create the public garden out of the adjacent industrial-era canal, the designers added concrete steps down the trench’s embankments and planted it out as a green space. Amenities, including pergolas and benches, serve Swiss and French locals commuting to Geneva, many of whom use the bike path along the river to get to the city each day. When the project is finally complete, the Aire will once again showcase its natural splendor, enhanced for all to enjoy.



The adjacent drained canal has been transformed into a green space inspired by 19<sup>th</sup> century British gardens. Photo by Jasques Bethet.



The promenade’s bike path, which runs adjacent to the original canal, is heavily used by commuters from France who work in Geneva. Photo by Jasques Bethet.

Architectural Record, October 8, 2019 by [Kara Mavros](#)



## The History of the Riverwalk

LINK: <https://www.sanantonioriverwalk.com/history-of-the-riverwalk/>

The downtown loop of the famed San Antonio Riverwalk, or Paseo del Rio, is a 1/2 mile stretch of beautifully landscaped waterfront that features many of San Antonio's most spectacular hotels, restaurants, night clubs, bars, shopping centers and businesses. It is one of the most dynamic tourist attractions in the entire state of Texas, pouring nearly \$800 million a year into the local economy. While it is an amazing and romantic place to visit, that wasn't always true.

In the beginning, Spanish Explorers used the waterway to supply water to their missions. Mission San Antonio de Valero, also known as The Alamo, was the first to benefit from it. The river flooded its banks many times. In September 1921 the worst flood in its history killed over fifty people and caused millions of dollars in damage to the city.

City planners struggled over what to do while large debates rang among the people.

One man, an architect named Robert H. H. Hugman proposed a plan that would turn the area into a beautiful urban park with apartments, dining, shopping, boat rides and walk ways lit with old-fashioned street lamps. He wanted it to be just as if one were walking in Venice, Italy. After convincing city officials and business leaders of the financial benefits of his plan, the dream became a reality and the riverwalk was eventually sculpted into the masterpiece you see today.



*Mr. Robert H. H. Hugman*

Later, in the 1930's, many efforts were made to clean and beautify the river by groups like the San Antonio Advertising Club, Daughters of the American Revolution San Antonio chapter, and the San Antonio Real Estate Board. Hugman worked many years with the city to construct the plans for the riverwalk, however, despite their best efforts it would be years before the riverwalk could be called a success due to low business volumes and a high level of crime. The 1960's, on the other hand, was a great time for improvement and growth. Paseo Del Rio Association was established in 1969 to promote the continuous improvement and development of the riverwalk.

Today, the people of San Antonio continue to preserve its history and beauty and develop its economic resources. It truly is one of the greatest vacation destinations in the United States.



**FIESTA: Anticipation...**



**The first of many floats...**