

Towpath Trail Scope of Services Document

Attachment "B" - Target Markets and Audience Needs

dated January 21, 2008

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Target Markets

Amenities/features common to all

- Activities will involve walking, biking, running/jogging
- Access to interpretation, historical features, nature
- Wayfinding to and within the greenway and to nearby attractions and neighborhoods
- Features that welcome and orient visitors when they arrive
- Trailheads and neighborhood connections
- Comfort amenities (restrooms, water, and benches)
- Rest stops along an active trail
- Connection to commercial services (esp. food and drink)
- Safe and well maintained
- Bike parking at venues near the route that visitors might want to use
- Packaged as a coherent whole
- Bike rentals
- Picnic areas
- Digital infrastructure for interpretation
- Need to value proximity to urban amenities; recreation + big city = compelling

Residents in adjacent neighborhood

- Repeat visitors (high frequency)
- Some visits might be short - ½-hour for lunch break
- Group size could be 1+
- Need access points and connector trails
- Need community involvement in the process for support
- Deserve something high quality and exciting
- Needs amenities not currently available in urban neighborhoods such as expanses of natural landscaping
- Needs elements that reflect the historic and current cultures of the neighborhoods
- Create a connection to health and wellness to increase use for fitness; recognize that some might use it as part of an exercise loop
- Recognize that trail will have a role as a transportation system providing access to work, shopping, and entertainment; commuting frequently identified as the primary use by local residents
- Expect dog walkers as part of this market

Northeast Ohio residents

- Repeat visitors (sometimes at a high frequency)
- Expect heavy weekend use, especially during warm months
- Expect duration of visit to average 2 hours but could be shorter or longer
- Group size could be 1+

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- Expect recreation to usually be the primary motive for their visit, but that it would be enhanced by the trail’s interpretive values; for a subset, the interpretive values would be the primary motive
- Recreation = casual walking, hiking, biking, roller blading, etc.
- Provide access through community connectors and trailheads
- Need trailheads relatively accessible from highways with restrooms and other welcoming amenities; one person commented that trailheads are mostly needed south of Harvard; another commented that Harvard and Steelyard Commons would probably be the major trailheads
- Needs to provide suburban visitors a chance to experience the big city
- Need bus parking for those coming in groups organized by bus
- Need access to a place for food and drink as part of their recreational experience

Out-of-town visitors

- Recognize that long-weekend vacations are becoming preferred over week vacations; gives us the opportunity to appeal to the numerous metropolitan areas within a ½-day drive
- Recognize that biking vacations have become the third most popular outdoor recreation vacations after camping and hiking; regional bike trails are attracting national audiences
- Recognize the combination of completed Towpath Trail/Canalway can play a major role in attracting out-of-town visitors to the area
- Recognize that creating a great community for local residents leads to out-of-town people coming to enjoy it
- Recognize that the national park name is attracting out-of-town visitors to Cuyahoga Valley National Park who can be drawn to the Cleveland section of the Towpath Trail
- Recognize that the burning river has national/international awareness that gives us an opportunity as poster child of the environmental movement
- Will be interested in recreation, heritage tourism, and sightseeing
- Need overnight accommodations/camping with bicycle access
- Need access to bicycle rentals
- Will be seeking “attractions” along the Towpath Trail (Canal Basin Park; Tremont shops; industrial valley—through tour of Mittal if possible, experiencing the working river and its powerful environmental history)
- Canal Basin Park would play a hub for information and interpretive services
- Marketing/promotion was frequently identified as the key ingredient for this audience
- Need access through Tower City and RTA Waterfront Line Superior Station for those staying downtown but without vehicle
- Need access from convention center and downtown hotels for the convention/business subset of this market
- Interpretation is especially key for out-of-town visitors and meeting the needs of this audience should drive the quality of the interpretation

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Subsets of Target Markets

Urban residents

- Demographics will shift from primarily suburban residents who use rest of trail
- Need to provide green, serene park experience that contrasts to gritty, noisy, urban experience of urban residents
- Need connector trails from their neighborhoods
- Urban residents, especially minorities, have expressed greater concerns about safety in surveys about perceptions about parks
- Urban residents deserve the same amenities and recreational resources available in the suburbs
- Need digital infrastructure for those who want to do their work outside

Families

- Kids can enjoy walking and bicycling, but also like opportunities for more less structured, more playful activities
- Shelters as an amenity for families, especially larger family gatherings

Commuter

Canalway Visitors

- Recognize that the Towpath Trail is one of three spines of the Canalway. Canalway visitors are encouraged to journey these spines as their way of discovering the diverse resources of the Canalway. It will ultimately be a 100-mile trail.
- Recognize that Cleveland is either the starting point or ending point for tourists experiencing the entire Canalway
- Need access to information services for the entire Canalway; especially need packaged information about how to experience the Canalway

School groups

- Opportunities to learn about the valley's past and view renewal efforts
- Need logistical considerations (place to park bus, restrooms, area to eat lunch, preferably covered space for inclement weather, space to do activities, concentrated natural/historical resource to interpret)
- Are there any schools that can walk to the Towpath and use it routinely? Should they be considered in connector trails?

Young adults

- Interested in adventure recreation more than passive recreation; a typical Towpath visit isn't adventure
- Should recognize young professionals living downtown as a segment of this audience
- Active recreation suggestions: in-line skate rentals, canoe rentals, bicycle-based camping, climbing

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- Recognize that the private sector could play a role in providing active recreation
- Mountain biking in the Canal Reservation could be a piece built in

Senior citizens

- May have physical mobility, vision, and hearing issues associated with aging

Enthusiasts

- Can include history buffs, people interested in nature and the environment, bridge enthusiasts, etc.

Volunteers

- Actively getting involved in a place through volun-tourism and service learning is appealing to diverse audiences. Is there an opportunity to get the community involved in creating the park (such as natural resource plantings?) This was very successful in the creation of Crissy Field in San Francisco

Event Groups

- Expect some large organized events to be held on the Towpath and associated lands such as marathons, organized bike rides, etc.
- Need larger parking areas and gathering spaces

Dog Walkers

- Dog poop bags

Winter recreators

- Provide places for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing
- Access to rental equipment

Researchers/workers

- Potential for focus on regenerative/restoration activities