Greenway Planning and Environmental Design in the Phoenix Metropolitan Area

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Phoenix, Arizona is known for its warm weather, flat terrain, single-family residential subdivisions, shopping malls, and suburban and auto-oriented development as well as golf courses and resorts. Over the years, Phoenix has also embraced various greenway programs including the damming of the Salado River through Mesa, Tempe and Phoenix, Scottsdale's Indian Bendwash Greenbelt, and various other initiatives aimed at capitalizing on the area's extensive network of irrigation canals, parks and open spaces, mountain preserves, many miles of multi-purpose trails, and attempts to make various downtown areas more pedestrian-friendly, such as Phoenix's Form-Based Code green streets program, Tempe's Mill Avenue district regeneration program, and Valley Forward's Pedestrian Freeway strategy. What would it take to bring these various programs together and develop a metropolitan-wide greenway strategy conducive to a seamless integration, design, planning, implementation, maintenance, and monitorization of its various sub-components? The paper's purpose is to inventory, characterize and analyze existing initiatives, synthesize their unique features, identify key stakeholders, and propose a greenway governance arrangement oriented towards the materialization of a Valley of the Sun greenway development strategy. The research methods include literature and public policy reviews and analyses, physical and organizational inventories, outreach to privileged stakeholders, preliminary designs and mapping, and implementation considerations. The key expected finding will consist in a more effective understanding of various literature strands on greenway planning, multiple syntheses of earlier planning and public policy proposals, and the identification of potential collaborations at least as significant as those which led to such emblematic greenway projects as Boston's Emerald Neckless, Hudson Valley Greenway Trail, Chicago's 606 Elevated Park & Trail, and the Beltline in Atlanta.

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