

Scenic walking paths coming soon to borough

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By Daniel Gesslein

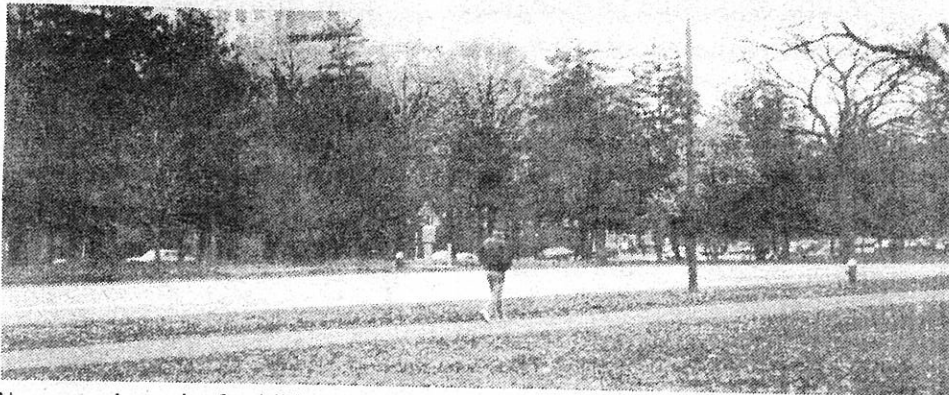
New scenic paths are to be created in the Bronx as a result of a coordinated effort between state senators, the borough president and environmental groups.

Last week, the Bronx received a \$50,000 grant, from the Hudson Greenway Council, to develop a hiking trail along the banks of the Hudson River, from Troy, NY to Battery Park. The

path will run right through Riverdale.

The original plan called for skipping the Bronx entirely and concentrating on Manhattan. As a result,

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New scenic paths for hiking and biking are to be built in the Bronx. Some are to be constructed along Pelham Parkway (pictured) and the Hutchinson River Parkway. "I see a renaissance for the Bronx," said Jorge Santiago.

Scenic paths

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Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer put together his own Greenway committee. The group is in the process of creating some smaller paths within the northern section of the borough.

One of the smaller paths runs from the Hutchinson River Parkway to Ferry Point Park. The other runs from Pelham Parkway to City Island. The project has already received one million dollars in federal funding.

These paths will run through Pelham, Co-op City, Throggs Neck and City Island. Most of Ferrer's Greenway proposal will be built on existing paths. They will be stripped, widened and linked to create one long unbroken path in each section of the Northeast Bronx.

State Senators Franz S. Lechter and Guy Velella and Assemblyman Jefferey Dinowitz brought the Green-

way project to the Bronx. According to Vic Mallison, Lechter's spokesperson, the push to get involved in the Greenway came from the fact that residents did not have access to the Hudson. Industrial development had blocked residents from having natural park land like upstate residents have. With the dwindling of the Hudson as an industrial base, residents want now to have access to the river.

The Greenway Council was created in 1991 to preserve the Hudson River Valley. The goal is to create these natural paths and find the funding to do so. \$50,000 of the grant's money comes from this state agency. Other contributors are the federal government with \$100,000 and the city with \$25,000.

The goal of the Greenway project is to provide bicycle and walking paths. The council will meet to plan and work out the specifics. The first meeting will be held

December 12.

One of the problems is the Conrail-Amtrak train line that runs down the spine of Riverdale. Currently the funds are available to buy a mile of track from Conrail. They will then be able to link the Bronx path with Westchester's.

"We welcome the Greenway and access to other communities," said Jorge Santiago of the Bronx Council of Environmental Quality and a member of the Borough President's Greenway Committee.

Such a linking of biking and hiking paths is at the core of the project. Currently there is no way for non-vehicular travelers to go from community to community without some sort of barrier. The new paths will do away with this and open travelers up to "one of the most scenic parts of the Hudson area."

Santiago said that the project, in addition to the passage of the Environmental Bond Act, would help beautify the borough.

"I see a renaissance for the Bronx," Santiago said.