

IN LIVABLE CITIES IS THE PRESERVATION OF THE WILD

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Congress
for the
New
Urbanism

Bio: Since 1982, Mike Houck has served as the Audubon Society of Portland's Urban Naturalist. The Audubon Society of Portland was founded in 1909 and now has over 8,000 members in the Portland metropolitan region. The Society was one of the founding members of the Coalition for a Livable Future (CLF). Mike serves on CLF's Board of Trustees and chairs the Natural Resources Working Group. His interest in the Coalition is to ensure the integration of urban fish and wildlife habitat, wetlands, urban streams, and other elements of the urban Greeninfrastructure into regional growth management strategies.

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I accepted the invitation to speak today for several reasons. First, I was intrigued the CNU wanted to address the issue of urban Greenspaces and hopeful that out of this discussion and Sunday's Environment Task Force workshop that something substantive will be done to integrate natural resource concerns into CNU's agenda; Second, I was not about to pass up the opportunity to share the podium with so distinguished a panel. I've read Michael Hough's writings, including *Out of Place* and found his thoughts to be as inspirational as the works I will cite later; After talking with Dan Williams it was clear we share many views on this topic and I look forward to continuing that conversation today; finally, our moderator, David Bragdon, I think brings a new passion and energy to make Greenspaces planning in the Portland metropolitan region the priority it deserves. His introductory remarks to Bob Pyle's luncheon talk yesterday demonstrated that he is mindful of the need to integrate nature with the city.

DUANY'S CONCEIT

As to the substance of my comments, I had two things I want to cover. The first is to offer a corollary to Thoreau's oft quoted aphorism, "In wildness is the preservation of the world." The second is to respond to Andres Duany's essay, *Portland*, in which he states, "the environmentalist (in Portland), had been neutralized by the sense of security that the urban boundary provided: the realm of nature was safe. They were dancing in celebration of nature while the realm of man went to hell. A small aside: this is precisely the problem with any specialist: they protect only their prerogative at the expense of the overall good, but that is the subject of another essay."

I agree with Andres Duany's basic premise that much more needs to be done with respect to creating a more hospitable human realm inside the region's Urban Growth Boundary. However, while his assertion that the "environmentalists have been neutralized by the sense of security that the urban boundary provided: the realm of nature was safe", is a cute, flippant remark, nothing could be farther from the truth. For the past two decades an ever-growing cadre of conservationists, neighborhood activists, and professionals in the land use planning and surface water management agencies have worked diligently to protect, and improve, nature within the human realm, inside the UGB.

And, of course, Duany, himself has argued that nature stops at the city limits and that CNU's mission should be to ensure there is good urban design inside urban areas and that nature should be relegated to the landscape in which it belongs, in the countryside. My response is that the notion that nature is "out there" is no longer tenable. We are working to reverse this false dichotomy in the Portland metropolitan region and I would argue that the CNU has an important role

to play in promoting the integration of nature in the city throughout North America.

The title of this conference is the “politics of place.” The reason that “developers in Portland—arrogant and inflexible in the extreme” have survived, is the politics of this place, not because conservationists have been “neutralized” by the fact that the Urban Growth Boundary was protecting nature “out there.” Such an assertion is both absurd and simplistic. It is, in fact, the unenlightened local elected official and those in the development community who find the New Urbanism antithetical to their desires for boundless greenfield development, unfettered by nettlesome environmental regulations that is the problem here, not conservationists and progressive planners being lulled into a false sense of security by the Urban Growth Boundary.

Before he writes his promised follow-up essay Duany should spend some quality time in the Portland metropolitan region and learn more about what the environmentalists, regional government, and the more enlightened local governments are doing to address the issues he raised. He might also be well served by spending some time getting to know the Coalition For A Livable Future, a diverse coalition of affordable housing, alternative transportation, economic revitalization, and Greenspace advocates. The Coalition has, for the past six years, worked at the regional level for the “overall good” of the metropolitan region, not isolated, “individual prerogatives. While this too is a subject for another essay, I will briefly describe a few of those efforts in today’s presentation.

To be fair, Duany has several valid points in his Portland critique. He is correct in his assertion that too little has been done, even with all of our efforts, to create a better realm for man, if you accept the basic philosophy that the realm of man must include nature to be a livable community as we do in the Portland region. In 1982 When I first became active in urban Greenspace issues in the Portland metropolitan region I was told by a county planning director that it was antithetical to the purposes of Oregon’s land use planning program to protect and restore natural resources inside our Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). The UGB, he argued, was established to maximize development across the urban and urbanizing landscape; that in order to prevent sprawl from consuming valuable farm and forest land outside the UGB we had to accept the loss of Greenspaces inside the UGB.

While we have made some limited progress in debunking that ecologically, socially and economically bankrupt notion over the intervening 18 years, he was practically and politically speaking, accurately describing how the Oregon land use planning program has functionally related to natural resources inside urban areas since the state wide planning program’s inception in the early 1970’s. It is only recently that even the more enlightened jurisdictions have undertaken any meaningful fish and wildlife habitat inventories, stormwater management and restoration of degraded natural landscapes. We still have far to go before we truly integrate the natural and built environments in this region.

IN LIVABLE CITIES IS PRESERVATION OF THE WILD

An appropriate corollary to Thoreau’s aphorism should be “In Livable Cities is the Preservation of the Wild.” For, unless we create compact, land-conserving cities we cannot hope to protect the “wild.” But, livable cities must include a vibrant urban Greenfrastructure with healthy streams, natural areas and neighborhood parks, inside our cities where the vast majority of our population lives. We need to do so through acquisition, regulation and stewardship. We also need innovative urban design that integrates the natural and built into a unique, unified urban landscape that is also a functioning urban ecosystem.

In my opinion, however, neither the so-called “Smart Growth” movement nor the New Urbanism adequately addresses the integration of nature in their schemes for the creation of livable cities. For example, when I recently visited the office of a prominent “smart growth” adherent I noticed a huge, four-foot by six-foot poster on their wall. Amidst the multi-modal transit schemes, row houses and townhouses and mixed-use developments was a small, three by five-inch space with the words “open space” in it. That was it. One small rectangle with the words “open space” to

convey the sense that Green was somewhere to be seen in this “smart growth” scenario. There were no wetlands, no un-culverted streams, not even a tree.

LEARNING FROM THE PAST

In preparation for this panel discussion I culled the following quotes from a few of my favorite planning and open space writings that capture eloquently and succinctly the points I would like to make today. I am hopeful that my illustrated presentation will depict visually what the following quotes so beautifully convey in words.

—William H Whyte, *The Last Landscape*, 1968

“Instead of laying down an arbitrary design for a region, it might be in order to find a plan that nature has already laid down. One way would be to chart all of the physical resources of the region. City and regional planning commissions have been staffed primarily by people concerned with physical design and development. The people who think mostly about nature, such as ecologists and biologists, have been operating on the fringes of regional planning, literally as well as figuratively. So have the landscape architects.”

“Linkage is the key. Most of the big tracts in our metropolitan areas have already been saved, or lost. The most pressing need now is to weave them together a host of seemingly disparate elements—and experimental farm, a private golf course, a local park, the spaces of a cluster subdivision, the edge of a new freeway right-of-way...the most important elements for linkage already exist. Nature has laid down a regional design of streams and valleys that provide superb natural connectors, and into the very heart of the urban area. Here the priorities are self-evident. Where streamside land has not been secured against development, it should be; where continuity has been broken, the pieces should be reclaimed wherever it is at all possible.”

“As a major part of their new beautification programs, cities should launch stream bank improvement projects to save what has not been concreted or rip-rapped; they should also launch projects to bring back to life some of the stretches which have been concreted. Another possibility worth exploring is the unburying of streams.”

—Anne Whiston Spirn, *The Granite Garden*, 1984

“the belief that the city is an entity apart from nature and even antithetical to it has dominated the way in which the city is perceived and continues to affect how it is built. This attitude has aggravated and even created many of the city’s environmental problems...Even those who have sought to introduce nature to the city in the form of parks and gardens have frequently viewed the city as something foreign to nature, have seen themselves as bringing a piece of nature to the city...The city must be recognized as part of nature and designed accordingly.”

“The city, the suburbs, and the countryside must be viewed as a single, evolving system within nature, as must every individual park and building within that larger whole. The social value of nature must be recognized and its power harnessed, rather than resisted. Nature in the city must be cultivated, like a garden, rather than ignored or subdued.”

—Robert Michael Pyle, *The Thunder Tree*, 1993

“Everybody has a ditch, or ought to. For only the ditches—and the fields, the woods, the ravines—can teach us to care enough for all the land. “In the long run, this mass estrangement from things natural bodes ill for the care of the earth. If we are to forge new links to the land, we must resist the extinction of experience. We must save not only the wilderness but the vacant lots, the ditches as well as the canyonlands, and the woodlots along with the old growth.”

“We all need spots near home where we can wander off a trail, lift a stone, poke about, and merely to wonder: places with no interpretive signs intrude their message to rob our spontaneous response. Along with nature centers, parks, and preserves, we would do well with to maintain a modicum of open space with no rule but common courtesy, no sign besides animals tracks. For these purposes, nothing serves better than hand-me-down habitats that lie somewhere between

formal protection and development.” “What is the extinction of the condor to a child who has never known a wren?”

SECURING THE URBAN GREENFRASTRUCTURE, PORTLAND-VANCOUVER METROPOLITAN REGION

What I would like to do now is describe how, over the past 18 years, we have sought to reverse the notion that nature is “out there”, how we are attempting to make a meaningful change toward integrating the natural and built environment.

I’d like to start with a vision of the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan region and start of the discussion with a few quotes from John Charles Olmsted. It was Olmsted, who was brought out west by the Portland and Seattle park boards who established the framework from which much of our parks, opens space and Greenspace planning as emanated.

In their “Report of the Park Board, Portland, Oregon 1903 With the Report of Messrs. Olmsted Bros., Landscape Architects, Outlining a System of Parkways, Boulevards and Parks for the City of Portland” John Charles and Fredrick Law, Jr Olmsted wrote,

“While there are many things, both small and great, which may contribute to the beauty of a great city, unquestionably one of the greatest is a comprehensive system of parks and parkways.”

“In addition to taking advantage of beautiful natural scenery, parks and parkways...Marked economy in municipal development may also be effected by laying out parkways and park, while land is cheap, so as to embrace streams that carry at times more water than can be taken care of by drain pipes of ordinary size. Thus brooks or little rivers which would otherwise become nuisances that would some day have to be put in large underground conduits at enormous expense, may be made the occasion for delightful local pleasure grounds or attractive parkways.”

It has been Olmsted’s admonition to create a comprehensive, interconnected park system, one that included the streams, steep slopes and large watery areas of the Columbia River floodplain that has informed virtually all of our parks, open space and Greenspace planning for the past two or three decades.

The main topics I will discuss in this presentation are:

1. Evolution of the Metropolitan Greenspaces Program that was initiated by local conservation organizations, neighborhood groups, and regional and local park planners in 1988.
2. The role of non-profit organizations like the 40-Mile Loop Land Trust and what now are over 100 citizen-led “friends” groups throughout the metropolitan region, on both sides of the Columbia River, in promoting Greenspace protection and restoration, and a comprehensive interconnected regional trail network inside the Urban Growth Boundary.
3. The importance of having the only directly elected regional government in the country, Metro, to address natural resource issues across jurisdictional boundaries.
4. The necessity of placing equal importance on protection and restoration of Greenspaces in our cities, both in response to the federal Endangered Species Act and in meeting the goals we have set forth in our Region 2040 Growth Concept.
5. The positive economic consequence of building our cities, “lighter, greener, smarter”, in the words of Patrick Condon, landscape professor from the University of British Columbia.

COALITION FOR A LIVABLE FUTURE: CREATING A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE METROPOLITAN REGION

We have pursued each of these issues through a unique collaboration of nonprofit organizations that came together six years ago to form the Coalition For A Livable Future. Robert Liberty, 1000 Friends of Oregon's director, provided the catalyst for the formation of the Coalition by bringing Myron Orfield, a state legislator from Minneapolis, to Portland in 1994. Representative Orfield had studied metropolitan regions throughout the U. S. and has documented the "hollowing out" of their urban cores.

Orfield's presentation brought together park and natural area advocates with land use, transportation, and urban design groups like 1000 Friends of Oregon, AIA, and Citizen for Sensible Transportation. More importantly it catalyzed a partnership between these mainstream environmental groups with affordable housing advocates, the Urban League, Albina Ministerial Alliance and Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, and Jobs With Justice and other social and environmental justice organizations. The Coalition currently has more than 55 nonprofit organizations, working in the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan region.

The Coalition organized around the following mission statement: To protect, restore, and maintain healthy, equitable, and sustainable communities, both human and natural, for the benefit of present and future residents of the greater metropolitan region. The focus of the Coalition is to adopt or change government land use, transportation, housing, public investment, economic and environmental policy through advocacy, research, and public education. CLF will also reach out to other groups that have a stake in these issues.

The following are the Coalition's broad regional objectives:

- 1). Protect the region's social and economic health including: preventing displacement of low and moderate income residents and people of color; assuring equitable access to employment and affordable housing throughout the region; reversing polarization of income;
- 2). Develop a sustainable relationship between human residents and the region's ecosystems by: changing patterns of urban expansion to more compact neighborhoods; expanding transportation options; protecting, restoring and maintaining healthy watersheds, fish and wildlife habitat, and Greenspaces both within and outside the Urban Growth Boundary;
- 3). Assure fair distribution of tax burdens and government investment within the region;
- 4). Promote a diverse and tolerant society;
- 5). Increase public understanding of regional growth management issues, develop effective democratic discourse, and promote broader citizen participation in decision-making regarding regional growth issues.

Focus On Regional Growth Management

One of the first areas of focus for the Coalition was participation in the development of a regional vision as part of our regional Government's Regional 2040 planning process. Both Robert Liberty and I sat on Metro's Future Vision Commission that developed, among numerous other recommendations, the following vision for the region:

"Integrate urban, suburban, and rural lands in a watershed-wide perspective to ensure reduction in downstream flooding, reduction in winter time flows and enhancement of summer flows, protection of riparian corridors and wetlands and restoration of fisheries. Any future development within the targeted urban reserves must be sensitive to increased stormwater runoff, erosion, and sources of pollution and flooding downstream communities. An integrated, multiobjective floodplain management strategy shall be developed which recognizes the multiple values of stream and river

corridors including: enhanced water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, open space, increased property values, education, flood reduction, aesthetics, and recreation. An interconnected system of streams, rivers, and wetlands that are managed on an ecosystem basis and restoration of currently degraded streams and wetlands are important elements of this ecosystem approach.”

In addition to a number of other Coalition priorities, in the Greenspaces arena we next took on the task of redefining what the region viewed as “infrastructure” in our Regional Growth Goals and Objectives (RUGGO’s). We developed an alternative definition, took it to the regional advisory committee of local elected officials and the full Metro Council and the following definition of urban infrastructure was adopted:

Infrastructure: Roads, water systems, sewage systems, systems for storm drainage, telecommunications and energy transmission and distribution systems, bridges, transportation facilities, parks, schools and public facilities developed to support the functioning of the developed portions of the environment. Areas of the undeveloped portions of the environment such as floodplains, riparian and wetland zones, groundwater recharge and discharge areas and Greenspaces that provide important functions related to maintaining the region’s air and water quality, reduce the need for infrastructure expenses and contribute to the region’s quality of life.

Greenspace Acquisition and Watershed Management: Even prior to the formation of the Coalition, a loosely organized Greenspaces coalition formed to develop a regional Greenspaces initiative. Beginning in 1988 the Audubon Society of Portland and several other groups, like The Wetlands Conservancy that would later become active members of the Coalition For A Livable Future, embarked on an effort to create a regionally, interconnected natural areas system. We identified Metro as the logical government entity to house a regional natural areas system. Working with Metro, numerous citizen groups, and local park providers, we were able to persuade Metro Council to establish a Regional Parks and Greenspaces Program at Metro.

Again, coalition-building and establishing partnerships with government agencies at every level were key to this successful grassroots effort. We also had to be creative. We brought in the “outside experts” such as Dr. David Goode, Director of the London Ecology Unit in England and New Yorker author, Tony Hiss who wrote an article about our efforts in national publications. We also invited nationally syndicated columnist Neil Pierce to address our newly established coalition of Greenspace advocates, FAUNA (Friends and Advocates of Urban Natural Areas). We then organized two field tours of the East Bay Regional Park District in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties in the San Francisco Bay area so local elected officials and park professionals in our region could see how a natural areas focused regional park system can be developed and managed.

In spring of 1989 Metro commissioned, with funding from the Audubon Society of Portland, local neighborhood groups, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and a host of other cooperators, infrared photography for the entire Portland-Vancouver metropolitan region, an area covering 1925 square miles (55 miles north to south and 35 miles east to west). Dr. Joe Poracsky, professor of geography at Portland State University and his graduate students then digitized this low-level imagery to produce for the first time in our region a map of all remaining natural areas in the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan region.

The result of these efforts was development of the political will and broad public support at both the local and regional level to both establish a regional Greenspaces program at Metro and to pass, with over 60% approval, a \$135.6 million bond measure in May of 1995 to acquire up to 6,000 acres of Greenspaces. To date, Metro has acquired over 6,300 acres of significant Greenspaces (natural areas) inside and outside the Urban Growth Boundary. While this acquisition program is a very important tool, even the acquisition of more than 6,000 acres is inadequate to protect the regional landscape.

Regulatory Approach, Region-Wide Floodplain and Water Quality Management: During the past six years the Coalition’s Natural Resources Working Group has focused its efforts in the regulatory arena and the development of a region-wide Urban Growth Management Functional

Plan, one element of which (Title 3) addresses floodplain and water quality management. Every public opinion survey demonstrates there is tremendous support for additional regulatory approaches to the protection of water quality and maintaining the integrity of the region's urban waterways. Water quality is viewed as essential to the maintenance of the region's livability and long-term economic health. Protecting urban streams is consistently rated one of the top values in Metro's public surveys conducted in the metropolitan area. One Metro survey indicates that 60% of the respondents want to protect urban streams, even if it means limiting development.

The Portland metropolitan region has 213 miles of water quality limited (303 (d)-listed) streams and rivers. In addition to these polluted stream miles 388 miles of streams have "disappeared." They have been culverted, routed underground or piped under streets and parking lots. An estimated 8,840 household units in the region are in or close to floodplains. Approximately 1,080 units were built in floodplains since 1992. During the February 1996 flood, 189 homes in the region were inundated with water. According to the Oregon Emergency Management Office the cost of this flood was about \$60 million for the three counties in Metro's jurisdiction.

Unbuildable Lands: To address these issues the Coalition For A Livable Future has worked with local stream groups and watershed councils, Metro staff and elected officials at the local and regional levels to develop a region-wide strategy to address development in the region's floodplains and degradation of water quality in the Willamette River and its tributaries. Harkening back to Ian McHarg's Design With Nature, at the outset of the Region 2040 planning process Metro removed over 16,000 acres from the region's buildable lands inventory. All wetlands, stream corridors (including a 200' wide corridor on both sides of all streams, measured from center line), all floodplains and steep slopes 25% and over have been placed in the "unbuildable lands" inventory. The significance of this action is that none of these lands are "needed" to meet the region's housing, transportation or other development needs. Metro has made its calculations on acreage needed to accommodate growth without these "unbuildable" lands. Of course, what actually happens to these lands is another matter. They are virtually all privately owned.

Regulating Floodplains and Stream Corridors, Step One: The first step in actually protecting a portion of the 16,000 acres of unbuildable lands has come through the development of Title 3 of Metro's Urban Growth Management Functional Plan. A new regulatory program governing development in floodplains and along streams was adopted by the full Metro Council in the summer of 1998. These regulations require the all jurisdictions to do the following:

1. A preference for no new development in the floodplains of the region's rivers and streams or, at a minimum, require "balanced cut and fill." While this does not represent a prohibition of floodplain development it does go beyond FEMA regulations and what is in place in most local jurisdictions.

2. Adopt water quality performance standards that focus on retention of vegetated corridors along all of the region's streams, rivers and wetlands. Each city and county will be required to maintain vegetated corridors which provide shade, stabilize banks, traps soil and other runoff before it enters the water and moderates stormwater flow. The vegetated corridors will measure (on each side of the water feature):

15' for seasonal streams that drain between 50 and 100 acres, on slopes of less than 25%:

50' for perennial streams or rivers that drain more than 100 acres, wetlands and year-round springs if they are in areas where slopes are less than 25 %.

200' for streams and wetlands where slopes are more than 25%.

3. Local jurisdictions are required to either adopt Metro's map which delineates all floodplains, wetlands, stream corridors and steep slopes (over 24%) throughout the region or develop their own maps which "substantially comply" with Metro's maps.

4. Region-wide erosion control for any new development (no acreage limitation).

5. Adopt Metro's Model Ordinance or develop their own ordinance which substantially complies with Metro's Model Ordinance.

REGIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT PROGRAM

Metro is now in the process of adopting regionwide standards to protect, and restore, regionally significant fish and wildlife habitat. At this point Metro has developed recommendations for a regional "safe harbor" Streamside CPR Program that will require 200-foot Riparian Management Areas on each side of all intermittent and perennial streams inside the Urban Growth Boundary and within Metro's jurisdiction. The total amount of land covered by these regulations is 44,000 acres, two-thirds of which is already developed in some way and approximately at third is vacant, undeveloped land.

The Purpose, Goal and Principles that underpin the Goal 5 program includes the following language:

"Our region places a high priority on the protection of its streams, wetlands and floodplains to maintain access to nature; sustain and enhance native fish and wildlife species and their habitats; mitigate high storm flows and maintain adequate summer flows; provide clean water; and create communities that fully integrate the built and natural environment. As ribbons of green, stream and river corridors maintain connections with adjacent upland habitats, form an interconnected mosaic of urban forest and other fish and wildlife habitat, and contribute significantly to our region's livability."

"This system should be preserved, restored where appropriate, and managed to maintain the region's biodiversity." The streamside program will contribute to these objectives by balancing, economic, social, environmental and energy considerations as will future efforts to address watershed and upland habitats."

"The overall goal is to conserve, protect and restore a continuous ecologically viable streamside corridor system, from the streams' headwaters to their confluence with others streams and rivers, and with their floodplains in a manner that is integrated with the surrounding urban landscape. This system will be achieved through conservation, protection and restoration of streamside corridors through time."

Recognizing that within the already developed lands that restoration is more likely to contribute to improved environmental quality than protection, restoration as a condition of redevelopment or significant changes to existing structures will be emphasized. On the undeveloped lands and in newly designated Urban Reserves protection is more of an option.

Metro is currently contemplating allowing local governments to develop their own, flexibly approach to meeting the goals of the regional "safe harbor" program by making provisions for Riparian District Plans or local discretionary review. For example, the city of Portland's Willamette River harbor is already severely degraded, so much so that EPA will soon declare much of it a superfund site. It is unrealistic to simply apply the 200-foot Riparian Management Area standard to the downtown Portland harbor. A more realistic approach will be to hold Portland to a standard that requires improvement of fish and wildlife habitat conditions where redevelopment will occur in already degraded areas of the harbor and the outright protection and enhancement of those areas that are still in relatively good ecological health, such as the 160-acre Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge and nearby Ross Island complex.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT, IMPLICATIONS FOR REGIONAL GROWTH MANAGEMENT

The recent listing of steelhead trout and Chinook salmon as Threatened by the National Marine Fisheries Service has brought the Endangered Species Act to the Portland metropolitan region in a manner that we believe will assist in the adoption of these and other water resource-oriented

growth management policies.

But, our concerns about natural resource protection do not stop with the Endangered Species Act. While the ESA is critical to address and a tremendous potential lever to enact better natural resource protection, we are just as concerned about the common, everyday Greenspaces inside the Urban Growth Boundary. Robert Michael Pyle describes these as “hand-me-down habitats” in his book, *The Thunder Tree* that celebrates the virtues of urban waterways and “ditches” in inner city urban environments. Our guiding principle when it comes to natural resource protection inside the UGB is that every citizen should be within a 15 minute walk of a park and Greenspace, regardless of whether they live in more upscale neighborhoods in Portland’s west hills or outlying communities or in low income communities along the severely degraded Columbia Slough and Johnson Creek.

INTEGRATING URBAN RENEWAL, CLEAN WATER ACT, REDEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF GREENSPACES

There are numerous other programs, both regional and local, that the Coalition is focusing its collective energies on to ensure better integration of the built and natural environment. For example, in the city of Portland the 130-acre North Macadam Urban Renewal Area holds promise of both creating a mixed use commercial and residential neighborhood near downtown and simultaneously restoring the riverbank and creating a new 100-foot wide Greenway; a CSO (Combined Sewer Overflow) abatement program that de-emphasizes bricks and mortar solutions and puts significant funds into stream bank, floodplain and wetland restoration; and a new River Renaissance project that will revisit and re-invigorate the long-moribund Willamette River Greenway. At Metro there is a new Greenstreets Project that will focus attention on the cause of more than one-third of urban stormwater runoff, the transportation system.

Finally, we have much work to do to document the economic value of the urban Greeninfrastructure. The Coalition has brought Professor Patrick Condon, the James Taylor Chair of the Landscape & Livable Environments program at the University of British Columbia, to Portland to make his case that it is possible to build high density residential and commercial developments while addressing urban stormwater management and providing a vibrant urban Greeninfrastructure. Condon has demonstrated that there are positive economic consequence of building our cities, “lighter, greener, smarter”, as contrasted with the status quo “heavy, gray, stupid” way we design neighborhoods. Condon’s designs yield a 10 unit/acre density while reducing effective imperviousness to around 10%, the threshold at which urban streams are degraded by increased volumes of stormwater runoff. Reed College’s Dr. Noelwah Neutsil’s has also documented the economic value of natural area with respect to resale value of residential properties as a function of proximity to parks and natural areas. Dr. Neutsil has document over \$7,000 added value to homes that are as far as 1500 meters from a natural area. Too little documentation of this sort has been done and will be a focus of future Coalition work.

CNU’S ROLE

In closing, I would again like to make the case that there is a role for the CNU in make meaningful changes to how we view cities. I would urge you to ensure your mission explicitly addresses the need to integrate the natural and built environments so that our communities are not only well designed but are also just and sustainable.