

## NEW ISSUES WEEK FOUR

### **I. A Livability Agenda**

Leave the environment better than we found it.

1. Friendly neighbors. Announce federal government will no longer ignore local zoning regulations by states and officials but will only do so in extreme circumstances as certified by the Secretary of the Agency. See e.g., HR 1231 Post Office Community Partnership Act.
2. Flooding and Disaster Relief. Appoint panel to examine recent FEMA emergencies and study, with the Corps of Engineers, means of avoiding repetition.
3. Encourage urban growth boundaries. Some western cities are growing unchecked, highlight success of Portland in use of urban growth boundaries.
4. Encourage light rail. Current federal law offers federal 80% matching funds if local communities provide 20% of the resources for a highway but significantly less if the money is invested in light rail. Make the subsidy equal.
5. Curb auto incentives. Federal employees often receive free parking which serves to encourage automobile use. Offer subsidies to alternative means of transport (public, bicycle, etc) at levels equal to that currently in place for auto parking. (Already in existence for Senate employees).
6. Announce time table for fixing of park in front of White House into pedestrian-oriented zone. The PPI is recommending a national campaign to reclaim public spaces aimed at guaranteeing safe access and use by law-abiding citizens to parks, downtown commercial and retail areas, public transportation systems, and entertainment facilities.

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**(7) Cops in Public Housing.** Designate 20 worst public housing projects and then pick up the tab for federal law enforcement officers who are willing to live in them. This is modeled off the Milwaukee program in which cops pay \$1 a month to live in public housing. The program attracted a lot of interest from police (50 applications for 20 spots). It was scaled back recently against community protests and they've added a community service requirement.

**(8) Public Ownership of Sports Teams.** Communities are currently prohibited from owning their local football team, except for the Green Bay Packers who have been grandfathered in. Wealthy owners in football, and other sports, need to be able to move teams so they can play towns off against each other in order to get publicly financed stadiums. This is a legislative move to deny leagues their antitrust exemption if they don't let towns bid to buy their teams when they are for sale.

**(9) Free TV Announcement--** Four months ago Gore announced the formation, via Executive Order, of an Advisory Committee on Digital TV. It was hoped that this might be a vehicle for getting free tv time for candidates. The Commerce Department is taking control and opposes (an ex-staffer for Markey is working on it). Paul Taylor has met with Rahm and Waldman on this. Our candidates should include Paul Taylor, Norm Ornstein, Cass Sunstein, and Barry Diller. This would be a good public event of the President urging them to find a way to get free tv time.

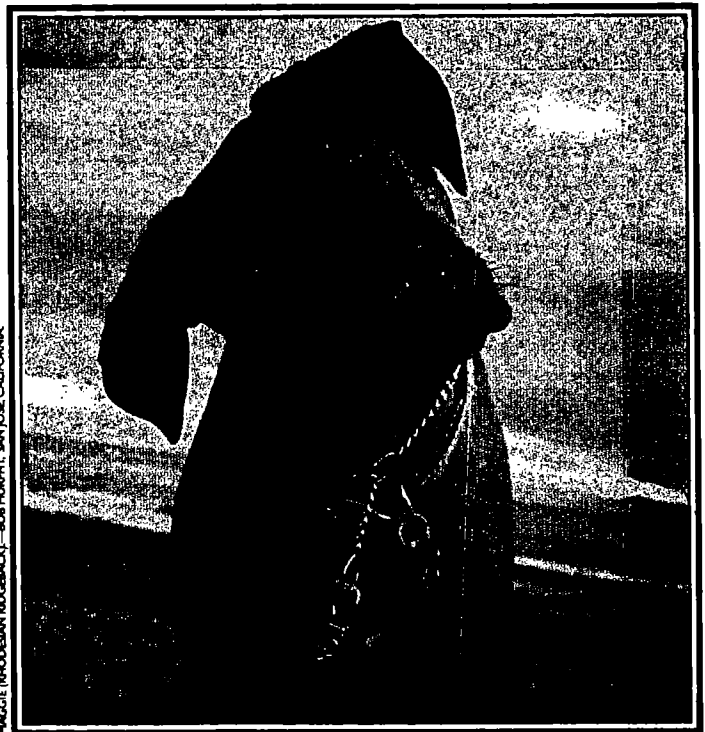
**(10) Second Chance Homes:** Bill to create a network of second-chance homes for teen mothers to help them raise their children while building independent lives.

**Phase out Sugar Subsidies by 2003**

**Arthur Schlesinger One Nation Conference**

# **Livable Communities Agenda Mission, Principles and Projects**

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MAGGIE (RHODESIAN INDEMNITY) — BOB MURPHY, SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

**An Explanation**

### **The Livable Communities agenda.**

The primary goal of the Livable Communities agenda is to promote livability in Federal legislation and regulations. To do so, we will (1) identify and act on specific legislative initiatives, and (2) educate members and the public.

### **What Will We Seek to Promote?**

Federal policies that:

- ⇒ Require local community involvement in government decisions at all levels;
- ⇒ Provide local communities with the tools to solve their own local problems;
- ⇒ Find cheaper, more environmentally friendly solutions to infrastructure problems, thereby preserving and conserving resources;
- ⇒ Prepare communities to function in a global environment;
- ⇒ Focus on partnerships (local govt., private companies, federal govt., non-profits, citizen groups) for funding solutions;
- ⇒ Encourage multi-objective management -- i.e., management choices that have multiple beneficial results. An example is wetlands restoration which also provides flood and storm water protection.

# Components of Livable Communities

The following table is an initial analysis of the specific components of livability, with some federal components, such as existing laws, agencies, and regulations, that affect livable communities.

## I. PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

| Livable Communities Goals                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Oregon Example                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Possible Federal Component                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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| <p><b>Transportation:</b> Balanced transportation systems that meet the transportation needs of local and regional users.</p> <p><b>Goal:</b> Provide a range of transportation options that allow people to choose the most cost-effective, convenient mode of travel for their needs.</p> <p>Increase freight and passenger mobility by providing alternatives to single occupancy vehicles.</p> <p>Decrease impacts on the environment by promoting non-polluting modes of travel.</p> | <p>Light rail instead of the Mt. Hood Freeway.</p> <p>Coordinated Land Use, Transportation and Air Quality planning to support alternatives to the Westside Bypass.</p> <p>IVHS projects to increase freight mobility.</p> <p>Bike and Pedestrian plans and full-time coordinators at state and local levels.</p> <p>Bike racks on buses.</p> <p>Pedestrian-oriented zones in Gresham and Portland.</p> <p>Using FTA funds to facilitate development around light rail stations.</p> <p>Transportation Planning Rule requiring policies to reduce Vehicle Miles Travelled.</p> | <p>ISTEA</p> <p>Clean Air Act</p> <p>Tax laws on transit deductions.</p> <p>Home lending programs</p> <p>Bicycle Caucus (already established): Encouraging use of bikes for transport.</p> <p>Transit pass bill (to be introduced by Rep. Blumenauer) - giving House employers the same options as Senate employers to offer a transit benefit.</p> |

## Components of Livable Communities

| Livable Communities Goals                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Oregon Example                                                                                                                                                                            | Possible Federal Component                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b><i>Energy Use / Infrastructure:</i></b><br/>Use renewable energy whenever possible as an energy source. Promote public power resources in which citizens have a say re: how power is generated and used.</p> <p><b><i>Goal:</i></b> Clean air, pollution prevention. Conservation of scarce resources. Limit environmental externalities of energy.</p> | <p>City energy policy creates standards for energy conservation, ie. solar protection in Building Codes or low-interest energy loans, and City energy-management programs.</p>            | <p>Clean Air Act.</p> <p>Electricity Restructuring</p> <p>Public Power treatment</p> <p>Renewable energy development funding</p>                                                                    |
| <p><b><i>Global Environment:</i></b><br/>Recognizing that Air, Water, and other environmental concerns do not recognize geo-political boundaries. Balance the need for economic values of resource extraction with the need to preserve resources on a global scale</p>                                                                                       | <p>Using Oregon's natural resources for tourist opportunities.</p> <p>High Desert Museum.</p> <p>Crater Lake National Park</p>                                                            | <p>Environmental funds in Foreign Aid authorizations and appropriations.</p> <p>Fast track negotiating authority</p> <p>Other trade legislation</p> <p>Energy and Water Appropriations</p>          |
| <p><b><i>Natural Resources and Public Lands:</i></b> Balance the need for economic values of resource extraction with the need to preserve resources in situ for their ecological, recreational, and cultural values.</p> <p><b><i>Goal:</i></b> Leave the environment better than we found it.</p>                                                           | <p>Land Use planning laws.</p> <p>Urban growth boundaries.</p> <p>Columbia Gorge and other local parks / wilderness areas</p> <p>Local cultural resources: Oregon Public Broadcasting</p> | <p>Estate tax laws</p> <p>Legislation on National Parks</p> <p>Farm bill</p> <p>NEA authorization and appropriation.</p> <p>Interior Appropriations</p> <p>Land and Water Development trustfund</p> |

## Components of Livable Communities

### II. SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE COMPONENTS

| Livable Communities Goals                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Oregon Example                                                                                                                         | Possible Federal Component                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Community Input:</b><br/>Defending taxpayer's stake in sound land use and other government decisions.</p> <p><i>Goal:</i> Improve decisions by asking those directly affected for input.</p>                                                                                                    | <p>Requirement that all planning activities include substantial public involvement.</p>                                                | <p>Current regulatory requirements for cost / benefit analysis.</p> <p>Sports Franchise legislation (to be introduced by Rep. Blumenauer)</p>                       |
| <p><b>Crime:</b> Increase actual and perceived safety and security.</p> <p><i>Goal:</i> Design self-policing communities and increasing vitality of urban neighborhoods.</p>                                                                                                                          | <p>DUII penalties. E-911 system.</p> <p>Community policing programs</p>                                                                | <p>DUII bill at the federal level (Rep. Blumenauer has introduced).</p> <p>Crime bills (ex. community policing authorizations, law enforcement use of spectrum)</p> |
| <p><b>Welfare:</b> Fight poverty by providing support necessary for families to move from welfare to work.</p> <p><i>Goal:</i> Adequate funds for job training and child care.<br/>Protecting legal immigrants and asylees from unfair treatment</p>                                                  | <p>JOBS Plus program, a public-private partnership, places welfare clients in six-month, subsidized, on-the-job training positions</p> | <p>Welfare reform</p>                                                                                                                                               |
| <p><b>Health Care:</b> Ensuring the public health for people of all ages, all incomes.</p> <p><i>Goal:</i> Protect Medicare and Medicaid. Encourage managed care, where appropriate, in order to provide better care to more people. Fixing capitation rates so efficient states are not punished</p> | <p>Oregon Health Plan</p> <p>High enrollment in managed care.</p>                                                                      | <p>Medicare program.</p>                                                                                                                                            |

## Components of Livable Communities

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| Livable Communities Goals                                                                                                                                                                                | Oregon Example                                                                                                                                                                                               | Possible Federal Component |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <p><b><i>Disaster Mitigation:</i></b><br/>Encourage appropriate development while protecting the environment, tax dollars and human lives.</p> <p><b>Goal:</b> End subsidization of bad development.</p> | <p>Watershed Councils to monitor and protect urban watersheds.</p> <p>Local drainage development standards.</p> <p>Environmental zoning.</p> <p>State geologists GIS mapping of Oregon earthquake risks.</p> | <p>FEMA</p>                |

# Livable Communities Agenda

## Mission, Principles and Projects

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Drawing by Catherine Johnson  
From James Howard Kunzler's book *Home from Nowhere* (Simon & Schuster, 1996)

Those from among you shall build the old waste places;  
You shall raise up the foundations of many generations;  
And you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach,  
The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In.

*Isaiah 58:12*

### **The Livable Communities Task Force.**

The primary goal of the Livable Communities Task Force is to promote the livability agenda as an important tool for Democrats in the House. To do so, we will (1) develop and support legislative initiatives that promote livability, and (2) educate members about the potential of livability as a framework for developing policy and outreach strategies.

### **What is a livable community?**

Livable Communities are those where people:

- *Can afford to live:* The opportunity for affordable housing and for home ownership are essential to a livable community.
- *Have a range of transportation options:* Livable communities do not hold residents captive to the automobile. They provide a choice of transit, walking, biking, rollerblades -- choices that better the quality of our lives.
- *Feel safe:* Statistics don't make a community more livable. Residents must be able to entrust their families to the streets, to the roads, to the schools.
- *Can create an environmentally and economically sustainable future for their children:* Where environmental protections and the economy are interconnected, it is impossible for the air to be too clean or the water too pure.
- *Can participate in shaping their own neighborhoods:* Citizen participation must not be one of a list of criteria to be checked off. The landmark achievements of our communities are all the result of citizens being involved at all levels -- the push, the pull, the tug they exert on our efforts have made our good accomplishments better.

### **What kinds of solutions create Livable Communities?**

- *Inexpensive, low-tech solutions:* Many things that we are most excited about really don't cost very much, if we do them right.
- *Incentives:* Helping people understand what's possible is a more effective way of creating communities that work than blanket regulations. And incentives for the right sorts of behaviors are tools that are far more powerful and more effective than any regulation in unharnessing ingenuity, creativity, and enthusiasm.
- *Partnerships:* No single level of government has all of the answers. We certainly don't have them all here in Washington, but the solutions can't be found through devolution, either. Our experience in our home communities is that successes are not the result of singular brilliance or cookie-cutter regulations, but of the innovative use of partnerships. Time and again, solutions emerge when citizens create and validate the vision and energy for partnerships involving civic and business organizations, state and local governments and the federal government.

The following pages identify Livable Communities goals as they relate to federal legislation and programs.

The following table is an initial analysis of the specific components of livability, with some federal components, such as existing laws, agencies, and regulations, that affect livable communities.

## I. PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

| Livable Communities Goals                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Federal Component                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Transportation:</b> Balanced transportation systems that meet the transportation needs of local and regional users.</p> <p><b>Goal:</b> Provide a range of transportation options that allow people to choose the most cost-effective, convenient mode of travel for their needs.</p> <p>Increase freight and passenger mobility by providing alternatives to single occupancy vehicles.</p> <p>Decrease impacts on the environment by promoting non-polluting modes of travel.</p> | <p>ISTEA</p> <p>Clean Air Act</p> <p>Promoting tax equity for transportation benefits.</p> <p>Home lending programs that include location-efficient mortgages.</p> <p>Bicycle Caucus: Promoting cycling as a national transportation priority.</p> <p>HR. Res. 37 allowing House employers the option to offer a \$21/month transit benefit.</p> |
| <p><b>Energy Use / Infrastructure:</b> Use renewable energy whenever possible as an energy source. Promote public power resources in which citizens have a say re: how power is generated and used.</p> <p><b>Goal:</b> Clean air, pollution prevention. Conservation of scarce resources. Limit environmental externalities of energy.</p>                                                                                                                                               | <p>Clean Air Act.</p> <p>Electricity restructuring and deregulation</p> <p>Public Power treatment</p> <p>Renewable energy development funding</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p><b>Global Environment:</b> Recognizing that Air, Water, and other environmental concerns do not recognize geo-political boundaries. Balance the need for economic values of resource extraction with the need to preserve resources on a global scale</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p>Environmental funds in Foreign Aid authorizations and appropriations.</p> <p>Fast track negotiating authority and other trade legislation.</p> <p>Energy and Water Appropriations</p>                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p><b>Urban Infrastructure:</b> We cannot thrive as a country if our cities are in disrepair. The federal government should partner with local communities to preserve and revitalize inner cities and downtowns.</p> <p><b>Goal:</b> Thriving downtowns and inner cities. Preservation of urban core.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                | <p>HR 1555, the American Cities Investment Act.</p> <p>GSA partnerships with Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)</p> <p>Brownfields</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

| Livable Communities Goals                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Federal Component                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b><i>Natural/Cultural Resources and Public Lands:</i></b> Balance the need for economic values of resource extraction with the need to preserve resources in situ for their ecological, recreational, and cultural values.</p> <p><b><i>Goal:</i></b> Leave the environment better than we found it.</p> | <p>Estate tax laws that promote sustainable use of natural resources.</p> <p>Support for maintenance of National Parks and wilderness areas.</p> <p>Agriculture and Interior Appropriations</p> <p>NEA authorization and appropriation.</p> <p>Land and Water Conservation Fund</p> <p>Forest Service reform</p> <p>Create a process for water management that mirrors ISTEA's reforms to the transportation planning process.</p> |

## II. SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE COMPONENTS

| Livable Communities Goals                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Possible Federal Component                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Stewardship of Community Resources:</b> Defending taxpayer's stake in sound land use and other decisions affecting public resources.</p> <p><i>Goal:</i> Improve decisionmaking by relying on input from all affected parties.</p>                            | <p>HR 1231 -- Post Office Community Partnership Act</p> <p>HR 590 -- Give Fans a Chance Act</p>                                                                                                                         |
| <p><b>Public Safety:</b> Increase actual and perceived safety and security in our neighborhoods and on our public roads.</p> <p><i>Goal:</i> Design self-policing communities and increase vitality of urban neighborhoods.</p>                                     | <p>HR 108 -- Vehicle Forfeiture for Repeat Drunk Drivers Act</p> <p>HR 814 -- Defense of Children Act (Requires gun dealers to offer a locking device or lock box with the sale of any gun)</p> <p>Enterprise Zones</p> |
| <p><b>Education:</b> Prepare our children and communities for the 21st Century through education.</p> <p><i>Goal:</i> Improve access to higher education. Help communities improve the quality of schools. Ensure adults have access to training opportunities.</p> | <p>H.R. 777 The 21st Century Scholars Act of 1997</p> <p>H.R. 828 The Equal Protection School Finance Act</p>                                                                                                           |
| <p><b>Disaster Mitigation:</b> Encourage appropriate development while protecting the environment, tax dollars and human lives.</p> <p><i>Goal:</i> Discontinue support of policies that encourage unsustainable development.</p>                                   | <p>FEMA reform</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

# H.R. 1231: Post Office Community Partnership Act

Introduced by Congressman Earl Blumenauer

April 8, 1997

**What is the Problem?** When building, closing or altering post offices, the U.S. Postal Service is ignoring local laws and bringing harm to communities across the country.

**First**, the Postal Service is not required to abide by local zoning and building laws. This has led the Postal Service to build new facilities or make changes to existing facilities out of compliance with local plans for growth management, traffic management, environmental protection or public safety.

**Second**, communities have little say in the decisions that impact them. Currently, under Section 404(b) of Title 39 of the U.S. Code, the post office is required to consider the effect of any closings or consolidations of post offices on the community. The post office has adopted "community contact" procedures to meet the requirements of this section. However, the post office has, in some cases, not followed these procedures where they are not technically required to do so. The most glaring examples have involved relocations, which can have major impacts on communities but do not fit the technical definition of "closing" or "consolidation".

## A Few of the Communities Negatively Affected by Post Office Decisions:

- |                |                    |                  |                 |
|----------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| ⇒ Portland, OR | ⇒ Durbey, NY       | ⇒ Castine, ME    | ⇒ Golden, CO    |
| ⇒ Lakewood, NY | ⇒ Red Lodge, MT    | ⇒ Woodland, WA   | ⇒ McCall, ID    |
| ⇒ Big Horn, WY | ⇒ Philadelphia, PA | ⇒ Basalt, CO     | ⇒ Abbeville, LA |
| ⇒ Auburn, CA   | ⇒ Parks, LA        | ⇒ Livingston, MT | ⇒ Genoa, NE     |

**How H.R. 1231 Helps:** Treats the Postal Service as a responsible member of the community by not allowing it to be above local laws. Gives the community a voice in post office decisions.

**First**, the proposal would require the Postal Service to comply with any zoning or building codes that the local community may have in place, so long as those regulations are applicable to state or local public entities, including the zoning authority itself.

**Second**, outlining minimum community contact procedures that apply to the **renovation, relocation, closing and consolidation** of post offices, not just closings and consolidations as under current law. Included would be a list of criteria the post office must consider when evaluating the effect of the decision on the community.

Under the community contact procedures, individuals served by the post office in question would be given the opportunity to offer reasonable alternatives to the Postal Service proposal, to which the Postal Service would reply in writing why the alternative is or is not viable. The proposal would also expand communities' rights to appeal Postal Service decisions to the Postal Rate Commission, to include **renovations and relocations** along with **closings and consolidations**.

*For more information or to cosponsor, contact Michael Harrison at 225-4811*

# GIVE FANS A CHANCE

## The Who, What, When, Where, and Why

**Who:** Rep. Earl Blumenauer has introduced  
**H.R. 590**, to **Give Fans a Chance**

### **WHEN** it started: **The Green Bay Story**

The Green Bay Packers were founded in 1919. In 1950, the fans saved the team from bankruptcy through a one and only public stock offering. Since then, this team from the NFL's smallest city has seen 175 consecutive sell-outs, 11 championships, and three Superbowls, including the Superbowl they won this year. They have the best record in the NFL.

The Packers aren't an ordinary football team. Their fans aren't ordinary fans. And their community isn't an ordinary community -- **because 1,915 residents of Green Bay and other "Packer Backers" own their football team.** The Packers help hold the Green Bay community together.

### **What** needs to be done:

The Green Bay Packers are unique. NFL rules prohibit any more public ownership of teams. H.R. 590 gives fans a chance to define their communities by owning the local team. It:

- ⇒ Eliminates league rules against public ownership
- ⇒ Gives communities a voice in team relocation decisions
- ⇒ Ties the leagues' broadcast antitrust exemption to the requirements in this bill.

### **Where:** Communities affected

These are only a few of the communities affected by franchise moves. H.R. 590 would give localities and fans a voice.

- |                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| ⇒ Brooklyn, NY     | ⇒ New York, NY    |
| ⇒ Washington, DC   | ⇒ Seattle, WA     |
| ⇒ Oakland, CA      | ⇒ Los Angeles, CA |
| ⇒ Philadelphia, PA | ⇒ Baltimore, MD   |
| ⇒ Cleveland, OH    | ⇒ Houston, TX     |
| ⇒ Sacramento, CA   | ⇒ New Orleans, LA |
| ⇒ Tampa Bay, FL    | ⇒ Minneapolis, MN |
| ⇒ Hartford, CT     |                   |

### **Why:** Questions and Answers

#### ***Why is this bill necessary?***

Since 1950, there have been 68 franchise moves in the four major sports leagues. Only a few teams currently have any form of public ownership, including the Celtics, the Packers, and the Florida Panthers. These teams haven't moved since they went public.

Public ownership of teams could help stem the tide of franchise moves, which severely test fan loyalty. But many league rules and practices either prohibit or discourage public ownership.

#### ***Why is a "community voice" so important?***

Like it or not, professional sports teams have become an integral part of the fabric that makes up our communities. Too often, however, sports team owners instigate pitched battles between local communities over placement of teams. These communities are willing to pay millions of dollars to coax teams from one city to another -- at the expense of other vital city services.

Communities need more leverage in these battles. H.R. 590 provides that leverage by requiring teams to listen to the community before making a relocation decision. It also gives communities an opportunity to purchase the team.

#### ***Why tie this bill to the broadcast antitrust exemption?***

This congressionally granted antitrust exemption allows teams to collaborate on the purchase of national broadcast time. The NFL earned \$1.2 billion on broadcast rights last year. Since Congress granted the leagues this benefit in 1961, professional sports in America have flourished. This exemption has provided the financial foundation for each team in each of the leagues. We have an obligation to sports fans to ensure the exemption is used for positive purposes.

For more information contact *Stephanie Vance* in the DC Office at (202) 225-0820 or  
*Julia Pomeroy* in the Portland Office at (503) 231-2300

# H.R. 814 – The “Defense of Children Act”

## HERE ARE THE STATS:

- Every 90 minutes a child is killed with a loaded gun
- 1 out of 8 fatalities among kids are from guns
- Shootings are the 4<sup>th</sup> leading cause of accidental death for children
- For every child killed by gunfire, 4 more are wounded

## WE NEED TO REDUCE THESE STATS

Kids should not mix with guns improperly stored in the home. We can and should do something about it. The right to own a gun must be balanced with the responsibility of keeping guns out of children's hands. When people buy a gun, they should be encouraged to purchase a device that ensures the gun will not be accidentally handled or fired.

## STATES ARE ALREADY TAKING ACTION

**Child Access Prevention (CAP) laws** and other similar trigger lock laws are already on the books in 15 states and a number of local communities. **CAP laws** make it the legal responsibility of both gun dealers to provide and gun owners to use such devices. **THESE LAWS WORK.** Florida, the first state to pass such a law, showed a **50%** drop in unintentional deaths the first year after passage. California has shown similar results after passage of their **CAP** law.

## OUR BILL WOULD FOLLOW THE STATES' LEAD

Our bill consists of the following main provisions, which are included in most versions of the state **CAP** law:

- makes it unlawful for any person to leave a loaded firearm, or a firearm near ammunition, in a manner that makes it likely to be reasonably accessed by a juvenile without supervision or permission
- makes it unlawful for a gun dealer to sell a firearm unless the dealer has offered to sell the gun buyer a locking device or “lock box” for safe gun storage
- requires gun dealers to post a sign saying that such a law is in effect to notify potential customers

### States where CAP laws are already in effect:

- |               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| • California  | • Nevada         |
| • Connecticut | • New Jersey     |
| • Delaware    | • North Carolina |
| • Florida     | • Rhode Island   |
| • Hawaii      | • Texas          |
| • Iowa        | • Virginia       |
| • Maryland    | • Wisconsin      |
| • Minnesota   |                  |

(CAP laws are pending in several more states)

### Co-sponsors of H.R. 814 (as of 4/23/97)

Rep. George Brown (D-CA)  
Rep. Carrie Meek (D-FL)  
Rep. Sidney Yates (D-IL)  
Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)  
Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-CA)  
Rep. Gary Ackerman (D-NY)  
Rep. Elizabeth Furse (D-OR)  
Rep. Steven Rothman (D-NJ)  
Rep. John Lewis (D-GA)  
Rep. Corrine Brown (D-FL)

For more information, contact **Adam Carstens** in Rep. Blumenauer's office (202-225-4811)

## **H. Res. 37 -- House Transit Pass Program**

*Improving Transportation Options for Congressional Employees*

### **Who in DC is helping ease traffic congestion?**

- ⇒ Over 1,000 private businesses and 100 Federal Agencies in Washington, DC offer transit pass incentives to their employees.
- ⇒ 745 employees of Bell Atlantic receive transit pass benefits
- ⇒ Many federal agencies, including EPA, participate in the transit pass program
- ⇒ The Senate, with 7,000 employees, has an active transit pass program

### **Who's missing?**

*The United States House of Representatives.* The House has never established a transit pass program. With nearly 7,000 employees living and working in the DC metropolitan area and another 3,000 in district offices, we could have a significant role to play in getting people out of their cars and on to public transportation.

### **Why haven't we? The History:**

The House was authorized to participate in state and local transit programs under the Federal Employees Clean Air Incentives Act of 1993. However, the structure of certain House budgets at the time made it nearly impossible to develop a viable program for all House employees.

Recent changes in the budget structure make this the opportune time to establish a transit pass program.

**Representative Blumenauer introduced House Resolution 37 to do just that.**

### **How it works:**

H. Res. 37 would require House Oversight to establish a program that:

- ⇒ Gives each office the option to participate.
- ⇒ Makes house employees who neither hold a parking permit nor participate in a carpool eligible to receive a \$21 monthly transit pass.
- ⇒ Requires no additional revenue.
- ⇒ Works with participating offices to help budget the costs associated with employee participation.

This resolution is an opportunity to support transit systems in the District of Columbia and in cities across the country. It is a simple, cost-effective way to ease congestion on our highways, clean our air and improve our communities.

### **Please add your support to this list of current cosponsors:**

Reps. Boehlert, Bonior, Borski, Brown (CA), Clyburn, Davis (IL), DeFazio, Dellums, Dunn, Ehlers, Engel, Farr, Flake, Foglietta, Frank, Frost, Furse, Gejdenson, Gilchrest, Kelly, Knollenberg, LaFalce, Leach, Lewis (GA), McKinney, Markey, Maloney (NY), Martinez, Miller (CA), Moran, Morella, Nadler, Nethercutt, Norton, Olver, Quinn, Skaggs, Snyder, Stark, Traficant, Watt (NC), and Wynn

*For more information or to sign on as a cosponsor, please contact Chris Spencer at 51179.*

## **H.R. 108 -- Vehicle Forfeiture for Repeat Drunk Drivers Act**

### **DRUNK DRIVING'S COSTS TO SOCIETY ARE DRAMATIC AND RISING:**

- 1995's death toll was **17,274**, up four percent from 1994;
- drunk drivers injure **hundreds of thousands** every year;
- the economic costs borne by individuals, industry and the government **exceed \$45 billion** annually!

### **VEHICLE FORFEITURE STOPS THE WORST OFFENDERS -- THE CHRONIC DRUNK DRIVERS:**

- Portland, Oregon has registered a steep drop in drunk driving deaths - **down 42%** between 1994 and 1995. Much of this success can be attributed to Portland's auto forfeiture program.
- The city of Portland has seen a recidivism rate of only four percent for offenders whose cars have been seized;
- Auto forfeiture has been proven to be cost-effective and litigation proof.

### **WHAT WILL H.R. 108 DO?**

Representative Blumenauer's H.R. 108 alters an existing federal anti-drunk driving grant program to encourage, but not require, states to adopt auto forfeiture. This increases the number of options states have in fighting drunk driving, giving credit for a proven means of combating the repeat drunk driver. H.R. 108 does not penalize states who do not adopt auto forfeiture programs -- they could continue to meet the existing grant criteria and remain eligible for funding.

### **HOW MUCH WILL H.R. 108 COST?**

Nothing. This bill does not change the amount authorized for the existing anti-drunk driving grant program.

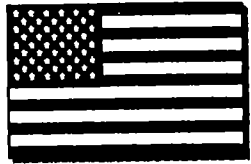
### **NATIONAL FORFEITURE SUPPORTERS:**

Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Law Enforcement Steering Committee, Police Executive Research Forum, Citizens for Safe Drivers Against Drunk Drivers & Chronic Offenders, the American Bankers Association, the Century Council and the Independent Insurance Agents of America.

### **COSPONSORS:**

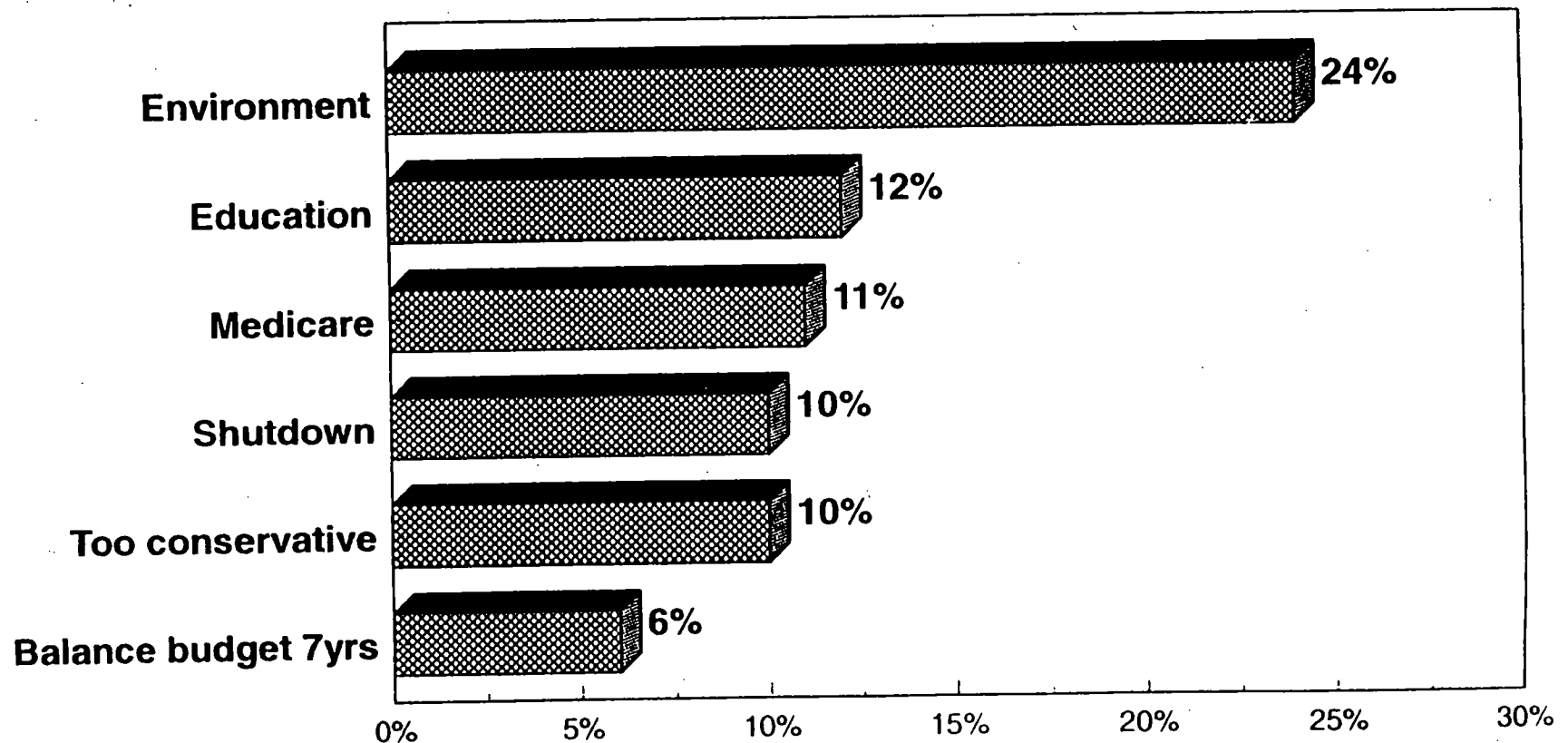
Reps. Quinn, DeFazio, Solomon, Frost, Underwood, John Lewis, Parker, Furse... and you?

*For more information or to cosponsor, contact Michael Harrison in Congressman Blumenauer's office, at 225-4811*



## The Environment raised the most doubts in voters' minds about the Republicans maintaining control of Congress.

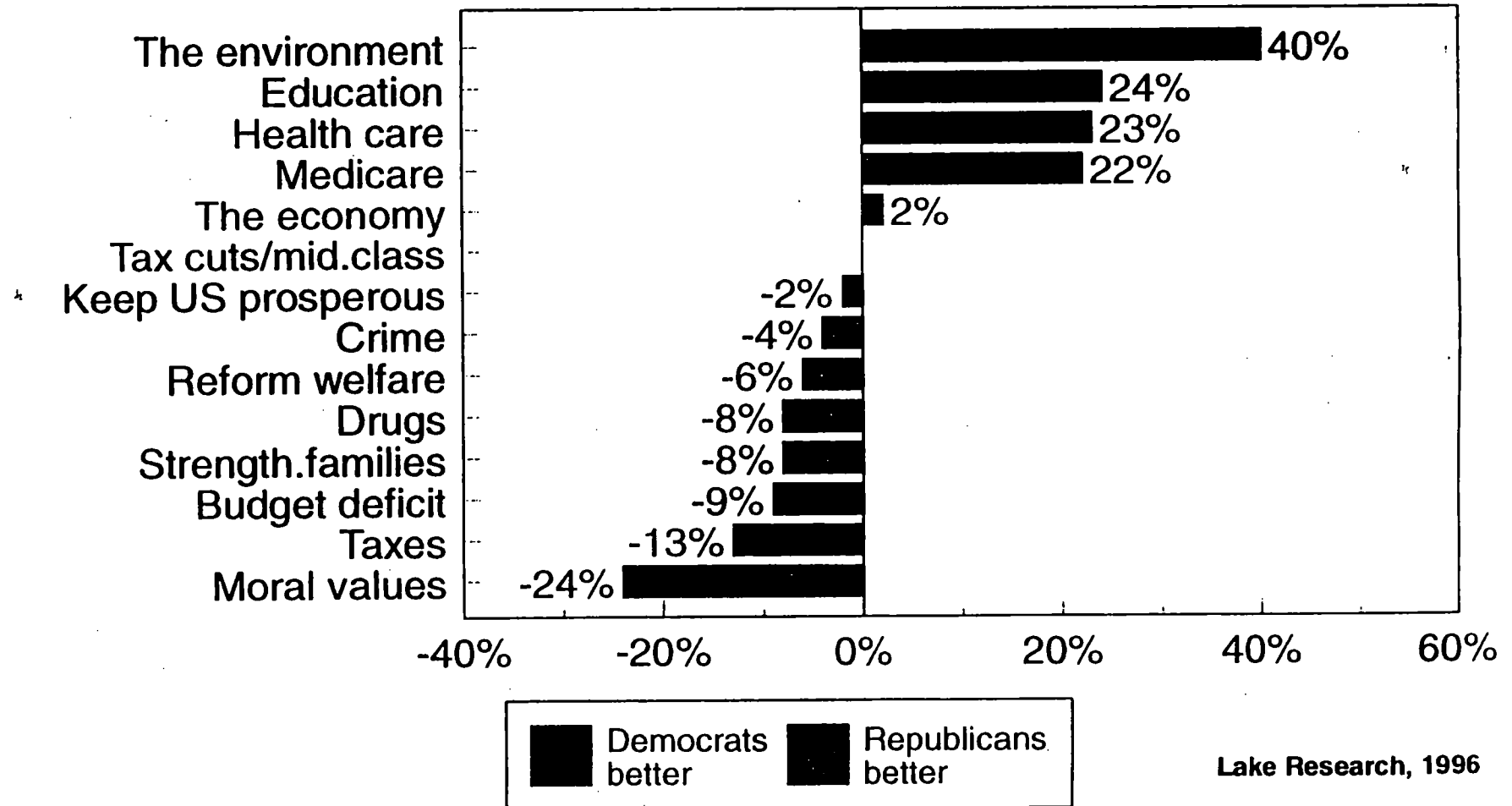
Which one of the following factors caused you to have the greatest reservation or concern about the GOP continuing to control Congress?





## Voters prefer Democrats on Medicare, education, and the environment, but split on economic issues and give Republicans the advantage on values.

Overall, do you think the Democrats or the Republicans would do a better job with...





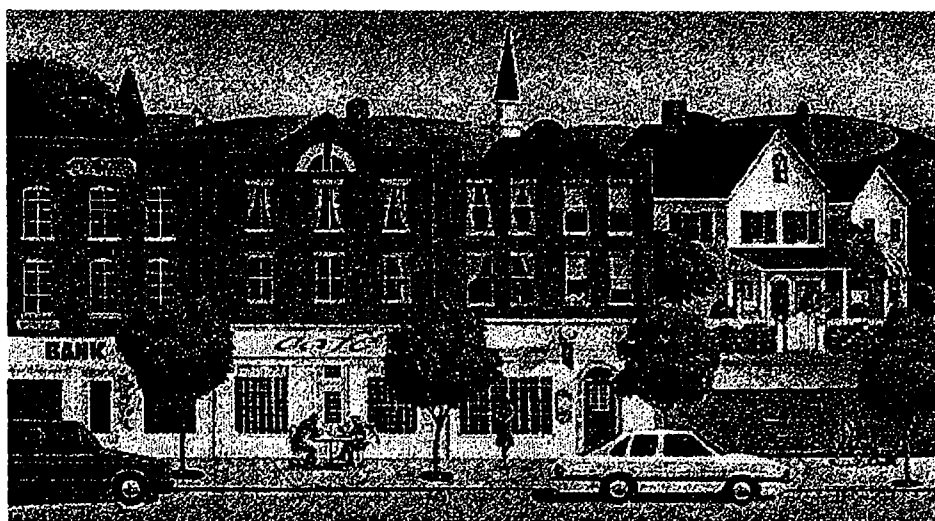
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# Home From Nowhere

by [JAMES HOWARD KUNSTLER](#)

Illustrations by Robert Crawford

*Can the momentum of sprawl be halted? America's zoning laws, intended to control the baneful effects of industry, have mutated, in the view of one architecture critic, into a system that corrodes civic life, outlaws the human scale, defeats tradition and authenticity, and confounds our yearning for an everyday environment worthy of our affection*



**A**mericans sense that something is wrong with the places where we live and work and go about our daily business. We hear this unhappiness expressed in phrases like "no sense of place" and "the loss of community." We drive up and down the gruesome, tragic suburban boulevards of commerce, and we're overwhelmed at the fantastic, awesome, stupefying ugliness of absolutely everything in sight -- the fry pits, the big-box stores, the

office units, the lube joints, the carpet warehouses, the parking lagoons, the jive plastic townhouse clusters, the uproar of signs, the highway itself clogged with cars -- as though the whole thing had been designed by some diabolical force bent on making human beings miserable. And naturally, this experience can make us feel glum about the nature and future of our civilization.



When we drive around and look at all this cartoon architecture and other junk that we've smeared all over the landscape, we register it as ugliness. This ugliness is the surface expression of deeper problems -- problems that relate to the issue of our national character. The highway strip is not just a sequence of eyesores. The pattern it represents is also economically catastrophic, an environmental calamity, socially devastating, and spiritually degrading.

It is no small irony that during the period of America's greatest prosperity, in the decades following the Second World War, we put up almost nothing but the cheapest possible buildings, particularly civic buildings. Compare any richly embellished firehouse or post office built in 1904 with its dreary concrete-box counterpart today. Compare the home of a small-town bank president of the 1890s, with its massive masonry walls and complex roof articulation, with the flimsy home of a 1990s business leader, made of two-by-fours, Sheetrock, and fake fanlight windows. When we were a far less wealthy nation, we built things with the expectation that they would endure. To throw away money (painfully acquired) and effort (painfully expended) on something certain to fall apart in thirty years would have seemed immoral, if not insane, in our great-grandparents' day.

The buildings our predecessors constructed paid homage to history in their design, including elegant solutions to age-old problems posed by the cycles of weather and light, and they paid respect to the future in the sheer expectation that they would endure through the lifetimes of the people who built them. They therefore embodied a sense of chronological connectivity, one of the fundamental patterns of the universe: an understanding that time is a defining dimension of existence -- particularly the existence of living things, such as human beings, who miraculously pass into life and then inevitably pass out of it.

Chronological connectivity lends meaning and dignity to our little lives. It charges the present with a vivid validation of our own aliveness. It puts us in touch with the ages and with the eternities, suggesting that we are part of a larger and more significant organism. It even suggests that the larger organism we are part of *cares* about us, and that, in turn, we should respect ourselves and our fellow creatures and all those who will follow us in time, as those preceding us respected those who followed them. In short, chronological connectivity puts us in touch with the holy. It is at once humbling and exhilarating. I say this as someone who has never followed any formal religious practice. Connection with the past and the future is a pathway that charms us in the direction of sanity and grace.

The antithesis to this can be seen in the way we have built things since 1945. We reject the past and the future, and this repudiation is manifest in our graceless constructions. Our residential, commercial, and civic buildings are constructed with the fully conscious

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## "Home From Nowhere"

Additional illustrations  
by Catherine Johnson

- [Nantucket](#)
  - [Main Street](#)
  - [Sidewalk](#)
  - [Architectural code](#)
-

expectation that they will disintegrate in a few decades. This condition even has a name: "design life." Strip malls and elementary schools have short design lives. They are expected to fall apart in less than fifty years. Since these things are not expected to speak to any era but our own, we seem unwilling to put money or effort into their embellishment. Nor do we care about traditional solutions to the problems of weather and light, because we have technology to mitigate these problems -- namely, central heating and electricity. Thus in many new office buildings the windows don't open. In especially bad buildings, like the average Wal-Mart, windows are dispensed with nearly altogether. This process of disconnection from the past and the future, and from the organic patterns of weather and light, done for the sake of expedience, ends up diminishing us spiritually, impoverishing us socially, and degrading the aggregate set of cultural patterns that we call civilization.

## **Destroying the Grand Union Hotel**

THE everyday environments of our time, the places where we live and work, are composed of dead patterns. These environments infect the patterns around them with disease and ultimately with contagious deadness, and deaden us in the process. The patterns that emerge fail to draw us in, fail to invite us to participate in the connectivity of the world. They frustrate our innate biological and psychological needs -- for instance, our phototropic inclination to seek natural daylight, our need to feel protected, our need to keep a destination in sight as we move about town. They violate human scale. They are devoid of charm.

Our streets used to be charming and beautiful. The public realm of the street was understood to function as an outdoor room. Like any room, it required walls to define the essential void of the room itself. Where I live, Saratoga Springs, New York, a magnificent building called the Grand Union Hotel once existed. Said to have been the largest hotel in the world in the late nineteenth century, it occupied a six-acre site in the heart of town. The hotel consisted of a set of narrow buildings that lined the outside of an unusually large superblock. Inside the block was a semi-public parklike courtyard. The street sides of the hotel incorporated a gigantic verandah twenty feet deep, with a roof that was three stories high and supported by columns. This facade functioned as a marvelous street wall, active and permeable. The hotel's size (a central cupola reached seven stories) was appropriate to the scale of the town's main street, called Broadway. For much of the year the verandah was filled with people sitting perhaps eight feet above the sidewalk grade, talking to one another while they watched the pageant of life on the street. These verandah-sitters were protected from the weather by the roof, and protected from the sun by elm trees along the sidewalk. The orderly rows of elms performed an additional architectural function. The trunks were straight and round, like columns, reiterating and reinforcing the pattern of the hotel facade, while the crowns formed a vaulted canopy over the sidewalk, pleasantly filtering the sunlight for pedestrians as well as hotel patrons. All these patterns worked to enhance the lives of everybody in town -- a common laborer on his way home as well as a railroad millionaire rocking on the verandah. In doing so, they supported civic life as a general proposition. They nourished our civilization.

When I say that the facade of the Grand Union Hotel was permeable, I mean that the building contained activities that attracted people inside, and had a number of suitably embellished entrances that allowed people to pass in and out of the building gracefully and

enjoyably. Underneath the verandah, half a story below the sidewalk grade, a number of shops operated, selling cigars, newspapers, clothing, and other goods. Thus the street wall was permeable at more than one level and had a multiplicity of uses.

The courtyard park that occupied the inside of the six-acre block had winding gravel paths lined with benches among more towering elm trees. It was a tranquil place of repose -- though sometimes band concerts and balls were held there. Any reasonably attired person could walk in off the street, pass through the hotel lobby, and enjoy the interior park. This courtyard had even-more-overt characteristics of a big outdoor room than the street did. It was much more enclosed. Like the street facade, the courtyard facade featured a broad, permeable verandah with a high roof. The verandah functioned as a mediating zone between the outdoor world and the world of the hotel's interior, with its many public, semi-public, and private rooms. One passed from public to private in a logical sequence, and the transition was eased at each stage by conscious embellishment. The order of things was, by nature, more formal than what we are accustomed to in our sloppy, clownish, informal age. The layers of intersecting patterns at work in this place were extraordinarily rich. The patterns had a quality of great aliveness, meaning they worked wonderfully as an ensemble, each pattern doing its job while it supported and reinforced the other patterns. The hotel was therefore a place of spectacular charm. It was demolished in 1953.

Although nothing lasts forever, it was tragic that this magnificent building was destroyed less than a hundred years after it was completed. In 1953 America stood at the brink of the greatest building spree in world history, and the very qualities that had made the Grand Union Hotel so wonderful were antithetical to all the new stuff that America was about to build. The town demolished it with a kind of mad glee. What replaced the hotel was a strip mall anchored by, of all things, a Grand Union supermarket. This shopping plaza was prototypical for its time. Tens of thousands of strip malls like it have been built all over America since then. It is in every one of its details a perfect piece of junk. It is the anti-place.

What had been the heart and soul of the town was now converted into a kind of mini-Outer Mongolia. The strip-mall buildings were set back from Broadway 150 feet, and a parking lot filled the gap. The street and the buildings commenced a nonrelationship. Since the new buildings were one story high, their scale bore no relation to the scale of the town's most important street. They failed to create a street wall. The perception that the street functioned as an outdoor room was lost. The space between the buildings and the street now had one function: automobile storage. The street, and consequently the public realm in general, was degraded by the design of the mall. As the street's importance as a public place declined, townspeople ceased to care what happened in it. If it became jammed with cars, so much the better, because individual cars were now understood to be not merely personal transportation but personal home-delivery vehicles, enabling customers to haul away enormous volumes of merchandise very efficiently, at no cost to the merchandiser -- which was a great boon for business. That is why the citizens of Saratoga Springs in 1953 were willing to sacrifice the town's most magnificent building. We could simply throw away the past. The owners of the supermarket that anchored the mall didn't live in town. They didn't care what effect their design considerations had on the town. They certainly didn't care about the town's past, and their interest in the town's future had largely to do with technicalities of selling dog food and soap flakes.

What has happened to the interrelation of healthy, living patterns of human ecology in the town where I live has happened all over the country. Almost everywhere the larger patterns

are in such a sorry state that the details seem irrelevant. When Saratoga Springs invested tens of thousands of dollars in Victorian-style streetlamps in an effort to create instant charm, the gesture seemed pathetic, because the larger design failures were ignored. It is hard to overstate how ridiculous these lampposts look in the context of our desolate streets and the cheap, inappropriate new buildings amid their parking lots in what remains of our downtown. The lamppost scheme was like putting Band-Aids on someone who had tripped and fallen on his chainsaw.

The one-story-high Grand Union strip-mall building must be understood as a pattern in itself, a dead one, which infects surrounding town tissue with its deadness. Putting up one-story commercial buildings eliminated a large number of live bodies downtown, and undermined the vitality of the town. One-story mall buildings became ubiquitous across the United States after the war, a predictable byproduct of the zoning zeitgeist that deemed shopping and apartment living to be unsuitable neighbors.

## Creating Someplace

ALMOST everywhere in the United States laws prohibit building the kinds of places that Americans themselves consider authentic and traditional. Laws prevent the building of places that human beings can feel good in and can afford to live in. Laws forbid us to build places that are worth caring about.

Is Main Street your idea of a nice business district? Sorry, your zoning laws won't let you build it, or even extend it where it already exists. Is Elm Street your idea of a nice place to live -- you know, houses with front porches on a tree-lined street? Sorry, Elm Street cannot be assembled under the rules of large-lot zoning and modern traffic engineering. All you can build where I live is another version of Los Angeles -- the zoning laws say so.

This is not a gag. Our zoning laws are essentially a manual of instructions for creating the stuff of our communities. Most of these laws have been in place only since the Second World War. For the previous 300-odd years of American history we didn't have zoning laws. We had a popular consensus about the right way to assemble a town or a city. Our best Main Streets and Elm Streets were created not by municipal ordinances but by cultural agreement. Everybody agreed that buildings on Main Street ought to be more than one story tall; that corner groceries were good to have in residential neighborhoods; that streets ought to intersect with other streets to facilitate movement; that sidewalks were necessary, and that orderly rows of trees planted along them made the sidewalks much more pleasant; that roofs should be pitched to shed rain and snow; that doors should be conspicuous, so that one could easily find the entrance to a building; that windows should be vertical, to dignify a house. Everybody agreed that communities needed different kinds of housing to meet the needs of different kinds of families and individuals, and the market was allowed to supply them. Our great-grandparents didn't have to argue endlessly over these matters of civic design. Nor did they have to reinvent civic design every fifty years because no one could remember what had been agreed on.

Everybody agreed that both private and public buildings should be ornamented and embellished to honor the public realm of the street, so town halls, firehouses, banks, and homes were built that today are on the National Register of Historic Places. We can't

replicate any of that stuff. Our laws actually forbid it. Want to build a bank in Anytown, USA? Fine. Make sure that it's surrounded by at least an acre of parking, and that it's set back from the street at least seventy-five feet. (Of course, it will be one story.) The instructions for a church or a muffler shop are identical. That's exactly what your laws tell you to build. If you deviate from the template, you will not receive a building permit.

Therefore, if you want to make your community better, begin at once by throwing out your zoning laws. Don't revise them -- get rid of them. Set them on fire if possible and make a public ceremony of it; public ceremony is a great way to announce the birth of a new consensus. While you're at it, throw out your "master plan" too. It's invariably just as bad. Replace these things with a traditional town-planning ordinance that prescribes a more desirable everyday environment.

The practice of zoning started early in the twentieth century, at a time when industry had reached an enormous scale. The noisy, smelly, dirty operations of gigantic factories came to overshadow and oppress all other aspects of city life, and civic authorities decided that they had to be separated from everything else, especially residential neighborhoods. One could say that single-use zoning, as it came to be called, was a reasonable response to the social and economic experiment called industrialism.

After the Second World War, however, that set of ideas was taken to an absurd extreme. Zoning itself began to overshadow all the historic elements of civic art and civic life. For instance, because the democratic masses of people used their cars to shop, and masses of cars required parking lots, shopping was declared an obnoxious industrial activity around which people shouldn't be allowed to live. This tended to destroy age-old physical relationships between shopping and living, as embodied, say, in Main Street.

What zoning produces is suburban sprawl, which must be understood as the product of a particular set of instructions. Its chief characteristics are the strict separation of human activities, mandatory driving to get from one activity to another, and huge supplies of free parking. After all, the basic idea of zoning is that every activity demands a separate zone of its own. For people to live around shopping would be harmful and indecent. Better not even to allow them within walking distance of it. They'll need their cars to haul all that stuff home anyway. While we're at it, let's separate the homes by income gradients. Don't let the \$75,000-a-year families live near the \$200,000-a-year families -- they'll bring down property values -- and for God's sake don't let a \$25,000-a-year recent college graduate or a \$19,000-a-year widowed grandmother on Social Security live near any of them. There goes the neighborhood! Now put all the workplaces in separate office "parks" or industrial "parks," and make sure nobody can walk to them either. As for public squares, parks, and the like -- forget it. We can't afford them, because we spent all our funds paving the four-lane highways and collector roads and parking lots, and laying sewer and water lines out to the housing subdivisions, and hiring traffic cops to regulate the movement of people in their cars going back and forth among these segregated activities.

The model of the human habitat dictated by zoning is a formless, soul-less, centerless, demoralizing mess. It bankrupts families and townships. It disables whole classes of decent, normal citizens. It ruins the air we breathe. It corrupts and deadens our spirit.

The construction industry likes it, because it requires stupendous amounts of cement, asphalt, and steel and a lot of heavy equipment and personnel to push all this stuff into place.

Car dealers love it. Politicians used to love it, because it produced big short-term profits and short-term revenue gains, but now they're all mixed up about it, because the voters who live in suburban sprawl don't want more of the same built around them -- which implies that at some dark level suburban-sprawl dwellers are quite conscious of sprawl's shortcomings. They have a word for it: "growth." They're now against growth. Their lips curl when they utter the word. They sense that new construction is only going to make the place where they live worse. They're convinced that the future is going to be worse than the past. And they're right, because the future has been getting worse throughout their lifetime. Growth means only more traffic, bigger parking lots, and buildings ever bigger and uglier than the monstrosities of the sixties, seventies, and eighties.

So they become NIMBYs ("not in my back yard") and BANANAs ("build absolutely nothing anywhere near anything"). If they're successful in their NIMBYism, they'll use their town government to torture developers (people who create growth) with layer upon layer of bureaucratic rigmarole, so that only a certified masochist would apply to build something there. Eventually the unwanted growth leapfrogs over them to cheap, vacant rural land farther out, and then all the new commuters in the farther-out suburb choke the NIMBYs' roads anyway, to get to the existing mall in NIMBYville.

Unfortunately, the NIMBYs don't have a better model in mind. They go to better places on holiday weekends -- Nantucket, St. Augustine, little New England towns -- but they think of these places as special exceptions. It never occurs to NIMBY tourists that their own home places could be that good too. *Make Massapequa like Nantucket? Where would I park?* Exactly.

These special places are modeled on a pre-automobile template. They were designed for a human scale and in some respects maintained that way. Such a thing is unimaginable to us today. We must design for the automobile, because...because all our laws and habits tell us we must. Notice that you can get to all these special places in your car. It's just a nuisance to use the car while you're there -- so you stash it someplace for the duration of your visit and get around perfectly happily on foot, by bicycle, in a cab, or on public transit. The same is true, by the way, of London, Paris, and Venice.

The future will not allow us to continue using cars the way we've been accustomed to in the unprecedented conditions of the late twentieth century. So, whether we adore suburbia or not, we're going to have to live differently. Rather than being a tragedy, this is actually an extremely lucky situation, a wonderful opportunity, because we are now free to redesign our everyday world in a way that is going to make all classes of Americans much happier. We do not have to come up with tools and techniques never seen before. The principles of town planning can be found in excellent books written before the Second World War.

Three-dimensional models of the kinds of places that can result from these principles exist in the form of historic towns and cities. In fact, after two generations of architectural amnesia, this knowledge has been reinstalled in the brains of professional designers in active practice all over the country, and these designers have already begun to create an alternate model of the human habitat for the twenty-first century.

What's missing is a more widespread consensus -- a cultural agreement -- in favor of the new model, and the will to go forward with it. Large numbers of ordinary citizens haven't heard the news. They're stuck in old habits and stuck in the psychology of previous investment; political leadership reflects this all over America. NIMBYism is one of the results, a form of

hysterical cultural paralysis. *Don't build anything! Don't change anything!* The consensus that exists, therefore, is a consensus of fear, and that is obviously not good enough. We need a consensus of hope.

In the absence of a widespread consensus about how to build a better everyday environment, we'll have to replace the old set of rules with an explicit new set -- or, to put it a slightly different way, replace zoning laws with principles of civic art. It will take time for these principles to become second nature again, to become common sense. It may not happen at all, in which case we ought to be very concerned. In the event that this body of ideas gains widespread acceptance, think of all the time and money we'll save! No more endless nights down at the zoning board watching the NIMBYs scream at the mall developers. No more real-estate-related lawsuits. We will have time, instead, to become better people and to enjoy our lives on a planet full of beauty and mystery. Here, then, are some of the things citizens will need to know in order to create a new model for the everyday environment of America.

## The New Urbanism

THE principles apply equally to villages, towns, and cities. Most of them apply even to places of extraordinarily high density, like Manhattan, with added provisions that I will not go into here, in part because special cases like Manhattan are so rare, and in part because I believe that the scale of even our greatest cities will necessarily have to become smaller in the future, at no loss to their dynamism (London and Paris are plenty dynamic, with few buildings over ten stories high).

The pattern under discussion here has been called variously neo-traditional planning, traditional neighborhood development, low-density urbanism, transit-oriented development, the new urbanism, and just plain civic art. Its principles produce settings that resemble American towns from prior to the Second World War.

1. The basic unit of planning is the neighborhood. A neighborhood standing alone is a hamlet or village. A cluster of neighborhoods becomes a town. Clusters of a great many neighborhoods become a city. The population of a neighborhood can vary depending on local conditions.
2. The neighborhood is limited in physical size, with well-defined edges and a focused center. The size of a neighborhood is defined as a five-minute walking distance (or a quarter mile) from the edge to the center and a ten-minute walk edge to edge. Human scale is the standard for proportions in buildings and their accessories. Automobiles and other wheeled vehicles are permitted, but they do not take precedence over human needs, including aesthetic needs. The neighborhood contains a public-transit stop.
3. The secondary units of planning are corridors and districts. Corridors form the boundaries between neighborhoods, both connecting and defining them. Corridors can incorporate natural features like streams and canyons. They can take the form of parks, nature preserves, travel corridors, railroad lines, or some combination of these. In towns and cities a neighborhood or parts of neighborhoods can compose a district. Districts are made up of streets or ensembles of streets where special activities get preferential treatment. The French Quarter of New Orleans is an example of a district. It is a whole neighborhood dedicated to

entertainment, in which housing, shops, and offices are also integral. A corridor can also be a district -- for instance, a major shopping avenue between adjoining neighborhoods.

4. The neighborhood is emphatically mixed-use and provides housing for people with different incomes. Buildings may be various in function but must be compatible with one another in size and in their relation to the street. The needs of daily life are accessible within the five-minute walk. Commerce is integrated with residential, business, and even manufacturing use, though not necessarily on the same street in a given neighborhood.

Apartments are permitted over stores. Forms of housing are mixed, including apartments, duplex and single-family houses, accessory apartments, and outbuildings. (Over time streets will inevitably evolve to become less or more desirable. But attempts to preserve property values by mandating minimum-square-footage requirements, outlawing rental apartments, or formulating other strategies to exclude lower-income residents must be avoided. Even the best streets in the world's best towns can accommodate people of various incomes.)

5. Buildings are disciplined on their lots in order to define public space successfully. The street is understood to be the pre-eminent form of public space, and the buildings that define it are expected to honor and embellish it.

6. The street pattern is conceived as a network in order to create the greatest number of alternative routes from one part of the neighborhood to another. This has the beneficial effect of relieving traffic congestion. The network may be a grid. Networks based on a grid must be modified by parks, squares, diagonals, T intersections, rotaries, and other devices that relieve the grid's tendency to monotonous regularity. The streets exist in a hierarchy from broad boulevards to narrow lanes and alleys. In a town or a city limited-access highways may exist only within a corridor, preferably in the form of parkways. Cul-de-sacs are strongly discouraged except under extraordinary circumstances -- for example, where rugged topography requires them.

7. Civic buildings, such as town halls, churches, schools, libraries, and museums, are placed on preferential building sites, such as the frontage of squares, in neighborhood centers, and where street vistas terminate, in order to serve as landmarks and reinforce their symbolic importance. Buildings define parks and squares, which are distributed throughout the neighborhood and appropriately designed for recreation, repose, periodic commercial uses, and special events such as political meetings, concerts, theatricals, exhibitions, and fairs. Because streets will differ in importance, scale, and quality, what is appropriate for a part of town with small houses may not be appropriate as the town's main shopping street. These distinctions are properly expressed by physical design.

8. In the absence of a consensus about the appropriate decoration of buildings, an architectural code may be devised to establish some fundamental unities of massing, fenestration, materials, and roof pitch, within which many variations may function harmoniously.

Under the regime of zoning and the professional overspecialization that it fostered, all streets were made as wide as possible because the specialist in charge -- the traffic engineer -- was concerned solely with the movement of cars and trucks. In the process much of the traditional decor that made streets pleasant for people was gotten rid of. For instance, street trees were eliminated. Orderly rows of mature trees can improve even the most dismal street by softening hard edges and sunblasted bleakness. Under postwar engineering standards

street trees were deemed a hazard to motorists and chopped down in many American towns.

## **Accommodating Automobiles**

THE practice of maximizing car movement at the expense of all other concerns was applied with particular zeal to suburban housing subdivisions. Suburban streets were given the characteristics of county highways, though children played in them. Suburban developments notoriously lack parks. The spacious private lots were supposed to make up for the lack of parks, but children have a tendency to play in the street anyway -- bicycles and roller skates don't work well on the lawn. Out in the subdivisions, where trees along the sides of streets were often expressly forbidden, we see those asinine exercises in romantic landscaping that attempt to recapitulate the forest primeval in clumps of ornamental juniper. In a setting so inimical to walking, sidewalks were often deemed a waste of money. In the new urbanism the meaning of the street as the essential fabric of the public realm is restored. The space created is understood to function as an outdoor room, and building facades are understood to be street walls.

Thoroughfares are distinguished by their character as well as by their capacity. The hierarchy of streets begins with the boulevard, featuring express lanes in the center, local lanes on the sides, and tree-planted medians between the express and local lanes, with parallel parking along all curbs. Next in the hierarchy is the multilane avenue with a median. Then comes a main shopping street, with no median. This is followed by two or more orders of ordinary streets (apt to be residential in character), and finally the lane or alley, which intersects blocks and becomes the preferred location for garages and accessory apartments.

Parallel parking is emphatically permitted along the curbs of all streets, except under the most extraordinary conditions. Parallel parking is desirable for two reasons: parked cars create a physical barrier and psychological buffer that protects pedestrians on the sidewalk from moving vehicles; and a rich supply of parallel parking can eliminate the need for parking lots, which are extremely destructive of the civic fabric. Anyone who thinks that parallel parking "ruins" a residential street should take a look at some of the most desirable real estate in America: Georgetown, Beacon Hill, Nob Hill, Alexandria, Charleston, Savannah, Annapolis, Princeton, Greenwich Village, Marblehead. All permit parallel parking.

Residential streets can and should be narrower than current specifications permit. In general, cars need not move at speeds greater than 20 m.p.h. within a neighborhood. Higher speeds can be reserved for boulevards or parkways, which occupy corridors. Within neighborhoods the explicit intent is to calm and tame vehicular traffic. This is achieved by the use of corners with sharp turning radii, partly textured pavements, and T intersections. The result of these practices is a more civilized street.

Even under ideal circumstances towns and cities will have some streets that are better than others. Over time streets tend to sort themselves out in a hierarchy of quality as well as size. The new urbanism recognizes this tendency, especially in city commercial districts, and designates streets A or B. B streets may contain less-desirable structures -- for instance, parking-garage entrances, pawnshops, a homeless shelter, a Burger King -- without disrupting the A streets in proximity. This does not mean that B streets are allowed to be

deliberately squalid. Even here the public realm deserves respect. Cars are still not given dominion. A decent standard of detailing applies to B streets with respect to sidewalks, lighting, and even trees.

## **Property Values and Affordable Housing**

**ZONING** required the artificial creation of "affordable housing," because the rules of zoning prohibited the very conditions that formerly made housing available to all income groups and integrated it into the civic fabric. Accessory apartments became illegal in most neighborhoods, particularly in new suburbs. Without provision for apartments, an unmarried sixth-grade schoolteacher could not afford to live near the children she taught. Nor could the housecleaner and the gardener -- they had to commute for half an hour from some distant low-income ghetto. In many localities apartments over stores were also forbidden under the zoning laws. Few modern shopping centers are more than one story in height, and I know of no suburban malls that incorporate housing. In eliminating arrangements like these we have eliminated the most common form of affordable housing, found virtually all over the rest of the world. By zoning these things out, we've zoned out Main Street, USA.

The best way to make housing affordable is to build or restore compact, mixed-use, traditional American neighborhoods. The way to preserve property values is to recognize that a house is part of a community, not an isolated object, and to make sure that the community maintains high standards of civic amenity in the form of walkable streets and easy access to shops, recreation, culture, and public beauty.

Towns built before the Second World War contain more-desirable and less-desirable residential streets, but even the best can have income-integrated housing. A \$350,000 house can exist next to a \$180,000 house with a \$600-a-month garage apartment (which has the added benefit of helping the homeowner pay a substantial portion of his mortgage). Such a street might house two millionaires, eleven professionals, a dozen wage workers, sixteen children, three full-time mothers, a college student, two grandmothers on Social Security, and a bachelor fireman. That is a street that will maintain its value and bring people of different ages and occupations into informal contact.

## **Density, Not Congestion**

"**CONGESTION**" was the scare word of the past, as "growth" is the scare word of our time. The fear of congestion sprang from the atrocious conditions in urban slums at the turn of the century. The Lower East Side of Manhattan in 1900 is said to have contained more inhabitants per square mile than are found in modern-day Calcutta. If crowding had been confined to the slums, it might not have made such an impact on the public imagination. But urban congestion was aggravated by the revolutionary effects of the elevator, the office skyscraper, the sudden mass replication of large apartment buildings, and the widespread introduction of the automobile. These innovations drastically altered the scale and tone of city life. Within a generation cities went from being dynamic to being -- or at least seeming -- frighteningly overcrowded. Those with the money to commute were easily persuaded to get

out, and thus in the 1920s came the first mass evacuation to new suburbs, reachable primarily by automobile. The movement was slowed by the Great Depression and then by the Second World War. The memory of all that lingers. Tremendous confusion about density and congestion persists in America today, even though most urban areas and even many small towns (like my own) now suffer from density deficits. Too few people live, and businesses operate, at the core to maintain the synergies necessary for civic life. The new urbanism proposes a restoration of synergistic density, within reasonable limits. These limits are controlled by building size. The new urbanism calls for higher density -- more houses per acre, closer together -- than zoning does. However, the new urbanism is modeled not on the urban slum but on the traditional American town. This is not a pattern of life that should frighten reasonable people. Millions pay forty dollars a day to walk through a grossly oversimplified version of it at Disney World. It conforms exactly to their most cherished fantasies about the ideal living arrangement.

Houses may be freestanding in the new urbanism, but their lots are smaller than those in sprawling subdivisions. Streets of connected row houses are also deemed desirable. Useless front lawns are often eliminated. The new urbanism compensates for this loss by providing squares, parks, greens, and other useful, high-quality civic amenities. The new urbanism also creates streets of beauty and character. This model does not suffer from congestion. Occupancy laws remain in force -- sixteen families aren't jammed into one building, as in the tenements of yore. Back yards provide plenty of privacy, and houses can be large and spacious on their lots. People and cars are able to circulate freely in the network of streets. The car is not needed for trips to the store, the school, or other local places. This pattern encourages good connections between people and their commercial and cultural institutions.

The crude street pattern of zoning, with its cul-de-sacs and collector streets, actually promotes congestion, because absolutely every trip out of the single-use residential pod must be made by car onto the collector street. The worst congestion in America today takes place not in the narrow streets of traditional neighborhoods such as Georgetown and Alexandria but on the six-lane collector streets of Tysons Corner, Virginia, and other places created by zoning. Because of the extremely poor connectivity inherent in them, such products of zoning have much of the infrastructure of a city and the culture of a backwater.

## Composing a Street Wall

IN order for a street to achieve the intimate and welcoming quality of an outdoor room, the buildings along it must compose a suitable street wall. Whereas they may vary in style and expression, some fundamental agreement, some unity, must pull buildings into alignment. Think of one of those fine side streets of row houses on the Upper East Side of New York. They may express in masonry every historical fantasy from neo-Egyptian to Ruskinian Gothic. But they are all close to the same height, and even if their windows don't line up precisely, they all run to four or five stories. They all stand directly along the sidewalk. They share materials: stone and brick. They are not interrupted by vacant spaces or parking lots. About half of them are homes; the rest may be diplomatic offices or art galleries. The various uses co-exist in harmony. The same may be said of streets on Chicago's North Side, in Savannah, on Beacon Hill, in Georgetown, in Pacific Heights, and in many other ultra-desirable neighborhoods across the country.

Similarly, buildings must be sized in proportion to the width of the street. Low buildings do a poor job of defining streets, especially overly wide streets, as anyone who has been on a postwar commercial highway strip can tell. The road is too wide and the cars go too fast. The parking lots are fearsome wastelands. The buildings themselves are barely visible -- that is why gigantic internally lit signs are necessary. The relationship between buildings and space fails utterly in this case. In many residential suburbs, too, the buildings do a poor job of defining space. The houses are low; the front lawns and streets are too wide. Sidewalks and orderly rows of trees are absent. The space between the houses is an incomprehensible abyss.

The new urbanism advances specific solutions for these ills -- both for existing towns and cities and to mitigate the current problems of the suburbs. Commerce is removed from the highway strip and reassembled in a town or neighborhood center. The buildings that house commerce are required to be at least two stories high and may be higher, and this has the additional benefit of establishing apartments and offices above the shops to bring vitality, along with extra rents, to the center. Buildings on designated shopping streets near the center are encouraged to house retail businesses on the ground floor.

A build-to line determines how close buildings will stand to the street and promotes regular alignment. Zoning has a seemingly similar feature called the setback line, but it is intended to keep buildings far away from the street in order to create parking lots, particularly in front, where parking lots are considered to be a welcome sign to motorists. When buildings stand in isolation like this, the unfortunate effect is their complete failure to define space: the abyss. In the new urbanism the build-to line is meant to ensure the opposite outcome: the positive definition of space by pulling buildings forward to the street. If parking lots are necessary, they should be behind the buildings, in the middle of the block, where they will not disrupt civic life.

Additional rules govern building height, recess lines according to which upper stories may be set back, and transition lines, which denote a distinction between ground floors for retail use and upper floors for offices and apartments. (Paris, under Baron Haussmann, was coded for an eleven-meter-high transition line, which is one reason for the phenomenal unity and character of Parisian boulevards.)

In traditional American town planning the standard increments for lots have been based on twenty-five feet of street frontage, which have allowed for twenty-five-foot row houses and storefronts, and fifty-, seventy-five-, and 100-foot lots for freestanding houses. Unfortunately, the old standard is slightly out of whack with what is needed to park cars efficiently. Therefore, under the new urbanism lot size will be based on the rod (sixteen and a half feet), a classic unit of measurement. This allows for a minimum townhouse lot of sixteen and a half feet, which has room for parking one car in the rear (off an alley) plus a few feet for pedestrians to walk around the car. The 1.5-rod townhouse lot permits two cars to park in the rear. The two-rod lot allows for a townhouse with parking for two cars plus a small side yard. Three rods allows for a standard detached house with on-site parking in different configurations. The four-rod lot provides room for a very large detached building (house, shops, offices, or apartments) with parking for as many as ten cars in the rear. The issue of a standard increment based on the rod is far from settled. Some new-urbanist practitioners recommend an adjustable standard of twelve to eighteen feet, based on local conditions.

The new urbanism recognizes zones of transition between the public realm of the street and the semi-private realm of the shop or the private realm of the house. (In the world of zoning

this refinement is nonexistent.) Successful transitions are achieved by regulating such devices as the arcade, the storefront, the dooryard, the ensemble of porch and fence, even the front lawn. These devices of transition soften the visual and psychological hard edges of the everyday world, allowing us to move between these zones with appropriate degrees of ease or friction. (They are therefore at odds with the harsh geometries and polished surfaces of Modernism.)

The arcade, for instance, affords shelter along the sidewalk on a street of shops. It is especially desirable in southern climates where both harsh sunlight and frequent downpours occur. The arcade must shelter the entire sidewalk, not just a portion of it, or else it tends to become an obstacle rather than an amenity. Porches on certain streets may be required to be set back no more than a "conversational distance" from the sidewalk, to aid communication between the public and private realms. The low picket fence plays its part in the ensemble as a gentle physical barrier, reminding pedestrians that the zone between the sidewalk and the porch is private while still permitting verbal and visual communication. In some conditions a front lawn is appropriate. Large, ornate civic buildings often merit a lawn, because they cannot be visually comprehended close up. Mansions merit setbacks with lawns for similar reasons.

## Architectural Codes

THE foregoing presents the "urban code" of the new urbanism, but architectural codes operate at a more detailed and refined level. In theory a good urban code alone can create the conditions that make civic life possible, by holding to a standard of excellence in a town's basic design framework. Architectural codes establish a standard of excellence for individual buildings, particularly the surface details. Variances to codes may be granted on the basis of architectural merit. The new urbanism does not favor any particular style.

Nowadays houses are often designed from the inside out. A married couple wants a fanlight window over the bed, or a little octagonal window over the Jacuzzi, and a builder or architect designs the room around that wish. This approach does not take into account how the house will end up looking on the outside. The outside ceases to matter. This is socially undesirable. It degrades the community. It encourages people to stay inside, lessening surveillance on the street, reducing opportunities for making connections, and in the long term causing considerable damage to the everyday environment.

The new urbanism declares that the outside does matter, so a few simple rules re-establish the necessary design discipline for individual buildings. For example, a certain proportion of each exterior wall will be devoted to windows. Suddenly houses will no longer look like television sets, where only the front matters. Another rule may state that windows must be vertical or square, not horizontal -- because horizontal windows tend to subvert the inherent dignity of the standing human figure. This rule reinstates a basic principle of architecture that, unfortunately, has been abandoned or forgotten in America -- and has resulted in millions of terrible-looking houses.

Likewise, the front porch is an important and desirable element in some neighborhoods. A porch less than six feet deep is useless except for storage, because it provides too little room

for furniture and the circulation of human bodies. Builders tack on inadequate porches as a sales gimmick to enhance "curb appeal," so that the real-estate agent can drive up with the customer and say, "Look, a front porch!" The porch becomes a cartoon feature of the house, like the little fake cupola on the garage. This saves the builders money in time and materials. Perhaps they assume that the street will be too repulsive to sit next to.

Why do builders even bother with pathetic-looking cartoon porches? Apparently Americans need at least the idea of a porch to be reassured, symbolically, that they're decent people living in a decent place. But the cartoon porch only compounds the degradation of the public realm.

In America today flat roofs are the norm in commercial construction. This is a legacy of Modernism, and we're suffering because of it. The roofscapes of our communities are boring and dreary as well as vulnerable to leakage or collapse in the face of heavy rain or snow. An interesting roofscape can be a joy -- and a life worth living is composed of many joys. Once Modernism had expanded beyond Europe to America, it developed a hidden agenda: to give developers a moral and intellectual justification for putting up cheap buildings. One of the best ways to save money on a building is to put a flat roof on it.

Aggravating matters was the tendency in postwar America to regard buildings as throwaway commodities, like cars. That flat roofs began to leak after a few years didn't matter; by then the building was a candidate for demolition. That attitude has now infected all architecture and development. Low standards that wouldn't have been acceptable in our grandparents' day, when this was a less affluent country, are today perfectly normal. The new urbanism seeks to redress this substandard normality. It recognizes that a distinctive roofline is architecturally appropriate and spiritually desirable in the everyday environment. Pitched roofs and their accessories, including towers, are favored explicitly by codes. Roofing materials can also be specified if a community wants a high standard of construction.

Architectural codes should be viewed as a supplement to an urban code. Architectural codes are not intended to impose a particular style on a neighborhood -- Victorian, neoclassical, Colonial, or whatever -- though they certainly could if they were sufficiently detailed and rigorous. But style is emphatically not the point. The point is to achieve a standard of excellence in design for the benefit of the community as a whole. Is anything wrong with standards of excellence? Should we continue the experiment of trying to live without them?

## Getting the Rules Changed

REPLACING the crude idiocies of zoning with true civic art has proved to be a monumentally difficult task. It has been attempted in many places around the United States over the past fifteen years, mainly by developers, professional town planners, and architects who are members of the new-urbanist movement. They have succeeded in a few places. The status quo has remarkable staying power, no matter how miserable it makes people, including the local officials who support it and who have to live in the same junk environment as everybody else. An enormous entrenched superstructure of bureaucratic agencies at state and federal levels also supports zoning and its accessories. Departments of transportation, the Federal Housing Administration, the various tax agencies, and so on all have a long-standing stake in policies that promote and heavily subsidize suburban sprawl.

They're not going to renounce those policies without a struggle. Any change in a rule about land development makes or breaks people who seek to become millionaires. Ban sprawl, and some guy who bought twenty acres to build a strip mall is out of business, while somebody else with three weed-filled lots downtown suddenly has more-valuable property.

I believe that we have entered a kind of slow-motion cultural meltdown, owing largely to our living habits, though many ordinary Americans wouldn't agree. They may or may not be doing all right in the changing economy, but they have personal and psychological investments in going about business as usual. Many Americans have chosen to live in suburbia out of a historic antipathy for life in the city and particularly a fear of the underclass that has come to dwell there. They would sooner move to the dark side of the moon than consider city life.

Americans still have considerable affection for small towns, but small towns present a slightly different problem: in the past fifty years many towns have received a suburban-sprawl zoning overlay that has made them indistinguishable from the sprawl matrix that surrounds them. In my town strip malls and fast-food joints have invaded what used to be a much denser core, and nearly ruined it.

Notwithstanding all these obstacles, zoning must go, and zoning will go. In its place we will re-establish a consensus for doing things better, along with formal town-planning codes to spell out the terms. I maintain that the change will occur whether we love suburbia or not.

Fortunately, a democratic process for making this change exists. It has the advantage of being a highly localized process, geared to individual communities. It is called the charette. In its expanded modern meaning, a "charette" is a week-long professional design workshop held for the purpose of planning land development or redevelopment. It includes public meetings that bring all the participants together in one room -- developers, architects, citizens, government officials, traffic engineers, environmentalists, and so on. These meetings are meant to get all issues on the table and settle as many of them as possible. This avoids the otherwise usual, inevitably gruesome process of conflict resolution performed by lawyers -- which is to say, a hugely expensive waste of society's resources benefiting only lawyers.

The object of the charette is not, however, to produce verbiage but to produce results on paper in the form of drawings and plans. This highlights an essential difference between zoning codes and traditional town planning based on civic art. Zoning codes are invariably twenty-seven-inch-high stacks of numbers and legalistic language that few people other than technical specialists understand. Because this is so, local zoning- and planning-board members frequently don't understand their own zoning laws. Zoning has great advantages for specialists, namely lawyers and traffic engineers, in that they profit financially by being the arbiters of the regulations, or benefit professionally by being able to impose their special technical needs (say, for cars) over the needs of citizens -- without the public's being involved in their decisions.

Traditional town planning produces pictorial codes that any normal citizen can comprehend. This is democratic and ethical as well as practical. It elevates the quality of the public discussion about development. People can see what they're talking about. Such codes show a desired outcome at the same time that they depict formal specifications. They're much more useful than the reams of balderdash found in zoning codes.

An exemplary town-planning code devised by Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and others can be found in the ninth edition of *Architectural Graphic Standards*. The code runs a brief fourteen pages. About 75 percent of the content is pictures -- of street sections, blocks, building lots, building types, and street networks. Although it is generic, a code of similar brevity could easily be devised for localized conditions all over America.

The most common consequence of the zoning status quo is that it ends up imposing fantastic unnecessary costs on top of bad development. It also wastes enormous amounts of time -- and time is money. Projects are frequently sunk by delays in the process of obtaining permits. The worst consequence of the status quo is that it actually makes good development much harder to achieve than bad development.

Because many citizens have been unhappy with the model of development that zoning gives them, they have turned it into an adversarial process. They have added many layers of procedural rigmarole, so that only the most determined and wealthiest developers can withstand the ordeal. In the end, after all the zoning-board meetings and flashy presentations and environmental objections and mitigation, and after both sides' lawyers have chewed each other up and spit each other out, what ends up getting built is a terrible piece of sprawl equipment -- a strip mall, a housing subdivision. Everybody is left miserable and demoralized, and the next project that comes down the road gets beaten up even more, whether it's good or bad.

No doubt many projects deserve to get beaten up and delayed, even killed. But wouldn't society benefit if we could agree on a model of good development and simplify the means of going forward with it? This is the intent of the traditional town planning that is the foundation of the new urbanism.

Human settlements are like living organisms. They must grow, and they will change. But we can decide on the nature of that growth -- on the quality and the character of it -- and where it ought to go. We don't have to scatter the building blocks of our civic life all over the countryside, destroying our towns and ruining farmland. We can put the shopping and the offices and the movie theaters and the library all within walking distance of one another. And we can live within walking distance of all these things. We can build our schools close to where the children live, and the school buildings don't have to look like fertilizer plants. We can insist that commercial buildings be more than one story high, and allow people to live in decent apartments over the stores. We can build Main Street and Elm Street and still park our cars. It is within our power to create places that are worthy of our affection.

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The Atlantic Monthly; September 1996; Home From Nowhere; Volume 278, No. 3; pages 43-66.

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## WHAT WORKS

# When Activists Win: The Renaissance of Dudley St.

JAY WALLJASPER

The neighborhood surrounding Dudley Street, an avenue winding through Boston's Roxbury district, is one of the poorest in Massachusetts, with per capita income half that of Boston as a whole and unemployment at least twice as high. Thirty-five percent of families live below the poverty line, and it's not hard to spot crack dealers slinking past shabby apartment buildings on the side streets. But you also see giggling kids walking home from school, old ladies tending flower patches in their side yards and neighbors chatting over fences behind tidy white wood-frame houses. The town common hosts a farmer's market and a bandstand.

Nearby is Davey's Market, which serves as a gathering spot for anyone seeking the latest neighborhood news. Conversations may be in Spanish, Cape Verdean or the melodious accents of the Caribbean, but you still sense something of the idealized America found on Norman Rockwell's *Saturday Evening Post* covers.



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What's going on here? The answer can be found just down the street from Davy's Market in the cramped storefront office of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (D.S.N.I.). During the afternoon, it stands in for the corner soda fountain as kids wander in to say hello and see who else might be around. The busy staff usually finds time to talk and joke with them, and when there really is a reason for the kids' visit, they listen carefully. One afternoon when I was there, Ros Everdell, a D.S.N.I. organizer, counseled 16-year-old Jason Webb about an algebra class with no regular teacher. "Get all the kids in the class to go with you and say you need a real teacher, and that you need to make up all the material you've already missed."

The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative has been at work in this corner of Roxbury since 1985, pursuing local residents' vision of their community as a safe, lively and close-knit urban village. Dudley Street residents will tell you they've seen significant changes in their neighborhood, achieved against considerable odds. "It's been slow," says Olivio Teixeira, co-owner of the Ideal Sub Shop right on Dudley Street, "but that's because it's big work. It's so much nicer around here now."

Besides the usual problems of inner-city neighborhoods—poverty, redlining, unemployment, racism, inadequate public services, pollution, poor schools, crime, drugs, neglect by government officials—Dudley Street has faced some unique challenges. Many landlords in the neighborhood had reacted to plummeting property values by torching their houses for the insurance money, killing several people and leaving the area pockmarked with vacant land. More than 20 percent of the lots in the one-and-a-half-square-mile Dudley Street neighborhood were empty. These soon became dumping grounds, not only for mid-night drop-offs of old refrigerators and construction debris but for illegal garbage transfer stations that operated in the light of day. The neighborhood also had to overcome problems associated with an ethnically fragmented population, including many immigrants with a limited command of English.

African-Americans make up 40 percent of the neighborhood's 24,000 residents, with Latin Americans, mostly from Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, at 30 percent. Cape Verdeans, from islands off the coast of West Africa that were a Portuguese colony until 1975, account for another 24 percent of the population, and whites, mostly elderly Irish and Italians who've lived here since the fifties, make up 6 percent.

The revitalization of Dudley Street began when La Alianza Hispana, a local social service agency, interested a small Boston-based trust in taking on the neighborhood as a major program. But when the Riley Foundation unveiled its plans at a community meeting in St. Patrick's Catholic Church on Dudley Street, it was greeted with skepticism. Distrust of outsiders ran strong in Dudley Street because many residents had been forced out of

*The concept of urban villages has become fashionable among progressive planners, but these people didn't get the idea from academics.*

the adjacent South End neighborhood in the seventies by city-sponsored gentrification. Only a few seats on the proposed twenty-three-member board were slated for residents. Che Madyun, a mother of three with a background in the performing arts and a commanding presence, stood up, stared straight at the assembled panel of redevelopment experts and, as she recalls, "I asked how many of the people up there lived in the neighborhood. Not one. And then I asked, How can you say the residents are going to be represented when there are only three of us on the board?" Other voices quickly joined her. Robert Holmes, a trustee of the Riley Foundation and an attorney with the prestigious downtown Boston law firm of Warner and Stackpole, remembers: "Che scared the daylights out of me. I was looking at the door at the back of the room, thinking about how do I leave."

Reeling from its reception at the meeting, the Riley Foundation decided to fund improvements in the Dudley Street neighborhood without maintaining direct control of the project—a show of support rarely seen in philanthropic circles. "We allowed the neighborhood process to happen on its own," Holmes says. "Some people thought we were crazy. They thought we were throwing away our grant money."

Residents made up a majority on the D.S.N.I. board and were joined by representatives from area social service agencies, churches and businesses. The board then hired Peter Medoff, a savvy community organizer who had grown up in Boston, to head the project. Medoff, firmly committed to residents controlling the process yet with surprisingly good contacts at City Hall, proved an excellent choice. Emphasizing that D.S.N.I.'s foremost goal was organizing the neighborhood as a political force rather than becoming another developer of low-income housing or broker of social services, he and the board launched several campaigns that resulted in immediate success: restoring rail service to an abandoned commuter train stop on the edge of the neighborhood and improving safety conditions at the busy intersection of Dudley Street and Blue Hill Avenue. By setting achievable goals, D.S.N.I. kept the level of participation high even though the bigger things like getting the dumps out of Dudley Street and providing affordable housing were slow in coming.

The organization's active membership has grown steadily over the past decade, and now numbers 2,500. Its biggest accomplishment has been imbuing Dudley Street residents with the sense that things are looking up. From the start, the group's members devoted considerable time and energy to envisioning what they wanted for Dudley Street. More than 150 people met to plot out the future of their neighborhood in an eight-month series of meetings that were conducted in Spanish and Cape Verdean as well as English. They came up with a wide-ranging plan that emphasized building community spirit as much as erecting new houses. Bike paths, apple orchards, outdoor cafes, community gardens, fountains, art programs and a town common with concerts were identified as goals alongside pressing economic needs like jobs.

"The only way to make things happen is to dream," explains Gertrudes Fidalgo, who participated in the original visioning

*In "What Works?", a new feature that examines projects making a positive difference in people's lives, Jay Walljasper, former editor of Utne Reader, will report on what we can learn from these political organizations, programs and policies.*

process as a youngster and became a D.S.N.I. organizer after college. "Dreams are your best resource." This visioning process has gone on for ten years, and results from the latest round are taped to the wall in D.S.N.I.'s conference room, testifying to people's powerful yearning for community—and ice cream. An ice cream parlor figures in many of the scenarios of Dudley Street's future that were jotted down on big sheets of paper, along with dreams like this: "People Walking. People Talking. People Laughing. Saying Hello to Everyone We Meet." Another reads: "I want affordable housing and schools with beautiful green playgrounds."

"A lot of these urban programs do only housing," notes Gus Newport, the former Berkeley, California, mayor who succeeded Medoff as executive director of D.S.N.I. from 1988 to 1992. "I think planners take it for granted that poor people don't need culture, vital businesses or beauty. If you had those things in inner cities, you'd have a lot less crime. You have to get inside the heads of people who live here, see what they want. They want more than houses. Beauty—no matter how small it is, just a few flowers—is what matters most."

Newport, who now lectures and consults on urban issues around the country and is still involved with D.S.N.I., notes that the concept of urban villages has become fashionable recently among progressive architects and planners. "But these people didn't get the idea from academics," he says. "What you have here are a lot of people who grew up in the rural South and the Cape Verde Islands and the Caribbean. They want to work with the land. They want open spaces for kids to play in. They don't want to live in tall buildings. They want to know their neighbors. They understood all by themselves that they wanted to get back to the village."

Standing in the way of these dreams of a thriving urban village, however, have been some very real problems, beginning with dozens of wrecked cars abandoned on the neighborhood's streets each week and regular shipments of other people's garbage, including rotten meat. "You had to hold your nose when you drove down the road," remembers Che Madyun, who became D.S.N.I.'s board president in 1986. "It was terrible." Madyun and Medoff guided the Don't Dump on Us campaign, which strong-armed Boston Mayor Raymond Flynn to do something about all the illegal dumping. Flynn, who had campaigned for mayor against African-American activist Mel King as a populist representative of Boston's neighborhoods in 1983 but had

virtually no support in minority communities, was looking for ways to boost his popularity in Roxbury. He immediately saw the political advantages of siding with a scrappy neighborhood group and offered some city resources to assist D.S.N.I., going so far as helping Madyun padlock the gates of one illegal garbage transfer station before rolling TV cameras. "People were galvanized in seeing that they could change things," remembers Ros Everdell.

The next question was what to do with the empty land. The city had acquired about half of it through tax delinquency and, after some prodding, Flynn agreed to deed it over to D.S.N.I. The rest, however, was owned by individuals, among them real estate speculators, who hoped that some giant urban renewal scheme would net them a handsome profit. Redevelopment plans were hindered by the checkerboard pattern of land ownership. D.S.N.I. decided to boldly go where no community group has ever gone before, to undertake a controversial move: eminent domain.

This is the legal tool that has been used to devastate many urban neighborhoods, where people are forced to sell their homes and businesses to make way for freeways, convention centers and other megaprojects. Could it be used to help rebuild a neighborhood? After convincing City Hall to grant it that power and four years of challenges in courts, D.S.N.I. gained the right to buy any empty land in the neighborhood.

The time tied up in court wasn't wasted because the organization still needed to come up with funding to buy the land. The Riley Foundation's support of D.S.N.I. has been limited, amounting to \$1.4 million through the years. (Riley contributed more than \$1.5 million to social service agencies in the neighborhood as well as making arrangements for considerable pro bono legal work on the eminent domain case and other matters.) Other local and national foundations have contributed smaller amounts. But it would take a sizable chunk of cash to purchase the land. Since banks and other conventional lenders steer clear of projects like this in poor neighborhoods, finding the money was a formidable task. Finally, the Ford Foundation agreed to make a \$2 million loan.

Besides working to build affordable housing, D.S.N.I. has been busy with numerous other projects and partnerships. An annual neighborhood cleanup was launched, dozens of community gardens planted and a multicultural festival and a network for family daycare providers established. When drug dealers set up shop at the playgrounds in Mary Hannon Park, the community retook the park by establishing regular youth activities and sports programs. Working with planning professionals, residents translated the ideas of a sociable, walkable urban village into a master plan that was accepted by the city. More than 300 units of housing in the area have been rehabbed. A special effort was made to draw young people into the project, including designating youth seats on the board and bringing on a special organizer. State and municipal money was secured to construct the lovely town common, which opened last June, and plans are under way to remodel an old municipal building into a community center. Renovations for the nearby Orchard Park public housing project (childhood home of soul singer Bobby Brown) have been announced by the Boston Housing Authority, with much of the money coming from Washington. Playgrounds will be built by the authority for residents of the

# Nation

## ALERT

—BULLETINS FOR POLITICAL ACTION—

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development, and an old cabinet factory on Dudley Street was acquired and will eventually house D.S.N.I., along with a new charter school and a small furniture manufacturer.

Leveraging money from municipal, state and federal authorities as well as foundations has been a key ingredient of D.S.N.I.'s success. Starting with Medoff, who had critical ties into City Hall, and then Newport, who had a national reputation as an urban advocate, on through current director Greg Watson, who served as Commissioner of Agriculture under Michael Dukakis and current Republican Governor William Weld, the organization has made the most of its political and philanthropic connections.

Winning a few early campaigns and publicizing them also positioned Dudley Street as a "success story." Foundation officials, politicians and government agencies—wary of what felt like the intractable problems of urban ghettos—were more than eager to join enthusiastic inner-city residents on what looked to be a winning team. Newport says, "Once you have people who are positive and working toward a goal themselves, then it's easy to get pro bono services and other kinds of support. Make things happen in the neighborhood and you make things happen other places, too."

D.S.N.I. also got involved with some projects outside the Dudley Street area, joining protests against redlining by Boston banks and sponsoring regular classes for groups who wanted to rehab apartment buildings and low-income people who wanted to buy houses. One of the people signing up for the home-buying class was Debra Wilson, a 39-year-old caseworker for the welfare department. That's how she heard about Dudley Street's Winthrop Estates, which comprises the first thirty-eight of 225 new housing units rising from what was vacant land. Wilson now lives there with her two teenage sons and grandmother. Walking me through her town house, which is modeled on traditional New England houses with clapboard-style siding and a bay window that looks out on one of the new parks, she says, "When I first came here it was all overgrown with weeds, old tires, abandoned cars everywhere. I couldn't imagine this as a neighborhood like it is now. It still surprises me."

Winthrop Estates was developed by D.S.N.I. with funding from various foundations and government programs. The houses can be bought by families with incomes as low as \$18,000, in part because the land is owned by a trust. The adjacent Stafford Heights development offers co-ops for families with incomes as low as \$15,000. Although only three years old, these houses all feel like a rooted neighborhood, and not just because of newly fashionable old-fashioned touches like front porches and wood columns at the doorways. Winthrop Estates and Stafford Heights avoid the suburban look of many urban redevelopment projects by emphasizing classic city features like sidewalks, compact lots and narrow streets. Because residents guided the planning process, the usual cookie-cutter subdivision designs were tossed out in favor of plans that fit their vision of an urban village. You see kids racing in front of the houses and hear folks calling out to one another.

The new neighborhood has already pulled together several times to deal with problems in the area: a nearby crack house, speeding drivers, noise from a twenty-four-hour gas station. Thanks to prodding from residents, police drove the crack dealers

out. In response to residents' petitions, the city made several streets one-way to discourage drivers from taking shortcuts through the neighborhood. And picketing pressured the gas station owner to quiet his customers. "All of us here realized that this is the first time we had ever spoken up," Wilson says. "We didn't know things could change."

Wilson is involved with a D.S.N.I. committee promoting economic development. "We just had a meeting about what we wanted on the Main Street. In two or three years we'll see the businesses coming back—places to eat outside, a bakery, restaurants where you can take the family."

Promoting small businesses is one of the strategies adopted by residents to increase employment in Dudley Street. So far the construction and rehabbing projects have provided a few jobs for local people, and the reopening of the commuter rail stop provided better access to opportunities downtown, but economic development has lagged behind other D.S.N.I. goals. "It's a much tougher nut to crack," admits D.S.N.I. organizer Everdell. "The answer is not just jobs in the neighborhood but all over the metro area."

*Dudley Street's significance as a symbol is that it shows investment in low-income areas truly can make a difference in people's lives.*

So what is it that's brought a new sense of hope to a place whose poverty and deterioration once marked it as a lost cause in the eyes of city officials and even many residents? "There's a tremendous core here, it's not just two or three heroic people," explains journalist Holly Sklar, author, with Peter Medoff (who died in 1994), of a history of the Dudley Street project, *Streets of Hope* (South End Press). She adds that D.S.N.I.'s efforts were effective because they transcended racial and ethnic differences and reached out to young people. "The foundations and government agencies became partners, not patrons," she says. "And the residents are really the leaders."

But Sklar goes on to offer a cautionary note: "Some people will say this shows you don't need government programs. If every neighborhood was just good enough, we wouldn't need government. But you can't duplicate this around the nation on the basis of foundation money. There's millions of dollars of federal, state and municipal money here. You can't do this instead of changing U.S. policies, instead of raising the minimum wage, instead of full employment policies, instead of improving the educational system. No village is an island. Even here they're going to be hit hard because of changes in the welfare bill and the immigration bill."

Dudley Street's significance as a symbol of hope for America's hard-hit urban neighborhoods is not that it represents a magic way to mend problems without spending taxpayers' money. Rather it points to what can be done to make sure that both public and private money invested in low-income areas truly makes a difference in people's lives. Much of the backlash against social spending in inner cities stems from middle-class people's doubts that it does any good. Billions of dollars have streamed into ghettos since the sixties, and poverty and hopelessness persist. The most important message from Dudley Street is that conditions in inner-city neighborhoods can actually improve if revitalization efforts inspire the enthusiastic involvement of people who live there.

Urban revitalization plans are usually cooked up in a foundation office or government agency, and then neighborhood

residents are invited to participate in the process—almost as an afterthought. Because many inner-city residents are poor, undereducated, immigrants, minorities or plain out-of-luck, some planners assume they have little to offer. Yet, in one sense, they are the real experts on inner-city life. Gus Newport notes, "This doesn't mean that you can't use professionals. But you must remember that community people know a lot. Here in Dudley Street, they looked over everything that came from the planners and analyzed it. They asked a lot of good questions and offered a lot of good ideas."

Politicians go on about "personal responsibility" as the key for inner-city residents in turning around their lives. The success of Dudley Street proves this true, but not in exactly the sense that Bill Clinton or William Weld means it. Because residents were in complete charge of the planning process for D.S.N.I., they assumed responsibility for where the neighborhood was headed and they tapped unrecognized resources. Local teenagers, for instance, volunteered to help the architects on designs for housing. Che Madyun and a number of other residents proved to be talented leaders. This would never have hap-

pened with a top-down project, even a more lavishly funded one. Some housing might have been built and some services provided, but there would have been no boost for the neighborhood's of itself. As a result of this experience, folks in Dudley St began to view politics differently: as a way to get things done, not just as something that does things to them. That, as much as the foundation and government money, made a difference in this corner of Roxbury.

Of course, Dudley Street is not safe from the storms of federal policy and the global economy. What happens in Washington and Wall Street directly affects this neighborhood. But the lasting impact of a project like D.S.N.I. is that it strengthens the neighborhood's ability to withstand such assaults. They have more resources to figure out how to deal with the effects of the draconian welfare bill and anti-immigrant legislation. These policies will hurt people on Dudley Street, but not as much as they would if D.S.N.I. wasn't there. Community-based organizing is not a substitute for the hard political work of pulling America back fi its rightward course. But the success of this project strengthens the case for progressive policies by showing that public concern and taxpayer money can make a real difference.

There are unique elements of Dudley Street's story that limit its applicability to other urban neighborhoods—empty land strewn with garbage but also providing a catalyst for redevelopment, immigrants struggling with language skills but still enjoying the strengths of extended families, a local foundation willing to invest in a neighborhood rather than just a project. But the overriding theme of Dudley Street applies anywhere: The people living in a neighborhood were called on to make the decisions about its future. And they responded with enthusiasm, outrage, hope, creativity, patience and lots of energy.

A documentary, by Leah Mahan and Mark Lipman, *Holding Ground: The Rebirth of Dudley Street*, will be aired on public television stations across the country beginning in mid-May. ■

over the hard-liners? A million dollars a day is a lot of money, but it may be too small a sum to provide real political leverage in most of those situations.

**DR:** I don't agree. The international community is responsible for something like 80 percent of the jobs in Bosnia. Even the hard-liners who want to perpetuate the conflict must worry about the consequences of an aid cutoff. They have their constituents; they don't want people dissatisfied with them. One must not underestimate what humanitarian aid can accomplish if it is

properly administered. These humanitarian agencies and N.G.O.s are tremendous forces for good in a cruel world—at least in terms of alleviating human suffering in a crisis. But, as it is now, this humanitarian international operates like a strange kind of free agent. It needs to come to terms better with its limitations, and we need to harness it a lot better than we are doing now and, also, reintroduce a degree of reality into our thinking about what humanitarian aid can and cannot accomplish. That should be the lesson we draw from our recent experience in Zaire. ■

WHAT WORKS? PROGRESSIVES HAVE REVIVED THIS CITY LARGELY BY LISTENING TO PEOPLE.

# Burlington, Northern Light

JAY WALLJASPER

It's a snowy Friday night with a wind off Lake Champlain, but inside the gym at Barnes Elementary School in Burlington, Vermont, the mood is warm as the Progressive Coalition kicks off its municipal election campaign. The Great Rondini, an African-American magician and escape artist, enthralls a cluster of school-age kids by wriggling free from a tangle of locks. Then a local rockabilly band takes the stage and Terry Bouricius, the explicitly socialist legislator who serves a Burlington district in the Vermont House of Representatives, shows off some fancy dance steps. Meanwhile City Council candidate Tom Smith, who still calls himself a Marxist, is chatting up voters by the popcorn stand.

Peter Clavelle, the Mayor of Burlington, who is running for re-election in a few weeks, is throwing this party. He doesn't need to deliver a speech, though, since neither Democrats nor Republicans are fielding candidates against him. The event is not a campaign rally as much as a "thank you" to the residents of this neighborhood, Burlington's Old North End. The Old North End is Burlington's mill-town quarter, dominated by French Canadians and Irish Catholics, with a new sprinkling of African-American, Vietnamese and Latino faces. It's primarily working families and single moms who have come out tonight, looking for some family fun at the end of the week.

That chilly night represents a lesson in how to rekindle the fires of progressive politics. The blue-collar constituency of the Old North End has kept Burlington's Progressives in power for eight of the last nine municipal elections (including this past March, when Clavelle and Smith both won handily and the Progressive Coalition retained its working majority on the City Council). They vote Progressive because the policies pursued by Progressive officeholders have made a difference in their lives.

In 1981, when socialist Bernie Sanders squeaked by with a 10-vote victory over a five-term Democratic incumbent, Burlington



was moving in the same direction as other U.S. cities—toward an ever-widening gap in quality of life between rich and poor. The shadow of gentrification loomed over the Old North End. Affordable housing was scarce and run-down. Developers were drawing up plans for highrise condos and upscale shopping along the city's waterfront, then a privately owned wasteland of rail yards and oil tanks. Burlington's small stretches of public beach were often closed because of pollution. A property tax increase, which would have fallen most heavily on low-income and elderly residents, was in the works. The streets were pocked with potholes, the sidewalks were falling apart, cars zoomed recklessly through inner-city neighborhoods and snowplowing was always behind schedule. A business-dominated Democratic Party machine ran the city hand in hand with local Republicans. And despite all that was going wrong in Burlington, voter turnout and political participation were low—especially in the Old North End and university precincts.

Now, after a decade and a half of Progressive leadership, it's a different story. The Old North End offers more affordable housing and it's a better place to live, with blocks of rehabbed houses, new job opportunities and municipally funded organizations to aid low-income people. The oil tanks are gone and the waterfront now boasts a park, a lovely public boathouse, a new science museum and a nine-mile bike path. Thanks to a new sewer system, the beaches are clean. Luxury town houses are being built near—not on—the waterfront, but developers must make them fit Burlington's urban fabric and include some affordable units. There has been no general hike in property taxes because the university, utilities, out-of-town visitors and businesses now pay a greater share of local taxes. The streets have been fixed and fitted with devices to slow traffic, sidewalks have been repaired and snow is quickly plowed. In addition, politics has become a popular pastime, as citizens take part in municipally sponsored commissions, councils and Neighborhood Planning Assemblies.

That's not all. A municipal arts commission has enlivened the city's cultural life with a year-round calendar of concerts and performances, youth programs and support services for artists. A mu-

*Jay Walljasper is editor at large of Utne Reader. This article is the second "What Works?", a new feature that examines projects making a positive difference in people's lives.*

nicipal Women's Council educates and advocates on a range of issues. And 40 percent of Burlington's solid waste is recycled. On the drawing board are plans for an expansive network of bicycle lanes and a commuter rail to outlying communities, part of an effort that, it is hoped, will lead to a 15 percent decline in single-occupancy auto traffic. The U.S. Conference of Mayors picked Burlington as America's most livable small city in 1988, and socialist Bernie Sanders was named as one of the best mayors in the nation in 1987 by the conservative *U.S. News & World Report*.

Some observers discount Burlington's progressive accomplishments because it is a college town. The University of Vermont's 9,000 students and others from smaller colleges in the area are a clear presence in this town of 39,000 (the metro population is 137,000), but U.V.M. is known more for parties than protests. And with 19 percent of the city's population living below the poverty level, Progressives here grapple with many of the same problems as leaders in other cities.

It's true that Burlington is not exactly Detroit. Poverty isn't as isolating in a small city, and crack has never been a big business here. Because Burlington is 96 percent white, "the tensions that come with race don't happen," as Kevin Kelley, a journalist who covers politics for the local alternative weekly, puts it. "It also means that working-class white people are comfortable voting their class interests," he says. "They will vote socialist. You can't do a divide-and-conquer strategy against the Progressives."

But it's not a bucolic New England village, either. Five and a half percent of the city's residents are on welfare, with nearly 12 percent receiving food stamps. Burlington's problems are real, and the creative ways Progressives deal with them are worth noting. Take the issue of affordable housing, which was one of the big concerns that brought Sanders into office sixteen years ago. At that time rent control and public housing were touted as the progressive solutions to the problem. Yet neither would fly in Burlington, where the local public housing authority was a sorry mess. Two months after Sanders's election, Burlington voters defeated his rent-control proposal by a resounding 3-to-1 margin. Conventional politics dictated that the city offer lavish incentives to private developers to rehab or build new housing, especially since federal support for public housing was drying up.

Instead, Sanders, whose strong idealism as a politician is balanced by a supple pragmatism (which was important, since he never enjoyed a Progressive majority on the City Council during his eight years as mayor), initiated a housing policy based on neither the public nor the private sector. Borrowing an idea that was being tested in several rural New England communities as a way to preserve open space, his administration funded a land trust. Established as a nonprofit organization with a \$200,000 grant from the city, the Burlington Community Land Trust now encompasses 150 owner-occupied homes and 135 rental units, making it one of Burlington's largest landlords. The land trust has refurbished many houses and apartments, especially in the Old North End, and then found low-income home buyers or renters. Buyers can purchase a land trust house at a less-than-market price, but when moving out they are obliged to sell it back to the trust with less-than-market appreciation in value. That way the housing stays affordable.

Besides getting poor families into good houses, the land trust makes sure they can stay there, according to John Davis, an urban

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consultant who was formerly Burlington's Housing Director. "The idea is to provide a backstop for low-income homeowners," he says—help if they get into financial trouble or have maintenance problems. Several other housing nonprofits have also been launched and with city help have created housing for the elderly and single-room-occupancy hotels for the formerly homeless.

The idea of tapping into the Third Sector—nonprofit groups funded in part by the city—has been carried over from housing to many other issues. The Old North End is dotted with organizations working on problems like domestic violence, homelessness and unemployment out of storefront offices that blend in with the laundromats, taverns, tattoo parlors and secondhand shops. Indeed, sixty-two groups involved in the neighborhood were included in a successful proposal to make the Old North End part of the Enterprise Community program, a federal initiative for low-income areas similar to empowerment zones. The strong Third Sector participation helped tip the scales to bring in \$3 million and other kinds of federal support.

The important thing to remember about all this, notes Davis, is that "the community got to decide what it wanted." A new neighborhood technology center, which offers computer training and public access to the Internet, has opened in response to requests from the residents who guide the Enterprise Community program. And the city helped a buyers' club, in which families on food stamps saved money by purchasing in bulk, transform itself into a cooperative market.

**T**he prospects of the Old North End have also been brightened by the city's efforts to create jobs. Micro-lending programs offer small amounts of money (\$500 to \$30,000) to low-income people, especially women, to launch businesses like daycare, catering, bookkeeping or retail shops. Eight incubators for small business around town, including one in the old Maypo cereal plant, have boosted employment through new enterprises in manufacturing, services and food. The world's largest snowboard factory now occupies a plant that once built machine guns. In 1991 *Inc.* magazine listed Burlington as one of the ten best cities for starting a new business.

Aggressive efforts are also under way to integrate women into the building trades, including a mandate that work crews on all publicly funded construction projects in Burlington must be 10 percent female. And in keeping with his vision of Burlington as the prototype of an ecologically and economically sustainable city, Mayor Clavelle is promoting an eco-industrial park that would take excess heat from the municipally owned biomass (woodchip) power plant to set up greenhouses, aquaculture projects and food processing businesses. Added to the city's already impressive community gardens, this park will, he hopes, eventually enable Burlington to produce 10 percent of its own food.

Despite the jokes about the People's Republic of Burlington, this is no grand ideological experiment. Peter Clavelle doesn't even call himself a socialist, and nothing that's been done here would be out of reach for a progressive Democratic (or New Party or Green or nonpartisan) city government. The Progressive Coalition has transformed this town simply by listening to people,

especially low-income people, and working with them to make things better. "In a way Bernie's first election was a fluke," notes Clavelle, who served under Sanders as director of the Community and Economic Development Office before becoming mayor in 1989, "and he would have been in office no more than two years if he just stuck to ideology. But he did a good job of managing the city. That's why we're still here."

This is the essence of Sewer Socialism, which kept Socialists in power in cities like Milwaukee and Bridgeport, Connecticut, for decades after the national Socialist Party declined. The Sewer Socialism label fits Burlington's Progressives well, since one of their most notable accomplishments is a new, \$53 million sewer system (the largest environmental project in Vermont history) to clean all of Burlington's waste water

draining into Lake Champlain. Burlington is one of just four cities in the country that treats its storm water.

But the Progressives' success involves more than efficient management. They have won widespread support because of their commitment to their vision of the public good. The bike trail and parklands along the waterfront, for example, which everyone points to as the city's greatest asset, came about only because Progressives challenged plans for private development along the lake. "The waterfront is not for sale," Sanders thundered throughout his first mayoral campaign.

Snowplowing, often a make-or-break issue for politicians in Northern cities, illustrates how the Progressives' insistence on wide participation in decision-making paid off in better public services. Days after the 1981 election, facing outright hostility from the heads of many city departments, Sanders went straight to the workers in the streets and asked what could be done to do a better job of plowing the snow. "Buy new plows," they told him. "We spend half our time trying to fix the old ones." That's exactly what Sanders did, saving a bundle of money and getting the streets plowed faster. Burlington's policy had always been to plow streets first, then sidewalks, but after the Progressives created the Neighborhood Planning Assemblies it became clear that in the Old North End and other inner-city wards, more people walked than drove. So the city now plows the sidewalks first in those areas. "We probably would have never come up with that idea on our own," admits Public Works Director Scott Johnstone.

**O**f course, there are limits to what can be accomplished by progressives in one city. Many political reforms passed by the City Council, especially attempts to shift the tax burden away from low- and middle-income households, were overturned by the state legislature (Vermont invests local municipalities with less authority than most states). And economic decisions are made in many other places besides city hall. A lot of business investment now bypasses Burlington in favor of the more prosperous suburbs, causing the city to lose out on both jobs and tax revenues.

The issue seems particularly pertinent now that a hulking Wal-Mart has opened its doors in nearby Williston. The city's response is to strengthen downtown Burlington, which already has considerable appeal with its well-preserved old buildings, eclectic shops and beloved pedestrian mall along Church Street. A

*Burlington shows that local government can do something constructive about urban ills, even in a time of sharp cuts in federal aid.*

## On Toleration

Michael  
Walzer

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major component of Mayor Clavelle's economic development strategy is bringing in a Filene's department store, as well as widening roads into downtown and building a publicly funded parking garage to lure more shoppers from outside the city. This, in the eyes of some local activists, contradicts his vision of Burlington as a sustainable city. Clavelle counters, "The long-term sustainability of a region is linked to having a lively downtown. The rhetoric against ugly sprawl is not enough; we must create more development in growth centers like downtown." He adds that the store may create as many as 500 new jobs within walking distance of the Old North End.

Progressive politics in Burlington doesn't stop at the water's edge. The city helped put economic pressure on Canada's Hydro-Quebec utility to curtail a massive project that would have flooded millions of acres of Indian land there. Sister-city programs have been initiated with communities in Nicaragua, Russia, the Gaza Strip and Israel. An antiwar banner hung on city hall throughout the Gulf War, and as State Representative Terry Bouricius notes, "The invasion of Grenada was debated more in the Burlington City Council than in Congress."

What has happened in Burlington shows that government—local government—can do something constructive about urban ills, even in a time of sharp cuts in federal aid to cities and poor people. While Republicans were preaching that government is irrelevant (or worse), Burlington's Progressive Coalition used the power of city hall to improve life in the community.

**T**he Progressives' most important accomplishment has been to open up the political process in Burlington, inviting the public to participate in all kinds of decisions, from how to make the streets safer to who should run the cable TV franchise. This changed the political culture around town—enough so that when a Republican captured the mayor's office from 1993 to 1995 ("my voter-inspired sabbatical," Clavelle calls it), very few of the Progressive policies were overturned, not even the controversial domestic-partner legislation that probably cost Clavelle that election.

"Although a city can't cut the defense budget, it is within our power to bring people back into the political process," observes Sanders, now in his fourth term as an Independent in the U.S. House of Representatives. He proudly notes that voter turnout in Burlington almost doubled from 1979 (before he entered city politics) to 1983 (when he sought a second term as mayor). "We used city hall as a way to promote cultural and intellectual discourse, a way to promote democracy."

Sanders adds that he outpolled Bill Clinton across the state last November, and that the Associated Press, on the basis of exit polls, called Vermont the most progressive state in the Union. Although efforts to expand the Progressive Coalition into a statewide party have stalled (there are only three Progressives in the Vermont legislature, all from Burlington), Sanders says the Progressive presence has pushed state Democrats leftward.

The chairwoman of Burlington's Democratic Party, lawyer Sandy Baird, positions herself to the left of the Progressive Coalition on many issues, although most local Democrats don't share her views. She's a vocal opponent of the Filene's department store deal on ecological grounds and because of the company's ties to sweatshops, and contends that under the Progressives business

interests still run the city. Yet she praises the Progressives for their arts policies and Neighborhood Planning Assemblies, and because "in an age of conservatism, they have argued for the rights of poor people." Even Peter Brownell, the Republican who beat Clavelle in 1993, gives Progressives high marks for boosting the arts and keeping the waterfront open to the public. He worries about how the city will pay off the loans that financed waterfront development, but when I asked him if Burlington was a nicer, more interesting town because of the Progressives, he answered, "Yes, absolutely."

Local government offers a unique opportunity for grass-roots

politics because it's a setting where big-money interests can't throw around as much weight. "We won because we knocked on more doors," explains Sanders. "It takes hard work—and if you're serious, hard work for a long time. You can't just run one campaign. But we outworked the Democrats and Republicans over a long period of time." As we enter an era when large responsibilities are being handed down to local government, Burlington points the way to a new front for progressive politics, based on devotion to the down-to-earth details that improve the lives of everyday people in America's neighborhoods. Forget the barricades—it's time to seize the sewers! ■

THE C.I.A. GOT REVENGE ON RICHARD NUCCIO FOR TELLING CONGRESS OF ITS STONEWALLING.

# The Spy Who Shoved Me

DAVID CORN

In February a onetime senior member of the Clinton Administration called reporters to a Capitol Hill committee room and declared, "No one in this White House, in this Administration, is questioning or confronting what is literally mutiny by components of the Central Intelligence Agency." The speaker was Richard Nuccio, a strapping 49-year-old who had served the President as a special envoy to Guatemala and as a special adviser on Cuba. He was resigning from the State Department. Three months earlier his career in the national security establishment had been wiped out when Director of Central Intelligence John Deutch canceled Nuccio's security clearance. Deutch's action was retribution for Nuccio's violation of the C.I.A.'s holiest prescripts: He had revealed the name of an agency asset. It did not matter that he had done so, in private, to then-Representative Bob Torricelli, a member of the House Intelligence Committee who was cleared to receive sensitive material, or that Nuccio had shared the highly classified secret to counter C.I.A. stonewalling and to inform Congress that an agency asset was connected to two murders in Guatemala. Nuccio had challenged the covert crowd. The spooks sought revenge. The successful drive to banish Nuccio was led by C.I.A. Deputy Director George Tenet—who is now President Clinton's choice to head the agency.

Four days after Nuccio's press conference, *The Washington Post* revealed that Tenet's C.I.A. had quietly canned 1,000 informants, including more than a hundred implicated in major crimes abroad. The vetting was prompted, in part, by the public outcry that occurred after Torricelli went public with the information Nuccio had passed him. The C.I.A. also issued new guidelines for dealing with assets who commit human rights abuses. According to a White House report, this too was "largely as a result of the inquiries related to Guatemala." Thus Nuccio had a hand in exposing a C.I.A. cover-up, rousting brutes from the payroll and reforming agency rules on doing business with thugs. His reward: He was chewed up by the system. By promoting



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Tenet—one who did the chewing—the President ratified Tenet's message to government officials: Reveal C.I.A. secrets (even when they concern illegal actions) and you will pay. As the agency is about to get its fourth director in six years, Nuccio's tale, and Tenet's crucial role in it, is an illuminating one, showing that the C.I.A. remains untamed, its bureaucratic prerogatives untouchable. The story is also another example of how the Clinton Administration treats its friends.

Nuccio did not go looking for a fight with the spies. In the fall of 1994, American Jennifer Harbury was demanding information on the fate of her husband, Efraín Bámaca Velásquez, a Guatemalan rebel leader captured in 1992. Nuccio, the State Department's point man on Guatemala, was forced to deal with the case. No sentimental idealist, he believed her campaign was interfering with the peace process in Guatemala. And for months, in good faith, he had been telling various members of Congress that the U.S. government had little information on her husband. But Harbury was working the media and Capitol Hill with savvy. The State Department could not disregard her. Nuccio reviewed State Department files and found a C.I.A. cable that contained rich details on the Guatemalan military's interrogation of Bámaca. He began to wonder if perhaps the U.S. government did know something about the case. Then, on November 1, 1994, Nuccio and several State Department officials met with four C.I.A. officers. The diplomats asked about the cable. The C.I.A. representatives told them to ignore that report, claiming it came from a discredited source, whom they refused to identify.

Nuccio had stumbled into a C.I.A. cover-up. The unidentified source was Col. Julio Roberto Alpírez, a Guatemalan military intelligence officer. He had been a paid C.I.A. agent but was now a liability, for the agency had intelligence tying him to the 1990 murder of Michael DeVine, an American innkeeper in Guatemala. And the agency had not reported that to Congress, as it should have. The C.I.A. was in a fix: It could not reveal what it knew about Bámaca without drawing attention to Alpírez, a po-

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# The Great Wall of Portland

**Oregon's biggest city has long been considered America's most successful experiment in growth control. Now the pressure to grow is more intense than ever, and so is the debate over whether that growth will be in the form of ever-greater density or sprawl.**

**BY ALAN EHRENHALT**

**It's no small burden** being America's urban sweetheart. Every week of the year, somebody arrives in Portland, Oregon, from far away, wanting to know the secrets of big-city livability. And invariably they fall in love and return home proclaiming that they have seen a glimpse of urban life as it ought to be lived in the century to come.

Journalists and local planners are among the most deeply infatuated. Within a period of a few months not long ago, one visiting reporter called Portland "America's shining example of effective sprawl control," a second described its land use process as "a model around the world," and a third suggested that it "consider bottling its vision." Planners from Botswana have been to Portland looking for advice. So have local officials from China and members of the French National Assembly.

But it is the official delegations from other American cities that fall for Portland the hardest. And it isn't difficult to figure out why. They arrive from places where the downtown is dead, the neighborhoods are crumbling and the strip malls sprawl for 50 miles across the suburban asphalt, and they see a place where the downtown has a thousand retail stores, the outlying neighborhoods are healthy and growing, and the sprawl ends at a greenbelt 20 minutes from the city line. And every land use decision is made under the aegis of an elected metropolitan government in accordance with the dictates of a tough and explicit state law.

To the visitors who troop there, Portland is a monument to intelligent civic leadership. But at the moment, it is more than that. It is the model for the wave of New Urbanist design ideas that has been gathering momentum throughout the 1990s and now threatens to break out as a full-fledged planning craze. All the concepts and phrases of the New Urbanism--"mixed-use development," "transit-oriented design," "neo-traditional planning," "resource efficiency"--are becoming standard equipment in city halls and planning departments in every region of the country. Boise has just implemented a comprehensive metro plan that reads like a New Urbanist manifesto. Nashville and Raleigh have approved something similar. Louisville is debating the issues in its "Cornerstone 2020" planning process. The governor of Maryland has unveiled a "Smart Growth" program aimed at pumping state money into communities that adopt New Urbanist guidelines--and denying it to those that refuse.

Virtually every community that launches one of these master planning projects sends a delegation to Portland sooner or later. Portland is the one place, they believe, that has confronted most of the tough urban planning problems and handled them.

As things stand now, it sometimes seems as if the whole country is looking to Portland as a role model for 21st century urban development. But there's one place that isn't so sure Portland has all the answers. That's Portland.

For the past several years, Oregon's largest city and its surrounding region have been immersed in an intense and sometimes bitter argument about their future, and specifically about the future of the UGB--the urban growth boundary that nearly everyone agrees is responsible, one way or another, for the region as it has come to exist today.

All of the people of metropolitan Portland and 41 percent of the people of Oregon live within a 364-square-mile, 232,000 acre, blob-shaped mass of territory that was created in 1979 to mark off urbanized territory from the parks, forests and farmland that surround it. Beyond the line, it is virtually impossible to build anything. A farmer who owns a house on his land has to tear it down if he wants to build another one. The idea of having a boundary, which exists around every one of Oregon's 157 cities, was mostly to protect the rural parts of the state from what the late Governor Tom McCall, the father of Oregon land use planning, used to refer to as "Californication" and "coastal condomania."

When the line was drawn, it inconvenienced few people, since it was far beyond the edge of most existing development and there was no shortage of building opportunities inside it. Then, in the 1980s, the entire state went through a prolonged economic downturn that essentially took growth issues off the political agenda for a decade.

But in the 1990s, with metropolitan Portland booming, the issue has returned. Homebuilders and allied growth advocates argue that the rigid boundary has forced up real estate prices and made the construction of affordable new housing virtually impossible. They want the boundary expanded. Arrayed against them are environmentalists, downtown Portland interests and most of the region's local officials, who argue that an expanded UGB will magnify the suburban sprawl that planning has so far limited, and impose infrastructure costs that the suburban governments cannot afford. They want to deal with the area's rapid population growth by imposing higher density on Portland and the other communities inside the border.

Perched rather uneasily between them is the seven-member Metro council, the only popularly elected regional government in the United States. Early this year, lobbied heavily by both sides, it voted to take 18,000 acres of land--an amount roughly equal to 8 percent of the current boundary--and place it in the category of "urban reserves," eligible to be incorporated into the UGB at some time in the near future. Metro has the legal right to do this, subject to approval by the state.

In the context of land use decisions in many parts of the country, where two subdivisions can take up 18,000 acres all by themselves, it was not a huge decision. As one local transportation planner likes to say, "We're having a great debate about a relatively small amount of land." But it is nevertheless a great debate, and it has generated unusual emotion and an identity crisis of sorts in America's New Urbanist showcase city.

**There is no question** that Portland owes part of its renaissance to the happenstance of its Northwest scenery and mild climate, and a larger part to good political leadership, especially that of Neil Goldschmidt, the mayor of the 1970s who backed up McCall on land use, created the public transit system, and staked his reputation on the revival of downtown. But even the most ardent advocates of expanding the boundary don't dispute that Portland looks as good as it does in large part because the boundary is there.

Nobody in his right mind, however, would suggest that the UGB has put an end to sprawl in the Portland region. Between the city limits and the boundary line are a collection of roads, malls and low-density

housing indistinguishable from those found in all metropolitan areas. As Portland Councilman Charlie Hales says, "A lot of the trash around the edge of Portland is as trashy as the trash around any other city. It's godawful subdivisions right up to the line."

The magic of the UGB isn't in the prevention of sprawl; it's in the containment of sprawl. Big as the urbanized territory is, at some point it more or less filled up, at least for the purposes of constructing huge collections of tract houses on flat, empty land. There were no more places inside the boundary to put new 500-acre subdivisions. And so the city of Portland and its downtown began to look attractive again to developers and investors who might otherwise have preferred extending pavement all the way to the ocean, 60 miles to the west.

In the two decades between 1973 and 1993, the amount of office space in downtown Portland nearly tripled, at a time when some large cities were holding even at best. Last year, 21 percent of all the housing permits in the metro area were inside the city. At this moment, there are three new office buildings being built in the Portland area, and all of them are downtown, on the MAX light rail line. Anywhere else, they would likely be far beyond the city limits. Of all the workers who commute into Portland every weekday, 40 percent use public transportation, more than in any city outside the dense Northeast. For the most part, they are not poor people, either. Nearly two-thirds of them own a car. They are using public transportation as an act of choice.

What has happened to downtown Portland is happening to its residential neighborhoods as well. While similar areas of other cities are losing population, the streetcar neighborhoods that stretch across Portland's East Side are growing two and three times as fast as Metro planners had predicted. Developers are building and rebuilding on sites they usually prefer to ignore: oddly shaped parcels, uneven terrain, sites with underground tank leakage problems. "People are showing up at the doorstep of homeowners with double lots, wanting to build," says Robert Stacey, the former city planning director. In Stacey's view, the crucial factor is "that slight bit of pinch" that the growth boundary has created. Forced back into the city by the dictates of land use law, builders have discovered that they can make money there, and the whole inner core of Portland has begun to boom as a consequence.

**So what's the problem?** To much of the community, there is none. The tighter the boundary begins to pinch, the more development will be channeled to the city and the closer Portland will come to the high-density, resource-efficient model the New Urbanists love to write about.

One of those who sees no problem is the Metro council's elected (but non-voting) chief executive, Mike Burton. He won the job in 1994 on a platform of leaving the UGB alone, presenting commercials that complained about turning "farms into freeways," and he has mostly resisted expansion since then. In January, when the council voted 6-1 to consider 18,000 new acres, Burton not only opposed the decision, he said he would not ask his staff to defend it if it were challenged in court.

Burton's view is supported by Portland's city leadership, most notably including Hales, a onetime real estate lobbyist who has broken with his former colleagues. "We in the city want to keep the pressure cooker pressurized," Hales acknowledges. The tighter the lid on growth, the happier Portland's elected officials will be.

It is not simply the city government that feels this way. It is a broad coalition that includes environmentalists, housing advocates, social service organizations, and--somewhat more interestingly--property owners. One thing the Portland boom of the 1990s has done is establish a critical mass of economic players whose interests clearly lie in keeping the lid tight. That includes some in the

development business, as the pro-expansion forces are quick to point out. "The strongest advocates for keeping the UGB where it is," says homebuilders' lobbyist Jon Chandler, "are builders who have bet on high density."

It would be exaggerating to say that inner-city property owners have thrown their weight around in any inappropriate or even conspicuous way. Still, at a time when students of urban government still talk about most American cities having a "growth machine," Portland is the one place that can plausibly be said to have an incipient anti-growth machine—one whose ranks include economic leaders as well as ideologues.

But the anti-growth forces are strong outside the city limits as well, especially in the inner suburbs that have shared in Portland's 1990s prosperity. The town of Gresham, for example, just a few miles east of the Portland border, was long derided as a somewhat tacky working-class town of ramblers and bungalows with nothing at all to attract visitors. But in the past few years, as the terminus of the East Side MAX light rail line, Gresham has begun to blossom, with an attractive pedestrian downtown and an influx of affluent newcomers.

It is no coincidence that Gresham's mayor, Gussie McRobert, is not only an opponent of UGB expansion but the leader of the anti-growth forces on the policy committee that advises Metro. "Every time you move out another ring in the circle," she says, "something inside the circle dies. If these 18,000 acres come in right now, our downtown redevelopment will stop." Most suburban officials on both sides of Portland agree with her.

If they aren't worried about the character of their downtowns, though, these officials have another reason to be leery of UGB expansion: its impact on their local budgets. In this respect, Oregon is a little different from most states. Its voters have enacted two dramatic property tax cuts in the past decade, and there is no state sales tax at all. So new growth does not offer the possibilities for additional revenue that it does in other parts of the country. When mayors and commissioners in suburban Portland look at plans for subdivisions and shopping centers, what they see is a whole new layer of infrastructure expense, with very little tax money available to pay for it.

"We no longer live under the illusion that growth equals progress," says Linda Peters, chair of the board of commissioners in fast-growing Washington County, where much of the newly urbanized land would be. "We know the burdens it puts on us for service delivery. It's not clear how we would go about funding it."

As in most places, builders are required to pay a "system development charge" to help local governments handle the long-term costs of their new growth projects. But this money falls far short of paying all the bills. In the city of Beaverton, Washington County's largest jurisdiction, Mayor Rob Drake estimates that builders' traffic impact fees actually contribute only about 20 percent of the likely costs of development over a 20-year period. "If we had a sales tax," Drake admits, "we would be wooing shopping centers to locate on our side of the line. Here, you put a shopping center instead of a lumber yard across the street, you don't derive much revenue from it."

**For all these reasons,** the slow-growth coalition is strong right now in the Portland area—probably stronger than in any other American city of its size. But it does have a political problem to contend with, and that is the undeniable fact that a tight UGB ultimately makes life more difficult for people who wish to buy land or houses.

The Oregon homebuilders and their allies argue, in fact, that this is already happening. Their figures are

that the price of a buildable acre of land inside the UGB tripled in just the two years prior to 1996, that Portland land prices, 19 percent below the U.S. average in 1985, were 6 percent above it by 1994, and that while Portland was the nation's 55th most affordable city just six years ago, it now ranks 165th out of 179.

The person who argues that most conspicuously is Don Morrisette, a homebuilder himself and the leading expansion advocate on the Metro council. Morrisette uses his own funds to commission real estate studies that back up his point of view. "We have a severe housing problem," he insists. "Our land prices have gone through the roof. Whenever a piece of land comes up, there's 14 people trying to buy it. And that will keep happening until we go bust."

The only point beyond dispute, however, is that prices are going up rapidly. How much of the increase can be attributed directly to the UGB is another question. Morrisette and his allies see the boundary as the primary culprit. On the other hand, land prices have been going up in the 1990s in plenty of cities that don't have a growth boundary--26 percent between 1994 and 1996 in Salt Lake City, for example, compared with Portland's 19 percent. To those who want the line to stay put, the real source of housing inflation isn't the UGB; it's the strong regional economy.

Nevertheless, there is enough to the UGB/inflation theory to give it some political strength, and the homebuilders are making the case as insistently as they know how. "Frankly, I can't find land right now inside this boundary that I can afford to develop," says Dennis Derby, former head of the Oregon Homebuilders Association. "If we don't address the supply problem, there's a limited opportunity to live in Portland and have a job in Portland." Jon Kvistad, the presiding officer of the Metro council, agrees. "You can't say zero growth," he insists. "Zero isn't reasonable."

That is the argument of an entire coalition that includes not only the homebuilders but the real estate brokers, the Oregon Association of Counties, Safeway and other large retail companies, and a conservative statewide organization called Oregonians in Action. Many of them speak for commercial companies that need large sites to do business; small parcels or rehab opportunities inside the UGB are not much help to them.

To a great extent, these are self-interested arguments. Nevertheless, they benefit from the plausibility of the underlying point: In the end, there is bound to be some relationship between the availability of land and the price of housing. "If you constrain supply and increase demand," lobbyist Chandler says, "you get high prices. It defies credibility to say otherwise. People are so invested in the theology of the UGB that they are unwilling to let go of it in the face of facts."

Of course, there is one thing Metro could do about housing inflation other than expand the boundary: It could demand much greater density INSIDE the boundary. And this, to a large extent, is what it has chosen to do.

**When it comes** to adding density as a means of promoting New Urbanist values, Portland has in fact been more venturesome than almost any other city over the past two decades. When the growth boundary first went in, the lot size for the average new detached house in the Metro area was 13,200 square feet. By the mid-1990s, it was down to 8,700 square feet. In 1995, attached homes (rowhouses and townhouses) accounted for 12 percent of the units in the city. A decade earlier, the figure had been 3 percent.

However, the Region 2040 master plan approved by the Metro Council in December of 1995 calls for

density that would be a whole order of magnitude beyond anything in place now. By 2020, Portland would have to have 70,704 new units. Gresham, with a current population of about 80,000 people and less than 30,000 housing units, would have to have 16,817 additional ones. The suburb of Lake Oswego, where most of the current 13,000 units are large detached houses on big lots, would have to come up with another 3,353, which could occur only if the community accepted multi-family housing it has shown little desire to accept before.

Why are the density numbers so high? Primarily for one reason. Current assumptions are that the Metro population as a whole will increase by as much as 700,000 people in the next two decades. The new people have to go somewhere. If a major expansion of the boundary is ruled out, there is no alternative but to solve the problem by adding density everywhere inside the line. "Those numbers were picked to keep the boundary from moving," insists Morrisette, the Metro council member. "Anybody who tells you otherwise is kidding you."

The question is whether the voters who have to absorb the density--and who elect the Metro council--will accept it. Early in the discussion process, when Metro penciled in nearly 4,900 new units for Lake Oswego, the local paper complained that "a suburb that looks like downtown Hong Kong could be planned for the heart of É Lake Oswego, and the city would have to sit on the side lines and brood." Later the figure was lowered by 30 percent. But there is little evidence so far that wealthy communities of this sort will be willing to handle the density the 2040 Plan imposes on them.

Portland, though it has been adding multi-family units at an impressive rate in recent years, does not seem immune from such pressures. When word of the new density targets reached Multnomah, a middle-class West Side neighborhood with a 7,000-square-foot average lot size, residents there launched a protest movement. Placards labeled "Rethink Rezoning" began to appear on residential streets, and homeowners showed up at meetings complaining that they didn't want to become a rowhouse neighborhood. Even some of Metro's slow-growth advocates say that the Multnomah reaction was not a favorable omen. "The first wave of increasing urban density has not been received well," admits Metro council member Patricia McCaig, who cast the one negative vote on the addition of 18,000 acres to the urban reserve.

Others say the reaction mostly reflects people's reluctance to face the growth question squarely, and to make a choice among the resulting trade-offs. "You talk about moving the boundary," says homebuilders' lobbyist Jon Chandler, "and people go nuts. You talk about higher density, and they go nuts. What they want is option C, and there is no option C."

**It would seem,** based on the available evidence, that Portland may be in a bit of a jam. But there are reasons why the dispute may yet lend itself to reconciliation.

One big reason is the state of Oregon. Unlike every other big-city land use program in the United States, the one in metropolitan Portland is under strict state control, just the way McCall planned it 25 years ago. The Land Conservation and Development Commission, which monitors all local growth boundaries in Oregon, has the legal authority to reject any community's land use plan, even to withhold the revenue from state excise taxes, if a local government is willfully non-compliant. It actually did that twice in the 1970s. No matter how difficult it may be for Portland and its suburbs to hammer out a compromise on real-estate and density issues, the LCDC is likely to force them back to the table for another try. The program as a whole can't really fall apart and cease functioning: The state won't let it.

Unless, of course, the state decides to back away from land use control. That isn't out of the question. The whole state program was challenged by referendum three times in its first decade of existence, most

notably in 1982, when a dying McCall taped a commercial in which he told the voters, "If it goes, I guess I wouldn't want to live in Oregon anyway."

The program was in a considerable amount of trouble as recently as 1995, when conservative Republicans took over the legislature and Ray Baum, the incoming House majority leader, announced that "we're coming after land use." GOP legislators soon introduced a package of bills that would have stripped the LCDC of much of its regulatory authority. But the effort didn't get very far because the law's critics found themselves opposed not only by Portland, the suburban governments, the environmental activists and the Democratic governor, but by the Oregon Farm Bureau and most of the timber industry, which were worried about the potential loss of farm and forest land. The law was modified, but not in very consequential ways.

In the end, though, there's a more fundamental reason for cautious optimism about the future of Portland's urban experiment, and that is Metro itself. Over 20 years, the existence of an independent regional government, gradually taking on new powers and electing its leadership, has changed the underlying psychology of the area's civic life. Growth and development issues have a visibility in Portland that they simply don't have in other parts of the country. The future of the UGB is a story on the 11 o'clock news there. Portland's jurisdictions conceive of themselves as a combined entity, a problem-solving unit, in a way that they were unable to do two decades ago, and communities elsewhere still are unable to do.

"What's good for Beaverton," Mayor Rob Drake says, "is good for Portland. And vice versa." There are suburban mayors in other parts of the country who say that sort of thing, but very few who give much evidence that they mean it. In the suburbs of Portland, they sound as if they mean it.

And they seem to understand that, as big a headache as regional cooperation might be, the alternative is a much worse headache. Even the most strident pro-growth advocates agree on that: "Here in Oregon," homebuilders' lobbyist Jon Chandler admits, "we agree on a whole bunch of stuff. The disagreements are at the margin. In most places, the disagreements are still fundamental."

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