

Our Community Plan Submission

From: Scott Menzies, BA (Hons), Canterbury
1/264 Papanui Rd. 03-3556005
scottmenzies@yahoo.com

This is an exciting opportunity to shape the future of our city and I thank Council for that.

This submission is set out as requested in terms of the issues I am commenting on, the action I would like Council to take, and why I believe that action should be taken.

Major Projects

Issue: New Bus Exchange (p4, summary)

Action: Incorporate a Bikestation

*The new Bus Exchange can incorporate our first and most important Bikestation. What is that? Bikestation in Christchurch's sister city of Seattle is working to change the way that people travel. Each Bikestation location provides unique services and amenities; but nearly every Bikestation provides:

- A secure parking spot;
- Shared-use bicycle rentals;
- Access to public transportation;
- Convenient operating hours;
- Friendly and helpful staff;
- Information to plan your commute trips.

Some Bikestation locations offer bicycle repairs, bicycle and commute sales & accessories, rental bikes for local and tourist needs, restroom/changing rooms and access to environmentally-clean vehicle-sharing (e.g. Flexcar).

See <http://www.bikestation.org/seattle/index.asp> and also Bikestation <http://www.bikestation.org/> for detailed information.

*In Christchurch, linking 'Bikestation' facilities to Metro services, as Bikestation does in the U.S., would be a significant step forward in reducing our city's addiction to the private car.

The Bikestation incorporated into the new Bus Exchange would offer the facilities described above. It can display and offer information about Bikeways and Bikestations, including posters on the walls (e.g. 'cycle to your Metro interchange') and a restyled map of facilities and infrastructure printed on recycled paper can be delivered to all Christchurch households.

*Council should plan to create Bikestations (either 'full-service' or just shelters with cycle parking) at the termination points of bus routes and at major Metro interchanges.

That way people could cycle to their nearest main Metro interchange- at malls, shopping strips, or university, for example, and take the bus from there.

*Local cycle retailers could display 'Bikestation' logos as part of the infrastructure branding and perhaps, in private-public partnership with council could renovate their outlets to include restroom/changing room facilities and access to car sharing (when it eventually takes off in NZ as it is in the US and Europe). Deals could be struck between the firms, Council and cycling groups for this (e.g. some Bikestations in the U.S. require membership).

*Cycle ways could be re-named 'Bikeways' (to go with the Bikestations). [See also 'Greenways' section below].

*Biking in Christchurch needs a public relations overhaul to make it appear more stylish and cool for advertising savvy Gen-Xers and Gen-Yers, as well the baby-boomers who are concerned about the environment they're leaving behind for their grandkids.

Rebranding Christchurch's cycle facilities and infrastructure, as a hip and eco-savvy alternative to the car would be a good move, with advertising to match.

Bikestation's logo alone is quite cool, along with that refreshing American directness of their slogans: 'Every clean trip counts' and 'Making clean transportation a reality'. They're an example of the sort of approach I think CCC's cycling could move towards here.

As Seattle is our sister city I'm sure the people at Bikestation there would be only too happy to share their experience with you.

In Seattle, Bikestation sometimes links to Flexcar, a car-sharing scheme now popular in the US and Europe. See http://www.flexcar.com/seattle/specials_bikestation.asp?rc=0

Why?

All of the above would facilitate Council in meeting the Community Plan's Health, Prosperity and Environment and City Development community outcomes.

Issue: City Mall renovation (p4, summary)

Action: Extend tram through mall

It is wonderful to see tourists young and old enjoying a ride on the trams. There are even a few locals that use them for short commutes. They add a distinct and attractive character to the city's streets, and attract tourist dollars not just for the trams' operator, but also to businesses along their route.

Many people I know dream of the trams being extended out to Riccarton (via Hagley park), Papanui and Linwood saying they would gladly give up their cars to travel in them. I however propose a much smaller extension- bring that character and money to City Mall as part of its renovation.

The route would extend behind the Cathedral, down a portion of Colombo and then down High Street, then into Cashel Street, then along Oxford Terrace to rejoin the current tracks at the Worcester Street bridge. Track would continue to run down Worcester Street between the Square and bridge as an alternative route.

There is space for trams in Cashel Street with enough left over for seating and occasional street entertainment and without the need to most of the remove existing trees. For events where Oxford Terrace is temporarily closed, the Worcester Street alternative route would remain.

Why?

If we are to retain a vibrant, dynamic and prosperous city centre we need to include features that achieve those aims. The trams achieve all three- they are literally a dynamic feature, moving people from all walks of life in special and distinctive vehicles. They bring an extra verve, spark and importantly for retailers, money and attention from passengers. Look at New Regent Street as an example.

Extending the tram route contributes towards the Our Community Plan vision of being a 'must-see for visitors' and the Strategic Directions of being a Liveable City (enhancement and renewal of built environment) and having a Prosperous Economy (promoting economic development).

Activities

Issue: City development (p9, summary)

Action: Urban villages and pedestrian pockets

*Pedestrian pockets are simple clusters of housing, retail space, and offices within a 750m walking distance radius of a Metro bus or rail interchange and Greenway. By its clustering the Pedestrian pocket allows people a choice of walking, driving or the convenient use of public transport.

*The Urban Villages of Christchurch would be designated in consultation with citizens and business. Once designated the villages would automatically adopt the 'Pedestrian Pocket' concept and develop in line with its concepts, with continuing community consultation.

Suggested Urban Villages include Riccarton, Papanui, Addington, Sydenham (SoMoor-South of Moorhouse), Linwood, New Brighton, Sumner, Hornby, Avonhead, Merivale, etc.

Each Urban Village would have links via public transport and Greenways to all the other villages and the City Centre and to other urban areas within the Greater Christchurch Urban Development area via express bus, Greenways and, in the long-term, rail.

Please also see attached Appendices I and II, 'Pedestrian Pockets' and 'A Sense of Place: Retrofitting Older Neighbourhoods' from the book 'Sustainable Cities'.

Why?

As the city's population gets older it is easier for them if their shopping and social needs can be taken care of within walking distance. It also reduces demand for private car use, as does the ready availability of public transport and Greenway options to move from one village to another or travel into the City Centre and back.

Maintaining a satisfied population who can participate fully in all that Christchurch has to offer socially, geographically and intellectually would be facilitated significantly by Urban Villages and pedestrian pockets as they encouraging physical health through walking and cycling, better mental health through aesthetic and stress-reducing improvements and greater community spirit through the creation of democratically decided points-of-difference.

Issue: Streets and transport (p18, summary)

Action: Greenways

*Greenways link city centres, urban villages and transport interchanges via linear paths incorporating parks, natural features, institutions and historic sites. They provide a safe place to walk, cycle and jog. Existing and new Bikeways and walkways can be made a part of the Greenway network.

As an example a Greenway could be designated from Cathedral Square through the Botanic Gardens and Hagley Park, down Kilmarnock Street to Riccarton Bush and then on to Riccarton Mall and Canterbury University. Another Greenway could be designated all the way to Northland Mall using the northern rail corridor through to Papanui, then via quiet streets with new streetscaping to the mall. The Avon River from Avonhead to the sea could also be the main feature of a cross-city Greenway.

*Greenways would be marked on Metro bus maps and Bikeway maps and via on-way signage.

*Greenways are, as the name suggests, ideally 'green'. Greenways should include green spaces along their routes and tree or bush planting where possible. Pedestrians and cyclists are well segregated from motor vehicles.

*Greenways can be developed along existing and former rail corridors, rivers, pipelines, rejuvenated drainage ditches and to the sides of major road corridors

Please also see attached Appendices III and IV, 'Benefits of Trails and Greenways Fact Sheet' and from 'Rails to Trails Conservancy' and 'Greenways, Paths to the Future' from National Geographic Magazine, June 1990.

Please visit <http://www.greenways.gov.uk> which contains valuable information from the UK on the relevance of Greenways, planning, creating and developing them and a Greenways Handbook.

The site <http://www.trailsandgreenways.org/> includes

Why?

If we are to make Christchurch 'the most attractive city in New Zealand', with a 'first-class environment' as Our Community Plan proposes, then we need to ensure we reduce our car-centricity with all the ugly roads and congestion that entails and increase greener, cleaner and healthier transport routes. Greenways are compatible with Christchurch's status as the 'Garden City'. We have the parks, gardens, sites, suburbs and institutions to

link together- it is now a matter of designating, developing and marketing the Greenways to link them.

'Greenways are often seen narrowly when it comes to their benefits. People tend to focus on the recreational or environmental aspects of Greenways, failing to see the big picture - the total package of benefits that Greenways can provide to communities including public health, economic and transportation benefits, and even the effect on community pride and identity. When seen as a whole, the evidence about the far-reaching benefits of Greenways is compelling, especially given the minimal public investment involved compared to other undertakings with the same community goals.' (from <http://www.trailsandgreenways.org/resources/benefits/resonbenefits.asp>)

Issue: Streets and transport (p18, summary)

Action: Future-proof for commuter rail

*Council should ensure provision for commuter rail is incorporated into its Central City Transport Strategy and any other transport strategies it may have or develop. While the development of commuter rail in the Greater Christchurch area is dependent on feasibility studies, it is crucial that this option is not eliminated because of lack of future-proofing on Council's part. Future-proofing includes:

- Land should be set-aside for development of a central city rail interchange that would enable commuters to switch between rail, bus, bicycle and pedestrian modes as well as coaches, taxis and private car;

- Planning for Metro bus priority routing to and from the rail interchange including interlocking scheduling of rail and bus;

- Planning for Greenways to and from the rail interchange [See also 'Greenways' section above].

Why?

The public desire for rail as a long-term method of reducing the negative economic and health effects of private car use has been expressed in submissions on the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy. Even within your own draft summary document a citizen states 'we need to look at other options, like trains' (p18).

Development of a rail interchange on the rail corridor between Moorhouse Ave and Sydenham could be a key component of the economic, social and aesthetic rejuvenation of the SoMoor (South Of Moorhouse) neighbourhood, an 'Urban Village' ripe for creation, including a pedestrian pocket of new or revitalised cafes, bars, and mixed-income high-density housing and shopping in Sydenham. [See also 'Urban Villages' section above].

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide these suggestions for action. I look forward to seeing the final plan once the public's views and ideas have been taken into account.

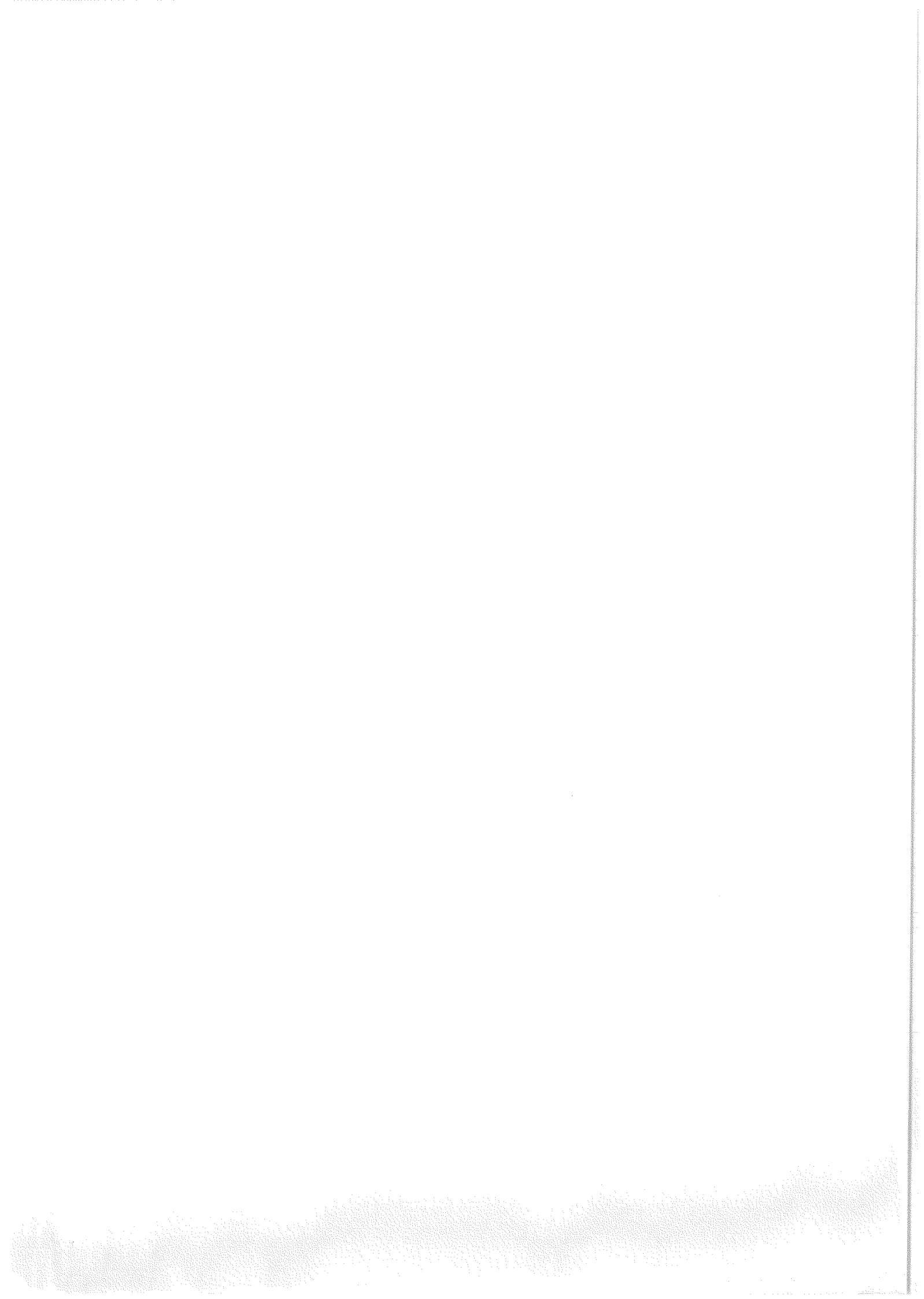
I do not wish to speak to this submission, but I am happy to provide further information or comments if required.

Yours respectfully,



Scott Menzies

3 May 2006



THE PEDESTRIAN POCKET: NEW STRATEGIES FOR SUBURBAN GROWTH

Peter Calthorpe, AIA

The current round of suburban growth is generating a crisis of many dimensions: mounting traffic congestion, diminishing affordable housing, receding open space, and stressful social patterns. The truth is, we are using planning strategies which are forty years old and no longer relevant to today's needs. Our household makeup has changed dramatically, the workplace and work force have been transformed, real wealth is shrinking, and serious environmental concerns have surfaced. But we are still building World War II suburbs as if families were large and had only one breadwinner, as if the jobs were all downtown, as if land and energy were endless, and as if another lane on the freeway would end traffic congestion.

This proposal is for an alternative suburban pattern of growth, the Pedestrian Pocket. The Pedestrian Pocket is a simple cluster of housing, retail space, and offices within a quarter-mile walking radius of a light rail system. The convenience of the car and the opportunity to walk would be blended in an environment in which the economic engine of new growth, jobs in the service and information industry, would be balanced with affordable housing and local stores. It is a planning strategy which would preserve open space, and reduce auto traffic without increasing density in existing neighborhoods. By its clustering, the Pedestrian Pocket would allow people a choice of walking, driving or the convenient use of mass transit. These pockets would reconnect an existing suburban fabric and its towns by the creation of new light rail lines and a corresponding upzoning at each of its stations. The increments of growth are small, but the whole system would accommodate regional growth with minimal environmental impact: less land consumed, less traffic generated, less pollution produced.

The Pedestrian Pocket is a concept for some new growth; it is not intended to displace urban-renewal efforts, and it will certainly not totally eclipse typical suburban sprawl. It will, however, extend the range of choices available to the home buyer, the business seeking relocation, the environmentalist seeking to preserve open space, and the existing communities attempting to balance the benefits of growth with liabilities.

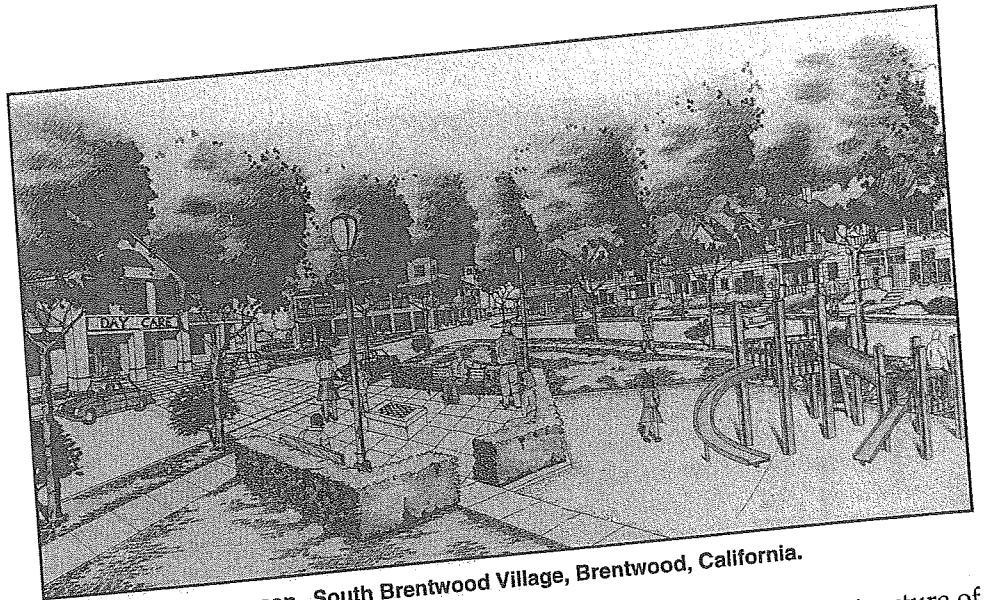
THE NEW SUBURBAN CONDITION

There is a profound mismatch between the old suburban patterns of settlement we have evolved since World War II and the post-industrial culture we now find ourselves in. This mismatch is generating traffic congestion, a dearth of affordable and appropriate housing forms, environmental stress, loss of irreplaceable open space, and lifestyles that burden working families as well as isolate elderly people and single households. This mismatch has two primary sources: a dramatic shift in the nature and location of our workplace and a fundamental change in the character of our increasingly diverse households.



Peter Calthorpe was named by Newsweek Magazine as an "innovator on the cutting edge" for his work redefining the models of urban and suburban growth in America. Since 1983, this award-winning architect/planner's firm has planned projects for over 40,000 acres. His special emphasis is on creating mixed-use communities which are environmentally sound, economically feasible and socially progressive.

*Calthorpe & Associates
246 First Street #400
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 777-0181*



Mixed-use / village green. South Brentwood Village, Brentwood, California.

Traffic congestion in the suburbs is the signal of a deep shift in the structure of our culture. The computer and the service industry have led to the decentralization of the workplace, causing new traffic patterns and "suburban gridlock". Where downtown employment once dominated, suburb-to-suburb traffic patterns now produce greater commute distances and driving time. Over 40% of all commute trips are now from suburb to suburb. These new patterns have seriously eroded the quality of life in formerly quiet suburban towns. In the San Francisco Bay area, for example, 212 miles of the region's 812 miles of suburban freeway are regularly backed up during rush hours. That figure is projected to double within the next 12 years. As a result, recent polls have traffic continually heading the list as the primary regional problem followed only by the difficulty of finding good affordable housing.

Home ownership has become a troublesome — if not unattainable — goal, even with our double-income families. Affordable housing is growing ever more elusive and families have to move to cheaper but distant peripheral sites, consuming irreplaceable agricultural land and overloading the roads. In 1970 about half of all families could afford a median-priced single-family home; today less than a quarter can. And the basic criteria for housing have changed dramatically as single occupants, single parents, the elderly, and small double-income families re-define the traditional home.

Our old suburbs are designed around a stereotypical household which is no longer so prevalent.

Our old suburbs are designed around a stereotypical household which is no longer so prevalent. Of the approximate 17 million new households to be formed in the 80s, 51% will be occupied by single people and unrelated individuals, 22% by single-parent families, and only 27% by married couples with or without children. Of the percentage with children, the family now typically has two workers. Close to half of the single households will be elderly people over 65 and will make up 23% of the total of new homeowners. Certainly the traditional three-bedroom, single-family residence is relevant to a decreasing segment of the population. Add to this the problem of affordability and the suburban dream becomes even more complicated.

In addition to these dominant problems of housing and traffic, longer-range problems of pollution, open-space preservation, prime agricultural land conversion, and growing infrastructure costs add to the crisis of our post-industr

sprawl. Along with this is a growing sense of frustration and placelessness, a fractured quality in our suburban mega-centers, which overlays the unique qualities of each place with chainstore architecture, scaleless office parks, and monotonous subdivisions.

THE SERVICE ECONOMY: DRIVING TO DECENTRALIZATION

As new jobs have shifted from blue collar to white and grey, the computer has allowed the decentralization of the new service industries into mammoth low-rise office parks on cheap and sometimes remote sites. The shift is dramatic from 1973 to 1985, when five million blue-collar jobs were lost nationwide, while the service and knowledge fields gained from 82 to 110 million jobs. This translated directly into new office complexes, with 1.1 billion square feet of new office space constructed. Nationwide, these complexes have moved outside the central cities with the percentage of total office space in the suburbs shifting from 25% in 1970 to 57% in 1984.

Central to this shift is a phenomenon called the "back-office," the new sweatshop of the post-industrial economy. The typical back-office is large, often with a single floor area of one to two acres. On an average, about 80% of its employees are clerical, 12% supervisory, and only 8% management. In a survey of criteria for back-office locations, 47 major Manhattan corporations ranked cost of space first, followed by the quality of the labor pool and site safety. These criteria led directly to the suburbs, where the land is cheap, parking easy, and where, most importantly, the workforce is supplemented by housewives: college-educated, poorly paid, non-unionized, and dependable.

This back-office explosion has rejuvenated suburban growth just as urban "gentrification" seems to have run its course.

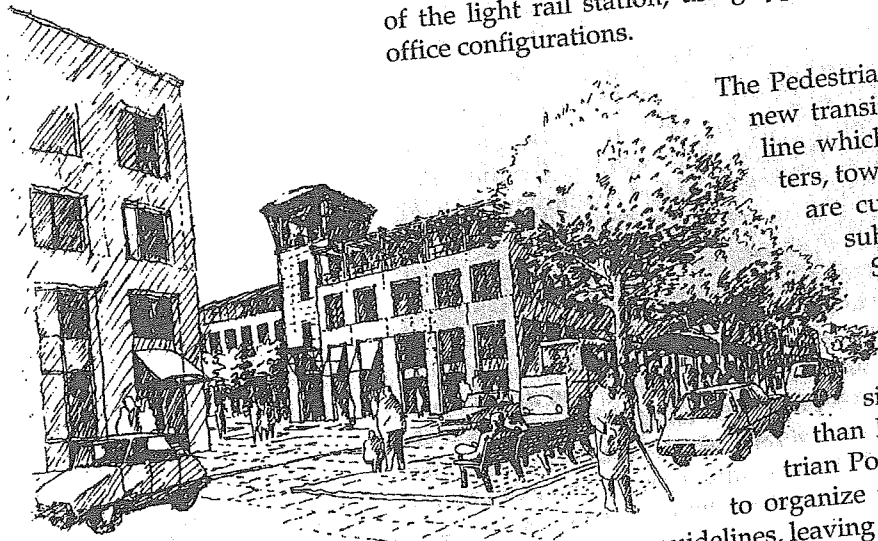
The young urban professional has recently become a family person and the draw of the suburbs is being felt. Therefore, most of the growth areas in the U.S. are suburban in character: built from freeways, office parks, shopping malls, and single-family-dwelling subdivisions. Although such growth continually seems to reach its limits with auto congestion and building moratoriums, there are no readily available alternatives to enrich the dialogue between growth and no-growth factions, between the public benefit and private gain, between environmentalists and businesspersons.

The Pedestrian Pocket is defined as a balanced, mixed-use area within a 1/4-mile walking radius of a light rail station.

THE PEDESTRIAN POCKET: A POST-INDUSTRIAL SUBURB

Single-function land-use zoning at a scale and density which eliminate the pedestrian has been the norm for so long that Americans have forgotten that walking could be part of their daily lives. Certainly, the present suburban environment is unwalkable, much to the detriment of children, their chauffeur parents, the elderly, and the general health of the population and its environment. Urban redevelopment is a strong and compelling alternative to the suburban world, but doesn't seem to fit the character or aspirations of major parts of our population or of many businesses. Mixed-use new towns are not an alternative at this time, because the political consensus needed to back the massive infrastructure investments is lacking. By default, growth is directed mainly by the locations of new freeway systems, the economic strength of the region, and standard single-use zoning practices. Environmental and local opposition to growth only seems to spread the problem, either transferring the congestion to the next county or creating lower and more auto-dependent densities.

Much smaller than a new town, the Pedestrian Pocket is defined as a balanced, mixed-use area within a 1/4-mile walking radius of a light rail station. The uses within this zone of approximately 50 to 120 acres would include housing, back-offices, retail, daycare, recreation and open space. Up to 2,000 units of housing and 1,000,000 sq. ft. of office space can be located within three blocks of the light rail station, using typical condominium densities and four-story office configurations.



VILLAGE CENTER

The lightrail station area would be bordered by ground floor retail and neighborhood services. The office courtyard and the "main street" would intersect in a public plaza.

The commercial center of the Pedestrian Pocket would mix large back-office jobs with ground floor stores, restaurants and smaller businesses. All employees would be within walking distance of the station. Cars would circulate on the shopping street, and parking structures would provide for those who choose to drive.

The Pedestrian Pockets would act in concert with new transit lines, reinforcing ridership along a line which connects existing employment centers, towns and neighborhoods. Light rail lines are currently under construction in many suburban environments in Sacramento, San Jose, San Diego, Long Beach and Orange County in California alone. They emphasize the economies of using existing rights-of-way and a simpler, more cost-effective technology than heavy rail. In creating a line of Pedestrian Pockets, the public sector's role is merely to organize the transit system and set new zoning guidelines, leaving development to the private sector. Much of the cost of the transit line could be covered by assessing the property owner who benefits from the windfall increased densities. Diversity and architectural interest would be the product of individual developers and homeowners building small sections of the Pockets independently.

The Pedestrian Pocket would accommodate the car as well as public transit. Parking would be provided for all housing and commercial space. The housing types would be standard low-rise, high-density forms such as three-story walk-up apartments and two-story townhouses. Only the interrelationships and adjacent land use would change. People would have a choice: walk to work or walk to a store within the Pedestrian Pocket; take the light rail to work or shop at another station; drive on crowded freeways. Within a small Pedestrian Pocket, 1,000 homes are within walking distance of a typical neighborhood shopping center, several three-acre parks, daycare, various services, and 2,000 jobs. Within four stops of the light rail in either direction (ten minutes) is employment for 16,000, or the equivalent back-office growth of Contra Costa County, California, one of the nation's high-growth suburbs during the last five years.

The light rails in current use provide primarily a park-and-ride system to link low-density sprawl with downtown commercial areas. In contrast, the Pedestrian Pocket system would be decentralized, linking many nodes of higher-density housing with many commercial destinations. Peak-hour traffic would be multi-directional, reducing congestion and making the system more efficient. The office would be right at the station, avoiding the need for secondary mass transit or large parking areas. Additionally, locating retail and services near the offices would make arriving without a car more practical, since mid-day errands could be handled on foot.

Express bus systems could not substitute for light rail, because their peak capacity is lower and they couldn't sustain the land values needed for mixed-use development. However, existing bus systems could tie into the light rail along with car-pool systems. Several of the Pockets on a line would have large parking facilities for park-and-ride access, allowing the existing suburban development to enjoy the services and opportunities of the Pedestrian Pockets.

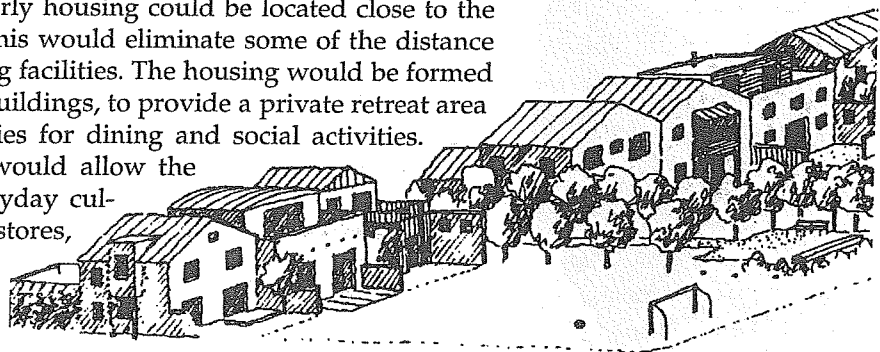
The importance of the Pedestrian Pocket is that it would provide balanced growth in jobs, housing and services, while creating a healthy mass-transit alternative for the existing community. But the key lies in the form and mix of the Pocket. The pedestrian path system must be carefully designed and form a primary order for the place. If this is configured to allow the pedestrian comfortable and safe access, up to 50% of a household's typical auto trips could be replaced by walking, and light rail journeys. Not only does it make for a better living environment within the pocket, but the reduction of traffic in the region would be significant.

HOUSING: DIVERSITY IN NEEDS AND MEANS

Housing in the Pedestrian Pocket is planned to meet the needs of each of the primary household types with affordable homes. For families with children, single parents or couples, an environment in which kids could move safely, in which daycare is integrated into the neighborhood, and in which commute time is reduced, would be very desirable. The townhouses and duplexes proposed for the Pedestrian Pocket would allow such families to have this with an attached garage, land ownership, and a small private yard. These building types are more affordable to build and maintain than their detached counterparts, while still offering simple ownership and a private identity. And the common open space, recreation, daycare and convenient shopping would make these houses even more desirable. Common play areas are located off the townhouses' private yards, and are connected to the central park and the commercial section by paths. One-third of the housing in the Pockets would be this type.

For singles and "empty-nesters", traditional two- and three-story apartment buildings or condominiums are even more affordable, while sharing in the civic, retail, and recreational amenities of the extended community. This segment of the population is traditionally more mobile and would have an option of rental or ownership housing. Elderly housing could be located close to the parks, light rail, and service retail. This would eliminate some of the distance and alienation of their current housing facilities. The housing would be formed into courtyard clusters of two-story buildings, to provide a private retreat area and the capacity for common facilities for dining and social activities.

Living in a pedestrian community would allow the elderly to become a part of our everyday culture again, and to enjoy the parks, stores, and restaurants close at hand.



AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Family housing would cluster around a large common open space connected to the central green, daycare and store. Each townhouse would have a private yard area and an attached garage. Children would have free access to common open space, daycare and central facilities.

Several parks would double as paths to the station area, a route which is pleasant and free of auto crossings. The housing overlooking the park would provide security surveillance and 24-hour activity. Within each park would be daycare buildings and general recreation facilities that could vary from Pocket to Pocket. Although the housing would be formed into small clusters, the central park and facilities would tend to unify the neighborhood, giving it an identity and sense of community missing in most of our suburban tracts. The centers would be used and maintained by an organization, much like a condominium homeowners association, which includes landlords, townhouse owners, tenants, office managers, and worker representatives.

The goal of this tight mix of housing and open space is not just to provide more appropriate homes for the different users or to offer the convenience of walking, but hopefully to reintegrate the currently separated age and social types of our diverse culture. The shared common spaces and local stores may create a rebirth of our often lost sense of community and place.

COMMERCE AND COMMUNITY

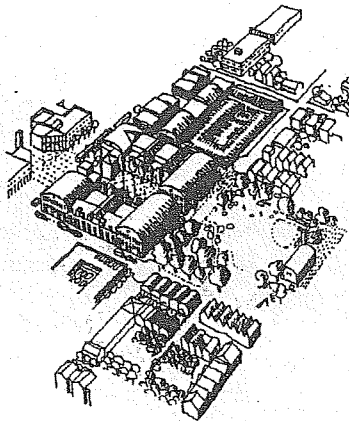
Jobs are the fuel of new growth, of which the service and high-tech fields are the spearhead. For example, the San Francisco Bay area has currently about 63% of all its jobs in these areas, with that proportion expected to increase in the next 20 years, adding about 200,000 new jobs in the high-tech area and 370,000 new jobs in the service areas. Retail activity and housing growth always follow in proportion to these primary income generators. The Pedestrian Pocket provides a framework for these jobs, and housing to grow in tandem.

The Pedestrian Pocket provides a framework for jobs and housing to grow in tandem.

The commercial buildings in the Pocket provide retail opportunities at their ground floor with offices above. The retail would enjoy the local walk-in trade from offices and housing, as well as exposure to the light rail and drive-in customers. All the stores would face a "main street" on which the light rail line, station, and convenient parking for cars would be mixed. This multiple exposure and access, along with the office workers, would create a strong market for roughly 100,000 sq. ft. of retail business.

The offices above the retail stores would provide space for smaller entrepreneurial businesses, start-up firms, and local services for the community. Behind all this would be parking structures capable of providing space for one-half the workers in all the commercial space. It is assumed that the other half would walk, carpool, or arrive by light rail.

The large back-offices would share facilities and open space with the neighborhood, and would have both auto and light rail access. At 500,000 to 1,000,000 sq. ft. potential in two to four buildings per Pedestrian Pocket, these four-story buildings with 60,000 sq. ft. floors would fit the size and cost criteria of most large back-office employers. The building would be formed around courtyards that opened to the station on one side, and the park on the other. The workers would enjoy the opportunity to shop nearby, use the park, visit their children at the daycare, or visit any number of restaurants in the Pocket. Space for theaters, library, post office, food stores, and other daily needs would all be developed in the nearly 100,000-sq. ft. of ground-floor commercial space.



INCREMENTAL GROWTH

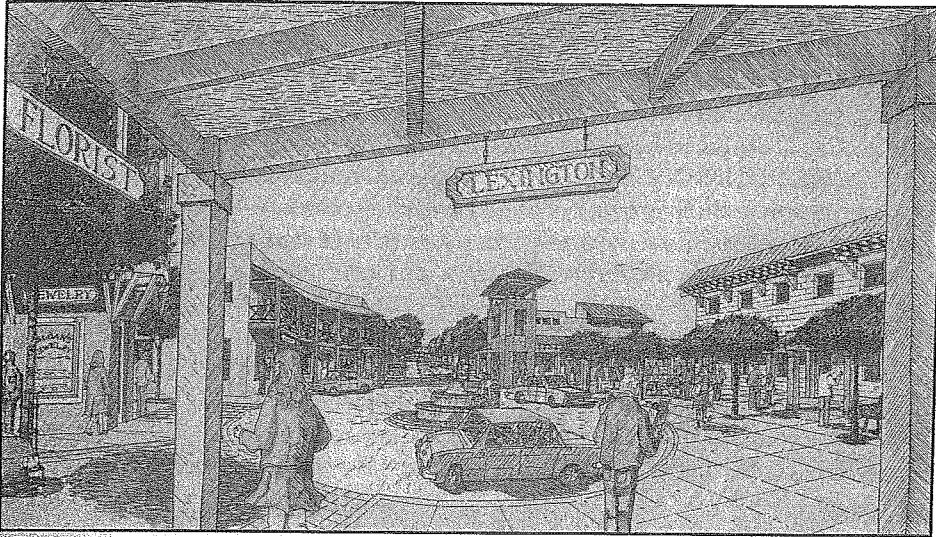
Architectural diversity and interest in the Pedestrian Pocket would be insured by having different developers for each section of the site. Townhouse lots would be built by individuals, and clusters by housing co-ops. Different commercial parcels would be developed incrementally in balance with housing and demand.

The goal of the commercial mix would be to balance the housing with a desirable job market, stores, entertainment, and services. The commercial facilities and the offices would not be financially dependent only on the local housing; drive-access from the existing neighborhoods and people passing on the light rail would be an important segment of the support. Similarly, it is important to recognize that workers will travel from a large "employee shed" of up to twenty miles, connected by the light rail and other transit modes.

REGIONAL PLANNING AND THE PEDESTRIAN POCKET

Pedestrian Pockets are not meant to be stand-alone developments, but are intended to form a long-range growth network within a region. They will vary considerably, given the complexities of place and their varying internal makeup. The quarter-mile walking radius actually encloses 120 acres, although some Pockets may be as small as 60 acres. Some may have a different focus: one providing a regional shopping center, one a cultural center, a third simply housing and recreation. Some may be used to provide economic incentives in a depressed area as a redevelopment tool, others may rejuvenate aging shopping areas, others may be located in new areas currently zoned for low-density sprawl over a large area and serve to save much of the land from development.

But it is also important to use the Pockets and their rail line as a connector of the existing assets of an area. Certainly the major towns, office parks, shopping areas, and government facilities should be linked by the system. And several of the Pockets should offer an opportunity for park-and-ride, so that existing housing in the region could take advantage of the rail line. Many new light rail systems which are built only to connect existing low-density development, are experiencing some resistance from people who do not want to leave their cars. The importance of re-zoning for a comfortable walking distance from house to station is to ease people out of their cars, to give them an alternative that is convenient and pleasing.



LEXINGTON PARK. Polk County, Florida

As an example of this regional planning, I have taken an area north of San Francisco, combining Marin and Sonoma counties. This area is considered by many as prime turf for new post-industrial sprawl. Sonoma is projected to have a 61% growth in employment in the next 20 years, the highest in the Bay region. Combined, these areas are to grow by about 88,000 jobs in the next 15 years and by about 63,000 households. Of the new jobs, about 60,000 will be in the service, high-tech, and knowledge fields, the equivalent of 20 million sq. ft. of office and light industrial space. With standard planning techniques, this growth will consume massive quantities of open space, and will necessitate a major expansion of the freeway system. The result would still involve frustrating traffic jams.

By contrast, 20 Pedestrian Pockets along a new light rail line could accommodate this office growth with matching retail, support business and about 30,000 new houses. With several additional pockets dedicated primarily to housing, two-thirds of the area's home demand will be met while linking the counties' main cities with a viable mass-transit system. A recently acquired Northwestern Pacific Railroad abandoned right-of-way connecting a San Francisco ferry terminal to the northernmost county seat will form the spine for such a new pattern of growth.

SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORM

It is easy to talk quantitatively about the physical and environmental consequences of urban sprawl, but very difficult to postulate their social implications. Many argue that there is no longer a causal relationship between the structure of our physical environment and human well-being or social health. We are

adaptable, they claim, and our communities are formed around interest groups and work, rather than by any sense of place or group of individuals. Our center seems to be more abstract, less grounded in place, and our social forms are more disconnected from home and neighborhood. Simultaneously, planning ideology has been polarized between urban and suburban forms. Some have advocated a rigorous return to traditional city forms and an almost pre-industrial culture, while others have praised the evolution of the suburban megalopolis as the inevitable and desirable expression of our new technologies and hyper-individualized culture. However rationalized, these new forms seem to have a restless and hollow feel, reinforcing our mobile state and perhaps the instability of our families. Moving at a speed that allows generic symbols to be recognized, we cannot wonder that the humanmade environment seems trite and overstated.

GROWTH AND PRESERVATION

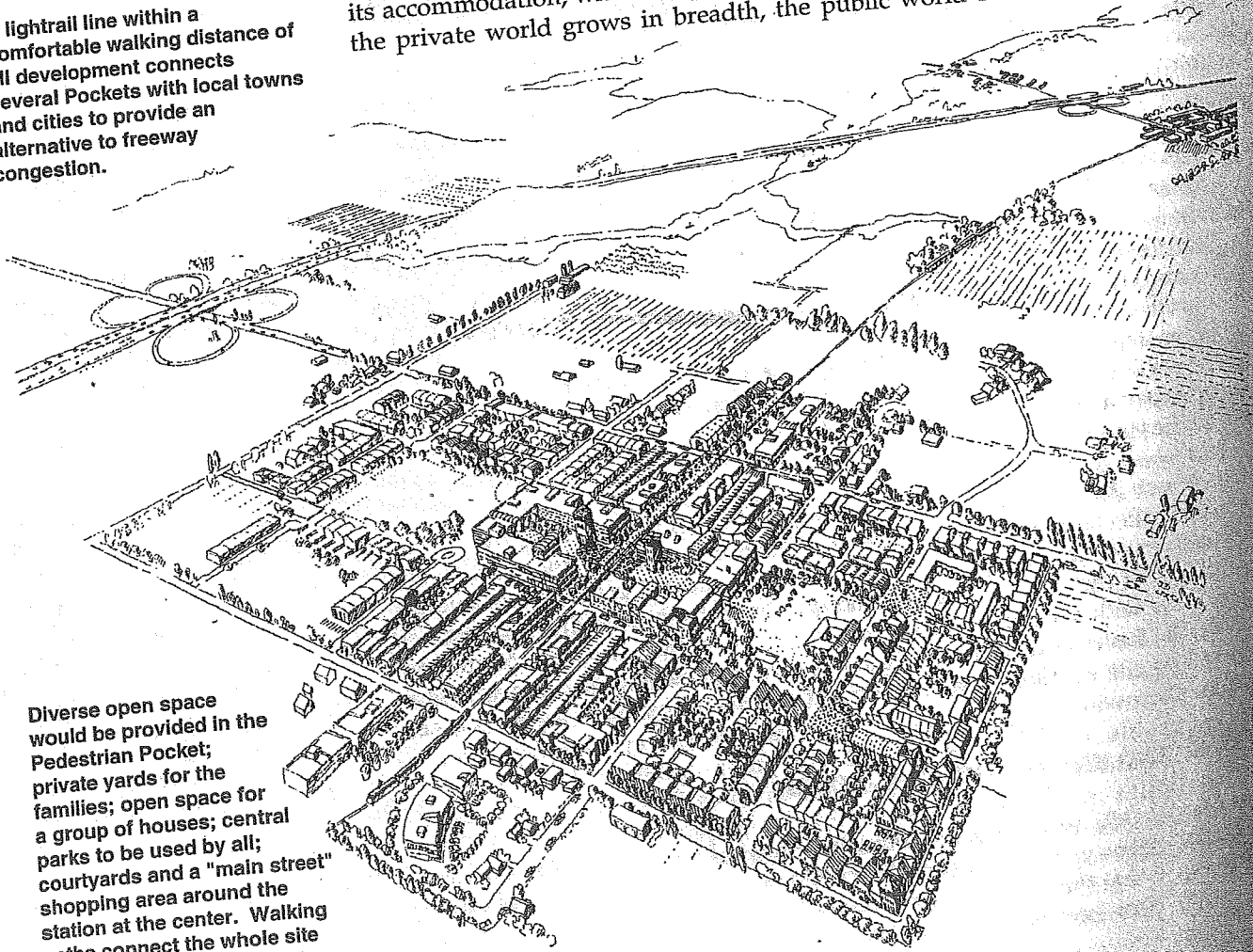
Balancing and clustering jobs, housing, shopping, recreation and childcare, the Pedestrian Pocket uses 1/16 the land area of typical suburban development. Open space and precious agricultural land could be preserved, along with a region's growth.

A light rail line within a comfortable walking distance of all development connects several Pockets with local towns and cities to provide an alternative to freeway congestion.

In proposing the Pedestrian Pocket, the practical comes first: that land, energy, and resources would be saved, that traffic would be reduced, that homes would be more affordable, that children and elderly would have more access, that working people would not be burdened with long commutes. The social consequences are less quantitative, but perhaps equally compelling. They have to do with the quality of our shared world, our commons.

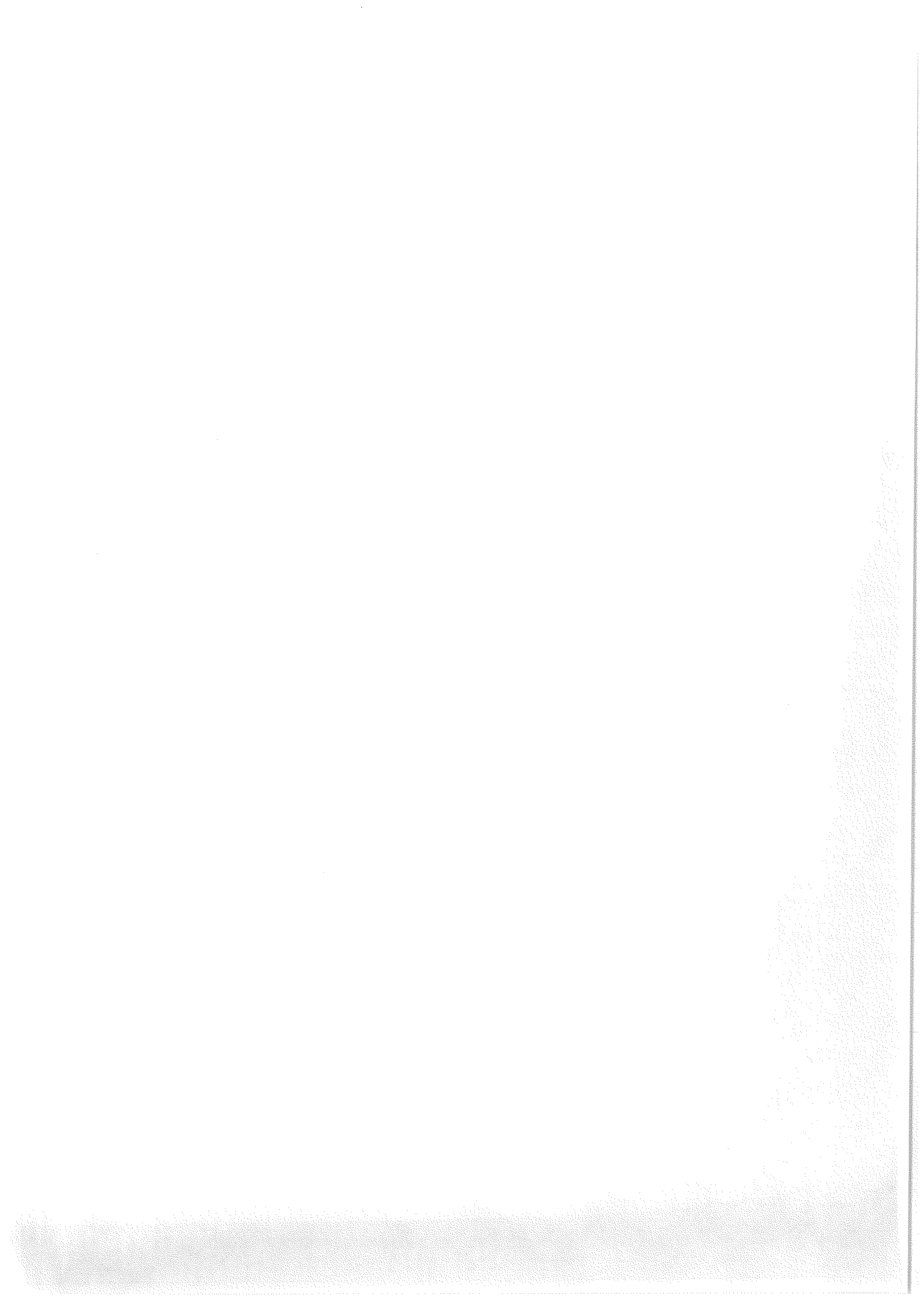
The traditional commons, which once centered our communities with convivial gathering and meeting places, is increasingly displaced by corridors of mobility and the private domain. Our shared public space is given over to the car and its accommodation, while our private world becomes bloated and isolated. As the private world grows in breadth, the public world becomes more remote

Diverse open space would be provided in the Pedestrian Pocket; private yards for the families; open space for a group of houses; central parks to be used by all; courtyards and a "main street" shopping area around the station at the center. Walking paths connect the whole site without crossing any streets.



and impersonal. As a result, our public space lacks identity, and is largely anonymous, while our private space lacks identity, is also largely anonymous, and strains toward a narcissistic autonomy. Our communities are zoned black and white, private or public, my space or nobody's. The auto destroys the joys of urban streets, the shopping center destroys neighborhood stores, and depersonalization of public space grows with the scale of government. Inversely, private space is strained by the physical need to provide for many activities that were once shared, and is further burdened by the need to create some identity in a surrounding sea of monotony. Although the connection between such social issues and development is elusive and complex, it must be addressed by any serious theory of growth.

In a way, Pedestrian Pockets are utopian — they involve the conscious choice of an ideal rather than laissez-faire planning, and they make certain assumptions about social well-being. But they are not utopian in that they do not assume a transformation of our society or its people. They represent, instead, a response to a transformation that has already expressed itself, the transformation from the industrial forms of segregation and centralization to the decentralized and integrated forms of the post-industrial era. And, perhaps, Pedestrian Pockets can express the positive environmental and social results of a culture adjusting itself to this new reality.



A SENSE OF PLACE: RETROFITTING OLDER NEIGHBORHOODS

Adapted from a presentation given at the First Los Angeles Ecological Cities Conference

Sam Hall Kaplan

No slides today! I'm trying something different, because I have gotten quite prejudiced against slides. Especially for what I want to talk about this afternoon.

Slides and pictures tend to be fanciful. We've gotten so used to packaging things based on how they look, not how they work. We're getting used to looking at images of other communities that may bear no relationship to us at all, and these pictures tend to generate false expectations. I want to move away from that.

The wonderful thing about L.A., which we all keep on trashing, is that there are hundreds of different communities. There are many varied worlds off those freeways, just waiting to be discovered. When I had this great travel/study grant for the *L.A. Times* (which they called being a critic), it allowed me access into lots of these communities. And each expressed itself in unique ways. So what works for Santa Monica, what works for Beverly Hills, doesn't work for East L.A., doesn't work for North Central, or doesn't work for South Pasadena, which has landmark oak trees in the middle of its streets.

So, sort of close your eyes and say what works in Laguna may not work in Brentwood, may not work someplace else. Because, thank goodness, every place is different.

What I want us to think about, and what I think is so exciting about this conference, is that we're talking about cultural context. That's what we're designing around. Too many of us still act like we're in a throw-away city: "Hey, this ain't working anymore, let's move to Irvine, or Laguna South." You name it, everybody's on the move. "Hey, Santa Barbara! I heard it's pretty good!" And we keep on abandoning our neighborhoods where we live.

I think the real challenge is not in the suburbs, as pretty as they may be. It is not starting to plow over our vanishing farmland, creating false lakes. The real challenge is in our existing communities and on our streets. We just can't afford to throw away communities ever again. It's time we start looking around, not at models elsewhere, but at what can be done where we live right now.

I'm convinced it's not design (I'm saying this as a designer) that people are searching for. It's not about that pretty idealized picture, but rather about a sense of place. A community where they feel secure and happy, where they can let go of their children's hands and let them walk without always worrying. That's why I think Disneyland is the biggest pedestrian experience in the world. What do we learn from it? We learn questions of visual scale, comfort and security. People are happy to get out of their cars, and happy to get on a tram, albeit, they pay for it. The question is can we create environments where you don't have to pay an admission fee?



After 12 years as the architecture and design critic for the *L.A. Times*, Sam Hall Kaplan is now putting his ideas into practice as principal in the West Coast office of Ehrenkrantz, Eckstut & Whitlaw. Working from the premise that urban design is recognizing your responsibility to your user, neighbor, community and city, his special focus is creating a viable urban design out of existing communities.

Ehrenkrantz, Eckstut & Whitlaw
823 20th Street
Santa Monica, CA 90403

And this gets into the whole issue of retrofitting. You don't want to take away flavor and blend it. I've always figured you find out what's different about your community, and you celebrate it. And there's a need now for what I call "microplanning". Now, it's odd for me to say that. The name of the firm I work for is Ehrenkrantz and Eckstut. We did Chicago's Central Station. We did Battery Park City. We did Inner Harbor, Baltimore. Talk about big! We're doing the Alameda Plan for downtown. And what marks these projects is that we're thinking small. Places are the goal, not projects. You're talking about small rather than large. You're talking about maximizing what exists. No demolition. The familiar should be relied on whenever possible.

We want to deal with public spaces, the nature of our streets. You know, dozens of businesses haven't made any impact in terms of striving to widen the sidewalks and narrow the streets. But that's where I'm absolutely convinced community happens, where communities are formed, and that the streets and our public places are the focus. How can we recapture that? By fronting houses with porches on them? By widening sidewalks? Yes, but also just by looking at the nature of people's use patterns. For example: alleys are great places. I live on an alley, and everybody knows everyone on the alley, because that's where you take out the garbage. That's where you meet the neighbors, that's where the cars are illegally parked. God forbid you should park illegally on the street. And that's where the social fabric is. I wrote a couple of columns on how we could save these alleys and make them into mews.

So what do you do, and how do you do it? We talk about implementation and building a consensus. How do you build a consensus? It's something that has always meant to me: no secrets, none of these developer meetings behind closed doors. It has to be an open process.

In Santa Fe we turned to the community and asked: what do you really like about Santa Fe? What really makes you feel good about it? You could ask that about wherever you live. And what we ultimately came up with was really interesting. We found that people there liked the streets being confused; they liked dead ends. They didn't like the parks, they liked the walkways, and the little paseos. And so you create that which they feel comfortable with.

*... you find out what's
different about your community
and you celebrate it.*

It's the same thing that we're looking at in Long Beach. What do they really like about it? And how can we emphasize that? Here's an older city, the coast of Iowa. Take the Pike: how do we start infilling that? Using vacant land to create housing, to create commercial opportunities that add a vibrancy to the place. And I think we just have to stop looking at our suburban models going further out, and start looking at ourselves in our own communities. Because we're just going to keep chasing our tail if we don't.

So the emphasis is on consensus building, with no secrets. The emphasis is on public places. Everybody likes to design a house, a second floor. But if we build public places, if we treat our streets correctly, if we create our parks where housing can surround it, if we do care about the nature of street life, the private sector will take care of itself. I'm convinced that we must concentrate on the nature of our public sector. That is what creates community. And that's why, instead of having a lake that everybody looks at, I'd rather have a community garden. And we must concentrate on having flexibility. And the most important thing and perhaps the most frustrating, is making no grand plans. This must be done on a block by block basis. We're talking incremental. I think the bigger the plan, the bigger chance for failure. It's an excuse not to do something.

And the idea of how do we enjoy the city? If we create a safe, secure environment, where people feel comfortable, we will have an ecologically pure environment. People will care about themselves, care about their neighbors, and care about maintaining their neighborhood, not just as some sort of ideological model up on a wall or handout, but as some place where they can live. How do

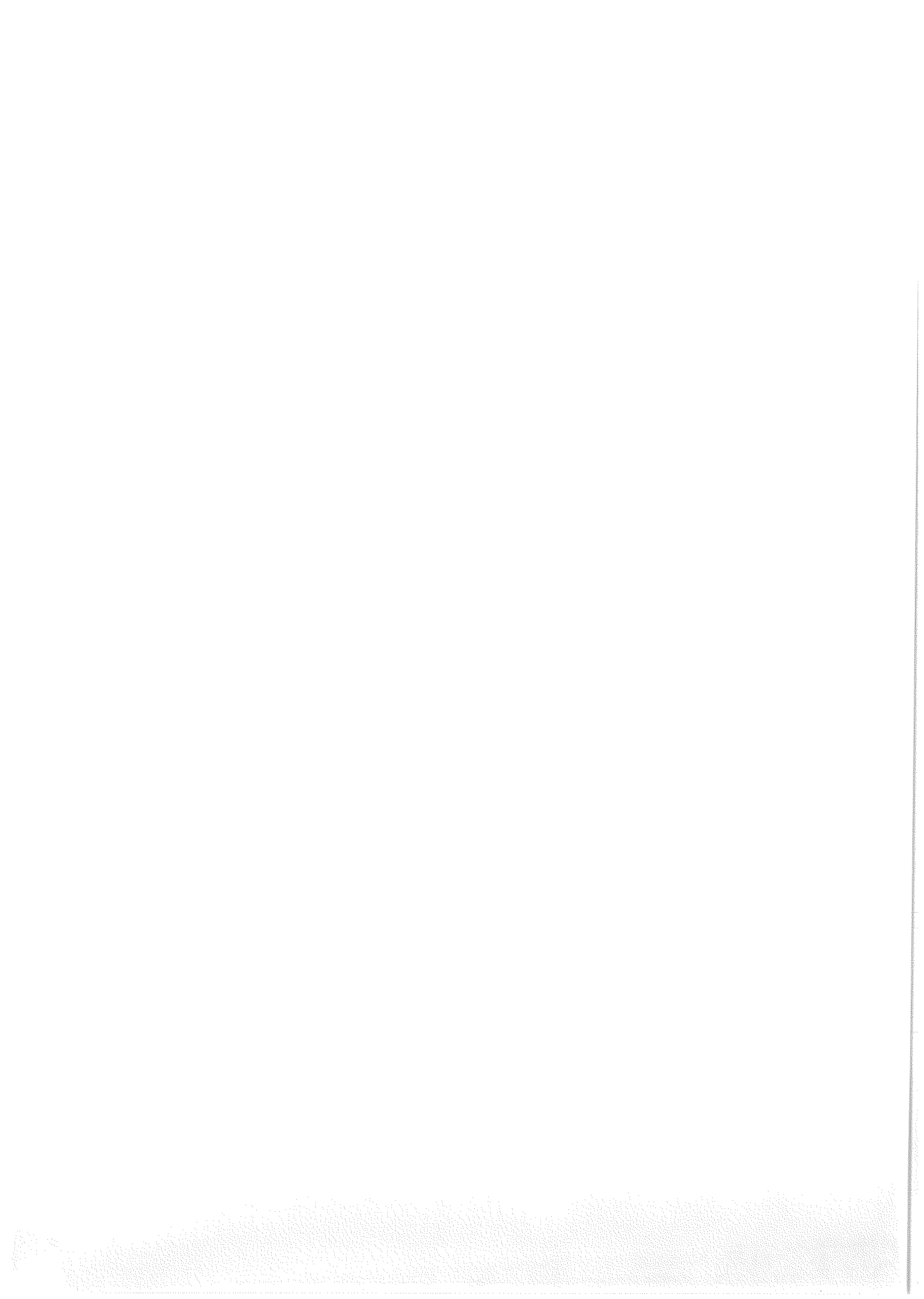
If we create a safe, secure environment, we'll have an ecologically pure environment.

we deal with South Central in terms of creating block associations and building up better civic identity? Those are the sorts of little things that count. And once you have one small success, once you close a street in Carthay Circle like Darrow did, or close a street off Fairfax, you will find that the kids

are playing out there again. And once the kids come out, the neighbors come out. And all of a sudden people are looking out for each other and crime goes down. This is a little bit of success that can be repeated and repeated and repeated. Just as the cancers of the city are repeated.

When people ask if I'm a futurist, I answer: no. Futurism, I always thought, was an excuse not to do anything now. But if we start looking, indeed, at what our own communities are saying, and stop building a sort of utopian community elsewhere, we can come to see that utopia basically exists in our backyard. Utopia exists in us. And we build out from that: The question of a common walkway with a neighbor, the question of a block association getting together and saying "Hey, let's neck the street. Let's create a place where we close one end of the alley so the kids can play. I don't care if the garbage truck can't get in once a week. We'll change something around." It's those little incremental steps that we can build upon. And that's how we infill, that's how we retrofit, and that's how we make a livable place.

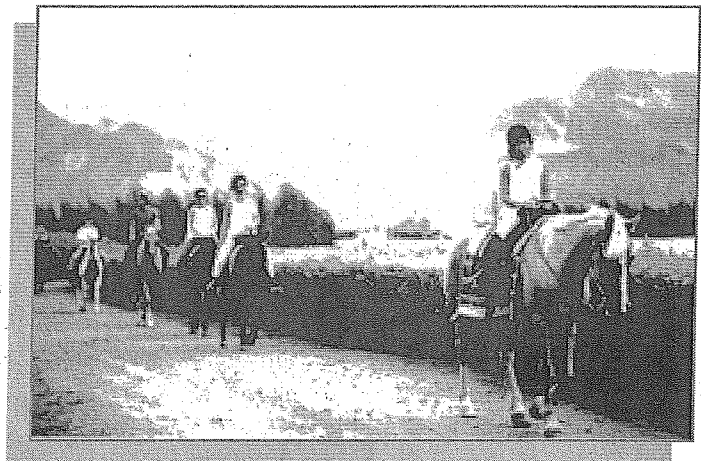
There is a wonderful consciousness surrounding this conference. I can feel that energy coming out of the audience. Now if we only can take that energy and turn to ourselves, to our own blocks and our own communities, we'll have that environment we're all searching for.



BENEFITS OF TRAILS AND GREENWAYS

WHAT ARE TRAILS AND GREENWAYS?

Greenways are corridors of protected open space managed for conservation and recreation purposes. Greenways often follow natural land or water features, and link nature reserves, parks, cultural features and historic sites with each other and with populated areas. Greenways can be publicly or privately owned, and some are the result of public/private partnerships. Trails are paths used for walking, bicycling, horseback riding or other forms of recreation or transportation. Some greenways include trails, while others do not. Some appeal to people, while others attract wildlife. From the hills of inland America to the beaches and barrier islands of the coast, greenways provide a vast network linking America's special places.



Equestrians enjoy the beautiful mountainous scenery along California's Ojai Valley Trail. (Photo: C. Hamley)

WHY ESTABLISH TRAILS AND GREENWAYS?

Trails and greenways positively impact individuals and improve communities by providing not only recreation and transportation opportunities, but also by influencing economic and community development. Some of the many trails and greenways benefits include:

- making communities better places to live by preserving and creating open spaces;
- encouraging physical fitness and healthy lifestyles;
- creating new opportunities for outdoor recreation and non-motorized transportation;
- strengthening local economies;
- protecting the environment; and
- preserving culturally and historically valuable areas.

“TO MAKE A GREENWAY
IS TO MAKE A COMMUNITY.”

— CHARLES E. LITTLE,

AUTHOR OF

GREENWAYS FOR AMERICA

TRAILS

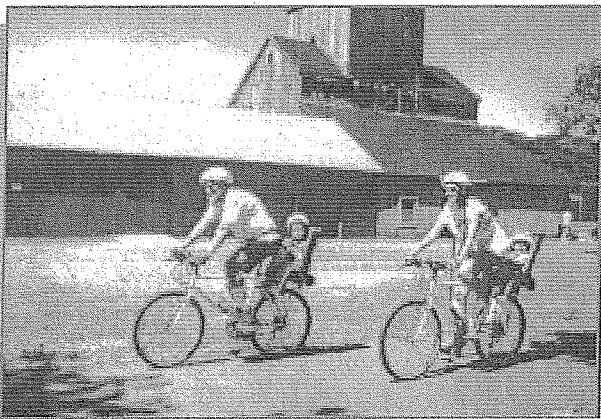
TRAILS AND GREENWAYS SUPPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Trails and greenways provide countless opportunities for economic renewal and growth. Increased property values and tourism and recreation-related spending on items such as bicycles, in-line skates and lodging are just a few of the ways trails and greenways positively impact community economies.

- In a 1992 study, the National Park Service estimated the average economic activity associated with three multi-purpose trails in Florida, California and Iowa was \$1.5 million annually.¹
- According to a study conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, birdwatchers spend over \$5.2 billion annually.²

PROMOTING HEALTHY LIVING

Many people realize exercise is important for maintaining good health in all stages of life; however many do not regularly exercise. The U.S. Surgeon General estimates that 60% of American adults are not regularly active and another 25% are not active at all.³ In communities across the country, people do not have access to trails, parks, or other recreation areas close to their homes. Trails and greenways provide a safe, inexpensive avenue for regular exercise for people living in rural, urban and suburban areas.



Minnesota's 20-mile Cannon Valley Trail attracts bicyclists of all ages, as well as walkers, runners, skaters and skiers. (Photo: Patricia Schmid)

“THREE NEW GIFT SHOPS HAVE RECENTLY OPENED, ANOTHER BIKE SHOP, A JEWELRY STORE, AN ANTIQUE AND USED FURNITURE STORE, A THRIFT SHOP, A WENDY'S RESTAURANT AND A PIZZA AND SANDWICH SHOP HAVE ALSO CROPPED UP...ALL THIS IS HAPPENING, AND ONLY WITH THE PROSPECT OF THE TRAIL OPENING IN JULY...THERE IS AN AIR OF EXCITEMENT AND ANTICIPATION NOW WITHIN THIS COMMUNITY. SOMETHING CONNELLSVILLE HAS NOT FELT FOR MANY YEARS.”

— CHRIS WAGNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF THE GREATER CONNELLSVILLE CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE, PENNSYLVANIA

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Greenways protect important habitat and provide corridors for people and wildlife. The preserved Pinhook Swamp between Florida's Osceola National Forest and Georgia's Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge protects a vital wildlife corridor. This important swampland ecosystem sustains numerous species including the Florida black bear, timber rattlesnake and the Florida sandhill crane.

Trails and greenways help improve air and water quality. For example, communities with trails provide enjoyable and safe options for transportation, which reduces air pollution. By protecting land along rivers and streams, greenways prevent soil erosion and filter pollution caused by agricultural and road runoff.

Greenways also serve as natural floodplains. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, flooding causes over \$1 billion in property damages every year. By restoring developed floodplains to their natural state, many riverside communities are preventing potential flood damage.

Finally, trails and greenways are hands-on environmental classrooms. People of all ages can see for themselves the precious and intriguing natural world from which they often feel so far removed.

PRESERVING OUR HISTORY AND CULTURE

Trails and greenways have the power to connect us to our heritage by preserving historic places and by providing access to them. They can give people a sense of place and an understanding of the enormity of past events, such as Native American trails and vast battlefields. Trails and greenways draw the public to historic sites. The six-mile Bethabara Trail and Greenway in Winston-Salem, North Carolina draws people to the birthplace of the city, the original Moravian Christian village founded in the late 1700s. Other trails preserve transportation corridors. Rail-trails along historic rail corridors provide a glance at the importance of this mode of transportation. Many canal paths, preserved for their historic importance as a transportation route before the advent of railroads, are now used by thousands of people each year for bicycling, running, hiking and

strolling. Many historic structures along canal towpaths, such as taverns and locks, have been preserved.

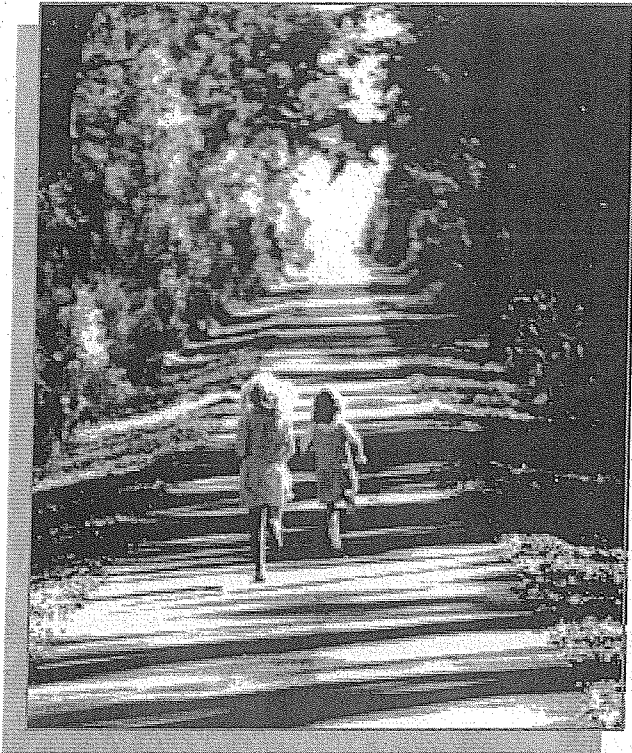
“A LIVABLE SUBURB OR CITY IS ONE THAT LETS US GET HOME AFTER WORK FAST... THAT RESTORES AND SUSTAINS OUR HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS... THAT PRESERVES AMONG NEW DEVELOPMENT SOME FAMILY FARMS AND GREEN SPACES... A LIVABLE NEIGHBORHOOD LETS YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE WALK THROUGH A NATURAL ECOSYSTEM AS YOU SIMPLY TAKE AN EVENING STROLL DOWN YOUR STREET.”

— VICE PRESIDENT ALBERT GORE

CREATE GREENWAYS AND TRAILS; BUILD A BETTER LIFE

Vice President Al Gore described a way of living that is cherished by most people and, unfortunately, is largely unavailable. Open spaces have disappeared at an alarming rate to make room for new development. People spend far too much time in traffic, detracting from time that could be better spent with their families and friends.

Through their votes, thousands of Americans have said ‘yes’ to preserving open spaces, greenways, farmlands and other important habitat. During the 1998 election, voters in 44 states approved over 150 conservation-related ballot initiatives. Trails and greenways provide what many Americans seek — close-to-home recreational areas, community meeting places, historic preservation, educational experiences, natural landscapes and beautification. Both trails and greenways help communities build pride by ensuring that their neighborhoods are good places to live, so that children can safely walk or bike to a park, school, or to a neighbor’s home. Trails and greenways help make communities more attractive and friendly places to live.



People of all ages enjoy Florida's Tallahassee-St. Marks Historic Railroad State Trail. (Photo: Dan Burden)

ENDNOTES

¹ *The Impacts of Rail-Trails, A Study of Users and Nearby Property Owners from Three Trails*, National Park Service, Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, 1992.

² *Economic Impacts of Protecting Rivers, Trails and Greenway Corridors*, National Park Service, Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, 4th edition, 1995.

³ *Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General*, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996.



ABOUT THE CLEARINGHOUSE: The Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse provides technical assistance, information resources and referrals to trail and greenway advocates and developers across the nation. Services are available to individuals, government agencies, communities, grassroots organizations and anyone else who is seeking to create or manage trails and greenways. The Clearinghouse is a joint project of Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and The Conservation Fund's American Greenways Program.

TRAILS AND GREENWAYS CLEARINGHOUSE ■ 1100 17TH STREET, NW, 10TH FLOOR ■ WASHINGTON, DC 20036
TOLL FREE: 1-877-GRNWAYS ■ E-MAIL: greenways@transact.org ■ WEB SITE: www.trailsandgreenways.org

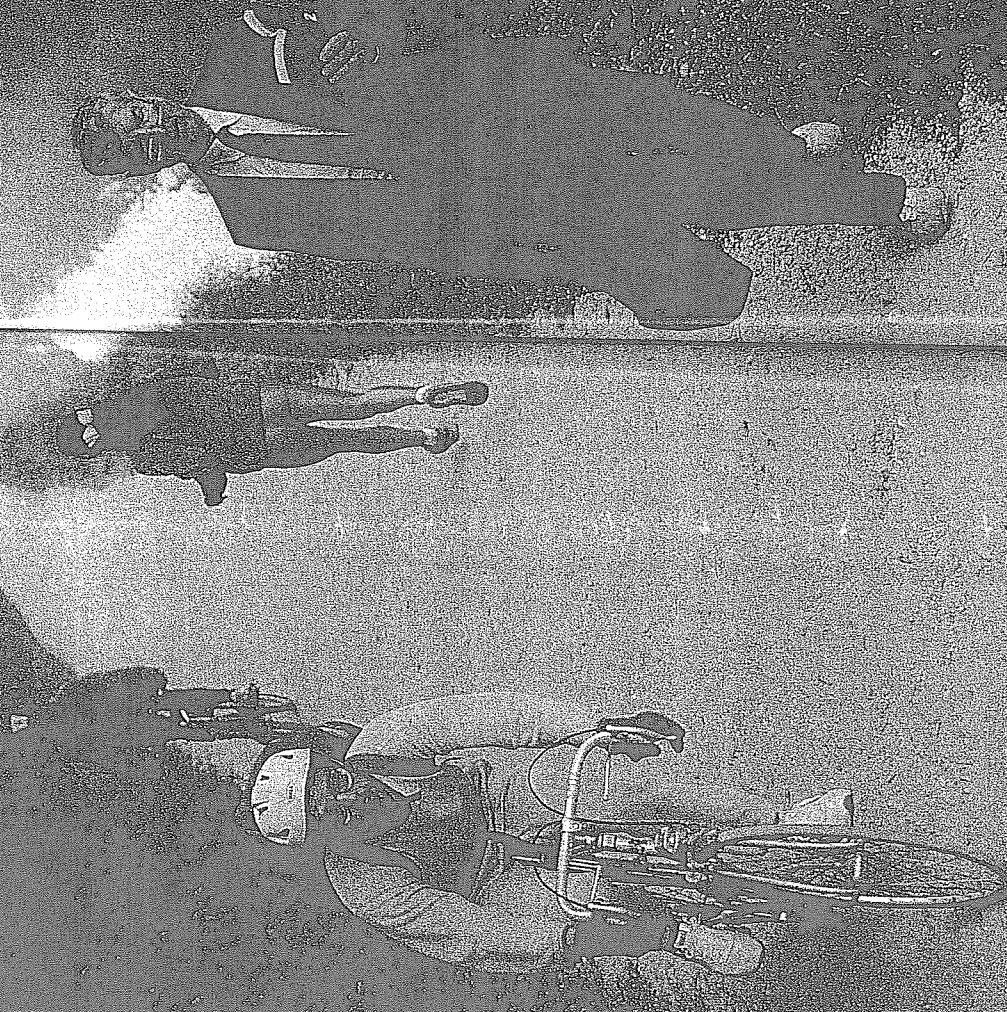
Greenways Paths to the Future

By NOEL GROVE
SENIOR ASSISTANT EDITOR

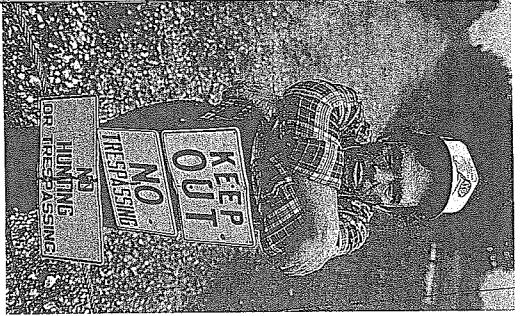
Photographs by
PHIL SCHERMEISTER

Verdant corridors are snaking across America, connecting parklands and triniting our urban population outdoors. Called greenways, they aim at improving recreation, aiding wildlife migration, and protecting scenic regions. The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal in Washington, D. C., where commuters are only a tree line away from bumper-to-bumper traffic, is a 19th-century artery become a 20th-century greenway.

77



PHOTOGRAPH BY
To Submission for Scott Meitzel
to Our Community Plan.



These land is it? Converting abandoned railroads to recreational trails has met both success and dogged opposition. Iowa's 53-mile-long Cedar Valley Nature Trail breeds at the McKinley family farm (facing page). The McKinnys claimed that the land should revert to them. The Iowa Supreme Court agreed. But a new law allows the land to be purchased by the state under eminent domain. John Sam Williamson (above) stands against Missouri's proposed 200-mile-long "Katy trail." Two miles of the old Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad bisects the farm his family has worked since 1835. "Recreation shouldn't be at the expense of the landowner," he says. "This is where we make our living. This is our home."

Called greenways, these corridors link open spaces and the an increasingly urbanized population to experiences in the outdoors. A Florida greenway, for example, runs from Tallahassee to a national forest and on to a national wildlife refuge, passing three state parks and touching three small towns. That comes close to what Vermont Anne Lusk calls an ideal greenway: one that ties together already existing outdoor opportunities. Lusk pictures such a greenway as a long, green python that has swallowed a liter of pigs.

A greenway and state park in Virginia, built on an old railroad bed, is only 50 to 150 feet wide but 57 miles long. It bisects python-like when it connects with other parklands, then narrows again when it passes through private farmland.

Maryland's Program Open Space has been buying land for 21 years. Early purchases were for parks and endangered wetlands, but now 75 percent are for greenways. Taking the idea even further, Maryland Governor William Donald Schaefer has just appointed a commission of developers, environmentalists, and government officials to inaugurate a statewide greenways program. It would be the first such in the nation.

A proposed circular 400-mile trail following ridgelines in the San Francisco Bay area would touch more than a hundred communities in nine counties, allowing millions to tap into a lofty, fresh-air experience. A footpath winding through the little town of Stowe, Vermont, to the countryside beyond is only five miles long, but making it helped tie a community together.

A MERICANS like to be on the move, we're not a people to go to a park and sit," says Keith Hay, director of the nonprofit Conservation Fund's American Greenways program. "Besides, land is expensive and less available now, which makes it hard to set aside blocks for parks."

"The word is really a combination of 'greenbelt' and 'parkway,' talking the better part of each," says Charles E. Little, author of a forthcoming book on the subject. "Of course, trails and green swaths have been set aside in the past. But the current trend of building these linear, connecting devices that get us out of our cars and into the landscape is a remarkable, citizen-led movement. I estimate about 500 individual projects are under way in the U.S."

Greenways may be as elaborate as a hiking-biking-riding route, but they can also be as simple and natural—and ecologically important—as a stretch of stream bank left wild.

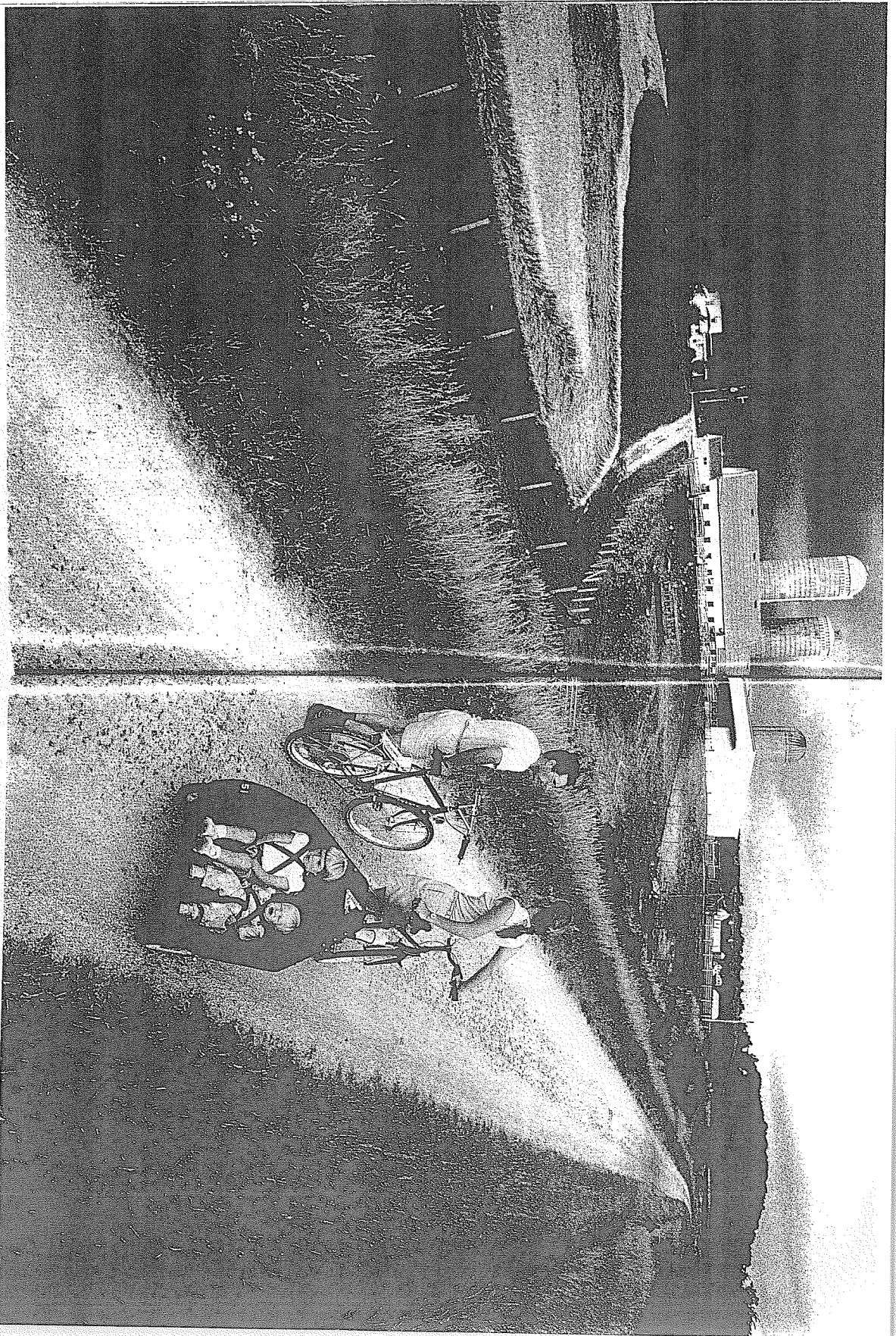
"Recreation is nice, but it's near the bottom of my list of reasons why we should have corridors of natural land," Richard T. T. Forman, a landscape ecologist at Harvard University, told me as we wandered near my home in rural Virginia. As we walked, Forman rearranged my view of the landscape.

"See the tree line along that creek?" he said, pointing. "Deer and other wildlife can move along it from this patch of woods to that one on the other side of the field between them.

"See that rough fence line? Trim away the shrubs and brush and you cut bird diversity by two-thirds.

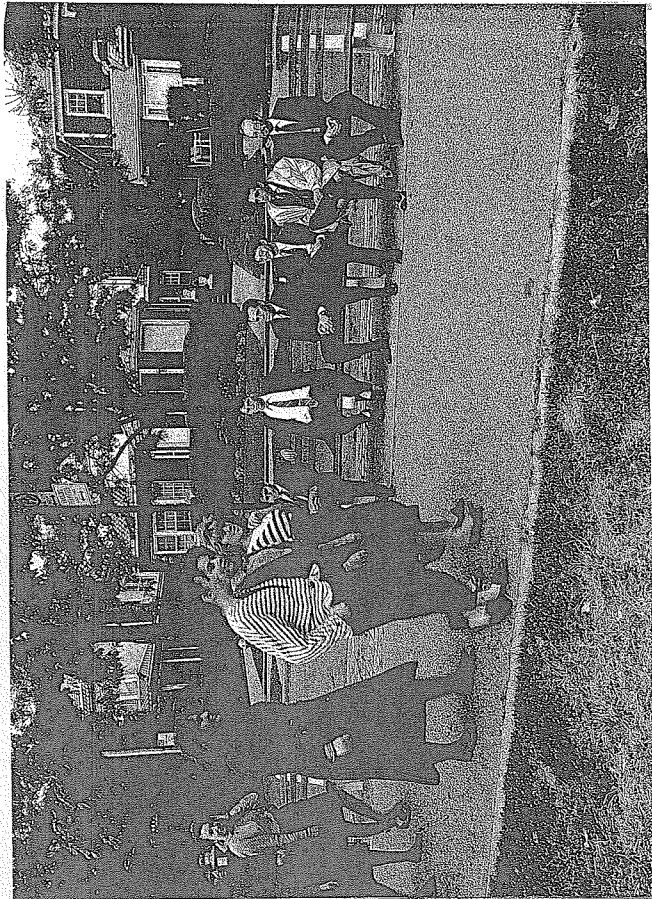
"These natural corridors filter water runoff before it enters our streams, protect biotic diversity, preserve woodland habitat,





One of the first trails-to-trails conversions in the United States, the 1967 Elroy-Sparta State Park Trail crosses 32 miles of dairy country in southwestern Wisconsin. Adjacent farmers initially feared vandalism, but "their fears have been unfounded."

says Jim Moonhead, a state park ranger who works the trail and also relaxes there with his wife, Barbara, and their daughters. Nationally, 250 such trails now cover 3,100 miles—equivalent to the railroad mileage being abandoned each year.



Farmers argue that land taken for railroads in the past century should revert to them when the trains stop. Trail makers cite 1983 federal legislation suggesting that rights-of-way be "banked" in case fuel costs some day drive us back to trains. The U. S. Supreme Court recently decided that banking the rights-of-way as trails was constitutional.

In Iowa, Tom Neenan felt the heat of opposition when he helped convert an old electric rail line to a hike-and-bike path from Cedar Rapids to Waterloo. "Adjacent landowners said it would attract vandals who would damage their land, shoot their livestock, rape their daughters," said the white-haired former homebuilder, amazement still on his face in the telling.

"The landowners burned a railroad trestle, defoliated trees, and buried boards in the trail with nails sticking up. In fact, the only violence so far has been done by the people who said they were worried about the trail attracting a rough crowd."

The land was finally purchased through private donations and developed largely by volunteers.

My foray on the proposed 200-mile rail-to-trail conversion west of St. Louis—the "KATY trail," for the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad—ended at a fence built by an angry landowner.

"We know 99 percent of the people using it will be good people," said another trail opponent, John Sam Williamson, who farms near Columbia, Missouri. "But one percent may be

National Geographic, June 1990

bad. On the trail in Columbia a woman was murdered, and they've had some robberies too. Our objection is the way they took the land, but we have some personal concerns as well."

Studies indicate that trails are no less secure than other areas of human use and cause no increase in crime. Seattle law officers pointed out that problems in park areas are usually related to easy automobile access, which is not available on that city's Burke-Gilman Trail. A long-term study of the Appalachian Trail, which passes through both rural areas and small towns, revealed impressively low crime statistics considering the volume of people who use the facility.

"If a corridor runs through a city, you've got to remember you're still in a city," I was told by city planner Bob Mosher in path-conscious Raleigh, North Carolina.

"Our statistics indicate you're probably safer on a greenway than in most areas. People with a criminal mind-set don't usually frequent places like that."

GREENWAYS in New York City? A two-tour Vietnam veteran has already mapped one. "Not many people realize that New York has 40,000 acres of parks, and a greenway is a way of pulling them all together," said Tom Fox, a Brooklynite who calls himself an open-space hustler. "Besides, there are tremendous cultural opportunities along the way. I love the diversity in this city."

Following sidewalks, existing bike paths, and streets when necessary, Fox mapped a 40-mile bike route from Brooklyn's Coney Island to Queens' Fort Totten. We began at Coney Island and were soon riding on the wide sidewalk along Ocean Parkway heading north, Fox a rolling monologue of local highlights.

"See the Russian restaurants? This area is popular with Russian émigrés . . . iron grillwork, we've entered an Italian neighborhood . . . new Jewish temples . . . here's Prospect Park! Olmsted considered it his best combination of woods, water, and a meadow more than a mile long . . . let's stop for a walk through the Brooklyn Botanic Garden . . ."

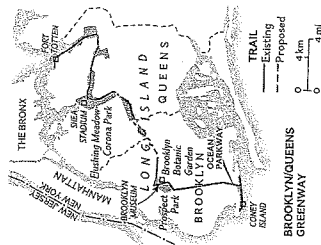
Our passage through a down-at-the-heel neighborhood with boarded-up windows and bored-looking residents only added to his optimism: "A greenway allows these people to get out to other areas, just as it allows us to get into theirs," he insisted.

Decaying urban neighborhoods are actually aiding creation of useful open space in New York and other cities. Across town in the Bronx, Rob Feder of the Trust for Public Land (TPL) walked me through vacant lots covered with weeds and trash.

"During fiscal crises in the 1970s a lot of property reverted to the city through tax foreclosures," he said. "These areas will come back some day," he added, as we crunched over broken glass and dried dog scat. "As development pressures mount, we are working with other groups to preserve green oases for people to enjoy. They make a city livable."

TPL is also aiding in the creation of the Bronx River Trailway, a recreational use of now derelict stretches of waterfront. Nationwide, the organization helps form local land trusts to purchase open space. In Ohio, for example, TPL is helping an effort to tie together the cities of Cleveland and Akron with a

Greenways: Paths to the Future

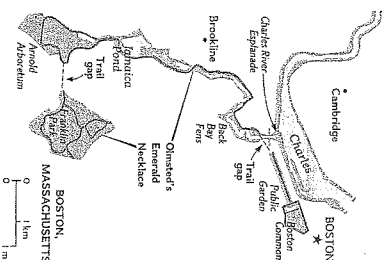


Courting attention, young Brooklynites stroll Ocean Parkway on the Jewish Sabbath. Famed landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, considered the father of greenways, designed this "shaded pleasure drive" in the 1860s as an approach to his new creation, 526-acre Prospect Park. Extending his vision, the Brooklyn/Queens Greenway (map) will cross Long Island by 1995, joining 13 parks and such landmarks as Shea Stadium and the Brooklyn Museum.

For further information on greenway development write:
AMERICAN GREENWAYS
 1800 North Kent Street
 Suite 1120
 Arlington, Virginia 22209



Bathing alfresco. Gabino Martinez-Poz soaps up in his garden plot in Boston's Back Bay. *Rens (facing page).* A legacy of World War II, the Fenway Victory Gardens thrive in this park "erected from foul tidal flats" by architect Olmsted. The Rens are one jewel in the eight-mile-long Emerald Necklace he designed for the city in the 1870s and 1880s (map).



greenway, doing for recreation what was once done for industry. In the early 19th century the Ohio and Erie Canal allowed boat commerce from Lake Erie to the Ohio River. Cleveland and Akron grew up by the canal, which was abandoned in 1913. The Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area was opened between the cities in 1974, totaling some 33,000 wooded acres along 22 miles.

Now a citizens movement led by TPL and the National Park Service wants to tie the recreation area from Cleveland to Akron and 30 miles beyond to the historical village of Zoar. The corridor would include foot-and-bike trails, picnic stops, a pioneer farm and village, and steam engine service, all allowing users to enjoy the outdoors while learning the history of the region. Using donated funds and land trusts, a coalition of citizens, businesses, governments, and organizations hopes to negotiate land purchases into a 60-mile greenway rich in scenery and culture.

PERHAPS NOTHING better reflects the mounting interest in greenways than the earmarking of government funds for their construction. California's Proposition 70, passed in 1988, provides three-quarters of a billion dollars for parks and recreation. Only five million dollars is tagged specifically for trails, but another 120 million goes to local communities for open-space projects, including greenways.

"Greenways with trails are one of the cheapest forms of recreation," said Phyllis Cangani, whose group, Whole Access, works to make them available to the many Americans who are often excluded from the outdoors—people with disabilities. Stricken with Hodgkin's disease, she powers her three-wheeled scooter on weekend outings and camping trips, and lobbies for firm trail surfaces and paths with gentle gradients.

"Those with mobility difficulties include not only the 16 to 20 percent of the population with disabilities," she told me, "but also older people, and our population is aging."

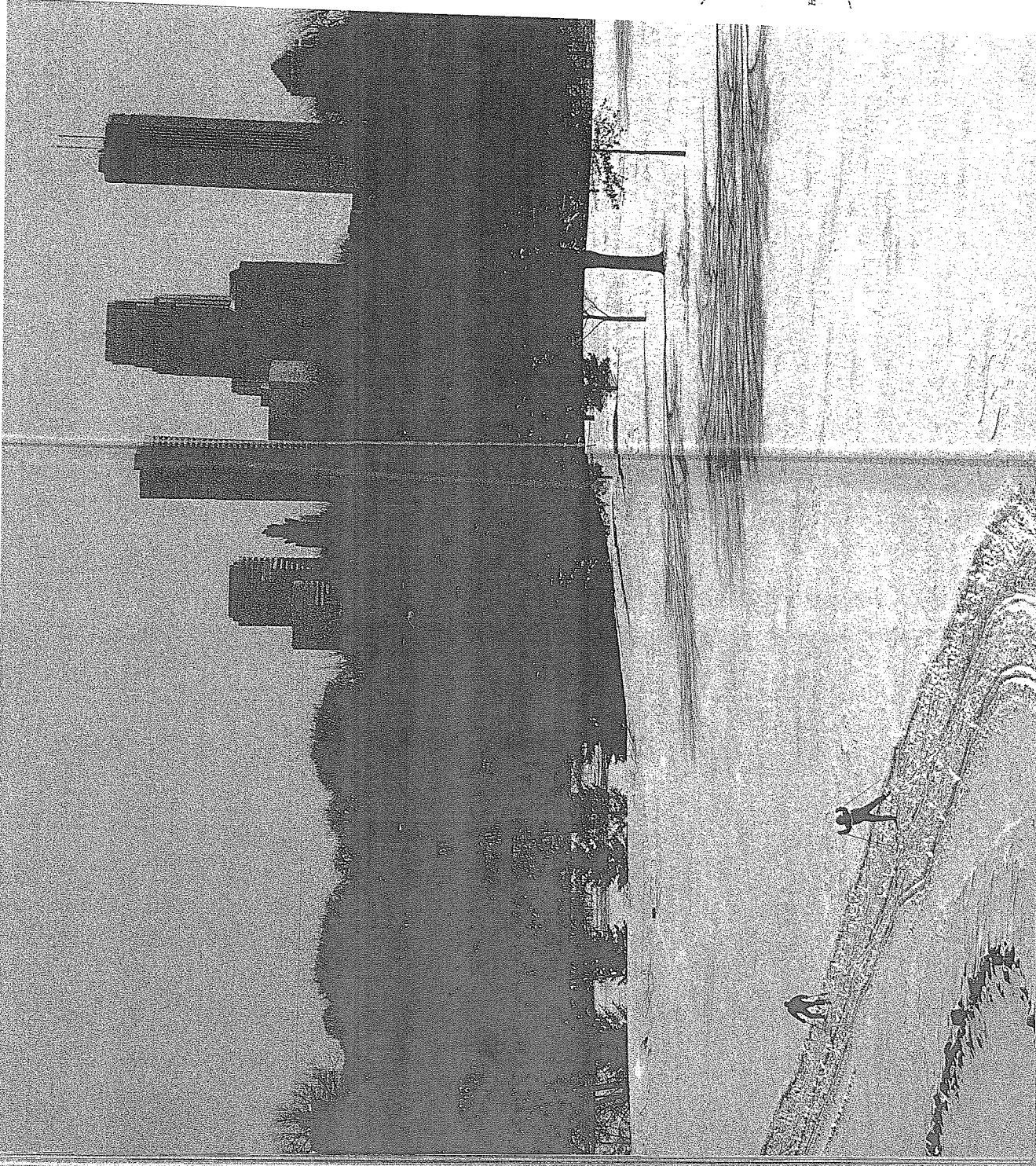
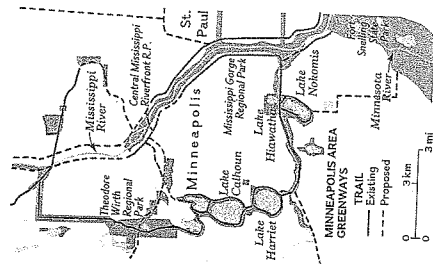
The demand for neighborhood corridors of recreation knows no age, however, and seemingly no limits. Minneapolis and St. Paul are ahead of most cities in creating trails for biking, walking, and cross-country skiing because, as park board planner Al Withman told me, "Minnesotans have always had a tradition of outdoor activity. The demand is terrific. When a new trail was installed, kids were riding their bikes a hundred yards behind the asphalt-laying machine."

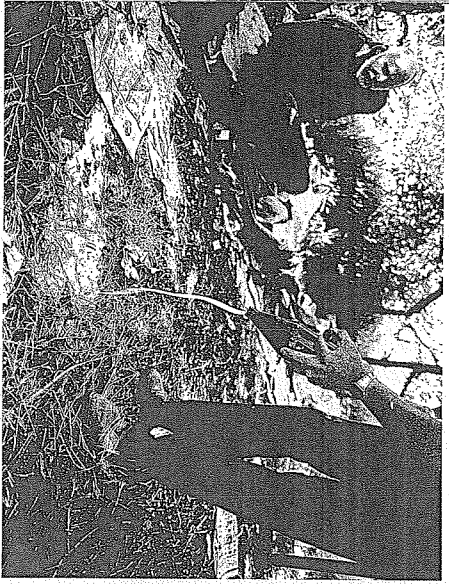
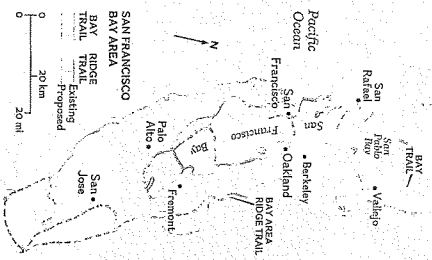
In Yakima, Washington, I began an evening run a few yards outside my motel, built next to the Yakima Greenway. The path, still under construction, was rocky and uneven, but it curved gracefully beside a clear trout and salmon stream that a few years ago had been little more than a dumping ground.

Financing looked like a rocky road when the project started in an agricultural community with high unemployment. To the surprise of everyone, the first private fund drive yielded a half million dollars. State funds were also squeezed—out of grants from eight different accounts, including an obscure one for Aquatic Land Enhancement. "It's a matter of knowing where the money is and how to get it," said Jim Whiteside, former county commissioner.



In sports-minded Minneapolis—where “it’s not unusual to see people running in a blizzard,” says city park planner Al Witman—cross-country skiers glide through 750-acre Theodore Wirth Regional Park. Laid out at the turn of the century, the Minneapolis system is one of the earliest urban greenways. The Twin Cities area enjoys 45,000 acres of parkland, 25,000 added since 1974. The nearly completed 40-mile trail around Minneapolis (map) embodies a central greenway tenet: “You can go 15 minutes,” says Witman, “or you can go all day.”





Bear is okay, but glass is banned on Sacramento's 23-mile-long American River Parkway—as is camping. “The homeless problem here is sad,” says ranger Dub Roberts. To the south, two dramatic greenway loops totaling 800 miles are being built around San Francisco Bay (map). As with joggers along the Ridge Trail (facing page), greenway planning faces uphill climbs but rewarding vistas.

THE SEARCH FOR MONEY does not stop greenway builders. When city council members at High Point, North Carolina, said the city budget could not afford the entire cost of greenway construction, a citizens group sold “deeds” to foot-long sections of the path. Fifteen hundred miles to the west, trail makers at Pueblo, Colorado, sold bricks inscribed with donors’ names and used them for the path’s centerpiece.

Recognizing a demand for outdoor recreation, more and more states are funneling money from special taxes and user fees toward greenways. The National Park Service includes a small division that offers communities technical assistance and advice on greenway acquisition and development.

With its grants from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), the federal government has been the single largest funder of recreation corridors. Since its enactment in 1964 as a trust built by revenue from federal property sales, boat fuel taxes, and oil and gas leases on the continental shelf, the LWCF has sent more than a billion dollars toward the building of community pathways.

But federal deficits have all but dried up that source. Only three million dollars a year is currently dispersed for trails, although legislative efforts continue toward the creation of a new federal environmental fund.

Deep pockets are gone from state and local governments as well, which inspires creative financing. Coalitions of public and private groups are being formed to purchase parklands and greenways, spurring connections over ever larger areas. New York State, for example, passed legislation in 1988 that called for study of a Hudson River Valley Greenway along 154 miles of the scenic river that is sometimes called America’s Rhine.

“We want to examine every possible opportunity along the corridor—parks, old mansions, preserves, historic sites—and then figure out how to preserve and connect them, so they can be part of an outdoor experience,” said Barry D’Ilatro, the greenway coordinator for a group called Scenic Hudson, Inc. “With nearly four million people living in the valley and many more expected by the end of the century, we want to plan open spaces for them to enjoy.”

“We’re not talking about just one trail or one connection but a network of outdoor experiences,” explained Frances Dunwell of New York’s Department of Environmental Conservation. “It’s more a philosophy of future land use for a whole valley.”

Or a nation. □