

Rory Robinson's Notes for Indiana Leadership Summit Presentation

Author, columnist for the Guardian George Monbiot, provides an idea of the challenge we face when he wrote... “The only rational response to both the impending end of the oil age and the menace of global warming is to redesign our cities, our farming and our lives. But this can not happen without massive political pressure, and our problem is that no one ever rioted for austerity. People tend to take to the streets because they want to consume more, not less. Given a choice between a new set of matching tableware and the survival of humanity, I suspect that most people would choose the tableware.”

So, how to promote development of trails and greenways, creation of green infrastructure in light of this? We are not rioting for austerity, but instead what we are proposing is a benefit to people... economic, health and quality of life – a good and right thing to do...

The Conservation Fund defines Green Infrastructure as; “an interconnected green space network that is planned and managed to conserve natural ecosystem values and functions and provide associated benefits to human populations” Trails and greenways provide the connections

My Focus 20 minutes will be on the human benefits... specifically, economic

Expenditures by Residents - Spending by local residents on greenway related activities helps support recreation oriented businesses and employment, as well as other businesses, which are patronized by greenway and trail users.

- **A 2004 Study of The Washington & Old Dominion Trail, a 45-mile long transportation and recreation corridor running from Arlington, VA west to Purcellville, finds that an estimated 1.7 million adult W&OD users put about \$7 million directly in the northern Virginia economy.**
 - **The estimated 1.6 million local visits accounted for about \$5.3 million of spending directly related to the use of the W&OD.**

In 2001, there were 84.2 million recreational walkers (SGMA, 2002) *average sport footwear recently retailed for \$38.88 (NSGA, 2004). Between 1987 and 2003, mountain bike participation rose by 359%, fitness walking rose almost 40%, and trail running 16.4% (SGMA, 2004). In Los Angeles County alone, hikers supported a \$300 million hiking equipment industry

BUILD IT THEY WILL COME (STAY) if you don't, they will go (FIND)

Commercial Uses - Greenways provide business opportunities, locations and resources for commercial activities such as recreation equipment rentals and sales, lessons, special events, on-site concessions and other related businesses.

- **Opening of Mineral Belt Trail in Leadville, CO, led to a 19% increase in sales tax revenues helping the city recover from a mine closure in 1999**
- **Downtown Dunedin, Florida – suffering a 35% storefront vacancy rate in early 1990 until an abandoned CSX railroad track became the Pinellas Trail. Now, storefront occupancy is 100 percent, business is booming.**
- **\$77 million Carmel City Ctr., mixed use, \$30 million city which includes \$17 million for Civic Ctr. Bisected by the Monon Trails, mayor points to the trail as the catalyst for this development.**

Tourism - NPS states that outdoor recreation and leisure expenditures account for a substantial part of tourist's discretionary spending, as ecotourism continues to be one of the fastest growing sectors of the travel industry. Greenways are often major tourist attractions generating expenditures on lodging, food and recreation oriented services and improving the overall appeal of a community to tourists and new residents.

- **Impact of Bicycling on N. Carolina Outer Banks**
 - 680,000 visitors bicycle in area annually, represents 17% of tourists to area
 - 43 % bicycling as an important factor in selecting area for vacation
 - 53 % bicycling as a strong influence in decision for return visit
 - Bicycling visitors generate econ. impact of \$60 million
 - Annual Economic impact of cyclists is 9 times the one-time cost of building the facilities

- **Recreation spending by non-locals visiting the Washington & Old Dominion supported approx. \$1.8 million of economic output, about 34 full-time job equivalents, and around \$642 thousand of personal income in the northern Virginia economy**

- **Here in Indiana... the impact of events**
 - On a larger scale – In 2000, the Hilly 100, annual bike event held in Bloomington area, drew in 5000 riders that contributed over \$1 million to the local economy in just lodging and food expenditures
 - Smaller scale – Indiana Bike Fest in Jasper, IN drew in 250 bringing \$120,000 to the local economy

Corporate Relocation and Retention

Ed Morrison, Director, Center for Regional Economic Issues, Case Western Reserve Univ., Weatherhead School of Management identifies five focus areas in a working model for economic development... Brainpower, Innovation, Marketing and Awareness (Branding), Dialog and Inclusion, **Quality Place: underscores the importance of building sustainable, connected places for to live and for businesses to compete focusing on building places that are competitive, cool, and connected.**

An ongoing survey to help Michigan cities use the Cool Cities Initiative as an economic development strategy found that while job opportunities are important in choosing a place to live, quality of life is significantly more important than previously thought.

- **Of the 31 attributes of preferred places to live participants identified safe streets #1,**
 - walkable streets #3
 - gathering places #7,
 - sense of community #9,
 - scenic beauty #11,
 - trails and parks #13
 - Gambling casinos (31), Pro sports (28) and malls/shopping centers (27) do not play a big role in choosing a place to live

- **Survey of 1,200 high tech workers in 1998 by KPMG found that quality of life in a community increases job attractiveness by 33 %**

- **Ruby Tuesdays, Inc. moved Restaurant Support Center to a site adjacent to the Greenway Trail in Maryville, TN... “I was very impressed with the beauty of the park, which helps provide a sense of community to this area, as well as the many benefits it provides to our more than 300 employees”, CEO**

Public Cost Reduction – According to the APA, “perhaps one of the greatest values of an interconnected green space system is the financial benefit that may be gained through the reduction of the need for the built environment

- The wetlands of Congaree Bottomland Hardwood Swamp in South Carolina provide valuable water quality functions. The least cost substitute for the water quality services provided would be a water treatment plant costing \$5 million
- American Forests estimates that the 187,767 acres of tree canopy in the Washington, D. C. metro region provides 949 million cubic feet in avoided storage of water - value \$4.7 billion
- The tree canopy in Charlotte, North Carolina, comprises 53% of the county’s land area. This urban forest removes 17.5 million pounds of pollutants from the air each year; a benefit American Forests estimates is worth \$43.8 million each year.

Can we afford it? - According to U.S. Rep. James Oberstar, (D-MN), Constructing one mile of urban freeway costs an average of \$46,000,000 a mile – Comparatively, costs for:

- 12-foot shared paths = \$128,000/mile
- 5-foot bicycle lanes = \$189,000/mile
- 5-foot paved shoulders on rural roads = \$102,000/mile

As far back as 1993 Maryland's Northern Central Rail-Trail found that while the trail's management and maintenance cost to the public was \$191,893, the trail-related tax income to the state totaled \$303.750.

Property Values - In 2001 Dr. John Crompton of Texas A&M University compiled the results of 25 major studies examining the effects of open space on property values. He found that 20 of 25 studies concluded that open space and parks increased proximate property values. Four of the five other studies reached ambivalent conclusions.

A 2002 survey of recent home buyers by the National Association of Realtors and the National Association of Home Builders rank trails as the 2nd most important community amenity out of a list of 18 choices

A survey the same year in NE in which realtors evaluated the impact of a trail on the sale of a home reported...

- 65.7 % easier to sell
- 15.3% no effect
- 17.3% not sure
- ONLY 1.5% harder to sell

2001 Indiana Trails Study of six trails in Indiana:

- Specifically 86% to 95% of trail neighbors indicated they felt the trail had either no effect or a positive effect on their property value.
- 81% and 93% indicating the trail had no negative effect or made it easier to sell their property,

Intrinsic Value - Humans benefit with access to recreation that can improve physical health and fitness, improve quality of life and increase community pride and sense of regional character.

2001 Indiana Trails study

- On average, 79% of all trail users indicated they participate in their preferred activity more because of the trail

- **Over 70 %**, as many and **95 %** of trail neighbors reported using the trail during the prior 12 months, many were NIMBY's
- **Over 65 %** of the of users id health and fitness as the reason for being on the trail... **5%** in Indy, commuting

Create safer neighborhoods... trails, greenways, parks, sidewalks, neighborhoods that provide opportunities to be out, connect and interact in a shared environment and be active

- **85.5%** of trail users responding to the IN Trails Study viewed trail as safe
- **Average of 61%** of trail neighbors felt the trail was a better neighbor than expected
- **average of 69%** indicated that the trail **IMPROVED** their neighborhood - Summary of Indiana Trails Study at www.in.gov/dot/projects/trails/

Recent editions of Money's rankings prove that open space amenities are more prominently featured than they used to be. In the 2003 rankings, Money chose to highlight park or trail amenities in 63% of the best places to retire.

Proposals to "develop" land as open space should be scrutinized just as are proposals to build subdivisions and shopping centers. Increasingly, proponents of preserving open space have successfully persuaded local officials that the benefits of *not* developing the land for homes and businesses are greater than converting the land to developed uses.

Through Green Infrastructure, trails and greenways we;

- **enrich habitat and biodiversity**
- **maintain natural landscape processes**
- **clean the air and water, as well as**
- **reduce the cost of traditional "grey infrastructure" and community services**
- **increase recreational and transportation opportunities**
- **improve health; and**
- **provide connection to nature and sense of place**
- **and we enhance economic vitality**

Still need a why - The 1999 Economic Impact of Open Space in NH study shows that each acre of open space provides \$1500 of economic benefit to the state and community... the report identifies open space as the direct underpinning of the economic sectors of agriculture, forestry, tourism and recreation, and vacation homes... activities that generate \$8.2 billion directly and indirectly each year, over 20% of the gross state product

The concepts of trails, greenways, green infrastructure can help people to understand that we are not, "rioting for austerity". We, the leadership community, in partnership with others can help people to realize the reasons, the benefits of embracing these concepts so that in the future they may either choose the "survival of humanity" over the "tableware", or come to realize that we may be able to have both.