

Green at No Cost

Ecological and Economic Prosperity



By Richard Vermeulen

SINOPSYS

For decades, we have told ourselves that depleting our resources is necessary in order to increase our standard of living. We have also told ourselves that the main obstacle in protecting our environment has been the higher costs. These are myths and rationalizations.

The Value Process

This book is about taking economic design elements apart, examining them, identifying optimal pieces, and placing these pieces in optimal relations. Some of these configurations may seem surprising, many are elegant in their simplicity, and most appeal to us since we realize that success and prosperity are within our reach.

The Prosperity Four: Choice, Access, Mobility, and Space

When we start a building design, our clients describe their mission, vision, and values for their project. Once we have the guiding principles, our design teams have a metric they can engineer their solutions to, and fulfill their obligations. What are our criteria in the Green at No Cost project and how do we measure our progress?

Time is Money is Energy

Everyone accepts the business maxim that Time is Money. (Oh well, if you are an economist you have to start somewhere). This means that if time is not leisure time, then it is measured in efficiency terms. What may be new to our thinking is that Money is Energy.

The Barriers

In our society, we have to be ever vigilant about natural accumulations and agglomerations of power. Big government, big business, and big media are powerful forces that must be balanced by the ballot box, the courts, watchdog associations, and so on.

The environmental movement started as a watchdog and a voice that challenged the establishment and helped put safeguards into place. As the decades passed, the upstart movement grew large by its success. Today it could be fairly claimed that the environment game is big government, big business, and big media.

The status quo sometimes tells us to maintain something beyond its useful life. But nature, with its life cycles, puts an expiry date on pretty much everything, and so should we. When economic life cycles are applied to all our cost analyses, greater freedom, adaptability, choice, and dynamism is achieved.

It is said that people resist change. Really, we resist change for the worse. Change for the better we readily adopt. The line-ups for the new gizmos and modern conveniences are real. We are seeing prosperity increase rapidly in our communication realm with the increase of mobile phones, internet, video and audio technologies.



However, our living realm is in decline. In our daily lives, we circumscribe our choices by **Measuring the Wrong Things**. We limit our access with **Oceans of Asphalt**. **The Transit Hoax** chokes off our mobility. We over-compress our spaces and ask **Dude – Where’s My Yard?**

What are these barriers? How were they born and what forces keep them alive? What high-cost relationships do they create, and what are the overall impacts on the pursuit of prosperity?

The Value Process in Action

People naturally make savings decisions, so the price and choice mechanism can be adopted to incorporate the socio part of the socio-economic process. **Choice and Green Taxes** identifies several economic tools that facilitate access, mobility, and space in our building and transportation infrastructure.

Zoning began with the desire to separate uses. After all, nobody wanted to live next to the meat packing plant! Now we consider form, so that high rise is next to high-rise, low rise is next to low rise. Use and form are good things to plan, but **Access Based Zoning** is our guide to optimizing parking, streets, parks, and other uses. Access determines routes for pedestrians, bikes, cars, transit, and freight. What frameworks maximize access both in terms of proximity of space and choice of transportation mode?

Micro mobility is the advantage of a useful transportation mode to an individual or enterprise. Extending mobility to everyone and incorporating all modes of transportation multiplies that advantage exponentially and becomes macro mobility. Instead of worsening auto mobility, we seek to enhance it. Instead of limited transit mobility, we create it everywhere. **Micro to Macro Mobility** provides multiple and redundant transportation grids interlaced in interstitial spaces creating the cellular form.

Green infrastructure that serves as buffer zones, swing space, transportation grids, and ecological corridors, creates the interstitial zones of **Space and the Cellular Form**. Living spaces reach out into the country while rivers of nature infiltrate the city. Mobility is everywhere between and through the cellular form. Access underlies and abut our built spaces.

Green at No Cost

The **Eco City** is a cost model that incorporates optimum design elements identified by the Value Process. Here we look at **Eight Steps to Our Eco Future** by estimating the **Cost/Benefit Analysis** of **Supernatural Cities**, **Let People Choose**, **Ban Parking**, **Transportation Going Forward**, **21st Century Transit**, **Why Get High?**, and **Sprawl On**, to see how close we have come to our goal of Green at No Cost.



Introduction

The Value Process

The Prosperity Four: Choice, Access, Mobility, and Space

Time is Money is Energy

THE BARRIERS

Measuring the Wrong Things

Externalities

Resource Depletion

Command Economy

Oceans of Asphalt

Commercial Wasteland

The Snout House

Widening of The Arteries

The Transit Hoax

The Congestion Pill

The One Percent Solution

From Concession to Congestion

Overload on Main Street

It's The Co2—Stupid!

Dude – Where's My Yard?

Frank Lloyd Was Right

Nimby Jack

Why Get High?

THE VALUE PROCESS IN ACTION

Choice and Green Taxes

Competitive Renewable Fuels

Pay at the Pump

The Green Vehicle

Mobile Cap and Trade



Access Based Zoning

- Bury the Car
- Old Towne Main Street
- The Industrial Zone
- The Institutional Green

Micro to Macro Mobility

- Mobility and Prosperity
- Redundant Grids
- Even Flow
- Rideshare Transit

Space and the Cellular Form

- The Eco City Grid in Your City
- Nature In

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GREEN AT NO COST

Eight Steps to Our Eco Future: Cost/Benefit Analysis

- Supernatural Cities
- Let People Choose
- Ban Parking
- Transportation Going Forward
- 21st Century Transit
- Why Get High?
- Sprawl On

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Appendix

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