

# Willits in Transition Workshop "Next Steps" and some recommendations from Ecocity Builders

## **Next Steps, outlined at the Willits in Transition (WIT) Workshop on March 18, 2006.**

1. A Green City Mapping Task Force, composed of member attending the WIT workshop, will coordinate with the City of Willits and WELL to gather data for the Willits Green City Map
2. Ecocity Builders will return in several months to assist with a Willits Green City Mapping Community Workshop to help shape the map (see notes below)
3. Some Willits community members may help create some models of Willits today and a green city Willits of tomorrow that could be on display
4. WIT participants and Green City Mapping Task Force members will organize some community "field trips" around town and to other location that could provide inspiration to Willits

## **Actions!**

March-May, 2006

## **Willits Green City Mapping Task Force to collect data for "ecocity" GIS mapping, paper maps and overlays**

Note: We will have to decide if the map is just for Willits proper or Willits area, which would include Brooktrails as a town "center." The following is a laundry list of items that we suggest looking for as good "green city" data sets. These are the kinds of data we are collecting for the City of Oakland at this time and putting into GIS layers.

1. Where the downtown and neighborhood centers are now located,
2. Existing zoning,
3. Transit routes,
4. Streets, highways, parking lots and structures, gas stations, car dealerships and other car infrastructure,
5. Existing and planned bicycle/pedestrian routes,
6. Residential population density,

7. Workforce population density,
8. Relevant demographic distribution (race, wealth, crime, etc.),
9. Schools, colleges, hospitals, museums and other major institutions,
10. Creeks and special geographic features such as steep hills, ridgelines, nature areas,
11. Flood zones, earthquake liquefaction zones and fire danger areas
12. City parks, pools, sports fields,
13. City food gardens, farmers markets,
14. Non-profit community centers and facilities,
15. Civic building such as City Hall
16. Zones of specialized industrial production, processing and warehousing,
17. Areas of special economic investment in existing or in development
18. Major development projects in the pipeline
19. Existing "vitality" centers: areas that are lively and up-beat, economically active and already or promising to be particularly vital into the future.

### **June or July, 2006?**

#### **Next Steps on the map to be addressed at a Green City Workshop**

20. From studying 1. Through 19., find centers of potential ecocity vitality – centers that should be the center of increasing density/diversity,
21. From studying 1. Through 19. find areas of highest priority for preserving and restoring open space for food gardening/production and natural features and resources such as creeks, farmland, wetlands and ridgelines,
22. From studying 1. Through 19., find best sites for several ecological demonstration projects such or "zero import energy development projects."
23. Engage in detailed discussions with community leaders, members and those well-informed in related fields to create a draft final map that would become the working Ecocity Zoning Overlay Map that, with amendments, would be adopted by Willits City Council

These last three steps require a statement of assumptions and methodology in their determination. Largely it will be based on the data on the maps, but a later draft statement of assumptions would need to be refined according to feedback from the community and on experience in the field as project investigators regarding: sense of vitality and uniqueness, pride, answers to question in the area about life and interests there, etc. Judgment in determining these centers and open spaces will necessarily have to weigh ethnic, political, economic and intuitive knowledge gained in the experience in the mapping project and in visiting the most important sites and be viewed in context with an energy short, biodiversity threatened, economically disrupted future.

**Possible outcome: The Willits Green City Map, a Tool for Sustainable City Transformation**

The product would be a map identifying #s 20., 21. and 22. above to be used as an overlay of the current zoning code and to inform all concerned parties as to directions for future ecologically healthy urban land use, design and development. Accompanying the map, would be the background maps used in the whole project (# 1. Through 19.) and list of some of the tools that could be used to change zoning and apply the map, such as transfer of development rights and ecological demonstration projects, including “carbon neutral” or “zero waste” and “zero imported energy” development projects.

*Submitted to the hosts of the March 17 & 18, 2006, Willits in Transition (WIT) Workshop  
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**Some Recommendations for Willits and participants in the Willits in Transition Workshop**

—from Richard Register and Kirstin Miller, Ecocity Builders

1. Create a **“green city” overlay map** for Willits to inform land use planning (in process)
2. Identify and build **walkable town centers** linked by transit and greenways, powered by renewable energy and aiding natural restoration
3. Build and expand one or more **car-free areas** with car-free streets.
4. Utilize **transfer of development rights** (TDR) programs, community land trusts, incentives and other policies to shape a healthy physical footprint
5. Adopt a **“Green City Leadership” theme** for the city’s economic

- prosperity, health and education
6. **Allow for increased height and density**
    - Supporting ecological TDRs
    - Balancing development imbalances
    - Ecological building features, including solar greenhouses, terraces, elevated public access, rooftop gardens
    - Shifting ever more citizens into car-free infrastructure and life styles
  7. Create a **community development program** that involves local businesses with sustainable development and local employment goals.
  8. Focus on development of **local farms and local energy, ecologically healthy technology and education for ecological development.**
  9. Develop classes at the college extension and/or attract a campus of a larger college to train people in the services and professions that Willits needs to be largely self-sufficient; become a major **center of sustainable economy research and education.**
  10. Take **regional transportation leadership** with other small cities in shifting local, regional, Caltrans and federal policies from roads to rails.