

First place

CATEGORY

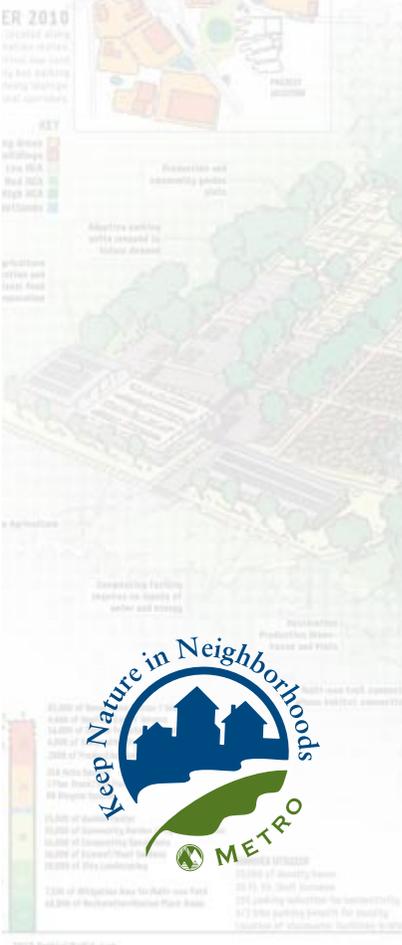
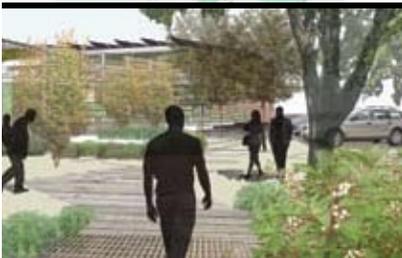
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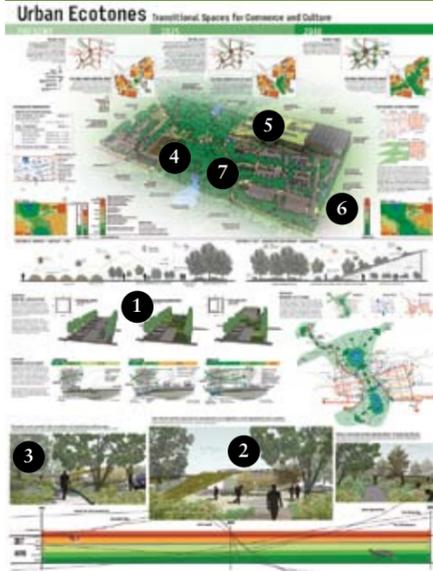
Nature in Neighborhoods: Integrating Habitats Winners Series

Commercial development and lowland hardwood forest

Urban Ecotones

Transitional Spaces for Commerce and Culture





Snapshot of a winner

Today's decisions grow into tomorrow. Urban Ecotones' design vision stretches over 30 years, offering economic and ecological systems based on a shift from fossil fuel dependency. In the process, structures and habitat evolve and grow together. The needs of people, wildlife and the planet are balanced over time. The areas where development and natural systems meet create educational opportunities and are environments of unique biotic richness.



③ Stormwater beauty: Trails through swales

Stormwater from parking surfaces travels through planted swales to a replicated wetland pond for on-site filtration. The swales are part of a regional trail corridor, with bike paths and habitat links emerging from the trail. A raised pedestrian bridge through the habitat conservation area (HCA) creates connectivity for people and protects wildlife habitat. The ponds evolve into healthy wetland ecosystems.

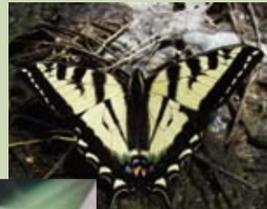


⑤ Ecoroof view cafe

A rooftop cafe has views of adjacent woods and wetlands. The sloping, vegetated ecoroof provides habitat and on-site stormwater treatment, beautifully blending the built and natural environments.

Ecotone: the transitional area between two ecosystems that contains more diversity and biotic activity than singular habitats

Inhabitant profiles



Western swallowtail butterfly © Curt Zonick, Mourning dove (Lee Karney), Northern flicker © Jim Cruce.



② Split the big box: A forest runs through it

Instead of a big box store in the center of an immense parking lot, a green building center is constructed to one side, allowing the lowland hardwood forest in the middle of the site to flourish. The forest provides food and habitat for birds, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates and terrestrial mammals.

“Big box development poses a rather difficult challenge to design a sustainable concept. Urban Ecotones divides the development in two and allows a center with a rather thin connection between the two developments to be a green marshland with two small natural runoff lakes. The concentration was on keeping the center of the development free as a natural habitat—a big box solution successfully developed.” —Stefan Behnisch, jurist

① Parking lot (r)evolution: Autos into urban agriculture

Fast-forward to 2025. As the need for parking is reduced, opportunity arises for creative re-use. Parking spaces are easily converted to alternate functions such as community gardens. A 3,600 square foot area with twelve parking spaces and a drive aisle is transformed into nine community garden plots. Accompanying the transition is a new center for urban agriculture, offering educational opportunities and resources for local food production and preparation.



④ Compost greens: Waste into economic capital

A 16,600 square foot composting operation is part of the green building center. Here, construction fill and yard waste are transformed into a saleable product—garden and greenhouse compost. The nutrient-rich blend of soil can be sold as a nursery product to the center's customers or used to fertilize plants in the site's greenhouse and garden center.



⑥ Stormwater gardens

Wetlands are an engaging entry to the green home center entrance and also treat building and site runoff.



⑦ Green ribbons of habitat

Tree canopy and natural areas are connected through green ribbons of vegetation, thereby maintaining strong core habitats and improving corridor connectivity.

Urban Ecotones Transitional Spaces for Commerce and Culture

PRESENT

2025

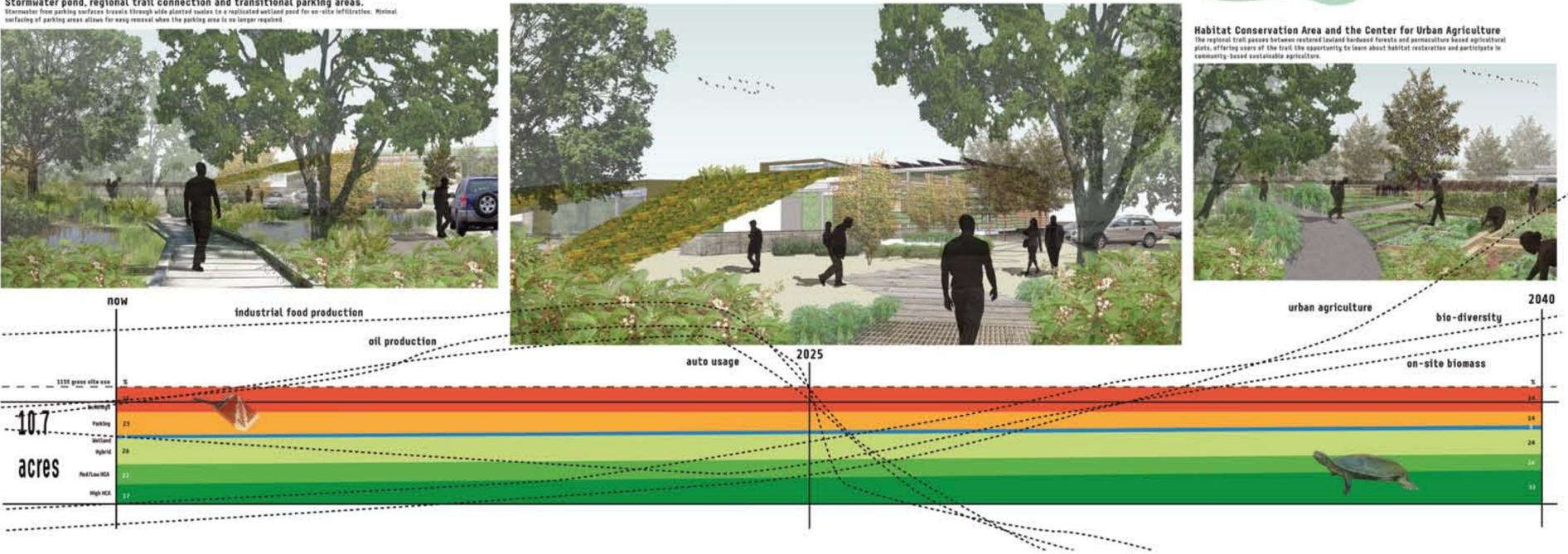
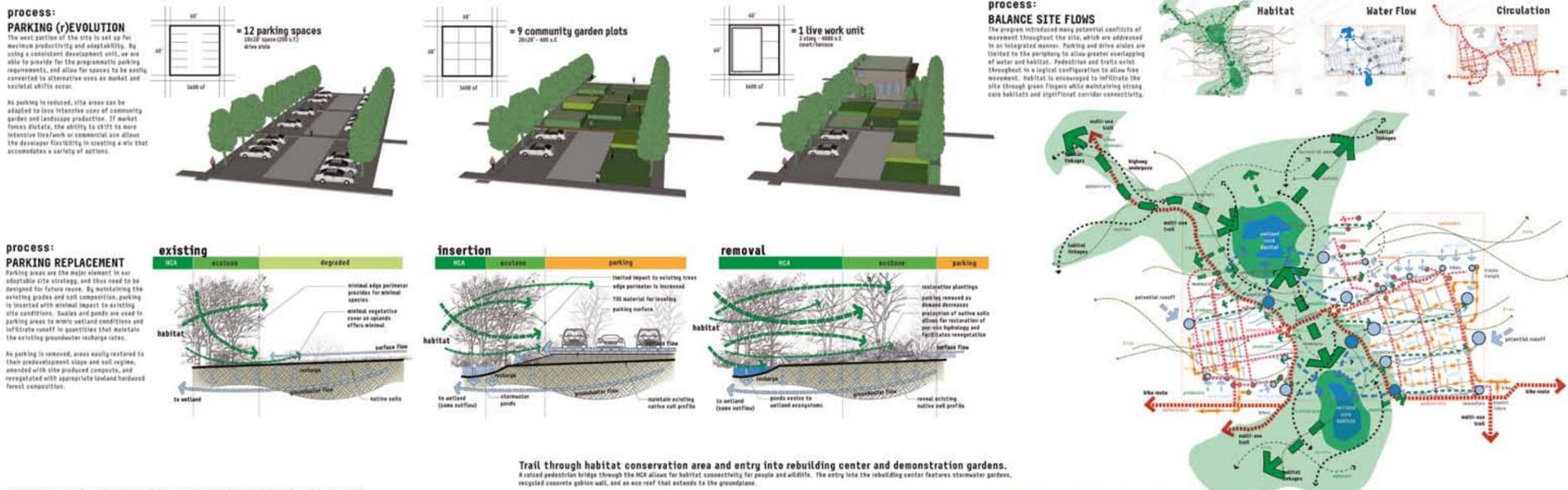
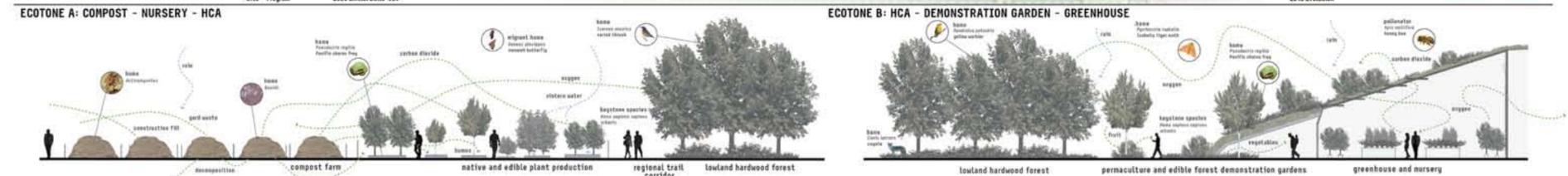
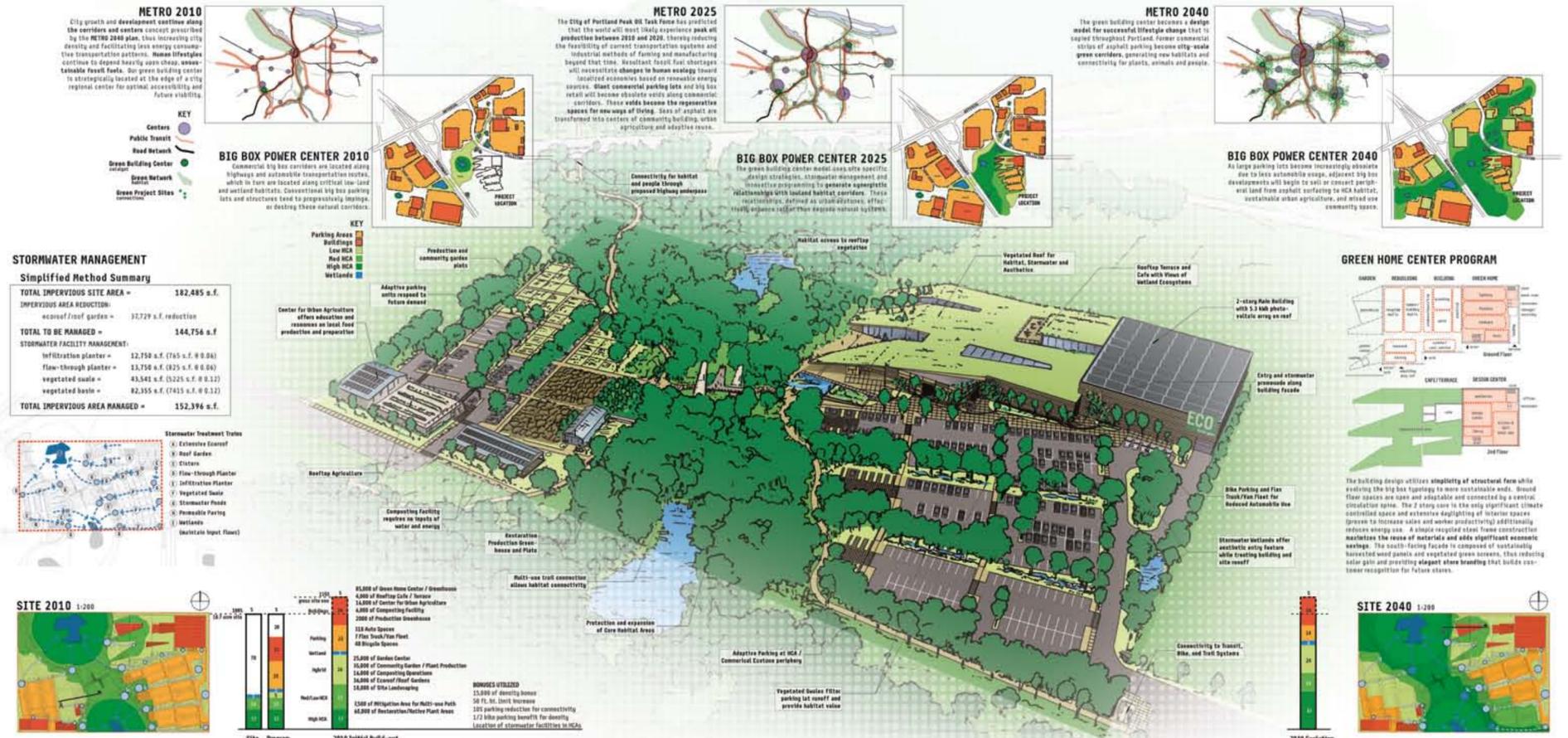
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Big box retail goes green
 Fossil fuel shortages will transform the way we shop. Giant big box retail along commercial corridors will become obsolete. These voids become opportunities for new ways of living. Big box parking centers can find new uses. Innovative home building stores can thrive as service-oriented community centers. Commercial development can incorporate natural systems in ways that regenerate critical habitat at a city-wide scale.

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"I must commend these designers for working together in a presentation that not only makes sense but is also very beautiful."
 —Susan Szenasy, jurist

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Nature in Neighborhoods: Integrating Habitats Winners Series

Blend. Balance. Integrate.

Collaborate to redefine the built environment and restore nature.

More than 100 teams from around the world submitted entries to the Integrating Habitats design competition, proving that every space in which we live, work, shop and play can create places for both people and nature. These designs redefine current standards of environmental sustainability. The award winners illustrate new types of nature-friendly designs that balance development, human needs and the health of natural systems we all depend upon.



www.oregonmetro.gov/integratinghabitats

“We are on the cusp of a mega-trend of exploding interest in the relationship of habitat to green building. This is not merely a regional interest, but a global interest in which our region is the leader.” —Jim Winkler, jurist

Metro regional government

serves 1.4 million people who live in the 25 cities and three counties of the Portland metropolitan area. Metro's Nature in Neighborhoods initiative brings the regional government and local jurisdictions together to help ensure that the region's wildlife and people thrive in a healthy urban ecosystem.

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