SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN TIMBER TOWNS: A CASE STUDY IN OAKRIDGE, OREGON

by

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Forty-five minutes from Eugene lies one of the premier recreation areas in Oregon: Oakridge. Known as the "Gateway City to the National Forest," Oakridge easily accesses more than one hundred lakes and streams in the area and an equal number of trails for mountain biking, horseback riding and hiking. However, only recently has Oakridge begun advertising its recreational potential. Once labeled the "Tree Planting Capital of the World," numerous mills operated in the area until the 1980's when only the Pope and Talbot mill remained. In 1989, logging was greatly reduced near Oakridge because of the listing of the Northern Spotted Owl as an endangered species. When the Pope and Talbot mill shut down in 1989, four hundred people were immediately put out of work in a town of four thousand. Built on timber dollars, Oakridge had to find a new source of income.

The purpose of this thesis is to evaluate Oakridge's attempts at economic diversification in the years following major mill shutdowns in the area. My objectives are to: (a) provide a definition of sustainable development by which to measure the

town's efforts, (b) evaluate the sustainability of recommendations identified in recent community economic development plans and assess the progress of those plans to date, and (d) present my own recommendations for projects that might assure the future sustainability of Oakridge's economy, community and environment.

My methodology consists mostly of reading sustainable development text and Oakridge Community Economic Development Plans and then critically analyzing their content. Graduate and Masters students at the University of Oregon have done substantial research and outreach work in the community and I felt I lacked the resources and time to similarly evaluate Oakridge's situation in a participatory manner. Instead, I chose to look over this work and process my theoretical studies in sustainable development to better understand the philosophy's purpose in practical situations. I wanted to fully understand the complexities involved in integrating these progressive environmental and social ideals.

As a result, I found it very difficult to ascertain a definitive black and white answer to the question of sustainability in Oakridge. It seems that in reality, the money is always short and the enthusiasm limited. The plethora of great ideas has only so much basis in "real life". I found, in my research, concerted attempts at approaching development in a sustainable manner. However, time after time, I encountered apathy and disillusionment. I may not have any more concrete answers than when I began, but I definitely have a better understanding of the planning process, community organization and the role of sustainable development.

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Sustainable Development

When considering the options for Oakridge, the term *sustainable development* is frequently used, though unfortunately, few agree on a single definition. Instead, scientists, economists, recreationists, and others express different interpretations of the concept. The disagreement stems in part from the numerous aspects of the community to be sustained: the ecosystem, human community, tourism industry, and timber industry. Consequently, sustainable development may be interpreted to mean: 1) the sustainable production of a commodity, such as timber, 2) the sustainability of a system upon which the human community depends, such as the economy, or 3) the sustainability of an ecosystem (Gale 1994). In practice, sustainable development usually presumes a high level of human benefit with lesser consideration of other components.

Numerous public conferences, documents, and reports support sustainable development on the premise that development, as it has been done under the capitalist system, is no longer acceptable. Where sustainable development once meant the promise of continued jobs in the future, it is more complicated now, requiring the consideration of the future quality of life and the environment. Because of this new emphasis, a more inclusive, equitable, participatory, and environmentally sound vision of development is emerging (Slater 1995).

For the purpose of this paper, sustainable development is defined as an approach to development and planning that seeks to achieve several objectives. First,

all social groups should benefit from development. Second, all social groups must have the opportunity to participate in the development. Third, it is imperative that all development should strive to promote social equity (Reid 1995).

Sustainable development should also include environmental awareness. As such, it must actively conserve and enhance ecological processes and protect biological diversity; it cannot disturb present systems in a manner that precludes future generations from providing for themselves (Wahab & Pigram 1997). However, even sustainable development impacts and effects most, if not all, elements of the environment; directing, minimizing and avoiding these impacts must therefore be made an integral part of the development. To do so will require a greater appreciation of the effects of the developmental process on the ecology, economy and society.

Equitable, sustainable development requires a respect for local knowledge, addressing inequitable power relations and acknowledging the need for concerted action that respects all peoples' needs and rights (Slater 1995). Therefore, three critical components of the societal portion of development are equity, justice and participation of everyone in the community. The knowledge and involvement of citizens in the decision-making process assures the inclusion of different perspectives (President's Council 1996). Observers in previous research have found that sustainable development is more likely to occur when local residents identify needs, then design and implement the programs for themselves. Nevertheless, efforts to engage local residents run the risk of neglecting the poor, the marginalized, and the powerless who may be "invisible" and silent (Slater 1995).

Even where organized, their interests may still be overpowered by more vocal, prominent members of the group. In many communities these under represented categories include the majority of the local women. Thus, seeking out those parties and empowering them is critical to sustainable development and they must be identified as priority partners in development efforts. Empowerment -- to generate or build the capacity to exercise control over the future -- of the entire community must occur within the process to achieve any level of success (Slater 1995).

Ecological principles that must be satisfied, in order to sustain both the physical and human environment, include carrying capacity, assimilative capacity, resiliency, and a holistic viewpoint. Carrying capacity measures the ability of the environment to sustain the population without deteriorating social and ecological settings, while assimilative capacity reflects the ability of the environment to tolerate use, and resiliency its ability to recover from impact. The natural resource base must be conserved at a sustainable level in order to maintain development and population.

Sustainable development does include economic gain in the end equation for a sustainable system must be frugal, efficient, and knowledgeable about ecological, as well as economic, systems. In order to achieve the efficient, controlled growth of a mature system, economists must look to natural systems to mirror their balance and order. The breakdown or degradation of ecosystems to the point where they no longer provide us with essential services is not necessarily an even, gradual or even visible process; it is often triggered by some slight modification in conditions or the loss of

some inconspicuous species - a process that we have already seen throughout the country (Reid 1995). This process is beginning to effect the economy negatively as there are fewer and fewer resources to extract and manipulate. Sustainable communities look to alter this pattern with an emphasis on cooperation, interdependence, resilience to outside stress, and strives for quality instead of quantity (Baldwin 1999).

The general point is that sustainable development requires a different value system than the dominant paradigm. The intent is to look beyond solving problems one at a time and to envision the future of communities and the development process in order to prevent problems from occurring. Sustainable development approaches recovery holistically, in hopes of improving life for everyone in the human community, as well as in the environment. Instead of looking at sustainability as a specific program, it is a way to reason and a way to live. It is a philosophy and an ethic for balancing community economic security and environmental integrity (Five E's Unlimited 1999).

> Sustainable development cannot be a fixed destination, rather it is a process, as part of which our institutions and human resources can be moulded to meet the perceived priorities of the time. These priorities will also change, depending partly on the extent to which they prove achievable and partly on the emergence of others that may seem more urgent (Kirkby 157, 1995).

How do we accomplish sustainable development in practice?

> To devise a sound, sustainable policy is a little like putting together a clock. It is easier to take apart than to assemble one that works (Caldwell 1995, 319).

There are two basic approaches to developing sustainable communities: reactive and proactive. At this time, most community development is reactive because we have already tried other systems and are now, in practical terms, wiping up the mess. However, with new plans and continual changes in community economics in many towns, there is a chance to take a proactive stance that includes planned growth, conservation and mutual education of all parties involved. During this process, it becomes important to ask these questions: What is being developed? Who is developing? What impacts/benefits are being generated? What are the options?

The first priority of an unsustainable community in search of a sustainable future is to reduce the ecological impacts of economic activity to the level at which they can be contained within the ecological boundary (Reid 1995). To do this, planners must first identify problems in the political, economic, ecological, and social spheres. Then they must analyze, prioritize, and address the plan and design. They must assess environmental and social impacts, and critique the present infrastructure. After evaluating the situation, planners must seek out various funding sources to make the plans possible. Ideally, these plans are then implemented, managed, and monitored (Baldwin 1999).

Certainly, the negative effects of economic activities must decrease in order to live sustainably. We must protect sensitive lands and avoid development in hazardous areas. We must understand and better utilize the principles of assimilative and carrying capacity, internalize costs, and manage toxic materials in order to protect public health. We must stabilize socioeconomic systems through economic diversification and responsible resource management. This necessitates that we limit system size and guarantee sustained yields of renewable resources (Baldwin 1984). Development should be environmentally sound, with little or no degradation of the resource. There must be understanding, and partnerships, between different community members and a promotion of ethical responsibilities and behavior towards the natural and cultural environment.

Businesses will not be able to achieve true social responsibility until the system in which they operate undergoes a fundamental change. The greater system must integrate economic, biologic and human systems in an interdependent method of commerce (Hawken 1993). The modern capitalist economic system is too large and complexly interconnected to make possible a rapid, comprehensive transformation, even if the attempt were made and we had concrete examples to follow (Caldwell 1995). We must recognize that deregulation, expanding markets and free trade will indeed increase the gross domestic product, but will also increase income disparities and deplete natural resources, resulting in a decrease in both ecological and geopolitical security (Baldwin 1999).

There must be a complete transition in the way we have historically done business in the United States. Rather than regulation, litigation, and standardization, all sectors of society must learn to cooperate with one another to achieve mutual goals. In the same manner, to achieve sustainability, communities must embrace the idea of collaborative planning rather than hierarchical planning processes. If this occurred, the result would be a community joint decision-making process among autonomous, equal powered stakeholders as opposed to a process dominated by the most powerful and wealthiest citizens in the community.

Progress toward sustainable development may be gained by identifying the types of institutional arrangements that are most compatible with an ecological orientation, and those factors built into existing institutions that immunize them against ecological problems. The community might seek out less intensive resource extractive industries and employment with non-oppressive labor practices. Economic development should be linked with social development, to achieve sustainability, and also reduce the community's dependence on outside resources . Through such efforts, a steady state might be made more effective (Caldwell 1995).

The State of Oregon attempts in many small, but constructive ways to change traditional development relations. The Applegate Partnership is one example of a community-based project that brings together industry, conservation groups, natural resource agencies, and residents to encourage and facilitate natural resource practices that promote ecosystem health and diversity. Located in Southern Oregon, the Applegate Partnership encourages connections among agencies and human

communities through constructive collaboration and mutual education. Watershed Councils established throughout Oregon, and other states, are further examples of the collaborative decision making process challenging traditional planning approaches to development.

Watershed Councils developed in response to the catastrophic economic events related to the timber industry and the Northern Spotted Owl. When rural communities throughout Oregon were first confronted with listings under the Endangered Species Act, the regulations threatened to ruin many prominent industries. In hopes of reaching a compromise, instead interested parties now gather at watershed councils to identify problems and solutions acceptable to everyone. Instead of traditional problem-solving means, watershed councils and programs such as the Applegate Partnership attempt to find innovative solutions for their communities.

How do we measure sustainable development?

> As critiques of policy, comprehensive case studies may be one of the best ways to illuminate both policy issues and the way in which they are treated by the government (Caldwell 1995, 132).

There is a multitude of methods available to evaluate sustainable development. Whichever one chooses, however, it is important to consider the infrastructure, as well as the community's ability to manage collective affairs, make decisions, and resolve conflict. This requires an examination of three main aspects of development: process, product and principles. The process must be participatory and proceed according to the planning and decision making methods. The product, which includes any concrete plans drafted by the community, must market attainable goals desired by the community. The plan must evaluate the impacts, both quantitative and qualitative, within the community. It must include efficiency, innovation and continuous improvement, as well as consideration for carrying capacity and anticipation and prevention of future problems. The plan's principles should reinforce sustainable development ideology, such as long range planning and intergenerational responsibility (Slater 1995).

A society must establish a set of indicators to evaluate progress and digression. When evaluating an animal's health, a doctor would look at the animal's circulatory, digestive, nervous, reproductive, skeletal and excretory systems. Similarly, an evaluator of sustainable development should look at corresponding aspects of

communities. He/she should look at the economy, natural resources, pollution, wastes, and the quality of physical settings to evaluate community health (Baldwin 1999). The important factor here is the holistic evaluation in which the focus is not primarily economic in statute, as opposed to the gross domestic product as our end all, be all, evaluator of community success. Sustainable development requires a more thorough, inclusive set of indicators. Several indicators relevant to sustainable development evaluation include energy use, air quality, mass transportation use, unemployment rate, the percentage of the population in poverty, the high school graduation rate, the voting rate, and the efficiency of government (Baldwin 1999). Further characteristics of a sustainable community might include:

-child safety, security and education
-measured multi-objective goals
-improved information systems
-protected, restored or enhanced ecosystems
-product quality and durability
-urban development quality
-reduced consumption
-precycle, reduce, reuse, recycle, proper disposal
-long term - land use, transportation, energy, infrastructure, urban and rural planning (all sustainable)
-fair regulation
-green budgets and accounting
-education
-clean food
-reduced personal and community pollution
-controlled population/growth

(Baldwin 1999

Community plans of all forms are also excellent indicators of the community's overall state of being.

Why should we evaluate sustainable development?

Measuring the effectiveness of approaches to community transformation can serve a number of purposes. Evaluation may help assess performance and determine whether plans and programs are effective in addressing or remedying the identified problems. It can help improve decision-making processes as an important source of information related to shaping and refining the project and keeping it on target. Accurate evaluations facilitate the allocation of resources because they help determine the effectiveness of a strategy and the suitability of implementing similar programs or projects in other settings. They can help develop staff and community competence through feedback to those implementing the plans and as a source of motivation, satisfaction and growth for all involved. Such analyses also help justify programs when they demonstrate that an agency is concerned with issues and committed to improving performance. An evaluation may also show financial supporters whether or not program results warrant the investment, and finally, they build knowledge and understanding by providing a rigorous test of lessons learned and suggest useful generalizations to other practitioners (Slater 1995).

History of the West and Oakridge

Throughout its post-European history, development of the American West has depended upon government and outside capital (Enzweiler 1990). The eastern United States, Great Britain, and other European countries originally invested in the West because of the plentiful profits from resource extraction. While the region made many entrepreneurs rich and provided a living for many workers, most of the benefits reached the original investors, not the local community (Robbins 1984).

The Pacific Northwest economy prospered by supplying the rest of the world with raw materials: furs, skins, agricultural commodities, lumber, fish, and metals. This role, combined with its geographical remoteness from the economic and political power centers, established the Pacific Northwest as a dependent region (Enzweiler 1990).

The first large market for timber was San Francisco, but in the early 1880's the timberlands of the Northwest had little value because there were few markets available nearby. A boom in timberland speculation peaked shortly after 1900, and companies like Pope and Talbot invested heavily in the Pacific Northwest region when the federal government built railroad lines to assist the export of raw materials and import people and supplies (Enzweiler 1990).

Pope and Talbot bought a tract of timber on the Middle Fork of the Willamette in 1946. The company supposedly established sustained yield practices and claimed to consider factors like recreational needs, protection of watersheds, healthy growth of the timber and sustainable logging. The first mill opened in Oakridge in 1948,

with the community believing that Pope and Talbot was interested in stability and permanent operations in Oakridge; this would later prove false.

Pope and Talbot bought forty acres of land in the city and constructed apartments and homes for company employees. From an initial population of 600 people, Oakridge grew to 1500 people by 1949. During the 1950's and 1960's, mill employment was fairly stable, with two mills usually operating, and a substantial work force employed by the Southern Pacific Railroad and two major dam construction projects at Lookout Point and Hills Creek. The other major employers were, and still are more or less today, all public agencies: the Oakridge school district, the Forest Service, and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. By the late 1980's Oakridge's economic health depended on mill worker wages. Then, the economy came to a screeching halt.

The mill property sold to Bald Knob Land and Timber Company of Creswell, Oregon in the summer of 1989 because the plant was no longer profitable. The mill never reopened due to a multitude of outside factors, including the listing under the Endangered Species of the Northern Spotted Owl (Enzweiler 1990).

Today, Oakridge is surrounded by one of the largest national forests in the country, the Willamette National Forest, which effectively isolates it from potential markets. The only town nearby is Westfir, located four miles west on the North Fork of the Willamette River. Their shared history as mill towns links the communities' past and present economic situations. Like Oakridge, Westfir developed when a company agreed to help establish a mill and community in the area. Timber

employment peaked in the 1950's and dropped steadily each year following. By 1977, the timber company decided to sell all of its property and Westfir --as in Oakridge-- was left without a major employer and unsuccessfully struggled through the following years to rebuild the economy. Little remains today of the town, which once included medical facilities, a theater, stores, a community hall and a swimming pool -- just a small store, post office and a few homes remain (Enzweiler 1990).

Though the scenic beauty of the Oakridge-Westfir area is impressive, the towns themselves are deserted. Oakridge is basically a two-mile long speed trap for passing motorists, with a few shops on either side of the highway. Wealthier residents live near the golf course or on small ranches outside of the city, while the rest of the population resides in neighborhoods created in the same crowded manner as any other town. As a result, there is very little room in the urban growth boundary for new residents or businesses (Enzweiler 1990).

While the Pacific Northwest region is unified by transportation and communication networks, as well as a special sense of place derived from its history and geography, there are two major economic arenas functioning -- Seattle and Portland. Urban residents of these cities experience the same strong appreciation for the natural environment as the rural areas; yet, they also have diversified economies with high technology manufacturing and exporting businesses that allow them to prosper (Schwantes 1989). By comparison, the survival of timber towns today depends on their ability to similarly diversify their economies and accommodate social change, while extracting significant income or value from their local resources

(Lapping 1992). In the opinion of many sociologists and forest resource professors, timber towns have a harder time than most communities in accomplishing this task because of rural isolation, below average academic skills, and loyalty to the profession of logging (Enzweiler 1990).

Both mining and timber towns tend to be located in areas far from urban centers and close to the resources being extracted. This creates an enormous disadvantage for successfully diversifying and stabilizing their economic base. The United States federal government perpetuates this problem by providing capital to build transportation, irrigation, education and communication systems, to assist in the extraction of natural resources. Such costs are considered appropriate public expenses and the government plays a dominant role through this system of grants, low interest loans, regulation, and the direct offering of services (Enzweiler 1990). Only in recent years, after many mill shutdowns and despair in the timber industry, have logging towns made substantial attempts to diversify their economies.

Many rural communities also lack the necessary internal social organization to effectively utilize existing economic development programs. They do not have the management capacity to carry out long-term programs and local officials are more or less forced to rely on assistance from outside the community. Ultimately, a stable and self-sufficient economy will not be created by exporting natural resources and importing finished products because any surplus in the region will always be drawn to the political and financial power centers, due to greater ease of commerce. If this is the case, communities like Oakridge may never be able to solve their problems.

One way to explain the inadequacy of towns like Oakridge is through dependency theory. Dependency theory views Oakridge's situation as a consequence of the continued exploitation of the area by more powerful and wealthy regions. This dependence is caused by the systematic draining of capital and resources by other regions, and not as a condition caused by the region's specific failure (Enzweiler 1990).

All over the world we see that investment capital tends to migrate to areas where the highest profits can be made; in the West, this created a boom and bust cycle that contained little security for workers and communities. Towns formed where there were opportunities to extract resources and sell goods for a profit; when industries moved, many towns shut down and people were forced to relocate to new communities (Schwantes 1989).

Governments assist in this exploitation of regions, some suggest, by developing policies that strengthen some regions at the expense of others. Tax laws favor capital- intensive urban development and channel money away from rural areas, leaving them with relatively small populations and lacking in the trade and exchange process. Collectively, these ideas create a better understanding of the complex political, social and economic forces that initially shaped communities and power in the West.

Barriers to Economic Development

Despite government and community efforts, economic diversification and community stability do not occur in many small towns. Many of the problems of the towns are not created there, but result from greater societal problems such as unemployment, inflation, national timber management policies, international competition and deindustralization (Warren 1998). City governments tend to react in one of two ways, by either reducing or curtailing city services, or by increasing their reliance on intergovernmental revenues.

The second choice leaves the community more vulnerable to decisions made outside the community, but without enough resources, essential services must be cut. In both situations, the amount of local control over resources is reduced, and the role of both the city council and the public becomes less significant (Weeks 1990). In many development efforts, academia or technical experts become the ones who gather and analyze information, while locals look on. This furthers the feeling that it is impossible to take significant actions locally, when most of the important decisions are made outside of town.

Community economic development efforts in small, single-industry, resource-extracting communities often fail to address additional barriers that restrict development. Many people neglect, or fail, to understand the complexity of these barriers, both inside and outside of the community, to sustainable development in

rural areas, including: 1) physical barriers, such as the location of the community, the geography of the area, resources available for exploitation, weather, types and costs of energy, transportation and communication systems, and the size of the community; 2) economic barriers encompassing employment, trade, the local industrial base, tax structure, national and international economic conditions, and distribution of wealth; 3) financial barriers including investment patterns, availability of capital outside the community, and funding for rural development programs; 4) governmental barriers or the patterns by which decisions are made and carried out, regulations and policies; 5) informational barriers such as accuracy and usability of information available to identify and confirm trends, monitor changes, predict outcomes, and define alternatives for action; 6) social barriers that envelope groups and organizations, and their shared values, attitudes, behaviors and human relationships (Enzweiler 1990).

Enzweiler highlighted five additional social barriers that specifically affect Oakridge. These include the vertical integration of society, cultural characteristics, a lack of organizational capacity and leadership, perceived role of the government and lack of citizen participation (Enzweiler 1990). Individually and collectively, these barriers and the subsequent failure of institutions and leadership to handle serious local concerns, may lead to a loss of confidence in the administration's legitimacy (Caldwell 1995). As this confidence wanes, so does local support for community institutions and public services.

Current Development Efforts

In the United States, rural planning has become a matter of selecting those few remaining communities deemed likely to survive the demise of traditional industries and assisting them primarily through technical assistance and volunteerism. Rural development programs have never been well funded and have always required federal intervention. This creates a Catch 22 situation; while some federal programs are designed to make communities more independent, the end result is often increased dependence on outside programs. There are no unified national and local rural development policies and there is an uneven distribution of wealth and power within rural areas and between rural and city areas (Enzweiler 1990).

There is a strong need for small towns, like Oakridge, to develop strategies that balance their local needs, while taking external constraints into account, in order to assure outcomes that are in the community's best interests. Yet, this new approach to sustainable rural development has not existed in the United States before and hence, federal programs lack experience integrating social and environmental interests in economic plans (Enzweiler 1990). In addition, while local governments have become increasingly important players in the decision making process, most have limited experience with activities in community outreach, public involvement, and consensus building.

Larger cities and towns have the taxing capacity to hire sufficient economic development staff to assist local government. Rural areas, however, often have an

insufficient taxing population and, must therefore, rely heavily on regional planning organizations and state development departments. Though they are effective within their means, they are not adequately funded to complete the extensive work necessary (Pulner 1988).

The implementation of strategic planning has been one of the main planning impetuses of Oregon government in past years. This type of planning builds long-term responsive systems, also known as sustainable systems. It often begins with an economic SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, which combines crisis, prevention and innovation. The Community Initiatives Program (CIP), sponsored by the Oregon Economic Development Department, is now experimenting with the use of SWOTs in an attempt to help some communities survive the timber industry reorganization, which leaves them without large employers to support their residents.

The first part of the Community Initiatives Program provides technical assistance to communities to cope with the impacts of a plant closure or sudden job loss. The crisis program then works with community leaders to form a Community Response Team and develop an action agenda. The second part of the program provides technical assistance to those communities whose leadership is committed to improving local economic development efforts. The primary goal of this preventative program is to assist leaders in developing the skills necessary to become more effective in local development. The innovative portion of the CIP is intended to mobilize

communities by giving leaders an action plan that is implementable, without further local input, and then the leaders are taught to create their own plans in the future (Enzweiler 1990).

In the 1980's, the CIP director asked the Lane County Commissioners to organize a Strategic Assessment Task Force to evaluate the county's current economic conditions and the impact of timber industry job lay offs. The task force met for several months and then presented county commissioners with an action agenda and several economic development projects determined to have a high potential for success in the short term (Enzweiler 1990).

The Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) has also been a significant catalyst in developing Oakridge's community economic development plans. Only a few small towns in Oregon have staff assigned to promote economic development, so COGs primarily assist them. Councils of Government differ from most regional agencies in that they are composed of both elected officials and appointed citizens who serve on a board establishing policies and priorities for its staff. While their power and duties vary widely, generally the staff applies for, and administers, federal grants, provides technical assistance for local governments, and prepares regional plans for health care, energy conservation and economic development (Enzweiler 1990). In the past, COGs have helped with tourism, land use planning, infrastructure needs and financial resources.

To achieve their goals in Oakridge, LCOG cooperated with Lane County and the University of Oregon's Planning Public Policy and Management department to establish a network of student interns. They recruited four interns for the first year -- two with LCOG and two with Lane County. The County interns were placed in two unincorporated rural areas, Mapleton and the McKenzie River area, while the LCOG interns were sent to Eugene and Oakridge. The Oakridge intern, Constance Enzweiler, was assigned to develop an up-to-date, realistic economic development program and to identify and implement specific projects. She was further expected to improve the community's capacity to respond to change effectively.

In cooperation, the mayor of Oakridge agreed to form a volunteer organization entitled the Community Response Team (CRT). This group would take the SWOT recommendations and use them to formulate an action plan. Most members of the CRT have been involved in Oakridge economic development since 1985. Many are also involved in the Planning Commission or the City Council.

Consultants from the city of Indianapolis and LCOG initiated the development of a plan and the group started with three strategies from the SWOT report. They applied for a grant, secured funds for an economic development specialist, and began to improve communication and cooperation between the community and state and federal agencies. The majority of the CRT members also worked on an effort to beautify the area in town along Highway 58 (OCRT 1995).

Community Economic Development Plans

In addition to their action plan, the Community Response Team decided to develop a long term Community Economic Development Plan. Opting for a structural change approach rather than a growth or communitarian approach, the Community Economic Development Plan is meant to serve as a "blueprint" for future development in the Oakridge area. It is also designed to be a flexible, living document that responds to the community's needs over time.

Process

Although, the "community" ideally creates the plan, the group in charge is often more homogeneous than desired. In Oakridge, the composition of the Community Response Team is not exactly representative of the entire community. Instead, members are primarily middle class and either employed, retired, or have enough income that they do not need to work. Seven of the ten members in 1989 were male, and all but three were older than fifty. As a result, the group is more representative of the retired professionals in town. Attempts to involve more citizens, however, have not been consistently coordinated or planned (Enzweiler 1990).

Many of the Community Response Team volunteers have changed since 1989, when the first plan was created, but the focus has not. The volunteers still seek to achieve the long-term goals put forth in the community's future vision statement, with individuals, organizations and different branches of the government carrying out the plan. The city council, city government, and staff sponsor much of the planning

activity, with the active participation of the Oakridge-Westfir Chamber of Commerce, the Lane Council of Government, Lane Community College and other state agencies. Community Response Team meetings are open to anyone who cares about the future of Oakridge (OCRT 1995).

The first community economic development plan began in 1989 with the compilation of a SWOT analysis aided by the Oregon Economic Development Department's Community Initiative Program. A relatively straightforward procedure, SWOT researchers conducted a series of approximately twenty interviews, reviewed relevant planning documents and then held a meeting with the City Council and Planning Commission (OEDD 1989).

The findings are not supposed to become a final solution for Oakridge, but rather a launch pad for further discussion among the Community Response Team. As such, they are recommendations that may be refined and eventually formulated into an actual plan with community support and implementation. The report assesses community *strengths* that could facilitate economic growth, recovery and diversification, and the *weaknesses* that may thwart the parameters or speed of this success. It then identifies *opportunities* to generate additional employment, business and investment opportunity, and the *threats* to economic stability.

The SWOT team found no single *strength,* which would, by itself, offer a compelling reason to invest in the community (OEDD 1989). However, there were multiple reasons, which combined, made an attractive package, including Oakridge's

physical location, weather conditions and accessibility to nearby recreational activities. Only forty five minutes away from Eugene, on Highway 58, Oakridge is conveniently located near more than one hundred lakes and streams in the area, and equally numerous trails for mountain biking, horseback riding and hiking, many using the extensive network of logging roads (Warren 1998). Indeed, Highway 58 offers four seasons of recreational activities, which is an important factor when considering investing in the tourism enterprise. In addition, Waldo Lake Wilderness area, Odell Lake, Crescent Lake, Diamond Peak Wilderness, and the Willamette Pass ski area are only a short drive away. Consequently, there is an outdoor activity availability for almost all abilities and desires from downhill skiing to fishing.

Furthermore, Oakridge is situated high enough in elevation to avoid the fog that permeates the Willamette Valley, and low enough to avoid heavy snowfall and extreme winters. This is a point repeatedly mentioned by residents and could be a potential draw for incoming residents. Other perks for potential residents include a low cost of living, a small town lifestyle and a strong sense of community. Most of these strengths are related to quality of life issues and not clear-cut business issues. Viewed as a challenge in the assessment is a need for the community of Oakridge to convert quality of life assets to economic strengths (OEDD 1989)

Oakridge's weaknesses are related to economic issues that impede its development as a tourist locale or attractive retirement location. Presently, Oakridge has a very limited retail business core. Few stores offer the quality or variety of

selection needed to adequately serve the community, let alone the tourist market. In addition, the dilapidated appearance of the storefronts along Highway 58 presents a negative image of the community both to residents and visitors.

Problems arise in respect to increasing the population of Oakridge as well. Oakridge is relatively mountainous and surrounded by federally owned land, which limits the area where people can build homes, industries, or resorts. This topography also makes Oakridge mores susceptible to any air pollution associated with increased population or industry. Lastly, the labor supply is small in number and low in skill, the majority trained in forest work and lacking experience in any other industry. This will make it difficult to attract other types of industry.

After evaluating Oakridge's strengths and weaknesses, four areas of opportunity were identified. Ranked in terms of greatest to least opportunity, they were identified as recreation/tourism, retirees, retail, and industrial development.

The SWOT led to the first CED plan in 1990, based on community member's desires for the town's future. The Oakridge City Council and the Oakridge-Westfir Chamber of Commerce adopted the plan as official policy. However, in 1991, the plan was replaced by the Oakridge Strategic Plan. This plan was then updated in 1992 to reflect progress made through that time. As the community adapted to the changes, yet another plan developed in 1995 that laid out specific goals and activities, timelines and responsible parties to move the community towards its vision. The most recent update was completed in 1998 (PPPM 1998).

A version of the Community Economic Development Plan was adopted by the city in 1990, based on the citizens' preferred vision of Oakridge over the next twenty years. In 1991, the Oakridge Strategic Plan was developed with the help of the Oregon Economic Development Department, and was updated in 1992 when the goals were reassessed and a list of accomplishments added to reflect progress (OCRT 1995). The Plan was again reorganized in 1994 to reflect the prevailing philosophy that economic development should be based upon successful community development. The OEDD wanted to emphasize that business development, quality of life, physical infrastructure and a well-trained, prepared work force, were all important components of a community economic development plan (OCRT 1998). In 1998, the plan was again reevaluated by a group of students from the University of Oregon's Planning Public Policy and Management Department and additional goals and corrections were made.

At the onset of the planning process, researchers asked Oakridge residents which characteristics they would ideally like to see their town possess in the future. In response, Oakridge residents expressed a preference for a secure, well-financed kindergarten through twelfth grade school system, and potentially a community college program. They also desired additional medical services, a varied transportation network, and well-established retiree services, as well as a sustainable, diversified forest available for multiple uses, more retail businesses offering a wider variety of

products, and a bustling downtown area intertwined with government offices, businesses and education.

They recognized the need for controlled, moderate growth, hoping for a population of approximately 5,000 people by the year 2010 and expressed the need for diverse, clean and environmentally safe industries, capable of providing long-term, family wage jobs, and an adequate telecommunications system. They also hoped for appropriate development of the abandoned Pope and Talbot mill site so that it might become a successful industrial park. Finally, the residents hoped to develop the tourist potential of the area so that there might be a destination resort or retreat center in the area, as well as tourist events and sufficient motels and restaurants to accommodate visitors (OCRT 1995).

In response, the University of Oregon Community and Rural Planning program projected that the largest obstacles Oakridge has yet to overcome are reflected in the explanations as to why some of the goals and strategies from the 1995 CED have not been accomplished (PPPM 1998). Instead, it appears as if there are too many goals the community seeks to satisfy and too few people willing, or able, to assist. Professional staff in Oakridge already have their hands full carrying out their daily responsibilities without dealing with the eleven goals and the even greater number of associated strategies and actions for each goal. The community is also quite [illegible] in its desires for the future of the town, leaving insufficient support to achieve progress on many of the goals and strategies (PPPM 1998).

Product

The Oakridge Community Economic Development Plan is divided into four sections: Business Development, Quality of Life, Physical Infrastructure, and Work Force Development. Preceding these sections, is the future vision statement, an introduction to the Oakridge area, and a quick explanation of the process involved. The plan also includes an appendix with a list of public comments, a specific tourism action plan, highlights of community accomplishments, and other publications and information about Oakridge.

The Business Development section contains three goals with very detailed actions and strategies needed to accomplish each. Responsible parties and collaborators are listed, along with a budget, success indicator, and timeline for each action. The goals include creating a specific number of family wage jobs through economic diversification and commercial and industrial development, and supporting existing businesses to expand and remain in the area (OCRT 1995).

The Quality of Life section features the same outline of goals, strategies, and actions. Among them are an increase in affordable and desirable housing for residents, increased social and recreational opportunities for everyone in the community, greater access to health care services, and improved basic city services. While there are more goals listed in this section, the necessary strategies and actions are fewer. The budget is also less than that of the Business Development section.

The Physical Infrastructure section has only two goals, and specified actions and strategies are also fewer. Goals include improving the Oakridge water system and influencing the decisions of regional and statewide public bodies, which have an impact on Oakridge plans.

The Work Force Development section has only one goal, to cooperate with Lane Community College and other agencies to provide skills and training for eligible community members. This includes high school students, graduates, and adults. However, the budget for this section was $0, demonstrating the little amount of effort put into work force development.

Principles

The Business Development section was obviously the prime focus of the Community Response team, as it is allocated more money and resources for completion. The Oakridge Tourism Action Plan was also an added section to the business development section. Its goals included developing and marketing Oakridge for recreational purposes. Developing a marketing plan to demonstrate the highlights of athletic or aesthetic recreation in the Oakridge area was an important strategy. The Community Response Team later decided that the tourism promotion was primarily a task for the Chamber of Commerce and enlisted the Oregon Tourism Division, the Lane County Convention and Visitors Association, the business community, and the Forest Service as collaborators (OCRT 1995).

According to the University of Oregon Urban and Rural Planning program, business development has been given too much priority in the plan, and physical infrastructure and resource options have been neglected (PPPM 1998). In general, the goals in the Physical Quality of Life Section remain incomplete. Actions that have been completed are limited in scope, though they do establish a foundation for improvement of the general infrastructure. The construction of the new fire hall was an important step in providing service to the community, while the goal to beautify uptown and Highway 58 has been achieved through city sponsored clean-up days. Now the uptown area must be maintained and council members note that there is a need to landscape Highway 58 in order to achieve the vision statement's goals. While funds are unavailable for these efforts, University of Oregon students have attempted to achieve these goals.

The plan describes two strategies to achieve the recreational goals. The first is to assist with the development of the Oakridge family YMCA. Oakridge received a Lane County grant to use a vacant building, however, no funding was secured for the necessary innovations. Grants were not solicited to begin the renovation process and fund raising activities conducted never raised enough money. As a consequence, there are no currant plans to open the YMCA (PPPM 1998).

The second strategy was to construct a senior community center. Presently, Oakridge does not have one, and no one followed through on grants and funding. On

this specific project, lack of completion is blamed on the transition between city administrators.

The plan also highlighted a health care services goal to organize and investigate possible short and long-term health care facilities appropriate for the area. Various citizens were assigned to develop funding for these facilities. Since the completion of the plan, the people listed as "responsible parties" have not formed a committee; however, a number of other groups and individuals have looked into the issue. Despite the fact that not much has happened to improve the health care services, it is still considered an important goal. Many people believe that a nursing home is an important community need. Nevertheless, improvement of health care service is closely linked to improvement of the local economic situation and business development; more jobs would bring health insurance which would in turn help maintain the health care business (PPPM 1998).

The lack of progress on the these strategies suggests two possible problems with implementing Oakridge's plans. First, the community may have difficulty gathering support for expensive and complex projects. Second, there are simply not enough people available to do all the things the community needs or would like (PPPM 1998).

Highlights of Community accomplishments

Taken from the Community Economic Development Plan.

-Held a promotional display at Expo 85, Vancouver, BC
-Established economic development revolving loan fund
-Initiated SWOT analysis through OEDD
-Participated in State and Land County economic development training seminars
-Formed the Community Response Team
-Established an enterprise zone
-Produced first biennial community profile in 1989, updated biennially
-Constructed visitors information booth on Highway 58
-Became a member of the Eugene/Springfield convention and visitors bureau
-Gained representation on Lane Economic Committee
-Gained representation on the Private Industry Council
-Raised money on various counts for Greenwaters Park Rest stop beautification
-Best Western and Dairy Queen opened up
-Recruited Cole Manufacturing, creating 12 family wage jobs
-Developed Highway 58 beautification proposal and secured various funds
-Hosted first annual visit from Totori University, Japan and initiated an ongoing exchange
of ideas and information about rural economic issues
-Completed 1991-1992 Comprehensive Tourism Development Plan
-Hired a full-time economic development specialist
-Completed a buildable lands inventory and initiated industrial site acquisition
-Arranged small business seminar
-Completed promotional video and brochure about Oakridge-Westfir and distributed
-Participated in National Public Television special on rural development
-Volunteers built more than 50 flower boxes and placed along major town arteries
-Planted trees and shrubs along Highway 58
-Westfir Covered Bridge society formed
-Picture of Oakridge published on front page of travel of USA Today
-Improved transport system for senior citizens by acquiring new 10 passenger vans and providing inexpensive transportation system
-Installed City of Oakridge Entrance sign
-Installed decorative flags along major arterials
-Started a wood stove replacement program to improve local air quality
-Job creation project at mill site with grant assistance
-Created community latchkey program
-Created an Oregon Youth Conservation Corps Program

-Renovated mill site
-Assisted local business with start up
-Positive media coverage on American Public Radio, National Public Radio and National Public Broadcast system
-Hosted Partners in Change Conference
-Eventually purchased mill site
-Construction of pedestrian bridge over Willamette River
-Completion of improvements to Union Street
-Moved Visitors information booth to Greenwaters Rest Area

(PPPM 1998)

Plan Evaluation

In order to ensure that all of the important elements of sustainable development are addressed, this evaluation will consider three interconnected issues: Social, Economic and Environmental issues.

Social

In previous pages, I raised questions about critical social concerns that must be met in order to attain sustainable development. These include assuring that equity, justice and respect are stated as important goals in any community economic development plan. For sustainable development to exist, there must be actual improvement in the townspeople's quality of life, understanding and partnerships between different community members, and all social groups must benefit from the development. Ideally, the community, in its entirety, should participate in the decision making process as well as in conflict resolution. Overall, there should be a pattern of respect for local knowledge, for the cultural environment, and for different aspects of the community (Slater 1995).

Building the capacity of community members to participate actively in a group setting is essential to equitable and sustainable development; unless the community members understand the whole picture they will not be ready to participate in the solution to their own problems. When they are permitted to do so, their own well being is improved (Caldwell 1995). It is imperative that the residents feel they have some sort of control over the local resources. A lack of access to, and control over,

resources leads to false assumptions about what groups can accomplish and how they may benefit from particular projects. Facilitating groups, building leadership, and making decisions by consensus, can become effective ways to engage group participation (Slater 1995).

The quality of life for all people is closely connected to the places in which they work, live and convene for public interactions and recreation (Caldwell 1995). These places reflect the ideas and opinions of community members through their presence. It follows that inequitable relations between various groups will surface at these public spaces. In order to cooperate on the new ideas for community economic development in Oakridge, these inequitable relations must be transformed. To do so, the community might organize disempowered groups in order to realize the power of collective action. They might also educate, train, change policy at the macro level, and recognize local/global linkages

Communities consist of diverse groups of people whose privileges, priorities and perceptions vary widely. Development efforts that look at a community as a homogeneous group risk increasing or reinforcing inequities. So, what does this mean in Oakridge? What has the community done and what has it not done to reach the ideal of sustainable and equitable development?

On the positive note, the Oakridge Community Response Team and similar community organizations have made significant efforts to become more proactive. Several community members put extensive efforts into helping Oakridge and

designing a new future. Determined to take advantage of any opportunity to develop and stabilize the community, they have stepped up when other members were incapable or unwilling to do so. The long list of accomplishments at the end of the more recent plan speaks to the efforts put forth by the community (Enzweiler 1990)..

According to the University of Oregon participatory evaluation, the Community Response Team and other Oakridge activists made many partnerships within and outside of the community. They successfully accessed technical support and grant resources from federal, state and local agencies and city officials established strong relationships with agency offices and with the Oakridge School Administration. The result is the receipt of needed funding for schools and open facilities for after-school activities and meetings, and a school-police partnership to deal with juvenile crime and high drop out rates (PPPM 1998).

The Community Response Team should also be commended for its handling of public commentary in regards to the Community Economic Development Plan. The fact that the team mailed a summary of the plan, the vision statement, and a comment card to almost every business and organization in the community, as well as to selected individuals, shows a desire to receive feedback from the affected community. Unfortunately, the team received only forty cards in reply. However, reaction to the comments, and the consensus that all comments were valuable and that all would be passed on to community groups or used by the Community Response Team in future revisions of the plan, is hopeful. It should also be noted that discussion about the

comments continued over the course of three two-hour Community Response Team meetings (OCRT 1995).

Regrettably, there is a long list of actions that the community did not take, and there are many goals that the Community Response Team dabbled in, but did not fully accomplish. One of the major deficiencies in this category is the composition of the Community Response Team and the community's meager attempts at recruiting. According to Constance Enzweiler (1990), there have been no consistent efforts to involve more people in the Community Response Team. The newspaper published information about meeting times and places irregularly in the past, although the editor of the local paper is a team member and attends every meeting. Nor would the editor print the information without a personal request, for whatever reason.

Enzweiler apparently made a few attempts at drawing others into the group, including a few high school students, but the response was negative. Instead, the high school students felt that they did not have any place at the Community Response Team meetings arguing that they like many teenagers in the United States, felt their opinions were not important enough for something like this community group (Enzweiler 1990).

In addition to the composition of the Community Response Team, there are also several problems with regards to their capabilities and actions. The range of decisions that the CRT can make is very limited and the city administrator is the only person with grant writing skills within the community. If he is unavailable, the team

must request assistance from LCOG or another organization outside of the community. Unfortunately, the city does not have any money to pay for these kinds of services.

This money problem sprouts up over and over again in Oakridge since there is rarely enough money to carry out many of the plans or to hire people to take care of certain aspects of the plan. Volunteer groups have little validity inside and outside of the community without the backing of the elected officials, and elected officials do not approve of many of the development efforts (Enzweiler 1990). Some members of the City Council believe assisting with development efforts is outside their area of responsibility so they oppose efforts to engage the city government in the process. In response, the Community Response Team is forced to rely on state and county development agencies for assistance. Of the volunteers that the CRT can target within the Oakridge community, few are willing to engage in long term projects that require planning and acquiring resources. Instead, most volunteers prefer to show up, be told what to do, do it, and go home, with no further responsibilities.

As a result, researchers find that the community lacks confidence in the local leadership (Hibbard 1986). Many studies have been conducted and various recommendations made, but few implemented. Enzweiler (1990) suggested that many of the suggestions made ten to twenty years ago are still completely relevant, but what is required next is the facilitation of community action within the framework of the plan, and appropriate tools for equal participation among all community groups, even the poor and marginalized.

Economic

In the economic realm of development, there are a multitude of sustainable development requirements that are quite different from traditional development goals. Instead of focusing on the bottom line and unlimited economic growth, Oakridge must foster an economy supportive of the environmental and social needs. A sustainable economic system must employ frugality, efficiency, and knowledge about ecologic as well as economic systems. There should be promotion of ethical responsibilities with little or no degradation to the natural resources of the community. Ecological impacts must be reduced overall and we need to look at what exactly we are trying to develop.

> It has been a near axiom of modern liberalism that man's basic economic needs must be met before he can be expected to concern himself with environmental quality, democratic government or...cooperation (Caldwell 1995, 221).

Poverty created by inequitable social relations and inequitable resource distribution results in one of the greatest threats to sustainable development. However, we must be careful about how much power we lend to the economic arena. The "American dream" of United States history, in which every man should fend for himself to make his own fortune, has ignored common needs and resulted in the degradation we are presently dealing with. This self-centered way of life has led to a history of disregarding system limits and a one-way taking of everything and giving nothing back. The dream does not recognize collective efforts to build more

sustainable economies. Instead it takes a very selfish and unrealistic view of life (Caldwell 1995).

> Those who live in the poorest communities and those who work with disadvantaged residents of any community are well aware that processes of socio-economic change do not necessarily improve their lives, their livelihood security, the environment in which they live or their access to health, education and basic rights (Slater 1995, 1).

Large-scale projects, popular in the past, have caused severe social and economic disruptions in rural communities, often resulting in rapid population growth and intolerable stress on schools, water systems, sanitation facilities, and other social services. This type of development often causes further resentment within the community as well, because of immigrating workers and their families (DeSouza 1991). This is not a beneficial solution and luckily, a step Oakridge has not taken. Instead, it is important to the future of Oakridge that the industries targeted benefit the community's growth.

Oakridge community groups have attempted to diversify their economy to produce a more stable, sustainable economy by aggressively courting new companies for the recently developed industrial park in hopes of providing family wage jobs for local residents. The city hired professional business developers and launched advertising campaigns emphasizing the region's beauty and other community highlights. It received significant amounts of technical assistance for the purpose of reestablishing its economy.

I think Oakridge made an intelligent decision in not focusing solely on tourism in its economic plan. Over-dependence on the tourism industry can be very dangerous because the market is so sensitive. Tourism is susceptible to numerous changes including prices, changing travel fashions, global economic markets and political situations (Wahab & Pigram 1997). This makes tourism very volatile and very competitive. Destinations have to compete aggressively for customers against other destinations not only in the region, but all over the globe. Tourism development is often promoted as the premier opportunity for towns like Oakridge nestled in beautiful areas.

However, it tends to create dependency relationships among all involved. The entire pattern of resource control often changes as different groups gain or lose ownership, access and use rights, and the tourism industry often receives first priority in resource management decisions that is not always appropriate. As a result, cultural values shift, social relations become strained, and the service industry gains control over the town (Caldwell 1995).

At the same time, Oakridge has many features that combine to form a very popular tourist destination. Enough is now known about the principles of sustainability that industry should be receptive to sensible controls on development that will actually enhance tourist destinations for everyone involved (Wahab & Pigram, 1997). Nature tourism could not exist if the natural environment was not beautiful. It

is in the community's best interest to note that fact, address it, and at the same time focus on other strengths of the economy.

Tourism will not provide many high paying jobs for the residents of Oakridge and will likely bring unwelcome newcomers to the area. In order to maintain the future vision that the community of Oakridge would like to achieve, a different kind of economic base must be built. I think that in their goal to attract industrial companies to the former mill site, Oakridge is aiming for the type of employment desired by the people of Oakridge.

Both residents and outside observers highlight the industrial park as the community's best chance to establish local employment. Because of the available industrial space, infrastructure, and services, the site can suit the needs of many different types of firms.

As far as specific goals set forth by the Business Development section of the plan, it is unsure whether the fifty family wage jobs desired by the Community Economic Development Plan have been created in Oakridge. The definition of family wage even remains unsure and debatable. If at some point it is determined that fifty family wage jobs have been created, it becomes important next to ask whether or not this was because of economic diversification. Non-agricultural employment is on the increase but the figures do not take into consideration whether or not the jobs that were created were comparable to pay and benefits to the previously available jobs. If existing businesses were to remain in Oakridge and expand their operations as a result

of planning, then Oakridge may experience "long term economic stability" (PPPM 1998).

Environment

Perceptual problems are probably the fundamental obstacles to attaining environmental and sustainable development goals. There is extensive individual and systemic resistance to ecological considerations as well as much skepticism. Environmental principles will continue to fare badly in the political scenes as long as short-range income producing interests reign powerful (Caldwell 1995). On a fundamental level, these conflicts are based on competing definitions of the purpose of the environment and care about the future.

Although we now see many efforts to bring people to an understanding of their stake in environmental conditions there is little evidence to indicate how effective these efforts really are or which ones are more successful (Caldwell 1995). Oakridge did not include many concrete actions regarding the natural environment in the Community Action Plan. However, it made many plans to improve its communal environment, including the downtown area and the rest area. It has been quite successful at reaching these goals.

The city, although definitely not by choice, has eliminated a resource extractive industry from the basis of its economic plan and instead, has focused efforts on attracting industries and companies that are, on the whole, more environmentally sound. I think that it would be wise for Oakridge to recognize environmental limits

this time around. Not recognizing them before put the community in the situation it is presently fighting against. It needs to attract an environmentally sound industry into the area, or else it will not last and will not be capable of sustaining the economy of Oakridge. While more employment would increase the standard of living, there must be a multitude of sources of employment or several years down the line, the city will be in the same situation as the present one. The magnitude of problems created by increasing numbers of people, goods and services and the interaction among them would frustrate all efforts to create or maintain environmental quality (Caldwell 1995).

Conclusions and Recommendations

In an attempt to bring some conclusion to the observations brought forth so far, I must say it would be nearly impossible to state a firm yes or no answer as to whether Oakridge is sustainably developing its economy and its future. Instead, it seems that sustainability must be seen on a spectrum in which 0 would be completely non-sustainable and 10 would be utopia. In some aspects, Oakridge scores quite high on the spectrum of sustainability, in others quite low. Furthermore, none of the ratings are permanent. Community actions or goals could change within the next few years, months or weeks. Like any living body, Oakridge as a community is fluid, ever changing and evolving and does not stay in one particular state at all times. Oakridge could still achieve all of the goals set forth in the vision statement and its economy may rate as a sustainable example for the rest of the Pacific Northwest timber towns. In addition, societal definitions of sustainability could change in the future and Oakridge could fit where it does not now, or not fit where it does now. We do not know what will be regarded as sustainable tomorrow, and can only hope that as a part of sustainable goals, Oakridge will be able to change with the times.

I raised several questions earlier about important elements of the development process focusing on the who, what and why of development. The answers to these questions in respect to Oakridge are relevant and furthermore, optimistic. Oakridge is developing a sustainable, diversified economic base, looking into the future and addressing community needs. The community, in general is involved in the development process. There have been few negative impacts on the human

community during the development process and Oakridge's economic and social options have been well evaluated and thought out. All of these questions regarding principles of Oakridge's plans are positive, even if some of the plans have not yet come to fruition.

The important factor in all of this is that Oakridge is changing right now. In general, the community is trying to move forward with the times. It is easier to note the mistakes of Oakridge than to say what it should fix, especially for me as an undergraduate student with an interdisciplinary major. I feel I am, in many ways, unqualified to make suggestions about a community's economy, especially when I do not live there and have not taken part in the process of community change. Nevertheless, as an outsider, with idealistic hopes and desires, I would like to bring forward some hopeful suggestions.

Although it is somewhat of a cliché, it seems to me that much of what Oakridge needs is time to heal and change. It has taken many years for the citizens to get accustomed to a different economy and way of life and with new generations will come new knowledge and lifestyles. Oakridge needs to continue working towards social and ecological responsibility, controlled growth, and sustainable development. On the whole, it seems that the Community Economic Development Plan goals that were not met held low priority within the community. These strategies had little funding, even fewer people willing to work on them, and total lack of agreement on steps of action.

Other people involved in participatory evaluations in Oakridge have noted major social barriers to be the obstacle between sustainability and the community. Enzweiler (1990) noted the vertical integration of the community, individualism and self-reliance and other beliefs that resist change, lack of organizational and leadership capacity, attitudes about the role of government, and the lack of citizen participation as major problems. Correspondingly, Hibbard and University of Oregon's Planning, Public Policy, and Management students note community divisions and lack of organization as the main barriers to economic and personal success in the Oakridge Community Economic Development Plans (PPPM 1998).

I find that the principles behind the Community Economic Development Plan are sustainable and have great intentions. However, somewhere in the process and the drafting of the plan, many of the principles did not come to fruition. Moreover, carrying out the plan seems to have been a difficult process, as financial and human resources were always underfunded, and undersupported. With this in mind, I have these recommendations for Oakridge:

1. Make a greater attempt at involving other people in the Community Response Team. In order for sustainable development to occur, it is imperative that the poorer, less powerful members of the community be empowered and assured that their voices are valid and respected by the developing process.

2. In developing the industrial park and future employers of Oakridge, try to be proactive in recruiting environmentally responsible companies or look into

ecological industrial parks which various companies recycle each other's waste to close the loop on industrial production.

3. Prioritize goals in the Community Economic Development Plan and Delegate, Delegate, Delegate!

4. Take steps to make the Community Response Team a permanent fixture in the community (The recent establishment of a Watershed Council in Oakridge may also alleviate some of the responsibilities of the CRT).

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