

## His View: Consider something really different for Third Street

By Al Poplawsky, DNews, Oct 10, 2018

In a recent YES! Magazine article, David Korten tells us that for 99 percent of our history, we humans have existed as tight-knit, hunter-gatherer tribes with direct connections to one another and nature. Our brains evolved to facilitate living in co-productive relationships with each other and the Earth. However, our current monetized, profit-driven, corporate society with its ever increasing, isolating technologies is not compatible with these highly-evolved brains. This is in part why U.S. suicide rates are way up - indicative of a burgeoning mental health crisis. The answer we are told is "Instead of building more single-family dwellings, we should build multi-generational, multi-family homes in vibrant eco-villages that share facilities, tools, labor and resources. Instead of designing cities for self-driving, single-person cars, design them for walking, biking and public transportation with lots of places for people to meet and greet, mix and mingle."

Moscow's east Third Street was closed for most of this summer - extending into the period after school began. I literally did not hear one complaint about the closure. People report to me that Sixth Street did not go crazy. I bike-commuted on First Street, and although I noticed more traffic, I did not feel endangered in any way. Maybe, just maybe, it is time we considered something really different that will serve to truly connect our community on a human basis, and also diversify our transportation options. Imagine it - the year is 2021. Walking up Third Street on the sidewalk, you're approaching the high school and the 1912 Community Center. Warm memories of attending your children's high school activities and your daughter's wedding reception at the 1912 Center last summer flood your brain. You were just at the downtown Farmers Market on Saturday; the long winter has receded, and the whole world is now in bloom.

As you pass the high school, the road ends and you are now walking in a pedestrian mall with a bike path on the edge of the former road. Families glide past on their assortment of bikes and bike trailers carrying fresh treasures from the market. Small trees, bushes and even flowers sprout between the bike path and the central area of the former road, which is open for pedestrian activities and public transport. In the absence of vehicle noise, you notice the birds singing, and instead of gas and diesel fumes, you discern the delicate fragrances of crabapples and lilacs. You hear the distant warning of the electric, trackless train traveling Third Street back and forth on the hour from the Palouse Mall to Mountain View Road. It reminds you of visiting with a friend on Friday while commuting on the train from your job at the University of Idaho. Scores of people now use the train to commute from their central or eastside residences to either downtown, the UI or Palouse Mall work places - frequently able to abandon their cars. The transition between the pedestrian mall and East City Park is so seamless that you almost miss your turn for your regular stroll through the park - the start of a half mile walk from the train stop to your home, which you do regularly for exercise.

As you note the children in the park playground, you fondly remember how last weekend's Renaissance Fair spilled over into the Third Street mall and halfway to downtown. You exchange greetings with several homeowners before you arrive at your house just in time to prepare a family brunch with your market finds.

Things couldn't be much finer in your small university town.