Integrating Habitats Winners Series

Nature in Neighborhoods:


Collaborate to redefine the built environment and restore nature.

More than 300 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 buildings. This is not merely a regional interest, but a global interest in which our region is the leader.”

— Jim Winkler, jurist

Co-hosts, partners and sponsors

Commercial development and lowland hardwood forest

Urban Ecotones

Transitional Spaces for Commerce and Culture

Pricing for a winner

Parking lot evolution

Split the big box

Stormwater beauty

Compost greens

Ecoroof view café

Stormwater garden

Green ribbons of habitat
Snapshots 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.

1. Parking lot (re)vision: 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 3,400 square foot area with twelve parking spaces and a drove 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.

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.

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.

4. Compost greens: Waste into economic capital

A 16,600 square foot composting operation is part of the green building center. Here, construction debris and yard waste are transformed into a valuable 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.

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.

6. Stormwater gardens

Rain gardens and swales act as natural rain garden and wetlands. The planting, design and plant selection ensure that rain gardens provide habitat for wildlife and contribute to the health of the natural systems they support.

7. Trails through swales

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8. Splash the big box

A new, sustainable example of retail development, the center is constructed to one side, allowing the two developments to be a green stretch 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.
Big box retail goes green
Fossil fuel shortages will transform the way we shop. Once 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 use. 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.

Team members
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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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Inhabitant profiles and biotic activity than singular habitats two ecosystems that contains more diversity.

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

Snapshot of a winner

Autos into urban agriculture

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First place

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