

## Transforming Where We Live

Transforming where we live is about learning to live within our environmental and economic means - in our homes, neighborhoods and communities. This adventure will prove to be one of the most important in human history for many reasons.

Much has been learned to accomplish this task and much more remains to be discovered. The scale ranges from home to global. There are many benefits to be gained. Lessons learned in one place can be applied elsewhere.

This brochure will describe transformations in real life, made to a quarter acre suburban property and the nearby neighborhood in Eugene, Oregon.

This brochure will also touch on aspects of transforming a community and provide links to a related website for greater detail.

## Transforming a Suburban Property

Transforming this quarter acre suburban property has been one of the most enriching experiences in my life. The goal is to take care of more needs closer to home for creating a safer, more secure, resilient home, neighborhood and culture.



*The sidewalk is the remains of a 5 car driveway. Repurposing what is familiar in creative and positive ways is a core ideal of transformation.*



***Back Yard and main house. This was all grassy back yard. Patio enclosed for passive solar space.***

The site is in the River Road Neighborhood, two miles northwest of downtown Eugene, Oregon, and a quarter mile west of the Willamette River.

Its flat. The climate, soil and solar access are good, the house is mid 50's vintage, remodeled to 1400 ft sq with the back yard on the south side.

First to go, was the grass, front and back, making space for vegetable gardens. Next, two 1600 gallon rain water tanks were set up, a solar water heater was installed, the driveway was removed and the carport was remodeled into a living space.

Most non productive trees and shrubs have been removed, making way for edible landscaping, much of it "elevated" such as espalier fruit trees, trellised vines, brambles and food forest.

In 2005, the sunroom was rebuilt. In 2007, the 450 ft2 passive solar bungalow replaced an old shed. A galvalum metal roof replaced shingles on the main house in 2009. In 2011, a 3000 gallon water tank was installed to catch runoff from the bungalow.

The home owner has done most of the work with significant help on several projects. There is enormous economic potential in transforming suburbia.

## Transforming A Neighborhood

Over the past 14 years, a growing number of near by friends and neighbors have begun to make similar changes to their places. Within blocks, there are more grassy yards replaced with gardens and edible landscapes, solar retrofits, rain water management, small new buildings, drive ways taken out, fences down, green building and more.

There are educational programs, green bike tours, purposeful socials and mutual assistance projects and collaborations with the RR Community Organization, RR Park District and City of Eugene.

Added together, we see the early stages of transforming a neighborhood – an increasingly complex and purposeful set of actions for creating a more local culture and economy - taking care of more needs closer to home by way of mutual assistance and making better use of existing assets.



***Village Garden Party River Road***

## Transforming A Community & Beyond

Transforming a home and nearby neighborhood is a great start. But to bring about the kind of culture, economic and lifestyle change today's trends call for, the scale of transformation needs to be made at the community level, regional and beyond – moving into uncharted territory.

Every town has far more existing assets, allies and potential actions for transformation than one might think - faith communities, civic organizations, under used public property, schools, vacant lots, city programs, youth, neighborhood associations, unemployed people, retired people, businesses, volunteers all can play important roles.

A favorite phrase - "You don't have to move to live in a better neighborhood."

*Civic culture* is a perfect term to describe this work - people actively caring about where they live - their homes, neighborhoods and communities.



**Block Planning - Immense Potential**

### Key Words, Concepts, Actions

**Transformation** - Learning to live within our economic and environmental means.

**Allies and Assets** - existing social, educational, civic infrastructure that can assist transformation

**Permaculture** - A holistic set of design ideals and principles for taking care of human needs in ways that are friendly to people and planet.

**Green Preparedness/Home Economics** - Developing local food, water, energy, civic culture for taking care of more needs closer to home

**Social Activation** - Tools and actions to motivate and empower citizens to act for the health and well being of their communities. Several listed next -

**Place Making** - Purposeful actions and projects in public places that show we care for where we live

**Work Parties** - People coming together to cooperate on a work project

**Front Yard Gardens** - Turning front yard grass into garden benefits personal and public health, civic vitality, the environment and much more.

**Green Bike Tours** - Purposeful visits to green sites for educational/motivational show and tell

**Block Planning** - A powerful land use tool for transforming an entire urban or suburban block that facilitates much "greener" use of space.

**Civic Culture** - A desirable condition where citizens and residents of a place are actively engaged in enhancing the well being of where they live.

**Multiple benefits** - Home, neighborhood and community transformation can address virtually every social, economic and environmental trend and challenge of our time.

**Jan has made three Posters rich in content that make reference to all these concepts and actions**

- \*Creating Safer, More Secure and Healthier Neighborhoods
- \*Transforming A Suburban Property
- \*Front Yard Gardens - A Simple Act, Impressive Benefits

**Jan offers presentations -**

In person or over the internet. Great for neighborhood organizations, university classes, community groups, conferences.

**Contact -**

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**www.suburbanpermaculture.org**

**The website contains -**

**More detail, Posters, topics I can speak to, bio, media, foto galleries**

# Transforming Our Homes, Neighborhoods & Communities for Multiple Benefits

[www.suburbanpermaculture.org](http://www.suburbanpermaculture.org)

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