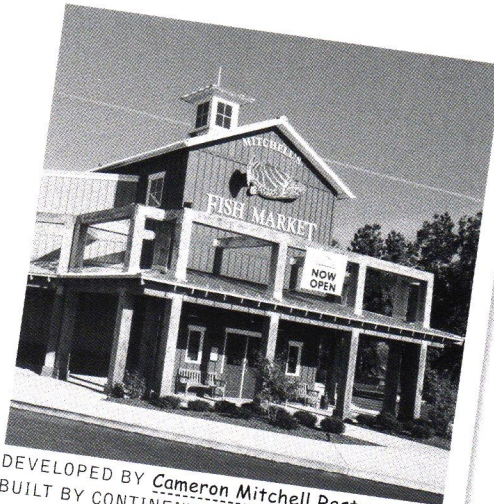


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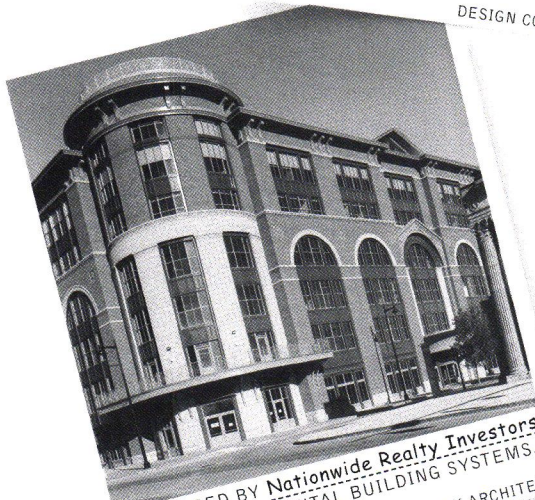
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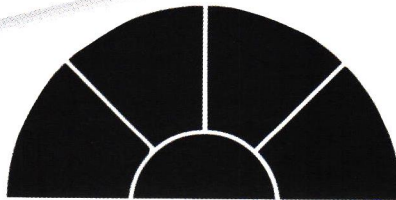
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The Good, the Bad and the Ugly By Tracy Certo



Let's talk great design in infrastructure: If you have billions to spend, the sky's the limit and here's proof.

There we were, bumper to bumper

on the Harbor Freeway in L.A., when we suddenly found ourselves under a mammoth concrete structure that jutted forth and towered over us. What fresh freeway hell was this? As we soon discovered, it was another multi-lane freeway soaring overhead—an unsettling encounter, especially in that earthquake-prone area.

It's been ten years since we moved from L.A. and a lot has changed, notably the traffic. One friend from Thousand Oaks is in the same house and same job and yet, his commute has doubled in a decade, from 45 minutes to 90.

In West L.A. where we used to live, it's a logjam. We averaged 15 mph on the San Diego Freeway the few times we ventured on it. The short cuts we knew and loved aren't very short anymore. We were late everywhere we went.

Weeks later, in a phone conversation with Congressman Earl Blumenauer (page 16), I mentioned L.A. The Congressman had just made a solid case advocating for incorporating really good design in infrastructure. At one point, he said that people will no longer settle for "chunks of concrete" in highways and other similar projects. That's when I asked his opinion of the proposed freeway stacked on top of an existing freeway to ease the unbearable congestion in the San Fernando Valley. He paused for just a second. "Sub-par," he said in quiet disgust.

Having just experienced it, I would have to agree.

Los Angeles is a great place to live if you're an orange, as Fred Allen said. Or, if you know where to go. Despite its many faults (bad pun), I love L.A. and, especially, Malibu, which is where we went. In the spectacular and mysteriously uncrowded canyons, we hiked for miles without seeing anyone.

At the Colony, that fabled wealthy strip of beach, a long fence and a stern sign warned about trespassing on the hallowed ground. I crashed the gate, anyway, to continue my run only to discover that in a city of more than 8 million, I was alone on the beach. It was worth risking arrest.

Unofficially, people like me who stay politely along the breakwater are tolerated in the forbidden zone, but not those

who park their coolers on the sand. The big issue is: who owns the rights to a beach? It's hotly debated today just as it was ten years ago. And may I suggest another? Beach infrastructure. Those signs and fences are ugly in more ways than one.

On a much brighter note, L.A. now boasts the spectacular Getty Center, Richard Meier's shining mountaintop complex of travertine marble with a 360-degree view of the city and ocean. Let's talk great design in infrastructure: If you have billions to spend, the sky's the limit and here's proof. Start with the smooth and elegant tram that winds up the mountain and the cool marble and glass station stops. From the start, you know you're embarking on a very special journey. Even the public restrooms and picnic area are noteworthy and it's all free, except for the parking.

More than one friend told me if we were short on time, to go to the Getty for the architecture and skip the collections. Architecture eclipsing its function? In this case, yes. Among the many wonderful tours offered is the popular Architecture Tour.

It leads to the Robert Irwin Garden "a sculpture in the form of a garden inspiring to be art" according to its creator. The sculpture/garden/art is so visually stunning and soul-stirring that you're reluctant to leave, even for natural lit galleries showcasing masterpieces.

The temperature was in the high seventies, the sun just was just breaking through the morning haze and life was good. For oranges. And those on top of the world at the Getty Center. Although we hated to leave, it will be our first stop when we return. Of course, we know an alternate route that bypasses the freeway. #

While doing some background research on Earl Blumenauer, I came across his recent piece in Landscape Architect Magazine. As you can see, we opted to run that in this issue, too (page 4). In fact, if I had my wish Blumenauer would have joined us at the Roundtable discussion on design issues in infrastructure (page 6) at the AIA office. Then we could have grilled him—um, I mean inquired politely—on what it really takes to make well-designed public works projects.

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On the cover: Transit stop for Westside Light Rail Corridor; Portland, Oregon by Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnerships. Oregon Congressman Earle Blumenauer, profiled in this issue of *Columns*, calls the project "works of art" that reflect his philosophy that investing in design upfront pays off big in public works projects.

AIA Pittsburgh serves 12 Western Pennsylvania counties as the local component of the American Institute of Architects and AIA Pennsylvania. The objective of AIA Pittsburgh is to improve, for society, the quality of the built environment by further raising the standards of architectural education, training and practice; fostering design excellence; and promoting the value of architectural services to the public. AIA membership is open to all registered architects, architectural interns, and a limited number of professionals in supporting fields.

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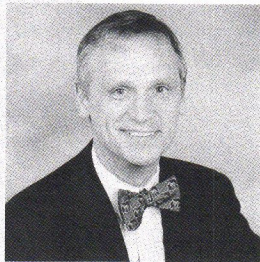
Taking the Public Hostage — Responding to Terrorism

By Earl Blumenauer (D-Oregon)

From my first visit to Washington, DC,

the highlight of each trip was a morning run down the Mall. The routine never varied. I visited the memorials to Lincoln and Jefferson, then the Vietnam memorial to sense the pain of loss suffered by so many and the hope of reconciliation and healing. I would circle the U.S. Capitol, an awe-inspiring monument to democracy.

Since my election to Congress six years ago, these runs have become a morning ritual, with the Mall's symbolic reminder of the significance of each day's work. Sadly, since September 11th, this source of pride and inspiration has become a daily reminder of our continuing inability to find intelligent ways to protect both our citizens and our national heritage.



"...safety and security objectives can be achieved without sacrificing the visitors' and workers' experiences."

Concrete barriers litter the landscape. They wall off our citizens not just from vital symbols of our government, but from the government itself. Visual blight is compounded by the disruption of pedestrian and vehicle movements in and around the Capitol and the White House. We are cheapening the experience of millions of visitors, as well as the thousands who work here. Even more troubling, these security measures may actually make people less safe.

These remedies create a false sense of security, while buildings and crowds remain vulnerable. By spending huge sums of money on only marginally useful construction, we divert money and attention from other more effective means. Worst of all, we may be putting people in danger. Transforming our most important and heavily trafficked public spaces into barrier-strewn obstacle courses will also interfere with rescue efforts in the event of actual attack or accident. Sadly, these cold, ugly and ineffective monuments to our fear mean that in a sense, the terrorists are winning another battle. They are taking away our public spaces and freedom of movement.

Poorly designed security measures can have a devastating effect on entire communities. The extended closure of National Airport resulted in the loss of hundreds of jobs, some perhaps permanently, and the displacement of thousands of others. The roads that have been closed around the Capitol and the White House have snarled traffic and frustrated commuters. Suppos-

edly temporary actions have a way of becoming permanent. Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House was hastily closed after the Oklahoma City bombing and remains closed seven years later. Security measures that may have made sense temporarily have led to a seemingly permanent closure that has created costly traffic problems and a blighted scene in front of the home of our President.

Another example can be found on Washington's Capitol Hill, where new "no cycling" signs have sprouted on the Capitol grounds. These newly restricted paths have long been used as a commuting route for residents on Capitol Hill. Their closure endangers the safety of cyclists who are now forced onto busy streets not designed to accommodate them. These signs haven't made Congress safer, but are a symbol of desperation and an inconvenience to hundreds of people making a personal choice to make our Capitol more livable by biking to work.

Fortunately, it does not have to be this way. There is a powerful alliance of planning and design professionals who are leading the way, summoning the faithful for a response to terrorism that creates safer spaces without losing what makes them so essential. The change is being led by the American Institute of Architects, the American Society of Landscape Architects and others who are charting the path to greater security through creative design. With strategic use of landscaping, reinforced street furniture, building materials and the design of roads and sidewalks, safety and security objectives can be achieved without sacrificing the visitors' and workers' experiences.

If we are to provide security around the Capitol complex, airports, public buildings and other threatened places without the concrete blocks and jersey barriers, we must treat these efforts as the major construction projects they are. That means careful planning and proper input from various professions, advocates, and community leaders. Doing it right will lead to designs that can alleviate questions of security without creating mini-fortresses walled off from their surroundings.

We must hurry. The Federal Government is set to despoil over 6,000 federal buildings around the country, creating ugly little islands of isolation—not only making them clearer targets, but also symbols of the gulf between our citizens and their government. It would be a shameful indictment of our stewardship if the most influential people in the design of our new century were Timothy McVeigh and Osama Bin Laden.