

I have been asked to speak today about impossible ideals and the problem of reconciliation. I want to discuss the impossible ideal of sustainable development and the importance of reconciling competing dimensions of its meaning. To illustrate my argument and to make my talk practical, I will draw on some of my recent work in Viet Nam and at home in Indianapolis, Indiana. But let me first reflect on the Y and why I think it is both appropriate and necessary that the Y sponsor a lecture series with a title that, in at least some academic circles, would be considered audacious. Far from being a digression, however, I think that these thoughts are integral to the message I have to share.

The Y is in the business of creating a better world by providing university students opportunities to explore what it means to live ethically in a complex society. Through its programming, the Y provides students opportunities to share and pursue visions of a better world, to complement and supplement their classroom training with service, and to test their mettle and reflect on the challenges of giving ideas meaning through action. These are opportunities that students deserve and need but too often lack or fail to take advantage of. The purpose of the Y, frankly, is epitomized in the theme of this Friday Forum Series: Impossible Ideals. If we are to come close to achieving any of the impossible ideals to which we aspire, we need organizations like the Y that are willing and committed to raising issues of principle and ethics in public discourse. Civil society depends on it, for it is in the process of working to achieve our ideals that we create better places for people to live and work.

If ever there was a Holy Grail, it is sustainable development. I think we need to reconcile ourselves to the fact that we probably cannot even define it, let alone achieve it. The most frequently quoted definition of sustainable development is the 1987 wording of the World Commission on Environment and Development, or the Brundtland Commission. Sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (*Our Common Future*, The World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

Well, this and \$1.75 will get you a gallon of gas at the Speedway.

My point is that this definition is so general that it defies practicality. This observation is not new. In the *Journal of the American Planning Association* in 1996, Scott Campbell warned that the concept is subject to the criticism of “vague idealism.” And, as other observers have noted, the concept is so general that everyone can agree to it.

As the concept of sustainability has been reduced to symbolic rhetoric, it has been trivialized and debased. Indeed, in an evaluation of 30 comprehensive plans for cities across the United States, Professor Philip Berke and a team of researchers at the University of North Carolina found that “specific inclusion of the sustainability principle has no effect on how well plans actually promote sustainability.” All manner of development now is being construed as sustainable. I fear that to a very real degree, we no longer have an ideal that is useful for shaping policy. Rather, we have sets of Orwellian outcomes in which non-sustainable activities are heralded as archetypes. We must work to avoid these outcomes. And although I believe that the potential for these outcomes is very real, I will dwell on them no more today. I prefer to focus instead on examples of work to create sustainability. Even as we speak, thousands of people across the globe are working on projects and activities to make the places they live more stable and enduring.

To help our thinking about these examples, I want to make two other observations, neither of which is new or controversial, but which, when considered jointly, are daunting in their enormity.

The first observation is that sustainability encompasses dimensions of equity or fairness, ecology, and economics. Sustainable projects and activities:

1. are efficient in an economic sense and help to create wealth;
2. help to restore and maintain the integrity of ecological systems; and
3. increase equity of opportunity and access to economic and ecological resources.

A more vivid way of saying this is that sustainable development is green, profitable, and fair. Although this proposition makes common sense, it also is problematic, for we cannot maximize for more than a single variable. To address these dimensions of sustainability in any single project or activity,

we must reconcile ourselves to tradeoffs among them. Reconciliation, which presumes conflict or at least difference as an antecedent, necessarily is a component of efforts in pursuit of a multi-faceted ideal like sustainability.

The second observation is that all social, economic, and ecological systems are dynamic and continually changing. Hence, to increase sustainability, we must focus on complex processes that we only partially understand, and we must commit to working on these processes forever, for any outcome we achieve will be only temporary and will change naturally and inevitably. We must reconcile ourselves to the fact that our work will never be done.

In a recent paper in *Economic Development Quarterly*, Judith Innes and David Booher of the Institute of Urban and Regional Development at the University of California at Berkeley wrote of the futility of trying to control complex processes of development and the implications for planning practice. They concluded:

Policies fail to turn out as those crafting them desire—not only because of emergent technologies, unanticipated major events, or changes in the structure of the economy that are beyond their ability to predict or control, but also because there are so many players . . . The best planners can do is to help the players in these places to influence the direction of change.

We have no choice but to trust the intelligence and inventiveness of people everywhere to learn and to transform the system. Instead of trying to define a vision of sustainability—how to get from here to this ideal world—we need to find ways to make the complex system we have into one that will allow the players themselves to turn the metropolitan system into a collective intelligence that can sustain itself indefinitely.

We therefore propose three principal strategies for improving metropolitan performance . . . These include

- 1. development and use of indicators and performance measures in new ways,*
- 2. the use of collaborative consensus building among stakeholders who best understand the different aspects of the metropolitan system, and finally*
- 3. the creation of new forms of leadership.*

Now, rather than belabor these ideas in an academic way, I want to illustrate them with examples from two places: Nha Trang, Viet Nam and

Indianapolis, Indiana, two places that outwardly have little in common. In the spring and early summer of 1999, I had the good fortune to be a member of the first group of Senior Fulbright Scholars to go to Viet Nam since the war ended in 1975 and we normalized diplomatic ties in 1997. I was assigned by Viet Nam's Ministry of Education and Training to teach environmental planning and management at Dai Hoc Thuy San, the national University of Fisheries. While in Nha Trang, which is known throughout Viet Nam as the City by the Blue Sea, I had the opportunity to observe work by the World Conservation Union, the Vietnamese Ministry of Science, Technology, and the Environment, and Khanh Hoa Provincial government to create the first Marine Protected Area in Viet Nam. A Marine Protected Area is an aquatic ecological reserve; hence, my titular reference to Blueways. My second example will be from my adopted hometown of Indianapolis where for the past decade local officials have put tremendous effort into developing a system of greenways, or linear parks or open spaces.

As I discuss the development processes in these places, let us keep in mind two questions:

1. Do the processes include use of measurable indicators, consensus-building among stakeholders, and new leadership?
2. Are the processes likely to lead to development that is profitable, fair, and green?

What I hope to illustrate for you today is what I've learned about the tensions that exist among the different dimensions of sustainability and why I believe a process-oriented approach is essential to reconciling these tensions.

Viet Nam is a poor, highly populated country with a rapidly degrading resource base that, despite its historic commitment to a communist, egalitarian ideal, is experiencing rapidly growing inequities among its population. A few facts will provide useful context:

- Viet Nam's population is approximately 80 million. The population is young: more than half has been born since the war. The population is also very diseased. The nation is approximately the size of New Mexico. Eighty percent of the people live in rural areas but the population is urbanizing rapidly.

- Viet Nam ranks in the bottom third of the world's nations in its level of development as measured by the United Nations Human Development Index. This Index ranks the country as 122 of 174 nations according to a composite measure of health, education, and wealth. Although life expectancy at 66 in 1997 and literacy rate of 93% are comparatively high, in Viet Nam, the people are poor. The real GDP per capita or potential purchasing power in 1997 was only about \$1,200, less than half the value for all developing countries.

Since 1986, when Viet Nam launched Doi Moi, or renovation, and began to open to outsiders, development has been the nation's highest priority. Efforts also have been made, however, to institutionalize environmental programs. Viet Nam completed a national plan for sustainable development in 1991 and adopted its first national environmental law in 1993. The Vietnamese Law on the Environment is the equivalent of our National Environmental Policy Act, our Clean Water Act, our Clean Air Act, and several provisions of other federal laws all in one piece of legislation. In 1995, Viet Nam adopted a National Biodiversity Plan that calls for creation of a system of marine protected areas. Although plans have been adopted and laws are on the books, resources for implementation are scarce, and implementation is weak at best. In 1997, for example, the National Environmental Agency employed only 45 people. Last year at IUPUI we hosted the deputy director for national environmental policy, and his major concern was implementation. How can we implement programs, he asked, when we have no money?

Although Viet Nam faces major challenges in all environmental areas, the challenges it faces in coastal and marine management are particularly critical. Viet Nam is a coastal nation, and scientists and managers widely acknowledge that coastal areas have not been well-managed. Fisheries and areas of coral reef are threatened by an array of factors: growth in rates of exploitation, dynamite and other destructive fishing practices, pollution from soil erosion, untreated sewage, oil spills, and illegal aquaculture; harvesting of coral for use in construction; the aquarium and shell trades; careless use by tourists; and, more generally, increasing population density along the coast.

Viet Nam also faces social and institutional challenges in creating protected areas. Vo Si Tuan, a researcher at the National Oceanographic Institute, has listed some of these challenges: rapid economic development, a growing population with low environmental awareness, financial constraints on government budgets, opposition from people who fear the loss of livelihood, unforeseen, perverse effects of ill-advised regulation, limited socio-economic data, and an unresponsive, poorly trained bureaucracy.

Within this difficult setting, people from the World Conservation Union and the Vietnamese government are now initiating ambitious plans to establish the nation's first Marine Protected Areas. The site selected for the first MPA is Nha Trang Bay in Khanh Hoa Province around an archipelago. Water quality is good—transparency exceeds 20 meters. The reefs there are among the most diverse in Viet Nam, although the coral coverage of 34 percent is low relative to other sites. Approximately 44 genera and 98 species of hard coral have been identified, as have 170 species of reef fish and 112 species of mollusks. The area now is fished intensively and catches are declining.

The City by the Blue Sea, with a population of approximately 300,000, already is an important tourist destination. Approximately 80 hotels and 60 tourist boats now operate there. The number of hotel rooms in Nha Trang more than doubled from 1993 to 1998, increasing from about 1,543 to more than 3,100. During that same period the estimated number of tourists fluctuated, ranging from a low of 260,000 in 1994 to a high of 390,000 in 1996. Provincial officials estimate that foreign tourists, mainly from France, America, and Germany, accounted for 15 percent to one-third of all tourists annually during the six-year period. Most importantly for our purposes, officials hope to attract 1.2 million tourists by 2010 and 1.8 million tourists by 2020, mainly by increasing numbers of international visitors. The provinces goals for foreign tourists for 2010 and 2020 respectively are 660,000 and 1.14 million. Many of these tourists visit the archipelago, placing additional stress on the coral reefs.

The goal of the MPA proposal is to “conserve a representative example of internationally significant and threatened biodiversity.” The primary project development objective is to “enable local stakeholders to effectively protect

and manage the marine biodiversity at Hon Mun as a replicable model for MPA management in Vietnam. The MPA proposal was developed in consultation with islanders who, at least theoretically, will be provided leadership opportunities within the management structure.

The plan for the MPA calls for designation of four different use zones, some of which include major tourist areas, with different restrictions on activities (MOF, PPC, and IUCN 1999). The largest zone, the Protected Area, also is referred to as a general use zone because all activities other than those proscribed by general principles will be allowed. The Protected Area is intended to function as a buffer for more sensitive areas. A Biodiversity Zone will include additional restrictions on the harvesting of species for ornamental purposes and aquaculture and on anchorage of large ships. An Aquaculture Zone will include additional restrictions on use and anchorage and support only culturing of locally derived species. The Sanctuary Zone will include prohibitions on all extractive activity and anchorage, with exceptions for research activities and tourist boats on moorings.

Funding for the project is being provided by the World Bank and will be used to support four activities:

1. Participatory planning and management;
2. Alternative income-generating activities, including sustainable financing;
3. Capacity building; and
4. Monitoring and evaluation.

Performance indicators for assessing progress have been identified. These include, for example, “no decrease in threatened species” and “statistically significant and important increase in the productivity of target fish and shellfish.”

Now, the issue is, will this project so conceived help to achieve the Holy Grail of sustainability? Recall two questions I raised previously:

1. Do plans call for development and use of indicators, consensus-building, and new forms of leadership?
2. Will the array of activities associated with the MPA be profitable, fair, and green?

I'd like to answer the first question with a qualified yes. Although my vantage point is really that of an outsider, it appears that planners are working along the lines proposed by Innes and Booher. Efforts are being made to include stakeholders in planning the MPA, but some local experts grumble that the NGOs dominate planning processes. Indicators have been identified, but it is doubtful that resources are available for monitoring and, more importantly, that there is capacity to respond to trends that may be observed. The institutional structure for the proposed management system provides novel new approaches for local leadership in Viet Nam, but it remains unknown whether the all-powerful people's committee will devolve some real power to the management authority.

I'm less optimistic about the answers to the second question. I think that the MPA will spur economic development in Nha Trang, and I think that many people will benefit, but I do not believe that benefits will be distributed equally: there is too much graft and corruption in the system for that to occur in the short term. I also do not believe that the islands can sustain a quadrupling of use without further environmental degradation. I do think, however, that political leaders in Nha Trang have little choice. Without infusion of capital and general improvement in economic conditions, business as usual surely will continue, and the effects of business as usual are easy to predict: the marine environment will continue to deteriorate.

Sustainable development in Nha Trang may be a Holy Grail, an ideal that is impossible to achieve. It most certainly involves reconciliation of competing objectives of economic development and environmental protection and equity of opportunity. And to the extent that the plans hinge on increases in foreign tourism, it depends on reconciliation of global market forces with communist concerns for controlling ideas and rates of development.

Now, let's travel 12,000 miles around the globe to Indianapolis.

Indianapolis is moderately sized with a population of about 850,000 within the city-county boundaries. The nine-county metropolitan area has a population of about 1.6 million people. Like central cities in many urban areas, the population is growing, but at a slower rate than the surrounding suburban counties, and disparities in important outcomes like income and

poverty rates are increasing. Two weeks ago Deputy Mayor William Shrewsbury proclaimed at a public meeting to kick off the two-year process to develop a new comprehensive plan, “We no longer are ‘Indiana No Place;’ you can’t call us Nap-town any longer.” And it’s true: in contrast to many central cities, Indianapolis has a thriving downtown anchored by a relatively new mall that has exceeded expectations in sales for the past few years. Earlier this year the city hosted the Olympic trials for swimming and diving, and this past year 250,000 people from around the globe came to Indy for America’s first major Formula 1 car race. But Indiana routinely ranks in the bottom five states in the nation in the percentage of adults with a college education, and this week Indianapolis gained notoriety for surpassing all other cities in the United States in reported cases of syphilis. Although prospects for the city are bright, we are not without challenges. And sustainability is a major challenge.

The history of Indianapolis, whatever else it might encompass, is in part a history of environmental impact. When European and African settlers first arrived in Indiana, they found a “utopian wilderness,” but by the 1800s, much of the state had been deforested. By 1876, only 40 percent of the forest in Marion County remained, and by 1883, the forest had “dwindled to a few patches of woodlands.” In 1980, only 1 percent of the county was contiguous forest in parklands. Recent analyses by geographers at IUPUI place the amount of medium to dense forest canopy, including canopy over residential areas, at 13 percent.

City leaders first responded to the need for public open space and parks more than a century ago when they hired John C. Olmsted, the son of famous landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, to prepare a park and boulevard plan for the city. In 1909, George Kessler, another landscape architect schooled in the City Beautiful tradition, completed a plan that today provides the foundation for current efforts to green the city. In 1994, in response to the needs for open space and conservation of remaining forests, and after an intensive planning process that included public meetings throughout the city, the County adopted a new greenways plan that established 14 greenway corridors along rivers, creeks, a canal, and an historic rail-line. The goals for

the system are recreation, conservation, linkage, and education. A fifth goal of economic development was added with the update of the greenway master plan in 1999. Half of these corridors will have recreational trails; the others will be conservation corridors without public access and will mostly remain in private ownership. About 30 miles of trails in six corridors have been completed; the system will include more than 80 miles when finished. These greenway corridors pass diverse land uses through the city ranging from the “natural” to the bucolic to the industrial.

The question I want to address concerns the role of the greenways system in making Indianapolis a sustainable place. Are the greenways economic? Do their benefits justify their costs? What about equity? Are the greenways accessible to all? And what about the ecology of the greenways? Are the greenways green?

My colleagues, students, and I have been involved in a series of studies of the Indianapolis greenways system for the past five years. We have documented use of the trails, surveyed users and trail neighbors, completed benefit-cost analyses, analyzed equity of access, and assembled available ecological information. I would like to share with you a little of what we have found. We will begin with the headlines:

- People like the greenways.
- People use the greenways.
- Available economic data indicates the greenways are good investments.
- Minorities and the poor have disproportionate access to the greenways.
- The greenways are not green from an ecological perspective.

First, people like the greenways. In surveys of the county population in general, private property owners in a conservation greenway, and neighbors of a greenway recreational trail, majorities of respondents say that they believe greenway designation will improve their neighborhoods. Surveys of users on recreational trails indicate that upwards of 90 percent of users believe that trails are well-maintained. And more than 90 percent of owners of businesses near the most heavily used recreational trail say that they are satisfied or very satisfied with the trail.

More tangible evidence is from studies of use of the greenways. Studies in 1996 and 1998 on four trails indicate that the number of users of the trail system exceeds 1.2 million people annually. To put this in perspective, this exceeds the number of people who attend games played in Indianapolis by the Indianapolis Colts, Pacers, Indians, and the Ice. We currently are involved in a study to document use on six trails throughout Indiana. In Indianapolis, at one point on the Monon Trail in August 2000, infrared counters registered more than 60,000 persons passing along the trail and this estimate is an undercount because only one passing event is registered for pairs of users. At the busiest times, trail users pass the counter at the rate of one person every five seconds. Average peak hour use is in the range of one person every 15 seconds. People are voting with their feet, and they are voting to use the trails.

These estimates of levels of use are the best information available for analyzing whether the greenways are economic. Economists distinguish use and non-use or passive values of public goods like parks. Use values are the value assigned to use of a park; non-use values include the value of ecological services and existence values, or the amounts people would be willing to pay to preserve an area. A problem in measuring these values of public goods is that people typically do not pay to use them: no markets for them exist. Hence, economists have developed ingenious methodologies for imputing values of public goods. One approach is called the travel cost method, in which it is assumed that the value of a freely accessible asset like a greenway is worth at least whatever costs people incur to use it. Other approaches also have been developed. Two studies of the economic benefits of greenways in Indianapolis have been completed. One of these, an analysis of the Central Indianapolis Waterfront Project, has been repeated three times as project elements have changed. Each of these analyses suggests that the benefits associated with use of the greenways are greater than the costs of developing and maintaining them. Moreover, these studies make no attempts to estimate non-use values. These studies do not, however, tell us whether other investments might have been better or made more sense.

On the other hand, people clearly have limited willingness to pay for programs to encourage private property owners in conservation corridors to improve stewardship. Gerrit Knaap, an economist in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning here at University of Indianapolis, and I conducted an experiment in 1997 in which we asked half of the property owners in the greenway corridor how much they would be willing to donate to the White River Greenways Foundation to support stewardship programs. We sent the other half of the property owners actual solicitations for donations. Our results were comparable to results from other studies: hypothetical willingness to donate exceeded actual willingness to donate by about a factor of 10. The implications are that we will be hard-pressed to find resources for efforts to promote collective stewardship.

Who has access to the greenways? Is there equity of access to the trails? The popular image of a typical urban user is that of a yuppie. Two students at IUPUI recently completed studies of the populations that reside in the greenway corridors with publicly accessible trails. It turns out that the trail populations—those people who live in census tracts that are within one-half mile of the trails—are disproportionately African American and poor. For example, the population of people living adjacent to trails is 35 percent African American; the comparable proportion for the county as a whole is 21 percent. Approximately 16 percent of the population along the trails is living in poverty; the comparable proportion for the county is 12 percent. Both median household income and median housing value is lower for the populations that live near the trails.

Why is this the case? Researchers have documented that park and recreation officials believe that the poor and minorities need more opportunities and programs. Do these outcomes represent the results of a successful policy initiative in Indianapolis to meet the needs of the disadvantaged? I don't think this is the case. The potential locations of greenways were essentially fixed or predetermined when the system was planned in 1994, in part by the 1909 park and boulevard plan and, more generally, by the location of river and streams and historic decisions about infrastructure—the canal and rail line. By historic circumstance, these

locations tend to be in the center of the county, in Center Township, an area that has suffered for years from white flight. Hence, the disproportionate access the disadvantaged now have to the greenways system is largely a product of the very forces that left them concentrated in the central city.

Although minorities and the poor have disproportionate access to the system as a whole, this does not mean that populations are distributed evenly along the greenway trails. Rather, there exists significant segregation along the greenways themselves. We have analyzed the distribution of African American population along the Monon Trail, the most heavily used trail in the system. If you were a user traveling from the northern county border to central business district in the heart of the city, you would first pass through neighborhoods that are predominantly or all white and then, upon approaching and entering Center Township, move into neighborhoods that are mostly or 100 percent black. Racial and economic segregation along the trails is an indicator of the challenges that exist in achieving the goal of linkage and, more generally, in making the greenways system sustainable.

So our data show that people like and use the greenways. The data also show that the disadvantaged have access to them, although this is a serendipitous result associated with historic circumstance. The third dimension of sustainability, the ecological dimension, remains to be considered. The available evidence suggests that the greenways are not very green and, moreover, that the ecological health of the greenways is not a priority of system development or management. Only two studies of the ecology of individual greenways are available, one of the terrestrial ecology of one of the conservation corridors and the other of aquatic habitat and biodiversity in streams in the greenways system. Tim Brothers, an IUPUI biogeographer who completed the former, found that nothing about the riparian forest was natural, that invasive exotic species predominated in many places, and that expected riparian species were missing or failing to recruit, in part because of changes in the hydrologic regimes of the aquatic systems.

Aquatic ecologists use habitat and diversity indices to track the quality of aquatic ecosystems. In her dissertation in the mid-1990s, Indiana Department of Natural Resources ecologist Gwen White found that habitat and diversity were good in only one of six streams.

Within the Greenways Division, though volunteers make some progress, no significant funds for restoration projects are available for the foreseeable future. Division priorities are centered on development of additional corridors for recreational use. From an economic perspective, this approach clearly makes sense, for it maximizes use value of the system. But for individuals concerned about the ecological health of the system, it remains frustrating. My point today with this brief study is that it is exceedingly difficult to reconcile the different dimensions of sustainability.

I'd like to relate a story to underscore this point. The director of the Greenways Division, the man who is the heart and soul of the program, is Ray Irvin. I periodically ask Ray to talk to my classes to give students a first-hand account of the complexity of local governmental processes and the difficulty of implementing plans as ambitious as the greenways plan. In contrast to when I was an undergraduate in the 1970s, I find that my students sometimes are reluctant to raise difficult issues with guests and that I must jump-start the conversations. One time, after Ray showed before and after slides of construction of an asphalt trail along an historic rail corridor that had largely been overgrown with vegetation, I asked Ray, "Why are you cutting down trees for yuppies in spandex?" He was momentarily taken aback, as were my students. He eventually answered that the vegetation was mostly exotic honeysuckle anyway, that he believed trade-offs were inevitable, that it is essential to build support for the system overall by providing recreational opportunities, and that he is committed to restoration of natural systems and will do so as funds allow.

My point in relating this story to you today is not to second-guess greenway priorities. Rather, it is that sustainable development is an impossible ideal precisely because it necessarily involves reconciliation of multiple, competing objectives.

Where do these examples leave us?

Although their settings are drastically different, these stories share surprising similarities, at least to my way of thinking. In each place, processes of development and urbanization have placed stress on resources, degraded environment and resulted in uneven or inequitable distribution of wealth. In each place, people are attempting to manage complex systems that have been

changed over years without conscious management. Like Innes and Booher, I do not believe that we can control these processes, certainly not from the top down. The best we can do is influence the direction of change.

In response to problems, leaders in each place are developing planning processes that share common elements and incorporate hallmarks of best practice:

- their planning processes are participatory and involve seeking consensus among stakeholders;
- each involves use of measurable performance indicators; and
- each requires novel leadership.

Finally, in each place, leaders recognize the three dimensions of sustainability: economics, ecology, and equity. Protection and conservation of natural resources are explicit goals in both Nha Trang and Indianapolis. Economic development tied to resource development and use is an explicit goal in each place. Officials view tourism and recreation both as an end and as a means to improved stewardship. Concerns about equity are latent in both places: tensions easily could emerge between wealthy foreign tourists and poor Vietnamese nationals or between middle class white recreationists passing through poor, African American neighborhoods.

Neither place is assured of success, but each place is trying, attempting to learn from the past to build for the future.

Sustainability, in the end analysis, is a Holy Grail, an impossible ideal. It is an ideal that necessarily involves reconciliation of competing objectives and interests. The extent to which the ideal will be realized hinges on leaders in each place, their vision, and their ability to motivate stakeholders with diverse interests to reconcile those interests in hopes of a greater good.

The tasks these people face are fraught with difficulty and uncertainty and they doubtless will encounter many setbacks. I have no illusion that there exists some sustainable state that they can achieve and perpetuate, and one easily could survey their situations and despair over their prospects. Yet I am cautiously optimistic.

Viet Nam has only a rudimentary institutional structure for environmental protection, fledgling initiatives to conserve biodiversity, and few financial

resources. Yet the nation has made progress during the 15 years of Doi Moi, and 15 years is but a moment in the evolution of this 1,000-year-old nation.

Indianapolis ranks well below its peer cities in park-land per capita, and the potential of park plans laid out nearly one century ago is only now being realized. Yet in five short years a vibrant system of greenways has been established, and more than one million people per year now visit corridors that not long ago were considered by many to be derelict landscapes.

These small steps represent real progress—progress that we can and must nurture and support—for these small steps are the only ways that we can pursue our impossible ideals.