

Ecocities Rising

The solution has been with us for 4,500 years:

Raise the pedestrian city, town and village on artificial fill. (The first full-fledged cities of the Mesopotamian Valley were simply raised above the floods.)

A. What ecocity development is all about – in flood areas and everywhere

1. Be aware of "access by proximity." Design so what you need is nearby.
2. On constructed mounds, build compact, car-free, tall, small footprint pedestrian cities with transit, bicycles and centers-oriented development...
3. ...while steadily and systematically removing buildings farther from the centers. Do this with willing seller deals empowered by governments and land trusts and using tools like transfer of development rights (TDR). Slogan: "Roll Back Sprawl."
4. Use clustered buildings connected at ground level by streets and connected by pedestrian bridges at a publicly accessible level or two above the streets.

B. What ecocity development does – in flood areas

1. By covering very little land area per person it makes possible raising the level of the city, say 15 to 25 feet. This cannot be done for massively land consuming low-density development. By rising above the floods, no one gets killed and no serious material losses are incurred as the sea rises. (In areas of higher density development that already exist, that can't be raised, dikes are the only way.)
2. By raising the city, town, village or neighborhood center and hardening its edge to the water, the community is protected from sea level rise, inland flood and coastal tsunamis.

C. What ecocity development does – everywhere in the world

1. By systematically eliminating cars and removing sprawl, it saves energy in a gigantic way combating climate change at its source.
2. It also saves and restores natural environments and agricultural land in a massive way. If planting billions of trees will help reverse global heating, creating new open space for reforestation by way of ecocity development also serves to combat global heating.
3. By radically reducing energy demand, ecocity development makes healthier yet more expensive solar, wind and geothermal energy affordable and practical.
4. By removing the necessity of buying a car for access to city and nature and saving enormous amounts of money, social justice is served for lower income people.
5. Any place adopting this ecocity solution would be a model for transforming cities everywhere in the world, not just in flood-prone areas. In other words, the potential for world leadership for early pioneer cities adopting this approach is great and potentially very rewarding.

