



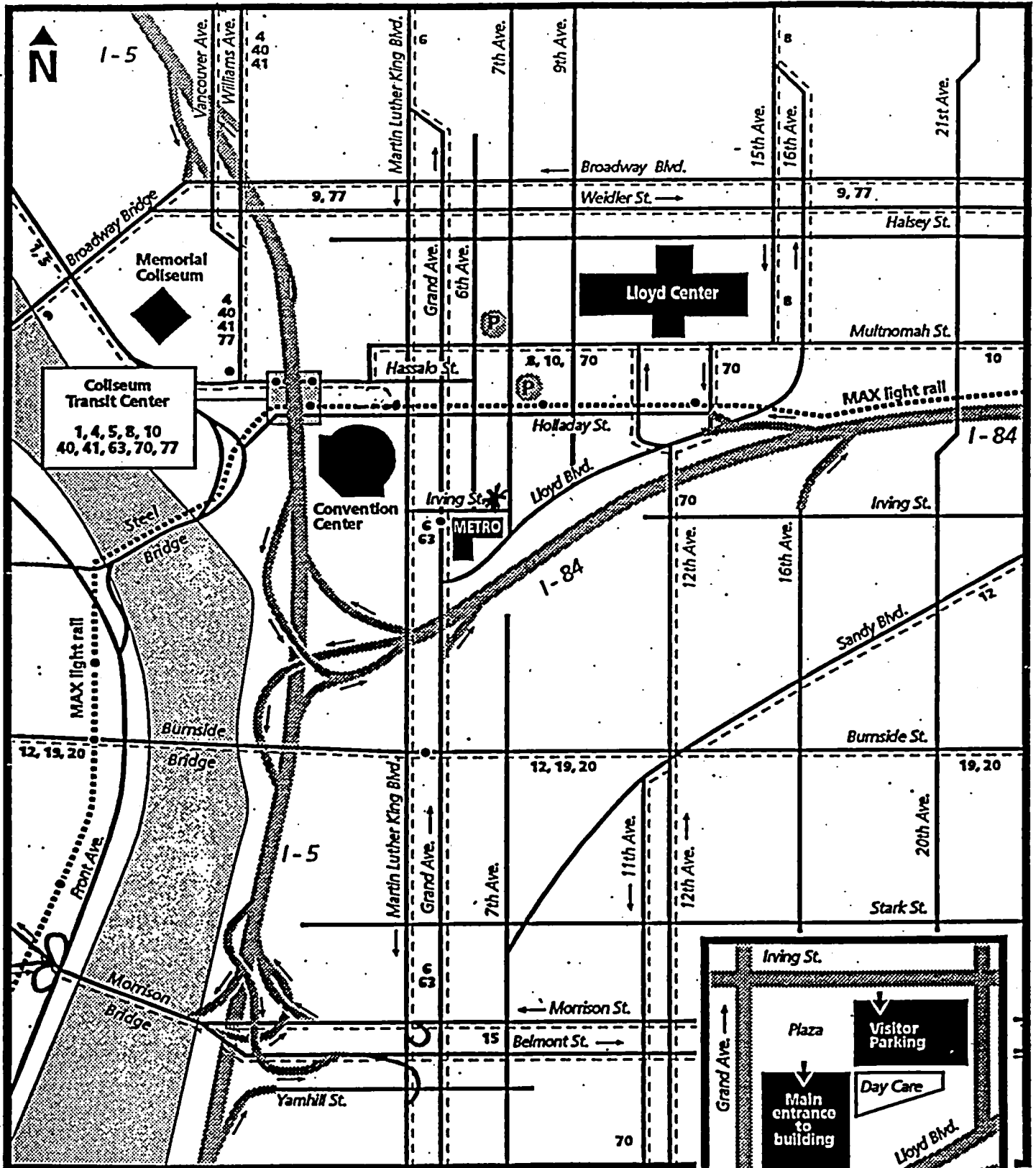
METRO

Meeting: **FUTURE VISION COMMISSION**
Date: **August 29, 1994**
Day: **Monday**
Time: **4:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.**
Place: **Metro, Room 370**

| | <u>Approximate Time</u> |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. CALL TO ORDER | 15 minutes |
| 2. ROLL CALL | |
| 3. PUBLIC COMMENT | |
| 4. OTHER BUSINESS | |
| 5. WORK SESSION ◦ Carrying Capacity Discussion | 135 minutes |

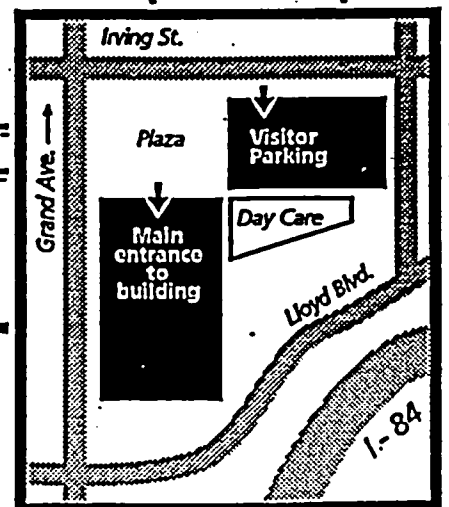
Enclosures:
Memo from Ethan Seltzer
Excerpt from Biophilia by Edward O. Wilson

Questions? Call Barbara Duncan at 797-1562.



Legend

- = bus route
- 70 = bus number
- = street
- Ⓟ = public parking; \$2 half day, \$4 full day
- ▨ = freeway
- ⋯ = max
- = bus/max stop



Enter Metro visitor parking from Irving Street (time limit 4 hours per visit). Enter Metro Regional Headquarters from the plaza.

August 24, 1994

To: Members of the Future Vision Commission
From: Ethan Seltzer
Re: Carrying Capacity Discussion

At the last meeting the Commission agreed to arrive at its findings regarding carrying capacity through the following process:

FIRST, the Commission will identify carrying capacity constraints currently facing the region, utilizing Wim's framework as a checklist for ensuring that the discussion is of sufficient breadth. Your staff will take the results of these discussions, sort them by Wim's categories, and identify those that will be long-term in nature. Staff will also review previous work of the Commission and incorporate it wherever possible. Finally, staff will also suggest how the carrying capacity constraints link up with the draft vision statements.

THEN, the Commission will review the draft vision statement to determine how it responds to the carrying capacity constraints we presently know about, and what it does to prevent the creation of new or expanded constraints in the future. Your conclusions regarding carrying capacity should be reflected in your vision statements and their accompanying monitoring efforts and action steps.

FINALLY, the Commission, in subcommittees, will be asked to translate the draft vision statement, now modified or at least evaluated as the result of your carrying capacity discussion, into guidance for the development of each element of the regional framework plan and into instructions for the next Future Vision Commission. This "translation" of the draft vision should itself reside within a broader chapter on implementation.

Completing this discussion as outlined above will provide you with findings regarding carrying capacity, develop the next draft of your vision statement, and deliver the first draft of your implementation chapter. In addition, the Commission has been asked to review the Region 2040 results, and Commission members have expressed a desire to meet in subcommittees as soon as possible to work on implementation and the relationship of the vision to the elements of the Regional Framework Plan. Accordingly, the agendas for your next several months of meetings should be:

- August 29 Identify carrying capacity constraints for water, air, and land
- September 5 Labor Day - no meeting
- September 12 Review staff sort of carrying capacity constraints; discuss draft vision statement response to carrying capacity constraints; propose revisions
- September 19 Review amended vision statement
- September 26 Meet in Subcommittees: review regional framework plan elements, etc.
- October 3 Meet in Subcommittees: review regional framework plan elements, etc.
- October 10 Meet in Subcommittees: review regional framework plan elements, etc.
- October 17 Full Commission: presentations by subcommittees, first draft implementation chapter
- October 24 Full Commission: discuss and revise implementation chapter
- October 31 Region 2040 briefing; discuss vis-a-vis vision
- November 7 Develop Region 2040 comments
- November 10 Deliver Region 2040 comments to Metro Council

- November 14 Discuss education paper and incorporate revisions as necessary
- November 21 Review final revised draft; initiate contact with new Council members
- November 28 No meeting
- December 5, 12, 19 Invited testimony or additional development of vision chapters
- December 26 No meeting
- January 2 No meeting
- January 9 Review and revise as necessary
- January 16 Meet with/brief new Council; discuss hearings process and calendar

Please note that this schedule is predicated on identifying the bulk of the carrying capacity constraints at your next meeting. Staff will review and add to the list, but the Commission will need to focus its efforts at the next meeting in order to stay on track. Therefore, please review Wim's paper, previous memo's, and come prepared with your own thoughts about the state of the region.

Feel free to contact myself (725-5170) or Ken Gervais (797-1736) should you have any comments or questions.

Thanks!

Aldo Leopold, the pioneer ecologist and author of *Sand County Almanac*, defined an ethic as a set of rules invented to meet circumstances so new or intricate, or else encompassing responses so far in the future, that the average person cannot foresee the final outcome. What is good for you and me at this moment might easily sour within ten years, and what seems ideal for the next few decades could ruin future generations. That is why any ethic worthy of the name has to encompass the distant future. The relationships of ecology and the human mind are too intricate to be understood entirely by unaided intuition, by common sense—that overrated capacity composed of the set of prejudices we acquire by the age of eighteen.

Values are time-dependent, making them all the more difficult to carve in stone. We want health, security, freedom, and pleasure for ourselves and our families. For distant generations we wish the same but not at any great personal cost. The difficulty created for the conservation ethic is that natural selection has programmed people to think mostly in physiological time. Their minds travel back and forth across hours, days, or at most a hundred years. The forests may all be cut, radiation slowly rise, and the winters grow steadily colder, but if the effects are unlikely to become decisive for a few generations, very few people will be stirred to revolt. Ecological and evolutionary time, spanning centuries and millennia, can be conceived in an intellectual mode but has no immediate emotional impact. Only through an unusual amount of education and reflective thought do people come to respond emotionally to far-off events and hence place a high premium on posterity.

The deepening of the conservation ethic requires a greater measure of evolutionary realism, including a valuation of ourselves as opposed to other people. What do we really owe our remote descendants? At the risk of offending some readers I will suggest: Nothing. Obligations simply lose their meaning across centuries. But what do we owe ourselves in planning for them? Everything. If human exist-

ence has any verifiable meaning, it is that our passions and toil are enabling mechanisms to continue that existence unbroken, unsullied, and progressively secure. It is for ourselves, and not for them or any abstract morality, that we think into the distant future. The precise manner in which we take this measure, how we put it into words, is crucially important. For if the whole process of our life is directed toward preserving our species and personal genes, preparing for future generations is an expression of the highest morality of which human beings are capable. It follows that the destruction of the natural world in which the brain was assembled over millions of years is a risky step. And the worst gamble of all is to let species slip into extinction wholesale, for even if the natural environment is conceded more ground later, it can never be reconstituted in its original diversity. The first rule of the tinkerer, Aldo Leopold reminds us, is to keep all the pieces.

This proposition can be expressed another way. What event likely to happen during the next few years will our descendants most regret? Everyone agrees, defense ministers and environmentalists alike, that the worst thing possible is global nuclear war. If it occurs the entire human species is endangered; life as normal human beings wish to live it would come to an end. With that terrible truism acknowledged, it must be added that if no country pulls the trigger the worst thing that will *probably* happen—in fact is already well underway—is not energy depletion, economic collapse, conventional war, or even the expansion of totalitarian governments. As tragic as these catastrophes would be for us, they can be repaired within a few generations. The one process now going on that will take millions of years to correct is the loss of genetic and species diversity by the destruction of natural habitats. This is the folly our descendants are least likely to forgive us.

Extinction is accelerating and could reach ruinous proportions during the next twenty years. Not only are birds and mammals vanishing but such smaller forms as mosses, in-