

FIELD NOTE 0000009

September 9, 2026

Field Notes from the Mabuhay Stories Experiment Beyond the Story Score.

DON'T LEAVE SOMEBODY ELSE HOLDING THE WASTE

BUILD THE CONSEQUENCES INTO THE DESIGN

THUS MAKING OUR ECONOMY MORE CIRCULAR ON THE WHOLE

Every powerful tool arrives carrying consequences.

Some are obvious.

Some are delayed.

Some are distributed so widely that nobody feels responsible for them until the bill comes due.

Human beings are very good at celebrating the capability.

Less good at noticing who gets stuck with the exhaust.

We build the machine.

We scale the service.

We accelerate the network.

We automate the process.

We increase the throughput.

We make the system more intelligent.

And then, somewhere downstream, somebody gets handed the waste.

Energy demand.

Water demand.

Traffic.

Heat.

Displacement.

Pollution.

Noise.

Fragility.

Dependency.

Lost work.

New forms of concentration.

New forms of exclusion.

Or simply the cost of cleaning up after everybody else has already taken the benefit.

Humph.

This is not a new problem.

Technology changes.

The human temptation does not.

We like to separate the useful thing from the consequences it creates.

Then we call the useful thing innovation.

And call the consequences somebody else's problem.

That is not stewardship.

That is accounting by disappearance.

The bill still exists.

We have simply moved it far enough away that we can pretend not to see it.

And perhaps one of the great stewardship questions of the increasingly agentic age is whether we can stop doing that.

Because artificial intelligence is not weightless.

It does not float above the world as pure thought.

It depends upon very physical things.

Buildings.

Energy.

Cooling.

Water.

Networks.

Transportation.

Supply chains.

Materials.

Maintenance.

Human labor.

And eventually replacement, reclamation, and disposal.

The intelligence may appear on a screen.

But the consequences live somewhere.

Always.

So perhaps we should ask a different question before the infrastructure becomes too difficult to change.

Not merely:

How do we build enough infrastructure to support increasingly capable machines?

But:

How do we build infrastructure whose consequences are themselves worth living with?

That's a different engineering problem.

And I think it's the more interesting one.

It's one of the ideas underneath Project Neon Oasis.

The project does not begin with the assumption that technological growth must be stopped.

Nor does it assume that technological growth will automatically produce good outcomes if we merely allow enough of it.

Both positions seem too easy.

There is another possibility.

Design the consequences.

If large computational systems require extraordinary amounts of energy—

Then energy stewardship belongs in the architecture.

If they require water—

Then water stewardship belongs in the architecture.

If they create industrial waste—

Then reclamation belongs in the architecture.

If they generate transportation demand—

Then transportation belongs in the architecture.

If they concentrate economic opportunity—

Then human access and community benefit belong in the architecture.

If they change the nature of work—

Then dignifying transitions toward useful work belong in the architecture too.

Not later.

Not after the ribbon cutting.

Not after somebody discovers that the externalities have accumulated in a neighborhood with the least political power to resist them.

At the beginning.

Inside the system.

Where they can still be designed.

That principle feels almost embarrassingly simple:

If you know the system will create a consequence, treat the consequence as part of the system.

The waste stream is not outside the architecture.

The water cycle is not outside the architecture.

The grid is not outside the architecture.

The displaced worker is not outside the architecture.

The neighboring community is not outside the architecture.

The person who never touches the technology but still experiences its consequences is not outside the architecture.

They are all part of the problem we are supposedly solving.

And therefore—

They belong inside the design.

This is where the receiving giver idea becomes architectural.

A healthy system receives resources.

Uses them.

Transforms them.

And gives something useful onward.

But if the system takes the value and exports the cost, it has failed the receiving-giver test.

It received.

It benefited.

It did not give responsibly.

So the question becomes:

What does the system give back?

Clean energy capacity?

Reclaimed water?

Recovered materials?

Better transportation?

Useful employment?

More resilient local infrastructure?

Public spaces?

Education?

Community benefit?

A more dignifying place to live?

Perhaps even entirely new kinds of opportunity we have not yet learned how to name?

If the answer is merely:

More computation

then we have described the capability.

We have not yet described the stewardship.

This matters because there is enormous temptation in moments of technological acceleration to treat mitigation as something we bolt onto the back end.

Build first.

Repair later.

Extract first.

Reclaim later.

Displace first.

Train later.

Pollute first.

Offset later.

Break trust first.

Form an advisory council later.

Humph.

That is not designing consequences.

That is institutionalizing apology.

Sometimes apology is necessary.

Repair is necessary.

But stewardship should aspire to something better:

Fewer preventable apologies.

Design enough foresight into the system that obvious harms do not have to become someone else's lived experience before they become our engineering requirement.

That does not mean we can predict everything.

We cannot.

Every system wobbles.

Every forecast misses something.

Every sufficiently complex project eventually teaches its builders something they did not know when they began.

Good.

Build for that too.

Leave room for correction.

Measurement.

Feedback.

Repair.

Reconfiguration.

Learning.

Failure that lands somewhere safe enough to teach us something.

Because responsible infrastructure does not merely optimize for success.

It creates somewhere useful for error to go.

That's another form of Mercy.

And perhaps this is where Project Neon Oasis becomes part of the same experiment as The Mabuhay Stories.

At first glance they look almost absurdly unrelated.

One involves Story Scores, children, crayons, butterscotch, and peculiar creatures in a valley that exists wherever people celebrate one another's gifts.

The other involves infrastructure.

Energy.

Water.

Transportation.

Industrial systems.

Computation.

Architecture.

Yet the stewardship problem underneath both is remarkably similar.

Leave room for the next person.

In a story, that means leaving interpretive space.

At a table, it means another chair.

In a community, it means welcoming another gift.

In an infrastructure system, it means refusing to consume all the value while leaving all the consequences for somebody outside the room.

Same principle.

Different scale.

Do not complete the system so tightly around your own needs that nobody else can flourish inside it.

That is not abundance.

It is enclosure.

Instead—

Build systems that can receive.

Adapt.

Share.

Repair.

Reclaim.

Regenerate.

And expand the circle of useful participation.

That is a much more interesting definition of progress.

And perhaps a more durable one.

Because agentic systems will almost certainly continue becoming more capable.

The question is not merely whether we can stop that.

Nor whether we should celebrate everything that follows from it.

The question is whether our stewardship can become more capable too.

Can we build cities that think farther ahead?

Can we build infrastructure that remembers its own waste?

Can we build economic systems that count the people standing outside the transaction?

Can we build technologies that increase human possibility without merely concentrating power?

Can we turn some of the negative consequences of agentic growth into inputs for better systems?

Waste into resource.

Heat into energy opportunity.

Water demand into reclamation innovation.

Transportation demand into better mobility.

Economic concentration into investment in community capacity.

Automation pressure into more dignifying forms of human work.

Not perfectly.

Nothing human works that way.

But intentionally.

Architecturally.

From the beginning.

Because the alternative is familiar.

Take what we need.

Scale what benefits us.

Send the bill elsewhere.

And hope the people holding the waste never find our forwarding address.

We can do better than that.

We have to.

Not because technology is evil.

And not because technology will save us.

But because powerful tools amplify the quality of their stewardship.

Poor stewardship scales harm.

Good stewardship scales possibility.

That may be one of the great opportunities of this moment.

Not merely to build more intelligent systems.

But to become more intelligent about the systems we build around them.

Places where the positives can grow.

Where the negatives can be reduced, reclaimed, redirected, or transformed where possible.

Where extraordinary capability does not require ordinary people to absorb extraordinary costs.

Places where innovation and responsibility are not separate departments.

Places where consequences are treated as design materials.

Places where the receiving giver principle is poured into concrete.

Perhaps places like Project Neon Oasis.

Perhaps many other places nobody has imagined yet.

Good.

Let them imagine.

Let them improve the idea.

Let them discover what we missed.

Let them bring better fibers.

That is what Story Stewards do.

That is what receiving givers do.

And perhaps that is what infrastructure stewards must learn to do as well.

Receive the capability.

Understand the consequences.

Build the consequences into the design.

Give the benefits onward.

Reclaim what can be reclaimed.

Repair what must be repaired.

Learn from the wobble.

And—

don't leave somebody else holding the waste.

Because neither the technology nor the infrastructure is the premium.

Neither the completion nor the capital is the premium.

The encounters made possible by what we build are.

And if our systems are worth building—
those encounters should Help Mercy Abound.

Naturally.

Organically.

And as widely as possible.

Without end.

Right on the streets where we live.

4EVER!



To learn more about Project Neon Oasis and become part of the well-stewarded solution actions it invites us all to take, visit ProjectNeonOasis.com today.