Living Cities: Sustainable Urban Design in the 21st Century

Friday, May 3, 2013, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.
Ford Building, ITW Lecture Room

G. Wayne Clough
Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution

Doug Farr, AIA
Founding principal of Farr Associates

Kimberly Gray
Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Northwestern University

Adilson Motter
Harold H. and Virginia Anderson Professor of Physics and Astronomy at Northwestern University

CITIES MAY BE OUR GREATEST INVENTION, but in 2013 the typical city is woefully inefficient in the way it transports its citizens, supplies information, manages water, produces food and energy, and treats wastes. The development and operation of today’s cities injure ecosystems and contribute heavily to global climate change. Sustainable cities, both exploding Asian megacities and shrinking cities of mature economies, must be envisioned completely differently from the 20th Century urban model to create a “Living City” incorporating principles of density, diversity, and flexibility around the “operating system of nature.” Infrastructure is decentralized and integrated with natural ecosystems. Energy is harvested from renewable sources and transmitted along smart grids. The processes that sustain the Living City are linked and managed through a “central nervous” or information system, which optimizes resource recovery and maximizes profitability through integration, monitoring and accurate pricing. The Living City is ecologically regenerative, economically vibrant and socially equitable.