
Transition Network Conference

Ruskin Mills, 31-May-07

Session Notes

Richard Heinberg: Relocalisation Initiatives worldwide - local strategies for adapting to lower energy future

I want to talk about what strategies of relocalisation are happening elsewhere in the world. Studies are pretty much confined to North America. What's going on with Transition Town network [over here] is about the most exciting thing I've seen anywhere you should be proud of yourselves, that said I am happy to share with you what I know is happening in America

Vancouver Bryn Davidson dynamic cities project interesting slide show on has to do with scenario planning, a lot of what we are taking about has to do with city policy

In terms of policy making scenario planing, it is v important obviously if we are preparing on the future of our region we have to have some idea what the future of our city is going to look like in order to plan for it.

It is the business of governments of to prepare for foreseeable catastrophe. Peak oil is much more foreseeable than earthquakes. Peak oil is inevitable. With every passing day the likelihood becomes greater. We can choose how quickly and effectively to prepare and respond.

Diagram Gives 4 quadrants so possibilities if we have later peaking and a pro-active response we can have a techno market response. We need a proactive response (from government). Where peaking comes v late and we are v early thats going to be [our only chance]

Policy makers don't want to hear that what we really want is to tear down community and put up something else. They want to maintain business as usual as much as possible, that's not going to be possible to a v large degree. Business as usual perpetuates myth we can consume as usual.

Nuclear comes back as another head of the monster. We have to destroy each myth as it arises. its possible to bring up the real cogent objections to nuclear if we look at how expensive they are to how long they take to build and the cost of uranium is probably going to go much higher If we try to replace coal then uranium will become more expensive than other forms including solar etc. Nuclear fails on costs - \$7/lb to \$20/lb. Price of uranium is rising fast. Politicians will listen to economic arguments more than any other.

What's the worlds supply of uranium – Uranium supply at current rate will peak before 2050.

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Take Away message: We cannot control the speed of energy decline no one can we predict it accurately at this point. However we can choose how quickly and effectually to prepare an respond.

It's the potential of policy makers in Oakland, California to prepare for earthquakes. PO is a foreseeable future we are certain that they will happen at some point tint the future but when in not known the longest we leave it.

Q: Charlene coulson - I work on scenario planning in UK government no one talks about PO, why. Can u enlighten me?

A: Just in the last 2 years it been a significant topic of conversation. Still I am attracting audiences who are unusually knowledgeable about the subject so it is understandable that gov doesn't know.

D Strahan answers, "Two of blairs advisors David king and Manning believe oil will peak in next decade.

George Monbiot asked this week where is UK government position on peak oil. They are not talking out it in no.10 because its really reactive and they are not going to create policies that are going to take consumers toys away. DTI is here to provide business as usual. We can rub along with a bit of energy efficiency. They are starting to know about it but don't want to talk about it.

US Dept of Energy is not talking bout it. There are 12 out of 20 who are discussing it. What might be going through Dick Cheney head that he is not talking about it in public?

Countries who are talking about it: Cuba, Sweden - after the oil report new more conservative government was elected.

Two answers to work with gov at city or regional level or public non-governmental organization like TT

These are not mutually exclusive. In working with elective leaders they are v sensitive to public demands if they are receiving lot of letter about PO then they feel as tho they have the support to look into it. But if there only one person they feel justification in marginalizing that voice and going on w business as usual.

With less oil there will be less transportation that has implications for tourism and global trade and food so economies will become more localised. Will that we planned or not? It it's not planned it won't localise in a v enjoyable way.

The genius of Transition movement is pointing out the benefit of things we need to do anyway. Local self-reliance makes for redundancy less efficient from a purely economic perspective but resilient from disruptions.

What does makes people happier is when people have the ability to make some difference in the policies being made in their area. But if they feel there is nothing they can do [they become despondent]. Economic = relocalistion makes us happier. The happiness index improves when people are more involved.

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In Ladak Helena Norberg-Hodge has made people realise the value of their own culture before it disappears or is swallowed up by Hollywood. Globalisation is destroying culture as fast as possible. Those of use involved in global equity are obviously concerned traditional economies are still in place and haven't been disrupted.

Books

Localisation - a global manifesto - Colin Hines

Going local Michael Sherman

Ancient Future Helena Norberg-Hodge.

Relocalise Now (coming soon) Julian Darley preparing for climate change and end of cheap oil. Julian Darley, Celine Rich, David Roon and Richard Heinberg created the Post Carbon Institute.

There are 140 post carbon groups scattered across North America. Doing many of the same things you are doing.

www.postcarbon.org

community solution www.communitysolution.org

Business alliance for living local Economies (BALLE)

livingeconomies.org

www.globalpublicmedia.com

There are some pretty strong climate change mitigation efforts going on in North

America www.seattle.gov/mayor/climate/pdf/resoluiton_finallanguage

Denver Colorado Mayor Hickenlooper is former oil engineer implementing programmes to min impar of energy

Hervey bay Queensland Australia MP Andre Mc Namarea discusses PO In parliament Established Queensland Oil Vulnerability Task Force.

Franklin New York, Sebastopol California

Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

In 2005 they planned to create an aerotropolis. Dr Richard Gilbert gave presentation to city council and said have you heard about Peak Oil. They commissioned him to right a report on the likely impacts to Hamilton and aerotropolis. They replaced with whole new plan. In 2006 council voted to proceed on Dr Hamilton's commitment to a sustainable future.

Some cities re adopting the oil depletion protocol its important to have targets. Oil depletion protocol.org

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Northern California Vulnerability Summit

<http://elizabethlogan.blogspot.com/2006/05/report-on-energy-vulnerability-summit.html>

How to influence the council:

Getting some local elected together show them some info and get them to talk about it go to city council meeting mention the event as often as possible. We got 50 of them in

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one room spent morning explain the problem on peak oil then we put them in to talk among them selves. No media

The day was a success. The key is follow up, since then several of the cities have undertaken vulnerability assessments, but these are processes that have to be continually assessed. So will have naotbe of these events. they have to be continually convinced that their electorate want this.

San Fran first US city to pass peak oil resolution but doesn't make it a binding part of policy.

Portland Oregon Portland Peak oil Committee 2006 resolution for task force that has a good report on how the city is vulnerable to oil. Portland online.com

If you are interested in working with elected leaders. The Hirsh report the Portland report at top of list the Hirsh report underscores the need of problem the Portland report is a model of what communities can do, they break the problem down into transportation, delivery of water, waste water etc. Act big - act now! (Naresh said he read some of this but v dense and not v relevant)

Daniel Lerch Post Carbon Cities project postcarboncities.net - book coming soon (the third literature for policy makers)

powerdownproject.org
transitiontowns.org

I am hoping the transition movement can be transplanted to North America, but unfortunately Rob does not want to get on an aeroplane I hope there are other ways that the wisdom or experience you all are accumulating can be shared. Many US projects are focused around vulnerabilities and negative aspects. TT is more about visioning. We need to vision how life could be better.

What I get from the Transition Movement is a huge buzz about a [possible] positive future. Many other reports are focussed around vulnerabilities and [written in] somewhat negative terms I would like to see more positive re-visioning. We realistically need policy makers to mitigate the enormous risks and vulnerabilities we face and that is a negative process to be involved with. We need to envisage how life could be better.

I think biofuels are wrong headed on many counts the places in the world where biofuels can be produced most efficiently are the tropics if we go round the road of biofuels very low energy profit strategy, if we pursue that over the short term local economies in equatorial counties will be devastated by the need to grow we will see millions starve while others drive their cars.

Anna's comment on advertising agencies

"Going after these heartbreaking images was one of the worst things you can do because you push people away, but bringing humour is better. There is a whole field called social marketing. There was disagreement about this.

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My question: Can you make a comment about how the transition movement is leading the way in green policy in action at a grassroots level (Resurgence angle)

The transition movement is leading the way in the sense of creating a positive community involved in proactive work along these lines rather than thinking in terms of risktaking. The risk is looking at the benefits of post petrol [carbon] world. It's important that people realise the importance [of what you are doing].