



**An Action Handbook:
Ideas for
Relocalizing our Communities**

Based on excerpts from

Relocalize Now!

*Getting Ready For Climate Change
and the End of Cheap Oil*

By Julian Darley, David Room and Celine Rich

Engage in Local Governance & Your Community

Community Post Carbon Guidebook

Form a Community Coalition

Run for Municipal Office with a Relocalization Platform

Reclaim Public Space

Barn Raising Project

Community Post Carbon Guidebook

Upon completing a Community Assessment Inventory (see the Take Inventory of Your Community fact sheet), create a guidebook that outlines the various businesses, services, manufacturers, organizations, media outlets and programs that are working towards relocalization in your community. This informative pamphlet, booklet or online resource will serve as a resource for individuals and organizations that want to know where to put their money, how to get involved and what is still needed in the area to create a self-reliant post-carbon community network.

Resources

Examples of a Community Guidebooks: www.comdir.bfree.on.ca ;
www.greenpeople.org/nb ; www.coopamerica.org/pubs/greenpages

Form a Community Coalition

Form a coalition for groups and organizations in your community that are working on relocalizing the local economy. The goal is to have a wide range of informed organizations who are interested in how their work fits into the bigger issues of the global energy crisis and relocalization. Create the space for these organizations to get involved in effecting solutions. Your Post Carbon Group can assist coalition members create new programs to deal with the coming crisis, add new thrust to the organizations' existing advocacy programs and help them connect with a network of organizations with similar aims. The coalition will bring together people from different backgrounds and allow members to see how their work fits into the peak oil context and why what they are doing is important in a energy constrained world.

Resources

Post Carbon Institute can provide a PowerPoint slideshow to present to community groups and organization (please contacts info@postcarbon.org)

Run for Municipal Office with a Relocalization Platform

Understanding your municipal government and how it works is essential for working towards relocalization. Running as a candidate in a municipal election on the issues of low energy living will give these issues a higher public profile in your community, especially if you win. If you are successful you will be able to bring the issues of peak oil and the positive options of relocalization to council chambers. By asking the right questions, even during election time, you will be able to force other leaders to address the issues of peak oil. Running for office is an effective vehicle to share information about relocalization with your community.

We encourage anyone who is interested in politics to consider running for municipal office. Regardless of the outcome of the election, your voice, opinions and questions will be heard and reported on in the local media.

Resources

The book *How to Run for Local Office: a complete guide for winning a local election:*
www.winelect.com

Contact Post Carbon Institute so that we can provide you with the latest research at
info@postcarbon.org

Reclaim Public Space

Work with other members of your community to revitalize an existing public space or to create a new site for neighborhood interaction. Each community will have a different vision of how to develop such a project and how the finished product will look, function and be managed. Project ideas include reclaiming an underused parking lot, converting an intersection into public space, or redirecting an existing park back towards public use.

Resources

The City Repair Project: www.cityrepair.org

Project for Public Spaces: www.pps.org

Barn Raising Project

Use Barn Raising as a means of getting work done on a community project. Members of a community actively decide to come to the same place at the same time to achieve a specific goal. The activity can be something that benefits a small subset of the population, such as installing a solar water heater for a community member, or it can be a larger goal of the entire community, such as creating a new community garden. The key features of Barn Raising event are doing work and finding time to socialize.

Resources

Definition and history: www.usemod.com/cgi-bin/mb.pl?BarnRaising ;

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barn_raising

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Revitalize Your Local Food Systems

Start a Food Co-operative
Initiate a Garden Gleaning Project
Develop a Community Garden
Establish Networks of Neighborhood Gardens
Strengthen Farmers' Markets
Develop or Join a CSA

Start a Food Co-operative

Help support local farmers and promote sustainable agricultural practices, by form a food co-operative to purchase and distribute organic and locally grown produce. Forming co-ops can make organic local food more affordable because as members of a c-cooperative your group will have more purchasing power. Individuals can pool their orders and receive discounts for large quantity orders.

Resources

Co-operative Grocers' Information Network: www.cgim.coop/manual.pdf

Cooperative Directory Service: www.coopdirectory.org

Garden Gleaning Project

Organize a Garden Gleaning Project to harvest fruit from backyards where the produce would otherwise go to waste. Project volunteers are matched up with property owners who do not have the time or capability to harvest the fruit on their property. The harvested fruit can be shared between the pickers, property owners, community organizations and local food banks. The gleaning project can range from a few friends and a couple of fruit trees to a citywide organization that coordinates a large group of volunteers, runs workshops, hosts harvesting celebrations and produces preserves, juices, and jams. A Garden Gleaning Project can work both in urban and rural areas, wherever fruit trees exist but are not being used for their fruit by their owners.

Resources

The Richmond Fruit Tree Sharing Project: www.richmondfruittree.com

The Fruit Tree Project in Vancouver: www.vcn.bc.ca/fruit/home.html

The Victoria Fruit Tree Project:

www.lifecyclesproject.ca/programs/food_distribution/fruittree

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Re-think Transportation

Start or Join a Car Sharing Cooperative
Organize a Walking School Bus

Start or Join a Car Sharing Cooperative

Start a car co-operative in order to offer car sharing as a viable transportation alternative in your town or area. Instead of each owning a personal vehicle, members of a car coop own a number of cars collectively for use when using alternative mode of transportation, such as cycling and walking, is not possible. Car sharing greatly reduces personal automobile use, cuts the number of cars on the road and shrinks the financial and air quality costs of our society's over reliance on private transportation. At the same time cooperatives provide the reliability and convenience of owning a private vehicle. Car co-ops can vary in size from a few friends sharing a car to 30,000 members sharing a large fleet of vehicles.

Resources

Definition and history: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Car_sharing

CarSharing Network: www.carsharing.net

Cooperative Auto Network: www.cooperativeauto.net

Autoshare Toronto: www.autoshare.com

Boulder CarShare: www.carshare.org

Walking School Bus

Organize a Walking School Bus so that elementary school children can get to school in a safe, healthy and fossil-fuel-free manner. Walking School Buses are programs that allow children to walk to school in a supervised group along a predetermined route and pick up additional students at assigned stops. The program can provide an alternative to the conventional and congested vehicle drop off and encourage both supervising parents and children to get out of their car and back into community space. The school bus program ensures that parents feel confident that their children are safe, while it

provides the opportunity for kids to socialize, stay fit, and learn the importance of people-powered transportation at an early age.

Resources

The Walking Bus Website: www.walkingbus.com

The Walking School Bus Information Website: www.walkingschoolbus.org

Friends of the Earth: www.foe.co.uk/resource/factsheets/walking_bus.pdf

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Revitalize Local Culture

Produce a Documentary Film Meta-Project

Develop a Community Walking Tour

Produce a Documentary Film Meta-Project

Produce a documentary film about the work your local post carbon group is doing, with a particular focus on the processes behind each project. The film can centre on one project your group has completed and can outline the various steps it took to achieve your goals. In contrast, your group may wish to outline several on-going projects that you have been working on and show how the initiatives were started. Your film will serve as a tool to inspire other groups to begin their own projects, a means of encouraging greater understanding of the challenges of peak oil and relocalization, and a call to action for those new to the issues. It is best to start documentary films during the initial stage of a project so that you have footage of each step along the way.

Develop a Community Walking Tour

Organize a walking tour of your community. Highlight the region's pre-globalization history, discuss areas of concern, and demonstrate to the participants the possibilities and working examples of relocalization and positive alternatives. A knowledgeable guide will engage participants by introducing points of interest, explaining their significance, and share ideas about how the situation could be improved. The purpose of the tour is to educate community members about the localized networks that used to exist in their community, to create awareness about the current positive and negative attributes of your region and to illustrate the potential your community has for building a strong post-carbon, relocalized future.

Resources

Maps of communities by walking distance - A Very Beautiful Place:

www.authenticbusiness.co.uk/archive/AVBP

Common Ground: www.commonground.org.uk

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Take Inventory of Your Community

Nature and Resources

Society and Business

Municipal and Regional Political Structure

Skills Database

Local Needs Assessment

Conduct a Personal Energy Audit

Set Goals for Reduction

Natural Resources

Understanding your community and bioregion and its resources is a great starting point for deciding which projects and experiments to undertake as a Post Carbon Group. An assessment of your local natural resources requires researchers to gather information and coordinators to compile the information in an accessible and useable form. Map the natural features of your community and bioregion and include the location of arable land, weather, flora and fauna.

Resources

The Planet Drum Foundation: www.planetdrum.org

Society and Business

Along with taking an inventory of your community's physical features, it is valuable to create a map of the landscape of local civil society, public projects and initiatives and business and non-profit organizations in your community. Conduct a community asset inventory. This type of assessment is a valuable first step in identifying local capability and skills and will provide your region with a list of all resources that might be incorporated into a process of neighborhood visioning or regeneration. The very process of creating an asset inventory encourages community members to start forming valuable connections and relationships with one another. Find a way to share this information with your neighborhood; your group could compile the information in a Community Guidebook (see Engage in Local Governance & Your Community).

Municipal and Regional Political Structure

Get to know the local municipal and regional political structure. Doing research into the arrangement of local politics will help your group understand who makes the decisions, who holds sway in which areas and who to approach with different ideas and problems. Compile a synopsis and contact information on all advisory committees, commissions and working groups. Find out what laws stand in the way of relocalization and through what processes they can be changed.

Skills Database

Compile a database of who has what practical skills in your community. Local skills can be as simple as an expert knot-tier or as complex as how to build, install and maintain solar panels. Community members may develop these abilities in their paid employment, or practice these skills in the form of hobbies. Organize the information in an electronic database, which will allow you to make adjustments as community members learn new skills and people move in and out of the area. The database will allow you to quickly locate skilled people in the area who can help your group conduct research projects and undertake action-oriented projects. A skills database can also be helpful when establishing local money or bartering systems. Developing this type of database and presenting the information is an effective way will natural help your community value and appreciate local skills and talents.

Resources

Salt Spring Island Studio Tour: www.saltspringstudiotour.com/index.html

Local Needs Assessment

Collect current information on the amount of locally produced food, energy and water being produced in your region. Determine how much produce is transported into the region in order to meet local demand. Identify local sources of food, energy and water and calculate how much additional food, energy and water is required to create a self-reliant region.

Resources

Willits Economic Localization Project:

www.willitseconomiclocalization.org/Papers/Papers.htm

Conduct a Personal Energy Audit

Conducting a personal energy audit is a valuable way to understand how deeply complex and interconnected relationship our society's dependence is on distant, unknown and non- renewable sources of energy. The exercise will help you become more conscious of how much energy you use in a typical day.

Resources

Home Energy Saver Web site: <http://hes.lbl.gov>

AC Power Measurement device:

www.realgoods.com/shop/shop3.cfm?dv=3&dp=302&ts=1025344&kw=measure

US DOE Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy "Energy Savers" Web site:

www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/tips/

Conversion factors for petrochemical activities: www.chemlink.com.au/conversions.htm

Carbon Counter: www.carboncounter.org

Set Goals for Reduction

Once you and your group members have completed personal energy audits, create goals to reduce the amount of energy used by each member of the group, say by a factor of ten. By working together, the group will be able to support each other. The single, most effective way to reduce general energy consumption is by sharing energy use. A large portion of individual energy use is through private personal mobility, namely cars, followed by electricity and heating. Taking action to substantially reduce the amount of electricity or heating used in an average home is a formidable, medium- to long-term task. Do research into local and federal grants and investment options to finance the retrofitting of homes for energy use.

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Get Involved in Meetings and Media

- Hold a Film Screening or Film Festival
- Coordinated Letters to the Editor
- Raising Awareness with Press Releases
- Form a Relocalization Committee

Hold a Film Screening or Film Festival

Film screenings and film festivals are a valuable tool to raise awareness about the energy and ecological predicaments of our society's dependence on fossil fuels. Film screening and festivals are especially effective if participants are given the opportunity to discuss the film after the showing. These types of events are a great opportunity to increase community knowledge and advocacy, to raise funds for sponsoring groups. It is a good idea to provide a sign-up sheet for participants to get involved in the local Post Carbon Group events and meetings.

Resources

Contact Post Carbon Institute at info@postcarbon.org for a toolkit on how to hold a screening of the film *End of Suburbia*: www.endofsuburbia.com.

Coordinated Letters to the Editor

The letters to the editor section of your local paper represents is a valuable forum for getting your message about peak oil, low-energy living and global relocalization to the community, which includes both local citizens and politicians. The editorial section is one of the most read sections of any newspaper. Letters to the editor help editors decide which topics to cover in future news stories and editorials. Additionally, elected officials often carefully monitor this section and the editorial page to gauge local opinion.

Coordinate your efforts: gather together several local organizations and plan to write editorials to the same newspaper within the same week. The more letters an editor gets, the more weight your letter will have.

Raising Awareness with Press Releases

Writing press releases can be an effective means of sharing your message with your community. Focus your story on specific issues, perhaps something that is happening in your community, and outline the positive actions that your group is taking to deal with these challenges. A well-written press release can raise community awareness about the ramifications of our society's over-reliance on cheap energy and will encourage others to speak out about these issues. Press releases can inspire people to action and will give your group and its activities legitimacy.

Resources

Press Release Newswire: www.prweb.com

Press Release Free: www.prfree.com

Form a Relocalization Committee

Form a Relocalization Committee in order to develop greater public awareness about peak oil, the local and regional ramifications of energy shortages and the looming environmental crisis, and preparations at the municipal/regional level for an energy-depleted future. The committee can work to identify local laws and ordinances that inhibit relocalization and to develop laws that would encourage local self-reliance.

Resources

Citizens Committee on Oil Peak and Decline (COPAD): www.copad.org

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