The Role of Cities in Advancing Sustainable Consumption

Workshop Proceedings
Oct. 29-Nov. 1, 2014
Eugene, Oregon

Introduction
The workshop, conducted in Eugene, Oregon, was sponsored by the Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN), a professional network of city sustainability leaders from over 130 North American cities and the Sustainable Consumption Research and Action Initiative, or SCORAI, a consortium of international researchers working in this field of study. With 43 participants including international researchers, city sustainability staff and other policy experts and representatives of NGOs, this was an opportunity to bridge knowledge and practice in exploring the unique role of cities in advancing sustainable consumption.

Sustainable consumption is an emerging topic within the field of municipal sustainability but one for which a significant body of research has been developed over the past few decades. By bringing together practitioners and researchers, the workshop was designed to foster a shared understanding of the opportunities and challenges, potential next steps and additional research needs to aid local governments in accelerating the transition to more sustainable consumption. Specifically, the discussion was to help inform the following:

- Research agenda
- Policy framework
- Opportunities for future collaboration

Why the focus on cities? Cities have played a significant role in building sustainable communities and lifestyles. They're also are seen as leaders in addressing climate change and there is a growing awareness among cities, particularly on the West Coast, of the connection between consumption and the ability to reach local climate action goals. Cities are acknowledging this connection and beginning to address consumption in their climate action plans. But because this is still such a nascent topic, cities lack the necessary building blocks to take action:

- They lack basic information, data and analysis on which to build local strategies. Currently, few credible metrics exist for evaluating consumption and its impacts, making it difficult to ground local policy in measurable goals and outcomes.
- More fundamentally, cities struggle to find an appropriate role for influencing activity that is so closely associated with community economic health; the same activity that is driven by larger, more systemic issues in the national and global economies.

Research can help to inform these basic questions and enable cities to find effective leverage points for changing consumption at the community level. It was on the promise of this type of collaboration that the workshop was developed.

The following report provides an overview of the major themes and key findings from the workshop discussions, as well as some of the specific outcomes from its participants and work groups. The appendices include workshop materials and products as well as the original USDN funding proposal outlining the rationale and intended outcomes of the workshop.

Summary of themes and key findings
<u>Themes</u>
Some important high- level themes were present throughout the workshop and highlighted in the presentations:

Economic and natural systems are at odds
One of the most powerful and clarifying themes was that at a fundamental level, the economic and natural systems are at odds. The economy is driven by the goal of continuing economic growth, with its associated high levels of material and energy throughput, pollution, and inequities while the natural system struggles to maintain itself in the face of these demands. This is increasingly a losing battle.

Systemic nature of the consumption problem
Consumption occurs within the context of markets, regulatory boundaries, wage and tax structures, social and cultural motivators, etc. Cities need to continue to explore and experiment with methods to affect local change that align with and facilitate change at this higher level. Much work is needed to define the specific city opportunities that will be effective and their connection to the larger systemic change that is desired.

Re-focusing on well-being
The primary focus should be on the notion of well-being, that it involves essential conditions that are independent of high levels of consumption, things like secure livelihood, family and friends, personal growth and skill building, political and social engagement, good health but not material wealth.

Government influence on consumption
Panelists argued that government at all levels has had a significant influence on building a consumer based economy and society in this country and that government has a legitimate role to play in correcting this.

Signs of a post-consumer society
A number of signs that may point to the emergence of a post-consumer society – things like declining household formation rates, decreased labor force participation rates, stagnant incomes and a declining middle class.

Significance of the sharing economy
There was also discussion of "bottom up" movements that are emerging in response to these conditions – things like the sharing economy, maker movement, re-localization efforts and others. The sharing economy in particular was the focus of much discussion.

Addressing equity
Another major theme centered on equity and the need to address the growing disparities in income and social empowerment witnessed in this country. One panel was dedicated to this topic with some interesting ideas for harnessing both the market and the regulation of public resources (e.g. public space in cities) to help bring about more equitable access to resources. In considering ways to build more sustainable consumption patterns, cities should avoid replicating structural inequities and instead use behavioral realities to further sustainable consumption. Sustainable consumption should be scaled beyond just the elite.

Beware the rebound effect
The rebound effect is also important. Gains in efficiency or spending power often translate into higher consumption and fuel greater economic growth, thereby creating a vicious cycle.

<u>Additional findings</u>
The discussion also highlighted issues more directly related to cities:

The local government paradox: sustainable consumption vs. economic prosperity
Engaging local leaders on this topic quickly reveals the tension between advancing sustainable consumption (consuming less) and promoting local economic prosperity. Any suggestion of changing consumption is seen a potential threat to local business, sales tax revenues and other elements on which local economies are dependent.

Building local infrastructure: the recycling example
Cities should consider modeling government strategies after those used to build local recycling programs. Public infrastructure is needed in the form of regulations, services, education and more to support a shift in consumption patterns.

Need for meaningful measurement and metrics
City sustainability directors and their municipal colleagues are called upon to ground their work in real, measurable outcomes. This is difficult in this realm, particularly because of the lack of a feasible way to measure and track changes in consumption patterns at the local level.

Government power in the market
It's also important to be strategic in government efforts – to exercise power in the marketplace and leverage regulation, education and investment in the context of consumer motivations and desires.

<u>Opportunities within cities</u>
Several specific areas were identified where cities have a unique opportunity to advance this work:

City voice on systemic change
Cities can come together to support state and federal initiatives such as carbon tax, income tax reform, product labeling, wage and worker policies and others.

Framing for local audiences
Cities can frame the issue for local leaders in terms that resonate (probably something other than "sustainable consumption").

Policy areas: housing, economic development, institutional purchasing, food management
Several high leverage policy areas were identified such as housing type and location, local community development, government and institutional purchasing and sustainable food management strategies

Advancing equity
Cities should practice equity early and often so it's not an afterthought but a driving force in achieving sustainable consumption. Consumption options and choices vary significantly across cultural and socio-economic lines. There is likely no one-size-fits-all approach to affect change and all levels of society need to have opportunities.

Regulatory mechanisms: balanced, proactive
Cities need to consider a balanced, proactive regulatory approach as new business and consumption models emerge in local communities. Many are currently challenged to respond to concerns about Uber and Airbnb, for example, without the benefit of a broader understanding or set of goals for sustainable consumption. This may produce a forced regulatory response that does not take a comprehensive approach.

Innovation: new business models and forms of exchange
Cities have a unique opportunity to foster grassroots innovations – things like sharing ventures, co-housing or shared transportation infrastructure. These and other related innovations should be nurtured, evaluated and disseminated to other cities.

Workshop outcomes
Participants organized into a number of work groups for the remainder of the workshop and focused their discussions around specific issues or research needs. Some of the results include:

Framing document: "Eugene memo"
There was a great deal of energy and interest around the question of how best to frame the issue for local leaders. A short and compelling manifesto or memo was proposed that would capture the essential aspects of sustainable consumption in terms that are meaningful to decision makers. The memo is included below as Appendix 1. The workgroup developed a short purpose statement for this work:

> ***To create human and ecological wellbeing, we must transform the economy so that it serves what we value.***

The group also proposed a toolkit or filter to prioritize actions, one that would address the question: does this action support a transition to sustainable consumption? This workgroup is expected to continue its work in developing the talking points and language for framing this topic.

The Role of Cities
A short summary was compiled, reflecting the ideas distilled from the workshop, which addresses the central question about the role of cities. The summary (see Appendix 2) includes a review of the role of cities, including guiding principles and specific policy actions cities can take to advance this work. This, along with the other results of workshop discussions, will inform next steps for the Urban Sustainability Director's Network.

Research ideas
- A list of opportunities for research on sustainable purchasing;
- A literature review on key drivers for effective city strategy to help inform priorities and taking action;
- A project focused on re-visioning the transition of urban form; re-appropriation of urban street to non-motorized uses, etc.;
- A research proposal looking at sumptuary codes (local laws and regulations that lock in certain types of unsustainable consumption);
- Interest in reactivating work with EPA on measuring material and energy flows through cities
- A proposed matrix to link city projects with SCORAI researchers that would also identify funding needs and opportunities and core research questions.

Other workgroup outcomes
Sustainable food management
The group focused on local projects to reduce food waste. A potential strategy would look at avoidable and recoverable food as well as supporting food relief/rescue organizations. Cities could engage residents to 1) measure what they are wasting and 2) try out a strategy to reduce or prevent the food waste. The group recommended a project that would focus on 2 local governments over 18 months as they applied the approach in the EPA's Food too Good to Waste Toolkit.

Grassroots sharing economy
Grassroots or neighborhood sharing was viewed by this workgroup as having the greatest potential within the sharing economy to reduce consumption. The group will continue to explore potential pilot programs of this type, with the aim of producing clear evidence of how neighborhood sharing can enhance social connection, build trust, foster disaster resilience and have other positive impacts in the community.

Workshop materials and products
A number of the workshop materials and products are available from SCORAI and the City of Eugene website supporting the event:
www.SCORAI.org

- Newsletter report on workshop
- Video segments from the presentations and plenary discussion sessions

www.eugene-or.gov/index.aspx?NID=2691

- Workshop materials: agenda, background reading, presentations
- Proceedings document

Appendix 1: Eugene Memo

Eugene Memo: The Role of Cities in Advancing Sustainable Consumption
November 2014

Cities in North America have an important role to play in building prosperity and wellbeing while promoting lifestyles that are compatible with the limits of natural systems. The consumption of materials and energy in cities is a significant factor in driving climate change and resource depletion. Increasingly, government agencies, industry organizations and experts in the research community are calling attention to the need both to consume less and consume differently. Cities can and should take action to make this possible.

In October 2014, members of the Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN), the Sustainable Consumption Research and Action Initiative (SCORAI) and other policy experts met in Eugene (Oregon, USA) to review relevant research and explore the actions that cities could take to promote sustainable consumption and wellbeing at the municipal scale.

A clear consensus emerged from this dialogue: ***to facilitate human and ecological wellbeing, we must transform the economy so that it serves what we value.*** This objective is ultimately less about increasing material wealth and more about enhancing the hallmarks of the good life to which everyone aspires: time with family and friends; strong community ties; a sense of belonging; personal growth through new skills and knowledge; meaningful livelihoods, good health and other life qualities that transcend mere income and material consumption.

Such a transformation requires a shift in cultural values and a re-design of urban economies and communities to reduce material and energy throughput while simultaneously improving the quality of life for all people. Advancing sustainable consumption in cities also entails supportive systemic change at the national and global levels: these multi-level changes enable the fundamental and necessary shifts in culture and markets that make the transition possible.

We need such powerful ideas to open a new way of advancing urban sustainability. Participants in the workshop came away committed to delving more deeply into potential municipal government strategies and to building a policy framework for new research and local action.

Why?
Urban sustainability initiatives are typically grounded in the principles of resource efficiency, conservation and stewardship, and we have all benefited from their successes. But with the compounding social and ecological problems we face, we must re-assess conventional solutions and identify those promising innovations that can foster more fundamental change.

To begin, we acknowledge that an economic system dependent on continuous growth in material and energy consumption is fundamentally at odds with the very real limits of the natural systems available to support it. There is solid scientific evidence that the world is in ecological overshoot. Estimates suggest that we are currently consuming the equivalent of 1.5 times the resources and energy our planet can sustainably produce. Our expanding global economy brings with it a growing ecological deficit as the market fails to capture the true cost of such growth. Climate change, environmental degradation and

resource depletion are symptoms of an economic system living beyond its means. we may already have entered an era of uneconomic growth in which the (largely unaccounted) costs exceed the readily measured benefits.

We cannot look to technology advances alone to solve our problem. In a world with a growing population and expanding consumption aspirations, sustainable or "green" technologies are not sufficient to 'decouple' the economy from our supporting ecosystems. Efficiency gains cannot offset growing demand and instead lead to further expansion in production and consumption, creating a vicious cycle. The International Energy Agency concludes that reducing resource depletion rates will not be achieved by efficiency gains in isolation. The transition toward renewable energy requires absolute reductions in demand.

Rising expectations worldwide create an additional challenge: *current North American consumption levels cannot be replicated on a global scale or even maintained in North America.* Any meaningful discussion of changing consumption has to address fair sharing of the world's ecological and economic output and advance solutions that reverse growing inequality. There is widespread recognition that the relatively wealthy are consuming far more than their share, while others are left without even the basics.

There are indications that new ways of understanding prosperity are emerging. Public opinion in the US supports the notion that we would be better off if there were less overall consumption and greater equality. There is increasing evidence that more material wealth over a certain threshold adds little to happiness, and may actually undermine wellbeing. Some young people are rejecting high-impact suburban lifestyles to adopt lower impact ways of life. New forms of ownership and exchange, often aided by technology, are appearing in cities across the world with growing interest in sharing, borrowing, renting and repair. New business models and enterprises are developing to reflect longer-term social interests. The continuous economic growth paradigm itself is now increasingly being challenged; other social and ecological indicators are being proposed that are superior to per capita gross domestic product (GDP) as measures of general wellbeing.

Guiding principles for local actions:

1. **Envision prosperity as a holistic, integrated concept**: Real prosperity supports individual, social and ecological dimensions of wellbeing. Aggregate wellbeing should be the goal of progress in the pursuit of social and economic development. That means satisfying basic needs -- food, shelter, mobility, security, education, and health -- while also ensuring true personal and community development ('development' implies getting 'better' and not just getting 'bigger'). There are real biophysical limits to growth and we must advance human prosperity within these limits.
2. **Commit to equity and social inclusion:** Highly unequal societies are not sustainable. By committing to sustainability with social justice we also commit to equity in designing projects and policies, and in evaluating progress. Municipalities should support alternatives that provide households of all income levels with better ways to meet their needs, freeing up time and resources for the things that really matter: time with family and friends, access to nature and recreation, community volunteerism, building memories, and acquiring new skills.
3. **Enhance social capital and resilience:** As cities build toward more compact, cohesive and livable communities, urban form must align with more collaborative, reciprocal and interdependent patterns of human interaction, including consumption. People living in close proximity have more opportunities to share idle resources, to launch small-scale commercial ventures and to build community engagement and cohesion. Sustainable urban form fosters both informal and commercial exchange, augments social capital and builds stronger neighborhood networks and resilience in the process.
4. **Advance sustainable local economies:** A strong and diverse local economy promotes human

wellbeing by: providing a cushion against global financial shocks; responding to new business opportunities and emerging needs; strengthening local communities; and creating novel livelihoods. Consumers are becoming more interested in access to goods and services than in personal ownership. This trend opens new opportunities for locally-based service-oriented businesses. Cities should focus on creating incentives for building thriving local economies and on removing perverse incentives that undermine them.

5. **Keep the big picture in mind and work toward the long-term:** Taking a systems approach enables us to target our efforts at the appropriate level (macro, meso, micro) and take advantage of interactions across scales. We consider the interconnectedness and interdependence of systems, both short and long term effects, and the local and global consequences of our actions. Cities can focus on integrated programs and actions that lead strategically toward more sustainable consumption patterns in the short- and long-run.
6. **Collaborate with diverse partners:** Advancing sustainable consumption requires interaction and engagement across sectors (public, private, civil society, academia, media, communities) to co-create and take action together. Cities can facilitate connections among people, sectors and activities to catalyze change.
7. **Experiment and learn:** Advancing sustainable consumption in cities requires a commitment to sharing lessons on effective initiatives, monitoring and evaluating approaches, learning from mistakes, and embracing emergence and the unexpected. Cities benefit from engaging and consulting with the research community to gain from their insights.
8. **Set goals and measure**: Learning and progress over time is supported by clear goals and measures that indicate whether our actions are moving us forward. GDP per capita is an inadequate measure of human wellbeing. New indices must be developed and deployed to evaluate progress and in choosing among alternative policies and projects.
9. **Combine structural and systemic change with education**: Awareness programs on their own are limited in advancing systemic change but are effective when cities combine structural and institutional changes with educational programs.
10. **Take action and leadership:** Cities must be opportunistic as well as strategic. They should mobilize their assets, engage local allies and partners, and embrace the need to learn-by-doing; cities should be thoughtful risk-takers and openly self-reflective in assessing the results. As cities, we can lead through convening, demonstrating, leveraging, and activating others, and by creating incentives and disincentives to move sustainable consumption, economies, and communities forward.

Looking forward

The Eugene workshop highlighted several promising areas for local government action that deserve exploration and development. These include housing, mobility, economic development, procurement, infrastructure development, spatial planning, regulatory review, implementing green and smart technologies, engaging arts and culture in envisioning sustainable futures and others. Cities can also collaborate with the local business community, neighborhood organizations and researchers to test ideas and highlight new opportunities. But to build support for this work, cities have some immediate needs:

1) Development of clear and compelling framing and dialogue on sustainable consumption in their local context. This is essential to generate understanding and collective action among city leadership and community stakeholders and to explore how each partner can use the issue to address their priorities.
2) Guidance on actionable programs and policies that have the greatest potential to advance more sustainable consumption patterns.

The partnership that made this workshop possible can provide the foundation for meaningful steps in the future. SCORAI, USDN and all the workshop participants are committed to continuing this work so that cities have the tools they need to fulfill their role in advancing sustainable consumption.

Appendix 2: Summary – the Role of Cities

The Role of Cities in Advancing Sustainable Consumption

- Convene
- Demonstrate
- Leverage
- Activate
- Regulate

Guiding principles

- Practice equity early and often
- Build consumption into goals and measurements
- Keep the big picture in mind
- Experiment and learn
- Target efforts appropriately (macro, meso, micro)
- Remove or reverse "perverse" incentives
- Consult our friends in the research community
- Include both structural changes and education
- Envision prosperity as a holistic concept (well-being)
- Copy the opportunity model from recycling
- Be opportunistic and mobilize assets

Policy framework

- Integrate into economic development strategies
    - Innovative business models: incentives for retail sales alternatives
    - Targeted sectors: remanufacturing, product design, resource recovery, energy efficiency
- Balanced regulatory response:
    - Strategic response to unsustainable market trends
    - Comprehensive approach: level playing field, supportive policy for alternatives
- Collaborate and pilot neighborhood level projects
- Build and expand city procurement policies
    - Multi-attribute rankings
    - Durability, upgrades, repair/maintenance
- Aggregate city support for state and federal level action:
    - e.g. carbon tax, income tax, infrastructure investment, wage and worker policies
    - USDN, League of Cities, US Conference of Mayors
- Reduced work-weeks for employees (public and private)
    - Reforms to benefits
- Use policies for public/shared spaces
    - Informal markets, incubators, makers' space
- Housing alternatives:
    - micro, ADUs, co-housing, co-ops
- Align with climate action plans and initiatives
- Educate leadership/management and elected officials

Appendix 3: Workshop materials

The Role of Cities in Advancing Sustainable Consumption
October 29–November 1, 2014
Hilton Hotel
Eugene, OR, USA

Workshop Goal

To advance the work of researchers and practitioners in understanding and fostering ways in which living in an urban environment may accelerate a shift beyond consumerism—toward more sustainable consumption.

Through intense interactions among participants:

- Researchers will better understand consumption behaviors in the urban environment, role of policy in promoting sustainable consumption, and potential contributions of further research.

- Practitioners will better understand leverage points for policy interventions that may support the transition beyond consumerism and have a better idea how to formulate researchable questions for researchers.

Workshop Outcomes

To begin to develop action plans in the following areas:

- **Research agenda**. Identify information gaps and further analysis that is needed to direct and refine city-policy development. What additional research is needed to identify the policies and interventions with the greatest potential to influence consumer behavior?
- **Policy framework**. Identify the most promising policy initiatives to be developed and tested. The workshop will highlight opportunities in economic development, government and institutional purchasing, consumer behavior change, and community resilience.
- **Partnerships and collaboration**. Capture ongoing partnerships and specific project opportunities and identify project teams, next steps and key outcomes.

Workshop Schedule at a Glance

Wednesday, October 29

7:00pm	Welcome reception (light refreshments) Vistas I room at the Hilton Hotel

Thursday, October 30

8:30am–4pm	Workshop sessions (includes breaks & lunch) Hellman Ballroom
4:45–6:45pm	Exhibit tour at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, University of Oregon
7:00pm	Dinner at the Hilton Hotel – Vistas II room

Friday, October 31

8:30am–5:30pm	Workshop sessions (includes breaks & lunch) Hellman Ballroom

Saturday, November 1

8:30am–Noon	Workshop sessions (includes breakfast) Hellman Ballroom

Detailed Schedule

Thursday, October 30
Includes snacks at breaks, lunch, and dinner

8:30–8:50am *20 minutes*	**Opening Remarks**
8:50–9:10am *20 minutes*	**Introductions** Facilitate introductions among participants with a quick "icebreaker"
9:10–9:50am *40 minutes*	**SCORAI Introductory Panel Discussion** *Key questions & findings from research* *Presenters: Maurie Cohen, New Jersey Institute of Technology; Halina Brown, Clark University; Cindy Isenhour, University of Maine*
9:50–10:10am *20 minutes*	**Discussion / Q&A with SCORAI Panelists**
10:10–10:30am *20 minutes*	**Coffee Break**
10:30–11:10am *40 minutes*	**Practitioner Introductory Panel Discussion** *Key needs & challenges for communities, local governments and practitioners* *Presenters: Babe O'Sullivan, City of Eugene; David Allaway, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality; Lauren Norris, City of Portland*

11:10–11:30am *20 minutes*	**Discussion / Q&A with Practitioner Panelists**
11:30am–12:30pm *60 minutes*	**Plenary (Large Group Discussion)** Reflect on presentations, share additional perspectives, and distill main themes & questions to help frame remainder of workshop.
12:30–1:30pm *60 minutes*	**Lunch**
1:30–4pm *2.5 hours*	**World Café-style Conversations**

1:30–1:45pm	Explanation & transition
1:45–2:10pm	Café 1: What could be the role of municipal governments in advancing sustainable consumption? How can they influence the local consumption behaviors?
2:10–2:35pm	Café 2: What mix of regulatory and outreach approaches can have the most impact? How do we account for differences in income, culture and urban context in attempting to shift consumption behavior?
2:35–3:15pm	Café 3: What research is needed to help inform a municipal government strategy? What can the research community provide to help advance this work?
3:15–4 pm	Harvest the conversations and identify insights and results. Capture feedback visually.

4–4:30pm *30 minutes*	**Tea Break**
4:30pm	**Departure, University of Oregon** Participants board EmX buses for University
5:00–6:45pm	**Tour of consumption-themed photo exhibit, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art**
7:00pm	**Dinner at the Hilton Hotel** Welcome from Kitty Piercy, Mayor of Eugene

Friday, October 31

Includes snacks at breaks and lunch service

8:30–8:45am *15 minutes*	**Announcements**
8:45–9:45am *60 minutes*	**Panel Discussion: Intersections of Sustainable Consumption & Social Equity** Address issues & impacts of access, self-determination, local knowledge, community security, social justice and inclusion. *Presenters: Julian Agyeman, Tufts University and Douglas Holt, Cultural Strategy Group* *Moderator: Lindsey Foltz, Human Rights staff, City of Eugene*

9:45–10:45am *60 minutes*	**Plenary (Large Group Discussion)** What themes, questions & concepts are emerging? What do we want to be sure to cover in our time here? Are we on track?
10:45–11:10am *25 minutes*	**Coffee Break**
11:10am–12:15pm *65 minutes*	**Fishbowl: Case Study of Eugene** Group of Eugene community experts to frame issues and challenges, offer potential strategies, and ask for assistance. Workshop participants can pose questions and comments, and "tap in" to join dialogue more directly.
12:15–1:15pm *60 minutes*	**Lunch**
1:15–2:15pm *60 minutes*	**Plenary (Large Group Discussion)** Reflect on presentations and harvest main themes, questions and impulses.
	Invitation to Working Groups Planning team representatives to explain working groups, followed by individual conveners who will describe what/where of groups.
2:15–3:45pm *90 minutes*	**Working Groups** Groups will form to dig into issues, and begin developing platform of actions & recommendations. Note takers provided.
3:45–4:15pm *30 minutes*	**Tea Break**
4:15–5:30pm *75 minutes*	**Check in with Working Groups** Initial feedback from working groups about direction. Opportunity to raise issues and ask questions for feedback/guidance to group conveners and members.
5:30–6:30pm *60 minutes*	**Optional: Working Groups Reconvene** Opportunity for groups to discuss feedback and prepare for Saturday. Note: Groups can always continue to meet on their own time. Alternative: informal gathering at local brewpub.
After 6:30pm	**Dinner on your own and/or trick-or-treating**

Saturday, Nov. 1

Include breakfast service

8:30am	**Breakfast at the Hilton Hotel**
8:30–8:45am *15 minutes*	**Announcements**
8:45–9:45am	**Working Groups**

60 minutes	Additional time for discussion and to prepare presentations
9:45–10am *15 minutes*	**Coffee Break**
10–11:30am *90 minutes*	**Working Group Presentations: Action Plans and Next Steps**
11:30am–Noon *30 minutes*	**Closing Remarks** Conference planning team: reflections, follow-up, enlistment, commitments

Workshop Preparatory Materials
The Role of Cities in Advancing Sustainable Consumption
Eugene, Oregon
October 29–November 1, 2014

I. Overviews of the Field of Sustainable Consumption Research

Reisch, Lucia A. and John Thøgersen, 2015 (in press). "Research on Sustainable Consumption: Introduction and Overview," in Lucia A. Reisch and John Thøgersen, *Handbook of Research on Sustainable Consumption*. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.
https://drive.google.com/a/njit.edu/file/d/0BxT9LuCdrKBQanYtWjVfRzZ5RGc/edit?usp=sharing

Brown, Halina. 2012. "Sustainability Science," *Environment* 54(1):20–24.
https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxT9LuCdrKBQdWRyRUlUZmxBSTA/edit?usp=sharing

Allaway, David and Leslie Kochan. 2012. *Literature Review: Key Challenges in Sustainable Consumption*. Salem, OR: State of Oregon, Department of Environmental Quality.
http://www.deq.state.or.us/lq/pubs/docs/sw/2050vision/LitReviewKeyChallengesSustainableConsumption.pdf

Allaway, David, Leslie Kochan, and Cheryl Grabham. 2012. Literature Review: Alternatives for Advancing Sustainable Production and Consumption through Government Programs and Policies. Salem, OR: State of Oregon, Department of Environmental Quality.
http://www.deq.state.or.us/lq/pubs/docs/sw/2050vision/LitReviewAlternativesAdvancingSustainableProduction.pdf

II. Useful Background Material on Current Issues in Sustainable Consumption Research

Jackson, Tim.2009. *Prosperity Without Growth: Economics for a Finite Planet*. London: Earthscan.
http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/data/files/publications/prosperity_without_growth_report.pdf

Tim Jackson TED Talk: An Economic Reality Check (July 2010).
http://www.ted.com/talks/tim_jackson_s_economic_reality_check?language=en

III. New Directions in Sustainable Consumption Research

Vergragt, Philip, Lewis Akenji, and Paul Dewick, 2014. "Sustainable Production, Consumption, and Livelihoods: Global and Regional Research Perspectives," *Journal of Cleaner Production* 63:1–12
https://drive.google.com/a/njit.edu/file/d/0BxT9LuCdrKBQMjliN0dDNVBBa1E/edit?usp=sharing

Lorek, Sylvia and Philip Vergragt, 2015 (in press). "Sustainable Consumption as a Systemic Challenge: Inter- and Transdisciplinary Research and Research Questions," in Lucia A. Reisch and John Thøgersen, eds., *Handbook of Research on Sustainable Consumption*. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.
https://drive.google.com/a/njit.edu/file/d/0BxT9LuCdrKBQTTlwUGpkYVdGQXc/edit?usp=sharing

Brown, Halina. 2014. "The Next Generation of Research on Sustainable Consumption," *Sustainability: Science, Practice, and Policy* 10(1):1–3. http://sspp.proquest.com/static_content/vol10iss1/editorial.brown.pdf.

John Sterman Lecture, SCORAI Colloquium on Consumption and Social Change (September 2014). http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c891j7lnaYk&feature=youtu.be

Holt, Douglas. 2012. "Constructing Sustainable Consumption: From Ethical Values to the Cultural Transformation of Unsustainable Markets," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 2012 644: 236. https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxT9LuCdrKBQSFJSaWxOTGZXZkk/view?usp=sharing

IV. Innovative Research on Urban Sustainability

Checker, Melissa, Gary McDonogh, and Cindy Isenhour. 2015. "Introduction" in Melissa Checker, Gary McDonogh, and Cindy Isenhour, Eds., Urban Sustainability as Myth and Practice. New York: Cambridge University Press. https://drive.google.com/a/njit.edu/file/d/0BxT9LuCdrKBQTnI1eDZfVnM2Qk0/edit?usp=sharing

Hess, David and Quan Mai. 2014. The convergence of economic development and energy transition policies in state government plans. Sustainability: Science, Practice, and Policy, in press. https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxT9LuCdrKBQY01NYkg2ZzJqcTA/edit?usp=sharing

V. Sustainable Consumption and the Sharing Economy

Agyeman, Julian, Duncan McLaren, and Adrianne Schaefer-Borrego. 2013. *Sharing Cities Briefing Report*. London: Friends of the Earth. http://www.foe.co.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/agyeman_sharing_cities.pdf

Cohen, Maurie. 2014 Draft Chapter "The Illusory Sharing Economy," September 8, 2014. https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxT9LuCdrKBQQkVnaGJOMGNOaEE/edit?usp=sharing

VI. Critique of Sustainable Consumption and New Economics

Holt, Doug. 2014. "Why the Sustainable Economy Movement Hasn't Scaled: Toward a Strategy That Empowers Main Street," in Juliet Schor and Craig Thompson, eds., *Plenitude in Practice*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxT9LuCdrKBQcFg4eUxZd1IyVW8/edit?usp=sharing

VII. Additional Readings of Interest

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Workshop Participants

Name	Affiliation
City of Eugene	
Babe O'Sullivan	City of Eugene
Lindsey Foltz	City of Eugene
Laura Hammond	City of Eugene
Matt McRae	City of Eugene
SCORAI	
Philip Vergragt	Clark University
Maurie Cohen	New Jersey Institute of Technology
Halina Brown	Clark University
John Stutz	Tellus Institute
Jeffrey Barber	Integrative Strategies Forum
USDN	
Nils Moe	USDN
Leslie Ng	Vancouver, BC
Brenda Nations	Iowa City, IA
Lisa Lin	Houston, TX
Jo Zientek	San Jose, CA
Dean Kubani	Santa Monica, CA
Shawn Rosenmoss	San Francisco, CA
Lauren Norris	Portland, OR
McKenzie Jones	Flagstaff, AZ
Liza Meyer	San Antonio, TX
USDN Sustainable Consumption Metrics / Measurement team	
Arianne Sperry	Portland, OR
Christy Shelton	Cascadia Consulting
USDN Sustainable Economic Development team	
Paul Schmiechen	Denver, CO
Terry Moore	ECONorthwest
West Coast Climate and Materials Management Forum	
Shannon Davis	EPA Region 9
Ashley Zanolli	EPA Region 10
Leslie Kochan	Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
David Allaway	Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
Jason Pearson	Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council
Researchers	
Tom Bowerman	Policy Interactive

James Goldstein	Tellus Institute
Kent Portney	Tufts University
Steven Moore	University of Texas, Austin
Bill Rees	University of British Columbia
Esther Zipori	New Jersey Institute of Technology
Cynthia Isenhour	University of Maine
Jennie Moore	British Columbia Institute of Technology
Judy Layzer	MIT
Tiy Chung	Clark University
Lei Zhang	University of California, Berkeley

Other

Eleni Sotos	The Sustainability Funders / New Economy Discussion Group
April Rinne	Advisor, Sharing Economy and Sharing Cities
Anna Awimbo	Center for a New American Dream
Neal Gorenflo	Shareable
Vanessa Timmer	One Earth
Rosemary Cooper	One Earth

Proposal to USDN Innovation Steering Committee
Breakthrough Convening: The Role of Cities in Advancing Sustainable Consumption
May 7, 2014

Project Summary
This proposal is to fund a convening between members of USDN, leading researchers from the Sustainable Consumption Research and Action Initiative (SCORAI) and other policy experts to explore the action cities can take to promote sustainable consumption at the community scale. While the topic has generated considerable interest within USDN and the research and policy communities at large, little if any established or tested practice has emerged. Practitioners continue to face significant questions around issues as varied as credible metrics for evaluating impacts and the appropriate role for local government. The proposed workshop will harness this interest and momentum to delve deeply into potential municipal government strategies to promote sustainable consumption activities and begin the process of building a policy framework for local action.

SCORAI, our partner on this proposal, is an international network of more than 600 professionals working to address challenges at the interface of material consumption, human fulfillment, lifestyle satisfaction, and technological change. Participants are seeking to advance and disseminate knowledge, forge connections, and contribute to policy dialogues and practices involving these interrelated issues. SCORAI hosts annual workshops, a larger conference every three years and maintains a website, a dynamic listserv, and a monthly newsletter. SCORAI also serves as a springboard for publication initiatives including books, workshop proceedings, and special issues of academic journals.

List of Participating USDN Members/Cities and other participants
Participating USDN members
Babe O'Sullivan, Eugene, OR
Leslie Ng, Vancouver, BC
Dyan Backe, Gaithersburg, MD
Michael Armstrong, Portland, OR
Jo Zientek, San Jose, CA
Lisa Lin, Houston, TX
Donnie Oliveira, San Francisco, CA
Celia Vanderloop, Denver, CO
Shannon Parry, Santa Monica, CA
Corey Zehngebot, Boston, MA
McKenzie Jones, Flagstaff, AZ
Doug Melnick, San Antonio, TX

Other participants
SCORAI Board of Directors
Leading academic researchers with expertise in sustainable consumption
Policy experts from organizations such as:

- United Nations Environmental Programme
- Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
- Environmental Protection Agency West Coast Climate and Materials Management Forum
- One Earth
- Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council

Purpose/Rationale
The potential breakthrough is to advance the topic of sustainable consumption from the conceptual phase toward actionable programs and policies within a municipal government context. The work of the international research community has provided a valuable conceptual framework, articulating important issues and considerations, but it lacks focus and specificity in identifying local government policy options. We need to take the next step, working with researchers in the field to derive policies, programs and intervention strategies that appear most promising given research findings and lessons from local

practice. This next step is inherently experimental, lacking robust case studies and evaluation results specific to the topic. But we need to begin to address the essential question – what can cities do to facilitate a paradigm shift toward consuming less and consuming differently.

What might this shift in consumption look like? A precise definition for sustainable consumption is still evolving but generally emphasizes the following:

- Reuse of products.
- Repair and maintenance of products, to extend their useful life.
- Sharing of products (and services), including borrowing and rental; such efforts reduce idle product time, increase efficiency, and reduce need for consumption of as many new products.
- Use of durable, long-lasting, and upgradable products.
- Use of lower-impact products made using materials and resources that are rapidly renewable, replenishable, and less toxic.

The proposed convening brings together critical elements: established researchers representing a growing body of work in the field of sustainable consumption and production; city sustainability staff in communities that are beginning to experiment with or at least investigate the topic, and key policy experts who are working to bring theory into practice. The convening will maximize the interaction and collective thinking necessary to advance this work, with a professional facilitator drawing on lessons learned from other break-through convening examples. The workshop will be designed to explore 1) results of recent scholarship accompanied by peer review and critique, 2) insights from local practitioners on effective policy tools and 3) promising new strategies that emerge from the mutual learning and discovery made possible by the workshop. A final synthesis and wrap-up would generate a shared understanding of the opportunities and challenges, potential next steps and additional research needs.

For many cities, interest in sustainable consumption and production has emerged from local climate action planning, but there are important economic development and social implications. We would expect to focus on several including:

- Equity considerations: Enhancing the range of consumption alternatives provides households of all income levels with more affordable ways to meet their needs, freeing up time and resources for the things that really matter: time with family and friends, access to nature and recreation, community volunteerism, building memories, and acquiring new skills.
- Social capital and resilience: As cities build toward more compact, cohesive and livable communities, this urban form aligns with the collaborative nature of sustainable consumption. People living in close proximity have more opportunities to share idle resources and launch small-scale commercial ventures and build community engagement and cohesion. This type of urban form fosters both informal and commercial exchange and builds social capital and stronger neighborhood networks in the process.
- Structure of local economies: Sustainable consumption provides local businesses with new models and business opportunities that complement broader economic development strategies. Research indicates that consumers are becoming more interested in access to goods and services and less drawn to traditional ownership. This suggests new ways for local businesses to meet these needs through a focus on providing *services* rather than products.

These will be some of the priority topics for a 2.5-day workshop in Eugene, Oregon, September 18-20, 2014. Key questions we expect to address include:

- What role might municipal governments play in amplifying these trends and assisting a transition to post-consumerist lifestyles?
- What partnerships can municipalities build in the private/nonprofit sectors to make this transition happen? What common goals among the partnerships should be emphasized?
- How can cities integrate sustainable consumption into local economic development strategy?
- What are the distributional effects of alternative consumption patterns in terms of economic and social equity impacts across different populations?
- What is the potential to mainstream these trends? What are the significant political barriers?
- How can sustainable consumption contribute to local resilience and prosperity?

Proposed Outcome of the Convening
This convening is an opportunity for researchers and practitioners to build a shared platform for action by bridging theory and practice. At a minimum, a summary of proceedings will be produced that captures the key findings, discoveries and conclusions from the workshop. The workshop will be designed and facilitated to push for additional outputs, though these are contingent on the outcome of discussions and willingness of participants to complete the tasks, perhaps after the convening. Some of these may include:

- Research agenda: information gaps and further analysis needed to direct and refine city policy development. What additional research is needed to identify the policies and interventions with the greatest potential to impact consumer behavior?
- Policy framework: the most promising, high leverage policy initiatives that should be developed and tested. The workshop will focus on opportunities in ***economic development, government and institutional purchasing, consumer behavior change and community resilience***.
- Partnerships and collaboration: capture ongoing partnerships and specific project opportunities and identify project teams, next steps and key outcomes where appropriate.

In addition to these workshop products, it's expected that the proceedings will provide the USDN Sustainable Consumption User Group with material for developing a work plan and agenda topics.

Research Conducted or Consulted To Determine Potential Value and Feasibility of the Proposed Convening
The time is right for this type of convening as a number of the partners and participants converge on the topic to engage cities and formulate a path forward. SCORAI members are on the leading edge of research in the field. The SCORAI board has identified cities as a priority for their programming and secured grant funding to support a deeper engagement. In recognition of this shared interest and potential partnership, SCORAI board members proposed this concept of a workshop to bring together thought leaders and policy practitioners to lay the foundation for a policy framework that leverages the unique role of cities.

While interest has begun to coalesce within USDN with the formation of the Sustainable Consumption User Group and funding for an Innovation project on Measuring Sustainable Consumption, we lack a comprehensive or integrated strategy on the topic. The User Group is just getting started and has yet to map out a work plan or research agenda that captures the issues, projects and resources that might help advance the work. This convening will provide important capacity building and help to document and articulate the key leverage opportunities for cities, providing the basis for both the User Group's work planning and a broader USDN initiative on the subject.

Other allied or related work that informs this convening:

- The **EPA West Coast Climate and Materials Management Forum** dedicated their recent annual meeting to the topic of sustainable consumption and the sharing economy. To support this work, the Forum's Research Work Group produced a literature review that further detailed the state of knowledge, emerging consumption trends, and potential policy tools and approaches. The Forum has also produced a two-year webinar series on Sustainable Consumption.
- **One Earth** is collaborating with City of Vancouver in applying to the McConnell Foundation for funding to launch *Cities and the Sharing Economy.* The project is proposed in two phases 1) development of a scan of best practices and road map for action and 2) support for specific city-based pilots to advance the body of practice. Though the project focus is limited to the sharing economy, it will complement the broader exploration of sustainable consumption in this proposed convening with SCORAI.

Convening Design & Key Tasks Involved
The two-and-a-half-day convening, tentatively scheduled for September 18-20, will be designed for 40-50 participants and take place in Eugene, Oregon. Some of the key tasks include:

1) Design: with the range of perspectives and professional backgrounds represented by the participants, the immediate challenge in designing the convening is setting a structure that allows for a meaningful exchange of ideas. The typical conference format of panelists delivering papers/presentations to an audience will be too restrictive. Instead, the convening will take advantage of a number of highly interactive formats including small group discussions, one-on-one exchanges, world cafés, open space and other innovative approaches. See ***Appendix B*** for some initial meeting design concepts.
2) Facilitation: this strategy will require an expert facilitator at the helm to drive these diffused discussions toward the desired outcomes. We will work with Keli Osborn, former Division Manager for the Eugene City Manager's Office, trained facilitator and certified mediator, who is familiar with the topic and skilled at active facilitation. We also expect to engage Tom Atlee and the resources of the Co-Intelligence Institute for innovative ideas of civil engagement.
3) Common understanding: to quickly bring the group together around a common understanding of the topic, we'll ask the SCORAI members to provide a literature review of the key research findings to date. This will be accompanied by a policy scan drawn from cities that have begun to investigate or experiment with approaches to advance sustainable consumption. The EPA Forum has produced information resources to build such a scan.
4) Local hosts: we'd also like to experiment with an optional local host program where workshop participants can extend their stay with local hosts drawn from interested stakeholders, University of Oregon faculty, city policy staff and others. The hosts would be invited in at the conclusion of the convening to share insights and ideas generated during their host experience.
5) Preparatory call: background materials will be shared with the USDN project team to help prepare for the workshop. Key issues, research findings and other information will be reviewed in a call with the team. The team will also be provided with vitae from the participating researchers.

Description of the Commitment of Participating USDN Members to Use the Outcomes/Products of the Project

The City of Vancouver's Greenest City Action Plan is an ambitious plan for climate mitigation, climate adaptation and a green economy. One of the goals in the plan is to reduce the city's ecological footprint which includes strategies for sustainable consumption, waste reduction, food recovery, green buildings and green transportation. The outcomes of this project will help provide a better understanding of what the City of Vancouver's role is in promoting and supporting sustainable consumption and engaging residents to make that shift. The City of Vancouver would like to identify opportunities for a pilot project and specific actions that can support the shift to more sustainable consumption.

Gaithersburg is presently engaged in an update to the Environment Element of the City's Master Plan. During the process of updating this element, staff has been reviewing sustainable consumption and the shared economy. As discussions at the municipal level are fairly new on this topic, Gaithersburg would greatly benefit from a focus on the actions that municipalities can take to encourage sustainable consumption patterns. With the timing of this convening, it is possible that ideas formulated during this process and at the convening could result in recommendations made to the City Mayor and Council through the Environment Element.

The City of Santa Monica commits to using the outcomes and products of this convening to meaningfully inform our GHG emissions inventory, our climate action plan and performance metrics in the Sustainable City Plan. Additionally, we will use the outcomes and products to inform the development of sustainable consumption programs, policies and procedures for both the municipal government and the community as a whole.

Denver is committed to using the results of this project in two separate forums, one that functions at a city-wide policy level and the other that functions at a neighborhood level.

1. A new City Council Committee was recently formed to focus on the sharing economy, and will be considering policy and legislative changes. A set of policies, strategies and tools resulting from the workshop can help inform the deliberations of this group.
2. Denver recently launched a Sustainable Neighborhoods program, whose purpose is to help Denver residents implement sustainability projects in their neighborhoods and get recognition for

those projects. The workshop, research agenda and policy framework can help guide future community sharing projects that will be taken on by the neighborhoods participating in the program.

Portland currently has several programs that are targeted at expanding reuse, repair, and sharing of products, and we welcome additional research or examples that we can apply to improve these efforts. Portland is also in the process of establishing rules governing short-term housing rentals, and we expect to continue to engage in the emerging opportunities and challenges around this issue.

Houston is witnessing a growing interest in the community around sustainable consumption. With some city-led reuse and sharing programs in place, a handful of non-profits are also taking a lead in promoting efforts in the sharing economy. It is to the City's benefit to use the outcomes and products of the project to define ways to enhance, support, and expand upon what is already happening organically in the community.

San Jose has supported several efforts to advance reuse activities and a sharing economy, usually with nonprofit partners and within multiple City departments. This convening will provide staff with strategies to further these efforts more cohesively and better convey to policy makers and City senior management the environmental and additional community benefits of such efforts.

Potential to Benefit Many USDN Members
While much of the initial activity on this topic has come from cities and states on the west coast, interest is spreading across the country as cities begin to connect consumption with other sustainability goals and plans. The range of cities responding to this collaboration opportunity, both in terms of size and geographic location, speaks to its potential benefit and applicability to the broader USDN membership. The project team also reflects a range in the familiarity and experience with addressing consumption at the community level. These various perspectives will enhance the discussion both within the workshop and in sharing the results with USDN colleagues. It's appropriate, and valuable, to challenge participants in the workshop to consider all types of city contexts and to make the topic relevant no matter what the circumstances.

The most immediate beneficiaries within USDN are those in the recently formed Sustainable Consumption User Group, many of whom are on the list of invited workshop participants. The insights and learning that come from the workshop will help form the basis for the group's work plan and agenda going forward. The workshop is a unique opportunity to build capacity on the topic and begin to seed more focused work within USDN for what is now a nascent, but potentially powerful, subject within the practice of sustainable development.

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