The Role of Cities in Advancing Sustainable Consumption

West Coast Forum on Climate and Materials Management
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Overview

- Workshop background and overview
- Key themes and findings
- Outcomes and future work

The Workshop

The Role of Cities in Advancing Sustainable Consumption

Oct. 29- Nov. 1, 2014

SCORAI
Sustainable Consumption Research and Action Initiative

USDN urban sustainability directors network

The Consumption Problem

- Resource constraints
- Diminishing benefits
- Growing inequities
- Climate connection

Sustainable Consumption

"…the use of services and related products which respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life while minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as the emissions of waste and pollutants over the life-cycle so as not to jeopardise needs of future generations." (Oslo Symposium on Sustainable Consumption, 1994)

- Basic needs
- Quality of life
- Improved material efficiency
- Reduced impacts
- Equitable prosperity

Consuming less + consuming differently

Why Focus on Cities?

- Growing awareness of climate connection
- Recognition of cities as leaders in sustainability
- Lack of tested practice
- Research support for local action

Workshop Goals

…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****.*

Themes

- *Economic system and natural system at odds*
- *Systemic nature of consumption problem*
- *Re-focusing on well-being*
- *Government influence on consumption*
- *Signs of a post-consumer society*
- *Significance of the sharing economy*
- *Addressing equity*
- *Beware the rebound effect*

Themes

- *The local government paradox: sustainable consumption vs. economic prosperity*
- *Building local infrastructure: the recycling example*
- *Need for meaningful measurement and metrics*
- *Opportunities for grassroots innovation*
- *Government power in the market*

The Role of Cities

- *City voice on systemic change*
- *Framing for local audience*
- *Policy areas: housing, economic development, institutional purchasing, food management*
- *Regulatory mechanisms: balanced, proactive*
- *Innovation: new business models and forms of exchange*
- *Advancing equity*

Work Group Projects

- Framing document: “Eugene memo”
- Opportunities for sustainable purchasing research
- Literature review on key drivers for city strategy
- Research proposal: effect of “sumptuary” codes
- SCORAI: reactivate EPA on measuring material and energy flows

Workshop Products

www.SCORAI.org

- Newsletter report
- Video (coming)

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

- Workshop materials: agenda, background reading, presentations
- Proceedings document (coming)