

Pacific Cities Sustainability Initiative Meeting Minutes | January 15, 2010

Moderated by Peter Schwartz

Assumptions and Context

- **The Pacific Rim is will be the focus of most of the world's growth and development over the next 50 years.** In particular, the rise of China as a major player in the world economy has enormous policy implications for sustainability initiatives. California's location on the Pacific Rim gives it special advantages and responsibilities vis-à-vis the development of Asia and Latin America.
- **The balance between human population growth and resources will be continually strained under traditional models of growth.** In particular, there will be increasing problems in the areas of energy, clean water, climate change, food supply and environmental degradation. Thus new thinking needs to be developed, and assumptions and challenges to values and beliefs that reside in present models for development reviewed. In addition, institutions on the Pacific Rim need to cooperate and coordinate actions in order to create the conditions for successful sustainable growth in the region.
- Cities on the Pacific Rim will become the focus of policy discussion and analysis because **the increasing proportion of populations living in cities creates difficult challenges to sustainable development and growth.** The cities will be both the problem and the solution to many issues of sustainability in areas such as clean water, efficient energy use, pollution, food supply and security.

Vision

- A Pacific Rim forum will be an important institutional development for California public and private policy. Presently there are multiple organizations, private and public, profit and non-profit with interests, issues, expertise and opportunities having to do with growth and development of the Pacific Rim region. However, there are few forums for these groups to work together to develop a better understanding of the opportunities and threats that this development presents the California and western United States.
- Given the California orientation of this project, the PCSI intends to **bring the strengths, resources and expertise of both the Southland and the Bay Area together** in order to increase credibility and reach. These two regions will provide the right mix of interests and abilities to tackle the sustainability challenge in large cities.
- The Asia Society, in cooperation with the CIBER organizations of USC and UCLA and other regional organizations, proposes developing an **on-going, responsive and inclusive forum over the next 3-4 years to serve the development and growth interests of California and the larger western region.** Such a forum will provide all of its cooperating members a number of distinct benefits: better information sharing; development of coordinated coherent policy positions with regard to important development issues; networking opportunities throughout the Pacific

Rim region; opportunities to develop and execute joint projects; act as a touchstone for educators and employers; offer testimony and expertise of policy-focused organizations to share ideas and have an impact on public debate; serve as a focus for educating the general public on important Pacific Rim issues; and more.

- The PCSI will address (and include when possible) Asian and Latin American interests in its activities and analyses.
- PCSI proactively reach out to all institutions and organizations that share its vision for the development of sustainable cities in the Pacific Rim.

Possible goals of the initiative

- The project will be successful if people/governments think differently about sustainability, even if it is only a marginal shift—Small changes over time can lead to large cumulative changes
- Develop a sustainable structure or network of policy makers (and academicians) to promote sustainable cities
- Write publications with the goal to promote sound metrics and best practices
- Act as a clearinghouse of information on key issues
- Get policy makers to think and act more creatively and effectively in their sustainability policies
 - E.g., UCSD has developed a campus-wide initiative to actually become more sustainable: the Sustainability Solutions Institute (SSI). One of SSI's goals is to have UCSD become water independent in 5 yrs
 - Locally (Sacramento), regionally and across the Pacific Rim
- Influence thinking and action—PCSI should not only be a “think” activity, but it should also have a real “do” activity component, particularly citizen diplomacy, to all of its policy discussions.
- Be a credible force of influence in Sacramento—perhaps through coalition building—as oftentimes state regulations hamper local sustainability initiatives

Stance

- From the two possible stances—neutrality or advocacy—having a point of view is recommended to have an impact. For credibility, organization must remain neutral, but have data and working groups advocate solutions.

Scope

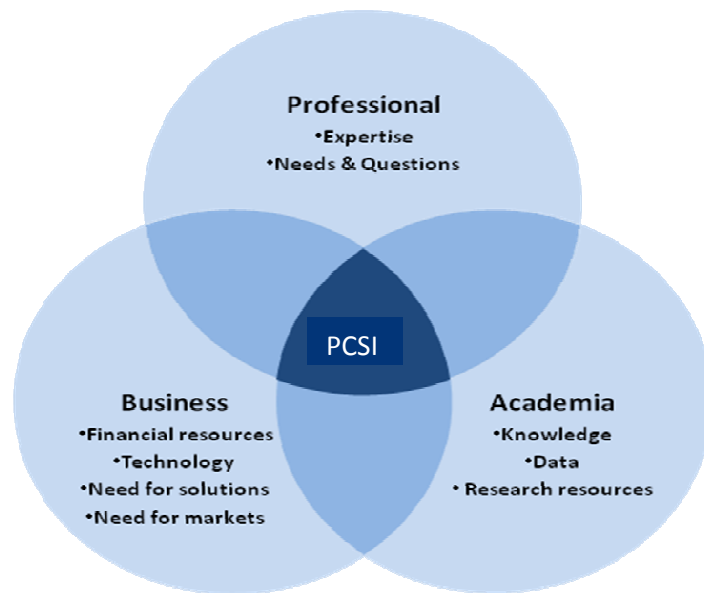
- In principle, a group of cities that impact California in any country that touches the Pacific Rim
 - At first, probably best to focus on half a dozen in the U.S. and selected Asian economies [warning: terminology is important—need to follow APEC protocol and use the word “economies” not “countries” (China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore)]
 - Second phase might include India and Latin America. India maybe so important that early engagement becomes necessary.

Audience(s)

- Policy makers
- Public at large (including civil society)
- Business
- Academia
- Youth

Approach

- The initiative aims to bring the academic, professional and business communities together. The business constituency must be more actively engaged.



Possible and available Resources

- [APRU World Institute](#) make resources available
- Stanford's research team
- Existing grant
- Matching grants from foundations
- Business sponsorship
- Advertising on a web-site—create a “green services portal”
- Create a 10K membership/advisory board for corporate sponsors
- Web micro-donations
- DOE funds
- Military
- Revenue generation via public events, conferences, seminars, etc

Potential additional topics—perhaps focusing on one main topic per year for four year (energy, climate, water, food)

- Systems of systems-approach
 - Physical systems
 - Regulatory environment
 - Investments and incentives
 - Human behavior and how to influence that
 - Ecosystem of a city, energy, transportation, recycling/garbage, air quality...
 - Social Systems
 - Economic Systems/cost/business

- What is sustainability? Oftentimes buildings that are thought to be sustainable often are not
 - Example LEED; With branding come boutique projects
 - What are the right metrics

Possible projects

- Help make a to-be-built city in China more sustainable
- Tackle one topic, for example water and...
 - Simplify the problem
 - Show its interconnection with other issues, such as energy
 - Stimulate research
- Sustainability conference
 - Y1: Study metrics around the Energy-Water nexus in SF, LA, SD
 - Publish a ranking
 - Y2: Add Shanghai, Hong Kong Singapore
 - Publish ranking
 - Organize Conference to share best practices
 - Important to segment cities by location and stage of development
- Thought leadership
 - Y1: Present framework for thinking about sustainability
 - Y2: Benchmark Pacific Rim cities
 - Issue policy recommendations and engage policy makers
- Issue a sustainable city prize—yearly rankings on key metrics can be useful in motivating policy makers and operational organizations
 - Based on a ranking and metrics
 - Prize money provided by the business community
 - Possibly in collaboration with existing \$500k Singapore prize
 - Engage and educate the media
 - Similar to business school rankings or corporate bond rankings
- Convening the conveners

- Create a bigger framework
 - Develop a joint point-of-view
- Collect Data
- Involve business (and possibly labor) through personal networks
- Include NGO's and associations
- Getting business sponsorship
 - Define Success
 - Define usefulness
 - Get \$10,000 from 10 firms
 - Get matching funds from foundations
- Organize mayoral training programs in China, in partnership with or with the advice of JUCCE

Additional resources

- Cisco: [City of SF-Amsterdam "Ecomap"](#) project on sustainability metrics
- IBM smart grid initiatives
- City data from Portland Oregon
- Existing data in Chinese academies and universities
- UN Habitat
- US-China Clean Energy Forum
- [Asia-Pacific Energy Research Center](#)
- [JUCCE](#)
- [ICLEI](#) and other non-profits working on green cities already
- Various Universities, U. of Hawaii, U. of Vermont, as well as CA and Chinese Unis
- EPA

Next steps

- Establish small CORE GROUP for operations/advice, to meet in February to synthesize an action plan and distribute it to the larger group.

○ Jack Wadsworth	○ Mark Levine
○ Richard Drobnick	○ Jeff Heller
○ Rob Spich	○ Kristen Durham
○ Clark Jordan	○ ...please tell me if you'd like to be on this list
○ Jay Ogilvy	
- Define a budget (Seed capital -> full budget)
- Develop a public definition of sustainability for PCSI—should be short, clear and motivating
- Establish an external and internal web platform

Events

- April 19 and 20 at USC: [Asia/Pacific Business Outlook Conference 2010](#) which has a theme on "Sustainable Business Opportunities in Asia"
- In May: Shanghai group to go to LA following SF conference on green finance.
- May 24 and 25: Stanford is hosting a smart cities conference for international partners.