

De-carbonising Our Urban Environment

Friday 4th April 2008 - 9.00 - 17.30

Cultivate Dublin

An exploration into how cities can respond to climate change and energy uncertainty

FEATURING LEADING SPEAKERS AND CASE STUDIES FROM IRELAND, U.K. AND THE U.S.

Supported by *Dublin City Council, Comhar (the National Sustainable Development Council) and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.*

Rethinking the City will present the issues, outline some of the priorities for change, and introduce tools for effective engagement in building sustainable cities.

It has become clear that we are facing, not a climate crisis or an energy crisis per se, but a systemic crisis for which we are woefully unprepared. Many cities around the world have sustainable development plans in place, some have strategies to reduce greenhouse gases and a few are even planning for the decline in global oil production. It is only the minority, however, who are daring to tackle the issues of sustainability, climate change and oil depletion together. We now urgently need an integral approach to forge new strategies for local government and to create community responses to these challenges. How we do this will be the focus of this year's Rethinking the City Conference.

With the key focus on cities, participants will hear about the major challenges likely to arise from climate change and peak oil. The conference will explore systems thinking, ecological design, urban food systems, transport and other strategies for reducing energy use in the built environment. Leading international speakers will introduce integral approaches to planning and development that foster community resilience and sustainability.

Who Should Attend?

Planners, traffic engineers, architects, urban designers, city councilors, city development boards, civil servants, property developers and businesses, environmental and Agenda 21 officers, community organisations, environmental NGOs and concerned citizens.

Schedule

09.00 - 09.20 Registration

09.25 - 09.30 Opening

Noel Casserly, Director of Comhar, the National Sustainable Development Council, opens and introduces Minister Ryan.

09.30 - 09.40 The Energy Context

Minister Eamon Ryan, Department of Communication, Energy and Natural Resources, outlines the challenges cities face from an energy perspective.

9.40 - 9.50 The Challenge for Cities

Daniel Lerch, the Program Manager of the Post Carbon Institute, a California-based think-tank, introduces the challenges for local governments in adapting to climate and energy uncertainty.

Session 1 - Thinking Together

We cannot overcome the challenges of climate change and increasing scarcity of natural resources alone. Currently we try to resolve them incrementally and separately. However, while certain indicators improve in the short term the total health of the combined eco-system we depend on is in decline. Seeing the connection between this systems decline and the future welfare of our cities is critical if we are to future-proof our development plans. We therefore need a different approach, one in which we focus on rebalancing the system rather than on the problems.

9.50 - 10.00 The Planning Challenge for Cities

Dick Gleeson, City Planner, Dublin City Council, introduces the planning challenges for local authorities with case studies from Ireland, Sweden and the United States.

10.00 - 11.15 The Natural Step Experience

John Harrington and **Michael Donnelly** of RealEyes Sustainability Ltd. lead an interactive session on the pitfalls of reductive planning and the merits of systems thinking. They demonstrate how planning techniques based on a systems perspective are both necessary and attractive options - leading to reduced costs and resource use and great ways of getting the right people involved in your decisions.

11.15 - 11.30 Break

Session 2 - Eco Cities

Natural systems are characterised by closed loops of energy and materials where a complex of interlocked functions builds diversity, stability and abundance. Human systems are generally characterised by a simplification of structures and functions, disconnected processes, resource flows which end in waste, and economics driven by scarcity.

11.30 - 11.45 Working with Nature for Regeneration

Erik van Lennep, TEPUI, introduces a range of technologies and integrated strategies that are being developed which work more closely with nature's designs. These offer the possibility for making our communities more sustainable, enjoyable, and more resilient to climate impacts. See tepuidesign.com

11.45 - 12.00 Food Focused Urban Systems

Bruce Darrell of *FEASTA (Foundation for the Economics of Sustainability)* outlines that the food we eat follows a linear path from distant factories and farms through complex systems of processing and distribution before quickly passing through our cities on the way to waste management systems. One way to break this linear path is by developing integral approaches to food production in the urban environment. Urban food systems can also help to de-carbonise our cities, while improving food security and building social capital.

12.00 - 12.15 Scaling up the lessons from the Eco-Village

Iva Pocock, of *Sustainable Projects Ireland Ltd.*, will explore the lessons that cities can learn from the experience of developing Ireland's first Eco-Village in Cloughjordan, North Tipperary. As a living community, The Village will develop a renewable energy district heating system, demonstrate ecological building and local food production, and foster community-level governance. Each home in the eco-village will be metered to measure energy use, and the whole process will be closely monitored to act as a model of best practice in sustainability.

12.15 - 13.00 Discussion facilitated by **Davie Philip** of Cultivate

13.00 - 14.00 Lunch

Session 3 – Community, Transport and the Built Environment

Ireland faces a bleak future with our dependence on an unreliable supply of imported oil and gas, and impending penalties by the international community for our failures in meeting our Kyoto targets. A city's efforts to reduce its appetite for fossil energy will enable us to see an overall improvement in quality of life while also reducing our carbon emissions.

14.00 - 14.15 The Community Context

Megan Quinn Bachman, Outreach Director for *The Community Solution* in Yellow Springs, Ohio, details how communities can deal with the "converging calamities" of energy and climate.

14.15 - 14.30 Moving Around the City in the Future

Graham Lightfoot, MD of *Mendes GoCar Limited* will argue that how we live should determine our mobility choices not the other way round and will outline plans for introducing CarSharing to Ireland in conjunction with Cork City Council.

14.30 - 14.45 Reducing Energy Use in our Buildings

Well-known Irish environmentalist and broadcaster, **Duncan Stewart**, explores how we can energy proof our built environment. Duncan argues that we face difficult times ahead if we do not have strong leadership and commitments from the government to promote renewables and disincentivise the use of fossil fuel.

14.45 - 15.30 Discussion Facilitated by Sustainability Consultant Gavin Harte

15.30 - 15.45 Break

Session 4 - Is Your City Ready?

In this session **Daniel Lerch** outlines how local authorities can prepare themselves for climate change and energy disruption. This will be followed by an open discussion led by **Paul Allen**.

15.45 - 16.30 **Is Your City Ready for Climate Change and Energy Disruption?**

Daniel Lerch is the author of *Post Carbon Cities: Planning for Energy and Climate Uncertainty*, the first major municipal guidebook on peak oil and global warming. Daniel is a Programme Manager with *Post Carbon Institute*, and has worked in urban planning for over ten years in the public, private and non-profit sectors.

16.30 – 17.30 Plenary Discussion

Paul Allen, the development director at the *Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT)* in Wales will chair and launch this final session with an introduction to ‘*Zero Carbon Britain*’- the new ground-breaking report to emerge from the leading thinkers and scientists at CAT and the *Public Interest Research Centre (PIRC)*.

Speaker Biographies

Daniel Lerch (*Post Carbon Institute, Portland, Oregon, www.postcarbon.org*) is Programme Manager at Post Carbon Institute and the author of *Post Carbon Cities: Planning for Energy and Climate Uncertainty*, the first major municipal guidebook on peak oil and global warming.

Duncan Stewart (*Earth Horizon Productions, Ireland, www.earthhorizon.ie*) began his television career in 1993 presenting “Our House” on RTE. He established Earth Horizon and produced a number of critically-acclaimed environmental series including his most recent, “EcoEye”.

Megan Quinn Bachman (*Community Solution, USA, www.communitysolution.org*) is Outreach Director of Community Solution, and co-wrote and co-produced her organisation’s award-winning documentary, *The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil* (2006).

Erik van Lennep (*TEPUI, Ireland, www.tepui.ie*) is a co-founder of Cultivate Centre and now CEO of TEPUI, a new design collaborative focused on Nature Technologies as community level responses to Climate Change.

Paul Allen (*Centre for Alternative Technology - CAT, Wales, www.cat.org.uk*) has been development director at CAT since 1998, pioneering projects with CAT since 1988. His current projects include the co-ordination of the new ‘*Wales Institute for Sustainable Education*’ (*WISE*). Paul was the project director of the ground-breaking energy strategy ‘*Zero Carbon Britain*.’

Bruce Darrell (*FEASTA, Ireland, www.feasta.org*) from the Foundation for the Economics of Sustainability is interested in the interrelated issues of food, climate and energy. He is a member of The Village focusing on creating sustainable local food systems.

John Harrington (*RealEyes, Ireland*) was the Communication Manager at the Cultivate Centre before co-founding RealEyes Ltd., a young consultancy company dedicated to reorienting organisations toward Sustainability.

Michael Donnelly (*RealEyes, Ireland*), co-founder, is an experienced facilitator with particular expertise in using whole system processes to engender cultural change in organisations and to unlock creativity through tools like Future Search and Open Space.

Graham Lightfoot (*CMILT, www.mendes.ie*) is Managing Director of Mendes GoCar Limited, a transport consultancy specialising in sustainable passenger transport operations, research and training.

Iva Pocock (*Sustainable Projects Ireland Ltd., www.thevillage.ie*) is one of the original members of The Village and has been involved in environmental campaigning for many years. She currently works as a journalist.

The Village - Building Sustainable Community

<http://www.thevillage.ie/>

Cultivate's mission is to respond to energy vulnerability and climate change by providing access to the knowledge and tools to cultivate sustainable lifestyles and resilient communities.

At Cultivate you will find:

- * **inspiring and informative books and magazines**
- * **eco-friendly detergents, organic foods and other products**
- * **courses such as Green Building, Gardening and Powerdown**
- * **workshops on diverse topics from composting to nutrition**
- * **major cultural events such as the Convergence Sustainable Living Festival**
- * **a courtyard with a demonstration permaculture garden, a quiet refuge in Temple Bar**

Some of the themes we address in our educational programmes are:

- * **Green Building**
- * **Permaculture & Organic Gardening**
- * **Renewable Energy**
- * **Powerdown - Energy Descent Pathways**
- * **Rethinking Urban Planning & Design**

<http://www.cultivate.ie/>