



PLUS network is a Network of cities and communities engaged in integrated long-term planning for sustainability. PLUS stands for Partners for Long-term Urban Sustainability. Please visit our website at www.plusnetwork.org

New Members!

Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada joined the Network February 6., 2006 in a formal signing ceremony with Mayor Norm McFarlane

Letters of intent have been received from Niagara Region and Ottawa-Gatineau in Canada, Suncheon, South Korea, San Fernando, Philippines and Havana, Cuba. Membership in the Network is under active discussion in Toronto, Regina, Montreal and Iqaluit in Canada, Sula Valley, Honduras and Matala and Moratuwa, Sri Lanka. We are also in discussion with Port Alberni and the Okanagan Partnership in Canada and Katowice, Poland; Bayamo, Cuba; and Manchester, U.K. as part of the Network's on-going recruitment drive.

News from Network Cities

Dakar, Senegal, has received a matching grant from Cities Alliance to develop a City Development Strategy for the Region of Dakar.

In Calgary, Canada, imagineCalgary published its draft 100-year vision on its website and is now soliciting feedback on the vision. To see the vision and the survey, go to http://www.imaginecalgary.ca/public/get_involved/survey/index.php

Events Current Events

A local economic development workshop in Matamoros, Mexico, was facilitated by EcoPlan International and the PLUS Network from March 22-23, 2006.

The Long-term Planning for Sustainability session at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Sustainable Communities National Conference and Trade Show on February 4 2006, in Ottawa, Canada featured the imagineCalgary team. Nola-Kate Seymoar facilitated the session.

Member cities presenting at "Ambitious Cities" at ICLEI's World Congress, Feb 27-Mar 3, 2006, held in Cape Town, South Africa, included Durban and Vancouver and was facilitated by Nola-Kate Seymoar.

A peer exchange between Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; Matamoros, Mexico; and the GVRD, Whistler, and Saint John, Canada, with invited guest Sula Valley, Honduras took place March 29 in Vancouver on the topic of Regional Governance and sustainable land use planning. The GVRD hosted the exchange and many of the delegates also participated in meetings and panels at the GLOBE 2006 Conference.

The Mayor of Dar es Salaam, Mr. Adam Kimbasa, visited the Aboriginal Mother's Centre while in Vancouver to exchange ideas on how to empower women through skills training, small businesses and providing a secure place for them to gather.

The PLUS Network co-sponsored a workshop by Bliss Browne, founder of imagineChicago, in Calgary, Canada on April 7. Member city Edmonton also attended. The Network has invited Bliss and Professor Emeritus C.S. (Buzz) Holling, one of the

NETWORK CITIES: AUSTRALIA Adelaide • BRAZIL Curitiba • Porto Alegre • Salvador • CANADA Calgary • Edmonton • Halifax Region • Saint John • Greater Vancouver Regional District • Whistler • COSTA RICA San Jose • MEXICO Chihuahua • Colima •Matamoros • MONGOLIA Ulaanbaatar • ROMANIA Bucharest • SENEGAL Dakar • SOUTH AFRICA eThekwni (Durban) • TANZANIA Dar es Salaam

leading thinkers on systems theory, to join the PLUS Network International Panel of Advisors.

Chihuahua, Mexico, held a conference “New Land Use Plan: Practical Applications for Sustainability in Chihuahua” on April 21. IPA representative Ken Cameron, CEO, Homeowner Protection Office, Canada, and Vancouver Co-director of Planning, Larry Beasley, and PLUS Network Director of Programs Jane McRae spoke at the conference. In the Words of Mayor Juan Blanco of Chihuahua, “Some mayors work for the next election. I work for the next generation.”

Thanks to Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design students Christina Cecconi, Soojin Cha and Tristan Dods for our new newsletter design.!

Upcoming Events

The Niagara Region will sign their Network MOU at the upcoming conference Creating the Cross-Border Capital, May 11-12., in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada and Niagara Falls, New York.

The GVRD and the PLUS Network Secretariat will host the Mayor of Ulaan Bataar in late May for a peer exchange on regional governance, urban agriculture and affordable housing.

The PLUS Network’s biannual conference: June 16-18, 2006, Vancouver, Canada. The event will focus on the long-term planning experiences of our cities and examine key issues in-depth. For more information, please contact Denise Pritchard at dpritchard@icsc.ca.

The World Urban Forum will take place in Vancouver from June 19-23, 2006. The PLUS Network has a Networking session on Tuesday, June 20 from 1:30-3:30. Network Members will be participating in a number of events around WUF including Super Saturday (June 17), a day of professional interdisciplinary sessions put together by the Planning, Architecture and Landscape Architecture Associations of Canada, and other Networking events at WUF.

Highlights

Web Dialogue on Urban Security

The Urban Security Web Dialogue, March 27-31, 2006, began with an outlay of the broad aspects of the theme including: the nexus between design, architecture and security; defensible cyberspace, and the importance of private property in capitalism. The following themes were raised during the discussion:

1. The dilemma that planners face regarding cost implications and harnessing political will for preventive vs. adaptive security and what is most appropriate.
2. Security means different things to different people—food security, tenure security, safety from crime and terrorism. How important is the context of security i.e. what are the values of the place, culture and society that need protection in addition to infrastructure issues?
3. The importance of perception in managing urban security: the difference between local, provincial and federal government responses based on their priorities and the role of media in public dissemination were highlighted as a major concern with examples from Bogota and Vancouver.
4. Poverty as a contributing factor—here the discussion stemmed from readings on the role of private property and capitalism and insecurity being a construct of the perceptions of the wealthy.
5. Refugee diasporas and crime prevention in Vancouver and the contextual conditions in the Canadian environment which are conducive to refugee diasporas’ peacemaking behaviour and the extent to which the model derived could contribute to peace-building efforts in the countries of origin were discussed.
6. Networks to provide solutions. The example given was that of The Global Sustainable Solutions Exchange (GSSE) which will be an on-line destination where the world can collectively curate, discuss and apply the best ideas for sustainable cities. GSSE is being developed by the University of British Columbia and will be an open source knowledge repository meshed with a learning commons and driven by a social network.
7. Design and crime prevention: Durban has a history of apartheid and is making small and medium scale interventions including landscaping, building design and increased surveillance that are making important contributions to reconciliation in the city. The point was made that the environmental design policy dovetailed with the overall framework of crime prevention in the city.

Many thanks to our facilitators Dr. Arthur Fallick, Moussa Magasa and Kelly Ross.

Sustainability Highlight

*Economics Matter: Selling Taxpayers on Sustainability
Councillor Andrew Younger (East Dartmouth – The Lakes),
Halifax Regional Municipality*

The Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities recently prepared a report called “Save Money, Save Energy, & Cut Emissions”. Note the first phrase in the title “Save Money”. Government has a responsibility to lead by example; however, when it comes to sustainability, elected officials face a much tougher challenge: to justify the benefits of sustainability.

With growing concern about value for tax dollars, elected officials have to justify additional costs to the residents who pay the bills. Many municipalities find it difficult to pay their existing bills let alone justify spending on environmental initiatives which offer little or no payback. While it was once sufficient to argue for environmental initiatives based on the fact it was the right thing to do, many taxpayers now justifiably expect to see tangible benefits for their investment. Those benefits have to be direct improvements in quality of life, or, more often, the promise of reduced government expenditures.

The Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) acts as constant witness to the impact of environmental damage and climate change: Scuba divers marvel at periodic visits to Halifax waters by species more at home in tropical waters; Plant and animal life above and below the water shows the impact of environmental damage; Hurricane Juan in 2003 was even more devastating to the city because higher sea temperatures brought the storm closer to land; and the threat of sea level rise alone has brought proposed changes to planning strategies and concern over loss of property.

Sometimes sustainability is easy. When HRM's transit fleet switched to biodiesel it was an easy sell. The municipality reduced greenhouse gases with no significant increase in cost. However, municipal discussions about the purchase of hybrid vehicles, the construction of a district energy system powered by transition fuels such as natural gas, and the conversion of oil burning municipal buildings to cleaner fuels are far more difficult. Someone always has to show the environmental benefits will save the city money. After all, which taxpayer is going to notice whether a single building burns natural gas or oil. Money almost always talks louder than the environment.

In my own electoral district we have decided to construct a new community centre to LEED Silver standard. Some have asked why not the gold standard, while still others have wondered why we're spending any money at all on sustainable construction when the building could be built for less by not meeting any efficiency standards. The financial selling point on this project is that for an additional investment of two to three percent we'll save upwards of 30 to 40% in future en-

ergy and operating costs. Why not go for gold? We quickly realized that while the environmental benefits may be obvious, we would never raise the money to build the building, and the payback would take a lot longer. The economics just weren't there.

This type of trade-off is common and necessary, and we can only hope that as green-oriented construction becomes more common costs will decrease, payback will be quicker, and buildings will become more and more efficient.

Halifax's water commission's new building is also built using environmental efficiency in mind. They didn't do it for a certification plaque but because they realized the cost savings of environmental sustainability. The Halifax Regional Water Commission is a world model for economic analysis of environmental sustainability. As a leader in leak reduction, they will spend up to one dollar to prevent system leakage for every dollar saved. Despite dramatic increases in development in the region, they now produce less potable water than before the program began thanks to this and other conservation efforts. While it might be preferable to eliminate every drop of water leaking from the system, the commission realizes this just does not make sense economically for its customers and its regulators.

There is clearly room for projects conducted for strictly environmental reasons. The clean-up of Halifax Harbour will never make money, but while very expensive, the benefit to residents is abundantly clear. Government initiatives to reduce their environmental footprint must also be encouraged, and by-laws and planning initiatives which promote sustainability are often difficult to quantify on a purely economic basis. Nonetheless, it is a fact of life that elected officials need to be increasingly prepared to justify major projects solely on their economic benefits.

Economics. That's where sustainability practices will take root and prosper around the world. The economic advantages of sustainability must become the *raison d'être*. We all benefit from environmental sustainability through cleaner air, cleaner water, and a better quality of life, but it is a far easier sell when it comes with the promise of future cost savings.

We would like to highlight a contribution from a Network Member in each of our newsletters. Please contact Samantha Anderson sjanderson@icsc.ca 604-666-5505 with suggestions for future highlights

Organizational Structure

The Partners

The PLUS Network Partners serve as the management committee for the Network, sit on the selection committee and on the International Panel of Advisors. They are:

- The International Centre for Sustainable Cities (ICSC)
- ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI)
- The Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), and
- The University of British Columbia's Design Centre for Sustainability

Key Secretariat Personnel

The International Centre for Sustainable Cities (ICSC), a non-government organization based in Vancouver, Canada is the secretariat of the PLUS Network. For more information on ICSC, please visit our website at www.icsc.ca.

Dr. Nola-Kate Seymoar, President and CEO of ICSC, Chair of the Management Committee.

Jane McRae, Director of Programs

Samantha Anderson, Senior Project Officer and Communications Manager

Denise Pritchard, Project Officer and City Liaison

International Advisors

• Co-Chairs:

Mike Harcourt, Chair, Government of Canada External Advisory Committee on Cities and Communities, Canada

Liz Dowdeswell, President, Nuclear Waste Management Organization, Canada, former Executive Director, UN Environment Program

• Network Partner Representatives:

Konrad Otto-Zimmermann, ICLEI- Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI)

Johnny Carline, Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD)

Elisa Campbell, University of British Columbia (UBC)

• Affiliates:

Sustainable Cities Initiative, Industry Canada

• Members:

Alan Artibise, Divisional Dean, Arizona State University, USA

Sengul Ackar, President, Foundation of Support for Women's Work, Turkey

Bliss Browne, Founder and President, Imagine Chicago, U.S.A.

Jeb Brugmann, President, Globalegacy International Ltd., Canada

Ken Cameron, CEO, Homeowner Protection Office, Canada

Gwynne Dyer, Journalist, England

Gwendolyn Hallsmith, President, Global Community Initiatives, USA

Prema Gopalan, Executive Director, Syawam Sikshan Prayog, India

Sir Peter Hall, Professor of Planning, University College of London, England

Hazel Henderson, Evolutionary Economist and Author, USA

C.S. (Buzz) Holling, Professor Emeritus, Department of Zoology, University of Florida, U.S.A.

Jeff Kenworthy, Associate Professor, Institute for Sustainability and Technology Policy, Murdoch University, Australia

Ashok Koshla, President, Development Alternatives, India

Jaime Lerner, President, Uniao Internacional de Arquitetos do Brasil (International Union of Architects)

Esther Mwaura Muiru, Groots International, Kenya

Karl-Henrik Robèrt, Founder, The Natural Step, Sweden

Alice Soulek, President, Back Stop Light Reflector, LLC and Alice B. Soulek, LLC, USA

Nicholas You, Coordinator, Best Practices and Local Leadership, UN Habitat, Kenya

For further information on the PLUS Network please visit www.plusnetwork.org or contact:

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