

The Pioneer Valley Relocalization Project (PVRP)

RELOCALIZE to healthy, happy towns

The PVRP is a team in the Pioneer Valley educating on relocalization and pushing Amherst officials to implement relocalization projects in transportation, agriculture, and weatherization.

Relocalization is the transformation of a high CO2, energy wasteful town into a low CO2, energy-efficient one by changing the town's layout, infrastructure, and private-public behaviors. Relocalization reduces distances to reduce energy/CO2. It is the opposite of globalization: products supplied globally produce more CO2 and use more energy than those supplied locally. People not in agriculture need to live/work in close proximity to minimize CO2 and energy in transport. This preserves enough farmland so the town can produce its own food. Such densification/open space delineation is an essential adaptation to global warming and declining world oil production, peak oil.

We must slow warming by 2014 or we'll later have runaway heat. Peak oil will vastly increase the price of oil and things made from it in coming decades. We can lessen the coming threats via transformation in behavior and infrastructure via conservation, more local food, more local energy.

3 associated benefits of relocalization:

Conserves wealth: promotes local self-sufficiency, adds resilience. Local labor, resources, and business keep wealth in town so it can afford its services. A resilient town is buffered from oil/food price/supply shocks and from manipulations by Wall Street. Shopping at chain stores and big banks bleeds wealth from a town. Money saved in transport can go to services instead of to oil companies.

Enhances democracy: allows a town to decide its own future free from corporate profit maximizing boards and sovereignty-depriving laws.

Enhances civility/happiness: public transport, bikepaths, a walkable center knit the town together. One-person/car adds to incivility because cars emotionally separate drivers from each other.

Relocalization actions include:

CONSERVATION

- convenient biodiesel vans to weatherized bus stops, carpooling, bike paths, 25 mph speeds 3 miles from town center to encourage biking, trains/light rail.
- home energy savings (Amh. Energy Task Force – www.amherstma.gov/index.aspx?nid=285), www.CET.org
- recycling/reuse businesses/buy less stuff, reuse of bldgs. (Amherst Redevelopment Authority)

DENSIFICATION AND TOWN VIBRANCY

- An economic model to sustain, not grow: local wealth for local self-sufficiency: www.E2M.org
- Buy-local/local bank/commongoodbank.com
- Locally owned businesses
- housing near work/school – “walkability”
- Encourage local arts/culture – pub. access TV, newspaper/NPR radio with listener feedback

LOCAL FOOD AND ENERGY PRODUCTION

- Much more food acreage - town to feed itself
- Farmers' markets, community/home gardens
- CPA funds to acquire land for agriculture (even reclaim land with now defunct buildings)
- Local energy (solar, geothermal, wind, vege-oil)
- Cogenerate – heat from making electricity is kept for heating/cooling nearby, otherwise 80% of fuel energy is wasted as evolved heat.



“In Close Proximity”

Relocalization's essential principle is shortening transport lines of people and products. **People live close to town center, leaving space for farms. “In Close Proximity” is the name of our monthly column in the Amherst Bulletin.**

We must make community-wide changes to reduce CO2 and lower energy because personal consumption changes (a Prius, home energy use) are not enough. Community-wide public changes (like transportation) will motivate personal level change. Transportation alternatives to one-person/car are needed immediately. The centralization of farming/manufacturing in the midwest is now too CO2 and energy costly. Towns must regain their own farming and light manufacturing.

Getting Relocalization Done:

Only town executives can execute the needed town-wide changes. The town is the key to national change, so the more progressive towns must lead and set an example. Some towns in Massachusetts have biodiesel mini-buses now. The MA Sec. of Energy and Environment urged activists in 2008 to demand action from their town executives. The Governor spoke on peak oil to the Boston Chamber of Commerce in 2008.

Town executives have the responsibility to respond to town needs. Relocalizing a town is an urgent need now. Town executives must frequently urge private conservation at home, and urge up-grading insulation and installing solar energy and hot water where budgets allow. They must also initiate public conservation by creating the transport modes we need. Police, fire, education and public works are only the beginning of town responsibility in our age of global warming and peak oil. Town executives must find more land for farming, find farmers to farm it, and they must find manufacturing options.

Mail 5 copies of this flyer to your friends!

Transportation: PVRP's physical projects

The kingdom of one-person/car is killing us. Aside from emotionally separating us from each other – and hurting our communal sense and therefore our capacity to have good democratic governance – it is the most energy and CO2 wasteful transportation mode. One-person/car will hobble the goal of sustainability until there are convenient transportation alternatives.

Our transportation projects are: 1) convenient diesel minibuses for off-peak times in Amherst and neighboring towns to weatherized stops a mile apart, with the money from sources outside the region 2) coordinating area towns' officials and citizens with Ridebuzz.org, a free carpool webpage 3) encouraging idea for 25 mph car speeds within 3 miles of Amherst so more people will bike on existing roads 4) easements between properties to create more bike paths.

Public behavior changes in transport will motivate people to act sustainably in all aspects of their lives. Even people with Priuses need to ride a bike, take a minibus, or carpool when they can – to be citizens for sustainability.

One-person/car must end:

- Bike 653 passenger mpg
- Walk 235 "
- light rail 91 "
- minibus 87 "
- train 41 "
- bus – 9 people 30 "
- car - 1 person 25 "



PVRP: Who we are / contacting us

PVRP is an arm of the MA Coalition for Healthy Communities (MCHC), a non-profit that informs and empowers MA residents to defend and fortify the social, economic, environmental and democratic foundations of healthy communities.

MCHC was formed in 2003 by Jill Stein MD, a gifted people organizer, who ran for governor in 2002 and is running again in 2010, and John Andrews, one of 250 environmentalists invited to the White House in 1996. MCHC formed PVRP after its 9/30/2007 relocation workshop in Northampton with Frances Moore Lappe, 26 PV tabling organizations, and 225 attendees.

Since 2007 PVRP has been developing expertise on relocation. In 2008 we: worked with the Amherst Select Board to help local business win contracts, hosted Richard Heinberg at Amherst and Hampshire Colleges to speak on peak oil, and began the Gazette's "Green Perspective" column. In April 2010 we began a monthly column in the Amherst Bulletin - "In Close Proximity."

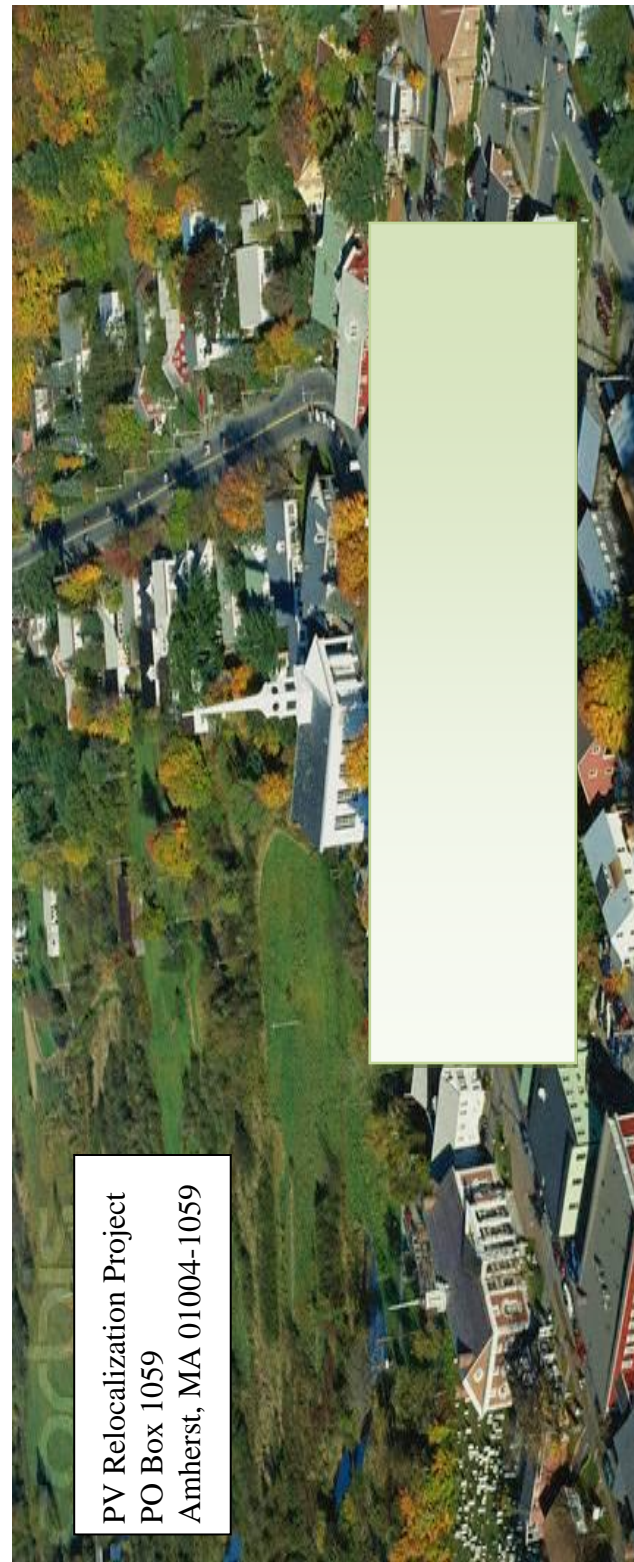
Great media: since 2007 we've sponsored talks by Bill McKibben and Richard Heinberg, the nation's best speakers on relocation. View them on our site www.masschc.org/PVRP.html and also view the classic peak oil film "The End of Suburbia". Also, you may hear James Hansen, our nation's preeminent climate scientist.

We need your support! For a tax deductible contribution of \$10 or more we'll publish your name as a supporter (if you want) and keep you posted on progress. Support our region's future with a check to MCHC, with "PVRP-contribution" on the note line: PVRP, PO Box 1059, Amherst, MA 01004-1059. Tell us your name, address, phone, email, and your work. You may also contribute online at our website above.

Join our team or become an ambassador to keep in the loop. Contact: Larry Ely at 256-6044 or at Larry.Ely@alumni.princeton.edu.



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