

Planning for Global Climate Change

James A. Kushner

Professor of Law – Southwestern Law School

Adjunct Professor – University of Southern California

School of Policy, Planning & Development

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Even if every SUV were downsized to a Schwinn, every truck and bus repowered to burn biodiesel, and every refrigerator retrofitted to run with solar panels, we are playing Russian Roulette with the very thing that makes our life on earth possible—a steady, temperate climate.

Jeff Goodell



1. Housing and Construction

We consume as if there's a prize for consumption itself, like the pie-eating contest at the county fair.

Terry Tamminen

1. Limit house sizes: tax buildings or dwellings that exceed 400 square feet per occupant
2. Impose green architecture: Idaho and Wisconsin mandate use of green building codes; tax non-green development
3. Reuse existing structures

4. Plant shade trees

5. Permit parking no closer than the closest transit stop

6. Permit only new development that is either car-free, traffic free, or traffic reduced

two-thirds of all buildings projected to be
constructed in the United States by 2050
have not yet been built





2. Transportation

America finds itself nearing the end of the cheap-oil age having invested its national wealth in a living arrangement—suburban sprawl—that has no future.

James Howard Kunstler

1. Dedicated transit corridors
2. Implement congestion pricing
3. Raise parking meter fees
4. Set maximum parking limits

5. Create walkable communities
6. Build pedestrian trails
7. Dedicated paths for bicycles
8. Limit all urbanization to within 1 - 2 miles
of a station or stop

9. Narrow the streets in commercial and residential areas and reduce speed limit to 15 mph
10. Reduce available parking incrementally each year
11. Close selected streets incrementally each year
12. Follow the example of Pasadena, California:
Subsidize electric bicycles for light-rail riders to travel between their homes and the station to avoid the need for park-and-ride lots

Simpson-Curtain rule: For every 10% fare increase, the system experiences a 3.8% drop in ridership.

The farebox will destroy transit.







3. Energy

A full-blown push for clean energy could unleash a jobs bonanza that would make what happened in Silicon Valley in the 1990s look like a bake sale.

Jeff Goodell

Conservation can have dramatic effects on energy demand. For example,

- More efficient household appliances would eliminate the need for 127 new power plants.
- More efficient air conditioning would eliminate the need for 43 new power plants.
- Raising commercial air conditioning standards would eliminate the need for 50 new power plants.
- Using tax credits and energy codes to improve new building efficiency would save another 170 plants.
- Retrofitting existing buildings to higher energy standards would eliminate 210 plants.
- Heating and air conditioning demand in new buildings can be reduced as much as 90% by modern insulation, triple-glazed windows with tight seals, and passive solar design.”

Bill Prindle

- Prohibit the sale of bottled water
- Curtail the excessive use of lighting
- Overlay ordinances to permit wind and other renewable energy facilities in any district
- Mandate 25% emissions reduction program
- Meter individual units in multi-unit buildings
- Tax homes without an energy efficiency retrofit

But tackling climate change, like dieting, is as much about what you don't do as what you do. Developing low carbon technologies without cutting your emissions is like eating two Big Macs, four donuts, and an ice cream sundae and then, to be healthy, also eating a salad. Unless new technologies replace fossil fuel burning—rather than simply supplementing it—they cannot reduce a nation's emissions.

George Monbiot

The savings from slowing global warming to business and consumer energy bills would exceed the economic cost of doing so.

Joseph J. Romm





4. Smart Growth

What is extraordinary about Portland is that half of all development in the past decade has occurred within one block of a streetcar route.

1. Sharing of the regional tax revenues
2. Brownfield cleanup and redevelopment
3. Urban growth boundaries
4. Urban service districts

5. Planning for industrial sites and office needs served by transport
6. High density around transport
7. Mixed uses



5. Water Management

Worldwide, 70% of all water consumed
is used for irrigation.



It takes about a thousand tons of water to produce one ton of grain that, fed to cows, produces only 18 pounds of meat. Mankind is using 160 billion tons more water each year than is being replenished by rain and fed back into water storages. If this water were carried in water trucks, it would require a 300,000-mile-long convoy of trucks every day—a convoy length 37 times the diameter of the Earth. This is how much water we are using and not replenishing.

James Martin

1. Collect surface water for irrigation
2. Make water management a part or element of the comprehensive plan
3. Zeroscape



6. Agricultural and Food Policy

To keep up with the growth in human population, more food will have to be produced worldwide over the next 50 years than has been during the past 10,000 years combined. . . .

Ian Sample

Every year, because of our misuse of the Earth's resources, we lose 100 million acres of farmland and 24 billion tons of topsoil, and we create 15 million acres of new desert around the world. An inch of good topsoil can take a thousand years to form, but when people destroy windbreaks by cutting down trees, the topsoil can be washed or blown away in months.

James Martin

1. Create community gardens and urban agriculture
2. Use local, in-season products
3. Build high-rise farms using green architecture principles

4. Require organic roofs and roof gardens
5. Convert lawns to food cultivation
6. Include urban agriculture in master plans

A field of cows produces less than a tenth
of the nutrients of a field of vegetables.





In a time of war, truth is the first casualty. In a time of warming, it begins with ice. That is followed in short order by plants, animals, fish, birds, and entire ecosystems that are right now migrating toward the poles all over the world in the futile pursuit of stable temperatures. The next set of casualties is people. Only the bugs love warming.

Ross Gelbspan

I would sooner expect a goat to succeed
as a gardener than expect humans to
become stewards of the Earth.

James Lovelock



8. Emergency Preparedness

Questionable information, misguided leadership, unclear goals, under investment in critical areas, and staggering hubris apply as much to large-scale disaster preparedness as they do to the conduct of the war. For this, the country has already paid a great price, with, unfortunately, more to come.

Irwin Redlener

1. Relocate to high Ground
2. Levees
3. Wetlands buffering urbanization
4. Evacuation



