

**The Consensus from Pocantico Hills: a brief summary of strategic initiatives
emerging from the national meeting on The Economic Benefits of Climate Action,
Pocantico Hills, NY, November 26-28, 2007**

*Dr. Marc A. Weiss, Chairman and CEO, Global Urban Development,
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OVERVIEW: Everyone agreed to work together and build a nationwide movement around a new and innovative agenda to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prevent global warming based on the foundation that climate action saves money and improves the economy, rather than the opposite, as opponents of climate action have frequently asserted.

People at the meeting requested that Marc Weiss serve as a national coordinator and communications hub for developing and disseminating this new agenda, and Michael Northrop agreed that the Rockefeller Brothers Fund would provide a three-year grant to Global Urban Development to enable Marc Weiss to fulfill this role by creating the Climate Prosperity Project (CPP).

This email message represents one of several follow-up communications to begin framing the conversation and start organizing collective actions. As we all move forward together, we will considerably expand the group of people participating in the ongoing dialogue, and organize ourselves into various committees to identify and pursue a wide range of strategic actions forwarding the overall agenda.

MEETING SUMMARY: The first evening and morning consisted of dynamic presentations together with considerable and lively discussion by all of the participants. On Monday evening Phil Angelides gave a keynote address, and on Tuesday morning Ken Colburn, Graham Richard, Doug Foy, Joe Cortright, Doug Henton, Joan Fitzgerald, and Mike Northrop gave a series of presentations on various aspects of the issue. They helped provide a great deal of background information and substantive ideas that set the stage for the later agenda-setting conversation on Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning.

During the afternoon session everyone engaged in an action-oriented exchange that generated a large number of innovative ideas. Some of these ideas related to issues of how to frame the policy proposals in the context of Climate Prosperity, as well as how best to communicate these ideas both in terms of communication vehicles and target audiences and constituencies. Also addressed were major contextual issues such as the need for carbon pricing mechanisms, ranging from taxes to emissions trading. In addition, many action items were proposed, including: new financial instruments such as Climate Action Revenue Bonds (CARBs), Tax-Increment Financing Districts for Climate Action, and the new \$2 billion annual Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant that was just signed into law by President Bush as part of the federal Energy Bill; new forms of federal interagency collaboration and funding regional climate prosperity demonstration projects; new forms of regional collaboration including Climate

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs); new federal transportation legislation that changes the funding formula to give states a financial incentive to promote the reduction of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) similar to the “de-coupling” policy used in California electric utility regulation since the 1970s to substantially reduce per capita energy consumption, along with a massive increase in federal funding for light-rail and other forms of public transportation along with biking and hiking trails; new investment in both physical and intellectual infrastructure, including research and development of green technologies through an Energy Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) and other mechanisms; targeted procurement by all levels of government to increase green jobs, businesses, and savings, including green buildings; increasing public information through product information and labeling about greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and other environmental impacts, including using new communication technologies combined with innovative measurement tools and other metrics; spreading new ideas and approaches such as California’s Green Innovation Index, Portland’s Green Dividend, or Chicago’s Climate Strategy Jobs Initiative; and joint federal/state/local initiatives to create energy efficient, low carbon, Climate Prosperity Zones. These are just some of the many good ideas proposed.

On Tuesday evening we engaged in a Climate Prosperity Strategy simulation exercise for the mythical Ameriplace Metropolitan Region. All four groups did an outstanding job of coming up with innovative policies and programs, though we also encountered the difficulties of integrating environmental and economic strategies, which reinforced the vital importance of the working together to create the Climate Prosperity Project.

On Wednesday morning many people enthusiastically volunteered to continue the conversation into 2008 and beyond, and to take many specific and concrete actions to develop and refine the overall policy agenda. These fell into five broad categories for our initial efforts: 1) Outreach to economic development professionals and practitioners, and to state and local government officials. Jeff Finkle of International Economic Development Council (IEDC) has provided a list of major conferences for one or more of us to address, and Dave Feehan has already convinced his Board to make climate action a major theme of the next International Downtown Association (IDA) conference. Kevin McCarty of the US Conference of Mayors (USCM) is beginning to organize outreach to officials who will be receiving funds beginning in FY 2009 under the new Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant. Sue Gander, Ken Colburn, Doug Foy, Parris Glendening, Mike Northrop, and others can play a key role at the state level. 2) Reshaping transportation and physical infrastructure investments, with a major emphasis on nationwide transportation authorizing legislation and budget appropriations during 2009-10. Don Chen, Parris Glendening, Keith Laughlin, Shelley Poticha and others are starting to focus on this approach. There will be a key meeting at the Brookings Institution in Washington on February 19th to discuss the UK’s innovative Eddington Transport Study that attempts to integrate transportation funding into national economic and environmental policy, and that may be one venue for us to further our agenda. 3) Outreach to metropolitan regional business leadership across the US in order to build a new economic paradigm and policy consensus. Dick Fleming has agreed to take the lead, with support from, among others, Lucy Blake, Richard Seline, Doug Henton, Seth

Fearey, Jim Gollub, Jim Lopez, and Marc Weiss. An initial step will be organizing a meeting of federal agency officials in February to come up with funding for competitive grants for capacity-building and technical assistance to several metropolitan areas to pursue regional climate prosperity strategies during 2008-9. 4) Changing public attitudes by focusing on opinion leaders (“the influentials”). Early steps include a special issue of Global Urban Development Magazine in the spring of 2008 that will publish many of the readings and presentations from the Pocantico meeting, and a special issue of Economic Development Quarterly that Larry Ledebur, Joan Fitzgerald, and others will help edit. 5) Outreach to universities in terms of “intellectual infrastructure” investments (education and workforce development, research and technological development) and the economic and environmental role of higher education institutions. Phil Singerman and Karl Ulrich can help get the ball rolling here.

LONG-TERM STRATEGY: Finally, at Pocantico we also discussed a longer term 13-year strategy to transform America (and therefore the world) by creating a new economic paradigm in three stages leading up to the end of 2020. Clearly we will not be able to make all of the physical, economic, or political changes by these dates. The goal is to build a new “conventional wisdom” for business and government and all other institutions, communities, and the general public to begin thinking and acting differently in order to avert the climate crisis of the 21st century and rebuild a more sustainable Climate Prosperity and Quality of Life, one that does more than begin phasing out the extraction and burning of fossil fuels and drastically reduce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions, but that actually creates jobs and raises incomes by conserving resources rather than constantly overusing and wasting them. In other words, a healthier, more peaceful, and more equitable global society with a decent standard of living for every person and community, that operates in much greater harmony with the natural environment, rather than destroying it and in the process ruining our own civilization through violence and excessive resource depletion.

Phase I by 2010: GREEN SAVINGS/GREEN JOBS/GREEN PROFITS. Things have been changing so fast in 2007 that we can realistically reach this goal in terms of national awareness within the next three years.

Phase II by 2015: GREEN SUPERSAVINGS/GREEN TECHNOLOGIES/LOW-CARBON ECONOMY. This clearly will take longer, but given the current advanced advocacy by practical business and government leaders ranging from General Electric CEO Jeff Immelt to former President Bill Clinton, this indeed seems a possible goal to reach within the next eight years, especially if we have a clear message and creative mass communications strategies.

Phase III by 2020: CLIMATE PROSPERITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE/RESOURCE-CONSERVING CAPITALISM. This is the ultimate goal. If we can achieve it in terms of economic, political, and cultural consciousness during the next 13 years, then we can actually make it happen in real world America by 2050, which will avert the threat of global warming as alarmingly articulated by the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize laureates, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). None of us

will be around by then, but all of our children and grandchildren will be very happy with the results that we launched last month at Pocantico Hills!

As we move forward and greatly expand, we will probably need to organize some kind of steering committee as well as find leaders for the five areas and numerous others that will later emerge. Please send me an email if you are interested in helping lead the Climate Prosperity Project in either capacity.

I hope you all have a wonderful holiday with your family, friends, and other loved ones over the next two weeks, and I'm looking forward to working together with you all of you in 2008.