



**“You can’t understand a city  
without using its public transportation system.”**

**Erol Ozan**

**August 2012**

**No SAGE meetings** until autumn.

City of Lethbridge is seeking nominations of individuals, businesses and organizations for the [2012 Green List](#) to acknowledge putting the environment first.

## City Unveils Transportation Master Plan

The City of Lethbridge has presented the new Transportation Master Plan (TMP) to Council and at two public meetings.

The TMP reflects the mandates outlined by the Municipal Development Plan / Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (MDP/ICSP), and there is a clear effort to integrate planning with

existing land use, transit and bikeways & pathways plans. There is an emphasis on creating a more robust ‘multimodal transportation system’ in the city.

Interestingly, [data collected](#) by the City indicates a growing trend towards alternative transportation with 7.5% presently

taking public transit, walking or biking.

Future efforts will be focused on improving public transportation service, and on managing transportation demand through traffic calming and other methods. The TMP also identifies the need to expand major thoroughfares to service city growth.

## Rezoning in Cardston County Defeated

The youth camp proposed by the LDS church was defeated during second reading on July 9th in Cardston County.

The youth camp was to convert a wilderness property to accommodate as many as 500 people. Local landowners opposed the

application based on concerns about the impact of activities on wildlife, water abstraction, wastewater management, the impact of transportation, and the impact on nearby recreational areas.

The applicant may reapply in

six months with or without modifications to the proposal. Opponents are looking to restrict the further subdivision and rezoning of agricultural land in the area, and hope the applicants will seek a more suitable location for future proposals.

## OWC vs. Weeds

Weeds were caught Knapping in Cottonwood Park by a strike team of OWC volunteers. Armed with spades and bags and braving the 30°C+ afternoon heat (and a little rattlesnake), the volunteers clearly meant business.

In response to a recent Cows & Fish report on the state of the City’s riparian areas, the OWC organized the first of a multi-year effort to control knapweed in Cottonwood Park.

The weed is designated a

‘prohibited noxious’ weed in the province. It produces a rosette in the first year, and a flowering bolt in the second, and each plant can produce over 100,000 seeds. It is considered extremely difficult to eradicate once well established.

Fortunately, the knapweed species in Cottonwood Park are not too well established and it is hoped that they can be eradicated through weed pulls over a series of years. The decision for Year One goes to the OWC.

## Interesting Links:

The State of Canada’s Parks: 2012 Report:  
<http://www.cpaws.org/>

Allocating Water: Changing to Meet the Public Interest  
<http://www.water-matters.org/pub/466>

You Are Here: The Oil Journey  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sv2MHEDIXIU>

Dangers of Fracking  
<http://www.dangersoffracking.com/>

Frack Baby Frack  
<http://bigthink.com/think-tank/what-you-need-to-know-about-fracking?page=all>



## Moving Toward Sustainable Prosperity (2012)

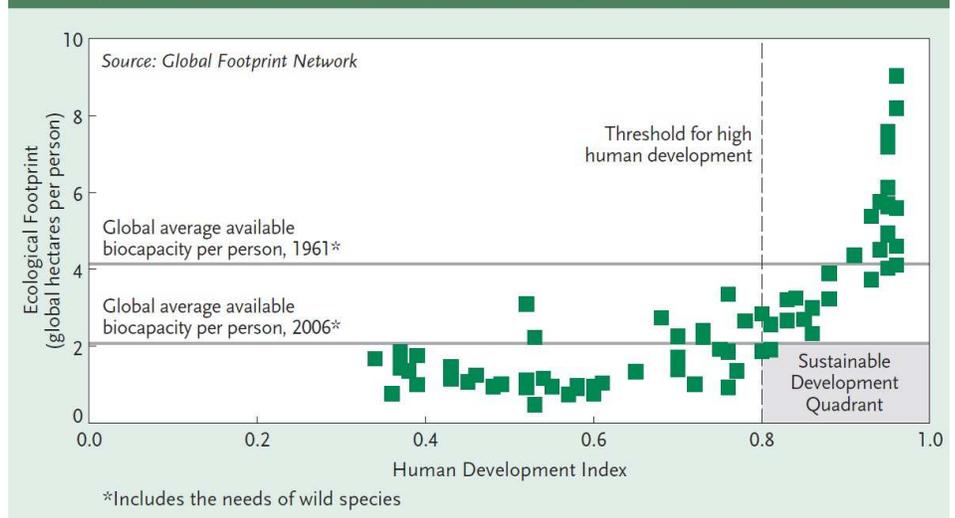
The 2012 *State of the World* publication from The Worldwatch Institute is focused on sustainable prosperity. This publication is consistently well researched and documented, with an effective mix of theoretical and practical essays - the 2012 issue calls these practical essays a 'policy toolbox'.

Each issue begins with a Year in Review timeline that presents some of the main environmental events, both positive and negative - though this year seems to have had more of the latter. The timeline also puts the following essays in perspective with respect to the interrelationship between climate, energy, health, transport, corporate governance, and the economy.

The first essay, and I think one of the better ones, is titled *Making the Green Economy Work for Everybody*. Michael Renner writes what is perhaps the best 20-page synopsis ever written on the economy and how it relates to the macroscopic issues of poverty, energy use, and resource extraction. The attached chart gives a very informative picture of our predicament. The horizontal axis represents the Human Development Index which is a composite measure of life expectancy, literacy, education, and standards of living for various countries. The vertical axis is the Ecological Footprint which is a measure of human demand on the ecosystem (you may have read that our current global ecological footprint is 1.5 planets).

As would be expected, as our quality of life improves our demands on the earth increase. What makes this chart extremely interesting is the bottom right corner (with high quality of life, and low ecological impact) which represents the quadrant at which we could sustainably live. Renner argues that to achieve sustainability, our consumption (of energy and resources) must be disconnected from our quality of life. And it is this

Figure 1-2. Human Development Index and Ecological Footprint of Nations, 2006



imperative that informs many of the essays in this publication.

Other essays discuss a path to degrowth what is termed 'overdeveloped' countries (like ours); planning sustainable urban development; developing sustainable transportation; using information and communication technologies to advance sustainability; and reinventing corporations and global governance to better support sustainability goals.

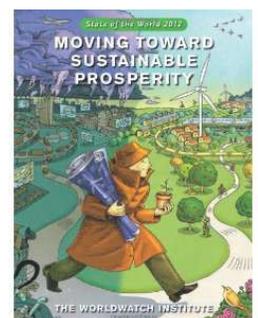
Regarding sustainable transportation, the author advocates for a tripartite approach: Avoid, Shift, and Improve. That is, avoid unnecessary motorized trips through better planning/communication, road-use or congestion charges, or by creating public-transport dependent developments. Shift to more sustainable modes of transportation like public transportation, bike/pedestrian paths, and intermodal freight management. And Improve vehicle efficiency with fuel efficiency regulations, managing constant traffic speeds for optimum performance, and by encouraging alternative fuels.

The author argues that sustainable transportation should provide subsidies to encourage public transport, cycling and affordable housing close to transporta-

tion networks; modernize roads with real-time traffic management; create protected road space for cyclists and pedestrians; and encourage public transport oriented developments through land use policy.

The 'policy toolbox' provides some policy directions and working examples to manage population, improve green building, encourage more sustainable consumption, providing food security, combatting the sixth mass extinction, and for 'getting local government right,' with involves access to information, public participation, and access to justice.

The State of the World offers a wide-ranging, big-picture glimpse into our future and they try to provide helpful guidance to complex issues. At times, however, the solutions seem platitudinous, or overly reliant on future technologies and market solutions. On the other hand, many good resources are provided for further research.



From the NDP Environment Critic, Megan Leslie, M.P., in response to the letter to Prime Minister Harper regarding Bill C-38 (SAGE July 2012 Newsletter).

Braum,

Thank you for taking the time to write to me sharing your detailed list of concerns with the Harper government's assault on the environment. Like you, I am deeply troubled by the serious impacts their decisions have on the well-being of our environment and our health.

With their omnibus budget bill, the Conservatives are trying to bury critical changes to environmental legislation in a bill that is more than 400 pages long. Fully one third of the bill proposes changes to Canada's environmental protection laws that do little more than grease the wheels for major pipeline projects.

Specifically, the omnibus budget bill will repeal and replace the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA), the central piece of federal environmental legislation for environmental protection. In addition to millions of dollars in cuts to Environment Canada and its research capacity, the Conservatives are eliminating the National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy, one of the most respected voices speaking out about the realities of climate change.

By gutting the environmental assessment process, the Harper government is burdening our grandchildren with costly environmental clean-ups. Under the guise of 'streamlining,' they are allowing our environmental protection system to become a process of rubber stamping. The Conservatives have removed the amount of public participation in environmental assessments, and given cabinet ministers the unchecked power to make decisions about major development projects.

At a time when the government should be strengthening habitat protection, the Conservatives aim to gut one of the strongest environmental laws in the country. These changes will set Canada back decades.

By eliminating provisions to protect fish habitat, the Conservatives will be better positioned to fast track their agenda of pipelines, oil super tankers, mega mines and other major industrial projects.

With the stroke of a pen, this government aims to wipe out decades of progress and condemn future generations to a less diverse environment.

There is nothing radical or un-Canadian about wanting to pass on a healthy environment to future generations and for having an expectation that our precious natural resources be developed in a sustainable manner with maximum benefits for Canadians. What is radical is the short-sighted evisceration of the laws meant to protect Canada's environment, the firing of government scientists and pulling out of international efforts to fight catastrophic climate change.

The hypocrisy of the government's statements regarding opponents of their environmental agenda is clear. In many cases the companies that are profiting from oil-sands development are themselves partially foreign-owned.

New Democrats will continue to oppose the government's moves to abrogate its duty to ensure fulsome environmental assessments for major projects, and we will continue to ask why this government is interfering with what it had assured Canadians would be an arms-length and independent joint review panel process.

Sincerely,

Megan