REconomy:
reimagining and rebuilding our economy
to work for people and the planet

Marissa Mommaerts
Transition US
CONNECTING OUR LOCAL FOODSHED
A free, interactive exhibition and celebration of our local food systems

SATURDAY
JUNE 8, 2013
GOSHEN FARMERS MARKET
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

www.transitiongoshen.org/foodshed

Elkhart Co. 4-H • Elkhart Local Food Alliance • Maple City Market
The Unity Gardens • Purple Porch Co-op • Slow Money Michiana
Seed to Food • Peace Bees • Urban Hens for Goshen • and more...

TRANSITION UNITED STATES

TRANSITION CHARLOTTESVILLE ALBEMARLE
Transition Movement
What is REconomy?

• Building an economy that **works for our community!**
  – Builds community wealth & resilience
  – Responsible resource use & low carbon footprint
  – Harnesses local ingenuity & builds local power
  – Builds connection & relationships
  – Ecologically and economically regenerative
  – Economic growth is welcome, and certainly within key resilience-building sectors, but not at any cost

• A strategy for shifting our economy by convening economic stakeholders and cultivating entrepreneurship
Definition of “Economy”

• Economy = careful management of available resources

• Comes from Greek “oikonomia,” or “management of home” (household, bioregion, Planet Earth)

Is our economy doing a good job of carefully managing the resources of our home?
What do the California drought and racial injustice have in common?

An economy based on extraction & exploitation
What’s wrong with our economy?

- Conventional economics (Econ 101)
  - Based on “infinite growth”
  - Doesn’t account for negative social & environmental impacts of economic activity

- Big corporations
  - Exist to maximize shareholder profit
  - Drain resources from communities
  - Consolidate wealth
  - Undermine democracy
  - Use more than their fair share
  - Destroy vital ecological systems
  - Exploit labor
  - Endanger public health & well-being
  - Stifle creativity
  - Lower our quality of life

Chart: Michael Della Croce, TheUnderstatement.com - March 2011
Data: From 2007, as per: http://sociology.ucsc.edu/wheresamerica/power/wealth.html via http://front.msnvbw.org/what-happened-to-good-old-american-pie-chart/
The Good News: There Are Many Alternatives!

- Local
- Independent
- Cooperative
- Commons
- Regenerative
- Bioregionalism
- Sharing, barter, gift, etc.
California State Grange Resolution
COM-14-007
Vote by Shopping & Saving Locally

• Whereas: Citizens in California cities and counties send hundreds of billions of dollars to Wall Street banks every year and Sonoma County sends $22 billion per year in mortgage and credit card payments and purchases from stores owned by Wall Street listed companies, and;
• Whereas: Many more billions are sent to Wall Street banks in the form of account deposits and investments, and;
• Whereas: Only a tiny fraction of that money ever comes back for local investment, and in Sonoma County that number is less than one percent, and;
• Whereas: It is urgent to promote resilient local communities, make investment capital available for local farmers and industries and thereby promote jobs and a robust local economy, therefore be it;
• Resolved: That the California State Grange strongly encourage and work with all subordinate Granges to urge our members and communities to buy from local farmers, and locally-owned businesses and stores and to deposit our money in local credit unions and banks that invest a large proportion of their funds locally, further be it;
• Resolved: That the CSG explore with our state government, and encourage subordinate Granges to explore with county governments, ways to actively promote local purchasing and local depositing by our fellow citizens, businesses, and our government agencies and be it further;
• Resolved: That the California State Grange lobby the California Legislature to amend state law prohibiting local bidding preferences, and explore local investing practices.
Resilience-Building Enterprises

1. Operate as locally as possible:
Provide local goods for local people

2. Use resources appropriately:
Minimize waste & pollution, maximize use of renewables, respect resource limits

3. Serve a purpose greater than profit:
Goal of meeting community needs while providing decent livelihoods & affordable, sustainable products & services

4. Are part of the community:
Treat & pay workers fairly, practice democratic governance, build common wealth

5. Strengthen community resilience:
Help meet community needs; resilient in itself
Case Study:
Evergreen Cooperatives, Cleveland, OH

- 3 worker-owned cooperatives:
  - “green” industrial laundry,
  - solar pv design & installation,
  - largest hydroponic greenhouse in the Midwest

- Large contracts w/ hospital & university (anchor institutions)
Case Study:

Cooperative Energy, Recycling, & Organics (CERO), Boston, MA

- Multi-racial, worker-owned cooperative
- Works with local businesses to sort their waste and collect and sell clean paper, plastics, metals, waste vegetable oil, and organic food waste
- Reduces customer trash sent to landfill and incinerators by 50% or more.
Case Study: Resilience-Building Farm

- Uses ecologically regenerative practices
- Worker-owned and/or workers paid living wage
- Inputs sourced as locally as possible, outputs distributed as locally as possible
- Could be part of a network of cooperatives (ex: processing, distribution, etc.)
Local Opportunities

• **Local Food System**
  – Biggest barrier is cost of/access to land

• **Low Impact Housing**
  – Community Land Trusts
  – Affordable Housing Cooperatives
  – Low-impact development (natural building, tiny homes, ecological landscaping)
  – Retrofitting (greywater & rainwater catchment, energy efficiency, etc.)

• **Social Sector**
  – Healthcare
  – Education
  – Eldercare
  – Health insurance

• **Community Clean Power**
  – Distributed renewables
  – Community biofuel: 57% of Sebastopol’s GHG emissions come from driving cars

• **Local Manufacturing**

• **Finance & Banking**
  – Public banking
  – Community Development Corporation
  – Student debt refinancing
REconomy areas:

• **Leadership & vision**: developing shared vision of economic transformation with local economic stakeholders
• **Economic Assessment**: identifying market potential for resilience-building enterprises
• **Transforming Existing Businesses**: helping existing enterprises review their business models
• **Starting New Enterprises**: cultivating entrepreneurship & incubating new businesses
Where do we go from here?

• Economic assessment
• Convene local economic stakeholders
• Host community conversations
• Develop strategies to shift investment or build capacity in each target sector
  – 10% in first year?
• Leverage local/county economic dev $ & private investment
• Support for new entrepreneurs & enterprises
Thank you!