

OSKAR VON MILLER FORUM

Press Release

One-Planet Cities

A lecture by Mathis Wackernagel, Global Footprint Network, on January 18, 2018 at 6:30 pm at the Oskar von Miller Forum

The world's urban population is expected to double by 2050, with 7-8 billion people living in cities. Yet, if we comply with the Paris Climate Agreement, humanity will have ceased using fossil fuel well before 2050. Therefore, cities that want to be resilient and successful need to find ways to operate and provide for thriving lives within the resource budget of planet Earth. These cities are one-planet cities.

While our planet is finite, our ability to look ahead and innovate is not. Possibilities for a thriving future are infinite, if we embrace physical reality and make sure humanity's resource dependence can be met by this planet. For instance, cities plan for transportation and utility infrastructure and guide housing development. All those pieces of infrastructure dictate the resource dependence of a city. Since infrastructure lasts for decades if not centuries, foresight is crucial for adapting cities to future needs. Vice versa, delaying response and continuing to promote resource-inefficient infrastructure turns into large and lasting liabilities.

What are possible pathways for enabling this vast and fast transformation of our cities? How can we harness foresight and innovation and turn "possible" into "real"? How much effort does it take? Is the outcome worth the effort?

Global Footprint Network

Global Footprint Network is an international think-tank that focuses on bringing about a sustainable human economy in which all can thrive within the means of one planet. Since 2003 this international think-tank has engaged with more than 50 nations, 30 cities, and 70 global partners to deliver scientific insights for high-impact policy and investment decisions. To make its assessments accessible, Global Footprint Network also marks Earth Overshoot Day every year. This is the day when humanity's annual demand on nature exceeds what Earth can regenerate over the entire year.

About

Mathis Wackernagel is co-creator of the Ecological Footprint and CEO of Global Footprint Network. He completed a Ph.D. in community and regional planning with Professor William Rees at the University of British Columbia, with the development the Ecological Footprint concept as his dissertation. Mathis also earned a mechanical engineering degree from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology.

Mathis has worked on sustainability with governments, corporations and international NGOs on six continents and has lectured at more than a hundred universities. Mathis' awards include the 2015 IAIA Global Environment Award, the 2012 Blue Planet Prize, the 2012 Binding-Prize for Nature Conservation, the 2012 Kenneth E. Boulding Memorial Award, the 2011 Zayed International Prize for the Environment, and the 2007 Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship.