



The Net Zero California Symposium held today was engaging and productive. See [this post](#) for my summary, slides, and access to resources. My announcement of the symposium is [here](#).

This post and the following links provide some additional detail. I also talked to a developer who is doing the first Passive House net positive energy+transportation infill project in the world(?) in SF. What's remarkable about it is the fact that these developers are connecting such big concepts to the ground with a real project and program for future development. VERY inspiring. When i commented that his project seems to be directly connected to Amory Lovins' work at RMI, particularly the [Reinventing Fire Initiative](#) to get the U.S. off oil by 2050 and grow the economy, he said he had not heard of RMI. When he finished a quick skim through their website, he said that reading their strategy and ideas was like reading their own. Small world!

The symposium began the conversation on charting the Bay Area's and California's course to comply with the new state legislation for net zero energy buildings by 2030. Here is a summary of my subsequent thoughts.

**PASSIVE HOUSE BRIGHT SPOT!** With Passive House being such a simple and proven technology for reducing building energy consumption 80% and for creating better interior environments for any building from single family to towers, it is likely one of those "bright-spot" innovations that should/will be scaled to reap that benefit for society. It is an existing innovation that can be one of the front-line responses for climate change mitigation and adaptation and creating the foundation for a feasible and sustainable renewable energy economy.

**ONE RIPE APPLICATION - AFFORDABLE HOUSING.** Coming out of the discussion at the end of the day, it seems like one obvious avenue of application is affordable housing. I look forward to the larger strategy you/we develop. We'll discuss implications for planning and see where that might lead.

**SHIFT TO AMERICAN DREAM NEIGHBORHOODS.** I certainly found Alex Steffen's presentation engaging. His characterization of the many changes on the urban front culminating in a shift from demanding the American dream house to the American dream neighborhood was particularly powerful.

**BRIGHT-SPOT CHANGE THEORY.** Reading up on Bright-Spot Theory (don't solve problems but identify and copy success) after the symposium was also an added bonus.

**FOLLOW UP.** The symposium organizers will uploaded the presentations to the website. I believe that planners would find some of that material especially intriguing, particularly Joke's Brussels model of public-sector intervention strategy for private sector innovation,



and Alex's musings on the implications of technology and sustainability for a new urbanism.

**Quick Links:**

- **Bright Spot Theory ([Fast Company Article](#))**
- **CA Net Zero [Legislation](#)**
- **Symposium [Website](#)**
- **Passive House CA [Website](#)**
- **Alex Steffen TED Talks:**
  - [The Shareable Future of Cities](#) (10 min vid; highly recommended)
  - [The Route to Sustainable Development](#) (17 min vid; also highly recommended)