



In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts
Andrea Baty

Will defend her thesis

The Process of Sustainability Transformations in Cities

Abstract

Many American cities are striving to become sustainable and to this end are developing sustainability plans, coordinating initiatives, and building partnerships. The theory of transition management provides a framework to conceptualize the process a city goes through when transitioning to more sustainable functioning. Empirical case studies that analyze and compare details of these transition processes can provide valuable insights about critical barriers, success factors, and specific contexts. For this study, the cities of New York, Dallas, and Phoenix were selected as case studies, and in-person interviews of key actors in each city were conducted. Transition profiles, narratives, and conceptual diagrams were created to map the different transition processes. It was found that the transition theory is applicable and helps to understand how best to learn from specific cities about what can be transferred to other cities. It appears the most important barriers to overcome, or success factors respectively, are: achieving buy-in from senior level city officials; garnering broad public support; institutionalizing sustainability into the governance structure; and building adaptability and accountability through reflexive monitoring into the transition process.

July 15, 2010
1:00 p.m.
GLOS 481

Faculty, students, and the general public are invited.

Supervisory Committee:
Arnim Wiek (Chair)
George Basile (Member)
Carol Johnson (Member)