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Terra Nova: The New World After Oil, Cars, and Suburbs

Eric W. Sanderson

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TERRA NOVA



The New World After
Oil, Cars, and Suburbs

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Eric W. Sanderson : Terra Nova: The New World After Oil, Cars, and Suburbs before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Terra Nova: The New World After Oil, Cars, and Suburbs:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. BEFORE AND AFTERBy adelThere are planetary boundaries like temperature, composition of the atmosphere, ocean chemistry that it would be wise to maintain at the risk of extinction. These boundaries tend to interact, i.e., releasing 450 ppb of CO2 into the atmosphere will probably raise global temperature by 2 degrees Centigrade. Because of a deeply ingrained reliance on fossil fuels, almost every aspect of human consumption, production and waste releases carbon. This book explains how Oil became so tightly

woven into the fabric of life. The association is not obvious; a series of accidents and good fortune led down the path of dependence. The author opens with a step back to the prehistoric origins of this natural resource and then covers choices made in the early days of electricity and automobiles which tied the knot to fossil fuels. Part 1 concludes with expose linking the economics of big oil companies to international politics (and wars). Part 2 of the book claims "it doesn't have to be this way" and "its never too late to change." This exploration of a future is not sci-fi speculation or a fuel efficiency lecture. The author reaches for discards in the dustbins of history and comes up with ideas ripe for resurrection - like street cars. The book also discusses new energy options (technologies which are not so new and should have been deployed decades back) and calculates ideal population densities for sustainable cities. The creativity gets you thinking about lost options and undiscovered alternatives.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.
Great ideas to help save humanity from fast-approaching and very big troubles
By Kirk-RS
Wonderful book by a talented amateur, whose professional research training in biology really helped him do a great job of analysing energy, urban planning and transportation issues. Even growing up in a family of CPAs paid off. His ideas about taxation at the endpoints of production (initial extraction and recycling/disposal) have real merit. I especially appreciated his coverage of hydro-storage of solar wind energy -- pumping water uphill to a reservoir with excess power, then releasing it back through dynamos to generate the power when it is needed. This is actually established technology, in limited use now. Sanderson estimates there are 100k locations where this would work in the USA alone! Costly? Yes. Doable? Yes. Worth doing? ABSOLUTELY! I would compare it to the money and effort required to create the Interstate Highway system. Now that was a very big deal, but wouldn't it be just as worthwhile to make alternative energy really work, achieve energy independence, and disentangle energy policy from political quagmires ranging from the Middle East to Venezuela to Russia/China? Kudos to Sanderson for presenting this and a number of other very worthy ideas in a lovingly done single volume, at an affordable price to boot!

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Rare insight into how we got to this point in American culture
By William E. Baird
Eric Sanderson has captured the story of how events merged to bring us to the lifestyle we "enjoy" as Americans today. He is a good writer, and provides just enough background to make this story spellbinding. Oil led to cars, and the combination led us to settle far from our work, shopping, schools, and social centers. As we exit the era of cheap oil, we face the task of changing in ways that will require courage and awareness of limitations. I recommend this book to all who would seek an understanding of how our future will look different from the past 100 years in America.

Many experts agree that energy is the defining issue of this century. Economic recessions, foreign wars, and foreclosures are only a few of the results of America's dependence on oil. In *Terra Nova*, ecologist Eric Sanderson elucidates the interconnections between oil and money, cars and transportation, and suburbs and land use. He then charts a path toward renewed economic growth, enhanced national security, revitalized communities, and a sustainable environment: a new form of the American Dream. Taking a uniquely cross-disciplinary, accessible approach, Sanderson delves into natural history, architecture, chemistry, and politics, to show how the American relationship to nature shaped our past and predicated our future. Illustrated throughout with maps, charts, and infographics, the book suggests how we achieve a better world through a self-reinforcing cycle of tax reform, retrofitted towns and cities, bicycles and streetcars, and investment in renewable energy.

About the Author Eric W. Sanderson is a senior conservation ecologist in the Global Conservation Programs of the Wildlife Conservation Society. He is adjunct faculty member at Columbia University and New York University and has lectured at Princeton, Harvard, and Oxford universities, and at TED.