



Meeting the Northwest's Livability Challenge



A Cumulative Conversation

October 21, 2011

**American Planning Association
Oregon-Washington Joint Conference**

Meeting the Northwest's Livability Challenge

Several Key Concurrent Conversations

- Oregon Fellows of AICP, AIA and ASLA
- Washington Chapter of APA
- OR-WA Symposium: "Moving Forward"



Meeting the Northwest's Livability Challenge

Symposium: “Moving Forward”

- The regional, national and global economy
- Consumption impacts on natural resources
- Climate change
- Polarized politics
- “24-7” communications
- Community livability



The Set-Up: Who Are These Folks, Anyway?

- John Owen
- Carol Mayer-Reed, FASLA
- Arnold Cogan, FAICP
- Paddy Tillett, RIBA, FRTPI, FAICP, FAIA, LEED AP
- ABC, OK, LSMFT, WWJD, WTF, **OMG!**



The Set-Up: Three Fellows Meet in a Bar

- APA, AIA, ASLA
- How can we make a difference?
- Livability and design matters
- Frame and initiate a conversation
- We're old, we're here, get used to it!



The Set-Up: Good News and Bad News

- Northwest's population could nearly double
- Support systems will feel the pressure:
 - Infrastructure
 - Environment
 - Social services
- Deferred or downsized investments



■ The Set-Up: But Wait – There's More!

Adding to the Stress:

- Changing demographics
- Energy cost and availability
- Climate change



The Set-up: Implicit Challenges

- More extreme weather conditions
 - Climate change refugees
- Increasing resource demand
 - Land, energy, water, food
- Widening disparity among population groups
- Developing sustainable design practices
- Developing political will



The Set-up: Key Questions

- How do we accommodate new Northwesterners?
- How do we maintain/enhance quality of life?
- What role should planners and designers play:
 - To influence change and its impacts;
 - To make our future communities more sustainable?
- How do we ensure “livability” doesn’t get thrown under the bus?



How Can We Prepare for These Challenges?

- Livability objectives?
- Frame the discussion?
- Define a livability strategy?
- Influence legislation and budgets?



Design Professions: How Can We Help?

Livability strategy components

- Urban form and how our communities grow
- How we get around
- Designing with nature
- Infrastructure
- Building community dialogue



Initial Thoughts: Urban Form and How We Grow

Plan now for future urban form

- Respect established urban and rural separations
- Concentrate growth in developed areas
- Protect natural resources and scenic quality
- Design matters!



Initial Thoughts: How We Get Around

Minimize the need to travel

- Make walking the preferred mode
 - Healthy, safe, direct and interesting connections
- Favor low-impact modes and equitable use of streets
- Provide transportation choices, optimizing all modes
 - Roadway, rail, water, air, cable and wireless



Initial Thoughts: Design With Nature

Maintain balance: natural and man-made ecologies

- Let natural features shape development
 - Respecting forests, floodways, etc.
- Green infrastructure and natural corridors
- Capitalize on views, vistas, light and breezes
- Integrate infrastructure into natural landforms



Initial Thoughts: Infrastructure/Building Priorities

Capitalize on past investments (energy and materials)

- Adapt existing ROW to current/future infrastructure
- Adaptive reuse of buildings
- Mix of uses: cost efficiency and trip reductions
- Safe and accessible public environments
- Housing choice: enable mix of ages & incomes



Initial Thoughts: Building Community Dialogue

Have a conversation!

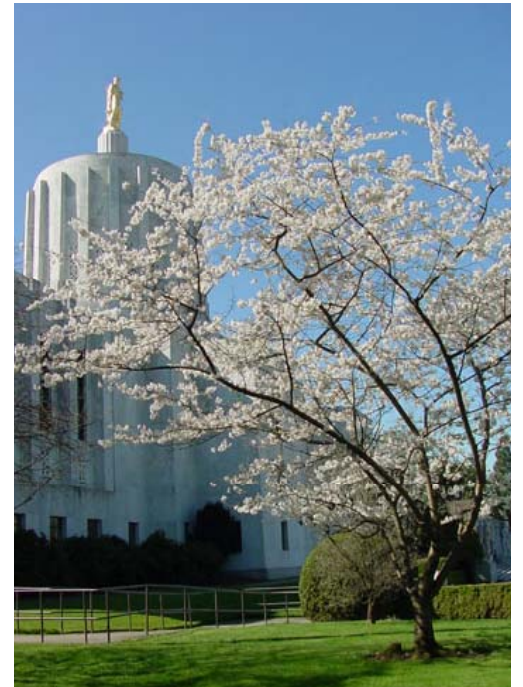
- Educate
- Inform
- Involve



Initial Thoughts: How Do We Get There?

What's the action plan for moving forward?

- Institutional and political
- Educational
- Inspirational

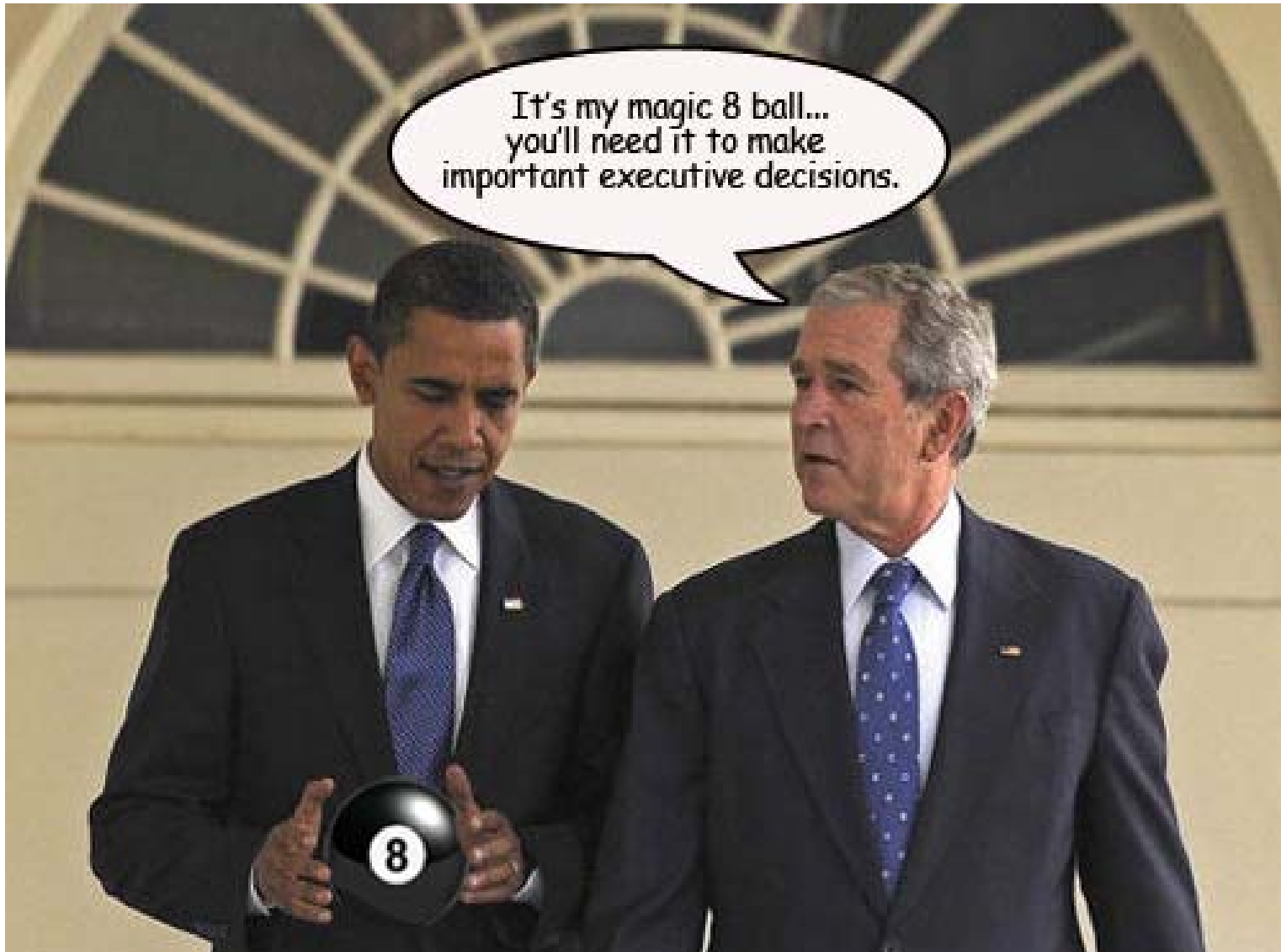


Re-Cap and Summary

- Growth is a given
- Great challenges...limited resources
- Should livability objectives inform decision-making?
- What should these objectives be and how do we get going?



The Questions!

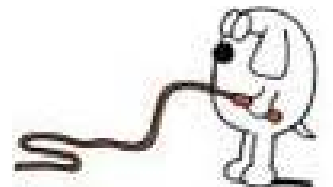


■ Perspectives and Discussion

Design profession perspectives

Q: Given the challenges we discussed, how is each profession responding to them?

Q: Are there other factors we should address?

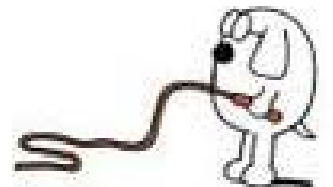


■ Perspectives and Discussion

Livability

Q: What does “livability strategy” mean to you?

Q: Is it possible or desirable to define a livability strategy in terms of values to be preserved and outcomes to be achieved?

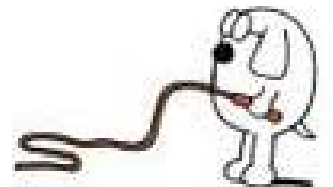


■ Perspectives and Discussion

Given: We can't do everything, the challenges are great, and competition for resources will be fierce.

Q: What aspects of livability ought to have priority in the face of future challenges?

Q: Does this vary by region, or by size of community?

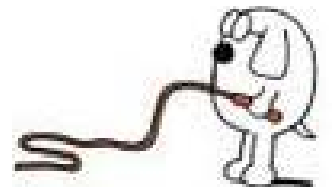


■ Perspectives and Discussion

Collaboration and action:

Q: How can individual practitioners work together to make a difference at the state and national levels? How do we foster collaboration?

Q: What specific actions might we take?



Next Steps: Where Does the Conversation Go?

Four key questions

- What are the key issues, and what's driving change?
- What aspects of livability are most important?
- Should a “livability strategy” be defined and shared?
- How can we work together to make a difference?



Next Steps: Where Does the Conversation Go?

- TBD: Regional and targeted discussions w/in Northwest
- TBD: ASLA National or Regional Meetings
- TBD: AIA National or Regional Meetings





Thank you
for your thoughts!

