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President’s Message

By Brian Campbell, FAICP, OAPA President

The Oregon APA conference in Bend was another great success, proving once again that we have gotten very good at putting on conferences. We had more than 140 registrants, very informative sessions and a thought provoking keynote speech from University of Oregon Professor Peter Walker.

The theme of Prof. Walker’s talk was the Oregon planning program, and how vulnerable it is unless some fairly important changes are made. Oregon APA has been saying much the same things about the program for well over a decade now. The 2001 COPE report, our work against Ballot Measures 7 and 37 and for Measure 49, and OAPA’s attempts to give direction to the Big Look Task Force are all indicative of how seriously we have taken these challenges. But clearly, Oregon has a long way to go to address the problems with the planning system. Prof. Walker identified four areas to work on:

1. Address the perception (and reality in some cases) of bureaucratic “sclerosis”;

2. Promote “fairness”;

3. Update the program’s relationship to farming; and

4. Revitalize the way we do public engagement.

And he issued a call to action that indicated how urgent these issues are.

It’s evident as I talk to planners of varying perspectives around the state that most see these and perhaps other issues as serious challenges, not just to the Oregon program but for how they do their everyday work. It is also important for us to realize that we cannot be effective in responding alone.

Oregon APA needs to continue to form alliances with other organizations that are also concerned about the long term success of planning in this state. We may not always agree with other organizations and we have our own internal divisions on many issues. All we can do is continue to talk among ourselves and with others and develop positions and strategies to help ensure that the issues are effectively addressed and not swept under the rug.

In order to do that it is important that we hear your ideas for how to make the needed improvements to the Oregon planning program. At the conference LPAC held a session to help come up with ideas for the 2013 legislative session. Unfortunately it was very lightly attended. But there is still time to help out. LPAC will be meeting over the summer to develop positions on a number of hot topics and longer range subjects such as those mentioned above. I strongly encourage anyone who has ideas for LPAC to consider to get in touch with Chair Jeannine Rustad so that we have the benefit of everyone’s best thinking as LPAC makes its recommendations to the Board this fall. The future of our profession depends on all of us making small contributions to ensure that we have a good planning context and framework to “make great communities happen”.
A Medley of Land Use in Oregon

By Angela Lazarean, Department of Land Conservation and Development

Oregon’s land use planning program was designed to create a sustainable living environment for today and for generations to come. Below we will review three success stories from across the state focusing on water quality, economic development and farm land protection. The Department of Land Conservation and Development’s (DLCD) vision is to help communities and citizens plan for, protect and improve the built and natural systems that provide a high quality of life. In partnership with citizens and local governments, DLCD aims to foster sustainable and vibrant communities and protect our natural resources legacy.

Florence - Water Quality

Siuslaw Estuary Partnership

Over the past three years, the city of Florence has been leading an EPA-funded effort to plan for protection of water quality on the lower Siuslaw River and estuary. This planning effort has revealed just how interconnected surface and groundwater is throughout this region. The Siuslaw Estuary Partnership (SEP) includes both educational and outreach and planning and regulatory components. Participants include State, Federal, Tribal, NGOs and service districts, all focusing on restoration and protection of water resources and related fish and wildlife habitats on the lower Siuslaw. In addition to greatly increasing local awareness and appreciation for the importance of the water resources of this region, the eventual products of this effort will include well head protection for the drinking water aquifer and protection of wetland and riparian areas within the Florence urban area.

Florence is the only major urban center in the Siuslaw Watershed. Its entire UGB drains primarily to the Siuslaw estuary or the Pacific Ocean. Rapid infiltration rates into the sand cover, combined with a shallow water table, make the North Florence Sole Source Dual Aquifer, and the hydrological-connected wetlands, riparian, and estuarine system, highly susceptible to contamination from surface activity. These conditions, combined with the high habitat value of the area, and projected growth, make this “Integrated, Multiple Objective Approach to Watershed Protection and Restoration Project” a high priority project for the watershed.

Siuslaw Estuary

The Estuary, and the area surrounding it, is a place of transition from land to sea, and freshwater to saltwater. Home to 23 species of fish, almost 200 species of birds, and numerous species of marine mammals, this watershed is a significant natural area. It provides habitat to several endangered and threatened species and supports spawning runs of fall Chinook, chum, winter steelhead, Coho, and sea-run cutthroat trout. The River was once the Oregon Coast’s largest Coho-producing system next to the Columbia; but current salmon production levels are significantly diminished due to habitat impacts. Portions of the River are classified...
as “Water Quality Limited,” under the Clean Water Act, for temperature, dissolved oxygen, fecal coliform, and sediment and the River is included on the State’s 303(d) list of Impaired Water Bodies by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

North Florence Sole Source Aquifer and Clear Lake

Groundwater in the aquifer was of good quality when the last comprehensive testing was done 23 years ago. The 1987 EPA Sole Source Aquifer Resource Document states, “Possible sources of aquifer contamination include fuel storage tank failure, accidental spills of hazardous material, septic tank effluent, storm runoff, pesticides, and chemical fertilizers.” Today, pharmaceutical by-products are also an environmental threat. Clear Lake is a remarkably unpolluted, clean source of drinking water. Heceta Water District, Lane County and the Oregon Environmental Quality Commission created the Clear Lake Watershed Protection Zone to protect the Clear Lake drinking water source well into the future.

The participation consists of an interdisciplinary team of which DLCD is one of several State and Federal agencies in a 3-year venture, culminating this Fall. The team helped guide the project and provide feedback on proposals and alternatives.

Public outreach workshops were held on the estuary trail vision and planning process, technical assistance was provided at the regular advisory committee meetings relating to protection of water quality, wetlands and riparian areas. In the final phase of the project, DLCD will be involved in what is termed “ecological growth planning” by providing input and guidance that will ultimately result in changes to the city plan and land use regulations. And finally, after the EPA supported effort has concluded, DLCD will continue to provide technical and potential financial support to help the city to achieve its long-term objectives relating to water quality and estuarine health.

For more information, go to www.siuslawwaters.org. City of Florence contact: Sandra Belson, City Planner. DLCD Regional Representative: Dave Perry dave.perry@state.or.us.

Astoria - Economic Development

Astoria Waterfront Vision Plan

Astoria is the oldest American settlement west of the Rockies; a place that takes visitors back to simpler times, its architecture dominated by hundreds of Victorian homes clinging to steep wooded hillsides and with a revitalized 1920s era downtown; all set against a backdrop of tremendous natural beauty in the temperate rain forest at the mouth of the Columbia River. Due to its beautiful location, burgeoning artist community, unique civic character and strategic investment, the City of Astoria is a growing and vital community. Astoria’s waterfront has become a magnet for new in-fill and redevelopment projects and proposals in recent years – particularly condominiums. While these key projects have helped transform Astoria’s economy, dramatic changes over the years have caused concern that the community’s quality could be affected by the current pace of development. As a result, the City worked with their community to establish a sustainable waterfront vision, ensuring equitable waterfront growth by balancing development with the desire to preserve Astoria’s quality of life and connection to its unique history. The process will guide future use, preservation and development of private and
public lands adjacent to the Columbia River.

In a recent conversation with the city’s Community Development Director, Brett Estes summed up the City of Astoria’s relationship with DLCD with just one word: Teamwork. Mr. Estes went on to explain, “the team-first philosophy between the city and DLCD has been integral to the success of numerous projects that have been developed and implemented over the years to help strengthen the city’s strong sense of place and reconnect its historic downtown district and neighborhoods to its working waterfront”. In a strong show of support for the City of Astoria’s enduring community development efforts, DLCD’s Coastal Division nominated the City of Astoria for the 2010 Walter B. Jones Memorial and NOAA Excellence in Local Government Award for its work to develop the Columbia Riverfront Vision Plan.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration honored this project with its Walter B. Jones Memorial and NOAA Excellence Awards. The Astoria Riverfront Vision Plan took honors for educating the community about the value of cultural and natural resources. A few years ago, Astoria was also voted one of the top five places to retire in the U.S by a noted commentator on Good Morning America on ABC Television.

For more information, go to http://www.astoria.or.us/RiverfrontVisionPlan/tabid/5508/language/en-US/Default.aspx. City of Astoria contact: Brett Estes, Community Development Director, bestes@astoria.or.us. DLCD Regional Representative: Patrick Wingard patrick.wingard@state.or.us

Malheur County - Farm Land Protection

In the fall of 2009, Katherine Daniels, DLCD Farm/Forest Specialist was contacted by several farmers and the Oregon Onion Grower’s Association in Malheur County. They were protesting the plans of Idaho Power to site the proposed Boardman-to-Hemingway 500 kV Transmission Line extending through Malheur, Baker, Union, Umatilla, and Morrow counties in Oregon. Farmers in Malheur and Baker counties, including Malheur County Onion Growers Association expressed concerns with the routing of the transmission line through private farmland in the Treasure Valley and Baker Valley. The specific concerns were about the likely need to alter irrigation practices, modify aerial application of chemicals, and change tilling practices, all of which would disrupt and add additional costs to farming operations. In addition, high-value farmland would be lost.

Katherine explained that she saw this as a “grab at low-hanging fruit” – suspecting that Idaho Power was trying to avoid siting the corridor through Idaho because of rural residential sprawl there. An effort was made by the department to support the interests of farmers on the far side of the State, although DLCD had never been involved in energy siting issues of this type before. At that time, Director Richard Whitman permitted Katherine to write a letter to Idaho Power to ask that they consider alternatives to the proposed route that would better protect high-value farmland. DLCD recommended that Idaho Power consider a number of significant local and regional impacts as it decides where to site the proposed transmission line.

The economy of eastern Oregon counties is strongly tied to agriculture and outdoor recreation. The siting of a major transmission line through these counties would have significant and long-term consequences for several counties and cities, including potential adverse impacts to high-value agriculture, sensitive wildlife habitat and the recreational tourism industry.

To her surprise, sometime later the Malheur County Planning Director called and told her that the letter had been pivotal in getting Idaho Power to select a different route that the farm community is much more satisfied with. The project has been temporarily suspended while Idaho Power conducts public outreach through its Community Advisory Process (CAP). The purpose of the CAP is to develop an alternate route in response to community concerns.

Oregon’s statewide land use planning program
as set forth in statewide planning goal 3, “Agricultural Lands,” and ORS Chapter 215 requires counties to protect agricultural land, with preference given to high-value soils such as those found in the Baker, Grande Ronde and Treasure valleys and the irrigated row crop-producing areas of Umatilla and Morrow counties. These areas boast some of the best farmland in Oregon and are subject to strict safeguards protecting them from conflicting nonfarm development. The farmers who are stewards of Oregon’s working landscape now and into the future deserve our commitment to make every effort to accommodate agricultural production needs. Idaho Power is now working to find an appropriate balance between protection of agricultural lands and wildlife habitat through a public process.

For more information contact: Malheur County Planning Director, John Beal jbeal@malheurco.org. DLCD Farms/Forest Specialist, Katherine Daniels katherin.daniels@state.or.us

Angela Lazarean is the Willamette Valley Regional Representative for DLCD and Chair of the Education and Outreach Board for OAPA.
OAPA brings National Expert on Health and Transportation to Oregon

By Becky Steckler, AICP, Education and Outreach Committee, OAPA

Dr. Richard Jackson, pediatrician and chair of Environmental Health Sciences at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), spoke in Salem, Eugene, Roseburg, Medford, Bend, and Portland on June 19 - 22, 2012 on “Designing Healthful, Livable Communities.” Jackson is a nationally renowned expert on the importance of “active transportation” to public health.

Over 650 citizens from around the state came out to listen to Dr. Richard J. Jackson talk about the relationship between how we design our communities and our health. With the dramatic rise in diabetes and other health problems linked to a sedentary life style, Jackson advocates ways to enable people to work simple types of physical activity, such as walking and bicycling, into their daily routine. In many communities, urban design, land use and transportation policies have yielded a built environment that requires most people to drive everywhere— even short distances. Health officials have associated today’s spreading obesity epidemic with this problem.

“Dr. Jackson is a forceful advocate of safe routes to school and other concepts for integrating opportunities for physical activity into our lives,” said Brian Campbell, FAICP, President of OAPA. “We are pleased to host Dr. Jackson’s presentation, as his knowledge and expertise relate directly to issues facing communities across the state.

Dr. Jackson is the author of a new book, “Designing Healthy Communities,” which was the focus of a three-part PBS series that aired nationwide in January 2012. He also co-authored two Island Press Books: Urban Sprawl and Public Health in 2004 and Making Healthy Places in 2011.

Organizations with diverse interests came together to make Dr. Jackson’s appearance possible. Statewide partners included the Oregon Environmental Council, 1000 Friends of Oregon, the Oregon Transportation and Growth Management Program, and the Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association. AICP CM credits available for all of the talks.

To get involved with the Education and Outreach Committee of the Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association, contact Angela Lazarean, Chair at (503) 373-0050 x286.

To find out more about Dr. Jackson’s work, go to: http://designinghealthycommunities.org/.
A Vision of an Age-Friendly Portland

By Dawn Hanson, Colin Rowan, Collin Roughton, Garrett Phillips, Alison Wicks, and Mark Person, Portland State University

The City of Portland – known nationwide for its commitment to urban planning that creates livable communities, cutting-edge transit strategies, and the preservation of green spaces – is identified in various ways: The City of Roses, Stumptown, Bridgetown, Rip City, Portlandia, and beyond.

Can the City embrace a new identification – Age-Friendly?

Project Background

The recent Portland Plan draft, to be considered for adoption by City Council on April 18, 2012, was developed through an extensive participation process to address the many challenges facing the city now and in the future — income gaps, high unemployment, low high school graduation rates, and environmental concerns. Recently, the Portland Plan draft has been expanded to address the challenges of accommodating the large numbers of baby boomers that will reach the age of 65 over the next twenty years.

This addition to the plan was spurred by the work of Portland State University’s (PSU) Institute on Aging (IOA) and other groups advocating for older adults. The IOA’s work encouraged Mayor Sam Adams and City Council to sign Portland on as one of two U.S. cities in the World Health Organization’s Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities. This network is “an international effort to get cities to prepare for two significant trends: a rapidly aging population and increasing urbanization.”

Preparation is necessary because,

As the U.S. population continues to age and as people stay healthy and active longer,

American cities, towns, and counties must adapt to the needs of changing demographics to serve the interests of their residents and sustain economic and social vitality. – American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)

What does this mean for Portland? This means that the city will assess its current and planned age-friendliness and make a commitment to ensure that Portland is a better place to live, regardless of age.

Project Goals

In January 2012, a group of six PSU graduate urban planning students formed ORCA Planning. This group responded to a proposal by the City of Portland’s Bureau of Planning & Sustainability (BPS) to assess Portland’s age-friendliness.

The project is guided by a single question: what is an age-friendly Portland?

The answers are complex. In order to capture and process this complexity, the focus of our project is to form a Vision for an Age-Friendly Portland informed by citizens and stakeholders throughout.
the city. Additionally, our group will make policy recommendations that will be vital inputs for both the City’s upcoming Comprehensive Plan update and, possibly, the IOA’s Age-friendly Action Plan.

**Project Methodology**

In partnership with BPS and the IOA, the group set up a process to collect people’s visions and needs for an age-friendly city. In order to appropriately assess the visions and needs of older Portlanders we created an extensive public participation process supported by data and research. So far, our group has engaged with 131 mini-workshop participants, 90 survey respondents, and 25+ key stakeholder interviews. These efforts, along with upcoming technical and citizen advisory group sessions, draw from a diversity of perspectives in order to help define and shape the vision for an Age-Friendly Portland.

**Project Findings**

Our group has learned what many Portland boomers and older adults want for their future in the City — to not be segregated by age, to live near parks and green space, to interact with youth or young adults, to have a variety of affordable housing options available, to live in walkable and vibrant communities, and to have affordable and accessible transit options. Is this different from any other age group? That is one ongoing question that we hope to answer.

We also learned that some Portland boomers and older adults believe Portland caters to a younger population. This may serve as a challenge to the city as it strives to become more age-friendly. Several other challenges were brought to our attention — rising rents, too much traffic congestion, lack of job opportunities for older adults, lack of awareness of older adults, and housing and transit accessibility issues for older adults with activity limitations.

**Creating the Vision and Recommendations**

These findings drive our visioning process. Currently, our group is drawing from this rich trove of information in order to create vision statements and policy recommendations. Our hope is that these products will add to the knowledge base and drive conversation about aging in Portland. Historically, the city’s approach to urban planning has earned it a top spot in terms of sustainability. In support of the many other community agencies working with the aging population in Portland, we hope to influence planning decisions that can help Portland to broaden the definition of sustainability to fully encompass age-friendliness.
Connect Cascade Locks: A Recreational Trails Plan for Economic Development

By Michael Ahillen, Sarah Bronstein, Ellen Dorsey, Danielle Fuchs, Sara Morrissey, and Chloe Ritter, Portland State University

Located in the heart of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, the City of Cascade Locks is a point of entry for regional and national trail systems. From its scenic vistas of the gorge to the pleasant riverfront park, the city’s assets are enjoyed by locals and visitors alike.

Recreational development opportunities abound for the community including mountain biking, hiking, sailing, bird watching, road biking, windsurfing, fishing, bird watching, and camping. As the only city located directly on the Pacific Crest Trail, Cascade Locks sees thousands of hikers pass through every year. The Historic Columbia River Highway, a National Scenic Byway, draws in bicyclists and motorists from across the region. New opportunities for cyclists are forthcoming with the completion of a new mountain biking trail network and an extension of the multi-use road bike trail to the west.

**Project Goals**

With these opportunities in mind, a team of graduate students from the Master of Urban and Regional Planning program at Portland State University are working with the Port of Cascade Locks to develop a plan that identifies potential areas for economic growth. The team, working under the name Celilo Planning Studio, is conducting a new planning process, Connect Cascade Locks: a Recreational Trails Plan for Economic Development. The purpose of Connect Cascade Locks is to increase the economic development prospects of the community of Cascade Locks through a regionally integrated recreational trails network.

**Project Methodology**

Celilo Planning Studio, better known as Chloe Ritter, Sarah Bronstein, Michael Ahillen, Danielle Fuchs, Sara Morrissey, and Ellen Dorsey, is focusing on connecting regional trails, identifying goods and services that trail users desire, developing opportunities for local businesses, and recognizing existing local attractions.

The students have conducted two surveys, two workshops, and a community open house to determine what the residents of Cascade Locks want and what they can do in terms of trail-based economic development. Celilo Planning Studio will digest these ideas and make recommendations in their final trails plan, due in early June.

**Project Products**

Studies have found that 1.3 million visitors bicycled in Oregon in 2009, cycling visitors to Oregon spent $223 million primarily on lodging, meals & retail, and hiking generates more than 700,000 jobs nationwide. The trail user survey, with over 1,200 respondents, has indicated that Cascade Locks is the most common stop in the Gorge after Hood River.
This plan seeks to capitalize on these opportunities as well as the enthusiasm of the Cascade Locks community to help revitalize the town. Connect Cascade Locks has already galvanized partner organizations such as the Port and ODOT to start planning new trails and outdoor recreation opportunities in Cascade Locks. Celilo Planning Studio hopes their trails plan will carry these efforts into the future.

For more information on the project, visit www.connectcascadelocks.com or contact Celilo Planning Studio at celiloplanning@gmail.com.
Imagine Holgate: A Vision for Portland’s SE 17th Avenue/Holgate Blvd. Light Rail Station Area

By Chad Armstrong, Joshua Shaklee, Alex Steinberger, Tara Sulzen, Michael Weidmann, Portland State University

When the Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail line opens in 2015, it will transform the SE 17th Avenue corridor. The PSU student workshop project, Imagine Holgate, is working with residents and business owners to re-imagine the SE 17th/Holgate Station Area by incorporating the aspirations of community members into feasible alternatives for future growth and development.

Project Methodology

The student group, BrightRail Planning + Design, is comprised of five PSU Masters of Urban and Regional Planning candidates: Tara Sulzen, Joshua Shaklee, Alex Steinberger, Michael Weidmann and Chad Armstrong.

Public outreach for this project included:

1. A resident-led Community Walkshop
2. An online survey
3. Stakeholder interviews
4. A focus group
5. A community workshop

Resulting recommendations will specifically focus on and address ways to spur development on sites adjacent to and within the SE 17th Avenue/Holgate MAX station area.

Project Products

BrightRail Planning + Design will create an Existing Conditions Assessment, a Community Assets and Aspirations Assessment and a Development Opportunity Study for the station area, which can be found on our website at www.imagineholgate.org. These products will be created for use by TriMet, Metro, and the City of Portland in an effort to ensure that new development and redevelopment in the station area maximize opportunity and support the community’s aspirations.

Project Summary

Transit-oriented development can occur in many different ways. Project recommendations will consider impacts and engage stakeholders within an approximate 10 minute walk of the SE 17th/ Holgate Avenue Light Rail Station. The project will solicit and synthesize community goals and aspirations from those living and working within the study area into multiple feasible scenarios for
transit-oriented development in the station area.

By engaging community members in an honest and realistic conversation about constraints, possibilities, and aspirations, the Imagine Holgate project will achieve a vision for growth around the future SE 17th/ Holgate station that meets the needs of nearby residents and business owners while accommodating future growth and promoting increased transit ridership.

For more information on the project please visit www.brightrail.org.
Milwaukie Neighborhood Streets Project

By Kelly Moosbrugger, Candidate, Masters of Urban Planning, Portland State University

The Portland State University graduate planning student group Horizon Planning is working with the City of Milwaukie, Oregon on the Neighborhood Main Streets Project. The students were drawn to the project because of the great potential for it to actually be implemented. The City plans to use the work to make real changes that will help neighborhoods in Milwaukie become more walkable and economically vibrant.

This project also represents a challenge they are eager to take on - making an established suburban community more livable. The students know that as a smaller community, Milwaukie doesn’t have as many resources or planning staff to take on this work. They like the fact that their services are welcomed, needed and that they can tackle a problem relevant to so many communities - the challenge of creating walkable urbanism in suburban neighborhoods.

Project Methodology

Public input and dialogue is crucial to the success of the project. The group doesn’t want to guess what the residents of Milwaukie want in the neighborhood, they want residents to tell them in order to get it right the first time.

The group has been gathering community input in multiple ways:

1. Speaking with the neighborhood associations
2. A survey
3. Walking tours
4. A public workshop
5. A focus group
6. Individual interviews

People have expressed what kinds of businesses they want and don’t want in their neighborhood, where the major safety problems are, and what they want the commercial areas to look like.

Project Products

The group is using all of this information to create a vision for the neighborhood main streets and to develop recommendations to the City concerning zoning, transportation, and economic development. A final presentation to the Milwaukie Planning Commission is scheduled for June 12th. For additional information about the project, see tinyurl.com/neighborhoodmainstreets.
On Solid Ground

By Michael Burnham, Institute of Portland Metropolitan Studies, Portland State University

We live in a region of fault lines and volcanoes. Yet most of us do not think about natural disaster risks very often if at all.

If a major earthquake were to rattle Portland, topple bridges and block roads, emergency responders would not be able to reach all neighborhoods immediately. Residents will have to be their own first responders for at least the first 72 hours, as a general rule.

1. Where would you seek help?

2. How would you help your neighbors?

3. Which hazardous areas of your neighborhood would you avoid?

These are important questions with major physical and economic implications and personal consequences.

A recent University of Oregon study notes that every dollar spent on hazard mitigation can save a society $4 in response and recovery costs. For such preparedness planning to be effective, however, it must be institutionalized into the local decision-making process, the study underscores.

Project Goals and Partners

This spring, a team of Portland State University students studying urban planning is working with the Portland Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods (NECN) to develop a community disaster-preparedness plan. This collaborative planning effort, called On Solid Ground, aims to improve the resiliency and sustainability of North and Northeast Portland communities, built and natural landscapes, households and citizens by increasing awareness about community assets and vulnerabilities, as well as laying the foundation for durable trust, coordination, and communication.

Project Methodology

The graduate student team, called Terra Firma Planning, is conducting interviews with experts in the fields of disaster preparedness and response, as well as eliciting feedback from community stakeholders at focus groups and neighborhood association meetings.

There are plenty of ways North and Northeast Portland stakeholders can weigh in. We are eliciting feedback via a disaster-preparedness survey at http://solidground.necoalition.org. We are also inviting residents, businesses, workers, and other local folks to attend open houses we will be hosting in early May.

The first open house will be on Friday, May 4, from 4-7 p.m., at the Mississippi Marketplace, 4233 N. Mississippi Ave. The second open house will be on Tuesday, May 8, from 4-7 p.m., at the Oregon Red Cross Trail Chapter headquarters, 3131 N. Vancouver Ave.

PSU alumnus and Humanitarian Resources
International principal Arif Khan, who is advising us on our planning effort, is also hosting a disaster-preparedness exposition on Saturday, June 2, at the King School, 4906 NE 6th Ave. For more information about this event, please visit www.resiliencePDX.org.

Project Products

In late May, the PSU team — composed of Andrew Parish, Jacob Nitchals, John Boren and Michael Burnham — will present to NECN a plan with recommendations and multimedia tools for bolstering community coordination, education, and communication. Our deliverables will include maps of community assets and vulnerabilities; criteria for selecting neighborhood disaster communications hubs; and, ideas for how NECN and its constituent neighborhood associations could engage and educate citizens about preparedness.

Using the feedback we gather, we hope to create a durable and replicable model for helping neighborhoods prepare for a wide range of emergencies. Planning scholars define a “resilient” or “sustainable” community as one that can weather sudden or slow change and emerge closely resembling its former state and functionality. Anyone whose life has been upended by an earthquake, volcanic eruption or other major disaster might call it simply, getting back to normal.

We hope you’ll agree preparedness is something worth thinking about early and often.

Michael Burnham is a veteran journalist and graduate student studying environmental planning at Portland State University. To learn more about On Solid Ground, please visit http://solidground.necoalition.org.
Citizen Planners - Arm Thyselves....
With Knowledge

By David Sykes, Chairman, Morrow County, Oregon, Planning Commission

An interesting discussion to have some time, especially with planning commissioners from various jurisdictions-large, small, city, county-would be about commissioners’ experiences interacting with the public. Outside of the hearings, meetings and other official planning commission business, how much social interaction is there with citizens having business before the planning commission, and what is the nature of that interaction?

I’m not talking about the builders, land developers and other professionals with a lot of experience dealing with planners and land use, but rather the occasional citizen who comes into contact with zoning, land use and other planning issues perhaps only a few times in their life.

Do volunteer members of planning commissions receive phone calls at home or work from citizens who have had business before the planning commission? Are planning commission members stopped on the street, in the grocery store or in other public venues by citizens? It wouldn’t necessarily have to be a disagreeable experience, but if it happens, what kind of questions are raised by those encounters, with the question being: “Do planning commission members feel prepared, are they offended, or are they appreciative of those encounters?”

As opposed to the professional planner who is armed with years of schooling, experience and considerable training, does the “amateur” planning commission member feel upset or threatened by these social encounters with the occasional citizen?

Perhaps in larger cities citizens do not know who serves on the planning commission. How big a jurisdiction is it before most citizens do not personally know who their planning commission members are? Is social contact with citizens just a phenomenon of smaller cities or counties?

These are questions I do not have the answer for, having a limited experience of only serving on a rural county planning commission. However I will say in small jurisdictions many, many people know who make the planning decisions, and many of those might see a commission on a social basis regularly.

So what to do when waiting in the grocery store line and a constituent (and that is what they are— we represent them) wants to know why we made such an idiotic decision at the last planning commission meeting? I actually have been in this situation. One of the best comments I have heard was, “The moron (Morrow) county planning commission did it again.” To this I say, keep your cool but “arm thyself - with knowledge”.

One thing I have learned in my experience as a citizen volunteer planner is that citizens and the public have great protection and access to the system. No one holds their hands, and they have
to pay attention, but their concerns, problems and input are respected and accounted for in the system.

Notifications, public hearings and the appeal process are all in place. It is all there for the citizen to use, if he wants it. This is where the citizen planner on the commission comes on the scene. Your constituent has a complaint. Did they exercise their rights? Were they informed? As commissioners we must know these rights and procedures. We must tell our constituents their rights, and we must sometimes tell them to use those rights or they will find they have lost them. In order to do that we need to know the basics.

You may not know the intricacies of the planning code, but you should know the procedural rules, the notification, the public hearing and the appeals process. If you know these basics, you will be ready when confronted by your constituent in the grocery store line. One good remedy is to ask your professional planner to hold a Procedure 101 session for your commission, and you will be able to “arm yourself...with knowledge.”
Five Fallacies: Common Planning Commission Errors in Reasoning

By Ric Stephens and Dr. Michael Labossiere

Every public meeting involves arguments. Although many meetings may involve heated disputes, I am referring to logical arguments where one or more premises lead to a conclusion. Development applications provide the basic argument (premises) for regulatory approval (conclusions). The application process is intended to provide a logical argument for public consideration.

In a good argument, the premises provide logical support for the conclusion. In short, if the evidence is correct, then you have good reason to accept the conclusion supported by that evidence. In contrast to good arguments are those that involve bad reasoning. To be more specific, Fallacies are errors in reasoning where the premises do not support the conclusions. Invalid deductive arguments are arguments in which the reasoning is flawed or broken: such a bad argument can have all true premises while having a false conclusion. As an analogy, imagine a badly written tax software program— you type in all the right numbers but it can give you the wrong answer at the end (what, how can I owe more than I even made?!). Inductive fallacies have premises which do not adequately support the conclusions. As an analogy, think of an old car that sometimes starts and sometimes does not. You wouldn’t want to rely on such a car and similarly you would not want to rely on a bad inductive argument. As a planning commissioner, you will hear a wide variety of logical arguments and an equal number of fallacies. Here are five of the most pervasive public meeting fallacies:

Appeal to Common Practice, Tradition and/or Popularity

This fallacy has the following structure:

1. X is the common practice, the tradition or the most popular. (Most of the neighborhood residences have converted garages to additional rooms.)

2. Therefore: X is correct, justifiable, reasonable…etc. (Therefore, all applications for garage conversions should be approved.)

This sort of poor reasoning is defective because the fact that something is commonly done, traditional or popular does not mean that is actually correct or good. For example, at one time the belief that the sun revolved around the earth was very popular. This fallacy is a common argument for variances or to oppose applications that deviate from adjacent land uses.

While such appeals are errors, there are appeals that seem similar that are actually based on good
reasoning. A call for equitable treatment is not fallacious and is often persuasive. For example, if someone was granted an exception to the normal land use restriction for a good reason (such as a clear benefit to the community) and your situation is like that one, then you would have reasonable grounds for requesting a similar exception in your case. In this case you would be appealing for equitable treatment and not merely appealing to common practice, tradition or popularity.

**Slippery Slope**

This fallacy is based on the assumption that one event will inevitably lead to another without any argument for this inevitability. The structure is:

1. Event A occurs or might occur. (The application does not provide sufficient parking.)
2. Therefore: Event B will inevitably happen. (If this application is approved, future applicants will use this as a precedent to submit projects with insufficient parking.)

For example, a person might use this poor reasoning when claiming that allowing a variance or other regulatory deviation will inevitably lead to a series of subsequent similar requests from applicants “appealing to common practice.” This fallacy ignores the number of steps between one event and another and the need to connect the dots, so to speak, between them. Naturally enough, if the connection can be established between the events, then the slope is no longer a slippery one.

**Appeal to Emotion**

This fallacy has the following structure:

1. Favorable (or unfavorable) emotions are associated with X. (Urban growth is disliked by the community)
2. Therefore X is true (or untrue). (Therefore, no development should be permitted)

In many public hearings, this is the counter to the Appeal to Authority. Opposition to an application may not have the resources to engage technical experts, but they do have vested emotions in their property and community. The Appeal to Emotion is often combined with the Appeal to Popularity. These are often effective means of persuasion as they can be more motivating than rational arguments. However, the mere fact that people feel a certain way does not prove (or disprove) a claim. After all, people can be very angry over something that would actually be good for them or happy about something that would lead to disaster.

**False Dilemma and Middle Ground**

The False Dilemma has the following structure:

1. Either statement A is true or statement B is true (when either or both could be false). (The residential development is either approved as submitted, or approved with a reduction in density)
2. Statement A is false. (The project cannot be approved as submitted)
3. Therefore: statement B is true. (Therefore, it must be approved with a reduction in density)

Rarely is a Planning Commission faced with a choice between two absolute positions. The False Dilemma is often evident in applications where an alternative is presented to provide the first premise. This error in reasoning is closely related to the “middle ground” fallacy that a compromise between two positions is the correct position. For example:

1. The applicant proposes 50 residential units.
2. The neighborhood requests a reduction to 30 residential units.
3. Therefore: the correct decision is to approve the application for the average of the two positions: 40 residential units.
The belief in the equity of this “King Solomon” solution makes it very compelling to Planning Commissions trying to appease two opposing positions. Unfortunately, this approach is so common, opposing parties often position themselves at extreme ends of the spectrum so as to, they hope, improve the outcome. In the previous example, the applicant may request higher density than needed to ensure a satisfactory compromise. Opponents may take the same strategy and oppose all development in the hopes of having the least amount approved. The example then might be as follows:

1. The applicant proposes 80 residential units with expectation for 50.

2. The neighborhood requests denial of the application with expectation that some level of development will be approved.

3. Therefore: the correct decision is to approve the application for ½ the request: 40 residential units.

Although the same decisions may result from both examples, this “middle ground” position may not necessarily be either correct or equitable.

**The Enlightenment Fallacy**

Simply stated, this fallacy asserts that if an argument is purely logical, factual premises leading to a valid conclusion, it will be accepted as the truth. This is a particularly unique fallacy as it does not question the premises or conclusion, but rather the acceptance of the argument. Take for example the common issue of development density. If the general premises are that compact development allows for more economic service provision, affordable housing, transit, amenities, etc.; that compact development means higher density; and lower density has the problems associated with sprawl. Then, in general, higher density is more logical than lower density. The argument for higher density should result in an “enlightened” acceptance of this approach to development. And yet, lower densities are often preferred over higher densities regardless of the arguments in favor.

There are many more fallacies beyond the five presented here. Some are well-known such as Two wrongs don’t make a right. Others like Circumstantial Ad Hominem, are less common, but equally pervasive in public forums. For a review of many of these, please visit the Nizkor “Fallacies” webpage [http://www.nizkor.org/features/fallacies/](http://www.nizkor.org/features/fallacies/)

An understanding of arguments and fallacies is invaluable to Planning Commissioners wishing to provide good community decision-making.

But I wouldn’t use an appeal to authority or any other fallacy for this claim. To quote Dennis Miller “Of course, that’s just my opinion. I could be wrong.”
Is an online MBA a worthwhile investment in your future?

By Eileen Franzese Schiffer, Ph.D.

During nearly a decade of work in adult online education, I’ve worked with thousands of students, many of whom had well established, successful careers before their return to the classroom: doctors, real estate brokers, lawyers, hospital administrators, directors of non-profits, and, yes, planners – each of whom, for a variety of reasons, determined that the addition of formal education to their years of experience was worthwhile. What value might there be for you, in adding an MBA to your professional toolkit? If you determine that pursuit of a degree is a good idea for you, might an online program be the best path to that goal? Let’s explore those questions, one at a time.

Why an MBA?

We develop skills unique to our professions during career-specific education and through work in our fields. Doctors learn to treat physical illnesses. Real estate brokers can evaluate property values. Planners learn to navigate regulatory issues. However, across industries, there are skills and knowledge that can be important to every professional, and that are often left to trial-and-error to develop. Why do some medical practices run more efficiently than others? Why do some brokers have highly functioning, cooperative teams of agents, while other brokers deal with nearly 100% Realtor turnover each year? Why are some planners able to adapt to rapid changes in community development initiatives, envisioning opportunities where others see hurdles?

The reality is that leaders in every field can benefit the business focus that an MBA provides. There’s no need to reinvent the wheel and acquire business acumen through trial and error (which can be costly in many ways), when you can benefit from the wisdom and research of experts in the study of leadership and management. One of the most rewarding experiences for me, as an educator, is hearing students in the very first course in the MBA program enthusiastically discuss the skills and knowledge gained in the class that they’ve already applied in their work lives.

A quick glance at the curriculum of any program previews the content that you’ll explore. For example, the Marylhurst University MBA in Sustainable Business covers economics, finance, strategic leadership, accounting, marketing, decision making, environmental law, urban planning, sustainable development, and operations management – just to give you a broad picture. Within each of those larger topics, you’d have the opportunity to gain new insights, including understanding motivational, interpersonal and cultural factors that influence every interaction you have – personally and professionally. You would develop and apply specific skills, including strategic thinking and planning, team building, and the ability to effectively analyze social, environmental and economic impacts of urban planning decisions.
Increased knowledge, and development of essential skills, can help you to be more intentional and proactive in the creation and implementation of goals for your clients or other stakeholders, and for yourself.

If you do decide to pursue an MBA, the next questions are “Where?” and “How”? There certainly are a variety of options available! Rather than outlining all of those options, I’ll offer my perspective. Perhaps, in considering my point of view, you’ll be able to evaluate your own priorities and preferences. I’ll admit to a personal bias in favor of online education; done right, virtual classes can provide greater opportunities for student engagement and learning than traditional classrooms do.

**Why online?**

Almost all of my students are working adult professionals. Completing a degree online provides the flexibility to “attend” classes on days and at times that are convenient to you. It truly is possible to fit school into your busy schedule. However, as a fan of complete honesty and full disclosure, I must emphasize that “more flexible” does not mean “easier” or “less time consuming.” If you truly want an education, and want value for your investment of time and money, you’ll select a rigorous program with high expectations for student performance. The readings, the discussions (and good online programs will require interactions in online discussions – more on that in a moment), and the assignments take time. The old adage, “The more you put in, the more you get out” holds true. Pursuing a degree is truly an investment in yourself, and you will directly and immediately benefit – personally and professionally - from that investment.

Now, what about those online discussions? Best practice online learning is not an independent study experience; it is a highly interactive process in which you’ll actively engage in thought-provoking discussions with diverse professionals. While you’ll certainly benefit from the lessons provided by your instructors and derived from your readings, you’ll gain at least as much (often even more) from your exchanges with your classmates! You’ll be exposed to new perspectives. You’ll be challenged. You’ll develop a network of interesting and valuable contacts across professions and geographic boundaries. Though students sometimes resist the discussion requirements initially (they do demand time and effort), over and over again they assert that they became the most enjoyable and stimulating components of their virtual classroom experiences!

Is an MBA – specifically an online MBA – right for everyone? Certainly not. Can pursuit of an MBA through a high quality online program increase your professional skills and knowledge, and be a worthwhile investment in yourself and your future? Absolutely.

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