



AIA Livable Communities Conference/WWW Seattle  
September 16, 2006

## **MANIFESTO: WALKING WORKING WATER**

We, the assembled makers and implementers of urban policy – architects, planners, and observers of sustainable communities – attending the AIA Livable Communities Conference in Seattle, express our support to those now facing critical decisions affecting the long-term future of communities throughout the greater Puget Sound area and the State of Washington.

In the course of our days here, we have admired the natural and human-crafted beauty of this urban region, and learned how policy and design choices at key historic moments have led to the creation of healthy, sustainable, and economically vibrant communities: from the preservation of the Pike Place Market to the passage and implementation of ‘green’ legislation in Seattle and Washington. We have valued and learned from our exchange with public officials and design advocates from near and far.

Supplementing our direct observation as we have visited city neighborhoods in Seattle, on Bainbridge and at Bremerton, conversations with local colleagues and public officials have given us appreciation for the immediate and long-term dilemmas posed by imminent choices among transportation options associated with the absence of the Viaduct. Obviously, choices made today will affect not only the quality of life in downtown Seattle, but the commercial vitality of the state and region as these hinge on the efficient movement of people and goods into and through Seattle. Our exchange has also brought forward the experiences of cities, states, and regions that have faced similar choices relating to waterfronts – Detroit, San Francisco, Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Cleveland among many others.

Our AIA Seattle colleagues have shared with us their recently-issued advocacy statement, calling for the creation of a new Seattle waterfront: **“Permanently remove the Viaduct, and don’t replace it.”** WE WHOLEHEARTEDLY CONCUR.

During our Conference, we learned of the release of the study commissioned by the Congress for the New Urbanism, amplifying the range of options stemming from removal of the aging Viaduct. In our view, the options presented for public choice should take into account that in the not-so-distant future, emerging transportation technology, changing consumer preferences, and communities designed to promote lifelong health goals for residents, will alter future generations’ reliance on automobiles and freeways. Thoughtful planning and design will lead to neighborhoods at home in nature, the promotion of successful economic exchange, social diversity, and positive connections within and between urban centers – genuine urban sustainability.

The study’s observations accord with what we perceive, and with visions of healthy, sustainable communities to which we have dedicated our professional skills to achieve, here as elsewhere across the US and around the world. Now as throughout the 150-year history of The American Institute of Architects, we commit ourselves to working with our communities to create a better future, by design.

Great opportunities lie before you here and now. We urge public decision-makers and our fellow citizens to take the long view in the decisions that will affect many lives, now and for many years to come; and we invite and urge you to call upon the architects of your community to help discover and achieve our shared vision of the future.

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