

Columbia Connections



SUMMER 2011



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Public Involvement Works!

By Jim Gladson, BergerABAM

Sometimes it's required by law or administrative rule. Sometimes it's simply the right thing to do. Regardless of the driver, effective public involvement is the cornerstone of successful planning processes. The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) adopted as its first core value that people have a right to be involved in decision-making processes that may affect their lives or livelihoods. This makes intuitive sense.

The challenge is determining what level of public involvement will be needed to reach sustain-

able outcomes. That is a question to ask at the beginning of any planning process, whether the project involves a major comprehensive plan update or a modest rule change. IAP2 offers the [Spectrum of Public Participation](#) to help guide project managers' participation decisions (<http://bit.ly/hxZvT7>).

An upfront investment in appropriate public participation can actually save time and money. Any experienced planner can recite a list of projects delayed or derailed by public opposition. While effective public engagement does not guarantee smooth sailing, that effort does increase the odds for success, even with the most controversial projects.

Here are some benefits of a successful public involvement process.

By engaging affected parties at project start up through activities such as stakeholder, **continued, page 3**

Cascadia Collaborative: Scholarships and Auction

Gary Albrecht, Clark County, SW Section President-Elect

The SW Section is offering free registration to attend Cascadia Collaborative, this year's joint Oregon/Washington American Planning Association conference on October 20-21, 2011. On Thursday, October 20, at 5:30 PM during the social reception, the SW Section will help the Washington Chapter APA hold a silent auction to sustain the annual student scholarship.

We need volunteers to help procure and track items, staff the auction, assist with checkout, and related duties. This is a great opportunity to meet and network with local planners while helping a great cause. In exchange for assistance with the auction, SW Section will offer free registration to four people-two planning students and two SW Section planners now out of work.

For more information about the scholarships, please contact Gary Albrecht at (360) 397-2280, ext. 4318 by September 10. The free registration does not cover mobile workshops, travel, or accommodations. For details on the scholarship auction, or to donate an item, please contact Gabe Snedeker, WA APA Scholarship Co-Chair, at (206) 459-9137.

We look forward to seeing you at the auction!



American Planning Association
Washington Chapter
Making Great Communities Happen

“Kids in Planning” and You

Sarah Fox, City of Camas, SW Section Education Chair

Available on the SW Section website this month is a new resource available for planners intending to visit a classroom. Called “Kids in Planning” the curriculum is the culmination of work by many Washington professionals intent on teaching the younger generation why planning is important to communities. A small group from our section has been working intermittently for the past two years to finalize a draft passed to us from the state chapter’s Education Task Force. The section added another dimension by creating a kit for planners to take into school classrooms. The kit now includes an historic film, PowerPoint presentations, and ready-made worksheets—all downloadable.

The curriculum is designed to satisfy the Social Studies Essential Academic Learning Requirements at the seventh grade level. In May 2011, the curriculum was approved for use in the Vancouver School District, and teacher Elizabeth Pager used it in her classroom for an end of the year fun activity. She commented, “As a teacher, the lessons were well prepared and engaging,” and a student remarked, “Overall, the program was great, I liked thinking about what makes a community and what I could do to change it.”

Education Chair Sarah Fox will maintain a list of professional planners who are willing to participate in a classroom activity. **For more information** and to be included as a professional resource, please contact sarah1973@clear.net. Many thanks to Education Committee members Derek Chisholm, Laura Hudson, and Amanda Smeller, and **please join us!**



Public Involvement

Continued from page 1

interviews, the project manager can identify and address issues early that might otherwise delay a decision if these same issues arose late in a process.

Elected or appointed officials may adjust their positions based on the response of the public to a proposed plan. A well-documented and defensible public process can help smooth legislative decision-making. Having an organizational history of dealing with public concerns openly and honestly can lead to a higher level of trust within the community.

This, in turn, can support more constructive communication and engagement for future projects.

The real bottom line: Decisions that reflect a high level of open and interactive public participation tend to be better and

more sustainable.

The Cascade Chapter of IAP2 is very active in SW Washington and Oregon. The chapter recognizes the value of public involvement in planning efforts by funding scholarships annually for master’s degrees in planning programs at Portland State University and the University of Oregon. The chapter also provides training and brownbag workshops on implementing effective public involvement processes. **For more information**, contact Jim Gladson at 360/823-6121 or e-mail jim.gladson@abam.com



International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)

Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public’s contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision-makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

SW Section of APA Prioritizes Support for Training and Networking

Karyn Criswell, EnviroIssues, SW Section President

Periodically, the Board of Directors of the SW Section determines the work priorities for our all-volunteer board. We also poll our members to see how the board can best support you. Over the past few years, we have placed a high priority on organizing and funding trainings and networking opportunities. Trainings come in many forms, including stand-alone sessions, forums in partnership with the state Department of Commerce, and online webinars. Networking opportunities occur at the trainings as well as at our winter and summer socials.

The SW Section is funded by a small annual stipend from the state chapter, nominal entry fees, and generous donations from local consulting firms. For the first time since the section's inception, we are offering four scholarships to the upcoming joint state APA conference (see "Cascadia Collaborative Scholarships and Auction", page 1 for details and eligibility requirements).

We hope that you have benefited from our offerings and welcome your ongoing feedback on our priorities. For more information, visit the [SW Section web page](#) (washington-apa.org/sections/southwest) or email me at kcriswell@enviroissues.com.



Summer Social Event at the Brickhouse Bar & Grill

Southwest Section's Summer Social Event was eventful! On July 13, almost 15 attendees from the private and public sectors came to socialize. This was a great opportunity for planners to mingle with colleagues over sausages and beer and have some fun for an evening.



On-line Registration Now Available
2011 Joint WA/OR APA Planning Conference
October 19-21
Oregon Convention Center, Portland
Visit
www.oregonapa.org/CascadiaCollaborative
to Sponsor, Request an Exhibitor
Booth, or Register for the Conference

SW APA welcomes articles written by members for publication in the newsletter. If you would like to submit an article, please contact Don Hardy, Communications Chair, at don.hardy@abam.com or 360/823-6115, for specifics.

Thanks for your interest!