



Strategic Plan Report

American Planning Association Washington Chapter

September 2008

The Board of Directors of the American Planning Association Washington Chapter met in March and June of 2008 to engage in strategic planning for the chapter. The board prepared a statement of the chapter's purpose, mission, and vision for the future. After the first meeting, the members were surveyed about the greatest obstacles that they saw to achieving the vision. Information from the survey was studied by the board and is being shared with members through articles in the newsletter. The board is very grateful to those members who took the time to share their views. In the second phase of the process, several themes emerged and the board agreed upon three overarching goals derived from those themes.

1. THEME: Planning is more than regulations.

Planning increases the choices available to people and improves our society. It will require boldness and risk-taking to articulate this understanding, be "vision" oriented rather than regulatory, and tell the positive story of planning.

GOAL: Be bold, be visible, be future-oriented, take risks.

OBJECTIVES:

Be proactive and don't shy away from self-promotion. Target the message as to why regulations etc. are important.

Use the media more effectively so that we control the message. Bring media attention to positive aspects of planning and help deemphasize focus on controversial projects in coverage. Work with columnists in local newspapers or write a column ourselves.

Initiate partnerships and education opportunities with the local community: chambers of commerce, homeowners' associations, environmental groups

Market creation – chapter could sponsor sessions on the GMA, and encourage vendor-sponsored trainings.

Emphasize bringing "good planning" into the classroom (elementary, middle, high school). Develop model curricula that could be used by planners throughout the state.

Institutionalize ongoing education/informational efforts aimed at elected officials, amongst whom there is frequent turnover.

Work to influence legislation and tax policy to support the profession. Promote tax credits and encourage the state of Washington support the CM curriculum.

Make the case with employers as to why they should subsidize the costs of membership in the chapter and attendance at events.



2. THEME: We can leverage our resources as our society evolves and connects in new and different ways. Electronic means provide opportunities for social interaction, convenience, and enhanced credibility for our work.

GOAL: Communicate strategically to educate, advocate, promote and connect

OBJECTIVES:

Be concise in all communications.

Use web-based technology for sharing information and learning. Post information on web for reference—doesn't need to be in emails and newsletters so much. Use web links to access different layers of information.

Minimize email from chapter except "news flash" for time-sensitive. Restrict chain emails—i.e. use "chat room" approach. Have sign-in groups for different topics—and target information to those topics.

Use technology better for events and workshops. Make use of the teleconference, web broadcast and recorded option. Use distance learning—webinars, classes (WATS).

Provide networking and social opportunities for members—even more important as virtual types of interaction multiply. Members are looking for fun events and regional get-togethers in addition to the state-wide conferences.

Provide short volunteer opportunities announced on the website and through the newsletter. Emphasize our core value of making communities great. Let volunteers know that they only are being asked to do one thing. Recruit actively.

Strengthen the sections and ensure members are associated with a section.

Create sub-sections—smaller interest groups (for example, a hiking group).

Rotate venues to different communities within section and state—mix of urban, suburban and rural locations. Recruit members in less-represented regions and locations.

Organize travel options to events, subsidize travel costs.

Make sure that topics for events are balanced, urban and rural, and by region.

Continue to push for cost control, transparency, efficiency and accountability at the APA national level.

Encourage revision of CM policy to include such possibilities as more liberal credit, credit for teaching, or credit for shared activities.

Consider unusual ideas such as providing a coupon valid for attendance at a training session or event with membership payment.

Make the case for services provided to the membership.



American Planning Association
Washington Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen

3. THEME: Everyone is struggling with the current flood of work requirements and the difficulty of balancing work and personal life. Members will welcome tools to help them meet their obligations more effectively.

GOAL 3: Provide tools to help our members.

OBJECTIVES:

Provide non-traditional vehicles for planning—GIS, 3-D models.

Create a printed annual report so members can inform and enlighten others about the chapter's work in a memorable way.