



VIRGINIA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

**DEVELOPMENT PLAN
2008-2013**
ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF
DIRECTORS
DECEMBER 12, 2008

MISSION

Our mission is to make great communities happen in Virginia by offering continuing professional development and other valuable services to our members that will enable them to excel in their practice. We are committed to raising awareness about the many benefits planning offers as a foundation for effectively addressing the physical, economic, and social changes that take place in Virginia, and to providing effective leadership in planning advocacy reflective of a diverse geography and population.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Help Planners Plan

Advance the practice of planning by providing opportunities for professional development in order to build strong communities that improve the quality of life for all Virginians.

Help Virginia Plan

Promote sound planning and decision making in Virginia.

Make Planning and Planners Matter

Promote the value and enhance the credibility of planners among elected and appointed officials, the public, and related professions.

Meet Membership Needs

Offer services that help our members advance their individual careers and better serve their customers.

Get Planners Involved

Engage all facets of our membership in Chapter activities and leadership development.

Support APA

Create opportunities to further APA's mission, values, goals, and objectives through Chapter leadership and activities.

Strategic Objective: Help Planners Plan

Advance the art and science of planning by providing opportunities for professional development in order to build strong communities that improve the quality of life for all Virginians.

Suggested Actions

- Offer continuing education and skill building opportunities for planners, academics, students, and citizen planners.
- Provide an Annual Conference for all members as an educational and networking event. Choose meeting themes and solicit session proposals that are timely and relevant to current issues facing Virginia.
- Promote the availability and use of APA's Policy Guides as resources for planning and decision-making.
- Provide or support training opportunities that offer Certification Maintenance (CM) credit for AICP and non-AICP members.
- Maintain and promote an AICP exam preparation program, and provide support for exam candidates. Maintain a ready supply of exam preparation materials for purchase by exam candidates.
- Remind AICP members of certification expiration dates and encourage certification maintenance.

Strategic Objective: Help Virginia Plan

Promote sound planning and decision making in Virginia.

Suggested Actions:

- Prepare and adopt an annual Legislative & Policy Agenda.
- Offer education, technical assistance, and expert testimony for study committees and key legislative committees. Conduct research on best practices and prepare white papers on important and timely issues. Where appropriate, adopt Chapter positions.
- Maintain high quality and effective contractual legislative and policy consulting services to assist Board and Legislative Committee with the following activities:
 - developing and advocating for the annual Legislative & Policy agenda;
 - establishing and maintaining contacts with key legislators and legislative committees;
 - raising awareness of sound planning principles in decision-making;
 - pursuing opportunities to offer Chapter resources for more educated and informed decision-making on study committees or through providing expert testimony;
 - developing Chapter positions; and,
 - providing members with timely information about legislative activities affecting the practice of planning in Virginia.
- Build or strengthen relationships with allied organizations on matters of mutual legislative or policy interest. Coordinate positions with allied and related organizations to achieve a broader and unified voice.
- Send Chapter newsletter to General Assembly members on key legislative committees.
- Recognize state legislators and administrators that have promoted sound planning in Virginia with an awards presentation.

Strategic Objective: Make Planning and Planners Matter

Promote the value and enhance the credibility of planners among elected and appointed officials, the public, and related professions.

Suggested Actions:

- Recognize planning achievements and excellence by:
 - Maintaining an Awards Program that recognizes excellence in Virginia Planning. Create an award category that reflects the Annual Conference theme to recognize excellence associated with that theme. Use local press releases to recognize Award Winners. Support nominations of Awards Program winners for National APA Awards.
 - Promoting and participating in APA's National Community Planning Month celebration.
 - Providing support for FAICP nominations by establishing nomination support procedures.

- Build awareness about planning by:
 - Establishing and strengthening partnerships with allied organizations on matters of mutual interest. Continue to co-sponsor conferences and events with related organizations. Develop a Speakers Bureau or list and offer speakers to related organizations. Encourage participation of related organizations in Annual Conference or Section events as speakers or attendees.
 - Supporting programs that bring awareness about community planning and the Planning profession to elementary, middle, and high-school students. Participate in Career Day events.
 - Attending the APA's annual Federal Policy and Program Briefing and organizing a Virginia delegation to participate in APA's annual Planners Day on the Hill event to promote awareness of APA's Legislative Priorities and to advocate as planners for sound federal policy, legislative and budget decisions affecting planning.
 - Promoting the use of APA's Policy Guides as resources for decision-making.
 - Advocating for the Chapter's role as the certifying agent of any state-mandated certification requirements for planners.

Strategic Objective: Meet Membership Needs

Offer services that help our members advance their individual careers and better serve their customers.

Suggested Actions:

- Creating and maintaining a high quality Chapter Website as the primary vehicle for informing members with timely information about planning news and events, member services, CM and other training opportunities, Annual Meeting information and registration, Section events, Chapter administration, Chapter strategic initiatives, employment opportunities, consultant services, and relevant links. Explore opportunities to use the Website as an information clearinghouse and to provide for topical reference databases.
- Maintaining the Chapter newsletter (Newsbrief) as the secondary vehicle for informing members of planning news and issues in Virginia and nationally, Board activities, and member news. The newsletter should be published quarterly with focus on relevant planning themes and news events in Virginia.
- Using e-mail special bulletins to provide timely alerts about upcoming chapter events or professional development opportunities.
- Continuing to administer the Chapter listserv to promote research and information sharing among members. Explore options for enhancing this service to respond to subscriber preferences.
- Exploring opportunities to provide an electronic Bulletin Board function for topical discussions.
- Providing timely and relevant publications for members. Provide an annual report on legislative actions affecting the practice of planning in Virginia.
- Encouraging creation of discussion groups organized around topics in *Journal of the American Planning Association*, *Planning* magazine, or books relevant to the profession.
- Encouraging research and development by members of best practice white papers on issues relevant to the profession and timely to planning issues in Virginia.
- Routinely assessing the Chapter membership to ensure services provided meet needs, through use of member surveys on the Website or direct mailing.

Strategic Objective: Get Planners Involved

Engage all facets of the Chapter membership in Chapter activities and leadership development.

Suggested Actions:

- Grow Chapter membership by:
 - Encouraging and embracing membership diversity.
 - Increasing membership among private sector professionals and offering services that are attractive to these professionals.
 - Promoting Chapter-only membership for Planning Officials and non-renewing APA members.
- Promote ethnic and cultural diversity by:
 - Continuing to demonstrate leadership in ethnic and cultural diversity and awareness by encouraging and promoting diversity within our profession in order to be more reflective of the communities we serve.
 - Offering programs, speakers and other Chapter resources to facilitate resolution of community planning issues that disproportionately affected minority populations.
 - Encouraging diversity in Chapter leadership.
 - Supporting programs that bring awareness about community planning and the Planning profession to elementary, middle, and high-school students. Participate in Career Day events.
- Improve member accessibility of Chapter events and activities by:
 - Creating geographic-centered Sections to enable more members to participate in Section events closer to home or work.
 - Supporting capacity building in newly established Sections to offer programming and events and fund Section events. Continue to support established Sections through the Chapter budgeting.
 - Rotating Annual Chapter Conference locations to encourage participation by all members. Set registration fees to improve accessibility while covering costs and realizing some profit to help fund Chapter initiatives and programs. Consider offering geographic-specific mini-conferences hosted by the Sections.

- Improve outreach to members by:
 - Using e-mail special bulletins to provide timely alerts about upcoming chapter events or professional development opportunities.
 - Welcoming new Chapter members with correspondence and encourage review of the Chapter's Strategic Plan; solicit new member interest assisting with implementation of the Strategic Plan.
 - Offering targeted networking opportunities at the Annual Chapter conference for new Chapter members and Young Planners.
 - Seeking involvement of students and Young Planners in Chapter events, programs, preparing Chapter publications, and implementing the Strategic Plan as needed. Support Student Planning Organizations with mentoring partnerships. Consider establishing a Students Section and a Young Planners Group.
 - Develop and support a University Relations program that encourages faculty and students to participate in Chapter activities. Offer targeted member services and membership fees.
 - Seek opportunities to involve the Planning Directors Section in implementing the Strategic Plan.

- Promote Chapter leadership succession planning by:
 - Encouraging members to pursue Chapter leadership positions.
 - Continuing to administer a high quality nominations and elections process. Encourage contested races to generate greater interest in leadership positions.
 - Prepare a Chapter Leadership succession manual to assist with biennial Board transitions. Conduct a transition and strategic planning retreat with outgoing and incoming Chapter Board members following each Chapter Board election; use this retreat to properly orient new Board members with duties and responsibility, to review and update the Chapter's Strategic Plan, and to prepare a 2-year work plan and budget. Explore opportunities for applying recommended actions in the *Chapter Success Manual* prepared by APA's Chapter President's Council.

Strategic Objective: Support APA

Create opportunities to further APA's mission, values, goals, and objectives through Chapter leadership and activities.

Suggested Actions:

- Consider APA Development Goals when reviewing updating the Chapter's Development Plan.
- Consider using APA's multi-year focus or "Super Topic" as Chapter Annual Conference or Section event themes.
- Apply APA's "Minimum Chapter Performance Criteria" to Chapter administration, where feasible.