NPC20 Educational Tracks/Topics

**Climate Adaptation and Hazard Mitigation.** Climate change affects all areas of the country. Coastal cities are planning for sea-level rise and landlocked states are experiencing extreme weather and new weather cycles, while droughts, floods, and seismic activity are occurring in unfamiliar locations. Communities that regularly focus on other planning issues also should note and be ready to address potential impacts from natural hazards and a changing climate.

We invite proposals for this track that share lessons learned about increasing ability to withstand natural hazards; adapting local economies and land-use policies; maintaining water delivery and other public infrastructure; and enhancing emergency communication systems. Proposals that address resources related to providing energy derived from fossil fuels or renewable sources are encouraged.

**Topics in this track:**

- Climate Adaptation
- Climate Mitigation
- Climate Resilience
- Disaster Recovery
- Drought Resilience
- Extreme Weather Impacts
- Fire Prevention and Recovery
- Hazards Planning and Mitigation
- Sea-Level Rise
- Energy Conservation
- Stormwater/Green Infrastructure
- Water Supply Management

**Design, Development, and Preservation.** People embrace communities of lasting value that reflect historic preservation, cultural resources, local character, and exceptional urban design. Communities built on principles of interrelated patterns of land use, transportation, and urban form foster some of the most desirable characteristics of human habitation: neighborliness, sustainability, and economic efficiency.

We invite proposals that address land-use planning and building form, community revitalization, urban design, public art, historic preservation, and new urbanism.

**Topics within this track:**
Equitable Access and Reducing Barriers to Opportunity
• Structural Barriers to Equity
• Land-Use Planning and Building Form

Creative Placemaking
• Historic Preservation
• Preserving Community Character
• Public Art

Land Use and Development
• New Urbanism
• Urban Design

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. APA is committed to promoting more inclusive, just, and equitable communities through a planning profession as diverse as the communities we serve. We encourage proposals that are responsive to demographic changes and challenges to achieving just, equitable, and inclusive communities for all.

We invite proposals that discuss efforts to foster inclusion and equity within communities and the institutions of planning. Sessions within this track may emphasize issues of concern to communities of color (e.g. gentrification, environmental justice); examine aspects of any planning context with a thoughtful focus on equity, diversity, or justice; or consider the concerns and special circumstances of planners with specific demographic characteristics or abilities.

Topics within this track:

• Accessibility and Universal Design
• Aging in Place
• Digital Divide
• Environmental Justice
• Health Equity
• Homelessness and Poverty
• Immigrants and Refugees
• Inclusive Public Participation and Public Involvement

• Multigenerational Planning
• Planning for Diverse Populations
• Planning for Inclusive Communities
• Gentrification

• Public Health and the Built Environment
• Redlining and Greenlining
• Religious Land Uses
• Schools as Community Assets
• Housing/Housing Affordability, Mobility
Healthy Living With Natural Environments. Across the country, local governments are adopting goals and objectives that integrate public health into all types of plans, policies, and processes. These efforts will impact how people choose where to live, how to get around, and how to access healthy foods and physical activity. They will affect everything from clean air and water to social equity.

Through citizen engagement, plan making, capital improvements, development review, and other planning actions, planners promote fiscally sound investments and decisions that protect and restore the natural environment, conserve resources, and build more sustainable communities in both rural and urban areas.

We invite proposals that address these topics as well as environmental justice, parks, open space, and greenways. Proposals within this track will highlight local, regional, and national efforts to balance human needs with long-term environmental viability. We encourage proposals that explore how plans and regulations affect the equitable distribution of benefits associated with ecosystem services.

Topics within this track:
- Active Living
- Air Quality
- Ecosystem Services
- Energy Efficiency
- Environmental Regulations
- Food Systems
- Green Infrastructure
- Partnerships for Healthy Communities
- Parks, Open Spaces, and Greenways
- Planning Policies for Healthy Communities
- Public Health and the Built Environment
- Urban Agriculture
- Waste Minimization
- Water Quality
- Sanitation
- Wildland-Urban Interface
- Wildlife Preservation

Housing and Community Development. Solving the pressing issues of insufficient affordable housing, homelessness, and social inequity is essential for improving everyone’s quality of life and expanding economic and social mobility for all. Providing local communities with a pathway toward inclusive prosperity requires the collaboration of legislators, policy makers, planners, developers, advocates, and residents.

We invite proposals that examine these issues and offer pragmatic solutions that planners can adapt in their communities and regions.

Topics within this track:
International, Comparative, and Global Planning. Rapid urbanization, cross-border movement of people, goods, and ideas, and global environmental challenges have made the planning world smaller. How can communities respond to global pressures? How can planners respond to global problems and innovate in light of increasing globalization and its associated risks?

We invite proposals that explore international challenges of development, channels for international movement of planning ideas, urbanization, environmental pollution, and climate change in different countries and in international agencies and compacts. We encourage proposals that discuss innovative and successful responses to informality, land tenure, migration, disaster resilience, artificial intelligence, varying legal frameworks, and emerging concepts such as the Right to the City.

Topics within this track:

- Planning for Olympic Games/Mega Events
- Global Movement of Planning Ideas and Practices
- International and Comparative Planning Innovations
- Informal Settlements/Favelas
- Infrastructure Development Planning
- International Financial Institutions and International Development Aid Agencies
- International Law
- Land Reform
- Migration and Refugees
- Planning for Humanitarian Emergencies
- Planning in Conflict Zones
- Sustainable Development
- Transboundary Planning
- Urbanization
Managing Communities in Transition. While local economies are greatly influenced by national and state policies, communities are challenged to find the best local economic development choices. Many planners are eager to learn about successful local and regional efforts to support job creation, workforce development, and economic activities that maintain or enhance quality of life.

We invite proposals that concern economic transformation of neighborhoods or communities; compatible redevelopment; approaches to maximizing economic opportunities; real estate market analysis; comprehensive planning; understanding the consequences of planning-related decisions; and building political support for transformational economic development.

Topics within this track:

- Comprehensive Planning
- Changing Demographics
- Suburban Reinvention
- Economic Development and Redevelopment
- Innovative Finance
- Shared Economy
- Changes in Zoning Codes to Support Change
- Changes in Brick-and-Mortar Retail
- Disruptive Technology
- Aging Infrastructure
- Real Estate Market Analysis
- Public Engagement
- Workforce Planning

Planning Practice and Careers. Planning work takes place in diverse settings in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, and at neighborhood, municipal, regional, state, interstate, national, and international levels. Career advancement and success derive from formal qualifications, opportunities, continuing education, mentoring, and personal initiative.

We invite proposals that offer best practices for managing planning organizations, working within legal mandates and constraints, and building successful careers.

Topics within this track:

- Leadership and Collaboration
- Relations with Elected and Appointed Officials
- Influencing Decision Making in the Public Interest
- Intergroup and Stakeholder Relationships
- Media Relations and Managing the Flow of Information
- Private Practice and Consultancy
- Expert Testimony
Politics, Policy, and Government. Planners are deeply concerned about many federal, state, and local policy issues. In our currently contentious era, it is more important than ever for planners to keep up with new issues and trends of thought, especially those likely to affect their work during the next decade. This track will offer discussions and new ideas about current policies that every planner should understand, insights into the workings of government at all levels, and a platform to support planning advocates’ positions and actions on policy issues that affect local communities.

We encourage proposals that illustrate successful tools and approaches that planners use to engage communities, respond to political leadership, introduce innovative ideas into community dialogues, and promote productive relationships with interest groups and decision makers.

Topics within this track:

- Inclusion and Equity
- Advocacy and Activism
- Youth and Community Engagement
- Conflict Management
- Intergovernmental Coordination
- Planning Law
- Regional Partnerships
- Political Engagement
- Advisory Committees
- Working with Elected Officials
- Census 2020
- State v. Local Control
- Management Innovations
- Zoning, Codes, and Ordinances

Research to Improve Planning. How can research aimed at understanding and improving planning practice bring planning researchers and planning practitioners closer together? Whether conducted by scholars or practitioners, proposals in this track should show applicable practice that attendees can use by including researchers and the planners who served as subjects of the research or who experimented with implementing the results of research.

We invite proposals featuring research to better understand cities, imagine improved planning systems, reinterpret planning’s past, develop new planning approaches, or assess the impact of plans. We encourage proposals that provide for interaction between researchers and those impacted by research.
Topics within this track:

- Research Examining Planning Practice
- Policy Analysis
- Qualitative and Quantitative Methods
- Planning Methods and Tools
- Demographics and Economics
- Impact Assessment and Demand Analysis
- Spatial Analysis

**Small-Town and Rural Planning.** Rural communities’ challenges differ in scale and nature from challenges in metropolitan areas. This track assembles sessions that explore diverse rural and small-town planning topics. Examples include ensuring equal access to high-quality broadband, transportation, and utilities infrastructure; planning for rural economic development; and recognizing the importance and distinctive characteristics of small towns and rural areas.

We invite proposals that explore both innovative and tried-and-true strategies to address the unique issues and opportunities facing these communities.

**Topics within this track:**

- Agriculture and Farmland Protection
- Broadband Access
- Building Local Leadership
- Distributed Utilities
- Resort and Tourism Planning
- Gateway and Natural Amenity Planning
- Impact of Sprawl on Service Delivery
- New Ruralism
- Revitalizing Main Street
- Rural Growth and Change
- Rural-Urban Synergies
- Sharing Economy and Small Towns
- Small-Town and Rural Disaster Recovery

**Technology and Innovation.** Expanding data sources and computing power have transformed projection, analysis, and design in planning. New technologies are disrupting housing, transportation, and other industries that are central to urban growth and development. Planners’ skillsets now require frequent updating to keep agencies and firms on the cutting edge.

We encourage proposals that demonstrate the potential and impact of new technologies, imagine improved planning functions that use technology, and help planners integrate technological developments in related fields.

**Topics within this track:**
Transportation. Transportation is changing rapidly, and planners must acquire skills needed to keep abreast of new developments. As both technology and transportation preferences evolve, transit, biking, and pedestrian travel and safety have become prime considerations in street design. We invite proposals that consider these issues, as well as others that cover large transportation planning projects — including rail and airport planning — and how they are planned and executed.

We encourage proposals highlighting new and promising responses to challenges in accessibility and mobility, including those aimed at pedestrians, light individual-transport vehicles, public transit, paratransit, for-hire vehicles, freight, and air travel.

Topics within this track:

- Active Transportation
- Transit-Oriented Development
- Roadway Design
- Micromobility (Scooters, E-bicycles, Bikeshare, etc.)
- For-Hire Vehicles/Transportation Network

- Companies/ Ride-Hailing Services
- Autonomous and Connected Vehicles
- Emerging Modes of Transit Planning (Bus Rapid Transit, Microtransit, and Autonomous Shuttles)
- Intercity Rail

- Parking Management and Optimization
- Curbside Management
- Port and Intermodal Freight Planning, Including Last-Mile Delivery Services
- Airport Planning
- Transport-Related Smartphone Apps