



## Putting Conferences to Work

by: Joseph Horwedel , AICP



Attending the National APA Conference in Los Angeles this past spring, I wanted to find things I could bring back to the office and implement. As it turned out, the last session of the Conference entitled “Municipal Design Studios” was the one that resonated the most with me. The session included representatives from Dallas, Portland, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. I have on my bucket list to build community appreciation and support for quality urban design and architecture in San José. Part of that clearly is to look for allies and tools to accomplish this ambitious goal, and this session provided that.

The session structure made “walk away learning” easy for me by presenting several panelists explaining how each of their cities created an urban design function in their city through a variety of methods, ranging from including major staff operations, to contractual functions with a key staff person to manage the program. The examples they used

helped me frame in my mind the questions I have been carrying around in trying to establish a formal urban design function here in San José.

This session sparked that goal, and before the session was finished, I had already emailed John Raim, the Director for the San Francisco Planning Department, to set up a time for a group from San José to visit his design team.

While the planning of our visit to San Francisco started with staff from Planning, Building and Code Enforcement, as I talked about the upcoming trip with

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# Putting Conferences to Work

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managers from other departments, we quickly had others wanting to attend. The Director and Deputy from our Transportation Department and the head of our Economic Development office asked to also spend the day learning about urban design in San Francisco.

This was important as urban design is greatly controlled by the public right of way, so transportation improvements can accentuate great design, or totally frustrate the private property investments. Likewise having support from the economic development director can help as the planning staff negotiates with private developers so that quality design is part of the project.

The sharing of ideas is very powerful in these staff exchange sessions. We heard from their staff about their very popular **Pavement to Parks** project, which is worth checking out. They allow businesses to petition the City to remove temporary parking in front of their business and add pedestrian amenities such as seating and planters. While San José had allowed these previously, it was a great opportunity for the Transportation Department management to see how a process driven by the adjoining business owners might apply back home.

We also used this trip to spend time with a partnership we have been fostering with a non profit, San Francisco Urban Research Group (SPUR), to grow the appreciation for quality architecture and urban design. What we learned from the San Francisco staff was that they partnered with SPUR on specific projects including the Pavement to Parks, a number of the neighborhood planning projects completed in the past, and reviews of development regulations to better achieve the community's goals around quality of life and economic development. Our

Economic Development Director is a member of the SPUR board and a champion of SPUR expanding their presence into San Jose. (That is worth an article in a future newsletter by itself).

The idea for the trip to San Francisco had several goals for my organization. I wanted to see first hand what was really being done in San Francisco vs. the optimistic views shared at conferences. I also wanted to use this opportunity to get some of my key staff out of the office with their boots on the ground in another city to see how it works, talk more informally with their peers and perhaps build connections for a longer term relationship. Lastly it was an excuse to visit SPUR and one of the design firms we work with in their offices away from our normal projects to reflect on the larger urban design question.

Spending the day with John Rahaim and his team was well worth the time and a success at many levels. I suggest finding those opportunities to get out of the building once in awhile to see what your peers are up to. It was great listening to the energy in the room as the staff swapped war stories and victories and it opened the door for our next city-to-city visit to San Diego.



## Help wanted

### Authors

Looking for someone to tell their professional successes with their peers.

### Newsletter Editor

Looking for assistance in organizing and obtaining content for the newsletter.

# The value of Chapter conferences

by: Margo Wheeler, AICP

*Two examples...*

October is the busiest month of the year for Chapter conferences. The weather is expected to be better in the fall and hotel rates are reasonable. Academics and students are back at work, too.

I have worked for cities in Nevada and California and was privileged to attend both Chapter conferences in October. Both were excellent conferences, with outstanding speakers, offering relevant material on cutting edge issues in the respective states.

The biggest contrast was the size and settings of the conferences. The contrasts between the two were sometimes expected, and other times surprising. The California Chapter had over 1000 attendees, Nevada 100. The APA-Nevada conference was held at the new city of Las Vegas city hall, a LEED certified Gold building. The use of city hall kept the conference cost for participants to \$100.00. The hotels were walking distance, offering rates between \$37.00 and \$45.00. The California Chapter conference was held at the Rancho Las Palmas resort. The conference and room rates were substantially higher.

Some of the noteworthy sessions in Nevada were as follows:

- Planning Sustainability in Southern Nevada with representatives from local jurisdictions, HUD and the Lincy Institute UNLV discussing the \$3.5

million federal grant to create regional collaboration, community engagement and long-range growth options.

- A downtown Las Vegas infrastructure presentation by the City's Assistant Public Works Director and a private sector engineer – that's right, two engineers!
- Quantitative Evaluation methodology in TOD Planning by three Ph.D.'s from regional planning agencies.

Master plans for UNLV, Nellis AFB and Lake Tahoe were discussed by multi-disciplinary participants. The battle to create a food truck ordinance was explained.

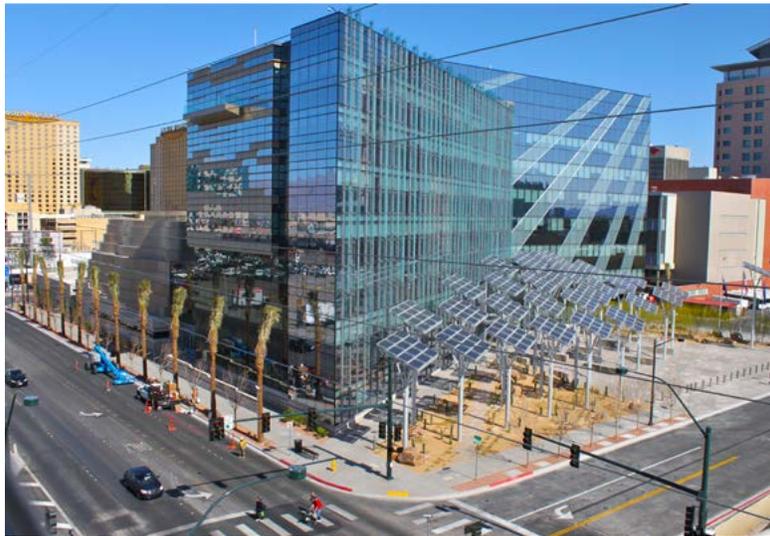
The conference also offered two Ethics sessions. The City Planning and Management division presented a session presenting situational material regarding staff interaction with elected

and appointed officials. One Law session on exactions and development conditions was offered.

On an even larger scale the California chapter conference offered 14 Law sessions and six Ethics sessions. Even coming just one half day, planners could acquire their AICP required courses in California.

Having been away from California for several years, I was particularly interested in recent California Laws so I attended the APA-CA legislative update annual CEQA update, Mills Act implementations, and

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**The City of Las Vegas new city hall building.**

As the new Chair of the City Planning and Management Division, I have been thinking about what the Division offers our current members and what our focus should be this year. The past year has been challenging for the Division, and I am looking to “reboot” our efforts to you.

The workplan we adopted at the Business Meeting Annual Conference is focused on several fronts:

- First, getting the Newsletter back in circulation, and then connecting with you to learn what you would like to see in our different publications.
- Second, we will continue to have an active presence at the National Conference, providing training and learning for the professional. (See the separate article on Putting Conferences to Work)
- Third, we will also continue to support the New Directors Institute financially, as well as with faculty members.

In our next newsletter we want to focus on the timely topic of how the planning profession can help our communities to be economically successful. We are looking for what you are doing in your communities to support economic success through good planning to share in the newsletter.

Thanks again for sticking with us.

Joe

## Joseph Horwedel, AICP Director of Planning, Building, & Code Enforcement City of San Jose

Joe became Director of Planning, Building, & Code Enforcement in November 2006 and brings 29 years of planning experience and leadership to the role. He is responsible for oversight of all private development, long-range land use planning, building construction review and compliance, and community code enforcement.



Most recently the City adopted the award winning Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan that charts the future of the city focused on increasing the city’s economic sustainability, and creating a series of unique vibrant villages throughout the city each with its own identity to accommodate significant levels of new growth.

He is committed to improving the Department’s service delivery to better facilitate the City’s economic growth, preserve its diverse community, and build the future San José. During his tenure with the Department, Joe has led significant technology initiatives, negotiated complex redevelopment projects, and collaborated with countless stakeholders to achieve major policy initiatives. Recently the department drafted ordinance updates for sign regulations, medical marijuana, access to fresh foods to neighborhoods and bail bond regulation.

The department staff of over 250 provides a full range of service to the citizens of San Jose from planning through construction to property enforcement. Joe is a graduate of California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo and received his AICP certification in 1990.



# BIO

## Vice Chair

Charles Graves, AICP  
Director of Planning & Buildings  
City of Cincinnati

Charles C. Graves III, is the Director of the Department of Planning and Buildings, for the City of Cincinnati. He oversees a staff that includes 75 staff persons in the Divisions of Community Planning and Building & Inspections. Major initiatives for the Department include developing a Comprehensive Plan for the City, developing form-based code zoning, and streamlining the permitting process.



Mr. Graves previously worked as the Deputy Director of Long Range Planning in the office of Planning for Washington, D.C. where he helped develop the Comprehensive Plan for the city. In his career he has also served as the Commissioner of Planning and Community Development in Atlanta, Georgia, Director of Planning for Baltimore, Maryland and Director of Planning and Development in Appleton, Wisconsin.

Mr. Graves holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Urban Planning from Hampton University. He also received his Master of Science in Community Economic Development from New Hampshire College and achieved a Certificate of Advanced Study from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government.

# BIO

## Secretary/Treasurer

Flinn Fagg, AICP  
Director of Department of Planning  
City of Las Vegas

Flinn Fagg, AICP, was appointed as the Director of Planning in 2011. Under his direction, the department has implemented Walkable Community Plans as a way to achieve sustainability goals, reduce automobile dependence, and reinvest in mature neighborhoods. In addition, he has instituted a Citizens Academy of Planning course, which the department provides as a means to engage citizens and provide instruction in zoning practices. Flinn joined the city of Las Vegas Department of Planning in 2003 as an Urban Design Coordinator, and was promoted to Planning Manager in 2005 and Acting Deputy Director in 2009.



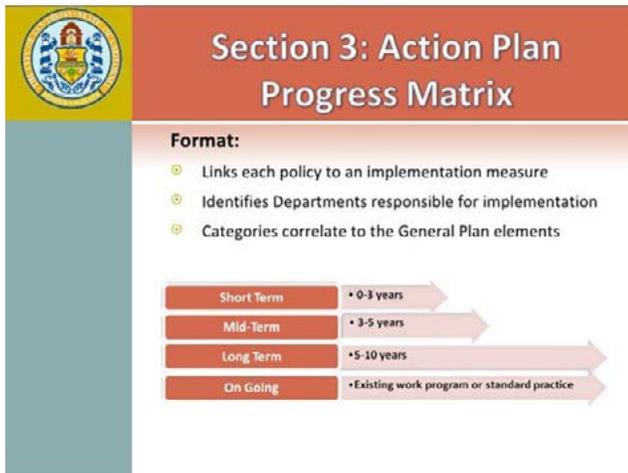
Before joining the city of Las Vegas, he worked as an urban designer and planner for several municipalities in the state of Florida. Flinn earned his Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Oregon and his Master of Architecture at the University of Miami, specializing in urban design.

Flinn has been a member of APA since 1994, and received his AICP certification in 1998. He served as Assistant Director of the Southern Section of the Nevada Chapter of the American Planning Association in 2008, and then as Director from 2009 to 2010. He received the Professional Planner Award for Distinguished Leadership from the state chapter in 2010.

by: Joseph Horwedel, AICP

At the 2012 National Conference in Los Angeles the division presented a session entitled General Plan Action Plans. The focus of the session was looking at strategies that cities could take to achieve the goals we include in our various comprehensive, general and strategic plans. The session included Nancy Bragado from the City of San Diego, Charles Graves from the City of Cincinnati Ohio and myself talking about San Jose.

Charles and I talked about how our respective plans now include specific measures to track our progress and how we have broadened our reach into our communities to share the plans and build support during their preparations.



### San Diego Monitoring

Nancy showed off the great work San Diego has undertaken in tracking the progress of implementation of their recent General Plan adoption. They have now prepared a yearly report to the community that tracks the progress of the plan by all agencies in the City. The 2010 edition of the report is a shorter version of that report (link included at end of article) includes a very helpful sort of project and actions focused on the time frame to implement.

What is valuable with this level of on going reporting is that the community and the elected body can see where the investments made to date have resulted in progress towards the goals, and where budget cut backs have slowed or even stopped progress on a goal. San Diego is pretty candid in their comments about resource availability and progress on the targets.

In San José we are creating our version of the monitoring report from San Diego. This started with meeting with each of the respective department management in the City to walk through policies and goals that are included in the new Envision San José 2040 plan that were associated with their department. For some departments this was a short page or two to cover. Other like our Environmental Services Department went on for pages as environmental issues were a large part of the plan creation. We are confirming lead responsibilities and the broader shared responsibilities to implement the policies which allowed us an opportunity to circle back with some departments that were only involved on the edge of the plan adoption. These conversations also have allowed us to talk about how we can use the plan to help frame budget discussions for other departments and align priorities with our council by connecting them back to the new general plan.

A trend I am noticing in this tough economy is connecting the work of long range planning to economic development. As resources have become scarce at the local level, connecting our story for decision makers and the public to the near term economic development goals and activities is imperative. Our council wants to invest in actions that will make the city stronger on the bottom line. Land use regulation can certainly have a direct impact. Helping recruit new businesses directly and

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by: Flinn Fagg, AICP

through efficient service models also fits. This has allowed us in San Jose to build a stronger relationship with our peers in the economic development team. That pays off at budget time where the economic development team advocates for budget adds in Planning to support our work in the permit center and doing master plans of our future growth areas ahead of development.

The bottom line is that if you are not doing a formal review on the progress of your comprehensive or general plan, you are missing an opportunity to tell your story.

The adopted budget for the City Planning and Management Division reflects the cost controls most planning organizations have faced in the past several years. This year's budget is planned to be \$6,000 less than last year, based on reduced membership revenues and a decision to not draw down reserves this year.

The division will continue to provide a sizeable financial contribution to the New Directors Institute (NDI) of \$2,500, as well as offering two scholarships in the total amount of \$500. This past year, the division supported the NDI with \$8,000 and the scholarships.

The budget includes travel costs for the division chair to attend the two yearly meetings required by APA, the Annual Conference series of business meetings and the Fall Leadership Meeting normally held in Washington D.C. The budget for this year is \$3,000; this is less than last year's amount of \$4,000. The actual amount will be less this year, as the chair used their department's travel and training budget to cover their attendance at the Los Angeles conference to reduce our division costs.

Sadly, the division budget does not include any funding to conduct peer review activities, as has been carried out in the past. While our last peer review of Greensboro, North Carolina was well received, the need to conserve funds requires that this service be put on hold for the present budget cycle.

For this next year, the division is focusing on growing revenues through membership and increased webinars. We are following up with each of the NDI attendees to solicit their membership in the division. We will be reaching out to the leadership of the larger planning agencies to get better participation, and you will see new activities at the Chicago conference designed to grow membership.

## Tell us what you or your organization have been up to.

Won an award?  
Completed a big project?  
Something cool you saw at a Chapter Conference?

**Don't keep it secret.**

### Useful Links:

San Diego 2010 General Plan  
Monitoring Report

### Copies of the 2012 Conference PowerPoint Presentations:

San Diego Presentation

San José Presentation

Cincinnati Presentation

## The value of Chapter conferences

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CEQA/NEPA coordination sessions.

In California unique topics aplenty were offered – Indian reservations, wildland urban interface, island communities, tsunami preparedness, the protestor and planning, life without redevelopment, and mall transformation.

In addition to the topic-specific sessions, there were lots of career assistance offerings: Salary Negotiations for Planners, How to Be a Better Supervisor, Leading into the Future, and Passing the AICP Exam.

There were also sessions for those just starting out: Charting A Career in Sustainability – Steps Students Can Take Before Graduating; and Competing for Jobs – Improve Your Resume, Interviewing and Getting Your Foot in the Door were given.

Over the years I have found the likeliest retention of ideas comes from mobile workshops. In Nevada, a tour highlighting the importance of adaptive reuse of historic buildings as part of sustainability and economic development was given by the city's Historic Preservation Office/Urban Design Coordinator.

In California, the wind corridor north of Palm Springs was visited. Representatives of the local wind energy companies were present to discuss designs, environmental concerns and plans to develop solar energy production among the wind machines.

But it is often the intangibles that make attending conferences memorable and important. At the California conference you may have run into Mitchell Silver, AICP, current APA president, to introduce yourself. In Nevada after attending an ethics session, you may have spoken to the FAICP presenter and she gave you some good career advice. During the California Planning Foundation auction you might have spoken to a consulting firm representative and learned about entirely new career oppor-

## Chicago Division Presentation

by: Joseph Horwedel, AICP

The City Planning and Management Division will be presenting at the national conference this year on April 14th from 9:45 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. a session called Zoning for Creating Competitive Cities. We recognize that economic survival for communities ranks as the top priority in many areas of the country these days, having overtaken more “traditional” planning goals. This session will examine existing and new zoning tools and techniques planners can use to enhance economic competitiveness and sustainability in communities of varying sizes. Learn how communities have employed these tools to advance their economic development agendas successfully. Vice Chair Charles Graves will be leading the session and he has built a panel of practicing planners to talk about what they are doing in their cities to make themselves more economically competitive. Session S455

## The value of Chapter conferences continued

tunities. Or during the city of Las Vegas, after-conference pub crawl, you may have picked up ideas on downtown revitalization to take home to your own community.

Chapter conferences are much more than just what you read about in the brochure. Attendance is an investment in yourself. You are learning not just during the sessions but while observing top professionals at work; meeting planners in other specialties, academia, public and private practice; gaining knowledge from those new to the field and those more experienced; confirming your own ideas or discovering better ways to meet your own or your agency's goals. The value of conferences is allowing professional planners to think about Planning (with a capital “P”) outside of the daily routine.

## See Us in Chicago

by: Joseph Horwedel, AICP

It is not too early to be making those travel plans to come to Chicago in April for the National Conference. The Division has a number of activities we will be conducting besides our session and a number of our members will be on panels and sessions at the conference. We will highlight these as information becomes available leading up to the conference.



**Business Meeting:** We will hold our annual business meeting at the conference. At the meeting we review our budget and workplan to date, consider the proposed budget and workplan for the following year. We are confirming the day and time and will send out a separate email with information. We are looking at late afternoon in lieu of the normal lunch meeting time to reduce costs and also allow adjourning to a location with refreshments for adults.

**Facilitated discussion:** The division will be hosting a facilitated discussion on the trade floor during the conference. This is a new feature at the conference where each of the divisions will host a separate discussion outside of the normal session format on a topic of their choosing. We are finishing those plans and will share information as that is confirmed.

# Strategies

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