Highlights of 2014

For APA, 2014 was marked by renewed energy, creative ideas, new partnerships, and innovative approaches to serving members and communities. APA Past President William Anderson, FAICP; AICP Past President Lee Brown, FAICP; and APA’s new-in-2014 Executive Director James Drinan begin our report with some of the year’s highlights.

2014 was a watershed year for APA. Following a successful National Planning Conference in April and installation of new APA Directors and AICP Commissioners in June, APA said farewell and thank you to longtime chief executive Paul Farmer, FAICP, and hello and welcome to new Executive Director, James M. Drinan, JD.

It's not a stretch to say that last year's central event was a July meeting of APA leaders and senior staff to evaluate the state of APA, explore our options, and chart a path forward. During three days of intense discussions in Chicago the participants generated great enthusiasm and excitement accompanied by an outpouring of new ideas about APA's vision, goals, and ways of doing business.

We envisioned an APA that is at the center of contemporary planning — relevant, agile, and pushing boundaries. We want to develop innovative programs on our own or with strong partners. We want APA operations to be transparent and responsive to members and to deliver efficient, exemplary member service. We want to engage all members and reach out to others — planners and nonplanners alike — to join us in creating great communities.

As we move forward, our work is informed by the investigations, analyses, and conclusions of several Task Forces that I appointed in 2013 to explore key issues facing APA and planning: Aging in Community, People and Places, Consumers of Planning and Engaged Citizens, Emerging Issues, Retired Members, Economic Development, Smart Cities and Sustainability, Water, and the Planning Office of the Future. The last of their reports were approved at the 2015 National Planning Conference. I thank all the task force members for contributing their time and talents to improve our association, advance planning, and strengthen our profession.

Since our retreat last July, leaders and other members have been writing a Development Plan that reflects APA’s new energy and strategic vision. The Development Plan and Budget Committee chaired by APA's new president — Carol Rhea, FAICP — took a long-term approach, drafting a 20-year plan that frames APA activities within a few clearly defined goals and values. Following Board approval this summer, the 2015-2035 Development Plan will go into effect on October 1.

I am gratified by all that APA accomplished during the last year. In addition to providing information on membership and association finances, this report touches on activities in 2014 that demonstrate APA's service to communities, productive partnerships, member support, and creative outreach efforts.

— William Anderson, FAICP
Past President, APA Board of Directors
The AICP Commission continues its focus on our mission to elevate the value of the AICP credential.

The Commission advanced the Core Competencies Initiative as the basis of evaluating planning skills. We will use the core competencies as benchmarks to ensure that AICP certification is consistent with the skills of a successful practicing planner and as a basis for assuring that Certification Maintenance offerings meet the needs of members in pursuing their professional development goals.

We modified the process of reviewing applications to sit for the AICP exam to include a peer review element, conducted by active AICP member volunteers, to assure that the value of the prerequisite work experience of candidates is considered by those who best understand the practice of planning.

We are updating procedures to equitably and effectively enforce the AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, assuring that the Code continues to hold members responsible to the highest professional standards.

Also, in order to increase the relevance and availability of high-quality Certification Maintenance opportunities to AICP members, the Commission initiated a process of prequalifying the providers of CM-eligible professional education (chapters, non-for-profit and for-profit education providers), and requiring providers to meet a high standard of quality and value for the sessions they offer.

AICP members continue to make a difference in communities and to generously volunteer their skills — some at the 2014 Community Planning Workshop and others in our Community Planning Assistance Teams, throughout the country. We invite you to learn more about CPATs in the Community Service section of this report.

— Lee Brown, FAICP
Past President, AICP Commission
To my delight, I have become part of a profession that has a great story to tell. Building better communities, advocating for planning, and helping the public and local governments to plan effectively inspire everything we do. On behalf of the member leaders who represent you and the APA staff I am pleased to bring you a report of activities of the past year.

Highlights include the relationship of public health and planning, the interdisciplinary role of planners, and the associated need for us to partner. Throughout this report, you will see how your professional association is working for planners and planning. We research, educate, advocate, create, partner, answer, assist, and listen. Exploring new paths, developing new relationships, and finding new solutions will be part of the ongoing challenges that we face together.

Member service is at the heart of all our efforts, and this report showcases some of our recent efforts.

More information is available at planning.org.

I invite you to let us know what you think. How are we doing? What do you need? How can we help? Send your ideas or suggestions to me at jdrinan@planning.org.

We had a great year and I look forward to an even better one in 2015!

— James M. Drinan, JD
Executive Director
Community Service

AICP-sponsored Community Planning Assistance Teams emphasize service and engagement and offer members singular opportunities for personal and professional growth. Each team matches a community that needs planning assistance with experienced APA members who are eager to volunteer their time and expertise and apply their skills to new challenges. In 2014, five teams were at work across the country.

Pine Hills, Florida

A CPAT led by Graham Billingsley, FAICP, visited this Orlando neighborhood that has experienced decades of economic decline. The team prompted new momentum and renewed spirit among residents by engaging them in interactive workshops to create a vision and land use plan for a new village center and to develop a community brand that highlights diversity.

Lyons, Colorado

Lyons was drastically affected by historic floods in September 2013. Gavin Smith, AICP, led a team of hazard mitigation and resiliency experts to aid the town's recovery. Their final report includes architectural and landscape design renderings based on the team's observations that convey the range and implications of various recovery planning options.
Unalaska, Alaska

Five planners led by Roger Wagoner, FAICP, flew 800 miles across the Bering Sea to Unalaska Island to engage the community in discussions about the future of local land use. Team members toured the area by land and sea and analyzed key issues, including the lack of affordable housing, ideas and locations for growth and development, and potential sites for oil and gas industry operations.

Shreveport, Louisiana

Leader Robert Lurcott, FAICP, and team members met with city officials, community groups, and small-business owners to discuss revitalization of their historic downtown. The planners recommended a public-private parking management system, improved streets and sidewalks, and mixed used development. They cited residential development and influx as essential elements of downtown vibrancy.
This predominately African American neighborhood has experienced years of change and disinvestment. A team led by Marijoan Bull, AICP, focused on housing, mobility, services, economic vitality, and community identity and cohesiveness. The team's final report recommends steps to implement short- and long-term projects in Hartsville organized by need, funding opportunities, and feasibility.

**Signs of success**

Many CPATs aim to leave quick wins for their communities — changes they can implement in the near term — to maintain the project's momentum and shared vision. In 2014, APA learned that Story County, Iowa, had already seen substantial results from the work of a 2011 CPAT.

Local officials say ...

"The CPAT was very responsive to the community's needs ... and developed useful and applicable recommendations that will assist our recovery efforts."
– Victoria Simonsen, Town Administrator, Lyons, Colorado

"Our efforts are enriched by this diverse, experienced, and highly qualified team of professionals. Their willingness to listen and learn, challenge and press, is exactly what we need to expand our success and overcome obstacles."
– Cedric Glover, Mayor, Shreveport, Louisiana
Partnership

The Plan4Health project launched in 2014, one of several managed by the Planning and Community Health Center, is a game-changer for APA. Plan4Health has the potential to involve members all over the United States and establish planners as key collaborators and essential conveners for improving community health nationwide.

Plan4Health

In October, in partnership with the American Public Health Association, the Planning and Community Health Center inaugurated Plan4Health, an ambitious initiative that capitalizes on APA's nationwide network of chapters and sections. The project addresses the social determinants of health through policies, systems, and environmental strategies to achieve long-term public health improvements.

Plan4Health is expected to last for three years and support two cohorts of grantees. It is funded by a grant — the largest ever received by APA — from the Division of Community Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Collaborating for Healthy Communities

In November, APA invited chapters to apply for funding in collaboration with APHA affiliates, making this the first project to require planners to work at the local level with public health practitioners. APA received nearly 100 proposals from 36 chapters representing 38 states.

Center stage in Atlanta

The Planning and Community Health Center hosted the 28-session Planning Healthy Communities Symposium at the National Planning Conference.

The symposium produced conference highlights — a plenary session led by the Executive Director of the American Public Health Association, Dr. Georges C. Benjamin, and the conference keynote address by Rear Admiral Boris Lushniak, then-Acting Surgeon General of the United States. Lushniak forcefully linked health and planning and called on planners to use their skills to improve the health of all Americans.
PCH also hosted a Partners Roundtable in Atlanta. Participants included leaders in health and planning from the public and private sectors, academia, foundations, and federal agencies. The robust, two-hour conversation generated key takeaways for future collaboration.

Both efforts, partially supported through APA's partnership with APHA, raised APA members' awareness of health issues and placed APA at the forefront of organizations breaking down barriers between the built environment professions and public health.

Resources to integrate planning and health

PCH also released *Healthy Plan Making*, featuring in-depth research on best practices for integrating health into comprehensive planning. The Healthy Community Design Toolkit soon followed, with guidance for planners and policy and decision makers. The National Center for Environmental Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention funded both projects.
Member Service

APA is committed to supporting members at all stages of their careers. Our suite of programs sets emerging professional members on the path toward rewarding careers and encourages them to contribute their ideas, enthusiasm, openness to change, and leadership to APA and the planning profession. New and veteran members alike benefit from national and chapter events that bring generations of planners together for networking, mentoring, and career counseling.

Early Career Membership Program

Last year APA welcomed more than 2,500 students from 127 planning programs in the United States, Puerto Rico, and Canada into the Early Career Membership Program.

The Early Career Membership Program offers five years of affordable association membership. Mentoring, job shadowing, networking, career training, and pro bono community outreach connect emerging professionals to peers, practitioners, and employers in APA's worldwide planning community. Planning's November cover story focused on this important group. "New Planners on the Block" explored how new professionals are navigating and leading changes in the professional landscape.

Honoring student achievements

![Image of students receiving awards]
APA strengthens connections to the student community through leadership opportunities, scholarships, and awards. Last year we recognized the University of Michigan's Urban Planning Student Association for its Expanded Horizons Program. Texas A&M, Tufts, Georgia Tech, and Ball State received AICP Student Project Awards, and 60 students from 50 colleges and universities received AICP Outstanding Student Awards.

Amina Hassen from Hunter College and Ashleigh Johnson from the University of Michigan received Judith McManus Price Scholarships. University of Pennsylvania student Brett Roeth Peanasky won the Charles Abrams Scholarship. The Planning Foundation of APA supports both scholarships.

Students who are elected to leadership positions on the Student Representatives Council Executive Committee represent students' interests within APA. In 2014 the SRC EC focused on improving outreach and increasing its presence on social media.

Networking and learning in Atlanta

Emerging professionals at the National Planning Conference in Atlanta participated in networking events, an all-day Emerging Professionals Institute, a series of clinics including a resume clinic, and a Young Planners Group Ideas Exchange. The Mentor Match program alone brought together more than 100 new and veteran planners.

In the new Emerging Professionals Connection in the Planning Expo, APA hosted a series of small-group discussions, networking events, and meet-ups with planning leaders.

APA honored University of Washington student Matthew Mateo, who won the 2014 Student Case Competition, and Stacey Mack, who won the "I'm Planning For" competition with her video, "Planning the Boom to Prevent the Bust: Community Decision Making and Natural Resource Management."

Supporting local efforts

There is outstanding work done in APA chapters and sections to engage and serve emerging professional members. More than 20 Young Planners Groups/Emerging Professionals Groups have been established, with several more forming. They connect the new generation with planning veterans and open opportunities to meet colleagues, build skills, and volunteer. A consortium of YPG leaders drafted the Guide to Young Planners Groups 2.0 incorporating best practices for creating and maintaining local groups.
The Arizona Chapter surveyed recent planning graduates to find out what they face in the workplace. Its report, "Career Advice for Emerging Planners," includes feedback from employers about what they look for in new hires, skills needed to succeed, and "what not to do" in interviews.

Chapters offer a variety of mentoring programs to help emerging professionals connect to the planning community. For example, the North Carolina, Florida, Iowa, Maryland, and Delaware chapters emulate APA national and offer Mentor Match at their annual conferences, while chapters and sections in California, New York, and Washington have developed mentoring programs that last for a year or longer.

"APA helps me meet colleagues who are facing similar challenges, learn about what others are doing, and get connected to seasoned professionals."
— Ben Howell, AICP, North Carolina YPG Leadership

"Joining APA has helped me to reach out to the planning community. Connections like that are truly invaluable when looking to advance your career."
— Ellen Forthofer, SRC Executive Committee
Outreach

APA uses social media to maintain its place as a leader of the planning movement. We conduct APA business and engage, educate, inform, and serve members and the public on a variety of platforms, offering association news, planning updates, and customer service.

Lots of likes

APA's presence on both Facebook and Twitter is growing steadily. We now have more than 30,000 Twitter followers and "@APA_Planning" appeared on Congressional Quarterly's list of "100 Association Twitter Handles You Should Follow."

You'll also find APA on LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, and Google+.

Hashtag this

We had great success in telling some great stories of planning with one-a-day Twitter tributes to the 2015 Great Places in America throughout October. We got the public involved in the Great Places program by using social media to select a "31st Great Place – People's Choice." Nominations came in from all over the country and it was inspiring to read people's paeansto their favorite places. APA selected 10 finalists, and online voters chose College Avenue in Appleton, Wisconsin, as the winner.

Congratulations to Appleton and all of APA's 2014 Great Places!

"#APA14" and "#implanningfor" represented the National Planning Conference on both Twitter and Instagram. More than 1,000 Twitter users generated 9,000 tweets using #APA14, and scores of conference-goers used #implanningfor to post pictures on Instagram proclaiming their planning priorities.

Other notable social media campaigns promoted the Policy and Advocacy Conference and National Community Planning Month.

To get an idea of our campaigns' reach and impact, check APA social media activity aggregated on Storify:

#APA14 – National Planning Conference
implanningfor
APAPolicy – Policy and Advocacy Conference
mygreatplace – "31st Great Place in America"

Video outreach

New content on APA's YouTube channel profiled winners of the 2014 National Planning Awards, announced the Great Places in America, and shared Daniel Burnham Forum lectures, public service announcements, webinars, author and expert interviews, and more.

Visit YouTube to view some of APA's top videos:

Announcing the Great Places in America in Dorchester, Massachusetts
"Private Capital, Public Good" – The Daniel Burnham Forum on Big Ideas
"Aging in Place" – An Interview with Rodney Harrell, PhD
"The Planning Office of the Future" – An Interview with Mindmixer CEO Nick Bowden
"Planning Chicago" – An Interview with Authors Jon DeVries, AICP, and D. Bradford Hunt
Membership and Finances

Membership
On September 30, 2014 — the end of APA's 2014 fiscal year — membership totaled 37,634, of whom 15,252 — or 40.5 percent — were AICP members, compared with 37,750 APA members and 15,500 AICP members at the end of FY 2013. APA member retention remained strong at 80.2 percent and AICP retention was a near-perfect 98.7 percent.

Finances
Maintaining a strong financial position enables APA to achieve the goals established by members and the Board of Directors in the Development Plan. APA's FY 2014 financial results are highlighted below.

Total assets for APA as of September 30, 2014, were $25.8 million, up approximately $2.2 million from September 30, 2013. Cash and investments increased from the prior year for APA national, chapters and divisions. Key assets include cash and investments, chapter and division cash and cash equivalents, and publication inventory. Total liabilities for APA as of September 30, 2014, were $12.3 million, up approximately $1.1 million from the prior year. This increase was principally due to increased pension liabilities for APA's defined benefit pension plan.

Total operating revenue for FY 2014 was approximately $18.2 million and operating expenses were approximately $17.2 million, generating a net change in assets from operations of $1 million. The net surplus of approximately $1 million was four times better than the budgeted surplus of $240,000.

Member programs include Planning magazine, policy and outreach, chapter, section, and division services, the Early Career Membership Program, and member services.
Total APA member program revenues and expenses for FY 2014 were $9.3 million and $7.4 million, respectively. Revenues for member programs increased and expenses decreased slightly from FY 2013.

User programs include the National Planning Conference, research, APA Books, and various subscription periodicals.

APA user program revenues for FY 2014 totaled $5.6 million, a decrease from FY 2013. User program expenses for FY 2014 totaled $6.5 million, a decrease from FY 2013.
AICP programs include education, certification exams and related activities, and member services.

AICP program revenues and expenses for FY 2014 broke even at $3.3 million, an improvement from FY 2013.

APA's non-operating activity consists of realized/unrealized gains and losses on investments, charges for pension obligations, the APA Foundation, and chapters.

Total non-operating credits, which are additions to APA's change in net assets for FY 2014, were $1.15 million.