

THE ART OF PLANNING

DEEP SOUTH
PLANNING
CONFERENCE
2025



HATTIESBURG, MS
OCTOBER 28-30, 2025

APA
MS

APA
AL



THE ART OF PLANNING

**Tuesday,
October 28, 2025**

SCHEDULE

9:00 AM- Till	REGISTRATION OPEN Trent Lott Center Rotunda
10:00 AM-12:00 PM	Planning Commissioner Training Room 102
1:00 PM-2:00 PM	Welcome to Hattiesburg Welcome Speaker: Mayor Toby Barker Welcome Keynote: The Planner as Artist Keynote Speaker: Silvia E. Vargas, FAICP Room 103
2:15 PM-3:15 PM	Session: A Year Without Dots: Kicking the Sticky Habit in Public Engagement Room 103 Session: Beyond Rational Idealism: The Art of Getting to a "Yes" in Rezoning Room 102
3:30PM -4:30PM	Session: Reimagining Communities with CPAT 3:30 PM-4:30 PM Room 103 Session: Why Trees?: The Importance of Including Urban Forests in the Planning Process 3:30 PM-4:30 PM Room 102
4:45PM -5:45 PM	Session: Focus Group: Member Perspectives on APA Elections Room 103 Session: Student Presentations-Jackson State University Room 102
3:30 PM-5:30 PM	Mobile Workshop: Hattiesburg Public Art Bike Tour (sign up required) Hattiesburg, MS Meet in Rotunda
5:30 PM-7:00 PM	Welcome Reception Trent Lott Center Rotunda



8:00 AM–9:30 AM

Keynote: Culture and Community Well-Being

Rhonda Phillips, FAICP | Room 103

9:45 AM–10:45 AM

Session: Painting a Picture Through Development

Room 102

Session: We All Have Rights, Right?

Room 103

Session: “For My People, For Our Future”: Bringing the Margaret Walker Center to Life as a Living Heritage & Innovation Hub

Room 101

11:00 AM–11:20 AM

Session: Reimagining Distressed Public Housing

Room 102

Session: From Inspiration to Innovation

Room 101

Session: This Woman's Work– Tales of Women and Planning in the Deep South

Room 103

11:30 AM–1:20 PM

Awards Luncheon

Room 103

1:30 PM–3:30 PM

Mobile Workshop: Midtown in Focus: The Art of Plan Implementation, Walking the Path from “Midtown in Motion” to Midtown Today

Midtown Hattiesburg, MS | Meet in Rotunda



THE ART OF PLANNING

**Wednesday,
October 29, 2025**

SCHEDULE

1:30 PM-2:30 PM

**Session: Getting Back to the Olmstead Plan - Preserving
Birmingham's Green Space**

Room 103

**Session: Planning Through Partnership: Rewriting Mississippi's
MS4 General Permit**

Room 101

Session: Mississippi Freedom Houses Project

Room 102

2:45 PM-3:45 PM

**Session: Examining the Community Rating System From a
Planning Perspective**

Room 101

Session: Reviving the Black Downtown

Room 102

2:45 PM-4:15PM

Session: Equity Underground

Room 103

4:00 PM-5:00 PM

**Session: Rezoning & Implementation Committees: A Case Study in
North Birmingham**

Room 102

Session: Student Session: Alabama A&M University

Room 101

5:30 PM-7:30 PM

Downtown Reception

Downtown Hattiesburg | Blu Jazz Cafe - 103 E Front Street | Studio 522 -
522 Main Street | Pocket Alley Museum



THE ART OF PLANNING

**Thursday,
October 30, 2025**

SCHEDULE

7:30 AM–8:15 AM

Mississippi Chapter Meeting

Room 101

Alabama Chapter Meeting

Room 102

8:30 AM–9:30 AM

Session: Ethics Case of the Year

Room 103

Session: Student Session: Auburn University

Room 102

9:45 AM–10:45 AM:

Session: Strategizing Success: Creating Missing Middle Housing Solutions

Room 103

Session: Huntsville's Pinhook Greenway: Lessons from Atlanta

Room 102

Session: AICP Exam Prep

Room 101

11:00 AM–12:00 PM

Closing Keynote

Allison Mouch, AICP | Room 103

SCHEDULE

**Tuesday,
October 28, 2025**

1:00 PM–2:00 PM
Room 102
CM | 1

Welcome Keynote: The Planner as Artist

Keynote Speaker: Silvia E. Vargas, FAICP

Weaving Vision, Data, and Humanity: Planning has long been framed primarily as a technical profession, rooted in numbers, analysis and rigid frameworks. Yet at its core, great planning is much more than codes and maps. It is also storytelling, requiring imagination, empathy and the capacity to see opportunity where others may only see disadvantages and constraints. This session explores how planners can cultivate creativity alongside rigorousness, ensuring plans are not just effective, but inspiring, just, and deeply connected to the people they serve. Join us for an inspiring keynote on planning with heart to honor culture, lift unheard voices, and build resilient, authentic communities.

2:15 PM–3:15 PM
Room 103
CM | 1

Session: A Year Without Dots: Kicking the Sticky Habit in Public Engagement

Presenters: Roxanne Raven; Anna Baggett; Bert Kuyrkendall

A typical Tuesday in the dot-addicted planning world means boards on easels and dot stickers handed out like candy to trick-or-treaters. But what happens when you quit dots cold turkey? For the past year, TSW took a pledge to go an entire year without using dots. Working with our clients, we challenged ourselves to build a better public engagement toolkit—without relying on dots. In this session, we'll share what worked, what didn't, and how you can kick the dot habit too—showcasing fresh engagement activities that go beyond the sticker and inspire better community input and collaboration.

2:15 PM–3:15 PM
Room 102
CM | 1

Session: Beyond Rational Idealism: The Art of Getting to a "Yes" in Rezoning

Presenter: Venard Asongayi

Grounded in theoretical rationalism, land use planning practice often seeks idealized optimal outcomes. Rational idealism, however, has become increasingly deficient in an era in which populist tendencies have given voice to NIMBYISM and fostered the influence of "Neighborhood defenders" on land use policy making. The interplay of such factors and actors has rendered rezoning arenas more challenging; thus, raising the stakes regarding the provision of attainable housing and diverse land uses necessary to sustain local governments. How can we get to rezoning "Yes" in the face of such challenges? We depart from a private applicant-neighborhood focus model that has often engendered conflicts. Drawing from professional practice cases, we propose and position local government planners at the center of an art that can lead to local governing authorities rendering desired "Yes" votes in land use development rezonings.

3:30 PM–4:30 PM
Room 103
CM | 1

Session: Reimagining Communities with CPAT

Presenters: Corey Sosebee; Phoenix Robinson; Lady Kassama; Broxton Sanders; Sara Kovachich; Trae Watson; Mac Martin, AICP

Join us to learn about our recently formed Community Planning Assistance Team (CPAT), and to hear more about how you can be involved in the CPAT program. Our team will share an overview of our recent pilot project with the Town of Autaugaville, AL, highlighting challenges, successes, and what's next.

SCHEDULE

**Tuesday,
October 28, 2025**

3:30 PM–4:30 PM
Room 102
CM | 1

Session: Why Trees?: The Importance of Including Urban Forests in the Planning Process

Presenter: Caroline Ingram

What do urban forests have to do with city planning? Trees are often overlooked as a vital part of the urban landscape. They provide myriad benefits—environmental, social, and economic. This presentation will discuss how trees serve as infrastructure, the need for urban forestry programs, and integration of tree canopy data into comprehensive plans. A case study of three Mississippi cities will illustrate the process of strategic tree canopy planning at a municipal level and the importance of implementation at the neighborhood level.

3:30 PM–5:30 PM
Mobile Workshop–
Meet in Rotunda
CM | 2

Session: City of 100 Murals: A Mobile Bike Tour of Placemaking Through Public Art in Hattiesburg

Presenters: Nathan Satcher; Cory Long, AICP; Meridian McDaniel; Russell Archer

Join a mobile bike tour through Hattiesburg's vibrant public art landscape as the city works toward its vision of becoming the "City of 100 Murals." This session highlights the collaboration between Hattiesburg Alliance for Public Arts (HAPA) the City of Hattiesburg, private property owners, and artists to create a framework for placemaking through public art. The tour will feature mural locations within Hattiesburg's Historic Downtown, showcasing how art is thoughtfully integrated to balance creative expression with historic preservation. Participants will see how public art enhances authenticity while respecting the district's architectural character. The session will also highlight the city's expanding active transportation network and the long-term vision for the Gordon's Creek Corridor, a planned greenway connecting to the Leaf River, Longleaf Trace, and Downtown Hattiesburg. Attendee's will experience firsthand how Hattiesburg is weaving together art, mobility, and historic preservation to create a more connected, creative, and livable city.

4:45 PM – 5:45 PM
Room 103

Session: Focus Group: Member Perspectives on APA Elections

Presenters: Allison Mouch, AICP; Silvia Vargas, FAICP

Help shape the future of APA elections by sharing your voice in this interactive session. Together, we'll explore voting behavior, perceptions of the national consolidated election process, and leadership engagement. Your feedback will guide APA's Governance Committee in strengthening member participation and ensuring elections reflect the priorities and voices of our planning community.

4:45 PM – 5:45 PM
Room 102

Session: Student Presentations–Jackson State University

Presenters: Jackson State University Students

The session will feature two presentations from students in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Jackson State University regarding homelessness and climate adaptation planning.

5:30 PM–7:00 PM
Trent Lott Center
Rotunda

Welcome Reception

SCHEDULE

**Wednesday,
October 29, 2025**

8:00 AM–9:30 AM

Room 103

CM | 1.5

Keynote: Culture and Community Well-Being

Keynote Speaker: Rhonda Phillips, FAICP

Culture can be considered as a "living thing" - changing and adapting through time. It can represent entire ways of life, including rules, values, and expected behavior. While culture definitely varies from place to place, and even in the smallest localities, it is a motivating factor in the creation of identity. Culture can also serve as a basis for creating cohesion and solidarity in working towards desired community planning and development outcomes. During a time when interest to retain the uniqueness of local life, traditions, and culture is significantly increasing, this session considers impacts of culture on well-being. Key concepts, variables, and relationships used in research and practice of cultural based community development will be presented. Relevant historical contexts along with more contemporary examples will also be discussed, supporting planners in their work to consider well-being impacts and outcomes.

9:45 AM–10:45 AM

Room 102

CM | 1

Session: Painting a Picture Through Development

Presenters: Lady Kassama; Thomas J. Nunez

Amidst rapid growth, how does the community balance the investment prospects while addressing the community priorities and practices. Your community have invested on a comprehensive plan or a master plan but how could be translated for those new to the region who want to invest in a growing and vibrant community. Development reviews are crucial for both the community and developers in doing so. A development project could be framed in a way that aligns with the community's vision through this process. Compliance with zoning ordinances, comprehensive plans, and other regulations are evaluated to ensure that the development project's implementation runs smoothly, minimizing costs and maximizing efficiency. In the same way as an artwork is enhanced and defined by its picture frame, a development project is refined through the development review process, substantiating not only its suitability within its surroundings, but also its consistency with community ideals and its positive impact on the community, which guarantees the project's success. This session will discuss the nuances of a development review process, and the lessons learned from the development reviews coordinated by the City of Huntsville's Planning Services staff.

9:45 AM–10:45 AM

Room 103

CM | 1

Session: We All Have Rights, Right?

Presenter: Adrienne Jones

Planners are often responsible for juggling the rights of various community stakeholders while maintaining a balance between public trust and private interest. In this session, we will discuss privacy, freedom of information, First Amendment audits, as well as best practices for Planners to protect the rights of citizens and themselves.

9:45 AM–10:45 AM

Room 101

CM | 1

E | 1

Session: "For My People, For Our Future": Bringing the Margaret Walker Center to Life as a Living Heritage & Innovation Hub

Presenters: D'Angelos Svenkeson; Marlin King; Dr. Robby Lockett

At Jackson State University, the Margaret Walker Center (MWC) preserves and interprets African American history and culture—rooted in Walker's legacy and housed in historic Ayer Hall. This session spotlights NEOO Partners' role in shaping an "Archive-to-Activation" roadmap that blends preservation with innovation: adaptive reuse and campus placemaking, digital humanities and AR/VR storytelling, student micro-internships and creative-economy pilots, and a feasible capital/operating stack. Using MWC and the COFO Civil Rights Education Center as anchors, we'll demonstrate how stories become spaces, artifacts become activations, and heritage fuels neighborhood vitality around Jackson State University.

SCHEDULE

**Wednesday,
October 29, 2025**

11:00 AM–11:20 AM
Room 102
CM | 0.5

Session: Reimagining Distressed Public Housing—Mill Creek: Advancing Equity, Sustainability, and Resilience through the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative (CNI)

Presenter: Turkessa Coleman Lacey

This session highlights the Huntsville Housing Authority's role in implementing the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative (CNI) at Mill Creek, a transformative redevelopment project that integrates housing, people, and neighborhood strategies to create a resilient and equitable future for residents. Participants will learn how Huntsville is leveraging federal investment, cross-sector partnerships, and data-driven planning to ensure families benefit from quality housing, access to opportunity, and long-term community sustainability.

Through the Mill Creek case study, we will explore how relocation, community engagement, and neighborhood revitalization strategies are being coordinated to preserve resident choice, promote economic mobility, and build a resilient mixed-income neighborhood.

11:00 AM–11:20 AM
Room 101
CM | 0.5

Session: From Inspiration to Innovation

Presenter: Benjamin Requet, AICP

Great planning ideas don't start in a vacuum—they're shaped by seeing what works in other communities. This session will explore how planners can take a proactive approach to professional development by creating their own "mobile conferences." By visiting peer cities, meeting with local officials, and learning from community leaders, planners can bring home fresh ideas and proven strategies. The presentation will showcase the Oxford Planning Department's recent trip to Northwest Arkansas, highlighting the practical lessons, creative approaches, and inspiration that emerged—and how those takeaways are being translated into innovative efforts back home.

11:00 AM–11:20 AM
Room 103
CM | 0.5

Session: This Woman's Work— Tales of Women and Planning in the Deep South

Presenters: Phoenix Robinson; Aliyah Riley, AICP

"This Woman's Work" explores the experiences of women currently working as professional planners in the Deep South, specifically in Alabama and Mississippi. Session attendees will hear directly from seasoned figures practicing in municipal government, academia, and the private sector as they share candid insights about navigating workplace bias, underrepresentation in leadership, and challenges in accessing mentorship and career advancement opportunities.

11:30 AM–1:20 PM
Room 103

Awards Luncheon

Presenters: Mississippi and Alabama APA Officers

Join us for lunch and presentation of awards by the Mississippi and Alabama chapters of the American Planning Association!

1:30 PM–3:30 PM
Mobile Workshop—
Meet in Rotunda
CM | 2

Mobile Workshop: Midtown in Focus: The Art of Plan Implementation, Walking the Path from "Midtown in Motion" to Midtown Today

Presenters: Kara Drane, FAICP; Ginger Lowrey, AICP; Matt Pace, President and CEO of Codaray Construction; David Ford, Senior Project Architect for WBA Architecture

Explore how a form-based code transformed Midtown into one of Mississippi's most successful redevelopment stories. This two-hour walking tour highlights the district's evolution from plan adoption to built results, featuring key redevelopment sites, The District at Midtown, and the new Jones Company headquarters. Led by planners who have guided the process from vision to implementation, this session offers practical lessons in applying form-based principles, aligning public and private investment, and sustaining momentum through long-term leadership.

SCHEDULE

**Wednesday,
October 29, 2025**

1:30 PM–2:30 PM
Room 103
CM|1

Session: Getting Back to the Olmstead Plan – Preserving Birmingham's Green Space

Presenters: Jess Blankenship Mays; Kimberly Speerl

This session will provide a discussion on the importance of green space and how the City of Birmingham is using its Zoning Ordinance to create Open Space Districts for preservation and protection of lands. The session will provide a brief background on the history of green spaces in urban cities and then discuss the Green Systems adopted in the City of Birmingham's Comprehensive Plan. Then, discussion will be focused on the new Open Space Districts created by the City to preserve and protect our natural areas and City parks. We will also briefly discuss a new initiative the City is working on to create a Natural Resource Protection Overlay.

1:30 PM–2:30 PM
Room 101
CM|1

Session: Planning Through Partnership: Rewriting Mississippi's MS4 General Permit

Presenters: Nadine Armstrong; Jay Estes, AICP

This session will walk attendees through the collaborative 12-month process of updating the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality's (MDEQ) MS4 General Permit. Presenters will share insights into the planning timeline, stakeholder engagement strategies, and the integration of technology and feedback tools that supported transparency and efficiency. Attendees will leave with practical lessons learned and recommendations for planners engaged in similar regulatory or collaborative planning efforts.

1:30 PM–2:30 PM
Room 102
CM|1

Session: Mississippi Freedom Houses Project

Presenter: Lolly Rash

After listing Freedom Houses as one of Mississippi's 10 Most Endangered Historic Places in 2019, Mississippi Heritage Trust has worked with numerous partners to identify and stabilize these places where the civil rights movement happened. Raising more questions than answers, MHT Executive Director Lolly Rash will invite participants to imagine how Mississippi's few remaining Freedom Houses can be saved and renewed to continue the work of advancing social justice for all.

2:45 PM–3:45 PM
Room 101
CM|1

Session: Examining the Community Rating System From a Planning Perspective

Presenter: Stephen Deal

Participants in this course will leave with a sound understanding of how land use planning interacts with the Community Rating System. Attendees will be exposed to different aspects of the development approval process and how local development practices can complement, or in some cases, undermine NFIP compliance and accrual of CRS points. Discuss various open space incentives (CRS Activity 420) that involve the application of land use planning principles and regulations (transferable Development rights, low density zoning, etc.).

2:45 PM–3:45 PM
Room 102
CM|1

Session: Reviving the Black Downtown

Presenter: Philip Walker

This session will examine the downfall of countless Downtown areas that once served as economic, social and cultural hubs for their local African American community, as well as approaches used in recent years to successfully revitalize them. Example places highlighted where the planning effort was led by the speaker include New Orleans (LA), Rocky Mount (NC), High Point (NC), Natchez (MS), and Mobile (AL), while other examples will include Tulsa (OK) and Birmingham (AL). Examples of topics to be addressed include: involvement of community stakeholders; consultant team composition; development of interpretive themes and stories; prioritizing sites for preservation and rehabilitation; creating great public spaces; attracting retail, dining and entertainment; branding the place for a clear identity; and telling the place's story in an unvarnished and engaging manner.

SCHEDULE

**Wednesday,
October 29, 2025**

2:45 PM–4:15 PM

Room 103

CM | 1.5

Eq | 1

Session: Equity Underground

Presenters: Phoenix Robinson; Quinton Young; Aliyah Riley, AICP; Jordan Yin, AICP; Dennis Madsen, AICP

This session examines how planners in the Deep South continue advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) despite political and cultural resistance. Facilitated by professionals with on-the-ground experience, the discussion highlights how equity work often takes place “underground”—through grassroots efforts, creative policy framing, and community partnerships that persist even under restrictive conditions. Attendees will gain practical strategies for navigating contested environments, including methods for reframing equity goals in politically acceptable language, leveraging community organizing as a planning tool, and embedding inclusion within project processes without triggering institutional pushback. Tools such as policy reframing exercises, grassroots coalition frameworks, and scenario-based planning methods will be shared and modeled.

4:00 PM–5:00 PM

Room 102

CM | 1

Session: Rezoning & Implementation Committees: A Case Study in North Birmingham

Presenters: Kimberly Speorl; Jess Mays Blankenship

This session will explore the City of Birmingham's city-wide rezoning effort and the impacts on the City's Framework Plan Implementation Committees. The session will focus primarily on the North Birmingham Community and how community participation helped shape the rezoning plan and where the community stands now as it implements the goals, strategies and actions of the Framework Plan. We will discuss the highs and lows of the rezoning process, including issues surrounding a systemic mistrust of government by the community. This session will feature what the Planning Department has learned in dealing with a marginalized population and how to gain the trust of the community.

4:00 PM–5:00 PM

Room 101

Session: Student Session: Alabama A&M University

Presenters: Alabama A&M University Students

The session will feature presentations by students at AAMU's Department of Community & Regional Planning touching on the themes of social equity and community development, the intersection of technology and planning, sustainability and resilience, and walkability and mobility.

5:30 PM–7:30 PM

Downtown

Hattiesburg

Downtown Hattiesburg Reception

Downtown Hattiesburg | Blu Jazz Cafe – 103 E Front Street | Studio 522 – 522 Main Street | Pocket Alley Museum

Blu Jazz Cafe | 5:30 PM

The Downtown reception will begin at 5:30 at Blu Jazz for a private reception featuring heavy hors d'oeuvres and beverages. Blu Jazz is owned by Nelson Haskins, a downtown restaurateur with 5 different dining options, from bagels to bourbon.

Pocket Museum and Prospect on Main | 6:30 PM

At 6:30 we'll walk around the block to the Pocket Museum Alley and Prospect on Main located at 522 Main St. There will be an open bar at 522 Main Street.

You'll have an option between a few activities:

- Tour Prospect on Main
- Make your own art!
- Contribute to the Conference's art project
- Visit the pocket museum

SCHEDULE

**Thursday,
October 30, 2025**

7:30 AM–8:15 AM	Mississippi Chapter Meeting Presenters: Mississippi APA Room 101	Alabama Chapter Meeting Presenters: Alabama APA Room 102
8:30 AM–9:30 AM Room 103 CM 1 E 1	Session: Ethics Jeopardy Presenters: Robert Barber, FAICP; Kara Drane, FAICP Summary: Put your knowledge of the AICP Code of Ethics to the test in this interactive session modeled on the classic game show Jeopardy! Answering questions across categories that highlight real-world ethical dilemmas, professional responsibilities, and the principles guiding planners in practice. From tricky client scenarios to community conflicts, the session offers an engaging way to sharpen knowledge of the Code of Ethics while applying our ethical standards to planning practice.	
8:30 AM–9:30 AM Room 102	Session: Student Session: Auburn University Presenters: Auburn University Students The session will feature posters presentations from students of the Masters of Community Planning program at Auburn University on various community planning and development topics.	
9:45 AM–10:45 AM Room 103 CM 1	Session: Strategizing Success: Creating Missing Middle Housing Solutions Presenters: Bob Barber, FAICP; Benjamin Requet, AICP; Joe Fratesi This session explores innovative strategies and practical tools for advancing missing middle housing solutions in Mississippi and Alabama. Participants will learn how communities can address the affordability gap by diversifying housing options, fostering neighborhood compatibility, and overcoming regulatory and market barriers.	
9:45 AM–10:45 AM Room 102 CM 1	Session: Huntsville's Pinhook Greenway: Lessons from Atlanta Presenter: Dennis Madsen The Atlanta BeltLine is a transformational public project, re-purposing more than 20 miles of abandoned and under-utilized rail corridors into a network of parks, plantings, art spaces, and redevelopment. In particular, the effort has been successful in celebrating local culture, or 'making Atlanta *more* Atlanta'. As Huntsville continues to expand its own greenway network, there are best practices the City can adopt (and pitfalls to avoid) from Atlanta. This case study will focus on the North Huntsville Greenway, a new project that strives to connect Downtown to an historic HBCU and catalyze the revitalization of blighted neighborhoods in between.	
9:45 AM–10:45 AM Room 101	Session: AICP Exam Prep Presenter: Jordan Yin Summary: All levels and all eligible people, from students to practitioners, are welcome!	
11:00 AM–12:00 PM Room 103 CM 1	Closing Keynote: Beyond the Blueprint: The Creative Soul of Planning Keynote Speaker: Allison Mouch, AICP Planners are professionals deeply rooted in sense of place; grounded in our communities and committed to sharing their stories. Yet over the course of our careers we find ourselves wearing many different hats, dabbling in different specializations, and evolving our practice based on a continuously changing world. At any given time we may be thinking ".... How did I get here? What am I doing? Who am I helping? And how does this all relate?" How do you reconcile an education in historic preservation with being a permit technician? How does your experience working in a community of 500 people help you navigate the waters of a one pushing 500,000... or the reverse? Drawing from the rich tapestry of backgrounds and experiences that planners bring to their work, from design and engineering to social work and environmental science, this keynote will explore how planners serve as out-of-the-box thinkers and collaborative leaders, harnessing diverse tools and perspectives to transform communities. Using local, regional, and national examples of how planning professionals have tackled unique problems with scalable solutions and ingenuity, we'll demonstrate how our profession's interdisciplinary – and eclectic! – nature is actually its greatest innovative strength.	

GUIDE TO THE DOWNTOWN HATTIESBURG RECEPTION

**Wednesday,
October 29, 2025**

Blu Jazz Cafe | 103 E Front Street | 5:30 PM

The Downtown reception will begin at 5:30 at Blu Jazz for a private reception featuring heavy hors d'oeuvres and beverages. Blu Jazz is owned by Nelson Haskins, a downtown restaurateur with 5 different dining options, from bagels to bourbon.

Pocket Museum and Prospect on Main | 6:30 PM

At 6:30 we'll walk around the block to the Pocket Museum Alley and Prospect on Main located at 522 Main St. There will be an open bar at 522 Main Street.

You'll have an option between a few activities:

Tour Prospect on Main

Tour the Prospect on Main building (255 Main St) with the developer, David Shemper, and architect, Rion Snowden, VERB Architecture. This building was carefully renovated and adapted for modern uses and includes a dance studio, art gallery, offices, living units, and commercial space.

Create Your Own Art!

Create a piece of art with local artist and owner of Studio 522, Abigail Lenz Allen, to donate to the Pocket Gallery in the Pocket Alley. One of our favorite aspects of the Pocket Alley is the "give & take" items where you can leave and take art pieces. There are also "little free libraries" for key chains, Lego minifigs, and VHS Tapes.

Deep South Planning Art Project

Join us in decorating a Deep South Planning Conference mural banner on the Main Street end of the Alley. Add your touch to a lasting piece of art with your fellow Planners.

Pocket Museum

Explore award winning Pocket Alley. This space turned an underused alley into an open air art museum in the early days of the pandemic. It has turned into one of the top tourism destinations in downtown Hattiesburg – and is completely free!

This is a come & go reception leaving you free to explore downtown on your own following our activities. Transportation for this activity is on your own. Carpooling is encouraged for a good time. Downtown business and parking maps are available in the program via QR code and links.

[DOWNTOWN MAP](#)



A GUIDE TO HATTIESBURG LOCAL DINING

Downtown:

Hattiesburgers and Blues
142 E Front Street

South Bound Bagel & Coffee Shop
217 E Front Street

Blu Jazz Café
103 E Front Street

Nellie's Chicken & Daiquiris
213 E Front Street

Bourbon on Front Street
206 W Front Street

Southern Prohibition Brewing
301 Mobile Street

Fat Cat
309 McLeod Street

GrateFull Soul
205 Main Street

Jutamas Thai Restaurant
910 Timothy Lane

Avenues:

Big Trouble
2313 Hardy Street

Petra Cafe Greek & Mediterranean:
6060 US Hwy 49

Gold Post Sandwich House
2210 Hardy Street

Keg & Barrel
1315 Hardy Street

Midtown:

The Midtowner
3000 Hardy Street, Ste 10

Crescent City / Mahogany Bar
3810 Hardy Street

Loblolly Bakery
3207 Hardy Street

Mo' Bay Beignet Co.
2902 Hardy Street, Ste 10

Mercury Pizza Company
3805 W 4th Street

Art of Roux
208 N 38th Avenue, Ste 10

Mugshots Grill & Bar
204 N 40th Avenue

Coffee Shops:

Equinox Coffee
1901 Hardy Street

Mulvi's Coffee
3416 Hardy Street, Ste 120

T-Bones Records & Café
2101 Hardy Street

Grin Coffee
508 Broadway Drive

Café De Luna
212 W Pine Street



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

GINGER M. LOWREY, AICP
MS APA PRESIDENT



On behalf of the Mississippi Chapter of the American Planning Association, it is my pleasure to welcome you to Hattiesburg, Mississippi, for the 2025 Deep South Planning Conference. We are excited to host our colleagues and friends from across Mississippi and Alabama here in the Hub City, a community that demonstrates how creativity, collaboration, and thoughtful planning can shape a resilient future.

This year's conference theme, The Art of Planning, highlights the creative side of planning in building strong and meaningful communities. We are honored to host a keynote speaker each day, representing different planning perspectives while exploring The Art of Planning through both our toolbox and our philosophy as planners. The Art of Planning is not only about how we apply planning principles but also about how we use art and culture as tools to build community. From cultural spaces to creative engagement, this connection is on full display in Hattiesburg. Check out our mobile workshops and receptions to experience it firsthand.

We couldn't make this happen without partnerships. The Deep South Planning Conference reflects a valued collaboration between the Mississippi and Alabama Chapters of APA. I want to thank everyone on the conference committee and executive board for their time and effort in making this event a success. A special thank-you goes to our sponsors and exhibitors; your support makes this gathering possible. Please take a moment during the conference to connect with them and show your appreciation.

As we gather here, I encourage you to draw inspiration from the conversations, the projects, and the people who make planning such a meaningful profession. The lessons shared this week will carry forward through the work you do in your own communities. Let's continue to learn from one another and keep building places that reflect both purpose and possibility.

PLATINUM

SPONSORS



**URBAN
DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING DIVISION**

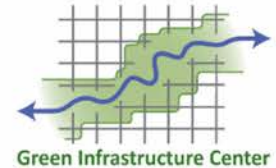
GOLD

SPONSOR



SILVER

SPONSORS

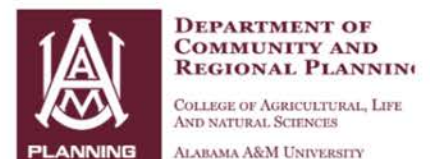


BRONZE

SPONSORS



VISITHATTIESBURG



A GUIDE TO THIS PROGRAM'S FEATURED HATTIESBURG PUBLIC ART



SPREAD YOUR WINGS

AVERY ORENDORF

The hummingbird as the central image represents strength and the power to rise above trouble and hardship. It is a message of hope, along with the rising sun, that welcomes every new day with energy and joy. This mural is an original piece commissioned for Hattiesburg.

HUB OF MOMENTUM

GONZO247

"Hub of Momentum" is located on the side of The Porter Pub in downtown Hattiesburg. Designed by internationally recognized cultural artist GONZO247, the mural features his award-winning graffiti and street art style, which he first cultivated in his hometown of Houston. The design illustrates the progress of Hattiesburg from a railroad and lumber town into a vibrant hub of activity, featuring the train depot, pines, and a guitar alongside an arrow representing continued development and what lies ahead.



SUFFRAGE

HEIDI PITRE

Located on McLeod Street in Downtown Hattiesburg, "Suffrage" is a nod to the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment protecting women's constitutional right to vote. This larger-than-life design is both vibrant and patriotic and includes an insignia officially honoring past and present female public office holders in the Greater Hattiesburg area.

**FOLLOW THESE QR CODES/LINKS TO
SEE MORE OF HATTIESBURG'S PUBLIC
ART!**



MURALS



SCULPTURES



UTILITY BOXES

