Maryland APA Strategic Plan

The Maryland Chapter of the American Planning Association (MD APA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and improving the art and science of planning throughout the State of Maryland and the Mid-Atlantic region. As one of 47 state chapters, MD APA supports the mission of the American Planning Association (APA) as it advocates excellence in community planning, and addresses economic, environmental and social equity issues at national and international levels. The MD APA is a local resource for networking and professional development, and creates opportunities for involvement. With approximately 600 members from both the public and private sectors, it works closely with neighboring chapters to offer a biannual regional planning conference, educational workshops, walking tours, a quarterly newsletter, an educational website, legislative monitoring, and other reinforcement for those members and their clients.

This Development Plan guides the Chapter’s vision and initiatives for the next two years.. It may be updated regularly to always reflect the current priorities of the Chapter and its members.

Our Mission

In supporting APA’s mission at the state level, the Maryland Chapter provides leadership in planning, advocates excellence in community planning, promotes education and citizen empowerment, and offers the tools and support necessary to meet the challenges of growth and change in Maryland. Because of this, we include by reference the Slogan, Vision, Core Values, and Strategic Direction of the latest APA Development Plan.

Goals and Strategies:

1. Advocate excellent planning practices and emphasize the value of planners at all levels of government.
   1.1. Work closely with the Maryland Association of Counties (MACO) and Maryland Municipal League (MML) to influence state Legislations and policies related to planning.
   1.2. Provide educational sessions and materials for elected and appointed officials, emphasizing effective planning tools.
   1.3. Develop and maintain working relationships and collaborative opportunities with key legislative committee chairs and their staff with similar planning interests, and
advocate for funding.

1.4. Conduct regional workshops and mini-conferences or events to address issues of interest to the counties and cities within those regions.

1.5. Reinforce the value of planners and planning by coordinated communications and outreach to gain media attention. (was #2)

1.6. Reward the exceptional planning projects in the State by honoring them at the biannual planning awards ceremony.

1.7. Encourage volunteerism and extraordinary contributions by board members and the membership with awards or other significant recognitions for outstanding service.

1.8. Identify and work closely with liaisons for local media outlets.

1.9. Invite media correspondents to Chapter events.

**Performance measures:** number of white papers prepared on upcoming legislation; number of visits to legislative committee chairs and staff; number of regional workshops/events held.

number of white papers prepared on upcoming legislation; number of visits to legislative committee chairs and staff; number of media at Chapter events – especially at the biannual conference; number of articles about MD APA—especially about the biannual conference.

2. **Lead Maryland’s communities toward a more just and sustainable future by identifying and addressing emerging planning trends at the state level, such as climate change, aging population, sustainability and economic development through chapter communications, events, and focus areas.**

2.1. Identify annual themes on which the chapter will focus events, communications, and training as a strategy to increase awareness and help communities plan for trends underway.

2.2. Develop products and tools that will increase public awareness of emerging planning trends and issues.

2.3. Continue to emphasize the need for equity in all planning activities.

**Performance measures:** number of educational materials distributed on these issues; number of CM credits available for emerging trends at the biannual and regional conferences; number of ethics CM credits available in the state.
3. **Cultivate and inspire the next generation of planning leaders to ensure the continuing growth of planning knowledge.**

3.1. Support the planning programs at Maryland colleges and Universities
   
   3.1.1. Provide mini-grants,
   3.1.2. Participate in classroom activities, such as super juries and panel discussions

3.2. Provide greater opportunities for networking and professional development.

   3.2.1. Conduct a membership survey for the purpose of identifying specific action items on which members would like the Chapter to focus.
   3.2.2. Develop a mentoring program for new professionals.
   3.2.3. Coordinate with employers and other groups, such as Volunteer Maryland, to place students in internships.
   3.2.4. Consider holding executive board meetings or other events at planning schools.

3.3. Encourage membership communication.

   3.3.1. Offer social events such as happy hours, walking tours and other networking opportunities.
   3.3.2. Develop and maintain presence on social networking websites such as facebook, linkedin and twitter to foster communication.
   3.3.3. Develop and maintain online blogs and google groups to discuss current planning issues.
   3.3.4. Offer digital quarterly newsletter, listserv and an updated website to promote best planning practices and to communicate with the members on a regular basis.

*Performance measures:* amount of money distributed in mini-grants; number and types of planning program events attended by the membership, number of members shadowed by students; number of interns placed; number of social events sponsor or organized; increase in use of social media and blogs; number of newsletters per year; frequency of listserv usage; completion of membership survey; number of mentors trained; number of new professionals mentored.

3.4 Promote professional certifications such as American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), Advanced Specialty Certification (ASC) and Fellows of AICP (FAICP).

   3.4.1 Provide and encourage AICP exam preparation by offering training and AICP study manuals to our membership.
3.4.2 Encourage and assist experienced planners to apply to become Fellows of AICP (FAICP)
3.4.3 Seek greater participation from FAICPs in the Chapter’s activities.

**Performance measures:** number of members passing the AICP exam; number passing the ASC; number of members becoming FAICPs.

3.5 Provide affordable and accessible continuing education opportunities for practicing planners.
   3.5.1 Offer a biannual regional conference in partnership with the neighboring state chapters.
   3.5.2 Sponsor workshops and webinars eligible for CM credits throughout the State.
   3.5.3 Sponsor speaker series and brown bag discussions on current planning issues.

**Performance measures:** number and type of continuing educational opportunities offered at affordable prices; attendance numbers.

4. **Enhance the excitement and enthusiasm for planning by developing new strategies to attract a broader audience.**
   4.1. Foster the relationship with sister organizations such as Maryland Chapter of American Society of Landscape Architects (MD ASLA), Maryland Chapter of American Institute of Architects (AIA Maryland), Maryland Chapter of U.S. Green Building Council (USGBCMD).
   4.2. Provide joint CM credits to maintain professional certifications such as AICP, LEED AP, PE, AIA, and ASLA.
   4.3. Designate a liaison for each sister organization to improve communication and coordinate joint events.
   4.4. Offer workshops and conference sessions that will benefit planners, architects, landscape architects and professional engineers.
   4.5. Work with allied professions to influence policies related to urban and rural communities.
   4.6. **Provide local governments with impartial analyses of upcoming legislation for their use.**

**Performance measures:** number of CM credits provided at events in conjunction with allied professions; number of policy analysis distributed to local governments.

5. **One APA. We are one organization with one mission. We succeed by working together to plan and advance the goals and strategies of the American Planning Association.**
   5.1. Participate in national planning leadership activities.
   5.2. Grow the organization at the state and local levels.
5.3. Promote the role of planning in good governance.

5.4. Strive to enhance the value of the AICP credential.

5.5. Celebrate our volunteers.

**Performance measures:** number of members attending the national conference; number of students attending the national conference; number of members at national leadership meetings in the fall and spring; number of planning directors in the state with AICP credential; number of schools with smart growth curriculum; number of articles or books about planning written by MD APA members; number of volunteers honored at our biannual conference and annual meetings.

6. **Looking ahead: within the next five years APA MD will:**

6.1. Grow membership by nn%.

6.2. Increase AICP enrollment by nn%

6.3. **Performance measures:** percent increase in membership and in AICP enrollment.