



APA Iowa announces recipients of 2009 Iowa Planning Awards

Submitted by Naomi Hamlett, AICP

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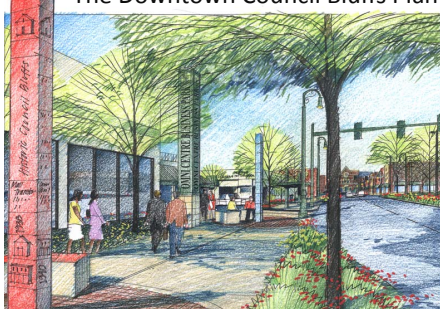
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Each year, the Iowa Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA Iowa) asks its more than 350 members to nominate plans, projects, and individuals deserving recognition by the professional organization. Award nominees can be recognized in as many as thirteen categories ranging from planning excellence, to distinguished leadership.

Based on an independent review by a jury of professional planners from the Minnesota Chapter of the APA, four nominees were selected to receive Iowa APA Awards in 2009. An awards ceremony was held to honor the recipients during the 2009 APA Iowa Fall Conference. Each of the award recipients was introduced and given an opportunity to make a short presentation about their plan or project. The four nominees selected to receive Iowa APA Awards in 2009 and a short summary of each nominees' plan are included on pages 6-9 of this months newsletter.

"The Downtown Council Bluffs Plan"



"Cedar Rapids River Corridor Redevelopment Plan"



"Historic Millwork District Master Plan"



"Fort Dodge, IA Downtown Plan"



President's Message

Greetings Iowa Planners!

I hope that 2010 is going well for all of you. As we all know the declining economic conditions across the world have resulted in a challenging time for all of us, new development has slowed, unemployment is up, foreclosures are happening at a record rate and travel/training budgets are being cut, certainly making a trying time for all planners. Yet, planning must go on.

I was excited to see nearly 80 APA Iowa planners or student planners were able to travel to the 2010 APA National Conference in New Orleans and I hope to see you all again at the 2010 APA Iowa Conference being held at the MidAmerican Center in Council Bluffs on October 27th-29th, 2010, please mark your calendars now. The Conference Planning Committee is already meeting to plan an outstanding conference; we hope that many of you will be sharing some of those great projects at this conference. One way you can highlight your projects is by submitting a project for an APA Iowa Award, information about this year's awards program is coming soon.

Speaking of sharing your project with colleagues, why not share your work by writing an article that could be included in a future edition of *Iowa Planning*? Please submit your article ideas to Carissa Miller our Newsletter Editor.

The APA Iowa Board has heard from many of you, and I agree, that the APA Iowa website is long overdue for an update. I am pleased to report that a new APA Iowa website is now available at <http://www.iowa-apa.org/>. It's still a work in progress, but we hope it will become a much more useful resource than it's been in the past. Please check it out and let us know what other resources you'd like to see on the site. I would like to extend a huge thank you to Seana Perkins our Website Editor and John Peterson for their work in updating the site.

I'd like to conclude by saying thank you to all of the APA Iowa Board members, sponsors and volunteers who work to improve the organization and planning in Iowa. A special thank you to Eric Jensen, who just concluded a six year presidential term (president-elect, president and past-president), and to John Peterson whose term as president just concluded. John will be continuing to serve as the Immediate Past President and Eric will be continuing to serve as an At-Large Board member. I'd also like to welcome Rich Russell who was recently elected as the President Elect and re-welcome Ben Champ and Rose Brown who were both re-elected as Secretary and Treasurer respectfully and welcome Carissa Miller who will be our Newsletter Editor. Finally I would like to thank Riley Simpson who recently stepped down from the APA Iowa Board for his service as an At Large Board member. Without volunteers we cannot get our job done, if you're interested in volunteering to assist the Chapter in any capacity, I'd love to hear from you.

Best wishes,
David R. Wilwerding, AICP
APA Iowa President

Highlights of the Iowa Smart Planning Legislation

Submitted by Gary Taylor, AICP



On April 26, 2010, Governor Culver signed into law the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund appropriations bill – SF 2389. The bill included what has come to be known as the Iowa Smart Planning Law. The Smart Planning Law started out in January as a stand-alone bill, but was folded into SF 2389 at the close of the session. The Smart Planning provisions enacted into law with SF 2389 remain almost identical to the provisions as originally introduced in January.

The Smart Planning Law contains four sections. The first section sets forth ten smart planning principles that state agencies and local governments “shall consider and may apply” during “deliberation of all appropriate planning, zoning, development and resource management decisions.”

The ten principles address (1) collaboration, (2) efficiency, transparency, and consistency, (3) clean, renewable, and efficient energy, (4) occupational diversity, (5) revitalization, (6) housing diversity, (7) community character, (8) natural resources and agricultural protection, (9) sustainable design, and (10) transportation diversity. Planners familiar with the Smart Growth movement will recognize some similarities between these ten principles and the ten Smart Growth principles espoused by the Smart Growth Network (which the reader can find at www.smartgrowth.org); however, Iowa’s Smart Planning principles focus less on the urban built environment and more on contemporary and rural planning issues. The language in the Smart Planning Law only requires cities and counties to “consider” these principles; it leaves the application of those principles to the discretion of local governments.

The second section sets forth thirteen elements that local governments “may include” when developing or amending comprehensive plans or “other local land development regulations.” Most of these elements are common to most comprehensive plans, but some will be new to local governments and planners familiar with how planning has been practiced in Iowa. The thirteen elements address objectives, information, and programs related to:

- Current and future land uses;
- Protecting vitality of established residential neighborhoods and new residential neighborhoods;
- Ensuring an adequate housing supply;

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Governor Chet Culver signs Senate File 2389

Surface Transportation Policy Guide

Adopted by Chapter Delegate Assembly

Submitted by Dylan Mullenix, AICP



www.planning.org

As part of the 2010 APA National Conference in New Orleans, APA hosted a Chapter Delegate Assembly to approve the organization's Surface Transportation Policy Guide. An annual event, the Chapter Delegate Assembly is part of the process by which the APA adopts formal policies on topics important to the planning profession. The Surface Transportation Policy Guide is one of 23 adopted policies. Dylan Mullenix, AICP, Senior Transportation Planner for the Des Moines Area MPO represented the Iowa Chapter as part of this Delegate Assembly.

The Chapter Delegate Assembly is the final step in the approval process before the APA Board of Directors ratifies a Policy Guide. The process to form an APA Policy Guide begins with the selection of a topic or issue. After selecting a topic, APA forms a team of authors and reviewers to develop a draft guide for review by the Legislative and Policy Committee. Following approval by the Legislative and Policy Committee, all APA Chapters and Divisions review the draft guide and submit comments. These comments are used to form a final draft that goes before the Chapter Delegate

Assembly. At the Delegate Assembly, chapter representatives make final changes, debate issues, and vote to adopt the draft guide. The draft guide is then sent to the APA Board of Directors for ratification.

A Delegate Assembly consists of representatives from each APA Chapter. The number of delegates assigned to each chapter is based on the size of its membership, and each delegate is entitled to one vote. Some chapters, such as California, have several delegates. Others, like Iowa, have one.

The Surface Transportation Delegate Assembly began with a brief overview of the draft Policy Guide. Following this overview, delegates caucused to discuss the guide. Chapters typically caucused with other chapters of similar size or geographic location. For example, Iowa's delegate caucused with delegates from Missouri, Kansas, and Indiana. Upon conclusion of the caucus, delegates proposed formal amendments to the draft Policy Guide, each of which required a majority vote of the Delegate Assembly for approval. Once all amendments were offered, the Delegate Assembly voted to adopt the full Policy Guide.

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November 2009 AICP Exam

Congratulation to the November '09 AICP Exam Achievers! Those achievers include:

- ★ Kristopher Ackerson, Assistant Transportation Planner, Johnson County Council of Governments
- ★ Kent Ralston, Assistant Transportation Planner, Johnson County Council of Governments
- ★ Debra Lampe, Associate Planner, City of Ankeny
- ★ Kathryn Wollan

Interested in taking the AICP Exam?

The AICP Certification Exam application deadline is July 13. More information is available at <http://www.planning.org/certification/2010/nov/index.htm>

APA-Iowa Awards 2010

Awards season is fast-approaching. Chapter award categories are based on National award categories so that nominators can apply to both. Information about Chapter awards categories and submittal information will be available soon after National awards information is posted, sometime in July. Please be thinking about projects that are worthy of nomination. Award winners will be announced at the 2010 APA-Iowa Conference, held in Council Bluffs on October 28-30.

Iowa Jury Reviewers

Eight APA-Iowa members answered a call for jury members this past January. Both the Nebraska and Wisconsin Chapters of APA asked that the Iowa chapter serve as the jury for their awards programs. **Sheila Lumley, Mike Ludwig, Chris Nosbisch, Gavin Schermer, and Jill Wanderscheid** served as the jury to review and make recommendations on the Nebraska award submittals, while **Stevin Dahl, Bob Miklo, and Jared Reed** served as the jury for the Wisconsin award submittals. Thanks to these eight Iowa chapter members for their time in reviewing these planning projects and offering their valuable feedback!



APA Iowa announces recipients of 2009 Iowa Planning Awards

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Planning Excellence Award for Best Practice – City of Fort Dodge and Camiros, Ltd. – “Fort Dodge, IA Downtown Plan”

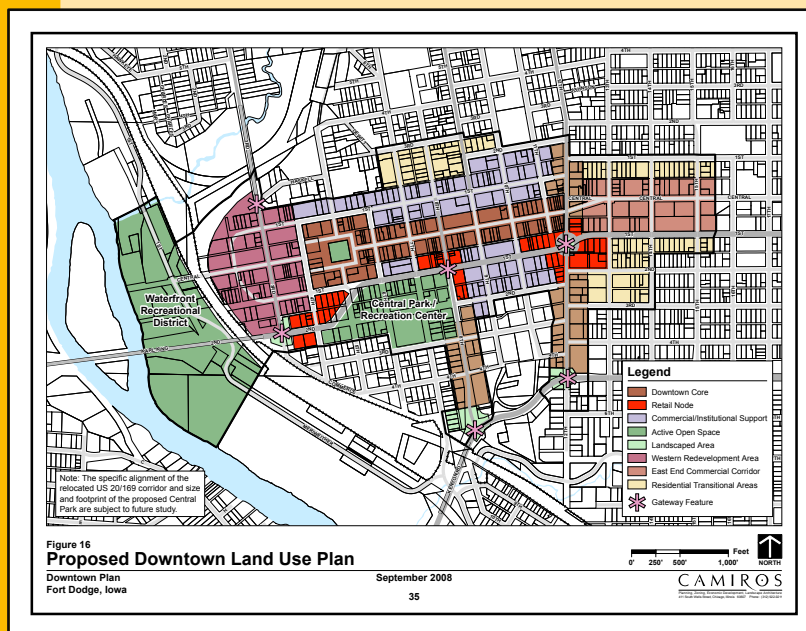
In 2008, the City of Fort Dodge adopted a Downtown Plan as a means of stimulating new investment in a traditional core that had been stressed by vacancies, age, and a migration of commercial activities to peripheral arterials. Since then, several businesses have been retained, and new development proposals are coming forth. Federal stimulus funds were secured to revitalize neighborhoods that abut the downtown, and major infrastructure improvements are planned that will provide increased access and a new Central Park, the centerpiece of the Downtown Plan.

The Plan balances physical improvements, redevelopment, strategic actions, partnerships, and public policy to result in a document that serves as a manual for local leaders and members of the development community. By clearly articulating a vision and subsequently identifying the required steps for implementation, the Plan outlines a clear process for the improvements desired by the community and project Steering Committee.

A broad group of involved stakeholders crafted a common vision that provided the context for each group to achieve their individual goals while understanding a greater set of ideals. This involvement helped answer

specific questions, such as “what is the future of downtown?” and “what can I do with my property to help achieve plan goals?” These talks were essential in instilling local stewardship in the plan.

For questions or to request more information on this project, please contact Douglas Hammel, AICP, Camiros, Ltd., 312-922-9211 x.241 or dhammel@camiros.com.



APA Iowa announces recipients of 2009 Iowa Planning Awards

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Planning Excellence Award for Implementation – City of Council Bluffs and RDG Planning & Design – “The Downtown Council Bluffs Plan”

Downtown Council Bluffs was once a vital and teeming retail center. The City undertook a massive redevelopment effort during the 1970s to retain this retail base, but ultimately lost out to more auto-oriented competition. Since then, parts of the central district adapted to change, but the overall district lacked cohesion and did not produce needed reinvestment. In 2003, the Downtown Council Bluffs Plan established a new blueprint for the district, based on restoring each of nine distinct “neighborhoods” to a state of health. During the subsequent six years, the City has achieved remarkable success in reigniting interest and development within its unique center.



The City has executed major public projects since the plan’s adoption. These include the reconstruction of Bayliss Park, the city’s traditional town square; streetscape improvements on Broadway, the district’s main corridor; and other public space improvements. These public improvements were matched by private investments, including the construction of new downtown housing, restoration and reuse of the former home of the city’s newspaper, restoration of commercial buildings on the historic 100 Block, continued reinvestment in the Haymarket historic district, and housing rehabilitation in the surrounding neighborhood. The momentum continues with the planned redevelopment of the south side of the 100 Block on Broadway, a major recommendation of the 2003 plan.

The plan focused on three basic categories of change: *Subdistricts*, describing the component districts of the central district. *Connections*, describing the linkages between the subdistricts and other points of importance, provide structure for development and represent the main ways that people move through downtown. They also have a processional quality, and represent Downtown’s most important public spaces. *Policies*, describing methods by which various needs and markets are met and projects are implemented.

For questions or to request more information on this project, please contact Gary Lozano, AICP, RDG Planning & Design, 515-309-3273 or glozano@rdgusa.com.



APA Iowa announces recipients of 2009 Iowa Planning Awards

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Planning Excellence Award for Innovation in Best Practices for Sustainability – City of Dubuque, Cunningham Group Architecture, P.A., Economics Research Associates and Jeffrey Morton Architecture – “Historic Millwork District Master Plan”

Dubuque’s Millwork District is located between Downtown and the River. The District - once the nation’s largest Millwork District - now covers 19 acres and contains over 1 million square feet of vacant warehouse space.

The Historic Millwork District Master Plan (“The Plan”) charts a course for the Millwork District to reestablish itself as a regional engine of growth. Upon completion, the District will contain over 1,000 new residents and 1,000 new employees. Individual properties and the public realm will function as an urban ecosystem, and the District will be a unit with high economic value and low environmental impact. The District will stay within its rainfall budget, approach carbon balance, create sustainable jobs and housing, and reinforce the importance of connectivity and diversity within the city.



The Plan provides a comprehensive approach for integrating sustainable practices throughout the implementation process. The Plan organizes the strategies according to five infrastructure systems, or layers, to provide a framework for understanding and implementing a healthy and sustainable plan. Blue Infrastructure addresses water use and treatment approaches that contribute to better water quality. Orange Infrastructure includes

efficient electrical, heating, and cooling systems that minimize the District’s carbon footprint. Gray Infrastructure includes buildings, parking, streets, and other redevelopment that is essential to establishing a viable mixed-use neighborhood. Green Infrastructure includes vegetation, parks, and open space that contribute to a healthy ecosystem, better air and water quality, and improved public life. Red Infrastructure includes arts and cultural spaces, amenities, and expressions that reinforce the identity of an area.

For questions or more information on this project, please contact Andrew Dresdner, Cunningham Group Architecture, P.A. at 612-379-3400 or adresdner@cunningham.com.

APA Iowa announces recipients of 2009 Iowa Planning Awards

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Planning Achievement Award for a Hard Won Victory – City of Cedar Rapids and Sasaki Associates – “Cedar Rapids River Corridor Redevelopment Plan”

Cedar Rapids crowned 2008 the “Year of the River,” a title meant to reinforce the connection between the City and the Cedar River that runs through its core. This name became ever more significant following an extreme flood in June 2008 that inundated the river-edge neighborhoods and a large part of Downtown with a record-breaking 31.5 feet of water. The “Flood of 2008” crested 11.5 feet higher than any previous flood, forced thousands of evacuations, and caused billions of dollars in damage. Over 10 square miles were flooded, with upwards of 10 feet of water in flood-affected areas, catering on Downtown and nearside neighborhoods.

Since the flood, the City and its residents have mobilized to complete two phases of reinvestment and revitalization planning, while a third phase of implementation initiatives and projects is underway. With an ambitious scope and a need for quick action, cooperation was essential to the development of a viable plan.

Phase One, which began only days after the flood in June 2008, was a four-month public process to develop a flood-management strategy. Immediately following Phase One, Phase Two focused on developing plans for reinvesting in the flood-affected neighborhoods, including the Downtown. At the end of the Neighborhood Planning Process, an Action Plan was developed to guide redevelopment in neighborhoods over the next 10 to 15 years. At the heart the planning process is a desire to ensure that Cedar Rapids will not only recover from the flood, but will become a greater city for future generations.

For questions or more information on this project, please contact Sasaki Associates, or more specifically Jason Hellendrung at jhellendrung@sasaki.com or 617-923-7374 or Gina Ford at gford@sasaki.com or 617-923-7161.





(Continued from page 3: Highlights of the Iowa Smart Planning Legislation)

- Providing a range of housing choices;
- Infrastructure needs;
- Transportation needs;
- Public facilities (schools, libraries, fire stations, health care facilities, etc.);
- Stabilization, retention, or expansion of economic development and employment opportunities;
- Preservation and protection of agricultural and natural resources;
- “Quality of life” considerations;
- Natural and man-made hazards;
- Joint planning and joint decision making with other municipalities or governmental entities; and
- Implementation.

The law states that comprehensive plans should be integrated with the FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plans that most Iowa communities have adopted, and that the comprehensive plan should specifically address prevention, mitigation, and recovery from catastrophic floods.

Like the ten smart planning principles, the inclusion of these elements in comprehensive plans is optional for cities and counties. Despite this fact, this section of the law is significant. Although there have been references to the “comprehensive plan” in other sections of the Iowa Code for years (including the reference that local zoning “shall be in accordance with the comprehensive plan”) Iowa, unlike the vast majority of states in the nation, has never had enabling legislation specifically defining what a comprehensive plan should include or the process for adopting it. The Smart Planning law changes that by providing a framework for what a good local comprehensive plan should contain, and by outlining a process local city councils and county boards of supervisors can use (again, this is optional) when adopting the comprehensive plan.

Section three of the law creates a smart planning taskforce charged with a number of responsibilities, including the evaluation of state policies and practices for their conformance with the smart planning principles, the development of statewide goals for comprehensive planning consistent with the smart planning principles, the development of a “model regional comprehensive plan,” a review of local comprehensive plans to assess how they address hazard mitigation, and the centralization of information for comprehensive planning, and a central repository for comprehensive plans. The Smart Planning Taskforce must submit a report with its findings and recommendations to the Governor by November 15, 2010. The taskforce is scheduled to meet for the first time on June 23, 2010, and must meet three more times prior to the November deadline. APA-Iowa is well-represented on the taskforce with at least six taskforce members also being APA-Iowa members.

Finally section four makes \$30 million from the Revenue Bonds Capitals II Fund (the final monies from the I-JOBS bonding) available for disaster prevention infrastructure projects to cities and counties that are applying the smart planning principles and adopting comprehensive plans consistent with the other sections of the bill. While the “stick” of mandated planning was not placed in the bill, the legislature clearly set aside these funds for use as “carrots” to entice cities and counties to move forward with smart planning. The Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) is responsible for establishing the criteria that will determine how a city can qualify a project for these funds; in other words, defining the criteria that will be used to determine whether a city or county is applying smart planning principles. As of the writing of this article IFA is preparing to hold a series of workshops to provide cities and counties more information on the I-JOBS funds. Information on the workshops is available at www.ijobsiowa.gov.



(Continued from Page 4; "Surface Transportation Policy Guide Adopted by Chapter Delegate Assembly")

The final Surface Transportation Policy Guide includes seven general policies, each of which has several specific policies. The seven general policies are as follows:

- Establish a National Transportation Vision
- Empower and Improve the Mobility of Metropolitan Regions
- Support Integrated Planning for Sustainable Communities
- Invest in Transportation that Promotes Economic Growth, Competitiveness, and Resilience
- Foster Location-Efficient Decisions
- Create Safe, Healthy, and Accessible Communities for Everyone
- Expand Funding Sources to Meet Transportation Needs in Ways that are Flexible, Performance-Driven, and Linked to Outcomes

The complete Surface Transportation Policy Guide is available at <http://www.planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/surfacetransportation.htm>.

Iowa Planning Information

If you are interested in submitting a planning related article in Iowa Planning please contact Carissa Miller, Newsletter Editor cmiller@midascog.net (515) 576-7183 ext 214.

If your business or organization is interested in advertising in Iowa Planning, please contact Richard Brown, Communications Chair rrbrown@dmgov.org (515) 248-6356

For more information on the Iowa Chapter of APA check out our new website! <http://www.iowa-apa.org/>

APA Iowa Annual Conference

*Sustainably Rebuilding the Heartland
October 27-29th, 2010
MidAmerica Center - Council Bluffs,
Iowa*

*Conference registration material will
be available soon!*

*Sponsorship information is available at
our website:*

[http://www.iowa-apa.org/events/
conference-information.html](http://www.iowa-apa.org/events/conference-information.html)