

IOWA PLANNING



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Iowa Chapter

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In this issue...

APA-Iowa Members
Serve on Award Jury.....1

President's Message.....2

Riverfront Crossings
District Open House.....3

The Smart Code &
Affordable Housing.....4

2011 Legislative
Update.....6

Upcoming Events.....7



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APA Iowa Members Serve on Award Jury

Submitted by Naomi Hamlett, AICP

In January and February, eight APA-Iowa members served as jurors for neighboring states' awards programs. The job entailed reviewing award nominations (8 for Nebraska and 10 for Wisconsin), offering comments on the specific project, and issuing final recommendations on whether the project is award-worthy. Thank you to the following planners for their time and professional opinions in bringing recognition to award-worthy projects in other states, and for furthering the planning profession, in general.

For APA-Nebraska:

Jerry Anthony, University of Iowa
Don Gross, City of Council Bluffs
Mike Johnson, City of Norwalk
Tricia Sandahl, City of Mason City
Jill Wanderscheid, City of Sioux City

For APA-Wisconsin:

Christine Butterfield, City of Cedar Rapids
Andrea Hauer, City of Des Moines
Todd Ashby, Des Moines Metropolitan
Planning Organization

President's Message



Greetings Iowa Planners!

As I noted in my previous President's Letter with the changes to the by-laws there remained a couple of open positions on the board. I am pleased to announce the addition of Melissa Tiedemann, AICP, as the Chapter Development Chair. Melissa is an Environmental Planner with Stanley Consultants in their Coralville Office.

We don't just do planning for a living; we also know how to plan for our organization! The APA Iowa Board has been working on the development of an updated two year Work Plan, and I anticipate the adoption of the plan at an upcoming meeting (look for an update on the Work Plan in a coming newsletter). With the new plan will come a new and renewed effort to focus on critical projects to improve the Chapter services and with that we will need help on various subcommittees. As we announce those we will be looking for more volunteers to assist in those endeavors and I hope many of you are inclined to volunteer. Rich Russell, President-Elect is currently spearheading such an effort focusing on increasing Chapter membership. I want to express my appreciation for the 15 APA Iowa members who have agreed to assist in that endeavor.

With the addition of faculty representatives from the University of Iowa and Iowa State University to the APA Iowa Board, a previous position of University Relations was no longer necessary. Stevin Dahl, Dahl Communications had served in this capacity for a number of years, and I want to thank him for his years of service and dedication.

Please take note of the opportunity to meet your legislators at the Design Professionals Day on March 14th and to socialize with your fellow Iowa Planners at the All Iowa Reception in Boston on April 10th. Information on both events are contained in this newsletter.

Thanks to Kate Dirks, ISU Graduate Student Representative to the APA Iowa Board, you can now "Like" APA Iowa on Facebook! Just search for Iowa APA. Where we will keep you updated on Chapter activities. Of course we will continue to maintain our website, www.iowa-apa.org, thanks to the efforts of Seana Perkins our Webmaster, but use Facebook as an additional means of communication.

Best wishes,

David R. Wilwerding, AICP
APA Iowa President
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Riverfront Crossings District Open House

Reprinted with permission from the Iowa City Planning & Community Development Department

Originally Featured in The Planner: Volume 3, Issues 1& 2



On Thursday, January 27th, the City of Iowa City held an open house to present plan proposals for the Riverfront Crossings District; an area south of downtown, which is roughly bordered by Burlington Street to the north, Highway 6 to the south, Gilbert Street to the east, and Riverside Drive to the west. The Riverfront Crossings District was heavily impacted by the 2008 floods and is now the focus of a redevelopment project that would revitalize the area while simultaneously putting flood mitigation efforts in place.

Proposed Project Presentation

The house was packed to standing room only for the open house and presentation, and overwhelmingly, those who attended offered an enthusiastic thumbs-up to what they heard. The plan was presented by representatives from the City of Iowa City, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and planning consultants from HDR, Inc. and SRA International, Inc. who have been collaborating on the project.

The presentation focused on one section of the proposed project, which includes the development of a riverfront park and the restoration of natural areas on the site of the City's North Wastewater



Treatment Plant and the former Animal Care and Adoption Center, which will both be relocated from Kirkwood Avenue to south Iowa City. Returning the area to green space will help absorb floodwaters from both the Iowa River and Ralston Creek during future flood events. Preliminary plans for the new park include walking and biking trails and the establishment of boating, fishing, and other park amenities along the Iowa River.

Project funding

Funds for this planning project have come from grants from the EPA's *Smart Growth Assistance Program*, and from the *Partnership for Sustainable Communities*, a joint initiative of the EPA, HUD, and U.S. Department of Transportation. Iowa City was one of only five cities in the country to receive the Sustainable Communities Partnership funding.

Development of this project will continue throughout the following months. For more information, contact Karen Howard at 319.356.5251 or e-mail karen-howard@iowa-city.org.

The Smart Code and Affordable Housing

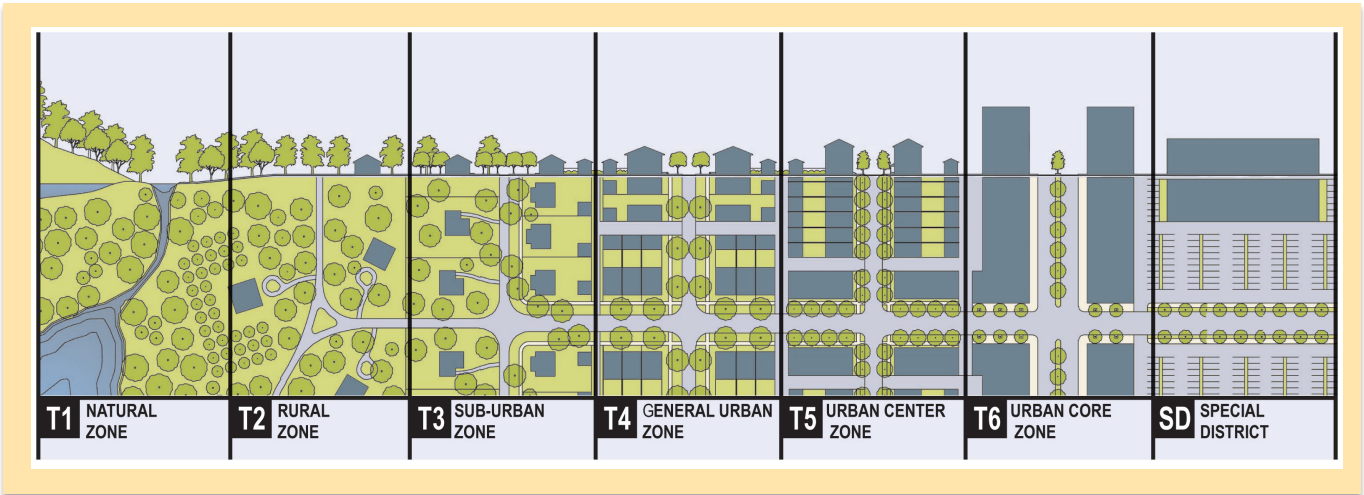
Submitted by Megan Moody, HUD USER
Originally Featured in Breakthroughs: Volume 10, Issue 1



More and more communities across the nation are eschewing traditional zoning codes in favor of smart growth codes, such as form-based codes, traditional neighborhood designs, and transit-oriented developments. The SmartCode, originally developed by Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, is a model form-based code that promotes sustainable development by encouraging a mix of uses, diverse housing options at all income levels, open space preservation, and pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods that reduce automobile dependency. Unlike conventional zoning, the SmartCode model combines zoning, subdivision regulations, urban design standards, and infrastructure requirements into one regulating document. The one-stop ordinance generates predictability and timeliness, ultimately lowering development costs in the approval process. Since 2003, when the SmartCode was first unveiled, more than 40 municipalities have adopted customized versions of the code.

Affordable housing provisions within the transect zones. This article takes a brief look at some of the communities that have recently adopted a SmartCode with added provisions for affordable housing development.

Jamestown, Rhode Island. In a 2007 report that put forth the community’s vision for future growth, Jamestown residents identified affordable housing as a critical component. The report contained strategies to increase the area’s affordable housing supply, including the adoption of a SmartCode that would allow for higher densities and mixed uses. In October 2009, Jamestown, a small island located in the middle of Narragansett Bay, adopted a calibrated version of the SmartCode. The code is mandatory for the town’s Special Development District, which includes areas of the Island that can support higher densities. Within this district, accessory dwelling units are allowed as an affordable housing option. The accessory units



Affordable Housing

The SmartCode is based on six transect zones ranging from “Natural” to “Urban Core”. A mix of uses and housing types are required in most of the zones. In addition, the code also allows for the development of accessory dwelling units and other

must be deed-restricted so as to remain affordable. Additionally, the code allows reduced minimum lot sizes to accommodate affordable housing. The smaller lots are required to be part of a land trust and are tied to a ground lease or deed restricted for a period of 99 years. (Continued on Page 5)

The Smart Code and Affordable Housing

Submitted by Megan Moody, HUD USER

Originally Featured in Breakthroughs: Volume 10, Issue 1

**Continued from Page 4*



Ridgeland, South Carolina. Following a public charette and visioning process, Ridgeland adopted its version of the SmartCode in March 2010. The mandatory SmartCode aims to retain the town's character and accommodate growth in a sustainable manner. The code includes provisions to encourage affordable housing, such as priority processing and expedited approval. Highest priority is given to affordable housing projects that are developed in partnership with a community land trust or nonprofit housing agency. Additionally, the town offers density bonuses and parking reductions for affordable housing units located within one quarter mile of a transit stop.

Flagstaff, Arizona. The "City of Pines" is currently in the process of updating its zoning code to better promote smart growth development. The new zoning ordinance will feature transect zones, form-based development regulations, and sustainability principles. Various affordable housing incentives will be consolidated under the new code. The Traditional Neighborhood District (TND) that Flagstaff adopted in 2007 is expected to remain largely unchanged in the new ordinance. Modeled after the SmartCode, the TND applies to new and infill developments that incorporate mixed uses, higher densities, and traditional neighborhood design elements. Incentives to encourage affordable housing include expedited permitting, fee waivers, and reduced parking requirements. The most recent development under the city's TND features 125 permanently affordable units on 27 acres that are part of the city's land trust. The land will remain under city ownership and the homes will be available for residents making between 80 and 150 percent of the area median income.

Conclusion

Ensuring the availability of diverse housing options for all ages and income levels is an integral component of the SmartCode. The regulatory flexibility and streamlined approval process offered by the code can help lower housing development costs and increase affordability. The code, which can be adapted to meet specific needs of a community, is becoming increasingly popular with local governments intent on promoting sustainable growth and affordable living.

Submit your articles
now!

If your entity has news or projects that you would like to share with other Iowa Planners, submit your articles for the May edition of Iowa Planning! Email your articles to cmiller@midascog.net

Remember to register for the 2011 Planning & Zoning Workshop! Multiple dates and locations are available. For more information visit: <http://www.blogs.extension.iastate.edu/planningBLUZ>

2011 Legislative Update

Submitted by David Wilwerding, AICP



We have tried to keep you updated via email of the 2011 legislative proposals that could affect planning in Iowa as the session has proceeded. HF 45 which contained the repeal of Smart Planning as it left the Iowa House of Representatives was amended and passed by both the Senate and House without the Smart Planning repeal. Smart Planning lives.

Friday, March 4th was the first funnel deadline, and as of the writing of this article the following are bills that have made it through that funnel process that APA Iowa members should be aware of:

SSB 1068 carries out many of the recommendations of the Smart Planning Taskforce, including the creation of an Office of State Planning and GIS.

[SF53](#) includes provisions relating to disaster mitigation and predisaster planning by providing for comprehensive watershed management planning, creating a watershed management grant program, providing floodplain management regulation incentives, creating a predisaster hazard mitigation grant program, and making appropriations.

SF 321 is the successor bill to SF 269, concerning wastewater discharges by on-farm processing operations.

SF 297 and SF 336 both deal with the notification requirements of meetings of the boards of condominium and homeowners associations.

HF 430 would protect agricultural operations from nuisance suits under certain circumstances (commonly referred to as a right-to-farm law. NOTE: the Iowa Supreme Court struck down Iowa's previous right-to-farm law in a nationally-famous case, Bormann v. Kossuth County, in the 1990s).

HF 413 would provide a property tax exemption for commercial property in an urban revitalization area that has been vacant for more than six months and meets other criteria.

HF 388 would no longer allow cities to adopt ordinances providing for the use of a designated amount of the increased local sales and services tax revenues attributable to retail establishments in an urban renewal area to fund urban renewal projects located in that area. Existing ordinances could be amended or repealed only.

HF 357 would change the authority of city zoning boards of adjustment to grant variances, by allowing the granting of area variances upon a showing of 'practical difficulties' rather than unnecessary hardship.

HF 305 would prohibit the use of FEMA Floodplain Maps by the State, counties, cities or other entities for any purpose until they had been approved by the Iowa Legislature.

You can search the language, history and other information on any of these bills at <http://www.legis.iowa.gov>.

If you support or have concerns for any of these legislative proposals, please contact your State Legislators, their contact information is available at <http://www.legis.iowa.gov/Legislators/find.aspx>.

Should you have any questions on these legislative issues, please feel free to contact [David Wilwerding](#) - President, [Don Gross](#) - Legislative Chair, [John Peterson](#) - Past President or [Gary Taylor](#) - Professional Development Officer who have all been involved in monitoring the legislation. We will continue to keep you updated as this legislation works its way through the approval process.

Upcoming Events



Design Professionals Day on the Hill

All APA Iowa Members are invited to the first annual “Design Professionals Day on the Hill” being hosted by the APA Iowa Chapter in coordination with the Iowa Chapters of the American Institute of Architects, American Society of Landscape Architects and International Interior Design Association. This event will allow the planning community a direct opportunity to discuss key issues pertaining to our profession directly with our Iowa Legislators. The event is scheduled as an open house on:

Monday, March 14th, 2011

2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

1st Floor Rotunda of the Iowa State Capitol

All APA Iowa members are invited and encouraged to attend at any time during the open house. There will be an issue briefing to discuss key issues for those attending the open house beginning at 1:00 p.m. in Room 116 of the Iowa Capitol.

ISU Extension – Introduction to Planning and Zoning Workshops

Registration brochures for the annual Introduction to Planning and Zoning Workshops have now been mailed to all cities, counties, and councils of government. The registration brochure may also be downloaded by going to the “Introduction to Planning and Zoning Workshops” tab at Gary Taylor’s blog <http://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/planningBLUZ>. Dates of this years workshop run between March 22nd and April 13th.

NE Planning and Zoning Conference

Nebraska will be holding our Annual Planning and Zoning Conference on March 30, 31 and April 1, 2011 at the Holiday Inn Midtown in Grand Island, Nebraska (along I-80). If you look on the calendar, this is 1 week prior to the start of the National Conference in Boston. We hope that if any of your members do not have the budget to go to Boston that they might find this an excellent alternative.



Upcoming Events

(continued)



APA's National Planning Conference: April 9th-12th



All Iowa Reception

Are you a member of APA Iowa, alumnus of the University of Iowa School of Urban Planning or alumnus of the Iowa State University Community and Regional Planning program who will be attending the National APA Conference in Boston?

If so, don't miss an opportunity to meet and network with your colleagues at the All Iowa Reception being held on:

All Iowa Reception
Sunday, April 10, 2011
7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
Dillon's
955 Boylston St, Boston, MA

Dillon's is just a short 1 ½ block walk from the Sheraton Conference Hotel. Light appetizers will be provided, with food and beverages also available for purchase. The event is being co-hosted by APA Iowa, Iowa State University CRP Program and University of Iowa School of Urban Planning.

ASLA Central States Conference

The Iowa Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects on behalf of the Central States Conference announces its call for session proposals for the 2011 ASLA Central States Conference, "Landscape Urbanism: Economics of Healthy Communities" being held in cooperation with the Iowa ASLA Chapter on May 5th and 6th, 2011 at Hy-Vee Hall in Des Moines, IA. Anyone is eligible to submit a session proposal, whether or not they are a member of ASLA or APA. If you have a particular expertise, or you believe that you have a topic that would interest others, we encourage you to submit a session proposal. Please see attached for complete details or visit the ASLA website, www.iaasla.org.

Upper Midwest Regional APA Conference

This year, APA Iowa is pleased to be hosting the Upper Midwest APA Conference, **MOTATE – Transportation and Mobility in the Green Era**, hosted annually by Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin and Minnesota APA State Chapters. This year's event will be held October 19-21, 2011 in Davenport.

At this time, the Conference Planning Committee is accepting Session Proposals for individuals/groups interested in presenting at the conference or conducting mobile tours at the conference. Detailed information, including the session proposal forms are available on the APA Iowa website at, <http://www.iowa-apa.org/events/conference-information.html>. Session proposals are due back to the conference committee by May 31, 2011.