

A PLANNING PERSPECTIVE

APA-IOWA CHAPTER
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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Snapshots of the APA Iowa Chapter Annual Conference in Iowa City.
Photos Courtesy of Andrea Boller, City of Iowa City

Please complete the post-conference survey!
<https://forms.gle/VRgLPtX82B5yeNpy6>

CHAPTER UPDATE FROM THE APA IA PRESIDENT

SUBMITTED BY DYLAN MULLENIX, AICP
PRESIDENT, APA IOWA CHAPTER

Iowa Planners,

The last several months have been busy for APA Iowa, and I want to quickly recap what the chapter and its board have been up to.

Most recently APA Iowa held its annual conference in Iowa City. This conference was a great success and I would like to thank the more than 250 attendees and speakers, the conference sponsors, as well as the conference planning committee for making it happen. Be sure to mark your calendars for next year's conference, October 14-16, 2020, at the Iowa Events Center in Des Moines.

At the conference the chapter unveiled its new website, iowa.planning.org. This new website is built on a platform provided by APA national and made available for free to APA's chapters and divisions. This allows for a better connection to APA's website and information, is easier to maintain, and frees financial resources that can be allocated elsewhere in the chapter. Many, but not all, of the new website's pages are updated, though most information should be updated soon. I would like to thank Seana Perkins, APA Iowa's Communications Co-Chair, for her work with APA national to get the new website developed. I am also sad to announce that Seana has decided to step down from her position at the end of October. This comes after 11 years of managing the chapter's website. I would like to thank Seana for her wonderful contributions to the chapter over the years.

Another announcement made at the conference is that, beginning in 2020, APA Iowa will for the first time have staff support. In September the board agreed to a contract with Sickels & Associates, Inc., an association management firm based in Indianola. Sickels & Associates, Inc. will provide the chapter with financial management services; assist with managing meetings, including the annual conference, board meetings, and regional lunch-and-learns; advisory services; and, general administration assistance.

Earlier in the fall, I along with APA Iowa's Legislative and Policy Chair Steven Van Steenhuyse, City of Mason City, traveled to Washington, D.C., for the APA Policy and Advocacy Conference. This annual conference brings together planners from across the country to learn about legislative issues that affect planning at the federal, state, and local levels, and educates planners how to advocate effectively for or against these issues. Part of this event is a Planners' Day on the Hill, in which Steven was able to meet with the offices of both Iowa senators and three of its four representatives to advocate on behalf of issues of importance to planners and Iowa's communities.

Finally, APA Iowa held its biennial elections earlier this summer for board positions that will run from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2021. Current office holder of President (Dylan Mullenix, Des Moines Area MPO), Vice President (Madeline Sturms, City of Pleasant Hill), and Treasurer (Zach Young, Des Moines Area MPO) were reelected for a second term. Bill Micheel, City of Cedar Rapids, was elected as the chapter's new Secretary and will replace Tony Filippini, Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority, who chose not to run again. Past President Ben Champ, City of Pleasant Hill, will continue in that role to round out APA Iowa's officers for 2020-2021.



2020 & 2021 APA IOWA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The APA Iowa Chapter is excited to host the Upper Midwest APA Conference in Des Moines in 2020. We will be inviting our colleagues from Wisconsin and Minnesota to share planning successes October 14-16, 2020 at the Iowa Events Center. Look forward to mobile tours, progressive dinner, and networking reception in the Capital City.

Additionally, the Greater Ottumwa Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), in partnership with the Area 15 Regional Planning Commission, is looking forward to hosting the APA Iowa Chapter Annual Meeting in 2021. The central conference activities will be held in the Bridge View Center; however, a number of events and mobile workshops are being planned throughout the city and in other nearby communities. This will be an excellent opportunity to showcase the many planning-based revitalization efforts that have graced the City of Ottumwa over the last decade.



INTRODUCING THE NEW STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES ON THE APA IA BOARD

The recent start of the fall semester brought with it two new student representatives on the APA Iowa board.

Representing the students at the University of Iowa's School of Urban and Regional Planning is Leon Begay. Leon is a Master's candidate for the Fall 2021 class.

Originally from Tuba City, AZ on the Navajo Nation, Leon received his BSE in civil engineering at Arizona State University in 2012 and worked as a project engineer in Phoenix, AZ and Cedar Falls, IA before starting the graduate program at Iowa.

Representing the undergraduate students in Iowa State University's Community and Regional Planning (CRP) program is Julia Hertaus. Julia is a senior at Iowa State University majoring in CRP with a Leadership Studies certificate. A Minnesota native, Julia grew up in the small Czech community of Veseli located an hour south of the Twin Cities. She is the Outreach Intern for the Leadership Studies Program and has also worked as a teaching assistant for the past year. Over the course of her collegiate career, Julia has served as the social chair, publicity chair, and President of the Leadership Studies Club as well as the Vice President of the CRP Undergraduate Club.

Iowa State University's CRP graduate student representative, Sarah Runkel, began her term in 2018 and will continue to serve on the board through the 2019-2020 academic year.



DES MOINES BIRDLAND AREA REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

SUBMITTED BY SHAWN O'SHEA, AICP, CLIENT SERVICE MANAGER, MSA PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, INC. SOSHEA@MSA-PS.COM

The Birdland Area is located north of downtown Des Moines, within the boundaries of the Union Park Neighborhood. The area sustained significant flooding during the floods of 1993 and 2008, but the 2008 flooding proved especially catastrophic, with water from the Des Moines River breaching the levee and swallowing homes in up to six feet of water. A number of voluntary buyouts occurred following the floods. These properties were then demolished, leaving a number of vacant lots scattered throughout the study area. The property conditions in Birdland have varied greatly, with a number of well-kept homes intermixed with properties that are in diverse states of disrepair. For a long time, locals wondered if their neighborhood would ever bounce back. It finally did.

In November of 2011, the Army Corp of Engineers stepped in and rebuilt the levee to bring the flood protection for this area up to current standards. In addition, the Union Park Neighborhood Association set forth to create a comprehensive plan to establish a vision and process to revitalize the Birdland Area and to coordinate and prioritize future improvement efforts in the area. To get this process started, the association issued a letter to the City of Des Moines requesting a comprehensive development plan. This task was then turned over to the Area Parks Foundation to organize and manage. Working in conjunction with the City of Des Moines, the Parks Area Foundation and the Union Park Neighborhood Association, MSA Professional Services, Inc. (MSA) collected input from a diverse and engaged public and stakeholders. The resulting plan outlined the participants' vision for the future of the area. It also included an inventory of infill sites, a development concept, street level infrastructure analysis and an action plan for implementation.

On January 12, 2015, the Des Moines City Council approved the Birdland Area Redevelopment Plan and directed the Community Development Director to send an RFP to developers to acquire and develop City-owned, vacant lots in the Birdland neighborhood. The area has been in a state of steady revitalization ever since.

One of the unique components of the plan was a pocket development concept. By definition, a pocket development consists of a small cluster of neighboring houses that share a common green space – generally in the 'pocket'—or heart—of the development. They are designed to create a closer sense of community and a collective identity – a kind of neighborhood within a neighborhood. In these spaces, residents can more easily connect and form relationships. In their courtyard or green space, they can gather for celebrations or recreation together. The green spaces are also appreciated for providing safe, traffic-free zones for kids to play in. The pocket development in Birdland is being built by the Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity, who have been diligently at work since the plan's adoption. To date there has been 34 homes (33 new construction and one renovation) and more than 50 owner-occupied repairs in and around Birdland, each with their own unique identity and aesthetic, all affordably priced to attract new individuals and families to the area.

Residents are witnessing a resurgence of energy to the area. This project is a great testament to the success of a committed community planning effort. The City of Des Moines and its partner organizations set forth to revitalize the floundering area, voted to implement a redevelopment plan and then entrusted the plan with the follow-through efforts of the private sector. The beneficiaries? Over two dozen families who will now have a new home, will enjoy sustainable and affordable home ownership and will enjoy a true and trusted grassroots neighborhood and community for decades to come. The Des Moines Birdland Area Redevelopment Plan was awarded the Iowa American Planning Association (APA) Grassroots Initiative Award in 2015.



PLANNING HEALTHY IOWA COMMUNITIES ANNOUNCES WINNER OF THE 2019 ESSAY CONTEST

SUBMITTED BY JOHN PETERSON, PE AICP, PRINCIPAL, PETERSON PLANNING STRATEGIES
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Planning Healthy Iowa Communities is a collaboration between the American Planning Association Iowa Chapter and the Iowa Public Health Association to promote community health by encouraging physical activity, creating access to nutritious food, connecting to the natural environment and supporting thoughtful infrastructure and built environment.

Planning Healthy Iowa Communities works to connect organizations and professionals involved in community planning and public health to share resources and promote healthy outcomes. The Planning Healthy Iowa Communities Essay Contest exists to help encourage connections between planners and public health professionals to create policy, systems and environmental change toward healthier communities. The Essay Contest is available to Iowa Public Health Association and Iowa Environmental Health Association members and the winner receives a stipend to attend the American Planning Association Iowa Chapter Annual Conference.

This year's winner is Kelli Gerdes, Health Promotion Manager at Cerro Gordo Public Health. Kelli's essay told the story of a collaborative "walkability" project that showcased the blending of community planning and public health goals to enhance the health of Mason City, Iowa. Kelli is also an Iowa Walking College Fellow and a current fellow with the De Beaumont Foundation PHRASES fellowship. The "Walkability" project showcases how collaboration between partners creates the opportunity to enhance health outcomes and intertwine health into the scope of active living projects to benefit the entire community.

View the full essay online which describes the collaboration project.

BOARD OF REGENTS APPROVE NEW MPA DEGREE AT UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

At its September 2019 meeting, the Board of Regents, State of Iowa, approved the University of Iowa's proposal to add a Master of Public Affairs degree to its Graduate College. The new interdisciplinary degree will prepare students to pursue careers in government service, as well as the rapidly growing nonprofit sector. The new degree also helps the university fulfill its pledge to "Create a university ecosystem that enables UI to be an international leader in confronting the grand challenges of the 21st century." That includes addressing how society responds to key problems facing communities, the nation, and the world.

"The creation of this new degree is a logical step forward," says Charles Connerly, professor and director of the UI School of Urban and Regional Planning. "We're looking forward to training future leaders to systematically and creatively address a number of environmental, social, economic, and political challenges in the coming years." Students admitted to the 42-hour degree will begin their studies in Fall 2020. Expected enrollment in the program includes individuals already employed and classes will mostly be offered on campus.

"Students will have the opportunity to learn from faculty across campus with national and international reputations, who already conduct research, teach classes, and perform public service in public affairs," says Connerly. "In addition, students will benefit from having access to important public affairs centers at the university, including the Public Policy Center, the Larned A. Waterman Iowa Nonprofit Resource Center, and the Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities."

The Master of Public Affairs program will be administered by the School of Urban and Regional Planning of the Graduate College. The Political Science Department is partnering with Urban and Regional Planning to manage the new program. Other partners include, but are not limited to, degree programs in strategic communications, management and organization, civil and environmental engineering, and health policy. More information about the degree: <https://www.urban.uiowa.edu/mpa/about>

RECIPIENTS OF 2019 IOWA PLANNING AWARDS

Each year, the Iowa Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA-Iowa) asks its members to nominate plans, projects, and individuals deserving recognition by the professional organization. Award nominees can be recognized in nineteen categories ranging from public outreach to distinguished leadership. Based on an independent review by a jury of professional planners from the Nebraska Chapter of the APA, eight nominees have been selected to receive APA-Iowa Awards in 2019. These awards can be found below and posted on the APA-IA Chapter website at <https://iowa.planning.org>



Award: Grassroots Initiative

Awardees: Rotary Club of Denison; Snyder & Associates, Inc.

Plan: Trails to a Wonderful Life

Award: Environmental Planning

Awardees: East and West Nishnabotna River Watershed Management Coalition; JEO Consulting Group, Inc.; Golden Hills RC&D

Plan: East and West Nishnabotna River Watershed Management and Flood Resiliency Plans

Award: Economic Development Planning

Awardees: City of Dyersville / RDG Planning & Design.

Plan: Dyersville Downtown Plan



Award: Transportation Planning

Awardees: City of Cedar Rapids

Plan: Bike Share System

Award: Transportation Planning

Awardees: City of Davenport; RDG Planning & Design; Alta Planning + Design

Plan: Davenport GO

Award: Urban Design

Awardees: City of Indianola; Bolton & Menk, Inc

Plan: The Square Streetscape Master Plan

Award: Implementation

Awardees: City of Iowa City

Plan: Affordable Housing Action Plan

Award: Best Practice

Awardees: City of Cedar Rapids

Plan: ReZone Cedar Rapids

Student Poster Contest

First Place: Megan Schott and Nate Bauer, University of Iowa
Block by Block Flood Recovery Study:
The Nonprofit Response in Cedar Rapids, IA

Second Place: Tunazzina Binte Alam, University of Iowa
Determination of Prime Bus Stop Locations:

A Case Study of Khulna City Corporation Area, Bangladesh

Third Place: Harrison Freund, University of Iowa

Understanding Heat Vulnerability in Iowa City: Identifying at Risk Populations and Areas



IOWA PLANNER SPOTLIGHT:

BILL MICHEEL, AICP

Asst. Director of Community Development and Planning -
City of Cedar Rapids
Corridor MPO Manager - Corridor MPO
APA-Iowa Chapter Board Member,
Incoming Secretary January, 2020
w.micheel@cedar-rapids.org



Degree & School

MS Urban and Regional Planning from University of Iowa

Why did you decide to become a planner?

My first career was as a professional forester for the Colorado State Forest Service and Jefferson County Open Space in Golden. I met the parks planner for Jefferson County who introduced me to planning. I was working on very small timber management tracts at the time which were a part of the Jefferson County Open Space Master Plan. Watching the Parks Planner working on a range of policy issues and implementation strategies with a range of interested people was attractive to me.

What are your areas of expertise?

Land Use Policy and Planning, Brownfields Redevelopment, Transportation Planning, Project Management

What aspects of planning do you enjoy the most?

I enjoy working with all of the people interested in improving the quality of life in our region and watching a diverse group of people put the agreed upon actions into practice.

Describe a recent project you've contributed to that you are proud of. Why is it important? Highlight methods that made the project a success.

The Cedar Rapids Bike Share Program. A significant amount of planning and preparation occurred prior to the system launch which ultimately contributed to the success of this program. The City teamed up with a consulting firm to complete an Implementation Study to identify strategies to minimize risk and maximize success. In addition, a significant amount of outreach to build support from the public, small businesses, and major employers prior to system launch was also important.

What is one planning challenge you foresee for Iowa or your community over the next 10 years? What preparation do you recommend to meet this challenge?

Climate Change Adaptation. Completing community climate change or sustainability action plans and using other tools for assessment of preparedness and capacity for adaptation such as Star Communities.

Do you have a favorite book about planning?

A Prayer For the City by Buzz Bissinger

DON'T MISS OUT CHECK OUT THESE OPPORTUNITIES...

JOB POSTINGS

Transportation Traffic Planner

Job Type: Full Time
Location: Ankeny, IA
Employer: Snyder & Associates

Assistant Planner

Job Type: Full Time
Location: Grimes, IA
Employer: City of Grimes

Senior Planner

Job Type: Full Time
Location: Salt Lake City, UT
Employer: Logan Simpson

Planner/Community Development Specialist

Job Type: Full Time
Location: Platteville, WI
Employer: City of Platteville

More openings from the region available on the APA-Iowa Chapter Website

GET INVOLVED IN APA-IOWA CHAPTER

Are you interested in getting more involved with APA-Iowa Chapter? We are always on the lookout for members to serve on the chapter board, a standing committee, or assist with temporary, short-term projects. If you are interested, please fill out this short form to understand what your interest areas are and to what degree you want to become involved. We anticipate subcommittees will be forming around the various program areas in the strategic plan. Feel free to contact Dylan Mullenix, APA-Iowa Chapter Chapter President, if you have any questions.

AGRIHOODS IN THE CORRIDOR: JOHNSON COUNTY POOR FARM AND DOWS FARM

Agrihoods are residential or mixed-use developments built with a working farm or garden as a focus. In master-planned communities, farms are replacing golf courses as a healthier and more sustainable amenity that can support an attractive return on investment.

Join ULI Iowa to learn about the Dows Farm agrihood project and their strategy for agrihood development on Tuesday, November 12th, 5:30pm-7:00pm at the Iowa City Public Library, Meeting Room A, 123 S. Linn Street, Iowa City, IA 52240. This event is free for members and nonmembers.

And don't forget to check out ULI's new report Agrihoods: Cultivating Best Practices found online.

UPCOMING EVENTS

October - National Planning Month:
<https://planning.org/ncpm/>

Oct. 22 - 5-2-1-0 Summit, Des Moines University Olsen Center, Des Moines

Oct. 25 - Webinar: APA Ethics Case of the Year Panel Discussion - 1.5 CM ETHICS

Nov. 8 - Webinar: Making Room for Middle Housing, lessons from Oregon - 1.5 CM

Nov. 12 - Agrihoods Presentation, Iowa City

Nov. 15- Current Topics in Planning Law: From Cannabis to the Fast Track - 1.5 CM LAW

Follow us on Facebook to stay up to date on events and happenings.



Submit your community updates for January's newsletter by Friday, January 10th.

Fill out the form to be featured in our Planner Spotlight.