

ALABAMA CHAPTER, AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

CHAPTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2012-2018

I. INTRODUCTION & ADOPTION

Purpose of the Chapter Development Plan

The Chapter Development Plan (CDP) is an assessment of the Chapter's current condition. Its purpose is to:

- articulate the Chapter's mission,
- reaffirm the membership's support of those areas in which the Chapter is performing well,
- identify specific areas in need of improvement; and
- provide a realistic long-range work program to guide the implementation of activities which will support and strengthen Chapter program areas and service.

The Alabama Chapter of the American Planning Association is an organization comprised of practicing planners, planning commissioners, students, educators, interested citizens, and others throughout the State of Alabama. As a constituent chapter of the American Planning Association (APA), the Alabama Chapter and its members have access to a wide variety of programs and services offered by the national organization. At the Chapter level, members are offered a range of programs, services, and support activities that are relevant to planning issues and concerns facing the State and its residents.

The CDP is intended to be a comprehensive document designed to direct Chapter activities for a six year time period, beginning in 2012. However, the CDP is designed to be a fluid document. It serves as a guide to improving the Chapter's overall performance and the level and type of services offered to its members. As with any plan, it is intended to be reviewed annually and revised periodically in order to maintain its currency and relevancy in light of the Chapter's conditions and priorities.

Implementation of the CDP will occur through preparation of bi-annual work programs and annual budgets, which are to be adopted by the Executive Committee and reported to the Chapter at its annual meeting. These documents should be consistent with the objectives of the CDP and support of the Plan's overall goal, which is to enable the Chapter to realize its full potential.

Background and Preparation of the Plan

The first CDP of the Alabama Chapter of the American Planning Association was adopted by the Chapter's Executive Committee in December of 1991. Since that time various Administrations have updated the Plan and adopted new goals for the future of the Chapter.

This update to the CDP began with a review of the Plan during the 2012 Chapter Leadership Retreat at Kiesel Park in Auburn, Alabama on September 14, 2012. The final document resulted from subsequent reviews by the ALAPA Executive Committee during regular meetings in November and December 2012. The Finalized Plan was presented to the Executive Committee and those attending the Annual Leadership Retreat on October 18, 2013 in Dothan, Alabama. This document represents the Plan that was voted on and adopted at that time.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED this the 18th day of October, 2013.

By: _____
Katherine E. Ennis, AICP, Chapter President

AND

Charlene LeBleu, AICP, Chapter Vice-President

II. STRATEGIC PLAN

Chapter Mission

The purpose of the Alabama Chapter of the American Planning Association is to improve the quality of life for citizens through physical, economic, and human resource planning. This mission is accomplished by:

- *Promoting sound and sustainable planning approaches to developmental and social opportunities and challenges facing the State;*
- *Increasing awareness of the planning process, the planning profession and the benefits that both can bring to the State of Alabama;*
- *Supporting planning education and fostering the growth of professional planner's knowledge and skills;*
- *Encouraging the exchange of planning information and experience in Alabama; and*
- *Working with other organizations in the State and Regions to foster common goals.*

Chapter Assessment

This component of the CDP critically examines the Alabama Chapter – APA in terms of the prevailing professional context. Below are the opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses that perceptually face the Chapter.

Opportunities

1. Building coalitions with other groups in support of the mission of ALAPA.
2. Promoting better strategic planning and addressing policy issues throughout the State.
3. Cultivating relationships regarding planning issues in our communities within the State.
4. Cooperation with other APA Chapters in surrounding states.
5. Training courses offered by Alabama Planning Institute (API), League of Municipalities (LOM), Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC) and other certified training entities.
6. Development of training and continuing education opportunities at the university level.
7. Communicate with State administrators and legislators about current federal planning issues.
8. The significant numbers of planning officials currently on the Chapter roll.

9. The potential for new members.
10. Abundant, diverse and untapped talent of the membership.
11. Opportunities for improving exchange of practical information and problem-solving experiences across the State.
12. Expansion of programs and services to members.

Threats

1. The low value local official and citizens place on planning.
2. The low level of planning awareness in the State.
3. The low salary levels of Alabama Planners.
4. The National economy and current political climate.
5. Legislative actions resulting from misuse of United Nations Agenda 21.

Strengths

1. Continuity in Leadership.
2. Continuing Education programs, particularly the Alabama Planning Institute (API).
3. Emerging Chapter leaders and committed Chapter members that continue to remain interested in the organization's activities.
4. The significant numbers of planning officials currently on the Chapter roll.
5. Utilization of existing resources (i.e. Website/Newsletter) for exchange between agencies and individuals.
6. Sound fiscal policies.

Weaknesses

1. Lack of involvement in the legislative process, League of Municipalities, Association of County Commissions, Association of Regional Councils, Real Estate Commission and Alabama Real Estate Exchange.
2. Lack of student involvement in Chapter activities.
3. Low participation by a portion of the membership.
4. Inadequate use of the media.

III. CHAPTER GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

To accomplish the Chapter's intended mission, while building upon past programs and achievements, the following Chapter goals are presented. Following each goal statement is a set of objectives with strategies for meeting each objective.

Goal I: Improve/Increase Services to Members

The membership of the Chapter relies upon many of the services currently provided. This goal focuses on maintaining and enhancing existing services to the membership, while improving and increasing services overall.

Objective 1: Improve/Increase Communications.

Strategies:

- a. Solicit the participation of students in all aspects of chapter networking.
- b. Add a focus on the Chapter Sections to the Newsletter.
- c. Provide networking opportunities and distribute information through social media.

Objective 2: Increase networking opportunities for Chapter members.

Strategies:

- a. Hold one multi-day Chapter conference each year (annual meeting).
- b. Hold an annual Leadership Workshop.
- c. Have sections sponsor periodic activities in various locations throughout their section to allow a wide range of participation.
- d. Participate in regional conferences with surrounding state chapters, as opportunities arise.

Objective 3: Create opportunities for the involvement of special interest groups in Chapter functions.

Strategies:

- a. Continue to involve allied professionals in Chapter activities. (i.e. ATPA, ASLA, AARC, etc.)
- b. Provide opportunities for American Institute of Certified Planners – Certification Maintenance (AICP-CM) and Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) credits at conferences and workshops.
- c. Consider establishing committees according to Chapter needs or member requests.

Objective 4: Professional Development.

Strategies:

- a. AICP Exam Training:
 - Provide annual AICP training sessions and a session at the annual conference when feasible.
 - Distribute Chapter President Council AICP Exam Training Materials.
- b. Recognize new AICP and FAICP members by personal letters of commendation; announcements at Chapter meetings (possibly during Annual Conference Awards Program); and publication in the newsletter/website.
- c. Periodically hold a One Day Professional Development Workshop to assist members with obtaining CM Credits for AICP maintenance.
- d. Continue support for the Alabama Planning Institute (API) as a vehicle for training new professional planners and planning officials.
- e. Encourage the updating of the training manual for Alabama Planning Officials; distributed at Alabama Planning Institute courses.

Objective 5: Increase services to student members.

Strategies:

- a. Continue to provide reduced rates for student members at chapter functions.
- b. Support student organizations at each university with a planning-related degree program.

- c. List student representatives' responsibilities in the Procedures Manual.
- d. Establish lines of communication between ALAPA and a faculty contact at each university.
- e. Maintain and promote a program for coordinating planning internships within the State. Provide information about Scholarship Intern Program on the website with information about how to apply and qualify for the grant.

Objective 6: Recruit new Chapter members.

Strategies:

- a. Put in place a system to identify new members & have them welcomed to the Chapter.
- b. Develop and regularly distribute new member orientation and welcome packages.
- c. Encourage the participation of new members in Chapter leadership activities.
- d. Initiate an active membership recruitment program targeted at professional planners, citizen planners, and planning students.

Goal II: Strengthen Chapter Structure and Administration

Implementation of the Chapter's work program is heavily dependent upon the organizational framework of the Chapter. If the Chapter lacks an institutional memory, each administration would spend considerable time re-inventing the wheel rather than moving forward with improved and expanded services.

Objective 1: Bylaws Maintenance

Strategies:

- a. Rewrite existing Bylaws
- b. Incorporate to the extent possible *One APA* recommendations.
- c. Review and update Bylaws on a regular basis.

Objective 2: Establish Leadership Development Program

Strategies:

- a. Establish executive committee transition policy.
- b. Prepare Chapter Leadership Manual to include appropriate materials. (i.e. Chapter Development Plan, Chapter Work Program, Bylaws, Procedures Manual, etc.)
- c. Prepare Policies and Procedures Manual to be adopted by the Executive Committee.
- d. Survey chapter membership for leadership talents and interests.
- e. Build on annual Leadership Workshop.

Objective 3: Maintain Awards Program.

Strategies:

- a. Continue streamlined application process.
- b. Announce awards to media throughout the State, feature in newsletter and on web site, and set up displays at annual conference.

Objective 4: Strengthen budget and finance practices.

Strategies:

- a. Prepare budget and finance policies and procedures to be adopted by the Executive Committee.
- b. Maintain a long-term investment plan for the Chapter reserve.
- c. Maintain up-to-date audits.
- d. Remain current on Federal tax reporting.
- e. Develop a job description for the Chapter Treasurer's position which includes an appropriate skill set for someone seeking the position.
- f. Consider changing the bylaws to make the Treasurer's position appointed rather than elected.

Goal III. Influence the Climate of Planning and Overall Development within the State of Alabama

If the Alabama Chapter of APA is to be an effective, respected organization at all levels of government, the Chapter must actively work to educate all citizens of Alabama about planning and the role that it can play in creating a better life for all of the citizens of the State. This goal will be accomplished by acting to increase the public's understanding of planning and strengthening the Chapter's effectiveness in interacting with the State legislative process.

Objective 1: Develop an active legislative program.

Strategies:

- a. Work to energize the Legislative Committee and support the activities that they deem important for the Chapter.
- b. Monitor and respond to legislative issues and threats, and alert members.
- c. Prepare position papers on planning issues.
- d. Establish relationships with like-minded organizations to support common legislative objectives.
- e. Continue to be involved in National APA legislative activities.

Objective 2: Enhance public awareness of the planning profession and planning issues.

Strategies:

- a. Update and distribute a Chapter brochure.
- b. Broaden the distribution of the Chapter newsletter to legislators and sister organizations.
- c. Promote “Planners Day in School”, “National Planning Month – October” or other Youth in Planning Programs.
- d. Promote World Town Planning Day.
- e. Support the “Your Town” program.
- f. Include social media in the Chapter website.