

COUNTY PLANNING DIVISION NEWSLETTER

APA • American Planning Association

County Planning Division

Making Great Communities Happen

National Association of County Planners

NACo • National Association of Counties



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Letter from the Chair



Planners need to ask questions about their codes such as: "Is it doing its job?", "What would happen if we got rid of that section?" and "Is this code enhancing the vision of how we want our city/town/rural area?"

If you aren't careful, sections of your code will become like the shirt you bought 20 years ago that sits in the back of your closet and you've only worn twice. Worse, it might be like the shirt you've worn three times a week for the last ten years and is thread bare and ready to split down the seam. But, as with those shirts and parts of your code, they might be hard to get rid of because you might need them for a special occasion or you are emotionally attached; even if they are outdated, have holes, or just aren't useful. As many organization experts advise, sometimes, even if its uncomfortable, you need to let it go.

Example: A long time ago my county regulated horse boarding. We received complaints about the code being too restrictive so we decided to loosen it up a bit. We had several hundred people show up at the hearing. They didn't understand why we would want to regulate these facilities in the first place. We pondered their suggestion. Our comprehensive plan's major goal is to preserve the rural nature of our county and what is more rural than horses and people enjoying our beautiful landscape via horseback?

We thought, what would happen if we just allowed this use, in accordance with public opinion? We decided to take a chance and remove that section of code. After 20 years, there has been no identifiable negative effect by removing that section of code.

Bottom line, pay attention to your code. Make sure it stays relevant, that it addresses the things you need it to address, and that it is getting you the results that you need. If your code isn't getting you the result you want to see on the landscape - change it. Never be afraid to modify that code, fine tune it, or eliminate policies that aren't furthering your goals. Code changes shouldn't be revolutionary; they should be frequent, small, and easy to digest.

Since this is my last letter as Chair of the County Planning Division, I want to let you know I have very much enjoyed my time as Chair and want to thank the other volunteer members that have helped my term to be successful. Thank you for this opportunity; it has been a joy interacting with all of you. I am looking forward to my new role on the committee and to serving you in a different capacity. I hope that you will all continue to be a part of this Division and to share with us your stories so other planners can learn from you.

Here's to the New Year! May it bring good surprises!

Michelle Fuson

Chair, APA County Planning Division & NACo National Association of County Planners

OUR MISSION: The County Planning Division of the APA seeks to strengthen relationships among county planners, county elected officials, and other county personnel by facilitating the sharing of technical information, encouraging continuing professional development of its members, researching county planning issues, and building strong ties with other organizations and disciplines with related interests.

Your 2024 Administrative Committee

ADAM BRADFORD, CHAIR

Adam Bradford is AICP certified and a licensed Professional Planner in the State of New Jersey. He has practiced Community & Regional Planning for ten years with expertise in Land Use and Development, Transportation, Farmland and Open Space Preservation, Project Management, and Federal/State Grant Programs. He graduated with a B.S. in Community & Regional Planning and a B.S. in Economics at Iowa State University. He is earning an M.S. in Transportation Planning at the New Jersey Institute of Technology and graduating in May 2024. He has worked for the USDA, Iowa DOT, and four NJ Counties, where he is currently the Supervising Planner for the County of Passaic.



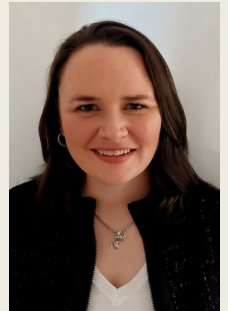
ROBERT HILL, CHAIR ELECT

Robert W. Hill, SR, CEM® is the director of the County Development Department and Emergency Manager for Brookings County, SD. Brookings County has a population of 35,603 humans 87,936 cattle and calves. He has been an APA member since 2001 and is also an International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) certified emergency manager and has worked for Brookings County for the past 24 years. He served 20 years in the U.S. Army and after retirement earned a master's and bachelor's degree in geography from South Dakota State University. He has been married for 44 years and has two children and two grandchildren. Robert has previously served as the Treasurer of the County Planning Division .



STEPHANIE DONAHUE, SECRETARY

Stephanie Donahue is a dedicated professional that blends her diverse background in program management, operations, accounting, continuity, and emergency management with APA division support. As the Director of Communications for APA City, Stephanie brings experience, efficiency, and effectiveness to APA County and the communities they inspire. On the weekends, Steph can be found serving communities like yours with Team Rubicon and enjoying her family in Colbert, Washington. Stephanie has previously served as the membership coordinator for the County Planning Division .



ANDREW DEVEREAUX, TREASURER

Andrew Devereaux is a planner for Boone County Resource Management in Columbia, Missouri. He has been in this position since January of 2022. His job responsibilities include review of subdivision and land use requests for compliance with Boone County's development regulations. Andrew also assists with the administration of Boone County's onsite wastewater program. He has a Masters of Urban and Regional Planning from Virginia Tech and a Bachelors of Arts in Geography from the University of Mary Washington. Andrew has previously served as an At-Large Member for the County Planning Division.



MICHELLE FUSON, PAST CHAIR

Michelle Fuson is the Director of the Latah County, Idaho, Planning, Building and GIS Departments. She previously was the Director of Environmental Health for Adams County in Washington State. She has a Master's Degree which focused on natural resource management, regional planning, and public perceptions of nuclear energy. She has served as Division Chair and as the Social Media Coordinator for the County Planning Division.



Let us know about your projects! We love to hear from our members!

Email the County Planning Newsletter Editor: jonathan.buono@yorkcountygov.com

CPD Updates

SURVEY RESULTS

Thanks to everyone that filled out the County Planning Division survey. We had 74 responses and found out that the best way to communicate with you is via email, especially through our newsletter. It was clear that we need to better promote our social media pages and discovered that we should make some updates to our Webpage as many of you enjoy going there for information. You gave us lots of good ideas on information that we should and will work on getting you in the future, including forwarding articles, webinars and reports. We are also considering ways to have our members better interact with each other either via email or teams/zoom networking sessions.

BY-LAWS

Please watch for an upcoming email that will ask you to review our By-Laws. We have submitted the change to the APA for review and will forward them to you for comments prior to adoption.

VOLUNTEER FOR COUNTY PLANNING DIVISION

We still have a few openings on the leadership team. If you are interested, please contact Michelle or Adam about volunteering.

NEW COUNTY PLANNING DIVISION EMAIL ADDRESSES

We have gotten a new email system so our future emails should be coming from "Gmail" addresses and should better reflect which part of our Division they are pertinent to.

NEWSLETTER CONTENT

We are always looking for newsletter content. Please forward us articles that you wrote or any updates on projects (big or small) that you are working on.

Did you know that membership in the County Planning Division automatically enrolls you as a member of NACo's National Association of County Planners? Just one of the many benefits of being a member!



WORRIED ABOUT HOUSING AVAILABILITY?

The National Association of Counties is our working partner in trying to find solutions to our housing crisis.

Their website has a great of information: <https://www.naco.org/>

NACo information on housing affordability: <https://www.naco.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/Advancing-Local-Housing-Affordability.pdf>

Photo Credit: BJ Swanson, Latah County, Idaho, Treasurer

02
FEB

Planning for Wildfire

February 2, 2024 | 1:00 - 2:30 PM ET

CM # TBD

Guest Host: [APA City Planning and Management Division](#)

The [Home Ignition Zone](#) (HIZ) model has been promoted internally, but professionals in planning, construction, and development are still unaware of their roles in creating fire resistant structures and communities. In this webinar you'll be introduced to the Home Ignition Zone as well as the Community Ignition Zone and what roles you can play in creating wildfire ready communities.

CM 1.5
SR 1.0

16
FEB

Adapting to Climate: Urban Landscape Transformation in the 21st Century

February 16, 2024 | 1:00 - 2:30 PM ET

CM # TBD

Guest Host: [APA ENRE Division + APA Water and Planning Network](#)

There is a tremendous amount of change happening in urban landscapes, especially in the western U.S. Driven by climate change more broadly, and its symptoms of water scarcity, stormwater flooding, and heat, these changes present both challenges and opportunities for planners. The conversion of our cities will not be easy, or quick. To do this right, we must address this as systems-change, with robust attention to both the social and physical details. To address this challenge, the recent Lincoln Institute/Babbitt Center White Paper "Research-Informed Documents of

Practice: Helping Urban Planners and Water Managers Direct the Change Needed for Creating Climate-Adapted Urban Landscapes", researched 3 different sources of information to gather a snapshot of current activities, stated goals, and future directions to make this transformation happen. This webinar will cover what was learned.

CM 1.5
SR 1.0



“AG-CHAT”: A VIABLE SOLUTION FOR YOUR STATE IN DISCUSSING THE PRESERVATION OF THE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY

By Maurika Knott, Senior Planner, Latah County, Idaho

Photo credit: BJ Swanson, Latah County, Idaho, Treasurer

In the face of unprecedented challenges spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic, Idaho's rural communities found themselves grappling with a new wave of pressures exacerbating existing growth issues. Besides the strain on infrastructure and public services, one of the most significantly impacted areas is the fragmentation of farmland. Idaho's prime farmland is not only a driving force in Idaho's economy, it is a major contributor in the global food and fiber supply. Idaho agriculture is a 20-billion-dollar industry and the leading producer of potatoes, barley, peppermint, and alfalfa in the US.

Many planners felt burdened and helpless under the rising development pressures. The sentiments were shared amongst working groups in the planning community. Thus, the start of “Ag Chat”. What began as a grassroots effort spearheaded by dedicated planners from diverse corners of the state has blossomed into a vital forum. Through monthly gatherings and impassioned discussions via Zoom, these individuals have not only supported one another in preserving precious farmland through ordinance adoption and comprehensive plan updates at the local level but have also gone beyond boundaries to advocate for statewide action. The disseminated knowledge and collaboration have positioned “Ag Chat” as a respected source of information and advocacy.

The “Ag Chat” goal of shaping policies that safeguard Idaho's agricultural economy and heritage for generations to come is taking shape. As Idaho's “Ag Chat” has shown change can be started at any level through communication and education. To start your own “Ag-Chat”, invite as many people in your region as you can to a Zoom meeting and simply start the conversation about Agriculture preservation.

Idaho Ag-Chat was the 2023 winner of the “Rural Innovation” award by Western Planner