



WESTERN CENTRAL CHAPTER

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Creating and Maintaining Districts of Density

by Lawrence J. Fabian

Urban planners need positive policy and program tools (i.e., carrots) to encourage density. They can be more effective than negative tools (i.e., sticks), such as growth boundaries, to discourage or prevent sprawl. The opposite of sprawl is density.

Neo-traditionalism, New Urbanism, Transit-Oriented Development and Smart Growth are all attempts to respond in different ways to worsening chronic congestion all over urban America and continuing “erosion” of countryside by sprawled, car-oriented development. There is much to be learned about building codes, zoning, mobility provision, and ways to encourage density-friendly behavior (e.g., restraint in car-honking and other noise, littering, etc.).

Is Sprawl Inevitable?

Even where the decline of city centers has stabilized and healthy “downtowns” and “main streets” can be found, more substantial growth is occurring on metropolitan fringes and at far-flung interchanges of the Interstate highway network. Family farms are converted to industrial parks and suburban tracts. Wilderness areas are “spoiled” with buildings, parking lots, and then more roads.

If this growth could be attracted into districts of density, there would be less pressure on metropolitan edges, small towns, and the countryside. One acre at floor-to-area ratio (FAR) of 10 can replace more than 20 at a typical suburban FAR of 0.5. But there are costs to density – noise, heat, concentrated air pollution, and traffic. We planners face frequent objections by neighborhood groups wary of traffic and competition for parking space. We need better answers, or sprawl will prevail.

Density and Car-Orientation

Almost all mobility needs are now satisfied by cars, trucks and a growing array of specialized rubber-tired vehicles that need street space and parking. Even where good, subsidized public transport exists, it draws a small share of traffic away from the streets. For example, in older transit-oriented Boston, overall only about 10 percent of travel is by mass transit. To the dense, highly congested CBD, it is little more than 50 percent even in peak periods.

The San Francisco region in recent decades has invested billions of dollars in rail transit infrastructure. Proud officials recently bragged that transit ridership has risen 10 percent. The last paragraph quietly noted, however, that employment rose 11 percent in the same period, meaning conventional transit, even heavily subsidized, isn’t keeping pace.

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NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

This newsletter is published by the Western Central Chapter of the American Planning Association. Circulation is to APA members of the Western Central Chapter (WCC). The WCC Board welcomes submission of original articles, editorial letters, and any other information of interest to both professional and citizen planners. Submissions should be made to the newsletter editor:

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2005 WCC Newsletter Schedule

Spring - March 4 (submittal deadline February 18)
Summer - June 3 (submittal deadline May 20)
Fall - September 2 (submittal deadline August 19)
Winter - December 2 (submittal deadline November 18)

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

If your mailing address has changed, please contact the American Planning Association at the address below. You can also edit your information online at <https://www.planning.org/myprofile/>.

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Wyoming

*This position is
currently vacant.*

President's Message

by Andrew C. Epple, AICP

Your Executive Committee has been active this Fall. We held a phone conference meeting in November, and followed up on a number of issues and initiatives that were undertaken last summer. These included moving ahead with the creation of a Chapter Website (see RFP in this Newsletter), and development of Chapter policies on budgeting and making grants to Chapter Divisions. You'll see elsewhere in this Newsletter a summary of the proceedings of our November meeting. We intend to publish these meeting summaries on a regular basis, in an effort to communicate more directly and effectively with you regarding Chapter activities. I encourage you to review the meeting summaries as they are published, and to contact any of us with comments, concerns, or questions about any of the items discussed in them. We will work best as your Executive Committee if we know what the membership is thinking on these and other subjects you may wish to bring up.

One of the more disappointing results of the November 2nd elections was the passage of Measure 37 by voters in Oregon. It carried by a 60 / 40 margin and passed in 35 of Oregon's 36 counties. Oregon APA Chapter President Bob Clay, AICP, comments in an e-mail to Chapter Presidents:

"240 cities and 36 counties across Oregon are scrambling to put in place mechanisms to accept claims and prepare to make decisions to pay, waive regulations, or fight claims within 180 days. Most cities and counties in Oregon do not have the resources to pay claims and we can expect to see many claims simply result in waiving regulations. Unfortunately the new law does not outline any procedures for adjudication and standard methodologies to determine precisely when value due to regulation has been reduced and by how much. The Oregon Legislature meets in January and this will be on their agenda to address some fixes to clarify to make the measure easier to administer. This is a huge setback for planning in this state and only time will tell how Oregonians respond."

Bob goes on to say: "Be wary of the property rights proponents success here being transferred elsewhere." No sooner were his words transmitted than we heard that one of our Montana legislators (from right here in Bozeman, no less) intends to introduce such legislation in the upcoming session.

Bob urges his Oregon Chapter members to: "...step back. Breathe deep. Put the resume back in the file. Let's remember what we're about. We share a profession, a history, and a future. There is work to be done." These are good words of advice and I wanted to share them with you.

I hope you all enjoy a wonderful Holiday Season and a terrific New Year!

Congratulations to New WCC AICP Members!

Congratulations to Donna West from Canyon County, Idaho and Jeff Lowe from the City of Eagle, Idaho. Both passed the November AICP exam. Donna and Jeff were surprised to receive their exam results immediately after the exam; no more waiting for six weeks.

January 5, 2005 is the deadline for submitting your application for eligibility to take the May 2005 exam. Applications are on the APA website. Contact the chapter or state professional development officers if you need any assistance.



Districts of Density, continued from Page 1

Sprawl not only worries those who want to preserve farms, forest, and desert, it also makes us drive more, boosting gas consumption (with inevitable political and military implications) and the volume of air pollution. The denser the flow of traffic, the higher the concentration of pollutants. Is it fair for New Urbanism and Smart Growth advocates to encourage people to live and work where they get higher exposure to fumes and dust?

It is not easy to give a definition of what density is. Is it any area zoned for a FAR of more than 1.0? Is a FAR of 5.0 needed to be really dense? Answers depend on whether this is in the highly urbanized Northeast, or in Heartland plains. Is it in Florida near the beach, or in the desert expanses of the Southwest? Is it near a major transportation area, or in Spokane, or a town of 25,000?

It is helpful to examine what kind of district is being considered. Is it the CBD – the traditional downtown? Or, is it an edge city – on the periphery with good highway access? Is it a retail node of malls, strips, and big box stores? There are also campuses or complexes of medical care (and research) buildings, or maybe a college, university, or other specialized district.

If Smart Growth and related urban attitudes are to really affect our communities and environment, they should apply to residential areas as well. Are there many people willing to live in dense neighborhoods where vehicular access is constrained, or even denied? Whether for senior citizens or simply for those who prefer to walk, bike, and take transit (maybe renting a car every so often), shouldn't there be special zoning and codes for car-constrained, pedestrian-friendly residential districts?

And then there are “airfronts” – the commercial districts evolving around airports with ready access to the global marketplace. For more on this, visit www.airfront.us.

Tools to Coax Density

As planners, we should have as complete a set of policy and infrastructure tools as possible. What are the tools of denser development? Here are areas where planning guidance is needed:

- District traffic and parking management and calming;

- Local mobility and last-mile services;
- Landscaping and maintenance at the scale of pedestrians and bikers, not just cars;
- The proper mixing of land uses at micro-scale;
- Building codes and insulation that make higher-density living safe and comfortable; and
- Ways to encourage public behavior that is density-friendly, minimizing noise, litter and smells.

There is very little planning literature on ways to encourage and sustain high density. What do academics and practitioners know? What new technologies and tools are available? What are infrastructure trends?

The Transportation Planning Division (TPD) of the American Planning Association should undertake a systematic study of these items and compile a planner-relevant set of best practices and recommendations. Tools for facilitating density are the planning carrots that can be more effective than the stick of growth boundaries.

Larry Fabian is the director of Trans 21, an international clearinghouse of planning information on automated people movers.

Mr. Fabian is eager to learn of particular plans or projects in the WCC states of Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming that can be impacted by the new strategies mentioned in the article. Perhaps it could be a TPD project, or more modestly, to be the seed of an article that WCC planners prepare based on their work and perceived needs.

Mr. Fabian is also seeking stories about growing towns in WCC states. How large are the bigger ones getting? What kind of transport and developmental challenges do they have? Would they benefit from workshops or seminars providing a focused delivery of planning-level information? Please contact Mr. Fabian at lfabian@airfront.us.

This article originally appeared in the August 2004 issue of Transportation Planning, a publication of the Transportation Planning Division of the American Planning Association. The article is reprinted here with permission.

WCC Executive Committee Meeting Summary

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the Western Central Chapter of the American Planning Association was held via conference phone call on Thursday, November 19, 2004. The meeting was called to order by Chapter President Andy Epple at 10:11 a.m. with the following Committee members participating:

Dave Abo, Secretary
Don Contraman, Vice President
Andy Epple, President
Diane Kushlan, Professional Development Officer
Steve Miller, North Dakota State Director
Trish Nilsson, Idaho State Director

Minutes of the August 3 and 5, 2004 meetings held in Missoula, MT at the Western Planner Conference were approved as distributed.

Budget Report and Status

Andy Epple stated that the Chapter's balance in the checking account was approximately \$13,600. He stated that he will be working with Ramona Mattix, Treasurer and Dave Abo, former Chapter Treasurer, to formulate an annual budget, for presentation to the Committee in January, 2005.

Old Business

A. Review of WCC Survey Results

The Board requested a review of the WCC Survey at the August Executive Board meeting. Trish Nilsson was concerned that the survey indicated that the Western Planner Conference was not a good development opportunity and asked how many WCC members attend the Western Planner Conference.

Diane Kushlan was concerned that people were not aware of the resources available to them through the Ohio State Ethics Program which was paid for by WCC. Diane said she would get more information from Ramona Mattix and get the information to the membership.

Trish Nilsson asked about the comment that the survey respondents wanted help from the WCC with research. Trish volunteered to look into a membership for the WCC for PAS.

B. WCC Website Report

Steve Miller reported on establishing a WCC website. Steve stated that the WCC could tap into the American Planning Association website as a host provider and it wouldn't cost WCC any fee. There is no charge to us if APA is the host. However, we would not have any control over design of the web site or format of content.

Diane Kushlan stated that she has had problems accessing current information using the APA website. The Board agreed to pursue setting up a separate WCC website.

Steve Miller stated that WCC would need to make the following decisions.

1. Securing a Domain Name
2. Finding someplace to host the site
3. Someone to develop the web page

The cost to secure a domain name is \$9.95/year for 1, 2, 3, 5 or 10-year increments. The Board needs to select a host. Most of the host sites will also file a request for a domain name at no extra cost. The cost would be about \$120/year.

The final action required is to determine someone to develop the site. We can try it from a volunteer standpoint or ask for RFP's. The estimated cost would be \$300 to \$500 for development and then \$200 to \$300/year for maintenance.

Andy Epple asked Steve Miller and Diane Kushlan to develop an RFP for publication in the WCC newsletter. The RFP would include developing and maintaining the website. The Board would make a decision during the January Board meeting.

C. Approve ID Request for Reimbursement

This was a matter that had first been discussed at the August Executive Committee meeting. At that time the Committee had agreed to reimburse IPA for continuing education and training expenses at their Fall conference. Trish Nilsson of IPA reports the costs totalled \$1,045.28, and provided appropriate documentation for reimbursement. *(Continued)*

WCC Executive Committee Meeting Summary, continued

MOTION

Steve Miller moved to approve to pay these expenses, seconded by Don Contraman. Motion passed.

New Business

A. Chapter Grant Program

Trish Nilsson proposed a way for State Divisions to request funds based on contribution to WCC from APA. Dave Abo asked that we look at the makeup of the Chapter by State. Diane Kushlan said we should look at maybe a balance of funding and need. Andy Epple stated that he would draft a "Division Reimbursement Policy" for Committee members' consideration at our January meeting. The Policy would address how distribution of funds would be made, what they could be used for, and the type of accounting / reporting Divisions would need to provide to the Chapter to remain eligible for reimbursement of funds.

B. North Dakota Request for Funding

Steve Miller of North Dakota APA described a request for reimbursement of \$1,296.50 to help underwrite continuing education activities at their Fall 2004 conference held in Bismark.

Andy Epple stated that in the absence of the kind of reimbursement policy described above, and in light of the Idaho action taken above, he feels the North Dakota request is reasonable. He indicated that expenses were properly documented and he urged Committee members to approve the request.

MOTION

Trish moved to approve North Dakota's request subject to submission of receipts, seconded by Don, motion passed.

C. Advertising in Newsletter

Jody Sanford, newsletter editor, had informed Andy Epple about a company in Boise, Idaho that had requested permission to print an ad in the WCC newsletter advertising an environmental planner opening.

MOTION

Trish moved that if a company pays for APA dues for members, the ad should be free and if not a \$50 fee. Steve Miller seconded, motion passed.

D. Other New Business

Diane Kushlan presented information on applying for APA Chapter Grants that WCC should apply for. Andy Epple recommended that Diane get together with Betty Clack and submit a request on behalf of WCC. Trish Nilsson said that she would help. Diane Kushlan suggested a topic on preservation of farmland.

The date for the next Conference Call Meeting of the Executive Committee was set for Thursday, January 20, 2005, 10:00 a.m. Mountain Standard Time. This meeting of the WCC Executive Committee adjourned at 11:34 a.m.

Request for Proposals - WCC Web Site

The Western Central Chapter is looking for a member to design, develop and maintain a chapter web site. The initial phase of the work would be web site design and development. The web site would include: (1) information about the chapter and membership; (2) calendar of conferences, training and events; (3) membership directory and other information with access by members only; (4) news and articles; and (5) links to APA and other planning resources.

The second phase of work is maintenance of the web site on a regular basis.

Interested members should submit a proposal limited to 6 pages, and including the following information in the following order: (1) letter of interest; (2) resume; (3) experience in web site development and maintenance; (4) references; and (5) schedule for completion of the initial web site development.

The deadline for submittals is 5:00 PM Mountain Time January 31, 2005. Submittals should be received by mail or e-mailed by that deadline addressed to Diane Kushlan, Planning and Management Services, PO Box 8463, Boise, ID 83707;

The decision on the selected proposal will be made by the WCC Board. A contract to proceed on the design and development will be made by March 1, 2005.

Maintenance services would be subject to an annual renewable contract.

APA/AICP News and Information

Joanne Garnett honored as a Fellow of the American Institute of Certified Planners

by Andrew Epple, AICP, President, Western Central Chapter, APA

While attending the national APA Conference in Washington D.C. in April, I had the privilege of seeing our very own Joanne Garnett get inducted as a Fellow of the American Institute of Certified Planners. Please join me in extending hearty congratulations to Joanne for this significant lifetime achievement. No one in our Chapter, or in national APA, is more deserving of this professional recognition.



Joanne (second from the left) at the FAICP induction ceremony

The induction ceremony was very formal, as befitting the honor of being named FAICP, and it caused me to reflect on the kind of person Joanne is...one who is as comfortable hobnobbing in an elegant evening gown with the foremost professionals in our field as she is in making a presentation to a boots-and-hats group of rural county commissioners. This ability to communicate and work effectively with a wide variety of people has been a hallmark of Joanne's career, and is fundamental to her success as a professional planner and a leader of APA.

I first met Joanne in 1979 when she was a staff planner for the City of Billings, MT, and I was a fresh-out-of-school planner for the town of Big Timber. Early on in my career, Joanne was always there to help me out with answers to tough questions, and with advice on how to get along and thrive as a planner in Big Sky Country. As we worked together through the ranks of the Montana Association of Planners on various legislative and professional development issues, she continued to mentor and be an inspiration to newer planners. She also distinguished herself as a heck of a country jitterbug dancer on more than one occasion...no small feat for a lady born and raised thousands of miles from the nearest cattle ranch!

So congratulations, again, Joanne. Your friends and colleagues throughout the Western Central Chapter region are proud of you and look forward to many more years of collaboration.

Editor's note: From AICP – election to Fellow is one of the highest honors that the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) bestows upon a member. This honor is a recognition of the achievements of the planner as an individual, elevating the Fellow before the public and the profession as a model planner with significant contributions to planning and society. Fellowship will be granted to planners who have been a member of AICP and have achieved excellence in professional practice, teaching and mentoring, research, public/community service and leadership. The Fellow will subsequently become a member of the College of Fellows.

AICP Exam Information

by Diane Kushlan, AICP

Changes to the AICP Exam Process

2004 brought about several changes to the AICP exam process because of the move to a computer-based exam. Among other things, approved applicants now have greater flexibility in arranging to take the AICP exam. In addition to registering with AICP to pay the exam fee, applicants may follow through and schedule their test at any of 300 test centers in the United States and Canada. Applicants are able to test in May and November, and may select one of the twelve different days available for testing during each month. Beginning with the November 2004 AICP Exam, for the first time, candidates taking the AICP Exam learned their results immediately, instead of having to wait. There is also a new application process for the May 2005 exam. The application for eligibility and exam registration has been combined, eliminating the two step process. The intent is to make the application process more customer-friendly and efficient. The deadline is now March 15, 2005 for the May 2005 exam.

AICP Exam Fee Scholarships

As in previous years, AICP promotes the Reduced Exam Registration Fee Scholarship program. This program was put into place to offer assistance to approved applicants who may defer taking or are unable to take the AICP exam because of the high cost. Scholarship recipients pay a \$55 exam site registration fee instead of the regular \$325. AICP subsidizes the remainder of the fee. The chapter Professional Development Officer is charged with choosing a scholarship recipient based on the general selection criteria provided by AICP. The scholarship program will continue with the 2005 exam cycle. Contact Diane Kushlan at dkushlan@fiberpipe.net for more information about the scholarship program or for any other questions about the exam.

Upcoming Conferences

2005 National Planning Conference, March 19-23, 2005, San Francisco

San Francisco – A favorite destination for planners and anyone who loves cities. More than 5,200 planners and their colleagues attended the 2004 American Planning Association's National Planning Conference in Washington, D.C.

It's not too early to make your plans to join us in the City by the Bay. Visit APA's website at <http://www.planning.org/2005conference/index.htm> to stay up-to-date on the most recent 2005 conference information.

2005 Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute Land Use Conference, April 21 & 22, 2005, Denver

The RMLUI's fourteenth annual land use conference will be held at the University of Denver's College of Law. For registration and session information, please check their web site at: <http://www.law.du.edu/rmlui>.

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Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) is seeking a dynamic Environmental Planner/Project Manager to join our established multidisciplinary staff in Boise, Idaho. Seven or more years experience preparing NEPA and/or planning projects in the west is essential. A bachelors degree in environmental planning or related field is required. Consulting experience, a Masters degree and AICP are desired.

SAIC is the largest employee-owned research and engineering company in the United States, providing information technology, systems integration and eSolutions to commercial and government customers. To learn more about SAIC's business areas, growth history, core values and employee ownership culture and to apply for the above position, visit www.saic.com and reference job #TKT097537. We are an Affirmative Action Employer who values cultural diversity in the workplace. EOE, M/F/D/V.

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