



American Planning Association  
**Pennsylvania Chapter**

*Making Great Communities Happen*

**Development Plan  
2011 – 2014**

***“Promoting a Culture of Planning”***

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## I. Introduction and Background

- The PA Chapter of APA (PA APA) is a nonprofit, non-partisan organization for the promotion of planning, and for professional planners and planning officials in the Commonwealth. The organization is one of 47 chapters of the American Planning Association (APA). Approximately 3,000 members strong, the PA APA works to promote planning at all levels of the Commonwealth through trainings, the annual conference, legislative monitoring, and public awareness efforts. PA APA members participate with various statewide and regional groups with shared values and goals. The purpose of this 2011-2014 Plan is to guide the decision-making of the Board of Directors.
  
- APA requires each chapter to maintain a current development plan. The development plan guides the chapter in its activities and supports chapter leaders by providing key direction concerning the organizations priorities and goals. Since the existing PA APA development plan concluded in December 2010, a new plan was needed.

□ During 2009 the Chapter Board of Directors made plans for the preparation of a new development plan. The Chapter applied for and received an APA Chapter President's Council (CPC) Grant to support the costs of preparing a new development plan. A retreat was scheduled for January 2010. Invited attendees included members of the board of directors, committee and PMPEI chairs, past chapter presidents, and additional select chapter members. An RFP was distributed in fall 2009 to obtain proposals from potential facilitators to guide the retreat attendees. Edward Swenson & Associates were selected as the facilitator. The retreat took place January 28-29, 2010 in State College, PA. During the two-day the facilitators guided attendees through multiple items designed to identify the organization's mission, vision, values, and key priorities. The facilitators produced a follow up report with detailed results from the retreat activities. Their report can be found at [http://planningpa.org/about\\_chapdevplan\\_completiontimeline.shtml](http://planningpa.org/about_chapdevplan_completiontimeline.shtml). Report components include the following documents:

1. Retreat Notes
2. Benchmarking and Performance Indicators
3. Draft Goals, Objectives & Actions
4. Guiding Principles for the Chapter

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5. Strategic Plan Summary  
6. Strategic Implementation Guide

- Following receipt of the report, which was shared with all retreat attendees, a small committee was formed to work through the report materials and complete a draft plan. The results of those efforts are found in this draft plan. The draft plan is a proposed document and is open to feedback from chapter leaders, retreat attendees, and members. Following a review period by these individuals, the board of directors adopted a final version of the plan. The plan is published in final form on the chapter website and a copy was forwarded to APA and the CPC.
  
- The Development Plan is a four year plan, beginning in January 2011 and concluding in December 2014. A retreat will be scheduled to review the plan every two years. The goal is to schedule this event in conjunction with the annual conference when possible. The next retreat will take place in the fall of 2011.
  
- The 2011-2014 Development Plan is the basis for succeeding plans. Moreover, this Plan assumes the continuation of existing membership benefits such as the annual conference, Awards

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Programs, training for professionals and planning officials, and the *Vantage Point* newsletter. The goal of the new Plan is to articulate a strategic focus to promote a culture of planning in Pennsylvania.

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## **II. Mission**

The Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association provides leadership in the development of vital communities by advocating excellence in community planning through education, empowerment, partnership, and public policy.

## **III. Vision**

### **Planning Matters**

Planning is an essential function in creating successful communities throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The PA Chapter of APA, with its diverse and engaged membership, positively influences the provision of planning resources and the practice of planning at all levels of the public and private sectors.

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## **IV. Values**

### **The PA Chapter of APA believes:**

- Planning is a critical function of government, citizens, and the private sector;
- Planning brings forth the best ideas by balancing varied interests and resources;
- Planning is objective and open-minded;
- Planning is comprehensive, inclusive, and empowering; and
- Planning values the diversity of Pennsylvania's communities, cultures, and places.

## **V. Organizational Narrative**

The PA Chapter of APA (PA APA) is a nonprofit, non-partisan organization for the promotion of planning, and for professional planners and planning officials in the Commonwealth. The organization is a chapter of the American Planning Association (APA). It was created in 1985 by the consolidation of three separate chapters of the APA in Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania Planning Association. Approximately 3,000 members strong, the PA Chapter of APA works to promote planning at all levels of the Commonwealth through trainings, the annual conference, legislative monitoring, and public awareness efforts. PA Chapter of APA members participate with various statewide and regional groups with shared values and goals. The Chapter is organized into six sections which provide local service to members and others through program meetings, local workshops, newsletters, and announcements. Since our founding in 1985, our Chapter has hosted a statewide conference, provided training to planning professionals and officials, produced a newsletter, and hosted a website since the mid 1990s. We also partner with the Penn State University Cooperative Extension to create the PMPEI (Pennsylvania Municipal

Planning Education Institute). PMPEI provides training to planning commission members, zoning officers, and zoning hearing board members throughout Pennsylvania.



## **In addition to what we currently do...**

### **VI. Organizational Priorities for 2011-2014 are:**

1. Promote a "Culture of Planning" throughout the Commonwealth.
2. Advocate for the provision of resources for planning and plan implementation at all levels of government.
3. Enhance the Chapter's organizational and programmatic capacity.

**The PA Chapter of APA promotes a culture in which planning is a practical and routine means for communities to stay on top of the realities of change, make tough decisions about priorities, invite innovation, and initiate actions to improve communities and make them more attractive for desired investment, growth, and development.**

## VII. Strategies

1. Promote good planning practice and the “Culture of Planning” throughout the Commonwealth
  - 1a. Charge the Sections with building a strong network of membership support, within their region, aligned with statewide goals.
  - 1b. Develop peer-to-peer information exchange capability for technical planning requests, to share examples of best practices, and to connect members with similar planning interests.
  - 1c. Publish an annual report on Chapter activities and key planning events in the Commonwealth.
  - 1d. Continue to provide training and education that responds to the needs of the membership.
2. Advocate for the provision of resources for planning and plan implementation at all levels of government.
  - 2a. Expand Chapter contacts with key legislative committee chairs and their staff with similar planning interests, and advocate for funding.
  - 2b. Advance the legislative proposal to the PA State Legislature for amendments to and/or rewrite of the Municipal Planning Code.

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2c. Advance the legislative proposal for required training for planning commissioners, zoning hearing board members, and zoning officers.

2d. Work in partnership and build coalitions with other organizations.

3. Enhance the Chapter's organizational and programmatic capacity.

3a. Evaluate the full scope of engaging an Executive Director with planning expertise, full or part time.

3b. Provide an orientation process for board members, committee/section chairs, and committee/section members.

3c. Maximize the use of technology via the Chapter website and newsletter to distribute news, best practices, and case studies.

3d. Strengthen the alignment of section strategies with chapter goals and objectives.

3e. Develop a plan to address financial stability, scholarships, member dues, and non-dues income.

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## **VIII. Benchmarks**

The PA Chapter of APA will establish a committee on chapter benchmarking. The committee will investigate relevant and measurable benchmarks to compare our chapter to other APA chapters as well as other Pennsylvania non-profit membership associations. This will guide future chapter development plans by quantifying the metrics appropriate for our Association such as membership growth and retention. Benchmarking will help the Chapter understand reasonable goals for growth.

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## **IX. Bylaws Review**

A Bylaws Review Committee was formed in December 2010.

The Committee will review the current Bylaws and recommend revisions to the Board of Directors by May 2011.

The PA Chapter of APA membership will vote on proposed revisions at the 2011 Elections (July-August 2011).

## **X. Acknowledgements:**

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