

IOWA PLANNING



American Planning Association
Iowa Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen

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APA's Community Planning Assistance Team Visits Story County

Submitted by Charlie Dissell, AICP

In January of 2011, the Story County Board of Supervisors began to reevaluate their role in the economic development of Story County. Historically, Story County had participated in economic development solely in a financial role, and the Board of Supervisors wanted to examine if it was feasible to become a participatory entity in the economic development of Story County. As these discussions progressed, it was decided that Story County Planning and Zoning would lead this reevaluation effort. In late February, the Board of Supervisors directed Planning and Zoning staff to apply for the Community Planning Assistance Team (CPAT) initiative in an effort to develop an economic development strategic plan. Once Story County received



CPAT conducts stakeholder focus group meeting

Photo courtesy of:

*Thomas Bassett, Senior Program Associate
American Planning Association*



Iowa State University CRP students work with members of the CPAT

Photo courtesy of:

*Thomas Bassett, Senior Program Associate
American Planning Association*

notification that it had been approved

to receive assistance from the American Planning Association (APA), Planning and Zoning staff immediately began to work with Thomas Bassett, Senior Program Associate, APA, in planning the CPAT visit. APA assigned a team leader to the CPAT; Wayne Feiden, FAICP, Planning and Development Director, City of Northampton (Massachusetts). Mr. Feiden and APA worked to put the rest of the CPAT together, a team that had the experience and expertise to assist Story County evaluate their role in economic development. The team members included:

Deborah Meihoff, AICP, Communitas LLC (Portland, Oregon)

Cathie Pagano, AICP CEP, Planner, Gunnison County (Colorado) Community Development

Russell Soyring, AICP, Director of Planning, City of Traverse City (Michigan)

After months of planning, team leader Wayne Feiden and Thomas Bassett traveled to Story County for a preliminary visit on September 28 and 29. The first day was spent visiting all cities in the county as well as some of the major economic development projects, such as the 123-turbine wind farm in the northeast portion of the County. The following day consisted of meetings with the Board of Supervisors and focus groups meetings with key stakeholders. Following the preliminary visit, Story County Planning and Zoning staff continued to work with team leader Wayne Feiden and Thomas Bassett to iron out all the final details of the visit, which would take place in three short weeks. A list of nearly 100 stakeholders was identified, invitations to focus group meetings were delivered, public input meetings were planned, logistics were arranged, lodging was booked, meals were contrived, public notices were posted, and press releases were sent.



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President's Message

Greetings Iowa Planners!

Time certainly does fly. It seems like last week I was writing my first letter as your Chapter President, fast forward two years and here I am writing my final one, as I'll officially hand over the APA Iowa keys to Rich Russell, AICP on March 1st. I want to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve APA Iowa, it has truly been a pleasure and I've enjoyed working with and meeting so many chapter members from across the state and representing APA Iowa at National APA functions. While I'm handing over the APA Iowa keys to Rich I look forward to continuing to serve the Chapter and organization in the coming years. I also want to extend a sincere appreciation to Rose Brown, AICP who is completing four years as the Chapter Treasurer and Ben Champ, AICP who is completing four years as the Chapter Secretary on March 1st. Both did an exemplary job! Ben will continue to serve the Chapter as the Vice President and I would like to welcome Melissa Tiedemann, AICP as the new Chapter Treasurer and Charlie Dissell, AICP as the new Chapter Secretary.

Thanks to those of you that took time to complete the Chapter Survey this fall, we received a lot of useful information into the types of programs and services you'd like provided by the chapter. The overwhelming sentiment was that you all would like additional networking opportunities. The Board is already working on various ways we can expand our services and will be rolling them out over the course of 2012. Your first such opportunity for 2012 is on January 20th as part of the APA Iowa Board meeting. All chapter members are welcome to join us in Newton, at the Newton Arboretum, 3000 N 4 Ave E. The business meeting will run from 10 AM until Noon (approximately). A chance to earn certificate maintenance credit will follow at Noon with a presentation by City of Newton Community Development Director Bryan Friedman, AICP and Development Planner Erin Chambers, AICP. The topic of the presentation is "Newton's New Energy: A Company Town Responds to the Loss of Its Company." We will place lunch orders from a local deli during the business meeting, so get there early!

APA Iowa has partnered with several other APA Chapters and Divisions to offer cost **free** webinars to our membership. Working collectively each participating Chapter or Division will host at least one CM qualified session as part of the Planning Webcast Series. The goal of the partnership is to offer one webinar per week throughout the year (45 webinars were held in 2011) and the Series is currently soliciting topics for the 2012 calendar year. If you or your organization have a topic that can reach a national audience, please contact me as soon as possible so we can get Iowa sessions added to the schedule. The current schedule of webinars, including links to sign up, are available on our website at <http://www.iowa-apa.org/resources/webcasts.html>.

I am pleased to announce that the 2012 APA Iowa Conference will be held October 31st – November 2nd, 2012 at the Gateway Center in Ames, Iowa. Please mark your calendars now! We are looking for individuals interested in assisting with the development of the conference as part of the conference committee, if you have an interest, please contact Rich Russell, AICP, at russell@cityofdubuque.org.

Finally and as always, if you have any comments, suggestions or questions about APA Iowa or would like to volunteer to assist the Chapter in any way, please don't hesitate to contact me or any member of the APA Iowa Board.

Best wishes for the New Year!

David R. Wilwerding, AICP
APA Iowa President
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see the schedule of
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www.iowa-apa.org/
resources/
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Building Community Capacity Through Effective Planning

Previously Published in Evidence Matters, Winter 2011

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, private foundations committed to transforming disadvantaged communities began experimenting with comprehensive community development, a strategy designed to promote “positive change in individual, family, and community circumstances in disadvantaged neighborhoods by applying the principles of comprehensiveness and community building to improve physical, social, and economic conditions.”¹ Broadly speaking, these efforts sought to weave education reform, youth development, economic development, housing, employment, social services, and civic participation into the fabric of these neighborhoods.² Although some attempts failed, others offered a viable roadmap for the long-term planning, coordination, and investment needed to build community leadership, increase civic participation, repair physical infrastructure, and ensure accountability among various stakeholders.

Over the past decade, a growing body of research has documented the strengths and weaknesses of community transformation and capacity-building strategies. No definitive answers yet exist to some of the most difficult questions about community change. But even as the empirical foundations for assessing such efforts emerge — and cultivating that body of knowledge will be a focus of HUD-sponsored research in the coming year — the evidence underscores the importance of broad community participation in effective planning, financing, and implementing community development initiatives. The effects of this approach can be

seen both at the city level, as illustrated by the work of the Aspen Institute and of the Local Initiative Support Coalition’s New Communities Program in Chicago, and at the neighborhood level, as in the development of Murphy Park in St. Louis, Missouri.

Emerging Lessons in Capacity Building Point to Planning

The Aspen Institute’s Roundtable on Community Change has been collecting data for 18 years from a crosssection of groups and individuals who work to improve conditions and quality of life in disadvantaged neighborhoods. These data document the experiences and lessons learned by these builders of community sustainability. Aspen’s recent analysis of 43 different community change efforts, captured in *Voices From the Field III: Lessons and Challenges From Two Decades of Community Change Efforts*, emphasizes the importance of careful planning that defines the community’s vision, clearly specifies the project’s objectives, deliberately aligns implementation with goals, realistically assesses and adapts to actual capacity to implement, and brokers the necessary partnerships and collaborations. Finally, effective planning must also include a carefully designed evaluation frame-

work that involves learning and making adjustments along the way.³

In Chicago, an interim assessment of the New Communities Program (NCP), a multiyear effort to support community capacity building in 14 distressed neighborhoods, reinforces the importance of inclusive and collaborative planning. Residents of each neighborhood first engage in a structured community planning process that addresses each community’s unique needs — from gentrification to crime to education reform — and develops projects and partnerships to address those needs. Such neighborhood-based planning, which facilitates coordination and accountability among the various public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders, is



Local Chicago youth beautify East Garfield Park’s commercial district with plantings to improve the public space. Credit: LISCI/Chicago, Photography by Eric Young Smith

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Building Community Capacity Through Effective Planning *(continued)*

Previously Published in Evidence Matters, Winter 2011

key to the program's success. NCP's reliance on collaborative planning and implementation not only builds on existing strengths and capabilities of local groups but also helps leverage additional resources for heavily challenged neighborhoods. Some NCP neighborhoods already show increases in home prices, school achievement, graduation rates, and business growth.⁴

Local Lessons Inform Federal Policy

Murphy Park, a mixed-finance demonstration project completed in St. Louis, Missouri, is an important site-specific case study of the type of comprehensive community development that informed the HOPE VI program. Murphy Park was created through the combined efforts of residents, the city, the St. Louis Housing Authority, the state, the developer, private enterprise, and philanthropy. This rental neighborhood of townhomes, garden apartments, and single-family homes — with amenities, a reconstituted school, and new, incoming investments — replaced

thousands of public housing units concentrated within a one-mile radius that were essentially isolated despite being surrounded by single-family residential neighborhoods. Notably, the Murphy Park project led to reform in the neighborhood school that, in turn, sparked broader civic engagement in improving the Near North Side of St. Louis, additional investments in schools and neighborhood improvements, and systemwide school management reform, thus adding to the strength and capacity of the entire community.⁵



Residents and a local nonprofit collaborate to build a playground in Chicago's Little Village neighborhood" title="Residents and a local nonprofit collaborate to build a playground in Chicago's Little Village neighborhood. Credit: LISC/Chicago, Photography by Juan Francisco Hernandez

Taking lessons from both broad community change strategies and local case studies, policymakers at HUD are embracing the principle of comprehensive community planning in urban development strategies aimed at strengthening the capacity, resiliency, and sustainability of entire

communities. The Choice Neighborhoods initiative in particular will be a key strategy for strengthening neighborhoods through effective planning and community-driven partnering.

1. Karen Fulbright-Anderson and Patricia Auspos, eds., 2006. *Community Change: Theories, Practice, and Evidence*, Washington, DC: Aspen Institute, 10.
2. Ibid.
3. Anne C. Kubisch, Patricia Auspos, Prudence Brown, and Tom Dewar. "[Community Change Initiatives From 1990–2010: Accomplishments and Implications for Future Work](#)," *Community Investments* 22, no.1: 8–12 and *Voices From the Field III: Lessons and Challenges From Two Decades of Community Change Efforts*, Washington, DC: Aspen Institute, 2010.
4. David Greenberg, Nandita Verma, Keri-Nicole Dillman, and Robert Chaskin. 2010. *Creating a Platform for Sustained Neighborhood Improvement: Interim Findings From Chicago's New Communities Program*. New York: MDRC.
5. Mindy Turbov and Valerie Piper. 2005. *HOPE VI and Mixed-Finance Redevelopments: A Catalyst for Neighborhood Renewal*. Washington, DC: Metropolitan Policy Program, Brookings Institution, 18–9.



ASK THE PLANNER

Do you have a planning-related question for other Iowa Planners? Send your question to cmiller@midascog.net and we'll include feedback in the March edition of Iowa Planning!

APA's Community Planning Assistance Team Visits Story County *(continued)*

Submitted by Charlie Dissell, AICP



CPAT presents their recommendations

Photo courtesy of:

*Thomas Bassett, Senior Program Associate
American Planning Association*

On Sunday, October 23, 2011, the full team arrived to Story County. That evening and the following morning were spent touring a sample of cities and sites around the County. The following day, after an initial meeting with the Board of Supervisors, the CPAT held three focus group meetings with different stakeholders from all parts of the County. That evening, the team held a public input meeting in the Story County Public Meeting Room in Nevada, where members of the public voiced their opinions and visions on the future of Story County. On Tuesday, the CPAT convened in Iowa State University's College of Design, and, with the help of Community and Regional Planning (CRP) students from Iowa State, worked well into the evening on their recommendations and creating a presentation for Story County. The CPAT continued to work through Wednesday prior to presenting their recommendations in a public meeting held at the Ames City Council Chambers on Wednesday evening to a group of citizens, stakeholders, Story County staff, and the Board of Supervisors. After multiple focus group meetings, public meetings, and countless hours of "planning" the group departed on Thursday concluding their short four-day visit to Story County. Since their departure, the CPAT has been working

independently outside of their normal work schedules to put together a final report, which is expected to be completed prior to year end.

As Story County awaits the CPAT's final report, one of the CPAT's recommendations, renaming the Story County Planning and Zoning Department to the Story County Planning and Development Department, has been approved by the Board of Supervisors, and will go in effect on January 1, 2012. We would be amiss if didn't thank all the stakeholders, citizens, and students who made the Story County CPAT a success.

Members of the Iowa Chapter of APA who took part in the CPAT include:

Jennifer Davies, Deputy Clerk/ Economic Development Coordinator, City of Slater

John Haldeman, City Administrator, City of Huxley

Doug Johnston, Program Director, Iowa State University Community and Regional Planning

Charlie Kuester, Planner, City of Ames Planning and Housing

Seana Perkins, AICP, Ames Economic Development Commission

Iowa State University CRP students Jennifer Roberts, Shawn O'Shea, Taylor King, Jesse Thornsen, Annie Thompson, Kate Dirks, Shelley Oltmans, Evan Totdz, and James Hickey

Special thanks to Seana Perkins who assisted us in reserving the City of Ames Council Chambers, and worked with City staff to help us video record the Wednesday meeting, which gave us the ability to rebroadcast the final presentation on various Story County public access channels. Specials thanks also to Doug Johnston for allowing the CPAT to use meeting rooms space and facilities at Iowa State University's College of Design, and for organizing the assistance of the Iowa State University CRP students. Finally, special thanks to all the Iowa State University CRP students who took time out of their busy midterm schedules to assist the CPAT.

If your community is in need of planning expertise, perhaps the CPAT is the right program. The teams work on a varied range of projects that seek to enhance a community through planning. You can also become a CPAT Member to further your career. To find out more information about both visit <http://planning.org/communityassistance/teams/>. Team Members donate their time pro bono; and communities are responsible for all personal expenses, such as lodging, food, transportation, etc. The application process is rather simple, and the fee is only \$50. Although the final cycle of 2011's deadline has passed, you have ample time to prepare for the first cycle in 2012, whose deadline is June 13, 2012. For more information on Story County's CPAT visit, you can visit <http://planning.org/communityassistance/teams/storycounty/>, or contact Charlie Dissell by phone at (515) 382-7246 or by e-mail at CDissell@storycounty.com.

THE ZONER'S CORNER



"The Zoner's Corner" will be an ongoing column that consists of zoning articles and correspondence. The column presents issues, initiatives, suggestions, questions or comments specific to zoning. If you have a piece of writing or question which relates to zoning that you would like to share with Iowa Planners, feel free to contact Carissa Miller at cmiller@midascog.net.

Sioux City Design Guidelines

Submitted by Chris R. Madsen, AICP, CFM

Background

The Sioux City 2005 Comprehensive Plan, *My Home, Our Neighborhood, Everybody's Hometown*, identified and highlighted a project known as the Citywide Design Manual and as a priority for Sioux City. Two specific goals set out in the Comprehensive Plan including "Create a comprehensive design scheme and guidelines for future development and redevelopment to protect the unique urban character," and "All major corridors should have an aesthetic design / quality that reflect a citywide approach to public open space and community identity."

The Need for Design Guidelines

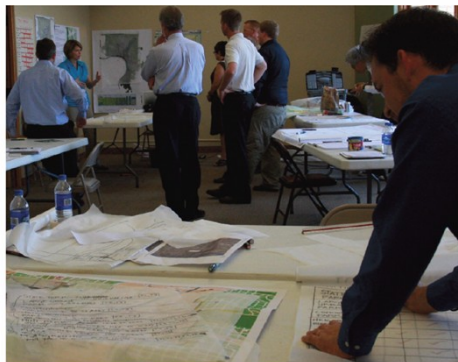
The Citywide Design Guidelines project was initiated by the private sector. According to the Siouxland Chamber of Commerce and local developers, site plan regulations were unclear. Due to the lack of clear design standards, the site plan approval could be costly to developers due to multiple revisions requested throughout the public hearing process. According to the City of Sioux City Economic Development Department, in many cases the first question they are asked from a site selector is; "where are your design guidelines?" In addition, as recent commercial developments have occurred, there has been a large amount of concern from neighboring property owners about the aesthetics and quality of site design next to their residences and businesses.



Downtown Sioux City has a unique and beautiful skyline that design guidelines will help preserve.

Project Development

In response to these issues, a public / private partnership, entitled the Urban Design Guidelines Committee, was established among the City of Sioux City, the Siouxland Chamber of Commerce and local developers. The Committee requested qualifications from firms nationwide with experience in creating city-wide urban design guidelines. Seven proposals were received, of which three were chosen for interviews on August 4th, 2008.



The charrette process is an interactive working meeting where design ideas are discussed and reviewed.

On January 26, 2009, the Sioux City City Council approved a contract with Design Workshop (located in Austin, TX) for the Citywide Design Guidelines Project. Design Guidelines are intended to articulate a shared collective identity and provide guiding principles for new development and redevelopment within Sioux City. These guidelines should promote positive and enriching development in Sioux City by assuring that such growth reflects the character and future vision of Sioux City. The goals and aspirations articulated in this document guide and shape Sioux City into a great city fitting this shared vision.

The consultants held a kickoff meeting on March 26th with staff and

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Sioux City Design Guidelines *(continued)*

Submitted by Chris R. Madsen, AICP, CFM



stakeholders to get a general idea of how the project should progress. In addition, dialogue was initiated with the private development sector. After this initial meeting, an open house was held on May 17th, 2009 to discuss the consultant's preliminary findings. The use of a visual survey led up to a week of "Design Workshops" from June 22nd through 25th, 2009 with stakeholders and City leaders that gathered a large amount of public input and guidance. The consultants then created the draft guidelines and presented the findings at a public meeting on September 2nd, 2009. The Planning and Zoning Commission reviewed the final design guidelines on January 12, 2010 and gave unanimous approval. The final hearing before the City Council on February 1, 2010 approved the design guidelines as an amendment to the Comprehensive plan with a unanimous vote. The guidelines are available for viewing at the project website, www.siouxcitydesignworks.com.



Before and after of the Sandpoint and Sioux Creek Old High Channel.



Historic 4th Street has a fine grain of small buildings. New construction may be built to have the articulation of multiple facades.

The design guidelines have now been available for use for approximately one year. Though the guidelines are not mandatory, there have been many developers that have willingly included aspects of the guidelines in their designs. Examples range from increased landscaping, rain gardens in commercial infill sites, increased interest and development of residential infill projects and row-home concepts, and mixed-use developments. The drastic increase in requests of mixed-use development led staff to create, and City Council to approve, new regulations allowing mixed-use in all business zones, and included parking requirement reductions as an incentive for mixed-use developments. The design guidelines have also had an impact on City projects ranging from increased focus on landscaped medians in street reconstruction, historic streetscaping, use of bump-outs to accommodate pedestrian traffic in commercial corridors outside downtown, and use of aesthetic streetlights and trees.

Next Steps

The next step in this process will be the codification of these guidelines into the zoning ordinance. The current Capital Improvement Program has a complete revision/rewrite of the zoning ordinance programmed in fiscal year 2013. With this rewrite, various aspects of the design guidelines will be taken into account, such as form

based zoning, exterior façade materials, building scale, landscaping, stormwater management, signage, lighting, and parking, etc. With the successes from the private and public sector over the past year, the process and eventual outcome of the zoning rewrite is very exciting!



View 76: Street-level perspective rendering that plans "E Squares" in use of buildings. Urban Design Associates.



2012 Planning & Zoning Workshops

The dates for the 2012 Introduction to Planning and Zoning Workshops have been set! The workshops introduce the basic principles of land use planning and development management to elected officials, planning and zoning officials, and board of adjustment members without formal training in the subjects. Using case scenarios in a highly-interactive format, the workshops will highlight issues frequently faced in the land use process. The dates and locations for this year's workshops are as follows:

Wednesday, March 21, 2012 – Best Western Holiday Lodge, Clear Lake
 Wednesday, March 28, 2012 – Comfort Inn, Burlington
 Thursday, March 29 – Clarion Hotel, Cedar Rapids
 Tuesday, April 3 – Hotel Winneshiek, Decorah
 Wednesday, April 4 – Carrollton Inn, Carroll
 Tuesday, April 10 – Bev's on the River, Sioux City
 Wednesday, April 11 – Red Coach Inn, Red Oak

The registration fee is \$55 per individual, reduced to \$45 per individual if a City or County registers 5 or more officials to attend. The fee covers the workshop instruction, workshop materials, and supper. Registration and meal begins at 5:30pm. The Program will run until approximately 8:45pm.

The registration brochures will be mailed in the next couple of weeks, and are also posted on the ISU Extension **B**log on **L**and **U**se and **Z**oning: <http://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/planningBLUZ>. Go to the 'Intro to Planning and Zoning Workshops' link at the top of the blog home page.

For more information on the workshops contact Gary Taylor, J.D., AICP; (515) 290-0214 or gtaylor@iastate.edu

2012 Nebraska Annual Planning & Zoning Conference

It's not too late to get those CM Credits for 2010/2011... Come join us in Grand Island for the **2012 Nebraska Annual Planning and Zoning Conference!**

Special Speakers will include: Mitch Silver, AICP; Sue Schwartz, FAICP; Peter Lowitt, FAICP.

Up to 52 CM Hours being requested. An individual can get up to 12 CM Hours including Legal and Ethics. Topics will include planning commission fundamentals, legal issues, eco-friendly industrial parks, zoning administration, GIS, housing, and more!

Dates: March 28-30, 2012

Location: Grand Island Holiday Inn MidTown

Cost: \$85.00 for Wednesday or Thursday Only
 \$160.00 For the entire conference

Rooms Available for: \$70.00 per night

Visit www.planningnebraska.org for registration and the schedule of sessions.



MEET THE PLANNER - Kesha Billings



Occupation

Associate Planner, City of Marion

Family

Grew up in small town, (pop. 104) in eastern Iowa, in a traditional family household. 5 years ago I met a great guy (Darin) that I can now call my husband, we were wed in July. We currently

live in the small town Ryan with one dog, Ruger.

What planning tasks do you enjoy?

I enjoy the ongoing interaction with citizens about the benefits of community planning and the forward thinking that makes tomorrows community better than today's.

What are some challenges you see in planning?

Many people can go through life knowing, or caring, little about the purposes of community planning for environmental, economical, or social reasons.

What do you like to do in your free time?

In the warmer Iowa months I enjoy spending time outdoors, while in the cold winter months I enjoy crafting and baking projects in a warm, cozy kitchen.

What's the best vacation you've ever taken?

My husband and I recently enjoyed a Caribbean cruise where the sun was always shining, the staff was always friendly, and the food was always delicious. Yes, I've already contemplated booking my next cruise!

If you had a day and could do anything wanted to do, what would it be?

Spend one more day with my mom.

If you could trade places with any other person for a week, famous or not famous, living or dead, real or fictional, with whom would it be?

Not so sure I want to trade places with anyone, but I would love to live for a week in the time of the United States declaring their independence.

IAF Seeking Volunteers

Iowa Architectural Foundation (IAF) Seeks Volunteers for Community Design Program Charrettes

IAF is preparing to conduct programs in Underwood and Treynor (both in Pottawattamie County) within the next two months and is seeking volunteers from Iowa APA. Volunteers do not necessarily visit these communities as part of the charrettes team but may be asked to attend follow up meetings in Central Iowa and/or review and critique existing planning documents.

More information on the Community Design Program here: <http://www.iowaarchfoundation.org/index.cfm?nodeID=23582&audienceID=1>

If you are interested in volunteering please contact Matthew G. Flynn, AICP at the City of Davenport: (563) 326-7743 or mflynn@ci.davenport.ia.us and he will pass the information on to Kristin McHugh-Johnston, Executive Director of the Iowa Architectural Foundation.

Submit your articles today!

The next edition of Iowa Planning will be released in March of 2012. Share your planning news by sending articles to

cmiller@midascoq.net.