

ARIZONA Planning Association

DECEMBER 2003

WHAT MEASURE OF SUCCESS – THE 2003 ARIZONA PLANNING CONFERENCE

by Ronald N. Short, FAICP

How do we measure the success of the 2003 State Planning Conference? Is it what participants learned and took home to apply to their work? Do we measure it by the number of sessions and speakers? Did conference goers have fun? Did anything frustrate and discourage a conference attendee? Did the conference attract planning commissioners? Was the food excellent? Did the facility meet and exceed expectations? Did those who attended the conference really feel good and excited about the conference? Did we have more participants than expected for the Valley location? Did AzPA meet the budget requirements for the conference?



Paul Farmer, APA Director, Kelli Sertich, Chapter President, and Ron Short, President-Elect, enjoying the opening reception.

EDUCATION

The primary objective of any conference should be an outstanding learning experience for participants. The conference provided 20 sessions with 66 speakers on subjects relating to rural planning, redevelopment,

nuts and bolts, and transportation. There were four mobile workshops with a variety of topics—historic preservation, downtown revitalization, mixed-use development, and West Valley development. Major speakers addressed the full conference and talked about the American Planning Association and Valley development. The pre-conference workshop had 67 attending to hear 10 speakers discuss big box development. Both the AICP Preparation and Ethics sessions were full with planners to learn more. Certainly, the opportunity was provided to learn and take home knowledge.

I sought out comments from participants about the quality of their learning experience. I consistently received high praise for the session formats and speakers. More than once, a planner would tell me the sessions were equal to, if not better than, those sessions given at the APA National Conference.



Joy Rich, Vice President for Professional Development, leads the annual conference AICP Workshop.

PARTICIPATION

There were 339 paid participants in attendance for the 2003 Arizona Planning Conference. This is not

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the largest attendance in recent years—Tucson 2001 conference had 361 participants. This was a strong attendance for the Valley, which in past years did not get more than 240 participants. The interesting aspect was that 111 participants were from areas outside of the Phoenix Metro Area. There were planners and citizen planners from all over the state. There was a strong showing of planning commission members throughout the state. Thank you to all the planning directors and community development directors who helped to get both staff and planning commissioners to the conference. I wish to thank the consultants in Arizona – both in participation as speakers, attendance and financial support through the exhibits and sponsorships.



Planners from RBF Consulting enjoy the festivities at the Planners Bazaar.



Conference participants enjoy a tour of the Cerretas Candy Factory.



Jon Froke, Vice President for Conference 2003, relaxes at the Planners' Bazaar after months of planning for a successful annual conference.

FACILITIES AND FOOD

Wow! The Glendale Civic Center was just awesome. It is a beautiful and functional building that allowed for all sessions, plenary session, awards luncheon and the Planners' Bazaar. The Civic Center staff went all out to make sure we had a terrific experience. In fact, the consistent comment I received from participants was praise for the building. Participants liked the lunch and buffet dinner at the Planners' Bazaar, not to mention the food provided at the breaks. The Arrowhead Country Club provided us a memorable experience with great atmosphere and fantastic dinner buffet and wine-tasting event for the opening reception and the quartet was a pleasure to enjoy with their outstanding music.

FUN

About 150 participants had a great time at the Arrowhead Country Club enjoying quiet conversation over a wonderful meal. Paul Farmer, AICP, APA Executive Director, had the opportunity to talk with many planners at the opening reception. The breaks at the conference center provided more opportunities for participants to meet, as well as in the exhibit area. The Planners' Bazaar had 180 participants enjoying the food, conversing and winning prizes. After the sessions were over, a large group of participants met at a local restaurant and spent the afternoon enjoying more conversation and refreshments.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Kelli A. Sertich, AICP

It has been a busy year. The AzPA Board started out 2003 with a serious support effort to save the planning programs at the Department of Commerce and the University of Arizona. Many others took up the battle for Commerce while we continued through the year on the U of A effort. The Commerce Planning program will continue. At this writing, the U of A decision is still pending. Budgets, all around, were probably the biggest concern over the year. Many planning programs in other states saw layoffs. Arizona was fortunate to be experiencing steady growth financially, although we still experienced these budget crunches. Many agencies cut training and professional membership dues from their budgets. This left many of our members having to pay out of pocket to remain active in AzPA. I would like to thank all of you for hanging in there and staying involved.

In February we had a successful day at the Capitol, getting the planning message out to the legislature. This program will continue. Throughout the year, there were numerous professional development opportunities that were well attended. If you have ideas for sessions for 2004, please contact your board members so we can plan for next year. There was a little difficulty holding the trails workshop, but the effort was covered at the annual conference. Another success of the year was the annual conference. We had the highest number of attendees ever at a conference held in the metro area. The facilities and food (except that chicken) were good, and sessions were well attended. As always, we will be soliciting ideas for sessions at the 2004 conference. On a more regional basis, the federal funding (TEA-21 reauthorization) for transportation passed and the cities in Maricopa County all agreed on a transportation plan. For those of you who have ever attended any MAG meetings this is a major accomplishment. Stadium decisions were over with, but big box battles waged on. Areas experienced devastating fires and there was some flooding despite the drought. Which brings up a topic to remind the membership about—the state and local Hazard Mitigation Plans are still being developed. The plans are due to the Feds by November 2004 (but really need to be delivered earlier), so please get involved in helping to put these plans together. It is a great concept—good land use planning to avoid natural

and man-made disasters. Because these plans are tied to federal funding, this is a good tool we can use to help guide elected officials in good decision-making regarding land use.

The board worked throughout the year on strengthening relationships with the planning students. We have representation from the three universities on the board. The ASU students formed a new organization on campus for AzPA. Mixers were held with all three of the universities. This program will definitely continue. World Town Planning Day was held in November. This is a great outreach program that with more volunteers will be a great tool for getting the planning message out.

Where should the board energy be focused next year? In addition to continuing and strengthening all of our existing programs, things I would like to see the board making a special effort on for next year are the following:

- More interaction with the non-Maricopa County parts of the state. At a minimum, starting the newsletter column back up on what other communities are doing around the state.
- More submittals for student scholarships (its free money—what's the problem) and more submittals for the awards program.
- Expanded marketing efforts to get the Arizona Planning Association recognized as a group to turn to for technical and professional advise.

As always, I want to hear from members on your thoughts. What are we doing right? What do you think we need to improve on? Have Happy Holidays and a safe New Year.





EDITOR'S COMMENTARY

How do we get the creative class to move to Phoenix? To find answers to this dilemma, several of your colleagues attended a presentation by Richard Florida based on his best selling book, *"The Rise of the Creative Class."* The November 11 event was appropriately held in one of the few beautifully renovated dowager structures in downtown Phoenix—the historic Orpheum Theatre. The presentation was sponsored by the *New Times*, which had previously printed a series of articles about what's wrong with Downtown Phoenix, and had heavily marketed Florida's appearance.

The Orpheum seats 1,300 and *New Times* did a far from satisfactory job of estimating how large the attendance would be and how to logistically take care of the lines that snaked around the theater. We waited in line for 30 minutes—fighting off those ever-present line cutters—only to be told that there might not be enough seating. We did get in, but were pointed to the balcony. Although the view was great—the seats were incredibly uncomfortable and were designed for Lilliputians. Once we were in our second-level seats, we realized that the community "elite" were being comfortably ensconced on the main floor of the theater. We also noted that there were more planners from the cities of Tempe and Scottsdale on the main floor than Phoenix planners.

So what words of wisdom did Florida share with the audience? First, he is definitely a polished speaker and presenter—perhaps too polished. His presentation appeared to be the packaged spiel that he uses in every city he visits, with a few "local" observations thrown in. This leads to the second point. We came to hear Florida discuss specifics about how to attract the creative class to Phoenix—we went away disappointed!! Specifics had no place in his generalities-laden presentation.

So did Florida have a message, and, if so, what was it? After listening to his stories, some humorous, his message seemed to come down to two major points. First, we all have the capability to be a part of the creative class if a nurturing environment is available. And second, a nurturing environment for the creative class is one in which the creative class can feel a "sense of community." Nothing new about this message—most planners have been preaching it for a long time. Florida was simply smart enough—and clearly understands the value of marketing—to become the creative class guru.

So why are people listening to Florida? He has wrapped the "sense of community" message in the mystical shroud of university research, has rated communities based on criteria derived from that research, and is making us all feel guilty if our community doesn't measure up. This all backed up with a finely-tuned and cash-laden marketing machine – take a look at his Web site.

So do we create a "sense of community" in Phoenix? Florida didn't offer much guidance. But check out the book (\$19.25 via Amazon.com), and join a group of your fellow department planners who have started a discussion group to determine how we can build on his message and make more people aware of the need for creating a sense of community. We can profit from Florida's popularity and national exposure, making use of them in our mission to create a "sense of community" in Phoenix.

NOTE: Watch for more discussion about creating a sense of community and Richard Florida in upcoming issues of the AzPA Newsletter. If you have any comments and/or would like to contribute an article about this topic or any other related planning topic, please contact me at dean.brennan@phoenix.gov.



WHAT MEASURE OF SUCCESS,

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BUDGET

The good news is our actual revenue exceeded the budgeted conference revenue and the expenses were less than projected. The projected surplus for the conference was set at \$30,000. This surplus is an integral part of the total annual Arizona Planning Association budget. Without the annual conference surplus it would be necessary to reduce services to the membership. This year the surplus is \$37,500.

LOOKING AHEAD

Yes, by any measure the 2003 Arizona Planning Association Conference was a great success, due to the dedicated effort by Jon Froke, AICP, Vice-President for the 2003 Planning Conference, many conference committee members, sponsors, track coordinators and speakers. Thank you all for participating. The membership looks forward to the 2004 Arizona Planning Conference in Tucson for another outstanding conference experience.

Ron Short was Conference Program Coordinator for the 2003 Annual Conference and President-Elect.



UPDATE – MAG REGIONAL PLAN RECEIVES UNANIMOUS APPROVAL

On November 25, 2003, the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) unanimously certified a Regional Transportation Plan to the governor and state legislature, as required under state law. The certification comes after the plan passed a series of air quality tests known as a “conformity analysis.” **(This is an additional step in the process that follows-up on the approval of the MAG Regional Transportation Plan as reported in the last AzPA Newsletter.)**

The plan will guide transportation investments in the region for the next two decades. It was developed by MAG through its Transportation Policy Committee, a unique collaboration of public and private sector leaders.

“The certification culminates the most comprehensive transportation planning effort in the Valley in the past 40 years,” said MAG Chair Wendy Feldman-Kerr, Mayor of Queen Creek. “The plan is especially significant because it will serve as the foundation for a half-cent sales tax extension expected to go before voters in May 2004.”

The Regional Council approved the plan September 24, 2003, after it was forwarded to the Regional Council by the 22-member Transportation Policy Committee (TPC). The TPC—which developed the plan and unanimously forwarded it to the council—is made up of elected officials and individuals representing business, citizens, freight and transit interests.

“This is a major milestone for the region, to have unanimous support to advance a transportation plan to voters that will meet our transportation needs for the next 20 years,” said TPC Chair Neil Giuliano, mayor of Tempe. “I don’t know if people recognize how historic this is, to have this kind of support. All philosophies and viewpoints were at the table from the very beginning,” he said.

TPC Vice Chair Elaine Scruggs said the plan will bring needed improvements across the region, including the West Valley.

“This plan is distinct from any other plan created in the last two decades in that it not only identifies important corridors for the coming 20 years, but it also places a high priority on right-of-way preservation to ensure future transportation corridors are protected,” she said.

The plan assumes \$17.5 billion in regional funding over 20 years, and contains \$15.8 billion dollars in transportation projects. Projects span a variety of transportation modes, including new and improved freeways with better access and more capacity, about 28 miles of new light rail extensions, a tripling of bus service with added routes and less waiting, and improved streets and intersections to help relieve congestion. The remaining \$1.8 billion is set aside for debt service and other committed projects.

“With this action today, we will continue to set up a very comprehensive plan for 20 years worth of transportation investments in all modes,” said Regional Council member, Mayor Skip Rimsza of Phoenix, in casting his vote for the plan. “We should feel proud of what we’re doing for future mayors and city councils, future citizens of this community, and existing citizens who don’t want to be caught in traffic,” he said.

TPC member Peggy Bilsten, a councilmember for the city of Phoenix, said the TPC recognized that the plan must use all of the tools in the transportation toolbox to address diverse needs across the region.

“Transportation challenges vary from community to community. In Phoenix, for example, new freeways are not a viable option, yet we have to be able to move people through the highly-dense urban core. So for us, it was important to focus on improving existing streets and freeways and putting additional resources toward high-capacity transit,” she said. “In the West Valley, the emphasis had to be on accommodating explosive growth through additional freeway and street projects. In the East Valley, we needed a mix of freeway, street and transit components. This plan provides the flexibility to use the right mode to address individual challenges.”

MAG Executive Director Dennis Smith called the approval of the plan the most significant event in the history of the Maricopa Association of Governments. “I have been with this organization for 26 years,” he said. “This is the best transportation plan that has ever been produced in this region. The success of this plan is due to the unique cooperative process of local governments and the business community working together.”

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Chair Feldman-Kerr also pointed to the public/private makeup of the Transportation Policy Committee as a key to the successful development of the plan.

“This plan, and the process used to develop it, is a great lesson for our organization—and that is opening up the MAG process for the achievement of the greatest good for the region and all its residents,” said Feldman-Kerr. “I would propose that this is a model that we can use for many of the other issues that affect us,” she said.

WHAT'S IN THE PLAN?

Following are just a few of the major elements in the plan, complete with a percentage breakdown of funding for each mode.

Freeways/Highways = 59% of total regional funding.

- Additional lanes on Loop 101, Loop 202, I-10, I-17, SR 51, and US 60.
- New freeways, including Loop 303, an I-10 Reliever, Williams Gateway Parkway and the South Mountain Loop.
- New and improved traffic interchanges.
- New carpool lanes.
- Grand Avenue improvements.
- Maintenance (litter control and landscaping).
- Rubberized asphalt and noise mitigation for existing freeways.

Transit = 32% of total regional funding. (15% bus, 15% rail, 2% other transit)

- 27.7 miles of new light rail expansion beyond the 30 miles being funded by cities.

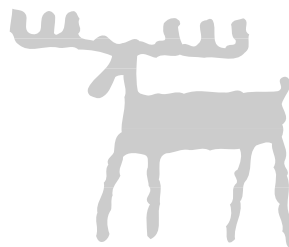
- A regional bus plan known as a “supergrid.” The supergrid concept includes new or enhanced service on 30 routes, plus the creation of 10 new routes.
- Improvements to express/bus rapid transit service, including enhancements to 16 existing routes and the creation of 14 new routes.
- A doubling of paratransit services for Americans with disabilities.
- 32 new passenger facilities (including 20 park-and-ride lots).
- More than 2,100 new buses, 1,000 new Dial-a-Ride vehicles, more than 1,400 commuter van vehicles.
- Commuter rail planning.

Street Improvements = 8% of total regional funds.

- Northern Parkway.
- Rio Salado Parkway.
- Sonoran Parkway.
- Major street and intersection improvements across the Valley.
- Intelligent Transportation Systems such as “smart signals” that sense traffic conditions.

Other Programs = 2% of total regional funds.

- Safety planning.
- Regional planning programs.
- Bicycle projects.
- Pedestrian facilities.
- Programs to reduce travel and improve air quality.
- Rideshare programs.





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The Arizona State Committee on Trails is proud to announce its continuing tradition of hosting workshops related to the current needs of Arizona's non- motorized trails! This year the focus is accessibility on trails.

When you look around, it is easy to assume that only a handful of people cannot use trails; especially the disabled. Did you know that over 17 percent of Arizona's population has some kind of disability, and another 15 percent are seniors? Having a handicap goes beyond wheelchairs and pacemakers! Extra weight, pregnancy, sports injuries, heart disease, and caring for infant and toddlers can turn into a handicap when considering the use of a trail. This conference is designed to help create trails for ALL of us to use.

FOR A DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE SPEAKERS, SESSIONS AND REGISTRATION INFORMATION, PLEASE CHECK THE AZPA WEBSITE—azplanning.org

OR YOU CAN GET ADDITIONAL INFORMATION BY CALLING 602-542-4180



THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY HEALTH

Representatives from the State Health Department and St. Lukes Health Initiative met recently with AzPA planners on December 15 to discuss the relationship between urban design and health outcomes. Increasingly, authorities in various disciplines are collaborating to promote healthy community design. Public health professionals are learning about land-use, transportation planning, and how they contribute to or prevent chronic disease.

Recent special issues linking the built environment to public health have been published by *The Institute for Transportation Journal* and *Landscape and Urban Design Planning*. For example, wider

bicycle lanes and sidewalks promote physical activity while decreasing incidence of traffic accidents. Commercial home builders report that active living communities yield a higher profit margin than other residential options. In low-income neighborhoods, zoning measures could prevent crime, increase access to nutritious food, allow for social interaction and create a sense of community.

Planners interested in joining this dialogue should e-mail Raya Tahan, St. Luke's Health Initiatives, rtahan@slhi.org, or Dean Brennan, AICP, Phoenix Planning Department, at dean.brennan@phoenix.gov.




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- Member. National dues (from table below) \$ _____ plus \$36 chapter dues. Enter total under **PAYMENT**.
- Student member. Dues \$42* (national dues \$37; chapter dues \$5)
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Check the range that includes your salary plus other profession-related income. Records are confidential.

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\$38,000 - \$41,999	\$130
\$42,000 - \$44,999	\$135
\$45,000 - \$49,999	\$141
\$50,000 - \$54,999	\$147
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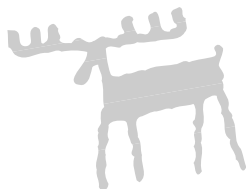
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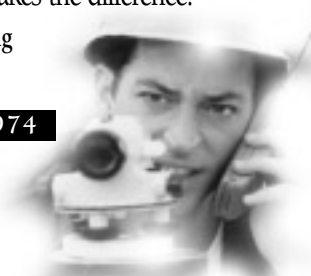
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2003-2004 Arizona Planning Association ■ Important Dates to Remember

NOVEMBER

- 12 Planners Roundtable with GROC, Tucson
- 28 Newsletter Article Deadline

JANUARY 2004

- 7 AICP Application Deadline

TO PUBLISH

Articles should not exceed four pages, single spaced, 12 point font, formatted in Word Perfect or MS Word. Be sure to spell check your article. Graphics are encouraged: tables and charts saved as either Excel or Lotus (*.xls or *.wk4); pictures and maps saved in bitmap, tiff or eps format (*.bmp, *.tif, or *.eps). Submissions should be e-mailed or sent on 3.5" disk to the newsletter editor, co-editor, or staff administrator. Please include your name, title, organization, phone number, and e-mail address.

DECEMBER

- 12 AzPA Board of Directors Annual Retreat
- 18 Southern Section Annual Business Meeting and Year End Social

