

## New York APA 2009 Conference Summary

By Neal Stone, AICP, Chapter V.P. of Programs

The APA New York Metro Chapter / NYU Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service 2009 Biennial Student and Professional Planning Conference was held on September 24 – 26 at the NYU Kimmel Center, with the theme “Planning for the New York Region in Challenging Economic Times”. As the region continues to struggle with the problems presented by the 2007 collapse of the housing and financial markets, and with substantial cutbacks of cash-flows to schools, capital plans, the MTA, and operating budgets, planners continue to be faced with the realities of strangulated project funding, furloughs and layoffs. Projects struggle to move forward, essential public services are in jeopardy and funding remains more critical than ever before. Planners continue to search for innovative solutions to problems, as the verdict continues to be out on whether the full effects of the Federal Stimulus (ARRA) are effectively cushioning the blow of the recession and catalyzing future economic growth.

Members of the American Institute of Certified Planners, APA, students from Columbia, Hunter, NYU, Pratt, and Cornell, and professionals from associated disciplines took three days to convene and listen to representatives from various sectors speak about policy and program initiatives, innovative approaches for tackling the plethora of complicated planning problems, and current trends.

*[Continued on p.2]*

## President’s Message

By Donald Burns, AICP, Chapter President



Dear members,

It is with great sadness that I inform you of Mary Findlen’s passing. Mary was our Chapter Administrator. She passed away in February, at home surrounded by family and friends after a valiant battle with cancer. Mary will be missed; she enjoyed working with the New York

Metro Chapter and supported us greatly in our Chapter activities.

Mary was a marketing professional at engineering concerns such as URS Corporation and Thorton-Tomasetti Group. She was an active member of the Society of Marketing Professional Services (SMPS) and a great supporter of the ACE program (Architects, Construction, and Engineers), which mentors high-school students to encourage them to pursue careers in architecture, construction, or engineering (<http://www.acementor.org/495>).

Mary’s SMPS and engineering colleagues are organizing a scholarship fund for the ACE program. If you are interested in contributing to the scholarship fund please send a message to the Chapter email address [office@nyplanning.org](mailto:office@nyplanning.org). We will respond to you when we have more information.

Sincerely,  
Donald Burns, AICP

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The region – from Wall Street and Times Square to the bedroom communities of Rockland, Ulster and Suffolk Counties – remains the epicenter of trade, tourism and commerce activity for the nation. To date, although violent crime rates continue to fall significantly making New York one of the safest major urban centers of the country to live, the region continues to struggle with over 400,000 unemployed residents and significant funding cuts to State aid. Eight speakers addressed approximately 450 attendees at the Friday morning plenary sessions. The speakers discussed the role of the planning profession in the emergence of new technologies, methodologies for practice, and the state of the region in the current economic crisis. Addressing the engine of the region – New York City – and the measures being advanced by the Department of City Planning was its Director, who also serves as the Chair of the City Planning Commission, Hon. Amanda M. Burden, FAICP. Under her supervision, DCP and the City Planning Commission continue to advance progressive policies of re-zoning, streetscaping, and pedestrian-friendly design, while creating a favorable environment for green buildings and energy-saving initiatives as the morphology of the 400 year-old cityscape continues to change. Ms. Burden's presentation and opening remarks set an enthusiastic tone for the debate and discourse of the morning plenary panel discussion.

The panel of four distinguished speakers, moderated by Past-President of the APA chapter, Ethel Scheffer, AICP (Insight Associates), discussed a number of lynchpin issues of critical importance to the region: transit hubs, land use plans, education funding, private development incentives, property taxation, open space preservation, and industry redevelopment and expansion. Vishaan Chakrabarti (Vice-president, The Related Companies), Jerilyn Perine (Executive Director, Citizens Housing & Planning Council), Anthony Shorris (Director, NYU Rudin Center), and Thomas K. Wright (Executive Director, Regional Plan Association) delved with specifics into discussion about the New York region in relation to other urban regions and American megaregions, stringent housing standards and definitions, and changing demographics; the critical need for major investment projects; and opportunities for public investment to spur new growth.

Acknowledging the change of administration in Washington in January 2009, the conference organizing committee invited the White House to send their representative of the newly-created Office of Urban Affairs. The Director, who happens to be the former Bronx Borough President, prepared pre-recorded remarks that were televised at the morning session. Hon. Adolfo Carrion outlined the new bureau's role in highlighting the importance of megaregions, cities, and suburban areas for the new administration. Because cities must remain competitive globally as national engines of economic growth and strong denominators of the gross domestic product, the White House is aware and committed to investing in the infrastructure needed by urban centers to keep American cities competitive. The conference committee was appreciative of the address presented to the APA by Director Carrion.

Critical to the overall dialogue about the economic state of the New York region and illustrating critical strengths, weaknesses, investment needs, and strategic risks were Mr. Richard T. Anderson, FAICP, President of the New York Building Congress, and Mr. Seth Pinsky, President of the New York City Economic Development Corporation. With Mr. Anderson's focus on the regional context and citing numerous examples, he stressed that good local, regional, and state governance is just as imperative to the long-term stability of the region as innovative project initiatives and sound economic planning. This comes at a time when the Governor is trying to keep New York State solvent and recent Assembly actions over the summer demonstrate the need for good governance. Complimenting Mr. Anderson's remarks, Mr. Pinsky highlighted numerous significant projects within the City that will provide a sound economic footing for the region going forward, and NYC EDC's role in assisting with its support.

Manhattan Borough President, Scott M. Stringer spoke fittingly for the half-hour during the seated lunch in the Rosenthal Pavilion about planning and food policy issues. Safety of food supply, community-supported agriculture, sustainable agricultural practices, organic and pesticide-free production, food-borne illness, and food-waste recycling were among the food policy topics touched upon during his address.

A total of 16 break-out sessions and mobile workshops over the course of the three day conference involved just over 50 speakers, panelists and moderators, covering a vast array of topics and affording up to a maximum of 14.5 AICP Certification Maintenance credits. Panels included: Project Economic Incentives and Financing, Perspectives on the Transportation Megaprojects, Planning for Housing and Neighborhood Recovery in a Severely Down Market, Planning and Funding for Bicycles and Pedestrians—Progress Made/Looking Forward, An Aging Population and Its Impact on the Region, Ethics in Planning, Planning for Green Jobs, and Planning Law—Understanding Smart Growth... Keys to Success. Two computer-based workshops ran on the Friday afternoon technology track teaching GIS use for “Managing and Mapping Economic Data” and “Understanding, Downloading and Using Census Data in Mapmaking”. Mobile workshops were led by New York City Department of Transportation and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and were entitled “World Class Streets with NYCDOT” and “World Trade Center Site Redevelopment” respectively.

Approximately 100 students pre-registered for the conference and several contributed as volunteer session recorders, photographers, and registration workers. Students and young planners also had the option of attending the regular conference sessions or taking in sessions about Planning for the Beginning of Your Career, Presentations by Students—shared experiences about internships, and Presentations by Professors—planning professors discussing recent research in planning as a field of study. In addition, the Metro Chapter’s new “Young Planners Group” hosted a wine-and-cheese social event at the Center for Architecture following the Friday conference sessions for all conference attendees, as a kick-off for the YPG Mentorship Program, which pairs novice and veteran planners for shared learning.

Corporate sponsorship in full was received by The Durst Organization and AKRF, Inc., with educational institutional backing from New York University, Columbia University, and Pratt Institute. Additional corporate backing was made available from Extell Development Company, Kramer Levin, Perkins + Will, The Brick Industry Association, URS, Starr Whitehouse, Parsons Brinckerhoff, BFI

Planning, Brenda Levin, New York Building Congress, the Real Estate Board of New York, and Zetlin Strategic Communications. Numerous exhibitors from educational programs, non-profit organizations, quasi-governmental groups, and private consultancies provided displays, showcased project work, and afforded networking opportunities during the Friday afternoon portion of the conference.

All told, the 19-member conference planning team effectively advanced a three-day program that aimed to be provocative, informative, educational and interesting. Given the challenges still facing the region as the recession drags into its third calendar year, there is optimism about emerging job sectors, the use of new technologies in solving commonplace planning problems, and future projects still being pursued in light of tightened purse strings. Planning in the New York region is alive and well, in spite of challenging economic times, and is in fact, as important now as it has ever been.

### Conference Keynote Remarks: “Planning for Change in the New York Region”

By Mr. Richard T. Anderson, FAICP



My thanks to everyone for the invitation to speak at the American Planning Association New York Metropolitan Chapter’s Biennial Conference. My involvement with the Association and its predecessor organizations goes back a long way. Last summer was the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my planning career, beginning at Regional Plan Association when it was embarking on the Second Regional Plan. Fresh out of the planning program at Cornell, I came to New York full of optimism and all the enthusiasm you would expect of a young planner.

Then, as now, the economy was central to planning for the New York metropolitan region. In fact, the most regional thing about the New York area is the economy and, strategically, it is the most challenging aspect of any planning effort. With a gross regional product well over \$1 trillion, this region is one of the world’s largest economies –

exceeded only by a handful of countries. Planning for such an immense economic engine is an awesome prospect, and I welcome the opportunity to share some thoughts on this challenging topic. Consider for a moment how different the metropolitan region is today from the recent past. Roughly 3.5 million new jobs have been created in the 31- county region since 1970 – from 8.8 million to 12.3 million today, a nearly 40 percent increase. All of this growth has been in services. Manufacturing has declined to roughly 550,000 jobs, or 5 percent of the total, and education and health services are the region’s leading industry, about 1.7 million jobs, followed by professional and business services at about 1.5 million jobs.

Over the past 50 years, the region’s economy has been transformed from goods to service production, from blue collar to white collar, from manual to knowledge-based. Even finance, insurance and real estate are relatively less important, being replaced by innovation, culture and education. On a market basis, the New York area has broadened its horizons, from regional and national production earlier to global production and consumption today. Clearly, the region accounts for a disproportionately large share of the U.S. economy’s trade and services.

This growth in employment has been supported by the transformation of the region’s labor force from largely male/white non-Hispanic/single worker households to male and female/ethnically diverse/multi-worker households. Labor force participation rates have increased over the period to the extent that 72 percent of men of working age and nearly 60 percent of women of working age are in the labor force.

At the same time, the region’s population has grown from about 19.5 million in 1970 to roughly 22.2 million today, about a 14 percent increase. Birth rates have dropped dramatically to roughly replacement fertility. The ratio/ethnic composition

of the region’s population has changed from 79 percent white non-Hispanic and 21 percent minority to about 50/50 region wide. New York City is 65 percent minority today.

It is safe to say that more than all of the region’s growth in population has been comprised of foreign immigrants since 1970. In fact without them, the region would have lost population in recent decades. More than one million immigrants have arrived in the region since the year 2000 and have fueled the economic growth of the metropolitan area.

Households have grown faster than population as average household size has declined. In 1970, there were 6.4 million households in the region; today, there are 8 million, a 25 percent increase. This surge in new households had a lot to do with the housing boom of recent years.

Vast portions of the region have been developed over the past 40 years, with construction of hundreds of millions of square feet of residential, office and other commercial and institutional space. This has decentralized the tri-state area away from established centers. Regional Plan Association predicted this decentralization in its pioneering 1963 report, “Spread City”, which called attention to the enormous social, economic and environmental consequences of unplanned sprawl. In recent years, after a sharp decline in central city population, there has been a recovery, with New York City now at 8.3 million people, up from 7.9 million in 1970. Another million are expected by 2030.

We have a very different region today – with many strengths and weaknesses. In planning, our challenge is either to invest in the strengths or attempt to overcome the weaknesses. I would like to discuss both sides of this equation and suggest to you a framework for New York’s long-term regional planning. Perhaps we could consider these thoughts

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a “preface” to the next regional plan.

First, what are some of the region’s strengths that need further investments? Let me suggest three: Fundamental Attractions – New York is attractive to people from around the world who want to live here, visit, work or invest. It has become a safe, secure and exciting environment with countless opportunities for everyone. We must reinforce this fundamental attraction of New York by making sure that personal safety and quality of life remain at the highest possible level and that we continue to attract intellectual and cultural capital. We must foster an environment where our universities, cultural institutions and creative industries can grow and prosper.

Diversity – The phrase “the world’s second home”, which the Bloomberg administration coined as part of the effort to attract the 2012 Olympic Games, captures this region’s incredible ethnic diversity. Maintaining and enhancing this diverse population must be a priority, because it is important for our labor force, for supporting New York’s bedrock institutions, and for so much of the uniqueness of this great metropolitan region.

Resource - Conserving Fabric – New York’s built environment conserves energy and other resources. It supports public transportation and diminishes the need for motor vehicle travel. It enhances quality of life and generates an enormous range of opportunities for residents and visitors alike. No other metropolitan region in the country has this physical setting, and we should invest in it and take advantage of it wherever possible.

By contrast, where are we at risk? With such fundamental strengths, what can undermine our future? New York’s regional strategy should emphasize some key considerations:

1. Safety and Security – Since September 11, 2001, New York will never be the same, even though it has not been attacked or threatened in any major way. Moreover, public safety has continued to improve to the extent that we are the safest large city in the country. Any negative change in this situation could have devastating effects on our future. We must never lose sight of the fact that public safety and security are critical to urban living.

2. Governance and Fiscal Management – We have also learned in recent years that governmental management is fundamental to public confidence and investment. New York City reached a low point during the fiscal crisis of the 1970’s. When combined with public safety problems, New York became uncompetitive and unattractive to many potential employers, visitors, and investors. Our optimistic outlook these days is due largely to better public safety and governmental management, and the entire region from Long Island to the Hudson Valley benefits.

3. Development Costs – The New York area cannot continue to be the highest cost development environment in the country and remain competitive. It costs so much to build here because we have allowed it to happen. Higher prices are the result of everything from governmental mandates to high land costs and union work rules. New York often gets away with expensive development, because its attractions create even stronger demand. But that cannot go on forever. A concerted effort on the cost front is imperative, one involving all the stakeholders from government to developers and organized labor.

4. Infrastructure Investment - If we are to strengthen our economy, attract visitors, and add population, the region’s infrastructure must be



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maintained and enhanced. The deficit in this regard is alarming and continued neglect only will undermine our future. While it is difficult to predict the duration and depth of the current economic downturn, there is no doubt that the New York region must continue to build for growth, in good times and in bad, if it is to maintain its position as a global capital. From the building industry's perspective, the Building Congress has emphasized several steps in recent years:

To identify and secure dedicated sources of funding for infrastructure programs that are needed more than ever;

To form public- private partnerships in order to further major institutional expansion programs, such as for Columbia University, and fund new infrastructure facilities;

To strategically address the high cost of doing business in New York, including everything from labor to housing;

To continue the planning and rezoning of New York City and to extend sustainable planning and environmental strategies.

Perhaps most importantly, I would like to leave you with one final thought. Governmental reform is needed in New York at the State and local level more than ever. We have seen what good government can accomplish during the eight years of the Bloomberg administration. By contrast, State Government in Albany has fallen on hard times, with serious consequences. Good planning requires good government and right now we are in serious need of major reform. Let's get behind a constitutional convention and other steps to set the State of New York on the right course.

Finally, what is the New York metropolitan region going to look like in the future – over the next 45 years? Not a great deal different, in terms of the physical fabric. But that is only one indication of our future. The population mix will continue to evolve, and I think it will continue to be a source of strength, especially since young people are increasingly attracted to New York rather than the other way around. But it is the economy that will change the most, just as it has in recent decades. That's why planning must rededicate itself to understanding and coping with economic changes. We need more economic research capacity at planning agencies, something that is sorely lacking today.

Thank you very much for inviting me. I have welcomed the opportunity to speak with my fellow planners. We have a wonderful profession -- optimistic, forward looking, innovative and pioneering. We should be grateful for the opportunities to do what we do.

*Mr. Richard T. Anderson, FAICP, is President of the New York Building Congress and a nationally recognized association executive and urban planner.*

## COMMENTARY: Should Conference Speaker Have Been Invited?

By Lukas Herbert, AICP

*This commentary was written in advance of the Chapter Conference held on September 25, 2009 and does not reflect the opinions of the APA NY Metro Chapter.*

At the upcoming Metro Chapter conference, White House Urban Policy Director Adolfo Carrion will be addressing the conference via a pre-recorded video. In the video he might tout his resume of "planning experience" by noting that he once worked for the NYC Department of City Planning. But the great thing about addressing a group with a video is that



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nobody can ask you any questions. If I had an opportunity to ask Mr. Carrion one question it would be: “why are you here?”

As a rank-and-file APA member who takes the AICP Code of Ethics seriously, I have always been disturbed at how our organization has been willing to promote Mr. Carrion as a “planner” because of his three years of experience working for the NYC Department of City Planning followed by a political career. Does any planning experience automatically make you a “planner?” Or is being a planner something more? I would argue that there are certain “Principles to Which We Aspire”, as the Code of Ethics describes, that should mold us (along with plenty of CM courses...) into professionals that the public (who we above all are responsible to) can trust. If someone chooses not to follow those principles, then perhaps they are something other than a planner. And maybe the APA should not fondly refer to them as such in its publications and conferences.

As I recently sat through my required ethics course for Certification Maintenance (CM), a constant theme kept droning through the canned PowerPoint show that came out of the CD-ROM we were watching: “Don’t take money or gifts from an applicant whose project you are reviewing. Even if it’s harmless, don’t go there.”

Unfortunately, Mr. Carrion “went there” and was recently under investigation for having work done on his house by an applicant that was before him for a planning review while he was Bronx Borough President. While he recently paid the bill (after the Daily News exposed it), it’s not clear exactly what went on. But the timing of the house improvements and the planning review raised a lot of eyebrows.

I wish unpaid (or recently paid) home renovations were the only issue, but have you been to a Yankees game lately? If you have, you may have noticed what a wreck the neighborhood near the stadium has become, with many of the promises that Mr. Carrion and Yankees made to the community gone unfulfilled. But when he was asked in January 2006 (during project approval) by Gary Axelbank of *BronxTalk* “you will go to the mat that these (project benefits) have to be in the plan?”, Mr. Carrion responded emphatically, “Absolutely.”

You may have thought the poorest Congressional District in the nation was someplace in Alabama, but it’s actually the area around Yankee Stadium. If you followed our ethical code and sought to “recognize a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged” you might think that seizing 16 acres of parkland from some of the poorest people in the country (with some of the worst asthma) and giving it to the wealthiest sports franchise in the world for a development parcel (to build one of the most opulent stadiums in human history and parking) might seem kind of sketchy. As a planner who sat on the Community Board who reviewed this project, I sure had a lot of questions about it. But unfortunately, those of us who dared asked anything critical were quickly brushed aside by Mr. Carrion who called us “outside agitators” in the press. He then proceeded to grossly misrepresent the project to the public after the Community Board voted it down by a 2-to-1 margin. After all, why listen to our code which says: “We shall not deliberately or with reckless indifference fail to provide adequate, timely, clear and accurate information on planning issues”? Below are a mere sample of statements by Mr. Carrion, along with pictures that verify the accuracy of his statements:

“All the old trees, that folks were arguing about, around the perimeter of the old park will be kept.”  
*BronxTalk, January 23, 2006.*



*The view from my apartment.*  
Photos: Geoffrey Croft

“There is this misconception that somehow you’re going to have to climb up on top of a parking garage to be in the (new) park and that’s in fact not the case.” *The Brian Lehrer Show, March 28, 2006*



(Top) Rendering from Yankee Stadium final environmental impact statement showing stairs to a rooftop park above a parking garage. (Bottom) Project as being constructed now without even any viable space left for the landscaped screening shown in the rendering.

View from my apartment at 7 a.m. The stadium lights are still on from the night before. Outside agitators fighting a new stadium don’t have to start sleeping with eyeshades on once the new stadium is built!

Perhaps I am being unfair by trying to measure Mr. Carrion by a Code of Ethics that does not apply to him because he never passed an AICP exam. I also could not find any information about him ever belonging to APA. However, what does it say about

us as a profession if we heap praise and distinction on a person who has routinely violated the rules that we are supposed to hold ourselves to, and call him a “planner” like the rest of us? If some of us planners want to congratulate Mr. Carrion on getting a big time White House job, that’s fine. But he achieved that job by being a politician, not a planner; and we need to make that perfectly clear. Otherwise, the image of this profession that we project to the public (as well as to our own rank-and-file) is one where only the suckers follow the rules. If you don’t pay dues to APA, and don’t take the AICP test, you can still call yourself a planner, but you are free to follow whatever rules you choose...and make the rest of us look less trustworthy in the process. And if you hit it big, then you get invited to be a distinguished speaker at an APA event. How do we think we can get away with this if public trust is so absolutely necessary for the planning profession to survive and flourish?

**Forging Forward: APA New York Metro Chapter Diversity Committee**

By Vojislava Filipcevic

Almost a decade ago, the APA New York Metro Chapter Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Committee was nationally recognized for its “Lagging Behind” study. The study's chief findings included conclusions that the profession was less diverse than general population of the New York region (with the exception of Asian-American planners), that Hispanics were the most underrepresented minority in all sectors of planning, and that the private sector was less diverse than the public and non-profit sector and the posed the greatest barriers to minority hiring.

The new and revitalized Diversity Committee met this summer to discuss updating the survey by the end of 2010. New conditions -- including the impact of the Great Recession, the foreclosure crisis, global

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environmental challenges, and the election of President Obama – however, pressed the committee to reassert the significance of urban social diversity in planning, but also to consider issues of diversity at the intersections of equity and sustainability. The work of the Diversity Committee has been redefined to encompass new and critical issues in planning in New York and the region. The Committee's work addresses the following: 1) the under representation of minorities in the planning profession, which has been the traditional focus of the Committee; 2) planning in immigrant and minority neighborhoods—we are seeking planners who have experience working in diverse neighborhoods in New York City and the region, including especially planners who have worked with members of different ethnic, racial, and religious groups, to help us to identify best practices for inclusive and equitable planning; 3) comprehensive planning problems that impact diverse populations and neighborhoods, and which cannot be solved by a sectoral approach (for example, merely by rezoning or by selective economic development); 4) programs to encourage young planners working at the intersections of diversity and social equity.

This fall, the Diversity Committee in collaboration with the Environmental Planning Committee hosted a workshop with Miquela Craytor, Executive Director of Sustainable South Bronx, who presented on sustainable planning and workforce development in the South Bronx.

We are now preparing a forum on low-income Latino migrant workers on Long Island and identifying best practices for inclusionary planning in the suburbs. This is currently a crucial issue in the community of Oyster Bay, Long Island, that has passed an ordinance, which might be declared unconstitutional, that bans day-laborers from congregating on the streets and soliciting work, despite the protests of immigrant organizations and civil rights groups (see, “In a Day Labor Corner”

(Editorial), New York Times, 12/22/2009, p. 22). We are seeking to identify and propose programs and policies that would provide safe access to employment and better ways of integrating low-income migrants in the suburbs.

Among our additional planned workshops for winter and spring 2010 is a discussion of comprehensive planning for the South Bronx, and a public college visit, co-sponsored with the Young Planners Group, to educate and inspire future planners. Furthermore, in collaboration with NYU Schack Institute of Real Estate we plan to hold an event on minority hiring, minority participation in the planning process, and Community Benefits Agreements in large-scale development projects in New York.

New York contains some of the most heterogeneous neighborhoods in the world, such as Jackson Heights in Queens, has remained the destination city for immigrants for over a century, and contains historic and well-established native-born minority communities. While its neighborhoods have been sites of group conflict and of struggle among different groups for limited resources and political power, the city has also pioneered urban innovations that have benefited diverse groups—from the first public housing and social programs, to the community planning and preservation movements. We are asking planners substantively committed to issues of urban diversity, social equity, and sustainability to join us at our next meeting on January 12, 2010, 6:30-8, 11 Park Place, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor. Please also visit our Google Group site: <http://groups.google.com/group/apadiversity/>.

## Young Planners Group Mentorship Program Kick-Off Event a Success!

By Lisa Santoro

Following the September 25, 2009 Student and Professional Biennial Conference entitled “Planning

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for the NY Region in Challenging Economic Times,” the Metro Chapter’s Young Planners Group hosted its Mentorship Program Kick-Off Event in conjunction with the post-conference social. Held at the AIA Center for Architecture, the Mentorship Kick-Off Event introduced the mentors to their mentees and provided information to those interested in becoming mentors or being mentored in the future. The Mentorship Program matches two groups of planners: seasoned professionals (with over five years of professional planning experience) who are to serve as mentors to new professionals (planners with one to five years of experience) and new professionals who are to serve as mentors to planning students. Mentors and mentees were selected and matched to one another based on the mentor’s experience and the mentee’s interests and career objectives. The event was a success as the mentors shared their multifarious planning experience and offered invaluable advice to their mentees; conversely, the mentees made important contacts that may prove beneficial in their respective careers.

While the program has been targeted primarily to planning professionals and graduate students, the Mentorship Subcommittee also encourages interested undergraduate students to apply for either a graduate student or young planner mentor. As the first cycle of the Mentorship Program is off to a promising start, the Young Planners Group is confident that submissions will be taken for the next cycle of the program sometime in mid-late Spring 2010. For more information concerning the Mentorship Program, please contact its Co-Chairpersons, Andrew Murray at [adm216@nyu.edu](mailto:adm216@nyu.edu) or Dominique McAfee at [dominique.mcafee@gmail.com](mailto:dominique.mcafee@gmail.com).

### **The Importance of Networking at APA Chapter Events and National Conferences**

By Matt Schwartz

If you have ever heard the saying, “it’s a small world”, it is even more applicable to the world of urban planners. Two APA National Conferences ago in Las Vegas, I went with my fellow Columbia planning classmates and attended an APA young planners welcoming dinner at a German beer hall. It as a great opportunity to engage with other planning students from across the country. We ended up sitting at a table with a bunch of California planning students from Cal Poly. We compared our planning

programs, discussed East Coast vs. West Coast planning issues, talked about internship and job leads, and of course shared our Las Vegas experiences. We all had a great time getting to know each other and “friended” each other on Facebook. Some of us would send a message to each other every now and then to see how we were doing and discuss the job market and any opportunities in our regions.

The following year (my 2<sup>nd</sup> year of graduate school) I attended the APA National Conference in Minneapolis with a mission to network even more due to the terrible job market that awaited me once I graduated. I stepped out of my comfort zone and approached strangers and chatted away. I ended up engaging with a recruiter from the Navy and gave the recruiter my resume. I am fortunate enough to say that soon after I had a job offer from the Navy and started at the end of the summer. About a month into the job, my boss notified me that they were hiring another planner fresh out of graduate school. The planner they were bringing on staff was from Cal Poly and ended up being one of the students I met at the APA young planners welcoming dinner who I was “friends” with on Facebook.

The Cal Poly student and I still marvel about how we met at the APA Conference and how we are living proof of how small the planning world can be. I cannot stress the importance of engaging with other planners (students and working professionals) at Chapter Events or National Conferences because someone always knows someone in our field. We are a small niche field, so be friendly, keep in touch with your contacts, and never burn any bridges because the Las Vegas odds favor us all working or running into each other soon.

### **Regional Rail a Reality**

By David Field, AICP

Imagine boarding a commuter rail service in Connecticut and getting off in New Jersey. No need to imagine it any more as the region’s rail agencies have worked together to make it a reality. MTA Metro-North Railroad helped lead a multi-agency team that addressed the issues of interoperability among Metro-North, New Jersey Transit, Long Island Rail Road and

Amtrak. The result was a pilot program establishing New Haven through running a 'Football Train' service to Penn Station, with service continuing to the Meadowlands Sports Complex on the New Jersey Transit system. This service is a live-action case study showing how rail agencies with different service territories, equipment, personnel, and labor agreements, can work together to simplify the system for rail customers.

The Metro Chapter's Transportation Committee hosted Daniel O'Connell, Director of Operations Planning and Analysis at Metro-North Railroad, for a presentation of the "Football Train Through Service" at their

December meeting. This year's program includes three roundtrips on the 10 Sundays where the Giants or Jets play at home and start at 1:00PM. The program is planned to continue through the 2012 football season, with future initiatives including a Railgating area to accommodate fan activities at the Meadowlands.

The program also is consistent with the Transportation Committee's Policy Priority of "Regionalization of transit network so that travelers may travel from region to region with little or no transferring and with one consistent fare pass/fare structure system."

## UP COMING EVENTS

### APA EVENTS

([www.nyplanning.org/calendar\\_all.html](http://www.nyplanning.org/calendar_all.html))

- **APA 2010 NATIONAL PLANNING CONFERENCE**

**April 10-13, 2010**

Where: New Orleans, LA

Join APA and more than 5,000 planners and officials in New Orleans for the 2010 National Planning Conference

Go to the following link for more information: <http://www.planning.org/conference/index.htm>

### APA MONTHLY WEBCASTS

#### **Earn CM credits on your computer – no cost to APA members**

To register for upcoming webcasts visit <http://www.utah-apa.org/webcasts.htm>

Below is a summary of the 2009 schedule including a session summary, instructor, date, time, and sponsoring chapter. To access the monthly webcasts participants will need is an internet connection.

#### **Each session is worth 1.5 CM Credit**

- **April 2<sup>nd</sup>** : Virginia: Using Form Based Regulations to Sustain Neighborhood Character
- **April 9<sup>th</sup>** : The American Housing Survey

Please Note: Past presentations are available for informational purposes only. CM credit is not available for viewing these presentations after the event has occurred.

Co-Sponsored by the Alabama, Alaska, APA Planning & Law Division, APA Small Town & Rural Planning Division, APA Technology Division, Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Mississippi, National Capital, New Jersey, New York Metro, New York Upstate, Northern New England, Ohio, Orange County, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Private Practice Division APA, Transportation Division APA, Urban Design and Preservation Division APA, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Western Central and Wisconsin Chapters.

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## SUBMISSIONS

**Next Deadline: April 16, 2010**

The MetroPlanner publishes six times a year. Contributions from current or past members and other interested parties are encouraged. Articles, letters, comments, announcements, etc, submitted for publication are accepted via e-mail. Material accepted for publication may be edited to conform to space, readability, and basic grammar requirements. Interested persons should submit articles to the Chapter office [office@nyplanning.org].

Please observe deadlines in considerations of the editor, who does this in his spare time. Late entries will appear in a later issue.