



ANNUAL REPORT 2006 – 2007

President's Message

What a year this has been for New York Metro APA! A move to new offices at a great location at 11 Park Place, with fine facilities for our meetings, a wonderful new Chapter Administrator, Mary Findlen, the launching of a digital *MetroPlanner*, and a record number of educational, professional, and training events and discussions to serve our members. This report provides the details of these many activities.

As we all know, this has been a time of a more intense focus on the initiatives and problems relating to global environmental challenges, a renewed attention to infrastructure and transportation needs, and a multiplicity of proposals for residential and commercial mega-projects around the city and elsewhere. Planning in New York has never been more needed and more salient, and at the same time more difficult, as funding resources remain scarce. Planners and decision makers alike need political courage to make hard, informed choices on the future of our city and our region. For planners, there continues to be the dual professional responsibility to promote transparent and inclusive decision-making, and at the same time to foster social equity, even as our region prospers and grows.

Our membership continues to increase with the last membership roster showing that we have 1,275 members. This roster includes students and retirees and we are delighted to include those groups in all our activities. We can also say with pride that this membership growth also reflects the continuing increase in the ranks of young and seasoned planners who find it worthwhile to be part of the Chapter.

Our Chapter, with its active committees, has sponsored initiatives and events on planning for middle-income housing, on transportation alternatives, and on a number of re-zoning issues that will change the face of the city. We have continued to serve the professional needs of our members by creating a hands-on ethics workshop and an intensive preparation for the AICP exam. We have expressed our members' concerns and recommendations in regard to continuing education and standards for the profession, and we have provided an effective voice for our

members in APA's national councils. NY Metro tries to represent our Chapter's unique character while working to strengthen the cause of planning around the country.

In the year ahead we will be intensifying and expanding our efforts to participate in PlaNYC, and in urging greater state and city collaborations in evaluating, refining and implementing the plan's ambitious goals. We will be holding a major conference on "Planning a Livable Region" in October. To serve you better we will be asking for your ideas as part of our own Chapter's organizational strategic planning effort to be underway in the coming year.

As ever, we need your increased participation and support. Your questions, your ideas, and your committee involvement are the lifeblood of our activity. I am proud to be leading our efforts at this exciting and demanding time, and I thank all my colleagues for their dedication and their commitment to significant and superior planning.

Ethel Sheffer
President
May 22, 2007

Executive Committee Reports

Legislative Activities

Once again, Michael A. Levine, AICP, represented the Chapter at the APA National Delegate Assembly in Philadelphia and attended the annual meeting of the APA Intergovernmental Affairs practice division. As one of APA's fifty "Legislative Liaisons," he participated in opposing several bills involving regulatory takings and the use of eminent domain and is currently working to support the passage of the Water Resources Development Act at the federal level.

Mr. Levine assists the APA Legislative & Policy committee in reviewing draft policy guides and assisted the Amicus Curiae Committee in submitting a legal brief concerning a regulatory takings case currently pending before the New York State Supreme Court. He also serves on the Metro Chapter conference committee and *MetroPlanner* editorial board and will be attending the annual Legislative and Policy conference in Washington D.C. later this year.

Executive Committee

Jennifer Posner served the Executive Committee well in keeping the database of electronic interest documents, maintaining the leadership contact lists, and recording Executive Committee meeting minutes.

Finances

The Chapter's ambitious agenda of programs and activities is challenging our financial capabilities. However, we have been able to meet these stresses by increasing program

sponsorships and keeping cost to a minimum, wherever possible, such as going with an electronic distribution of the newsletter and avoiding costly printing and postage charges. We have also implemented the new financial strategy, adopted last year, and we now have our first reserve funds earning higher interest/dividends. All the same, the challenges will persist in the coming years as office rent and the cost of putting on our expanding programs continue at higher levels.

Professional Development (PDO)

Our new PDO, Sarah K. Yackel, AICP had a busy year. Sarah started her term as PDO by undertaking a revamp of the AICP Exam Review Course materials and class structure. The review materials were converted to an electronic format to cut down on the Chapter's printing costs and to keep the materials affordable to exam candidates. In addition, in an effort to reach Metro Chapter members outside the city, the review class was held on two Saturdays approximately one month apart; 25 exam candidates attended the spring 2007 review class including APA members from New Jersey, and Westchester and Dutchess Counties. In addition, the Metro Chapter had a pass rate of 73% for the November 2006 AICP exam as compared to the national pass rate of 66%. Efforts to improve the review materials, course content and structure are ongoing.

Keeping Chapter members apprised of the AICP Commission's Certification Maintenance Program (CMP) proposal, adopted in April 2007, was also another major task undertaken by the PDO. The Metro Chapter solicited feedback from its membership concerning the CMP proposal, receiving over 150 responses; the Metro Chapter solicited general comments and also distributed a member survey. A majority of the responding members (58%) expressed support for some form of mandatory certification maintenance, but an even larger number (61%) said they were not in favor of the program being considered by the AICP Commission. Based on these responses, the Chapter prepared and authorized submission of a letter to the AICP Commission on March 20, 2007. Ultimately the AICP Commission did adopt the CMP, which now requires AICP planners to obtain 32 hours of eligible professional development every two years. The PDO and Chapter will be busy over the next several months disseminating the new requirements to AICP planners and developing and identifying programs and providers to meet the continuing education needs of our members.

Programs

Our Co-Vice Presidents for Programs Brodie Hefner and Nicolette Wagoner assisted in the organization of a provocative and well-attended panel discussion, "Jane Jacobs Today." Metro Chapter co-sponsored this event with the Canadian Consulate General in New York and New York University. The panel of planning and design experts from New York and Toronto who compared the impact Jacobs' work has had on their two cities were: Paul Goldberger; architecture critic for *The New Yorker*; Paul Bedford; former Chief City Planner of Toronto; Lisa Rochon, architecture critic for *The Globe and Mail*; and Eugénie Birch, Professor and Chair, University of Pennsylvania Department of City and Regional Planning and former New York

City Planning Commissioner. They discussed how the planning process and specific projects in both cities have been influenced by her and how her philosophy has in turn been modified by planners in the 45 years since publication of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.

The Programs VP's also organized the Chapter's holiday party at the CUE Art Foundation in Chelsea, which was attended by over 100 members.

Finally, they assisted with the organization of an ethics seminar led by Carol Rosenthal and Eugénie Birch. They are currently planning the Metro Chapter conference to be held on October 12, 2007 at NYU's Kimmel Center, in conjunction with the Rudin Center for Transportation and the NYU planning students' group.

Area Representation

We are very proud that New York Metro Chapter has active geographic sections whose representatives accomplished much during this past year.

Long Island Section: Andrew P. Freleng noted the following accomplishments of the Long Island Section for 2006-2007:

- The section continued to work with the Nassau and Suffolk Planning Federations and held numerous seminars and conferences on various land use and planning topics.
- Officially established the Arthur H. Kunz scholarship fund with the Long Island Community Foundation

The following are goals for the Long Island Section for 2006-2007:

- Work with the Suffolk County Executives office/Legislature toward the creation of legislation to formalize (codify) the Suffolk County Planning Federation as an information, education and training arm of the Suffolk County Planning Commission.
- Assist with the planning, organizing and execution of the annual Suffolk and Nassau County Planning Federation conferences.
- Make the section visible and available to provide considered opinion on planning issues in Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

Hudson Valley East Section: Tracey Corbitt, the Hudson Valley East Director, spoke at the national convention in Philadelphia, organized several Planners' Happy Hours in White Plains and the following local events:

- **Aquatic Restoration in Westchester County**, David Kvinge, AICP, ASLA. Conversation on the aquatic restoration program in Westchester County.

- **Hudson River Museum Exhibit: Westchester: The American Suburb**, Group tour of the exhibit on Westchester County's long and varied history that makes it one of America's classic suburbs that contributes directly to current debates over the character and meaning of suburban life.
- **Old Croton Aqueduct Lecture and Tour**, The Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct opened the doors of the Keeper's House in Dobbs Ferry, the only remaining Keeper's House, built in 1857 to oversee a portion of the 41-mile Aqueduct, then New York City's only source of water. This National Historic Landmark will reopen as the Old Croton Aqueduct Visitor & Education Center, which will focus on our water resources, past and future.
- **Historic Preservation is Green**, Walter Sedovic Architects, lectured on Sustainable Preservation. The night also included a tour of the entire Bridge Street Building, which originally housed the Lord and Burnham Company, a greenhouse manufacturer, and occupied the waterfront from 1870 until 1986. The building was renovated using green technologies, to include geothermal heating.
- **Private Green Initiatives**, Whole Foods Market Green Mission Specialist spoke about Whole Foods Market initiatives to be one of the leading green companies in the country and the leader in wind power energy.

Goals for 2007-2008 are:

- To work with the Westchester Municipal Planning Federation (WMPF) to obtain accreditation for AICP CPD for all WMPF educational events and training sessions.
- To continue to provide speaker events on a bi-monthly basis for planners and the general public.

Hudson Valley West Section: Alan J. Sorensen, AICP, the Hudson Valley West Director, spoke at several regional planning conferences and has continued to network with the Planning Commissioners in Orange, Rockland, Sullivan and Ulster County to focus on regional issues including affordable housing and transportation planning. Mr. Sorensen spoke at the following regional conferences:

- **Building a Downtown Economy**, Tioga County REAP Zone in Owego, NY. Spoke about successful Downtown Revitalization Strategies that communities can use to revitalize their communities while strengthening their economic base. Presentation also focused on façade renovations in the context of historic preservation.
- **Building a Main Street Economy**, Main Street in Sullivan County – Rock Hill, NY. Session focused on the process of creating a successful Main Street revitalization program, the components of a vibrant and pedestrian streetscape and the importance of window displays and merchandising.

- **Comprehensive and Regional Planning**, Upper Delaware Visioning Committee, Hawley, PA. Presentation focused on the purpose of a comprehensive plan, the process of creating a successful comprehensive plan and tools that could be utilized to ensure effective implementation of a community's comprehensive plan. Forum also focused in the need for regional planning across state boundaries and strategies communities could employ to plan for their communities with a broader regional context.
- **Main Street Institute**, Liberty, New York. Conducted workshop that included case studies of successful Main Street revitalization efforts in the Hudson Valley Region. Also discussed the types of programs that are now available to assist communities with their Main Street Revitalization efforts such as the New York Main Street program which Mr. Sorensen helped to create in his former role as Assistant Commissioner of Public Policy at NYSDHCR.
- **Land Use Leadership Alliance Training Program, Pace University**, Mr. Sorensen participated in a four-day Land Use Leadership Alliance Training Program concerning affordable housing with representatives from Orange, Ulster and Dutchess Counties.

Goals for 2007-2008 are:

- To coordinate with Orange, Sullivan, Rockland and Ulster Counties to conduct regional planning forums with a focus on affordable housing and transportation planning.
- To invite the Port Authority of New York to discuss their plans for Stewart International Airport – including, but not limited to, the possibility of a regional rail connection to the airport.

COMMITTEES

Our committees worked well and hard this past year conducting numerous programs, drafting letters, and preparing written reports. The committees assisted in the Chapter's efforts to review the Atlantic Yards development and the Mayor's Long Term Planning and Sustainability Plan and drafted portions of the Chapter's letter to Governor Spitzer outlining suggested policies related to land use planning, the environment, and transportation.

In the upcoming year, the Co-Vice Presidents of Committees, Donald Burns and Michael Marrella, intend to work with the committee chairs to increase involvement in committees and recruiting new committee members, establish a calendar on the Chapter website showing upcoming committee events, and record committee events to produce podcast recordings accessible through the Chapter website.

Aviation

In late 2006, a new committee on Aviation was formed within the APA Metro Chapter. This committee will examine the many aviation issues facing Metropolitan New York, such as the

growth shift from JFK to Newark, capacity issues at LGA, the "Fourth" New York airport, and landside airport access issues, to name a few. And all these issues are further exacerbated with aviation growing at such a fast pace—estimated at 5% per year for the next twenty. The committee will examine and discuss these issues and, ideally, develop policy papers reflecting Metro Chapter's position on these important issues, which possess substantial ability to affect urban planning issues in New York City for years to come.

Environment

In April 2007 the Environmental Committee, co-chaired by Robert M. White and Stephen Whitehouse, held a roundtable discussion entitled "Health of the Harbor." Four speakers presented on the status of the Bronx River Greenway, the Hudson River Park Sanctuary Plan, innovations in urban stormwater management control and emerging ecological shoreline stabilization technologies.

The committee also prepared detailed comments in response to the initial presentation of the Mayor's Long Term Planning and Sustainability Plan.

A mid-summer annual field trip is planned that will be announced. The Committee is looking forward to organizing another roundtable discussion in fall 2007.

Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization

In concert with the American Planning Association's focus on Housing Choice and Affordability, the APA Metro Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization Committee explored the issues surrounding middle-income housing in the New York area.

At our November meeting we had preliminary discussions on several topics such as:

- The possibility of middle-income co-ops such as Southbridge Towers and Co-op City leaving the Mitchell-Lama program
- The City of New York's Middle Class Housing Initiative (22,000 units)
- Middle-Income projects - Queens West and Arverne
- New development on Roosevelt Island
- The "Housing First!" New York State platform

At our winter and spring meetings, the committee continued to explore these and related issues. In January, the committee hosted a speaker from New York City Department of Housing, Preservation and Development to address the topic of middle income housing in the city. The committee is also considering a field trip/walk.

Transportation

The Transportation Committee and New York City Section have continued their program of hosting representatives from major initiatives throughout the region. Topics included the New York City Bus Rapid Transit project, the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission's Taxi Technology program, a joint presentation by NYMTC and Federal Highway Administration on the coordination of land use and transportation planning, as well as cosponsoring a professional development dinner with the New York Chapter of the Institute of Transportation Engineers. The Committee also reviewed and took positions on several major initiatives, including the redevelopment of Atlantic Yards in Brooklyn, New York and the proposed Access to the Region's Core Tunnel between New York and New Jersey.

In June, the section and committee will co-host the chapter's first Planner's Scavenger Hunt, offering APA members the opportunity to prove their planning mettle on the development of New York City.

The Transportation Committee would like to welcome Janet Jenkins, AICP as co-chair for the upcoming year. Planned activities include a review of the proposed conversion of Stewart Airport in Orange County, New York into the region's fourth major airport and a presentation on the city's emergency evacuation plans.

Urban Design

The Public Place Public Process was the major activity of the Urban Design Committee in 2005-2006. Rex Curry and Rob Lane chair the committee. The committee is now looking forward to developing a similar effort for 2007 - 2008 and establishing an outreach effort.

Effective public processes add value to design and enrich the public's understanding of its environment. The Urban Design Committee has launched a blog with links to other IT venues on the question of advancing the "public process in design" resource as a key to building a viable urban community capable of accepting the challenges of sustainability.

The desire to establish a consistent review of the processes that are now rapidly re-shaping NYC's landscape forms the basis of the network. All of the findings from the 2005-2006 call for submissions are available through the blog. Additional review and comment is always welcome. The next phase of this work will grow out of a discussion of the facts and comments generated by this resource. All are welcome. We urge APA members to enter this particular fray with a thought or two. Have a look:

<http://www.communitydesign.net/urbandesigncommittee>

Waterfront

The Waterfront Committee, co-chaired by Bonnie Harken and Bob Balder, prepared several events this past spring including a presentation of the Development Strategy for Brooklyn Piers 7-12, a discussion of citywide issues around waterfront housing, and a presentation of the operations and maintenance of waterfront parks.

In June, the Waterfront Committee intends to review the Governors Island open space competition entries.

Zoning

The Zoning Committee over the past year has been a lively forum for the discussion of current events and topics related to New York City zoning and the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). We are seeing zoning increasingly at the center of planning issues including affordable housing, transportation, and sustainability. We are also seeing an increasing focus on controversial topics such as eminent domain and so-called community benefits agreements (CBA's).

We were honored to host Brad Lander of the Pratt Center for Community Development. Brad gave a timely presentation on affordable housing in New York City, which included a history of the programs that have been utilized in the city and an update on current initiatives. We discussed upcoming changes to the 421-a program, which would expand the "exclusion zone" and require on-site affordable housing in order to receive benefits. We also discussed current Inclusionary Zoning, which has been incorporated in recent high profile rezonings such as Hudson Yards and Greenpoint-Williamsburg.

The Committee was also pleased to host a presentation on the Jamaica Plan, an ambitious rezoning initiative covering 368 blocks in Jamaica, Queens. John Young, Director of the Queens office of the Department of City Planning, led the presentation, along with a number of staff members from the Queens office there to help present and answer questions. The Jamaica plan is intended to encourage mixed-use growth in downtown Jamaica, while preserving the low-scale residential character of surrounding neighborhoods. This initiative is currently being reviewed under ULURP and our committee intends to submit testimony in support of the plan.

Upcoming activities will include a presentation from Columbia University on their application to rezone a large area of West Harlem for a proposed new "Manhattanville" campus. If you would like to join us, please contact co-chair Zachary Bernstein at zbernstein@manatt.com

Goals and Plans for Next Year

The Metro Chapter Executive Committee has established many goals for next year to continue our work as the "best" APA chapter. Some of these are to:

- Create a strategic plan
- Review committee structure and activities and expand membership
- Increase the number of events and educational activities
- Focus on increasing the diversity of our membership and of our activities
- Conduct our bi-annual conference
- Expand our communication with members and the public with improved electronic distribution of the *MetroPlanner* newsletter and wider use of our website and of broadcast email
- Continue and improve our collaborations with civic, educational and community groups around the city and the region