



STRATEGIC PLAN

2019-2024

Nebraska Chapter of the American Planning Association

Strategic Planning

To paraphrase Lewis Carroll in *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There*, “if you don’t know where you’re going, then it doesn’t matter which way you go!”

Strategic planning is one of the most important responsibilities of any organization’s leadership. It is the activity that establishes a clear vision for the organization and sets appropriate strategic objectives to guide fulfillment of the vision. It also helps align appropriate resources and deployment decisions to achieve the strategic objectives within the specified time frames.

Like all organizations, the Nebraska Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA-NE) is continually faced with a myriad of challenges and opportunities. In an era of limited resources (both human and financial), it is critical that the APA-NE’s executive board, committees, subcommittees, and members are focused in the same direction which underscores the need for a comprehensive and clear strategic plan. Therefore, the role of this strategic plan is to provide a platform that purposefully and clearly advances the direction of the Chapter.

The strategic plan helps identify and prioritize the specific initiatives that will assist the Chapter in reaching its desired destination. These projects will not happen overnight, nor can they be accomplished by one person. Careful planning and consideration should be given to each. The Chapter should rely on committees, subcommittees, memberships, and professional alliances to pursue strategic initiatives that benefit the entire Chapter.

This strategic plan is a thorough assessment of the Chapter’s stated mission, organizational structure, current condition, and future direction. Its purpose is to articulate where the Chapter wants to go, what it wants to be, and how it will get there. In other words, how to achieve its vision for the future.

Background and Preparation of the Plan

APA-NE is a constituent chapter of the American Planning Association (APA). Its membership is comprised of practicing planners, students, educators, interested citizens, and other professional disciplines throughout the state. As a constituent chapter, APA-NE members have access to a wide array of programs and services offered by the national organization. At the Chapter level, members are offered a range of support activities relevant to planning issues, concerns, and opportunities facing Nebraska, its residents, and its planning practitioners.

The APA-NE's Executive Board recognizes that a period of consistent policy, planning, and action will be required to make progress towards improving the Chapter's overall performance and the level and type of services offered to its members. Success can only be realized, though, if there is first a practical and useable, yet visionary, road map that ensures that Chapter goals are clearly identified, defined, and prioritized.

The development of APA-NE's strategic plan has been deliberate. Not only will the plan focus Chapter's resources (human and financial) on strategic priorities that can influence its future direction, it has been created to specifically address the ten (10) mandatory items required by APA for constituent chapters. These items include:

- Mission Statement
- Development Plan
- Work Program
- Bylaws
- Budget
- Financial Reporting
- Tax Return
- Use of "One APA" logotype
- Consolidated Elections
- Annual Report

The strategic plan is formatted in a manner that (1) identifies specific priorities to be achieved, (2) outlines actionable steps for achieving APA-NE priorities, and (3) identifies "champions" who will be responsible for implementing each of these short- and long-term priorities. Additionally, and perhaps as importantly, the plan communicates to all Chapter members what is expected and how to achieve success. Success is inherently dependent on the Chapter membership's involvement through volunteer committees.

This strategic plan is a living document that provides direction and operational guidance for the Chapter. The APA-NE's Executive Board will be diligent in monitoring progress made on identified priorities and to ensure that priorities accurately reflect the evolving needs and direction of the organization. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of this plan will help provide greater accountability and a stronger evidence base for future decision-making and communication activities.

Planning Process

On November 2, 2018, members of the APA-NE Executive Board held a strategic planning workshop to discuss and prioritize various goals for the Chapter. The purpose of the strategic planning workshop was to inform, educate, and build consensus among the APA-NE's Executive Board members so they could formulate strategies and target resources (both human and financial) to accomplish priority initiatives. JEO Consulting Group, Inc. (JEO) volunteered to facilitate the workshop.

Eight of the nine current board members were able to attend and participate in the workshop:

- Bruce Fountain, President
- Derek Miller, Past President
- Stacey Groshong Hageman, Vice President/PDO
- Matthew Roque, Secretary
- Chris Solberg, NPZA Liaison
- Gordon Scholz, UNL Faculty Liaison
- Cale Brodersen, SPAN Liaison
- Andrew Conzett, AIA Liaison



Treasurer Troy Anderson was unable to attend.

The workshop began with a review of the Chapter's existing mission statement, mandatory and elective items of an APA Chapter Development Plan (CDP), strategic issues surrounding APA-NE, and an identification of Chapter's committees, subcommittees, groups, and professional alliances.



Prioritization Process

The next step in the planning process was to identify short- and long-term goals of APA-NE. Using the mandatory items as the basis to facilitate the discussion, the six (6) consolidated Chapter goals include:

- Communications/Public Relations
- Membership Recruitment & Retention
- Professional Development/Education
- APA-NE Administration
- Legislative and Policy Programs
- Awards Program

The Chapter's goals were discussed in detail so Executive Board members could understand all associated issues, concerns, and opportunities surrounding each strategic issue. (A summary of the discussion is provided in Appendix A.) Using their understanding, insight, and professional expertise, Executive Board members were asked to consider and rank their top tier priorities using a sticker-dot exercise. Each member of the Executive Board was given four (4) sticker dots, or votes, to help rank the strategic goals in terms of organizational importance. The results of the first round of voting showed a clear consensus on three (3) Chapter goals:

Tier I Priorities

- Communications/Public Relations (7 Tier I votes)
- Professional Development/Education (6 Tier I votes)
- Membership Recruitment & Retention (5 Tier I votes)

These strategic issues were referred to as "Tier I Priorities," or priorities of highest importance to APA-NE, since they received a majority of first-round votes from Executive Board members.

Tier I Priorities were set aside, and Executive Board members were then asked to rank the remaining strategic issues. This time, each board member was given two (2) sticker dots and instructed to vote on "Tier II Priorities." Again, the strategic issue had to receive a majority (or near majority) of second-round votes to be considered a Tier II Priority. The results of the second round of voting indicated two Tier II Priorities:

Tier II Priorities

- APA-NE Administration (3 Tier I votes and 7 Tier II votes)
- Legislative and Policy Programs (2 Tier I votes and 7 Tier II votes)

The only other strategic goal, the Chapter Awards Program, did not garner a clear consensus and was therefore placed into a Tier III Priority category. This priority is still identified as an important goal for the Chapter; however, the Executive Board believes the Program is already strong and does not warrant expenditure of limited Chapter resources in the immediate future.

Tier III Priorities

- Awards Program (1 Tier I vote and 2 Tier II votes)

The Executive Board did express support for additional award nominations to be submitted at the national APA level, to recognize Chapter projects and members.

APA-NE Strategic Plan 2019-2024

Based on the discussion and prioritization of strategic issues, the APA-NE Executive Board refined its existing mission statement and developed a work program and development plan.

Our Mission

To better the communities and Chapter members of Nebraska by:

- increasing the awareness of planning and its impact upon people,
- advocating the development and implementation of sound planning principles,
- training community leaders to utilize the planning process and develop professionals, and
- creating value, engagement opportunities, and benefits for our members.

Work Program

The Chapter's Work Program is comprised of action items that support the strategic issues identified as **Tier I** priorities that should be accomplished in a one- to three-year outlook.

Strategic Objective	Action Steps	Responsible Committee(s)	Priority, Timeline
COMMUNICATIONS / PUBLIC RELATIONS			
Continue to produce and send quarterly Chapter newsletter	Recruit individuals to develop or provide content; partner with NPZA	Communications & Public Relations	Tier I, <i>On-going</i>
	Develop schedule for what goes in each newsletter on a regular basis	Communications & Public Relations	Tier I, <i>Winter 2019</i>
Update and Maintain Chapter website	Work with National APA to update Chapter website and identify process for continuous updates	Communications & Public Relations	Tier I, <i>On-going 2019</i>
Improve social media presence	Develop social media policy	Communications & Public Relations	Tier I, <i>2019</i>
	Recruit SPAN student or other individual with expertise for social media management	Communications & Public Relations	Tier I, <i>Winter 2019</i>
Use social media efforts to increase community outreach	Identify what information should be shared, who it should be shared with, and when	Communications & Public Relations	Tier I, <i>Spring 2019</i>
	Identify potential communication partners (i.e., economic development and community development groups)	Communications & Public Relations	Tier I, <i>Spring 2019</i>
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT / EDUCATION			
Continue to build and grow professional development opportunities	Partner with affiliated groups for fall workshop	Professional Development / Education	Tier I, <i>Spring 2019</i>
	Maintain and grow mentorship program	Professional Development / Education	Tier I, <i>Ongoing</i>
Support members pursuing AICP certification	Create better awareness about existing AICP exam preparation assistance and resources	Professional Development / Education	Tier I, <i>Spring 2019</i>

Strategic Objective	Action Steps	Responsible Committee(s)	Priority, Timeline
Increase collaboration with like professional disciplines and associations	Encourage Chapter members to attend conferences and events of like disciplines	Professional Development / Education	Tier I, Ongoing
	Determine feasibility of offering member rate of conferences to members of allied associations	Professional Development / Education; Administrative	Tier I, Spring 2019
	Create a formal relationship with other associations to hire and share part-time administrative support	Executive Board; Allied Professional Associations	Tier I, Summer 2019
Continue to support UNL's community and regional planning program	Consider creating fund or endowment to further support student attendance of planning conferences	Professional Development / Education	Tier I, Fall 2019 - Winter 2020
	Continue to fund annual student scholarship through the Chapter	Professional Development / Education; Budget	Tier I, Ongoing
	Support on-going and future accreditation efforts	Professional Development / Education	Tier I, Ongoing
MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT & RETENTION			
Increase Chapter membership	Encourage multi-state membership for those along Nebraska-Iowa border	Membership Recruitment & Retention	Tier I, Summer 2019
	Research and outline what a state-only membership would look like	Membership Recruitment & Retention	Tier I, Spring 2019
	Create "sell sheet" to attract new members and encourage employer support of membership	Communications & Public Relations; Membership Recruitment & Retention	Tier I, Spring 2019
Encourage existing member to be more involved in Chapter	Identify new chairperson/people for Emerging Planners Group	Membership Recruitment & Retention	Tier I, Winter 2019
	Recruit more mentors for mentorship program	Membership Recruitment & Retention	Tier I, Winter 2019
	Encourage regional social events and assist in creating awareness of these events	Membership Recruitment & Retention	Tier I, Spring 2019
Improve communication with and support of existing members	Develop and send new member welcome letter or information packet	Communications & Public Relations; Membership Recruitment & Retention	Tier I, Summer 2019
	Develop and send congratulations letter to the employers of members who pass the AICP exam	Membership Recruitment & Retention	Tier I, Spring 2019

Strategic Objective	Action Steps	Responsible Committee(s)	Priority, Timeline
CHAPTER ADMINISTRATION			
Consider changes to the organizational structure	Review by-laws, propose updates, survey membership, and revise by-laws	Administrative; Executive Board	Tier II, Summer 2019
	Pursue options to hire part-time administrative support (see "Create a formal relationship..." in Professional Development / Education section)	Administrative; Executive Board	Tier II, Summer-Fall 2019
	Reevaluate annual meeting structure	Administrative; Executive Board	Tier II, Fall 2019
	Continue supporting Chapter President's attendance and involvement in National APA	Administrative; Executive Board	Tier II, Ongoing
Encourage active membership	Recruit more members to serve on committees and take ownership of initiatives	Membership Recruitment & Retention; Executive Board	Tier II, Ongoing
	Recruit more mentors to support mentorship programs.	Membership Recruitment & Retention; Executive Board	Tier II, Ongoing
	Develop succession management plan to facilitate smooth transitions and consistency between Boards	Executive Committee	Tier II, Summer 2019
LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY PROGRAM			
Be more involved in planning issues	Develop process and identify person/people to pro-actively review and prepare bill summaries	Legislative	Tier II, Winter 2019
	When relevant, develop and share stance on planning issues	Legislative	Tier II, Ongoing
	Establish APA Legislative Day at Capitol	Legislative	Tier II, Winter 2020
Become a resource for legislators and elective officials for planning issues	Begin to build relationships with legislators and elected officials	Legislative; Executive Board	Tier II, Spring 2019

Chapter Development Plan

The Chapter's Development Plan is comprised of action items that support the strategic issue identified as **Tier III** priority. The development plan has a three- to five-year outlook.

Strategic Objective	Action Steps	Responsible Committee(s)	Priority, Timeline
AWARDS PROGRAM			
Continue to support excellence in planning	Encourage members to nominate projects for existing planning awards	Awards; Communications & Public Relations	Tier III, <i>Ongoing</i>
	Encourage state award applicants to also apply for national awards	Awards; Executive Board	Tier III, <i>Ongoing</i>
	Increase awareness about State and National Great Places award	Awards; Communications & Public Relations	Tier III, <i>Ongoing</i>
	Consider consolidating awards committee and nominations committee	Awards; Executive Board	Tier III, <i>Summer 2019</i>
	Support members pursuing FAICP certification	Awards; Professional Development / Education; Executive Board	Tier III, <i>Ongoing</i>