APA’S Response To Hurricane Katrina

- APA has a special “Katrina” section of the website that will allow us to continuously add both educational materials and functions.  
  [www.planning.org/katrina](http://www.planning.org/katrina)
- A collection of research materials and articles are available on the web at [http://www.planning.org/katrina/resources.htm](http://www.planning.org/katrina/resources.htm)
- AICP Training provided a Safe Growth workshop in Washington, D.C. in September. This workshop was originally planned as part of our “super topic” curriculum on Safe Growth, which has been a focus of APA for the past two years. This specific workshop curriculum was modified to focus more on disaster recovery and mitigation planning.
- The Planners Toolkit section of *Planning for Post-Disaster Recovery and Reconstruction, PAS Report 483/484*, the first all-hazards guidance manual for local planners developing plans for post-disaster recovery and reconstruction is available for free online. This manual includes a model ordinance and case studies of five different hazard scenarios — flood, earthquake, tornado, wildfire and hurricane. The report also offers planning tools for managing long-term community recovery after a natural disaster.
- We have created a resume posting section for members and others who wish to provide pro bono services. Many of our members have experienced floods, wildfires, earthquakes and other disasters and can offer valuable assistance to their colleagues and communities in these states. [http://www.planning.org/katrina/volunteering.htm](http://www.planning.org/katrina/volunteering.htm)
- Pro-bono Planning Assistance Teams of APA’s Professional Institute, AICP, will work with the impacted communities, on location, offering their assistance, expertise and knowledge. The volunteer experts will help community leaders address a variety of planning, rebuilding, hazard mitigation, and other needs.
- We are also continuing coordination of our efforts with other professional organizations and associations. As planners at the local level are making contacts with local Congressional leaders, our Policy staff in D.C. is making contacts as well.
- We have created a page listing offers of temporary employment for planners displaced by the hurricane. We know that many of our members have been directly affected and may need housing or jobs.  
  [http://www.planning.org/katrina/tempjobs.htm](http://www.planning.org/katrina/tempjobs.htm)
- We offered a new audio conference called *Disaster Recovery*, free for planners and others in the Gulf region on Monday, Sept. 19, 2005 at 4 p.m. EDT. More than 250 people participated. The conference focused on emergency permitting, visioning the next steps, rebuilding local businesses, historic preservation and FEMA long-term recovery planning.
- At our Leadership Meeting in Buffalo in late September, our national leadership worked to devise an organizational strategic framework to effectively respond to the needs of our members and everyone in the affected areas. The Board of Directors adopted a statement outlining...
A new GPA Board was seated at the Fall Conference in Columbus, September 28-30th. The former GPA Board has left our organization in great shape. During the past year, we have held successful conferences, provided training and remained financially secure. Many Board members dedicate substantial time and energy to provide services to GPA members for no compensation. We should all thank them for the results of their hard work.

Hurricane Katrina has been in the media continuously for several weeks. In addition to the devastation that has already occurred, I have heard from the Louisiana planning chapter that they expect 180,000 homes will need to be demolished after the waters recede. The need for planning and rebuilding of communities on the Gulf Coast is daunting. If you want to know how planners are responding, the APA website (www.planning.org) is the best place to look. APA is leading many actions, some which GPA members can directly assist.

GPA is an organization with much unrealized potential. Planning is increasingly recognized as an important profession in our state. Initiatives for water plans, small area or community plans, watershed plans and transportation plans are furthering our collective understanding and empowering action. The recipients of the 2005 GPA Awards, outlined in this Georgia Planner issue, represent some of the best planning work that has occurred during the past year. But the projects that received awards are only the tip of the iceberg of great efforts that occur in our state. Our membership has grown substantially during the past few years to over 900 members making GPA the 14th largest APA chapter in the U.S.

We should be proud of our state and planning chapter. Georgia has many fine communities, great federal, state and local parks, happy citizens of all ages and ethnicity with jobs or businesses that support many definitions for quality of life. GPA is the chief organization in our state with the mission to support planners, governments and other organizations to maintain and enhance the quality of life of Georgians.

GPA can find many more ways to fulfill our planning role from communication to pro-bono planning assistance. Technology can enable planners to work and communicate in new ways. Sharing experiences and success motivates other local governments to repeat that success. Educating citizens about growth challenges and planning can help our state to grow while improving the quality of communities.

A CHALLENGE TO ALL GPA MEMBERS! Try to find one new meaningful way to advance GPA and good planning in our state during the next year. I realize that most of us seek to improve planning everyday, but how can we push ourselves just a little more? I believe GPA members posses all the knowledge, tools and leadership needed to produce well designed and lasting developments, improve environmental protection and reinvest in existing communities in ways to benefit our state’s citizens.

Take the challenge and get involved with your fellow planners. Share a recent success in your area with colleagues, propose a new smarter growth ordinance in your community, take a stand to protect the environment in some manner. Let me know your thoughts and ideas for improving GPA. We have many brilliant and energetic members. Let’s use our talents to sustain the wonderful state where we live.

Dan Reuter, AICP
President
dreuter@atlantaregional.com
The Benefits of Installing Medians

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) estimates congestion in Georgia costs motorists and businesses $2.0 billion annually (2005). Many communities are discovering that the installation of raised medians can reduce congestion, improve roadway safety and save pedestrian lives, while providing landscaping opportunities for beautification. Research indicates crashes may be reduced by as much as 55% on congested arterial roadways (undivided) after installation of a raised median, with “head on” crashes virtually eliminated. In addition, roadway levels of service improve with fewer left turn conflicts, reduced congestion and delay and fewer accidents to clear; while left turns are channeled to median openings for permitted “U” turns.

Pedestrian refuge is also provided by installation of the median. Pedestrian refuge is, of course, a major benefit for urban and suburban roadways where pedestrian crossings may be particularly problematic (especially on multi-lane arterial roadways). The installation of raised medians greatly improves pedestrian safety. Research indicates pedestrian crashes on undivided roads are five times higher than on roadways with medians.

Attractive landscaping can also be included if local governments agree to maintain the landscaped materials. Beautiful medians are locally maintained on major arterials in Alpharetta, Augusta, Buford, Conyers, Gainesville, Marietta, Powder Springs and Savannah (to name a few). Research from Kansas, Texas and Iowa also indicates business impacts may be mitigated by improved levels of service, fewer accidents and less congestion. For some businesses, sales and employment actually increased after installation of medians due to a reduction in congestion and delay according to the studies.

To view “The Benefits of Installing Medians” CD (also available by mail) on Georgia DOT’s web site, please go to: http://www.dot.state.ga.us/specialsubjects/medians/index.shtml

For a copy of the CD (or the brochure), please e-mail keith.melton@dot.state.ga.us.

Do you have a SESSION idea for the 2006 Spring Conference in Athens on March 23 and 24?

Now is the time to make a session proposal for a 2006 Spring conference (due by January 27th). Contact Rob LeBeau at rlebeau@atlantaregional.com or visit the GPA website to receive the necessary form and submit by the due date.
Georgia Planning Association 2005—2006
Calendar of Planning Related Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>CONTACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 20th – 23rd</td>
<td>National Conference on Planning History</td>
<td>Coral Gables, FL</td>
<td><a href="http://www.urban.uiuc.edu/sacroph">www.urban.uiuc.edu/sacroph</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 20th – 21st</td>
<td>Transportation Design For Communities</td>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Karen.leone@coa.gatech.edu">Karen.leone@coa.gatech.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 4th</td>
<td>Planners’ Luncheon</td>
<td>Decatur</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kfield@ci.roswell.ga.us">kfield@ci.roswell.ga.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 7th – 19th</td>
<td>AICP Exam Testing Dates</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:AICPexam@planning.org">AICPexam@planning.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 14th</td>
<td>Georgia Land Use: Current Issues in Subdivision, Annexation and Zoning Law</td>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nbi-sems.com">www.nbi-sems.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 15th – 16th</td>
<td>Community Planning Institute</td>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>Autumn Shores (404) 679-0646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 30th</td>
<td>Newsletter Deadline</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:ROSSATCR@cs.com">ROSSATCR@cs.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 11th</td>
<td>P&amp;Z Workshop &amp; GPA District Luncheon</td>
<td>Perry</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pclark@mgrdc.org">pclark@mgrdc.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 23rd – 24th</td>
<td>GPA Spring Conference</td>
<td>Athens</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rlebeau@atlantaregional.com">rlebeau@atlantaregional.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 11th – 13th</td>
<td>GPA Fall Conference</td>
<td>St. Simons</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rlebeau@atlantaregional.com">rlebeau@atlantaregional.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you have an event to announce, contact Tracy Dunnavant, GPA Secretary, at TDunnavant@cityofnewnan.org.

---

How Can GPA Best Serve You?

I am honored to have been recently elected as Vice President of Chapter Services for GPA. I am excited about the opportunity to contribute directly to the continued growth and influence of our profession and I want to encourage as much feedback as possible on ways in which the organization can better serve its members. The Board is considering several issues on which I would welcome comments and suggestions, including:

- Updates and improvements to the website and newsletter
- Creation of an e-newsletter and listserve
- Strengthened relationships with other professional organizations
- More formalized support for District activities

Many thanks to Adam Hazell, who has helped gather input to date on some of these possible improvements. If you have any suggestions or comments concerning these issues or others, please contact me at [sharvey@urbancollage.com](mailto:sharvey@urbancollage.com) or (404) 586-0277.

Thanks!

Stan Harvey
Vice President for Chapter Services
APA’s response to recovery from Hurricane Katrina, including key planning principles to make the recovery most effective and equitable.

♦ We will provide a workshop at the Louisiana Chapter Conference October 6-8, 2005 on Recovery Planning. Faculty will consist of international experts who have provided disaster recovery assistance in places such as Australia, Sri Lanka, Japan and several countries of Latin America as well as within the U.S.

♦ We are soliciting gifts to the Planning Foundation of APA that will be used exclusively to support the planning efforts that will be undertaken by APA and our Chapters in Louisiana and Mississippi. While we will be coordinating pro bono efforts of members, those efforts, and others, will require financial support. Tax-deductible donations to the Planning Foundation should be noted as "Katrina relief." [http://www.planning.org/foundation/default.htm](http://www.planning.org/foundation/default.htm)

♦ APA is developing a special conference track for the National Planning Conference in San Antonio in April 2006, to educate our members about disaster mitigation and recovery.

♦ APA is providing a five-person team to evaluate and make recommendations regarding the planning function in New Orleans at the request of local officials and FEMA. The team, headed by Fort Worth Planning Director Fernando Costa, AICP, will be in residence three weeks, working with local planners and officials. APA anticipates providing teams of this type to other impacted communities.

♦ APA is collaborating with Congressional offices on federal legislation related to Safe Growth, rebuilding initiatives, and a variety of issues such as housing, transportation and the environment.

♦ APA will sponsor a summit of design profession organizations, to discuss how to leverage each other’s efforts.

♦ We will create a “kitchen cabinet” sounding board, for discussion of various strategies, in conjunction with Tulane University and key business leaders.

♦ APA will support education and constituent building (long-term support-building) using schools as “centers of community,” building a planning curriculum in Gulf Coast schools, special planning projects by community members and school kids, and establishing a potential link with the Gates Foundation.

♦ Coordinate circuit-riding planners to assist small communities to bring the discussion to the residents in a variety of venues, utilizing volunteer planners, AICP’s Fellows, and so on.

GPA DISTRICT 5 NEWS

Planning and Zoning Luncheon

GPA District 5 held its second Planning and Zoning Luncheon on September 8 in Macon. There were over 30 planning and zoning officials from the middle Georgia region in attendance. The guest speakers were: Ms. Kay Lee, a retired Southern Company executive who is currently Director of The Center for Facilitating Community Preservation & Planning located in Covington/Newton County; and Ms. Josephine Kelly, Director of Main Street Covington.

Newton County and the City of Covington are experiencing enormous growth. Newton County is the 8th fastest growing county in the United States. Community leaders are working together to resist the typical suburban sprawl and vow to preserve the character of the community for future generations. Using the Georgia Conservancy’s “Blueprints’ program along with other community charrettes, Covington and Newton County established a roadmap for the future. From this roadmap and using monies from an endowment and the establishment of several public/private partnerships, many innovative housing, commercial, and transportation projects have been developed.

(Continued on page 9)
The GPA 2005 Fall Conference was held on September 28 to 30 at the Historic Iron Works Conference Center in Columbus. This event drew an impressive 206 registered attendees for the conference. The conference location highlighted the Columbus community nestled along the Chattahoochee River and the schedule provided ample opportunity to learn and network.

The conference featured 40 breakout sessions in five tracks – Environmental Planning, Transportation Planning, Comprehensive Planning & Quality Growth, Urban Design & Historic Preservation, and Professional Development – dispersed over three days. Two mobile workshops were offered, including a bus tour focusing on Mill Redevelopment and a 16-mile bike ride to the Oxbow Meadows Environmental Learning Center. An opening presentation featured a panel of local officials discussing innovative practices in the Columbus area, highlighting historic preservation, economic development and SPLOST funded projects.

Special events included an opening reception at the Coca-Cola Space Science Center and the adjacent city park. The reception provided excellent food and drinks, with great entertainment from the Columbus State University jazz band, as well as admission to the space science center (and laser light show!). The annual Awards Lunch was held on Thursday and provided an opportunity for planners to hear about the innovative and quality planning undertaken around the state over the last year. The lunch featured a keynote address from Sue Schwartz, FAICP, AICP President, providing an update on planning activities related to Hurricane Katrina and a discussion on the Golden Age of Planning (which is now). The text of Sue’s excellent speech can be found on the GPA website – www.georgia planning.org.

The annual GPA membership meeting was held on Thursday afternoon followed by a casual reception in the Columbus Marriott. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs also held a Quality Growth Advisory Clinic and RDC Planning Directors meeting during the conference.

The success of this conference was due to the efforts of many people. Special appreciation goes out to our sponsors – ARCADIS, Jordan Jones & Goulding, Robert & Company, MACTEC, Vinyl Siding Institute, ESRI, Hughes Good O’Leary & Ryan, Grice & Associates, URS, EDAW, Day Wilburn Associates, and The Collaborative Firm – who provided financial support to help keep the conference economical for all attendees. Thanks also to the conference local host committee (headed by Patti Cullen at the Lower Chattahoochee RDC), session organizers, programs committee, and numerous speakers that volunteered their time. Finally, thanks to all the conference attendees for supporting your Georgia Planning Association and advancing the interest of the planning profession by participating in the conference.

Would your community like to host a conference in 2007?
This is an excellent economic development opportunity and a chance to highlight your community to planners from around the state. Contact Rob LeBeau at rlebeau@atlantaregional.com or visit the GPA website to receive the necessary form and submit by the due date.
Legislative Update

Senate Study Committees on Inverse Condemnation and Tree Ordinances

A Georgia Senate Study Committee on Tree Ordinances held one meeting on October 5th at the State Capitol. Senator Pearson who chaired the committee meeting authored legislation in 2005 to prevent local governments from enacting ordinances that restrict removal of trees on private property. It seems that the City of Atlanta tree ordinance was a primary impetus for the study committee as more than half of the meeting was devoted to the city's tree preservation requirements, fines and problems with enforcement. Atlanta Councilperson Mary Norwood was in attendance and assured the committee that the city was taking actions to correct problems that had been cited at the meeting. It was left as an open question at the meeting whether the legislation to restrict local tree ordinances would also apply to restrict local governments from regulating removal of trees in buffer areas along stream corridors or other buffer areas between industrial and residential areas. Other members of the Senate Tree Ordinance Committee include Senators Joseph Carter, Bill Heath, Steen Miles, Nancy Sheafer, Mitch Seabaugh and Jim Whitehead.

A Senate Study Committee on Inverse Condemnation held a 3rd meeting in Dahlonega on October 6th. The meeting was very well attended by property owners who would be impacted by stream buffers along small water supply watershed tributaries in Lumpkin County. Senator Pearson coauthored SB 30 in 2005 and also chaired the meeting. Mr. David Hunnicut of "Oregon In Action" was the first speaker to the committee. Mr. Hunnicut presented the experience of the State of Oregon with Proposition 37. Among other items discussed by Mr. Hunnicut, he recommended that Georgia lower the bar on the requirements to provide that a local government had committed a "taking". Pat Stevens, staff to the Metro North Georgia Water District provided a resolution on behalf of the Water District and other supporting comments for stream buffers. Charles Ruffin, attorney for the law firm of Gambrell and Stolz also suggested that the threshold to prove a taking in Georgia was too high as evidenced by a case of a client who did not receive a rezoning for a 30 room hotel. The Part 5 Environmental Criteria of the 1989 Planning Act are squarely in the cross-hairs of the legislation. Other members of the committee include Senators John Wiles, Don Balfour, Eric Johnson, Chip Rodgers, Mitch Seabaugh, Robert Brown, and Michael Meyer Von Bremen.

Planners across Georgia should make sure local officials, planning commissioners and citizens are aware of the possible impacts of Senate Bill 30 or any related inverse condemnation legislation. It is very unclear what unintended consequences could occur as a result of inverse condemnation legislation. Hundreds and eventually thousands of petitions to compensate landowners for perceived takings, get a release from various local regulations or allow a rezoning will likely be an immediate impact. Litigation and administrative costs to local governments could be staggering. Finally, it is difficult to imagine how implementation of the law would not substantially impact statewide environmental protections and the strength of local land use control through zoning ordinances and other regulations. Planners and others must find our voices or 2006 may be the year private property advocates and real estate interest groups find a means to undermine regulations that the vast majority of citizens and property owners have counted on for decades.
GPA Gives 9 Awards at Conference in Columbus

GPA presented the recipients of its 2005 planning awards in Columbus at the association’s annual fall conference September 29th. This year, GPA received a record 21 nominations for awards. “If there was ever any doubt about whether cutting-edge planning was being completed in Georgia, there certainly isn’t anymore,” said Jerry Weitz, chair of the 2005 awards committee. “It was really quite difficult to turn any of them down,” he said.

This year, GPA recognized 9 plans, projects, studies, and persons for excellence in planning, from virtually all parts of the state. “We usually award only one or two projects in the “outstanding planning document” and “outstanding planning process” categories, but this year given so many outstanding submissions we had to do something different,” Weitz said. The association found that most of the substantive planning projects could be grouped naturally into the following categories, with 2-5 submissions in each:

- Regional transportation planning
- Transportation corridor plans and studies
- Historic preservation and redevelopment
- Environmental planning
- Land use and zoning

There were 16 GPA members who served as awards jurists this year. The 9 award recipients and description of the award are as follows:

**Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Organization, Chatham Urban Transportation Study, Outstanding Planning Project, Regional Transportation Planning, for “Connecting Savannah: Moving People, Making Neighborhoods.”** The awards jury found that the Connecting Savannah plan warranted an award especially for its clear identification of key transportation needs and its concise documentation.

**City of Atlanta Bureau of Planning, for Outstanding Planning Project, Transportation Corridor Study, for “Ponce de Leon/Moreland Avenue Corridors Study.”** The awards jury found that the corridors study warranted an award especially for its comprehensiveness, clear identification of the vision, and thorough documentation.

**Blueprint Brunswick, Outstanding Planning Process, Historic Preservation and Redevelopment, for “Blueprint Brunswick: A Development Strategy for Historic Brunswick.”** “With the blueprint strategy, Brunswick is poised to make much-needed, quality redevelopment happen” said Jerry Weitz, chair of the awards committee. “Reviewers were particularly impressed by the detailed designs and financial studies that went into the work,” he said.

**City of Atlanta Bureau of Planning, Outstanding Planning Document, Historic Preservation and Redevelopment, for “Butler-Auburn Redevelopment Plan Update.”** The update of the redevelopment plan holds substantial promise in terms of implementation. “The awards jurists found it is very high quality and comprehensive with regard to its findings and recommendations. Kudos to Atlanta for another job well done,” Weitz said.

**Arabia Alliance, Outstanding Planning Document, Environmental Planning, for “Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Management Plan.”** “The more I read of this plan, the more impressed I was,” said Weitz. “The management plan is absolutely outstanding in its innovation, comprehensiveness, and implementation detail,” he said.

**Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission, Outstanding Planning Document – Land Use and Zoning, for “Mid-City Land Use Plan and Rezoning Program.”** Awards jurists found that the rezoning program presented in simple terms how it will change rules to allow for desired development outcomes, and Mid City was considered an excellent template for Savannah to continue following in its zoning reform efforts.

(Continued on page 9)
and mixed-use developments have been constructed in the last several years. In addition, Newton County has embarked on a major greenspace/trail program to protect one of its major streams and provide its citizens with an excellent passive recreation area. Realizing that preserving community character is a regional effort not just a local one, Newton County and Covington are partnering with neighboring cities and counties on several quality growth initiatives.

The Center in which Ms. Lee is associated has its mission to support “community preservation through collaborative planning and design, and provide an environment for learning and sharing creative solutions to accommodate growth.” Ms. Lee used three very important words throughout her presentation: PLAN, ACHIEVE, INSPIRE. Having a plan is not enough, we must achieve something from that plan to inspire others to continue, and from that the cycle continues.

Ms. Kelly, originally from New Zealand and Main Street Director since 2001 elaborated on several of Ms. Lee’s comments, particularly referencing projects that have been or currently being developed in downtown Covington. She indicated that the downtown area has experienced a significant resurgence since this planning and preservation program began.

Ms. Lee and Ms. Kelly were an inspiration to all of us in the audience. If they can do that in Newton County why can not we in our communities. It is a challenge for all of us planners and community leaders.
Lunchtime is usually a time for refreshment and relaxation; a time to get away from the daily grind for at least one hour. On September 20, 2005 at the Middle Georgia RDC office in Macon, fifteen planning and zoning officials throughout the middle Georgia region attended the first zoning “brown-bag” seminar; an opportunity to have some food and drink and to hear an excellent presentation from one of the state’s foremost experts in the planning and zoning field; Mr. Vernon B. Ryle, III, Executive Director of the Macon-Bibb County Planning and Zoning Commission. Mr. Ryle’s seminar topic was the Zoning Procedures Act and its administration. Mr. Ryle led the attendees through the intricate details of the Act, explained the critical importance of following this law, and demonstrated how they can protect their local zoning process from being challenged.
CHANGE OF ADDRESS: The Georgia Chapter does not maintain address lists. All lists are maintained at the national office and are mailed to the local chapters each month. If you have moved, e-mail: addresschange@planning.org, go to Member Login at www.planning.org, or write to:

Membership Department  
APA National Headquarters  
122 South Michigan, Suite 1600  
Chicago, Illinois 60603-6107

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: If you are interested in joining GPA or the American Planning Association, contact the national headquarters at the address above or call (312) 431-9100.

CONTACTS: Direct financial inquiries and address payments to the Treasurer. Direct questions about chapter records to the Secretary. Direct matters for the Board of Directors to the President. See mailing and email addresses inside.

SUBMISSION: The Georgia Planning Association welcomes articles, letters to the editor, photos of planning events or state happenings, calendar listings, job notices, planners on the move, etc. We are always interested in publishing items you think may be of interest to others throughout the state. Graphics are especially welcome. Articles may be edited for space. Articles printed in any issue of The Georgia Planner are not the expressed opinion of the Chapter.

DEADLINE: The deadline for the next issue is November 30, 2005.

Send items for the newsletter to:

William F. Ross  
ROSS+associates  
2161 Peachtree Road, NE Suite 806  
Atlanta, Georgia 30309  
Bill@planross.com

DEADLINE: November 30, 2005.