



GEORGIA PLANNER – June 2007 Newsletter of the Georgia Planning Association, A Chapter of the American Planning Association

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Georgia Chapter
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Georgia Chapter
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GEORGIA PLANNER

Newsletter of the Georgia Chapter of the American Planning Association
JUNE 2007

AICP CERTIFICATION MAINTENANCE IS REAL!

by Gary Cornell

It happened on Friday, April 13 in Philadelphia. The AICP Commission voted to make AICP Certification official. This means that from now on, AICP members must earn professional development credits in order to maintain their AICP status. For all the details, I urge you to go to <http://www.planning.org/certification/maintenance.htm> and read the new rules of the road. Here is a brief overview:

The certification period is a two-year cycle that starts on January 8, 2008. In the two-year period ending December 31, 2009 you will need to earn 32 credits (each hour of qualified training is worth one credit.) Among these 32 credits, 1.5 must be in ethics and 1.5 hours must be planning law.

All 32 credits must be earned from courses approved by APA. These may be APA-sponsored courses, APA graduate degree courses, or other registered providers. GPA will become a registered provider so that GPA conference sessions can provide most of the hours you will need. You can also count qualifying continuing education courses sponsored by other, related professional associations. In the coming years, GPA will develop other eligible courses to offer between conferences in different locations in the state.

ELECTION ALERT!

This fall several elective seats on our GPA Board will be up for re-election, including AICP Director at Large, Treasurer, Vice President for Programs, Vice President for Chapter Services and three District Directors. These vacancies on the GPA Board provide a great opportunity for additional members to take on leadership positions within our organization. We particularly need to increase the diversity of our leadership. All nominees must be a member in good standing of APA and be at least 18 years of age. If you are interested in serving or would

If you have not been using the voluntary CPD log, you will all need to become more “intentional” and disciplined about professional development. Prior to January, 2008 you should establish a log on the AICP certification website, make a plan for how you will earn your credits, check the AICP website in advance to ensure that training courses you plan to take are recognized as eligible by AICP, and then record the courses you take on your personal log.

As the Professional Development Officer for our Chapter, I can help RDC’s, colleges, and other potential course sponsors enroll in the program to establish course eligibility on behalf of our Chapter. During the next few months the Professional Development Committee will be conducting an inventory of potentially eligible professional development activities throughout the state so we can publicize their availability. You can really help by passing on information to me about sources of potentially eligible professional development activities for our inventory. You can also join the GPA Professional Development Committee if you would like to help organize and publicize our professional development program. Call me at (678) 333-0229 or email me at gcornell@jgg.com. ■

like to suggest candidates, contact Debbie Miness, Chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee, at dminess@gaconservancy.org. In addition to being selected by the committee, nominees may be made by submitting a written petition with the name of the nominee, the position to be filled, and the signatures of ten or more GPA members to the Nominations and Elections Committee on or before July 21, 2007. For more information about the board and the election process, see the GPA Bylaws under “About GPA” on the GPA Website www.georgiaplanning.org).

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2007 GPA AWARDS PROGRAM

Submittal deadline: Tuesday July 31, 2007

The GPA awards program recognizes individuals, studies, processes and projects that demonstrate an exceptional level of excellence and persons who have made outstanding contributions to the field of planning. An unbiased jury of your professional peers will be responsible for selecting award recipients. The awards will be presented at the fall conference in Savannah. The following general criteria will be used to evaluate each project nominated and the work of individuals nominated.

- **Innovation** – Originality of concept or appreciable refinement of existing techniques or procedures.
- **Transferability** – Potential application in other areas or to other projects.
- **Quality** – Excellence of thought, analysis, writing, graphics and character of presentation.
- **Implementation** – Effectiveness: Proposals either carried out or show promise of doing so.
- **Comprehensiveness** – Planning principles observed, especially their effects on other public objectives.

Sign up today by filling out the application form found on the GPA website at <http://www.GeorgiaPlanning.org>. ■

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GPA MEMBERSHIP LETTER

Dear Georgia Planners

I am writing this letter to inform you about many important and exciting activities that have occurred in the past year related to Georgia planners and the American Planning Association (APA). During the past year we have been fortunate to have valuable persons serving the Georgia Chapter of APA through many activities including: creation of a new website; quarterly hard copy newsletters and monthly e-newsletters; new planning commissioner’s newsletter; conferences and successful legislative activities.

The roots of APA go back to the year 1917 and the Georgia Chapter which began in the early 1960s was incorporated as a non-profit in 1968. APA has 46 chapters and 19 divisions devoted to specialized planning interests. The American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) is APA’s professional institute, which certifies planners who have met specific educational and work criteria and passed the certification exam. The Georgia Chapter shares in the history of planning in the U.S. and is the only organization in the State of Georgia that is concerned comprehensively with building better communities whether the issue is new regulatory tools, transportation planning, housing, urban design or the environment.

APA’s membership now exceeds 41,000 and the Georgia Chapter exceeds 1,000. Georgia is the 9th largest state chapter. While many planners come in contact with APA only through state chapter conferences, reading “Planning Magazine” or electronic newsletters, I can testify that APA is a very large organization embracing many aspects of planning from rural activities to urban issues and environmental concerns to influencing the development of the federal transportation reauthorization bill.

Many important activities have occurred through APA and your Georgia Chapter that I want to bring to your attention. First, as you can observe from this newsletter, APA has undertaken a national branding process to better link the national organization’s identity to state chapters and other elements of the organization. APA has begun a process to make all state chapters and divisions logo’s, websites and other materials more recognizable with the national branding. The Georgia Chapter was a pilot for this branding effort and thus you can see the changes in our logo and soon in our newsletters and website: www.georgiaplanning.org.

At the 2007 APA conference held in Philadelphia from April 14th to 18th, the AICP Commission approved a plan for Certification Maintenance. Certification Maintenance was an important step for planners who have attained the AICP professional certification. Much more information about Certification Maintenance can be found at <http://www.planning.org/certification/maintenance.htm>.

APA recently launched a new program known as “Great Places” to recognize the existing neighborhoods and communities in the U.S. that are models. APA undertakes substantial legislative activities including a Fall Policy Conference. The Journal of the American Planning Association (JAPA) is published quarterly and edited by Georgia Tech’s David Sawicki and “Practicing Planner” is edited by Georgia’s Jerry Weitz.

The Georgia Chapter is instituting a process and request to members to join special interest “Divisions” within the state. Unlike Chapter “districts” which are geographically based, the Division will allow members with specific interests from zoning to environmental planning to communicate via the Georgia Chapter website forum or during state conferences. Please look for an announcement on the Georgia Chapter Divisions in an upcoming newsletter or on the chapter website.

At the 2007 Georgia Chapter Spring Conference Membership Meeting, we voted to increase the Georgia Chapter dues from \$25 annually to \$35. This dues increase will be effective with new and renewing membership starting in October of this year.

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:
American Planning Association
97774 Eagle Way
Chicago, IL 60678-9770

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 or visit their website at www.planning.org.

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 **August 31, 2007**.

Send items for the newsletter to:
William F. Ross
ROSS+associates
2161 Peachtree Road, NE Suite 806
Atlanta, Georgia 30309
Bill@planross.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - visit the website for the current events listing

June 1st	Southface – Sustainable Atlanta Roundtable	Atlanta, GA	www.southface.org
June 6th – 7th	Collaborative Growth Visioning	Chicago, IL	www.planning.org
June 6th – 7th	Effective Zoning Techniques	Chicago, IL	www.planning.org
June 8th – 9th	Transportation/Land Use Connection	Chicago, IL	www.planning.org
June 8th – 9th	Urban Design and Site Planning	Chicago, IL	www.planning.org
June 23rd – 26th	GMA Annual Conference	Savannah, GA	www.gmanet.org
July 13th	Southface – Sustainable Atlanta Roundtable	Atlanta, GA	www.southface.org
August 2nd – 3rd	GAZA Summer Conference	St. Simons, GA	www.georgiazoning.org
August 3rd	Southface – Sustainable Atlanta Roundtable	Atlanta, GA	www.southface.org
August 8th – 11th	Planning and the Black Community Conf.	Gary, IN	www.planning.org
September 6th – 7th	Common Ground 2007: Clean Energy Solutions for Georgia	Atlanta, GA	www.georgiaconservancy.org
September 7th	Southface – Sustainable Atlanta Roundtable	Atlanta, GA	www.southface.org
September 19th – 21st	GPA Fall Conference	Savannah, GA	rlebeau@atlantaregional.com
October 2nd – 6th	National Historic Preservation Conf.	St. Paul, MN	www.nthpconference.org

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The primary purpose of the membership dues increase is to fund administrative assistance to our Chapter. All state chapters larger than Georgia and many smaller have administrative staff assistance. There have been many demands over the years placed on volunteers to make the Georgia Chapter successful. New administrative help with conference activities, financial management and communication will help ensure the Georgia Chapter remains successful.

Many individuals on the Board of the Georgia Chapter and non-board members have used their personal time and professional experience over the past year to benefit you and planning in Georgia. It would be difficult to list all of the accomplishments and time that these persons have invested, but please know that many planners are actively seeking ways through the organization to help Georgia planners and your communities be successful.

Finally, I would like to encourage you to attend the upcoming Georgia Chapter Fall Conference in Savannah, September 19th – 21st at the Marriott Savannah Riverfront. We expect over 200 participants attending breakout sessions, plenary sessions, awards lunch, and receptions. For the first time, the Georgia Chapter is offering a Conference Scholarship Award, which will provide free conference registration and a night stay at the conference hotel for free to one person from each of the Georgia Chapter Districts. The applicants for the scholarship will be evaluated based on need and benefit to the community and the deadline is July 31st. More information is available on the chapter website.

I have been a planner in Georgia for 18 years. The time I have spent seeking to understand the tools and strategies of other planners and communities in Georgia and the U.S. has been invaluable. The Georgia Chapter is your doorway towards greater knowledge and success in planning. I am hoping that you will continually find ways to engage your peers and elected officials in your own community, attend a state or national planning conference, or suggest new ways to that the Georgia Chapter of APA can better serve our members or role in Georgia. Thank you for your membership!

Sincerely,
Dan Reuter, AICP, President
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American Planning Association
Making Great Communities Happen

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LEGISLATIVE RECAP

The 2007 session of the Georgia General Assembly ended on April 20th. All bills from this session that were not voted on will be available for reconsideration in the 2008 session.

TRANSPORTATION

Both transportation funding bills (HB 434 and HB 442) received hearings in House Ways and Means Committee but did not move further this year. Another vehicle, SR 365- a Joint Study Committee on Transportation Funding sponsored by Senator Jeff Mullis, passed and will be used to study the transportation funding issue before the 2008 session begins.

HB 434: Regional Sales and Use Tax/Transportation Purposes — Reps Chuck Martin, Richard Royal, Jon Burns

HB 442/HR 506: State-wide 1 Cent Sales Tax for Transportation / Constitutional Amendment — Rep Vance Smith

SR 154: Joint Human Services Transportation Study Commission — Senator Jeff Mullis
STATUS: Passed the Senate and House committee. Dead for this year.

HB 293: Cap all Gas Tax at 15 cents — Rep Steve Davis
STATUS: Dead for this year.

HB 307: Tax Credit for Using Transit — Rep Chuck Martin
STATUS: Dead for this year.

SB 19: Timely Utility Relocation in Transportation Projects — Senator Jim Whitehead
This bill assists GDOT in moving transportation projects forward in a timely manner by holding utility companies accountable when relocating their facilities.
STATUS: Passed; awaits the Governor’s signature.

HB 232: Impact Fees Relating to Transportation Projects — Rep Ed Lindsey
Limits transportation projects to assigned areas rather than allow them for system wide improvements as the current law reads. The bill only applies to the City of Atlanta.
STATUS: Passed; awaits the Governor’s signature.

HB 192: GDOT Negotiated Contracts — Rep Vance Smith
This bill increases the amount that GDOT can execute a negotiated construction and maintenance contracts from \$50,000 to \$100,000.
STATUS: Passed; awaits the Governor’s signature.

HB 202: Transportation Contractors Behind Schedule — Rep Ben Harbin
This bill prohibits a contractor who is working on a state public works project, or a GDOT contraction or maintenance project and who is behind schedule by 25 % from bidding on additional state work until the delinquent work is completed or brought current.
STATUS: Passed; awaits the Governor’s signature.

HB 219: Motor Fuel Sales Tax — Rep Richard Royal
Moves the collection of local sales tax on motor fuel from the retail level to the distributor level
STATUS: Passed; awaits the Governor’s signature.

AICP Exam Prep Session Slides Available Online

Slides from the 2007 AICP Exam Prep Session in Philadelphia are now available online in PDF format. They may be found in two locations: the PDO website (www.planning.org/pdo/member/index.htm) and the AICP Certification website (www.planning.org/certification.htm).

Certification Maintenance Update

An additional CM FAQ document is now available on our CM website located at <http://www.planning.org/certification/maintenance>. This site is also linked from the PDO webpage.

November 2007 AICP Exam Schedule Announced

July 24, 2007
Exam Fee Payment by Check Deadline

July 31, 2007
Exam Audit Deadline
Exam Scholarship Deadline

August 14, 2007
November 2007 Exam Application & Registration Deadline

November 5-19, 2007
November 2007 Testing Window

November 2007 Exam Reduced Fee Scholarship Information

Reduced Fee Scholarship information is now available for the November 2007 AICP Exam. Please see the document entitled “November 2007 Reduced AICP Exam Fee Scholarships” attached to this Memo. Remember that the scholarships listed for your chapter represent your total allotment for the entire year, or both 2007 AICP Exam cycles. Your scholarship selections should be sent to Lidija Saric (lsaric@planning.org) and must be received no later than July 31, 2007.



Awarding More Than One Scholarship Per District

If allocated funds are still available after the Committee has selected the one recipient per district because no applications were received from one or more of the districts, the Committee has the discretion based on further review of the applications to award more than one scholarship per district.

Awards to Previous Recipients

Recipients of prior Scholarship Awards will be prohibited from applying for future scholarships, but other planning and zoning staff and commissioners from the same community will be eligible to apply.

Post-Conference Survey

At the end of the Fall Conference, each recipient of the Conference Scholarship Award will be asked to complete a survey where they would be asked: 1). If they felt from what they learned at the conference it will help their community and their job responsibilities as they described in the scholarship request form; 2). If from the conference they would seek membership in the organization; and 3). How GPA could better serve them and their community. The intent of the survey is to provide feedback to the Scholarship Award Committee on how they can make the Scholarship program better, and to the GPA Board on how they can better reach out to those who have not participated in GPA activities in the past. ■

CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIP AWARD APPLICATION

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Title: _____

Agency/Firm: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email Address: _____

On a separate piece of paper, please provide the following information on the need for the scholarship and the benefits to your community and job responsibilities in attending the conference.

1. Demonstration of Need: Explain why you would not be able attend the Fall Conference without the scholarship award.
2. Demonstration of Benefit to Your Community: Explain the benefits your community would derive by having you attend the Fall Conference.
3. Demonstration of Benefit to Your Job Responsibilities: Explain how would attending the Fall Conference significantly benefit your job responsibilities.

Please submit this application form with your conference registration form by July 31, 2007 to:

Mr. Dan Reuter, GPA President
Atlanta Regional Commission
40 Courtland Street, NE
Atlanta, Ga. 30303

Thank you for your interest in the conference scholarship awards program.

GPA CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

There are probably many planning and zoning officials in the state that would like to attend the GPA Fall Conference because of its educational and networking value but can not afford the registration fee and lodging expenses. To help meet this need, the GPA Board of Directors has taken some funds allocated for District-wide events and have established the Conference Scholarship Award Program. This program would allow one person from each GPA District to receive a scholarship to attend the annual GPA Fall Conference. This scholarship would equate to a waiver of the registration fee for the conference and one-night free registration at the conference hotel. These scholarships would be awarded beginning with the 2007 Fall Conference in Savannah. The following standards and procedures have been established for Conference Scholarship Award Program.

Standards

The following standards would apply to the awarding of the scholarships.

1. Demonstration of Need- The applicant would have to demonstrate that they would not be able to attend the conference without the scholarship.
2. Demonstration of Benefit To Their Community- The applicant would have to demonstrate the benefits their community would derive by attending the conference.
3. Demonstration of Benefit to Their Job Responsibilities- The applicant would have to demonstrate that attending the conference would significantly benefit the performance of their job responsibilities.

Application Process

All applicants for the scholarship award will be required to complete both a conference registration form and a separate Scholarship Request Form and submit them simultaneously prior to the early registration deadline. In 2007, the forms should be sent to Dan Reuter, GPA President no later than July 31.

Establishment of Scholarship Awards Committee

To obtain a fair and objective review of all of the applications, a Scholarship Awards Committee will be appointed to include the GPA President, GPA President-Elect (if present), Past GPA President (if present), VP for Programs and other appointments made by the GPA President that are not District Directors. The District Director’s role would be to promote the Scholarship Program and to send out applications to the communities in their region.

Awarding of the Scholarships

Shortly after the early registration deadline for the Fall Conference, the Scholarship Awards Committee would meet to review each of submitted applications taking into consideration the standards defined above. The Committee would make their decision no later than two weeks prior to start of the Conference. The Committee would inform the award winners and those not selected by e-mail shortly after the Committee’s decision.

LAND USE

ACCG/GMA COMPROMISE ANNEXATION LEGISLATION
HB 2: Veto Power by Counties to Annexation — Rep Doug Holt
This bill is the compromise bill by ACCG and GMA. The new legislation replaces the non-binding dispute resolution process with a binding one.

- County has 30 days to review a proposed annexation and file an objection.
- Objections can be filed if there is material change in zoning, land use, density or infrastructure demands.
- An independent 5 member arbitration panel appointed by DCA whose members are from outside the county will hear the complaint.
- The panel must consider current land use, zoning, and infrastructure.
- If the complaint is substantiated certain conditions must be set on zoning land use and density.
- The conditions are finding for one year and the decision can be appealed to the Superior Court.

STATUS: Passed; awaits the Governor’s signature.

HB 258: Public Meeting after DRI Review — Rep Mike Jacobs
STATUS: Dead for this year.

SB 200: Infrastructure Development Districts
— Senators Johnny Grant, Steve Thompson
This bill would allow for the creation of special infrastructure districts whose purpose is to finance certain types of infrastructure projects such as roads, water & sewer systems, parks, libraries, and schools. The petitioner must complete all required federal, state reviews and DRI review. Language was added on the last day stating that DCA and the RDC of jurisdiction shall consider the comments of a contiguous RDC in formulating its findings in the DRI review process for such a development district.
STATUS: Passed; awaits the Governor’s signature.

HB 610/SB 256: Outdoor Advertising
— Rep Vance Smith/Senator Jeff Mullis
STATUS: Dead for this year.

HR 12 Creation of Milton County
— Rep Jan Jones, Mark Burkhalter, others
STATUS: Assigned to House Governmental Affairs (committee’s rule states that no new incorporation or change in county structure will be passed out of committee this year, but will be studied and attended to in the 2008 session)

SB 82: Creation of the City of Dunwoody
— Senators Weber, Johnson, Shafer
STATUS: Passed the Senate and House committee; dead for this year.

SB 89/SR 130: Townships — Senator David Adelman and others
This bill and accompanying resolution for a constitutional amendment would create the structure by which townships in Georgia could be created. Townships would have zoning powers and be able to annex and be annexed into municipalities.
STATUS: Passed the Senate; dead for this year.

HB 511: Joint Study Committee on Local Governments
— Rep Austin Scott
STATUS: Dead for this year.

NATURAL RESOURCES/WATER

HB 54 and 55: Regulation of Inter and Intrabasin Transfers
— Rep Alan Powell & Tom McCall
River Basin Protection Act — Rep Powell & McCall
STATUS: Dead for this year.

SB 69 Protection of River Basins — Senator Preston Smith
STATUS: Dead for this year.

HB 70: Change Definition of Local Government to MNGWPD
— Rep Tommy Benton
STATUS: Dead for this year.

HB 596: Return Flows — Rep Bob Hanner
STATUS: Dead for this year.

SB 221: Land Disposal sites receiving Septic tank Waste
— Senator Bullock, Tolleson
The bill removes county government veto from future septage land application sites.
STATUS: Dead for the year.

HB 471: No Transfer of Private Water or Sewer Allowed
— Rep Ron Stephens
This bill prohibits local governments or authorities from requiring private wastewater or drinking water systems be deeded to the local government as a condition of permit issuance or local approval. Counties in the MNGWPD are exempt.
STATUS: Passed; awaits the Governor’s signature.

HB 463: Soil Erosion & Sedimentation Act change exemptions
— Rep Tom McCall
This bill would change the standards set forth in the act. The House Rules committee addressed concerns from many groups with the bill. Now, at least one person who is certified by EPD must be on site when land disturbing activities occur.
STATUS: Passed; awaits the Governor’s signature.

SB 306: Creation of a North Fulton Water Authority
— Senator David Shafer
This local legislation creates a new authority in North Fulton.
STATUS: Dead for this year.

OTHER

SB 88: Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act
— Senator Renee Unterman
This bill creates a Power of Attorney for a Minor Child and will give parents a means to grant authority to grandparents and great-grandparents to act on behalf of the child without requiring a court proceeding.
STATUS: Passed the Senate and House committee; dead for this year.

2008 Aging Budget Issues:

- Increased funding for adult day care licensure.
STATUS: Conference Committee increase \$215,500
- CCSP funding for eligible elderly clients providing services for them to continue living at home.
STATUS: House and Senate agreed to provide \$2,079,800.
- Provide for 1000 new slots in Non-Medicaid Home and Community Based Services Program.
STATUS: \$2,7000,000.
- Provide additional funding for the Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORC)
STATUS: Conference Committee provided \$200,000.

SR 20: Tax and Revenue Limitations — Senators Rogers, Seabaugh, Pearson, Wiles, others TABOR: This bill requires a constitutional amendment and is a state revenue and expenditure limit. It limits the amount of revenue the state could spend yearly to no more then the previous year’s expenditure plus the sum of inflation plus population change.
STATUS: Passed the Senate and House committee; dead for this year.

HR 3: Property Cap Tax — Representative Ed Lindsey
This bill calls for a constitutional amendment to cap property taxes at 3% a year or the rate of inflation whichever is lower.
STATUS: Dead for the year.

SB 71: Limit SPLOST Election Dates — Senator Tommy Williams
This bill changes the timeframe that counties could hold SPLOST referendums from 4 times a year to once a year in November.
STATUS: Passed the Senate; dead for this year.

SB 92: Department of Revenue Reporting Changes — Senator Tommy Williams
This bill will require that the state revenue department provide more detailed data to local governments on where sales taxes are actually collected at retail points-of-sale.
STATUS: Passed the Senate; dead for this year. ■

GEORGIA PLANNING ASSOCIATION FALL CONFERENCE

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Upcoming Planners Training Service (PTS) Workshops

APA is offering four two-day PTS workshops in Chicago June 6-9, 2007. We will offer workshops on the following topics: Urban Design and Site Plan Review, Effective Zoning Techniques, Community Visioning, and the Transportation-Land Use Connection. Please visit www.planning.org/pts for more information and to register. The registration deadline has been extended to May 24th.

APA Audio/Web Conferences

Check out APA’s 2006-2007 Audio/Web Conference Training Series! This year’s program series delivers convenient, long-distance training directly to your desktop or conference room on topics such as Inclusionary Zoning and Green Communities. For more information on conference topics and to register, please visit: <http://www.planning.org/audioconference/>.

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Professional Practice Center

Make the new Professional Practice Center your online resource for information about the profession of planning and AICP. Look for sections on certification, licensing, planners’ job descriptions and salaries, comparisons with allied professions and international organizations, and much more. Its clear descriptions of what planning is and what planners do may help you explain to non-planners how planning — and your own work — contributes to vital communities.

The Professional Practice Center may be found online at: <http://www.planning.org/propractice/index.htm>. ■

In Memoriam

Denise Bonotto Abboud
July 10, 1963 – June 7, 2007

Her Loving Husband

Marwan Abboud

Her Children

Michael and Adriana

Her Friend

Bill Ross

GEORGIA INFRASTRUCTURE — THE BAD NEWS AND GOOD NEWS

by Dan Reuter, AICP, President, GPA

If there is one thread that could sum up many of my opinions reported in GPA articles during the past two years it is that I believe our best years of building infrastructure are behind us. This opinion was confirmed today in a new study completed by the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and the accounting firm Ernst & Young. As reported in the May 14th Atlanta Journal Constitution (AJC): “The study compared American investment in transportation and other infrastructure to that in other countries. It found that China “boldly builds new infrastructure to support future generations,” according to a summary of the report, while the U.S. sits on its laurels and even defers maintenance on roads as long as people can drive on them. The report titled “Infrastructure 2007: A Global Perspective” offers a comprehensive look at the status of current and planned infrastructure investment and development in a variety of categories in countries worldwide, with a particular focus on the United States, China, Japan, India, and Europe.

More information on the ULI and Ernst & Young report can be found at: <http://www.uli.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=News&CONTENTID=81610&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm>

Consider the amazing infrastructure built in the U. S. during the past 50 years. Now consider the substantial portion of that infrastructure which was funded by the federal government, particularly transportation infrastructure. Now recall what you know about our existing national debt and future demands on the federal budget for social security to aging baby boomers, Medicare and Medicaid, funding for the military, and other large ticket items. We have large future federal budget needs, a large existing budget deficit and overwhelming existing national debt.

Inquire about current methodologies for forecasts of future federal funds and you are told that regulations require the basis of historical revenues. Question issues of the national debt and you are told that the federal government has always taken care of the transportation system as a priority. But the facts are that there is an excellent chance we will have substantially fewer federal dollars in the future for roads or transit.

Georgia Department of Transportation Commissioner Harold Linnenkohl and I appear to be in agreement on this point. As he stated in the May 14th, AJC article: “Public-private partnerships certainly will have an important role in rebuilding our infrastructure,” Linnenkohl said. “But, as I told the (federal)

Surface Transportation Policy Commission in February, I believe that role will be limited; the federal and state governments will continue to bear the predominant financial responsibility for transportation infrastructure, and we have difficult decisions to make in the days ahead.”

It is my belief that we cannot get even get close to building the scale of infrastructure during the next 50 that was built in America in the past 50 years. The reasons are many from escalating construction costs to insufficient revenues, competing fiscal needs, new laws and government bureaucracy. This emphasizes the need to make wise and long term choices with our limited funds available. The good news to this story and possibly a point that Harold Linnenkohl and I might disagree is that we have substantial existing infrastructure that is very poorly used. We have many smaller cities in Georgia, many interstate interchange areas, many state highways, existing rail lines, many areas with water and sewer that are built at the same residential and commercial density that existed 25 or even 50 years ago. Even the densities near many MARTA rail stations have changed little since they were completed.

I have a hot real estate tip for you. Buy land that is close to existing job centers or near existing attractions either natural amenities or entertainment. Develop land in areas with existing infrastructure where a person may not need to drive an hour to find a job. Georgia is not going to stop growing even though we won’t have enough funding for new infrastructure. We will grow much more in population but building or living far from jobs, hospitals or existing infrastructure will look more and more foolish. If you want to know where most of the development, most of the population, the economic activity and infrastructure will be located in 25 years, look out the window, it is already there. ■

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