

Reflections on Planning and Leadership

A conversation with GPA Presidents

2025 GPA Fall Conference, Athens, Georgia

October 9, 2025

Moderator: Kristen Wescott, AICP



Q	A
First Job	Sales Associate, Joann Fabrics
Current Job	Traffic/Transportation Manager, Sandy Springs
Oddest Job	Short Order Cook at Sweeney's Saloon in Saint Paul, MN
Undergrad Degree	B. A. Political Science (Carleton College)
Grad Degree	Master of City Planning (GA Tech)
Fav Mascot	Gritty (Philadelphia Flyers)
GPA President	2024-2025
Other GPA / APA	AICP Exam Committee, VP-Chapter Services, Chapter Services Committee, Professional Development Committee, National Planning Conference Committee (2014)
Rational Planning or Muddling Through?	Muddling Through

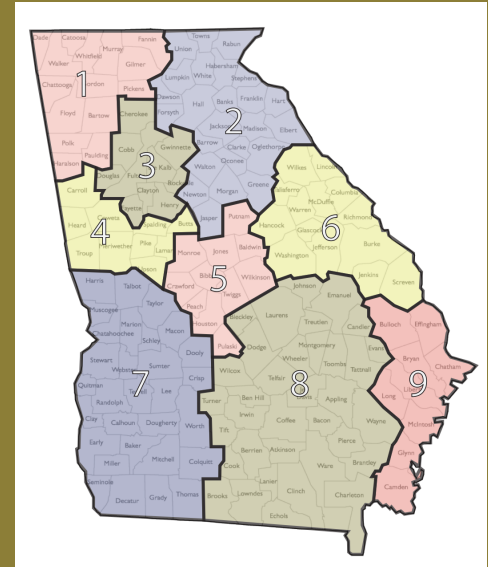


American Planning Association
Georgia Chapter

Creating Great Communities for All

- Georgia Chapter of the American Planning Association
- Current Membership: $\approx$ 1,100
- Georgia Planning Association Board: 26
- How to join: <https://planning.org/join/>

Georgia Chapter Districts



HOW TO GET INVOLVED

- Programs Committee
- Chapter Services
- Professional Development
- Financial Committee
- Policy and Advocacy
- Awards Committee
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

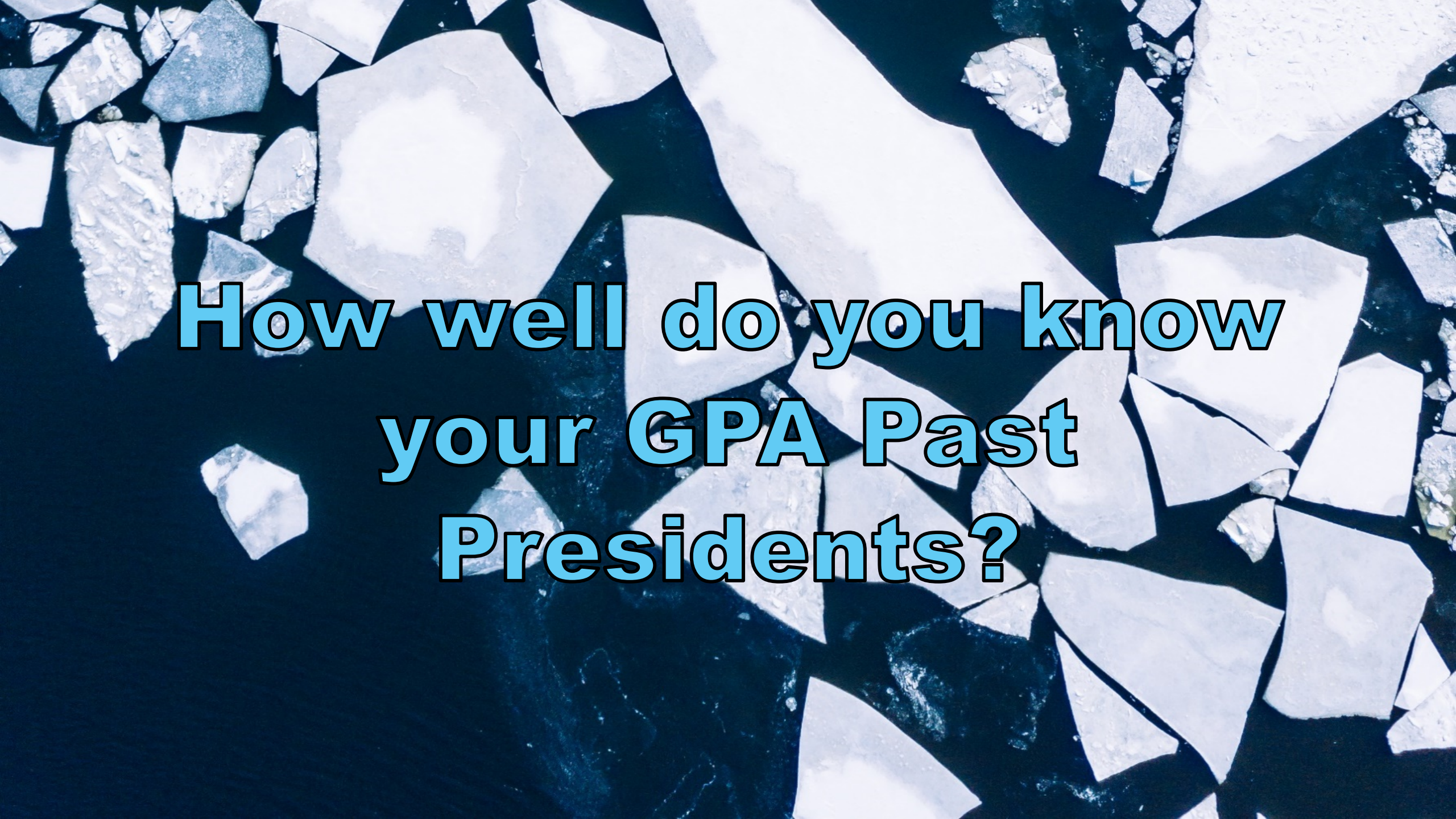
- Mentor Committee
- Climate Action
- Emerging Planners of Georgia (EPG)
- UGA College of Environment and Design Student Planning Association (SPA)
- Georgia Tech City and Regional Planning Student Planning Association (SPA)

<https://georgiaplanning.org/join-a-committee/>



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The background of the image is a close-up photograph of shattered glass. Numerous sharp, translucent fragments of glass are scattered across a dark, possibly black, surface. The lighting creates strong highlights and shadows on the edges of the glass shards, emphasizing their jagged and irregular shapes. The overall composition is abstract and textured.

**How well do you know
your GPA Past
Presidents?**

Mentimeter



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Panelist: Jerry Weitz, FAICP



Q	A
First Job	Dishwasher
Current Job	Consultant
Oddest Job	Cook
Undergrad Degree	Political Science
Grad Degree	Planning
Fav Mascot	
GPA President	2003-2005
Other GPA / APA	APA Editor, Practicing Planner (AICP), Planner's Press Author
Rational Planning or Muddling Through?	Muddling Through

Panelist: Daniel Studdard, AICP



Q	A
First Job	Arby's
Current Job	Planning Administrator, Atlanta Regional Commission
Oddest Job	Food/water/ice delivery at the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta
Undergrad Degree	Journalism/Mass Communications, University of Georgia
Grad Degree	City and Regional Planning, Georgia Tech
Fav Mascot	Georgia Bulldogs! Uga V for the specific bulldog
GPA President	2020-2021
Other GPA / APA	GPA VP Chapter Services, AICP Director at Large, Chapter Services Committee, Finance Committee, Programs Committee, Young (later re-named Emerging) Planners Group Co-Chair, APA National Planning Conference Committee (2014)
Rational Planning or Muddling Through?	Muddling Through (But with a Vision)

Panelist: Eric Bosman, FAICP



Q	A
First Job	Newspaper Delivery Boy
Current Job	Vice President at Kimley Horn
Oddest Job	Professional Miniature Golfer
Undergrad Degree	Clemson University, B.A. Design (Architecture)
Grad Degree	University of Illinois, Master of Architecture and Master of Urban & Regional Planning
Fav Mascot	Blooper
GPA President	2013-15
Other GPA / APA	GPA Treasurer 2007-2013, 2014 National Planning Conference co-host, 2024 AICP College of Fellows
Rational Planning or Muddling Through?	Rational Planning (with human influence)

Panelist: Whitney Shephard, PE



Q	A
First Job	Bookkeeping Assistant
Current Job	Engineer/Planner, Restaurateur, Policy Advocate
Oddest Job	Mural Artist (most fun, anyway!)
Undergrad Degree	BS Civil Engineering and BS Architecture, Ga Tech
Grad Degree	MS Civil Engineering, Ga Tech
Fav Mascot	BUZZ (but I miss the Savannah Sand Gnats)
GPA President	2022-2023
Other GPA / APA	EPG President, Mentor Program Chair, District 9/10 Director, Programs Committee, APA Legislative and Policy Committee, State Legislative Liaison
Rational Planning or Muddling Through?	That's why I am an advocate!

Leadership Lightning Round



What do you get out of your
involvement in Georgia
Planning Association?

Why is it important to
be on a committee?

What has been your
involvement in the
American Planning
Association?

What is your involvement in
organizations outside of
Georgia Planning Association?

How has your involvement
impacted your leadership
development?

Who do you most
admire as a leader?



Trends

What are the greatest
issues facing planning?

What are your thoughts
about AI and planning?

How do I talk to my
community about
sustainability and
resilience?

How do I talk to my
community about
equity, diversity, and
inclusion?

A pair of hands is shown from the palms up, cupped together. A vibrant rainbow light spectrum is projected onto the palms and fingers. The colors transition from red at the base of the fingers, through orange, yellow, green, blue, and finally to purple at the tips. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The text "What's Next?" is overlaid in white, sans-serif font on the left side of the image, partially covering the left hand.

What's Next?