APA California Pasadena Conference 2016
Session Track Descriptions

Resiliency. Cities and communities are always creatively positioning themselves for resilience and to respond to the changes, including post-recession economic resilience, droughts and adaptation strategies to deal with climate change. How has your city capitalized on existing assets, turned a challenge into an opportunity, re-imagined a place to make it part of the community again? Did you leverage transit or other infrastructure investment or capture foreign investment? Topics may include district transit planning, economic development, coastal planning, or infrastructure planning.

Sustainability. This track focuses on the "nuts and bolts" ways in which California cities and communities are promoting sustainability, reducing our carbon footprint and protecting natural resources and the environment through their planning efforts. Topics may include the professional response to changes to CEQA (new exemptions for Transit Oriented Development, the move from the level of service analysis to vehicle miles traveled, etc.) and projects that advance state legislation on complete streets and affordable housing. Sessions that feature strategies for addressing gentrification and displacement issues are encouraged. Agriculture, Ecosystem planning, and resource management are also appropriate topics for this track.

By the Numbers (Data, Demographics, and Technology). Dramatic demographic shifts and technological changes are occurring in cities and communities throughout the state. There's a lot of buzz about "big data" and "smart cities," but how are planners using data and technology to analyze planning problems and inform planning recommendations? Topics in this track should feature the use of data and technology in projects and highlight how either was used to better understand demographic changes, how they informed plan recommendations, or how they were used as tools for public outreach or influence decision makers. Sessions that show how data and technology were used to evaluate the outcomes or effectiveness of planning decisions are also encouraged.

City Beautiful 2.0. There is a renewed interest in civic, and public spaces and cities are again investing in the public realm. What does the "City Beautiful" movement of the 21st Century look like and how does it compare to its historical predecessor? Sessions in this track should feature city beautification and public infrastructure projects that are changing people's relationship with place. What partnerships (interagency, interdisciplinary, public/private, etc.) were forged to get projects off of the ground? The sessions should describe project impetus champions and funding. Projects can range from a parklet, plaza or innovative streetscape project to a major new park, bridge reconstruction or 50-year river ecosystem master plan.

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Community Outreach—The Art of Communicating with the Public. Planners are always looking for new and more effective ways to engage stakeholders in the decisions that affect their communities and to use technology to reach wider audiences. Public input often challenges planners to think creatively about a range of urban planning issues with good outcomes. Sometimes community resistance to change can lead to detrimental outcomes that have hampered economic growth and led to chronic housing shortages statewide. How can planners have more productive conversations and better educate communities about the need to accommodate growth in sustainable ways, and to help all parties better understand the ramifications of our choices when we don't? Sessions in this track should feature examples of outreach efforts and strategies where planners have been both successful and unsuccessful in winning public opinion on important plans and projects—highlighting strategies used and the outcomes as case studies.

Crafting Meaningful Regulations. This "nuts and bolts" track is intended to feature case studies of instances where planners developed regulations to solve an identified planning challenge or problem and the regulations that were crafted in response. Whether it's design and development standards to deal with mansionization and neighborhood character or regulations to protect industrial land from encroachment or to set rules for the sharing economy, sessions in this track should delve into the detail of crafting regulations—defining the problem, describing the analytical process and the tools used, detailing the regulations themselves and how the public and decision-making process shaped the regulations, as well as how the regulations have been working.

Evaluation Criteria

All sessions will be evaluated on the following criteria:

Transferability. How transferable the lessons are to other cities and communities.

Diversity. What degree the session addresses planning responses to changing demographics and diverse communities.

Timeliness. How the topic or case study is reflective of an important current trend and addresses a challenge that is shared by other communities.

Sustainability. How it advances sustainability goals across topics.

Innovative Format. Sessions that involve good use of technology, interactivity or some other innovative format will score favorably.

Consistency with track. Sessions that fit the theme of one or more of the six conference tracks will be prioritized.