Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association
Strategic Plan
2014 - 2018
Introduction

Background

In November 2013, President-elect Jason Franklin created a strategic planning committee comprised of Peter Gutowsky, member-at-large, John Russell, Treasurer, and Becky Steckler, Program and Policy Manager, to create a plan to update the Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association’s (OAPA) strategic plan. The current strategic plan was created in 2010 for the 2010 – 2015 period. Given staff and leadership changes in 2013 and 2014, as well as changes in the Chapter’s outreach and activities, the Board felt that it was time to update the strategic plan.

Strategic planning is a process of defining organizational strategies or directions and making decisions about allocating resources to pursue this strategy, including policy, capital, and people. Strategic planning strengthens the management decision-making process by recognizing and addressing key internal and external factors that affect the organization. In short, a strategic plan is a management tool.

How the Strategic Plan Works

The purpose of strategic planning is to help OAPA align everyday operations with our organizational mission statement. The strategic plan is a tool for the Board and staff that provides guidance for the organization. It establishes an operational framework guided by goals, strategies, and actions. The process includes the organization asking itself the following questions:

1. Where are we today?
2. Where do we want to be in five years? and
3. How do we get there?

These questions are answered through an assessment of current and potential internal and external factors that affect the everyday operations of the organization. Once identified, these factors are categorized into overarching initiatives to pursue in the next five years. Next, goals are created to address the initiatives, and then the goals are carried out through specified strategies.
Methods

OAPA staff and volunteers engaged in a strategic planning process from November 2013 through June 2014. The project included three phases: (1) project organization, (2) environmental scan, and (3) strategic plan.

The project organization phase was conducted in November 2013 to January 2014. A proposed planning process was presented and approved by the OAPA Board at the Board meeting on January 10, 2013. In addition, OAPA hired a strategic planning intern, Carmen Kuncz, a student from the University of Oregon, to join the strategic planning team.

The environmental scan phase was conducted in February and March 2014. Steckler and Kuncz received input from: 16 current and in-coming OAPA Board members and staff via a survey and interviews; nine DLCD staff members from a meeting held on Friday, March 14; and 19 interviews of OAPA members, volunteers, and officials representing a variety of organizations that are involved in land use planning issues in Oregon.

The strategic planning phase was conducted between April and June 2014. The Board met for a strategic planning retreat on Friday, April 4 to work on key strategic initiatives and refine goals and strategies. A draft of the Strategic Plan was reviewed at the May 2, 2014 meeting and a final Strategic Plan was adopted at the May 29, 2014 annual meeting.

Mission Statement

The mission of OAPA is to carry out the Mission of the American Planning Association (APA) and to:

A. Promote the art and science of planning in Oregon.
B. Help planning professionals in their profession.
C. Advance the practice of planning and opportunities for planners.
D. Emphasize the importance of achieving the final vision/goal over mere procedure.
E. Protect the legacy of our state’s natural environment.
F. Nurture the improvement of our built environment.
G. Foster social and environmental equity.
H. Advocate for every citizen’s opportunity to participate.

APA Mission Statement:

APA is an independent, national, not-for-profit educational organization that provides leadership in the development of vital communities by advocating excellence in community planning, promoting education and citizen empowerment, and providing the tools and support necessary to meet the challenges of growth and change.
Strategic Initiatives

To help OAPA further excel in achieving and fulfilling its mission, Board members set forth the following key initiatives for OAPA to focus on for the next five years:

- **Professional Development.** Oregon needs highly skilled planners to plan for great communities. OAPA will provide workshops and trainings on a variety of topics in multiple locations throughout the state for member and non-member planners.

- **Advocacy.** Oregon needs champions of planning who can advocate for sound planning practices and policies. OAPA will provide information to decision makers and the public in order to provide a better understanding of the impacts of planning decisions.

- **Community.** OAPA needs resources and a structure that enables volunteer leaders and staff to accomplish the organization’s goals and support the needs of its members. OAPA will work to ensure that the organization is efficient and effective and provides networking opportunities for members.
Goals and Strategies

The following Goals and Strategies directly respond to the key initiatives OAPA defined above. The strategies were designed to be specific, measurable, and achievable.

**Goal 1.** Ensure that planners in Oregon possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities to create and sustain vital communities. (Professional Development)

- **Strategy 1a.** Promote membership in the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) by providing information about and support for achieving certification.
- **Strategy 1b.** Support members of AICP by ensuring access to in-state certification maintenance opportunities, especially regarding legal issues, ethics, and community engagement.
- **Strategy 1c.** Provide high-quality and affordable training and networking opportunities for planners throughout Oregon.

**Goal 2.** Lead and shape discussions about policy issues. (Advocacy)

- **Strategy 2a.** Provide legislation, policy education, and advocacy. Advocate for, and educate members about, both legislative and ongoing land use policy at the state level.

**Goal 3.** Increase opportunities for the public, elected and appointed officials, and partner organizations to understand the impacts of land use planning decisions. (Advocacy)

- **Strategy 3a.** Training and education for non-professionals. Create and expand high quality, affordable trainings and educational opportunities for non-professionals (such as elected and appointed officials). Additionally, develop public education programs to communicate the value of planning so the public can connect land use to their everyday lives.
Goal 4. Ensure that the organization has the staff and volunteer leadership necessary to achieve its goals.

(Community)

**Strategy 4a.** Increase membership and networking opportunities. Focus on increasing membership among planners and non-planners in planning related fields. Provide both formal and informal opportunities for members to network and build career opportunities.

**Strategy 4b.** Awards. Continue and expand formal recognition of outstanding planners and planning projects as a way to further engage members and the broader community.

**Strategy 4c.** Expand use of communication tools and outreach. Increase the accessibility of land use information through social media and the OAPA website.

**Strategy 4d.** Revenue enhancement. Plan and price events at affordable rates to encourage participation. Provide the financial support necessary to host events and secondarily support other organizational programs and services.

**Strategy 4e.** Increase opportunities for volunteers. Support committees to foster volunteer participation in OAPA activities in all parts of the state.
Implementation

OAPA will implement the Strategic Plan through its annual business plan and budgeting process. OAPA utilizes a committee structure led by volunteers to provide services and programs. These committees are:

- OAPA Board
- Professional Development Committee (PDC)
  - Women and Diversity in Planning Committee
  - Ethics Committee
- Legislative and Policy Advisory Committee (LPAC)
  - Policy Subcommittee
- Education and Outreach Committee (EOC)
- Membership Committee
  - Emerging Planners Group (EPG)
- Awards Committee
- Oregon Planners’ Journal (OPJ) Committee
- Conference Committee