Celebrating National Community Planning Month (NCPM) in Oregon

Oregon has prominence as a leader in Planning in North America and our successes are worth celebrating. Does the public know what planners do and how we are partners in building great communities? Do our elected officials understand the contributions planners make to the success of their communities?

October is National Community Planning Month. While this effort is promoted nationally by APA and supported by Oregon APA (OAPA), the best celebrations are local and local planners can best tell their story. What are some things we can do to tell our planning story through #PlanningMonth? This document, organized into the following parts, provides ideas and resources to get you started:

- Get Inspired
- Plan Your Event Now!
- Next Steps
- Celebrate Your Successes
- Resources and Templates

For questions or if you need support, OAPA can help! Send us flyers, links to articles, or photos of your activities so we can share your plans and successes. Contact OAPA at susan@oregonapa.org.

Get Inspired

This year's theme — Housing as Community Infrastructure — highlights the importance of housing as part of our community fabric, and underscores the critical role planning plays in delivering the housing and communities the nation needs. Perhaps your community has a housing story to tell? Check out some past NCPM activities for inspiration and additional ideas:

https://storymaps.esri.com/stories/apa/ncpm/ (NCPM Storymap)
https://planning.org/blog/blogpost/9114704/ (NCPM by the Numbers)

Plan Your Event Now!

The following list provides a number of suggestions for your community to use in planning ways to celebrate planning and its accomplishments:

1. Have your governing body pass a proclamation (template included below) emphasizing the value of planning to your community’s past, present and future. How has planning created lasting value and carried out a vision for the future representing the values of
your citizens? Have your chief elected official introduce the planning staff. Proclamations by the offices of state and federal elected officials are also valuable to display the importance and interdependent nature of planning at all levels.

2. Draft a letter to the editor (template included below) of your local newspaper regarding #PlanningMonth and the importance of planning in your community and talk about how the public can get engaged in the community’s future. Or, sit down with a reporter that you’re familiar with and have a discussion about planning and new challenges facing the community in 2018 and beyond. Talk about NCPM on your website and include featured activities and links to APA/OAPA information and videos.

3. Invite residents to a Planning Month community meeting, open house or workshop(s) to discuss planning in your community or region, how residents can become involved, and let residents identify issues they would like to see addressed. Opportunities for planner/citizen one-on-ones are great ways to get input. Videos are available from APA to highlight #PlanningMonth and can be used for any special events.

4. If you have an ongoing planning effort (such as comprehensive plan update, downtown or district plan) schedule one of your public engagement activities in October and invite the public-at-large to see planning in action and how implementing the plan can shape and change the community using concrete examples.

5. Host an interpreted walking tour of your Main Street or community points/projects/neighborhoods of interest during October, explaining the history of these special areas and the role of planning in creating them.

6. Host a fun run or bicycle tour in October featuring your “great places” and let participants know how they can get involved in planning for the future, and how they can provide input on development proposals.

7. Approach your school district about sending planners to schools in October to talk about how communities are planned and how planners turn visions and ideas into great livable neighborhoods.


Following is a list of Oregon Great Places designated in the past by APA. We know there are many more that deserve to be on the list. The 2019 deadline for nominations likely will be in April and it would be great to have several new nominees from Oregon. Find additional information at https://www.planning.org/greatplaces/. OAPA can review nominations and lend our support!
Great Places in America in Oregon 2007-2017

Ashland, Oregon
Lithia Park

Portland, Oregon
5th and 6th Avenues – Portland Transit Mall
Governor Tom McCall Waterfront Park
Pioneer Courthouse Square
Ladd’s Addition

Lake Oswego, Oregon
First Addition

McMinnville, Oregon
Third Street

Next Steps in Preparing Your #Planning Month Plan

Draw up some ideas for National Community Planning Month in your community. Get consensus around one or more ideas from your staff and elected officials. Decide who will carry out the plan to make it happen. Contact APA at www.planning.org/ncpm and share your ideas with APA staff. They can help.

Celebrate Your Successes

Celebrate your planning successes! Planning a community tour, meeting, or special event to mark the occasion? Contact Oregon APA at susan@oregonapa.org and let us know. We’d love to highlight your efforts in our newsletter and on our website and social media outlets during the month of October and beyond.

Resources and Templates

The following resource pages include key messages, background information, a NCPM Proclamation template, language to use for websites and newsletters, and a letter to the editor template. Use these as a starting point and go from there.
PLANNING MONTH KEY MESSAGES

National Community Planning Month is a time to highlight the important role of planning in our communities. Planning can be summed up as comprehensive, community-focused and enhancing choices. Planning has a significant impact on their day-to-day life. From where they live, to how they commute, to the type of home they live in, planning plays a vital role in a person’s life and well-being.

**Planners help create communities of lasting value.** Planning helps leverage public and private funds that lead to business growth, job creation, and economically resilient communities.

**Planners are skilled at balancing the varied interests and viewpoints that emerge as a community plans its future.** Planners consider what is best for the entire community – senior citizens, workers, children, people living with disabilities, business owners, and elected officials. How do they arrive at these community-wide decisions? Through conversations with residents and thoughtful outreach to community stakeholders.

**Planners work for the greater good.** Planners work with professionals from different fields such as public health, recreation and engineering to make communities safer, stronger, and healthier. Planning does not stop at a geographic border. Communities are served best when planners take a broader viewpoint, encompassing regional and statewide perspectives.

**Planners have the unique expertise to comprehensively address the impacts of today’s actions on tomorrow’s communities.** Planners do not just focus on where to locate (or site) a building, but also consider how that decision impacts the safety of the community, the existing character of the community, how it impacts the environmental resiliency, and if the decision encourages social and economic diversity.

More than 15,000 planners have earned their professional certification. Certified planners pledge to uphold high standards of practice, ethics and professional conduct, while keeping their skills sharp and up-to-date by pursing advanced professional education.

**BACKGROUND**

What is National Community Planning Month?
Established in 2006, National Community Planning Month is celebrated each October as a way to highlight the role of planners and the importance of good planning in our communities. Across the country, communities celebrate planning through a variety of avenues including have a mayoral proclamation declaring October as community planning month; planning department open houses; community tours of APA designated Great Places in America; or photo contests. Planning is essential for our communities to prosper and maintain balance and cohesiveness.

Each year, a theme is identified to help a community highlight an aspect or outcome of planning. The theme can be used to organize events and activities within the community. The 2018 theme is **housing as community infrastructure.** Ensuring that all residents in a community have safe and affordable housing options advances economic and social equity goals. Inclusive growth planning and policies can give current residents a genuine stake in housing and development, while helping new residents access housing opportunity.

**Why celebrate Planning?**
National Community Planning Month is your chance to raise the visibility of planning, the planning profession, and to highlight the positive impact it has on your community. It is also an opportunity to share your stories with your appointed and elected officials to reinforce the importance of planning in your community.
COMMUNITY PLANNING MONTH PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, change is constant and affects all cities, towns, suburbs, counties, boroughs, townships, rural areas, and other places; and

WHEREAS, community planning and plans can help manage this change in a way that provides better choices for how people work and live; and

WHEREAS, community planning provides an opportunity for all residents to be meaningfully involved in making choices that determine the future of their community; and

WHEREAS, the full benefits of planning requires public officials and citizens who understand, support, and demand excellence in planning and plan implementation; and

WHEREAS, the month of October is designated as National Community Planning Month throughout the United States of America and its territories, and

WHEREAS, American Planning Association and its professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners, endorse National Community Planning Month as an opportunity to highlight the contributions sound planning and plan implementation make to the quality of our settlements and environment; and

WHEREAS, the celebration of National Community Planning Month gives us the opportunity to publicly recognize the participation and dedication of the members of planning commissions and other citizen planners who have contributed their time and expertise to the improvement of the (State, City, or County) of ________________ (insert name of state, city, or county); and

WHEREAS, we recognize the many valuable contributions made by professional community and regional planners of the ________________ (State or City or County) of ________________ (insert name of state, city, or county) and extend our heartfelt thanks for the continued commitment to public service by these professionals;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the month of October 2018 is hereby designated as Community Planning Month in the ________________ (State or City or County) of ________________ (insert name of state, city, or county) in conjunction with the celebration of National Community Planning Month.

Adopted this __________ day of ______________, 2018.

________________________________________ (SEAL)
Use this text for your planning department or firm's website in October:

National Community Planning Month is Here

All month long we’re celebrating the lasting value that thoughtful and innovative planning has for [insert community name]. Get to know the planners in your community; learn about the local planning initiatives underway; and maybe even attend your first planning-related meeting.

Want to get involved with planning the future of our community? Visit [insert department or firm web address] to learn how.

Learn more about National Community Planning Month at www.planning.org/ncpm.
Planning Month Letter to the Editor Template

Note: This template can be customized with specific examples from your community and with your community name. Keep in mind your target media outlet’s allowed maximum word count.

For additional tips on how to write an effective letter to the editor, visit APA’s Communications Guide: www.planning.org/communicationsguide/

Investing in Our Community

The planning process is essential for preserving and developing thriving, vibrant communities. Planning provides a roadmap for the community, addressing today’s challenges while simultaneously envisioning what we want our community to be in the future. This involves working together, taking innovative, community-based approaches to topics such as transportation, economic development, housing, and recreation. It is planning that creates communities that are healthy, safe and resilient.

Sometimes these initiatives require federal investment. The most recent round of federal budget discussions propose drastic reductions, or even eliminations, to some of the most essential tools planners use to advance our communities. Federal investment tools like Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME), Choice Neighborhoods Initiative, and TIGER Discretionary grants make possible the community spaces we love most.

These programs are tools for leveraging additional private and public investments that help create stronger local economies. They are investments in our communities that lead to more commerce, more jobs, and an improved quality of life for all. Without these federal investments, our communities might achieve their vision, it will just take longer, and we’ll have to make tougher cost-benefit decisions, foregoing some programs for the sake of others.

So this October, during National Community Planning Month, ask yourself what you enjoy most about your community. Use your voice to be an advocate for your community, and the tools, local and federal, that help our communities achieve their goals.

NAME (Include AICP/FAICP), Title
Location