Celebrating National Community Planning Month 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 (NCPM). 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 — Planning for Infrastructure That Benefits All — highlights how well-planned infrastructure projects (including roadways, transportation systems, housing, parks, and even broadband networks) strengthen communities, boost the economy, expand opportunity, and promote equitable development. Perhaps your community has an infrastructure story to tell? Check out some past NCPM activities and APA’s resources for inspiration and additional ideas:

- [https://storymaps.esri.com/stories/apa/ncpm/](https://storymaps.esri.com/stories/apa/ncpm/) (NCPM Storymap)
- [https://planning.org/blog/blogpost/9114704/](https://planning.org/blog/blogpost/9114704/) (NCPM by the Numbers)
- [www.planning.org/ncpm/tools/](http://www.planning.org/ncpm/tools/)
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 2019 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.

8. Spend some time in October on a discussion of your nomination for Great Places in America 2020. Planning is behind the places communities value most. For 12 years, APA has recognized the neighborhoods, streets, and public spaces that make communities stronger and bring people together through good planning.
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 2020 deadline for nominations likely will be in April and it would be great to have several new nominees from Oregon. Find additional information at [www.planning.org/greatplaces/](http://www.planning.org/greatplaces/). OAPA can review nominations and lend our support!

_Great Places in America in Oregon 2007-2018_

**Ashland, Oregon**  
_Lithia Park_

**Lake Oswego, Oregon**  
_First Addition_

**McMinnville, Oregon**  
_Third Street_

**Portland, Oregon**  
_5th and 6th Avenues – Portland Transit Mall_  
_Governor Tom McCall Waterfront Park_  
_Pioneer Courthouse Square_  
_Ladd's Addition_

**Next Steps in Preparing Your #PlanningMonth 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](http://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, and language to use for websites, newsletters, and letters to the editor. Use these as a starting point and go from there.
2019 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 choices that enhance the spaces where people live, work, and play. While many people may not realize it, 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.

Planning helps create access and opportunity for all. Through planning, strategic investments in innovation and infrastructure can boost the economy and strengthen communities.

Planners help create communities of lasting value. Planning helps leverage public and private funds that lead to business growth, job creation, robust infrastructure, 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, inclusive 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, healthier, and more just. Planning does not stop at a geographic border. Communities are served best when planners take a broader viewpoint, encompassing regional and statewide perspectives. This is especially critical for infrastructure projects, which are most successful when planned at a regional scale. Taking a regional focus ensures the infrastructure system will benefit those well beyond the immediate location of the project.

Planners have the unique expertise to comprehensively address the impacts of today’s actions on tomorrow’s communities. With a comprehensive big-picture perspective, planners are uniquely positioned to evaluate how decisions about the built environment, including transportation networks, building location and scale, and parks and green space, impact communities. When guided and informed by good planning, these decisions make communities safer, more resilient, healthier, more prosperous, and more equitable.

More than 15,000 planners have earned their professional certification. AICP-certified planners pledge to uphold high standards of practice, commit to a code of ethics and professional conduct, and keep their skills sharp and up to date by pursuing 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 mayoral or city council proclamations declaring October as community planning month; site visits for federal, state, and local elected officials; community tours of APA designated Great Places in America; or outreach to students. Planning is essential for the health, safety, equity, and economic well-being of all people living in our communities.

Theme
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 2019 theme is planning for infrastructure that benefits all. Infrastructure is defined broadly, extending to different types of projects ranging from roadways to transportation systems to parks and broadband networks. Housing is another critical component of a community’s infrastructure. Well-planned infrastructure projects strengthen communities, boost the economy, expand opportunity, and promote equitable development. Ensuring that all residents in a community have safe and affordable housing options advances economic and social equity goals.

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 2019 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 ________________, 2019.

__________________________________ (SEAL)
Chief Elected Official

__________________________________
Clerk
Sample text websites and newsletters 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 Letters to the Editor

Using points from the Planning Month key messages, write a customized letter with specific examples from your community and with your community name. Keep in mind your target media outlet’s allowed maximum word count.

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