



American Planning Association
Pennsylvania Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen

Spring Planning Forum: Making It Great Now

May 12, 2014, 9 am – 3:45 pm

Indiana University of Pennsylvania
 Kovalchick Convention and Athletic Complex
 711 Pratt Drive
 Indiana, PA 15705

Making it Great Now is a full-day program that focuses on revitalization strategies for Pennsylvania communities. The program will emphasize projects operating within short planning horizons using limited resources - strategies and methods that can be rapidly deployed, quickly implemented, and readily realized to advance community goals. The keynote speaker is *Andrew Howard, AICP of Team Better Block*, a leading expert in placemaking and transportation. The remainder of the program will be filled with a more local perspective – the “how to” and “hands on” of creative asset mobilization, organizational structure, community capacity building, institutional support, and civic engagement. An ethics panel will focus on engaging all community members, including populations that are typically underserved, and the promises and pitfalls of using social media to engage underserved populations.

Time	Event
8:30-9:00	Registration/ Coffee/Informal
9:00-9:15	Introduction Peter Zug, Executive Director, Governor’s Center for Local Government Services
9:15-10:15	Keynote Address Andrew Howard, Team Better Block
1 CM	

*Andrew Howard, AICP, is one of the **leading experts in transportation and placemaking** in the nation. His experience in both public and private sector transportation and land development planning and design provides him an excellent perspective on city and regional issues. His career combines two important American traditions: **entrepreneurship**—the spirit of enterprise, and **civic virtue**—the spirit of community. Andrew's overarching goal is to **equip new leaders to take action in their communities**. As the co-Founder of the Better Block and Principal at Team Better Block, Andrew **helps communities develop and organize their economic assets to build productive, resilient relationships across the public, private, and civil sectors**. Now being used in **over fifty cities and three nations**, the Better Block demonstrates **how temporary sustainability improvements to a single city block can build momentum for long-term financial, social and environmental advancements**. The American Society of Landscape Architects called it, “a 21st-century version of what the Chicago World’s Fair did in 1893.”*

10:15-10:30	Morning Break, Transition to Breakout Sessions
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10:30-11:45

1.25 CM

Concurrent Session 1 “Getting it Done in the Neighborhood: Plan Implementation in Latrobe”

Alex Graziani, AICP, City of Latrobe

*From bike and pedestrian trails to Main Street and Complete Streets, the City of Latrobe is working to **implement its comprehensive plan** and become a “**Pennsylvania Model Sustainable Community**”. In this session you will learn how Latrobe is **leveraging partnerships, capitalizing on small town assets** and **focusing its budget resources** to achieve the “Holy Grail” of implementation to create a safe, livable, and vibrant community.*

10:30-11:45

1.25 CM

Concurrent Session 2 “Ready, Set, Act”

Andrew J.G. Schwartz, AICP, RLA, LEED, Environmental Planning and Design
Amy Rockwell, Borough of Millvale

*How can communities with **limited resources** (staff, volunteers, budget, etc.) better position efforts for revitalization, retaining residents, and furthering quality of life? This session will focus on communities in the Western Pennsylvania region who have **developed effective comprehensive plans** and **embarked on successful plan implementation**. From **broad multi-municipal initiatives** to **strategically focused projects**, these communities have been able to create synergy through their actions and work towards the goals of their planning efforts.*

10:30-11:45

1.25 CM

Concurrent Session 3 “Quick Change: Building the Capacity to Implement in Corridor Communities”

Greg Jones, Economic Development South

*The purpose of this session is to outline the **innovative, implementation-based, approach** that EDS used to create one of the most successful **multi-municipal partnerships** in the region. Executive Director, Greg Jones, will discuss the approach that has resulted in an unprecedented partnership around comprehensive economic development of our communities – wherein issues of **redevelopment, marketing, transit & transportation, small business services, and environmental planning are addressed cooperatively** by our member municipalities.*

*This session will have a particular emphasis on how EDS has utilized this approach to **secure and leverage significant redevelopment resources in a very short period** – emphasizing how neighboring communities, working together on issues of shared interest and concern, can become more competitive for increasingly scarce local and state-wide resources.*

11:45-12:00

Transition to Lunch

12:00-1:00

.75 CM

Lunch and Luncheon Address

Mayor John Fetterman, Braddock

*Mayor Fetterman will speak on ongoing efforts to **revitalize Braddock, Pennsylvania**. Mayor Fetterman has drawn international attention in trying to revitalize the economy in Braddock. Recognition of Fetterman's efforts to **create youth-oriented programs, revitalize his town, and attract artists, entrepreneurs and other “creatives”** to his community were featured, in among other places, The “Brave Thinkers” edition of Atlantic Magazine, The New York Times, and The Guardian.*

1:00-1:15

Transition to Breakout Sessions

1:15-2:15

1.0 CM

Concurrent Session 4 “Just Do It: Lifting and Reinventing Johnstown”

Brad Clemenson, Pennsylvania Environmental Council

Kristen Denne, City of Johnstown

Michael Kane, Community Foundation for the Alleghenies

*This session will describe the details of how the City of Johnstown is reinventing itself through the Lift Johnstown Partnership. Lift Johnstown is working to **implement three plans** for rebuilding Johnstown as a vibrant small city. **Collaboration** in implementing the three plans is the centerpiece of Lift Johnstown. Each plan is a thoughtful, **creative examination of the assets and needs** of the community. Each plan came from a **different perspective** but recognized many of the same assets and **offered overlapping goals** in outlining steps to rebuild the economy, enhance the workforce, and improve the quality of life through recreation.*

1:15-2:15

1.0 CM

Concurrent Session 5 “More than an Eyesore: Facing the Costs of Blight in the Mon Valley”

An Lewis, Steel Valley COG

Amanda Settelmaier, Turtle Creek Valley COG

The population contraction of the Mon Valley involved a loss of close to 100,000 people. These losses directly affected the vacancy and abandonment rates of housing stock in the valley. By 2010, it was estimated that over 12,000 residential properties were vacant in Mon Valley communities. Many are blighted, unsafe, and uninhabitable; further destabilizing neighborhoods around them and weakening the housing market. In many cases, the taxes and liens owed on such properties far exceed their value and make them impossible to sell and burden already overburdened Mon Valley communities. The regional challenge is huge.

*This session will **describe the true costs of blight** and how three regional COGs; Steel Valley, Turtle Creek and Twin Rivers, as well as their 42 associated communities have assembled a **clear, multi-pronged and unprecedented strategy for moving forward**. The session will describe the details of this “**Fight Blight**” strategy through **engagement, consensus building, inventory, code enforcement, site control, remediation and capacity building initiatives**.*

1:15-2:15

1.0 CM

Concurrent Session 6 “Making it Happen: Creating an Implementable Comprehensive Plan”

Denny Puko, DCED

*Communities make significant investments in comprehensive plans. Yet, too many sit on the proverbial shelf. This session will **challenge conventional wisdom** and **showcase innovative planning approaches** that create plans that get implemented. Planners will be urged to **think differently about the basic purpose of a comprehensive plan and its content and process**. The session will challenge the common practice of organizing plans by functional chapters – land use plan, housing plan, etc. It will suggest that work sessions and plan chapters be **built around a community's priority issues** – whether revitalizing downtown, fixing a problem road corridor, becoming more walkable, or capitalizing on local history. The session will also **discuss creating capacity for implementation BEFORE the plan is finished**, by having detailed action plans, organizing implementation teams, and making plan implementation part of elected officials' regular business. The session will present research and case studies on successful and implemented plans.*

2:15-2:45

Afternoon Break

2:45-3:45

1.0 CM

Concurrent Session 7 “Quick, Easy and Cheap: Rapid Community Visualization”

Brian Lawrence, Westmoreland County

*This session will introduce the basics of Google Earth and its value as a **cost-effective and highly accessible medium for the communication of geographic information** to the public and*

stakeholders. Google Earth has opened the world of mapping to the lay planner and the public. In addition, it presents unique opportunities to share photos, 3-D structures, and other graphics in a geobrowser. From zoning and land use to infrastructure and economic development, Google Earth can help **bridge the gap between GIS and the intended audience** with its open-source KML format. The presenter will lead attendees through a number of examples, from **basic through advanced, yet all practical for the planning community**. Time will be taken to discuss the relationship of GIS and Google Earth."

2:45-3:45
1.0 CM

Concurrent Session 8 "Border Crossings: Dancing with Institutions of Higher Learning"

Carol Adukaitis, EdD, PA State System of Higher Education
Jeff Raykes, Indiana County Office of Planning and Development

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has an unusual abundance of colleges and universities. This means that nearly 200 of the over 2,000 municipalities in Pennsylvania have institutions of higher learning within their jurisdictions. The relationships between these institutions and their surrounding communities are often **strained by "town-gown" issues**. Whatever the strains, **colleges and universities represent substantial community assets**, assets that **could be more effectively mobilized** by taking a closer look at the **mechanics of community engagement** in these contested geographies. This highly participatory session **will reexamine unique challenges and opportunities** associated with successful university-community interactions, describe the importance of "seeing the invisible giant" and "adding a third wheel" in these **collaborations**, and outline some **successful cases**.

2:45-3:45
1.0 CM

Concurrent Session 8 "The Day after the Charette: Implementing Change in a Small Town"

Leanne Chaney, Blairsville Community Development Authority
Connie Constantino, Citizen Planner Blairsville
Linda Gwinn, Citizen Planner Blairsville

Since an NEA sponsored Your Town Workshop in 2006, the Boro of Blairsville has made **significant progress in implementing many of the recommendations** made during that workshop. **Improvements** in traffic management, business district development, housing and recreation have all **reached fruition in fairly short order**. This session will provide an overview of **one small town's success** implementing these improvements; describe the conversation between **tactical and strategic approaches** and how communities might best position themselves to move quickly forward on the "Day after the Charette."



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY
& ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



The Partnership is a collaboration between DCED and the following associations:

County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association
Pennsylvania Municipal League
Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs
Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners
Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors