

THE VANTAGE POINT



American Planning Association
Pennsylvania Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen

A Publication of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association

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ANNOUNCING THE 2016 *Great Places in Pennsylvania*

The PA Chapter of APA kicked-off the “*Great Places in Pennsylvania*” Program in 2014. The purpose of the Program is to recognize places with exemplary character, quality, identity, cultural interest, and community involvement. Great Places are unique and have a sustainable vision for tomorrow. They not only demonstrate the rewarding results that occur through community partnerships, planning, and dedication, but also serve as a model that other communities want to emulate.

For 2016, **two new Great Places categories** were created: **Great Greenways/Trails** and **Great Streets**. These categories were defined as follows:

- A **Great Greenway/Trail** is linear parcel of land or right-of-way set aside to preserve/protect open space, scenic landscapes, historical resources, natural resources and plant/animal habitats. It is easily accessible, serves to connect people and places, and is used by people of all ages. A great greenway/trail is an economic generator for communities and is often a focal point for social events and festivals that bring people together.
- A **Great Street** comprises the entire three-dimensional visual corridor, including the public realm and how it relates to the adjacent land uses. It is important for local businesses and helps to create a sense of community. Special emphasis is placed on

“complete” streets that service and take into account all users, whether auto, pedestrian, bicycle or transit.

A total of 25 nominations from across the Commonwealth were submitted: 19 for Great Greenways/Trails and six for Great Streets. The nominations were reviewed and rated by a panel of eight judges. The outcome was the designation of six Great Places in Pennsylvania: four in the category of Great Greenways/Trails and two in the category of Great Streets.

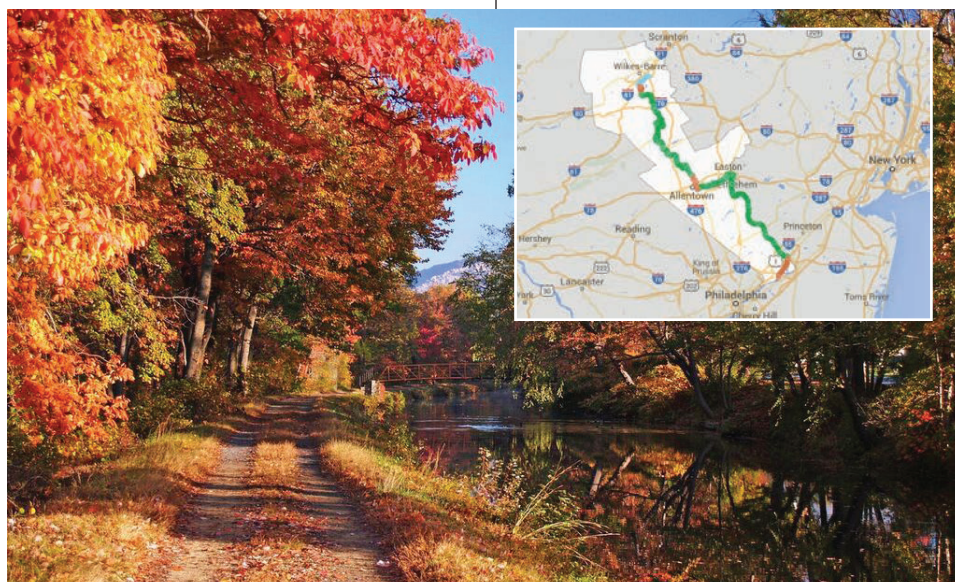
*Congratulations to the 2016
Great Places in Pennsylvania!*

In recognizing the 2016 Great Places in Pennsylvania, PA-APA also celebrates the many community leaders and officials, professionals, and residents who contributed to making the Great Greenways/Trails and Streets.

GREAT GREENWAYS/TRAILS:

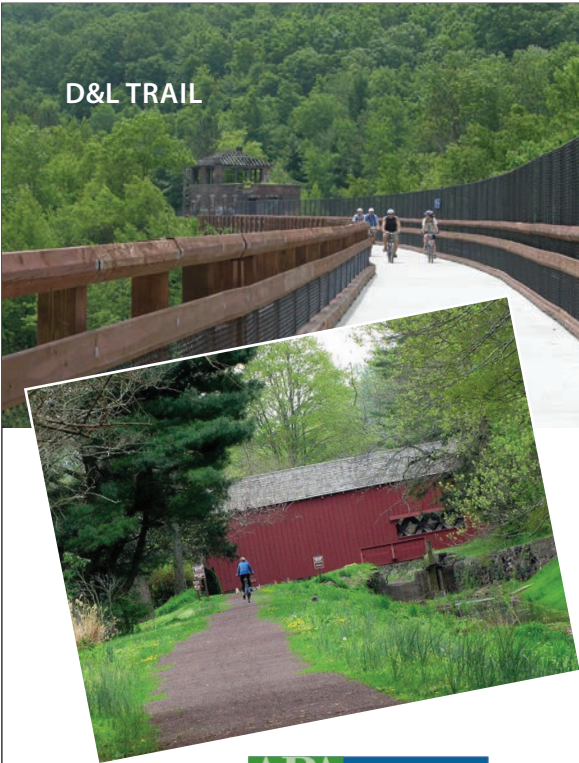
D&L Trail

The D&L Trail is located along the Lehigh and Delaware Rivers. The Trail, with 44 trailheads, follows the 165-mile nationally historic pathway that carried coal from the anthracite mines near Wilkes-Barre to the Bucks County port. It traverses railroads, canals, rivers and other trails, and connects people to



A photograph of the D&L trail graced the cover of the 2016 annual conference final program!

D&L TRAIL



GREAT ALLEGHENY PASSAGE



nature, culture, communities, recreation, and industrial heritage. Trail users include walkers, runners, hikers, bicyclists and cross country skiers. The D&L Trail is also host to a variety of community events that attract many visitors.

Great Allegheny Passage

The Great Allegheny Passage provides 150 miles of trail between Pittsburgh and Cumberland, MD, where it joins the C&O Canal Towpath with linkage to Washington, D.C. for a combined total of 334.5 miles. There are numerous trailheads, four Visitor Centers, and more than 30 interpretive signs. The Trail enables hikers, bicyclists, cross country skiers and people with disabilities to discover the region's river gorges, mountain vistas, cityscapes, waterways, wildlife, plants and rock formations. Annually, over 750,000 visitors from all over the globe come to explore the Passage, which generates significant spending in trail communities.

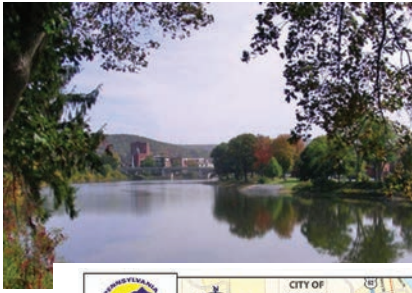
Schuylkill Banks Trail & Greenway

This 1.4-mile Trail and Greenway is located along the east bank of the Schuylkill River in the heart of Philadelphia. It has transformed a formerly industrial no-man's land into a vital commuter corridor, a valued recreational area, and a green oasis within the City. Walkers, runners, bicyclists, rollerbladers, and skateboarders are welcome to use the paved trail, which offers many amenities ranging from large shade trees, benches, composting restroom, water fountain and lighting to a visitor center, public dock and public art.

SCHUYLKILL BANKS TRAIL & GREENWAY



WALKABLE WARREN



Walkable Warren

Walkable Warren is a unique partnership endeavor that, through signage, encourages motorists to park their vehicles on the outskirts of town and walk with any passengers into the City. The signage directs walkers and bicyclists through the back streets of the City past older and amazing architecture, parks, businesses, and the community center, as well as the beautiful scenery of creeks and rivers. Walkable Warren promotes healthy lifestyles and the project has contributed to sense of place and community pride.



GREAT STREETS:

Butler Avenue

A four-block stretch of Butler Avenue in Ambler Borough (Montgomery County) is the focal point of the Borough's revitalized Central Business District. This pedestrian friendly street with a Victorian theme has become a destination for its restaurants, shopping, theaters, and many community events. This once unappealing corridor is now bustling with activity and the Ambler Train Station has become the busiest station on the Doylestown rail commuter line.

Penn Avenue

This approximately 5-mile street traverses some of the most unique neighborhoods in the City of Pittsburgh and acts as a major thoroughfare for residents and visitors. Recent infrastructure improvements and programming have incorporated stormwater management, pedestrian safety, and public art, making Penn Avenue a vibrant area for walking, biking and transit. Throughout the corridor, Penn Avenue has been a catalyst for development and community events.

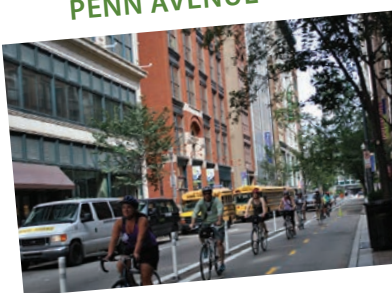
When traveling or looking for a fun adventure, consider visiting the "Great Places in Pennsylvania." The 2016 Great Places, as well as previously designated Great Places, are posted on the Chapter website (www.planningpa.org).

Stay tuned for the next opportunity to nominate Great Places. The 2017 categories will be Great Public Spaces and Great Streets. It's not too soon to start thinking about great places to nominate in your community. ♦

BUTLER AVENUE



PENN AVENUE





INSIDER

*A Message from President **James Cowhey, AICP***

Dear Pennsylvania Planners - Fall is a time of renewed energy after the lull of a long, hot summer. Luckily, we planners had the annual conference to look forward to. The conference committee put together a diverse and very interesting program which will be highlighted in the next issue of *Vantage Point*. Allentown and the Lehigh Valley Region had great stories to share.

The Chapter development plan anticipates outreach to allied organizations and the formation of partnerships with them. This is an ongoing process. In July, **former APA-PA President Alex Graziani** was appointed as chair of the **Pennsylvania State Planning Board**. I'm taking Alex's appointment as a positive sign that the Wolf Administration values planning and will look to the board for advice on issues impacting the future of the Commonwealth. Alex Graziani's appointment provides a great opportunity to expand the Chapter's interaction with the planning board. They were charged by **Governor Wolf** to consider three issues: 1) infrastructure, 2) efficient government, and 3) urban renewal.

The Chapter has provided feedback to the board on these topics and will continue to advocate for the inclusion of shale energy policy to be put before the planning board for their research, analysis, and advice. It is my intent to assist Alex in his role as chairman of the planning board in proving the value of planning to the Commonwealth.

Finally, I want to congratulate the ten Pennsylvania planners that passed the AICP exam earlier this year. Qualifying to become a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners is a major milestone in our careers. It exemplifies our knowledge, ethical practice, and dedication to our chosen profession. Well done, new AICP members!

Enjoy the autumn in Pennsylvania. ♦



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Lower Macungie Township

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Contact information is available at
www.planningpa.org under "About Us"



American Planning Association **Pennsylvania Chapter**

Making Great Communities Happen

587 James Drive
Harrisburg, PA 17112
717 671-4510 (P)
717 545-9247 (F)
www.planningpa.org

Susan Shermer, CMP

Administrative Director
sshermer@shermer-assoc.com

Kim Gusic

Administrative Assistant
kdiep@shermer-assoc.com

R. Keith McNally

Conference Coordinator
keithmcn@aol.com

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What hot issues in housing need expert clarification? Who is a great speaker on housing issues? The PDC is currently considering housing as a potential training topic for 2017 and would welcome suggestions for specific areas to address or speakers. If you have specific thoughts on a dynamic and thought-provoking speaker, we'd love to hear it. Please send your thoughts to PDC Chair Susan Elks at selks@chesco.org.

APA is proposing changes to the AICP Comprehensive Exam content outline for May 2017. The revised outline will be made available in December – please keep an eye out for it if you are planning to test in 2017. The details provided to date by APA indicate a moderate reorganization of content and weighting, but not a significant revamping of the content areas. The test format will remain the same. If you are testing in 2017, all of the latest details will be reviewed at the PA Chapter's spring exam prep session,

tentatively targeted for early March 2017. Registration and full details will be available in early 2017. Please keep in mind that we have only one full-day exam prep session – the spring session – while the conference exam prep session is always a shorter review of tips and the application process.

If you are in search of CM credits in 2017, the national conference will be in New York City in May 2017. This location is as close as the conference has come to Pennsylvania since Philadelphia was the host city in 2007. While a significant financial investment, the national planning conference is a great way to connect to the broader planning community, hear the newest ideas, reconnect with our professional organization at the national level, and hear inspiring stories from across the country. More details are available on APA's website, www.planning.org. One hint if you plan to attend – the conference hotels book VERY quickly! ♦

CONGRATULATIONS

to those who passed the
May 2016 AICP exam!

Laura Ahramjian
Zachary Barner
Stefania Chiorean
Rhiannon Haller
Katie Kinka
Jaime Larzelere
John Michael
Hector Rojas
Matthew Schelly
Susan Unver



News You Can Use

Herbert, Rowland & Grubic, Inc. (HRG) is expanding its municipal services to include community planning tasks such as comprehensive plans, corridor planning, ordinance development, and master planning. The firm is also expanding its delivery of landscape architecture services, particularly the planning and design of parks, recreational facilities, and streetscapes. Along with this change comes the introduction of several new staff members and the promotion of several long-time staff members, as well.

“HRG has been a leader in municipal engineering for more than 50 years,” says Western Region Vice President Jason Fralick. “We represent many municipalities

around the state, so we are fortunate enough to have a window into the issues that are important to communities and their leaders. Right now, many local governments are looking to establish a strategic vision for their communities over the



long-term. They want to make sure their communities are positioned for growth and to offer vibrant and attractive spaces for people to live and work for many years into the future. We want to help them succeed.”

Pittsburgh office manager **Dan Santoro**, a PA-APA member, will take on new responsibilities, leading the firm's community planning efforts for municipalities. Santoro previously served as the director of planning and engineering for one of Pennsylvania's fastest growing communities: Cranberry Township, Butler County. As a result, he understands community planning from the local government perspective. ♦



Central Section Update

By *Rachelle A. Abbott, AICP, Section Chair*

The APA – PA Central Section held its Fall Workshop on November 3 in Harrisburg. This full-day workshop ‘Planning on the Move: Hot Topics in Transportation’ received 6 CM credits. The workshop featured speakers: Brian Hare, PE, PennDOT; Denny Puko, DCED; Mark Murawski, Lycoming County Planning Commission; Natasha Manbeck, PE, AICP, McMahon Associates; Trish Meek, AICP, Centre County MPO; Brian Funkhouser, AICP, Michael Baker International; and Jon Fitzkee, Lebanon County MPO.

The APA-PA **Central Section Professional Development Scholarship** deadline ended on August 1, 2016. We are happy to announce that the **scholarship recipient** is **Jenny Picciano** and it will be used for AICP exam fees and study materials. The next deadline for the Professional Development Scholarship will be **February 1, 2017**. To access the application for the APA – PA Central Section Professional Development Scholarship, please check the APA – PA Chapter website at www.planningpa.org and upcoming communications from the Section.

The 2017 APA-PA Chapter Conference is on the minds of the Central Section as the location is set for State College! The conference dates are October 22 – 24, 2017, so be sure to mark your calendars! **VOLUNTEERS** are needed to make the 2017 Conference a success. APA-PA Central Section is seeking planners to fill the following positions:

- Sponsorship Committee Chairperson
- Mobile Workshop/Tours Committee Chairperson
- Keynote Speaker Committee Chairperson
- Special Events Committee Chairperson
- Fundraiser for Scholarship Committee Chairperson

A number of people stepped forward during the Allentown conference, but more are always welcome. If you are interested in being involved as a committee volunteer, please contact Rachelle Abbott, AICP at raabbott@stepcorp.org. Remember, actively involved committee members receive **FREE** registration!

As always, the APA – PA Central Section welcomes guests to our upcoming meetings. If you are interested in attending or have information to provide, please email the APA – PA Central Section Chair, Rachelle Abbott, AICP at raabbott@stepcorp.org

Southwest Section Update

By *Katie Stringent*

The Southwest Section Council election was held this fall. New officers who begin their terms in January are:

Section Chair, **Katie Stringent**

Section Vice-Chair, **William McLain**

Section Treasurer, **Josh Lippert**

Section Secretary, **Nick Fedorek**

Planner At Large, **Nicole Zimsky**

Planner At Large, **Rhiannon Haller**

Planner At Large, **Steve Wiedemer** ♦



welcome

New PA Chapter Members!

WE WELCOME THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS who joined the PA Chapter over the past few months.

The PA Chapter membership includes nearly 2,600 planning officials, professional planners, and others who care about how Pennsylvania continues to grow the places where we live, work, and enjoy recreation. The Board and staff are available to answer any questions.

Feel free to contact the Chapter Office at 717-671-4510.

Board member contact information is available at

www.planningpa.org under **About Us**.

Individual Member:

Colin Brown, Southeast Section

Agency Members:

City of Lebanon, Central Section

PA State Association of Boroughs, Central Section

Wayne County Planning/

GIS Department, Northeast Section ♦

Scholarships Awarded to Planning Students and Professionals

APA Charles Abrams Scholarship Winner 2016

Josh Davidson from the University of Pennsylvania received the 2016 scholarship. This scholarship program is for citizens of the United States who are enrolled or have been accepted for enrollment at the graduate planning programs of Columbia, Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, New School University, or the University of Pennsylvania.

PA Chapter Scholarships

The PA Chapter of APA awarded scholarships from the **Francis Pitkin Scholarship Fund**, the **Richard P. Byler Charitable Fund of the Philadelphia Foundation**, the **Richard G. Bickel Planning Education** and the **Leslie and Greta Spaulding Education Fund** for the 2016-2017 academic year. Seven Students benefited from the generosity of these funds and donations from Chapter members. The following students were recipients:

Oforiwaah Pee Agyei-Boakye	University of Pennsylvania
Corey Brown	Temple University
Joshua Davidson	University of Pennsylvania
Andrew Estrain	Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Lauren Payne-Riley	University of Pennsylvania
Jessica Stevenson	Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Emilile Yonan	University of Maryland

Jerry S. Walls Planning Professional Development Award



The PA Chapter of APA encourages the pursuit of professional development through the administration of the **Jerry S. Walls, FAICP Planning Professional Development Award**. A scholarship of **\$2000.00** is awarded annually to the **Pennsylvania** applicant who demonstrates commitment in the field of community planning, involvement in public sector planning, and a desire to enhance their expertise and/or develop new skills. **Akshali Ghandi** was this year's recipient. She is also an APA Ambassador, and wrote the article in the last issue of *Vantage Point* on 'Girls Rock Science: Educating Girls about STEM-related Careers.'

APA Ambassador Program

The PA Chapter of APA thanks APA members that participated in the APA Ambassador Pilot Program. These individuals volunteered their time, experience, and talents to advancing the public understanding of planning and promoting the planning profession. We appreciate their volunteerism and dedication to the profession.

Akshali Ghandi,
Pittsburgh

Oforiwaah Pee Agyei-Boakye,
Philadelphia

Samuel Thrush,
Chambersburg

The **APA Ambassador Program** is a national effort to support member volunteers in their work to educate and engage local students and community members. [Click here](#) to find out what these activities look like. In conducting these activities, APA hopes our Ambassadors can reach future planners with diverse racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Interested in volunteering? Applications are now being accepted for the 2017 Ambassador year, which runs January thru December. You must be an APA member and commit to conducting two activities per year. APA will support you along the way! Deadline is December 31, 2016.



HOLD THE DATE!

annual conference

APA-PA 2017

**OCTOBER
22 – 24, 2017**

**The Penn Stater
State College, PA**