



American Planning Association
Pennsylvania Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen

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October 20, 2020

Harrisburg, PA – On October 20, 2020, the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association (PA Chapter of APA) held its Annual Awards virtually where over 300 attendees celebrated the esteemed award winners of this year’s highly competitive program.

The following awards were presented:

Award for a Plan

BLOSSOM AT BARTRAM

Philadelphia Housing Authority

Blossom at Bartram is a plan to redevelop the deteriorated 500-unit Bartram Village public housing development as a catalyst for revitalization of the surrounding neighborhood. Its aim is to overcome decades of social inequity, preserve affordable housing, and connect residents to jobs, medical services, healthy food, and green spaces. Residents participated with city officials in work sessions and events to build leadership and restore trust and transparency. Residents developed strategies alongside partner groups with capacity to implement them. Visible actions already include transforming vacant lots into affordable housing and clean, green spaces, and a program to regularly deliver fresh fruits and vegetables to the neighborhood. Immediate action projects include a neighborhood gateway and home renovations to employ local contractors and teach residents construction and home repair skills.

Award for a Plan

ETNA ECODISTRICT PLAN

evolve environment :: architecture

Borough of Etna

Etna Borough saw sustainability as an imperative to improve quality of life for the community in the face of persistent flooding, bad air quality, and economic challenges. The Etna EcoDistrict Plan outlines projects, programs, and places to integrate social equity, community resilience, and environmental stewardship into the fabric of the community. As a result of its commitment, Etna became the world’s first certified EcoDistrict. Other visible outcomes include setting a 2050 goal to be carbon neutral, acquiring property and initiating development of a community library, helping found and secure a \$5 million endowment for a community land trust to provide affordable housing, and providing Idea Round-up grants to citizens to implement energy saving, flood resilience, and healthy food projects.

Award for a Project, Program or Practice

DVRPC PENNDOT CONNECTS BIKE-FRIENDLY RESURFACING PROGRAM

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

DVRPC's Bike-Friendly Resurfacing Program is a practical, effective, and low-cost use of the planning process. It identifies road locations meriting bike improvements and leverages PennDOT Connects to integrate new facilities – bike lanes, striped shoulders, or sharrows – into scheduled road resurfacing projects. DVRPC analyses the priority of road segments for bike facilities and the Level of Traffic Stress for bicycles, then conducts feasibility screenings in house and with PennDOT. Upon approval and letter of request from the host municipalities, road segments are advanced for completion. After a year and a half, six improved bike facilities were implemented with 10 miles of road resurfacing. Another nine facilities are in the pipeline.

Award for a Leader – Professional Planner

JOHN THEILACKER, AICP, Associate Director for Municipal Assistance, Brandywine Conservancy

John Theilacker has enjoyed a 37-year career of planning work at the local level in both the public and private sectors. In 21 years at the Brandywine Conservancy, John has helped Pennsylvania municipalities use innovative conservation and land use practices to protect and enhance natural resources and support community resilience. He is a recognized expert in transfer of development rights. He co-authored 12 PA Land Trust Association guides on topics including TDR, riparian buffers, zoning for solar and wind energy, and traditional neighborhood development. He is active in educating municipal officials and has done presentations at the local, state, and national levels. John is appreciated for his ability to listen to municipal concerns and deliver products that fit their vision.

Award for a Leader – Elected Official

SHIRLEY YANNICH, Warrington Township (Bucks County) Board of Supervisors

Shirley Yannich, in eight years as a township supervisor, and ten years before it as a planning commission member, provided an objective and professional mindset to guiding township affairs. Shirley applied sound planning principles to improve township government. She promoted the interests of residents over outside interests, and encouraged more deliberate, well-thought planning decisions. She made township government more transparent. She encouraged communication with the public and within the township. She pushed for updates to the comprehensive plan and land use ordinances, and led initiatives for significant open space projects. Shirley Yannich changed the culture of township government in a way that was quiet, deliberate, and enduring.

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For more information about the PA Chapter of APA, or to obtain contact information for local award winners, please contact Kim Gusic at 717-671-4510 or info@planningpa.org. The website address is www.planningpa.org.