



American Planning Association
Pennsylvania Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen

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October 4, 2022

Lancaster, PA – On October 4, 2022, the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association (PA Chapter of APA) held its Annual Awards Luncheon in Lancaster, PA where over 400 attendees celebrated the esteemed award winners of this year’s highly competitive program.

The following awards were presented:

Award for a Plan

**Allentown Vision 2030 Comprehensive & Economic Development Plan
Evolve Environment :: Architecture & Fourth Economy Consulting**

Allentown’s Vision 2030 Comprehensive and Economic Development Plan envisions the next 10 years of growth and development in the third largest city in Pennsylvania. Allentown today reflects the country’s change to a knowledge economy. Healthcare and office jobs are emerging as key economic sectors, and many work in the logistics industry, bolstered by internet commerce. The City’s growing population and changing demographics necessitated different approaches to community engagement. The City dedicated a physical space and staffing by the City to facilitate community conversations. All materials, presentations, speakers, and activities were provided in both English and Spanish, with online and physical toolkits that allowed communities to discuss the contents of the plan outside of the traditional meeting format. The City created a Community Ambassadors Program to create a network of engaged and informed community members who could add capacity to the implementation of the plan. The Vision 2030 Community Engagement Hub was established in a donated downtown storefront. The Hub invited community members to drop in, learn about the planning process, and participate in activities to capture their priorities and feedback on plan development. The Community Engagement Hub has become a model to make city government, programs, and projects more accessible and transparent for citizens. Allentown Vision 2030 makes a strong commitment to taking on big ideas. It is high in originality and easily understood thought graphic representations.

Award for a Plan

Completing the Loop

Evolve Environment :: Architecture & Riverlife

The value of open space became abundantly clear with the onset of the COVID pandemic as more Pittsburghers than ever were drawn to the existing riverfront trails and green spaces. The riverfront was a place to exercise, to gather and safely meet, and was a staging ground for political expression through public art. Riverlife is dedicated to reimagining Pittsburgh’s riverfronts as a continuous system of parks and open space referred to as “the Loop”. The Plan includes a Scorecard to rate progress for the Loop’s 25 segments and recommends how to improve each segment’s score, which rates Connectivity, Places, Maintenance, Ecology, and Experience. Early pandemic public engagement necessitated live online events with over 2,100 views. The project team also created an interactive StoryMap to share findings from phase one, attracting 3,000 unique views and over 1,000 survey responses. Riverlife’s efforts as outlined in the Plan will leverage public and private investments estimated at over \$4.9 billion in the next 10 years. The Plan outlines how partners can help improve local water

quality, air quality, tree canopy, and food access and prioritizes underserved communities whose riverfront access is limited. Completing the Loop is a visually compelling and data driven plan. All plans should have more implementation and this delivers.

Award for a Plan

SmartMoves Connections: A Regional Vision for Public Transit Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission

SmartMoves Connections represents an innovative approach to a regional transit plan. The plan put forth four core goals: identify locations for multimodal transit hubs, identify corridors for multimodal improvements, improve regional transportation coordination and involve riders and stakeholders in the planning process. The Team employed aerial photography that had been processed with machine-learning and was combined with Big Data origin/destination statistics to find Transit Supportive Land Use Clusters (TSLU) and Critical Corridors. The act of producing a TSLU map was unlike any other that has been deployed at the regional scale. Computer simulations of the Multimodal Hub and Corridor treatments brought the concepts to life by showing how buses, bikes and people interact. The team then used a first-of-its-kind process where aerial photography data from Urban Footprint was analyzed to produce a map of TSLU clusters where multimodal potential could be inferred. Some of the results of the SmartMoves Connections project are already coming to pass. The plan developed at the Transit Operations Workshop became the basis for a development proposal in Cranberry Township which includes a Multimodal Hub and new transit service. The Commission, Port Authority and PennDOT have applied for a major federal grant to build a bus only ramp from I-376 to the East Busway, much as described in the TranSystems simulation. SmartMoves is a well-organized plan with lots of case studies. It starts with clearly articulated goals and marches through points on how to get there. While it is specific for those responsible for implementation, it also asks the lay person what type of transit user you are and then describes how to make use of the plan.

Award for a Project, Program or Practice

Transit-Oriented Development Model Ordinance and Guidebook Montgomery County Planning Commission

The Commission sought to aid communities interested in encouraging Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in a way that respects the physical scale and character of their existing neighborhoods. The model ordinance is structured around five station area “typologies”. Within the model ordinance, land use mix and dimensional standards such as height, can be modified based on station area typology to meet the goals of each municipality. This flexibility allows each community to modify the ordinance language to meet their needs. This self-analysis process encourages municipalities to be forward-thinking, by proactively planning for the whole station area. Encouraging station-wide planning reduces the tendency to rely on developer-driven, parcel-by-parcel development. The Commission created a digital “web experience” version of the guidebook as a way to interactively explore the TOD concepts. The Commission also developed an audit tool for community planners to use to assess a municipality’s existing ordinances around their transit stations. Following a two-year planning process, the Commission tested the TOD Ordinance and Guidebook with local professionals skilled in land use law and real estate development and planning professionals in the public and private sectors. The Transit-Oriented Development Model Ordinance and Guidebook takes a deep dive on communities. and the Plan is one of the best in showing examples and diagrammatic representations of towns. It is admirable that all work was done in-house.

Award for a Leader – Professional Planner

**Katherine M de Silva, Planning Director
County of Clinton**

As the planning director of Clinton County, Kathryn de Silva has had a profound impact on the county since joining the planning office in 2012. During her tenure, she coordinated the complete update of the county's zoning ordinance, overseeing the zoning and permitting in seven municipalities. Katie was the main force behind the 2014 Clinton County Comprehensive Plan and the 2018 Bike-Ped Plan. She was also a main contributor to the Chesapeake Bay (CAP) Water Quality study, assisting in obtaining water quality grant funding and a construction implementation grant to carry out the CAP. She was a proponent of the SEDACOG senior housing project in Flemington Borough, leader of a multi-county broadband initiative, and project manager of the PennDOT pilot busing program. Over the years, Katie was the primary visionary responsible for the Bald Eagle Valley Trail, a 13.9-mile walking/biking trail being built in phases, including the rebuilding of a railroad bridge over the Susquehanna River, which the county commissioners have chosen to name "Katie's Crossing".

Award for a Leader – Distinguished Service

**Barry Seymour, Executive Director
Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission**

As the executive director of DVRPC, the Philadelphia regional municipal planning organization that oversees billions of dollars in transportation funding, Barry Seymour has fostered DVRPC's innovative work in a wide range of planning disciplines. This has included food system planning, healthy communities, energy and climate change, land use/transportation linkages, and equity. In addition, Barry has supported multiple innovative approaches to promoting and funding more pedestrian and bicycle activity in the region, from creating one of the first in-country permanent and cyclical bicycle and pedestrian counting programs to launching the pedestrian portal, which includes a sidewalk inventory, connectivity analysis tool, and a crowd sourced database of pedestrian plans and projects. Barry has also strongly supported the planning profession, serving as co-chair of the 2007 APA National Conference in Philadelphia, as Chair of the Southeast Section of the PA Chapter, as Co-Chair of a Chapter Conference in Philadelphia, as a member of the Narberth Borough Planning Commission, and as an adjunct faculty member at Widener University in the Master of Public Administration Program.

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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.