



American Planning Association **Texas Chapter**

Making Great Communities Happen

2021 – 2023 Action Plan

This Action Plan for 2021 through 2023 was developed through a membership survey; input from the Chapter President, President-Elect and Executive Administrator; the Board of Directors' workshop in July; input received from two Executive Committee members through an online survey; and discussion at the Summer Executive Committee meeting.

The Executive Committee recommended the draft Action Plan for approval at the Fall Board of Directors' meeting. It was adopted by the APA Texas Board of Directors on November 1, 2021.

Vision Statement

APA Texas is a respected leader and partner whose members make great communities happen by providing expertise, innovation and education to shape livable, sustainable and equitable Texas communities.

Goals

1. APA Texas will **LEAD** the planning movement in this state.
2. APA Texas will **COMMUNICATE AND ENGAGE** to foster quality leadership and participation and to provide the best planning information to its members and to Texas residents, property owners and elected leaders.
3. APA Texas will **PARTNER** with other Texas professional organizations and non-profits to leverage resources and build coalitions.
4. APA Texas will **ADVOCATE** for inclusive planning, planning leaders and government in our unique Texas setting.
5. APA Texas will **INSPIRE** building great communities that meet the needs of diverse Texans, benefit from our state's character, climate and other assets, and are resilient and adaptable in response to change.

6. APA Texas will use Chapter and Section resources to **SERVE** its professional, appointed/elected, academic and student members in a way that furthers equity, diversity and inclusion.

Action Items

Action Item #	Goals and Action Items for 2021 - 2023
GOAL 1.	APA Texas will LEAD the planning movement in this state.
1A.	Design a Texas planning movement. The national APA organization strengthens a planning movement by serving as a "big tent" for involvement by everyone interested in planning, with an internal institute to advance the interests of the profession. APA Texas should apply this model and serve as that single "big tent" organization for the state. The Chapter should foster entrance into the profession and make people aware of our accomplishments.
1B.	Ensure a successful transition of APA Texas leadership. This two-year period will see a transition to a new Executive Administrator. This transition is critical to the organization, in terms of selecting an individual and providing time for training and interaction with Mike and Claudia McAnelly. In addition, there should be a continuing effort to build the pipeline of leaders for the Sections and the Chapter.
1C.	Support the APA Foundation. Assist the Foundation with fundraising and communication that support its goals and mission.
1D.	Create a Leadership Academy. Develop an academy that will become a pipeline for members volunteering and taking on future leadership responsibilities.
1E.	Support state and local governments' application of Census 2020 data. Use this information to inform and educate community residents and leaders about the value of planning to their communities.
1F.	Take the Short Course framework out to the individual Sections. Use the material to provide a mini-Short Course that brings new people into the planning movement. Both regional in-person sessions and virtual sessions should be used to reach people throughout the state.
1G.	Increase Texas participation in National Planning Month. Every October, APA Texas should celebrate the good things planning brings to communities; educate the public about the planning behind Great Places in Texas; and advocate for policies that create better places to live, work, and play. Increased participation and updated communications materials are essential to this action item.
1H.	Offer experiential learning opportunities. Develop these opportunities to train and inspire planners while assisting communities and encouraging community members to support planning. Consider adding this as a minimum Section performance criterion, for completion every two years.
1I.	Partner with universities to recruit new members to the planning movement. A key approach is to increase collaboration with university faculty members and student planning organizations.

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1J.	Mentor future members of the planning movement. Use APA Ambassadors, Future Cities and other approaches to mentor future generations of planners and supporters of planning. Target these approaches to increase diversity and inclusion. Include focus on undergraduates in fields like geography, political science as people to recruit into planning.
1K.	Promote APA membership to Planning Commissioners, Elected Officials and Legislators. Carry out an effort to explain the benefits and low costs of APA membership to these individuals. Provide a special focus on reaching leaders in smaller communities and rural counties.
1L.	Encourage National to simplify the process for registering Commissioner members. Promote Commissioner membership by communicating with cities about the discounted rates and member benefits.
1M.	Increase APA membership by students. Provide additional outreach so students are aware that this membership is free.
1N.	Conduct special outreach to 'Early Professionals'. These are former planning students who are now in the workforce. Since they are no longer students, their membership is no longer free. Reduced membership is offered to young professionals for two years. Attention is needed to keep them in the organization.
1O.	Continue to send welcome letters from the Chapter to new APA and AICP members. Consider additional strategies to involve these members in the Texas planning movement.
GOAL 2. APA Texas will COMMUNICATE AND ENGAGE to foster quality leadership and participation and to provide the best planning information to its members and to Texas residents, property owners and elected leaders.	
2A.	Implement a communications plan. The communications plan should be updated to reflect the diversity of planners and to communicate effectively and inclusively to diverse audiences.
2B.	Promote diversity and inclusion. Use the EDI Committee as the focal point for leadership on specific tasks.
2C.	Leverage all forms of media. Social media and traditional media should both be used. One focus could be National Planning Month, another is the advocacy efforts. During the next two years, APA Texas' media tools should be reviewed and enhanced or updated as necessary.
2D.	Develop outreach materials that tell the stories about the planners who are creating Great Places. Focus this effort on the people so it complements the existing communications about the places.
2E.	Enhance connections to get media attention for APA Texas awards and other initiatives. Include connections with legislators in this effort.
2F.	Create a structure to engage 'legacy' professionals. Find ways to involve FAICP members and retired planners. Consider offering reduced chapter conference registration fee for retired and lifetime members.

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2G.	Engage appointed and elected officials in APA Texas. Consider having a Board appointee to represent these officials.
2H.	Increase communication between the APA Texas Executive Committee and members. Members need more information about APA Texas programs and the value they provide to planners and their communities. This is an on-going action item.
2I.	Use a dashboard to report progress. The dashboard should give a streamlined report on the Chapter's and Sections' progress.
GOAL 3. APA Texas will PARTNER with other Texas professional organizations and non-profits to leverage resources and build coalitions.	
3A.	Emphasize APA as a 'big tent' organization that connects with many others.
3B.	Identify a Board member or position with responsibility for coordinating with partners.
3C.	Encourage reciprocal partnership relationships. But recognize that some non-reciprocal partnerships may still be worthwhile for APA Texas.
3D.	Expand partnerships with universities, student planning organizations and school districts.
3E.	Leverage emerging relationships with surrounding State Chapters.
3F.	Build on partnerships for public health. APA Texas has established strong and effective partnerships with the state's public health providers through the Texas Public Health Association (TPHA) and the Texas Department of Health Services. These partnerships should be continued and expanded as appropriate.
3G.	Identify potential new partnerships. These opportunities may differ by region. Partnerships should go beyond the other professional associations to include organizations (like U. S. Green Building Council and American Association of Retired Persons) that support certain aspects of planning.
3H.	Offer conference sessions geared to partner speakers. Reach out to these partners to provide conference content; emphasize EDI (examples are Texas City Managers Association, Texas Municipal Clerks Association and Texas City Attorneys Association).
3I.	Explore options with other groups regarding deployment of new technologies.
3J.	Communicate the stories about these partnerships.
GOAL 4. APA Texas will ADVOCATE for inclusive planning, planning leaders and good government in our unique Texas setting.	
4A.	Refine the APA Texas Advocacy Initiative structure based on the experience in 2020 – 2021. Review and modify, as necessary, the Advocacy Committee and subcommittee organizational structure and processes. Clarify expectations so involvement makes the most of the time members can contribute. Expand the committees to include a broader and more diverse range of members, and provide training and tools so their involvement can take advantage of their strengths.
4B.	Include members from all Sections in the Advocacy Committee/subcommittees and explore how best to advocate on regional or local issues. It will be important that any advocacy on regional or local issues is consistent with the policy priorities and positions established for the Chapter. Further discussion is needed to decide how this should work.

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4C.	Make the 'Texas Planning Roundtable' operational. Evaluate the role of the Texas Planning Roundtable as part of the Advocacy Initiative and implement appropriate steps to incorporate it in the advocacy efforts.
4D.	Implement guidelines and policies for advocacy. Identify the questions members have about advocacy, and draft an FAQ answering those questions that can be shared with members when they're being asked to participate in the Advocacy Initiative.
4E.	Continue making advocacy training available to individual APA Texas members.
4F.	Maintain funding for paid assistance with advocacy and the Legislature.
4G.	Strengthen and implement a staffing plan during the Legislative session. Establish a schedule and program so there are planners and partners who are the 'troops on the ground' available to testify on bills.
4H.	Maintain a Legislative Program. Update the policy priorities developed in 2021. Prepare a detailed task list for activities before and during the 2023 Legislative session, and track progress on these tasks.
4I.	Maintain a Texas planning information base. It should make information available about how planning is used in Texas communities, what results are achieved, what the best practices in Texas planning are and which communities are taking innovative approaches to particular issues. Structure a topic list and schedule for drafting reports so they are available in time to share with legislators before the 2023 session.
4J.	Hold a "Planners' Day at the Capitol" in 2022 and 2023. Build on the successful Day at the Capitol in 2019. In 2022, display banners and hold a recognition event for "Great Places in Texas", with special outreach to legislators and staff who have new Great Places in their districts. During the session in 2023, also secure recognition of "Great Places in Texas" on the house floor if possible.
4K.	Put in place a mechanism to get information about planning and planning issues to cities' legislative staffs and to key individuals in other partner organizations. Partner with City secretaries and their professional association to disseminate critical information. Add city advocate representatives and in-house contacts to the AirTable database. Assemble the contact information for key individuals in other partner groups and include them in the AirTable database.
4L.	Cultivate advocacy at the local level to reach Council members, County Commissioners, City managers, City secretaries and other representatives of local jurisdictions. Establish coordination processes with partner organizations including Texas Municipal League, Texas City Managers Association, organizations of city secretaries and similar organizations.
GOAL 5. APA Texas will INSPIRE building great communities that meet the needs of diverse Texans, benefit from our state's character, climate and other assets, and are resilient and adaptable in response to change.	
5A.	Increase exposure of the 'Great Texas Places' program. Do more to explain the role planners played, educate ourselves about the key take-aways and explain more about what an individual can apply at the grassroots level. Develop an interactive map of winners that explains why they are great places.

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5B.	Reinvigorate the Emerging Planning Leaders (EPL) initiative to become a succession planning initiative. Appoint an EPL Chair and committee.
5C.	Create a structure for newer planners to benefit from the experience and contributions of more experienced planners. This structure should engage the newer planners where they are – on social media, through mini-videos or short podcasts and in similar ways.
5D.	Refine and perfect the Chapter’s mentorship program. Consider connecting it more closely to activities at the Conference. Experiment with ‘organic mentoring’ by legacy planners telling stories. Capitalize on new virtual technology. Bring back “Lattes and Leadership”.
5E.	Revamp the Richard R. Lillie FAICP Planning Excellence Awards programs. Consider enhancing the criteria for recognition and possibly varying criteria by city size. Better promote the program with Texas cities. Consider yearly plaques for cities rather than framed certificates.
5F.	Scholarships for Sections. Evaluate the costs and benefits of providing Sections with a number of scholarships to use as incentives to attend conferences as a way to encourage people to become more engaged with their local Sections.
GOAL 6. APA Texas will use Chapter and Section resources to SERVE its professional, appointed/elected, academic and student members in a way that furthers equity, diversity and inclusion.	
6A.	Survey all APA Texas members about what they need and want from the organization.
6B.	Evaluate current Chapter programming and expand or revamp it to provide value to members.
6C.	Review and implement the recommendations of the Diversity and Inclusion Study. With leadership of the EDI Committee, implement the outreach plan to share these results with the membership.
6D.	Maintain the transparency of APA Texas. Members should be able to see how decisions are made and resources are used. Board minutes and agendas should be posted online so members can see what the Board does.
6E.	Ensure full compliance with the Chapter Presidents’ Council’s Chapter Performance Criteria. Develop a Chapter Succession Plan with Standard Operating Procedures for all Chapter procedures for all Chapter programs, and update it every two years so it remains current.
6F.	Complete a Chapter Strategic Financial Plan. Perform an internal financial audit.
6G.	Use the Sections’ Guide as part of training for new Chapter and Section leaders.
6H.	Ensure that the annual state conferences continue to be events that participants value. The conferences should continue to use new tools and technologies, provide basic training, and explore emerging issues and concerns in the field.
6I.	Revamp the Conference organizational structure. Continue to evaluate and implement changes that improve the conference, including the use of hybrid conferences. Monitor attendee characteristics and feedback after each conference.

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6J.	Create a new Short Course. Rebuild and improve it to create a new and updated Short Course, and develop a succession plan for the leadership of the Short Course for future years.
6K.	Continue to make assessments and offer development programs to provide appropriate resources and support to all Sections. Develop a quarterly membership report analyzing member demographics to ensure that programs and resources are meeting the needs of members. Evaluate a simplified 'Chapter-Only' membership approach.
6L.	Take advantage of distance technology. This includes offering more webinars & simulcasts, using virtual meeting platforms (e.g., Zoom, Teams, etc.) and archiving presentations for future use and distribution. Use virtual meeting options for all events.
6M.	Effectively use resources and services available from National, and disseminate these to APA Texas members.
6N.	Do more to recognize FAICP, particularly new Fellows. This could include presentations at their Council meetings and activities at the Conference. Continue providing support and mentoring for Chapter nominees for new AICP Fellows.
6O.	Assist AICP Candidates and Early Planners in achieving AICP certification. Focus specifically on assistance that will support inclusion and add diversity to the AICP membership. Evaluate steps to bring training programs or university courses to Hispanic students in regions without PAB-accredited planning schools.