

**TO: APA California Chapter Board Meeting**

**FROM: Betsy McCullough, AICP, Vice President of Conferences**

**DATE: June 5, 2015**

**SUBJECT: 2015 Chapter Conference (Northern Section) in Oakland**

This is an information report to the Board regarding the 2016 Chapter Conference to be hosted by the Northern Section in Oakland from October 3-6, 2015.

BACKGROUND

Attached is a report from the very capable co-chairs of the 2015 Chapter Conference in Oakland this year: Darcy Kremin, Erik Balsley, and Hanson Hom. The CHC Committees are all making progress toward their goals.

A few key points from the Chapter perspective are:

* Additional space had to be secured for conference sessions and special events beyond what was included in the original contract. HPN secured this space for us at the additional cost of $14,000.
* Registration is expected to be open by the June 5 Board call. We are using HPN’s registration portal this year. We are focusing on making the on-site experience for those checking in at the conference easier.
* The Mobile App will soon follow rather than be activated just prior to the conference.
* We will again prepare to record a series of conference sessions to be used by the Chapter as Distance Education learning opportunities for Chapter members who were unable to attend the conference or for those who attended different sessions at the conference.
* We have thus far secured only one pre-conference session (the management session led by Steve Preston and Janet Ruggiero) but are continuing to work on finding a second session.

**Budget**

The Conference Co-chairs continue to work with Betsy McCullough, Vice President of Conferences, on refinements to the budget as firmer costs are known. Refinements to the adopted budget since January include: updates to reflect the adopted conference rates for the 2015 conference; an additional cost for extra conference rooms to accommodate the projected higher attendance at the conference; a cost for required drayage of the exhibitor space; adjustments to the projected cost for food (breakfast, lunch, afternoon breaks, and CPF and consultants receptions); insertion of projected revenue and expenses for the mobile workshops; and reduction or elimination of line item costs that are no longer expected to be incurred. The Conference Host Committee is very mindful of ensuring that conference expenses will be controlled to reach the minimum target of at least $100,000 in net revenue. With positive progress on conference sponsorships and projections for a higher than average attendance level (based on high number of session and mobile workshop proposals), we expect that this target will be well exceeded. Nevertheless, we will continue to monitor the budget closely.

**Program Sessions Committee**

This committee is overseen by Juan Borrelli, Program Sessions Committee Chair. Approximately 320 session proposals for the Oakland conference were received by the February 6 deadline, which we understand may have set a new record for session submittals. The large number of session proposals, as well as mobile workshop proposals (discussed below), is a positive indicator of future conference attendance. The session proposals were divided into the six established conference tracks, and a sub-committee was formed for each track to score and rank the proposals. Over 36 planners were involved in reviewing the proposals. The final selection of sessions carefully considered a number of criteria with the overall goal of providing an excellent selection of sessions from each track and ensuring a good coverage of planning topics of interest to planners from throughout the state. In order to maximize participation in the conference, some session organizers were asked to work together to combine similar or related proposals into one session. In the final tally, we are very pleased that conference attendees will be able to select from an excellent selection of 127 quality sessions. Multiple sessions will also be offered to satisfy AICP CM ethics and law credits.

Session organizers have been notified on whether their session was accepted or not accepted. The Conference-at-a-Glance which indicates the assigned dates and times for all accepted sessions was posted on the Cal Chapter conference web site on May 15. In the following weeks, the Program Sessions Committee will assign the conference rooms for the sessions and work with organizers to finalize the session descriptions and speakers/panelists as needed for the conference program. We will also indicate in the program the sessions within each conference track and possibly highlight some related sessions by sub-topics.

**Mobile Workshop Committee**

This committee is headed by Mika Miyasato, Mobile Workshops Committee Chair. The deadline for submittal of proposals was the same as for sessions, February 6. A record 49 mobile proposals were received by the deadline. A committee consisting of about 15 volunteers carefully reviewed the proposals to select the mobile workshops. Criteria included selecting workshops that would highlight a variety of planning issues and projects in the Bay Area, identifying workshops that would be of keen interest to planners, and favoring proposals that were well organized and thought out. Sixteen mobile workshops have been selected by the committee for the conference. Although this is a higher number than typically offered at Cal Chapter conferences, the majority of the workshops (12) will be walking or bicycle tours or will use low-cost public transit (BART/AC Transit). Only four will require a chartered bus, which includes the two all-day workshops. This will keep the workshops affordable and allow most of them to proceed even with a small group. Several of the workshops, such as the two bike tours, will also have a limit on number of participants.

The committee has worked with the mobile workshop organizers to refine the logistics and time allotted for each workshop. The assigned times for the 16 mobile workshops are indicated on the Conference-at-a-Glance. Prior with conference registration going live on or about May 30, Hanson and Mika will work with Betsy to set the price for each mobile workshop. Mika is also finalizing the workshop descriptions for posting with online registration and determining the feasible number of AICP CM credits for each workshop.

**Diversity Committee**

With diversity being one of the six tracks for the conference, Miroo Desai, Diversity Committee Chair, and other committee members were involved in promoting diversity-related planning topics and soliciting possible speakers for the conference. They also directly participated in reviewing sessions and mobile workshop proposals to select representative sessions and workshops that will address a wide range of important diversity topics. With the City of Oakland and the Bay Area as an ideal backdrop, we are extremely pleased that the conference is featuring diversity as one of the conference tracks.

The Diversity Committee is also taking the lead working with Chapter representatives to organize the Diversity Summit, which will be offered on Saturday, October3, just before the Opening Reception. The title for this year’s Diversity Summit is: “The New and Old Faces of Gentrification.” The Summit will be a panel discussion with the moderator and three speakers confirmed. A couple of additional speakers are also being contacted to round out the panel.

**Fundraising**

Our fundraising efforts, lead by Jean Long, Fundraising Committee Chair, have been going very well. We have raised $72,900 to date, with another $21,500 pending (applications received, waiting for checks). We have had many other inquiries and estimate that those will amount to about $20,000. Sponsors have selected 18 booths, (out of 45 total spaces), and there are four more firms to go before we can release the exhibitor map to the public. We feel confident we will meet or exceed our $140,000 fundraising goal.

**Volunteers/Students**

We have started reaching out to students to volunteer, though our efforts will start in earnest in August. Student day is shaping up nicely. We will start the day with a “Meet with APA” event where students will get a chance to meet folks who have volunteered with APA at various levels or positions (National, Chapter, local sections, divisions, YPG, activity coordinators, awards co-chairs, etc.). We have about 10 professionals signed up to help, but we could always use more if you can think of anyone to suggest. We are also hosting a student poster competition, where attendees will vote on posters during the Opening Reception (winner to be announced during the event). We will continue to coordinate with Betsy and the student representatives throughout the state to make this a great day.

**Hospitality**

This committee, headed by Florentina Craciun Committee Chair, is working on details for the Opening Reception. The caterer was selected and the contract is still being finalized, but it looks like we will have a great night. The committee is also looking into a passport that attendees can have stamped if they want to visit the local restaurants, pubs and eateries.

**Publicity**

This committee has been working closely with Francine to coordinate materials placed on the Section, Chapter, and Conference Websites. We have established Instagram and Twitter accounts at APA2015CA. They will be updating the Section site with Oakland related information to help conference attendees plan their time in Oakland. The committee continues to interview local planners for the Northern Section’s newsletter, *Northern News*, for the bi-monthly “My Oakland” columns. In each story, a local planner identifies the things they like most about Oakland. The committee is gearing up to identify stories for the upcoming CalPlanner that will be focused on Oakland and the conference. As of now, authors for stories on diversity and the history of planning in Oakland have been identified. Additional stories focused on the 5 remaining conference tracks are being identified.

**Planner’s Guide**

Based on the discussion at the Board Retreat in January, there will be a printed Planner’s Guide document for the conference. The Guide will provide an overview of neighborhood in Oakland to facilitate exploration of the host city. The guide will be made available in PDF form. As such it will be able to be printed from the PDF file. In addition, the committee will work with the appropriate Chapter personnel and/or contractors to determine how to incorporate the Guide into the Mobile App. Paper copies of the guide will be available at registration. Dorina has created a template and the committee is working on placing content within it. They hope to have the guide mostly complete in late July/early August.

**Merchandise**

This small committee is working with the CHC and the Volunteers committee to ensure that CHC members and Volunteers have a t-shirt or other items to differentiate themselves. This will allow conference attendees to easily identify volunteers.