

Date: February 2, 2018

To: APA California Chapter Board

From: **2020 Conference Site Selection Committee**

Chris Gray

 John Hildebrand, Inland Empire Section Director

 Hanson Hom, Vice-President of Conferences

Aaron Pfannenstiel

Subject: Approval of Site and Date for APA California Chapter 2020 Conference – Inland Empire Section

***Recommendation: Approve City of Riverside Convention Center as the site for the APA California Chapter 2020 conference and set the conference date for September 12-15, 2020.***

**Background**

As the Board is aware, the 2020 annual conference will be hosted by the Inland Empire Section. The Site Selection Committee identified locations in the cities of Ontario, Temecula, and Riverside that could possibly meet the Chapter’s conference needs. After researching the facilities and amenities in these cities with consideration of the Site Selection Criteria in the Conference Requirements Handbook (Appendix H), Riverside most favorably met the Chapter’s conference criteria. Ontario was rated a second option, and Temecula did not have sufficient meeting and exhibit space to meet our needs.

A site visit to the City of Riverside was conducted in November 2017 to confer with staffs from the Riverside Convention Center and several downtown hotels, including the historic Mission Inn. Deene Alongi, our recently hired Conference Manager, organized the site visit. The Committee concluded that in terms of meeting and exhibit space, hotel accommodations and accessibility, the City of Riverside would meet and exceed our requirements for a successful conference. The Convention Center is a large facility with over 60,000 square feet of meeting and exhibit space. It is located in downtown Riverside with several hotels within easy walking distance. Ample restaurant, cultural and entertainment options are also available in the downtown.

Riverside is easily accessible for planners and students in Southern California. Downtown Riverside is located approximately 20 minutes from Ontario Airport. Additionally, an Amtrak train station is located just south of the downtown.

The City of Riverside provides an excellent setting and “living laboratory” to explore current and future planning issues to enrich the conference experience for attendees. Many options are available for informative mobile workshops. The downtown is also experiencing a vibrant transformation with mixed use, residential and retail projects that will be completed by 2020.

While September 12-15 is earlier than usual for our annual conference, the weekend dates for the later part of September and most of October were already reserved. In addition, the month of September is considered a “shoulder season,” therefore, resulting in more favorable rates for both the Convention Center and hotels. While the climate is warm in September, the evenings are very pleasant. The recommended dates do not pose a conflict with holidays in September, League of CA Cities Conference (10/7-9) or Election Day (11/3). The conference would start on Saturday and end on Tuesday.

With the goal of providing a recommendation to the Board at its 2018 Board Retreat, staff initiated discussions with possible conference facilities last August. After identifying Riverside as the preferred option and having favorable meetings with visitor bureau, convention center, hotel and city personnel, the Committee directed the Conference Manager to begin negotiations with the Riverside Convention Center and nearby hotels.

Assuming the Board approves the recommended 2020 conference site and date, the Site Selection Committee and Conference Manager will proceed to finalize contracts with the Convention Center and selected hotels. Attached is a table that summarizes compliance with our Site Selection Criteria (Appendix H from the Conference Requirements Handbook).

**Recommendation**

The Site Selection Committee recommends the City of Riverside Convention Center as the site for the 2020 Chapter Conference for the reasons discussed above and further outlined below:

* The Convention Center offers flexibility and growth for attendance, exhibits, and conference format.
* After further negotiations and in 2020 terms, the Convention Center is waiving all rental costs based on a minimum food and beverage of **$68,300 inclusive of tax and gratuity – this results in a 28.75% savings to the Chapter conference budget.** In addition, the Convention Center will require only a $1,775 deposit due at time of signing. Based on the approval of a direct bill application, no further deposits will be required, and the Chapter will be responsible for the remaining payment 30 days **after** the conference.
* The Convention Center is completely wi-fi enabled; however, the Riverside Convention Bureau is offering a complimentary upgrade valued at $1,500.
* The hotel package will accommodate most of our housing needs within walking distance. If we need to contract with one or two other hotels, they would be approximately six blocks from the center. The hotel rates in our package range from $189-$199 – all in 2020 terms. The hotels range from historic (Mission Inn) to convention (Marriott) to select-service type hotels (Hyatt Place, Courtyard by Marriott, and Comfort Inn). A new Hampton Inn very near the Convention Center will also be available by 2020. All hotels offer complimentary in-room internet access. Other terms of the contract meet our regular conference requirements.
* The City of Riverside and Convention Bureau are highly motivated to host our conference, and Inland Empire Section members are enthusiastic about showing off the city and region to conference attendees.
* Exciting downtown attractions will be open by 2020 for planners to explore, such as The Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Arts, Culture and Industry Museum, a Riverside Food Lab, and Chow Alley.

Attachment:

1. Appendix H –Site Selection Criteria