

**June 20th, 2014**

**FR:** Marc Yeber, VP Public Information

**TO:** APA California Board of Directors **Attachment E1-4**

**RE:** Update & Actions

The following is an update on the actions taken so far in regard to the 2013-2014 Strategic Plan and Work Program as well as additional recommended actions that are not only associated with the Chapter's communications efforts, but also relate to Strategic Plan Document.

**PRIORITY 1: Share Best Practices**

1.1 It has been identified that making any substantive changes to the website, including adding and organizing content regarding Best Practices at this point may have significant costs implications and may be unproductive under the current Contractor agreement structure.

***Recommendation:*** *start identifying and cataloging content for upload to website closer to current contract's termination in mid-2015 and report to Board at September 2014 meeting on status of the website and potential contractor transition.*

1.2 The *CalPlanner* has been re-structured and redesigned to contain content that is better organized, more concise and meaningful to the Chapter membership. The click rate (*via e-Blast*) averages at nearly 40% of the membership. We continue to make tweaks and additions to enhance its value to APA California members as well as the Chapter's partners.

**PRIORITY 5: Medias Kit and Focused Outreach**

See Agenda Item submitted by Stefan George Associates for updates and recommendations

**FURTHER ACTIONS REQUESTED:**

The following are recommended actions requested to help clean-up, clarify and improve the effectiveness of Chapter activities as they relate to communications and outreach to the membership.

**E1. Alignment of Local Sections with APA California (and APA National) Branding**OBJECTIVE: To ensure that all communication and social platforms are consistent with APA California and APA National identity and branding guidelines. (related to **Goals 4 & 14**, 2013-14 Strategic Plan)

BACKROUND:

All 8 Local Sections have a website; 6 have a LinkedIn Discussion Board; 6 have a Facebook page (*the LA Section has 2*); 5 have a Twitter account. Other social media platforms might also be employed, but were not readily evident. Identification (*along with logos*) used for pages, groups, and accounts is generally inconsistent with APA National and APA California identity and branding guidelines. Such variation leads to confusion and a perceived disorder of the Chapter and Local Section organization structure. See attached exhibits for information on current identification and logo usage.

BOARD ACTIONS:

1. Consider Local Section identification(s) that can be used across all Sections as well as be effective for various social media platforms and their respective sections' websites.

**EXAMPLES: (LinkedIn/Facebook)**

*American Planning Association*

**California Chapter**

Los Angeles Section

**(Twitter)**

APA | CA - San Diego

**Note:** *all would include the official APA | CA logo*

2. Adopt a policy that recommends all Local Sections to follow basic National and Chapter guidelines for local section identification and logo usage on all platforms including website page headers.

**E2. Update and/or Eliminate Inactive Pages, Accounts and Group Boards**

OBJECTIVE: To optimize Local Section communication efforts with limited resources and minimize the member perception of inactivity or dysfunction. (related to **Goals 4 & 5**, 2013-14 Strategic Plan)

BACKROUND:

In surveying all Local Sections social media platforms (*Facebook, LinkedIN, Twitter, etc*), it became apparent that several pages and discussion boards have substantially outdated material or demonstrate no activity for a significant amount of time. A number of the these platforms are NOT being monitored or updated regularly which could result in member consternation and impact the member's perception for both the Local Section and the Chapter. For example, if a new member asks to join a group and that request is left pending for a significant period of time, the experience and value of membership is diminished. Another example of perceptual degradation would be outdated content or announcements that remain posted indefinitely (*in some cases of more than a year*). Such inattention not only casts some doubt on the Local Section, but reflects negatively on Chapter efforts to be the definitive source (s) for timely and meaningful planning related content.

BOARD ACTIONS:

1. Suggest to all Local Sections that they evaluate the effectiveness of their social media components in conjunction with the Section's capabilities to regularly maintain such platforms (*as it relates to known available resources*) and make changes accordingly.

2. Adopt a policy that recommends that all Local Sections to remove abandoned pages, eliminate inactive groups, and/or update their social media platforms.

**E3. Establishment of Guidelines for Content Submission and Board Discussions**  
OBJECTIVE: To provide policies & procedures for contributors of APA California content so that material is applicable, meaningful, current and allows for equitable contribution among members. (not related to a specific SP Goal)

BACKROUND:

Until recently, there has been little in the way of guidelines to promote the contribution of content that was relevant, concise and fair. As a result, content submitted has been haphazard, in a format that is too long or is made via multiple submissions by a single member (*in a serial fashion*). The lack of content submission guidance prevents clarity and certainty to those who submit, which at times can lead to member frustration and contention.

BOARD ACTIONS:

1. Identify and discuss other potential challenges that may impede the meaningful and fair sharing of information among Chapter members.

2. Consider general guidelines for submissions that could be designed/modified to address specific communication platforms.

3. Adopt a policy that recommends developing a content submission framework to promote professional, timely and concise information, news, and announcements.

**EXAMPLE: Guidelines for Content Submission and Board Discussions (*to be posted* on *website*)**

1. Content to be considered should benefit the entire California Chapter membership. We are looking for: 1.) news and information on broad topics/issues that influence statewide planning and; 2.) member announcements on APA California Chapter activities and events. In most cases (*but not all*), content specific to a particular Local Section should be directed to Local Section's online and digital resources including website, newsletters, discussion boards and other social media platforms.

2. To allow for equal participation among the membership, we ask that you be selective and limit the amount of material to be considered for submission. Remember, the various APA related platforms accessed are done so with a limited amount of time and with efficiency in mind. Content should be geared towards topics of professional interests and from a variety of sources or authors. For specific guidelines on content submission, please refer to those posted on the respective platforms.

3. Job postings and Product/service promotions are not appropriate for the Chapter's Linkedin Discussion Board. Please visit the APA California website (*http://www.apacalifornia.org* ) for job opportunity submissions and guidance to promote your company's product or service.

4. Please use care when engaging in any discussion that could be construed as a possible violation of ethics or anti-trust laws. This includes anything related to fees, current or future compensation, prices for services that contracted by planners and discussions on pending actions that adversely influence a state policy or local agency action.

**E4. Determine Policy Regarding the Promotion of Activities from Outside Organizations**  
OBJECTIVE: To help the Chapter and Local Sections determine the appropriate position and content placement when promoting an activity from an outside or allied organization. (not related to a specific SP Goal)

BACKGROUND:

The promotion of a recent event of an (outside) allied organization by a Local Section presented some confusion on guidelines for such events. Our current Event Support and Marketing Policy stipulates the following:

*3. The event sponsor agrees to list APA California as a supporter of an event on all communication materials related*

*to the event, and agrees to prominently display the APA California logo as part of any event marketing materials.*

*6. APA California will receive ad compensation or equivalent economic benefit for APA members determined by*

*APA California to be commensurate with the marketing activity provided by APA California such as the following:*

*a. Complimentary registrations*

*b. Registration discounts for APA California members*

*c. Reciprocal cross-marketing privileges of similar size/scope/audience*

*d. Payment of fees for services provided*

*e. Distributing and displaying APA California marketing materials at the event.*

To complicate matters further, the request was to use the Chapter's MailChimp account to promote the event which was counter to the Chapter's efforts to streamline its communications and ward off email fatigue of its members. Also, by using the Chapter's account (for announcements from an outside organization), the Chapter is implicitly sanctioning a particular event when such is not the case.

BOARD ACTIONS:

1. Discuss possible modifications to the current Event Support and Marketing policy to; 1.) provide clear direction on the mechanisms for promoting or supporting an outside organization's event and; 2.) distinguish between Local Section sponsored activities and those sanctioned by the Chapter.

2. Consider separating the Local Section and Chapter communication accounts to allow for more flexibility to the Sections and minimize impacts to the Chapter's communication efforts.

3. Adopt recommendations as outlined by the Board.

**CHAPTER & LOCAL SECTION SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS**

*(does not include Pinterest, Tumblr, Instagram or other social media in the event such are used by Sections)*

**LinkedIn DISCUSSION BOARD**

APA-CA Orange Section

[American Planning Association San Diego Section](https://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=4334450&trk=anet_ug_hm)

APA California Northern

[American Planning Association Los Angeles Section](https://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=2697791&trk=anet_ug_hm)

# [Inland Empire Section of the American Planning Association--Networking Group](https://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=1939948&trk=anet_ug_hm)

Central Coast APA

**FACEBOOK PAGES:**

APA-American Planning Association California Chapter

APA California

LA APA: American Planning Association, Los Angeles Section

American Planning Association - Los Angeles

APA California - Northern

San Diego American Planning Association

Orange Section of the American Planning Association

American Planning Association, Inland Empire, California Chapter

APA California - Sacramento Valley Section

**Twitter ACCOUNTS:**

SD American Planning

OCAPA

Norcal APA

Los Angeles APA

Central Coast APA

