

**2015 California Planning Conference Local Host Committee**

September 13, 2014

California Chapter Board Report

**History of the LHC**

The Northern Section kicked off planning for the 2015 conference at the July 2013 Section Board meeting. Initially Erik Balsley and Hing Wong volunteered and were selected as co-chairs of the Local Host Committee (LHC). In January 2014, due to Hing’s election as Chapter President, the Section named Erik Balsley, Hanson Hom, and Darcy Kremin as LHC co-chairs. Each was assigned oversight of three LHC subcommittees.

**LHC Meetings**

The LHC has met six times since the LHC was established:

* September 14, 2013
* November 16, 2013
* February 2, 2014
* April 5, 2014
* June 7, 2014
* August 9, 2014

Two more meetings are planned for 2014, and meetings will occur at least every other month through 2015 until the conference date:

* October 11, 2014
* December 13, 2014

We have posted all past meeting reports on our conference “stub” page on the Northern Section’s website at: <http://norcalapa.org/programs/apa-california-2015-conference/>

This website will migrate over to the Chapter’s when it is ready.

All meetings have been held in Oakland at either the offices of URS at 1333 Broadway or at the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) at 101 Eighth Street. Both sites are accessible by Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) which has helped us attract between 40 and 60 people to our meetings. We will try and hold future meetings at other locations in Oakland.

We have been conducting the meetings in a large open circle. This has helped foster more interaction among meeting participants and allowed our creative juices to flow.

**Subcommittees and Chairs**

To help plan for the conference, we established 9 subcommittees that are headed by the following chairs:

* Diversity – Miroo Desai
* Fundraising – Jean Long
* Hospitality – Florentina Craciun
* Merchandise – Jonathan Schuppert
* Mobile Workshops – Mika Miyasato
* Planner’s Guide – Jackie Yang
* Program/Sessions – Juan Borrelli
* Publicity/PR – Erika Sawyer and Brian Soland
* Volunteers – Syd Wayman

The subcommittees were based on those established for the 2007 California Planning Conference the Section hosted in San José. However, we established a Diversity Subcommittee to build on and reach out to the strong communities present in Oakland, and the Northern Section, to ensure we created an inclusive conference. Also in recognition of the work that is required to maintain social media platforms, two co-chairs were chosen for the Publicity/PR Subcommittee.

Erik is overseeing the Merchandise, Planner’s Guide and Publicity/PR subcommittees; Darcy is overseeing the Fundraising, Hospitality and Volunteers subcommittees; and Hanson is overseeing the Diversity, Mobile Workshops and Program/Sessions subcommittees.

Each subcommittee will meet separately, as needed, between the LHC meetings. To maintain and share files between all the committees, the 2015 LHC is using Google Drive. Although for most LHC members there has been a slight learning curve, it has proven to be an effective way to collaborate and share information.

**Conference Theme – “Rooted in AuthentiCITY”**

At the first two LHC committee meetings we conducted a visioning exercise. At the first meeting we asked participants to provide us a few brief positive words about Oakland. We hoped to create a narrative to counteract many of the established negative images of Oakland in the press. We wrote the words on easel pad pages that we then posted on the wall.

At the second meeting we asked participants to place dots near the five words or phrases they most related to. In the end, the following were the top words:

* Authenticity (34)
* Branches/Tree (21)
* Diversity/Equity (18)
* Metamorphosis (16)
* Rebirth/Resurgence (15)
* Maker Culture (15)
* Gritty, Real, Urban (13)

As a meeting participant pointed out, the word authenticity was the only one that had the word city in it. To keep authenticity, we worked with the tree, but focused on its roots. The theme became “Rooted in AuthentiCITY.” This would allow us to work both urban forms and natural forms through the roots into development of the conference logo.

**Conference Logo**

Oakland has a very strong arts community. To tap into it we held an open logo competition. Starting at the February 2nd LHC committee, we combined the Merchandise and Publicity Committees into a logo competition committee. Adam Turréy led the group. He conducted outreach to various arts organizations in the City to ensure we cast the widest net possible to generate interest in the conference.

The group crafted basic guidelines for the competition that started in April 2014. By the end of the competition period on May 2, 2014 we had received 10 logo entries. On May 9, 2014 the group met to review the entries and choose the preferred logo. Two logos were considered finalists and we provided review comments to the two designers. Once revisions were received we set up a Google poll for the group to use to select the winning entry.

Amie Krager, a member of CirclePoint’s creative team in Oakland, designed the bold winning logo at the top of page 1 of this report. It shows the Oakland skyline while emphasizing the city’s solid roots. The colors communicate a sense of pride, and rays symbolize the community’s potential and growth.

Thus both the conference theme and logo are community-based efforts of our LHC.

**Conference Budget**

Our initial conference budget (see Attachment A) is based on previous ones received from the Chapter. With guidance from Kurt, our draft budget assumes a minimum attendance of 900 for conservative budgeting purposes. We also have alternate budgets for attendance of 1,200 and 1,500 which will more likely reflect the level of attendance. Total projected income is $541,625, and total projected expenses are $416,110 for a minimum attendance level of 900. If we meet our sponsorship goal and stay within budget, we expect a minimum conference profit of $125,515. We are obviously aiming to have higher attendance and will continue to publicize the conference as much as possible so that we can reach the highest attendance level.

**Host Hotel**

The host hotel for the 2015 Conference will be the Oakland City Center Marriott. Meeting and exhibit space will be provided in the adjacent Oakland Convention Center. It is located in downtown Oakland at 11th Street and Broadway and is easily accessible from both Oakland and San Francisco International Airports. The location has excellent access via BART and other local transit agencies. A free Broadway Shuttle is also available to provide easy access to the Jack London Square waterfront and downtown area. The new BART Connector service from Oakland Airport will be operational by the time of our conference with a projected start date of late 2014. Those who fly into Oakland’s Airport will no longer have to board shuttle buses to travel to BART from the Airport.

Currently we have committed to 800 room nights at the Oakland Marriott. On August 25, the conference coordinators will visit the hotel to review facilities and potentially obtain additional room nights at the hotel or its sister property – the Marriott Residence Inn – across the street.

**Sponsorship**

The sponsorship levels for the 2015 conference are based on those from previous conferences. An attempt was made to be consistent with established fundraising levels and expected benefits. The sponsorship committee will be coordinating outreach to identified organizations so that we focus on strategic personnel in each and build on established relationships. We will be carefully coordinating our efforts with Chapter outreach. In addition, based on the work that the Anaheim organizing committee has completed, we will be asking each LHC member to contact three firms to seek out sponsors. The attached conference budget reflects the proposed sponsorship levels. See Attachment B for the Sponsorship Opportunities.

**Sessions and Tracks**

The proposed sessions and tracks build on the conference theme and logo design. They were developed by the Program/Sessions Subcommittee with input from the entire LHC. The track titles incorporate both urban and natural features, but also recognizes that while this conference will be held in Oakland, it is a statewide conference; therefore, the tracks are broad and cover diverse topics of interest to planners from throughout the state. We anticipate this will generate maximum interest in the conference and expect to receive many great session proposals. The tentative closing date for receiving proposals is February 6, 2015. The draft Call for Presentations (Attachment C) identifies the conference tracks, and has been prepared earlier than in the past to allow for possible release at the Anaheim conference or shortly thereafter. The conference website will provide more details on the tracks as well as the concept of “salons.”

Salons are a new idea and are intended to be shorter 60-minute sessions to provide an alternative to the standard 90-minute sessions. Salons are envisioned to be rapid, dynamic, interactive, thought-provoking and idea generating conversations or problem-solving discussions around a “hot” planning topic or issue. They might be ideal to offer at the end of the day, but much depends the level of response to the Call for Presentations.

**Diversity**

As mentioned above, a Diversity Subcommittee was formed to ensure that the conference will highlight the topic of diversity, and it has been identified as one of the conference tracks. In addition to the Diversity Summit, Oakland and the Bay Area offer a prime opportunity for sessions and mobile workshops that can showcase local and statewide diversity issues. The subcommittee has developed a list of possible sessions and mobile workshops and will work to the Program/Sessions and Mobile Workshop subcommittees to outreach to community groups to possibly incorporate these ideas in the conference program. In addition, prominent individuals that can address a particular diversity issue are abundant in the Bay Area and are excellent candidates for potential keynote speakers.

**Opening Reception**

The Hospitality Committee presented three proposed sites to the LHC at the August 9, 2014 meeting to seek consensus on which site would be preferred. A fourth wildcard site was also presented. These sites included: the USS Hornet, an old WWII aircraft carrier in Alameda, the Oakland Museum of California, and an entertainment venue in Jack London Square. The latter two are in walking distance of the host hotel. The wild-card venue would be a bay cruise that would depart from San Francisco.

The LHC preferred the Oakland Museum of California for the reception. The venue can accommodate a large crowd and we would have access to the History of California exhibit which would be of interest to all throughout the State. In addition, the museum has rooftop gardens that afford great views of the Oakland skyline and Lake Merritt. Although walkable and transit accessible from the hotel, parking is available at the site and we will provide some shuttle bus service to and from the host hotel. The draft budget reflects the estimated cost of holding the opening event at the Oakland Museum.

**Mobile Workshops**

Based on information from Kurt about the level of registration for mobile workshops at the Anaheim conference, the Mobile Workshops subcommittee is planning to offer about 15 workshops at the Oakland conference. The Bay Area offers excellent possibilities for workshops, as well as convenient walking tours from the conference center. Although mobile workshops will be developed at the local section level, the subcommittee has been working closely with the Program/Sessions subcommittee to ensure a consistent approach to topics and publicity. It is likely that a planning topic will be covered through a related session and workshop. The subcommittee has also coordinated with the Diversity subcommittee to suggest workshops that will explore diversity themes.

Mobile workshops will be developed through two methods: issuance of a Call for Mobile Workshops to the Northern Section, and direct contact with possible organizers on identified workshop topics. The Call for Mobile Workshops has been drafted and will be finalized in October so that it can be issued concurrently with the Call for Presentations. It is expected that the cost for mobile workshops will primarily be covered by registration fees, but the subcommittee would like to keep the cost of workshops reasonable. Sponsorship opportunities will also be solicited.

**Publicity**

The publicity committee will be working with Francine to start generating content for our conference. At first, conference information will be presented on a page on Chapter’s website. After the Anaheim conference concludes, we will work towards setting up the new 2015 conference website in late October 2015.

We have set up Instagram and Twitter accounts to follow. Due to username length restrictions both are apa2015ca. LHC and Northern Section members are already tagging photos of Oakland on Instagram.

We are also publishing interviews with local residents and Planners in the Northern Section’s newsletter – *Northern News*. Each interviewee is providing brief highlights of Oakland and their relationship to it. We plan to post these on the conference website, include them in *CalPlanner*, and share them with other Sections in an effort to generate interest in the Conference and the host city.

**Oakland at the Anaheim Conference**

Thank you to the Anaheim organizing committee for organizing what will be an excellent conference. We appreciate you providing us a booth near registration outside the exhibitor’s area.

We have ordered and received 500 pins with our Conference Logo for the pin exchange. The pin will also be the one for Northern Section. We will be providing sustainable cork coasters with a save-the-date reminder and fortune cookies with Oakland specific fortunes. Dorina has set up and ordered the coasters in coordination with the Merchandise committee.

Our booth we also will bring a little of Oakland’s Do-It-Yourself (DIY) ethos to Anaheim. While we will provide the usual information pertaining to sessions and sponsorship we will have a make your own save-the-date postcard station. Attendees will be able to hand stamp our conference logo on the front of the postcard and write any inspirational words about planning, California, or Oakland on it. The conference information will be on the back of the card and attendees will address their postcards. Each card can then be pinned onto a foam core board that will consist on the conference logo. Once the call for sessions is opened, or hotel reservations, we will send the cards out. We will try to use custom made postage stamps with the conference logo.

In addition we will have a selfie wall so people can tag the conference on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and all the other social media platforms.

Attachments:

A – Proposed Oakland 2015 Conference Budget

B – Sponsorship Opportunities

C – Draft Call for Presentations for Oakland 2015 Conference