

**TO: APA California Chapter Board**

**FROM: Sharon Grewal, AICP**

 **Vice President of Professional Development**

 **Greg Konar, AICP**

**Distance Education Coordinator**

**DATE: January 11, 2019**

**SUBJECT: Planetizen Collaboration Opportunities**

***Recommendation: Initiate collaboration with Planetizen to create courses and “what is planning” video.***

BACKGROUND

At the October 2018 Conference Board meeting, Chris Steins, CEO of Planetizen, solicited input from the Board on potential collaboration opportunities with APA California. Following the conference, Chris submitted a list of collaboration efforts that might be of interest to APA. Projects included potential collaboration on an introduction to planning course, a course for planning commissioners, an urban planning training program for middle school or high school students, a pilot 2019 conference session-based course, marketing APA California produced conference session videos, marketing for Cal Planner articles and an APA member discount on Planetizen Courses.

Planetizen has already helped to market the 2018 conference videos through its website and several issues of Planetizen Newswire.

DISCUSSION

The Distance Education Committee met on December 13, 2018, to discuss collaboration opportunities and again on December 20, 2018, to continue discussions, with Chris Steins joining in on the conference call.

At the first meeting the Committee agreed that more information was needed on four key areas before the Board could agree to work with Planetizen on any collaboration project: 1) timeframe for production, 2) revenue sharing, 3) ownership of distribution rights, and 4) branding.

At the following meeting, Chris explained how Planetizen produces and markets its courses and how a collaboration project with APA California could be structured.

Timeframe for Production

Courses are developed on a 1-3 month schedule. A typical course takes 60-days to create. A preliminary step before anything takes place in the preparation of a course outline.

1. The first step is an initial meeting with the instructor. This is a mini-brainstorming session. Specific learning goals are set. Visuals to go along with the course are discussed.
2. The next step is to work out a contract for services. Instructors are paid $1,000 per hour of instruction. An additional travel stipend of $750 is available. The recording takes place in Los Angeles.
3. The instructor is then given a series of deadlines or milestones that need to be met.
4. The producer then meets with the instructor to go over the recording process.
5. Recording date is set. The recording process takes 2-4 hours.
6. The last step is post-production where any needed editing takes place.

Distribution and Revenue Sharing

Distribution rights would be shared per agreement.

APA would be providing the course concept and content. Planetizen would be producing the video product. There would be no dollar costs to APA to produce a course but there would be volunteer time costs for developing the course concept and content.

Chris offered two different models with regard to distribution and revenues:

1. In the first model, APA would market the course to its own membership and receive the revenue directly. Planetizen would market the course to its broader audience and retain all revenues received.
2. In the second model, APA California members could access the course through Planetizen. Planetizen would keep track of APA California viewers and send a check to APA California for this portion of the revenue. Revenue from sources other than APA California members would go to Planetizen. Chris indicated that Planetizen has thousands of subscribers.

Planetizen courses are offered on a subscription basis: $20 per month or $160 per year. APA California markets conference videos on a pay per view basis: $10 per CM credit. A discount is available for group viewing.

Branding

Jointly produced courses would be co-branded so that APA California and Planetizen would receive recognition. Chris felt strongly that co-branding with APA California increases course marketability especially for agencies seeking quality training materials. If a certificate is offered the course would be even more valuable.

ANALYSIS

The Chapter’s current distance education program focuses on expanding the availability of content created through existing Chapter and Section activities. These include webinars, conference session videos, and interactive live streaming.

The creation of new courses specifically for online distribution involves significant costs and time obligations. A collaboration with Planetizen provides a way to balance production costs and time obligations while opening up an opportunity for additional revenue. The Distance Education Committee found the collaboration concept presented by Planetizen reasonable and worth pursuing on a step-by-step basis. All agreed that the production of a Planning Commissioner Training video would be a good place to start. Additionally, Planetizen is willing to create a short “what is planning” video that can be posted on the APA California website at no charge to the Chapter.