



American Planning Association  
**California Chapter**

*Making Great Communities Happen*

DATE: October 17, 2020  
TO: APA California Chapter Board  
FROM: Hanson Hom, AICP, Vice President Conferences  
SUBJECT: APA California 2020 Virtual Conference

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This report provides information on the outcome of the APA California 2020 Virtual Conference held on September 14-16, 2020. It is recommended that the Board discuss the distribution of the net income from the conference. A full Conference Wrap-Up Report with a final Profit & Loss statement will be presented at the annual Board Retreat in January 2021.

***The virtual conference generated \$266,750 in gross income with estimated expenses of \$127,603. Approximate net revenue is \$139,147. These amounts are subject to a final accounting of all income and expenses.***

### **Distribution of Conference Profit**

The Conference Requirements Handbook (Article III.H) stipulates how conference profits are to be distributed to the Chapter, Host Section and the other seven sections. The first \$120,000 is to be distributed 40% or \$48,000 to the Chapter, 40% or \$48,000 to the Host Section, and 20% or \$24,000 split equally among the other seven sections (\$3,428.57 each). Any amount above \$120,000 are split 50/50 between the Chapter and Host Section.

Because the virtual conference did not have a Host Section, the Board will have the discretion to distribute the income that would otherwise be allocated to the Host Section. Another item for discussion is revisiting the Board's decision to allocate a portion of the conference profit to the CPF Student Scholarship Fund, which was made before we changed over to a virtual conference. The Board might also set aside some of the funds to backfill the expected reduction in Chapter revenue in 2021.

### **Virtual Conference Committee**

This conference included over 40 members who volunteered their time to serve on the Virtual Conference Committee by participating on one or several of the conference subcommittees (Attachment 1). A big thank you and sincere appreciation are extended to all committee members as well as to the Section Directors for their help in organizing and publicizing the conference. Special thanks go to the Inland Empire Section for soliciting and screening session

submittals that were originally slated for the Riverside conference. It was truly a team effort that all came together in just three months. As usual, our stellar contractors were pivotal for making this conference a success. Last but not least, our student volunteers led by Ben Morrison provided essential technical support for the conference.

In addition to pivoting to a virtual conference, the VP for Conferences and Francine Farrell oversaw switching to a new event management company, Cvent/CrowdCompass, for our conference registration, website, and mobile app.

## **Conference Content**

The 2020 Virtual Conference with the theme “State of Change” included 110 educational sessions, networking events, and sponsor forums over three full days of programming. Over 150 speakers presented at the educational sessions and networking events. Along with a wide variety of planning topics, the length of sessions ranged from 30 minutes for focused presentations to 90 minutes to allow for more discussion or audience participation. In addition to the annual Diversity Summit, the themes of social equity, environmental justice, and systemic racism were core topics or were integrated into many sessions.

Most of the sessions held in a Zoom webinar or meeting room (most with CM credits) were recorded and are available for registered attendees to view without an additional fee until December 31, 2020. Individual and packaged sessions will also be available to view with a fee for those who did not register for the conference. The networking events held in a Remo room were not recorded. A total of 52 AICP CM credits were available at the conference, including four sessions for CM Law or Ethics credits. Premier events were scheduled with no competing sessions (except for overlapping sponsor forums) consisting of: three Big Conversations on racism, housing and the future of planning; the annual Diversity Summit; the 2020 Chapter Legislative Update; and the 2020 APA California Chapter Awards.

The ten highest attended sessions were the following:

1. Big Conversation #1: Racism and Bias in Planning
2. Big Conversation #2: Thinking Outside the Toolbox to House California
3. APA California 2020 Legislative Update
4. Diversity Summit: Lessons from COVID-19
5. 2020 CEQA Update
6. Big Conversation #3: Planning for the Future
7. SB 1000: The Bumpy Road towards Environmental Justice through Comprehensive Planning (CPR Session)
8. APA California President's Introduction and Welcome
9. 2020 APA California Awards Program
10. Public Space in Diverse and Changing Communities

## **Post-Conference Survey**

Following the conference, a post-conference survey was distributed to all conference attendees. The survey received an 18.4% response rate (208 respondents). A summary of the results is

shown in Attachment 2. Not included are the extensive individual comments that were submitted for each question. High-level results include the following:

1. Close to half of the attendees are employed with public agencies. Over 90 percent of attendees are APA members and over half are AICP certified. A large number of students and entry-level planners also attended the conferences.
2. The conference was well-received with approximately 70-75 percent rating the range of topics, quality of sessions, and relevance of sessions as excellent or very good.
3. An interesting mix of comments was received regarding the focus of many sessions on social and racial equity. Comments, ranged from high marks to the Chapter for highlighting these issues to others mentioning that some sessions were redundant.
4. About half of the respondents felt that a good balance of educational sessions and networking events was offered, but a significant number (43%) would have preferred more educational sessions.
5. Zoom was highly well-received as a virtual platform. Remo received more positive comments than negative comments, with feedback ranging from rave reviews for the networking capabilities to those who expressed some difficulties with the format.
6. While most found it was very easy or fairly easy to login to the conference app, the submitted comments indicate that this is area for improvement. Staff has already debriefed with Cvent on possible user improvements.
7. Once people were able to download and access the app, over 75 percent of attendees were very satisfied with the content, features, and user friendliness of the app. Over 90 percent used the My Schedule feature.
8. The virtual conference was very favorably received. Various reasons were offered to support incorporating a virtual component into future conferences, including to expand membership access and to provide affordable and flexible learning opportunities. However, while necessary this year, many noted that a virtual format does not equate to the learning and networking experience available at an in-person conference.

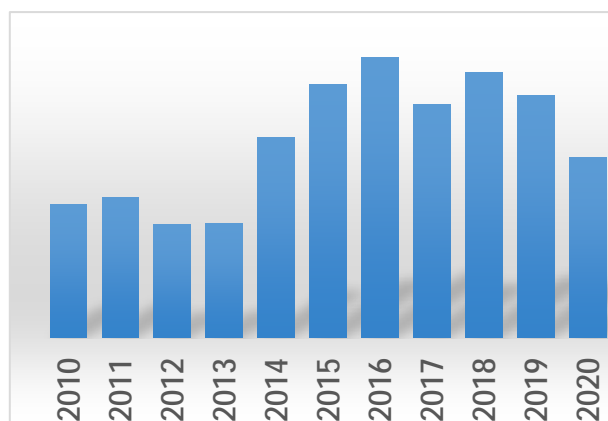
## Registration

Total registration for the virtual conference was 1,128 (not including unregistered speakers). The breakdown of registration by category is shown below in Table 1.

**TABLE 1**  
**2020 Virtual Conference Registration**

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
APA and Chapter-Only Member	660	58.5%
Student	181	16.0%
Non-APA Member	114	10.1%
Young/Emerging Planner	78	6.9%
Life/Retired Member	38	3.4%
Commission/Board Member	34	3.0%
Speaker	23	2.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,128</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Attendance at the virtual conference when compared to past in-person conferences is shown below in Table 3. Given the uncertain and unparalleled times which necessitated most agencies and firms to reduce their expenditures for 2020, the attendance numbers are very respectable.



**TABLE 2**  
**Historic Conference Registration**

<b>2020 Virtual Conference</b>	<b>1,128</b>
2019 Santa Barbara	1,519
2018 San Diego	1,665
2017 Sacramento Valley	1,462
2016 Los Angeles	1,758
2015 Northern	1,590
2014 Orange	1,257
2013 Central	717
2012 Inland Empire	708
2011 Central Coast	879
2010 Santa Barbara	838

### Conference Profit

The Conference Planning Handbook requires that conferences achieve a minimum profit of \$120,000 based on 900 registrants. The Handbook further sets a profit margin guideline of 20-25 percent (net income/gross income) for larger conferences. This guideline balances providing a high quality and complete conference experience for attendees while ensuring that conferences generate income to fund the ongoing programs of the Chapter and Sections.

### Total Income

Income from registration and sponsorships are indicated below and are shown in the attached updated budget for the 2020 virtual conference that reflects a registration of 1,128 attendees (Attachment 3). Registration income accounted for the majority of revenue, but sponsorship income was substantial and critical since registration rates were significantly lower for the virtual conference than for our in-person conferences.

**TABLE 3**  
**2020 Conference Income**

<u>Income Source</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Registrations	\$ 171,750.00	64.5%
Sponsorships	\$ 94,500.00	35.5%
Misc. Income/Interest	\$ pending	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 266,250.00</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## **Sponsorship Income**

Once it was determined that the 2020 conference would pivot to virtual, the existing sponsorship list was reviewed, which had already generated some income for the Riverside conference. Laura Black and Deene Alongi assumed the sponsorship responsibilities and reached out to the existing Riverside sponsors to determine who would sponsor the 2020 Virtual Conference. A new sponsorship brochure with an updated benefits package was created and sent out to over 100 previous and potential conference sponsors.

Sponsorship income totaled \$95,000. The conference received 35 sponsors (paid and in-kind) who were also offered a scheduled Sponsor Forum (a virtual exhibit space using the virtual platform Remo). The allotted time for Sponsor Forums was defined by the level of sponsorship. Sponsors also had the option to sponsor a session of their choice to further highlight their firm.

Additionally, a new Chapter-level sponsorship was created with additional benefits. Dudek stepped forward to be our first Chapter sponsor. They also provided in-kind services by designing the conference logo and Zoom backgrounds.

## **Expenses**

The updated conference budget includes an itemization of expected expenses. While I believe the expenses are accurately represented, a final Profit & Loss Statement will be provided at the Board Retreat after reconciling and confirming all conference expenses with our bookkeeper.

## **Attachments:**

1. Virtual Conference Host Committee
2. 2020 Post-Conference Survey
3. Updated 2020 Conference Budget

# APA California 2020 Virtual Conference Committee

## Core Committee

<b>Julia Lave Johnston, Chapter President</b>	<b>Hanson Hom, VP for Conferences</b>
Tess Harris, Conference Program Coordinator	Betsy McCullough
Bob Lagomarsino	Deene Alongi, Conference Manager
Sharon Grewal	Ben Morrison, Virtual Technology Coordinator

## Sponsorships Subcommittee

<b>Laura Black, CoChair</b>	<b>Deene Alongi, CoChair</b>
Jay Higgins	Julia Lave Johnston
Hanson Hom	Marc Yeber

## Program Sessions

<b>Julia Lave Johnston, CoChair</b>	<b>Betsy McCullough, CoChair</b>
<b>Stephanie Roxas, CoChair</b>	
Jennifer Clark	Rick Rust
Allison Cook	Yassaman Sarvian
Nancy Graham	Jonathan Schuppert
Tess Harris	Brian Smith
Hanson Hom	Jenny Welch
Kacey Lizon	Pamela Wu
Tony Mendoza	Marc Yeber
Brian Mooney	Jenny J. Yu
Lisa Prasse	

## YEP, Students & Volunteers

<b>Rachel Raynor, Chair</b>	
Elizabeth Owen	Juan Borrelli
Mirle Rabinowitz-Bussell	Jenny J. Yu
Hilary Nixon	

## Publicity

<b>Ellie Fiore, Chair</b>	
Hanson Hom	Julia Lave Johnston

## Networking Events

<b>Bob Lagomarsino, CoChair</b>	<b>Marc Yeber, CoChair</b>
Juan Borrelli	Hilary Nixon
Hanson Hom	Bennett Smithhart
Julia Lave Johnston	Janet Spilman
Betsy McCullough	

## Diversity

<b>Miroo Desai, VP Diversity and Equity</b>	
Hanson Hom	Jeannie Lee

## Technical

Greg Konar, Distance Education Director	Ben Morrison, Technology Coordinator
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## Contractors

Deene Alongi, Conference Manager	Carol Malin, Proofreader
Dorina Blythe, Graphic Designer	Ben Morrison, Virtual Technology Coordinator
Laura Dee, Bookkeeper	Laura Murphy, AICP Coordinator
Francine Farrell, Registration, Website and App Coordinator	

**American Planning Association, California Chapter**  
**DRAFT Conference Budget (updated 10/08/2020)**  
**2020 Virtual Conference (1,128 registered attendees)**

		No. or %	Unit Cost	Total Cost
ITEM	INCOME ITEMS			
	<i>Number of Registrants</i>			<i>1,128</i>
4600	TOTAL Conference Registration Income			171,750
4700	Conference Sponsorships			95,000
	TOTAL INCOME			266,750
ITEM	EXPENSE ITEMS			
	Conference Management (5106):			
5106.1	Conference Contract Services (Deene Alongi))			35,000
5106.2	Conference Contract Services (Ben Morrison)			10,263
5106	TOTAL Conference Management			45,263
5107	Conference Registration (included with Item 6841.1)			0
5110	Operations/Miscellaneous Expenses			5,000
5115	Speaker Fees and Expense Allowance			600
5120	Insurance			650
5175	Credit Card Fees			5,153
5180	Conference Registration/Sponsor Support (Contract)			13,500
5185	Conference Program/AICP CM Support (Contract)			7,500
5520	Design Services (Contract)			7,000
5521	Proofreader (Contract)			2,500
5620	Accounting/Tax Services (Contract)			7,000
6450	Virtual Conference Platforms			3,500
6480	Website & Mobile App (6480):			
6481	Website:			
6481.1	Website and Registration Hosting (per Contract)			17,437
6481.2	Website Support (per Contract)			2,500
6481	Website			19,937
6482	Mobile App:			
6482.1	Mobile App Hosting (Certain contract)			5,000
6482.2	Mobile App Support (per Contract)			5,000
6482	Mobile App			10,000
6480	TOTAL Website & Mobile App			29,937
	TOTAL EXPENSES			127,603
	NET INCOME			139,148
	PROFIT MARGIN			52%

