

IOWA PLANNING



American Planning Association
Iowa Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen

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After studying five different options for a passenger rail route linking Chicago to Council Bluffs/Omaha — which included analyzing the potential levels of service and ridership, and reviewing feedback from the public — the Iowa Department of Transportation and the Federal Railroad Administration have determined that the most feasible route is the one that would pass through the Quad Cities, Iowa City, Des Moines, and Council Bluffs.

The State of Iowa was offered an \$87 million federal grant for the project in 2010 (part of a \$230 million grant with the State of Illinois), but has still not accepted the funds. Passenger rail supporters and some Iowa legislators are concerned that if the state does not accept the grant this year, the dollars will be redirected to other states. Illinois has already begun work to extend the passenger rail line from Chicago to Moline, using their portion of the federal grant.

Loss of the passenger rail connection could put the state at an economic disadvantage, as surrounding states continue to leverage inclusion in a passenger rail system. Over the last decade, Amtrak has experienced record ridership and greatly improved on-time performance. It is believed that expanding this transportation alternative would provide a significant economic boost throughout the entire state.

In addition to connecting major population centers in Iowa and other states, the rail system is expected to expand and diversify the regional transportation network; enhance tourism opportunities; aid in the recruitment and retention efforts of the University of Iowa; provide safe, reliable, and affordable business and personal travel options; and serve as an economic catalyst for the redevelopment of the Riverfront Crossings area in Iowa City. Proposals have Rock Island train depot on Lafayette Street for use as the rail station.

Based on experience with other passenger rail projects, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) anticipates that the Chicago-to-Omaha project would be incrementally funded, and that construction and operations would be implemented in phases as federal and state funding was allocated. The proposed plan calls for a schedule that would eventually offer up to seven round-trips per day from Chicago to Des Moines, five of which would then extend on to Council Bluffs/Omaha.

Supporters of passenger rail in Iowa are urged to contact their state legislators to ask them to back the Chicago-to-Iowa City passenger rail project during this legislative session, and demonstrate support for extending the route to Omaha in the future. For more information, visit www.iowadot.gov/chicagotoomaha. ■

President's Message

Rich Russell, AICP

Greetings Iowa Planners!

I hope everyone had a fantastic holiday season! I am excited about the many opportunities that 2013 will bring. I apologize for the brevity of this column. Maybe I am still in holiday mode?

One of the opportunities will be for us to get together for networking and education. Please make an effort to attend some of these events in the coming months:

- January 18, 2013--Linn County--Cedar Rapids--Les Beck--Begin 2013 Conference Planning--U of I Cost of Living presentation (tentative)
- March 15, 2013--Sioux City--Jill Wanderscheid--Topic TBD
- May 17, 2013--City of Davenport--Davenport--Matt Flynn--Topic TBD
- July 19, 2013--Region XII COG--Carroll--Karina Ward will help with a CM presentation.
- September 20, 2013--Linn County--Cedar Rapids--Les Beck--2013 Conference Planning + Topic TBD
- November 15, 2013--University of Iowa--Iowa City--Chuck Connerly-- University-Community Partnerships for Sustainability: The Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities.

AIA Iowa's Spring Conference will be held in Ames on April 4th at the Scheman Center. Dan Pitera, Executive Director of the Detroit Collaborative Design Center at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture, will be the keynote speaker at the conference.

Also, APA's National Conference will be held in Chicago April 13th through 17th. We will have the All-Iowa Reception on the evening of April 16th at the Emerald Loop Bar and Grill located at 216 N Wabash in Chicago. The reception will run from 5-8 p.m. Please make plans to attend the conference and reception. The location offers a wonderful opportunity for Iowa members to attend at a reasonable cost.



Make a resolution to please let me know of any way your chapter can provide more benefits to you as a member. Also, please let me know of any way you'd like to be more involved in the chapter. This is the primary way that the chapter can become more effective.

Rich Russell, AICP
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Check us out on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter!

Visit our webpage at www.iowa-apa.org



Reduced 2013 AICP Exam Fee Scholarship

Submitted by Gary Taylor, AICP



APA members with financial hardships are encouraged to become AICP members by taking advantage of the Reduced Exam Fee Scholarship program. The program was put into place to offer assistance to those individuals who may defer taking, or are unable to take the AICP exam because of its cost. Each chapter is allowed a specified number of recipients. Iowa is allotted one scholarship per calendar year. Scholarship recipients pay reduced fees to AICP as follows:

- First time AICP applicants: \$135 (combined \$70 application and \$65 exam fee)
- Previously approved AICP applicants: \$65 (exam fee only)

If scholarship recipients pay the regular instead of the reduced fees before receiving notice of selection, AICP will promptly refund the fee difference to the candidates.

If you are interested in applying for a scholarship you must submit to me a written explanation of financial hardship (including financial hardship caused by a budget cutback in a firm or agency), that necessitates the request. Financial hardship is defined by APA as:

1. The applicant(s) selected will be otherwise unlikely to take the exam without the reduced fee.
2. The applicant's employer will not subsidize the exam fee.
3. Members of ethnic or racial minorities shall be given preference.

Your application must address each of these three points. Your request must be submitted to Gary Taylor, APA-Iowa Chapter Professional Development Officer (gtaylor@iastate.edu), by January 29, 2012 for the May 2013 testing window. If you are thinking ahead to the May 2013 testing window you should plan to submit to your request to Gary by the end of this year. ■



The American Planning Association's
Professional Institute

**American Institute
of Certified Planners**

Making Great Communities Happen

Considering Certification?

Taking the AICP exam is the first step to becoming a certified planner. To qualify, one must be a current APA member, submit an online application meeting certain education and experience criteria, and pass an examination.

THE ZONER'S CORNER

Bluffs Tomorrow: 2030 Plan *Submitted by Rose E. Brown, AICP*

The City of Council Bluffs initiated an update to the adopted Comprehensive Plan in July 2012. The plan is expected to be complete in May 2013. The City received thirteen proposals representing 27 unique firms, and selected Houseal Lavigne Associates as the lead consultant along with sub-consultants HDR Engineering, Inc. and MindMixer.

The existing comprehensive plan was adopted in 1994 and has been amended on multiple occasions ranging from future land use map changes to the adoption of the Loess Hills Preservation Plan. The updated plan will be consistent with the Iowa Smart Planning Principles and will particularly examine the community's growth and development related to the lessons learned from the 2011 Missouri River Flood event. The plan will address land use and policy issues related to the historical flood event.

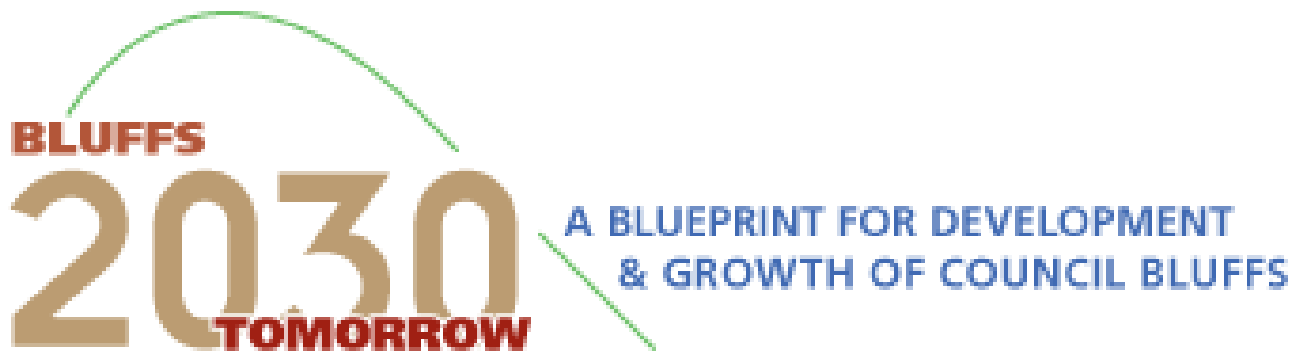
In addition to the customary elements of the plan, four special subareas have been selected for additional detailed analysis. Each subarea is geographically specific, but it is intended that many of the principles and strategies for each area will have applicability to other locations within the community. The selected subareas include: 1) an undeveloped interstate interchange, 2) an underserved residential neighborhood adjacent to downtown, 3) an area struggling for an identity that is experiencing the redevelopment of light industrial/commercial uses located south of downtown, and 4) a state highway commercial corridor including 24 contiguous blocks of unimproved City right-of-way.

A great deal of attention is being paid to the public input process. One of the major goals and approaches of this planning process is to receive a significant amount of input from a range of diverse parties including: residents, property owners, business owners/operators, the young, the elderly and all members of the community. A variety of public input tools and opportunities are used to result in broad participation. A project website has been used to provide opportunities for community mapping and survey/comment input. The website provides the ability to subscribe to an RSS feed to keep informed about the process. In addition, a mindmixer site has been developed. The process has a Facebook page and the capability to have a Twitter presence. A 'Do-it-Yourself' kit is available to small groups. The DIY kit provides everything needed including facilitator instructions, a sign, and other materials to conduct a small scale public meeting. The idea is to solicit input from those that may not otherwise attend a public meeting because of time constraints, comfort level or any other reason. For more information on the Plan or process visit www.bluffstomorrow2030.com.

"The updated plan will be consistent with the Iowa Smart Planning Principles"

Iowa Smart Planning Principles:

1. Collaboration;
2. Efficiency, transparency, and consistency;
3. Clean, renewable, and efficient energy;
4. Occupational diversity;
5. Revitalization;
6. Housing diversity;
7. Community character;
8. Natural resources and agricultural protection;
9. Sustainable design;
10. Transportation diversity.



ANNOUNCEMENTS



CALL FOR WEBCASTS!

APA-IA is a member of the Planning Webcast Series, a co-op comprised of APA Chapters and Divisions that provides cost-free webcasts to a national audience. The Series is currently soliciting topics for the 2013 calendar year.

These are the planned webcasts, so far:

- January 18 - [Linking Airports to Transportation Planning](#), Transportation Division
- January 25 - [Mobile Planning: There's an App for That](#), The Ohio State University
- February 1 - TBD, Illinois
- February 8 - [Copy Cats: How Plagiarism \(and Laziness\) is Discrediting the Urban Planning Profession](#), The Ohio State University
- February 15 - TBD, Mississippi Chapter
- February 23 - TBD, Economic Development Division
- March 1 - [How to Start a New Consulting Firm: Strategies for Success](#), Private Practice Division
- March 8 - TBD, Northern New England Chapter
- March 15 - TBD, Western Central Chapter
- March 22 - OPEN DATE

If you or your organization have a topic that can reach a national audience (i.e. Mobile Populations; Strategies for Aging Communities; Public Art), please contact Rich Russell at rrussell@cityofdubuque.org. ■

ISU EXTENSION AND OUTREACH PLANNING AND ZONING WORKSHOPS

It is once again time for the ISU Extension and Outreach Introduction to Planning and Zoning workshops. The workshop is offered annually in eight locations across the state. Locations change from year-to-year so that city and county officials are able to attend a location near them at least once every two years. The dates and locations for Spring 2013 are:

March 25 – Council Bluffs, Hilton Garden Inn
March 27 – Fort Dodge, Best Western Starlight Village
April 1 – Davenport, River Music Experience Performance Hall
April 2 – Fairfield, Fairfield Arts and Convention Center
April 3 – Waterloo, Waterloo Center for the Arts
April 8 – Dubuque, Grand River Center

April 9 – Johnston, Hilton Garden Inn

For more information visit the Intro to Planning and Zoning Workshops page on my blog:

<http://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/planningBLUZ/workshops/>

You will also be able to download a registration form from that page in late January. Hard copies of registration brochures will be in the mail to your city clerks at around the same time. Contact Gary Taylor if you have any questions: (515) 294-5156 or gtaylor@iastate.edu ■

HEARTLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COURSE

(April 21-25, 2013)

The Heartland Economic Development Course (HEDC) offers intensive training in the basic concepts, information, methods and strategies of local economic development. Graduation from Heartland fulfills one of the prerequisites for those who wish to take examinations for Certified Economic Development (CEcD) designation. Those with AICP credentials can earn 16 Certification Maintenance (CM) credits for attending this course. The next course will be held April 21-25, 2013 in Blue Springs, Missouri (Kansas City metro area). For more information or to register please visit www.bcs.uni.edu/heartland, call [800-782-9520](tel:800-782-9520) or check us out on Facebook or LinkedIn. – Submitted by Aaron Sauerbrei, Heartland Economic Development ■

University Planning News!!

The Planning Accreditation Board met in November and re-accredited the planning programs at Iowa State University for a period of 5 years, effective January 1, 2013. There is a possible 2 year extension based on an interim report. The maximum term of accreditation granted is 7 years.

On behalf of the PAB, thank you to those who coordinated the written comments provided by the local APA Chapter, and who participated in the visit itself.

–Submitted by David Wilwerding, AICP ■

University of Iowa, URP
www.urban.uiowa.edu/

Visit their WebPages'!

Iowa State University, CRP:
www.design.iastate.edu/communityplanning/index.php