

# PLANNING MATTERS



American Planning Association  
**Colorado Chapter**

*Making Great Communities Happen*

A Publication of the Colorado Chapter of the American Planning Association

## MAY 2019 HOUSING

### **Generational Bond:**

Affordable Senior Housing Helping Families Grow Old Together

### **LIMBY**

The "Live in My Backyard" invitation

### **Zoning for Alternative Housing**

Meeting the demand with modern code updates

### **Community Inclusion**

A Prerequisite to Solving the Housing Affordability Crisis





# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



around the Country at the 2019 National Planning Conference in San Francisco in April. The conference was filled with refreshing content and I was moved by the organization's loud commitment to diversity and inclusivity. Our 4-Corners reception offered meaningful networking with planners from the New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, and Arizona. Also at NPC 19, APA National introduced us to our new Chief Executive Officer, Joel Albizo, FASAE, CAE. Joel has a wealth of experience in organizational management and is coming to APA from the American Society of Landscape Architects. I look forward to watching him grow the profile of planners and APA.



This issue of Planning Matters is dedicated to housing and we have curated a wide-array of articles on issues and challenges related to housing from planners throughout the state. I hope you will be inspired by this issue and will continue to show-up every day ready to demonstrate to your friends and colleagues the importance of planning in our communities.

One final note, we will be opening registration for the Colorado Planning Conference, to be held in Snowmass September 18-20 in June. Thanks to our professional development committee and the depth of session proposals we received, the event will provide a variety of educational, networking, and mobile tour events. I hope you can make it!

As always, if you have questions, ideas, or concerns, please reach out to me at [president@apacolorado.org](mailto:president@apacolorado.org).

Take Care,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michelle N. Stephens'.

Michelle N. Stephens, AICP  
President, APA Colorado Chapter

## Dear Members and Friends,

Spring is roaring it's way into summer and I'm excited for graduation!! New graduates will be entering the planning field soon and I encourage our seasoned professionals to take any opportunity to meet and hopefully work with an emerging professional. Our soon-to-be recent graduates bring fresh thinking, new ideas, and creativity and will be looking to us to mentor and provide them meaningful opportunities to contribute. If you'd like to meet some of the graduates coming out of Colorado's accredited Master's of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) program, please come to their Capstone Reception on Thursday, May 16th. Learn more and RSVP at our website at [www.apacolorado.org](http://www.apacolorado.org). The Capstone Reception, co-hosted with the MURP Alumni Association (MURPAA) and CU Denver's College of Architecture and Planning, is a great opportunity to meet new grads, connect with friends from the planning community, and learn about trends in our field. I look forward to seeing you and your colleagues there.

As Chapter President, I was provided the opportunity to meet with planning friends from



*Cover Photo: A log cabin built atop a rock in a Colorado ghost town. 1984 Photographer: Sylvia Lewis. Copyright American Planning Association*



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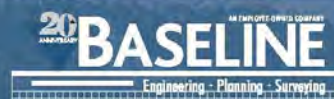
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# GENERATIONAL BOND:

## *Affordable Senior Housing Helping Families Grow Old Together*

**By Jeos Oreamuno AIA, ECODistricts AP™, LEED AP BD+C**

Architects working on projects that include Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) for senior housing focus primarily on code requirements and building amenities. While those attributes are necessary for multi-family buildings, there are other auxiliary factors to consider:

age-in-place planning and convenient access to nearby transportation. These factors are sometimes difficult to quantify but play a significant role in senior living.

An April 2019 study published by Health Affairs estimates that in 10 years, more than half of middle-income Americans aged 75 or older will not be able to afford the costs of assisted living or medical expenses. Having to make the difficult choice between adequate healthcare or housing is a serious topic facing families today. According to census data, more than 80,000 seniors live in the metro Denver area and nearly

three-quarters of them are homeowners.

Organizations like The Colorado Visiting Nurse Association and Metro Denver Habitat for Humanity are promoting aging-in-place services including; hospice care, wellness care, and home repairs. However, the program which makes their work possible, the Community Aging in Place—Advancing Better Living for Elders (CAPABLE) is in its infancy and intends to provide around 100 participants with assistance in 2019.

In order to meet the evolving needs of communities, senior housing projects that incorporate Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) offer aging residents access to public transportation which in turn encourage active living, helping to keep seniors independent and engaged in their communities. TOD





planning not only benefits seniors, immediate families benefit from access to transit options that facilitate visitations bridging families that rely primarily on public transit together.

The Adams County housing authority, Unison Housing Partners, applies progressive housing solutions in the framing of multigenerational housing models. Crossing Pointe, an affordable senior/family housing

project designed by Van Meter Williams Pollack is Unison's ambitious housing concept under development in Thornton, Colorado. Conveniently located near retail stores, supermarket, commuter rail station, and the new Thornton Active Adult Center scheduled to open in 2020, Crossing Pointe provides healthy living opportunities for seniors who earn 30-60 percent of the area median income. In collaboration,

Unison Housing Partners and Van Meter Williams Pollack envision a vibrant, thriving community that fosters organic interactions around the development.

Offering seniors an affordable housing choice that secures their independence by



means of access to transportation options located near their surrounding neighborhood is becoming a priority for communities all across the country. Housing agencies and interest groups should advocate local policies prioritizing aging-in-place strategies that provide solutions for the imminent housing needs of our growing senior population.



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# LIMBY: *The “Live in My Back Yard” Invitation*

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) provide citizens with an “Live In My Back Yard” (LIMBY) alternative to perpetual NIMBY / YIMBY headbutting that dominates not-so neighborly discourse surrounding development. This alternative invites a shift in perspective and embraces significant and growing support from zoning and planning documents, including the recent adoption of Blueprint Denver, as it seeks to change the city by reimagining our role within it.



By Will Martin, urbanist

**The Vote:** Denver’s City Council voted on April 22, 2019 to pass Blueprint Denver, the city’s updated land-use plan. With a 20+ year time horizon and weighing in at over 300 pages, the document is a big deal with long term and broad reaching impacts on Denver’s future. Attendees at the public hearing preceding the plan’s vote, however, witnessed the gravity of something seemingly (and actually) small – the accessory dwelling unit (ADU). Uninitiated onlookers watched a live rerun of the weekly ADU debate rehearsed by neighborhood associations in growing cities across the country. To ADU or not to ADU? That seems to be the question. The updated Blueprint Denver has a recommendation (or two): one, to expand ADU units in all residential areas (currently they are limited to neighborhood specific zone lots) and two, to remove other barriers impeding their construction. These

recommendations, albeit modest compared to other, more aggressive, municipal standards and proposals in the region (re: Englewood and Colorado Springs) and across the nation (re: Los Angeles and Portland), dominated a disproportionate amount of the air-time throughout the several hour hearing. With the documents accepted, work has just begun. For ADUs to play an important role in building “complete neighborhoods,” communities must come together to formally implement the plans recommendations. This requires broad public support, support which ADUs clearly don’t have. How can communities unlock this small but powerful agent of housing opportunity?

**The problem:** ADUs are strawmen come lightning rods (ie. likely to spark a fire). They amplify the familiar war



chants of two irreconcilable tribes – the NIMBYs and the YIMBYs – who’s entrench positions, “Not” and “Yes,” meet violently on that most personal and private battlefield: “my back yard.” Purported battles for our families, neighborhoods, and communities (and of course the underlying but seldomly mentioned property values), however, prefigure any debate for failure. Absolute yea/nay dichotomies inherently beget bickering, gridlock, and protectionism which rarely constitute a solid platform for neighborly collaboration and, most importantly, progress. Furthermore, the underlying and prevalent insincerity which couches a concern for what happens in my back yard for what is really a concern for what happens in your back yard, further erodes any potential for common ground. Together these groups set an inadequate stage for positive change.

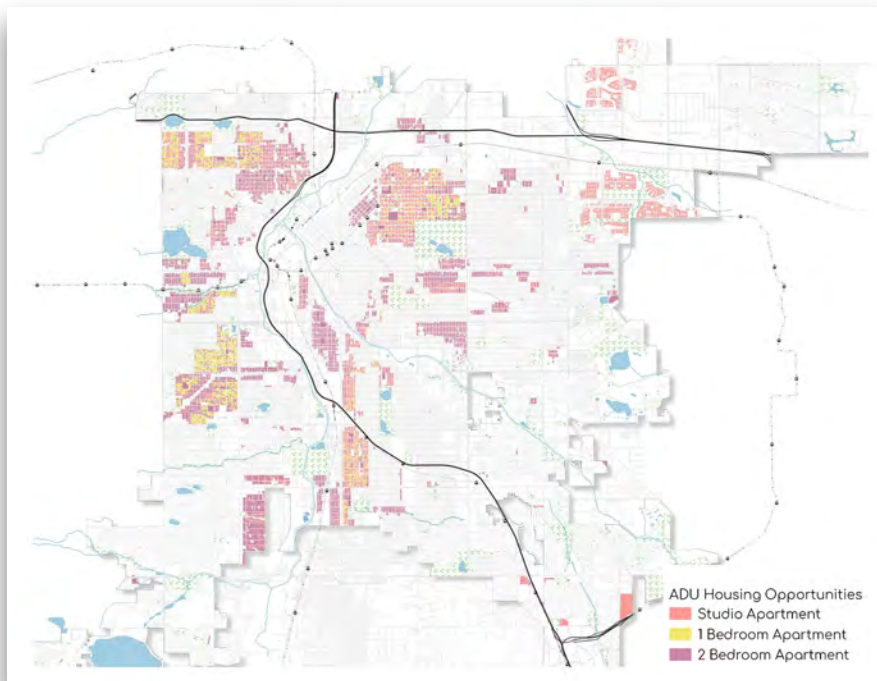
**The solution:** A more fruitful approach diverts energy away from a presupposed debate and shift our attention to the specific opportunities afforded today. Statistically, very few (under 500) Denverites live in, with, or next to an ADU. The physical proof and lived realities of their alternative housing can and will invite the public to explore a new urban imaginary. The momentum grows. A door opens to the fact that both the reality, perception, and potential of what an individual or family can contribute to their family, neighborhood, and community (and of course property value!) is limited as much by the imagination as it is by laws. This is the “Live in My Back yard” (LIMBY) invitation. LIMBYs invite a new perspective – a reimagination of personal and civic opportunity and purpose. LIMBYs ask, “how can I provide a house for someone who needs a home?” as opposed to “does zoning restrict me from building an ADU?”. LIMBYs focus on



potential, not opposition.

**The numbers:** Analyzing Denver’s current zoning code, demographic data, and construction industry trends should fuel the engine of this new mode of imagining. Today there are nearly 18,000 homeowners who live in single family homes on properties where they could build an ADU and invite others to live in their back yard. They could provide 7,250 studio; 3,439 one-bedroom; and 7,242 two-bedroom apartments. Those ADUs could be housing for nearly 40,000 neighbors/friends/family. Rent from those units could generate an average of \$20,000 in revenue for their household, an increase of nearly 33% of the average neighborhood median income per household. Construction of the over 14 million square feet of housing would equate to around \$3 billion in construction costs and over \$2.5 million in design fees – a boon to local businesses thanks to the openness and generosity of their neighbors. But numbers fail to communicate the real and reciprocal impact of providing a home within the city, neighborhood, and block you love.

**The invitation:** In the future, many more Denverites may have the opportunity to invite others to live in their back yard. Those others might be refugees, aging parents, local teachers or bus drivers, previously homeless, boomerang kids, or even you! Others that will contribute meaningfully to the city with an opportunity to stay and make it home in a house that they can afford. That future, however, is not certain. It will only be achieved if we refuse to accept a limited perspective of our own capacity and accept the invitation to be the change we wish to see. That is the LIMBY way.





BALANCING

# COLORADO

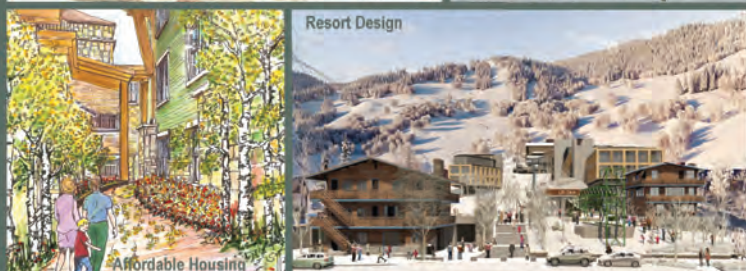
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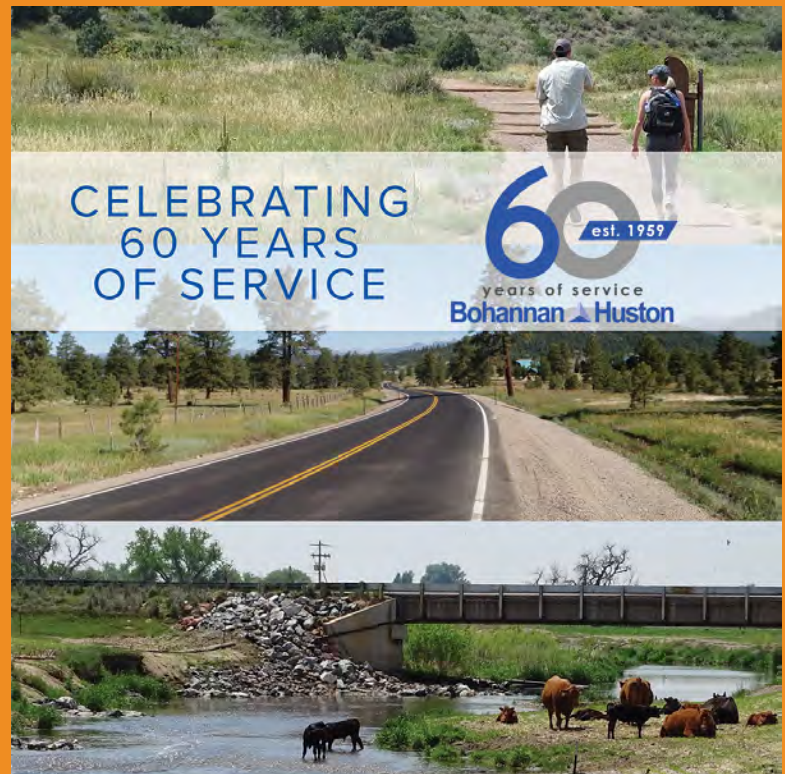
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# AROUND THE WAY

NEWS & ARTICLES YOU MAY HAVE MISSED.

## ULI REAL ESTATE ECONOMIC FORECAST SEES MORE RUNWAY AHEAD FOR CURRENT GROWTH CYCLE

The U.S. economy is weeks away from celebrating the start of its record-breaking 11th year of economic expansion, and the latest ULI Real Estate Economic Forecast is pointing to an even longer run that could extend through 2021, as discussed on a webinar hosted by ULI.

FULL  
ARTICLE

## PLANNING FOR ACTION

In "Planning for Action" (Planning Magazine, March 2019), author Kristen Pope explores the challenges and benefits of Housing Action Plans, which take into account the full range of a city's housing challenges. With success stories ranging from large eastern cities like Philadelphia to small mountain towns like Big Sky, Montana, and wine-country cities like Santa Rosa, HAPs are revolutionizing the way communities address local housing crises and coming together around a singular cause

FULL  
ARTICLE

## ADDRESSING THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING GAP

The supply of housing in the United States that is affordable to low- to moderate-income renters and homeowners (those earning up to 140 percent of area median income) remains insufficient to meet the demand. At last November's Solutions for Affordable Housing convening hosted by the National Housing Conference (NHC), one panel, "Filling the Affordable Housing Gap," explored a number of potential strategies to close this gap.

FULL  
ARTICLE

## PARTNERING TO PROMOTE AGING IN PLACE

As previously highlighted in PD&R Edge, HUD has partnered with the Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism to explore innovative housing policy and urban planning approaches to aging in place and community development for older adults; inclusive housing and urban development strategies for older adults in Japan and the United States; and effective partnership among the public sector, private sector, and nonprofit organizations to achieve successful aging in place.

FULL  
ARTICLE

## RURAL AMERICA FACES A CRISIS IN "ADEQUATE HOUSING"

Economists say this phenomenon of "aging in place" is one of the main factors driving a shortage in housing nationwide. According to one analysis, people are living in their homes twice as long as they did before the Great Recession. Small towns like Ogallala are no exception to this trend. Ogallala's residents tend to skew older. And the town's remoteness and distance from a major power center like Omaha or Denver mean its problems with housing could be even harder to solve.

FULL  
ARTICLE

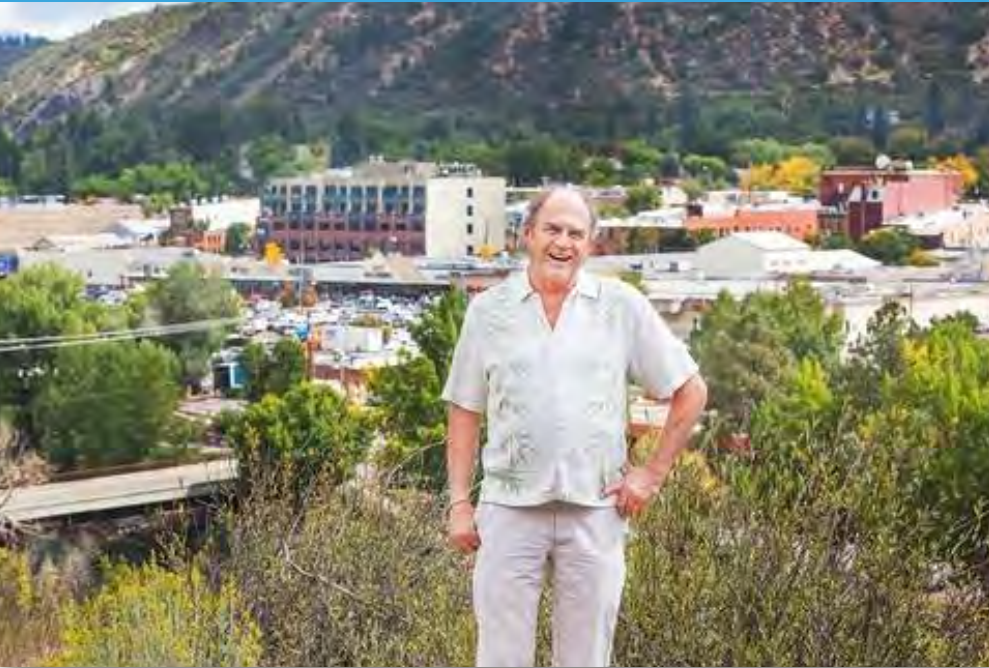


Greg Hoch was the long time planning director for the City of Durango, from 1981 until his retirement in 2016. Hoch is best known for his vision in expanding the role of planning in Durango, and for his tireless efforts to fight for what he saw as good planning.

# GREG HOCH

## PLANNER PROFILE

**By Mark Williams, City of  
Durango**



### **WHERE WAS YOUR FIRST JOB, AND WHAT WAS THE GENERAL ATMOSPHERE AROUND THE ROLE OF PLANNING?**

My first job was in 1973 with the City and County of Denver, under Mayor McNichols. There was little real planning to speak of at the time, and it was mostly focused on transportation. The construction of I-25 happened, and created the first appearance of the brown cloud. Denver did get its first bicycle plan while I was there. Strategic annexations were a big part of Denver's growth strategy, but the suburbs were largely anti-Denver at the time because of bussing to desegregate schools. This anti-Denver sentiment led to the Poundstone Amendment, which handcuffed Denver from further expansion. These types of laws are part of what seems to be a recurring issue in Colorado, that being a reactive sentiment towards progressive ideas. The problem is the sentiment may pass, but the laws, or constitutional amendment in the case of Poundstone, seem to stay forever. Local governments in Colorado have tried innovative approaches to dealing with their issues only for the approach to be outlawed at the state level, so no local government can try it. Besides the

Poundstone Amendment, which applies only to Denver, this is true for transfer taxes, now illegal, that Aspen and Telluride approved to fund affordable housing. Also, Telluride tried rent control in the 1990s, and that is now still banned everywhere in the state. We adopted a sign code in Durango in the late 1980s and having one made a lot of people very unhappy. There was a public referendum in 1988 about whether to keep it and get rid of it completely, and the city residents voted to keep with 66% of the vote.

### **TALK SOME ABOUT THE INSTITUTION OF PLANNING, AND HOW IT HAS CHANGED SINCE THE 1970S.**

The planning writer and professor Earl Finkler did a comparative study of different planning departments to see how they actually function. Finkler found that 75%-80% of the workload in a typical planning department is devoted to current planning. You have to be efficient and fair in how you review development, or it will eat your lunch and bleed into everything else you do. It has been several decades since this study, but these principles are still just as true.



Planning is more widely accepted. Generally, planning as a profession only existed in bigger cities like New York or Chicago before the Great Depression and World War II. After the war ended and the economy surged, planning became more common in the rest of the country, and now planning as a whole is more sophisticated than it used to be. One of the reasons for that is planning education is better than it used to be. Also, the profession of planning does a better job dealing with complexity than it used to.

### DURANGO MUST HAVE BEEN A BIG CHANGE FROM DENVER. WHAT WAS IT LIKE?

I remember a meeting that was held at the County Fairgrounds not long after I started in Durango, and the Animas Valley Regional Planning Commission (there were no city or county planning departments yet) wanted to adopt land use policies for the county. Not a land use map,

just policies. Well, there were several hundred people at the meeting, many in cowboy hats, chanting “Hell No,” drowning us out and intimidating the planning commissioners. Those policies did not get approved. There was a La Plata County land use plan meeting in early 2018 with more than 1,000 attendees, at the Fairgrounds, and of the people there had the same sentiments as the people who attended the 1974 meeting. Planning in rural Colorado can still be difficult.

Be informed and educated, be articulate in both writing

### YOU MANAGED A LOT OF PROFESSIONALS DURING YOUR CAREER. WHAT PARTING ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR YOUNG PLANNERS?

and speaking, be aware of the past, present and future, and be bold.



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## It's not just Denver:

*Rural Colorado is feeling the housing crunch, with more residents spending half their income on a place to live*

In Yuma, like many other small communities in the state, waiting lists are long as many struggle to find an affordable place to live.

This year, Colorado's legislature launched a historically broad effort to boost affordable housing statewide, even though it eventually was scaled back to fund other priorities. One bill headed for Gov. Jared Polis' desk will double the amount Colorado puts toward tax credits for affordable housing from \$5 million to \$10 million annually from 2020-24.

*By: Kevin Simpson, The Colorado Sun,  
May 2, 2019*

[Read the Full Article](#)



# SNOWMASS SNEAK PEAK

By Julie Ann Woods, FAICP

*Trying to figure out if you should make it to APA in Snowmass this September?* Were you here for the conference in 2012 and discovered an off-season sleeper of a community with rebar sticking out of buildings, not much to do and difficulty finding an open restaurant? Well, this is the year that the Village delivers! By moving the conference up to mid-September (Sept. 18-20th) we're guaranteed to have great weather, great special events on the weekend before (Snowmass Wine Festival ) and after (National Interscholastic Cycling Association Bike Races) in case you want to make a family trip out of it—and restaurants will still be open!!

*The highlight for the family?* It has to be the Lost Forest and the fabulous Breath Taker Alpine Coaster. (Watch the night-time video of the coaster [HERE](#). We've arranged for the closing event on Friday afternoon to be at the Lost Forest with **free lift rides** to Elk Camp (kids are welcome). For the adults, Après at the Limelight and Bingo (and beer) at the Collective strike a chord in the newest phase of Base Village. **Remember that rebar?** Gone! Up for a good climb? Try Colorado's tallest indoor climbing wall in the glassed-in atrium of the Limelight. Don't forget to bring your mountain bikes—there are great rides for all levels, and you can always ride downhill and bring the bike back up on the free buses. 9News did a story about our New Base Village (<https://on9news.tv/2Hj2ubO>) and Forbes wrote an article (<https://bit.ly/2E54gt2>) just before the Grand Opening last December.

Bring your "Outside Side" to Snowmass (things to do: <https://www.gosnowmass.com/>) and you'll have a Snowmass Blast! See you in September!



The New Snowmass Base Village – Location of the APA Opening Reception on Wednesday, September 18th!





# SAVE THE DATE

**SNOWMASS VILLAGE, COLORADO**

**SEPTEMBER 18-20 2019**

**REGISTRATION OPENS IN JUNE**

## **THIS YEAR....**

**We start at 8:00 a.m. Wednesday** & End at Noon on Friday

**Come early,** relax for a night then kick off your education & networking.

**Networking is key:** Wednesday's opening reception will be at Base Village, Thursday in Aspen and Friday on top of the mountain at Lost Forest for some coaster riding, rope walking, and more!

**Learn to balance place and change** in your community from our two plenary speakers **Bryan C. Lee Jr., COLLOQATE**

**Joe Minicozzi, Urban 3**



# THE ART OF SELECTING A GOOD DEVELOPMENT PARTNER

By Willa Williford

**Consider this scenario:** Your community has a housing problem. Your elected officials have promised solutions. The private sector can't overcome the financial gap alone. There's a nice piece of publicly owned land, and political will to build housing there. Now what? Creating a public/private partnership to share risk and achieve community goals could be the way. Public/private partnerships for housing have loads of creative potential. And, a few common pitfalls. Here we explore some best practices to set your community up for success.

• **Open and transparent process** – Include the public before, during, (and after) your development partner selection. I usually recommend a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) or Request for Proposals (RFP). A well-crafted process creates a competitive playing field where the best proposals and most qualified partners can rise to the top. Public outreach before or during the selection process can stimulate new ideas, create community buy-in, and ensure the project is aligned with community values. In one community, proposing developers were required to give 10- minute pitches and neighbors were able to ask questions and rank responses.

- Clear but flexible goals – Guiding principles communicate a sense of the overall purpose of the project and if a partner might be a good fit. Goals or guiding principles often clarify topics such as:
- Who are we seeking to house? Owners or renters? At what income or mix of incomes? In what housing types?
- Sustainability – expectations for quality, durability, density, energy consumption
- Neighborhood compatibility – what other amenities or aesthetics are important in this context?

Creating clear but flexible goals is a Goldilocks proposition: Requests that are overly open ended are frustrating; prospective development teams feel like they are shooting in the dark. Overly prescriptive requests (build 12 net zero homes for sale to families below 60% AMI) are unrealistic, and usually fail to attract a qualified partner.

- Baseline feasibility and data - Understand the basic parameters of your site. In crafting your process and negotiating with your development partner, be realistic about site constraints, project costs, and market need. Keep in mind that the project is intended to satisfy a public good first, but must also be somewhat profitable.
- Relationship – Who do you want on your team when the chips are down? Building housing takes time, and there will be unexpected hurdles along the way. Does your partner have a good reputation? Do they understand and respect the values of the community and project?

Do your due diligence and check references. Some red flags to consider: no experience in your







community or region, no experience doing similar projects, over estimating the size of the market, unwillingness to be “open book” about finances, and/or previous financial difficulty with projects.

Good luck with your project. And keep in mind, well-crafted public/private partnerships have the potential to draw on the best skills and resources of each sector, creating positive community outcomes neither sector could do alone.

*Willa Williford is an affordable housing consultant based in Crested Butte. She works throughout the mountain west helping communities identify and implement their housing goals. She has worked on dozens of successful public/private partnerships, and a few not so successful ones.*

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# 2019 AFFORDABLE HOUSING LEGISLATION

**By Susan Wood, AICP, Legislative Committee Chair**

It is an established fact that rents in Metro Denver are high (and increasing) and the cost of home ownership in the Metro area make it difficult, if not impossible, for many. While this trend is not fully universal across Colorado, the increase in housing cost has affected all, but a few of the most rural and remote communities.

In Denver, for example, the average rent for a one bedroom apartment is \$1,673/month, which is a 3.95% increase from last year<sup>1</sup>. Equally concerning, the median sales price for a single-family home in some of the most populated Colorado Front Range counties is inching beyond \$450,000<sup>2</sup>. These figures clearly demonstrate the disproportionate share of monthly income that must be allocated for housing and shed light on the difficulty of many to provide for their families. These statistics also explain why in the last few years, there have been 5 to 10 bills introduced in

each legislative session to address affordable housing. These include extending the Low Income Housing Tax Credit; providing trust funds to assist low income buyers; consumer protections for renters; and more. Most of these were not successful.

The State of Colorado 2019 Legislative Session was no different in regard to the number of housing bills introduced. This session, 16 housing bills were introduced and seven of these were tracked by the APA CO Legislative Committee. There were a couple of exceptions in the type of bills introduced, which are discussed below and another major difference from previous years, is the success of many of the 2019 bills. A summary of the housing bills tracked by APA CO follows on the next page.

The real exceptions in this session’s Affordable Housing lineup were HB19-1245, which introduced

.....  
**Resources:**

1. <https://www.rentjungle.com/average-rent-in-denver-rent-trends/>; “Rent trend data in Denver, Colorado;” accessed May 8, 2019.
2. <https://www.coloradorealtors.com/market-trends/regional-and-statewide-statistics/>; “Housing Market Sortable Statistics – Single Family;” accessed May 8, 2019.



a funding source for affordable housing that would be sufficient in amount to make a difference in the ability to create affordable housing; and SB19-225, which would have given local government the authority to impose a cap on rent increases that, in Colorado, were solely within the purview of the private property owner. Both bills were bold and controversial. HB19-1245 designates funding that was previously returned to business owners as a percentage rebate of collected sales tax, and therefore, not popular with the business community. In the end; however, this bill passed.

SB19-225, which was not successful, would take the ability to establish the rental rates out of the hands of property owners. This proved to be too much of a leap for Colorado legislators and this bill failed.

In 2019, Affordable Housing was named the No. 1 planning issue in the State by APA CO members, which placed it at the top of our Legislative Agenda. It is encouraging to see the progress made in Affordable Housing in the 2019 Legislative Session and it will be interesting to track the results.

## 2019 HOUSING BILLS TRACKED BY APA COLORADO

BILL NO.	SUBJECT	SUMMARY	CHAPTER POSITION	RESULT
HB19-1075	Tax Credit Employer Assisted Housing Pilot Program	Pilot program to promote employer assisted housing in rural areas	Monitor	Failed
HB19-1228	Increase Tax Credit Allocation for Affordable Housing	Increase in the amount of tax credits the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority can allocate in one year	Support	Passed
HB19-1245	Affordable Housing Funding from Vendor Fee Changes	Increase affordable housing funding via modification of the state sales tax vendor fee	Support	Passed
HB19-1272	Housing Authority Property in New Energy Improvement District	Permit Housing Authority participation in the Colorado New Energy Improvement District Program	Support	Passed
HB19-1319	Incentives for Developers to Facilitate Affordable Housing	Provides incentives to assist land developers in providing affordable housing statewide	Support	Passed
HB19-1322	Expand Supply of Affordable Housing	Use money from certain state funds to expand the supply of affordable housing statewide	Support	Passed
SB19-225	Authorize Local Governments to Stabilize Rent	Provide Local Government the authority to stabilize rent on private residential property	Monitor	Lost



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# COMMUNITY INCLUSION:

## *A Prerequisite to Solving the Housing Affordability Crisis*



By Katherine Whitney and Sam Young, Spencer Fance

***Living in Colorado is expensive.*** With population growth and housing costs steadily rising, the need for affordable housing becomes more urgent. The median home price in Denver as of April was \$438,300 – rents averaged \$1,500. These prices have pushed residents out of their lifelong neighborhoods, and have even, in some unfortunate instances, pushed people out of reliable housing altogether. Facing a growing housing crisis, community leaders must find housing solutions that balance the benefits of growth with the housing needs of all citizens.

Implementing workable housing solutions is not easy. Challenges often include market forces, land availability and “not-in-my-backyard” objections from neighbors. As one example, the Denver City Council recently agreed to lease publicly owned land in Globeville to a non-profit organization that provides housing opportunities for persons experiencing homelessness. An existing tiny home village will relocate to the land and potentially expand its operations.

City officials announced the land deal before engaging area residents. Consequently,

many residents felt excluded from the planning process. Councilmembers and residents both agreed: the process wasn’t right.

This recent event highlights the need for community participation. Housing projects for low- and very low-income earners fail when planning professionals do not collaborate with area residents, end users (those who will live in the as-built product), and government officials.

What can we do to reduce the panicked cries of “Not in my backyard!” and pave the way for successful economically diverse communities? We can



invite participation from all stakeholders, regardless of socioeconomic status, in all aspects of planning and require meaningful inclusion.

We must recognize that each neighborhood has unique cultural contexts known fully only to those who experience them daily. As planning professionals, creating livable spaces requires input from the end user. This is especially important to remember when working with underserved populations.

We can use a learning-process approach that recognizes, then builds upon, the skills, intelligence, creativity and courage of all community members. We can honor the knowledge of insiders – both the materially

poor who will live in the new housing and the existing area residents.

We can avoid knowledge paternalism – assuming we have the best ideas about how to do something – and act with humility, caution, and an open ear. We can remember the appropriate role is not for us to do something to or for the economically poor, but to seek solutions together with them.

Finally, we can look to solutions being implemented in other communities as inspiration. From prefabricated live-work communities in Detroit, to modular housing in Copenhagen, to micro-apartments in London, communities

around the world are innovating creative solutions to housing affordability challenges. Denver leaders can learn from and build upon the experiences of these communities, and refine successful programs in a manner that suits our unique and wonderful city.



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## MODERN HOME No. 101

The arrangement of this house is as follows:

### FIRST FLOOR.

Parlor - - - - 11 feet 6 inches by 15 feet  
 Living Room - - - 12 feet 6 inches by 15 feet  
 Chamber or Library, 11 feet 8 inches by 11 feet 6 inches  
 Kitchen - - - - - 12 feet by 15 feet  
 Storeroom - - - - 5 feet 5 inches by 7 feet  
 Pantry - - - - 5 feet 6 inches by 4 feet 4 inches  
 Front Porch, 5 feet 6 inches by 8 feet 6 inches  
 Rear Porch - - - 4 feet 6 inches by 10 feet

### SECOND FLOOR.

Front Bedroom - - - - 15 feet by 12 feet  
 Bedroom - 10 feet 6 inches by 11 feet 6 inches  
 Bedroom - 10 feet 6 inches by 8 feet 8 inches  
 Storeroom - - - - - 18 feet by 15 feet  
 Hall - - - - - 15 feet by 3 feet 4 inches  
 Three large Closets.

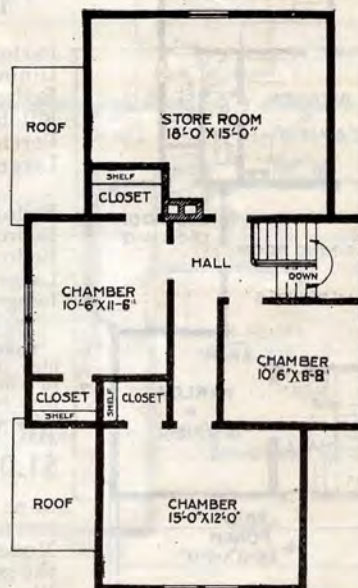
Length of building, 44 feet; width of building, 26 feet, not including porches.

Excavated basement, 6 feet 10 inches from floor to joists. First story is 9 feet 2 inches from floor to ceiling. Rooms in the second story are 8 feet 6 inches from the floor to the ceiling.

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# ZONING FOR ALTERNATIVE HOUSING

**By Andrew Webb, Senior City Planner, City and County of Denver**

As demand grows for unique residential options like tiny house villages, cooperative housing and adult dorms, Denver City Planners aim to meet it by overhauling and modernizing zoning regulations that govern how people live together.

In recent years, the city has seen rising interest in nontraditional housing, in part because of the increasing cost of housing in the city and the region. Moreover, new efforts to address homelessness, encourage aging in place, and acknowledge the changing composition of households have highlighted constraints caused by outdated zoning regulations, some dating back decades. Guided by national trends and best practices, as well as adopted city policies to expand housing options, the city began work with an advisory committee of residents, neighborhood representatives and providers in 2018 to evaluate the Denver Zoning Code's rules for household and group living. As the project enters the final stretch, zoning rules could change for households, boarding houses, community corrections facilities, shelters for the homeless, residential care homes, assisted living, cooperatives (co-ops), tiny home villages and more.

Last year's "problem identification" phase uncovered many challenges in the code, including:

- Unintended consequences of regulations, such as difficulty establishing new large residential facilities near transit and other services because of zoning, spacing and density limitations.
- Lack of clear ways for new or reemerging housing types to become legal. Examples include: tiny house villages, cooperative housing (co-ops), and commercial/industrial buildings converted into live-work space for artists or others.
- Confusing language, such as the







inconsistent use of “bed” and “resident” as a measure of the size of a shelter and geographic caps on shelter capacity in City Council districts, which change regularly as part of required redistricting.

An overarching issue uncovered during this process is the city’s current limitations on how many unrelated people can live in a home – capped at 2 in a typical single-family home. Like many cities, Denver’s regulations on household size reflect a nationwide post-World War II

evolution toward “single family” zoning, aimed at reducing rental of rooms or units and limiting unrelated people from living together. While Denver’s code maintains a specific list of permitted relatives dating to the 1960s, many U.S. cities have updated these codes to acknowledge evolving notions of “family” and allow people to purchase or rent a home together regardless of their relationship.

During a series of late 2018 meetings, the Group Living Advisory Committee proposed a major rework of this requirement that moves away from treating related and unrelated adults differently. In 2019, the Committee has been working with the city on draft proposals to solve the other code “problems they identified, including regulations for tiny home villages, reorganization of confusing shelter definitions and regulations, reduction of off-street parking requirements to allow expansion of assisted living facilities and other updates. This work is expected to continue through the summer, with a package of Zoning Code amendments proposed for adoption through the city’s public process in the fall. For more information, visit [www.denvergov.org/groupliving](http://www.denvergov.org/groupliving)

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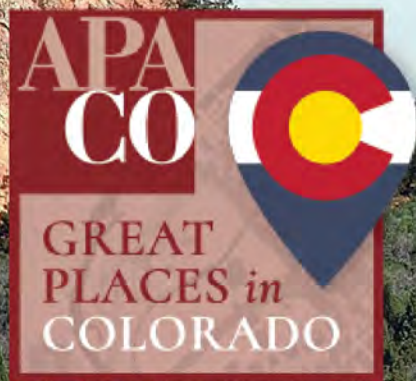
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# 2019 the Inaugural Year

**Have you heard the exciting news?** The APA Colorado Great Places Committee is proud to announce the 2019 Call for Nominations for the inaugural year of the Great Places in Colorado program is now open!

The Great Places in Colorado program was established in 2019 to celebrate the many Great Places in our state and the communities that sustain them. We all know planning is behind many of the places communities value most. Through this program, APA Colorado will recognize the neighborhoods, streets, and public spaces that represent the gold standard in planning by making communities stronger and bringing people together. The program is modeled after APA's Great Places in America program, and will be an annual selection of places in Colorado that embody a true sense of place, cultural and historical interest, community involvement and a vision for tomorrow.

**We believe you know Great Places and we want you to nominate them!** We welcome you (and ask you to encourage people in your communities) to nominate your favorite streets, neighborhoods, and public spaces across Colorado, whether they are in your city or town, in a place you've visited, or any other special location you would like to nominate. Nominations may be submitted by individuals, local governments or organizations. A panel of experts from across the state will select the finalists, and the winners will be honored and celebrated during the APA Colorado State Conference in Snowmass and October's National Community Planning Month.

**Want more details?** The timeline for the inaugural 2019 Great Places Colorado Program is as follows:

- May 8, 2019 - Nomination Period opens
- July 15, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. - Nomination deadline
- August 15, 2019 - Review completed and notification begins
- September 18-20 - APA Colorado State Conference celebration
- October - National Community Planning Month celebration

To nominate your favorite place, or to learn more about the program and find answers to your questions, please visit <http://www.apacolorado.org/great-places-program>.

**We need volunteers!** Are you interested in lending your expertise and supporting this exciting new program in a meaningful way? If so, the Great Places Committee is looking for a few volunteers from across Colorado and across planning disciplines to serve on the jury that reviews nominations. This is an exciting opportunity to share your expertise and knowledge about great planning and help select the first of what will be many Great Places in Colorado! The expected time commitment is just 5-10 hours from July 16-August 15 and will involve reviewing submissions against criteria that the Great Places Committee will provide, meeting via teleconference with the other panelists and selecting the finalists. In addition to the chance to learn more about all the great places around Colorado, each volunteer panelist will be individually celebrated and recognized on the APA Colorado website and other project collateral. If interested in this fun and unique opportunity, please send an email to [greatplaces@apacolorado.org](mailto:greatplaces@apacolorado.org) to express your interest or to request more information.



# GREAT PLACES IN COLORADO

## 2019 CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Great Places Award is an annual selection of places that represent the gold standard in terms of having a true sense of place, cultural and historical interest, community involvement and a vision for tomorrow. Celebrate excellence in planning and nominate your Colorado Great Place today!



APA Colorado is seeking nominations from individuals, local governments and organizations for Great Places in Colorado.

Through the *Great Places in Colorado* program, we celebrate the vitality and local partnerships that have made each place a focal point for community life.

**A Great Neighborhood, Street or Public Space will have characteristics of the following:**

- **Livable Built Environment**
- **Harmony with Nature**
- **Resilient Economy**
- **Healthy Community**

To nominate your favorite place, visit the APA Colorado Great Places website at [apacolorado.org/great-places-program](http://apacolorado.org/great-places-program)

*Nomination instructions and the complete nomination package can be found at the site.*

**MAY 8**

**The nomination period opens**

**July 15**

**The nomination period closes at 5:00 p.m.**

**August 15**

**Review period concludes and selected honorees notified**

**September 19**

**Winners will be announced and honored at the annual APA Colorado Conference in Snowmass, Colorado**



# BOARD & COMMITTEE UPDATES

## Chapter Administrator Update

by: Shelia Booth, AICP



It's almost summer, which means conference registration is on the horizon. I hope all of you (...well maybe not ALL of you, that could be a bit crazy) will join us in Snowmass Village this September 18-20th for the annual fall conference. We moved up the dates this year to take advantage of the

weather, recreational offerings and open businesses and restaurants.

We're trying out a new schedule as well. For many years, our survey shows and our attendance reflects that many attendees want to leave early on Friday. So, we'll start early on Wednesday and give attendees the opportunity to leave after lunch Friday, or stick around for a fun filled afternoon and weekend.

As we continue to grow, you'll see that our conference locations will start to rotate between the same locations: Colorado Springs, Keystone, Vail and possibly Breckenridge and Snowmass Village. Growth is a good thing. We just have to be a bit more creative in our adventures and continue to provide quality educational

sessions, workshops and roundtables for our members.

Why not add Denver to the list? The short answer is cost. Denver hotels are in high demand in September/October so room pricing, food and beverage minimums and room rentals are much higher than those offered at our mountain resorts. However, we will keep trying and hope to one day find that opportunity.

Now, for some good news. Did you know the 2025 National Planning Conference is coming to Denver? Yes it is! We're looking forward to working with APA to showcase our state and we'll be reaching out to our membership to help us with that task.

Lastly, I'd like to give a big thanks to our Great Places in Colorado Committee for all the hard work they've done over the past months to get this new Chapter program up and running. These dedicated members spent much of their free time researching, organizing and creating this new program with little guidance. We hope you'll support their efforts by nominating a Great Place this year.

Remember, good planning doesn't come easy and educating our citizens, public officials and allied professional partners is key to the success of our profession, communities and places.

Sincerely,  
Shelia Booth, AICP

## Faculty Representative Update

by: Andrew Rumbach, Faculty Representative

The University of Colorado Denver's Department of Urban and Regional Planning is happy to announce its newest faculty member, Dr. Manish Shirgaokar. Manish is a transportation policy researcher with a background in urban design and architecture. He earned his Ph.D. at the University of California, Berkeley in 2012 and is a

member of the American Institute of Certified Planners.

His current interests include how

transportation systems help or hinder the mobility of groups such as older adults, women, immigrants, and low-income households. His broader interests are in the social equity aspects of infrastructure policy, new transportation technologies, travel behavior, and the land use-transportation connection.

Manish works on topics in the United States, India, and Canada, and he has a number of publications in academic journals including Urban Studies, Journal of Planning Education and Research, Journal of Transport Geography, Transport Policy, and Transportation.



Manish has taught in lecture, seminar, and studio settings delivering courses on transportation, geographic information systems, and urban design. He has supervised research students in Planning, Geography, and Transportation Engineering. He was previously at the University of Alberta, Canada. You can learn more about him at <https://www.shirgaokar.com/>.

## Professional Development Committee Update

by: Allison Crump, AICP - Professional Development Officer & Committee Chair



**Congratulations to all the Colorado planners who passed the November 2018 AICP Exam!** Please help me in congratulating your colleagues listed below:

***Jana Easley, Collin Wahab, Robert Messenger, Frederick Rollenhagen, Fritz Clauson, John Hersey, Kelly Hickler, Hannah Klausman, Jon Hoffman, Amber Wesner, Derrick Rosenbach, Alison Holm, David Kimmett, Carolyn Fahey, Sam Starr, Nicole Aimone, Renae Stavros, Savannah Jameson, Sayre Brennan, Chapin LaChance, Alison Van Deutekim, David Eisenbraun***

For the November 2018 AICP exam, we had a 76% pass rate (22 new certified planners!) for regular exam takers and a 90% pass rate (9 new certified planners!) for AICP candidate exam takers. Nationally, those rates were 66% and 58%, respectively. Congratulations to Colorado planners! We have many planners signed up for the May 2019 exam. We hosted an exam prep session in March 2019 for these exam takers (thank you for co-leading Summer Frederick). Best of luck to those taking the exam this month! We will be hosting an AICP prep course for the November exam at the APA

Colorado Conference in September 2019.

Big thank you to the Professional Development Committee (PDC) for all of their effort earlier this year in reviewing and approving sessions for the 2019 Colorado APA Conference. You helped us to have an interesting and diverse selection of sessions that aligned with our “Elevated Planning” theme. If any APA members are interested in joining the PDC, please contact Allison Crump.

Additionally, throughout the year, APA has offered dozens of CM credits throughout the state. Thanks to Shelia, Scott Bressler, and Erin

Fosdick for the help in making these possible. Keep up the good work and feel free to reach out if you have an event that you feel would qualify for CM credits.

Allison Crump, AICP  
Professional Development Officer  
[PDO@APAColorado.org](mailto:PDO@APAColorado.org)



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## Sustainability Committee Update

by: Conor Merrigan and Karl Barton, Committee Co-Chairs



The Sustainability committee has shifted from our successful EcoDistricts 101 talk to organizing an EcoDistricts walking tour in RiNo for June or July. The date is still pending, but we are hoping to re-energize their efforts and get some first-hand experience with the formative portion of EcoDistricts planning. We continue to welcome new members to our monthly meetings the third Tuesday of the month and are busy keeping tabs and looking for partnership opportunities on all the great sustainability events happening in Colorado.





## Denver Metro Area Update

by: Scott Bressler, AICP & Anne Miller, AICP



Hello Metro Area planners. We have been busy as the calendar turned to 2019. We spent a great deal of time working on the 16th Annual Transportation Symposium, which was held

on Friday, April 19th. This is one of the best opportunities each year to mingle with transportation professionals from the region and this year did not disappoint. It was great to see so many planners attending and speaking at the event this year, which attracted nearly 600 transportation

professionals!

Be on the lookout for future networking happy hours. We are looking at dates and locations in May for our next happy hour. Additionally, we hope to announce plans for a Law related metro area event soon! We are also excited to team up with Downtown Colorado Inc. for a Springtime Happy Hour Concert featuring Slopeside on June 4th from 5:00-7:00 PM. We are also co-hosting a happy hour with EPP on July 25th at Denver Beer Company in Arvada (watch for more information about this event as the date gets closer).

Scott and Anne are always looking for suggestions on Metro events and places to indulge in a happy hour. If you have a suggestion or are willing

to sponsor one of our events, please reach out to us - our events, please reach out to us -

DenverMetro1@APAColorado.org (Scott) or  
DenverMetro2@APAColorado.org (Anne).



Join us for a one-of-a-kind event!

## SPRINGTIME HAPPY HOUR CONCERT

You are cordially invited to an evening that blends networking and a performance by our favorite local band, Slopeside. This summer kick off will raise awareness and funds for Colorado nonprofits that give so much back to our communities.

Tuesday June 4, 2019

5:00 - 7:00 pm

Emerson School at 1420 N Ogden Street

More info at [downtowncoloradoinc.org](http://downtowncoloradoinc.org)

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## Legislative Committee Update

by: Susan Wood, AICP - Committee Chair



On Friday, May 3, the 2019 State of Colorado Legislative Session ended in a flurry of activity and the introduction of bills at a pace that was almost too fast to track. In regard to bills of interest to planners and planning, this session was an active one overall. It opened on January 4, which is approximately one week earlier than in previous years, and over the course of the session, the APA CO Legislative Committee, with assistance and guidance from Sol Malick, Peak Government Affairs, and legislative liaison for APA Colorado, tracked more than 50 proposed bills.

Bills tracked encompass legislation that addressed all issues included in APA Colorado's 2019 Legislative Agenda as determined through a member survey conducted in Fall 2018. These are Affordable Housing, Climate Change, Transportation, Water, and Environmental Issues. Of the bills tracked, the APA Colorado Legislative Committee supported 18. Possibly for the first time ever, all 18 bills supported by APA Colorado passed and have either been signed by the Governor or are awaiting signature. For a list of the Bills tracked, bill summaries and history, and APA Colorado position, please see the following link:  
<http://coloradocapitolwatch.com/bill-analysis/3231/2019/0/>

This year, in the off-session, the APA Colorado Legislative Committee will remain active by continuing to build collaborative relationships with water interest groups and stakeholders for the purpose of running water conservation legislation in 2020. It is probable that this legislation will closely resemble previous legislative efforts regarding water, particularly legislation that APA Colorado

championed in 2017. Colorado has entered the implementation phase of the State Water Plan so the intent of any legislation proposed will be to provide additional means of support for implementation. In order to be successful in passing meaningful legislation, coordination with allied groups and local government is **essential. Therefore, in the off-session, the Committee will work toward creating partnerships and coalition-building.**

**We hope you will consider joining the APA Colorado Legislative Committee. With more voices, APA Colorado will have a stronger, more representative voice at the Capitol.**

If you would like to receive meeting notices and updates, as well as the link to the Bill Tracker, which is updated weekly, please send an email to: [legislative@APAColorado.org](mailto:legislative@APAColorado.org) and ask to be placed on the list serv.

We appreciate your interest and invite your participation!

Send me an email:  
[Legislative@apacolorado.org](mailto:Legislative@apacolorado.org)

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## Awards Committee Update

by: Daniel Murray, AICP and Julia Puester, AICP - Committee Co-Chairs



The APA Colorado Awards Committee's mission is to recognize outstanding projects, plans and people. This year we received 24 award nominations, which is higher than the average of 18 per year. The Awards Committee will be conducting a conference call in May to review the nominations, with notification letters sent out in June. Award recipients will be celebrated at the 2019 APA Colorado State Conference in Snowmass Village, September 18-20.

We encourage you to submit your project, plan or person for Chapter Award consideration in 2020. Celebrating good planning is a celebration of our profession.

Want to join our Committee? We'd love to have you. Email us at [Awards@APAColorado.org](mailto:Awards@APAColorado.org)!



## Outreach & Communication Committee Update

by: Meghie Tabar, AICP and Nick Vander Kwaak, AICP -Committee Co-Chairs



The Outreach and Communications Committee (OCC) is in the process of creating a new Outreach and Communications Plan to replace the older social media plan draft. The primary purpose of this plan is to keep APA Colorado in front of its members through the use of general outreach, newsletters, website, and social media. A secondary purpose of this plan is to broaden the exposure of planning and planning professionals to the general public, various media outlets, and affiliated professions such as Architects, Landscape Designers, Transportation Engineers, and their respective professional organizations. Outlined in the APA CO Outreach and Communication Plan are general policies and strategies for the use of newsletters, email, and social media by APA Colorado. The new plan will be completed during the May board meeting.

At the start of the new year, the OCC also launched their new mini planning matters newsletter. Two editions have gone out prior to this newsletter and two more are planned by the end of the year. If you are interested in contributing to one of APA Colorado's newsletters, please contact:

[Newsletter@APAColorado.org](mailto:Newsletter@APAColorado.org)



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