

# Quarterly Newsletter

APA INLAND  
EMPIRE SECTION  
Spring 2025



## Message from the Director

The first half of 2025 has been a season of energy, connection, and growth for IES-APA. In the first half of 2025, we focused on engaging planners at every stage of their careers by hosting mixers across the IE that brought students and early-career professionals together for meaningful conversation and connection. Our most recent mixer saw several new professionals just beginning their careers, and it was great to see them engaging with both YEP and seasoned planners alike!

We also returned to Cal Poly Pomona for our hands-on Resume Workshop, where seasoned planners provided valuable guidance to students preparing to launch their careers. Thank you to our mentors and volunteers who continue to support the next generation of planners.

A major highlight was our annual Awards Gala in Rancho Cucamonga where we recognized the outstanding people and projects shaping

our region. We're especially grateful to our generous sponsors, whose support, in addition to funding many of our activities throughout the year, made it possible for students to attend and be inspired by the accomplishments of our local planning community.

Looking ahead, we're excited to build on this momentum. This fall, we'll launch the reestablishment of the Historic Preservation Symposium and continue expanding our Mentorship Program. Lastly, we'll hold board elections in the fall and we look forward to the continued development of our local leadership. We hope you'll join us as we keep growing our network, celebrating our shared successes, and shaping the future of planning in the Inland Empire.



*Warm Regards,*  
Emily Elliott, AICP  
Inland Empire Section Director

### Newsletter Highlights

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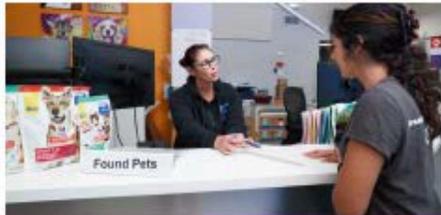


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## Shine and Share!

Submit your individual or agency's content to our section for us to share! Submit planning-related content to be considered for a feature in upcoming IES-APA Communications. This includes individual and organizations efforts.

Link: [ies-apa.org/submit-an-event](https://ies-apa.org/submit-an-event)



## WANT TO BE FEATURED IN OUR APA INLAND EMPIRE COMMUNICATION EFFORTS?

(SOCIAL MEDIA, NEWSLETTER, AND BRANDING)

**SCAN THE QR CODE AND  
SHARE YOUR CONTENT!**



- **EXCITING PROJECTS:** IS YOUR ORGANIZATION TACKLING AN EXCITING PLANNING PROJECT OR INITIATIVE IN THE APA-IES REGION?
- **BEST PRACTICES:** HAVE YOU IMPLEMENTED STRATEGIES THAT IMPROVED YOUR PLANNING PROCESSES?
- **RECOGNITION:** DO YOU KNOW A PLANNER WHO'S GONE ABOVE AND BEYOND AND DESERVES THE SPOTLIGHT?
- **EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES:** WANT TO ADVERTISE A LUNCH & LEARN, WEBINAR, OR MIXER?
- **VALUABLE RESOURCES:** HAVE TOOLS OR INFORMATION YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOUR PEERS?

VISIT US AT: [IES-APA.ORG](https://IES-APA.ORG)

# Recap

## Inland Empire Awards 2025

This year’s APA Inland Empire Awards Gala in Rancho Cucamonga was a night to remember! We were proud to recognize outstanding planning efforts across our region—from innovative projects and visionary leadership to student contributions shaping the future of our profession.

Congratulations to all of our award winners! Your work is a testament to the creativity, resilience, and impact of planning in the Inland Empire. A heartfelt thank you to our generous sponsors for making this event possible. Your support had also helped sponsor student attendance, ensuring the next generation of planners could join in the festivities and be inspired by the leaders of today.

We’re grateful to everyone who joined us in celebrating and look forward to continuing our work together to shape a more vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable Inland Empire.

[Click here to access the Google Photos Folder](#)



Recap

# Inland Empire Awards 2025

Visit our website to see the award winners and event program.

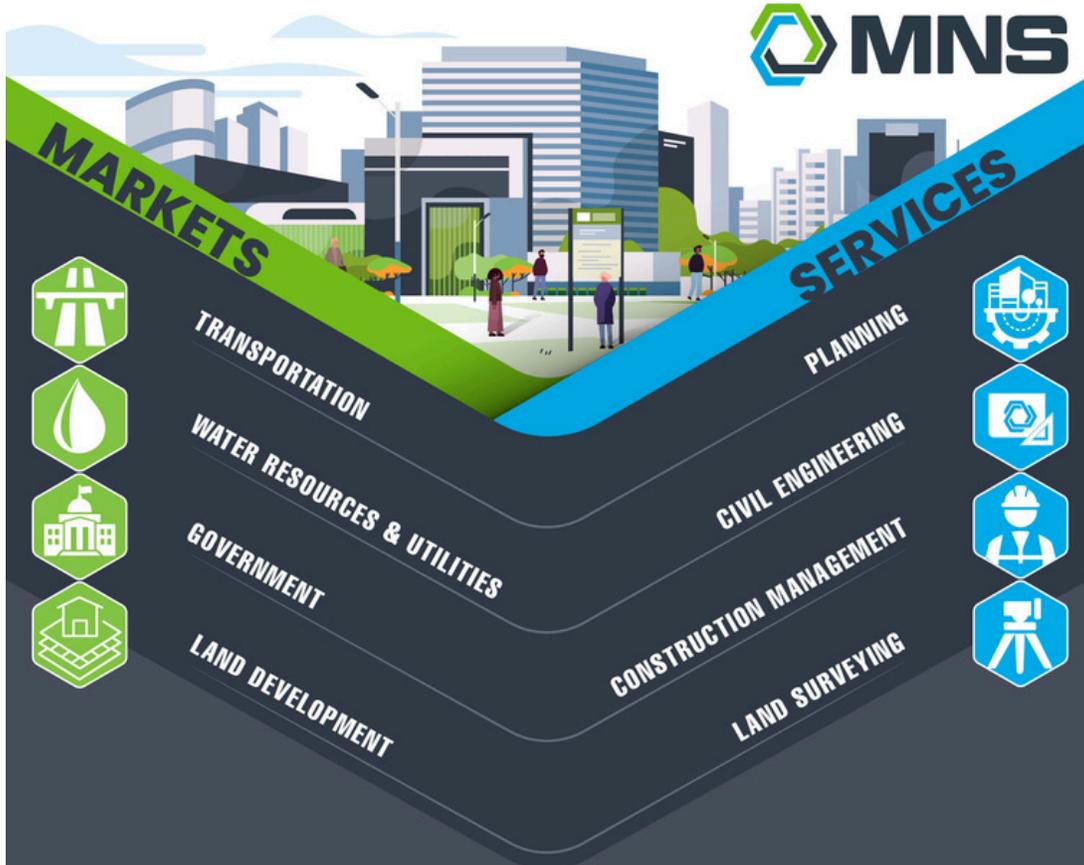
**APA INLAND EMPIRE SECTION 2025 AWARDS GALA**

**Congrats to our 2025 Award Winners**

Merit Winners		Excellence Winners	
<p><b>Eileen Ramos</b> <i>Planning for the Prestigious Poor</i></p> <p><b>ACADEMIC</b></p>	<p><b>UCLA Institute of Transportation Studies</b> <i>Implications of Freeway Siting in CA</i></p> <p><b>ACADEMIC</b></p>	<p><b>City of Jurupa Valley</b> <i>Permit Ready ADU Outreach</i></p> <p><b>COMMUNICATIONS</b></p>	
<p><b>Ground Series</b> <i>Grounding</i></p> <p><b>COMMUNICATIONS</b></p>	<p><b>City of Montclair &amp; Rangwala Associates</b> <i>Montclair General Plan</i></p> <p><b>COMPREHENSIVE PLAN</b></p>	<p><b>Sagecrest Planning &amp; City of Perris</b> <i>Density Bonus Guidelines</i></p> <p><b>PLANNING EXCELLENCE</b></p>	
<p><b>City of Palm Desert</b> <i>Multifamily and Mixed Use Objective Design Standards</i></p> <p><b>URBAN DESIGN</b></p>		<p><b>City of Wildomar</b> <i>Wildomar General Plan</i></p> <p><b>COMPREHENSIVE PLAN</b></p>	
<p><b>Riverside Art Museum</b> <i>Ride-Walk-Engage</i></p> <p><b>COMMUNICATIONS</b></p>	<p><b>Property One, LLC, Redlands Railway District, LLC, and the City of Redlands</b> <i>Downtown Redlands Redevelopment</i></p> <p><b>IMPLEMENTATION</b></p>	<p><b>Tomorrow's World</b> <i>Juneteeth Jam Active Transportation Pop Up</i></p> <p><b>GRASSROOTS INITIATIVE</b></p>	
<p><b>City of Rancho Cucamonga</b></p> <p><b>PLANNING AGENCY</b></p>	<p><b>Riverside Community Health Foundation</b> <i>HEAL Zone</i></p> <p><b>ADVANCING DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL CHANGE</b></p>	<p><b>Nabeeha Said</b></p> <p><b>PLANNER 4 HEALTH</b></p>	
<p><b>Bryan Jones</b></p> <p><b>PLANNER 4 HEALTH</b></p>	<p><b>Town of Apple Valley</b> <i>Highway 18 Access Plan</i></p> <p><b>PLANNING EXCELLENCE</b></p>	<p><b>SBCTA</b> <i>Long Range Multimodal Transportation Plan</i></p> <p><b>TRANSPORTATION</b></p>	



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## MNS PLANNING LEADERS



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# Member Spotlights

## Celina Robles



A big thank you to Celina Robles, Resident Planner at the City of Wildomar and recent graduate of Cal Poly Pomona, for her outstanding service to the APA Inland Empire Section! As our Student Liaison, Celina has played a key role in strengthening our connection with Cal Poly students and faculty, helping to foster the next generation of planners. Her passion for community planning and dedication to mentorship make her a rising leader in our field. Thank you, Celina, for your continued contributions and for being such a valued member of our section!

## Jason Martin



We're proud to recognize Jason Martin for his ongoing contributions to the APA Inland Empire Section! As a Senior Planner at WHA | William Hezmalhalch Architects, Jason brings deep expertise in design, planning, and implementation—backed by a strong foundation in civil engineering and a planning degree from Cal Poly Pomona. Beyond his professional accomplishments, Jason is a dedicated mentor and volunteer who consistently gives back to our planning community. Thank you, Jason, for your commitment to the future of planning and for being such a valuable member of our section!

## John Hildebrand, Aaron Pfannenstiel and Christopher Gray



A heartfelt congratulations and thank you **John Hildebrand, Aaron Pfannenstiel** and **Christopher Gray** for nearly two decades of dedicated service to our APA Inland Empire Section. Your leadership, vision, and commitment have laid the foundation for the success we continue to build upon today. We are grateful for the legacy you've created and the framework you've established for future generations of planners in our region.



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## APA California Legislative Update | May 2025

By Reuben Duarte, Vice President for Policy and Legislation  
 Lauren De Valencia, APA California Lobbyist

### *Legislative Process & Timeline*

- Appropriations Committees met on May 23 to review bills on the “Suspense File”—those with significant fiscal impacts. Due to the state’s budget deficit, more bills than usual may be held back.
- June 6 deadline: Legislature aims to pass bills to the opposite house. Policy committees will reconvene before the mid-July Summer Recess.
- APA California continues to track and engage with planning-related bills, often working behind the scenes before taking formal positions.

### *State Budget & May Revision Highlights*

- Governor Newsom’s May Revision projects a \$12 billion deficit for the 2025–2026 fiscal year, contrasting with the modest surplus projected in January.
- Total proposed state spending is \$321.9 billion, with economic uncertainty cited as a primary cause for the deficit.

### *Housing & Homelessness*

- Proposal to establish the California Housing and Homelessness Agency (CHHA) and the Housing Development and Finance Committee (HDFC) to streamline housing efforts.
- Support for legislation (AB 609 and SB 607) aimed at holding permitting entities accountable to existing processes and timelines, reducing delays, and promoting affordable, transit-oriented housing.
- No new funding allocated for housing/homelessness programs; however, discussions are ongoing regarding a potential statewide bond measure to fund critical housing and infrastructure investments.
- Proposal to revert \$31.7 million in unexpended funds from previous programs, including the Infill Infrastructure Grant Catalytic Program and the Commercial Property Pilot Program.

### *Climate Policy Updates*

- Proposal to extend and rename the “Cap-and-Trade program” to “Cap-and-Invest”, with plans to design an expenditure strategy that invests proceeds into transformative climate projects like the High-Speed Rail Project.
- Suggested statutory changes to streamline administrative processes for climate initiative

[Click here to download the full article.](#)

[Taylor Libolt Varner](#), Vice Director of Policy APA IE

## Street Vendor Toolkit... LOADING!

### Equipping Cities to Support Safe and Vibrant Street Vending

By Maddie Jordan, Associate Planner

The San Bernardino Council of Governments (SBCOG) is excited to announce the development of a much-requested resource for cities across our region: the Street Vendor Toolkit.

This initiative is a key component of the SBCOG 5-Year Work Plan, which was approved by the SBCOG Board in November 2024. The Work Plan reflects the collective priorities of our member agencies and is designed to advance projects and programs that address their most pressing needs. To support this effort, SBCOG is partnering with the Community Planning team at MNS Engineers and will implement a two-phase approach for this project. In the coming months, the team will conduct interviews, review current legislation, and research “best practices” from across the state regarding mobile food vending. These insights will inform the second phase of the project, which will focus on developing recommendations, strategies for effective compliance and enforcement, and a comprehensive model ordinance for agencies to use as a template for adoption within their jurisdictions.

The goal is to provide a practical, user-friendly toolkit that equips cities to effectively manage street vending in a manner that is safe, equitable, and supportive of both vendors and the broader community.

We look forward to engaging with our partners throughout this process. For questions or to share feedback, please contact Suzanne Peterson at [speterson@gosbcta.com](mailto:speterson@gosbcta.com).

Stay tuned for future updates!



# How Local Comprehensive Plans Can Assist LA Wildfire Recovery Efforts: A Guide for Practicing Planner

By Adam Rush AICP, APA IES Board Member and Meridian Consultants Principal

From January 7 to 31, 2025, the Los Angeles region endured one of the most destructive wildfire events in California history. Fourteen fires, intensified by severe drought, high winds, and overgrown vegetation, burned more than 57,000 acres. The most catastrophic—the Eaton Fire in Altadena and the Palisades Fire in Pacific Palisades—together caused the majority of the destruction. These two fires alone led to the deaths of at least 30 individuals, the evacuation of over 200,000 residents, and the loss of more than 18,000 homes and structures.

Recovery will not come quickly. According to Gatsby Investment, the timeline for full rebuilding is estimated between 16 and 27 years, taking us into 2052. This long horizon reflects California's intricate regulatory landscape. While no one advocates for dismantling environmental protections, the scale of destruction demands urgent, coordinated, and innovative planning solutions.

Fortunately, the American Planning Association – California Chapter (APA CA) is already taking action. On May 16, 2025, APA released the Post-Disaster Recovery Guide for Planners—a framework designed to help planners use existing tools and plans to accelerate recovery without waiting for full General Plan updates. The guide encourages practical strategies that are nimble, impactful, and legally sound.

While the General Plan is essential for long-term growth, in post-disaster recovery, it can also slow down rebuilding. Planners should assess which policies help or hinder recovery—especially within the Land Use, Housing, and Safety Elements.

- Outdated goals and low-density zoning may block rebuilding in fire-impacted areas.
- Targeted amendments—especially CEQA-exempt ones—can accelerate recovery within 90 days.
- The recently updated Housing Element and state laws like SB 9, SB 330, and ADU legislation provide new flexibility for housing construction.

### **Recovery begins with clear guidance and immediate action. Planners should:**

- Create easy-to-read FAQs and guides for homeowners.
- Recommend temporary policies to bypass delays from hearings and CEQA.
- Support emergency regulations for debris removal, temporary uses, permit waivers, and zoning flexibility.

### **Planning for Resilience**

Disasters reveal weaknesses in existing plans. Planners must act quickly now, while laying the groundwork for long-term changes:

- Short-term tools (e.g., Housing Element, local code updates) should be used immediately.
- Long-term updates to the General Plan and land use policies should follow to ensure safer development.

Collaboration with fire departments, emergency agencies, and community groups is essential. APA California and partners like the Building Industry Association offer resources to guide these efforts.

### **A Planner's Role**

Planners must lead with urgency and vision—balancing recovery today with resilience for tomorrow. Our efforts now will shape safer, more sustainable communities in the years ahead.

🔗 Explore APA California's full Wildfire Recovery Toolkit: [apacalifornia.org/lafires](https://apacalifornia.org/lafires)

## City of Perris Declares April Arts, Culture, and Health Month as City Expands Creative Wellness Initiatives

By Miguel Vazquez

The City of Perris officially declared April 2025 as Arts, Culture, and Health Month, marking a formal step in the city's growing effort to integrate the arts into its approach to improve health outcomes and community well-being.

The proclamation follows a series of local, state, and national initiatives that highlight the role of creativity in advancing quality of life, social equity, and overall wellness. In recent years, local leaders have invested in various public art programs across Perris, from mural installations and park art projects to community gardening and student-led creative campaigns.

City officials announced the declaration during a recent council meeting, supported by remarks from the Arts and Health Collective, a pilot project affiliated with the Riverside County Healthy Cities Network (HCN), which operates under the Riverside University Health System – Public Health. The proclamation aligns with the larger HCN 2.0 framework, which integrates arts, health, and planning as a unified approach to building healthier communities. Inspiration for this effort comes from national initiatives like Arts for Everybody, a campaign led by the National League of Cities and One Nation/One Project that demonstrates how the arts can improve public health and civic engagement.

[Read the full article on our website.](#)



Photo: Perris Mayor Michael Vargas and Public Services Director Sabrina Chavez hold the city's official proclamation declaring April as Arts, Culture and Health Month during the March 25, 2025 City Council meeting. They were joined by City Council members, representatives from the County of Riverside, and the Arts and Health Collective.

## Why Value Older Buildings

By Jim Mulvihill, APA IE Historian

There is a significant number of detractors who see historic preservation as an impediment to society's progress. Ehrenhalt quotes from one such study, "...in cities around the country, entire neighborhoods of marginal historical value are hindering the ability of cities and their residents to adjust their built environments in response to changing economic circumstances." Until the 1960s, this was a dominant opinion, particularly during the post-1949 period of "urban renewal." Since then, historic preservation has become widely supported.

For example, Kevin Lynch elaborates on his previous work on the "image" of the city, in his classic: "What Time is This Place?" He writes, "...the quality of the personal image of time is crucial for individual well-being"... and..."a desirable image is one that celebrates and enlarges the present while making connections with past and future.(p.1)" Lynch does limit which older structures qualify for preservation: "Where old structures cannot support present functions without impairing those functions, and unless they are of exceptional didactic or esthetic value, they can be cleared away (p.59)." Maintaining the usefulness of a building is critical in judging potential for preservation.

One writer gives an example of improvements associated with changing office technology in recent decades that made "drop ceilings and raised floors"

necessary to accommodate the installation and maintenance of additional cable connections to provide capacity for processing information.

The potential for providing such adaptations is referred to as a building's capacity for "learning." Thus, an older building with the capacity for "learning" is more justifiable for preservation. Another study demonstrates the value of preserving older structures when including them in city revitalization programs.

Preservation efforts are drawn from Baltimore, Philadelphia, Detroit, and Los Angeles. These examples, taken together, provide inventories of the common barriers, innovative solutions, and best practices for positive building reuse. Meeks et. al. provide an extensive review of themes for justifying preservation: 1) the evolving visions of the ideal American city; 2) the positive economic impact that the "fine grain" of neighborhoods composed of older buildings is shown to have; 3) maintaining the use of older buildings advances the qualities of sustainability, climate change and the environment; 4) positive opportunities for social "inclusion" that neighborhoods with older buildings are shown to have. And there are other qualities listed that historic preservation advances. So, there are a variety of sources that planners and their preservationist supporters can rely on to support their efforts.



## Historic Preservation Symposium is Coming Back!

We're excited to announce the revitalization of our Historic Preservation Symposium, returning this year as a two-part event focused on celebrating and preserving the rich cultural and architectural history of the Inland Empire.

The symposium will kick off with an online info-session offering an overview of preservation efforts in our region, followed by an in-person walking tour in September that brings local history to life through guided storytelling and on-the-ground insights.

Whether you're a student, practitioner, or community advocate, this is a great opportunity to learn, connect, and explore the unique historic fabric of our cities.

 Dates and details coming soon — stay tuned!



## California Arts Council Program Applications California Cultural Districts - Carolyn Schutten, APA IE Board Member

California Arts Council (CAC) recently announced the opening of the application period for the 2025 California Cultural Districts grant program. This initiative will designate up to 10 new state-designated cultural districts, expanding the original cohort established in 2017. The Inland Empire has no state-designated cultural districts, so we encourage county and city planners to apply!

The Cultural Districts program is intended to support communities to harness their unique cultural assets to stimulate local economies, attract tourism, preserve historic sites, and support vibrant, inclusive creative economies. "Districts are selected through a rigorous, equity-centered application process that emphasizes authentic community partnerships, vision clarity, and demonstrated cultural depth."

Only partnerships are eligible to apply, ones that include, at a minimum, a cultural non-profit or artist collective, a local business/business association or a community development corporation, and a branch of local government. In addition, applicants will need to provide three letters of support from individual community members or artists located in the proposed district beyond the participating partners and a cultural asset inventory completed within the last three years.

Applications are due by August 7, 2025, and the Cultural Districts program offers grants up to \$10,000 over a two-year period, official state certification, technical assistance, and access to joint marketing and branding resources. The 2025 cohort designation period will run from January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2030, with grant activities taking place from January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2027.

California Arts Council program staff are offering online drop-in office hours. Audience members are welcome to join and exit as needed. Dates are as follows. Sign up on the CAC website.

- Monday, June 23, 2025, 4-5 PM
- Friday, July 11, 2025, 12-1 PM
- Monday, July 21, 2025, 12-1 PM
- Monday, August 4, 2025, 4-5 PM

If you would like local support with your application or cultural district asset mapping, please contact IES-APA Board Historian Carolyn Schutten at [Carolyn.Schutten@gmail.com](mailto:Carolyn.Schutten@gmail.com).





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## APA Inland Empire Young and Emerging Planners Group - Jump Start Your Career Today!

The APA Inland Empire Young & Emerging Planners (YEP) group is dedicated to fostering a dynamic social and professional network for students, young professionals, and the broader planning community.

We serve as a vital resource to engage and support aspiring urban planners in becoming active members of APA through conferences, workshops, and interactive events.

Our mission is to develop programs and activities that inspire, motivate, and build meaningful connections among members.

Interested in getting involved? Contact Kassie Vickers ([kass.vick@gmail.com](mailto:kass.vick@gmail.com)) or Derek Meksavanh ([derek.meksavanh@gmail.com](mailto:derek.meksavanh@gmail.com)) to learn more and join our growing network!



## Support, Unite, and Network (SUN) Mentorship Program

This year-round program is designed to support students and early-career professionals (with less than 5 years of experience) through structured career development opportunities. Mentors will offer support through:

- ✓ Sharing industry knowledge & best practices
- ✓ Strengthening interpersonal & communication skills
- ✓ Providing career development guidance, including interview and public speaking tips
- ✓ Developing leadership and professionalism skills
- ✓ Facilitating networking and creating long-lasting connections

Spots for this pilot program are limited—please keep an eye out for sign-up details and program information coming this summer.



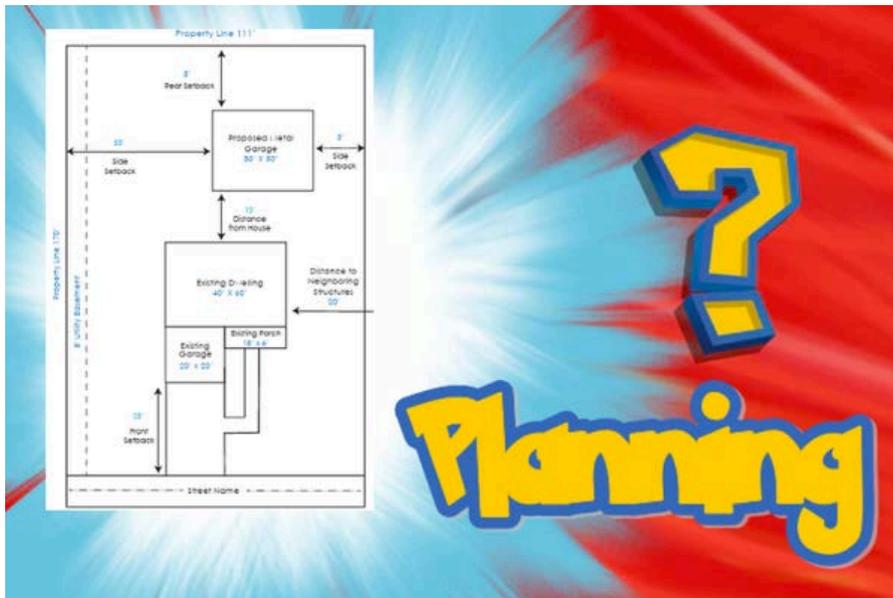
# **AICP Study Group**

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- 
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**If interested, email [kamrynkubose@gmail.com](mailto:kamrynkubose@gmail.com)**

# What's that Planning Man?



Check Back Here for the Answer in Our Next Issue!

## Join Us in Shaping The Future of APA - Why Now is the Time to Become a Member of the APA Private Practice Division

By Adam Rush AICP, APA IES Board Member and Meridian Consultants Principal

Since 1988, the APA Private Practice Division (PPD) has provided resources, programming, networking, and advocacy to promote the quality of private practice, increase the recognition of planning's value within the private sector, and improve the quality of life of planners in private practice. The Private Practice Division supports planners in every stage of their career, whether you are a seasoned private practice practitioner, student, or contemplating a transition from the public sector, the PPD is dedicated to supporting your success.

As a member, you will receive access to valuable networking opportunities, business resources, current information on private practice planning, and technical support. At the PPD, we believe engagement is key to building an impactful practice, that is why the Division hosts a monthly networking sessions through our PPD Conversations where you can engage with seasoned professionals and FAICP mentors on topics such as client engagement and retention, professional liability insurance, and volunteer opportunities to spread the word about your firm or sole-proprietor practice. These conversations touch on all aspects of the planning profession, such as land use, CEQA, NEPA, historical preservation, and habitat conservation and management.

In 2025, the Division presented topics on Planning and Politics, the **Housing Accelerator Handbook**, conducting public outreach and community engagement. PPD is also committed to educating planners on the importance of equity and diversity in our profession.

Over 90% of members are private sector planners, with 87% of members having more than 10 years of experience, including multiple FAICP planners that provide valuable advice and mentorship that will shape the future of planning for the next generation.

If you are an AICP, or AICP-Candidate, member then the PPD is definitely for you. We offer quarterly webinars that are CM credit eligible at no additional cost. Recent webinars include Managing and Growing Your Firm, How To Budget and Schedule Projects , GIS on a Shoestring, New Approaches to Transportation Impact Studies.

Become a Member Today

Whether you're a seasoned executive, an independent consultant, or an emerging professional, there is a place for you at the Private Practice Division Visit (<https://privatepractice.planning.org/>) to learn more and become part of the movement.

Let's build the future of planning—together.



## Other Events

### **APA CA 2025 STATE CONFERENCE - MONTEREY, CA SEPTEMBER 28 - OCTOBER 1**

[Early registration is open!](#)

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### **2025 SPEAKER SERIES - PRESENTED BY SACRAMENTO VALLEY SECTION APA AND CALTRANS**

Registration is now open! This year's theme is Doubling Down in Times of Uncertainty. [Visit their website here for details and registration.](#) The Speaker Series is an affordable way to get CM credits, including Equity and Sustainability credits.

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### **USGBC-CA INLAND EMPIRE COMMITTEE**

The USGBC-CA Inland Empire (IE) Committee convenes key players of the region for all things green building and sustainability. [Click the link here for upcoming events!](#)

# STAY CONNECTED!



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