

Quarterly Newsletter

APA INLAND EMPIRE SECTION

Winter 2025



Recapping 2024 and What to Look Forward to in 2025!

Welcome to our Section's *NEW* newsletter! We are thrilled to share with you the latest developments in our mission to share exciting planning news in the Inland Empire region.

Firstly, we would like to express our gratitude to all of our sponsors, members, and volunteers who have continued to support our efforts. Your generosity and dedication have allowed us to keep our programs running smoothly and effectively, especially the 2024 State Conference in our backyard!

In terms of our approach for 2025, we aim to bring our members with us in our communications journey. Our Board has created a Communications Committee to help achieve this, led by [Kamryn Kubose-Peutz](#), [Tony Lopez](#), [Madeline Jordan](#), and [Adam Rush](#).

The Communications Committee is dedicated to enhancing the visibility and impact of our organization through coordinated communication efforts. We aim to effectively share our mission, initiatives, and opportunities with our members and the broader community. By creating cohesive graphics, managing content, and fostering collaboration across teams, the committee ensures consistent messaging across all platforms. We are committed to promoting engagement, supporting our sponsors, and elevating the organization's presence through innovative communication strategies and creative solutions. See the next page on how to get involved.

Enjoy this month's newsletter!

*APA Inland
Empire Board*

Newsletter Highlights

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Message from the Director

Happy New Year, Inland Empire Planners!

As we reflect on 2024, it's clear it was a remarkable year for the IES-APA. A major highlight was hosting the state conference in Riverside, "Cultivating Our Future." This event brought together planners from across California to exchange ideas, discuss emerging challenges, and celebrate our shared vision for the future while shining a bright light on the Inland Empire. I want to thank all of our members who volunteered their valuable time to making the conference a success. We also hosted numerous events aimed at fostering connections, including social gatherings for Young and Emerging Planners and seasoned professionals, strengthening the bonds that help us rise together as a profession. The Annual Awards Gala in downtown Redlands, with its Oscars theme, was a resounding success, and we're excited to bring the 2025 awards back to the Fox Theater.

Our accomplishments in 2024 would not have been possible without the generous support of our sponsors. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who contributed, with special thanks to our Gold Sponsors: Albert A. Webb and Associates, Michael Baker International, Fehr & Peers, EJMA and MNS. Your support allowed us to execute our initiatives and elevate the planning profession in the Inland Empire.

We also took great strides in advancing professional development. In addition to hosting a Planning Commissioner's workshop, we provided valuable legislative updates on critical topics like new housing laws, AB 98 warehouse law, the role of public health in planning, and navigating the state legislative process. These events underscored our commitment to keeping planners informed and equipped to tackle evolving challenges.

Looking forward, 2025 brings exciting opportunities. We will relaunch our website and newsletter, revive the Inland Empire Historic Symposium, begin special programming for Arts in Planning, and continue promoting community-driven leadership to address critical issues like climate adaptation and disaster response, especially in response to the devastating wildfires in Los Angeles County. As a section, our hearts are with our friends, colleagues, family, and fellow Californians who have been so dramatically impacted. As we embark on this year, let's lean into community, camaraderie, and our shared purpose to build meaningful relationships that support our mission to create thriving, resilient communities. Together, we can meet the challenges of today and prepare for the opportunities of tomorrow.



Warm Regards,

Emily Elliott, AICP
Inland Empire Section Director

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.



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

Exciting News! APA Inland Empire Website Update

We're thrilled to announce that the APA Inland Empire website has been updated! Explore our refreshed platform for upcoming events, professional resources, and more:

IES-APA.ORG



Here's what's new:

User-Friendly Design: Easily navigate resources, events, and news.

Upcoming Events: Stay informed about professional development and networking opportunities.

Community Spotlights: Celebrate local planning successes and members making an impact.

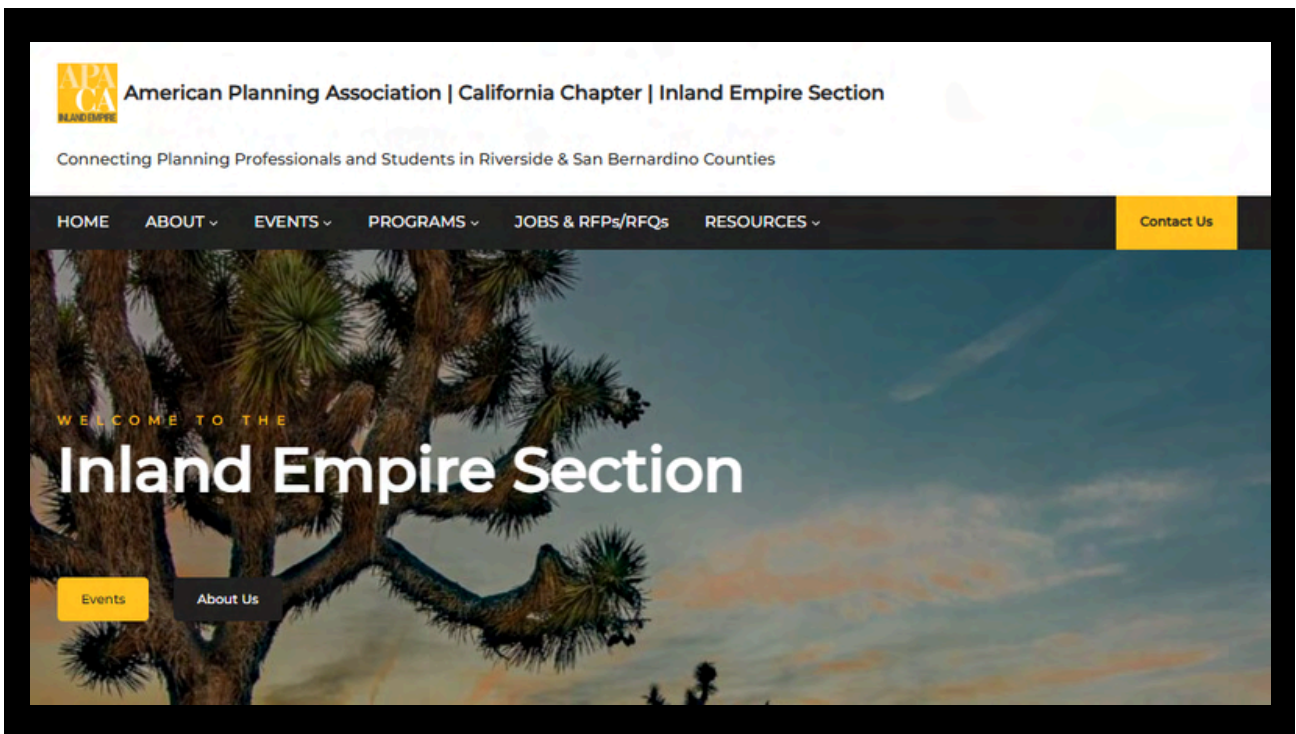
Resource Hub: Access valuable tools, job postings, and educational content.

Stay connected with us:

Follow us on LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/company/ies-apa-ca](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ies-apa-ca)

Follow us on Instagram: [Instagram.com/inlandempireAPA](https://www.instagram.com/inlandempireAPA)

Stay informed, stay inspired, and stay engaged!





2024 Recap

2024 was a year of significant growth and engagement for the APA Inland Empire Section, marked by increased social media presence, new initiatives, and stronger community connections. Here's a look back at some key highlights:

Expanded community college engagement, particularly with Mount San Antonio College & Riverside Community College, to support planning initiatives.

APA Inland Empire hosted Lunch & Learns, public health events, and Planning Commissioner Workshops, all to enhance professional development. Engagement grew through mentorship, education, and outreach, leading to the creation of the Communications Committee for content management. The Spotlight Campaign connected members with five Gold Sponsors and job opportunities.



2024 State Conference

Hosted in the City of Riverside, the 2024 APA California Conference was a pivotal event for APA Inland Empire, featuring Student Day with career resources, networking, and panel discussions. It highlighted key planning topics like housing, climate resilience, and transportation, while strengthening mentorship, showcasing regional projects, and fostering professional connections. The State Conference also provided a Diversity Summit and Mixer, along with raising funds for the [California Planning Foundation \(CPE\)](#). We hope to see you this year in Monterey!



APA IE in 2025!

- Building on the successes of 2024, APA Inland Empire is poised to:
 - Strengthen its Communications Committee for better outreach.
 - Expand community partnerships and student initiatives.
 - Continue advocacy efforts to support planners in the region.

Thank you to all members, volunteers, and sponsors for making 2024 a success! We look forward to an even more impactful 2025.

Member Spotlights



Kassie Vickers

Kassie Vickers is a recent graduate from CSU Northridge with a master's degree in urban planning. During graduate school, she gained experience at the San Bernardino County Economic Development Department. She recently started a new role as a Planner at Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG). She leads the IES Young & Emerging Planners (YEP) group where she organizes social events and workshops with local universities. Last year, she took part in the state APA conference planning for student day. Congrats on your new role, Kassie!



Cuong Trinh

Cuong Phu Trinh is a Senior Transportation Planner at Caltrans District 8 as the Active Transportation Portfolio Manager and Interim Complete Streets Coordinator. His role entails ensuring the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians of all ages, abilities and mobility are incorporated into local and regional transportation plans and transportation projects; organizing Complete Streets trainings, as well as leading bicycle safety education seminars. His career objective is to create more livable places through improving sustainable community practices and equitable transportation outcomes. He is an active YEP member and attends nearly every event. Thank you for your dedication, Cuong!



Miguel Vazquez, FAICP

Miguel Angel Vazquez, FAICP is an award-winning urban planner dedicated to public service. Over the past 20 years, he has successfully led multi-disciplinary teams on various high profile projects for the municipal, private, non-profit and military sectors. Currently, Miguel serves as the health equity and regional planner for the Riverside University Health System-Public Health, is the founder of Art VULUPS, and is a PHEAL Steering Committee Chair. He is a Bloomberg American Health Initiative Fellow at Johns Hopkins University and serves on the IES board. Congrats on your induction to the 2024 Class of Fellows of the AICP, Miguel!



Nancy Fong, FAICP

Nancy Fong, FAICP has over 30 years of extensive planning experiences in the public sector. She brings a deep understanding of departmental processes and procedures related to all aspects of large, complex development projects. She served as the Interim Community Development Director in City of Bell and as a member of the transitional management team assisting in transforming the City to be transparent, ethical, focused on serving the community, professional in operations and effective in the use of financial resources. She is currently a Principal Planner at Interwest Consulting Group, Inc. Congrats on your induction to the 2024 Class of Fellows of the AICP, Nancy!

Project Highlight

Using Esri's ArcGIS Solutions to Increase Engagement in the Development Process

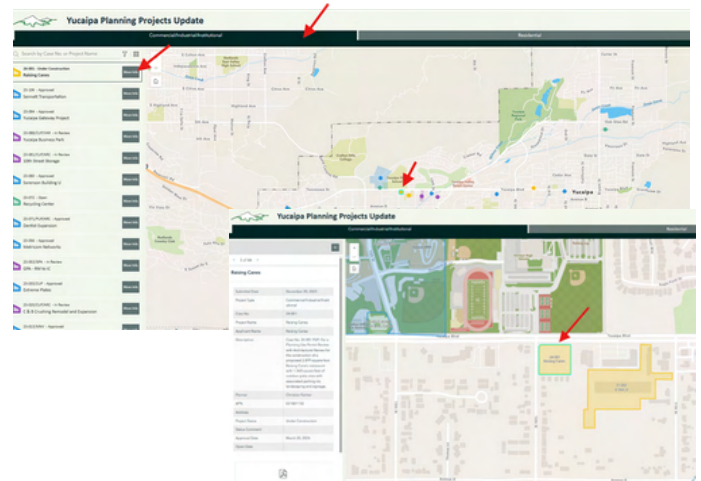
The City of Yucaipa's small but mighty planning team has proactively used ArcGIS solutions to ensure technical planning information is available (and consumable) for people where they are—usually on their phones or other smart devices. Benjamin Matlock, Deputy Director of Community Development said, "ArcGIS tools are user-friendly and help our team summarize technical information to help communicate more effectively with the people we serve."

One such tool is StoryMaps, which has been used for their [Wine Country Specific Plan](#) and [Freeway Corridor Specific Plan Update](#) to highlight their project history, integrate surveys, and embed media and interactive content.



The StoryMap interface offers a slider comparison tool, where residents were able to easily compare the development outcomes under the existing General Plan vs. the proposed Wine Country Specific Plan.

To maintain accessible information for staff and the public is the development of a [Project Tracker Map](#) that includes current project details, status, and site plans. A [HUB Site](#) to support the multi-year rollout of a citywide Development Code Update has also been recently published.



Yucaipa planning staff update this [Project Tracker Map](#) resource during each phase of the project entitlement through construction. This provides increased transparency on projects that are in the pipeline, while helping staff effectively respond to one of their most commonly asked customer service questions: "What's going on over there?"

With the launch of their new "Yucaipa Permit Exchange" online permitting portal last summer, the team creatively used ArcGIS tools to create interactive [How-To User Guides](#) to support people doing business in the city to get better acclimated to the new digital system. Compared to standard PDFs, these resources can be easily maintained into the future. Rather than having to worry about rehosting updated documents, these user guides can be quickly edited online and with just a few clicks, the original published link will be refreshed with updates.



With REAP 2.0 funding support for the city's Development Code Update, Yucaipa created a [HUB Site](#) to document the life cycle of this planning project, making updates and adding resources as the project progresses.

By creating well-thought-out maps/resources, the Yucaipa team ensures that their department:

- 1) Has tangible resources to share with the public;
- 2) Saves time and reduces duplication of efforts (one-stop shop StoryMaps/HUB sites);
- 3) Improves training and cross training of staff; and,
- 4) Builds community trust (they're not hiding anything).

The City of Yucaipa is proud to have taken such proactive steps to improve their public engagement and public outreach to make planning information and supporting technical documentation/resources more accessible to the community. They have advertised these resources on social media, via QR codes on the website/flyers, at tabling events, and even in meeting presentations, and hope that you are inspired to create something similar within your own organizations.

Should you have any questions about this creative approach taken by the Yucaipa team, please reach out to Madeline Jordan, Associate Planner at (909) 797-2489 ext. 250 or mjordan@yucaipa.gov.



The Yucaipa team attended a WinterFest community festival to connect with residents and get feedback for on-going long-range planning projects. QR Codes were available on informational brochures that linked to the Specific Plan StoryMap resources, the Development Code Hubsite, and Community Surveys which were created using Survey123.

Preservation Necessity Raises a Debate by Jim Mulvihill, APA IE Historian

An issue that has frustrated planners for years is central to the present controversy over the proposed Capitol Annex in Sacramento: namely, the need for a comprehensive review and updating of CEQA, California's seminal environmental regulation. Though there have been frequent calls for such an update, so far California's Legislature has been unwilling to undertake the task. A procedure to circumvent CEQA has become common when a project important to the Legislature is being delayed by CEQA mandates. The Legislature simply exempts that project from CEQA review and approves the project.

A procedure Bill Fulton (California Planning & Development Report) refers to as the "Swiss cheese" approach, i.e. each exemption making a procedural "hole" in CEQA mandates. The present controversy arises from the proposed billion-dollar Capital Annex to replace the present 1940s era Annex. The old Annex no longer meets the space needs of State government. The present proposal would mean demolishing the present Annex, and either cutting down or possibly moving 100 trees on the Capitol grounds.

In addition to these physical impacts, objections have been raised over the aesthetic changes, as the proposed Annex has a glass façade that would greatly contrast with the architecture of the original Capitol Building

Two groups are challenging the proposal, the principal one being Save Our Capitol. Two members of the Legislature lead opposition to the proposal: Senator John Laird and Assembly member Blanca Pacheco. The two estimate the cost of the delay brought about by the court proceedings at \$5 million per month. It was the actions of the two legislators that brought about the CEQA exemption, which was placed and passed in the budget trailer bill, SB174.

Will the Legislature continue to avoid undertaking a much-needed CEQA update, or will the present short-term strategy of "Swiss cheesing" CEQA involving lengthy and expensive court battles prevail?

If you're interested in contributing historical articles about planning in our region, please contact our Section Historian, Jim Mulvihill, at mulvihill@csusb.edu.



APA California Legislative Update | January 2025

By Reuben Duarte, Vice President for Policy and Legislation

Lauren De Valencia, APA California Lobbyist

2025 Legislative Session Updates

- Session Kickoff & Key Dates
 - The 2025 Legislative Session began on January 6.
 - The deadline to introduce new bills is February 21.
- Key Legislative Focus Areas
 - Addressing the housing and homelessness crisis.
 - Infrastructure improvements to meet California's climate goals.
 - Legislative response to LA County wildfires, including land use and fire-related issues.
- APA California's Legislative Engagement
 - Engaging with legislative staff on hazard mitigation and planning.
 - Supporting technical clean-up for AB 98 (Carrillo, 2024), which sets new warehouse standards and truck route requirements in circulation elements.
 - Tracking and reviewing new bills relevant to planners, with updates posted in February on the APA California advocacy page.

Special Session: Wildfire Response & Recovery

- Governor Gavin Newsom expanded the special session to enhance wildfire response and recovery efforts for LA County.
- Read the Governor's proclamation [here](#).

Governor Newsom's Executive Order on CEQA & Coastal Act

- Signed an Executive Order to suspend CEQA and California Coastal Act requirements to accelerate rebuilding efforts for fire-affected homes and businesses.

2025-2026 Proposed State Budget

- Released on January 10, totaling \$322 billion.
- Initial \$2 billion deficit projection changed to a \$363 million surplus.
- Key Budget Considerations:
 - Potential impacts from an incoming Trump Administration.
 - Financial uncertainty due to LA County wildfire recovery costs.
 - Proposal to pull \$7.1 billion from the rainy-day fund despite the surplus.
- Budget Items of Interest to Planners:
- (Details forthcoming as APA California reviews the proposal.)

For the full article please visit our LinkedIn page: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/ies-apa-ca_apa-california-legislative-update-january-activity-7287526771522969601-mYD5?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAACCNun0BwbnF13ZG8miFVMv0kgf5wWXWgIM

Taylor Libolt Varner, Vice Director of Policy APA IE

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) or Derek Meksavanh (derek.meksavanh@gmail.com) to learn more and join our growing network!





Other Events

APA CA STATE CONFERENCE

MONTEREY IS UNIQUELY SITUATED AT THE INTERSECTION OF LAND AND SEA, WHERE THE BEAUTY OF THE COASTLINE OFFERS THE PERFECT BACKDROP FOR THIS YEAR'S THEME – "WAVES OF CHANGE." JOIN US AS WE DEEP DIVE INTO THE TIDES OF INNOVATION AND EXPLORE HOW INSPIRATION AND COLLABORATION CAN SHAPE THE FUTURE OF PLANNING IN OUR COMMUNITIES. WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU THERE!

DATE: SEPTEMBER 28 2025- OCTOBER 1 2025

LOCATION: MONTEREY CALIFORNIA

REGISTER: COMING SOON...

DALE PRIZE 2025 COLLOQUIUM AND AWARDS BANQUET

DATE: TUESDAY, MARCH 4TH 2025 FROM 6PM TO 7:30PM

LOCATION: CAL POLY POMONA

REGISTER: IT WILL BE A WEBINAR VIA ZOOM
([HTTPS://CPP.ZOOM.US/S/81594537662](https://cpp.zoom.us/j/81594537662)).

COST: FREE

PLEASE BE SURE TO SUBMIT EVENTS AND OTHER CONTENT VIA OUR
CONTENT GOOGLE FORM ON PAGE 3



Thank you to our 2024 Sponsors

The APA Inland Empire Section would like to extend our deepest gratitude to our 2024 sponsors for their invaluable support. Your contributions empower us to provide engaging programming, professional development opportunities, and resources that strengthen our planning community. Details on our 2025 sponsorship packages will be released soon on our website.

Gold Sponsors:



Silver and Bronze Sponsors:



Exciting Sponsorship Opportunities for 2025!

The APA Inland Empire is gearing up for another impactful year, and we're inviting organizations to partner with us through our 2025 sponsorship program. This is your chance to connect with planning professionals, showcase your company's expertise, and support the growth of the planning community in the Inland Empire.

By becoming a featured sponsor, your organization will gain visibility through our events, newsletters, social media, and website. You'll also have the opportunity to engage directly with planners, students, and industry leaders through exclusive networking and branding opportunities.

Don't miss out on this chance to elevate your presence in the Inland Empire's planning community! Contact us today to secure your place as a 2025 featured sponsor.

Please reach out to [Bryan Jones PE, AICP](mailto:bjones@cityofmenifee.us) at bjones@cityofmenifee.us

STAY CONNECTED!

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