



APA CALIFORNIA AWARDS PROGRAM POLICY

Adopted by APA California Board on September 21, 2008

I. INTRODUCTION

The APA California Awards Program provides an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the great planning work occurring throughout California. This Awards Program Policy provides the general guidelines and procedures for the annual APA California Awards Program. All future Awards Programs shall be conducted in conformance with the policies and procedures outlined herein. Amendment of the APA California Awards Program Policy shall be made by majority of the APA California Board of Directors.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of the APA California Awards Program is to encourage quality in planning and increase the public's awareness of the planning profession through recognizing outstanding achievement in the planning field. APA California annually presents dozens of Planning Awards to honor the most outstanding efforts in planning in California. The program honors innovative plans and projects, distinguished APA members, and lay contributors to planning and achievements of APA California Sections.

III. AWARD CATEGORIES

A. OUTSTANDING PLANNING AWARDS

Nominations for Outstanding Planning Awards must first be submitted to the Section where the project, plan or work occurred prior to being submitted to the State for consideration. Only the first place Section Award winners (no ties) for that year are eligible for nominations in the APA California Outstanding Planning Awards Categories.

Comprehensive Planning Award: *(Corresponds to APA's Daniel Burnham Award)*

- a) **Large Jurisdiction:** To a comprehensive plan of unusually high merit completed within the past 3 years for, by or within a jurisdiction with a Census 2000 population of 100,000 or more.
- b) **Small Jurisdiction:** To a comprehensive plan of unusually high merit completed within the past 3 years for, by, or within a jurisdiction with a Census 2000 population of less than 100,000.

2) **Planning Implementation Award:** *(Corresponds to APA's Outstanding Planning Award for Implementation)*

- a) **Large Jurisdiction:** For an effort that demonstrates a significant achievement for a jurisdiction with a Census 2000 population of 100,000 or more in accomplishing positive change as a result of planning. This award is for long-term, measurable results to demonstrate that sustained implementation makes a difference. Nominated efforts should have been in continuous effect for a minimum of five years. Nominations can include, but not limited to, plans for smart growth, signage, farmland preservation, urban design, wetland mitigation, resource conservation, capital improvements, citizen participation, neighborhood improvement, transportation management, and sustained economic development.
- b) **Small Jurisdiction:** For an effort that demonstrates a significant achievement for a jurisdiction with a Census 2000 population of less than 100,000 in accomplishing positive change as a result of planning. This award is for long-term, measurable results to demonstrate that sustained implementation makes a difference. Nominated efforts should have been in continuous effect for a minimum of five years. Nominations can include, but not limited to, plans for smart growth, signage, farmland preservation, urban design, wetland mitigation, resource conservation, capital improvements, citizen participation, neighborhood improvement, transportation management, and sustained economic development.

3) **Planning Project Award:** To a specific planning project of unusually high merit that is in the process of being constructed or has been completed within the last year.

- 4) **Innovation in Green Community Planning:** To an innovative plan, program, tool, or related effort that demonstrates advancement in planners' efforts to address the serious consequences of development and everyday living on the environment.
- 5) **Focused Issue Planning Award:** For a planning document of unusually high merit completed or published in the past 3 years, dealing with a specific aspect of the planning process. For example, an environmental impact report or housing needs assessment.
- 6) **Best Practices Award:** For a specific planning tool, practice, program, project, or process that is a significant advancement to specific elements of planning. This category emphasizes results and demonstrates how innovative and state-of-the-art planning methods and practices helped to implement a plan. Nominations may include such things as regulations and codes, tax policies or initiatives, growth management or design guidelines, transferable development rights program, land acquisition efforts, public/private partnerships, applications of technology, handbooks, or efforts that foster greater participation in community planning. *(Corresponds to APA's Best Practice Award)*
- 7) **Grassroots Initiative Award:** For an initiative that illustrates how a community utilized the planning process to address a need that extends beyond the traditional scope of planning. Emphasis is placed on the success of planning in new or different settings. Nominated projects should expand public understanding of the planning process. This could include such efforts as community policing or drug prevention, neighborhood outreach initiatives, programs designed for special populations, public art or cultural efforts, community festivals, environmental or conservation initiatives, summer recreational initiatives for children, or focused tourism ventures. *(Corresponds to APA's Grassroots Initiative Award)*
- 8) **Education Project Award:** To an individual, project or program that uses information and education about the value of planning and how planning improves a community's quality of life to create greater awareness among citizens or specific segments of the population. This may include, but is not limited to, broad community efforts showing how planning can make a difference, curricula designed to teach children about planning, neighborhood empowerment programs, initiatives designed to include new individuals and groups in the planning process, use of technology to expand public participation in planning, outreach programs to the media, or comprehensive campaigns to renew or initiate a plan. *(Corresponds to APA's Public Outreach Award)*

- 9) **Neighborhood Planning Award:** This award will go to a neighborhood plan, program, design, or related effort that demonstrates innovative planning principles and measures that create sustainable neighborhoods that have lasting value.

B. LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE AWARDS

The following awards are given to individuals, programs or organizations for sustained and significant contributions to the planning profession. Nominations for Leadership and Service Awards will be accepted from any person, including members of the California Chapter Board of Directors. Individuals, programs or organizations nominated for the Leadership and Service awards do not have to be a Section Award winner. Candidates may not self-nominate, except for 1c.

1) Distinguished Leadership Awards

- a) **Professional Planner:** To a professional planner, currently employed in the planning profession, for a sustained contribution to the profession through distinguished practice, teaching, or writing. *(Corresponds to APA's Leadership Award for a Professional Planner)*
- b) **Elected Official:** To an individual elected to public office for a significant contribution to excellence in public planning. *(Corresponds to APA's Leadership Award for an Planning Advocate)*
- c) **Planning Firm, Department or Agency:** To a planning firm, planning department or planning agency for outstanding achievement in public or private planning over a sustained period. Self-nominations are allowed for this award category.
- d) **Citizen Planner/Layperson:** To a person who is neither a professional planner nor an elected official for a significant contribution to excellence in the planning field. *(Corresponds to APA's Leadership Award for a Planning Advocate)*
- e) **Student Planner:** To a student in a Planning Accreditation Board approved planning program for outstanding achievement during the respective nominee's academic career in planning. *(Corresponds to APA's Distinguished Leadership Award for a Student Planner)*
- f) **Organization:** To an organization whose efforts have contributed to elevating planning principles, creating greater awareness of the value of planning, and improving the quality of life in one or more communities. Only open to non-APA related organizations.

- 2) **Distinguished Service Award:** To an APA California member who has made a substantial contribution to the development and objectives of APA California over a sustained period. *(Corresponds to APA's Distinguished Service Award)*
- 3) **Distinguished Contribution Award:** Recognizing an APA California member who has contributed to the goals and objectives of the California Chapter of the American Planning Association and to its strategic plan through an extraordinary effort over a short period of time. *(Corresponds to APA's Distinguished Contribution Award)*

C. PLANNING ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

The following awards are given to individuals, programs or organizations for outstanding planning achievement. Nominations for Planning Achievement Awards will be accepted from any person, including members of the California Chapter Board of Directors. Individuals, programs or organizations nominated for the Planning Achievement Awards do not have to be a Section Award winner.

- 1) **Advocacy/Social Change/Diversity Planning Award:** To a project, group or individual reflecting a sustained social commitment to advocacy planning in support of the needs of society's less fortunate members, or for efforts or specific projects by individuals belonging to a minority group or organizations whose membership, staff, or focus is on minority concerns and such individuals or organizations have successfully promoted and helped expand diversity within the planning profession or have promoted and helped expand planning and diversity. *(Corresponds to the APA Paul Davidoff Award)*
- 2) **Contribution to Women and Families Award:** For a significant contribution to planning issues related to women and the family. *(Corresponds to the APA Diana Donald Award)*
- 3) **Hard-Won Victories:** For a planning initiative or other planning effort undertaken by a community, neighborhood, citizens group, or jurisdiction in the face of difficult or trying circumstances. This award recognizes the positive effect of hard-won victories by professional planners, citizen planners, or both working together under difficult, challenging, or adverse conditions because of natural disasters, local circumstances, financial or organization constraints, social factors, or other causes. *(Corresponds to APA's Hard-Won Victories Award)*
- 4) **Academic Award:** To faculty and/or students to recognize outstanding work done in planning schools on an individual or collective basis. *(Corresponds to APA's Student Project Award)*

Recipients of any Leadership, Services or Achievement Award are ineligible to receive the same award for ten years after accepting it.

D. JOURNALISM/MEDIA AWARDS

The following awards honor newspapers and other media “for public service rendered in the advancement of city and regional planning through outstanding journalism or coverage of a topic.” Nominations for Journalism/Media Awards will be accepted from any person or organization. Individuals or organizations nominated for the Journalism/Media awards do not have to be a Section Award winner. Candidates may not self-nominate.

1) **Journalism Award** (*Corresponds with APA’s Journalism Awards*)

- a) **Circulation over 100,000:** To a publication with circulation over 100,000 for outstanding coverage of planning or environmental issues.
- b) **Circulation 35,000 to 100,000:** To a publication with circulation between 35,000 and 100,000 for outstanding coverage of planning or environmental issues.
- c) **Circulation under 35,000:** To a publication with circulation under 35,000 for outstanding coverage of planning or environmental issues.

2) **Individual Journalist Award:** To an individual writer or editor for an article or series of articles of exceptional merit on planning or environmental issues.

3) **Media Award:** For outstanding coverage of a planning topic through other than the journalism (e.g., television, radio, video, the internet, literature, etc).

E. SECTION ACTIVITY AWARD

The APA California is comprised of eight Sections in California. Each Section has its own officers and develops its own programs and activities to serve the needs of their members and the community in their region. The Sections serve as the primary vehicle through which many members participate.

The APA California Section Activity Award recognizes the outstanding work of a Section that has established or implemented an activity or program of unusually high merit within the past two years. Section Activity Award winners are only eligible to receive the award once every three years. Any person including a member of the APA California Board or the Sections can make nominations for this award. Self-nominations are allowed for this award category.

F. PLANNING LANDMARK AND PIONEER AWARDS

Nominations for Planning Landmark and Pioneer Awards must be submitted to the Chapter for review by the Chapter Historian and the Chapter Board. Special criteria have been established for these two award categories.

- 1) **Planning Landmark Award:** The Planning Landmark Award is for a planning project, initiative, or endeavor that is historically significant and that may be used or accessed by the public. (*Corresponds with APA's National Planning Landmark Award*)
- 2) **Planning Pioneer Award:** Presented to pioneers of the profession who have made personal and direct innovations in American planning that have significantly and positively redirected planning practices, education or theory with long-term results. (*Corresponds with AICP National Planning Pioneer Award*)

G. PLANNER EMERITUS NETWORK HONOR AWARDS

Nominations must be submitted to the PEN President or a member of the PEN Board of Directors.

IV. NOMINATION SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

- 1) **All nominations must be submitted in electronic format on a CD-ROM.** Six paper copies of the "APA California 2009 Awards Application Form" must be submitted with each award submittal. Section application forms are not acceptable substitutes for the APA California Planning Awards Application Form.
- 2) **Six CD-ROM sets of the following items must be submitted.** One CD-ROM must be labeled Master Copy. Please place each of the following in separate folders on the CD-ROM. Each award submittal CD-ROM must be labeled with the appropriate award category. The following items must be submitted:
 - **APPLICATION:** The completed APA California 2009 Awards Application Form.
 - **SUMMARY DESCRIPTION:** One page summary of the submission or in the case of an individual, a one page resume.
 - **AWARD CRITERIA:** One- or two-page explanation demonstrating how the submission specifically meets each criterion in the order listed under each award category.
 - **LETTER (S) OF SUPPORT:** At least one (1), but no more than five (5) one-page letters in support of the entry from someone familiar with the nomination, but other than the nominator and/or staff/consultant.
 - **PROJECT OR PLAN:** A digital copy in PDF format on CD-ROM of the document for which the nomination is submitted. The document can be submitted as a separate CD-ROM. If submitted as a separate CD-ROM, please make sure to label each CD-ROM. All winning documents will be posted on the APA California website.

- **IMAGES:** Ten (10) digital images in JPEG format. **No PowerPoint Presentations.** The images should be representative of the nomination, as they will be used during the Awards Ceremony. Please include a brief sentence identifying or describing each slide. Leadership Award nominations need only to supply two to three images of the individual nominated.

Please remember to include one CD-ROM labeled **Master Copy**.

- 3) All submissions must be received by the deadline and strictly follow the requirements outlined in the APA California Awards Policy and the Planning Awards Application Form.
- 4) Submissions received before the deadline not meeting the requirements may be returned and resubmitted before the deadline at the discretion of the Vice President for Administration.
- 5) Submissions may be entered in only one awards category or subcategory.
- 6) Specific program, projects, reports, processes, and ordinances may only be nominated for an APA California award once.

V. APA CALIFORNIA STATEWIDE AWARDS SELECTION PROCESS

A. APA CALIFORNIA STATEWIDE JURY COMPOSITION

An APA California jury of five members shall be appointed by the Vice President for Administration and the State Awards Coordinator to judge the entries. Jurors should be chosen to represent different areas of expertise, geographic locations, and professional experiences in the private/public sector, to achieve an overall balance of the jury. The diversity in jurors will also be considered. The decision of the majority of the jury shall be final.

B. APA CALIFORNIA STATEWIDE JURY MAY MOVE NOMINATIONS TO A DIFFERENT CATEGORY

Nominations will be evaluated for the award category in which they were submitted. However, the APA California jury may, upon majority vote, move a nomination to a different category, if appropriate.

C. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING AWARD ENTRIES

Entries shall be judged according to the following criteria:

1) Outstanding Planning Awards Criteria

The following criteria will be used in evaluating all outstanding planning awards submittals, except for the Neighborhood Planning Award:

- a) Originality: Is there a visionary approach or innovative concept that results in a meaningful advance in the planning process?
- b) Transferability: To what extent is there a potential application in other areas or to other projects?
- c) Quality: To what extent is there excellence of thought, analysis, writing, graphics, and ethical planning process?
- d) Implementation: How did the project address the need or problem that prompted its initiation? What is the level of effectiveness as evidenced by the project's degree of post-completion or post-adoption activity? What level of effectiveness do you anticipate over time? How much local support is there for the plan and its implementation?
- e) Comprehensiveness: To what extent have planning principles been observed, especially consideration of the projects' effects in other public objectives?
- f) Public Participation: To what extent was the public involved in this project and how both public and private support was obtained.
- g) Role of Planners: What role did planners play in the project?

The following are additional criteria for specific awards:

Planning Implementation Award:

- a) Sustained Improvement: Indicate the level of consistency of this implementation effort since its start. Detail any changes, derailments, or improvements throughout the implementation phase.
- b) Funding: Identify funding challenges or support for this effort. Report any political changes that might affect, for better or worse, the effort's long-term funding.
- c) Community Acceptance and Support: Describe how the longevity of this effort has increased the community's appetite for planning and the pursuit of similar initiatives.

- d) Environmental Planning and Impacts: How has the nominated effort identified, evaluated, and addressed potential beneficial and adverse consequences of implementing a project, development, or program on the surrounding environment. What mitigation measures were undertaken and how effective have they been.

Innovation in Green Community Planning:

- a) Planning and Innovation: What critical green planning elements are addressed by the nominated effort in terms of lessening and mitigating adverse impacts from development and everyday living? In what ways does the plan or planning effort seek to create a community that is truly sustainable and compatible with the natural resources and environmental system upon which its existence depends?
- b) Plan Compatibility: How is the green community planning integrated into a corresponding comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance, capital improvement program, or other related initiative? In what ways does the green planning support the broader needs of the community and surrounding region or address community-wide objectives?
- c) Citizen Participation: What was done to ensure the widest variety of resident and stakeholder participation in the plan and planning process?
- d) Collaboration and Partnerships: What strategic partnerships or alliances were developed to help meet the goals and objectives of the nominated effort?
- e) Social and Economic Concerns: How does the nominated effort address not only a community's physical realm, but also its social and economic concerns and issues? How have the efforts to improve a community's quality of life been integrated into older neighborhoods and brownfields?

Grassroots Initiative Award:

- a) Education: Establish that your entry has encouraged community leaders to revise their opinions about varied uses and broad applications of the planning process. State the influence your entry has had on public awareness beyond those immediately affected.
- b) Collaboration: Describe the level of collaboration between leadership and competing interests. Explain how those affected were brought into the planning process for this initiative.

Education Project Award:

- a) Education: Show how the program has increased the understanding of planning principles and the planning process. Explain how the results have been measured and internalized.

Neighborhood Planning Award:

- a) Planning and Innovation: What critical planning elements are addressed by the nominated effort in terms of creating new neighborhoods and redesigning older neighborhoods? As an example, but not limited to, how does the nomination contribute to residents doing more walking, biking, or taking part in other physical activities? Does the plan call for placing schools closer to the homes where students and their families live? How are smart growth principles used to guide design of new neighborhoods as well as reinvestment decisions affecting older areas? How does the plan help create more diverse housing opportunities and address affordable housing needs?
- b) Plan Compatibility: How is the neighborhood plan, project, initiative, or other nominated effort compatible with the corresponding city comprehensive or master plan, district or special-use plans, city recreational plans, economic development plans, conservation area plans, environmental planning, capital improvement programs, zoning ordinances, or other related planning initiatives? In what ways does the neighborhood plan or planning effort support the broader needs of the community and surrounding region or addresses citywide objectives?
- c) Collaboration and Partnerships: What formal and informal steps were taken for neighborhood leaders to meet among themselves and with local officials to discuss the plan and plan implementation? What strategic partnerships or alliances were developed to help meet the goals and objectives of the nominated effort?
- d) Social Concerns: How does the nominated effort address not only physical conditions of the neighborhood, but also issues involving the diversity and social make-up of the neighborhood? Does the plan or effort facilitate the development of mixed-income neighborhoods?

2) Leadership and Service Awards Criteria

The following criteria will be used in evaluating all leadership and service submittals:

- a) Length of Leadership/Service: How has there been a sustained contribution to planning; length of outstanding leadership.

- b) Support of Planning/Planners. How has the nominee's work increased the understanding of the planning process and/or profession?
- c) Ethics. How has exemplary ethical behavior been demonstrated?

3) Planning Achievement Awards Criteria

The following criteria will be used in Planning Achievement submittals:

Advocacy/Social Change/Diversity Planning Award:

- a) Advocacy: Describe to what extent the nominee addressed the needs of those that society typically overlooks during the planning process.
- b) Effectiveness: Specify how the nominee's effort has had an impact on the lives of those the nominee is working to help. Indicate how those efforts have touched a wider audience.
- c) Diversity: For nominations addressing diversity issues and concerns, what has the individual, organization, or undertaken effort done to promote diversity within the planning profession or to advance and sustain sound, ethical, and inclusionary planning in communities, regions, states, or the nations?

Contribution to Women and Families Award:

- a) Support of women and the family: Describe how the nominee's efforts addressed the concerns of women through specific actions or contributions to planning initiatives in the community.
- b) Effectiveness: Specify how the nominee's effort has been effective in furthering the cause of women's issues through planning. Indicate how those efforts have touched a wider audience.

Hard-Won Victories:

- a) Challenges or barriers: What obstacles, whether physical, natural, social, or a combination thereof, was faced and addressed by the nominated effort? What is the extent of these challenges or other adversarial conditions, and what steps were undertaken to meet the difficult circumstances?
- b) Available resources: What resources were available and how were these resources (financial, personnel, consultants, etc.) managed, leveraged, and deployed?

- c) Progress and positive effects: What are the lasting effects the effort has had or is likely to have on planning in the community? Has the effort removed or mitigated the barriers and obstacles? How has or will the effort shape the future in the community or locale? What influence has the nominated effort had on community leaders and their views about the value and effectiveness of planning?

Academic Award:

- a) Purpose: What was the purpose of the project? What was learned or accomplished by the students?
- b) Research and Resources: Please detail what and how research was completed to prepare for producing the final product? What resources were available to the students to prepare the paper or document?
- c) Challenges: Please describe the challenges the student(s) face during the project.
- d) Results: What was the basis for the paper or the project? What was the final outcome? How was the final product used?

4) Journalism/Media Awards Criteria

The following criteria will be used in evaluating journalism/media submittals:

- a) Originality: Innovation in theme, topic, or treatment; establishment of a point of view; development of a new angle on an existing problem.
- b) Topicality: Relation to issues which are current, noteworthy and significant; relationship to the issues, topic areas of interest of citizens, community leaders, or the planning profession at large.
- c) Craft: Writing style; application of journalistic skills and standards to develop the topic; adherence to principles of objectivity, if applicable, research techniques and methods; level of documentation.
- d) Presentation: Use of photography, typography, layout, graphics and other design tools to communicate with the audience.
- e) Interpretation: Manner in which planning concepts are interpreted or expressed to aid reader understanding and ability to draw important conclusions.

5) Planning Landmark and Pioneer Awards Criteria

The following criteria will be used in evaluating Planning Landmark and Pioneer awards:

- a) **Historical Significance:** What is the nomination's historical significance in terms of at least one of the following: being a pioneering work or a documented first; being historically significant, unique, and outstanding; having initiated a new direction in planning that had a lasting effect or other impact; or having impact on American planning, cities, or regions during a broad range of time, space, or both time and space? Nominated landmarks must be at least 25 years old as of the submittal deadline.
- b) **National significance:** What effect or impact did the nominated landmark have on planning in the United States as a whole? What is the nominated landmark's national importance and influence in helping create communities or other places of lasting value throughout the country?
- c) **Persons involved:** Who were the significant planners or others who were involved and responsible for the accomplishments of the nominated landmark?

D. NUMBER OF AWARDS

Only one first-place award may be granted per category each year. When exceptional circumstances warrant, one Award of Merit may also be given per category. If the jury finds that none of the nominations in a particular category meets the desirable standards of excellence, they may grant only an Award of Merit or grant no award in that category.

VI. HONORING THE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Award recipients will be honored at the annual APA California Conference during an Awards Ceremony event, typically a luncheon or dinner. Each award recipient is provided with one Awards event ticket at no cost. First place winners will be honored with a trophy. Award of Merit winners will be honored with a plaque. One trophy or plaque per award will be provided to the recipient at no cost. Upon request, additional Awards event tickets, trophies, or plaques will be provided for individuals, firms or groups affiliated with the award winning project or program, but the recipients must pay for the cost.

VII. SECTION AWARDS PROGRAMS

A. SECTION AWARDS PROCESS

Because only first place winners of Section Awards Programs are eligible for nomination for APA California Outstanding Planning Awards, the Section Awards Programs are vital to the success of the Chapter's Awards Program. Nominations for Outstanding Planning Awards must be submitted to the Section where the project, plan or work occurred first prior to being submitted to the State for consideration. Sections are strongly encouraged to support and promote their local Awards Programs.

B. SECTION AWARDS POLICIES

Individual Sections may establish Awards Policies different from those of the Chapter at their discretion. Each Section wishing to participate in the Chapter Awards Program, however, must appoint an Awards Chairperson to serve as contact with the Vice President for Administration or APA California Awards Coordinator concerning Awards Program matters and to coordinate awards activities for the Section.