APA MN Legislative and Law Committee Work Plan

Background
The Legislative and Law Committee actively engages with the chapter membership on policy issues of importance to our communities and the planning profession. The committee is responsible for developing and maintaining APA Minnesota’s Legislative Policy Platform and educating the chapter membership on case law and legislation of interest to planners. The Legislative and Law Committee also coordinates an annual Planners Day at the Capitol during the legislative session.

Bylaws
9.3 There shall be a LEGISLATIVE AND LAW COMMITTEE consisting of members of the APA-MN Chapter. This committee shall be responsible for following legislative actions and case law, apprising Chapter members of items that impact them or affect the planning profession, and coordinating legislative platforms and activities on behalf of the APA-MN Chapter. One member of the Committee shall be appointed by the Board to serve as an ex-officio board member.

Strategic Plan
The Legislative and Law Committee is the primary asset for implementing the Leadership focus area of the chapter’s 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, which reads as follows:

Goal Statement
Leverage the knowledge of the association’s membership to enact change in Minnesota

Strategies and Tactics
1. Use communication outlets to expand awareness of our organization.
   1.1. Implement external communication and relations plan.
2. Serve as experts in the field of planning.
   2.1. Proactively offer to share the organization’s perspective on topics being considered by governing bodies.
   2.2. Develop a bench of experts for advocacy.
   2.3. Develop a process by which legislative and law requests are thoroughly and properly vetted.
   2.4. Provide guidance to members and allies on effective communication, outreach, organizing, and advocacy.
3. Proactively share the organization’s perspective on a wide range of planning-related topics.
   3.2. Share Policy Platform with state and local leaders, allied organizations, League of MN Cities.
   3.3. Create white papers on a number of planning-related topics.

Success Indicators
- APA MN is contacted to serve as subject matter experts in local and state legislation.
- APA MN is viewed as the go-to organization for expertise in planning.
- APA MN is contacted to provide comments, present, or testify.

Policy Platform
The chapter maintains a Legislative Policy Platform that is authored by the Legislative and Law Committee and adopted by the board. The purpose of the platform is to inform annual legislative priorities and to
serve as a source document for responding to legislative proposals and other matters of importance to Minnesota planners and the communities they serve. The platform is generally updated every four years, but may also be edited at any time at the discretion of the board. The committee will next update the platform in 2020.

Annual Legislative Priorities
Every year the committee develops a short list of legislative priorities that the chapter to be used for the following:

- Proactive advocacy
- Responding to proposed legislation
- Topical focus for bill tracking and education

Relationship to national
Since APA MN approved its most recent Legislative Policy Platform in 2016, APA national has increased its legislative advocacy efforts. APA MN will consult the national organization’s platform and legislative priorities when updating our own platform and priorities.

Legislative Advocacy
Every year the committee develops a focused legislative advocacy action plan for implementing the chapter’s legislative priorities. The action plan includes a relatively small, achievable number of activities to be carried out by committee members and board members. These may include:

- Testifying in committee
- Writing opinion pieces for publication
- Partnering with allied organizations
- Meeting with key elected officials

Planners Day at the Capitol
The committee plans an annual Planners Day at the Capitol as an educational opportunity for the membership and a venue for legislative advocacy. The 2019 edition of Planners Day at the Capitol is a mini-conference format, featuring presentations throughout the day from organizations that tackle the latest in transportation, economic development, and infrastructure. The committee will evaluate the success of this format and recommend to the board whether changes need to be made for 2020.

Bill Tracking and Education
The Education Coordinator tracks bills at the Minnesota Legislature that are related to the chapter’s Legislative Policy Platform, with an emphasis on those related to the chapter’s annual legislative priorities. The Education Coordinator provides updates to the chapter membership at regular intervals (generally every two weeks) throughout the legislative session, and summarizes the results of the session for the July newsletter along with any relevant activity in the courts. The Education Coordinator alerts the committee co-chairs to bills that may merit action based on the Annual Legislative Priorities and Legislative Action Plan.
Annual Calendar of Activities

Preparation for the next year’s legislative session begins in June immediately following the close of the previous legislative session. Note that this calendar is based on the first year of the biennium, in which by statute the legislature begins meeting in early January. The legislative calendar for even-numbered years varies.

The Legislative and Law Committee meets every two months throughout the year, as indicated by an asterisk(*).

June*

- The **Education Coordinator** summarizes the completed legislative session in Planning Minnesota Newsletter (due July 1), with a focus on legislative activity most relevant to the APA MN Legislative Policy Platform and that year’s chapter legislative priorities.
- The **Legislative and Law Committee** convenes a half-day retreat to complete the following tasks:
  - Review the just-completed legislative session
  - Propose legislative priorities for the following year
  - Develop an advocacy strategy for those priorities
  - Formulate an approach to the following year’s Planners Day at the Capitol

July

- The **Executive Director** communicates the committee’s proposed legislative priorities to the general membership and offers opportunity for comment.

August*

- The **Legislative and Law Committee** meets to review feedback from the general membership on the proposed legislative priorities, and forwards a recommendation to the board.

September

- The **Education Coordinator** presents a legislative session and court case overview at the state planning conference.
- The **APA MN Board** approves the legislative priorities, advocacy strategy, and Planners Day at the Capitol framework for the following year.

October*

- The **Education Coordinator** and **Executive Director** produce advocacy materials based on the following year’s legislative priorities.
- The **Legislative and Law Committee** meets to review advocacy materials and plan the following year’s Planners Day at the Capitol. Members of the committee volunteer to invite speakers. The committee also reviews any changes to the following year’s work plan and forwards it to the board.

November

- The **APA MN Board** reviews advocacy materials for the following year and approves the following year’s Legislative and Law Committee work plan.

December*

- The **Education Coordinator** prepares the Legislative and Law update for the January Planning Minnesota newsletter.
The Legislative and Law Committee meets to complete any remaining preparations for the upcoming legislative session.

January
- Legislative session begins.
- The Education Coordinator begins tracking bills relevant to the APA MN Legislative Policy Platform, with a focus on those related to the chapter’s annual legislative priorities.
- The Executive Director opens registration for Planners Day at the Capitol

February*
- The Legislative and Law Committee meets to discuss the first few weeks of the legislative session and identify opportunities for advocacy.

March
- Planners Day at the Capitol
- Submit fall conference session proposal (perhaps this becomes a standing session with no need for a proposal).

April*
- The Legislative and Law Committee meets to assess progress of the legislative session and identify opportunities for advocacy.

May
- The legislative session ends.