Planning Minnesota

Inside This Issue

From the Desk of the President ........................................... Page 3
Finding Safe Routes to School ........................................ Page 4
Cities Working Toward Bike-Friendly Status ......................... Page 5
Getting Active in Western Minnesota ................................ Page 6
Rita Albrecht: From Planning to Politics .......................... Page 7
Minnesota Design Team .................................................. Page 9
Health Dept. Addresses Climate Change ........................... Page 10
Legislative Update ....................................................... Page 12
Upcoming Events .......................................................... Page 16
Job Opportunities ......................................................... Page 17

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Hello Fellow Planners;

As planners, we are continually trying to determine the best way to involve people in decisions regarding their neighborhoods. The skill of community engagement is critical to our success as planners, whether it be conducting a public hearing, hosting an open house, or staffing a focus group or design charrette. However, I have recently seen an increasing amount of literature about the importance of the arts and artists in engaging community.

For many years, there has been scholarly discussion and research regarding the positive impact of artists in our communities, especially in the revitalization of urban neighborhoods and the local economy.

Richard Florida’s book “The Rise of the Creative Class” written in 2002 served as the catalyst to bring the importance of the artist community to light in planning circles, and more recently Ann Markusen’s work regarding the impact of artists in the Twin Cities and beyond has continued to raise awareness about the value art and artists serve in revitalizing urban areas and place-making. However, recently artists are getting special attention for their ability to creatively and effectively engage the public in planning efforts.

The contributions artists offer in the planning profession include new community engagement strategies like hands-on visualization techniques, photography, drawing, and community chalkboards. More importantly, however is their ability to help planners change the way they see their engagement efforts.

Rather than a means to resultant planning document, the process itself can build community and connections so critical to achieving the goals laid out the plan. Therefore, if the chance arises, I would encourage you to find ways to incorporate artists, their ideas, and their work into your community engagement efforts.

Breanne Rothstein

“The contributions artists offer in the planning profession include new community engagement strategies like hands-on visualization techniques, photography, drawing, and community chalkboards. More importantly, however is their ability to help planners change the way they see their engagement efforts.”
Finding Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School has been beneficial for west central Minnesota. It takes a comprehensive approach to getting children to walk and bike to school. The program’s goal is to make safe routes for children to bike or walk to school. The program was created to reverse the trend of kids getting driven to school, rather than biking or walking.

Three communities in west central Minnesota are in the process of completing SRTS plans, with planning assistance being provided by West Central Initiative (WCI). The communities of Battle Lake, Barnesville, and Perham have been engaged in the process since September and should finish the process in May. As part of this process they have done observations, sent surveys to parents, and had teachers take in-classroom tallies. Most recently all three towns held individual community meetings in which members of the community were invited to an input meeting where they could meet their local Safe Routes to School team members and share their vision for their community.

In addition to WCI’s planning efforts a grant solicitation was recently made available. This grant was open to communities applying for infrastructure, planning, and non-infrastructure implementation and was due on Feb 15th 2013. Several communities applied for grants for everything from sidewalks and trails to signage and lighting. We also had five additional communities apply for a planning grant. The planning grants allow communities to get engaged and really determine what their vision is and start building safe routes from the ground up. This is a great way to engage the community and having a plan also puts these communities a step ahead when it is time to apply for funding for the projects they identify in the plan.

Of course there is so much more to SRTS then just new sidewalks and infrastructure. The 5 E’s highlight a plan that ensures success when implemented together. Education, Encouragement, Engineering, Enforcement, and Evaluation all play a large role in a Safe Routes to School program. Overall, this approach will hopefully make it safe for more children to walk and bike to school.

Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission (Region 6W) – Lindsey Knutson, Transportation/Community Development Planner

In region 6W Safe Routes to School has recently been a very important program for schools and communities interested in walking and biking. The Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission (UMVRDC) is assisting five schools with Safe Routes to School Plans in Appleton, Benson, Dawson, Granite Falls and Madison and has helped the community of Canby write a grant to secure funding for two years to hire a Safe Routes to School Coordinator. Through these efforts to develop SRTS Plans, the schools and communities hope to not only make walking and biking to school safer, but also make it the easy, convenient and fun choice for parents and students.

In the latest round of SRTS funding two of the communities working on SRTS Plans were able to develop infrastructure implementation grant applications to fill in missing sidewalk segments on identified routes to school. If these grants are awarded, it would help complete the sidewalk networks for children walking to school. Additionally, all of the schools in the region worked together to submit a regional grant application to fund an education and encouragement campaign that would allow them to develop marketing and educational materials and purchase incentive prizes for walking and biking encouragement programs.

The SRTS program has seen increased interest among schools and communities in region 6W. Two more schools in the region have applied for the SRTS Planning Assistance grants to complete SRTS Plans. We hope the interest in this important program to help students get to school safely and lead a healthy active lifestyle will continue. This program has enabled the UMVRDC to build stronger relationships with both the schools and communities within the region, but also with MnDOT as well. Through the SRTS planning process, MnDOT has worked closely with all of the Regional Development Organizations throughout the state to provide the SRTS planning expertise in their respective regions.
Cities Working Toward Bike-Friendly Status

PartnerSHIP 4 Health (PS4H) and West Central Initiative (WCI) in partnership with Bicycle Alliance of MN through our Community Transformation Grant sponsored a series of community meetings to promote the benefits that cities can have by being a bike friendly community. Meetings were held in Frazee and Fergus Falls in December.

From these meetings city officials and local residents are coming together to work on advancing biking promotion and infrastructure by applying for Bike Friendly status with the League of American Bicyclists. Applications are due each year in either February or July.

"The purpose is to promote cycling as something that is safe and can help communities," said local certified cycling instructor David Sanderson. "As a former physician, I see a lot of health benefits in cycling." Recently Joe Mahunik and Kayla Rossiter were also certified as Lead Cycling Instructors, building the capacity in our region to provide education about safe and fun bicycling.

To date only 216 communities nationwide have met this prestigious recognition but that is not stopping community members to rally together to move their communities forward.

Even if communities do not meet the criteria they still are winners because the League of American Bicyclists will make detailed recommendations on how to become eligible in the future. The recommendations provide a roadmap for cities to work on to become recognized as Bike Friendly Communities.

In addition, Battle Lake was chosen to be the site for a walkability audit of Battle Lake with Mark Fenton. Mark Fenton is a national public health, planning and transportation consultant, and an adjunct associate professor at Tufts University’s Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy. This was hosted by the Minnesota Department of Transportation and sponsored by Minnesota Department of Health and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota.

Communities across our region are seeing the benefits to health, economic development and many other reasons to support and invest in making their communities more bikeable and walkable.

If you are interested in becoming a Bike Friendly Community please contact the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota at www.bikemn.org.

Patrick Hollister, Active Living Planner, PartnerSHIP 4 Health

Patrick Hollister, Active Living Planner, PartnerSHIP 4 Health
Getting Active in Western MN

West Central Initiative in collaboration with PartnerSHIP 4 Health is working on an Active Transportation Plan for the counties of Becker, Clay, Otter Tail, and Wilkin. The organizations received a Community Transformation Grant (CTG) to write the plan.

The CTG grant comes from the Center for Disease Control and is administered through the Department of Health. Some other regions of Minnesota received a CTG to work on Active Transportation as well. Representatives from these regions met in Duluth in December to plan for our work.

The partnership between West Central Initiative and PartnerSHIP 4 Health is very beneficial because of the roles our organizations play in the region is the main reason we are collaborating. For this plan we have created an Active Transportation Advisory Partnership (ATAP) team comprised of multiple stakeholders from various positions around our four county region.

These team members were strategically selected on a number of criteria including, location within the region, position, the ability to challenge our group, and the ability to bring a particular skill set to our group. The main goal of the ATAP is to work on issues related to active transportation with a focus on disparate populations. Our first item of business will be to create a strategic work plan that details a minimum of the first year of work. The group could identify some additional long range goals which we would also work to accomplish. For the purposes of this grant “long range” refers to 3 years, which is the term of this grant. It is hoped that we can have a variety of initiatives with some quick wins and some on-going projects.

Twins Outing

Spring is right around the corner, and that means APA MN is scheduling the year’s first Twins outing.

APA MN will be going to Target Field on April 25 to see the Twins play the Texas Rangers. But first, there will be a gathering at the Loop Bar at 5:15 p.m. for drinks.

At the Loop, you can pick up your tickets and have a drink and bite to eat prior to the game. As part of the price, APA Minnesota will spring for several appetizers. The ball park is only 4 or 5 blocks from the Loop Bar.

Date: Thursday, April 25, 2013

Time: Gathering at the Loop Bar is at 5:15 pm – first pitch is at 7:10 pm. Cost $15 (this includes ticket and delicious appetizers at the Loop Bar)

Location 606 Washington Ave N (http://www.theloopmpls.com/)

Parking: We always suggest taking transit but if you drive, you are on your own for parking.

Reservations: Reserve your ticket by emailing Lisa Wittman at lwittman@goldenvalleymn.gov

Payment: Checks should be made payable (within one week of your reservation) to APA Minnesota and sent to Lisa Wittman, City of Golden Valley, 7800 Golden Valley Road, Golden Valley, MN 55427

If you have questions, please contact Mark Grimes at 763-593-8095 or mgrimes@goldenvalleymn.gov
Rita Albrecht: From Planning to Politics

Rita Albrecht’s political career began with a firing. Her own.

In 2009, the certified planner lost her job as Bemidji’s community development director, the victim of a combination of budget cuts and city politics. The next year, no longer confined by rules keeping her from holding political office, Albrecht ran for city council. She ran against a longtime incumbent who rarely was opposed – the very person who led the charge to eliminate her job. Albrecht won.

Two years later, she ran for office again, this time for the city’s mayor. She won again, beating one-term incumbent Dave Larson and becoming the city’s first female mayor. She was also a rarity of a different sort: a planner who stepped onto the other side of the council chambers. "I felt that I still had something to offer the city," Albrecht said. "I thought Bemidji needed a mayor who was a much stronger advocate for the community."

The decision was controversial. Supporters periodically brought it up during council meetings, and keeping the position was supported by the local chamber of commerce and the Downtown Development Authority. Many city advocates felt she got a raw deal. Yet it hit Albrecht hard. "That was really devastating and difficult for me," she said.

Planning jobs in small town Minnesota are tough to come by, and Albrecht wasn’t moving. "I was unemployed for 14 months," she said. She ultimately found a job as a planner for the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe.

The Bemidji State University graduate had been a planner for a number of agencies, including the City of Bemidji and the Headwater Regional Development Commission before she became community development director with the city. Albrecht received her AICP certification, getting the experience she needed to get the credentials. "It’s really important for planners to pursue that," she said.

Albrecht worked as the community development director nearly two years until 2009, when then-Gov. Tim Pawlenty used an obscure power of the governor’s office known as "unallotment" to cut $300 million in assistance to local governments. Those cuts reverberated throughout government agencies statewide.

In August that year, the Bemidji City Council voted 4-3 to eliminate the community development director position effective in 2010. Some council members thought that the tasks could be performed by the city manager.
to vote to eliminate her position. Downs had been a longtime member of the council and rarely had run with any opposition. Yet Albrecht won, receiving 54.5 percent of the vote.

Albrecht said that the elimination of her position played a role in her decision to run for council, but not in the way you might think. She was still a city resident, after all, and the city was missing something without having someone on staff responsible for community development. "It was alarming to me that nobody was going to be doing that," she said. "Bemidji is a regional center. It's developing whether people want it to or not."

She joined the council in 2011. The next year, she decided to run for mayor. She won that race with 52.9 percent of the vote. "I'm going to be a good advocate for planning and community development," Albrecht said.

She said there was a misconception on the council as to the amount of legwork that the community development director did to be a true advocate for the city. She said that it may seem to be an easy place to find efficiencies, but it was a job that needed to be done in a regional center like Bemidji.

Albrecht will take skills she developed over the years as a planner for both small towns and regional planning agencies to the mayor's office.

For one thing, she'll be able to provide more specific assistance with the comprehensive plan. But she also has good customer service skills and "an appreciation for the challenging work involved in creating the city."

"The fact that I've worked in the field gives me a good understanding of how important it is for the city to be a partner," she said. Bemidji has a weak mayor system, so she has just one of seven council votes, though the mayor sets the council agenda. But she'll also be able to champion the city and its causes from a far more visible position. "That's the role I like most," she said.

"Policymakers want straightforward answers, honesty and transparency. They don't have to be fearful, if you treat them with respect."

To be sure, she also understands what staff want when they make a presentation before the council, and that coming up to the podium with a proposal can be intimidating. "Policymakers want straightforward answers, honesty and transparency," she said. "They don't have to be fearful, if you treat them with respect."

Today, Albrecht says she holds no animosity toward council members who voted her out of a job. "You've got to move forward if you're going to live in this town," she said. Oddly enough, though, her win and other changes on the council since then have removed much of the opposition there had been to having a community development director on staff.

Could Albrecht revive the position she once held? Maybe, she said, but for now, things are fine. The city is contracting for economic development, and the city's planning organization has stepped up its economic development efforts. Well, that and the fact that the city's mayor IS the former community development director.

"Things are better than they were," she said. "I see Bemidji's growth, with the city manager and the planning organization. I want to add to that."
Minnesota Design Team to Visit Zumbro Falls, Hammond

Since 1983, a well-respected group of over 300 volunteer architects, landscape architects, designers and planners have been helping communities across Minnesota plan their future.

What started as “The Governor’s Design Team” under the defunct Minnesota Planning Agency has now become an accomplished committee within the Minnesota Chapter of the American Institute of Architects with support from the Minnesota Chapter of the American Planning Association, the Minnesota Chapter of the Society of Landscape Architects, the Otto Bremer Foundation and the University of Minnesota’s College of Design.

Each year the Minnesota Design Team sets out to transform two communities in the spring and two communities in the fall during one intense weekend visit.

It all begins when a community, backed by demonstrated, broad-based commitment and letters of support, completes an application. The Steering Committee then selects winning applications and a unique team of two experienced leaders and 12-15 volunteers are assembled based on the community’s needs.

Next, the assembled team descends upon a community over two days to learn the community’s history, current problems, opportunities and dreams for the future through charrettes and community meetings.

The visit culminates with a Saturday night unveiling of a slide show and roughly 20 poster sized drawings and diagrams depicting the teams finished product. All work product is then handed over to the community, serving as a blueprint for their dreams.

Through grassroots volunteerism the Minnesota Design Team has assisted over 100 communities in the past 30 years by establishing common visions for improving communities’ physical and environmental design.

Projects have ranged from helping to update a Comprehensive Plan to addressing highway realignment and from rebuilding after a natural disaster to revitalizing historic districts.

This spring the Minnesota Design Team will be visiting Zumbro Falls and Hammond, located about 20 miles north of Rochester, to assist the roughly 600 community members who are still dealing with the devastating flood in 2010. The team will primarily address the decline in development prior to the flood that was accelerated by the federal buy out of flooded properties.

The Minnesota Chapter of the American Planning Association is a proud contributor to the Minnesota Design Team.

If you are interested in learning more about the Minnesota Design Team or becoming involved, please visit their website at minnesotadesignteam.org.

Team Members can participate in many capacities besides serving on a weekend visit team and the organization also hosts several social events such as retreats, picnics and holiday parties.

Eric Laska

Each year the Minnesota Design Team sets out to transform two communities in the spring and two communities in the fall during one intense weekend.
Health Dept. Address Climate Change

It should not be news anymore that climate change and severe weather events impact human health. When Minnesota average summer temperatures rise, there is an increase in ER visits and hospitalizations for heat-related illnesses. As communities flood with increasing frequency and severity, infrastructure is damaged, people are displaced and water is contaminated, which may result in injuries, stress, depression, and water-borne disease outbreaks.

How a community is designed affects its ability to be resilient to these and other climate changes, and therefore affects population health outcomes. Comprehensive plans and environmental review processes can promote healthy and resilient communities or project designs through a number of common planning strategies and design elements.

In 2010, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) received a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to undertake a number of projects that addressed the health impacts of climate change. Two of the project areas included comprehensive plans and the state environmental review process. The final products of these efforts have recently been released on the MDH “Healthy Places” webpage at http://www.health.state.mn.us/topics/places/index.html.

MDH undertook studies of comprehensive plans from the seven-county Metro Area and environmental assessment documents from across the U.S. to assess the inclusion of health and climate change, and best practices for improving planning. Final reports and tools for planners, including trainings for including health and climate change in both comp plans and the EAW, are posted on the MDH Healthy Places webpage. The comp plan training has a companion How-To Guide that steps through eight specific health goals that can be addressed in plans and outlines 20 standard planning strategies for achieving the health goals.

Kelly Muellman, Planner for the MN Climate and Health Program at MDH, will be giving a Brown Bag on March 13, 2013 from 11:30AM to 1:00PM at Burnsville City Hall on Planning for Healthy, Climate Resilient Communities. For questions regarding MDH’s work, contact health.climatechange@state.mn.us.

Climate Brown Bag

The Minnesota Department of Health and the Minnesota Climate and Health Program is hosting a Brown Bag Lunch this month to discuss how climate change is affecting health.

When: 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Wednesday, March 13
Where: Burnsville City Hall City Council Chambers, 100 Civic Center Parkway, Burnsville, MN 55337

About: The Minnesota Department of Health is concerned how regional and local climate changes, such as temperature and precipitation, are expected to have substantial impacts on public health, including increases in illnesses and death attributed to extreme heat events, extreme weather events, air pollution, vector-borne and other infectious diseases. This Brown Bag will discuss strategies planners can take to make communities resilient and thereby mitigate the negative impacts of climate change.

About the presenter: Kelly Muellman is the planner for the Minnesota climate and Health Program at the Minnesota Department of Health. She has been working at MDH since June 2011. Kelly has a masters in urban planning from the University of Minnesota.

Attendees are welcome to bring their own lunch. RSVP to matthew.parent@co.anoka.mn.us by Tuesday, March 12.
Upper Midwest Planners Conference

On behalf of the Minnesota Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA MN), we are pleased to host this year’s Upper Midwest Planners Conference in Rochester, MN. This year’s conference will take place on September 18 - 20, 2013 at the Rochester Civic Center. We are excited about the opportunity to work with our neighboring chapters to offer a conference program that highlights planning efforts throughout the Midwest. We encourage everyone from the Dakotas, Wisconsin, Iowa, Nebraska, and Illinois to participate in this exciting event.

Conference theme: This year’s conference theme, “Operation: Plan! Prioritizing Community Vitals” takes a playful spin on Rochester’s renowned health industry. More importantly, it provides a foundation for a conference program that emphasizes how communities are tackling their planning needs in a new era.

Request for Proposals: The Conference Planning Committee is pleased to announce that the Request for Proposals process for presenters at the conference has been opened. There are three (3) RFPs: one for standard conference sessions, one for speed planning sessions, and one for mobile tours. The three (3) RFPs are posted on the APA Minnesota website at www.mnapa.com under the Conference page. The deadline for proposal submissions is Friday, March 15, 2013.

The Conference Planning Committee welcomes diverse and compelling proposals for sessions at this year’s conference. The committee has targeted the following subject areas and would like to have a few sessions related to each:

• Innovative Performance Measures and Prioritization Methods
• Planning Fundamentals – Techniques and Applications
• Planning in Ethnically Diverse Communities
• Geographic Diversity (urban, suburban, exurban, rural, etc.) - Case Studies and Best Practices
• Healthy Communities, Healthy Landscapes
• Innovative Technical Applications in Planning

More information about the conference and proposal submissions can be found at www.mnapa.com under the Conference page. Please contact Dan Edgerton (dedgerton@hrgreen.com | 651-659-7726) with questions.

Broadband Survey

As a follow-up to the American Planning Association, Planning Advisory Report #569 – “Planning for Broadband: Infrastructure, Policy, and Sustainability”, we are conducting a survey of planning professionals to assess the integration of broadband strategies in local planning documents. The survey takes less than five minutes. The results will be presented at the national conference in April. We are seeking participation from all sizes and types of planning agencies. We encourage you to take the survey whether or not your agency has engaged in any broadband planning activity.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/72GN8KZ

Kathleen McMahon, AIP – Applied Communications, LLC
Ronald L. Thomas, FAICP – University of Georgia
Charles Kaylor, Temple University

Award Time

It is almost time to submit nominations for the 2013 APA-MN awards! All the award winners will be honored during the 2013 conference in Rochester during a lunch time presentation, in the program and will have display boards highlighting the projects in the exhibit hall. Below is the list of 2013 award categories:

• Excellence in Community Engagement.
• Success Stories in Implementation.
• Planning in Context.
• Partnerships in Planning.
• Individual Lifetime Achievement.
• Outstanding Student Project.
• Gunner Isberg Student Scholarship ($2,000)

Watch for further information coming in April about criteria for each award and how to submit nominations. In the meantime, if you have questions please contact Lyssa Leitner, the Awards Committee Chair at Lyssa.Leitner@co.washington.mn.us. The 2013 Awards Committee is excited to honor all of the great Minnesota planning projects!
The Minnesota Legislature has been in session since January 8. Governor Mark Dayton is proposing changes to spending and revenues. The governor has proposed changes to sales, income, corporate, and property taxes, along with Local Government Aid changes. The sales tax provisions include broadening the base at a lower state rate. The proposal also includes adding sales taxes to:
- Management consulting services - e.g. administrative management consulting services, human resources consulting services, marketing consulting services, environmental consulting services, scientific and technical consulting services, scientific research and development services.
- Other consulting and development services - e.g. environmental, sanitation, site remediation, safety, economic, security, and other consulting services.

The complete summaries for the tax changes are located at:
http://www.revenue.state.mn.us/local_gov/prop_tax_admin/Pages/Governors-Proposed-Budget-for-LGA-and-CPA.aspx and http://www.revenue.state.mn.us/tax_reform/Pages/Tax-Reform.aspx

Meanwhile, the Legislative Committee has identified several bills that may be of interest to APA members. A more complete tracking list is available at the Legislative Committee’s webpage. The following are updates on bills and recent actions on bills that the Committee thinks may have broader significance to planning and planners in Minnesota. Information about these bills are organized by general subject areas. The 2013 session is schedule to continue into May and you will be updated as new information is obtained and evaluated.

The Legislative Committee will be hosting a “Day at the Capitol” event on March 20th. Watch your email and the Legislative Committee web page for more information!

Environment and Energy

HF 66/SF 113: The bill uses recommendations that were developed by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources’ Drainage Work Group. The bill amends the definition of the term “board” for purposes of drainage law to include a joint county board, the board of managers of a watershed district, or a watershed management organization to provide clarification of roles when those entities are acting as drainage authorities. It also updates and makes technical corrections to the statutes. HF 66 unanimously passed the House floor on February 14. As of February 14, SF 113 has cleared the Jobs, Agriculture and Rural Development and the Environment and Energy committees and is on the Senate Floor.

HF 190/SF 203: The bill changes the state’s large wind energy conversion system siting provisions and modifies county enactment authority. Section 216B.1691, subdivision 2b is amended by adding new language directing the public utilities commission to also consider "the availability of suitable sites for the location of eligible energy technology facilities, considering local land use restrictions" when deciding whether or not to modify or delay the requirement of a utility to comply with the state’s "Renewable Energy Standard" for electric generation. This provision is similar to one that was contained in HF 3254, as introduced by Representative Kelly and Representative Drazkowski in 2010. HF 190/SF 203 also amends section 216F.081 that permits a county to adopt by "official controls" by ordinance that restrict the siting of Large Wind Energy Conversion Systems (LWECS) that are more stringent than standards in public utilities commission rules or permit standards, including prohibition of LWECS in districts established by zoning ordinances as provided in chapter 394. The bill also directs the PUC to consider and apply the county’s more stringent official controls, unless the commission finds good cause not to apply the official controls. The definition of “official controls” tracks the definition used in section 394.22, subdivision 6.

HF583 adds a new subdivision to section 103B.101 which requires the BWSR to work with state and federal agencies, academic institutions, local government, and other stakeholders to provide recommendations for standardized water quality and soil conservation.
Legislative Update (cont.)

protection and improvement projects. The bill also includes provisions for the BWSR to develop a work group to develop related information, education, and recommendations. The bill is scheduled to be heard in the Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee on February 19. This change to statute is also contained in HF613, which is summarized below.

HF613 modifies the BWSR’s authority; local levy authority; the disposition of funds; and soil loss ordinance provisions. HF 613 does not yet have a companion. The House File, as introduced, amends sections 103B.101, by adding a subdivision; 103B.335; 103B.3369, subdivision 5; 103C.501, subdivision 4; and section103F.405, subdivision 1. Section 103B.101, is amended by adding a subdivision which requires BWSR to “work with state and federal agencies, academic institutions, local governments, practitioners, and stakeholders to foster mutual understanding and provide recommendations for standardized specifications for water quality and soil conservation protection and improvement practices and projects. The board may convene working groups or work teams to develop information, education, and recommendations”. Along with other provisions, the bill amends section 103F.405, subdivision 1, by correcting a reference to the USDA’s Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The amended subdivision also allows soil loss ordinances to be developed using the soil loss tolerance for each soil series described in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide, or “another method approved by the Board of Water and Soil Resources.” Section 103F.405, subdivision 1also expands the range of plans that are used to adopt soil loss ordinances to include a local water management plan or may also include a comprehensive plan or watershed management plan, “developed or amended, adopted and approved, according to chapter 103B, 103C, or 103D”. The bill is scheduled to be heard in the Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee on February 19.

HF614 amends section 103B.102 by extending the five year review period given to BWSR to evaluate a local water management organization’s planning progress. The bill is scheduled to be heard in the Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee on February 19.

HF436 amends section 116.182, subdivision 5 by adding criteria and evaluation points to wastewater projects that apply for Public Facilities Authority financial assistance to be given to projects that use wastewater. The criteria to wastewater treatment system projects include: (1) 15 points shall be assigned to projects that will treat wastewater for reuse in cases where a user has committed, in writing, to using the wastewater; and (2) ten points shall be assigned to projects that will treat wastewater for reuse in cases where a user for the wastewater has not been established. The bill has been placed on the agenda for a hearing in the Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee on February 20.

HF 254/ SF 190 abolishes Xcel Energy’s nuclear power plant certificate of need prohibition. The bill is identical to a bill that was considered in the 87th Legislature.

HF 306/ SF 97 abolishes Minnesota’s 2025 renewable energy standards; repeals the renewable energy objectives eligible energy technology standard, modification or delay of standard, and the requirements of the use of an integrated resource planning process for utility planning.

Economic Development and Housing
HF 350/ SF 212: The bill removes the expiration date for the authority of a city to establish a new special service district or a housing improvement area by repealing the sections of statute that provide for the authority set to expire June 30, 2013. HF 350 passed the Government Operations Committee and was re-referred to the Housing Finance and Policy Committee. SF 212 is scheduled for a hearing in the Committee on State and Local Government Committee on February 18. A summary of the existing special service district and housing improvement district statutes may be located online at:

HF 27: Mortgage lenders who have foreclosed on real estate within a city are required to deed the property...
Legislative Update (cont.)

to city in which it is located upon completion of foreclosure. The, city is permitted to charge the lender for repair or demolition costs, and the lender is required to pay for the charges. (The bill proposes coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 582.)

HF 3/SF 54 and HF125: These bills provide that $15,000,000 in fiscal year 2014 and $15,000,000 in fiscal year 2015 are appropriated from the general fund to the commissioner of employment and economic development for the Minnesota investment fund under Minnesota Statutes, section 116J.8731.

HF 205/SF 13: The bill renews the deed registration tax in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties, allowing for continued funding of the Environmental Response Fund.

HF 4/SF 128 and HF124: These bills provide that $2,500,000 in fiscal year 2014 and $2,500,000 in fiscal year 2015 are appropriated from the general fund to the commissioner of employment and economic development for the Minnesota Trade Office. The trade office must enhance its activities to identify and increase export opportunities for Minnesota products and services, including agricultural products.

HF 409/SF 343: The “Mayo Clinic” development proposal amends sections 272.02, subdivision 39; 469.174, subdivision 8; 469.176, subdivisions 1b, 4c; proposes coding for new law in chapter 469. The bill establishes a medical center development authority and provides for its organization, powers, and duties; provides for medical center development districts; authorizing the issuance of revenue obligations by the authority; authorizing city bonds; authorizes state assistance; and provides for tax increment financing within a medical center development district. The bill provides for appropriation authority in each state fiscal year, beginning in fiscal year 2016 to and including fiscal year 2049. The commissioner of management and budget is directed to transfer to the authority the amount of debt service for the state fiscal year on outstanding authority bonds issued pursuant to section 469.50, subdivision 5, clause plus operating and administrative expense of the authority.

Eminent Domain

HF 78 limits cities’ eminent domain power outside of city jurisdictional limits. This is similar to a bill introduced in the 87th Legislature.

HF 338/ SF 183 modifies Minnesota’s “buy the farm” eminent domain options, public service corporation utility appraisal fee awards, and contiguous land power of condemnation requirements. On February 12, the House Energy Policy Committee took testimony but no action was taken on the bill. The author indicated the bill is intended to clarify the legislature’s original intent regarding the “buy the farm” statutory provisions during a power line siting conflict in the 1970s. A summary of the House Energy Policy Committee meeting is available online at http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hinfo/sessiondaily.asp?storyid=3374.

One aspect of the bill amends section 117.189 by removing the maximum award amount of $1,500 for appraisal fees that are allowed to be awarded to landowners for all types of public service corporation projects. The bill’s removal of appraisal award limitations as drafted uses the definition of public service corporation used by local governments and also under section 117.025, where it “also means a municipality or public corporation when operating an airport under chapter 360 or 473, a common carrier, a watershed district, or a drainage authority.”

Litigation was brought before a district court. The by the CapX 2020 utilities challenged a district court’s ruling that held landowners are entitled to minimum compensation and relocation benefits under chapter 117. The Minnesota Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the utilities and the decision is now on appeal to the Minnesota Supreme Court by the landowners (See Case Number A11-1116). Question posed to the courts are:

I. Does a landowner become eligible for minimum compensation under Minn.Stat. § 117.187 by making a Buy-the-Farm election under Minn.Stat. § 216E.12, subd. 4?

II. Does a landowner become eligible for relocation benefits under Minn.Stat. § 117.52 by making a Buy-the-Farm election under Minn.Stat. § 216E.12, subd. 4?

Transportation
On February 21, the House Transportation Finance Committee is scheduled to receive a presentation of the Minnesota Department of Transportation’s State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

HF 272/SF 178: $10,000,000 is appropriated from the bond proceeds fund to the commissioner of transportation for purposes of the port development assistance program under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 457A. Any improvements made with the proceeds of these grants must be publicly owned.

HF 617: The bill authorizes the designation and use of transit improvement districts. The bill amends section 469.174 by adding a transit improvement district subdivision to tax increment financing provisions under chapter 469’s economic development statutes. The district must be for qualified development activities that have the nearest boundary of each parcel of the district lies within one-half mile of a qualifying transit line.

HF 202/SF 282: The bill authorizes local authorities to establish a speed limit, by resolution, on a street or highway under its jurisdiction if “(1) the local authority passes a resolution, following a public hearing, identifying the segment of street or highway for which an adjusted speed limit is proposed to be established; (2) the local authority transmits a copy of the resolution to the commissioner for review and comment; (3) the commissioner has performed an engineering and traffic investigation; and (4) the speed limit being established is no greater than ten miles per hour above or below the speed limit recommended in the engineering and traffic investigation.” The bill also states that the “commissioner shall perform an engineering and traffic investigation upon request of a local authority.” Under the bill, a “speed limit being established… does not require the consent of the commissioner.”

HF 123: The bill requires MnDOT to regularly review property that was obtained for transportation projects but not used for implementing the project. Typically, MnDOT obtains temporary or permanent easements as well as landowner uneconomic remnants to construct transportation projects. Disposals involve contacting appropriate public agencies with jurisdiction before properties are removed from the inventory. The bill requires MnDOT to review the “surplus” properties regularly in order to impose a higher agency priority and attract additional revenue for the state. In the 87th Legislature, a bill was considered that would have required MnDOT and other public agencies to offer to discharge portions of easements that were obtained by eminent domain but not used for the projects. HF 123 has passed the Transportation Policy Committee and was re-referred to the Transportation Finance Committee for possible inclusion in the omnibus transportation finance bill.

HF 332/SF 174: removes the prohibitions on the Dan Patch commuter rail line between Northfield and Minneapolis by repealing Laws 2002, chapter 393, section 85.

HF 272/SF 178: $10,000,000 is appropriated from the bond proceeds fund to the commissioner of transportation for purposes of the port development assistance program under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 457A. Any improvements made with the proceeds of these grants must be publicly owned.

HF 402/SF 257 and HF 401/SF 258: The two bills provide for a combined total of $155,000,000 in appropriations from the bond proceeds fund to the Metropolitan Council for environmental studies and preliminary engineering, to acquire real property, or interests in real property, and to design and construct the Southwest Corridor light rail transit line from the Hiawatha light rail transit line in downtown Minneapolis to Eden Prairie.
Upcoming Events

Planner’s Day at the Capitol
When: Wednesday, March 20, 10 a.m.
Where: State Office Building (the House offices next to the capitol)

Save the date! The 2013 Annual Planner’s Day at the Capitol program is scheduled for Wednesday, March 20, at 10 a.m. in the State Office Building, the House offices next to the capitol building. The program will include a House Government Operations Committee hearing, meetings with legislators, and a policy briefing from the APA.

CM Law Credits will be available and the Chapter will provide lunch. A social gathering is also being planned following the morning and afternoon programs. A flier will be sent out soon with additional details.

Unsustainable Economic Growth
When: Thursday, March 7, 4 p.m.
Where: Dorsey & Whitney, 50 S. 6th Street, 15th Floor, Minnesota Room, Minneapolis

The Urban Land Institute of Minnesota is presenting “Kicking the Habit: Unsustainable Economic Growth.” Charles Marohn, PE AICP, executive director of Strong Towns, will give a candid talk about the future of America’s cities, towns and neighborhoods. Topics will include why cities are short of resources, why we struggle to maintain basic infrastructure, and what can be done now that the economy has changed. Marohn’s presentation has been called a “stunning game changer” for communities looking to be resilient and have prosperous growth during changing times.

He will focus on these three themes: the current path cities are pursuing is not financially stable; the future for most cities will not resemble the recent past, and the main determinant of future prosperity for cities will be local leaders’ ability to transform their communities.

Strong Towns is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization focused on the root of systemic problems facing our communities.

The registration fee is $45, $35 for members and $10 for students. CRE and AICP credits have been applied for.

Click here to register. Or call 1 800 321-5011. The event code is 8117-1385.

Brownfields Information Session
When: Tuesday, March 12
Where: Eagan

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and the Metropolitan Council will host an information session on Tuesday, March 12 in Eagan on how to get public financing for cleaning up contamination on redevelopment sites. Nearly $8 million will be available for brownfield cleanup in May. Advanced preparation is a key to grant writing success. The cleanup funding is awarded through a competitive grant program awarded to cities, counties and development authorities that partner with private developers on specific real estate development projects.

The information is intended for local government officials, community development professionals, private commercial/industrial developers and housing developers, environmental consultants and architects working on redevelopment sites with significant amounts of:

- Petroleum contamination;
- Groundwater contamination;
- Soil contamination;
- Asbestos and other hazardous materials.

Following is a link to the event with more details: http://www.metrocouncil.org/services/livcomm/TBRAWorkshopMarch2013.htm
Job Opportunities

Request for Proposals - TCAAP AUAR, Master Plan, and Regulations & Policies

Hiring Agency: City of Arden Hills
Web Link: www.cityofardenhills.org/tcaapmasterplan
Deadline: Noon on March 15, 2013

Job Description
PLANNING SERVICES. Arden Hills has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an Alternative Urban Area Review (AUAR), Master Plan, and Regulations & Policies for the TCAAP site. The RFP is posted on the City's website. A pre-proposal meeting will be held on February 21, 2013 at 10:00 am at Arden Hills City Hall.

Application Instructions:
Questions regarding the RFP may be submitted via e-mail to Jill Hutmacher at jhutmacher@cityofardenhills.org no later than noon on February 15. Written responses to all questions will be distributed at the pre-proposal meeting and posted on the City's website. Additional information about the project can be found in the RFP document.

Job Title: Transportation Planner

Hiring Agency: City of Edina
Web Link: http://www.EdinaMn.gov
Deadline: Saturday, March 03, 2013
Salary Range: $65,095 - $81,369

Job Description
The Transportation Planner serves as the administrator for the Living Streets program and Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety (PACS) fund in the creation, maintenance and improvement of non-motorized transportation facilities for the primary benefit of pedestrians and cyclists in Edina. Assists the Engineering Department in the planning and design of traffic operations within the City. Directly supervises the Traffic Safety Coordinator.

Application Instructions:
Apply online to the City of Edina's website http://www.EdinaMn.gov

Job Title: Planner/Zoning Inspector

Hiring Agency: City of Onalaska
Web Link: www.cityofonalaska.com
Deadline: Friday, March 8, 2013
Salary Range: $44,671 - $47,299

Job Description
Under the direction of the Land Use and Development Director, this position is responsible for the enforcement of municipal ordinances pertaining to nuisance and property maintenance, and will assist with the enforcement of municipal ordinances pertaining to zoning and development. This position will assist with the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and long range plans for the City which includes a range of and degree of responsibility over urban planning projects. Work is performed according to established guidelines and the verbal and written instructions of an immediate supervisor, and is reviewed for accuracy and adherence to established procedure by the supervisor.

Essential Job Functions:
Any one position may not include all the duties listed, nor do the examples listed include all the duties that may be found in this position.
- Enforces municipal ordinances pertaining to nuisances & property maintenance; composes and sends correspondence to individuals in response to complaints and ordinance violations.
- Develops and maintains a consistent system of ordinance compliance report organization utilizing ArcGIS and INCODE (the municipal permit tracking software); maintains data through photography and report writing.
- Serves as a liaison between the public and the City regarding ordinance violations and ordinance enforcement.
- Inspects new development for compliance with conditions of approval; assists developers in achieving compliance; assists with erosion control enforcement and inspections
- Attends Municipal Court as needed to support violation documentation.
- Assists committees and staff to develop policies and procedures to improve the overall maintenance and appearance of properties in the City.
- Develops outreach activities to inform public and City Council of the City’s Property Maintenance activities.
- Assists with updates to municipal ordinances, including research and developing recommendations for ordinance updates.
- Assists with the enforcement of the zoning ordinance including inspections, follow-up on complaints, and preparation of documentation of ordinance violations; may assist inspection staff with non-technical inspections.
- Assists in the administration and interpretation of the zoning ordinance.
- Assists in reviewing site plans, certified survey maps, subdivision plats, planned unit developments, rezonings, conditional use permits, an-
nexations, sign permits, and home occupations.

- Works with customers, property owners, and developers on inquiries pertaining to development, the zoning ordinance, and urban planning projects.
- Assists with the development of the City’s GIS (Geographic Information System) and maps to support planning activities.
- Provides staffing assistance for City committees (i.e., Historic Preservation Commission, Long Range Planning Committee) as assigned.
- Assists with updates to the City’s Comprehensive Plan; departmental website; and may assist with implementation of the City’s Urban Forestry Plan.
- Works with partner organizations (i.e., the DOT, the School District) to develop recommendations for transportation and trail corridor projects.
- Develops educational brochures and outreach activities to inform the public and City Council of municipal projects and City regulations.
- Prepares grant applications for financial assistance from federal, state, local and private agencies. Assists with implementation of grants.

Related Job Functions

- Acts as a member of the City’s Emergency Operation Team and is responsible for emergency management tasks as assigned.
- Assists with economic development activities; researches and implements sustainability initiatives in urban planning projects; assists with the implementation of long-range City plans (i.e., the waterfront master plan, the downtown redevelopment plan).
- Coordinate and manage urban planning projects as assigned.
- Other duties as requested or assigned.

Knowledge, Skills & Abilities

- Knowledge of the comprehensive planning process as it is conducted at the local level.
- Knowledge of enforcement of variances, ordinances, conditional use permits, and set back requirements preferred.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with businesses, developers, property owners, citizens, and elected officials; ability to communicate effectively.
- Ability to present facts and ideas effectively to small and large groups; ability to prepare a variety of documents such as reports, maps, charts, spreadsheets, graphs, and grant applications.
- Ability to maintain a professional demeanor, calmly approach and solve problems under stressful circumstances, maintain and promote harmony in the workplace, concentrate for extended periods of time, and be flexible.
- Excellent organizational skills including the ability to work on multiple tasks and projects and to work independently; excellent oral and written communication skills.
- Experience with ArcMap or related GIS software.
- Ability to understand maps, site plans, legal descriptions, blueprints, utility, and basic construction.
- Ability to operate a variety of equipment and tools such as computers, printers, copy machines and other such equipment.

Training, Experience & Other Requirements

- Bachelor’s degree in landscape architecture, planning, geography, architecture, public management, or related field required.
- Two (2) to four (4) years experience in municipal planning or an equivalent combination of education and experience.
- AICP Certification (American Institute of Certified Planners) or other comparable professional certification is preferred. Progress towards the attainment of the AICP Certification or other comparable profession certification is looked upon favorably.
- Experience in urban planning, long and short range planning, zoning/code enforcement, housing maintenance/basic construction, and working with municipal government.
- Valid Wisconsin Motor vehicle operator license.
- Wisconsin Erosion Control certification is preferred.

Physical Requirements:

- Physically able to observe field conditions, negotiate slopes, and terrain.
- Physically able to operate digital camera and surveying equipment.
- Ability to lift/carry objects of varying sizes and weights up to fifty (50) pounds.
- Work is done in varying weather conditions from extreme heat to cold temperatures.
- Percentages of time sitting, standing, walking, and driving may vary depending on the task performed and the time of year.

Application Instructions:

Application materials may be obtained from the City of Onalaska Human Resources office, 415 Main Street, Onalaska, WI 54650; (608) 781-9530; or from the City of Onalaska website at http://www.cityofonalaska.com.
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