



By Sharon Grewal, AICP, Northern Section Director



We are beginning the year with significant change in Washington, but I believe we at the local level have the greatest impact in shaping our communities. In these challenging times, we, the planning community, have the opportunity to be a force for good and a force for change. We must be that change, involved in and committed to improving our communities.

During the Northern Section Retreat January 21st, your Board reflected on new ways we can engage our planning community and build coalitions with local organizations. As Section Director, I also have the privilege of representing the Northern Section on the California Chapter Board and look forward to bringing you great ideas from the Chapter Retreats.

In 2016, our Section hosted numerous events, offered you a total of 72.75 AICP | CM credits, awarded four Awards of Merit and eight Awards of Excellence, raised funds for California Planning Foundation (CPF) scholarships, and launched a revamped mentorship program with 200 members.

We plan to continue our programming and build on it in 2017. We are enhancing our Awards program, developing a Planning Commissioner Training program, adjusting for the new AICP exam, traveling to Southeast Asia with our International Planning Program (individuals pay their way), partnering with the California Planning Roundtable (CPR) to provide core professional skills training, renovating our website and adding mobile features, and offering more educational and network opportunities throughout our geographic area for professionals at all levels of experience.

Northern Section's Awards Program

In our corner of the world, the most prestigious means of acknowledging extraordinary planning work and devoted professionals is through Northern Section's Awards Program. We enhanced this year's program by simplifying the Section application process and adding new Local Awards categories: Planning and Health; Social and Environmental Justice; Planning and Food Systems; Great Places and Emerging Planner. Nominations for Section Awards are now open. See for details or go to <https://norcalapa.org/programs/awards>.

New partnerships

Northern Section is also excited to announce new partnerships with SPUR and the Urban Land Institute, ULI. These valuable partnerships offer an exchange of information and ideas and an opportunity to network with other professionals in related fields with whom we engage and collaborate in our work.



We continue our longstanding partnership with the Association of Environmental Planners (AEP) by co-sponsoring social and networking opportunities in the North Bay and San Francisco.

Our Section also continues to pursue partnerships with other agencies and local organizations to promote planning and build strong connections. If you know of organizations that would be interested in partnering with local APA, please contact me at director@norcalapa.org.