

API Council Strategic Plan

Background:

In developing a Strategic Plan for the Atlantic Planners Institute which will guide activities of the Council and the members activities, the following SWOT assessment helps us better understand our current situation.

Strengths:

- Individually, the numbers of planners within each Province are few. Together, the numbers of planners practicing regionally are a force to be reckoned with.
- There is so much to recognize in the Atlantic Planners Institute: The experience and background of the planners in the Atlantic Provinces is diverse and brings a wealth of knowledge to the organization.
- Planners are at the forefront of many issues and have knowledge in a broad range of current topics (sustainable development, climate change, etc.)
- The Atlantic Planners Institute stages excellent annual conferences.
- The organization itself operates very efficiently.

Weaknesses:

- Geography is our foe. It is difficult to meet regularly and frequently, given time and travel obstacles. Being widely dispersed over a large region means that planners do not always see how much in common they have with their more far-flung colleagues.
- The planning profession itself has a low profile, with many people being unaware of what exactly planners do on a day-to-day basis. In only two of the Atlantic provinces (New Brunswick and Nova Scotia) do planners have legal standing.
- API's relationship with the Canadian Institute of Planners, the national association, is not well-defined or understood.
- The relatively small number of planners in our affiliate means that some people take on many jobs within the Institute which leads to volunteer burnout.
- Two of our four provinces do not provide any legal standing for planners.
- As professionals who have a significant influence on community development, we have no over-riding policy to include sustainability considerations in our decision-making.

Opportunities:

- A strategic plan can provide direction to API Council and the services it provides to the membership.
- Dalhousie University has a planning school with new planners graduating every year. There is an opportunity to build on the linkages that are available to us, through joint projects, teaching opportunities and others.
- Planning for the Future offers a chance to mentor Candidate members, building more links between members. It is an opportunity to share wisdom and experience in exchange for fresh ideas and perspectives.
- The media in the Atlantic Provinces are always looking for story ideas. By being proactive in offering stories, rather than reactive, in responding to crises, the Atlantic Planners Institute has an opportunity to raise the profile of planners amongst the general public on issues of particular concern (i.e., Climate Change).
- Planning for the Future, the initiative underway by CIP, will provide opportunity for API to work with each branch to change how we related to the membership.
- Planners can and should be at the forefront of helping make our communities more sustainable through existing tools (planning regulations), and future opportunities.

Threats:

- Disagreements about how the Atlantic Planners' Institute is structured and its distribution of funds exist among the branches.
- Many members do not see any value in the Atlantic Planners Institute or the benefits of membership.

API Vision Statement:

The Atlantic Planners Institute provides quality services to its members and takes the leadership in the Atlantic provinces in promoting the profession.

API Mission Statement:

Our mission is to serve as a strong, united voice for planners in Atlantic Canada, working to represent their unique views to the Canadian Institute of Planners, members of the planning profession and the public. The Atlantic Planners Institute is to help the member branches (New Brunswick Association of Planners, Licensed Professional Planners Association of Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador Branch of the Atlantic Planners Institute and the Prince Edward Island Association of Planners) in promoting the role and value of professional planners as they help to define our rural and urban environments.

API Corporate Values:

The Atlantic Planners Institute aims to operate with the highest standards of respect, professionalism, and ethics in its relationships with its branches, its members, the Canadian Institute of Planners, other professionals and the public.

API 2011-2016 Strategic Actions

API Council has identified 4 broad categories for our Strategic Initiatives. These are:

- 1) Communication
- 2) Collaboration
- 3) Capacity Building
- 4) Initiation (tools and resources)

Each of these are addressed in detail below.

Action 1: Communication

Objective	Action Items	Lead	Timing
1.1 Build public profile of API and planners in general	<p>1.1a Develop and launch an API integrated website.</p> <p>1.1b Work with a consultant to produce communications materials such as pamphlets, YouTube videos, and radio ads directed at promoting the Atlantic Planners Institute and the planning profession in Atlantic Canada and highlighting the Sustainable Planning and Development to public in general and to young audiences in particular.</p>	<p>Website Committee branches</p> <p>Ad hoc Communications Committee</p>	<p>June 2011</p> <p>March 2013</p>
1.2 Improve membership recruitment and retention	<p>1.2a Develop a strategy for recruitment and retention methods to be used by the Atlantic Planners Institute to increase its membership.</p> <p>1.2b Work with CIP to implement Planning for the Future.</p> <p>1.2c. Support provincial branches to develop and review legislation for professional recognition.</p>	<p>Membership Committee</p> <p>Council</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
1.3 Facilitate the exchange of information and knowledge between API members and other planning academics, associations and organizations on current topics.	<p>1.3a Identify best practices on sustainable community development initiatives to share with members (potentially through new website)</p> <p>1.3b Ensure widespread sharing of CIP's www.planningforclimatechange.ca website.</p>	<p>Members at large</p> <p>CIP and members</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Action 2: Collaboration

Objective	Action Items	Lead	Timing
2.1 Build a strong relationship with the Dalhousie University School of Planning	2.1a Fulfill obligations to Dalhousie Planning School by creating a new entrance scholarship for planning students (3 year commitment of \$2000 each year) 2.1b Collaborate with LPPANS to formalize the mentorship program. 2.1c Consider best options for leading renewed relations with Dalhousie (special committee, or delegation to LPPANS) 2.1d Work collaboratively to integrate the CIP climate change work into graduate and undergraduate curriculum. 2.1e Create lunch-and-learns with students and API members to share details of being a planning professional	API Council and Dal Planning Director LPPANS Council CIP/API and Dalhousie faculty API Student rep and LPPANS rep.	March 2011 Ongoing July 2011 2012 Fall 2011
2.2 Build better relationship with CIP, the affiliates and the members	2.2a Provide CPL links of other affiliate activities 2.2b Invite other affiliates to annual conferences. 2.2c Participate in CIP initiatives that result in extended networking activities with representatives from other affiliates. 2.2d Provide examples on the API website of best practices in key areas of planning.	CPL committee API branch conference committees API representatives on committees API members, website committee	2011 Ongoing Ongoing Once website is established.
2.3 Work with other professional organizations to address challenges surrounding sustainability issues.	2.3a Host joint conferences on sustainable development topics.	Members at large	Ongoing
2.4 Encourage collaborative approaches to planning at all levels as a key aspect of sustainable development and planning.	2.4a Develop CPL opportunities on collaborative planning. 2.4b Gather best-practices on collaborative planning from members and post on API website. 2.4c Nominate collaborative planning processes for Planning Excellence Awards.	Members at large	Ongoing

Action 3: Capacity Building Opportunities

Objective	Action Items	Lead	Timing
3.1 Create broad opportunities for continuous professional learning for API membership	<p>3.1a Research formal and informal learning opportunities for members used in other affiliates.</p> <p>3.1b Work with branch executives to identify topical CPL opportunities for local members.</p> <p>3.1c Develop a calendar of events on the new API website that allows individuals to upload event listings.</p> <p>3.1d Encourage branch executives to send out regular announcements of CPL opportunities provided by a range of providers (not just API events).</p> <p>3.1c Encourage branch executives to share CPL opportunities in region through API Council members.</p>	<p>Continuous Professional Learning Committee</p> <p>Website committee</p> <p>API Council members</p> <p>API Council</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>June 2011</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
3.2 Create a Centre of Excellence – showcasing and promoting planning practice	<p>3.2a Establish a special committee to lead development of a Centre for Planning Excellence.</p> <p>3.2b Develop a plan to establish a Centre for Planning Excellence that will promote innovative or cutting edge planning approaches, technologies or tools.</p>	Special Committee	June 2012
3.3 Integrate sustainability thinking within training opportunities.	<p>3.3a Develop, introduce and provide Tools and Resources to members in the areas of “Understanding”, “Planning” and “Implementing” sustainability</p> <p>3.3b Develop and organize Webinar, Debate Sessions and online workshop in various aspects to sustainability, climate change and other key topics.</p>	<p>API members</p> <p>CPL and website committees, members at large</p>	June 2012

Action 4: Initiation

Objective	Action Items	Lead	Timing
4.1 Improve API Administration and Operation	4.1a Create a privacy policy 4.1b Develop an internal policy manual 4.1c Create a workplan for the Executive Director 4.1d Review this strategic plan to assess implementation, successes and failure.	API Exec. Dir. API Exec. Dir. Council	September 2011 Dec. 2011 Dec. 2011 2016
4.2 Share Climate Change Learnings	4.2a Deliver 2-day climate change module at least two times in region 4.2b Deliver 2-hour introductory session in each branch at least once. 4.2b Provide up-to-date information as possible to membership.	Council and trainers Members Members at large	December 2011 December 2011 Ongoing
4.3 Integrate Sustainability concepts in all API undertakings	4.3a Develop a Sustainability Policy for API 4.3b Circulate for feedback among API members and branches. 4.3c Approve API Sustainability Policy 4.3c Create and issue a Report Card to monitor how well this policy is being implemented on a yearly basis by API Council 4.3d Create a report card for members to determine how well the sustainability policy is being implemented in their daily work.	Council Exec. Director Council Council New Sustainability committee?	April 2011 June 2011 July 2011 March 2012 March 2012
4.4 Recognize contributions of members to creating a more sustainable world	4.4a Include in its newly launched Planning Excellence Awards a component to recognize "Sustainability Initiative" employed by API members.	Planning Excellence Committee	March 2012