

2025 API Conference - Call for Proposals

The 2025 Annual Conference of the Atlantic Planners Institute (API) will be held **October 22nd to 24th, 2025** at the eastern edge of the Atlantic provinces in the colourful city of St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. To help us create an educational and memorable experience for all attendees, we are pleased to invite submissions for inclusion in the conference program.

Please take time to read the following Call for Proposals package to gain a better understanding of the conference and what the API Conference Committee will be looking for while reviewing proposals. We hope you can join us in St. John's as we reflect on our progress and prepare to weather the storm into the next 100 years of planning in Atlantic Canada.

The Conference Theme - Weathering the Storm

The theme for the 2025 API Conference is inspired by recent challenges experienced by planners across the Atlantic provinces and the country. Between climate change impacts, social discord, the spread of misinformation, a housing crisis, and the aftermath of a global pandemic, it's been a tough few years in the planning profession. How does planning and the work we do address these challenges?

It's often during the storm that we see creative and practical solutions arise. Whether it's an emphasis on community engagement during a municipal plan review, or a drastic change in policies to encourage housing construction, the planning profession adapts to challenges in order to meet the needs of our communities. Come learn how your colleagues are weathering their storms, on an island known for its wild weather!

Conference Subthemes

The following subthemes have been identified to help focus proposals and highlight challenges the Committee believes to be topical or specifically relevant at this time. The Conference Committee will be looking for presentations in these themes that go beyond a simple "show and tell" format and display innovation in planning theory and practice. While submissions on the themes listed will be given priority, other topics may also be submitted.

The subthemes include:

Navigating a Housing Crisis & Unprecedented Growth

Communities across Atlantic Canada have been exploring ways to tackle the headwinds of the housing crisis and quickly manage unprecedented population growth. Navigating these headwinds has brought several challenges to the forefront including affordability and the delivery of services and infrastructure. This subtheme is intended to focus on the innovations and responses to the housing crisis and managing growth.

Not intended as a prescriptive list, possible topics to be considered in this sub-theme include:

- Housing policy and implementation strategies to address demand (e.g. approaches/results through the Housing Accelerator Fund)

- Affordability and the housing continuum (e.g. encampments, homelessness, transitional housing, supportive housing, etc.)
- Housing needs for immigration and newcomers
- Challenges and opportunities with intensification (both in rural and urban communities)
- Innovative approaches to housing and neighbourhood design
- Balancing growth with infrastructure needs (e.g. approaches with Canadian Housing Infrastructure Fund)
- Context specific solutions and removing barriers to meet housing demand

Adjusting the Sails & Adapting to Change

With significant winds of change, from climate change to foggy economic futures, communities and planners have needed to become more nimble and responsive. This subtheme is intended to focus on planning for change, adapting to change, and raising resiliency.

Not intended as a prescriptive list, possible topics to be considered in this sub-theme include:

- Climate change adaptation and mitigation (what's working and what isn't)
- Emergency preparedness or response programs and projects
- Integrating natural systems and the built environment to enhance environmental resilience
- Initiatives aimed at recognizing shifting demographics and increasing social equity
- Building capacity and resiliency for the profession and planning practitioners
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging in the profession and planning work

Anchored in Culture

We want to hear about how your community has navigated the changing tides to become stronger. This subtheme is intended to focus on authentically connecting to local culture, old or new, to share stories and support communities.

Not intended as a prescriptive list, possible topics to be considered in this sub-theme include:

- Respecting/reviving historic industries (e.g., fishing, forestry, mining, agriculture)
- Truth and Reconciliation projects or Indigenous-led planning
- Historic or cultural neighbourhoods and/or heritage resources
- Challenges for heritage preservation amidst housing pressures
- Context-specific tourism

Lifting Through the Fog

It's often during the storm that we see creative and practical solutions arise. How have practitioners and groups worked through complex problems to achieve surprising and inclusive outcomes? We want to hear stories about innovations that have made impacts on changing places and neighbourhoods. This subtheme is intended to focus on collaboration, equitable engagement, and navigating barriers.

Not intended as a prescriptive list, possible topics to be considered in this sub-theme include:

- Multi-disciplinary efforts, partnerships, or unexpected collaborators with exciting outcomes
- Changing dynamics and expectations of public hearings and possible alternatives
- Managing misinformation, and effective communication initiatives
- Successful or challenging community engagement processes
- Incremental revitalization of existing areas
- Equity oriented urban design initiatives

Embracing New Directions

Communities have had to adjust to uncertain winds and take ideas, processes, and procedures in new directions. This subtheme is intended to focus on topics related to how communities have adapted and innovated to changing economic circumstances and new technologies.

Not intended as a prescriptive list, possible topics to be considered in this sub-theme include:

- Shifting dynamics of local economies and industries
- Rural or remote economic challenges and/or opportunities
- Investing in our communities
- Integration of AI
- New technologies and tools in the planning profession

Who's Coming?

Weathering the Storm 2025 will attract professional planners, planning students, municipal staff, elected officials, those in interconnected fields and others with an interest in planning. The conference will provide an important opportunity for professionals from diverse fields to come together to network and explore ways to further integrate the relationship between planning, our communities, and the new environment.

What We Are Looking For

The Conference Committee is seeking diverse, original, practical, and engaging proposals to fulfill the following program elements, which collectively are intended to provide a range of learning opportunities for attendees. Proposals for conference content may include the following:

- **Concurrent Session** - a complete 60 to 90 minute panel presentation exploring examples or best practices related to one of the conference sub-themes.
- **Workshop** - deeper explorations of a conference sub-theme providing an opportunity to learn about best practice, develop skills, and engage with your colleagues. Workshops may extend from 2 hours to a half day.
- **Learning Tour** - less formal learning activity, which takes place offsite. This may be a walking or bus tour that visits one or more sites.
- **Walking Workshop** - this conference strongly encourages the submission of complete workshops that combine the opportunity to learn with the chance to get some exercise and get to know the city by foot.
- **Mobile Workshop** - get conference attendees further afield and outdoors to explore the region.
- **Poster Gallery** - an opportunity to highlight successful projects and research in a gallery setting.
- **Fast or Funny Planning Presentation** - an opportunity to present a fast and/or funny planning presentation - make 'em laugh or make 'em think (10 minutes).

The Committee also encourages student presentations.

Selection Criteria & Review Process

It is the API Conference Committee's goal to design a conference that provides interest and value to all attendees. While we strive to include all proposals submitted, the Conference Committee reserves the right to select those proposals that best reflect the conference theme and format. The Conference Committee will review all proposals, and selection will be based on the following criteria:

- Relevance and alignment to the conference theme and sub-themes.
- Describe how your session will challenge, engage, and give attendees an opportunity to contribute to the discussion. Demonstrate how the conversation will offer practical solutions to challenges facing planners today.
- Submit a clear and concise proposal that highlights top learning outcomes for participants. Be sure to adhere to the minimum information and format requirements listed under how to submit a proposal.
- Ability to exemplify and articulate a specific activity or approach and have real world application.

- Provide content that will be appealing to an Atlantic audience.

How to Submit a Proposal

The API Conference Committee invites proposals from all interested proponents. Potential presenters should:

- Review this Call for Proposals carefully, including the criteria listed above.
- Be sure to coordinate and collaborate with colleagues to fully explore your topic, including related professionals and those that represent different stakeholders, specialities, and perspectives.
- Propose content for an entire conference element; a complete concurrent session, workshop, etc. Proposals for a panel of speakers may be submitted without the full panel of presenters included, but if selected, the proposer (working with the Conference Committee) will be responsible for identifying the full slate of panelists.

An individual should submit, or be involved in, no more than two proposals.

All submissions must include the following information:

- Contact Details (include all presenters): Name, Any Designations (RPP, MCIP, etc.), Job Position/Title, Email, Phone
- Type of Content: indicate the type of session for your topic (concurrent session, workshop, learning tour, walking workshop, mobile workshop, poster gallery, fast or funny planning presentation)
- Session Title: include the name of the session that would be used in the program.
- Length of Session: indicate how long your session would be so that the conference committee can schedule out the program accordingly.
- Presenter Biography: 100 word maximum per presenter (to be used in conference program)
- Session Description: 250 word maximum (provide a brief and captivating overview of your topic, to be used in conference program).
- Include photo/headshot of the presenter(s), to be used in advertising the conference program.

Apply online at: <https://atlanticplanners.org/events/api-conference-2025/>

The deadline for receipt of all proposals is March 31, 2025.

Successful proponents will be contacted regarding selected proposals by **May 5, 2025. Only online submission will be considered. The Atlantic Planners Institute thanks you for your interest in our conference.**