

DATE: April 2, 2018

TO: Mayor Chelminiak and City Councilmembers

FROM: Deborah Munkberg, Senior Planner, 452-2898
Planning and Community Development Department

SUBJECT: National American Planning Association Conference Presentations

The American Planning Association (APA) national conference is the premier professional event in the planning profession for continuing education, networking and renewed inspiration. The conference brings together the diverse perspectives of about 6,000 planners, allied professions and appointed and elected officials from all over the United States and the world. Each year a different city hosts the conference; this year the host city is New Orleans.

Proposals to present sessions at the conference are reviewed through a highly rigorous and competitive process and must pass several rounds of peer review before final acceptance into the program. Successful proposals must demonstrate that speakers have significant expertise in the topic area and that session content is relevant, innovative and expands best practices in planning. Less than one-quarter of proposals nationally are accepted. For this year's conference, Planning and Community Development department staff are pleased to be invited to speak at two conference sessions. Staff are honored to be representing the City of Bellevue at the conference.

The sessions being presented by City staff include:

- **Creation of Open Space in Downtowns.** Public open space is an essential element of a successful downtown, providing space for recreation, preserving the beauty of the outdoors, enhancing health and supporting economic vitality. In this session, Mac Cummins will lead a panel discussion that examines strategies for acquiring and creating more open space in urbanized downtown areas. The panel will focus on Bellevue, Santa Monica California and Westminster Colorado. Participants in this session will gain an understanding of the pros and cons of different approaches and how to go about starting the dialogue and executing acquisition of public spaces in their urbanized areas.
- **Civic Engagement for a Resilient Community.** How can cities engage with their community to build a strong foundation of mutual trust and healthy dialogue? Mike McCormick-Huentelman, Marcia McReynolds, Carol Ross and Deborah Munkberg will present a "deep dive" 2½ hour interactive session that highlights Bellevue's approach to answering this question. Participants will learn

how, through intentional investments in long-term relationships, cities can better adapt in real time to community conversations and changing priorities. The session intersperses a series of short presentations with ample opportunities to “test-drive” different engagement concepts.

While in New Orleans, staff will also meet with peer staff at the New Orleans Office of Neighborhood Engagement and volunteer with Rebuilding Together New Orleans, along with other conference sessions and events.