
American Public Works Association
Washington Chapter
Strategic Plan

Vision

APWA Washington Chapter is the organization of choice in providing public works education, advocacy, expertise, and public awareness for its diverse community of members.

Mission

The APWA Washington Chapter serves its members by

- Creating educational and networking opportunities to facilitate knowledge exchange.
- Providing trusted information for public works policy makers and stakeholders.
- Rewarding and recognizing excellence and innovation.

Strategic Goals

- Grow and Strengthen Membership
- Expand Partnerships with Other Organizations
- Advocate for Public Works, both for legislation and regulation
- Improved Marketing and Public Works Outreach
- Increase Partnerships with Higher Education

Strategic Planning Session Attendees – June 11, 2010

- Jay Burney, City of Olympia (President)
- Bobbi Wallace, City of Kirkland
- Crystal Donner, Perteet, Inc.
- Dick Warren, Past President (Retired)
- Dick Andrews, Dick Andrews Consulting (Past President)
- Peter DeBoldt, Perteet Inc. (Board)
- Tom Skillings, Skillings/Connolly
- Bob Brock, City of Issaquah
- Paul Bucich, Parametrix
- Art Louie, Snohomish County (Secretary)
- John Carpita, MRSC (Chapter Liaison)
- Glenn Cutler, City of Port Angeles (Board)
- Katherine Claeys, City of Seattle (Past President)
- Bill Pugh, City of Sumner (Board)
- Jill Marilley, HDR (Vice President)
- Einer Handeland, Parsons Brinckerhoff
- Tara Olsen, Parsons Brinckerhoff
- Dan Dawson, Otak
- Dick McKinley, City of Tacoma (Past President/Chapter Delegate)
- Craig Olson, City of Clyde Hill (Past President)
- Kathy Robertson, Seattle Public Utilities
- Mike Terrell, City of Seattle (Past President)
- Peg Staeheli, SVR Design Company(Board)
- Pete Capell, Clark County (Treasurer)
- Toby Rickman, Pierce County
- Sam Yaghmaie, Harris & Associates
- Bill Holladay, Roth Hill
- Randy Brackett, Island County

Facilitated by: John Spencer and Jennifer Price, CH2M HILL

Brief History of APWA Successes

- Since the 2002 Strategic Plan, we have done what we said we wanted to do. Now is the time to lay a new blueprint for the next 5 to 7 years, building on the strengths and successes of the past few years. Our accomplishments since 2002:
- Expanded membership
- Forged new partnerships, for example, with AGC.
- Developed a Chapter magazine that rivals the National's magazine
- Brought structure to committees and brought them into leadership fold, making the committee structure more effective.
- Held many outstanding educational and networking events.
- Developed the Public works Institute with Oregon Chapter
- Scholarships for Students and Members
- Improved the financial shape of our chapter
- Our awards program has blossomed – i.e., PACE Award
- Nation visibility of our chapter is on the rise

APWA – Washington Chapter Member Survey – Gaps/Emphasis

- In preparation for developing this Strategic Plan, the APWA – Washington Chapter conducted a member survey in May 2010. The survey was emailed to all 1,300 members and 125 responses were received. The results of the survey are included as Appendix A. The survey results were reviewed during the strategic planning session, with the following summary of results.
- Networking Value: connecting people, create useful resource to connect/talk with people as a resource.
- Advocacy: Value of “getting out there”
- Communicate. Advocate. Educate.
- Council members, public, organizations
 - Mentoring junior staff
 - Web based education
 - Broadcast conferences
 - Maintenance staff
- Partnership with Non-Profit organization
- Challenge working with elected officials – Educate
- Educate constituents
 - i.e. level of service
- Disincentive to experiment/innovate
- Create talking points – key messages for everyone

- Need to reach out and engage with unions, construction and others for funding
- Keep younger members engaged with APWA committees
- Time for a Watershed change
- Take much more active role to tell our “spotted dog”
- Make tough decisions
- Surprised by survey comments on sustainability
- More advocacy: Technical resource to help shape policy, etc
- Innovators
- Use technology “Facebook”
- Leadership development

Results Synthesis for Member Survey

Based on the results of the survey and subsequent discussion, several key themes emerged that the group recommended be considered as future goals and plans for APWA – Washington Chapter.

- Need for leadership training, focused on leadership skills and qualities that are separate from management
- Importance of promoting the profession as a chapter – provides some independence from National
- Sustainability: Shared services and break through territoriality
- Importance of advocacy and regulatory support for members, especially in terms of how to work with agencies

Use of professional staff – potential to use contracted services to support advocacy and education

Key Challenges Summary

- Reduced revenue vs. citizen expectations
- Funding:
 - Regulatory
 - Idiot initiatives
 - Litigation
 - Competition
 - Bonding – future
 - Tax Structure
- Sustainable workforce/Succession planning - Training of employees
- Workforce/Education
- More with less – staff stress
- Accountability
- Economy – future unclear

- Energy
- Management of government agencies
- Role in economic development
- Regional solutions
- M/O/P – more assets to take care of
- Accountability Requirements

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

| | |
|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <p>Intelligence Active – Participatory Experience Loyalty Large Membership Extensive Network to other Organizations National Visibility Strong Committees Strong Programs: conferences, committees, training Fun Financial position</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <p>Diversity – gender/race Future demographics – generational gap, aging members Technology gap: GenZ – social networking Low participation below management Lack of advocacy and lobbying Holding back – not open, frank, honest Breadth of committee membership Communication between committees Marketing of who we are Just doing what we have always done One among many Not strong in supporting maintenance functions at APWA Not recognizing contractors for good work</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <p>Stronger connections with other Organizations Maintenance Chapter as a leader Increase influence with legislative regulations AWWA certifications in key Public Works areas Representation on state committee Lead sustainability initiatives and advocates Responders to disaster – engage public support Leverage technology: blogging, templates, science and practices Transition to different style of work and volunteerism Partnerships: WFOA, Unions, & AWWA etc Resource sharing Student Chapter Expand discipline focus: water, others Staff pay attention to partnering Inform public on needs and solutions</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <p>Losing credibility/communicating needs Aging membership Lack of Public Recognition Perceived value: e.g. why attend? Time/Money/Availability for participating Staying current electronically Angry voters Political – lack of continuity and collaboration Gap between money and expectations Inconsistent messaging Spread too thin Innovation is a threat – too risky Natural distrust of government</p> |

GOAL 1

Grow and Strengthen Membership

Introduction

The APWA Washington Chapter is a very successful organization that has a lot to offer its membership and encourages participation from all disciplines of public works. APWA is sometimes perceived as an “engineers or managers club” that typically leads public works departments, and this train of thought discourages some public works professionals from participating in chapter activities.

The trend is also for participation to come from the upper management levels of public works with little involvement from the operations personnel, although this varies depending on the type and size of organization. There is also a need to increase membership with some of the larger agencies, as well as certain geographic areas within the chapter jurisdiction.

Challenges/Opportunities

- Although the chapter has enjoyed tremendous growth in the past several years, that growth has been concentrated in certain communities and larger organizations and does not present a broad spectrum of the eligible membership of the chapter. These zones tend to be the largest organizations (i.e., City of Seattle), as well as geographic zones away from established centers of chapter activity and metropolitan areas, and will need more in the way of chapter resources and attention to develop.
- Municipalities subsidize their management level personnel to become members of APWA, but rarely do they afford operational level personnel the same option. Getting the operational members more involved would greatly benefit the chapter by getting fresh ideas and diverse solutions.
- Recruiting newer and younger members of the profession to join the chapter poses a problem that tracks the problem faced by the industry in general. There needs to be a special effort directed at entry-level positions both in the professional and operations levels within Public Works departments. There is also a need to ensure these younger members are engaged with Chapter committees and encouraged by their employers to be involved.
- Recruiting and retention of members, although successful, remains a challenge given the economy and the competing for time and talent with other professional societies and associations.

Vision of Success

- Membership numbers increase.
- Participation is more representative of the public works profession in general.
- Improved committee participation.

Objectives

Increase membership numbers by 8% to include more operational employees and smaller, eligible organizations

| Initiatives | Year |
|---|------|
| Develop and implement membership incentives. Possible incentives could include: Buy block of memberships and determine how to distribute Offer free conference registrations and free memberships | 2011 |
| Market APWA's services and benefits to agencies that should be participating or participating with a stronger level of support | 2011 |
| Implement a program to contact member agencies to have them add at least one additional member | 2011 |
| Develop a recruitment campaign and Utilize the Past Presidents and others to implement | 2011 |

Improve involvement and active participation so that we continue to grow our committees and educational offerings

| Initiatives | Year |
|---|------|
| Increase active participation and number of members participating on committees. Several ways that this could be accomplished: Get a commitment from new members to join a committee when they become members Actively recruit current members to committees, using the network of the current chapter leadership and members Use increased participation of existing Board of Directors members | 2011 |
| Assign a mentor for all new chapter members to foster a better understanding of the workings of the chapter and the benefits of active membership | 2012 |

Implementation

Board Member Lead: TBD

Use existing membership committee to ensure the work is done.

GOAL 2

Expand Partnerships with Other Organizations

Introduction

There are many organizations competing for the time and talents of public works professionals, including organizations or associations that serve other purposes. For example, several associations serve the drinking water and wastewater aspects of public works here in Washington State – Pacific Northwest Clean Water Association (PNCWA) and Pacific Northwest Section of American Water Works Association (PNWS AWWA). Both of these organizations are very well organized and have significant membership bases. There is no need for APWA to duplicate what these organizations are doing, in terms of trying to expand the Chapter’s reach into those sectors. But strong partnerships or joint conferences or sessions could be very effective.

We have been successful in the recent past in reaching out to organizations such as the Association of General Contractors (AGC) and the Puget Sound Engineering Council (PSEC) in an effort to spread our messages and align with common goals and objectives. We have laid the groundwork with these organizations and now need to expand those relationships as well as developing new relationships with organizations that share our mission and vision.

Challenges/Opportunities

- Everyone has funding constraints these days, especially when it comes to funding staff to participate in professional organizations. It is important to partner with other professional organizations rather than compete for people, funding, and time.
- The APWA – Washington Chapter would like to engage with other aspects of Public Works, including operations, construction, and other non-management or engineering professionals.
- APWA is not currently staffed or organized sufficiently to provide the amount of public works advocacy that their members need. One potential way to help increase public works advocacy is to partner with organizations doing similar work, such as the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) or other similar organizations.

Vision of Success

- Joint conferences and meetings with partner organizations. Could also have shared presentations at APWA or partner conferences. Incorporate joint awards and recognitions into the partnership.
- Sharing of information and logos on partners’ websites.
- Joint positioning papers or statements when it is time to take a stance on public works issues.
- APWA is seen as the one-stop information shop for Public Works professionals and is working with partners to bring the full spectrum of Public Works information and networking.
- Joint student chapters (Universities and Colleges).

Objectives

Select Target Organizations for Partnerships in order to expand and share resources that benefit our membership

| Initiatives | Year |
|---|------|
| Develop a list of potential partners, using committees for correspondence and connections | 2011 |
| Coordinate with other APWA committees in terms of potential partners and needs for partnerships | 2011 |
| Select 2-4 key partner organizations with which to develop partnerships | 2011 |

Develop goals and framework for strong partnerships so that they are sustainable over the long-term

| Initiatives | Year |
|---|------|
| Set up meetings with selected partners to determine commonalities | 2012 |
| Create incentives for other organizations to partner with APWA | 2012 |
| Jointly develop goals and framework with partners | 2012 |
| Formal agreements with organizations (framework) | 2012 |
| Implement knowledge sharing and other partnership goals, including FAQ sheets on the websites | 2012 |

Provide networking opportunities with partners so that we grow and strengthen our relationship and learn from each other

| Initiatives | Year |
|---|------|
| Ensure attendance at partners' conferences | 2012 |
| Identify 2-3 potential joint conferences with partners to pursue | 2012 |
| Identify and implement other joint efforts with partners, including booths at conference, joint technical sessions, networking nights, committee meetings, and others | 2013 |
| Technical presentations (APWA to them and them to us) | 2012 |
| Conduct 1 joint conference per year | 2013 |

Implementation

Board Member Lead: TBD

Create a task force to lead the development of partnership and work.

GOAL 3

Advocate for Public Works, both for legislation and regulation

Introduction

Public Works services are overwhelmingly provided by the public sector, mostly state and local government organizations. As such, the general public has high expectations that the services they rely upon are readily available and delivered promptly and with the highest quality. Yet those services and the underlying infrastructure are subject to funding by state and local government bodies through some form of taxation and/or service fees. Elected officials face competing demands for scarce resources and by its nature public works infrastructure and resources typically do not have advocacy groups speaking for funding those essential services.

Those most knowledgeable of the need for adequate funding of public works services are typically public sector employees. They must work with their elected officials in presenting budgets and informing those officials of the public works needs of their communities. Because of their position, they often must be muted in their advocacy efforts. As a result, many communities' public works agencies are challenged with limited funding.

Public Works representatives have limited resources and opportunities to present the needs of public works infrastructure and services to the general public and elected officials. Public Works isn't typically high on the awareness of communities except when something fails or in times of emergencies.

Challenges/Opportunities

- Especially with the current economy, there is a disconnect between reduced revenues for public works and the citizen expectations of public works infrastructure and services.
- Continued funding challenges in many areas: regulatory, initiatives, litigation, competition, bonding for future projects.
- Many public works agencies and professionals aren't sure of the direct value of advocacy and "getting out there" – there often isn't a direct correlation to rates, or funding.
- It is critical that APWA is the organization that helps with the challenge of working with elected officials and educates their constituents. Communicate. Advocate. Educate.
- Communicating with Council members, public, organizations

Lack of advocacy and lobbying

Vision of Success

Active voice on issues: proactive, networked, and connected to agencies/legislature.

- APWA takes positions on public works issues when required.
- We have one point of contact (e.g. chapter administrator) to interact/present/advocate on members' behalf.
- Members are aware of new issues, laws, and/or regulations affecting them.

- Communication system and process in place to inform and communicate positions and get feedback.
- Educate: members, board, local communities.

Objectives

Investigate feasibility of chapter administrator to aid in tracking and communicating legislation affecting the Public Works profession

| Initiatives | Year |
|---|------|
| Benchmark other chapters who have chapter administrators, in terms of how they accomplish it, what tasks the administrator does, and how effective they are | 2011 |
| Initiate discussion first with Board and then with National to determine feasibility | 2011 |
| If feasible move forward with hiring Chapter Administrator | 2012 |

Set up communication process so that members receive timely updates on issues affecting Public Works

| Initiatives | Year |
|--|------|
| Mine other organizations for information, assign resources – don't reinvent the wheel | 2011 |
| Research how other organizations communicate and respond to their members on important issues | 2011 |
| Create database of speakers, resources/expertise for issue/bill review | 2011 |
| Identify networking opportunities and points of contact | 2011 |
| Set up communication process: board, members, and other organizations | 2011 |
| Develop talking points that can be employed by chapter members as well as partner organizations to engage in advocacy efforts with the elected representatives | 2011 |

Develop partnerships with organizations of similar interest so that we can share resources and we ensure advocacy is occurring

| Initiatives | Year |
|--|------|
| Identify those issues emerging in state and local governments that impact public works programs | 2011 |
| Identify champions in various legislative bodies to be approached and provided information regarding the needs of public works communities | 2011 |
| Develop partnerships with organizations that have similar interests, common issues, and lobbyists and staff | 2012 |

Implementation

Board Member Lead: TBD

Task Lead: Government Affairs Committee Chair, Kathy Robertson, Seattle Public Utilities.

GOAL 4

Improved Marketing and Public Works Outreach

Introduction

Marketing is a vital and important aspect of any organization. For APWA, marketing helps educate current and potential members on the goals of the organization and the benefits of membership and involvement. In addition, an effective marketing and outreach plan helps to build name recognition in the industry, and helps our members and other organizations to easily associate our brand and logo with who we are and what we are all about.

Marketing plays an essential role in the success of any organization. It not only educates, it also builds reputation. An effective marketing and outreach plan will ensure that we are spending our time and resources in a manner that best promotes our Chapter, its mission, and its members.

Challenges/Opportunities

- Creating and implementing an on-going marketing and outreach plan will not only require a dedication of funding, but member resources as well.
- We must seek out and utilize the experiences of marketing professionals so that we ensure that the plan is creative and long lasting.
- We are in competition with many other professional organizations for membership. We must create marketing and outreach plans that set APWA apart from other professional organizations and demonstrates the value of APWA membership.

Vision of Success

- Better communication of issues through press releases, as well as media coverage and social media.
- Increased membership and participation in Chapter.
- Increased public awareness and APWA brand.
- Increased number of future professionals – students knows who we are.
- Increases our funding.
- Increase public trust.
- Support committee goals and celebrates their successes.

Objectives

Develop a PR/Marketing Plan so that we increase awareness of the APWA WA Chapter mission, goals, and available resources

| Initiatives | Year |
|---|------|
| Create a budget for marketing 2011 (\$20-25K) | 2010 |
| Set up a steering committee and place someone “in-charge” i.e. task force, steering committee | 2011 |
| Develop PR Plan | 2011 |

Implement the Marketing Plan to deliver key APWA messages

| Initiatives | Year |
|--|-----------|
| Deliver the message through media channels such as radio, news, internet, articles, social media, and others | 2011/2012 |
| Utilize younger professionals to bring energy and their perspective to marketing | 2011/2012 |
| Identify new venues for marketing such as an enhanced website | 2011 |
| Utilize the APWA Brand in all messaging | 2011 |
| Contact Laura Bynum, National Media Relations Manager, as a resource | 2011 |
| Profile stories in communities | 2011 |
| Track results versus Marketing and PR investments | 2012/2013 |

GOAL 5

Increase Partnerships with Higher Education

Introduction

Meaningful partnerships with higher education can help us to continue to grow our profession and membership and improve upon the educational opportunities available to our members. Working together, we can create synergies that benefit both APWA and higher learning institutions. APWA members will have improved access to educational offerings that will allow them to grow and develop, and higher learning institutions gain from the enrollment of our members into their programs.

Through our scholarship program and the development of internship and formal mentoring arrangements, we will continue to grow and develop our profession and refresh our membership over the long-term.

Challenges/Opportunities

- Development of new curriculum will take a substantial investment of time and energy from the Board, committees, membership and higher learning institutions. The reward, however in doing so, may far surpass the effort involved to move this strategy forward.
- We have a tremendous knowledge and experience base within APWA to draw from in creating new curriculums or degree programs. Much of what we have created for the Public Works Institute could be a basis for development of new programs.
- Establishing internship programs will provide opportunities for younger members to grow and develop in the profession, while at the same time providing a valuable service in the firms they work for.

Vision of Success

- Expanded cooperation with higher learning institutions.
- New Masters Degree program is developed with at least one institution in the State of Washington.
- Increase in the number of intern possibilities available for younger members and/or students.
- Formal mentorship program established within the APWA Washington Chapter.

Objectives

Develop an Internship Program so that we provide job experience to younger members entering the profession

| Initiatives | Year |
|---|------|
| Utilize the Scholarship Committee to advertise scholarships, pursue internship opportunities, and track past recipients | 2011 |
| Decide on role for APWA Washington chapter to develop an Intern Pool, establish criteria, champion recruits, track internship program reporting back, develop job board, interns attend APWA meetings/education/lunches | 2011 |
| APWA clearinghouse for interns used by public agencies and private sector | 2012 |

Establish an agreement with one University to start a Masters with a specialty in PW so that we expand the educational offerings to our members

| Initiatives | Year |
|--|------|
| Form Steering Committee to prepare basic description of Credentials and champion | 2013 |
| Review what east coast schools have (Nebraska, Norwich) | 2013 |
| Contact schools and identify interested academics | 2013 |
| Develop sample agreements for the program | 2013 |

Establish a formal Mentoring Program to help grow and develop younger members

| Initiatives | Year |
|--|-----------|
| Identify Champions for four Universities (UW, SU, WSU, and Gonzaga). This would entail the following steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Criteria for champion ▪ Term limits/commitment ▪ Verify university contact ▪ Recruit mentors: Three per school minimum ▪ Establish interest ▪ Attend ASCE student chapter | 2011 |
| Develop a list of interested APWA members. Identify their skills and knowledge. | 2011 |
| Develop mentoring activities | 2012 |
| Formalize mentor role (throughout the school year) | 2011/2012 |
| Regular attendance at ASCE student Chapter committee meetings/Visa versa | 2011/2012 |

Implementation

Board Member Lead: TBD

Education Committee

Strategic Plan Implementation - “Keeping It Alive”

In order to ensure success of the strategic plan, it is crucial to continuously remind the APWA Washington Chapter Board and members about its contents. This will help keep our Chapter focused on the mission, vision, and goals to be accomplished. A few activities that will help accomplish this:

- Business cards with mission and vision.
- Start each agenda with the mission and vision and what strategic plan goal it is linked to.
- Mission and/or vision could be on each document APWA sends out.
- In every communication, it refers to the mission and vision.
- Review strategic plan goals and progress towards those goals at every January Board Meeting.

This Strategic Plan is intended to be a 3-5 year look into APWA’s future. It should be revisited by 2013 and redone by 2015 at a minimum.