

18 November 2024 | Annual Business Meeting

Meeting called by	Ralph Willmer, Chair	Attendees
Type of meeting	Conference Call /Zoom Meeting	Executive Committee: Ralph Willmer, Chair (American Planning Association (APA)) Paul Inghram, Vice Chair (Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)) Nicole McCall, Secretary/Treasurer (Cambridge Systematics) Bridget Callea, Communications Officer (Benchmark Planning) Ben Bakkenta, Board Member (PSRC)
		Members: Scott Allen, West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission Beth Dawson, Mid-America Regional Council Madeleine, University of Texas Sheila Lynch, Denver Regional Council of Governments Andy Taylor, Denver Regional Council of Governments
		APA: Jason Jordan

AGENDA TOPICS

Welcome and Introductions | Ralph Willmer, RIPD

Ralph kicked off the meeting by welcoming participants to the meeting and initiating a round of introductions.

Broad, contextual perspectives:

- Federal Trifecta
- State level, shifts – Republican dominance
- Local level – more difficult to assess, general conservative shift

Trifecta Control

- Unified control – reconciliation for Tax Policy
- Fiscal tightening
- Surface transportation reauthorization debate begins
 - More modest expectations for Democrats
- EV push
- Opening for permitting reform – bipartisan legislation already out, emphasis on energy issues will create more momentum for reform, fundamental shifts
- Question for future of IRA, Climate legislation and related spending
- Housing remains bipartisan opportunity
 - Capitol Hill questions
 - House transportation and infrastructure leadership
 - House financial services leadership
 - CR & FY25
 - Narrow margins for Republican leadership the House
 - Thune era in the Senate – new majority leader, considered an establishment figure
 - Are there 7 Dems on Non-Reconciliation – pressure on moderate Dems
 - Role of the White House
 - New Chief of Staff – Susie Wiles
- Housing
 - APA's top legislative priority for past 2 years and likely moving forward
 - Republican control mean more opportunities to discuss
 - Tax opportunities
 - Boost for Scott Bill, Manufactured Housing, Rural Housing
 - Farm Bill already extended – carries rural housing provisions
 - Bipartisan Support for Reform Bills
 - Support anticipated to hold; legislation may be reconfigured
 - Reintroduction Game Plans
 - Schatz Role on PRO Funding
 - Strong role/leadership – no longer chair
 - Movement around appropriations committee
 - Intra-GOP Debate
 - Republican debate – housing / infrastructure / regulatory
 - Unleashing housing production
 - Attack on classic suburban household/home

- White House: early signals
 - Insider v Outsider – leaning toward establishment so far, no appointments for DOT/HUD yet
 - Campaign Team – continuity
 - First term, more of a revolving door of staff, may be trying to set different approach
 - Centralized approach
 - Lee Zeldin nominated to EPA
 - Appointment in deregulatory vein
 - DOT, HUD?
 - Implications state by state, expanded action in 2025
- Questions/discussion
 - Paul Inghram: Spending. Fiscal hawks or interest in spending?
 - Jason: inherent tension between deficit hawks and those who are not. Anticipate role for Elon Musk or others on special effort/initiative to identify inefficient domestic discretionary programs. Anticipate pressure to cut certain programs. On transportation, majority of Republicans want to cut spending for Amtrak, however Republicans representing regions with Amtrak service want it to continue. How well will White House spend political capital? More draconian cuts could occur. Anticipate this will be a dynamic next four years.
 - Ralph: See any attempt to roll back some of the initiatives, IRA / Infrastructure bill, that have not been spent or obligated
 - Jason: anticipate that Infrastructure Bil funding is safe but IRA funding is vulnerable. Will examine funding that has not been obligated. Could pull back on consumer side incentives. IRA is closely aligned with climate/green energy. Symbolic aspect but will be difficult to recoup significant dollars.
 - Ralph: Senate map for 2026?
 - Jason: last reviewed, Republicans more territory to defend. Not much territory to lose and they could maintain trifecta
 - Scott Allen: noted that DOT Secretary was just announced, Sean Duffy.
<https://www.wispolitics.com/2024/president-elect-trump-statement-re-sean-duffy/>
- In general, we have lived through political transitions in the past. May be a challenge for the planning agenda. Looking for input from experts across the nation on what needs there may be for regional planning.
- APA will deliver a similar presentation for entire membership in early December.

Review of past year work and budget | Ralph Wilmer, RIPD

- Work plan includes tasks the Division is required to perform
- Membership generally held steady
- APA is considering giving everyone a division membership beginning in January 2026
- Communications – newsletters / eblasts / keeping membership
- Education/Outreach – RIPD main effort is the forum at National Conference, will partner with DRCOG (Friday, March 28)
- While not in 2025, in the past we have run research programs and webinars.
- National Conference – Promote/ build awareness of RIPD members presenting sessions

- Membership – consider how to expand membership and engagement
- Bylaw review – APA issues new model bylaws, may need to make changes and bring forward to new business meeting
- Budget – relatively low

Comments:

Ben Bakkenta: What implications would change memberships have on Division/s budget?

Ralph: Division would not lose existing revenue but there is the opportunity that people may join second or third Division and increase membership in additional Division.

Approval of FY 2025 workplan and budget | Ralph Willmer, RIPD

- Workplan and budget approved.

Solicit ideas for new programs and research | Ralph Willmer, RIPD

- Ralph contacted by a member who is interested in the intersection of artificial intelligence (AI) and regional planning. APA also examining AI and ethics.

Solicit ideas for additional webinars and the regional forum at the National Conference | Ralph Willmer, RIPD

- Ben Bakkenta: Is there a theme for the national conference? For Sheila and Andy, is there anything that should be highlighted?
- Ralph Willmer: Themes anticipated but not available yet
- Sheila Lynch:
 - Colorado passed Land Use and Housing Laws last Spring – how are communities implementing plans / determining compliance
 - Offices downtown, short walking tour could be considered as part of forum agenda
 - Regional Housing Needs Assessment – aligning with Housing/Transportation Coordination piece
- Andy: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law / Housing coordination – how regions are approach given limited guidance
- Ralph: In past office tours offered by host RPA
- Nicole suggested water limitations and planning
- Ralph noted that there is now a fire season not only in California, but also in New England
- Scott Allen: challenged by climate migration, regionally.

Other | All

Nicole thanked Ralph for his service as Chair. He will continue to support APA RIPD as Immediate Past Chair. Ralph thanked the Executive Committee for their support and welcomed Paul, Ben, and Nicole as the newly elected officers.