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NH Planners Association Annual Awards

The New Hampshire Planners Association executive committee solicited applications this spring for its annual awards – Professional and Citizen Planners, Plan, and Project of the Year. This year the committee received many excellent nominations and the winners were announced at the Spring Professional Development Workshop held on April 22, 2010.

Citizen Planner of the Year

James Duffy
Keene City Council

James Duffy is currently a member of the Keene City Council and is also a member of the Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee.

In his career he has served on various boards and committees including the Cities for Climate Protection Committee. The Cities for Climate Protection Committee has been working diligently to implement items in the City's Climate Action Plan, to keep the Council and community informed of progress in achieving energy and climate change goals, and to build collaboration between the community and Keene's civic leadership to achieve stated sustainability goals. Mr. Duffy was also integral to the development of one of the first municipal climate change adaptation action plans in the country.

In his career, James has also served on the Heading for Home Board (a non-profit focused on the issue of affordable housing in the Region), the advisory committee for the Monadnock Farm and Community Connection Co-op group, the Southwest Region Planning Commission Travel Demand Management group, the Ad-Hoc Sustainable Design and Energy Efficiency committee and is an active member of the Keene Rotary.

As a citizen planner, he has taken the lead or participated in shaping many projects, navigated the political arena to make positive changes within the community, has worked to involve the public in community planning issues, and has been an advocate of incorporating sustainability into everything the City considers or does. He has especially supported the connection between sustainability and land use planning.

Professional Planner of the Year

Camille Pattison, Principal Planner
Nashua Regional Planning Commission

Camille has made significant contributions to the field of planning through her work at the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC).

Camille is currently a Principal Planner at the Nashua Regional Planning Commission. She has been with the agency for 7 years and currently oversees the land use programs, including the Integrating Transportation and Community Planning (iTRaC) Program. During her tenure at NRPC, Camille has worked on an array of projects including transit planning, the widening of Route 101 A, and local assistance to member communities.

Camille was instrumental in creating NRPC's iTRaC program, which is an innovative planning program that integrates the planning disciplines of transportation, land use, and environmental planning.

Most recently, Camille was recognized by the Town of Merrimack Rotary Club for "Excellence in the Workplace" for her work with the Town's iTRaC Committee on the Town Center Action Plan.

Project of the Year

Form Based Code
Dover, NH

The recently adopted Form Based Code for Dover's Downtown Area is the first such ordinance adopted by a community in Northern New England, and the lessons learned in Dover provide an excellent example of this type of land use regulation that may be useful in other New Hampshire village and downtown settings.

Being the first community in New Hampshire to craft such an ordinance, it could not rely on another's work and had to break new ground. At the same time the City recognized that the process would benefit greatly from public interaction and participation.

The code was conceived as one means to implement the City's recent Master Plan's land use chapter and results of its Visual Preference Survey where participants ranked images of various styles and forms of development. Community members and staff were drawn to the FBC as a mechanism to promote positive design characteristics in the existing downtown and to ensure that new growth built upon the existing development and reinforced the height, massing and location of prominent downtown structures.

A final result of the process has been increased attention on the downtown as a growth area and property owners are taking a fresh look at their own property.

Plan of the Year

Stratham, NH Gateway Commercial Business District Master Plan

This plan looks at the primary gateway into the community and seeks a better way to create a community center based on smart growth principals, while recognizing that past planning efforts had failed to create a community many were happy with.

To create a new vision and strategy, the Master Plan Committee had to “think outside the box,” and look at different solutions for planning for an “auto-centric society.” Given the District’s proximity to Route 101 and current existence a commercial-highway area, the plan investigated other examples of where “new communities had risen from older parking lots.”

“The committee took a New Urbanist approach to how [they] would address the problem, except [they] called it Traditional New England Design.”

“The plan brought together many differing parties within Stratham. The need for municipal services such as water and wastewater treatment was a major part of [the] discussions. Traffic issues on Portsmouth Avenue and the fact that everyone has to own a car to safely travel anywhere was a major topic in the development of the plan. The fact that Stratham had no social center became a driving force in [the Plan’s] final direction.”

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