



## APA California 2023 Conference Wrap Up

It's been nearly two weeks since more than 1,550 planners gathered in both Fresno and virtually for the APA California 2023 Conference "Planning at the Crossroads" and the 75th Anniversary Celebration of the APA California Chapter - wow, did that really happen! #FresYes it did!

The APA California Central Section Conference Host Committee and the Central Section Board would like to extend a huge thank you to all who joined us to make this event a success - attendees, speakers, presenters, sponsors, exhibitors, and especially the volunteers.

We hope you enjoy this recap of the conference highlights!

### BY THE NUMBERS

- 1,550+ attendees
- 90+ educational sessions / 200+ speakers
- 120+ students
- 85+ young & emerging planners
- 13 mobile workshops / 470+ mobile workshop participants
- 54 sponsors and exhibitors



### OPENING RECEPTION

## A Night to Remember - The Fresno Chaffee Zoo



For one night only, the Fresno Chaffee Zoo was open exclusively to APA California conference attendees for an unforgettable opening reception. More than 850 planners joined together to enjoy food, drinks, live music, giraffe feeding, connecting with colleagues and fellow planners, and access to the entire zoo. The response from those who participated has been that they had a fantastic time eating, celebrating, reconnecting, and networking. The weather was perfect, the food was wonderful, the music was welcoming, and feeding the giraffes was beyond fun! It won't be easily forgotten.

A beautiful evening at Fresno Chaffee Zoo for the Opening Reception. Source: Jenna Chillingierian

### STANDING ROOM ONLY

## Diversity, Student, and YEP Mixer at Full Circle Brewing Co.

It was standing room only for the highly anticipated Diversity, Student, and YEP Mixer at Full Circle Brewing Co. which took place following the opening reception. This mixer was extra special, coinciding with Downtown Fresno's Brewery District Oktoberfest Celebration - yep! Attendees enjoyed Oktoberfest drinks and food, as well as the opportunity to network with so many fellow planners in the heat of Downtown Fresno.



YEP! Standing room only at Full Circle Brewing Co. for the Diversity, Student, and YEP Mixer, coinciding with Oktoberfest in Downtown Fresno. Source: Jenna Chillingierian

### AN INSPIRING KEYNOTE

## High-Speed Rail Authority CEO, Brian Kelly, and City of Fresno Mayor, Jerry Dyer, Highlight "Planning for Transformational Change through California's High-Speed Rail System"

Fresno's top official, Mayor Jerry Dyer, provided a warm and charismatic welcome, including showcasing an exciting vision of land use and transportation changes coming soon to Downtown Fresno based on recent large-scale planning and rezoning efforts that will support the nation's first High-Speed Rail Station in Downtown Fresno.



California's High-Speed Rail Authority CEO, Brian Kelly, then presented an overview and timeline of the statewide High-Speed Rail project, which will start in the Central Valley and stretch north to San Francisco and Sacramento, and south to Los Angeles, Riverside, and ultimately, San Diego. [See the High-Speed Rail video here.](#) After Brian Kelly's presentation, California APA President Andrea Ouse, AICP, facilitated an in-depth and insightful dialogue between Mayor Dyer and CEO Kelly. Make sure to check out the conference opening plenary recording to learn more about one of the most impactful transportation investments in California's history and the planning-related work bringing the project to fruition.

*"This video was created as part of the City of Fresno's successful application for an IIRTA Infrastructure Grant from the State of California and is the result of a collaborative effort between the City of Fresno, the Downtown Fresno Partnership, the Central Valley Community Foundation and countless other stakeholders invested in the future of Downtown Fresno. Video created by Meza Studios."*

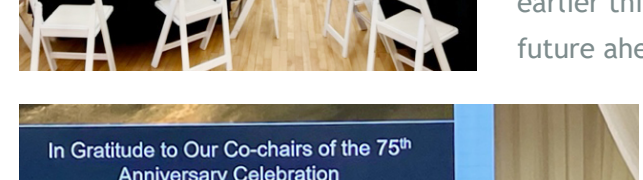
### 75TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

## Cheers to 75 Remarkable Years of the APA California Chapter!

Cheers to 75 remarkable years of the APA California Chapter! On Sunday, September 17, 2023, APA California celebrated its 75th founding anniversary with a spectacular "SOLO OUT" special celebration at the iconic Grand 1401 in downtown Fresno, or as the Fresno Bee would call it, "Fresno's Grand Skyscraper."



Attendees enjoyed two specialty cocktails (one affectionately named the "FresYes" and the other affectionately named the "FresNo"), a sit-down dinner, beautiful historical exhibits covering major historical points in time within the APA California Chapter, and an engaging program highlighting the history of APA California and recognizing specific VIPs. Including a beautiful dedication to Larry Mintzer, FAICP, who dedicated his life to the planning profession and passed away earlier this year. Here's to our storied history and the exciting future ahead!



President Andrea Ouse honors Larry Mintzer and Steve Preston for their service to APA California as Chapter Historians.



75th Anniversary Committee members.

### ON THE MOVE

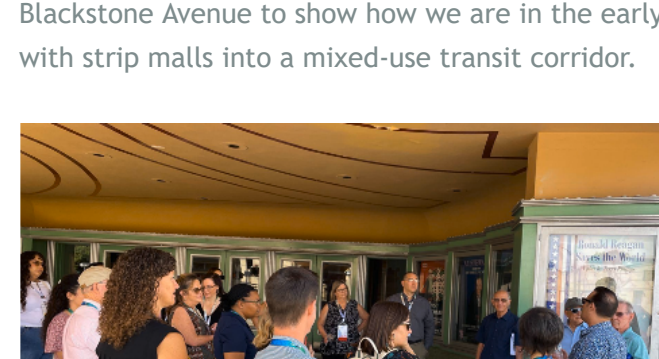
## Mobile Workshops Explored Fresno, Clovis, and the Sierras

Our mobile workshops went high and low from a trip to the Sierras and Shaver Lake to see and discuss the Creek Fire and wildfire planning to a trip to and along the San Joaquin River to see the recreation planning taking place as part of the San Joaquin River Parkway and a tour of Old Town Clovis - A New Approach to "Valley" Development. We showed off the construction taking place right here in Fresno on the California High Speed Rail including climbing onto the large bridges and viaducts over the San Joaquin River and Freeway 99.



At the Crossroads: High-Speed Rail Construction Across Fresno. Source: Carolina Ilic

We also had numerous walking tours around Downtown Fresno, including a visit to what will be the first high speed rail station in the United States and how Fulton Street transformed back to a street from its run as a pedestrian mall. Local planning legends David Fey and Nick Yovino Sr., architectural historian Karana Hattersley-Drayton, Bill Herr from the City of Fresno, Christopher Ramos from the Fresno Historic Preservation Commission and the Chinatown Foundation discussed historic architecture in Downtown Fresno, Clovis, and the Mariposa Mall. Michael Cruz from Tigeo Sequoia Brewing and Denver from the Modernist spoke to our group about the Downtown Brewery District. Plus, Tower District preservationists, Michael Birdsong and Joe Cantania, architect Paul Halajian, City of Fresno BRT guru Jeff Long, Michael Duarte from the Fresno Housing Authority, and Christine Mktarian, PE from State Center Community College District, took one group along Blackstone Avenue to show how we are in the early stages of transitioning an old state highway lined with strip malls into a mixed-use transit corridor.



Peeling Back the Layers of Fresno's Tower District. Source: Carolina Ilic

Dan Zack, our MW Champion, took a group of folks through one of Fresno's most unique neighborhoods (and his neighborhood), the Tower District. Dan gives a big shout out to all of his INCREDIBLE collaborators and speakers, including Peter Winch from WRT, Sophia Pagoulatos from the City of Fresno, Scott Miller from Gazebo Gardens, superstar Downtown developers Reza Assemi, William Dyck, and Elliot Bath and from the Downtown Fresno Partnership!

### CLOSING PLENARY

## We Finished With Something to Think About - "Navigating Equity, Health, and Sustainability in California's Inland Communities"

Acknowledging that California's inland regions have been on the frontlines where they have been forced to respond to climate change, environmental injustices, public health outbreaks, natural disasters, and other health equity issues, this year's closing plenary highlighted that California is truly at a crossroads when it comes to ensuring plan implementation moves toward health equity. Desiring to find the answers to "How do we tangibly create healthy communities?", and reflecting on the discussions held at this year's conference, we asked our experts, "How do we, as community planners, collaborate with stakeholders to solve some of our most challenging public health and planning issues - especially in areas which have the greatest health and income disparities?" The answers were the beginning of a conversation that will hopefully continue to the 2024 Riverside Conference.

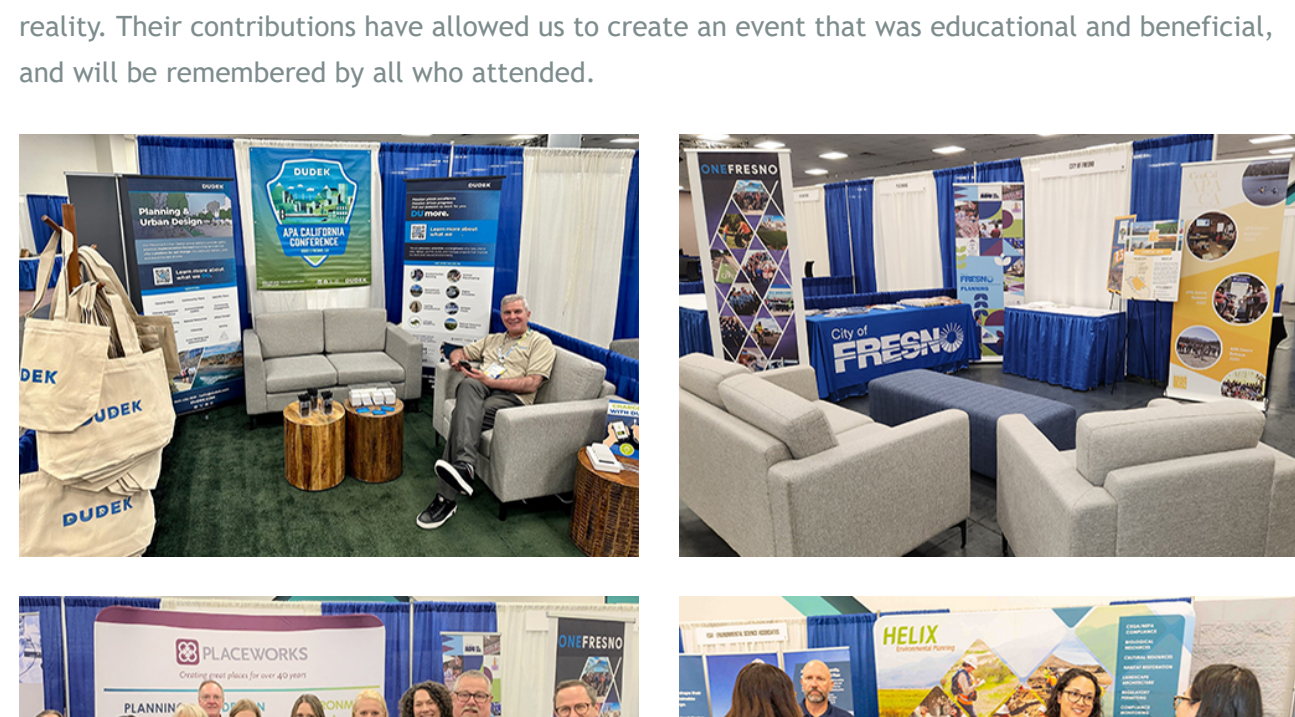
Our insightful keynote speaker, Sarah DeGula, CEO of Change Lab Solutions, was followed by an intersectional panel featuring Bernadette Austin, CEO of CivicWell, Vicki Jones Director of Safety B Risk Management for CSU, Stanislaus and Josh Lee, Chief of Planning for the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority.



The program, moderated by Jonnie Lan, AICP, our Central Section Director, and Andrew Flores, AICP, Co-Lead for Planners4Health, was thoughtful, practical, and seemed to leave those who were there with specific actions they could take to engage our non-traditional planning colleagues and allies as we all move forward to build healthier communities.

### THANK YOU SPONSORS

We are grateful to our sponsors and partners for their generous support in making this conference a reality. Their contributions have allowed us to create an event that was educational and beneficial, and will be remembered by all who attended.



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KOLLA ASSOCIATES, Brian R. Smith, Retired Planner, APA California 2023 Conference



### MORE CONFERENCE MEMORIES



Thank you to everyone who provided photos for the conference and 75th anniversary wrap up: Carolina Ilic, Jenna Chillingierian, Steve Preston, Cher Ekasala, Juan Borrelli, Allison Joe and more.

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