



American Planning Association  
**Florida Chapter**  
*Creating Great Communities for All*



## **Neptune Beach Selected for an APA Florida Award of Excellence in the Best Practices Category**

*The City of Neptune Beach: A Model City for Inclusive Planning and Coastal Resiliency Through Vision Planning and Responsive, Innovative Policies*

**TALLAHASSEE, FL** – The **American Planning Association, Florida Chapter**, announced that the City of Neptune Beach has been selected for an APA Florida **Award of Excellence** in the Best Practices category. Nominations were received from communities across Florida, but the APA Florida Awards Committee found Neptune Beach's nomination worthy of the premier award.

The nomination titled, *The City of Neptune Beach: A Model City for Inclusive Planning and Coastal Resiliency Through Vision Planning and Responsive, Innovative Policies*, was selected for its innovative and resilient approach to engaging residents.

Beginning in January 2020, the City's consultants, Dover, Kohl and Partners, along with City Staff, engaged residents through multiple forms of community collaboration and outreach. These engagement activities included: design charettes, roundtable discussions, stakeholder meetings, interactive workshops with live polling, open design studios, neighborhood level planning, and even collaboration with Duncan Fletcher Middle School Students.

The process was quickly adapted to the challenges brought forward with the pandemic, and staff embraced new virtual technologies to continue to engage residents throughout the process. As restrictions were lifted, the process continued under a hybrid of virtual and in-person activities.

Neptune Beach Mayor, Elaine Brown, said, "This is a great honor for our City and was made possible due to the diligence of staff, residents and the City Council. We are so proud to have a vision that can serve us as we plan for the future and appreciate the participation of residents during such trying times."

City Representatives will officially receive the award during an Awards Ceremony at the Florida Planning Conference on September 1<sup>st</sup>. The City of Neptune Beach joins previous award winners such as the City of Bradenton (*Creating Together; Youth-Centered Planning for the Riverwalk East Master Plan*).

Neptune Beach City Manager, Stefen Wynn said, "I'm proud of how quickly our staff and residents adapted to the challenges presented during the pandemic and I'm still impressed with how engaged our Residents were during the entire process. Their feedback was paramount to the City's vision for the future and I'm encouraged with how involved they continue to be."

The American Planning Association, Florida Chapter is made up of a network of planning professionals, students and community partners that provides statewide leadership in the development of sustainable communities by advocating

excellence in planning, providing professional development for its members, and working to protect and enhance the natural and built environments.

For more information on the award and what it means to the City of Neptune Beach, please visit the American Planning Association, Florida Chapter website at: [www.florida.planning.org](http://www.florida.planning.org).

The City is currently finishing the second phase of a three-phase process: the **Vision Plan**, for which the award is given; the **Comprehensive Plan**, which was transmitted to the state for review earlier this month; and the **Land Development Code** update, with the process beginning later this month. Each phase will include degrees of public participation, but the most intensive public engagement was completed with the creation of the City's Vision Plan.

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*The American Planning Association and its professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners, are organized to advance the art and science of planning and to foster the activity of planning — physical, economic, and social — at the local, regional, state, and national levels.*

*The objective of the Association is to encourage planning that will contribute to public well-being by developing communities and environments that meet the needs of people and of society more effectively.*

*The Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association serves APA members in the state. APA Florida is the state-level resource for networking and professional development. When you join APA and reside in Florida, you automatically become a member of APA Florida.*

*The Florida Chapter provides members the opportunity to share experiences with colleagues and to broaden perspectives. The chapter holds an annual conference, educational workshops, AICP exam preparation courses, and produces a newsletter. APA Florida also conducts legislative programs, sponsors training workshops, conducts an awards program, and provides public information to and about the planning profession.*

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