

Andy Hill wins APA Colorado Planning Leadership Award

by Don Elliott, FAICP - Director, Clarion Associates



Andy Hill has received APA Colorado's 2019 Planning Leadership Award in recognition of her devotion to improving land use planning and governance throughout the State of Colorado. As Program Manager of the Community Development Office of the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, she has focused on the technical assistance and training needs of local government, particularly in smaller and rural communities.

After finishing her undergraduate degree at Colorado State University and a Master's Degree from the University of Colorado at Denver, Andy joined the Colorado Division of Emergency Management, where she worked for three years as a Hazard Mitigation Planner. She then moved on the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, where she has spent the last 23 years strengthening all aspects of the Division of Local Government. She is most known for her extraordinary success in implementing training programs for local planners and appointed and elected officials. Perhaps no single person has influenced more Colorado's planners, simply because Andy has been training for so many years. In addition to her personal involvement, she has strengthened the training skills of a generation of staff at the Division of Local Government in a wide range of topics, including land planning, fair and affordable housing, transportation, land use law and procedures, and growth management.

While the state's biggest cities often draw the most planning attention, it is Colorado's smaller counties and towns that often face the most daunting challenges and can contribute most to preserving our natural beauty and Western heritage. Throughout her career, Andy has focused on responding to the technically and politically complex problems facing small town planners, and her efforts have brought them the kinds of quality resources, handbooks, newsletters, and white papers they need to make and sustain great communities.

In addition, Andy Hill has a history of leadership in helping smaller communities implement Main Street programs to revitalize downtown areas. Her knowledge of available resources and her thoughtful, patient approach to facilitate local consensus on how best to use those resources, are unmatched in Colorado.

Finally, Andy is well known for her knowledge of hazard mitigation planning and her development of tools and handbooks to enable even smaller communities to reduce risks to their citizens. Following the disastrous Colorado floods of 2013, Andy led DOLA efforts to coordinate flood recovery planning and financing of disaster recovery programs. Although already well appreciated, her quarter century of work in this field will bear even richer fruit in the years ahead as climate change brings stronger and more frequent storms with greater risks to Colorado's citizens.

For all these reasons, APA Colorado was proud to honor Andy Hill with this year's Planning Leadership Award.