October 15, 2014

Jim Drinan
APA Executive Director
jdrinan@planning.org

Re: Why Choose New Orleans for the 2018 APA NPC?

Dear Jim:

Thanks for considering New Orleans as an alternate site for the 2018 APA National Planning Conference (NPC). The Executive Committee of the APA LA thought it was very important to provide additional information on why APA should select New Orleans.

New Orleans is an authentic historic city and the Paris of the United States. Coincidentally, 2018 is the tri-centennial of the birth of New Orleans. Should New Orleans be chosen in 2018, APA will be part of the year-long 300th anniversary celebration.

In keeping with its historic footprint, New Orleans is a very walkable city. Planners will be able to walk and/or ride the street car to experience the rich culture of the city. Mixed use development was invented in the Vieux Carre’ (French Quarter), one of the oldest historic districts in the United States, where residents, business and industry have coexisted for centuries. Additionally, New Orleans has many other neighborhoods on the National Register of Historic Places that are located along the great Mississippi River and its former tributaries.

Since the APA NPC was last held in New Orleans in 2010, we have much to share on the progress of the recovery from the devastation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. Billions of dollars have gone into making infrastructure more resilient and hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses are back on line. The region is better than ever. This has not gone unnoticed. According to www.gnoinc.org, the region enjoys high national rankings on quality of life, economic development, talent/workforce and entrepreneurship:

- New Orleans is America’s Favorite City, and a Top 10 City in the World [Travel + Leisure]
- New Orleans was ranked the #2 “Aspirational” City in the USA” based on economy, demographics and quality of life [Daily Beast]
- Greater New Orleans was the **#1 Most Improved Metro in the USA** [Wall Street Journal]

- Greater New Orleans is the **#2 Boomtown in America**, due to population and GDP growth [Bloomberg]

- New Orleans was named the **#1 City (of 475) for employment, income, and population** [NerdWallet]

- Greater New Orleans was ranked **#1 Brainpower City in the USA** [Forbes]

- Greater New Orleans was ranked **#1 for the Decade for Major Economic Development Wins in the South** [Southern Business & Development]

- Greater New Orleans was named **#1 Most Cost-Friendly for Business in the USA** [KPMG]

- Louisiana was ranked **#1 Best Business Conditions in the USA** [Business Facilities]

- Greater New Orleans is **#1 in the USA for Export Growth**, over 400% [US Chamber of Commerce]

- Greater New Orleans is the **#3 Big City Winning the IT Jobs Battle** (after Silicon Valley and San Francisco) [Forbes]

- Louisiana has the **#1 Business Climate in the USA** [Business Facilities]

- Louisiana is the **#1 Most Improved State** on the "Best States for Business" ranking since 2008 [Forbes]

- Louisiana was named **#4 Most Cooperative State Government in the USA** [Area Development]

- Louisiana placed **#1 for Economic Potential, Workforce Training, and Digital Media** [Business Facilities]

- Louisiana is **One of the Best States to Operate a Small Business, Meriting a Grade of "A"** [The Economist]

- Louisiana was ranked **#1 in the USA for Exports Per Capita** [New Geography]
• Louisiana was rated a **Top Ten State in the USA for Overall Tax Competitiveness** [Tax Foundation + KPMG]

• Greater New Orleans is **#1 in the USA for In-Migration of “Workers In their Prime”** (35-49 age group) [Forbes]

• Louisiana’s workers are considered the **Most Engaged Workforce in the USA** [Gallup]

• Greater New Orleans is **Top 5 in the USA for increasing share of Millennial (22-34 age group) Jobs** [CareerBuilder]

• New Orleans was ranked **#1** on the list of “America’s Biggest Brain Magnets” for attracting people under 25 with college degrees [Forbes]

• Louisiana Economic Development’s **FastStart** training program has been Ranked **#1 in the USA Four Years in a Row** [Business Facilities]

• Louisiana has enjoyed **6 Straight Years of Net In-Migration** [US Census Bureau]

• New Orleans **Leads the USA by 56% in Number of Startups Per Capita** [GNO Community Data Center]

• New Orleans was ranked the **6th Best City for Young Entrepreneurs** [Under30CEO.com]

• Louisiana was rated the **#2 State in the USA to Start a Company** [Tax Foundation + KPMG]

• New Orleans was named “America’s Best City for School Reform” [Thomas B. Fordham Institute]

• New Orleans ranked in the **Top 5 “Most Affordable Cities for Households”** in the USA [Intuit]

At the NPC in 2010, the APA LA laid the groundwork for an examination of cultural tourism in New Orleans. One session included multi-Grammy award winning Dr. John along with one of his favorite side-kicks, Irma Thomas. Dr. John and Irma literally rocked the New Orleans convention center. Planners were hanging from the rafters to hear the music and learn about the business of cultural heritage in New Orleans. The number of participants in the session exceeded capacity and made the fire marshal anxious. We would like to build on

3521 Lake Des Allemands Drive
Harvey, LA 70058
the excitement in the session and offer a grand opening reception featuring New Orleans culture and music, should we be so fortunate in 2018.

Louisiana has quite a story to tell on coastal restoration. We would like the opportunity to offer a sequel to the local program session conducted in 2010, which could be called Living Below Sea Level, Part Deux, along with appropriate mobile workshops.

Lastly, we want to remind APA that even in the face of the great recession of 2010, New Orleans was and is a very popular venue among planners and a great learning tool for resiliency. We expect that 2018 will be even more successful!

Whatever you decide to be the site of NPC in 2018, we wish you well.

On behalf of the APA LA Executive Committee, I remain,

Sincerely yours,

Lydia Z. Jemison, AICP, CFM
APA LA President

CC: Deene Alongi, APA
APA LA Executive Committee