For Immediate Release

County Planners Recognized for Excellence with National Awards

(March 23, 2012) – The American Planning Association (APA), County Planning Division (CPD) and its sister organization, the National Association of County Planners (NACP) today announced their 2012 County Planning Project Award winners.

This year’s recipients of APA CPD/NACP County Planning Project Awards are as follows:

- **Award of Excellence**
  Charlotte-Mecklenburg County, N.C.
  Category: Small Area Plan/Special Area Planning
  Project: *Elizabeth Area Plan*

- **Award of Excellence**
  Montgomery County, P.A.
  Category: Best Practices
  Project: *Model Ordinance Series*

- **Award of Merit**
  Westchester County, N.Y.
  Category: Best Practices
  Project: *Homeseeker Website*

See attachment for project details.

The awards will be presented at the County Planning Division/National Association of County Planners Annual Meeting at the APA National Conference in Los Angeles, Calif. on **Sunday, April 15, 2012** from 11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the JW Marriott Hotel, Plaza 1.

For more information about the County Planning Division of APA, visit: [http://www.planning.org/divisions/countyplanning/index.htm](http://www.planning.org/divisions/countyplanning/index.htm). For more information about the National Association of County Planners, an affiliate of the National Association of Counties, visit: [http://www.countyplanning.org](http://www.countyplanning.org).

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2012 County Planning Project Awards

An Award of Excellence will be presented to Charlotte – Mecklenburg County, North Carolina in the Small Area/Special Area Planning category for their Elizabeth Area Plan. The Elizabeth Area Plan was developed over an 18-month period and included a thorough analysis of the opportunities, challenges, goals, and vision for the community. It provides succinct direction for land use, transportation, community design, infrastructure and public facilities, and environmental policies through the use of text, maps, and graphics. A stakeholder group was integral in the development of the plan document and provided thorough review and comment on the draft plan. Their comments were addressed by staff in the final document adopted on November 14, 2011.

An Award of Excellence will be presented to Montgomery County, Pennsylvania in the Best Practices category for their Model Ordinance Series. The Model Ordinance Series provides a comprehensive and easy to use set of tools for the County and its municipalities to foster sound land use development. The publications provide the user with an explanation of the pertinent land use issues to be addressed by each model. Also a clear description of design elements that should be incorporated to address the topic of each model ordinance is described through numerous photographs and illustrations. The layout of each model ordinance document makes it easy to understand the purpose of various standards and criteria used in the model and how to modify them to better meet any local concerns. Effective aerial photographic illustrations clearly depict suitable locations for types of land uses and how individual development projects can be designed to achieve overall community goals. Various forms of computer simulated site design are used to illustrate key design concepts within each model.

An Award of Merit will be presented to Westchester County, New York in the Best Practices category for their Homeseeker Website. The Homeseeker Website provides a straightforward comprehensive tool for outreach to broad communities and diverse populations and to provide information that makes it easy for potential “homeseekers” to take advantage of the homeownership and rental affordable housing opportunities offered in the County. With the click of a mouse, visitors discover a wealth of information about the homes, the neighborhoods, financial eligibility requirements, affiliated housing resources and counseling agencies, and can view the housing site they select in Bing maps to experience a virtual satellite-view tour of the very community they are considering moving into.

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