

# CNU

## CHAPTER RESOURCES TOOLKIT

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The *Chapter Resources Toolkit* is one of three publications prepared by CNU to help its Chapters create strong, viable, and independent organizations that will enhance and further CNU's mission and the practice of the New Urbanism. The purpose of this toolkit is to highlight a range of best practices that can aid in building successful Chapters. It serves as a companion to *Steps to Organize a CNU Chapter* and the *Chapter Policies Handbook*. The *Chapter Policies Handbook* outlines CNU policies Chapters must abide by and is an essential publication for all Chapters whether they are at the earliest stages of forming an Interest Group, have attained the status of a Chapter Organizing Committee, or have been approved as a Full Chapter.

All questions or more specific best practices or inquiries regarding Chapters should be addressed to CNU's Chapter Coordinator, [chapters@cnu.org](mailto:chapters@cnu.org).

# 2 Sample Chapter Activities

The mission of CNU Chapters is to further CNU’s mission to build places that people love. CNU Chapters provide a local framework to collaborate on building more great places for everyone. Chapters are a leading voice to promote and define urban design in communities and across regions. They gather local leaders, like-minded organizations, and practitioners looking for peer networking, professional development, and strategies and tools of what works in their communities. Chapters engage in a wide range of activities from hosting talks, monthly happy hours, film festivals, symposiums, and design charrettes to critiquing new or proposed development.

## 2.1 Education

- Throughout the year, host educational conferences and symposia focused on topics presented at the annual Congress that would be of interest to members. (See the *Chapter Policies Handbook* for specific policies related to Chapter events and CNU’s annual Congress.) Examples are sponsoring an annual Chapter conference and working with CNU to plan a New Urbanism 101 or 202 workshop within the Chapter’s service area.
- In order to further New Urbanist causes, form coalitions with other related organizations such as an American Planning Association state or local Chapter, a state redevelopment association, a local Urban Land Institute (ULI) district council, or a state or local Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), American Landscaping Society Association (ASLA), Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE), and American Bar Association (ABA). For example, a Chapter could offer a New Urbanism course at the state meeting of one of those organizations (perhaps a course on New Urbanism and redevelopment as part of a state redevelopment association conference).
- Sponsor professional development programs for Chapter members and others. Those events could include educational tours of New Urbanist developments in the Chapter service area (or other areas) and offering skill-specific seminars (for example, financing and marketing New Urbanist developments).
- Increase participation in Chapter educational events by seeking approval of continuing education credits from the organizations that offer and require such credits (for example, APA, AIA, ASLA, ITE, and ABA). As noted in the *Chapter Policies Handbook*, the CNU Chapter Coordinator can assist with obtaining AIA and AICP continuing education credits.
- Produce publications specific to the Chapter’s geographic area, such as a guidebook featuring New Urbanist developments in that area or a descriptive listing of New Urbanism-related resource organizations in the Chapter service area. Also feature publications prepared by CNU on the Chapter website and at Chapter events.
- Sponsor “hot topic” lunches or breakfasts to provide information on timely topics of interest to Chapter members (for example, on green building practices and affordable housing production and financing).
- Conduct research and disseminate information on place-based issues related to the practice of the New Urbanism in the Chapter’s service area. For example, the Florida Chapter examined how the design of the state’s enduring historic towns informs today’s urbanism.

- Give awards to noteworthy examples of New Urbanist theory or practice in the local area. When planning such programs, Chapter leaders should remember the CNU requirement that prohibits Chapters from endorsing (or disapproving) specific projects.

## 2.2 Networking

- Host opportunities for relaxed social interaction such as happy hours gatherings, holiday parties, and outings and receptions at new urbanist developments members would like to visit. For example, when a Chapter serves a large geographic area, informal events sponsored by Chapter members could be held in different sub-regions of the Chapter service area.
- Maintain a Chapter member Listserv to further the exchange of information among members. Listserv typically comes in two forms: an announcement, or receive-only, Listserv, where members receive notices from the Chapter; or a discussion-type Listserv, which allows anyone on the subscription list to send a message through a moderated or unmoderated discussion. Carefully thought through rules for a Listserv are critical to making the wisest use of members' time.
- Maintain an active Facebook page and Twitter account and highlight members, events, and projects. Highlight partner organizations on a regular basis and offer to host their events on your social media.
- Plan time for networking at Chapter meetings and events and set up networking groups composed of members from similar professions (for example, peer-to-peer learning sessions for architects, local planners, transportation engineers, or planning commission members).
- Publish a print or online membership directory that provides information on each member's business and convene forums that enable members to exchange information and ideas on topics of interest.
- Host networking events in collaboration with other related organizations (for example, a ULI District Council or state AIA Chapter) or as adjuncts to other organizations' regional/national events.

## 2.3 Outreach

- Use email to notify members and others of events and other topics of interest.
- Survey members (and others) about topics of interest (for example, for a Chapter-sponsored workshop). Surveys can be done by mail, email, and using web-based survey tools.
- Produce a print or electronic newsletter to alert members to issues of interest and upcoming events (Chapter, CNU, and those of related organizations). Chapter newsletter publication ranges from monthly and weekly to quarterly or by special need.
- Create and maintain a Chapter website (described in Communication Pointers below). The website could feature a calendar of Chapter events.
- Promote local policies and implementing regulations that remove barriers to creating places based on the Charter of the New Urbanism (available from CNU's website, [www.cnu.org](http://www.cnu.org)). The CNU Chapter Policies Handbook provides specific guidance on when a Chapter may or may not take a policy position.)
- Prepare timely articles for publication (for example, in Chapter service area newspapers and the newsletters or publications of other organizations).

- Develop a Chapter promotional brochure that can serve as a companion to CNU's membership materials (available from the CNU Chapter Coordinator).
- Designate a public relations liaison to maintain regular contacts with media (discussed in Communications Pointers below).
- Sponsor a speakers' bureau to broaden the public's understanding of the New Urbanism. To facilitate the process, the Chapter could provide a standard script and PowerPoint presentation for speakers to use (also offer speaker training if needed) and identify speaking opportunities. Most civic clubs and professional associations that meet regularly welcome a lunch or dinner speaker.

When planning its activities, including those listed above, a Chapter must remain in compliance with the policies and requirements contained in the CNU *Chapter Policies Handbook* (which outlines specific restrictions regarding Chapter lobbying, policy positions, non-competition with consultants, and positions on real estate development), the CNU-Chapter Agreement, and with any new policies governing Chapter roles that CNU might disseminate from time to time. Chapters should also be fully familiar with the limits placed by the Internal Revenue Service on 501(c)(3) organizations (for example, on engaging in political campaigns). A local tax attorney can help with that information. The National Council for Nonprofit Associations [www.councilofnonprofits.org](http://www.councilofnonprofits.org) is another resource for nonprofit organizations.

# 3 Membership and Fundraising Tips

The *CNU Chapter Policies Handbook* outlines specific membership requirements and services for Chapters; therefore, this section focuses on techniques that Chapters can use to increase Chapter and CNU membership, thereby furthering each organization's effectiveness. Those techniques include a two-prong approach: membership recruitment and membership retention. Other options include holding a special membership drive or some other type of fundraising activity in the Chapter service area and offering Chapter member and sponsor benefits that are in addition to benefits offered by CNU.

## 3.1 Member Recruitment

An effective membership recruitment program uses a variety of techniques. When choosing ways to recruit members, Chapters should keep in mind that the most effective techniques are those that provide personal contact. Personal contacts can come through events, small group meetings, phone calls, and even handwritten notes on membership letters.

Techniques to recruit new members could include the following:

- Develop an attractive kit of membership information that describes the work of the Chapter and its benefits. The kit should include standard member talking points and/or question and answer format about the benefits of Chapter membership. (The CNU Chapter Coordinator and CNU's standard membership package are a first stop for information.)
- Have a highly visible membership table featuring the benefits of Chapter membership and Chapter accomplishments at Chapter events and at meetings of allied professional organizations and other public venues. Also place membership forms in the Chapter newsletter. CNU's annual Congress presents another venue for recognizing and attracting members: Chapters are given an opportunity to host a Chapter event as part of each Congress and to sponsor a Chapter vendor booth.
- Send direct mailings signed by either the Chapter chair or a recognized industry leader to targeted professional categories. Special events can also be used to target specific professional categories. Such an event could be hosted by the Chapter chair and several leaders in the target profession. Both approaches (direct mail or a special event) should follow up with personal phone calls.
- Sponsor a get-a-member campaign in which Chapter members are asked to identify and recruit new members and bring them to a Chapter event, coupled with follow-up phone calls. Such a campaign can be conducted by individual Chapter members or through organized membership teams focused on recruiting members from a specific geographic area or profession. To promote the campaign, a good-natured competition could be used to recognize those individuals or teams recruiting the most new members. Campaign materials should be easy to use and clearly outline the steps that volunteers can use when making membership calls.
- Provide new members with orientation materials that offer information on the Chapter (its website, events, special member services, newsletter, a list of members, volunteer opportunities, etc.). Other techniques include new member welcome calls and notes, personal invitations to Chapter events (also recognize new members at

those events), and listing new members on the Chapter's website and/or in its newsletter.

- Host small group breakfasts, lunch meetings, or receptions so that prospective members can learn about the benefits of Chapter membership. Chapter leaders should attend the event and make Chapter informational materials available.
- Make membership a part of every Chapter event (for example, promoting Chapter membership, welcoming new members and visitors, and recognizing current members who have done something special to help the Chapter).
- Survey new members to learn about their areas of interest and expertise; that information can be used to attract prospects to Chapter events or serve as the basis for mailing specific Chapter publications or articles that may be of particular interest.
- Follow up in person with prospective members who do not join the Chapter and invite them to Chapter events.
- Publicize Chapter accomplishments in area media as part of the Chapter's communication program (described later under Communication Pointers).
- Track what membership recruitment techniques work the best for the Chapter.
- Provide incentives for Chapter membership, discussed later under Sample Member and Sponsor Benefits.

## 3.2 Member Retention

In order for a Chapter to be successful, member retention should be as important as recruiting new members. Retention activities often focus on making sure that members feel welcome at and benefit from meetings, that they are informed of the Chapter's activities, and that they are involved in Chapter events and decision-making. On request, the CNU Chapter Coordinator can provide Chapters a list of members whose membership renewal date is coming due. To help retain its members, a Chapter could:

- Establish a buddy program in which active Chapter members are assigned to new members to make certain that they receive personal invitations to Chapter events and that they meet other members and are not left alone at events. The active Chapter member could mentor that new member, accompany him or her to Chapter events, and identify that member's areas of special expertise or interest that could be featured at Chapter events (for example, moderating or participating in a panel). The more involved a person is, the more apt he or she is to financially contribute to an organization.
- Use the CNU-provided list of membership renewals coming due to send personal letters to (and make calls to) each person on the list. Also, send timely thank you notes to those who renew their membership and feature them with new members in a Chapter newsletter or on its website. In addition, follow up with those not renewing to determine the reasons and respond to concerns.
- Create a "member host" group that circulates at Chapter events and meetings to ensure that all members feel welcome and that their questions are addressed. That group could hold orientation sessions and welcome events for new members and keep members up to date on Chapter goals and activities, including preparing an annual report that describes the previous year's accomplishments and plans for the coming year. That group (or another group of members) could also assign members to make personal calls and/or host small lunches or breakfasts to talk about the benefits of Chapter membership and ask members to renew their membership.



- Make sure members, especially new ones, become involved in some aspect of Chapter work. Getting members involved can include maintaining information on the interests of each member and providing opportunities to comment on Chapter work so that events add to members' knowledge and assist them in making new contacts. It can also include sending members an annual schedule of meetings so they can accommodate Chapter meetings in their schedules, making sure that members receive adequate notices of Chapter meetings and events, and having meetings at different times and locations to accommodate different schedules and geographic needs.
- Co-host events with other organizations to broaden members' opportunities for networking.

### 3.3 Special Fundraising Campaigns

Full Chapters may want to consider special fundraising campaigns that raise funds over and above Chapter memberships and the funds raised through a Founding Membership program (described in the *Chapter Policies Handbook* as a possible role for a Chapter Organizing Committee). An example is a campaign each year to solicit sponsors of an annual Chapter conference or event. Categories of sponsorships could be set and coupled with specified benefits – for example, for the highest level donor, display boards in a prominent area at the event, a listing (including the sponsor's business logo) in the event program and on the Chapter's website, and personal recognition at the event. Assuming registration fees cover the cost of an event, sponsorships are a good way to raise funds and recognize donors.

### 3.4 Sample Member and Sponsor Benefits

#### 3.4.1 Chapters

Chapters may decide to offer benefits above and beyond the CNU member benefits that are listed below. In deciding on Chapter benefits, a Chapter may want to select those benefits that enhance members' ability to network with their peers and learn about and have a greater impact on New Urbanist policies and practices within their area. Examples of Chapter benefits include:

- Host a members-only e-mail list that members can use to exchange and request information and send out alerts about upcoming events and issues.
- Sponsor a Chapter website, with a secure area for members-only information like a membership directory or image bank.
- Make a membership directory available only to Chapter members.
- Offer opportunities to participate in members-only events, such as giving members a preview of a new project or an opportunity to hear a briefing on timely topics from a key public official. Events (and Chapter publications) can also be used to offer members special opportunities to display information about their projects.
- Report on members' achievements in Chapter publications, on the Chapter's website, or in area media.
- Offer member discounts on Chapter events and Chapter publications. New members could receive a complimentary copy of a selected Chapter publication.

### 3.4.2 CNU

A full list of CNU member benefits is available at [www.cnu.org/membershipbenefits](http://www.cnu.org/membershipbenefits) . CNU member benefits include the following:

- Upon signing up new members receive a Welcome packet with member card.
- Subscription to CNU Monthly Review e-update newsletters.
- Full access to CNU's website, which includes a member directory, an archive of all CNU publications, an interactive image bank, a database of current projects, and job listings
- A copy of the single-page Charter of the New Urbanism, which outlines the movement's core principles.
- Discounts on books and magazines of interest to New Urbanists
- A discount to the CNU's annual Congress.
- Continuing education discounts.
- Access to CNU staff for help in finding people, information, and other resources.

\*Membership Benefits are subject to change.

# 4 Communication Pointers

A strong communication program is a core part of a successful Chapter. Attention to regular communication applies to Chapter members, the broader public and key constituency groups, and the media. When describing the New Urbanism or the work of CNU, a Chapter's communication program must be consistent with the provisions of the *Chapter Policies Handbook*, including requirements regarding using use of CNU's intellectual property and a unified message that is consistent with the Charter of the New Urbanism and CNU policies. Potential Chapter communication tools include a newsletter, email blasts, and events (described earlier). Also important are putting in place and maintaining a two-way communication program, a Chapter website, and good relations with the media (described below).

Professional communication support can be provided by a volunteer (for example, a local PR firm that works with a number of New Urbanist firms) or a paid professional (which means dedicating Chapter funds). Investment in communication on the front-end usually pays off with greater Chapter support and awareness. What is important is that the Chapter matches its communication plan and expectations with its resources. Joining with other like-minded organizations is another way to get the word out (often to new audiences) without dipping heavily into Chapter resources.

## 4.1 Two-Way Communication

In a two-way communication program, Chapters get information out to members and give members a way to provide suggestions and ideas to the Chapter. Two-way communication is important in achieving three important objectives: educating, creating awareness, and attracting and maintaining members. Careful attention to message crafting is critical to any communication program. Chapters need to find the messages and the mediums that their target groups will respond to.

Important features of such a program could be to:

- Identify and prioritize your target audiences (e.g., public officials, developers, residents/the general public, planners) and how the Chapter is perceived by those audiences. (For example, if CNU and the New Urbanism are well known in a Chapter's service area, the message would be different from a region where CNU and the New Urbanism are a new topic.)
- Decide on the message that the Chapter wants to communicate (for example, to encourage someone to attend a Chapter workshop or renew a membership) and the benefit of that action to the recipient ("Tell me why I should invest my time or money"). Action deadlines (register by a certain date, for example) should also be clear.
- Understand your target audience and craft (through research testing, for example, through focus groups or surveys) the messages that connect and are relevant (may vary by the target audience).
- Identify the most effective strategies to reach the target audiences. Those strategies may include deciding on the best contact methods (for example, email or personal

- calls) and the best messenger (perhaps a peer industry leader or well-respected public official).
- Include something about the Chapter in all messages – for example, the Chapter logo and a tag line to brand the organization (what it stands for and does) and differentiate it from others.
  - Use compelling words and short, action-oriented sentences that quickly and simply convey the main message. (Trade jargon and complex sentences are out.) Lead with the most important idea (sometimes graphically pulling it out), follow that message with supporting points, and end with a conclusion that recaptures the opening point and highlights follow-up action information (which can also be graphically called out). Brevity and a limited number of memorable take-away points (three is a good limit) should be the hallmark. Listen to good public speakers; they always come back to those concise two or three points and memorable slogan that they want to convey. They also use words that create concrete images, tell stories that tap emotions, and validate messages with credible information.
  - Monitor message effectiveness (for example, an increase in membership following a particular email blast or a get-a-member call-a-thon) and change course if needed.

## 4.2 Chapter Website

More than ever, an organization’s website is becoming its calling card – its first impression. That means the website design and usability are key, beginning with a home page that is visually attractive, downloads quickly (within a few seconds), and easy to use. CNU Chapters use their websites as the frontline source of information about the Chapter and the new urbanism. CNU also provides a link to Chapter websites on its website at <http://cnu.org/get-involved/find-chapter>.

In addition, numerous on-line resources list useful tips for maintaining effective websites. Those tips include the following advice:

- Be visual, uncluttered, and easy to navigate, and provide fresh information (updated at least monthly and preferably more often) in order to draw users back.
- Feature content that is engaging, accurate, and carefully edited (no typos). Use a journalistic style that is easy to understand and provides key information in the first paragraph. Use short, active sentences with clearly marked internal links. Make content easy to read by using a dark color font for text and a lighter background.
- Make key information about the Chapter visible and clear (for example, a Chapter’s logo, history, leadership, activities, events, nonprofit status, and publications).
- Prominently display a point of contact; for websites with multiple pages, provide a website map or directory.
- Offer links (the design of which should make them pop out) to pages within the Chapter website to social media and to other websites and make sure they work).
- Highlight how to join the Chapter and CNU and ways to become involved as a volunteer.
- Provide an easy way to offer feedback about the website and ask questions (which means that the Chapter must commit to systematically monitoring and responding to comments).

## 4.3 Media Relations

Chapters are encouraged to maintain an ongoing program that provides timely information about the Chapter's activities and programs, educates the public and area media on the principles and benefits of the New Urbanism, and establishes CNU and the Chapter as the primary source of information on urban design issues. A Chapter's information program should include the following steps:

- Develop (and keep current) a contact database for media outlets in the Chapter's area, including information on the reporters who cover development and design issues. To target messages, records should also include the reporter's areas of interest or reporting beat. That will require some research to identify the different reporting assignments at the media outlets in the Chapter area and the types of stories that are important at the different outlets. In addition to print, radio, and television and via the Internet, the research could also include identifying alternative types of media outlets in the Chapter area (for example, colleges and universities, community centers, and reference librarians). Any reporter who contacts the local Chapter should be added to the Chapter's database.
- ***Develop an ongoing relationship with reporters for key media outlets.*** Developing that relationship requires responding promptly to media calls (help them meet their deadline) and being ready with clear, concise information that highlights (and keeps coming back to) your major points. Techniques to develop ongoing relationships can include holding informal meetings to get to know different members of the media and providing background information on major events, research products, or other work of the Chapter. Briefing sessions with an editorial board, editor, or publisher or producer can also be useful.
- ***Designate a lead spokesperson or liaison to answer media questions and*** serve as the primary point of contact with media. That person could assist in developing media releases and information packages about Chapter events and new publications produced by the Chapter or CNU. The liaison could also help tailor the Chapter's message to the target audience and target medium (e.g., print, television, internet) and could help reporters find information on the New Urbanism in other areas.
- Encourage media to cover Chapter events and cultivate those who come. Have a point of contact to answer questions and make sure media needs are taken care of. A media kit is also useful. It could contain information about the event – those key talking points the Chapter wants to communicate – and about the Chapter and CNU. A media table or room can be set up for larger events. Another way to cultivate media is to arrange a special time when media can interview event speakers.
- Additional ways to get Chapter information out through the media include asking well-known Chapter members to write guest articles for area media and letters to the editor, placing educational Public Service Announcements on local radio and television stations, and appearing on local television and radio talk shows.

# 5 Chapter Leadership Development

A Chapter's leadership (its board of directors and officers) is a critical part of Chapter success. As highlighted in the Chapter Policies Handbook, a Chapter's board of directors is responsible for overseeing the assets of the Chapter and allocating its resources; establishing Chapter goals; recruiting new members and leaders; hiring and supporting staff; assuring compliance with local, state, and federal regulations; providing an effective governance structure; organizing programs and activities; and promoting membership in the Chapter. In short, a strong board is the foundation of a strong Chapter.

## 5.1 Sample Board of Directors Attributes and Roles

### 5.1.1 Board Attributes

The *Chapter Policies Handbook* addresses the governing aspects of a CNU Chapter board – for example, voting, meetings, and committees. Therefore, this toolkit covers the qualities or attributes of board members that Chapter leaders might want to consider when creating a Chapter. Forming and sustaining a CNU Chapter requires careful attention to who serves on the board, including the founding board that sets the tone for the Chapter. Qualities to consider are board members who are:

- Chapter and CNU members and well versed in and enthusiastic about and willing to be ambassadors for the New Urbanism and the Chapter.
- Fully committed to building a successful Chapter by providing at least one of what is sometimes called the three Ts (treasure, time, and talent) or three Ws (wealth, work, and wisdom) of nonprofit board membership.
- Willing to staying involved long enough to get the Chapter off on a strong foot, which can take several years (important to new Chapters). Continuity of leadership can help build the organizational culture and memory and signal organizational stability, if the board contains respected leaders in their respective fields (people who are associated with getting things done). One way to provide institutional continuity is to stagger board member terms so that no more than one-third of the directors' terms expire in any one year. Two-year Chapter officer terms and succession planning (where officers such as the vice-chair and secretary-treasurer move up to chair over a specified period of time) are other ways to provide the continuity that is especially important in the early years.
- Balanced in the disciplines and areas of expertise (and for Chapters with a larger service area, geographic balance) represented. A balanced board allows for a more holistic approach, particularly in connecting to those constituencies that the Chapter wants to reach (for example, architects, transportation engineers, public officials, or planners). Developing a board profile is one way of helping ensure a balanced board.

Other board provisions could include:

- providing training and briefing notebooks for new board members
- holding an annual board retreat to assess Chapter progress, board composition, and operations and plan the new year
- identifying and bringing along potential new Chapter leaders

- recognizing board members who make significant contributions

### 5.1.2 Board Roles

As the stewards of the organization, a Chapter board of directors is typically responsible for:

- determining the specific focus areas and goals for a Chapter within the mission and roles outlined for Chapters in the *Chapter Policies Handbook*
- ensuring adequate resources, organizational planning, and governance practices to implement Chapter goals and mission
- adopting (and abiding by) an annual and three-year budget and work plan and monitoring and reporting on progress
- ensuring that adequate financial controls are in place in order for the Chapter to remain accountable to its members and CNU and maintain the Chapter's tax exempt status
- maintaining compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal requirements for nonprofit organizations
- ensuring that all Chapter activities are consistent with allowed Chapter roles as described in the *Chapter Policies Handbook* and in regular contact with the Chapter Coordinator
- serving as a Chapter ambassador and enhancing its image
- participating in board meetings and Chapter functions and ensuring a continuity of leadership
- when applicable, selecting, supporting, and evaluating staff

## 5.2 Examples of Officer Responsibilities

**Chair:** A chair serves as an organization's chief executive officer unless otherwise directed by the board of directors. Responsibilities of the Chapter chair typically include presiding over board and Chapter meetings, appointing members to committees, serving as the spokesperson for the Chapter, developing new Chapter leadership, promoting Chapter membership, regularly communicating with Chapter members and with CNU, and participating in Chapter chair meetings at CNU's annual Congress.

**Vice-Chair:** The vice-chair works with the chair to carry out the goals of an organization and serves in the absence of the chair. The vice-chair may oversee the Chapter's strategic planning process or other assignments delegated by the chair. The vice-chair position could be used as training for the next board chair.

**Secretary-Treasurer:** A Chapter may have one person serve in both capacities or may divide these functions into two separate offices. The secretarial responsibilities are to keep the minutes of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee meetings, serve as the custodian of the corporate records, maintain a current mailing list of the directors, and see that all notices of meetings are given in accordance with the Chapter's by-laws and applicable state law. The Chapter treasurer is responsible for all funds and securities of the Chapter, handling and maintaining a permanent record of all financial transactions, overseeing the budgeting process, ensuring and reporting on an independent annual audit or financial review, and providing financial reports required by the Board of Directors. A Chapter may require that the person fulfilling the role of Chapter treasurer give a bond as

security for the proper performance of duties. The secretary-treasurer position could also be used as a training position for serving as chair in the future.

## 5.3 Examples of Board Committees

The Chapter's Board of Directors may create such standing or special purpose committees as may appear necessary for the effective management of the corporation and for accomplishing the goals and objectives of the Chapter. The types of committees and their membership will vary with the size and focus of a Chapter. Examples of standing committees include the following:

**Nominations:** A Chapter nominating committee identifies and nominates candidates for the Board and for Chapter offices. An important part of such a committee's work would be to focus on developing and maintaining strong Chapter leadership.

**Program:** Program committees are typically responsible for developing ideas and plans for Chapter events and meetings that provide opportunities for education, networking, and outreach.

**Finance:** Functions of a finance committee include overseeing the management of the Chapter's assets, working with the treasurer to develop the annual budget, and planning fundraising events and programs.

**Communications:** This committee would be responsible for developing a comprehensive communications program. Members of the committee could include representatives of different types of media outlets and individuals with expertise in communications and public relations.

**Regional Groups:** Chapters that cover larger geographic areas may want to consider enabling regional sub-groups to focus on issues affecting the practice of New Urbanism within smaller sub-areas. Those groups can host a range of activities within their sub-area (for example, networking and educational lunches and tours and helping promote Chapter membership and participation in Chapter events).

## 5.4 Sample Language: Board By-Laws, Committees, Duties, and Terms

### 5.4.1 Recommended Election Terms

- "Number, Term, and Election of Officers. The officers of the Corporation shall be the Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary, each of whom shall be elected by the Board of Directors from among its members. There may be an Executive Director appointed by the Board of Directors. A Director may hold the offices of Treasurer and Secretary, concurrently. Each officer shall hold office for a term from the time he or she is elected until the next succeeding annual meeting of the Board of Directors or until his or her successor shall have been duly elected and qualified.



The Board shall be made up of up to twenty-one (21) persons and not less than seven (7) persons each serving a two-year term, except that the Executive Director shall be a member of the Board for as long as he or she serves in that capacity. The Board shall be elected by majority vote of the Chapter membership. Each board member shall hold office for the term for which he or she is elected and until his or her successor is elected and qualified or until his or her earlier resignation, removal from office or death; provided that no Board member shall serve for more than four consecutive terms (a former Board member who has served four consecutive terms may be reappointed to the Board after two years).

#### 5.4.2 Examples of Officer Duties

- Chair. The Chair shall be the chief executive officer of the Corporation and by virtue of the office, be the Chairperson of the Board of Directors. The Chair shall:
  - Generally supervise the Corporation's affairs and business in conjunction with the Board of Directors;
  - Represent the Corporation at appropriate functions;
  - Preside at appropriate meetings of the Members and of the Board of Directors;
  - Present at each annual meeting of the Corporation an annual report of the work of the Corporation;
  - Cast an additional vote to break a tie vote on any action by the Board of Directors;
  - See that all books, reports and certificates are required by law and by these Bylaws are properly kept or filed;
  - Be one of the Officers who may sign the checks or drafts of the Corporation; and
  - Have such powers as may be reasonably construed as belonging to the chief executive officer of any organization."
- "Vice Chair. The Vice Chair shall be an Officer of the Corporation and by virtue of the office, be a Member of the Board of Directors. In the absence or inability of the Chair to exercise his/her office, the Vice Chair shall become acting Chair of the Corporation with all the rights, privileges and powers as if having been the duly elected Chair. The Vice Chair shall otherwise perform such duties as are customarily incident to the office of Vice Chair, or as may be designated by the Board of Directors."
- "Secretary. The Secretary shall be an Officer of the Corporation and by virtue of the office, be a Member of the Board of Directors. The Secretary or his/her designee shall:
  - Keep the minutes and records of the Corporation and appropriate books;
  - File any certificate required by any statute, federal or state;
  - Give and serve all notices to Members;

- Be the official custodian of the records and seal of the Corporation, if any;
- Present at any meetings any relevant communication addressed to him/her as Secretary of the Corporation;
- Attend to all correspondence of the Corporation; and
- Otherwise perform such duties as are customarily incident to the office of Secretary, or as may be designated by the Board of Directors.”
- “Treasurer. The treasurer shall be an Officer of the Corporation and by virtue of the office, be a Member of the Board of Directors. The Treasurer shall have the care and custody of all monies and financial affairs belonging to the Corporation and shall be solely responsible for such monies or securities of the Corporation and shall be one of the Officers who shall sign checks or drafts of the Corporation. The Treasurer or designee shall also:
  - Prepare an annual budget for presentation to the Board of Directors and such interim budgets as may be needed;
  - Attend to invoices, collection of dues, payment of bills and obligations and keep the Board of Directors apprised of the state of the treasury;
  - Ensure that no special fund may be set aside that shall make it unnecessary for the Treasurer to sign the checks issued upon it;
  - Render, at stated periods as the Board of Directors shall determine, a written account of the finances of the Corporation and such report shall be physically affixed to the minutes of the Board of Directors of such meeting; and
  - Otherwise perform such duties as are customarily incident to the office of Treasurer, or as may be designated by the Board of Directors.”

#### 5.4.3 Examples of Additional Chapter Positions

- Assistants to Officers
  - “Officers may, from time to time, individually appoint a Member to take over all or part of their respective duties. Appointments, however, shall always be temporary and such assistants shall not relieve an Officer’s respective responsibilities, except at the discretion of the Board of Directors.”
- Executive Director
  - “The Board shall appoint an Executive Director to oversee the management of the Association. The Executive Director shall serve at the pleasure of the Board and shall be an *ex-officio* member of the Board with full voting rights unless prohibited elsewhere in these Bylaws.”
  - “The Executive Director shall be the chief financial officer and the chief administrative officer of the Chapter and shall be empowered to hire staff and appoint assistants as necessary to ensure orderly operations. Such paid employees and uncompensated appointments shall be reviewed and approved by the Board. As chief administrative

officer, the Executive Director shall be the managing editor of all regular and special publications of the Chapter. As chief financial officer, the Executive Director shall be responsible for overseeing all regular and special funds approved by the Board.”

- Student Member Representative
  - “Where the Chapter includes one or more student Chapters in its geographic territory, the board of directors shall include as a voting member thereof, a student member, selected by the board to such position for a single one-year term, from among qualified candidates nominated by student Chapter presidents, faculty advisors or Chapter board members. Qualifying students may also independently submit applications to the board of directors for consideration in the student representative candidate pool.”
  - “In order to qualify for such board position, the nominee or applicant must be 1) a member of a student Chapter operating in the Chapter’s geographic area and 2) entering an advanced (upperclassman) level of their program at the time of nomination. The student representative shall be selected by the seated Chapter board of directors during dates that coincide with Chapter board elections but no later than March 30 of each year to begin serving on the Board October 1.”
  - “The student representative is responsible for representing all student Chapters and independent student members within the Chapter and:
    - Serves as a voting member of the Chapter board,
    - Serves as the communication link between the Chapter and the student membership at large,
    - Encourages student participation in Chapter programs such as career and professional development opportunities for student members
    - Encourages student participation in all Chapter programs
    - Orients successor student representative
- Regional Representative
  - “Officers may individually appoint a Member, a “Regional Representative,” to represent the issues and needs specific to a region within the Chapter’s geographic scope. The regions include: Region 1, Region 2, Region 3.”
  - “Regional Representative(s) duties include:
    - Establish contact with new and existing allied organizations, as well as individual members, in designated region,
    - Coordinate regional meeting logistics for regional events and activities,
    - Assist Chapter Board with recruiting members in designated region.

#### 5.4.5 Examples of By-Laws (please request for By-Laws from Chapter Coordinator)

- Atlanta
- Cascadia
- Central Texas
- Florida
- Michigan
- New England
- New York