



**CITY OF MOUNT VERNON, N.Y.**  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**SHAWYN PATTERSON-HOWARD**  
*Mayor*

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**JAMES RAUSSE, FAICP**  
*Commissioner*

February 3, 2026

Honorable City Council  
City of Mount Vernon  
City Hall  
Mount Vernon, NY 10550

RE: American Planning Association National Conference

Dear Honorable Councilmembers:

I respectfully request that the Mount Vernon City Council authorize the Planning Commissioner to travel to Detroit for the 2026 American Planning Association National Conference from April 24<sup>th</sup> through April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

The American Planning Association (APA) is a 501(c)3 that serves as the educational and advocacy organization for urban, city and regional planners nationwide. The Chicago and Washington, DC-based organization has over 40,000 spread across 47 Chapters and 24 Divisions nationwide. Every year, APA hosts an annual conference in different cities around the country to provide educational, training, and networking opportunities for its members and the communities they serve. On average, between 3,500-6,500 people attend these conferences.

As a certified planner through the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), and a member of its College of Fellows (FAICP), I am required to maintain my certification through obtaining 32 hours of continuing education credits every two years (known internally as certification maintenance [CM] credits). The APA National Conference is not only the best opportunity for compliance with CM requirements, but it offers the prospect of expanding development and network opportunities for the City of Mount Vernon in regard to planning, organizational capacity, design and development.

This year's conference is in Detroit at the Huntington Place Convention Center. The conference flagship hotel will be at the Courtyard by Marriott Detroit Downtown, depending on availability. I will be travelling from New York to Detroit via air travel.

In addition to per diem expenses, I am requesting authorization to utilize the following funds from budget line A8020.423 (Conference Expense). Funds towards the conference hotel will be paid for directly by the City of Mount Vernon. Conference registration and flight travel will be covered through

*"The Jewel of Westchester"*



reimbursement. Advanced purchase was necessary for the latter two in order to obtain the most reasonable price, as both are subject to dynamic pricing.

The requested cost estimates are as follows:

- |                                                                    |            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| • Courtyard by Marriott Detroit Downtown (estimate, if available)- | \$1,201.76 |
| • APA National Conference Registration-                            | \$ 895.00  |
| • Flight Travel New York to Detroit (estimate)-                    | \$ 337.00  |

|       |            |
|-------|------------|
| TOTAL | \$2,433.76 |
|-------|------------|

The current amount budgeted for A8020.423 is \$10,000. The anticipated expenses for this conference would result in a reduction of \$2,480.16 to a total of \$7,566.24 for the current Fiscal Year.

Attached are the registration splash page and calendar for the conference. Below is a link to the program schedule:

<https://www.planning.org/conference/registration/>  
<https://npc26.eventscribe.net/agenda.asp?BCFO=&pfp=Browse%20by%20Day&fa=&fb=&fc=&fd=&all=1&mode=>

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any additional questions, I am pleased to answer them.

Sincerely,

James Rausse, FAICP  
Commissioner  
Planning & Community Development