2011 AICP Review Course

EXAM CONTENT AND TIPS

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Exam Content

Plan Making & Implementation	~45 Questions	(30%)
Functional Areas of Practice	~38 Questions	(25%)
History, Theory, and Law	~23 Questions	(15%)
Spatial Areas of Practice	~22 Questions	(15%)
Public Participation and Social Justice	~15 Questions	(10%)
AICP Code of Ethics	~ 7 Questions	(5%)

www.planning.org/certification/examprep/subjectmatter.htm

Exam Scoring

Pass Rate

Approximately 63 percent

Scores

Reported on a scale of 25-75
55 is passing

For exam re-takers, the exam will very likely have anywhere up to 20% - 25% of questions from the test that you had taken the year prior.

Exam Preparation

- Exam tests knowledge (40%) and skills (60%)
- Devote 80 to 100 hours in study time
- Study Groups
- Note Cards
- Audio
- Take Practice Exams

Taking the Exam

- Get a good night rest
- Know the location of your testing center prior to the day of your scheduled appointment
- Bring two forms of identification (A list of valid IDs can be found in the Exam Candidate Bulletin)
- One of the identifications must contain a photo
- Calculator provided
- Scratch paper/pencil provided

During the Exam

- Exam is 4 hours; on computer
  - ½ hour tutorial
  - 3 ½ hours for 170 questions
  - 20 of 170 are pre-test questions-note these questions are not counted.
- Easy to mark questions to return to them before submitting
- No penalty for wrong answers. Guess, don't leave any blank!
- Receive *unofficial results immediately*
- Official Score Reports are usually mailed to all exam takers approximately six weeks after the exam window closes

During the Exam

- Carefully read the narrative (do not skim)
- Identify main idea. Understand the intention of the text.
- Determine what is being asked
  - Overall topic or scope
  - Specific Details
  - Inference Question
- Determine if the question has multiple parts
- Decide if specific notes would be helpful. Note taking strategy should not be used for all questions
- Summarize additional paragraphs

During the Exam

- Topic or Scope

  Refer to the main idea in notes

- Specific Details

  Refer to notes that will lead you correct text

- Inference

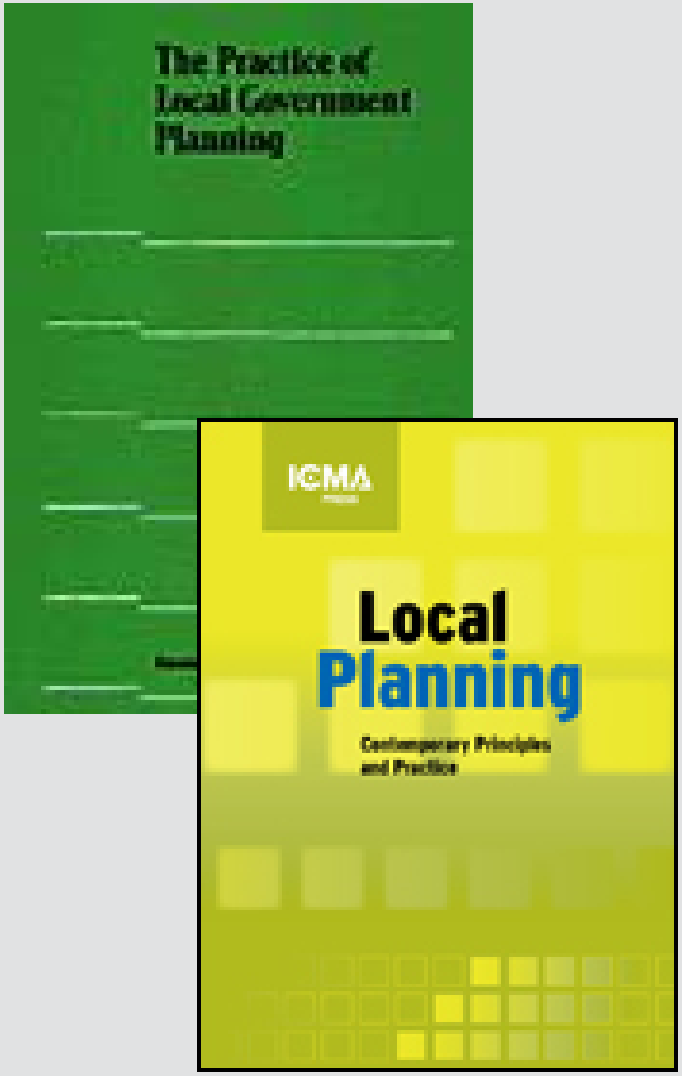
  Refer to and apply knowledge of planning

Inference questions appear frequently and you must feel comfortable applying planning knowledge – not all the relevant information is in the text

Study Resources

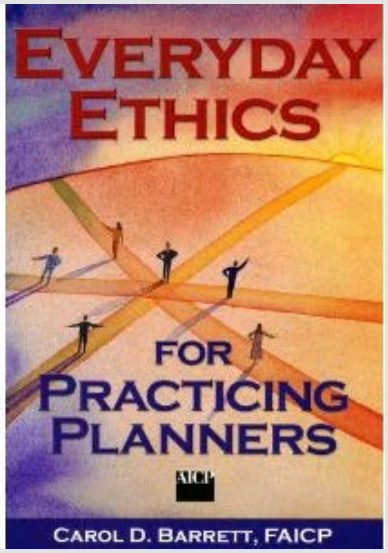
- 2nd chapter of the 2nd edition is excellent for historical background.
- 3rd edition is more up to date in all other areas and a little less of a dry read.
- 4th edition changed format somewhat.
- Latest version with new name

http://bookstore.icma.org/Local_Planning_Contemporary_P_P1917C29.cfm



Study Resources

- Everyday Ethics for Practicing Planners



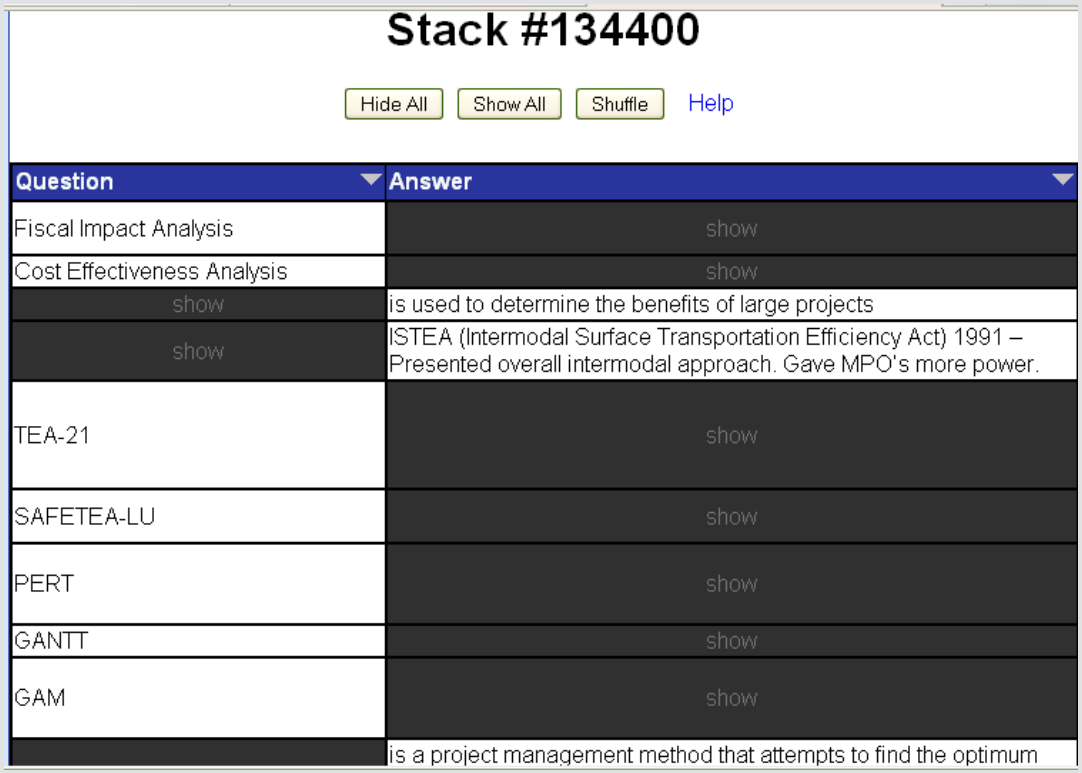
- The last 5 years of issues (starting one year ago) of:
  - Planning Magazine
  - Journal of the American Planning Association

Study Resources

Study Stack

http://www.studystack.com/flashcard-134400

- Flashcards
- Matching
- Study Table



Stack #134400

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Question	Answer
Fiscal Impact Analysis	show
Cost Effectiveness Analysis	show
show	is used to determine the benefits of large projects
show	ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act) 1991 – Presented overall intermodal approach. Gave MPO's more power.
TEA-21	show
SAFETEA-LU	show
PERT	show
GANTT	show
GAM	show
	is a project management method that attempts to find the optimum

Exam Content

History, Theory, and Law [15%]

- History of planning, including legal decisions
- Theory of planning
- Patterns of human settlement

AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Practice [5%]

- AICP Code of Ethics

Exam Content

Spatial Areas of Practice [15%]

- Planning at the national, multi-state, state, sub-state, county, urban, suburban, and small town levels.
- Corridor Planning
- Neighborhood Planning
- Waterfront Planning
- Planning for historic areas
- Downtown Planning

Exam Content

Plan Making and implementation [30%]

- Strategic planning/visioning
- Goal setting
- Research methods and techniques
- Collecting data
- Techniques for organizing information
- Analysis of information (quantitative and qualitative)
- Demographics
- Information systems (GIS, MIS)
- Fiscal impact analysis
- Intergovernmental relationship
- Land Use Regulation
- Growth Management
- Development Planning

Exam Content

Functional Areas of Practice [25%]

- Natural resources and environmental quality
- Land use
- Infrastructure (e.g., water, sewer, power, telecommunications)
- Energy
- Public services (e.g., public safety, education, human services)
- Transportation
- Recreation
- Economic Development and revitalization plans
- Historic preservation
- Urban Design
- Housing
- Neighborhood issues
- Rural and small town planning
- Comprehensive planning
- Community Development

Exam Content

Public Participation and Social Justice [10%]

- Multi-cultural and gender issues
- Public participation
- Negotiation and coalition building

Recent Exam Experiences

- Know the law cases, what topic they deal with, the outcomes. Dates weren't as critical but study those too
- More like the concepts of the foundations of the planning profession
- Seemed like the exam included lots of situational questions such as the "what would you do if you're the planner of a small city and..."
- A number of questions seemed completely random - like asking about a certain type of developer agreement (not the financing ones, which we studied)

Recent Exam Experiences

- There are a few FAR and graph questions which are "gimmies"
- Know the key names associated with some of the theories
- When asked what you would have studied more after just taken the exam:

> I mainly would have tried to study more contextual situations... what's the best way to implement comprehensive plans, capital improvement plans, learn what's the most key components

Recent Exam Experiences

- I had at least three questions on "concurrency". I knew that Florida had concurrency policies, but I didn't really know what that meant
- I would say at least 70% of my exam were questions that had options I, II, III, IV and we had to pick the BEST or MOST EFFECTIVE answers. I found those challenging because sometimes all four (I, II, III, IV) would be "correct" and picking the best or most effective or "which would have the most immediate results" was hard
- I had very little straight up history questions.
- I think I spent too much time trying to memorize facts. So many of the questions were scenario questions that you really had to read and reread and try to simplify.

Recent Exam Experiences

- Subdivisions- Impact fees: how they are used, how does a municipality calculate them, do calculations include inflation cost etc.
- Neighborhood Planning - Define a neighborhood, do they have elementary school, parks etc.
- Cost effectiveness analysis and Fiscal Impact Analysis.
- Be able to calculate Location Quotient, required parking spaces
- ADA 1996 Act- requirements for buildings, public hearings etc (I had 3 questions on this topic)
- Understand ISTEA, TEA21 and SAFETYLU
- MPO's - how they work, do they fund projects, do they monitor air quality etc.

Recent Exam Experiences

- Questions on Public participation- when do you use focus groups, visual preference surveys, facilitation etc. (I had almost 7-8 questions on this)
- I had hardly any questions on Census. The only one I had was about women related trends since 1990's (% of women is more than % of men, women live longer then men, women use more public transport than men, % of single mothers is rising etc.). I think because 2000 Census is almost outdated, there weren't any questions on this topic.
- Terms you should know: Power towns, E-government, Telecom Hotels, Colocation center, parking cash-out program, car sharing program, car ridership programs, CORBOR program, Scenic Byway program, New market Tax credit program, smart code/form-based code etc.

Recent Exam Experiences

- When to use Urban Sim, Community Viz and LandFrag
- Energy- Read the APA policy guide on energy and sustainability really well. Understand the key concepts and principles.
- What is Visit-ability code?
- History - Megalapolis, Advocacy Planning leaders, Mugler v. Kansas case, Dolan v. City of Tigard. No dates were asked.

Sample Question

In the US, the "Neighborhood Unit" concept is attributed to

a) Kevin Lynch

b) Clarence Perry

c) Ian McHarg

d) Lewis Mumford

ANSWER: B

Sample Question

What issue has prompted a number of transportation planning agencies and government departments and agencies to study the effects that their "changing intervals" have on driver safety?

A) texting
B) digital billboards
C) passing areas
D) bus traffic

ANSWER: A

Sample Question

Which of the following concepts was first upheld by Fred French Investing Co., Inc. v. City of New York (1976)?

a) Planned Unit Development

b) Transfer of Development Rights

c) Transit Oriented Development

d) Conservation Easement

ANSWER: B