



The American Planning Association seeks to Make Great Communities Happen for All, and the Washington State chapter (APAWA) is dedicated to that goal in our state. The 2023 legislative session presents opportunities to advance this goal by pursuing legislation that supports the following priorities.

2023 Session Legislative Priorities

Act Immediately on Climate Resilience and Sustainability

Planning and preparing for a rapidly warming climate is a necessity and a top priority. Reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to expected climate impacts is a moral obligation to current and future generations, a wise use of tax dollars, and beneficial to the state's economy.

- ***Integrate climate planning into the Growth Management Act framework and processes.***
- ***Support the Dept. of Commerce to develop guidance on clear metrics.***
- ***Provide state funding for cities and counties to address climate planning.***
- ***Update, clarify, and strengthen the state's statutory greenhouse gas emission reduction benchmarks.***
- ***Support legislative efforts to pursue climate action plans, regulatory measures, incentives, technical standards and specifications (e.g., LEED), and mitigation and adaptation measures.***
- ***Incorporate climate impacts, indicators, and benchmarks in comprehensive plans, environmental impact analysis, and development reviews.***
- ***Adopt climate policy including adaptation, resilience and hazard mitigation at all levels of government and among agencies rather than only at the local level.***
- ***Support proactive inclusion of adaptation, resilience, and hazard mitigation strategies and pre-disaster recovery planning in Comprehensive Plans.***
- ***Coordinate and collaborate at all governmental scales as fundamental to a successful effort.***
- ***Amend RCW 39.35D to require major facility projects of public agencies receiving funding in a state capital budget to meet LEED Platinum standards.***

Eliminate Homelessness and Increase Affordable Housing Choices

In order for communities to function, there must be an adequate supply of housing in proximity to employment, food, public transportation, and community facilities, such as schools. The housing stock must include affordable and accessible owned and rented units, not only to meet social equity goals, but in order to ensure community viability. The development of a diverse and affordable housing stock must be carried out without sacrificing sound regulations that are in place to protect the environment and public health.

- ***Strengthen requirements for comprehensive plan housing elements and implementation through zoning reforms, as well as expanding technical assistance and financial support from the state, which will together make providing housing for all economic segments of the population more achievable.***
 - ***Continue to provide planning grants and require local governments to plan for housing at every income level, especially for lower-income households, and require accountability.***
 - ***Encourage communities to facilitate the development of more affordable housing.***
 - ***Seek responsible changes to development-related statutes to facilitate housing development.***
- ***Provide stable and dependable funding for affordable housing.***
 - ***Provide subsidies for the construction of housing affordable to people making 50% of the Area Median Income or less.***
 - ***Provide support for land banking for subsequent affordable housing construction.***



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- ***Expand the availability of accessory dwelling units, duplexes, triplexes, and other denser housing types in single family areas throughout the state.***

Apply an Equity Lens to All GMA Goals

The American Planning Association of Washington seeks social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote equity.

- ***Apply an equity lens to all policies to address community engagement and empowerment; access to basic needs and opportunity; safe, fair, and affordable housing; and public health.***

Provide Financial Support for Essential Planning

Planning creates value. Planners need sustainable funding, planning requirements, and technical and policy support from the state; in return, effective planning can provide better communities, better health, a better economy, and more participation, fairness, efficiency, and innovation.

We observe that state and local revenue sources for planning work are similar (sales, property, B&O, utility fees, and other revenue), but also recognize that many cities and counties are challenged in their ability to raise revenue. To the extent that local governments are prevented by state law from raising the necessary revenue to fund existing and new planning requirements, local taxing authority or state funding should be provided.

Good planning pays ongoing dividends through efficient and effective provision of public services, a healthy tax base, and engaged communities.

- ***Identify sustainable state funding, consistent with the statewide interest in consistent and effective planning work, for upcoming local comprehensive plan periodic updates and development regulation updates.***
- ***Continue work to develop broad agreement on improvements to the state's planning framework.***

Transform the Transportation System

To address today's challenges, this work will transform the historic focus on vehicular travel to multimodal solutions, connectivity, safety, context-sensitivity, and maintenance needs in order to address climate and equity goals and targets. Planning for transportation includes local, regional and intrastate travel needs to ensure the system works for all. Transportation is closely linked with land use, and transportation facilities and services are best provided using a structured, objective, and transparent project selection and development process.

- ***Implement a performance-based, outcome-driven transportation planning and funding process that aligns with the Growth Management Act.***
- ***Develop sustainable transportation funding sources to replace the gas tax as fuel consumption decouples from vehicle miles traveled.***
- ***Develop and expand sustainable local transportation funding authority, particularly for transit, complete streets, and non-motorized transportation.***
- ***Fund projects and programs that will significantly reduce transportation-related deaths and injuries, especially among vulnerable, lower-income, and historically- marginalized populations that are overrepresented in deaths, injuries, and impacted health.***
- ***Maintain and enhance state transit operations funding in all communities, with a focus on improving service in underserved populations and smaller jurisdictions that have historic underinvestments in transit.***



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- *Require evaluation and reporting of levels-of-service for transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities.*
- *Adopt a fix-it-first focus on keeping our transportation facilities in a state of good repair and carefully considering long-term maintenance and operations costs for new and expanded transportation facilities.*

Ensure Infrastructure Investments Support Climate Resilience and Equity

The legislature has made strides but more steps are needed to address infrastructure deficits. Local governments need tools like the Public Works Trust Fund and revenue options. The state should also establish mechanisms to ensure funding decisions reflect state, regional, and local plans and policies, consistent with the Growth Management Act.

- *Expand loan programs, local funding authority, and state appropriations to address infrastructure needs that align with state, regional, and local plans and policies.*
- *Promote future infrastructure funding, design, and maintenance that addresses climate change causes and impacts as well as resiliency/disaster recovery planning strategies to ensure the investments are protected and resilient to climate change.*
- *Apply an equity lens to infrastructure planning, funding, design, and maintenance.*

Reform Annexation Policies and Procedures

A core principle of the state's planning framework is that urban growth areas should transition to municipal governance, providing local government that is more local, flexible, and fiscally sound. However, annexation and incorporation activity in many urban growth areas has stalled.

- *Amend laws to ensure that a proposed annexation does not become final until the resolution of any and all GMA appeals.*
- *Create a state program of incentives and regulatory simplification to facilitate and encourage annexations in urban growth areas.*

Define Capital Facilities Necessary for Development and Clarify Comprehensive Plan Requirements

The American Planning Association of Washington supports the coordinated planning called for by the Growth Management Act and seeks to facilitate compliance through clarified definitions and standards.

- *Clarify that the term "capital facilities", as used in RCW 36.70A, refers to physical facilities in a fixed location that a city or county deems necessary to support development, together with park and recreation facilities.*
- *Clarify that when updating its comprehensive plan a city or county shall identify all public entities that own capital facilities within the Urban Growth Area and endeavor in good faith to work with other public entities, but that if the city or county is unable to obtain the necessary information after a good faith effort, failure to include such information in the capital facilities plan shall not be grounds for a finding of noncompliance or invalidity of its comprehensive plan.*



Ensure Coordinated Planning Between Special Purpose Districts and Local Governments

Special purpose districts providing services such as water, sewer, fire, and schools are vital for supporting development, but planning resource and capacity needs can be challenging, given that special districts and local governments each have their own decision-making authority and governance systems. Further, the geographic boundaries of these various entities rarely align with each other, further complicating joint planning. Information-sharing and collaboration amongst special purpose districts and local governments is crucial, because local governments need to understand service capacity in order to plan for future growth, and special purpose districts need to understand the future population they will be asked to serve in order to provide adequate facilities.

- ***Require special purpose districts to plan for the county-adopted 20-year population forecast and local jurisdictions' growth targets.***
- ***Include special purpose districts in the local planning process(es).***
- ***Support siting schools and other public facilities within the UGA when the school district includes both urban and rural land.***
- ***Support funding for collaborative efforts between special purpose districts, local governments, and others to address siting challenges, and support smart site and capacity planning in a positive and thoughtful way.***

Maintain 10-year Update Cycle for Comprehensive Plans

The comprehensive plan update cycle was changed from 8 to 10 years in the 2022 legislative session, aligning the update cycle with the decennial census.

- ***Maintain the 10-year comprehensive plan update cycle; if legislation adding or modifying comprehensive plan requirements is enacted this session, these requirements should be addressed separately or during the next review.***
- ***Maintain value-added planning work through midpoint reviews every five years after a periodic update. The ten-year cycle should address accommodating new growth; a review every five years should be used to remove obsolete provisions, update existing conditions and inventories, and address new and revised state laws that affect planning.***