



American Planning Association

Washington Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen

January 24, 2008

The Honorable Christine Gregoire
Governor of the State of Washington
Legislative Building
Olympia, WA 98504

RE: A Comprehensive Climate Approach for Washington: Draft Recommendations of the Washington Climate Advisory Team

Dear Governor Gregoire:

On behalf of the Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association (Washington APA), I would like to thank you, the members of the Washington Climate Advisory Team (CAT) and its five Technical Working Groups (TWGs) for the opportunity to comment on this important draft document.

Washington APA applauds and congratulates you and your advisory panels for reaching this important milestone, for taking on the challenges of the "real and urgent threat of global warming" and for addressing controversial issues head on. Washington APA supports efforts directed to reduce the extent of climate change as well as adaptation to minimize the effects of global warming.

We are most pleased that the draft report acknowledges the vital importance of addressing climate change among the goals of the Growth Management Act (GMA). By so doing, the state would provide important direction to cities and counties to account for climate change in the consideration of both land use and transportation plans. Washington APA strongly supports HB 2797/SB 6580, which would add climate change to the GMA Planning Goals at RCW 36.70A.020. Such a state goal would embody Washington APA's mission of promoting sustainable communities and is consistent with our national organization's Policy Guides for Energy and Planning for Sustainable Communities. If this legislation reaches your desk, we urge your approval.

While our review of the draft report recommendations and strategies indicates that the CAT recognized the importance of the GMA goals, the fundamental importance of the Growth Management Act itself was not acknowledged in the overall Draft Recommendations. The Residential, Commercial and Industrial Technical Working Group (RCI-TWG) did recognize the contributions of GMA that have already reduced emissions; however, these accomplishments and the promise of even greater emissions reductions from bold and focused local planning merit even greater attention in the final CAT report.

Climate change brings a new urgency to the important planning work of Washington's cities and counties. The five following CAT recommendations especially stand out as being closely aligned to organizing principles and policy objectives of the GMA:

- Recommendation 3. Analyze Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Mitigation Options Early in Decision-Making, Planning Processes, and Development Projects
- Recommendation 5. Build and Continue to Redesign Communities that Offer Real and Reliable Alternatives to Single Occupancy Vehicles
- Recommendation 7. Invest in Washington's Existing Transportation Infrastructure to Move People and Goods Cleanly and Efficiently
- Recommendation 8. Design, Build, Upgrade and Operate New and Existing Buildings and Equipment to Maximize Energy Efficiency
- Recommendation 10. Restore and Retain the Health and Vitality of Washington's Farms and Forest Lands to Increase Carbon Sequestration and Storage, Reduce the Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Support the Provision of Biomass Fuels

Most of the strategies identified by the CAT to implement these five recommendations are familiar to planning practitioners, and in many cases represent policies that are already being employed in local government comprehensive plans. The following four strategies are noteworthy not only due to the ongoing work of local jurisdictions, but because of their potential to make a very large overall contribution of achieving state-wide goals.

- **RCI-3:** Promotion and Incentives for Improved Community Planning and Improved Design and Construction (Third-party Sustainability, Green, and Energy Efficiency Building Certification Programs) in the Private and Non-State Public Sectors
- **T-2:** State, Regional, and Local VMT Reduction Goals and Standards
- **T-9:** Promotion of Compact and Transit-Oriented Development
- **AW-7:** Preservation of Open Space/Agricultural Land

Policy RCI-9 accounts for about 13% of identified GHG savings in the Residential, Commercial, and Industrial Sector, while policies T-2 and T-9 together account for more than 74% of Transportation Sector savings. Together,

these three policies account for more than 25% of all 2008-2020 savings identified by the Climate Action Team! None of the policies identified above can achieve success if they stand alone – each is intricately interwoven in the land use-transportation fabric of our urban regions.

Local jurisdictions will be key partners with the State in reducing the causes of climate change and in mitigating its impacts, and the 1600 members of APA Washington will be on the front lines in implementing these recommendations and strategies in communities across the state. I was therefore frankly chagrined that both local jurisdictions and planning practitioners were notably absent from representation on the CAT and TWGs.

I respectfully ask that as the CAT and TWGs move forward into the next level of refining strategies and creating realistic implementation plans, you draw upon the broad and deep expertise represented by the membership of Washington APA. We would welcome the opportunity to have representation in the ongoing efforts of the Governor's Climate Action Team or Technical Working Groups. Likewise, we would be ready, willing, and able to assist in the formulation or vetting of future executive request legislation focused on the land use and transportation dimensions of climate change.

Again, congratulations on the work accomplished to date. We look forward to supporting and working with you in addressing these vital public policy issues. If you or members of your staff have questions regarding our comments or positions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Tovar", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

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