



The Honorable Senator Braun
Senate Ways and Means Committee
303 John A. Cherberg Building
Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Representative Ormsby
House Appropriations Committee
315 John L. O'Brien Building
Olympia, WA 98504

Re: Support for investments in planning

Dear Senator Braun, Representative Ormsby,

APA Washington respectfully submits the following comments in advance of the budget negotiations that the Washington Legislature will be undertaking in the coming weeks. We recognize both the challenges involved in developing a sound and sustainable state budget, as well as the significant amount of work that has already occurred.

APA Washington supports the identification of **funding for planning grants** through the Department of Commerce for comprehensive plan updates in jurisdictions with a 2018 comprehensive plan update deadline, **local authority for additional revenue sources**, such as permit fees, to support long-range planning, **sustainable revenue streams for local government general funds**, which fund the majority of planning work in the state, and funds to support **joint planning including school districts** and local governments – especially critical now as the legislature implements its response to the McCleary decision.

- Washington State has a long history of successful and coordinated planning that brings together cities, counties, state agencies, consultants, and stakeholders to help make great communities happen across the state. However, many local governments – which is where most planning happens – have seen declining financial capacity to accomplish their responsibilities and plan a strong future. Funding levels for planning have been reduced, and state support for planning is now almost nonexistent. The 1% cap on property tax growth has created a structural drain on general fund budgets which hits long range planning hard.
- Good planning generates value and pays ongoing dividends through efficient and effective provision of public services, a healthier and more stable tax base, and engaged communities. Like a healthy education system, good planning helps set the stage for a stronger Washington for decades to come.

Washington State Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA Washington) is an organization of people who make great communities happen through our engagement in public and private sector planning and decision making. We share our experience, knowledge and resources, stay current on planning issues and ideas, and contribute to great places. Our membership includes public and private sector professional planners, students, citizen planners, planning commissioners and government officials, and others.

APA Washington and its members welcome the opportunity to continue to engage in dialogue with the other key stakeholders on this topic and appreciate the opportunity to weigh in.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paula Reeves". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

Paula Reeves, AICP CTP
President, Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association

cc:

Members of the House Appropriations Committee
Members of the Senate Ways & Means Committee