



February 8, 2022

Representative Frame, Chair, House Finance Committee, and members of the committee,

The Washington State Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA Washington) respectfully submits comments **in support of House Bill 1880 (and its companion Senate Bill 5861)**, which would authorize certain cities (Everett, Shoreline, Renton, and Tacoma) to each establish a housing benefit district for affordable housing and community development projects near public transit, ensuring that certain housing thresholds must be met for income groups ranging from extremely low-income to middle-income. This legislation also includes a required audit to ensure the number of affordable units is compliant. A sales and use tax up to 0.025% is allowed to be implemented. These taxes and audit penalties must fund relevant housing benefit district work such as planning efforts, infrastructure costs, and land acquisition for housing. Lastly, the Housing Benefits District Advisory Board shall be created, and support shall be given by Housing Finance Committee staff.

In the midst of a housing crisis, this legislation encourages additional affordable housing development and housing development more generally, and ensures that the affordable housing is maintained. The transit-oriented emphasis of this affordable housing legislation has the clear benefit of more equitable development because lower-income citizens can live near transit and associated amenities. Climate change mitigation is also inherent in this legislation because increased housing near transit reduces dependence on automobiles.

Though we feel that there are elements of this legislation that could be clarified or strengthened, **we emphasize our overall support of House Bill 1880 (and its companion SB 5861)**. We would be happy to provide additional information or answer any questions you may have at this point. Thank you for your consideration.

APA Washington is a 1,400 member association of public and private sector professional planners, planning commissioners and elected officials, among others. We work every day to implement the state's growth management and planning framework and appreciate the opportunity to provide information that will help improve it for all Washingtonians.

Best regards,

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President, Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association