



The American Planning Association seeks to Make Great Communities Happen for all, and the Washington State chapter (APA-WA) is dedicated to that goal. The 2022 legislative session presents urgent challenges, and will be vitally important to set our state on a path to a sustainable and equitable recovery from the pandemic and its side effects.

2022 Session Legislative Priorities

Washington Needs to Act Immediately to Plan for Climate Resilience

Reducing our carbon footprint is a moral obligation to future generations, as well as a wise investment in resiliency and the state's economy. Planning and preparing for a warming world is also an unfortunate necessity and a top priority. APA WA strongly supports:

- ***Integrating Climate Planning into the Growth Management Act framework and processes;***
- ***Commerce Guidance on clear metrics;***
- ***Coordination and collaboration at all governmental scales as fundamental to a successful effort.***
- ***State funding to address climate planning, essential for cities and counties.***
- ***Updating, clarifying, and strengthening the state's statutory greenhouse gas emission reduction benchmarks.***
- ***Legislative efforts to pursue climate action plans, regulatory measures, incentives, technical standards and specifications (e.g., LEED), and mitigation and adaptation measures.***
- ***Incorporating climate impacts, indicators, and benchmarks in comprehensive plans, environmental impact analysis, and development reviews.***
- ***Climate Policy including adaptation, resilience and hazard mitigation at all levels of government and among agencies rather than only at the local level.***
- ***Proactive inclusion of adaptation, resilience, and hazard mitigation strategies and pre-disaster recovery planning in Comprehensive Plans.***

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, 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.***

- **Support recommendations in accordance with the Housing Affordability Response Team and the Affordable Housing Advisory Board 2020 Legislative Agenda (Dec. 4 draft).**
 - Provide planning grants and require local governments to plan for housing at every income level, especially for lower-income households, and require accountability (e.g., similar to buildable lands requirements).
 - 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.
- **Expand the availability of accessory dwelling units, duplexes, triplexes, and other denser housing types in single family areas throughout the state.**

Apply Equity Lens for Environmental Justice

The American Planning Association 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 racial and economic integration.

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

Provide Fiscal 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 effective planning work for upcoming local comprehensive plan periodic 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 travelled.***
- ***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.***
- ***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 impacts as well as resiliency/disaster recovery planning strategies to ensure investments are protected.***
- ***Apply an equity lens for 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.***

Ensure Coordinated Planning for Schools

School facilities have the potential to be positive centers of community life and to provide important neighborhood amenities like recreation and space for physical activity. When improperly located, they can also create permanent demands on school district and family transportation budgets; create and incentivize sprawl and threaten farm, forest, and rural land; and make inefficient use of public infrastructure. Washington APA continues to prefer that schools serving urban populations continue to be located in urban areas, with a focus on healthy site planning and priority for safe walking and bicycle paths between school facilities and adjacent neighborhoods.

- ***Include of local school districts in the local planning process(s).***
- ***Support siting schools and other public facilities within urban growth areas.***
- ***Support funding for collaborative efforts between school districts, local governments, and others (such as the Clark County Quality Schools Task Force) to address siting challenges and support smart and healthy site planning in a positive and thoughtful way.***

Align Periodic Update Cycle and Census

There have been many discussions recently about adjusting the statewide periodic update cycle. Two goals have been expressed for this adjustment, including better matching the periodic update cycle to the release schedule for planning data that flows from the decennial census, and reducing costs to local governments by reducing planning work.

Moving from an 8-year cycle to a 10-year cycle would better match the census schedule, state population forecasts that flow from that, and other cyclical planning work like buildable lands analyses. While certainly sensitive to fiscal constraints, APA believes that more planning work and more up-to-date plans better serves the state's residents (present and future) and businesses.

- ***Move to a ten-year periodic cycle that matches up with the decennial census and other cyclical planning work.***
- ***Avoid reducing the amount of value-added planning work in the state. One option could be to move to a ten-year cycle for the most involved piece of work, which is advancing the planning period and accommodating a new increment of growth, then review plans every five years to remove obsolete provisions, update existing conditions and inventories, address new and updated best-available-science since the last periodic update, and address new and revised state laws that affect planning.***