

<a href="#">Home</a>	<a href="#">About Us</a>	<a href="#">Sections &amp; Committees</a>	<a href="#">Resources</a>	<a href="#">Events &amp; Training</a>	<a href="#">Publications</a>	<a href="#">Professional Development</a>	<a href="#">Sponsor &amp; Advertise</a>
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THE

# WASHINGTON PLANNER

A Publication of the American Planning Association Washington Chapter

**December 2013    Volume XXVI, Issue 12**

## IN THIS ISSUE...

[December President's Message](#)

[Slope Stability and Vegetative Soil Stabilization in the Puget Sound Region](#)

[Legislative Update](#)

[New videos help city councils prepare for Growth Management Act and regulatory updates](#)

[Build Your Communications Skills with the Planners' Communication Guide 2.0](#)

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## **December President's Message**

Ivan shares some planning parallels from the Pacific Crest Trail and looks ahead to chapter business and events.

**Continues »**

## **Slope Stability and Vegetative Soil Stabilization in the Puget Sound Region**

The University of Washington Botanic Gardens has a daylong seminar this Thursday that may be of interest to planners in Western Washington.

**Continues »**

## **Legislative Update**

Boeing's new jet and state transportation funding are the subjects of this month's legislative update.

**Continues »**

## **New videos help city councils prepare for Growth Management Act and regulatory updates**

Washington planners created this toolkit especially for city decision makers who often lack information about the process.

**Continues »**

## **Build Your Communications Skills with the Planners' Communication Guide 2.0**

New online resource provides tips on how to make social and traditional media work for your projects.

**Continues »**



Home	About Us	Sections & Committees	Resources	Events & Training	Publications	Professional Development	Sponsor & Advertise
------	----------	-----------------------	-----------	-------------------	--------------	--------------------------	---------------------

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## December President's Message

By Ivan Miller, AICP



Ivan Miller, AICP—President, APA Washington

### LESSONS FROM THE PCT

I had the opportunity for some late season hiking this year, and Snowy Lakes on the Pacific Crest Trail was the destination. The views, the icy swim, and the friendly "through hikers" made this a perfect choice. The great weather and rich sunsets were uplifting. The ultra-light through-hikers were beaming, and the trail-picked, butter-fried mushrooms were supreme.

After a few days of mental hiatus from work and the APA chapter, a nagging thought cropped up—is there a planning-related lesson to learn from this experience? Clearly!

Here is more or less what I wrote to myself when arriving back at the car:

- Get on a mountaintop more often.
- Carry less: sit on the ground, eat from the cooking pot; there was so much stuff I never used.
- That lake was cold (!) but awesome.
- Big hills hurt and they bring me joy.
- My trip is over; I should have been the last one back to the car



Picturesque Sunset on the Pacific Crest Trail

These notes are about life and hiking but they also apply to planning. Simply said, planning is about the long view and connecting the dots. Planners should be good at being comprehensive. We also need to be good at focusing on less stuff—just those things that really matter. Through the day-to-day scrum of board meetings, public comment, budgets, spreadsheets, and long articles, I try to remember that planning can hurt and also bring joy. Patience and taking the time to finish a project well is a skill set I'm still working to improve!

### WHAT HAS THE CHAPTER BEEN UP TO LATELY?

October through December is budget season for the APA Washington Board, and

the chapter's committees and sections are developing their yearly work plans. I will write more extensively

about this in the January edition of *The Washington Planner* once the decisions have been made. For now, if you have comments or suggestions regarding chapter priorities before the board meeting, please [contact me](#).

The Board has also been hard at work on the second edition of the chapter's Biennial Report. This report highlights our activities and accomplishments over the past two years and past president Jill Sterrett is putting on the final touches. Clear your calendars in early January and get ready to give this page-turner a read.

I hope you will be inspired by the Biennial Report and join our important work! The chapter could use a person on our membership committee to help with outreach to planners that are not yet members, a person who went to WWU on our scholarship committee, a person who reads every edition of *Planetizen* or *APA Interact* on our Communications Committee, and a volunteer or two on our Community Planning Assistance Team that provides planning assistance to smaller communities. These volunteer activities are a great way to give something back to your community and to the planning profession.

## CONFERENCES?

We are now past the embryonic stages of our two upcoming annual statewide conferences: the Washington Chapter Annual Conference from October 16–17, 2014 in Spokane and the APA National Planning Conference from April 18–22, 2015 in Seattle. We have co-chairs for both events and are forming our local host committees. Get these dates on your calendars, put training funds in your budget, start considering sessions you want to propose or projects/plans you want to submit for awards, and start thinking about all the planners you can reach through these wise investments of your sponsorship dollars.

## WHAT HAS APA NATIONAL DONE FOR ME LATELY?

There's always so much happening at APA National: resources you can use, committees/task forces you can participate in, and divisions you can subscribe to. This month's edition of *The Washington Planner* highlights one new resource from APA, the Planner's Communications Guide 2.0.

A few months ago we published an article about the importance of communication and referred to this practice as *celebrating the outcomes of our work*. In other words, it's stating in plain language the impact of planning on people's lives, the economy, and the environment. We suggested this was part of a new and improved planning model. Maybe the national APA read this and decided it was time to update their Communications Guide. Learn more about this resource in [Kimbra Wellock's article](#).



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**Washington Chapter**  
*Making Great Communities Happen*


[Home](#)
[About Us](#)
[Sections & Committees](#)
[Resources](#)
[Events & Training](#)
[Publications](#)
[Professional Development](#)
[Sponsor & Advertise](#)

[SEARCH](#)

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[December President's Message](#)

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## Slope Stability and Vegetative Soil Stabilization in the Puget Sound Region

The diverse landscape of the rainy Puget Sound area present challenges regarding the threat of erosion and landslides, which can cause permitting problems, transportation difficulties, and of course safety challenges.

The University of Washington Botanic Gardens has an upcoming day seminar on December 5 to educate urban planners and other professionals on Puget Sound's regional geology and hydrology. Planners working on landscape architecture and design, ecology, shoreline management, and other land use specialties are especially encouraged to attend. The seminar will educate attendees on the interaction of land and water and provide solutions and tools to use when issues arise.

Academics, contractors, and local government officials will share current projects and research, along with information on permitting and regulations. Other scheduled speakers include:

**Dr. Stan Boyle, Vice President, Shannon & Wilson, Inc.**

(Geosynthetics for Erosion Control and Reinforcement)

**Bill Laprade, Senior Vice President, Shannon & Wilson, Inc.**

(Geology and Hydrology of Puget Sound)

**Elliott Menashe, Natural Resource Manager & Consultant, Greenbelt Consulting**

(Vegetation and Slope Stability; Vegetation in Conjunction with Engineering Solutions Used to Avert Flooding, Erosion, and Landslides)

The seminar takes place on Thursday, December 5 from 8:15 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the University of Washington Botanic Gardens' Center for Urban Horticulture, located at 3501 NE 41st St. in Seattle. The cost is \$150. You can register online at <http://www.uwbotanicgardens.org/education>. For more information, email the organization at [urbhort@uw.edu](mailto:urbhort@uw.edu) or call 206-685-8033.



Home	About Us	Sections & Committees	Resources	Events & Training	Publications	Professional Development	Sponsor & Advertise
------	----------	-----------------------	-----------	-------------------	--------------	--------------------------	---------------------

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## Legislative Update

By Michael Shaw

The Washington State Legislature returned to work once again this November to take up several important issues for the state. In an effort to encourage Boeing to build the 777x plane and its composite wing in Washington, the Governor called the Legislature into session on Thursday, November 7. By Saturday afternoon, November 9, they adjourned sine die after passing two bills that would extend the existing tax credit for commercial airline manufacture and a bill addressing workforce training (SB 5952 and HB 2088 respectively). Now, it remains to be seen whether this activity will bear fruit.

Initially, the Governor presented a 777x package containing five parts: the tax credit extension, workforce training, streamlined permitting, fish consumption (human health and water quality), and a transportation revenue package. It quickly became clear that there was no legislative agreement on the last three issues. Yet, by elevating the transportation revenue discussion, there was some progress.

Back in June, the House passed a transportation revenue package that would fund a number of highway projects, provide some support to local government, and provide several local funding options for transit and roads. The Senate did not act on this issue, but the Majority Coalition Caucus pushed for a number of reforms, and the Senate Transportation Committee held a number of listening sessions over the last several months in every part of the state. Although they heard some reticence about raising the gas tax, most of those attending the meetings testified to the need for transportation infrastructure investments in their communities.

During this last special session, negotiators from the House and the Senate met with the goal of seeking an agreement on a transportation funding plan. Although there was no agreement, Sen. Curtis King, a Republican from Yakima, did provide the Senate Majority Coalition Caucus with the details of a proposal that he presented to the House negotiators. There are a number of differences between what Sen. King unveiled and what the House package contained. Specifically, the House would provide a higher percentage of funding to transit, and the Senate would fund stormwater runoff prevention with money from the Model Toxics Control Account. That latter difference is a substantial problem for members of the environmental lobby.

Emphasizing there is no agreement, the Governor, in a press conference, noted that the special session helped move the transportation discussion forward and he voiced hopes that an agreement could be reached by the next scheduled legislative committee meetings on November 21 and 22. Because the Legislature adjourned this special session sine die, Governor Inslee would need to call another special session in order for a transportation revenue package to pass at the end of November, assuming an agreement is reached. As of press time, discussions are still underway.

Although transportation has the main stage, other important matters are also occurring in the legislative arena. On November 6 the Climate Legislative and Executive Workgroup met in Olympia and reviewed the outline of a final report, including actions and policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the inclusion of minority reports.

On October 31, the Association of Washington Cities hosted a stakeholder meeting regarding last session's raid on the Public Works Trust Fund. Representatives from the Department of Commerce and the Public Works Board spoke about surveys they sent local government to determine the impact caused by the sweep of the Trust Fund to fund the State's education obligation. Many of the fund's stakeholders spoke about last session and how best to address the situation. The stakeholders decided to create a smaller

group to help guide education efforts and to continue this discussion.

As we move toward the start of the 2014 session, the APA Washington chapter will review its legislative agenda. Part of this work will include evaluating the results of the chapter's survey regarding the Growth Management Act. From there, the chapter will determine its strategies during the upcoming 60-day session to address the issues already set forth by the Legislature and the Governor and continue working with other stakeholders on shared priorities.

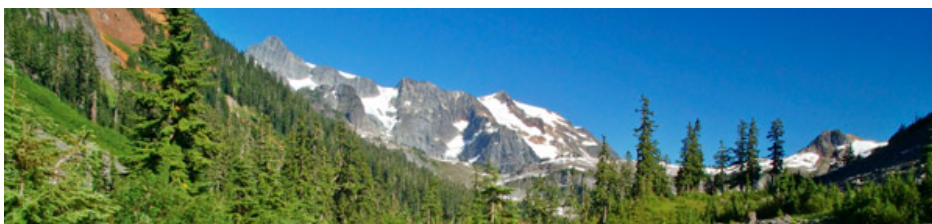
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Home	About Us	Sections & Committees	Resources	Events & Training	Publications	Professional Development	Sponsor & Advertise
------	----------	-----------------------	-----------	-------------------	--------------	--------------------------	---------------------

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[New videos help city councils prepare for Growth Management Act and regulatory updates](#)
[Build Your Communications Skills with the Planners' Communication Guide 2.0](#)

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## New videos help city councils prepare for Growth Management Act and regulatory updates

By Joe Tovar, FAICP

Virtually every planner in Washington State is familiar with the provisions of the Growth Management Act (GMA) and the update deadlines for comprehensive plans and development regulations. But that is not the case for most of the decision makers with ultimate authority for adopting city plans and codes-the members of city councils.

Last winter I conducted a series of interviews for the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) on the topic of what city elected officials know about the GMA, land use policy making, and the effectiveness of existing or potential training opportunities to learn more. The interviewees all agreed that most city elected officials have only a passing familiarity with the goals and requirements of the GMA.

This finding is not surprising considering that many of them were not in office when their community completed its last plan and code updates eight years ago. Even fewer of them were in office two decades ago, so almost none had firsthand experience with the public clamor that led to the GMA of 1990 or the Regulatory Reform Act of 1995.

The two dozen mayors, city council members, and city managers I interviewed agreed that city elected officials received no formal training on the purposes and requirements of the GMA, or even land use policy making in general. The limited training they typically receive on "land use" is focused on how to minimize legal liability rather than how to maximize understanding of the whys and hows of land use policy making and implementation.

The city leaders I interviewed agreed that in order for city councils to be prepared for the GMA updates, they must become more knowledgeable about land use decision-making than simply how to avoid legal risk. An email survey of 50 city planning directors affirmed this conclusion. The consensus was that the best way to effectively accomplish the needed training would be to offer a program that takes place in the respective city halls of each council and that is included as part of regularly scheduled council meetings.

### A NEW GMA TOOLKIT FOR CITIES

The solution? A series of AWC-sponsored online training videos, presented together with a real-time structured dialogue between council members and their staffs. Working with AWC staff and city officials from Wenatchee to Sequim, from Olympia to Everett, I helped assemble and edit a dozen training videos titled "GMA Comp Plan Conversation Starters."

The credible on-camera talent includes veteran city mayors, council members, planning directors, and private consultants. They review the major components of the law, the range of methods and choices available, and relate city success stories with different aspects of comprehensive plan-making and implementation.

Each video is about seven minutes long and posted on the AWC website at:

<http://www.awcnet.org/ResourcesResearch/GMACompPlanConversationStarters.aspx>. The twelve segments are:

- Why your comp plan matters
- GMA and budget decisions
- GMA and economic development
- Your GMA choices: what's mandatory and what's optional?
- Strategies to implement your plan
- Impact fees
- Form-based code: is it a good fit?
- Public engagement
- Minimizing legal risks
- Sunshine laws and fishbowl meetings
- GMA, SEPA, LID, and the environmental landscape
- How do council, staff, and the commission work together?

Posted with each video are “conversation starter sheets” with questions to help frame the dialogue among city elected officials, their staffs, and planning commissioners. As councils consider the scope, schedule, and resources for their GMA update work programs, this toolkit of training videos can help them focus on topics of greatest local interest, and do so in a format and venue that can easily be fit into their agenda schedules.

For more information about this program, contact AWC staffer Andy Meyer, AICP, at [andym@awcnet.org](mailto:andym@awcnet.org) or project consultant Joe Tovar, FAICP, at [joe@josephthovar-faicp.com](mailto:joe@josephthovar-faicp.com)





Home	About Us	Sections & Committees	Resources	Events & Training	Publications	Professional Development	Sponsor & Advertise
------	----------	-----------------------	-----------	-------------------	--------------	--------------------------	---------------------

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[December President's Message](#)
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[Legislative Update](#)
[New videos help city councils prepare for Growth Management Act and regulatory updates](#)
[Build Your Communications Skills with the Planners' Communication Guide 2.0](#)

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## Build Your Communications Skills with the Planners' Communication Guide 2.0

By Kimbra Wellock, AICP

Need to give a media interview? Want to use social media to connect with your community? Need help navigating a contentious issue? [APA's Planners' Communication Guide 2.0](#) can help. This online, interactive guide provides tips and resources in five areas, and includes definitions of key communications terms, links to worksheets and web resources, and video and audio clips.

### A LOOK INSIDE THE GUIDE:

#### Section 1: Messages

People are busy, bombarded by thousands of messages each day from radio, television, and newspapers. Learn how to create and use compelling messages to make an impact when speaking to the media, key stakeholders, and the public, and bring consistency to how you and your team communicate about a project or issue.

#### Section 2: Media 101

The media provide one of the most effective, far-reaching, and credible ways to reach broad audiences with information about a project or issue. Learn how to work with the media to get your message out, prepare for media interviews, and what to do when a reporter calls you.

#### Section 3: Social Media

Social media provides an opportunity to engage key audiences in an interactive dialogue. Learn how to integrate different social media platforms into traditional media and communications efforts and manage your organization's online reputation. This section also discusses how to comply with open meeting laws and establish social media guidelines.

#### Section 4: Allies and Partners

Relationships with members of your community — elected officials, business leaders, developers, neighborhood organizations, municipal employees, and citizens - are pivotal to success. Learn how to identify and garner support from allies within your community, leverage partnerships to help advance good planning, and get your message across to your elected and appointed officials.

#### Section 5: Contentious Issues

Planners tackle complicated and difficult issues. Sooner or later, every planner encounters a contentious issue or controversy. Learn how to respond to critics or those opposed to a planning initiative and engage opponents to work toward a common goal.

### GET THE GUIDE

The Planners' Communication Guide 2.0 is available to APA members only by visiting <http://www.planning.org/communicationsguide/>.