



Washington State has one of the strongest community planning statutes in the nation, and for the past 25 years, this has enabled our citizens, businesses, elected leaders, and our profession to help “make great communities happen” across the state. APA looks forward to working with the Ruckelshaus Center, peer organizations, and stakeholders to carry out the Road Map to Washington’s Future and help ensure Washington’s next 25 years and beyond continue to be successful at promoting sustainable development patterns, preserving farmland, building a resilient economic base, and saving taxpayer dollars. While that work is underway, below are the priorities of the Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association for the 2018 legislative session.

2018 Legislative Priorities

Support funding for planning

The need to provide local governments with the tools to adequately fund planning remains a high priority for APA Washington. Good planning generates value and pays ongoing dividends through efficient and effective provision of public services, a healthy tax base, and engaged communities.

- ***APA Washington supports statutory authority for local governments to apply some permit fee revenue towards long-range planning works.***

Climate change

The legislature is strongly urged to take decisive action on this issue in 2018. Local planning has for years been directed to help support a lower statewide carbon footprint, but much of that planning has been hampered by distorted (low) prices for carbon-based energy. Pricing carbon would go a long way towards supporting those plans and making a low-carbon Washington a reality.

- ***APA Washington supports updating, clarifying, and strengthening the state’s statutory greenhouse gas emission reduction benchmarks; as well as action to establish mechanisms, such as pricing carbon pollution, that will achieve those benchmarks.***
- ***APA Washington supports legislative efforts to pursue climate action plans, regulatory measures, incentives, technical standards and specifications, and mitigation and adaption measures into comprehensive plans.***
- ***APA Washington supports incorporating climate impacts, indicators, and benchmarks in comprehensive plans, environmental impact analysis, and development reviews.***

Collaborative Road Map

Washington APA is appreciative of the Legislature’s funding of the Ruckelshaus Center’s Collaborative Road Map for Washington’s Future project in the 2017 state budget. This work will provide a comprehensive, evidence-based study of how well the Growth Management Act and related statutes have met their goals, as well as recommendations to help the state nurture economic and environmental health and protect the quality of life in our communities through a deliberate, coherent, and effective framework of law, institutions and public policy.

- ***APA Washington strongly supports the Road Map to Washington’s Future project, requests that APA continue to be involved in working and stakeholder groups, and expresses early support for additional resources to support the Road Map work as necessary.***

School siting

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, incentivize more sprawl and convert working or potential farm and forest 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.

- ***APA Washington supports public facilities serving primarily urban populations, including schools, locating within urban growth areas, near the communities that they serve.***
- ***APA Washington supports collaborative efforts between school districts, local governments, and others to address siting challenges in a positive and thoughtful way, including support for the development of toolkits and other resources.***

Annexation reform

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.

- ***APA Washington supports a state program of incentives and regulatory simplification to facilitate and encourage annexations in urban growth areas.***

Infrastructure

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.

- ***APA Washington supports state appropriations, local funding authority, and loan programs to address infrastructure needs that align with state, regional, and local plans and policies.***

Housing & Homelessness

Meeting needs for housing and homelessness is a significant and growing issue. Planning for housing to meet all income levels in a manner that is sustainable and takes into account transportation facilities and other services is needed.

- ***APA Washington supports dedicated sources of public revenue and other tools to support appropriate production and preservation of affordable housing and to address homelessness.***

Hirst and Foster decisions

If local governments don't plan for water availability, the consequences will be dry irrigation wells and inadequate water for in-stream flows. We believe ensuring water availability before granting development permits protects all water users. The Washington State Supreme Court's decision in Whatcom County v. Hirst is a common sense interpretation of the GMA requirement to protect surface and ground water in RCW 36.70A.070 and the requirements for adequate water supplies for building permits and subdivisions in RCW 19.27.097(1); RCW 58.17.110. The decision highlighted the importance of planning for sufficient water supplies as well as the need to provide adequate funding for Ecology to provide technical assistance to counties and cities and for counties and cities to plan and provide for adequate water resources.

The Foster decision points out that urban water service providers must have consistent and achievable mitigation standards when new water rights are required to serve urban growth areas and provide for the higher densities necessary to accommodate the forecasted population in a manner that is sustainable and affordable.

- ***APA Washington supports legislation that will give counties, cities, and Ecology improved tools and adequate funding to carry out their responsibilities to plan for adequate water where it is available and needed.***