



January 29, 2018

Representative Fitzgibbon, Chair, House Committee on Environment, and members of the committee,

The Washington State Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA Washington) respectfully submits comments **supporting House Bill 2599** allowing local governments to collect reasonable fees to cover some costs for long-range planning.

APA Washington is a 1,400 member association of public and private sector professional planners, planning commissioners and elected officials, among others. We witness first-hand the value to communities and the development process that is provided by planning work, and we also have a front row seat to the challenge of funding this important work. We appreciate the public hearings given to this important piece of legislation, and would like to offer the following comments in support of HB 2599:

- **This bill would allow, at local discretion, a modest supplement to general funds** for long range planning work. Planning work is initiated and directed by elected officials at the local and state level, and includes: developing new and updated subarea plans for neighborhoods, business districts, and newly developing areas; revising, streamlining, and updating development regulations; and updating comprehensive plans to address new and evolving policy areas including new state mandates.
- **Planning generates value for the community.** Planning work often improves land values and tax revenue from development and property taxes, responds to community input and addresses concerns with existing conditions or plans, generates value for individuals and businesses involved in land development
- **Planning generates value for developers and property owners.** Planning projects often wind up allowing new uses, generating new opportunities for development, or allowing more density or a more valuable product. Code projects streamline development regulations to clarify ambiguous provisions, remove redundant sections, and improve usability. Public engagement improves community buy-in and can reduce opposition and roadblocks at the time of development. Planning for capital facilities can help reduce infrastructure backlogs and other impediments to development, and SEPA planned actions speed up the development process and reduce building costs.
- **There's a nexus between planning and permitting.** Permitting and planning both address land development. Individuals and businesses engaged in the land development process arguably have more of a connection to planning work than an average taxpayer who never visits the permit counter and currently bears the full cost of this work.

We are open to discussion and would be happy to collaborate on amendments such as clarifying the definition of long range planning work or making more of a connection to direct benefits for permit customers. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rick Sepler, AICP
President, Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association