



About the Legislative Committee and WA-APA's Legislative Activities

WA-APA formed a legislative committee in 1989, and the committee's function and purpose has continued to be important to the well-being of the chapter. Over the past few years, the committee has maintained fairly consistent operating procedures, which include the following.

- **Membership:** The committee is supported by a professional lobbyist, and is made up of approximately 15 volunteer WA-APA members, including both public and private sector planners, as well as planners from eastern, central, and western Washington.
- **Weekly meetings:** The committee meets twice a week by phone conference during the legislative session. These calls occur on Tuesday at 4 PM and Thursday at noon. During the phone meetings, committee members discuss proposed bills, legislative deadlines, and chapter positions on issues. Committee members then volunteer/are assigned bills to review.
- **Bill reviews:** Following the phone meeting, committee members review and comment on bills, following a detailed process and template.
- **Bill Review Positions:** The committee has tried to keep the position statements that are to be sent to legislators brief. The committee usually takes one of the following positions on a bill: strongly support, support, neutral, oppose, or strongly oppose. If the position is neutral, a letter is usually not sent. Committee members are encouraged to make suggestions that will help improve the bill and thereby allow the chapter to support the bill.
- **Consensus Model:** The committee operates via a consensus model with the Board's Executive Committee being the final decision-maker on position statements and the chapter President or other officer designated to sign statement on behalf of the chapter. In cases where there is clear support or opposition, a letter is sent. In cases with no clear consensus and/or a great diversity in opinions, no Legislative Committee recommendation is set forth. In cases with bills that could be supported with changes, suggestions are made regarding changes in the bill language or other issues, and where appropriate, a Legislative Committee recommendation is set forth.

Over the past few years, WA-APA embarked upon an ambitious program to advance the GMA and to assure that planners have a voice in that process. The results of that program include the following:

- Publication of *Livable Washington: APA's Action Agenda for Growth Management* in 2002. WA-APA updated *Livable Washington* in 2004. Both of these documents have been widely shared with legislators and others to inform their deliberations regarding GMA and planning issues.
- Participation in the GMA Working Group, a coalition of nine wide-ranging interest groups who met to develop legislative amendments to refine the GMA. The group was successful in passing 4 pieces of legislation during the 2004 session, including: (1) SSB 6534, refining the rules on industrial land banks; (2) ESHB 2905, clarifying the designation criteria for LAMIRDs; (3) SB 6237, allowing for limited retail sales on designated agricultural resource lands; and

(4) SHB 2781, providing for expedited state agency review of development regulation amendments.

- WA-APA continued to work in collaboration with the GMA Working Group during the 2005 session, although the group was unable to come to consensus on bills related to best available science, GMA update timelines, accessory uses in agricultural areas, and more. The group did not re-convene in 2006, although WA-APA continued to work collaboratively with many of these stakeholders, first in commenting on the Governor's Land Use Initiative proposals, and more generally throughout the 2006 legislative session.
- WA-APA participated in the GMA Affordable Housing Task Force during 2006, supports the recommendations set for by that Task Force on October 18, 2006, and will continue to work in collaboration with the Task Force members to implement and strengthen those recommendations.

WA-APA's Board adopted a Strategic Plan in October 2004 and began to update it in July 2006 with the goal of completing the update by March 2007. This plan identified two main themes: (1) Organizational Capacity; and (2) Advocacy and Outreach. The second theme is directed externally towards increasing the role of the WA-APA as an advocate of good planning. The intent of these goals is to establish WA-APA as an authority and resource for planning, to develop a constituency and advocate for good planning, and to increase public awareness and understanding of planning issues.

WA-APA has received much positive feedback regarding its heightened participation in legislative matters from other organizations involved in the legislative process, as well as from legislators themselves. Based on this, the Board continues to support a strong presence for WA-APA in legislative matters.