

2016 APA MINNESOTA LEGISLATIVE POLICY PLATFORM



The Minnesota Chapter of the American Planning Association is the predominant professional planning organization in Minnesota. We are an 800-member non-profit organization consisting of planning professionals, educators, local officials, and planning commissioners. APA MN is involved in activities on behalf of state and regional agencies, counties, cities, towns, educational institutions and the private sector.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION



Sustainable multimodal transportation enhancing access and mobility

APA MN SUPPORTS:

- Increased funding for multi-modal transportation, including both urban and rural areas and covering capital investment in all modes, including roads and bridges, transit, air, rail and port facilities, and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.
- Prioritization of road maintenance and safety improvements over significant expansion of the highway system.
- Mileage-based user fees, which will be necessary as fuel efficiency improves and as electric vehicles become more prevalent.
- State legislation that enables value capture for transit oriented development, so that municipalities can maximize return on transportation investments and build livable communities that do not require use of a car.
- Buildout of a well-planned public transportation system in the Twin Cities metro area that includes light rail transit, bus rapid transit, and local bus improvements in order to improve access to jobs, elevate the region's competitiveness on a national scale, and enhance the state's economic vitality.
- Changes to Municipal State Aid design standards intended to allow county and municipal governments to employ context-sensitive design that accommodates and promotes bicycling and walking.
- Implementation and strengthening of the MNDOT complete streets policy by incorporating bicycles and pedestrians into road and bridge projects as well as proactively identifying and constructing stand-alone facilities statewide.
- Prioritization of bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements to neighborhoods and communities with low rates of vehicle ownership in order to improve access for disadvantaged populations.

LIVABLE COMMUNITIES AND HOUSING



Livable communities made up of affordable and inclusive neighborhoods.

APA MN SUPPORTS:

- Providing sufficient funding for low income and work-force housing through tax credits and/or passage of a bonding bill in the next legislative session to fund General Obligation bonds for Public Housing and Housing Infrastructure Bonds.
- Incentives and legislative changes to encourage racial and economic integration in communities and neighborhoods, including:
 - Changes in MHFA rules and practice to direct housing assistance to communities and neighborhoods where housing projects will promote integrated neighborhoods;
 - Changes in infrastructure and economic development programs providing incentives for community-wide integration approaches such as inclusionary zoning; and
 - Changes in enabling law applying to inclusionary zoning to provide for the option of making a payment to a locally administered fund for affordable housing in lieu of providing affordable housing as part of the site (similar to parkland dedication requirements).
- Programs and incentives to maintain healthy housing quality through the adoption of building and housing codes in Minnesota communities to promote affordable, integrated, and healthy neighborhoods.
- Programs and incentives to provide life-cycle housing for seniors that can be developed in ways that promote independent housing and aging in place.

COMPREHENSIVE AND STATEWIDE PLANNING



Fundamental planning principles which incorporate intergovernmental cooperation, effective planning tools, and excellence in citizen involvement.

APA MN SUPPORTS:

- Continued regional planning in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.
- Local autonomy in the development and approval of comprehensive plans and official controls for all local jurisdictions outside the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.
- Strengthened comprehensive planning outside the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, including:
 - A more clearly defined role for comprehensive planning in guiding public investments and private development.
 - Incentives to prepare comprehensive plans that are linked to potential funding mechanisms for infrastructure and other improvements.
 - Defining of the required elements of comprehensive plans for all local jurisdictions, including:
 - Land Use
 - Housing and Economic Development
 - Parks and Trails
 - Transportation
 - Community Facilities
 - Natural, Cultural and Historic Resources
 - Energy, Sustainability and Resiliency
 - Health and Active Living
 - Intergovernmental Collaboration
 - Implementation
- A requirement that zoning and other official controls be in accordance with an up-to-date comprehensive plan.
- A requirement of planning and zoning certification training for all current and newly appointed planning commissioners and zoning board of adjustment members.
- Study of increased resources, involvement and coordination at the State level with planning for Minnesota communities.
- Changes to Minnesota's planning and zoning enabling laws (Minnesota Statutes Chapters 394 and 462) creating coordinated and updated planning and zoning statutes following principles outlined in [*Minnesota's Planning and Zoning Enabling Laws: Analysis and Options for Reform*](#) (APA MN, 2015).
- Changes to statutes and rules which ensure aviation safety and land use compatibility through effective integration of airport zoning with the municipal and county planning and zoning laws.

INTEGRATED RESOURCE PLANNING



Integrated renewable energy, local foods, and resilient planning practices which support Minnesota's interdependent resources.

APA MN SUPPORTS:

- Integrating planning efforts across resources and disciplines.
- A requirement for state-supported water-related planning efforts which include outreach to community planners and local officials for consideration of land-water relationships
- The incorporation of natural resources elements in comprehensive plans, including surface water and groundwater, natural landscapes, native plant communities, greenways, parks and trails, as a complete and interconnected system that is essential for a high-quality and sustainable living environment.
- Recognition and encouragement of renewable energy resources and opportunities in long-range plans and ordinances to better integrate land use decisions.
- Removing regulatory barriers to small-scale renewable technologies where they are compatible with urban land uses, as well as barriers to larger-scale renewable technologies in rural areas.
- Incorporating local food production, including urban agriculture, in land use plans and projects.
- State policies and programs that promote increased resilience to extreme rainfall and drought by preserving the natural functions of floodplains, keeping or restoring living cover on the landscape, and keeping natural drainage patterns intact.
- Integrating resiliency, hazard mitigation, climate change adaptation and mitigation, into local comprehensive, land use, and strategic planning documents to ensure Minnesotans that their communities are protected from high impact and extreme weather events to become sustainable and resilient.

COMMUNITY HEALTH



Integrating public health into planning for equitable, sustainable and resilient communities.

APA MN SUPPORTS:

- The integration of public health and planning documents and activities to address the social and environmental determinants of health.
- Incorporating public health into land use enabling legislation, land use decision-making, comprehensive planning, and local and regional planning documents and activities to reduce public health risks and protect the life and health of Minnesotans.
- Approaches to ensure decision makers are informed about the mutually beneficial opportunities integrating public health provides.
- Development and adoption of health criteria or adapting established health indices to improve community health.
- Development and adoption of climate mitigation and climate adaptation plans and policies as a means to improve public health in planning and realize the mutual benefits of planning for global change at the local level.
- Changes in land use, zoning, development standards, building codes, regulations, and ordinances that improve public health throughout Minnesota communities.
- Planning activities that address active living, multigenerational living, health equity, emergency and hazard planning, access to cultural resources and health and social services to protect and improve the lives and health of Minnesotans.
- Planning activities that improve mental health conditions that are affected by the social and environmental factors resulting from land use decisions.