



VIRGINIA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

2016 Legislative Agenda

Members of the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association are committed to supporting economic prosperity for all residents and businesses in the Commonwealth. Planning provides opportunities for Virginians to look into the future and work towards a long-term vision for their communities. Planners are reliable and trusted sources of information committed to the communities they serve.

The Chapter supports legislative and administrative actions which are outcome based and incorporate a review of return on investment in order to ensure efficient expenditures of resources.

The Chapter opposes legislation that focuses only on the short term economic benefit of actions without considering potential long term economic and other impacts on residents and businesses in the Commonwealth.

Planning & Zoning

Cash Proffers/Fees

The Chapter opposes any effort to establish state-mandated caps on development fees and proffers, including caps on water and sewer fees, review fees, and existing or prospective proffers; however, the Chapter supports impact fee legislation that allows for simple, locally-based formulae designed to reasonably achieve infrastructure and service objectives identified in local comprehensive/long-range plans with reasonable administrative requirements. The Chapter would not oppose a requirement that fees be based on actual and anticipated costs in each locality and providing that the rational basis for such actual and anticipated costs be established by each locality by ordinance in setting the fees or cash proffer amounts.

Design for all citizens

As life expectancy rises and as the number of citizens with significant physical disabilities and limitations increases, Virginia's local governments recognize that the man-made environment must be made accessible to and inclusive of all citizens, whether aging, disabled or facing other limitations. Therefore, the state's laws, regulations and policies must serve to increase accessibility for aging and disabled populations. Such laws, regulations and policies that do not assist reaching these goals should be amended or repealed. Building codes should be amended to help achieve these goals in new and existing construction. Further, state laws, regulations and policies must give local governments full authority to provide accessible private and public infrastructure.

Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program

The Commonwealth should give priority to—and consider a higher subsidy for—LIHTC projects that incorporate affordable and subsidized units into mixed use/mixed income development that includes a substantial component of market rate housing. Such a policy will reduce the stigma of supportive housing and avoid concentrating or re-concentrating poverty.

Value Added Agriculture

The Chapter is committed to working with varied organizations as the definition of “farming” and “agriculture” continues to evolve in the Commonwealth, in order to support practices which continue the economic growth and development of Virginia's agricultural heritage while still providing the flexibility to protect health, safety and welfare issues including adequate parking, access, and compliance with building code requirements for the types of uses associated with value added production.

Infrastructure and Community Development

Lifecycle Costing

The Chapter supports extending the requirement to consider the lifecycle costs of public investments to all state agencies and institutions.

Transportation System

The Chapter recognizes and applauds the tremendous strides made in the previous General Assembly sessions to provide additional and reliable funding for transportation. Moving ahead, the Chapter feels that implementation of the funding plan set in place by legislation in past sessions for transportation costs now in effect should be supported, without change, to address the current and future transportation needs throughout the Commonwealth.

Additionally, the Chapter supports transportation policy options and funding for mobility, connectivity, and accessibility to facilitate the easy movement of people and goods throughout the state by coordinating transportation and land use.

Complete Transportation Networks

The laws, policies and regulations of the Commonwealth should promote transportation priorities which include public transportation modes as well as safe and continuous pedestrian and bicycle transportation throughout the entire transportation network. Multi-modal transportation options must exist for all regions and localities and the decision to exercise such options should not be penalized through the loss of or reduction in maintenance payments.

Notification of Actions Impacting Military Infrastructure

The Chapter recognizes the importance of Department of Defense facilities in the Commonwealth. In addition to the national defense, these facilities are critical economic drivers. The Chapter supports efforts to enhance notification requirements of potential local actions that may impact military installations. Such enhanced notification allows DOD installations to properly advise localities of the impacts so it is appropriately factored into land use decisions.

Recurrent Flooding and Eastern Virginia Water Supply

The Chapter supports expanding the concept incorporated in § 15.2-2223.3 of developing strategies to combat projected sea level rise by providing localities facing recurrent flooding with additional planning, zoning and building code authority to implement such strategies. The overuse of the Potomac Aquifer in Eastern Virginia is causing increased intrusion of salt water into our groundwater supply and loss of the aquifer’s artesian head pressure. The Chapter strongly encourages the development of policies that protect drinking water supplies and economic investment throughout Virginia’s coastal plain.

Other

Local Planning Authority

The Chapter opposes any legislation that reduces the authority of local government for planning, zoning, subdivision, resource protection, neighborhood preservation and local redevelopment.

State to Comply with Local Plans and Zoning

State agencies should be required to comply with local comprehensive plans and local land use regulations and policies, including zoning, subject to specific case-by-case written override by the governor.

Budget Reductions to Planning

The Chapter opposes State budget actions that inhibit the ability of the Commonwealth, Planning District Commissions, and local governments to provide for the health, well-being and prosperity of its present and future citizens.

APA VIRGINIA MISSION: We promote planning as the foundation for effectively addressing the physical, economic and social changes taking place in Virginia. The Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA Virginia) is committed to increasing awareness about planning's many benefits, and enhancing its practice throughout the Commonwealth.