



APA Ohio Policy Platform - 2020

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As the only organization in Ohio that exists specifically “to promote good planning for the betterment of all Ohioans,” the American Planning Association Ohio Chapter (APA Ohio) believes that it is essential to clearly outline our professional position on key priority issues facing Ohio. This Policy Platform is intended to guide the Chapter’s lobbying efforts and inform positions taken by the Chapter on legislative issues. It is also meant to provide flexibility to address unanticipated issues that inevitably arise. Toward these ends, APA Ohio’s position on key issues facing our communities are listed below in three broad categories. These categories include (1) *Types of Planning – which describe the physical forms of our planning practices, (2) Planning Principles – which articulate the social impacts and outcomes planners hope to achieve through our work, and (3) Planning Issues – which include brief descriptions of the APA Ohio’s stance on current topics or legislation which have a direct impact in planning for our communities.* :

TYPES OF PLANNING

Community Development: APA Ohio supports initiatives to promote quality urban development and redevelopment that involve infill development, job creation and economic development. Infill development and redevelopment of blighted areas and abandoned properties supports economic development and renews essential services and infrastructure that improves quality of life in our communities. APA Ohio supports the use of community development corporations (CDCs) and Community Investment Corporations (CICs), Community Reinvestment Areas (CRAs), Tax Increment Financing Districts (TIF) and other similar tools to assist in the redevelopment and revitalization of declining areas or blighted areas. Further, APA Ohio advocates for the continued funding of HUD programs such as Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME (Home Investment Partnership Grant) to invest in infrastructure and services as well as provide affordable housing options and assistance in low to moderate income areas of our communities.

Comprehensive Planning: Comprehensive planning is the process that determines community goals and aspirations for a how a community develops or redevelops including all the various facets that make up our communities (housing, land use, transportation, urban design, parks and recreation, historic preservation, etc.). The outcome of the comprehensive planning process is the Comprehensive Plan document which outlines the public policies which the community has agreed will be used to inform and influence decision-making by elected and appointed leaders. APA Ohio supports the development of comprehensive plans as the basis for the adoption of zoning and specifically related to Ohio Revised Code sections 303.02 and 519.02. Despite several decisions made by Ohio Courts to the contrary (*most recently Apple Group, Ltd. v. Granger Twp. Bd. of Zoning Appeals*), APA Ohio emphatically believes that zoning alone does not constitute a comprehensive plan.

Disaster Planning: *The state of Ohio is susceptible to many types of disasters; particularly flood, wind, and severe storm hazards. APA Ohio recognizes the role of planning in the mitigations, preparation, response, and recovery of these disasters. Vulnerability and impact to disasters of all kinds is determined by social factors and the built environment, of which planners and policy makers actively design. APA Ohio supports initiatives to ensure planning intervention promotes long-term resiliency and protects all citizens, especially vulnerable populations, from the impact of disasters. Furthermore, APA Ohio supports inter-governmental funding for access to resources, financial and otherwise, for all four phases of disaster planning.*

Economic Development: APA Ohio supports sound planning and incentives that attract mixed land uses to diversify state, regional and local economies while supporting a high quality of life. Sustainable and quality economic development requires planning and appropriate intergovernmental coordination, including strong state support through incentives and flexibility for local governments. To increase economic diversity and sustainability in the global marketplace, encourage an innovation economy and create high quality jobs, APA Ohio supports attracting, retaining and expanding targeted industries that provide high quality and diverse employment opportunities for all Ohioans.

Energy Planning: APA Ohio supports a state energy policy consistent with efficient conservation of natural resources, multi-modal forms of transportation and flexible local land use planning programs that incentivize energy efficiency. A statewide energy policy should provide statutory incentives for renewable energy projects and programs that create jobs, redevelop existing buildings and infrastructure, attract and retain existing businesses and bring new industries to Ohio without compromising the State’s natural

resources. State policies should encourage the manufacturing, distribution and use of alternative and renewable energy sources. APA Ohio also supports APA's [Energy Policy Guide](#), which addresses the rising energy costs for homes, businesses and transportation while enhancing our energy security as a nation.

Infrastructure Planning: APA Ohio supports public and private investment and policies to invest in our aging infrastructure. Ohio's aging infrastructure is in dire need of improvements to bridges, dams, drinking water, hazardous waste, waterways, parks and recreation, ports, rail, roads, solid waste, transit and wastewater. Failing underground utilities such as gas lines, water lines, storm and sanitary sewers threaten the health and welfare of state residents. The essential role to protect the public health, safety and welfare is achieved through effective infrastructure planning and funding. Coordinated planning with public agencies and intergovernmental coordination is needed to allocate scarce resources efficiently. APA Ohio supports:

- Fixing Federal Highway Trust fund by raising the motor fuel tax;
- Exploring alternative long-term road funding;
- Increasing investment at all levels of government to rehabilitate aging infrastructure;
- Using asset management and best practices to improve safety and condition of infrastructure;
- Promoting policies such as dig once policies to better coordinate use of resources;
- Encouraging the use of green infrastructure practices to mimic natural waterway processes, when appropriate, to alleviate the repair and continued maintenance costs associated with additional grey infrastructure.

Land Use Planning: Land use planning refers to the process by which a community decides where, within its territory, different socioeconomic activities such as agriculture, housing, industry, recreation and commerce should take place. This includes protecting well-defined areas from development due to environmental, cultural, historical or similar reasons, and establishing provisions that control the nature of development activities. APA Ohio supports the development of land use plans as the core component of the comprehensive planning process. Additionally, integration with and potential modification of adopted land use plans must coordinate with and respond to transportation improvements as well as environmental and other changes within a community.

Rural Planning: APA Ohio recognizes that our state's rural and agricultural lands require long-range planning for sustainability, opportunities for economic development and diversification and supporting efforts to preserve and protect Ohio's scenic, natural and agricultural areas. In addition to protection of designated agricultural land, APA Ohio recognizes the importance of ensuring food security within our communities while working to adapt to a changing climate and the need to build resilience in our agricultural resources. In the portions of the state without zoning authority, APA Ohio supports the promotion of educational opportunities for residents and elected/appointed officials to learn more about the planning process so that they can respond to unexpected development proposals.

Transportation Planning: APA Ohio recognizes the importance of public transportation and multi-modal transportation to sustained economic development and job creation. APA Ohio supports long-term investment in public transit and a statewide dedicated funding source for transit. Ohio has the 14th largest ridership on public transit in the country, but spends less than 44 states on public transit. APA Ohio supports a robust multi-modal transportation network of highways, rail, air, transit, trails, bicycle and pedestrian modes of transportation. APA Ohio supports public and private funding on a statewide and local level for new transportation initiatives for alternative transportation initiatives and supports ODOT's new Active Transportation Grants funding. APA Ohio recognizes the importance of promoting mobility for people and goods, for coordinated transportation and land use initiatives and to promote transportation modal choice. APA Ohio also supports investment in research on emerging transportation technologies; including automation and shared mobility, to further ensure diversity and accessibility of mobility options. Regional and state agencies should support local innovative transportation solutions to societal problems such as the first-mile-last-mile connectivity issues.

Zoning: Zoning is an essential tool for regulating land uses and carrying out the goals and objectives of a community's comprehensive and/or land use plan. APA Ohio supports the use of planned unit developments, form based codes, mixed use districts and other innovative tools that allow a community to develop in a manner consistent with its goals and objectives. APA Ohio strongly encourages communities without zoning to consider adopting such regulations in accordance with a comprehensive plan.

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Citizen Participation: Citizen participation is a process where individuals are provided an opportunity to influence decisions in a community through a meaningful exchange of information. APA Ohio strongly supports citizen access and public input through an open and collaborative process, including reasonable notice, open public records and accessibility at all stages of the planning process. APA Ohio supports investigating and adapting new technologies for communication and information sharing to improve outreach where appropriate to individual communities.

Equity: APA Ohio supports policies that meet the needs of all communities, especially those of disadvantaged communities, through policies and programs that reduce social, economic, health and environmental disparities while fostering vibrant places where residents intentionally choose to live. Equitable development expands choice and opportunity, encourages sustainable outcomes and improves quality of life for all communities while mitigating the disproportionate impacts from the negative externalities of contemporary society. APA Ohio supports complete and fair mitigation planning for the displacement of disadvantaged individuals through redevelopment processes. APA-Ohio also supports APA's [Planning for Equity Policy Guide](#) that identifies policy recommendations for planners to advocate for policies that support equity in all aspects of planning at local, state, and federal levels. APA-Ohio believes that state policies should better recognize how local, regional and statewide land use, transportation, economic development, housing and other public decisions may incentivize and support development in some communities that results in disinvestment and social and economic decline in other communities.

Underserved Populations: Underserved Populations are those who are often (usually unintentionally) missing from the planning process and plans implementation. "Underserved" is defined broadly, depending on planning interests and needs of our communities. The planning profession should cast the widest possible net to serve as many people from myriad situations and circumstances as possible. While planning cannot solve all problems in society, APA Ohio supports intentional awareness and thoughtful practice in the planning and implementation process to improve the overall quality of life in our communities.

Healthy Communities: APA Ohio encourages planning that supports physical and mental wellness. Planning must encourage accessibility to affordable health care, healthy food, active living, mental health resources and help for people who depend on tobacco, drugs and/or alcohol. Integrating a wide-range of health considerations into zoning and design can reduce chronic diseases and improve overall well-being in our communities. APA Ohio also supports APA's [DRAFT-Healthy Communities Policy Guide](#), where healthy communities are defined as places where all individuals have access to healthy built and natural environments that give them the opportunity to live to their fullest potential regardless of their race and ethnicity, gender, income or age. Further, APA Ohio supports policies addressing the social determinants of health by improving access to food, opportunities for physical activity and environmental justice.

Housing: APA Ohio supports the goal of providing housing opportunity to households of all ages, races, abilities and income levels throughout the state. As housing is central to community life, there must be an adequate supply of housing in proximity to employment, public transportation, and community facilities such as public schools. Housing stock must include affordable and accessible for sale and rental units to meet social equity goals and ensure community vibrancy. APA Ohio supports measures to preserve existing housing stock and to develop more innovative housing options that are sensitive to issues of sustainability and public health. APA Ohio also supports APA's [Housing Policy Guide](#) which sets forth specific policies and actions which will help APA, its members, and national partners effectively address this country's housing needs.

Affordable Housing: Most Ohioans' greatest expense is housing. Mortgage or rent payments represent a higher percentage of lower income budgets which shrinks available funds for other essential human needs such as healthcare, food, utilities and transportation. APA Ohio believes that affordable housing curbs homelessness, decreases poverty, improves public health, boosts mobility, advances economies and improves the quality of life for all. APA Ohio supports increasing the availability, accessibility and quality of affordable housing in communities of all sizes.

Intergovernmental and Regional Coordination: In an era of shrinking municipal revenues, the importance of intergovernmental and regional coordination could not be greater. The coordination and sharing of resources allows municipalities to continue to provide quality services at a reduced cost. More importantly to APA Ohio, coordination can provide greater continuity in zoning and comprehensive plans across municipal borders. Such collaboration and coordination can help curb urban sprawl, improve transportation connections, help preserve agricultural lands and other green space, and better coordinate the protection of natural resources such as water, forests, and species habitat on a regional or watershed levels. The continued support and encouragement of coordination can allow planners and other officials to begin to think on a more regional level when addressing local issues.

Sustainability: APA Ohio supports policies that improve quality of life while respecting the capacities of supporting natural and human systems. Accommodating population changes, shifting resource demands and the imperative to build vibrant, just communities requires equitable, efficient and affordable access to sustainable sources of healthy food, water and shelter, as well as energy, mobility and communications. Planning and land use policies in Ohio must contribute to these ends by supporting communities to be financially and fiscally stable, as well as environmentally, socially and economically sustainable.

PLANNING ISSUES

Brownfields: Brownfields are abandoned, idled or underused industrial and commercial properties where expansion, reuse or redevelopment may be complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. They present opportunity for local governments to use marketing, redevelopment and economic development tools for these sites previously overlooked due to perceived environmental problems or past activities that created environmental concerns. While cleanup of contaminated sites is the ultimate goal of [Ohio's Brownfield Programs](#), the program itself is primarily designed to allow redevelopment and revitalization of community areas that have been abandoned by commerce and industry. *APA Ohio supports funding of this program to provide sufficient additional tax credits and other incentives to ensure continued success in the future.*

Climate Change: The scientific evidence indicates the Earth's climate system is warming, and humans are a major cause of it through activities such as deforestation and burning fossil fuels that increase concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Most scientists agree some climate change impacts are irreversible and likely to get worse. Ohio is particularly vulnerable to impacts associated with climate change. These impacts include increases in harmful blue-green algae blooms in Lake Erie, larger amounts of agricultural pollution into our streams and lakes, a rise in urban bad air quality days and increased flooding of the Ohio River and its tributaries. In planning for our future, both mitigation and adaptation to climate change and its impacts are needed to maintain a safe, attractive and resilient environment for residents and businesses. Adaptation to climate change and mitigation of its impacts is important for the State's overall economy and the jobs that support it, business investments, infrastructure, health of its people and the conservation of its natural resources and protection of its natural amenities. APA Ohio supports a growth management strategy at the state, regional and local level which recognizes and provides plans, incentives, standards and regulations that address climate change adaptation and mitigation. APA Ohio also supports policies and programs, including [APA's Climate Change Policy Guide](#), that will reduce long-term risk, promote economic development and sustainability and provide transparent disclosure of the risk associated with climate change.

Home Rule: Home rule is a progressive era innovation that allows voters to adopt a charter that establishes a governing doctrine over issues in their local municipality. These charters may differ from state law when it pertains to local issues. State law still supersedes local laws on statewide issues. APA Ohio supports and encourages home rule as it allows not only thoughtful use of zoning controls granted through police powers, but also allows communities to specifically address their own unique issues in a manner voters feel is appropriate. In recent years, the Ohio Legislature has continued to chip away at home rule regulations, which undermines municipalities. In a wide range of issues including gun regulation, traffic cameras and telecommunication towers, the state has created statewide legislation to supersede previously established local regulations.

Planning & Development Incentives: APA Ohio recognizes that planning and development incentives are important to achieve economic goals. Planning and development incentives include financial and non-financial incentives such as tax incentives, tax abatement, TIFs, loans, grants, infrastructure funding, green incentives, industrial revenue bonds, job creation incentives, expedited permitting and zoning bonuses. APA Ohio recognizes the importance of returning land to productive use and supports incentives to achieve redevelopment of existing sites including funding for pre-development, property purchase and brownfield remediation. APA Ohio supports federal, state and local funding to provide incentives for redevelopment of property, tax base diversification and business expansion.

Technology: APA Ohio supports free access to the Internet of things (devices – computers, tablets and smartphones) and the broadband infrastructure necessary to operate them. This includes public hardware, freeware, apps and widespread, quality, broadband internet coverage available in public spaces such as p-16 schools, public libraries and other tax-funded public facilities. In today's big data economy, every citizen should have access to the devices and software tools used to study and analyze community planning scenarios.

Water Resource Protection: APA Ohio recognizes the importance of water as an essential element in healthy environments and that land use changes impact both water quality and quantity. **The two largest sources of drinking water for millions of Ohioans, the Ohio River and Lake Erie, are in need of protection from pollution, climate change effects, and un-regulated withdrawals.** Planning can affectively impact a comprehensive approach to water management by addressing issues of sustainable water supply, groundwater resources, storm water management, flooding, and water quality. APA Ohio supports land use and environmental policies that ensure all aspects of water are integrated in terms of planning and implementation. APA Ohio also supports APA's [Policy Guide on Water](#), which calls for an integrated, systems-oriented, comprehensive approach to water management, innovative land-use planning and urban designs that improve and protect water environments, professional practices that manage water more sustainably and equitably, awareness of the potential for inequity in access to water supply, water pricing that is not sensitive to ability to pay and environmental justice issues where discharge of pollution to waterways occurs and where there is insufficient attention to flood mitigation.