



# The Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association

## ISSUE BRIEF

### STATE HOUSING POLICY AND AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN

VAPA supports the development of a State Housing Policy and an Affordable Housing Plan with appropriate policies and tools to encourage affordable, accessible housing across the Commonwealth. An Effective Plan with Supporting Policies and Tools should include several Elements:

- ❖ Establish Broad state-wide policy goals, definitions and principles. This state-wide policy statement should:
  - Define workforce housing. Affordable housing is defined under the affordable housing ordinance enabling authority.
  - Develop state goals for increasing opportunities and providing a decent living environment for citizens.
  - Establish principles for housing: quality, income integration, local appropriateness, accessibility, equal access/fair housing
- ❖ Provide information and enhance understanding and awareness of key housing policy, facts and issues. Such an effort should include:
  - Provide state matching funds for Housing Virginia campaigns to help localities.
  - Provide additional funding to VA Tech Center for housing research to conduct regional housing studies that can be the basis of local policies
  - Provide state publication/website/dissemination of housing policy and Housing Virginia information.
- ❖ Strengthen planning and zoning guidelines for workforce and affordable housing.
  - Clarify and provide more detail regarding how localities address housing need and affordability in their Comprehensive Plans
  - Develop regional planning goals and incentives for regional approaches to housing
  - Review the Affordable Dwelling Unit Ordinance to determine whether it can be approved
- ❖ Strengthen current State housing programs and initiatives through a state technical assistance program. Responsibilities would include:
  - Support local and regional affordable housing planning efforts
  - Support the creation of a Housing Trust Fund as proposed by the Virginia Housing Coalition and the Virginia Housing Commission
  - Monitor and report on affordable housing programs and achievements
  - Communicate state policies and goals; assist with coordination of initiatives
  - Develop revised planning and zoning policy recommendations
  - Provide support for Virginia Housing Commission

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12/5/08

## **MAKING GREAT COMMUNITIES HAPPEN:**

VAPA will support state-level planning policies that make Virginia and its communities the best place to live, work and play. Sound planning offers a key to making Virginia the best place it can be for all Virginians. Every region requires planning that promotes good jobs in livable communities. Faster growing regions have the added need for planning that recognizes pressures that are unprecedented in Virginia's history. Good planning actively involves the people of a community in the process; it combines their input on what is "valuable" for a good community with the technical facts brought by professionals and scientists. Sound planning includes an understanding of the differences between technical and value judgments and blends both appropriately to recommend a direction that moves a community toward the best place it can be for its citizens.

## **ADVOCATING FOR GREAT COMMUNITIES:**

In our efforts to advocate for sound planning policies, regulations, and practice in Virginia, our diverse membership is available as a resource for information and expert testimony regarding planning practice in Virginia. Likewise, through our parent organization, APA, we can provide information regarding planning practice through the United States. VAPA is ready and willing to assist as needed.

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