



The Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association

VAPA MISSION STATEMENT:

To 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 (VAPA) is committed to increasing awareness about planning's many benefits, and enhancing its practice throughout the Commonwealth.

WHO WE ARE:

VAPA is over 1,500 practicing professionals from the public and private sector, as well as academics and students. The American Planning Association is a nonprofit public interest and research organization committed to urban, suburban, regional, and rural planning. APA and its professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners, advance the art and science of planning to meet the needs of people and society.

MAKING GREAT COMMUNITIES HAPPEN:

It is the goal of VAPA to support policymakers in efforts to make Virginia and its communities the best place to live, work and play. Sound planning is essential for communities to accomplish this. All regions require 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. Productive 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.

VAPA LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES:

VAPA supports efforts to improve local and regional planning. Improved planning is borne from better technical assessment and enhanced public involvement, two essential elements of empowering sound community decision making. VAPA supports appropriate local and regional authority to plan for and implement livable communities across the Commonwealth.

VAPA strongly encourages that transportation decisions reflect the needs of Virginia's in all parts of the Commonwealth and the need to offer solutions that provide transportation options to all Virginians. Transportation has become the major public policy issue facing Virginians and our policy makers. While strategic investment in transportation infrastructure and programs is debated over the coming months, transportation planning and decisions need to be made with full recognition of their impact on communities and the people that live, work and play in them. Land-use and transportation decisions must



be consistent or communities are likely to be inefficient, unattractive and more expensive. Sound decision-making must appropriately recognize this linkage to achieve cost-effectiveness and to retain quality of life.

VAPA supports clarifying Virginia law to ensure that the rights of property owners are properly respected while preserving governmental condemnation authority necessary to provide essential public purposes such as safe drinking water, protection of public health, schools, parks and roads. It is also essential to ensure that governments have appropriate authority to avoid and abate blighted conditions through redevelopment.

VAPA supports appropriate authority to allow the coordinated provision of public facilities with minimum impact on taxpayers for by-right zoning so that the supply of public infrastructure can match the demand created by new development. Coordination of residential and commercial development with availability of transportation, schools, water, sewer and other services is critical to livable and affordable communities.

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.

VAPA supports enhancement of the Land Conservation Fund. The LCF provides jurisdictions an opportunity to leverage local, federal and private funding for the preservation of parcels that define and serve community improvement needs. VAPA supports enhanced funding to the LCF and programmatic revisions that will strengthen support for local PDR and conservation easement programs.

VAPA supports adequate state funding to assist local and regional agencies to conduct water supply and water quality planning activities. New requirements for water supply planning and continued efforts to improve water quality, including meeting federal Clean Water Act mandates, increases financial pressures on local taxpayers to address state and federal water policies and goals. Adequate state financial support is essential to achieving the desired outcomes of these state and federal mandates.

MAKING GREAT COMMUNITIES HAPPEN:

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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