September 22, 2020

Robin McArthur, Chair, and Katie Pearmine, Vice-Chair
Land Conservation and Development Commission

Re: OAPA Testimony on Agenda Item 6 - Review of Statewide Planning Goals & Climate Change

Dear Chair McArthur, Vice-Chair Pearmine, and Members of the Commission:

The Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association (OAPA) is disappointed in the staff recommendation to defer, during the 2019-2021 biennium, a project to engage in an initial policy discussion with stakeholders and subsequent development of a white paper regarding a review of Statewide Planning Goals & Climate Change.

We believe that it is imperative that the Statewide Planning Program be modernized to address climate change. Criteria for land use decisions should be based on practices that mitigate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and provide meaningful opportunities to adapt to climate change impacts, protect and increase sequestration opportunities, and address climate change inequities.

The project was identified as part of DLCD’s climate change work last fall. It was included in DLCD’s May 15 response to Governor Brown’s Executive Order (EO) 20-04 on climate change. At the Commission’s July meeting, staff reported that “stakeholders unanimously expressed support for this effort.” And that “multiple individuals articulated this effort as one of the top three most critical actions as a response to EO 20-04.”

Staff also noted in its summary of stakeholder input that “There was multiple support to specifically examine Goals 1 and 8 and to create a new Goal 20 that would provide an overall direction for how and why the statewide planning program will respond to climate change. There was a shared response that Goal 1 lacks guidelines relevant to today’s technology, and moreover, does not address equity in land use decision-making….“ A number of other goals were identified as priorities for review.

In 2009, LCDC considered updating the Planning Goals for climate and adding a new Goal specific to sea level rise. At its July meeting that year, DLC staff acknowledged the need to make changes “for the state to fully and properly respond to … climate change” but they concluded that it was premature to begin. Instead, they recommended: “development of a public engagement program for a more comprehensive assessment and program integrating climate change into the land use program beginning in 2011.” Eleven years have gone by, and the process has not yet started. Oregon cannot afford to have this pattern repeat itself.
OAPA is committed to continued advocacy for this project. We also offer to assist the department in moving this project forward, including doing outreach, research and analysis.

OAPA is an independent, statewide, not-for-profit membership organization of more than 950 planners from across the state who work for cities, counties, special districts, state agencies, tribes, community-based organizations, and private firms. OAPA provides leadership in the development of vital communities by advocating excellence in community planning, promoting education and resident empowerment, and providing the tools and support necessary to meet the challenges of growth and change. OAPA supports sustainable communities, working to enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by helping to create and stabilize places that are equitable, healthy, and resilient, and to provide ongoing economic, environmental, and social benefits.

Thank you for your time and attention to our testimony.

Sincerely,

Aaron Ray, AICP, President
Board of Directors

Eunice Kim, AICP, Chair
Legislative and Policy Affairs Committee