2021 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association (OAPA) is an independent, statewide, not-for-profit educational organization with more than 950 members. Our mission statement is: Relevant Resources, Better Planners, Exceptional Communities. OAPA promotes the art and science of planning in Oregon, which balances Statewide Planning Goals to foster social equity, economic viability, and protection and regeneration of the natural environment, with emphasis on creating more resilient and adaptable people and places today and for a more sustainable future. Below are OAPA’s legislative priorities for 2021.

1. **Confront climate change**
Oregon needs to act now to confront climate change. More needs to be done to mitigate climate change and to help communities adapt and become more resilient to its impacts, while addressing the inequitable impacts of climate change to vulnerable communities.

**OAPA supports:**
- Legislation and other measures that further efforts to: reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, advance adaptation by and resiliency of communities, and increase carbon sequestration
- Creating a new Statewide Planning Goal and/or updating existing goals to address climate change
- More coordination by and funding for State agencies to effectively address climate change
- Prioritizing planning and assistance for Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) community members and other vulnerable communities, and centering their voices when developing policy

**OAPA opposes:**
- Legislation that leads to a net increase in GHG emissions
- Efforts to restrict or ban the use of the term climate change, including direction to State agencies to stop working toward the goals outlined in Executive Order 20-04

2. **Address the housing crisis**
There is a housing crisis in Oregon and it is critical that efforts continue to increase housing availability, affordability, and choices for Oregonians across the state. The need to ensure access to temporary and permanent housing is especially acute in communities that are recovering from the recent wildfires of 2020.

**OAPA supports:**
- Legislation that allows communities to reduce barriers to the development of affordable housing, including opportunities to streamline public input processes
- Increased funding and technical assistance to communities to help meet their housing needs, including adequate funding for water and sewer infrastructure
- Legislation that provides the resources communities need to rebuild safe housing after the wildfires
- Policies and programs that prevent displacement and create a backstop for the recent repeal of the federal Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule

**OAPA opposes:**
- Legislation that would require jurisdictions to cap system development changes (SDCs) or to update/revise their SDC methodologies
- Attacks to the land use program and to local authority for planning and zoning hiding behind wildfire recovery
3. **Promote resiliency and recovery**

Oregon is facing unprecedented challenges – including the coronavirus pandemic, economic crisis, and recent wildfires – that require immediate and ongoing action to help communities recover and rebuild. There is an increased urgency to ensure communities can withstand and bounce back from natural hazards and other disasters.

**OAPA supports:**
- Legislation that facilitates smart rebuilding in fire-damaged communities, making them less vulnerable to future disasters
- Increased coordination and alignment with Federal programs and policies, particularly around federal lands, natural hazards mitigation, land management, and environmental practices
- Policies, funding, and data to help communities better prepare for and recover from natural, economic, and public health disasters
- Funding for the planning and development of infrastructure
- Advancing environmental justice to address inequities and prioritizing vulnerable communities in recovery and resiliency strategies

**OAPA opposes:**
- Changes that subvert the Statewide Planning Program
- Policies that lead to displacement of local residents in rebuilding efforts after the wildfires

4. **Advance racial equity**

Anti-racism needs to be centered in policy and planning work in Oregon. Deliberate efforts need to be made to advance racial equity and combat systemic racism in the state.

**OAPA supports:**
- Policies that increase access to resources and opportunity, build community development, and otherwise empower BIPOC communities
- Changes to public engagement processes and Statewide Planning Goal 1 (citizen involvement) to explicitly advance anti-racism and elevate the voices of BIPOC and other traditionally underrepresented communities
- Legislation – even if unrelated to planning – that addresses systematic racism (e.g., hiring practices and disproportionate policing), undoing past harm and preventing future harm

**OAPA opposes:**
- Doing nothing. OAPA opposes any legislative efforts to maintain the status quo.

5. **Advocate for Oregon’s planning program**

Oregon’s planning program helps ensure cities and counties comprehensively plan for today and for future generations. Governments at all levels need funding and resources to support good planning and foster great communities.

**OAPA supports:**
- Increased funding and technical resources for local, regional, and state agencies engaged in planning work, including the Department of Land Conservation and Development and the Land Use Board of Appeals
- Initiatives that set a high standard for good planning with authentic engagement
- Policies that maintain land use decision-making at the local level
- Better state agency coordination that accomplishes these goals

**OAPA opposes:**
- Efforts to weaken Oregon’s planning program
- Legislation that fails to recognize local and regional differences and/or proposes unduly preemptive policies at the state level related to land use, housing, or community development
LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY GUIDING PRINCIPLES

OAPA considers the following when taking a position on proposed legislation or policies:

- **Benefit.** Will the policy advance the goals of the Oregon planning program and the APA objective of “creating great communities for all”, in keeping with OAPA’s mission and vision? Does the policy recommend “best planning practices” for both process and outcomes? Does it facilitate effective and meaningful engagement of all community members? Does it help sustain vital, resilient, and healthy communities? Does it provide for processes and resources (e.g. access to technical assistance and funding opportunities) that benefit both urban and rural communities or place an unfair burden on a geographic area or type of community?

- **Clarity.** What will the proposed policy require? Is it clear? What are the outcomes and products expected from local, regional, state, and federal agencies, businesses, and residents? Is this a policy that will help the public understand the benefits of planning?

- **Cost.** How much will the policy cost, to the state, the public, local governments, or others? Does it provide for an efficient and equitable allocation? Who will pay? Do all local governments required to implement the change in policy have the resources to do so?

- **Creativity.** Can we come up with a more efficient, effective, and creative policy that accomplishes the same purpose with broader political and public support? If a policy has negative impacts, can we come up with a way to overcome the harmful effects consistent with the proposal’s intent? Can we think of a way to accomplish the purpose in a way that gets broader legislative support?

- **Collaboration.** Does the policy support partnerships, integration of strategies, or prioritize opportunities that increase capacity and meet multiple objectives?

- **Demonstrated Need.** Does the change in policy address a demonstrated need or problem? Is there evidence that shows the Legislature needs to act to address a need or solve a problem? Are local and regional governments better suited to address these needs in the absence of state legislation?

- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.** Is the policy reflective of and responsive to Oregon’s diverse people and places? Does the policy further equity and inclusion or reduce disparities and remove barriers, especially for communities that have faced historic injustice? Does the policy seek social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic integration? Does it alter policies, institutions, and decisions that oppose such needs? (Adapted from the American Institute of Certified Planners Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.)

How does OAPA define diversity, equity, and inclusion?

**Diversity** is an inclusive concept that “encompasses, but is not limited to race, ethnicity, class, gender, age, sexuality, ability, educational attainment, spiritual beliefs, creed, culture, tribal affiliation, nationality, immigration status, political beliefs[,] veteran status”, and geographic location. “With greater diversity, we can be more creative, effective and just, and bring more varied perspectives, experiences, backgrounds, talents and interests to the practice of planning and to the communities we serve. We recognize that achieving diversity and inclusion is an evolutionary process that requires an ongoing renewal of our commitment.” (Adapted from APA’s Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, Adopted April 2018)

**Equity** is “just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. Unlocking the promise of the nation by unleashing the promise in us all.” (PolicyLink Equity Manifesto, 2018)

**Inclusion** means that everyone can participate and everyone belongs. Inclusion applies to all components of the planning process – from how we do planning in alignment with Oregon’s Statewide Planning Goal 1: Citizen Involvement to how we comprehensively plan for, design and build, and manage our communities, farm and forest lands, and natural spaces and resources.

Source: OAPA Strategic Plan 2018 Update