

2020 Legislative Priorities

Wisconsin Chapter of the American Planning Association

1. **Addressing Wisconsin's affordable housing shortage through funding and reforms.** Planners are on the front lines of the housing affordability crisis, and often have firsthand knowledge of what is influencing the production of housing at the local level. Planners know that developer incentives that improve the profitability of building housing for all income levels are crucial. Any pre-emption of local zoning authority must be tied to financial incentives for both local governments as well as developers to truly move the needle on housing reform. APA-WI supports:
 - a. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) reform that authorizes workforce housing TIFs and/or increases the statutory max of mixed-use TIF districts devoted to housing beyond 30%.
 - b. Authorizing local governments to extend the life of successful TIF districts in order to fund affordable or workforce housing developments beyond the statutory 1-year limit.
 - c. Authorizing local governments to exceed the 12% statutory limit upon the equalized value that can be within TIF districts when funding workforce housing developments.
 - d. Encouraging local governments to approve affordable housing developments by expanding levy limit flexibility beyond the statutory bonus of \$1K per unit.
 - e. Balancing state pre-emption with WI's tradition of local control by incentivizing zoning reforms through a menu of choices tied to state funding similar to Utah's Senate Bill 34.
 - f. Reverse recent pre-emptions of local control that actually eliminate existing affordable housing, such as the short-term rental pre-emption. This pre-emption is actively converting affordable units into weekly rentals and inhibiting local efforts to enable Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) reforms out of concerns about community character.
2. **Support for and restoration of local zoning authority.** Pre-emption bills interfere with local decision-making and apply one-size-fits-all standards to the entire state, resulting in unintended consequences and land use conflicts. Planners support democracy at the local level, which requires local tools and decision-making authority. APA-WI supports:
 - a. Restoration of local zoning control over nonconforming structures.
 - b. Restoration and protection of local zoning control over borrow pit locations and quarries.
 - c. Transparency and fairness during the review & approval of new state legislation.
3. **Support for property tax fairness and transparency at the local level.** The dark store strategy is being used throughout WI to force assessment settlements that shift property tax burdens from big box retailers to homeowners and small businesses. These tax avoidance moves increase homeownership costs statewide. APA-WI supports:
 - a. Closure of the Dark Store and Walgreen's loopholes by codifying that vacant stores cannot be used as comparables when assessing or valuing commercial property.
 - b. Protection and enhancement of locally supported revenue options (established and new).
4. **Support for multi-modal transportation options and long-term funding solutions.** APA-WI supports the #JustFixItWI movement's call for stable, long-term funding solutions to the state's infrastructure crisis and our over-reliance upon debt. APA-WI supports:
 - a. Any or all of the user-based revenue solutions (e.g. indexing, tolls, miles-based fees) proposed by the "Filling Potholes" report by the Local Government Institute of WI and the "Keep WI Moving" report by the WI Commission on Transportation Finance and Policy.
 - b. Authorization of Regional Transit Authorities to give local regions the choice of self-funding their own transit systems.
 - c. Repeal of the prohibition on using eminent domain to acquire land for complete streets, bike paths, sidewalks, and recreational trails.