

2021 Legislative Priorities

Wisconsin Chapter of the American Planning Association

1. **Addressing Wisconsin's 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 35%.
 - 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 AB859 from last session.
2. **Supporting financial stability and sustainability at the local level.** The COVID-19 crisis has disrupted sources of revenue that support critical local services, including community & economic development efforts. In addition, the dark store loophole continues to be used throughout WI to force assessment settlements that shift property tax burdens from big box retailers to homeowners and small businesses. 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) to diversify the revenue streams used to support critical services provided by local units of government. This should include emergency and long-term funding options.
3. **Supporting equitable multi-modal transportation projects 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 through local sales taxes.
 - c. Repeal of the costly and discriminatory prohibition on using eminent domain to acquire land for complete streets, bike paths, sidewalks, and recreational trails.
4. **Advocating for Legislation That Addresses Equity and Climate Considerations.** APA-WI supports:
 - a. Any and all efforts to explicitly address racial disparities, environmental injustice, and climate change including but not limited to the Governor's Task Force on Climate Change.
 - b. Funding increases that improve the quality and quantity of early childhood education across the state, which is a foundation of our economy & communities and an under-appreciated component of structural inequality, achievement gaps, and wealth disparities.
 - c. Building relationships with trade associations, realtors, the League, and all stakeholders in urban & rural places regarding updates to the 1999 Comprehensive Planning law.