



American Planning Association Texas Chapter Creating Great Communities for All

The American Planning Association's Texas Chapter and its 2,400 members—community leaders, private developers, design professionals, and local officials—work with the private and public sectors in communities throughout Texas. We use our expertise and innovation to shape livable and sustainable Texas communities that reflect the character and values of each local city, town, or rural area.

2023 APATX Policy Priorities for the Environment and Healthy Communities

Based on the experience of our public and private sector members, the Texas Chapter of the American Planning Association has identified the following seven environmental and health-related priorities for the 88th Session of the Texas Legislature.

Advance Climate Policy

Support legislation and funding which strengthens local efforts to prepare for a changing climate, including preparation for flood protection, drought, extreme heat and urban heat island effect, and other natural hazards exacerbated by a changing climate.

Support legislation and funding that would expand opportunities to invest in clean energy, green infrastructure, and other nature-based solutions to support sustainable growth of the built environment.

Support legislation which provides for the inclusion of climate and resilience considerations into grant and other funding program criteria.

Ensure a Safe and Resilient Future

Support legislation and funding to provide communities with the tools they need to plan for resilience with financial support for interagency, university and public-private partnerships that produce and share natural hazard data.

Support legislation and funding that would expand opportunities to adapt infrastructure to changing environmental conditions, such as flooding, hurricanes and coastal storms, drought, and fire.

Support legislation to amend state policy for public investment in infrastructure, such as roads and bridges, flood control and drainage, water and wastewater systems to require consideration of hazards exposure and vulnerability into the decision-making process.

Support legislation and funding which promotes the preservation or regeneration of natural areas that provide protection from flooding, storm surge, erosion, and other natural hazards.

Support legislation and funding which creates communities that are prepared for the future by establishing building, construction and siting standards that account for a changing environment over the life cycle of a project.

Support legislation and funding which encourages new development in low-risk areas through incentives, relocation assistance and conservation of sensitive natural areas.

Support legislation and funding which improves the resilience of the Texas Gulf Coast by investing in the joint effort between the state and the US Army Corps of Engineers to support the Coastal Texas Protection and Restoration Project.

APA TEXAS SUPPORTS THE PROTECTION OF
NATURAL RESOURCES AND SUSTAINABLE
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES THAT
FOSTER ENDURING, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES.

Support legislation and funding which promote the use of federal funds to rebuild homes and neighborhoods affected by hurricanes, floods and tropical storms to lower flood risk of the homeowners and their neighbors.

Support legislation and funding which promotes investments in economic resilience through programs that assist people to remain financially solvent throughout disaster recovery, including workforce training, diversified savings and credit options, and improved access to insurance.

Support legislation and funding to improve emergency response and post-disaster recovery coordination for early warning networks that encourage people to avoid areas in harm's way.

Promote Natural Resource Conservation and Management

Support legislation and funding that encourages local government, residential, and private sector water conservation and water reuse initiatives, including native and drought tolerant outdoor landscaping practices.

Support legislation and funding to maintain or improve water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams and reduce water quality impairments.

Support legislation and funding to reduce energy consumption in buildings and the transportation sector; and, increase deployment of renewable energy.

Support legislation and funding that allows conservation, protection, and preservation of open space that provides numerous health, economic, environmental benefits and critical ecosystem services.

Support legislation and funding that provides communities opportunities to enhance access to parks and recreational amenities.

Support legislation and funding that improves or maintains linkages between open space corridors and habitat quality.

Support legislation that allows for the conservation, protection, and preservation of trees that provide numerous air quality, water quality, stormwater runoff, and urban heat island reduction benefits.

Support legislation that improves air quality.

Support legislation and funding that encourages planning for and implementation of practices that ensure the provision of landfill capacity to meet future demand.

Promote Social Equity and Environmental Justice

Support legislation and funding which promotes equity in disaster recovery by engaging historically excluded residents in the development of programs and procedures to promote resilience.

Support legislation and funding which strengthens the ability of families and children to weather shocks and stresses by investing in research to identify vulnerable populations that account for a different pace of recovery among racial and ethnic groups.

Support legislation and funding which reduce the impact of long-term population stresses, like poverty, housing shortages, unemployment and health status.

Support legislation which supports policies that incorporate equity considerations in evacuation procedures and emergency shelter locations.

Promote Living with Water

Support legislation and funding that ensures the provision of adequate water supply and wastewater infrastructure to meet future demand.

Support legislation and funding which strengthen water conservation and drought planning efforts, regulations, and other proactive drought mitigation efforts.

Support legislation and funding which strengthen floodplain protection, floodplain regulations, flood resilience, and expansion of state and local abilities to enact land use regulations that minimize new development in areas demonstrated to be flood-prone.

Support funding for the Flood Infrastructure Fund and projects which provide a balanced consideration of structural and nonstructural flood risk mitigation measures (e.g., buyouts, home elevations and weatherization), including projects which prioritize the use nature-based solutions that lead to long-term mitigation of flood risk and protection from other natural hazards.

Support legislation and funding for implementation of the state flood plan and corresponding regional flood plans enacted by SB8.

Support legislation and funding which provide for strengthened construction, rehabilitation, operation and maintenance of stormwater infrastructure and stormwater utilities.

Support legislation and funding which provides for the integration, implementation, and maintenance of low impact development and green infrastructure approaches to stormwater control.

Reduce Barriers to Improved Health Outcomes

Support legislation and funding which creates social and physical environments which promote good health (i.e., the Social Determinants of Health construct) for all.

Support legislation and funding which emphasizes the return on investment (ROI) for funding disaster recovery and emergency management.

Support legislation and funding which promote aging in place opportunities and initiatives.

Support legislation and funding which protect and advance the American Disabilities Act objectives.

Support legislation and funding which promote the development of child-friendly cities.

Support legislation and funding to protect, expand and enhance the parks, recreation facilities, trails, open spaces and forests that support Texans' health and well-being.

Support legislation and funding which promote initiatives to improve access to health and mental health information, treatment, testing and vaccination.

Harness Technology to Promote Strong and Healthy Communities

Support legislation and funding which improves Broadband and other technology access and digital literacy in vulnerable communities.

Support legislation and funding which protects state data agencies, essential programs, and policies that make resources usable and accessible for local decision makers.

Support legislation and funding in smart cities technologies by investing in infrastructure, supporting good planning, aiding adoption in targeted communities, and expanding research and standards.