



American Planning Association
Texas Chapter

Creating Great Communities for All

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Thank you, Chairman Burns, for the opportunity to present the following information from the American Planning Association - Texas Chapter. My name is Heather Nick, and I represent the American Planning Association - Texas Chapter, and we are testifying in opposition of HB 1526. The Texas Chapter of the American Planning Association (APATX) represents public and private sector planners, planning academics and students, elected officials, and citizen planners in the great state of Texas.

As Texas cities continue to grow, the need for public green space becomes increasingly important. This was made even more evident during the Covid-19 pandemic. One way that cities can ensure that their park systems keep pace with population growth is through the use of parkland dedication and development ordinances. These ordinances require developers to set aside a certain percentage of their land for parks or pay a fee in lieu of parkland. This approach allows cities to acquire land and develop parks without having to use taxpayer funds or rely solely on philanthropic donations.

In addition to providing much-needed green space, parks offer a wide range of benefits to communities, including improved public health, increased property values, and enhanced quality of life. By continuing to use parkland dedication and development ordinances, Texas cities can ensure that all residents have access to parks and the benefits they provide.

Our Texas communities have had a long-standing history and success in using these types of ordinances to grow their park systems concurrent with new growth. In the last major study on parkland dedication in Texas, over 73 cities were identified as having ordinances tailored to serve their unique community needs, governmental structure, and operational processes. The specificity of HB 1526, as currently written, does not acknowledge that each community is unique, and its adoption would cause unanticipated conflicts and would be incredibly burdensome for our Texas cities to implement.

The continued use of parkland dedication and development ordinances as a tool is extremely important for the sustainable growth of our Texas communities. APATX would be interested in being a continued partner to help the Texas Legislature develop language that is more responsive to the unique needs of our large Texas communities.

Respectfully submitted,

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Chapter President, APA Texas Chapter

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