



Chair McGinn and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA) is a membership organization of nearly 400 professional planners. The KS Chapter of the APA appreciates the opportunity to voice opposition to HB 346.

The professional planning practice has a long history of advocating for issues that affect the profession, as well as the communities in which we serve. Many planning professionals are certified through the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), which abides by a Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. This code states “our primary obligation as planners and active participants in the planning process is to serve the public interest.” One of the ways in which city planners meet this obligation is through a long-range planning process that culminates in a comprehensive plan.

The comprehensive plan is a guide for cities, in cooperation with stakeholders and the public, to construct a long-term vision for the future of their communities. A comprehensive plan is adopted by the governing body and implemented over a determinate number of years. When a jurisdiction undergoes the process of devising or updating its comprehensive plan, a thorough public engagement process takes place in which staff, stakeholders, residents, and the governing body work in collaboration to come to consensus about the direction toward progress for their communities. Input from individuals is gathered and evaluated with regard to the desires of the community as a whole, with consensus as the ultimate goal. This engagement and planning process concludes with a document that addresses existing and future economic development, changing demographics, environment, social and cultural context, housing, transportation, land use, and zoning. The planners’ role, in conjunction with the governing body, is implementation of a comprehensive plan, that is guided directly by the public interest and desires of the community.

The comprehensive plan must be implementable so that community-wide goals can be realized. One of the best tools professional planners have toward implementing a comprehensive plan is zoning. Planners make day-to-day development decisions based on the zoning and land use goals identified in a comprehensive plan. Planners make daily decisions that were foundationally derived from desires of the community through public engagement processes. Without the ability to enact the goals of the comprehensive plan, planners would not be able to implement the desires of the community as a whole through the planning process. For these reasons, the Kansas Chapter of the American Planning Association respectfully opposes HB 346.

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Peterson, AICP
President, KS APA Chapter

Martin Rivarola
Chair, KS APA Legislative Committee