



4290 14th Street NE, Naples, FL 34120 | P (239) 304-6837 | amegrath@LandPlanningSolutions.us

TERRA FIRMA

YOUR GUIDE FOR SOLID LAND USE PLANNING
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LAND USE PLANNING & THE CLIMATE

[Planning & The Climate](#)

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The 100th Conference of the American Planning Association (APA) was held in Las Vegas, NV in April 2008. Allisor Megrath, President and Principal Planner of Land Planning Solutions, Inc. represented the Florida Chapter of APA one of eight Florida Delegates. Megrath also served a Florida Delegate at the 2006 National APA Conference in San Antonio, TX.

The 2008 Delegates were charged with considering adopting a Policy Guide on Land Use Planning and Climate Change. After much consideration, caucussing with colleagues from other states with similar interests and amendments, the Delegates voted to adopt the Policy Guide as presented. The APA will now begin preparation of summaries tailored to specific interest groups (i.e. Federal, State and Local Governments, Agencies and Organizations) so that climate change initiatives may begin moving forward.

While hundreds of topics were covered over the five-day conference, the topic of focus was clearly climate change. Several of the sessions offered at the conference were related to climate change and planning, State and Federal laws regulating climate impact, and worldwide climate issues.

As land use planners, we find ourselves on the forefront of the climate change battleground. We have the dual responsibility of leading the way on making influential progress in this arena as we have the knowledge and ability to suggest changes to Comprehensive Plans and Local Development Codes that address planning impacts on climate. We need to take the lead.

Some approaches worth considering:

1. **REGIONAL EFFORTS:** To have success with reducing climate impacts, approaching planning on a regional scale

will prove more effective. Piecemeal planning will no longer work. Intergovernmental coordination must be exercised and planning needs to be approached on a much larger scale. Likewise, a cookie cutter approach to address climate issues cannot be used. We must look to *our* local state experts and study *our* best available data and science for *our* region. How they approach climate issues in California and Montana may be much, much different than what we need to do here in Florida.

2. MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION: While we change future development patterns (*mitigate*) responsibly adopting goals, objectives and policies that support planning compact, walkable, dense, mixed-use communities that reduce the amount of vehicle miles traveled, we cannot be ignorant to the fact that some things we cannot change. We need to adapt to the rising temperatures, rising sea levels, increased drought conditions and population increases by developing new techniques to cope with them.

3. LONG-TERM PLANNING: It is inherent upon us to develop long-term planning strategies to address climate change. Simply using "typical" planning timeframes from yesteryear is no longer going to work. We need to focus attention on 25-50 years from now. The new APA Policy Guide on Planning and Climate Change looks out to 2050. Having shorter term goals is good, and will keep people engaged, but the overall approach to land use planning needs to focus on the future effects of the decisions we make.

For more information on the APA Policy Guide on Planning and Climate Change, please go to our website www.landplanningsolutions.us or contact us at amegrath@landplanningsolutions.us.

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