



WABO Strategic Plan

Revised 2024

The Washington Association of Building Officials (WABO) is a non-profit professional trade association. The membership consists of Building Officials in the State of Washington and Associate Members who are dedicated to effective code administration, and safe building and design practices. This strategic plan has been developed by the membership to help guide the association in realizing success in accomplishing its mission.

WABO Mission Statement:

Leading the way to excellence in building and life safety.

Vision

WABO will help lead Washington State to be known as the best place for citizens to live and business to thrive in a built environment that is safe and resilient.

The Future

The future will look quite different than it does now. WABO has looked into the future by recognizing trends today that will affect the directions that building construction, design, and code administration take. Continual monitoring of these trends and the strategic initiatives that WABO undertakes will help assure that the association's mission and vision will be achieved.

What will the future look like?

Social

- There will be an aging population who represent diverse socio-economic status. Their needs will bring many challenges to all service providers. There will be increased density in cities. This could lead to higher crime rates.
- Home based employment will increase along with increased telecommuting.
- There will be a changing work force. Education and globalization together with

a more mechanized method of working will change the character and means of work and increase the sophistication of our business.

- There will be more unconventional housing arrangements due to the economic and cultural changes.

Land Use

- An increase in small lot development and clustering near economic bases will occur.
- Densification of urban areas with mixed use buildings and increased multi-family housing will occur.
- Increased pressure for environmental preservation, rural areas preserved for green spaces, and land banking will become prevalent.
- Houses and apartments will become smaller to provide affordability.
- Growth management laws will be revised to more effectively manage growth and development.

Infrastructure

- Water availability issues will play a larger role in driving development location and type.
- Transportation issues will continue to worsen. Alternatives such as elevated transportation systems will become viable.
- Storm and sanitary systems will be stretched to their limits.
- Solid waste management will play a larger role in development decisions.
- Sustainability will continue to be a big issue.

Technology

- Electronic permitting, plan review, and inspection management (wireless) will become standard procedure.
- Cyber- review and design (internationally) will occur.
- Telecommuting will increase.
- Remote training and on-line education will replace classroom style training.
- The metric system will be adopted.
- 3-D design will increase.
- Wet-stamped plans will be replaced by electronic methods.
- A paperless workplace will become a reality.

Political

- Seamless coordination and interagency cooperation will occur.
- Code officials will become community leaders.
- Building departments will be viewed as public safety agencies.
- Government will become smaller, resulting in more contracted services and self-certification.
- Building officials will be working in an increasing polarized political environment.

Design/Construction

- Global design will occur, breaking down borders. Licensing could become international.
- Green building technology will become industry standard.
- Designers, builders, etc. will directly participate in code compliance.
- Performance based design will become industry standard.
- New products and materials will change construction technology.
- Security will drive design.
- National standards will become a reality.

The Code Official

- Outsourcing of plan review and inspection services will increase.
- Building department staff will decrease.
- Regional approaches will become prevalent.
- Statewide certification of building department personnel will be required.
- The role of the code official will change to an upper-level management position.
- Regionalization of services will occur.
- Services will become more streamlined and responsive.

The Preferred Future

The preferred future is one in which WABO will be a leader in partnerships that are holistic and inclusive. Ones which build relationships that meet the needs of the community (the public), stakeholders in the construction industry, and the businesses which provide for the economic well-being of the community.

WABO will prepare for the future by assisting in the leveraging of technology to optimize staff efficiency and consistency in providing public services; assist in building one stop shopping for public services; and help increase building department transparency.

WABO will be a leader in the advancement of technology which will further electronic processes and enhance e-commerce.

WABO will be a provider of education for the furtherance of safe and viable building design and construction practices, WABO will pursue and implement the Code Official Degree Program.

WABO will be recognized as a leader locally, regionally, and nationally.

Strengths

WABO has many strengths on which to build. These strengths will carry the association forward to a successful future. The greatest strength is the voting membership and the associate members. They have the creativity, professionalism, experience, and knowledge to accomplish the association's mission.

Building on the momentum of a strong legacy of success, WABO has built the ability to share and gain consensus through its values and relationships. The membership shares a visionary approach to the future. WABO has built a strong national recognition and achieved a high level of participation. WABO enjoys a leadership role in code development, legislative involvement, and the promotion of consistency.

WABO's strengths also include the programs and services that have been developed. The Special Inspection Registration Program, the Welder Certification Program, Code Official Accreditation Program, and the WABO Bookstore are nationally recognized and further the mission and provide the financial strength to accomplish the goals set forth.

WABO's use of technology provides services that help build a strong organization. The Chat Line, and the WABO website provide a foundation for communication and information sharing that assist the effectiveness of the members and customers.

WABO will continue to enjoy progressive leadership. Members continue to step forward to take on the leadership responsibility and build on the strong legacy

of WABO. These leadership roles together with the professional management services provided by T. Jenkins Management Solutions, are great assets to the successful accomplishments of the association.

Weaknesses

Every organization has weaknesses. Recognizing and turning them into strengths will help assure the success of WABO.

Geographic differences within the state have not yet been dealt with. These differences are real but to accommodate the needs of each area is a challenge that must be accepted.

The limited number of active members (and voting members) has been recognized as a weakness. Gaining a higher level of participation of existing members and reviewing the organizational structure should be set as a priority. The reasons behind this weakness may be insufficient outreach to jurisdictions, WABO not being relevant to small jurisdictions, jurisdictional workloads, lack of support by the jurisdictions, and code administration not being viewed as an essential service. The fact that there are only so many jurisdictions in the state has also been recognized as a limiting factor to membership size.

Dependence on a small number of people keeping things moving (the 80/20 rule).

Perception that WABO is a threat to other ICC chapters in the state and that there is a lack of involvement with other chapters in general.

No concrete plan to deal with the imminent retirement of experienced code officials.

Opportunities and Threats

Many influences outside the association affect our ability to fulfill the stated mission. Some can be viewed as threats if not addressed in a

positive manner. The following issues are identified as potential opportunities and threats.

Opportunities

- Increased partnering including trade organizations, design community, etc.
- Expand leadership role
- Help develop new permitting tools
- Involvement with local ICC chapters
- Enhanced and expanded educational activities
- Expanded influence on electrical code
- Development of a security code
- Assist in privatization of services
- Work with coalition to improve communication and leverage influence on state and national issues
- WABO road show to help small jurisdictions
- Development of training to overcome code complexity, increase consistency, and outreach to stakeholders and improve public image
- Creation of tool kits for elected officials, Building Officials, and public

- Standardization and consistency.
- Mentoring program.
- Expanded certification program
- State required certification
- Technology
- Marketing
- Code Official Accreditation Program
- Building Official Certification Program
- Western Pacific League of Building Officials

Threats

- Outsourcing and privatization
- Diminishing budgets
- Increasing workloads
- Unfunded mandates
- Failure to mentor
- Fear of change and usurping of authority
- Straying off the path
- Litigation
- Technology
- Increasing code complexity
- Increased level of service expectation
- Stagnation

Prioritized Initiatives for 2015

1. Participation and Sustainability (Outreach Committee)
 - a. Our participation is KEY. Encourage active participation and represent those who can't be here.
 - i. Grow participation of building officials at member meetings, bring a guest meeting each year
 - b. Inventory of talents and skills, institutional knowledge... succession planning. Capture the WHY we did what we did in the minutes.
 - c. Inform jurisdictional leaders of the value of having their building department staff attend WABO functions and meetings
 - d. Finance (Finance Committee)
 - i. Develop a strategy for The WABO Bookstore. Service becoming hard to sustain.
 - ii. Assure the continuation of WABO with sustainable revenue stream (bookstore, certification programs, etc.)
2. Education (Education Committee)
 - a. Offer more educational opportunities on the east side of the state
 - b. Develop strong process for getting education out there
3. Expand involvement in Group A code development (TCD Committee)
4. Full implementation of our apprenticeship program (Government Relations)
5. State Issues/Influence (Government Relations)
 - a. Provide cities a stronger voice in the State electrical code
 - b. Supporting a transparent, sustainable way to adequately fund the State Building Code Council
 - c. Maintain or improve our influence with State Building Code Council
6. Prepare for regional emergency response use to leverage relationship building (Emergency Management Committee)
7. Strengthen relationships with fire marshals, BIAW, SEAW, AIA, etc., a holistic view, make a lasting partnership, issue papers, preparing cards (use these to promote) Outreach Committee, Board, Government Relations)
 - a. Need greater representation on ICC Board
8. Code (TCD Committee)
 - a. IPC alternative (and training)
 - b. Green code - determine where to go with this in Washington

WABO STRATEGIC PLAN

Outreach

- Elected Officials and General Public: Take a stronger role to increase awareness as to the important role the building department plays in supporting communities' safety, economic development and sustainability. Increase the effectiveness of our marketing.
- Increase participation from nonparticipating building officials, including mentoring, incentives, tool kits (including common forms and brochures) and education.
- Expand the role of the Accredited Code Official to include training, becoming mentors, and providing more of a leadership role to WABO members.
- Enhance relationships with other organizations with common interests such as trade organization, unions, state agencies such as Labor and Industries and Department of Health, fire service, schools (trade and university), home builders associations and schools from elementary to high school.
- Reach out to other ICC chapters.
- Strengthen professional image by educating the public on the importance of code officials and enforcing the code, which will also protect funding of building departments. Ways to accomplish this may include sending the WABO newsletter to local elected officials highlighting the value of the building official, promote individuals, profile the community, and encourage elected officials to attend WABO meetings. Also, consider sending out a monthly newsletter, rather than quarterly.

- Reach out to other groups such as high school and college students and veterans, through job fairs to encourage them to become code officials.
- Support legislation to require each jurisdiction to employ qualified building officials with phased-in implementation.

Technical Code Development

- Represent WABO in state and national code development activities and increase participation at code hearings.
- Continue to take a lead role in protecting the governmental consensus process related to code development conducted by the State Building Code Council and ICC.
- Serve as liaison between State Building Code Council Technical Advisory Groups and WABO membership.
- Promote code consistency and uniformity and encourage consistent application of codes.

Government Relations

- Work to expand influence and presence in legislative process by:
 - Identifying current and emerging issues for proactive participation.
 - Developing relevant working relationships with legislators and other associations.
 - Gaining the reputation for bringing solutions to difficult issues through the effective use of building official and lobbyist contact.
 - Developing yearly presentation for legislators on building code official perspectives including ideas and innovations they would like to implement locally.
- Seek funding source to support education and training for code officials through a

training trust account that can sustain training both for current code officials and the apprenticeship program.

- Support the use of green building technology.
- Seek to obtain counties authority to conduct electrical inspections.
- Support an effort to begin the dialogue with small business to determine if opportunities exist for removing barriers, both real and perceived, posed by construction codes.

Education

- Encourage use of technology by investigating available technology for communication processes.
- Explore teleconferencing for WABO meetings, ICC code hearings, ICC annual business meetings and instant messaging for committees through WABO.
- Encourage online permitting.
- Develop long-range education plans and calendar for members and stakeholders.
- Develop a higher education degree or certification program for code officials and building department staff.
- Explore state funding to support code education for the public.
- Provide training for building officials in areas outside their subject, such as land use concepts, design development processes, budgeting etc.
- Establish a list of core instructors and facilities in order to offer consistent quality training.
- Continue to strengthen the Annual Education Institute and training sessions

and work towards expansion to eastern Washington.

Emergency Management

- Develop model building safety agency emergency response and devolution plans for use by member jurisdictions.
- Partner with local government entities to facilitate effective all-hazard emergency management throughout the four phases of emergency management (Planning, Mitigation, Response, Recovery).
- Support statewide hazard awareness and emergency preparedness education efforts.
- Collaborate on development of tools and systems for management of building safety resources in emergencies including credentialing of building safety responders and cataloguing of member talents and capabilities for quick access to resources during a response.
- Catalog member talents for a resource list.

Finance

- Maintain financial stability of Association in order to support critical member services.
- Develop an investment strategy to ensure the best return on WABO funds without undue risk.

Certification and Registration

- Continue and enhance the alliance with Oregon Building Officials Association (OBOA) in order to strengthen Special Inspection programs.
- Explore certification for green building inspector program.

Accreditation

Code Official Accreditation Program (COAP)

- Review and refine Code Official Accreditation Program
- Gain committee participation from WABO jurisdictions
- Develop Tutor Program
- Obtain State Licensing
- Outreach Prospective Students
- Outreach Prospective Instructors and Tutors

Accredited Code Official (ACO) Program

- Continue to review and maintain the written exam
- Develop and Maintain Program Administration
- Outreach to Membership

- Increase Awareness to Members
- 12 Module Course Development

Executive Board

- Plan for changing economics affecting WABO membership and address issues such as what will WABO look like in the future? How do we ensure continued participation and growth in the Association?
- Continue to promote transparency in business practices by WABO.
- Provide advanced information on what will be addressed at WABO Quarterly Meetings.
- Foster imagination. Mini-brainstorming sessions at each meeting. (5 to 10 minutes each).
- Continue to work with Western Pacific League of Building Officials to work on common interstate issues
- Provide strong support for Code Official Apprenticeship Program