

CHAPTER 281

METROPOLITAN OR REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSIONS

Referred to in [§97B.1A](#), [331.304](#)

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281.1 Authority of governing bodies — joint commission.

The governing bodies of two or more adjoining cities, independently or together with the governing body or bodies of the county or counties within which such cities are located, or the governing bodies of two or more adjoining counties, or a county and its major city or cities, or the governing bodies of one or more counties together with the governing bodies of one or more cities adjoining such county or counties, or any of the above together with a school district, benefited water district, benefited fire district, sanitary district or any other similar district which may be formed under an Act of the legislature may cooperate in the creation of a joint planning commission which may be designated to be a regional or metropolitan planning commission, as agreed among the governing bodies. The governing bodies of cities, counties, school districts or other governmental units may cooperate with the governing bodies of the cities and counties or other authorized governing bodies of any adjoining state or states in the creation of such a joint planning commission where such cooperation has been authorized by law by the adjoining state or states.

The joint planning commission shall be separate and apart from the governmental units creating it, may sue and be sued, contract for the purchase and sale of real and personal property necessary for its purposes, and shall be a juristic entity as the term is used in [section 97C.2, subsection 6](#).

[C66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §473A.1]
C91, §281.1

281.2 Membership.

The commission shall have not less than five members, appointed by the governing bodies of the area served by the commission. A majority of the members of the commission may be citizens who hold no other public office or position except appointive membership on a city plan commission or other planning commission, board or agency. Citizen members shall be appointed for overlapping terms of not less than three nor more than five years or thereafter until their successors are appointed. The appointing governing bodies shall determine the amount of compensation, if any, to be paid to the members of a commission. Any vacancy in the membership of a commission shall be filled for the unexpired term in the same manner as the initial appointment. The governing bodies shall have authority to remove any member for cause stated in writing and after a public hearing.

[C66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §473A.2]
C91, §281.2

281.3 Organization.

The joint planning commission shall elect one of its members as chairperson who shall serve for one year or until the chairperson is reelected or the chairperson's successor is elected. The commission shall appoint a secretary who may be an officer or an employee of a governing body or of the commission. The members of the commission shall meet not less than four times a year at the call of the chairperson and at such other times as the chairperson or the members of the commission shall determine, shall adopt rules for the transaction of business, and shall keep a record of their resolutions, transactions, findings and determinations, which record shall be a public record. The commission may employ such employees and staff as it may deem necessary for its work, including a director of planning and consultants. In the performance of its duties, the commission may cooperate

with, contract with, and accept and expend funds from federal, state, or local agencies, public or semipublic agencies, or private individuals or corporations, and may carry out such cooperative undertakings and contract. It may enter into other contracts and make expenditures for the purchase of required equipment and supplies, and exercise all other powers necessary to carry out the purposes of [this chapter](#). The expenditures of the commission, exclusive of gifts or grants to the commission or its contract receipts, shall be within the amounts appropriated or provided to the commission by the governing bodies of the area served by the commission, who are empowered to determine, agree upon, and appropriate funds for the payment of the expenses of the commission of their respective shares thereof. The governing bodies of the area served by the commission shall cooperate with the commission and may aid the commission by furnishing staff, services and property.

[C66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §473A.3]

C91, §28I.3

28I.4 Powers and duties.

1. The commission shall have the power and duty to make comprehensive studies and plans for the development of the area it serves which will guide the unified development of the area and which will eliminate planning duplication and promote economy and efficiency in the coordinated development of the area and the general welfare, convenience, safety, and prosperity of its people. The plan or plans collectively shall be known as the regional or metropolitan development plan. The plans for the development of the area may include but shall not be limited to recommendations with respect to existing and proposed highways, bridges, airports, streets, parks and recreational areas, schools and public institutions and public utilities, public open spaces, and sites for public buildings and structures; districts for residence, business, industry, recreation, agriculture, and forestry; water supply, sanitation, drainage, protection against floods and other disasters; areas for housing developments, slum clearance and urban renewal and redevelopment; location of private and public utilities, including but not limited to sewerage and water supply systems; and such other recommendations concerning current and impending problems as may affect the area served by the commission. Time and priority schedules and cost estimates for the accomplishment of the recommendations may also be included in the plans. The plans shall be made with consideration of the smart planning principles under [section 18B.1](#). The plans shall be based upon and include appropriate studies of the location and extent of present and anticipated populations; social, physical, and economic resources, problems and trends; and governmental conditions and trends. The commission is also authorized to make surveys, land-use studies, and urban renewal plans, provide technical services and other planning work for the area it serves and for cities, counties, and other political subdivisions in the area. A plan or plans of the commission may be adopted, added to, and changed from time to time by a majority vote of the planning commission. The plan or plans may in whole or in part be adopted by the governing bodies of the cooperating cities and counties as the general plans of such cities and counties. The commission may also assist the governing bodies and other public authorities or agencies within the area it serves in carrying out any regional plan or plans, and assist any planning commission, board or agency of the cities and counties and political subdivisions in the preparation or effectuation of local plans and planning consistent with the program of the commission. The commission may cooperate and confer, as far as possible, with planning agencies of other states or of regional groups of states adjoining its area.

2. A planning commission formed under the provisions of [this chapter](#) shall, upon designation as such by the governor, serve as a district, regional, or metropolitan agency for comprehensive planning for its area for the purpose of carrying out the functions as defined for such an agency by federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

[C66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §473A.4]

C91, §28I.4

[2010 Acts, ch 1184, §19](#)

281.5 Plans distributed.

Copies of the plan or plans and amendments or revisions of a plan or plans prepared by a commission may be transmitted by the commission to the chief administrative officers, the legislative bodies, the planning commissions, boards or agencies of the counties and cities, within its area, and to regional or metropolitan planning commissions established for adjoining areas. A commission may make copies of its plan or plans or parts of plans available for general distribution or sale, and may advise and supply information, as far as available, to persons and organizations who may request such advice and information and who are concerned with the area's development problems. It may also provide information to state and local agencies and to the public at large, in order to foster public awareness and understanding of the objectives of regional or metropolitan planning, and in order to stimulate public interest and participation in the orderly, integrated development of the area served by the commission.

[C66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §473A.5]
C91, §281.5

281.6 Filing documents with commission.

To facilitate effective and harmonious planning of the region or metropolitan area, all governing bodies in the area served by a commission, and all county and city planning commissions, boards or agencies in the area may file with the commission, for its information, all county or city plans, zoning ordinances, official maps, building codes, subdivision regulations, or amendments or revisions of them, as well as copies of their regular and special reports dealing in whole or in part with planning matters. County or city governing bodies, or county or city local planning commissions, boards or agencies may also submit proposals to a commission for such plans, ordinances, maps, codes, regulations, amendments or revisions prior to their adoption, in order to afford an opportunity to the commission to study such proposals and to render advice thereon.

[C66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §473A.6]
C91, §281.6

281.7 Construction of provisions.

Nothing in [this chapter](#) shall be construed to remove or limit the powers of the cooperating cities, counties, school districts, benefited water districts, benefited fire districts, sanitary districts, or similar districts as provided by state law. All legislative power with respect to zoning and other planning legislation shall remain with the governing body of the cooperative cities and counties. Each participating city or county may continue to have its own planning commission or board but may under the joint agreement and in the interest of economy and efficiency and in the interest of uniform standards and procedures, request the metropolitan or regional planning commission to assume duties and functions of local planning agencies in whole or in part. The metropolitan or regional planning commission shall have the duty and function of promoting public interest and understanding of the economic and social necessity for long-term coordinated planning for the metropolitan or regional area, but its official recommendations shall be made to the governing bodies of the cooperating cities, counties, school districts, benefited water districts, benefited fire districts, sanitary districts, or similar districts.

[C66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §473A.7]
C91, §281.7

281.8 Contracts for planning.

A metropolitan planning commission may contract with professional consultants, the economic development authority or the federal government, for local planning assistance.

[C62, 66, 71, 73, §373.21; C75, 77, 79, 81, §473A.8]
C91, §281.8
[2011 Acts, ch 118, §85, 89](#)