

# NEVADA PLANNER



American Planning Association  
**Nevada Chapter**

*Making Great Communities Happen*

A Publication of the Nevada Chapter of the American Planning Association

**FALL 2017**

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Community Planning  
Month!**

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**ON THE COVER:** The stately State Capitol.  
Photo from Wikipedia

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# NORTHERN SECTION NEWS

ANGELA FUSS, AICP  
DIRECTOR, NORTHERN SECTION

The Northern Section is thrilled to be hosting this year's State Planning Conference in Carson City. The Conference offers over 36 sessions, mobile workshops, networking opportunities and a mock Planning Commission hearing comprised of local 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Enjoy!

# SOUTHERN SECTION NEWS

JARED TASKO, AICP  
DIRECTOR, SOUTHERN SECTION

I hope you enjoy your time in Carson City at the 2017 Nevada State Planning Conference. The preconference workshop as well as all the diverse planning sessions will provide an incredible opportunity to learn, network, and get inspired by the best planning personnel in the state. I hope that you enjoy the experience and can apply the knowledge in your respective professions, as we are all "Betting on Nevada's Future."

Be sure to join us in Las Vegas next year for the 2018 Nevada State Planning Conference. Also, the Southern Section is working on our final quarterly luncheon for 2017, and we will announce the details soon.



#PlanningMonth

APA  
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Community  
Planning  
Month









FIGURE 2: SOUTH CARSON STREET

conditions, identified potential improvements, and incorporated extensive public outreach to develop conceptual designs and a finalized project report. The public outreach approach included two meetings, which served a variety of objectives. First, to educate the public on what Complete Streets are, including types of design methods and benefits. Second, to gain insight on community perception of South Carson Street’s existing conditions. Third, to provide examples of what potential design alternatives might look like. Lastly, to ask the public about their preferences for improvements to South Carson Street through the corridor.

The first public meeting identified community-preferred design layouts, and approximately 50 community members attended. Community members voiced a desire for South Carson Street to include all modes of transportation while obtaining better access for the variety of businesses that serve the corridor. The polling results conducted from the first meeting are shown in

Figure 3. In addition to traditional methods of notifying the community of the second public meeting, CAMPO mailed and hand-delivered information to businesses along the corridor. The additional outreach was successful and over 100 community members attended the meeting. The main objective of the second meeting was to give community members opportunity to guide features of the future design.

Overwhelmingly, community members preferred Design Alternative A for the five sections of roadway. The concept of segments were introduced at this meeting in order to break up South Carson Street due to its 2.5 mile length. Segments generally aligned with similar land uses and physical features. Alternative A includes improvements such as one travel lane in both directions, two-way center left turn lane, buffered bicycle lanes, landscaping separating bicyclist and pedestrians from vehicles, ADA sidewalk improvements, and lighting. Alternative B improvements include one travel lane in both directions, two-way center left turn lane, bicycle

| Overall  | Walkability  | Bikeability  |
|--|--|--|
| 78% preferred vehicle access over mobility   | 94% felt improvements were needed  | 98% felt improvements were needed  |
| 94% felt lighting improvements were of medium to high importance   | 76% felt walkability is of medium to high importance   | 82% felt bikeability was of medium to high importance  |
| 78% felt upgrading streetscape with landscaping, furniture, and other amenities was of medium to high importance | Of those who would consider walking, the following treatments would get people to walk more:<br>60% attractive streetscape<br>20% vibrant street scene<br>10% wider sidewalk<br>7% access to transit | 75% mainly ride a bicycle for recreation or exercise, of those who would consider bicycling, the following treatments would get people to ride a bicycle more:<br>65% bicycle paths separated from roadways<br>26% buffered bicycle lanes<br>19% striped and signed bicycle lanes on streets |

FIGURE 3: POLLING RESULTS



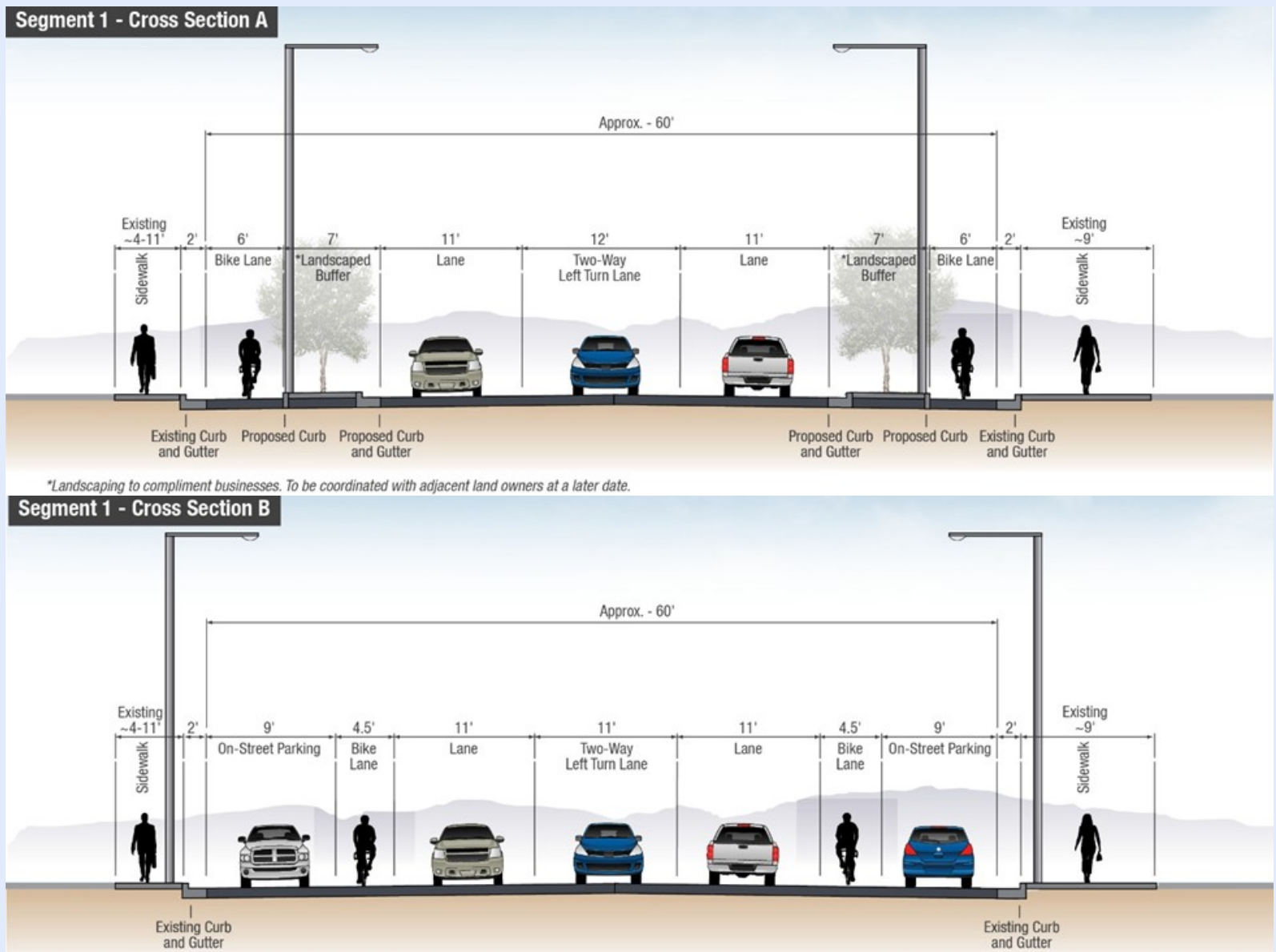



FIGURE 4

lanes, ADA sidewalk improvements, lighting, and on-street parking (Figure 4).

As noted, community members preferred Alternative A for all segments of roadway. The success in Carson City's public outreach was that it shows vast community support for a Complete Streets corridor that accounts for all modes of transportation, improves business access, and is landscaped. The public outreach process helped bolster the City's relationship with the community, gain support of Complete Streets design concepts, and affirmed the City's commitment to engaging with stakeholders. Next steps include the formation of a technical advisory committee to obtain ongoing feedback as the project progresses into the design stage. 

**Hailey Lang** is a Transportation Planner for the Carson City Public Works Department/Carson Area Metropolitan Planning Organization.





# SOUTHERN NEVADA ADOPTS REGIONAL BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLAN

CATHLY HALKA, AICP

Southern Nevada has 868 miles of bike lanes, paved paths, and shared roadways. However, only 1% of all trips in Southern Nevada are done by bicycle and up to 12% by walking. Most of the existing walking and biking network isn't very comfortable or connected. Crashes are found to be most common along high-traffic arterial streets, which provide the most continuous routes in the regional street network and serve as primary retail and employment corridors. Data show that 3.7% of Southern Nevada residents have no access to an automobile and 24.3% have limited access. According to the project survey, people would walk and bike more if there were wider and separated sidewalks and bikes facilities, more regional paved trails, and more safe routes to schools.

There are many benefits to having a successful walking and biking network. A great active transportation network makes it easier to incorporate physical activity into daily routines and can lead to improved community health. Providing space on the roadway for people on bikes and on foot, in addition to people in cars, can lead to increased safety for all users. Infrastructure improvements



## Regional Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan for Southern Nevada

Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada  
with support from the Southern Nevada Health District



PLAN RELEASE: APRIL 2017  
RTC ADOPTION: MAY 18, 2017

can lead to slower travel speeds and potentially fewer crashes. Walking and biking are not only great cost effective ways to get around, which is particularly important for low-income families with limited access to a vehicle, but can also provide great health benefits. A better walking and biking network can improve air quality as people trade car trips for people-powered modes. There are economic benefits as well. It has been shown that businesses have higher potential for growth and property values are higher near bike paths and walking trails. The recent renewed interest in walking and biking along with the development of new best practices in design standards are what drove the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada (RTC SNV) to study the topic further.

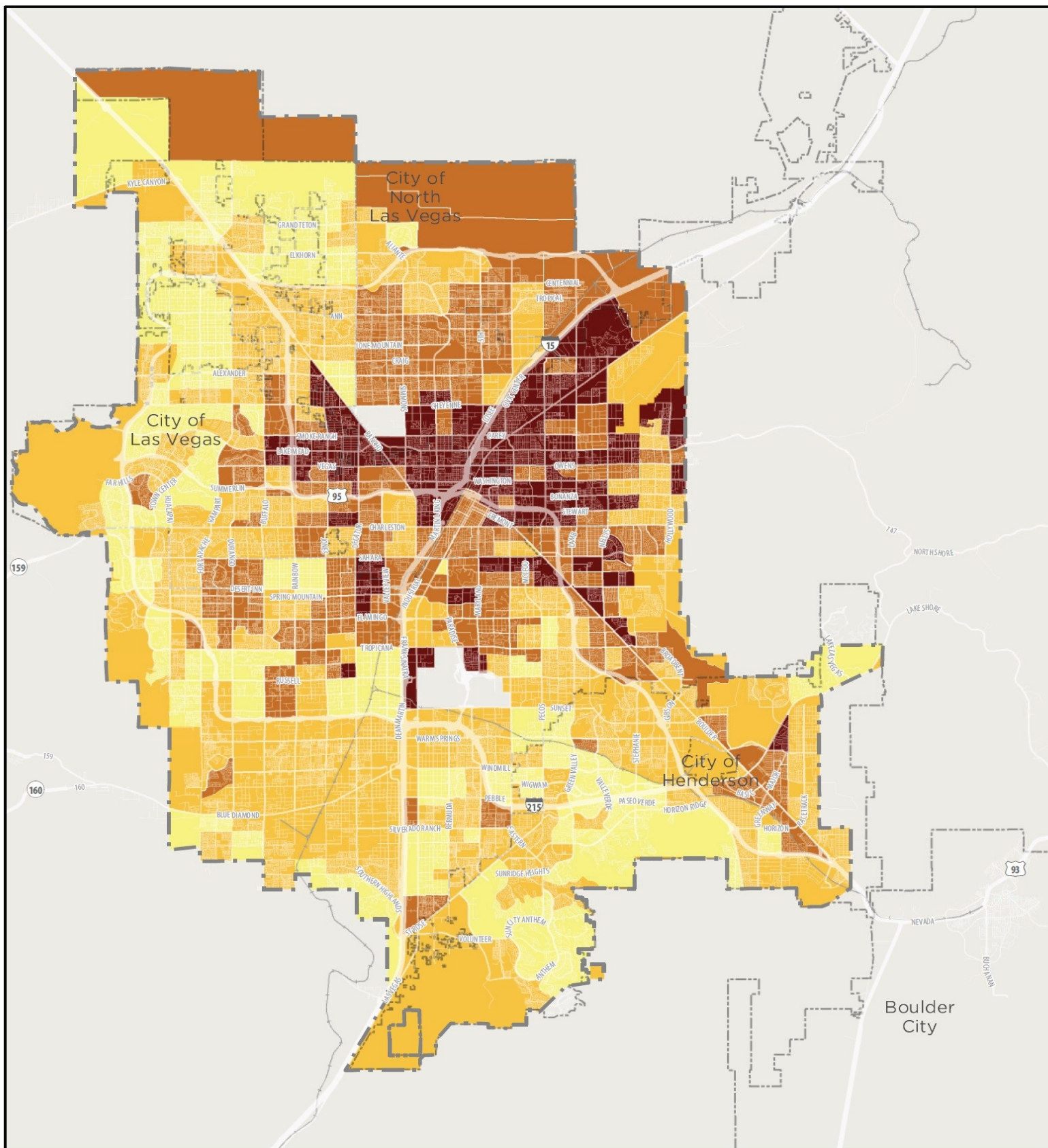
On May 18, 2017, the RTC SNV adopted the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (RBPP). The project was made possible by the Southern Nevada Health District, which secured grant funding from the Partnerships to Improve Community Health (PICH) program through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Plan identifies a vision and goals, existing conditions, design guidelines, a map of proposed facilities, and recommendations for policies and programs to comprehensively support biking in Southern Nevada. The RTC SNV's efforts to expand and provide safer transportation options for cyclists and pedestrians also support Southern Nevada Strong's vision to create multi-modal interconnected streets and build strong communities.

Equity is a prominent focus of the plan. The project team targeted underserved areas for public outreach and focused infrastructure recommendations in these areas. The map identifies areas where underserved populations, households with limited access to a vehicle, and minority and low income populations. Areas with the highest identified needs include along US 95, near Nellis Air Force Base, along I-15 north of US 95, and near the University of Nevada, Las Vegas campus.

Through a robust and diverse community outreach effort, thousands of stakeholders participated in the year-and-a-half-long plan development process. A project webpage and e-newsletters provided regular updates on the plan's progress and opportunities to participate. The online survey received over a thousand responses and the mapping activity received more than 1,200 comments on community needs and preferences. Additionally, a dedicated Stakeholder Advisory Group comprised of representatives from local jurisdictions, agencies, and walking and biking advocates provided direction and feedback on the plan at key milestones throughout the project. The project team attended 12 community events to build awareness about the plan and get feedback on draft elements.

With consideration of existing plans and feedback from public engagement efforts, a plan vision was developed: "Southern Nevada will develop a safe, connected, and convenient walking and bicycling system that serves as a viable transportation and recreation asset while advancing the region's economic, educational, health, and environmental goals." Four goals were identified to address





Map 2.1  
Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for  
Southern Nevada

## Equity Analysis Map

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Clark County and RTC GIS  
Map Created: March 2016  
Map Produced By: Alta Planning + Design

### Composite Equity Score\*

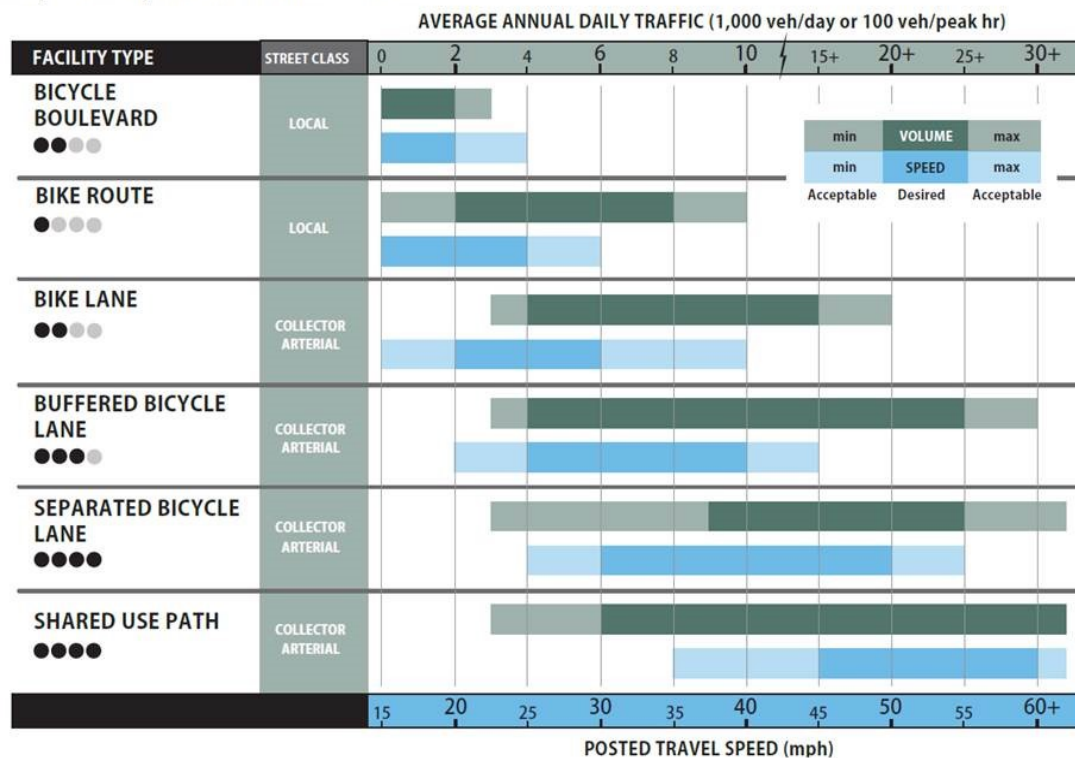


\*Equity scores are based upon census tract data and may include some uninhabited areas. McCarran and North Las Vegas Airports have been removed.






Bicycle Facility Selection Guidance Table



from the 2012 Complete Streets Design Guidelines for Livable Communities and including new best practices in facility design for bicycle and walking facilities, as well as crossing and intersection design treatments. The American Association for State Highway Officials (AASHTO) Guide for Bicycle Facilities and the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Bikeway Design Guide provided additional design guidance. Facility selection tables offer guidelines for selecting the appropriate bike facility or crossing design based on roadway features such as vehicle volume and speed, roadway type, and number of lanes. The plan's design guidelines identify best practices in facility designs for Southern Nevada.

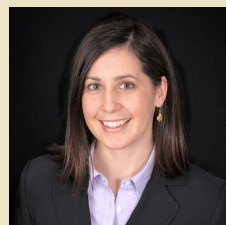
the vision:

1. **Safety & Comfort:** Develop comprehensive facilities throughout Southern Nevada that make bicycling and walking safe, comfortable and convenient for all ages and abilities;
2. **Access:** Improve bicycling and walking access to community destinations across Southern Nevada including connections to transit;
3. **Education & Encouragement:** Encourage broader participation, appreciation and awareness of walking and bicycling through program efforts targeted to all ages and abilities;
4. **Equity & Health:** Recognize the transportation system's impact on air quality and community health while providing ladders of opportunity to underserved communities.

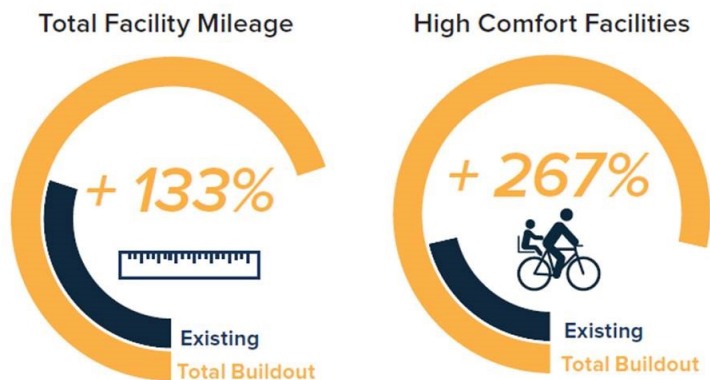
The Plan recommends an expansion of the existing regional bicycle network to **2,023 miles of bike facilities, a 133% increase**. With a focus on rider experience, the plan recommends improving the level of comfort of the overall walking and biking network from 46% to 73%. At full build out, the Southern Nevada bicycle network would experience a 267% increase in high comfort facilities. Valley-wide, it would be easier and more comfortable to hop on a bike instead of getting in a car. A high-comfort bicycle network can provide safe, comfortable, and attractive facilities for people of all ages and abilities to ride and connects them to destinations such as jobs, homes, parks, schools, and healthcare. 

For more information on the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, please visit: [www.rtcsnv.com/bikepedplan](http://www.rtcsnv.com/bikepedplan)

Design guidelines in the plan were developed starting



**Cathy Halka, AICP**, is a Senior Transportation Planner at the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada (RTCSNV). She received a Master of Community Planning from the University of Maryland and has professional experiences in residential development, neighborhood planning, development review, and transportation planning.





# LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT IN THE CARSON RIVER WATERSHED

LYNN ZONGE

Resource Concepts, Inc. assisted the Carson Water Sub-conservancy District (CWSD) in completing Low Impact Development in the Carson River Watershed. This handy, colorful 20 page document was prepared to assist local jurisdictions to make Low Impact Development (LID) a part of everyday business.


Urban stormwater runoff is one of the main sources of non-point source (NPS) pollution in the United States. NPS pollution is caused by rainfall or snowmelt moving over and through the ground. As the runoff moves across impervious surfaces/hardscapes like roads, driveways and rooftops, it picks up and carries away natural and human-made pollutants. These pollutants, like oil, trash, fecal matter, soil sediments, pesticides, and fertilizers are deposited into watershed lakes, streams, wetlands, rivers, and eventually even our ground water.

LID practices reduce the amount of runoff and filter stormwater by slowing, holding, infiltrating, and evaporating stormwater onsite. LID practices filter out pollutants such as oil, bacteria, sediment, and nutrients by allowing the runoff to seep through onsite vegetation and soil. Urbanized areas in Nevada can incorporate LID practices into their stormwater management repertoire and gain many benefits that enhance water quality and overall watershed

health. In addition, LID practices can be used to address stormwater, limiting the need for large infrastructure that municipalities do not have the financial or staff resources to build or maintain.

Reading through the document one can learn:

- What stormwater is and how to use it as a resource rather than a waste product
- LID benefits and practices in northern Nevada including the various types, designs, alternatives, maintenance needs, and limitations
- Examples of LID practices in northern Nevada
- How to incorporate LID into the fabric of the planning process
- Various LID incentives

Low Impact Development in the Carson River Watershed is available on the [CWSD website](#) on the Water Quality page. 

**Lynn Zonge is Senior Resource Specialist at Resource Concepts, Inc., in Carson City, and is the Secretary/Treasurer for the Truckee River Foundation, a local non-profit aimed at improving recreation on the Truckee River.**





# VIDEO SERIES: FLOODPLAINS AS A COMMUNITY ASSET

DEBBIE NEDDENRIEP

Carson Water Subconservancy District (CWSD) is delighted to debut its “Floodplains as a Community Asset” video series. Inspired by similar videos created by Colorado’s Urban Drainage and Control District, our goal is to underscore the critical importance of conserving the Carson River Watershed’s remaining floodplain, with an emphasis on maintaining the undeveloped nature of our watershed’s rivers and streams.

Created with funding from FEMA’s 2015 CTP “Cooperating Technical Partners” program, these videos aim to increase flood awareness, promote the importance of reducing flood hazards, and spur community action to conserve the Carson River Floodplain. The videos support CWSD’s overarching objective of informing watershed residents, policy makers, and developers of the importance of preserving the Carson River Floodplain and will be utilized in flood awareness outreach and education efforts throughout the watershed.

The videos provide a strong case for watershed communities to preserve floodplains and support conservation efforts in the Carson Watershed. They provide vital information to our community planners and local officials, empowering them to make informed land use and ordinance decisions that encourage public safety by keeping our floodplains open and undeveloped. A desired result of this project is increased funding from federal, state, and local budgets for floodplain preservation projects such as open space acquisition, conservation easements, and ecosystem service incentives.


[Public Service Announcement \(PSA\) - Conserving the Carson River Floodplain as a Community Asset](#)

[Agriculture’s a Good Fit for Conserving the Carson River Floodplain as a Community Asset](#)

[A Case for Developers to Conserve the Carson River Floodplain as a Community Asset](#)

[Our Officials in Conserving the Carson River Floodplain as a Community Asset](#)



The CWSD would like to thank everyone who made these productions possible! Let’s continue to work together to protect the Carson River Floodplain as a Community Asset! 

**Debbie Neddenriep** is Water Resource Specialist at the Carson Water Subconservancy District, supporting various grants, programs, and staff members and serving as office IT support.



## National Community Planning Month is Here!

This month, we’re joining with our planning colleagues from across the country to celebrate the lasting value that thoughtful and innovative planning has on communities. This year’s theme is innovation in planning, underscoring the role of planning in addressing and adapting to the challenges facing communities in the 21st century.

Use the resources in APA’s Planning Month Resource HUB to share with your community, elected officials, and local media the positive impact planning has had on your community.

Have a planning success story you’d like APA to highlight during October? Send your stories and photos to us at [ncpm@planning.org](mailto:ncpm@planning.org). Learn more about National Community Planning Month at [www.planning.org/ncpm](http://www.planning.org/ncpm)





## SUSTAINABILITY AT THE RTC OF WASHOE: FROM FINANCE TO FACILITIES

COLE PEIFFER, AICP

Sustainability in transportation is often focused solely on reducing the emission of Greenhouse Gases (GHGs), and with good reason. The transportation sector emits the second largest amount of GHGs, emitting over 27 percent of the total GHGs in the nation in 2015. Here in Nevada, transportation represents over 38 percent of total carbon dioxide emissions, a major contributor of GHGs. While reducing the amount of GHG emissions is a primary goal for making transportation more sustainable, the Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County (RTC) recognizes there are many additional strategies that can help make the transportation network as a whole more sustainable and environmentally friendly.

The RTC has a unique opportunity to be a sustainability leader in the Truckee Meadows transportation network as the regional road builder, Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and transit provider. The RTC has approached the issue of sustainability holistically, working across departments and with other stakeholders throughout the region, as well as with the public to improve all aspects of the agency from Finance to Facilities. This approach to sustainability in transportation has been fully embraced by the RTC in the last decade with a commitment to provide a sustainable transportation system that supports the environmental, social, and economic vitality of the Truckee Meadows community.

The core principle of sustainability at the RTC has brought about many changes across the agency: from the way we manage facilities to how we design roadways and deliver transit service. As the guiding policy document for the RTC, the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) represents all aspects of the RTC and highlights guiding principles which are at the core of the RTC's mission. Based on community feedback, agency leadership, and an understanding of its importance, the RTC incorporated sustainability into the Guiding Principles of the agency in the 2035 RTP and carried this forward to the newly adopted 2040 RTP. Making a further commitment to sustainability, the RTC signed the Sustainability Commitment from the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) in 2011. Through this program, RTC was awarded with a Silver Level of recognition for achievements in sustainability in August, 2017. Additionally, the RTC adopted a Sustainability Policy in 2011, which helps further formalize our commitment to promote, continually improve upon, and implement sustainable practices throughout the agency and the work we do for the benefit of the region.

### Facilities

At the administrative offices, the RTC instituted a recycling program which helped reduce total waste generation by more than 161 tons since 2015; recycling containers for transit riders were installed at RTC 4th Street Station and RTC Centennial Plaza. Moreover, these transit centers were designed with sustainable practices at their



core and both received LEED Certification upon their completion. The RTC has also implemented energy efficient upgrades at existing facilities, including occupancy light sensors, LED lighting retrofits, HVAC system upgrades, low-e window glazing, and the installation of solar panel arrays with a total capacity of 230 kW. All these efforts have resulted in a 25 percent reduction in the total energy used by RTC facilities since 2010.

Being located in the high desert, the RTC is keenly aware of the need to conserve water resources. The RTC has made extensive efforts to reduce water usage at our facilities. Initiatives to reduce water usage include installing mechanical water shut-off valves on all bathroom faucets, ultra-low-flow toilets, xeriscaping landscaping techniques, and specialized bus washing facilities. Both bus washing facilities owned by the RTC utilize a reverse osmosis filtration process which prevents washing solvents from entering the environment and allows wash water to be reused.

## Engineering & Planning

The RTC encourages sustainability throughout the Truckee Meadows by providing access to safe and reliable transportation alternatives to the private automobile. Alternatives to driving, such as walking and bicycling, reduce GHGs and can help improve overall health. The RTC has worked diligently to expand pedestrian & bicycling facilities in order to make these modes safer and more competitive with the automobile. The RTC has installed over 60 miles of bicycle facilities since 2012, and is committed to continuing to expand both the pedestrian and bicycling network. In order to guide these efforts, the RTC has created a Complete Streets Master Plan and recently updated the Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan which includes 115 miles of bicycle projects and 338 miles of pedestrian projects planned through 2040.



When constructing a roadway, the RTC takes special care to reduce impacts to the environment by addressing storm water run-off and reducing the total energy embodied in the roadway. One of the ways the RTC achieves this is by utilizing pervious paving in parking areas or along roadway shoulders. This kind of pavement allows storm water to pass vertically through the roadway, unlike most road surfaces. By allowing for storm water to be collected on-site, the burden placed on the storm water system is less severe. During the design of the South-East Connector, the RTC incorporated extensive storm water management techniques which helped reconnect the Steamboat Creek with its natural floodplain, improve downstream water quality, and replaced displaced wetlands at a ratio of 8 acres for every 1 acre removed. The RTC also uses sustainable practices when selecting materials to construct roadways. Currently, the RTC uses pavement with 15 percent recycled content, which helps reduce the overall embodied energy for a roadway. Another strategy used during roadway construction is Cold-In-Place (CIR) recycling, a process in which old pavement is recycled during resurfacing projects. The RTC also uses Warm-Mix-Asphalt which reduces GHG emissions both at the asphalt plant and at the construction site.

## Transit

One of the most visible parts of the RTC are our transit buses, which carry passengers all across the Truckee Meadows thousands of times each day. From the way passengers purchase tickets to the vehicle on which they ride, the RTC is continuing to make riding the bus more sustainable than ever.

Over the past decade, the RTC has upgraded the entire transit fleet. The RTC RIDE fleet replaced older diesel buses








with ten cleaner hybrid-diesel buses and four fully electric buses; the RTC ACCESS paratransit fleet transitioned from gasoline to running solely on Compressed Natural Gas (CNG). By upgrading the fleet to incorporate cleaner burning engines and alternative fuels, the RTC has reduced total criteria air pollutants per passenger trip by over 15 percent and GHG emissions per passenger trip by over 10 percent overall since 2010. Going forward, the RTC will continue to upgrade the RTC fleet to be more sustainable. The RTC is committed to becoming a fully electric transit fleet and is expanding the current charging capabilities to handle up to 20 fully electric buses. The transition to a fully electric fleet is not without challenges, but will help the RTC become more environmentally and financially sustainable as the long-term price for electricity is more stable than prices for gasoline. The RTC VANPOOL program is also a game-changer that increases sustainability and transportation choices throughout the region, including to the Tahoe Reno Industrial Center, home of Tesla and other high tech industries. The program is the RTC's fastest growing market segment in transit services. With 110 vanpools in operation today, the success of the program is evident with the elimination of VMT's and the significant reduction of carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide emissions.

The RTC is also enhancing the customer experience as a way to improve sustainability. In November 2016, the RTC introduced the Token Transit app which allows transit users to purchase transit fares directly from their smartphone eliminating the need to purchase a pass at a ticket counter or vending machine. By transitioning to a mobile device ticketing system, Token Transit makes up 9.3 percent of all pass rides and 5.9 percent of all transit rides.

## Looking Ahead

Sustainability is inherently interdisciplinary and requires collaboration, both internally and with external stakeholders, to succeed. RTC staff participate in a regional sustainability group and a land use and transportation resiliency committee. Public meetings held for the update of the 2040 RTP captured public input and highlighted the importance of sustainability to the community. Internally, RTC staff coordinate regularly to share sustainability ideas and collaborate on solutions for improving sustainability practices across departments. The RTC recognizes the importance of continued internal and external collaboration in achieving more ambitious sustainability goals.

Moving forward, the RTC plans to continue to fulfill its commitment to sustainability by addressing issues with an integrated, agency-wide approach. The RTC Sustainability Plan, adopted in July 2017, is the first agency-wide plan focusing solely on sustainability and details short- and long-term sustainability goals for the entire agency. The RTC relied on an interdepartmental team to develop the crosscutting plan. Achieving plan goals will require continued commitment from agency leadership, expertise from staff, and support from partner organizations and the public. In keeping with the RTC's holistic approach to sustainability in transportation, the Sustainability Plan includes strategies to achieve sustainability goals for all departments—from Finance to Facilities. 



**Cole Peiffer, AICP** is a planner at the Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County and the project manager for the development of the RTC's sustainability plan.



# THOUGHTS FROM THE DIAS

PETER GOWER, AICP

Friends and family outside the planning community often ask me what it means to be a planning commissioner. In a nutshell, I explain that it entails reviewing staff reports for planning or development proposals, sitting through often lengthy meetings, and rendering sometimes tough decisions on the proposed action. The response I usually get is a sympathetic look and a comment about how it must be a tough career. To that, I clarify, that it really isn't my job, per se, it is something I do in addition to my day job as an environmental planning consultant. Raised eyebrows typically ensue. "You mean," they protest, "you do not get paid for it?"


Of course, I do get a stipend for each meeting, but when considering the amount of time spent reviewing packets, visiting project sites, meeting with applicants, and talking with staff and legal counsel before the meeting even starts, being a planning commissioner nearly equates to a volunteer position. After I explain this, and describe the impassioned public testimony and lengthy debate that typifies an average planning commission meeting, the inevitable next question is: "Then WHY do you do it?"

It is a fair question, and I offer the following thoughts:

1. **The opportunity to make informed decisions on behalf of my community.** The privilege to serve comes with important responsibilities. For some matters, such as special use permits, the planning commission serves in a quasi-judicial role and its decisions are final. On other matters, such as tentative maps and master plan amendments, the planning commission's role is to provide a recommendation to the higher authority, such as the city council or county commission. In either case, commissioners are cognizant of the need to build a comprehensive decision record for the higher body. This is because controversial decisions made on special use permits and other final acts can be appealed to the higher body for further review. For these reasons, planning commissioners rely on their own professional experiences, knowledge of the planning process, expertise and communication skills of staff, and the additional information provided during public testimony and from the applicant to make informed decisions.
2. **The benefit of knowing what is going on in the community.** More than the average citizen, planning commissioners know about current and upcoming projects and planning initiatives. Decisions on these proposals will immediately change the community we serve. While planning commissioners do not have the same level of involvement as staff or the decision making authority as the city council or county commission, we are up to speed on the issues and can leverage our perspective to make sound decisions on behalf of the community.

3. **A chance to plan for the future.** In addition to considering nearer term projects, tentative maps, and zone changes, planning commissioners have the unique and exciting role of participating in master plan amendment and update processes. These longer-term documents allow the planning commission to look far beyond each commissioner's current term and grapple with bigger picture questions, such as population growth, resource constraints, and infrastructure capacity. For example, beginning in 2015, Reno City Planning Commissioners have been fully engaged in the ReImagine Reno Master Plan Update. This exceptional planning process leveraged the expertise of the planning commission at key intervals in developing guiding principles, citywide policies, and implementation strategies. Thanks to extensive public input and City of Reno staff's remarkable work preparing the plan and presenting information at planning commissioner briefings, public workshops, and joint planning commission-city council public meetings, the city has an excellent draft plan that will be considered for adoption later this year. Contributing to this process has allowed each commissioner the unique occasion to make a mark on Reno's future.

To be sure, serving my community as a planning commissioner is challenging. Planning cases can be complex and require substantial time and energy to identify the critical issues, formulate questions, and render decisions based on findings of fact. Public comment on development or planning proposals, especially controversial ones, is sometimes critical of the planning process and can be personally upsetting. Meetings, which usually begin at 6pm, regularly extend past 9pm, and sometimes as late as midnight or 1am. For everyone involved—staff, applicants, the public, and commissioners—planning commission days are long.

Despite these apparent shortcomings, being a planning commissioner is a unique opportunity to be a part of the planning process and to serve and contribute to the future of my community. This privilege is worth more than any stipend; it justifies the long meetings and delayed sleep; and it brings a strong sense of professional and personal fulfillment. 



**Peter Gower, AICP**, is chairman of the Reno City Planning Commission and vice-chairman of the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Commission. During the day, he is an environmental planning consultant with Environmental Management and Planning Solutions, Inc. in Reno.



# NEVADA PLANNER

The Nevada Planner is a publication of the Nevada Chapter of the American Planning Association, with a circulation of approximately 300 Chapter members, members of APA leadership, and Chapter Presidents. It is published three times per year.

## ARTICLES

To submit articles, letters, announcements, events, photos, or advertisements, please contact Greg Toth, Editor in Chief, at [greg.toth@cityofhenderson.com](mailto:greg.toth@cityofhenderson.com). The next issue will be published in the new year.

## CHANGES OF ADDRESS

The Nevada Chapter receives all member mailing and email addresses from the National database. To change your mailing address or email address, please log in to [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org) and update your information there.

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