

NEVADA PLANNER



American Planning Association
Nevada Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen

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Nevada Chapter President

Letter from the President

As the year winds down, so does my Presidency. I won't belabor that fact, but I want to start this article by saying THANK YOU to all of you. I've loved every minute of being your President and will always look back on these last 4+ years (2,102,400+ minutes) fondly. You'll still see me from time to time, and we're in excellent hands with Andy Durling at the helm, supported by the rest of our incredible Executive Committee.

Ok, enough sappiness. Year's end is a good time to update you on what's been going on with the Chapter and APA National. I'm happy to tell you that the State Planning/Western Planner Conference this October in South Lake Tahoe was an incredible success. It drew attendees from as far away as Alaska and made a 5-figure profit, which we haven't seen since the 2008 National Planning Conference and the 2003 Western Planner Conference. Aside from the dozens of incredible sessions, Mitch Silver, Immediate Past APA President, wowed his audiences as usual, and John Ralston, hometown journalist and host of The Ralston Reports, got attendees riled up with his trademark, off-the-cuff political and social commentary.

The executive committee is in the beginning stages of establishing an amicus/legislative committee. Several law firms and attorneys have approached us with interest in representing the Chapter, as well as tracking planning legislation for us. This committee would likely allow us the opportunity to proactively lobby the Legislature on planning legislation, something the Chapter hasn't been able to do since I can remember. We're also watching, along with the California Chapter, a lawsuit filed by the Sierra Club and another watchdog organization against the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency regarding its recent Regional Plan Update.

An amicus committee would help us if the need arises for the Chapter to get involved. I expect some form of this committee to be in place within the coming months.

I've mentioned before that our membership has declined significantly since it peaked at about 500 in 2008. But good news! We've seen an increase for the first time since then — up more than 7% over last year to 285 (as of October — sorry I don't have more current numbers). It's not a huge increase, but it's a good sign. The bump comes in large part due to our 11 Chapter Only memberships, so please keep spreading the word about Chapter Only membership to those you know who've let their APA memberships lapse.

You know I'm always yammering on and on about getting involved, and I'm not stopping now. The National Planning Conference returns to the Mountain West in 2016 when Phoenix will play host. I'm sure I'm not alone in being excited about the chance to help the Arizona Chapter showcase the great things we do out here in the desert. We don't get many opportunities, so let's not take it for granted. It's a bit soon, but we are planners, after all. Things will get started early. Keep an eye out for announcements.

Those are the highlights, fellow Nevada Planners. I leave you with this picture I took in the Hart Senate Office Building in DC — the day the shutdown started. I share it without caption or commentary. Enjoy. And see you around.

Cheers,
Greg Toth



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Northern Nevada Railway in Ely, Nevada.

Picture courtesy of Marco Velotta



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Saving Mid-Century Modern Las Vegas, One Architect at a Time

Courtney Mooney, AICP



Home located in Berkley Square Neighborhood Historic District built in 1954.

The mere mention of historic Las Vegas conjures iconic images of glowing vintage neon and flashing lights, bedazzled showgirls and craps tables ringed by stylish and giddy Hollywood stars. Thanks to movies and aggressive marketing that continues today, most people are very familiar with the glamorous Las Vegas of the 1940s through the 1960s. But rarely did the movies and magazine advertisements highlight the people that lived and worked in Las Vegas. The bar tenders, prop makers, black jack dealers and police officers were not nearly as exciting as the entertainment their jobs supported. Even less exciting to the masses was where these average and not-so-average citizens and their families lived, literally behind the scenes.

Not so to the city of Las Vegas Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) that has embarked on a multi-year quest to document the suburban homes of Las Vegans in the mid-twentieth century. Every year the city of Las Vegas receives funding through the National Park Service's Historic Preservation Fund grant to conduct surveys of historic neighborhoods. The HPC has committed to surveying Las Vegas' World War II and post war housing stock in order to develop a mid-century housing context. The context will help the HPC gauge levels of historic significance when neighborhoods and individual properties apply for historic designation on the city of Las Vegas Historic Property Register ("local register").

To date, the city has surveyed over 2,100 mid century homes. Not surprisingly, the findings showed that Las Vegas' wartime housing followed the national trends of the day: small mirror-image brick or stucco homes with traditional styling laid neatly in rows along gently curving streets. Likewise, many of the post war homes also reflected the popular "modern" styles of the day such as traditional and contemporary ranch, and even the modest international style.

The surprises have come in the form of the local and internationally known "starchitects" who were discovered through the surveys to have designed some of the post war tract homes. Prior to this, tract homes were typically built by local builders and it was rare when an architect was noted in promotional materials. Today's residents are hoping that the link to the more prolific designers will lead to the long-term preservation of their neighborhoods.

One such neighborhood is the Berkley Square Neighborhood Historic District built in 1954 in the predominantly African American West Las Vegas community. The development was the first minority built subdivision in Nevada with African American developers, financiers and designers. The designer was internationally known architect Paul R. Williams, the first African American architect initiated into the American Institute of Architects and the first to be elected a Fellow of the organization.

Williams, a Southern California architect, did a significant amount of work in Las Vegas, most notably the Historic La Concha Motel lobby (1962) which has been moved from its original location on the Strip to serve as the visitors center for the Neon Museum.

Early in his career he was best known as the residential "architect to the stars" with Lon Chaney, Frank Sinatra, and Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball as some of his clients.

Williams designed the Berkley Square subdivision to improve the living conditions of Las Vegas' African American community in the 1950s, many of whom were living without indoor plumbing. All of the homes are one-story modest contemporary ranch style with rectangular plans, asymmetric facades and carports on the side of house. The subdivision's streets were curved with limited access to slow traffic, planting strips separated sidewalks from the pavement to provide safety and comfort to pedestrians, and large trees shaded each front lawn.

The neighborhood was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2009 for its association with the civil rights movement. Property owners were opposed to designation on the local register because it would result in restrictions on alterations. Conversely, national designation only recognizes historic significance and does not protect neighborhoods from unwanted development. Even so, it became a catalyst for a number of community-led projects that sought to recognize the historical significance of the neighborhood and promote historically compatible rehabilitation. A grant from the Nevada Division of Forestry provided trees for the planting strip in front of each house to restore the vanishing tree canopy. A local artist designed interpretive banners to be placed throughout the neighborhood on streetlight poles, and bronze National Register plaques have been placed at the entrances to the neighborhood. Historical lectures and panel discussions by long-time residents bring voices to the printed history. These projects and others are bringing much-needed attention to African American history in Las Vegas.

Another discovery that is causing excitement among Modern architecture enthusiasts resulted from historic surveys completed for the Beverly Green neighborhood near downtown Las Vegas. Beverly Green is the official name of a geographic area with several historic tract developments that is overseen by a neighborhood association. The Beverly Green neighborhood association acts as a liaison with the city to address code and crime issues, and would represent the property owners should they wish to pursue historic designation.

The Beverly Green surveys uncovered the Paradise Village and Paradise Park tracts which are the first known residential tracts designed by the prolific Las Vegas architecture firm Zick and Sharp and local architect John Repogle in the 1950s. Zick and Sharp formed in 1949 and became well-known for designing commercial, residential and governmental buildings in the Modern architectural style with clean lines and limited ornamentation. Some well-known examples are the former Moulin Rouge Hotel and Casino (1955) and the Mint Hotel and Casino (1957). John Repogle also worked on a number of large-scale commercial and governmental commissions. His most well-known work was on the terminals of the McCarran International Airport (1962).

In keeping with these architects' early contemporary style, many of the Paradise Village and Paradise Park homes were designed with low pitched, asymmetrical roofs with wide overhanging eaves and side carports with adjoining porch roofs that provided a horizontal emphasis to the façade. These stylistic elements did not become prominent until the 1960s making these homes distinctive for their time.

The Nevada State Historic Preservation Office concurred with the survey findings that the Paradise Village and Paradise Park tracts are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as an historic district for their association with post war residential subdivision growth in Las Vegas and also for the association with the prominent architectural firm Zick and Sharp.



Home located in Beverly Green near downtown Las Vegas.

So, what next? A portion of the Beverly Green neighborhood is designated a gaming enterprise overlay district which includes a section of Las Vegas Boulevard. Concerns about commercial encroachment have prompted residents' interest in historic designation on the local register as a tool to discourage commercial encroachment. Historic district designation is promoted by the city as an important tool for preserving the character of urban neighborhoods. Exterior alterations and demolitions for properties listed on the local register are reviewed by the HPC in order to maintain historic character and integrity. Reviews are based on specific design standards and guidelines developed by the affected community.

Property owners are often wary of the restrictions imposed by a historic district overlay and it is not unusual for the designation process to be derailed by aggressive misinformation campaigns. The city has added design workshops to the designation process to discuss compatible alterations for existing homes, and has beefed up neighborhood outreach by partnering with the non-profit Nevada Preservation Foundation. It's an uphill battle and still in the very early stages, but the city and some residents hope to report a successful historic district designation to this publication by this time next year.

Courtney Mooney, AICP is the Urban Design Coordinator/Historic Preservation Officer in the City of Las Vegas Department of Planning.

2013 DeBoer Excellence in Planning Awards

The Nevada Chapter of the American Planning Association encourages excellence in planning. The Chapter's DeBoer Awards are named after Saco Reink DeBoer, author of the Boulder City plan and one of the master city planners of the twentieth century. The awards honor excellence in planning projects and individual initiative. Winners represent the best efforts of the planning community to affect the Silver State in a positive way. The 2013 DeBoer Awards were presented at the awards luncheon at the 2013 Western Planner/APA Nevada Chapter conference in South Lake Tahoe.

Outstanding Plan

Presented to City of North Las Vegas Comprehensive Trails and Bikeway Master Plan

An Outstanding Plan is a written plan that significantly advances the art and science of planning. This category includes master plans, general plans, comprehensive plans, capital improvement plans, transportation plans, other functional plans (e.g., air quality, recreation), redevelopment area plans, economic development plans, and similar plans.



Johanna Murphy, Advanced Planning Principal Planner, City of North Las Vegas, accepts the Outstanding Plan award from Greg Toth, Nevada Chapter APA president.

Outstanding Planning Programs, Techniques and Tools Award

Presented to City of North Las Vegas Zoning Ordinance

The Outstanding Planning Programs, Techniques and Tools is a planning program or tool that significantly advances planning in Nevada. This category emphasizes results and demonstrations of excellence in planning. Nominations may include codes, guidelines, regulations, ordinances, open space and TDR programs, land acquisition programs, public/private partnerships, fiscal/financial initiatives, planning technology projects (e.g., GIS), and similar efforts by planning teams.



Robert Eastman, Principal Planner at the City of North Las Vegas, accepting the Outstanding Program, Technique and Tools DeBoer Award in South Lake Tahoe.

Outstanding Plan for an Individual Project Award

Presented to Stantec and the Virginia Streetscape Enhancement Project and Visitors Welcome Center

This category includes focused planning efforts for individual residential, non-residential, or mixed-use projects that demonstrate excellence in the application of planning principles. Nominations may include plans for parks, golf courses, in-fill projects, affordable housing, utility projects, government buildings, cluster developments, residential developments, redevelopment projects, rehabilitation projects, and combinations.



Cynthia Albright, Senior Associate of Community Development at Stantec, accepting the Outstanding Plan for an Individual Project Award.

Outstanding Public Outreach and Journalism Award

Presented to RTC Washoe County 2035 Regional Transportation Plan

This category is awarded based on initiative illustrating how a region or community involves the general public in a planning activity, above and beyond the minimum state or local requirements. This category emphasizes successful efforts to engage the public, as well as programs to raise the overall level of understanding of planning, economic, development, environmental, or integrated issues.



Amy Cummings, RTC Director of Planning at the Awards Luncheon after the acceptance of the Outstanding Public Outreach and Journalism Award for the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan.

Outstanding Cultural or Environmental Plan Award

Presented to Lake Tahoe Regional Plan Update

This category is awarded for a planning effort that contributes to Nevada's cultural or environmental heritage and quality of life through management, enhancement, preservation, or restoration of important resources. Nominations may include plans for remediation projects, historic districts, natural and wildland areas, cultural sites, and other cultural or environmental efforts.



John Hester, Planning at TRPA at the Awards Luncheon after the acceptance of the Outstanding Cultural or Environmental Plan Award.

Professional Planner Award

Presented to Theresa Avance

Theresa is a Senior Planner with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. She started her career with the TRPA after receiving a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Studies with a specialization in Public Policy & Resource Management from UNLV. Theresa is the Assistant Director of the Northern Section of the Chapter, and she is also the lead co-chair for this year's Conference. She has demonstrated a commendable pursuit of professionalism in both her position with the TRPA and her contribution to the Nevada Chapter.



Theresa Avance accepts the 2013 DeBoer Professional Planner Award from Nevada APA President, Greg Toth.

Presented to Candace Stowell

Candace has broad experience in the land use planning field, having worked in Colorado, Arizona, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Nevada. She recently started her own consulting firm here in northern Nevada. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from George Washington University and a Master of Urban Planning from the University of Kansas. Candace is the Nevada Chapter Secretary and a School Board Trustee for Carson City. She is also the Treasurer for this year's Conference. Candace is a huge asset to the Chapter and the planning profession.

Elected Official Award

Presented to Oscar Delgado

Oscar is Councilman for the City of Reno's Ward 3. He brings to the Council his education in Land Use Planning and practice with social service and community outreach. Oscar was instrumental in creating a "neighborhood clean" for the Wells Avenue Neighborhood, which provided free dumping and clean up of trash and debris. He's coordinated bimonthly meetings with residents of the Oliver Montello neighborhood and opened the lines of communication between the City and business owners of the Sikh community, who would otherwise rarely participate in city outreach or functions. He has made it a priority to connect with the schools within Ward 3 by meeting with students, parents and school staff, identifying issues within the schools and neighborhoods. The Planning community commends Oscar for his hard work and dedication to the field.



Councilman Oscar Delgado stands with Greg Toth, Nevada Chapter APA president, after accepting the Elected Official Distinguished Leadership Award.

Citizen Planner Award

Presented to Shannon Eckmeyer

Shannon started with the League to Save Tahoe last year, which was partway through the Tahoe Regional Plan Update. She had to come up to speed with all the TRPA regulations in a very short period of time while also participating on the Code Technical Working Group and on one of the Regional Plan Mitigation Measure Technical Working Groups. Shannon is very dedicated and thorough and has taken some heat from various entities through the plan update process. She has sacrificed a lot of her personal life for the benefit of Lake Tahoe. We thank and commend Shannon for all she does as a citizen planner.



Shannon Eckmeyer accepts the Citizen Planner Award from Greg Toth, Nevada Chapter president.

History on the Road

Alicia Barber, Ph.D

Few Northern Nevada roads provide a glimpse into the past quite like the stretch running from Reno's 4th Street through Prater Way in Sparks. With buildings constructed over the course of a century or more, this single thoroughfare delivers an intriguing cross-section of the region's industrial, commercial, and residential history. For years it served as the Lincoln Highway, the famed transcontinental route that celebrates its centennial this year. In the decades to follow, designated as U.S. 40, its hotels and auto camps gave way to family-friendly motels, many of which still bear their original neon signs.

The corridor has been central to community life, too. Iron works, breweries, lumber yards, and machine shops have long stood alongside family markets, small businesses, and restaurants, many operated by the same families for generations.

It is this rich heritage that prompted the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) to initiate an innovative project in 2011 to research the history of the corridor and work with the community to tell its story. Beginning with an oral history project and an architectural survey conducted in partnership with the University of Nevada, Reno, the 4th Street/Prater Way History Project now engages a wide array of community partners, from the Sparks Museum & Cultural Center to the Historic Reno Preservation Society and Lincoln Highway Association.

By the summer of 2014, this collaborative project will result in four major products: a multimedia online feature housed on the Nevada Humanities Online Nevada Encyclopedia; content for historical mobile apps for both Reno and Sparks; permanent exhibits installed in the RTC 4th Street Station in downtown Reno and RTC Centennial Plaza in Sparks; and designs for eight new historically-themed bus shelters to be located along the corridor.

The 4th Street/Prater Way History Project encourages the public to help tell the story of this important thoroughfare by sharing their photographs, postcards, stories, and suggestions for additional research and interview subjects. To learn more, visit www.facebook.com/4thPraterHistory.



Historic Marker sign for Coney Island



Example of Reno's historic neon motel signs on 4th Street



4th Street Corridor



Planner Profile

John Slaughter, AICP, County Manager,
Washoe County

Candace H. Stowell, AICP

John Slaughter, AICP, arrived in Reno in 1986 with two suitcases and a graduate degree in Urban Planning from the University of Kansas (KU). A Kansas native, he had never been to Nevada prior to interviewing for a planning position in the Silver State. When John joined the Washoe County Community Comprehensive Planning Department in 1986, the population of the County was 227,998.

John is now the County Manager for Washoe County, after competing with 53 other candidates from around the country. John was formally appointed as the new County Manager on November 12, 2013. During his career at Washoe County he has worked as a land use planner, the County's strategic planning manager, and as the Director of Management Services. He represented Washoe County at the Nevada Legislature from 2001-2013 and was named Acting Assistant County Manager prior to his appointment as County Manager.

Today, John is in charge of a County with 2,534 employees and an annual General Fund Budget of \$232.7 million. The total population of Washoe County is now 427,704, and includes the cities of Reno and Sparks, and several unincorporated areas including Incline Village at Lake Tahoe, Washoe Valley, Sun Valley, Spanish Springs, and Gerlach (perhaps best known as the jumping off point for the annual Burning Man celebration).

Nevada APA interviewed John on November 15 to talk about his work and accomplishments at the County during the last 27 years and his priorities for Washoe County.

After you graduated from the University of Kansas with your Master's in Urban Planning, what brought you to Washoe County?

I came to Washoe County because Eric Strauss, the former Chair of the KU Planning Program knew John Hester, former Planning Director at Washoe County at the time who was advertising for a planning position. I had never been west of Dodge City, KS and I came to Nevada in October, 1986. I started as one of three long range planners. Mike Harper, FAICP, was the Current Planning Division Director. Washoe County was starting to rebuild the long range planning division and I was hired to develop plans for specific areas of unincorporated Washoe County, including Mt. Rose and the Galena area, and to assist with the development of the County's Capital Improvement Plan using GIS.

What was the state of planning back in the 1980's? What type of projects did you work on?

I worked on capital planning for growth areas such as the Southeast and the Southwest areas of Washoe County. There was a Regional Planning Commission, but Reno and Sparks were no longer participating. Regional Planning was rather fragmented, which eventually led to the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency's creation in 1989. My introduction to the Nevada Legislature was during the process of deliberation on Washoe County's regional planning legislation.

When did you move to the County Manager's Office?

In 1989, as I was working on the regional planning legislation for the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency I was asked by the County Manager at the time to assist with strategic planning. And so began a process of me being pulled into doing more and more projects with the Manager's Office. During the 1991 Legislative Session, I coordinated legislative bill tracking for the County and was working with all of the departments on various projects

In 1998, when Katy Simon became the new Washoe County Manager she decided to make my assignment to the Manager's Office official; following that we continued to identify programs or projects that had no other home in the organization — this eventually led to creation of the Management Services Division within the County Manager's Office and came to include strategic planning, legislative affairs, grants administration, fire services, emergency management, and County Commission support.

I'm probably most proud of our legislative affairs work. We've developed a very effective program that is well respected.

Emergency Management is another success. Washoe County's program is recognized as a leader throughout Nevada and the western states; our Regional Emergency Operations Center is a state of the art facility.

Since you worked with the Nevada Legislature on behalf of Washoe County, what is your assessment of Nevada's planning laws?

I'm not sure we have progressed enough. We have more work to do — Nevada planners continue to talk about doing a thorough review of all of Nevada's planning legislation; so far this review has been piecemeal and issue specific. A good example is the recent school siting bill [AB 87] which had good intent. Our school districts in Nevada have multiple jurisdictions to work with, there should be the same requirements with each jurisdiction when it comes to site plan review for schools.

Does Washoe County have enough tools to manage growth? Do you have many General Improvement Districts (GIDs)?

Washoe County does have GIDs in Incline Village, Palomino Valley, and Sun Valley to name a few — most of our GIDs provide a limited set of public services. I think that after a long maturation process, regional planning in Washoe County has come into its own; the region has agreed to service boundaries for growth within the Truckee Meadows Service Area. It has also provided a very good foundation for economic development as we work to recover from the recession. We have seen great regional cooperation in attracting several very attractive industries to our region.

What are your goals or priorities for Washoe County for the next five years?

We want to support the Board's goals for economic development; we have established an internal economic development team to review processes, including the permitting process, to encourage that development.

Washoe County began to cut budgets very early during the recession. The County has 670 fewer employees as compared to 2007. There is no doubt this reduction in staff impacts our services, for example Parks and Libraries were cut significantly. One of my initiatives is to start building the organization to where we need to be. We will go through a deliberate process to determine what services and what resources we need to provide in this new era of county government.

I want to continue Washoe County's legacy of being open and transparent with information. I began my career at Washoe County when geographical information systems were just beginning to take off. Today, citizens can access information on the County's website that as a young planner I could only dream about. I want to make sure we continue to build on this tradition of transparency with data — I want to facilitate providing information to the public to enable them resolve issues on their own

Candace H. Stowell, AICP is an urban planning consultant in Carson City and is the Secretary for the Nevada APA Chapter.



Washoe County Facts

Total Area

6,621 square miles (USGS)

Total Land Area

6,302 (Census Bureau)

Population Density

66.9 persons per square mile

Total County Population

427,704*

Population in Unincorporated Areas

107,631*

2010 Census Population

421,407

2000 Census Population

339,486

**State Demographer's 2012 Estimates*

Nevada Chapter

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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, as well as APA leadership and Chapter Presidents.

Articles

To submit articles, ideas for articles, letters, announcements, events, photos or advertisements, please contact Christina Leach, Editor in Chief, at cleach@rtcwashoe.com.

Upcoming Events

Administering Zoning Codes Audio/Web Conference
January 15, 2014 from 1-2:30 pm at various locations in Reno-Sparks and Carson City.

Contact Marco Velotta at mvelotta@lasvegasnevada.gov for more information.

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