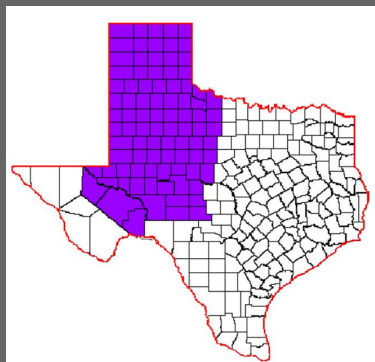




# NORTHWEST SECTION QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION  
TEXAS CHAPTER | NORTHWEST SECTION  
SPRING 2018



The Northwest Section includes 88 Texas counties. Member cities currently include Abilene, Amarillo, Ballinger, Big Spring, Clyde, Levelland, Lubbock, Midland, Odessa, San Angelo, and Vernon. For more information, visit [www.txplanning.org/northwest/](http://www.txplanning.org/northwest/).

## Section Officers:

Director: AJ Fawver, AICP, CNU-A, CPM, City of Amarillo

Assistant Director: Jon James, AICP, City of San Angelo

Secretary: Kristen Sager, City of Lubbock

Treasurer: Zack Rainbow, City of Abilene

Newsletter Editor/Website: Jeff Fisher, AICP, City of San Angelo

Professional Development Officer: Cameron Walker, AICP, Permian Basin MPO



## Message from the Director

I am so excited to share this first 2018 issue of our newsletter with you. Behind the scenes, we have had extensive discussions about how we can better serve you as members, helping you in doing what you do best.

As such, a big focus of 2018 is improving the value of your membership as much as possible, by cultivating content, communication, and events that are interesting and productive.

We recently asked for your participation in a short survey, to assist us in pinpointing specific areas of interest while providing us important feedback. We intend to utilize this input throughout the year, in pursuit of addressing those suggestions and concerns while growing our membership.

We will also ask you for your submission of ideas and suggestions in this newsletter edition.

We want to use this opportunity to feature people, projects, and news from around the section. Please help us recognize and highlight these by emailing us, in preparation for our Summer newsletter.

Special thanks to Jeff Fisher, without whom this newsletter could not have happened. Thank you for your willingness to step into this role, Jeff!

Thank you for being a part of the Northwest Section, and here's to improving our knowledge and increasing our visibility in 2018!

-AJ

## IN THIS ISSUE:

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Legislative News/Updates  
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## UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb 21, 2018 - Land Use Planning with Changing Climate (live [webinar](#))

Mar 21-23, 2018 - UT Law Land Use Conference (in [person](#) or [online](#))

Apr 5-6, 2018 - Cultivating Strong Towns (in [person](#))

Apr 6, 2018 - Northwest Section Business Meeting (in [person](#))

Apr 11, 2018 - Addressing the Parking Challenge - Smart Parking Planning for Downtown Development (live [webinar](#))

Apr 12, 2018 - Building Healthy Communities through Parks and Recreation (live [webinar](#))

Apr 21-24, 2018 - 2018 National Planning Conference ([registration open now!](#))

Apr 27, 2018 - deadline for AICP exam registration

May 14-28, 2018 - AICP exam [testing window](#)

## Thank you to our new and renewing members!

John Brideweser, City of Midland  
Hayden Brodowsky, City of Abilene  
Jessica Carpenter, City of Midland  
Katya Copeland, City of Lubbock  
Michael Gerke, Odessa  
Peter Hughes, City of Lubbock  
Jon James, AICP, City of San Angelo  
Roxanne Johnston, City of Big Spring  
Travis Muno, Amarillo MPO  
Cristina Odenborg, AICP, City of Midland  
Kristen Sager, City of Lubbock  
Samuel Selman, AICP, Clyde  
Lee Sonnenberg, Texas Tech University  
Aaron Vannoy, City of San Angelo  
Jennifer Waters, Amarillo

## Featured Projects

We need your help! In each issue, we would like to feature a project or projects from within the Northwest section that would be of interest to our members. Examples might include: a consultant-led plan rewrite, a groundbreaking policy, a student project with a unique approach, or a community engagement effort. Please email some details to us at [jeff.fisher@cosatx.us](mailto:jeff.fisher@cosatx.us) so that we can reach out to you in preparation for our Summer newsletter.

## Polling All Members

In each issue, we will feature a member poll on a hot topic in planning. Check back in each issue to see how your fellow members responded. This is a great way to share information on initiatives and challenges many of us are facing. We heard from you loud and clear that maximizing resources is a big priority..

In this edition, we want to focus on Short Term Rentals. How do you regulate these in your city? Do you require a Conditional Use or Special Use or allow them by-right? Are there any development/zoning standards that apply to a Short Term Rental application? What criteria do you use for evaluating applications? What are some of the concerns from local residents with Short Term Rentals? From City Councils?

If you work in the private sector, what are common struggles that emerge? Do you have a great example you are willing to share? Go to this [link](#) and take a short survey. We will share the results in our next newsletter.

## Featured Member

This section, covering over 80 counties, has a variety of members working to advance the cause of planning in building better communities. We want to call attention to individual members who are doing extraordinary work. If you know of someone whose efforts deserve recognition, please contact [jeff.fisher@cosatx.us](mailto:jeff.fisher@cosatx.us) to share some background on your nominee as we prepare for the Summer newsletter.

## What's Happening

In each issue, we'll feature some news stories of interest from within our section. Here's a look at recent events:

*Dalhart residents are concerned that potential truck bypass could destroy the town*

*Conaway introduces legislation to expand I-14 through San Angelo*

*Planning & Zoning approves zone change for microbrewery*

*Abilene council to examine landmark commission power*

*South Polk Street evolving into downtown entertainment district with new eateries, music venue*

*New downtown park and plaza coming to Big Spring*

*County discusses downtown TIF district*

*What's the deal with STRs? City, state officials eye regulation for short term rentals*

## Commissioners Corner

Whether your city is large or small, if you have a Planning & Zoning Commission, then you know the importance of commissioners. Keep in mind that they can also benefit from joining our section, as well as APATX.

In this issue, we focus on the topic of holding effective public meetings. [PlannersWeb](#) provided the results of an extensive survey they conducted in 2014.

"Based on your experience, what are the most important things a planning commission and/or planning staff can do in order to hold an effective public meeting or hearing?" Their summary, covering 950 comments in response to this question, can be found at [this link](#). There are some great takeaways for you to discuss with your board, staff, and chair.

## LEGISLATIVE NEWS/UPDATES

Small Cell Nodes (SB 1004, effective Sept 1, 2017) - [update from TML](#) on related lawsuit filed by City of McAllen

Sales Taxes on Online Sales - U.S. Supreme Court to consider South Dakota's law requiring out-of-state retailers to collect sales tax. [Article from BloombergPolitics](#) explains more.

Open Government Training - remember that each elected and appointed official must complete no later than 90 days after taking office. [Texas AG's training](#) is free.

## Reviews You Can Use

From technology to the latest reads, subscriptions to engagement methods, our goal is to continually review what's new that our membership might be able to utilize or learn from.

In this edition, we focus on two user-friendly web tools with a focus on mobility.

[WalkScore.com](#) (free, data/subscriptions available)

WalkScore is a website that uses road metrics and population density to create a measure, or score, of walkability. Users simply enter their address and city and the site responds with a score between 0 and 100. Any address across the nation can be analyzed.

Part of the formulation is an assessment of nearby amenities, like dining venues, shopping, parks and schools. The shorter and more accessible the walk, the higher the score. For example, 90-100 is deemed a "walker's paradise", while 0-24 is "car-dependent".

Newer site features include Transit Score and Bike Score, and are being rolled out incrementally. A paid subscription can be used to measure historical trends over time.

### Final Thoughts

In addition to being a tool for residents, city planners and local government officials can also benefit from this tool.

Examples include identifying locations for additional parks, transit, shopping, and other amenities as part of land use studies or plans. It offers an easy comparison to other cities, helping identify locations that "get it right" and whose regulatory tools might be useful to review. It also can be utilized in neighborhood planning, as it allows comparison of scores by neighborhood or area. This site is definitely a tremendous tool worthy of your attention.

[Openstreetmap.org](#) (free)

OpenStreetMap is a free website that allows a user to find cycling, transit and road information near a particular property. The site also includes use categories and clusters of proximity to retail and commercial services, and industrial properties.

A massive open data project, over 1 million mappers collect and contribute data. It is both transparent and inclusive, as virtually anyone can contribute data.

### Final Thoughts

This is a great low- or no-cost approach for any community to implement plans and create maps. Any city could utilize it as a starting point in identifying community services and amenities, or building custom maps for projects. It's also a worthy cause, encouraging distribution of free geospatial data for and to anyone.

Have an item you'd like us to review? Email your suggestions to [jeff.fisher@cosatx.us](mailto:jeff.fisher@cosatx.us).

## 2018 MEETING SCHEDULE

We are thrilled to announce three Northwest Section meetings/events for 2018. You have spoken about the need for regular events, and we agree!

Friday, April 6th - Lubbock (following the Cultivating Strong Towns event - info below. We are working to secure a discounted rate for our members, and CM credits).

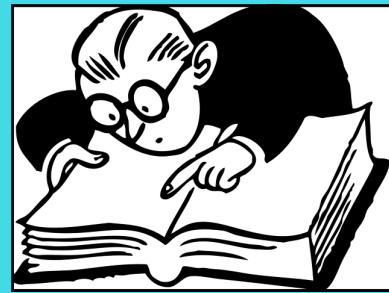
Friday, June 29th - Amarillo

Friday, October 19th - Abilene

Additional information about will be made available closer to these dates. In addition, we are working to identify additional ways to keep you engaged between meetings - more to come!

## NOTES: AICP UPDATE

With the AICP Candidate Pilot Program, planners can now sit for the AICP exam before obtaining all required professional experience. To learn more, visit [www.planning.org/aicp/candidate/](http://www.planning.org/aicp/candidate/). Act soon! The next exam registration deadline is **April 27, 2018**.



# CULTIVATING STRONG TOWNS WORKSHOP ★ LUBBOCK, TX: APR. 5-6

**Introduction to Strong Towns & Incremental Development Principles.**  
A crash course on proven & emerging strategies that will help your community:



CREATE A CULTURE OF  
COLLABORATION



GET MORE DONE WITH  
EXISTING RESOURCES



GROW A UNIQUE & SELF-  
SUSTAINING LOCAL ECONOMY



This 1.5-day event is sponsored by APA Texas – Northwest and immediately precedes the Northwest section meeting. C.M. Credits and APA member discounts are available!

LEARN MORE & REGISTER: [cultivatecollaborative.org/events](http://cultivatecollaborative.org/events)

