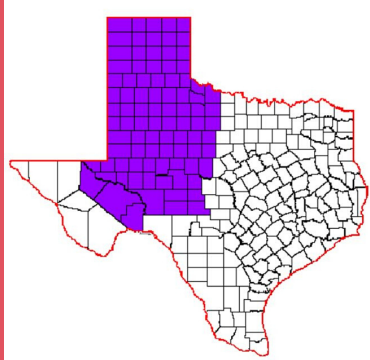




NORTHWEST SECTION QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION
TEXAS CHAPTER | NORTHWEST SECTION
FALL 2019



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/.

Section Officers:

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

2019 is flying by! Hard to believe we are putting together our Fall newsletter. It's been a great year so far for the Northwest Section, as we continue to grow both in size and in knowledge, thanks to a great variety in training sessions - prompted by the suggestions of our membership.

National Community Planning Month is coming up in October, and I want to encourage every city to take on promoting planning with their citizens and organizations. The theme for 2019?

Planning for infrastructure that benefits all.

The topic of planning infrastructure is a great bridge (no pun intended!) to our counterparts in engineering, capital budgeting, public works, and other city groups. Last year, the City of Lubbock did a campaign that was featured on the APA Texas website, along with Tyler, El Paso, & Richardson. Let's get more of our Northwest Section cities recognized! There are some great ideas and free resources at <https://planning.org/ncpm/>.

Your leadership team will also be bringing you our last section event for 2019 - check the events on page 2 for more information.

In November, coinciding with our state chapter conference in Waco, we will have some new officers joining our executive committee, including Eric Myers (Lubbock) as Director-Elect, Hillary Bueker (San Angelo) as Secretary, and Elizabeth Shaughnessy (Midland), as Treasurer.

This means it will also be time to select members for our appointed positions:

- Communications Coordinator
- Professional Development Officer
- Emerging Planning Leader Representative

The terms for these positions coincides with the elected positions and begin in November of this year, running for a two year term. If you are interested in seeing what these positions are responsible for, please review our bylaws, which can be found at <https://www.txplanning.org/northwest/>.

If interested in a position, please contact me at aj@verdunity.com. Here's to a terrific fall, and thanks for all each of you do!

-AJ

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sep 13, 2019 - Bus Rapid Transit: Insight on Project Development and Implementation ([live webinar](#))

Sep 19-20, 2019 - Pedestrian and Bicycle Transport Planning Webinar Four Part Series ([live webinars](#))

Oct 18, 2019 - Path as Place: The Experiential side of Transportation ([live webinar](#))

Oct 24-25, 2019 - Community Development 101 For Planners (in-person Section event) Hosted by City of Andrews

Nov 6-8, 2019 - APATX19 Conference in Waco, TX ([register here](#))

On Demand - Plan Smarter: How to Streamline the Path to Sustainable Plans and Policies ([pre-recorded webinar](#))

Day 2 involved setting design parameters including new programs and catalysts for strengthening Downtown; a model session focusing on utilities, parks, traffic, parking and historic buildings and places; and a team sketch session.

In addition, City Council passed on first reading a Short Term Rental (STR) Ordinance which requires that STR's are properly registered along with payment of hotel occupancy taxes. This item is scheduled for second reading on September 10, 2019. For more information, contact:

CityPlanning@mylubbock.us



City of Abilene

The Abilene Planning and Development Services Department is working on a Vacant Commercial and Residential Building registration program for their Neighborhood Empowerment Zone (NEZ). The goals of the program are to require registration of all vacant structures, submission of a maintenance plan, and an annual registration fee. The Department is recommending the creation of a Vacant Building Advisory Task Force involving multiple stakeholders to conduct a study of vacant buildings. For more information, contact: nick.watts@abilenetx.gov



Featured Projects

This month, the following cities have volunteered to share a featured project. We hope these examples provide your city with some helpful information on implementing its own initiatives.

City of Lubbock

On August 27 and 28, 2019, Lubbock City Council conducted a two-day Special Meeting for participation in the Lubbock Downtown Master Plan Update Workshop. Presented by Overland Partners, Day 1 examined desired outcomes of the Master Plan Update; relevance of previous work relating to Downtown; and a "Mark the Map" exercise of current and forthcoming projects.

City of San Angelo

On August 20, 2019, San Angelo City Council approved changes to the Land Development and Subdivision Ordinance (LDSO) recommended by the Planning Division. The amendments were originally discussed at the City's Development Task Force and later brought forward to the Planning Commission to obtain community input. These changes include when a plat gets recorded and expires; types of performance guarantees and deferral options; and an overall cleanup of language. The following changes were approved by Council:

- Exemption from platting of up to three lots under common ownership for single or two-family homes;
- Exemption from platting for construction under a certain floor area (i.e. up to 25% of current floor area to maximum of 5,000 square feet annually for non single-family residential;
- Expiry of preliminary plats after five years unless approved final plat or with progress options being completed
- Establishing a Deferral of Obligation option to defer improvements until after plat recordation up to time of permitting;
- Changes to the drainage section of the ordinance, including a deferral option to a later stage of development
- Clarified that the act of subdividing property is what triggers the requirement to plat, not the need for a building permit



Commissioners Corner

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

Joining APA as a Planning Board Member

APA provides Commissioners with a wide range of useful tools including publications, training events, and networking opportunities. Planning Commissioners and other board members can participate in online or onsite education, subscribe to publications to keep up-to-date with zoning practice, legal issues, and board management, and have access to APA's policy guides and legislative priorities. For more information:

planning.org/join/commissioners/

APA Texas Chapter 2019 State Planning Conference and Short Course for Appointed and Elected Officials, Waco, TX

This year's state planning conference in Waco provides an excellent training opportunity for commissioners through its 47th Annual Short Course. The course includes 8-10 sessions including roles and responsibilities, zoning and subdivisions, and topics of current interest. Registrants can also attend the main APA conference at the same time. Registration begins July 1, 2019. For more information:

<https://www.apatx19.com/elected-appointed-officials>

<https://www.apatx19.com/details>

APA Learn

One great resource for easy access to commissioner training is APA Learn, with over 375 courses, including the "Planning Commissioner Training Collection". For only \$30 per person (\$60 for nonmembers), or an even better deal on groups over 4, commissioners can access a 90 minute on demand course covering meeting preparation, meeting management, & legal decision making.

<https://www.planning.org/apalearn/>

What's Happening

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

Living and retiring in San Angelo: A look at the AARP study

Council approves redevelopment plan for Center City

City of Midland is dealing with the lack of parking availability

New mobile public transportation app for Amarillo residents

City of Amarillo approves North Heights health care laundry facility

A downtown master plan is in the works in Lubbock

Citibus to unveil 2 new electric buses

Solar panels on the rise: LP&L reports increase in customers using the renewable energy in Lubbock

Phase II of Plainview Point to begin soon

Update: Abilene man's toilet art display can stay

City approves infrastructure incentive program



Feeling apprehensive about the upcoming census? Unsure what you and your city's role should be? APA has assembled a page of resources, information, and ideas for getting involved. Complete Count committees are crucial to cities getting the funding they so dearly need to serve their citizens. For more information, visit <https://www.txplanning.org/2020census/>.

Featured Member

Taslima Khanaker, Planner, City of Midland

Taslima Khandaker, has been working with the City of Midland since May 2018 after graduating with her Masters in Urban Planning with a focus in Transportation Planning from Texas A&M University. She has received her Bachelor's in Environmental and Community Planning from the University of New Mexico.



In her hometown of Albuquerque, Taslima focused on community projects within tribal reservations, along with helping the communities of northern New Mexico with environmental remediation. During her time at Texas A&M, Taslima was involved with volunteering with APA and being the president of the Aggie Graduate and Professional Community Club. Taslima's interest in Transportation Planning had allowed her to intern with Brazos Transit District as their transit planner. Her goal as a planner is to help design walkable and aesthetically pleasing communities that promotes a live, work, and play environment.

Hot Topics

2019 Legislative Session

Bills of particular interest to planners in our member cities should include:

- Senate Bill 2 - Property Tax Revenue Cap
- House Bill 2439 - Building Materials
- House Bill 347 - Annexations by Consent
- House Bill 3167 - Subdivision "Shot Clock"
- House Bill 2840 - Public Comment
- Senate Bill 1303 - Annexation Map & Notice Requirements
- House Bill 2497 - BOA/ZBA Rules & Appeals
- House Bill 2496 - Local Historic Landmark Designations
- House Bill 3314 - Notices/Hearings for Replats

APA Texas recently did a webinar with some solid information on some of these bills, which is now accessible for free at: <https://youtu.be/tgSXYeob5tY>.

If you're looking to dive deeper into these bills, a free resource available is a package of legislative digests put together by VERDUNITY, available at through the Community Cultivators Network at www.communitycultivators.co.



2019 Annual APATX Conference

This year debuts the new "Partner's Track", featuring sessions from partner organizations on cross-disciplinary issues. These sessions will include:

- AARP - Livability Index, Walk Audit
- ASLA - Ecology & Reclamation
- CNU - Building Timeless Places
- IAP2 - Public Participation
- TPHA - Live Well Waco
- THC - Historic Resource Surveys
- Texas A&M - Transportation and Big Data
- ScenicHouston - Streetscape Planning
- ULI - Value Creation in TOD and Walkable Development

For more information on these sessions, go to: <https://www.apatx19.com/partnerassociationsessions>.

2019 APATX Election Results

Members of the APATX Chapter who have secured new positions following the results of the 2019 election include:

- Doug McDonald, AICP, Chapter President's Council Treasurer/Secretary
- Andrew Wright, AICP, Federal Planning Division, Chair
- Marco Hinojosa, Latinos and Planning Division, Secretary
- Carlo Chunga Pizarro, Latinos and Planning, Treasurer
- Alex Hoffman, AICP, City Planning and Management Division, Chair
- Heather Nick, AICP, Texas Chapter President-Elect
- Chance Sparks, AICP, Texas Chapter Incoming President
- Christina Sebastian, AICP, Texas Chapter Secretary
- Lee Battle, AICP, Texas Chapter TML Representative
- Gary Mitchell, AICP, Texas Chapter Treasurer

Resources

Institute for Local Government

This website contains a number of resources for cities, including advice on public engagement methods, and tools to help assess engagement effectiveness. Other topics include partnering with community based organizations, and economic development. Check these out here: <http://www.ca-ilg.org/basics-public-engagement>.

Next City

This blog (<http://www.nextcity.org>) provides "briefs" on topics important to planners, like housing and economics policy. In addition to providing solid pieces on what's happening now with cities, they offer webinars and ebooks based on sound reporting and research.

Citylab

Covering design, transportation, environment, equity, and quality of life, Citylab is a great source for urbanists; co-founded by Richard Florida, the writing team is top-notch and offers new pieces daily (<http://www.citylab.com>).

Strong Towns

If you recognize the reality that cities' needs are growing at a faster rate than any municipal budget does, Strong Towns is for you. Spend ten minutes perusing the site, and you'll find yourself nodding wholeheartedly as they tackle issues where cities tend to get in their own way, like parking, street design, & economic development (<http://www.strongtowns.org>).

The City Fix

If you're driven by data and diversity in viewpoints, you'll love The City Fix (<http://www.thecityfix.com>). Check out their CityFixLearn catalog, chock full of training resources and webinars on any subject under the sun related to cities. Whether you want to learn more about electric vehicle charging stations, or tactical urbanism, they've got you covered - in multiple languages.

Further Discussion

Connect to your fellow planning colleagues on social media to continue the conversation!

Texas Chapter - American Planning Association:
<https://www.txplanning.org>

Northwest Section:
<https://www.txplanning.org/northwest>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/txplanning/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/txplanning>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCj0JRgeaxx8my1fbfomBpKA>

Instagram:
<https://www.instagram.com/txplanning/>

