



# NORTHWEST SECTION QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION  
TEXAS CHAPTER | NORTHWEST SECTION  
SUMMER 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/](http://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

We have had a great start to 2019! So far, we have successfully completed our first Northwest Section webinar, had a well-attended event with great speakers in Sweetwater, and pulled off our first-ever regional conference in Canyon.

We also weathered a frustrating legislative session, after which several things have changed for planners in Texas. Jeff Fisher has highlighted a few of those events on page 5. I'll be working with our state chapter representatives and other section directors to formulate next steps for implementing legislation in the best possible approach for our communities, so stay tuned for information on that.

In other news, all sections around the state - including our own - have now adopted a uniform set of bylaws. You can view those on our section website at <https://www.txplanning.org/northwest/>.

Another focus in the months to come is the 2020 Census. In May, the Texas Chapter Board of Directors established a committee to oversee Chapter education, promotion, & activities related to the 2020 Census. They are seeking volunteers, so please consider reaching out to join the cause. Strong Census efforts in all of our communities are of the utmost importance, as more than \$675 billion in federal funds are distributed based upon those figures. Read more about this on page 4.

Your Northwest Section leadership team is committed to bringing you more opportunities for networking, resources, and training - but we need our members to be engaged and involved, and to volunteer and attend events. I have high hopes that we will begin to see an uptick in the attendance of our events which take so much time outside of work to put together. We have been so fortunate to have the generosity of amazing speakers come out to our area to bring us unique views and knowledge; however, it is important that we meet them halfway by showing up and taking part of their sessions. We continue to seek volunteers for two subcommittees to provide resources for our members. Please consider pitching in to make these happen. Enjoy your summer, and I hope to see you soon!

-AJ

## UPCOMING EVENTS

July 12, 2019 - Creating Safe Environments - Integrating Planning, Design & Physical Security ([live webinar](#))

July 9, 2019 - Nature-based Solutions in Cities: Mainstreaming Into City Planning ([live webinar](#))

July 19, 2019 - Comprehensive Plans: Procurement, Preparation & Implementation (in-person Section event) Hosted by City of Levelland

July 19, 2019 - Incorporating Arts in Urban & Site Design ([live webinar](#))

July 21, 2019 - "Planning Home" and the Latino Home ([live webinar](#))

## 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*

The City of Lubbock is creating a new Unified Development Code (UDC) which includes an update its Zoning Code to be consistent with its 2040 Comprehensive Plan. In addition to review and rewrite of the Zoning Code, it includes unification of zoning, subdivision, sign, and drainage regulations, as well as standards for design and historic districts, manufactured homes and recreational vehicle parks, and other development regulations.

The Zoning Code was adopted in 1975; on May 28, 2019, City Council voted unanimously to adopt the resolution by staff authorizing the Mayor to execute a Professional Service Contract for Kendig Keast Collaborative to develop the UDC. The entire process is expected to take 22 months, and is one of the top priorities of PlanLubbock 2040, which was adopted in December of 2018.

[http://agenda.ci.lubbock.tx.us/agenda\\_publish.cfm](http://agenda.ci.lubbock.tx.us/agenda_publish.cfm)



### *City of Midland*

On May 28, 2019, Midland City Council adopted a new zoning ordinance that will take affect on July 1, 2019. The ordinance was adopted in accordance with Midland's Tall City Tomorrow comprehensive plan. Among other things, it is intended to: lessen congestion in the streets, prevent the overcrowding of land and air, and facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, water, wastewater, schools, parks, and other public requirements. The new ordinance contains new zoning districts, standards, and regulations, and zoning development review procedures. For the full text of the new Zoning Ordinance, click here:

<https://www.midlandtexas.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2510/Proposed-Zoning-Code-Update?bidId=>

## City of San Angelo

On May 21, 2019, San Angelo City Council approved amendments to its current and parking and loading standards in its Zoning Ordinance. Consistent with other comparable cities in West Texas, Planning Staff examined reducing its minimum parking requirements while still ensuring adequate parking; providing minimum spacing, maneuvering, and paving standards to ensure longevity of its parking lots; and to allow for options and alternatives to provide flexibility in meeting parking requirements. Recommended changes adopted by Council included:

- Requiring expansion of land area not subject to a building permit to also provide parking.
- Requiring a parking lot permit for new stand-alone parking areas or additions to existing stand-alone parking lots not currently required unless they are associated with a building permit.
- Reducing parking for offices, furniture and appliance stores, and retail stores above 20,000 square feet.
- Increasing parking for uses already deficient to bring up to current demand.
- Require all parking areas are adequately paved and striped.
- Allow the Planning Director to administratively approve reduced parking, loading, and drive-thru stacking spaces where appropriate.
- Allow up to 50% of required parking spaces to be on the street, increase distance of off-site parking to maximum of 500 feet from lot with facility or activity.
- Changes to drive-thru stacking requirements, including new parallel parking standards.



## 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.

### *Budget Preparation Tips*

It is crucial to provide ongoing training to commissioners and other City officials; unfortunately, most organizations do not do it nearly enough. This is an ideal time to have a conversation with your leadership team about funding for memberships and travel - your commissioners will thank you!

### *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:

*ICouncil approves zoning change for commercial property in central Plainview*

*I-27 extension moves forward as Gov. Greg Abbott signs bill for TxDOT to conduct study*

*High priced development on Soncy Rd. fuels building boom*

*Kenedy & Bralley: Barrio Wellness Clinic and the Barrio Historical Map*

*City of Lubbock reinstates Homelessness Committee to tackle the issue*

*City of Canyon passes new noise ordinance*

*The Fastest-Growing U.S. City Is Scrambling to Survive the Shale Boom*

*City: More than 3,400 apartment units through approval process*

*Compliance Committee drafting housing plan*

*City of Odessa bringing more art to traffic boxes*

*Texas cities struggle to keep pace as thirst for water intensifies*

*City Council votes to approve increases to service fees. Here's what is increasing:*

*City property with view of downtown Abilene available for bid*

*Hotel, other downtown Abilene projects attracting out-of-town developers*

*Where a citizenship question could cause the census to miss millions of Hispanics*

*How'd the 86th Texas Legislature do?*

*SMC Oilfield Chemicals Builds Third Facility in San Angelo*

*97% of San Angelo apartments are full*

*More housing approved for Midland, Texas*

*AEDC votes to spend \$3.5 million on land in Randall County for possible business park*

## Featured Member

Rolandrea Russell, Senior Planner, City of Midland

Rolandrea, a Senior Planner, has been with the City of Midland for just about eighteen months. Originally from St. Catherine, Jamaica, Rolandrea received a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning with a concentration in Transportation Planning from Alabama A&M University.



During her tenure at Alabama A&M University, Rolandrea was an avid volunteer, mentor and served as president of the Sociology/Criminal Justice Club. Rolandrea enjoys reading and travelling in her spare time and is extremely passionate about giving back to her community and educating her peers on the importance of planning.

## Census 2020

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/>.



# Hot Topics

## Design Standards: House Bill 2439

HB2439 was signed into law earlier this month, prohibiting city governments from regulating aesthetic finishing materials, essentially restricting cities from implementing minimum design standards except for the minimum installation and construction requirements outlined in the National Building Code.

Concerns include:

- Adverse affects on economic development: -
- Prohibiting cities to regulate design can reduce quality of design particularly in commercial or mixed-use areas
- Disturbed aesthetics: Downtowns and scenic places without design control could allow colors and materials inappropriate for area
- Infill projects would not have to match current development standards leading to design inconsistencies
- Bill is retroactive and would affect existing zoning ordinances and planned developments already adopted and constructed.



ASLA  
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HB 2439 provides an exception for historic buildings and certain other areas if they meet certain state guidelines, but many do not. The Bill will take effect on September 1, 2019. The full text of the bill can be found here: <https://capitol.texas.gov/Search/DocViewer.aspx?ID=86RHB024394B&QueryText=%22hb+2439%22&DocType=B>

## Subdivision Shot Clock: House Bill 3167

HB3167 was signed into law earlier this month, changing the 30 day requirement to a limitation on approve or disapprove, not simply act on. Written notice of disapproval listing all reasons for disapproval is also required, and the legislation has the potential to even further complicate the approval process.

The full text of this bill can be found here: <https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/86R/billtext/pdf/HB03167F.pdf#navpanes=0>

If you have any questions about these or other bills recently passed, please contact Section Director AJ Fawver at [aj@verdunity.com](mailto:aj@verdunity.com), who is working to put together an educational session on this topic.

## Resources

### *APA's Planning Magazine*

The American Planning Association's (APA) monthly "Planning" magazine provides an excellent overview of current planning topics. APA Members receive "Planning" free including online and print versions.  
<https://planning.org/planning/>

### *APA Policy Guides*

The American Planning Association's Policy Guides provides members with APA's official position on key planning issues and tools to advocate policies that benefit our communities: <https://planning.org/policy/guides/>. Included are policy guides on Planning for Equity, Housing, and Surface Transportation, among many others.

### *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>.

### *Texas Municipal League - 86th Legislature Bills Passed*

TML has put together a great summary of all the city-related bills that were passed this session, along with effective dates. Our section will be continuing to discuss these at our next Section business meetings. Access them at: <https://tx-texasmunicipalleague.civicplus.com/601/June-7-2019-Number-23#bills>

## 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/>

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com>

