

NEVADA PLANNER



American Planning Association
Nevada Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen

A Publication of the Nevada Chapter of the American Planning Association

WINTER 2023/24

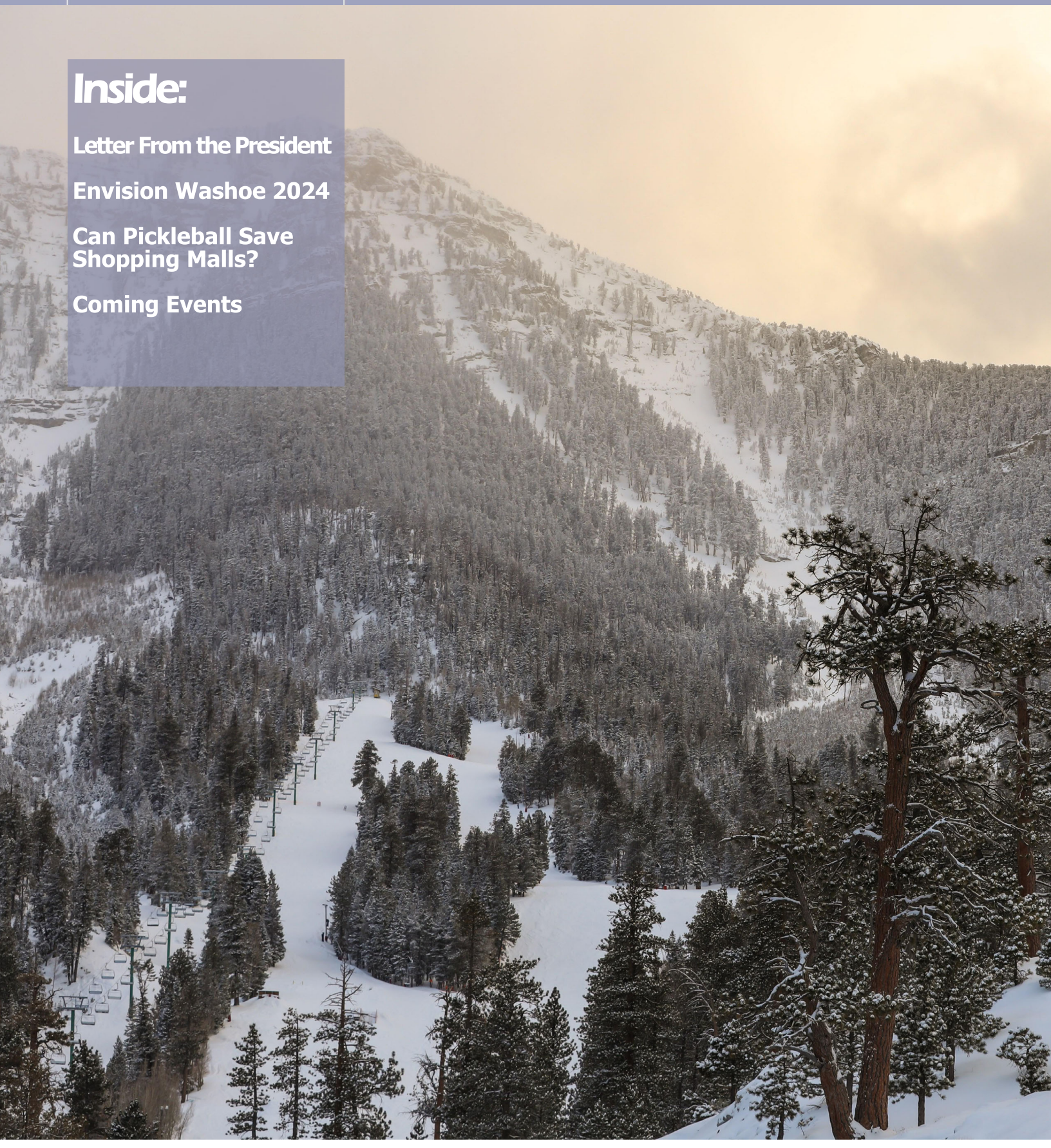
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American Planning Association Nevada Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen



ON THE COVER: A BLUSTERY LEE CANYON NEAR MT. CHARLESTON DONS A PSEUDO-WARM, SUNSET GLOW. PHOTO: PETRA J PHOTO

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AS OF JANUARY 1, 2024

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

SCOTT CAREY, AICP
PRESIDENT-ELECT, NEVADA CHAPTER

Happy New Year!

On behalf of the Chapter, I would like to wish all of our members and every planner throughout Nevada a very happy New Year. Starting on January 1st, I have the tremendous honor and challenge of serving as Chapter President and to succeed Nathan Goldberg. Nathan's contributions to the Chapter over past several decades have been invaluable and he will forever be known as the President who brought a Stanley Cup to Nevada. GO KNIGHTS GO!

2023 has been a tremendous year for the Chapter, and the entire Board and I are looking forward to big things in 2024. This past year, the Chapter has held many educational and social events that have allowed our members to grow as professional planners and to advance planning throughout Nevada. From planning career events in Carson City to walking tours of downtown Las Vegas to Planning Commission training at Lake Tahoe to getting together for drinks on Water Street, our Chapter has had a great year. This past year, the Chapter also updated its strategic plan, which will guide the Chapter's activities over the next four years. The chapter's new plan is focused on five key areas: Members Services & Networking, Increasing Membership, Professional Development, Planning Advocacy, and Organization Impact. The Chapter looks forward to working with our members to implement this new strategic plan.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to all of our members who continue to support everything that our Chapter does to improve planning throughout the Silver State. From our Chapter board members who put in countless hours helping put on Chapter events and keep the organization running, to our members who continue to show up at events and pay their dues: Thank You! The Chapter has a lot of great projects and events planned for 2024 and we invite you to become involved. Whether it's helping with organizing the Chapter's annual conference next October in Southern Nevada, organizing a Chapter social or networking event, putting together a professional development event, or even something cool that the Chapter hasn't thought of doing before, please let us know. We welcome any member to get more involved with the Chapter. If you'd like to serve in a new capacity or want to give back to the planning profession in a new way, please let us know and we can create a role for you. Together we can create great communities for all Nevadans. 



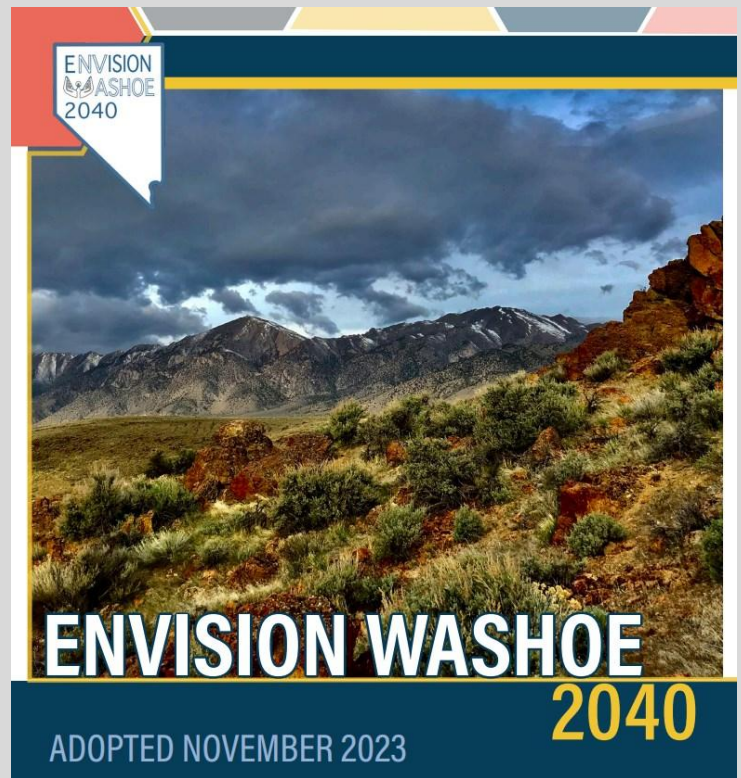
WASHOE COUNTY ADOPTS ALL-NEW ENVISION WASHOE 2040

KAT OAKLEY

This year saw the adoption of a comprehensive update to the Washoe County Master Plan—branded Envision Washoe 2040—that was four years in the making. The old master plan, after its creation in the 1990s and through subsequent amendments, had mushroomed to hold all the worries of a growing community that ranges from the shores of Tahoe to the Oregon border. Free of the code-like language that characterized it before, the new document looks completely different from what community members had co-created and grown accustomed to. By questioning which content should be updated, the community had to reimagine what a master plan should and could be. As a result of this reimagining, the new plan is one document of 250 pages instead of 18 separate documents totaling 1,500. To achieve this, we undertook the most extensive public outreach process we ever have, transforming our outreach strategies along the way.

The old master plan did not function as a master plan is meant to. It was rife with repetition and replete with rules that would be more appropriately housed in the development code. While not the original intent, it had evolved in that direction over the decades since its adoption. Washoe County has traditionally been divided into 13 sperate planning areas. Each planning area in the county had its own 40–50-page section of the master plan known as an area plan. These area plans were full of narrative text, goals, and policies that residents thought would protect their areas from the pressures of change and growth. As became clear with time, the sheer volume of language in the master plan created contradictions and obscured the plan's purpose. It was a common occurrence at public hearings for stakeholders to point to the same section of the plan to substantiate their opposing arguments. Furthermore, all users of the master plan came up against the simple barrier of time. Everyone was meant to assess developments against the master plan, but a comprehensive attempt to do so was near impossible because of the plan's sheer volume. A change was needed, but building consensus on that change would not be easy.

An entire year of public outreach and planning was



dedicated solely to discussing a new format. Creating another 1,500-page plan was not going to work; it needed to be refined, with repetitions and regulatory language removed to leave only the high-level context and visionary policies a master plan is meant to contain. This phase of public engagement was as much about developing consensus around the new plan concept as it was determining content.

People had grown accustomed to 40 or 50 pages of what they viewed as protections in their area—it was hard for community members to accept that four pages could do the same job. Community discussions necessarily went beyond values and visions of the future. We developed and presented concrete examples that focused on the realities of the planning process, such as staff reports and public hearings, to demonstrate how an oversaturation of policies and narratives can do more harm than good.

To help re-envision the area plan documents and to better facilitate public outreach, a community advisory committee was formed with representatives from every part of the county. This committee was the first stop for discussing new ideas and building consensus throughout the process. Information and feedback percolated through that committee. In particular, this committee was able to take advantage of information and data from a series of workshops specific to each of the planning areas. These additional meetings extended the process but gave each planning area the consideration needed to build a completely new plan that still captured their priorities and was supported by residents.



KAT OAKLEY AND ERIC YOUNG SHOWCASING THEIR PUBLIC OUTREACH SETUP. PHOTO: WASHOE COUNTY PLANNING DIVISION

While significant time was dedicated to building consensus around the new format, content was also a necessary part of the discussion. With the onset of COVID-19 and the subsequent changes to patterns of engagement with local government, our entire outreach strategy had to be invented anew. People already engaged in the process would attend a more traditional community meeting, but that strategy did not work to hear from a new audience. In response, we diversified outreach strategies. Rather than asking people to come to us, we set up tables at community events, including a bluegrass festival, a Spanish-language poetry event, and more. We utilized an online platform where people could review draft documents and leave comments, making it easier to engage.


We created “planner in the library” and “planner in the park” events at multiple county libraries and parks to give people a chance to talk with us where they were already comfortable. All of these efforts were intended to broaden the scope of feedback received and they resulted in hundreds of comments and thousands of views on our draft documents. All of the input informed the content of a completely new master plan, transformed in format and updated to more accurately reflect the values of a diverse and growing community.

After years of outreach and work, a new master plan was finally in-hand. Three major changes were

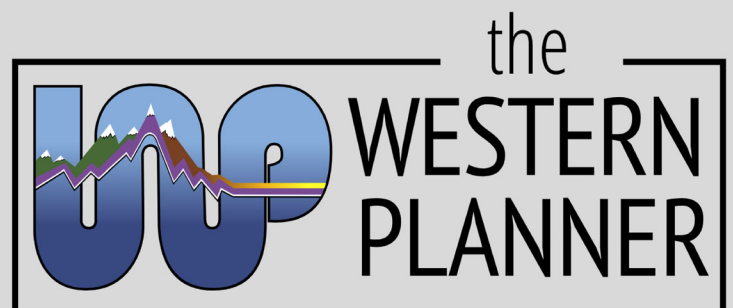
immediately evident. First, repetitive, boilerplate-like language was consolidated to one appropriate place in the plan. Second, code-like, regulatory language was removed and placed into the Development Code. And third, useful graphics and links to relevant documents were utilized extensively throughout the plan. Seen from one perspective, not too much had changed; it had all just moved to where it was meant to be. After all of the work to get there, one might wonder “what’s the point if not too much is changing, and why are we spending so long on it?”

The answer implies an importance of format and structure that is easily

overlooked when it’s working and glaringly obvious when it’s not. The previous master plan was so extensive that a shared understanding amongst stakeholders of its contents was impossible. If a long-range planner wanted to create a strategy for implementation—even on a narrow subject—they would need to refer to ten different plan sections that were uncontextualized with each other. The plan contained something for everyone but no real signposts for users.

Envision Washoe 2040 achieved not just brevity but importantly a new focus that will make implementation possible. We are now busy developing a dashboard to track indicators of successful implementation of our new plan over time. As we embark on the next phase, Envision Washoe 2040 serves as a revitalized blueprint for the future, supported by a community that actively shaped its evolution. 

Kat Oakley is a planner at Washoe County, working on both long-range planning efforts and development review.



CAN PICKLEBALL MANIA REVITALIZE DYING SHOPPING MALLS?

JOE TEDINO

(This article was initially published on October 5, 2023, in *Planning Magazine*.)

The nation's pickleball craze and the closing of big retail stores have combined to breathe new life into hollowed-out shopping malls across the country.

Start-ups like Pickleball America in Stamford, Connecticut, and Dallas-based Picklemall Inc., are racing to take advantage of pickleball mania by reusing mall space to build dozens of indoor courts in the carcasses of retail stores that closed up shop during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pickleball America has leased 80,000 square feet in a former Saks OFF 5th department store for 27 courts at the Stamford Town Center, while Picklemall built 24 courts in 104,000 square feet of space in a former At Home furniture store at Arizona Mills mall in Tempe, Arizona. The facility opened in August with the first 16 courts.



PICKLEMALL OPENED A FACILITY INSIDE A MALL IN TEMPE, ARIZONA IN AUGUST AND PLANS TO OPEN 50 LOCATIONS WITHIN THE NEXT TWO YEARS, INCLUDING A 14-COURT MIDWEST FACILITY IN A FORMER TOYS R US STORE IN VERNON HILLS, ILLINOIS. PHOTO COURTESY OF VERNON HILLS.

The Stamford mall was already experimenting with an indoor soccer zone, a comedy club and ballet school to compensate for the loss of dozens of retailers. Pickleball, a social sport with elements of tennis, badminton, and ping-pong that people can learn in about 30 minutes, fits right in.

"The mall was a much better fit all around, from the

central location to the ownership and partnership, and the enthusiasm to bring us in," says Mia Schipani, chief marketing director of Pickleball America, which also looked at vacant Class A office buildings and strip shopping centers. "They immediately saw the value in what we would bring in terms of foot traffic and the repurposing of the space."

Dan Stolzenbach, the Stamford mall's general manager, expects the courts will "drive additional traffic to the mall, particularly as players realize they can play almost any time of day and without the interruptions from Mother Nature." The pickleball club will be open from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily and support about 1,000 memberships, according to Schipani.



IN LAKE ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, PADDLE UP PICKLEBALL MOVED INTO A FORMER BED, BATH & BEYOND SITE. UNOBSTRUCTED VIEWS, 18-FOOT CEILINGS, AND CONCRETE FLOORS MAKE RETAIL STORES IDEAL FOR PICKLEBALL COURTS. PHOTO COURTESY OF PADDLE UP PICKLEBALL CLUB.

A Novel Adaptive Reuse

Pickleball participation is soaring. In 2022, 8.9 million people in the U.S. played pickleball at least once — an 86 percent increase from the previous year, according to Sports & Fitness Industry Association.

The growth of pickleball has entrepreneurs scrambling to meet demand for court space — and they are finding it in shuttered stores. A vacant Bed, Bath & Beyond in the Meadows shopping mall outside St. Louis reopened in June as the Paddle Up Pickleball Club, offering nine indoor courts and a concession stand.

Putting a pickleball club inside a closed retail store creates opportunities for mall operators, while also meeting the demand for places to play a paddle sport that offers physical, social, and cognitive benefits.

Unobstructed views, 18-foot-high ceilings, and concrete floors make retail stores ideal for pickleball courts. It can cost as little as \$10,000 to set up a

court in a small store, says Wes Cosgriff, CEO of Ground Rule, a firm that helps companies find and revamp retail space for sports courts.

In a large department store with dozens of courts, developers may need to add lighting, upgrade HVAC systems, and install locker rooms. They may also need to add sound mitigation solutions.

"Everyone is so passionate about pickleball, but you're going to be hearing from people who aren't so passionate about it," Cosgriff says. Not everyone loves the sound of paddles constantly hitting the plastic pickleballs.

Planners should confirm that pickleball court operators have studied potential sound problems and that they plan to take steps to limit the noise, such as installing sport-approved 10-foot-high sound-dampening curtains or using quieter Green Zone paddles.

Economic Development Wins

Involving individuals from the municipality's economic development department is also key, Cosgriff says, because they understand the economic impact that adaptive reuse for an indoor sports facility can have at a shopping mall.



MORE THAN JUST COURTS, THE PICKLEBALL AMERICA PLAN FOR A MALL IN STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT, INCLUDES A CAFÉ AND LOUNGE FACILITIES IN A FORMER SAKS OFF FIFTH RETAIL SPACE. RENDERING COURTESY OF PICKLEBALL AMERICA.

In Stamford, repurposing the retail space with pickleball fits in with the shopping mall's revitalization strategy, which includes adding more sports and entertainment choices for retail shoppers, Stolzenbach says.


"We envision a central meeting place where people can shop, dine, be entertained, and enjoy games together," he says.

The lion's share of indoor pickleball growth is in the Northeast and Upper Midwest, where demand for

year-round court time is high. But the trend has caught on in the South, too, as extreme heat forces the game indoors.

"It's widespread and it's only increasing," Cosgriff says. "And it's not just retail. We're seeing repurposing in flex space, warehouses, office space, and some industrial space."

Pickleball CEO West Shaw plans to open 50 more locations across the country in the next two years. Schipani told Planning magazine her company will focus on other large cities in the Northeast before expanding nationally.

Pickleball is growing "at a pace that cannot be sustained without more facilities coming online," Cosgriff says. "Add to that the number of retail store closures that have been happening and it creates an opportunity and challenge for these malls and landlords and an opportunity for pickleball to fit in." 

Joe Tedino is a Chicago-based writer focusing on sports, wellness, and climate.

Editor's Note: By now, I'm sure some of you have already had "experiences" with citizens over the noise created by pickleball courts. While I was still at the City of Henderson, we received complaints from residents within an HOA that their board was going to replace a tennis court with a pickleball court. "Fine by us," was our response, which did not go over well. But of course we had nothing in Code that prevented it, nor had the city identified pickleball as something that needed regulating, or even special attention. We asked our Parks & Recreation Department and they couldn't find any best practices or info regarding pickleball court placement or screening. I found this article interesting since it seems to indicate [at least one] solution to the noise issue without even needing to regulate it. But how much will people be willing to pay to play pickleball? Henderson may soon find out, as Nevada's first [Chicken N Pickle](#) is now under construction on land acquired from the City. -GT





COMING EVENTS

January 19, 2024

10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

[Utility-Scale Batteries as a New Land Use](#)

Presented by the Sustainable Communities Division
CM | TBD

February 2

10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

[Planning for Wildfire](#)

Presented by the City Planning and Management Division
CM | 1.5
SR | 1.0

February 16

10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

[Adapting to Climate: Urban Landscape Transformation in the 21st Century](#)

Presented by the ENRE Division and APA Water and Planning Network
CM | 1.5
SR | 1.0

March 7-9

[Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute Conference](#)

University of Denver, Sturm College of Law

April 13-16

[National Planning Conference](#)

Minneapolis Convention Center

On-Demand CMs Until December 31, 2023

[Planning for Sustainable Energy Production: A Nature-Based Approach to Large-Scale Solar](#)

CM | 1.5

SR | 1.0

[The Climate Data Power Hour](#)

CM | 1.5

SR | 1.0

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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, members of APA leadership, and Chapter Presidents. It is published three times per year.

ARTICLES

To submit articles, letters, announcements, events, or photos, please contact Greg Toth, Editor, at nevadaplanner@proton.me. The next issue is planned for Spring.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

The Nevada Chapter receives all member mailing and email addresses from APA's National database. To change your mailing or email address, please log in to your account at **www.planning.org** and update your information there.

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Become a member of the Nevada Chapter! For only \$40 annually, you'll receive all emails, newsletters, announcements, in-state registration discounts, and Chapter voting privileges that National members receive. Visit our website for an application and mail it with your payment to:

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