

# STUDENT PLANNING ASSOCIATION

THERE'S A PLACE FOR EVERYONE IN PLANNING!

STUDENT PLANNING  
ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER:  
JULY-AUGUST 2019

## MEET THE 2019-2020 SPA BOARD!



2019 SPA BOARD RETREAT

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Samantha Bradley (MCRP)

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Zeyla Gonzalez (PAPP)

VP of Regional Programming  
Midwest Texas  
Tammy Hayes (PAPP)

VP of Community Development  
Crystal Lemus (ARCH)

VP of Economic Development  
Catherine Osborn (MCRP)

VP of Communications  
Rachel Jenkins (MCRP)



# WELCOME THE 2019–2020 SPA BOARD!

During the 2018–2019 academic year, the SPA Board embarked on an initiative to imbue inclusivity into all of the SPA's academic and professional endeavors. Our efforts to make space for a mix of ideas, people, and events were manifold. From the professional networking events we attended to our philanthropic pursuits, the Board expanded the SPA's reach by learning from and collaborating with the cross-section of disciplines that influence the field of planning. As a result of this effort, we have fostered stronger relationships not only with our partners in the APATX but with the Congress for the New Urbanism, North Texas Chapter, the Texas Planning and Urban Design programs across the State, with advocacy groups such as Strong Towns and Habitat for Humanity, and with all of the CAPPA student organizations and administration. Keen on representing all the disciplines that help create equitable and vibrant communities, the SPA aimed to build a Board that also reflected its mission of planning for inclusivity.

During the Spring 2019 semester, the SPA opened its Board nominations to all University of Texas at Arlington students. After an extensive interview process, the SPA is excited to introduce the 2019–2020 Executive Board! This coming year, the SPA will be represented and lead by a multi-disciplinary group of talented women whose backgrounds encompass technology, education, military, architecture, transportation planning, and humanitarian advocacy.

Jane Jacobs presciently asserted that cities designed to be an “intricate minglings of different uses” will “represent a complex and highly developed form of order.” At the heart of this message, Jane is reminding us that successful cities are dependent on a diverse collection of uses, perspectives and people. Recognizing this, the newly inaugurated SPA Executive Board aspires to live out its mission of making space for everyone who strives to create great communities by enriching the experience of students and alumni through diverse professional, social, and academic opportunities in the coming year.

Best of luck to the new Executive Board members!

The SPA and the UTA planning community looks forward to all of your future projects and accomplishments!



2019 SPA BOARD RETREAT



# UPCOMING EVENTS

DFW PLANNING LECTURES, WORKSHOPS, AND NETWORKING EVENTS

## Legislative Process Meetup

Host: Ideation Planning

Date: July 24, 2019

Location: Southlake

Time: 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

[Register](#)

## TRVA Fort Worth Panel

Host: APATX + ASLA

Date: July 25, 2019

Location: Fort Worth

Time: 5:30 PM – 8 PM

[Register](#)

## Trinity River Volunteer Day: July Cleanup & Seedball Workshop

Host: Trinity Park Conservancy

Date: July 27, 2019

Location: Dallas

Time: 9:00 AM – 11:00 PM

[Register](#)

## 2019 North Texas Parking Management Symposium

Host: NCTCOG

Date: August 15, 2019

Location: Hurst

Time: 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

[Register](#)

## Future Cities: Livable Futures: Conference on Urban-Watershed Management

Host: CAPPA

Date: August 16/17, 2019

Location: CAPPA Room 204

Time: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

[Register](#)

## Legislative Process Wrap Up

Host: APATX

Date: August 16 2019

Location: Online Webinar

Time: 11:00 PM – 12:30 PM

[Register](#)





# JOB OPPORTUNITIES

## DFW PLANNING OPEN POSITIONS

City of Desoto: Planner  
Planning and Development

LJA Engineering, Inc: Planner I  
Planning and Landscape Architecture

City of Dallas: Intern  
Planning and Urban Development

INCOG: Planner  
Plan Development and Implementation  
Division

NCTCOG: Intern  
Metropolitan Transportation Plan

NCTCOG: Planner I  
Environmental Justice

NCTCOG: Planner I  
Transit Operations

City of Arlington: Part-time Planning Tech/  
Short-term Rentals  
Planning and Development



City Lab High School Summit



APA MWT Award Ceremony



APA MWT Lattes & Leadership

## PLANNING IN THE MEDIA

### PLANNING RELATED ARTICLES, OP-EDS, AND PODCASTS

**Title:** To Save the Planet, You Need to Improve Urban Land Use

**Publication:** Brookings

**Author:** Jenny Schuetz

**Read** ([Read the Green New Deal](#))

**Title:** Cities Start to Question an American Ideal: A House with a Yard on Every Lot

**Publication:** NY Times

**Author:** Emily Badger and Quoctrung Bui

**Read**

**Title:** The State of the Nation's Housing 2019

**Publication:** Joint Centers for Housing Studies of Harvard University

**Read**

**Title:** The City of Dallas Is Finally Taking Its Tree Canopy Seriously

**Publication:** D Magazine

**Author:** Matt Goodman

**Read**

**Title:** Are Cities Prepared for Autonomous Vehicles?

**Publication:** JAPA

**Author:** Yonah Freemark, Anne Hudson, Jinhua Zhao

**Read**

**Title:** Urban...Texas mayors condemn state Legislature's overreach...

**Publication:** Community Impact

**Author:** Christopher Neely

**Read** ([Read Bill HB 2439](#))





# AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION, TEXAS CHAPTER UPDATES



## Read the APA June 2019 Planning Issue!

The June 2019 issue is a special edition on Transportation. It features articles on Curb Control, Mission Zero, and Next-Gen BRT.

## The Planning for Equity Policy Guide

APA's first-ever public-policy position on equity in planning — presents valuable insights on how planners can apply the lens of equity to all of their work. The Planning for Equity Policy Guide identifies policy recommendations for planners to advocate for policies that support equity in all aspects of planning at local, state, and federal levels.

## AICP Candidate Pilot Program

Don't forget! If you are enrolled in the AICP Candidate Pilot Program, you must track 16 CM credits before you are eligible to become a full AICP member.

**APA Article:** Why Homelessness is Going Down in Houston But Up in Dallas?

#APATX19

# BIG STATE. BIG PLANS.

NOVEMBER 6-8, 2019  
WACO, TEXAS  
[WWW.APATX19.COM](http://WWW.APATX19.COM)



**APATX19  
Early Bird Registration Open!**

November 6-8, 2019  
Waco, Texas

Student Early Bird Rate: \$50  
Volunteers will receive additional discounts.

**REGISTER TODAY!**

## DFW PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ACTION PLAN SURVEY

NCTCOG is developing a Pedestrian Safety Action Plan with the goal of lowering the number and rate of pedestrian-related crashes and fatalities across the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area.

This survey is an opportunity for you to provide input on what NCTCOG and TxDOT can do to improve walking as a transportation option in the region.

**TAKE THE SURVEY**



# 2019 SPA AWARDS & RECOGNITION!



This past spring, the SPA was recognized at the APATX Midwest Texas Award Ceremony and Student Scholarship Fundraiser and at the UTA Student Organization Leadership Awards for its meaningful contributions to making both the DFW Metroplex and the State of Texas a more resilient place to live. We are also thrilled to announce that Catherine Osborn and Muhammad Khan, two CAPPA planning students, were selected for the Midwest Section Student Scholarships. The SPA is honored to receive these awards and recognition from its peers in the UTA and DFW planning communities!

## Division of Student Affairs Leadership Awards Recognition Outstanding Contribution to the Greater Community

The Student Planning Association at the University of Texas Arlington was recognized by the Division of Student Affairs for “Outstanding Contribution to the Greater Community” for the 2018–2019 school year. This Leadership Award was given specifically to a student organization that “made a meaningful contribution to the surrounding community through service, and addressed an existing problem, was committed to working with and for others, and successfully inspired and motivated others to act.”

## American Planning Association–Midwest Texas Section Special Recognition Award

The Student Planning Association at the University of Texas Arlington also received a Special Recognition Award from the American Planning Association–Midwest Texas Section for their collaboration and active involvement in the American Planning Association at the regional and state level. Kelsey Poole, Samantha Bradley, Catherine Osborn, and Jaric Jones were at the 2019 annual award ceremony and student scholarship fundraiser to accept this honor.

## Midwest Texas APA Student Scholarships

UTA CAPPA students, Catherine Osborn, MCRP and Muhammad Khan, UPPP, both received Midwest Texas APA scholarships for the 2019–2020 school year for their outstanding academic record and commitment and future aspirations in the planning field.



UTA Leadership Award Ceremony



APA MWT Award Ceremony  
Recipient – Muhammad Khan



APA MWT Award Ceremony  
Recipient – Catherine Osborn



APA MWT Award Ceremony  
Bowling Social





# EVENT RECAP: SPA + APA MWT SERVICE DAY



## TARRANT COUNTY HABITAT BUILD

Top Row, From Left: Ellen Phillips, Ryan Mulkey, Travis Liska, Mateo Portela  
Bottom Row, From Left: Kelly Swedenburg, Kelsey Poole, Catherine Osborn, Rachel Jenkins, Samantha Bradley, Matt Reeves.

On June 22nd, members of the SPA and the APATX MWT volunteered with the Trinity Habitat for Humanity to help build a new home for a Fort Worth family. Volunteers spent a beautiful Saturday morning working alongside a seasoned Habitat crew, who taught volunteers how to properly construct a sustainable home. The day was spent affixing the exterior siding to the front and sides of the house. Volunteers also enjoyed learning about the home's infrastructure, which was designed to withstand extreme weather conditions by incorporating resilient hardware such as hurricane brackets and 6" shot pin anchors.

Help build strong neighborhoods in your local community! Head to your local Habitat website to learn more about Habitat's mission and to get involved!

Tarrant County Habitat – [www.trinityhabitat.org](http://www.trinityhabitat.org)  
Dallas Habitat – [www.dallasareahabitat.org](http://www.dallasareahabitat.org)





## PLAN TO RUN:

# A CALL FOR PLANNERS TO GET POLITICAL

**AUTHOR: RACHEL JENKINS**

Rachel is a Masters of City & Regional Planning student at UTA. She is the UTA SPA VP of Communications and the President of the UTA WTS Student Chapter.

All over the world, planners are getting political. I recently spoke with Fort Worth Council Woman Ann Zadeh on how planning knowledge can serve as an asset, and even an advantage, in making policy decisions. After graduating from UTA with her Masters in City and Regional Planning and practicing professionally in the planning field, Zadeh took a break for several years before joining the Zoning Commission, and subsequently the City Council. With sound planning principles guiding her decisions, Zadeh found ways to stay involved civically even after she quit practicing professionally. This made her choice to run for office all the more clear. Unfortunately, a background as a planner isn't particularly common for elected officials. If you ask Zadeh, her opinion on the matter is clear: more planners need to get elected. So, what's stopping them?

In sort of a self-fulfilling prophecy, it's difficult for planners to imagine themselves in public office when there are so few examples to emulate. Planners don't see themselves represented in these roles, so they don't entertain the possibility for themselves. Zadeh is lucky to have a least one similarly positioned peer to look at. Lisa Bender, graduate of the Berkeley City and Regional Planning program, worked as a practicing planner for several years before winning a Minneapolis City Council seat in 2012. Others across the country have similar political will but aren't always successful.



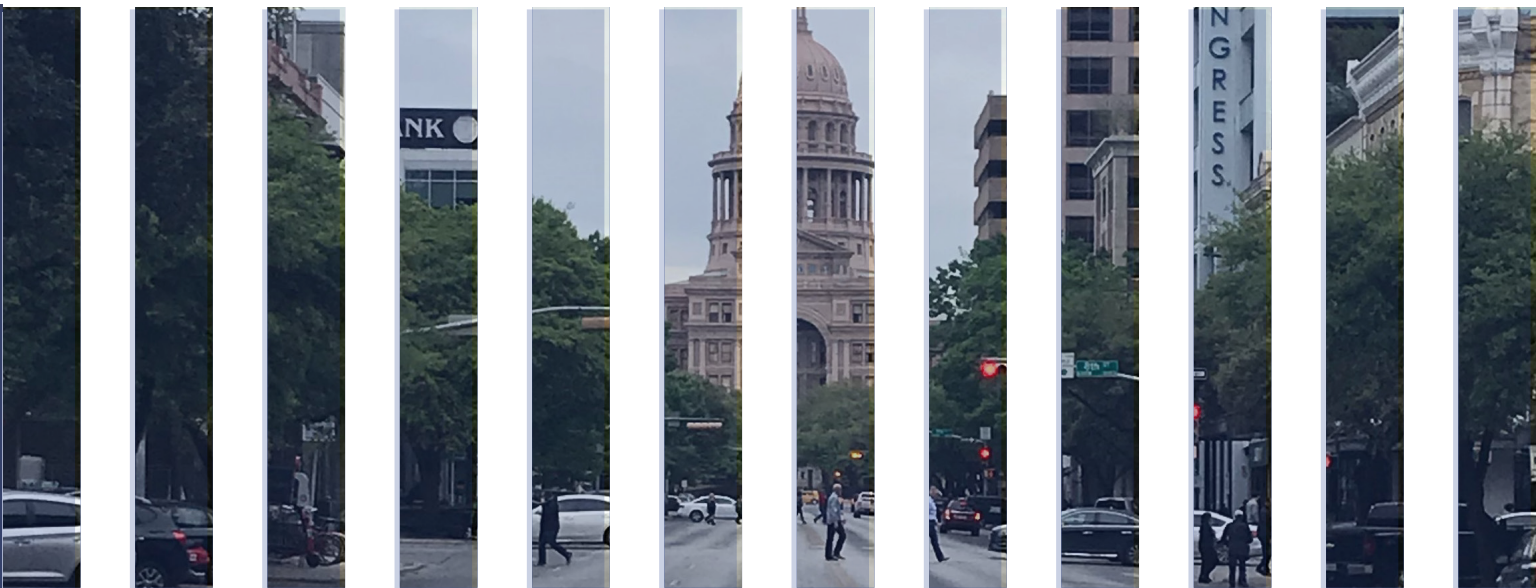
American Planning Association, Texas Chapter 2019 Planners' Day at the Texas State Capitol





Planner Mary May of Spokane Valley lost her bid for state representative but is actively working towards her political goals through participation in Emerge Washington, a training program for aspiring politicians. Jennifer Keesmat, former Chief Planner, entered the Toronto mayor's race at the very last minute after feeling pressured by the changing political climate.

While she's not expected to win, the desire to create a city for everyone and get things done in a different way was enough to incentivize her to run. Part of the problem preventing planners from running is the mental barrier of the neutral public servant mindset. While other planners supported Keesmat when she decided to run, she frequently shuns the politician label for herself. It seems as planning professionals, we don't prepare to be political, because we don't inherently see it as part of our what we do. In fact, 'political' is often a word ascribed to situations where elected officials get in the way of us doing our jobs.



But as Bree Davies, a planner advocate in Denver who served on staff of a local campaign, affirms, we can't avoid getting political because we typically serve a public that isn't afforded that choice. The biggest barrier to political office for planners might be themselves, but vocal critics and culture shock create even more challenges for those looking to take the leap. For all planners, but especially for a planner moving from the private sector, it may be surprising how long it takes to get things done and the limited resources available at any level of government. Novices to the political game may be unprepared for the large part money plays in the campaigning process, and the essential role of lobbying and negotiation skills.

This all isn't to say it's impossible. It simply means there are considerable challenges that planners should prepare to meet when they decide to make the leap. In fact, planners are uniquely qualified for holding public office. Zadeh found her transition to City Council eased by the fact that she had already done the work as a planner that City Council members make policy about. Others find their planning skill sets advantageous as well. Keesmat's training allows her to be seen as articulate and comfortable in the public view. Leslie Richards, Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and former planner, is lauded for her ability to build consensus and her unique perspective on stakeholder issues.

The bottom line is that most planners already spend a considerable amount of time working in the political realm. It's not outlandish to think they might have the expert knowledge and experience to assume the positions themselves.



# Qualified Opportunity Zones:

## An Opinionated Summary from a Planner's Perspective

### AUTHOR: CATHERINE OSBORN

Catherine is a Masters of City & Regional Planning student at UTA. She is the VP of Economic Development and a Transportation Intern at the NCTCOG.

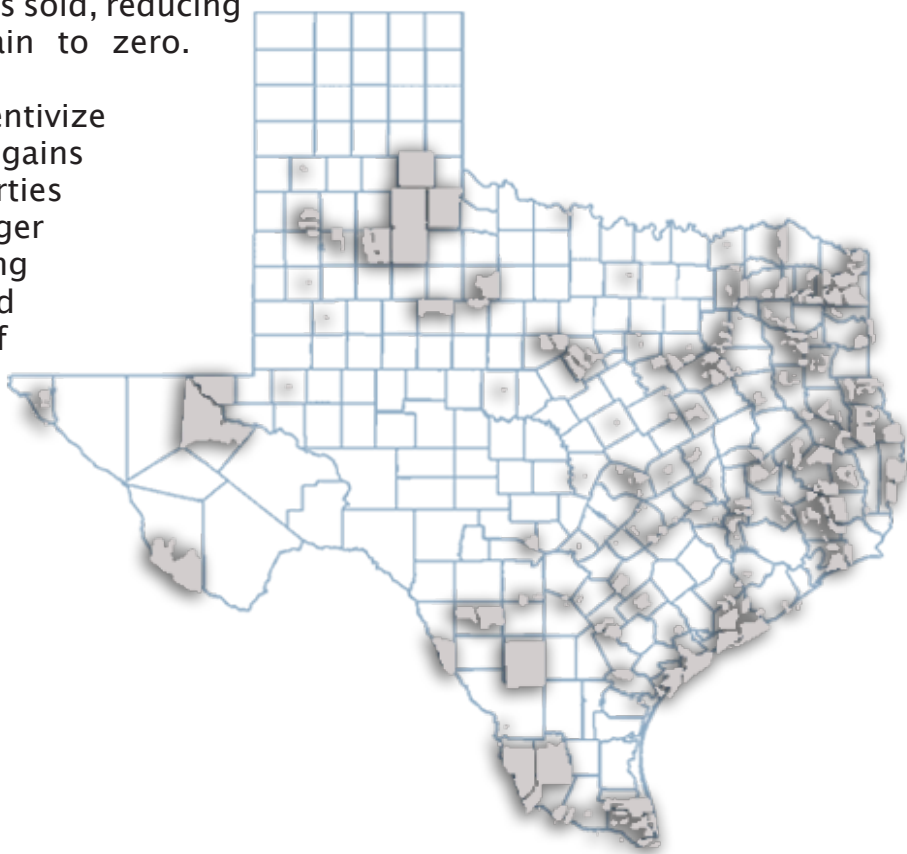
I recently had the opportunity to do some research into Opportunity Zones for a project at work and was immediately captivated by what I initially thought was a great development opportunity to bring new investment to affordable housing opportunities and especially rural communities experiencing food deserts. However, after a little digging, I soon realized there is a lot going on under the surface concerning Opportunity Zones.

Opportunity Zones were first created as part of the infamous 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. The IRS states that the purpose of Opportunity Zones is to act as an “economic development tool,” in hopes of spurring “economic development and job creation in distressed communities” through preferential tax treatment in qualifying zones, therefore increasing incentive for development investment.

In order for an investor to gain tax benefits, they must first set up something called a Qualified Opportunity Fund (QOF), which is usually either a partnership or a corporation used for investing in an eligible property in a Qualified Opportunity Zone (QOZ). The investor can then defer tax on any prior gains invested in the QOF until the date on which the QOF is sold, or by December 31, 2026.

If an investor keeps their money in the QOF for more than 5 years, there is a 10% exclusion on the amount of gain deferred when calculating capital gain taxes. If an investor keeps their money in the QOF for more than 7 years, the exclusion is 15%. If the investor keeps their money in the QOF for at least 10 years, the investor is eligible for an increase in the basis of the QOF investment to its fair market value on the date the QOF is sold, reducing the deferred taxable capital gain to zero.

These tax benefits basically incentivize investors to increase capital gains and remain invested in properties located within QOZs for longer periods of time, without paying capital gains taxes they would normally pay from the sale of stock or other capital assets. So what does this mean for planning and affordable housing?



“Texas has 628 designated opportunity zones, all of which are low-income communities.” – [www.opportunitydb.com](http://www.opportunitydb.com)





Well, there are two main points I would like for you to consider: 1) the way in which QOZs are selected, and 2) how development is regulated in these QOZs. A community can be designated as an Opportunity Zone once they have been nominated by the state and certified by the Secretary of the US Treasury.

The first QOZs were identified as early as April 2018 and the rest of the zones were designated by May 2019. However, each state went about designating their zones differently. For instance, many states that previously competed for Promise Zones followed a similar process for selecting opportunity zones. Promise Zones, according to HUD's website, are "are high-poverty communities where the federal government partners with local leaders to increase economic activity, improve educational opportunities, leverage private investment, reduce violent crime, enhance public health and address other priorities identified by the community."

These 22 zones were selected through three rounds of national competition from 2013 to 2016 during which "applicants demonstrated a consensus vision for their community and its residents, the capacity to carry it out, and a shared commitment to specific, measurable results." The selection process for Promise Zones incorporated two key factors of planning theory from my classes: community input and implementation strategies.

Other states, such as Texas, did not have as much discretion in their selection process. In the state of Texas, HUD reported that very often it was a case of who knew the state governor. In Downtown Dallas, developers interested in projects in the region were the ones who nominated many of census tracts that would become QOZs. For instance, the site of the future Oak Farms development and what was the potential Amazon HQ2 site are both within QOZs and nominated by a developer.

It is not entirely clear how QOZ were selected in the state of Texas, however, there is no evidence to suggest that it incorporated either community input or considered the implementation of community goals in regard to investment from QOFs.





This brings us to the way that development within Qualified Opportunity Zones is regulated. There is no formal requirement that opportunity funds be used for affordable housing or other philanthropic purposes. Only when local rules requiring such developments apply to the zones are equitable measures mandated. An example of preexisting local affordable housing regulatory framework can be seen at the MidCity apartment development in Washington, D.C.

Developers are currently working to bring opportunity zone investment into the project and, when combined with city inclusionary zoning efforts, the development will be able to include 10 affordable housing units out of the total 108 units. The National Council of State Housing Agencies (NCSHA) states that as of early 2019, 63 funds have been set up with a total of \$16 billion invested.

However, the NCSHA also reports that finding investment capital is not as difficult as finding projects within opportunity zones that can be carried out. This is partly because of the requirement to build quickly. HUD stated that their current focus is on adjusting their financing tools to better align with the Opportunity Zone program. As more projects are planned and begin development, the potential impact of the Qualified Opportunity Zones program will become clearer.

What is clear now is the importance of planners' role in getting out ahead of – and highly involved in – such programs in the future. If not, we will be left scrambling to react to decisions made without a community's input as we are now with QOZs.

