

# PLANNING MATTERS



American Planning Association  
Colorado Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen

A Publication of the Colorado Chapter of the American Planning Association

Volume 15, Issue 3

*Using & Understanding Population & Demographic*

## Demographic Matters in Planning

*Elizabeth Garner—State Demography Office, Department of Local Affairs (DOLA)*

*Anne Miller—Community Development Office, DOLA*

**INSIDE THIS EDITION:**  
Population & Demographics

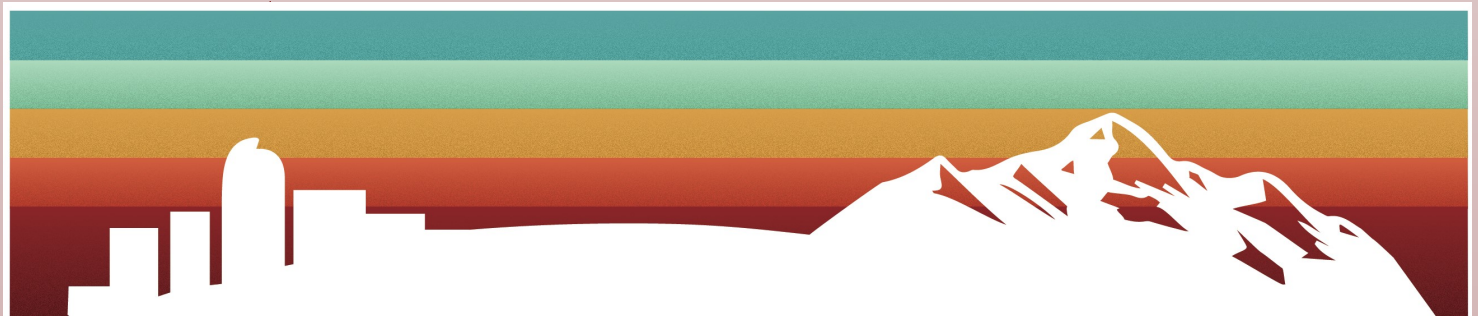
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Understanding the past, present, and future demographic and economic trends is the foundation for most planning strategies whether it be for an economic or community development project, preparing a comprehensive plan, or a housing assessment. A community profile using economic and demographic data, combined with community knowledge, helps tell the story of where the community has been and where it's going. This information can be very instructive in evaluating how the community is doing relative to other communities or the state average. Also, the resources a community may need in the future are highly dependent on its demographic mix (e.g., education, infrastructure, health care). Planning for the future without this reflection on demographic trends would be like planning in a vacuum, and could lead to the development of less efficient strategies and use of resources to address key issues.

### Colorado Population Growth Trends 2013-14

- ◇ Colorado increased by 82,700 to reach 5.3 million in population, growing by 1.6%.
- ◇ Ranked 8<sup>th</sup> nationally in total change.
- ◇ Ranked 4<sup>th</sup> nationally in percentage change.
- ◇ Net-migration estimated to be 51,000.
- ◇ 19 counties (almost 30%) declined in population.

*(Continued on Page 4)*



APA Colorado State Conference  
**Community & Character in Colorado:**  
FROM METRO TO RESORT

Steamboat Springs  
Sept 30<sup>TH</sup> - Oct 2<sup>ND</sup>  
2 0 1 5

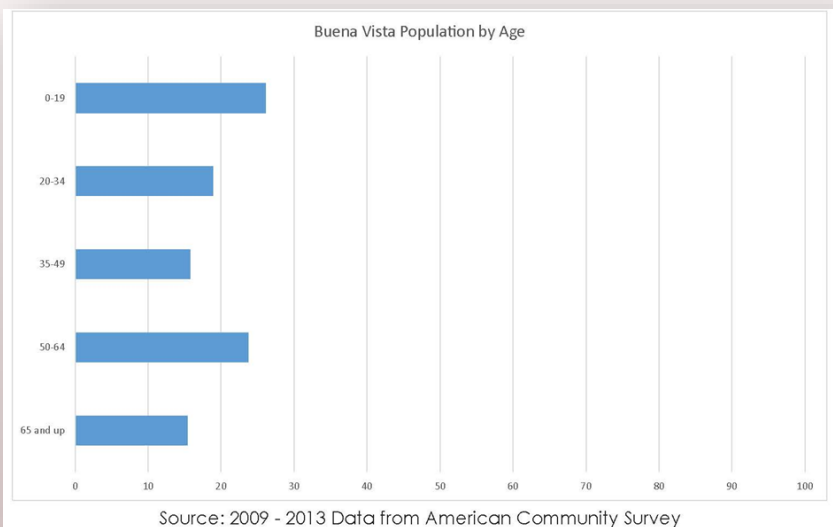
## President's Message

Stan Clauson, AICP ASLA

Welcome to the Fall Edition of *Planning Matters*. This issue focuses on the relationship of population and demographics to good planning. Some of the articles presented here relate to providing housing for different demographic groups, while other articles highlight data interpretation for lay persons. In the context of other information and public participation, demographics can tell us a lot about the needs of a community that can be addressed by good planning.



To illustrate how important demographics are to planners, our recent work in Buena Vista showed the following age distribution:



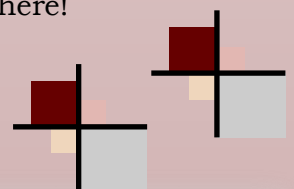
As can be seen from the graph, there are two significant cohorts: young people and those approaching retirement age. There is also a significant population of persons 65 and older, along with a dip in the 35-49 age range, a period when many families have children in the school system. However, interpreting a distribution of this sort is not entirely easy. Does the reduction of persons 65 and up signal the need for more support facilities for the elderly? Probably. Similarly, does the reduced 35-49 cohort speak to a need for better employment and housing opportunities for growing families? Quite likely. And do the two major cohorts speak to

Buena Vista as a great place for young people as well as older folks in a post-child-raising active living situation. That too. It is our hope that the articles in this issue will be helpful in understanding and responding to population information and why it is important to planning professionals.

Planning for APA-Colorado's annual State Conference is well underway, and the early-bird registration response has been excellent. We hope you will join us for the Conference in Steamboat Springs on September 30<sup>th</sup> through October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Both the historic town of Steamboat Springs and the mountain base area offer interesting planning and design solutions that will be covered in Mobile Workshops, made more enjoyable by the great mountain town experience Steamboat provides. The many presentations should provide new insights and energy for our daily work, and opportunities for lively discussions with fellow planners. Look forward to seeing you there!

Best regards,

Stan Clauson  
Colorado Chapter President



**Talk to the President:** Do you have a comment or thought you'd like to share after reading the President's message or about the Chapter in General? Email [President@APAColorado.org](mailto:President@APAColorado.org)

## Using the American Community Survey to Inform Public Officials

*Larry G. Mugler, AICP, Arapahoe County Planning Division*

Now that the U.S. Census Bureau releases annual results from the American Community Survey (ACS), we have the opportunity to keep our elected officials and planning commissioners up-to-date on the demographics of their community. However, the volume of data available from the ACS can be overwhelming. In order to provide the information in “bite-size” portions, I developed a series of “demographic highlights”. This article provides an example and explains the process for converting ACS data into other geographies.

The ACS provides data for geographies as small as block groups, usually about 1,000 people. Since Arapahoe County has five county commissioner districts, I built an equivalency between census tracts and block groups to each commissioner district. I could then aggregate data from the ACS into each commissioner district.

The example below is the highlight concerning household income. It required that I build the income distribution from the census tract level and recalculate the median incomes at the commissioner district level. Demographic experts would be concerned about the margin of error calculations for this data manipulation but for my use, I did not believe that it was necessary to provide margins of error.

This information was emailed to the board of county commissioners, the members of the planning commission, senior county staff and the staff of the planning division. With the volume of information from the ACS, I have been able to provide a weekly highlight for most of the year. Topics have included: household characteristics, poverty, housing characteristics like overcrowding, employment by industry, and commuting methods. If you would like more information about these highlights or other samples, please contact me at [lmugler@arapahoegov.com](mailto:lmugler@arapahoegov.com).

*(Continued on Page 6)*

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Urban Design Planning Design Review  
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## **Demographic Matters** *(continued from page 1)*

The following are recommended topics for a community profile:

1. Has the population been increasing or decreasing over time (20 years) and in comparison to other municipalities or counties in the region?
2. What is causing the population to change? Has there been in or out migration? Have there been more births than deaths or vice versa? This will help to show what is contributing to population change.
3. How is the population by race and ethnicity changing, especially by age group?
4. Population by age and how it has been changing may be one of the most critical pieces of information you can have on your community. For example, do you have an aging population, a large group of school age, or a strong labor force age group? How has the age profile changed over time? The age distribution of a community is greatly influenced by its amenities, housing prices, and job opportunities.
5. What is the population forecast for the state, region, and county where the community is located? Is the area forecast to grow at a fast, medium, or slow pace?
6. Are the households comprised of families with or without children, single person, single person over 65 years? How have the households been changing?
7. Housing units are the “containers” for households. Understanding the current housing stock is critical for understanding how the community can best address current and future demands. Beyond the numbers and characteristics, understanding the value and affordability of housing units is vital. Are the housing prices prohibitive to new families? Are the housing prices at such a high price that once the current work force ages and sells, those housing units will most likely go into the vacation seasonal market? Or are housing prices reasonable and suddenly the community is experiencing growth in families with children? How many total housing units are there? What types of new units are being built - multi-family vs single family? Are the units owned vs. rented, vacant vs. occupied vs. seasonal use?
8. What is the median home price as well as the number of units available at different price points?
9. What is the income distribution of the area and average wages? Is housing affordability an issue?
10. Economically what industry is driving the economy in the county and region and how are total jobs changing? How does this compare to the region and state?
11. What is the current forecast for job growth based on the current industry mix? What types of jobs are forecast to grow? What are the wages for those jobs – high or low?
12. What are the labor force trends for the state and community? Is the labor force growing or slowing down, is it aging or is it younger?

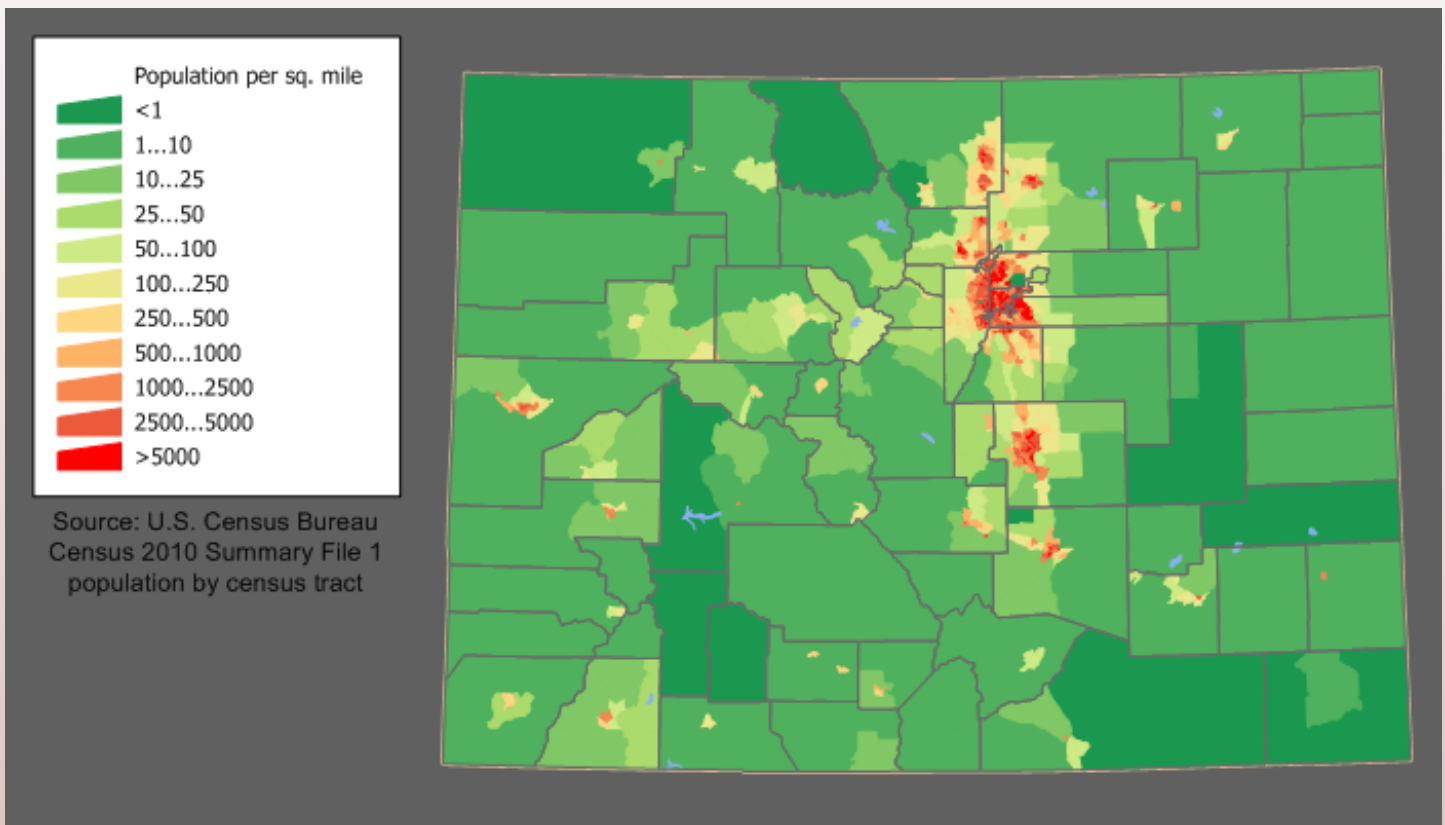
### **Colorado Leading the Nation in Aging Population Growth**

- ◇ Colorado ranked 3rd in US for growth of 65+ population increasing by 125,554 between 2010- 2014 by an annual average growth rate of 5.3%.
- ◇ 65+ population is forecast to increase from 555,000 in 2010 to 1.2 million by 2030 – just from aging of the current population.



13. What are the commuting patterns in the area?

The majority of the data and information for a Community Profile can be found on the State Demography Office website: [www.colorado.gov/demography](http://www.colorado.gov/demography). The Office provides assistance to communities in developing profiles and is developing online tools to help automate the compilation and downloading and visualization of most of this data. Please contact us at: [dlg.helpdesk@state.co.us](mailto:dlg.helpdesk@state.co.us).



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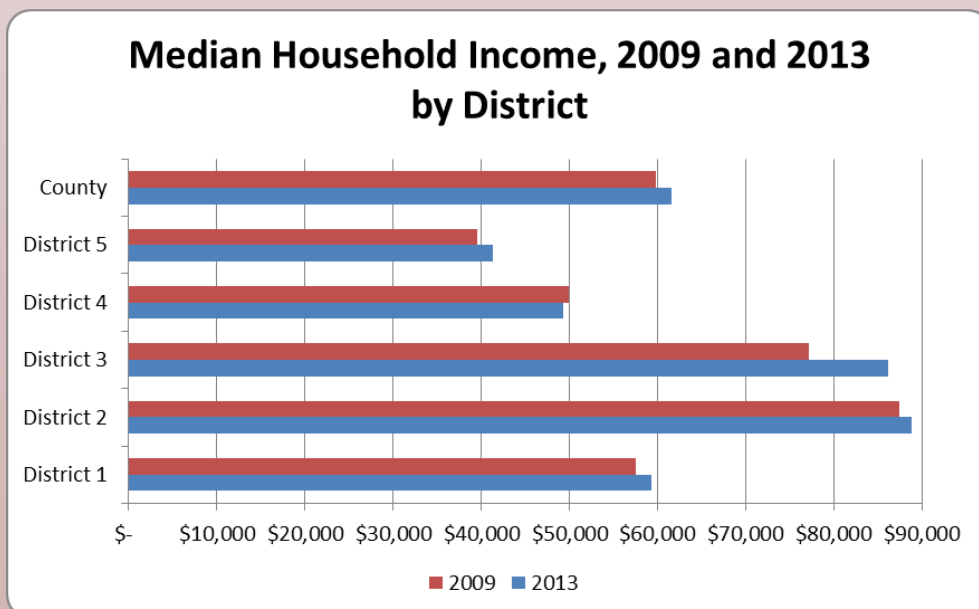
## American Community Survey *(continued from page 3)*

### County Median Household Income

For 2013, the median income of households ranged from \$41,300 in District 5 to \$88,900 in District 2 (compared to the county median income of \$61,600). Six percent of the households in District 1 and eight percent in Districts 4 and 5 have incomes of less than \$10,000 compared to 2 percent in District 3 and 3 percent in District 2. District 2 has 44 percent of the households in the County with incomes over \$200,000.

	Median Income	% less than \$10,000	% more than \$200,000
District 1	\$59,249	6.5%	7.1%
District 2	\$88,859	3.0%	13.2%
District 3	\$86,201	2.4%	7.4%
District 4	\$49,286	7.6%	1.8%
District 5	\$41,293	8.2%	0.6%
County	\$61,619	5.6%	6.0%

Since the ACS data covers five years of sample households, 2013 is the first year where trends can be addressed. The sample for the 2009 ACS data only overlaps with the 2013 sample by one year. Income information for each dataset is inflation-adjusted to the final year. Between 2009 and 2013, median incomes have shown modest change. District 4 saw a slight drop, about \$600, and District 3 the largest gain, almost \$9,000. Data for 2009 mostly preceded the great recession while 2013 includes the recession years.



# Upcoming Events:



## *You don't want to miss it!*

*Wednesday—Over lunch, Justice Gregory Hobbs will guide you through the history of Colorado water, water rights and how to plan with water in mind.*

*Continue your water education with the Water Track.*

*Thursday—Join the APA Colorado Board to find out what's happening in your chapter. Stay around for breakfast and a lesson from Debra Fine on the Fine Art of Small Talk. Tools to make your next public meeting....or any outing...successful*

*Celebrate the 2015 APA Colorado Chapter Award winners.*

*Friday, Jim DeFrancia will speak while you eat. He'll hit on community character—what it is and why you need it.*



[ Upcoming Free Webcasts ]

- September 25** (1.5 CM)  
Public Involvement for Transportation Planning
- October 2** (1.5 CM)  
Big Data & Small Communities: Opportunities & Challenges
- October 16** (1.5 CM)  
Aging-in-Community Programs

## September & October Events at a Glance

September 11, 2015  
 APA Colorado Board Meeting  
 2:00—4:00  
 UC Denver—Denver, Colorado

September 11, 2015  
 APA Colorado & APAS Happy Hour  
 4:00—??? Location TBD  
 Denver, Colorado

September 30—October 2, 2015  
 APA Colorado State Conference  
 Steamboat Springs, Colorado  
 Registration closes September 11, 2015

October 6, 2015  
 RMLUI: State Control of Federal Lands—Legal or Not?  
 6-8:30 p.m.  
 Sturm College of Law, Denver

October 6—9, 2015  
 DCI Annual Conference: Vibrant Colorado Downtowns  
 Durango, Colorado

# Aging in Place: Good Community Design

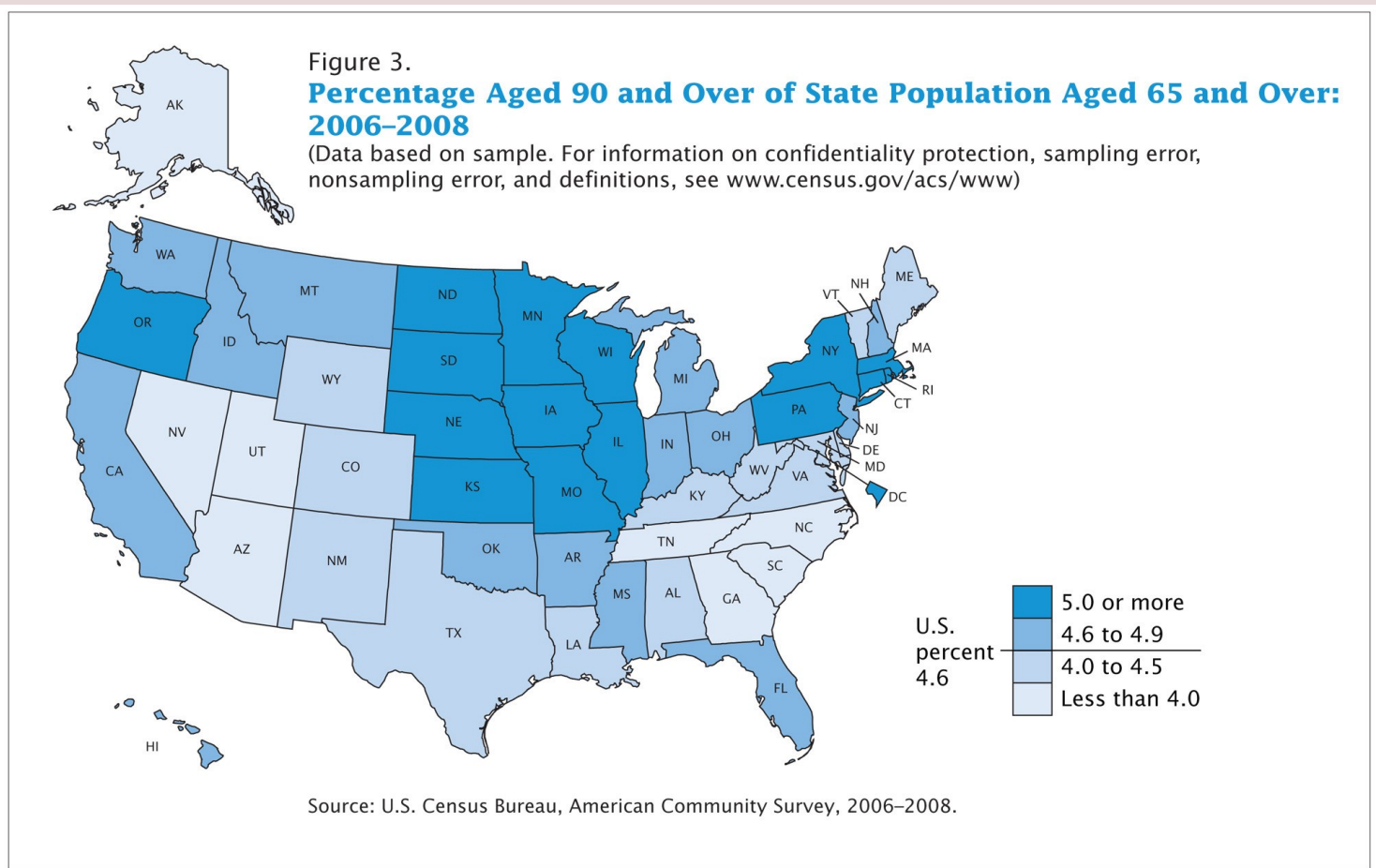
*Brendan Hurley, Michael Tavel Architects*

According to a 2014 Community Preference Survey completed by the AARP, 87% of adults ages 65 and older want to age in their current home and community. In order to meet this need we need neighborhoods and communities that remain accessible and affordable to their residents as they age. Typically aging in place is associated with people over the age of 65, but really it starts with the purchase of a new home or apartment, no matter the buyer’s age.

The same things that are integral for a great community of any age demographic are the same things that make up an aging in place community. Research done by the AARP shows five critical aspects to aging in place: sense of community and place, access to goods and services, accessible building design, a variety of transportation options, and easy access to health care (including facilities and providers). All of these qualities are ones that should be desirable for anyone at any age.

Here is a brief summary of a few “best practices” planners can implement in order to make designing aging in place neighborhoods easier:

1. Create a set of detailed design guidelines that cater to a successful aging in place community or establish a form-based code for housing developers to follow before sketch plan during the PUD process.
2. Use existing locations of goods and services (especially in suburban locations) to be the





## Aging Continued

catalyst for age-friendly communities. This can take form of suburban retrofitting or increasing the housing stock to allow for a mixture of housing types and sizes.

3. Require a variety of housing types in a planned community ranging from large single family homes to smaller to single story cottages. This allows for the owners of large single family houses to downsize to a more manageable smaller dwelling later on in life but still be able to stay within their community.

4. Allow accessory dwelling units in back yards or “granny flats” over garages.

5. Provide incentives such as increased density or an expedient review process to developers who are willing to make the neighborhood a great place in which to age.



With an increasing senior population, the need for age-friendly environment will only grow. As planners, we need to be thinking about how housing developments can be designed to meet this need.

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- ◆ Department of Local Affairs, State Demography Office

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## United States of Aging Survey—Denver Summit

Nate Currey, Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG)



On August 15, the Denver Regional Council of Governments ([DRCOG](#)) hosted the formal presentation of the fourth annual United States of Aging Survey. While not designed specifically for city planners, the survey is a wealth of information that can help inform important decisions regarding zoning, design, transportation and other quality-of-life issues that the planning industry influences every day. The survey polls U.S. adults 60 and older for their insights on how older Americans are preparing for their later years, and what communities can do to better support this growing population.

Across the Denver region, older adults are looking to their communities for support as they age, hoping to continue living in their homes and neighborhoods as long as possible. The majority of older adults in Denver have not changed residences in more than 20 years (57%). Though 74% say they intend to live in their current home for the rest of their lives, Denver seniors are much less interested than the national population in the expansion of services that would help them maintain and upgrade their homes (26% compared with 41% of the total population).

When asked what concerns they have about living independently, adults 60 and older throughout the Denver region say they are most concerned about losing their memory (43%). The next greatest concerns are becoming a burden to others (39%) and not being able to get out of their house and/or drive (36%). The region's older adults are generally satisfied with infrastructure in their community (82%), yet 46% of those surveyed find public transportation "acceptable" at best, including 17% rating it as "poor."

To coincide with the release of the results of the U.S. of Aging Survey for Denver, Kyle Brown, Senior Health Policy Advisor from the Governor's Office announced the appointees for the [Strategic Action Planning Group on Aging](#) which was created this spring by Colorado House Bill 1033. The planning group is tasked with studying the impacts of the aging population on state & local governments, families and businesses, and will be recommending policies and actions to better prepare for the growing demographic shifts across the State.



DRCOG's Area Agency on Aging, Director Jayla Sanchez-Warren is interviewed by the press

*The United States of Aging Survey is conducted annually by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a), National Council on Aging (NCOA) and UnitedHealthcare. Both [National](#) and [Denver](#) survey results can be found at <https://www.ncoa.org/news/usoa-survey/>*



# Aging Survey Continued

## In the press:

**7News Denver (ABC) - Governor names strategic planning group to focus on challenges facing Colorado's aging population : DRCOG hosts summit to identify resources** by Lance Hernandez

**Colorado Public Radio (90.1) - As Seniors Population Grows, So Do Worries About Health, Memory** by John Daley

**Forbes.com - Why Are There So Few Age Friendly Cities?** by Richard Eisenberg, contributor, Forbes.com Personal Finance

**Denver Post - Group Will Study Area Aging - Leader Chosen for Effort to Study Impacts on Population** by Nate Currey, DRCOG



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# Tiny Houses: And the Not-so-Tiny Questions They Raise

*Don Elliott, FAICP, Clarion Associates*

Where did they come from – those cute little “cabins-on-wheels” that you see being pulled down the road or sitting on a lot. Wood siding, pitched roof, gable windows . . . and a porch with a railing. All that’s missing is the dog in the yard (presumably a small dog in a small yard). Tiny houses are trending, and shows like “Tiny House Nation” have fed the interest with stories about (mostly young) couples being shown all the amazing features that can be packed into 250 or 400 or 500 square feet of movable cabin so the couple can “de-clutter” and live a simpler life (sometimes with the hope of living off the grid in some idyllic spot like . . . say . . . the Rocky Mountains).



Cuteness aside, Tiny Homes raise some interesting questions for planners. Questions like “Is this a house, or a trailer, or . . . just what is it?”, “Would this qualify as an accessory unit?” “Does this meet the building code?” “Where should we allow this to be parked . . . or occupied . . . and for how long?” Recently, Clarion associates tried to answer some of those questions in a webinar format, and here is some – but not all – of what we learned along the way.

*What are they?*

Most tiny houses like those described above are Recreational Vehicles (and at least one of the major manufacturers’ web sites tells you that up front).

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*Can you park it somewhere and live in it as a permanent home?*

That depends, but often the answer is no. In order to be a permanent residence, most cities require that the unit meet the International Residential Code or HUD’s safety standards for manufactured homes. Some Tiny Homes do not meet either one. Instead, they meet the safety standards for recreational vehicles. They are safe to pull down the road, and to occupy, but were not designed to be lived in permanently (primarily because of their semi-self-contained water and sanitation systems). If it’s not a house, then it’s technically “camping”, and many communities limit camping to no more than 30 consecutive days unless the unit is in an approved Recreational Vehicle park.

*What if my town wants to allow people to live in them permanently?*

Spur, Texas, has beat you to the punch, and advertise themselves as the first “Tiny House Friendly” town in the U.S. They – and most other cities that do allow Tiny Homes as permanent residence – require that the wheels be removed and the home placed on a permanent foundation and connected to electricity. If the lot is too small for well and septic service, they also require that it be connected to the community water and sewer systems. The costs add up. And the land where you park it is often required to be a legally subdivided lot – just like other houses.



*Can I permit them as an Accessory Dwelling Unit?*

That’s up to you. If you have an ordinance that allows “detached” ADUs, and the Tiny Home meets the requirements of that ordinance, then it’s an ADU. Most ordinances don’t name Tiny Homes by name as either a form of permanent or accessory housing – if they meet the standards for that type of use and structure, they are allowed.

## Committee Updates

### Emerging Planning Professionals (EPP)

In early August, APA-CO's Emerging Planning Professionals celebrated our second successful year as a Committee while enjoying the last night of Denver's Jazz in the Park. Now, as summertime winds down and the seasons hint toward changing, EPP is looking forward to a change of its own!

On Wednesday, August 26<sup>th</sup>, with a great turnout, plenty of lively discussions and a fun happy hour to follow, a group of EPPs gathered downtown for the Re-imagine Workshop. We recapped this past year and discussed ways to make the organization more impactful and fun! The Workshop was an opportunity for the Committee leaders and members to revisit the core reasons this organization was created- to connect planning professionals at similar points in their careers with professional development, networking opportunities, and social events, while creating a sense of community among our peers.

EPP is seeking your input, feedback, ideas, and suggestions at our Re-imagine Workshop: The Sequel. Which events were you able to attend? Which events were you sorry to miss? Would you prefer events at different times? Days? Locations? Did any of our events just miss the mark? Come find out more about our organization, how you can get involved, and meet your fellow emerging planners. We're excited to hear from you, so stay tuned for the details (and a twist) - The Sequel coming to Denver September 2015. We look forward to seeing you there!

Attention recent graduates, you should be on our list! If you have 8 or fewer years of experience and are not currently enrolled as a full-time student, shoot us an email and we'll get you connected - [EPP@apacolorado.org](mailto:EPP@apacolorado.org). To stay up-to-date and RSVP for our events, Like us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/EPPColorado](http://www.facebook.com/EPPColorado).

*Emerging Planning Professionals (EPP), part of APA-Colorado, cultivates a vibrant community of entry- to mid-level planning professionals by offering and promoting opportunities for professional development, service, and meaningful, innovative contributions to an evolving, diverse profession.*

*Dedicated to serving planning professionals across Colorado with eight or fewer years of experience in the field, EPP inspires and supports emerging planners to become community leaders today and tomorrow.*



### Professional Development Committee

The state conference in Steamboat is sure to be a gem! The Professional Development Committee received over **90 session proposals** this year. Reviewing and selecting the final lineup was a challenging effort. I would like to thank the members of the Professional Development Committee for their tireless efforts to ensure that the Chapter's educational events, including the annual conference, serve the training needs of APA Colorado's membership. Thank You 2015 Professional Development Committee Members!

*Shelia Booth, AICP (Chapter Administrator)*

*Scott Bressler, AICP*

*Erin Fosdick, AICP*

*Watkins Fulk-Gray (Local Host Committee)*

*Greg Moberg*

*Ken Schroepfel, AICP*

#### AICP Exam

The Colorado Chapter had a 90 percent pass rate for the May 2015 Exam (compared to 68 percent nationally). Congratulations to our newest AICP members!

*Ahmed Abukhater, AICP*

*Sarah Davis, AICP*

*Brad Dodson, AICP*

*Jennifer Eby, AICP*

*Alina Fowler, AICP*

*Summer Frederick, AICP*

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*Judy Hammer, AICP*

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*Susie Reed, AICP*

*Jason Rodgers, AICP*

*Amy Schmaltz, AICP*

*Jessie Young, AICP*



## Innovative Economic Development & Planning

The Professional Development Committee offers two AICP Exam Preparation courses each year. The three-hour course provides study tips, valuable resources, testimonials from recent test takers, and plenty of practice questions to help stir discussion about the exam. Whether you plan to take the test this November, or later down the road, this session will establish a good foundation for your preparations. A special thanks to **Abe Barge, AICP** for his assistance earlier this year for the Spring Exam Prep session! The next session will be October 2<sup>nd</sup> at the state conference in Steamboat. Hope to see you there!

### Log Your CM Credits!

Remember to log your CM credits for the 2014-2015 reporting period. If you still need credits, there are plenty of affordable and even free options for online training and local events to get your CM credits while expanding your breadth of knowledge. For a list of upcoming events, please visit the APA Colorado Events Calendar at: <http://www.apacolorado.org/event-calendar>. For other training opportunities, visit the APA National training and workshops page at: <http://www.planning.org/education/training/>.

We warmly welcome your feedback on how the Professional Development Committee can continue to add value to the Chapter and its members. For more information, please contact:

### Tareq Wafaie, AICP

Professional Development Officer  
PDO@APAColorado.org—303.830.2890 ext. 32



### Sustainability Committee

The Sustainability Committee has had an active spring and summer, hosting two fascinating webinars on [ADUs](#) and a [community energy planning tool](#) from NREL, providing comments on the APA Draft [Sustainability Policy Guide](#), hosting the City of Lakewood to learn about the new Sustainability Plan they have developed, and working to forge stronger partnerships with local affiliated professions such as the [American Society of Civil Engineers](#) Colorado Sustainability Committee the [Colorado Association of Stormwater and Floodplain Managers](#). As the last two connections indicate, there has been a renewed interest in water planning that is also going to be represented at the Colorado APA Conference, where the committee is sponsoring a session entitled, "Tools for Managing Water Sustainability" on Thursday at 10:15. We're excited to see a Water track at the conference and will be on hand to help ensure planners interested in the topic leave with some of the latest tools to manage water in a sustainable manner.

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# Chapter Administrator's Update



## Numbers.....

We're all obsessed with numbers. Whether it's the amount of money in our bank account, the total daily steps displayed on our fitness monitor, or the endless number of days left before our next vacation—numbers tell a story. In my case, I'm looking at our current registration numbers for the upcoming 2015 APA Colorado State Conference in Steamboat Springs, September 30th—October 2nd. I'm please to see we have almost 375 people registered this year, more than last year and almost as many as the 2013 conference in Vail (387).

The numbers tell us that our economy has recovered enough to allow organizations to budget for this type of training. I also hope the enrollment figures reflect that you, the members, find the conference fulfilling your education and networking needs. At the end of each conference, we ask attendees to complete a survey. The Board reviews the responses....the numbers...and incorporates changes where possible. However, if at any time you have any comments or suggestions, send them to me (Admin@APAcOLORADO.org.) We're always looking for key-note speaker ideas, themes, special tracks, workshops, etc.

Another thing the registration numbers tell us is that with our growing attendance comes a reduction in the number of communities and venues that can accommodate our conference each year. This could ultimately mean we return to the same locations more frequently. The 2016 conference is set for Colorado Springs and the Board is currently reviewing locations for the 2017 event. We hope to continue to offer a quality event and that you will continue to join your fellow planners each year.



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