

NVHousingSearch.org Advisory Board Meeting Notes, 3-23-2017

Participants: Tim Whitright, Betsy Fadali, Kate Zook, Susy Breckon, Phyllis Hargrove, Gilbert Medina, Debbie Warner, Earlie King, Nancy Brown, Jeni Chavez, Kristin Cooper, Sherry Manning, Sheila Roberts, Michelle Khan, Palisa Sturgis, and George Graham.

Site activity

Listings have grown since the launch event in September 2014:

Table 1. Units represented in NVHS listings

Region	9/16/2014	3/8/2017
Washoe	4,320	10,359
Carson	148	1,188
All Other	1,062	2,009
Clark	8,248	28,817
Total	13,778	42,373

Using ACS estimates, over 15% of Nevada multi-family units are now listed in NVHS.

Sheila presented dashboard graphs for google analytics over the past year and growth in search activity (see presentation).

Nancy Brown asked whether data is available on how many searches are successful. This is of interest because of the very tight market especially in northern Nevada.

Betsy explained that NHD receives reports on listings, from which a vacancy rate can be calculated but that the vacancy rate is “noisy”. Detailed reports on monthly search activity are also available. The percent of searches that come up empty can be calculated, but successful searches may include properties that have waiting lists. Further work may be possible to get reports on which types of searches come up empty. Betsy will send out a report on the NVHS searches to the group to demonstrate data that is currently available (see below).

Live Demonstration

As an update and reminder, Sheila demonstrated a search on the NVHS system. She drew attention to the following features among others:

- News and blog section. AB members were thanked for their participation. Blogs on new properties, as well as the requirement for new tax credit properties to list in NVHS are a selling point for the site.
- Emphasys continues to work on responsive design for phones and tablets while keeping high accessibility standards so the site can be used with adaptive technology like screen readers, helmet pointers, etc.
- Print-friendly button for mail, fax, in-person help

Ways to Help Serve Communities with NVHS

Customized webinar trainings can be provided free to groups or individuals. Agency staff turnover means that training is always needed.

Emphasys can help with landlord recruitment campaigns. There are a variety of ways to engage landlords. We also discussed non-traditional options such as single room occupancy and finding roommates. Emphasys has been involved in recruiting landlords and educating them about the availability of caseworker support in roommate situations. Palisa would be interested in pursuing this idea further.

Agency programs can be promoted through the use of the news and blog section on NVHS.

The Socialserve call center that is a part of NVHS services, has a lot of experience with disaster recovery around the U.S. and NVHousingSearch can offer numerous services in disasters large and small such as targeted outreach to landlords from the call center to update and add listings, help through the call center with those who are displaced from their housing, use of the website as an informational portal. Typically the housing search website isn't involved as a first responder but for households who have medium to long term housing displacement. Washington State has designed a disaster plan for how they will use their housing search site in case of emergency.

Marketing and Promotional Activities

Betsy recapped some of the most recent NVHS outreach activities including:

- Thanks to Southern Nevada Regional Housing Authority for distribution of more than 10,000 rack cards and inclusion in their calendar.
- A podcast with University Center for Economic Development
- A PAIR (prescreening, assessment, intake and referral tool) demo for Money Follows the Person, Clark County and Nevada Housing Division. PAIR is an add-on module for NVHousingSearch.
- A new technique for listing affordable properties through collecting as many fields of data first which then can be entered by call center staff. This streamlines the initial data entry for property managers. Using this technique the inventory of HUD properties in the system was increased.
- Thanks to Nancy Brown for her help in getting NVHS into the Reno Health Festivals.
- Successful outreach to mobile home parks with help from the Manufactured Housing Division.

Advisory board roles are to participate in the meetings which are now biannual, to advise on outreach opportunities, and suggest improvements, and to spread the word. Outreach opportunities can be events, newsletters, speaking engagements, training and webinars, social media posts or rack card distribution.

Group Discussion

Betsy asked for outreach opportunities especially for senior and Hispanic markets, property managers, private market and single family listings and helping recruit listings in rural counties. Nancy suggested that Betsy should talk with the director of RSAR and offered to introduce her. Phyllis suggested that Betsy also reach out to the Las Vegas region real estate association. She also suggested outreach at foreclosure prevention events since foreclosure prevention could mean renting out a home. Another potential for recruiting single family homes would be to post a blog about the section eight process and single family owners who have successfully done this. Sheila said she could provide a you-tube link on renting to voucher holders. Tim said that NHD had done some outreach on NVHousingSearch at the foreclosure workshops but would think about doing more.

Uploading information from property management software is still in beta mode. However, two systems are currently possible. One is Entrata auto update feature and another is a specific product from Yardi. Any property managers with those versions are invited to talk with Sheila about setting up beta version of the uploads.

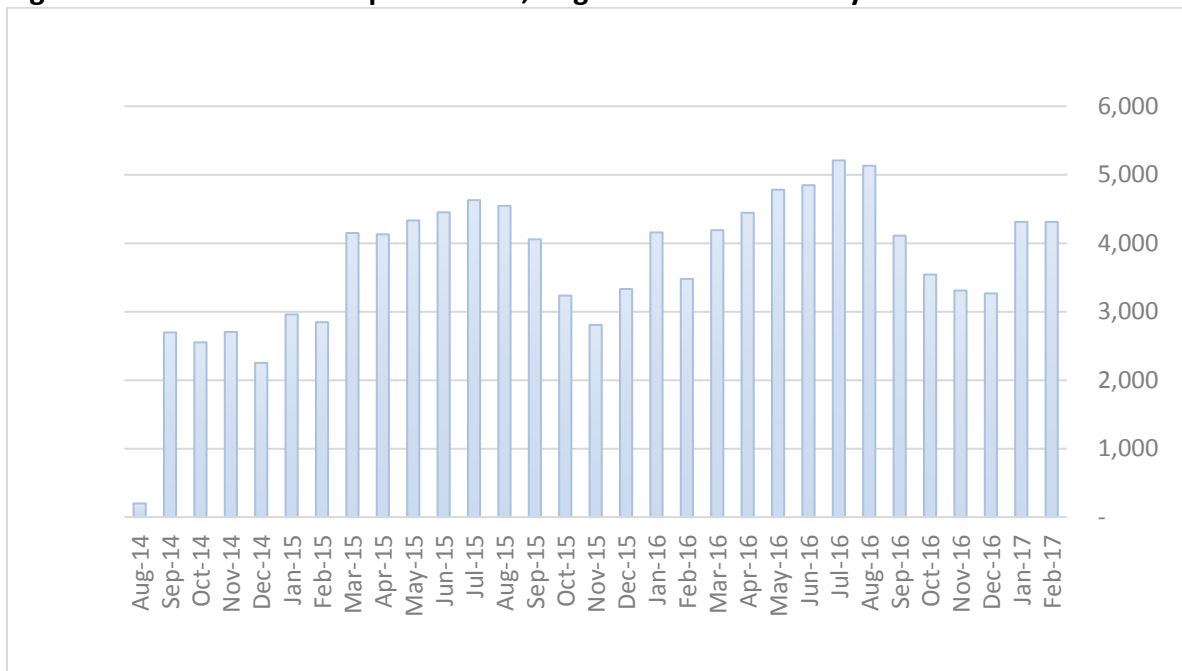
Search Data from NVHousingSearch.org (NVHS)

Nevada Housing Division is now receiving a total of eight regular reports from NVHS data on listings and searches. Two of the reports cover monthly search data.

Search Data

Emphasys sends two monthly reports on search activity. One report gives searches that started by choosing a city and the second report gives searches that started by choosing a county. It is also possible to track some of the daily search activity through online access. Figure 1 gives monthly search data from the month before the launch (testing searches occurred in August 2014) until February 2017. Search activity is highly seasonal.

Figure 1. NVHS Searches in past month, August 2014 to February 2017



There were 4,311 searches in February 2017. Of these, 16% of the searches did not find a match. The only crosstab possible in the current report for “did not find a match” is with the region used for the search. This is an easy cross-tabulation because all searches must start by picking a region.

Majority of searches without a match were in Las Vegas which had 45% of these non-matches. Las Vegas listings make up about 53% of total units but were only 38% of total search activity. Las Vegas searchers may also search through “Clark County”. A large number of the searches in North Las Vegas also did not come up with a match. The percentage of searches without a match was 26% for North Las Vegas and 19% in Las Vegas. Other areas with a high percentage of searches without a match were small areas with a small number of total searches and thus high variability. For Reno and Sparks, 15% and 14% of total searches did not come up with a match.

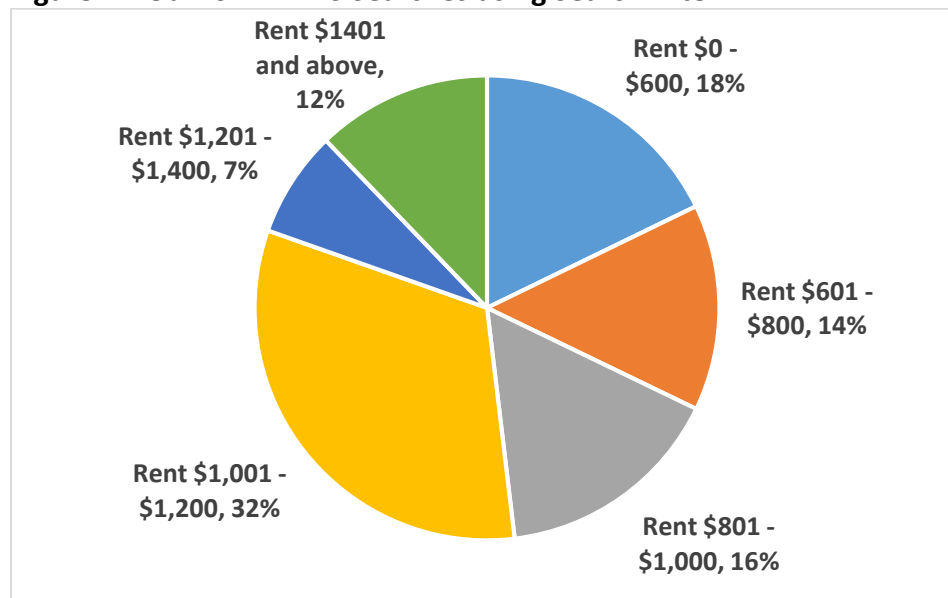
Some of the listings that are a match may have a waiting list. Only if the filter using “exclude properties on wait list” was used would wait list properties not “count” as a match. If all units are full a landlord may choose either to have the listing appear with a waiting list notice or to make the listing not visible in public searches.

Table 1. Regions with above average proportion of searches without a match

City	Type	Total Searches	Searches Without Match	% Without Match
Ely	city	14	5	36%
Areas that had less than six searches	city	33	11	33%
Eureka	city	13	4	31%
North Las Vegas	city	363	95	26%
Nye	county	12	3	25%
Henderson	city	404	77	19%
Las Vegas	city	1672	308	18%

Search reports have additional information about which filters have been used. About 20% of the searches didn’t use any filter. All of the remaining 80% of the searches using a filter used a rent range amount. There is a default rent maximum of \$1100 to \$1200. Thirty-two percent of the searches used a rent range corresponding to this default maximum.

Figure 2. Feb. 2017 NVHS Searches using Search Filter



Bedroom size filters are not exclusive. For example, you can search for a studio or “studio or one bedroom”. Table 3 has a summary of these searches.

Table 2. February 2017 NVHS searches using number of bedrooms

In search term . . .	Number of searches	% of total searches using the search form
studio	210	6.0%
one bedroom	529	15.1%
two bedroom	977	28.0%
three bedroom	846	24.2%
four bedroom	418	12.0%
five bedrooms or more	37	1.1%

In the table below are the most popular search filters outside of the rent range and bedroom and bath criteria.

Table 3. Searches by filter (February 2017 – excludes number of bedroom and bathrooms and rent amount)

Search Filter	Number of Searches	% of total
Section 8	878	20%
Distance to Public Transportation	182	4%
VASH or Veteran	175	4%
House	136	3%
Smoking: No Smoking	132	3%
Smoking: Allowed	108	3%
Income Based or Sliding Scale Rent	87	2%
No Credit Check	85	2%
Total accessible	77	2%
Any Senior	53	1%
Other housing type	42	1%
No Criminal Check	34	1%
Eligible Disabled	29	1%
Distance to Shopping	26	1%
Distance to Hospital	14	0%