

# **Huntridge Tracts 1 and 2 Historic Resource Survey and Inventory**

*Prepared for*  
**City of Las Vegas  
Development Services Center  
& Historic Preservation Commission**

*Prepared by*  
**Diana J. Painter  
Painter Preservation & Planning**

**August 2005**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b><i>Cover Letter</i></b>	1
- Survey boundaries	
- Research design	
- Research methodology	
- Findings and recommendations	
- Evaluator qualifications	
<b><i>Introduction</i></b>	3
<b><i>Historic Context</i></b>	4
- Historic Context	
- The Huntridge Addition	
<b><i>Architectural Context</i></b>	14
- Location and Setting	
- Architectural Character	
- Architectural Context	
- Conclusions and Recommendations	
<b><i>References</i></b>	18
<b><i>Figures</i></b>	
Fig. 1 - Survey Location Map	
Fig. 2 - Survey Map	
Fig. 3 - Defense Housing	
Fig. 4 - The Neighborhood Unit	
Fig. 5 - Federal Housing Administration Standards	
Fig. 6 - Letter to the People of Las Vegas	
Fig. 7 - A New Group of 2-Bedroom Homes	
Fig. 8 - Home in Huntridge May 1944	
Fig. 9 - Maryland Parkway in 1949	
Fig. 10 - Maryland Parkway Today	
Fig. 11 - Neighborhood Context	
Fig. 12 - Neighborhood Context	
Fig. 13 - Neighborhood Context	
<b><i>Appendices</i></b>	
Appendix A – List of Properties Surveyed	
Appendix B - Historic Resources Inventory Forms	
Appendix C – Continuation Sheet with References*	
Appendix D – Photo Log and Photographs*	

---

\* Included in full report located at the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office.



August 31, 2005

Ms. Courtney Mooney  
Historic Preservation Officer  
City of Las Vegas  
Planning and Development  
731 S. Fourth Street  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89101

**Re Huntridge Tracts 1 and 2 Historic Resource Survey and Inventory**

Dear Ms. Mooney:

Enclosed please find the Historic Resource Survey and Inventory for Huntridge Tracts 1 and 2 in Las Vegas, Nevada, which was undertaken between February and July 2005. The survey was conducted at the request of the City of Las Vegas Planning and Development Department to document the historic and architectural significance of the Huntridge subdivision. The City and its Historic Preservation Commission procured funds from the State of Nevada in 2004 to undertake the survey, which was conducted by Painter Preservation & Planning in 2005.

***Survey boundaries***

Huntridge Tracts 1 and 2 consist of 148 single family homes, some of which have been converted to small commercial businesses. The Huntridge neighborhood is located five blocks east of Las Vegas Boulevard and is one mile east and south of downtown Las Vegas. The survey area includes the following: both sides S. 10th Street from Charleston Boulevard to Franklin Avenue; both sides of Yucca Avenue from S. 10th Street to Francis Avenue; both sides of Francis Avenue from S. 10th Street to Maryland Parkway; both sides of Jessica Avenue from S. 10th Street to Maryland Parkway; both sides of Norman Avenue from S. 10th Street to Maryland Parkway; and the north side of Franklin Avenue between S. 10th Street and Maryland Parkway.

***Research design***

The purpose of this focused survey and inventory was to assess the historic importance of this neighborhood, identify the context within which it developed, and document a representative sample of the properties to evaluate their historic and architectural importance and integrity.

### ***Research methodology***

This historic and architectural resource survey and inventory documents all sites within Huntridge Tracts 1 and 2, with the exception of the commercial properties along Charleston Boulevard, with photographs and Historic Resource Inventory Forms (HRIF). In addition, a historic context statement was prepared to help assess the importance of the properties within the context of Las Vegas' history and the value of the buildings within the context of mid-twentieth century residential design.

Preparation of this report involved consultation with staff from the Las Vegas Planning and Development Department, the State Office of Historic Preservation, and the Clark County Recorder's and Assessor's offices. Research was conducted at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas Lied Library Special Collections and Architecture Studies Library, the Nevada State Museum and Historic Society in Las Vegas, and the Las Vegas Library.

Three site visits were undertaken to inventory and photograph the properties and conduct research, in May, June and July 2005. The files of the *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal* and *Las Vegas Review-Journal* were a major source of information for the historic context report. Secondary sources consulted include Alan Hess's *Ranch House*, Eugene Moehring's *Resort City in the Sunbelt*, Greg Hise's article "The Airplane and the Garden City: Regional Transformations during World War II," in *World War II and the American Dream*, and Kenneth Jackson's *Crabgrass Frontier, The Suburbanization of the United States*.

### ***Findings and recommendations***

It was found that the Huntridge neighborhood represents an early example of the most progressive community-oriented planning that was done under the auspices of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) in the 1940s. The urgency required in mobilizing for World War II had a significant impact on many American cities, particularly those that were important to the war effort. Las Vegas was among those, with a new military installation and the Basic Magnesium site, which were critical to the defense industry.

Huntridge, along with two other subdivisions being built at the time, represented a departure in previous housing projects for Las Vegas, in that it was formally laid out to FHA standards, which stressed safety and good design practices. Additionally, it was progressive for the fact that it included provisions for an elementary school, a park, a commercial center within walking distance, and a theater.

The homes of Huntridge are Traditional Style Ranch Houses. The Ranch Style, with its horizontal emphasis, asymmetrical design features, and informal spaces, was the house style of choice in the massive building boom of the post-World War II years. The houses of Huntridge are early examples of the Ranch House, and combine some elements of the concurrently popular Minimal Traditional Style, such as hip and gable roofs with shallow slopes and narrow eaves and multi-light windows, and the later Ranch Style. The character-defining elements of the Huntridge homes include their low-slung profile, complex roof forms, and four-over-four-light, double-hung, wood frame windows. The variety and complexity of the homes is particularly noteworthy for tract homes.

Despite these facts, the Huntridge neighborhood is not recommended for further survey work or for nomination as a historic district due to the low level of integrity for the individual houses. The amount of change seen in the homes precludes the subdivision from having the number of contributing resources needed for a historic district.

***Evaluator qualifications***

Diana J. Painter of Painter Preservation & Planning undertook this survey of historic and architectural resources and conducted research for the context statement. Ms. Painter is a qualified architectural historian as defined in the Code of Federal Regulations, 36 CFR Part 61. She holds a PhD in Architecture in Research and a Masters Degree in Urban Planning, and has 25 years of professional experience in urban design and historic preservation. She is listed as an architectural historian on the roster of consultants on file with the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office in Carson City, Nevada.

Sincerely,

Diana Painter PhD, AICP  
Owner/Principal

# HUNTRIDGE TRACTS 1 AND 2 HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY AND INVENTORY

*Las Vegas, Nevada*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Huntridge Tracts 1 and 2 consist of 148 single family homes, some of which have been converted to small commercial businesses. The Huntridge neighborhood is located five blocks east of Las Vegas Boulevard and east and south of downtown Las Vegas. It is a little over a mile from Fourth and Fremont.

The Huntridge subdivision as a whole consists of 572 properties on 140 acres. The purpose of this focused survey and inventory is to assess the historic importance of this neighborhood, identify the context within which it developed, and document a representative sample of the properties to evaluate their historic and architectural importance and integrity.

The survey area includes the following:

- Both sides S. 10th Street from Charleston Boulevard to Franklin Avenue;
- Both sides of Yucca Avenue from S. 10th Street to Francis Avenue;
- Both sides of Francis Avenue from S. 10th Street to Maryland Parkway;
- Both sides of Jessica Avenue from S. 10th Street to Maryland Parkway;
- Both sides of Norman Avenue from S. 10th Street to Maryland Parkway; and
- The north side of Franklin Avenue between S. 10th Street and Maryland Parkway.

## 2. HISTORIC CONTEXT

### A. *Historic Context*

The Huntridge development was approved at a time when the United States as a whole was experiencing a shortage of housing in the post-Depression era. A lack of resources during the Depression resulted in a stagnating construction industry, causing very little new housing to be developed in the 1930s.<sup>1</sup> This shortfall would be exacerbated in certain areas of the country, as it became necessary to provide housing for the large numbers of people that were relocating to work in the defense industry in the early 1940s. Las Vegas' situation was slightly different due to the construction of Hoover Dam, but it too would become overwhelmed by the influx of people during the war years.

#### 1. **The Depression in Las Vegas**

In contrast to other areas of the country during the Depression, the Las Vegas region became an employment center with the construction of Hoover Dam (then known as Boulder Dam) at Black Canyon. Funding was authorized for this project by Congress in 1928; it was constructed between 1933 and 1935, and was in full production by 1937. Although housing for the dam workers and their families was developed in the "temporary" government town of Boulder City, which was 26 miles from Las Vegas, the young city of Las Vegas nonetheless experienced its first period of real growth as a result of dam construction. It also experienced its first recession once the dam was complete and Federal funds disappeared.

The city, which incorporated in 1911 with a population of 800, grew to 5,165 by 1930. Even as workers and their families left the area, Las Vegas continued to grow. In 1940 it had a population of 8,422, but needed to generate new revenue sources. The city began to focus on tourism and gaming to bolster the local economy, but a new infusion of government money was soon realized with Hitler's invasion of Europe.<sup>2</sup>

#### 2. **Nellis Air Force Base**

Following Hitler's invasion and the British retreat from Dunkirk, the Roosevelt Administration began preparing for war. The western coastal cities were considered vulnerable targets for modern bombers, driving the focus to the inland cities. Las Vegas, Pocatello, Salt Lake, Phoenix and Albuquerque were among those identified as potential sites for defense plants and military installations.<sup>3</sup>

A small dirt runway used by Western Air Express was located eight miles north of Las Vegas. The property was signed over to the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps on Jan. 25, 1941 and it opened as the Las Vegas Army Air Corps Gunnery School soon thereafter.

---

<sup>1</sup> Between 1928 and 1933, the construction of residential property fell by 95% and expenditures on home repairs fell by 90 percent (Jackson, 187).

<sup>2</sup> Gambling was legalized in 1931.

<sup>3</sup> Moehring, 31.

The expressed mission of the school was the "training of aerial gunners to the degree of proficiency that will qualify them for combat duty." Initially 2,000 men were stationed at the airfield. By 1943 approximately 8,000 servicemen were stationed there, growing to 11,000 by 1946.<sup>4</sup> While the City of North Las Vegas was most directly affected by the influx of soldiers to what became Nellis Air Force Base, the resulting population growth nonetheless had an impact on Las Vegas.

### **3. Basic Magnesium, Inc.**

The Las Vegas region was also successful in attracting wartime industry. The Federal government announced plans in 1941 to build giant magnesium plant near Las Vegas. The location decision was due to the fact that large deposits of brucite and magnesite, the minerals needed for manufacturing magnesium, were located near Gabbs, in Nye County, Nevada. The plant was developed close to Boulder Dam, as it was expected that the dam could provide a ready supply of inexpensive power and water.

Magnesium is a lightweight metal first used by the Germans in World War II in their bomber planes and in the bombs themselves. It was soon apparent to the United States and its Allies that it was imperative to obtain more of this metal to remain competitive in the war effort.

In May 1941 the United States announced that it would finance the construction of a magnesium plant in cooperation with the Canadian and English governments, who were looking to replace a plant lost to bombing in England. Howard P. Eells of Ohio held the patent for manufacturing magnesium and his company Basic Refractories, Inc. (BRI) had discovered the deposits. He developed the company Basic Magnesium, Inc. (BMI), underwritten by the United States government. The government also paid the salaries of the workers, who numbered 13,000 at the peak of production in 1944.<sup>5</sup>

At this time there were no plans to house the workers. This was problematic, as Las Vegas was experiencing a housing shortfall due to the influx of military personnel and their families as well. "Families were living in cars and hotel rooms, doubling up in accommodations or partaking in the 'share your home' programs where families with extra rooms rented to those in need. Rent hiking reaching scandalous proportions and tourists were being turned away as there were no available accommodations."<sup>6</sup> Although BMI eventually built over 1,600 units of housing, when it went into production in September 1942 more than 11,000 workers were living in tents.

### **4. Wartime Construction**

The rapid movement of people, substandard housing conditions, and the need to mobilize for war led the Federal government to become a major customer in the housing market.

---

<sup>4</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, 9.

<sup>5</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, 12.

<sup>6</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, 12.



Two million housing units were constructed for defense workers and their families near factories, arsenals, and shipyards nationwide.<sup>7</sup> Urban historian Mel Scott writes:

*By the fall of 1941 the defense program had been under way less than a year and a half, yet in that brief time the number of Americans who had left their homes in search of new jobs or had been displaced by defense activities was greater than the entire migration from the Old World to American shores from the time of the voyage of the Mayflower to the outbreak of the Revolution. Almost 1,300,000 had left the farms, but so many more city dwellers had also joined treks to the 275 defense areas of the nation that rural folks were in the minority among mobile Americans.*<sup>8</sup>

Despite housing built for BMI workers and military housing, Las Vegas was overwhelmed by the flood of soldiers and defense workers. Rolla E. Clapp of Los Angeles, chairman of the national housing research organization, was hired to conduct a housing survey in Las Vegas in 1941. He reported that at the time the city had a shortage of 385 family homes and “could absorb around 500 sub-standard residences.” He noted that 3,000 families would locate in Las Vegas with the Basic Magnesium, Inc. plant alone, and that one and one-half families were required as service population for each family engaged in industry.

Finally, he forecasted an increase to the population of Las Vegas of 13,000 persons in the following 18 months, which would in effect double the population. In a presentation to the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce, which was reported in the *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal* on October 28, 1941, he announced that the Las Vegas housing situation was being studied by the Senate investigating committee for the defense program, which was headed by Senator Harry Truman.<sup>9</sup>

As a result of existing shortages, growing demand, and Federal government support, the Las Vegas area, including Las Vegas, Henderson and North Las Vegas, were not held to wartime building restrictions on labor and materials, as were other communities.<sup>10</sup> In fall of 1941 the Federal Housing Administration approved the construction of 800 new homes in Las Vegas. These became the Mayfair, Biltmore, and Huntridge Additions. This was the beginning of a new era for Las Vegas, one which would have long-lasting effects:

*“ . . . the effects of federal wartime spending were magical. Within four years, the town’s physical plant and housing supply had expanded enormously, laying a powerful base for the postwar years when a vibrant resort economy would team with Cold War spending to produce a substantial metropolis.”*<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Hope, 52.

<sup>8</sup> Scott, 386.

<sup>9</sup> *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, October 28, 1941.

<sup>10</sup> Moehring, 39.

<sup>11</sup> Moehring, 40.

---

## ***B. The Huntridge Addition***

The Huntridge development was among the first subdivisions in Las Vegas where homes were built and sold with the lot as a package to buyers. This is a model that is often associated with post-World War II developments but in fact the development of whole communities, as well as efficient homes and rationalized building programs, was part of the ideas being generated by the New Deal programs of the early 1930s.<sup>12</sup> Subdivisions, rather than individually developed properties, were seen a way to solve the housing shortage in the 1930s.

### **1. The Federal Housing Administration**

The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) was established by the National Housing Act of 1934 to stimulate building without government spending. Its stated purpose was “to encourage improvement in housing standards and conditions, to facilitate sound home financing on reasonable terms, and to exert a stabilizing influence on the mortgage market.” It was also to help alleviate unemployment, which was at 25% at that time, and particularly high in the construction industry.<sup>13</sup>

The FHA insured long term mortgage loans made by private lenders for home construction and sale. They induced lenders to invest in residential mortgages by insuring them against loss, which revolutionized the home finance industry.<sup>14</sup> Previously, larger down payments were required by mortgage lenders and the loans had a shorter repayment period. FHA mortgages were guaranteed for 25-to-30 years, allowing for a lower average monthly payment.

The FHA also influenced the design of subdivisions and homes across the country, as it was required that a bank, before lending money to a real-estate developer, obtain FHA approval. This gave the FHA an opportunity to advise developers and oversee development standards and processes.<sup>15</sup>

### **2. A New Planning Model**

The Land Planning Division of the FHA was also established in 1934. They provided oversight, as well as design services, to prospective development projects. They also established standards. Under the auspices of the FHA they published such guides as *Land Planning Bulletin No. 1: Successful Subdivisions* in 1933 and *Bulletin No. 5: Planning Neighborhoods for Small Houses* in 1946.<sup>16</sup> Historian Greg Hise describes their influence as follows:

---

<sup>12</sup> Albrecht, 148.

<sup>13</sup> Jackson, 203.

<sup>14</sup> Jackson, 204.

<sup>15</sup> Newton, 643.

<sup>16</sup> Newton, 643.

*The FHA's mortgage insurance incentive assured that their technical bulletin series became a blueprint for community design. Seward Mott, a landscape architect, directed the agency's Land Planning Division. When developers submitted their projects for approval, FHA staff applied a standard template to evaluate everything from room layout to land use patterns. The FHA derived standards from progressive subdivision practices first advanced by land developers and then adopted by municipalities, counties and state government. . . . Approved site plans featured differentiated street patterns to restrict traffic hazards and avoid visual monotony. The FHA promoted a Radburn-type plan based on superblock principles with a minimum area devoted to circulation and more emphasis on recreation.<sup>17</sup>*

The standards that the FHA established became industry standards. It was unfortunate in a sense that they also became minimum standards. However, they were revolutionary for the fact that they were “objective, uniform, and in writing”, and were enforced through on-site inspection.<sup>18</sup> Standards were set for lot size, setback from the street, separation from adjacent structures, and even for the width of the house itself. They in effect designed American suburbs.

Among the concepts promoted by the FHA were curved streets, looping streets and short cul-de-sacs, intended to slow traffic and protect children. Differentiated circulation – that is, the superblock concept with only a few external access points – was intended to reduce the volume of traffic in the subdivision. The subdivisions were to include parks, schools and commercial development. The influences of the standards at the time in Las Vegas can be seen in this 1942 quote about the Huntridge, Biltmore and Mayfair projects: “All of the projects have been carefully laid out on curved streets, to keep traffic slow and protect the lives of children living in the area, and ample provision has been made for landscaping, paved streets, and small parks which will add to the convenience and pleasure of the home owners in the area.” Shopping areas within walking distance of the homes were promoted “in the interest of national defense and the preservation of automobiles and tires.”<sup>19</sup>

### **3. Developing Huntridge**

The Huntridge Addition was designed by Kenneth Jones of the Land Planning Division of the Federal Housing Administration, in accordance with FHA requirements. Huntridge Tract #1 was recorded in 1941 and Tract #2 was recorded in 1942.<sup>20</sup> The development was to contain 572 single family homes. The first phase began with 75 houses in 1942.<sup>21</sup> It was built-out by 1946. It was developed by the Realty Development

---

<sup>17</sup> Hise, 149.

<sup>18</sup> Jackson, 205.

<sup>19</sup> *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, February 10, 1942, 4.

<sup>20</sup> Clark County Recorder's Office.

<sup>21</sup> A newspaper article in October 20, 1941 said that 18 four-unit apartment houses would also be built in addition to the 572 homes, but this evidently didn't happen.

Corporation, whose president was Francis D. Griffin. Norman Winston was Vice President and Thomas A. Oakey, who also developed the Huntridge Theater, was Secretary.<sup>22</sup> Although Realty Development Corporation was a local company, it was reported that the company had “directed many major housing programs of the same character throughout the country.”<sup>23</sup> The project was constructed by McNeil Construction, which had also built BMI.<sup>24</sup>

Dr. Griffin was interviewed in a newspaper article at the time, in anticipation of the project. He described the forthcoming project as follows. The homes would be “designed for character, originality, and dignity in an effort to escape the ‘mining town’ aspects so prevalent in former planned developments.” There were to be fourteen basic plans with 27 architectural variations, with no two houses of the same type on any one block. “The distance each house is set back from the curb will be varied to avoid the ‘military pup tent’ effect,” explained Griffin. Lot sizes varied between 6,000 and 10,000 square feet, with a minimum width of 60 feet.<sup>25</sup> The houses would cost between \$4,000 and \$5,000.

He commended city officials and the chamber of commerce and other groups for their help and cooperation: “They have cooperated to the utmost of their ability to make this development possible so that the tremendous demands made on the City of Las Vegas as an important factor in the defense program could be fulfilled.”<sup>26</sup>

A newspaper article dated February 10, 1942 reported on progress in the subdivision, saying that grading was being completed and utility and water and sewer lines laid. It reported that the first 75 houses were under construction and work would begin in two to three weeks on another 55 homes. It was anticipated that the first house would be completed March 1, 1942. The John S. Park Elementary School opened in 1942.

The three-and-one-half acre park was dedicated in February 1944, when the Huntridge Development Co. deeded the park to the City. As envisioned, the park was to have a recreational area for small children with a wading pool, sand piles, swings and other playground facilities. “Shaded benches will be built around the sides of the playground for the convenience of attending adults.” Plans were made for a softball diamond and a touch football field. It was to be landscaped with grass and shrubs and outlined with trees.<sup>27</sup> There was disagreement, however, over who should actually construct and landscape the park, and how it was to be funded. Evidently this situation was not resolved quickly, as a photograph published in 1949 shows that the park was still not landscaped.

---

<sup>22</sup> In some documents he is noted as the manager.

<sup>23</sup> *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, December 20, 1941, 1.

<sup>24</sup> Moehring, 39.

<sup>25</sup> *Las Vegas Evening Journal Review*, December 20, 1941, 1.

<sup>26</sup> *Las Vegas Evening Journal Review*, December 20, 1941, 1.

<sup>27</sup> *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, September 22, 1944, 3.

---

**c. Marketing Huntridge**

A number of different advertising strategies were undertaken to sell the homes in Huntridge. An ad in the *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal* on December 4, 1943 noted that, in addition to the schools, parks and bus service, protective restrictions would be in place for 25 years; in other words African Americans could not live in the development. These covenants were endorsed by the FHA and occurred in similar projects throughout the United States until 1948, when a United States Supreme Court ruling determined that they were ‘unenforceable as law and contrary to public policy.’<sup>28</sup>

An ad on May 12, 1944 promoted the ease and convenience of living in Huntridge, in addition to providing a bus schedule from downtown and suggesting carpooling. At that time 100 homes had been completed. An ad on June 9th, which included testimonials from people who lived in the development, accompanied photographs of their home.<sup>29</sup>

On June 16, 1944 a full page ad was published with numerous large photographs promoting the advantages of living at Huntridge. The advertisement was headlined, “Comfort and Beauty Costs So Little at Huntridge” and enticed future homeowners with “Why Not Enjoy Life? Select Your Huntridge Home Now!” The photographs featured the home of Jack Walsh, assistant manager of El Rancho Vegas, although all the photos were of the women in the household, enjoying the comfort and convenience of their homes. Prospective buyers were urged to contact Thomas A. Oakey, General Manager of the Huntridge Development Co., and inquire about ‘small, easy terms.’

It is interesting to note that, as the war progressed, the emphasis in the advertisements shifted from promoting the basic services available at Huntridge to comfort, convenience, and the availability of technically advanced, modern conveniences that enhanced family life.

**d. The Urban Context**

The Huntridge Addition was just one development that was eventually built on land owned by the speculator Leigh Hunt. He bought 4,000 acres south of Las Vegas in the 1920s. After he died in 1931 his wife Jesse sold the estate to various parties.<sup>30</sup> At the time that Huntridge was developed, the location of the subdivision was still very remote. In fact, the commercial development envisioned as a part of the entire complex was not constructed until the 1950s and 1960s, with the exception of the Huntridge Theater, which opened in 1944. It was the only business on Charleston Boulevard at the time.<sup>31</sup>

The Huntridge neighborhood is located just five blocks east of Las Vegas Boulevard and a little over a mile from Fourth and Fremont, the heart of downtown Las Vegas at this time. There was no development south of Oakey at the time. Even in 1948 Huntridge it

---

<sup>28</sup> Jackson, 208.

<sup>29</sup> *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, June 9, 1944, 6.

<sup>30</sup> Moehring, 236.

<sup>31</sup> Ashbaugh, 15.

was surrounded on all four sides by vacant land. The closest subdivision was Vega Verde to the west, which had also developed in the early 1940s.

Maryland Parkway was also to remain relatively undeveloped until the 1950s. The Paradise Development Group built Sunrise Hospital in 1959 and later, a series of professional buildings. They also built the Las Vegas International County Club along this corridor, and several commercial centers. The city's first indoor mall, Boulevard Mall, was sited on Maryland Parkway in 1967. Finally, the University of Nevada at Las Vegas campus was established here in 1957, making Maryland Parkway from the Huntridge to McCarren Airport a major commercial and institutional corridor.<sup>32</sup>

#### **e. Later Developments**

In 1961 Huntridge was announced to be the “first sizable development” outside of the old Las Vegas area to “effectively meet the challenge of creeping blight and deterioration.” This was part of an effort by Franklin J. Bills, who was listed as Planning Director and Coordinator for Urban Renewal for the City, and managed the Citizens’ Committee for Renewal and Development, to procure funds to improve streets and add sidewalks and streetlights.<sup>33</sup>

In a block meeting in 1961 Bills announced that “while the area is definitely not a slum it is showing the traditional warning signs, and unless something is done the area will slide downhill and will require the city to move in at a future date on a full-scale urban renewal plan.” This seems unprecedented for a development less than 20 years old. The major proposal was a system of having block captains, who would represent the community and coordinate efforts between the city’s urban renewal and planning agencies and the neighborhood.

The article covering the meeting stated that the results of this coordination effort were planned public improvements, to be followed by private improvements. The City announced that further questions would have to be posed, and would be answered, by mail.<sup>34</sup> The process was likely undertaken by the City to position themselves for Urban Renewal funds.

#### **f. Demographics**

Huntridge was designed to house white defense workers, and was restricted for at least its first 25 years. In a 1992 profile of the neighborhood, the population in Huntridge as a whole was reported as 1,563 people in 506 units of housing. The median age was 40. Whites were reported as making up 78 percent of the population; Hispanics, 12%; Blacks, 2%; Asian, 2%; Indians, .8%; and other, 4%. In informal discussions with residents two trends were noted. The neighborhood was still made up of many people

---

<sup>32</sup> Moehring, 239.

<sup>33</sup> *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, January 22, 1961, 10.

<sup>34</sup> *Las Vegas Review Journal*, February 21, 1961, 2.

who bought the homes when they were first constructed – in other words, long time residents - and a growing Hispanic population.

### 3. ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

#### A. *Location and Setting*

The topography within Huntridge is flat. Huntridge and Las Vegas as a whole is set within a basin nearly surrounded by mountains. To the west are the Spring Mountains; to the east is Sunrise Mountain; and to the north is the Desert Mountain Wildlife Range. The larger urban context is as follows. Charleston Boulevard and Maryland Parkway are the largest arterial streets. The area to the south of Charleston Boulevard is basically a grid-iron in design. North of Charleston Boulevard the grid is skewed in alignment with the Union Pacific Railroad tracks (originally San Pedro, Los Angeles, & Salt Lake Railroad) and Clark's Las Vegas Townsite. The oblique angles of the intersecting grids, width of Charleston Boulevard, the amount of traffic carried by the street, and the extensive commercial development divide the primarily commercial and residential area to the north from the residential neighborhoods of Huntridge and immediately surrounding neighborhoods.

The Huntridge neighborhood extends from S. 10th Street on the west to 15<sup>th</sup> Street on the east, and from Charleston Boulevard on the north to Oakey Avenue on the south. Huntridge Tracts #1 and #2 extend from S. 10th Street on the west to Maryland Parkway on the east, and from Charleston Boulevard on the north to Franklin Avenue on the south. The entire development is symmetrical in design. Maryland Parkway bisects the neighborhood into east and west sectors, and frames an oval-shaped park in the center, historically called Circle Park. Most of the streets are oriented east-west, and the neighborhood as a whole is divided into four super blocks by interior terminating streets. The main arterials that connect the neighborhood to its larger urban context are Charleston, Franklin and Oakey, running east and west, S. 10th (with the exception of John S. Park Elementary School), Maryland and 15<sup>th</sup> running north and south.

#### B. *Architectural Character*

The homes of Huntridge are wood frame construction with a slab foundation. They are one story and display the low-slung, horizontal emphasis of the typical Traditional Style Ranch House in form, although they were built at a time when the earlier Minimal Traditional house, often associated with FHA-sponsored homes, was popular. They are oriented toward and relatively close to the front of their lots, with the main ridge-line typically parallel to the street frontage. Today most of the houses display an irregular footprint.

The rooflines, the most prominent feature of the homes, are complex. The homes display low-pitched hip or gable roofs. Many combine hip and gable roofs, and some have gable-on-hip features. The roof lines intersect or telescope, providing the main visual interest in the building form. Eave overhangs are narrow-to-moderate. Some display exposed rafter ends.



The original windows of the homes are wood frame, with double-hung sash, and four-over-four lights with a horizontal emphasis. They are both single and paired. There are also large multi-light picture windows made up of the same horizontal lights, with casement openings. Today most of the houses have a stucco finish and composition shingle roof. Some display rustic details such as a shelf supported by simple brackets on the façade.

Entries can be recessed under the roof or covered with an arcade that extends across a portion of the front façade. Some have entries in the “L” of two intersection wings with a small overhang. Many have carports and have added fences around the front yard.

When designed, the rooms were as follows: a living room, dinette, kitchen, bath, two bedrooms and garage. According to a 1944 advertisement, the homes had the following features and selling points:

- Every home FHA inspected and approved
- Hardwood floors
- Complete cooling and air-conditioning system
- Oil burning furnace, operated by system of ducts bringing heat into every room
- Modern plumbing fixtures with chromium plate fittings, including square bath tub in a variety of colors
- Fully equipped with screens and window shades
- Corner kitchen sinks
- Spacious kitchen cupboards
- Every room has double exposure with large windows
- Shingle roofs
- Every home equipped with electric hot water heater
- Priorities furnished for electric refrigerator and electric cook stove
- Highly restricted district for twenty-five years.<sup>35</sup>

The homes have undergone a great deal of change. These include changes to windows and doors, new siding, altered porch supports and carports, and additions. Many of the yards have been enclosed with fences. Sidewalks in the subdivision are still inconsistent. Some streets or properties have sidewalks and some don't, and they vary in design.

### ***C. Architectural Context***

The houses of Huntridge are Ranch Houses with traditional design elements. Architectural historian Alan Hess defines the character-defining features of the Ranch House as follows. It is a one-story house with a low-pitched, gabled, or hipped roof, with wide eaves; of general asymmetry with a horizontal emphasis; an open-interior plan

---

<sup>35</sup> *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, May 12, 1944.

blending functional spaces; strong connections to the outside; with informal or rustic materials or details; and a plan that is rambling and suggestive of wings or additions.<sup>36</sup>

Ranch houses are attributed as emerging from a design aesthetic pioneered in California and the west, inspired by traditional vernacular structures and the design influences of the Bay Area Regional Modernist architects. They became the house style of choice in the post-World War II building boom, and proliferated throughout the United States. Their ubiquity was in part due to the standardized and streamlined building methods that were developed at the same time that the house style was popularized. These methods were developed in the course of providing defense housing and mobilizing for the war, and refined after the war as merchant builders built entire neighborhoods and communities to meet the pent-up housing demand.

The Huntridge development represents an early community project, in that in addition to residences the project provided for a school, park, theater and commercial area within walking distance; in other words, a neighborhood, advocated by the most progressive planners of the time. Consideration was even given to transit, although it is clearly an automobile-oriented subdivision. Other communities building defense housing at the same time found out too late that comprehensive community planning was advantageous and resulted in projects that would withstand the test of time.<sup>37</sup>

The homes of Huntridge are also an early example of the Ranch House in a tract development. At this time many communities were still building in the Minimal Traditional style, a style popularized by the FHA basic house and influenced by resource shortages during the war years. Huntridge represents an early Traditional Style Ranch House development that displays the traditional elements of the Minimal Traditional style and rustic Ranch House tradition, exemplified by the homes' low-slung profile, complex roof forms, and multi-light wood frame windows.

#### ***D. Conclusions and Recommendations***

The Huntridge neighborhood represents an early example of the most progressive community-oriented planning that was done under the auspices of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) in the 1940s. The urgency required in mobilizing for World War II had a significant impact on many American cities, particularly those that were important to the war effort. Las Vegas was among those, with a new military installation and the Basic Magnesium site, which was critical to the defense industry.

Huntridge, along with two other subdivisions being built at the time, represented a departure in previous housing projects for Las Vegas, in that it was formally laid out to FHA standards, which stressed safety and good design practices. Additionally, it was

---

<sup>36</sup> Hess, *Ranch House*, 17.

<sup>37</sup> Crawford, 92. Examples are Richmond, CA and Detroit.

progressive for the fact that it included provisions for an elementary school, a park, a commercial center within walking distance, and a theater.

The homes of Huntridge are Traditional Style Ranch Houses. The Ranch Style, with its horizontal emphasis, asymmetrical design features, and informal spaces, was the house style of choice in the massive building boom of the post-World War II years. The houses of Huntridge are early examples of the Ranch House, and combine some elements of the concurrently popular Minimal Traditional Style, such as low-pitched hip and gable roofs and multi-light windows, and the later Ranch Style. The character-defining elements of the Huntridge homes include their low-slung profile, complex roof forms, and four-over-four-light, double-hung, wood frame windows. The variety and complexity of the homes is particularly noteworthy for tract homes.

Despite these facts, the Huntridge neighborhood is not recommended for further survey work or for nomination as a historic district due to the low level of integrity for the individual houses. The amount of change seen in the homes precludes the subdivision from having the number of contributing resources needed for a historic district.

---

## 4. REFERENCES

### Books

- Editorial Staff of Sunset Magazine, *Sunset Western Ranch Houses*. Santa Monica: Hennessey+Ingalls Art and Architecture Books, 1999 (originally published by Lane Publishing Company, 1946).
- Hayden, Dolores, *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth 1820 – 2000*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2003.
- Hess, Alan, *Ranch House*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2004.
- Hise, Greg, “The Airplane and the Garden City: Regional Transformations during World War II,” in *World War II and the American Dream*, Donald Albrecht, Editor. Washington DC: National Building Museum, 1995.
- Hulse, James W., *The Silver State*. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1998 (1991).
- Jackson, Kenneth T., *Crabgrass Frontier, The Suburbanization of the United States*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- McAlester, Virginia & Lee, *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000.
- Moehring, Eugene P., *Resort City in the Sunbelt*. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2000 (1989).
- Newton, Norman T., *Design on the Land*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971.
- Scott, Mel, *American City Planning since 1890*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969.

### Periodicals

- “A New Group of 2-Bedroom Homes” (advertisement), *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, 4 December 1943, p. 3.
- Ashbaugh, Don, “Charleston Blvd’s Growth Astounding,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 6 April 1961, p. 15.
- “Comfort and Beauty Costs So Little at Huntridge” (advertisement), *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, 16 June 1944, p. 8.

---

Griffin, Francis D., Letter "To the People of Las Vegas," as published in the *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, 30 December 1941, p. 5.

Hope, Andrew, "Evaluating the Significance of San Lorenzo village, A Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century Suburban Community," *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship*, Summer 2005, pp. 50-61.

"Huntridge Plan Set in Motion," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 22 January 1961, p. 10.

"Huntridge Park Project Will Get Started Monday," *Las Vegas Journal Review*, 22 September 1944, p. 3.

"Huntridge Residents Form Project Group," *Las Vegas Journal-Review*, 22 February 1961, p. 2.

"Las Vegas Housing Needs Growing, City to Double in 18 Months, Said," *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, 28 October 1941.

"Many New Homes Will be Ready by Early Spring," *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, 10 February 1942, p. 4.

"Park Planting Plan Undecided," *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, February 19, 1944, p. 3.

Renzi, David, "My home is Huntridge," *Las Vegas Sun*, 26 January 1992.

"Three Million Dollar Residence Building Program in Vegas Near," *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, 20 December 1941, p. 1.

"You Will Enjoy Owning a Home in Huntridge" (advertisement), *Las Vegas Evening Review Journal*, May 12, 1944, p. 7.

### **Government Documents and Reports**

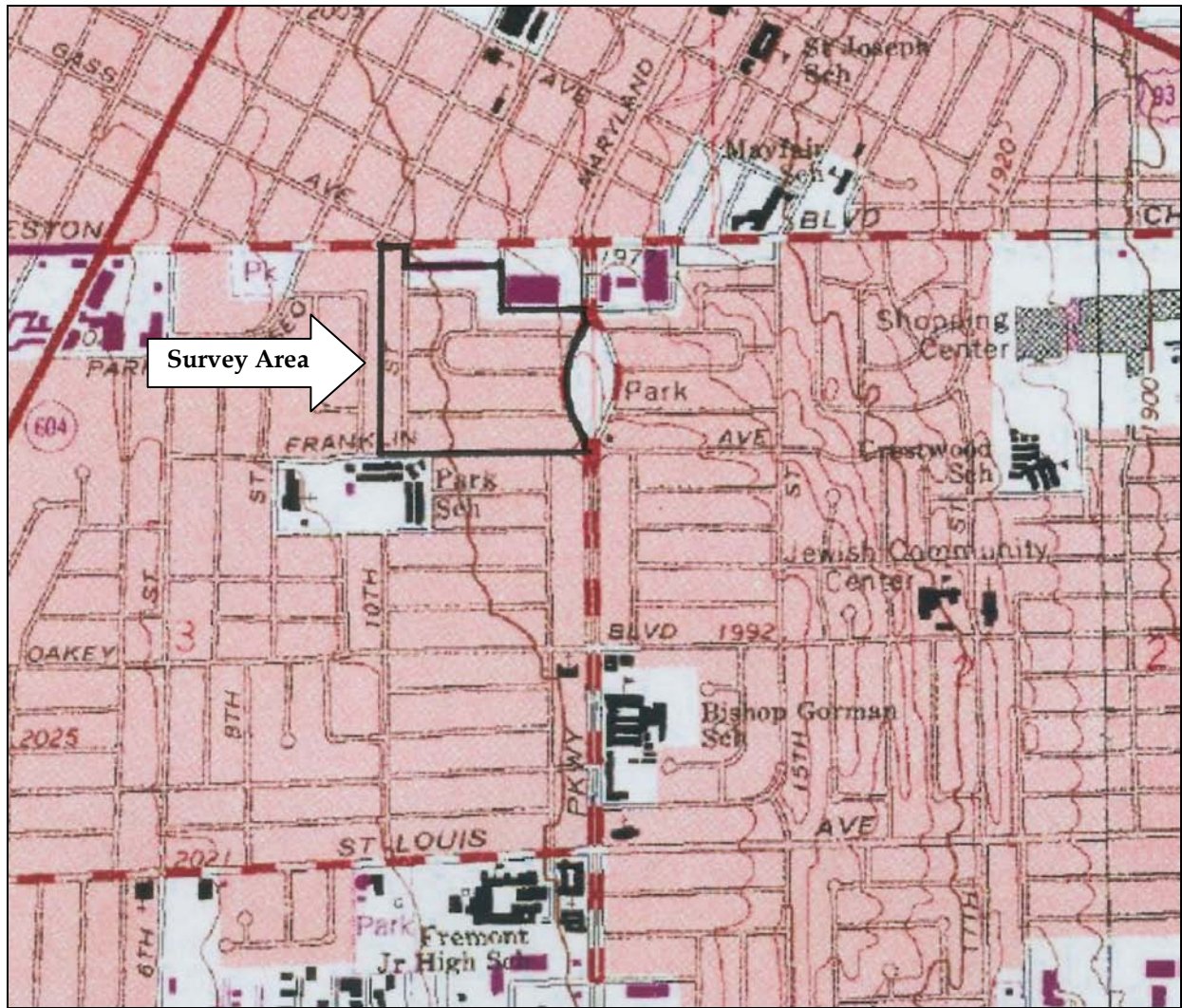
20<sup>th</sup> Century Preservation, *Historic Resource Survey Report, Basic Magnesium, Inc., Women's Apartments and Basic Townsite Homes*. City of Henderson and Nevada State Historic Preservation Office, May 2003.

Ames, David L. and Linda Flint McClelland, *National Register Bulletin, Historic Residential Suburbs*. Washington DC: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2002.

---

## Websites

“Nellis Air Force Base,” <<http://www.nellis.af.mil/history.htm>> August 2005.



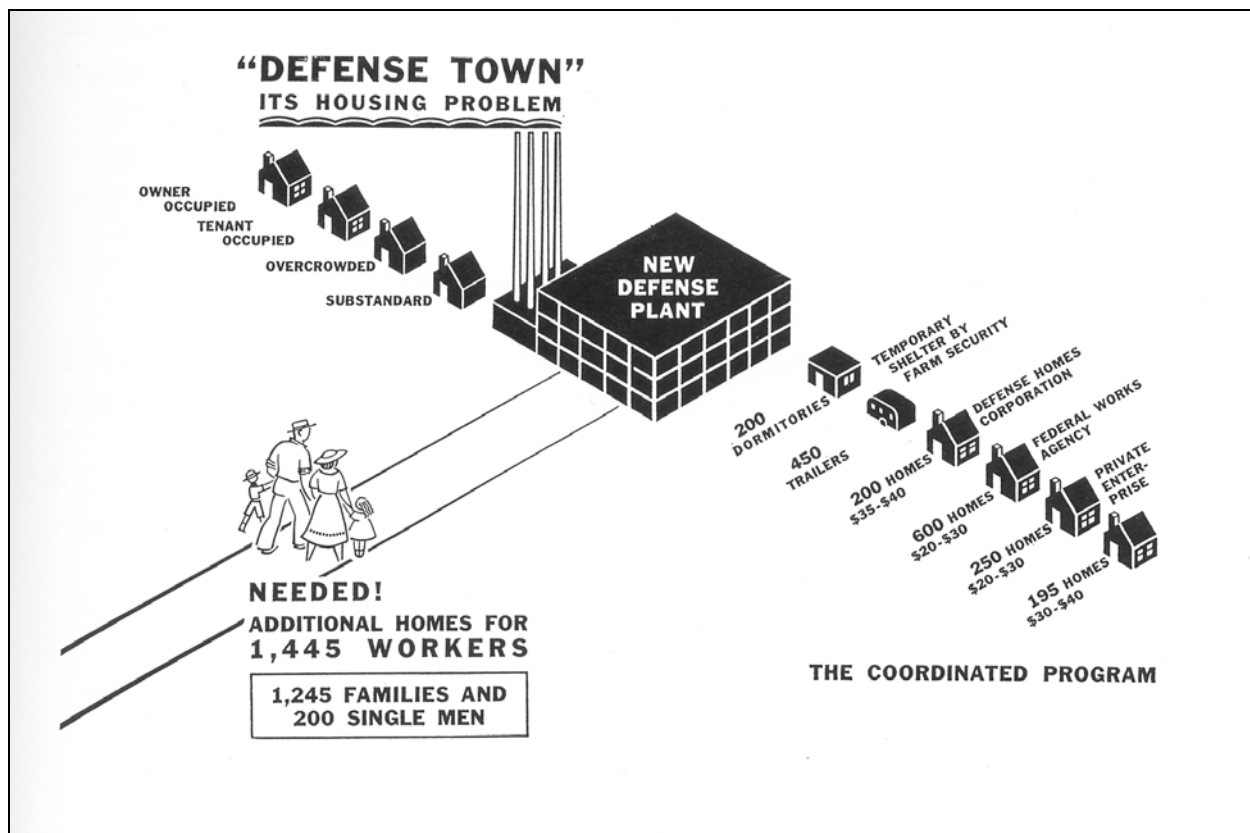
**Figure 1: Survey Location Map**





**Figure 2: Survey Map**





*From Homes for Defense: A Statement of Functions*

**Figure 3: Defense Housing**

## THE NEIGHBORHOOD UNIT FORMULA



*From Regional Plan of New York and its Environs, 1929*

**Figure 4: The Neighborhood Unit**

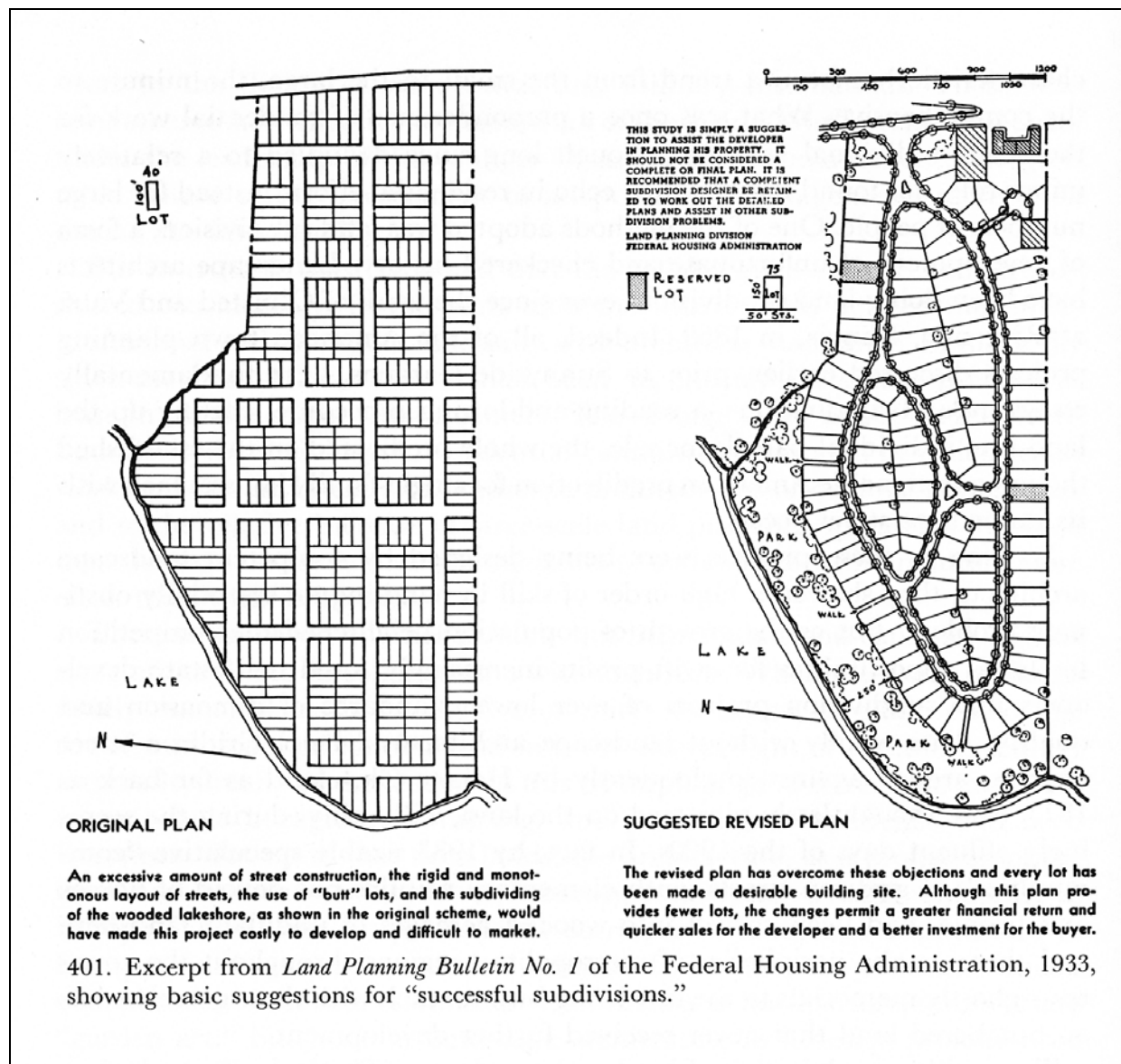


Figure 5: Federal Housing Administration Standards

To the People of Las Vegas:

Prompted by a desire to do our share in the present war effort, we have conceived and now present to you Huntridge Subdivision, a community designed and constructed to meet the requirements of the most discriminating homeseeker.

Huntridge Subdivision comprises 140 acres of land located on the south side of Charleston Boulevard between Ninth Street and Fifteenth Street—this location affords easy access to the retail shopping area, theatres, elementary and high schools, the future home of Basic Magnesium Company and the operation of McNeil Construction Company.

Huntridge homes will be built of the finest quality, by the best workmanship under the able supervision of McNeil Housing Company and will be priced to meet the budget of people of Las Vegas.

Our present program involves the construction of 572 individual homes and 18 eight-unit apartment homes. We expect to have Huntridge homes ready for occupancy about February 15th, 1942.

Our sales department will be glad to furnish you with complete details.

Yours very truly,

REALTY DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

By Francis D. Griffin, President

Figure 6: Letter to the People of Las Vegas

# **A New Group of 2-Bedroom Homes**

NOW AVAILABLE IN

# **HUNTRIDGE**

"A Good Place To Live"

**Schools — Parks — Bus Service — Protective Restrictions**

**Some of the Special Features in These Homes Are**

Bruce Block Hardwood Floors	Built-in Laundry Room
Bath with Tub and Shower	Double Kitchen Sinks
Built-in Hollywood Bath Tub	Large Wardrobe Closets
Forced Air Oil Burning Furnace and Complete Cooling Units with Individual Outlets to Each Room.	

---

**TERMS ARRANGED TO SUIT YOUR CONVENIENCE**  
**Small Down Payment—Monthly Payments Like Rent**

---

**COME EARLY AND MAKE YOUR SELECTION**

**Visit Our Model Furnished Home**

## **HUNTRIDGE DEVELOPMENT CO.**

**Open Daily and Tuesday and Friday Evenings**

**Office Corner 10th and Charleston**

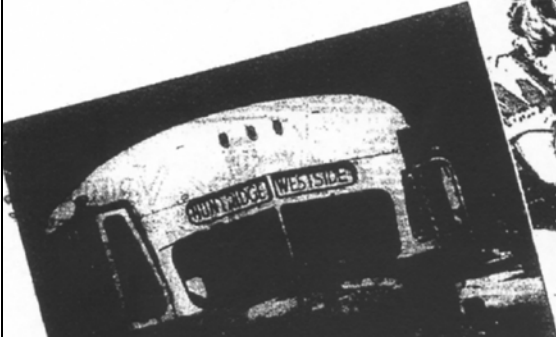
**Phone 78**

Figure 7: A New Group of 2-Bedroom Homes

# You Will Enjoy Owning a Home In **HUNTRIDGE** Where the Best Transportation Is Available

**ONLY FIVE MINUTES FROM DOWNTOWN LAS VEGAS**

One of the first questions that pops into a family's mind when they think of purchasing a new home is the location. This question is readily answered at Huntridge. Your new home in this beautiful subdivision will place you in a position to quickly reach the social and business activity of Las Vegas, either by bus or your own car. Vegas Transit buses run every hour to downtown Las Vegas, El Rancho Vegas, Hotel Last Frontier, Westside, North Las Vegas and East Fremont. If you prefer to use your own car, you will enjoy driving on paved streets, including Charleston Boulevard, and all of Huntridge. Yes, Huntridge is the ideal spot for your new home.

**HUNTRIDGE BUS SCHEDULE**

—AND HERE'S  
A GOOD  
SUGGESTION

Figure 8: Home in Huntridge May 1944



**Figure 9: Maryland Parkway in 1949**





**Figure 10: Maryland Parkway Today**