

When St. George hired Bob Nicholson as a planner in 1983, the city was in a transition caused by amazing growth. Industrial parks were being created. New residential developments were proposed and built. A whole new retail model was underway with satellite shopping malls and big box stores. One result of expansion on the edges was that downtown St. George was slipping into decline. Bob became an early adopter of the Main Street approach to downtown revitalization after attending one of the first national Main Street conferences. He returned with enthusiasm for this new approach and it spread.

He was key in the designation of the Downtown Historic District, creating design guidelines for the Downtown Historic District, and preparing a pictorial guide to historic buildings in St. George. The historic buildings tours he has organized with the historic preservation commission have drawn large and enthusiastic crowds.

Bob was at the forefront during the creation of The Pioneer Center for the Arts including the restoration of the pioneer Opera House and the rehabilitation of two former Utah & Idaho Sugar Beet warehouses to create the Social Hall and the St. George Art Museum. He dedicated himself to many major projects like the award-winning public open space in the award-winning Town Square, contributing to the vitality of the Downtown Historic District.

During all of this, Bob kept up on his other duties including generating three general plans for the city, starting the city's historic preservation commission, overseeing preparation of a guide to historic adobe granaries, and documenting and creating appropriate signage for historic buildings.

In his nearly three decades as planner, Community and Economic Development Director, and Certified Local Government liaison, Bob Nicholson has guided St. George City in defining and preserving the city's historic character with quiet competence, passion, patience, and good humor. He has shown that historic preservation can be the foundation of sound economic development that will continue to shape the City of St. George for many years.

Utah Heritage Foundation presented Bob Nicholson with a Heritage Award for his tireless efforts in historic preservation in the City of St. George.