



# DOUGLAS COUNTY VALLEY VISION

*A VISION FOR A COMMUNITY TO MATCH THE SCENERY*

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Prepared by:

**DESIGNWORKSHOP**







In the spring of 2013, business owners, community leaders and citizens of Douglas County came together through a process called the Valley Vision to collectively define how the communities within the Carson Valley should evolve over the next 20-30 years. Over the course of multiple meetings and a three-day work session participants convened to discuss critical issues facing the Valley. The results of the work session included a collection of principle ideas and illustrations to address questions such as: What will the future of agriculture in the Valley look like? Will the current transportation system support the creation of the downtown areas the community desires? How can the success of existing industries be leveraged to create new economic opportunities? Opinions about the Valley's future varied greatly among participants. However, not surprising for a region with a proud agricultural heritage, the focus for many gravitated towards answering one fundamental question: How can we preserve the character of the Valley while encouraging economic opportunities for generations to come?

The purpose of the Valley Vision is to establish a community dialogue focused on questions of prosperity, conservation, job generation, and quality of life that will serve as the foundation for the future. The plan respects previous planning studies and the community's desire for progress but the ideas contained herein are not restrained by today's realities. Over time demographic shifts, new technologies, partnerships opportunities and market conditions will evolve and the outcome of those changes will be shaped by the values and choices being made today. While some will be quick to identify the impediments to achieving the Vision, the real purpose of the plan is for the citizens of Douglas County to define a shared future for the Valley that enhances the quality of the downtowns, identifies economic development strategies that complement existing business clusters, and preserves the natural resources that are fundamental to the past and future character of the Valley.



*The Valley Vision is an opportunity to imagine a future condition where traditional and contemporary ideas can be integrated to create authentic experiences for residents and visitors.*





# 1

## Plan Summary

Overview

Purpose of the Plan

Process



## A Vision Plan is:

A focus on prosperity issues & the possibilities of seeing a newer future.

An opportunity to illustrates ideas, both new ideas and ideas that are part of existing plans, to visualize the possibilities that exist in a place.

A catalyst to help seek implementation resources.

## Overview

In September 2010 the Douglas County Board of County Commissioners established a forward thinking goal “to be recognized by 2022 as one of the best communities to live, work, and play.” To achieve the goal separate focus areas were identified in the County’s Economic Vitality Plan to leverage the Valley’s distinctive downtown areas, capitalize on outdoor recreation and lifestyle, and improve education and workforce opportunities. These core areas are unified through a shared vision to create a community to match the surrounding scenery. Together with the County, business owners and citizens of the Valley, the Design Workshop consultant team led the Valley Vision planning process to define a collection of programmatic opportunities and physical transformations aimed at achieving the County’s vision. Thirteen principle ideas addressing environment, community, economics, and art form the foundation of the plan. The principle ideas are further supported by a series of place-based illustrations to represent the potential that exists for creating a future of economic vitality, community cohesion, and agricultural and open space preservation. The following core areas organize the key plan concepts:

- Trails, Open Space, and Visual Resource Protection. Parks, natural areas, and scenic landscapes have great economic value. They help protect the Valley’s agricultural heritage, attract tourism and recreation, and ensure the integrity of naturally functioning ecosystems. Preserving scenic vistas and establishing trails to the abundant outdoor amenities also strengthens the connection that people have with their neighbors and the surrounding environment.
- New Employment and Economic Opportunities. The economic drivers of the Valley Vision build upon the existing and successful technology, energy, and medical clusters to attract compatible new businesses. Secondary economic opportunities include tourism, health and wellness, continuous care adult communities, and enhancing local food markets.
- Tourism Destinations and Connections. The uniqueness of a community is found in its history and in activities that cannot be replicated elsewhere. Linking together the Valley’s historic resources with contemporary entertainment and activities provides awareness of the wide range of authentic experiences available. It’s not hard to imagine how an afternoon glider ride could be followed by a stroll through the historic Silos District and a traditional Basque meal.
- Transportation and Linkages. Pedestrian access is integral to creating distinctive destinations. Safe, convenient, and attractive streetscapes create opportunities for community interaction and stimulate main street economic development. Communities with well defined gateways and districts also create a lasting impression on visitors and contribute to a strong sense of place with which community residents can identify.



## Purpose of the Plan

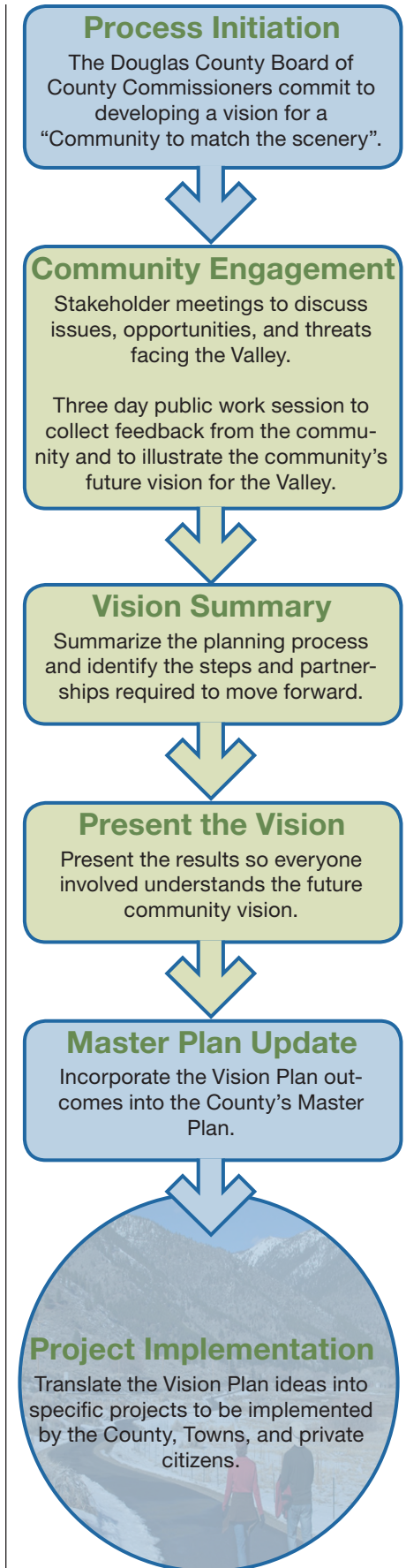
The purpose of the Valley Vision is to stimulate a conversation about how the Valley can become a premier place to live, work, and play. The plan is focused on big-picture ideas such as prosperity, conservation, job generation, and quality of life, that will serve as the foundation for the future. The plan also helps to identify the policies, code revisions, and regulatory standards that make the vision achievable. The fundamental question the Vision Plan seeks to address is how can we ensure that what is being planned and built today will be cherished by the community tomorrow?

## Process

The Valley Vision was initiated when the Douglas County Board of County Commissioners committed to developing a vision for a “community to match the scenery”. Surrounded by snow capped mountains, green pastures, and meandering rivers, the Carson Valley epitomizes the picturesque scenic quality of Northern Nevada. To complement the striking landscape qualities, the Commissioners sought to enhance the quality of the built environment, strengthen connections to outdoor recreation and foster a wide range of economic opportunities to attract and retain businesses.

The first step in the process included meetings with community leaders, business owners, and public representatives to understand the current issues facing the community and the opportunities that exist for the future. This phase also included a review of the previous plans and studies that reflect the community’s desires, values, and hopes. These ideas were used to develop a collection of principle statements that serve as a framework for the Vision. The principles were vetted by the community over the course of a three-day work session and new ideas were collected which helped the design team understand the unique qualities that give the community its sense of place. One of the most compelling aspects of the planning process was the ability for stakeholders to describe their vision for specific areas of the community and then watch as those ideas were brought to life through graphic illustrations. The transformation of places intimately familiar to the stakeholders created a sense of hope and enthusiasm by demonstrating how vision ideas could look when they are actually implemented.

The final steps of the Vision Plan include this document which summarizes the findings and recommendations from the process. The Vision Plan document is not a regulatory plan, official County planning document, or a promise of specific elements. Rather, it is a collection of ideas that enables people to visualize a range of potential programmatic and physical transformations that reflect the community’s desires. The Vision Plan illustrates a high level road map for the Valley’s future which may be realized through updates to the County’s Master Plan and the implementation of specific projects by the County, Towns, and private citizens.







# 2

## Existing Conditions Analysis

Current Planning Context

Project Area Context



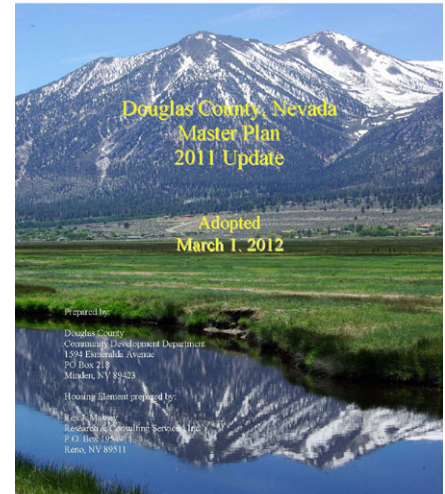




## Current Planning Context

In addition to the Douglas County Master Plan, a number of planning studies have been completed that help summarize the issues and opportunities for the Valley. Recommendations from these plans have been incorporated in the Vision Plan to build upon ideas that already have momentum. The following list of plans were reviewed to understand the current planning context:

- **Minden Plan for Prosperity (2002) and the Gardnerville Plan for Prosperity (2005)**  
The Towns of Minden and Gardnerville developed a number of recommendations related to land use, transportation, and community design. The plans identify public investment priorities regarding community facilities, open space preservation, and economic development.
- **NDOT Landscape and Aesthetics Corridor Plan (2006)**  
The Nevada Department of Transportation developed the US 395, West US 50, SR 28, SR 207 and SR 431 Landscape and Aesthetics Corridor Plan to assist state and local agencies with designing and constructing consistent highway facilities along these routes.
- **U.S. 395 Southern Sierra Corridor Study (2007)**  
This study provides planning-level analysis for transportation improvements proposed within the study area between 2007 and 2030. Initiated by the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT), this study evaluates the current traffic level of service on the roadway network and the need for future investments based on the planned growth in population, employment, and visitor traffic.
- **Town of Genoa Strategic Plan (2008)**  
This plan identifies a number of goals and strategies that will help the town fulfill its vision as a community of historic character and quaint charm in a setting of natural beauty, with businesses and residences that compliment its unique sense of place.
- **Carson River Watershed Regional Floodplain Management Plan (2008)**  
The plan includes suggested actions that encourage communities within the Carson River Watershed to recognize the value and critical functions provided by floodplain lands for public safety and reduction of costly flood damages.
- **Douglas County Economic Vitality Plan (2010)**  
The Economic Vitality Plan focuses on growing community wealth by becoming a place rich in talent and ideas, attracting educated people, creating additional physical and cultural amenities, and putting together bold partnerships among businesses, government, and the nonprofit sector to bring about change.



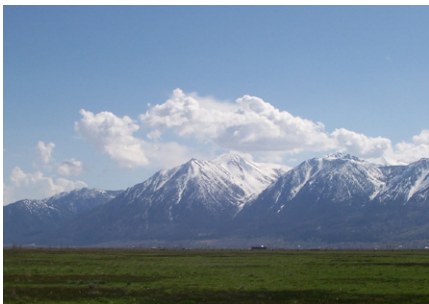
*The Douglas County Master Plan presents information on existing conditions, highlights current and future issues, and recommends Goals, Policies, and Actions to address identified issues.*



*The Carson River meanders through the Valley weaving a pattern of riparian corridors and irrigation ditches.*



*The Valley floor is covered with ranch and agriculture lands that have been in operation for generations.*



*The Sierra Nevada Mountains create a dramatic backdrop along the western edge of the Valley.*



*The vast expanse of the Great Basin reinforces the rural, open quality of the Valley.*

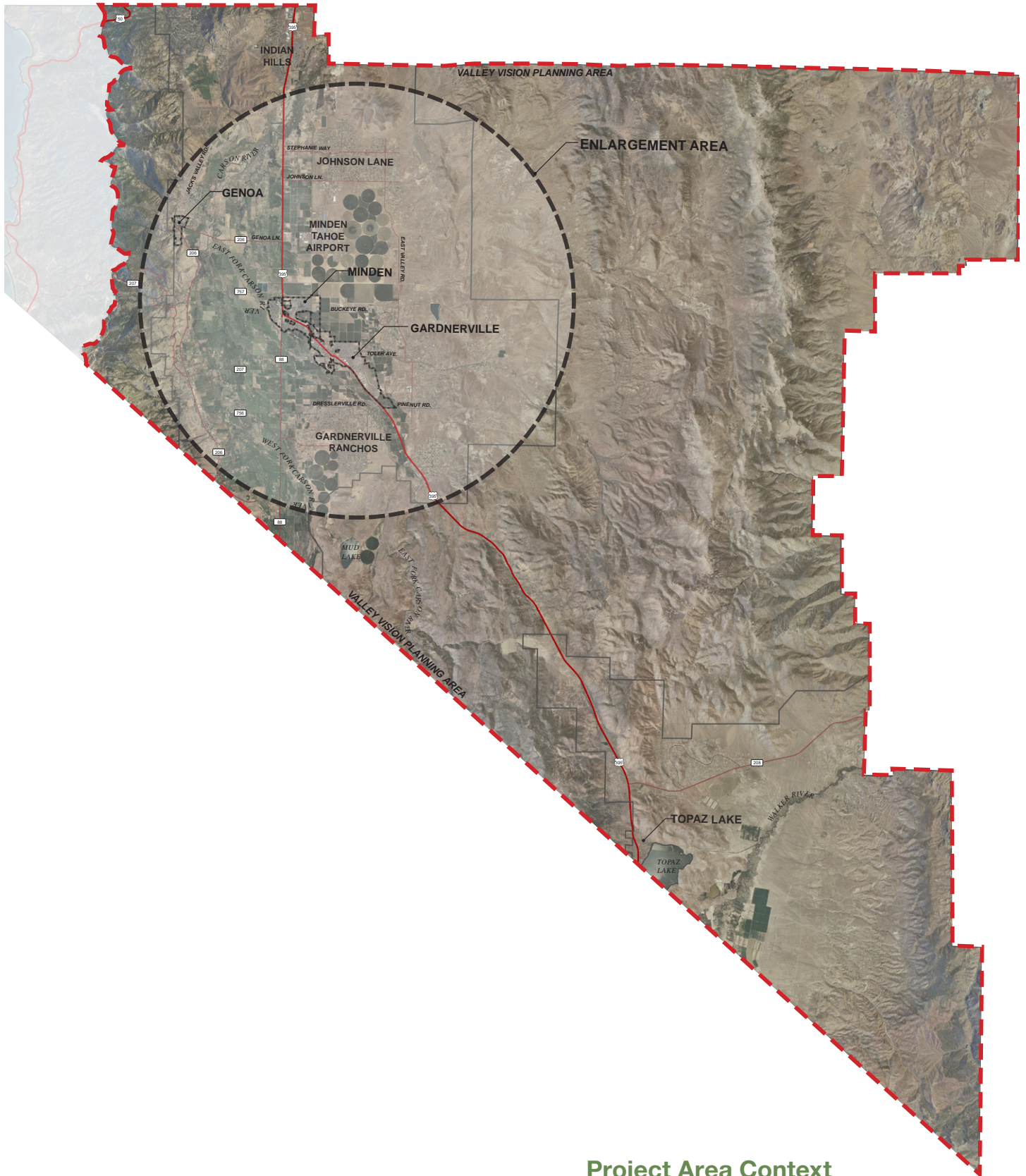
## Project Area Context

The visioning process began by developing plans and information which create the foundation for understanding how physical, environmental, and social patterns have resulted in the land use arrangement we see today. The maps on the following pages describe the land uses, transportation connections, and environmental influences within the study area.

### Regional Context

Douglas County consists of over 700 square miles of land situated at the base of the Sierra Nevada Mountains along the western edge of the Great Basin. A majority of the land in the County is remote, uninhabited, and owned by the Federal Government (U.S. Department of Agriculture and Bureau of Land Management). The Valley Vision process was focused on a much smaller portion of the County that included the towns of Genoa, Minden, Gardnerville, and Topaz Lake. The Vision Plan area constitutes the majority of the County's lands zoned for residential, industrial, agricultural, and commercial uses. To the north of the Valley are the major urbanized areas of Carson City and Reno. To the west and south are major tourist destinations: Lake Tahoe and Topaz Lake. To the east are the Pinenut Mountains and the large expanse of the Great Basin.





## Project Area Context



*Preserved historic buildings within the old town centers are a distinguishing characteristic of the towns in the Valley.*



*Working ranch and agriculture lands account for 38,330 acres, or nearly 30% of the land in the Carson Valley.*



*New development is being concentrated within Urban Service Areas.*



*A significant amount of land has been zoned for business and technology parks.*

## Land Use

Land use patterns within the Valley have been heavily influenced by natural drainages and the alignment of US Highway 395. Existing development is primarily concentrated along the highway, and the sprawling pattern of development that might be expected based on the rapid growth in nearby cities has largely been averted through the County's growth management programs. At one time Minden and Gardnerville were separate communities focused around their respective commercial districts. Over time the communities expanded along the highway to the point where it is difficult to distinguish where one town ends and the other begins. Historic Minden and Old Town Gardnerville have retained many of the buildings and characteristic features of early western towns which serve to reinforce their traditional values and character. Genoa, the oldest settlement in Nevada, is designated an historic district and serves as a picture into Nevada's past. More recent development has occurred at the edges of Minden/Gardnerville which includes big-box retail, residential subdivisions and business parks. Surrounding the concentrated development of Minden and Gardnerville are areas zoned for agricultural and rural residential uses.

Future growth of higher density residential development and intense retail and office development is anticipated to occur only in Urban Service Areas and areas with densities of one unit per acre or greater. Outside of Urban Service Areas, such urban development is discouraged. Urban Service Areas help to maintain urban edges, foster compact urban form, and preserve rural character.

## Issues and Opportunities

The following issues and opportunities have been identified in previous plans and by Valley Vision participants:

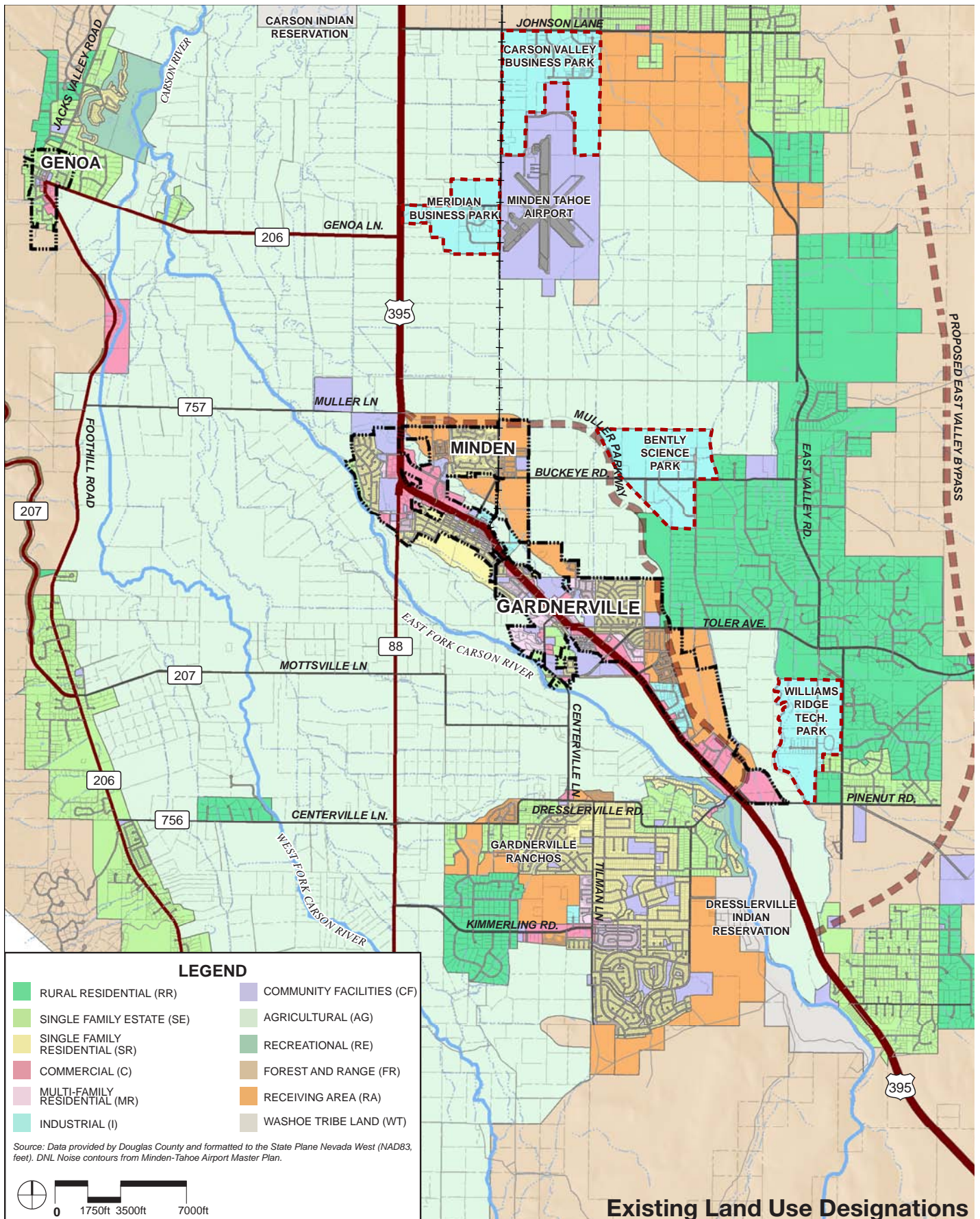
### Issues:

- Land and housing prices are the highest in Northern Nevada making it difficult to retain and attract young families.
- Big box retail centers at both ends of the Valley are impacting the desirability of downtown retail.
- Physical site conditions, political boundaries, and the challenge of extending services act to limit the potential for future growth.

### Opportunities:

- Revitalize the downtown areas (Minden, Gardnerville) to support vibrant mixed-uses and to become a destination for new businesses, entertainment, and boutique shopping.
- The geographic concentration of business and technology parks can be leveraged to retain and attract new compatible business.
- Demographic trends indicate growth in the retiree market and associated services.
- History of early settlement is evident in the places like Genoa and Minden's Silos District. The historic places could be collectively marketed as part of Valley-wide tourism program.







The volume of traffic on US 395 is expected to be 80% greater in 2030 than it was in 2005; growing from 4,600 to 8,200 vehicles per day. Regional truck traffic constitutes eight percent of the 2005 total, as measured at the Nevada/California state line. Using this same ratio, the number of trucks is projected to increase from 368 to 656 trucks per day in 2030.

*US 395 Southern Sierra Corridor Study*

## Transportation

US 395 is a critical transportation and economic link between the Valley and the Truckee Meadows to the north. It also acts as a major trucking route connecting eastern Sierra communities in California and Nevada. As the highway descends into the Valley from the south it becomes the main street for Gardnerville and Minden. Since it is the only major highway linking communities along the Eastern Sierra high volumes of traffic and slower traffic speeds often result in congestion and delays. Additionally, the average speed and volume of traffic pose real threats to pedestrian safety. The traffic and safety concerns are expected to compound as additional growth in the Valley and surrounding areas place increased demand on the existing roadways.

A number of suggestions have been proposed to help alleviate the traffic and safety issues including the Muller Parkway extension and an east valley bypass. Muller Parkway is partially constructed and will eventually provide an alternative north-south connection around the towns of Minden and Gardnerville. However, truck traffic will be restricted to the existing US 395, as the design for Muller Parkway is not intended for commercial sized vehicles. The proposed east valley bypass alignment would primarily utilize the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land along the foothills east of Carson Valley and tie into US 395 at a point south of Gardnerville. Based on the interstate-only traffic projections, including truck traffic, it is not anticipated that the east valley bypass facility around Minden and Gardnerville would be justified from a traffic volume only standpoint within the next 20 years.

## Issues and Opportunities

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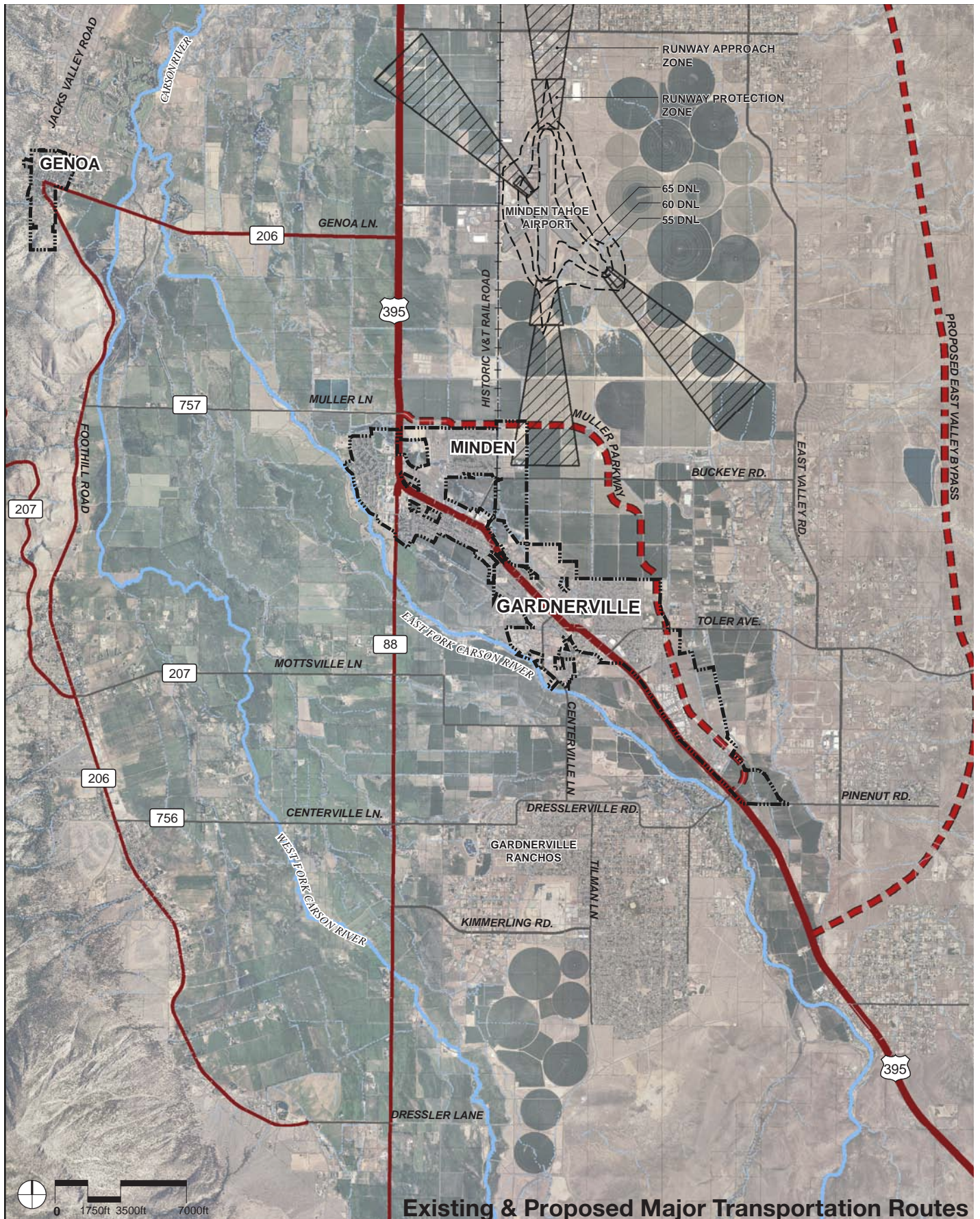
### Issues:

- Proposed bypasses have the potential to divert traffic away from main street businesses.
- Traffic through Minden/Gardnerville is creating a significant impediment to the success of local businesses in the downtown area.
- Funding for road maintenance is limited and much of the existing infrastructure is in need of repair.

### Opportunities:

- Muller Parkway extension will create a north-south alternative to US 395, however it will not support through truck traffic.
- The Minden-Tahoe Airport is an asset that could be better utilized as a premier sport aviation destination.
- The downtown areas along main street could become more attractive with desirable retail and entertainment amenities if traffic volumes along US 395 could be reduced.
- The abandoned V&T railroad right-of-way provides an opportunity for a unique type of transportation connection.
- Proximity to California and tax advantages makes it a good place for business.







Agricultural and ranch lands are consistent with a living river approach and most appropriate for critical floodplain lands. Providing ways to protect and sustain these lands is a top priority.

*Carson River Watershed  
Floodplain Management Plan*

## Flood Zones

The East and West Forks of the Carson River that traverse the Valley are part of a watershed that captures, stores, and carries water from the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the Carson Sink. Rain and snowmelt cause the waters of the rivers to rise as flows are concentrated and carried downstream through the Carson Valley. The increased flows of the Carson serve to rejuvenate the rangeland and riparian corridors of the Valley. However, since the upper watershed is not regulated to provide flood control and there is extremely limited reservoir storage capability, large flows can occur downstream which cause the rivers to overflow their banks and flood the low-lying areas of the valley floor. The physical setting of the watershed has strongly shaped the pattern of development within the Valley by restricting growth in the floodplain and thereby preserving the rural quality of the landscape.

In addition to preserving open space, the floodplain also helps protect the working ranch lands and natural resources such as drinking water and wildlife habitat. Property acquisitions such as the River Fork Ranch by the Nature Conservancy are indicative of the floodplain's value for enhancing flood protection, improving water quality, recharging aquifers, sustaining agriculture, and enriching wildlife habitat. To help ensure the continued protection of the floodplain it will be important to educate and connect people to the region's valuable resources through parks, greenways, and conservation easements. Such opportunities strengthen the relationship people have with the natural world by making the resources more accessible to Valley residents.

## Issues and Opportunities

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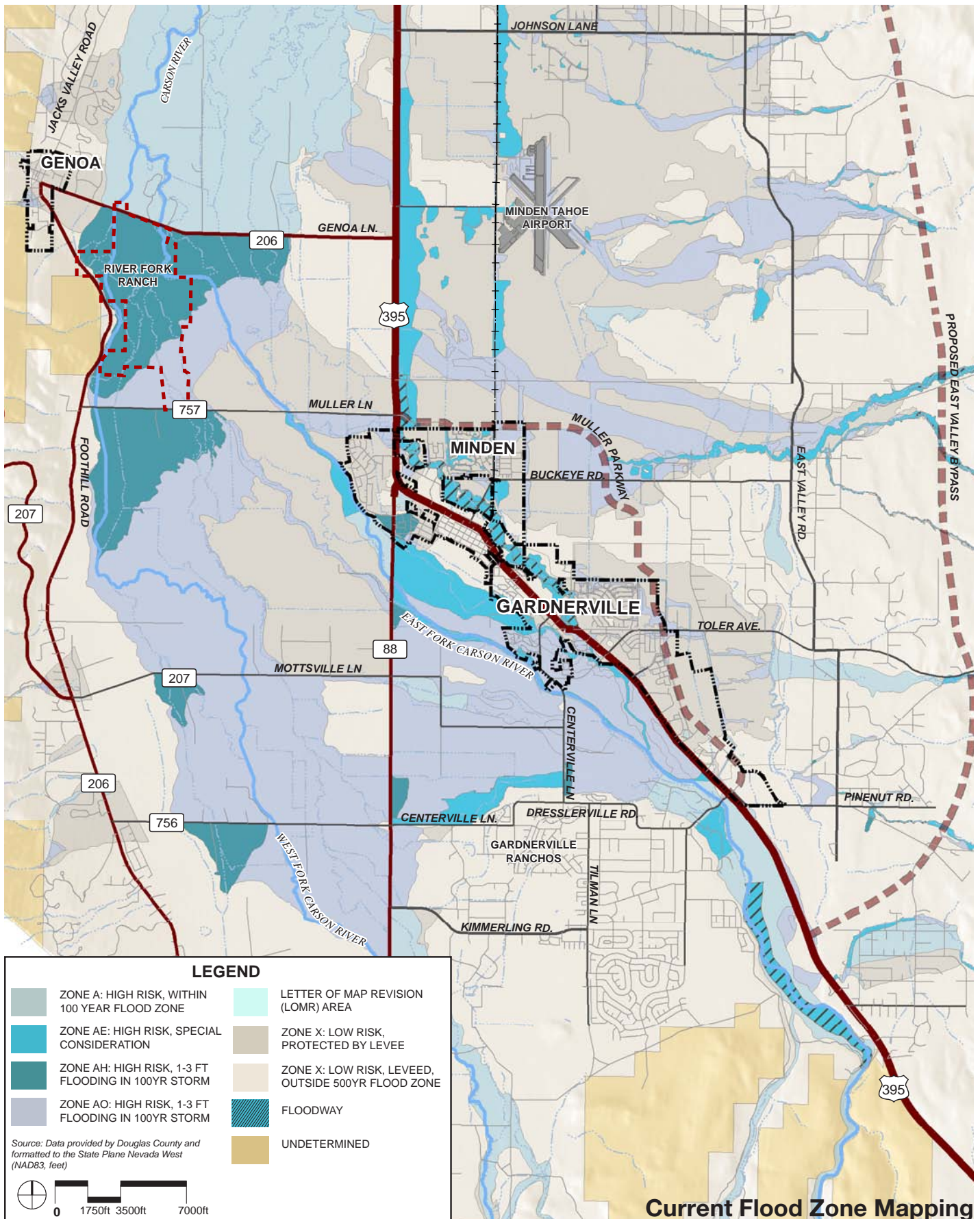
### Issues:

- Floodplain conditions limit the potential for growth.
- Connections between developed areas have been restricted by the pattern of rivers and drainages.
- Revisions to the FEMA flood plain boundary have required property owners to obtain flood insurance.

### Opportunities:

- The riparian corridors provide a foundation of green infrastructure that protects critical ecological sites.
- Protecting riparian corridors and floodplains reinforces the rural quality of the place.
- Potential to grow local tourism industry, especially in adventure and outdoor recreation (rafting, hiking, biking, etc.) by creating stronger connections between the Valley's natural resources.





Agriculture is an important and valued way of life in Douglas County and a major contributor to the character of the community.

*Douglas County Master Plan*

## Agriculture

The communities in the Valley were built upon a heritage of farming and ranching which continues to be a valued way of life and a major contributor to the visual character of the Valley. Agriculture is also one of the major contributors to the local economy by providing jobs, creating wealth, and offering tourism and agritourism opportunities. The future of agriculture is one of the major concerns for the Valley as the desire to live in a rural agricultural landscape and the financial incentive of land sales creates considerable pressure to convert agricultural lands for alternative uses. Counties throughout the west with scenic public lands, abundant outdoor recreation, and sound infrastructure are experiencing some of the highest rates of growth in the country. Within the Valley, the lands identified as Farmland of Statewide Importance or Prime Farmland are also some of the most attractive areas for locating future development. The County has developed a number of strategies that will help preserve working lands, but the future of agriculture in the Valley depends upon adapting to new technologies and applications and responding to emerging agriculture markets such as agritourism to make evident all the beneficial aspects of working lands.

### *Issues and Opportunities*

The following issues and opportunities have been identified in previous plans and by Valley Vision participants:

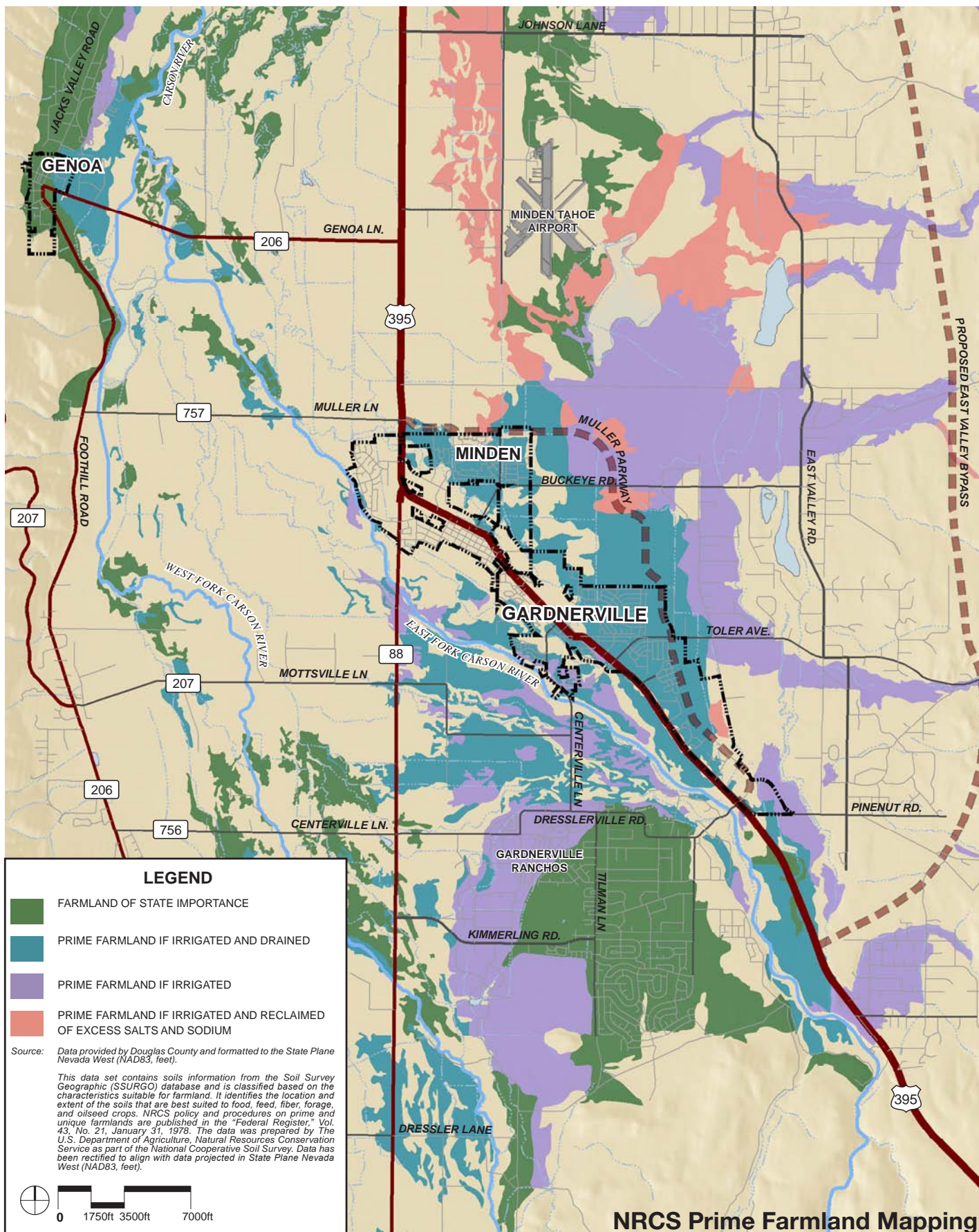
#### **Issues:**

- Agricultural operations are often the subject of nuisance complaints, especially when adjacent to residential uses.
- The often marginal economic return on agricultural lands can result in the conversion of productive agricultural lands into alternative uses.
- Public access to rivers used for agricultural irrigation can result in conflicts between ranchers and the general public.

#### **Opportunities:**

- The area's agricultural heritage offers unique tourism and agritourism potential.
- There is potential to preserve agriculture lands while expanding the clean energy industry, especially geothermal, biofuels and wind energy.
- Branding agriculture products from the Valley.
- Take advantage of the growing market for high-quality, locally grown food and organic products.









# 3

## Guiding Principles and Plan Elements



## Guiding Principles

Principles describe the fundamental values that represent the desired future for the Valley. These principles provide the foundation for a plan that seeks to improve the area in a way that is economically sustainable and responsive to community desires and environmental conditions. The planning principles bring together key components from previous planning studies and supplements those ideas with additional concepts discussed with stakeholders and community members. The principle ideas are organized into four categories – environment, economics, community, and art.

Imagery showing the current land use arrangements, physical form, and streetscape environment are used to visually communicate or locate areas where the principles can be realized. Descriptions include goals and policies from existing planning documents and a summary of the methods and strategies that may be employed to achieve the principle.



## Environment Principles

### *Principle One*

Enhance and protect environmental resources, scenic vistas, rural character, and the highly valued quality of life dependent on these resources. Protect important land and water resources.

#### *Related strategies*

- Maintain and enhance the quality of open space and rural character that typifies the Valley. Keep the majority of agriculture as agriculture.
- Manage hillside development to minimize impacts on natural resources and scenic character.
- Encourage the use of low impact development and use of on-site natural features to manage storm water and protect water quality.

### *Principle Two*

Enhance availability of outdoor recreation opportunities. Create an interconnected regional trail system that couples a Valley-wide open space and trail program with linkages to Lake Tahoe and new investments at Topaz Lake.

#### *Related strategies*

- Identify opportunities to link trail corridors with open space systems.
- Create trail connections to wider regional destinations such as Lake Tahoe and new investments at Topaz Lake.
- Minimize conflicts between vehicles and bicyclists/pedestrians.

### *Principle Three*

Enlarge local food production capabilities and diversify agricultural products by intermixing supporting uses and creating a branding strategy.

#### *Related strategies*

- Distinguish the Valley and its agricultural products from products from other areas (e.g. certified agricultural lands).
- Establish an expectation of quality for Valley products.
- Promote the use of locally grown products as part of other industries (restaurants using locally grown crops).
- Evaluate the feasible types and varieties of products to identify any opportunities for a niche market.



*Agriculture and open space dominate views.*



*Trail systems link open space to community centers.*



*Local agriculture can be enlarged.*



*GE Bently Nevada anchors Douglas County's technology cluster.*



*Active seniors are a growing demographic in the Valley.*

## Economic Principles

### ***Principle One***

Create sustainable economic opportunities through new job creation, recruiting viable Valley businesses, and promoting a successful education system and workforce development.

#### ***Related strategies***

- Develop programs to align workforce and education with identified industry clusters.
- Support programs aimed at strengthening the education system and workforce development, including higher/continued education opportunities and training programs.
- Promote academic, industry and government collaboration.

### ***Principle Two***

Encourage growth and prosperity. Build off existing industries while welcoming new opportunities to foster authentic industries, such as agricultural, tourism services, and recreation and develop new economic clusters such as medical research and wellness, recreational second homes, active senior living, and other compatible growth sectors.

#### ***Related strategies***

- Recruit, retain, and expand employment opportunities that are compatible with the Valley's resources (e.g. outdoor recreation; energy, science and engineering; environmental innovation; tourism; health and wellness).
- Identify opportunities to attract active senior living and recreational second home developments that align with the Valley's rural lifestyle and recreation opportunities.

### ***Principle Three***

Enhance each town centers' existing, inviting atmosphere with infill development and public amenities to continue their evolution as desirable places to be for a variety of users.

#### ***Related strategies***

- Promote the revitalization of the Towns of Minden, Gardnerville, and Genoa and the community of Topaz Lake. Utilize infill to provide economic development.
- Define districts and areas of place-making to focus revitalization and redevelopment efforts within the town centers.
- Provide a mix of uses, densities, and amenities to attract and activate the downtown spaces.
- Enhance the streetscape environment to increase the dwell time of patrons within the downtown.
- Support and expand the Main Street Gardnerville Program. Investigate and support the development of a Main Street Minden Program.
- Support the continued improvements occurring through the Genoa Main Street Landscape Enhancement Plan.
- Support environmental redevelopment to improve the built environment.
- Seek infrastructure improvements that support economic development efforts.

### ***Principle Four***

Create a business friendly, growing community within the bounds of Carson Valley's plentiful resources.

#### ***Related strategies***

- Encourage reinvestment and new business growth while maintaining the Valley's spectacular natural environment.
- Maintain the quality of life and attract unique and marketable businesses.
- Retain and strengthen the existing business base.



*The historic downtown can offer a vibrant destination.*



*The Valley's resources can support a growing community.*





*Dangberg Ranch is a centrally located historic resource.*



*US 395 serves both local and truck traffic.*



*Skilled training grows community knowledge and resources.*



*Healthy communities include diversity in age and income levels.*

## Community Principles

### Principle One

Bring a Valley-wide tourism development strategy forward to preserve and restore historic resources, create historic trails, define new points of interest and attraction, and capitalize on the rich history of settlement and Native American culture.

#### Related strategies

- Rebrand the visitor experience to focus on environmental quality, health and wellness, and recreation activities.
- Create a comprehensive tourism strategy that aligns the varied Valley resources and amenities and creates the sense of “one destination” for residents and visitors alike.

### Principle Two

Address the dilemma between US Highway 395 and Main Street by articulating needs and providing solutions for the future. Solutions should include options for highway re-alignment, travel speed reductions, and the conversion to pedestrian friendly street uses.

#### Related strategies

- Evaluate the opportunity for a truck bypass to divert the large volume of truck traffic away from Main Street.
- Identify key districts to focus pedestrian improvements. Create shorter blocks and reduce travel speeds to highlight the importance of the pedestrian.
- Reconfigure the S-curve and intersection at US 395 and Toler Avenue. Explore place-making opportunities.
- Evaluate opportunities to create a road diet along Main Street or in key districts based upon the ability to relocate truck traffic.

### Principle Three

Support a culture of intentional and constant school improvements to create a ‘quality gain’ at all levels of education.

#### Related strategies

- Link education and community improvements to grow, diversify, and promote educational opportunities.
- Identify public/private partnerships aimed at attracting and developing quality learning and training programs.
- Build upon and celebrate current successes and strengths while identifying continual opportunities for improvement at all levels.
- Foster pride, ownership, and participation in a nationally distinguished Valley-wide education program.

### Principle Four

Provide appropriate vital neighborhoods which include some affordable housing.

#### Related strategies

- Diversify the housing inventory by including multifamily units and other housing types that provide affordable housing.
- Remove potential barriers from land use and zoning codes to allow affordable housing opportunities.
- Allow for mixed use development to support housing near businesses and employment centers.

## Art Principles

### Principle One

Encourage the expression of all forms of art in the community through active engagement.

#### Related strategies

- Contribute to place-making and livability by incorporating all forms of art into the community.
- Support and provide venues for incorporating both visual and performing arts into the community fabric.

### Principle Two

Address the quality of design to create an artful expression of space and community place-making.

#### Related strategies

- Ensure design expresses an excellence of craftsmanship, quality, truthfulness, and originality.
- Create regionally appropriate and meaningful architecture and spaces.
- Incorporate art and meaning as part of the design and planning process. Do not use art as an afterthought or decoration. Engage artists early.



*Streetscape elements can help reinforce an aesthetic, rural character.*



*Historic buildings can be used to help establish a quality of design.*



*The Copeland Building is planned for a future regional arts center.*

## Key Concepts

The vision principles generate a range of key concepts illustrated by the Vision Plan Diagram.

The vision diagram compiles the concepts and shows how the ideas coalesce into one unified vision. The diagram organizes the Valley in response to potential opportunities related to the following four core areas:

- Trails, Open Space, and Visual Resource Protection;
- New Employment and Economic Opportunities;
- Tourism Destinations and Connections; and
- Transportation and Linkages.

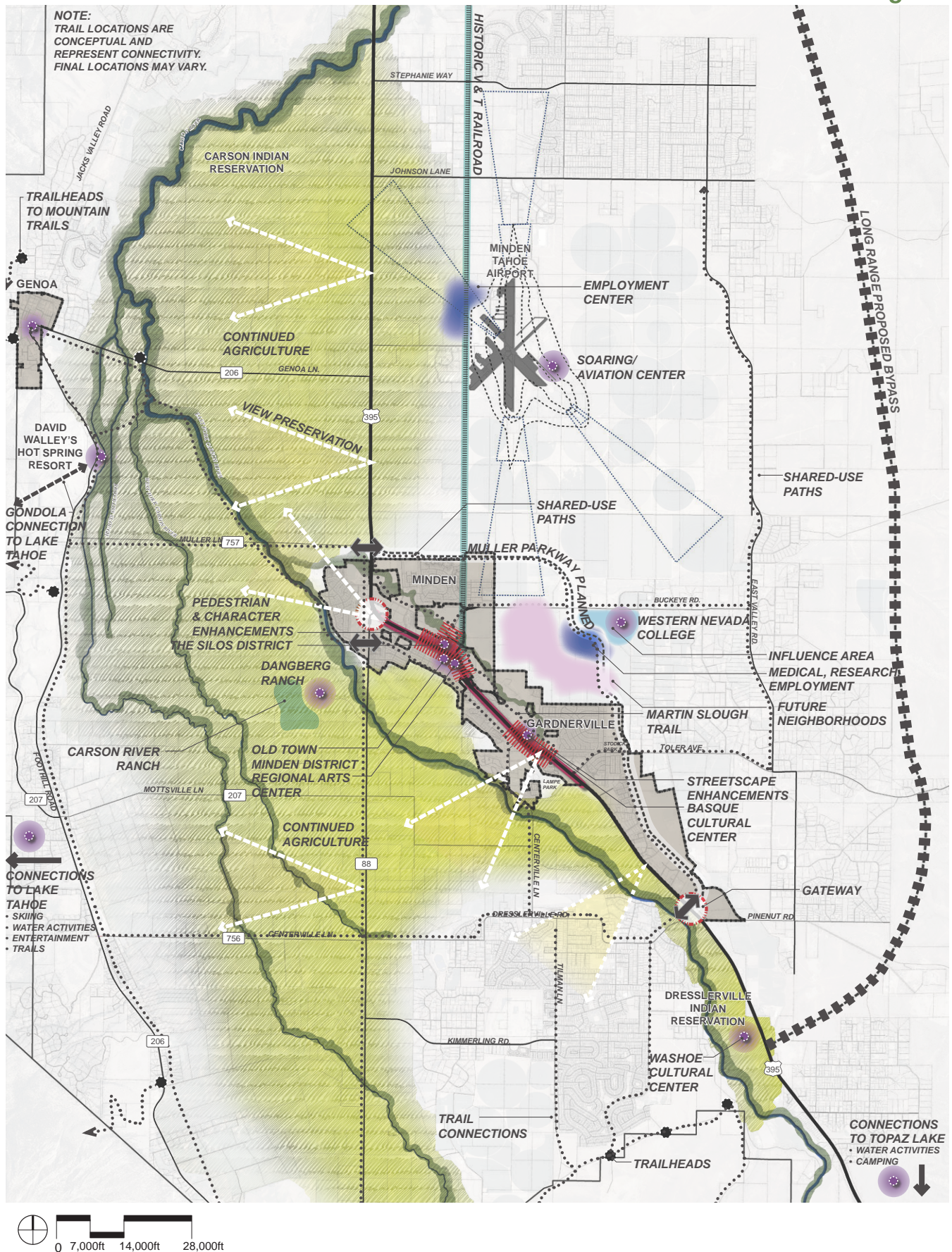
While much work remains before some of the improvements can be realized, the diagrams and illustrations establish a view of how the future of the Valley may look.

Illustrations are provided to give a sense of what could be, visually conveying the possibilities for the Valley. The final form and detail of projects and development may differ from the illustrations, but the ideas are set forth to inform those planning and design decision that have the opportunity to shape the Valley's future. As stakeholders, community members and the County carry ideas forward, the precise locations and actual designs will evolve to best meet the community needs and site requirements.

As the County and Towns move forward, the ideas illustrated here can be incorporated into General Plan and Strategic Plan updates. These documents may provide additional detail on implementation and funding opportunities to achieve specific elements of the Valley Vision.



## Vision Plan Diagram





## Core Area: Trails, Open Space, and Visual Resource Protection

Parks, natural areas, and scenic landscapes have great economic value. They help protect the Valley's agricultural heritage, attract tourism and recreation, and ensure the integrity of naturally functioning ecosystems. Preserving scenic vistas and establishing trails to the abundant outdoor amenities also strengthens the connection that people have with their neighbors and the surrounding environment.

The Trails, Open Space, and Visual Resource Protection diagram illustrates the following goals:

***Goal 1: Establish a diversified network of trails to link downtown areas to local and regional destinations.***

Trail connections link the Valley in a variety of methods. River corridors can serve as Valley-wide connections to link downtown areas to local and regional destinations. Coordination with the agricultural community is needed to develop workable solutions which allow for some type of trail connection while protecting agricultural access and use of the river and avoiding potential vandalism to irrigation facilities.

Completion of the planned bike path network includes the Martin Slough Trail through Minden and connecting to Lampe Park. Separated bike paths can be aligned along designated roadways to enhance connectivity. These routes are shown as dotted lines on the Vision Diagram.

***Goal 2: Enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety at key crossing locations along major roads.***

Conflicts between cyclists, pedestrians, and vehicles should be minimized and avoided where possible to enhance safety. Key areas to improve crossings of US 395 and Hwy 88 are identified with large black arrows. These areas represent connections from valley-wide trails to the downtown. Safety and improved access should be evaluated for these and other areas where pedestrians and cyclists may interface with large traffic volumes.

***Goal 3: Expand recreation access by connecting residents and visitors to the regional trail system.***

Valley-wide trails link with regional trail systems allowing residents and visitors alternative access and recreation opportunities. Linkages to mountain trails around Genoa support town revitalization and promote a regional connection to the greater Lake Tahoe area.







## Core Area: Trails, Open Space, and Visual Resource Protection



*Greenways along river corridors help link Valley destinations to the downtown.*

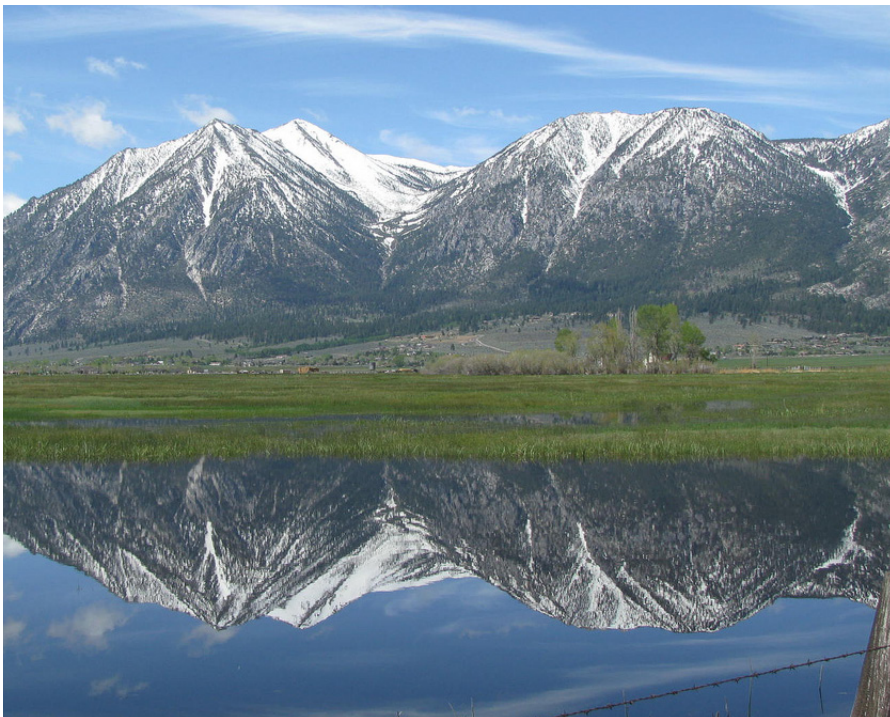


*Trail connections at Genoa provide mountain access and regional linkages to Lake Tahoe.*





*The new trail connecting Genoa to Walley's Hot Springs should be continued as part of a larger trail network connecting the Valley.*



*Views of the Sierra Nevada and the agricultural fields in the foreground should be preserved.*

**Goal 4: Protect critical lands that retain the rural quality of the community, support working land and preserve natural resources and systems.**

Views of the Sierra Nevada and Jobs Peak, agricultural fields, and the Pine Nuts dominate the visual experience. Maintaining working agriculture and managing hillside development can help retain the Valley's high scenic quality and sense of place. Viewsheds along US 395 and Hwy 88 are noted for view preservation. The intersection of US 395 and Hwy 88 is noted as an area for improvement and focus. It provides key views of the Sierra Nevada and also serves as a gateway into Minden and Gardnerville.

## Core Area: New Employment and Economic Opportunities

Continued growth and prosperity in the Valley builds off the successful base of existing industries while creating new opportunities that leverage the Valley's competitive advantages. Factors such as the available lifestyle, business friendly climate and proximity to major markets in combination with recommended infrastructure upgrades are critical to attracting and retaining businesses that create sustainable economic opportunities.

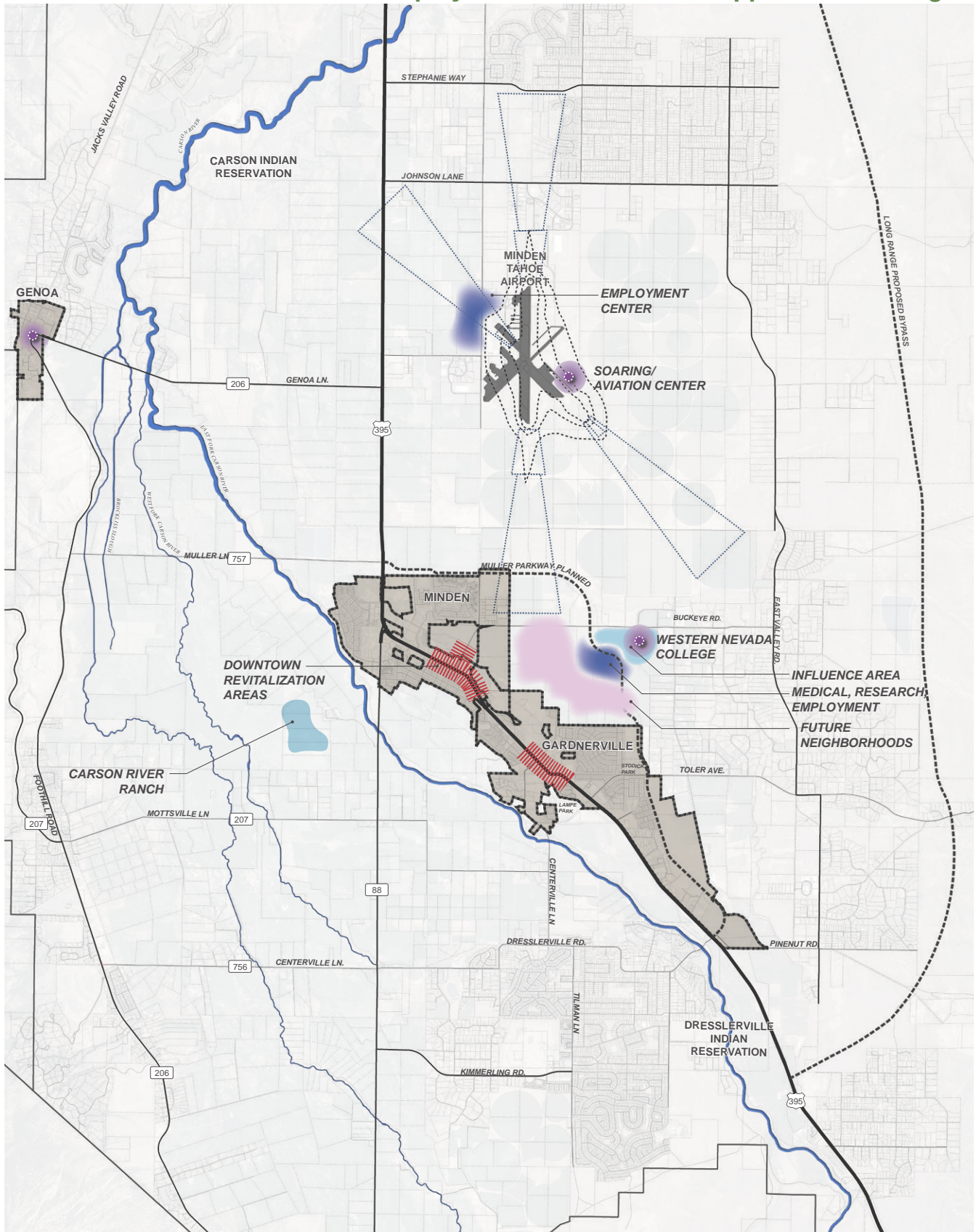
The economic drivers of the Valley Vision identify methods for agricultural innovation to enhance local food markets and build upon existing technology, energy, and medical clusters to attract compatible new businesses. Secondary economic opportunities include tourism, health and wellness, and continuous care adult communities.

Additional employment and economic generators are identified as part of infill and reinvestment in the districts noted as downtown revitalization areas. Historic districts such as The Silos, Old Town Gardnerville and Historic Minden create authentic downtown experiences. The regional performing arts venues reinforce a vibrant downtown by offering a mix of arts and cultural attractions.

The New Employment and Economic Opportunities Diagram illustrates the following goals:



## New Employment and Economic Opportunities Diagram







*Certifying Valley agricultural areas as organic may help make the products distinctive.*



*Similar to the Cheese Guild in Oregon helping various creameries work together for greater recognition, Valley agriculture can cooperatively promote a niche market.*

***Goal 1: Innovate local food and agriculture production as a means to preserve the region's agricultural heritage.***

Preservation of agricultural lands requires finding methods to enlarge local food and agricultural production. This can be accomplished by intermixing supporting uses and creating a branding strategy to distinguish Valley products from other areas. As farms work together to establish an expected level of quality, they can evaluate opportunities for improvement and advancement. Considering organic certification of fields may be one option. Locally grown crops can also be promoted at local restaurants, sold at local and regional farmers markets, marketed and distributed through community shared agriculture (CSAs), and sold at retail outlets.



*Agricultural products can be coordinated with economic opportunities as field to table options, promoting the use of local produce in restaurants.*





*Agricultural products from Carson Valley can be branded and distinguished for their excellence.*



*Wilson Farm in Massachusetts provides an example for an innovative approach to agriculture in the Valley.*



*Retail opportunities for local produce can be developed.*



***Goal 2. Recruit, retain and expand employment opportunities through the advancement and expansion of existing technology clusters.***

The Valley's business and technology parks offer a vital economic resource in the fields of science, research, and energy. Continued growth of these parks should occur to position the Valley to be on the forefront of new technologies.

Additionally, the parks can be further enhanced by adding health and wellness elements. The growth and need for advancing health care technologies can be a sister piece to the existing research parks and provide additional economic opportunities.

Innovations in outdoor recreation can also be pursued as part of the research facilities to complement existing Valley resources and economic drivers.



*The Valley's science, technology, and energy research parks can not only provide economic employment but also training and staff development. In addition, as new ideas emerge the parks can position the Valley to be on the forefront of sustainable technologies to be incorporated into building design.*



*Existing research and innovation parks can serve as an incubator for ideas. Maker fairs and science centers can coordinate with the existing businesses to grow with emerging markets and adapt new technologies.*





*The Nebraska Innovation Park is modeled on successful existing national research university/public-private partnerships. One such example is Centennial Campus at North Carolina State University, where more than 70 businesses now operate, providing new jobs and revenue for the state and its citizens.*



*Cummings Research Park in Huntsville, Alabama is the second largest research park in the United States. Major industries are aerospace, defense, engineering, biotechnology, advanced manufacturing, software development, and information technology.*





*A health and wellness facility could fit within the Valley's resources and environment and create an additional economic generator for the area.*

**Goal 3. Develop a health and wellness industry with a compatible active adult community.**

As demographics change, the demand for quality active adult retirement areas are growing. The Valley offers abundant resources desired by many of retirement age. The outdoor lifestyle and rural character are a draw for many and set the stage for an economic development opportunity. A small, active adult community could be developed within the Valley. Coordinating the development with a health and wellness facility would enhance the community and expand the type of research facilities now present in the Valley.



*Active adult communities can be combined with recreation opportunities and health and wellness facilities to provide a comprehensive package.*

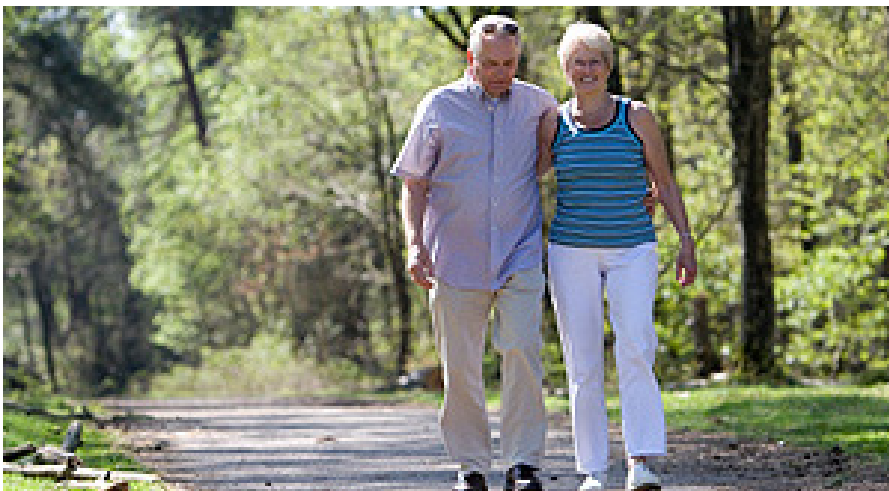




*Walnut Village active senior living village in Anaheim, California.*



*Villa Portofina active adult community in Palm Desert, California.*



*The Valley offers all the elements desired by active adult communities including outdoor recreation access.*



*The Valley has already developed a range of outdoor activities similar to that found in Villa Portofina.*





*Infill and mixed uses should be focused in identified districts. The pedestrian area is increased to create a more welcoming environment where people want to stay and visit.*



*Existing conditions at the S-curve on US 395.*





*Downtown pedestrian environments which provide seating, shade, and substantial sidewalk area draw more patrons and can be more economically viable.*



*Infill development in Ogden, Utah used the framework of historic buildings to reinvigorate the downtown.*

### ***Goal 4. Revitalize downtowns with infill development and a mix of uses and amenities.***

Reinvestment in downtown areas should include infill and mixed uses. Enhancing the streetscape environment and focusing reinvestment in key districts can help create defined areas of activity while allowing the remainder of the downtown area to maintain its current viability.

Buildings of significance can be kept and transformed into economic generators with a streetscape presence. Potential revitalization projects include the Creamery, the Mill, the Whiskey Distillery and Farmers Bank. Additional areas may build off improvements to the streetscape and adjacent buildings.

High speed internet connections present opportunities for both businesses and the streetscape environment. Downtown wifi “hotspots” can encourage people to stay longer and activate the area.

A number of historic buildings along US 395 and in the heart of the downtown area present opportunities for restoration and reuse. Structures should be designed to have a presence along the street and invite pedestrians within their doors. Focus should be on infill and renovation of existing structures in the downtown area. Much of the Valley’s charm lies in these buildings and they can be enhanced to function as part of a lively streetscape.





*Economic development and streetscape and community benefit can be achieved through renovation and re-purposing of historic buildings.*



*Existing view of US 395 by the Minden Flour Mill.*





*Transforming the Copeland building into a Regional Arts Center reactivates the area and creates the opportunity for an arts district along US 395.*



*Farmers Bank can be reused as office or commercial space.*

## Core Area: Tourism Destinations and Connections

The uniqueness of a community is found in its history, and in activities that cannot be replicated elsewhere. Linking together the Valley's historic resources with contemporary entertainment and activities provides awareness of the wide range of authentic experiences available. It's not hard to imagine how an afternoon glider ride could be followed by a stroll through The Silos District and a traditional Basque meal.

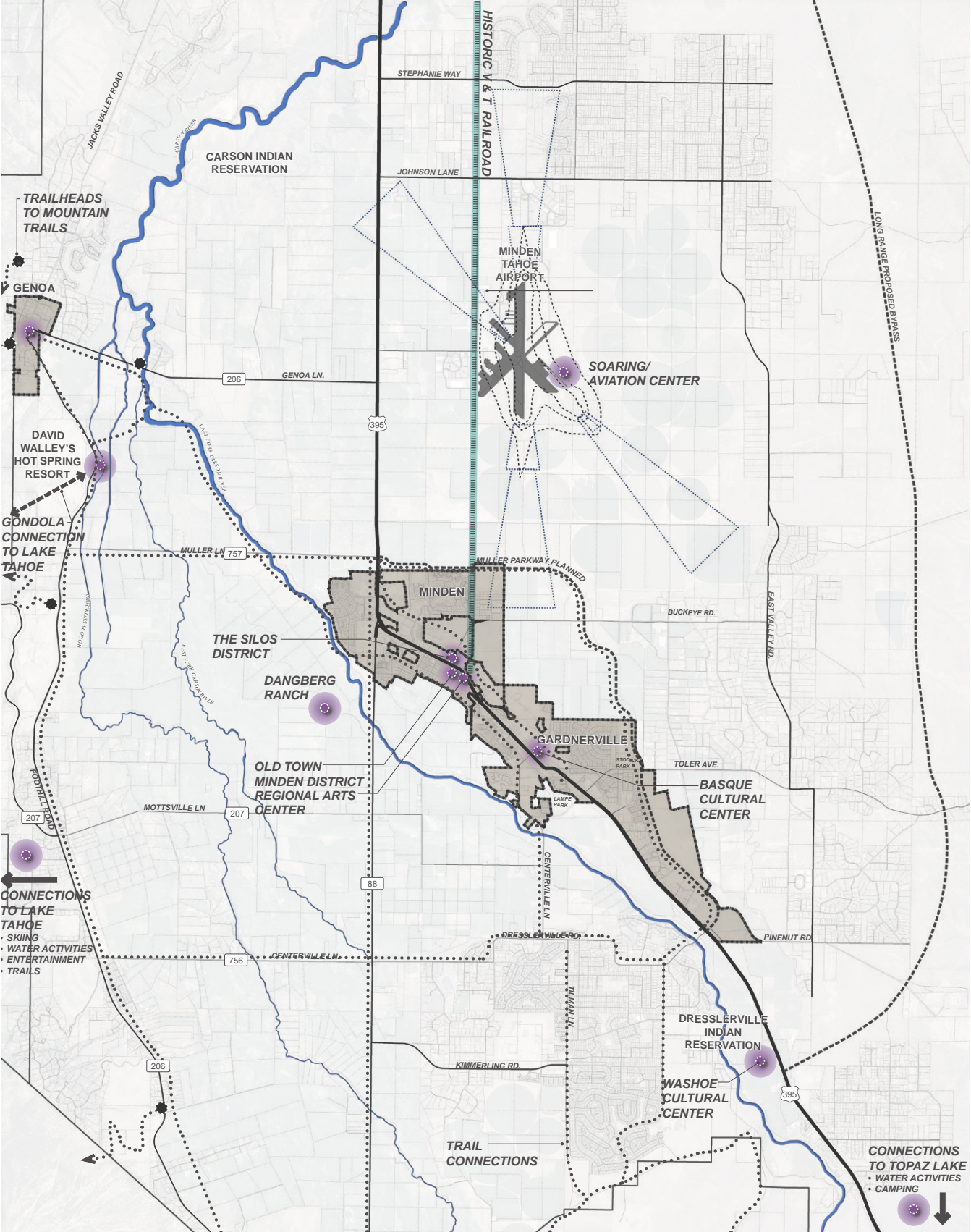
The Tourism Destinations & Connections Diagram highlights a number of important tourism destinations, community districts, the historic V&T Railroad, soaring center and other cultural centers. A gondola connection from Walley's Hot Spring Resort to Lake Tahoe provides not only a mode of alternative transportation, but it can be a destination experience in and of itself. On their own, these improvements might not create a significant draw. But as a whole, they offer a rich, attractive experience.

The improvements shown on the following pages describe the opportunities and methods associated with the following elements:

- Carson River Ranch
- Valley-wide Branding & Coordinated Signage Program
- V&T Railroad Connection
- Soaring Center
- Recreation Connections to Lake Tahoe and Topaz Lake
- Cultural Centers
  - » Regional Arts Center
  - » Basque Cultural Center
  - » Native American Cultural Center



Tourism Destinations & Connections Diagram







*A new destination can be developed as a Carson River Ranch. Cabins and a main lodge can create an authentic and comfortable experience in the Valley.*



*Vista Verde Ranch in Steamboat Springs, Colorado is a luxury cabin resort similar to that imagined for the Carson River Valley Ranch.*





*Resort ranches offer a high quality experience with a low-impact development footprint.*



*Ranch activities can include traditional “western” outings...*



*... as well as offering more modern, outdoor recreation activities.*

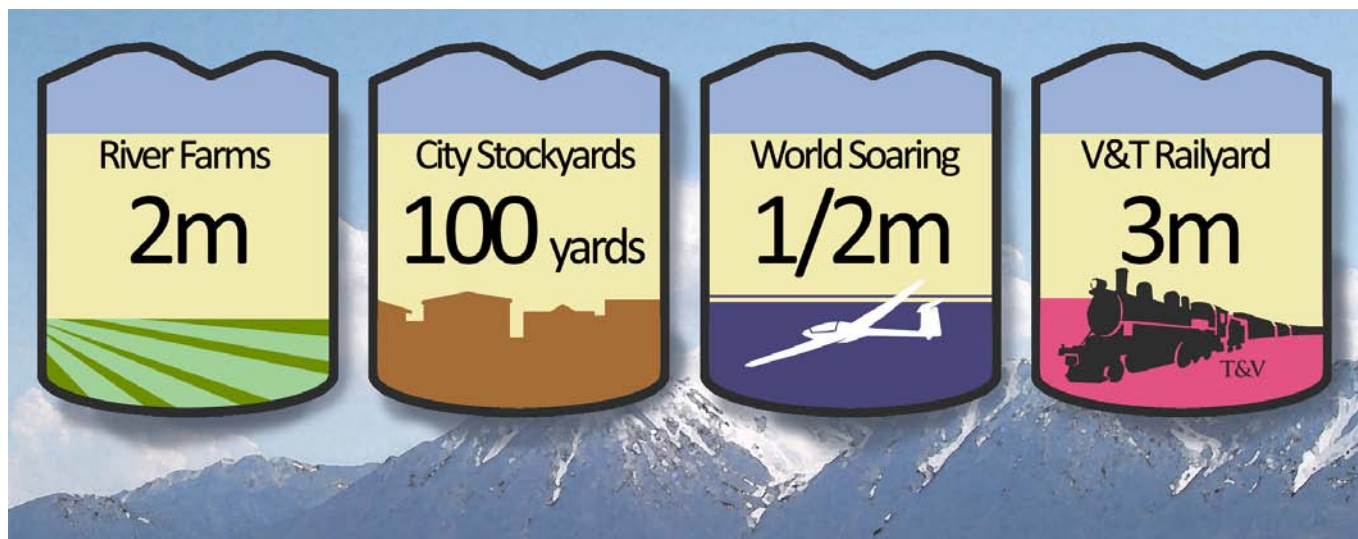
***Goal 1. Create authentic tourism experiences such as a Carson River Ranch.***

Resort ranches are an emerging trend appropriate for the Valley. The ranch could be associated with an existing resource such as Dangberg Ranch and the Carson River. The guest ranch offers an all-inclusive resort experience in the Valley’s natural setting. A diverse range of activities, accommodations, and services invite visitors to stay in the Valley.





*Signage program links tourism destinations throughout the Valley – promoting opportunities for personalized biking and motor tours.*



*A system of iconographic logos can tie into a regional signage program identifying tourism destinations. Coordinated marketing materials could include brochures, phone applications and passport books.*





*Dangberg Ranch.*



*Genoa's historic bar.*



*Mobile marketing developed by the Carson Valley Visitors Authority.*

***Goal 2. Coordinate a Valley-wide tourism signage program with the Carson Valley brand.***

Individually, the Valley's tourism components do not have significant draw to create a world class destination. As a whole, however, they offer the type of experience desired by many. As part of an overall branding and marketing strategy the different elements of history, culture, recreation, and environment can be packaged together to describe the overall Valley experience.

The concept would be to attract Lake Tahoe visitors to extend their stay for a day and spend it exploring the wonders of the Valley. A simple signage program can provide an easy way for tourists to recognize the destinations and help them have a cohesive, rich experience.



*Carson Valley branding developed by the Carson Valley Visitors Authority.*



***Goal 3. Expand tourism opportunities by continuing the V&T Railroad into the downtown area.***

At one time the V&T railroad connected Virginia City to Minden. This corridor can be reestablished and bring people right into the heart of the downtown area with stops along the way to further enhance the experience.



*The V&T railroad in Virginia City.*



*Bringing the V&T railroad into the Valley creates another tourist draw. Visitors are able to explore the region in a fun, entertaining way.*





*Planned image of Sports Aviation center.*



*Glider planes are a distinctive use in the Valley.*

***Goal 4. Gain international recognition for the Minden-Tahoe airport by creating a Soaring Center.***

The Minden-Tahoe Airport is home to many glider planes. A growing effort to expand the airport into a premier sport aviation destination builds upon this opportunity. The center could host international events and become an international learning center. This would provide both a destination and economic opportunity for the Valley.



***Goal 5. Enhance recreation and transportation connections to Lake Tahoe and Topaz Lake through highlighted trailheads and innovative alternative transportation, such as a gondola connection.***

Lake Tahoe is a national destination. The Valley can benefit from their proximity to the Lake through trail connections and continued transit.

Transit can be further promoted to visitors as a desirable way to access the Lake from the Valley and a way to access the Valley from the Lake. A gondola from David Walley's Hot Springs Resort to Lake Tahoe would create not only a transportation connection but also a destination experience. It could be a "must-do" activity for visitors to Lake Tahoe, thereby increasing Valley visitation.

***Goal 6. Celebrate community heritage through the development of community and cultural centers.***

Cultural meaning helps make the Valley a rich place to live and visit. The Basque restaurants along US 395 present an opportunity to create a special district that communicates the history and provides opportunities for a cultural center and events.

The Dresslerville colony and Tribal headquarters to the south of Gardnerville also offer opportunities to celebrate the Native American history of the area.



*Trail connections can link recreation opportunities in the Valley to Lake Tahoe.*



*Gondola transportation to and from the Carson Valley and Lake Tahoe can enhance visitation and improve air quality.*



*Promotion of connections to Topaz Lake and planned improvements and reinvestments can be made.*





*Local Basque restaurant.*



*A grouping of local Basque restaurants along US 395 provides an opportunity to develop a Basque cultural district and center in the area. Cultural events and history can be highlighted to create a special and memorable area along US 395.*



*The new Douglas County Community and Senior Center*



*Washoe ancestry: Molly Dressler and her child in the 1900's.*



*Washoe basket weaving.*



## Core Area: Transportation and Linkages

Pedestrian access is integral to creating distinctive destinations. Safe, convenient, and attractive streetscapes create opportunities for community interaction and stimulate main street economic development. Communities with well defined gateways and districts also create a lasting impression on visitors and contribute to a strong sense of place with which community residents can identify. The Transportation and Linkages Diagram illustrates the following goals:



*Existing streetscape.*

### ***Goal 1. Support downtown districts, community development, and the pedestrian experience by creating vibrant streetscapes.***

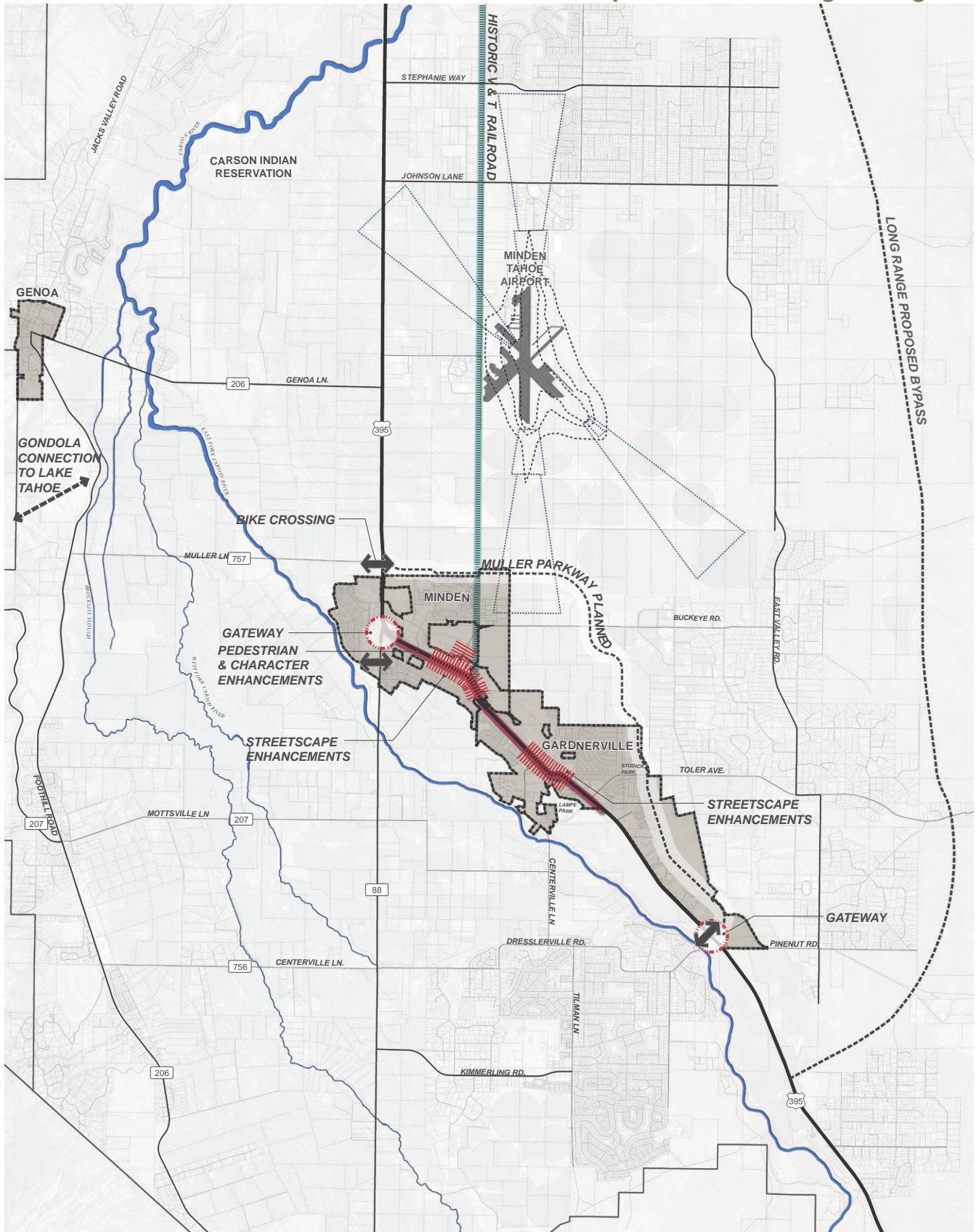
Adequate sidewalks, street trees for shade, and available parking are essential components for a vibrant streetscape. Additionally, communities can enhance walkability by identifying important local assets, such as natural features, historic districts or unique architectural design, and by developing strategies that use those assets to attract pedestrians to retail and restaurant venues.



*Simple and thoughtful streetscape enhancements can stimulate reinvestment and engender community pride.*



## Transportation & Linkages Diagram





## Core Area: Transportation and Linkages

### ***Goal 2. Address noise, air quality, congestion, and traffic safety issues by diverting large truck traffic out of downtown areas.***

Large truck traffic has a significant presence in downtown Minden and Gardnerville. Studies have evaluated the potential for a truck bypass route to be located in public lands east of town centers. This is likely to be a long range solution to help create a pedestrian friendly environment. A portion of the local traffic volumes may also be served by the planned Muller Parkway.

Intermediate opportunities can focus on working with NDOT to create districts where streetscape and road diet improvements may occur. The two districts shown on the Transportation & Linkages Diagram are associated with The Silos District/Old Town Minden District and the Basque District between Gilman Avenue and Toler Avenue. Narrowing the roadway, widening sidewalks and concentrating infill can occur in these districts. Simple pedestrian and character enhancements can be made along the remainder of US 395 in Minden and Gardnerville such as consolidating curb cuts, undergrounding utilities, enhancing landscape areas, and providing areas for seating and outdoor space. Study of similar communities with a bypass reveals the importance of establishing a vibrant town center business area prior to bypass construction. Evidence shows that downtown areas seen as community destinations prior to bypass development can be even more successful after a bypass is constructed. Planning and help for business transitions is key.



*Streetscape enhancements and roadway improvements can be focused in identified districts.*





*Gateways, such as seen in Carmel, Indiana, can create a significant entry statement into a downtown or business district.*

**Goal 3. Encourage local and visitor traffic to downtown areas through aesthetic improvements to town entries and development of clear, inviting gateways and wayfinding.**

Gateways establish first impressions for visitors and can reinforce community pride for residents. Their importance, along with a coordinated system of clear, inviting wayfinding, rises with the development of a truck bypass.

The gateway should be located at key decision points and create a simple, elegant image that draws new and repeat visitors into downtown. Enhanced visual quality at community entries increases the likelihood of visitors choosing to explore the community. Wayfinding supports that image and clearly directs visitors to business districts.

Although there has not been extensive research on community gateways and signage, in some instances findings from studies on business signage can be extrapolated to how people consider community signage.

For example, according to a FedEx Office 2012 survey, 76% of people have entered a store simply because the sign caught their interest. In contrast, no signage and bad signage can significantly deter customers from entering a store. Three out of five customers think a sign reflects the quality of a store's products and services. Nine out of ten people will try a business' product or service when the sign is easy to read (clarity of message and no extra verbage).



*Simple wayfinding signs can highlight special business district areas.*



*Successful gateway signage should be simple, elegant, and of appropriate size to be viewed by motorists.*

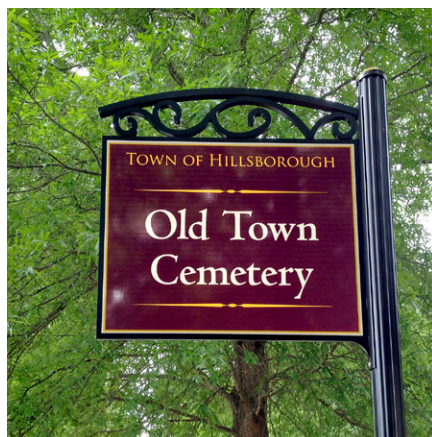
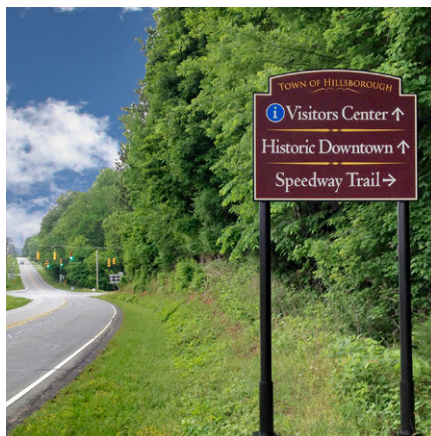


## Core Area: Transportation and Linkages

- Patriotic
- Tourism logo shape
- White, colonial style poles tie in the county's architecture and work well with existing municipality gateway signs



*Coordinated wayfinding systems create a visual harmony and ease of navigation.*



*Consistent, well-designed signage programs can reinforce branding and community character.*



# 4

## Implementation

Completed & Ongoing Efforts

Methods & Funding Opportunities



### Examples of Completed & Ongoing Efforts

*Martin Slough Nature Trail  
Genoa Vista Trail (1.3 miles)*

*Genoa Foothill Trail System  
(more than 16 miles)*

*Fay-Luther and Job's Peak  
Ranch Trail System (9 miles)*

*Bently-Kirman Tract Trail (3  
miles)*

*River Fork Ranch Trail  
System (3 miles)*

*Clear Creek Trail under  
construction (9 miles)*

*Bently-Kirman Field  
partnership with Nature  
Conservancy and  
Bently Agrowdynamics.  
Conservation easement  
protects over 1000 acres &  
4 miles of the Carson River*

*Clear Creek: partnership  
between Nature  
Conservancy and Clear  
Creek Tahoe, 853 acre  
easement*

*River Fork Ranch: 800 acre-  
working cattle ranch and  
nature preserve owned by  
the Nature Conservancy*

### Implementation of Core Area: Trails, Open Space & Visual Resource Protection

#### ***Goal 1. Establish a diversified network of trails to link downtown areas to local and regional destinations.***

Opportunities:

- Complete the Martin Slough Nature Trail to provide water quality improvement and connect Minden and Gardnerville.
- Link parks, commercial nodes, public facilities and residential areas with shared use paths.

#### ***Goal 2. Enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety at key crossing locations along major roads.***

Opportunities:

- Identify and improve key pedestrian crossings along US 395 and Hwy 88.

#### ***Goal 3. Expand recreation access by connecting residents and visitors to the regional trail system.***

Opportunities:

- Support a valley-wide recreation trails network.
- Highlight access to public lands through the creation of trailhead connections.
- Ensure access to regional trails is considered during future transportation projects.

#### ***Goal 4. Protect critical lands that retain the rural quality of the community, support working land and preserve natural resources and systems.***

Opportunities:

- Identify and protect an additional 15,000 acres of land.
- Protect scenic viewsheds along US 395 and Hwy 88 and at gateway locations to Minden and Gardnerville.

### ***Methods & Funding Mechanisms***

#### ***Planned Development Overlay District (Douglas County)***

Allows increased residential density in a large scale development that sets aside at least 25% of the site as open space (developed park or restoration).

#### ***Urban Service Areas (Douglas County)***

Promotes higher density residential and intense retail and office to be located in Urban Service Areas and identifies infill sites and Receiving Areas (adjacent to areas with urban density & existing public utilities & require TDRs).

#### ***Transfer Development Rights (TDR) Program (Douglas County)***

TDR is a voluntary program that enables sending property owners to retain ownership and use of property consistent with a conservation easement (continue to use land for agriculture & open space).



### ***State Parks Land and Water Conservation Grant***

A federal program providing matching grants to states and through the states to local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. The Land and Water Conservation Fund assistance is provided on a 50/50 matching basis to individual projects.

### ***State Parks Rec Trails Program (RTP)***

The program provides funding for all kinds of recreational trail uses, such as pedestrian uses (hiking, running, wheelchair use), bicycling, in-line skating, equestrian use, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding, four-wheel driving, or using other off-road motorized vehicles.

### ***MAP-21 Funding Programs***

A federal program administered through NDOT in the form of: Transportation Alternative Program (TAP), Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Operating Assistance (CMAQ), Surface Transportation Program (STP), Section 402 (highway safety funds).

### ***Federal Lands Bill***

As of September 20th the bill has been introduced in the US Senate and is waiting on the House. If approved, the bill would help fund open space protection through proceeds raised from the sale of U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands determined no longer useful in Douglas County.

### ***Conservation Bond Program, Question 1 (Nevada Division of State Lands)***

A voter approved initiative that authorized the State of Nevada to issue general obligation bonds and the proceeds were to provide grants for state agencies, local governments or qualifying private nonprofit organizations "...to preserve water quality; protect open space, lakes, rivers, wetlands, and wildlife habitat; and restore and improve parks, recreational areas, and historic and cultural resources."

### ***Section 319h Grants (Environmental Protection Agency)***

Provides funding for watershed planning and water quality improvement.

### ***Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (Natural Resources Conservation Service)***

The Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP) provides matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farm and ranchland in agricultural uses.

### ***Wetlands Reserve Program (Natural Resources Conservation Service)***

Easement and restoration cost-share agreements to conserve, restore or enhance wetland functions and values.

### ***Additional Methods***

- Co-location of facilities
- Opt-out/opt-in programs
- Donations or endowments
- Coordination with other organizations
- Easements
- Development Code trail corridor development & connectivity provisions or in lieu payment

## Examples of Completed & Ongoing Efforts

**COD Garage Renovation**  
(*\$3.1 million casino renovation*)

**Genoa Main Street Project**  
(*\$1.65 million investment to create a pedestrian friendly downtown*)

**Main Street Gardnerville**  
(*develops and implements an economic strategy to distinguish Downtown as a successful commercial corridor, to provide sustainable business opportunities for the merchants and to create job opportunities.*)

**Agricultural Innovation**  
(*Bently Ranch is maximizing agricultural production through efficient resource use*)

**Digital-395** (a new 583-mile fiber network that replaces outdated telecommunications infrastructure)

## New Employment and Economic Opportunities

### ***Goal 1. Innovate local food and agriculture production as a means to preserve the region's agricultural heritage.***

Opportunities:

- Develop a branding strategy that distinguishes the quality of locally grown products and increases market demand.
- Promote the use of locally grown products as parts of other industries including restaurants, regional farmers markets and community shared agriculture.
- Evaluate alternative agriculture practices to take advantage of high-desert farming technology.

### ***Goal 2. Recruit, retain and expand employment opportunities through the advancement and expansion of existing technology clusters.***

Opportunities:

- Leverage the success of existing technology parks to attract interconnected businesses.
- Utilize the region's proximity to outdoor recreation to attract adventure sport equipment manufacturers and outfitters.

### ***Goal 3. Develop a health and wellness industry with a compatible active adult community.***

Opportunities:

- Leverage the rural lifestyle and abundant recreation resources desired by retired adults.

### ***Goal 4. Revitalize downtowns with infill development and a mix of uses and amenities.***

Opportunities:

- Enhance the streetscape environment and focus future investment to better define key downtown districts (Silos District, Old Town Gardnerville and Historic Minden).
- Repurpose existing buildings of significance to act as catalysts for future economic development (Creamery Building, grain silos, Farmers Bank and Copeland Lumber Building).

## Methods & Funding Mechanisms

### ***Business Improvement District/Benefit Assessment District***

A business improvement district (BID) is a defined area within which businesses pay an additional tax (or levy) in order to fund projects within the district's boundaries. BIDs provide services, such as cleaning streets, providing security, making capital improvements, construction of pedestrian and streetscape enhancements, and marketing the area.



### ***TIF (Tax Increment Financing)***

TIF is a mechanism to capture the net new or incremental taxes that are created when a vacant or underutilized property is redeveloped and use those revenues to help finance the project. Revenue generated by the TIF may be used to help finance infrastructure, open spaces, and historical preservation to assist with redeveloping the site.

### ***National Trust for Historic Preservation***

Provides grant funding to support the efforts of non-profit organization to preserve and protect important community places through preservation planning and educational projects.

### ***National Trust Community Investment Corporation (NTIC)***

The National Trust Community Investment Corporation (NTCIC) makes equity investments in real estate projects nationwide that qualify for Federal and state historic tax credits, Low-Income Housing, New Markets and solar tax credits. NTCIC works with a wide variety of property owners including for-profit developers, nonprofit organizations and local governments.

### ***Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBEG) program (U.S. Department of Agriculture)***

The RBEG program provides grants for rural projects that finance and facilitate development of small and emerging rural businesses that help fund distance learning networks, and help fund employment related adult education programs. Generally grants range \$10,000 up to \$500,000. Rural public entities (towns, communities, State agencies, and authorities), Indian tribes and rural private non-profit corporations are eligible to apply for funding.

### ***Rural Energy for America(REAP) Program (U.S. Department of Agriculture)***

REAP creates opportunities for economic development for rural businesses by supporting renewable energy and energy efficiency projects, via loan guarantees and grants. The program provides assistance to qualified applicants to finance renewable energy (renewable biomass, anaerobic digesters, geothermal for electric generation, geothermal for direct use, hydroelectric (30 megawatts or less), hydrogen, small and large wind, small and large solar and ocean (including tidal, wave, current, and thermal) and energy efficiency projects.

### ***Nevada Small Business Development Center***

A statewide business assistance outreach program of the University of Nevada, Reno, College of Business. We provide a wide variety of technical assistance to support Nevada Business. The purpose of the Nevada Small Business Development Center is to guide and assist entrepreneurs in starting and growing their businesses in today's dynamic market.

### ***Rural Nevada Development Corporation Loans***

A non-profit development corporation that serves rural counties. It lends to small businesses in need of expansion or start-up financing in rural communities.

### ***Nevada Commission on Economic Development***

Supports resource programs to help businesses. Includes the Rural Community Development program; relocation and expansion assistance; site selection assistance; training to find, bid, and acquire federal, state, and local contracts; and international expansion assistance.

### ***Silver State Opportunities Fund***

Manages \$50 million of capital dedicated to investing in compelling businesses located in Nevada to generate funds for the state's Permanent School Fund.

## Examples of Completed & Ongoing Efforts

*Genoa Main Street improvements*

*Dangberg Home Ranch Historic Park established*

*Initial planning and development of Soaring Center at Minden-Tahoe airport*

*Trail development and connections to Tahoe Rim Trail*

*Carson Valley Community and Senior Center*

*Regional Arts Center preparing feasibility study*

*Carson Valley Visitors Authority development of Valley Brand*

*Implementation of a mobile visitors center*

## Implementation of Core Area: Tourism Destinations and Connections

### ***Goal 1. Create authentic tourism experiences such as a Carson River Ranch.***

Opportunities:

- Identify existing resources that can be developed into an all-inclusive resort ranch experience, such as the Dangberg Ranch.
- Create a diverse range of activities, accommodations, and services invite visitors to stay in the Valley.

### ***Goal 2. Coordinate a Valley-wide tourism signage program with the Carson Valley brand.***

Opportunities:

- Coordinate a Valley-wide tourism signage program with the Carson Valley brand.
- Create a biking/driving tour linking valley destinations.
- Attract Lake Tahoe visitors to the Valley.

### ***Goal 3. Expand tourism opportunities by continuing the V&T Railroad into the downtown area.***

Opportunities:

- Extend the V&T Railroad from Carson City to downtown Minden.
- Utilize existing right-of-way/historic railroad alignment.
- Coordinate improvements with development of historic districts.
- Bring visitors into the heart of downtown while connecting them to area history.

### ***Goal 4. Gain international recognition for the Minden-Tahoe airport by creating a Soaring Center.***

Opportunities:

- Host world-class, international events.
- Create a year-round learning center.
- Create a soaring museum and auxiliary elements to develop a renowned destination.

### ***Goal 5. Enhance recreation and transportation connections to Lake Tahoe and Topaz Lake through highlighted trailheads and innovative alternative transportation, such as a gondola connection.***

Opportunities:

- Highlight trailheads and trail connectivity through signage and marketing.
- Complete a regional trail network linking Carson Valley to Lake Tahoe and to Topaz Lake.
- Host events that highlight community recreation resources.
- Create a gondola connection from Walley's Hot Springs to Lake Tahoe.



***Goal 6. Celebrate community heritage through the development of community and cultural centers.***

Opportunities:

- Develop a “Basque District” in the downtown area to highlight the existing group of Basque restaurants.
- Develop a Basque Cultural Arts Center to honor and celebrate the area’s cultural heritage.
- Coordinate with the Washoe Tribe and Dresslerville Indian Colony to establish a Native American Cultural Center to celebrate and honor the Native American history of the area.
- Conduct a feasibility analysis of the County Fairground complex to determine the viability for expansion and development of a Fairground and Expo Center.

***Methods & Funding Mechanisms***

***National Trust for Historic Preservation Grants***

Connects communities to funding and grant opportunities for activities such as revitalization, heritage tourism, and the preservation and reuse of historic resources. Designations of “historic district” can provide additional funding opportunities.

***Nevada State Historic Preservation Office***

The agency works to educate the public about the importance of our cultural heritage so that Nevada’s historic and archaeological properties are preserved, interpreted, and reused for their economic, educational, and intrinsic values and for future generations to appreciate.

***Community Services Foundation***

Supports community centers and senior centers in Douglas County.

***Nevada Commission on Tourism Grant Programs***

Manages a Marketing Grant Program to help the rural communities of Nevada market their towns to potential visitors around the world in an effort to generate overnight stays.

***Additional Methods***

- Funding sources and mechanisms listed in the previous New Employment and Economic Opportunities section
- Opt-in/Opt-out programs
- Donations or endowments
- Public/private partnerships

## Examples of Completed & Ongoing Efforts

*Long-range truck bypass identified in 2011 Master Plan*

*Main Street Gardnerville*

*Minden Street Tree Program*

*Genoa Main Street Landscape Enhancements*

*Minden Gateway landscape improvements (funding previously secured)*

*Defined street light aesthetic*

## Benefits of Street Trees & Streetscape Enhancements

*Property value increases of 5-18% with tree-lined streets*

*Shoppers willing to pay up to 11% more for goods and services in a well-landscaped business district*

*Trees reduce noise, improve air quality, and reduce urban heat islands*

*Trees provide energy savings by shading buildings, lowering summertime temperatures, and reducing wind speeds*

## Implementation of Core Area: Transportation and Linkages

***Goal 1. Support downtown districts, community development, and the pedestrian experience by creating vibrant streetscapes.***

Opportunities:

- Extend the Main Street Gardnerville program to Minden.
- Underground utilities.
- Create area-wide/shared parking strategies to reduce curb cuts and facilitate commercial reinvestment.
- Develop a facade rehabilitation/renovation program.
- Activate the streetscape through pedestrian amenities, mixed-uses, extended business hours, and coordinated signage and branding.

***Goal 2. Address noise, air quality, congestion, and traffic safety issues by diverting large truck traffic out of downtown areas.***

Opportunities:

- Identify truck bypass location to allow for a clear vision of the future and promote continued investment.
- Identify businesses that would struggle with truck bypass (service-based businesses) and develop strategies to help them relocate.
- Create a vital downtown business core – develop a critical mass of businesses and services.
  - » Invest in public improvements.
  - » Focus on infill and revitalization of core business district.
  - » Provide authentic places where people can share experiences with others and enjoy cultural amenities, dining, and community programming and entertainment for a variety of ages in a vibrant, outdoor ambience.
  - » Support public art and “destination-type” plazas.
  - » Develop a Downtown Market Analysis & Business Development Plan.
  - » Develop a Downtown Parking Analysis & Management Plan.
  - » Identify opportunity sites.
  - » Improve business signage – create a sign replacement program.
  - » Create a façade improvement program. Evaluate the potential to provide free design assistance.
- Create a streetscape improvement plan to address post-bypass conditions.
  - » Narrow/reduce travel lanes
  - » Create on-street parking
- Create a consolidated branding and marketing effort for the downtown area.
- Establish clear and engaging gateways and wayfinding signage.
- Identify & focus on a balance of short- and long-term projects.
- Provide support for catalyst projects in downtown area.
- Help businesses create business plans to address transition time & post-conditions.
  - » Communicate clearly and regularly. Help businesses do the same for customers.



### ***Bypass Case Studies:***

The effect of bypasses on rural communities has been studied by a number of entities. Results typically show improvements in overall economic viability for downtown areas. This is especially true if the downtown has planned for the bypass, established a vibrant downtown destination, shifted service-related businesses from downtown to near the bypass, and incorporated gateways, signage, and marketing to draw people to existing business centers.

- Redmond, Oregon
- Lincoln, California
- Newberg-Dundee, Oregon
- Livermore, California

### ***Goal 3. Encourage local and visitor traffic to downtown areas through aesthetic improvements to town entries and development of clear, inviting gateways and wayfinding.***

Opportunities:

- Establish clear gateway signage and wayfinding signage at key motorists' decision points.
- Enhance aesthetics at community entries.
- Identify business districts.
- Use landmarks and sight lines to reinforce wayfinding.
- Use signage to convey a positive community image and encourage exploration of the downtown businesses.

### ***Methods & Funding Mechanisms***

#### ***National Highway Performance Program (NHPP)***

Under MAP-21, the NHPP is authorized at an average of \$182 million per year for Nevada to support the condition and performance of the NHS, for the construction of new facilities on the NHS, and to ensure that investments of Federal-aid funds in highway construction are directed to support progress toward the achievement of performance targets established in an asset management plan of a State for the NHS. As of April 2013, initial steps towards development of a statewide Asset Management Plan for Nevada are currently underway.

#### ***Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)***

The CMAQ program, continued in MAP-21 at an average annual funding level of \$31 million for Nevada, provides a flexible funding source to the State and its local governments for transportation projects and programs to help meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. Funding is available to reduce congestion and improve air quality for areas that do not meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone, carbon monoxide, or particulate matter (nonattainment areas) as well as former nonattainment areas that are now in compliance (maintenance areas).

#### ***NDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)***

MAP-21 establishes a new program to provide for a variety of alternative transportation projects that were previously eligible activities under separately funded programs. Nevada has elected to spend a certain portion of the funding on Recreational Trails. Eligible activities include:

- Transportation alternatives (new definition incorporates many transportation enhancement activities)
- Recreational trails program (program remains unchanged)
- Safe routes to schools program
- Planning, designing, or constructing roadways within the right-of way of former Interstate routes or other divided highways.

#### ***NDOT Landscape Community Match Program***

Provided to help communities add landscape and aesthetic treatments to existing State highways ("retrofitting"). The program provides for a variety of projects, such as landscaping, scenic beautification, transportation art, and community gate-

ways that may not be covered by other funding programs. These matching funds are provided in addition to other cost sharing or enhancement programs through NDOT, such as the Transportation Alternatives Program, or the Federal Government.

### ***TIGER Discretionary Grants***

This appropriation is similar, but not identical to the appropriation for the “TIGER” program authorized and implemented pursuant to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (the “Recovery Act”). Because of the similarity in program structure, DOT will continue to refer to the program as “TIGER Discretionary Grants.” As with previous rounds of TIGER, funds for the FY 2013 TIGER program are to be awarded on a competitive basis for projects that will have a significant impact on the Nation, a metropolitan area or a region.

The Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery, or TIGER Discretionary Grant program, provides a unique opportunity for the U.S. Department of Transportation to invest in road, rail, transit and port projects that promise to achieve critical national objectives. US 395 i from Canada to Reno is listed as a high priority corridor. Regional highway improvements may warrant extending that designation further south and through Douglas County.

TIGER’s highly competitive process, galvanized by tremendous applicant interest, allowed DOT to fund 51 innovative capital projects in TIGER I, and an additional 42 capital projects in TIGER II. TIGER II also featured a new Planning Grant category and 33 planning projects were also funded through TIGER II. In the FY 2011 round of TIGER Grants, DOT awarded 46 capital projects in 33 states and Puerto Rico. The FY 2012 round of TIGER Grants, DOT awarded 47 capital projects in 34 states and the District of Columbia. Each project is multi-modal, multi-jurisdictional or otherwise challenging to fund through existing programs. The TIGER program enables DOT to use a rigorous process to select projects with exceptional benefits, explore ways to deliver projects faster and save on construction costs, and make investments in our Nation’s infrastructure that make communities more livable and sustainable.

### ***National Main Street Center (Main Street Programs)***

A nonprofit subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation that provides research and resources to establish Main Street programs for preservation-based revitalization of commercial districts.

### ***Additional Methods***

- Funding sources and mechanisms listed in the previous New Employment and Economic Opportunities section
- Funding sources and mechanisms listed in the previous Tourism Destinations and Connections section
- In-kind right-of-way donations
- Private sponsors
- Opt-in/Opt-out programs
- Donations and endowments
- Business Improvement District/Benefit Assessment District
- Public/private partnerships