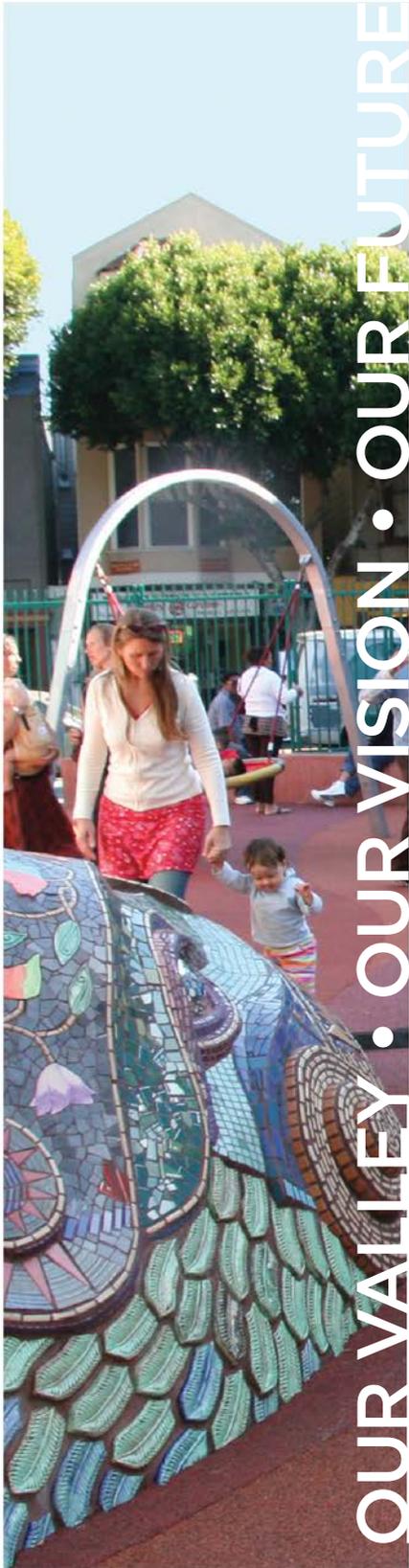




**SOUTHERN NEVADA STRONG**



JANUARY 2015



OUR VALLEY • OUR VISION • OUR FUTURE



**SOUTHERN NEVADA STRONG**  
 regional plan

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A large, stylized sunburst graphic in shades of orange and red, composed of numerous triangular rays of varying lengths and orientations, creating a dynamic, sun-like effect. The rays are layered, with some appearing more prominent than others, giving it a three-dimensional feel.

SOUTHERN NEVADA STRONG  
regional plan

# Acknowledgements



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Our region competed nationally and was chosen to receive funding through the Partnership for Sustainable Communities Initiative, an interagency partnership of HUD, Department of Transportation and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This collaborative initiative works to integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation options, and infrastructure to support and empower local communities. Southern Nevada was afforded this opportunity as a region that not only demonstrated need but, moreover, the desire and ability to implement change.

The City of Henderson led and managed this project on behalf of the Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition (SNRPC). The project team represented the interests of the entire region, and worked with representatives from local governments and agencies throughout the valley. The final Plan will be subject to adoption by the SNRPC and all member agencies in early 2015.

The Consortium Committee advised the development of the Southern Nevada Strong Regional Plan and supporting activities. They are supported by six Task Groups focusing on particular areas (including housing, environment, economic development and education, transportation, healthy communities, and public engagement and equity) and ensured public input was incorporated into the process.

**The project is leveraged by resources and in-kind matching funds from 13 regional partners to the Consortium. Consortium partners include:**



# THANK YOU!





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# regional plan

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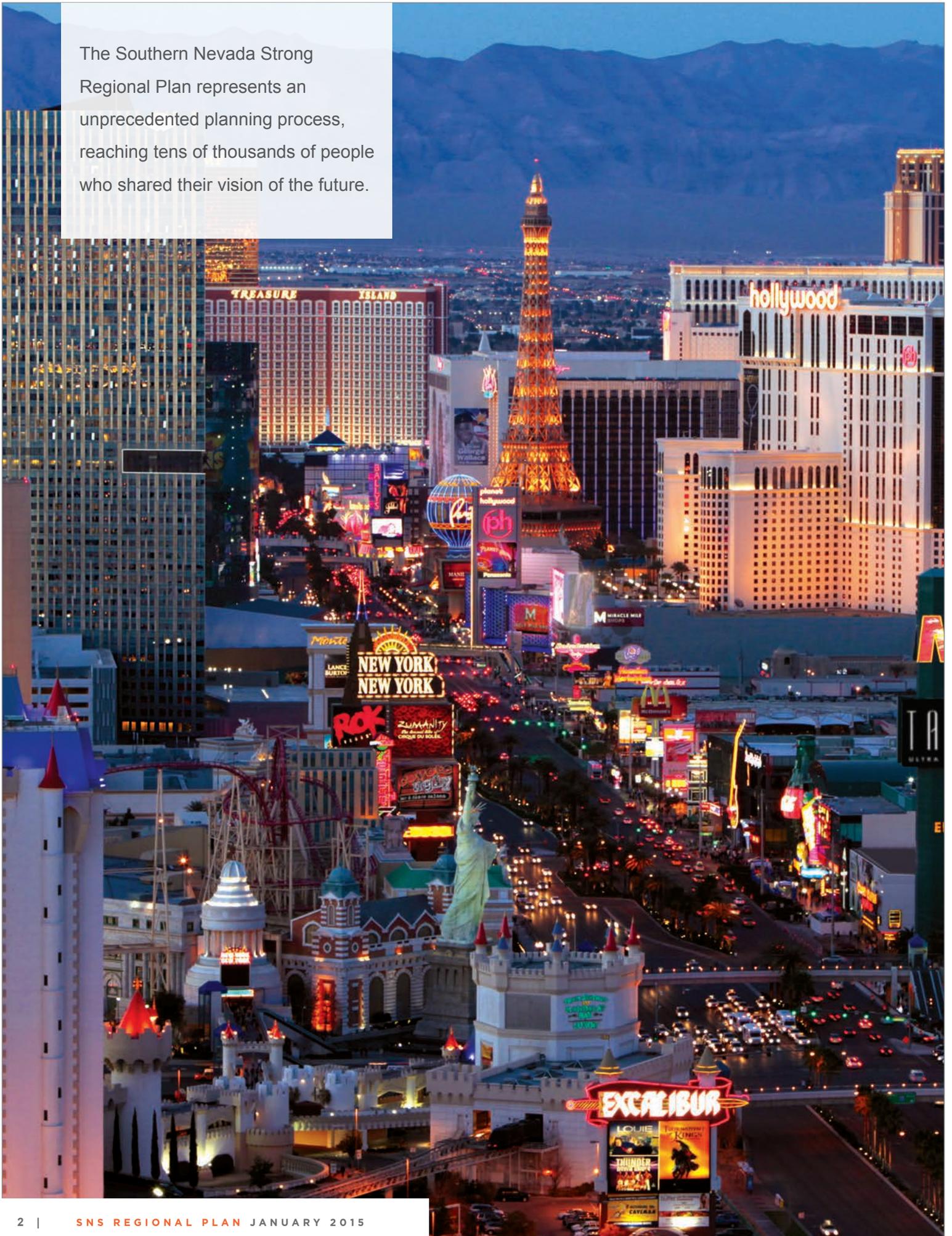
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CHAPTER ONE

# Plan Summary

The Southern Nevada Strong Regional Plan represents an unprecedented planning process, reaching tens of thousands of people who shared their vision of the future.





## Plan Summary

**Southern Nevada has weathered extremes. A decade-long economic boom brought rapid rates of population growth that were among the highest in the nation, and a deep recession brought the country's highest rates of foreclosure and unemployment.**

During this volatility, the impacts of uncoordinated growth became evident around the region: limited choices for housing and transportation, unhealthy neighborhoods, fewer living-wage jobs, and widespread impacts from the sharp decline of the residential construction market and gaming industry.

**In response, we came together as a region to envision a better future that recognizes the critical role of our built environment in all aspects of community life.** We embarked on a broad effort to engage the public, collaborate across the region, and develop a vision for future development.

We were among a select few communities in the United States chosen to set a course for economic recovery through improved regional coordination. **The result of that effort is the Southern Nevada Strong Regional Plan.**

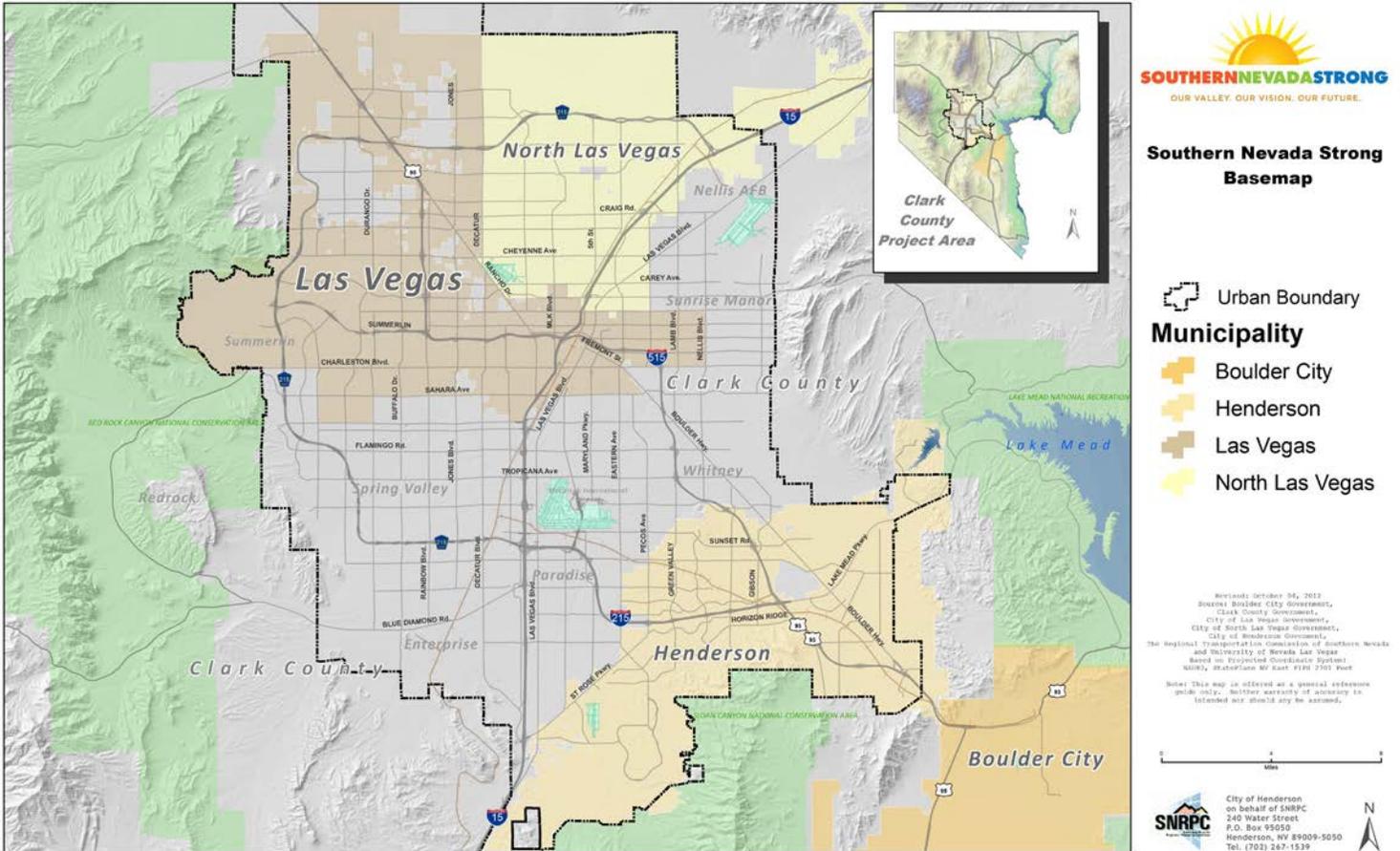
During our outreach, residents consistently described a future in which their children could stay in Southern Nevada, obtain the job of their choice, and raise their own families here. They want a wide variety of jobs; great public education; stable, strong neighborhoods; diverse housing options; access to transit; urban and recreational amenities; and opportunities to participate in decision-making.

This Regional Plan recognizes that achieving these outcomes requires change. We need unprecedented regional collaboration to realize the vision that reflects the aspirations of Southern Nevadans.



People across the region weighed-in on new ideas presented for future development. The feedback was used to develop the vision and Regional Plan.

Figure 1: SNS Regional Plan Base Map




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“GRACIAS POR PREOCUPARSE POR NUESTRA COMUNIDAD.”

“THANKS FOR CARING ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY.”

---

– PUBLIC OUTREACH PARTICIPANT

The Regional Plan relies on continued regional collaboration to be achieved. The primary organizations responsible for maintaining momentum and implement strategies outlined in the Plan include: all local governments, the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada (RTC), UNLV, the Southern Nevada Regional Housing Authority, the Southern

Nevada Water Authority (SNWA), the Clark County School District, the Southern Nevada Health District and the Conservation District of Southern Nevada, and the dozens of people and organizations who participated in Task Groups. All implementation roles are identified specifically in the Southern Nevada Strong Implementation Matrix.

## 1.1 NEED FOR THE REGIONAL PLAN

Southern Nevadans take pride in the region and value its unique attributes, including the climate, combination of urban and rural amenities, 24-hour lifestyle, relative affordability, ethnic diversity, and a strong entrepreneurial spirit. However, the region also faces serious challenges that impact regional prosperity and quality of life.

### Uncoordinated Growth and Disconnected Land Uses

Over the past 20 years, Southern Nevada was among the fastest growing regions in the nation. This rapid rate of development brought prosperity and opportunity to many, but it also created challenges. As our communities grew, our local governments did not collaborate at the regional level to strategically guide growth and development.

As a result, we have disjointed land-use patterns that negatively impact residents. These land-use patterns create longer commutes and make it more difficult or time-consuming to access services and amenities. Much of our development has occurred on the edges of cities and the region and most new homes are single-family structures in subdivisions that are expensive to serve with infrastructure, and offer limited

transportation and housing choices. This development makes it harder for residents to find appropriate housing and contributes to the growing disparity in access to jobs, transit service, quality public schools, health care and other services.

The rapid and extended population growth over the past 20 years has put pressure on natural resources and public sector funding for infrastructure, social service, and schools. If development continues as it has in the past, our current challenges will only continue to get worse. We also will miss the opportunity to use remaining developable land in a way that creates healthy, desirable neighborhoods with deliberate and efficient connections between jobs, transit and housing. If we fail to create these types of places in our region, we will lose out economically if employers and residents elect to invest in other, more livable places.

### Economic Volatility and Over-Reliance on Gaming, Tourism and Construction

The Southern Nevada region particularly was hard-hit by the recession and slow economic recovery. Because our region relies heavily on a few industries that declined quickly during the recession, many residents lost wages and jobs. The subsequent



Decades of auto-centric development and land use patterns are one of the primary challenges facing our region.

Coordinating land use and new growth will give more people in the region better access to health care facilities and parks, as well as other amenities.





New and existing housing should have convenient connections to transit, as well as sidewalks and bike facilities, that support a diversity of lifestyles and make it easier to get to work, school, health care facilities, or other destinations.

housing crisis affected thousands of families who lost their homes as they became unable to pay rent or mortgages and housing values plummeted. Changes in the housing market had region-wide impacts on many sectors, and our service-focused economy shrank drastically as national spending declined.

Our economic challenges are compounded by the mismatch between current zoning and the needs of both target industries and small businesses that form the basis for our economy. We have focused development in strip commercial

areas, rather than the region's traditional downtowns and neighborhood centers which tend to attract workers in the region's target industries.

### Social Disparities and Vulnerable Communities

While Southern Nevada experienced tremendous economic growth for several decades, many communities did not benefit equally from economic advances and were less able to weather the national recession in 2008. The economic downturn revealed many vulnerabilities and inequities in the region.

Today there remain significant disparities in income and educational attainment by race and ethnicity. Similar to the rest of the United States, White and Asian students are more likely than Black and Hispanic students to graduate high school and to complete a bachelor's or advanced degree. Annual incomes are also higher among White and Asian households. Overall, nearly one-quarter of the region's children live in poverty (compared with 22 percent nationally in 2012), and one-third of the region's households make less than \$35,000 per year (which is slightly lower than the national rate of 35 percent).

Geographic disparities also exist across the region. Analysis by census tract shows lower-income areas clustered in and around downtown Las Vegas, while more prosperous and well-educated households tend to live toward the urban fringe.

A critical piece of creating inclusive communities is the ability of vulnerable populations to participate in civic processes. Often these populations are the least active participants in policy decisions that will impact them the most. Factors such as income, availability of childcare, and access to affordable transportation can have a significant impact on a resident's ability to participate in public processes.

### Continued Growth and Changing Demographics

Without regional collaboration, continued public engagement, and new patterns of development, the region will not be well-positioned to compete with other regions from across the country for the new jobs and workers that will create prosperity. Although our economy and housing market slowed considerably in recent years, the region will keep growing. By the year 2030, Southern Nevada is

forecast to add nearly 866,000 residents. The new population will continue to diversify, and new development patterns will need to respond to the needs of the new population. Minorities now make up over half of the region's total population. The Hispanic population alone is projected to comprise 52 percent of the total population by 2050.<sup>2</sup> The non-White population is expected to slightly decrease, from 21 percent in 2015 to 19 percent in 2050. The population over age 65 is projected to increase as a percentage of the total population from 2015 to 2050 (from 13 percent in 2015 to 23 percent in 2050<sup>3</sup>), while other age groups are projected to decrease.

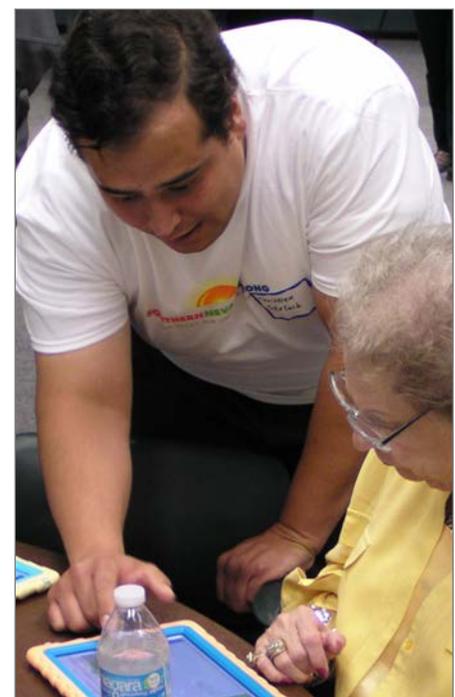
## 1.2 A VISION FOR CHANGE: A PATH TO PROSPERITY

The purpose of Southern Nevada Strong is to develop regional support for long-term economic success and stronger communities by integrating reliable transportation, quality housing for all income levels, and job opportunities throughout Southern Nevada.



Open houses, surveys and interviews with residents and stakeholders helped to identify the important aspects of our community worth preserving, as well as key issues and concerns about the future.

Using creative techniques, the Southern Nevada Strong team worked to engage a diversity of people representing many different walks of life and abilities. Below, an online survey is presented to open house participants via an iPad.



## Outreach by the Numbers: Nearly 70,000



Map-based exercises along with input from visual preference surveys were used to capture key ideas from the community.



This Plan is the culmination of unprecedented regional collaboration, expert input, and community engagement. We've received input from a variety of audiences. The list below highlights methods, audiences, and participation.

OUTREACH ACTIVITY	APPROX. NUMBER OF INPUTS
SNS Kick Off and Summit Events	400
QuickTap Surveys (Phase I)	850
Online Survey (Phases II and III)	5,000
Statistically Valid Phone Survey	1,000
Spanish-Speaking Intercept Surveys at Local Events (Phase II)	1,000
Telephone Town Hall (English and Spanish)	5,000
Facebook and Twitter	900
Open Houses and Visual Preference Surveys	550
Focus Groups	150
Interviews with Residents and Community Leaders	150
Task Group Member Inputs	680
Consortium Committee Meeting Inputs	150
Dynamic Documents Review Tool	80
Phase 3 Targeted Spanish Outreach	750 surveys
Capacity Building Events	400
E-blast Communication	2,600 subscribers
Targeted Mailers	8,000+ households
Targeted Flyer Distribution	40,000+ households
Public Relations Impressions	Numerous

### ***Our regional vision for the future:***

In 2035, the Southern Nevada region has a strong entrepreneurial spirit sustaining its high quality of life. This vibrant, unique region is characterized by a resilient economy, excellent educational opportunities, urban and natural amenities, and integrated transportation networks.

The regional vision was developed through comprehensive and strategic community outreach, including efforts to engage and activate traditionally under-represented community groups. By engaging as many people as possible, we can better understand the issues, concerns and general priorities for the Southern Nevada community. Initial outreach identified the region's positive attributes, concerns and issues, and a vision for the future.

Subsequent outreach further explored community priorities and helped to identify opportunity sites and preferred development types. The third phase of outreach asked specific questions about infrastructure, transit, and what the public thought the opportunity sites should look and feel like.

Southern Nevadans shared that the greatest challenges locally are a wide range of employment opportunities, quality education, health, housing and transportation.

#### **Southern Nevadans support a region characterized by:**

- A diversified economy with a wide range of job opportunities;
- High-quality educational systems for youth and the workforce;
- A multi-modal, well-connected transit system;
- Housing options for all preferences and budgets;
- Strong social service networks and high-quality health care;
- Communities that are safe, desirable and engaged.

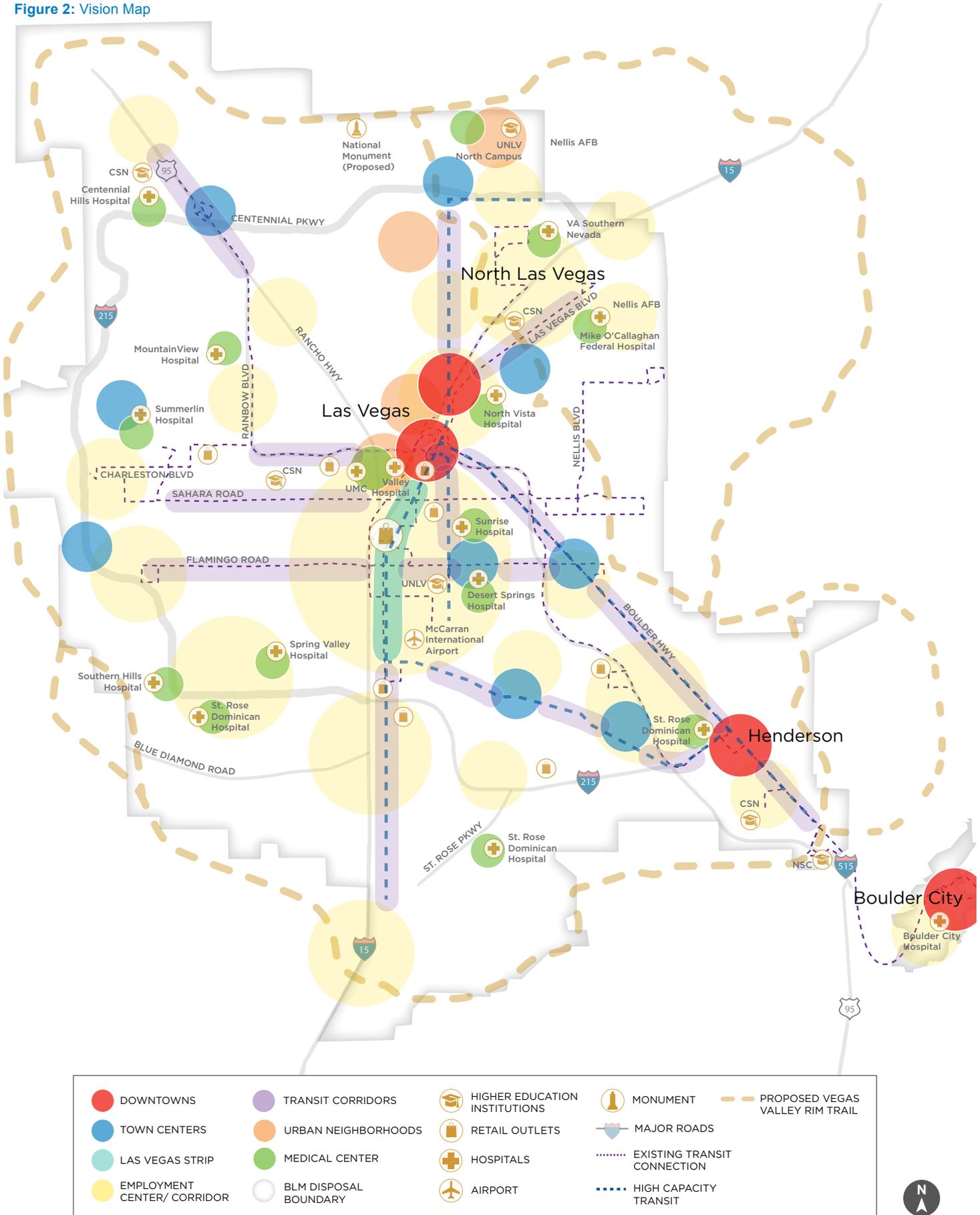
## **1.3 THE VISION ON THE GROUND**

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Using community input, Southern Nevada Strong developed a map (shown in **Figure 2** on the next page) that illustrates how the regional vision might look on the ground and to visualize how our priorities can be reflected in the region's development pattern. The map shows the community's vision for where housing, jobs and transportation should be located in the future.

The vision map is a communication tool with no regulatory function. It provides direction and focus for how we can craft local land-use and transportation programs and, ultimately, local zoning code changes to achieve our future vision. This map is the starting point for community-level discussions about how to translate these regional policies into local action.

Figure 2: Vision Map





Multiple modes of transportation—including walking, biking and transit – are available, safe and convenient.



Through regional collaboration, schools are located in walkable and bikable communities.

New growth occurs in existing neighborhoods and vacant and underused sites are redeveloped.



The region's downtowns provide a variety of jobs and services for local residents, dense housing combined with vibrant commercial spaces, and new employment and workforce development opportunities.



“IN 20 YEARS, I HOPE THE COMMUNITY HAS LESS VIOLENCE, MORE ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS, AND BETTER OPPORTUNITIES.”

– 17-YEAR-OLD PUBLIC OUTREACH PARTICIPANT



Redevelopment occurs along future transit corridors, including North 5th Street, Maryland Parkway, Flamingo Road and Boulder Highway.



More people can live close to work because jobs, services and schools are located within easy reach of a variety of housing types for all budgets and preferences.

Underutilized retail and industrial land along key corridors is repurposed and attracts small businesses and companies in targeted economic industries.



## 1.4 BENEFITS OF THE VISION

TODAY'S CHALLENGES (The Base Case*)	In the Preferred Scenario...	Changes from the Base Case
Most of the growth is at the “fringe,” in single-use development types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Transportation costs decrease</b> (<i>\$3K less in annual transportation costs per household on average in central vs. fringe areas</i>)</li> <li>• <b>New infrastructure costs are less</b></li> <li>• <b>Land consumption decreases</b> (<i>-11K acres</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>30% fewer housing units in suburban residential development types</b></li> <li>• <b>18% fewer jobs in single-use employment types</b></li> <li>• <b>Average annual household transportation costs are \$3,000 less in central vs. fringe areas</b></li> </ul>
Few “mixed-use centers”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Jobs/housing proximity improves</b></li> <li>• <b>Transit supporting density increases</b></li> <li>• <b>Pedestrian and bicycle access increases</b></li> <li>• <b>Infill development increases</b> (<i>Increase of ~700 acres</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>51% of new housing units in mixed-use areas</b> (<i>Only 24% in base case</i>)</li> <li>• <b>19% of new jobs in mixed-use areas</b> (<i>Only 8% in base case</i>)</li> <li>• <b>16% of new housing within a ¼ mile of high-capacity transit</b> (<i>only 9% in the base case</i>)</li> </ul>
Low proximity of housing to existing schools and parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better use of existing school facilities, potential to expand or build within existing neighborhoods</b></li> <li>• <b>Support existing public amenities</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>26% more housing units within one mile of existing schools</b></li> <li>• <b>21% more housing units within a ¼ mile of existing parks</b></li> </ul>
Fiscal efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fewer road miles to build/maintain</b> (<i>Road costs decrease 6%</i>)</li> <li>• <b>Tax revenue increases</b> (<i>Higher property values for commercial land, more housing units</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>\$600,000,000 cost savings in roadway infrastructure</b></li> <li>• <b>Overall increase in fiscal efficiency</b></li> </ul>
Environmental resource use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reduced emissions and resource usage</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>11% decrease in energy use</b></li> <li>• <b>11% decrease in carbon emissions</b></li> <li>• <b>21% decrease in water use</b></li> </ul>

\* A “base case” scenario was created to compare today’s conditions with future alternative scenarios, including the vision scenario. The base case uses current data for existing development types, and housing and employment density and location.

## 1.5 HOW DO WE GET THERE?

The Southern Nevada Strong Regional Plan is a community-driven guide outlining regional goals and presenting a set of strategies that local governments can use to address challenges and achieve these goals.

The region's top priorities serve as the three main themes of the Plan.

1. **Improve Economic Competitiveness and Education**
2. **Invest in Complete Communities**
3. **Increase Transportation Choice**

Summarized below, the themes describe how the Plan addresses challenges through specific goals and strategies. Each theme plays a critical role in connecting and supporting our region to ensure that we thrive in the years to come.



**Complete communities include jobs, housing, transportation options and community amenities – creating places that support economic opportunities and provide healthy options for people regardless of income.**



All Southern Nevadans will benefit from efforts to improve the region's economic competitiveness and educational opportunities.



## 1. Improve Economic Competitiveness and Education

Throughout the project, Southern Nevadans emphasized two top priorities for their region: a need for a variety of well-paying jobs, and high-quality public education. The Regional Plan goals and objectives respond to these priorities. The Plan sets forth a variety of strategies to diversify the regional economy by creating communities with a variety of housing, transportation and amenity options that meet the demands of a talented workforce. These strategies also will help support education by improving the physical environment around schools.

Goals in this theme focus on aligning future development styles (or “place types”) with the needs of small businesses and workers in the target sectors prioritized by the Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

### Goals in this theme include:

1. Aligning land use and transportation plans with regional economic development plans.
2. Ensuring that Southern Nevada offers a range of place types to attract and retain future workers, visitors, businesses and entrepreneurs.
3. Enhancing the role of small businesses and entrepreneurs as leaders in economic diversification and revitalization.
4. Increasing collaboration between the state government, local governments, and the region’s higher education institutions to align economic development and education efforts.
5. Supporting the educational system and learning environments through thoughtful land-use and transportation planning.

## 2. Invest in Complete Communities

Complete communities are communities in which jobs, housing, transportation and community amenities combine to create places that support economic opportunity and healthy options for all people, regardless of income level. In complete communities, people feel safe, healthy and have natural resources to support their everyday living.

Goals in this theme focus on fostering complete communities within the region by integrating placemaking, safety, a variety of housing options, fresh food options, health services, cultural amenities, natural resources, recreation, and parks.

### Goals in this theme include:

1. Stabilizing and strengthening existing neighborhoods through placemaking improvements.
2. Encouraging an adequate supply of housing in a range of price, income, density, ownership and building types.
3. Supporting access to healthcare facilities, healthy food, parks and community services.
4. Improving neighborhood safety and protecting residents from the harmful effects of pollution and hazardous materials.
5. Promoting resource-efficient land use and development practices.



Complete communities incorporate many different attributes, from pedestrian-friendly urban design to public open spaces for cultural celebrations to healthy food access. Together, these aspects contribute positively to our quality of life and the quality of the places where we live, work, and play.





A well-connected transit system along with more facilities that make biking and walking easier will give residents more options for getting around the region and contribute to a higher quality of life.



### 3. Increase Transportation Choice

Southern Nevada’s current land-use patterns are auto-centric, requiring that most people have access to a car to meet their day-to-day transportation needs. However, community input suggests that Southern Nevadans support having additional transportation options, including expanded bus service and, potentially, light rail.

Successful transit systems are dependent on land-use and development patterns that allow people to access transit connections easily and safely and make meaningful connections between their homes, jobs and services. With safety improvements and land-use patterns that allow for easy access to common destinations, walking and biking become viable options for more people.

Goals in this theme focus on developing a world-class transportation system and coordinating future transit investments with urban development.

#### Goals in this theme include:

1. Developing a modern transit system that is integrated with vibrant neighborhood and employment centers, better connecting people to their destinations.
2. Connecting and enhancing bike and pedestrian facilities throughout the region.
3. Developing a safe, efficient road network that supports all transportation modes.

## 1.6 BUILDING CAPACITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Three years, thousands of work hours, and nearly 70,000 Southern Nevadans’ voices later, Southern Nevada Strong has developed a shared vision and Regional Plan for integrating good jobs with a wide range of housing options located near transit. The results of this work, when implemented, will ensure that our Valley’s two million residents can enjoy, participate, and thrive in an economically competitive and vibrant region.

The Consortium Committee and the Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition (SNRPC) recommended that the core administration of the Plan, moving forward, be placed with the RTC – an existing organization with regional purview. This recommendation was based on best practices research, local expertise, federal and local agency input, and was favored over funding an entirely new structure or organization.

As the Southern Nevada Strong Regional Plan transitions to the RTC for administration and implementation, our community must heed the call-to-action: implement the Regional Plan and enjoy its benefits, or maintain status quo.

But more than any decision on paper, our actions will speak volumes. Meaningful and long-lasting changes happen when we act together to achieve success – and will be especially important in overcoming the newness of regional planning in the absence of a well-established and well-funded regional body. Fortunately, our community has demonstrated many times that it is up to such momentous challenges.

### Goals to build capacity for implementation include:

1. Expanding public engagement and equitable access to community engagement.
2. Working with member agencies and the RTC to prioritize regional planning and enhance collaboration.
3. Building experience and capacity in the Regional Plan concepts.
4. Developing local funding strategies to implement items with fiscal impacts.
5. Seeking external funding for Plan implementation.



By increasing the capacity of our higher education system, the region will be better equipped to attract and retain talented workers and well paying jobs.

Throughout the region, people of all generations will benefit from improved access to healthy food and a diversity of housing options.





### Implementation Priorities

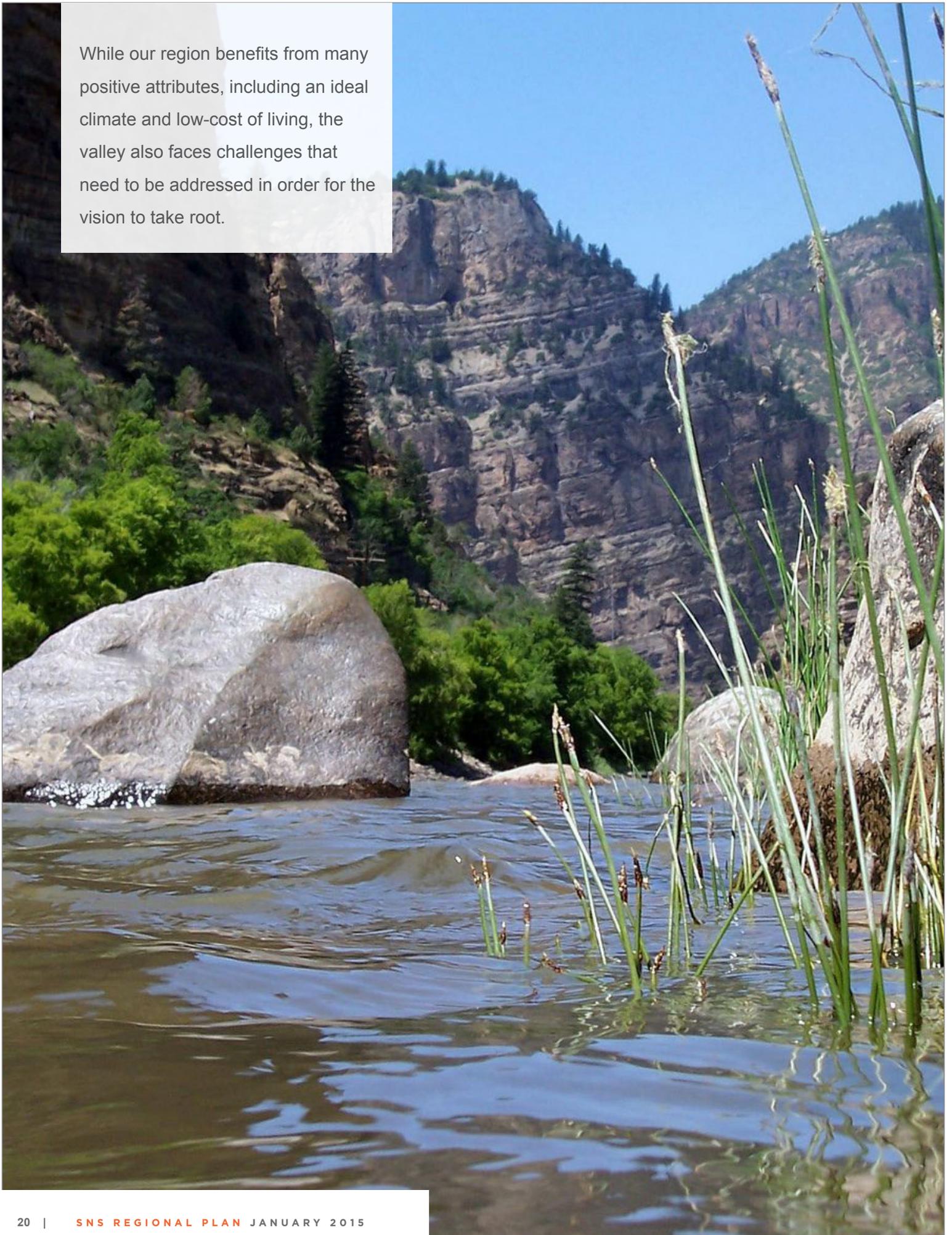
The Southern Nevada Strong Task Groups reviewed all goals and strategies in the Plan and identified the following priorities to begin implementation immediately. These are described in greater detail in the respective sections of the Regional Plan and identified in the Implementation Matrix.

1. **Implement the four opportunity site strategies:** Maryland Parkway, Boulder Highway at Broadbent/Gibson, Downtown North Las Vegas, and the Las Vegas Medical District. Create and encourage the use of an infill and revitalization action plan for areas with similar characteristics to the opportunity sites that identifies barriers to mixed-use development and suggests tools to overcome them.
2. **Encourage the local businesses to support education and school programs** to better connect opportunities for student career mapping, mentoring, and educational needs of employers.
3. **Pursue light rail and improved transit options in low and moderate income areas**, including improvements to make walking and biking pleasant, safe and viable transportation options.
4. **Support access to healthcare, healthy food, parks and community services.**
5. **Improve neighborhood safety** and protect residents from the harmful effects of pollution and hazardous materials.
6. **Innovate and improve public-sector-led public engagement efforts.**
7. **Pursue a stronger higher education system** that includes a UNLV medical school, a Tier One Research Institution, and Graduate Medical Education programming, (formal medical education either hospital sponsored or hospital-based training following completion of an M.D. or D.O. degree).

CHAPTER TWO

# Our Valley: Key Issues Facing the Southern Nevada Region

While our region benefits from many positive attributes, including an ideal climate and low-cost of living, the valley also faces challenges that need to be addressed in order for the vision to take root.





# Our Valley: Key Issues Facing the Southern Nevada Region

This Plan is built upon a foundation of community values and desires for the future. Southern Nevadans love our region, and want it to be an even better place for our children in the years to come. This section provides the foundation for the Plan, describing the results of extensive public outreach and explaining how the community shaped the vision, goals and strategies.

## 2.1 WHY WE LOVE SOUTHERN NEVADA

Through outreach, residents consistently described a future in which their children could stay in Southern Nevada, obtain the jobs of their choice, and raise their own families here. They want a great public education system with schools

that serve as pillars of the community. They want stable, strong neighborhoods; diverse housing options; access to transit; urban and recreational amenities; and opportunities to participate in decision-making. More specifically, the outreach process identified consistent responses to questions about what Southern Nevadans love about our region. These are features that should not change during the Plan period, and that provide a solid base upon which to improve.

### Location, Climate and Affordability

Southern Nevadans describe the region as having the best of both worlds – substantial urban amenities and rich entertainment options with significant open space and recreation areas nearby. They value their proximity to the mountains and the natural beauty of the surrounding landscape. Further, with the exception of



a few hot summer months, residents appreciate the climate. Compared to other areas with similar amenities, residents see the region as being affordable and safe. Residents appreciate the region’s central location and the ease with which a person can get to and from other parts of the country.

### Entrepreneurial Spirit

Southern Nevadans speak favorably of the region’s entrepreneurial spirit and describe the region as a place where a person can come to find new opportunities and to reinvent

## Public Input on the Regional Plan

Public outreach provided a foundation for this Plan by identifying the issues, concerns and general priorities for the Southern Nevada community. Outreach activities included stakeholder interviews; large public events and open houses; e-newsletters; a random-sample telephone survey; conducting intercept surveys and map-based exercises at community events; online surveys; a land use and development visual preference survey administered at open houses; a telephone town hall event; multiple focus groups; and an ethnographic research training in partnership with UNLV. **The public engagement process sought to:**

**Build relationships:** SNS created opportunities for community members to engage with others to improve the region.

**Create opportunities for inclusive participation:** All residents, including typically under-represented groups, influenced the content of the Plan.

**Educate residents and inform decision-making:** Stakeholders were provided with information needed to make informed contributions to the planning process.

**Build long-term capacity for civic engagement:** Success will require ongoing attention from all stakeholders. SNS will ensure that those engaged through this process stay involved to build social capital and leadership.

themselves. Some emphasize that they value people’s willingness to be creative and try new things. There’s a “can-do” attitude and the region has many opportunities for anyone motivated to go after them.

### Sense of Renewal and Re-Creation

The region is always changing and “a work in progress.” Las Vegas is considered a relatively young city and is still forming. Leaders and elected officials are reachable and accessible. The area continues to reinvent itself and has improved steadily over time. Some describe the region as a place where new residents are not treated like outsiders; they can quickly get involved and move into a leadership position. Given the region’s rapid growth and ethnic diversification, the region has left room for new groups to join the community and feel at home. This is different from many other parts of the country, where long-term residency in the community is often critical.

### Culture and Entertainment

Southern Nevada has rich cultural and entertainment resources. Residents and visitors can enjoy high-quality, diverse entertainment 365 days of the year. Entertainment ranges from local talent and family-friendly activities to national headliners. The region also has significant cultural resources, including

networks of civic associations, places of worship, events, ethnic enclaves, and more dispersed clusters of small, often minority-owned businesses.

### Community Spirit/Diversity

Southern Nevadans express enthusiasm and community pride. People value their neighborhoods and are proud to live here. The region’s residents are increasingly diverse, so these cultures and traditions add greatly to the community. In 2012, about 31 percent of Clark County’s total population was foreign-born, which is higher than other cities in the Intermountain West, such as Phoenix (23 percent), Denver (18 percent), and Salt Lake City (18 percent). Between 2000 and 2012, the share of foreign born residents in Clark County more than doubled, from 13 percent of the total population in 2000 to 31 percent of the county population in 2012. No other region in the Intermountain West had such large growth in the share of foreign-born residents.

### Big City/Small-Town Feel

While Southern Nevadans recognize and appreciate the positive aspects of living in a larger region, they also value the small-town quality of the cities in which they live. They describe a strong presence of families and the quantity and variety of family-friendly activities available in the area.

## 2.2 WHAT WE NEED TO OVERCOME

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At the same time, Southern Nevadans consistently recognize the need to improve some aspects of the way that the region functions. The Southern Nevada community has weathered extremes. A decades-long economic boom brought rapid rates of population growth that were among the fastest in the nation, and a deep recession brought the country's highest rates of foreclosure and unemployment. During this volatility, the impacts of uncoordinated growth became evident around the region: limited choices for housing and transportation, unhealthy neighborhoods, fewer living-wage jobs, and widespread impacts from the sharp decline of the residential construction market and gaming industry.

More specifically, outreach participants consistently identified the following set of concerns about the region.

### Low Quality of Education

Many Southern Nevadans express concern regarding the low quality of education at

all levels in the region. These opinions ran on a spectrum from “atrocious” to “we need to do a better job.” Nevada continues to retain its ranking of 48th out of 50 states in educational performance, according to the Annie E. Casey Foundation.<sup>4</sup>

The outreach process found that some Southern Nevadans connect poor quality education with reduced economic growth. Some note a lack of coordination with the Community College to develop curriculum and offer workforce development activities. Others indicate that the region lacks a major research institution, which can drive innovation and entrepreneurship. In general, Southern Nevadans recognized underinvestment in human capital.

### Lack of Economic Diversity

Southern Nevadans recognize that the region's heavy reliance on the tourism and gaming industry makes the region vulnerable to economic changes. They value the strength of the industry and its international reputation, but are concerned by the area's dependence on this one sector of the economy.





### Limited Ability to Address Social Problems and Provide Health Care

Some participants note that the region’s low tax rate limits the resources available to meet social needs. The need for social programs and services continues to grow, while funding remains limited. It can be hard to think valley-wide due to the localized nature of some social issues.

### Inadequate Transportation Options and Infrastructure

Southern Nevadans express a variety of transportation-related concerns. These include: concerns about pedestrian safety, high level of traffic congestion, and an increased need for public transit and more transportation options to all areas of Southern Nevada. Some areas are well-served, including communities where bus rapid transit (BRT) service exists. Other transportation features, such as

park-and-ride stations and High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, have been successful and could be expanded.

### Limited Availability of Affordable Housing

Some Southern Nevadans express concerns about the limited availability of affordable housing. While there appear to be ample structures, and housing prices dropped substantially during the economic crisis, there still are not enough affordable choices available for low- and middle-income families, people with disabilities and seniors. These populations often live in housing that requires them to pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs per month.

### Uncoordinated Growth and Disconnected Land Uses

Southern Nevadans agree that the region needs to attract quality development, that is development the community wants, which includes aesthetically interesting developments integrated with surrounding uses in terms of connectivity, economic synergy, design for pedestrians, located along transportation corridors and with a mix of uses that meets the needs of residents, and not just growth for the sake of growth. Development patterns have made

neighborhoods increasingly less connected and new approaches will be needed.

### Limited Supply of Water

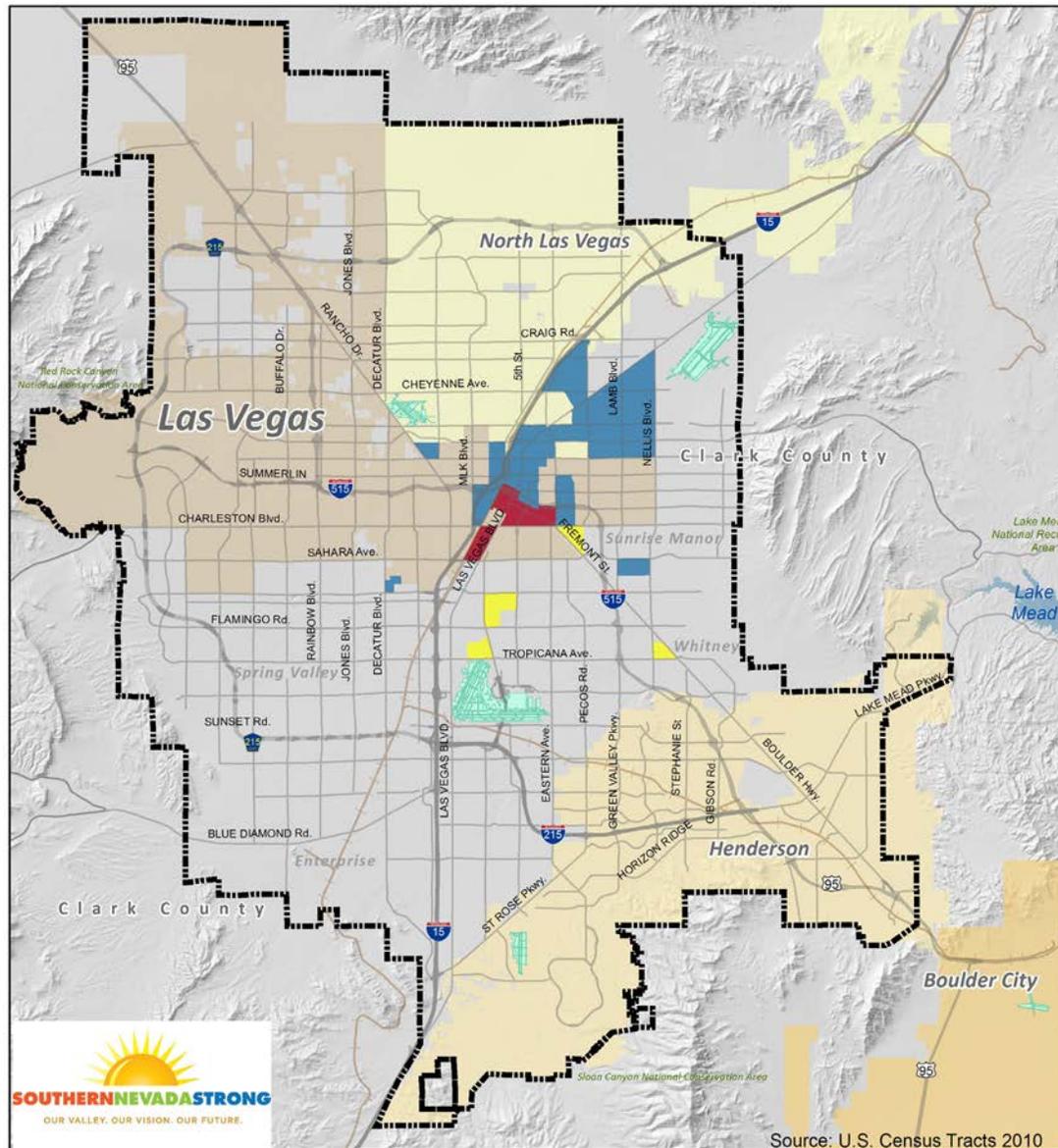
Some residents express concern about the region’s ability to meet water demands over the long term. Businesses may be unwilling to move to an area where water may be a limiting factor.

### Insufficient Government Collaboration

Some Southern Nevadans desire improved collaboration between the various agencies and organizations in the region. Along with increased cooperation between cities and the County, some stakeholders want to see improved working relationships with organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce.

**Figure 3**, the Social Indicator Map, reflects the current condition of communities within the region by measuring four separate indicators including income, health status, and education within a given census tract. This approach was developed by the SNS Healthy Communities Task Group and is based on San Diego’s Regional Planning Agency (SANDAG)’s “Healthy Communities Atlas” methodology.

Figure 3: Social Indicator Map



**Social Indicator Map**

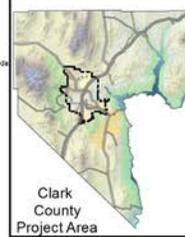
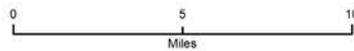
- Four Composite Indicators
- Three Composite Indicators
- Two Composite Indicators

50% or more Minority Population is the baseline for analyzing Composite Indicators. Approach based on the SANDAG methodology

**2010 CensusTracts data  
Social Indicator Map**

- 1) 50% or more Minority Population
- 2) % Population w/ No Vehicle
- 3) 150% Below Poverty
- 4) % High School Grad or Less (50% and more)

Revised: October 04, 2012  
 Source: Boulder City Government, Clark County Government, City of Las Vegas Government, City of North Las Vegas Government, City of Henderson Government, The Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada and The University of Nevada Las Vegas  
 Based on Projected Coordinate System: NAD83, StatePlane NV East FIPS 2701 Feet  
 Note: This map is offered as a general reference guide only. Neither warranty of accuracy is intended nor should any be assumed.



The four social indicators represented in Figure 3 include: 50 percent or more minority population (baseline for analyzing all composite indicator census tracts); estimated percent of the population with no vehicle; 150 percent below poverty; percentage of high school graduates or less (50% and more).

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CHAPTER THREE

# Our Vision # 1: Improve Economic Competitiveness and Education

As a region, we need to foster new development that is supportive of economic development and educational outcomes and ensure an adequate supply of land for future employment. Through comprehensive, long-term thinking and coordinated action we can enhance the region's ability to compete for new jobs and industry, and reach higher educational attainment at all levels.





## Our Vision #1: Improve Economic Competitiveness and Education

More than 20 years of rapid and dynamic population growth, followed by a sharp economic decline coinciding with the nationwide downturn, have severely affected Southern Nevada residents, businesses and the public sector.

The region's rapid growth brought many new people and households, but the prolonged economic decline of the most recent recession has left many of them in unstable housing and job circumstances. The situation calls for a reevaluation of local policies and prioritization of investment to support long-term economic stability and prosperity.

**The health, quality of life, and sustainability of a region is anchored in its ability to retain and create jobs that pay a family wage, and an environment where businesses can thrive.**  
For residents of Southern Nevada

to prosper, the region must clearly focus on economic growth that benefits all residents. As the population grows, the availability of new, well-paying jobs must also grow.

The CEDS identifies a set of target industries that the Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance (the regional entity that created and adopted the CEDS) determined should be the focus of its efforts to develop the regional economy. Like the CEDS, this theme recognizes that economic growth is inextricably linked to human capital, or the skills, education, and connections of the workforce of the region; both documents recognize that the human capital of the workforce provides the foundation on which business growth and innovation occurs.

Fostering a better match between the skills base in the Southern Nevada workforce and future industry needs will improve the region's economic



Image credit: Argonne National Laboratory

**Making high-quality investments in education, especially providing for the kinds of skills necessary for family-wage jobs will boost the region's long-term economic competitiveness.**

competitiveness. Doing this requires that the region focus on improving educational attainment at all levels and for all students. This document identifies the ways in which the Regional Plan (which sets a vision for changes in regional development patterns and land use) can support CEDS implementation, so that both work together to improve educational attainment.

**Educational attainment benefits the region in a number of ways:**

- A community with a talented and flexible workforce and an appealing environment attracts diverse, value-adding industries that provide well-paying jobs.
- As income increases, communities generate revenues for excellent schools, quality public services, and public facilities, which in turn attract a talented and flexible workforce.
- The more prosperous communities are, the more they tend to invest in education.

The literature tells a compelling story that the strategies for narrowing the student achievement gap lie primarily outside of the K–12 schools – in families and communities. Rethinking strategies to strengthen and sustain the economic and social fabric of Southern Nevada communities is more critical now than ever. This Plan theme is intended to support implementation of the CEDS by identifying the place-based strategies that support human capital and economic development outcomes.

This Plan calls upon the region to foster new development that is supportive of economic development and educational outcomes. This Plan encourages comprehensive, long-term thinking and coordinated action to ensure that land use, development patterns

and supporting infrastructure enhance the region’s ability to compete for new jobs and industry, and support stronger educational attainment at all levels. The Plan also highlights the need to accommodate employment growth, specifically by clarifying the connection between the land supply and future target industries and protecting existing lands from rezoning in desirable areas for employment growth.

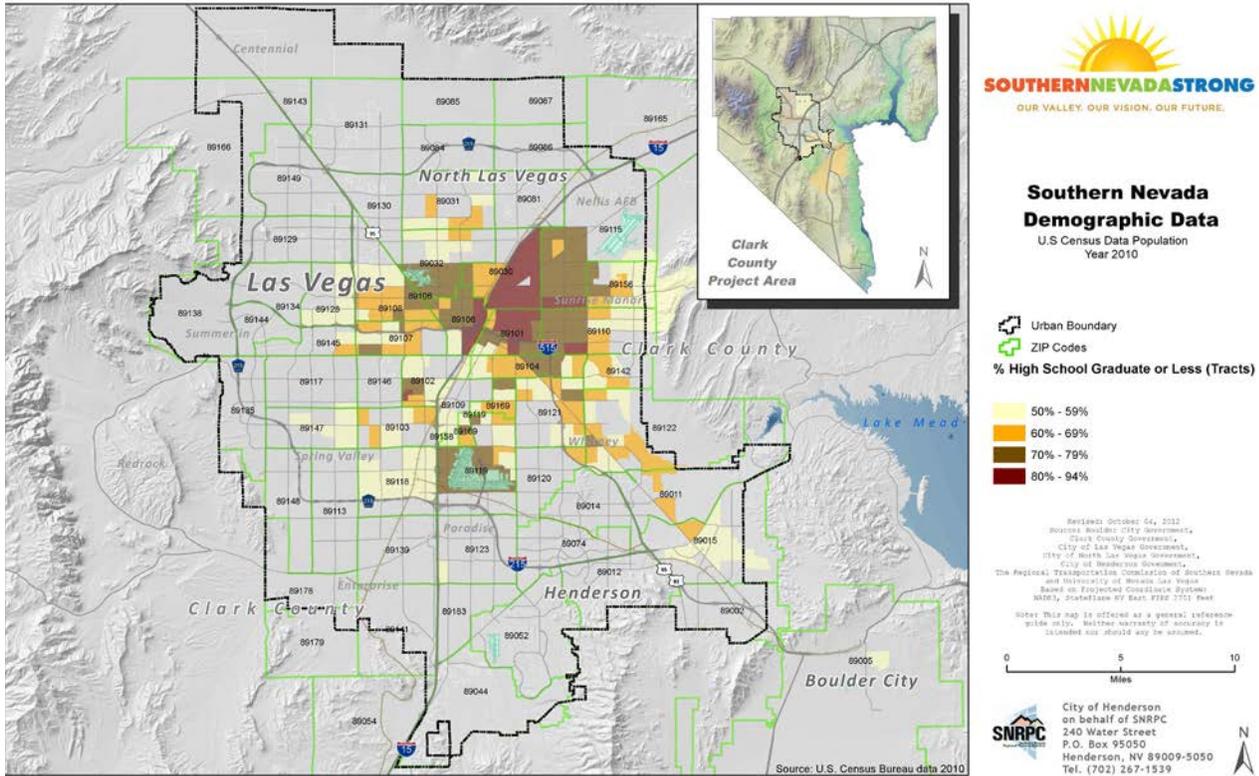
This theme of the Plan serves as a unified vision and strategy for land use and economic development that will build upon an existing inventory of local, regional, and state economic development plans, including: the Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy; Brooking Mountain West’s report *Unify, Regionalize,*

Figure 4: Education and Economic Growth: The Circle of Prosperity



Figure 4 shows the relationship among education/workforce training, economic development, and communities.

Figure 5. Southern Nevadans with High School Degree or Less



“WHAT SNS IS DOING SOUNDS GREAT. WE NEED TO DIVERSIFY OUR ECONOMY AND MAKE IT MORE STABLE RATHER THAN BEING SO RELIANT ON TOURISM AND CONSTRUCTION. IMPROVING TRANSPORTATION, OUR SCHOOLS AND OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE IS THE BEST WAY TO ATTRACT THE VERY BUSINESSES WE NEED TO BRING TO THE AREA.”

– PUBLIC OUTREACH PARTICIPANT

*Diversify: An Economic Development Agenda for Nevada*, and the Governor’s Office on Economic Development’s report: *Moving Nevada Forward: A Plan for Excellence in Economic Development*. Boosting the region’s economic competitiveness also is linked to policies throughout other elements of the Regional Plan.

The transportation element promotes diversification of transportation options to strengthen transportation affordability and choice, which also plays a critical role in

economic competitiveness as it improves the flow of people and goods to the marketplace.

The complete communities element identifies strategies to attract housing that meets the needs and desires of a variety of workers and considers how environmental quality, resource availability, and access to necessary services establish quality of life and economic success for the region.



### 3.1 OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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The Economic Development and Education Task Group led the work outlined in this Plan theme. The group reviewed policy research regarding economic development and educational issues, conducted an evaluation of the economic sector and worker competitiveness, completed a literature review regarding place-based approaches to supporting educational attainment, and conducted outreach to identify the key economic and education-related issues that require regional action. Analysis and public input consistently pointed the Task Groups to the following core challenges and opportunities that the region faces, and that this Plan theme addresses.

CHALLENGES	Opportunities And Priorities
<p><b>Mismatch Between Land Use and Economic Development Plans:</b>                      The effects of the Great Recession were exacerbated by the lack of diversification within the region’s economy, which is the third least diversified economy in the Country.<sup>5</sup> In addition, there is a mismatch between zoning and future land needs – there may be an insufficient supply of employment lands given the nature of likely future job growth, and retail land is oversupplied.</p>	<p><i>Match land use and transportation plans with the regional economic development strategy (CEDs) by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Investing in and maintaining infrastructure to meet the needs of a diversified economy.</i></li> <li>• <i>Determining future needs for employment lands.</i></li> <li>• <i>Fostering the development of the education sector, which can teach the skills necessary for workers in the target industry sectors.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Existing Neighborhoods Do Not Meet The Needs Of Future Workers In The Target Industry Sectors:</b>                      The region’s traditional downtowns and neighborhood centers have not seen the same level of investment as newer strip commercial areas. Vibrant mixed-use neighborhoods will play a role in attracting future workers in the region’s target industries. In addition, lack of investment in the region’s older neighborhoods and schools impact the perception of safety and wellbeing. Workers in these neighborhoods may not have adequate access to transportation, or nearby resources for job training and job searching, ultimately resulting in socioeconomic isolation.</p>	<p><i>Ensure that Southern Nevada offers a range of place types to attract and retain future workers, visitors, businesses and entrepreneurs by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Developing strategies and making targeted investments to encourage infill redevelopment and property rehabilitation.</i></li> <li>• <i>Developing community-based economic development programs.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Lack of Small Business and Entrepreneur Support Systems:</b>                      The region lacks incubator and flex spaces that can provide a home for creative, entrepreneurial efforts.</p>	<p><i>Enhance the role of small businesses and entrepreneurs as leaders in economic diversification and revitalization by determining the building and space needs of entrepreneurs and providing targeted technical assistance.</i></p>
<p><b>Little Regional Collaboration:</b>                      There is a lack of coordination between planning, economic development, education, environment and industry groups.</p>	<p><i>Increase collaboration between the state government, local governments and the region’s higher education institutions to align economic development and education efforts.</i></p>
<p><b>Low Educational Performance:</b>                      Clark County’s high school graduation rates are much lower than the national average, at 62 percent in 2014, compared with 80 percent nationally.<sup>6</sup> Students score low in national reading and math assessments. Many neighborhoods lack basic connectivity for children to safely access schools and social services and for residents to access services and jobs without a car. At the same time, college dropout rates also are high and the region has low educational attainment.</p>	<p><i>Support the educational system and learning environments through thoughtful land-use and transportation planning by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Prioritizing the school environment for children, encouraging development that better supports existing schools.</i></li> <li>• <i>Working closely with the Clark County School District to develop thoughtful school and service siting criteria.</i></li> </ul>

## What is a Location Quotient?

The “location quotient” shows how Southern Nevada’s concentration of employment by industry compares to the United States. If a region has a location quotient of 1, its employment in that industry is equally as concentrated as in the United States overall. If the quotient is less than 1, the region has less of a concentration in that sector than the national average.

## Mismatch between Land Use and Economic Development Plans

Every sector has a role in how the economy grows and thrives, including education, industry, businesses, the public sector and nonprofits. The regional economic development dialogue must expand to include discussion of how the built environment can support economic entrepreneurship, diversification and resiliency.

## Promoting Land Use for Regional Resiliency

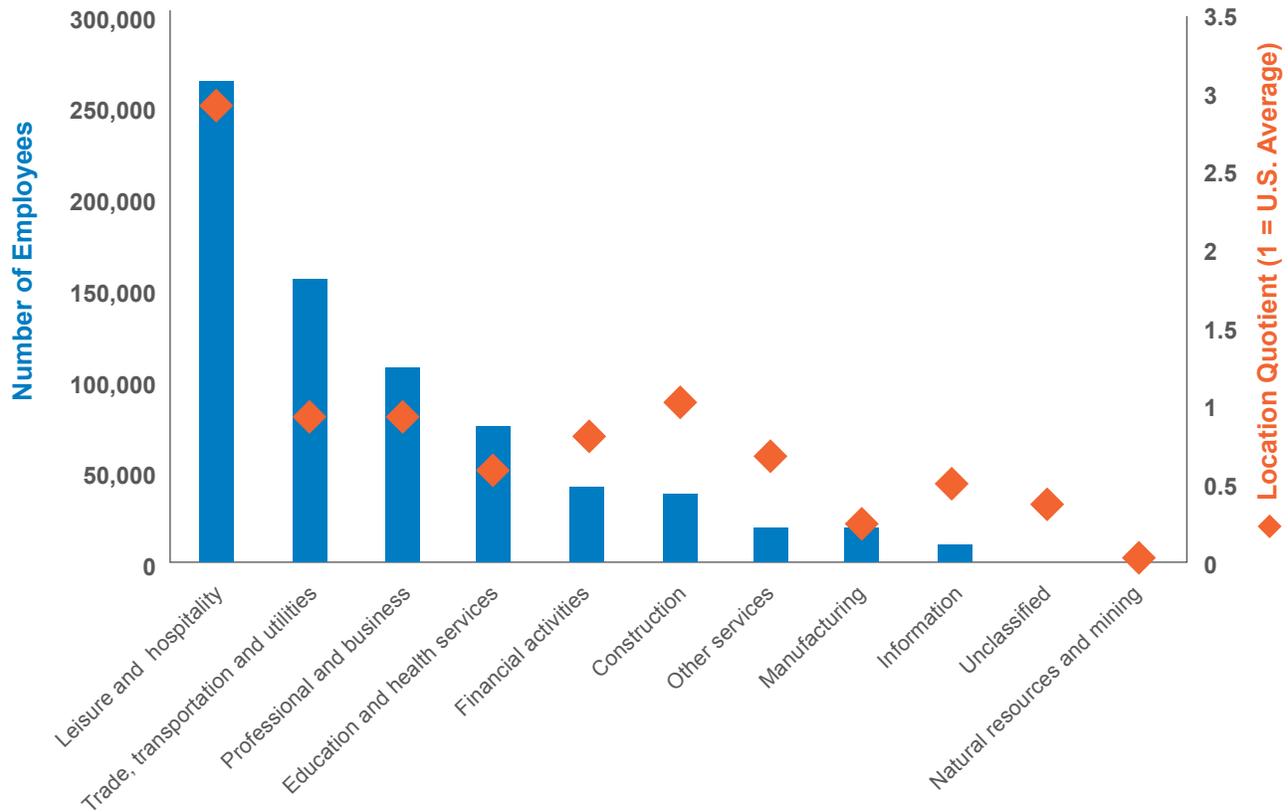
Regional resilience refers to the ability of a region to recover from a stress – either a sudden setback, such as a natural disaster, or a chronic strain, as may occur with longstanding economic decline or unrelentingly rapid population growth.<sup>7</sup> In the case of Southern Nevada, population growth and the subsequent housing construction boom exacerbated the effects of the Great Recession. The Las Vegas economy is the third least diversified economy in the country<sup>8</sup> and its service-oriented economy is reflected in its occupational structure. The full scope of the tourism and hospitality sector – hotels, food services, retail stores – includes

more than 360,000 jobs in Clark County, or about one-third of the entire job base.<sup>9</sup>

Volatility hurts regional economies in two primary ways. First, uncertain future demand conditions can deter firms from investing in workforce or facilities. Volatile growth also hurts regional economies by distorting spending decisions by firms, households and governments. Abrupt losses in income and tax revenue can weaken public and private balance sheets, which in turn can force sharp spending cutbacks during periods when credit is tight.<sup>10</sup>

**Figure 6** shows how Clark County’s employment is distributed among the major employment sectors. It also shows how concentrated the region is in these sectors compared with the United States. Healthcare and education occupations – which were among the industries that lost the fewest jobs through the recent recession – are slightly underrepresented in the Clark County workforce. Manufacturing and information sectors also are underrepresented locally.<sup>11</sup>

Figure 6. Clark County Employees by Sector in 2012 and Location Quotient



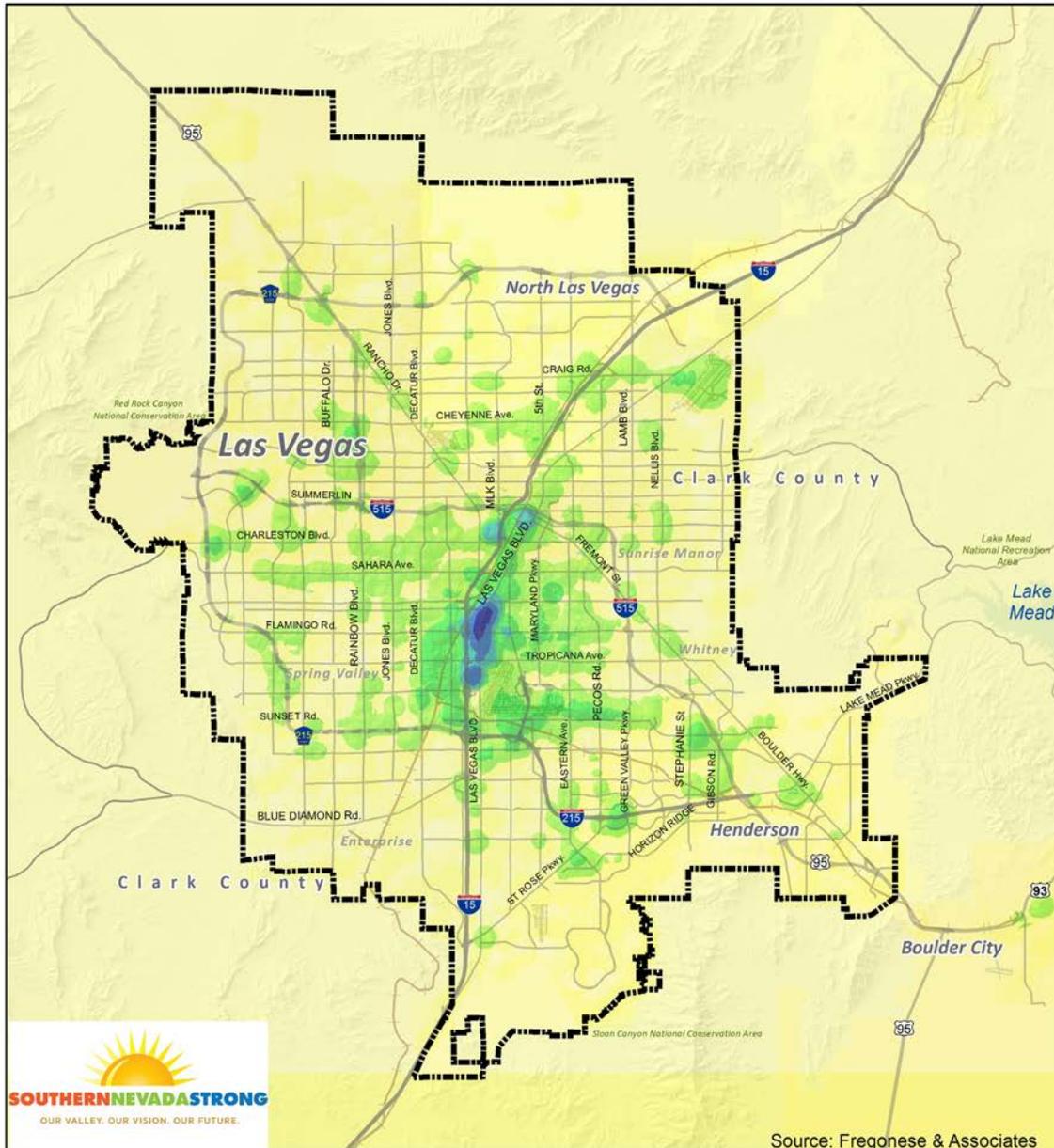
Source: Bureau of Labor and Statistics. See “A Look at Our Competitor Regions” sidebar on page [page 40] for more information on location quotients.

Research shows that the greater the industrial diversity of a region, the more likely it is to be resilient to a downturn.<sup>12</sup> The future for Southern Nevada may well be slower growth, which is a more desirable state of equilibrium because it allows the region to make deliberate efforts to restructure its workforce and cultivate a more diverse economy.<sup>13</sup>

The burgeoning research on resilient regions has uncovered several findings that might apply to Southern Nevada:

- A region’s resilience is a product of 1) what is happening to its major export industries nationally, and 2) the behavior of individual firms within the region.
- Regions with a higher proportion of workers with a high school degree or less were likely to experience more downturns and to be less shock-resistant to a structural change.<sup>14</sup>
- The greater the income disparities in a region, the more likely it is to experience a downturn and the longer it takes to return to its prior growth rate after the downturn.<sup>15</sup>
- Regions that have many export industries are more resilient to employment downturns.<sup>16</sup>
- Responding with new policies after a regional downturn is less effective than insulating a region against downturns.<sup>17</sup>

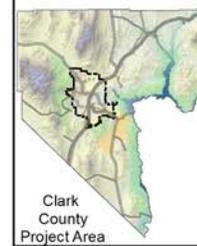
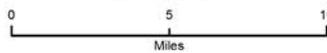
Figure 7: Where Southern Nevadans Work



**Existing Employment Density**



Revised: October 04, 2012  
 Source: Boulder City Government,  
 Clark County Government,  
 City of Las Vegas Government,  
 City of North Las Vegas Government,  
 City of Henderson Government,  
 The Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada  
 and The University of Nevada Las Vegas  
 Based on Projected Coordinate System:  
 NAD83, StatePlane NV East FIPS 2701 Feet  
 Note: This map is offered as a general reference  
 guide only. Neither warranty of accuracy is  
 intended nor should any be assumed.



Source: Fregonese & Associates

## Enhancing the Existing Economic Base

### Shifting Tourism

With 38 million visitors in 2012, Las Vegas is one of the most frequently visited destinations in the country.<sup>18</sup> This activity has centered in the core of the region, which has seen the most investment in tourist infrastructure. In the past decade, revenues have shifted not only to different subsets of the hospitality industry, but also abroad. Regional stakeholders are interested in broadening the geographic influence of tourism to highlight the region's diverse communities, while at the same time strengthening the existing tourism core (the Las Vegas Strip and downtown) through targeted infrastructure and placemaking investments. Of all of the county's major gaming zones, the Las Vegas Strip lost the least momentum during the downturn, and appears best positioned to reach full recovery first.<sup>19</sup>

**Figure 7** shows that while the greatest employment density is located along the Las Vegas Strip, it is expanding to outer areas.

With nearly five million of the 40 million annual visitors being convention delegates and more than 19,000 conventions landing in Las Vegas (LVCVA, 2012), attracting and retaining convention business is crucial to maintaining a competitive edge in this market.<sup>20</sup> Providing adequate transportation options will help the region compete for this business. Of the people who were not completely satisfied with their visit to Las Vegas, six percent cited that it was because it was too hard to get around.<sup>21</sup>

Our strength in the casino gaming industry is the intellect behind gaming technologies. There are several gaming technology companies that already have established headquarters in Las Vegas off of Sunset Road, including Konami Gaming, Bally Technologies, International Gaming Technologies (IGT), and WMS.<sup>22</sup>

### Stagnant Incomes

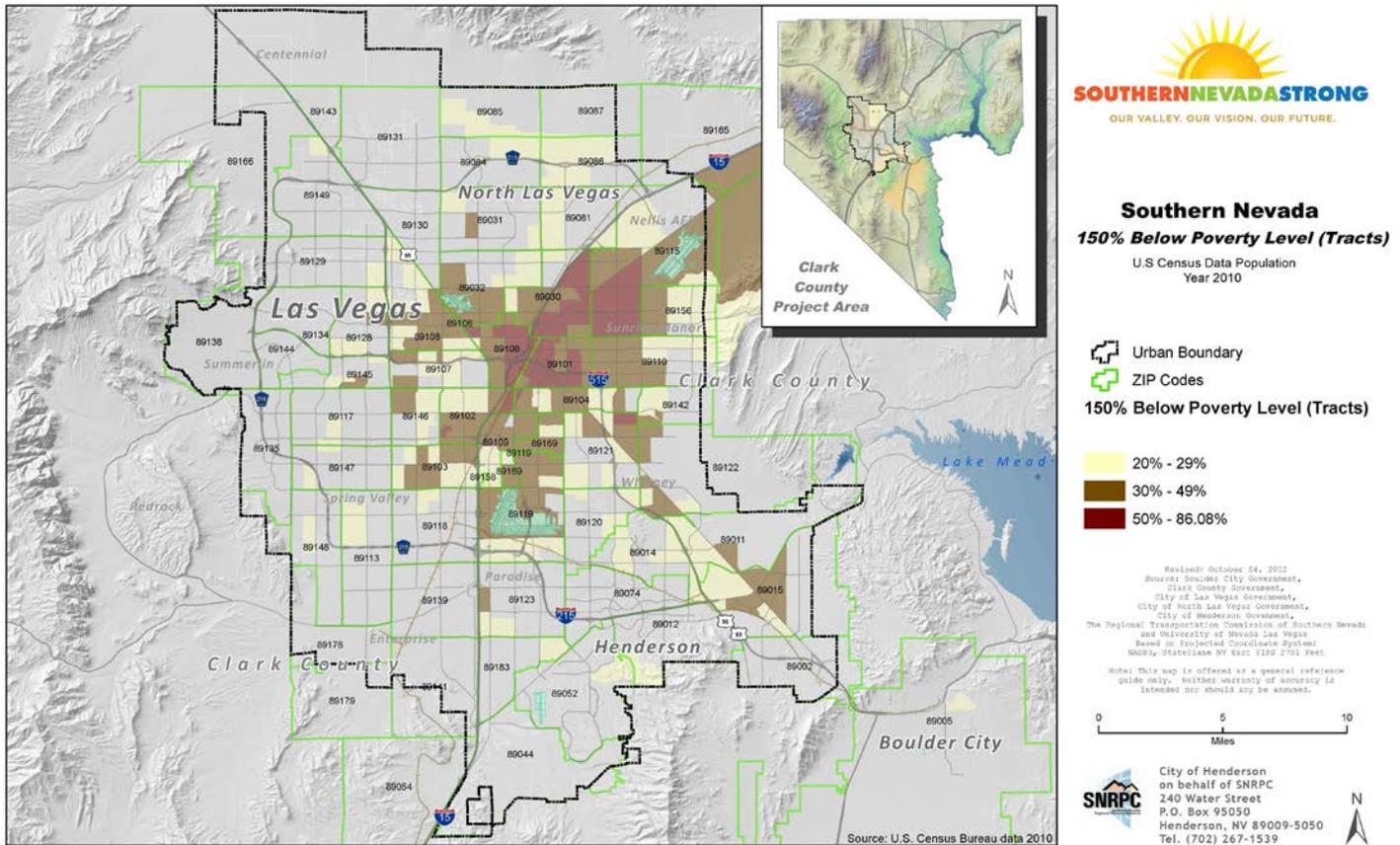
Despite Southern Nevada's lower educational attainment rate (which is normally closely tied to income), Southern Nevada maintains incomes that are similar to the national distribution.<sup>23</sup> Wages for

employees working in the gaming industry, tips included, are a likely factor in the region's ability to keep up with the national median household income.<sup>24</sup> Residents have a higher median household income (\$56,258) and a lower percentage of people living below the poverty level (11.7 percent) compared to the national median household income (\$51,914) and percentage of residents living below the poverty level nationally (13.8 percent).<sup>25</sup>

However, the region also follows the national trend in stagnating incomes over the past decade.

**Figure 8** shows where residents live who are below the poverty level. In order to reach the region's goals of making substantial gains in educational attainment and foster new target industries, the region will need to broaden opportunities for high-paying jobs.

Figure 8: Southern Nevadans Living in Poverty



**Future Workers**

To understand how land-use patterns need to evolve to support the region’s efforts to attract new businesses and workers in these industries, we must first understand who is likely to be employed in these industries and what their preferences might be.

The CEDS identified five key target sectors, based on the Brookings Institution *et al.* report *Unify, Regionalize, Diversify: An Economic Development Agenda for Nevada*.

These sectors include:

1. Tourism, Gaming and Entertainment
2. Health and Medical Services
3. Business IT Ecosystems
4. Clean Energy
5. Logistics and Operations <sup>26</sup>

The CEDS emphasizes jobs with higher earning potential across all skill levels, focuses on economic growth opportunities, capitalizing on the region’s geography and location and building on existing local capacities and assets” <sup>27</sup>

Currently, the region’s concentration of employment in most of these target industries is lower than would be expected based on national averages. The University of Nevada Las Vegas projects a total of about 550,000 new jobs by 2035. If the CEDS implementation process is successful in increasing the concentration of employment so that it is equal to national averages, Southern Nevada’s employers would need to employ about 100,000 new workers in the target industries, or 20 percent of all new employment (with the remaining employment

coming from the broader base of all industries in the region).<sup>28</sup> This provides some sense of the scale of transition that the successful implementation of the CEDS may require. What might those 100,000 workers demand from their community environments?

Overall, target industry workers earn more, are more highly educated, and are (on average) slightly older. They are the kind of workers who can make

choices about where they live. If the CEDS is to be successful in attracting these industries, it must include actions that support a future composition of employees in the Las Vegas region different than the current composition.

**Table 1** explores the demographic characteristics of workers in selected target industries.



Health and medical services are one of the five target employment sectors for the region.

**Table 1:** “Typical Industry Worker” Employment, Wage and Demographic Information for Nevada and Las Vegas-Paradise, MSA, 2011 (Q3, Q4) and 2012 (Q1, Q2)

	<i>All Industries</i>	<i>Healthcare</i>	<i>Business IT Ecosystems</i>	<i>Banking and Finance</i>
<b>Average yearly wage</b>	\$43,869	\$52,266	\$55,943	\$61,441
<b>Male or female?</b>	Male (51%)	Female (75%)	Male (64%)	Female (65%)
<b>Have at least some college or associates degree</b>	50%	62%	54%	66%
<b>Most common average age range</b>	25–44 (46%)	35–44 (25%)	25–34 (24%)	25–34 (26%)

Source: Data from LED Extraction Tool, U.S. Census; Analysis by ECONorthwest 2013.

## A Look at our Competitor Regions

The Las Vegas region is often compared to other regions that have large tourist economies or similar land-use patterns, such as Orlando and Phoenix. However, the list is different when comparing which regions have high concentrations of employment in the three industries that the CEDS identifies as having the largest impact on the region's built form.

**Table 2** shows the results. In general, the regions that have high concentrations in CEDS target industries are a very different list than those that are typically compared to Las Vegas. Madison, Wisconsin, and Columbia, Missouri, both have high concentrations in all of the CEDS target sectors.

There are many reasons that these regions have employment concentrations in these industries that are not directly related to development patterns. High concentrations of employment in health care, for example, are often correlated with strong research hospitals at universities. Business IT ecosystems firms might be attracted to low energy costs or the presence of a particularly skilled workforce. Competing successfully for new industries will require the full range of actions that are described in the CEDS document, and strong regional partnerships that are focused on implementation.

**Table 2:** MSAs with Location Quotient of at Least One in the Three Target Sectors, 2011

MSA	Sum of LQ	Health LQ	Business IT ECO LQ	Banking LQ
Las Vegas-Paradise MSA	2.25	0.59	1.01	0.65
Madison, WI MSA	4.38	1.04	1.75	1.58
Columbia, MO MSA	4.32	1.49	1.09	1.74
Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-HA MSA	3.94	1.15	1.36	1.43
New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	3.89	1.15	1.29	1.45
Little Rock-North Little Rock, AR MSA	3.76	1.36	1.37	1.03
Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA MSA	3.66	1.06	1.18	1.44
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	3.66	1.17	1.06	1.43
Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI MSA	3.49	1.18	1.22	1.27
Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro, TN MSA	3.39	1.01	1.06	1.41
Pittsburgh, PA MSA	3.20	1.03	1.25	1.10

Source: County Business Patterns, 2011; analysis by ECONorthwest, 2013. Industry concentrations are typically measured with "location quotients," or LQs. An LQ of "1" means that the concentration of the industry in the region is equal to the concentration in the nation. Any concentration over "1" can be interpreted as more highly concentrated than would be expected based on national averages. A more detailed description of our analysis is included in the Appendix.

### Employment Land Supply

An important component of regional land-use planning is to ensure that new and expanding industries have adequate land and sufficient transportation infrastructure. As part of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Cluster Analysis, the Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance (LVGEA) identified the need to align plans and zoning policies in new centers where office uses, medical centers, and other high-density enterprises can expand. Businesses such as

manufacturing, transportation and distribution, which require large building footprints and access to freight lines, will need adequate land with access to McCarran International Airport.

**Table 3** shows the general requirements and site selection factors for two of the region’s target industries. Implications for the land use program include the need to regularly assess the city’s supply of buildable employment land and align capital improvement plans so critical infrastructure is in place.

### Existing Neighborhoods Do Not Meet the Needs of Workers in the Target Sectors

Vibrant mixed-use neighborhoods will play a role in attracting future workers for the region’s target industries. Cleaning up and revitalizing residential and business areas is important for the entire region. Several respondents urged the renovation and reuse of existing vacant properties rather than building new; some suggested that infill should occur only after revitalization of existing facilities and businesses is successful.

**Table 3:** Site Needs for Health and Business IT Sectors

MSA	Health and Medical Services	Business IT Ecosystems
<b>General Requirements</b>	<i>Healthcare employment is typically spread across multiple building types, including office buildings (private practices), institutional buildings (hospitals, clinics, labs), and residential buildings (group housing, including rehabilitation, assisted living, and nursing care centers). Any number of healthcare occupations could be spread across these types of physical facilities.</i>	<i>Specific functions determine building needs. Data centers require very precise building specifications and tend to be more capital intensive. More labor-intensive operations such as teleservices, financial processing, or customer service centers may require less rigorous building specifications. There is no general template that can be applied to the “typical” occupier in the industry.</i>
<b>Site Selection Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to skilled labor</li> <li>• Growth of patient base</li> <li>• Regional teaching hospitals, medical schools, and flagship institutions</li> <li>• Regional R&amp;D activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to skilled labor</li> <li>• Affordable, reliable electricity</li> <li>• Buildings with large floor plates</li> <li>• Buildings with under-floor utilities</li> <li>• Competitive tax environment</li> </ul>

Source: Las Vegas Cluster Analysis, TIP Strategies.



Revitalizing the region's downtowns and main streets is a priority in the Regional Plan.

Based on the literature review and the profile of comparable metropolitan areas with strong employment in the target sectors, employees with higher educational levels and higher-than-average wages in the target sectors may be looking for the following amenities and community characteristics:

- **Vibrant mixed-use downtown and commercial areas that are within walking distance of homes.** The top three comparable MSAs all have vibrant downtowns and, in the case of Madison and Boston, strong neighborhood commercial areas. The downtown areas all are adjacent to the major regional universities and often encompass more than one

institution of higher learning. All of these areas concentrate restaurants, entertainment, art, retail and event spaces.

Multiple studies have shown that in many other communities, people are willing to pay more for amenities that are within easy walking distance. A study by the National Association of Realtors found that people want the following features, in no particular order, to be within walking distance of their home: grocery stores, pharmacies, hospitals, and restaurants.<sup>29</sup>

- **Multi-family rental housing within closer proximity to mixed-use commercial areas for younger workers (Gen Y).** National studies by ULI<sup>30</sup> and the National Association of Realtors<sup>31</sup> support the finding that younger people are delaying household formation and buying, and either living with parents longer or renting longer.
- **Homes close to public transit.** The literature overwhelmingly supports the fact that homes built close to public transit commanded a price premium. However, that does come with some caveats.

The most significant price premiums are associated with commuter rail, followed by light rail and then BRT, with bus service alone commanding the lowest price premium, but still a benefit over no transit access at all.<sup>32</sup>

- **Suburban-style development.** While national surveys see an increased demand for higher-density housing, employees who are married and in middle income brackets (earning more than \$25,000 and less than \$100,000) indicated that they prefer traditional suburban-type development. There is likely to continue to be strong demand for this development type in Southern Nevada.<sup>33</sup>
- **Quality communities close to employment areas and quality schools.** Commute times are one of the top variables for determining where to live, especially within larger metropolitan areas. The desire for quality schools or safe neighborhoods is often more important for workers with children or women living on their own.
- **Walkable neighborhoods.** There is strong evidence that people will pay a premium for better walkability, with

interesting places to walk to. The National Association of Realtors survey showed that people value neighborhoods with good pedestrian facilities (regardless of whether residents could walk somewhere interesting), implying that walking for exercise may be important to people, as long as they can still have a detached, single-family home with some privacy from neighbors.

- **Open space and parks.**

A separate study<sup>34</sup> that reviewed more than 60 published articles found that people value most types of open space, but that value depends on the size of the area, proximity to homes, the type of open space, and the methods used to conduct the analysis. In addition, open space and parks may be more valuable in urban settings, where residents do not benefit from an abundance of natural space as compared to rural areas.



### **Lack of Small Business and Entrepreneur Support Systems**

The Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council's most recent Small Business Survival Index, which ranked each state by its policy climate for small businesses and entrepreneurs, put Nevada at the top right behind South Dakota.<sup>35</sup> Over the past five years, Clark County's top patent-grant recipients have all been associated in some way with the gaming industry.<sup>36</sup>

A rich and productive entrepreneurial environment will need support from the land-use program in a variety of ways. Entrepreneurs and small businesses need easy access to a range of services, including printing, accounting, information technology, and catering.

Although there are well-known successes, such as the InNEVation Center and Chamber and Small Business Development Programs, the region could improve the connection between entrepreneurial efforts and revitalization. Entrepreneurs and the self-employed often benefit from incubators and flex spaces,

located in mixed-use and urban locations with increased access to services and transportation. Local organizations focused on supporting entrepreneurship have expressed that there is a prevalent need for programming, financial support, networking, funding, and mentoring for entrepreneurs.

### **Low Educational Performance**

Access, choice, and opportunities in primary and secondary education provide the basis for success. Educational institutions help our children learn communication and social skills to build their personal confidence and ability to contribute to our community, culture and civil society.

The Regional Plan focuses on enhancing learning environments to improve access to educational opportunities. Locating and integrating such environments wisely can make it easier to get to resources, especially in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods which often have struggling schools. Many neighborhoods lack basic connectivity for children to safely access schools and social

services, and for residents to access services and jobs without a car. There will be a continuing need to address the issue of school locations with respect to projected population growth, accessibility, joint use of schools and parks, and other factors. Improving growth-related decisions between the schools and others is a critical part of how communities grow, helping to add to the quality of local community environments.

There are a variety of factors that influence educational performance, including many topics that are not directly addressed through this Regional Plan, such as resource allocation, student-teacher ratios, classroom size, and curriculum, among many others.

About a quarter of children live in households with annual household incomes below the federal poverty line.<sup>37</sup> In a 2013 profile of children’s well-being by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Nevada ranked 48th out of 50. Clark County’s high school graduation rates are among the lowest in the nation and students score low in national reading and math assessments.

At this point, research documents a variety of symptoms of low socioeconomic standards that are relevant for children’s subsequent educational outcomes. These include, for example, poor health, limited access to home environments with rich language and experiences, low birth weight, limited access

to high-quality preschool opportunities, less participation in many activities in the summer and after school that middle class families take for granted, and more movement in and out of schools because of the way the housing market operates for low-income families.<sup>38</sup>

The 2013 Kids Count Profile for Nevada (**Table 4**) shows that Nevada has higher rates of children whose parents lack secure employment, households living with a high cost burden, teens in school and not working, and children living in families where the household head lacks a high school diploma.

**Table 4:** 2013 Kids Count Profile for Nevada

	<i>Nevada</i>	<i>U.S.</i>
<b>Children in poverty</b>	22%	23%
<b>Children whose parents lack secure employment</b>	34%	32%
<b>Children living in households with a high cost burden</b>	44%	40%
<b>Teens not in school and not working</b>	13%	8%
<b>Children living in high-poverty areas</b>	9%	12%
<b>Children living in families where the household head lacks a high school diploma</b>	23%	15%

Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation. [http://kidscount.unlv.edu/newsletters/2013KC\\_state\\_profile\\_NV.pdf](http://kidscount.unlv.edu/newsletters/2013KC_state_profile_NV.pdf)

The County also needs to look to the job requirements for the jobs of the future. A decade ago, only 15 percent of existing jobs in Clark County required a four-year degree as a minimum prequalification. This number inched up over the course of the decade to 17 percent of the existing job base. According to RCG Economics, focused skills training is currently in more demand than a college degree (e.g., Microsoft certification). Looking ahead, the new jobs projected to be added over the coming 10 years will require increasingly more preparation. A full 29 percent of the projected new jobs will require at least a four-year degree as an entry-level condition.<sup>39</sup> This is lower than the national projections for future jobs, which reports that about 26 percent of new jobs will require a bachelor's degree.<sup>40</sup>

**Figure 9** (next page) shows where residents with a college degree currently live.

Strategies to enhance access to quality educational opportunities include:

- Enhance multi-modal transportation opportunities, placing priority on low-income neighborhoods, safe routes to schools, and concentrating new housing along transit corridors.
- Encourage diverse mixed-income housing and neighborhoods and review the impacts of restrictive zoning on educational achievement.
- Create economic development opportunities within neighborhoods that provide tools for communities to build social capital and civic infrastructure that supports schools.
- Siting new schools and services in a thoughtful way, including the co-location of schools with health and other services.

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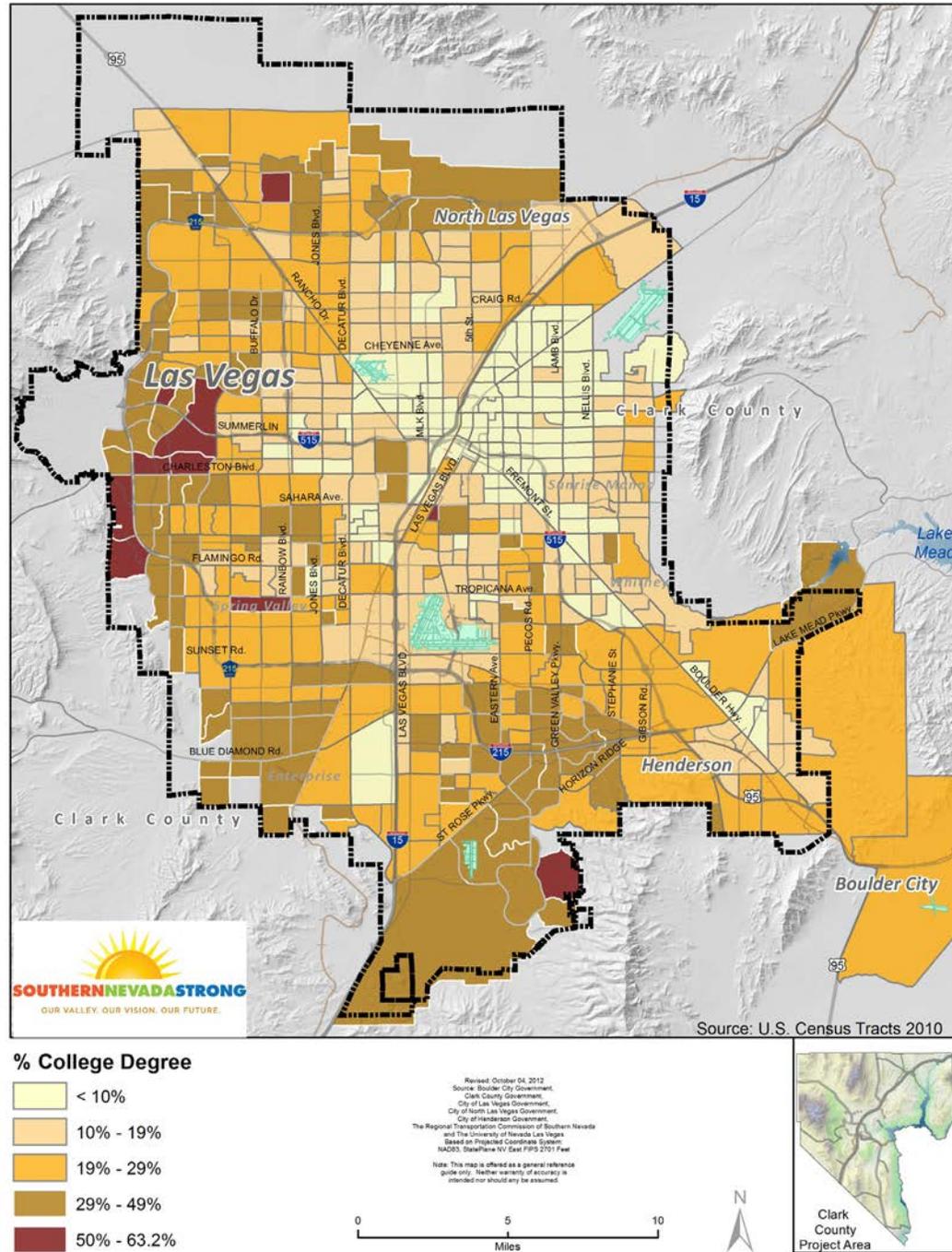
“IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF K–12 EDUCATION TO MAKE THE REGION A DESIRABLE PLACE FOR THE KNOWLEDGE-BASED WORKERS TO LIVE AND RAISE A FAMILY.”

– PUBLIC OUTREACH PARTICIPANT

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Figure 9: Southern Nevadans with a College Degree



## 3.2 GOALS AND POLICY STRATEGIES

This section details the **goals, objectives and actions that support improved economic competitiveness and education** and will move Southern Nevada toward the vision.

- **Goals** are the big overarching ideas, changes, or practices that are essential to realize the community's vision.
- **Objectives** establish specific, measurable goals that guide how the Plan is implemented in a way that will achieve the vision.
- **Strategies** outline the steps needed to achieve the objectives.

### Goal 1. Match land use and transportation plans with regional economic development plans.

#### Objective 1.1

**Invest in and maintain infrastructure that meets the needs of a diversified economy.**

- 1.1.1 In coordination with organizations such as the LVGEA, develop a regional approach to 1) assess the need for and implement infrastructure that can support a diversified economy and 2) recommend updates to land-use plans to match land use and transportation plans and policies.
- 1.1.2 Provide tools such as scenario planning analyses to local governments and the RTC to develop land-use strategies that implement the Plan at the local level.
- 1.1.3 Coordinate the RTC's Regional Transportation Plan and local government master plan updates with the CEDS.

### Achieving the Vision Through Strategic Land Use

Since the way we use land profoundly influences how we live, work and play, **this document touches on many aspects of the region's land-use planning.** The goals and policies included in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 will guide the design of the valley's regulatory system, including the zoning code, rules governing the subdivision of land, the interaction of land use and transportation and economic development.

**The Plan also recommends strategies that should be pursued in the first few years following Plan adoption.** These strategies are found in the Implementation Matrix.



**Objective 1.2**  
**Determine future needs for employment lands.**

- 1.2.1 Conduct and publicize a regional inventory of available commercial and industrial land and facilities.
- 1.2.2 Work with local governments to bolster longer-term economic growth and development by designating employment lands for future industries, while mitigating the pressure to respond to short-term development demand for residential development.

**Objective 1.3**  
**Foster the development of the healthcare and education sectors, locally serving sectors that would enhance quality of life for residents to better integrate with existing land uses and create a better environment to attract new workers.**

- 1.3.1 Support community stakeholders to plan for regional educational and medical assets that support economic growth and diversification, such as a UNLV medical school.
- 1.3.2 Encourage quality housing and transit near existing medical facilities, schools and training programs to increase access to local medical providers and provide opportunities for residency programs in order to get doctors to stay in the region.
- 1.3.3 Identify how and where medical and educational institutions can be integrated into mixed-use developments in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods to stimulate economic vitality while offering needed services.
- 1.3.4 Provide housing options for healthcare workers near their place of employment that integrate parks, trails, and active transportation infrastructure.

**Goal 2. Ensure that Southern Nevada offers a range of place types to attract and retain future workers, visitors, businesses and entrepreneurs.**

**Objective 2.1**  
**Develop strategies and make targeted investments to encourage infill redevelopment and property rehabilitation.**

- 2.1.1 Implement the four Opportunity Site strategies: Maryland Parkway, Boulder Highway at Broadbent/Gibson, Downtown North Las Vegas, and the Las Vegas Medical District and create and encourage the use of an infill and revitalization action plan for areas with similar characteristics to the four Opportunity Site strategies that identifies barriers to mixed-use development and suggests tools to overcome them.
- 2.1.2 Create a set of sample revitalization and renovation plans for existing buildings, which could be approved through a streamlined permitting process and implemented via low-cost loans, modest rehabilitation subsidies, or CDBG dollars, etc.
- 2.1.3 Make targeted enhancements in key infill areas to enhance walkability and connectivity to existing and new recreational, commercial and transportation options.
- 2.1.4 Preserve and enhance historic neighborhoods and allow appropriate infill and enhancements that can support the neighborhood's economic development.
- 2.1.5 Develop and build upon existing programs to promote reinvestment in business districts through sweat equity and volunteerism to create gathering spaces, improve safety, and stabilize neighborhoods.
- 2.1.6 Study market readiness and redevelopment potential for deteriorated commercial areas and underutilized strip retail developments.
- 2.1.7 Work with rural communities and small towns to implement economic development goals where comparative advantages align better than in the urban areas of Clark County.



## Regional Planning & Economic Development: WHERE DO SMALLER TOWNS & RURAL COMMUNITIES FIT IN?

In September 2013, Southern Nevada Strong project staff and consultants held an economic development workshop in Laughlin and Moapa Valley (Overton), respectively.

The purpose of each workshop was to discuss the latest trends in economic development, with particular focus on how smaller communities and rural areas identify their assets and what role they play in a regional economy. The workshop encouraged participants, who included businesses, economic developers, and community leaders, to identify potential new approaches to strengthening the local economies of Moapa Valley and Laughlin, respectively, and build closer economic connections to the larger Southern Nevada region.

Participants were asked to consider key questions:

- *What are my area's current economic priorities?*
- *What will our children or grandchildren do to earn their living when they grow up?*
- *Will they be able to, and want to, stay in this area?*
- *What is the region's current and future demographic, economic and social mix?*

The presenter shared that characteristics that may have been attractive to companies yesterday, won't attract companies today. Companies today are looking for:

- A Talented Workforce/ Entrepreneurs
- Quality of Life
- Good Location
- Strong Civic Leadership

The presenter emphasized that working at the regional scale is especially important to smaller towns and rural areas because:

- They build more critical mass
- Regions compete in a global market, not along political or municipal boundaries
- More ideas and diverse perspectives = better ideas

Through the workshop, participants identified opportunities for their respective communities, discussed ways to measure success and defined desired outcomes. They also identified strategic initiatives necessary to catalyze growth, and discussed partnerships that could be pursued to align efforts with other communities and the larger region.



## Highlights from Moapa

WITH GAYE STOCKTON, MESQUITE REGIONAL BUSINESS, INC.

Moapa Valley, in the rural northeastern corner of Southern Nevada, experienced similar effects of the Great Recession as the urbanized Las Vegas valley. Mesquite, an incorporated city and Overton, an unincorporated town, anchor the area and are located off of the I15 freeway. Each of these communities has worked on economic development efforts.

Mesquite has unique challenges and opportunities. The City planned for growth and enjoys adequate infrastructure and available land for development, boasting the availability of numerous modern buildings and sites. However, limited natural resources pose a concern for the rural community and position smart growth and sustainability as vital concepts for the area. Prioritizing Moapa Valley's downtowns, including downtown Overton and downtown Mesquite also align with the Regional Plan.

Mesquite also suffers extreme disparities due to a significant retired population with mainly stable above

average incomes, juxtaposed by a high unemployment rate of eligible workers.

Recovery in Moapa Valley is slower than in the metropolitan area of Southern Nevada and businesses, economic developers and community leaders must be creative to support the area's economic well-being.

Rural and small town communities are an important part of diversifying the region's economy in their ability to attract and capture different sectors looking for unique characteristics, location and developable land.

Recognizing the unique characteristics of rural areas and small towns is important to distinguish in an economic development strategy in order to align with the needs of target industries.

The community looks forward to continuing to participate in larger regional efforts through projects like Southern Nevada Strong and with the Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance.



### Highlights from Laughlin

WITH DEBORAH MURRAY, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MANAGER,  
CLARK COUNTY / LAUGHLIN TOWN MANAGER'S OFFICE

With a population of about eight thousand, this quiet town plays host to two million visitors per year who come to enjoy the entertainment and recreation Laughlin has to offer. All of these activities bring benefits to the region as well as to Laughlin; however recreation and tourism are only a portion of what's needed for sustainable economic development.

Although Laughlin's casino resorts have managed to maintain economic stability for the region by serving as the economic engine, a need for diversification is recognized to nourish a healthy community. Participation in Southern Nevada Strong has been a recent part of the multi-faceted approach that Laughlin has undertaken over the years to broaden its economic base.

Laughlin boasts many assets, including:

- Availability of large publically-owned land supply
- Great weather
- New parks and trails including 1,200 acres along the river walk

- High number of hotel rooms
- Annual events
- A renewed focus on the Colorado River and Lake Mojave
- Strong alignment with manufacturing
- A great community for retirees

Laughlin is in sync with Southern Nevada Strong, recognizing that regional planning can bring a variety of benefits to our neighborhoods by identifying local solutions to regional problems. We can improve the quality of life in our communities by working together to provide cleaner air, safer streets, and homes closer to transit, jobs and services. Along with improving local conditions, these factors are essential to attracting and retaining quality jobs that provide opportunities at all employment levels.

Regional Planning provides the broad context in which local and regional decisions can be made that move the town and region toward a sustainable future – a future with more choices and opportunities for all residents.

**Objective 2.2**  
**Develop and expand community-based economic development and reinvestment to support vibrant, transit-supported mixed-use districts throughout the region.**

- 2.2.1 Identify placemaking improvements, regulatory changes and design standards to increase customer draw in areas with a unique flair (arts, antiques, international appeal, family-oriented, etc.).
- 2.2.2 Develop strategies to better connect residential demand with local commercial services and products to reduce retail leakage.
- 2.2.3 Identify, adopt and support programs that aid in the revitalization of local business districts, such as the arts district in downtown Las Vegas and areas with active business associations.

**Goal 3. Enhance the role of small businesses and entrepreneurs as leaders in economic diversification and revitalization.**

**Objective 3.1**  
**Determine the building and space needs of entrepreneurs and startups to embolden existing small businesses to participate in revitalization.**

- 3.1.1 Identify neighborhoods that are well positioned to attract businesses from specific sectors and develop place-based strategies, cluster training, and workforce outreach efforts around those areas to reduce commute times and connect local residents to job opportunities.
- 3.1.2 Identify target industry locational needs, determine which industries are most likely to be successful in infill development, and develop a strategy to promote new development that accommodates them.
- 3.1.3 Assess potential support for locally-owned business preferences, including co-working spaces.
- 3.1.4 Expand and pursue public market concepts that allow flexibility for a diversity of businesses including micro-business, farmers markets, or public markets through a public-private partnership.
- 3.1.5 Provide tools and technical assistance to business districts to help increase market draw.
- 3.1.6 Encourage the development of “third places,” (locations outside of work and home including coffee shops, cafes or bars) that foster entrepreneurs and small business owners by allowing people to meet and exchange ideas or work with the ability to access basic services such as wifi at no charge.

**Goal 4. Support the educational system and learning environments through thoughtful land-use and transportation planning.**

**Objective 4.1**

**Prioritize the school environment for children, encouraging development that better supports existing schools.**

- 4.1.1 Explore community-based approaches to educational improvement and reform that focuses on improving the educational and developmental outcomes of children and youth in distressed communities, paying special attention to access to free preschools and all-day kindergarten.
- 4.1.2 Support updates to land-use plans based on the preferred land-use alternative, emphasizing relationships between revitalization, urban infill and education.
- 4.1.3 Support events and educational programming that address socioeconomic disparities and coordinate with partner organizations and initiatives to improve social equity.
- 4.1.4 Partner with Safe Routes to Schools to integrate safe walking and biking routes in new development areas to make neighborhoods more attractive. Prioritize investments that improve multi-modal school access.
- 4.1.5 Promote the integration of schools, parks and community services into neighborhoods.
- 4.1.6 Review the impacts of restrictive zoning on the educational system. (Restrictive zoning limits the types or form of development in a specific area. For instance, development of higher density buildings may be banned in certain areas of the community.)

**Objective 4.2**

**Work closely with the Clark County School District Real Property Management Division, local governments and developers to develop thoughtful school and service siting criteria.**

- 4.2.1 Work with the Clark County School District to prioritize repurposing and rehabilitation of deteriorating schools, especially in neighborhoods near the Opportunity Sites.
- 4.2.2 In the spirit of collaboration, research legislative changes (local, state and federal) necessary to allow the school district more flexibility with facility use and management with particular consideration for the role of regulations affecting Recreation & Public Purposes Act leases and BLM land and related impacts on schools on BLM property.
- 4.2.3 Consider changes to school design, including building schools with multiple stories and locating schools in infill areas, and consider repurposing commercial or vacant big-box retail spaces into schools.
- 4.2.4 Continue to strengthen the relationship between the CCSD and local governments to achieve shared goals for effective learning environments and educational performance.
- 4.2.5 Identify potential funding sources that could be directed to building or retrofitting schools so that they can support a better learning environment.
- 4.2.6 Encourage the local business community to support education and schools programs to better connect opportunities for student career mapping, mentoring, and educational needs of employers.
- 4.2.7 Implement the RTC’s Regional Schools Multimodal Transportation Access Study to improve safety for children and promote a better overall environment near schools.
- 4.2.8 Collaborate with the Clark County School District, local governments and the RTC to address school siting requirements, including but not limited to, separation of uses near planned school sites and bus access.
- 4.2.9 Promote the need for schools to be located adjacent to public facilities and Pre-K, health, social and educational services that support healthy families.
- 4.2.10 Elevate the importance of school siting as a strategic education and economic development initiative with the building and development industry, business community, local chambers and other stakeholders.
- 4.2.11 Co-locate schools and other learning facilities and community resources to capitalize on community skill sets and knowledge.

**Goal 5. Increase collaboration between the state government, local governments and the region’s higher education institutions to align economic development and education efforts.**

**Objective 5.1**  
**Partner with higher education institutions to support economic development.**

- 5.1.1 Pursue a stronger higher education system that includes a UNLV medical school, a tier 1 research institution, and Graduate Medical Education programming, (formal medical education either hospital sponsored or hospital-based training) following completion of an M.D. or D.O. degree.
- 5.1.2 Collaborate with local higher education institutions to develop local revitalization and improvement efforts.
- 5.1.3 Align complementary plans, special area plans and incentives with regional target sector industries, such as medical districts.
- 5.1.4 Consider public investment in a center for research and development, in partnership with area universities, hospitals, the LVGEA, and businesses that can be leveraged to promote investment and stimulate more collaboration.

CHAPTER FOUR

# Our Vision #2: Invest in Complete Communities

Clark County has expanded rapidly in the past 20 years and has attracted people of all races, ages, and incomes.





## Our Vision #2: Invest in Complete Communities

In the last four decades, Clark County has been one of the nation's fastest growing regions, doubling since 1990 – an increase of more than one million people. The availability of jobs and low housing prices, driven by relatively low construction costs and available land, drew people to the new homes built since 2000.

The rapid and extended population growth over the past 20 years has stretched monetary and natural resources to the limit, making it difficult to keep pace. At the same time, land-use patterns make access to amenities and services difficult without a car, contributing to health issues such as obesity.

While growth is not projected to continue at the rate seen during the last decade, the region still expects to welcome approximately 866,000 additional people by

2030 according to UNLV Center for Business and Economic Research's Population Forecasts: Long-Term Projections for Clark County, Nevada, 2012. This growth will have impacts on our region's community character, public health and environmental quality:

- To accommodate changing demographics, our region needs to foster complete communities that provide equal access to community amenities and housing for people of all incomes.
- A safe, healthy and sustainable environment is crucial to secure, healthy lives and a strong and resilient economy for Southern Nevada residents. Not surprisingly, the most recognizable environmental issues that the region faces are related to under-regulated development during periods of rapid population growth. In addition, the region is located in a valley with one of the world's

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COMPLETE COMMUNITIES  
ARE THOSE WHERE JOBS,  
HOUSING, TRANSPORTATION  
AND COMMUNITY AMENITIES  
COMBINE TO CREATE  
PLACES THAT SUPPORT  
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY  
AND HEALTHY OPTIONS FOR  
ALL PEOPLE, REGARDLESS  
OF INCOME LEVELS.

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Natural resource preservation is vital in our desert climate.

most arid climates with very little rainfall; this increases the pressure on local environmental resources.

- Our region must promote inclusive communities and reduce discrimination by advancing integrated strategies to reduce health disparities for all segments of the population. Implementation will occur through committed partnerships with neighborhoods, agencies, businesses and community groups that represent all segments of the population.

**The other themes from the Plan address related issues:**

- The Transportation Choice theme considers how housing location and type affect transportation impacts and vice versa, and how transportation choices can affect environmental outcomes.
- The Economic Competiveness theme considers how vibrant and diverse place types that provide proximity to community amenities and open space can attract future workers and retain those we have today.

The Complete Communities theme of the Plan serves as a single unified vision and strategy for how the region can promote inclusive communities with good access to housing, healthcare and vital services while fostering the efficient use of scarce natural resources. It calls upon the region to evaluate how it can ensure that its housing profile is well matched to meet the needs of the future population and economy. Attaining a healthy balance of well-planned housing and jobs while ensuring that the region's natural resources are protected is important for its long-term economic competitiveness.

## 4.1 VISION FOR PREFERRED FUTURE LAND USE

Translating the regional vision into reality requires an understanding of current trends and the impacts of potential policy decisions. To articulate alternative futures for the region, the project team created two land-use scenarios that describe current and potential land-use patterns. Each scenario shows where people might live and work, the types of housing and jobs that may be available, and how people would travel around the region. Given the many possible ways a community might grow, scenario planning can help better inform the decisions to be made at present, despite the uncertainties of the future.

### The Base Case: Growing Disparity and Inequality

As a first step, we created a “Baseline Scenario” or “Base Case” to describe how land-use patterns would change if existing trends continued. The base case scenario, in **Figure 10**, shows where current trends are likely to lead the region, assuming no zoning or policy

changes and a continuation of past development patterns. The base case scenario sets the benchmark for comparing an alternative scenario.

While the model focuses primarily on the built environment, conclusions can be drawn about impacts to engagement and equity issues. Under the baseline scenario, employment will continue to be focused in current industry clusters and new employment centers will likely grow on the edges of existing development. Likewise, new housing – particularly higher-density housing – will continue to be developed on the outskirts of the region. Transportation investments and infrastructure will continue to be auto-oriented.

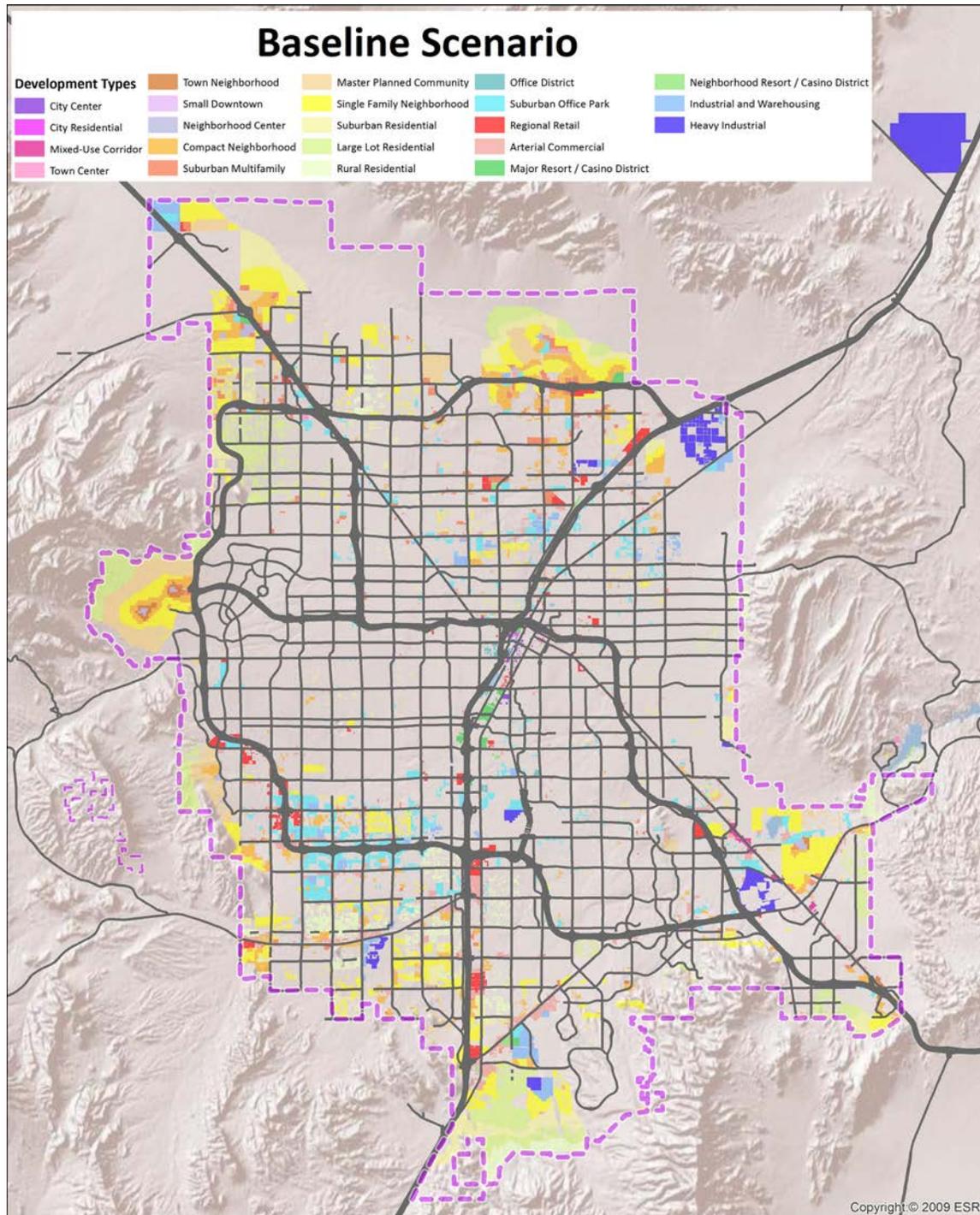
Without a significant shift in policy or investment, the future described by the baseline

scenario is one in which the current negative trends and growing disparities are likely to continue and worsen.

As development continues at the outer edges of the region, neighborhoods and communities with low levels of income and education will become further isolated and disenfranchised. Without major investments in affordable housing or transit networks, access to critical services and employment opportunities is unlikely to improve. The cost of living is likely to continue to increase without corresponding growth in income and wealth. Neighborhoods with high levels of community risk are likely to remain isolated and segregated from higher-income areas, and the housing market will continue to suffer the after-effects of the recession and foreclosure crisis.

Base Case	Preferred Scenario
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A likely picture of future growth according to existing plans and forecasts.</li> <li>• It is the “most likely future condition” if no policy or other changes are made.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preferred future growth patterns according to input received at the September workshop.</li> <li>• It is the “most likely future condition” if key policy or other changes are made.</li> </ul>

Figure 10: Southern Nevada Base Case Scenario



The base case scenario does not match task group or stakeholder priorities for the following reasons:

- Most of the growth is at the “fringe” in single-use development types. Without major policy or other changes, the baseline scenario indicates Southern Nevada is likely to continue to grow outward along the urban fringes, requiring new development on land that currently is vacant or within open space.

Using 2035 population and employment growth forecasts from UNLV, models show that 67,000 acres of new development would be needed to accommodate projected growth if current trends continue. This is an area roughly the size of the City of Henderson, but less land than was developed in the last decade. This assumes that household size remains stable, housing growth occurs primarily in single-family detached housing and very little redevelopment occurs. Incremental growth in employment in this scenario

is focused in areas where most employment currently exists – retail, office, industrial and hotel/hospitality.

- Redevelopment occurs only in downtown, the Strip, and a few mixed-use centers.
- Housing is not located near existing schools and parks.
- Environmental resource use remains relatively high.
- Housing is primarily located on the fringe; the majority of housing units are single-family units, representing a mismatch with the future housing needs analysis. If growth continues consistent with recent patterns, new housing would likely be built along the outer edges of the region, particularly for multi-family or higher-density developments.

Housing growth is likely to be concentrated to the far north and northwest of the metro area and new housing and jobs are not likely to be located close together. Transportation systems would continue to be auto-oriented. Almost 1,500 new miles

Figure 11: Land Consumption Comparison



of roads would be needed to accommodate the new development in the baseline scenario, at a cost of more than \$7 billion.

- Most new employment land is on the fringe. Some existing corridor employment areas along the Strip and in downtown Las Vegas would grow, but new employment centers would likely develop at the region’s outskirts. The baseline scenario also revealed that there is currently an excess of commercially-zoned properties along employment corridors, as well as a shortage of land for industrial uses.

Figure 12: Base Case Scenario Development Types



suburban office park



arterial commercial



suburban residential



suburban multifamily

Figure 13: Preferred Land Use Vision Development Types



mixed-use corridor



compact neighborhood



town center



employment district

### Preferred Land Use Vision: Improved Access and Opportunity

Using community input, Southern Nevada Strong developed a map (shown in **Figure 2** on page 10) to show how the regional vision might look on the ground and to visualize how our priorities can be reflected in the region's development pattern.

The Preferred Land Use Vision develops 55,000 acres, which is 12,000 acres less than the base case. The map shows the community's vision for where housing, jobs and transportation would be located in the future.

It is a communication tool with no regulatory function. It provides direction and focus for how we can craft local land-use and transportation programs, and ultimately local zoning code changes. This map is the starting point for community-level discussions about how to convert these regional policies into local action.

The vision shows a possible future for Southern Nevada in which:

- New growth occurs in existing neighborhoods and vacant and underused sites are redeveloped.
- Multiple modes of transportation – including walking, biking and transit – are available, safe and convenient.
- More people can live close to work because jobs, services and schools are located within easy reach of a variety of housing types for all budgets and preferences.
- Underutilized retail and industrial land along key corridors is repurposed and attracts small businesses and companies in targeted economic industries.
- Redevelopment occurs along future transit corridors, including North 5th Street, Maryland Parkway, Flamingo Road and Boulder Highway.

- The region's downtowns provide a variety of jobs and services for local residents, dense housing combined with vibrant commercial spaces, and new employment and workforce development opportunities.
- Through regional collaboration, schools are located in walkable and bikable communities.

During the scenario planning process, the planning team used indicators to communicate the benefits, impacts and tradeoffs of different policy choices and investments. As scenarios are tested and refined, we compare and evaluate them based on their indicator performance. Indicators may be related to new or emerging community goals or issues such as transit access, housing costs, or agricultural land preservation. In practice, this approach allows the public to visualize their region's future and track progress over time.

**Table 5** shows key indicators for the preferred land use scenario for Southern Nevada Strong.

Table 5: Scenario Indicators

BASE CASE CHALLENGES	In the Preferred Scenario...	Changes from the Base Case
<p>Most of the growth is at the “fringe,” in single-use development types</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Transportation costs decrease</b> (<i>\$3K less in annual transportation costs per household on average in central vs. fringe areas</i>)</li> <li>• <b>New infrastructure costs are less</b></li> <li>• <b>Land consumption decreases</b> (<i>-11K acres</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>30% fewer housing units in suburban residential development types</b></li> <li>• <b>18% fewer jobs in single-use employment types</b></li> <li>• <b>Average annual household transportation costs are \$3,000 less in central vs. fringe areas</b></li> </ul>
<p>Few “mixed-use centers”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Jobs/housing proximity improves</b></li> <li>• <b>Transit supporting density increases</b></li> <li>• <b>Pedestrian and bicycle access increases</b></li> <li>• <b>Infill development increases</b> (<i>Increase of ~700 acres</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>51% of new housing units in mixed-use areas</b> (<i>Only 24% in base case</i>)</li> <li>• <b>19% of new jobs in mixed-use areas</b> (<i>Only 8% in base case</i>)</li> <li>• <b>16% of new housing within a ¼ mile of high-capacity transit</b> (<i>only 9% in the base case</i>)</li> </ul>
<p>Low proximity of housing to existing schools and parks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better use of existing school facilities, potential to expand or build within existing neighborhoods</b></li> <li>• <b>Support existing public amenities</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>26% more housing units within one mile of existing schools</b></li> <li>• <b>21% more housing units within a ¼ mile of existing parks</b></li> </ul>
<p>Fiscal efficiency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fewer road miles to build/maintain</b> (<i>Road costs decrease 6%</i>)</li> <li>• <b>Tax revenue increases</b> (<i>Higher property values for commercial land, more housing units</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>\$600,000,000 cost savings in roadway infrastructure</b></li> <li>• <b>Overall increase in fiscal efficiency</b></li> </ul>
<p>Environmental resource use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reduced emissions and resource usage</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>11% decrease in energy use</b></li> <li>• <b>11% decrease in carbon emissions</b></li> <li>• <b>21% decrease in water use</b></li> </ul>

As compared with the base case scenario, the results show that the preferred land use scenario results in a built environment that provides more housing choice, better access to community amenities and transit options, and provides a more balanced approach to the siting of employment locations. Auxiliary benefits resulting from this new built form include fewer new roads to be constructed and a decrease in water and energy consumption.



## 4.2 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The work documented in this Plan theme was led by the Housing, Environment, and Healthy Communities Task Groups, which brought together a group of subject-matter experts and leaders from throughout the region. The SNS process gathered further input through workshops, open houses, interviews, focus groups and survey discussions. Analysis and public input consistently pointed the Task Groups to the following core challenges and opportunities that the region faces, and that this Plan theme addresses.



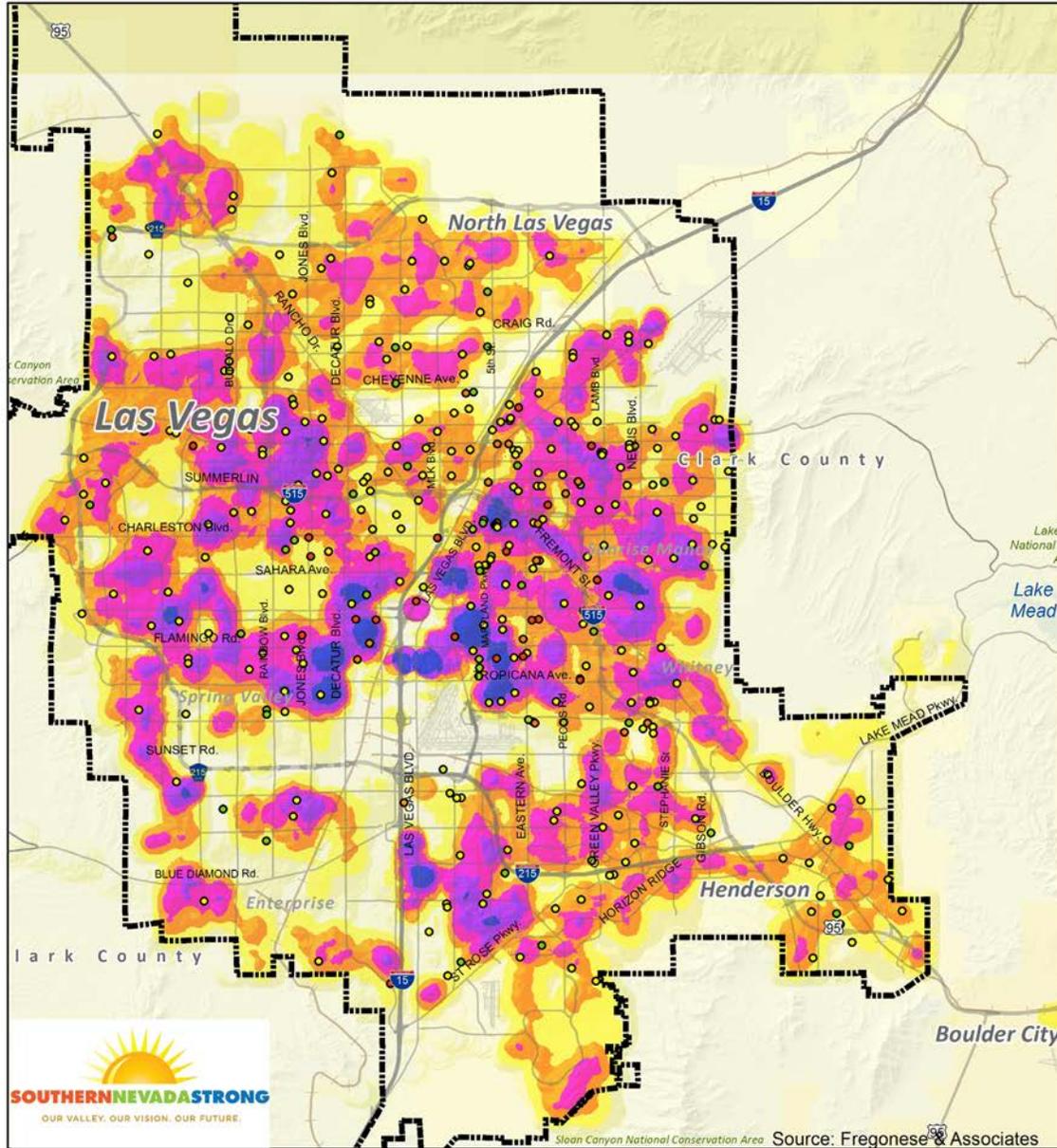
Public input was gathered through active participation in the Southern Nevada Strong planning process.



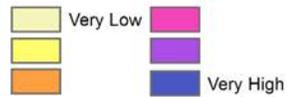
CHALLENGES	<i>Opportunities and Priorities</i>
<p><b>Auto-Oriented Development Pattern:</b>                      The region’s growth patterns have focused on segregating uses and locating new development on the fringe, leading to disinvestment in the urban core, an overreliance on the car, and neighborhoods lacking services and amenities. According to Smart Growth America’s <i>Dangerous By Design 2014</i> report, the Las Vegas MSA ranks 8th in pedestrian deaths per 100,000 population at 1.85 from 2008–2012.</p>	<p><i>Stabilize and strengthen existing neighborhoods through placemaking improvements by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Increasing neighborhood engagement.</i></li> <li>• <i>Developing housing and employment in mixed-use transit-oriented neighborhoods near job centers, schools and other services.</i></li> <li>• <i>Initiating redevelopment activities along transit corridors that enhance ridership, promote livability and develop community character.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Housing Choice, Efficiency and Diversity:</b>                      If development continues as it has in the past, some housing types and neighborhoods that are available in competitor regions will not be available in the Las Vegas area. We will lose out economically if we cannot compete. Housing costs are unaffordable for half of renters and almost half of homeowners with a mortgage. Poor quality housing has a disproportional impact on residents of low-income areas.</p>	<p><i>Encourage an adequate supply of housing with a range of price, density, ownership and building types by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Maintaining an adequate supply of land with flexible zoning designations to meet the anticipated housing demand.</i></li> <li>• <i>Developing housing to meet the needs of workers in future industry sectors.</i></li> <li>• <i>Designing housing to meet the needs of residents with low mobility and/or disabilities.</i></li> <li>• <i>Developing low-income and workforce housing in neighborhoods across the region.</i></li> <li>• <i>Considering the needs of the aging population.</i></li> <li>• <i>Educating and informing the population regarding housing choice, needs and rights.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Lack of Access to Basic Services and Amenities:</b>  <i>Healthcare shortage:</i> Clark County has a low physician-to-population ratio compared to other counties in Nevada and in the U.S. (1:1,244 while the national benchmark for this ratio is 1:631.)  <i>Food deserts:</i> There are 16 food deserts in Clark County. Convenience and fast food outlets are more accessible than grocery stores in several locations throughout the region.  <i>Insufficient park access:</i> The region has one of the lowest parks-per-capita ratios in the country. Compared to other Intermountain West metropolitan areas, the region had the highest rate of diabetes, and people reporting fair or poor health. Residents were less likely to exercise than were residents of other Intermountain West communities.</p>	<p><i>Support access to healthcare, healthy food, parks and community services by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Developing new partnerships to enhance access to healthcare and community services.</i></li> <li>• <i>Researching emerging issues and developing partnerships to improve access to affordable and healthy food options.</i></li> <li>• <i>Prioritizing access to parks, open space, recreational facilities, and opportunities for physical exercise.</i></li> </ul>

CHALLENGES	Opportunities and Priorities
<p><b>Neighborhood Safety And Health:</b> Some neighborhoods experienced decades of disinvestment even before the Great Recession began, but Southern Nevada had disproportionately high foreclosure rates and one of the largest decreases in housing values related to the foreclosure crisis. The Southern Nevada region is characterized by regional inequalities, with community risk heavily concentrated in some neighborhoods. In addition, the region has higher than average rates of crime and substance abuse, which can have negative effects on neighborhoods.</p>	<p><i>Improve neighborhood safety and protect residents from the harmful effects of pollution and hazardous materials by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Developing policies to promote environmental health of housing.</i></li> <li>• <i>Increasing the safety of neighborhoods, parks and open spaces.</i></li> <li>• <i>Protecting community members from the harmful effects of pollution and hazardous materials, hazardous waste, and environmental contamination.</i></li> <li>• <i>Prioritizing the cleanup and reuse of brownfield and grayfield sites.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Resource Consumptive Development:</b> Much of the region’s development faces a negative perception, including poor building quality and a short life span. The climate demands energy efficiency and enhanced quality of construction suited for the desert environment.</p> <p><i>Water supply:</i> Diminishing water supply is a threat to regional livability and the economic base.</p> <p><i>Air quality:</i> Stemming from motor vehicles, construction, and commercial and industrial enterprises, air pollution challenges have grown in proportion to the population and economic growth in the valley. Las Vegas received an “F” for ozone levels from the American Lung Association and was labeled the 16th most ozone-polluted city.</p> <p><i>Solid waste recovery:</i> Southern Nevada has one of the lowest recycling rates in the country.</p>	<p><i>Promote resource-efficient land-use and development practices by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Promoting sustainability in housing in the region to ensure a durable housing supply that will reduce housing costs for homeowners and renters.</i></li> <li>• <i>Minimizing air pollutant emissions from stationary sources to reduce emissions and improve air quality to meet or exceed national ambient air quality standards and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.</i></li> <li>• <i>Supporting compact development and regulations that help the Southern Nevada Water Authority achieve water conservation goals and encourage reduction in water consumption.</i></li> <li>• <i>Increasing water quality and decreasing wastewater and dry weather urban runoff while encouraging recycled water reuse strategies that maximize Southern Nevada’s return-flow credits from the Colorado River system.</i></li> <li>• <i>Reducing regional and local energy demand.</i></li> <li>• <i>Developing guidelines for the preservation of view corridors and restoration of natural resources.</i></li> <li>• <i>Increasing the supply of regionally generated solar energy.</i></li> <li>• <i>Increasing regional solid waste recovery and reducing landfill contributions.</i></li> </ul>

Figure 14: Southern Nevada Existing Housing Density



**Existing Housing Density**

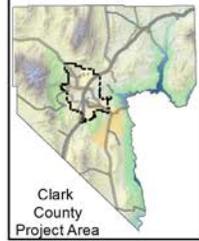


**Schools within the Urban Area**

- ALTERNATIVE School
- ELEMENTARY School
- HIGH School
- JUNIOR HIGH
- MAJOR
- MIDDLE School
- UNIVERSITY
- UNKNOWN
- VOCATIONAL

Revised: October 04, 2012  
 Source: Boulder City Government,  
 Clark County Government,  
 City of Las Vegas Government,  
 City of North Las Vegas Government,  
 City of Henderson Government,  
 The Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada  
 and The University of Nevada Las Vegas  
 Based on Projected Coordinate System:  
 NAD83, StatePlane NV East FIPS 2701 Feet

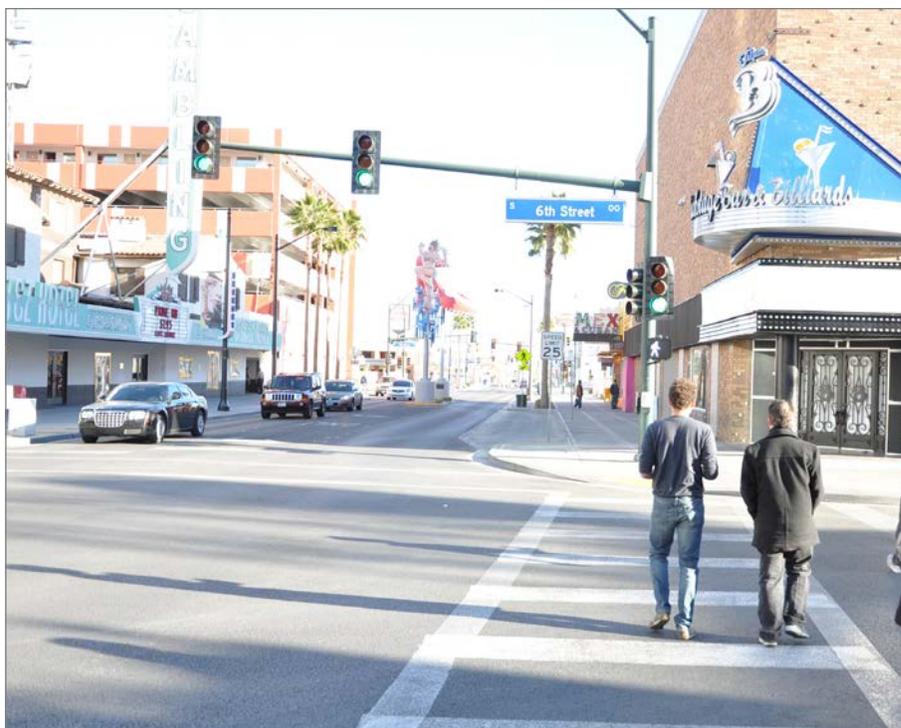
Note: This map is offered as a general reference  
 guide only. Neither warranty of accuracy is  
 intended nor should any be assumed.



## Auto-Oriented Development Pattern

The region’s auto-oriented growth pattern has led to limited transportation options, long distances between where people work and where they live, and infrastructure that supports suburban residential development styles and is expensive to maintain. This growth pattern has also created a dangerous environment for pedestrians. The region ranks 13th most dangerous overall according to Smart Growth America’s *Pedestrian Danger Index*.<sup>42</sup> Changing this development style will require new investment in existing neighborhoods and business districts.

Southern Nevada has seen limited infill development on previously developed land. The large supply of vacant land and abundance of suburban-style housing, retail, and employment development has made infill and redevelopment projects appear unnecessarily risky to financial backers and developers. Despite these challenges, renewed investment will be crucial to realizing the community’s vision. Southern Nevada Strong has identified a series of “centers”



State and local leaders in communities and schools can support Walk to School and Safe Routes to School programs.

that would provide convenient access to shops, restaurants, and community-oriented services, such as day cares, libraries and meeting halls. There are shorter auto trips and more walking and bicycling in a center since residential and commercial areas are near each other. Centers often are the site for transit stations and bus route intersections.

Local governments, the development community, and philanthropic foundations will need to form strategic

partnerships to build familiarity and effective processes to enable redevelopment. A strategy for success must include a coordinated approach to making redevelopment desirable and doable, including revisions to zoning code, identification of appropriate sites and incentives.

In addition to new communities, the preferred scenario envisions a portion of new growth occurring in the form of infill development, which is the integration of new or rehabilitated buildings into

existing urban areas. The SNS land-use scenario estimated that 51 percent of new housing units would take the form of infill or redevelopment. Infill can revitalize neighborhoods and main streets by providing new employment or housing and filling “gaps” in a streetscape.

Creating a strong market for infill development in Southern Nevada will require substantial planning, coordination and skill. The abundance of vacant land and the development community’s comfort and familiarity with suburban-style development is a further disincentive to infill development.

Infill is usually a new concept. Financial lenders (both in Southern Nevada and around the country) tend to favor the tried-and-true methods of development. Consequently, like every city that has turned to infill as a growth and development strategy, Southern Nevada will have to build confidence and an understanding of good infill practices. Infill projects tend to occur at two scales: the large multi-phase project that can cover several blocks, and small, parcel-by-parcel projects.

- **Larger projects** make it possible to combine a collection of uses, such as housing and retail entertainment venues, which help diversify the project and reduce risk. Often these projects are initiated by local governments or redevelopment agencies that solicit developers and investors. Substantial public investment is usually needed, especially if the project takes place on a formerly polluted site or in a distressed area. The positive aspects of the larger-scale approach include delivering a collection of amenities under the umbrella of one project. These projects can change perceptions about an area and serve as the initial catalyst for more investment. The drawbacks to this approach are the substantial risk the public must bear, both financially and politically.
- **Small, parcel-by-parcel projects** add gradually to a community. Investors adaptively reuse existing buildings, add on to them, or build anew. Governments in the region also can play a role, usually through providing



financing, development incentives, and technical assistance to individual developers. This can require just as much effort and attention by public agencies as the large infill project approach. Mobilizing small-scale capital projects is not a simple matter, and the risk for individual investors in those projects is not insubstantial. But the long-term yields of focusing on many small projects can potentially outperform the single large project approach.

## The Role of Local Governments in Infill Development

Most likely, there will be a role for both large and small infill projects in Southern Nevada. But to achieve the vision, there will be a much more substantial need for small-scale investments throughout the region. The region's municipalities must facilitate those projects with advanced neighborhood planning, clear and predictable zoning regulations, and the right incentives and tools to get them started.

**Brownfield remediation.** Some properties are difficult to sell because of the presence of hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants. These properties may be designated as brownfields based on federal criteria. Southern Nevada already has a brownfields program that uses federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funds to mediate environmental damage on designated sites. Owners of properties that fit the criteria should be encouraged to participate in the program, particularly if properties are located on key sites identified by the small area planning process.

**Land banking.** As demand for infill projects increases, one strategy for encouraging the type of development described in this Plan is to fully utilize the land banking capabilities and

authority of the area's Redevelopment Authorities (RDA). The land bank could establish a revolving fund from sale of properties to acquire and assemble parcels of sufficient size to be economically viable for development.

**Fire and safety codes.** One of the major hurdles for rehabilitating old structures is fire and safety codes. Cities that have spurred successful infill and redevelopment have brought representatives from fire and police agencies into the planning and permitting process to help identify ways to ensure fire and safety requirements are met in the most cost-effective manner. They are able to provide advice and guidance early in the process, when major decisions about project layout and design can be made without significantly increasing project costs.

**Unified development code enforcement.** The region can make infill development more attractive by encouraging robust code enforcement that holds property owners accountable for the physical condition and safety of their properties, and provides a means for remediating abandoned properties through code lien foreclosure. This only can be accomplished through persistent

inspections, aggressive penalties, and the ability to enforce penalties for violations.

**Development expertise.** The lessons learned from a holistic approach to infill development include the need for a cadre of experts who understand the challenges of and solutions for infill development. A one-stop-shop for planning, permitting and project assistance is a crucial element of a good infill program. Furthermore, these experts should manage and provide a consolidated toolbox of incentives and assistance programs.

**Catalyst projects and early wins.** Finally, all of the parties involved in promoting infill, from the government, to citizens, to developers, must keep in mind that it will take time for some financial and community benefits to materialize. Early projects may require some public financial backing, and no one project can fill all the gaps in a main street or center. But as Southern Nevada builds the technical capacity for infill in both the private and public sectors, the process will become easier to replicate throughout the region.

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“THE RUN-UP IN HOUSE PRICE WAS MUCH LARGER IN SOUTHERN NEVADA IN 2003–2006 THAN IN MUCH OF THE U.S.; CONSEQUENTLY, THE SUBSEQUENT DECLINE IN PRICES WAS LARGE AS WELL. MOREOVER, SOUTHERN NEVADA HAD A DISPROPORTIONATELY HIGH NUMBER OF HIGH-RISK LOANS, RESULTING IN EXCEEDINGLY HIGH FORECLOSURE RATES. EXCESS RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE CAPACITY GIVES LITTLE INCENTIVES FOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS, AND CAUSED A VIRTUAL CONSTRUCTION SECTOR COLLAPSE.”

– SOUTHERN NEVADA STRONG  
GRANT APPLICATION

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### Housing Choice, Efficiency and Diversity

If development continues as it has in the past, some housing types and neighborhoods will be less available in the Las Vegas area than in competitor regions, limiting housing choice for Southern Nevadans. However, with well-planned and balanced housing, Southern Nevada residents will have homes that they can afford and they will be able to choose from a variety of housing styles, sizes and neighborhoods.

From a longer-term perspective, planning for increased housing diversity and affordability also means ensuring housing availability and affordability that will keep people in the region and help to attract new residents and jobs to the area. Creating housing options that answer the needs of Southern Nevada’s diverse population, while sustaining and supporting existing neighborhoods, will result in a more prosperous, vibrant and inviting region.

### Market Distortion

While new construction and sales of homes are still occurring, the housing market in Southern Nevada remains in a state of relative distortion, which unbalances housing supply and demand.<sup>43</sup> Some neighborhoods experienced decades of disinvestment even before the Great Recession began, but Southern Nevada had disproportionately high foreclosure rates and one of the largest decreases in housing values related to the foreclosure crisis.

The foreclosure crisis has been the most significant change in recent economic conditions in Clark County, with more than 100,000 foreclosures recorded since 2007.<sup>44</sup> The economic recession and widespread job losses make it difficult for residents to remain in and maintain their housing. Then, in 2013, there was a second upward spike in foreclosures, despite several prior years of quarterly decreases.

Low-income households have been particularly hard hit in the slow and unsteady climb out of the recession. At the same time, foreclosure and speculative investment activity have made it difficult for many Southern Nevadans to access the housing market, despite desires to do so. Uncertainty regarding timing for market stabilization continues to affect development and consumer decision-making.

The region has a lower than average rate of owner occupancy. The percentage of residents who own their housing units in the region is lower than

the United States. According to the 2010 Census, 55 percent of occupied units are owner-occupied, compared with 65 percent nationally.

### Affordable Housing and Equity

The affordable housing challenge faced by Southern Nevadans is different from that in many other regions. As is described later in this section, the region generally has high “by the numbers” affordability. However, the region is characterized by geographic inequalities, meaning community risk is heavily concentrated in some neighborhoods.

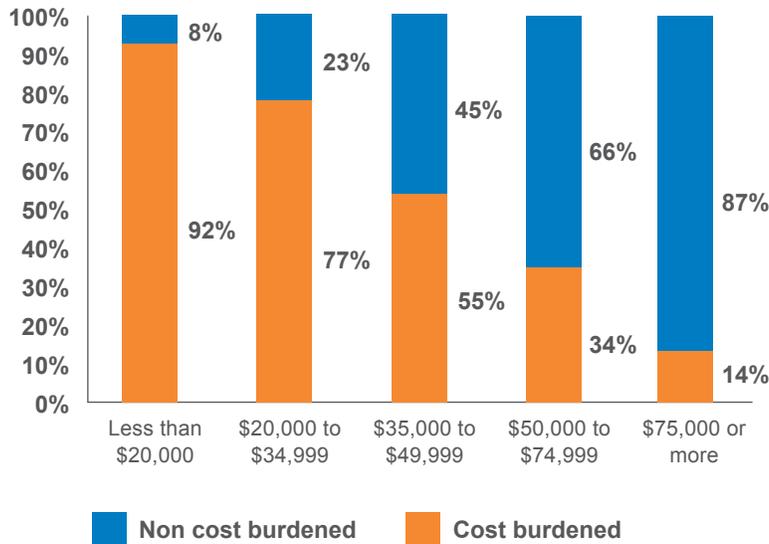
As development continues at the outer edges of the region, neighborhoods and communities with low levels of income and education will become further isolated and disenfranchised. Without major investments in affordable housing or transit networks, access to critical services and employment opportunities is unlikely to improve for those communities.

According to HUD, housing that costs 30 percent or less of the household’s income is considered affordable.<sup>45</sup> Las Vegas housing is more affordable to the median income family than many other housing markets in western regions.<sup>46</sup> While housing is, by the numbers, more affordable in Southern Nevada than in many other regions, there are still many people for whom it is not affordable, and these are the most vulnerable of Las Vegas residents. Overall, housing costs are unaffordable for half of renters and almost half of homeowners with a mortgage.<sup>47</sup>



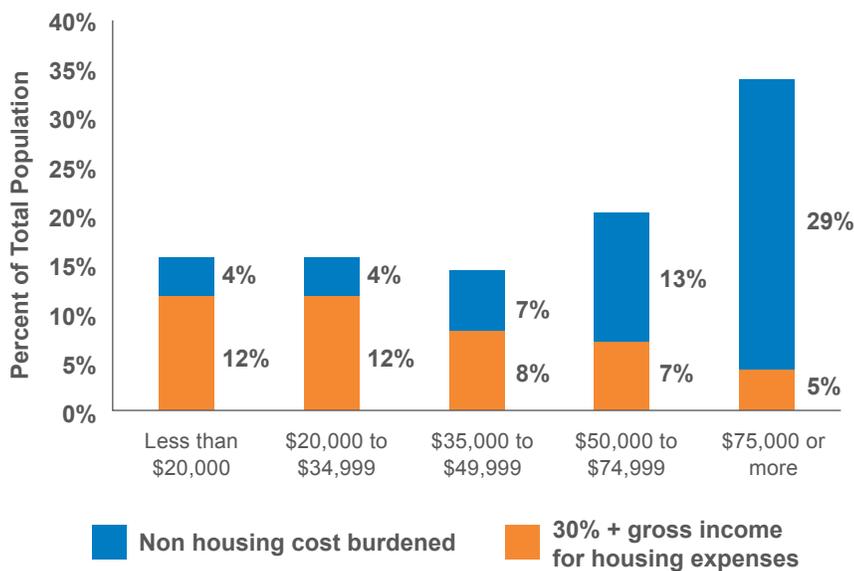
Building vertically is one way to reduce land consumption and provide housing options for all budgets.

**Figure 15:** Percent of Residents by Income Category Who Spend More Than 30 Percent of Gross Income on Housing Costs



Source: American Community Survey, 2008-2012.

**Figure 16:** Percent of All Residents Who Spend More Than 30 Percent of Gross Income on Housing Costs, 2012



Source: American Community Survey, 2008-2012.

Figure 15 shows that the majority of people with incomes under \$50,000 spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs.

Figure 16 shows the percent of residents in each income category that are cost burdened, and what percent of the total population they represent. For example, people earning less than \$20,000 who are cost burdened represent about 12 percent of the total population of Southern Nevada.

More than any other single factor, income shapes a person’s ability to avoid precarious or unsafe housing that includes substandard conditions, overcrowding, and unaffordable utility bills that limit residents’ abilities to control indoor climate. In the future, neighborhoods with precarious housing are likely to remain isolated from higher-income areas, and the most vulnerable residents will continue to suffer the after-effects of the recession and foreclosure crisis.

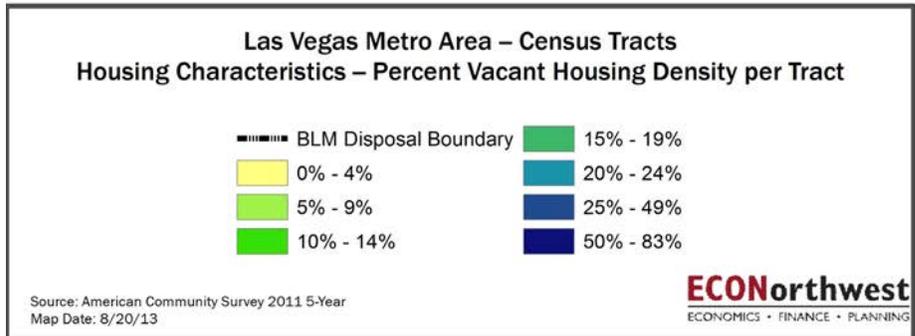
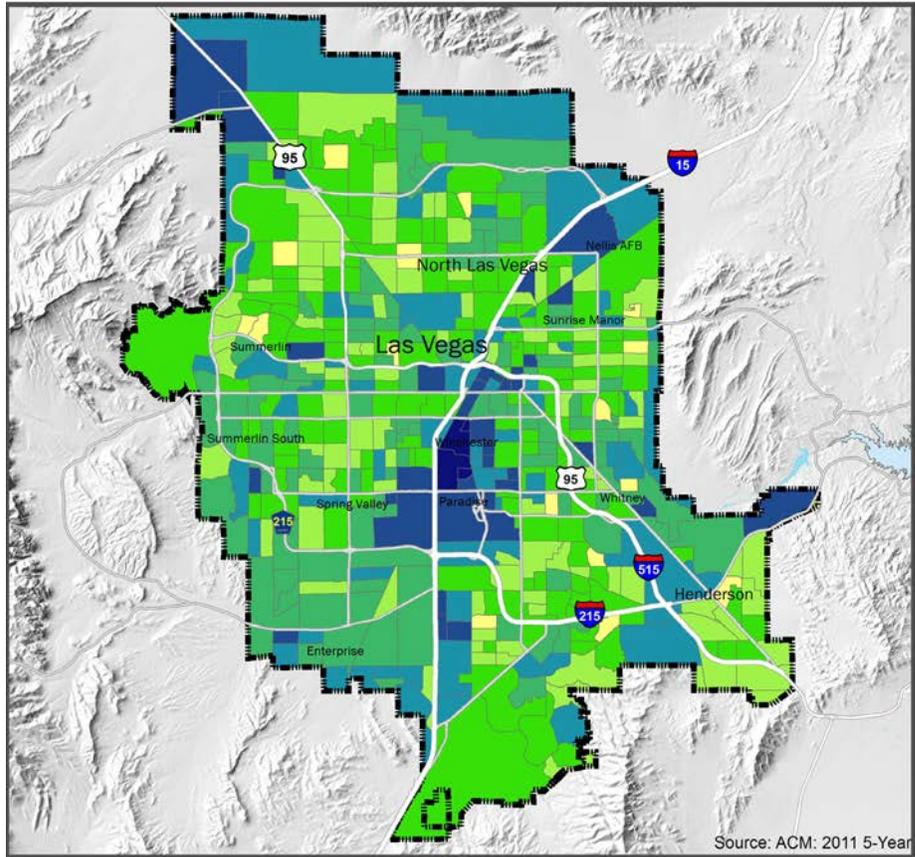
The capacity of the region’s local governments to address these issues varies. Some local governments are able to deal with precarious housing by themselves; other local governments are not. Often, even capable governments have too few incentives or resources to

collaborate with their neighbors. Regions with active, responsive, and appropriate housing policies are more likely to have capacity to develop better mechanisms for forecasting future housing demand, and to meet their housing challenges earlier and more comprehensively. With these tools – capacity, foresight, early action, and comprehensive response – in place, regions are much more likely to reduce the worst impacts of stresses on their most vulnerable residents.<sup>48</sup>

**Disinvestment**

The percent of vacant units in Southern Nevada is higher than the United States as a whole. In 2012, 17 percent of housing units were vacant, compared with 13 percent nationally in 2010. The majority of vacant units were condominiums (18 percent), followed by apartments (13 percent), townhouses (12 percent), and single-family units (11 percent). **Figure 17** shows where the largest concentration of vacant housing exists. The substantial number of vacant units is concerning, as vacant units become vandalized or dilapidated, attract crime, contribute to neighborhood decline, and pose a threat to public safety.<sup>49</sup> Additionally, the cost burden of inspecting

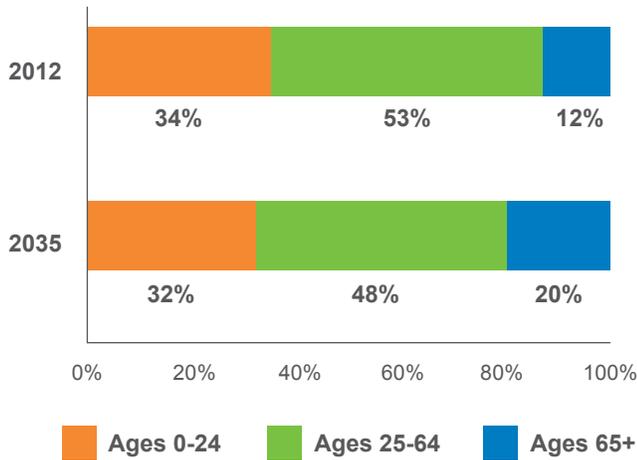
Figure 17: Southern Nevada Vacant Housing Density



vacant units and mitigating unsafe conditions falls on local governments, which are already overburdened. Data from UNLV identifies nine zip codes in metropolitan Clark County that are at critically high risk for housing-related health hazards.

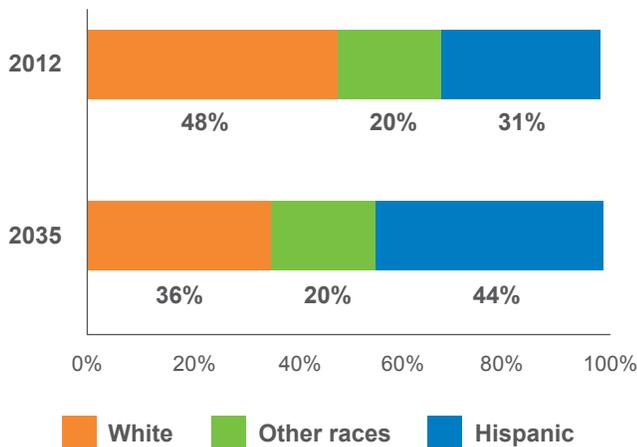
Neighborhood stability remains a pressing concern. Most home buying is taking place in the edges of the Las Vegas Valley, while investors are buying up properties in the core. As more and more homes in the downtown area are owned by

Figure 18: Age Makeup, 2012 (Estimated) and 2035 (Projected)



Source: Population Forecasts, Long Term Projections for Clark County, Nevada 2012–2035 Population Forecast, UNLV and American Community Survey, 2012.

Figure 19: Race and Ethnicity, 2012 (Estimated) and 2035 (Projected)



Source: Population Forecasts, Long Term Projections for Clark County, Nevada 2012–2035 Population Forecast, UNLV and American Community Survey, 2012.

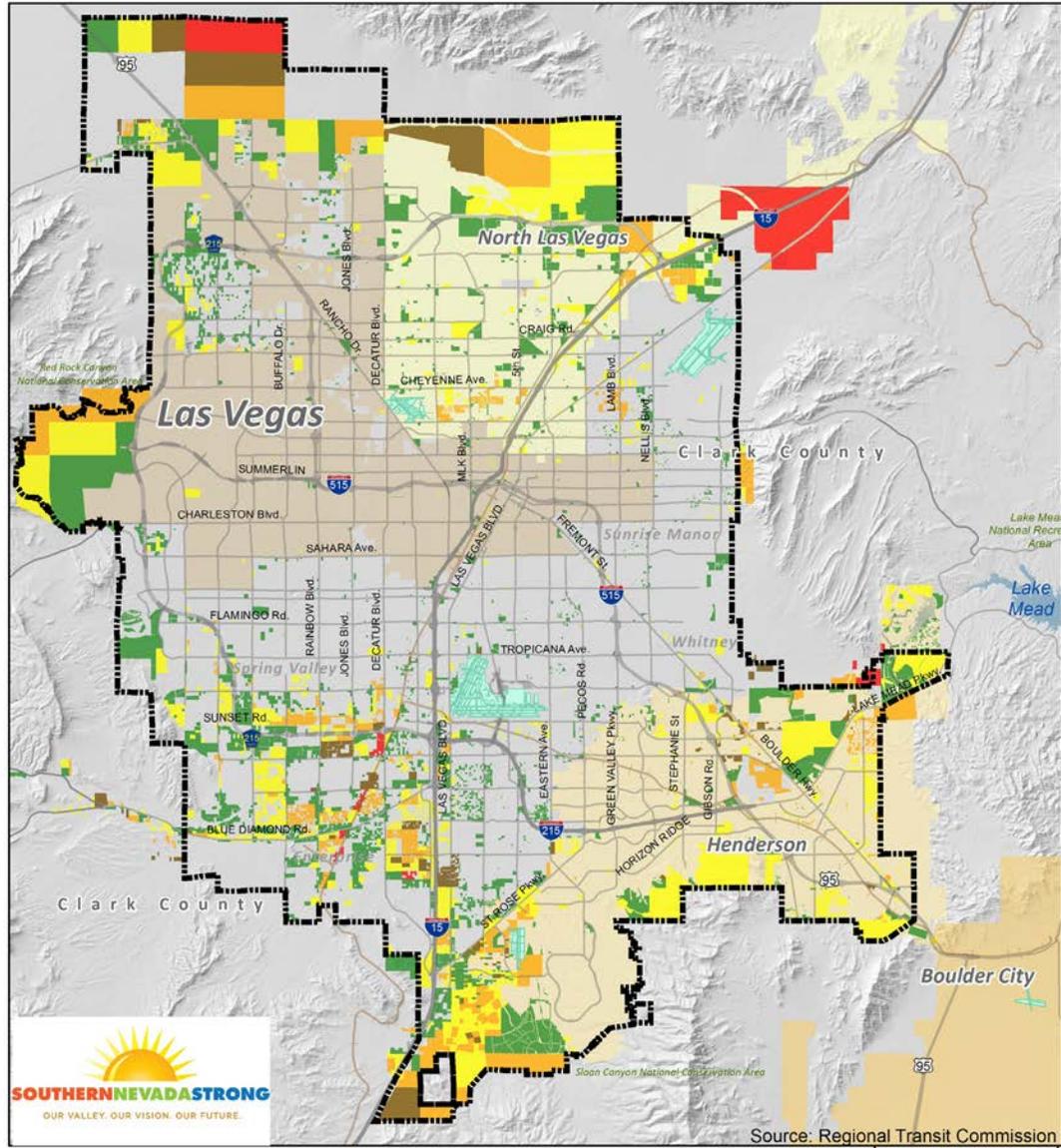
absentee landlords, the threat of urban decay is ever present. The key to stopping this is for landlords to make long-term investments in their properties, and for local governments to step up code enforcement to keep these neighborhoods viable.<sup>50,51</sup>

### Future Housing Development

To address the challenges of market distortion, affordability and equity, and disinvestment and to meet the demands of our region’s changing population; our housing market will need to offer different products in more diverse locations. By 2035, as shown in **Figure 18** and **Figure 19**, our population will be:

- **Larger.** UNLV’s population forecast estimates an additional 835,000 people by 2035.
- **More diverse.** A majority of the population will be racial and ethnic minorities. Forty-four percent of all residents will be Hispanic, and 20 percent will be of a different (non-Caucasian) race. Over three-quarters of the new population will be Hispanic, due to the fact that much of the region’s current Hispanic population is of childbearing age.
- **Older.** One in five residents will be over age 65, compared with one in eight in 2012. The region will need to accommodate an additional 330,000 people over the age of 65.

Figure 20: Future Land Development by Year



Source: Regional Transit Commission

**Future Land Use Development Year**

- 2015
- 2020
- 2025
- 2030
- 2035

Revised: October 24, 2012  
 Source: Boulder City Government, Clark County Government, City of Las Vegas Government, City of North Las Vegas Government, City of Henderson Government  
 The Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada and The University of Nevada Las Vegas  
 Based on Projected Coordinate System: NAD83, StatePlane NV Best PPS 2701 Feet  
 Note: This map is offered as a general reference guide only. Neither warranty of accuracy is intended nor should any be assumed.



*What does this mean for the future housing market?*

According to the Bipartisan Policy Center report, there are a number of key national market dynamics that will affect housing demand in Las Vegas. In the long term, changing demographics, increasing transportation costs, and a changing economy could all drive major changes in housing demand:

- **Growth in the 65+ population will create new demands for affordable, accessible housing.** As the Baby Boomers age, they will require housing that is close to family and friends and can accommodate any disabilities and changing transportation demands. Specialized housing that caters to specific populations may be more desirable, such as assisted care, active living communities, homes for extended families, etc.
- **Seniors will be selling off more units than they can occupy.** Among adults entering their sixties, household sizes tend to decrease and few new households are forming, meaning that this generation will be releasing more housing units into the supply than it can absorb.

- **Echo Boomers/Millennials (age 17–30 in 2014) have held out longer in buying a home, because they have had wage stagnation and high unemployment.** They are more likely to rent longer, and may have different housing preferences.<sup>53</sup> They also are more racially and ethnically diverse than previous generations. Increasing population diversity could spur demand for less common housing types, including some that have limited availability in Southern Nevada currently, such as co-housing, cooperative housing, intergenerational arrangements, accessory dwelling units, attached single-family homes, etc.
- **Rental housing demand is likely to climb in coming years.** Given ongoing barriers to homeownership and limited ability for younger people to buy housing, there will be an increase in rental rates.
- **Homeownership rates among Black and Hispanic Americans have suffered significant setbacks, but there is still a strong desire among many to own a home.** Hispanics saw a strong increase in homeownership during the housing boom but lost all of these gains in the bust; their

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“THE SELL-OFF OF SENIORS’ FORMER HOUSING CREATES A POTENTIAL SUPPLY THAT WILL POTENTIALLY EXCEED YOUNGER ADULTS’ EFFECTIVE DEMAND. AMERICAN COMMUNITIES FACE AN HISTORIC TIPPING POINT IN THE SOCIAL MAKE-UP AND ECONOMIC BASE OF THEIR HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS.”

— PITKIN AND MYERS, 2008<sup>52</sup>

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homeownership rate lags that of white non-Hispanics by 25 percent.<sup>54</sup>

- **Transportation costs will be a key factor when households consider where to locate.** Increasing transportation costs and available land within urbanized areas could increase the demand for infill development that is close to existing services. Successful development will require the region to overcome existing barriers to infill development.

To evaluate how future demographics could change demand for housing, ECONorthwest estimated housing demand by 2035 based on expected changes in household size, housing preferences, and ability to own or rent a home.<sup>55</sup> Clark County is forecast to have about 344,000 new housing units by 2035. These units will be built more slowly, with nearly 15,000 units permitted per year, compared with the average of nearly 26,000 new dwellings permitted annually between 2000 and 2011.

As shown in **Figure 21**, to meet future demand, new housing built between 2012 and 2035 would

need to increasingly emphasize single-family attached and multi-family units.

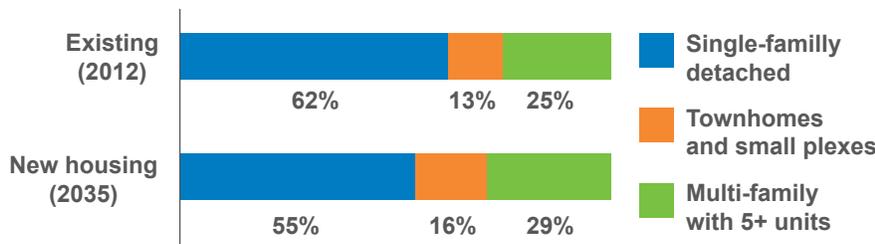
As shown in **Figure 22**, nearly 190,000 units of the new housing developed in Southern Nevada would still be single-family; many of these units are already planned and some are under construction in master-planned communities that will be developed.

Importantly, however, the forecasts suggest changing trends: a marked increase in single-family attached and multi-family units. At the same time, with careful planning that accounts for the projected increased transit costs and

changing housing preferences, much of this planned new single-family detached development could be directed to compact, walkable neighborhoods on small lots. If local governments develop a strategic focus, these areas could still be more compact and offer the range of housing types that are and will continue to be in demand.

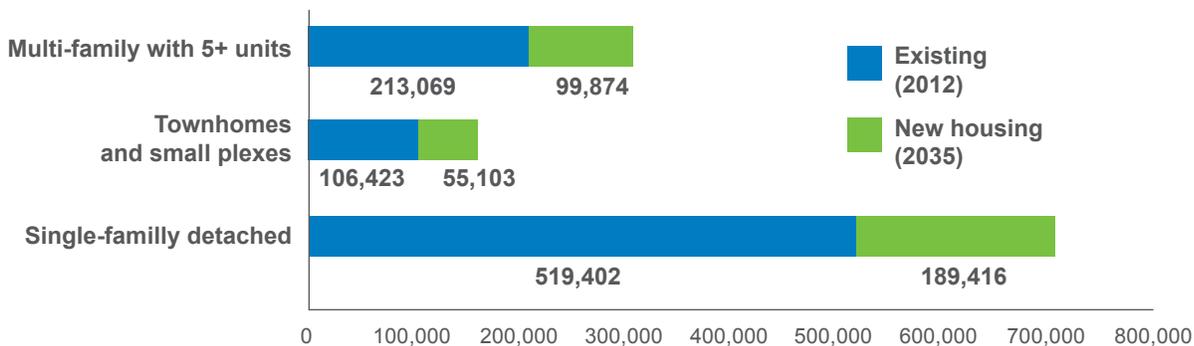
In the short term, single-family homes will continue to dominate new construction activity until available land in master-planned communities is developed and demand decreases for these units. In the longer-term, addressing the patterns of market distortion, inequality, and disinvestment in the region's housing stock will require increased focus on providing a wider range of housing types for all stages of life, including elderly, young professionals and millennials as well as a range of prices, in both existing and new neighborhoods.

**Figure 21: Housing Distribution, Existing Housing in 2012 and New Housing by 2035**



Source: ACS 2008-2012, ECONorthwest, 2013.

**Figure 22: Existing and Estimated New Housing Needed by 2035**



Source: ACS 2008-2012, ECONorthwest, 2013.



## Facts on Aging in Place

- Aging residents want to stay in their current residence and their current community for as long as possible. In a survey conducted by AARP in 2010, three-quarters of respondents reported wanting to stay in their current residence as long as possible and two-thirds of respondents reported wanting to stay in their current community as long as possible (Keenan Ph.D.).
- Some people want to stay in their residence as they age because they cannot afford to move. One-quarter of respondents to the 2010 AARP survey reported needing to stay in their residence because of affordability issues associated with moving (Keenan Ph.D.).
- As people age, they want to be near where they need to go, such as grocery stores, doctor's offices, and the library. Two-thirds of respondents from the AARP reported being close to the things they need is extremely or very important (Keenan Ph.D.).
- "Between 2005 and 2020, for instance, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that the population of persons age 50 to 64 will increase by 21 percent and the population age 65 and older by 33 percent. By comparison, the population under age 50 will only increase by four percent" (Kochera, Straight and Guterbock).
- Many people in the United States 50 and older report that their current home will not meet their physical needs as they age. In a survey conducted by AARP in 2004, half of the survey respondents reported that their home either would not or would only "somewhat" meet their physical needs as they grow older (Kochera, Straight and Guterbock).
- People over 50 who do not drive have lower levels of mobility than those who do drive (Kochera, Straight and Guterbock).
- The aging population needs affordable homes with doors wide enough for a walker or wheelchair, easy access in and out of the house (exterior stairs make entry and exit difficult), adequate lighting for safe cooking and other household activities. Aging people also need their home near public transportation and the products and services they need (Ball).
- Zoning makes it difficult for aging residents to stay in their community. Areas designated as single-family exclude older residents when they downsize from their current home

## Facts on Aging in Place

because multi-family options are not available. Additionally, some zoning regulations do not allow family members to convert their garage or basement into an apartment for the aging family member (Ball).

- Without access to public transportation, loss of driving privileges end older residents' independence. Residents who lose their driving privileges as they age depend on different forms of transportation. If their community does not offer public transportation, these residents become dependent on others for their transportation needs (Ball).
- Older adults make up the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population, and as they retire and live longer on fixed incomes, the demand for quality, affordable, accessible housing in close proximity

to services, and other amenities will only increase (Salomon).

- Retirement patterns have changed dramatically since the mid-1980s (Quinn, Cahill and Glandrea).
- The majority of Americans no longer retire all at once. Instead, workers retire gradually, in stages, utilizing bridge jobs between full-time career employment and complete labor force withdrawal (Quinn, Cahill and Glandrea).
- The percentage of population 55 and older continuing to work is projected to increase by 2022. In 2012, 20 percent of the civilian workforce was comprised of workers 55 and older. By 2022, 55 and older workers are projected to account for 26 percent of the civilian workforce or 5.7 million workers (Bureau of Labor Statistics).



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Image credit: Three Square Food Bank

### Lack of Access to Basic Services and Amenities Homelessness

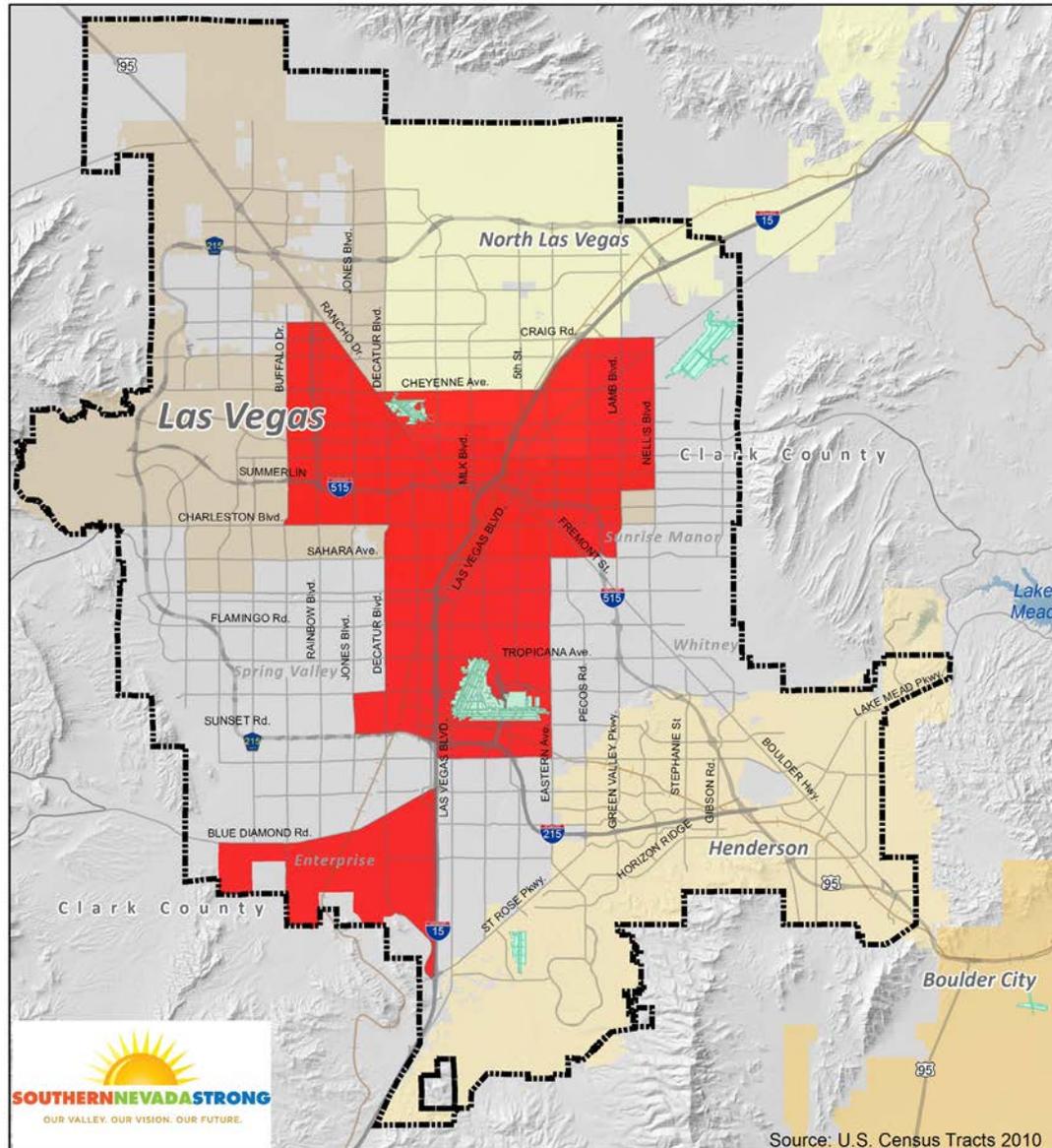
Clark County estimates that 33,882 persons experience homelessness annually in Clark County. The 2013 Homeless Census counted 7,355 people, about 60 percent of whom were not located in shelters. The majority of homeless individuals in Clark County were white males between the ages of 31 and 60. Fifty-three percent of survey respondents cited job loss as one of the primary reasons for their current episode of homelessness. Homelessness, substance abuse, and health issues often go hand-in-hand. For people who are already struggling to pay their bills, the onset or exacerbation

of an addiction or health issue may cause them to lose their housing. Thirty-five percent of all survey respondents reported that they had a disabling condition in 2013. Twelve percent of survey respondents reported alcohol or drug use as the primary cause of their homelessness.<sup>56</sup>

### Healthcare Access

Regular healthcare access improves the individual's chances of living a longer and healthier life.<sup>57</sup> Regular health exams can help find problems before they start or find problems early when treatment is often most effective. Clark County has a low physician-to-population ratio compared to other counties in Nevada and compared to the national average (1:1,244, while the national benchmark for this ratio is 1:631.) The consequences of this to the community is delayed care to residents. In addition, it may force some residents to access medical care through the emergency department instead of through a primary care physician who is better equipped to serve the patient long-term.<sup>58</sup> Clark County has both Medically Underserved Areas and Medically Underserved Populations and significant sections of the county are formally designated as Health Profession Shortage Areas, shown in **Figure 23**.

Figure 23: Healthcare Shortage Areas in Southern Nevada



Source: U.S. Census Tracts 2010

### Social Indicator Map

Healthcare Shortage

0 5 10  
Miles



Revised: October 04, 2012  
 Source: Boulder City Government,  
 Clark County Government,  
 City of Las Vegas Government,  
 City of North Las Vegas Government,  
 City of Henderson Government,  
 The Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada  
 and The University of Nevada Las Vegas  
 Based on Projected Coordinate System:  
 NAD83, StatePlane NV East FIPS 2701 Feet  
 Note: This map is offered as a general reference  
 guide only. Neither warranty of accuracy is  
 intended nor should any be assumed.

**Food Access**

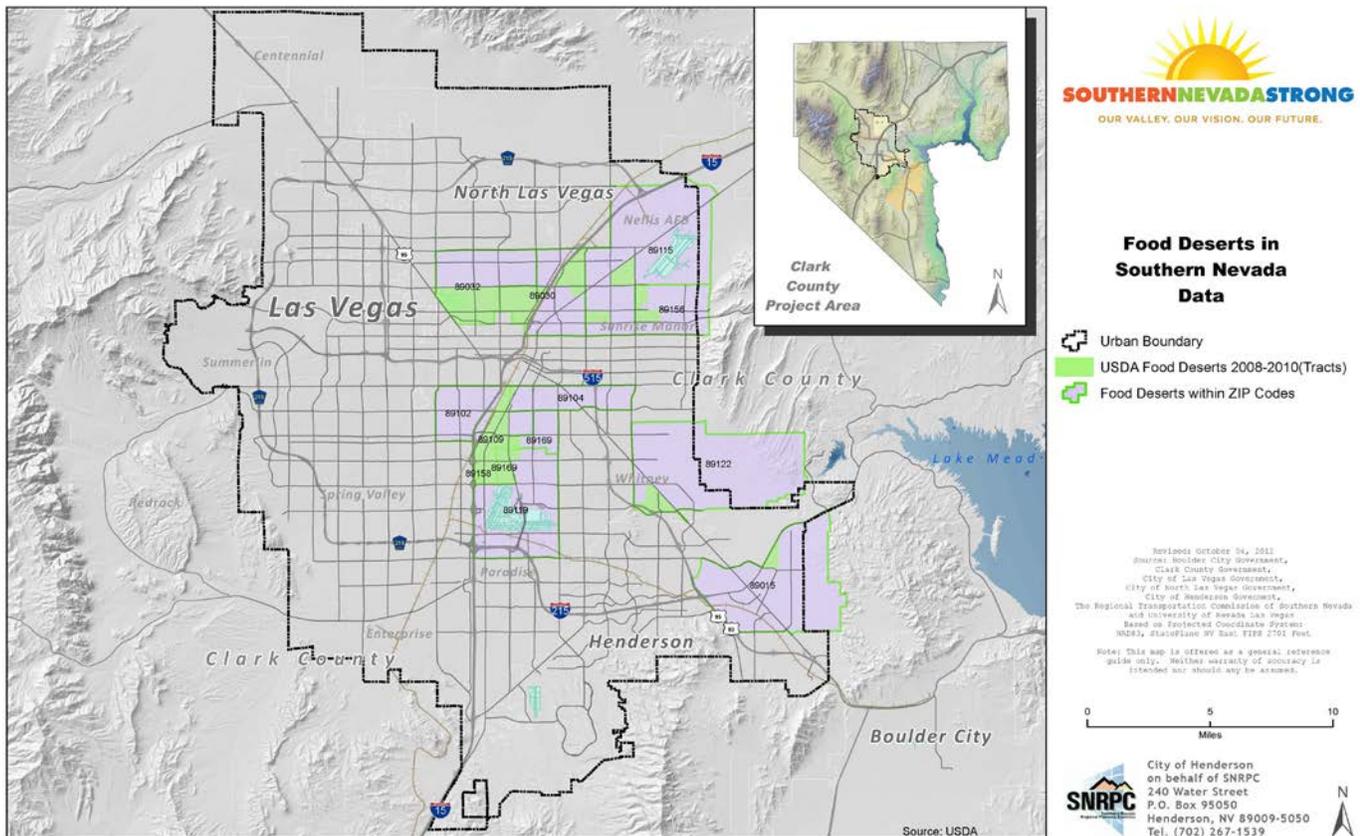
When people have access to grocery stores, they are less likely to be overweight, but when they have better access to convenience stores they are more likely to be overweight.<sup>59</sup> There are 16 food deserts in Clark County, as shown in **Figure 24**. The USDA qualifies a food desert as a census tract in which at least

33 percent of the population, or a minimum of 500 people, live more than one mile from a supermarket or large grocery store. Lack of access to healthy food contributes to a poor diet, obesity, and other related chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes.<sup>60</sup>

Convenience and fast food outlets are more accessible than grocery stores in several

locations throughout the region. Of all restaurants in Clark County, 59 percent are classified as fast food by the North American Industrial Classification System. This is much higher than the national benchmark of 25 percent but similar to other counties in the Intermountain West.<sup>61</sup>

**Figure 24: Food Deserts in Southern Nevada**



**Safe Access to Recreational Opportunities**

The Las Vegas Valley has one of the lowest parks-per-capita ratios in the country: 2.6 park acres per 1,000 residents, compared to the nationally recommended ratio of 10 park acres per 1,000 residents. Compared to other Intermountain West metropolitan areas, Clark County had the highest rate of diabetes and of people reporting fair or poor health.

**Table 6** shows the prevalence rates of diabetes and obesity for the counties that include Las Vegas, Phoenix, Denver and Salt Lake City. It also includes the national rates of each disease. The prevalence of diabetes in Clark County exceeds that of the other Intermountain West counties shown here and that of the nation. It also has a relatively high rate of obesity.

Those reporting fair or poor health had about seven more annual medical provider visits than those reporting good health and about eight more visits than those reporting very good or excellent health.<sup>62</sup> Residents were less likely to exercise than residents of other Intermountain West communities.

**Table 6:** Prevalence of Diabetes and Obesity, 2010

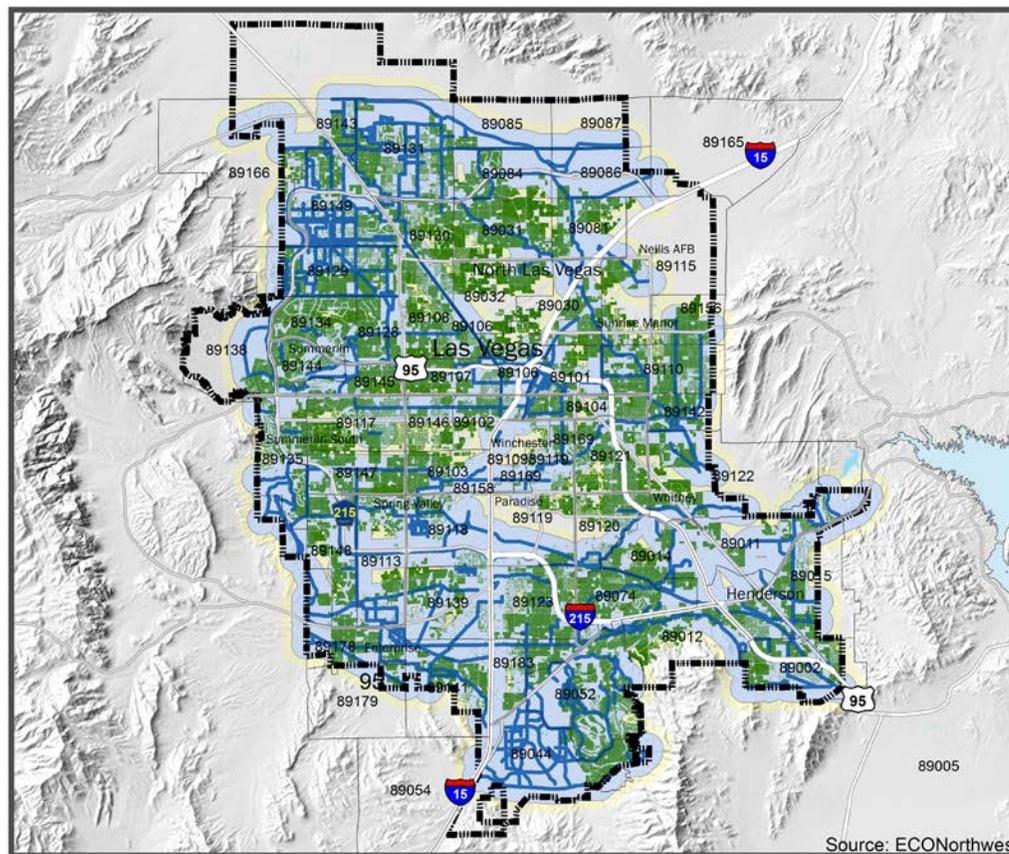
	<i>Prevalence of Diabetes</i>	<i>Prevalence of Obesity</i>
<b>Clark County, NV</b>	8.5%	21%
<b>Maricopa County, AZ</b>	8.0%	19%
<b>Denver County, CO</b>	5.9%	14%
<b>Salt Lake County, UT</b>	5.3%	21%
<b>Nation</b>	8.3%	35%

Source: CDC, 2010.

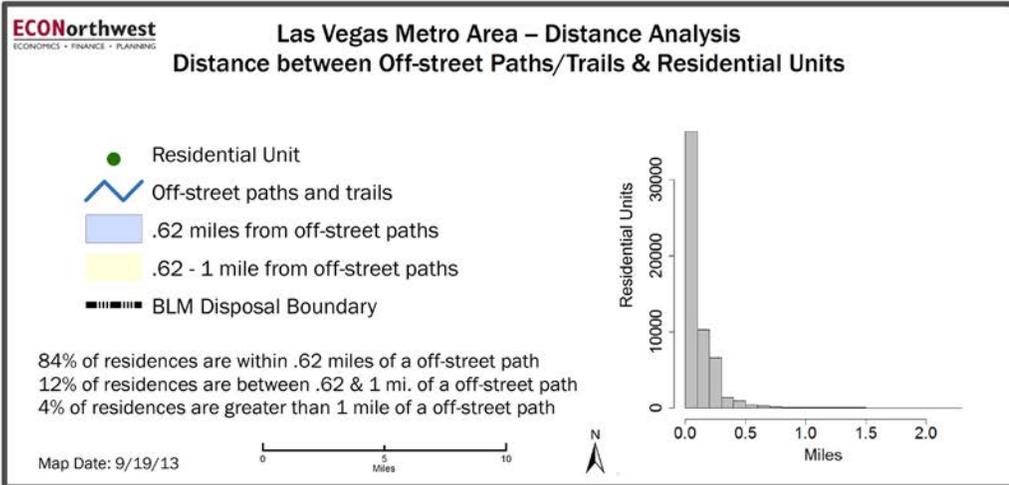


Siting more parks within easy walking or biking distance or a short transit ride from residential neighborhoods will contribute positively to the health of the region's residents.

Figure 25: Distance Between Walking Paths and Residences



Source: ECONorthwest



### Neighborhood Safety and Health

The way our built environment is designed can influence public health. The transportation system provides opportunities for exercise, influences our exposure to air pollution, addresses physical safety and more. The public sector has the ability to:

- Protect environmental quality;
- Create complete neighborhoods with housing for all ages;
- Reduce the community’s exposure to environmental hazards;
- Create public spaces that promote physical activity and social cohesion;
- Support educational and occupational opportunities;
- Encourage healthy foods and services that are physically, economically and culturally accessible.

Southern Nevada has key risk factors related to public health including substance abuse, mental health issues, crime, and environmental health issues like brownfields.

### Substance Abuse and Mental Health

The region has higher than average rates of drug and alcohol use than national

averages, as shown in **Table 7**. In the 2012 national survey, about 17 percent of Southern Nevada residents had used illicit drugs in the past year.

Between 2005–2010, about 10 percent of persons ages 12 or older were classified as having a substance abuse disorder in the region, as compared to nine percent nationwide.<sup>63</sup>

Between 2005 and 2010, about eight percent of persons ages 18 or older were classified as having a major depressive episode, as compared to 6.6 percent nationwide.<sup>64</sup>

### Crime

Crime can impact neighborhoods by creating a sense of insecurity and can lead to disinvestment. The region’s violent crime rate was 80 percent higher than

the national rate at 697 crimes per 100,000 people (compared with 387 per 100,000 people nationally). Property crimes are slightly above average at 2,966 per 100,000 people in the Southern Nevada region (compared with 2,859 per 100,000 people nationally).<sup>65</sup>

### Brownfields

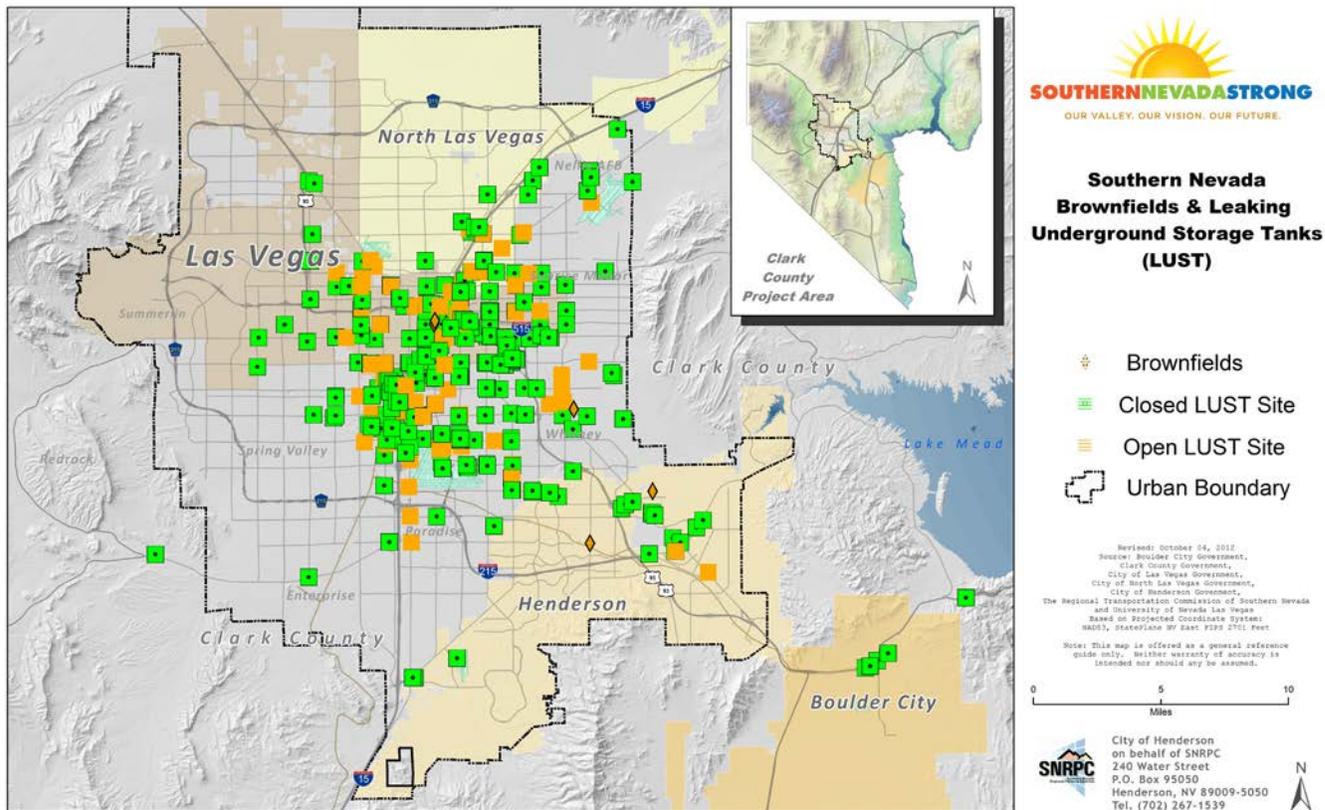
The region has a number of brownfields, which can impact public health at the site level. A brownfield site is any real property, the redevelopment or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a contaminant, such as hazardous waste and/or petroleum. As shown in **Figure 26**, the region has approximately 165 brownfield sites, of which many are leaking underground storage tank (LUST) sites.<sup>66,67</sup>

**Table 7: Drug Use in Southern Nevada Compared with U.S.**

	<i>Las Vegas MSA</i>	<i>U.S.</i>
<b>Any illicit drug (past year)</b>	16.8%	14.7%
<b>Binge alcohol (past year)</b>	25.6%	23.2%
<b>Unprescribed prescription-type pain relievers (past year)</b>	6.7%	4.9%
<b>Cigarettes (past month)</b>	24.1%	23.2%

Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health – Las Vegas-Paradise MSA. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUHMetroBriefReports/NSDUH-Metro-Las-Vegas.pdf>

Figure 26: Brownfields in Southern Nevada



Source: Nevada Department of Environmental Protection.

### Resource Consumptive Development

Over time, Southern Nevada has been a powerful growth engine. The fact that growth has been relatively under-regulated contributes to the environmental concerns confronting the region. In addition, the region is located in a valley with one of the world's most arid climates with very little rainfall; increasing the pressure on local environmental resources. This calls for comprehensive, long-term thinking and planning to account for environmental impacts and environmental health, emphasizing ways to mitigate impacts on the environmental resources upon which we rely.

### High-Quality, Resource-Efficient Housing and Development

Southern Nevada's climate demands energy efficiency and enhanced quality of construction suited for the desert environment. By doubling the current "lifespan" of construction (25 to 50 years), the tax base and neighborhoods could remain stable longer. The region also could consider developing shared renewable energy and energy-efficient models for higher density neighborhoods and public spaces, including

solar charging stations and NetZero cooling stations. This would enhance the energy efficiency of housing and create oases within and between neighborhoods to make walking, biking and access to public transportation more viable during extreme summer temperatures.

### Water Supply and Conservation

Since annual rainfall averages less than four inches per year (according to UNLV's Existing Conditions Report produced for Southern Nevada Strong in 2012), Southern Nevada depends upon the Colorado River for its water supply. Diminishing water supply is a threat to regional livability and the economic base. The region only draws about three percent of the Colorado River's total flow, but that accounts for almost 97 percent of the region's entire supply.<sup>68</sup> The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation forecasts that Colorado River flows will be lower by 2050.<sup>69</sup> Hydrologists estimate that there is a 50 percent chance that Lake Mead will be dry by 2021 if drought conditions persist.<sup>70</sup> Already, reduced snowfall and runoff from the Rocky Mountains has lowered Lake Mead's water level by about 100 feet since 2000.<sup>71</sup>

The region has long used conservation efforts to curb water use. In 1997, the SNWA created a water resource plan that identified water management strategies that reduced water consumption by more than five percent between 1996 and 2000. However, after consumption rates grew and conservation measures began to falter, SNWA released a conservation plan in 2004 that established rebate incentive programs focusing on xeric landscapes, irrigation clocks, and water-efficient technologies. It also introduced regulatory programs including water use ordinances, development codes, and drought watering policies aimed at curbing water misuse. In addition, SNWA designed public education and outreach programs to promote a water conservation culture.<sup>72</sup>

### Air Quality

Air pollution challenges stemming from motor vehicles, construction, and commercial and industrial enterprises, have grown in proportion to the population and economic growth in the valley. The region's geography presents a unique problem in terms of maintaining high air quality. Surrounding mountains create a bowl, which



frequently traps pollutants like ozone and particulate matter. In addition, regional air quality deterioration is due, in part, to increasing amounts of pollution produced by the growth in vehicle miles traveled and traffic congestion that accompanies sprawl, which has led to the RTC naming the improvement of air quality as a primary goal.<sup>73</sup>

Although Clark County recently achieved attainment status by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for two air pollutants: particulate matter (PM10) and ozone, the region should continue to closely monitor air quality. This improvement may be due to the slowdown in the construction industry over the last several years and as the economy recovers, these pollutants may worsen. Las Vegas received an “F” for ozone levels from the American Lung

Association and was labeled the 16th most ozone-polluted city. Ozone can cause acute respiratory problems, contribute to increased hospital admissions and emergency room visits, and impair the body’s immune system defenses, making people more susceptible to respiratory illnesses, including bronchitis and pneumonia.<sup>74</sup>

### Energy Supply

Southern Nevada has untapped potential in renewable energy markets, and currently only generates less than 10 percent of energy from renewable forms such as solar, geothermal, biomass and hydrological sources. Nevada uses less coal for electricity production than the country. In 2011, the EPA reported 16 percent of electricity production from coal for Nevada, compared with over 40 percent for the U.S. as a whole.

The region is a leader in green building technology and features CityCenter, the largest LEED certified project in the U.S.. New housing stock of the region is more efficient in its energy use than the older housing stock and includes the use of Energy Star appliances and high SEER-rated A/C units. A recent study shows that climate control in warmer climate regions can be more

energy-efficient because cooling uses less energy than heating.

### Solid Waste Recovery

The valley has one of the lowest recycling rates in the nation. According to the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP), Clark County recycled only 22 percent of its municipal solid waste (MSW) in 2011, compared to 34.1 percent nationally. EPA’s national solid waste goal is to recycle 35 percent of the waste stream.

Recycling creates new businesses that haul, process and broker recovered materials, as well as companies that manufacture and distribute products made with these recycled materials. The recycling and reuse industry generates billions in federal, state and local tax revenues (estimated at \$12.9 billion in 2001). The amount of energy saved differs by material, but almost all recycling processes achieve significant energy savings compared to virgin material production. For example, recycling of aluminum cans saves 95 percent of the energy required to make the same amount of aluminum from virgin sources. Each can that is recycled generates enough energy to run a television or computer for three hours.

## 4.3 GOALS AND POLICY STRATEGIES

This section details the **goals, objectives and actions that support investments in complete communities** and will move Southern Nevada toward the vision.

- **Goals** are the big overarching ideas, changes, or practices that are essential to realize the community’s vision.
- **Objectives** establish specific, measurable goals that guide how the Plan is implemented in a way that will achieve the vision.
- **Strategies** outline the steps needed to achieve the objectives.

### Goal 1. Stabilize and strengthen existing neighborhoods through placemaking improvements.

#### Objective 1.1 Increase neighborhood engagement.

- 1.1.1 Working with local jurisdiction code enforcement and outreach coordinators, develop neighborhood outreach plans to address community issues and provide resources for homeowner investments.
- 1.1.2 Continue to reach out to key landowners and developers to gain support for the preferred land use map and to coordinate redevelopment of key sites.
- 1.1.3 Foster new relationships between neighborhood leaders and businesses to identify incentives for businesses to support neighborhood identity and commitment.

### Achieving the Vision Through Strategic Land Use

Since the way we use land profoundly influences how we live, work and play, **this document touches on many aspects of the region’s land-use planning.** The goals and policies included in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 will guide the design of the valley’s regulatory system, including the zoning code, rules governing the subdivision of land, the interaction of land use and transportation and economic development.

**The Plan also recommends strategies that should be pursued in the first few years following Plan adoption.** These strategies are found in the Implementation Matrix.

**Objective 1.2**  
**Develop housing and employment in mixed-use transit-oriented neighborhoods near job centers, schools and other services.**

- 1.2.1 Develop regional goals and standards that aim to reduce transportation costs and provide increased mobility in neighborhoods to everyday amenities, such as grocery stores, offices and schools.
- 1.2.2 Consider development standards to reduce impediments to pedestrian access, such as block walls, cul-de-sacs, fencing and other obstacles that require the unnecessary use of a vehicle to travel short distances to otherwise adjacent uses, or consider including pedestrian access in the subdivision approval process.
- 1.2.3 Develop a toolkit, in collaboration with area economic development and real estate organizations and other institutions, that supports mixed-use development.
- 1.2.4 Identify opportunities to implement applicable incentives, including tax credits and other programs to support catalytic mixed-use projects.
- 1.2.5 Partner with local healthcare and educational institutions to encourage the development of attractive, high-quality housing, and supporting businesses and services that support and are supported by higher education, medical or hospital districts.
- 1.2.6 Encourage common licensing and development policies among local governments.

**Objective 1.3**  
**Initiate redevelopment activities along transit corridors that enhance ridership, promote livability, and develop community character.**

- 1.3.1 Identify and fund infrastructure investments that enable and support increased housing and employment density along key transit corridors.
- 1.3.2 Provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions, such as model zoning overlays, for transit-oriented development.
- 1.3.3 Pursue a pilot program to purchase deteriorated homes and redevelop them into public amenities, such as parks, to curb the process of deterioration of aging neighborhoods and attract additional reinvestment.
- 1.3.4 Reduce negative impacts associated with redevelopment, such as displacement, by working closely with community members and developers to plan for a range of housing products for all stages of life and incomes.
- 1.3.5 Work with local governments and redevelopment agencies to acquire key parcels for transit-oriented development.
- 1.3.6 Increase or develop incentives on land use (e.g., FAR increases, parking reductions, etc.) to attract more compact development and allow the efficient movement of pedestrians, bicyclists, buses and motor vehicles within, to and through the area.
- 1.3.7 Consider revising and adopting minimum parking standards.

**Goal 2: Encourage an adequate supply of housing with a range of price, density, ownership, size and building types.**

**Objective 2.1**  
**Maintain an adequate supply of land with flexible zoning designations to meet the anticipated housing demand.**

- 2.1.1 Establish and maintain a regional forecast of housing needs and set periodic goals for housing supply, based on population projections.
- 2.1.2 Monitor and disseminate information about regional housing development activity, developable land supply, residential zoning capacity, owner-occupancy rates, and use of zoning waivers to inform progress toward housing goals and to enable midcourse adjustments.
- 2.1.3 Educate elected officials, citizen organizations and the public on the housing needs and diversity of Southern Nevada’s residents, and create a plan to provide quality housing for all residents regardless of income or stage of life.
- 2.1.4 Support rural communities and small towns to ensure long-term economic sustainability.
- 2.1.5 Encourage updates to the housing elements of local master plans to align with housing demand.

**Objective 2.2**  
**Develop housing to meet the needs of workers in future industry sectors.**

- 2.2.1 Diversify housing options to meet the needs of local talent and the workforce. Increase the supply of high-quality, multi-family (condominium) housing in the region’s commercial cores and mixed-use commercial areas.



## Opportunities And Challenges For The Home Building Community

BY THE SOUTHERN NEVADA HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

The home building industry in Southern Nevada is committed to pursuing reasonable and market-driven strategies to achieve the unified vision of the Southern Nevada Strong Regional Plan. Southern Nevada homebuilders recognize the benefits and embrace the goals of the SNS Plan and the enhancements they will provide to the Southern Nevada community. The SNS Plan represents a unique opportunity for homebuilders to provide inclusive communities with good access to housing, healthcare and vital services, while fostering the efficient use of scarce natural resources. With that opportunity come challenges that need to be addressed in order for the vision to become fully realized. Some of those challenges along with suggested strategies to address them are described below.

**CHALLENGE 1:**  
**Appraisal practices that do not include added value to new homes in regard to their safety and energy efficiencies resulting in higher construction costs for energy efficiency, since the appraised value doesn't reflect the investment of energy savings and safety features and their benefits to the homeowner.**

**Suggested Strategies:**

1. Educate local appraisers and lenders on the benefits of green building features. There are national programs available that recognize the necessity of green building appraisal certifications and specific

rating sheets to gain comparable appraisal and lending values, such as NAHBGreen (National Association of Home Builders) and the Appraisal Institute (the Professional Organization for Appraisal Professionals).

2. Investigate opportunities for changes to State legislation to encourage state certifications for green building appraisers and lending practices.

**CHALLENGE 2:**  
**Rising insurance costs, and existing defect lawsuits, associated with Nevada's construction defect laws that inhibit the development of single-family homes, townhomes, and condominiums.**

**Suggested Strategies:**

1. Work with legislators and local governments to bring needed reform to existing construction defect laws with the goal of inhibiting unwarranted lawsuits in the cases of perceived defects in single family residences, condominiums and townhome structures.
2. Promote and incentivize quality housing design that meets the needs of its users, enhances the neighborhood and is built to last.
3. Encourage local governments to provide adequate zoning for the development of townhomes and condominiums to meet the needs of a segment of the population that desires this form of dwelling.

## Opportunities And Challenges For The Home Building Community

BY THE SOUTHERN NEVADA HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

### CHALLENGE 3:

Added costs of infill projects can make them unprofitable for the homebuilder. Infill projects are often more expensive due to higher land costs in urban areas, higher construction costs of developing on lots surrounded by existing development, a longer permitting time due to regulatory barriers, and inadequate accessibility and infrastructure of infill parcels.

#### *Suggested Strategies:*

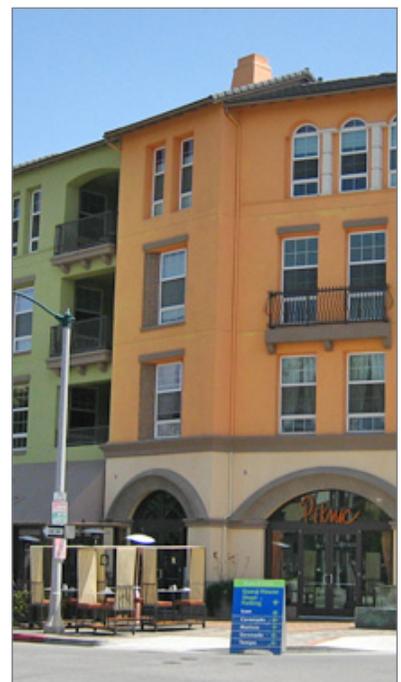
1. Use the Regional Plan to demonstrate support for and guidance to encourage and prioritize development in infill areas, including providing incentives to homebuilders without sacrificing construction standards and safety.
2. Promote the benefits of infill projects with the community and decision making bodies during the development review process and work with local governments to ensure that the process for reviewing site-specific land development applications is reasonable, predictable and fair for applicants, local governments and the surrounding community.
3. Encourage relevant planning agencies to allow infill development that complies with the policies and regulations established by the local government without unreasonable oversight and added conditions.

### CHALLENGE 4:

Continuing increases in construction and land costs, as well as additional costs derived from neighborhood opposition (such as additional meetings, notices, and plan revisions), when building and providing for affordable, mixed income housing.

#### *Suggested Strategies:*

1. Allow local governments to take a leadership role in advocating for affordable housing, mixed income housing, Transit Oriented Development, and Inclusive Communities for people of all incomes.
2. Participate in education processes with elected officials, citizen organizations and the public on the housing needs and diversity of Southern Nevada. This includes creating a plan to provide quality housing for all residents regardless of income, which is a goal of the Regional Plan.
3. Encourage local governments to adopt land use, building codes, and zoning regulations that allow a mix of housing types and do not make it cost-prohibitive to do so.
4. Work with local governments to remove barriers and avoid creating new barriers that impede innovative land-use planning techniques, especially related to affordable housing developments.



**Objective 2.3**  
**Consider the needs of residents with low mobility and/or disabilities.**

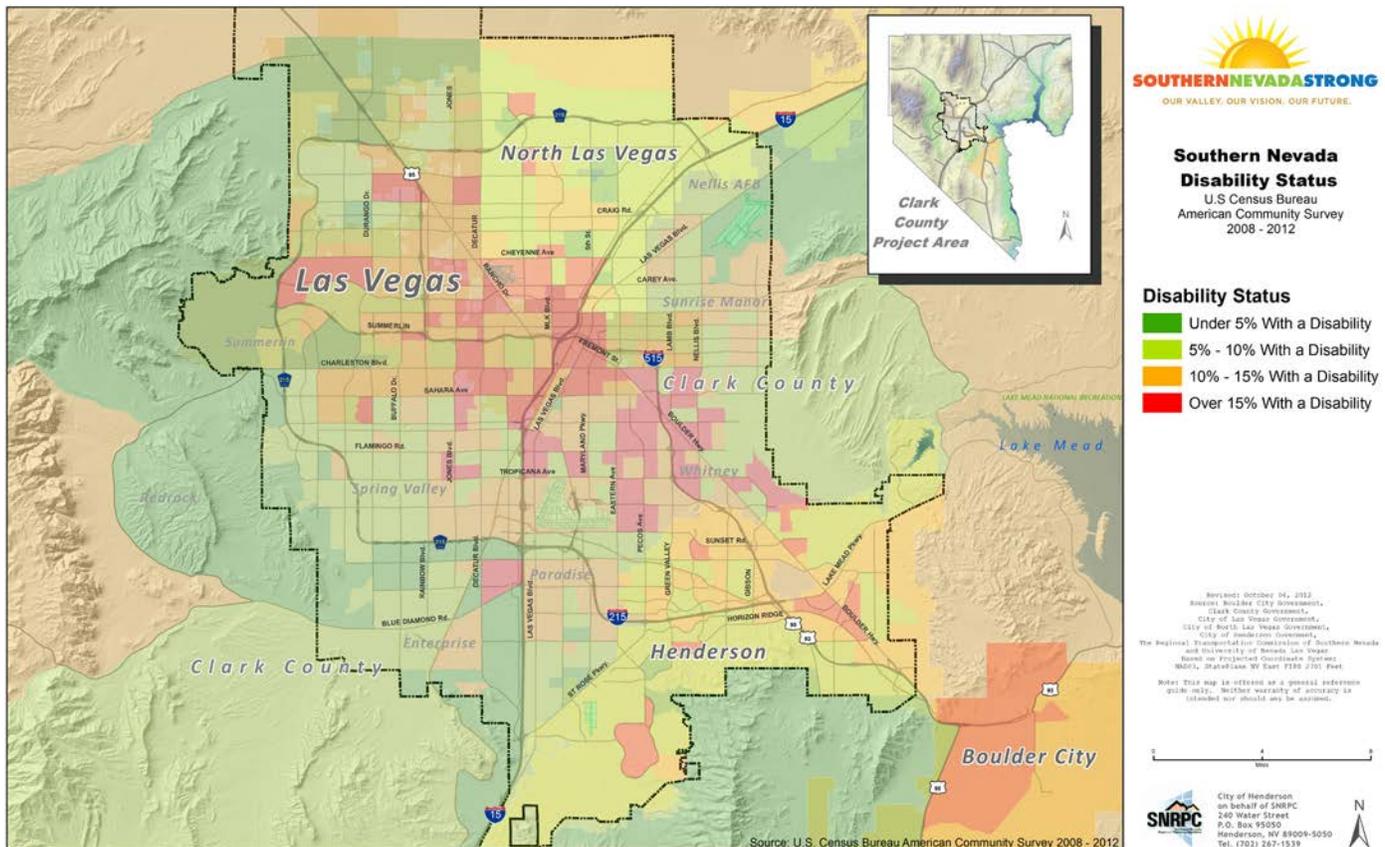
2.3.1 Research and analyze the needs of people with limited mobility, including identifying where they currently live, what types of housing products and community features they need, and ideal locations for improvements in order to increase self-sufficiency and integration with the community.

2.3.2 Create development incentives for new residential construction and to rehabilitate existing housing to meet universal and visitability design standards.

2.3.3 Support existing boards and committees to evaluate plans, codes and policies to ensure that the needs of individuals with disabilities are addressed as part of the approval process.

**Figure 27** shows that people with disability status live throughout the valley.

**Figure 27: County Residents with Disabilities**



**Objective 2.4**  
**Develop low-income and workforce housing in neighborhoods across the region.**

- 2.4.1 Encourage local governments to adopt land use, building codes, and zoning regulations that allow a mix of housing types that serve people from a variety of income levels, including single-family homes, cottage homes, townhomes, condominiums and apartments.
- 2.4.2 Consider developing standards to allow for micro-units (200–400 square feet per person) that allow reasonable rents for low-income people and remove inefficient use of space in traditional homes.
- 2.4.3 Work with for-profit and non-profit developers to encourage new mixed-income developments across the region that can provide easy access to employment centers, family support systems, shopping, public transportation and recreational facilities.
- 2.4.4 Conduct outreach with local businesses to develop Employer Assisted Housing (EAH) programs in which major employers provide incentives for their employees to live nearby.
- 2.4.5 Identify funding sources to support affordable housing to reach Energy Efficient and NetZero standards, and generate surplus.
- 2.4.6 Pursue grants and other sources of funding such as HOME Investment Partnership funds to rehabilitate affordable housing for rent or homeownership, including performing energy upgrades on homes to meet local codes and home energy rating improvements.
- 2.4.7 Working through the SNRPC and with the Southern Nevada caucus of the State Legislature, ensure an adequate supply of homeless housing is distributed throughout the region in ways that meet the needs of vulnerable populations.

**Objective 2.5**  
**Educate and inform the population regarding housing choice, needs and rights.**

- 2.5.1 Support the findings of the Regional Analysis of Impediments through continued engagement of housing and planning stakeholders and outreach with homeowner associations, multi-family property owners and residents to provide information on the Fair Housing Act, ADA, and rights of residents. (A Regional Analysis of Impediments is a housing analysis that assesses barriers to fair housing choice.)
- 2.5.2 Coordinate support services to interested homebuyers and first-time homeowners to prepare residents to establish credit, become financially stable, purchase homes, help ensure timely mortgage payments, maintenance of structure, and fulfillment of loan requirements.
- 2.5.3 Develop new lines of communication with residents to inform them of their rights and how they can deal with housing challenges (e.g., code enforcement, creation of neighborhood associations, contact numbers and offices if they feel there are issues, no retribution options, etc.).

**Goal 3. Support access to healthcare, healthy food, parks and community services.**

**Objective 3.1**  
**Developing new partnerships to enhance access to healthcare and community services.**

- 3.1.1 Develop public-private partnerships to encourage the development of primary care offices, healthcare and health-related facilities, especially in mixed-use areas currently underserved, and areas well-served by transit.
- 3.1.2 Encourage the co-location of healthcare and behavioral health services to increase access to care, potentially within a “one-stop shop” or resource center for all types of social services, including an employment opportunity center.
- 3.1.3 Work with the healthcare industry to promote community wellness, and become partners with municipalities to build “healthy communities” like those championed by the Centers for Disease Control.
- 3.1.4 Partner with organizations that are promoting wellness programs and working to reduce obesity and childhood obesity.
- 3.1.5 Develop and implement a public health and safety education campaign.

**Objective 3.2**  
**Research emerging issues and develop partnerships to improve access to affordable and healthy food options.**

- 3.2.1 To advance the priorities of Food Security in Nevada, Nevada’s Plan for Action, support in-depth research on existing or emerging geographic concentrations of food insecure populations within Clark County.
  - 3.2.3 Promote healthy food options and ensure Supplemental Nutritional Program (SNAP) benefits are available in areas with concentrations of fast food outlets that also have high food insecurity rates.
- 3.2.2 Support and coordinate with organizations working to increase access to healthy food options, including Southern Nevada Health District, Southern Nevada Food Council and the School of Community

**Objective 3.3**  
**Prioritize access to parks, trails, open space, recreational facilities, and opportunities for physical exercise.**

- 3.3.1 Work with the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program to request their assistance in developing community-led parks and other community gathering spaces, especially prioritizing underserved areas.
  - 3.3.5 Encourage adoption of ordinance and code changes requiring developments to dedicate open space or pay impact fees to a regional parks and open space fund.
- 3.3.2 Identify vacant or underutilized land within low-income, at-risk or underserved communities that can be repurposed for public spaces.
  - 3.3.6 Provide superior access to the valley’s natural environment (Red Rock Canyon, Mt. Charleston, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Floyd Lamb Park at Tule Springs, Craig Ranch, and other parks) including welcome centers accessible to all residents.
- 3.3.3 Develop an action plan to increase park accessibility for areas that are underserved.
  - 3.3.7 Support Outside Las Vegas Foundation’s efforts to maintain trails and provide education on existing trails in the region.
- 3.3.4 Promote a development pattern that provides direct pedestrian-friendly connections to parks and open space between low-income, at-risk or underserved communities.
  - 3.3.8 Support the planning and development of the Vegas Valley Rim Trail connecting neighborhoods to open spaces.
  - 3.3.9 Adopt uniform design and maintenance standards for trails and bike lanes.

**Goal 4. Improve neighborhood safety and protect residents from the harmful effects of pollution and hazardous materials.**

**Objective 4.1**

**Increase safety of neighborhoods, parks and open spaces.**

- 4.1.1 Initiate and expand existing community organizing programs and/or street crime prevention programs to build neighborhood pride and increase crime prevention awareness.
- 4.1.2 Encourage the use of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED).
- 4.1.3 Pursue the creation of community development organizations and community development efforts to ensure there are nonprofit organizations based in local neighborhoods working to build safety, community pride, and reinvestment projects.
- 4.1.4 Replicate successful local and national examples of community-based partnerships with law enforcement to improve safety in communities experiencing high crime rates.

**Objective 4.2**

**Develop policies to promote environmental health of housing.**

- 4.2.1 Educate property owners pursuing new developments and home renovations about the benefits of using low or non-toxic materials such as low-VOC (volatile organic compound) paint and carpet, and other strategies to improve indoor air quality. Create healthy building material checklists and fact sheets that can be provided to property owners and contractors when applying for building permits.
- 4.2.2 Encourage new development to incorporate project design features and guidance for building orientation to create areas for community interaction, maximize solar access, provide passive solar heating during cool seasons, and minimize heat gains during hot periods.
- 4.2.3 Partner with Nevada Healthy Homes Partnership, EnergyFit Nevada, UNLV, state/county agencies, and EPA to provide education and technical assistance to improve health and comfort, especially to reduce mold and lead hazards and increase air quality standards in residential, office and commercial land uses.
- 4.2.4 Partner with EnergyFit Nevada and the Asthma Coalition to promote education on asthma, allergy and other breathing disorder triggers caused by pollutants in homes.
- 4.2.5 Develop and distribute to stakeholders spatial health analysis maps of Southern Nevada to initiate conversations about community health and the built environment.

**Objective 4.3**  
**Protect community members from the harmful effects of pollution and hazardous materials, hazardous waste, and environmental contamination.**

- 4.3.1 Reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides and herbicides on public properties that negatively impact human health, especially in parks and publicly accessible open spaces.
- 4.3.2 Avoid locating new schools, childcare centers and senior housing in proximity to sources of pollution (e.g., truck routes and busy roadways) or near existing businesses that handle toxic materials. Where such uses are located in proximity to sources of air pollution or toxic materials, use building design, construction safeguards and technology techniques to mitigate the negative impacts of hazardous materials and/or air pollution on indoor air quality.

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**Objective 4.4**  
**Prioritize the cleanup and reuse of brownfield and grayfield sites.**

- 4.4.1 Remediate EPA/state/locally-identified brownfield sites to prevent further pollution and to utilize land for other uses.
- 4.4.2 Develop area-wide plans and specific implementation strategies for integrating the cleanup and reuse of brownfield and grayfield sites into neighborhood revitalization efforts.
- 4.4.3 Provide incentives for private sector cooperation to reduce the creation of hazardous wastes, the cleanup of brownfield sites, and the return of land to productive uses.
- 4.4.4 Establish appropriate measures for long-term environmental protection of previous brownfield sites.

**Goal 5. Promote resource-efficient land use and development practices.**

**Objective 5.1  
Promote sustainability in housing in the region to ensure a durable housing supply that will reduce housing costs for homeowners and renters.**

- 5.1.1 Promote and incentivize quality housing design that meets the needs of its users, enhances the neighborhood, and is built to last.
- 5.1.2 Promote the rehabilitation of existing residential and commercial properties and energy efficiency standards to reduce the negative impacts of new development.
- 5.1.3 Promote the use of residential solar installations and passive design techniques.
- 5.1.4 Promote energy efficiency audits as a real estate industry standard and develop an associated financing mechanism for the purchase of homes meeting a designated standard.
- 5.1.5 Expand energy-efficient housing choices that move the community toward NetZero homes.
- 5.1.6 Encourage adoption of energy code to increase NetZero homes.
- 5.1.7 Develop incentive programs to identify inefficient housing stock and to retrofit older residential housing to achieve energy efficiency standards.
- 5.1.8 Expand incentive programs, such as EnergyFit Nevada, that install high-quality, high-efficiency building technologies and assist homeowners in understanding how to make their homes more energy-efficient through energy assessments and financing/ rebate options.
- 5.1.9 Expand existing programs that assist in the production of Energy Star and LEED homes, such as those built by Habitat for Humanity for affordable housing.
- 5.1.10 Educate homebuilders, renters and homebuyers of the importance of shade near and around homes for additional energy conservation in the summer.
- 5.1.11 Collaborate with subject matter experts and advocacy groups to foster sustainable communities and exhibit leadership in sustainable practices.
- 5.1.12 Grow and encourage use of EnergyFit Nevada’s low interest loan funds for home energy upgrades.

**Objective 5.2**  
**Minimize air pollutant emissions from stationary sources to reduce emissions and improve air quality to meet or exceed national ambient air quality standards and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.**

- 5.2.1 Encourage adoption of ordinance or other code changes to promote the use of Air Quality Impact Analyses for certain types and sizes of land developments, including industrial developments.
- 5.2.2 Encourage adoption of ordinance or other code to limit the use of solvents and aerosol sprays for painting and dry cleaning.
- 5.2.3 Support and expand programs that incentivize electric-powered lawn equipment instead of mowers with gasoline motors.
- 5.2.4 Promote natural spaces, particularly native trees, which are proven to counter poor air quality by absorbing greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide and other pollutants.
- 5.2.5 Support transit and land-use improvements and amenities that make walking and biking short distances viable, to further reduce carbon emissions.

**Objective 5.3**  
**Support compact development and regulations that help the Southern Nevada Water Authority achieve water conservation goals and encourage reduction in water consumption.**

- 5.3.1 Support a variety of regulations by local governments to promote efficient use of water resources (e.g., turf restrictions, plumbing code requirement for high efficiency fixtures, etc.).
- 5.3.2 Continue to encourage the use of incentives to manage and reduce overall water use (e.g., providing rebates on water efficient technologies program).
- 5.3.3 Continue and expand education and outreach programs to improve water efficiency (e.g., school programs) and reduce water consumption during peak usage times of day and year.
- 5.3.4 Consider local government adoption of ordinance or other code restricting water usage during peak usage times of day and year to enhance enforcement efforts.
- 5.3.5 Continue SNWA, Las Vegas Valley Water District and local government adoption of progressive/tiered water pricing structure based on quantity and use.
- 5.3.6 Encourage all new golf courses to use recycled water and submit drought-tolerant landscape and irrigation plans.
- 5.3.7 Encourage existing golf courses to submit turf conversion/irrigation management plans.

**Objective 5.4**  
**Increase water quality and decrease wastewater and dry weather urban runoff while encouraging recycled water reuse strategies.**

- 5.4.1 Support the Clark County Flood Control District’s Stormwater Quality Management Committee’s adopted Stormwater Management Plan to promote site design standards in large parking lots, such as depressed medians, buffer strips, porous paving and minimized parking standards.
- 5.4.2 Encourage adoption of ordinance or other code for new and existing commercial businesses with water intensive uses that regulate/restrict water usage and provide other minimum standards. For example, consider requiring commercial car washes to recycle water on-site or send it to a wastewater treatment facility, where it can be cleaned and returned to the water cycle.
- 5.4.3 Promote sustainable water practices among businesses, such as dry cleaners, gas stations, hotels and other similar uses.
- 5.4.4 Work toward meeting or surpassing federal, state and local water quality requirements.

**Objective 5.5**  
**Promote energy efficiency to reduce regional and local energy demand.**

- 5.5.1 Encourage energy-efficient new home construction to meet or exceed energy efficiency standards.
- 5.5.2 Promote Combined Heat and Power (CHP) systems, such as MGM’s existing CHP system at CityCenter, to increase reliability and decrease regional energy demands of Southern Nevada’s resort hotels.
- 5.5.3 Establish a regional Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) program to assist commercial, industrial and multi-family property owners’ access to affordable, long-term financing for smart energy upgrades to their buildings.
- 5.5.4 Promote the use of electric vehicles in local and state government fleets.
- 5.5.5 Incentivize the construction of electric vehicle charging stations in local zoning codes by offering parking reductions and other zoning-related incentives.
- 5.5.6 Expand incentive programs to include retrofits for existing commercial and residential structures for both energy efficiency and renewable energy.
- 5.5.7 Develop shared renewable energy and energy-efficient models for higher density neighborhoods and public spaces, such as solar charging stations and NetZero cooling stations.

**Objective 5.6**  
**Increase supply of regionally generated solar energy.**

- 5.6.1 Encourage solar PV and solar thermal hot water for new homes.
- 5.6.2 Encourage all new commercial and residential construction to allow for solar energy connections.
- 5.6.3 Develop campaign to educate local governments and HOAs on Nevada Revised Statute 278.0208, which prohibits the unreasonable restricting of systems for obtaining solar energy.
- 5.6.4 Implement a green energy program that allows customers, both commercial and residential, to opt into purchasing clean energy from the local utility providers.
- 5.6.5 Incentivize utility-scale renewable energy projects.
- 5.6.6 Incentivize solar thermal on existing residential buildings measured by existing goals established by Southwest Gas for solar thermal installations.
- 5.6.7 Promote the adoption of legislation to allow small distributed generation sale of power and point-of-sale regulations to allow homeowners the ability to sell power back to their respective service company.

**Objective 5.7**  
**Develop guidelines for the preservation of view corridors, and protection and restoration of natural resources.**

- 5.7.1 Coordinate conservation and development of natural resources by establishing a regional entity that represents the views of the federal, state, and local agencies involved in these efforts, including private and non-profit agencies.
- 5.7.2 Maintain the publicly available database to showcase the region's network of park, trails and open space amenities.
- 5.7.3 Implement the SNRPC regional open space plan to conserve areas for their value as open spaces and acquire public recreation access to public lands.
- 5.7.4 Incorporate xeriscaping and native/adaptive landscaping from SNRPC plant list into public agency design standards for trails, roadways, and other public rights-of-way.
- 5.7.5 Create incentives to encourage use of native plant materials in meeting the landscape code through outreach programs for developers, designers, engineers and contractors.

**Objective 5.8**  
**Increase regional solid waste recovery and reduce landfill contributions.**

- 5.8.1 Encourage franchise agreements to require single-stream recycling programs throughout the region.
- 5.8.2 Encourage franchise agreements to pilot and implement a composting program.
- 5.8.3 Introduce regional composting pilot program utilizing the EPA-supported best practices for establishing a composting program.
- 5.8.4 Create an incentive-based program to promote regional recycling for both residential and commercial recycling based on case study research.

CHAPTER FIVE

# Our Vision #3: Increase Transportation Choice

Transportation was consistently raised as an area to improve on throughout Southern Nevada Strong's outreach efforts. Expanding transit systems and access to transit through more integrated and walkable land use and development can provide more efficient and affordable travel choices for residents, workers and visitors.





## Our Vision Part 3: Increase Transportation Choice

Our transportation infrastructure is key to the region’s prosperity, yet it has fallen behind other regions, many of which have invested in modern, world-class systems that support vibrant urban centers. Southern Nevada Strong stands behind future investment in a multi-modal transportation system that is safe, efficient, accessible, equitable, and supports reinvestment in our existing communities.

Completion of this vision will take time, given recent development and transportation investment trends. New housing development has most recently occurred at the fringes of the region, while employment opportunities have continued to concentrate downtown and along the 4.2-mile resort corridor. With longer commute distances and auto-oriented development

patterns, the region has a higher-than-average number of trips by car. As a result, freeway congestion has increased 35 percent since 2000. When visitor volumes are taken into consideration, the impact on the infrastructure is more challenging than many other metro areas.<sup>78</sup> Despite this congestion, the region has relatively high residential densities, which could be leveraged for successful transit use if the development pattern were more supportive for all users.

Southern Nevada Strong envisions the evolution of the transportation network to respond to the needs and desires of citizens, generating opportunities for economic and physical growth that improve access to high-quality neighborhoods and community gathering spaces. This Plan proposes strategic implementation of a more diverse set of land uses integrated with a modern high-capacity transit system that together facilitate

### Coordinating with Existing Plans

The Regional Plan serves as a single unified vision and strategy for land use and transportation system improvements that will build upon an existing inventory of local and regional transportation plans:

- The 2013-2035 Regional Transportation Plan
- The 2011-2015 Nevada Strategic Highway Safety Plan
- Safe Routes to Schools
- Regional and Open Space Working Group
- Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan (2008)
- CLV Great Streets Committee



## 5.1 OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The work outlined in this Plan theme was led by the Transportation Task Group, which brought together a group of transportation leaders from throughout the region. The group identified key challenges that the valley’s transportation network faces, and promoted possible refinements to state and local laws and regulations to promote integrated transportation and land-use planning. The SNS process gathered further input through workshops, open houses, interviews, focus groups and survey discussions. Analysis and public input consistently pointed the Task Group to the following core challenges and opportunities that the region faces, and that this Plan theme addresses.

mobility and shorten the distance traveled from housing to jobs and services. In addition, providing mixed-use centers of activity allows transit and bike/ pedestrian amenities to be implemented more efficiently, as critical densities of people can support increased transit services and the frequency of services needed for a healthy system.

that outweigh their costs. As exemplified by other regions that have implemented broad transportation and land use visions, a coordinated, multi-pronged approach that improves the transportation system while addressing development pattern issues will achieve further reductions in auto trips, trip lengths, and vehicle emissions over the next 20 years.

Given scarce resources, the region needs to allocate transportation funds more wisely, using performance-driven criteria rather than arbitrary formulas. Transportation implementers should prioritize efforts to maintain, enhance and modernize the existing system. Expensive, new roadway capacity projects should be built only if they yield benefits

The Plan calls for increased coordination of planning for housing, transportation and economic development by prioritizing public investments in transportation and infrastructure that improve our community, provide affordable transportation choices, and increase transportation efficiency and safety.

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“TRANSPORTATION SHOULD FOCUS ON EFFECTIVENESS REGARDLESS OF INCOME. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED FOR EVERYONE.”

– PUBLIC OUTREACH PARTICIPANT

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CHALLENGES	Opportunities and Priorities
<p><b>Unrealized Transportation Network:</b>                      The region is decidedly car-dependent: regional transportation costs are a significant burden for the average household based on the H+T index.<sup>79</sup> Proximity to transit is higher than the national average, but design impediments, such as block walls, cul-de-sacs, roadways design, and the separation of uses leaves people reliant on cars.</p>	<p><i>Develop a modern transit system that is integrated with vibrant neighborhood and employment centers better connecting people to their destinations by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Working with the RTC and other partners to develop a comprehensive transit master plan that focuses on enhanced services that supplement existing routes.</i></li> <li>• <i>Supporting safe neighborhood connections in marginalized communities.</i></li> <li>• <i>Supporting the RTC to secure funding for the expansion, operation and maintenance of transit systems and routes. Integrate future land-use planning with existing and future transportation improvements.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Inadequate Bike/Pedestrian Facilities:</b>                      Development patterns limit or make impossible access for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit patrons, limiting viable choices for other modes. The region has poor connectivity, high pedestrian fatalities, and a lower Walk Score than other Intermountain West metro areas.<sup>80</sup> The Las Vegas region is the sixth most dangerous region in the country for pedestrians.<sup>81</sup></p>	<p><i>Connect and enhance bike and pedestrian facilities throughout the region by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Implementing policies and design concepts that encourage safety and ease of movement for pedestrians and cyclists.</i></li> <li>• <i>Increasing funding strategies for investments in the bicycle and pedestrian network. Promoting transportation alternatives at the regional scale.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Congested Road Network:</b>                      The region is reliant on its highways and large arterials for local connectivity. However, local road connectivity is often poor outside the urban core. As a result, it is reliant on the arterial system. Freeway congestion has increased 35 percent since 2000 and has led to longer trip time and increased vehicle emissions. Southern Nevada residents spend about 25 percent of their household income on transportation. Las Vegas metro residents can reach about 44 percent of jobs in the region via transit in 90 minutes.<sup>82</sup></p>	<p><i>Develop a safe, efficient road network that supports all transportation modes by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Establishing a road network with improved and acceptable local and regional connectivity and traffic congestion levels. Overhauling design standards to support multiple modes and support healthy lifestyles.</i></li> <li>• <i>Reducing transportation-related emissions of ozone and carbon monoxide.</i></li> </ul>

### Unrealized Transportation Network

Equal viability for multiple modes, such as walking, biking and transit patronage are important for the workforce to access job opportunities, and for health, quality of life and safety. Nearly a quarter of comments submitted to Southern Nevada Strong via MetroQuest focused on transportation and traffic issues. Most of the comments focused on transportation priorities, but others talked about transportation in the context of providing healthy communities and improving environmental quality. The comments were summarized under four main themes: traffic improvements, traffic safety, public transit, and walkability/bikability.

### Auto Dependency

A lack of viable transportation choices causes the region to be auto-dependent. Faced with rapid growth of the 1990s and 2000s, the region invested heavily in a comprehensive network of wide, high-speed arterial roadways, making it relatively easy to drive in what

is still, in terms of geography, a relatively small region. Congestion is a growing issue in the region, increasing by 35 percent, from 21 to 28 hours spent delayed in traffic between 2000 and 2010.<sup>83</sup> By comparison, the average for all urban communities in the U.S. was 34 hours. For urban areas similar to Las Vegas (population between one and three million), including Salt Lake City and Denver, the average was 31 hours.<sup>84</sup>

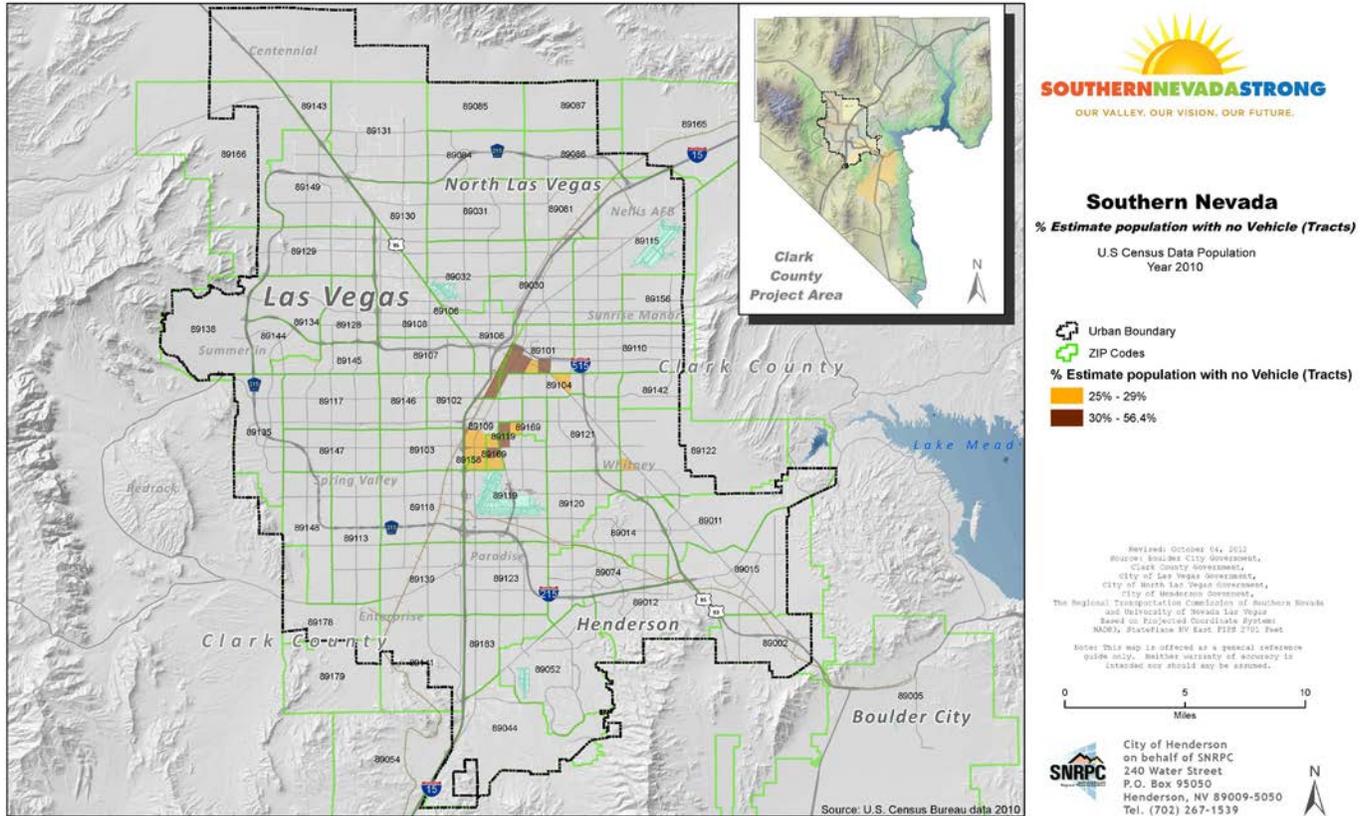
Despite this congestion, the region still maintains an average mean travel time to work of 25.3 minutes (including all modes of transportation),<sup>85</sup> which is similar to Denver and Phoenix, but slightly longer than the 20-minute commute in Salt Lake City (**Table 8**). Of those in the workforce, the majority (about 79 percent) drive alone to work, 11 percent carpool, seven percent take transit, walk or bike, with the remaining three percent working from home.<sup>86</sup>

**Table 8: Mean Travel Time to Work, 2012**

	<i>Time (minutes)</i>
<b>Las Vegas, NV</b>	25.3
<b>Denver, CO</b>	24.6
<b>Phoenix, AZ</b>	24.3
<b>Salt Lake City, UT</b>	19.9

Source: American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, 2012

Figure 28: Southern Nevadans with No Vehicle



### Public Transportation

The region’s public transit system, while well used and among the most fiscally efficient in the country,<sup>87</sup> is limited in its service, frequency and coverage across areas of the valley, also exacerbated by the fragmented development patterns and design issues. The region is the only one of its size in the Intermountain West without a fixed-rail, high-capacity transit system, making the region less attractive for a growing demographic segment.

Figure 28 shows where Southern Nevadans with no vehicle live.

Households in the region are fairly close to transit stops, but long trip lengths and transfers preclude extensive transit use. In 2011, the Brookings Institution published an analysis of data from transit providers in the nation’s 100 largest metropolitan areas. The report revealed that transit access in Las Vegas is much higher than the U.S. metro average. In terms of peer regions, the percent of

working-age residents within three quarters of a mile of a transit stop (86 percent) is more than the Denver metro area (84 percent) and less than Salt Lake City (89 percent).<sup>88</sup>

Las Vegas metro residents can reach about 44 percent of jobs in the region via transit in 90 minutes.<sup>89</sup> In the region, the typical working-age resident can reach 61 percent of low-skill jobs, 43 percent of middle-skill and 29 percent of high-skill jobs within 90 minutes via transit. By comparison, in all Western metro

## Benefits of Walking

Walking offers both health benefits and is a more sustainable form of transportation. Increasing the amount of time spent walking decreases the likelihood of chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and obesity. Further, walking promotes better psychosocial health by way of increased levels of social capital and an increased sense of community (Leyden, 2003; Lund, 2003).<sup>92</sup>

areas, the typical commuter can access 31 percent of low-skill industry jobs, and 35 percent of high-skill industry jobs.<sup>90</sup>

Job location within a metro area affects how many jobs are accessible via transit. In addition, the distribution of different types of industries within a region may affect the kinds of jobs residents can reach via transit. As a result, the degree to which transit systems “match” workers and the jobs for which they are most qualified depends on a range of factors that vary across metro areas.<sup>91</sup>

### Inadequate Bike and Pedestrian Facilities

The provision of safe facilities for cyclists and pedestrians has, until recently, been poor to non-existent across much of Southern Nevada. The arterial roadways are designed with little consideration of bicyclists or pedestrians, and constitute formidable barriers to those needing to walk, bike and/or access transit. The region has

many auto-oriented urban design characteristics, which result in an unsafe pedestrian environment. It has developed along a grid-design with numerous high-speed arterial streets, which is where pedestrian crashes most frequently occur.<sup>93</sup> Combined, these factors result in a transportation system that is highly focused on the automobile at the expense of safety and viability of other less expensive, more healthful modes. The responding auto-oriented, homogenous development pattern has had negative economic impacts. In 2011, Transportation for America ranked Las Vegas the sixth most dangerous region for pedestrians, with an annual average of 2.5 pedestrian deaths per 100,000 people.<sup>94</sup>

According to the website Walkscore.com, most places in the Southern Nevada region are auto-dependent, as shown in **Table 9**.

Table 9: Walkscore by Place

	Out of 100	Classification
Enterprise Township	31	auto-dependent
Henderson	39	auto-dependent
North Las Vegas	42	auto-dependent
Phoenix, AZ	45	auto-dependent
Las Vegas	49	auto-dependent
Spring Valley	51	somewhat walkable
Paradise Township	57	somewhat walkable
Salt Lake City, UT	58	somewhat walkable
Denver, CO	60	somewhat walkable
Tempe, AZ	62	somewhat walkable

Source: Walkscore.com

A Walk Score measures the walkability of a place based on proximity to nearby amenities such as restaurants, stores, schools, parks and entertainment.<sup>97,98</sup>

The region has myriad opportunities to strengthen opportunities to use a bicycle as a form of transportation. With its mild weather and flat topography, the region’s climate provides an opportunity for a strong biking culture. In addition, according to the RTC, most of the trips (both for work and for personal reasons) in the region are relatively short. For example, 25 percent of all trips are less than one mile; 50 percent of all trips are less than three miles.<sup>99</sup>



### Off-Street Path Network

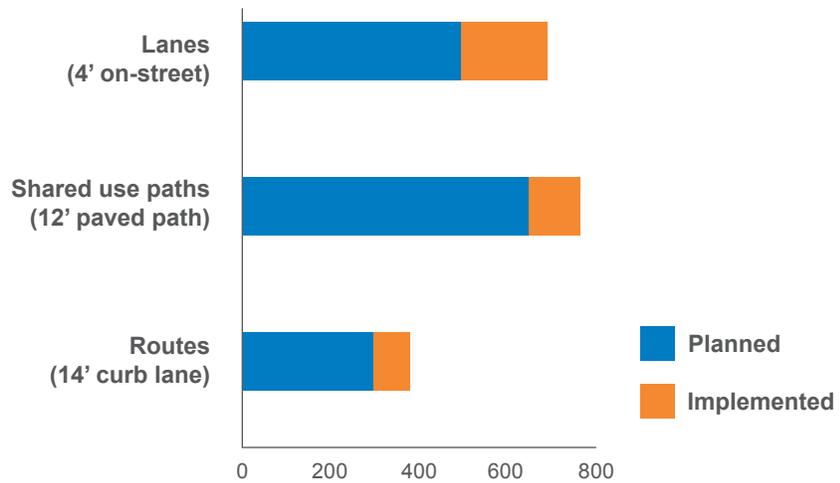
The RTC’s Bike and Pedestrian Plan recommends 634 miles of Shared Use Paths for the network. These paths should have minimum 12-foot widths and 2-foot shoulders.<sup>95</sup>

The City of Las Vegas and the RTC are in the process of making Main Street a two-lane northbound street with widened sidewalks and bike lanes, while southbound travel will use Commerce Street. The result will be an upgrade to the area that meets the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists, and an increase in the capacity of the roadway.<sup>96</sup>



Providing more bicycle amenities such as bike convenient parking and more multi-use pathways will encourage alternative modes of travel in the region.

Figure 29: Regional Multi-Use Path and Bike Lane Investments



Source: RTC.

Once a road network is built, it is difficult to make corrective changes to the infrastructure. Appropriate design and accommodation strategies are most effectively considered at planning and design stages. Required elements should include refuge areas, storage areas for pedestrians at high-demand areas, sufficient walk time on signals, adequate site distances and lighting.

Bikeway and pedestrian facilities need to be considered roadway infrastructure. Cities and counties typically do not build roadways that terminate abruptly or are disconnected from other parts of the system. Non-motorized mode facilities need the same continuity/

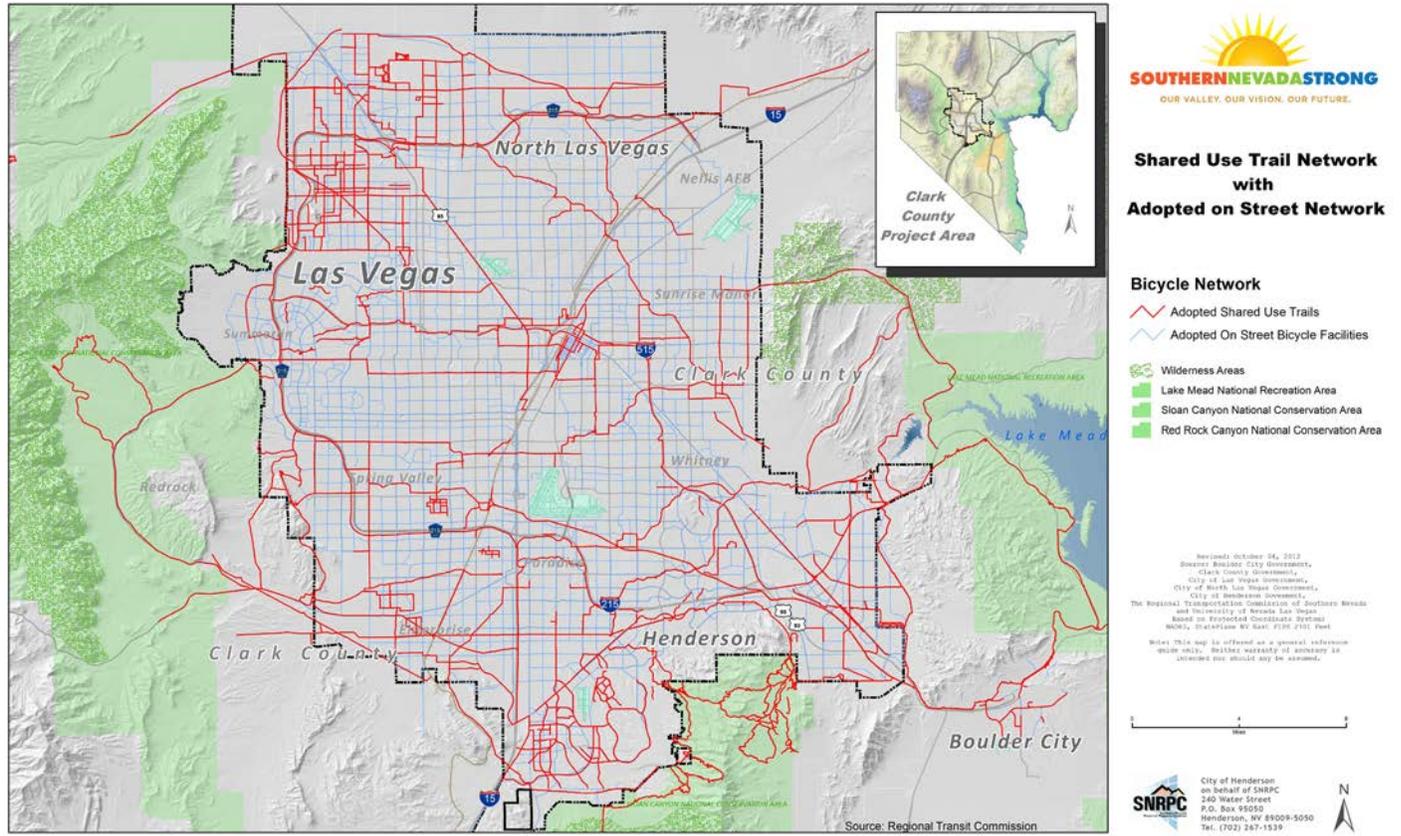
connectivity in order to provide a reliable network of infrastructure for non-motorized options.

**Transportation Costs**

Southern Nevada’s households spend a significant portion of their income on transportation. The Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) states that spending 15 percent of income on transportation is considered affordable. Las Vegas MSA residents spend about 24 percent of their household income on transportation (Table 10), which is very similar to comparable Intermountain West metropolitan areas.

According to the CNT, spending 45 percent of income on combined housing

Figure 30: Bicycle and Pedestrian Network



Source: RTC, 2010.<sup>100</sup>

and transportation costs is considered affordable. In the region, 83 percent of residents spend greater than 45 percent of their income on combined housing and transportation costs. Forty-five percent of the median household income equates to about \$25,236 annually or \$2,103 each month.

The average family in Clark County is spending nearly half their income on transportation and housing. Most own two vehicles and drive a total of 18,500 miles annually. The average household takes 97 transit trips annually. All told, the average family spends about 18 percent of their income on transportation (\$10,126). Transportation costs combined

with housing costs total about 49 percent of the average family income, or \$27,566.<sup>101</sup>

### Congested Road Network

Expanding the range of transportation options will require a different approach than the traditional, auto-oriented facility planning and design strategies that primarily focus on automobile capacity and alleviating traffic congestion. Visitor volumes, just under 39 million in 2011, have grown since 2009. Auto traffic coming from California on I-15 has increased 27 percent over the last 15 years, from an average of 29,530 vehicles per day in 1996 to an average of 40,344 vehicles per day in 2011.<sup>102</sup>

### Local Connectivity

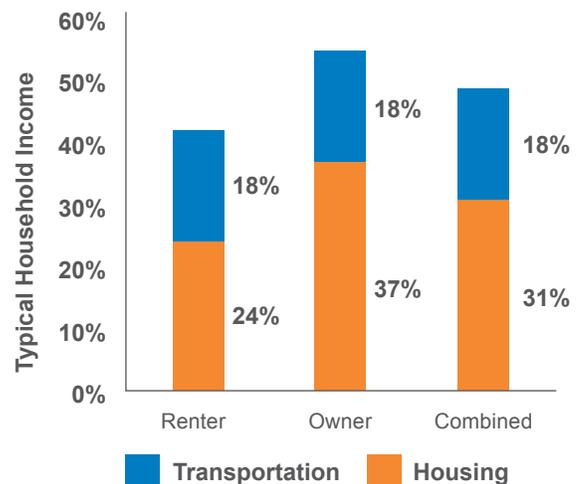
The region relies on its highways and arterial streets for local connectivity. Freeway congestion has increased 35 percent since 2000 and has led to longer trip time and increased vehicle emissions, creating air quality issues. Part of Southern Nevada’s air quality challenge arises from its natural geography: the mountains surrounding the valley create a bowl, tending to trap exhaust over the metropolis for long periods. Thermal inversions, which trap pollutants, are also common. The region had 24 days between 2008 and 2010 where ozone concentrations were unhealthy for sensitive groups and two days where

Table 10: Metro Area Transportation Costs

	Average HH Income	Average Percent of Income
Las Vegas	\$56,080	24%
Phoenix	\$54,713	26%
Salt Lake City	\$57,682	25%
Denver	\$59,932	22%

Source: Center for Neighborhood Technology (2011).

Figure 31: Average Household Expenditures on Housing and Transportation as a Percent of Total Income for Renters, Owners, and Combined in Clark County, Nevada



Source: HUD, <http://locationaffordability.info/lai.aspx>

particulate matter was unhealthy for sensitive groups. The region received a score of F and B, respectively in these two categories.<sup>103</sup> Clark County had zero days when it exceeded its CO<sub>2</sub> air quality standards.<sup>104</sup>

The lack of connectivity in the street network hinders different modes of transportation. Urban design standards have permitted fragmented development, with walled and gated communities inhibiting mobility by any mode other than the automobile. In addition, large swaths of land are built out with homogenous development patterns, limiting the availability of goods and services in proximity to residences and requiring automobiles for what should be very short trips. Design impediments, such as block walls, cul-de-sacs, roadway design and the separation of uses leave people reliant on cars. Part of this is due to the master-planned community dominance, which segregates retail from residential development by gates and large block walls.<sup>105</sup> Good



connectivity can enhance local circulation of both motorized and non-motorized trips.<sup>106</sup> In order to attract the widest possible segment of the population, routes between origin and destination should not require individuals to use highly congested links or involve an undue level of detour.<sup>107</sup>

Expanding transportation choices in the region will help relieve already congested roadways.

### Achieving the Vision Through Strategic Land Use

Since the way we use land profoundly influences how we live, work and play, **this document touches on many aspects of the region’s land-use planning.** The goals and policies included in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 will guide the design of the valley’s regulatory system, including the zoning code, rules governing the subdivision of land, the interaction of land use and transportation and economic development.

**The Plan also recommends strategies that should be pursued in the first few years following Plan adoption.** These strategies are found in the Implementation Matrix.

## 5.2 GOALS AND POLICY STRATEGIES

This section details the **goals, objectives and actions that support increased transportation choice** and will move Southern Nevada toward the vision.

- **Goals** are the big overarching ideas, changes, or practices that are essential to realize the community’s vision.
- **Objectives** establish specific, measurable goals that guide how the Plan is implemented in a way that will achieve the vision.
- **Strategies** outline the steps needed to achieve the objectives.

**Goal 1. Develop a modern transit system that is integrated with vibrant neighborhood and employment centers, better connecting people to their destinations.**

**Objective 1.1**  
**Work with the RTC and other partners to develop a comprehensive transit master plan, which focuses on enhanced services that supplement existing routes.**

- 1.1.1 Pursue light rail and improved transit options in low and moderate income areas, including improvements to make walking and biking pleasant, safe and viable transportation options.
- 1.1.2 Leverage recently completed transit infrastructure projects as a foundation to develop a comprehensive transit master plan.
- 1.1.3 Incorporate land use, multi-modal transportation and air quality planning considerations into future updates of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) multi-modal transportation plan.
- 1.1.4 Develop implementation criteria by which future corridors will be prioritized including: potential ridership, economic development/ transit-oriented development

**Objective 1.1**  
**Work with the RTC and other partners to develop a comprehensive transit master plan, which focuses on enhanced services that supplement existing routes.**

*continued...*

- (TOD) potential, proximity to jobs, housing and education, enhanced quality of life, and integration with the bike and pedestrian network.
- 1.1.5 Develop a strategy to combine public input and best practices to support the decision-making process when considering the locations and alignments of multi-modal connections to the airport and other destinations.
  - 1.1.6 Continue to evaluate Maryland Parkway as a BRT or rail corridor under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), with consideration given to the implementation strategies identified in the Maryland Parkway Opportunity Site study.
  - 1.1.7 Identify lines that would have increased frequency, limited stops, express, BRT, and light rail services.
  - 1.1.8 Designate a baseline transit network and set of operating standards that can serve as the foundation of the transit system.
  - 1.1.9 Improve the rider experience by locating stops away from adjacent travel lanes, offering robust lighting, and making other site considerations that maximize visibility and safety.
  - 1.1.10 Update design standards to create wider sidewalks with street trees, benches, trash receptacles, streetlighting, and other streetscape amenities along key transportation corridors to make walking to transit stops more welcoming for riders and to shield them from heat during extreme temperatures.
  - 1.1.11 Coordinate with relevant agencies to pursue interstate regional passenger rail service.
  - 1.1.12 Identify and pursue the use of complementary alternative funding sources for mass transit improvements, including national public and private funds, and existing local and state funds that are intended for public purpose and positive outcomes in the areas of: economic development or growth; green infrastructure; environmental protection; land conversion; urban land development; access to jobs, housing and education for low or moderate income individuals (LMI); and public health.

**Objective 1.2**  
**Support safe neighborhood connections in marginalized communities.**

- 1.2.1 Analyze the feasibility of transit stations with bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure provisions adjacent to existing and future mixed-income developments.
- 1.2.2 Consider partnerships between the RTC and private developers to create park-and-ride facilities in outlying areas that could provide access to express transit services and reduce travel time.
- 1.2.3 Ensure that transit amenities are supported by ADA/ PROWAG-compliant pedestrian facilities, universal design, and adequate directional signage.
- 1.2.4 Revise and develop bus stop/ station design standards based on passenger volumes, locations, and other characteristics.
- 1.2.5 Reduce the dependence on paratransit through facility enhancements and education about the transit system for people with disabilities or limited mobility.

**Objective 1.3**  
**Support the RTC to secure funding for the expansion, operation and maintenance of transit systems and routes.**

- 1.3.1 Pursue funding opportunities for system completion, right-of-way acquisition, and implementation through federal, state, and local sources.
- 1.3.2 Identify and pursue creative funding strategies to better balance transportation investments between roadway, transit, bike and pedestrian improvements.
- 1.3.3 Promote community pride in marketing and promotional materials with the idea that the region’s transportation system should be a source of community pride.
- 1.3.4 Continue to monitor effectiveness of communication methods with priority target audiences and enhance outreach efforts to raise awareness of existing services.
- 1.3.5 Strive to provide effective, efficient, and equitable service to all individuals regardless of their ability to speak, read, or write English.

**Objective 1.4**  
**Integrate future land-use planning with existing and future transportation improvements.**

- 1.4.1 Ensure coordination between local governments and the RTC to evaluate frequent service transit corridors for potential designation as TOD areas.
- 1.4.2 Pursue an analysis of the economic benefits of transit to highlight the importance of fixed transit lines in economic development and redevelopment.
- 1.4.3 Consider using space/land dedications or impact fees for transit amenities that support employment centers, such as multi-modal centers, transit centers, bike lanes, etc.
- 1.4.4 Tailor parking requirements to encourage more concentrated development in mixed-use areas, reflect actual demand, and increase development feasibility.
- 1.4.5 Require interim sidewalks along incomplete roadways, when feasible.

**Goal 2. Connect and enhance bike and pedestrian facilities throughout the region.**

**Objective 2.1**  
**Implement policies and design concepts that encourage safety and ease of movement for pedestrians and cyclists.**

- 2.1.1 Work with the RTC to implement a regional system of fully multi-modal interconnected arterial and local streets, pathways and bikeways that are integrated with public transit in order to increase mode share.
- 2.1.2 Enhance safety for marginalized groups, taking into consideration the particular needs of vulnerable populations, such as the homeless, unemployed, underemployed and other marginalized groups.
- 2.1.3 Ensure that information about transportation options is available and distributed in creative ways to promote and educate Southern Nevada’s most vulnerable populations, such as homeless, unemployed, underemployed and other marginalized groups.
- 2.1.4 Pursue a pedestrian safety study to identify priority locations with high pedestrian-vehicle conflicts to focus retrofit plans, conduct an incident management analysis, and define crash hot spots.
- 2.1.5 Develop a regionally-shared traffic safety database.
- 2.1.6 Work with local bike groups and transportation advocates to update the RTC’s multi-modal transportation plan and identify strategies to increase safety and make walking and bicycling more viable as primary transportation modes.
- 2.1.7 Establish an off-street bicycle parking policy, which considers security, placement, quality of facilities, and provision of signs directing bicyclists to the parking facilities.

**Objective 2.2**  
**Increase funding strategies for investments in the bicycle and pedestrian network.**

- 2.2.1 In coordination with Clark County School District, support Safe Routes to Schools and identify funding sources for all aspects of Safe Routes to Schools programs.
- 2.2.2 Develop financial or regulatory incentives for development projects that include multi-modal transportation infrastructure in low-income communities.
- 2.2.3 Consider alternative funding sources to connect the bicycle and pedestrian network to the transit network.
- 2.2.4 Coordinate with and continue to support the Outside Las Vegas Foundation and the Regional Open Space and Trails Working Group to integrate priorities into local ordinances and/or comprehensive plans and support the development and funding of the trails system and supporting programs.
- 2.2.5 Continue to implement the RTC’s public education campaign on multi-modal transportation and pursue a campaign on the region’s transportation vision.
- 2.2.6 Promote educational opportunities to the local engineering and planning community on the role of design and land use in pedestrian safety, such as an educational event about how to repurpose right-of-way, and design streets and streetscapes as amenities.
- 2.2.7 Celebrate accomplishments through special events and community outreach activities (e.g., cyclovias, family rides, etc.).

**Goal 3. Develop a safe, efficient road network that supports all transportation modes.**

**Objective 3.1**  
**Establish a road network with improved and acceptable local and regional connectivity and traffic congestion levels.**

- 3.1.1 Evaluate planned transportation infrastructure to reflect the land use vision.
- 3.1.2 Revise and adopt regional and local design standards to include multi-modal street design, safety and improved access management.
- 3.1.3 Pursue a regional policy change to require roadways to be designed for target speeds as recommended in the Complete Streets Design Guidelines for Livable Communities, based on the context of the corridor and overall safety and comfort of all users, including pedestrians and bicyclists, and require justification for all target design speeds and speed limits.
- 3.1.4 Consider the potential impacts of the development of the I-11 corridor, currently being studied by the Arizona and Nevada Departments of Transportation.

## Priority Transportation Corridors

Priority transportation corridors provide mobility to the local workforce and serve regional freight needs to diversify Southern Nevada's economy. To diversify Southern Nevada's economy, we must improve the transportation network to encourage interstate commerce and international trade.

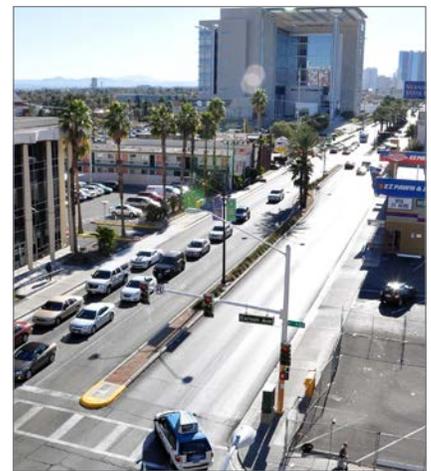
Interstate 11, which would connect Phoenix to Las Vegas, and ultimately Canada to Mexico, promises to position Southern Nevada at a strategic location that would attract new industries and outside investment. Work currently is underway to realize I-11. Nevada and Arizona are evaluating possible alignments of the proposed interstate, and the RTC and NDOT are investing more than \$300 million dollars in a phase of I-11 known as the Boulder City Bypass.

The Bruce Woodbury 215 Beltway is another regionally significant transportation facility that fosters the movement of goods and people around the perimeter of the valley. Clark County is making significant investments in the coming years to upgrade this facility to interstate freeway standards. When complete this project will facilitate movement by residents and freight alike because of its connections to multiple jurisdictions and their neighborhoods (Clark County, Las Vegas, Henderson, North Las Vegas), intermodal facilities (McCarran International Airport and the proposed Southern

Nevada Supplemental Airport), major employment centers (the Strip and Nellis Air Force Base, among countless others), and existing and planned interstate corridors (I-15, I-515, US 93, US 95 and the future I-11).

Efforts to improve workforce mobility also are important to the region. Corridors that connect areas of high residential densities with areas of high employment lend themselves to future investments.

- **Las Vegas Boulevard** and its environs represent one of the largest economic generators in the state. Efforts have been initiated to assess multi-modal transportation options in this area that would alleviate congestion, provide transportation options which seamlessly connect with one another, and improve overall mobility for residents, employees and visitors.
- **Flamingo Road**, which services the Strip, is the next busiest transit line in the region. This corridor is slated to be improved in the next few years to allow for improved transit service.
- **Maryland Parkway** is identified as a candidate for future transit enhancements because it links many high-activity centers such as McCarran International Airport, the UNLV campus, high-density residential areas, commercial properties, medical facilities and downtown Las Vegas.



Transportation corridors are important for uniting complete communities.

**Objective 3.2**  
**Overhaul design standards to support multiple modes and support healthy lifestyles, with special attention to the region's extreme summer temperatures.**

- 3.2.1 Working with local stakeholders, support more stringent criteria to justify roadway capacity expansion and ensure that any capacity expansions accommodate viable multi-modal transportation options.
- 3.2.2 Ensure that all traffic studies provide a justification for roadway capacity and speed limit.
- 3.2.3 Consider a regional review of RTC's TIP and local road CIPs to justify project need.
- 3.2.4 Promote "Complete Streets" cross section revisions whenever corridor reconstruction or reconfiguration occurs. Activities could include removing block walls, limiting cul-de-sacs, increasing sidewalk and bike lane widths, reducing curb cuts, and limiting driveways.
- 3.2.5 Develop a road diet/retrofit plan for road networks in Southern Nevada to improve connectivity and access for multiple modes, starting with areas identified through the pedestrian safety study.
- 3.2.6 Develop neighborhood and regional connectivity ratios/standards.
- 3.2.7 Encourage the development of design standards and land use policies that require investments in low-income or at-risk communities to include the basic attributes such as sidewalks, adequate lighting, street trees, and other strategies to create walkable communities, with special attention to designing for shade and heat absorbent materials to provide respite to transit riders.

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**Objective 3.3**  
**Reduce transportation-related emissions of ozone and carbon monoxide.**

- 3.3.1 Consider collaborating with state regulatory agencies and the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to strengthen the standard for vehicle emission.
- 3.3.2 Reduce vehicle miles traveled to reduce mobile emissions and therefore improve regional air quality.
- 3.3.3 Promote responsible auto use, including refueling motor vehicles after sunset to prevent gasoline fumes from interacting with sunlight, and keeping vehicle engines finely tuned.

CHAPTER SIX

# Our Future: Building Capacity for Implementation

By “meeting people where they are” and creating multiple opportunities for low-income residents and Spanish speakers to participate, the SNS team brought the planning process to the community. Through SNS, many residents were introduced to the concept of public participation, and through sustained communications with participants the SNS process will encourage continued involvement in public decision making.

WHEN IT HAS LOTS OF FUN THINGS TO DO.

WHEN WE ADD MORE MASS TRANSIT LINES,

Want the area safer. No truck park on Bradent

TRANSIT OPPORTUNITIES & VIBRANCY

there are grocery stores to shop in

bike

paths exist

Safer and Bike Paths

when there are more good restaurants

Closer shopping for groceries

-It has a Splash Pad, Park that is handicapped accessible and lots of trees & walking paths  
- There is a life rail running from freeman st dam boulder hwy



## Our Future: Building Capacity for Implementation

Three years, thousands of work hours, and nearly 70,000 Southern Nevadans’ voices later, Southern Nevada Strong has developed a shared vision and Regional Plan for integrating good jobs with a wide range of housing options located near transit. The results of this work, when implemented, will ensure that our Valley’s two million residents can enjoy, participate, and thrive in an economically competitive and vibrant region.

The Consortium Committee and the SNRPC recommended that the core administration of the Plan, moving forward, be placed with the RTC – an existing organization with regional purview. This recommendation

was based on best practices research, local expertise, federal and local agency input, and was favored over funding an entirely new structure or organization.

As the Southern Nevada Strong Regional Plan transitions to the RTC for administration and implementation, our community must heed the call-to-action: implement the Regional Plan and enjoy its benefits, or maintain the status quo.

But more than any decision on paper, our actions will speak volumes. Meaningful and long-lasting changes happen when we act together to achieve success – and will be especially important in overcoming the newness of regional planning in the absence of a well-established and well-funded regional body. Fortunately, our community has demonstrated many times that it is up to such momentous challenges.

Figure 33: Overcoming Implementation Challenges



## 6.1 OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Goal one in this section and the related objectives and strategies were developed by the Public Engagement and Equity Task Group and publically reviewed through several phases of outreach during the development of the draft Plan, where approximately 70,000 residents weighed-in. The Task Group reviewed all public input,

data, and research findings to identify the key barriers to a more engaged and empowered community. Both analysis and public input pointed to the need to innovate outreach techniques to reach a community that is interested and concerned about its future, but not currently engaged in policy-making decisions.

Goals two, three, four and five were developed to support the transition of core administration

of the Regional Plan to the RTC, and to maximize the success of implementation. These goals and their related objectives and strategies were developed based on case study research, consultant advising, RTC and SNS management, and local government input.

CHALLENGES	<i>Opportunities and Priorities</i>
<p><b>Traditionally Low Inclusion and Low Participation in Policy Making Decisions:</b></p> <p>It is increasingly recognized that to successfully address a community’s complex problems and quality of life issues, it is necessary that a wide range of advocates work together to achieve change. As a newer community with less organized neighborhood associations and community groups, low levels of educational attainment compared to other regions, and a highly transient population, participation in traditional public policy issues has been low. Further, public engagement efforts have been narrow and self-selecting, often representing a vocal minority rather than the needs of the majority or the most vulnerable members of the community. Given the power and influence of a few institutional actors in gaming and the tourist industry in Southern Nevada, balancing power and influence with a wider range of community stakeholders is also a challenge.</p>	<p><i>More creative approaches to reach a diverse population with attention to the nature of a 24-hour economy and shift work is important to engage Southern Nevada’s residents. Continuing to expand public engagement and equitable access to community engagement can be achieved by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Activating residents and business people for Southern Nevada Strong Regional Plan implementation.</i></li> <li>• <i>Innovating and improving public sector-led engagement efforts.</i></li> <li>• <i>Ensuring Southern Nevada remains a welcoming place for future generations from diverse backgrounds, with varying degrees of mobility and independence.</i></li> <li>• <i>Building understanding, expertise, and leadership in community development.</i></li> <li>• <i>Developing an on-going communications strategy to keep the public informed and to generate interest, enthusiasm and confidence in the Plan.</i></li> </ul>

CHALLENGES	Opportunities and Priorities
<p><b>Low Prioritization, Collaboration, Experience, And Capacity in the Regional Plan’s Concepts:</b></p> <p>Southern Nevada has experienced rapid growth, an uncoordinated development pattern and disconnected land uses, paired with an over reliance on gaming, tourism and construction. As a result, the community has disjointed land-use patterns that negatively impact residents and has suffered from an absence of prioritization, leadership and collaboration in advocating for proactive regional planning. Developing leadership to prioritize what is important to Southern Nevadans is necessary and will take collaboration and a customized approach.</p> <p>The state-created SNRPC has limited funding for a population of two million residents. Unlike many regions of comparable size, Southern Nevada has no council of governments. It has a number of focused regional agencies, such as the Regional Flood Control District and the RTC, but it lacks any regional council able to address wider regional priorities. Further, Nevada is not a “home rule” state, limiting its ability to create additional structures or funding sources to address regional priorities and dedicate staffing to ongoing, regional scale collaboration.</p> <p>The Consortium Committee and SNRPC recommended that core administration of the Plan, moving forward, be placed with the RTC – an existing organization positioned to absorb many of the implementation activities over time without additional funding. This recommendation was based on best practices research, local expertise and federal agency input and was favored over funding an entirely new structure or organization.</p> <p>Additionally, a lack of practical experience in Plan-recommended development concepts is a challenge and is exacerbated by the lack of experience with alternative financing mechanisms used frequently in other parts of the country to catalyze infill and reinvestment in disadvantaged areas.</p>	<p><i>Work closely with member agencies and the RTCSNV to prioritize regional planning and enhance collaboration by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Identifying great regional planning mentors.</i></li> <li>• <i>Clarifying RTC’s priorities in the Regional Plan and aligning complementary efforts to raise awareness and understanding.</i></li> <li>• <i>Transitioning staff, project structure and stakeholder roles for successful communication, decision making and implementation in relation to the Regional Plan.</i></li> <li>• <i>Integrating administration of the Regional Plan and updates with existing RTC structure and efforts.</i></li> <li>• <i>Working with State legislators and UNLV to heighten the role of planning and communicate the benefits of working regionally.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Enhance experience and capacity to implement Regional Plan concepts by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Developing relationships with other regions to learn from their experience in regional plan implementation.</i></li> <li>• <i>Building capacity of the RTC and jurisdictional planning staff through professional development.</i></li> <li>• <i>Increasing demand for and familiarity with alternative financing sources among real estate developers to build Plan-recommended products.</i></li> </ul>

CHALLENGES	Opportunities and Priorities
<p><b>No Dedicated and Consistent Funding for Project Implementation:</b></p> <p>The Regional Plan is a voluntary, visionary Plan to better integrate jobs, transit and housing to enhance economic competitiveness. The Plan identifies a variety of strategies to achieve the vision, some with significant costs. Currently, there is no dedicated funding stream to manage and/or administer coordination and the updating of the Regional Plan, nor is there dedicated funding for specific action items within the Plan. However, many of the Plan’s recommendations are not new things, just new ways of doing old things that are already mandated or addressed and could be prioritized differently.</p> <p>Southern Nevada is also less competitive in terms of accessing federal funding, ranking 49th out of 50 states in competitive grant dollars from Washington, D.C.</p>	<p><i>Develop local funding strategies to implement items with fiscal impacts by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Identifying stable funding source(s) for Regional Plan staff.</i></li> <li>• <i>Cultivating understanding and support among constituents and voters for the Regional Plan.</i></li> <li>• <i>Developing funding sources for grants and matching dollars.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Proactively seek external funding for Plan implementation by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Enhancing efforts to pursue private and federal funding to increase competitiveness with other states and regions.</i></li> </ul>

**Traditionally Low Inclusion and Low Participation in Policy Making Decisions**

The SNS Public Engagement and Equity Task Group, assisted by staff and consultants, led extensive outreach and received direct input from approximately 70,000 individuals and organizations that represent the region. This outreach included a concerted effort to receive and understand input from marginalized populations. As such, SNS has made tremendous strides in identifying common regional goals and outlining strategies to achieve

them. However, we still need to increase understanding of the Regional Plan, prioritize public engagement, and rally additional support.

Given the power and influence of a few institutional actors in gaming and the tourist industry in Southern Nevada, balancing power and influence with a wider range of community stakeholders is a challenge. In any region with a single dominant industry – in our case, gaming and tourism – there is always a tension between the needs and goals of that industry and a wider range of stakeholders whose interests

may not always align with those of the dominant industry. The Regional Plan provides an opportunity to balance these varying interests.

Southern Nevada Strong set the stage to create a region of residents that are informed, engaged and active participants in making Southern Nevada an even better place to live. The process awakened the community, educated countless individuals and organizations, and fundamentally increased resident involvement in improving local neighborhoods.

Going forward, local governments and the RTC should seize this unique public engagement opportunity and increase the likelihood that our goals and strategies are sustained over the long term. The goals that drove the public engagement effort for the project and that should be continued through implementation include the following:

- **Build Relationships:** Create opportunities for community members to meet and engage with others interested in helping to improve economic and social conditions in the region.
- **Create Opportunities for Inclusive Participation:** Invite all residents – including typically underrepresented groups – to influence the content of the Southern Nevada Strong Regional Plan and the future of the region by providing multiple and varied opportunities for input.
- **Educate Residents and Inform Decision Making:** Provide stakeholders with information needed to make informed contributions to the planning process and provide input that reflects local values, is useful and relevant, and informs decision-making related to the Plan.

- **Build Long-Term Capacity for Civic Engagement:**

Help those engaged through this process to stay involved and build social capital and community development leadership to realize the vision for Southern Nevada Strong.

With much of this difficult planning work done, the region’s long-term success rests in proactively engaging individuals and organizations representative of the region (paying special attention to traditionally underrepresented populations) to ensure that the Plan remains fully informed, understood, and compelling.

**Low Prioritization, Collaboration, Experience, and Capacity in the Regional Plan’s Concepts.**

Southern Nevada, in the face of unparalleled growth, has not prioritized regional planning significantly and has limited regional governance and therefore collaboration, experience and capacity in regional planning. Nevada is not a “home rule” state, which severely limits local and regional ability to create solutions and funding mechanisms for local problems. Additionally, it is one of the only states in the nation without a regional council of governments.



Public outreach conducted as part of the Southern Nevada Strong process laid the foundation for the kinds of important partnerships needed for implementation and ongoing collaboration.



## UNLV Ethnography Research

BY GIANPAOLO BAIOCCHI, DIANA GRAIZBORD, JOHNNIE LOTESTA, AND MICHAEL RODRÍGUEZ-MUÑIZ

The findings and collective report of the ethnography research is the result of a 10-week research study undertaken by a team of fourteen graduate student researchers from the UNLV under the guidance and supervision of a team based at Brown University. The researchers worked in 12 disparate opportunity sites in Southern Nevada, ranging from a historic African American neighborhood (West Las Vegas) to an area surrounding a large abandoned apartment complex – which has since been demolished – (Buena Vista Springs), to an area of relative residential stability (Pittman), to areas that comprise large stretches of roadway (the Maryland Parkway corridor).

Ethnography, is a research method based on the up-close observation of and conversation with people and communities. In each of the sites, researchers identified specific focus areas for more detailed observation, met residents, became familiar with issues of import to the local

community, and carried out in-depth interviews. Researchers kept the principles of sustainable communities in mind but were also attentive to new insights raised by the residents themselves.

Ethnography is meant to capture evidence not accessible by other means. Through lengthy and detailed observation, ethnography allows for greater unspoken understandings and the documentation and analysis of individuals' and group's daily activities – more so than through one-time surveys, interviews or focus groups. In this way, ethnography fosters more specific and concrete answers to questions about how families use public parks or respond to insufficient transportation or social services, or even how people make sense of their realities and build community in the midst of poverty. It elevates the everyday knowledge and experiences of neighborhood residents, and has the potential to unsettle accepted wisdoms.

**Together, the ethnographic reports identified four main findings, despite the wide diversity of sites:**

### COMMUNITY

Even though research often took place in economically and socially distressed neighborhoods, residents expressed a strong sense of community and common purpose. Researchers found this in diverse and sometimes unexpected places – social service agencies, ethnic markets, schools, religious institutions, and community centers.

### CRIME AND SAFETY

Residents repeatedly conveyed concerns about crime and safety. This confirms recent research on crime and neighborhood satisfaction in the Las Vegas valley by highlighting how residents time and again voiced concern for neighborhood safety in relation to topics such as transportation, housing, and access to public services.



## UNLV Ethnography Research

BY GIANPAOLO BAIOCCHI, DIANA GRAIZBORD, JOHNNIE LOTESTA,  
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### PUBLIC TRANSIT AND ACCESS TO SERVICES

Access to public transportation and social services – especially access to adequate housing for low-income people and the homeless, and mental health services – are of particular concern to residents who expressed a sense of being left behind. For example, one health clinic administrator called the Buena Vista Springs area a “resource desert,” noting the lack of mental health services and support for homeless individuals and families, which is a theme throughout the community. The design of transportation amenities was also commonly cited as being ill-planned for the needs of people. Lack of shade for transit riders, seating materials that are too hot in the summer months, and unsafe pedestrian access all limit transportation choices.

### NEED FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND FRESH FOOD

In nearly every neighborhood, residents shared stories of the hardships associated with finding affordable housing and healthy food. These hardships involved inadequate income, poor delivery of social services, and the lack of fresh, healthy, and affordable food at nearby grocery stores. “Slumlords” or those property owners who do not maintain rental properties were cited by respondents for not repairing air conditioning in the harshest time of year, or not responding to bed bugs as well as other nuisances.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF PLANNING EXPANDS FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Traditionally, many themes that emerged through the research would not be considered place-based or planning issues per se, but the findings raise expectations for planners to be more attentive to

the needs of the most vulnerable members of the community. Lack of access to quality healthcare, mental health services, and crime and safety are impediments to creating walkable, transit-friendly communities that respond to social equity.

Collectively, these findings helped to inform the SNS regional planning process by highlighting experiences and perspectives that may have been difficult to capture through survey or GIS analysis alone. For instance, one report of Gibson Road finds that missing patches of sidewalk, ill-placed crosswalks, and inadequate bike lanes can make pedestrian and bike travel difficult and even dangerous. These and other discoveries have helped SNS planners identify day-to-day challenges facing Southern Nevada residents, as well as adjust aspects of the Regional Plan to address those challenges.

At the same time, the region has worked together on several transformational efforts in the past, including:

- CEDS, a complete reorganization of the State's economic development agencies/efforts and the first ever regional economic development strategy, created by the recently reorganized LVGEA.
- An internationally-lauded coordination and leadership on water conservation led by the SNWA.
- Creation of the Clark County Flood Control District.
- Development of the 215 Beltway.
- The RTC's ongoing success.

These examples demonstrate the region's ability to rise to action when the community understands a critical challenge and opportunity, and an impactful leadership group emerges to guide progress.

Southern Nevada Strong is the region's largest and most concerted effort to date that works together to address key issues of land use and planning, including transit access, housing choice, public health, economic competitiveness and education, public engagement and the

environment. The result is an ambitious Regional Plan that calls on Southern Nevada's local governments, along with their regional, state, and federal counterparts, to work hand-in-hand with the private and social sectors to achieve success. Such a plan and so many partners requires administration and implementation leadership from a regional governing body that has a track record of successfully stewarding complex, multi-jurisdictional efforts. Further, strengthening the relationship between transportation, land use and economic development is complementary to the RTC's role as the region's metropolitan planning organization.

To this end, the SNS Consortium Committee carefully considered what agency was best situated and most capable of administering and implementing the Regional Plan. In light of its historical and ongoing successes, the RTC was recommended by the Consortium Committee to be the core administrator of the Plan moving forward. The Consortium Committee advanced its recommendation to the SNRPC, which in turn voted in favor of the RTC's role as core administrator of the Regional Plan.

Serving as administrator and convener of the Regional Plan is a new role for the RTC, making it even more critical for the community to actively engage with and support the RTC.

Lastly, another specific barrier to achieving the vision is the lack of practical experience (ranging from basic understanding to proven technical expertise) in Plan-recommended areas of development, including mixed-use, transit oriented development, infill and adaptive reuse. This shortage of practical experience is further aggravated by underdevelopment in financial expertise and availability of alternative financing mechanisms (e.g. community development capital lending, tax credits, and similar).

Through conversations with local developers and lenders we learned this is primarily due to a historical lack in market opportunity and/or feasibility (perceived or actual). Developers also identified neither understanding the sorts of financing available nor the requirements of such finance, while lenders voiced concern about unproven product types and lack of developer experience with such product types. Southern Nevada Strong

resources and Consortium partners will need to continue to serve as a resource for regional and national lenders, local developers, and others to identify key barriers and possible actions to encourage Plan-recommended development in Southern Nevada.

### **No Dedicated and Consistent Funding for Implementation**

From covering operating costs to meeting the unique capital challenges of regional planning, implementing and sustaining the Regional Plan will require sufficient and stable financial and in-kind resources. Unfortunately, our community and state do not have an existing funding source for this sort of large-scale endeavor.

Regional planning efforts in states across the country have found support from myriad sources, often including public support via local governments and/or the state along with public grants. The amount and type of resources needed are largely predicated on the intensity of implementation efforts, with fewer resources needed if the initiatives are already operating and sufficiently equipped to absorb specific activities identified in the Regional Plan.

Here in Southern Nevada, especially given our resource-constrained environment, scaling up the RTC's ongoing efforts provides a good opportunity to create economies of scale. Many of the strategies in the Plan are not new, just new ways of doing old things that are already funded and operating.

Importantly, the Regional Plan does more than just require more resources – it actually positions Southern Nevada for significant increased federal investment in the areas of housing and transportation, healthy communities, environment, economic development, and education. Indeed, as a direct result of SNS our community can better identify, compete for, and secure federal funding that has long eluded our region.<sup>108</sup>

### Achieving the Vision Through Implementation

Since the way we use land profoundly influences how we live, work and play, **this document touches on many aspects of the region’s land-use planning.** The goals and policies included in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 will guide the design of the valley’s regulatory system, including the zoning code, rules governing the subdivision of land, the interaction of land use and transportation and economic development.

**The Plan also recommends strategies that should be pursued in the first few years following Plan adoption.** These strategies are found in the Implementation Matrix.

## 6.2 GOALS AND POLICY STRATEGIES

This section details the **goals, objectives and actions that will enhance Southern Nevada’s capability to implement the Regional Plan.**

- **Goals** are the big overarching ideas, changes, or practices that are essential to realize the community’s vision.
- **Objectives** establish specific, measurable goals that guide how the Plan is implemented in a way that will achieve the vision.
- **Strategies** outline the steps needed to achieve the objectives.

### Goal 1. Continue to expand public engagement and equitable access to community engagement.

#### Objective 1.1 Activate residents and business people in Southern Nevada Strong Regional Plan implementation.

- 1.1.1 Grow and mobilize a strong network of people in every sector to support implementation of the Regional Plan.
- 1.1.2 Connect people in every sector to actions they can take to support the policies and priorities in the Plan.
- 1.1.3 Ensure that policymakers hear from all sectors of the community as they implement Plan policies by actively reaching out to those who do not traditionally participate in civic affairs.
- 1.1.4 Incorporate grassroots activities into the strategies for activating residents.
- 1.1.5 Ensure that all demographic sectors are involved in outreach activities.
- 1.1.6 Explore employee engagement programs as a way to involve people in SNS.

**Objective 1.1**  
**Activate residents and business people in Southern Nevada Strong Regional Plan implementation.**

- 1.1.7 Reach out and interact with schools, including students, parents, PTA and others.
- 1.1.8 Utilize a variety of outreach methods that bring engagement opportunities to residents, rather than requiring residents to attend large public events.

*...continued*

**Objective 1.2**  
**Innovate and improve public-sector-led public engagement efforts.**

- 1.2.1 Develop and maintain partnerships with communities through formal and informal contact, including community leaders, established business groups, non profits and social service agencies.
- 1.2.2 Keep people informed about the progress of the Regional Plan implementation and the benefits accruing to the region (broadcast, print and web media).
- 1.2.3 Establish mechanisms to ensure community input is received as implementation strategies are executed and new ideas are created.
- 1.2.4 Develop and deploy a pool of community-based liaisons to facilitate regular two-way communication between the public and decision makers to ensure Plan implementation is having the desired effects on the ground.
- 1.2.5 Establish Southern Nevada Strong kiosks in central locations that help promote messaging and help people stay up to date; use surveys to keep the website dynamic.
- 1.2.6 Use more photographs to help illustrate development and planning examples.
- 1.2.7 Develop an education strategy to help improve community understanding of place types, placemaking and planning concepts (e.g., infill development).
- 1.2.8 Track and monitor commitments of Southern Nevada Strong team and partners to conduct engagement activities.
- 1.2.9 Emphasize implementation so that members see this as a Plan that will not just sit on the shelf.

**Objective 1.3**  
**Ensure Southern Nevada remains a welcoming place for people from diverse backgrounds, future generations and with varying degrees of mobility and independence.**

- 1.3.1 As a global community with residents and visitors from all over the world, continue to promote the region’s image as a welcoming place with a sense of pride and engagement in local decision making and for talent recruitment purposes.
- 1.3.2 Employ go-to-them public engagement methods to reach a diverse range of residents.
- 1.3.3 Tailor outreach and engagement methods based on what has worked well in the past, respecting the cultural, linguistic, temporal, and geographic preferences of a community, and the question, action or decision at hand.
- 1.3.4 Use online methods and interactive tools to facilitate convenient, time-efficient participation.
- 1.3.5 Foster a community “can do” spirit through events and activities.
- 1.3.6 Leverage bilingual community partners, volunteers and staff to provide information in target languages and to convey a genuine celebration of a multi-cultural and socially equitable future.
- 1.3.7 Support and connect existing committees working on the needs of people with disabilities to continue to conduct outreach and gather input on the needs of this target audience.
- 1.3.8 Focus on outreach methods that “reach people where they are.”
- 1.3.9 Develop eligibility criteria for regional implementation money that includes equity considerations.
- 1.3.10 Identify community leaders and champions who will promote the SNS Plan and its implementation.

**Objective 1.4**  
**Build understanding, expertise and leadership in community development.**

- 1.4.1 Seek community grants for grassroots community organizing efforts to advance Regional Plan implementation.
- 1.4.2 Provide training to help residents build their organizing capacity. For example, provide training on how to move from an informal group of concerned citizens to an organized group or association, community-based organization, neighborhood association or multi-hub social network.
- 1.4.3 Identify communities and organizations that are well-positioned to start, develop and grow community development corporations, organizations that focus on specific neighborhoods and often lead not-for-profit development efforts and provide affordable housing.
- 1.4.4 Support all those who are working on implementing the Plan with materials, resources and up-to-date information.
- 1.4.5 Consider providing small grants to neighborhood groups to support local implementation (e.g. community gardens).

**Objective 1.5**  
**Develop an on-going communications strategy to keep the public informed and to generate interest, enthusiasm and confidence in the Plan.**

- 1.5.1 Ensure consistency in communication is maintained by preserving the project name, branding, imagery and adhering to brand guidelines in order to demonstrate to the public continuity in the project and a commitment to implementation.
- 1.5.2 Develop relationships with key reporters and editors of local news outlets, including television, radio, newspaper, ethnic media, business press and online outlets.
- 1.5.3 Create media-worthy public events that promote Plan objectives and goals.
- 1.5.4 Create media opportunities for benchmark components and successful completion of specific Plan activities.
- 1.5.5 Involve key stakeholders and elected officials in all media opportunities.
- 1.5.6 Maintain proactive editorial calendar.
- 1.5.7 Coordinate editorial board meetings on Plan implementation and development.
- 1.5.8 Develop a network of supporters who will act as industry-specific experts and will speak to media and advocate to governmental and decision-making bodies on behalf of the Regional Plan.

**Goal 2. Work closely with member agencies and the RTC of Southern Nevada to prioritize regional planning and enhance collaboration.**

**Objective 2.1**  
**Identify great regional planning mentors.**

- 2.1.1 Identify peer exchange opportunities and build relationships with a 'kitchen cabinet' of successful regional planning organizations.
- 2.1.2 Send RTC and member agency staff to attend capacity building training, workshops, and national conferences to build collaboration within and outside the region.
- 2.1.3 Engage local, regional, state and national leaders to speak at events and share lessons learned and innovative approaches to regional plan implementation.

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**Objective 2.2**  
**Clarify RTC's priorities in the Regional Plan and align complementary efforts to raise awareness and understanding.**

- 2.2.1 Ensure RTC staff and Board members have the opportunity to prioritize key implementation activities.
- 2.2.2 Cultivate regional leaders and stakeholders to advocate for the Regional Plan concepts.
- 2.2.3 Dedicate staff time and resources to allow ongoing regional collaboration.

**Objective 2.3**  
**Transition staff, project structure and stakeholder roles for successful communication, decision making and implementation in relation to the Regional Plan.**

- 2.3.1 Continue to build support for the Regional Plan with the RTC Board and member agency elected officials.
- 2.3.2 Maintain project name, branding and brand guidelines to build on momentum and connect complementary efforts.
- 2.3.3 Identify additional stakeholders and project champions; develop new relationships and strengthen existing participation as the region transitions to implementation.
- 2.3.4 Convene regional partners from the public and private sectors on a regular basis to maintain support for implementation priorities and to share updates.
- 2.3.5 Determine appropriate communication and decision-making channels relating to the Plan’s implementation. For example, consider nominating an Implementation Advisory Committee to oversee implementation, drawing from or consolidating the existing Consortium Committee, Task Groups, and Working Group, and/or existing RTC stakeholder groups and committees.

**Objective 2.4**  
**Integrate administration of the Regional Plan and updates with existing RTC structure and efforts.**

- 2.4.1 Update the Regional Plan, at a minimum, every 10 years with attention to incorporating input from the public, RTC member agencies and stakeholders and other boards who may need to adopt the Plan as a legislative requirement, such as the SNRPC.
- 2.4.2 Provide access to the Regional Plan online and encourage member agencies and other partners to provide a link to the Plan on their respective websites.
- 2.4.3 Update the SNS indicators annually or semi-annually to measure progress toward the Regional Plan vision and goals.
- 2.4.4 Identify metrics or performance measures to align with goals for more precise monitoring as regional capacity and support for planning concepts continue to build.

**Objective 2.5**  
**Work with State legislators and UNLV to heighten the role of planning and communicate the benefits of working regionally.**

- 2.5.1 Pursue an accredited planning program at UNLV.
- 2.5.2 Continue to brief state legislators on regional implementation work.
- 2.5.3 Coordinate with local jurisdictions to explore state legislative initiatives that will remove obstacles and promote opportunities for implementation of the Regional Plan goals and objectives.

**Goal 3. Build experience and capacity in the Regional Plan concepts.**

**Objective 3.1**  
**Develop relationships with other regions to learn from their experience in regional plan implementation.**

- 3.1.1 Organize study tours with public and private sector leaders to other regions that have made strides in implementing their regional plans.
- 3.1.2 Attend national and regional conferences on topics introduced in the Plan; participate in formal and informal information sharing with model agencies.
- 3.1.3 Continue to share updates with local, regional and state agencies to align efforts and to achieve mutual priorities.

**Objective 3.2**  
**Build capacity of the RTC and jurisdictional planning staff through professional development.**

- 3.2.1 Augment staff, resources and expertise on regional planning.
- 3.2.2 Host capacity-building events regularly to maintain momentum and to continue to expose stakeholders to planning principles current research and best practices from other regions.
- 3.2.3 Work with existing professional organizations to educate their memberships on innovative practices from other regions.
- 3.2.4 Explore the concept of a fellowship program for planning professionals from other regions to work in Southern Nevada for a set period of time to encourage diversity of thought and ideas.

**Objective 3.3**  
**Increase demand for and familiarity with alternative financing sources among real estate developers to build Plan-recommended products.**

- 3.3.1 Connect developers, builders and finance institutions to financing options and Plan-recommended products.
- 3.3.2 Promote financing options through convenings, stakeholder meetings, and targeted industry marketing efforts.
- 3.3.3 Actively recruit developers with proven experience in other markets.
- 3.3.4 Host smaller, strategic networking events to connect developers and financing institutions through professional organizations or other networks.
- 3.3.5 Market strategic sites, such as the Opportunity Sites (Maryland Parkway Corridor, downtown North Las Vegas and Boulder Highway at Gibson/Broadbent), to developers, investors, financing institutions, neighbors and others to share the vision and desire to work collaboratively on redevelopment.

**Goal 4. Develop local funding strategies to implement items with fiscal impacts.**

**Objective 4.1**  
**Identify stable funding sources for Regional Plan staff.**

- 4.1.1 Work with local jurisdictions to identify the current jurisdiction-led activities that the RTC can shoulder and that the local jurisdictions can fund accordingly.
- 4.1.2 Identify existing activities in the Region that could be folded into Regional Plan implementation.

**Objective 4.2**  
**Cultivate understanding and support among constituents and voters for the Regional Plan.**

- 4.2.1 Continue to actively engage residents and business people in Plan implementation.
- 4.2.2 Share updates frequently on community engagement accomplishments and outcomes.

**Objective 4.3**  
**Develop funding sources for grants and matching dollars.**

- 4.3.1 Work with local partners to create funding sources for Opportunity Site evaluation.
- 4.3.2 Look for public-private partnership opportunities for Regional Plan implementation.

**Goal 5. Proactively seek external funding for Plan implementation.**

**Objective 5.1**  
**Enhance efforts to pursue private and federal funding to increase competitiveness with other states and regions.**

- 5.1.1 Pursue federal funding from the Smart Communities Initiative (SCI) partnership and reach out to other federal partners to determine how they can support implementation of the Regional Plan.
- 5.1.2 Work with organization such as the Brookings Institute and the Nevada Community Foundation to increase competitiveness for federal funding and prioritize grant seeking at all levels of government.
- 5.1.3 Increase coordination and data sharing with the Nevada State Grant Office, as well as designees at each local government.
- 5.1.4 Tie eligibility criteria for state and federal dollars to the ability for the potential project to meet Regional Plan objectives.
- 5.1.5 Enhance the accuracy, consistency, and timeliness of data reported to the federal government.
- 5.1.6 Work with community leaders to increase their understanding and support of the Regional Plan.
- 5.1.7 Dedicate staff time to grant seeking and grant writing to look for additional funding sources for Regional Plan implementation.

# Acronyms

<b>ADA</b>	American with Disabilities Act
<b>BRT</b>	Bus Rapid Transit
<b>CCSD</b>	Clark County School District
<b>CEDS</b>	Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
<b>CDSN</b>	Conservation District of Southern Nevada
<b>CHP</b>	Combined Heat and Power
<b>CIP</b>	Capital Improvement Program
<b>CLV</b>	City of Las Vegas
<b>CNT</b>	Center for Neighborhood Technology
<b>C-PACE</b>	Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy
<b>CPTED</b>	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
<b>DMV</b>	Department of Motor Vehicles
<b>EAH</b>	Employer Assisted Housing
<b>EPA</b>	United States Environmental Protection Agency
<b>FAR</b>	Floor Area Ratio
<b>HOA</b>	Homeowners Association
<b>HOV</b>	High Occupancy Vehicle
<b>HUD</b>	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
<b>IGT</b>	International Gaming Technologies
<b>LEED</b>	Leadership in Energy Efficient Design
<b>LQ</b>	Location Quotient
<b>LUST</b>	Leaking Underground Storage Tanks
<b>LVGEA</b>	Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance
<b>MPH</b>	Miles Per Hour
<b>MSA</b>	Metropolitan Statistical Area
<b>MSW</b>	Municipal Solid Waste
<b>NDEP</b>	Nevada Division of Environmental Protection
<b>PROWAG</b>	Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines
<b>PV</b>	Photovoltaic
<b>RAI</b>	Regional Analysis of Impediments
<b>RDA</b>	Redevelopment Authority
<b>RTC</b>	Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada
<b>RTP</b>	Regional Transportation Plan
<b>RTCA</b>	Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program
<b>SEER</b>	Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio
<b>SCI</b>	Smart Communities Initiative
<b>SNAP</b>	Supplemental Nutritional Program
<b>SNHD</b>	Southern Nevada Health District
<b>SNPLMA</b>	Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act
<b>SNRHA</b>	Southern Nevada Regional Housing Authority
<b>SNRPC</b>	Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition
<b>SNS</b>	Southern Nevada Strong
<b>SNWA</b>	Southern Nevada Water Authority
<b>TIP</b>	Transportation Improvement Program
<b>TOD</b>	Transit Oriented Development
<b>UNLV</b>	University of Nevada, Las Vegas
<b>USDA</b>	U.S. Department of Agriculture
<b>VOC</b>	Volatile Organic Compound

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