Southern Nevada Strong Underutilized Lands Inventory:

Technical Methodology Report

2025

Acknowledgments

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[1] Inventory progress was presented at SNS Steering Committee and RTC Board meetings, allowing contributions from the general public.

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Executive Summary

Context

In 2015, Southern Nevada leaders and community members came together to co-develop the Southern Nevada Strong (SNS) Regional Plan to guide how our region should grow in the future. The plan seeks to reinvest in existing neighborhoods and build new communities that bring more opportunities and higher quality of life for everyone by providing access to more transportation options, more attainable housing units, and more high-paying jobs. RTC, as administrator of SNS, is preparing the new Southern Nevada Strong 2050 Plan, which will study existing gaps and opportunities to describe future pathways to achieve our community's goals.

> **"Conducting a land inventory…is an important process in understanding whether land is being used at its highest and best use. Land inventories are an important tool for providing a detailed understanding of land use patterns and identifying underutilized properties for future development or conservation. Such inventories, if the land were to be redeveloped, could support economic development by creating new opportunities for economic growth."[2]**
>
> **-Smart Growth America**

To support the new Plan, RTC commissioned a comprehensive Underutilized Lands Inventory (ULI) to identify vacant and underutilized parcels in urbanized Clark County (Las Vegas Valley, Boulder City, and Mesquite). Developed by ECOnorthwest with funding and guidance from RTC staff as well as stakeholder input, the ULI aims to promote and highlight potential opportunities for addressing critical housing and employment needs through infill development.

The inventory can be used to decide how we will grow to meet our needs and the needs of the 800,000 new residents we expect over the next 25 years. How we grow matters – Clark County currently estimates a shortage of 78,000 affordable homes for renters who earn less than $20 an hour.[3] It is also tough for people who want to buy a home. According to Zillow, Southern Nevada residents needed to make $54,000 a year to afford a typical mortgage in 2020. In 2024, people needed to make almost $120,000 to do the same.[4]

Inclusion of a site on the Inventory does not indicate that a site will be developed or redeveloped, or that any government entity will be required to develop or redevelop. Rather, inclusion indicates that a site may have unrealized potential to contribute housing and/or economic development capacity based on a parcel's surrounding context and a region-wide analysis. Inclusion was based on publicly available data and regional priorities outlined in

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[2] https://smartgrowthamerica.org/economic-diversification-roadmap-land-inventories-and-leveraging-underutilized-parcels/

[3] https://www.clarkcountynv.gov/residents/assistance_programs/affordable_housing_help.php

[4] https://zillow.mediaroom.com/2024-02-29-Home-buyers-need-to-earn-47,000-more-than-in-2020

the SNS Regional Plan as adopted by local governments, and discussions with stakeholders about findings in the publicly available data throughout the development process of the ULI.

Methodology

The ULI was developed through a series of meetings with regional stakeholders representing government agencies, non-profit organizations, utilities, and real estate groups. These meetings were instrumental in engaging the community leaders in the methodological process and informing key components of the analysis.

Through this collaborative effort, ECOnorthwest and RTC established a methodological framework that defined thresholds for identifying vacant and underutilized (i.e., partially vacant or developed) land. A composite index model was then employed, scoring individual parcels based on various underutilization factors. These scores were weighted based on stakeholder priorities and combined to generate a final rank for each parcel, ranging from low to high underutilization.

The underutilization factors are listed below:

- Job and Population Density
- Developed Share of Land
- Economic Development Areas
- Matched Planned Land Use Type
- Access to High-Frequency Transit
- CDC Social Vulnerability Index
  Walk Score

Results

A total of 31,650 tax lots[5], encompassing 78,285 acres, were identified as vacant or underutilized land. Of this land, approximately 85% (69,300 acres) was classified as vacant, while the remaining 15% was deemed underutilized. Over 10,000 acres received medium or high rankings.

The majority of medium to high and highly underutilized land was concentrated in dense, highly urbanized areas, primarily within the Cities of Las Vegas, Henderson, North Las Vegas, and unincorporated Clark County.

> ➢ **Key Findings**
>   - ○ **78,285 acres of vacant and underutilized land.**
>   - ○ **10,154 acres of land were found to be either medium or highly underutilized using stakeholders' ranking criteria.**

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[5] A tax lot is a piece of land, such as a parcel or lot, that a County assessor creates to collect and manage taxes.

Maps illustrating the distribution of vacant and underutilized land are shown in Exhibit 1, while Exhibit 2 presents the same land categorized by underutilization rank. A more in-depth breakdown of the distribution of land per jurisdiction is included in Chapter 4.

Intended Uses and Audiences

The Inventory will be used to study and compare the different ways our region may grow through scenario planning, a software tool that will yield information about the regional outcomes we can expect from a range of policy decisions looking 25 years into the future. As such, the primary audiences of this report are local government professionals and decision makers who are tasked with advancing and assessing housing and economic development policy to promote community well-being. Report findings are also available to advocacy groups and the general public given their continued contributions to the SNS Plan and the use of public funds for regional planning activities.

The map presented in Exhibit 1 below depicts both vacant and underutilized parcels in the Las Vegas Valley, Mesquite, and Boulder City. The map presented in Exhibit 2 depicts the same parcels ranked by degree of potential underutilization based on stakeholder input. Most of the highly underutilized parcels are located in and around the region's downtowns, where there are currently more jobs and homes.

Exhibit 1. Map of Vacant and Underutilized Tax Lots
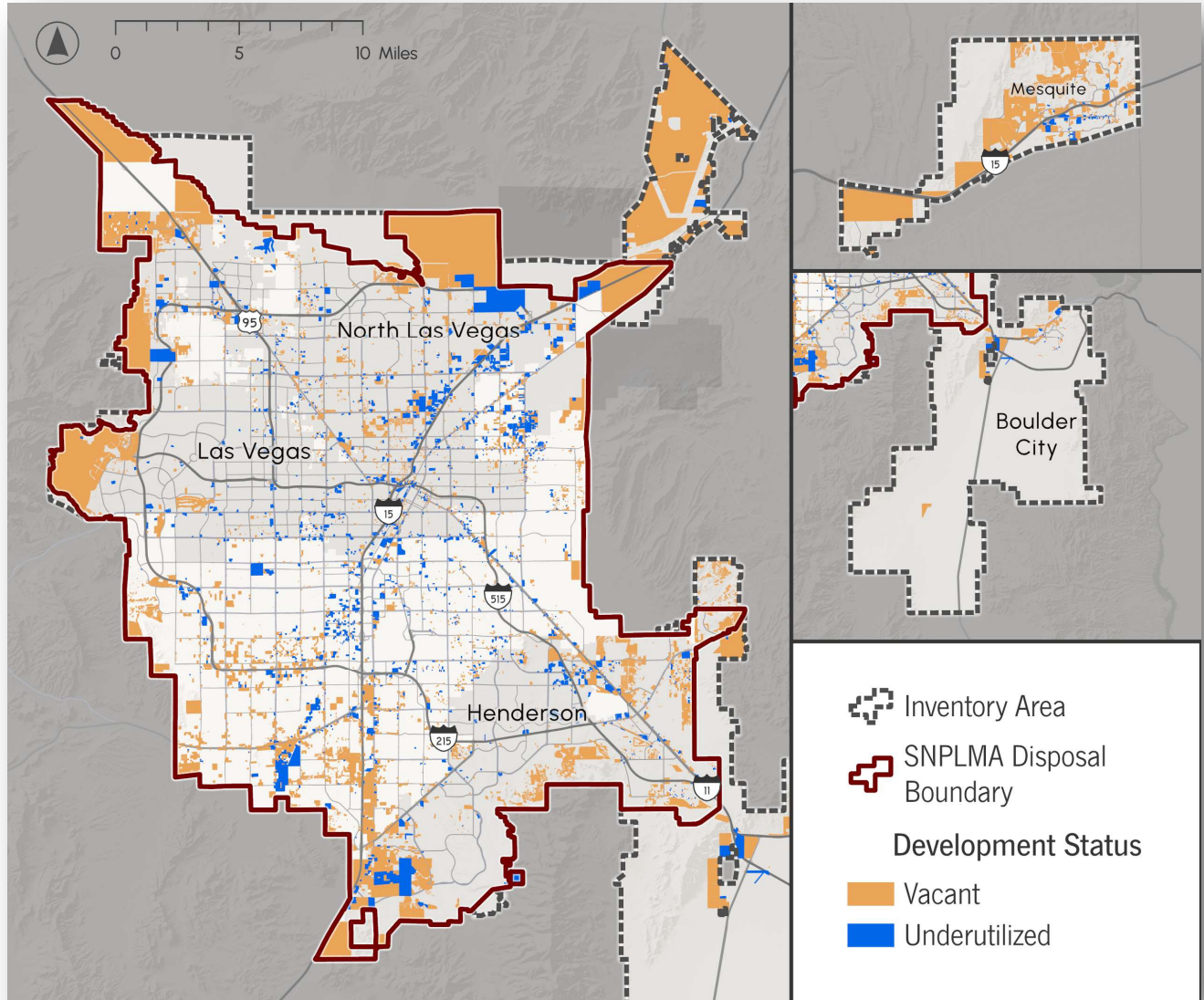
Exhibit 2. Map of Ranked Tax Lots
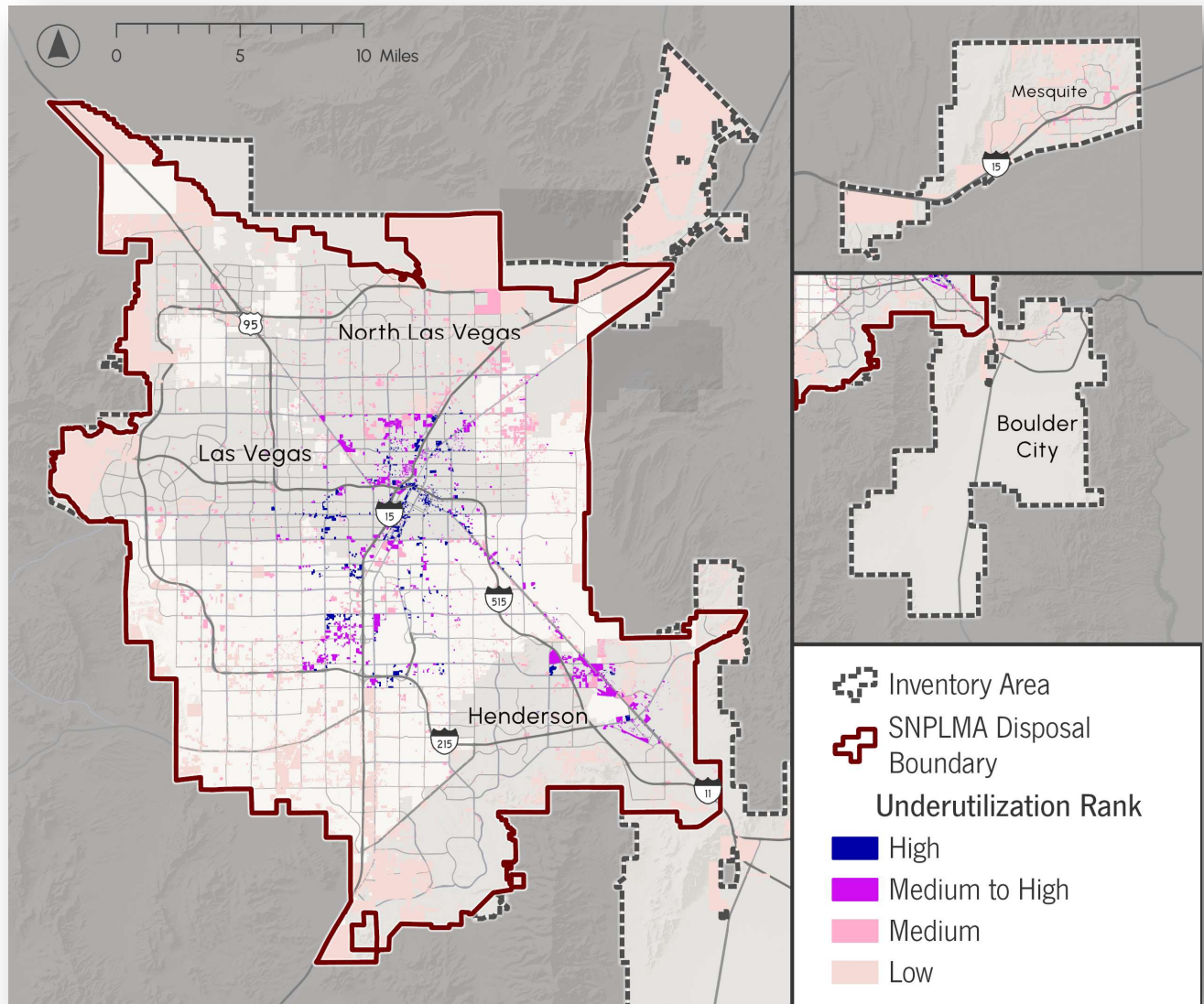
Report Overview

The primary aims of this report are to document the methodological and technical foundations of the ULI, provide policy context, summarize the Inventory development process, and share findings.

- **Chapter 1** introduces the Southern Nevada Strong effort, the new 2050 Plan, and the purpose of the Underutilized Lands Inventory in the regional planning context.

- **Chapter 2** summarizes the stakeholder meetings held during the summer and early fall of 2024.

- **Chapter 3** provides a comprehensive overview of the inventory methodology.

- **Chapter 4** presents a detailed analysis of the final inventory results, including regional and focus area maps.
- **Chapter 5** outlines several concerns outlined by real estate developers regarding infill development and how the SNS 2050 will discuss these and other concerns.

Additionally, Appendix A reviews land inventories of peer communities for guidance on best practices. Appendix B includes finalized maps of specific priority areas used in stakeholder meetings to illustrate the methodology and draft results at a micro level, while Appendix C provides an overview of the data and data sources utilized.

1. Introduction

SOUTHERN NEVADA STRONG REGIONAL PLAN OVERVIEW

In 2015, the Southern Nevada Strong Regional Planning Coalition (SNRPC) adopted the *Southern Nevada Strong Regional Plan*[6] as a strategic framework for guiding the region's growth. Plan development was led by the City of Henderson with funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). RTC administers SNS with guidance from the SNS Steering Committee, a group of 13 regional partners and community organizations that meet quarterly. Through more than 70,000 interactions with community members, SNS provided a unified vision for equitable and sustainable development that focuses on creating vibrant communities with easier access to housing, employment, and transportation. It places particular emphasis on reinvesting in existing neighborhoods, fostering the development of new inclusive communities, and enhancing regional mobility options, such as public transit, cycling, and walking, to promote economic development and improve traffic congestion management. At its core, the SNS plan aims to attract higher-paying jobs, promote attainable housing, and improve transportation options.

The plan established four main focus areas:

- **Improve economic competitiveness and education**
- **Increase transportation choice**
- **Investment in complete communities**
- **Build capacity for implementation**

As part of an ongoing effort to refine and update the vision for the region, RTC and ECOnorthwest will develop the new Southern Nevada Strong 2050 Plan (SNS 2050). The updated plan will span a 25-year horizon and will focus on several key objectives:

- **Re-engaging the Community:** Strengthening public involvement and education about regional planning processes, ensuring broad community input into future decision-making.

- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Analyzing the potential impacts of infrastructure and development decisions, helping stakeholders understand the trade-offs, and make data and evidence-based choices for the region's future.

- **Integrating Land Use and Transportation:** Aligning land use strategies with transportation planning and ensuring that local and regional plans are coordinated to support long-term growth and mobility needs.

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[6] https://www.southernnevadastrong.org/plan/

SNS 2050 will utilize a planning approach that includes community engagement, data analysis, and scenario planning to refine the vision for Southern Nevada's future. By developing a parcel-based actionable plan, the update will address key priorities, such as accommodating projected population growth, enhancing climate resiliency, and advancing fair outcomes to improve the overall quality of life of all Southern Nevadans.

UNDERUTILIZED LANDS INVENTORY

In preparation for SNS 2050, RTC sought the development of a comprehensive Underutilized Lands Inventory (ULI) for the Southern Nevada region with direction from the SNS Steering Committee, focusing on identifying vacant and underutilized parcels within the urbanized areas of Clark County. The Inventory is aligned with the following Southern Nevada Strong Regional Plan recommendations:

- ◆ **Objective 2.1:** Develop strategies and make targeted investments to encourage infill redevelopment and property rehabilitation.
- ◆ **Strategy 1.2.1:** Conduct and publicize a regional inventory of available commercial and industrial land and facilities.

The goal of this Inventory is to create a regional map that highlights these parcels as potential opportunities for addressing the housing and employment needs of the region's growing population, while also engaging a group of local stakeholders, including local jurisdictions, non-profits, and private organizations, to describe and rank parcels based on information available to the general public. This collaborative approach aims to inform SNS 2050 and reduce barriers to infill development, charting the path for more sustainable growth in Southern Nevada.

Development of the Underutilized Lands Inventory began in the summer of 2024. The methodology was developed through a collaborative process that included research into comparable inventories from other regions and an evaluation of available, high-quality data. The effort was further informed by a series of stakeholder meetings to develop a regional definition of underutilized land that was customizable based on local and neighborhood context. Parcels within the study area were analyzed using individual metrics, and a composite index analysis co-established by stakeholders and the Project Team was conducted to assign each parcel a weighted score. These scores were then used to rank parcels by their degree of underutilization. The project culminated in the creation of a parcel-level map, providing a comprehensive visual representation of underutilized lands across the region.

2. Stakeholder Engagement

The inventory was developed at the request of SNS Steering Committee members, who co-determined and approved the scope of the project in April 2023. RTC and ECOnorthwest co-hosted three stakeholder meetings with technical and policy experts during the Summer and Fall of 2024, which included several Committee members with land use and economic development expertise and other local professionals. These meetings brought together a diverse group of participants, including county and municipal officials, energy sector and public lands representatives, as well as real estate developers. Each meeting was designed to foster regional collaboration by identifying shared priorities. The first two sessions were held in person in Las Vegas, while the third took place remotely via Zoom.

Separate one-on-one meetings were held with each jurisdiction with the objective of providing them a tutorial to interactive maps made for their use, which gave staff the ability to provide direct feedback at the parcel level regarding lots that may have an incorrect development status. The meetings were also crucial for more in-depth discussions to gain jurisdiction-specific input regarding the inventory and meet their requests of the composite index model.

This chapter provides a concise summary of the key activities and takeaways from these meetings.

OVERVIEW OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

Each larger stakeholder meeting represented the three stages of the ULI development process:

Meeting #1: Kickoff and Initial Feedback

ECOnorthwest and RTC gathered stakeholder input on what the inventory should include, guiding principles, and potential elements to define potentially "underutilized" land based on the regional context. The group discussion identified shared priorities among stakeholders and was foundational to the development of the inventory's methodology. Importantly, the first meeting also determined the geographic boundaries of the study, opting for including land that was within growth boundaries only to ensure consistency with existing law.

Meeting #2: Methodology and Draft Review

The second meeting marked a critical check-in with stakeholders. By this stage, ECOnorthwest had developed a preliminary methodology framework, including definitions for vacant and underutilized (i.e. partially vacant) lands and a composite index model to rank the degree of underutilization based on the priorities discussed in the first meeting. Draft maps were presented for three focus areas suggested by stakeholders: Chinatown, Meadows

Mall, and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). These maps displayed vacant parcels scored and ranked based on the evolving framework. Stakeholders also reviewed tables showing the distribution of tax lots and acreage by underutilization rank. Two interactive polls followed: one asked participants to rank the proposed index factors in order of priority, and the other allowed them to suggest additional factors for consideration.

Meeting #3: Near-Final Review

One-on-one meetings with local jurisdictions took place between the second and third meeting. By the time the technical and policy experts reconvened in a group setting, all feedback had been incorporated, and the composite index model was complete. ECOnorthwest presented a near-final regional map showing tax lots by development status and underutilization rank, along with updates for the original three focus areas and five additional ones. Updated tables detailed the distribution of tax lots and acreage by rank and jurisdiction. The meeting was then bookended by discussion of the prospects of interactive mapping and long-term maintenance of the inventory.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT AND PRIORITIES

Early discussions helped establish the guiding principles for the inventory, which aimed to:

- ◆ Align with the existing work of jurisdictions.
- ◆ Be consistent with other regional methods and forecasting.
- ◆ Advocate for fairness through both process and outcomes.
- ◆ Focus on long-term regional success.

Stakeholders expressed a desire for the inventory to emphasize housing Southern Nevada residents can attain, optimize the use of existing buildings, enhance community amenities, and improve access to existing infrastructure. They also hoped the inventory would align with other initiatives, such as the City of Las Vegas Master Plan and state legislative efforts. Key opportunities for subsequent policy discussion included regional guidance on zoning to enable desired uses, framing development incentives, and targeting specific geographies and industries. Stakeholders also noted that any future opportunities would be discussed through public-private partnerships, and that building the capacity of local developers and lenders to capitalize on any new opportunities was critical.

When asked specifically about goals of the inventory, stakeholders said that it should be:

- ◆ Data and market-informed,
- ◆ Transparent about data sources and methodology,
- ◆ Aligned with the Southern Nevada Strong vision,
- ◆ Helpful in addressing challenges with U.S. Bureau of Land Management-owned land
- ◆ Aligned with local jurisdiction priorities,

- Consistent with regional forecasting methods,
- An advocacy tool for fair community outcomes across the region, and
- Centered on long-term regional success.

In later discussions, stakeholders provided additional feedback, including that the inventory should:

- Allow for a case-by-case inclusion of government-owned land,
- Account for both zoning and land use, and
- Prioritize redevelopment areas.

When asked to rank the proposed methodological scoring factors by importance, stakeholders consistently prioritized job and population density as the top factor for ranking parcels in the ULI composite index. This would allow the region to categorize parcels based on the surrounding area's potential ability to support new growth. This was followed by the share of vacant land nearby, and their location within an economic opportunity area as determined by local jurisdictions, such as a redevelopment area. The full results of this poll are shown in Exhibit 3. Chapter 2 details how this feedback was incorporated in the inventory.

Exhibit 3. Rank Choice Voting Results on Underutilization Factor Weighting Prioritization
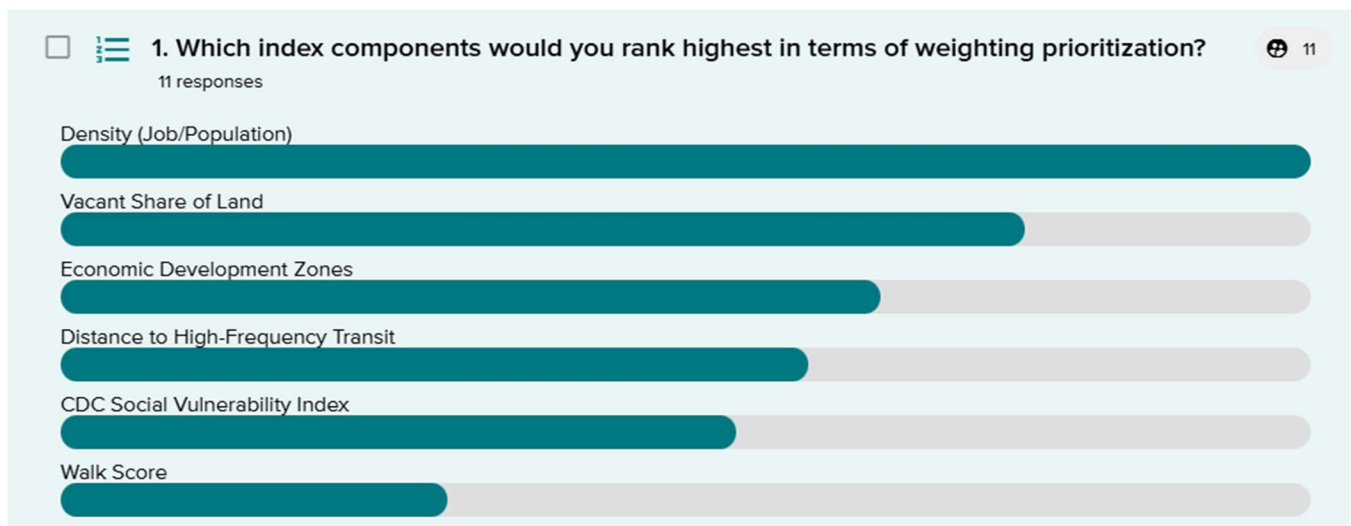
Lastly, stakeholders participated in an open-response poll to suggest additional underutilization factors that were not accounted for in the proposed composite index model. As shown in Exhibit 4, the most frequently suggested factor, by a significant margin, was the incorporation of land use, which was ultimately integrated into the final model.

Exhibit 4. Open Response Polling on Additional Underutilization Factors to Include

2. What additional components should be considered for inclusion into the component index model?

11 responses

land use	6
use type	2
communication	1
utility access	1
...	

TARGETED DISCUSSIONS WITH ALL JURISDICTIONS

In addition to the general stakeholder meetings, ECOnorthwest and RTC conducted one-on-one remote meetings with staff from Clark County and the cities of Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, Mesquite, Henderson, and Boulder City. The primary purpose of these meetings was to provide tutorials on jurisdiction-specific maps, allowing staff to offer parcel-level feedback. This process enabled jurisdictions to identify vacant city- or county-owned tax lots that could be made available for development or redevelopment. A secondary goal was to leverage local expertise, as staff could offer insights based on their on-the-ground knowledge, improving the overall accuracy of the inventory.

These meetings also facilitated focused discussions and generated additional feedback. Topics included the prioritization of redevelopment areas, assumptions related to Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land, site-specific focus areas, and potential interactive map features for future collaborations between ECOnorthwest and RTC.

3. Methodology

For the Southern Nevada Underutilized Lands Inventory, ECOnorthwest adopted a framework similar to that of Orange County, FL (see Appendix A), utilizing a composite index to evaluate underutilization. Using ArcGIS Pro software, tax lots included in the inventory were scored based on individual underutilization factors. These scores were then weighted and combined to produce a composite score, which classified parcels into one of four underutilization rank tiers.

To first establish the methodological framework, key analytical questions regarding definitions, thresholds, and criteria needed to be addressed. These included:

- Which tax lots should be initially included in the inventory "land base," and how to differentiate between employment and residential lots.

- What criteria to use for filtering the selected parcels

- How to define vacant and underutilized development statuses

- How to handle vacant tax lots that individually fall below the size threshold but, when aggregated with other nearby vacant lots, meet the threshold for inclusion

- Which utilization factors to include and how to define their analytical parameters

- How to score, weight, and combine individual factor scores to produce a final underutilization rank

This chapter provides a detailed overview of how the considerations above were addressed and describes the methodology driving the inventory analysis process, from defining key terms to the final composite index scoring. This chapter is organized into four distinct phases:

1. **Data Preparation and Processing**

2. **Establishment of Land Bases and Use of Zoning**

3. **Parcel Elimination Criteria**

4. **Development Status Classifications**

5. **Composite Index Model**

DATA PREPARATION AND PROCESSING

Tax Lot Processing

ECOnorthwest utilized the most up-to-date GIS tax lot layer, incorporating current-year Clark County Assessor data. Minimal cleaning was required, as the source data was well-organized. Key fields used in the analysis included tax lot IDs, owner names, real market land and improvement values, and statewide land use classes. Right-of-way polygons, such as roadways, were flagged with a Boolean value (0 for false, 1 for true)[7] to facilitate easy filtering out of the inventory analysis. Overlapping parcels were checked, and while minimal, were reconciled where necessary.

A consistent method throughout the inventory methodology was spatially joining various "flags" using the aforementioned Boolean values or other fields from different GIS layers to the tax lots, based on whether a tax lot was contained within the relevant boundary (1) or outside (0). Layers used in this process included the inventory boundary, zoning and land use layers, BLM land, parks, composite index factors, and others. This GIS tax lot layer formed the foundation of the inventory and served as the basis for all subsequent analyses.

Inventory Boundary

The first step in a land inventory analysis is to establish the "land base," which identifies the types of land and corresponding tax lots to be included in the analysis. The inventory boundary aggregated the jurisdictional boundaries of the five municipalities—Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, Henderson, Mesquite, and Boulder City—along with the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) Disposal Area Boundary, which serves as the region's urban growth boundary.

The boundary was assigned a flag of 1 and spatially joined to the tax lots, enabling easy exclusion of parcels located outside the inventory area. Tax lots were also joined with the corresponding jurisdiction names for further analysis with each jurisdiction including parcels outside of the SNPLMA boundary that were privately-owned, further supporting the stakeholders' shared goal of ensuring that the inventory was helpful in addressing challenges with BLM-owned land.

The inventory boundary and its relationship to the SNPLMA growth boundary is illustrated in Exhibit 5.

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[7] The Boolean is a data type that has one of two possible values (like a yes or no answer to a question), simplifying categorization and removal of data that is unwanted. In this context, the use of Boolean values made it easy to remove lots that were part of the right-of-way, were outside of the inventory area boundary, or were flagged by either the Project Team or the engaged experts for either inclusion or exclusion.

Exhibit 5. SNS Underutilized Lands Inventory Area Boundary
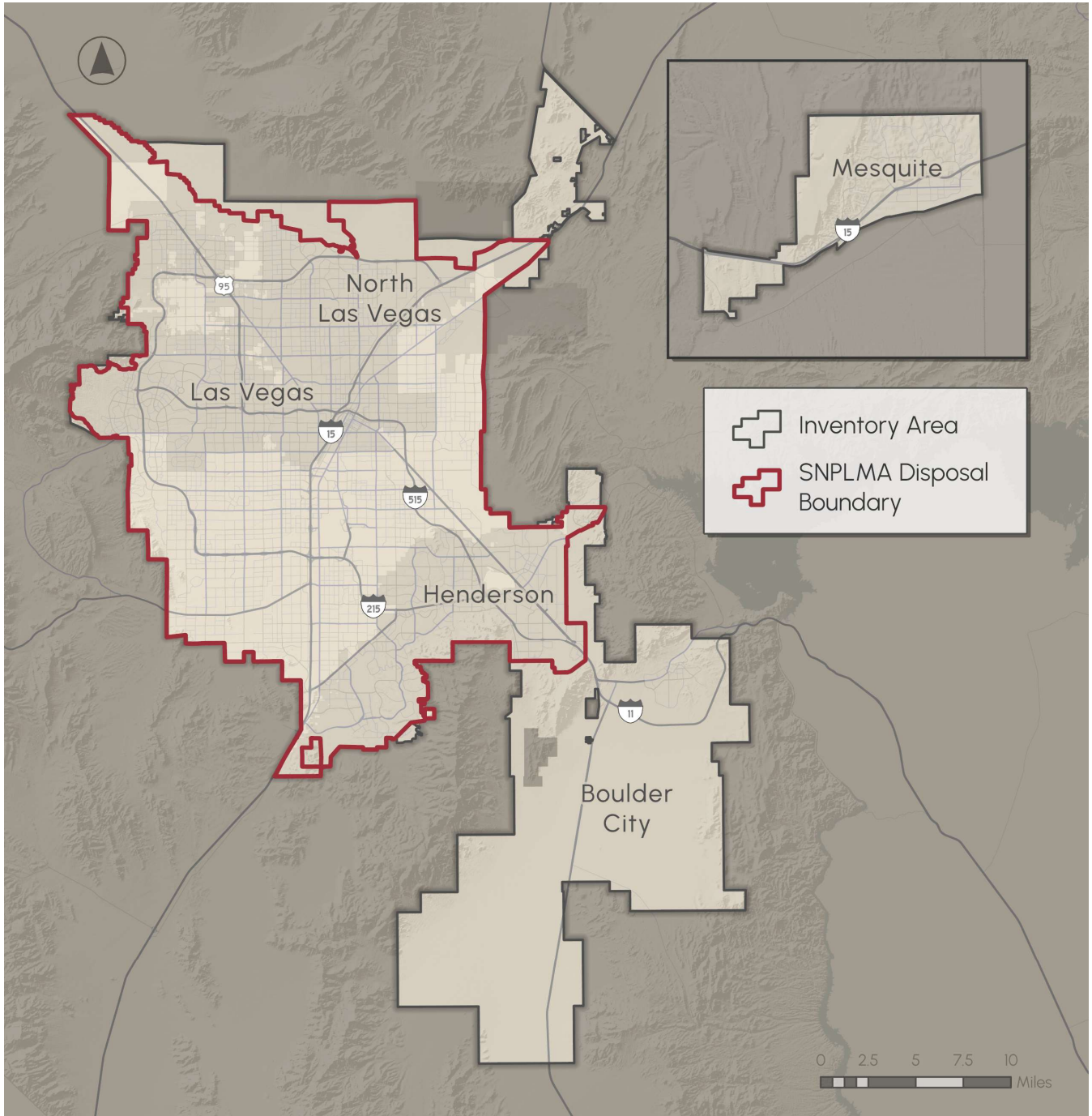
Zoning and Land Use Data

The project team utilized zoning data from the five municipal jurisdictions and Clark County to determine whether a parcel was classified as commercial, residential, or mixed use. The datasets were merged and standardized to ensure consistency across all six sources, including a review of each jurisdiction's zoning ordinance keeping in mind the shared goals of promoting housing and economic development at a regional scale. Each zoning type was flagged with a Boolean value to ensure inclusion of parcels with residential and employment

zoning designations and the removal of all others. This data was spatially joined with the tax lot data.

Planned land use designations, used as a composite index scoring factor following stakeholder feedback, underwent a similar cleaning process. For both zoning and planned land use data, overlapping municipal and County designations were reconciled by prioritizing municipal designations. No municipalities had overlapping zoning designations.

With zoning and planned land use layers joined to the tax lots, some significantly large lots were split by multiple zoning designations. To address this, tax lots were intersected by the merged zoning layer and flagged for manual review. These flagged lots were assessed by size to determine whether they should be split, with unique identifiers assigned to each resulting part, or whether the split was minimal enough to assign the zoning designation corresponding to the tax lot's centroid. In contrast, planned land use designations were not controlled for split zoning and were assigned to tax lots based solely on their centroid.

Other Data Layers

Additional layers that were cleaned and joined to the tax lot data include:

- Airports
- Buildable Land Management Visual Resource Inventory
- Building Footprints
- Cemeteries
- Composite Index Scoring Factors
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 100-Year Floodplain
- Federal, State, County, and Municipal Parks
- Hard Rural Preservation Areas
- Tribal Reservations

Data sources for these and other layers are detailed in Appendix C.

ESTABLISHMENT OF LAND BASES AND USE OF ZONING

Employment vs. Residential Land Bases

In many regions, such as in Oregon, land inventories typically focus on either residential purposes or employment (i.e., commercial, industrial, and mixed-use), each with distinct analytical and policy objectives. However, Southern Nevada's ULI diverges from this dichotomy due to the multi-purpose goals adopted in the SNS Regional Plan, which include fostering community development, improving access to employment, and supporting attainable housing. Treating residential and employment-focused tax lots the same way—

despite their differing zoning or land use designations—would fail to account for the unique conditions required for each type of development, such as varying site size requirements, physical constraints, and differing factors of desirability.

To address the differences between employment and residential land, methodology initially created two separate land inventories based on a tax lot's zoning designation, with both inventories concurrently analyzed using the same basic methodological framework, however with certain tailored adjustments for each type. In the final step, the two inventories were merged, with overlapping tax lots integrated and depicted according to their final underutilization rank using a hierarchical decision structure.

To determine which tax lots could be categorized as one—or both—of the inventory types, extensive research was conducted into the municipal codes of the five cities and Clark County. Where zoning designation ordinances provided clear and objective standards for permitted use types, each designation was flagged as employment, residential, or mixed use. Certain zoning designations were deemed unsuitable for either residential or employment development, those generally being government-use or open land zones. Additional clarity on permitted use types was provided by local jurisdiction staff during one-on-one reviews of the interactive maps developed for their feedback.

With added clarity and research on zoning types categorized by uses relevant to the goals of the inventory, the zoning data and corresponding flags were spatially joined to the tax lots, finalizing the land base for employment and residential uses. The final land base combined both.

Use of Zoning in Establishing Land Base

Some stakeholders engaged in the development process noted a preference for categorizing land based on planned uses as opposed to zoning. Although similar, zoning and planned land use differ in that zoning governs and regulates the types of uses currently allowed to be on a site while land use describes the preferred use in the future. The decision to categorize land by zoning was based on several considerations:

1. **Snapshot for Scenario Planning:** The inventory is intended to serve as a snapshot of present time's land consumption patterns to facilitate scenario planning, rather than a tool to allocate or designate land for housing or employment needs.

2. **Precision in Density Requirements:** Zoning provides greater accuracy in determining current density requirements, which encourages broader understanding and discussion of potential policy gaps and opportunities and studying their impacts in scenario planning.

3. **Clear and Objective Use Standards:** Jurisdiction ordinances typically provide clearer and more detailed definitions of permitted uses under zoning designations, whereas comprehensive plans can sometimes be vague or difficult to find. As a best practice, ECOnorthwest prioritizes the inclusion of land based on clear and objective standards regarding permitted use types outlined in ordinances.

4. **Alignment with Comparison Analysis:** Zoning was a foundational criterion for land inclusion in the University of Denver's Buildable Lands Analysis, the City of Portland's BLI, and Orange County, Florida's plan update, further supporting its use as a best practice in this ULI.

PARCEL ELIMINATION CRITERIA

With the land bases established, it was necessary to filter out tax lots that, while located in zoning ostensibly permitting their use type, were otherwise undevelopable for various reasons and needed to be automatically excluded regardless of its potential vacancy status. At a high-level view, these criteria fell into the general categories of physical constraints and unconstrained site size, as well as property and use types.

Physical Constraints and Unconstrained Site Size

Different development considerations for employment and residential land necessitated the splitting of the larger inventory into two separate inventories. These considerations were operationalized as the following filters:

1. **Physical Constraints:** Residential properties, specifically single-family homes, are generally easier to build on steeper slopes, while employment properties, such as industrial and warehouse sites, may require flat terrain. The following constraints were deducted from the total tax lot area:

   ➢ **FEMA 100-Year Floodplains**: Deducted equally from both land inventories

   ➢ **Steep Slopes:** 15% or greater deducted from employment lands; 25% from residential lands

2. **Site Size:** Residential development, at minimum for single-family homes, typically requires smaller lots, often with a minimum size of 5,000 sq. ft. In contrast, commercial and industrial properties typically demand larger parcels. To reflect this, ECOnorthwest presented the following minimum unconstrained size thresholds for discussion at stakeholder meetings. These site sizes were determined through an iterative process of testing values and reviewing resulting parcels alongside stakeholders, as well as best practices from comparison regions and ECOnorthwest's best practices used in similar inventories:

   ➢ **5,000 sq. ft.** for residential land

   ➢ **½ acre** for employment land

Property and Use Types

Using the state land use code and owner name fields found in the Clark County Assessor's roll, as well as GIS layers for parks, tribal reservations, and more, allowed for additional filtering criteria to exclude parcels from the inventory if they were within:

- Golf Courses Government-owned Land Government-owned Land Government-owned Land
- Government-owned Land
- Hard Rural Preservation Areas (HRPA)
- Manufactured Homes
- Parks
- Residential, Commercial, and Industrial Common and Auxiliary Areas
- Right-of-way and Rail Lines
- Tribal Reservations
- Utility Properties
- Las Vegas Speedway

While tax lots meeting the above property use criteria were all equally excluded initially, through discussions with stakeholders and jurisdictions, exceptions were made for other rural preservation areas and jurisdiction-owned land on a case-by-case basis.

Government-owned land was of particular importance. While the inventory initially removed all government-owned property, some local jurisdictions identified specific tax lots they owned as being vacant and potentially developable and requested their inclusion, while almost all local government-owned properties in other jurisdictions remained excluded.

BLM-owned land was also an exception to exclusion based on government ownership. Land owned by BLM was determined by identifying tax lots owned by the Federal Government based on Assessor data and falling within the BLM Visual Land Inventory. Where BLM land resided within the SNPLMA boundary, it was included in both employment and residential inventories. BLM outside the SNPLMA boundary but within the inventory boundary remained excluded.

DEVELOPMENT STATUS CLASSIFICATIONS

Tax lots in the final inventory were assigned one of four development status classifications based on specific assessor data attributes and elimination criteria:

Development Status Criteria

Tax lots that were included in the final inventory were classified as one of the following four development statuses based on publicly accessible data and additional feedback provided by stakeholders:

- Vacant
- Underutilized
- Excluded

♦ Developed

Vacant land includes tax lots that exceed the unconstrained site size threshold for their respective inventory type and have a statewide land use code indicating vacant use.

Underutilized land includes tax lots that meet both improvement-to-land ratio and site coverage area thresholds. These thresholds depend on the inventory type and both thresholds must be met for a tax lot to qualify as potentially underutilized in the regional context. The thresholds are defined as follows:

♦ Employment tax lots:

➢ Improvement-to-land ratio of 0.85 or less, meaning that the value of the land is higher than the value of the improvements made on the lot. Specifically, the improvements must be worth 85% of the land value or less.

➢ Site coverage of 40% or less, meaning that buildings or structures on the lot occupy 40% of the total land or less.

♦ Residential tax lots:

➢ Improvement-to-land ratio of 0.5 or less, meaning that the value of the land is higher than the value of the improvements made on the lot. Specifically, the improvements must be worth 50% of the land value or less.

➢ Site coverage of 50% or less, meaning that buildings or structures on the lot occupy half of the total land or less.

The thresholds for identifying underutilized land were developed through an iterative and collaborative analytical process. This involved testing various thresholds and reviewing the resulting tax lots that were classified as underutilized, with the goal of balancing the exclusion of lots with no obvious development potential and the inclusion of those that may have viable potential.

Excluded land includes tax lots that were eliminated due to their association with the property and use types specified in the elimination criteria.

Developed land includes tax lots that were not given a development status of vacant, underutilized, or excluded. This classification includes lots that failed to meet size thresholds for vacancy analysis and were simultaneously linked to the property and use type elimination criteria.

Small, Adjacent Tax Lots with Common Ownership

In addition to the stakeholder goals and values discussed in Chapter 2, engagement in the project scoping process led by RTC highlighted a need to consider small lots located next to each other. Indeed, many tax lots with a statewide land use code indicating vacancy were too small to meet the size thresholds individually, but when combined with other similarly sized lots represented a significant amount of land. For the purposes of the inventory, the

project team grouped small and vacant tax lots that were next to each other and had the same landowner. Once they were merged, the grouped lots were evaluated against the unconstrained site size thresholds and included if they collectively met all the pre-established criteria. These aggregated areas were not analyzed for partial vacancy, however.

Development Status Review

Due to the sheer volume of land included in the inventory land base initially classified as vacant or underutilized, accuracy could not be adequately verified based on the initial analysis alone. Contributing factors included recently developed land with outdated statewide land use codes and underutilized lots where, despite meeting site coverage thresholds, the location of existing structures or buildings within the site might make future development unfeasible. To address these issues, additional review of vacant and underutilized tax lots was conducted in two phases:

Phase 1: Manual Review by ECOnorthwest

In the first phase, ECOnorthwest conducted an in-depth review of each region and inventory comparing vacant and underutilized tax lots against recent satellite imagery to manually correct development statuses. More than 42,000 tax lots were manually reviewed, resulting in about 5,800 tax lots having their development statuses updated.

Phase 2: Interactive Jurisdiction Review Maps

For the second phase, interactive maps were developed for each of the five municipalities and Clark County. These maps allowed jurisdictions to review the development statuses of tax lots within their boundaries, view selected attributes of individual tax lots, query tax lots by owner name or lots owned by the respective jurisdiction, and provide updated development statuses with feedback explaining the changes.

The primary goals of these interactive maps were to help jurisdictions identify jurisdiction-owned tax lots for inclusion in the inventory as either vacant or underutilized and to provide additional insights on key lots' development statuses that would otherwise be unknown to the project team. Jurisdictions were also given the option to review and update every single site located within their boundaries if feasible or desired. All six jurisdictions participated in this phase, resulting in about 240 tax lots having their development statuses updated.

COMPOSITE INDEX MODEL

Stakeholders expressed a desire to categorize vacant and underutilized land early in the inventory development process, noting that not all neighborhoods were equally equipped to support new growth based on their existing conditions. In response an index model was developed to score tax lots on individual factors of underutilization, most often using percentiles, which were composited into a single score based on a weighting scheme. Scores are then categorized as low, medium, medium to high, and high. This section defines the scoring factors and second and how scores were calculated and composited.

Underutilization Scoring Factors

Based on research on similar land inventories, agreements developed in the SNS Regional Plan and discussions with technical and policy experts, seven underutilization factors were selected to score tax lots within the land inventory. Stakeholders voted to determine the weight of each factor, as discussed in Chapter 2. These factors include:

- Access to High-Frequency Transit
- CDC Social Vulnerability Index
- Developed Share of Land
- Economic Development Areas
- Job and Population Density
- Matching Planned Land Use Type
- Walk Score

Access to High-Frequency Transit

This factor evaluates tax lots based on their proximity to bus stops served by high-frequency RTC bus lines, defined as routes with service intervals of 15 to 25 minutes. Tax lots were scored on a scale from 0 to 1 based on their distance from these stops, with the following intervals:

- ¼ mile: Score of 1
- ½ mile: Score 0.66
- 1 mile: Score of 0.33
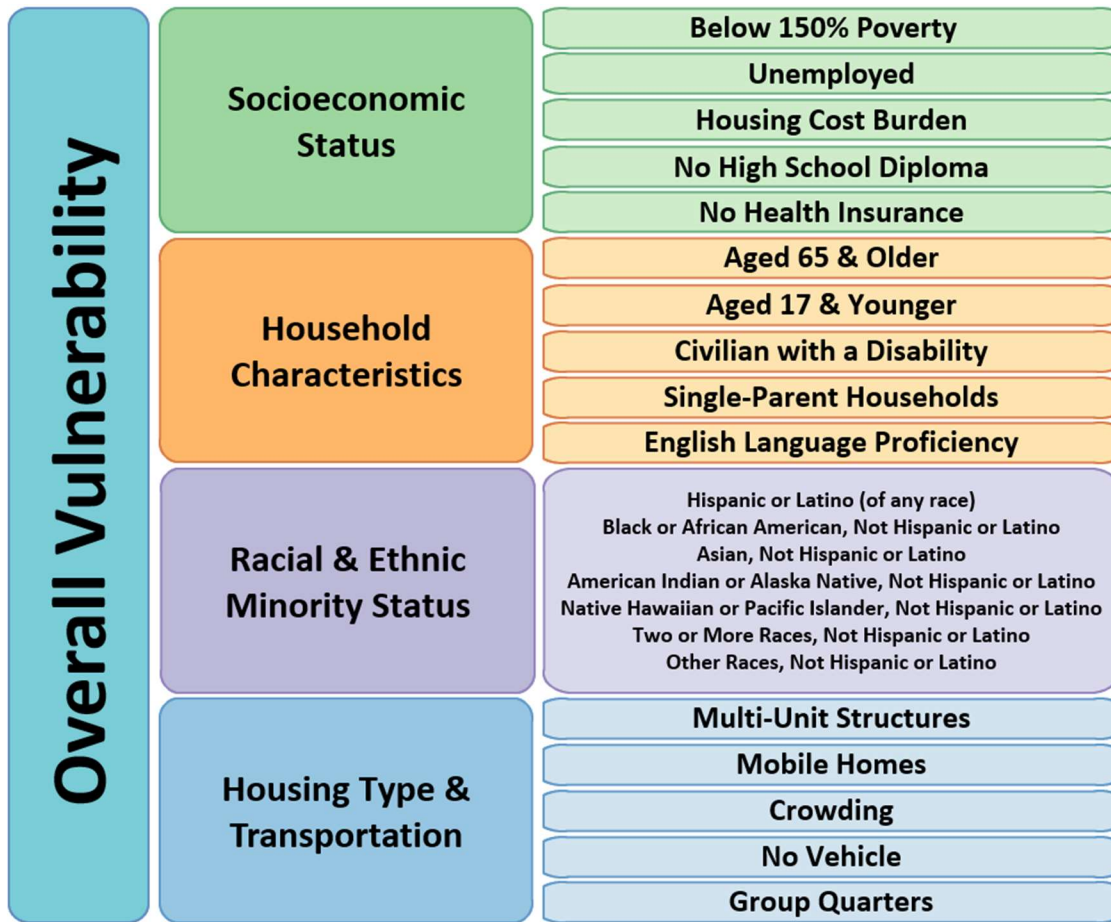- Beyond 1 mile: Score of 0

CDC Social Vulnerability Index[8]

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) is a composite index model that uses 16 demographic variables from the U.S. Census 5-Year American Community Survey (ACS) to identify census tract-level areas with populations that may be disproportionately affected by natural disasters, human-caused events, or public health emergencies. To calculate a comprehensive score for each tract, the SVI assigns a percentile score for each variable and combines them into a final score using a weighting scheme based on the variables' broader category groupings. Scores range from 0 to 1, with 1 indicating the most at-risk areas and 0 indicating the least at-risk.

The 16 variables used in the SVI are detailed in Exhibit 6:

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[8] https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/place-health/php/svi/index.html

Exhibit 6. Social Vulnerability U.S. Census Variables[9]

Overall Vulnerability		
Socioeconomic Status	Below 150% Poverty	
	Unemployed	
	Housing Cost Burden	
	No High School Diploma	
	No Health Insurance	
Household Characteristics	Aged 65 & Older	
	Aged 17 & Younger	
	Civilian with a Disability	
	Single-Parent Households	
	English Language Proficiency	
Racial & Ethnic Minority Status	Hispanic or Latino (of any race); Black or African American, Not Hispanic or Latino; Asian, Not Hispanic or Latino; American Indian or Alaska Native, Not Hispanic or Latino; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Not Hispanic or Latino; Two or More Races, Not Hispanic or Latino; Other Races, Not Hispanic or Latino	
Housing Type & Transportation	Multi-Unit Structures	
	Mobile Homes	
	Crowding	
	No Vehicle	
	Group Quarters	

ECOnorthwest incorporated the SVI as a means to account for equity and underserved areas within the inventory. While much of the concept of "underutilized" focuses on land with potentially unrealized development potential, it can also apply to land that fails to meet the needs of marginalized communities. Based on initial stakeholder discussions emphasizing equity, the SVI was selected for its comprehensive methodology, which includes factors such as poverty, racial and minority status, and limited access to transportation.

To score tax lots using the SVI, the final SVI scores of census tracts were spatially joined to all tax lots within their boundaries. Percentile ranks were then calculated exclusively for vacant and underutilized tax lots based on their respective tract-level scores. This approach allowed for the ranking of a vacant or underutilized lot's SVI score relative to the total number of such tax lots within the employment and residential inventories that were initially separate rather than relying on tract-level scores, which calculates scores for all tax lots within a tract, including those that are developed or excluded. Tax lots with higher percentile scores were considered more at-risk than tax lots with lower percentile scores. This approach to using percentiles for individual scoring factors is also used for several factors below.

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[9] Ibid., 21

Developed Share of Land

A vacant lot within an otherwise highly developed area inherently reflects its status as underutilized. To capture this contrast in development patterns, all tax lots within a Census Block were selected, their total acres summed and then divided by the total land area within the Block. This value was calculated for each Block and spatially joined to the tax lots within it.

Percentile ranks were then calculated exclusively for vacant and underutilized tax lots based on their respective Block-level scores. This approach enabled the ranking of a vacant or underutilized lot's surrounding area of developed land relative to the total number of such tax lots within its respective inventory (employment vs. residential). Tax lots with higher percentile scores were located in areas with a larger share of surrounding developed land, while those with lower scores were in less developed areas.

Economic Development Areas

Economic Development Areas, as referred to in this report, represent an amalgamation of the following four types of designated economic and development zones:

- Innovation Districts
- Jurisdiction-Approved and Proposed Redevelopment Areas
- Qualified Opportunity Zones (QOZ)[10]
- Southern Nevada Enterprise Community Census Tracts[11]

The inclusion of these areas was determined through stakeholder discussions, with modifications to exclude Innovation Districts within the unincorporated county's boundaries, continuing the Inventory's pattern of allowing jurisdiction-specific customization to best reflect local expertise.

Economic Development Areas were used to score tax lots on a Boolean 0/1 system: a score of 1 indicated that a tax lot was located within any of the four areas, while a score of 0 indicated that the tax lot was entirely outside them. Tax lots falling within multiple areas did not receive additional scoring.

Job and Population Density

A vacant tax lot within a high-density area is likely underutilized. However, the type of density requiring measurement differs between employment and residential lots. To address this, different density metrics were applied to the two inventory types (employment and residential) prior to merging them, ensuring that density was accounted for in a context-specific manner.

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[10] https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/businesses/opportunity-zones
[11] https://www.leg.state.nv.us/SpecialActs/37-SNevadaEnterprise.html

For employment lots, density was measured as the number of jobs per acre at the block group level, using Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES) data from the U.S. Census Bureau.[12] This metric identified unused lots within high-employment-density areas as having greater commercial or industrial development potential compared to those in lower-density areas.

For residential lots, density was measured as persons per acre, based on 2018–2022 5-Year ACS data. Similarly to employment lots, unused tax lots within high residential density areas were identified as having higher residential development potential than those in lower-density areas.

For both density metrics, vacant and underutilized tax lots were scored based on the percentile of their block group's density values relative to the total number of vacant and underutilized lots within their respective inventories.

Matching Planned Land Use Type

Through discussions with stakeholders and polling results highlighted in Chapter 2, land use consistently emerged as the most requested metric to include as a scoring factor. To incorporate this, ECOnorthwest prepared planned land use GIS data for the five municipalities and Clark County in a similar manner to the zoning data. Planned land use designations were compiled and, through research into jurisdiction ordinances, tagged as permitting residential development, economic development, or both. This data was then spatially joined to the tax lots.

Like Economic Development Areas, scoring was performed on a binary 0/1 system. Tax lots received a score of 1 if their zoning designation and planned land use were both aligned (e.g., both zoning and planned land use designations permitted commercial development) or 0 if no alignment existed.

Walk Score

The final factor of underutilization used in this methodology was a measurement of an area's "walkability," which evaluates the proximity to a variety of amenities and nearby employment opportunities.

To calculate this score, a hexagonal grid made up of 1,600' by 1'600 cells was created to cover the inventory boundary. Using Open-Source Routing Machine (OSRM)[13], street-network distances were calculated from each grid cell to every other grid cell. Spatial amenity data, including parks, libraries, clinics, schools, grocery stores, and jobs data from the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD), were joined to the grid to tally the total amenities within each cell.

Each cell was then scored based on two criteria:

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[12] https://lehd.ces.census.gov/data/
[13] https://project-osrm.org/

1. The number of amenities within a 1-mile radius.
2. The average closest distance to each amenity.

These two scores were averaged and converted into a single percentile score for each grid cell. Vacant and underutilized tax lots were then scored based on the percentile rank of their corresponding grid cell's walkability score, relative to the total number of vacant and underutilized lots in their respective inventories.

COMPOSITE INDEX WEIGHTING AND FINAL RANK

With all eligible lots joined to an underutilization factor, the individual scores were then compiled into a weighted calculation to determine a score of 0 to 1. This weighting scheme was influenced by the series of stakeholder meetings as described throughout this report:

- Employment/Population Density
  - 30%
- Developed Share of Land
  - 20%
- Economic Opportunity Areas
  - 20%
- Matching Planned Land Use
  - 10%
- Distance to High-Frequency Transit
  - 10%
- CDC SVI Score
  - 5%
- Walk Score
  - 5%

Once all tax lots in the two separate inventories were given a composite score, the tax lots and their scores were merged. For lots that were in both inventories, the highest score was assigned.

Finally, composite scores were then grouped into four categories:

- High
  - 0.9 or above
- Medium to High
  - 0.75 to 0.9

- Medium
  - 0.6 to 0.75
- Low
  - 0.6 or below.

4. Results

Results from the composite model analysis showed a total of 31,650 vacant and underutilized individual tax lots throughout the study area, comprising 78,285 acres, with the vast majority of land (85%, or 69,300 acres) was deemed totally vacant. These results can be seen on the map in Exhibit 7.

Exhibit 7. Map of Vacant and Underutilized Tax Lots
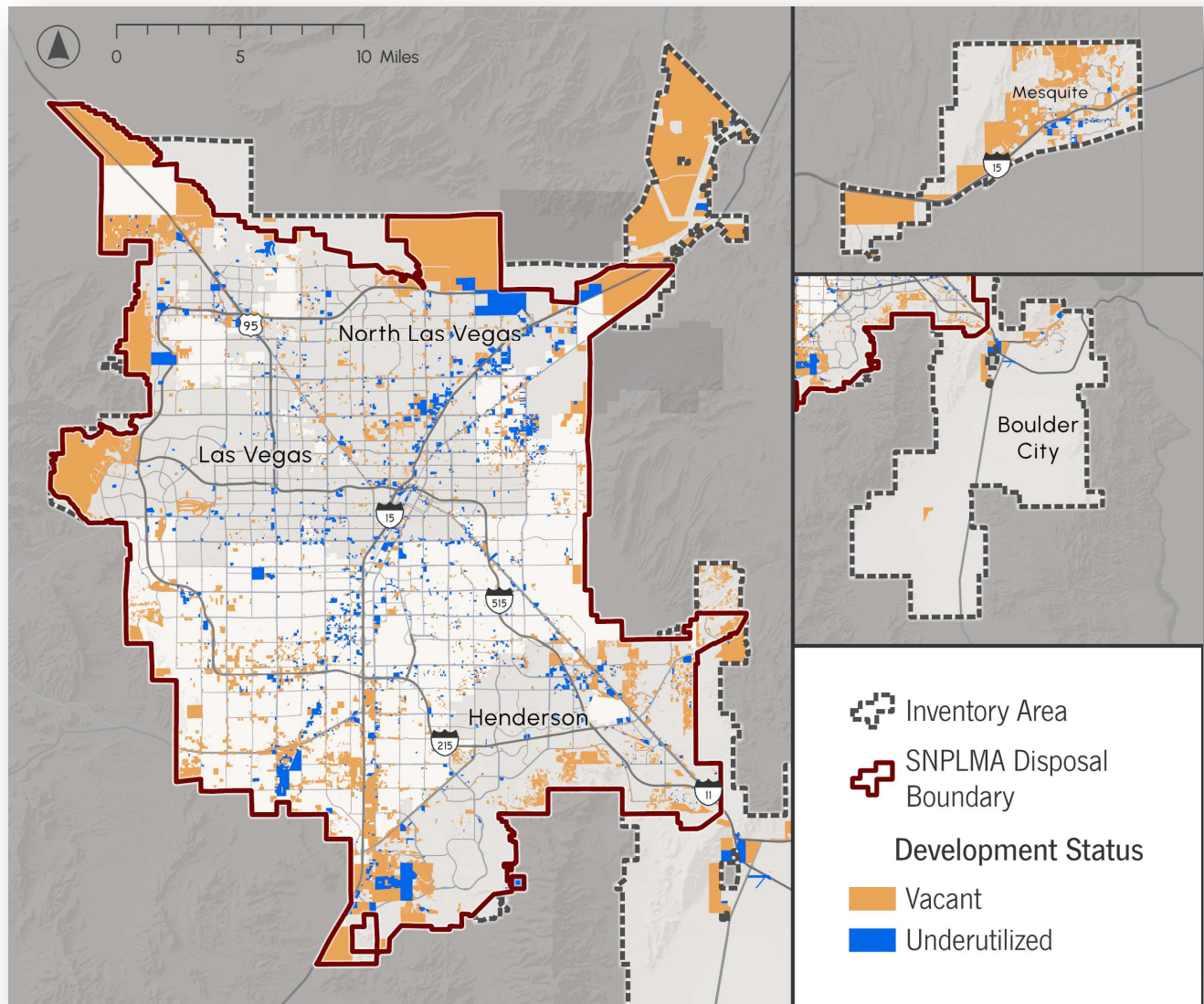
The distribution of these lots can be seen on the map in Exhibit 8, as well as the precise distribution of rankings across tax lots and acreage in Exhibit 9 and Exhibit 10, respectively.

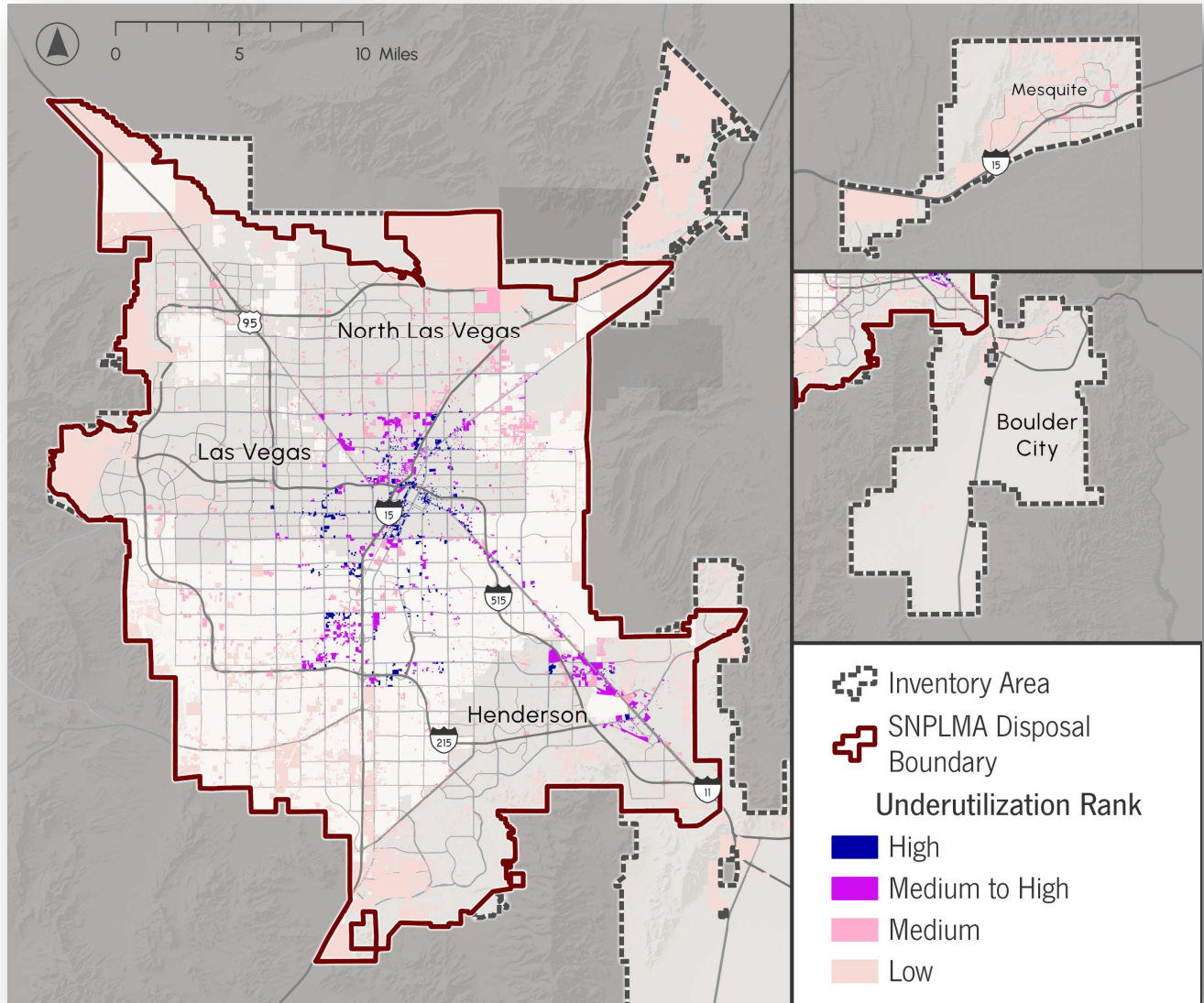## Exhibit 8. Map of Ranked Tax Lots

Exhibit 9. Distribution of Vacant and Underutilized Tax Lots Across Rankings
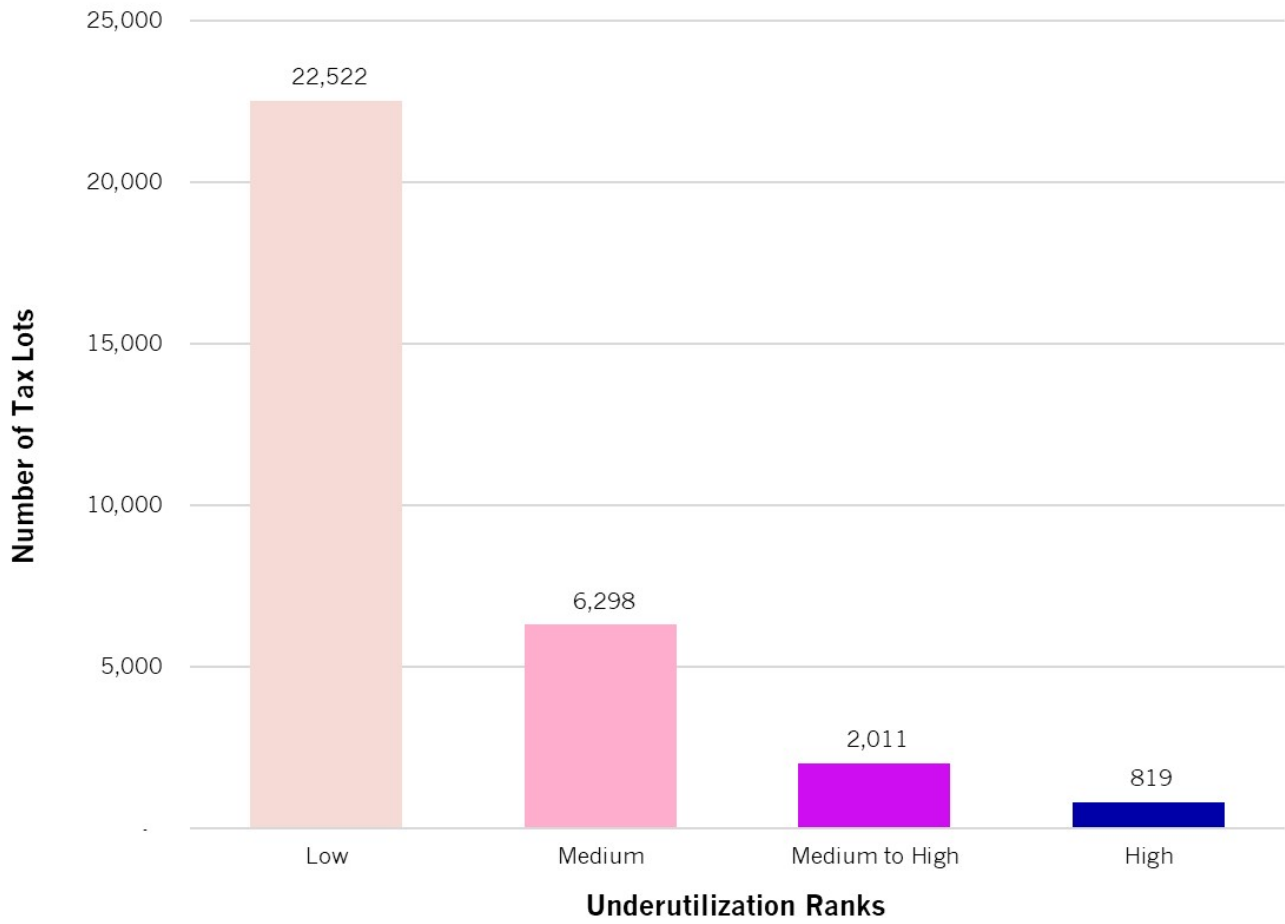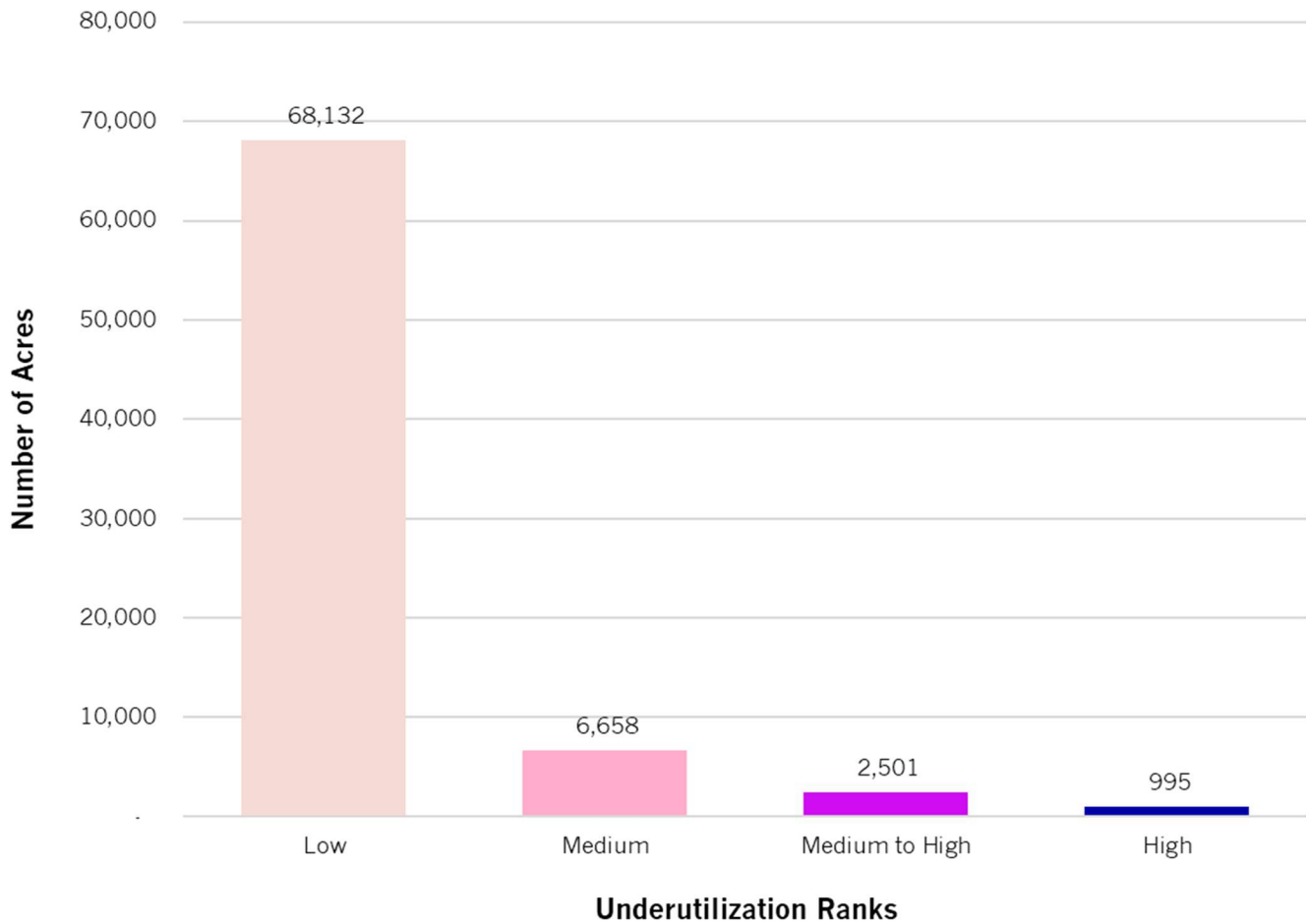
Exhibit 10. Distribution of Inventory Acres Across Rankings

The distribution of low, medium, medium to high, and high-ranked tax lots across the 6 jurisdictions can be seen in Exhibit 11 while Exhibit 12 shows the same distribution by acres.

Exhibit 11. Ranked Tax Lots Across Jurisdictions

Jurisdiction	Low	Medium	Medium to High	High	Sum
Clark County	7,188	2,384	452	179	10,203
City of Boulder City	263	10	2	-	275
City of Henderson	6,837	1,464	517	56	8,874
City of Las Vegas	4,833	742	502	517	6,594
City of Mesquite	1,210	44	-	-	1,254
City of North Las Vegas	2,191	1,654	538	67	4,450
Total	22,522	6,298	2,011	819	31,650

Exhibit 12. Ranked Acres Across Jurisdictions

Jurisdiction	Low	Medium	Medium to High	High	Sum
Clark County	12,374	2,946	855	340	16,514
City of Boulder City	2,048	16	1	-	2,065
City of Henderson	10,792	887	751	74	12,504
City of Las Vegas	13,591	906	408	466	15,371
City of Mesquite	6,063	163	-	-	6,226
City of North Las Vegas	23,262	1,740	486	116	25,604
Total	**68,132**	**6,658**	**2,501**	**995**	**78,285**

The majority of high and medium to high-ranked land most often occurred in high density areas, owing to higher weighted underutilization factors such as population and job density, distance to high frequency transit, and share of developed land. This relationship to the underutilization factors largely explains the relative lack of high scoring land within the cities of Boulder City and Mesquite.

5. Next Steps

As described in Appendix A: Review of Land Inventories, the scope of this inventory was developed in partnership with the Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance (LVGEA) and members of the Southern Nevada Chapter of the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP) to avoid duplication with previous work and ensure alignment. Accordingly, the initial goals of the ULI were to meet objectives and strategies of the SNS Regional Plan and provide a comprehensive look at potentially underutilized land that complements existing inventories in Southern Nevada.

The inventory does not propose any policies or mechanisms to help landowners realize the full potential of the underutilized lots they own. Broader stakeholder coordination and scenario planning to discuss policy gaps and opportunities will occur next as part of the phased approach to develop SNS 2050. Instead, the focus of the inventory was to develop regional agreements on what may constitute underutilized land in a regional context and map the parcels that meet the criteria co-established in the process to better understand existing conditions. However, several stakeholders leveraged the additional outreach opportunities provided by the inventory to continue discussion on potential barriers to realizing infill development more consistently across the region. The regional challenges for additional research and regional-scale problem-solving as mentioned by local real estate developers include:

- Land use policy and ease of permitting varies across jurisdictions instead of varying by location or by neighborhood type (e.g. urban, suburban, rural).

- A lack of reliable information to determine utility needs early in the development process (e.g. power line upgrades).

- Higher levels of NIMBYism, or public participation of neighbors who do not want to see new development in their communities and disproportionately influence the permitting process, particularly when new development proposes housing units at prices that more Southern Nevada residents can afford.

- Lenders typically tend to prefer single-use development (residential vs. employment), making financing unpredictable for sites and buildings that allow both uses on the same site or building (mixed-use development).

- Parking mandates and other requirements that constrain development to an area much smaller than the total amount of land owned, only rendering a portion of the land economically productive.

- Insufficient sustainable transportation options, such as light rail, near infill sites make it difficult to justify the removal of parking mandates to lenders and neighbors. Light rail can also be a catalyst to build denser development and make infill more profitable.

♦ A lack of clarity surrounding adaptive re-use, or the ability to repurpose existing buildings that are empty to meet housing and economic development needs.

♦ A lack of overall financial incentives to counter any of the challenges mentioned above, resulting in higher uncertainty in development cost and potentially impacting profit.

More discussion on these and other barriers will take place among members of the new SNS 2050 Economic Development and Housing Task Groups in 2025. Completion of the SNS 2050 planning effort is scheduled in 2026, which will present the task groups findings to the general public, demonstrate regional planning trade-offs through scenario planning, and propose policy-specific solutions in a new action plan for regional partner consideration. **The SNS 2050 phased approach to include more Southern Nevada residents in the decisions we make related to how we grow is provided below for reference.** Additionally, the inventory will be updated on an annual basis to reflect new data and stakeholder input.

♦ **Phase 1: Existing Conditions (March-July 2025)**
In this phase, our planning team will study the current state of the Southern Nevada community to learn about how Southern Nevada Strong has worked to improve the community since 2015 and what challenges still exist today. It's like taking a detailed snapshot of how things are today, which will inform us what changes and improvements are needed for the future.

➢ **What will you learn about during Phase 1?**
You will learn about the history of Southern Nevada Strong and why your input is valuable for the SNS 2050 Plan.

➢ **How can you participate in Phase 1?**
We'll be asking for input on community values, priorities, and aspirations, and challenges related to housing, transportation, and employment.

➢ **Activities will include:**
▪ Stakeholder interviews and focus groups
▪ Stakeholder advisory committees
▪ SNS Steering Committee
▪ Community focus groups and community conversations
▪ Community events
▪ Open house and text townhall

♦ **Phase 2: Scenario Planning (July-September 2025)**
Scenario planning is a way for us to think about different ways the future could turn out, so that we can plan to help make the best one happen. In this phase, our community will imagine things that could happen, like more people using public transit or building more attainable homes near our existing jobs and activity centers. This will help us decide what aspects of these futures are important to us as a community to achieve.

➢ **What will you learn during Phase 2?**
You will learn about how planning and development decisions that are happening today will help us decide what we should look at when imaging

different possible futures. We'll also share how community input received during this phase will shape these different ideas for the future.

➢ **How can you participate in Phase 2?**
We'll be asking you to help us imagine different future scenarios and to tell us what pieces of each scenario you like. Using that information, we'll create the best future for our community together.

➢ **Activities will include:**
  ▪ Stakeholder advisory committees
  ▪ SNS Steering Committee
  ▪ Community conversations and workshops
  ▪ Community events

♦ **Phase 3: Action Plan (September 2025-February 2026)**
In this phase, our planning team will develop an action plan for achieving the future scenario that was chosen in Phase 2.

➢ **What will you learn during Phase 3?**
You will learn about the new ideas we have for how and where Southern Nevada should grow so that we can achieve our community's best future scenario.

➢ **How can you participate in Phase 3?**
We'll be asking for your feedback on the action plan we've created and what you think are the most important things to work on in the future.

➢ **Activities will include:**
  ▪ Stakeholder advisory committees
  ▪ Stakeholder focus groups
  ▪ SNS Steering Committee
  ▪ Community conversations
  ▪ Community events
  ▪ Open house and text townhall

♦ **Phase 4: Plan Adoption (February-September 2026)**
In this phase, the SNS 2050 Plan will be shared with and adopted by local leaders and decision makers so that we are all on the same page in planning for the future growth and development of our community.

➢ **What will you learn during Phase 4?**
We'll share the full plan with you, explain how your ideas informed the plan, share the main goals for the future, and explain how we'll make the plan official.

➢ **How can you participate in Phase 4?**
We'll check with you to make sure the plan matches what the community told us during earlier phases of the plan and address any remaining problems people may have. Together, we'll decide what to work on first from the plan

and how to keep track of the to make sure it works for the next ten years.

- ➢ **Activities will include:**
    - ▪ SNS Steering Committee
    - ▪ City Council and RTC Board presentations
    - ▪ Online comment
    - ▪ Community events
    - ▪ Open house and text townhall

Appendix A. Review of Land Inventories

The scoping process of the inventory began with a review of existing Southern Nevada inventories to ensure that findings were both new and complementary to existing efforts. The latest inventory made available to the public was funded by the Governor's Office of Economic Development (GoED) in 2023. Initial tasks included proactive engagement to stakeholders of the 2023 inventory, such as GoED and Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance (LVGEA) leadership, as well as real estate developers who are members of the Southern Nevada Chapter of the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP). The latter were engaged due to their funding role in a prior version of the 2023 inventory conducted in 2020 and their overall economic development expertise. This Appendix discusses findings from a review of a few publicly-available inventories, including the 2023 GoED study, for reference.

Southern Nevada Employment Land Analysis (GoED)

The 2023 Southern Nevada Employment Land Analysis by GoED found that there was approximately 16,400 acres of potentially developable employment sites for of 20 acres or more in Southern Nevada, distributed across 142 vacant parcels. Like this Inventory, the GoED study relied on publicly available data to identify vacant parcels zoned for employment uses, resulting in an overlap of parcel identification for this type of land.

A few of the filters used in the GoED study are mentioned below:

- **Zoning:** Identified parcels needed to have a commercial or industrial zoning designation. Most parcels zoned for residential use were excluded.

- **Development status:** GoED excluded parcels that had any buildings or structures on them, focusing on totally vacant land only.

- **Parcel size:** GoED only identified employment parcels that were larger than 20 acres, roughly equal to 15 football fields.

- **Geographic area:** Parcels outside of the SNPLMA boundary were excluded, which means that parcels in Boulder City and Mesquite were not part of the Inventory.

- **Slope:** Parcels were only included if they had less than a 7% slope, or fairly flat terrain.

The SNS Steering Committee and other stakeholders repeatedly noted the need to expand on the GoED study, including the need to identify smaller size and infill parcels that could support housing and economic development needs, which were not included from the GoED study. Another key distinction is in the inclusion of partially developed land with relatively

low improvement-to-land value ratios (or potentially underutilized) in the SNS inventory, which are also not included in the GoED study.

The clarity in the information presented by the GoED study allowed RTC to quickly identify the ways in which the SNS inventories differ, which mostly relate to how parcels were filtered in each effort and the overall focus on industrial land by GoED.

APPROACHES TO LAND INVENTORIES AND POLICY OUTCOMES

Several jurisdictions across the United States have recently developed Underutilized Lands Inventories (ULI) or similar tools to identify and assess underutilized lands. Notable examples include:

- Phoenix, AZ
- Salt Lake City, UT
- Orange County, Florida
- Portland, OR

However, not all jurisdictions make their inventory methodologies publicly available, nor do they always clearly communicate the policy intent behind these efforts. Despite these limitations in other regional inventories, this Chapter aims to draw insights from these examples in two key areas:

1. **Approaches to Land Inventories and Policy Outcomes:** How were land inventories presented in jurisdictional and advocacy group reports, and what policy changes, if any, did they influence?
2. **Methodological Influences:** What lessons from these methodologies can be applied to the Southern Nevada Strong (SNS) Underutilized Lands Inventory?

Phoenix, Arizona

The City of Phoenix's underutilized lands inventory process is not explicitly documented, nor are its objectives clearly communicated to the public. However, the policy implications are evident in the City's *2025 General Plan*[14] adopted in April 2024, which frequently references underutilized lands across various planning areas such as:

- **Local and Small Business Development:** The Plan highlights the importance of adaptive reuse, stating that the City will "facilitate adaptive reuse of older,

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[14]
https://www.phoenix.gov/pddsite/Documents/City%20Council%20Adopted_PlanPHX%202025%20Update%20Final_8.5x11.pdf

underutilized properties to create mechanisms for new local and small businesses to operate, thrive, and grow."

♦ **Clean Neighborhoods and Infill Development:** Emphasizing the acquisition and redevelopment of underutilized parcels to improve neighborhood quality, the Plan notes that infill development faces unique challenges, including "high land costs, potential environmental contamination, and difficulties in assembling parcels." Nonetheless, incentives are provided to support redevelopment within the city's central villages.

♦ **Opportunity Sites:** The City identifies significant redevelopment potential within its boundaries, including both small vacant parcels and larger underutilized properties. These opportunity sites range from small-scale residential infill to larger commercial or mixed-use developments. The General Plan emphasizes leveraging these sites in urbanized areas to reduce growth management costs while ensuring compatibility with existing development and neighboring jurisdictions.

♦ **Land Use Policy:** Amendments to the Phoenix Zoning Ordinance are called for by the Plan to "encourage creative ways to activate vacant parcels, parking lots, and other underutilized areas" to create vibrant destinations for residents and tourists.

♦ **Canals, Trails, and Brownfields:** Acknowledging that its canals are "one of our most underutilized assets", the City sees potential in redeveloping brownfields, which are often viewed as unusable due to contamination. These properties, according to the Plan, represent "an untapped economic resource" capable of stimulating both the local economy and the environment.

Salt Lake City, UT

Envision Utah, a non-profit policy advocacy group, conducted an analysis of available land, identifying about 11,000 vacant, developable acres in Davis County; 52,000 combined acres between Salt Lake and Weber Counties, and 93,000 acres in Utah County. These figures are presented in the firm's *Land Use Strategies to Bring Housing Back within Reach* report[15], which informs state and regional recommendations. The report emphasizes the need for more comprehensive analyses of land and water resources to support future housing and compatible planning efforts.

The analysis projects housing needs from 2030 to 2060 under three planning scenarios: a status quo approach, moderate adjustments, and a more transformative framework involving zoning and regulatory changes. Each scenario forecasts housing units based on varying policy interventions.

Although Envision Utah's work operates at a regional scale similar to Southern Nevada, it aligns more closely with Oregon and Washington's buildable lands inventories (discussed below) rather than an underutilized lands inventory. Furthermore, the firm does not publicly

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[15] https://envisionutah.org/attainable-housing

disclose its methodology. Nevertheless, its recommendations have significant policy influence, guiding local and regional governments through advocacy and strategic planning.

Orange County, FL

Although geographically distant from Nevada, Orange County, Florida, home to Orlando, offers valuable insights through its land use planning efforts. The 2020 *Community Redevelopment Plan Update*[16], revised in 2021 references underutilized lands in the context of the I-Drive Parcel Inventory. This inventory classifies acreage by existing land use codes within the I-Drive CRA area, breaking vacant land into residential, industrial, and commercial categories.

The plan also employs a Redevelopment Opportunity Index to identify major undeveloped sites, which feed into market and housing forecasts and influence the County's transportation scenario planning.

Additionally, Orange County's *Infill Master Plan*[17], adopted in 2008, functions as an underutilized lands inventory. Underutilized lands are a central focus, guiding recommendations on market incentives, infrastructure development, design solutions, and land use and zoning regulations. This comprehensive approach has shaped infill development opportunities across the county.

> *"Acknowledging the gap between affordability and the desired level of housing production is an important step but it is a big one. Like those principles that encourage improved work/housing balances, actions centered on appropriate land use, zoning, deployment of underutilized lands, and other incentives can narrow this gap."*
>
> *– Orange County, FL*

Portland, OR

One highly public-facing land inventory comes from the City of Portland, Oregon. Under Oregon's Statewide Planning Goal 10[18], cities are required to conduct a Buildable Land Inventory (BLI) at least once every 20 years to comply with the state's Housing Needs Analysis (HNA) requirement. This process forecasts housing growth over a 20-year period and assesses whether the city's available land supply is sufficient to meet projected demand. While the land inventory itself is not the end goal, it serves as a foundational tool for calculating current land capacity and determining whether additional land is needed to accommodate future growth.

Portland last adopted its Buildable Land Inventory in December of 2023[19] and makes its methodology publicly available, including a detailed methodology memo and earlier drafts. This memo outlines the primary analytical steps, defines methodological parameters and

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[16] https://www.ocfl.net/portals/0/Library/Traffic-Transportation/docs/I-Drive%20CRA%20Redevelopment%20Plan%20Update_2021.pdf
[17] https://www.ocfl.net/Portals/0/resource%20library/planning%20-%20development/Infill_Master_Plan.pdf
[18] https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/op/pages/goal-10.aspx
[19] https://www.portland.gov/bps/planning/bli/2023-documents#toc-2023-buildable-lands-inventory-bli-documents

thresholds, and presents the results in maps and tables. These maps are also available separately in high-resolution formats for public access.

METHODOLOGICAL INSIGHTS

During its research into Underutilized Lands Inventories (ULIs), ECOnorthwest encountered a notable lack of detailed methodological documentation from the jurisdictions reviewed. Of the examples explored, only Orange County, FL, offered insights into its ULI methodology. However, valuable guidance was found through two non-governmental organizations: Smart Growth America and the University of Denver's Interdisciplinary Research Institute for the Study of (In)equality. Methodological insights from these sources, along with Orange County's approach, contributed to the development of ECOnorthwest's ULI for Southern Nevada by providing best practices to enhance its analytical framework.

Orange County, FL

Turning back to the Orange County I-Drive CRA Redevelopment Plan Update, its Redevelopment Opportunity Index (ROI) offers a versatile framework that can be adapted to other cities. At its core, the ROI is a composite index model that evaluates tax lots based on five key factors:

- ◆ **Floor Area Ratio (FAR)**
- ◆ **Age of Property Improvements**
- ◆ **Relationship between Land and Improvement Values**
- ◆ **Total Market Value per Square Foot of Lot Area**
- ◆ **Size of Tax Lot**

Each factor is scored from 0 to 100 and combined using a weighted index. Tax lots are then classified as redevelopment targets based on their composite scores, with thresholds differing by property type: commercial lots require a score of 35 or above, while residential lots need a score of 70 or higher. This report's appendix provides a comprehensive list of tax lots meeting these criteria.

Orange County's use of the ROI provides a clear example of integrating data-driven analysis into redevelopment planning. While ECOnorthwest's ULI for Southern Nevada incorporates many unique elements, this general framework contributed valuable insights, as will be further detailed in Chapter 3.

Portland, OR

The methodology behind Portland's Buildable Land Inventory (BLI) consists of five general steps:

1. Calculate existing development
2. Identify developed or likely developed parcels
3. Calculate gross development capacity
4. Apply development constraints
5. Integrate permit data for new housing development

While the primary intent of the inventory is largely regarding capacity, certain components of the overall methodology were used to inform the SNS Land Inventory methodology:

- **Developed Tax Lot Identification:** The City identifies developed lots by first classifying vacant lots using Assessor data that designates a tax lot as vacant. Additionally, building footprint data is used to identify lots with minimal or no improvement coverage.

- **Ignored Tax Lots:** Specific property types are excluded from the inventory, including publicly owned land, utility properties, parks, cemeteries, churches, and gas stations.

- **Manual Edits:** After the initial classification of vacant and developed parcels, City staff review the results, manually adjusting parcels based on local knowledge. These manual edits are incorporated into subsequent model runs.

- **Constraints:** Various constraints are applied to determine parcels where development would be infeasible. These include environmental hazards such as the FEMA 100-Year Floodplain and Floodway and parcels with steep terrain slopes.

One of the key outputs of Portland's BLI was a high-resolution map, seen in Exhibit 13, displaying all vacant lots, distinguishing between Vacant and Non-Vacant "Underutilized" parcels. The SNS ULI adopted a similar approach in its final map, categorizing different types of underutilized land to provide a clearer picture of development potential.

Exhibit 13. City of Portland: Vacant and Underutilized Land
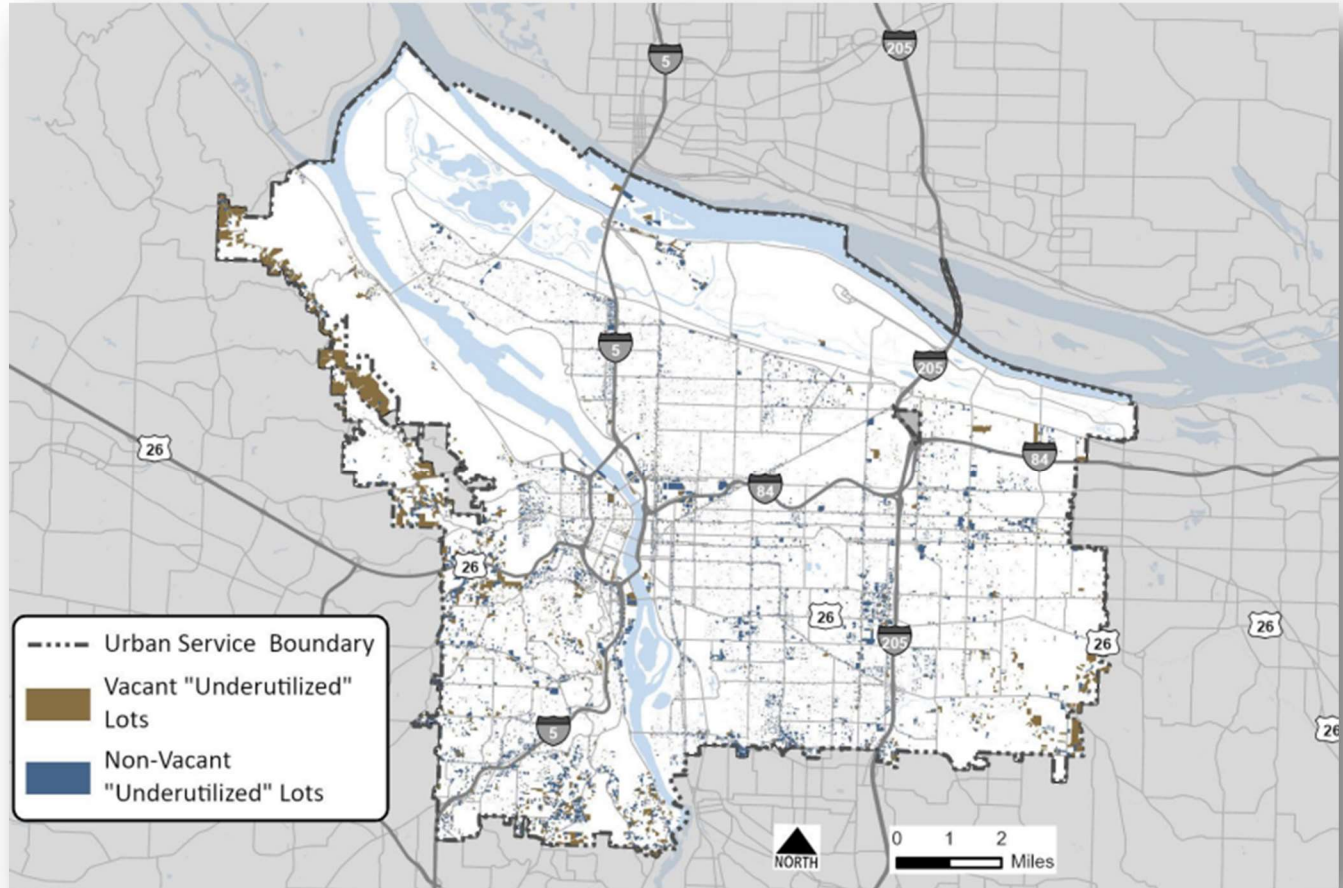
Source: The City of Portland Residential BLI Methodology and Summary Results, p. 20[20]

Smart Growth America

As part of its *Community Economic Diversification Roadmap*[21], Smart Growth America, a policy advocacy organization, offers guidance[22] on developing ULIs for use by local officials, urban planners, and other stakeholders. Their land inventory process consists of four main steps:

1. **Create a land inventory area summary:** Compile data on assessed values and total available land.

2. **Identify priority locations for development:** Focus on areas with existing infrastructure, residential density, and favorable zoning.

3. **Conduct a fiscal hotspot analysis:** Normalize parcel values on a per-acre basis to identify clusters of high-value parcels.

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[20] https://efiles.portlandoregon.gov/recordhtml/16505070/
[21] https://smartgrowthamerica.org/nuclear-closure-assistance/community-economic-diversification-roadmap/
[22] https://smartgrowthamerica.org/economic-diversification-roadmap-land-inventories-and-leveraging-underutilized-parcels/

4. **Perform an economic impact analysis:** Evaluate the broader economic implications of potential developments using REMI or IMPLAN models.

From this framework, ECOnorthwest integrated elements of step two into its composite index for the Southern Nevada ULI, drawing on Smart Growth America's approach to refine the SNS ULI's composite index scoring factors.

University of Denver, Interdisciplinary Research Institute for the Study of (in)Equality

In late 2023, the University of Denver's Interdisciplinary Research Institute for the Study of (in)Equality developed its *Buildable Lands Analysis for the Denver Metro Area*[23]. As more of a hybrid between a BLI and ULI, certain aspects of its methodology deviated from the traditional BLI framework, offering valuable components that could potentially be incorporated into ECOnorthwest's ULI as composite index scoring factors. As detailed in their Story Map, the analysis differs from a standard BLI in four notable ways:

1. **Exclusion of lots in zoning districts unlikely to be rezoned.**
2. **Exclusion of lots near hazardous infrastructure, flood-prone areas, or pollution sites.**
3. **Emphasis on proximity to services and transit.**
4. **Exclusion of lots in physically constrained areas, with a focus on lots within specific size thresholds.**

ECOnorthwest adapted variations of these elements for the Southern Nevada ULI. Specifically, parcels were excluded based on zoning designations, physical constraints, and size thresholds. Proximity to services and transit was also incorporated, though as a composite index factor rather than a basis for exclusion.

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[23] https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/718aa70663f44fe8bd791c9a7189cc16

Appendix B. Priority Area Maps

Throughout the series of meetings with regional stakeholders, priority areas were proposed, mapped, and presented to guide participants through the analysis process as it was being conducted. These maps were used to reflect progress and solicit feedback on the methodology and results. They do not necessarily represent priority areas in regional or local jurisdiction planning. Finalized versions of these maps are shown for illustration purposes only below.

In the case of Exhibit 15 and Exhibit 19, which display Boulder City and Mesquite respectively, no high or medium-to-high ranked parcels were identified. To illustrate the specific context of the tax lots within these cities, the low-ranking category has been further divided into subsets for greater granularity.

Exhibit 14. Region's Central Area
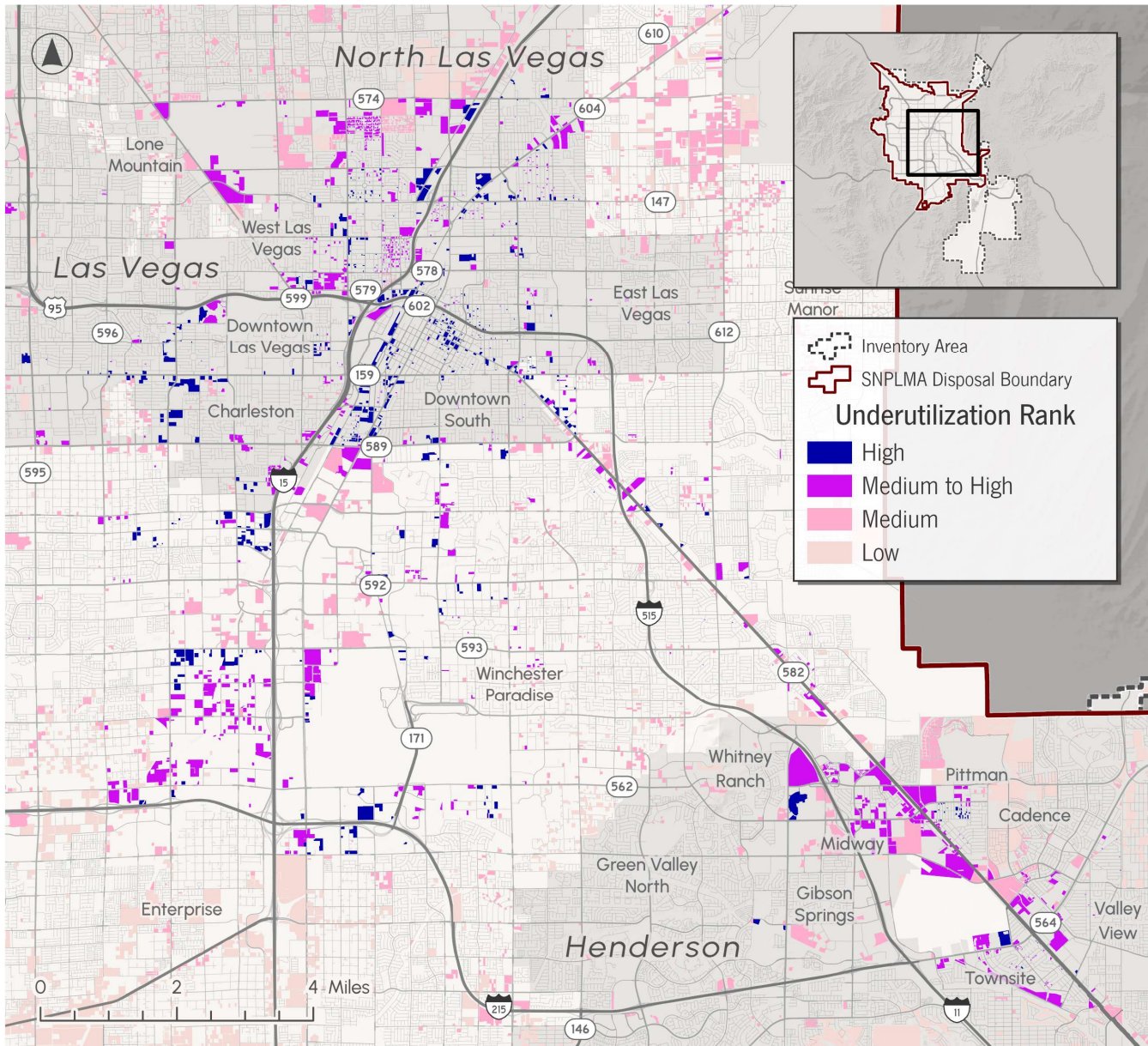
Exhibit 15. Boulder City Parkway
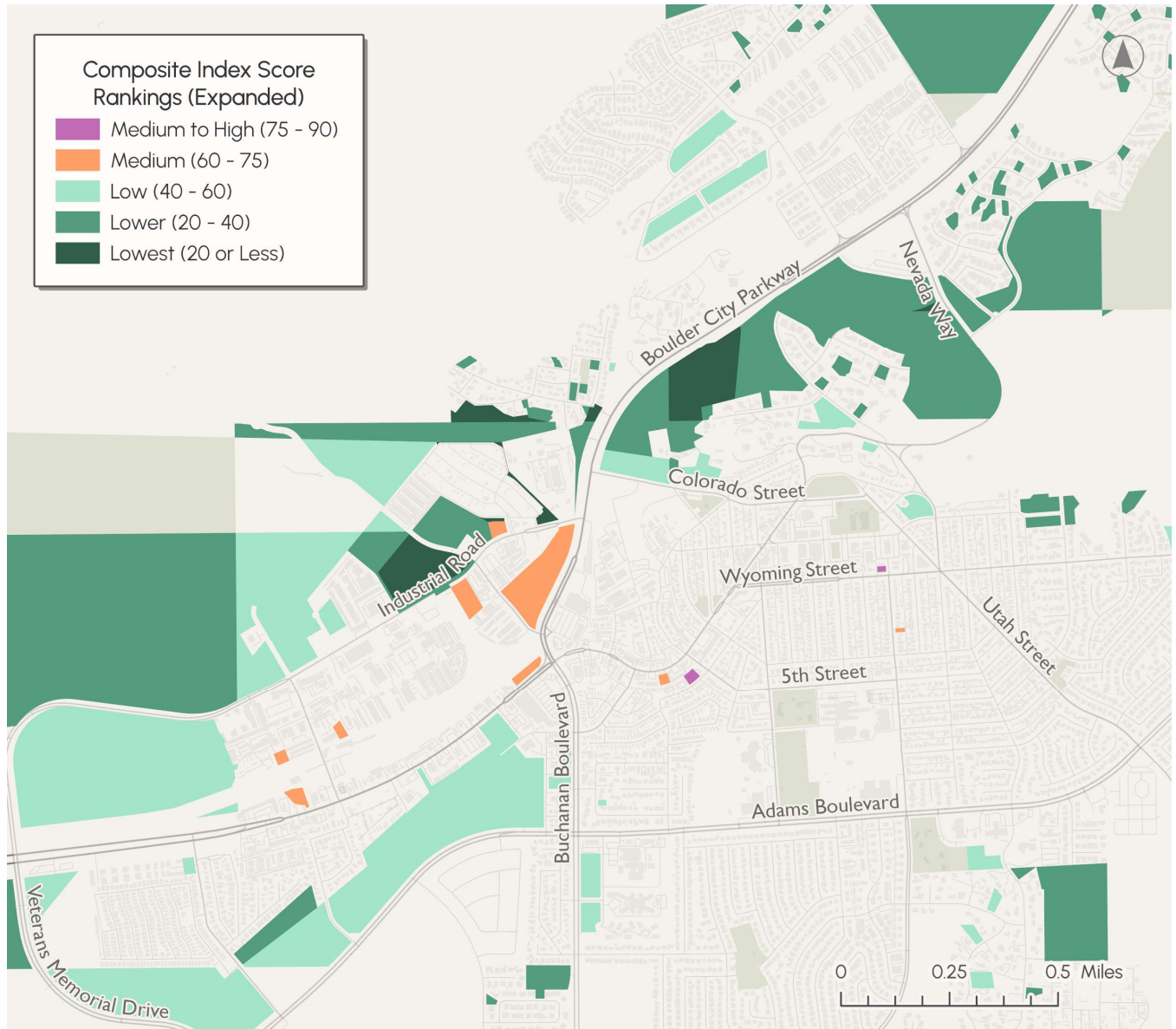
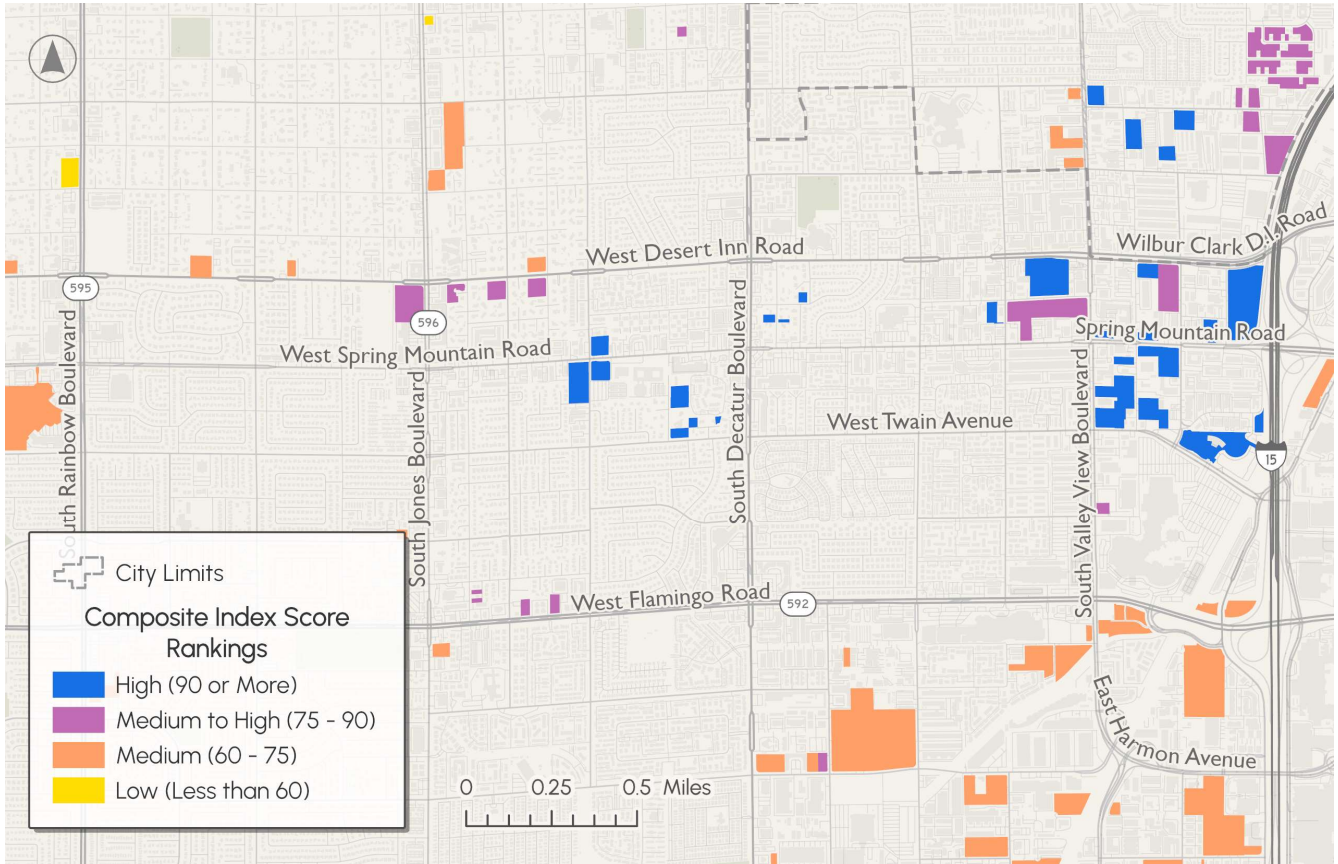**Exhibit 16. Boulder Highway**
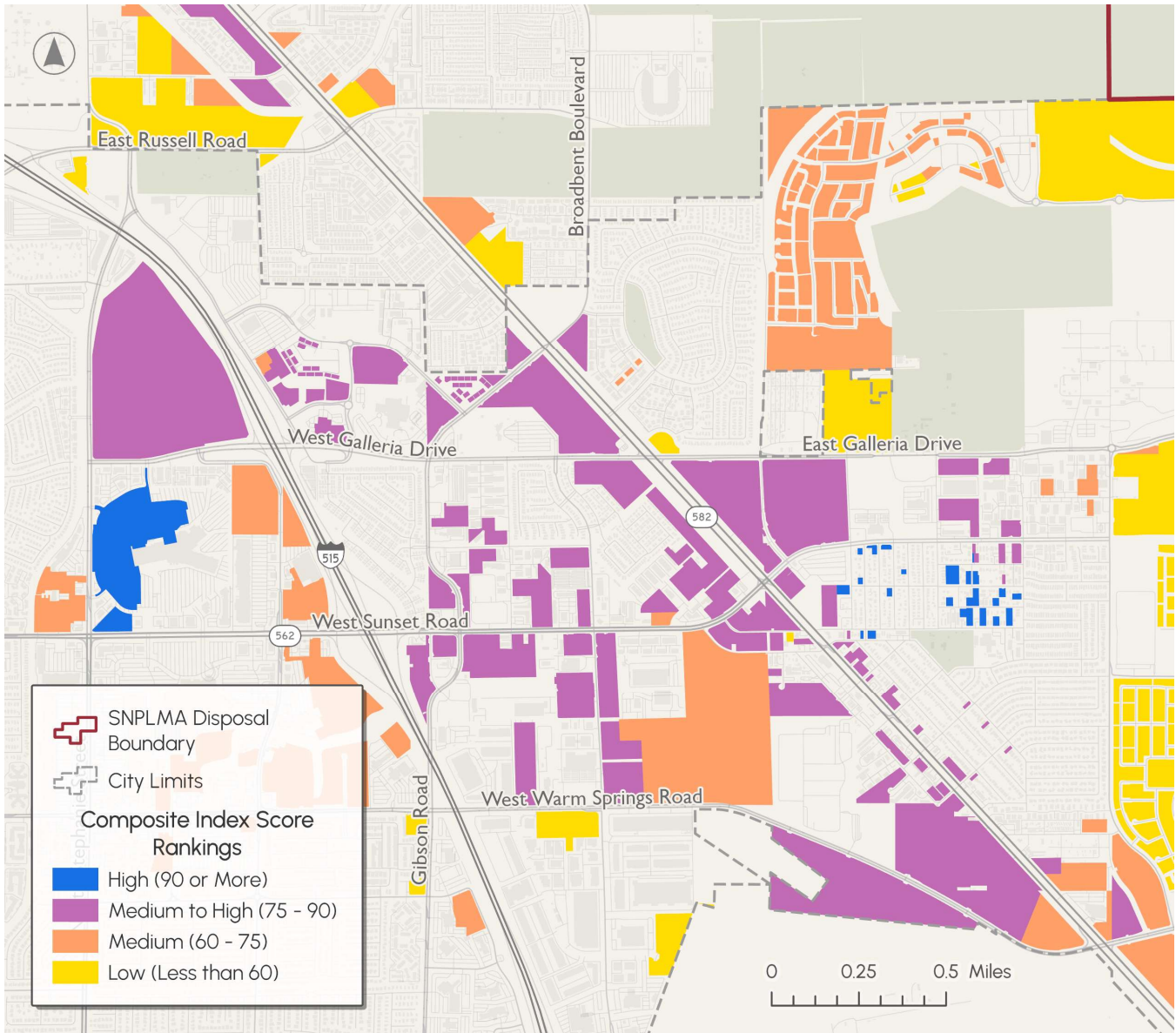
Exhibit 17. Chinatown

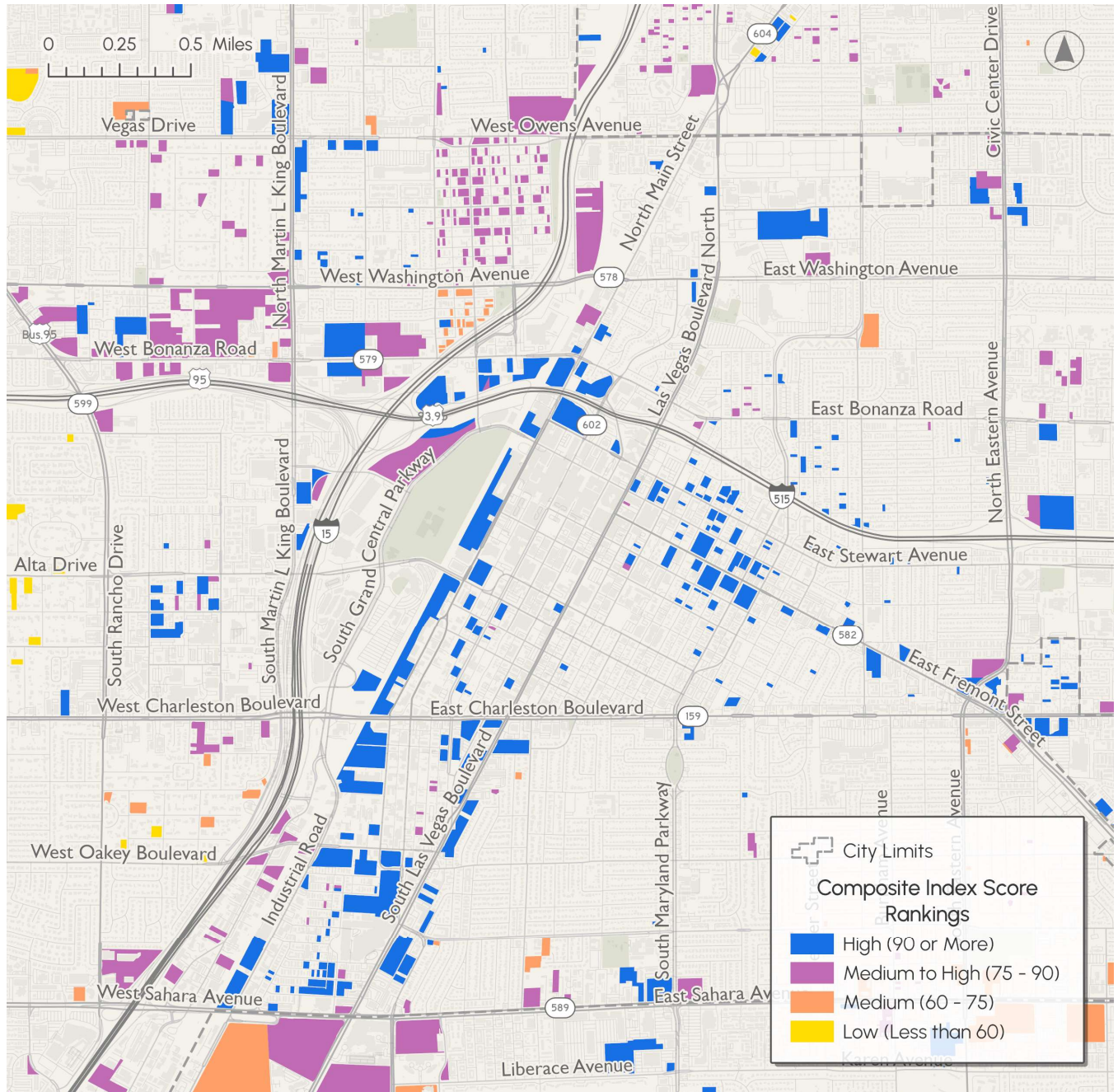**Exhibit 18. Downtown Las Vegas and Westside**
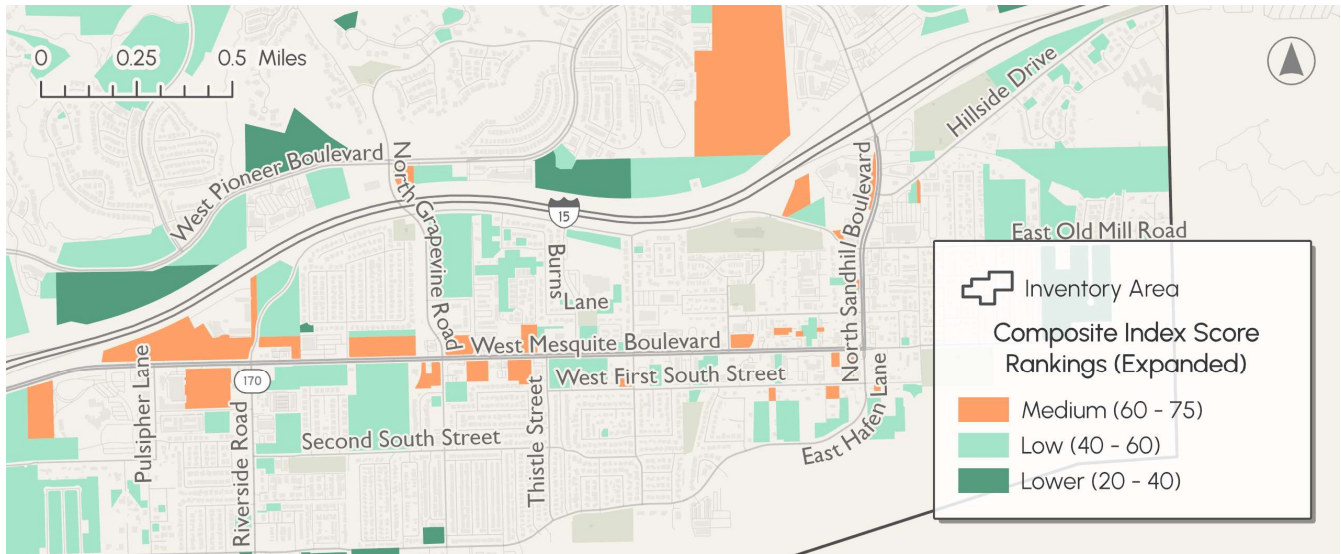
Exhibit 19. Downtown Mesquite
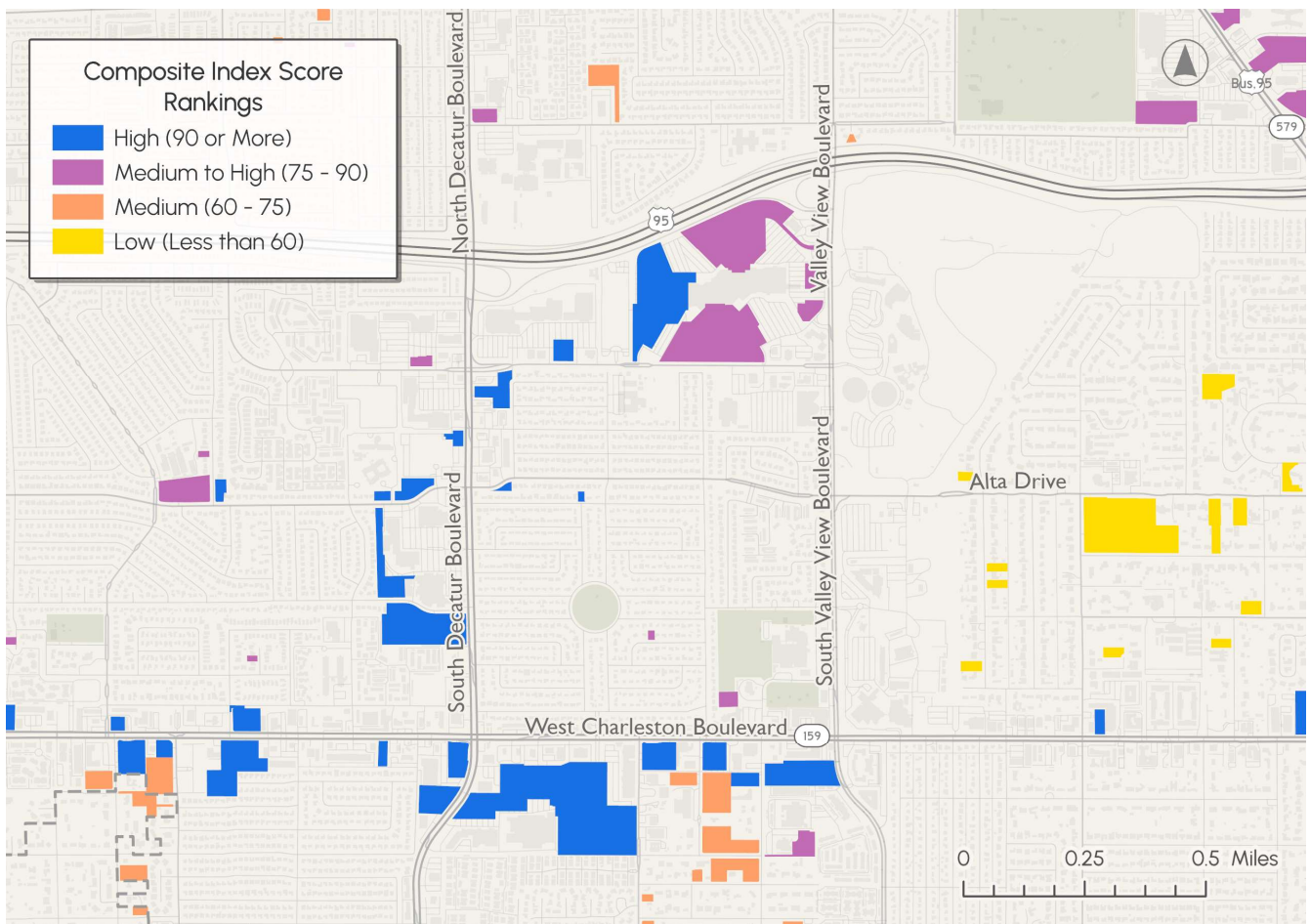

Exhibit 20. Meadows Mall
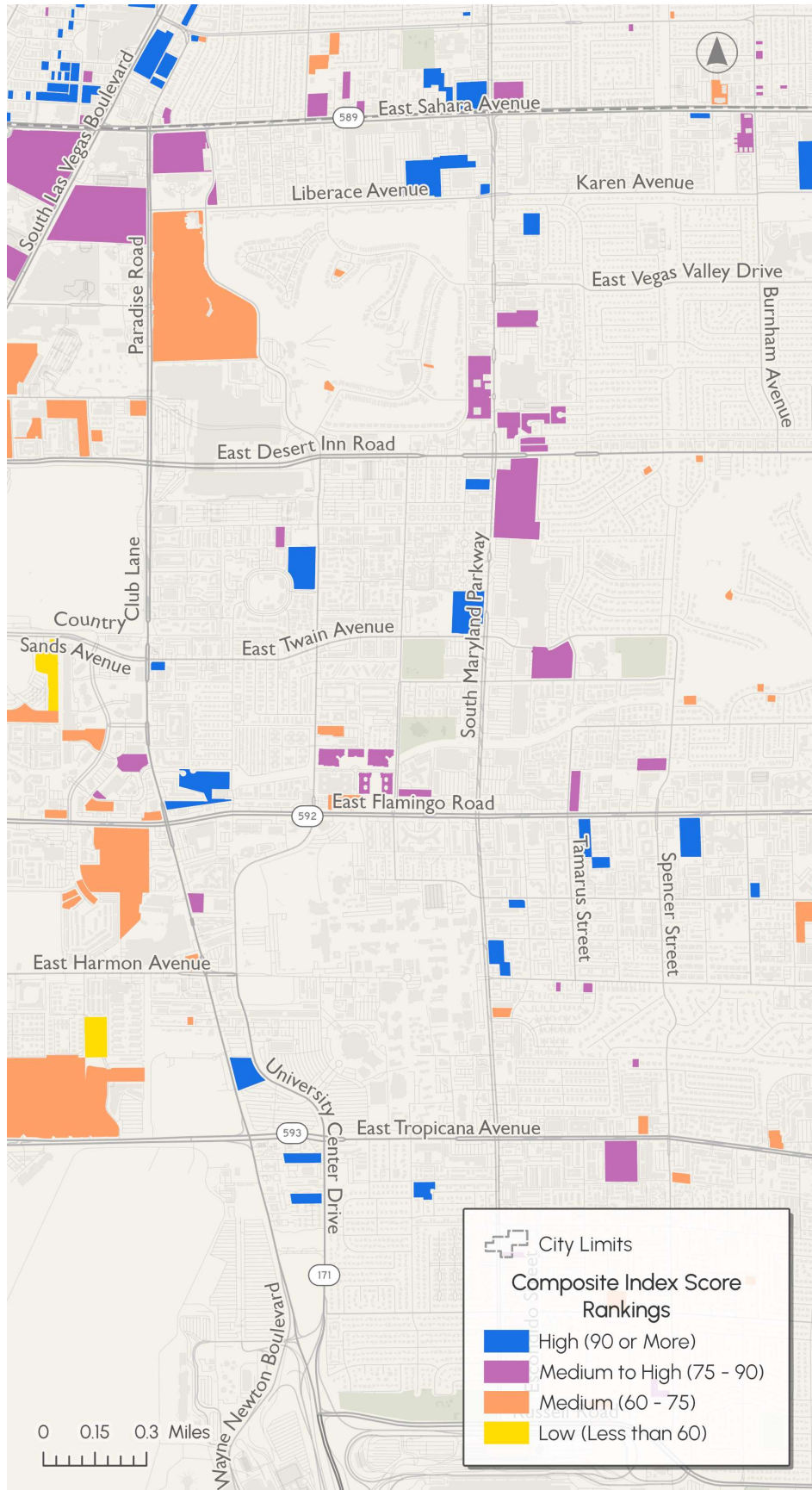
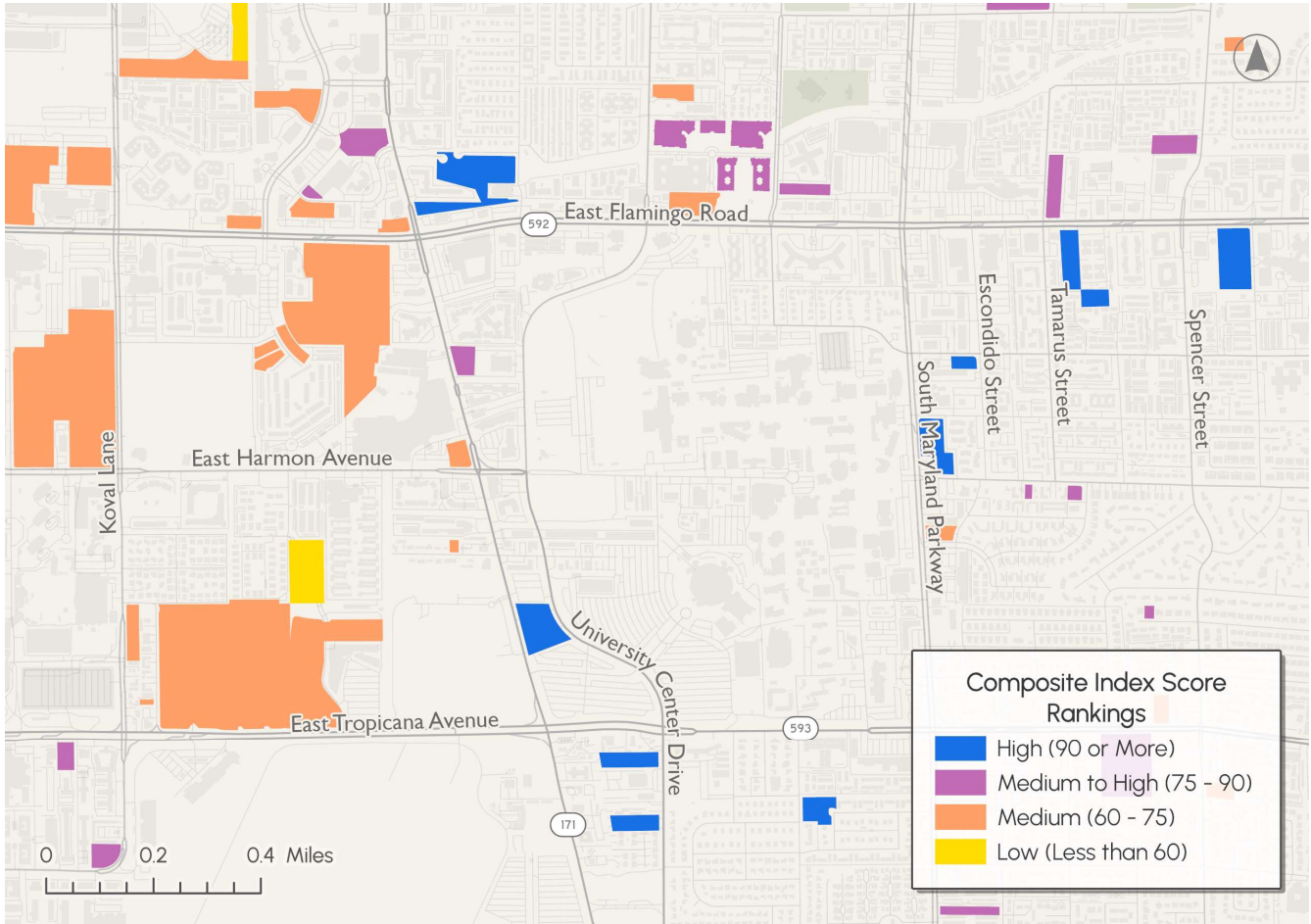**Exhibit 21. Maryland Parkway**

Exhibit 22. North Las Vegas Gateway
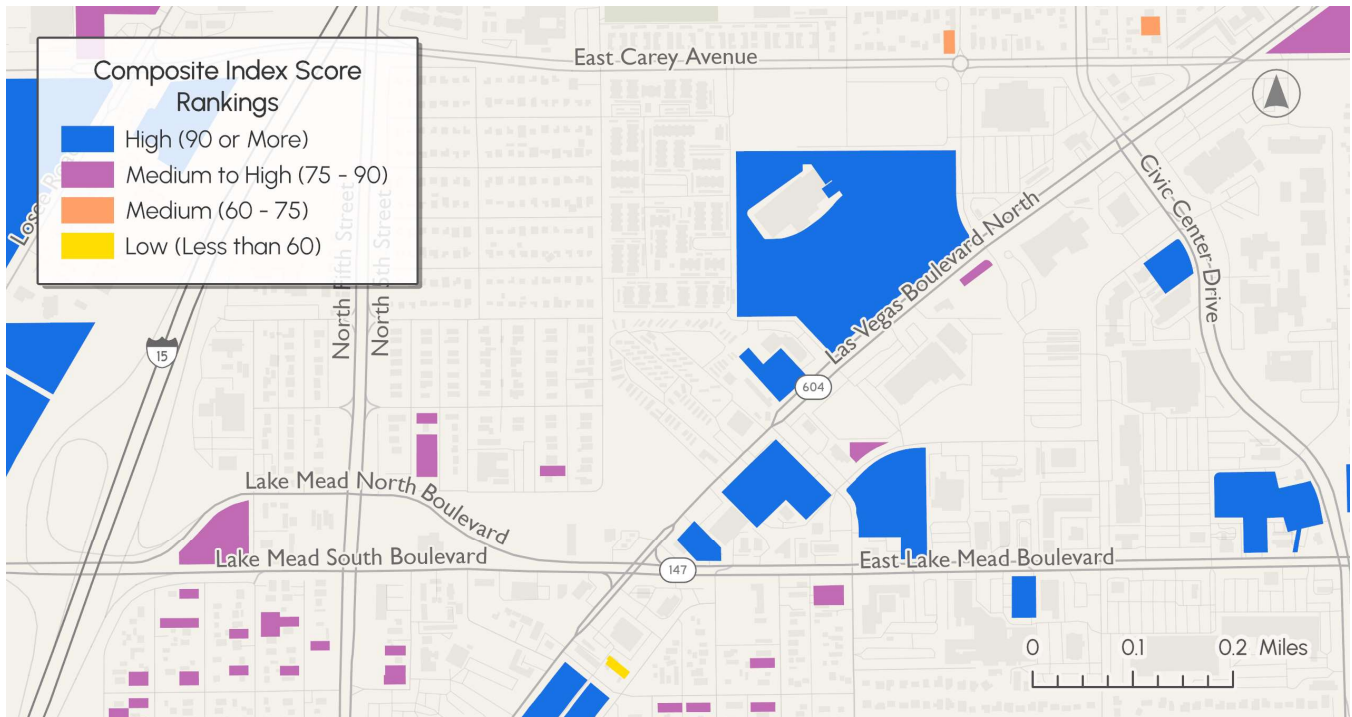
Exhibit 23. University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Appendix C. Data Inventory

Data Type/Description	Data Source
Primary Layers	
BLM Visual Resource Inventory	Bureau of Land Management
Airports	Clark County GIS Management Office (GISMO)
Cities	GISMO
Planned Land Use	GISMO
Zoning	GISMO
Hard Rural Preservation Areas	GISMO
Indian Reservations	GISMO
Land Interests	Clark County Assessor data, with approval from RTC and local jurisdictions when it involved land owned by engaged organizations.
Railroad	USGS
SNPLMA Disposal Boundary	GISMO
Tax lots	Clark County Assessor Data
Building Footprints	FEMA
Constraints	
Cemeteries	GISMO
FEMA Floodplains	FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer
Parks	GISMO
Slopes	GISMO
Composite Index Variables	
CDC Social Vulnerability Index	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2022)
Economic Development Areas	Provided by RTC MPO and reviewed by local jurisdictions as adopted or proposed (July 2024)
Employment Density	LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (2021)
Population Density	ACS 5-Year 2022: B01001 Sex by Age
Transit - Bus Routes Frequency	Provided by RTC (July 30th)
Transit - Bus Stops	RTC GIS Portal
Walk Score: Schools - Universities	GISMO
Walk Score: Schools - K-12	GISMO
Walk Score: Amenities - Community Centers	GISMO
Walk Score: Amenities - Cultural Sites	GISMO
Walk Score: Amenities - Libraries	GISMO

Walk Score: Parks · Clark County	GISMO
Walk Score: Parks · Henderson Parks	Clark County ArcGIS Online
Walk Score: Parks · Mesquite Parks	Clark County ArcGIS Online
Walk Score: Parks · Boulder City Parks	Clark County ArcGIS Online
Walk Score: Parks · North Las Vegas Parks	Clark County ArcGIS Online
Walk Score: Parks · Las Vegas Parks	Clark County ArcGIS Online
Walk Score: Health · Emergency Clinics	GISMO
Walk Score: Health · Hospitals	GISMO