



JANUARY 2015



OUR VALLEY • OUR VISION • OUR FUTURE



SOUTHERN NEVADA STRONG
regional plan

A stylized sunburst graphic composed of several overlapping, pointed shapes in various shades of orange, radiating from the bottom left towards the top right. The background is a solid, medium-orange color.

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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:





SOUTHERN NEVADA STRONG

regional plan

executive summary



Increasing transportation options will help Southern Nevadans get to the places that matter most.

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. Through 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.**

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

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.**

The 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.



IMPLEMENTATION RELIES ON COLLABORATION

The Regional Plan relies on continued regional collaboration to be achieved. The primary organizations responsible to maintain momentum and implement strategies outlined in the Plan include: all local governments, the Regional Transportation Commission, UNLV, the Southern Nevada Regional Housing Authority, the Southern Nevada Water Authority, 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 on Task Groups. **All implementation roles are identified in the Southern Nevada Strong Implementation Matrix.**

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



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.



Key Issues Facing the Southern Nevada Region

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.

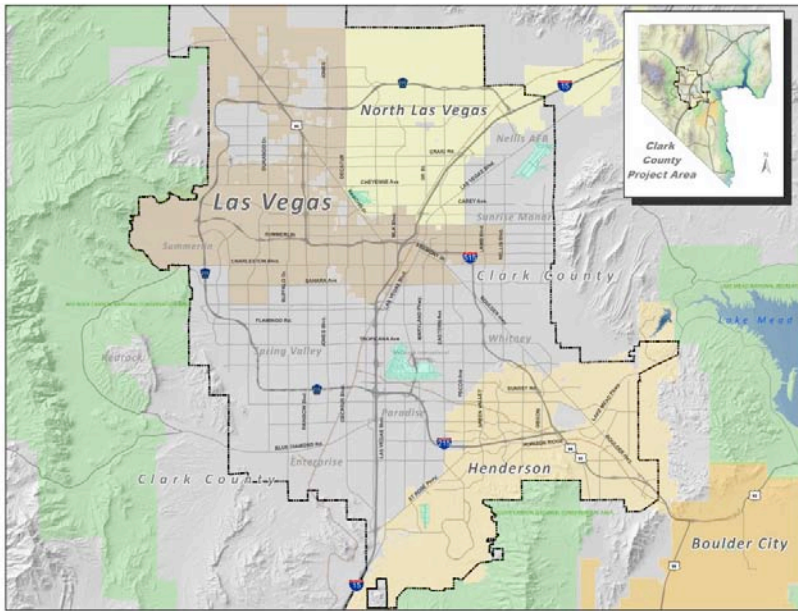
Much of our development has

occurred on the edges of cities and

the region, and most new homes are



Figure 1: SNS Regional Plan Base Map



— Urban boundary

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 it 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.



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.

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 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 2012¹), 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 for 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, the Southern Nevada region is forecast to add nearly 866,000 residents.

The new population will continue to diversify, and new development patterns will have to respond to changing needs. 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 2050.² 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 13 percent in 2015 to 23 percent in 2050³, while other age groups are projected to decrease.



By 2050, regional forecasts anticipate that almost a quarter of our residents will be over 65. Access to quality health care facilities and other amenities like parks and fresh foods will be increasingly important for Southern Nevada.





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 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.

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.





PUBLIC OUTREACH

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.

Together, we 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.
- Safe, desirable and engaged communities.

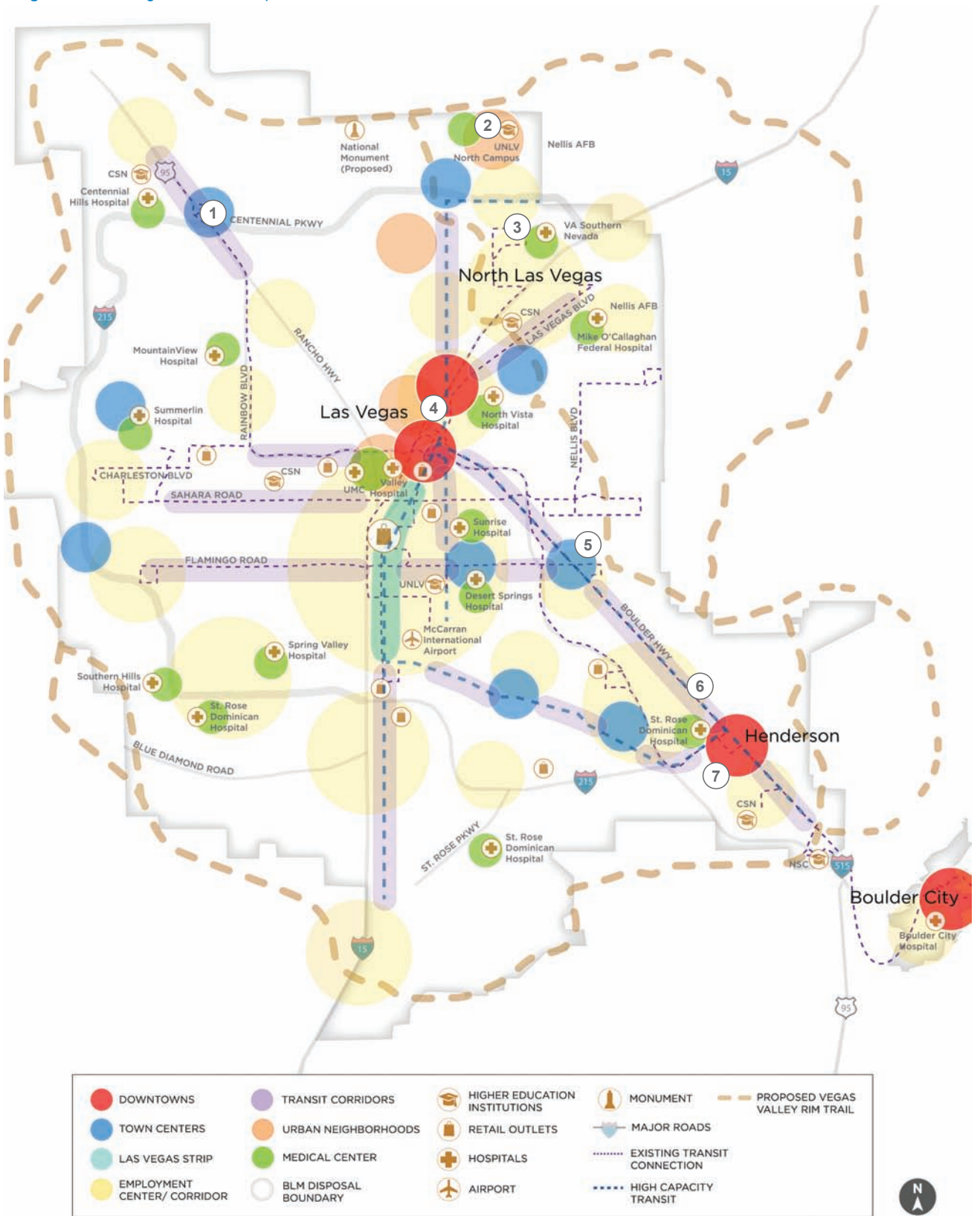
OUR REGIONAL VISION FOR THE FUTURE

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.

Outreach by Nearly the Numbers: 70,000

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 & 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

Figure 2: SNS Regional Vision Map



Using community input, Southern Nevada Strong developed a vision map to illustrate 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.



1

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



2

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



3

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



4

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.



5

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



6

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.



7

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

THE VISION MAP

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.

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

* 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.

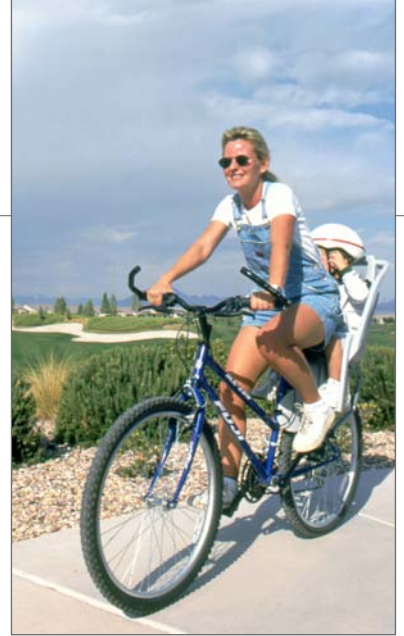


By increasing transportation choice and designing streets for all users, we can reduce vehicle miles traveled and improve air quality.



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 to organize the goals into the Plan's three main themes.** 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.

OUR REGION'S TOP PRIORITIES

The Plan presents goals, objectives and strategies to address our region's top priorities:

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





Improve Economic Competitiveness and Education

Throughout the project, Southern Nevadans emphasized two things again and again: a **need for a variety of well-paying jobs and high-quality public education**. The Regional Plan responds to these needs and sets forth a range of strategies to diversify the regional economy by creating communities with a variety of housing, transportation and amenity options – meeting the demands of a talented workforce. These strategies also support education by improving the physical and built environment around schools.



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:

Goals work to align future development styles or “place types” with the needs of small businesses and workers in the region’s target sectors.⁴

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.

GOALS IN THIS THEME:

Goals 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, and recreation and parks.

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.



Increase Transportation Choice

Southern Nevada’s current land-use patterns are auto-centric, requiring most people to have access to a car to meet their day-to-day transportation needs. However, community input suggests that Southern Nevadans support additional transportation options, including expanded bus service, and potentially light rail. Successful transit systems depend on the kinds of land use and development that allow people to access transit connections between their homes, jobs and services easily and safely. Safe and convenient connections also make walking and biking places a viable option for more people.

GOALS IN THIS THEME:

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

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.

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.

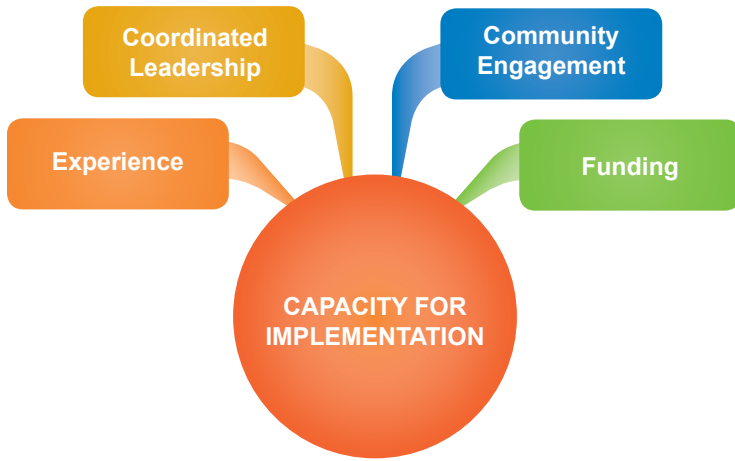
The Consortium Committee and the Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition (SNRPC) recommended that the core administration of the Plan, moving forward, be placed with the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada (RTC) – an existing organization with regional purview. This recommendation 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.



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.

Figure 3: Overcoming Implementation Challenges



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.

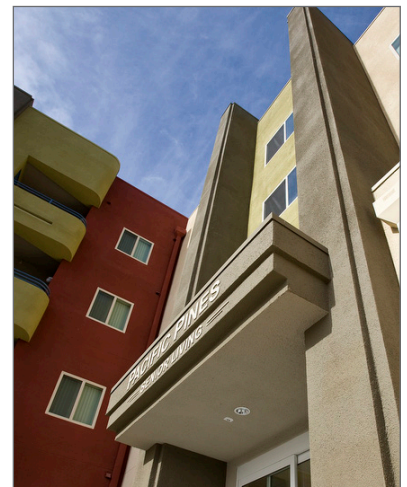
Goals to build capacity for implementation include:

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 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.

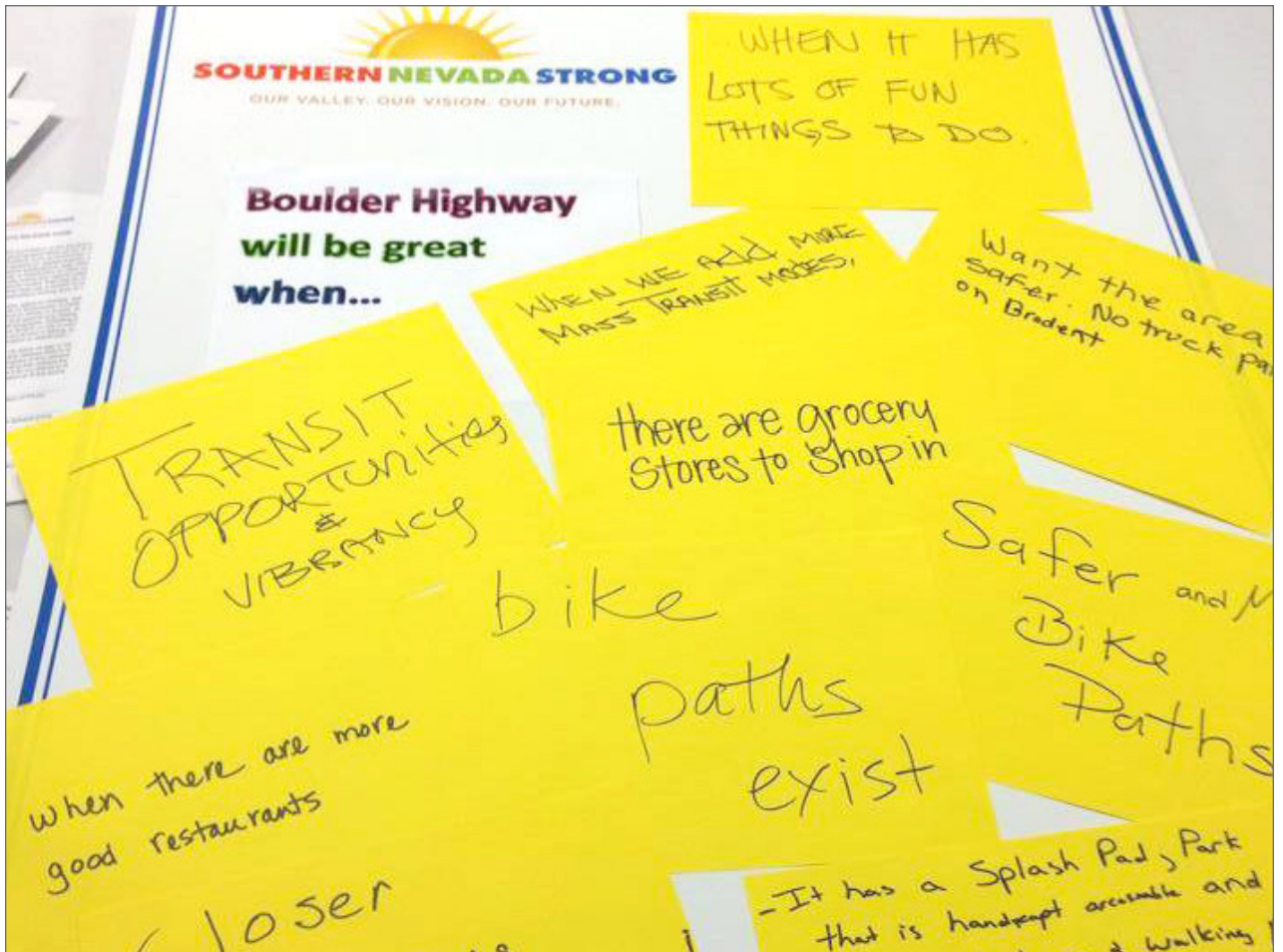


Implementation Priorities

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).





DOCUMENT NOTES:

1. National Center for Children in Poverty. Child Poverty. Retrieved on November 11, 2014, from www.nccp.org/topics/childpoverty.html.
2. Tra, C, Drury, C. Population Forecasts, Long Term Projections for Clark County, Nevada 2012-2035 Population Forecast. (2012). UNLV Center for Business and Economic Research. Retrieved on November 11, 2014, from <http://cber.unlv.edu/reports/2012PopulationForecasts.pdf>.
3. Tra, C, Drury, C. (2012).
4. Prioritized by the Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

THANK YOU!





