

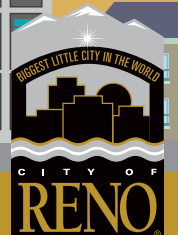
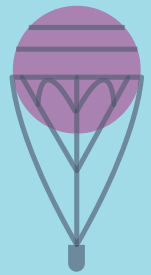


REIMAGINE RENO

Phase I Executive Summary

January 2016

Draft



REIMAGINE
RENO
planning for the future

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PROCESS OVERVIEW

About ReImagine Reno

In the spring of 2015, the City of Reno launched a multi-year, community-based effort to prepare a new master plan. In almost 20 years since the City last undertook a major master plan update effort, the City, community, and region have changed and evolved. The City's current population (236,883) represents an increase of more than 56,000 people since 2000 and is forecast to increase by an additional 72,000 people over the next twenty years—reaching nearly 310,000. The ReImagine Reno process is an opportunity to assess where Reno is today, and to explore trends and key issues that influence the City's future. It is also an opportunity to articulate a vision for the future, to explore potential tradeoffs associated with that vision, and to ensure the updated Master Plan is an effective tool to help guide the community toward its desired outcomes.

Phase I Summary

This executive summary provides a high level overview of key findings and recommendations identified as part of Phase I. The results of ReImagine Reno's Phase I research, analysis and community engagement efforts are reflected in the following standalone work products:

- **Community Profile:** this report provides an overview of existing conditions in the City and region. It also highlights trends and key issues that will influence Phase II of the ReImagine Reno process, with respect to a range of topics—population, employment, housing, infrastructure and services, and others. The Community Profile also contains two technical memorandums (incorporated as appendices) developed by Economic & Planning Systems, Inc.—one that provides an overview of real estate market context in Reno and another that provides a summary of initial municipal fiscal impact analysis findings developed through creation of a fiscal model. These memoranda helped to inform the development of the Community Profile and Master Plan Assessment during Phase I and will help inform Phase II discussions as well.
- **Master Plan Assessment:** this report identifies aspects of the current Master Plan that have worked well and should be carried forward, aspects that need to be revisited as part of the plan update process, and potential gaps that exist in the plan and need to be addressed based on our review and assessment of the current City of Reno Master Plan, interviews with numerous stakeholders, discussions with City staff and elected and appointed officials, and the results of extensive community input received as part of Phase I outreach. These observations also draw from

PROCESS OVERVIEW

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the consultants' professional experience and research of best practices from around the country as to the most innovative and effective comprehensive plans.

- **Public Input Summary Report:** this report provides an overview of Phase I public engagement activities and summarizes the input received from the nearly 6,000 people who participated.

These materials will be refined based on input received from City Council and Planning Commission in January 2016, and will be used to help guide potential next steps for the ReImagine Reno process as part of Phase II. All reports are available in the Resources section of the ReImagine Reno website: www.reimaginereno.us/resources.

Planning Context

BACKGROUND ON THE CURRENT MASTER PLAN

The 1998 City of Reno Master Plan, *The Great City Plan*, provides policy guidance on a range of issues, including land use, transportation, housing, public facilities and services, recreation and open space, conservation, and historic preservation. The City's planning area includes the City of Reno and its Sphere of Influence—an area into which the City could be expected to expand its limits over a twenty-year period.

The current Master Plan has been amended and updated numerous times since it was initially adopted. It has also been informed by several iterations of the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan, as required by law, including the most recent 2007 update.

BASIS FOR THE MASTER PLAN

In accordance with Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 278.160, the City of Reno is required to include a series of elements in its Master Plan. The table on the following page outlines the elements as required by NRS, along with the corresponding section(s) in the City's current Master Plan. The Policy Plan, last amended in April 2012, provides citywide policy guidance with respect to all of the required elements.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS AND POLICES

Numerous plans and policies inform, and in some cases help implement, different aspects of the City of Reno Master Plan. These plans and policies address topics such as regional growth and development, infrastructure and services, transportation, education, and other related issues. A complete listing of applicable plans and policies is provided in the Master Plan Assessment report and Community Profile report.

Required Master Plan Elements

REQUIRED ELEMENTS	CORRESPONDING CITY OF RENO MASTER PLAN SECTIONS (CITYWIDE)*
Conservation	Conservation Plan (Adopted October 2008)
Historic Preservation	Historic Plan (Adopted November 2012)
Housing	Housing Plan (Adopted 2008)
Land Use	Land Use Plan (Adopted August 2010)
Public Facilities and Services	Public Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Plan (Amended September 2009) Population Plan (Adopted October 2008)
Recreation and Open Space	Open Space and Greenways Plan (Adopted March 2007)
Safety	Public Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Plan (Amended September 2009)
Transportation	Public Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Plan (Amended September 2009)

**The City's Master Plan also includes numerous center and corridor plans and neighborhood plans not listed above.*

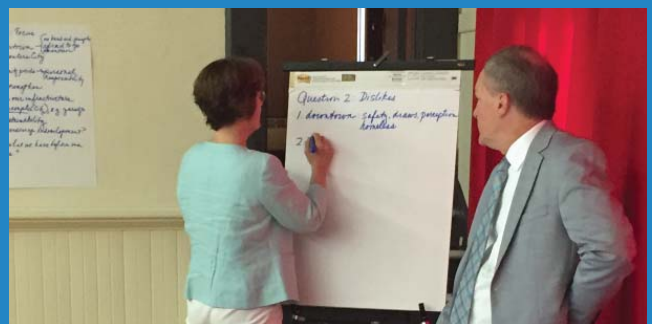
PHASE I PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

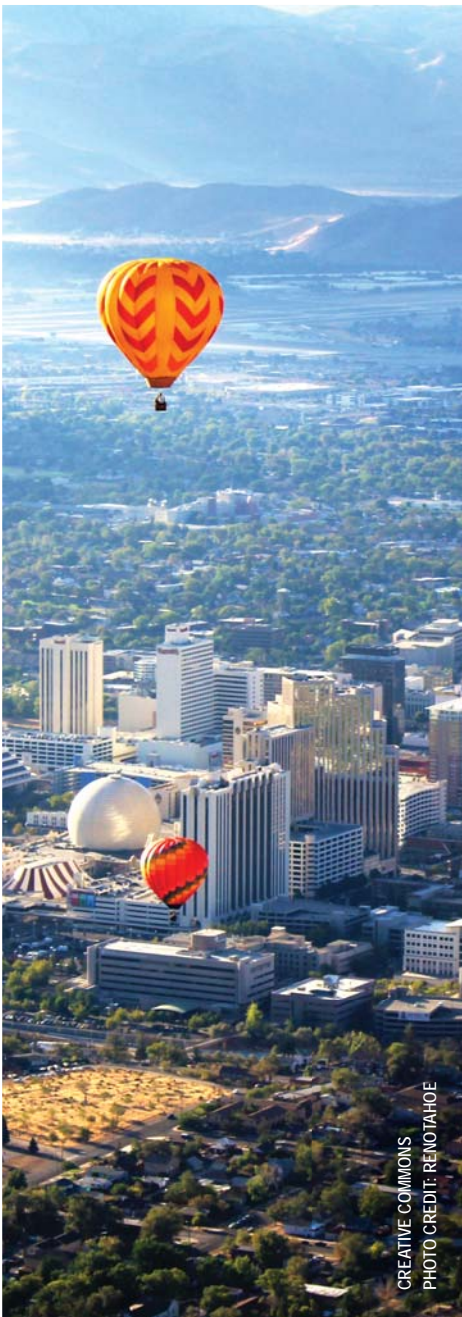
A key consideration in the development of the Public Participation Plan, or PPP, for Phase I of the Master Plan update was an outgrowth of consensus among policy makers, City staff and the community that in light of the significant number of changes and developments since the last comprehensive plan in the mid-1990's, combined with unique opportunities that have emerged during the last two years, the time was right to undertake broad outreach to identify a shared vision for the future. The planning, execution and coordination of all the components of the PPP--from website design to media buys to developing the focus group structure and content-- was handled in-house by City staff in the City Manager's Office (CMO), the Office of Communication and Community Engagement (OCCE) and the Department of Community Development (CD).

From the beginning, the City's intent for the ReImagine Reno process was to aim for the widest public engagement in our history. Every effort was also made to maximize the latest technologies and practices to achieve that goal. As a result:

- 4,025 people took the online survey
- 766 participated as part of 29 focus groups
- 1,033 people were present for 32 "road show" presentations

Every effort was made to solicit input from participants that were representative of the City's demographic and geographic diversity (e.g. different age groups and special populations, as well as Ward neighborhoods and various districts, such as Midtown, downtown, and the Liberty District), as well as participants with interest in specialized topics and emerging topics of interest to the community (e.g., climate change, food). In all, almost 6,000 people participated in the first round of public engagement. What emerged from these efforts was clear consensus on the top themes our residents see as our brightest vision for the future as well as aspects of the community that they want to see preserved and improved. Preferences around housing, neighborhood and transportation are more varied, and further public participation will be needed to address potential conflicts and determine the right balance of trade-offs. Additional input will also be needed on ideas that we did not specifically poll in the online community survey but emerged as potential important themes through inputs received in the focus groups. Detailed results of Phase I public engagement activities are provided in the Public Input Summary Report.





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WHERE ARE WE TODAY?

What are the major trends and forces affecting the City and region?

The following provides a brief overview of major trends and forces that will influence Phase II of the ReImagine Reno process; the full discussion is available in the Community Profile:

POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Reno's population in 2015 was estimated to be 236,883 and is expected to reach 309,583 by 2034. The timing of this growth is uncertain, as recent economic development efforts could mean the region will see a much larger influx of new residents in the next five years than previously expected. In addition, the population of the City is changing; while Reno's median age is becoming younger, the percentage of Reno residents over the age of 65 is expected to grow at more than twice the rate of the population as a whole, and the City is also becoming more ethnically diverse.

HOUSING

The housing and real estate markets were particularly hard hit during the Great Recession. New housing starts dropped sharply, approved projects remained unbuilt, and the values of existing homes decreased from a peak in 2006. However, there are signs of recovery--recent years have seen an increase in building permits home values appear to be stabilizing, and employment in construction has increased faster than any other industry. While housing remains relatively affordable in Reno, it is a growing concern for many residents experiencing increasingly unsustainable portions of their income going towards housing.

ECONOMY

Following job losses over the past ten years and a high unemployment rate, Reno is now experiencing a period of sustained job growth. Unemployment is down, although not quite to levels seen prior to the Great Recession. Large firms, such as Tesla, Switch, Apple, and Amazon have already announced investments in the Reno area, with more expected. Despite a push to attract more technology and manufacturing jobs to the City, most employment is in service sector industries, especially those related to tourism, gaming and casinos. Other major employers include the Washoe County School District, University of Nevada-Reno, and Renown Regional Medical Center.

WHERE ARE WE TODAY?

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INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

- **Water:** While a recent period of prolonged drought has raised concerns about the City's water supply, the Truckee Meadows Water Authority (or TMWA), the main water utility in the region, has enough water in its system to meet the current needs of residents and businesses in the Truckee Meadows, as well as the anticipated needs of the region to 2034. The recent final approvals of the Truckee River Operating Agreement are expected to improve storage capacity and flexibility in how Reno and the region use this precious water resource. However, water services are not available in some places within the Truckee Meadows Service Area, particularly in the North Valleys, raising potential barriers to the future growth and development of these areas.
- **Sewer & Wastewater:** Unlike water, sewer and wastewater services are provided by the City of Reno, City of Sparks, and Washoe County, and there is a high degree of cooperation and coordination between these three entities in providing services. While the wastewater facilities in the region all have spare operating capacity, constraints, such as water quality regulations governing discharges into the Truckee River and the reuse or disposal of reclaimed water, could create barriers to future development in the City well before the capacity of these facilities is reached.
- **Transportation:** The automobile is the predominant mode of transportation in the City of Reno, and residents value the ease with which they can travel around the City. However, as the region's roadways reach and exceed their designed-for capacities, traffic and congestion are becoming larger issues. In addition, population growth and changing commuting patterns could exacerbate these trends—already workers in the City have seen their average commute times increase over the past 15 years. In response, the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) has shifted a focus to providing more public transit service in the region, and both RTC and the City of Reno have invested in new bike lanes and sidewalks in order to promote greater use of alternative modes of transportation. However, funding for transportation projects are limited, and will not be enough to address all of the region's needs.
- **Education & Schools:** Residents of Reno generally have higher levels of educational attainment than their peers elsewhere in Nevada or the United States,

Reno's population in 2015 was estimated to be 236,883 and is expected to reach 309,583 by 2034.



How can the City best maintain the high quality of life enjoyed by residents in the face of additional growth?

thanks in large part to the presence of the University of Nevada Reno (or UNR) and Truckee Meadows Community College in the City. However, the Washoe County School District is facing a series of challenges related to a lack of funding for the construction of new facilities to accommodate the region's growing population, as well as funding for completing needed repairs, maintenance, and upgrades in its existing facilities. While not something that the City of Reno has direct influence over, schools and concerns about school quality are important values held by the community, as seen in the ReImagine Reno Phase I Public Input Summary Report.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

What are the key policy questions to be considered?

Phase I identified a number of issues and opportunities facing the City of Reno over the next ten to 20 years. These raise important policy questions that will need to be discussed further with the community, City staff, elected and appointed officials, as well as regional stakeholders during Phase II of the ReImagine Reno process. Broadly, these questions concern where and how the City of Reno should grow in the future, how the City can best maintain the high quality of life enjoyed by residents in the face of additional growth, and how best to prioritize where the City invests its limited resources. To help start the discussion, the following sections provide some context and key points that should be taken into consideration as the City and community begin to think about these questions.

FUTURE GROWTH

Deciding where and how the City of Reno grows in the future is important. Analysis of approved development units and available land indicates that single-family homes in large master planned communities may continue to be the predominant pattern of development moving forward. While the majority of respondents to the Phase I Community Survey indicated that they would like to continue to live in single-family homes, there was also strong support for more walkable neighborhoods and a desire to see housing remain affordable in Reno—traits not commonly associated with low-density suburban style development that has been most common in Reno over the past 15 years.

Related to the discussion of how the City grows is that of where the City should grow. The findings from the technical memoranda prepared by EPS suggest that the location

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

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of new growth will have considerable impacts on the fiscal health of the City. The costs of providing new services and infrastructure vary by location within the City, and appear to be greater for low-density patterns of development in greenfield areas and in the northern part of the City. However, there are some exceptions. For example, while higher density residential development is typically less expensive to serve with roads, fire services, sewer services, and public transit, the analysis showed that multifamily development has a slightly negative net fiscal impact on the City's General Fund because it generates less property tax than single-family homes. Moving forward, it will be important to consider if the City of Reno should try to more strategically encourage certain development types in certain locations.

Demographic trends are also important to consider. These trends indicate that although the median age of Reno residents is getting younger, the City will see its population over 65 grow at a much quicker pace than other age groups. In the future, this trend could influence the types of housing residents would like to live in. National trends suggest that older adults are looking to downsize from their current homes, especially as they become "empty-nesters" or become less physically able to move around and maintain multi-story single-family homes. Mobility is also an issue for older residents who are no longer able to drive cars, but still need to access services and move around the City.

In light of these and other trends, it will be important to consider the following questions during Phase II of the ReImagine Reno process:

- Why should we grow? What happens if we don't?
- Where in the City do we want to direct growth?
- What does this growth look like?
- What are the tradeoffs associated with different types, forms, and locations of development?

QUALITY OF LIFE AND LEVEL OF SERVICE

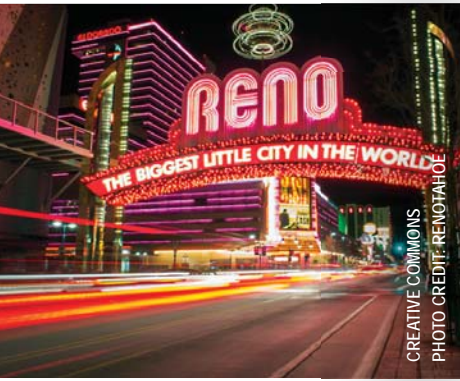
Residents of Reno love where they live. This was made very clear through the community participation process undertaken during Phase I, where respondents regularly used terms such as "warm," "welcoming," "friendly," "beautiful outdoor setting," and "open" to describe life in Reno. These qualities, along with a friendly business environment, have encouraged many new and dynamic companies to relocate to the area and the City is expected to see its population increase by around 77,000 people over the



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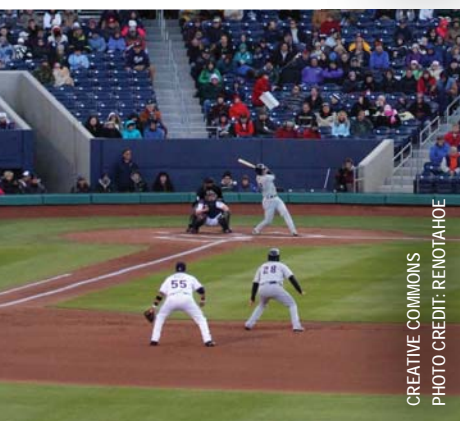
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next 20 years. While the City will be hard-pressed to halt growth entirely, there are important steps it could take through the Master Plan to help the community manage growth in such a way to minimize its negative impacts on quality of life. For example, during initial discussions with elected and appointed officials, the idea of Reno as a “20 minute town”— meaning that residents can commute to work and access everyday goods and services in 20 minutes or less—was given to illustrate one aspect of what makes Reno an attractive place to live. However, as the City grows, traffic and congestion on roadways will increase (based on approved plans for new residential development on the periphery of the City and increased freight traffic), resulting in longer travel times around the City. Encouraging residential development closer to commercial and employment uses, or in areas well served by public transit could be strategies to address this issue, reducing the distance and time future residents need to travel in order to access employment and services.

New growth in Reno will impact services and infrastructure that are essential to support new residents and businesses in the City. As the City grows, new investments in water, sewer and wastewater services, and transportation networks, among others, will be necessary to maintain acceptable levels of service. For instance, the City of Reno has three different wastewater treatment sheds served by different treatment facilities of varying sizes and capacities. However, both the user fees and connections fees across the three sheds are the same, despite the fact that each wastewater facility has varying costs and expected timing for upgrades and capacity increases. Charging different fees depending on geographic location could be one way in which the City could ensure funding for needed improvements are better aligned with increased demands.

In addition, protecting residents’ quality of life in the face of new growth may require the City to take a more proactive approach to infrastructure and services currently not in their purview. The issue of schools and education is a prominent example. The Washoe County School District (WCSD) is currently facing issues of school overcrowding and maintenance requirements coupled with large budget shortfalls. While the issue has not impacted school quality too severely, new growth threatens to exacerbate the issue as the district does not look likely to be able to keep up with anticipated needs. For instance, the amount of new homes that would be needed to fund the construction of a new school typically results in an increase in student enrollment greater than what could be accommodated in the new school. Moving forward, it will be important to include a range of regional stakeholders, such as WCSD, in discussions undertaken during Phase II.

In light of these and other trends, it will be important to consider the following questions during Phase II of the ReImagine Reno process:

- How do we plan for and address constraints to accommodate anticipated growth?
- What are the aspects or qualities that make Reno a great place to live and how do we preserve them in the face of growth?

PRIORITIES FOR PUBLIC INVESTMENTS

The City of Reno will need to prioritize where it invests its limited resources. In addition to investments necessary to support new growth, a number of needs were identified by the community during Phase I, both for improving existing services and infrastructure and for new ones. In most cases, the City of Reno and other regional service providers do not have the resources they need to meet these identified needs. In light of these

financial constraints, it will be important to identify the areas, services, or projects that are most important to the community.

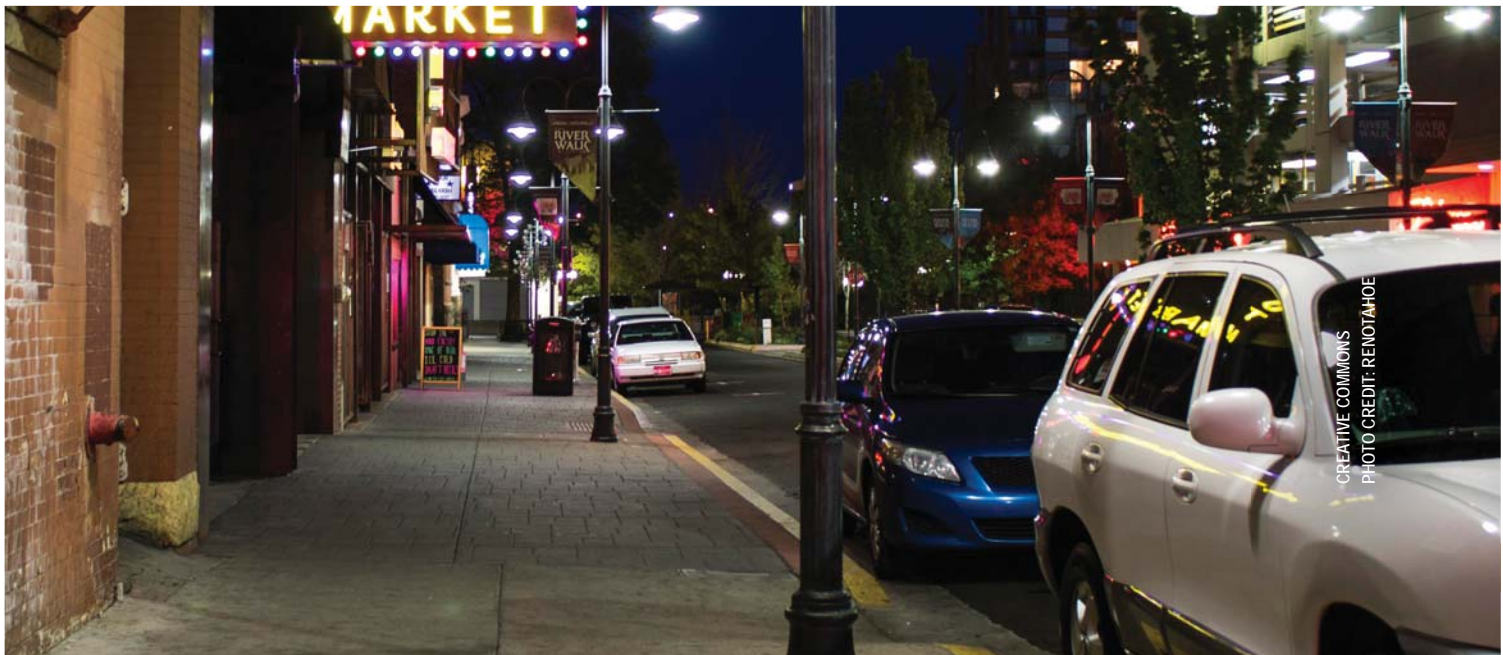
Transportation is a good example of an area where it will be important to better understand community priorities. While many residents expressed a desire to see improvements in the existing public transportation system, just as many also wanted to see the City focus on improving traffic flows and improving the ease of driving in Reno. Still others wanted to see Reno and RTC invest in new forms of public transit, such as rail-based transit. Given that both the City and RTC do not have the resources to address all of these, it will be necessary to make compromises between these competing needs.

Beyond transportation, the City also faces demands for investments in many areas, ranging from revitalizing downtown Reno to encouraging sustainability and reducing the City's carbon footprint. Moving forward, it will be important not only to understand the community's priorities, but also to ensure they understand the tradeoffs associated with decisions to invest in certain areas over others. Understanding these priorities will be essential in developing strategies to implement the ideas included in the updated Master Plan.

In light of these and other trends, it will be important to consider the following questions during Phase II of the ReImagine Reno process:

In what areas should we focus our limited resources? How do we respond to emerging trends?

- Infrastructure and services
- Enhancing quality of life
- Promoting economic development and diversification
- Supporting education and workforce development
- Addressing transportation needs and traffic congestion
- Revitalizing downtown Reno
- Providing affordable housing
- Encouraging sustainability





The Reimagine Reno process provides an opportunity to step back and explore community values, and to think critically about the type of place the community would like Reno to be in the future.

MOVING FORWARD

How can we frame our process and updated plan to best position the City for the future?

An overview of the Master Plan Assessment report's recommendations is provided below as a foundation for discussion; more details and case studies are available in the report:

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

In addition to the strengths identified above, we have identified the following areas for improvement:

- Establish a shared vision that is clear and compelling
- Sharpen focus on 21st century challenges and opportunities
- Create an integrated (and more intuitive) policy framework
- Clearly define demand and capacity for future growth
- Strengthen focus on downtown/University linkage
- Establish a framework for implementation and monitoring

Each of these is described in more detail in the following section.

Establish a shared vision that is clear and compelling

As the current Master Plan has been amended over time, the overarching vision on which it was based has become less clear. The Reimagine Reno process provides an opportunity to step back and explore community values and to think critically about the type of place the community would like Reno to be in the future. Through its broad-based community engagement process, the City has sought input from a diverse cross section of people and interest groups. Nearly 6,000 people participated in the first round of public engagement during Phase I. During Phase II, this input will be used to help inform the development of a "big picture" vision for Reno that can be used as a guide for strategic decision-making over the next ten to twenty years. Four themes were identified by participants in Phase I public engagement efforts as critical components of the City's vision for the future. In descending order of importance, they are: 1) A base for outdoor activities; 2) An arts and culture center; and 3) A technology center, and, polling equally, a university town. During Phase II, these themes or initial vision concepts will be explored further as part of continuing conversations.

MOVING FORWARD

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Many contemporary comprehensive plans supplement (or simply replace) the traditional vision statement with a set of “big ideas” that more concisely convey the community’s vision and values and provide strategic direction. While the terminology used to describe these “big ideas” varies by community—guiding principles, tenets, themes, cornerstones, or something altogether different—the common characteristics they share is that they are all succinct, memorable, and firmly grounded in community input. This approach can make the plan more relevant and relatable to “non-planners,” and help build consensus surrounding a set of common ideals that the community as a whole can work towards. Just as important as defining these “big ideas” is conveying why they are important to the future of the community. Creating a highly graphic summary version of the plan can also be an effective way to convey key initiatives and increase its accessibility to a broader audience.

Regardless of how the community’s vision is articulated, generating support for it—within the City of Reno organization, the community at large, and among regional stakeholders will be an essential part of the ReImagine Reno process. Even more important, however, will be the need for the City to build on the momentum generated by the process, and to demonstrate a commitment to stick with the vision over time and to collaborate with stakeholders and the community at large on its implementation. Reno’s vision should provide a framework for decision-making that is clear, but flexible. While City leadership, staffing, and levels of citizen engagement, and community priorities will all evolve over time; the core values expressed as part of the vision should be broad enough to remain relevant over an extended period of time.

Sharpen focus on 21st century challenges and opportunities

Since the City’s current Master Plan was initially adopted nearly 20 years ago, comprehensive plans have evolved in both substance and role. Traditional planning assumptions relied upon the past to foretell the future with regard to growth and economic projections and largely assumed that other factors—whether climate conditions, technology, cultural norms, energy supply, ecosystems, water resources, natural hazards, or human health—would remain relatively stable. The new reality for planning is one in which the future is evolving and uncertain. As such, contemporary comprehensive plans are broader in terms of the range of topics they address and the linkages between the topics. They are also broader in role, having much stronger linkages to governance.

Key to the evolution of comprehensive plans has been an emphasis on the integration of sustainability and resilience considerations. Although closely related, sustainability and resilience are distinctly different:



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The City has a history of prioritizing "green" and sustainable initiatives.

- **"Sustainability"** seeks to manage normal forms of change through programs and procedures that consider growth impacts on environment, community, and economy.
- **"Resilience"** seeks to manage disruptive forms of change, such as natural disasters and economic downturns, through mitigation and adaptation plans and actions that anticipate and contain disruptive impacts.

This importance of addressing these considerations as part of the ReImagine Reno process is underscored both by the City's demonstrated commitment to 'green' and sustainable initiatives, and by the range of issues cited by stakeholders and the community at large as particular areas of concern. Some of these issues—such as urban agriculture and food security—are truly new topics that were not contemplated in the current Master Plan. Other issues—such as community health and wellness, water conservation, sustainable growth patterns, and climate adaptation—are addressed to varying degrees by current Master Plan policies. Increased focus on many of these issues has emerged in recent years and as part of Phase I public engagement efforts in part due to ongoing drought conditions in the West and concerns about the potential impacts of climate change on Reno's quality of life and economy (e.g., impacts to Truckee River and ski areas).

CITY OF RENO "GREEN" AND SUSTAINABLE INITIATIVES

The City of Reno has a history of prioritizing "green" and sustainable initiatives since 2007 and has taken numerous steps to reduce its impact on the environment, lower its energy bills, and improve quality of life for its residents. Through the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Initiative, started in 2009 under the Council Green Priority, Reno invested in a variety of energy projects designed to tap into Nevada's wealth of solar, wind and geothermal resources. These projects included solar photovoltaic (PV) systems, a wind turbine demonstration program, solar thermal heating systems, lighting retrofits, control systems, and a variety of HVAC upgrades in City facilities. These efforts have dramatically increased the percentage of the City's energy that comes from renewable sources and has also yielded energy and financial savings.

The City's commitment to sustainability was further underscored in August 2015, when City Council voted unanimously to join the Compact of Mayors, a global coalition of mayors and city officials committed to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions, enhance resilience to climate change, and track their progress publicly. Through this initiative, the City has committed to take the following steps:

- **Take Inventory.** Within one year, assess and report on the current impacts of climate change on the City through a community-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory with a breakdown of emissions for buildings and transport sectors and identify climate hazards.
- **Create reduction targets and establish a system of measurements.** Within two years, update its GHG inventory to also include a breakdown of emissions from waste sector; set a target to reduce GHG emissions; conduct a climate change vulnerability assessment; and report on these efforts.
- **Establish an action plan.** Within three years, demonstrate through a strategic climate action and adaptation plan how the City will deliver its commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change.

Incorporating climate change considerations more directly as part of the updated Master Plan will allow the City to address this issue in an integrated and coordinated manner, and to set the stage for a more detailed climate action and adaptation plan.

The Master Plan update process is an opportunity to explore the policy implications of these and other emerging issues—such as changing demographics and cultural norms, the sharing economy, and technological advances in transportation and logistics—on Reno’s economy, community, and built environment. The Master Plan Assessment contains a detailed analysis of these 21st century issues and opportunities. As part of Phase II, potential impacts and consequences of these varied issues and opportunities can be explored, along with goals, policies, and strategies to address them into the updated Master Plan, as appropriate.

Create an more integrated (and intuitive) policy framework

The relationship between citywide policies and topic- or area-specific policies can be challenging to follow in the current Master Plan. In order to be truly effective, the updated Master Plan must be viewed as an effective tool for not just City staff and planning commission members, but for neighborhood residents, business and property owners, elected and appointed officials, prospective residents or employers, and the community at large. The following steps—both organizational and substantive—are recommended for consideration to ensure the updated Master Plan is clear, succinct, and user-friendly for a variety of users.

- **Streamline and reduce redundancy.** The current Master Plan is organized as a series of free-standing plans. While this structure is convenient in that it allows each required plan to be updated independent of the others, it adds significant redundancy and length to an already complex document. An integrated plan structure should be considered going forward to not just streamline the plan, but to promote systems thinking, as discussed in the prior section and the next bullet.
- **Create a clear linkage between vision, goals, and policies.** The organization of the current Master Plan does not provide a clear ‘through line’ between the stated goals and supporting policies. This structure increases the potential for certain policies to be missed and encourages the practice of applying individual elements of the current Master Plan in isolation as opposed to being viewed as an integrated system of considerations to be viewed in balance. A variety of potential options for creating a more integrated plan policy framework exist and should be explored as part of the Reimagine Reno process.
- **Use consistent terminology and policy structure throughout.** The Policy Plan contains most of the goals and policies intended to apply citywide; however, some of the individual plans contain goals and more detailed policy guidance on specific topics (i.e. housing, historic preservation) that are also covered at the citywide level. Going forward, existing language in all elements should be reviewed and updated to ensure consistent terminology and policy structure is used throughout the plan.
- **Consolidate technical information in a centralized appendix.** Several of the Master Plan’s individual plans contain technical information or extensive background narrative that is outdated and/or may not be used regularly. This information should be reviewed, updated as necessary, and consolidated in a technical appendix (along with lists of defined terms) where it can be referred to by City staff and others on an as needed basis.
- **Strengthen discussion of partner roles and supporting plans.** There are numerous functional plans that inform the City’s Master Plan. A more robust discussion of the role of the City’s many partners and service providers within the region (along with hyperlinks to applicable plans and other essential information) should be incorporated as part of the updated Master Plan.





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- **Consider integrating center and corridor and neighborhood plans.** As a supplement to the citywide policy framework, the current Master Plan contains nearly 30 individual plans for centers, corridors, and neighborhoods. Each of these plans varies in structure and level of specificity. As the City works to update its citywide policy framework, careful consideration should be given as to how the many area-specific plans are intended to fit together to create a cohesive and comprehensive Master Plan. To streamline the updated Master Plan, policies that apply in more than one location could be consolidated (e.g., general policies related to corridors). Tailored policies and other area-specific information could be carried forward and updated where applicable.
- **Reevaluate level of specificity (and possibly extent) of area-specific plans.** Consideration should also be given as to whether the current level of specificity in some plans—which border on regulatory in nature—should be reevaluated as part of the Master Plan update process. Challenges related to the current level of specificity in the City's Master Plan have been most pronounced in adopted plans for the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) corridors, which specify minimum densities for residential and non-residential development and include fairly prescriptive policies associated with building orientation and other site design considerations. Although the City has already invested significant time in completing targeted updates to its TOD corridor policies to provide increased flexibility, numerous stakeholders expressed concern that policies are still challenging to meet given the limited transit service that exists in some corridors today and a market that is still largely driven by more auto-dependent development patterns. The issue of balancing a long-term vision with short-term realities is an important discussion. As part of Phase II growth discussions, further analysis is needed to explore trade-offs associated with potential adjustments to the extent and/or specificity of area-specific plans within the context of City-wide growth considerations. This analysis will ensure that the community is well-informed about the key choices to be made for the future and help inform discussions as part of the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan update in 2017.

Clearly define demand and capacity for future growth

During initial stakeholder interviews, the need to quantify the City's overall capacity for future growth was mentioned repeatedly as a key issue to address as part of the Master Plan update, particularly in light of recent and emerging trends in employment and demographic shifts. The issues of development capacity and market demand are particularly important as they pertain to the extent to which the City will accommodate future growth through infill and redevelopment balanced with greenfield development. In general, a more robust discussion of factors influencing future growth opportunities in Reno should be explored as part of Phase II and incorporated as part of the updated Master Plan. Key considerations include:

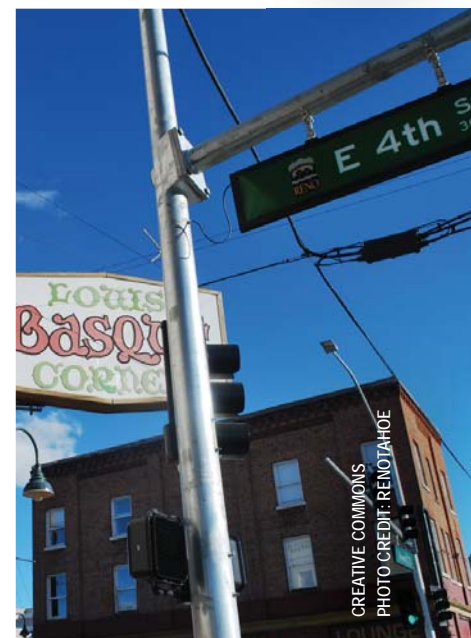
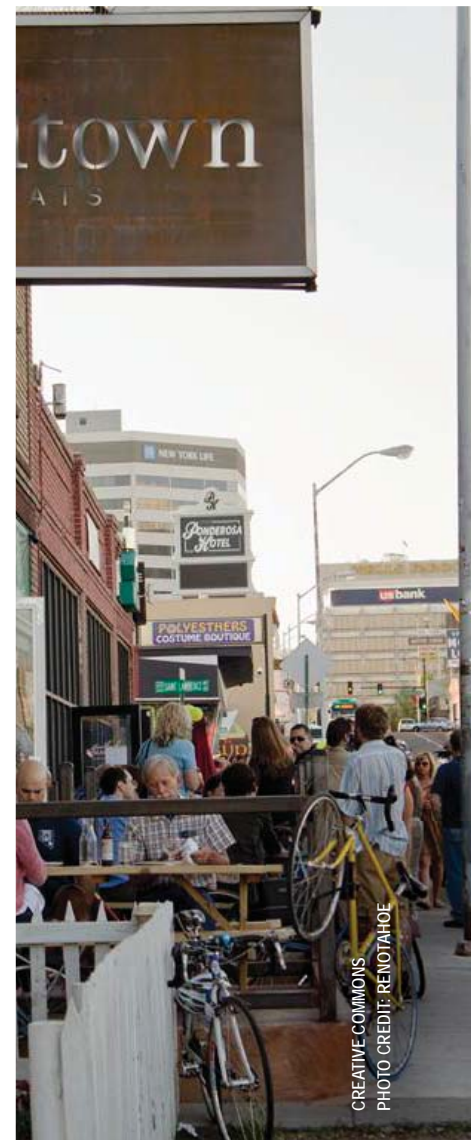
- **Incorporate more robust discussion of development capacity and market demand.** The current Master Plan assumes an average minimum density of four people per acre, as required by the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan, and some areas of development at higher densities within the TODs and Regional Centers. It also assumes that infrastructure and services will be provided in response to a continuation of market trends. Phase II will build upon the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency's (TMRPA) residential and industrial buildable land inventories to tailor the results to Reno specifically and develop a series of maps that document available, buildable land to help frame discussions of how and where to accommodate growth.

- **Integrate more in-depth discussion of infrastructure and service needs.** A key factor in understanding future development capacity (and timing) is the ability for staff, elected and appointed officials, property owners, and the development community to readily assess the availability of water, public services and facilities, and infrastructure, in different parts of the City and Sphere of Influence. Although the current Master Plan addresses these considerations at some level, the information is located in several different plans within the overall Master Plan and in many instances, more detailed plans are referenced. Coordination of public facilities and services as they pertain to future growth is a key role played by the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan; however, it is important that, as with development capacity, the City have the ability to readily access a consolidated map or set of maps that reflects current conditions and identifies planned improvements needed to serve growth in different parts of the City. This information can be used as a tool to help guide future development and to help assess priorities. Again, TMRPA's efforts with respect to residential and industrial buildable land inventories are a tremendous asset for the City and can be used to help inform these discussions as part of the Master Plan update.
- **Take a more proactive approach to infrastructure provision.** Current City policy largely requires development to pay its own way and the cost of infrastructure needed to support new development is borne primarily by the developer, especially in areas of greenfield development. Placing the burden largely on the developer impacts where growth can and will go due to the economic feasibility of privately funding infrastructure to support new development. The investment of capital dollars into infrastructure can have a major impact on where development occurs and the resulting land use pattern. The City has the potential to more proactively chart its future growth patterns by leading with investments in needed infrastructure. This shift in approach and policy could greatly aid in achieving the vision set forth in the Master Plan but is not without risk of missing market demand or lacking revenue options. This proactive approach would also likely require the City to partner with regional agencies given the current roles and responsibility for providing services and infrastructure in the region. Potential trade-offs associated with different patterns of growth and approaches to infrastructure financing for key focus areas should be explored as part of Phase II. And, once the updated Master Plan is completed, it will be essential to establish a mechanism by which development and infrastructure capacity can be maintained on an ongoing basis in collaboration with TMRPA and other regional partners.

Strengthen focus on downtown/University linkage

The revitalization of downtown has been identified as a priority for City leadership and the community at large. While some parts of downtown have experienced significant reinvestment in recent years and are thriving, others continue to struggle. There are several opportunities to consider:

- **Update Regional Center boundaries.** The University Regional Center Plan (URCP) will replace in its entirety the University of Nevada Reno Regional Center Plan (UNRRCP) in the updated Master Plan. The URCP shifts the current regional center plan eastern boundary west and the southern boundary south toward downtown Reno. This is an essential step to support the University of Nevada, Reno Campus Master Plan 2015-2024 and the vision of a campus mixed-use environment connecting to downtown.



SUCCESSSES AND STRENGTHS OF THE CURRENT MASTER PLAN

Overall, the current Master Plan contains a number of strengths that provide a solid foundation on which to build:

- **Emphasis on regional collaboration.** The current Master Plan supports a long-standing emphasis on regional growth management considerations and a track record of cooperation with the City of Sparks, Washoe County, the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency, the Regional Transportation Commission, University of Nevada Reno, Washoe County Health District, and numerous other regional stakeholders.
- **Solid foundation of core sustainability principles.** The current Master Plan touches on many of the core sustainability principles embodied in contemporary master plans—infill and redevelopment, environmental protection, energy and water conservation, renewable energy, access to social and human services, housing diversity, growth management, and many others. Although there are gaps and opportunities to strengthen and further integrate the consideration of these principles as part of the plan update, the basis for those discussions is firmly in place.
- **Detailed hierarchy of plans and policy direction.** The current Master Plan establishes a hierarchy of plans and policy direction to address specific needs in different parts of the City and address regional requirements. This hierarchy includes center and corridor plans, neighborhood plans, and other functional plans to help implement citywide policies.
- **A track record of regular updates.** Individual plans within the current Master Plan have been regularly updated (typically every five years) to ensure they remain current and relevant. As a result, the Master Plan has a solid foundation that will allow a significant portion of its substance to be updated, reorganized, and augmented as needed as part of the plan update process, as opposed to needing to “start from scratch,” which is more typical with most plans of this age.

The updated Master Plan has the potential to be used much more strategically in day-to-day decision-making.

- **Develop a plan of action for downtown.** Although the Downtown Reno Regional Center Plan is relatively recent, additional discussion is needed as part of the Master Plan update process to address the numerous downtown-specific challenges cited as part of initial stakeholder interviews and dozens of community focus groups, which include—vibrancy, blight mitigation, parking, public safety, cleanliness, homelessness, short-term housing, and vacant buildings to name a few. A detailed plan of action is needed to identify strategic priorities and promote collaboration among downtown property owners and businesses.
- **Identify strategies to catalyze reinvestment in the University District.** The URCP identifies the University District as an area generally inscribed by 9th Street to downtown Reno, bounded in most part by North Virginia Street and Evans Avenue. The URCP seeks to catalyze reinvestment in this area with University-induced uses to create a vibrant, safe and secure mixed-use neighborhood that links the University and downtown Reno. A range of strategies to help kick start reinvestment in this area should be explored as part of the Master Plan update.

The extent to which these efforts will occur as part of parallel downtown initiatives being explored by the City and other stakeholders will be determined as Phase II efforts get underway. As such, it will be essential for the Master Plan update process to be closely coordinated with these parallel initiatives. Regardless of the ultimate approach(es) selected for downtown, it is anticipated that the updated Master Plan will play a critical role helping shape and/or reinforce future directions for downtown.

Establish a framework for implementation and monitoring

Although the importance of implementation is referenced throughout the current Master Plan, most participants in the stakeholder interviews noted that the Master Plan

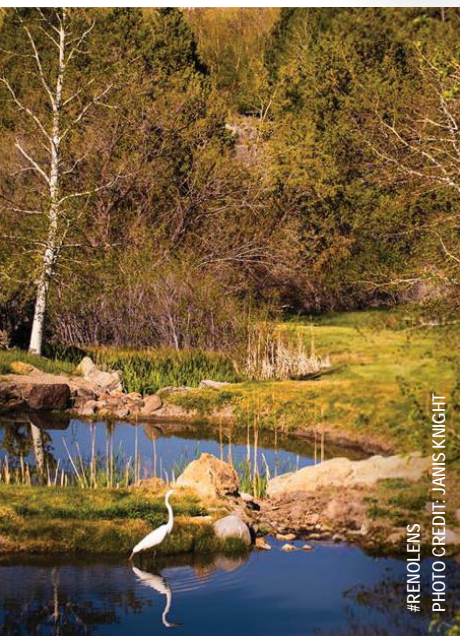
is primarily used in the review of individual development proposals. While ensuring future development is consistent with the City's goals and policies is an essential role that the Master Plan should continue to play, the updated Master Plan has the potential to be used much more strategically by Reno's elected and appointed officials and City staff in day-to-day decision-making. Opportunities to strengthen the role of the updated Master Plan as part of the plan update process include:

- **Define a clear strategy for implementation.** Although some of the more recent plans within the current Master Plan (i.e., Housing and Historic Preservation) contain recommended actions to implement specific goals and policies, the Policy Plan and other plans contain only broad references. The updated Master Plan should include a clear strategy for implementation that outlines: 1) A list of recommended strategies/actions that is aligned with the plan policy framework. (e.g., set of strategies/actions that accompanying each citywide goal). 2) Identification of roles and responsibilities for carrying out each action—City departments as well as external stakeholders/partners. 3) A suggested timeline for completion. 4) Discussion of the plan amendment process.
- **Identify a “short list” of near-term priorities.** As a companion to a comprehensive implementation/action plan, the identification of a short list of near-term priorities can help focus the allocation of resources and staff time following the Master Plan's adoption. It can also be used to continue momentum generated as part of the community engagement process, demonstrate a strong commitment to move the plan forward, and to promote transparency and accountability over time.
- **Strengthen linkage to the City's CIP and budgeting process.** Aligning the updated Master Plan with the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and the budgeting process can help foster accountability, promote collaboration between City departments, and build trust in the planning process. In accordance with the state law and the Regional Plan, the current Policy Plan recommends that the City prepare and annually update a Five-Year CIP to support implementation of the Master Plan, and recommends prioritization at three levels (listed in order from highest priority to lowest priority): 1) infrastructure needs within center and corridor plan areas; 2) areas, developed or not, within the existing City limits; and, 3) areas outside of the existing City limits. While the City's current CIP does reference priorities that include long-range plans generally, it appears to focus more on project types generally as opposed to linking to a strategic Master Plan recommendation. The City also participates in the Regional Capital Improvements Program as required by state law. As part of the Master Plan update, opportunities to establish a more robust and innovative approach to the Regional CIP should be explored, along with the possibility of developing a dedicated revenue source to fund priority projects.
- **Identify specific outcomes and measures.** The most successful plans provide clear guidance to stakeholders, decision-makers, and the community at large about what to expect as a result of implementing the plan. Metrics are qualitative or quantitative measurement tools that allow comparisons between a starting condition or baseline and outcomes or changes over time. Metrics may be derived from scientific or technical measurements, such as air quality, as well as more general indices, such as miles of trails or average density within a TOD corridor. A discussion related to the types of outcome measures and metrics that would be most effective for measuring Reno's progress should be initiated as part of the plan update process; however, ongoing discussions may be necessary to get the program fully underway and to add to it over time.





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Recommended Phase II Approach

A preliminary work program for Phase II of the ReImagine Reno process is outlined below, and is discussed in greater detail as part of the Master Plan Assessment report. Specifics of this work program will be refined in early 2016 based on additional discussions with staff, input received as part of the Joint City Council and Planning Commission work session on January 20, 2016, and the results of the Phase II procurement process.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Phase II activities are designed to build upon the extensive and highly successful community and stakeholder engagement effort completed by City staff and others as part of Phase 1. A detailed Public Participation Plan (PPP) will be developed for Phase II that defines specific roles and responsibilities and tools and techniques to be used during each outreach phase. However, it is anticipated that City staff will continue to take the lead on most public engagement activities with support from project team members on targeted stakeholder engagement. City staff and consultant team members will also conduct periodic work sessions with the Planning Commission and City Council to present community input and interim work products and to seek guidance and confirm overall direction throughout the process.

This collaborative approach will ensure a strong local presence is maintained for the duration of the Master Plan update process, provide continuity in the community/stakeholder engagement discussion, and promote the efficient use of available resources. Ensuring close coordination with parallel work efforts underway in the City and Region (e.g., Compact of Mayors commitment, downtown initiatives, Truckee Meadows Regional Plan update) will also be an essential component of the PPP.

PRELIMINARY WORK PLAN

This preliminary work plan includes four primary tasks, as outlined below.

1. Plan Foundations

As part of Task 1, supplemental analysis will be conducted to inform key issues that emerged from Phase I outreach. In addition, a preliminary foundation for the updated Master Plan will be established that articulates the results of community outreach conducted during Phase I, as well as other recommendations and parallel work efforts. Major tasks/deliverables are anticipated to include:

- A draft vision statement and/or set of guiding principles and goals;
- An analysis of housing demand weighed against a housing needs assessment;
- An analysis of economic development opportunities to help inform a new economic "element" in the updated Master Plan; and
- Support on downtown initiatives as appropriate.

2. Focus Area Opportunities and Key Choices

As part Task 2, growth scenarios for different focus areas within the community will be explored, along with key policy choices to support the community's vision and goals. This effort will build upon TMRPA's buildable lands inventories and scenarios, but will be tailored to Reno's needs and questions, helping to explore how potential policy directives will impact the build-out of different focus areas and what potential tradeoffs might be. Results of this analysis will provide targeted inputs to the Truckee Meadows

Regional Plan update, downtown initiatives, and other related efforts. Major tasks/deliverables are anticipated to include:

- Delineation of key focus areas (e.g, downtown Reno, the North Valleys, the TOD Corridors, and Centers/"urban villages") and identification of key issues related to potential growth alternatives in each area;
- Testing of growth scenarios/key policy choices and the impact of growth by area using the baseline fiscal model developed as part of Phase I;
- A preliminary draft policy framework that builds on the vision, guiding principles and goals;
- An analysis of the impact of varying levels of service on Reno's ability to serve future development; and,
- A summary of preliminary directions/recommendations related to focus areas and key policy choices

3. Draft and Final Plan

As part of Task 3, all interim materials developed to date will be assembled into a draft Master Plan that includes a strategy for implementation and monitoring of key plan objectives. The draft Plan will be designed to be user-friendly and easy to update. A targeted assessment of the City's current Land Development Code provisions and other related regulations, policies, and practices will also be conducted as part of this task to determine how they well they support or hinder the implementation of the updated Master Plan. The Major tasks/deliverables are anticipated to include:

- Preliminary and public review drafts of the Master Plan, Future Land Use Plan, and Implementation Strategy for official and public review; and
- A targeted assessment of the City's current Land Development Code.

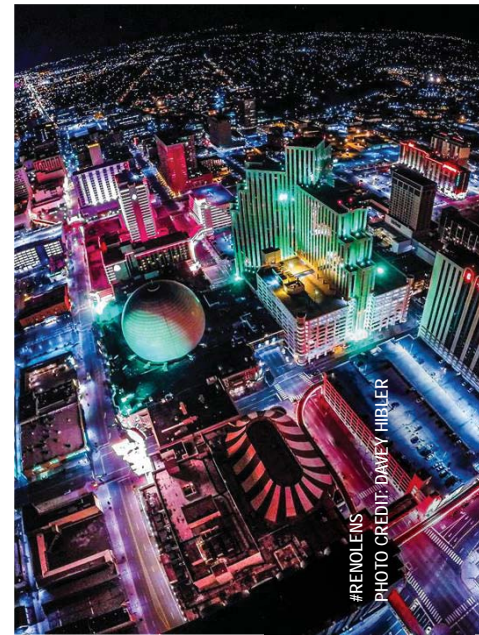
4. Plan Adoption

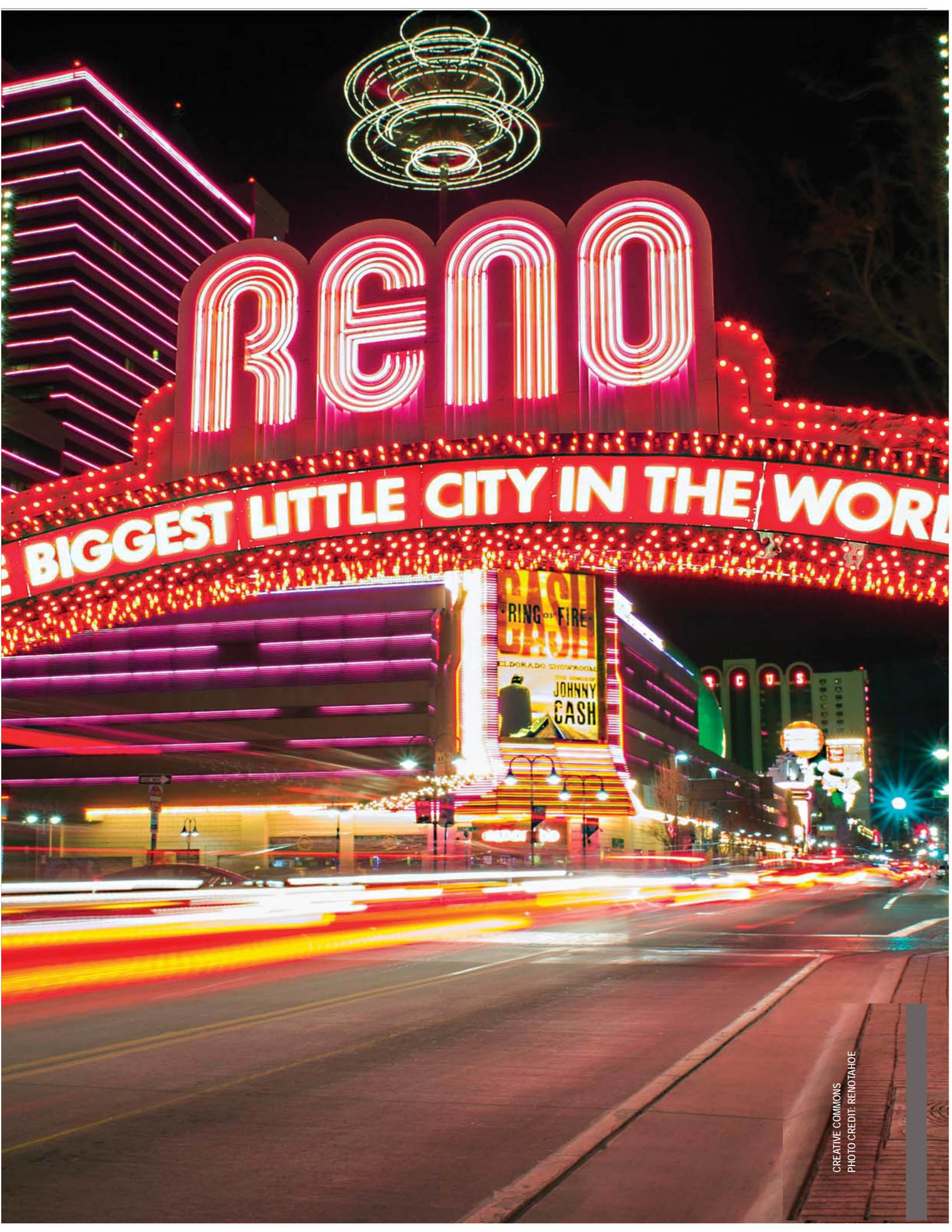
During Task 4, the draft plan will be finalized through the public review and adoption process. Major tasks/deliverables are anticipated to include:

- Adoption draft Master Plan;
- Master Plan Summary Brochure; and
- Public hearings on the draft Master Plan with the Planning Commission and City Council.

TIMELINE

Completion of Phase II work is anticipated to take approximately 14-16 months.





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