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FOCUSING ON REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

Regional connectivity has three primary contexts in this RTP: the larger mega-region that extends from San Francisco to Reno-Sparks, the Northern Nevada and Lake Tahoe Basin area, and the Reno-Sparks metropolitan area. Economic and transportation linkages tie Northern Nevada communities together including Carson City, the Lake Tahoe region, Virginia City, Pyramid Lake, Storey County and other nearby areas. These economic connections continue into California, extending to Sacramento and the San Francisco Bay Area. A strong desire to improve regional connectivity for residents, businesses and visitors was expressed during RTP outreach events. Local residents would like to see more multimodal travel options and freight mobility between these communities and into California.

Northern Nevada is directly impacted by the economic activity surrounding the San Francisco metropolitan region and the Port of Oakland. This relationship is reflected in the concept of Megapolitan Regions, as defined by Arthur Nelson and Robert Lang. Megapolitan Regions share a number of attributes including environmental systems and topography, infrastructure systems, economic linkages, settlement and land use patterns and culture and history. Reno and Sparks are part of the Sierra-Pacific region, which extends from San Francisco to Reno. The Megaregion is connected by the approximately 225 mile long I-80 corridor, which is generally parallel to a Union Pacific mainline railroad. Intercity bus transit is provided between these metropolitan areas by both Greyhound and Megabus. Amtrak provides passenger rail service in the corridor.

This region is important because economic activity in one city has a direct impact on the economy in other cities within the region even though they are hundreds of miles from one another.

RTC is a member of the Trans-Sierra Coalition, a partnership among local, regional, and state agencies to address transportation needs in Northern Nevada and the Lake Tahoe region.

Sierra Pacific Megapolitan Area

This 27-county area extends across Northern California into Nevada. Its population was 12.4 million in 2010; it is projected to reach 16.3 million by 2040, with most of the increase among minority populations.



Source: "Megapolitan America: A New Vision for Understanding America's Metropolitan Geography"

Todd Trumbull / The Chronicle

For example, if the number of ships increases in the Port of Oakland there is an immediate increase in traffic. More trucks and trains pass through Reno, where they unload cargo for redirection to all points throughout the Intermountain West. This impacts the transportation network and indicates there is a need to coordinate not only with nearby entities, but also with entities such as the Sacramento Area Council of Governments, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission in the San Francisco Bay Area, and the Association of Bay Area Governments. These larger regional issues and their impact on the RTC planning area are being considered in the I-80 Corridor Study.

8.1 CONNECTIVITY IN NORTHERN NEVADA

The transportation networks and economies of Northern Nevada communities are even more closely linked. Over 33,000 vehicles enter or leave Washoe County from Carson City each day and about 75,000 vehicles enter or leave Washoe County from I-80 daily. In addition, strong support has been expressed through the RTP process for increasing transit connectivity between the Reno, Sparks, Carson City and Tahoe regions. Strengthening these transit linkages will support sustainable economic development in the Trans-Sierra area. The RTC collaborated with the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) and the other Northern Nevada Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO's) in developing the 2035 RTP. Staff from the Carson Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) and the Tahoe Transportation District (TTD) were members of the 2053 RTP Agency Working Group. All of the MPO's are participants in the Trans-Sierra Coalition and meet periodically to discuss regional issues.



Connecting Nevada

NDOT launched the Connecting Nevada Plan to provide a comprehensive, statewide, multi-modal planning effort with the goal of improving communication and coordination among partner agencies, geographic areas, and planning efforts. Connecting Nevada, in its final form, will be a comprehensive statewide, multi-modal plan to guide transportation decision making processes during the course of the next 50 years. The plan will include contributions from more than 150 participating agencies and stakeholders representing a cross-section of the community, including local, regional, state, and federal government agencies, economic development entities, utilities, trade associations, private businesses, environmental groups, and other interested parties. Connecting Nevada includes elements of stakeholder and public participation that provide for ongoing collaboration, two-way information exchanges, and thoughtful, substantive deliberation of important topics impacting our state's transportation system.

Carson City

Carson City, the capital of Nevada, is located about 25 miles south of the Reno-Sparks metropolitan area. Significant commuter, commercial, and recreational traffic occurs between these two regions. The Carson City Regional Transportation Commission (CCRTC) is the governing agency for transportation improvements in the Carson City urbanized area, and operates Jump Around Carson (JAC), the city's public transit system. JAC began operation in 2005 and features the JAC fixed route system as well as JAC Assist, a demand response program that provides specialized transportation for ADA paratransit eligible individuals with disabilities. Fixed route buses run once each hour. The Carson Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) is responsible for transportation planning within the metropolitan planning area, which includes all of Carson City, as well as portions of Douglas and Lyon Counties. CAMPO is the designated recipient and grantee of urbanized area public transportation funding received directly from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA); and other transit-related Federal funding passed through NDOT. Technically, neither RTC nor CAMPO have staff, but Carson City Public Works employees provide the staffing functions for both entities. The RTC of Washoe County partners with CAMPO to provide INTERCITY transit service, a popular route where an additional coach was put in service in 2012 to ease crowding during peak hour service. I-580 was completed in 2012, a freeway linking Reno and Carson City.

Lake Tahoe Region

The Lake Tahoe Basin and surrounding areas are recognized for their unique beauty, environmental resources, and recreational amenities. Reno is a gateway for visitors travelling to Lake Tahoe, with many entering the region at the Reno-Tahoe International Airport. In addition, Lake Tahoe is a popular recreation destination for residents of the Reno-Sparks metropolitan region. Primary vehicle access is from I-80, Mount Rose Highway, and I-580. An estimated 3 million visitors travel to Lake Tahoe each year. Commuting patterns between the urbanized area and towns such as Truckee, South Lake Tahoe, and Kings Beach are substantial.

In 1969, California and Nevada legislators agreed to a unique Compact for protecting Lake Tahoe and sharing responsibility for that protection. The two states and the U.S. Congress amended the Compact in 1980, with public law 96-551, and at that time also established the Tahoe Transportation District (TTD). The TTD is responsible for facilitating and implementing safe, environmentally positive, multi-modal transportation plans, programs and projects for the Lake Tahoe Basin, including transit operations.

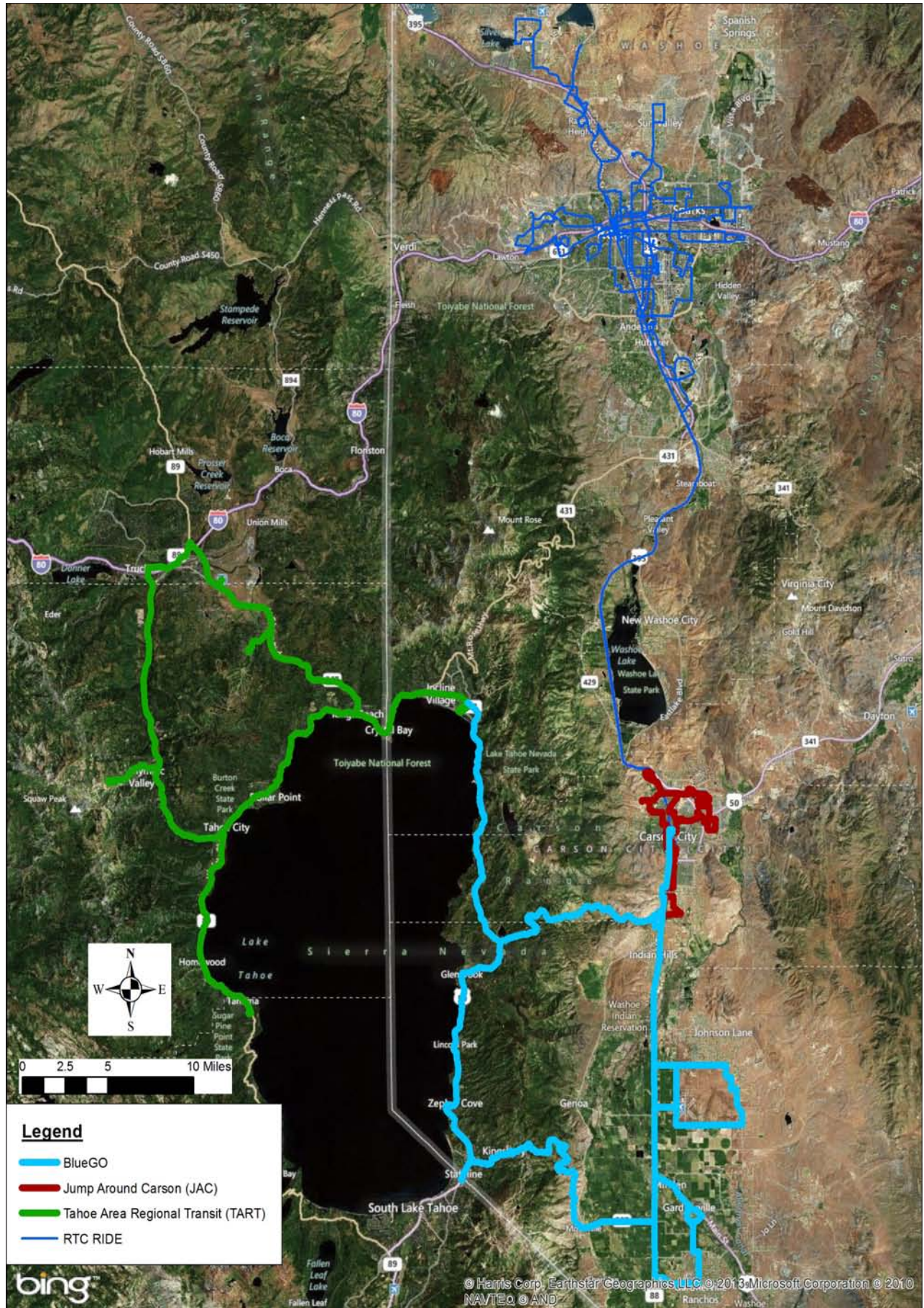
The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (TMPO) for the Lake Tahoe Basin. Staff at TMRPA work with TTD and the RTC to provide a safe, efficient transportation system that serves the basic transportation needs of citizens in the Tahoe Region and supports the economic base of the region in the movement of goods and people.

The South Lake Tahoe area's coordinated transit system includes a South Shore fixed-route service called BlueGO, the seasonal Nifty 50 Trolley, seasonal ski shuttles and commuter bus service to Carson City and the Carson Valley. TTD also provides ADA paratransit and on-demand service within the City of South Lake Tahoe, northern El Dorado County and western Douglas County.

In the summer of 2012 TTD began running the East Shore Express from Incline Village to Sand Harbor State Park that ran daily every 20 minutes from 9 am to 6 pm. This service began in response to the restriction of cars parking along State Route 28 to access Sand Harbor's beaches and facilities. It not only reduced the need for parking on the State Routes, but also reduced traffic congestion, reduced carbon dioxide and made the road safer for bicyclists and pedestrians.

REGIONAL MAP OF TRANSIT SYSTEMS IN CARSON, TAHOE & RENO/SPARKS

MAP 8-1



On the north side of the Lake Tahoe, Placer County operates the Tahoe Area Regional Transit (TART). TART's mainline route transports riders along 30 miles of Lake Tahoe including the communities of Tahoma, Homewood, Tahoe City, Kings Beach and Incline Village. Seasonal bus routes operate in the winter and summer seasons and include service between Truckee, Crystal Bay, the Truckee airport, Northstar and Kings Beach. RTC partners with TTD to contribute to TART service.

Virginia City

Nevada's most famous short rail line is the Virginia & Truckee Railroad which connected Reno with Carson City, Virginia City, and Minden. Operating for 80 years, the V&T was Nevada's Bonanza Railroad as it hauled valuable Comstock ore to quartz reduction mills located at Silver City and along the Carson River. Today visitors to Virginia City enjoy a ride over nearly three miles of the original line. With a population of about 900, Virginia City is a National Historic landmark and popular tourist destination. Virginia City is accessed from Geiger Grade/SR 341 in south Reno.

Pyramid Lake

Pyramid Lake encompasses 125,000 acres and, at 15 miles long and 11 miles wide, it is one of the largest natural lakes in the state and is the biggest remnant of ancient Lake Lahontan. The lake is located entirely within the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe reservation boundary. Pyramid Lake is part of the National Scenic Byways Program. Located about 40 miles northeast of Reno, the lake attracted over 150,000 visitors in 2010. Visitors enjoy fishing, camping and water activities during the summer months. Pyramid Lake is home to five different species of fish: Lahontan Cutthroat Trout, Cui-Ui, Tahoe Sucker, Tui Chub, and Sacramento Perch. In 2010 Pyramid Lake Fisheries stocked over 700,000 fingerling Lahontan Cutthroat Trout in the lake.

Storey County

Storey County is home to the Tahoe Reno Industrial Center (TRIC). TRIC is a 104,000 acre center, located in the community of McCarran, and has the capacity of 80-million-square-feet of industrial space. Some of the companies already at TRIC include Toys R Us, Mars Pet Care, US Ordinance, Tire Rack, Chart Industries, James Hardie, Food Bank of Northern Nevada, Golden Gate Petroleum, Prologis, Pittsburgh Paint, Randa, GDiesel, Duraflex, DIS, McShane, Pet Smart, Wal-Mart and many others. Also located in the area of TRIC are multiple sophisticated power plants: NV Energy, Barrick Mines, and Naniwa (a power plant that provides additional power support during peak hours).

With a county population under 4,000 in 2010, the majority of employees of TRIC commute from Reno and Sparks along the I-80 corridor.

I-80 Corridor

The I-80 Corridor links the Reno-Sparks metropolitan region with San Francisco, Sacramento, and Salt Lake City. RTC is partnering with NDOT on development of the I-80 Corridor Study. This study is using comprehensive and inclusive strategic dialogue with stakeholders in the entire metropolitan region to generate a vision and plan for I-80 that will enhance the future for corridor communities. Specifically the study will conduct a corridor wide economic assessment, develop a task force to identify issues in the study area and develop working groups to address the following topics:

- Energy Infrastructure
- Freight and Logistics
- GIS
- Maintenance
- Managed Lanes/Tolling
- Mobility Operations/ITS
- Program Delivery
- Rural Planning
- Tourism
- Safety
- Truck Parking
- Wildlife Crossings

8.2 CONNECTIVITY IN THE URBANIZED AREA

Regional connections are also needed to tie together the neighborhoods and employment centers in the urbanized area of Reno, Sparks, and Washoe County. Topography and historic development patterns limit direct roadway connections in many areas. While the historic core of the metropolitan region is centered on the axis of Virginia Street and 4th Street/Prater Way, recent decades have seen large concentrations of both jobs and housing emerge in outlying areas such as South Meadows, Spanish Springs, and the Reno-Stead Airport vicinity. These newer neighborhoods and employment districts are generally not connected by a grid network and cross-regional mobility is limited. Key projects that address connectivity needs are described on the following page.



SouthEast Connector

The SouthEast Connector will be a six-lane arterial roadway with two at-grade signalized intersections. It will originate at the existing intersection of South Meadows Parkway and Veterans Parkway on the south end and will terminate at the existing intersection of Greg Street and Sparks Boulevard on the north end. This north-south roadway will connect the southern part of the Truckee Meadows to the eastern part of the Truckee Meadows and is proposed to reduce traffic congestion on I-80, US 395/I-580, Virginia Street, Southeast McCarran, Double R Boulevard and Longley Lane. The project will also provide a better connection and access to employment centers in Reno and Sparks.



Photo illustration of SouthEast Connector

Pyramid-US 395 Connector

The Pyramid-US 395 Connector will convert six miles of existing Pyramid Highway from an arterial to a controlled access freeway and add a new six lane access controlled freeway from US 395 to Pyramid Highway. This project will alleviate current and future congestion in Sparks and Spanish Springs, serve future growth areas and provide additional east/west connectivity and create better access for getting to and from work.

McCarran Boulevard Improvements

McCarran Boulevard is the ring road surrounding the urban core. This proposed package of projects will address capacity and operational issues that cause significant traffic delay today and is expected to worsen over time. These projects were identified in the Southeast McCarran Corridor Study and incorporate NDOT's pavement rehabilitation program. It includes widening the road from four lanes to six lanes between Mira Loma Drive and Greg Street, pavement rehabilitation, addition of a shared use path, traffic signal upgrades, aesthetics, and sound walls.

RTC RAPID Extension

Planned extensions of RTC RAPID to the University of Nevada, Reno campus and to RTC CENTENNIAL PLAZA in Sparks will improve mobility in these densely developed corridors. Both Virginia Street and 4th Street/Prater Way are designated as Transit Oriented Development Corridors by Reno and Sparks, respectively. Because roadway widenings are not compatible with the historic character of these districts, enhanced transit service and improved sidewalks are essential to improving mobility.



RTC RAPID articulated bus