

DOWNTOWN RENO REGIONAL CENTER PLAN



Prepared by:

CITY OF RENO
Community Development Department

Staff Draft – January 2006



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

City Council

Robert A. Cashell, Sr., Mayor
Pierre Hascheff, At-Large
Dan Gustin, Ward One
Sharon Zadra, Ward Two
Jessica Sferrazza, Ward Three
Dwight Dortch, Ward Four
David Aiazzi, Ward Five

Office of the City Manager

Charles McNeely, City Manager
Susan Schlerf, Assistant City Manager
Leann McElroy, Chief of Staff

Planning Commission

Oscar Sanders, Chair
Darrin Georgeson, Vice-Chair
Randall Barton
Ron Cobb
Elizabeth Ford
Jim Newberg
Dennis Romeo

Community Development Department

John Hester, AICP, Community Development Director
Claudia Hanson, AICP, Senior Planner
Jessica Jones, Associate Planner
Heather Manzo, Planning Technician
Stephen Goates, Planning Technician

Neighborhood Advisory Board Liaisons

Sara Ellis, Ward One Neighborhood Advisory Board
Jim Stewart, Old Northwest Neighborhood Advisory Board
Lori Wray, Ward One Neighborhood Advisory Board

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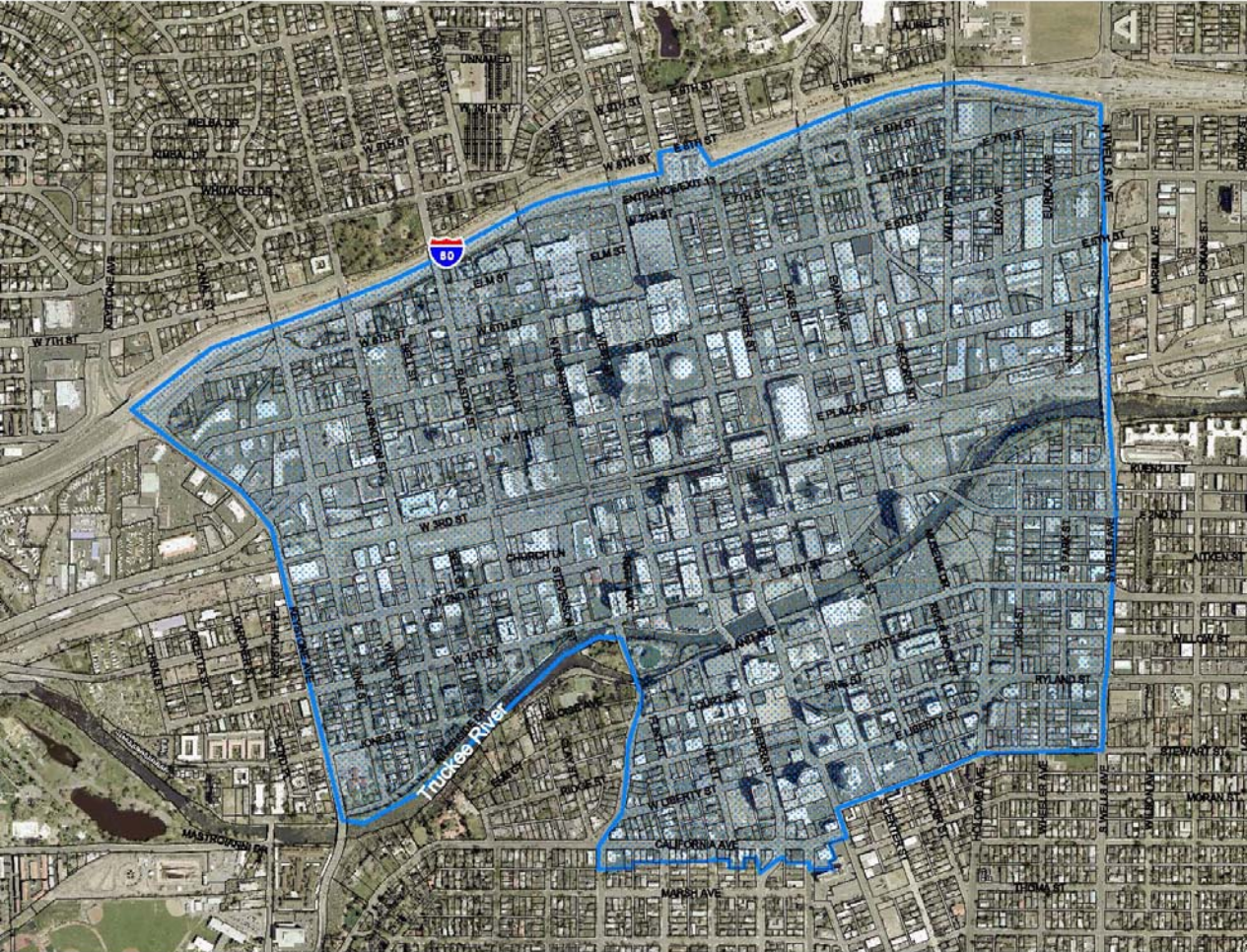
INTRODUCTION

Plan Organization

The Downtown Reno Regional Center Plan is divided into three sections: Introduction, Development Concept, and Implementation. The Introduction includes the boundary, time frame, and relationship to other plans. Development standards and processing provisions are included in the Reno Municipal Code. Maps that are referenced are included in this document.

Boundary

The Downtown Reno Regional Center area is shown below. This area is generally located south of Interstate 80, west of Wells Avenue, north of California Avenue, and east of Keystone Avenue.



Time Frame

The time horizon for this plan is twenty years.

Relationship to Other Plans

This plan is an element of the City of Reno Master Plan prepared in accordance with Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS 278.150 through 278.170).

Policies of the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan are applicable regionwide. The City of Reno Master Plan has three different levels of applicability; Citywide, Center and Transit Corridor, and Neighborhood. Citywide plans include the Land Use Plan and other plans that apply to the entire City and its sphere of influence. Center and Transit Corridor plans are for the eight regional centers and five transit oriented development corridors in the City and its sphere of influence. This Downtown Reno Regional Center Plan is one of the eight regional center plans. Neighborhood plans cover other areas, not in centers or transit corridors, which have been designated as appropriate for more detailed planning. Policies in center, transit corridor and neighborhood plans elaborate, with greater detail, upon general policies contained in the citywide and regional plans. Center plan areas and neighborhood plans must conform with and not be in conflict with policy direction of the citywide plans and the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan. Similarly, appropriate Municipal Code provisions (e.g., zoning, development standards and processing requirements) must be consistent with these plans.

The Downtown Reno Regional Center Plan was developed with input from the Redevelopment Agency, Regional Transportation Commission (RTC), Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency, property owners in the area, and Reno Neighborhood Advisory Boards. This plan replaces the DOWNTOWN Putting It All Together document, but will maintain many aspects of that document. This plan does not replace any documents produced through the Reno Redevelopment Agency.

Need for the Downtown Reno Regional Center Plan

This area has been identified as a Regional Center in the 2002 Truckee Meadows Regional Plan. The Regional Plan states that to “conform with the Regional Plan, Local Government Master Plans must further define the boundary and character of each Regional Center within their respective jurisdiction”.

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

Downtown Reno is the highest density and intensity area in Northern Nevada. This regional center plan proposes to strengthen that by making it the origin to the regional Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Corridor system.

The Truckee Meadows Regional Plan identifies North Virginia, South Virginia, East 4th Street, West 4th Street, and Mill Street as TOD Corridors. Downtown Reno is the central hub of these corridors. The TODs link Downtown to the Stead Airport Regional

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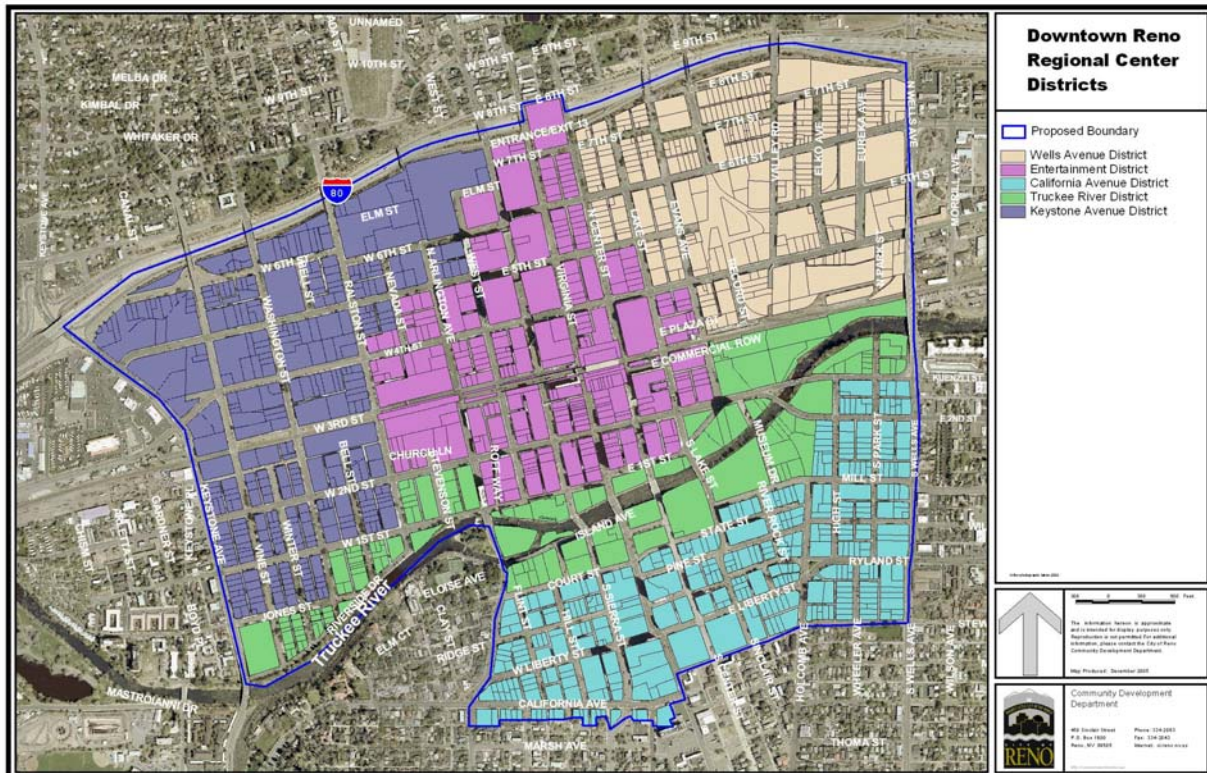
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Center, University of Nevada Regional Center, Sparks Downtown Regional Center, Washoe Medical Regional Center, Reno Tahoe International Airport Regional Center, Convention/Meadowood Regional Center, and the Redfield Regional Center.

Concentrated development and pedestrian safety enhancements are encouraged. Streetscape which supports transit oriented development is needed to accommodate and encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation as the preferred method of travel within the Regional Center. Minimum density and height requirements ensure that development intensities in the Regional Center are transit supportive. A variety of densities and floor area ratios (FAR) are required throughout the regional center. These are reflected in the Policies section and the associated Downtown Reno Regional Center Overlay District section of code. This mix allows for developments that are compatible with existing adjacent neighborhoods while providing the highest densities in the core of the Regional Center.

Districts

Currently the majority of the plan area is developed with a mix of hotel/casinos, commercial, office, and residential land uses. This plan divides the regional center into five districts: Entertainment District, Truckee River District, California Avenue District, Wells Avenue District, and Keystone Avenue District. The map of these districts is shown below.



The Entertainment District has been established to maintain the tourist element of Downtown. This district is appropriate for hotel/casinos, destination resorts, major recreational facilities, cultural facilities, and tourist shopping, services and activities. This district is surrounded by the other districts and Interstate 80 to adequately separate the intense land uses and high densities from surrounding single family development. The other districts within the regional center should feature pedestrian access between residential and tourist centers.

The Truckee River District has been established to preserve the Downtown benefits of the Truckee River. Building design and pedestrian corridors which enhance the river corridor are encouraged in this district.

The California Avenue District has been established to preserve the office portion of the district. Although office and other employment land uses are common in this area, supporting land uses including, but not limited to, residential, retail, restaurant, and cultural facilities play a key role in enhancing this vibrant district.

The Keystone Avenue and Wells Avenue Districts have been established to maintain general services within the regional center. Mixed land uses are encouraged throughout the regional center. These two districts encourage mixed land uses at lower intensities and densities to transition into the surrounding neighborhoods.

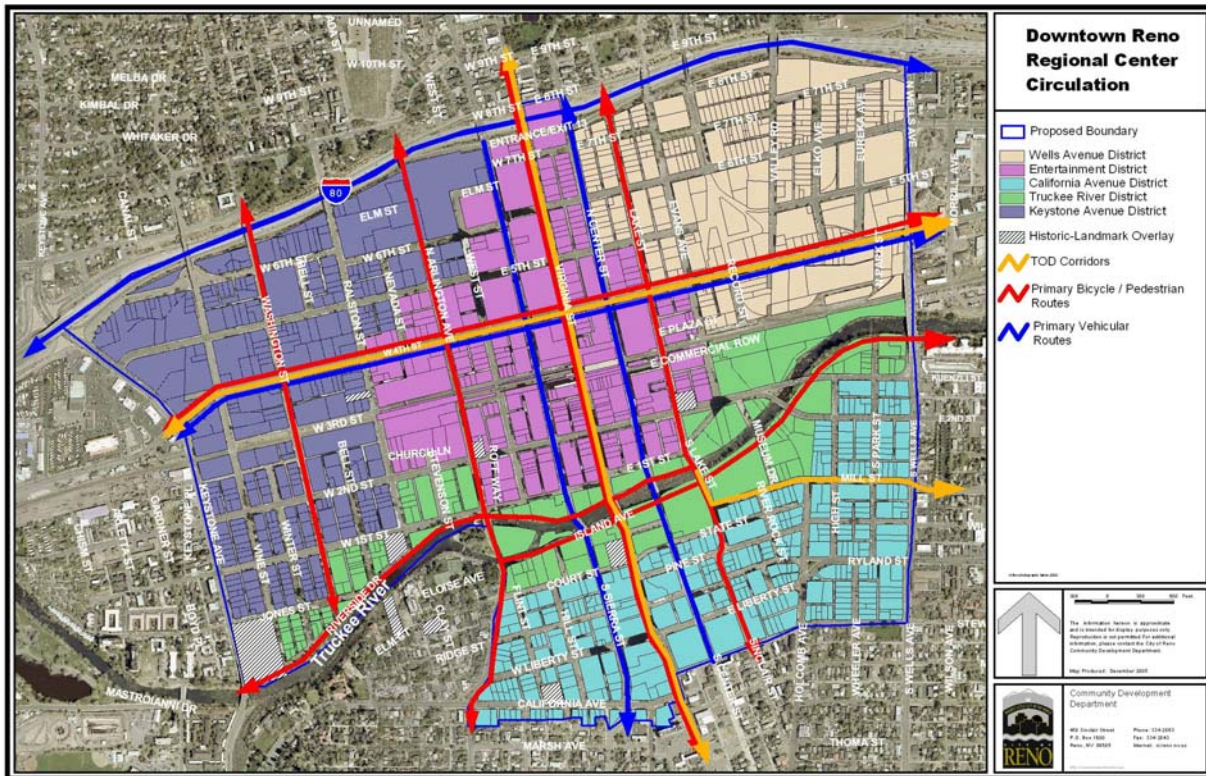
Circulation

Access will continue to be provided through an integrated vehicular, transit, and pedestrian circulation system. The primary vehicular routes within the regional center include Sierra Street traveling south, Center Street traveling north, and 4th Street traveling east and west. Interstate 80 is the northern boundary of the Downtown Reno Regional Center and provides another primary vehicular route.

Strong pedestrian access and circulation are encouraged throughout the regional center and TOD corridors. The primary north-south pedestrian/bicycle routes are located on Washington Street, Arlington Avenue, Virginia Street and Lake Street. These corridors provide pedestrian access from the University of Nevada Regional Center through the Downtown Reno Regional Center to the Truckee River. Washington Street currently functions as a primary bicycle route from the Truckee River to Rancho San Rafael Park. Arlington Avenue crosses Highway 80 via a pedestrian bridge near St. Mary's Hospital. Virginia Street is an identified TOD corridor in the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan and therefore must also be pedestrian oriented. Lake Street links the Downtown Reno Regional Center to one of the gateways identified in the University of Nevada Regional Center. The primary east-west pedestrian routes are located along Mill Street, 4th Street, and the Truckee River. Mill Street and 4th Street are both identified TOD Corridors. The Truckee River has an established pedestrian route along the River Walk.

The Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) is developing a new transit center for downtown Reno. This new center will both relocate and expand the current transit facilities. The purpose is to improve bus operations, prepare for future growth, and support and enhance the transit experience with joint development retail opportunities for passengers and passersby. RTC is reviewing the possibility of providing a rapid transit system along some of these corridors and linking this system through the transit center. The Amtrak station will be located adjacent to the transit center to further expand the multimodal concept. Bus transit is already in place from the Reno-Tahoe International Airport to downtown. This transit center will be the hub for airplane, rail, rapid transit, and bus circulation. This plan and the associated code sections allow for development that will support these systems.

Bicycle routes throughout the City of Reno, including the Downtown Reno Regional Center, are addressed in the Open Space and Greenways element of the Master Plan.



Policies

To support the concepts in this plan, the following policies apply in the Downtown Reno Regional Center.

1. The location, construction, and design of new development should be environmentally sensitive to the Truckee River.
2. Development that includes the improvement of key attractions in the area including recreation, businesses, and natural features is encouraged and consistent with this plan.
3. Development should include a mix of land uses.
4. Developments including a significant employment base should be encouraged in order to increase transit use.
5. Multifamily development within the Truckee River and California Avenue Districts should provide a minimum density of 21 units per acre. Multifamily development within the Keystone Avenue and Wells Avenue Districts should provide a minimum density of 30 units per acre. Multifamily development within the Entertainment District should provide a minimum density of 45 units per acre.
6. Nonresidential and mixed use development within the Truckee River and California Avenue Districts should provide a minimum FAR of 1.0. Nonresidential and mixed use development within the Keystone Avenue and Wells Avenue Districts should provide a minimum FAR of 2.0. Nonresidential and mixed use development within the Entertainment District should provide a minimum FAR of 3.0.
7. Development should be designed to provide a transition between the lower densities and building heights of the existing surrounding neighborhoods and the desired higher densities and building heights in mixed use areas.
8. Development should be designed to provide a variety of building heights and forms to create visual interest and establish a distinct identity with architectural detail that provides a high level of interest at the pedestrian level.
9. Buildings should be oriented toward the primary street frontage or provide a prominent pedestrian access.
10. Development should be designed to provide shared parking in mixed land use development to decrease the amount of parking on the site and decrease the emphasis on private vehicles.
11. Parking should be located inside, underground, or behind buildings.

12. Public spaces should interconnect within the high intensity areas of the regional center. North/south pedestrian connections should be emphasized on Arlington Avenue and Evans Avenue. East/west pedestrian connections should be emphasized along the Truckee River and 4th Street.
13. Public space should be used where possible for recreation, entertainment, restaurant, and other commercial land uses.
14. Site, building, and landscape design should strive to reduce energy consumption and provide more comfortable indoor and outdoor spaces.
15. Development should be designed to recognize the natural resources available in order to create energy-conserving site design.
16. Multi-modal connectivity should be provided throughout the plan area, particularly at the Amtrak Station/CitiCenter site where intercity rail, rapid transit, and bus transit converge.
17. Development should be designed to include wide sidewalks, landscaped parkways, street trees, street furniture, and other pedestrian amenities.
18. Streetscapes should be designed to accommodate all modes of transportation comfortably and should provide a separation between incompatible modes, such as bicycles and pedestrians where possible.

IMPLEMENTATION

Amended land use designations and zoning districts, as well as modified Reno Municipal Code provisions, are necessary to implement the development and circulation concepts in this plan.

Land Use

The Downtown Reno Regional Center plan area has been designated as Special Planning Area. This designation recognizes that customized land use and zoning provisions are appropriate in designated regional centers. Provisions of this regional center plan govern land use and development within the Downtown Reno Regional Center. When this regional center plan does not specifically address an issue, provisions of other parts of the Reno Master Plan apply.

Zoning

The entire area of the Regional Center is rezoned to the MU/DRRC (Mixed Use base zoning district /Downtown Reno Regional Center Overlay Zoning District). Mixed use development (i.e., combinations of uses) is permitted by the underlying Mixed Use base

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zoning district. Specific modifications to allowed land uses, development standards and processing requirements are identified in the Downtown Reno Regional Center Planning Area Overlay in the Reno Municipal Code.

The planning area overlay designation permits continuation of existing uses when a currently established use is going to be maintained or expanded. As long as the use remains the same it is considered a conforming use. Any change in the use must be in conformance with the Downtown Reno Regional Center Planning Area Overlay.

To help encourage new development, most projects within the Downtown Reno Regional Center Plan area are allowed to proceed without discretionary review by the City of Reno. To help encourage transit ridership parking standards for the area have also been reduced.