

STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item: **J.4**
Date: **2-14-2007**

To: Mayor and City Council

Thru: Charles McNeely, City Manager

Subject:

Staff Report: Approval of a project to be submitted for the NDOT 2007-2009 Landscape and Aesthetics Community Match Program (LACMP).

From: Wesley “Skip” Leedy, Senior Civil Engineer
Maureen McKissick, Grand and Fund Development Officer

Summary: The Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) has released a Request-for-Proposals for the 2007-2009 Landscape and Aesthetics Community Match Program (LACMP). Through LACMP, NDOT will provide funding for a variety of projects, such as landscaping, scenic beautification, transportation art, and community gateways that may not be covered by other funding programs. Staff recommends aesthetic “gateway” improvements to the Sierra, Virginia and Center Street bridges over Interstate-80.

Previous Council Action: Council accepted the Reno Gateways Conceptual Master Plan and Schematic Design for the North Gateway, Downtown Reno by Sasaki Associates, Inc. in 1995. Council rejected the structure that was proposed for the north gateway in the Master Plan.

Background: In November 1995, a final report was prepared for the Redevelopment Agency by Sasaki Associates, Inc. for the Reno Gateways Conceptual Master Plan and Schematic Design for the North Gateway, Downtown Reno. The Master Plan proposed various treatments to “contribute to the revitalization of downtown Reno and the surrounding community.” In addition to creating a north gateway, the Master Plan recommended the bridges have the same treatments as the rest of downtown, integrating streetscape improvements such as stamped concrete sidewalks and Sternberg streetlights.

Discussion: NDOT has changed the timetable of LACMP to coincide with the two-year grant cycle of the Transportation Enhancement Act program. To that end, NDOT is combining the 2007, 2008, and 2009 fiscal year programs into one application cycle. Funds applied for under LACMP in this cycle will be available in 2008-2009.

All LACMP projects **must** be located in an NDOT right-of-way. Currently, there are nine NDOT rights-of-way within the City: 1) Interstate-80, 2) Route-395, 3) Plumb Lane between Terminal Way and Virginia Street, 4) Kietzke Lane between Route-395 and Interstate-80, 5) Huffaker Lane/Lakeside Drive/Holcomb Lane, 6) Fourth Street west of McCarran Boulevard, and 7) the intersection of Keystone Avenue and McCarran Boulevard, and 8) Old Virginia Street north of McCarran Boulevard, and 9) McCarran Boulevard.

All projects **must** have a budget between \$100,000 and \$500,000. All projects have a 50% match requirement, which can be met through cash, in-kind contributions, or a combination of both.

LACMP makes funding available within eight categories:

1. Plantings to enhance aesthetics, emphasizing regionally appropriate and drought-tolerant species.
2. Hardscape aesthetic treatments, including specialized paving surfaces, sound walls, fencing, barriers, retaining walls, and bridge abutments.
3. Signage, such as welcome signs, interpretative signs, and roadside markers.
4. Artwork that is integral to landscape project design elements.
5. Street furnishings that enhance aesthetics, including distinctive streetlights, benches, trash receptacles, and tree grates.
6. Landscaping and aesthetic improvements to existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
7. State, regional, and community gateways.
8. Road services, including rest areas and welcome centers, kiosks for interpretative materials, and shade structures.

In 2006, the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) applied to LACMP for funding to undertake landscape and hardscape enhancements – including public art – at the proposed roundabout at Kietzke Lane and Neil Road. The proposal was not accepted.

Several of the gateways and treatments proposed by the Sasaki Master Plan are located in NDOT rights-of-way. Within NDOT’s funding criteria and building on Council’s desire to extend the Virginia Street improvements north to Interstate-80, and improve gateways into the downtown core from I-80 and the airport, there are several potential City projects that are eligible for LACMP funding.

- 1. Aesthetic improvements to the bridges that cross Interstate-80 at Sierra Street, Virginia Street, and Center Street.** Improvements would include the removal of antiquated “Type M” barrier fencing and the installation of new “Type V” barrier fencing, the removal of extraneous metal railings surrounding Walgreen’s, the installation of decorative lighting, flower baskets, and new signage. **The estimated cost is \$498,100.**

The Sasaki Master Plan highlighted Freeway Bridge Improvements. It suggested that the improvements include *“lighting, decorative railings, planters, and stamped concrete sidewalks on the Sierra, Virginia, and Center Street bridges over Interstate-80. Vertical lighting elements, use of architectural finishes, refined railings and a string of lights provide a quality and scale befitting the North Gateway area.”*

The LAMCP proposal would include a redesigned bridge fence, removing the arched inward-curving Type “M” fencing currently in use. This would be replaced with vertical, straight fencing. The support ribs would have wider spacing and would use a more decorative and appealing wire mesh, similar to that used on ReTRAC. Flower baskets would be installed on the interior fence, enhancing the pedestrian experience. The existing rails would be painted black – to tie into the new downtown streetscape standards – and would provide a more inviting entrance to both downtown and UNR. The fence ribbing could also be used to

support welcome signs, e.g. “Welcome to the Biggest Little City in the World,” or event signs. Additional lighting could also be installed, including energy-efficient LED lights.

According to the RSCVA, Reno hosted 5,266,405 visitors in 2005 (the last year for which data was available) and 60% of them arrived by automobile. A significant percentage traveled Interstate-80. Therefore, the creation of a north gateway and permanent enhancements to the existing bridges that welcome visitors along Interstate-80 could benefit the downtown business district and UNR. This alternative provides the biggest and most visible improvement to Reno’s North Gateway.

Proposal #1
"Gateway" Improvements for the Sierra, Virginia and Center Street Bridges Over I-80

Task	Estimated Cost	Task Total
Demolition of "Old" Type "M" Fence	\$40/LF	\$36,000
Install "New" Type "V" Fence	\$200/LF	\$180,000
Install Hanging Baskets w/Arms	\$175 each	\$5,600
Welcome to Downtown Reno Sign	\$1,000/LTR	\$42,000
Paint Existing Barrier Rails	\$14,000/LS	\$14,000
Remove Interior Barrier Rails	\$25/LF	\$11,250
Install Stamped Concrete Sidewalk	\$31/SqFt	\$209,250
	Street Total:	\$498,100

2. **A gateway treatment at the intersection of Interstate-80 and Sierra Street.** This location was proposed in the Reno Gateways Project that was conducted by Sasaki Associates. The gateway treatment would welcome visitors to the downtown district and the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) campus; would provide motorists with clear directions to downtown, UNR, and St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center; would improve the first-impression image of the district; and would enhance the pedestrian and vehicular connection between UNR and downtown. **The estimated cost is \$499,800.**

Originally, the Sasaki Master Plan proposed a “Tower of Cards” gateway sculpture at the southwest corner of the intersection of Sierra and Maple Streets. Council rejected this proposal. Although downtown Reno is still the focal point of gaming in greater Reno, downtown’s image has been modified in the last ten years to include special events, upscale residential units, and retail. If a gateway treatment for this location is desired, the identification and interpretation of civic symbols to be incorporated and presented in the treatment would need to involve public input to better reflect Reno’s updated image. Another artist/architect could be retained to help update Reno’s image.

Proposal #2

I-80 and Sierra Street Gateway Treatment

Task	w/LACMP* Funds
Design of "Gateway Treatment"	\$83,300
Materials, Fabrication & Installation	\$416,500
Design of "Art" Pieces	\$0
Fabrication & Installation of "Art" Pieces	\$0
Totals:	\$499,800

*Landscape and Aesthetics Community Match Program (LACMP) 50% NDOT/50% City of Reno

3. Additional gateway elements near the Interstate-80 and Virginia Street intersection.

The Sasaki Plan identified various sculptural elements that would create a welcoming and unique experience for visitors and residents, e.g. decorative seating; UNR-related public art, e.g. "Open Book" and/or Wolf Pack statues; decorative lighting; and landscaping. In essence, this project would bring to the Interstate-80/Virginia Street intersection the same type of public art enhancements that exist near the ReTRAC project area. **The estimated cost is \$411,843.**

The "Open Book" element, as proposed in the Sasaki Master Plan, was to be located at the site of the current Co-Ed Motel. This element could be re-positioned south of 8th Street and on the east side of Virginia Street, plainly visible to motorists and pedestrians as they proceed toward UNR. Another idea, not Sasaki's, would be to include life-size bronze wolf statues racing toward UNR adjacent to the sidewalk. Landscaping and lighting elements would be included as complements. An artist would be retained to design this art component such as the "wolves."

Proposal #3

UNR Wolves on Virginia Street Bridge

Task	Estimated Cost	Task Cost
Design (15%)	\$53,125/LS	\$53,125
12 Life Sized Bronze Wolves	\$20,000 each	\$240,000
Installation of 12 Bronze Wolves	\$750 each	\$9,000
Removal of Interior Barrier Rails	\$25/LF	\$5,625
Landscaping	\$50/LF	\$11,250
Lighting	\$100/LF	\$22,500
Stamped Concrete on Virginia Street Bridge	\$31/SqFt	\$69,750
	Total:	\$411,843

4. Landscaping Amenities at Plumb Lane and Kietzke Lane Intersection.

The Sasaki Plan identified Plumb Lane as a "gateway" for those arriving to the region from the Reno-Tahoe International Airport. This proposal would provide landscaping amenities

to the three large and one medium sized median islands located at the intersection of Plumb and Kietzke Lanes. **The estimated cost is \$457,000.**

Proposal #4
Landscaping Amenities at Plumb Lane and Kietzke Lane Intersection

Task	Estimated Cost	Task Cost
Design (15%)	\$52,000/LS	\$52,000
Water Rights (1 acre foot)	\$35,000/AcreFt	\$35,000
Irrigation Installation Complete	\$150,000/LS	\$150,000
Landscaping	\$200,000/LS	\$200,000
Lighting	\$100/LF	\$22,500
Total:		\$457,000

Financial Implications: There is a 50% match requirement for LACMP grant awards which can be met through cash, in-kind contributions, or a combination of both. The City plans to meet the match requirements by using staff time and requesting funds from the 2008 CIP for project management and administration. The LACMP funding is available on a reimbursement basis. The funding will not become available until late 2008-early 2009.

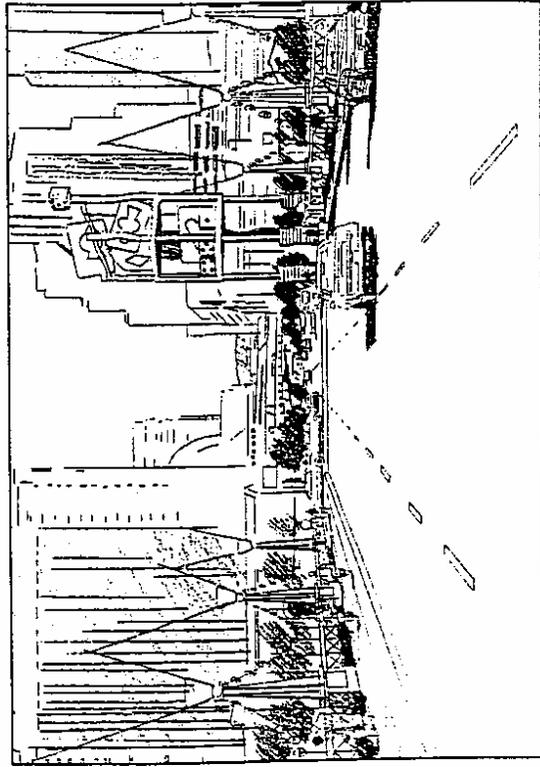
Although the projects are located in NDOT rights-of-way, the City would be responsible for the cost of maintenance.

Legal Implications: All LACMP projects must be done in accordance with the NDOT funding agreement and must be completed within the grant period.

Recommendation: Staff recommends the selection of “Aesthetic improvements to the bridges that cross Interstate-80 at Sierra Street, Virginia Street, and Center Street.”

Proposed Motion: I move to approve the staff recommendation.

R E N O G A T E W A Y S
P R O J E C T



CITY OF RENO REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

SASAKI ASSOCIATES, INC.

RENO GATEWAYS PROJECT

Reno Gateways Conceptual
Master Plan and
Schematic Design for the
North Gateway, Downtown Reno

Prepared for:

CITY OF RENO REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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Final
November 1995

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I. Purpose of the Reno Gateways Project

"A gateway is an entrance corridor that heralds the approach of a new landscape and defines the arrival point as a destination. The goal of gateway planning is to arrange this landscape so that it rewards the viewer with sense of arrival and a positive image of the place. Color, texture, rhythm and spacing, massing, bulk of the buildings, landscaping, and street furniture all contribute to the sense of place."

American Planning Association, *Zoning News*, December 1994.

The Reno Gateways Project contributes to the revitalization of Downtown Reno and the surrounding community. The Gateways Project focuses on major entrances into Reno. It makes the entrances more attractive and inviting, defines and sets the tone for downtown, and establishes Reno as a place to visit and revisit. The Gateways Project includes a schematic design for the "North Gateway" area, which is a major entrance corridor at the Intersection of Interstate 80 and Sierra, Virginia, and Center Streets. The North Gateway design establishes a standard of quality that will guide future phases of the Reno Gateways Project.

The North Gateway serves the gaming industry, the University of Nevada Reno (UNR), and the St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center. It provides locals and tourists with information and directions. The North Gateway responds to the complex, often competing objectives of the area, and identifies those attributes that form a common foundation. It considers land uses, circulation patterns, and visibility in the area. It coordinates development activities, streetscape elements, lighting, way-finding systems, and circulation patterns.

The overall goals of the Reno Gateways Project, and the North Gateway Schematic Design, are:

- **To Communicate Reno's Image as a Major Destination Resort.** The Reno Gateways Project identifies and distinguishes the downtown, attracting more visitors. The North Gateway design includes elements that point the way to subareas in the downtown area, such as gaming establishments, medical facilities, and civic buildings.
- **To Provide Signage that Directs Visitors to Reno's Activities and Attractions.** The Reno Gateways Project enhances and exposes its assets to visitors. Gateway signage directs visitors and provides orientation, and it adds value to Reno activities. Gateway designs have clear signs, ample directions, and good traffic circulation.
- **To Connect Various "Districts" and City Neighborhoods.** Physical linkages and symbolic gestures create connections between districts and neighborhoods. They bridge disparate

parts of the city into a cohesive, single entity. Districts in the downtown area include the entertainment core, University of Nevada Reno, the St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center, the civic-office district, and downtown neighborhoods.

- **To Strengthen Reno's Overall Sense of Community.** Design expressions at key entrance corridors that reflect Reno's special character and "sense of place" enhance Reno's overall sense of community.

The Reno Gateways Project builds upon previous planning efforts. In 1992, "The Blueprint: A Revitalization Strategy for Downtown Reno" recommended establishing gateways into Downtown Reno to enhance the Downtown's economic vitality. In the fall of 1993, a Gateways Task Force conducted a series of work sessions with Downtown and community-wide interests. The work sessions identified planning and design issues, opportunities, and concepts for the Reno Gateways Project.

II. Project Setting

A. Reno and its Downtown

The City of Reno is home to approximately 280,000 people (Reno/Sparks MSA for 1994), and is expected to grow by more than 2% per year to 313,000 by the year 2000. It is a major resort destination and university and business center. According to the Reno Convention and Visitors Authority, Reno attracts approximately 4.5 million visitors per year. Approximately 60% of the visitors come for gambling and other vacation activities. About 56% arrive by automobile, RV or truck and about 36% arrive by air via the Reno/Tahoe International Airport. Figures 1, 2, and 3 illustrate the Reno area and downtown Reno.

Reno Setting

Reno's Desert Setting

Reno is located in a high desert valley surrounded by mountains. It was first settled along the Truckee River, a beautiful river that now passes through the heart of the city. From its beginnings, Reno was a gateway community, offering lodging and other services to those heading to California or to the Great Basin and parts east. It was a transportation and transfer hub for the trans-continental railroad. Reno is on Interstate 80 (I-80), a major freeway that connects the nation's two coasts.

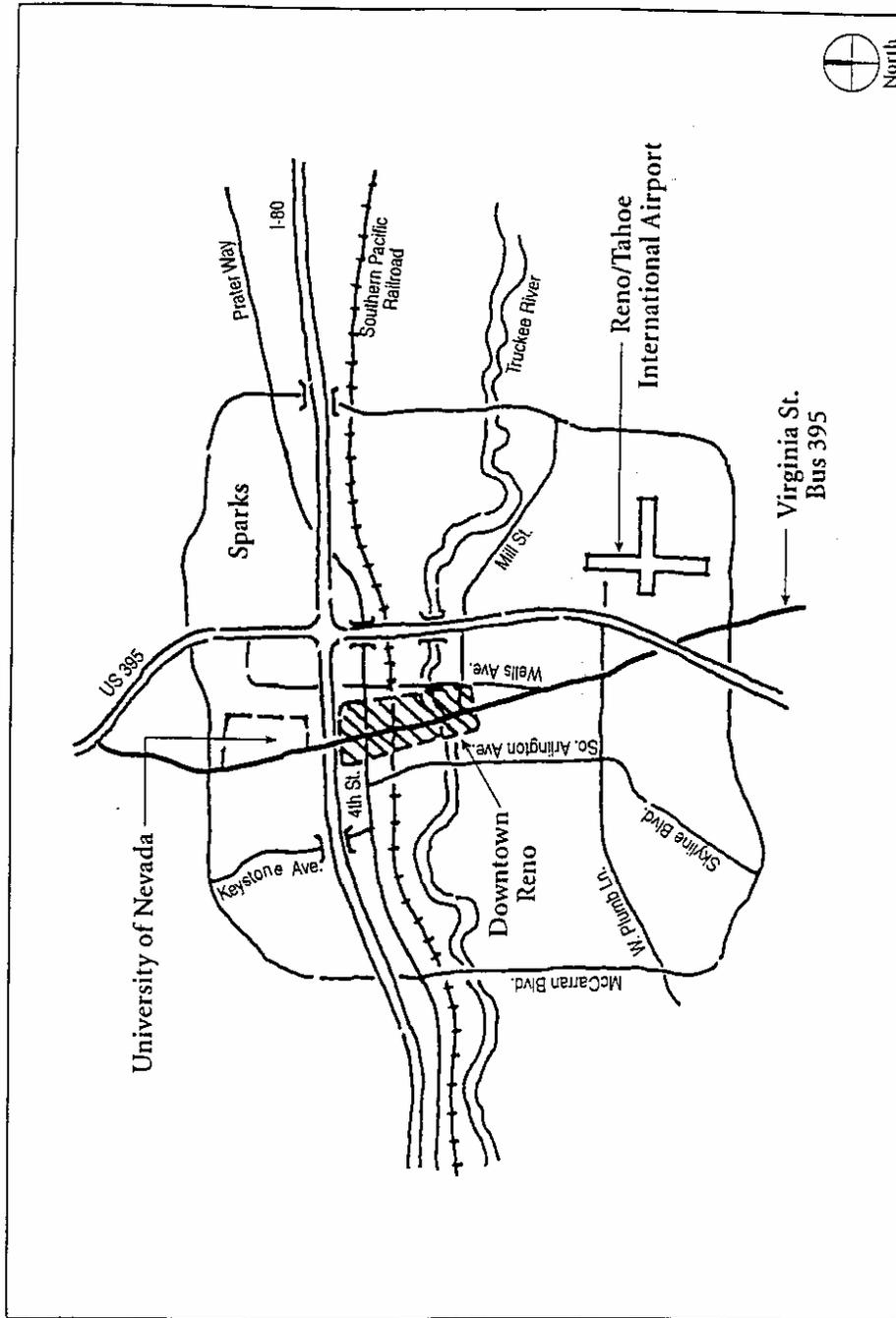


Figure 1: RENO AND ENVIRONS

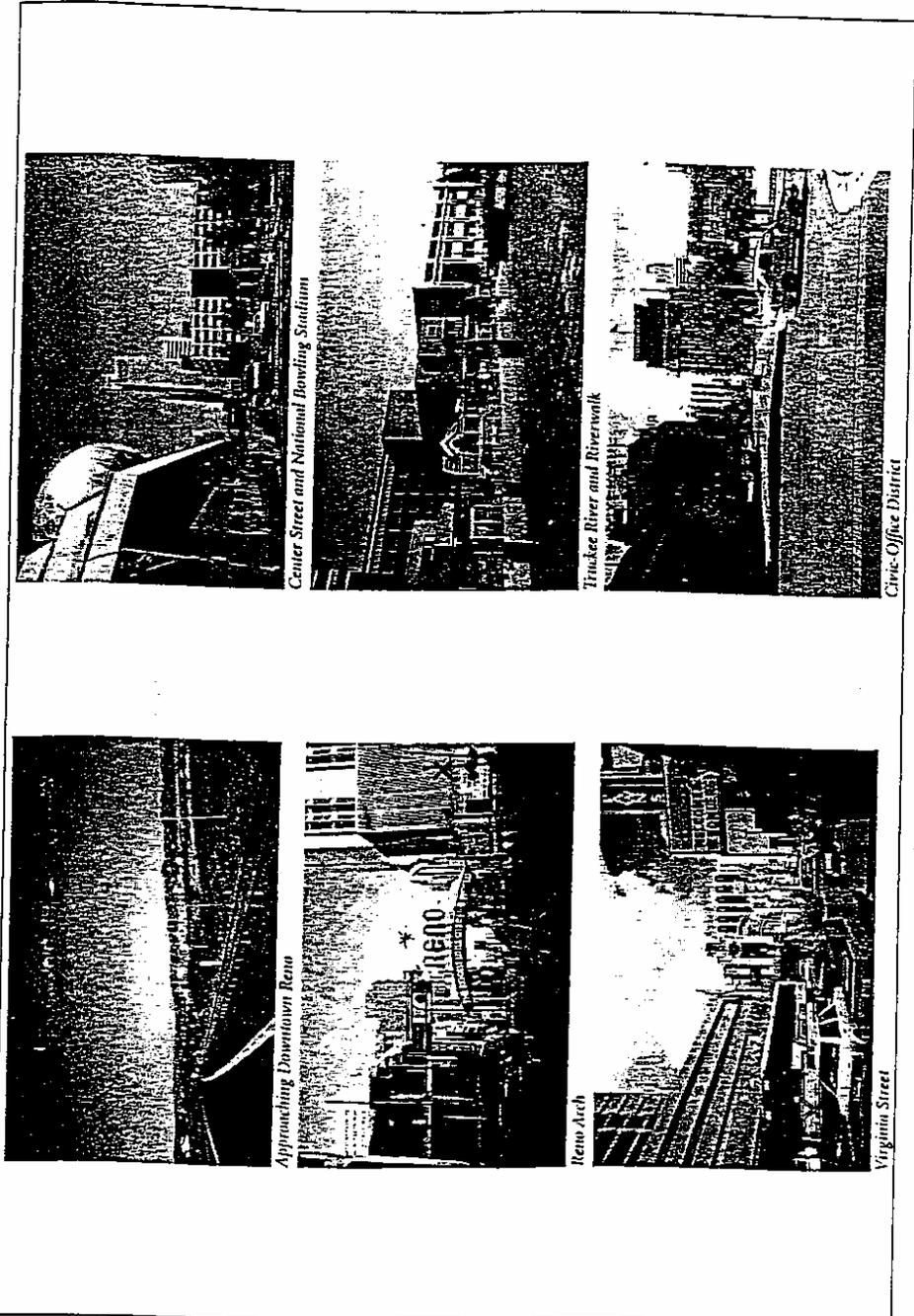


Figure 2: IMAGES OF DOWNTOWN RENO

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Reno's Downtown

Reno's downtown is composed of an Entertainment Core, with seventeen major hotels and casinos and related attractions; St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center; and a Civic-Office District south of the Truckee River. The University of Nevada - Reno (UNR), with 12,300 students and a projected growth rate of 3-4% per year, is just north of downtown and Interstate 80.

The downtown area, in particular the Entertainment Core, is defined by and separated from areas north and south by a depressed freeway (I-80) and the Truckee River. The freeway and river break the landscape, and crossing them provides ready entry experiences into downtown. Once downtown, visitors can reach most of Reno's downtown attractions by foot; the downtown's gridiron street pattern and relatively small blocks make the downtown area suitable for walking. Recognizing this pedestrian scale and its importance to casinos, the City has improved the pedestrian environment with new sidewalks and street furniture over the last several years.

Downtown meets I-80 and the Truckee River at the North Gateway and South Gateway, respectively. Most visitors to the city enter downtown through the North Gateway (discussed below). Visitors also pass through the North Gateway area to reach the UNR and the St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center. The South Gateway area, where Sierra, Virginia, and Center Streets cross the Truckee River, connects the downtown Entertainment Core with the Civic-Office District. Because the river is a popular community resource and the area is close to civic and

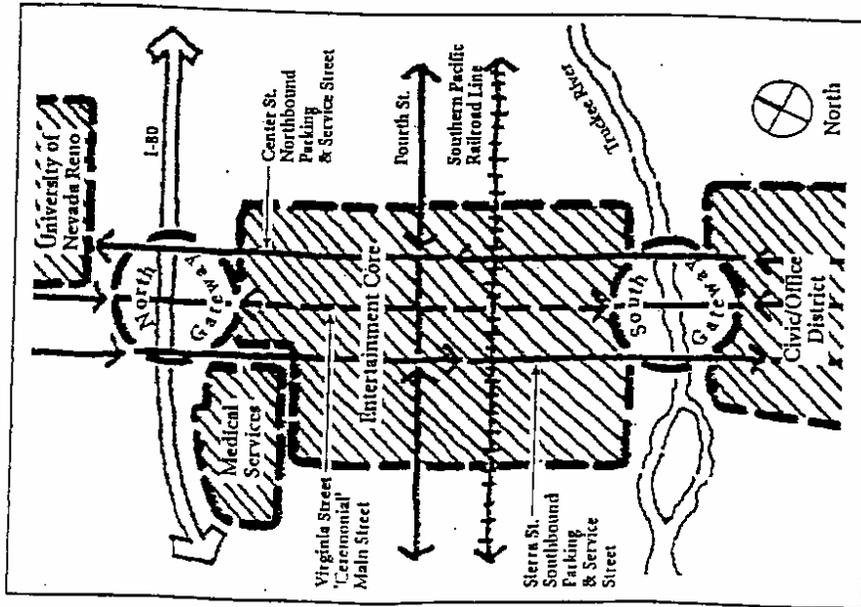


Figure 3: DOWNTOWN RENO

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Sasaki Associates, Inc.

cultural facilities, the South Gateway functions more as a community gateway rather than a "visitors" gateway. Historic bridges, such as the Virginia Street Bridge, are powerful symbolic elements in the area. Plans have been prepared for reinvigorating the area as a pedestrian-oriented shopping area, civic center, and town square.

Reno's Attractions

Reno offers many attractions to residents and visitors. The city's natural setting offers outdoor recreational opportunities such as hiking and skiing. More than seventeen hotels and casinos and other attractions, such as the National Bowling Stadium, Truckee River Walk, National Automobile Museum, special events, and cultural activities, attract visitors to the downtown.

The Reno Redevelopment Agency reports that downtown Reno projects have included more than \$800 million in private investment and more than \$90 million in public investment in recent years. New development is expected to increase traffic into downtown from visitors and new employees.

Access to Downtown

Interstate 80 and U.S. 395 are the major freeways in Reno offering access to the downtown core. The Reno/Tahoe International Airport is southeast of downtown adjacent to U.S. 395. Many visitors arriving by air use U.S. 395 to connect with I-80 and downtown Reno. I-80 is the primary route used by visitors arriving by car from the Sacramento Valley and the San Francisco

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Bay area.

Downtown Reno is reached by several routes:

- From the north: Sierra Street, and Virginia Street
- From the east: East Fourth Street via Prater Way
- From the south: Mill Street, and Virginia Street via East Plumb Lane
- From the west: West Fourth Street via Keystone Avenue

Visitors to downtown from the Reno/Tahoe International Airport travel on East Plumb Lane or Mill Street, or they travel U.S. 395 to I-80 and enter on Sierra or Virginia Streets. According to the Reno Redevelopment Agency, approximately one-third of visitors enter the downtown area on Mill Street, and about half enter from Sierra Street north of downtown. Fourth Street (U.S. 40) was once the major byway through town before I-80 was constructed. Fourth Street via Prater Way connects Reno to nearby Sparks.

Downtown Corridors

Three main streets run the length of downtown from north to south, and are the primary streets used by visitors to the City's casinos and other attractions. These streets are also used for through traffic from areas north and south of downtown. The streets include Virginia Street, Sierra Street, and Center Street.

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Virginia Street

Virginia Street is Reno's "Main Street" and is designated Business U.S. 395. It is the City's ceremonial street, providing access to the "front doors" of many of the City's hotels and casinos. Virginia Street, the most heavily traveled of the three major downtown corridors, is often congested. The City's intent is to redirect traffic to Sierra and Center Streets, two one-way streets with ample capacity. This move will provide more direct access to downtown parking garages.

The City plans to enhance Virginia Street as the city's ceremonial front door, and as a venue for special events. At present, Virginia Street is a collector for pedestrians, and a setting for outdoor activities. Virginia Street, with the proximity of hotels and casinos, has been the focus of the redevelopment attention with improvements completed for streets, sidewalks, alleys, street furniture, and landscaping.

Consistent with the downtown plan, the UNR envisions Virginia Street north of downtown near the University as a collector street rather than an arterial street. Virginia Street would provide direct access to the center of campus, including a proposed student union building and central garage facility. Through traffic would be directed to Sierra Street. The UNR would narrow Virginia Street, and incorporate a median with trees down its center.

The city envisions that, one day, a trolley system on Virginia Street would connect the University with the Reno-Sparks Convention Center south of downtown.

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Sierra Street

Sierra Street is a major one-way access street from the north into downtown. It is automobile-oriented, providing easy access to parking garages lining the street and serving the casinos. Sierra Street is the most direct route downtown from I-80.

Center Street

Center Street is a one-way north bound street linking the civic-office district and downtown with Interstate 80 and points north. Like Sierra Street, it is automobile-oriented, providing easy access to parking garages lining the street and serving the casinos. Center Street is the fastest and most direct route from downtown to I-80.

B. Planning Context

The Blueprint, adopted in 1992, and the UNR Master Plan, prepared in 1989, provide the planning context for the Reno Gateways Project. Both plans provide goals and policies affecting the downtown and North Gateway areas.

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The Blueprint: A Revitalization Strategy for Downtown Reno

The Blueprint, like the Reno Gateways Project, supports the revitalization of the downtown and surrounding community. Goals affecting the Reno Gateways Project include:

- Provide pedestrian and vehicular connection between the University population and the downtown.
- Improve motorists' perceived accessibility to downtown; enhance the signage along major circulation routes and parking facilities.
- Establish Virginia Street as the central "activity spine" of the downtown and the primary gathering place for visitors.
- In the North Gateway area:
 - Provide an enhanced sense of entry into the downtown.
 - Provide pedestrian and vehicular connections between the university population and the downtown.
 - Improve motorists' perceived accessibility of downtown; enhance the signage along major circulation routes and on parking facilities.

University of Nevada Reno Master Plan

The southern portion of the UNR campus, adjacent to the North Gateway project area, includes the blocks just north of I-80 between Virginia Street and Lake Street/Evans Avenue. The UNR is growing rapidly. The university anticipates that student

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enrollment will increase 3-4% annually through the year 2015, requiring proportionate increases in faculty and support staff. The substantial enrollment increases also mean expanded academic, student support, and residential facilities.

Policies affecting the Reno Gateways Project include:

- **Virginia Street:** The amount of traffic on Virginia Street must be redirected to promote it as a university-oriented drive. Through traffic should bypass Virginia Street in favor of Sierra Street. Median strips and sidewalk landscaping will help diminish the impact of the roadway, in slowing traffic, and creating a gentler driving and pedestrian environment. Visible sculptures at either end signal one's entry onto campus and symbolically designate that segment of roadway as part of the university.
- Center Street at Eighth Street is designated a symbolic entry into the University. It will have only a small amount of traffic.
- Pedestrian circulation from the University to downtown will be directed down Center Street, across the "pad" over I-80, and down Virginia Street.
- Administration will relocate to the center of the University, improving accessibility to all parts of the campus. A new building will be integrated into the proposed parking structure on Virginia Street.
- Signage components include:
 - Development of consistent entry signage at each major campus access. Large, highly visible signs bearing the University name will demarcate campus entries.

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Landscape elements, such as trees, shrubs, and flowers, will reinforce the sense of entry. An alternative to directional entry signage would be the development of staffed information booth at key entries. Elimination of the clutter along the campus perimeter by banning billboards, oversized signage, and excessive signage on Virginia Street, Sierra Street, Ninth Street, Evans Avenue, and McCarran Boulevard.

C. The North Gateway Area

The North Gateway area is at the intersection of Interstate 80 (I-80) and Sierra, Virginia, and Center Streets. The two-block area, bounded by Eight, Sierra, Maple, and Center Streets, is where visitors to Downtown Reno, the UNR, and St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center enter and exit I-80.

Most vehicular traffic into downtown arrives from I-80. Most motorists use Virginia Street to enter and exit downtown, and to reach points north of I-80. Figure 4 and 5 illustrates the North Gateway area.

The area and its issues and opportunities are discussed below:

Disappointing and Confusing First Impression

The North Gateway area and adjacent blocks provide a "first look" at the downtown for millions of visitors and residents. Empty lots, parking lots, service stations, and a variety of small

businesses, with little or no landscape, characterize the area. It is visually disappointing and confusing to motorists. The area is under increasing pressure for new private development from the gaming industry, the UNR, and St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center. The City and the UNR plan to improve the streetscape on the blocks north and south of I-80.

Inadequate Signage

Signage in the North Gateway area is inadequate in terms of directing people to downtown casinos, parking, visitor information, the UNR, and St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center. Visitors traveling on I-80 are directed to Virginia Street rather than Sierra Street. The City intends to redirect traffic into downtown along Sierra Street and to reduce traffic on Virginia Street.

Limited Right-of-Way Ownership

The North Gateway project will be built within the established right-of-way (streets and/or sidewalks). The City has limited land ownership in the area, and does not own the sidewalks or have easements for such use. A combination of public and private property owners adjacent to the street own the sidewalks. The Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) controls most of the North Gateway project area. NDOT must approve and permit all development concepts.

NDOT and the Federal Highway Administration are concerned about improvements that might violate the function of the freeway, such as signs or other elements that distract motorists. The agencies impose strict guidelines on signage, and require that improvements meet traffic safety, structural, and other standards.

Gateway Development Potential on The "Pad"

Several years ago, a private developer built a city-block sized platform or pad over I-80, bounded by Eighth, Virginia, Maple, and Center Streets. The pad is at-grade with the streets surrounding it. Presently, interested parties want to develop the pad. A building on this site, with its prominent location, visibility from I-80, and uses catering to visitors, could be a landmark in the area and provide a welcoming connection between the UNR and downtown.

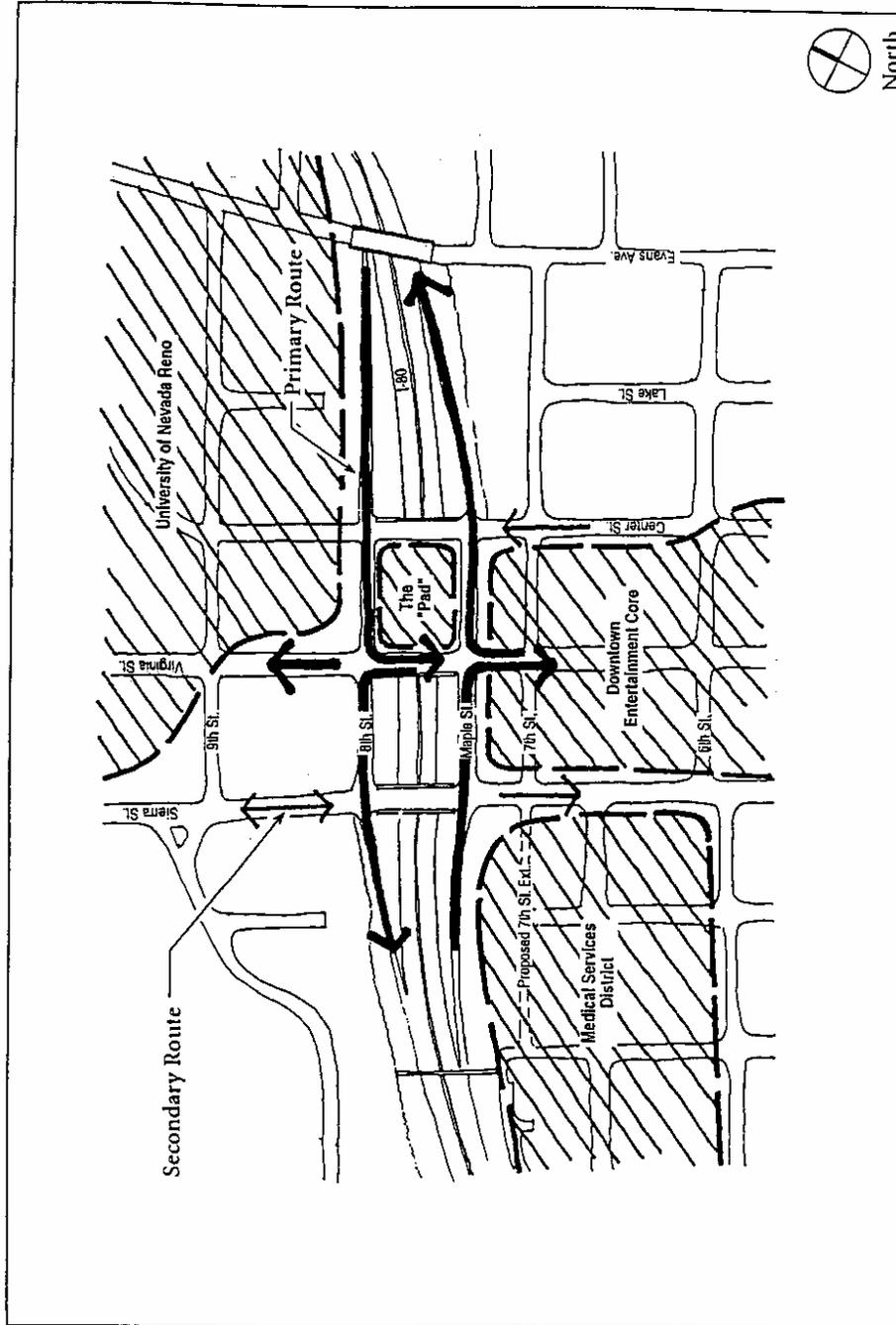
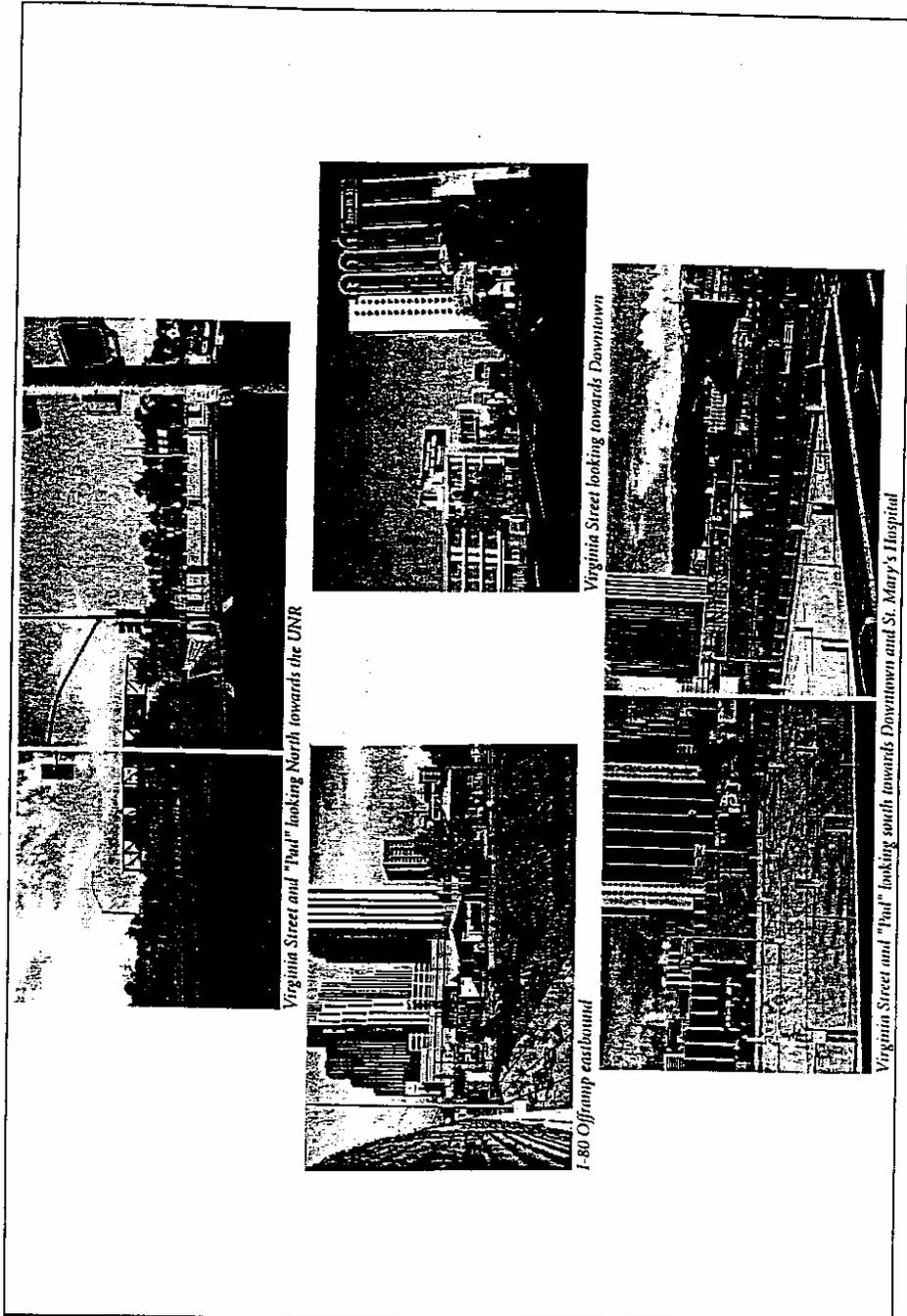


Figure 4: NORTH GATEWAY AREA



Virginia Street and "Paul" looking North towards the UNR

Virginia Street looking towards Downtown

I-80 Offramp eastbound

Virginia Street and "Paul" looking south towards Downtown and St. Mary's Hospital

Figure 5: IMAGES OF NORTH GATEWAY AREA

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III. Reno's Identity

"Reno is a city that revels in change, chance, and opportunity; mining, gaming, recreation, transportation, and education."

"The city resonates with pragmatic motives and mythic possibility."

"Nevada and Reno are meccas for personal choice and rugged individualism."

"Evolution and change are constants."

What is Reno? The answer to this question guides the design expression of the North Gateway and other gateway locations. Below is an inventory of characteristics and qualities that give Reno its sense of self, its identity. These qualities were identified through community workshops and interviews, and they serve as symbolic underpinnings for the gateway design. These qualities are illustrated in Figure 6 and listed below.

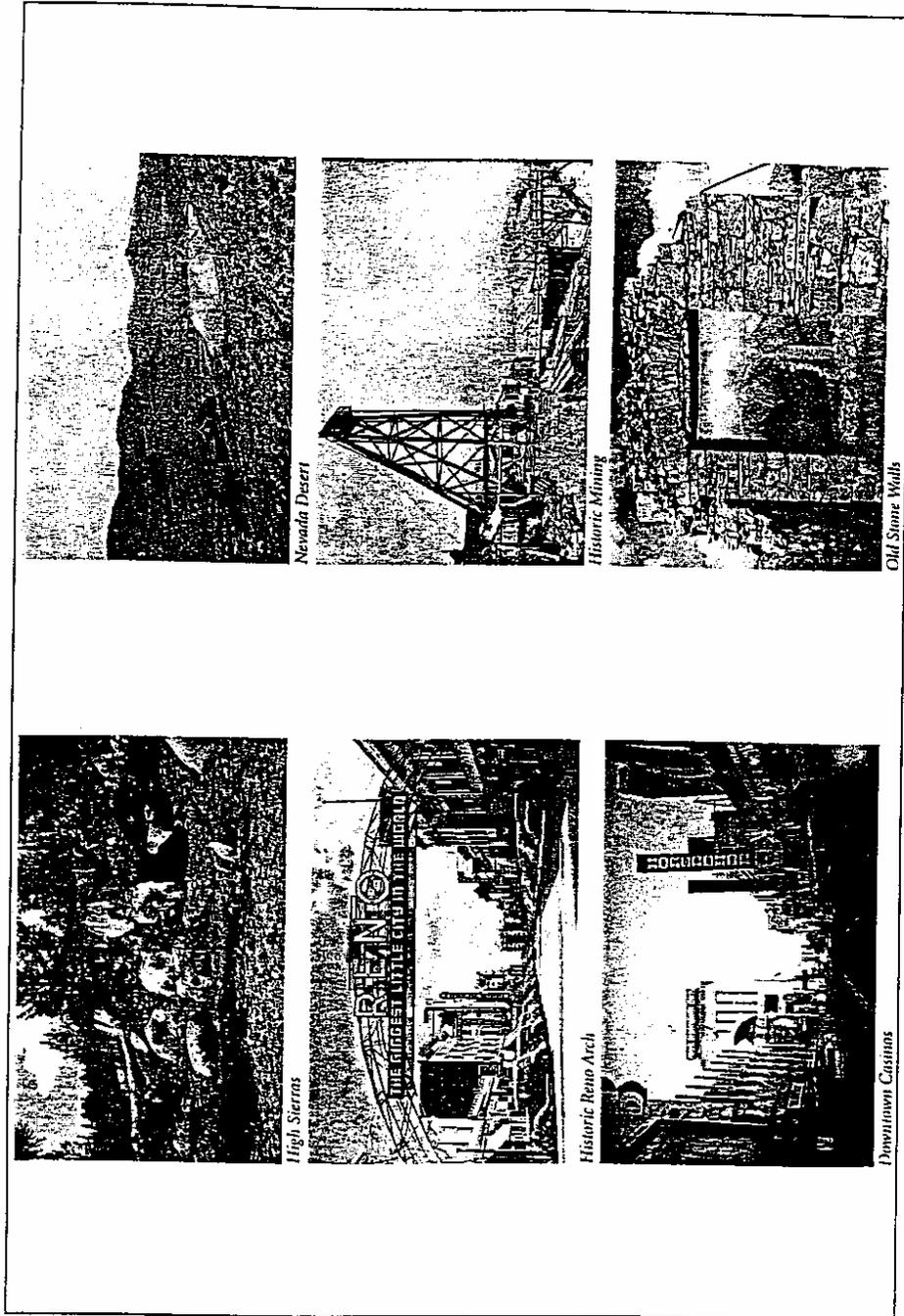


Figure 6: IMAGES OF RENO'S IDENTITY

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Natural Wonders

- Desertscape as base orientation and setting
- Great distances
- Vast open spaces
- Rawness
- Sky
- Light
- The Great Basin
- The High Sierras
- Mountain/desert transition
- Sierra/Truckee Rivers
- Prehistoric artifacts (ichthyosaur, nautilus)
- Outdoor activities (fishing, hiking, hunting, skiing, etc.)

Western Town

- Western History - taming of the West
- Time of vast opportunity and change
- Westward movement, great opportunity
- Frontier, wild west
- Man against nature
- Gambling
- Mining (trestles, bracing, mining heads, mining dredges, water flumes, tilted poles)
- Railroads
- Stone ruins
- Cowboys
- Wild west town (gambling, cowboys, etc.)
- Colorful history
- Bright lights of City
- Hub of commerce and transportation

- An events city (balloon races, etc.)
- Dynamic, growing, changing
- Independent and daring
- Fanciful, glittery, glitzy
- Modern; new (or rather not old)

Rugged Individualism

- Individual freedom
- Individual opportunity
- Independent
- Lone individual, freedom

Small Town America

- "Biggest Little City in the World"
- "American dream can still be lived"
- Small town/university town
- Small-town environment - makes Reno distinct from Las Vegas
- Home; a comfortable place to live
- More than gaming, a community
- Desert Oasis
- Family city

IV. Gateways Master Plan

The Reno Gateways Master Plan provides a framework for developing gateway gestures at key locations and corridors leading to downtown Reno. Figure 7 illustrates gateway locations. Table 1 describes gateway locations characteristics and design intent.

Several fundamental principles drive the Gateway Master Plan:

- **Focus on Downtown Connections:** The Reno Gateways receives visitors and directs them downtown. Gateways locations include the Reno/Tahoe International Airport and Interstate 80 (at Sierra, Virginia, and Center Streets), which are two major points of entry into Reno, and streets which connect the airport to downtown. Downtown connections are oriented to vehicular, transit, and pedestrian circulation.
- **Clear and Ample Way-Finding Systems:** The Reno Gateways orient visitors and inform them of attractions in the downtown area. A clear signage system that directs visitors to downtown attractions and services enhances visitor comfort.
- **Distinction through Streetscape, Street Furniture, and Public Art :** The Reno Gateways incorporates streetscape, street furniture, and public art that distinguishes the area,

imparts a positive image, and and conveys a "sense of arrival".

- **Gateway Motifs that are Portable:** The Reno Gateways include elements or motifs that can be repeated at other gateway locations. Repeated motifs guide visitors by letting them know that they are approaching downtown.
- **Recognition of Each Gateway Site:** While the Reno Gateways have a common "language" with other gateways (see above), each gateway expression relates to the special character and function of its site.

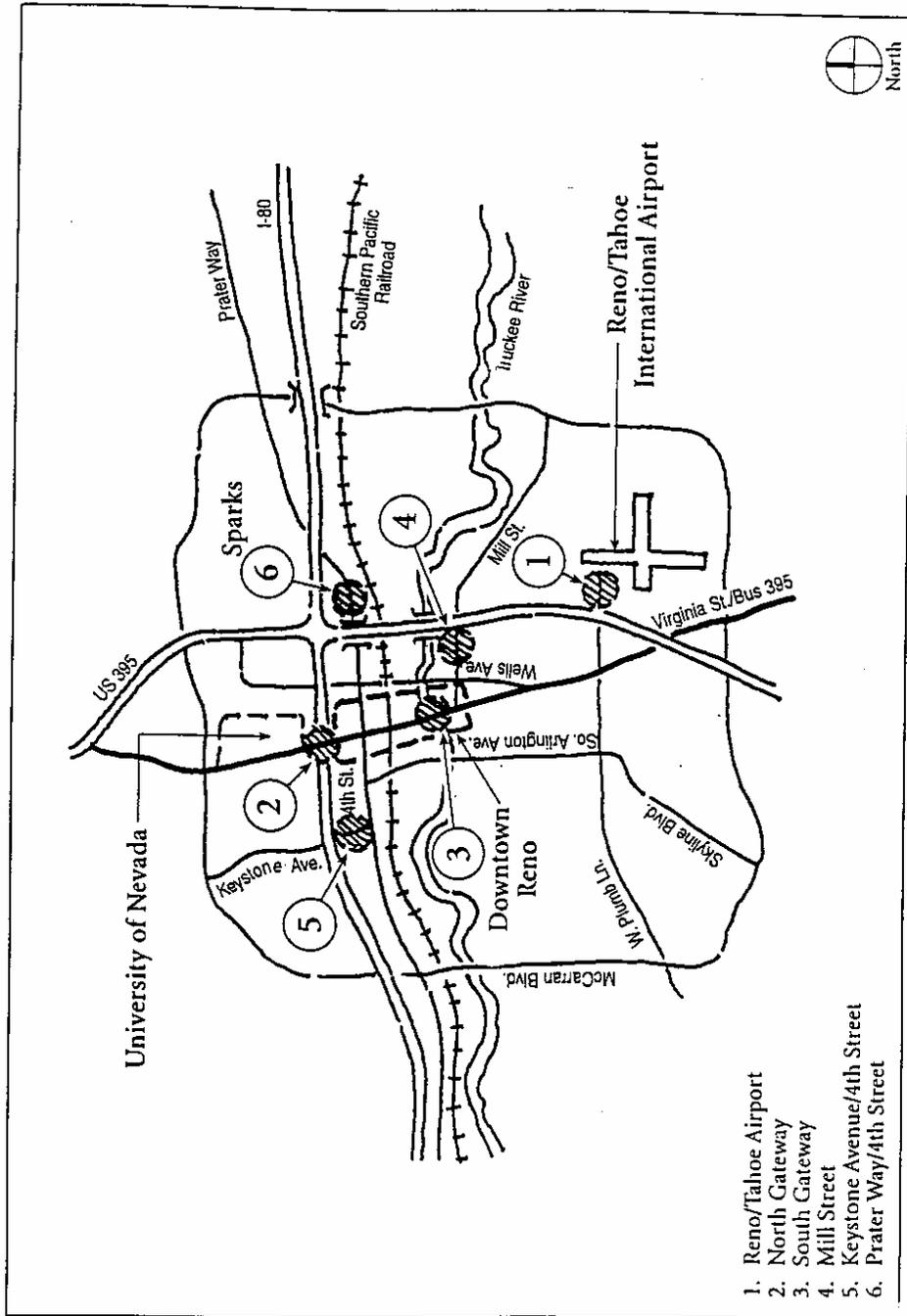


Figure 7: GATEWAY LOCATIONS

Table 1: Gateway Location Characteristics and Design Intent

Gateway	Location Characteristics	Design Intent
1. Reno/Tahoe International Airport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary arrival place for millions of visitors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide clear directions and information for visitors. Say "welcome": Provide visitor services and make "imageable" first impression.
2. "North Gateway" Sierra, Virginia, and Center Streets at I-80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary arrival point for millions of visitors. "Front door" to downtown Reno and the UNR. Auto-oriented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide clear direction (signage) and orientation to downtown and the UNR. Say "welcome": enhance streetscape, provide visitor services, and provide landmark gestures.
3. "South Gateway" Sierra, Virginia, and Center Streets at Truckee River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At confluence of three central downtown districts: entertainment core, riverfront district, and civic-office district. Includes Truckee River (local venue and outdoor attraction), historic bridges, and civic buildings. Site of redevelopment plan (Renaissance Project), including retail, restaurant and civic uses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide link between entertainment core and civic-office building. Enhance as community gateway/local venue/"town center", with pedestrian orientation. Use bridges as symbolic historic elements, interpretive pieces of art.
4. Mill Street At intersection of Mill Street and US 395	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major city street connecting airport with downtown Reno. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Say "welcome": enhance streetscape and provide gateway gesture. Provide consistent streetscape treatment unifying street as gateway corridor.
5. Keystone Avenue/Fourth Street At intersection of Keystone Avenue and I-80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major access point from I-80. Leads to Fourth Street, a historic highway (Business 80) connecting Reno and Sparks and points beyond. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Say "welcome": enhance streetscape and provide gateway gesture. Provide consistent streetscape treatment unifying streets as gateway corridor.
6. Prater Way/Fourth Street At intersection of Prater Way and Fourth Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major access point from Sparks. Fourth Street a historic highway (Business 80) connecting Reno and Sparks and points beyond. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Say "welcome": enhance streetscape and provide gateway gesture. Provide consistent streetscape treatment unifying street as gateway corridor.

V. The North Gateway

The North Gateway welcomes visitors to Reno's downtown and the University of Nevada Reno (UNR) campus. The North Gateway is located at the intersection of Interstate 80 (I-80) and Sierra, Virginia, and Center Streets. The two-block area, bounded by Eight, Sierra, Maple, and Center Streets, is where visitors to Downtown Reno, the UNR, and St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center enter and exit I-80.

A. Goals

- To convey the two blocks in the North Gateway area as a district. To enhance the image of the district with coordinated and high quality streetscape improvements, street furniture, and art elements.
- To provide motorists with clear directions to downtown, the UNR, and St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center. To emphasize southbound Sierra Street as the preferred entrance into downtown, northbound Center Street as preferred route exiting downtown, and northbound Virginia Street as the preferred entrance to the UNR.
- To create a "gateway gesture" to downtown and the UNR. To acknowledge the downtown gaming district and the

UNR with significant gateway gestures, such as sculptural (art) elements.

- To acknowledge Virginia Street as Reno's "Main Street" and a central "activity spine" of downtown. To maintain Virginia Street as primarily pedestrian-oriented.
- To enhance the pedestrian and vehicular connection between downtown, the UNR, and St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center.
- To provide services or directions to services for tourists (information, restrooms, etc.).

B. Gateway Elements

The North Gateway design includes a variety of art work and streetscape elements. Collectively, they create a welcoming "district" and arrival experience for visitors to Reno. The components of the North Gateway design are discussed below and illustrated in Figures 8 - 14.

Tower of Cards (Gateway to Downtown)

The Tower of Cards is a tall (up to 80') sculptural element on the southwest corner of the intersection of Sierra Street and Maple Street. The Tower is at the entrance to the downtown entertainment (gaming) district. It celebrates gaming and games (see Figure 10), and alludes to the mythology of "opportunity and

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chance" that is particular to Reno and the State of Nevada. The Tower is fun and playful in character, and can accommodate many interpretations of games and chance. Lighting, including tracer lights, is an integral part of the design.

The Tower of Cards is a grand expression of Reno. Its height and unique character ensures that the Tower become a landmark in the community.

The Open Book (Gateway to the UNR)

The Open Book is a sculptural element at the entrance to the UNR on the northeast corner of the intersection of Virginia Street and Eighth Street. The Open Book is a metaphor for learning, exploring, introspection, and growth.

The sculpture is made of three panels. Two stone walls (the cover of the book) are opened to reveal a stainless steel page with the message "University of Nevada Reno" in halo lighting. (The halo lighting is a rear projected lighting technique that is very soft and elegant). The "book cover" uses layers of rough and cut stone pieces; the stone transitions from rough blocks at the base to more refined cut stone pieces at the top. The refined stone resembles the stone of the older academic buildings on campus.

The Open Book has a quiet, reserved, understated quality. It has a "timeless" quality as compared to the dynamic, contemporary character of the Tower of Cards.

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Freeway Bridge Improvements

The North Gateway design includes lighting, decorative railings, planters, and stamped concrete sidewalks on the Sierra, Virginia, and Center Street Bridges over I-80. Vertical lighting elements, use of architectural finishes, refined railings, and a string of lights provide a quality and scale befitting the North Gateway area.

As the preferred access route into downtown, the Sierra Street bridge has improvements on both sides of the bridge. The east side of the Virginia Street bridge and the west side of the Center Street bridge have similar improvements. The west side of the Virginia Street bridge and the east of the Center Street bridge, the two sides adjacent to the pad, have streetscape treatment like downtown. This treatment helps link the downtown with the UNR.

I-80 Off-Ramps Improvements

The areas beside the eastbound and westbound off-ramps of I-80 are landscaped with trees, ground cover, boulders, and reflector bollards.

Streetscape Improvements

All streets in the North Gateway area, including Maple and Eighth Streets, have uniform streetscape treatment, including tree planting, consistent with City standards.

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Signage and Circulation

Signage, both guide and informational, provides clear directions to downtown, the UNR, and St. Mary's Hospital Medical center, among other destinations. Traffic is directed downtown on Sierra Street and to the UNR on Virginia Street. Traffic is directed out of downtown on Center Street. A signage program is illustrated in Chapter VI.

Virginia Street District

Streetscape improvements on Virginia Street north and south of the North Gateway area include tree plantings in the street's median. Virginia Street in downtown is designated the Virginia Street District to acknowledge the street's role as the City's ceremonial "Main Street".

Gateway-Related Policies

To enhance the North Gateway design, the following policies are recommended:

- Prohibit the construction of skyways over Virginia Street in the downtown area. Skyways darken streets and break the street's visual continuity. Virginia Street free of skyways enhances its pedestrian orientation and its role as the City's ceremonial "Main Street".
- Redesignate Business 395. Redesignating Sierra Street and Center Street as Business 395 (rather than Virginia Street)

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encourages greater use of Sierra and Center Streets and discourages traffic on Virginia Street.

- ~~Setback buildings and other structures from the gateway elements.~~ Setting back and stepping back buildings and other structures from the Tower of Cards and Open Book enhance the visibility and presence off the two gateway elements.

C. Cost Estimates

Table 2 lists estimated costs for the earliest phase of the North Gateway design (see D. Phasing and Implementation). Table 2 does not include cost for the Open Book UNR gateway, estimated at \$250,000.

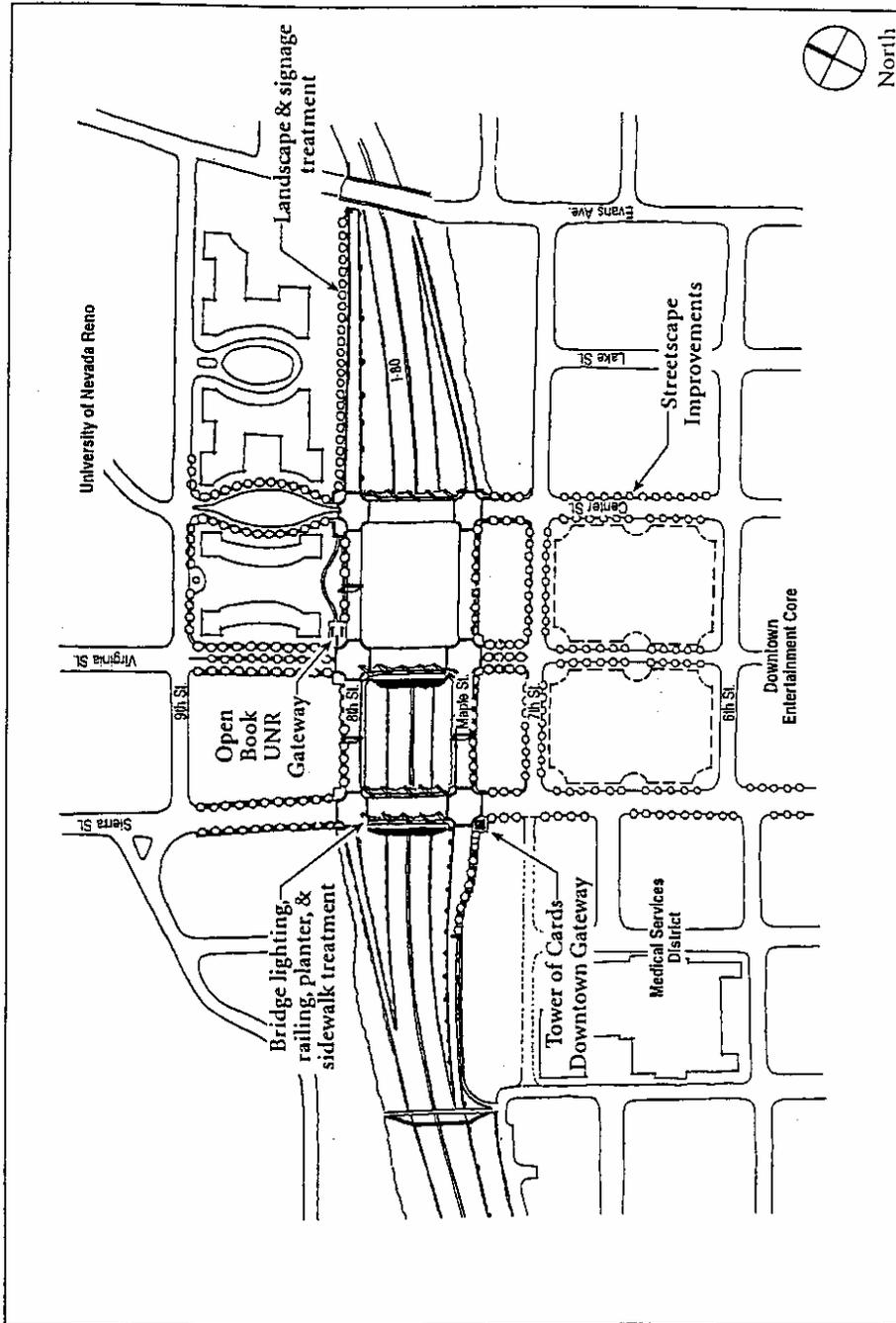


Figure 8: NORTH GATEWAY CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN

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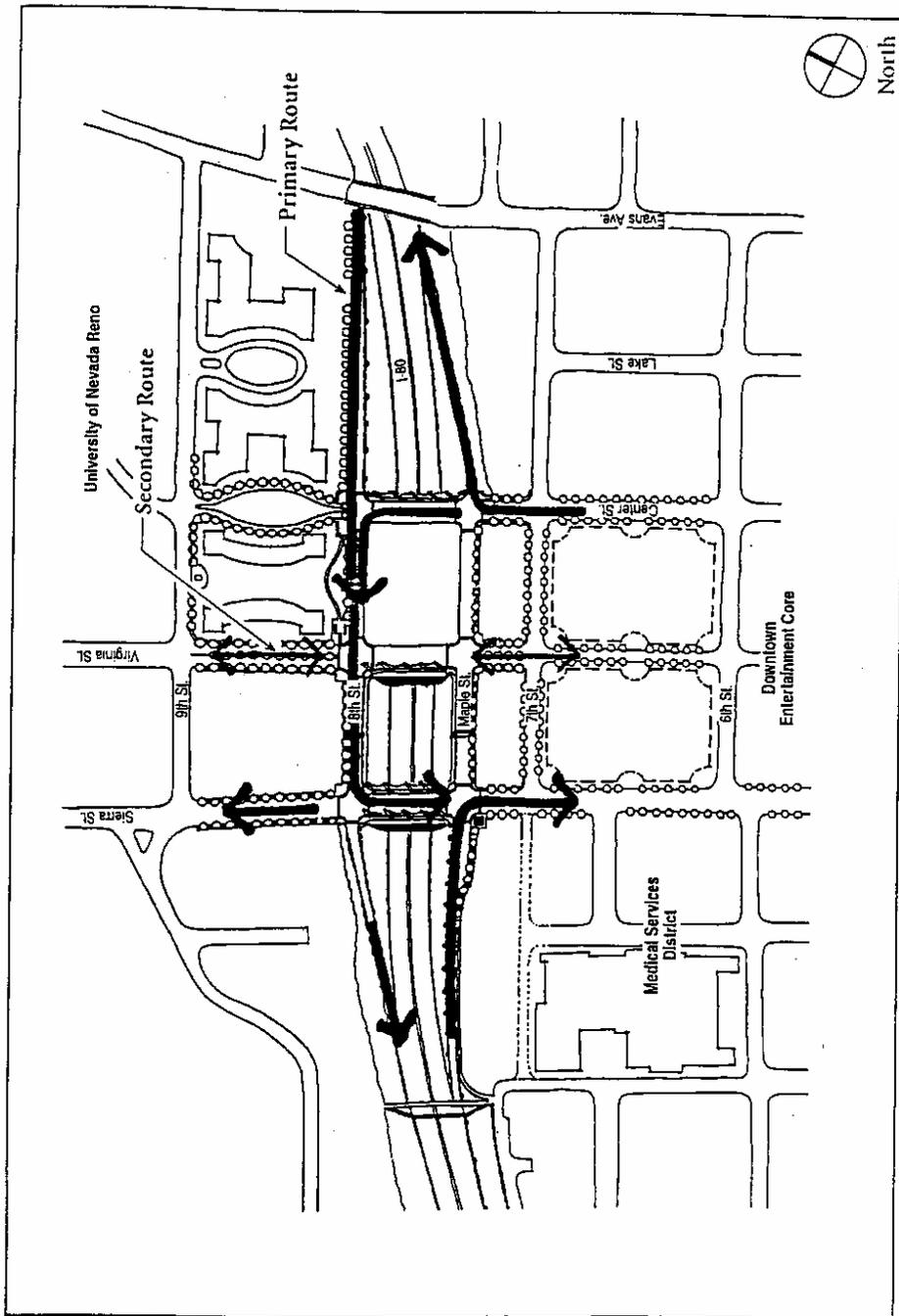


Figure 9: NORTH GATEWAY CIRCULATION PLAN

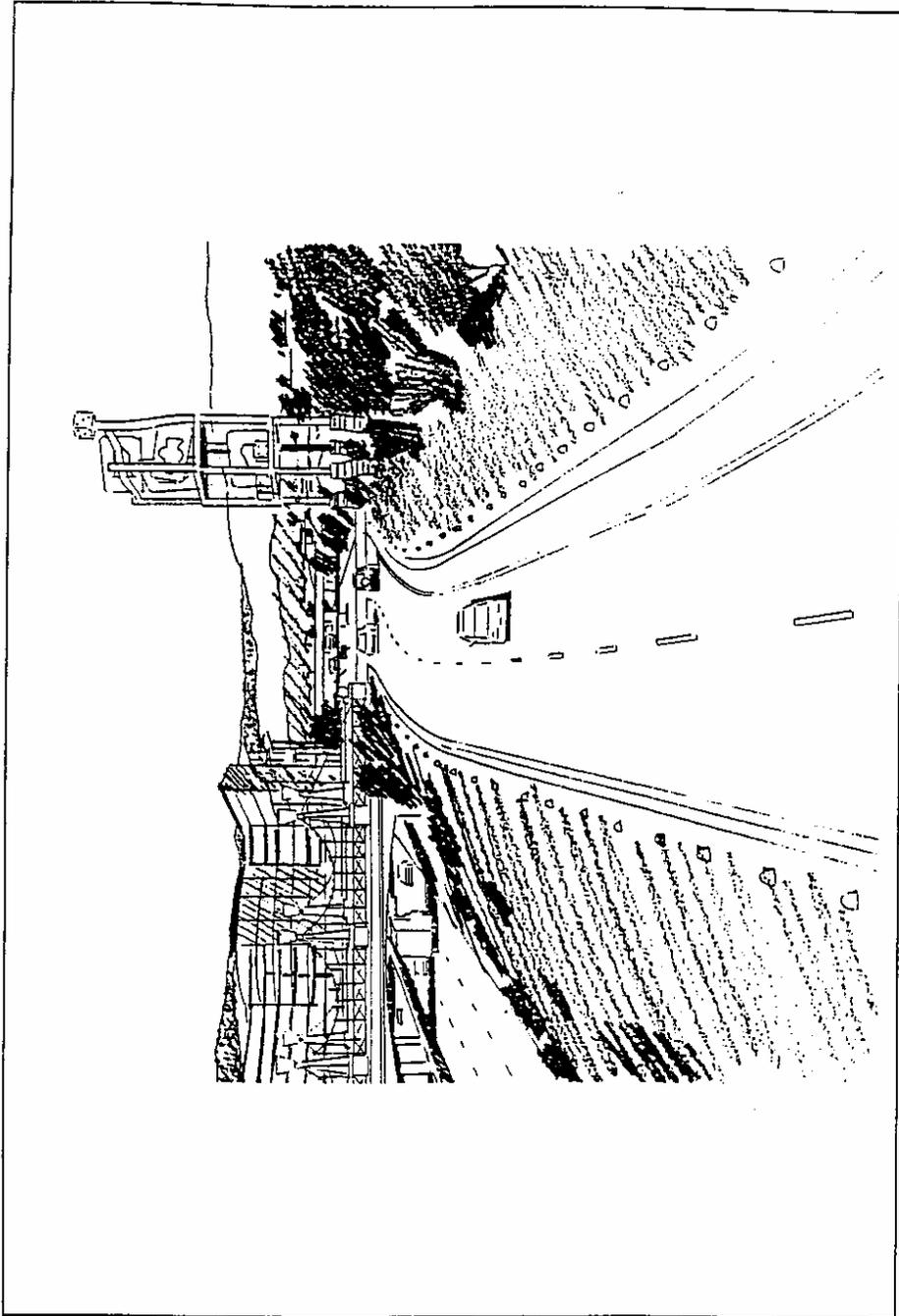


Figure 10: I-80 OFFRAMP HEADING EAST TO SIERRA STREET

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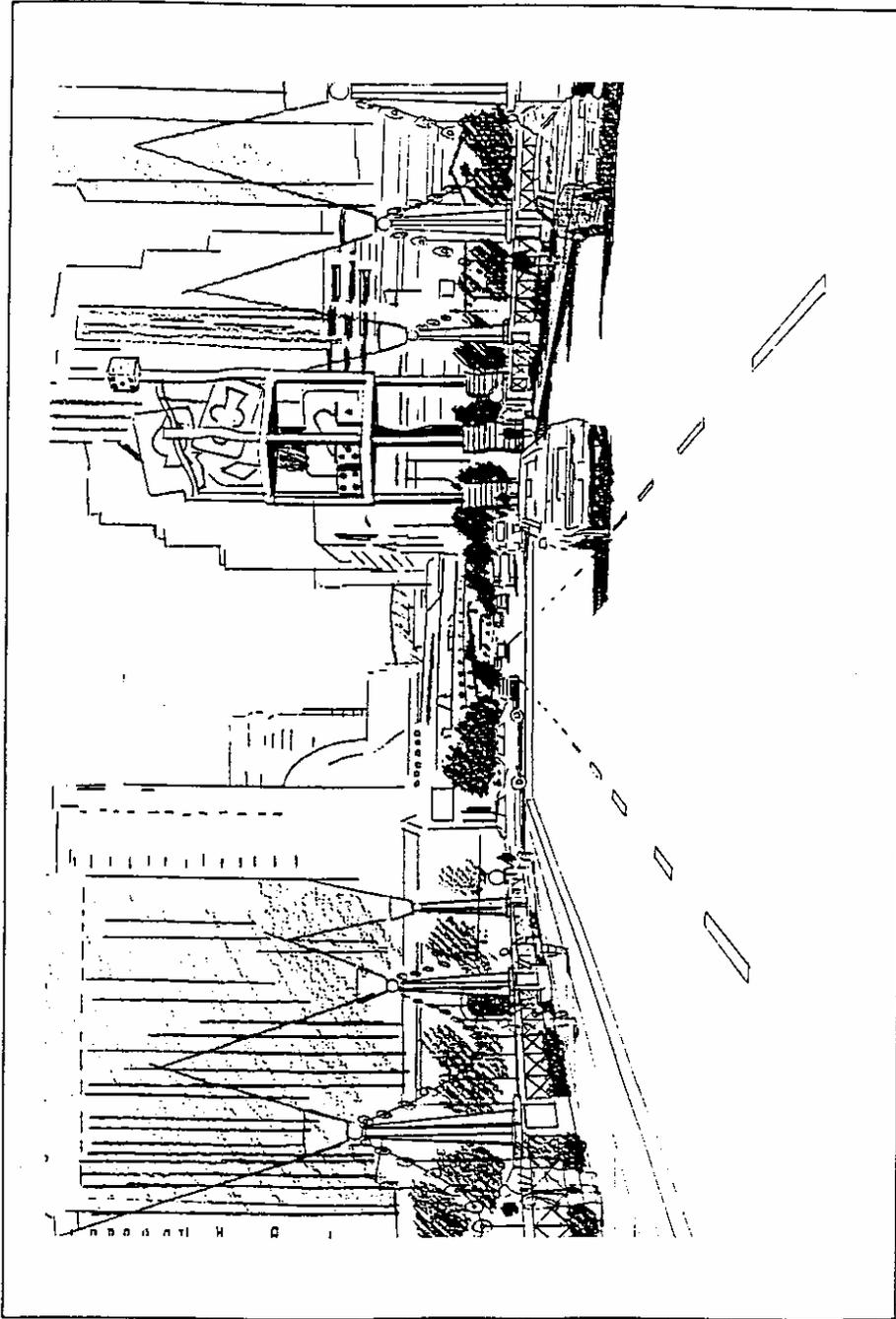


Figure 11: ENTRANCE TO DOWNTOWN ON SIERRA STREET: THE "TOWER OF CARDS"

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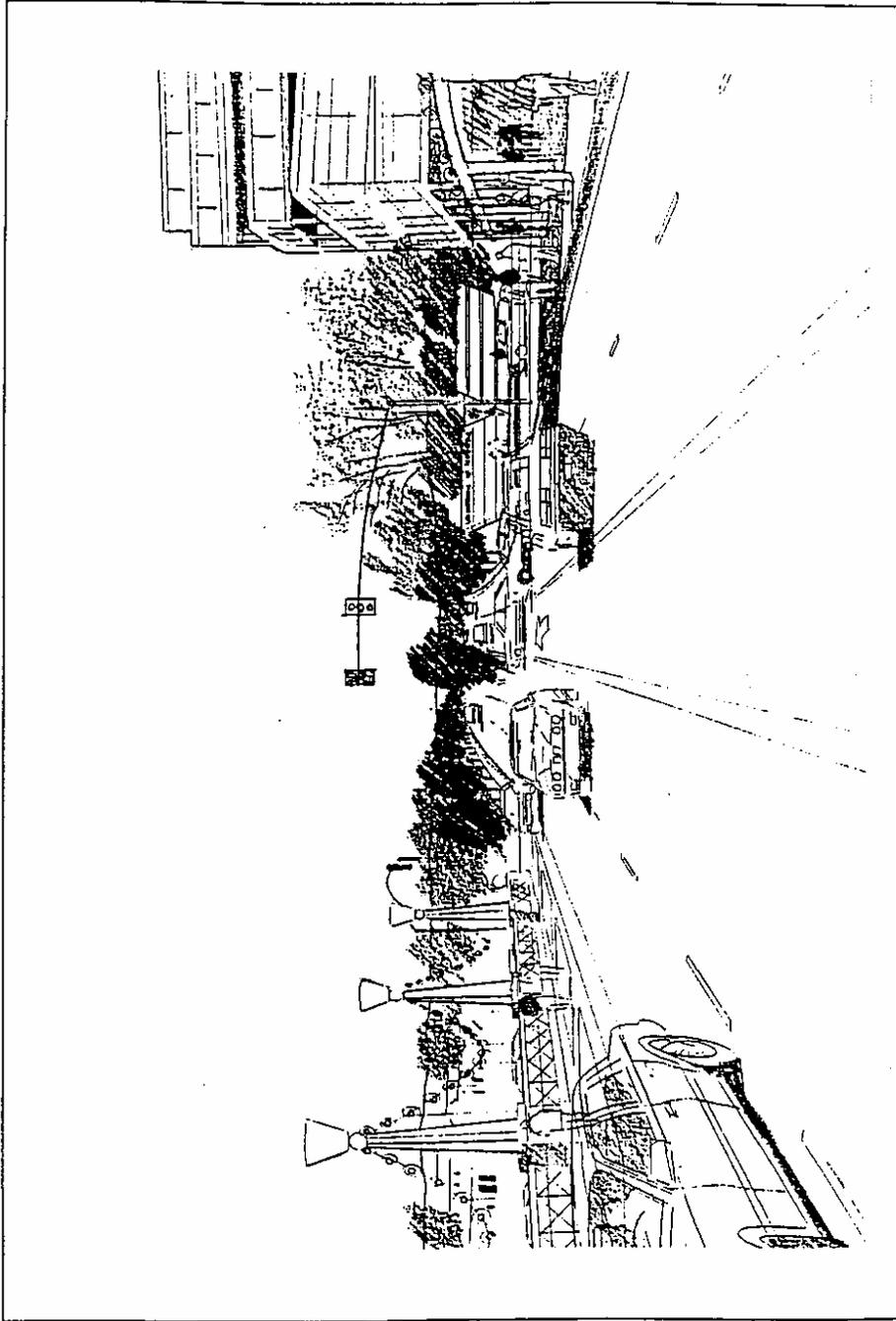


Figure 12: ENTRANCE TO THE UNR ON VIRGINIA STREET. THE "OPEN BOOK"

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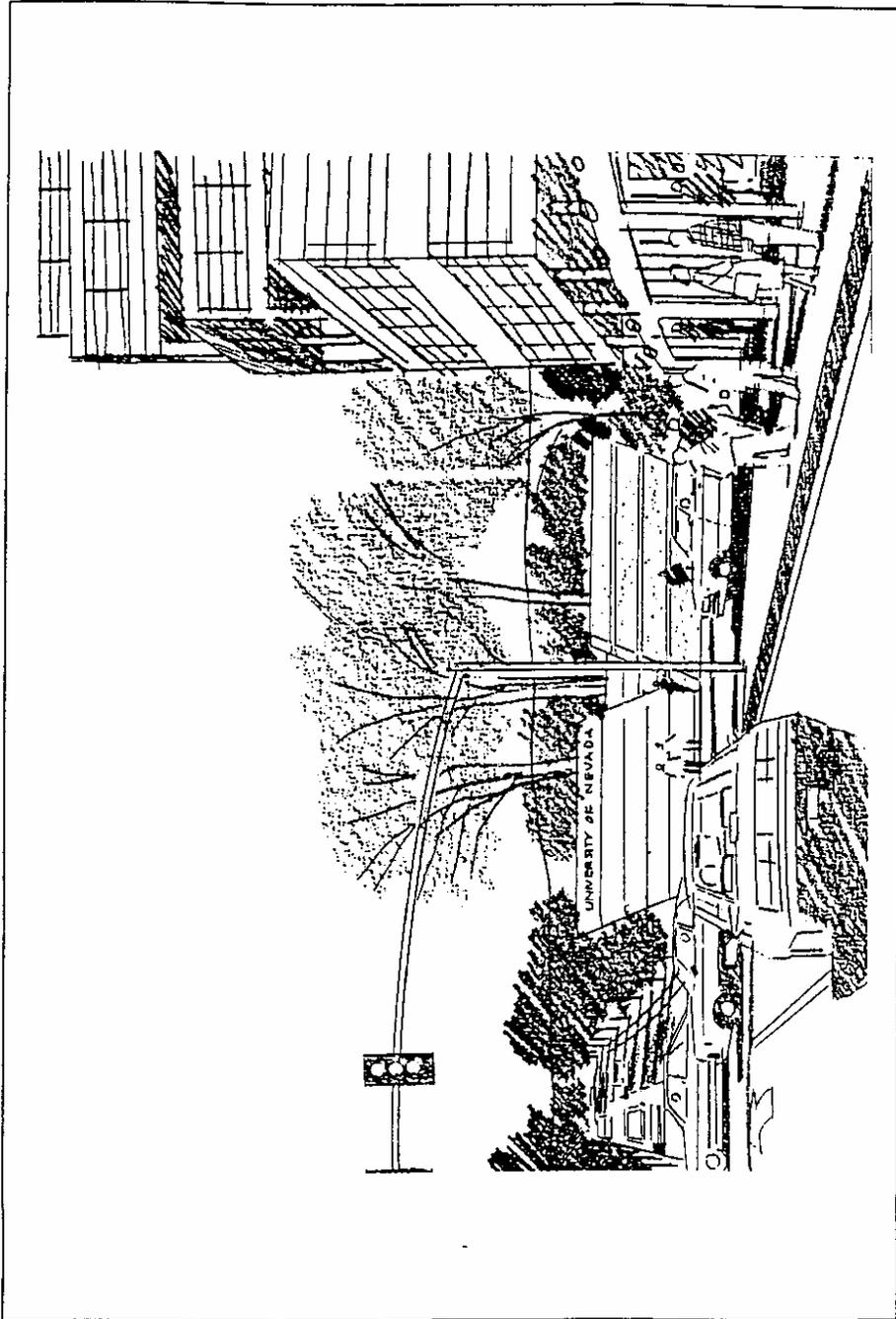


Figure 13: ENTRANCE TO THE UNR: THE "OPEN BOOK"

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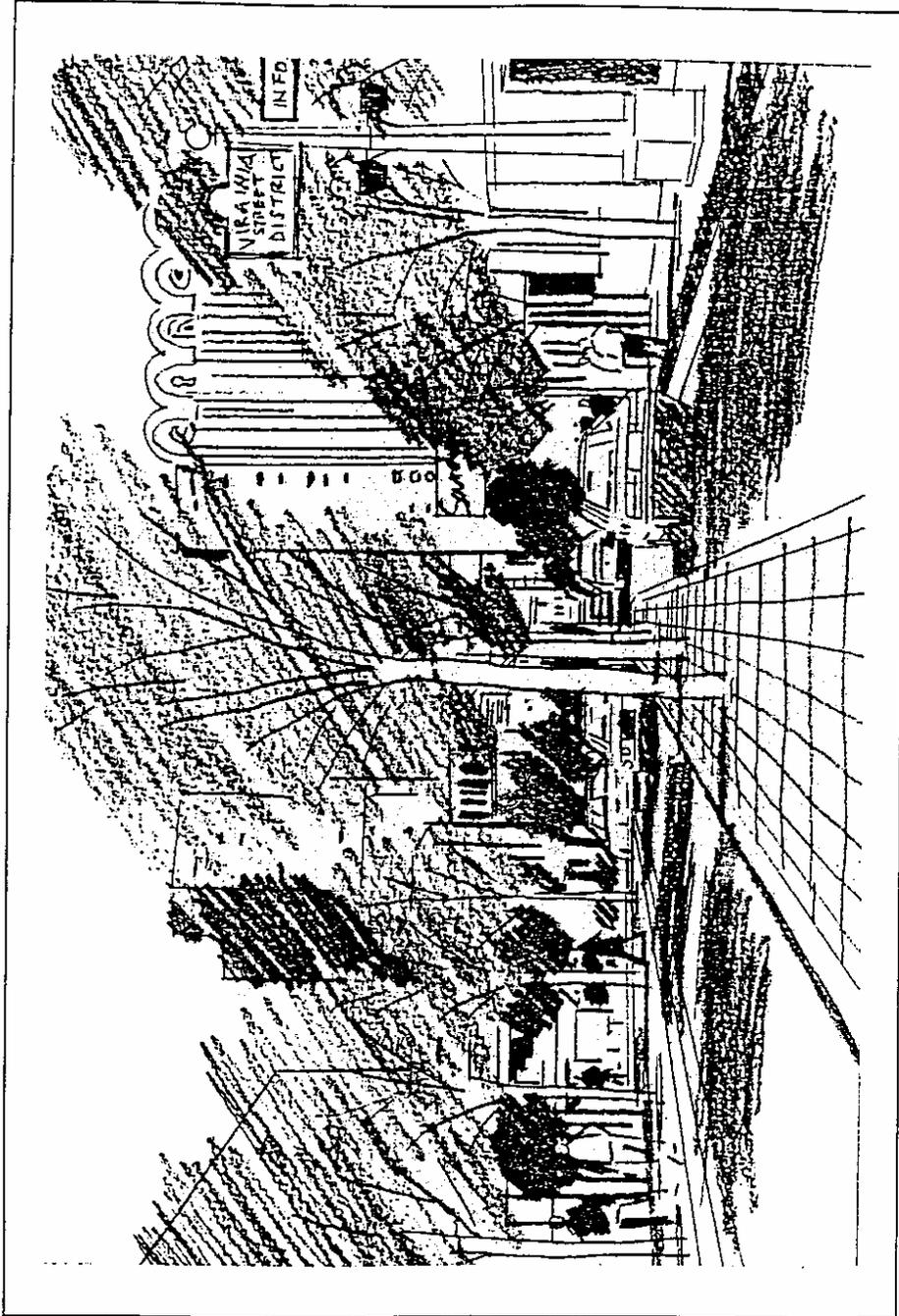


Figure 14: VIRGINIA STREET DISTRICT

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Table 2: Estimate of Probable Construction Costs

North Reno Gateways Schematic Design
 Reno, Nevada
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21-Aug-95
 Revised 8-Nov-95
 Revised 15-Nov-95

Item #	Description	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Cost
1	Civil				
	Water Service for Irrigation		LS		5,000
	Electrical Service for Lighting		LS		20,000
	Total Civil Work				\$25,000
2	Artworks				
	Tower of Cards		LS		300,000
	Total Artworks				\$300,000
3	Lighting				
	Pole Lights on Bridges	20	EA	7,000.00	140,000
	Tower of Cards Lighting	1	EA	20,000.00	20,000
	Total Lighting				\$160,000
4	Hardscape				
	Stamped Concrete Sidewalks on Bridges	5,000	SF	5.00	25,000
	Decorative Railing on Bridges	800	LF	50.00	40,000
	Planters on Bridges		LS		100,000
	Reflector Bollards (1-80 off-ramps)	60	LS		2,500
	Total Hardscape				\$167,500

Table 2: Estimate of Probable Costs Continued
North Reno Gateways Schematic Design
 Reno, Nevada
 Sasaki Associates, Inc.

21-AUG-95
 Revised 8-NOV-95

Item #	Description	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Cost
5	Planting and Irrigation				
	Planting Arcas w/ Irrigation (1-80 off-ramps)	42,200	SF	2.25	94,950
	Boulders (1-80 off-ramps)		LS		25,000
	Vines at NDOT Fence w/ Irrigation	600	LF	2.00	1,200
	Street Trees with Gravel Moulch (Maple and Eighth)	31	EA	350.00	10,850
	Planting in Bridge Planters		LS		15,000
	Total Planting and Irrigation				\$147,000
6	Informational Signage				
	Informational Signage		LS		\$75,000
	Subtotal				\$874,500
	Contingency	20%			\$174,900
	TOTAL				\$1,049,400
	Design and Engineering Services			Allow	\$147,000
	GRAND TOTAL				\$1,196,400

D. Phasing and Implementation

The North Gateway design improvements are phased as follows:

0 to 2 Years:

- Tower of Cards Downtown Gateway.
- Sierra Street Freeway Bridge Treatment (lighting, decorative railing, planters, and stamped concrete sidewalks on both sides of the bridge).
- Virginia Street and Center Street Freeway Bridge Treatment (lighting, decorative railing, planters, and stamped concrete sidewalks on one side of each of the bridges).
- Street Trees for Eighth and Maple Streets (north side and south side, respectively between Sierra and Center Streets).
- Informational Signage (see Figure 17).
- I-80 Off-ramp Landscape Treatment (eastbound and westbound).

2 + Years:

- Open Book UNR Gateway. Implementation determined by the UNR.
- Streetscape Improvements (on Sierra, Virginia, and Center Streets north and south of the North Gateway project area). Implementation determined by City and private property owners adjacent to streets.

The North Gateway improvements require that:

- The four major controlling interests in the North Gateway area work closely together to implement the plan. These interests are the Reno Redevelopment Agency, Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT), the University of Reno (UNR), and St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center.
- The Reno Redevelopment Agency works closely with NDOT. NDOT has jurisdiction over the entire project area's public right-of-ways.
- The Reno Redevelopment Agency works closely with adjacent private property owners to implement the streetscape improvements.

Table 3 describes the phasing and implementation strategy for the North Gateway design.

Table 3: Phasing and Implementation

Improvement	Phasing Period	Potential Funding Sources	Comments
1. Tower of Cards Gateway (Downtown)	0 - 2 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redevelopment Tax Increment Funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easement for gateway acquired by Redevelopment Agency.
2. I-80 Off-Ramp Landscape Treatment (east and westbound)	0 - 2 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) Funds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phasing Period determined by NDOT. Improvements made by NDOT in conjunction with planned freeway improvements.
3. Bridge Treatment: Sierra Street	0 - 2 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redevelopment Tax Increment Funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements for both sides of the Sierra Street Bridge. Redevelopment Agency to work with NDOT.
3. Bridge Treatment: Virginia and Center Streets	0 - 2 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redevelopment Tax Increment Funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements for one side of Virginia Street and one side of Center Street. Redevelopment Agency to work with NDOT.
4. Street Trees (Maple and Eighth Streets)	0 - 2 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redevelopment Tax Increment Funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redevelopment Agency to work with NDOT.
5. Informational Signage	0 - 2 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redevelopment Tax Increment Funds University of Nevada Reno (UNR) Funds Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) Funds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redevelopment Agency to work with NDOT and the UNR.
6. Open Book Gateway (UNR)	2 + Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Nevada Reno (UNR) Funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phasing period determined by the UNR. Property for gateway acquired by the UNR. Gateway constructed by the UNR.
7. Streetscape Improvements (north and south of North Gateway area)	2 + Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redevelopment Tax Increment Funds Private property owners (adjacent to street right-of-ways) funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phasing "parcel by parcel" in conjunction with private or public development activity adjacent to the street right-of-way. Streetscape improvements consistent with City Standards.

VI. The North Gateway Signage Program

Figures 15 - 19 illustrate the recommendations for signage of the North Gateway area and environs. The signage program includes recommendations for the redesignation of Business 395, as discussed in Chapter V.

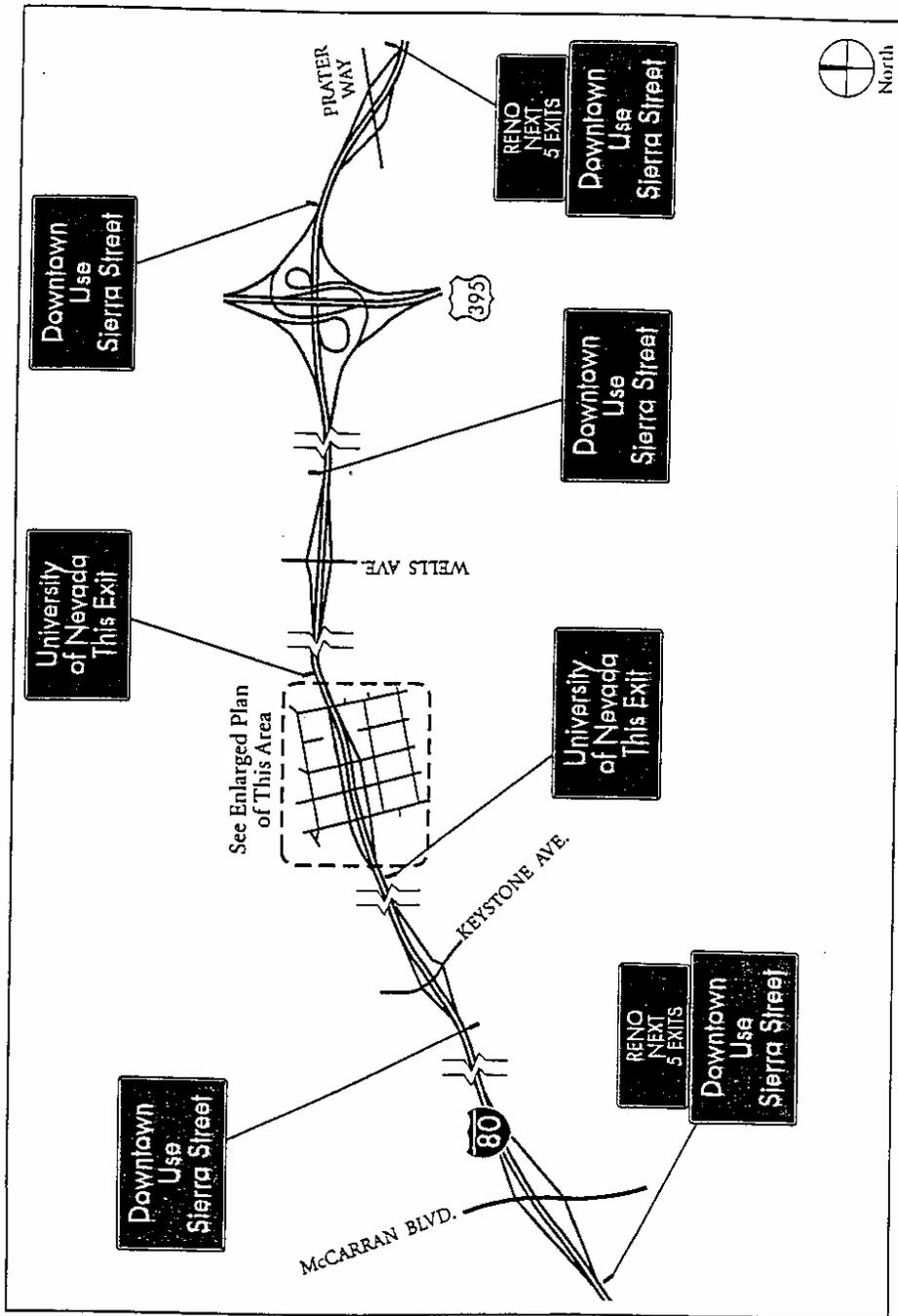


Figure 15: GUIDE SIGNING PROGRAM - I-80

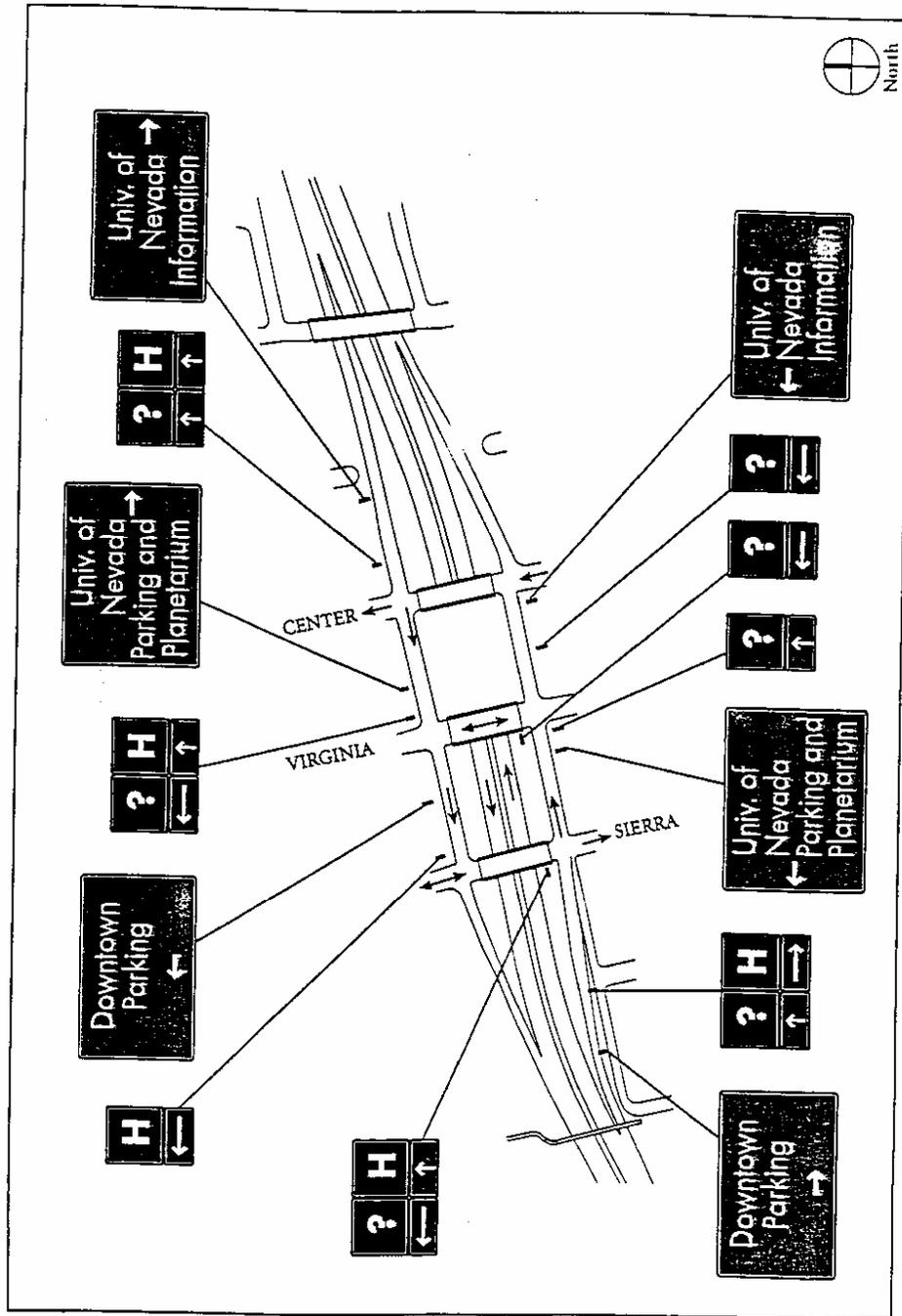


Figure 17: INFORMATIONAL SIGNING PROGRAM - NORTH GATEWAY

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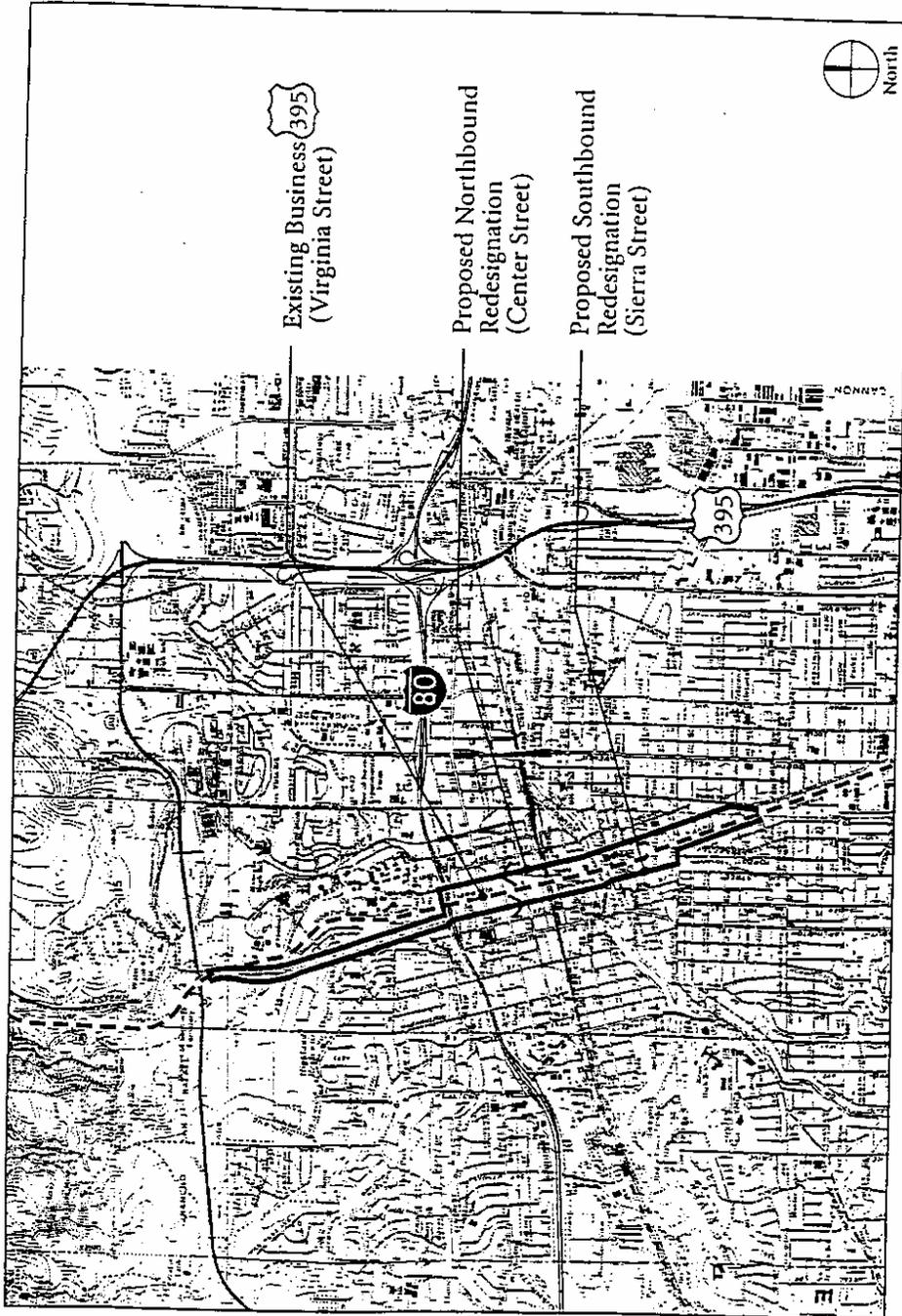


Figure 18: PROPOSED ROUTE - REDESIGNATED BUSINESS 395

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VII. Acknowledgments

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Jeff Griffin, Chairman
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Tom Herndon
Candice Pearce
Judy Pruett
Jim Pilzner

Gateway Task Force Committee

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