1 INTRODUCTION

Transportation infrastructure and service investments offer the opportunity to shape the region’s economy and land-use, creating new opportunities for prosperity. Transportation investments promote safety, a healthier community, regional connectivity, and neighborhood livability. All of these ideas are used in creating the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for the Reno-Sparks metropolitan area of Washoe County, Nevada. The RTP is the region’s long-range, multimodal transportation plan. It defines the policies and priorities for the community’s future transportation system and is the blueprint to achieving clean air, making roadways accessible to all regardless of age or ability, and providing transportation options. It is a key component to improving the region’s quality of life.

1.1 ABOUT THE RTC

The Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County (RTC) serves three roles for the Washoe County urban area: it is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the transit service provider, and builds the regional roadway network. As the MPO, RTC conducts a collaborative short- and long-range multimodal transportation planning program. RTC develops the 20-year RTP, five-year Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP), one-year Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and the Public Involvement Plan, consistent with Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) requirements.

As the transit service provider, RTC operates RTC RIDE regional fixed route bus system, the demand-responsive RTC ACCESS paratransit service and RTC VANPOOL. The RTC RIDE fixed route bus service includes 26 routes that provide about 8.5 million trips per year. RTC also operates RTC REGIONAL CONNECTOR commuter service between Reno and Carson City. The RTC RAPID bus rapid transit service on Virginia Street is the premier service in the urban area, providing high-frequency connections between Meadowood Mall and Downtown Reno. RTC RAPID includes level boarding stations and uses 60-foot articulated hybrid diesel/electric buses. The service includes technology that allows buses to extend the green light at intersections. This design helps the RTC RAPID buses move faster and compete with auto travel times. In downtown Reno, RTC operates the RTC SIERRA SPIRIT circulator service. The RTC SIERRA SPIRIT runs from downtown to the University of Nevada, Reno. It operates seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. every 20 minutes.
RTC TRANSIT SERVICES

In 2015, 8.5 million rides were taken on RTC transit services. All Services listed below.

**RTC RIDE — Local Fixed Route Service**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Regular fixed route service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ridership</td>
<td>6,641,582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue Vehicle Hours</td>
<td>211,179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productivity (Passengers per Service Hour)</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RTC RIDE operates in the cities of Reno and Sparks, and areas of Washoe County using a fleet of 70 buses on 26 routes. The service area is approximately 136 square miles. All RIDE buses offer free WiFi.

**RTC RAPID — Virginia Street BRT Service**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Bus rapid transit on Virginia Street</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ridership</td>
<td>1,320,401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue Vehicle Hours</td>
<td>29,175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productivity (Passengers per Service Hour)</td>
<td>45.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Designed to be a lot like light rail, RTC RAPID is a faster transit service on Virginia Street from downtown Reno to Meadowood Mall. RTC RAPID includes level-boarding stations with more amenities served by modern 60-foot articulated hybrid diesel/electric vehicles. The service includes technology that allows the buses to communicate with the traffic signals to extend the green time several seconds for the bus. Design improvements help vehicles move around other traffic. RTC RAPID vehicles travel up and down Virginia Street significantly faster than regular transit buses.

**RTC REGIONAL CONNECTOR (RC) — RIDE Regional Service to Carson City**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Peak hour commuter service between Reno and Carson City</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ridership</td>
<td>36,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue Vehicle Hours</td>
<td>3,311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productivity (Passengers per Service Hour)</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In partnership with the Carson City Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), the RC provides a connection between Reno and Nevada’s state capital. This route is 33 miles each way and offers free WiFi. It is ideal for commuters and runs three trips in the morning and three trips in the afternoon.
The SIERRA SPIRIT route will take you from the University of Nevada, Reno all around downtown and back. It runs every 20 minutes every day, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

RTC ACCESS is the paratransit service that provides door-to-door, prescheduled transportation for people who meet the eligibility criteria of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). RTC ACCESS passengers have disabilities which prevent them from riding RTC RIDE independently some or all of the time.

Vanpools offer people with long commutes a great way to reduce their transportation costs. Participants lease vehicles from a national vanpool company that covers the van’s maintenance and insurance. RTC subsidizes 40% of the cost of leasing the van as an incentive.
As the agency responsible for maintenance of the regional road network, RTC is responsible for planning, designing, and constructing regional road projects. In addition to new capacity, the RTC emphasizes maximizing the life of existing roadway infrastructure by funding a preventive maintenance program that keeps roads in good condition. The RTC’s regional Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) program maximizes the operational efficiency of the existing roadway network by coordinating traffic signals and other communications technology.

The RTC was formed in July 1979 by the Nevada State Legislature through the consolidation of the Regional Street and Highway Commission, the Regional Transit Commission and the Washoe County Area Transportation Study Policy Committee. The agency is governed by the RTC Board of Commissioners, which consists of five members: two representatives from the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners, two representatives from the Reno City Council, and one representative from the Sparks City Council. The Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) Director is an ex-officio member of the RTC Board. The RTC has three standing advisory committees that provide recommendations to the RTC Board: the Technical Advisory Committee, which consists of staff from partner jurisdictions and agencies, the Citizens Multimodal Advisory Committee, and the Regional Road Impact Fee Technical Advisory Committee.

1.2 TRANSPORTATION PLANNING FACTORS

This RTP was developed through a continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process. Federal regulations require that the metropolitan planning process include consideration of eight planning factors. These factors, listed below, illustrate the need for transportation plans to recognize and address the interrelationship of transportation, land-use and economic development planning. The factors are considered and integrated throughout the 2040 RTP.

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency
- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users
- Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users
- Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight
- Promote efficient system management and operation
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system
- Improving transportation system resiliency and reliability
- Reducing storm water impacts of surface transportation
- Enhancing travel and tourism
- Consideration of intercity bus service

Recognizing the special nature of transportation problems within major metropolitan areas over 200,000 residents, these areas — including the California-Reno-Sparks metropolitan area — have been designated as “Transportation Management Areas,” or TMAs, within which MPOs are given expanded responsibilities in planning for the safe and efficient movement of people, including motorists, transit customers, pedestrians, and bicyclists. The California-Reno-Sparks TMA is located in the urbanized area as defined by the U.S. Census, and is smaller than the Metropolitan Planning Area boundary. The planning-area boundary encompasses all of Washoe County, with the exception of Incline Village, which is in the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency boundary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2040</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Washoe County population</td>
<td>441,946</td>
<td>559,995</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washoe County employment</td>
<td>265,878</td>
<td>365,354</td>
<td>37.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRI Center employment</td>
<td>4,920</td>
<td>33,906</td>
<td>589.1%</td>
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</table>
The Reno-Sparks metropolitan region is expecting to gain more than 120,000 new residents over the next 23 years, increasing from about 445,000 residents to more than 565,000. The number of jobs in the region is expected to grow from 267,000 to more than 360,000 during the same period. The increase in population will result in growing travel demand. The regional travel demand model forecasts that daily vehicle miles of travel will increase from 8.4 million in 2015 to 11.2 million in 2040. The multimodal projects in this RTP are expected to reduce the future average daily traffic delay by about 12,500 hours per day compared to a no-action alternative.

1.3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The RTC worked closely with the community to develop guiding principles for the RTP at the beginning of plan development. The guiding principles are the overarching themes that recur throughout the RTP and on which the goals and selection of transportation investments are based. A description of the guiding principles is below.

• **Safe and Healthy Communities**
  
  Community safety and health are closely tied to transportation infrastructure in many ways. Roadway safety is perhaps the most obvious. RTC joins with NDOT in adopting the “Zero Fatalities: Drive Safe Nevada” initiative. RTC seeks to reduce the number of crashes that occur on area roadways and prevent traffic injuries and fatalities. Safety for bicyclists and pedestrians can be enhanced by providing safe and accessible space for all roadway users such as bicycle lanes and wider sidewalks. Offering safe and convenient infrastructure for active transportation, such as walking and biking, provides the opportunity for many other health benefits. Including physical activity as part of a daily routine helps prevent some of the chronic diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease, that are serious problems in Washoe County. Providing opportunities to walk, bike, and use transit also reduces the need for some auto trips, and subsequently vehicle emissions and air pollution. Cleaner air promotes respiratory health for all Washoe County residents.

• **Economic Development and Diversification**
  
  Transportation infrastructure investments can position Washoe County for a sustained economic recovery in several ways. Construction of roadway, transit, sidewalk, and other multimodal improvements create immediate jobs for local residents. The increased access and mobility provided by efficient transportation infrastructure systems and services allows for increased investment and job growth by local businesses. The quality of life improvements, like wider sidewalks, new bicycle lanes, and corridor beautification, create a unique sense of place and this makes the region more attractive to residents, businesses, and visitors. The multimodal investments in this plan improve regional connections, further strengthening the Northern Nevada Economy.

• **Sustainability**
  
  Transportation has an important role in environmental, economic, and social sustainability in Washoe County. RTC promotes sustainability by offering alternatives to driving: riding transit, walking, and biking. By partnering with the local jurisdictions, land-use planning can be integrated with transportation to allow the creation of new opportunities and choices. Outcomes of these partnerships can include transit-oriented development, reduced auto emissions, complete streets and increased mobility options. Strategies such as implementing car sharing, encouraging local businesses to be located adjacent to residential housing, and completing sidewalk and bicycle networks can all contribute to establishing more sustainable travel behaviors.
RTC also promotes sustainability through internal agency operations such as the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified transit centers at RTC 4TH STREET STATION and RTC CENTENNIAL PLAZA, using hybrid biodiesel-electric buses and electric-only buses, recycling, using solar panels to generate power for administrative buildings, using recycled materials in construction, and using warm-mix asphalt in roadway resurfacing projects.

Safety investment can include the following:
- Improving crosswalks at intersections
- Decreasing speed on roads with high bicycle and pedestrian use
- Providing separated bike lanes
- Creating a network of connected sidewalks and trails
- Adding concrete bus pads that allow passengers to load and unload
- Installing traffic calming devices
- Providing intersection and traffic signal upgrades
- Ongoing community education

Increased Travel Choices
Increasing travel choices means providing safe and convenient options for walking, biking, driving, and using transit. Providing local residents with a variety of mobility options increases the quality of life and daily convenience of getting to work, school and recreational activities. Providing these options can allow residents to engage in daily exercise, spend more time with their families by speeding up travel time and reduce the stress of driving on congested roadways. Increased travel choices also promote equality in transportation because it provides options to all residents regardless of age or ability.

1.4 GOALS

Goals were developed through the public participation process to support the RTP guiding principles. These goals highlight the areas where transportation investments can significantly impact quality of life for the region and include the following:

Improve Safety
RTC seeks to improve safety for all modes of transportation and is committed to the Zero Fatalities goal. RTC tracks crash statistics for the region and monitors the safety impacts of transportation improvements. High-crash corridors and intersections are prioritized for infrastructure and operational investments in this RTP.

Integrate Land-Use and Economic Development
RTC is partnering with local jurisdictions and economic development agencies to identify how transportation investments can support regional development goals. This can be achieved by providing connectivity between communities and economic centers, supporting access to local businesses in transit-oriented development districts and other areas, lowering transportation costs, and encouraging density and land-use that supports walking, bicycling, and transit.

Promote Healthy Communities and Sustainability
Sustainable practices include preservation of existing facilities through initiatives such as the pavement preservation program, focusing on green technology to promote economic development, and utilizing renewable resources to reduce energy costs.

A healthier community can be realized by providing access to nutritious foods to local residents regardless of demographics or location, encouraging active transportation by improving bicycle and pedestrian accessibility and lighting for a safer walking/biking environment, supporting the needs of freight and logistics industries, and reducing dependence on automobiles in order to improve air quality.
• **Manage Existing Systems Efficiently**
  
  It is imperative that RTC minimizes the life-cycle costs of area roadways and maximizes the utilization of existing infrastructure. By making the most of current transportation resources, RTC can stretch limited revenues farther. Examples of this include the RTC pavement preventive maintenance, annual traffic signal retiming, ITS, and bus maintenance programs.

• **Integrate all Types of Transportation**
  
  RTC seeks to have an interconnected multimodal transportation system that gives residents more travel choices. Local residents have expressed a desire to have transportation options, which include convenient alternatives for walking, biking, riding transit, or driving. The regional transportation system must provide mobility options that are appropriate to the land-use context and address the needs of neighborhoods, commercial districts, and goods movement.

• **Focus on Regional Connectivity**
  
  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. The community desires regional connectivity for residents, businesses, and visitors alike to have multimodal travel options and freight mobility between these regions and into California.

• **Promote Equity and Environmental Justice**
  
  Work toward a more equitable and balanced transportation system that can be safely used by all regardless of age, race, economic status, or ability. It is a priority of RTC to ensure that transportation and mobility benefits are equitably shared among residents of the region.

• **Improve Freight and Goods Movement**
  
  Freight and goods movement contributes to the economic success of this region and plays a role in diversifying the employment base. Because of the strategic location of Reno and Sparks, the manufacturing air cargo, freight rail, and trucking industries bring significant opportunities for economic growth. Freight, logistics, and advanced manufacturing have been identified by the Governor as key areas for economic opportunity in Northern Nevada.

• **Invest Strategically**
  
  Funding is essential to provide a quality transportation system. RTC has limited state, local, and federal resources available and must maximize the positive impact of each transportation dollar. A top priority of investing strategically is to help the community realize that transportation is an investment in our future.

Formation of the guiding principles and goals was one of the first steps in the planning process because they help to determine priorities. They are the cornerstone to plan for the future of the community and assist in knowing where to invest limited economic, human and natural resources. These goals were an important part of the project selection process, which is described in Appendix B.
2013-2017 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The 2035 Regional Transportation Plan, adopted in 2013, has guided transportation investments over the last four years. These transportation improvements have generated significant benefits for the region, including the following:

- Keystone Avenue — bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and crosswalk improvements between Coleman Avenue and University Terrace.
- McCarran Boulevard — widened from four to six lanes between Mira Loma Drive and Greg Street, installed sidewalks and multiuse path, including a pedestrian bridge over the Truckee River.
- North Valleys — Installed pedestrian safety and ADA improvements at locations on Sky Vista Parkway, Silver Lake Road, Lemmon Drive, and Stead Boulevard.
- West Plumb Lane — reconstructed pavement between McCarran Boulevard and Ferris Lane, improved drainage, and installed shared-use path.
• Sun Valley Boulevard — installed crosswalks, sidewalks, and improved bus stops at 6th Street, Gepford Parkway, and Skaggs Circle.
• Sutro Street — resurfaced pavement, installed bike lanes and sidewalks, improved crosswalks and bus stops from 4th Street to McCarran Boulevard.

• Virginia Street — replaced Truckee River Bridge.
• Installed 43.5 miles of bike lanes, 18.6 miles of sidewalk, and 318 ADA-compliant curb ramps.

• Upgraded traffic signals region wide.
• Implemented electric bus program.
• Improved bus stops region wide.
• The SouthEast Connector, Pyramid/McCarran Intersection improvements, Villanova Bus Maintenance Facility upgrades, and 4th Street/Prater Way Bus RAPID Extension Project have advanced to construction.

• Engineering for the Virginia Street Bus RAPID Transit Extension Project is underway.