

CHAPTER 1 TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No.
1.0 Purpose and Need	1-1
1.1 Introduction	1-1
1.2 Project Description and Location	1-1
1.3 Background and Project History	1-1
1.4 Project Objective	1-3
1.5 Project Purpose and Need	1-3
1.5.1 Purpose: Provide improvements to serve existing and future growth.	1-4
1.5.2 Purpose: Alleviate existing congestion problems on Pyramid Highway.	1-6
1.5.3 Purpose: Provide direct and efficient travel routes to address existing travel inefficiencies.	1-9
1.5.4 Purpose: Respond to regional and local plans.	1-12
1.5.5 BLM Purpose and Need.....	1-13
1.6 Relationship to the Transportation Planning Process	1-14
1.7 Relationship to NEPA.....	1-14

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page No.
Figure 1-1. Study Area	1-2
Figure 1-2. Intersection LOS	1-7
Figure 1-3. Existing Roadway Network	1-10
Figure 1-4. McCarran Boulevard Existing and Future (2035) Average Daily Traffic.....	1-12

LIST OF TABLES

	Page No.
Table 1-1. Historical Population Growth.....	1-4
Table 1-2. Population Statistics by Planning Area, 2015 to 2035	1-5
Table 1-3. Employment Statistics by Planning Area, 2015 to 2035	1-5
Table 1-4. LOS Criteria for Intersections.....	1-6
Table 1-5. Intersection LOS, Base Operation Year (2007)	1-8
Table 1-6. Available NDOT Traffic Count Data along Pyramid Highway (2007-2014)	1-8
Table 1-7. Intersection LOS, Future (2035)	1-9

1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) and the Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County (RTC), prepared this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to identify and evaluate transportation improvements along the Pyramid Highway (also known as State Highway 445) corridor in the area of Northeast Truckee Meadows. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is serving as a cooperating agency on this project (see Chapter 4.0 *Comments and Coordination* for more information).

The objective, purpose, and needs for the Pyramid Highway/US 395 Connector Project (Study) are based partly on information developed for the *Pyramid Highway Corridor Management Plan (CMP)*, October 2001. This CMP formed the basis for inclusion of this project in the Washoe County RTC 2030 *Regional Transportation Plan*, the 2035 *Regional Transportation Plan* and the 2040 *Regional Transportation Plan (2030 RTP, 2035 RTP, 2040 RTP)*.

The improvements considered in this Final EIS address the regional movement of people and goods; relieve traffic congestion on Pyramid Highway; and provide improved east-west community connectivity between Pyramid Highway, US 395, and Vista Boulevard.

1.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION

The Study Area depicted in Figure 1-1 includes approximately 18,000 acres of land located in Washoe County, Nevada, and covers portions of unincorporated Washoe County and portions of the cities of Sparks and Reno. The Study Area surrounds the existing Pyramid Highway beginning at Calle de la Plata at the northern end and continues to Queen Way at the southern end, ranging from a half-mile wide in the north to one mile wide in the south. The Study Area also includes the area where portions of the proposed US 395 Connector may be located, extending from near Dandini Boulevard on the western end to Vista Boulevard on the east end.

1.3 BACKGROUND AND PROJECT HISTORY

The RTC's 2015 *Regional Transportation Plan* adopted in 1997 indicated that forecasted traffic volumes identify a need to widen Pyramid Highway from the existing four lanes to six to eight lanes. In the spring of 1998, the RTC Engineering Department began discussing the Pyramid Highway widening project with the City of Sparks and neighboring communities. In the Northeast Truckee Meadows area, which includes the communities of Sparks, Spanish Springs, Sun Valley and lands immediately surrounding them, populations were expected to greatly increase.

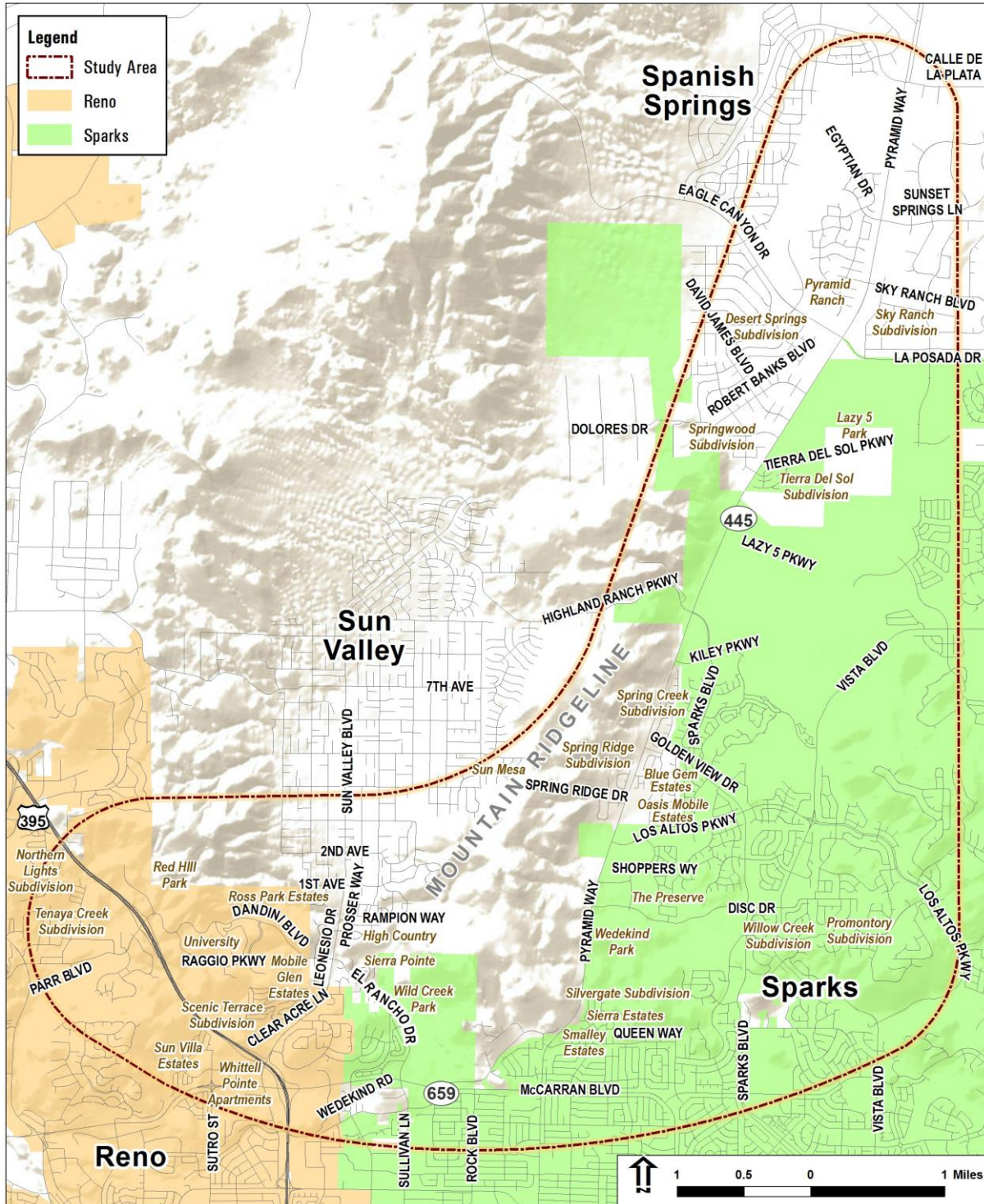


Figure 1-1. Study Area



Further, population growth in larger Washoe County and employment growth in the southern portions of Washoe County were increasing demand for north-south travel. While recognizing that rapid growth in this area of Washoe County called for a solution to traffic congestion, the City of Sparks and the surrounding communities expressed great concern about community impacts from the planned widening.

In response to the RTC's plan to widen Pyramid Highway, and in view of the growth patterns, the City of Sparks requested that the RTC evaluate long-range transportation solutions for the broader region through 2030.

In the summer of 1998, the Pyramid Highway corridor Citizens' Steering Committee was formed to study and make recommendations for improvements in the Northeast Truckee Meadows area, with specific lane recommendations for the Pyramid Highway through the City of Sparks urban core. The Citizens' Steering Committee included representatives from citizen and neighborhood advisory boards, private development, and local governments. They developed the vision and objectives for the *CMP*, which was adopted by the RTC in October 2001. This *CMP* formed the basis for inclusion of the improvement project in the *2030 RTP* and subsequent RTPs.

Following the adoption of the *CMP*, the RTC continued to work with FHWA and NDOT to identify funding sources and lay the groundwork for initiation of this EIS. In 2007, the environmental study process began to evaluate impacts and benefits from proposed improvements.

1.4 PROJECT OBJECTIVE

Development of the *CMP* was guided by the vision of the Citizens' Steering Committee. This same vision serves as the objective of this EIS:

To implement a plan that will maintain and improve the Pyramid Highway corridor as a viable transportation route for the Sparks urban core and the growing Northeast Truckee Meadows community.

1.5 PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

In February 2008, FHWA, NDOT, and RTC issued a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS for the Pyramid Highway/US 395 Connector Project. As the Lead Agencies for this EIS, FHWA, NDOT, and the RTC have worked with project stakeholders to identify multiple statements of purpose, each directly tied to a recognized need within the Pyramid Highway corridor. The purpose statements in the following sections are followed by their related need.

By satisfying each individual purpose and need, the project's stated objective will be accomplished.

1.5.1 Purpose: Provide improvements to serve existing and future growth.

Need: The cities of Reno and Sparks and unincorporated Washoe County all have experienced considerable growth in the past two decades. Table 1-1 shows that Washoe County population has consistently increased, growing 65.5 percent from 1990 to 2010. Over this same period, population in the cities of Reno and Sparks grew by 68.3 and 69.1 percent, respectively. The City of Reno had a larger population growth of 34.8 percent between 1990 and 2000 than Washoe County or the City of Sparks; however, between 2000 and 2010, there were higher growth rates in the City of Sparks. According to population forecasts from the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency (TMRPA), these population growth trends are expected to continue, but at a reduced rate.

Table 1-1. Historical Population Growth

Location	Population 1990	Population 2000 (Percent Change 1990-2000)	Population 2010 (Percent Change 2000-2010)
Nevada	1,201,833	1,998,257 (66.3%)	2,700,551 (35.1%)
Washoe County	254,667	339,486 (33.3%)	421,407 (24.1%)
Reno	133,850	180,480 (34.8%)	225,221 (24.8%)
Sparks	53,367	66,346 (24.3%)	90,264 (36.1%)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1990, 2000, 2010.

Washoe County is divided into Planning Areas made up of a collection of Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ) designed to represent concentrations of population, households, and employment districts. The Planning Areas relevant to this study are Spanish Springs, Sparks Sphere, Sun Valley, Central Sparks, Sparks Industrial, Northeast Sparks, and Downtown Sparks. The *Washoe County Consensus Forecast* (TMRPA, 2014) is the basis for population forecasts shown in Table 1-2 for the Planning Areas between 2015 and 2035¹.

The total population of Washoe County is forecasted to increase from 410,000 to 563,779 or 37.5 percent between 2015 and 2035. During that same time, population in the Planning Areas near the Study Area is forecasted to grow from 114,832 to 137,597 or 19.8 percent.

¹ In December 2007, the Regional Planning Governing Board (RPGGB) approved a Regional Plan amendment that requires the master plans, facilities plans, and similar planning documents of local governments and affected entities to utilize the *Washoe County Consensus Forecast* for determining future regional population. The forecast uses the most recent published data from the State Demographer, Woods & Poole, Global Insight, and Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA). The *Washoe County Consensus Forecast* includes both countywide population data, and data disaggregated to the three local government jurisdictions. The Regional Planning Commission (RPC) is responsible for adopting the final *Washoe County Consensus Forecast* (http://tmrpa.org/publications_4.html)



Table 1-2. Population Statistics by Planning Area, 2015 to 2035

Planning Area	Population		
	2015	2035	Percent Change
Central Sparks	44,787	49,175	9.8
Downtown Sparks	3,155	3,499	10.9
Northeast Sparks	21,344	23,408	9.7
Spanish Springs and Sparks Sphere	24,731	35,486	43.5
Sparks Industrial	393	3,004	664.4
Sun Valley	20,422	23,025	12.7
Total	114,832	137,597	19.8

Source: TMRPA *Washoe County Consensus Forecast*, 2014 and RTC.

Employment also has grown in the Study Area. Between 1990 and 2000, employment in Washoe County increased from 132,000 to 188,000, a 42.4 percent increase. Data from the TMRPA Consensus Forecast shows that total County employment from 2015 to 2035 is forecasted to grow from 257,759 to 339,306, a 31.6 percent increase. Employment statistics for most Planning Areas in the Study Area in Table 1-3 show growth. Considerable employment growth is expected in the Spanish Springs and Sparks Sphere Planning Area.

Table 1-3. Employment Statistics by Planning Area, 2015 to 2035

Planning Area	Employment		
	2015	2035	Percent Change
Central Sparks	10,146	13,891	36.9
Downtown Sparks	6,975	9,089	30.3
Northeast Sparks	3,277	4,485	36.9
Spanish Springs and Sparks Sphere	3,896	6,343	62.8
Sparks Industrial	29,118	40,022	37.4
Sun Valley	1,183	1,632	38.0
Total	54,595	75,462	38.2

Source: TMRPA *Washoe County Consensus Forecast*, 2014 and RTC.

The recent economic downturn and recent job losses have altered population and employment trends in and near the Study Area since 2007. As a result of this economic downturn, traffic counts along Pyramid Highway and at major intersections in the Study Area showed reduced volumes following 2007. As the economy has been recovering, traffic volumes in recent years have begun to increase again. Many of the traffic count stations within the study area indicate that the more recent traffic volumes have increased compared to the low volumes experienced during the recession, although the numbers are not appreciably different. The *Washoe County Consensus*

Forecast, like most forecasts of its kind, factors in economic downturns and upticks. Therefore, despite the recent downturn, projections still call for growth in the longer term, and traffic counts in the Study Area reflect this growth.

The projected increase in population and employment in the region will result in a commensurate increase in vehicle miles traveled. This will continue to strain the transportation network in the region. As discussed in Section 1.5.2, the Study Area’s transportation network is inadequate and congestion will worsen as growth continues. Improvements are needed to respond to this recent and forecasted growth.

1.5.2 Purpose: Alleviate existing congestion problems on Pyramid Highway.

Need: Level of service (LOS) is one method of describing congestion and the operating performance of a road segment or an intersection. It is measured quantitatively and reported on a scale from A to F, with A representing the best performance and F the worst.

1.5.2.1 Intersection LOS—Existing

For signalized intersections, LOS is reported for the overall intersection. For unsignalized (free or stop sign) intersections, LOS is reported for the roadway approaching the intersection with the worst delay. The quantitative criteria used to determine the LOS for signalized and unsignalized intersections are shown in Table 1-4 and displayed on Figure 1-2.

Table 1-4. LOS Criteria for Intersections

Control Delay per Vehicle (in seconds)		
LOS	Signalized Intersections	Unsignalized Intersections
A	0-10	0-10
B	>10-20	>10-15
C	>20-35	>15-25
D	>35-55	>25-35
E	>55-80	>35-50
F	>80	>50

Source: Transportation Research Board Highway Capacity Manual, 2000.

A traffic operations analysis for AM peak hour (7:00-9:00) and PM peak hour (4:00-6:00) conditions at the intersections along Pyramid Highway in the Study Area used 2007 traffic data as the base operations year. Year 2007 data was used because this EIS was initiated in that year and existing conditions information collected. Also, as discussed above, 2007 volumes are not appreciably different than existing conditions and continue to be relevant. RTC’s policy threshold LOS for Pyramid Highway is LOS E, meaning that intersections that operate at a LOS worse than E are considered to have unacceptable conditions (i.e., gridlock). The results of the analysis in Table 1-5 show that a few of the Study Area intersections are already operating at substandard LOS during peak hours. Table 1-6 compares available NDOT traffic count data for select points along Pyramid Highway. As shown, the volumes are not significantly different.

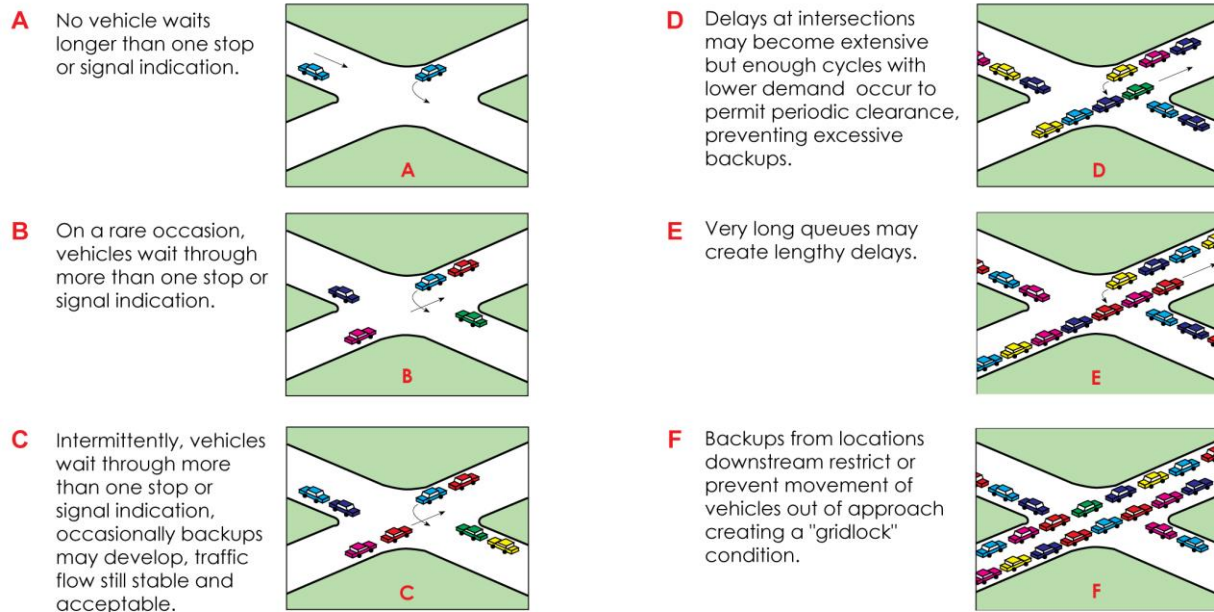


Figure 1-2. Intersection LOS

1.5.2.2 Intersection LOS—Future (2035)

The traffic operations analysis predicted future traffic conditions for the 2035 design year assuming roadway conditions similar to existing, with the addition of RTC's committed improvements in the RTP. Currently, traffic volumes on several Pyramid Highway segments within the Study Area are approaching existing capacity, southbound in the morning peak travel period and northbound in the afternoon peak. Along the southernmost section of the Study Area, in the Queen Way and Disc Drive vicinity, the volumes exceed capacity. Future improvements that were considered include those in RTC's 2035 and 2014 RTPs and FY 2016-2020 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (2016-2020 RTIP).

The results of the analysis in Table 1-7 indicate that in 2035, five of the Pyramid Highway intersections within the Study Area are anticipated to operate at LOS F during both AM and PM peak hours. One of the Pyramid Highway intersections within the Study Area is anticipated to operate at LOS F during the AM peak hour. Another three intersections are anticipated to operate at LOS F during the PM peak hour.

Table 1-5. Intersection LOS, Base Operation Year (2007)

Intersection with Pyramid Highway	Traffic Control	AM Peak Hour 7:00-9:00	PM Peak Hour 4:00-6:00
		LOS	LOS
Queen Way	Signal	A*	C
Disc Drive	Signal	B	C
Shoppers Way	Free	-	-
Los Altos Parkway	Signal	D	D
Spring Ridge Drive	Stop	D	B
Blue Gem Circle	Stop	B	F†
Golden View Drive	Signal	A	A
Sparks Boulevard (Highland Ranch Parkway)	Signal	C	D
Erin Drive (Tierra Del Sol Parkway)	Stop	F	B
Dolores Drive	Stop	D	C
David James Boulevard	Stop	F	B
Robert Banks Boulevard	Stop	C	C
Eagle Canyon Road /La Posada Drive‡	Signal	F	D
Sky Ranch Boulevard	Stop	C	D
Sunset Springs Lane/Egyptian Drive	Stop	C	C
Calle de la Plata	Stop	F	F

Source: Jacobs Traffic Analysis, 2011.

* The intersection of Pyramid Highway at Queen Way was observed to be negatively impacted by the operational conditions at the adjacent intersection of Pyramid Highway at McCarran Boulevard. The congestion and related back-up at the McCarran Boulevard intersection causes drivers to perceive poor LOS at the Queen Way intersection. This Study Synchro network did not include the Pyramid/McCarran intersection; therefore, its impact on the Queen Way intersection is not reflected in the results.

†Fewer than 10 vehicles per hour (vph) on minor street approach.

‡ Intersection lane configuration is for 2007 conditions. There have been recent geometry improvements at this intersection. With the new configuration, the intersection operates at an acceptable LOS.

Table 1-6. Available NDOT Traffic Count Data along Pyramid Highway (2007-2014)

Location on Pyramid Highway	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
North of Emerson Way	40,472	41,917	37,938	39,361	38,055	40,253	37,158	N/A
North of Queen Way	44,824	44,137	N/A	42,113	41,876	43,156	N/A	N/A
North of Sunset Springs Lane	N/A	10,285	10,140	9,835	10,258	N/A	9,889	10,198
South of La Posada Road	31,396	27,714	N/A	27,692	N/A	28,416	26,393	N/A

Source: NDOT



Table 1-7. Intersection LOS, Future (2035)

Intersection with Pyramid Highway	Traffic Control	AM Peak Hour 7:00-9:00	PM Peak Hour 4:00-6:00
		LOS	LOS
Queen Way	Signal	B	B
Disc Drive	Signal	D	E
Shoppers Way	Free	-	-
Los Altos Parkway	Signal	D	E
Spring Ridge Drive	Stop	F	F
Blue Gem Circle	Stop	D	F
Golden View Drive	Signal	D	D
Kiley Parkway	Stop	C	F
Sparks Blvd	Signal	D	F
Lazy 5 Parkway	Signal	F	E
Erin Drive (Tierra Del Sol Parkway)	Stop	F	F
Dolores Drive	Signal	E	D
David James Blvd	Stop	F	F
Robert Banks Blvd	Stop	F	F
Eagle Canyon Road/La Posada Drive	Signal	D	D
Sky Ranch Boulevard	Stop	F	F
Sunset Springs Lane/Egyptian Drive	Signal	D	C
Calle de la Plata	Signal	D	D

Source: Jacobs, 2015.

1.5.2.3 Traffic Operations Analysis Summary

In summary, the inadequate transportation network serving the Study Area results in congestion at intersections and on roadways. This is evident in the traffic volumes on Pyramid Highway that regularly exceed the existing capacity going southbound in the morning peak travel period and going northbound in the afternoon peak. With the projected growth in population and employment, these congestion levels will continue to worsen without capacity improvements.

1.5.3 Purpose: Provide direct and efficient travel routes to address existing travel inefficiencies.

Need: The existing roadway network shown in Figure 1-3 provides limited access to and from the City of Sparks and the Spanish Springs area. Currently, most southbound traffic funnels to Pyramid Highway, a four-lane, principal arterial, and then to the Pyramid Highway/McCarran Boulevard (also known as State Highway 659) intersection. East-west corridors are extremely limited.

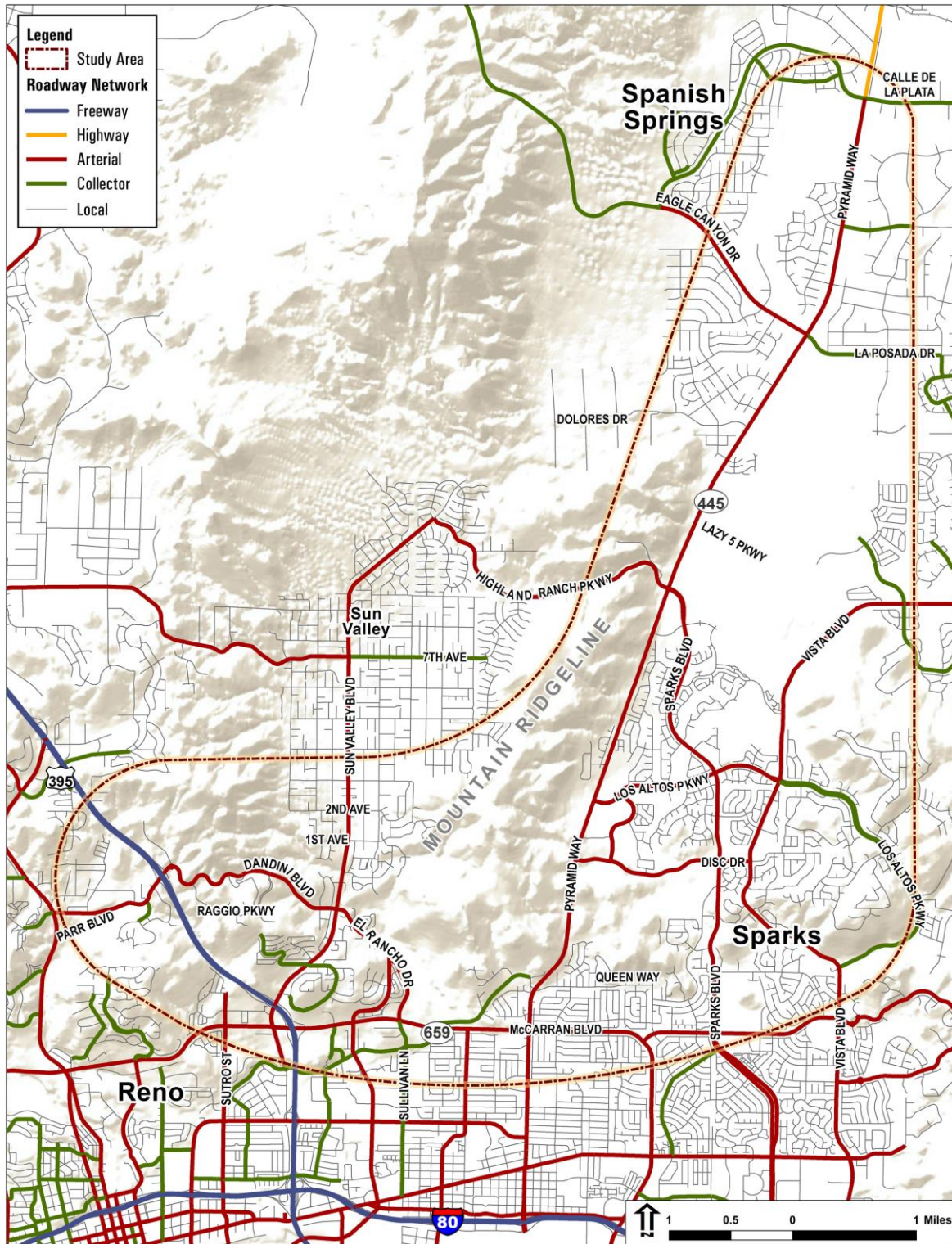


Figure 1-3. Existing Roadway Network



McCarran Boulevard and Interstate 80 (I-80) to Pyramid Highway are the primary routes for motorists accessing Sparks or Spanish Springs. The lack of adequate travel corridors has created inefficient and indirect travel routes, which results in out-of-direction travel and traffic overloading on roadways with insufficient capacity.

1.5.3.1 North-South Corridors

As the primary north-south corridor through Sparks and Spanish Springs, Pyramid Highway carries most of the local and regional traffic. The Spanish Springs and Sparks Sphere Planning Areas represent most of the traffic that uses Pyramid Highway regularly. As shown in Table 1-2 and Table 1-3, approximately 24,700 residents and 3,900 jobs are located in these Planning Areas, and these numbers are predicted to increase. No other north-south roadway provides access to Spanish Springs. Two primary four-lane arterials east of Pyramid Highway serve residents of Sparks—Boulevard and Vista Boulevard but do not extend to Spanish Springs. To avoid congested areas, some Pyramid Highway traffic uses Highland Ranch Parkway to access the metropolitan Reno area, a circuitous and inefficient route requiring out-of-direction travel and longer drive times.

1.5.3.2 East-West Corridors

The primary transportation corridors for the Reno-Sparks area have developed similarly to most American communities—along historic trade and travel routes emanating from a town center or hub. These routes are sometimes compared to spokes on a wheel. As development occurs along these corridors, a need develops to provide connections between these spokes.

McCarran Boulevard is a principal arterial with four lanes between Pyramid Highway and El Rancho Drive and six lanes between El Rancho Drive and US 395. Traffic studies conducted for this Study show that current volumes on McCarran Boulevard already strain its capacity. Updated traffic model data show that Average Daily Traffic (ADT) for McCarran Boulevard between Pyramid Highway and US 395 would range from nearly 48,000 vehicles near Pyramid Highway to almost 50,000 vehicles near US 395 by 2035 without additional east-west capacity. Figure 1-4 illustrates the existing and future (2035) traffic volumes on McCarran Boulevard.

1.5.3.3 Regional Mobility

There are a limited number of points of access into and out of the Spanish Springs and northern Sparks area for traffic destined for the regional freeway system and to the Reno greater metropolitan area. This has resulted in an indirect and inefficient roadway network. Additional connections to improve mobility are needed to effectively serve these areas.

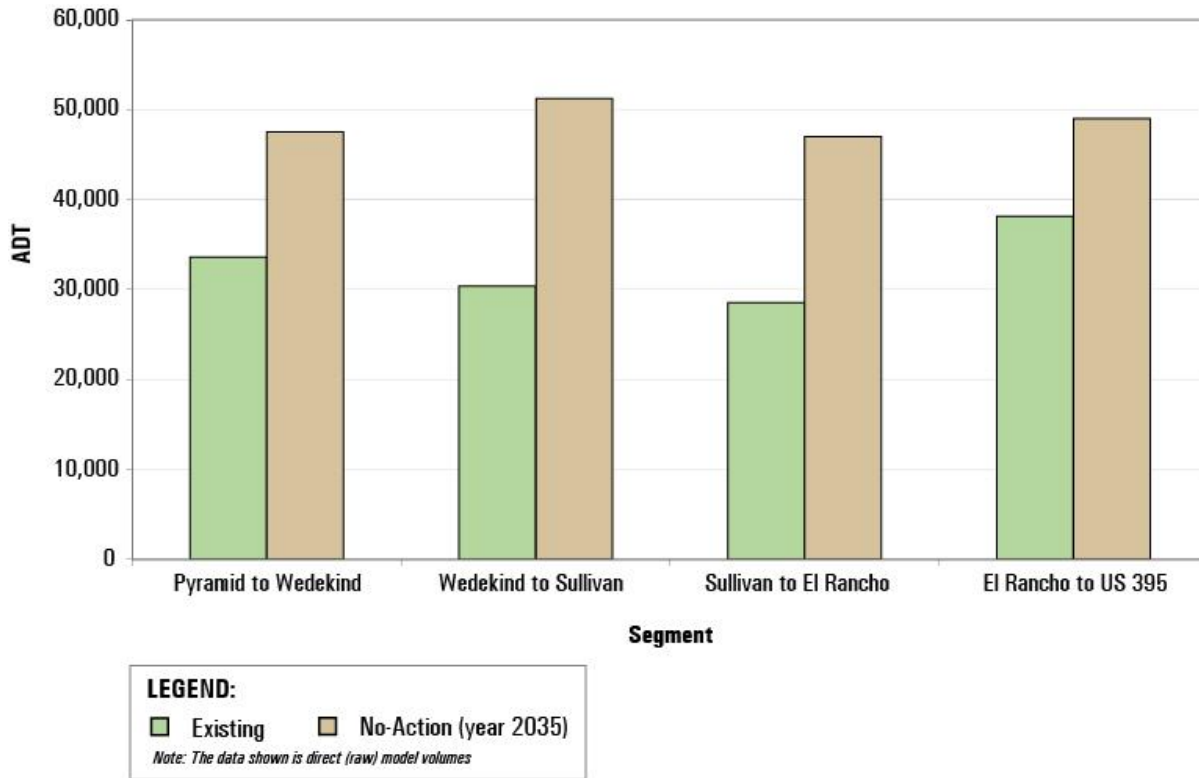


Figure 1-4. McCarran Boulevard Existing and Future (2035) Average Daily Traffic

1.5.4 Purpose: Respond to regional and local plans.

Need: Numerous local plans cite a need for transportation improvements to help meet land use and transportation goals, and include plans to improve Pyramid Highway and east-west connectivity, and provide additional multimodal options.

1.5.4.1 Transportation Improvement Projects

RTC's 2040 RTP identifies the need for improvements to Pyramid Highway and a new connection to US 395. These improvements constitute part of a larger plan to meet the region's transportation demands and would work in concert with other RTP projects to improve US 395, the Pyramid Highway/McCarran Boulevard intersection, Pyramid Highway south of McCarran Boulevard to I-80, and other proposed connections to areas northwest of the Study Area. These improvements are included in RTC's 2016-2020 RTIP.

Transportation improvement projects found in RTC's 2040 RTP and the 2016-2020 RTIP would focus improvements in specific areas where growth is expected to occur. Local jurisdictions, such as Washoe County and the cities of Reno and Sparks, specify the location, type, and intensity of new development or redevelopment within their



boundaries. Planning documents for these jurisdictions recognize the effect that growth areas within the Study Area would have on transportation needs.

The *Washoe County Master Plan* (Washoe County, 2011), and specifically the County's *Land Use and Transportation Element* (Washoe County, 2011), have stated goals to "make transportation systems seamless and efficient" (Goal Twenty-nine), and to "reduce dependence on the automobile" (Goal Thirty). As part of the *Washoe County Master Plan*, the *Spanish Springs Area Plan* (Washoe County, 2010) and the *Sun Valley Area Plan* (Washoe County, 2010) cite a need for improvements to Pyramid Highway to accommodate increased development in the area. They further express a need for a "safe, efficient, multimodal transportation system that provides connections to commercial, employment, and public spaces."

The *Reno Master Plan* (City of Reno, 2010) addresses needs for transportation improvements and includes such policies as ensuring that the road network serves present and future demand.

1.5.4.2 Multimodal Improvements

Local planning documents cite the need for increased multimodal options. RTC's 2040 RTP has a stated goal of integrating all types of transportation. This includes developing "an interconnected multimodal transportation system that gives residents more travel choices." (RTC, 2013). Similar multimodal goals are included in the *Washoe County Master Plan*, the *Spanish Springs Area Plan*, and *Sun Valley Area Plan*, and the *City of Sparks draft Imagine Reno plan*.

According to the *Reno Sparks Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan Draft* (RTC, 2011), 2009 U.S. census data for Washoe County shows that 3.2 percent of work commutes are made using public transit, 0.6 percent using bicycle, and 2.8 percent are walking. Compared to the Reno central business district, a relatively small number of the commuters use alternative transportation within the Study Area. This is due to a lack of transit service, poor bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and a land use pattern less conducive to alternative transportation. There are some bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the Study Area, but currently they are disjointed and underused.

1.5.5 BLM Purpose and Need

As the lead federal agency for this study, FHWA has the authority for and responsibility to define the purpose and need of the project for purposes of NEPA analysis (CEQ 2003 <http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/regs/CEQPurpose2.pdf>). Because BLM has jurisdiction over land within the Study Area, FHWA is not the sole federal agency with responsibility for making decisions with respect to the proposed action. Therefore, BLM is serving as a cooperating agency for this study.

The BLM's NEPA responsibilities are addressed under this EIS.

FHWA and BLM have an independent responsibility to prepare a NEPA document for the proposed action, including a purpose and need statement. To streamline the environmental study process, BLM's responsibilities under NEPA are addressed under this EIS and the Record of Decision that FHWA will prepare for the proposed action; BLM will not issue a NEPA Decision Document for this project.

BLM, FHWA, and NDOT have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding concerning operating procedures for processing federal-aid highway rights-of-way from BLM (2007). The agreement states that BLM will participate as a cooperating agency in the NEPA process on public lands. As a cooperating agency, BLM will use this EIS as a basis for future actions.

Because BLM's decision is different than FHWA's decision, the following describes BLM's purpose and need for the project. The BLM's purpose for the project is to determine if certain public lands should be devoted to federal highway uses. BLM, FHWA, and NDOT will follow the Memorandum of Understanding & Operating Manual, or any approved revisions, for this project (2007). At the conclusion of the NEPA process, FHWA will submit a request to BLM for right-of-way appropriation of public lands determined to be necessary for the project. BLM would then issue a Letter of Consent to FHWA for highway use of the public lands and to identify special stipulations associated with that use.

1.6 RELATIONSHIP TO THE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS

As the regional transportation planning agency for Washoe County, the RTC developed the *2040 RTP* as a comprehensive transportation plan that recommends transportation improvements to accommodate current and future travel needs of the cities of Sparks and Reno and unincorporated areas of Washoe County. The RTC coordinates its efforts with the local communities, Washoe County, NDOT, and the TMRPA to create a comprehensive, fiscally constrained, transportation plan for the region. This plan identifies a vision for the region's transportation network and establishes goals and policies to implement this plan.

The *2040 RTP* includes improvements to Pyramid Highway and construction of the US 395 Connector. In addition, the *2016-2020 RTIP* has identified funding for the proposed improvements.

1.7 RELATIONSHIP TO NEPA

This Final EIS has been prepared pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA and FHWA environmental impact and related procedures (23 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 771), *FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A*, and other applicable laws. It details the process through which transportation alternatives have been developed; discloses foreseeable social, economic, and



environmental impacts resulting from the project; provides findings for public review; and outlines potential mitigation options. The lead federal agency, FHWA, has signature authority on the Record of Decision (ROD). RTC prepared this Final EIS under the guidance of the lead agency.