



# The Connecting Nevada Process

In Section 1: The Connecting Nevada Process and key trends, issues, and opportunities shaping Nevada's transportation past and future; Connecting Nevada project principles and goals; key outcomes; and the Plan for Improvements



## Introduction

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The Connecting Nevada Plan originated from a need to plan for Nevada's long-term transportation needs. There was a realization that while the long-range transportation plan provides guidance for capital investment and planning for the state's transportation network, this planning document provides an opportunity to develop a long-term vision for the state that will help guide decisions with far-reaching implications.

The Plan defines transportation goals to make our economy more competitive, enhance our quality of life, and ensure that our environment provides quality places to live for future generations. Its implementation portion describes some of the methods identified to realize these goals.

Between August 2011 and December 2012, the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT, the Department) and its partners worked to develop the Plan. The Plan is for all of Nevada, urban and rural—including local, regional, and state partners who make decisions about future transportation investments. A total of seven Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings, four Steering Committee meetings, two rounds of stakeholder meetings, and numerous briefings at regularly scheduled meetings of transportation partners were conducted to gather guidance and input resulting in the Plan.

### Connecting Nevada Phase I

The concept of Connecting Nevada originated from the Nevada Statewide Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (STTAC) as a means to identify and preserve priority right-of-way corridors for transportation. During the Connecting Nevada Phase I process, participating stakeholders recognized the opportunities associated with a coordinated planning structure and process across transportation disciplines and modes.

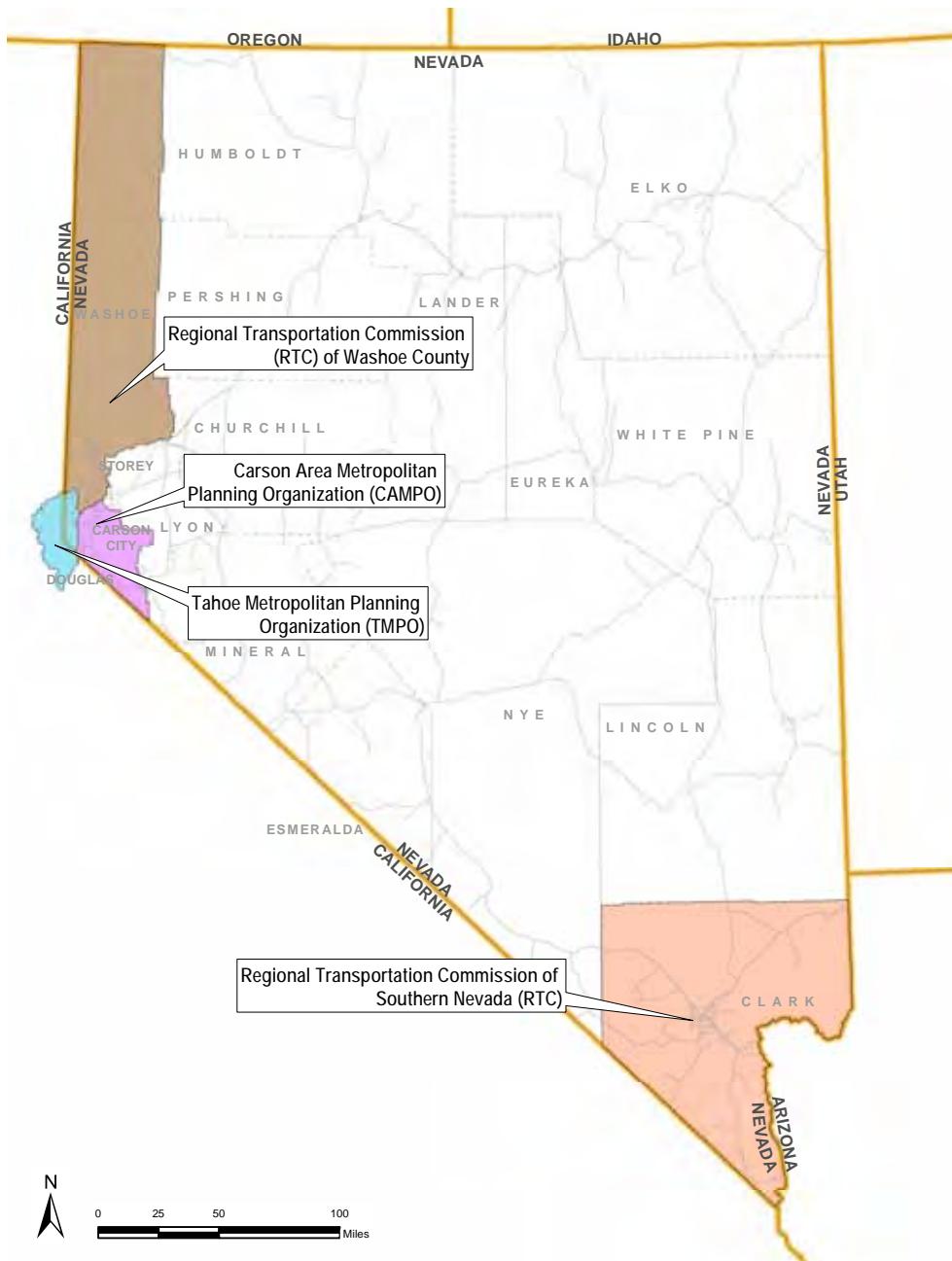
Connecting Nevada was developed not only a plan, but as a process whereby stakeholders (those interested in a range of topics related to and affected by the transportation network) could engage with planners and others in developing a vision for the statewide transportation system for the next 50 years. To support this process, a number of tools were developed, including a webmap featuring many products of Phase II of Connecting Nevada and a statewide travel demand model—the first of its kind in Nevada. Another tool the Connecting Nevada webmap can be accessed at [www.connectingnevada.org](http://www.connectingnevada.org).

This Plan describes the outcome of this process, but the process is by no means over. The Plan lays out a program to continually revisit and refresh Connecting Nevada to ensure that it continues to be a baseline that can be referred to whenever a project is being proposed or a transportation issue is being raised.

## Planning Partners and Participants

Numerous participants were instrumental in the Connecting Nevada process. NDOT reached out to a broad spectrum of stakeholders in developing the plan. Through this dialogue, trends, issues, and opportunities shaping Nevada's transportation past, present, and future were identified. A core group of participants provided guidance and direction for this process. This group represents organizations responsible for planning and implementing Nevada's transportation system, NDOT, and the state's Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), shown in Figure 1. These entities were represented by the TAC.

Figure 1. Nevada's Metropolitan Planning Organizations



## Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The TAC consisted of NDOT staff, including District Engineers; representatives of the four designated MPOs; at least one non-NDOT representative from each of the three NDOT Districts; and others as designated by the Department. The MPOs, each responsible for long-range planning in their own regions, are described below. (A complete listing of TAC members is included in Appendix A).

## Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)

### Role of Metropolitan Planning Organizations and the Regional Transportation Planning Process

*MPOs are federally mandated planning organizations for urbanized areas with populations greater than 50,000. MPOs are generally made up of representatives from local governments and local transportation authorities who collaborate with residents to make the best use of scarce federal transportation funding. MPOs provide the setting for evaluating regional transportation alternatives that reflect the region's shared vision.*

There are four designated MPOs in Nevada: the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) of Southern Nevada; the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) of Washoe County; the Carson Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO); and the Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization (TMPO). These four MPOs are the primary stewards for transportation planning within their boundaries, including member cities and surrounding unincorporated areas. The MPOs coordinate planning activities between multiple local agencies and NDOT within their urbanized areas. NDOT coordinates with the MPOs and represents the interests of the state. A brief description of the MPOs follows.

### Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) of Southern Nevada

The RTC of Southern Nevada is both the transit authority and the transportation planning agency for Southern Nevada. It identifies transportation challenges and

explores and implements both short- and long-term solutions for the Clark County region. The agency also promotes sustainability, complete streets, air quality improvement, enhanced mobility, and increased quality of life for the region. The RTC of Southern Nevada provides mass transit service that connects Southern Nevada, administers programs that encourage sustainability, and promotes walking, bicycling, carpooling, vanpooling, and transit. (The RTC of Southern Nevada's website may be accessed at [www.rtcsonthernnevada.com](http://www.rtcsonthernnevada.com).)

### Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) of Washoe County

The RTC of Washoe County serves Reno and Sparks, along with unincorporated areas of Washoe County. It provides public transportation services, street and highway construction, and transportation planning. The RTC of Washoe County's standard planning process involves studying regional trends in population and industry growth, forecasting future needs, and planning for the Northern Nevada roadway network—all of which support economic development and maintain residents' quality of life. (The RTC of Washoe County's website may be accessed at [www.rtcwashoe.com](http://www.rtcwashoe.com).)

## Carson Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO)

Following the 2000 Census, the Carson City urbanized area exceeded a population of 50,000. As a result, CAMPO was designated as the MPO for the Carson City urbanized area. The CAMPO metropolitan planning area boundaries encompass all of Carson City (with the exception of the western portion fronting Lake Tahoe) and portions of northern Douglas County and western Lyon County. CAMPO develops the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a prioritized listing of transportation projects that is adopted by CAMPO as part of the metropolitan transportation planning process. CAMPO is also responsible for the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), a multimodal transportation plan addressing a 20-year planning horizon. (CAMPO's website may be accessed at [www.carsonareampo.com](http://www.carsonareampo.com).)

## Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization (TMPO)

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA), also known as the Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization (TMPO), is the federally designated MPO for the Lake Tahoe Basin. TMPO's core mission is to establish a safe, efficient, and integrated transportation system that reduces reliance on the private automobile, provides for alternative modes of transportation, serves the basic transportation needs of Tahoe Region citizens, supports the region's economic base in the movement of goods and people, and minimizes adverse impacts on humans and the environment. TMPO's primary goal is the efficient movement of people and goods. (The TMPO website may be accessed at [www.tahoempo.org](http://www.tahoempo.org).)

## Steering Committee

The Connecting Nevada Steering Committee consisted of NDOT staff (including representatives from Administration, Engineering, Operations, and Planning), who were tasked with overseeing Phase II tasks, directing the project team, and advising on work plan components. The Steering Committee was influential in determining the format and structure of deliverables, such that they would be compatible with ongoing Department efforts to make the transportation planning process more transparent, efficient, and inclusive. A complete listing of Steering Committee members is included in Appendix A).

The Steering Committee will also be well-suited to reconvene in response to implementation of Connecting Nevada "triggers," such as yearly updates, major developments, RTP updates, and state and federal legislation.

## Stakeholder Outreach

Stakeholder outreach was conducted over the course of the project, and it was critical to developing the Plan and integral to the overall Connecting Nevada process. In fact, this is a cornerstone of Connecting Nevada; stakeholder outreach engaged many different interests that participated in meetings, and this level of involvement was responsible for the overall success of the plan (see listing of participants on the following page).



The Connecting Nevada Stakeholder Outreach was attended by representatives of the following entities:

<i>Aggregate Industries</i>	<i>Ely Times</i>
<i>American Magline Group</i>	<i>Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)</i>
<i>AT&amp;T</i>	<i>EP Minerals, LLC</i>
<i>Bureau of Land Management</i>	<i>Esmeralda County</i>
<i>Bureau of Reclamation</i>	<i>Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe</i>
<i>Caesars Entertainment</i>	<i>Federal Highway Administration</i>
<i>California-Nevada Super Speed Train Commission (Maglev)</i>	<i>Focus Property Group</i>
<i>Carson City Chamber of Commerce</i>	<i>Friends of Nevada Wilderness</i>
<i>Churchill County</i>	<i>Greyhound Bus Lines</i>
<i>Road Department</i>	<i>Henderson Chamber of Commerce</i>
<i>Churchill County Communications</i>	<i>Henderson Police Department</i>
<i>City of Elko</i>	<i>Howard Hughes Corporation</i>
<i>City of Fallon</i>	<i>Hub Group</i>
<i>City of Fernley</i>	<i>Humboldt County</i>
<i>City of Henderson</i>	<i>Las Vegas Arts District Neighborhood Association</i>
<i>City of Las Vegas</i>	<i>Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce</i>
<i>City of Mesquite</i>	<i>Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority</i>
<i>City of North Las Vegas</i>	<i>Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department</i>
<i>City of Sparks</i>	<i>Las Vegas Monorail</i>
<i>City of Winnemucca</i>	<i>Las Vegas Motor Speedway</i>
<i>Clark County</i>	<i>Las Vegas Valley Water District (LVVWD)</i>
<i>Department of Air Quality and Environmental Management</i>	<i>Lincoln County</i>
<i>Department of Aviation</i>	<i>Lincoln County Fire Department</i>
<i>Fire Department</i>	<i>Marnell Companies</i>
<i>Planning</i>	<i>Mesquite Fire Department</i>
<i>Public Works</i>	<i>Mineral County</i>
<i>Regional Flood Control District</i>	<i>Muscle Powered</i>
<i>Water Reclamation District</i>	<i>MWH Global</i>
<i>Cox Communications</i>	<i>NCSI</i>
<i>Desert Cab Co.</i>	<i>Nellis Air Force Base</i>
<i>Desert Research Institute (DRI)</i>	<i>Nevada Army National Guard</i>
<i>Douglas County</i>	<i>Nevada Association of Counties</i>
<i>Douglas County Police Department</i>	<i>Nevada Commission on Terrorism</i>
<i>Econ. Development Authority of Western Nevada</i>	<i>Nevada Commission on Tourism</i>
<i>Ely City Council</i>	<i>Nevada Conservation League</i>
	<i>Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT)</i>
	<i>Nevada Department of Wildlife</i>



Connecting Nevada Stakeholder Outreach participant list (continued)

Nevada Division of Forestry  
Nevada Division of State Lands  
Nevada Highway Patrol  
Nevada Legislature  
Nevada Manufacturers Association  
Nevada Mining Association  
Nevada Motor Transport Association  
Nevada Petroleum Marketers Association  
Nevada State Demographer  
Nevada State Legislature  
Nevada State Office of Energy  
Nevada Subcontractors Association  
Nevada Wilderness Project  
North Las Vegas Police Department  
Northern Nevada Counter Terrorism  
Northern Nevada Railway  
Northern Transport  
NV Energy  
NV Trucking Association  
Nye County  
Outside Las Vegas Foundation  
Paiute Pipeline Company  
Pershing County Police Department  
Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada (PLAN)  
Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe  
Railroad Foundation  
Red Rock Audubon Society  
Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) of Southern Nevada  
RTC of Washoe County  
REMSA  
Reno Sparks Indian Colony  
Reno/Sparks Chamber of Commerce  
Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority  
Renown Rehabilitation Hospital  
Republic Services  
Sierra Club  
Sierra Club, Toiyabe Chapter  
Southern Nevada Homebuilders Association  
Southern Nevada Transit Coalition  
Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA)  
SouthWest Action Network (SWAN)  
Southwest Gas Corporation  
Spectrum Surveying and Engineering  
Spring Creek Property Owners Association  
Stantec Consulting Services Inc  
State Historic Preservation Office  
Storey County  
Tahoe Fire Department  
Tahoe Pyramid Bikeway  
Tahoe Regional Planning Agency  
Tahoe Transportation District  
The Smith Center for the Performing Arts  
Town of Gardnerville  
Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency  
Truckee Meadows Water Authority  
Truckee River Flood Management Authority  
Truckee-North Tahoe Transportation Management Association  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Pacific Southwest Region  
U.S. Green Building Council, Nevada Chapter  
United States Postal Service (USPS)  
UNLV Transportation Research Center  
Urban Chamber of Commerce  
Valley Electric Association, Inc.  
Walker River Paiute Tribe  
Washoe County  
Washoe County Health District  
White Pine County  
White Pine Tourism and Recreation  
Wynn Resorts

The Connecting Nevada process includes stakeholder and public participation to encourage ongoing collaboration and thoughtful, substantive deliberation of important topics affecting our state's transportation system.

Two rounds of stakeholder meetings were held during development of the Plan, in addition to numerous outreach opportunities. This stakeholder engagement helped NDOT understand the issues and opportunities and the unique challenges associated with meeting current and future transportation needs of both a rural state and a state with several large urbanized areas.

### First Round of Stakeholder Outreach



The first round of stakeholder outreach was held in November and December 2011, involving about 150 participants through 14 workshops held in Elko, Ely, Las Vegas, Reno, Tonopah, and Winnemucca. Through these workshops, the Connecting Nevada team was able to gather valuable input regarding the state's transportation challenges and opportunities. It is noteworthy that the key issues discussed at both the northern and southern meetings were similar. The exhibit "What We Heard," shown on page 11, summarized these issues for participants attending the first round of stakeholder outreach.

This process allowed for the creation of a stakeholder database: a list of more than 500 community stakeholders representing a broad cross section of the community. Their insights and recommendations were critical to the development of the Plan.

During the first round of stakeholder outreach the following questions were used to initiate discussions:

- *What improvements are needed to existing road and transportation services in Nevada?*
- *What are the regional environmental and conservation issues that the plan must address?*
- *What are the biggest challenges and opportunities facing mobility in Nevada?*
- *From your perspective, what are the regional multi transportation issues that the plan must address?*
- *When you look to 2050 and beyond, what are the growth, development, business, or other economic changes that you see occurring in Nevada? How should the plan address these changes?*



## Second Round of Stakeholder Outreach

The second round of stakeholder outreach was conducted in August 2012. More than 135 community stakeholders participated throughout the second series of meetings held in Elko, Ely, Las Vegas, Reno, Tonopah, and Winnemucca. The stakeholder database grew to over 700 people. At these meetings, stakeholders were asked to respond to information about planned and committed roadway projects and traffic forecasts, population and employment projections through the 2060 planning horizon, identified transportation corridor deficiencies, and future roadway network and proposed transportation corridors.

## Public Meetings

In January 2013, NDOT conducted a series of public meetings intended to give the public an opportunity to review the draft plan and exhibits, provide feedback regarding the proposed projects, and give additional considerations for the project team.

The first meeting was held on January 17, 2013, in Las Vegas, and attended by 40 people; the second meeting was held on January 22, 2013 in Reno and had twenty attendees; and the third meeting was held on January 24, 2013 in Elko with 11 people in attendance. The meetings were structured as open houses with project staff answering questions, boards displaying project information and a brief presentation and question-and-answer period.

NDOT encouraged public comments during and after the meeting and provided several ways to submit comments including verbal statement to the court reporter during the meeting, comment forms, and letter or e-mail during the open comment period which closed on February 8, 2013. Court transcripts of the presentation, audience comments, comment forms and e-mail comments are available in Appendix F and in Table 1, page 28.



Additional information on the public meetings can be found on [www.ConnectingNevada.org/projectdocuments](http://www.ConnectingNevada.org/projectdocuments), see "Public Meeting."

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## Stakeholder Workshop Series 1 (November 2011-January 2012)

More than 150 stakeholders representing businesses and industry, trade associations, economic development agencies, environmental groups, federal, state, and local government entities from across Nevada identified

### FIVE KEY PRIORITIES FOR CONNECTING NEVADA

#### *Safety*

- Reduce crashes and fatalities on Nevada's roads
- Improve signage to address issues with consistency and communication of information to drivers (intelligent transportation systems)
- Provide additional turn-out and passing lanes for improved efficiency and safety
- Address issues of access to emergency services and communication, especially in rural areas of state

#### *Economic Development*

- Include long-term transportation planning processes that support and encourage economic development and diversification
- Identify key sectors for which long-range transportation planning will impact economic development; including renewable energy, mining, distribution, and tourism
- Emphasize the importance of coordinating long-range transportation planning with Nevada's economic development goals and objectives

#### *Partnership Development*

- Partner with stakeholders to identify opportunities for shared or multiuse corridors for transportation, utility, and communication infrastructure
- Incorporate more proactive and inclusive processes that encourage collaboration with federal, state, regional, and local government agencies
- Identify and expand opportunities for public/private partnerships in transportation planning and development

#### *Improved Multimodal Access*

- Determine appropriate means to expand freight capacity; consider the incorporation of dedicated truck lanes and urban bypass routes
- Incorporate walkable communities plans, complete streets plans, and other planning processes that emphasize sustainability and quality of life
- Coordinate long-term transportation planning processes in ways that strengthen the network of bike lanes and regional trails and encourage improved transit access throughout the state

#### *Environmental Issues*

- Understand implications of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) on transportation planning
- Identify opportunities to better integrate the NEPA process into transportation planning
- Understand constraints of water availability, threatened and endangered species, and conservation areas and issues on long-term transportation planning