



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

*The Plan Guiding the City of Sparks  
To the Year 2030*



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# CHAPTER ONE

# IGNITE SPARKS

# CHAPTER ONE: IGNITE SPARKS

The City of Sparks, with a population of 93,581, is projected to grow by 24 percent, to 116,629 persons, by the year 2036 (Source: Census Forecast). Factors include an influx of businesses and industry into the region bringing workers and the need for more housing. This Comprehensive Plan is intended to help the City's elected officials and staff anticipate and manage rather than simply react to changing circumstances. This makes 2016 a vital year for addressing future growth while working to maintain the small-town feel treasured by so many residents.



## Ignite Sparks

In the fall of 2015, the City of Sparks launched a community-wide outreach effort to invite citizen input for a new Comprehensive Plan to guide the provision of all City services, infrastructure needs and future development through 2030. The outreach initiative, called Ignite Sparks, is a multi-level process providing residents with a voice in assessing the state of Sparks today, identifying trends and future opportunities. It articulates a vision for Sparks and identifies potential hurdles. The resulting Comprehensive Plan replaces Sparks' current Master Plan and serves as an effective tool for guiding the community's future.

# Why a Comprehensive Plan?

The City's current Master Plan is comprised of individual master plan elements adopted at various times, with most having been adopted in the 1990s. Though amendments have been approved through the years, the plan has never before been completely updated. The Comprehensive Plan revises and refreshes existing elements of the Master Plan while fashioning new goals and policies

## Comprehensive Plan Basics

The Comprehensive Plan serves as the “big picture” policy document to guide City decisions for making Sparks a place where people want to live, work, and play. Think of it as a blueprint for how and where Sparks should grow. Public officials, including the City Council, the Planning Commission and City staff will consult this document. Residents, businesses and developers will also consult the plan as they make decisions as to where to live and invest.



## Thinking Big

The main benefit of the Comprehensive Plan is that it confronts issues through broad lens. The City's numerous other plans address specific topics such as parks, strategic planning, capital improvements and budget. Only a comprehensive plan considers what the whole community values, needs, and desires for the future while incorporating all of the interrelated functions required to run a city. This plan identifies issues that are central to Sparks' future success.

## Compliance with Nevada State Statutes

Sparks' Comprehensive Plan is prepared in accordance with Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS). NRS sections 278.150 through 278.170 require that a city prepare and adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the city and for this general plan be known as the comprehensive plan. NRS 278.150 requires that all cities containing counties with a population of more than 100,000 but less than 400,000 include Conservation, Housing and Population elements in their comprehensive plans. The Sparks Comprehensive Plan expands on those core elements by addressing Land Use, Transportation, Infrastructure and Services, and Parks and Recreation, as permitted by NRS.

NRS 278.210 requires that the party requesting an amendment to the comprehensive plan conduct a neighborhood meeting. The neighborhood meeting must be held before the Planning Commission conducts a public hearing for adoption of the amendment. The party requesting the proposed amendment must provide notice of the neighborhood meeting to each owner of real property, as listed in the county assessor's records, located within 750 feet of the area to which the proposed amendment pertains. Since Sparks' new Land Use component changes land use categories throughout the City, the City sent notices to every property owner within the city limits and 750 feet beyond. In fulfilling this requirement, the City held neighborhood meetings on July 26 and 27, 2016.

## Compliance with Truckee Meadows Regional Plan

The 2012 Truckee Meadows Regional Plan (TMRP) was updated and adopted by the Regional Planning Governing Board on February 11, 2016. Sparks' Comprehensive Plan must conform to the Regional Plan. The goals and policies of the TMRP **are addressed throughout this document.**

## Planning Area

The City of Sparks is situated in Washoe County, Nevada, directly east of the City of Reno at an elevation of 4,410 feet above mean sea level. To the west are the Sierra Nevada Mountains rising from 9,000 to 11,000 feet above sea level. To the east is the Virginia Range reaching 6,000 to 7,000 feet in elevation. The Truckee River flows through Sparks along its southern boundary.



## Building the Plan

In the fall of 2015 the City of Sparks kicked off the public outreach portion of its development of a new Comprehensive Plan. The City hired consultants to manage public participation and media coverage. Public outreach efforts aimed to engage the widest, deepest participation in Sparks' history. Modern technologies, extensive media outreach and presentations to community groups were employed to achieve that goal.

The website [IgniteSparksNV.com](http://IgniteSparksNV.com) became the “go-to” site for public surveys and the dissemination of information. The detailed public outreach report is provided as an appendix of this document.

Key components of the public outreach effort included:

1. Phase 1 Online Vision Survey, consisting of three open-ended questions: I love Sparks because.... ; My biggest concern for Sparks in the year 2030 is.... ; and, My wish to make Sparks even better by 2030 is ....



2. Establishment of a Champions Team to promote the survey through their network of contacts: A 50-member Champions Team was established for networking with individuals interested in contributing to the success of the survey and planning process. The Champions Team served as advocates throughout public outreach process and played a key role in getting the word out about the surveys.

3. Public Meetings: Workshops and public hearings were held with the City of Sparks Planning Commission, City of Sparks City Council, City of Sparks Parks and Recreation Commission and Sparks Citizen Advisory Committee.



4. Community Outreach emphasized connecting with residents where they live, work and play: Outreach to community groups and networks utilized a combination of in-person presentations and survey collection methods. Presentations were made to the following: the City's senior staff team, Mexican Consulate, 39 North Merchants Association, Washoe County Food Policy Council, local newspapers, Rotary Club of Sparks Centennial Sunrise, Greenbrae Lions, Nevada First Toastmasters, Downtown Kiwanis Club, Sparks Sertoma Club, Latino Student Advisory at University of Nevada, Sparks Heritage Museum, Reno Boys and Girls Club and the general public via radio and television interviews.

5. Major Events and Gathering Places: Major events attended for collecting community input for the Ignite Sparks campaign included: Sparks Hometown Christmas Parade, 39 North Pole, Boys and Girls Club of Truckee Meadows (2 times), El Rancho Flea Market, and Prater Way Hispanic businesses.

- 6. Phase 2 - Deep Dive Survey:** Based on comments received during Phase 1, two surveys (one short and one long) were launched in February 2016. Citizens could choose between the two.
- 7. Website:** The IgniteSparksNV.com website served as hub for education, communication and input. This also established a list of email addresses for residents who requested continued involvement in the process.
- 8. Stakeholders Meetings:** The City conducted two rounds of stakeholders' meetings, with stakeholders defined as professionals, representatives of interest groups and citizens interested in discussing the future of the community. The first three days of meetings were held in April 2016 to discuss survey results and concerns. The second round of stakeholders' meetings was held over two days in July 2016.
- 9. Boots on the Ground:** The boots-on-the-ground approach included outreach to residents at events, community bus tours, residents of all economic and socioeconomic levels, through the website, direct emails, social media engagement and meeting with groups.
- 10 City Bus Tour:** As continuation of the public outreach process, the City sponsored two-hour bus tours of the City with stops throughout for deeper discussion regarding issues and topics identified during the Phase 2 Deep Dive Survey. Thirty city officials and citizens participated on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup>.
- 11. Community Workshops:** In fulfillment of NRS 278.210, the City mailed 36,333 notices to property owners. Two public meetings were held on two consecutive days with one in Spanish Springs Valley and one in an older area of Sparks. The number of attendees was 75.



## Igniting Sparks Snapshot

<p><u>Online and Paper Surveys:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phase 1 Survey – 784</li> <li>Phase 2 Long Survey – 1,695</li> <li>Phase 2 Short Survey – 112</li> </ul> <p>3.0% Margin of Error and 99% Confidence Rating</p> <p>Representing 2.8% of the population Total completed surveys: 2,591</p>	<p><u>Public Meetings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sparks Planning Commission</li> <li>Sparks City Council</li> <li>Sparks Citizen Advisory Committee</li> <li>Sparks Parks and Recreation Commission</li> </ul>
<p><u>Major Events and Gathering Places:</u></p> <p>Total of 6</p>	<p><u>Group Meetings:</u></p> <p>Total of 17 meetings/presentations</p>
<p><u>Surveys Emailed to Group Memberships:</u></p> <p>Total 970</p>	<p><u>Media Coverage:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Television – KOLO, KTVN, KRNV</li> <li>Radio – KKOH, KUNR, Grow NV, Tom Jacobs Community Radio</li> <li>Reno Gazette Journal – 2 advertisements and 3 articles</li> <li>Sparks Tribune</li> </ul>
<p><u>Digital Coverage:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IgniteSparksNV.com website</li> <li>Social Media (Facebook -14,703 Likes, Twitter – 8,060 and Instagram - 260)</li> <li>Infographic</li> </ul>	<p><u>Champions and Stakeholders Meetings:</u></p> <p>Total of 22 meetings</p>
<p><u>Neighborhood Workshops: Total of 2</u></p> <p>36,333 notices sent out 75 attendees</p>	

## Phase 1 Outcomes

Phase 1 of the public outreach effort was a Vision Survey consisting of three open-ended questions formulated to invite unconstrained responses. Phase 1 was kicked off at the 2015 Hometown Christmas Parade and closed in February 2016. The survey itself was available online and in hard copies at various city locations. There was email distribution to nearly 10,000 email addresses. The total number of surveys completed was 750 which was 24 percent more than the goal of 600, providing a confidence rating of 99 percent. For more details about Phase 1 results, refer to the *Phase 1 Summary Report* in the appendix.

**“Question 1: I love Sparks because....”** had the largest percentage of responses incorporating the phrases “small town” or “community” supported by “family friendly,” “hometown” and “love” for the community’s special events and amenities, particularly parks. Respondents expressed their love for and pride in this community.



“The city has the sophistication of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, yet maintains its ‘small town’ feeling of community and connectedness. Living in Sparks is a choice, not an accident.”

“It has a small town feel but includes amenities that large towns have.”

**Figure 1-1 Question 1 - Word Cloud**

**“Question 2: My biggest concern for Sparks in the year 2030 is...”** resulted in respondents expressing concern about current and future traffic increases, anticipated growth, crime in neighborhoods and the schools/education system.



“Adequate planning for growth.”

“Too much and too rapid growth without adequate infrastructure, water, schools to keep the same quality of life here.”

**Figure 1-2 Question 2 – Word Cloud**

**“Question 3: My wish to make Sparks even better by 2030...”** saw the top four responses as parks, community feel, schools and downtown. Respondents wish that Sparks maintain and expand the current quality of life while at the same time anticipate the city will grow. The respondents expressed desire for a central location to meet, plus a vibrant downtown and enhanced education.



“Lots of new local businesses to benefit our community.”

“More shopping and small coffee shops. More active downtown.”

“Downtown area needs an identity, clean up and more businesses.”

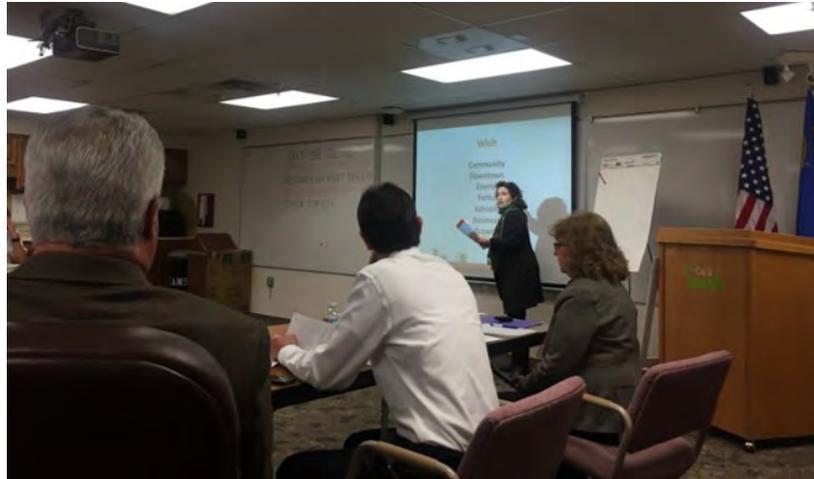
**Figure 1-3 Question 3 – Word Cloud**

Based on responses to the Vision Survey, the key takeaways include:

- Sparks residents love their community.
- It is critical for Sparks to grow while remaining a community that everyone loves.
- Consider resources required to ensure a clean, safe community.
- Listen to residents’ concerns related to traffic and growth while managing growth.
- Evaluate growth’s impact on neighborhoods, traffic and the community’s financial stability.
- Determine how growth will be met through public services, facilities and amenities while sustaining the quality of life now enjoyed.
- Develop a dynamic, diversified and thriving environment for continued economic growth.
- Continue to explore the development of a vibrant and active downtown.
- Continue to grow police, fire and medical responses as well as other public services to protect and provide a safe environment.
- Work with other governmental agencies advocating for residents’ concerns related to traffic, streets, schools and water resources.
- Examine the city’s economic vitality and future potential in order to sustain Sparks as a desirable place to live, work, play and visit.

## Phase 2 Outcomes

Results from the Phase 1 Vision Survey established the groundwork for development of the Phase 2 in-depth survey. Two questionnaires were prepared. The long version consisted of 30 questions. The second format was 19 questions. The survey period ran from February through June 2016. An interactive and engaging public outreach effort resulted in 1,807 completed surveys for the two versions combined. The long version had 15 times more responses than the short version. For more details about Phase 2 results, refer to the *Phase 2 Summary Report* in the appendix.



Phase 2 survey respondents prefer that the City not grow beyond its existing city limits and that it focus new development in existing areas by redeveloping and revitalizing older parts of the City. They want growth to be planned and managed. They prioritized maintenance of roads, the water treatment plant and parks. They see Victorian Square as the downtown of Sparks and want to dine and attend special events there.

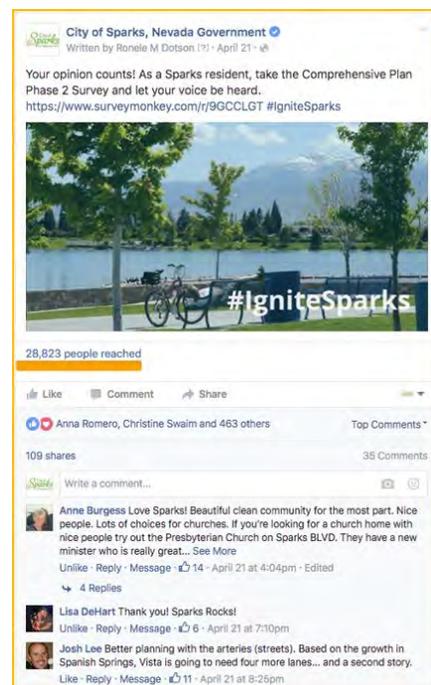
Three quarters of the respondents prefer to commute to work in their own vehicles. Eighty-five percent of respondents supported additional fire stations to maintain a six-minute response time. Fifty-six percent supported a community access location for the police department. Survey respondents prioritized the ability to withstand and manage disruptive change, including diversified energy sources, then drought resources, followed by flood control and lastly public health/mass casualty events. The community's top sustainability choice was solar and renewable energy closely followed by water conservation and protection of the Truckee River.

As for fiscal health and sustainability, respondents were split between aggressively pursuing growth that enhances tax revenues and increasing the City’s cash revenues and reducing debt.

The most important quality of life feature was feeling safe in their home or business. Being adequately protected by police and fire ranked second followed by a close three way tie between special events, access to shopping and dining and access to the Truckee River.

Key Survey takeaways:

- “Small town” means not sprawling beyond current city limits, and knowing neighbors, police and fire personnel.
- Reuse of vacant buildings is desired.
- Redevelopment of the older parts of town is important.
- Access to natural environment along with recreation are valued.
- Events are important for providing an opportunity for people to gather.
- The City should preserve, conserve and maintain existing assets before constructing new ones.
- Increased traffic and road maintenance are the biggest concerns of Sparks residents.
- Parks and street maintenance are top priorities.
- The flooding problem in the industrial area along the Truckee River should be fixed.
- The Oddie Boulevard area should transition from” big box” uses to smaller retailers and apartments.



## Discrepancies in the Survey Data

Analysis of the data from the Phase 2 survey indicates that some results may conflict with other responses and/or with how the city currently operates.

One apparent conflict is evident in responses to *Question 18: What policies should the City of Sparks pursue to maintain fiscal health?* The top responses were “increase the City’s cash reserves and reduce debt” and “aggressively pursue growth that enhances tax revenues” as respondents generally did not support increasing fees and taxes in order to maintain or enhance services. However, survey respondents also stated that they do not want Sparks to grow beyond its current limits.



Given Nevada’s current tax structure, the City must grow if it is to increase revenues without increasing taxes or fees. The City has been recovering from the Great Recession and revenue constraints do not allow it to increase city services. City staffing levels are in fact substantially less than prior to the recession. One service that respondents want is neighborhood police. This would require a substantial increase in the size of the police force. The City’s General Fund does not have sufficient revenues to support a substantial increase in neighborhood patrols, nor is it likely to have such funds in the foreseeable future.

Another conflict is suggested by responses to Question 1 to which the number one answer was that the City should “focus new development in existing areas by redeveloping and revitalizing the older parts of the city.” Other responses called for preserving older neighborhoods and historic buildings. In order to redevelop and revitalize the older parts of town, it may be necessary to demolish older homes and/or historic buildings and combine lots. This could result in new structures



that are out of scale with an existing neighborhood and the elimination of some historic buildings. Policies will need to address these concerns, such as by assuring that the scale of new development complements existing neighborhoods and, when necessary, documenting the significance of historic structures before their removal for new development.

A third such conflict arises from the answers to Question 4. Respondents prioritized building new roads and widening existing roads to accommodate anticipated increases in traffic. Historically, this has been an issue throughout the country where neighborhoods have been impacted by the construction of new or wider streets and freeways, changing their character. A wider roadway accommodates more traffic but can divide a neighborhood and create barriers between neighborhoods, impeding access to recreational facilities, shopping or schools. It will be critical to reduce the potential negative impact of roadway improvements.





## CHAPTER TWO

# PATHWAY TO THE FUTURE

# CHAPTER TWO: PATHWAY TO THE FUTURE

## Vision Statement

The community views Sparks as an ideal place “to live, work and play.” Planning for a city that embodies this vision is a complex undertaking. Many interconnected aspects to achieving and maintaining a good quality of life for residents and an appealing environment to conduct

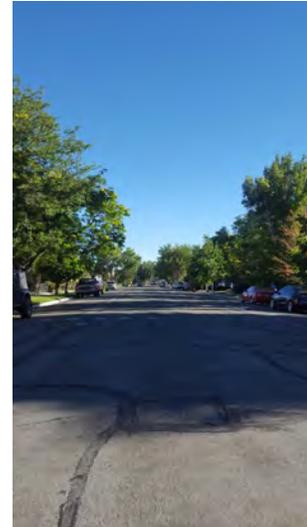
City of Sparks Vision
A mixed land use pattern maintaining the “small town” feel
Integrated connectivity with a maintained road network which includes bike and pedestrian pathways
A vital and diverse economy
A livable, sustainable and healthy community
A system of parks, natural areas and open space
Victorian Square functions as a vibrant downtown with living, shopping, restaurants and commercial
A high quality of life including a sense of feeling safe at home and business
A sustainable city budget

## Key Challenges and Opportunities

A significant finding from the community survey process is that residents love Sparks. With an influx of jobs to the region, Sparks will grow. The City can sit back and just respond to the growth, resulting in outcomes the community may or may not agree with. Or, the City can energetically shape its destiny, using this Comprehensive Plan as a guidebook. By creating a unified vision and being proactive, the City can capitalize on its strengths, carry forward its values and employ growth as a positive force. The public outreach process identified five challenges that the City will face as it grows.

## Challenge 1 - Growing While Staying a Small Town

The City is already growing and the future holds more growth. Balance growth will ensure access to a variety of lifestyles and housing options along with job opportunities. Respondents to the outreach surveys identified wanting Sparks to maintain its “small town” character and its sense of community. Respondents defined “small town/community” as having neighborhoods with parks and playgrounds and a vibrant downtown with



## Challenge 2 - Getting Around

As Sparks matures and grows, the street network, bus system, pedestrian paths and trails, and bicycle routes - all forms of moving people and goods - play critical role in moving around the city. The predominant mode of travel is the automobile. Survey respondents clearly preferred their own vehicles as their main mode of transportation. Survey results suggest in transportation priorities as building new roads, widening existing roads and improving existing street including road pavement conditions. However, they also indicated an increasing desire for pedestrian paths and sidewalks, more and improved bike lanes and improved bus service with a higher percentage than the current usage rate. Advancing these priorities will require an emphasis on efficient transportation facilities, improved access to all modes of travel (automobile, bicycles, pedestrian and transit) and an integrated approach to land use and transportation. Improving pedestrian and bicycle connectivity along with filling “gaps” in the system would need to be a key consideration.



### Challenge 3 – Vibrant Downtown

Survey respondents clearly view Victorian Square as Sparks’ downtown. Respondents desire a vibrant downtown with a mix of uses, including residences, dining, shopping and special events. As of 2016, over 500 multi-family units are approved or under construction in the Victorian Square area. An increase in downtown residents will change the complexion of that area and the City as a whole. Those units will bring many new residents to the area resulting in the need for new or expanded services. The Victorian Square master plan has always anticipated a mix of uses including residential uses. Development of these new homes will eliminate, much of the vacant land which has served as staging and parking areas for special events. New methods of access, staging and special events operations will result as the planned vibrant downtown emerges.



### Challenge 4 - **Sustaining the City’s Fiscal Health While** Maintaining City Services and Facilities/Amenities

To become a city of choice, Sparks must remain fiscally focused and responsible with a budget that prioritizes spending, services and maintenance of the City’s facilities and amenities. The City’s main functions are to provide fire and police protection, street maintenance including traffic lights and street signs, sewer collection and treatment, storm drainage infrastructure and the maintenance of City properties including parks. Other services include the management of City operations, planning for the future of the community, providing recreational opportunities and hosting events. Public input indicates that the community wants the City to increase its cash reserves, which it has struggled to do since the onset of the recession, and reduce its debt while aggressively pursuing growth that enhances tax revenues. The City already works to identify potential cost savings and, reduce per capita administrative.





Survey respondents identified the parks and community centers as the most important facilities, followed by new roads. They view street maintenance, cleaning and snow removal as the number one service, followed by community planning and maintenance of parks. These results indicate a desire for the City provides to prioritize maintenance of streets and parks, followed by planning for the City’s future.

Historically, the Sparks Master Plan has been primarily used to evaluate development projects. This Comprehensive Plan is also intended to be a tool for guiding budget priorities and capital improvements, as well as provide day-to-day policy guidance.

## Challenge 5 - Meeting the Needs of the Community

Public responses declared Sparks a great place to live. The city has a small town feel, while offering a many recreational opportunities, employment, friendly neighborhoods, shopping and dining. Sparks needs to sustain the high quality of life its residents currently enjoy. As the City grows and expands, its residents need to feel safe and enjoy the quality of life. Increased housing and transportation choices are essential to the community’s health. To succeed, the Sparks must be sustainable through finding balance among these three principals: 1) prosperity and jobs, 2) conservation and the environment, and 3) community health, equity and cultural vitality. This will require taking positive, proactive steps to protect today’s quality of life for future generations. This Comprehensive Plan provides policy framework for Sparks growth.





# CHAPTER THREE

# SPARKS TODAY

## CHAPTER THREE: SPARKS TODAY

The City of Sparks grew approximately 38% from 2000 to 2010 and by approximately 4% from 2010 to 2015. People who live in Sparks appreciate its quality of life and small town feel. Sparks is known as the premiere special events venue for northern Nevada, hence the City Slogan “It’s Happening Here.”

### Basic Facts

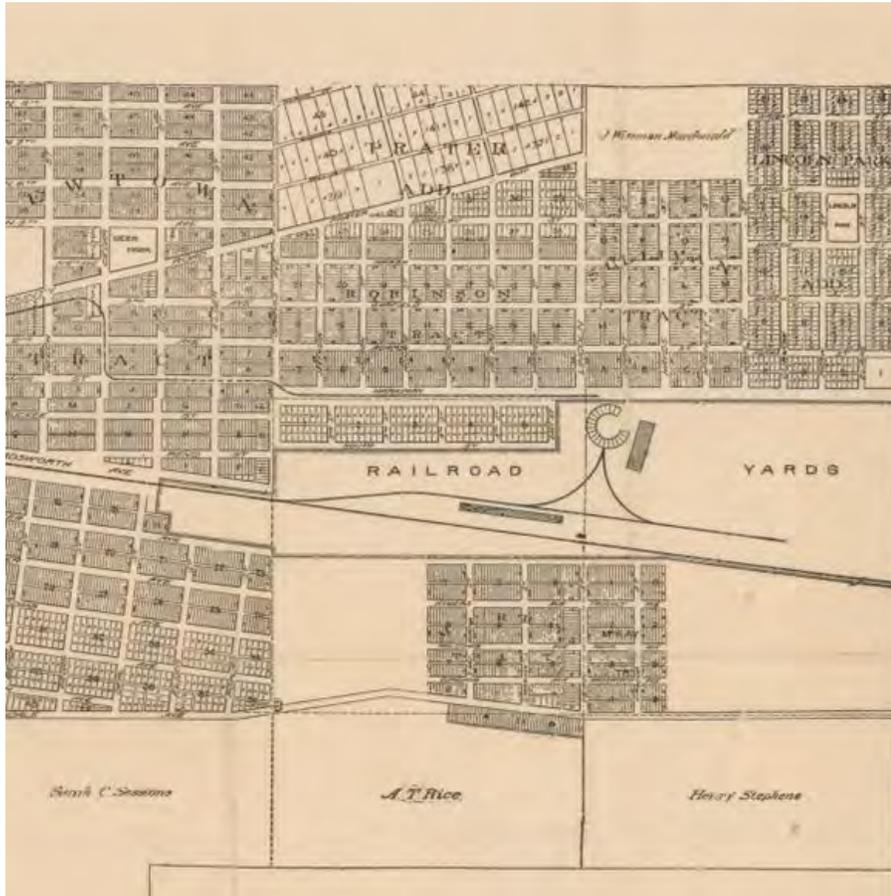
As of January 2016, Sparks covers approximately 36 square miles with an estimated current population of 93,581 (Source: Nevada State Demographer). Situated at 4,410 feet above sea level in a semi-arid valley, daily temperatures are temperate with daily highs and lows varying by as much as 45 degrees Fahrenheit. The sun shines roughly 290 days a year, or eight of every 10 days. Annual precipitation averages 8.26 inches per year. Sparks has four seasons with a relatively short growing season.

Sparks is one of two incorporated cities within Washoe County. The other city is Reno. Sparks is connected to the western United States by U.S. 395, Interstate 80 and the Union Pacific Railroad and is served by the Reno-Tahoe International Airport.

Older housing is located within the vicinity of downtown while most of the newer housing is located in the Spanish Springs Valley. Single family detached houses make up approximately 64 percent of the housing stock. The City of Sparks utilizes a strong city manager form of government. The city manager reports to the mayor and a five-member city council.

### The Start

In 1902, four miles east of Reno there was nothing but swampland and ranches. When Southern Pacific Railroad took over from Central Pacific Railroad as the new owner of the main rail line across Northern Nevada, one of their first decisions was to straighten the rail line to cut a few miles off the distance. The chosen route by-passed Wadsworth, which for 40 years had served as the location of the Central Pacific’s roundhouse and maintenance shops. Southern Pacific acquired land and started construction on the new rail yard and track alignment. On land next to the new roundhouse and rail yard, Southern Pacific offered its employees title to lots 50 feet by 140 feet in size and offered to pack up every house in Wadsworth and ship them to the new town, free of charge. During the summer of 1903, Southern Pacific employees drew numbers for the lots in the new town. In 1904 the city was officially named Sparks in honor of John Sparks, who was Nevada’s governor at that time. In 1905, Sparks was incorporated as a city.



**Figure 3-1 – 1907 Map of Sparks**

Sparks remained small until the 1950s, when economic growth in Reno triggered housing development in the area north of the railroad. The railroad served as the City's main employer until the advent of diesel engines in 1957, compelling the closure of the railroad shops. In the 1970s, the area south of the railroad to the Truckee River started to develop with warehouses and industry and in time became the main employment area for Sparks. During the 1970s, Sparks experienced a housing boom in the area north and east of its downtown, which continued into the 1980s.

In 1984, construction was finished on the east tower of what was then John Ascuaga's Nugget, giving Sparks its first, and to this date only, high-rise hotel/casino. In 1996, the long-term effort to redevelop the B Street business district across from the Nugget took a step forward with the opening of a multi-screen movie complex and construction of a public plaza. Since the area adopted a Victorian theme it became known as Victorian Square, home of many open-air events. In 2015 construction began on the 220-unit Fountainhouse Apartment complex, located west of the movie theater, concurrent with a remodel of the old Silver Club hotel into 98 apartment units. That project is located east of the movie theater.

Starting in the 1990s, Sparks expanded its city limits northward into the Spanish Springs Valley. Housing there is constructed within various (master) planned developments. Starting in the mid-2000s, shopping centers were also developed in this part of Sparks. The valley continues to grow within 15 approved planned developments. New development patterns provide a variety of housing, including apartments, assisted living facilities, condominiums, clustered single family lots and a variety of single-family lots. Shopping centers provide more diverse retail and services. Business parks proposed for planned developments such as Kiley Ranch North will eventually host more jobs.

In 1997, an aggregate pit owned by Helm’s Construction was flooded and a city park with a 77-acre lake was developed. Known as the Sparks Marina, it accommodates non-motorized boating, scuba diving, wind surfing, sailing, fishing and swimming. To capitalize on the Sparks Marina, the City is working with private developers on the development of an 140+ acre shopping, lodging and entertainment project at its eastern shore.

From 1999 through 2006, the City of Sparks experienced an upward trend in revenue, number of building permits, jobs and new businesses. The number of both building permits and planning cases peaked in 2006. Starting in 2007, City revenues and the number of building permits and planning cases, all indications of a growing economy, began to contract. The Great Recession, which proved to be more severe and last longer than in many parts of the United States, had come to Sparks.

Consolidated Taxes (the primary component of which is sales taxes), a major source of revenue for the City’s general fund, dropped for the first time ever in 2007. This was followed by a six-year decline in total General Fund revenue. Nationally, the Great Recession is recorded as lasting from December 2007 to June 2009, but not until 2014 did Sparks begin to see an increase in revenues. During those tough years, one third of city personnel were laid-off. The City is still recovering, but it has not significantly increased personnel or City services.



# Environment and Cultural Resources

The City of Sparks is located in a region known as the Truckee Meadows, which lies between the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range to the west and Virginia Range on the east. The Truckee Meadows, and therefore Sparks, is situated at the western edge of the geological formation known as the Great Basin. The Truckee River flows from Lake Tahoe to Pyramid Lake passing through southern Sparks. The river serves as an important water source for domestic use and irrigation and is one of the few rivers in the United States that does not flow to the ocean. In the Great Basin, the water flows and runoff stays within the drainage basin, sometimes creating wetlands.

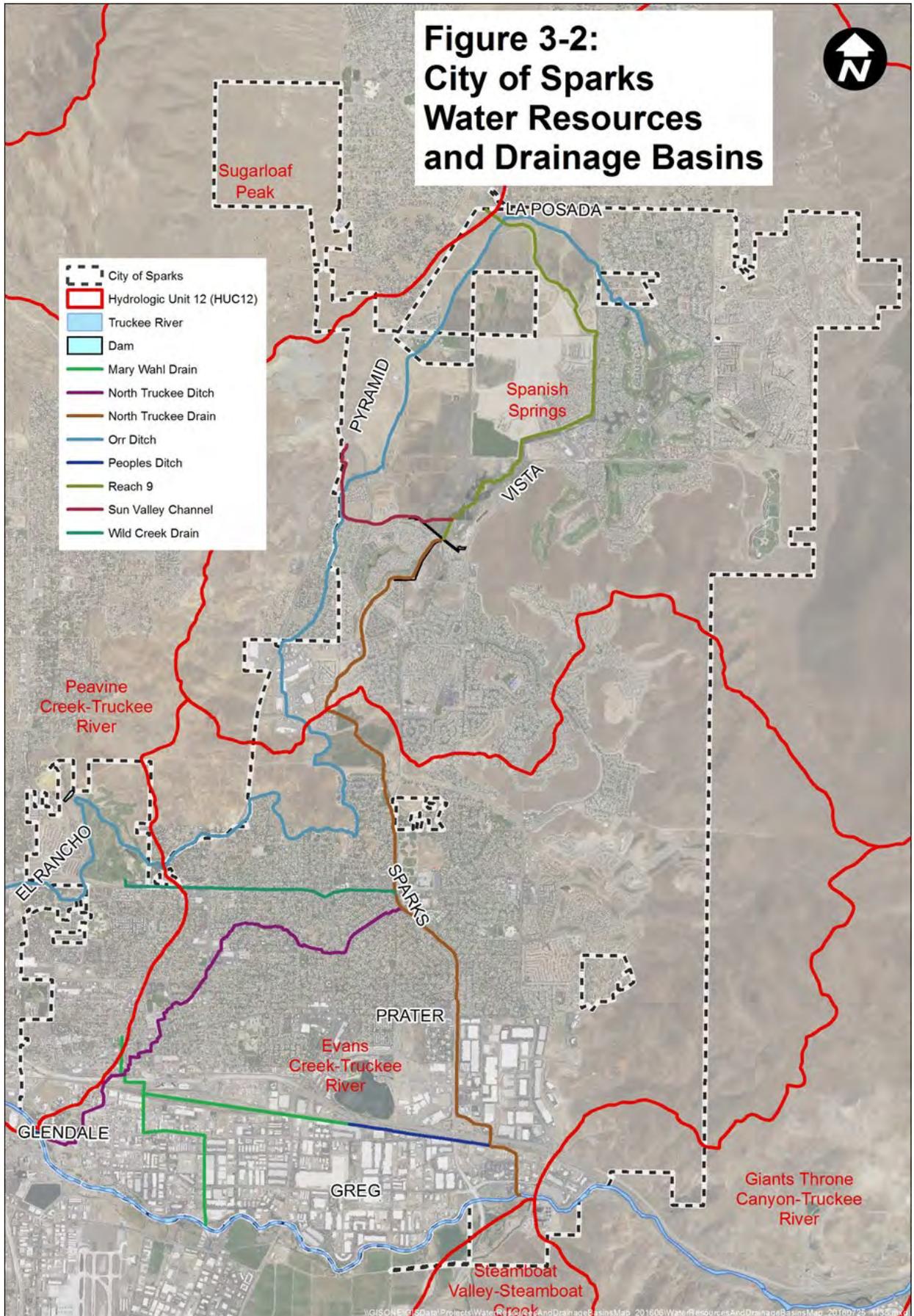
The basic environmental components of this Comprehensive Plan include the protection of: wetlands; the Truckee River; natural resources; open space; water and air quality; preservation of historic/cultural resources; restricting development on steep slopes, near seismic faults and /or landslide areas; and reducing the threat of wildfires.

## Water Resources

Water resources refer to the supply of groundwater and surface water of a given area as related to the current or potential value to the community and environment. Water resources and water-related issues identified and described in this section include the Truckee River, wetlands, storm-water management, drainage corridors, low-impact development, water quality and treated wastewater (a.k.a., effluent).



**Figure 3-2:  
City of Sparks  
Water Resources  
and Drainage Basins**



## Truckee River

The Truckee River, approximately 140 miles long, flows from Lake Tahoe to Pyramid Lake. This river runs through southern Sparks (south of the railroad tracks and Interstate 80). Its waters are an important source for domestic use and irrigation within the entire Truckee Meadows. Most of the river's water is fully allocated via water rights.

The Truckee River Flood Project (TRFP), a joint effort of the City of Sparks, Reno, Washoe County and the Army Corps of Engineers, has been conducting analyses of flooding issues and potential solutions relating to flooding by the Truckee River. The coalition has been working to obtain funding to implement a variety of flood protection measures which include a river parkway with graded benches and terraces designed to slow flood waters, and levees and flood walls that protect buildings adjacent to the river and along the North Truckee Drain. The project has stalled pending funding.



Based on Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maps, about 75% of Sparks' industrial area south of the railroad tracks experiences flooding. This demonstrates the importance of the TRFP project to the City, which started work on a North Truckee Drain Relocation project. To-date the project is about 40% complete. Completion is anticipated for fiscal year 2018.

## Wetlands

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) jointly define wetlands as: *“Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.”* Wetlands in Nevada



generally include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas. The USACE and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have separately issued a series of generalized potential wetlands maps. The USACE suggests that the maps be used as a guide only in determining the presence of potential wetlands regulated by USACE. Within the City of Sparks, the largest areas of wetlands fall in the Spanish Springs Valley. When projects are proposed for development near potential wetlands, the City requires a delineation of boundaries so that encroachment into wetlands does not occur.

To mitigate the loss of wetlands north of Los Altos Parkway in the Spanish Springs Valley the City of Sparks designated about nine acres of wetlands within the North Truckee Drain project.

## Stormwater and Drainage Corridors

Stormwater is a term used to describe water that originates during precipitation events as runoff from natural systems, snowmelt, rain, etc. Stormwater that does not soak into the ground becomes surface runoff which flows either into surface waterways or is channeled into storm sewers. Stormwater poses two main concerns: the volume and timing of runoff water (flood control) and any potential contaminants the water may carry (i.e., water pollution). Impervious surfaces (parking lots, roads, buildings, etc.) do not allow rain or snowmelt to infiltrate the ground, resulting in more runoff in developed areas.

Streams, drainage corridors, and ditches serve as important components of the stormwater management and water quality system. Historically, the natural drainage for the City of Sparks has been two drainage basins which both ultimately drain into the Truckee River. The eastern portion of the city drains into the commonly-called North Truckee Drain. The western portion of the city drains in a southeast direction from Sun Valley through a portion of the City and into Paradise Pond that is the Mary Wahl Drain.

## Water Quality

Water quality planning involves ensuring that waterways support aquatic life and human uses. The U.S. Clean Water Act aims to make waterways “fishable and swimmable.” Waterway pollution is defined as point source or non-point source. Point source pollution is generated by factories or sewer treatment plants. Non-point source pollution originates from runoff from parking lots, roads, agriculture, buildings, wildlife areas, and failing septic systems. The most common non-point source pollutants come from sediments and chemicals washed into water bodies from agricultural areas, construction sites and other disturbed areas. Other pollutants include pesticides, pathogens (bacteria and viruses) salts, oils, grease, toxic chemicals and heavy metals. Stormwater quality is managed under a regional joint Municipal Separate Storm System (MS4) permit with the cities of Sparks and Reno, and Washoe County.



## Reclaimed Water

Reclaimed water, such as outflow from a sewage treatment facility or treated wastewater discharge from industrial facilities, is considered a water resource. The Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility treats wastewater from Sparks, Reno and portions of unincorporated Washoe County. Reclaimed water from this facility is used in a wide variety of irrigation applications including but not limited to commercial landscape areas, construction water, golf courses, parks, medians, common areas in subdivisions and other uses permitted by law. The City has published *Reclaimed Water Treatment Effluent Design and Performance Standards* for the design and construction of effluent distribution systems.



## Low Impact Development (LID)

Low impact development (LID) serves as a natural systems approach for storm water management. LID is a growing practice for stormwater management with principles modeled after the natural management of runoff at the source. It uses local and small-scale controls rather than centralized stormwater treatment. The goal of LID is to imitate the predevelopment site hydrology by using design practices and techniques that effectively capture, filter, store, evaporate, detain and infiltrate runoff close to the source. In April 2015, the City of Reno, City of Sparks and Washoe County adopted the *Truckee Meadows Structural Controls – Design and Low Impact Development Manual* to provide guidance on the selection and implementation of source control and structural treatment control Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce pollutants in storm water. The Manual guides the siting, design, operation and long-term maintenance of LID improvements with the intent to improve stormwater quality and meet National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit requirements. Also included are local policies and procedures.

## Soils and Slopes

Soil is grouped into classes on the basis of parent material, chemical composition, particle size and makeup, manner of deposition and other considerations. Each soil class has certain identifying traits, such as good drainage (high permeability) or high shrink-swell potential. Failure to take into account soil characteristics can create excessive land development and maintenance costs as well as public health and safety hazards.

### **Soils – Moderate Constraints**

Soils identified as moderately constrained remain developable, but will require some remediation to improve structural strength and stability, and/or permeability.

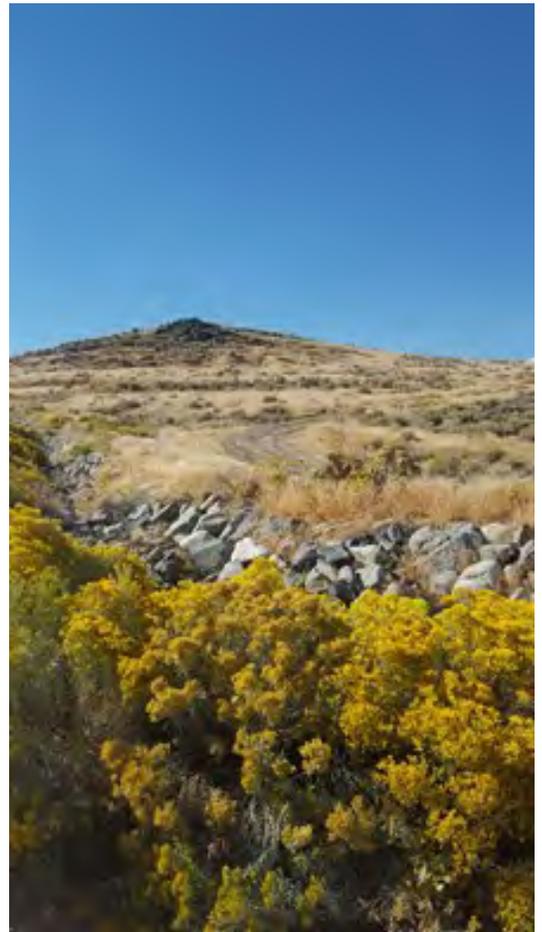
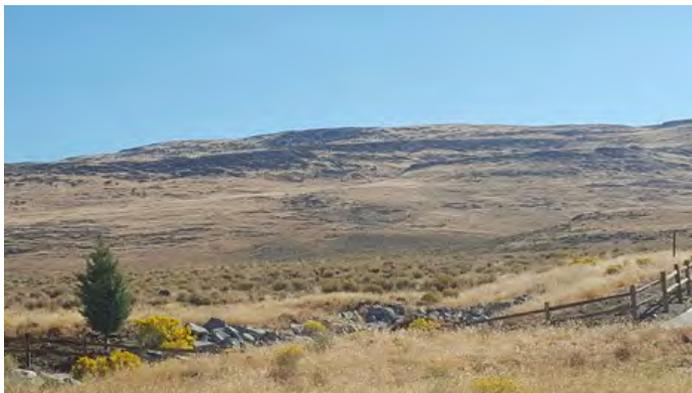
### **Soils – Severe Constraints**

Soils identified as severely constrained shall require extensive remediation at a more substantial cost to improve structural strength and stability, and/or permeability.

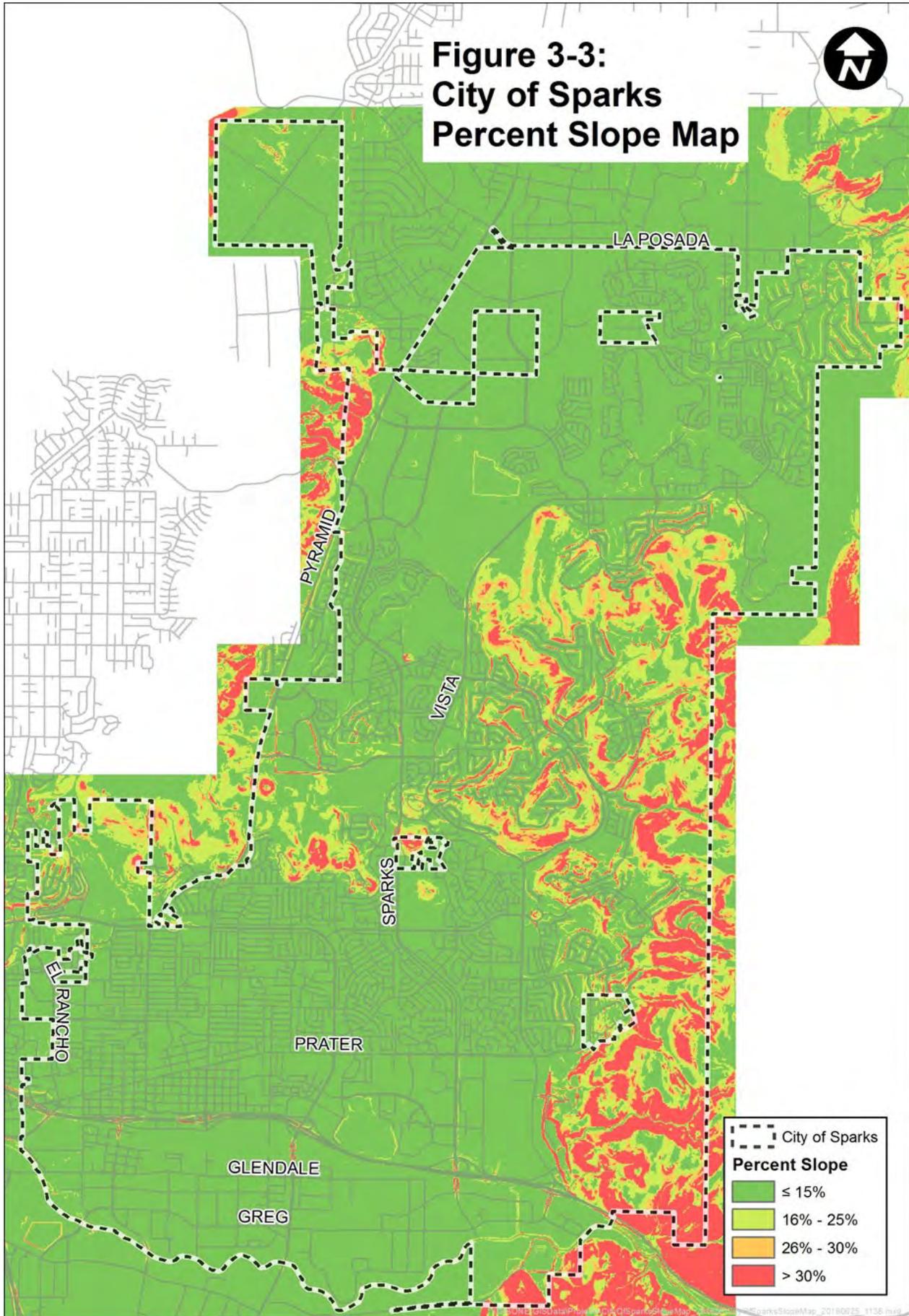
## Steep Slopes

Sparks currently regulates hillside development to minimize the potential for erosion, sedimentation, landslides and scenic degradation. For new developments, concept plans shall be submitted for grading, erosion and landscaping. Refer to Figure3-3 Slope Map. For planning purposes, the following rules apply:

- 0 to 15% Slopes: Easily developed
- 16 to 25% Slopes: Require moderate levels of engineering, design and review
- 26% to 30% Slopes: Require high levels of engineering, design and review
- Slopes in excess of 30%: Generally considered not developable



**Figure 3-3:  
City of Sparks  
Percent Slope Map**



## Natural Resources

Natural resources are substances such as soil, aggregate, oil, minerals and other marketable goods that occur naturally and may be extracted from the earth. The value of a natural resource is dependent upon consumer demand and the resource's availability. The only natural resource located within the City limits or Sphere of Influence (SOI) is aggregate. The only aggregate extraction pit located within the City's SOI has stopped operation.

## Wildlife Resources

The Truckee Meadows has a wide variety of native wildlife and plant species supported by key natural habitats and key migration corridors. These species, habitats and migration corridors are identified and described in detail for the southern portion of the County by the Washoe Regional Open Space and Natural Resource Management Plan and the Washoe County Conservation Element. Key descriptions from this plan are briefly summarized within this section.

### Biodiversity

Biodiversity is the measure of vegetation communities and species present in a region and how the landscape within the region supports the variety of animals and plants while maintaining healthy populations. Biodiversity in the Sparks area faces a number of challenges. Urban/suburban development, recreational activities, alterations to fire regimes (the patterns that fire follows in particular ecosystems), construction of dams, regulation or diversion of stream flows, industrial discharge and livestock grazing can all alter vegetation communities and impair habitat from supporting native species. These developments and/or environment-altering conditions result in loss of native vegetation; introduction of invasive (non-native) species; soil erosion and pollution; decreased water quality and quantity; and habitat fragmentation. Such conditions cause the conversion or loss of vegetation, directly affecting the displacement or mortality of wildlife. Rare vegetation communities and species may be lost, altering the aesthetics of a landscape area. Wildlife conflicts or encounters can also be a serious threat to both humans and wildlife. The most frequent are wildlife-vehicle collisions. Such conflicts are increased or decreased as a result of the relationship and location of roads; habitat; water and how transportation and infrastructure interact with migratory routes.

Native species, habitats and migration corridors identified within the Sparks Planning Area include the following:

## **Pronghorn Antelope**

Pronghorn antelope live in the mountains east and west of the City. Their habitat is typically gentle rolling to flat, wide-open topography, primarily within valleys between mountain ranges. Areas such as these with low understory allow antelope to see great distances and permit them quick movement for avoiding predators. These areas also provide the animals' preferred vegetation of low sagebrush and northern desert shrubs. The map in the Washoe County Conservation Element dated September 9, 2010 identifies the Pah Rah Mountains northeast of the City as crucial range for antelope.

## **Mule Deer**

Mule deer move between various zones depending on the season. Many mule deer live in the Pah Rah Mountains, northeast of Sparks. The lower elevations of the Pah Rahs serve as key winter habitat for mule deer with the highest elevations being summer habitat. Mule deer occupy almost all types of habitat within their range, though they prefer arid, open areas and rocky hillsides. In seasons of drought food sources are lost as plants toughen or wither. In addition, mule deer habitat is being lost to land development and wildfires.

## **Coyote**

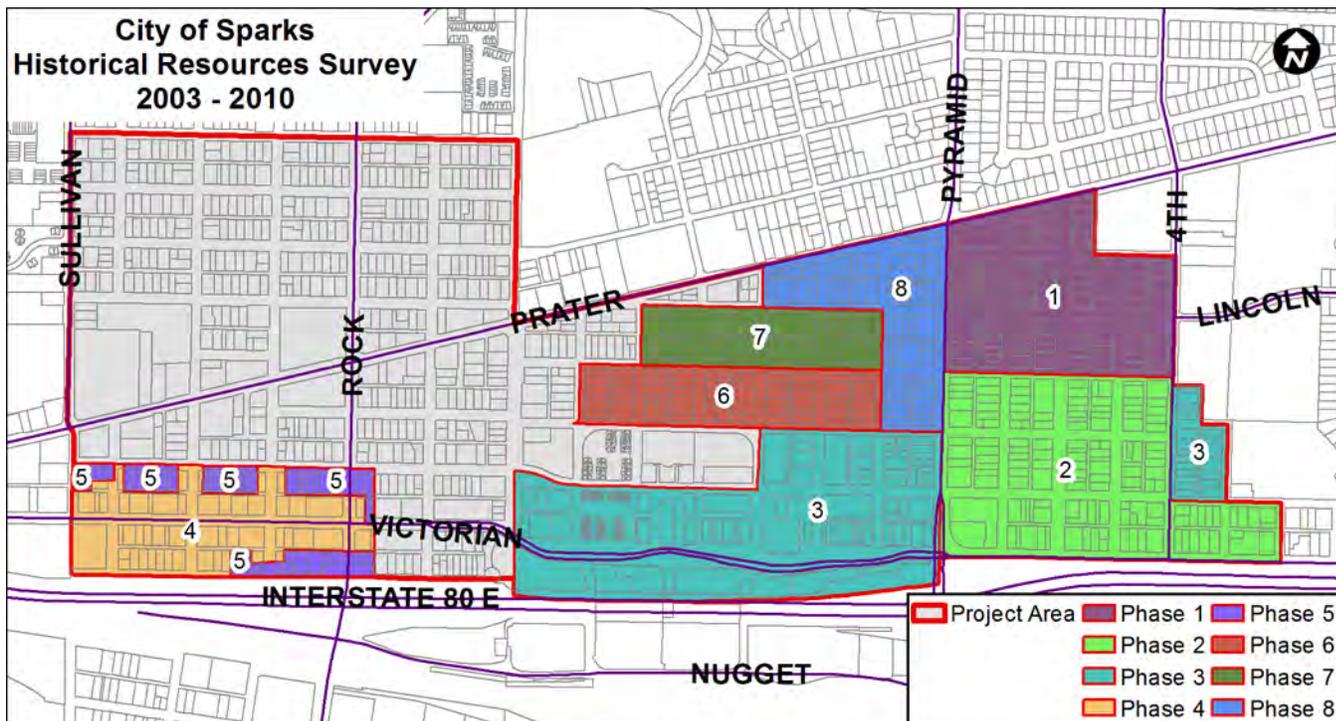
Coyotes live in the mountains surrounding the City. They are also found in green belts and open space within city limits. The coyote is an opportunistic feeder. Rabbits and rodents make up the bulk of their diet, however in urban areas they forage at landfills and from garbage cans and sometimes feed on domestic dogs and cats.

## Cultural Resources

Cultural Resources refer to areas previously inhabited by humans from prehistoric times to the immediate past and historic buildings within the City (those older than 50 years). These resources include remnants of built environments, settlement, or occupation. They encompass archaeological sites, where tools, rock rings, or petroglyphs might be found; fishing, hunting, gathering places, seasonal camps, and wintering villages; historic buildings and structures; constructed landscapes, such as irrigation canals, gardens or windbreaks.

One major challenge for protecting these areas is that most cultural sites have not been mapped or surveyed and doing so would involve significant funds and resources for evaluating all the sites within the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI) and Future Service Area (FSA). A second challenge is private development within areas with significant concentrations of cultural resources because the current regulations do not require protection of these resources on private lands. A third challenge is unregulated recreational use. Unregulated off-road vehicles, hiking, etc. can cause degradation of cultural resources or provide easy access for artifact hunting or vandalism. The fourth challenge is coordination between agencies who are trying to preserve these resources.

The City of Sparks received a succession of grants to hire experts to conduct a series of historical resources surveys. The study area was south of Prater Way from Sullivan Lane to just east of 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Eight surveys were conducted from 2003 to 2010.



**Figure 3-4 Historical Resources Map**

### Archaeological Sites

Evidence of long-term human occupation of the Spanish Springs area exists through prehistoric artifacts, rock art, seasonal camps and residential sites. Northern Paiutes utilized a variety of habitats including desert, aquatic, grassland and pinyon communities. They were hunters and gatherers, supplementing seasonal food resources with more predictable aquatic resources. Prehistoric artifacts indicate that both flora and fauna were used as food sources.

Several petroglyphs (prehistoric rock carvings or inscriptions) have been located in the Pah Rah Range in the west-central area of Sparks’ Future Service Area; also in Spanish Springs Canyon at the south end of the FSA. Much of the Pah Rah Range, located at the edge of the City’s limits, is privately owned, so pressures from potential development may ensue. Any proposed disturbances to the area or changes in use should consider potential impacts to these sites. Close consultation and coordination with the Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and Nevada State Historic Preservation Office shall be required.

## Natural Hazards

Natural Hazards are defined as events that can threaten lives and property. These include wildfire, flooding, earthquakes, landslides and debris flows. Generally, these events are part of the natural system, but due to land development they can sometimes prove catastrophic.

### Wildfire

Northern Nevada is considered a high fire hazard environment. The weather (arid, with lightning strikes), vegetation (sagebrush, rabbit brush and cheat grass) and topography (mountainous terrain) are elements that increase susceptibility to wildfire. These three components not only determine the ease of fire ignition, but also the speed and direction a fire will travel and the intensity at which it will burn.

As development continues to reach into the foothills, into the zone named the wildland-urban interface, the risk of wildfire damage to homes and structures increases. Short of reducing development into this interface area, the most effective prevention is to reduce development in the most wildfire-prone areas or require the establishment of defensible space between structures and wildland. Wildfires threaten homes by flame contact, radiated heat and flying embers. A minimum of 30 feet of defensible space is recommended, with the optimal being 100 feet. Ornamental plants, especially evergreen shrubs, should be avoided. Non-combustible roofing materials will reduce the risk of fire from flying embers.

### Flooding

Flooding within the Truckee Meadows and surrounding areas is generally the result of rapid snowmelt, heavy spring runoff, or summer thunderstorms. In recognition of the risks and problems in floodplain areas, development is carefully regulated as follows:

#### **Floodways**

This is the area of a drainage basin which remains open to carry runoff from the floodplain without causing the flood elevation to increase by 1-foot or more at any point along the basin. Development within floodways is extremely hazardous and is restricted. City regulations meet federal guidelines and prohibit floodway development which would cause any increase in flood elevations within the floodway zone.



**1997 Flood of Sparks**

### **100-Year Floodplain**

This is the portion of the drainage basin with a 1% annual chance of flooding but which includes the floodway. This area is also referred to as a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). Development within the 100-year floodplain may be appropriate if adequate measures are taken to protect such development from flood hazards.

### **500-Year Floodplain**

This portion of the drainage basin has a 0.2% annual chance of flooding. Development in the 500-year floodplain may be appropriate if adequate measures are taken to protect such development from flood hazards.

A large portion of the floodplain areas within the City, SOI and FSA have been mapped. The Water Resources Section of this chapter covers what the City of Sparks is doing pertaining to areas subject to flooding.

It should be noted that detailed flood elevations have not been determined for all mapped 100-year floodplain areas because the Flood Insurance Study prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) used FEMA's approximate methods to determine some floodplains. Also, the analysis methods used for preparation of the Flood Insurance Study has not caused all localized floodplains to be identified. For these reasons, City floodplain regulations require that persons subdividing or developing land within the floodplain determine floodplain elevations and flood restrictions on their property through appropriate study.

### **Flood Improvements in North Sparks**

The City of Sparks works with land owners and developers to ensure that growth within Northern Sparks includes timely construction of flood improvements to mitigate downstream flooding. These improvements include construction of the Kiley South Flood detention facility and associated flood channel improvements.

### **Critical Zone**

This is the area south of the Truckee River and upstream of the confluence of the Truckee River and the Steamboat Creek that includes the maximum footprint and geographical limits and maximum flood elevation of the peak stage of the 1997 Truckee River flood event.

### **Geologic Hazards**

The Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology is the authority on geologic hazards issues within this area. In recognition of the risks and problems in geologic hazard areas, development shall be carefully regulated to address the following hazards:

### **Earthquakes**

At the earth's surface, earthquakes manifest themselves by shaking and sometimes displacing ground. Nevada is the third most active state in the United States for large earthquakes (5.5 or higher on the Richter scale). A large number of active earthquake faults have been identified and as reflected in the historical record, earthquakes are a hazard.

## **Landslides / Debris Flows**

Landslides/debris flows are common natural occurrences in Northern Nevada. Occurrences are typically associated with a heavy rainfall or rapid snowmelt and worsen the effects of flooding. Areas prone to landslides/debris flows are steep slopes, bases of drainage channels and developed hillsides.

## Air Quality

Four pollutants affect air quality in this area: carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, ozone, and particulate matter. These typically result from the use of combustion engines.

The Truckee Meadows is on the leeward side of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, making temperature inversions a common phenomenon. During inversion periods, a layer of dense cold air settles in the basin under a layer of lighter, warm air. Vertical mixing of the air column is inhibited. Without vertical mixing, emissions from cars, wood stoves, and other pollution sources can be trapped under the warm air and become concentrated. During inversion periods, the beautiful blue sky of Nevada is replaced with a brown haze hanging above the valley.

When inversions occur, authorities announce air quality alerts. A number of programs and policies have been initiated in the area to counteract the effect of temperature inversions and to improve air quality in the region. The Truckee Meadows Air Quality Implementation Plan has moved the region closer to attainment of its air quality improvement goals. An annual auto inspection and maintenance program, a ban on the use of non-EPA certified wood burning stoves, and traffic synchronization improvements are just a few of the specific programs that follow from the plan. In addition, a temperature inversion prediction system was developed in the early 1980s to serve as an early warning for those groups who are particularly affected by high levels of air pollution.

Specific recommendations include:

- Large fleet operators should convert to cleaner burning fuels such as natural gas. The City could take the lead in this area.
- Encouraging passive and active solar energy in residential structures and developments
- Aggressively implement requirements that all parking areas and roadways be paved
- Synchronization of traffic signals and circulation system improvements
- Stringent regulation of land grading, dust control and dirt hauling
- Alternative fuels program
- Vehicle inspection and maintenance program
- Wood burning color code program

Washoe County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) initiatives include:

- Introducing alternative fuel vehicles into Washoe County's fleet
- Introducing queue jumping
- Developing Bus Rapid Transit along Prater Way and Pyramid Way

- Replacing current busses with more fuel efficient versions
- Developing more Park-and-Ride locations
- Developing Ride Share and Trip Reduction programs
- Developing more pedestrian/bicycle trails
- Traffic signal coordination

## Renewable Resources and Sustainable Development

Renewable resources are those generated from sustainable sources. Renewable energy sources include solar power, hydroelectricity, wind generators and harnessing the Earth's geothermal sources to generate energy. Northern Nevada, with an average of 290 sunny days per year, is a prime location for the use of solar energy. Northern Nevada also has significant wind and geothermal resources, making this area prime for harnessing renewable energy sources.

Sustainable development considers how development affects the Earth's environment. It is a pattern of resource use that aims to meet current human needs while preserving the environment for future generations. Sustainable development practices emphasize efficient use of resources such as energy, water and building materials. The practice addresses the design and siting of buildings, construction practices, construction materials, operations, maintenance and removal. Sustainable development is designed to reduce overall impacts by:

- Efficiently using land, energy, water and other resources
- Protecting community and building occupants' health
- Reducing waste, pollution and environmental degradation
- Addressing the quality of the environment people live in



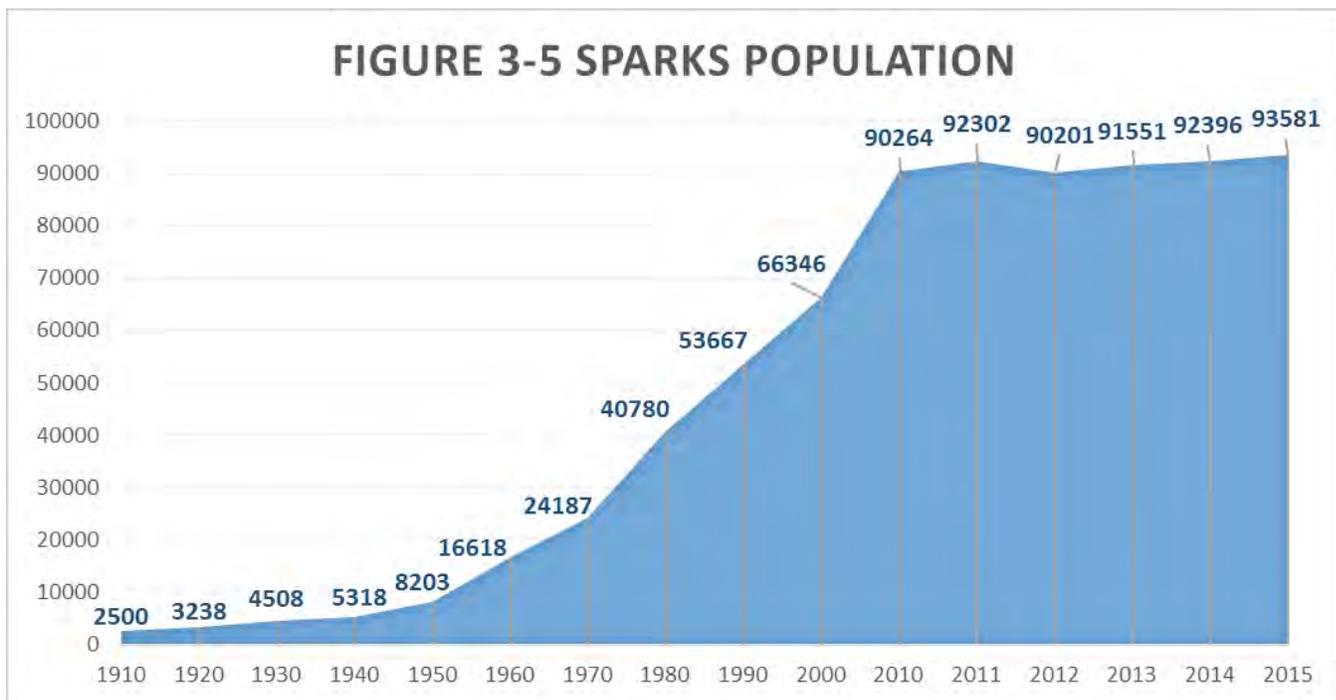
# Population

Sparks has an estimated 2015 population of 93,581. The City grew by 38% between 2000 and 2010 with an increase of approximately 23,900 people. Figure “3-5 Sparks Population” (below) illustrates how Sparks grew gradually until the 1950s when it then experienced a 103% growth rate, the highest in the City’s history. The next highest growth rate came in the 1970s when growth was measured at 67%. Since 1970, Sparks experienced a steady increase in population, averaging 4% annually through 2010. During the Great Recession, the population decreased by 2.3%. Not until 2014 did estimates of the City’s population rebound to near-2010 numbers.

Based on the 2014 U.S. Census from the American Community Survey (ACS), the U. S. Census Bureau estimates the median age of Sparks residents at 37.5. Seventy-five percent of the population is over 18 years of age. Females compose 55.9% of the population while males are 44.1%. Approximately 79.1% of Sparks residents identify themselves as white.

The City’s population forecast is based on historic trends. Population projections for the region are done by consensus forecasting, a methodology that averages the population/employment forecasts from various reliable sources. The estimate for the year, 2036 is 116,629 people (Source: Consensus Forecast).





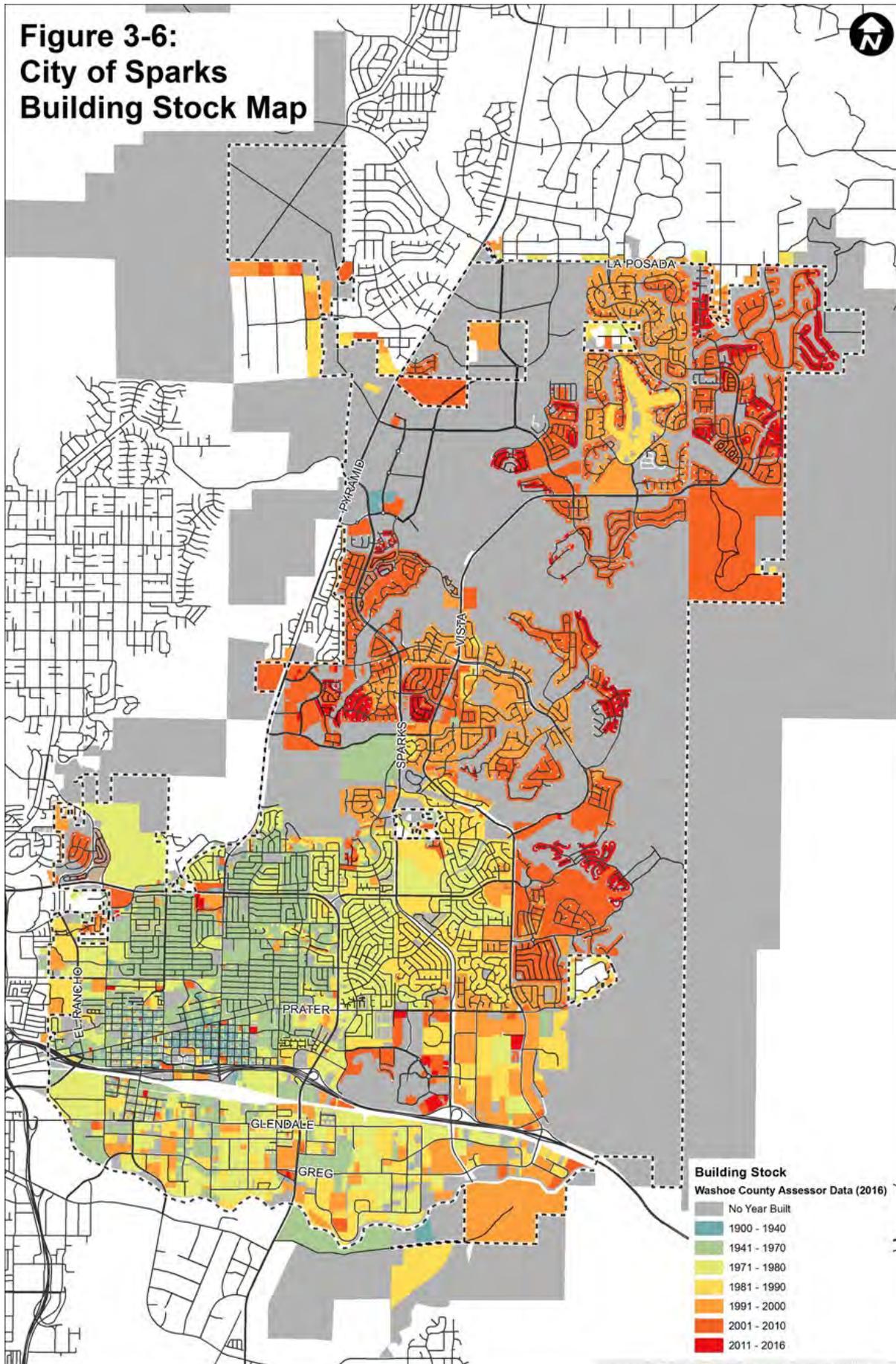
**(Source: U.S. Census and Nevada State Demographer)**

## Housing

Sparks has a wide range of neighborhoods and housing types. Generally, the neighborhoods have developed in rings radiating northward from the core, or downtown area, of Sparks. The oldest (historic) neighborhoods are found in the downtown area. These neighborhoods have been transitioning from single-family residences to mixed densities and housing types. Most historic homes front on a tree-lined street with sidewalks and parkways and alley access at the rear. Generally, the age of the housing stock decreases outward from the City’s core with the newest housing located in the Spanish Springs Valley. Housing from the 1950s through the 1980s was developed as standard subdivisions, including apartments and condominiums. Starting in the early 1990s, most housing was constructed within one of 40 planned developments. Each planned development includes a variety of housing types ranging from large single-family lots to cluster or small single-family lots to attached housing (apartments or condominiums).

“Figure 3-6 Building Stock Map” maps the age of structures in Sparks. This map shows the concentric pattern of new construction radiating outward from the city core. The old city center dates generally from 1900 to 1940. Growth generally moved east and northeast; the newest came in the 2000s. The employment/industrial areas east of Sparks Boulevard and south of I-80 represent an age mix with no discernible pattern of growth.

**Figure 3-6:  
City of Sparks  
Building Stock Map**



The 2014 U.S. Census American Community Survey documents 37,744 housing units in the City of Sparks. The majority are single-family detached homes representing 65.7% of housing types. Only 6.3% of residents live in attached single-family homes. Twenty-six percent live in multi-family units of three or more. Approximately 2% live in mobile homes, recreational vehicles or such.

Only 18.7% of current housing was built before 1970. During the 1970s a housing boom spurred growth that now equals 18.8% of housing stock. In the 1980s, 15.6% of current housing stock was built, and in the 1990s, 16.5%. From 2000 to 2014, 30.8% of the City's existing housing stock was built. This means that 62.9 percent of the existing Sparks housing stock was built since 1980.

The City of Sparks has 1,140 housing units that are income restricted or receive assistance. Based on Comprehensive Housing Affordable Strategy (CHAS), the City of Sparks has 9,415 housing units which accommodate low-to-moderate income households (incomes of less than 80% of the area's median income), so 25% of Sparks units qualify as low-to-moderate income.

The City of Sparks participates in the Washoe County Home Consortium (WCHC) with the City of Reno and Washoe County. Formed through an intergovernmental agreement, the WCHC makes available loans from various funding sources for pre-development, development, construction, acquisition, preservation and substantial rehabilitation of affordable, permanent or transitional housing units. Its primary goal is to assist lower income families and individuals, including homeless and special needs groups, in obtaining affordable housing. The original intergovernmental agreement was approved in 1994 between the three jurisdictions and has been operating ever since. The Consortium also allocates funds to housing assistance programs, including down-payment assistance to first-time homebuyers, monthly rental assistance, rental and utility deposit assistance, and homeowner rehabilitation assistance. Individuals must meet program eligibility requirements.

The Reno-Sparks housing market was one of the hardest hit housing markets in the nation during the Great Recession. The issuance of new single family residential building permits bottomed out in 2009. From 1999 to 2008, the average number of building permits for new single family homes was 843. In 2009, the number of single family homes permits issued was 117. The worst year was 2011 at only 73 single family home permits issued. The number of foreclosures skyrocketed, causing a significant inventory of abandoned homes and an exodus of people. In 2015, northern Nevada once again saw growth. After the highs of 2006-2007 and the steep declines that followed, the new trend for the area's housing market is stability. Median house prices are increasing at a moderate pace. New home construction has returned. The apartment market inventory is stressed and the City is experiencing a boom in construction of multi-family units. In the past year, Sparks has reviewed and approved the construction of more than 2,300 units.

# Economic Strength

The Great Recession hit the Reno-Sparks area relatively hard and it was not until 2014 that the region started to recover. The area experienced large job losses and high unemployment during the seven years prior. Now the region is experiencing a period of sustained job growth. Unemployment is down, though not lower than prior to the recession. Large firms, such as Tesla, Switch, Apple and Amazon have announced investments in the region which causes an anticipated of growth for both the economy and population. With momentum to attract more technology and manufacturing jobs to the region, the majority of employment remains in the service sectors of entertainment, hotel and food services. The next largest sector is education.

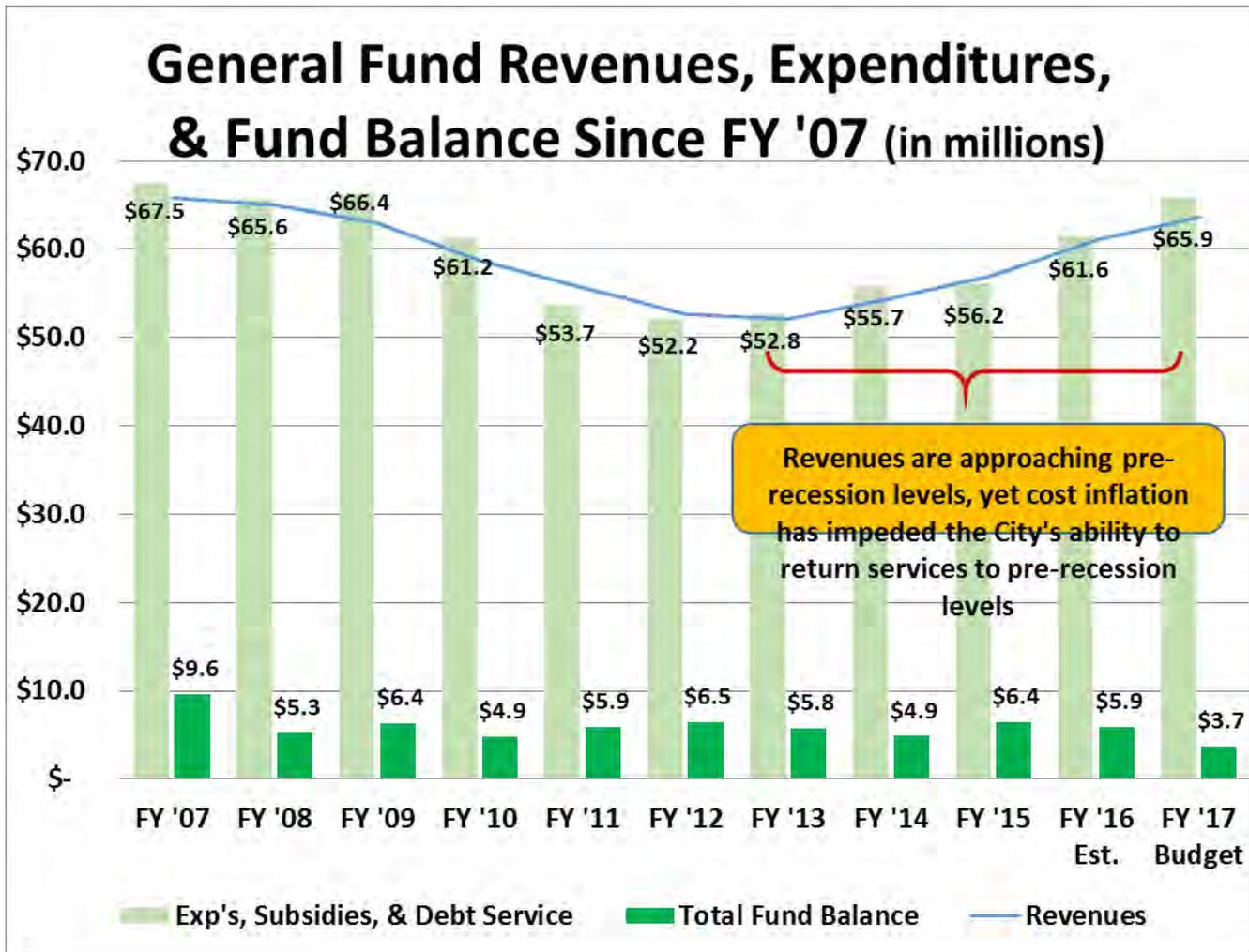


Figure 3-7 General Fund Revenues

# City Services and Facilities

This section focuses on the facilities and services provided by the City to ensure the quality of life, public health, safety and welfare desired by citizens of Sparks. Facility costs, timing and sequencing of facility improvements is detailed in the Capital Improvement Programming (CIP) segment below. Services provided by the City include fire and police protection, sanitary sewer treatment, reclaimed water, storm drainage, street maintenance, planning, permitting, municipal court and parks/recreation. Other service providers furnish schools, libraries, water, electricity, natural gas, telecommunication, solid waste and health care.

On an annual basis, City staff develops a Strategic Plan to prioritize strategic initiatives for the City. The Strategic Plan is drafted by the City's senior staff for review and approval by the City Council. It establishes goals and objectives for City administrative and fiscal operations. This Comprehensive Plan will guide the preparation of future strategic plans and will serve as an instrument for the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

## Financing and Capital Improvement Programming

The City's Budget contains 22 governmental funds and eight proprietary funds. The General Fund is the largest fund and is the general operating fund for the City. The General Fund supports functions such as police and fire services, community services, mayor, city council and city administrative functions. The largest portion of the General Fund's revenues comes from Consolidated Taxes (C-Tax), which is the consolidation of six tax components consisting of two types of sales taxes, Real Property Transfer Tax, Cigarette Tax, Liquor Tax and the Governmental Services Tax. Ad Valorem Revenue (property taxes) is a tax levied on the assessed value of real estate and personal property and is based on assessed property values assigned by the Washoe County Assessor. Licenses and permits represent the next largest revenue source and include business licenses, permits, liquor licenses, city gaming licenses and franchise fees. Charges for Services generates revenue through service fees charged to the public or fees charged to other funds within the City. The final revenue sources are fines and forfeits through Court and Bail fines.

The most challenged area for funding is that which supports City facilities and projects. Many current capital projects have focused on rehabilitation/refurbishment of existing facilities, designing/constructing energy-efficient systems at existing facilities, pavement management and finalizing construction of downtown redevelopment projects. The City is experiencing a backlog of capital project needs. Just a few examples include City Hall, Parks and Recreation Building, Victorian Square, Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility and Golden Eagle Regional Park. City Hall is aging and undersized. Sparks' Parks and Recreation Building is aging and in need of improvements.

Victorian Square is much used for special events and has been neglected, but future planned municipal investments will use room tax monies to improve it. Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility is an aging facility with limited space for expansion; it needs to keep up with the treatment technology. Golden Eagle Regional Park is heavily used and needs its artificial turf replaced.

## Sparks Government

The City of Sparks has a Council/Manager form of government with the Mayor serving as its executive branch and the City Council as its legislative branch. Together their role is to enact, amend and repeal laws and ordinances and make policy decisions for the City Manager and staff to implement. The Mayor and the five-member Council, who are elected for staggered four-year terms, provide leadership, serve on various regional boards and commissions and adopt the annual budget along with overseeing the City's financial affairs. The City Manager serves as staff for the City Council and oversees six departments: Management Services, City Attorney, Community Services Department, Parks and Recreation Department, Fire Prevention, Police Department and Municipal Court. The City Manager's office is responsible for strategic planning, annual budget preparation and day to day operations, ensuring the City operates in a fiscally responsible and timely manner.

## Public Services: Administrated by the City

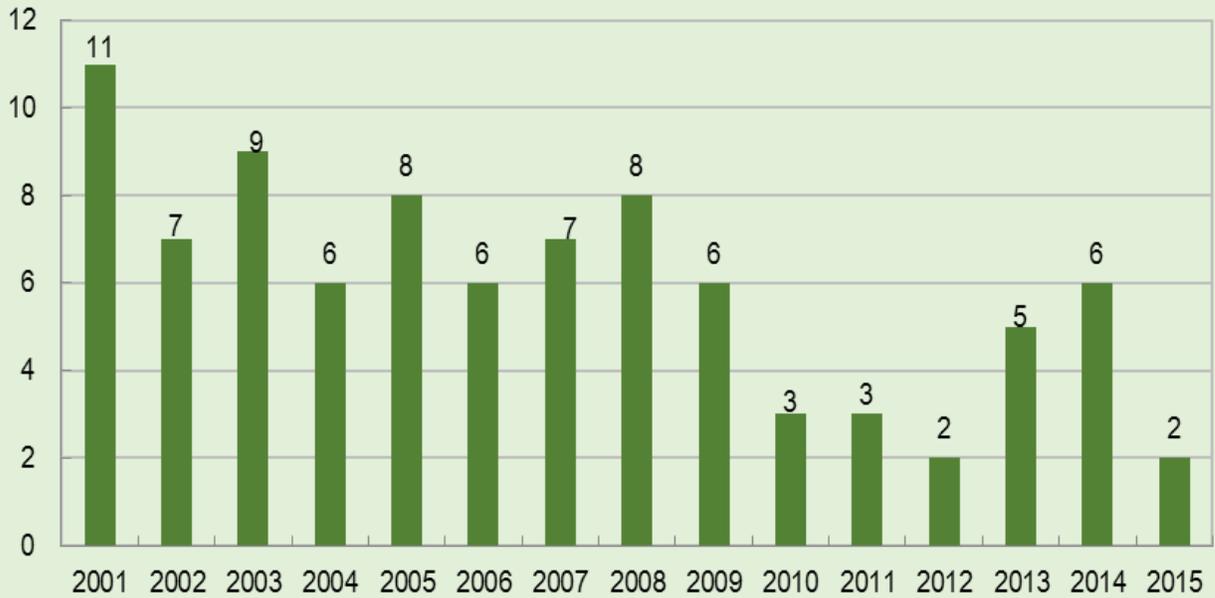
### **Management Services**

The City Manager oversees the five divisions of Management Services including the City Clerk's Office, Community Relations, Customer Service, Contracts and Risk Management, and Human Resources.

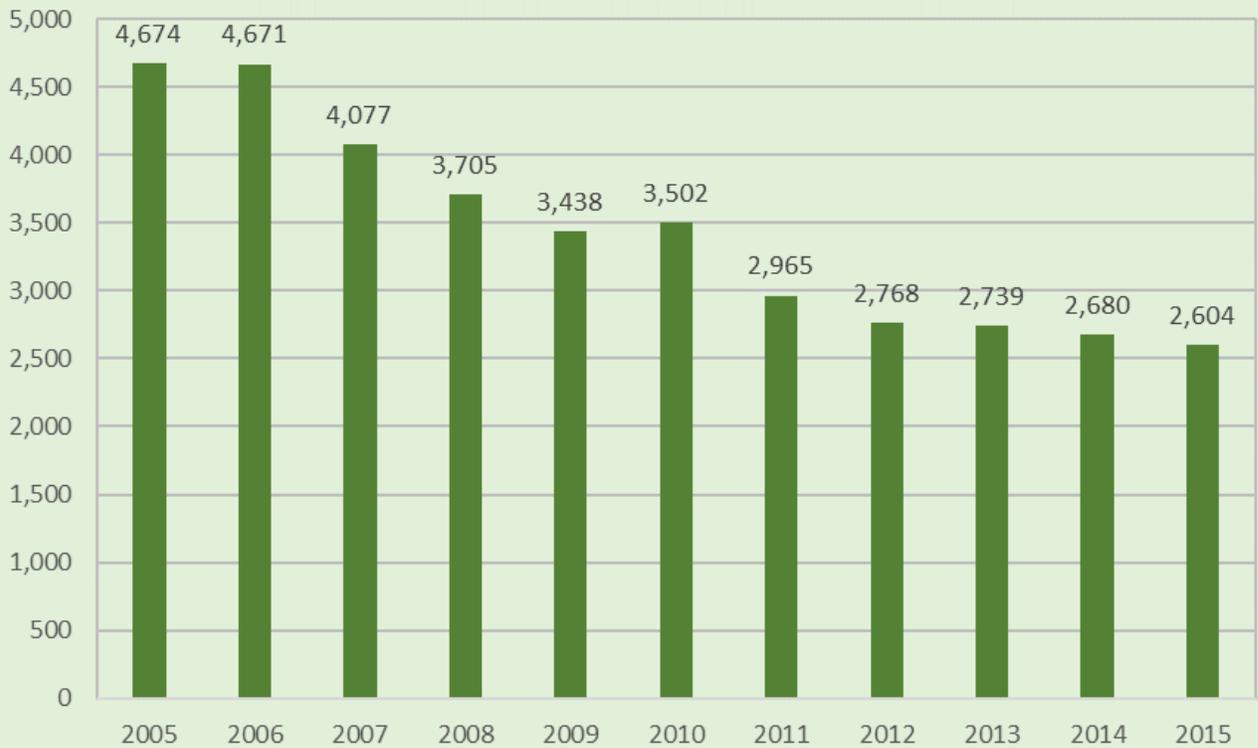
### **City Attorney**

The City Attorney is elected by Sparks voters and oversees a full-service municipal law office. The department is made up of three divisions. The Criminal Division prosecutes adult misdemeanor cases in Municipal Court: DUI's, traffic violations, domestic violence, assault and battery, petty theft, building or fire code violations and public nuisances. It also represents the City in criminal appeals before the Second Judicial District Court of Washoe County. The Civil Division defends the City in federal and state court litigation, including Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, the Nevada Supreme Court and United States Supreme Court on matters pertaining to employment, civil rights violations, personal injury, property damage, contracts and collection of debts, civil enforcement of ordinances and statutes and real property matters (planning, zoning, easements and eminent domain). The last division is Victim Advocate which provides assistance to victims of crimes, and bilingual and interpretive assistance.

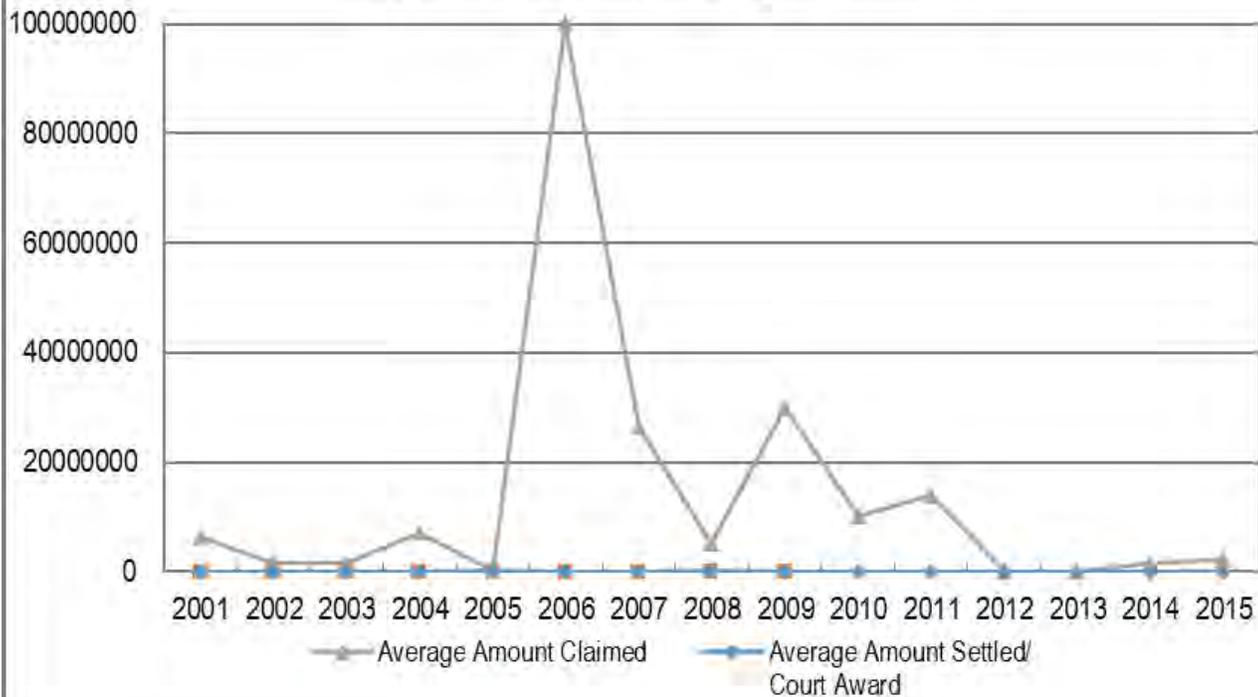
**Figure 3-8 Number of Civil Lawsuits Filed by Year**



**Figure 3- 9 Criminal Charges Prosecuted by Year**



**Figure 3 -10 Annual Litigation Trends**



### Financial Services

Financial Services consists of Accounting, Budget Administration processes and Information Technology. The Accounting Division processes invoices and purchase orders, makes payments to vendors, collects accounts receivable, maintains a general ledger and manages cash, investments and debt, maintains a fixed asset inventory and processes payroll. Budget Administration includes financial forecasting, budget management, and department support. Information Technology (IT) manages and coordinates technology services and the electronic network for the City. Budget cuts have drastically reduced technology upgrades.

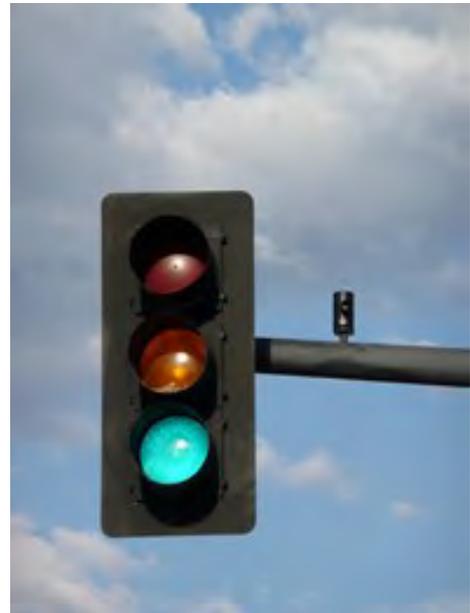
### Community Services

The Community Services Department is responsible for traditional planning and public works and is divided into five divisions: Engineering, Building and Safety, Planning, Public Works Maintenance, and Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility (TMWRF). Responsibilities of the Engineering Division include transportation system management, capital projects, sewer, storm drainage, flood control, effluent (reclaimed water), new development review, construction management of facilities improvements in the Capital Improvement Programming (CIP), inspection of CIP projects, and inspection of new development. The Building and Safety Division processes all applications for building permits, sign permits, street cut permits, fire sprinkler permits, flood plain permits and sewer tap permits and reviews building construction plans for compliance with the City's current

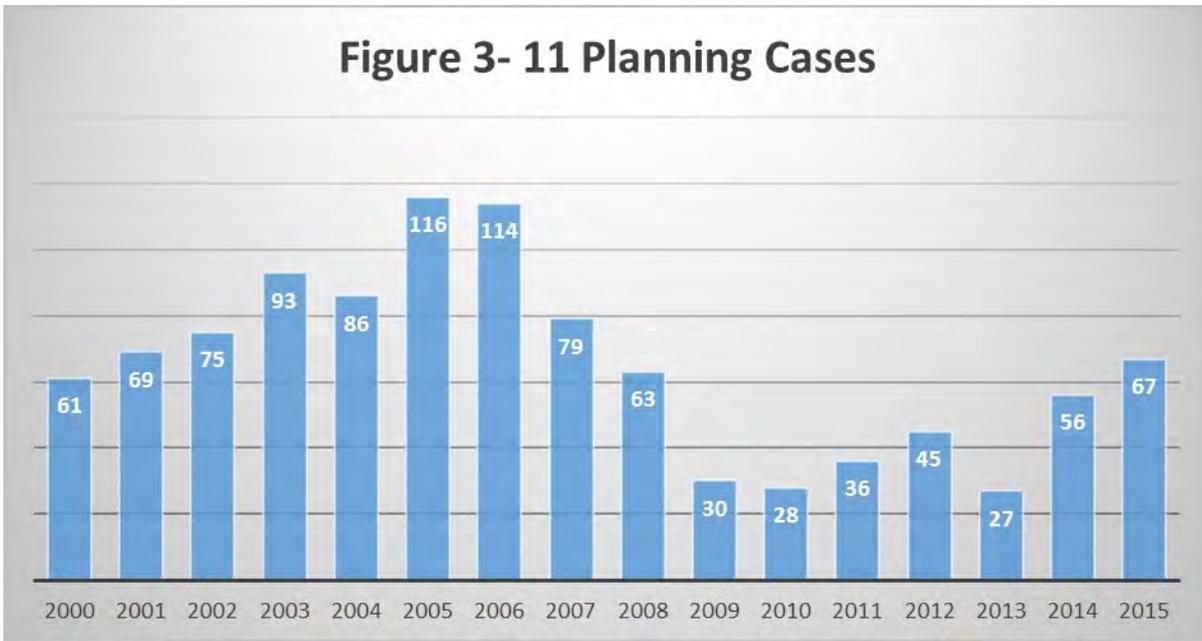
codes and ordinances. Inspection of all building construction ensures compliance with approved plans. Responsibilities of the Planning Division include current planning, advance planning, Redevelopment District administration, grants administration, code enforcement and housing. Public Works Maintenance **performs preventive maintenance and operational maintenance services for all of the City's public infrastructure and assets including:**

- Building facilities (HVAC, electrical, plumbing, boilers, roofs, interior finishes, doors, locks and janitorial services)
- Streets (crack sealing, pavement patching, sweeping, and snow removal)
- Sanitary sewer/collection lines and lift stations
- Storm drains and irrigation ditches
- Traffic signals, signs and pavement markings
- Electrical (signals, facilities, misc. street lights)
- Fleet management/equipment services
- City parks, landscaping and trails
- Graffiti eradication for public property

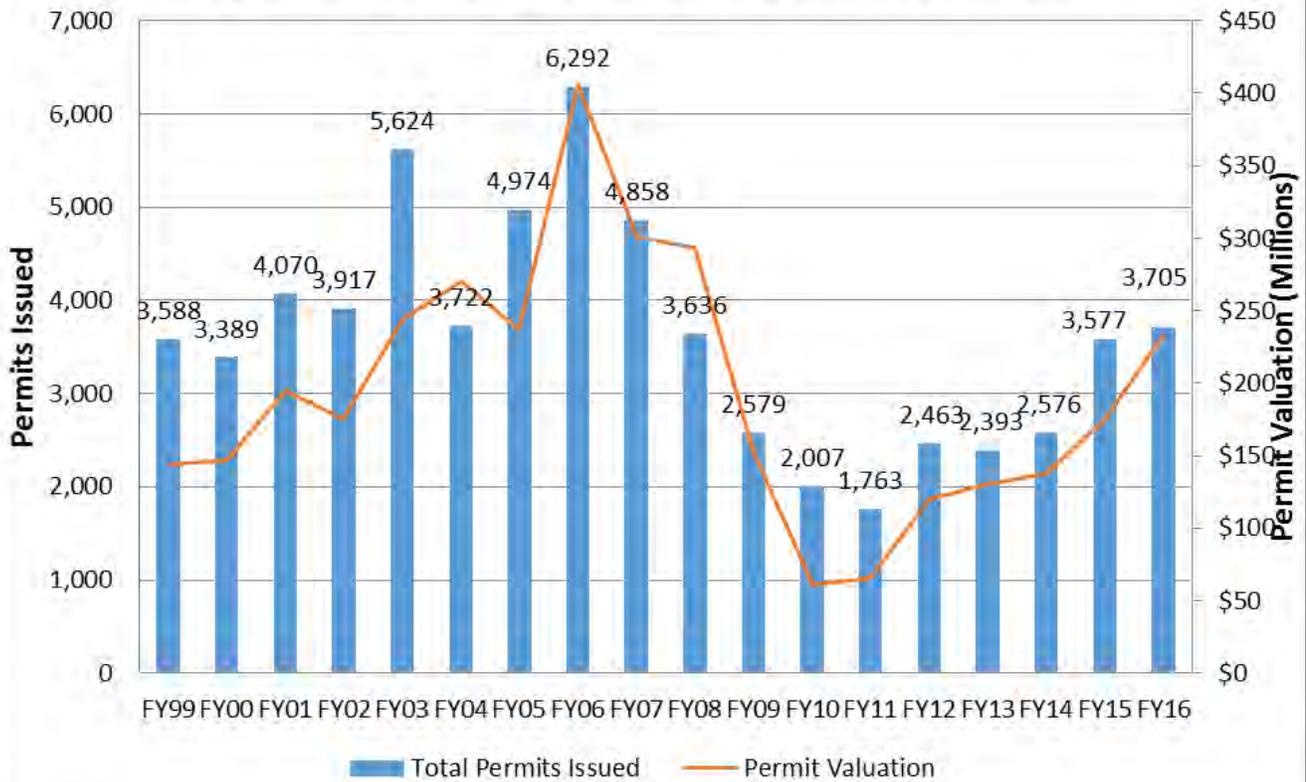
Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility (TMWRF) Operations department operates and maintains the sewer plant equipment, maintains computerized process control and management information systems for efficient operations of TMWRF to meet Nevada Department of Environmental Protection (NDEP) /Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) discharge permit requirements. **Support** functions perform laboratory analyses on treated water to ensure compliance with NDEP/EPA permit requirements.



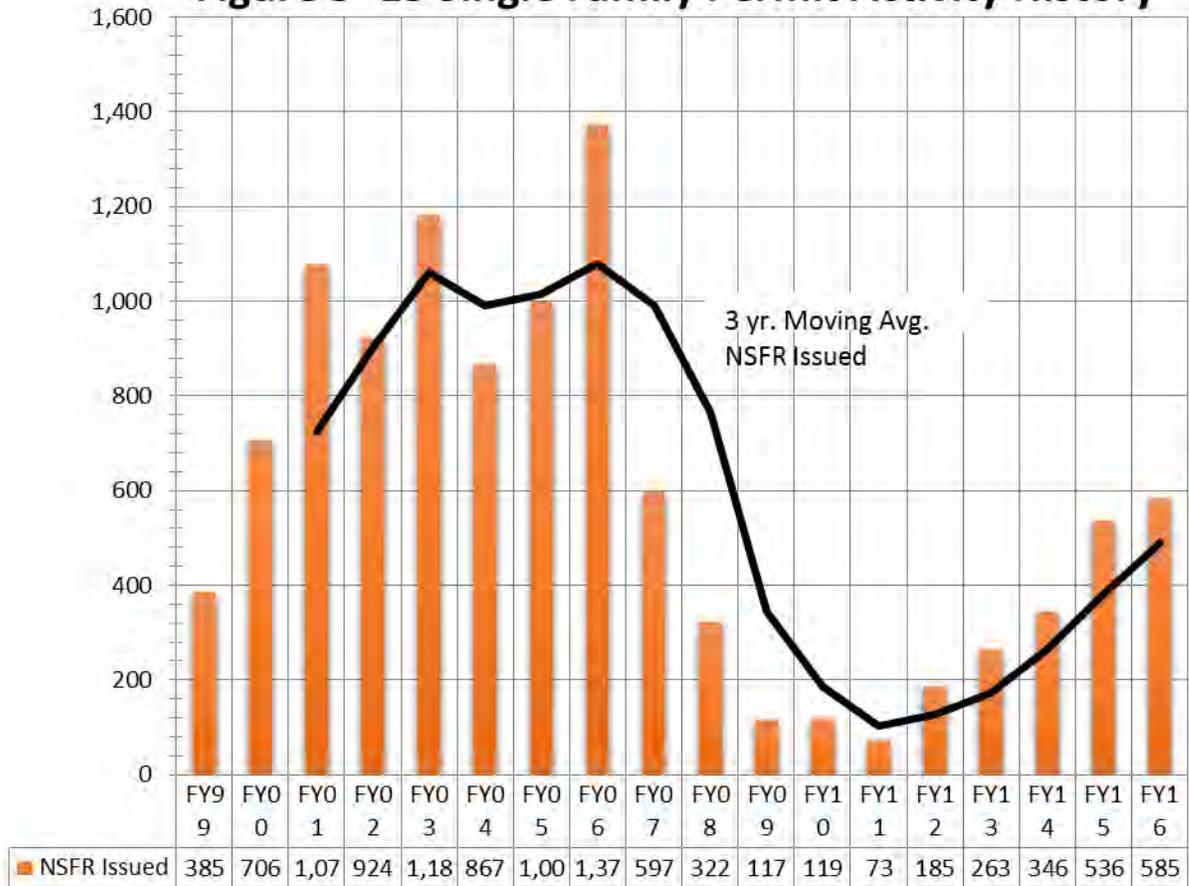
**Figure 3- 11 Planning Cases**



**Figure 3 - 12 Sparks Building Permit Activity**



**Figure 3- 13 Single Family Permit Activity History**



### Parks and Recreation Department

The City has an extensive parks system and offers a wide range of recreation programs for all ages and abilities, including sports leagues, sports camps, sports competitions, aquatics, art classes, dance, gymnastics, leisure and learning programs, youth watch programs, special events and more. The youth watch programs provide a social/recreational experience for children while they are out of school and include a before/after school Kid Konnection program, summer and holiday break programs, teen club, and Small Wonders Learning Centers for pre-school age children.

Sparks is well known regionally for its special events. The objective of events is to give the City of Sparks the opportunity to introduce or reinforce its brand through the promotion of tourism. Events deliver a positive economic impact and stimulate civic pride. Community Survey results revealed that Sparks citizens consider the provision of special events an important City function. Special events provide family activities year round with some dating back more than 25 years. Special events are offered at Victorian Square, Sparks Marina Park and the sports complexes at

Shadow Mountain and Golden Eagle Regional Park. The Recreation Division’s special events staff manages the production, marketing and sponsorship development of City-produced events. However, its main focus is to recruit events and coordinate the logistics and services for events produced by private promoters.

In June 2016, the City Council approved the establishment of an Arts and Culture Advisory Committee (ACAC). The vision for the ACAC is the development of a team of art experts and citizens to elicit public input for the creation of a five-year plan. Such a plan will guide all arts and culture activities on public property.



## Fire Protection

The Sparks Fire Department has two primary missions – reactive emergency response and proactive fire prevention. The Department’s Emergency Operations Division provides all-risk emergency response delivering the highest level of service to fire suppression, emergency medical service (EMS), rescue, and hazardous material incidents. The Department’s Fire Prevention Bureau supports the concept of fire prevention by providing education, inspection/enforcement, engineering, and fire investigative actions. Supporting the missions of these two divisions are the Training and Administration Divisions. The goal of each division is as follows:

### **Administration Division**

This division’s goal is to plan, administer, and coordinate the resources necessary to ensure the cost effective and efficient delivery of Fire Department services.



## **Emergency Operations Division**

Here the goal is to provide effective emergency and non-emergency services to the citizens and businesses of the City of Sparks in order to limit loss of life and reduce property damage.



### **Fire Prevention Bureau**

The Bureau's goal is to save lives and protect property through fire prevention safety education, inspection, fire investigation and engineering efforts.

### **Training Division**

This division plans, coordinates, and delivers training, certification programs, and

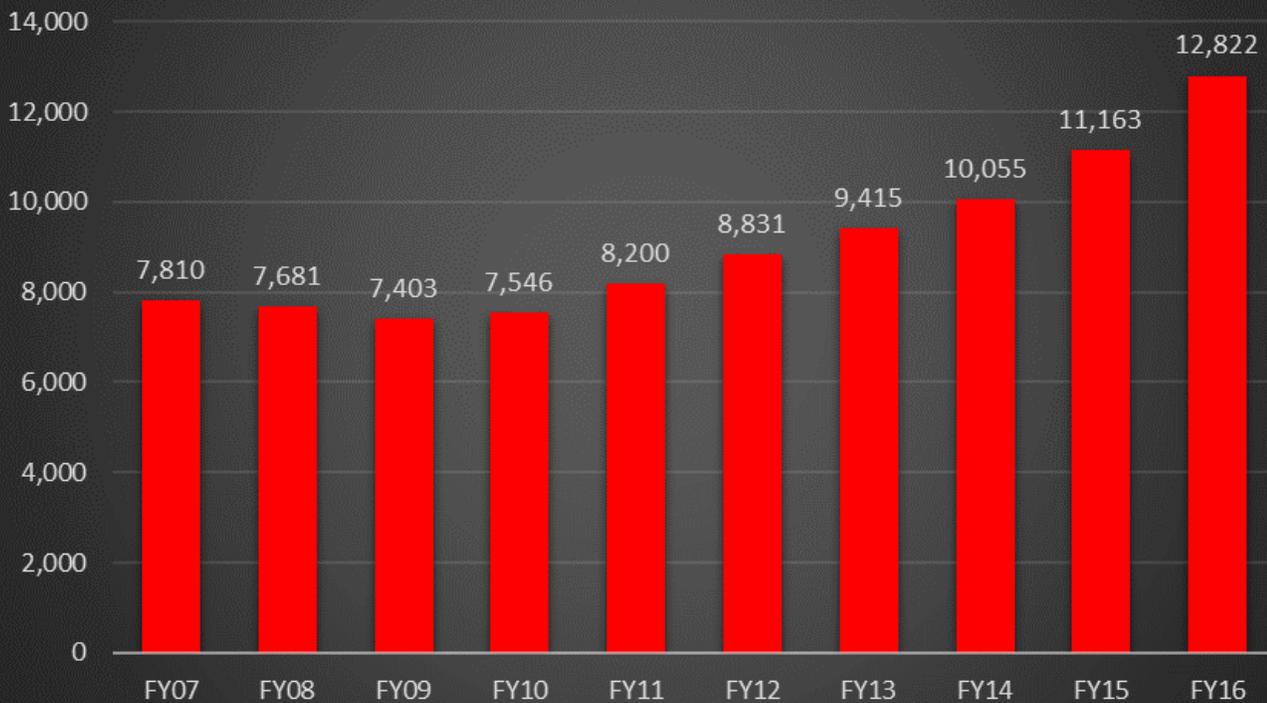
professional development to Sparks Fire Department employees so that they continue to provide safe and efficient fire, rescue, prevention and administrative services.

Eighty-nine personnel make up the Fire Department with 76 employees in Suppression, six in Prevention, three in Training, and four in Administration. All personnel in the Suppression and Prevention Divisions are trained to perform the duties of their specific rank through a task book certification process. The Department continues to certify all firefighters to the EMT-Advanced level and licenses its emergency response vehicles – engines, trucks, and brush trucks at the Intermediate Life Support level. The Department maintains four special teams: Technical Rescue, Water Rescue, Fire Investigation, and Regional Hazardous Material Response. Twelve employees are certified to serve as overhead personnel on wildfire Incident Management Teams and all members of the Fire Prevention Bureau are National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) Fire Investigator certified.

The Department strives to achieve a six-minute response time as standard for all Priority One emergencies. This standard has three components: a one-minute alarm-processing time in the dispatch center, a one-minute turn-out time, and a four-minute drive time. In fiscal year 2016, the Department responded to 12,822 emergency incidents, an increase of 14.9% over the previous fiscal year. Emergency medical responses represented the highest number of those calls for service at 10,352, or 80.7%.



### Figure 3 -14 Fire Protection Call Volume



#### Police Protection

The Sparks Police Department serves the community by protecting the safety of life, property and quality of life, and preventing crime. It is comprised of the Office of the Chief and three departmental divisions: Administration, Operations, and Investigations.

#### **The Office of the Chief**

This division consist of the Chief of Police, the Project Development Sergeant and an Administrative Assistant. The Office of the Chief is responsible for the overall operations of the police department. The Project Development Sergeant is responsible for grant management, policy and procedure development and special projects.



#### **Administration Division**

This division consists of a Communications Section, a Records Section, a Terminal Agency Coordinator and Information Technology. Division responsibilities include: dispatching emergency and non-emergency police, fire and medical calls for service; maintaining all official department records with organized filing, microfilming and imaging systems; performing data entry of all police reports, citations and investigations; providing technical support for the department's computer systems;

processing Department statistics, compiling and auditing each Uniform Crime Report (UCR); processing a variety of work permits and business license applications including but not limited to alcoholic beverage and gaming; performing data entry of all arrest warrants into the Sparks Police Records Management System (RMS), National Crime Information Center (NCIC), and Nevada Criminal Justice Information Services (NCJIS); providing a terminal agency coordination for the validation of all department warrants; listing missing/unidentified person records and stolen articles in NCIC and NCJIS; providing police assistance for facilitating citizen reports and referrals; and providing information technology support for all computer systems within the Department including but not limited to servers, mobile data computers, personal computers, Computer Aided Dispatch and Records Management Systems.

### **Operations Division**

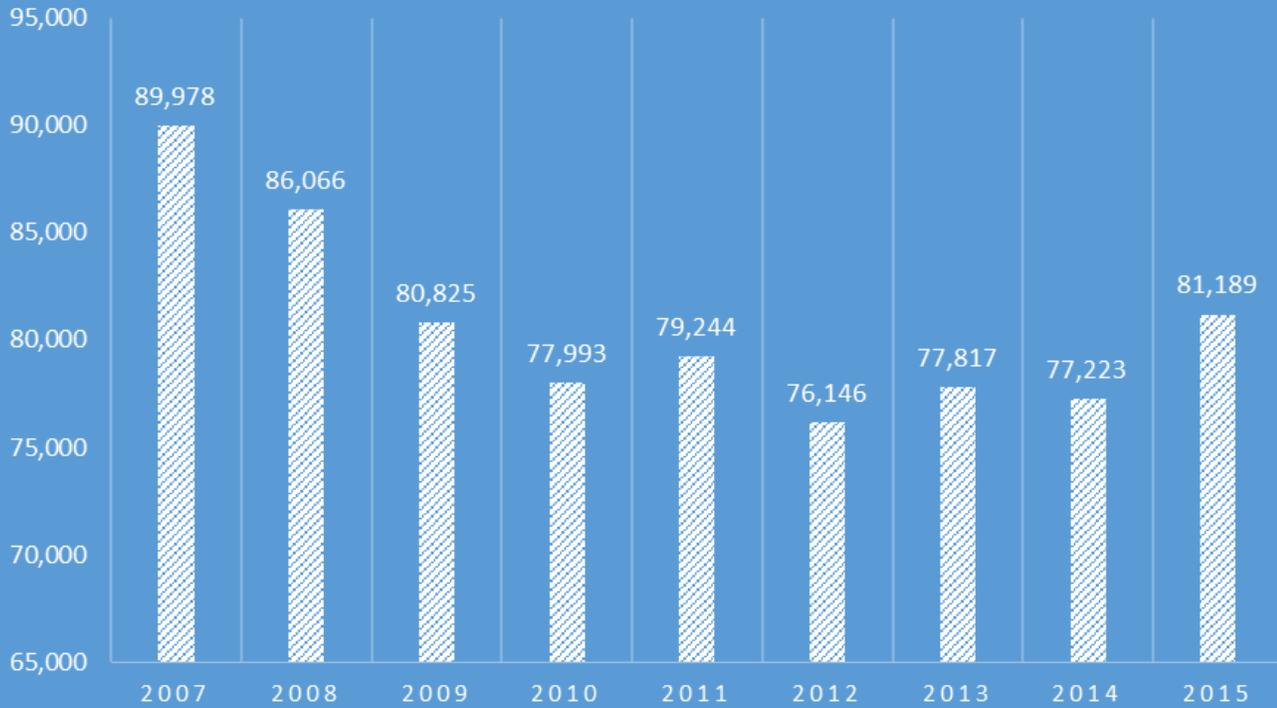
This Division consists of a Patrol Section, Traffic Section and Support Services Section. The Operations Division is responsible for: delivering uniformed police response to emergency and non-emergency calls for service; performing service delivery through a Community Policing Philosophy and proactive problem solving strategies including the ComStat model; providing specialized support activities to the department and community through special units such as SWAT, Regional Gang Unit, Consolidated Bomb Squad, K-9 Unit and Mounted Unit; coordinating and performing risk assessment of all special events in the City; providing safe streets and highways through enforcement of traffic laws and investigation of traffic accidents; coordinating mandatory and specialized annual police officer in-service training courses that meet the Nevada Commission on Peace Officers Standards and Training requirements; conducting thorough background investigations for police department applicants.

### **Investigations Division**

This includes a Detective Section, an Internal Affairs Section and a Property and Evidence Unit. It is responsible for: conducting criminal investigations, preparing cases for prosecution, and preparing weekly crime analysis reports; participating with the Regional Repeat Offender Program (ROP), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Task Force, the Interdiction Task Force through the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) Initiative, the Fugitive Investigative Strike Team through the HIDTA Initiative, the Regional Street Enforcement Team (SET) and the Regional Sex Offender Notification Unit (RSONU); providing appropriate supervisory levels that are consistent with commonly accepted span of control in unity of command standards and overseeing and managing the Property and Evidence Unit.



**FIGURE 3-15 POLICE DEPARTMENT CALLS**

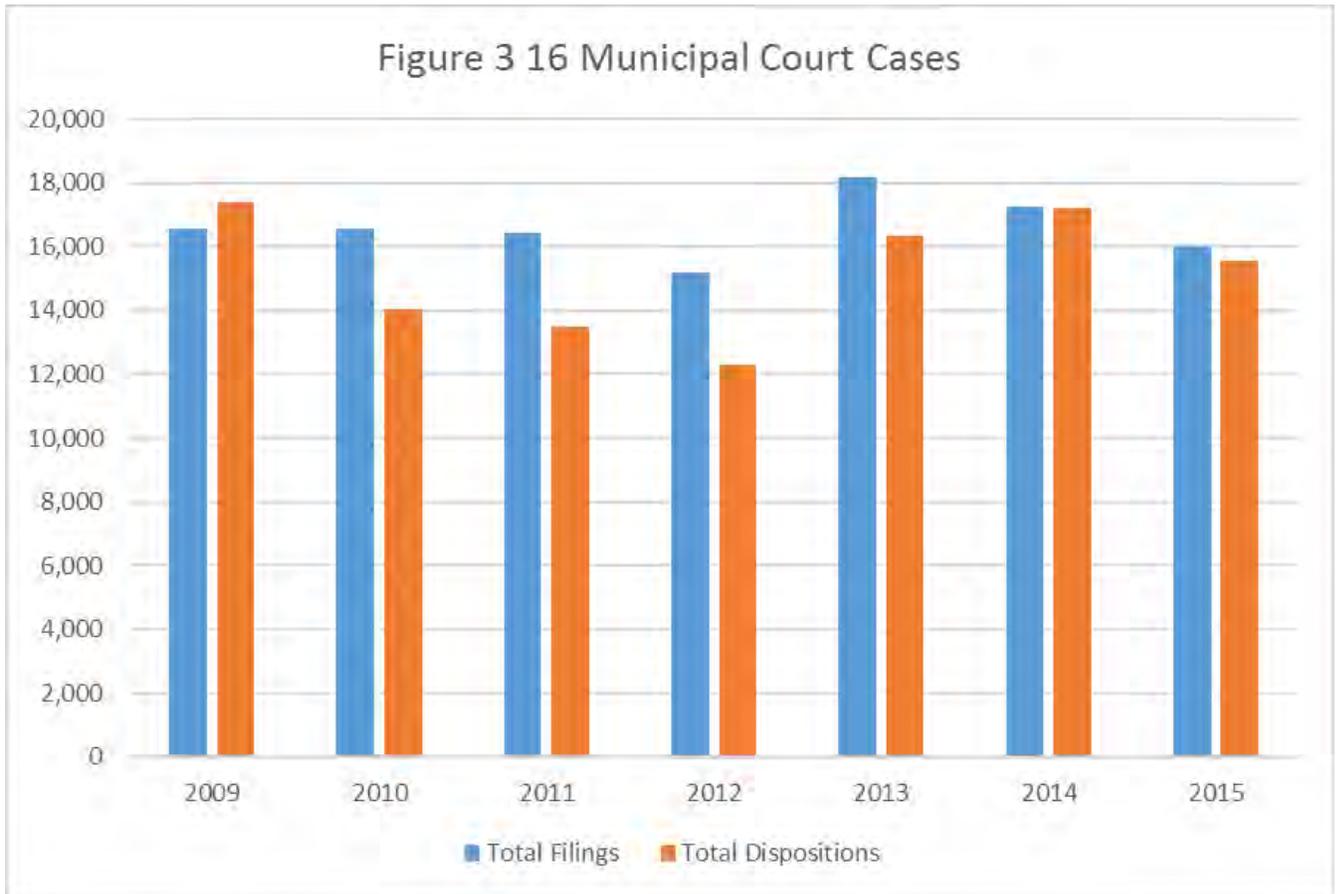


### Municipal Court

The Sparks Municipal Court adjudicates misdemeanor criminal cases issued by the Sparks Police Department and Sparks City Attorney’s Office. The Municipal Court System is comprised of two departments administered by two elected municipal judges. The judges preside over misdemeanor trials, in-court arraignments, video arraignments and alcohol and other drugs court.



Figure 3 16 Municipal Court Cases



## Infrastructure

### Roads and Traffic

Older parts of Sparks are served by a grid pattern of local, collector or arterial roadways, especially the areas located within the McCarran Boulevard ring road. The newer neighborhoods located north or east of the McCarran Boulevard ring road and into Spanish Springs Valley tend to be of curvilinear design. The City uses the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) classifications. Interstate 80 is classified as the only interstate highway passing through Sparks. Other principal arterials are Pyramid Way, Sparks Boulevard, Vista Boulevard south of Los Altos Parkway, Baring Boulevard, Prater Way, Oddie Boulevard, Glendale Avenue and McCarran Boulevard. NDOT classifies La Posada west of Cordoba Boulevard, Vista Boulevard north of Los Altos Parkway, Los Altos Parkway, Greg Street, Highland Ranch Parkway, El Rancho Drive, Sullivan Lane, Victorian Avenue, Glendale Avenue and Rock Boulevard as Minor Arterials. NDOT classifies 33 streets in Sparks as minor collectors. The City maintains approximately 320 miles of roadways and 107 traffic signals.

## Utilities

The City maintains three types of utilities pipe systems. The first is for reclaimed water, which provides treated water from the sewer treatment plant for re-use. Such water is used to irrigate golf courses, parks and streetscapes, and for construction dust control. The reclaimed water system substantially reduces the demand for domestic water used for irrigation. The system consists of 37.7 miles of pipeline in sizes ranging from 8 inches to 30 inches in diameter plus one 3.25-million-gallon storage tank. The main system was designed for an annual maximum delivery target of 6,700 acre-feet of water to be shared with the City of Reno. Pipeline materials are primarily ductile iron (50.6%) and PVC (49.2%).

The City's sanitary sewer system consists of 344.8 miles of pipeline ranging in size from 4 inches to 60 inches in diameter. Seventy-five percent of the pipes are 8 inches in size. Pipeline materials vary widely with the majority being PVC (52%). The system has seven sewage lift stations and two siphons. Generally, wastewater is collected through 8-inch pipes, which combine into larger trunk pipelines (12-inch to 15-inch). These flows are eventually conveyed by interceptor pipelines (18-inch and larger) which flow to the Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility (TMWRF). A single large interceptor conveys all of the wastewater generated by the City of Sparks beneath the Truckee River (to the west of Veteran's Parkway) and to TMWRF. This same interceptor also serves the City of Reno (for approximately 1/5 of its wastewater), the Sun Valley General Improvement District and unincorporated areas of Washoe County (Spanish Springs). The City is currently updating its sanitary sewer system model in order to evaluate the system's capacity.

The storm drain system is designed to capture precipitation runoff for flood control within the City. It consists of 247.3 miles of pipelines, ranging in size from 3 inches to 121 inches. The system typically uses inlets (catch basins and open-ended pipes) to collect storm runoff into the storm drain conveyance system. This conveyance system generally consists of a combination of open ditches, pipes, and box culverts to convey runoff to the Truckee River. Retention and detention facilities are used throughout the City to moderate and reduce storm runoff rates and provide water quality benefits. Three major flood storage facilities (Sun Valley Dam, Kiley Dam, and Kiley Wetlands Dam) are used to store runoff during major storm events.



## Facilities

### Truckee Meadows Wastewater Reclamation Facility (TMWRF)

Wastewater generated within the Truckee Meadows flows through a system of sewer lines to the Truckee Meadows Wastewater Reclamation Facility where it is treated and discharged to the Truckee River via Steamboat Creek. The plant is located on the east side of the Truckee Meadows on the south bank of the Truckee River, east of the Steamboat Creek. The facility, which began operation in 1966, is jointly owned by the cities of Sparks and Reno. Originally designed to treat 20 million gallons per day (MGD), the facility has been expanded several times to increase capacity as well as improve the treatment process. In the mid-1980s, nutrient loads from treated water returned to the Truckee River became a serious concern with regards to protecting indigenous threatened and endangered species that call the river home. TMWRF added major new treatment processes to remove more nitrogen and phosphorus from the wastewater, thus minimizing nutrient loading. The current capacity of the facility is 46 MGD. Average flow to TMWRF in 2015 was approximately 28 MGD. Approximately 25 MGD is returned to the Truckee River while 3 MGD of treated effluent is used for the irrigation of local parks, golf courses and the University of Nevada experimental farm.

The most restrictive discharge limit for the plant is the Total Nitrogen limit of 500 lbs/day. Plant staff is continuously investigating new processes and measures to improve TMWRF's ability to remove nitrogen from wastewater.



## Parks

Sparks has 613 acres of developed park land in the form of 48 parks and four greenbelts managed by the Parks and Recreation Department. Plans for future parks include four community parks (totaling approximately 72 acres), five neighborhood parks (18.6 acres) and a regional park (250 acres developed with a total of 270.4 acres to be improved). When complete, total park land will include 61 parks encompassing 828.9 acres.



## Alf Sorensen Community Center

Alf Sorensen Community Center has served citizens for more than 25 years, offering a gymnasium, indoor swimming pool, tot pool, fitness center and meeting rooms. It is located at 1400 Baring Boulevard. The pool is 25 yards in length and heated year round. The facility offers one one-meter diving board. All of the swimming activities are supervised by American Red Cross-certified lifeguards. The gymnasium is open for drop-in use during a variety of times throughout the week and hosts basketball and volleyball programs. The fitness center provides free weights and cardiovascular equipment for personalized workouts.



## Larry D. Johnson Community Center

The Larry D. Johnson Community Center, located at 1200 12th Street, officially opened its doors to the public in 2007. It is named for fallen Sparks police officer Larry D. Johnson, who lost his life in 1995 in the line of duty. The facility features a modern design with plenty of natural light, with two multi-purpose rooms, a Mt. Rose Fitness Center, a teen drop-in center called The Club and a dance/aerobic room.



The Parks and Recreation Department has collaborated with the Boys and Girls Club of Truckee Meadows to provide the 1,900 square-foot, second floor teen drop-in center. Teens have access to special programs and an area for playing pool, working out and interacting with other members. The Club also contains a computer lab and a quiet area for homework.

Phase one construction the \$4.5 million project began in June 2006. Two additional phases will be built when the funds become available. In 2009, a solar photovoltaic system was installed to assist in reducing the center's energy consumption. The system generates an estimated 29 kilowatts per hour.

## Parks and Recreation Administrative Building

The City's Parks Administrative Offices are located at 98 Richards Way. These offices are located on a nearly five-acre parcel which includes a gymnasium and a 5.4-acre neighborhood park with a playground, basketball courts, NEOS 360 electronic game and picnic facilities. The office building is 3,566 square feet and was built in 1964.

## City Hall

Sparks City Hall is located on a four-acre property at 431 Prater Way, on the southwest corner of Prater Way and Fourth Street. City Hall was originally constructed on this site in 1965 consisting of 13,840 square feet of office space. In 1979 the buildings were expanded and connected with an additional 19,316 square feet. The current assessor's records show the total square footage at 37,101 square feet, not including the basement area. In 2011 City Hall was remodeled to consolidate employees by relocating Community Services staff and eliminating leased space. The City Hall complex houses the following departments or functions:

- Council Chambers
- Manager’s Office
- Clerk’s Office
- Management Services
- City Attorney’s Office
- Financial Services
- Community Services

The existing City Hall can accommodate these departments, however, projected regional growth suggests there will eventually come a need for more staff. For planning purposes, City staff are conducting a needs assessment.



## Fire Stations

The Sparks Fire Department serves the City from five fire stations. Fire Station 1 serves as the headquarters to the Department and is located at 1605 Victorian Avenue. The station was constructed in 1982, and is approximately 25,000 square feet in size, consisting of a basement and three above-ground stories. The Administration, Fire Prevention Bureau, and Training Division are located there, as are the Shift Commander, two engine companies and one truck/aerial company. Other apparatus includes a reserve truck and engine, a brush truck, a heavy rescue van and trailer, and two inflatable boats for water rescue.

Station 2 is located at 2900 N. Truckee Lane. This building was constructed in 1974 and is 5,012 square feet in size. One engine company is located there, as are a reserve engine and a brush truck.

Station 3 is located at 1750 E. Greg Street. Constructed in 1988, this building is 6,653 square feet in size. One engine company is located there, as is a Hazardous Materials Tractor/Trailer, the response vehicle for the department’s Regional Hazardous Material Response Team.

Station 4 is located at 1450 Disc Drive. This building was constructed in 1997 and is 8,414 square feet in size. One engine company is located there and operates Ladder 41, a Quint (combination pumper and aerial) apparatus. A reserve engine and brush truck are also housed there.

Station 5 is located at 6490 Vista Boulevard. Constructed in 2005, this building is 8,480 square feet in size. One engine company is located there, along with a reserve engine, a brush truck, and a 3400-gallon tender.

Stations 4 and 5 have supplemental 30 kilowatts per-hour photovoltaic systems.

## Police Station

The Sparks Police Station is located at 1701 E. Prater Way on a property just over six acres. The station building is two stories with a basement and total square footage of 38,987 square feet. The Police Department first occupied the building in 1992. More recently, the City installed a carport-top solar photovoltaic system which generates an estimated 300 kilowatts per hour.

## Corporation Yard

The Corporation Yard located at 215 S. 21<sup>st</sup> Street is the storage and maintenance facility for the City's operations. Numerous buildings occupy its 4.9-acre site. The City's trucks and other heavy equipment are stored at the Corporation Yard. The yard houses vehicle and equipment repairs operations, shops handling electrical repairs and woodworking, and the storage of spare parts and materials. This location is the headquarters for parks, street repair and electrical maintenance crews. City vehicles can also be refueled there. The City's needs and functions are well served at the Corporation Yard and it is anticipated that this facility will serve the City adequately through the foreseeable future. The City has a satellite maintenance yard located in Golden Eagle Regional Park.



## Municipal Court

The Municipal Court is located at 1450 C Street in a 10,311 square-foot building constructed in 1982. The facility is anticipated to adequately serve the City's needs into the foreseeable future.



## Public Services: Not Administrated by the City

### Schools

The public school system is operated by the Washoe County School District (WCSD), an independent public body governed by an elected board of trustees. The WCSD operates schools in Reno, Sparks and unincorporated areas of Washoe County.

Within the City are the following schools and shown below is the approximate 2015–2016 enrollment along with school capacity:

**Table 3- 1 Elementary Schools**

School	Enrollment (2015 – 2016 )	Capacity
Bud Beasley	817	781
Lloyd Diedrichsen	403	531
Florence Drake	296	512
Katherine Dunn	522	639
Greenbrae	409	392
Lena Juniper	484	603
Lincoln Park	409	496
Alice Maxwell	593	496
Robert Mitchell	430	392
Marvin Moss	587	718
Agnes Risley	482	530
Sepulveda	793	701
Kate Smith	320	278
Van Gorder	791	750
Jerry Whitehead	492	531
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,828</b>	<b>8,350</b>

**Table 3-2 Middle Schools**

School	Enrollment (2015 – 2016 )	Capacity
Reed	2,075	1827
Portion of Spanish Springs	2,319 (includes more than Sparks students)	1910
Sparks	1,217	1,325
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,611</b>	<b>5,062</b>

**Table 3-3 High Schools**

School	Enrollment (2015 – 2016 )	Capacity
Reed	2,075	1827
Portion of Spanish Springs	2,319 (includes more than Sparks students)	1910
Sparks	1,217	1,325
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,611</b>	<b>5,062</b>

There are 15 elementary schools, four middle schools and three high schools serving the students of Sparks. Based on estimated enrollment for the 2016-2017 school year, there were 7,969 elementary school students, 3,397 middle school students and 5,681 high school students. Looking at school capacity, seven elementary schools exceeded capacity while overall elementary school enrollment is 381 students below the combined capacity of those schools. Two middle schools and two high schools exceeded capacity. Dilworth Middle School and Sparks High School have enrollment figures below capacity. For 2015-2016 there were a total of 16,877 students attending all Sparks schools. Not all school-age children attend public schools so these numbers do not include students attending charter schools, School District specialty schools, home schooling or private schools.

The School District does not anticipate new construction of schools to serve Sparks in the near future. Facility planning and school zoning is managed by the School District.

## Libraries

Two libraries serve the City of Sparks. The Sparks Library opened its doors in January of 1932 at its first location on B Street (now Victorian Avenue). It later moved to its current location near Oddie Boulevard and 12th Street in Sparks. Mendive Community Library became the fifth and last partnership library in Washoe County when it opened in 1995, serving the East Sparks community until 2008 when the library closed due to budget constraints. In 2005, the Spanish Springs Library opened in the Lazy 5 Regional Park on the Pyramid Highway.

Sparks Library is a large full-service library located in the heart of Sparks and is the busiest in the Washoe County Library System for materials checked out. Located at 1125 12th St., the library is 23,000 square feet with approximately 145,000 items. It provides wireless computer access, 20 public stations and word processors, one Express Station, test proctoring, a large DVD and audio-book collection, 24-hour book return, and specialized collections of auto repair and Rail City books. Spanish Springs Library is located at 7100 Pyramid Highway. It is an octagonal building with open spaces set off by a 64-foot ceiling over an atrium, comfortable seating and twenty-eight public-access computers. The atmosphere is enhanced by comfortable seating and a cozy fireplace. The

30,000 square-foot building was funded by a 2000 bond issue that Washoe County voters passed for libraries, parks, trails and open spaces. Library features include free Wi-Fi, a drive-through service point for picking up and dropping off materials; Nell J. Redfield Foundation Young People's Library with a unique oversized stack of books; a teen zone containing six of the 28 public-access computers and an area for group study and projects; and E.L. Cord community meeting rooms. Self-serve features include express check-out, the picking up of items on hold, online registration for library privileges and printing.

These two libraries adequately serve the needs of the Sparks. It is anticipated no new libraries will be constructed. Facility planning is by Washoe County Library Board of Trustees.

## Water

Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) provides water service for the City of Sparks. TMWA is a not-for-profit, community-owned water utility overseen by elected officials and citizen appointees from Reno, Sparks and Washoe County. The seven-member Board of Directors consists of three representatives from the City of Reno, two from the City of Sparks and two from Washoe County. TMWA is responsible for water treatment, availability and delivery of high-quality drinking water. It was created in June 2001 through a Joint Powers Authority between the cities of Reno and Sparks, and Washoe County.

The water supply derives from a mix of surface water and groundwater sources. The Truckee River provides surface water which is treated at the Chalk Bluff or Glendale treatment plants before distribution into the system. Surface water is stored in upstream reservoirs and includes Lake Tahoe, Boca and Stampede Reservoirs, Independence Lake and Donner Lake. Groundwater is pumped from wells throughout the service area.

The total water storage capacity of the system is 131 million gallons. TMWA's 20-Year Facility Plan (currently spanning 2010-2030) identifies all new facilities that will be required to accommodate future growth within the Truckee Meadows. New developments pay for the full cost of new facilities and the fees collected from developers cover the costs of new water mains, pumps and tanks, plus expansion of water treatment plants. It is the responsibility of TMWA to plan, establish water resource public policies, provide residences and businesses of Sparks with high-quality water and keep the distribution system functioning.



## Electricity and Natural Gas

Electricity is provided to the citizens of Sparks by NV Energy which has been serving northern Nevada and northeastern California for over 150 years. NV Energy was the result of a 2008 merger between Sierra Pacific Power (serving northern portions of the state and northeastern California) and Nevada Power (serving southern portions of the state). The merger created one energy company serving 93% of Nevada. NV Energy has a service territory of 46,000 square miles or approximately 2.4 million customers throughout Nevada and northeastern California.

Northern Nevada's energy needs date back more than 150 years with the discovery of gold and silver deposits on Virginia City's Comstock Lode. Electrical generation for the ensuing mining operations started with three hydroelectric plants built along the Truckee River. These three hydroelectric plants are still in operation today. As the mines prospered and people moved to the state, the demand for electricity grew. In 1928, electricity was purchased from other utilities and was imported to northern Nevada over high-voltage electric transmission lines. In 1963, Sierra Pacific Power Company began constructing its own natural gas and oil-fired power plants, reducing its dependence on imported power. Later in the 1980s, coal-fired generation was added to the system.

Today, NV Energy customers are served by a combination of imported power and electricity produced by the company's power plants. In 2006-2008, the company expanded capacity to 2800 MW, double its previous capacity.

NV Energy is actively involved and in and committed to adding renewable energy generation facilities to its system. It currently operates 20 geothermal projects, 13 solar projects, five biomass projects, six hydroelectric projects, one wind project and one waste heat recovery project. More than 157,142 customers in the Reno-Sparks area receive natural gas supplied by NV Energy, made possible by the construction of a natural gas pipeline delivering fuel to the Tracy Power Plant east of Sparks. NV Energy does the planning, expansion and maintenance of their facilities as regulated by the State of Nevada Public Utility Commission.

## Telecommunications

These days the primary means of communication for businesses, households and individuals is via telecommunications. Telecommunication is divided into four main sectors: wired, wireless, satellite and other establishments. The largest sector of the telecommunication industry continues to be wired telecommunications. This sector mainly provides wired (landline) telephone, digital subscriber line (DSL) and cable TV. The telecommunications industry routes TV, voice, data and other content over a network of wires and cables. They own and maintain their own networks; however, they do

not create the content (such as TV programs) transmitted over the networks. The main telecommunications companies serving Sparks are Charter and AT&T. Charter provides TV and telephone. AT&T provides TV, telephone and wireless telephone. Cellular or wireless phone services are provided by numerous carriers within Sparks. Planning, expansion and maintenance of telecommunications networks are the responsibility of individual providers.

## Solid Waste

The City of Sparks executed an exclusive franchise agreement with Waste Management in 2008. The franchise agreement calls for the collection and disposal of garbage within the City limits including a curbside recycling program. Per Section 7.12.030 of the Sparks Municipal Code, "All persons residing in the city in a single-family dwelling, all owners or managers of multiple-family dwellings, all business establishments, and all public buildings shall subscribe to the collection, hauling and disposal of solid waste." Waste Management is the only company permitted by the Washoe County Health Department to haul garbage.

Garbage is defined as putrescible animal and vegetable waste resulting from the handling, storage, preparation, cooking, and sale and serving of food and beverages, plus infectious waste as defined by Washoe County District Health. Garbage is disposed of in the Lockwood Regional Landfill, located in the East Truckee Canyon east of Sparks. The landfill, at 555 acres, receives an estimated 2,200 tons of waste per working day from northern Nevada and California. The recycling transfer station for the Truckee Meadows is located on Greg Boulevard in Sparks. Residential curbside recycling is included in garbage collection rates while the service is optional for commercial and industrial businesses. Curbside recycling includes collection of aluminum, plastic, glass and newspapers. Waste Management is responsible for projecting the needs of their customers and managing the Lockwood Regional Landfill.

## Health Care

Northern Nevada Medical Center, located east of Vista Boulevard at 2375 East Prater way, is the only full-service hospital located in Sparks. It is a 100-bed acute care hospital owned and operated by a subsidiary of Universal Health Services, Inc., one of the largest healthcare management companies in the nation. Two other full-service hospitals serve the Truckee Meadows – Renown Health/Renown Regional Medical Center operates three emergency rooms, three acute care hospitals and a rehabilitation hospital, totaling 946 licensed beds located in the City of Reno. Renown Health is a privately-owned, not-for-profit, integrated health network. Renown operates two urgent care facilities in Sparks – at 910 Vista Boulevard and 202 Los Altos Parkway. Approved in Phase 3 of the planned development known as Kiley Ranch North is a medical campus with potential build-out of a 300 bed hospital and 240,000 square feet of medical office and associated spaces.

Saint Mary’s Medical Center, also located in Reno, is at 235 West Sixth Street. It is a 390-bed full-service hospital owned by Prime Healthcare. Saint Mary’s operates an urgent care facility in Sparks at 5070 Ion Drive.

Ambulance service is provided by REMSA (Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority), a consolidated emergency transportation service created in 1986. REMSA’s mandate is to respond to life-threatening emergencies within 8 minutes at least 90% of the time. It operates both ground services and a fleet of four helicopter ambulances. REMSA is funded through user fees with no taxpayer or government subsidies. The District Board of Health oversees REMSA. Generally, the Sparks Fire Department is the first responder to medical emergencies within the City. While department staff do not transport patients, they provide prompt on-site emergency medical treatment before REMSA provides transport.





# CHAPTER FOUR

## FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE

# CHAPTER FOUR: FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE

This Comprehensive Plan reflects the community’s vision and is organized into seven topics referred to collectively as the Policy Framework. Each topic, addressed in sections within this chapter, contains a narrative plus goals and policies. This approach utilizes the Policy Framework to promote the Sparks Comprehensive Plan holistically, making it a wide-ranging plan rather than a collection of individual elements. The seven topics are:

- Managing Growth
- Connectivity
- Community Facilities and Services
- Community Character
- Housing and Affordability
- Resiliency and Sustainability
- Economic Vitality

## Managing Growth

Sparks’ population is projected to grow from 93,581 in 2016 to 116,629 in 2036. Public outreach community survey results indicate that residents desire managed growth and maintenance of the City’s current “small town feel.” A majority of survey respondents want development focused in existing areas while leaving areas surrounding the city boundaries for open spaces and/or parks. They want a vibrant Victorian Square area with a mix of uses including housing, shopping, dining and special events. How Sparks manages growth affects the character of the community’s neighborhoods, its traffic, the City’s financial condition and the ability of the City and other public agencies to provide public services, facilities and amenities. Conversely, how the City chooses to invest in public infrastructure will affect the pattern and timing of growth.

## Land Use and Development

A city with a balanced land use pattern provides an adequate inventory of land for employment, as well as for diverse housing, recreational opportunities and commercial services. A balanced land use pattern promotes longevity and economic endurance.

The Sparks Land Use Plan represents the City’s official position on the development of public and private lands within the City and its Sphere of Influence. Land use planning allows the City to manage population growth, guide commercial and industrial development, mitigate environmental impacts and plan for public services and infrastructure. Land use goals and policies aim to provide for the efficient use of land and resources, encourage infill and redevelopment, foster economic vitality and facilitate multi-modal transportation between land uses. In addition to addressing land use within Sparks, the policies set herein provide criteria for evaluating the potential expansion of Sparks’ city limits.

This section includes goals and policies for managing growth. The tables describing land use within the Land Use Plan assign all properties in the City to one of the categories located at the end of this chapter. From a previous count of 61 Land Use Categories there are now 14 designations plus 6 Mixed Use Development (MUD) land use designations. The 14 designations are broader in nature allowing a greater range of residential densities and primary uses. Provided in Tables 1-5 are descriptions of the new land use designations. For each land use designation, the tables identify: the density and intensity of development; primary allowed uses; other or secondary uses; and the general characteristics of that land use designation. The fourth column of these tables identifies how the former city land use designations convert to the new land use categories. The land use conversions represent land use designations that are similar in density, intensity and general characteristics to the adopted map. The last column is the Zoning District associated with the land use category.

## Mixed Use District

The Mixed Use District (MUD) contains many key City attractions including Victorian Square, city government and administrative offices, the Sparks Marina and a significant amount of retail and employment activity, including the Nugget Casino Resort. While geographically small, the area is very diverse. The MUD is envisioned as the heart of civic engagement, entertainment and employment, representing the City’s past, present and future in an integrated and active environment. Quality building design, active civic spaces and coordinated transportation systems combine to offer residents and visitors a high-quality experience that defines and highlights Sparks within the region.

The 2012 Truckee Meadows Regional Plan requires that local jurisdictions define such mixed use corridors where higher land use densities and intensities are expected. This helps to determine planning and maintenance of logical extensions of transit service. Sparks initially adopted the Transit Oriented Development corridor (now known as Mixed Use District) in 2002, until a more thorough effort provided design standards for approval in 2009. This was further refined through a significant zoning code update in 2014. Through all of these processes Sparks maintained four distinct districts as well as an “Employment” designation for a portion of one district and the downtown center within another.

The **Mixed Use Commercial** district primarily coincides with designated activity centers and should contain a mix of integrated, pedestrian-friendly uses (such as retail, offices and residential). Its development and design standards emphasize pedestrian comfort and safety and include direct pedestrian and bicycle linkages to adjacent neighborhoods. Mixed-Use Commercial areas should contain a mix of integrated, pedestrian friendly uses, such as restaurants with outdoor spaces, plazas, and walkable retail streets. This district includes properties with an **Employment** designation.

The **Mixed Residential** district includes development with a residential emphasis where site size, visibility or access constraints may limit the feasibility of a concentrated activity center such as in between activity center nodes or where existing multi-family neighborhoods exist. Mixed Residential regulations encourage a broad mix of housing types and connections to surrounding neighborhoods and activity centers. These areas are oriented to provide direct access to adjacent transit corridors, adjacent neighborhoods and activity centers.

**Sparks' Downtown**, more commonly known as Victorian Square, is a district that includes a range of retail, employment, casino, civic and entertainment uses along with a variety of medium to high-density housing types. Retail and commercial uses should be concentrated at the street level within the **Downtown Sparks Center**, along Victorian Avenue, and in other locations where high levels of activity are desired. Residential units and office spaces are generally concentrated above retail uses.

**Residential Neighborhood** applies to established neighborhoods that will evolve to include a mix of single and multi-family housing types over time. There will be infill and redevelopment activity which will include more density and intensity.

The **Mixed Use District's** boundaries are defined in the Land Use Map that follows. The map also defines a series of activity centers at various locations within the MUD area. Activity centers are compact, mixed-use areas that offer pedestrian and transit-friendly environments for people to shop, work, live and gather. Given the relatively low-intensity and single use patterns of development within the MUD area today, these activity centers make ideal locations for targeting future infill and reinvestment activity as well as future rapid transit stations.

Major activity centers are designated where more intensive patterns of development or concentration of activity are planned or are currently in play (e.g., Downtown, Sparks Marina), or where the opportunity exists to transition current uses to a more transit-oriented pattern of development over time (e.g., McCarran and Prater Way). In several cases, major activity centers are distinguished by a consolidated pattern of ownership that may enhance future redevelopment opportunities. Major activity centers are larger in scale and intensity and are generally intended to serve both the immediate neighborhood and surrounding community. In some cases, major activity centers are a regional draw, particularly where visible from I-80. Although sizes may vary, a general range of 30-60 acres is appropriate. Seven major activity centers are identified on the Land Use Map.

Minor activity centers are designated where a concentration of activity is desired to serve a surrounding neighborhood, but available land is limited. Minor activity centers provide an opportunity to transition current uses to a more transit-oriented pattern of development over time, though on a smaller scale than with major activity centers. Minor activity centers are smaller in scale and intensity and are intended to primarily serve the immediate neighborhood. Size will vary based on availability of land and the surrounding neighborhood context. A general range of 15-30 acres in size is appropriate; in some instances, minor activity centers may be as small as 3-5 acres.

## Other Considerations

The Comprehensive Plan and the Land Use Map must comply with the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan. Land use designations establish uses for all the areas within Sparks' municipal boundaries and its Sphere of Influence (SOI). The boundaries of the SOI conform to current Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Maps. In conformance with the Regional Plan, this Comprehensive Plan promotes infill development, redevelopment of the older sections of the City, and higher densities within the Mixed Use District. It defines the downtown center and encourages preservation and revitalization of neighborhoods.

There are two Cooperative Planning Areas: West Pyramid Area and a section east of Cimarron East (off La Posada Drive). The Regional Plan identifies Cooperative Areas as "areas within the Truckee Meadows where more than one jurisdiction has an interest in the density, intensity, or character of development ..." The criteria for Cooperative Planning is specified in an agreement between the City of Sparks and Washoe County. For reference, the 2012 Regional Plan Map 7 depicts areas subject to cooperative planning.

The Regional Plan defines Emerging Employment Centers (EEC) as "areas to be identified in local government master plans where rapid employment growth is currently occurring or planned, and areas where job centers are needed to provide a jobs-housing balance within the region." Emerging Employment Centers are generally areas located where large tracts of undeveloped land are available for new employment development. In Sparks, the Spanish Springs EEC is located generally north of Los Altos Parkway and its extension to Pyramid Highway, and a minimum one-half mile south of La Posada Drive. The East Sparks EEC is generally located north of 1-80, east of Sparks Boulevard, south of Prater Way, and generally located within two miles of Vista Boulevard.



# Managing Growth Goals and Policies

## Goals

- ◆ Goal MG1: Support economic vitality by providing a non-residential land use base.
- ◆ Goal MG2: Foster diversity in the land use mix including residential, commercial, industrial, employment and recreational areas citywide.
- ◆ Goal MG3: Maintain a land use plan which integrates land uses and facilitates access by multiple modes of transportation.
- ◆ Goal MG4: Facilitate infill and redevelopment.
- ◆ Goal MG5: Prioritize development and enhancement of the Downtown Sparks Center.
- ◆ Goal MG6: Promote compact development to reduce the per capita cost of providing infrastructure, public facilities and public services

## Policies

- Policy MG1: The Land Use Plan will provide for a diverse and integrated mix of residential and non-residential land uses which, in the aggregate, are fiscally positive.
- Policy MG2: Maintain the area south of Interstate 80 for industrial, office and commercial uses.
- Policy MG3: Retain and promote emerging employment centers.
- Policy MG4: Maintain an adequate supply of land for employment-generating uses.
- Policy MG5: When reviewing master plan amendments for sites over five acres, the City will evaluate or cause to be evaluated: a) the impacts on existing and planned public facilities and infrastructure; b) the impacts on existing and planned public services; c) the proposed land use in relationship to existing land uses; and, d) the fiscal implications for public service providers of the proposed land use changes as documented in a fiscal impact analysis.
- Policy MG6: Maintain a current Seven Year Annexation Program.

- Policy MG7: When reviewing annexation requests, the City will consider whether the proposed annexation: a) is included in the City’s Seven Year Annexation Program; b) is needed for the City’s growth within seven years; c) represents a logical extension of city limits; d) allows for efficient and cost effective provision of public services and capital facilities; and e) would be fiscally positive for a period of at least 20 years. When reviewing land use entitlements (e.g., master plan amendments, zone changes, tentative maps, conditional use permits) for land annexed within the previous 10-year period, the City may require an updated fiscal analysis if the proposed development materially varies from the development contemplated in the fiscal analysis prepared for the annexation.
- Policy MG8: When identifying lands for expansion of the City’s Sphere of Influence, the City must determine that the proposed expansion: a) represents a logical expansion of the City’s Sphere of Influence; b) is located within the Truckee Meadows Service Area (TMSA) as identified in the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan, or could reasonably be added to the TMSA; c) could be efficiently and cost effectively provided capital facilities and public services. The City’s determination will be based on preliminary infrastructure and facilities plans and a fiscal analysis addressing the cost of providing city services.
- Policy MG9: Promote compact development to reduce the number of miles of roads, sidewalks, sewers and other infrastructure needed per capita and to manage the geographic area to which the City and other public agencies must provide services such as police and fire protection, emergency medical services and code enforcement.
- Policy MG10: Facilitate infill, redevelopment and functionally-integrated mixed-use development through targeted infrastructure improvements, additional zoning code amendments (if necessary) and, when feasible and appropriate, public/private partnerships. The identified activity centers on the Land Use Map will promote a broad mix of uses.



- Policy MG11: Require new infill development to consider and be sensitive to the character of existing neighborhoods in regard to zoning, building mass, structure placement, height transitions, landscaping, streetscape, access and other physical features of the existing neighborhood.
- Policy MG12: Encourage reinvestment in existing employment centers such as the area south of Interstate 80 and the Prater Way, Victorian Avenue and Oddie Boulevard corridors.
- Policy MG13: Work with the Union Pacific Railroad to plan for compatible development adjacent to railroad facilities.
- Policy MG14: Work with Reno-Tahoe International Airport to enhance the compatibility of existing and proposed uses located within noise contours and airplane approaches to the airport.
- Policy MG15: Continue to implement the Victorian Square Development Plan as it may be amended.
- Policy MG16: Enhance Victorian Avenue west of the Downtown Sparks Center.



# Connectivity

The Connectivity Section of the Comprehensive Plan identifies how the City of Sparks wants to move people and goods. This system considers numerous modes of transportation including but not limited to pedestrians, bicycles, busses, and autos. The system focuses on providing the community with travel options that are safe and efficient.

Importance needs to be placed on the incorporation of these modes on all arterial roadway networks in the City of Sparks. Connecting neighborhoods, recreation, schools, employment and shopping create vibrant areas and encourage social interaction. Consideration and incorporation of these modes also can increase access to the outdoors making the City a healthier place to live.

The City of Sparks is connected to the western United States by U.S. Highway 395, Interstate 80, the Reno-Tahoe International Airport and the Union Pacific Railroad. There are six interchanges in Sparks: Vista Boulevard, Sparks Boulevard, McCarran Boulevard, Pyramid Way, Rock Boulevard, and Prater Way. The Union Pacific Railroad is one of America's leading transportation companies. Its main tracks run east and west through the City of Sparks which serves as one of Union Pacific's main rail yards. Amtrak, with a station in downtown Reno, also utilizes these tracks.

The Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County (RTC) provides public transit in Sparks. Sparks' main transit station is at Centennial Plaza in Victorian Square. RTC's bus routes include but are not limited to service to the Industrial area, Northern Nevada Medical Center, Prater Way, Reed High School and Victorian Avenue.

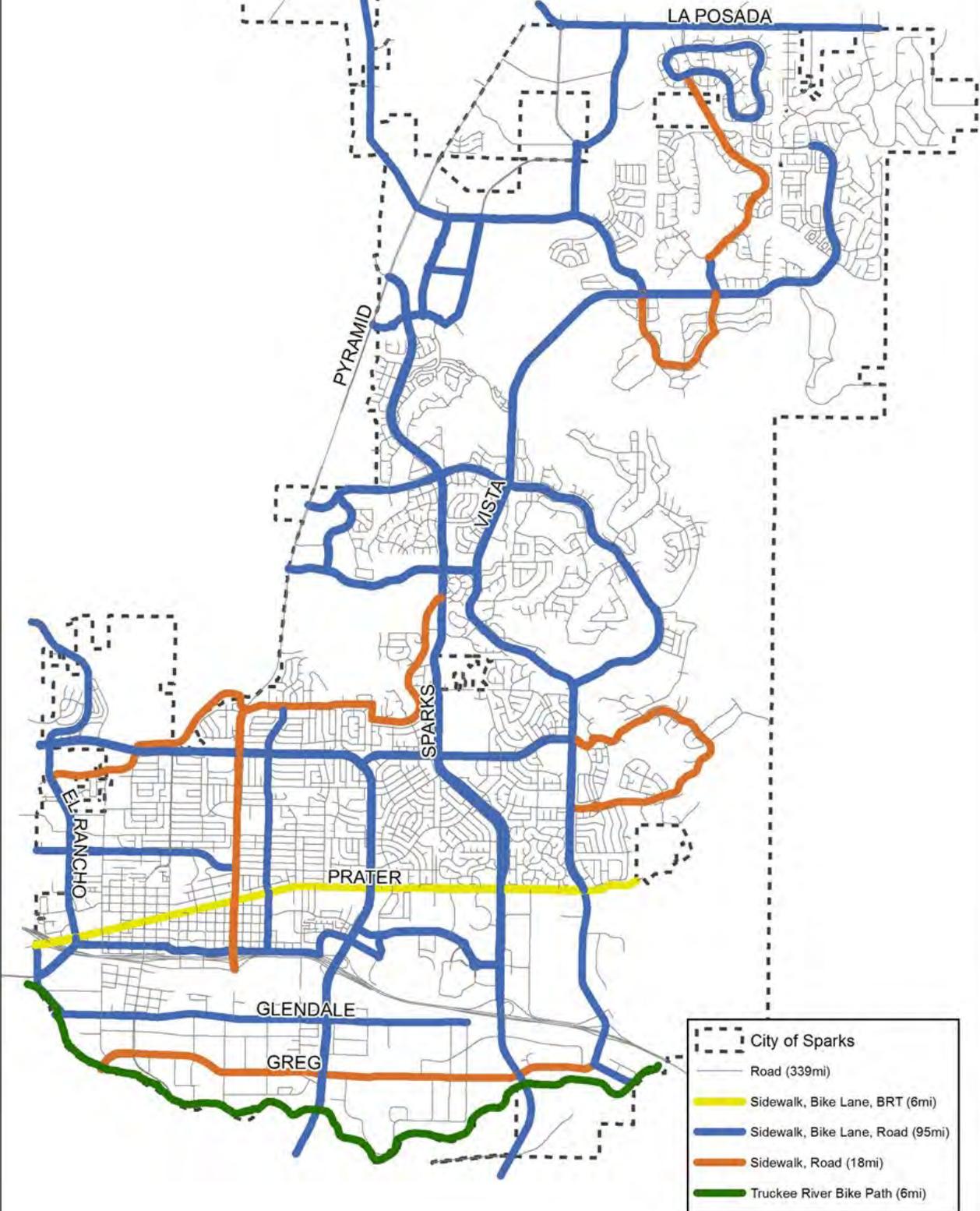
RTC in coordination with the City of Sparks has completed two corridor studies that will significantly enhance the Prater Way and Oddie Boulevard corridors. Design of both projects is underway and the Prater Way project should begin construction in 2017 with Oddie Boulevard to follow in 2019 or 2020. Prater Way will change from a predominately auto-oriented corridor to a multi-modal transportation network with wider sidewalks, bike lanes and auto lanes. As the City of Sparks continues to rehabilitate older street networks with the support of RTC, the policies of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan shall be considered including, but not limited to, providing pedestrian connectivity on both sides of every street.

Oddie Boulevard is a former Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) Highway. With the City of Sparks recently assuming jurisdiction of Oddie Boulevard from NDOT, the City in coordination with RTC plans to remake the corridor as one that includes a multi-modal network of transportation options. Currently the road only provides for auto-oriented movements, whereas the redesigned corridor will accommodate bicyclists, pedestrians and autos.

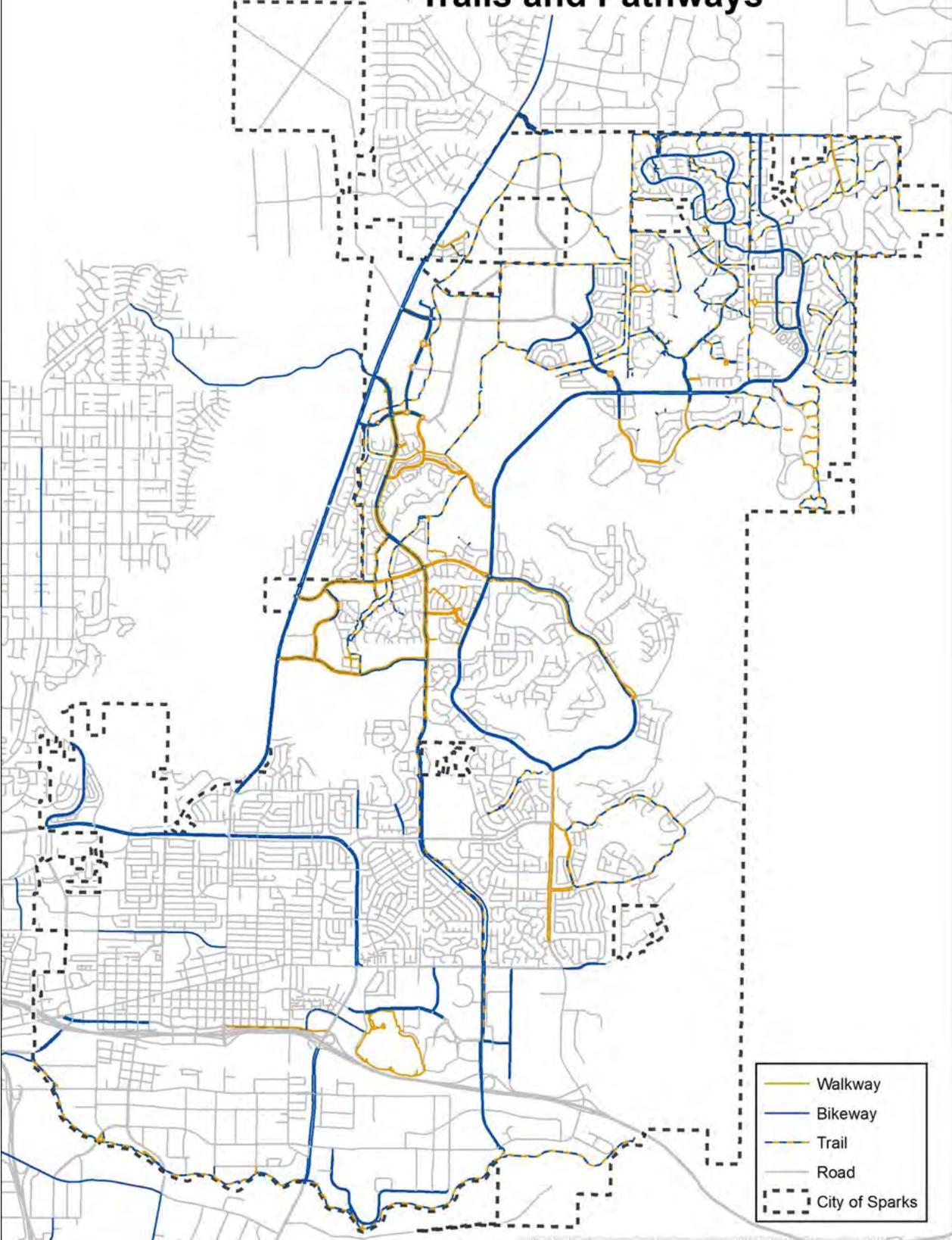
To ensure connectivity options are included in Sparks’ transportation network, Figure 4 -1 identifies which roads are planned as complete streets and the types of transportation they will accommodate. Not every street need include all transportation modes, but the network as a whole should facilitate multi-modal travel across Sparks plus connections to the rest of the metropolitan area. The City will also maintain its plan for the continued development of the pathway and trail network. The current trail network, as shown in Figure 4-2 Trails and Pathways Map, is a mix of designs and standards and has connection gaps. Some of the network has received the designation “Regional Trail,” requiring a ten-foot wide concrete path which shall be maintained.



**Figure 4-1:  
City of Sparks  
Complete Street Plan**



**Figure 4-2:  
City of Sparks  
Trails and Pathways**



## Looking Forward

The RTC prepares and maintains a transportation plan referred to as the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which is updated every five years. This long-range plan focuses on highways, streets, bicycle routes, pedestrian facilities and public transportation. The RTP considers regional road traffic congestion and the level of service on the roadway network. The creation of this plan requires significant coordination with the City of Sparks. It is imperative that Sparks identify in its Comprehensive Plan, policies that address the design of future roads and the reconstruction of existing roads.

Of those surveyed, 26% of Sparks residents requested improved pedestrian paths and sidewalks and additional bike lanes within existing streets. Previously, roadway design emphasized making streets functional for motor vehicles, including freight haulers. More recently, a growing number of communities have adopted the “Complete Street” philosophy. The basic premise of complete streets are that they are safe, accessible and convenient for all users regardless of transportation mode, age, or physical ability. They adequately provide for bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders and motorists and may include features such as raised medians, pedestrian refuge islands within medians, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, transit shelters, raised crosswalks, audible pedestrian signals, enhanced lighting, landscaping, public art and street furniture.

Sparks has identified on Map 4-1 where complete street design is most appropriate. The map designates differing levels of complete street design for various routes in Sparks. It also identifies 4th Street as a new north-south bicycle route; the City will coordinate with RTC to transition 4th Street into a “Bike Boulevard.” This boulevard will continue to provide for pedestrians but auto-oriented movements may not be as efficient as those on parallel streets such as Pyramid Way.

As mentioned above, a key component of connectivity is public transit. Survey results from public outreach for the 2016 Comprehensive Plan indicate that over 15% of the public would like to utilize public transit in the year 2030. This would represent a substantial increase over the number of persons utilizing the bus system today. To accommodate this interest, Sparks will need to continue pushing higher density and intensity in the Mixed Use District and coordinate with RTC to increase service frequency and the dependability of the transit system. To encourage public transit and complementary development, Sparks adopted a Mixed Use District, addressed in detail in the Managing Growth section of this plan, to support the City’s long term vision for its transit corridors.

Investment in the Mixed Use District continues to grow as the demand for higher density residential development increases. This was not always the case, but with the City’s commitment to the area through the redevelopment process, significant investment in infrastructure and civic spaces has occurred. Sparks is beginning to realize returns on this investment as developers bring to fruition multi-family residential projects such as downtown’s The Square, the Fountainhouse at Victorian Square, and in the Marina area, the Waterfront Apartments.

Portions of the Mixed Use Development corridor lie under the flight path to the Reno-Tahoe International Airport and therefore residential as well as higher floor area ratio (FAR) commercial development will be evaluated for impacts to the airport and to citizens who will ultimately utilize them. Notifications to the Airport Authority of any proposed development within the Mixed Use Development area will occur at the time of official submittal to the City.

The Mixed Use Development district has specific development standards set forth in the zoning code. These standards promote and require street design to promote use of walkable areas and the transit system. Many areas within the Mixed Use District are required to provide for multi-modal transit systems including biking, pedestrian and auto-oriented amenities. Zoning code standards include but are not limited to pushing building design toward the street and shifting parking to the side and rear of commercial buildings. Such standards facilitate the creation of vibrant downtown and activity centers; the areas become more pedestrian-oriented due to being developed on a human scale with less orientation toward autos.

Sparks will also work with RTC to identify express routes for special events. This would allow people who drive their own vehicles to work to also use the transit system for entertainment or recreational destinations. Providing the occasional bus ride to people who might otherwise never utilize the system may ultimately attract new riders, permitting RTC to enhance its transit service. Over 15% of those polled in the Sparks community outreach survey identified improvement to the public bus service as a priority. Inclusion of the policies discussed above will help to make it just that.

As more residents use the transit system maintenance and enhancement of the pedestrian system will become more important. Trails provide recreational opportunities, connections between land uses and alternatives to auto-oriented routes. (See Figure 4-2)

The Connectivity goals and policies below are meant to emphasize the movement of people, not just vehicles, from one point to another. While Sparks residents still see their cars as their primary transportation for the foreseeable future, they also envision using other modes of transportation significantly more than at present. Connectivity policies are therefore intended to assure that all users of streets are considered when the City plans, designs and builds new transportation routes or reconstructs previously established roads.



## Connectivity Goals and Policies

### Goals

- ◆ Goal C1: Develop a complete, efficient transportation system that gives Sparks residents of all ages and visitors access to employment, housing, services and recreation throughout urban Washoe County.
- ◆ Goal C2: Provide a transportation network that supports business formation and attraction and economic vitality.
- ◆ Goal C3: Facilitate non-motorized travel throughout the community.

### Policies

- Policy C1: Work with the Regional Transportation Commission to ensure completion of Prater Way and Oddie Boulevard corridor enhancements.
- Policy C2: Work with the Regional Transportation Commission to add roadway capacity as necessary to accommodate Sparks' growth.
- Policy C3: Ensure streets with multiple modes of transportation remain multi-modal. If a transportation mode is removed from a street, it must be provided in another facility that provides for comparable multi-modal connectivity in the same area.
- Policy C4: Require sidewalks for pedestrians on all street networks within the City.
- Policy C5: Convert 4<sup>th</sup> Street to a bike boulevard.
- Policy C6: In Spark's Transit Corridor promote infill development and create a pedestrian-friendly environment that facilitates walkability and transit ridership.
- Policy C7: Encourage bus service for special events.
- Policy C8: Ensure the completion and maintenance of the trail network (Figure 4-2).
- Policy C9: Ensure the transportation system meets the needs for all persons including children and seniors.

# Community Facilities and Services

Community facilities, including infrastructure, and services affect the daily life of all citizens of Sparks. The City of Sparks is comprised of eight departments with about 690 employees who provide services to residents. The departments are Management Services, Community Services, Financial Services, City Attorney, Municipal Court, Parks and Recreation, Fire and Police.

Results from the public surveys revealed that Sparks citizens place a premium on the maintenance of roads and parks, even as the City grows. They want the Truckee River protected through continuing investment in Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility. The most important recreational activities are special events and outdoor field sports (e.g., baseball, lacrosse, soccer and football).

The City is in the process of establishing an asset management program for the operations of the Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility (TMWRF). The program is called ER Portal. Its function is the provision of computerized management and capital improvements of TMWRF. The City is working on establishing a city-wide Asset Management System which will streamline internal processes and reporting of city facilities and amenities. The Asset Management System will address all facilities, amenities and infrastructure maintained and constructed by the City. This will help the City prioritize the timing of and type of necessary capital improvement investments identified in the Capital Improvement Plan.



# Community Facilities and Services Goals and Policies

## Goals

- ◆ Goal CF1: Maintain or, as necessary, upgrade the condition of City-owned facilities and infrastructure while maximizing their utilization.
- ◆ Goal CF2: Revenues permitting, maintain and enhance the level of public services provided to City residents, visitors and businesses.

## Policies

- Policy CF1: When reviewing new development, the City will not approve an application unless City services can be provided at acceptable service levels.
- Policy CF2: Any intensification of development within the City or its Sphere of Influence requires connection to city sewer.
- Policy CF3: Adopt criteria based on the Managing Growth Land Use Policies of the Comprehensive Plan, for how to allocate excess sewer capacity, if available. The criteria will prioritize allocating any such excess capacity to, in order of priority: 1) serve additional density within the existing city limits of Sparks; 2) areas identified in the City's Seven Year Annexation Program; 3) areas within the City's Sphere of Influence not included in the Seven Year Annexation Program; 4) areas outside the City's Sphere of Influence.
- Policy CF4: Manage recreation services to achieve the financial goals of the entire recreation program and allocate recreation programming to reflect residents' priorities.
- Policy CF5: When city parks are eliminated due to development, equivalent replacement facilities must be provided in a location agreed upon by all parties.
- Policy CF6: The City will strive to increase its internet/web presence and to create a more user-friendly system for permitting and application processes.
- Policy CF7: Continue to identify potential cost savings to reduce per capita administrative costs.
- Policy CF8: The City will minimize debt and increase cash reserves and fund balances to optimal levels.
- Policy CF9: Strive to provide a six-minute fire response time for 85% of the City, which will require a sixth fire station.

- Policy CF10: Establish an asset management system to proactively monitor and manage facilities, infrastructure and other capital investments for use in the Capital Improvement Plan. The establishment of the asset management system will require an Asset Management Department which will streamline predetermined internal City processes/reporting by historical analyzation of City assets through a suitable asset management software solution.
- Policy CF11: Explore providing a satellite office for the Police Department manned by civilian staff for public access.
- Policy CF12: Work in cooperation with Washoe County and the City of Reno to maintain and improve joint-use facilities.
- Policy CF13: Work in cooperation with the Washoe County School District to maintain and improve joint-use facilities as directed in the Joint Use Agreement.
- Policy CF14: Work with the Washoe County School District to strategically plan the location of new public schools.
- Policy CF15: New schools will not be located on streets designated as arterials.
- Policy CF16: Work with the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority to develop noise overlay zoning or similar measures to ensure compatibility of surrounding development to the operation of the airport.
- Policy CF17: Strive to install new electrical transmission infrastructure in existing utility corridors.
- Policy CF18: Work with utility companies to place new electrical transmission infrastructure underground, especially when doing so may mitigate the safety risk of above-ground construction.
- Policy CF19: Foster the placement of infrastructure in utility corridors.



# Community Character

Sparks is a family-oriented community and many of its residents define their city as a place that feels like a small town. Many want Sparks to maintain that sensibility as the City grows. Public input to this Comprehensive Plan has made evident that the best mechanisms to protect the small town feel while moving forward are parks and playgrounds located near homes. The addition of shopping and commercial services in proximity to residential areas will also help to promote a sense of place.

Sparks has become a City known for its special events. Many popular special events occur in the City's downtown, known to locals as Victorian Square. A central gathering place creates a more cohesive community as residents have a common area to gather for occasions such as the Sparks Hometown Christmas Parade. Hot August Nights and the Best in the West Rib Cook-off are also significant events that citizens are proud to host and participate in. Participation includes the highlighting of local talent in many forms and fashions. Whether it is local dance studios presenting their latest recital at the amphitheater or the Sparks City Council riding on a float in the Christmas parade, locals feel a close connection to their neighbors.

Downtown Sparks is not only a place to celebrate the present but is where the city has its deepest roots. As described earlier, Sparks was created as a railroad town and in fact, some of its structures were relocated from the former railroad town of Wadsworth. To preserve its history, the City is considering the feasibility of a historic district. Recently adopted zoning codes included language enabling just that. As redevelopment occurs downtown, considerations for historic buildings should be examined for incorporation into the design of new projects.

The Urban Land Institute and the Lincoln Institute for Land Policy studied the effect of urban design on property values. Four key elements were identified:

1. Architecture
2. Green Spaces
3. Water Settings
4. Good Transportation

Special attention to design will promote a more attractive environment for sustaining a sense of community. Design can encourage people to interact with their neighbors as they tend to spend more time in community spaces.



# Community Character Goals and Policies

## Goal

- ◆ Goal CC1: Ensure that Sparks’ physical environment, services and amenities make it a city of choice for residents and businesses.

## Policies

- Policy CC1: Continue providing parks within proximity to all residential areas of Sparks following adopted park land standards.
- Policy CC2: Promote a mix of uses, including restaurants and shopping, to create a vibrant downtown district at Victorian Square.
- Policy CC3: Evaluate the creation of a historic district.
- Policy CC4: Increase, as feasible, the number of special events held in Sparks.
- Policy CC5: Coordinate with private partners to make affordable arts and culture programs available to all citizens.
- Policy CC6: Encourage public art in major private and public works projects and provide opportunities for the display of art in public spaces.
- Policy CC7: Provide equitable access to recreation, children’s and other activities and programming to all areas of Sparks.
- Policy CC8: Foster neighborhood diversity and design by permitting varied lot sizes, building materials, building styles and color.
- Policy CC9: Promote quality of design for new construction through development standards that provide well-articulated building facades, defined entrances, clear pedestrian connections and landscaping.
- Policy CC10: Work with the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) and Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) to plan and design major road capacity expansions to minimize the degree to which the widening of roads divides neighborhoods or adds barriers for pedestrians, bicyclists and other non-motorized travel.



# Housing and Affordability

The Housing and Affordability Section of this Comprehensive Plan addresses the current and future housing desires of the community. This section is taken from the current Sparks Housing Plan. The plan presents the current and future housing needs of the city and proposes solutions for the provision of housing. The Housing Plan identifies goals, policies and programs which offer actions for addressing housing needs within city boundaries. Those goals, policies and programs aim to provide solutions to housing needs for all economic segments of the community. For the complete Housing Plan for the City of Spark, see the Appendix.

As the City grows, housing needs to be available for Sparks’ entire population. This includes ensuring areas are zoned for a variety of housing with the respective infrastructure to support them.

As the City considers future residential development, it must create opportunities to promote economic growth while ensuring fiscal sustainability. It is imperative to review impacts to City facilities and expenditures to serve the development. This needs to come in the form of fiscal impact analysis throughout the development process.

Considerations for sustainability are not limited to fiscal implications for the City’s general fund but include connectivity in terms of transportation options. To make the City of Sparks the “City of choice” for new residents the City must ensure a variety of transportation modes are available to all areas of the City while not solely favoring autos. These types of commitments to transportation alternatives promote a variety of housing types being made available in Sparks; housing need not rely on personal vehicles. Developments should continue to utilize the incentives provided by the Washoe County Home Consortium to support affordable housing options. Many of the projects utilizing “Home funds” depend on other sources as well as monetary incentives from Sparks and the Regional Transportation Commission to ensure a variety of transportation offers are provided. Washoe County Home Consortium supports affordable housing options. Many of the projects utilizing “Home funds” depend not just on monetary incentives from Sparks but also commitments by Regional Transportation Commission to ensure a variety of transportation offers are provided.

Much of the text above identifies considerations or policy directions for new development. As the City promotes housing, it needs to consider existing housing stock. Ensuring older areas of the City



remain attractive is imperative to continued investment in those areas. Enforcement of the property maintenance ordinances creates neighborhoods that attract revitalization as well as preserving older established neighborhoods within the City’s core.

Providing a variety of housing choices within the City of Sparks expands choices for its citizens while meeting the financial and lifestyle needs of a diverse population and workforce that choose to make Sparks their “City of Choice.”

# Housing and Affordability Goals and Policies

## Goals

- ◆ Goal H1: Facilitate development of housing that is available, affordable and accessible to a diverse and growing population, including senior citizens.
- ◆ Goal H2: Promote a strong, diverse housing market that supports economic growth and vitality while ensuring environmental and fiscal sustainability.
- ◆ Goal H3: Ensure that Sparks residential and mixed-use neighborhoods are desirable locations to live.

## Policies

- Policy H1: Ensure there are sufficient appropriately zoned areas with the infrastructure, public facilities and services necessary for the production of new housing.
- Policy H2: Promote a variety of housing types throughout Sparks, including within mixed-used settings, to expand the choices available to meet the financial and lifestyle needs of a diverse population and workforce.
- Policy H3: Connect housing with multiple transportation options.
- Policy H4: Enforce property maintenance ordinances in residential areas.
- Policy H5: Utilize the Washoe County Home Consortium as a vehicle for the development and retention of rent- and income-restricted affordable housing.
- Policy H6: The City will create a Housing Plan that addresses the eight components in NRS 278.160(8), including but not limited to maintaining and developing affordable housing to meet the housing needs of Sparks.
- Policy H7: Comply with NRS 278.235 by implementing at least six of the 12 specified measures relating to affordable housing.
- Policy H8: Facilitate development of multi-generational housing options and products.
- Policy H9: Facilitate housing communities for seniors, including aging in place options.



# Resiliency and Conservation

For purposes of this Comprehensive Plan, resiliency refers to the capacity to absorb disturbances or disruptive change while retaining – or having the ability to restore – the community’s environmental, social and economic health. Concerns include those posed by increased climate variability, non-climate related natural disasters such as earthquakes, mass casualty events arising from civil unrest or terrorism and the spread of infectious diseases. Population growth magnifies all of these concerns to varying degrees. Change may also arise as the result of economic disruption, such as the recession that began in 2007. The recession was more severe and lasted substantially longer in this region than in many parts of the United States.

In 2014 the Washoe County Office of Emergency Management & Homeland Security prepared the *Washoe County Regional Resiliency Study*. It includes a synthesis of climate studies conducted by the Western Regional Climate Center of the Nevada System of Higher Education’s Desert Research Institute. The analysis indicates the region’s climate is undergoing a gradual shift. This will primarily affect the frequency (decreasing), amount (less over an extended period of time) and form (more winter rain versus snow) of precipitation falling in the Sierra Nevada and Great Basin. The study emphasizes that the region’s water infrastructure is based on a historic pattern of snowfall. The resulting snowpack has provided relatively dependable flows in the Truckee River and other streams and for the recharge of groundwater aquifers. While climate studies indicate that total precipitation in future years may be the same or greater, the region presently lacks adequate facilities to store rainwater water for later use.

Washoe County’s study and the federal government’s third National Climate Assessment (also released in 2014) identify various impacts from climate variability that may affect northern Nevada over the coming decades. These include:

- Decreasing water supply reliability for cities, agriculture, and ecosystems resulting from reduced snowpacks and more frequent and prolonged drought.
- Flooding from more frequent and wetter winter storms and summer flash floods.
- More numerous and severe wildland fires, including fires burning at the edges of urbanized areas.
- Projected temperature increases that, combined with the way urban areas amplify heat, will pose increased threats and costs to public health in cities and strain power grids.
- Reduced air quality as result of increased ozone levels in the summer, more smoke from fires and more days with stagnant air.
- Damage or destruction of infrastructure (transportation, sanitary sewer, electrical, communications, energy) due to flooding, wildfire and severe weather events.

- Diminished desirability of the region as a place to live, work, do business, visit and recreate. This includes, for example, the decline of the region’s winter sports industry as the snowpack declines or becomes increasingly unreliable.
- Increased business costs due interruptions or damage resulting from increased frequency and severity of events such as fires and floods, the cost to operate and maintain facilities and supporting infrastructure, capital and liability costs, etc.
- Resource scarcity, including that of energy sources, food and workers.
- Regulatory changes and/or costs attributable to efforts to mitigate or respond to climate variability and its impacts. Examples include compliance with ozone limits or increases in the cost of carbon-based energy.

How Sparks fares depends on the magnitude and frequency of these impacts and the associated costs. It also depends on the preparedness and capacity of the region’s businesses, public agencies and nonprofit sector to adjust and recover.

A majority of respondents to the survey undertaken to inform the Comprehensive Plan favor the City adopting policies and allocating resources to increase the community’s sustainability. Majorities favor the City supporting the use of solar and other renewable energies to enhance sustainability and to increase the community’s ability to withstand and manage disruptive change.

Many of the best strategies for building community resiliency are tied to good planning and conservation policies and practices for the protection and judicious use of resources, including land, water and energy. Accordingly, this section of the Policy Framework focuses on policies for the protection of water resources, preservation of natural features (wetlands, floodplains) that provide protection against flooding, the diversification of energy sources, the conservation of natural resources, adding appropriate redundancy in systems, reducing the impacts of a warming climate, and avoidance of and preparedness for natural disasters such as flooding and wildfire. These policies are complemented by those in other sections of the Policy Framework:

- ⇒ Managing Growth policies to limit the premature expansion of Sparks and assure that the City has the financial resources to fulfill its responsibilities.
- ⇒ Connectivity policies to provide businesses and residents more diverse, and less polluting, options for moving about Sparks and the region.
- ⇒ Community Facility policies to provide for the efficient and cost effective provision of infrastructure, facilities and services.
- ⇒ Economic Vitality policies to support the community’s economic capacity to prepare for and respond to change.

Sparks should remain mindful that while change can be disruptive and adversely impact the community, it also presents opportunities. New industries and business opportunities will arise as the regional, national and global economies evolve due to technological innovation, demographic shifts and climate variability. Just as industries and businesses can prosper by recognizing and acting on emerging opportunities, so can cities.



# Resiliency and Conservation Goals and Policies

## Goals

- ◆ Goal RC1: Conserve and protect natural resources needed to provide for current and future residents, businesses and visitors.
- ◆ Goal RC2: Assess, prepare for and mitigate the impacts of environmental changes, including extended droughts and extreme weather events.
- ◆ Goal RC3: Identify and anticipate potential environmental, regulatory and other constraints on Sparks' growth and economic vitality.
- ◆ Goal RC4: Evaluate and prepare for natural disasters and mass-casualty events.

## Policies

- Policy RC1: Reduce per capita potable water use through conservation, water reclamation and reuse and other water resource stewardship programs.
- Policy RC2: Protect the water quality of the Truckee River, drainages, lakes and aquifers.
- Policy RC3: Maintain the Truckee River corridor as a trail and open space system and require new development to accommodate public trail and river access.
- Policy RC4: Reduce pollution from stormwater runoff, overflow and other non-point sources.
- Policy RC5: Protect groundwater quality through land use management that safeguards recharge areas from inappropriate disturbances and contamination.
- Policy RC6: Implement "Best Management Practices," including but not limited to Low Impact Development Practices (LID), to control urban stormwater runoff.
- Policy RC7: Prevent and mitigate the degradation or destruction of wetlands.
- Policy RC8: Plan for and adapt to increased drought, severe weather and other potential impacts of climate variability on the water supply.
- Policy RC9: Coordinate with regional agencies to improve air quality by reducing emissions resulting from motor vehicle use, traffic and congestion, and industrial sources.

- Policy RC10: Increase Sparks’ urban tree canopy through the addition of trees in existing developed areas and by requiring trees in new developments.
- Policy RC11: Reduce the disposal of solid waste and increase reuse and recycling to conserve natural resources.
- Policy RC12: Work with county, state, tribal and federal agencies to minimize potential impacts to natural habitats and migration corridors.
- Policy RC13: Support regional efforts to develop and implement a strategy to diversify the energy sources, especially solar energy, available to Sparks residents and businesses.
- Policy RC14: Reduce per capita energy use through conservation and by periodically updating building codes and development standards to make buildings and transportation more energy efficient.
- Policy RC15: Reduce the threats flooding poses to public safety and property.
- Policy RC16: Evaluate and mitigate the impacts on surrounding areas of new development within floodplains.
- Policy RC17: Maintain infrastructure and enhance programs to keep the public safe during emergencies.
- Policy RC18: Protect the public from the impacts of earthquakes and landslide/debris flow areas through compliance with building codes and federal standards.
- Policy RC19: Protect the urban-wildland interface from wildfire hazards and require developments to reduce intrusion into fire-prone areas by clustering or other design methods.



- Policy RC20: Prohibit the use of diesel oil-fueled, internal combustion power generation units synchronized with the regional electric grid within the Truckee Meadows Service portion of Sparks, except for emergency conditions such as weather related acts of nature, unforeseen grid disturbances, maintenance activities including testing or transmission limitations.
- Policy RC21: Evaluate the feasibility of decentralized wastewater treatment site options, including package plants and satellite facilities, to complement the Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility.
- Policy RC22: Maintain development restrictions and standards in the Sparks Municipal Code as necessary to conform to policies in the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan pertaining to Development Constraints Areas and for slopes with gradients over 30%.
- Policy RC23: Require new development to preserve and protect significant natural amenities, unique features (e.g., rock outcroppings and drainage ways) and other natural features.
- Policy RC24: Promote the protection of and minimize potential impacts on cultural resources within the City's jurisdiction.
- Policy RC25: Require development to minimize hillside scarring and the impacts of increasing access in roadless areas.



# Economic Vitality

Economic vitality refers to the economic well-being of Sparks. It is usually pursued through economic development efforts that entail job creation, job retention, building the tax base and quality of life. Over the last 20 years Sparks has made a concerted effort and achieved progress in diversifying its land use and economic base. It needs to continue doing so by adding commercial and industrial uses and development. Particularly important to the City is attracting capital investment, employment-dense and higher-paying industries. Doing so provides economic opportunities for residents, including the community's young people, bolsters existing industries, improves residents' quality of life, and heightens the community's ability to capitalize on future opportunities and deal with negative changes. Maintaining a strong economic base is necessary for the City and other public agencies serving Sparks to provide the high quality public safety services, infrastructure and other services and amenities, such as parks and recreation programs, desired by Sparks residents.

The City's foremost economic development responsibility is to assure that Sparks is an appealing place to live, work and do business. Sparks does so by providing municipal infrastructure, facilities and services in an efficient and cost-effective basis. Given the interrelated and overlapping nature of this plan's Policy Framework, many aspects of the City's economic development role are addressed in other sections of this document. The Economic Vitality policies therefore focus on more typical economic development goals such as attracting and retaining investment and jobs. The policies also reflect input from persons participating in the survey undertaken for this plan, who favor attracting new businesses and industries as well as the use of technology and online services to facilitate doing business with the City.

One challenge for Sparks is formulating a strategy to capitalize on the many locational advantages of the industrial and commercial area located between Interstate 80 and the Truckee River. This area, where over 20 million square feet of building space is located, is close to not only highway I-80 but I-580/U.S. 395 and the Reno-Tahoe International Airport. It is also served by rail and is readily accessible to the region's workforce. However, that area developed over several decades and there are numerous older industrial buildings that are functionally obsolete or of diminished utility for would-be users. Redevelopment and investment has been inhibited, in part, because significant portions of the area are subject to Truckee River flooding, as has occurred twice since 1998. Sparks has sought to address flooding issues by participating in a regional Truckee River flood control project. To date the regional effort has not produced the funding needed to construct its recommended improvements. In the absence of a regional flood control solution, it behooves the City to define an alternative strategy for attracting new investment and jobs to this strategically located area of Sparks.

More broadly the City needs to assure that there is sufficient land for industrial development. Sparks previously pursued expansion for this purpose east of the current city limit along the I-80 (East Truckee River Canyon) corridor. In 2010 the City concluded that the cost of maintaining the necessary facilities and infrastructure and providing public safety and other services to this area would exceed potential development revenues. Based on this conclusion the City detached property it had annexed in that area and removed the East Truckee River Canyon corridor from its Sphere of Influence. However, given recent demand for industrial sites in Storey County's Tahoe Reno Industrial Center (e.g., for the Tesla Gigafactory, Switch Supernap Data Centers, etc.), Sparks and other Washoe County officials have indicated interest in obtaining federal land to create another large industrial area within Washoe County. This new area of interest is located east of Sparks and the Pah Rah mountain range. To address this possibility, an Economic Vitality policy calls for Sparks to undertake the analysis necessary to determine the feasibility of expanding into this area.

Economic Vitality policies do not address the need for Nevada to modify its tax structure to reduce provisions (property tax caps and depreciation formulas in particular) that undermine the financial capacity of local governments and other public agencies (e.g., school districts) to provide services to existing residents and businesses, accommodate population growth and serve new development. Such changes would, however, substantially bolster the ability of the City and other local public service providers to address community needs and support economic development and vitality.



## Economic Vitality Goals and Policies

### Goals

- ◆ Goal EV1: Grow and diversify Sparks' economy.
- ◆ Goal EV2: Attract capital investment and new, higher-paying jobs.
- ◆ Goal EV3: Attract and retain sought-after employers and a skilled workforce.
- ◆ Goal EV4: Maintain a physical and regulatory environment that facilitates innovation, entrepreneurship and small business development while providing for long-term environmental and fiscal sustainability.
- ◆ Goal EV5: Identify and respond to potential economic development opportunities, including emerging industries, which may arise from environmental and regulatory changes.
- ◆ Goal EV6: Provide the facilities and public services necessary to support a vibrant economy by maintaining fiscal strength.

### Policies

- Policy EV1: Build on Sparks' position as a leader in special events by investing additional resources in event venues and adding events, including family-friendly events.
- Policy EV2: Enhance Sparks' appeal to visitors to the region by strengthening arts and entertainment offerings.
- Policy EV3: Promote the availability of land designated for business and office park uses within master planned developments.
- Policy EV4: Develop and implement a strategy for attracting new investment and more employment-dense and higher-paying industries to the area between the Truckee River and Interstate 80.
- Policy EV5: Undertake the analysis necessary to determine the feasibility of expanding the city limits to include the area east of the City's corporate boundary and north of Interstate 80 for job-generating land uses.

- Policy EV6: Support entrepreneurs by providing appropriately zoned areas with the infrastructure, public facilities and services necessary to start and grow small businesses.
- Policy EV7: Optimize the use of technology and online services to facilitate obtaining information, land use approvals, licenses and permits from the City.
- Policy EV8: Advocate for and support public and private investments in Sparks that improve quality of life while providing critical services and facilities to retain current residents and attract a skilled workforce.
- Policy EV9: Promote a balanced and sustainable land-use mix that fiscally and environmentally benefits the City.
- Policy EV10: Require, prior to or with applications for land-use approval (Tentative Map, Administrative Review or Conditional Use Permit), all development projects on green-field sites of 20 or more acres to demonstrate they are fiscally positive to the City for a period of at least 20 years.



# LAND USE CATEGORIES

The following tables summarize the land use categories identified on the Land Use Map, describing the Land Uses designation shown on the Land Use Map. The tables summarize the primary uses and other uses, residential density, floor area ratio (FAR) requirements, the criteria for location, and translation of existing land use category and zoning districts. Primary Uses are defined as the principal type of activity allowed within the Land Use category. Other Uses are defined as a secondary type of activity allowed within the Land Use category and may be considered as an ancillary use and/or have additional standards imposed by the Zoning Code (Title 20). Residential densities are assumed to be based on gross acreages. For areas located in planned developments master plans, these areas were assigned one of the City's 14 land uses designations. Refer to the planned development handbook for the specific development standards and requirements.



TABLE 1 - RESIDENTIAL LAND USES

Land Use Category	Uses and Density	Characteristics and Location	Existing Land Use Category	Zoning Districts
<p><b>LARGE LOT RESIDENTIAL (LLR)</b></p>	<p><b>Primary Uses:</b> Single family detached residences</p> <p><b>Other Uses:</b> Open Space, trails, schools, religious institutions, private recreational facilities, public facilities.</p> <p><b>Maximum Density:</b> Up to 3 DU/AC</p>	<p>Applies to areas where conventional large lot subdivisions have been established.</p> <p>It is the City’s intent to minimize establishment of new LLR areas.</p> <p>This designation generally occurs on the fringe of the city and may or may not have existing urban services.</p> <p>This land use category is the most consumptive land use.</p> <p>In exchange for open space, which may include environmentally constrained areas, LLR developments are encouraged to cluster housing near improved roads and available services. However, the net density of the entire development cannot exceed 3 dwelling units per acre.</p>	<p>EDR 1-3 DU/AC 1 DU/AC 1-3 DU/AC 2 DU/AC VHS 1-3 DU/AC EDR 1.9 DU/AC</p>	<p>A-5 A-40 NUD PD SF-40 SF-20 SF-15</p>

TABLE 1 - RESIDENTIAL LAND USES

Land Use Category	Uses and Density	Characteristics and Location	Existing Land Use Category	Zoning Districts
<p><b>LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (LDR)</b></p>	<p><b>Primary Uses:</b> Single family detached residences, zero lot line single family residences</p> <p><b>Other Uses:</b> Open Space, trails, schools, religious institutions, private recreational facilities, public facilities.</p> <p><b>Density Range:</b> 3 to less than 6 DU/AC</p>	<p>Suburban character with full range of urban services. Locations are generally located adjacent to rural neighborhoods.</p> <p>Supports principles of reinforcing existing neighborhoods.</p> <p>Serves as appropriate transition between single family and mixed residential land uses.</p> <p>Residences should be sited so as to provide privacy to the occupants while providing connectivity to adjoining commercial or other uses.</p> <p>The LDR category contains a number of established neighborhoods—change is not anticipated or encouraged in these areas.</p>	<p>LDR 3-7 DU/AC            3 DU/AC            3-7 DU/AC            4 DU/AC            5 DU/AC            LDR            EXC 3-7 DU/AC            ELR 3-7 DU/AC            LDR1 3.8 DU/AC            LDR2 4.4 DU/AC            LMR</p>	<p>SF-9            SF-12            NUD            PD</p>

TABLE 1 - RESIDENTIAL LAND USES

Land Use Category	Uses and Density	Characteristics and Location	Existing Land Use Category	Zoning Districts
<p><b>INTERMEDIATE DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (IDR)</b></p>	<p><b>Primary Uses:</b> Single family detached residences, zero lot line single family residences</p> <p><b>Other Uses:</b> Open Space, trails, schools, religious institutions, private recreational facilities, public facilities.</p> <p><b>Density Range:</b> 6 to less than 10 DU/AC</p>	<p>This designation is the highest density category of single-family uses existing without a significant mixing of two-family, multi-family and nonresidential uses.</p> <p>Generally located near more urban areas with activity centers.</p> <p>Supports principles of reinforcing existing neighborhoods.</p> <p>Residences should be sited so as to provide privacy to the occupants while providing connectivity to adjoining commercial or other uses.</p> <p>The IDR category contains a number of established neighborhoods—change is not anticipated or encouraged in these areas.</p>	<p>LMDR 7-14 DU/AC 5-10 DU/AC 6 DU/AC 7 DU/AC 8 DU/AC 10 DU/AC LDR3 6.1 DU/AC SF7 LDR/MDR LMR</p>	<p>SF-6 SF-7 NUD PD</p>

TABLE 1 - RESIDENTIAL LAND USES

Land Use Category	Uses and Density	Characteristics and Location	Existing Land Use Category	Zoning Districts
<p><b>MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (MF14)</b></p>	<p><b>Primary Uses:</b> Single-family detached and attached residences, duplexes, 3 or more attached units, townhouses/row-houses, apartment buildings, condominiums</p> <p><b>Other Uses:</b> Open Space, trails, schools, religious institutions, private recreational facilities, public facilities.</p> <p><b>Density Range:</b> 10 to less than 14 DU/AC</p>	<p>This designation tends to be found near activity centers. This designation should be accompanied by higher residential densities, recreational facilities, pocket parks or other amenities. Serves as appropriate transition between IDR and HDR land uses.</p> <p>Residences should be sited so as to provide privacy to the occupants while providing connectivity to adjoining commercial or other uses. MF14 neighborhoods could contain a mix of housing types. Should have access to public transit.</p>	<p>MDR 14-20 DU/AC 12 DU/AC MR MHR LMDR 7-14 DU/AC</p>	<p>MF-2 NUD PD</p>

**TABLE 1 - RESIDENTIAL LAND USES**

Land Use Category	Uses and Density	Characteristics and Location	Existing Land Use Category	Zoning Districts
<p><b>MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (MF24)</b></p>	<p><i>Primary Uses:</i> Single-family, attached residences; duplexes, 3 or more attached units, townhouses/row-houses, apartment buildings, condominiums</p> <p><i>Other Uses:</i> Open Space, trails, schools, religious institutions, private recreational facilities, public facilities.</p> <p><i>Density Range:</i> 14 to less than 24 DU/AC</p>	<p>This designation tends to be found near activity centers. This designation should be accompanied by higher residential densities, recreational facilities, pocket parks or other amenities. Serves as appropriate transition between IDR and HDR land uses.</p> <p>Residences should be sited so as to provide privacy to the occupants while providing connectivity to adjoining commercial or other uses.</p> <p>Should have access to public transit.</p>	<p>15 DU/AC LMDR 14 14 DU/AC HR</p>	<p>MF-3 MF-4 NUD PD</p>

TABLE 1 - RESIDENTIAL LAND USES

Land Use Category	Uses and Density	Characteristics and Location	Existing Land Use Category	Zoning Districts
<p><b>HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (HDR)</b></p>	<p><b>Primary Uses:</b> Mid to high rise residential apartment buildings and condominiums, assisted living facilities</p> <p><b>Other Uses:</b> Open Space, trails, schools, religious institutions, private recreational facilities, public facilities.</p> <p><b>Density Range:</b> Min. 24 DU/AC</p>	<p>This designation is generally located at activity centers along major collector, arterial roads or transit centers. This designation should be accompanied by recreational facilities, pocket parks or other amenities.</p> <p>This designation can serve as transitional use between MF14/MF24, MU, Commercial, Tourist Commercial and Employment Center uses.</p> <p>Should have access to public transit.</p> <p>Should be sited so as to provide privacy to the occupants while providing connectivity to adjoining commercial or other uses.</p>	<p>HDR</p>	<p>MF-5 NUD PD</p>

TABLE 2 - MIXED USE AND COMMERCIAL LAND USES

Land Use Category	Uses	Characteristics and Location	Existing Land Use Category	Zoning Districts
<p>MIXED USE (MU)</p>	<p><b>Primary Uses:</b> Commercial services such as banks and restaurants, retail, offices, day care, assisted living, medical/ veterinary clinics, hotel/motels, theaters, parks, plazas, personal services, Higher density residential is encouraged including live-work units</p> <p><b>Other Uses:</b> Residential uses (10-24 du/ac), Open Space, trails, schools, private recreational facilities, public facilities, religious institutions</p> <p><b>Minimum Density:</b> 0.35 FAR 10 DU/AC No maximum</p>	<p>Intended to allow for and encourage a mix of uses including high-density residential.</p> <p>The intent is to allow for vertical and/or horizontal mixing of uses on sites, including higher-density residential.</p> <p>Intended to create an efficient and compact development pattern which is a mix of uses that encourages shared parking and economical use of land.</p> <p>Should transition higher density and intensity away from established neighborhoods.</p> <p>Developments should integrate usable open space, pocket parks, plazas/ courtyards which act as community gathering places.</p> <p>These areas should be connected to the adjacent uses through a system of sidewalks and trails.</p> <p>For areas located within the TOD area, refer to the TOD Area Plan for development standards.</p> <p>For areas located within Planned Development's (PD) refer to that PD for development standards.</p>	<p>OP GC/HDR MIXED USE VC VILLAGE CENTER</p>	<p>PO MF-2 MF-3 MF-4 MF-5 C1 C2</p>

TABLE 2 - MIXED USE AND COMMERCIAL LAND USES

Land Use Category	Uses	Characteristics and Location	Existing Land Use Category	Zoning Districts
<p><b>COMMERCIAL (C)</b></p>	<p><b>Primary Uses:</b> Commercial services such as banks and restaurants, retail, offices, day care, assisted living, medical/veterinary clinics, hotel/motels, theaters, parks, plazas, personal services, religious institutions, outdoor sales and service operations, health clubs, wholesale stores, mini-storages, self storage facilities, multi-family residential</p> <p><b>Other Uses:</b> Open Space, trails, schools, private recreational facilities, public facilities, religious institutions</p> <p><b>Minimum Density:</b> None</p>	<p>Mix of retail and other commercial services in concentrated centers that serves the local community. May also include larger retail centers that serve as a regional draw.</p> <p>Single-use or “strip center” commercial pattern of development is discouraged.</p> <p>Will vary in scale and character.</p> <p>Smaller, limited use centers should be integrated into the surrounding neighborhood.</p> <p>Commercial centers should provide access with pedestrian or bicycle in addition to motor vehicle access.</p> <p>Should be within easy walking distance from IDR, MF14, MF24 and HDR neighborhoods.</p> <p>Office uses are found scattered throughout the urbanized area but are especially common in the vicinity of clinics, hospitals, commercial activities and major streets between residential land uses. Offices should serve as a transitional land use between single family and more intense retail uses.</p>	<p>OP NC GC AC CC MINI STORAGE/ RV STORAGE MINIWAREHOUSE CHILD DAY CARE GOLF COMM. Mixed Use</p>	<p>PO C1 C2 NUD PD</p>

TABLE 2 - MIXED USE AND COMMERCIAL LAND USES

Land Use Category	Uses	Characteristics and Location	Existing Land Use Category	Zoning Districts
<p><b>TOURIST COMMERCIAL (TC)</b></p>	<p><b>Primary Uses:</b> Tourist-oriented activities, restricted and unrestricted gaming, commercial services including, banks, restaurants, retail and offices, hotel/motels, theaters, parks, plazas, health clubs, truck stops</p> <p><b>Other Uses:</b> Higher density residential is encouraged including live-work units, Open Space, trails, schools, private recreational facilities, public facilities, religious institutions</p> <p><b>Minimum Density:</b> None</p>	<p>Generally located adjacent to I-80 freeway corridor and the Truckee River.</p> <p>Promotes a variety of tourist related facilities and activities, including commercial, hotel and gaming.</p> <p>Coordinated vehicular, pedestrian, transit and bicycle circulation system is an important part of TC use.</p> <p>Truck stops service the interstate commerce transportation system. Typically these facilities have gaming associated with the operation. Also associated are restaurants, truck maintenance facilities, fueling, lodging, driver personal services, etc.</p> <p>Can incorporate as ancillary uses as outdoor sales and service operations and wholesale stores</p>	<p>TC TC/GC</p>	<p>TC NUD PD</p>

TABLE 3 - EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL LAND USES

Land Use Category	Uses	Characteristics and Location	Existing Land Use Category	Zoning Districts
<p><b>EMPLOYMENT CENTER (EC)</b></p>	<p><b>Primary Uses:</b> Office parks, technology parks, manufacturing processing, medical complex, data center</p> <p><b>Other Uses:</b> Supporting commercial and service uses, lodging (no unrestricted gaming), warehousing and distribution (maximum 35% of total floor area), open space, trails, private recreational facilities, public facilities</p> <p><b>Minimum Density:</b> None</p>	<p>Intended for development that supports major non-retail employment uses including business parks and technology parks. Can incorporate limited ancillary commercial uses. Should occur within areas with large parcels and excellent transportation access. Can be found at various scales, from single use buildings to large mixed use buildings and / or multiple-building complexes. Can be appropriate adjacent to residential uses provided design and buffering standards are applied. Commercial services and lodging only allowed as ancillary use after establishment of Employment Center uses.</p>	<p>OP BP OBP OP/I PF GC/I</p>	<p>PO PF C2 I NUD PD</p>

TABLE 3 - EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL LAND USES

Land Use Category	Uses	Characteristics and Location	Existing Land Use Category	Zoning Districts
INDUSTRIAL (I)	<p><b>Primary Uses:</b> Manufacturing and processing, small to medium scale wholesale, warehousing and storage, distribution, outdoor storage, salvage, mineral extraction and operations, co-generation facilities, commercial renewable energy production, recycling plant – outdoor operational storage</p> <p><b>Other Uses:</b> Offices, open space, trails, commercial restricted to the area described in Characteristics and Location column, animal hospital and kennels, private recreational facilities, public facilities, religious institutions as an interim use</p> <p><b>Minimum Density:</b> None</p>	<p>Generally located south of I-80 along between the western / eastern City boundaries and southeast Prater Wy and Sparks Blvd.. Typically involves more intensive work processes and may involve manufacturing or basic resource handling. Higher-intensity industrial uses should have convenient access to freeway, highway, and/or rail. Lower-intensity industrial uses are appropriate along major arterial corridors. The uses permitted in the Industrial land use category are intense and should be designated for areas where there are large parcels. Integrated industrial development can result in productive and well-planned industrial parks with minimum adverse effect upon surrounding land uses. Within the Industrial land use category, but location restricted generally to Sparks Boulevard, McCarran Boulevard, Rock Boulevard, Greg Street, Glendale Avenue, and north of Greg Street to Glendale Avenue, west to the Truckee River, east to Deming Way as to support the predominant uses of the Industrial area are commercial uses including but not specifically limited to sales and service, office, personal service and restaurants.</p>	I	I MUD NUD

TABLE 4 – OTHER LAND USES

Land Use Category	Uses	Characteristics and Location	Existing Land Use Category	Zoning Districts
RURAL RESERVE (RR)	<p><b>Primary Uses:</b> Not developed or unimproved</p> <p><b>Other Uses:</b> Public utility structures</p> <p><b>Minimum Density:</b> None</p>	<p>These areas are expected to remain as rural for the foreseeable future. This designation will preserve existing land for future development beyond the planning horizon.</p> <p>The demand for public services levels will remain at or below what is deemed acceptable for rural communities.</p> <p>This designation may also be considered as an interim use with the intent that some time in the future these areas will transition to urban uses.</p>	OS/RURAL RESERVE	A-5

TABLE 4 – OTHER LAND USES

Land Use Category	Uses	Characteristics and Location	Existing Land Use Category	Zoning Districts
<p>OPEN SPACE (OS)</p>	<p><b>Primary Uses:</b> Passive and active open space, golf courses, common areas, green space, wetlands, other environmentally sensitive areas, parks, trails</p> <p><b>Other Uses:</b> Support structures and facilities, agriculture, public utility structures</p> <p><b>Minimum Density:</b> None</p>	<p>Generally lands dedicated by the government, property owner or developer to preserve open space or environmentally sensitive areas.</p> <p>Appropriate structures and facilities to support and enhance the use of the open space are allowed.</p> <p>Functions as either a location for passive recreational use or as a buffer between uses.</p> <p>Designated throughout the City in variety of locations such as steep terrain, along streams and drainages, designated wetlands and federally controlled lands.</p> <p>Can also be used on active recreational uses, generally when part of a planned development.</p>	<p>OS/RURAL RESERVE PF</p>	<p>A40 A5 NUD PD PF</p>

TABLE 4 – OTHER LAND USES

Land Use Category	Uses	Characteristics and Location	Existing Land Use Category	Zoning Districts
<p><b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES (CF)</b></p>	<p><b>Primary Uses:</b> Government offices, police stations, fire stations, public schools, parks, libraries, community centers, cemeteries, public services such as electrical substations, water and wastewater facilities and other similar uses, religious institutions, golf courses, community gardens</p> <p><b>Other Uses:</b> Public utility structures</p> <p><b>Minimum Density:</b> None</p>	<p>Lands and buildings intended to be used for public and civic use, utilities and/or religious institutions.</p> <p>These uses are located and planned throughout the City.</p> <p>The uses may be regional or city wide in scale and intensity (such as large athletic fields, community parks, biking and hiking trails) while others are intended to serve surrounding neighborhood needs such as playgrounds and pocket parks or public schools.</p> <p>Generally compatible with most other urban land uses, especially residential.</p> <p>Parks and schools should have pedestrian and bike trail access.</p>	<p>PARK PF PI SCHOOL SCHOOL/PARK</p>	<p>PF</p>

TABLE 5 – MIXED USE DISTRICT (MUD)

Land Use Category	Uses	Characteristics and Location	Existing Land Use Category	Zoning Districts
<p>MIXED USE DISTRICT (MUD) - RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD (RN)</p>	<p><b>Primary Uses:</b> Single-family detached and attached residences, duplexes, 3 or more attached units, townhouses/row-houses, apartment buildings, condominiums</p> <p><b>Other Uses:</b> None</p> <p><b>Minimum Density:</b> Min. of 24 dwelling units/acre for development adjacent to BRT route Min. of 12 dwelling units/acre for development not located adjacent to BRT route Refer to MUD Corridor plan for exceptions.</p>	<p>Refer to the MUD Area Plan for development standards.</p> <p>Intended to consist primarily of existing single-family detached and attached residences.</p>	<p>MUD-RN</p>	<p>MUD</p>

TABLE 5 – MIXED USE DISTRICT (MUD)

Land Use Category	Uses	Characteristics and Location	Existing Land Use Category	Zoning Districts
<p>MIXED USE DISTRICT (MUD) - MIXED - RESIDENTIAL (MR)</p>	<p><b>Primary Uses:</b> Single-family detached and attached residences, duplexes, 3 or more attached units, townhouses/row-houses, apartment buildings, condominiums</p> <p><b>Other Uses:</b> Retail, office, live work units</p> <p><b>Minimum Density:</b> Min. of 24 dwelling units/acre for development adjacent to BRT route Min. of 12 dwelling units/acre for development not located adjacent to BRT route Refer to MUD Corridor Plan for exceptions</p> <p>Min. FAR of 0.75 for development located adjacent to BRT route Min. FAR of 0.5 for development not located adjacent to BRT route Refer to MUD Corridor Plan for exceptions.</p>	<p>Refer to the MUD Area Plan for development standards.</p> <p>Intended to provide opportunities for transit-supportive, mixed-use development with a residential emphasis.</p>	<p>MUD-MR</p>	<p>MUD</p>

TABLE 5 – MIXED USE DISTRICT (MUD)

Land Use Category	Uses	Characteristics and Location	Existing Land Use Category	Zoning Districts
<p>MIXED USE DISTRICT (MUD) - DOWNTOWN/ VICTORIAN SQUARE (D/VS)</p>	<p><b>Primary Uses:</b> Retail, office, live work units, employment, casino, civic and entertainment uses</p> <p><b>Other Uses:</b> Medium to high density housing types</p> <p><b>Minimum Density:</b> Min. of 30 dwelling units/acre for development within the Downtown Sparks Center Min. of 18 dwelling units/acre for development not located within the Downtown Sparks Center Refer to MUD Corridor Plan for exceptions</p> <p>Min. FAR of 1.5 for development located within the Downtown Sparks Center Min. FAR of 1.0 for development not located within the Downtown Sparks Center Refer to MUD Corridor Plan for exceptions.</p>	<p>Refer to the MUD Area Plan for development standards.</p> <p>Intended to be a high-energy, mixed-use Regional Center that serves as a gathering place for the community and a desirable place for residents to live, work and play.</p> <p>This category includes the Sparks Downtown Center.</p>	<p>MUD-D/VS</p>	<p>MUD</p>

TABLE 5 – MIXED USE DISTRICT (MUD)

Land Use Category	Uses	Characteristics and Location	Existing Land Use Category	Zoning Districts
<p>MIXED USE DISTRICT (MUD) - MIXED-USE COMMERCIAL (MUC)</p>	<p><b>Primary Uses:</b> Retail, office, live work units, employment, casino, civic and entertainment uses</p> <p><b>Other Uses:</b> Medium to high density housing types</p> <p><b>Minimum Density:</b> Min. of 24 dwelling units/acre for development adjacent to BRT route Min. of 18 dwelling units/acre for development not located adjacent to BRT route Refer to MUD Corridor Plan for exceptions</p> <p>Min. FAR of 0.75 for development located adjacent to BRT route Min. FAR of 0.5 for development not located adjacent to BRT route Refer to MUD Corridor Plan for exceptions.</p>	<p>Refer to the MUD Area Plan for development standards.</p> <p>Primarily coincide with designated activity centers and should contain a mix of integrated, pedestrian-friendly uses (such as retail, offices and residential).</p>	<p>MUD-MUC</p>	<p>MUD</p>

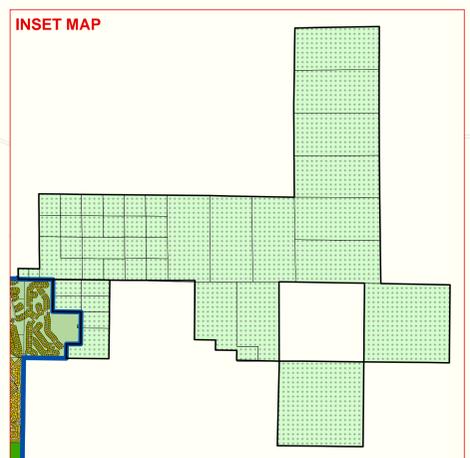
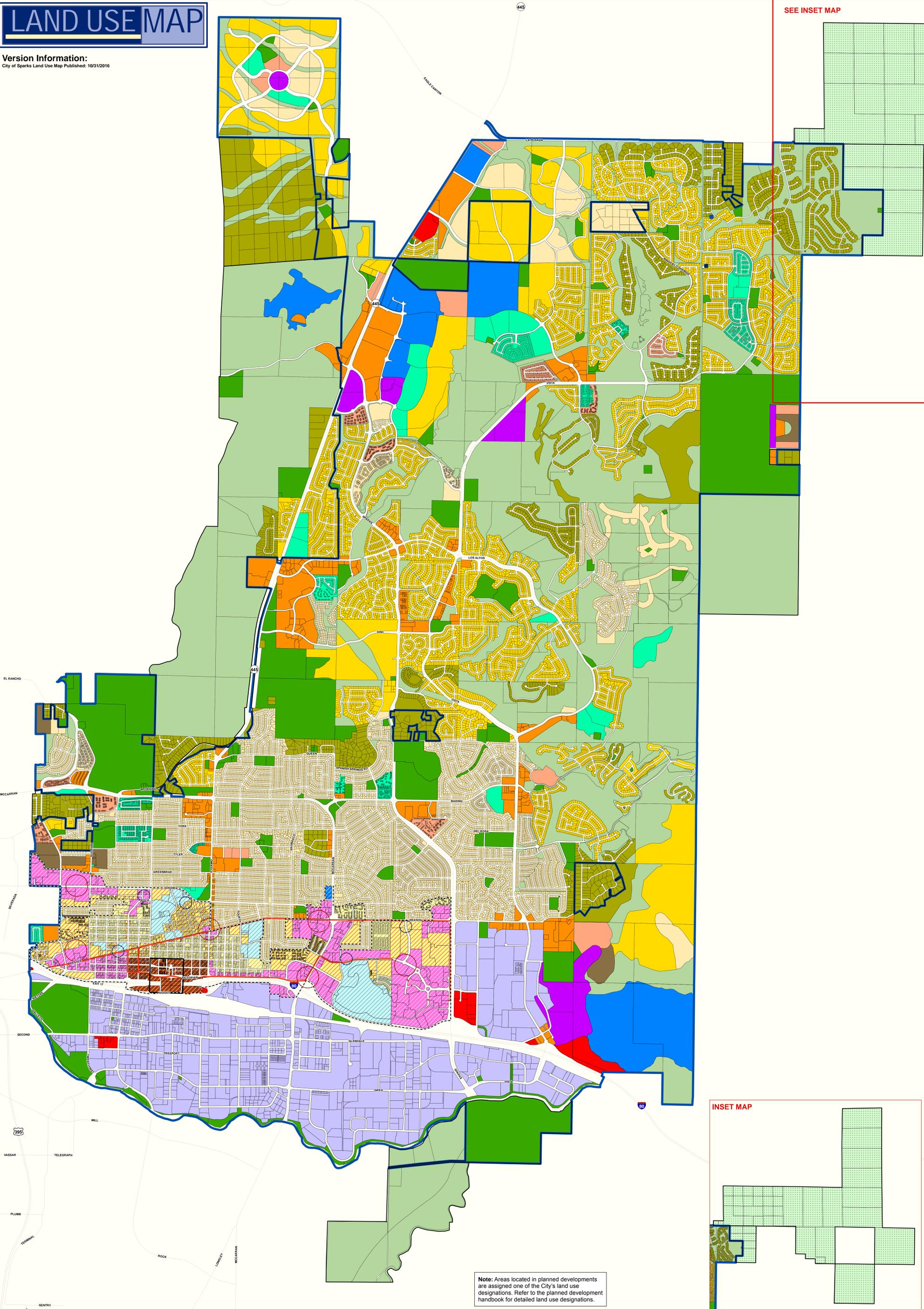
TABLE 5 – MIXED USE DISTRICT (MUD)

Land Use Category	Uses	Characteristics and Location	Existing Land Use Category	Zoning Districts
MIXED USE DISTRICT (MUD) - EMPLOYMENT (E)	<p><b>Primary Uses:</b> Light industrial, professional services, medical and office</p> <p><b>Other Uses:</b> Restaurants, retail services and personal services</p> <p><b>Minimum Density:</b> Min. FAR of 0.35 for development not located adjacent to Prater Way, Sparks Boulevard and Vista Boulevard</p>	<p>Refer to the MUD Area Plan for development standards.</p> <p>Primary purpose of Employment designation is to reinforce the well-established and largely built-out employment area east of Sparks Boulevard, between I-80 and Prater Way.</p> <p>To increase diversity of employment options. Provides large ridership base for existing transit routes.</p>	MUD-E	MUD
MIXED USE DISTRICT (MUD) - CIVIC	<p><b>Primary Uses:</b> Parks, schools, library, community facilities</p> <p><b>Other Uses:</b> None</p> <p><b>Minimum Density:</b> None</p>	<p>Refer to the MUD Area Plan for development standards.</p> <p>Primary purpose of Civic designation is to identify the public facilities.</p>	MUD-CV	MUD

# LAND USE MAP

Version Information:  
City of Sparks Land Use Map Published: 10/31/2016

SEE INSET MAP



Note: Areas located in planned developments are assigned one of the City's land use designations. Refer to the planned development handbook for detailed land use designations.

NOTE: The scale and configuration of all information shown hereon are approximate only and are NOT intended as a guide for design or survey work. Reproduction is NOT permitted without prior written permission from the City of Sparks GIS Office.

**GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM OFFICE**

City of Sparks  
101 W. WASHINGTON ST. SUITE 100  
SPARKS, NV 89410

0 900 1,800 3,600 Feet

LAND USE DESIGNATION:									
C	HDR	LDR	MF24	RR	MUD-DVS	MUD-RN	Sphere of Influence	Downtown Sparks Center	
CF	I	LLR	MU	TC	MUD-MR	MUD-E	City of Sparks Incorporated	Major Activity Center	
EC	IDR	MF14	OS	MUD-CV	MUD-MUC		Sparks MUD	Minor Activity Center	
							BRT		





## CHAPTER FIVE

# IMPLEMENTATION AND MEASURING SUCCESS

## CHAPTER FIVE: IMPLEMENTATION AND MEASURING SUCCESS

The Ignite Sparks Comprehensive Plan includes a policy framework comprised of 121 goals and policies across seven topics. The City will review the implementation status of the goals and policies annually in conjunction with the yearly update to the strategic plan. The following matrix is by framework topic listing all the goals and policies in Chapter 4 – Framework for the Future. The purpose of the matrix is to allow the City to better evaluate the effectiveness of the Ignite Sparks Comprehensive Plan and highlight areas that need attention or modification along with showing accomplishments.

The matrix identifies the city department(s) or in some instances other agencies such as Regional Transportation Commission, that will take the lead and/or have a key role in implementing the goal/policy. The second set of columns identify the current status of the implementation of the goal/policy as future, underway or completed. The matrix also addresses the resources required to implement the goal/policy.



## Implementation and Measuring Success

Managing Growth								
Goal/ Policy #	Goal/Policy	Priority	Lead Responsibility	Implementation			Cost to Implement	Comments
				No Action	Underway	Completed		
Goal MG1	Support economic vitality by providing a non-residential land use base.	High	Planning		X		Staff time	
Goal MG2	Foster diversity in the land use mix including residential, commercial, industrial, employment and recreational areas citywide.	High	Planning		X		Staff time	
Goal MG3	Maintain a land use plan which integrates land uses and facilitates access by multiple modes of transportation.	High	Planning		X		Staff time	
Goal MG4	Facilitate infill and redevelopment.	High	Planning		X		Potential infrastrure improvement costs	
Goal MG5	Prioritize development and enhancement of the Downtown Sparks Center.	High	Planning and Engineering		X		Staff time	
Goal MG6	Promote compact development to reduce the per capita cost of providing infrastructure, public facilities and public services.	High	Planning and Engineering		X		Potential infrastrure improvement costs	
Policy MG1	The Land Use Plan will provide for a diverse and integrated mix of residential and non-residential land uses which, in the aggregate, are fiscally positive		Planning			X	Staff time	
Policy MG2	Maintain the area south of Interstate 80 for industrial, office and commercial uses.					X		
Policy MG3	Retain and promote emerging employment centers.					X		
Policy MG4	Maintain an adequate supply of land for employment-generating uses.							
Policy MG5	When reviewing master plan amendments for sites over 5 acres, the City will evaluate or cause to be evaluated: a) the impacts on existing and planned public facilities and infrastructure; b) the impacts on existing and planned public services; c) the proposed land use in relationship to existing land uses; and, d) the fiscal implications for public service providers of the proposed land use changes as documented in a fiscal impact analysis.							
Policy MG6	Maintain a current Seven Year Annexation Program.	High						
Policy MG7	When reviewing annexation requests, the City will consider whether the proposed annexation: a) is included in the City's Seven Year Annexatio Program; b) is needed for the City's growth within seven years; c) represents a local extension of the city limits; d) allows for efficient and cost effective provision of public services and capital facilities; and e) would be fiscally positive for a period of at least 20 years. When reviewing land use entitlements (e.g. master plan maendments, zone changes, tentative maps, conditional use permits) for land annexed within the previous 10 years period, the City may require an updated fiscal analysis if the proposed development materially vvaries from the development contemplated in the fiscal analysis prepared for the annexation.		Planning, Engineering, Finance				None	
Policy MG8	When identifying lands for expansion of the City's Sphere of Influence, the City must determine that the proposed expansion: a) represents a logical expansion of the City's Sphere of Influence; b) is located within the Truckee Meadows Service Area (TMSA) as identified in the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan, or could reasonably be added to the TMSA; c) could be efficiently and cost effectively provided capital facilities and public services. The City's determination will be based on preliminary infrastructure and facilities plans and a fiscal analysis addressing the cost to provide city services.							
Policy MG9	Promote compact development to reduce the number of miles of roads, sidewalks, sewers and other infrastructure needed per capita and to manage the geographic area to which the City and other public agencies must provide services such as police and fire protection, emergency medical services and code enforcement.							
Policy MG10	Facilitate infill, redevelopment and functionally-integrated mixed-use development through targeted infrastructure improvements, additional zoning code amendments (if necessary) and, when feasible and appropriate, public/private partnerships. The identified activity centers on the Land Use Map will promote a broad mix of uses.							
Policy MG11	Require new infill development to consider and be sensitive to the character of existing neighborhoods in regard to zoning, building mass, structure placement, height transitions, landscaping, streetscape, access and other physical features of the existing neighborhood.							
Policy MG12	Encourage reinvestment in existing employment centers such as the area south of Interstate 80 and the Prater Way, Victorian Avenue and Oddie Boulevard corridors.							
Policy MG13	Work with the Union Pacific Railroad to plan for compatible development adjacent to railroad facilities.							
Policy MG14	Work with Reno-Tahoe International Airport to enhance the compatibility of existing and proposed uses located within noise contours and airplane approaches to the airport.							
Policy MG15	Continue to implement the Victorian Square Development Plan as it may be amended.							
Policy MG16	Enhance Victorian Avenue west of the Downtown Sparks Center.							

Connectivity							
Goal/ Policy #	Goal/Policy	Responsible Department	Implementation			Resources Required	Comments
			Future	Underway	Completed		
Goal C1	Develop a complete, efficient transportation system that gives Sparks residents of all ages and visitors access to employment, housing, services and recreation throughout urban Washoe County.	Community Services and RTC		X		Infrastructure improvements	
Goal C2	Provide a transportation network that supports business formation and attraction and economic vitality.	Community Services and RTC		X		Infrastructure improvements	
Goal C3	Facilitate non-motorized travel throughout the community.	Community Services and RTC		X		Infrastructure improvements	
Policy C1	Work with the Regional Transportation Commission to ensure completion of Prater Way and Oddie Boulevard corridor enhancements.	Community Services and RTC		X		Infrastructure improvements	
Policy C2	Work with the Regional Transportation Commission to add roadway capacity as necessary to accommodate Sparks' growth.	Community Services and RTC		X		Infrastructure improvements	
Policy C3	Ensure streets with multiple modes of transportation remain multi-modal. If a transportation mode is removed from a street, it must be provided in another facility that provides for comparable multi-modal connectivity in the same area	Community Services and RTC	X			Staff Time and infrastructure improvements	
Policy C4	Require sidewalks for pedestrians on all street networks within the City.	Community Services and RTC		X		Staff Time and infrastructure improvements	
Policy C5	Convert 4 <sup>th</sup> Street to a bike boulevard.	Community Services and RTC	X			Staff Time and infrastructure improvements	
Policy C6	In Spark's Transit Corridor promote infill development and create a pedestrian-friendly environment that facilitates walkability and transit ridership.	Community Services		X		Staff time	
Policy C7	Encourage bus service for special events.	Parks and Recreation		X		Staff Ttme	
Policy C8	Ensure the completion and maintenance of the trail network (Figure 4 – 2).	Community Services		X		Infrastructure improvements	
Policy C9	Ensure the transportation system meets the needs for all persons including children and seniors.	Community Services		X		Staff time	

Community Facilities and Services							
Goal/ Policy #	Goal/Policy	Responsible Department	Implementation			Resources Required	Comments
			Future	Underway	Completed		
Goal CF1	Maintain or, as necessary, upgrade the condition of City-owned facilities and infrastructure while maximizing their utilization.	Community Services		X		Staff time and facility investments	
Goal CF2	Revenues permitting, maintain and enhance the level of public services provided to the City residents, visitors and businesses.	All City Departments	X			Additional operational budget	
Policy CF1	When reviewing new development, the City will not approve an application unless City services can be provided at acceptable service levels.	Community Services, Police and Fire	X			Staff time	
Policy CF2	Any intensification of development within the City or its Sphere of Influence requires connection to city sewer.	Community Services		X		Staff time	
Policy CF3	Adopt criteria based on the Managing Growth Land Use Policies of the Comprehensive Plan, for how to allocate excess sewer capacity, if available. The criteria will prioritize allocating any such excess capacity to, in order of priority: 1) serve additional density within the existing city limits of Sparks; 2) areas identified in the City's Seven Year Annexation Program; 3) areas within the City's Sphere of Influence not included in the Seven Year Annexation Program; 4) areas outside the City's Sphere of Influence.	Community Services	X			Staff time	
Policy CF4	Manage recreation services to achieve the financial goals for the entire recreation program and allocate recreation programming to reflect residents' priorities.	Parks and Recreation		X		Staff time	
Policy CF5	When city parks are eliminated due to development, equivalent replacement facilities must be provided in a location agreed upon by all parties.	Community Services and Parks and Recreation	X			Staff time	
Policy CF6	The City will strive to increase its internet/web presence and to create a more user-friendly system for permitting and application processes.	Administrative Services		X		Technology investment	
Policy CF7	Continue to identify potential cost savings to reduce per capita administrative costs.	All City Departments		X		Staff time	
Policy CF8	The City will minimize debt and increase cash reserves and fund balances to optimal levels.	Financial Services		X		Staff time	
Policy CF9	Strive to provide a six-minute fire response time for 85 % of the City, which will require a sixth fire station.	Fire	X			Capital investment and increase operational budget	
Policy CF10	Establish an asset management system to proactively monitor and manage facilities, infrastructure and other capital investments for use in the Capital Improvement Plan. The establishment of the asset management system will require an Asset Management Department which will streamline predetermined internal City processes/reporting by historical analyzation of City assets through a suitable asset management software solution.	Community Services and Administrative Services	X			Staff time and technology investment	
Policy CF11	Explore providing a satellite office for the Police Department manned by civilian staff for public access.	Police	X			Increase operational budget	
Policy CF12	Work in cooperation with Washoe County and the City of Reno to maintain and improve joint-use facilities.	Parks and Recreation and Community Services		X		Staff time and Capital investment	
Policy CF13	Work in cooperation with the Washoe County School District to maintain and improve joint-use facilities as directed in the joint use agreement.	Parks and Recreation and Community Services		X		Staff time and Capital investment	
Policy CF14	Work with the Washoe County School District to strategically plan the location of new public schools.	Community Services	X			Staff time	
Policy CF15	New schools will not be located on streets designated as arterials.	Community Services	X			Staff time	
Policy CF16	Work with the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority to develop noise overlay zoning or similar measures to ensure compatibility of surrounding development to the operation of the airport.	Community Services	X			Staff time	
Policy CF17	Strive to install new electrical transmission infrastructure in existing utility corridors.	Community Services	X			Staff time	
Policy CF18	Work with utility companies to place new electrical transmission infrastructure underground, especially when doing so may mitigate the safety risk of above-ground construction.	Community Services			X	Staff time	
Policy CF19	Foster the placement of infrastructure in utility corridors.	Community Services		X		Staff time	

Community Character							
Goal/ Policy #	Goal/Policy	Responsible Department	Implementation			Resources Required	Comments
			Future	Underway	Completed		
Goal CC1	Ensure that Sparks' physical environment, services and amenities make it a city of choice for residents and businesses.	All Departments		X		Staff time and capital and operational investments	
Policy CC1	Continue providing parks within proximity of all residential areas to Sparks following adopted park land standards.	Parks and Recreation and Community Services		X		Staff time and capital and operational investments	
Policy CC2	Promote a mix of uses, including restaurants and shopping, to create a vibrant downtown district at Victorian Square.	Community Services		X		Staff time	
Policy CC3	Evaluate the creation of a historic district.	Community Services	X			Staff time	
Policy CC4	Increase, as feasible, the number of special events held in Sparks.	Parks and Recreation		X		Staff time and event subsidies	
Policy CC5	Coordinate with private partners to make affordable arts and culture programs available to all citizens.	Parks and Recreation		X		Staff time	
Policy CC6	Encourage public art in major private and public works projects and provide opportunities for the display of art in public spaces.	Parks and Recreation		X		Staff time	
Policy CC7	Provide equitable access to recreation, children's and other activities and programming to all areas of Sparks.	Parks and Recreation		X		Staff time	
Policy CC8	Foster neighborhood diversity and design by permitting varied lot sizes, building materials, building styles and color.	Community Services		X		Staff time	
Policy CC9	Promote quality of design for new construction through development standards that provide well-articulated building facades, defined entrances, clear pedestrian connections and landscaping.	Community Services		X		Staff time	
Policy CC10	Work with the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) and Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) to plan and design major road capacity expansions to minimize the degree to which the widening of roads divides neighborhoods or adds barriers for pedestrians, bicyclists and other non-motorized travel.	Community Services		X		Staff time	

Housing and Affordability							
Goal/ Policy #	Goal/Policy	Responsible Department	Implementation			Resources Required	Comments
			Future	Underway	Completed		
Goal H1	Facilitate development of housing that is available, affordable and accessible to a diverse and growing population, including senior citizens.	Community Services and Washoe County Home Consortium		X		Staff time and subsidies	
Goal H2	Promote a strong, diverse housing market that supports economic growth and vitality while ensuring environmental and fiscal sustainability.	Community Services		X		Staff time	
Goal H3	Ensure that Sparks residential and mixed-use neighborhoods are desirable locations to live.	Community Services, Parks and Recreation, Police and Fire		X		Staff time	
Policy H1	Ensure there are sufficient appropriately zoned areas with the infrastructure, public facilities and services necessary for the production of new housing.	Community Services		X		Staff time and capital improvements	
Policy H2	Promote a variety of housing types throughout Sparks, including within mixed-used settings, to expand the choices available to meet the financial and lifestyle needs of a diverse population and workforce.	Community Services		X		Staff time	
Policy H3	Connect housing with multiple transportation options.	Community Services and RTC		X		Staff time and capital improvements	
Policy H4	Enforce property maintenance ordinances in residential areas.	Community Services and City Attorney		X		Staff time	
Policy H5	Utilize the Washoe County Home Consortium as a vehicle for the development and retention of rent- and income-restricted affordable housing.	Community Services		X		Staff time	
Policy H6	The City will create a Housing Plan that addresses the eight components in NRS 278.160(8), including but not limited to maintaining and developing affordable housing to meet the housing needs of Sparks.	Community Services		X		Staff time	
Policy H7	Comply with NRS 278.235 by implementing at least 6 of the 12 specified measures relating to affordable housing.	Community Services and Washoe County Home Consortium	X			Staff time and may require hiring a consultant	
Policy H8	Facilitate development of multi-generational housing options and products.	Community Services and Washoe County Home Consortium	X			Staff time and may require housing subsidies	
Policy H9	Facilitate housing communities for seniors, including aging in place options.	Community Services and Washoe County Senior Services	X			Staff time and may require housing subsidies	

Resiliency and Conservation							
Goal/ Policy #	Goal/Policy	Responsible Department	Implementation			Resources Required	Comments
			Future	Underway	Completed		
Goal RC1	Conserve and protect natural resources needed to provide for current and future residents, businesses and visitors.	Community Services		X		Staff time and capital improvements	
Goal RC2	Assess, prepare for and mitigate the impacts of environmental changes, including extended droughts and extreme weather events.	Community Services		X		Staff time and capital improvements	
Goal RC3	Identify and anticipate potential environmental, regulatory and other constraints on Sparks' growth and economic vitality.	Community Services and City Attorney	X			Staff time	
Goal RC4	Evaluate and prepare for natural disasters and mass-casualty events.	Community Services, Police, Fire and Administrative Services		X		Staff time	
Policy RC1	Reduce per capita potable water use through conservation, water reclamation and reuse and other water resource stewardship programs.	Community Services and Truckee Meadows Water Authority		X		Staff time and capital improvements	
Policy RC2	Protect the water quality of the Truckee River, drainages, lakes and aquifers.	Community Services		X		Staff time and capital improvements	
Policy RC3	Maintain the Truckee River corridor as a trail and open space system and require new development to accommodate public trail and river access.	Community Services and Parks and Recreation		X		Staff time and capital improvements	
Policy RC4	Reduce pollution from stormwater runoff, overflow and other non-point sources.	Community Services		X		Staff time and capital improvements	
Policy RC5	Protect groundwater quality through land use management that safeguards recharge areas from inappropriate disturbances and contamination.	Community Services		X		Staff time	
Policy RC6	Implement "Best Management Practices", including but not limited to Low Impact Development Practices (LID), to control urban storm water runoff.	Community Services		X		Staff time	
Policy RC7	Prevent and mitigate the degradation or destruction of wetlands.	Community Services		X		Staff time	
Policy RC8	Plan for and adapt to increased drought, severe weather and other potential impacts of climate change on the water supply.	Community Services and Administrative Services	X			Staff time	
Policy RC9	Coordinate with regional agencies to improve air quality by reducing emissions resulting from motor vehicle use, traffic and congestion, and industrial sources.	Community Services, Washoe County District Health and RTC				Staff time	
Policy RC10	Increase Sparks' urban tree canopy through the addition of trees in existing developed areas and by requiring trees in new developments.	Community Services and Parks and Recreation		X		Staff time and additional operational resources	
Policy RC11	Reduce the disposal of solid waste and increase reuse and recycling to conserve natural resources.	Administrative Services		X		Staff time	
Policy RC12	Work with county, state, tribal and federal agencies to minimize potential impacts to natural habitats and migration corridors.	Community Services		X		Staff time	

Goal/ Policy #	Goal/Policy	Responsible Department	Implementation			Resources Required	Comments
			Future	Underway	Completed		
Policy RC13	Support regional efforts to develop and implement a strategy to diversify the energy sources, especially solar energy, available to Sparks residents and businesses.	Community Services, Administrative Services and City Attorney		X		Staff time	
Policy RC14	Reduce per capita energy use through conservation and by periodically updating building codes and development standards to make buildings and transportation more energy efficient.	Community Services		X		Staff time	
Policy RC15	Reduce the threats flooding poses to public safety and property.	Community Services		X		Staff time and capital investments	
Policy RC16	Evaluate and mitigate the impacts on surrounding areas of new development within floodplains.	Community Services		X		Staff time and capital investments	
Policy RC17	Maintain infrastructure and enhance programs to keep the public safe during emergencies.	Community Services, Police, Fire and Administrative Services		X		Staff time and capital investments	
Policy RC18	Protect the public from the impacts of earthquakes and landslide/debris flow areas through compliance with building codes and federal standards.	Community Services		X		Staff time	
Policy RC19	Protect the urban wildland interface from wildfire hazards and require development to reduce intrusion into fire-prone areas by clustering or other design methods.	Fire and Community Services		X		Staff time	
Policy RC20	Prohibit the use of diesel oil-fueled, internal combustion power generation units synchronized with the regional electric grid within the Truckee Meadows Service portion of Sparks, except for emergency conditions such as weather related acts of nature, unforeseen grid disturbances, maintenance activities including testing or transmission limitations.	Community Services	X			Staff time	
Policy RC21	Evaluate the feasibility of decentralized wastewater treatment site options, including package plants and satellite facilities, to complement the Truckee Meadows Wate Reclamation Facility.	Community Services	X			Staff time and consultants costs	
Policy RC22	Maintain development restrictions and standards in the Sparks Municipal Code as necessary to conform to policies in the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan pertaining to Development Constraints Areas and for slopes with gradients over 30 %.	Community Services		X		Staff time	
Policy RC23	Require new development to preserve and protect significant natural amenities, unique features (e.g., rock outcroppings and drainage ways) and other natural features.	Community Services		X		Staff time	
Policy RC24	Promote the protection of and minimize potential impacts on cultural resources within the City's jurisdiction.	Community Services	X			Staff time	
Policy RC25	Require development to minimize hillside scarring and the impacts of increasing access in roadless areas.	Community Services		X		Staff time	

Economic Vitality							
Goal/ Policy #	Goal/Policy	Responsible Department	Implementation			Resources Required	Comments
			Future	Underway	Completed		
Goal EV1	Grow and diversify Sparks' economy.	Community Services		X		Staff time	
Goal EV2	Attract capital investment and new, higher-paying jobs.	Community Services		X		Staff time	
Goal EV3	Attract and retain sought-after employers and a skilled workforce.	Community Services		X		Staff time	
Goal EV4	Maintain a physical and regulatory environment that facilitates innovation, entrepreneurship and small business development while providing for long-term environmental and fiscal sustainability.	Community Services, Administrative Services, City Attorney and Fire		X		Staff time	
Goal EV5	Identify and respond to potential economic development opportunities, including emerging industries, which may arise from environmental and regulatory changes.	Community Services, Administrative Services and City Attorney		X		Staff time	
Goal EV6	Provide the facilities and public services necessary to support a vibrant economy by maintaining fiscal strength.	All Departments		X		Staff time, capital investments and potential additional operational resources	
Policy EV1	Build on Sparks' position as a leader in special events by investing additional resources in event venues and adding events, including family-friendly events.	Parks and Recreation and Community Services		X		Staff time and capital investments	
Policy EV2	Enhance Sparks' appeal to visitors to the region by strengthening arts and entertainment offerings.	Parks and Recreation	X			Staff time	
Policy EV3	Promote the availability of land designated for business and office park uses with master planned developments	Community Services		X		Staff time	
Policy EV4	Develop and implement a strategy for attracting new investment and more employment-dense and higher-paying industries to the area between the Truckee River and Interstate 80.	Community Services	X			Staff time	
Policy EV5	Undertake the analysis necessary to determine the feasibility of expanding the city limits to include the area east of the City's corporate boundary and north of Interstate 80 for job-generating land uses.	Community Services and Administrative Services	X			Require consultant resources	
Policy EV6	Support entrepreneurs by providing appropriately zoned areas with the infrastructure, public facilities and services necessary to start and grow small businesses.	Community Services		X		Staff time	
Policy EV7	Optimize the use of technology and online services to facilitate obtaining information, land use approvals, licenses and permits from the City.	Administrative Services and Community Services		X		Technology investment	
Policy EV8	Advocate for and support public and private investments in Sparks that improve quality of life while providing critical services and facilities to retain current residents and attract a skilled workforce.	Community Services and Parks and Recreation		X		Staff time	
Policy EV9	Promote a balanced and sustainable land-use mix that fiscally and environmentally benefits the City	Community Services		X		Staff time	
Policy EV10	Require, prior to or with applications for land-use approval (Tentative Map, Administrative Review or Conditional Use Permit), all development projects on greenfield sites of 20 or more acres to demonstrate they are fiscally positive to the City for a period of at least 20 years.	Community Services	X			Staff time	



# APPENDIX X

# THE CITY OF SPARKS

## 2016 Housing Plan

**The City of Sparks Housing Plan presents the current and future housing needs of the City and proposes solutions for the provision of housing. The Housing Plan identifies the goals, policies and programs, which offer actions to address the housing needs for the City of Sparks. The goals, policies and programs aim to provide solutions to housing needs for all economic segments of the community. The Housing Plan for the City of Sparks applies to the City's boundaries within the region.**

This Housing Plan contents discusses a wide range of demographic, housing, and economic data. The data was collected from the U.S. Census Bureau, state economic and employment forecasts, the Nevada Small Business Development Center, and other local sources.

### HOUSING PLAN REQUIREMENTS

State law Chapter 278 specifies criteria for Housing Plans. There are eight Housing Plan components that guide the data collection for the Housing Needs Assessment, each of which is described below. State law also calls for goals, policies, and programs to address those needs identified in the Housing Needs Assessment. Recent legislation added another layer of requirements more relevant to the development of policies in the Housing Plan. NRS Section 278.235 mandates jurisdictions with Housing Plans to incorporate six out of twelve potential program measures. These are also described in further detail below.

First, Chapter 278 of the Nevada Revised Statutes requires jurisdictions in counties with populations between 100,000 and 700,000 that adopt Master Plans to include a Housing Plan. The law requires Housing Plans to "include a plan for maintaining and developing affordable housing to meet the housing needs of the community" (NRS 278.150 and 278.160). The Housing Plan must include the following eight components (as modified by AB 359):

1. An inventory of housing conditions, needs, plans, and procedures for improving housing standards and for providing adequate housing to individuals and families in the community, regardless of income level;
2. An inventory of existing affordable housing in the community including, without limitation, housing that is available to rent or own, housing that is subsidized whether directly or indirectly by this State, an agency or political subdivision of this State, or the Federal Government or an agency of the Federal Government, and housing that is accessible to persons with disabilities;

3. An analysis of projected growth and the demographic characteristics of the community;
4. A determination of the present and prospective need for affordable housing in the community;
5. An analysis of any impediments to the development of affordable housing and the development of policies to mitigate those impediments;
6. An analysis of the characteristics of the land that is suitable for residential development. The analysis must include, without limitation: a) a determination of whether the existing infrastructure is sufficient to sustain the current needs and projected growth of the community; and b) an inventory of available parcels that are suitable for residential development and any zoning, environmental, and other land-use planning restrictions that affect such parcels;
7. An analysis of the needs and appropriate methods for the construction of affordable housing or the conversion or rehabilitation of existing housing to affordable housing; and
8. A plan for maintaining and developing affordable housing to meet the housing needs of the community for a period of at least five years.

In addition to these eight components, a recently passed law, NRS 278.235) set forth more specific requirements for the Housing Plan. Housing Plans in Nevada must also contain policies and programs directing jurisdictions to “adopt at least 6 of 12 specified measures relating to the maintenance and development of affordable housing in the jurisdiction” (NRS 278.235). The twelve measures outlined in statute are as follows:

- a) At the expense of the city or county, as applicable, subsidizing in whole or in part impact fees and fees for the issuance of building permits collected;
- b) Selling land owned by the city or county, as applicable, to developers exclusively for the development of affordable housing at not more than 10 percent of the appraised value of the land, and requiring that any such savings, subsidy, or reduction in price be passed on to the purchaser of housing in such a development. Nothing in this paragraph authorizes a city or county to obtain land pursuant to the power of eminent domain for the purposes set forth in this paragraph;
- c) Donating land owned by the city or county to a non-profit organization to be used for affordable housing;
- d) Leasing land by the city or county to be used for affordable housing;
- e) Requesting to purchase land owned by the Federal Government at the discounted price for

the creation of affordable housing pursuant to the provision of section 7 (b) of the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998 (SNPLMA);

- f) Establishing a trust fund for affordable housing that must be used for the acquisition, construction, or rehabilitation of affordable housing;
- g) Establishing a process that expedites the approval of plans and specifications relating to maintaining and developing affordable housing;
- h) Providing money, support, or density bonuses for affordable housing developments that are financed, wholly or in part, with low-income housing tax credits, private activity bonds, or money from a governmental entity for affordable housing;
- i) Providing financial incentives or density bonuses to promote appropriate transit-oriented housing developments that would include an affordable housing component;
- j) Offering density bonuses or other incentives to encourage the development of affordable housing;
- k) Providing direct financial assistance to qualified applicants for the purchase or rental of affordable housing; and
- l) Providing money for supportive services necessary to enable persons with supportive housing needs to reside in affordable housing in accordance with a need for supportive housing identified in the 5-year consolidated plan adopted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the city or county.

The following descriptions indicate how and where each of the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) Housing Plan requirements are fulfilled.

## ADDRESSING EIGHT NRS REQUIREMENTS

**1) An inventory of housing conditions, needs, plans, and procedures for improving housing standards and for providing adequate housing to individuals and families in the community, regardless of income levels.**

The City shall identify a mechanism to provide for the creation of an inventory of housing. This inventory shall identify housing conditions in the City of Sparks include housing of all unit types, tenure, size, age and overcrowding of existing housing. Formerly, this has been completed through a Housing assessment which addresses all of the eight requirements identified in this Housing Element.

**2) An inventory of existing affordable housing in the community including, without**

**limitation, housing that is available to rent or own, housing that is subsidized either directly or indirectly by this State, an agency or political subdivision of this State, or the Federal Government or an agency of the Federal Government, and housing that is accessible to persons with disabilities.**

The City of Sparks offers several resources of subsidized affordable housing options to the Sparks community; and one of the primary partners and outlets is the local regional housing authority – Reno Housing Authority (RHA). RHA owns a total of 764 units which includes 475 family units and additionally has approximately 2,382 Housing Choice Vouchers at its disposal. There are a total of thirteen subsidized properties in the City of Sparks and owned and/or operated by RHA. The RHA is responsible for administering the Public Housing properties and Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program for all of Washoe County. Other affordable housing resources are as follows:

- Nevada Housing Division (NHD)
- Nevada Rural Housing Authority (NRHA)

The NHD offers several products in homeownership programs (e. g. “Home Is Possible” homebuyer program and “Home is Possible” for HEROS which is designed to assist honorably discharged veterans and families) and first-time homeowner and down payment assistance programs. Additionally, the NHD provides a rental housing locator website (NVHousingSearch.org). This rental locator service is a free resource helping Nevadans find affordable rental homes and apartments which fit their needs and budgets.

The NRHA offers first-time home buyer and down payment assistance programs for the Sparks community and other qualifying areas throughout the State of Nevada.

Sparks will create an inventory to demonstrate the resources available for affordable housing.

### **3) An analysis of projected growth and the demographic characteristics of the community.**

The demographic profile of the City of Sparks is analyzed through demographic information population growth, population projections, household incomes and poverty rates. Populations of special needs groups, such as the elderly, disabled, large families, the homeless and female-headed households, are also examined.

In 2015/2016 The City of Sparks population is estimated to be approximately 94,708 versus 90,264 population in 2010 (an increase of approximately 5%). The gradual population incline coincides with an incline of the median income for the City of Sparks which currently stands at \$52,581. The projected population of the City of Sparks by year 2034 is estimated to be approximately 120,077. The vast amount of the anticipated growth can be directly attributed to the influx of manufactures relocating and/or expanding in the Reno-Sparks region. The female-headed household (no husband present) represents approximately 13 % of all families in the City of Sparks and 5% of the female-headed households is considered to be living in poverty. The percent of Sparks’ population living below the poverty line (13%)

remains below that of Washoe County (15%).

The most recent "Point in Time" homeless count of Washoe County totaled 769 individuals, 9% are consisting of families and 15% are consisting of veterans in Washoe County. The vast difference of homeless persons count since 2005 figure of 2,430 homeless can be interrelated to a decrease of the number of motels to house the homeless population, the homeless population being very transit in nature and the initiative of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to "End Homelessness".

#### **4) A determination of the present and prospective need for affordable housing in the community.**

The aim of a Housing Needs Assessment is to illustrate the current and future need for affordable housing. A Housing Needs Assessment provides an inventory of subsidized housing and the demand for those units. The assessment also analyzes income information and the gap between current prices of market rate homes and how much people are able to spend on housing.

The City of Sparks current unemployment rate stands at 11% and the number of people that are identified as mental or physically disabled is also 11%. The vacancy rate of available units for rental in the region is less than 1% based on recent data provided by the Nevada Housing Division (NHD). As of year 2013; the housing stock of the City of Sparks was comprised of 71% of single-family, 27% multi-family and 2% mobile homes, RV's, vans, etc.. Of the available housing stock; 46% was built in year 1990 or later, 43% was built in years 1960 to 1989 and 11% was built in 1959 or prior. Most of the older housing stock is comprised in the "West end" of the City and Renter-occupied housing units totals 13,907 (41.5%) while Owner-occupied units totals 19,595 (58.5%). Based on American Community Survey estimates (2014 Data) 42% of Homeowners living in the City of Sparks are cost burdened and 53% of Renters residing in the City of Sparks are cost burdened.

Currently, there are limited vacancies in local mobile home parks. Mobile home owners pay between \$300 and \$560 a month for their lots in addition to a loan payment and utilities.

#### **5) An analysis of any impediments to the development of affordable housing and the development of policies to mitigate those impediments.**

Zoning requirements and other land use controls that determine the size and intensity of development can potentially impede affordable housing development. Other barriers include high land costs, high material costs and the ability to get financing for an affordable housing project. Policies to mitigate impediments are outlined in the Policies section.

The current zoning code doesn't present any obvious constraints to development, and it was recently overhauled to include updated policies to direct development in the desired pattern. A variety of housing types are now allowed, and the code includes updates improving the flexibility of the code which should provide for more housing types. Design standards are applied to each

development to ensure well-designed, high quality developments. Trends in Sparks reflect most building permits issued were for single-family detached homes. The cost of raw, developable land creates a direct impact on the cost for a new home and is considered a possible constraint. In a recent survey to identify what types of housing Sparks' residents desired by the year 2030, the overwhelming choice was medium to large lot subdivisions. To provide this housing choice, Sparks will need to maintain the housing stock currently depicted in the Planned Developments in the northern part of the City.

**6) An analysis of the characteristics of the land that is suitable for residential development. The analysis must include, without limitation: I) A determination of whether the existing infrastructure is sufficient to sustain the current needs and projected growth of the community; and II) An inventory of available parcels that are suitable for residential development and any zoning, environmental, and other land-use planning restrictions that affect such parcels.**

The City will conduct an assessment that identifies land appropriate for affordable housing development, including land that is zoned for multi-family, mobile homes and mixed-use development.

Most of the City's recent housing construction is occurring within planned developments. These large developments represent thousands of new single-family and multi-family units in the City of Sparks. In addition, the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan determined that both the water and solid waste facilities had the capacity to handle the planned future growth in the region. However, there has been a substantial uptick in the amount of approved Multi-Family Residential in the Mixed Use District. The Truckee River should be able to continue to handle the water needs of the region and the existing landfill should be viable for approximately another 50 years.

**7) An analysis of the needs and appropriate methods for the construction of affordable housing or the conversion or rehabilitation of existing housing to affordable housing.**

Funding for affordable housing development is limited and providing incentives to developers is a good way to encourage affordable housing development. The Constraints to Availability and Affordability section of the Housing Needs Assessment discusses regulatory changes that can positively affect affordable housing development in Sparks, such as adjusting setback, density, and parking requirements to encourage redevelopment and/or infill development. Other incentives that foster the construction of affordable units are priority processing, and fee waivers or deferrals.

The City's zoning code allows for single- and multi-family development as well as planned unit developments, which provide opportunities for development flexibility. The costs of developing on the available land that is appropriate for affordable housing development may be too high. Implementation of the policies developed as part of the Housing Plan will reduce the costs to develop affordable housing which may encourage affordable housing development.

**8) A plan for maintaining and developing affordable housing to meet the housing needs**

of the community for a period of at least 5 years.

The policies developed as part of the Housing Plan serve as the City's plan for ensuring the availability affordable housing

## ADDRESSING NRS CHAPTER 278.235

The following lists the measures from NRS Chapter 278.235 that are goals of the Housing Element policies:

- b) Selling land owned by the city or county, as applicable, to developers exclusively for the development of affordable housing at not more than 10 percent of the appraised value of the land, and requiring that any such savings, subsidy, or reduction in price be passed on to the purchaser of housing in such a development. Nothing in this paragraph authorizes a city or county to obtain land pursuant to the power of eminent domain for the purposes set forth in this paragraph;
- c) Donating land owned by the city or county to a non-profit organization to be used for affordable housing;
- d) Leasing land by the city or county to be used for affordable housing;
- e) Requesting to purchase land owned by the Federal Government at the discounted price for the creation of affordable housing pursuant to the provision of section 7 (b) of the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998 (SNPLMA);
- h) Providing money, support, or density bonuses for affordable housing developments that are financed, wholly or in part, with low-income housing tax credits, private activity bonds, or money from a governmental entity for affordable housing;
- l) Providing money for supportive services necessary to enable persons with supportive housing needs to reside in affordable housing in accordance with a need for supportive housing identified in the 5-year consolidated plan adopted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the city or county.

## CONSISTENCY WITH THE 2012 TRUCKEE MEADOWS REGIONAL PLAN (TMRP)

The Sparks Housing Plan policies are consistent with, and reflect the housing goal and accompanying policies contained in the 2012 Truckee Meadows Regional Plan (TMRP). The following outlines how the Housing Plan policies align with those in the Master Plan.

Goal 1.4 and its supporting policy 1.4.1 of the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan outline the region's approach to ensuring affordable housing availability. The Sparks Housing Plan contains policies that are consistent with the regional plan as described below.

### Goal 1.4

Within one year of the adoption of the Regional Plan local government master plans must include strategies based on quantifiable goals set by the jurisdiction to a) increase affordable housing opportunities for persons earning less than 80% AMI and b) increase workforce housing opportunities for persons earning between 80 and 120% of the AMI. The goals will be measurable, with a timeline that covers at least the five-year planning period.

### Policy 1.4.1

To conform to the Regional Plan local government master plans must promote and not conflict with NRS 278.160, and include strategies that address jurisdiction regulations addressing the creation of new and the maintenance of existing, housing, coordination efforts, financial tools, and community education with the aim of:

- 1) Identifying the needs of the community regarding affordable and workforce housing.

The City of Sparks shall adopt a mechanism to identify the housing needs of the community by exploring the housing characteristics including the number of housing units, type, size, and level of overcrowding. This appendix also identifies income information and compares incomes to housing costs.

- 2) Reducing regulatory barriers to the provision of affordable housing.

Goal 1 directs the City to remove regulatory barriers to increase the availability of affordable and workforce housing. Its supporting policies consist of allowing more flexibility in the zoning code, creating an affordable housing development manual for developers, streamlining and expediting residential development review, monitoring development fees, and providing development standards for more housing options. All of these policies were addressed in the overhaul to the Sparks

Zoning Code in 2015.

- 3) Preserving or rehabilitating current affordable and workforce housing stock when possible.

Goal 2 directs the City to “preserve and rehabilitate affordable and workforce housing” by providing quality rental housing and by operating an owner-occupied rehabilitation program.

- 4) Increasing new affordable and workforce housing stock.

Goals 1, 2, 3, and 4 have policies and programs geared toward the creation of additional housing affordable to affordable and workforce households. These goals put forth approaches to removing regulatory barriers that will allow developers to build more affordable housing, rehabilitating housing for affordable or workforce households, providing incentive for developers to build affordable housing, and identifying funding sources to help create affordable housing.

- 5) Providing for a diverse range of housing types.

Goal 1 guides the City to monitor its zoning code in a way that will enable the development of a variety of housing types.

- 6) Documenting existing and new affordable and workforce housing.

The City shall document the existing affordable housing by discussing subsidized housing including public housing and the number of Housing Choice Vouchers in use. Including but not limited to creating a needs assessment which provides market-rate prices for rental and for-sale homes. Goal 7 contains a policy and program that discusses the development of a regional clearing house to keep track of all affordable housing.

- 7) Developing incentives, partnerships, and processes to facilitate the creation of additional affordable and workforce housing stock.

Policies under Goal 1 call for processes that help induce the development of affordable housing. These processes include more flexible zoning regulations, streamlined permit processing, fee evaluation and possible development of new standards to allow innovative housing types. Goal 3 policies call for the extension of incentives – both regulatory and financial to developers of affordable housing.

The City of Sparks acknowledges that some of these goals and policies will be realized in the long term because the housing needs of the City may exceed the staffing or financial resources currently available.

The policy section of the Housing Plan is composed of seven overarching policies:

- Preserve and rehabilitate affordable and workforce housing;
- Provide developer incentives;
- Identify funding sources for affordable housing;
- Promote housing for special needs;
- Encourage sustainable development and energy efficiency for new and existing housing;
- Increase homeownership opportunities; and
- Coordinate regional housing initiatives.

Sparks housing policies include preserving and rehabilitating dilapidated housing, identifying potential developer incentives, finding funding for affordable housing, developing affordable housing programs for special needs residents, and coordinating with other jurisdictions in the region. Policies provide a more specific description of a proposed action and identify which City department will carry primary responsibility in implementing the program.

Sparks will create an Affordable Housing Development Manual. This manual will provide a process to review projects with affordable housing and make adjustments on a project-by-project basis. The manual shall identify Sparks will continue the “one-stop” permit process for residential developments for affordable housing and continue to coordinate between different City departments to provide corresponding reviews of permits associated with projects and to expedite the project review process. The City shall continue to review the fees associated with all housing development including affordable housing

## PRESERVE AND REHABILITATE AFFORDABLE AND WORKFORCE HOUSING

The City will investigate the development a Rental Housing Inspection and Code Enforcement Program. The basic components of the program are: 1) the inspection of housing units to identify housing code violations, and require correction of the deficiencies; 2) develop a responsive program

that provides inspection of housing on a demand-driven basis.

Develop programs to rehabilitation owner-occupied homes for households making less than 80 percent of the area median income.

The City will continue its Owner-occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program(s).

The City will coordinate with Truckee Meadows Regional Planning to identify vacant and under-utilized land suitable for residential development. The supply of developable land with adequate infrastructure that is also zoned for residential use can support the development of housing in the City. Identification of vacant and under- utilized residential land and its development potential will help to determine the residential development options in the City and assist in identifying ways to remove any constraints.

The City shall promote affordable and workforce housing in the Mixed Use Districts, Downtown Center and Emerging Employment Centers. With the recently adopted zoning code, there are numerous incentives to development within the mixed use district and downtown center. There are no specific limits to density in the Mixed Use District so a density bonus structure would not be applicable. This district will promote the development of affordable housing near services, transportation routes, schools, jobs, and child care by encouraging infill development that includes affordable housing.

A majority of the infill areas in the City are within the Mixed Use District. The standards in this area promote infill residential development within the urban area and older parts of the City where small projects that can be integrated with existing neighborhoods.

The City will consider the use manufactured housing developments to promote affordable housing. Manufactured housing refers to homes that are built with materials that are manufactured and then delivered and assembled on-site rather than built completely on-site. By considering this method, the zoning code will allow "by right" the development of manufactured homes on single-family lots.

## GOAL : PROMOTE HOUSING FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

The City shall continue to cooperate with developers in the production of dwelling units accessible to persons with disabilities. The City shall encourage developers to consider incorporating minimal changes in a percentage of new units, which would make them more usable for persons with disabilities while not otherwise affecting their marketability.

Work with non-profit agencies to allow residents to continue living in their homes.

Work with local housing groups to assist disabled persons with accessibility modifications to their

homes. Continue funding the Minor Housing Modification Program for disabled persons.

Encourage housing development identified for lower-income senior households.

To encourage affordable senior projects, the City will help interested developers apply for government financing and/or other government subsidies, assist interested developers in acquiring surplus government land suitable for multi-family development, expedite permit processing, reduce parking standards and lot size, and where possible subsidize fees for low-income dwelling units.

#### ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY FOR NEW AND EXISTING HOUSING

The City will promote sustainable, energy efficient practices for housing stock by encouraging residential developers to employ energy conserving measures for building sites, landscaping, and solar access through development standards. This will include encouraging developers to adopt "green" development practices. The City will examine regulatory and other incentives to encourage developers to engage in sustainable practices, including but not limited to:

- Pursue Green Building certification programs such as the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED).

- Adopt water conservation policy including landscape techniques, materials or equipment.

- Practice low impact grading techniques that minimize the amount of cut and fill, use alternatives to large block retaining walls, and generally result in an appearance that mimics the natural slope.

#### GOAL: INCREASE HOMEOWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The City will investigate methods to increase owner-occupied units in the City. Options such as deed restrictions, increasing the down payment assistance to a possible first-time homebuyer program, lease-to-own programs, and sweat-equity programs, among others, will be investigated.

Support programs available to Sparks' residents that increase homeownership opportunities.

Continue to work with the nonprofits to use private activity bonds for first time home buyers programs and the development of a regional clearing house to keep track of existing affordable housing units.

#### COORDINATE REGIONAL HOUSING INITIATIVES

The three jurisdictions will work cooperatively, when financially feasible, to pursue regional efficiencies in all matters related to affordable housing. This will include pursuing funding regionally to:

- Develop a regional housing trust fund
- Develop a regional housing clearing house for housing data and education
- Develop education and outreach programs

The City in cooperation with Reno and Washoe County will work to educate the public about the rehabilitation opportunities by holding workshops with housing advocacy groups and neighborhood organizations to keep the public and developers informed on regulations affecting affordable housing development.

It may be that citizens aren't aware of the current programs the City of Sparks offers. Therefore, the City will publicize and market the housing rehabilitation funding opportunities throughout the region.

The City will continue to support efforts to end homelessness throughout the region through coordinating with the other jurisdictions in Washoe County and complying with the regional plan to end homelessness entitled "Housing For All: A Plan to End Homelessness".