

# Chapter 2: Vision, Themes, and Guiding Principles

*A vision is a statement that describes the kind of city that residents, business owners, and leaders want their community to become in the future. This Vision for Carson City describes the community's collective values and aspirations and creates an image of the City based upon what it is today and what residents would like it to be in the future. The Vision is founded on the premise that the health of the City and the quality of life of its residents are dependent upon the balancing of multiple factors, including environmental, economic and community/social considerations. These components are interrelated and essential to the continued health and sustainability of the community. Addressing these factors in a comprehensive manner provides a balanced and flexible basis for formulating the City's Master Plan.*

## VISION

*Carson City is a community which recognizes the importance of protecting and enhancing its unique western heritage and distinct character; the scenic and environmental quality of its dramatic natural surroundings; and the quality of life of its residents. It is a city which takes great pride in its role as Nevada's state capital and strives to offer its residents a balanced community with a diverse range of housing, employment, educational, shopping and recreational opportunities; and a vital community which provides financial and social support for quality of life programs.*

## THEMES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Five broad “Themes” have been identified as the basic principles behind both the community’s Vision and this Master Plan. The Themes reflect the community’s vision at a broad policy level; highlighting areas where the City has opportunities to build on its strengths—as well as those areas where a change in policy direction is needed to improve a condition that is not consistent with the Vision. The five Themes include:

- ① **A Balanced Land Use Pattern**
- ② **Equitable Distribution of Recreational Opportunities**
- ③ **Economic Vitality**
- ④ **Livable Neighborhoods & Activity Centers**
- ⑤ **A Connected City**

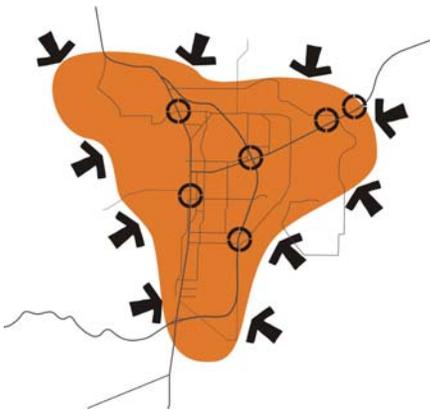
As a subset to each Theme, a series of Guiding Principles are provided to describe the community’s specific aspirations related to each Theme. The Guiding Principles set the stage for the more specific goals and policies contained in subsequent chapters of this plan.

### I A BALANCED LAND USE PATTERN

*Establishing a balance of land uses within the community promotes vitality and long-term economic stability. A balanced community is able to provide employment opportunities for its residents as well as a diverse choice of housing, recreational opportunities, and retail services. Carson City strives to maintain its strong employment base and extensive network of public lands while increasing housing options and the availability of retail services to serve residents of the City and surrounding growth areas.*

*Principles for achieving a more Balanced Land Use Pattern focus on:*

- *Balancing future growth with available water resources and sewer capacity;*
- *Encouraging infill and redevelopment within the City’s existing urbanized area;*
- *Maintaining a compact development footprint through the retention of public lands, the acquisition of open space, and the protection of natural areas; and*



Carson City will maintain a compact development footprint.

- *Providing a citywide mix of land uses to accommodate future housing, jobs, recreation, and retail services.*

### **Guiding Principle 1: A Compact and Efficient Pattern of Growth**

Carson City will have a compact pattern that makes efficient use of the limited land area and water resources it has available for urban growth, that fosters the provision of infrastructure and services in a cost-effective manner, and that balances development with conservation of the natural environment—particularly where public lands abut the urban interface.

### **Guiding Principle 2: Balanced Land Use Mix**

The City will work to broaden and diversify its mix of land uses in targeted areas as well as citywide. Particular emphasis will be placed on expanding housing, retail, and service options to better serve both existing residents and the City's large non-resident workforce—achieving a better balance as a place to live as well as work.

### **Guiding Principle 3: Stewardship of the Natural Environment**

The City will identify and strive to conserve its natural, scenic, and environmentally sensitive areas including important wildlife habitat, the floodplains of the Carson River and other significant watercourses, and visually sensitive areas, such as prominent hillsides surrounding the community. In addition, the City will plan for future development to minimize the impacts of potential natural disaster events, such as wildfire and flooding, on the community.

## **2** **EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

*Carson City residents are fortunate to have access to an extensive network of open lands both within and surrounding the community, as well as a range of more formal community and neighborhood parks and sports facilities; however, some portions of the community remain underserved. As it continues to grow, the City seeks to create more equitable (not necessarily equal) recreational resources for each of its neighborhoods, recognizing that the types of resources available in each area will vary based on the specific needs and wants of the community. The City will place an emphasis on establishing more parks with a*



*By continuing community clean up programs, such as the one above, the City promotes stewardship of its parks and natural environment.*



*The City will look for ways to create more equitable recreational resources for each of its neighborhoods.*



Recreational opportunities should meet the needs of existing and future neighborhoods, and provide a diverse range of activities for residents.



The City will seek to attract a broader range of retail services to Downtown.

*natural character, where possible, as opposed to non-athletic turf areas, in response to expressed community preference.*

*Principles for achieving equity in the distribution of Parks, Open Space, and Recreational Opportunities focus on:*

- *Balancing the disparity in resources between neighborhoods; and*
- *Ensuring that new facilities are provided as needed to serve new development.*

#### **Guiding Principle 4: An Integrated, Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space System**

The City will continue to provide a diverse range of park and recreational opportunities to include facilities and programming for all ages and varying interests, both passive and active. These recreational opportunities will serve both existing and future neighborhoods.

### **3**

## **ECONOMIC VITALITY**

*Carson City derives its overall health and economic success from its ability to maintain a strong and diverse base of jobs, to provide a supply of varied housing choices for its employees, to provide a range of services and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors, and to generate tourism through the promotion of its unique characteristics and historic amenities. Furthermore, the City recognizes the revitalization of the Downtown as an important component of the community's long-term health and vitality. The Master Plan promotes the continued enhancement of the Downtown and surrounding residential neighborhoods as the focus of the community.*

*Principles for achieving Economic Vitality focus on:*

- *Retaining and enhancing the City's strong employment base;*
- *Diversifying the City's economic base to include a broader range of retail services downtown, along its major gateway corridors, and in targeted locations along the Carson City Freeway;*
- *Emphasizing the role of technology and knowledge-based industries in the City's economy;*
- *Promoting the City's historic and cultural resources to enhance its tourism base;*
- *Promoting the City's parks, sport complexes, pathway system, open space system, and other recreational amenities and*

*programs as a tool for attracting new businesses to the community;*

- *Promoting Downtown revitalization;*
- *Promoting a collaborative approach to economic development;*
- *Promoting fiscal and economic health; and*
- *Continuing to support redevelopment efforts.*

#### **Guiding Principle 5: A Strong Diversified Economic Base**

The City will seek to maintain and enhance its enviable base of primary jobs and to provide a broader range of retail services that serve both residents of Carson City and those in surrounding counties. The City will also seek opportunities to promote its historic and recreational resources and overall quality of life as a means of generating tourism revenue and attracting new employers to the community. The City will strive to approach economic development activities using a collaborative and innovative approach that encourages cooperation between the public and private sector, and with other jurisdictions as appropriate to achieve the objectives of this Master Plan.



*Historic and cultural resources, such as the V&T Railroad, will be promoted to enhance the City's tourism base.*

## **4 LIVABLE NEIGHBORHOODS & ACTIVITY CENTERS**

*Carson City strives to be a city known for its safe, attractive, and diverse neighborhoods, compact mixed-use activity centers, and its vibrant, pedestrian-friendly Downtown. Access to parks, pathways, open space, and recreational facilities will be emphasized and the incorporation of thoughtful design and site planning techniques will be encouraged in all development. New commercial development will be focused in pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use activity centers located along major thoroughfares where they will be readily accessible to surrounding neighborhoods and may ultimately be served by transit. New higher-density housing will be encouraged as part of the overall land use mix along the City's major corridors and within the Downtown area to provide a more diverse selection of housing types and price ranges for residents within walking distance of the City's primary job and activity center.*

*Principles for achieving Livable Neighborhoods & Activity Centers focus on:*

- *Increasing the quality of development citywide;*



*The City will seek to provide safe, attractive, and diverse neighborhoods for its residents.*

- Encouraging infill and redevelopment that blends seamlessly with established areas of the City;
- Establishing a hierarchy of mixed-use activity centers to serve the community;
- Re-establishing Downtown as a vibrant center for the community;
- Creating a more diverse mix of housing and neighborhood options for residents;
- Providing connectivity to surrounding land uses; and
- Protecting and enhancing the City’s historic resources.



New development will be expected to project a positive image for the community by incorporating a high standard of design and through the use of durable, long-lasting materials.

**Guiding Principle 6: Quality Design and Development**

Carson City will project a positive image for the community by promoting a high standard of design and the use of durable long-lasting materials for all development, and by ensuring that infill and redevelopment is of a scale and character that is compatible with and enhances surrounding development context.

**Guiding Principle 7: Compact, Mixed-Use Activity Centers**

Carson City will encourage the creation of compact, mixed-use activity centers in easily accessible and highly visible locations of the community. These activity centers will promote the efficient use of available commercial lands and concentrate retail services in pedestrian and transit-

oriented development nodes that may be easily accessed from and serve surrounding neighborhoods. Activity centers will vary in size and composition (i.e., vertical or “stacked” mixed-use or horizontal or “side-by-side” mixed-use), depending upon their location, context, and level of priority. The Downtown district will be the largest and highest priority activity center.



The City will continue to promote a variety of revitalization efforts that support the community’s goal of re-establishing Downtown.

**Guiding Principle 8: A Vibrant Downtown Center for the Community**

Over the past decades, traffic in Downtown has increased dramatically—in large part due to Carson Street’s role as a state highway—changing it from a once pedestrian-friendly “main street” for the community to a noisy thoroughway. However, with the completion of the Carson City Freeway to Fairview Drive anticipated in 2008 and to South Carson Street by 2010,

Downtown will again be subject to change. The freeway is projected to divert approximately 1/2 of the current traffic volume from Carson Street, giving the City an opportunity to reclaim its former pedestrian-friendly environment in Downtown. In light of this opportunity, Carson City will continue to promote a variety of revitalization efforts that support the community's goal of re-establishing Downtown as the City's largest mixed-use activity center.

**Guiding Principle 9: Stable, Cohesive Neighborhoods Offering a Mix of Housing Types**

Carson City will encourage the development of new neighborhoods that contain a mix of land uses and housing options that meet the varying functional and financial needs of its residents, including single family, attached homes (duplexes, townhomes), multi family dwellings, accessory dwellings, and housing included as part of mixed-use developments. The City will also work to maintain the quality and character of established neighborhoods and ensure that infill and redevelopment is designed in a manner that minimizes impacts on existing neighborhoods, including rural neighborhoods located within the City's urbanizing areas.

**Guiding Principle 10: Protection of Historic Resources**

Carson City will seek to preserve and enhance its historic resources by enforcing its existing preservation regulations and ordinances and updating them as needed, and by encouraging historic preservation efforts through the use of financial, building, and other incentives for the restoration and rehabilitation of historic structures and facilities.



The City will seek to provide a variety of housing types (top) and to protect its historic resources (bottom).

**5 A CONNECTED CITY**

*A connected city allows residents to travel within the community, and to other centers within the region, in a variety of ways using a safe, efficient, multi-modal transportation system. Carson City will promote a sense of community by linking its many neighborhoods, employment areas, activity centers, parks, schools, and recreational amenities with an extensive system of interconnected roadways, multi-use pathways, bicycle facilities, and sidewalks. Additionally, the City will seek opportunities to expand existing transit services to increase travel choices for the community and to support a more compact pattern of growth.*



Safe transportation systems include well-marked crosswalks and signage for people of all ages.



*The City is committed to the shared use of most trail corridors.*

### **Guiding Principle 11: A Safe, Efficient, Multi-Modal Transportation System**

Carson City will maintain a safe transportation system that facilitates efficient travel both within and through the community using a variety of motorized and non-motorized modes.

### **Guiding Principle 12: A Unified Pathways System**

The City will seek to ensure that most major destinations, parks, schools, and open space areas within the community are accessible from residential neighborhoods via safe routes that are free of vehicular conflicts, and that allow the user to enjoy the natural setting of Carson City without their automobiles—adopting the slogan “Every home is a trailhead.” Carson City is committed to the shared use of most trail corridors by walkers, joggers, horseback riders, rollerbladers, strollers, and off-highway vehicles. The City will also seek to provide access to all feasible portions of the pathway system and open space areas for persons with disabilities.