

CHAPTER 5

ECONOMIC VITALITY






WHERE WE ARE TODAY

Carson City's identity and economy are heavily influenced by its role as the state capital. Public Administration is the largest employment industry in Carson City (representing nearly one in every four jobs), followed by the Health Care and Social Assistance industries. The State Legislature meets every other year, bringing with it an influx of legislators, lobbyists, and aides from around Nevada that fill the City's hotels and restaurants. Carson City's economy also benefits from the City's proximity to Lake Tahoe, an abundance of outdoor recreation opportunities, arts and cultural events, and historical tourism.

As with other communities in Nevada and around the country, Carson City has experienced the effects of a changing workforce and retail trends. Remote and hybrid work options have become commonplace as employers struggle to attract and retain skilled workers. While the State's Administrative and Legislative Branches both maintain a workforce in Carson City, the State has geographically diversified its operations and workforce. As a result, many State employees commute from neighboring communities and some work remotely at least part of the time. Rising housing costs have also made it increasingly challenging for young adults, families, service workers, and others with more limited resources to live and work in Carson City. As a result, there are more jobs in Carson City than there are working residents to fill those jobs.

While retail jobs are increasing, the City has added very little net new retail or office space since 2014, and vacancies along major commercial corridors have posed persistent challenges due to their age, condition, and in some cases, absentee owners. While residents note they are generally able to meet their day-to-day needs within Carson City, there is interest in expanding retail and entertainment options.



Carson City also has a large inventory of industrial and industrial/flex space, primarily concentrated near the airport and at the eastern portal. The inventory of industrial space in Carson City has experienced modest growth over the past decade but growth has been limited in part because of land constraints.

Economic development in Carson City is supported by the Carson City Chamber of Commerce, the Carson City Downtown Business Association, as well as the State of Nevada Department of Business & Industry Business Resource Hub, the Northern Nevada Development Authority (NNDA), various Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED) programs, and the Nevada Small Business Development Center. The City also participates in tourism campaigns led by Visit Carson City, Travel Nevada, and others.



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Carson City is projected to see a steady increase in jobs over the coming decades, bolstering the City's primary jobs base and providing opportunities to enhance the vitality of the community. The City will continue to seek opportunities to diversify the local economy, including focusing on ways to support industrial development, expanding the local retail base, and supporting the retention and growth of local small businesses. The City will continue to leverage its many assets and overall quality of life as a means of generating tourism revenue and attracting new employers to the community. The City will continue to approach economic development activities using a collaborative approach that leverages available state resources, and encourages cooperation between the public and private sector, and with other agencies and jurisdictions as appropriate. However, achieving the objectives of this Master Plan require the City to take a role in economic development moving forward.

Learn more about Non-Residential Development Trends and Projections

An analysis of non-residential development trends and projections was prepared to help inform the 2024 update to the Carson City Master Plan. A technical memorandum documenting the methodology used is provided in Appendix A. For a summary of key findings, visit: www.envisioncarsoncity.org/community-profile.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal 5.1—Promote a Collaborative Approach to Economic Development

5.1a—Economic Development Strategy

Establish and periodically update an Economic Development Strategy for Carson City that defines economic development roles and responsibilities in coordination with state and regional partners, identifies target industries, and articulates near-term priorities to support the implementation of this Master Plan.

5.1b—Public/Private Sector Collaboration

Promote collaboration between the City and public- and private-sector partners. Work with other levels of government and with the private sector to support and encourage activities associated with a range of economic development activities, as necessary and appropriate.

5.1c—Development Regulations and Procedures

Maintain land-use regulations and permitting procedures that are understandable, predictable, and can be accomplished within reasonable time periods. Consider streamlined permitting procedures to encourage desired economic development objectives.

See also, policy 7.2g

5.1d—Statewide Economic Development Efforts

Leverage, wherever possible, statewide economic development efforts to help attract business investment to Carson City and promote the benefits of the region.

5.1e—Business Cycles

Recognize that business cycles will occur and that the competitive landscape is rapidly evolving. Provide planning flexibility that can be responsive to unforeseen or changing economic conditions and community needs within the context of the Master Plan.

5.1f—Neighboring Counties

Recognize that Carson City’s economy and economic development are impacted by a broader economic unit that includes surrounding counties. Wherever possible, and where there is a net positive economic and fiscal gain, economic development strategies should be collaborative.

5.1g—Property Value Retention/Enhancement

Promote economic development efforts that protect or enhance existing and future property values – commercial, industrial, and residential.

5.1h—Adequate Infrastructure

Recognize the importance of adequate infrastructure in economic development and long-run economic stability.

Goal 5.2—Maintain and Enhance Carson City’s Primary Job Base

5.2a—Retention/Expansion of Established Employers

Retain and support the expansion of major employers already established within the community, such as the State of Nevada; Carson-Tahoe Hospital’s Regional Medical Center and associated facilities; Western Nevada College; the extensive manufacturing community; finance, insurance, and real estate industries (FIRE); banking; and other knowledge-based industries. Continue to coordinate the City’s ongoing planning efforts and Land Use Map with major employers to ensure compatibility with their facility master plans and expansion efforts.

5.2b—Business Support and Recruitment

Use available resources to support existing businesses and to recruit new companies to the community aligned with economic diversification goals. Collaborate with local educational facilities and foster public-private-partnerships to cultivate new opportunities for current and future employers in the community. Promote expansion and recruitment of industries that offer career opportunities for both secondary and post-secondary school graduates.



5.2c—Diverse Employment and Entrepreneurial Opportunities



Support industry growth and encourage workforce development across multiple targeted sectors to improve economic resilience. Prioritize initiatives that attract high-tech, manufacturing, healthcare, and creative industries, alongside traditional retail and service sectors. Use available State resources such as the State of Nevada Department of Business & Industry Business Resource Hub, various Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development strategic programs, Nevada Works, and the Nevada Small Business Development Center, and implement City-based incentives, to the extent possible, to foster diverse economic growth and create a supportive environment for startups and established businesses alike.

5.2d—Industry Specializations

Focus local economic development efforts to build on existing businesses. Identify, develop, and enhance these and additional industrial specializations in which the City can effectively compete to retain and gain market share. Improve opportunities for workforce training and development in targeted industrial sectors, including those already present in Carson City.

5.2e—Workforce Training

Promote activities that have the potential to upgrade the skill and wage levels of the City's resident labor force and those likely to enter the labor force (e.g., local college or tech school graduates). Encourage educational opportunities for the development and/or upgrade of skills required for employment, advancement, and entrepreneurship.

5.2f—Workforce Services

Encourage the expansion of programs, services, and land uses that are necessary to support participation in the local workforce, including training, job placement, childcare, health care, and transportation services.

Goal 5.3—Recognize and Adapt to the Impact of Technology on Work and Workforce Patterns

5.3a—Home-Based Occupations and Remote/Hybrid Work

Support home-based occupations and remote/hybrid work through the incorporation of live/work units that are generally consistent with the character of adjoining properties and surrounding neighborhoods. Enhance digital infrastructure citywide by ensuring reliable high-speed internet access and establishing public Wi-Fi hotspots in public spaces like parks, libraries, and community centers.

5.3b—Access to Community Information

Use technology to increase information available to residents and businesses regarding growth patterns, economic conditions, development activity, local recreational, retail, and entertainment-based amenities, and other elements of the competitive landscape.

5.3c—Development Regulations

Adopt development regulations that enable flexibility in the adaptive reuse of existing buildings as needs change over time and create opportunities for reinvesting in nonconforming buildings.

See also, policies 5.4a, 6.2b, 6.2c, 7.4b, and 7.4c.

Goal 5.4—Promote Revitalization and Reinvestment in Underutilized Areas

5.4a—Redevelopment Assistance

Continue to work with local businesses and property owners to encourage and assist in redevelopment efforts. Focus redevelopment efforts on encouraging higher intensity and mixed-use development in Downtown and along major gateway corridors.

5.4b—Redevelopment Tools

Continue to employ the use of redevelopment areas, regulatory incentives, and other tools, as may be available, to promote reinvestment in underutilized areas.

See also, policies 5.2c, 6.2b, 6.2c, 7.4b, and 7.4c

5.4c—Destination Retail

Encourage the creation of destination retail developments that include shops, restaurants, entertainment or recreational venues, offices, hotels, premium amenities, and upscale gaming venues to provide residents with access to a variety of retail service and entertainment needs close to home, and to attract patrons from surrounding growth areas.

5.4d—Public Facilities

Provide the public services and public facilities necessary to sustain a high quality of life and attract business investment. Consider obtaining additional information directly from business operators to better define these services.

Goal 5.5—Promote The City’s Assets as Economic Development Tools

5.5a—Community Recreational Facilities

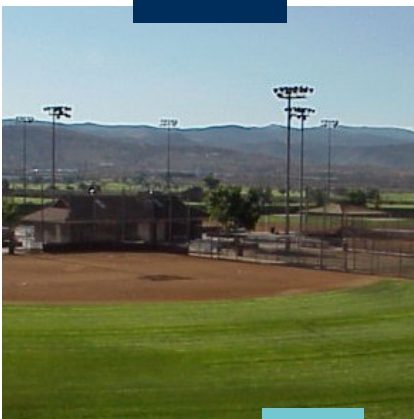
Expand opportunities to generate visitor revenue by continuing to promote the use of the community’s sports complexes, aquatic facility, community center, and theater for regional, state-wide, or national sports tournaments. Seek necessary funding to improve the quality of existing recreational facilities and develop additional facilities as appropriate.

5.5b—Recreational Amenities

Increase awareness of the City’s parks, sport complexes, pathway system, open space system, and other recreational amenities as a tool for attracting businesses seeking a high quality of life for their employees.

5.5c—Lake Tahoe Gateway

Develop and share promotional materials that highlight the City as a primary gateway to Lake Tahoe and its associated recreational and tourism amenities as a means of attracting additional tourism revenues and promoting the City as an attractive place to live and work.



See also, goals 8.1-8.3 and associated policies



5.5d—Carson City Airport

Protect the vitality of the airport by continuing to support the goals and policies of the Airport Master Plan. Encourage the development of airport-related industrial, as well as commercial uses (e.g., sightseeing flights, skydiving, and extreme skiing tours) that will increase the City's visibility and marketability as a destination for tourists and recreational aviators.

5.5e—Heritage Tourism

Continue to support the efforts of Visit Carson City, Travel Nevada, and other state and regional partners to promote tourism activities associated with the major historic resources within the community, such as the Westside Historic District, V&T Railway, the Kit Carson Trail, the Nevada State Prison, and the State Capitol Complex.

5.5f—Natural Resource Conservation

Encourage economic development that conserves natural resources and open spaces, protects environmental quality, and enhances the overall quality of life.

5.5g—Educational Resources

Emphasize educational resources of the community as an economic development tool. Enhance those resources where possible and efficient to do so.