



Carson Valley Plaza



**Patmont Motor Werks
Home of Go-Ped**



**Starbucks Roasting Plant
Minden**



GE Energy

**CHAPTER 9:
Economic Development Element**

Economic Development

Douglas County functioned over the last 100 years as an agriculture/ranching based community. During the last fifty years, the County has been in a transition phase from an agrarian based community to a more diverse economy that includes manufacturing, professional services, tourism and retail as well as agri-business. Up until World War II, the primary employer of the county centered on agriculture and agri-business. Over the years, the County's employment base has expanded and diversified. The first wave of expansion after World War II was the result of the growth of gaming and the Lake Tahoe casinos and the expansion of Bently Nevada Corporation. Along with the nation, the County went through a housing boom in the first part of the 21st Century. In recent years, the economy in Douglas County and throughout Nevada has slowed due to a significant loss of jobs in Nevada's primary industries – gaming and construction. In order to create an environment conducive to job growth and encourage economic development, the County developed the Economic Vitality Strategy and Action Plan, which was adopted by the Board of Commissioners in September of 2010.

Economic Vitality Strategy and Action Plan

The vision of the Economic Vitality Strategy and Action Plan is “a community to match the scenery,” which capitalizes on the County's greatest asset, “our spectacular natural environment.” The plan sets a goal “by 2022, Douglas County will be recognized as the best place to live, work and play because of our community commitment to education, recreation and innovation.”

The Economic Vitality Strategy and Action Plan takes into consideration 10 plans dealing with economic development. The plans include:

- Douglas County Community Assessment 2009
- Douglas County Strategic Plan Update 2009
- Genoa Strategic Plan 2008 by the Town of Genoa
- Carson Valley Visitor & Tourism Assessment 2006
- NVision Regional Economic Development Strategy 2006
- Douglas County Master Plan
- Gardnerville Plan for Prosperity
- Minden Plan for Prosperity
- Douglas County Economic Development Business Plan 2000
- Douglas County Retail Leakage Study by University Nevada Small Business Development Center, 1998

In order to implement the Economic Vitality Strategy and Action Plan the Board formed the Economic Vitality Division in the County Manager's Office and appointed an Economic Vitality Manager. The following five guiding principals direct the County's Economic Vitality work and the attraction of new business:

- Improve the business climate

- Preserve the natural environment; improve infrastructure
- Enhance education and workforce
- Maintain the quality of life and attract businesses that are unique and marketable

Project champions have formed teams to implement the Action Plan, which includes three areas of focus and twelve priority projects:

**Figure 9.1
Economic Vitality Action Plan**

Focus Area – Distinctive Downtowns
1. Tahoe Revitalization
Goal – Tahoe Revitalization is a major economic development goal for Douglas County, El Dorado County and the City of South Lake Tahoe. The guiding principle the attainment of significant environment gains through revitalization of the built environment and related environmental improvement projects founded on integrated water and transportation systems extending throughout the South Shore and within the areas of separate governmental authorities.
Objective – Transform the South Shore from a gaming based economic model to an outdoor recreation based tourism destination. As addressed in the Lake Tahoe Basin Prosperity Plan: “The Tahoe Brand – To re-brand the region as a green, geotourism, health and wellness visitor destination, providing a unique, authentic Lake Tahoe experience including sports, recreation, culinary, historical, art, cultural experiences, environmental education and volunteer opportunities.” LTBPP Nov 2010
Strategy – Visioning
Strategy – Engage residents; engage with similar communities; engage political leadership
Strategy – Attract capital
Strategy – Revitalization
Strategy – Constant evolution of what’s coming next
2. Minden Momentum
Project Framework – Using the momentum of major investment along Hwy. 395 radiating from the Buckeye Gateway, pedestrian friendly and traffic calming improvements will be pursued to inspire a vibrant downtown including mixed-use, infill and adaptive reuse of historic buildings.
3. Genoa Destination
Goal – Genoa is an active business community providing services and unique experiences for visitors and residents.
Objectives – Create the destination; amplify the destination
Strategy – Revisit and consider the implementation of the Genoa Main Street Master Plan (2002 landscape plan)
Strategy – Mormon Station possibilities
Strategy – Genoa Trail

Strategy – Cemetery beautification
Strategy – Roadway cleanup
Strategy – Reassess signage
Strategy – Explore creative solutions to zoning, code and parking issues
4. Main Street Gardnerville
Goal – Revitalize downtown Gardnerville utilizing design, organization, promotion, and economic restructuring to develop the unique identity and preserve the historic nature of our community.
Strategy – Recruit small independent retail businesses
Strategy – Pedestrian friendly and convenient parking
Strategy – Basque Old Town Center

Focus Area – Outdoor Recreation & Lifestyle
5. Tremendous Trails
Goal – To build a sustainable community connected by trails, making it easy and inviting for residents and visitors to connect outdoors and enjoy more than 22-types of outdoor activities year round in Douglas County.
Objective – Connect physically and virtually, an accessible network of sustainably planned and designed neighborhood paths and adventure trails
Objective – Be recognized with national awards and selected to host national meetings and event destinations for having one of the finest sustainably designed trails network in the United States
6. Ascent Douglas
Goal – Recruit, retain and expand Outdoor Recreation and Lifestyle Industry jobs.
Strategy – Outdoor Retailer–world’s largest Outdoor Sports Industry gathering
Strategy – Online Social Media Initiative
Strategy – Network local Outdoor Recreation Manufacturers
7. Sports Aviation Destination
Goal – Elevate Minden-Tahoe Airport to the world’s premier sport aviation destination by developing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – community involvement – International awareness – a learning center
Strategy – Education
Strategy – Awareness
Strategy – Business development
8. Inspired Mobility
A broad plan that will encompass a variety of inspiring modes of transportation while being convenient, affordable, fun, and have a low impact on the community.

Focus Area – Education, Innovation & Workforce
9. Maximize WNC Facility
Goal – Maximize WNC Facility with four levels of higher education –Vocational/technical courses –Associate programs –Undergraduate –Graduate degree
10. Energy Science Park
Goal – To create a better life for all in Douglas County through knowledge and technology-based development that effectively balances human needs with economic opportunities.
Objective – Promote academic, industry and government collaboration
Objective – Accelerate the establishment and maintenance of research and technology based companies, facilities, and organizations in Douglas County
Objective – Produce quality jobs and opportunities for our community and region
11. K-12 Education
Goal – Working with the School District to provide an educational environment that produces well-educated and well-rounded students who are ready for their next experience including college/vocational education, military, and work.
12. Community Center
Goal – To Build a Community Center that brings Carson Valley people together – a hub for activities for families and friends of all ages.
Objective – Secure accessible property
Objective – Finalize Community Center designs
Objective – Identify funding options for land/property acquisition, design/development and annual operations

Lake Tahoe Basin Plan for Prosperity

In 2009-2010 the County also took part in the development of the Lake Tahoe Basin Plan for Prosperity to address the significant economic decline in the Tahoe Basin over the past decade. The economic analysis conducted for the Prosperity Plan identified three economic clusters comprising two-thirds of the Basin economy:

- Tourism and Visitor Services
- Environmental Innovation
- Health and Wellness

Led by a diverse project steering committee representing all of the local government jurisdictions in the Basin as well as business associations and education institutions, the

process to develop the Prosperity Plan engaged hundreds of stakeholders in the region, convening work groups within each economic cluster, as well as capital resource partners, community leaders, state and federal agency representatives, and regional economic collaboratives from both California and Nevada.

The Prosperity Plan is a comprehensive action strategy to reposition the Tahoe Basin as an environmentally sustainable destination and test bed for environmental innovation. It is built upon the intellectual talents, commitment, and creativity of Tahoe residents and stewards of the Tahoe Basin, both within and outside of the region. It is a regional innovation strategy built on the foundation of growing and strengthening economic clusters where the region has potential competitive advantage.

To provide an organizational structure to coordinate and support the prosperity initiatives, it is recommended that a Prosperity Center (TahoeProsperity.org) be created using a regional stewardship model, which emphasizes networking and collaboration among existing private and public entities throughout the Basin. This model seeks to minimize duplication of efforts but rather will help to coordinate and leverage resources - especially in support of cluster and cross-sector initiatives; fill gaps where they exist; convene and collaborate with partners and stakeholders for shared solutions, especially around the core foundations for regional competitiveness; benchmark and track outcomes, including through the Watershed Sustainability Indicators, reporting back to the community and policymakers; and collaborate with partners on being a unified “voice” for the region’s economic future.

Along with this organizational and leadership capacity, it is also necessary to instill greater predictability and consistency in the regional regulatory processes than is administered currently by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) and other agencies, in order to achieve the levels of reinvestment and redevelopment necessary to achieve broad prosperity in the Tahoe Basin.

Cluster specific and basin-wide highlights include:

- Developing a pipeline strategy to support and commercialize alpine climate change and sustainability research, with a technology incubator, innovation investment fund and signature tourism and visitor services facilities – To build on the valuable existing assets of talent, expertise, facilities and research efforts of the many educational institutions, state and federal agencies, and environmental planning firms working in the Tahoe Basin. These include partners collaborating through the Tahoe Science Consortium: UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center, Desert Research Institute (DRI), University of Nevada, Reno, U.S.G.S., and the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Applied Development Economics, Inc. Research Station; the campus sustainability initiative of Sierra Nevada College; and the sustainability-related education and training of the area’s community colleges and universities. UC Davis and DRI along with others have been chosen by the federal government to co-host the new Southwest Climate Science Center, to understand the affects of climate change on the Southwest

region's natural and cultural resources, highlighting the rich knowledge assets of these institutions.

- The initiative would further expand efforts to generate Tahoe-based research resources; prototype, fund, and export commercially practical solutions for environmental challenges in the Tahoe Basin and elsewhere; sponsor green entrepreneurship and mentoring programs affiliated with the region's universities and colleges; and provide housing and other resources for researchers and visiting scholars. An innovation investment fund would be developed. It would also provide visitors with hands-on learning experiences about the Tahoe Basin's ecology, awareness of ongoing environmental research, and solutions for sustainable living, in collaboration with the Tourism and Visitor Services cluster.
- The Tahoe Brand – To rebrand the region as a green, geotourism, health and wellness visitor destination, providing a unique, authentic Lake Tahoe experience including skiing, other sports, gaming, recreation, culinary, historical, art, cultural experiences, environmental education and volunteer opportunities.
- Medical Centers of Excellence – To promote specialties such as orthopedics, sports medicine, fitness training, oncology, and healthy lifestyles; medical tourism framed by the alpine environment, expertise of local medical centers, complementary wellness services, and visitor service assets.
- Sports Commission – To attract major sporting events such as the Amgen Bike Tour, World Cup skiing, philanthropic sporting events and tournaments; to foster Tahoe as a major center for sports and high altitude training venues for athletes; to attract youth and other tournaments and league events; and to capture Tahoe as a center for emerging sports.
- Environmental Redevelopment – To achieve sustainable redevelopment of deteriorating properties and infrastructure, thereby improving community livability and promoting green building, resource efficient development, alternative transportation modes, and environmental restoration. Leverage reinvestment through a Basin Infrastructure Bank.
- Regional Broadband Strategy – To facilitate e-Health and telemedicine, e-commerce, improved visitor experiences, efficient government services, telecommuting, emergency services and other needs for a “Connected Tahoe Basin.”
- Basin-Wide Housing Affordability, Education and Workforce, Transportation and Infrastructure Strategies – To support the vitality of the clusters and promote community livability, sustainability, and equitable access to opportunities.

SWOT Analysis & Critical Issues

In 2006, during the preparation of the NVision Regional Economic Development Strategy, a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats (SWOT) analysis for Douglas County was completed along with the identification of Critical Issues facing Northern Nevada. Since that time a Community Assessment was completed in 2009, and the Lake Tahoe Basin Plan for Prosperity (Tahoe Prosperity Plan) was finalized in November of 2010 on the heels of the completion of the Douglas County Economic Vitality Strategy and Action Plan. To best capture critical issues facing the County, the NVision report data was used as a starting point and information from the other reports added to adequately sum up the issues that are being addressed by both the Vitality Plan and the Tahoe Prosperity Plan.

Strengths

- Good mix of available land.¹
- Good water resources.¹
- Close geographic proximity to Reno/Sparks metro, Lake Tahoe.¹
- High income levels for residents.¹
- Highest educational attainment levels in the 7-County region.¹
- Scenic environment with tremendous outdoor recreational activities.¹

Weaknesses

- Poor availability of employment opportunities and diversity of job types for local workforce.^{1,2}
- Land and housing prices are the highest in Northern Nevada.¹
- Need to continue to bolster the local tax base.¹
- Sewer capacity limitations in industrial park areas.⁴
- Funding for road maintenance.⁴

Opportunities

- Strong potential to grow local tourism industry, especially in adventure and outdoor recreation.^{1,2}

- Good potential to grow clean energy industry, especially geothermal and wind energy.¹
- To target cluster industries in Lake Tahoe Basin including Tourism and Visitor services; Environmental Innovation and Health and Wellness.³
- To attract desirable target industry companies to industrial parks around the airport.¹
- Tap into the large and growing base of retired executives for mentoring young entrepreneurs and funding new business creation.¹
- Revitalization of downtown areas (Minden, Gardnerville) to support vibrant mixed-use and to become a destination for entertainment and boutique shopping.¹
- The Minden-Tahoe Airport is an asset that could be better utilized.²
- Increase vocational/technical education options.²

Threats

- Very limited diversity in housing options. Only high-end housing development is encouraged, which doesn't give many options for local workforce.¹
- Need for increased collaboration between local government entities.^{1,2}
- Becoming a retirement community for second home owners.^{1,3}
- Need to sustain rural character while providing economic opportunities for residents.^{1,2}
- Local government's high reliance on sales tax revenue is leading to an uncooperative relationship with neighboring counties.¹
- Traffic through Minden/Gardnerville is creating a significant impediment to the success of local businesses in the downtown area.²
- Tourism in the Tahoe Basin is seasonal.²
- Declines in hotel room nights rented, Transient Occupancy Tax and Sales Tax revenues.³
- Increased unemployment rates.³
- Decrease in population.³

- Increase in subsidized school lunches.³

Critical Issues

- Continued development of a regional approach and more collaboration across governmental lines must be encouraged.¹
- Regionally greater emphasis should be placed on the value of education to improve the educational resources and support structures. This should extend from K-12, to community colleges, to developing a stronger 4-year degree presence in the region.¹
- The young professional community needs to be maintained and expanded in order to enhance the region's vitality and ensure future economic growth. Involve this key group in decision-making and leadership and empower them to be involved in the community.¹
- Entry level workers are priced out of the market and even experienced workers cannot purchase housing in certain communities at Lake Tahoe.³
- Unless there is a focus on local industry clusters, much of the region's future growth will need to be driven by small business creation and entrepreneurship.¹
- Northern Nevada's economy lacks diversity and is highly dependent on new business from California, which creates a vulnerability to economic shocks.¹
- Need to emphasize the importance of "place" and promote the development of attractive downtown centers, clean communities, clear design standards, beautification projects, and desirable retail and entertainment amenities that are in keeping with the uniqueness of each community.¹
- The TRPA's 1987 Regional Plan was focused on stopping the uncontrolled growth that once threatened Lake Tahoe. But the Plan also froze in time the basin's auto-centric road network and infrastructure of strip malls and scattered developments, which are now the greatest threat to both the clarity of Lake Tahoe and the health of the economy.⁵
- Since 1997, guided by Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) federal, state and local agencies have invested over \$1 billion in water quality and forest fuels projects to restore Lake Tahoe and the health of its forests. But unlike other national jewels, Tahoe has not secured significant public investments in transit systems, bike trails, visitor center, and other facilities necessary to appropriately serve residents and visitors in the 21st century.⁵

- Private investment in the basin’s community centers has been limited, in large part, because key elements of the 1987 Regional Plan are overly-complex, outdated and do not incorporate contemporary land use and environmental science. The basin’s economic and social health has deteriorated with the loss of some 10,000 permanent residents since 2000. Schools and many businesses have closed. Unemployment and poverty levels in the basin, as a whole, are above state averages.⁵
- Need for more predictable and consistent regulatory processes than currently administered by the TRPA and other agencies that encourage redevelopment and reinvestment.³

1 - NVision Regional Economic Development Strategy 2006 - Visioning Document

http://www.angeloueeconomics.com/northernnvision/Reports/Northern_NVision_Report_2_Visioning.pdf pg. 17

2- Douglas County Community Assessment, September 2009

3- Lake Tahoe Basin Plan for Prosperity, November 2010

4- Additional items identified during the update of the Economic Development Element

5- Creating a Sustainable future for Lake Tahoe – Tahoe Prosperity Center 2011

Redevelopment Areas

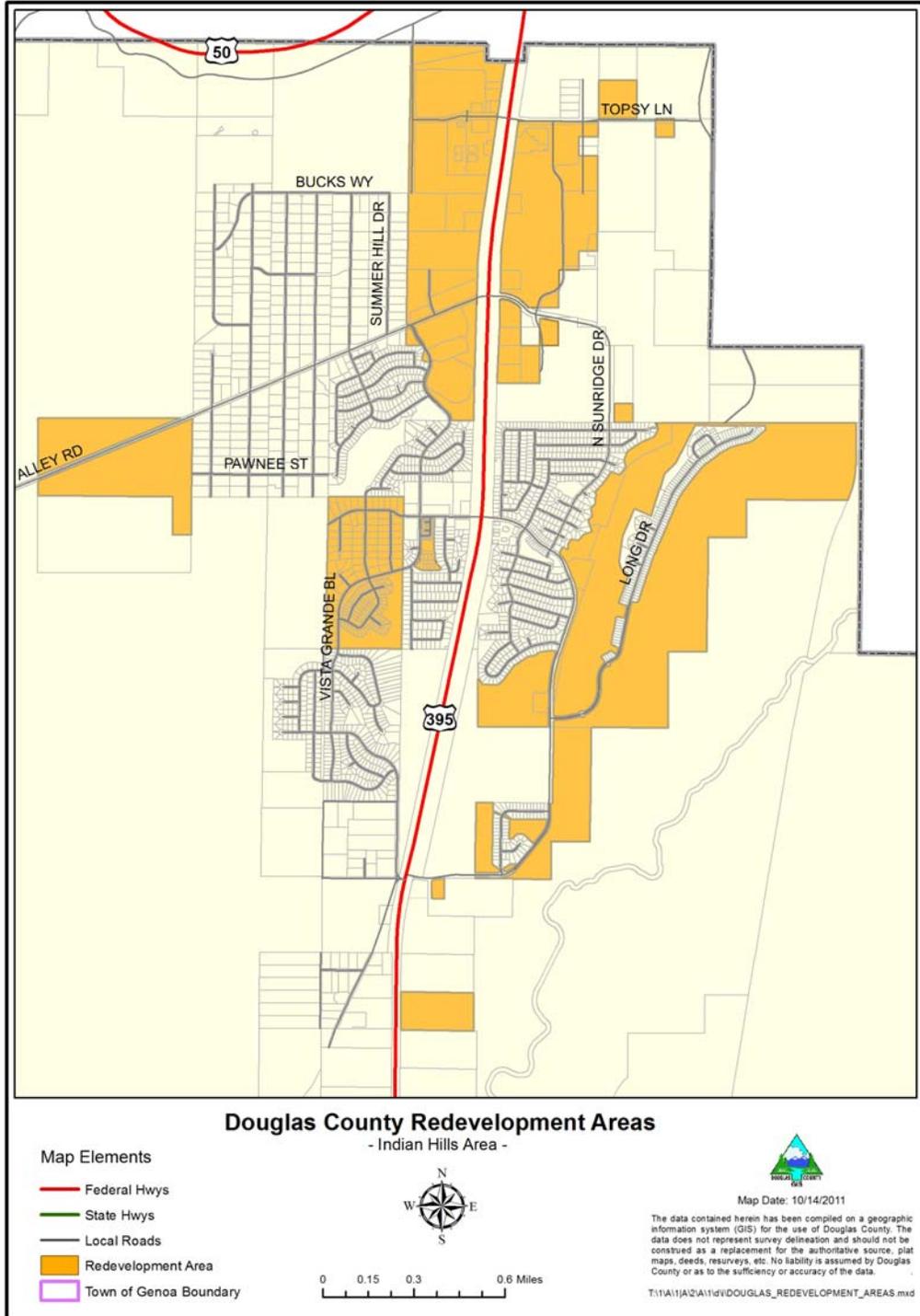
In October of 1997, the County established a Redevelopment Agency and created Redevelopment Project Area No. 1, which includes commercial areas in Genoa, along Foothill Road north and south of Genoa, and in the North County area. The redevelopment areas within North County are located within the Indian Hills/Jacks Valley Community Plan area.

In 2005, the County amended Redevelopment Project Area No. 1 to include additional commercial and private recreation areas in the North County portion. Redevelopment funds have been used to finance infrastructure improvement including water, sewer, road, drainage, and landscaping. Additionally Redevelopment funds have been used in association with the Carson Valley Plaza in North County. Map 9.1 depicts the Redevelopment Areas located in the Indian Hills/Jacks Valley Community Plan area.

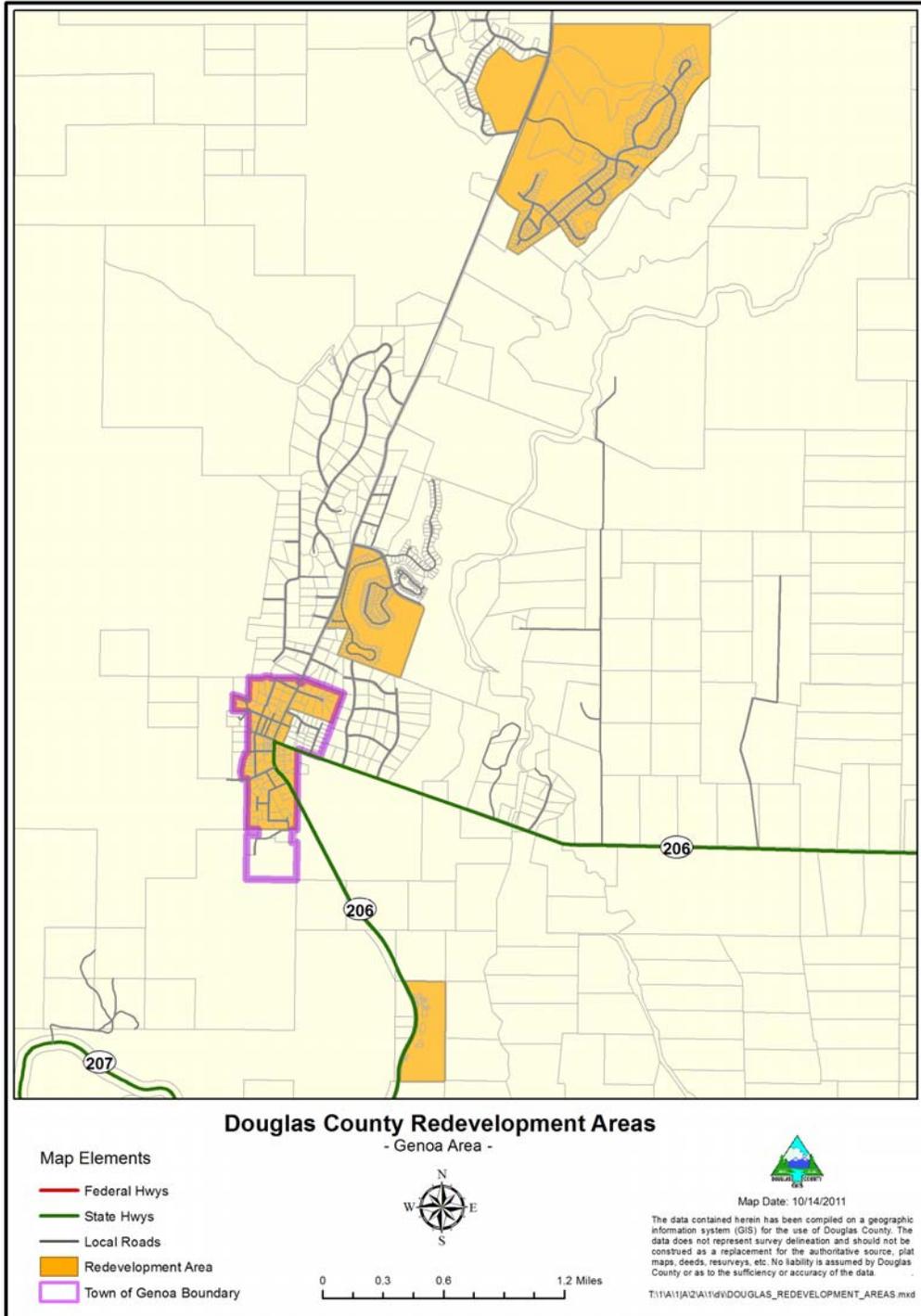
In 2011, redevelopment funding was approved to construct a trail from 1862 David Walley’s Hotsprings Resort to downtown Genoa along Foothill Road, and to construct enhancements to the Historic Downtown, including walkways, signage, lighting, and parking. Both improvements are part of the Genoa Destination Economic Vitality Project. Map 9.2 depicts the Redevelopment Areas in and near the Town of Genoa.

In 2011, the Redevelopment Agency had outstanding debt. Use of additional redevelopment funds will depend on the completion of approved projects and the availability of funding for future redevelopment projects.

Map 9.1 Redevelopment Areas in Douglas County – Indian Hills/Jack Valley Area



Map 9.2 Redevelopment Areas in Douglas County –Genoa Area



Economic Development (ED) Goals, Policies, and Actions

ED Goal 1 To implement the Economic Vitality Strategy and Action Plan and The Lake Tahoe Basin Plan for Prosperity.

ED Policy 1.1 Work with the project champions and community to implement the Economic Vitality Strategy and Action Plan.

ED Policy 1.2 Work with the Tahoe community and the Tahoe Prosperity Center to implement the Lake Tahoe Basin Prosperity Plan.

ED Goal 2 To focus recruitment, retention and expansion efforts on identified industry clusters.

ED Policy 2.1 Recruit, retain and expand Outdoor Recreation and Lifestyle Industry jobs.

ED Policy 2.2 Recruit, retain and expand Energy, Science and Advanced Engineering Industry jobs.

ED Policy 2.3 Recruit, retain and expand Environmental Innovation Industry jobs.

ED Policy 2.4 Recruit, retain and expand Tourism and Visitor Services Industry jobs.

ED Policy 2.5 Recruit, retain and expand Health and Wellness Industry jobs.

ED Policy 2.6 Develop programs to align workforce and education with identified industry clusters.

ED Policy 2.7 Seek infrastructure improvements that support economic development efforts.

ED Policy 2.8 Support programs aimed at strengthening the accessible labor pool, such as affordable housing, recreational opportunities, transportation alternatives, and higher/continued education opportunities.

ED Action 2.1 Utilize social media communication to reach influencers in the Outdoor Industry.

ED Action 2.2 Identify trends in the Outdoor Industry that have expansion/growth potential for the County.

ED Action 2.3 Promote academic, industry and government collaboration.

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- ED Action 2.4 Accelerate the establishment and maintenance of research and technology based companies, facilities, and organizations.
- ED Action 2.5 Promote commercialization of environmental research applications, including a business incubator and investment fund.
- ED Action 2.6 Support the development of itinerates focused on outdoor activities, natural amenities, environmental education, and geotourism. Rebrand the visitor experience to focus on environmental quality, health and wellness, and recreation activities.
- ED Action 2.7 Support environmental redevelopment to improve the built environment.
- ED Action 2.8 Promote the development of specialized center of excellence including orthopedics and oncology; sports and fitness training; wellness centers integrated with new visitor itineraries for fitness and recreation.
- ED Action 2.9 Partner with the Northern Nevada Development Authority in the development of the Dream It! Do It! Program to develop industry specific career ladder and certifications.
- ED Action 2.10 Seek information from employers regarding industry training, education and workforce needs.
- ED Action 2.11 Seek opportunities to improve upon bicycle, pedestrian and equestrian infrastructure that supports economic development.
- ED Goals 3 To emphasize the importance of “place” and promote the development of attractive downtowns centers.**
- ED Policy 3.1 Promote the revitalization of Tahoe.
- ED Policy 3.2 Promote the revitalization of the Towns of Minden, Gardnerville and Genoa.
- ED Policy 3.3 Link education and economic development through the creation of public/private partnerships that encompass public education and targeted business sectors. Grow, diversify, and promote educational opportunities aimed at attracting and developing a qualified and accessible labor pool.
- ED Policy 3.4 Support the efforts of the South Shore Vision Plan to create and rebrand the Highway 50 corridor from Kahle Drive to Ski Run.
- ED Action 3.1 Support and work to expand the Main Street Gardnerville Program.

- ED Action 3.2 Revise and support the implementation of the Gardnerville Parking District Strategy.
- ED Action 3.3 Support the implementation of the Genoa Main Street Landscape Enhancement Plan and the Walley's to Genoa trail.
- ED Goal 4 To promote economic development through regional and public-private partnerships; ensure efficient leveraging of resources.**
- ED Policy 4.1 Douglas County shall work with neighboring jurisdictions on major economic development efforts.
- ED Policy 4.2 Economic development efforts in the Tahoe Basin will be reflective of a regional and basin-wide approach.
- ED Policy 4.3 In order to provide a wide array of economic development services continue to strengthen economic development partnerships with the Chambers of Commerce, Business Council, Northern Nevada Development Authority, Nevada Small Business Development Center (NSBDC), NV Energy, State and local agencies, and other economic development organizations.
- ED Policy 4.4 Utilize Western Nevada Development District to identify funding sources available and appropriate to Douglas County.
- ED Policy 4.5 Seek opportunities to maximize grant seeking and other funding.
- ED Action 4.1 Actively participate in the Tahoe Prosperity Center to implement the Prosperity Plan.
- ED Action 4.2 Identify opportunities to leverage grant funds.
- ED Action 4.3 Develop a mechanism to strengthen economic development grant seeking activities.
- ED Action 4.4 Actively participate in the completion of the South Shore Vision Plan.
- ED Goal 5 To retain and strengthen our existing business base.**
- ED Policy 5.1 Promote successful Douglas County business retention and attraction efforts.
- ED Policy 5.2 Reduce the cost of doing business in Douglas County by streamlining County approval processes and by providing better communication channels with other agencies that share jurisdiction.

- ED Policy 5.3 Encourage training and assistance through the University of Nevada Reno, Western Nevada Community College, and Nevada Small Business Development Center.
- ED Policy 5.4 Advocate expansion of existing businesses by providing tools and information to encourage same.
- ED Policy 5.5 Continue the on-going effort to simplify the Douglas County approval process.
- ED Policy 5.6 Douglas County shall work with other agencies to track economic trends in the area of business retention, economic development, and commercial and industrial development.
- ED Policy 5.7 Douglas County shall work with other agencies to track progress and levels of success in determining and serving business needs.
- ED Policy 5.8 Collect, evaluate, and incorporate feedback from businesses during the permit process to further meet their needs.
- ED Policy 5.9 Research, adapt, and adopt best demonstrated practices from other communities and jurisdictions.
- ED Action 5.1 Douglas County will develop performance measures to evaluate the implementation of its economic development plan.