

SECTION 1

UNIFYING FRAMEWORK: High-Level Issues, Goals, and Policies

The Towns of Minden and Gardnerville have been the center for Carson Valley governmental, cultural, and commercial activities for over 140 years. The prosperity of the Valley is inexorably linked to their progress and ability to provide services for people that farm, build, and now lead in advanced technology innovation. The Unifying Framework Section contains goals and policies for high-level issues facing both Towns in terms of how to better manage and provide urban services for growth, the future of their downtowns, becoming more environmentally and economically resilient, and focusing on the quality of growth.

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Towns of Minden and Gardnerville are communities with a rich history of growing slowly compared to the rest of the region. There is a lot of market pressure on housing and young people find it difficult to secure housing in the communities in which they grew up. To overcome these challenges, the plan takes a long view, particularly as it pertains to infrastructure, urban services, land use, and fiscal sustainability. The Towns and the County, and in some cases the State of Nevada, must collaborate in planning and funding transportation and stormwater infrastructure in the area to support prosperity.

Minden and Gardnerville: Carson Valley's Social and Cultural Centers

The origins of the towns are their most valued and legible features. The historic downtowns and contiguous traditional porch-forward neighborhoods have the scale and design attributes the community wants to build from. Their importance goes beyond being a design reference for new investment, the Towns are Carson Valley's traditional cultural centers inextricably linked to its identity and social traditions.

Minden's Historic Pattern

Minden serves as the Douglas County seat and the traditional center of commerce. Minden was originally developed to serve H. L. Dangberg's ranching and farming operations in Carson Valley. H. L. Dangberg was instrumental in bringing the Virginia & Truckee Railroad to the Carson Valley, which provided access to his regional markets (Maule, 1993).

H. L. Dangberg prepared the original plat map for Minden in 1905. Minden's town plan indicated a small "main street" community with areas for commercial, residential and public uses. The plan subdivided the town into 250'x225' blocks with 15' wide alleys and 25'x105' lots. The plat maps identified the Town Square and the locations of public buildings. The plan featured 10-1/2 blocks of residential, 3 blocks of commercial and 1-1/2 blocks of public uses. The Town later expanded to the west in 1915. The 10-block expansion included the land where the Douglas County Courthouse stands.

Gardnerville Social and Commerce Center for Agriculture

Gardnerville has a 140-year history as the commercial center for Carson Valley farms and has evolved into the commercial service center for South Douglas County. It was established in 1879. Named after John Gardner, the Town's development was influenced by Danish and Basque settlers. In 1879, Lawrence Gilman bought the Kent House and had it moved from its site south of Genoa to land on the east fork of the Carson River and converted it to a hotel. A blacksmith shop and saloon were added. The hotel was the center of the hay- and grain-producing community for many years. Gardnerville was named for Gilman's friend John Gardner. The J.T. Basque Bar and Dining Room is near the original site (visitcarsonvalley.org).

The black-smith shop and a saloon ensured Gilman's town utility and popularity with the ranchers. As the town prospered, a number of hotels, shops, and saloons sprang up. By 1899, Main Street was lined with two livery stables, a woodworking shop, a boarding house, a tin shop, three general merchandising stores, a hall, four saloons, one meat market, one furniture store, a drug and confectionary store, and two hotels. The Valhalla Society-a Danish organization whose purpose was to disseminate information to immigrants- was formed in 1885, making Gardnerville an important social center in the valley as well as a commercial center. Because of its location, Gardnerville came to serve as feed stop for the 24-horse freight teams passing between Carson City and Bodie (Dangberg, 1972).

Planning for the Long Term Prosperity

Best practices for community planning requires taking the long view, particularly as it pertains to infrastructure planning, urban services, and fiscal sustainability. Long term planning also requires a strategic approach to managing growth, economic revitalization, and fiscal resilience.

Growth Management Policy Context

Minden and Gardnerville are in the path of California and Reno/Sparks spillover growth into Carson Valley. However, they are growing slowly as compared to other parts of the region. Douglas County has a 22-year policy for growing responsibly. This includes a development Transfer Development policy, implemented by the 1996 Growth Management Ordinance. The Ordinance protects agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas by transferring their development potential to receiving areas, which are contiguous to the Towns, where they have access to urban services and can contribute to a cohesive sense of community.

The draft Douglas County Master Plan Update 2016 includes these factors related to growth:

- Douglas County's Building Permit Allocation and Growth Management Ordinance were adopted in 2007 (Chapter 20.560).
- The ordinance established a two-percent (2%) growth rate (compounded annually) for the County over a 50-year period.
- The total number of annual residential allocations was set at 317 permits in 2007, and gradually increases to 837 annual allocations by the year 2056. There are 386 residential allocations available for 2017-18.
- For the Minden and Gardnerville community plan areas there 2,586 approved residential units with 606 built unit (23%) and 1,980 units (77%) remaining to be built in designated Receiving Areas.
- Currently there are 261 acres of undeveloped residential acreage in Minden and Gardnerville community planning areas.

Economic Revitalization and Housing

Competitive communities align jobs and housing profiles in their economic revitalization strategies. Their housing policies focus on accommodating the workforce of existing and future businesses and industries they want to retain and/or attract. Due in part to the existing Growth Management Ordinance, new residents and retirees are experiencing a shortage of obtainable housing. This is forcing young residents and service workers to relocate to other communities.

Gardnerville and Minden's young people and the workforce are facing a shortage of housing choices because of a disparity in incomes to housing costs:

- Almost one-half of the renter households and 30% of ownership households in Gardnerville and Minden are spending 35% or more of their income on housing costs.
- The extent of monthly rent (\$1,100) or a unit sale price (\$240,000) supported by an average annual salary (\$44,122) in Douglas County is significantly less than the current average monthly rents or listing sale prices.
- Existing and projected annual increases in monthly rents and sales prices are outpacing projected annual salary/wage increases.
- The lack of ownership and rental housing variety could become a negative factor related to retaining existing and attracting new desired businesses and industries.
- There is a shortage of workforce housing inventory priced at rent levels or sale prices affordable to the employees of the three largest job categories (hospitality; transportation, trade and utilities; and government) (Source: Rural Nevada Housing Needs Assessment, 2016/2017).

Fiscal Resilience

In the community planning process, a reoccurring discussion topic was how to assure the fiscal sustainability of the Towns. The Towns and County are creating economic opportunity for their private sector partners. However, they also need to maintain their fiscal capacity to deliver urban services. This includes maintaining a balance between revenues and expenditures in the long term from commercial, residential, and institutional land uses.

Stormwater Management as Placemaking

The towns are located at the confluence of the East Fork of the Carson River and Pine Nut and Buckeye washes. New hydrological models indicate the Carson River's likelihood of severe flooding has been underestimated. A rare event of a spring snowmelt storm that also drifts over the Pine Nut Mountains could introduce historic levels of flooding in the Valley. The solution to reducing current nuisance flooding and potentially more dangerous events will likely require a three-tier approach to detention. This includes: (1) detention in the upper reaches of the washes, (2) detention at the edges of the towns, and (3) larger culverts in the towns. Rather than approaching this solely as a detention volume solution, the Towns want to turn these potential responses into placemaking opportunities that can become wetlands and be part of the community park and trails system.

Main Street and Muller Parkway are a Connected Project

The Muller Parkway project has been in the Douglas County Master Plan for 20 years. Until the parkway is completed, US395 will shoulder increased traffic, primarily from regional growth. Traffic models indicate the level of service (LOS) will fail on US395 by 2025 without a completed Muller Parkway. Muller Parkway's implementation is directly connected to the success of Gardnerville's Main Street and Minden's Railroad Avenue. The Town's aspirations for pedestrian-oriented downtowns cannot be achieved without considering Muller Parkway and Main Street as a single, connected project.

Trails Policy Context

The County and community stakeholders also have been planning trail systems for the past two decades. The 2003 Douglas County Trail Plan was updated in 2013 in a collaborative effort with the State of Nevada DOT. The plan strives to overcome a current lack of pedestrian and bicycle facilities throughout the County's roadways by providing basic accommodations for bicycles, shoulders or bike lanes. Trails could also be constructed to connect future detention/wetland parks, Muller Parkway neighborhoods and the downtowns.

The 2013 trails plan includes these objectives:

- Objective 1: Increase Local Support of Bicycling
- Objective 2: Increase Bicycle Tourism
- Objective 3: Accommodate Appropriate Bicycling Facilities on all Roadways in Nevada Open to Bicycling
- Objective 4: Increase Motorists' and Bicyclists' Compliance with Laws Associated with Bicycling

The 2013 plan envisions joint use paths along Martin Slough, Buckeye Road, portions of Muller Parkway, and US395 north of Ironwood Drive.

High-Level Issues

The Minden and Gardnerville Plan for Prosperity update process focused on four high-level topics. These include:

- HOW WE GROW
- VIBRANT MAIN STREETS
- HEALTHY AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES
- MAKING GREAT NEIGHBORHOODS

These high-level topics were identified by the communities in the planning process and are viewed as key drivers for success. The plan is organized around four overall goals and supporting policies for development as a means of providing a unifying long term planning framework for the Towns and County.

1.1 HOW WE GROW

How will the Towns provide urban services for future growth?

Minden and Gardnerville strive to build on their traditional roles as the urban centers for the Carson Valley. These traditions include the railroad, which connected the Valley's agricultural production to the markets of the western states and was a catalyst for development of Minden's traditional main street district on Esmeralda Avenue. Minden also is the traditional Douglas County seat with over 500 government employees who contribute to the vitality of the downtown, as well as a significant number of visitors who use County facilities. Gardnerville has been a commercial service center for agriculture whose role has expanded to now include contemporary local and regional shopping services for the Carson Valley. Both towns continue to build on their history as places central to community life.

Figure 1.1 Long-Term Growth Strategy

Long-term Growth Areas

Minden Area 1

- Town of Minden development review
- Ag-land reserve

Minden Area 2

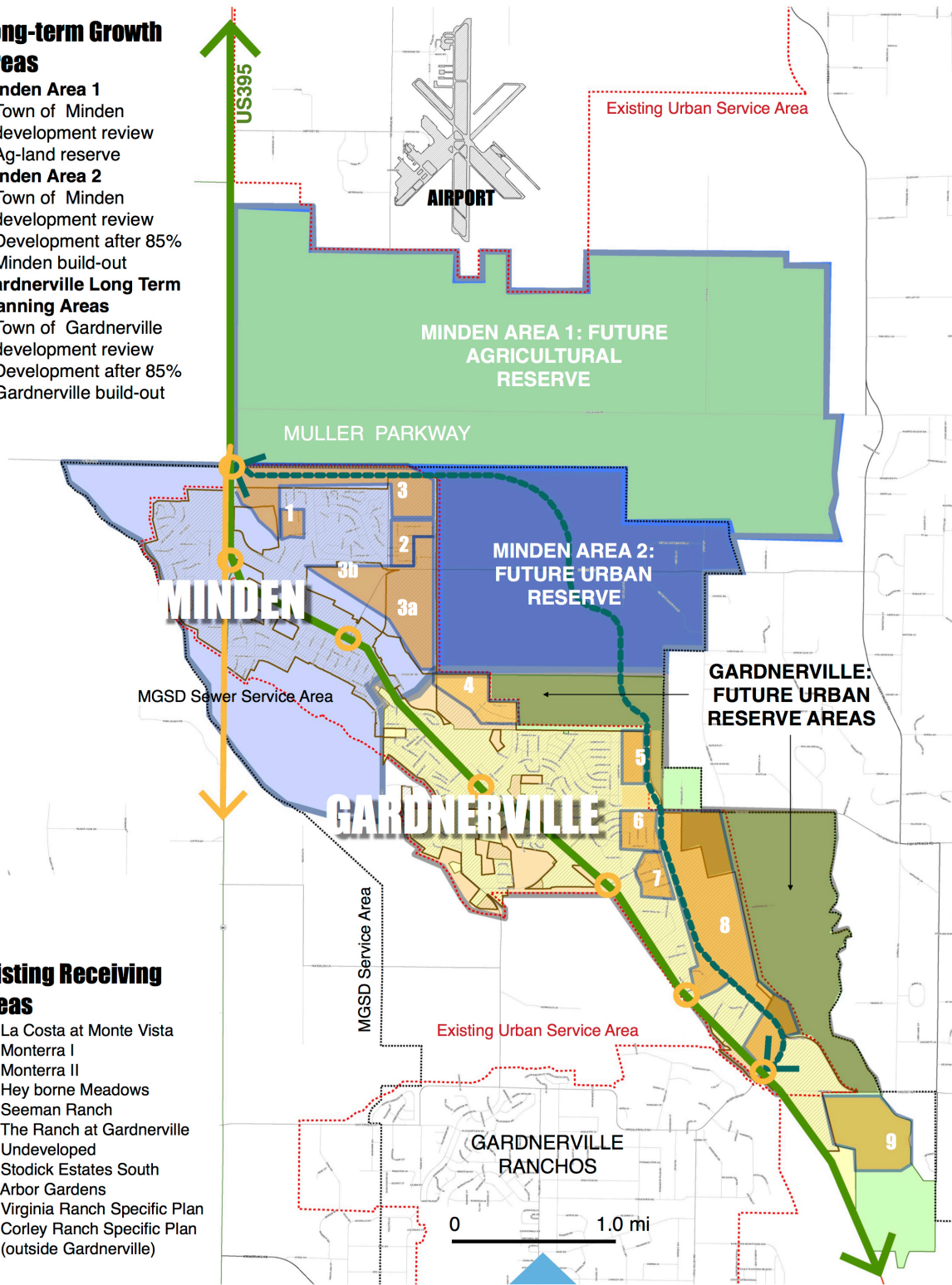
- Town of Minden development review
- Development after 85% Minden build-out

Gardnerville Long Term Planning Areas

- Town of Gardnerville development review
- Development after 85% Gardnerville build-out

Existing Receiving Areas

1. La Costa at Monte Vista
2. Monterra I
3. Monterra II
- 3a. Hey borne Meadows
- 3b. Seeman Ranch
4. The Ranch at Gardnerville
5. Undeveloped
6. Stodick Estates South
7. Arbor Gardens
8. Virginia Ranch Specific Plan
9. Corley Ranch Specific Plan (outside Gardnerville)



Growth Management Goal and Policies

GOAL 1: To provide for long-term orderly growth and planning for urban services.

P1.1 COORDINATE INVESTMENTS

Cooperate with the County to continue to jointly plan and manage strategic urban growth that supports the Towns' aspirations as the Valley's principal central places.

P1.2 INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT

View infrastructure investments as "big moves" that connect economic, community image, and environmental strategies.

P1.3 MATCHING HOUSING AND JOBS

View housing availability as an extension of the Towns and County's overall economic development strategy in order to meet the needs of existing and future workforce and residents.

P1.4 LONG RANGE GROWTH

Establish long-term Town growth boundaries for the purpose of planning for future development and related demand for urban services (Figure 1.1).

P1.5 TOWN REVIEW OF LONG RANGE GROWTH AREAS

In cooperation with Douglas County, expand the charge of Town Boards to include participation in review of development and infrastructure projects within their designated long-term growth areas.

P1.6 COTERMINOUS SERVICE AND TOWN BOUNDARIES

Realign the Towns' boundaries and urban service boundaries to reflect incremental growth identified in approved growth management policies.

P1.7 JOBS-HOUSING BALANCE

Craft land use and development regulations that support ownership and rental housing that is needed by the Towns to retain existing and attract future employees.

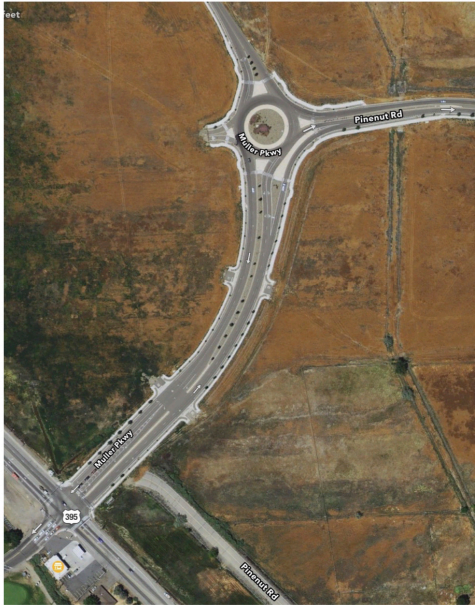
1.2 VIBRANT MAIN STREETS

How can the main street districts maintain their essential role as cultural and commercial centers for Carson Valley?

Minden's Esmeralda Avenue and Gardnerville's Main Street are the traditional social and economic centers for the Carson Valley. US395 is the principal transportation facility for the Sierra's eastern slope communities. It has evolved into only carrying traffic across the road's full right of way. The types of on-street parking, sidewalks and amenities that are essential for making a pedestrian-oriented retail environment work have been removed to accommodate that traffic (Figure 1.2). The Towns want their main streets to be pedestrian friendly and be conducive to successful commercial, social, cultural, and art activities. They seek a comprehensive solution to manage truck and peak automobile traffic that supports their ambitions for mixed-use, walkable destinations on their main streets.

Figure 1.2 Muller Parkway and Detention Park Concept Diagram

Fragmented Muller Parkway



Above:

This is an aerial photo of the partially implemented section of the Muller Parkway off US395 in Gardnerville. The Parkway is being implemented as areas are developed and depend on its access.

The County's traffic model indicates the Parkway will be required to accommodate the amount of traffic anticipated by 2025 on US395.

In addition to meeting transportation needs, the Towns are looking for:

- Improving pedestrian-oriented destinations and merchandizing that improve the downtowns' economic and social performance;
- Reduction of truck traffic; and
- Better connection to emerging neighborhoods in receiving areas and future long-term expansion areas.

Muller Parkway will require a more proactive implementation policy that opens up access to new eastern neighborhoods, supports the Towns' objectives for their downtowns, and meet the transpiration needs of the County.

Muller Parkway Concept

- 4-Lane arterial boulevard with turn lane
- Landscaped median and parkways
- By-Pass allowing truck traffic
- Multi-use path
- Joint development stormwater facilities/neighborhood park



Main Street/US395 Concept

- 2-Lane pedestrian-oriented street
- Widened sidewalks and amenities
- On-street parking



Above:

The solutions for Muller Parkway and Main Street/US395 are connected. The Parkway creates the opportunity to reintroduce on-street parking and pedestrian-oriented destinations on Main Street and Old Railroad Avenue.

Vibrant Main Street Districts Goal and Policies

GOAL 2: To invest and promote the towns' Main Street districts as cultural, economic, and governmental centers.

P1.8 MULLER PARKWAY

Recognize that Muller Parkway's function, design and implementation is part of an interconnected strategy for establishing and sustaining vibrant main street districts (Figure 1.2).

P1.9 MIXED-USE DOWNTOWNS

Pursue residential infill development in and adjacent to the downtowns to provide economic support and help to enhance vitality.

P1.10 DEVELOP AN ART & CULTURAL PLAN

Develop support, and implement an annual art, social, and cultural program that attracts residents and visitors.

P1.11 MULLER PARKWAY FUNDING

Pursue funding to complete the parkway as a facility capable of providing a bypass for traffic and trucks off US 395 around Minden and Gardnerville.

P1.12 MAIN STREET IMPROVEMENTS

Invest in improvements that will enhance both downtowns' pedestrian-oriented experiences, including on-street parking, landscape and lighting, and sidewalks.

P1.13 MIXED-USE DOWNTOWNS

Promote multifamily housing and employment facilities in, and contiguous to, downtown Minden and Gardnerville by allowing multi-story mixed-use buildings.

P1.14 COORDINATED TOWN PROGRAMMING AND PROMOTION

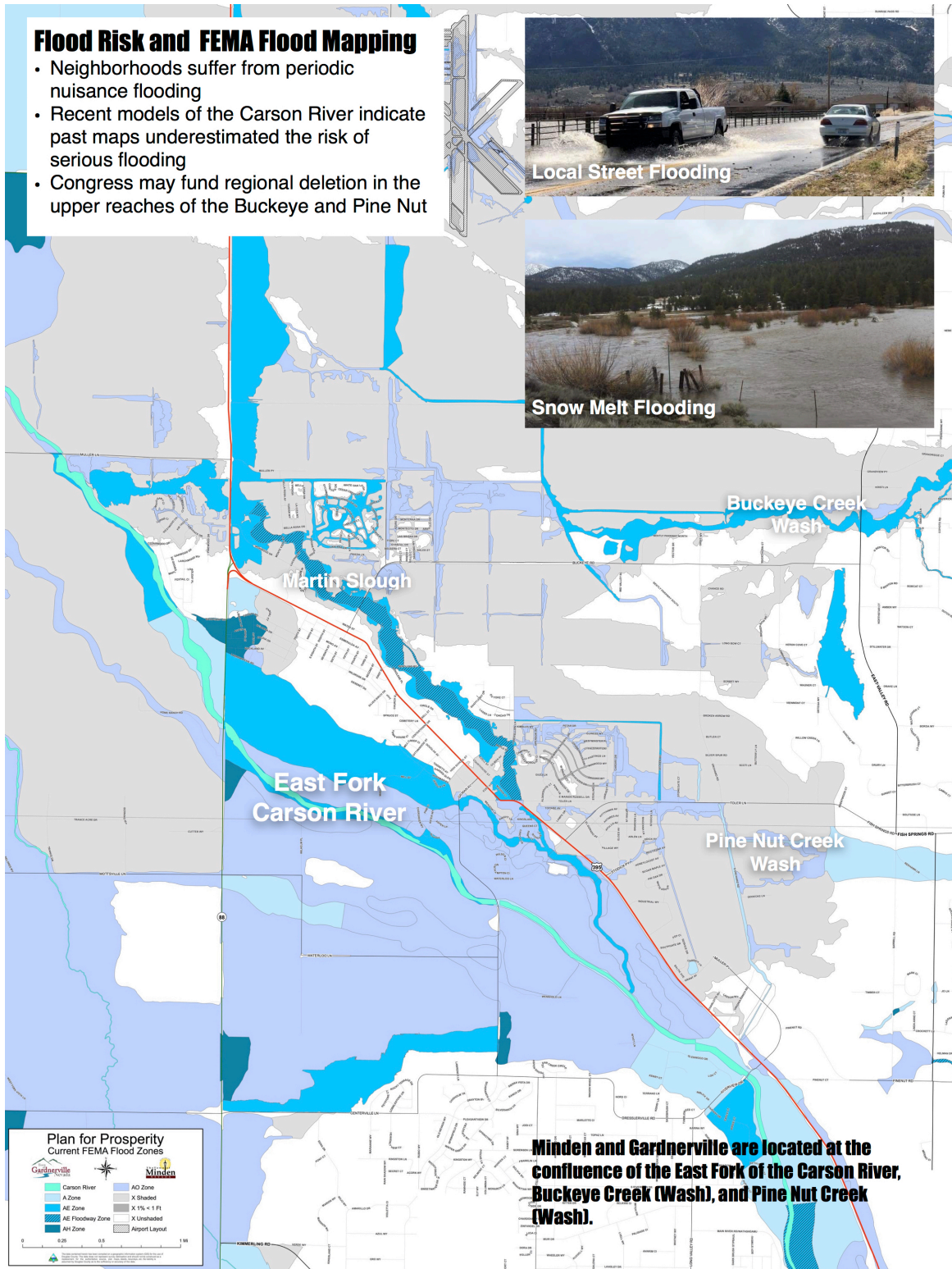
Prepare a plan that connects the promotion and event programming that is managed by the Carson Valley Arts Council, the Towns, Main Street Gardnerville and other community partners.

1.3 HEALTHY AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

How can the towns work with their partners to coordinate investment that improves the residents' quality of life and reduce the risks of environmental disasters?

The Towns are the centers of social, educational, and healthcare activities. Their economic and environmental resilience is key to the quality of life for all of Carson Valley's population. They are the traditional centers for commercial and institutional services. They provide residential neighborhoods for Carson Valley employees and, more recently, retirees. Located at the confluence of the East Fork of the Carson River and Pine Nut and Buckeye Washes, some areas are subject to periodic flooding (Figure 1.3). New hydrological models indicate the Carson River's likelihood of severe flooding has been underestimated. A rare event of a spring snowmelt storm that also drifts over the Pine Nut Mountains could introduce historic levels of flooding in the Valley. The Plan proposes developing a series of detention parks and trail system woven together with the future Muller Parkway (Figure 1.4).

Figure 1.3 Flooding Risk and Opportunities for Joint Use Detention Parks



Economic and Environmental Resilience and Community Health Goal and Policies

GOAL 3: To invest in a healthier and more economically and environmentally resilient community.

P1.15 ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

Maintain the focus of economic energy on the Towns and surrounding areas to create synergies that expand, strengthen and balance the local economy, thus making it less susceptible to economic downturns.

P1.16 COMMUNITY HEALTH

Provide healthcare services and develop trails and open space systems that support healthy, active lifestyles.

P1.17 ADAPTING TO FLOODING

Mitigate and adapt to higher risk of flooding by developing new detention facilities and reducing the impacts of new development on the watershed (Figure 1.3).

P1.18 FISCAL CAPACITY

Balance residential and commercial development to create a more sustainable and resilient tax base that enables the Towns to provide needed urban services.

P1.19 OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Designate easements and rights-of-way (ROW) to accommodate a continuous network of pedestrian routes and bikeways that connect community destinations and recreational facilities.

P1.20 JOINT-USE FLOOD FACILITIES

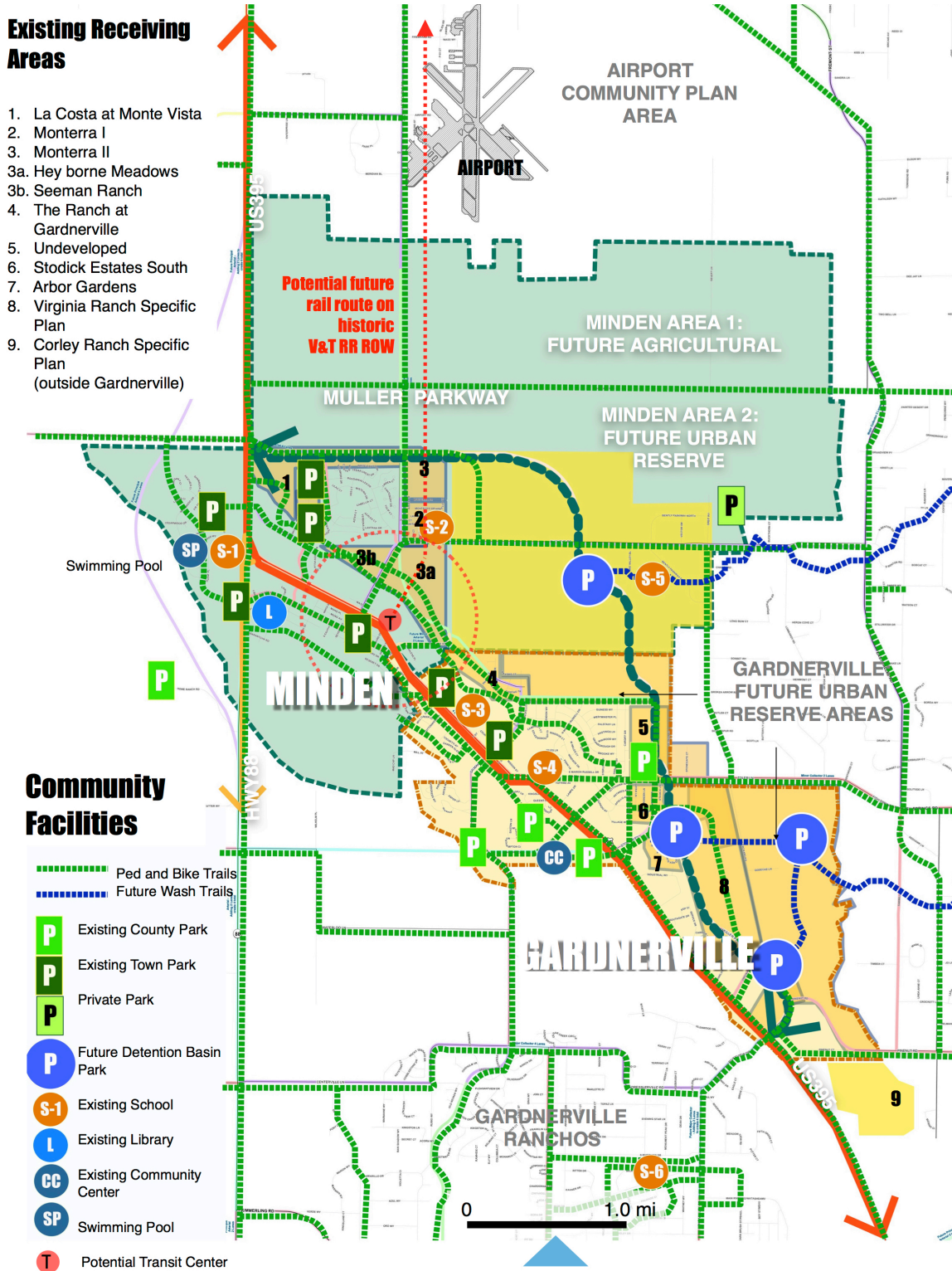
Plan stormwater detention facilities as recreational and visual amenities (Figure 6). Include special district partners (the school district, Towns, Douglas County, MUDs, and others) in the programming, planning, and implementation of these facilities.

1.4 MAKING GREAT NEIGHBORHOODS

How can new investment reflect the Towns' design character aspirations?

Minden and Gardnerville's existing Plan for Prosperity emphasize growing from, and connecting to their downtowns (Figure 1.4). Existing policies emphasize extending the traditional grid patterns of streets and blocks and street-oriented building design that result in sociable and safe streets. The plans insist on designing great neighborhoods rather than simply engineered subdivisions, where the scale and development patterns reflect the moderate pace of growth mandated in the 2007 Douglas County Building Permit and Growth Management Ordinance (which allows up to a 2% annual residential growth rate for the County over a 50-year period).

Figure 1.4 Centered and Connected Neighborhoods



Great Neighborhoods Goal and Policies

GOAL 4: To invest in development of high quality, well designed neighborhoods.

P1.21 CENTERED AND CONNECTED NEIGHBORHOODS

Design neighborhoods that are connected by walkable streets and trails, and are organized around central parks and other community facilities, that feature cultural and natural assets (Figure 1.4).

P1.22 JOINT DEVELOPMENT FACILITIES

The Towns and related special districts should pursue joint development opportunities for parks, schools, storm water detention, trails, and buildings/facilities that minimize costs and add value to neighborhoods.

P1.23 SITE AND BUILDING DESIGN

Design new neighborhoods to respect their context with buildings that reflect the scale and orientation of the traditional town centers, and with plans that feather development into rural and agrarian landscapes, and that use block patterns to accommodate the County's future moderate pace of growth.

P1.24 NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING

Develop a neighborhoods element in the Plan for Prosperity to be included in the Douglas County Master Plan. The element should include the name and location of existing and future neighborhoods, places, connections concepts, and development concepts guidelines.

P1.25 DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

Require new subdivision development to submit for neighborhood design review with the Towns. The submittal requirements should include overall neighborhood land use program concepts for placemaking, connections, and design character.

P1.26 JOINT DEVELOPMENT FACILITIES

Plan and implement community facilities, including future flood control facilities, as neighborhood and community-building opportunities. Include an opportunities map for joint facilities in the Plan for Prosperity.