

SECTION 4

CIRCULATION

Minden and Gardnerville will experience a measurable and observable increase in regional traffic on US395 and other major arterials, a growing need for public transit for workers and aging residents, and a desire to improve continuity in pedestrian and bike facilities. Much of the discussion in the community planning process focused on implementation of the Muller Parkway and the opportunities it would create to improve the experience for pedestrians on Main Street and Old Railroad Avenue. The Circulation Section contains goals and policies that address these issues and opportunities with the ambition of creating a better-integrated transportation and walking network for the residents.

4.0 BACKGROUND

The Minden and Gardnerville Plan for Prosperity integrates street and thoroughfare and trail planning from past plans and the 2016 Draft Douglas County Master Plan.

4.1 INTEGRATED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Douglas County and the Towns have grown slowly and now face increased background traffic. As village centers for rural communities, they have not addressed the need to integrate walking, transit, bicycle, truck access, and auto modes. The County will have a population of over 70,000 by 2040 with a greater variety of transportation needs for residents and visitors. A best practice model for growing regions demands a better-integrated, multi-modal transportation system.

INTEGRATED SYSTEM GOAL 1. To provide and maintain an integrated transportation system resulting in a safe and efficient movement of people and goods.

P4.1 INTEGRATED TRANSIT SYSTEM

Plan for a mature, modally connected systems for safely walking, accessing transit, and managing traffic flow.

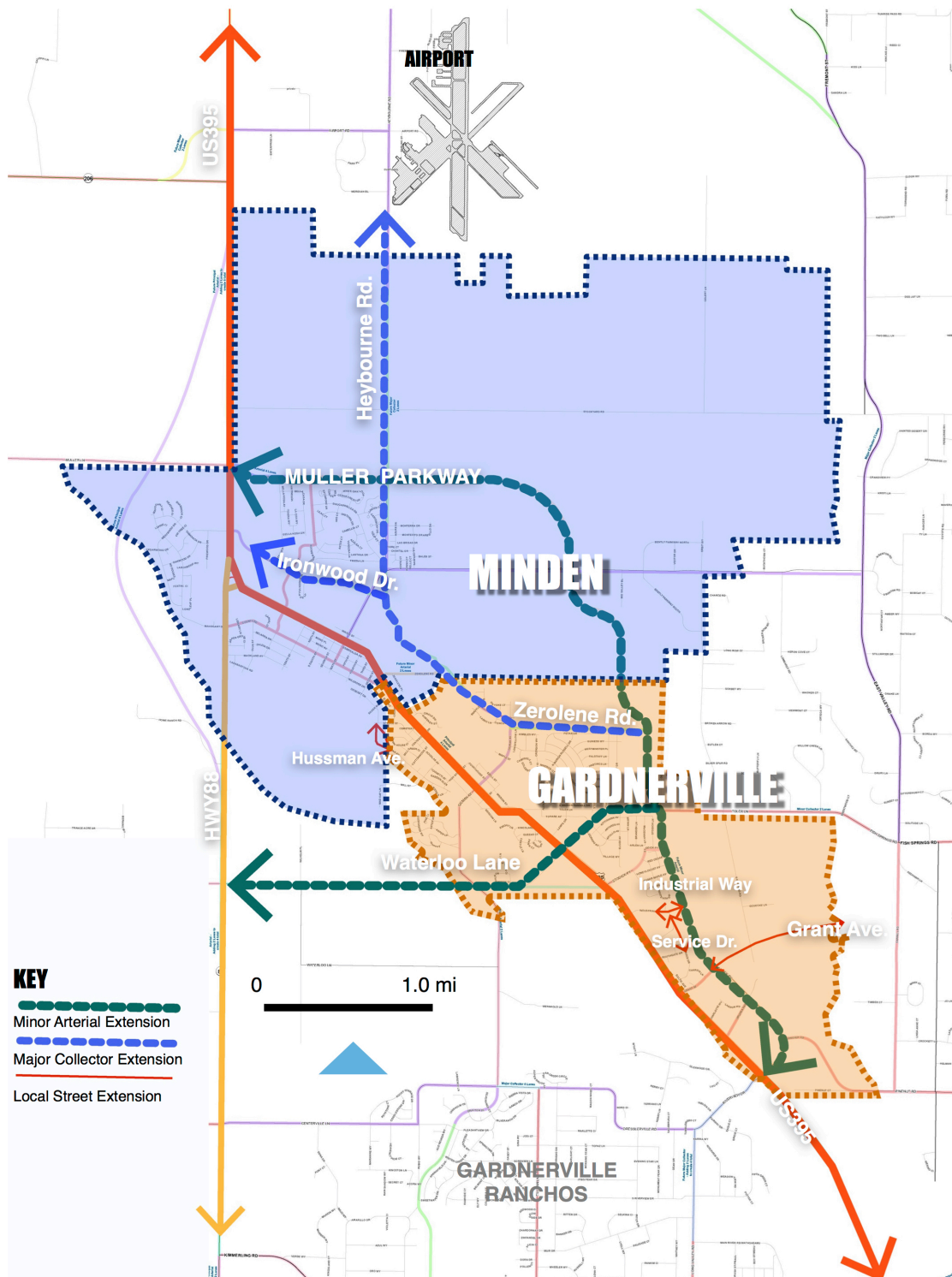
4.2 STREET SYSTEM

Minden and Gardnerville are experiencing growth in background traffic and are seeking state-level highway, regional, and local projects that reduce impacts on the towns while creating more economic opportunities.

Regional Traffic Impacting Towns

The transportation planning for Douglas County uses a planning horizon of 2040 and assumes an annual compounded growth rate of 1.39%. This falls somewhere in the middle of Nevada counties growth rates. However, Minden and Gardnerville are expected to grow less in the same period. Therefore, much of the traffic on US395 will not be originating in the towns but passing through them. Traffic studies prepared for the Douglas County Master Plan Update indicate US395 will be at capacity by 2025 if the Muller Parkway is not completed, and that US395 volumes combined with a completed Muller Parkway also will exceed capacity by 2040 if the eastern truck bypass is not completed.

Figure 4.1 Future Connecting Arterials and Collector Streets



Source: Douglas County, RACESTUDIO

Future of I-11 in Relation to Carson Valley

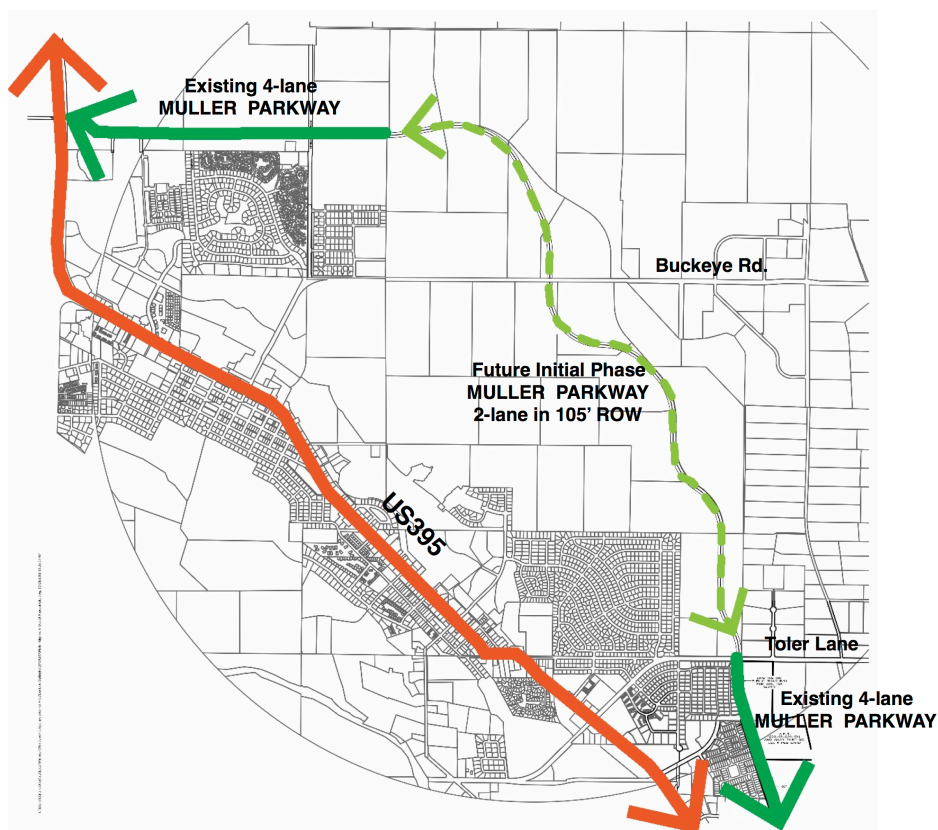
These improvements need to be studied in the context of highway planning at the state level. Nevada is currently planning I-11 that will connect Las Vegas to I-80 in Northern Nevada. The current planning includes the analysis of five alternatives, one of which is a “B4-Reno Connection.” This route, which would pass through Carson Valley, is not favored, due to cost and property ownership patterns. The recommended options for the northern segments are the “B2-Fernley East Connection” and a “B3-Fernley West Connection.” These alternative routes would carry traffic to the east of US395, north of Walker Lake and divert some percentage of traffic away from Carson Valley with a more direct route to I-80.

Muller Parkway and Main Street

As discussed in Section 1, the Towns are seeking to complete Muller Parkway before 2025 and are in favor for allowing trucks to use it. They view Muller Parkway and the towns’ Main Streets as a combined project where, by allowing through-traffic to bypass US395, it would permit providing on-street parking, expanded sidewalks, and other pedestrian amenities in the downtowns. These features are considered critical for creating a successful district for both the towns’ Main Street Programs.

In 2018, there was a proposal by property owners to build the first two lanes of Muller Parkway on a new 105’ ROW alignment (Figure 4.2). The proposal committed Douglas County to complete the parkway’s roadways, bike trails, pedestrian facilities, and landscaping.

Figure 4.2 Muller Parkway Proposed Alignment 2018



Street Standards

The *Douglas County Engineering Design and Improvement Standards Manual* identifies five functional classifications for streets. These include Principal Arterials, Minor Arterials, Rural/Urban Major Collectors, Rural/Urban Minor Collectors, and Rural/Urban Local Roadways. The manual makes distinctions between urban and urban local streets. A local street can also be classified as a residential street, which provides more flexibility in terms of ROW width. Two issues came up in the community workshops regarding the street standards. First, some thought the standards limited the choices for the design of neighborhoods, requiring all new residential areas look the same. Secondly, for those streets with the planting strips at the curb edge, it was not clear who was responsible for their maintenance. Depending on the street, this could be the County, the Town, an HOA, Landscape District or the individual resident. The construction of planter strips is not preferred by the Towns.

Future Connecting Streets

The Draft 2016 Douglas County Master Plan identifies future arterial and collector streets that will improve overall access to the towns' neighborhoods and reduce traffic on US395 (Figure 4.1). These include Muller Parkway, Heybourne Road, Ironwood Drive, Waterloo Lane, and US Westside Bypass.

STREET SYSTEM GOAL 1: To seek complimentary regional transportation solutions.

P4.2 ADVOCATE FOR REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

Track the progress of, and advocate for regional transportation solutions that support Minden and Gardnerville's environmental and economic wellbeing.

STREET SYSTEM GOAL 2: To concurrently design and implement Muller Parkway and Main Street improvements.

P4.3 DESIGN MULLER PARKWAY AND MAIN STREETS

Design Muller Parkway and Main Street improvements as a connected project that results in a pedestrian friendly corridor through the heart of Minden and Gardnerville.

P4.4 MULLER PARKWAY AS A LIMITED ACCESS ARTERIAL

Design Muller Parkway as a limited access arterial that allows both local and regional traffic, including trucks, to bypass.

P4.5 FUND MULLER PARKWAY AND MAIN STREETS

Develop a funding strategy for both Muller Parkway and the towns' Main Streets as a single, connected project.

STREET SYSTEM GOAL 3: To encourage design hierarchy and distinctiveness of streets in new neighborhoods.

P4.6 DESIGN STANDARDS FOR LOCAL STREETS

Encourage greater variety in design of local urban streets to promote more distinctive neighborhoods.

P4.7 MAINTENANCE PLAN FOR PRIVATE STREETS AND PLANTING STRIPS

Require a maintenance plan for planting strips on urban streets including mowing and weeding, and watering and maintaining street trees in new developments. Clearly identify maintenance responsibility and procedure.

4.3 PEDESTRIAN NETWORK AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Minden and Gardnerville's traditional neighborhoods and town centers were developed as walking environments. Minden was built around access to the Virginia & Truckee Railroad (V&TRR), which attracted hotels and businesses catering to visitors. These same planning principles can be extended to future development expanding the walkable environments to new neighborhoods.

Sidewalks and Streets

The towns have a mix of conditions for walking. Every trip begins and ends with a pedestrian. Focusing on improving the walking environments and better connectivity is foundational to a successful transportation system. The Towns have strived to identify and fill gaps in their sidewalk systems. In community workshops, participants voiced concern about the lack of variety in the types of streets that are allowed in Douglas County's subdivision standards. There was a preference to allow greater variety to make new neighborhoods less monotonous and respond to various public and private property line conditions.

Public Transit

Providing general public transit provides an alternative access to employment and services for residents who seek to avoid driving, do not have access to a car, or are no longer capable of driving. For residents of Minden and Gardnerville, however, there are few transit options. Douglas County operates the DART Dial-a-Ride service along the US395 corridor and DART Express as a fixed-route service for the towns and Gardnerville Ranchos areas, connecting community and commercial services. Regional public transit service also is limited. A private service connects the area with Lake Tahoe. A bus service by Washoe County that once connected the towns to Reno has been discontinued. Douglas County is growing and will need better transit choices, particularly in the US395 corridor that connects employees to their jobs and residents to regional-serving facilities.

PEDESTRIAN NETWORK AND TRANSIT GOAL 1: To prepare a plan pedestrian facilities as part of an overall walking network.

P4.8 PEDESTRIAN FACILITY MASTER PLAN

Prepare a sidewalk and pedestrian network master plan for the towns of Minden and Gardnerville.

P4.9 PEDESTRIAN SYSTEM GAP ANALYSIS

Prepare an analysis of gaps in the pedestrian network and work with Douglas County and private property owners to connect to them.

PEDESTRIAN NETWORK AND TRANSIT GOAL 2. To plan for improved regional and local transit access for residents, employees, and visitors.

P4.10 PROVIDE FOR GENERAL TRANSIT

Continue to work with Douglas County and private sector partners to expand general transit services that connect to regional destinations.

P4.11 FIXED-ROUTE TRANSIT FOR FUTURE NEIGHBORHOODS

Master plan receiving and urban reserve areas to improve access to a fixed-route transit system.

P4.12 FUTURE OF THE V&TR RIGHT-OF-WAY

Establish and preserve a transportation corridor along the Virginia & Truckee Railroad (V&TRR) right-of-way between Minden and Carson City.

4.4 TRAILS AND BIKEWAY SYSTEM

Douglas County and their community partners have been planning a regional system of trails and bikeways. In 2003, Douglas County prepared a *Comprehensive Trails Master Plan*. In 2014, the County and Nevada DOT developed the Douglas County Bicycle Master Plan. These plans are to be merged as the Bicycle/Pedestrian Trail Element in the Draft 2016 Douglas County Master Plan. The 2003 Minden and 2006 Gardnerville Plans for Prosperity strived to build on the 2003 planning by identifying trail locations and trailhead connection points for the towns. These ideas are still popular, and there is a new interest in expanding this network to include new trails that would link future storm water detention basins and parks. A new key feature in trails planning is the introduction of detention basin parks along Muller Parkway and washes, which would be connected by multi-use trails (Figure 4.3).

TRAILS AND BIKEWAY GOAL 1: To connect bike and trail plans to open spaces as an integrated system.

P4.13 MULTI-PURPOSE TRAIL SYSTEM

Coordinate development of the comprehensive trail planning with Douglas County and private sector partners.

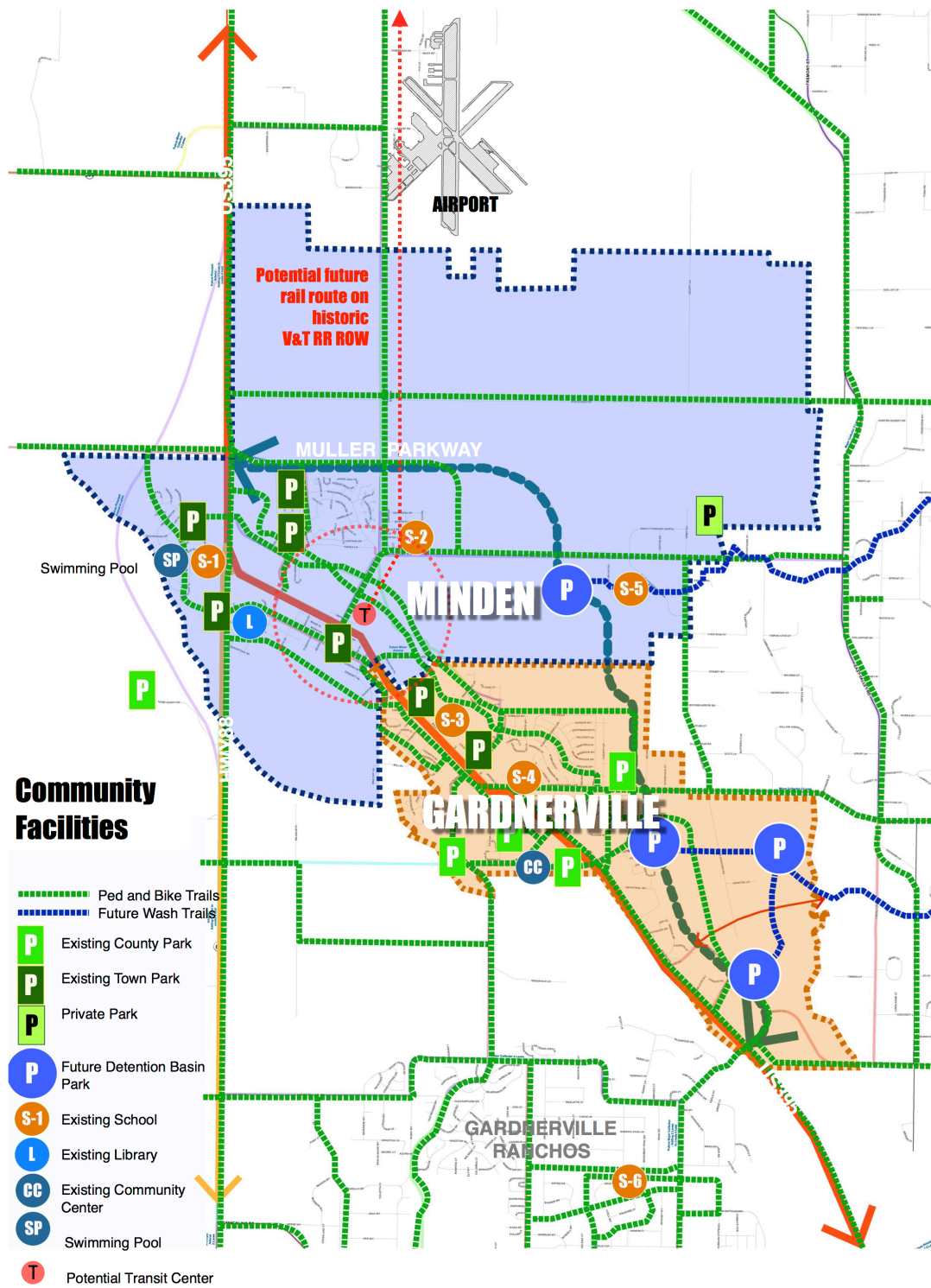
P4.14 CONNECT TO COUNTY BIKEWAY SYSTEM

Coordinate development of public ROW and off-road multi-use trails to connect to the countywide network for recreational and commuting bicyclists.

P4.15 MULLER PARKWAY TRAILS

Develop a Type 1 multi-use trail that parallels Muller Parkway, thus connecting future detention basin parks and the Pine Nut and Buckeye Wash trails.

Figure 4.3 Bikeway, Trail, and Open Space System



Source: Douglas County, RACESTUDIO