



AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

**RENO RUDAT**

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R/UDAT

RENO, NEVADA

REGIONAL/URBAN DESIGN ASSISTANCE TEAM

WESTERN MOUNTAIN REGION, A.I.A.

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# introduction

Truckee Meadows is presently a very attractive place to live. It is also in danger of being adversely affected by rapid growth. Development is spreading into areas of marginal service capabilities, air pollution is developing, water pollution is increasing. Housing costs rising from a market demand are pricing out low and moderate income families. Uncontrolled growth without governmental policies and tools to guide and mitigate the impact will severely affect the livability of the area.

The constant theme running throughout this report is the effect of growth on the communities of the Truckee Meadow Region. Urban growth can be unsettling because it means change: change in people's life style, changes in the environment, change in the ways government must operate, and changes in business patterns. But growth can also be beneficial if a community is prepared to control the development to create a better quality of life for its citizens. Growth creates options with regard to employment, development, revenue and new facilities. Unfortunately, however, most communities are not prepared to handle growth. Their policies, taxes, regulations, standards, organizations, procedures, knowledge, data systems, and physical facilities are not geared to assimilating the socio-economic and environmental impacts. Nor is much

known about the tradeoffs that occur when communities grow--the things that are lost, the things that are gained.

Rapid and large amounts of growth create major governmental administrative problems. Where once the local government had a caretaker role, it is now called on to become an active participant in resolving conflicts between groups of citizens or interests. The community is often divided into several antagonistic groups: newcomers and natives, those that gain from growth versus those that lose. The local governments must continue to provide the traditional housekeeping services and also be prepared to respond to new needs or desires. Growth always brings new demands; it is not simply an expansion of the currently available services or facilities. For example, where once volunteer groups could and did administer social programs, large increases in population and area dictate more structured, more formal responses which in turn require a source of permanent financing. This is true of cultural programs, recreation, youth programs, beautification, and many other activities.

As growth occurs, the delivery of services becomes more complex. New technologies become affordable and necessary. This, coupled with greater

awareness of what numbers can do to the environment, requires a new sophistication, new staff, and new financial resources.

As change accelerates, future consequences of current actions must be faced. What alternatives are foreclosed to future residents? What hardships are built into the system? What problems are compounded? These and other questions must be confronted.

While growth has social, environmental, fiscal, and personal costs that must be recognized, it can also have benefits in new jobs for the unemployed or underemployed and for the young people coming into the market place. There are opportunities for new cultural, recreational or educational community facilities.

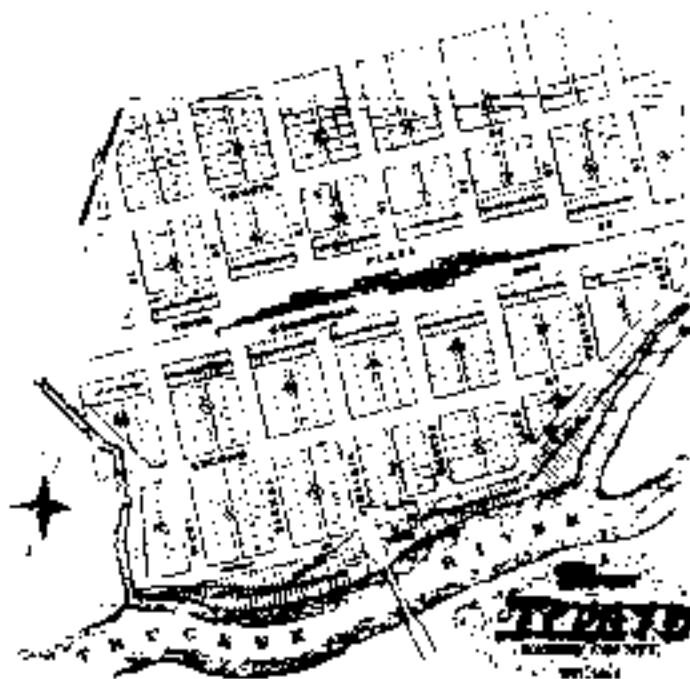
Uncontrolled growth may not generate many benefits, but it will inevitably generate costs. It is possible to guide, control, and harness growth without stopping it, achieving in the process many of the positive aspects, while reducing negative impacts.

Guidance of growth to maximize the benefits requires a desire and an effort on the part of the local governments to lead rather than to be led. Local governments must set the pace by cultivating citizen understanding and support. Goals must be set, and policies, regula-

tions, standards, decisions, and actions revised to achieve those goals. Development, fiscal and management decisions must be coordinated toward desired ends. They are all interrelated, with one dramatically affecting the other.

In short, Reno, Sparks and Washoe County must decide where they want to go, what they want to be and why, and what strategies will best serve to attain these goals. Leadership in this task must emanate from all citizen groups and be reflected in support for the administration and legislators who must coordinate and direct specific actions. The private sector should continue to shoulder the main responsibility for new developments, but only within the guidelines and facilities provided by the public. The two must work together. As one resident stated, "The power of government must be fused with the ability of the private sector to act."

The risks of implementation can be minimized and cost of inaction can be great as the decisions facing the city of Reno today will determine its destiny tomorrow. Therefore, these decisions must be made wisely on the best information and judgment available at that particular point in time, and not on emotion, personal likes or dislikes, or on the path of least resistance. The decisions should be based on what would be best for the whole community, now and in the future.



FIRST MAP OF RENO.  
"of vellum and very old and worn."



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## HISTORY

The "Biggest Little City in the World" began as a crossing on the emigrant trail. Situated in Truckee Meadows, the place offered fresh water and grass for animals and a resting spot before the dreaded crossing of the Sierra Nevada. The Donner Party stopped in this vicinity before the tragedy at the foot of the great mountains in 1846.

In 1859, settlement had begun on the banks of the Truckee River, near the site of the present Washoe County Court House and the Riverside Hotel. The place was called Fuller's Crossing, for the man who owned and maintained the first toll bridge on the river.

In 1862, Myron Lake, a veteran of the Mexican War, purchased the property, rebuilt the bridge that Fuller lost to winter floods, and renamed the settlement Lake's Crossing. Lake prospered there, charging fees for passing the Lake House. His business increased as miners and prospectors rushed to the Comstock. In return for the toll franchise, the Territorial Legislature required Lake to maintain the road for four miles in both directions.

With the building of the Central Pacific Railroad in the 1860's, the little river crossing began to grow. Myron Lake convinced the railroad builders that his station should become a stop on the line. In May, 1868, with the place newly named in honor of General Jesse Reno, a Civil War hero, the first sale of lots took place. When the first train arrived the next month, town buildings were already up.

Reno soon became a business, financial, and educational center for western Nevada. After the decline of the mining boom towns, the place grew to be the largest city in the state, and maintained that status until the 1960's. The county seat was transferred here in 1871 and the University of Nevada in 1885. As a railroad and transportation center, the city expanded rapidly.

Reno quickly became famous for its unique features. When the state legislature outlawed gambling in 1909, the city already had a few well-known establishments. Hard times following the reformist action hampered the city's development; an "International Exposition" in honor of the Lincoln Highway in 1927 resulted in the construction of the famed "Reno Arch" and a couple of public buildings, but little else.

When in the 1930's the economically hard-pressed state decided to allow gaming as a device to fight the Depression, Reno experienced a new influx. The movement was enhanced by a six weeks residence law, which brought movie stars, capitalists, and spouses of numberless celebrities to take advantage of the "quickie" divorce. The Washoe County Court House, central point for this legal process, became the feature of many articles, motion pictures and photo stories about the divorce trade.

During World War II, the city again underwent dramatic change. An air base built north of town brought hundreds of newcomers, many of whom decided to stay permanently after the base closed. Other people, traveling about in the post-war period, discovered clean air and a favorable climate and decided to make their homes in Nevada. The population boom struck Reno and western Nevada with the same intensity experienced in California. Commercial and recreational institutions proliferated until Reno became the metropolis of northern Nevada, with parks, banks, shopping centers, churches, schools, homes of all styles and descriptions, and a glittering downtown gaming section. The carnival-style "gambling joints" of the 1930's and 1940's gave way rapidly to the opulent and sedate gaming casinos and hotels of today.





# summary

#### SUMMARY:

The Reno R/EDAT team would like to emphasize our major recommendations that the city of Reno adopt a fiscally sound Urban Development Strategy which will encompass the following major points:

- Adopt a Contained Growth Policy that will focus growth and quality development within the existing core and city limits of Reno.
- Develop a high quality urban waterfront which will be the main focus of the urban core and city-wide open space network.
- Reinforce and develop the existing downtown core into a viable pedestrian space for both the tourists and the community.
- Develop the areas adjacent to the "downtown core" which are consistent with community goals and reinforce the linkages between new and existing nodes with the river.
- Respond to the Housing Need.
- Leadership and assumption of the proper roles of all segments within the community.
- Establish a single set of GOALS AND POLICIES with the accompanying implementation mechanisms for this area of Washoe County, involving all local governments that will be consistent with the community's needs and insure the residents of the community of maintaining the "quality of life", and the uniqueness and livability that the area offers.

The major elements of these points are covered briefly here, and in detail in the body of the report.

#### GROWTH: ADOPT A "CONTAINED GROWTH POLICY"

- Adopt a policy of containing all new development within the existing committed spaces in Stead, Lemon Valley and Sun Valley.
- Removal of the southwest and northwest portions of the McCarran Boulevard Ring Road.
- Removal of residential areas around the airport.
- The protection and conservation of the natural amenities and resources within the area (toothhills, river, etc.)

#### THE RIVER AND THE CITY:

- Establish urban design criteria and objectives for the river and the city.

#### "RIVER"

- Main focus and urban structuring element within the city and region.
- Provide the focus of the "open space network" running parallel to the river with radiating linkages of open space extending out and connecting various functions and activities within the community.
- Building envelopes should step back from the river corridor allowing air, light, and a view of the river.
- Reinforce public accessibility to the riverfront.

- Investigate alternative flood control measures in conjunction with the railroad problem.

"CBD":

- Retain the compactness and reinforce existing nodes by locating the cultural center, community college, and housing and other such facilities adjacent to the downtown core and the river.
- Create pedestrian-oriented districts, spaces and amenities in the downtown area.
- Extend and tie together the pedestrian circulation system at grade, above grade, through building, etc.
- Streetscape.
- Reinforce, connect, and expand the existing pedestrian circulation system at grade, at the second level, and in the alleyways; tie into the river where feasible.
- Consider the use of the tax exempt funding to encourage quality development in a positive way by improving amenities and attractiveness in public spaces and mixed uses in the core area while strengthening this area as a place for continued concentration of gaming facilities and the introduction of civic, cultural, residential, and other activities.
- Construct elderly housing adjacent to the downtown core with

mixed uses such as retail and commercial, and enclosed pedestrian spaces and linkages.

- Provide adequate peripheral parking structures with a jitney transport system.
- Construct a shared parking structure for joint use of the cultural center and Pioneer Auditorium.

DEVELOPMENT OF ADJACENT CORE AREAS:

- The treatment of the urban form giving corridors: the Interstate I-80 highway corridor, the railroad corridor, the river corridor.
- Develop a new entrance and gateway to the city at the I-80 interchange with highway and university related activities.
- Develop the "Reno Ride": a unique inner-city jitney bus loop system with adjacent parking structures.
- Development of Virginia Street as a transit and pedestrian spine from I-80 south to the governmental complex.
- Reinforce and preserve existing inner-city neighborhoods.

RESPOND TO THE HOUSING NEEDS:

- Establish the housing needs for the area within a six month period.
- Create a "Housing Task Force."
- Investigate the creation of a "State Housing Finance Authority."
- Create neighborhood planning units or districts.

#### ROLES:

- Assume the necessary leadership on major questions and decisions with a policy of action rather than reaction.
- Actively pursue the role of Reno as a "Gateway to the Sierras" and a regional center.
- Provide the climate for active participation and co-operation among other entities within the city so that they may assume their proper role (i.e. gaming, the university, etc.)
- Improve the "image of Reno" within its market area and among its own residents.

#### POLICIES:

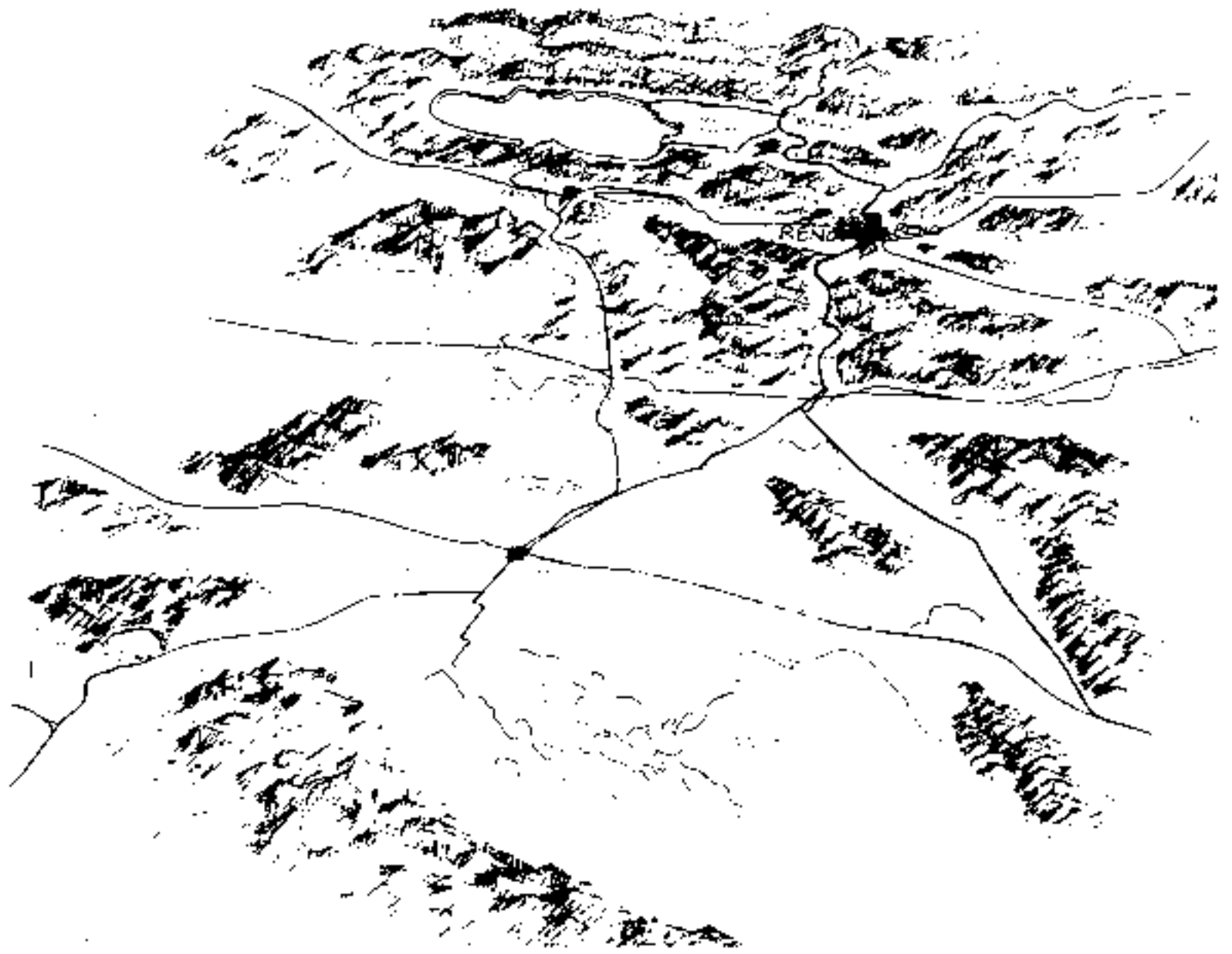
- That the three local governments undertake an immediate combined effort to involve the total community in the discussion, understanding of the implications, and the determination of the desired future direction for Reno/Sparks and the unincorporated areas in the Truckee Meadows.
- Revision of the comprehensive plan in relationship to the agreed goals, with subsequent revision of all community programs, actions, and regulations to guide development towards the achievement of the plan and its desired goals.
- For all local governments to revise their zoning codes and procedures

and to begin assuming a positive role in guiding the land uses and development decisions in their areas. (The present codes regulate some but essentially have no regulations for others to insure that the public receives protection from such contracts and does not subsidize some developers at the expense of others.)

- Adoption of comprehensive planning process and management policies that emphasize integration of physical, economic, governmental, and human elements.
- Reinforce the working relationship and future planning efforts with Sparks and Washoe County.
- Initiate some "action programs" which can start immediately and demonstrate a sense of momentum, and work for a climate of consensus.
- Assumption of a leadership role in which it acts instead of reacts.

#### OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Encourage the collection and evaluation of useful social, economic, and physical planning data.
- Create an awareness and understanding of the community regarding the issues, the options, trade-offs, and alternatives available.



**impressions**

## R/UDAT TEAM IMPRESSIONS

Team members have explored Reno, Sparks and the surrounding unincorporated area through reports, conversations, automobile windshields, bus tours, air reconnaissance, day and night walks, and the lens of the camera. We have talked to many knowledgeable people, people who are just visiting... people who knew why we were here, and others who had no idea who we were. We have the benefit of our experience and an objective, fresh view of the area to offer. Despite this, we must still confess a degree of ignorance. We lack the traditions, the history, the awareness of how and why certain conditions exist. We ask your consideration if our observations or suggestions fail to account for a local situation that has already been dealt with. Our impressions, outlined below, provide the context for our recommendations:

### Environment

- . Fragile, arid area - where water is necessary to create green valley.
- . Containment by natural topography, providing feeling of closeness to natural areas.
- . Dramatic natural asset: the Truckee River.
- . Entry way to the mountains and outdoor recreation.

- . South and east more attractive visually, because of irrigation, for urban expansion.
- . Desert, sagebrush, land to north of cities aesthetically pleasing until disturbed by development - then raw and ugly.
- . Air pollution evident to the east in early morning.

### Urban Form

- . Tight urban pattern.
- . Apparent acceptance of high rise in core gives good identity to area, yet not so high as to lose human scale or be overwhelming.
- . Scale of the rest of community is low rise.
- . Core is ugly, lacks cohesion/focus.
- . Core is exciting where development exists - lights, signs, people, action is excellent - but too many dilapidated buildings, few amenities, acres of surface parking.
- . Signs are major source of visual pollution away from the core - little evidence of organized purpose or role of signs in different areas of the community.
- . Little concentration of public buildings in Reno although City Hall, County Library and Pioneer Theater locations show a beginning.
- . Major community parks not readily apparent.



- . Lack of treatment and concern of the transportation corridors as they pass through the city (highway, railroad, river).
- . Entrance to the city is cluttered, uninviting, and confusing like any other city.
- . Lack of identifiable open space network.
- . 24-hour people-oriented industry located in the core of the city.
- . Location of key public buildings and activity centers are usually made on cheapest available "bargain" land rather than where it will benefit the city most and reinforce the existing urban fabric of the city.

#### - Residential

- . Single family homes dominate with cluster, multi-family units becoming more prevalent, particularly in Reno.
- . Clean, pleasant living areas with many well-kept older homes.
- . Planned unit development becoming a major method of building.
- . Growth trends to south and northwest in Reno, east in Sparks.
- . Scattered mobile home development primarily north of Reno and Sparks, where sprawl is most evident.
- . Little visual impact of off-campus University housing, no apparent "student territory" around campus.
- . Neighborhood identification difficult.

- . Residential development poorly located near airport.
- . Lots of vacant land in city yet to be developed.

#### Commercial

- . Strip commercial, apparently healthy, south of Interstate 80 dominates major arterials.
- . Minimum retailing core area - mostly specialty items and tourist shops-- little concentration.
- . Vast amounts of vacant or marginally used commercial (non-retail) distributing areas between Interstate 80 and residential land south of the river.
- . Retail center of community appears to be Park Lane Shopping Center.
- . Sparks shopping area on east side appears to be the answer to their need for major shopping facilities.
- . Tourist-commercial area in core appears vastly under utilized--in Reno, major portion is vacant or marginally used tracts. Also true on smaller scale in Sparks.
- . Major vacant parcels of undeveloped industrial area.
- . Clean industrial areas.
- . Warehouses located on scattered basis in north - may be good use of marginal land.
- . Why no warehouses in older areas of city north of railroad and south of Interstate 80?

### Transportation

- . Wide streets.
- . Good radial feeder from north.
- . Railroad barrier.
- . Comparatively easy to move about circulation system.
- . More left turn lanes needed; could be readily provided.
- . Airport well located for quick access to municipalities, but land uses becoming a threat in the approach zone to the southeast and north.
- . Railroad station well located if trains ever become a major passenger carrier again.
- . Forced major street through residential area in Sparks - McCarran Boulevard.
- . Car oriented population--typical western pattern.

### Government/Institutional

- . Intergovernmental cooperation at local level is outstanding.
- . No strong governmental leadership acknowledged by business community or citizens.
- . Reorganization or reorientation of municipal government seems to be underway.
- . Strong interest by all governmental agencies in making the area an even better place to live.
- . Joint Regional Planning Commission has become a major plus for the

- three local governments and the citizens.
- . Growing separation of planning powers and responsibilities - W.C.O.C., N.C.A.C. (Transportation), R.P.C., C.D.'s (community development) in Sparks and Reno.
- . No apparent effort to deal with subsidized housing needs.
- . No apparent consensus on where community should be going.
- . Reactive responses--cities do not appear to be guiding decisions of development, only accommodating.
- . Detailed figures of unit costs for public services do not appear available.
- . Apparent lack of facilities for the arts.

### Economic

- . Predominance of economic activity generated by "gaming" and transient visitor.
  - Warehousing and other activities have not increased their proportionate share of employment.
  - "Static" employment base - little change in distribution over last decade.
- . Relatively high average income, but still with a sizable low-income household group.
- . Continued dispersion of commercial economic activities from the downtown.
- . Little apparent detailed knowledge of economic base, its size, its importance by source.

- Tourism (here: tourists) - estimated at 9 million, but probably closer to 5 million based on room tax and available room inventory.
- . Land cost barrier to development of anything but gaming in central downtown core (e.g. \$30 - \$1000 per square foot).
- . Taxes unlike most communities--will levy unrealistically low.
- . County revenue sources extremely restrictive--no flexibility for determining own fiscal future.
- . City financial flexibility for capital improvements appears good with available techniques.

### Social

- . Youth concerned with a lack of social gathering facilities.
- . Core scene, socially, appears totally separate from resident social scene.
- . Typical rapid growth problem of no low or low-to-moderate income housing being built.
- . Existing low income housing stock being demolished.
- . Ambivalence toward downtown: "Would go if parking were available" or "leave it for the tourists."

- . Senior citizens concerned with housing availability, especially near downtown area.
- . General concern about growth and its effects: air pollution, traffic congestion, water supply, services, and cost: "Manage or control growth" vs. "don't mess with the system."
- . Concern with spread of major hotel/gaming activity outside downtown.
- . Lack of "forum" for effective participation in local government.
- . Preservation of the Truckee River as the region's most important amenity.
- . Strong concern about what's happening by committees, organizations, involved citizens. Overall citizen awareness uncertain.
- . High level of citizen satisfaction with area and communities may lead to lack of involvement.
- . Concern by involved citizens that legislative bodies and administration have not followed through on implementation of earlier studies--feeling of accomplishment missing.
- . Excellent news coverage of R/EDAT effort--is such support constant and positive on airing more controversial community issues, i.e. growth question?
- . Do news media provide in-depth analysis to educate public?



**opportunities**

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

### URBAN FORM

- . The location of new activity centers and functions (i.e. cultural center, community college, etc.) should reinforce this urban core and the river, and not be located on the periphery which would dilute the core potential.
- . The railroad is a barrier to the core.
- . There is a lack of focus and "pedestrian turf" in the core area: conflicts exist between auto and pedestrian, the desired movement of the pedestrians, barriers to the handicapped and a nonexistent pedestrian environment.
  
- . The relative "compactness" of the Truckee Meadows communities, the urban core, and the relative concentration of its principal industry provides a remarkable opportunity to avoid non-drastic solutions to air pollution. The area is not yet committed to sprawl; judicious use of regulatory power and utility pricing policy can reinforce this opportunity. Continuation of the present drift of public action can accelerate sprawl and dilute the core area rather than reinforce it, causing

a need for increased automobile use - the main source of local pollution.

- . The railroad is a barrier to the core.
- . There is a lack of a core focal area and the core is filled with architectural barriers to the handicapped.
- . However, there is danger the railroad may get too much attention in relation to other community problems, especially in view of needs such as the elderly, and housing for the middle and low income residents; cultural center, or parking structures.
- . There is a need to replace diseased elms in older residential areas in order to maintain the tree-lined street character and provide a cooling environment in the hot summer.
- . The relative compactness of the Truckee Meadows communities and the relative concentration of its principal industry provides a remarkable opportunity to avoid non-dramatic solutions to air pollution. The area is not yet committed to sprawl; judicious use of regulatory power and utility pricing policy can reinforce this opportunity. Continuation of the present drift of public action can accelerate sprawl due to the need for increased automobile use--the main source of local pollution.

## GOVERNMENTAL/INSTITUTIONAL

### Leadership in Government

The lack of leadership, alienation of citizens groups from their elected officials, and the lack of organized governmental response to committee and task force reports, creates a need to foster a greater sense of neighborhood identity with cities and greater citizen participation.

### Citizen Participation

In Reno at least, there seems to be a citizen passivity about government and elected officials that is unusual for a city of this size. Perhaps the "company town" attitude, satisfaction with the status quo, low taxes, generally high incomes, the climate and outdoor recreation opportunities discourage citizen advocacy. It should be pointed out, however, that there is a nucleus of active citizens who have participated on committees in the past. These citizens should be encouraged.

### Reorganization of the Regional Planning Commission Role

While many balkanized metropolitan areas have regional planning agencies forced on them by the federal government, Washoe County is unique in its home grown regional land planning agency. In the

pending reordering of responsibilities, it is essential that local governments do not lose a tool for dealing with the private utility and the state Public Service Commission which determines utility rate structures. The planning staff with a regional focus is in a better position to produce authoritative recommendations about environmental constraints, regional housing needs, transportation, annexation, and the delineation of urban/rural public service areas.

#### Community Services

- . There is a need to evaluate location of community services on cost/revenue basis.
- . The county is almost totally unable to raise revenues to deal with service demands resulting from intense urban usage. Therefore, such services should be located in Sparks or Reno.

#### ECONOMIC

- . Like most tourist-oriented industries, the gaming industry concentrates employment in low wage levels with seasonal fluctuations.
- . High land values in adjacent casino areas have precluded opportunities for other land uses in the area. This needs to be turned into better quality development in the core.

- . It is never desirable for a community to be unable to control its own level of revenue sources or to be overly dependent on a single industry.
- . There are severe limitations on the county's ability to determine its revenue needs and to create fiscal sources to meet these needs.
- . A major concern is the need for knowledge about the economy of the area, the impact and interrelationship of individual activities on the regional economy, growth considerations and "the business of government."

#### SOCIAL

- . The housing need problem must be met. Some formula must be found to supply low income workers with housing. The inevitable outcome, if nothing is done, is that Reno will be engulfed by a swamp of trailers, and that will be the final outcome of the "growth" that so many people talk about.
- . The needs of the elderly must be assigned a high priority by local governments. Their housing needs are most acute, and it would not take more than two or three medium-to-high-rise buildings to fill the need.



. Housing data:

There is a lack of basic data on housing needs of resident groups such as elderly and low-income persons.

The dispersion of mobile homes needs to be studied--who lives there, what are their transportation costs, where they work, etc.

- . There should be identification of base economic data by which impacts of all types of growth alternatives can be defined.
- . There is a lack of apparent knowledge about the tourist, both numbers and impact.
- . Impact of gaming vs. warehouse vs. other employee growth on community costs and revenues, housing needs and school needs should be determined.
- . Impact of potential activities in the larger region--Disney project, one hour from Reno, one million visitors in 1978, national market through Reno should be considered.
- . Physical decay of downtown:

Can the continued loss of retail business be stopped?

How much more parking is needed?

What are the physical barriers and economic barriers to improvements?



**goals**



## GOALS

The R/UDAT Team proposes the following goals with a view to increasing the awareness of every citizen and official in the Truckee Meadows region. Greater knowledge of the communities' own ability for self-determination and ability to initiate action rather than always reacting is a major goal.

Similarly the team hopes to foster an understanding that there will be major development decisions made for the region which will be beyond the communities' control. Therefore, it is important that the residents of the Truckee Meadows region are aware of and understand these issues, their options and alternatives, and the inter-relationships and impacts these issues have on the various levels of concern, as a lack of awareness can lead to serious problems. If the vision of citizens and officials can be correspondingly expanded, the R/UDAT Team will have succeeded in its basic purpose.

## THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION

A larger view of the Rocky Mountain tourist circuit (see drawing) indicates that the Truckee Meadows area is in the pathway of major tourist traffic for this region. This circuit includes every National Park in the West. The question remains whether Truckee Meadows wants to remain a passive member of this circuit or try to capture a larger segment of the traffic by enlarging its appeal.

One of the goals could be to increase the visibility of Truckee Meadows to all other cities on the circuit and to enlarge the natural scenic appeal in the area which is the major attraction for tourists in the Rocky Mountain area. This means a whole new program to attract a new segment of tourists. This is an obvious question that must be set in the context of the growth concern and weighed as a factor that could be positive or negative.



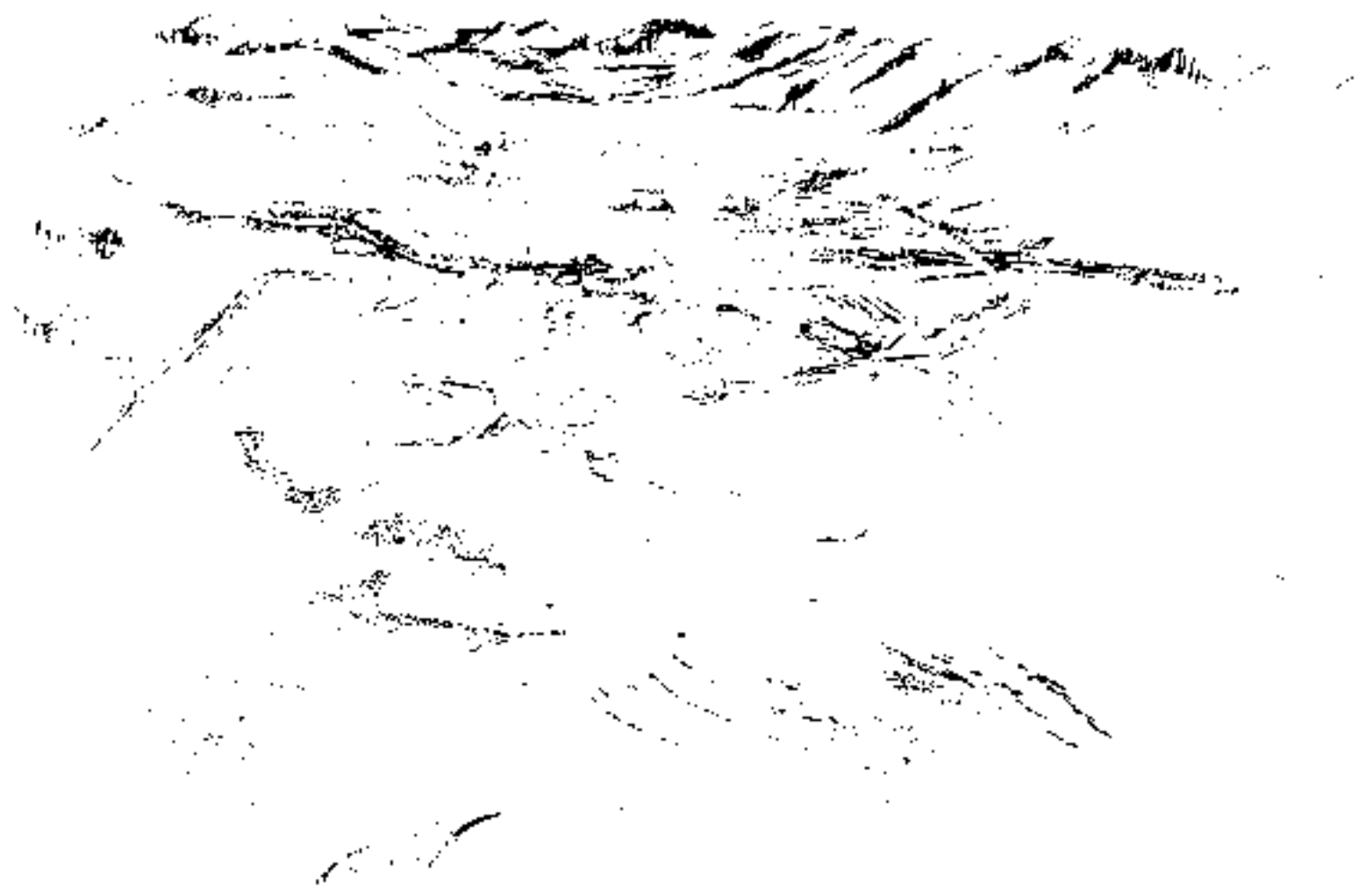
### THE TRUCKEE MEADOW REGION

Decisions in California affect the economy in Truckee Meadows. This is evident in the freepart impetus to warehousing in Sparks and Reno. Similarly, decisions in Tahoe affect Reno and Sparks.

What is not understood currently, however, is how decisions in Reno and Sparks have created the Sun Valley and Lemmon Valley mobile home communities. Because many of the jobs available in local industries do not provide enough economic leverage for workers, these industries, plus the competition for housing created by the scarce financing for housing, and the high growth rate, create a climate where the low and low-moderate income levels cannot compete for new housing.

Much is said about growth in the Truckee Meadows. When growth is mentioned the speaker summons up visions of economic affluence, beautiful homes and prosperous businesses. Unless a new awareness is created, funds allocated and programs created to meet the needs, the future result of this growth could be a sea of mobile homes.

Ample area exists within the present city limits to accommodate the anticipated growth over the next ten years.





## PRIMARY DEVELOPMENT AREAS

### Sparks and Reno (5-10 year growth)

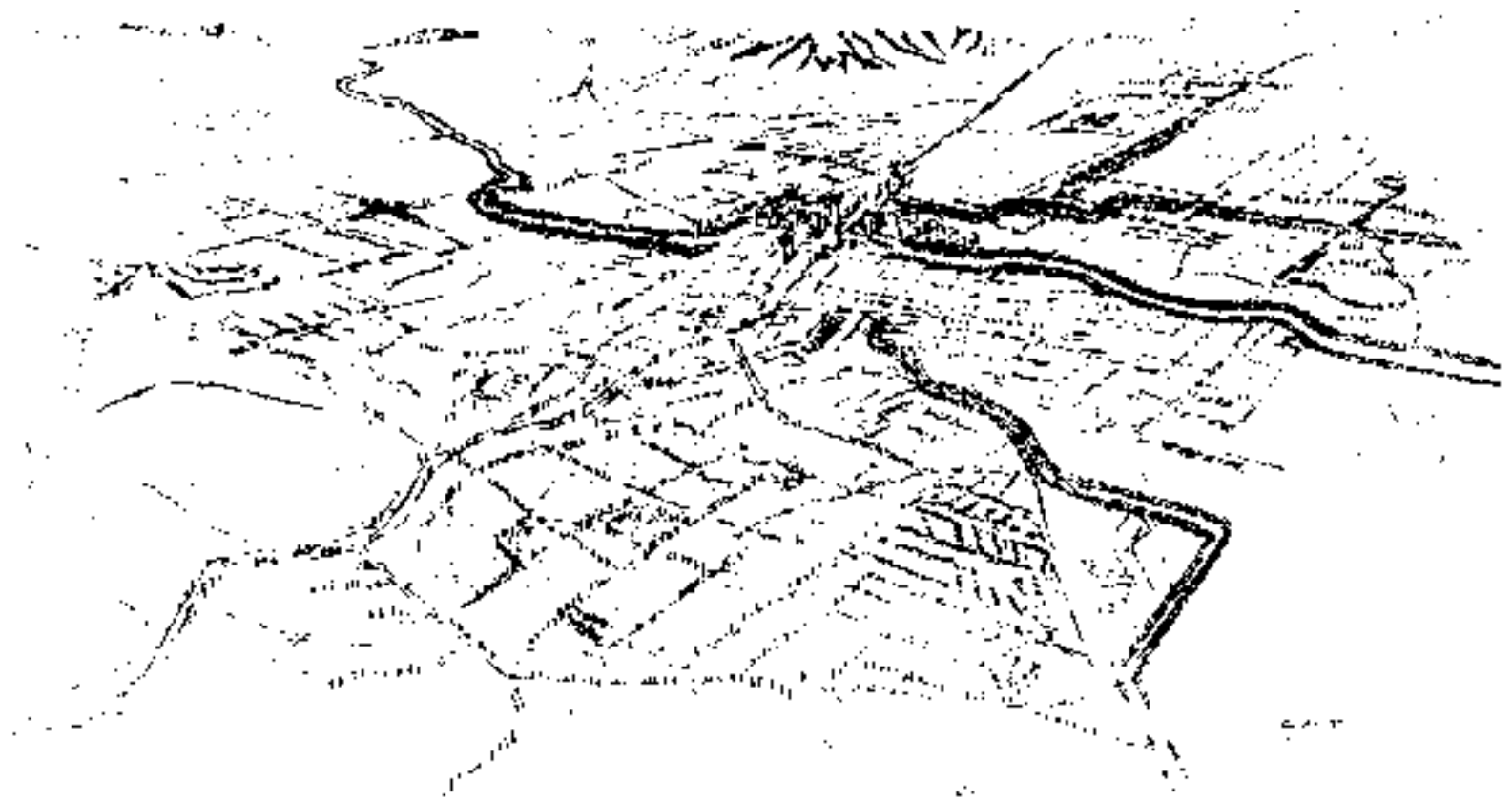
Phasing of what areas are available for development is a major suggestion. Given the amount of land already serviced by expensive-to-duplicate public facilities and services, it is "good business" and maximum utilization of public and private revenues to identify where the imminent development should occur in a primary development area.

Local governments should discourage further expansion of the city limits for the next five years in Sparks and Reno. Filling in of marginally-used land, vacant land and enclaves partially surrounded already by the municipal boundaries, should be able to provide more than adequate potential to accommodate even a considerable increase in population in the foreseeable future. The current population of Reno and Sparks (125,000 people) is accommodated in an area of 30,213 acres, of which an estimated 30% is vacant. Although no current estimate of the vacant land for residential use is available, continuation of the existing development mix would allow a population of about 180,000 in the two cities, a level that would not be reached until 1985-1987, even

assuming a continuation of current growth rates and no increase of the low overall population density.

This serves both the public and private expenditures by:

- . Preserving options for future development on the periphery by avoiding premature commitments to patterns of development based on current values and knowledge.
- . Reducing consumer costs by avoiding construction of new urban infrastructure.
- . Reducing the need to spend public funds on new facilities on the periphery.
- . Permitting concentration on existing facilities in the city rather than constant attention to outlying new facilities.
- . Annexation does not appear to have lowered housing costs to the levels where low and moderate incomes can afford units on the fringe. A period of concentration of filling in the present boundaries should not make a significant difference in those costs.



### Washoe County (5-10 year growth)

The second location for urban growth in the primary area of development is the Stead, Lemmon Valley and Sun Valley area. The outer boundaries of this area should be identified and no new development or expansion of existing development should be approved outside the area. Infilling subject to the availability of water and sewer capacity should be the only new development permitted. A capital improvements program and land use plan should be developed which would eventually provide this satellite area with public facilities and services. Farmers Home or other federal agencies should be investigated for financial assistance, or based upon an unusual circumstance, state aid might be possible. Major public deficiencies exist in the area. New development should be required to meet the desired standards for urban intensity development while intergovernmental assistance is sought to rectify past deficiencies. This is not an area where growth should be encouraged, but that which exists cannot be ignored. A concentrated program is necessary to improve the quality of life. This is a cheaper solution in the long run than the social and personal costs of life in a marginal environment.

### Future Development Patterns

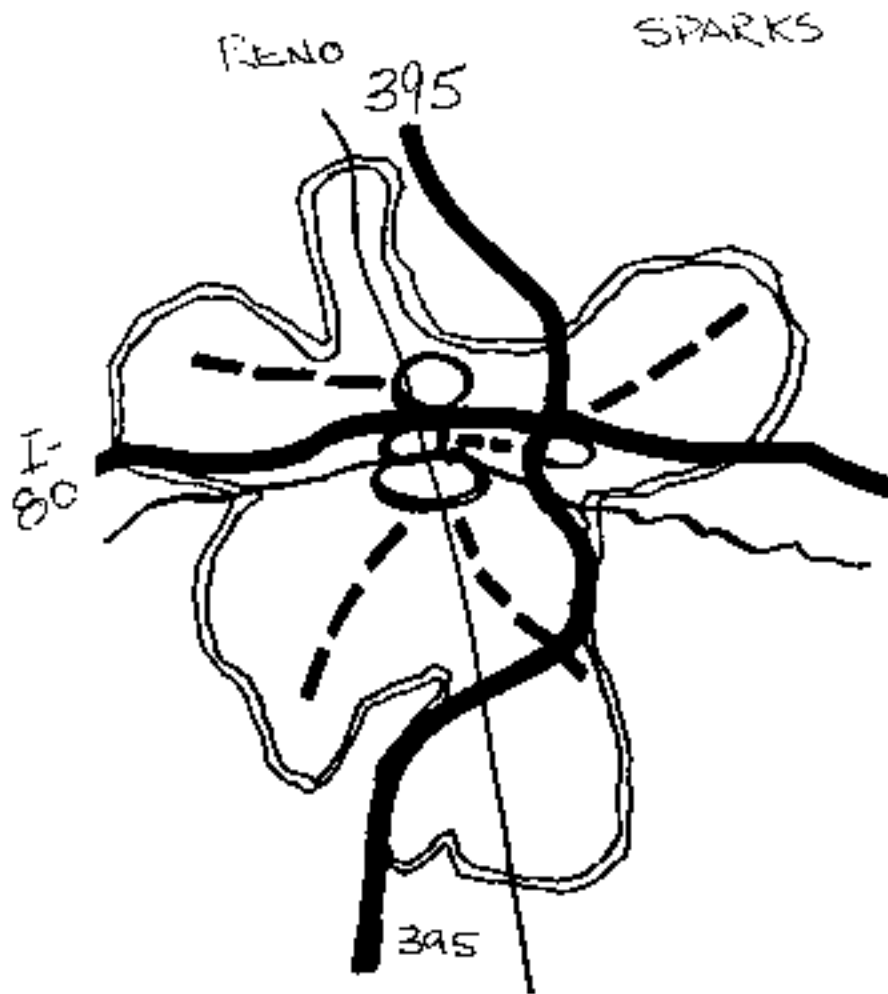
The region's communities need to re-

evaluate the need for additional space before the land in the primary development area becomes critically short, as evidenced by the increasingly adverse affect on housing choice availability. At such time decisions could be made whether to expand. In considering expansion, the criteria should be:

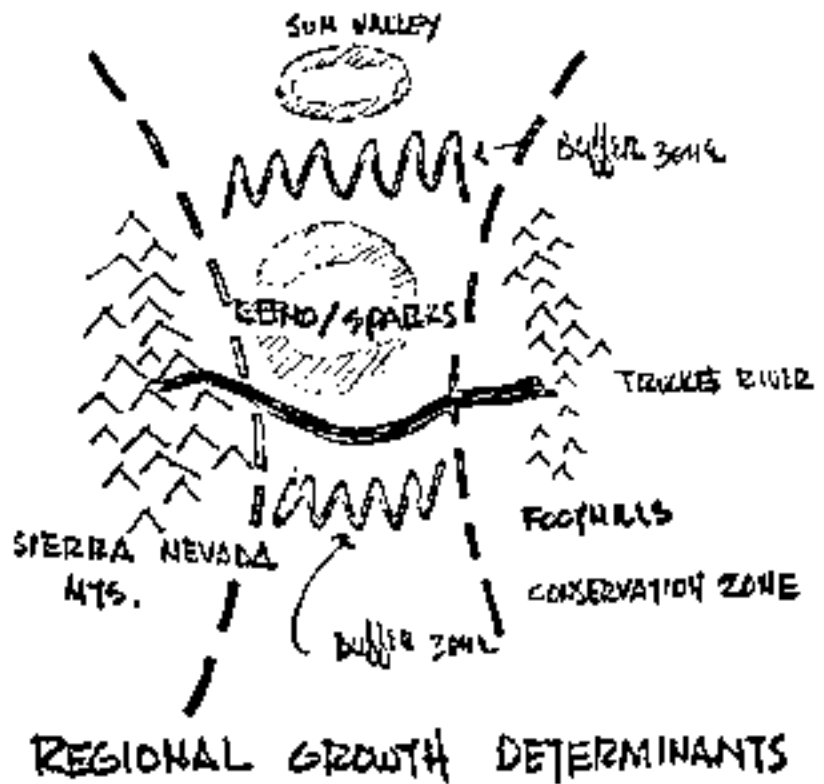
- . Directions of growth most easily served by existing facilities on the least costly extension of services--water, sewers, streets, fire, parks, and schools.
- . Avoidance of hazardous areas.
- . Preservation of most desirable natural areas.
- . Identification of areas in which developers are prepared to act due to availability of land, financing and potential market demand. Such areas should be identified in the interim period while the primary development area is being built out. A definite identification of where development should take place must be made and then publicized. If, during the first phase, anyone can justify a community need not capable of being met elsewhere, or will commit to develop all public services necessary for urban development (i.e. water, sewer, streets, schools, parks and recreation, fire, libraries), at no cost to local government, then the respective municipal governments should consider the proposal.

## INSTITUTIONAL

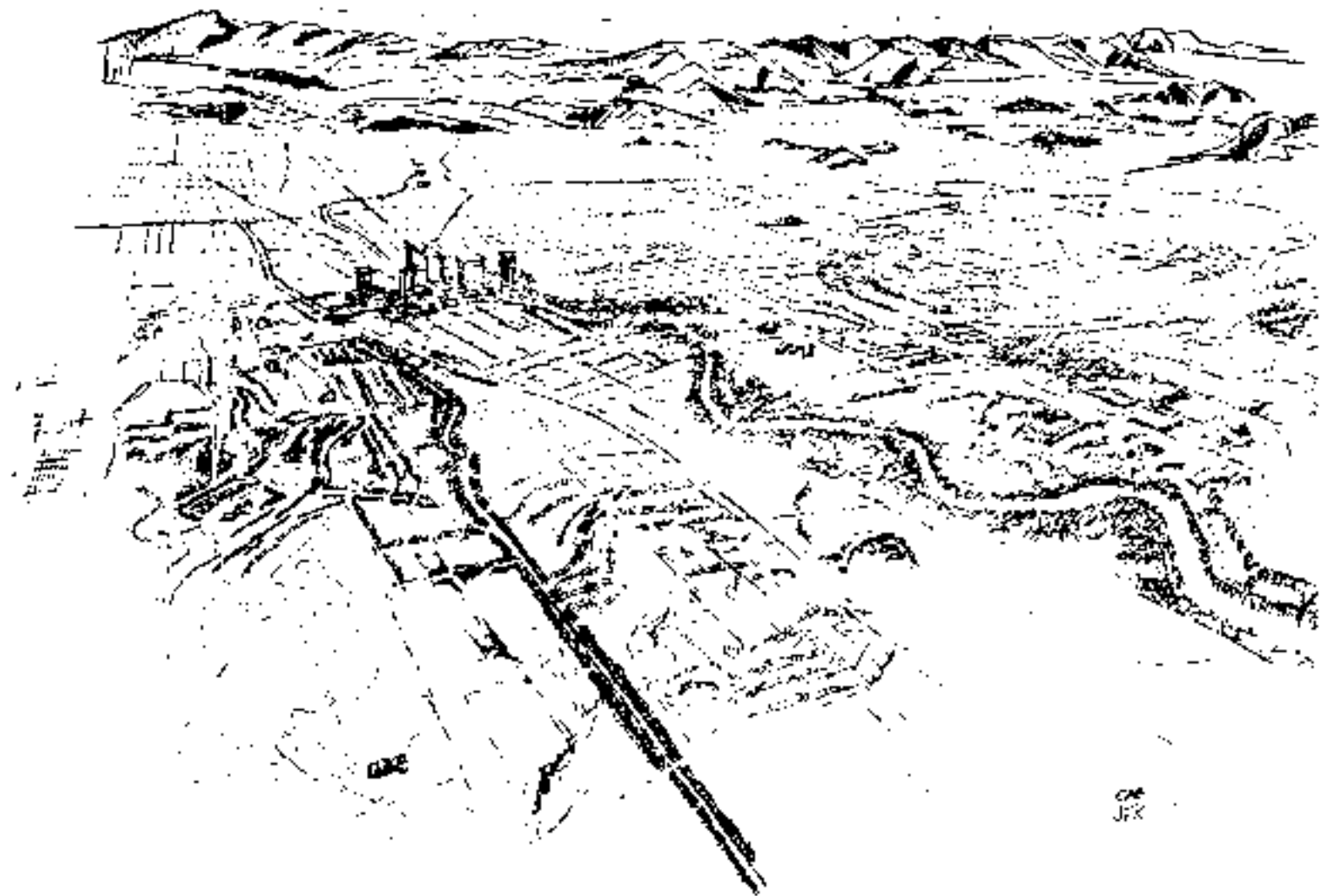
- . Recognize that staffs must be created for detailed planning purposes in Reno and Sparks. They will provide a direct staff function to the city manager, other city departments and the city council. As this occurs, formal safeguards must be provided to insure independent decisions regarding the regional concept will not be sacrificed to desires for total local autonomy. Specific responsibilities and powers should be defined before splits and frictions develop as agencies jockey for control.
- . Autonomous agencies that now exist should be brought into the government administration, i.e. W.C.A.T.S., R.P.C., Housing Authority. Every effort should be made to include all such regional agencies under the broad umbrella of the COG where the councils and county commissioners form the COG executive body. Clear delineation of responsibility and mandating of cooperative efforts which avoid the development of a single purpose agency syndrome should be a major governmental goal.
- . Through education and personal persuasion, the efforts of all public and semipublic agencies should be coordinated when dealing with future locational decisions, particularly with regard to capital improvement planning (e.g. school district, health board, fire districts, cities, county and any other semi-autonomous governmental agencies).
- . A concentrated effort should be made to develop techniques for identifying unit (marginal) costs and benefits of governmental services to permit the development of a systematic model for evaluating various forms and types of development--alternative land uses, residential types, alternative growth patterns, large developments, and specific public policies (open space programs, for example). Other considerations should also be addressed--non-monetary costs and benefits, sites and locational factors.



RADIAL ROAD  
LINKAGES  
NEEDED  
BETWEEN  
RENO-SPARKS  
CENTERS  
AND THEIR  
OUTER  
NEIGHBORHOODS



REGIONAL GROWTH DETERMINANTS



DOWNTOWN RENO "THE RIVER AND THE TOWN"

- . The focal point of the downtown area and the community as a whole should be the river. New buildings, transportation, the cultural center, and all planning should be oriented toward the river and the new park created along its banks. Several governmental actions--the ring road proposal and shift of the gaming red line from the enclave idea to the 100-unit standard--have already set centrifugal forces in motion. If allowed to continue, opportunities for less drastic solutions to air pollution, auto dependency, etc., will be lost. The commitment must be in the form of highly visible and complimentary public projects, such as river beautification and a unified public parking and circulation system. But beautification projects by themselves are just cosmetics, they must relate to the needs of the community and be part of a larger community objective and goal. These must accompany a concrete downtown development plan utilizing a realistic financing program. These should be combined with incentives for private development, like density bonuses for amenities such as open space and galleries, parking reductions plus fees in lieu to a parking authority, and disincentives such as high utility charges and onerous conditions (parking, landscaping, etc.) for fringe development.
- . Looking at the unique attraction of downtown Reno and the need for low income housing for the elderly, a high priority for city council should be the building of one or two high-rise apartment buildings within walking distance of the downtown area.
- . Better links need to be created between the university and the community. The image of the university as being the only source of the "no growth" constituency needs to be clarified. There are many tasks which the university can perform for the community and these should be done. Among them is an archeological survey of the entire Washoe region, economic analysis of the warehousing and other industries, analysis of tax revenues and expenditures, future analysis of the growth issues, collection of a data base to provide a forum for communications and awareness of the city they live in and the issues and alternatives confronting them, and various citizen attitude surveys. Further, the consequences of growth need to be empirically documented for future planning.





**actions**

## BROAD CONCEPTS

### Leadership

Unless planning results in action, the effort is futile and a waste of time and money. Not all plans will be realized, but unless steps are taken to begin implementation, the changes and opportunities that result from growth will be without direction and the goals of the area will be unfulfilled. Implementation should be considered almost from the time the problem is identified. Implementation requirements:

- . Commit government to quantitatively measure all public and private actions against the plan and community goals, and to justify any action taken which deviates from them.
- . Establish public policies and controls which regulate in a positive manner private development that is in accord with the plan and community goals.
- . Spend public funds in a coordinated manner for the direction of growth in conformance with the plan and the community goals.

The following actions listed after each goal and policy are suggested areas of concentration and action.

Even with citizen participation, the ability of local government to digest and proceed on these action recommendations is limited. There should be a division of labor based on the scope of the recommendation. Those actions that are regional in scope should be addressed by the WCOG and its staff; local actions by each government. There are probably additional actions that will be considered or that will come to light as the efforts mature; what follows is meant as a base from which active community programs can arise.

### Steps to setting and achieving community direction.

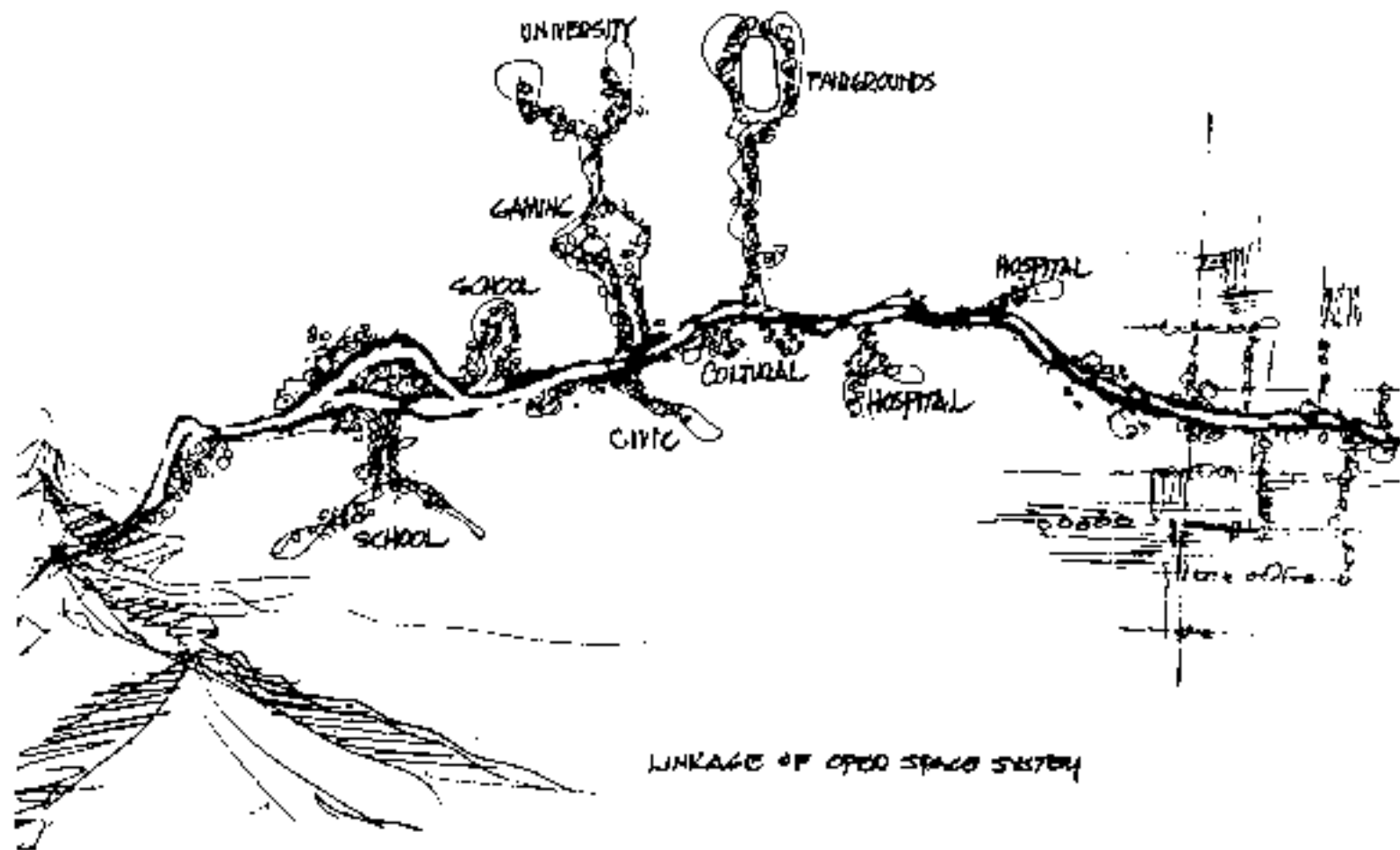
- . Step 1/Setting Goals. Community education with subsequent discussion as to the alternative directions of future growth is essential. It should include the implications of each alternative with social, environmental and economic cost benefit considerations. Develop slide shows, questionnaires, newspaper surveys, T.V. programs, have interviews, mail survey letters, conduct town meetings, engage service clubs, church groups, senior citizens, and have delphi meetings.

There should be a single set of community GOALS & POLICIES for this area of Washou County--all local governments involved.

- . Step 2/Planning. Develop a comprehensive plan which combines the traditional land use approach as well as new policies based on the adopted community goals.
- . Step 3/Evaluation. Evaluate all codes, regulations, programs and policies of the cities and county to assure they are working in the direction of accomplishing the adopted goals.
- . Step 4/Monitor. Annually review all public development proposals from each department for proper timing and location in compliance with the plan of a capital improvements program.
- . Step 5/Project Review. Develop a procedure for reviewing private development, including a conceptual review preceding any commitment or expenditure of funds to see if the proposal is in phase, meets the community's goals and policies, and to flag any areas of particular concern or sensitivity in the proposal. The applicant should receive in writing a quick (2-3 weeks), internally coordinated answer from all affected agencies through the central source of the conceptual review.

#### Current Land Use Plan Suggestions

- . Develop the southern leg of Interstate 395 to relieve through north-south traffic from Virginia Street.
- . Eliminate the southwest leg of the ring road with its potential for sprawl and land speculation.
- . Carefully analyze the need for the northwest leg of the ring road. If it is developed, it should not go through the residential areas as in the Sparks leg.
- . Finish the southeast portion of the ring road into Virginia Street.
- . Concentrate on developing radials into the heart of the city versus the ring road.
- . Remove offices as a permitted use in the residential areas south, west, and east (south of the river) of the core area to relieve pressures on existing housing, a more critical need.
- . Analyze the need for a neighborhood business area in the vicinity of the University.
- . Eliminate the residential zoning around the airport.
- . Reevaluate the industrial zoning and use in Sparks north of the river, because of the negative effect on the river.
- . Review the sign code to reflect different needs and character of different parts of the city--improve the visual quality of community outside the core.



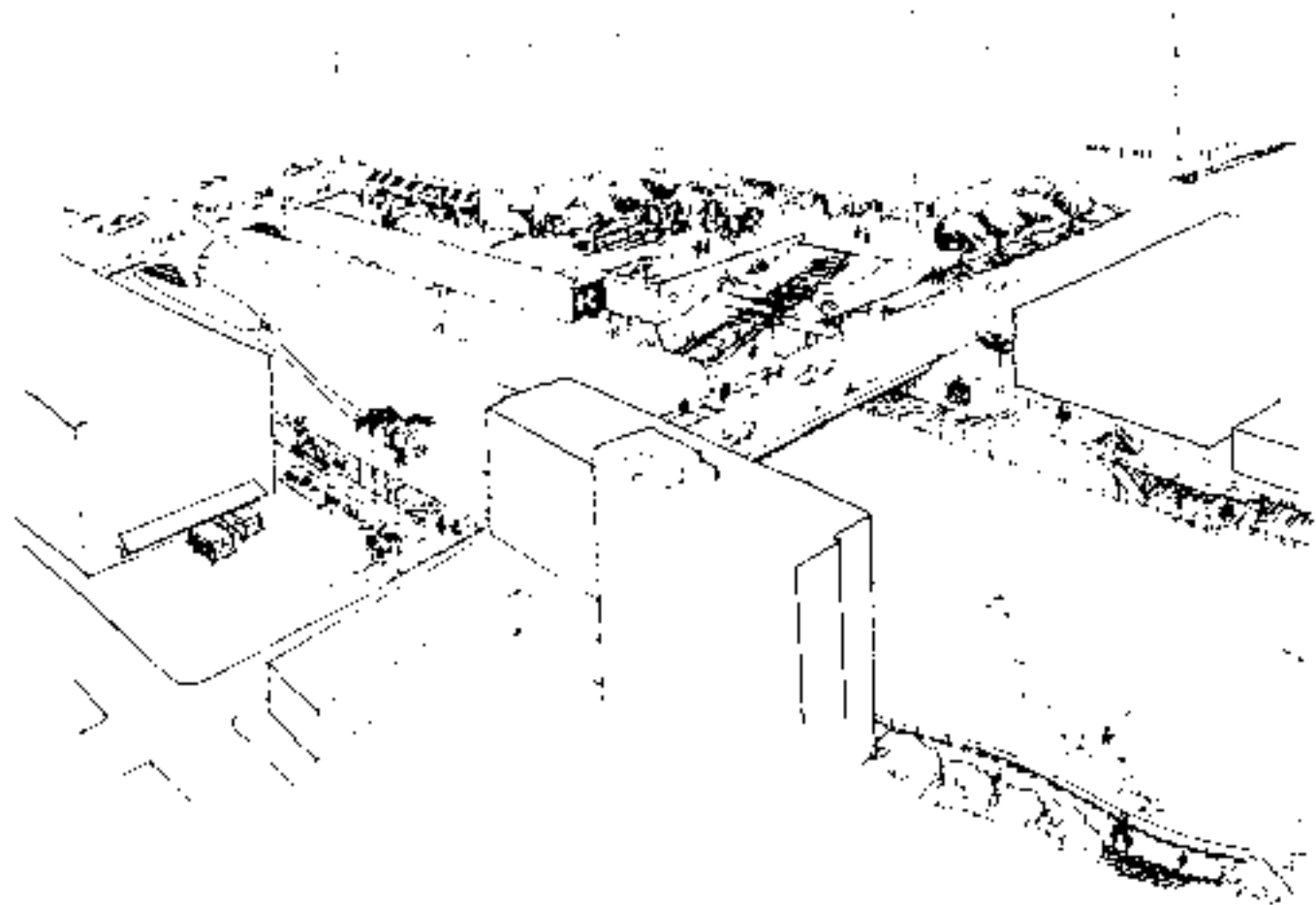
The primary focus: Reno on the Truckee

The key to revitalization of the image of the downtown Reno core is the recapture of the grace and visual appeal of the Truckee. Building in sympathy with the river will strengthen the river landscape and will reinforce the unity of the city and the orientation and sense of place of both visitor and resident.

Open riversides should be protected, together with the cottonwoods and rocky stream bottom which say to all: "This is Nevada's stream, in a Nevada city."

The river corridor will serve as the structure of both open space conservation and urban development. Open space along the river should be protected where it exists and recovered where it does not. Within the open space of the riversides, both access to the banks and continuity of pedestrian movement along them should be insured. This will allow the city to maximize the aesthetic and recreational benefits that will derive from the main landscape. It will also provide the necessary linkages among the residential, commercial, cultural, and entertainment nodes that will grow along the east/west river corridor. At the same time, the maintenance of open spaces along the river will help prevent additional susceptibility to property damage in the event of flooding. Park and recreation areas for





present and future residents will also be secured and, in the downtown area, small plazas and malls can take their place on the river's edge.

Two new pedestrian bridges over the Truckee should be considered: one, crossing from a north bank mall near the end of West Street over Wingfield Park to the south bank, and a second crossing the river at the site of the former Rock Street bridge, to serve the proposed Reno cultural center.

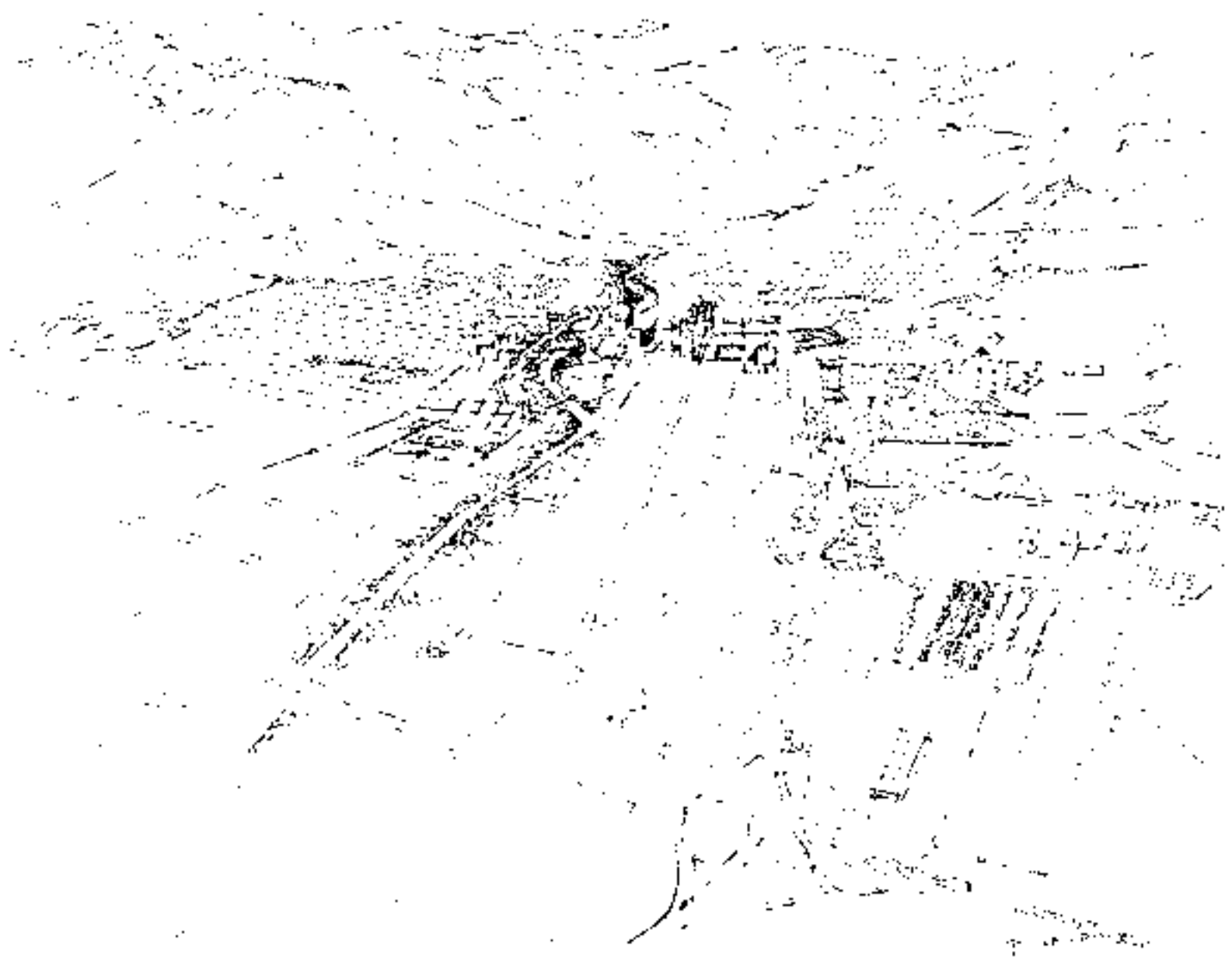
Expanded park and recreation space along the Truckee should include the previously mentioned West Street mall, a plaza at Center Street and Truckee River Lane, the conversion of Truckee River Lane into a pedestrian-priority landscaped mall, with restricted emergency access, a river-level walkway excavated from the north bank and connecting the Center Street plaza with access to the Rock Street pedestrian bridge, riverside paths both to the west and east of the downtown core, and a new linear park with tennis and other outdoor recreation facilities to the immediate east of broadhead Memorial Park. Whenever possible, paths should be excavated through the abutments or under the spaces of the river bridges, without encroaching on the floodway. The new linear park, on the south

bank between Wells Avenue and Kietzke Lane should be designed to coexist with new residential and neighborhood retail development fronting on East Kuenzli Street. Here, as with new residential and specialty retail development in the vicinity of the proposed cultural center, the proximity of other uses to the new park facilities will insure beneficial use as well as surveillance by permanent residents and proprietors.

Paths along the Truckee will also act as recreational arteries, linking the core with those areas of Reno and Sparks that are reached by them and affording new and exciting opportunities to bicyclists, joggers, and walkers.

The central focus of the river corridor in downtown Reno will be on the twin embankments which are proposed to face each other between Virginia and Center Streets. The Center Street Plaza, already discussed, will be the riverside space most easily accessible to visitors walking in from the transportation arrival center or from the core's gaming, hotel, and other focal areas. The south embankment would be created at the river level through removal of the post office employee parking lot and the underlying embankment.





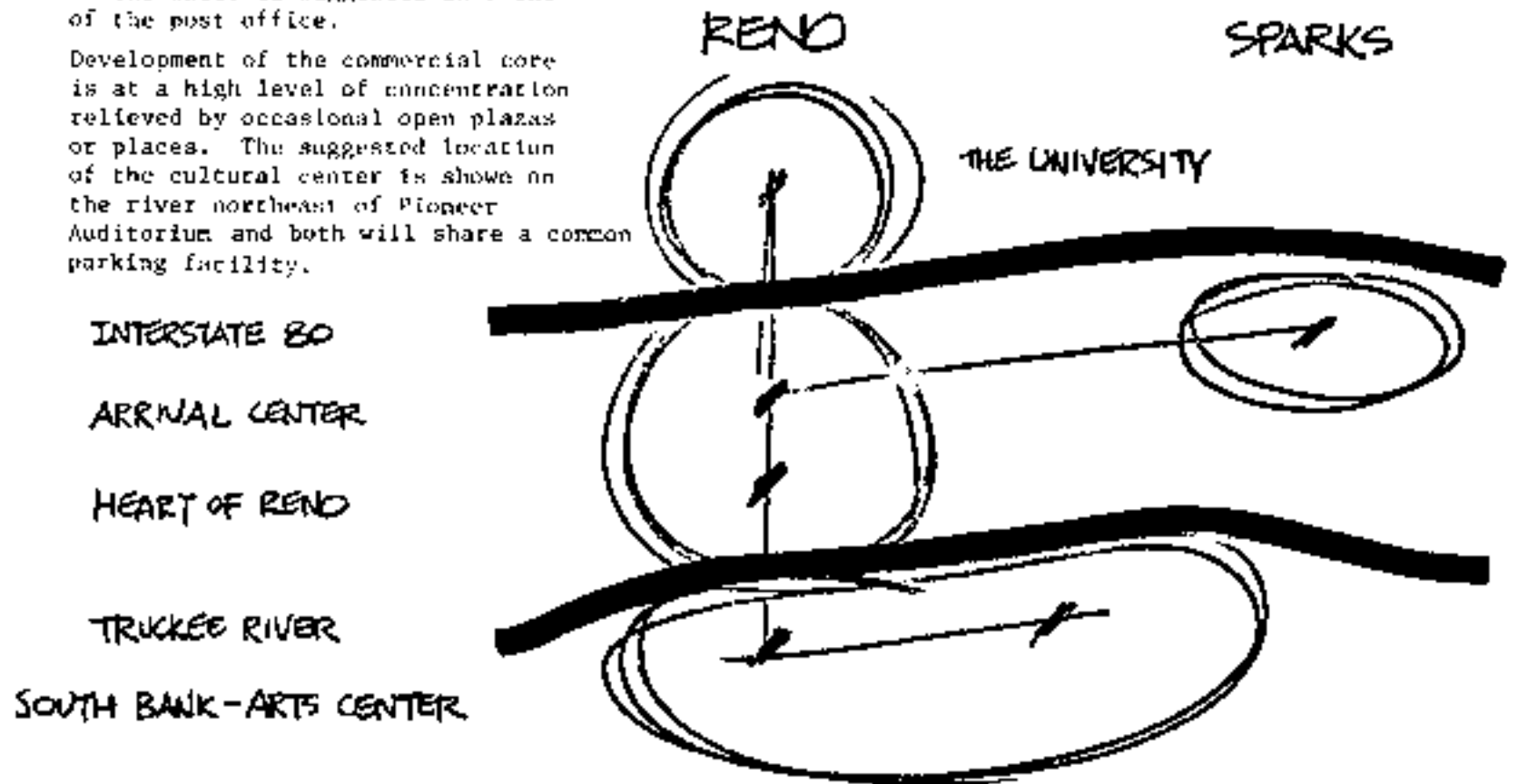
The water edges are treated as a continuous pedestrian way on both sides.

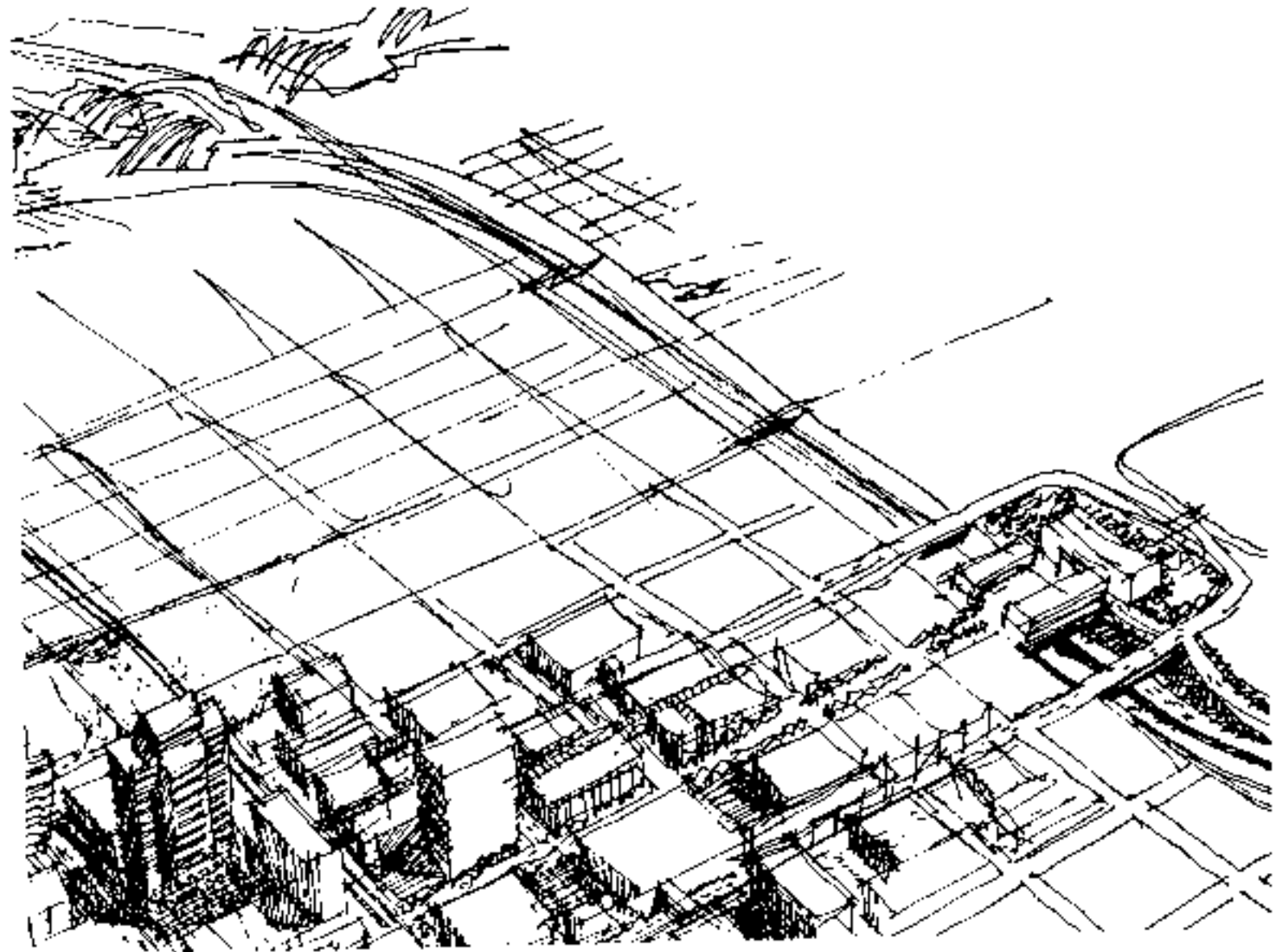
Pedestrian paths at right angles to the river allow access through greenbelt paths to the residential areas and paved and covered walkways between streets in the central core.

The possibility of pedestrian access to the water is suggested in front of the post office.

Development of the commercial core is at a high level of concentration relieved by occasional open plazas or places. The suggested location of the cultural center is shown on the river northeast of Pioneer Auditorium and both will share a common parking facility.

Various nodes of activity and use should connect and reinforce the role of the river and its linear park offering a variety of functions and providing accessibility from various activity nodes and neighborhoods in the community. It is the main urban structuring element in the area from which much diversity and opportunity can be derived and expanded upon.



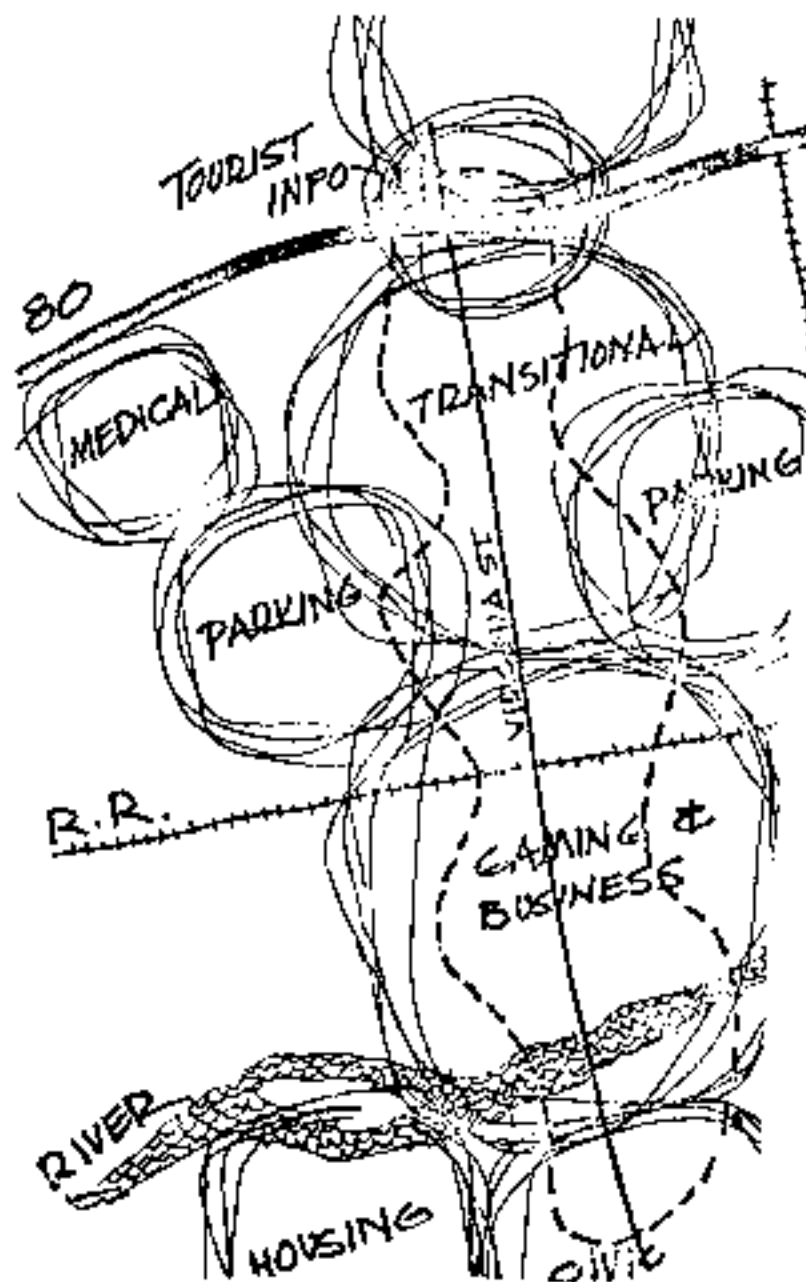


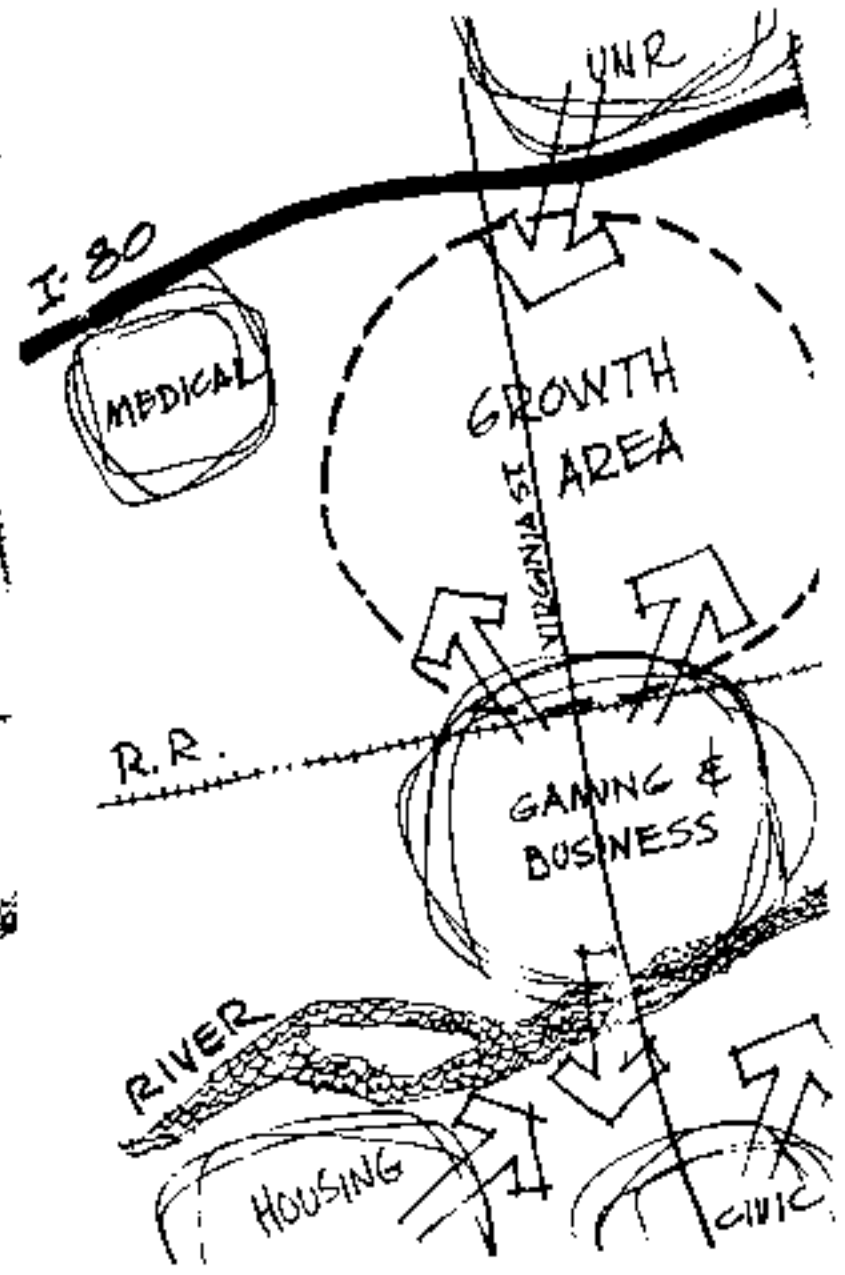
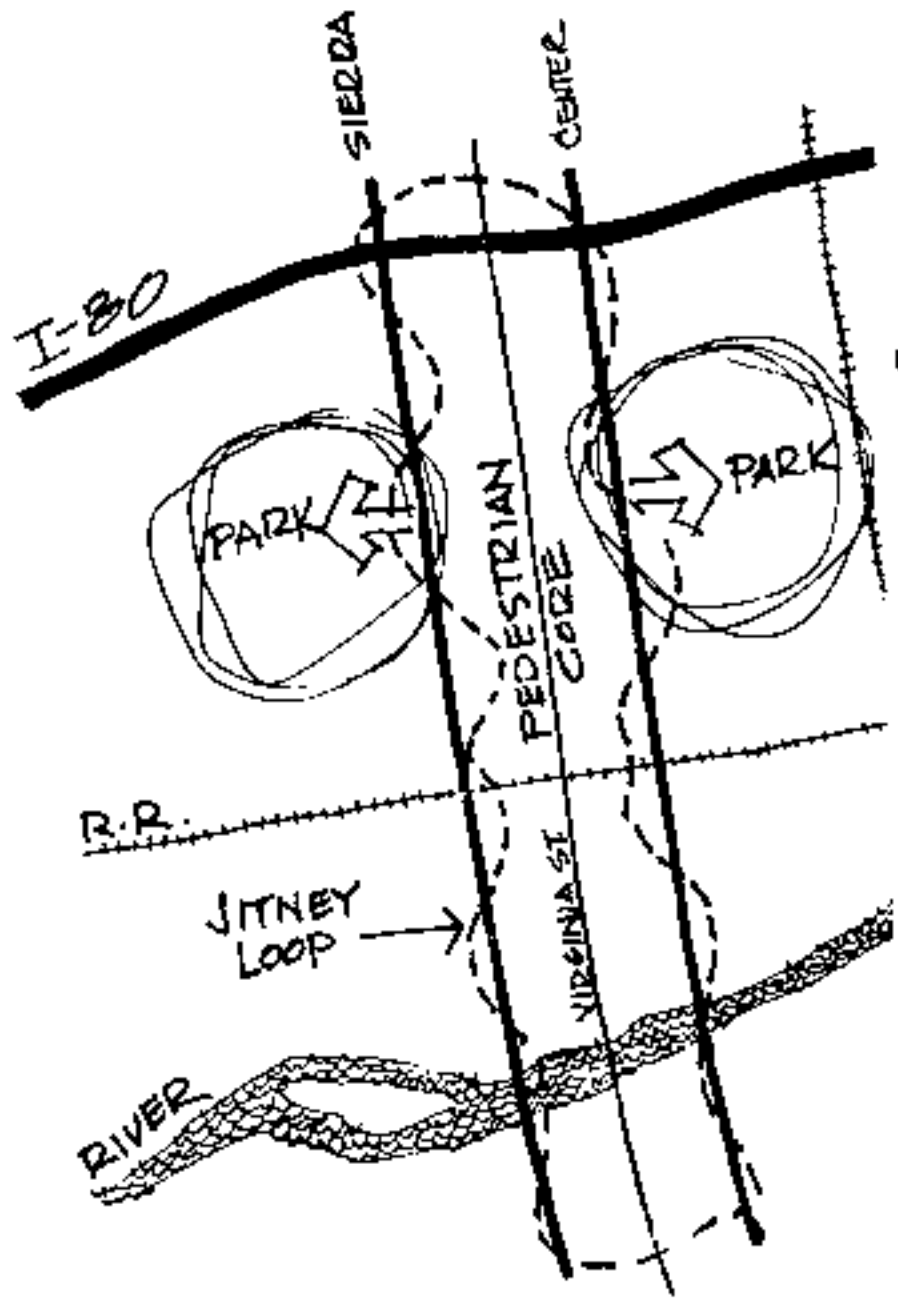
### The Core

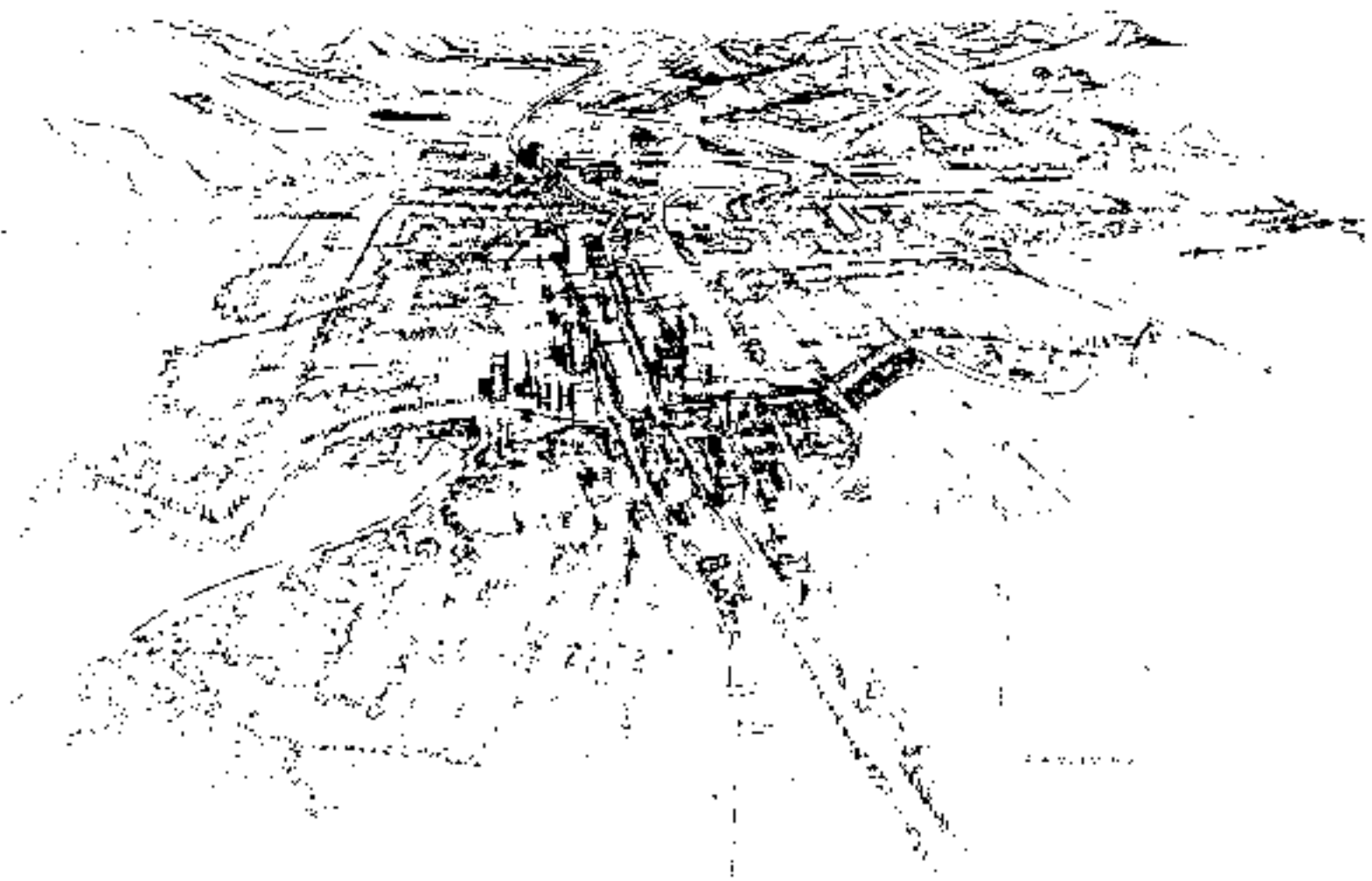
The physical design of the downtown Reno core is a key to the efficiency with which the city can welcome visitors, provide needs and facilities for its residents, and sustain economic growth.

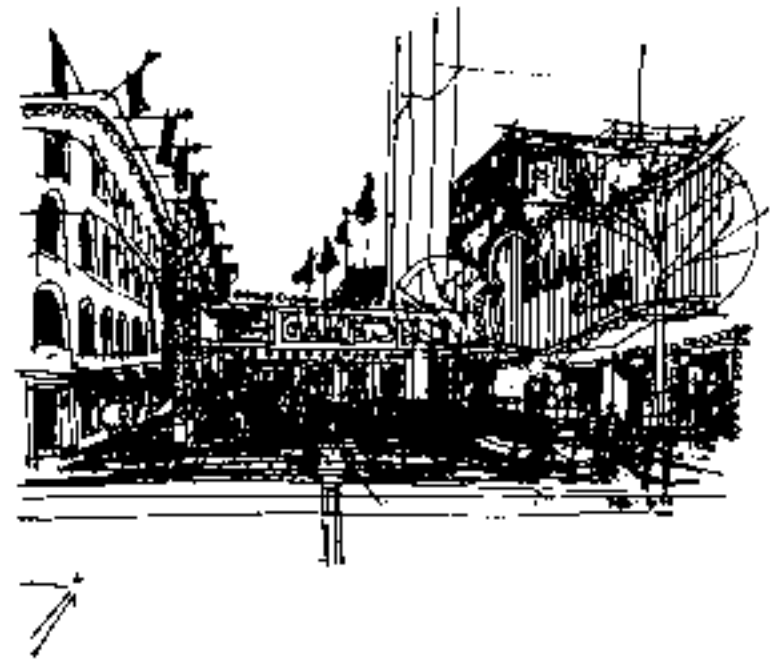
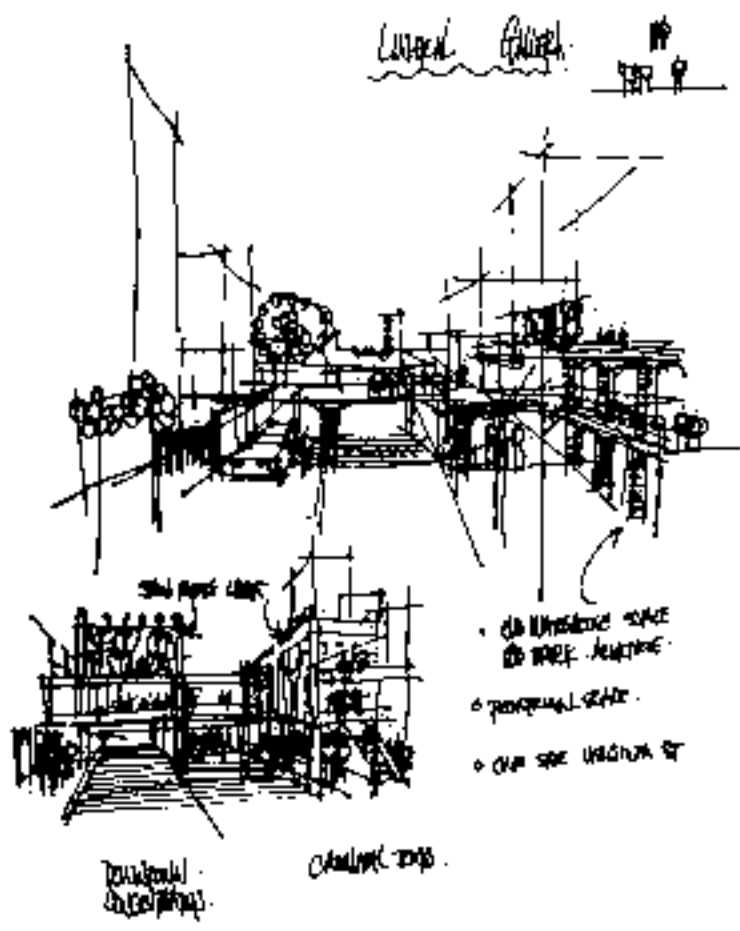
Salient features of the Core Concept are:

Form: The heart of the downtown core is the area between Sierra and Center Streets, extending from south of the Truckee northwards to the vicinity of the railroad tracks. This is the focus of the major part of Reno's existing gaming, hotel, and entertainment facilities. In the future, this core area should be strengthened by the development that will occur on the north and south ridges of the Truckee River corridor and the area northward to the University. Buildings should be stepped back next to the river and higher away from the edges. "A canyon effect" along the river's edge should be avoided.









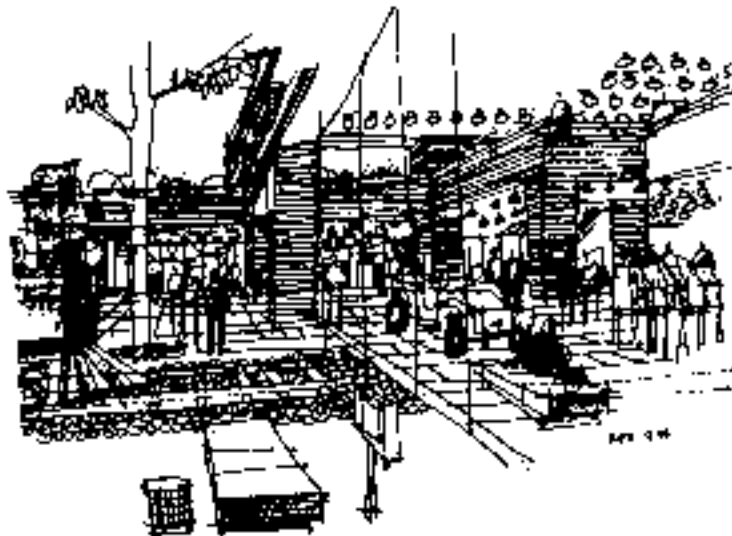
Transportation: Sierra and Center Streets should continue to serve as primary access and egress between Interstate 80 and the core. Major parking facilities should be developed along the outer (western and eastern) edges of this two-street system, to maximize convenience for arrival and departure of vehicles, and to facilitate access by passengers to the heart of the core along centrally-located pedestrian ways. Landscaped pedestrian ways along Virginia Street as well as covered walkways at either street or higher levels would do much to mitigate pedestrian vehicular conflicts as well as add an enjoyable attraction to the visitor. Principal surface sidewalks should also be carefully landscaped and should provide rest opportunities and information to the visitor.

Linkages to the south bank river walk, hotel, cultural center, governmental buildings, Pioneer Auditorium, and residential area should also be laid out with care.



Transition Area: I-90 and Railroad

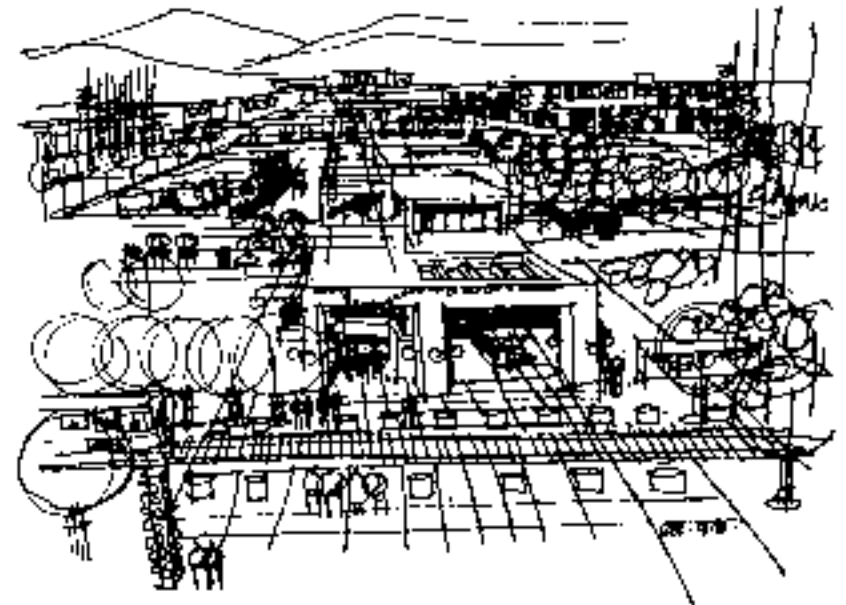
This area is an area of concern that can develop in a number of ways depending on future growth strategies and pressures. It is hoped that it could maintain a low scale residential character that would provide some of the inner city needs and be the tie between the gaming and business area to the south, residential to the west and highway and University related activities to the north.



OPEN SPACE - STREET

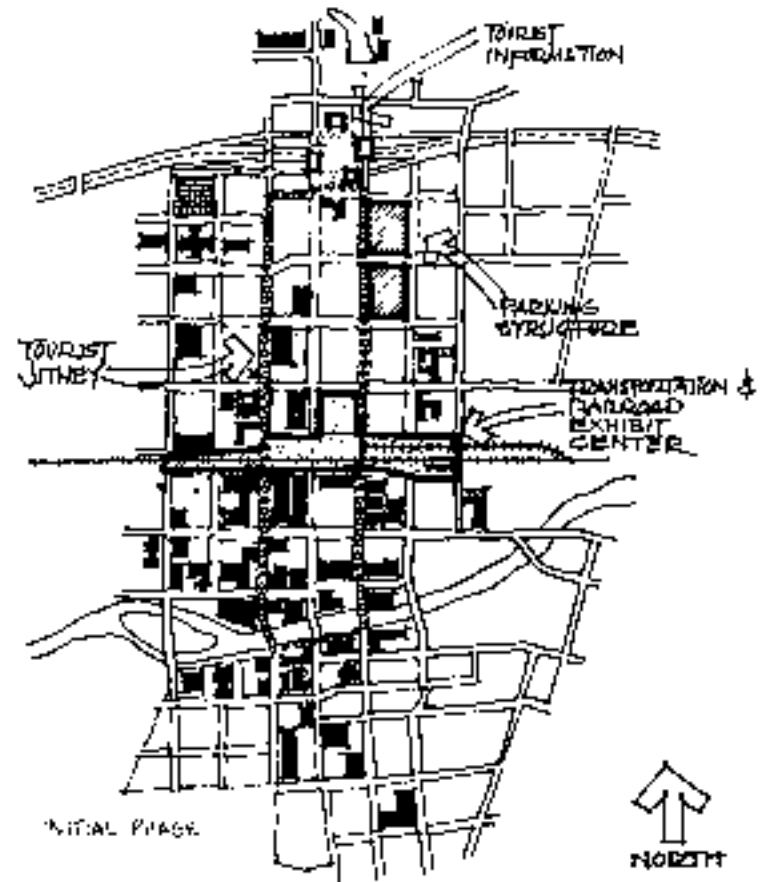
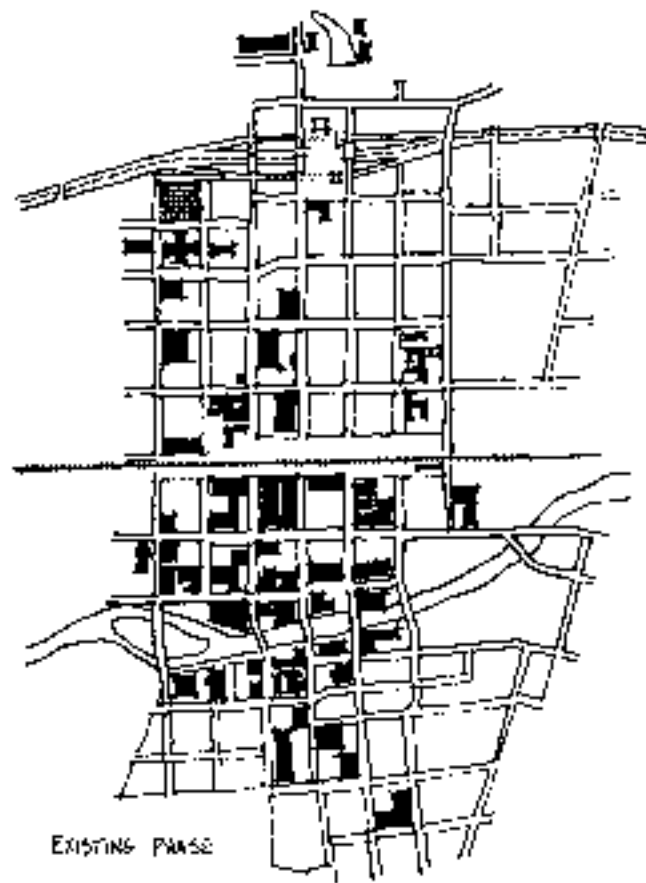
WIDE OPEN

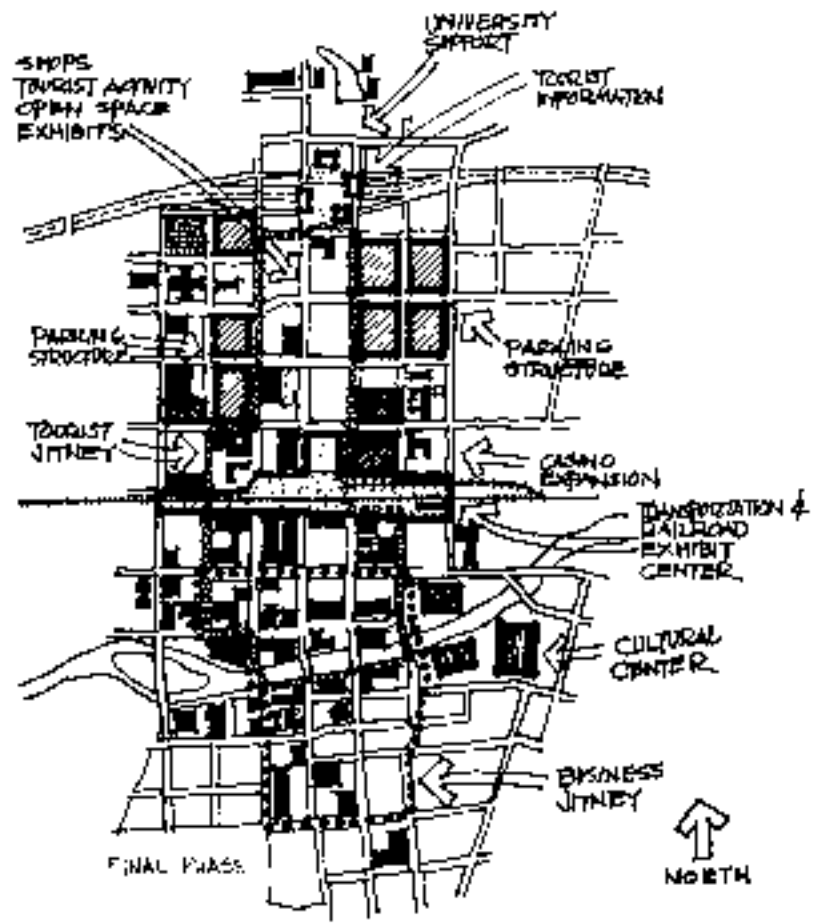
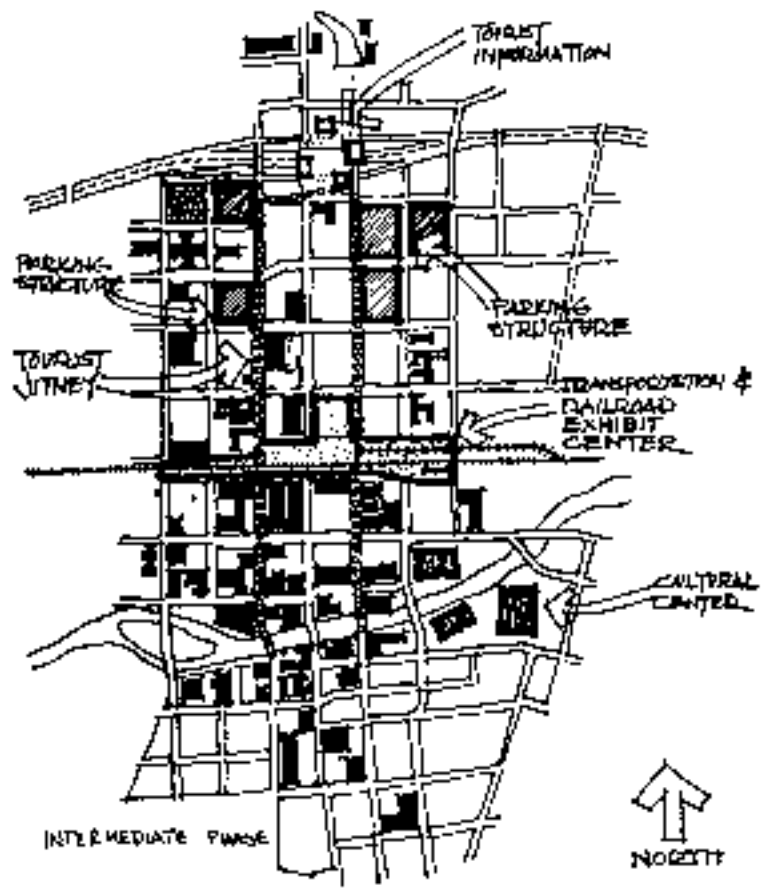
FROM PUBLIC MARKET STRUCTURE TO URBAN ACTIVITY



## Plan Implementation

- . Regulatory changes: With the adoption of the policies plan, new zoning codes will be essential to reflect the philosophies and help achieve the goals expressed in the plan. In the interim, however, minor adjustments seem warranted to help achieve the river and core planning and design concerns.
- . Amend C-2, C-3 classifications to reasonable density levels. These limits could be exceeded with density bonuses conditioned on provisions of amenities such as open space, galleries, and walkways. The provision of such amenities would be governed by design standards in the core area.
- . Amend off-street parking requirements to impose standards on all uses in the C-2 and C-3 districts. Relate standards to square footage of structure, or number of rooms. Parking requirements could be waived if developer either contributes fee-in-lieu or participates in public parking improvement district.
- . Create a special zoning district for the core area containing design standards for amenities provided in exchange for density bonuses.
- . Create a flood plain zoning district in areas computed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as being susceptible to the 100 year flood. The objective of the zoning district is to impose use and design restrictions on the flood plain for health and safety reasons in addition to flood plain zoning. Special incentives could also encompass design standards for riverfront development.
- . Consider street and alley closures in return for pedestrian and area public amenities.
- . Amend R-4 and R-5 classifications to impose density limits, with bonuses for provision of low and moderate income units.
- . Regulatory Administrative Procedure: Remove the RPC (or local planning commissions, if they are formed) from the individual development approval process--rezoning, variances and conditional uses--and assign the function of the public hearing, Preparation of finding, and recommendations of the governing body to a hearing officer. There is widespread appreciation that both the commission and governing bodies have become bogged down in the review of individual zoning cases. Yet, there is much suspicion of the hearing officer technique, despite its promise of removing arbitrary, inequitable decision-making. Positive examples are available in other cities.





## Land Use and Trades

- Identify key riverside parcels on which development would be incompatible with the river plan and slate those parcels for immediate acquisition through appropriate financing techniques. Where an easement or right-of-way for pedestrian or bikeway purposes can be secured for less than the cost of the entire fee, it should be acquired through purchase or condemnation. Where condemnation is necessary, multiple purposes of open space should be secured-- i.e., flood plain protection plus recreation.

Maximize use of trades of city-owned land elsewhere in the city for key riverfront parcels, perhaps sweetening the exchange with density increases or public services on the city land. It may also be possible to sell air rights over city-owned land in the core area.

A definite obstacle to realization of the core parking and circulation system is the charter limitation on use of condemnation to acquire private land for public parking. Assuming general public support for the proposal, the City should seek state legislative modification of their charter to permit such exercise of the eminent domain power.

## Taxation and Special Districts

- Investigate the feasibility of a special improvement district or tax increment financing mechanism to fund acquisition with tax exempt funds of land and construction of parking and circulation system. Additional funding for capital acquisitions could be obtained through fees-in-lieu of off-street parking requirements, gaming taxes, room taxes, and possibly other sources. These actions should be used as incentives to gain design considerations or public amenities in the core.

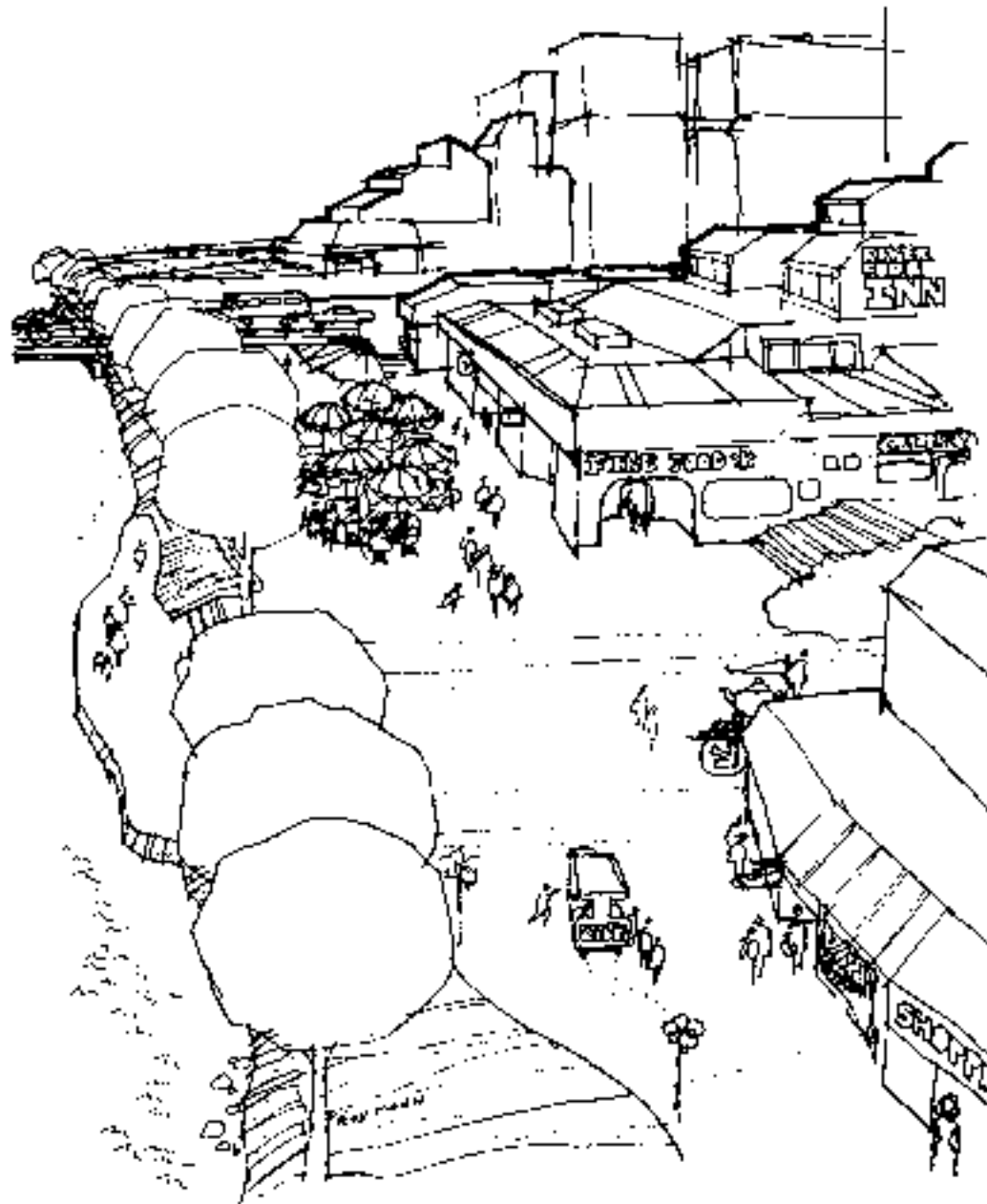
The rehabilitation of existing housing stock is a key to the provision of adequate housing. To the extent that increases in real property assessment or zoning may be a disincentive to rehabilitation and redevelopment in general, the ability of the local government to forgive increases in assessed valuation should be pursued, to the point of changes in state enabling legislation, if necessary.

### Utility Extension and Pricing Policies

- With the exception of sewer, the major elements of public infrastructure are provided by a private utility. Based on accurate information about unit costs of water and power service, the region's local governments should develop extension and pricing policies consistent with the objective of redirecting growth inward. Such pricing policy would avoid subsidization of new fringe development at the expense of the existing rate-payer, and encourage maximizing use of facilities that have already been paid for. How can these policies be imposed on Sierra Pacific? Utility rates are set by the state Public Service Commission, and local governments can offer their proposed rate package to that body. It may be possible to reach an agreement with Sierra Pacific prior to such rate hearings, particularly if the local governments offer tax exempt interest bond financing for utility facilities as an inducement to reduce the cost to the consumer and give the local governments a voice on where and when expansion occurs.

### Annexation Strategy

- The regional governments should delineate spheres of influence for Reno and Sparks with respect to their respective future urban areas. These policies could provide guidance for the Annexation Commission in their review of involuntary annexations. Voluntary annexation is problematic, assuming an owner or group of owners can force strip annexation on an unwilling municipality contrary to WCOG policies. If the annexation is motivated by a desire to get sewers, the cities could lessen the incentive through differential hook-up fees dramatically higher for land outside the urban service boundary. Ultimately it may be necessary to secure changes in state legislation governing voluntary annexations.



### Transportation System: "Reno Ride"

- . A free or minimal fare jitney bus service.  
As motorists exit from the interstate or from other local or regional transportation systems, they would leave their autos in peripheral parking structures and board a free or minimal-fare jitney bus loop service that would run at short intervals between the north terminus (I-80, the tourist center, and the University) and the railroad transportation and exhibit center, the River, the Civic and Cultural Center. Routes could change as per demand. The vehicle could either be low polluting small buses or vehicles which relate to some of Reno's uniqueness (i.e. antique cars, double deck buses; similar as the trolley is to San Francisco). It should be a fun experience, unique to Reno, and different from the typical transportation system.

The possibility should be investigated of turning Virginia Street into an exclusive transit street for use of the antique jitney buses and taxis: sidewalks could be expanded for the use of all pedestrians with places to sit, shade devices, and other pedestrian amenities and thusly reduce the conflict of autos and people.

### Transportation

All phases of transportation must be considered in a comprehensive manner to serve the citizens. These include:

- . Identify those residents of the area who are not served by the automobile, determine where they live, and their regular destinations.
- . Consider where use of the automobile could be reduced by present users if alternatives were available, and the impact on the community.
- . Present these alternatives for community education and, if feasible, eventual public decision.
- . Develop a program of viable alternatives (identifying costs, financing alternatives and the impact on the community).
- . Begin the development of an implementation program for the completion of the bicycle plan of the city, recognizing the bicycle as both a recreation and a transportation vehicle.
- . Consider the railroad line as either a design element to be included in all plans of the city or else consider its relocation. The importance of this concern would seem relatively low compared to other needs in the community.
- . Re-evaluate the city's street cross-section standards of design to permit narrower lanes where traffic is light, and revise where necessary.
- . Consider the creation of left turn lanes on major arterials where they are feasible by removing a few parking spaces within the immediate area of the corner.



## Social and Cultural

Human resource planning is relatively new. Traditionally it has been handled by voluntary responses to specific problems on an uncoordinated basis.

- . Develop a systematic overview and inventory of social and cultural needs.
- . Identify the needs and the groups to be served. Review the capabilities and sources of funding of the agencies and groups now providing social services.
- . Consider the potential role to be played by the city and county in supporting, managing, or operating programs or facilities to meet the community's social, cultural needs vs. the role of other institutions or volunteer efforts. Avoid overlap.
- . Air the alternatives after an educational program has been mounted.
- . Eventually, where appropriate, adopt an implementation program which clearly identifies the level of the governmental commitment in personnel, finances, and capital facilities.
- . Work with the school district to identify future school needs and potential site locations in compliance with the goals and policies and plans of the city. Pursue the creation of joint school-park facilities in all new locations.

- . There should be formed among the elderly population an association of retired managers and professionals. This group could be part of the current RSVP group or entirely independent. They could be the sponsors for various projects in the community (such as high rise buildings for low income elderly) and they could offer expertise to local government and industry at various levels. The artificial retirement age imposed on many professionals deprives the community of their much-needed experience. A fast growing community like Reno cannot afford this loss.

## Housing

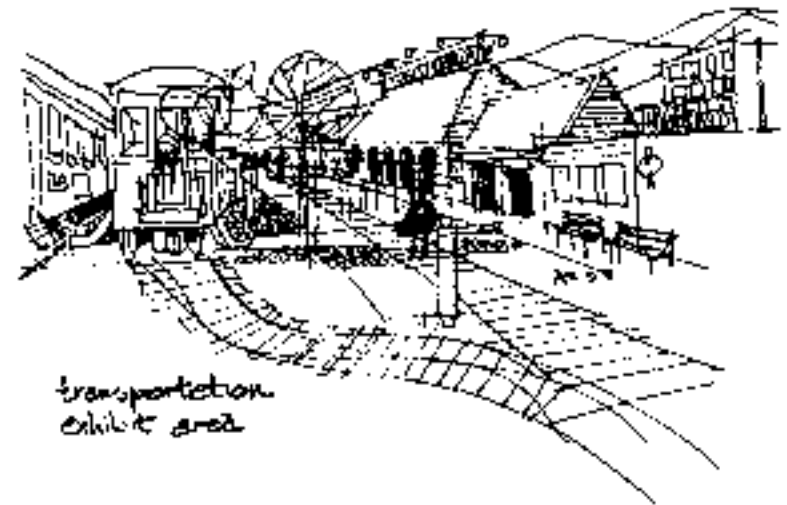
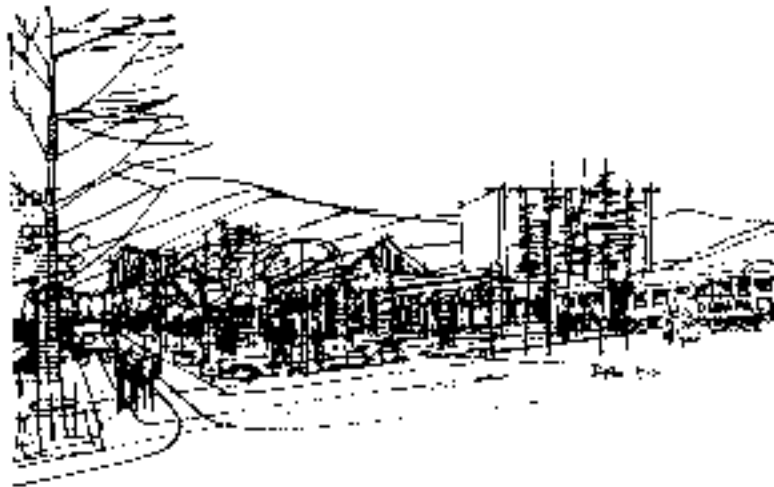
- . Establish a goal for the Housing Authority determining the housing needs for the area within a six-month period.
- . Parallel investigation of existing housing units for use in the Section 8 Program.
- . Creation of a task force of legislators, elderly, Housing Authority members, realtors, developers, Chamber of Commerce, and Downtown Association to investigate the potential for innovative housing

- units for the elderly and the low-income general occupancy. Use C.D. Funds, revenue sharing funds, tax exempt housing, federal or state programs to supplement ideas from the private sector to create units.
- . Through HUD representatives in the Denver and San Francisco Regional Offices, identify where local housing authorities and the building industry have put together a program that is producing housing under today's market condition.
- . Investigate the creation of a state housing finance authority similar to Colorado, California, Michigan and Massachusetts, to provide state financial capacity for loans to local housing authorities.

### Financial

Reno has more than average flexibility and revenue sources to accomplish a high level of capital improvements. However, a system has to be initiated to balance these needs with revenue sources.

- . Develop a basic capital improvements program with the capital budget constituting a first year.
- . Develop a six-year projection of revenues and expenditures to complement the capital improvements program, identifying potential revenue deficiencies that may develop.
- . Develop fiscal strategies that consider not only the revenues but the non-monetary effects of such a strategy.
- . Fiscal resources and programs to alleviate existing community deficiencies should be considered separately from programs that are necessary to meet new or expanding community needs. If "growth pays its own way" is adopted as a policy, this becomes achievable.
- . Create a group of public officials, downtown business people, gaming personnel, beautification committees, etc., to assist in developing specific priorities within downtown development projects.
- . Concentrate on the Truckee River: where to spend the \$2 million.
- . Develop a financing program for off-street parking, probably a tax increment financing/assessment district basis because of specific benefits of program.

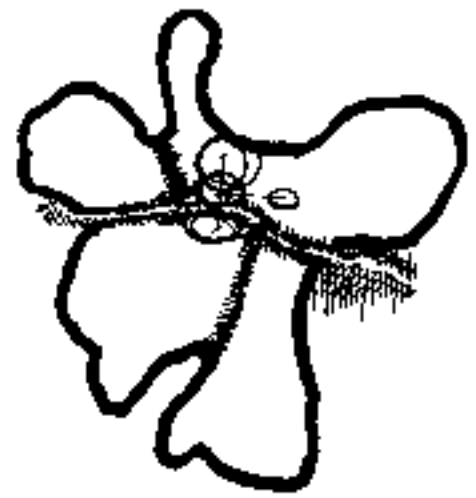
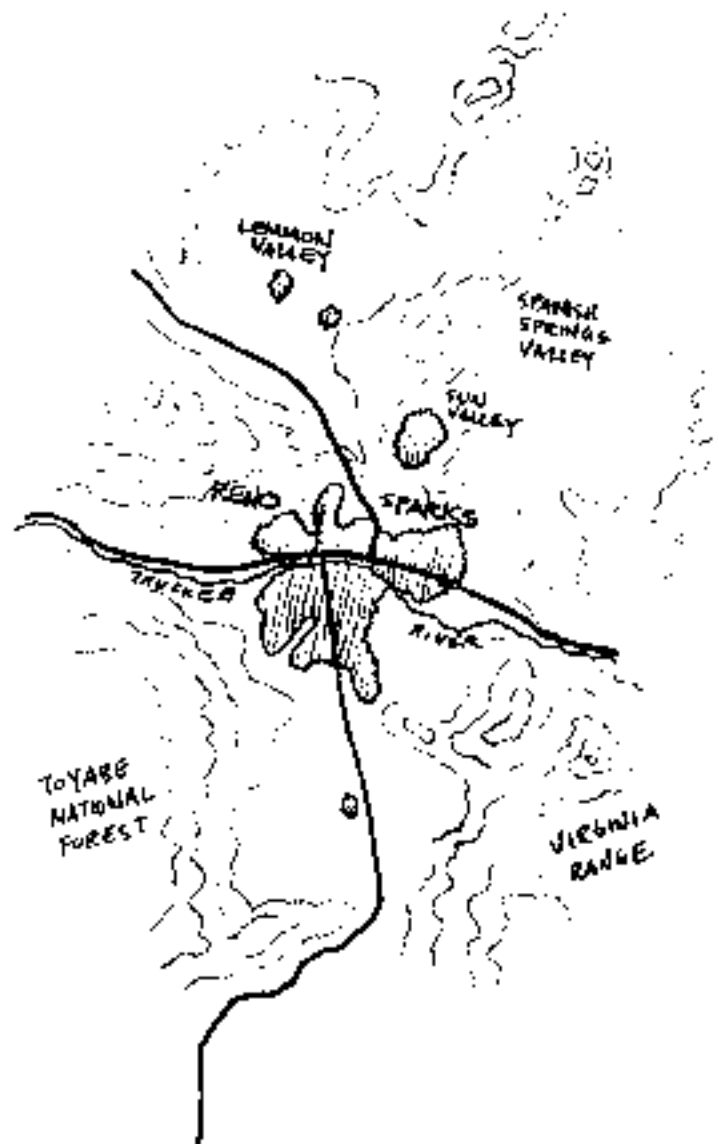


transportation  
exhibit area

### Railroad Corridor:

Currently the railroad corridor is under study and as previously mentioned, its priority should be carefully weighed with other community priorities. In any event, some treatment of this corridor should be initiated. If the alternative of depressing the tracks and combining it with a flood control project of the Truckee River proves feasible, it should be investigated as it will allow accessibility to the water's level to a greater extent in the downtown area and open up a new series of options for riverfront development. The railroad corridor and overflow channel might be treated as a linear park connection of a different nature which could provide access to the community, plus eliminate the annoyance of at-grade crossings along the major north-south arterial streets.

If this does not prove feasible, the existing railroad corridor should be treated as a linear park or buffer to mitigate the noise and unsightliness of the railroad. The second-level walkways or pedestrian connections in the existing alleyways should be encouraged to bridge across the tracks. Since the railroad played a major role in Reno's development, the possibility might exist for a railroad museum or exhibit center which might complement "Harrish's Auto Museum."



## Environment

- . Develop a detailed survey of the natural environment.

Identify the natural hazard areas and develop or amend regulatory codes which will prohibit or restrict development in these areas. If development is permitted, strict control should be practiced to prevent future problems for the occupant or the rest of the community, or costs to the governmental agencies.

Identify the natural amenity features and resource areas and develop programs to assure their conservation. Because of the variety of features and the magnitude of area, a combination of approaches will probably be necessary including: regulatory devices, subdivision zoning, and PUD design review, purchase in total, development right purchases, tax incentives, and gifts.

- . Each of the above raises additional questions, e.g. where to get the money, how to negotiate, how to spread payments, and how to change the property, to mention a few of the items that must be considered and programmed.
- . Approve no developments or services into these natural areas unless it is to rectify an existing problem, e.g. to provide sewage services to existing developments.

- . Identify the areas for conservation. Why and what is the basis for conservation? Gain community acceptance, develop an action program to acquire or preserve the areas, and create a management program to assure that the quality is preserved and enhanced.
- . Enlist the support of the Nevada Desert Institute to identify, design, and plan for these areas.



- . Where mineral extraction is to occur in the area, require detailed plans for reclamation before permits are issued, with financial guarantees posted when the permit is given to assure compliance.
- . Use environmental impact considerations through present codes and boards by expanding their scope and, if necessary, by increasing their sensitivity. Environmental concerns should be addressed with each proposed development. The community must provide the guidelines to be followed if it expects private concerns to be aware of flood plains, unstable soils, unstable slope problems, or friable areas.

#### Appearance and Community Design

- . Concentrate on the axes of primary natural assets within the community, the Truckee River.
- . Citizen involvement and business support may be created through concentrated exposure to what the area looks like to a critical observer. Blinders to appearance can be removed through:

Media support by a series of articles, TV shows, or radio shows on what some communities have accomplished, both in this country and in other countries.

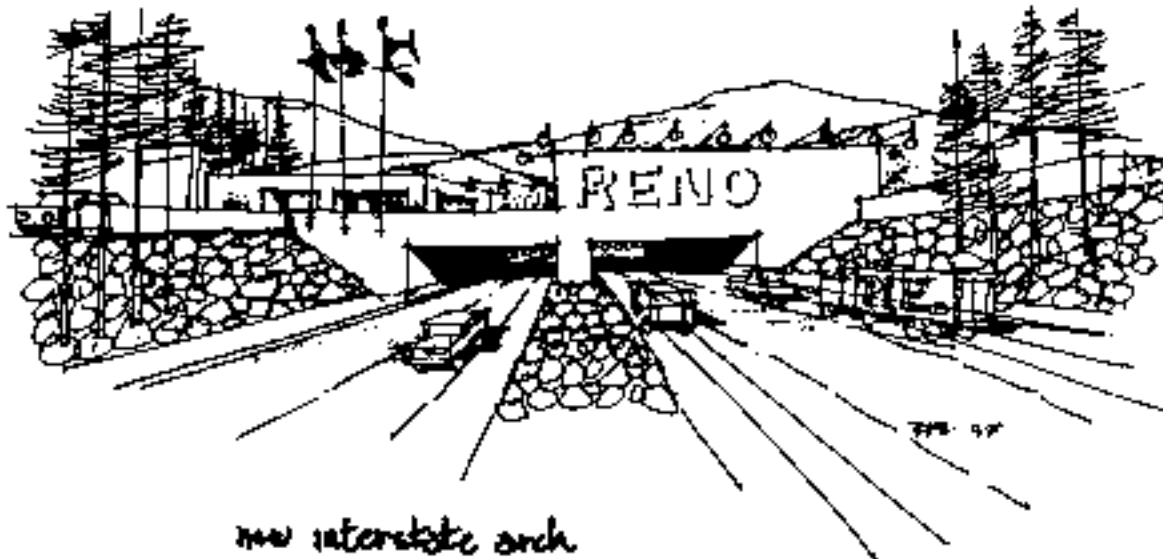
What is positive and what is negative in the community: a slide show on the area's appearance and potential provides an excellent complement to media

coverage and permits ample area for discussion. The local architects are an excellent group to be asked to assume this task.

The uniqueness of the gaming industry and the excitement of the areas in which they are located should not in any way be minimized by attempting to reduce signs or glitter. But even within these areas the excitement is not always creative and is plagued with dull or unimaginative design. This could be highlighted also.

- . Identify key areas and opportunities for improving the appearance of areas in Reno and Sparks, i.e., the strip commercial areas, the entryways to the city, the gateways from I-80 into each of the communities.
- . Establish set process of review of all publicly financed facilities to assure that they achieve a consistent and desirable design level.
- . Identify those areas of Reno and Sparks which justify preservation and historical protection. Adopt a design philosophy for new development and to a lesser level for existing neighborhoods. This includes signs, plantings, tree programs, utility lines and poles and parking areas. The design booklet which has recently been prepared by the Regional Planning Commission and its staff is an excellent base upon which to proceed.





new interstate arch  
announcing entrance to the city



CITY

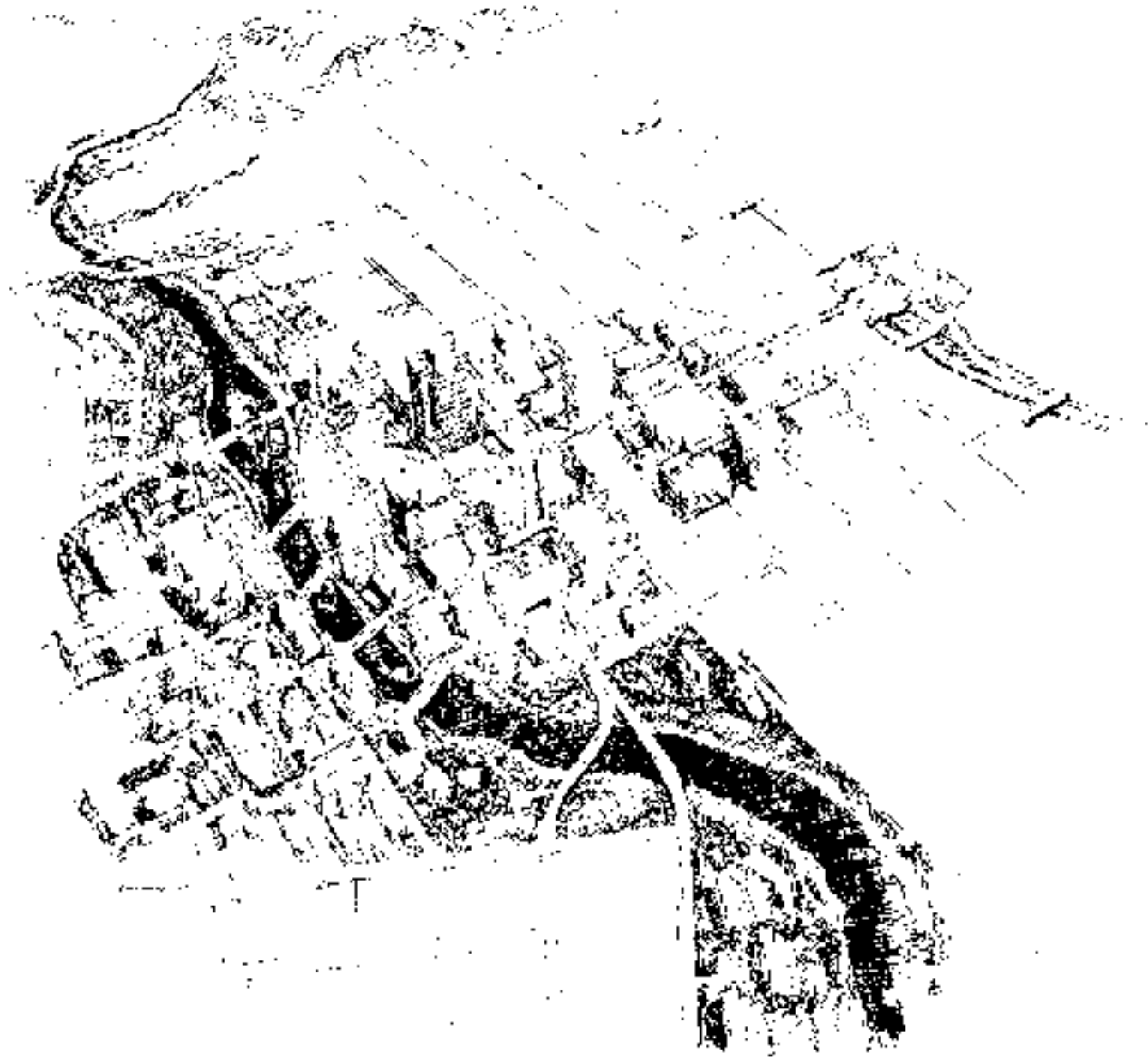
CULTURAL CENTER  
GATEWAY'S new interstate entrance  
to the city

I-80 "Arch" Gateway and the  
Highway Corridor:

Create a new gateway and entrance to the city via the I-80 interchange by utilizing the existing platform that reunites the south and north sides of the freeway, the city, and the University. This can serve as the "new arch", the new image of Reno.

The top side of the platform can house a "tourist information center", city exhibits, information, advertisements, etc. A rest stop for the motorist with adjacent highway-related activities and functions (family type hotels, University related, commercial and retail areas, free parking structures and the northern terminus of the "Reno Ride"- local jitney transportation system).

The highway corridor would be appropriately treated and landscaped to provide a buffer to adjacent land uses and provide an entrance to the city which is both native to the environment and the city. Bright multi-colored lights on the inside of the tunnel could reflect some of the glitter of the downtown gaming establishments while the exterior could reflect the "new image of Reno."



**rydat**



#### R/UDAT PROGRAM

The Urban Planning and Design Committee of the American Institute of Architects has been sending Urban Design Assistance Teams to various American cities since 1967.

The Reno Team is the 28th such team to be invited into a specific area to deal with environmental and urban problems which range in scale from a region to a small town, and in type from recreational areas to public policy and implementation methods.

The Teams respond to the problems as described by the local AIA Chapters and their sponsors from the community leadership.

Each Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team is specially selected to include professionals experienced in the particular problems of the area under study. Members are not compensated for their service and agree not to accept commissions for work resulting from their recommendations.

The Team acquaints itself with the community and its people...presents its analysis from a fresh perspective... offers its recommendations...perhaps a new approach for planning or for action.



## THE VISIT

The request for a R/UDAT Team was approved in April 1975 and on May 6-7 Ronald A. Straka, Team chairman, made a reconnaissance visit to Reno to observe and discuss the details of the team's visit. A Team was organized and was sent extensive background material on the Reno/Sparks area and Washoe County in advance of the visit. After meetings with city and county officials, planners, civic leaders and organizations, special interest groups and other interested citizens' groups, the Team surveyed the city by bus, air, and on foot.

With this information, the Team engaged in intensive work sessions which culminated in a public presentation on September 21.

This report was presented at that time.

This was the first R/UDAT held in conjunction with an AIA regional conference that focused in on "the R/UDAT process" and "design team concepts" as its main theme.

The main objective of the visit was to provide the "City of Reno" with a "plan for planning" and with a secondary emphasis on demonstrating how the process can be applied to communities and the Western Mountain Region; and that architects can and should assume new roles in trying to help their communities.

## OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the R/UDAT Program are:

- to improve physical design throughout the nation
- to illustrate the importance of urban and regional planning
- to stimulate public action
- to give national support to local AIA Chapters in their efforts to improve their own communities and become actively involved in urban design and planning issues.

An assistance team cannot provide detailed analysis or solutions nor final plans to complex problems in the 4-day visit, but it can objectively approach long standing problems with:

- a new look by experienced outsiders
- to make clear and comprehensive recommendations which are professionally responsible as well as politically and economically feasible and publicly understandable.



Members of the  
American Institute of Architects  
Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team  
Reno, Nevada  
September 17-21, 1975

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#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The idea of the R/UDAT visit in conjunction with the WMR regional convention and its design team concept theme was originally proposed by Robert A. Fielden, AIA, Director of the Western Mountain Region. The R/UDAT visit was coordinated by Edward S. Parsons, AIA, of the Northern Nevada Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, ably assisted by Carroll G. Peetz, AIA, Fred O. Dolven, AIA, and other members of the Northern Nevada Chapter. Members of the R/UDAT Team were assisted by regional teams of architects and students from within the WMR region. Their efforts were coordinated by Kathy Vernon, AIA, Julia Takahashi, and Jim Kelly. Without the enthusiastic assistance of these people this report would not have been possible.

An important contribution to the study was the active interest and participation of the city and county agencies, the elected officials, business and civic leaders, and the many interested and concerned citizens representing a cross-section of the community.

The Northern Nevada Chapter also wishes to express particular appreciation for the materials and information supplied by the cities of Reno and Sparks, Reno Unlimited, the Regional Planning office, the Gaming Industry Association, and the Greater Reno Chamber of Commerce.

#### SPONSORSHIP

The request to the NALA was accompanied by letter of interest and support from the cities of Reno and Sparks, Washoe County Commissioners, The Regional Planning Commission, Gaming Industry of Nevada, Greater Reno Chamber of Commerce, the University of Nevada/Reno, the Nevada Arts Council and various concerned groups of individuals.

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City of Reno  
Department of Economic Development  
First National Bank of Nevada  
Security National Bank of Nevada  
Pioneer Citizens Bank of Nevada  
Nevada State Council of the Arts  
Oakmans Drafting Supplies  
Concerned Individuals

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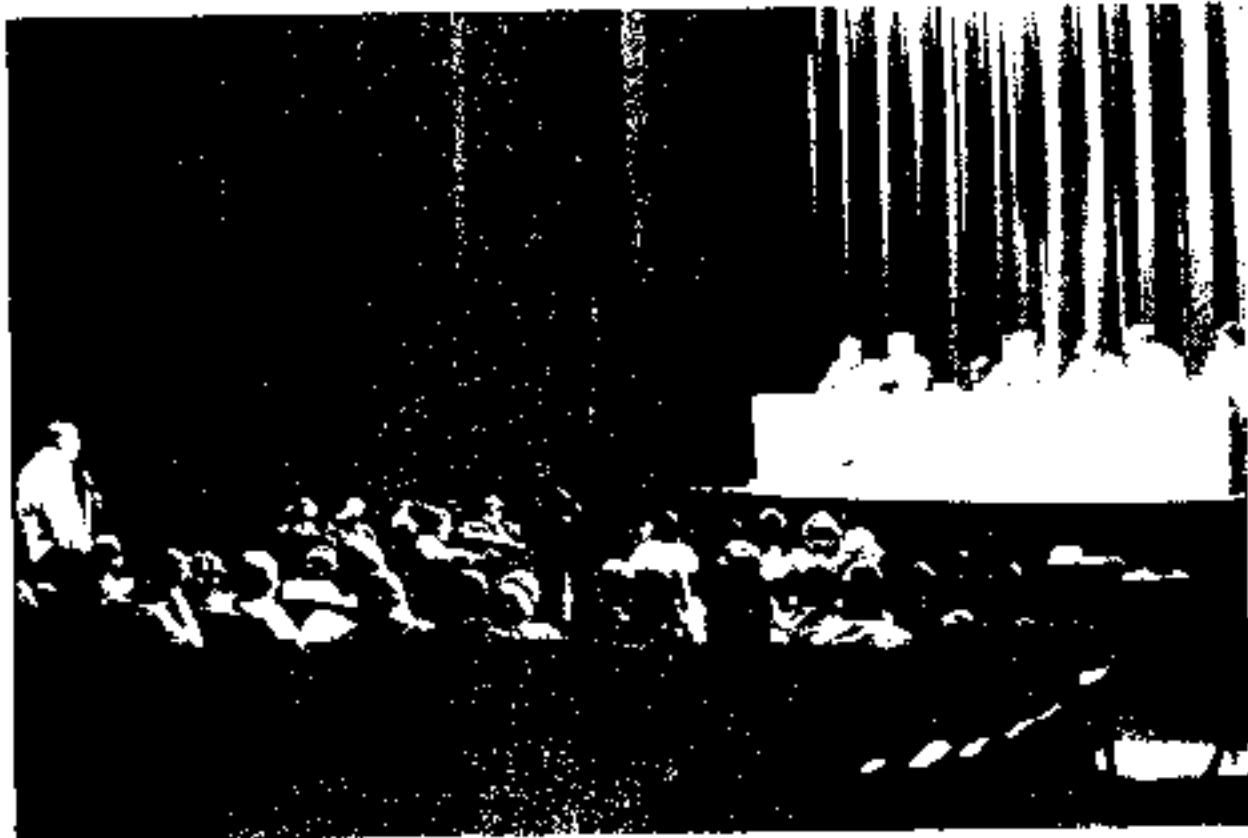
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City of Sparks  
Greater Reno Chamber of Commerce  
Gaming Industry Association  
of Nevada, Inc.  
Sierra Arts Foundation  
Builders Association of Northern  
Nevada  
University of Nevada / Reno  
City of Reno  
Blue Ribbon Task Force  
Beautification Committees  
Nevada State Council of the Arts  
Bi-Centennial Committee of Sparks  
Reno City Council  
Nevada State Journal  
Reno Evening Gazette  
KOLD-TV  
KERR-TV  
KTVN-TV  
Women in Construction  
Truckee River Beautification  
League of Women Voters  
Criminal Justice Planning Committee  
University of Colorado  
University of Utah  
University of Arizona  
Arizona State University  
University of New Mexico  
First National Bank of Nevada  
Pioneer Citizens Bank of Nevada  
Security National Bank  
Board of Realtors  
Sparks Tribune  
Northern Nevada Chapter, AIA  
Larry Madison and Movie Crew  
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Airways Engineering  
Darrell and Laurie Jason,  
Jerry Butler, Reno Printing  
Gene Christensen, Photography

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Frank Bender  
Clyde Buglieri  
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John Cavanaugh  
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Ben Dasher  
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Lino Del Grande  
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