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College of Agriculture,  
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## Results From the Community Asset Survey: Carson City, Nevada

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This publication was produced under the **Nevada Economic Assessment Project (NEAP)**, which aims to provide county, state and federal agencies, and their partners, with quantitative and qualitative baseline data and analyses to better understand trends in each county's demographic, social, economic, fiscal and environmental characteristics.

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## Introduction

The Nevada Economic Assessment Project (NEAP) is a statewide Extension program aimed at providing a baseline repository of socio-economic data for each county in Nevada. One component of NEAP includes a community asset mapping workshop conducted with community leaders and residents. The asset mapping component includes a community workshop, followed by an online community asset survey. The online survey is an opportunity to provide broader community participation, beyond the workshop participants, to help identify community assets.

As part of the NEAP process, the community asset workshop for Carson City was held in person with county officials and interested community members on June 16, 2021. The community asset mapping component of NEAP is a “snapshot of assets.” It is not a full inventory of every asset that exists or is desired in the county. A snapshot provides a broad overview of the key assets in the community, at this moment in time (hence a baseline). Asset mapping is a positive way to promote and think about one’s community and can typically serve as a starting point for further discussions of possible actions and initiatives.

Asset mapping is a process to create awareness of local resources. Its intended purpose is for community members to recognize what their community already has while noting desired additions to their community. Typically, when community members gather, people begin by listing all the problems or needs within the community. When members begin with identifying needs first, they see an endless list of problems. Funding often tends to go to outside service providers, and residents view themselves and their community as deficient. As a result, residents can feel as though they are victims who lack the capacity to make change happen within their own community (Kretzman and McKnight 1993).

However, if residents focus first on assets and strengths within the community, they are far more likely to be committed to investing in their communities and use existing strengths to address needs. Empirical evidence strongly suggests community economic development is more successful when people are willing to commit to investing in themselves and their resources (Burkett 2011; Underwood and Friesner 2017).

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Communities that focus on assets first are more able to effectively address needs by partnering with outside entities to leverage the resources and assets within the community (Kretzman and McKnight 1993; Pitzer and Streeter 2015).

Hence, successful community development must begin within the community itself. Results from the Carson City Community Asset Survey are provided in this special publication to provide a snapshot of existing and desired assets as provided by Carson City residents.

### **Survey Results**

Following the in-person community asset mapping workshop on June 16, 2021, an online community asset survey was open in Survey Monkey from June 17, 2021, until July 7, 2021. Links to the survey were made available on the NEAP website, and paper copies of the survey were available if requested.

A total of two residents (n=2) completed the online community asset survey for Carson City. Due to the very low response rate of survey respondents, gender, age and zip codes are not being reported. Only survey responses pertaining to the assets will be included as survey results.

The online survey is not intended to be a complete inventory of all assets in Carson City, but rather a snapshot of assets identified by residents at this point in time.

The process used to identify assets was grouped into six categories. These six categories were provided to residents during the community workshop and in the online survey as a framework to think about assets. The six asset categories are based on the seven community capitals (Flora and Flora 2013). The seven community capitals (i.e., built, natural, political, social, natural, human and cultural) are commonly identified as the ecosystem of a healthy community. The community capitals approach builds on the notion that all communities have assets. These assets may be inactive, or they may be invested to create more assets or leveraged to help fill gaps in the community.

Respondents were asked to provide what assets exist currently and what assets they desire for each of the six categories. The six asset categories can be fluid, implying the categories themselves are not the focus, but rather it is the the identification of the asset itself that is most important. For example, residents may identify a desired asset to have “reliable broadband.” This asset can be identified under the category of *Play*, *Economic* or *Values*. The six categories of assets are identified as follows.

1. Values
2. People
3. Places
4. Play
5. Economic
6. Group

## Assets

### 1) Values:

Values are an intangible asset of a community; however, shared values add to the quality of life in a community. Examples of values may include “safe community,” “a small-town feel” or “rural values.” Community values are important because values are the foundation to a community, and local decisions often reflect these core values. Table 1 outlines existing and desired assets of values as identified by workshop participants in Carson City. To be respectful of participants who completed the online survey, all comments (verbatim) are included in Table 1 regarding values as assets.

Table 1. Carson City Online Survey List of Assets: Values

Existing	Desired
Pride	County cooperation between Carson City and adjacent counties
Philanthropy	Diversity
Good story tellers	Inclusion
Railroad history	
American Indian history	
Education is valued	
Higher education is present	
“Feeling” community; friendliness	

*\*All data in this table were submitted by residents and survey respondents. Please excuse any spelling, grammar or other inconsistencies. These are not the views nor opinions of the authors of the report.*

**2) People:**

Everyone in a community has some gift or talent he/she can contribute to help strengthen the community. The core of community rests with the capacity of its residents, the individual members of the community and how individuals can contribute. When people use their skills and talents in the community, they make the community stronger. Table 2 outlines existing and desired assets of people as identified by workshop participants in Carson City. To be respectful of participants who completed the online survey, all comments (verbatim) are included in Table 2 regarding people as assets.

*Table 2. Carson City Online Survey List of Assets: People*

<b>Existing</b>	<b>Desired</b>
Growing senior population	More inclusivity (Latinx, etc.)
Deep knowledge and history	Locals and transplants
Families	Diverse cultures
Brand ambassadors	
Social clubs (Lions, Rotary, Elks, etc.)	
Native and newcomers	
Bicycle group Muscle Power	
Nextdoor (online community)	

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### 3) Places:

Every community has special places where people come together. Community is about coming together, and the places where people congregate are spaces for building community. These places may serve as a microcosm of community. Places can also add to a community’s identity through a historic building or traditional stories about the community. Table 3 outlines existing and desired assets of places as identified by workshop participants in Carson City. To be respectful of participants who completed the online survey, all comments (verbatim) are included in Table 3 regarding places as assets.

Table 3. Carson City Online Survey List of Assets: Places

Existing	Desired
Lake Tahoe	Neighborhood squares
Carson River	Gun ranges like Clark County
Galleries	Expansion of parks
Local parks (Mills Park, Dog parks)	Indoor and/or outdoor events center
Brewery Arts Center (BAC)	ATV trail development
McFadden Plaza	Ormsby House occupied
State capital	Social places (dancing venues for ages 20’s-30’s)
Multi-use paths	
Single-track mountain bike trails	
Museums	
Trails (hiking, etc.)	
Stewart Indian School	
Nevada State Prison (NSP)	
Mental health services	
Capital Plaza	
Silver Saddle Ranch	
V&T Railway	

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#### 4) Play:

Play is an important part of life for all of us, from children to adults. Play gives us the time and space to meet and socialize with others, and improves our physical and mental health and our overall quality of life. The evidence outlining the benefits of play in the development of young children is overwhelming. Likewise, the value of play from children to adults offers wide benefits for a community. Locations for play are often seen as a focal point for communities. They offer opportunities for social interaction for the wider community, support the development of a greater sense of community spirit and promote social cohesion. Table 4 outlines existing and desired assets of play as identified by workshop participants in Carson City. To be respectful of participants who completed the online survey, all comments (verbatim) are included in Table 4, regarding play as assets.

Table 4. Carson City Online Survey List of Assets: Play

Existing	Desired
Community center	Special needs consideration
Children’s museum events	ADA compliance
Theater	Youth/teen services
Hot air balloons	Large theater (1000+ capacity)
Multi-use paths	Outdoor amphitheater
Single-track mountain bike trails	
Brewery Arts Center (BAC)	
Hiking trails	
Lake Tahoe	
Carson River	
State parade	
Parks and recreation facilities	
For-profit facilities	
State fair	
Playing with friends	
5 museums	
Bob McFadden Plaza	

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## 5) Economic:

Communities have economic power in local businesses. This power includes who they hire, what they purchase, what skills they teach and what resources they offer. Revitalizing a community's economic life is at the very center of local economic development. Communities have many steps to rebuilding the local economy, and it begins by recognizing the local institutions and organizations that exist. Table 5 outlines existing and desired economic assets as identified by workshop participants in Carson City. To be respectful of participants who completed the online survey, all comments (verbatim) are included in Table 5, regarding economic assets.

Table 5. Carson City Online Survey List of Assets: Economic

Existing	Desired
Affordable housing but landlocked	Better local restaurants
Redeveloped authority citizens	Restructure taxes to fund services
Centerpoint to Reno, Tahoe, Virginia City, and Minden/Gardnerville	Better developed workforce
Hospital system	North end of Carson city needs development
Quality of life (arts and culture)	Redevelopment (shopping, etc.)
Great restaurants	General funds for arts and culture (more funding)
New lodging properties	Public transportation (shuttle system into downtown corridor)
Jobs (diversified employment possibilities)	Coordinated community calendar
Proximity to Tahoe	Community foundation
Active and talented tourism authority team	
Vast array of places to shop (retail, resale, auto, box stores like Home Depot and Walmart)	
Partnership with Clark County	
Fundraisers (nonprofits, etc.)	
Lack of taxes (less than 20% of property owners pay taxes)	

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**6) Groups:**

Groups and organizations are the foundation to a community’s social fabric. Linkages and networks among community groups create social capital. Community groups (whether formal or informal) can often serve as the avenue for creating social trust, build relationships, and connect networks among community members. Involvement in these groups builds individual skills and increases involvement in community associations. Those involved in groups often help “fill the gaps” in a community and take on leadership roles. Table 6 outlines existing and desired assets of groups as identified by workshop participants in Carson City. To be respectful of participants who completed the online survey, all comments (verbatim) are included in Table 6, regarding groups as assets.

*Table 6. Carson City Online Survey List of Assets: Groups*

<b>Existing</b>	<b>Desired</b>
Nevada Association of Counties (NACO)	Diversity (youth and POC)
Philanthropic groups (Elks, etc.)	Diverse population
Service organizations (RSVP, Rotary, Carson City Historical Society, Friends of the Museum, Nevada State Prison Preservation Society [NSPPS])	Western Nevada College (WNC) internship opportunities
Western Nevada College (WNC) students	
Carson Animal Services Initiative (CASI)	
Volunteer commissions for oversight	
Northern Nevada Development Authority (NNDA)	
Lots of 501c3 (nonprofits)	
Social Philanthropic groups (Chamber, Arts, Library, etc.)	

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## Snapshot of Assets

As stated earlier in this document, asset mapping is a process to create awareness of local resources and strengths. Its intended purpose is for community members to recognize what their community already has while noting desired additions to their community. Identifying community assets is an important process in driving local economic development (Burkett 2011). To create a “snapshot of assets” across each category, comments were qualitatively grouped into key themes. Themes were identified based on survey responses for each of the six asset categories. Participant comments, as listed in Tables 1-6, were reviewed and categorized into dominant themes based on similarity of responses.

Developing themes from qualitative survey responses required responses to be reviewed and coded. Similar coded responses were grouped together to create a theme (i.e., the individual responses of all the service and civic clubs listed were placed under a general theme of “Service/Civic Clubs” to reflect a broader theme). The higher frequency of coded response per theme is reflected by a sequence of listing for each asset. A snapshot of assets listing the top three existing and desired assets for each category is provided in Tables 7-12 and summarized below.

### Values

Table 7. Themes of Existing and Desired Values as Assets in Carson City

<i>Existing Values</i>	<i>Desired Values</i>
1. History, Local and State	1. Improve Cooperative Between City and County
2. Education	2. More Diversity
3. Community Pride	3. More Inclusive

### People

Table 8. Themes of Existing and Desired People Assets in Carson City

<i>Existing People</i>	<i>Desired People</i>
1. Civic Organizations	1. Diverse Cultures
2. Increasing Senior Population	2. More Inclusive
3. Long-term and New Residents	

## Places

Table 9. Themes of Existing and Desired Places as Assets in Carson City

<i>Existing Places</i>	<i>Desired Places</i>
1. Outdoor Amentities/Access	1. Community Public Spaces
2. Historical Places	2. Events Center
3. State Capital	3. Expand Local Parks

## Play

Table 10. Themes of Existing and Desired Play Assets in Carson City

<i>Existing Play</i>	<i>Desired Play</i>
1. Outdoor Opportunities	1. Better ADA Access
2. Museums/Cultural Activities	2. Outdoor Amphitheater
3. Nevada State Capital Events	3. Youth/Teen Opportunities

## Economic

Table 11. Themes of Existing and Desired Economic Assets in Carson City

<i>Existing Economic</i>	<i>Desired Economic</i>
1. Location-Relative to-World Class Tourism (Lake Tahoe)	1. Redevelopment of Shopping and Restaurants
2. Box Stores	2. Workforce Development
3. Affordable Housing—but Finite	3. Public Transport – DT Corridor

## Groups

Table 12. Themes of Existing and Desired Group Assets in Carson City

<i>Existing Groups</i>	<i>Desired Groups</i>
1. Civic Groups	1. Diversity of Youth Groups/Population
2. Nonprofits	2. Internship Opportunities With WNC
3. Northern Nevada Development Authority (NNDA)	

### Limitations

Some significant limitations need to be noted in this report. First, a very small percentage of residents completed the online community asset survey (n=2) and participated in the community workshops (n=6) out of a county population of 58,639 (U.S. Census 2020). Given these significant limitations to the community asset survey, the results are a first step in identifying existing and desired assets within the community. However, the snapshot of assets identified in this report can be used as **a starting point for discussion** among a more diverse set of residents with local decisionmakers to explore how existing and desired assets can guide economic development decisions.

### Conclusion and Next Steps

Asset mapping is an important tool to assist communities in identifying resources and strengths that currently exist, and it can help reveal desired assets that residents believe should be improved upon to help drive local change in their community. The information provided in this report reflect results from the Carson City Community Asset Survey, in connection with the Nevada Economic Analysis Baseline Report. Both of these reports are tools that can be used to help inform and guide local decision-making for economic development and to understand what residents value and desire in the community.

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