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## Results from the Community Asset Survey: Mineral County, Nevada

**Marlene Rebori, Community Development Specialist**

**Joseph Lednicky, Economist II**

**University of Nevada, Reno Extension**

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 Mineral County was held virtually with county officials interested community members on May 6, 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).

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 Mineral County Community Asset Survey are provided in this special publication to provide a snapshot of existing and desired assets as provided by Mineral County residents.

### Survey Results

Following the virtual community asset mapping workshop on May 6, 2021, an online community asset survey was open in Survey Monkey from May 6, 2021, until June 9, 2021. Links to the survey were made available on the NEAP website and the Mineral County website.

A total of 18 residents (n=18) completed the online community asset survey for Mineral County. A majority of survey respondents were women (66.67%) compared to men (33.3%). All respondents were residents of Mineral County, with the exception of one respondent who was a landowner in Mineral County, but does not reside in Nevada. One respondent resides on the Walker River Indian Reservation. The online survey is not intended to be a complete inventory of all assets in Mineral County, but rather a snapshot of assets identified by residents at this point in time.

Respondents who provided input into the survey were from three of the five zip codes in Mineral County (Table 1).

Table 1. Mineral County Community Assets Respondent Zip Code Distribution, 2021

Zip Code	City	Survey Responses	Percent
89415	Hawthorne	14	82.4%
89416	Hawthorne	1	5.9%
89427	Shurz	1	5.9%
89422	Mina	0	0
89420	Luning	0	0
93446	Out-Of-State	1	5.9%

Respondents were asked on the survey to share, “*In one word, what is something you would like to brag about your community?*” The following word cloud (Figure 1) reflects respondents’ one word to brag about their community. The larger the word in the word cloud, the more often the word was used from residents on the survey. Therefore, the more frequently it was cited, the larger the word appears.

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.

Figure 1. Mineral County Community Asset Word Cloud, 2021



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 2 outlines existing and desired assets of values as identified by workshop participants in Mineral County. To be respectful of participants who completed the online survey, all comments (verbatim) are included in Table 2, regarding values as assets.

Table 2. Mineral County Online Survey List of Assets: Values

Existing	Desired
	Walker Lake has a village mentality of caring for their neighbors
Small town feelinh	Pride in our community
Never have experienced any of the stated values	Peace and quiet lakeside living
share the beauty, Small Town values, neighbors helping neighbors, quiet community,	Thriving economy, Locally Driven Growth, Community Based Solutions, Leadership that is NOT bullying,
Walker lake, fishing/camping at Walker river	More for the young people to do.
Middle of nowhere	Something for every age group to so
Local Youth Sports Organizations	More community support of them.
tradition	empathy/ demolishing nepotism
Sense of community..ie: helping each other when in need.	Sense of community pride...ie: making it Look better
Knowledgeable commissioners/ county staff	Transparency and willingness to grow.
Friendly	

*\*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 3 outlines existing and desired assets of people as identified by workshop participants in Mineral County. To be respectful of participants who completed the online survey, all comments (verbatim) are included in Table 3, regarding people as assets.

*Table 3. Mineral County Online Survey List of Assets: People*

<b>Existing</b>	<b>Desired</b>
Walker Lake has a diverse artist population	Art lovers and well developed contributors to our village and society
Volunteering	Bringing the community together
There has been no opportunity for small business	Opportunity for support for small business
Patriots, Artists, Salt of the Earth, Knowledge,	Patriots, Conservative Teachers, Entrepreneurs, NOT California centric or city centric or Carson City Centric
	Better food
People willing to work	Educated people in key county roles
Those that run organizations	People to assist in current organizations
willing to grow our own	licensed childcare
Veterans, service industry, seniors	Contractors, plumbers, electricians, mechanics, day care providers
Tenacious community members	Open mindfulness and willingness to adapt and change with the times

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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 4 outlines existing and desired assets of places as identified by workshop participants in Mineral County. To be respectful of participants who completed the online survey, all comments (verbatim) are included in Table 4, regarding places as assets.

Table 4. Mineral County Online Survey List of Assets: Places

Existing	Desired
Bighorn Crossing State Beach	Amphitheater located at Bighorn Crossing State Beach for local bands and artists as a tourism destination
	Safe turn-offs exiting and entering accessing big horn sheep viewing and dark night star gazing.
USO building	More use as a community center
Most recreational areas closed	Access to Mount Grant for Recreation
Recreation @ Walker Lake, Camping, Boating, Hiking, Rock Houndin, Open beauty, Night Skies not ruined by lights	Bike trails from Lake to Town and to Schurz, Event Friendly, Local Services for entrepreneurs AGAIN,
2 parks	More events coming to town
Many off road riding trails	OHV facility with repair shop
Walker Lake	Sports Park
ycac	events center
The great outdoors, local bars and restaurants	Bowling alley, events center that's easier to use for small gatherings
Veterans park	Sports complex for all local sports groups to use

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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 5 outlines existing and desired assets of play as identified by workshop participants in Mineral County. To be respectful of participants who completed the online survey, all comments (verbatim) are included in Table 5, regarding play as assets.

Table 5. Mineral County Online Survey List of Assets: Play

Existing	Desired
Walker Lake launch ramp	Floating food and beverage barge to service all of the camps lake wide along with a pedal bar where everyone aboard pedal their floating bar around the lake and most of all three lanes through the entire dangerous highway for safe exiting and entering highway
	Outdoor amphitheater located at the new state beach
There is no real access to Walker Lake	Marina Access for the public BOAT RENTALS
Walker Lake, Open Spaces, Boating, wildlife viewing, museums, , photography, hiking, biking	Fishing, restored Lake, Art Classes, Art Events, Farmer's Markets, Craft Shows, New community events, painting safaris, photo safaris,
None	
OHV trails	More trail markings with available maps
Walker Lake	Sports Park
park/walker lake	splash pads/ water play for low income families
Outdoor activities, hiking fishing camping and casinos/bars	Bowling with other activities, tours of the local mountains and desert areas.
Walker Lake, veterans park, Lyon park	Movie theater
	Dojos

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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 6 outlines existing and desired economic assets as identified by workshop participants in Mineral County. To be respectful of participants who completed the online survey, all comments (verbatim) are included in Table 6, regarding economic assets.

*Table 6. Mineral County Online Survey List of Assets: Economic*

<b>Existing</b>	<b>Desired</b>
Walker Lake convenience store	Monthly crafts fair for the captured drive by audience and customer base
	Plotted areas with utilities and septic’s for people in Arby’s and fifth wheels living traveling like your seniors are transient workers small families
	Bring back MCEDA
No real restruants	Starbucks and Panera
HWAD, Gold and Silver Mines, Businesses that stay	Job NOT tied to Government, EVERYONE gets to thrive not just good old boys, Get the land out of county hands, Streamlined permitting, Progress minded elected officials,
????	More businesses
Great laundry facility	Recreation center
Gas station	More business other than the few we have.
history	youth/juvenile rehabilitation center, addictions rehabilitation center
SOC, casinos, restaurants, gas stations	Warehouses, distribution centers, rehabilitation center
Financial Horizons Credit Union	More/ different industries
	Food choices

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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 7 outlines existing and desired assets of groups as identified by workshop participants in Mineral County. To be respectful of participants who completed the online survey, all comments (verbatim) are included in Table 7, regarding groups as assets.

Table 7. Mineral County Online Survey List of Assets: Groups

Existing	Desired
	Nevada Food Bank delivery for senior Walker Lake residents, Walker Lake senior help group for building, repairs, yard work etc.
	Venue for music, acting and art displays attracting tourist
American legion VFW CAHS	
There are no recreation programs for adults	Walking Mount Grant, walking trails along Walker Lake
Mineral County Economic Development Authority, Walker Lake Advisory Board, Walker Lake GID,	LOCAL EDA with Jobs services, Events development Team, Active Tourism Board, Proactive Planning Board
Organized sports	Sports facilities ... Baseball/Softball four plex
Pop Warner	Co-op with all non-profits
parks and recreation	collaboration between agencies providing similar resources
Churches, boys and girls club, senior center,	An Active Chamber of Commerce, parenting support groups formed by parents for parents, summer youth programs
Hawthorne Little League	Principals advisory committees in the schools... other than that, we have the groups.... we just need the volunteers
	Dojos and dance

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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 2-7, 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 8-13 and summarized below.

### Values

*Table 8. Themes of Existing and Desired Values as Assets in Mineral County*

<b><i>Existing Values</i></b>	<b><i>Desired Values</i></b>
<b>1. Small Town</b>	<b>1. Community Pride</b>
<b>2. Access to Outdoor Opportunities</b>	<b>2. Local Economic Growth</b>
<b>3. Native Pauite Culture</b>	<b>3. More Opportunities for Youth</b>

### People

*Table 9. Themes of Existing and Desired People Assets in Mineral County*

<b><i>Existing People</i></b>	<b><i>Desired People</i></b>
<b>1. Veterans</b>	<b>1. More Educated Workforce</b>
<b>2. Artists</b>	<b>2. More Skilled Tradespeople</b>
<b>3. Seniors</b>	<b>3. Child Care Providers</b>

## Places

Table 10. Themes of Existing and Desired Places as Assets in Mineral County

<i>Existing Places</i>	<i>Desired Places</i>
1. Outdoor Recreation Sites	1. Amphitheater for Local Events
2. Local Parks	2. Sports Complex
3. USO Building	3. Better Use of Community Center

## Play

Table 11. Themes of Existing and Desired Play Assets in Mineral County

<i>Existing Play</i>	<i>Desired Play</i>
1. Outdoor Opportunities Access	1. Amphitheater at State Beach
2. Local Parks	2. Maps/Signage for Local Trails
3.	3. Community Events/Shows

## Economic

Table 12. Themes of Existing and Desired Economic Assets in Mineral County

<i>Existing Economic</i>	<i>Desired Economic</i>
1. Credit Union	1. Diversify and Expand Economic Development
2. Convenience Store/Gas Station	2. Drug Rehabilitation Facility
3. Local Restaurants	3. More Housing Options

## Groups

Table 13. Themes of Existing and Desired Group Assets in Mineral County

<i>Existing Groups</i>	<i>Desired Groups</i>
1. Veterans Groups	1. Senior Support Group
2. Youth Groups	2. Art Group
3. County Economic Development (MCEDA)	3. Tourism Board

## Limitations

A few significant limitations need to be noted in this report. First, a very small percentage of residents completed the online community asset survey (n=18) out of a county population of 4,586 (U.S. Census 2021). Additional limitations to the survey are a majority of those who did complete the survey were female (66.67%), and survey respondents represented only three of the five registered zip codes in Mineral County. Given these 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 Mineral County 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 decisionmaking for economic development and to understand what residents value and desire in the community.

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