

**4<sup>th</sup> Street / Prater Way BRT Project**  
**Reno, Nevada**  
**Small Starts Project Development**  
**(Rating Assigned November 2014)**

<b>Summary Description</b>	
<b>Proposed Project:</b>	Bus Rapid Transit 3.1 Miles, 8 Stations
<b>Total Capital Cost (\$YOE):</b>	\$52.57 Million
<b>Section 5309 Small Starts Share (\$YOE):</b>	\$6.47 Million (12.3%)
<b>Annual Opening Year Operating Cost:</b>	\$0.52 Million
<b>Opening Year Ridership Forecast (2017):</b>	6,200 Average Weekday Trips
<b>Overall Project Rating:</b>	Medium-High
<b>Project Justification Rating:</b>	Medium
<b>Local Financial Commitment Rating:</b>	High

**Project Description:** The Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) of Washoe County plans to implement a 3.1-mile bus rapid transit (BRT) line in the 4<sup>th</sup> Street / Prater Way corridor linking the business districts of Reno and Sparks. The project includes eight passenger stations, (four in each direction), off-vehicle fare collection, transit signal priority, real-time schedule information at stations and a bus charging facility. Service would be provided using four specially-branded all-electric buses. The project also includes conversion of the roadway from two lanes in each direction with no center turn lane to one lane in each direction with a center turn lane, new sidewalks, and bicycle lanes. BRT service would reduce transit travel times in the corridor via more frequent and convenient service. On weekdays, service would operate every 10 minutes during peak and off-peak hours. On weekends, service would operate every 12 minutes.

**Project Purpose:** The corridor is the primary east-west arterial linking the cities of Reno and Sparks. Sidewalks are absent or in poor condition for large segments of the corridor. Due to traffic congestion, existing transit service struggles with poor on-time performance, falling below 75 percent during peak traffic conditions, which makes the service less dependable. The project would improve the speed and reliability of transit service in the corridor via transit signal priority upgrades. The corridor, which includes several historic structures, is the core of an emerging industrial arts district and parallels the Union Pacific Railroad's mainline and Interstate 80 and has been identified in local land use plans for higher density, mixed used, transit-oriented development since it has many vacant or underutilized buildings, and is expected to grow more dense.

**Project Development History, Status and Next Steps:** FTA approved the project into project development in February 2014. The project was adopted into the fiscally constrained 2035 Regional Transportation Plan in April 2013. Subsequent to that action, RTC refined the design of the project. The revised design was designated as the Locally Preferred Alternative by RTC in November 2013. RTC received a documented Categorical Exclusion for National Environmental Policy Act purposes in February 2014. RTC anticipates receiving a Small Starts Grant Agreement in January 2016 and initiating revenue operations in late 2017.

**Significant Changes Since Last Evaluation:** In September 2014, the U.S. Department of Transportation awarded RTC with a \$16 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant for the project. As a result, RTC reduced the project's requested Section 5309 Small Starts amount from \$24.6 million to \$6.4 million. The requested Small Starts share also decreased from 47 percent to 12 percent.

## Locally Proposed Financial Plan

<u>Source of Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds (\$million)</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
<b>Federal:</b>		
Section 5309 Small Starts	\$6.47	12.3%
Surface Transportation Program Funds	\$15.20	28.9%
Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Funds	\$1.90	3.6%
TIGER Discretionary Grant	\$16.00	30.4%
<b>Local:</b>		
RTC Fuel/Sales Tax	\$13.00	24.7%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$52.57</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**NOTE:** The financial plan reflected in this table has been developed by the project sponsor and does not reflect a commitment by DOT or FTA. The sum of the figures may differ from the total as listed due to rounding.

**4<sup>th</sup> Street/Prater Way Bus RAPID Transit Project**  
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***LAND USE RATING: Medium***

The land use rating reflects population and employment densities within ½-mile of proposed station areas, as well as the share of legally binding affordability restricted housing in the corridor compared to the share in the surrounding county.

- Average population density across all station areas is 7,200, which corresponds to a medium rating according to FTA benchmarks. Total employment served is 40,300, corresponding to a medium-low rating.
- The proportion of legally binding affordability restricted housing in the project corridor compared to the proportion in the counties through which the project travels is 2.34, which corresponds to a medium-high rating.
- There are 1.28 parking spaces per employee in the central business district, corresponding to a Low rating. The ridership model for the project assumes free daily parking, which corresponds with a Low rating.
- The termini of the project are Downtown Reno and Downtown Sparks. In Reno, the corridor is primarily business oriented, including commercial and industrial enterprises. There is a small residential area north of the Sutro Station, as well as some small apartments and residential motels. In Sparks, there are businesses located along most of the corridor, though with a much higher percentage of residential use served by the stations than in Reno.

***ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RATING: Medium-Low***

**Transit-Supportive Plans and Policies: Medium-Low**

- *Transit-Supportive Corridor Policies:* Regional, municipal, and specific area plans have identified the corridor as a transit-oriented development corridor. These plans have also supported multimodal improvements for the corridor, with pedestrian and bicycle features and facilities and transit amenities. Local plans have identified strategies for addressing parking issues, including reduction of parking requirements, structured parking, shared parking, and locating of off-street parking away from building fronts.
- *Supportive Zoning Regulations Near Transit Stations:* A portion of the project area is designated as an East 4th Street Corridor (E4TC) Overlay District. This designation provides specific development requirements for the area such as setbacks, parking, site layout, architecture and landscaping. Regularly spaced transit stations are planned with this district. The surrounding station areas will have Mixed Use (MU) zoning with an overlay section for each station.
- *Tools to Implement Land Use Policies:* The Cities of Reno and Sparks, as well as the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency (TMRPA), have identified the East 4th Street TOD Corridor, Downtown Reno Regional Center, and Sparks TOD Corridor (which encompasses Prater Way and downtown Sparks) as key components of local economic development.

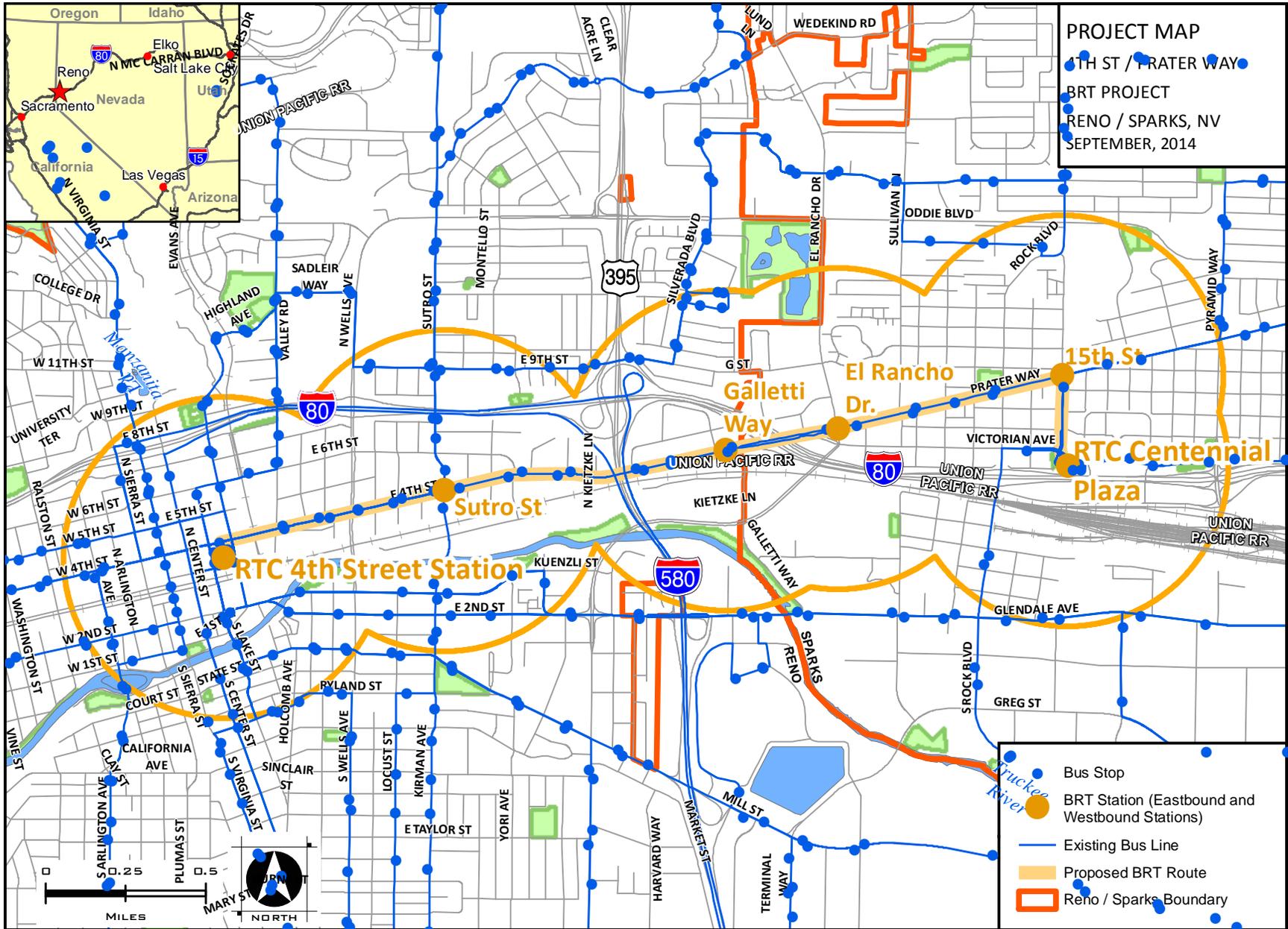
**Performance and Impacts of Policies: Medium-Low**

- *Performance of Land Use Policies:* The Aces ballpark, home to the Triple A Reno Aces, is located within a block of the RTC 4th Street Station. Since this major transit station was opened in 2010, this ballpark and the surrounding Freight House District Area have experienced new growth. The Prater Way TOD was established by the City of Sparks in 2009. Since then, Sparks has experienced development throughout the corridor, highlighted by the Legends at Sparks Marina and two proposed multi-family developments in the Marina district with as many as 1,000 new residential units.
- *Potential Impact of Transit Investment on Regional Land Use:* The 4th Street/Prater Way corridor has an abundance of opportunity for revitalization. The current state of the Corridor is reflected in the vacant historic buildings, the conversion of the roadside motels to weekly rentals for a transient population, and the prevalence of the facilities and services provided by the Reno Community

Assistance Center and other resources for the homeless.

**Tools to Maintain or Increase Share of Affordable Housing: Low**

- Approximately 30,000 renters and 39,000 owners are cost-burdened households within the City of Reno and Washoe County, meaning that housing costs represents more than 30 percent of income. These households represent 42 percent of all renters.
- Housing plans in Reno and Sparks have affirmed the cities' commitment to affordable housing. Assistance for low-income families and individuals for affordable housing comes from the Washoe County HOME Consortium and the Reno Housing Authority. Reno offers a density bonus for developments that include affordable housing units.



**PROJECT MAP**  
 4TH ST / PRATER WAY  
 BRT PROJECT  
 RENO / SPARKS, NV  
 SEPTEMBER, 2014

- Bus Stop
- BRT Station (Eastbound and Westbound Stations)
- Existing Bus Line
- Proposed BRT Route
- Reno / Sparks Boundary

