

BUILDING A BETTER **TOMORROW**



**WASHOE COUNTY
HEALTH DISTRICT**
ENHANCING QUALITY OF LIFE

Who needs housing that is affordable? Everybody!
Learn how Washoe County is finding solutions
for the area's growing workforce.

THE HOUSING CRUNCH

BY
WHIP
VILLARREA

How did we get here— and how do we solve it?

The good news: The Reno-Sparks area in Washoe County is rapidly growing due to new businesses relocating to Northern Nevada. The not-so-good news: There's nowhere near enough housing to meet current demand or future needs.

When it comes to the current housing issues the region is facing, here are what most agree are the five key issues.

First is the **lack of inventory** available to rent or purchase, which is contributing to the continually increasing cost of what is on the market.

Additionally, there has been a **lack of development** in the housing sector in recent years, and current development is being quickly outpaced by **population growth**.

Exacerbating this are the **barriers facing builders**, such as outdated codes and processes imposed by state and local regulatory requirements.

Lastly, with the workforce shortage and rising material cost issues, **costs**

to construct and develop new apartment complexes and homes have shot up, further raising purchase prices and rents.

"We are seeing the median rent in the area continuing to increase and we have populations that are on fixed incomes and are basically being priced out of the bottom of the housing market," says Kevin Dick, district health officer for Washoe County.

"We are seeing the median rent in the area continuing to increase and we have populations that are...basically being priced out."

Kevin Dick
District health officer, Washoe County

Dick says that his office is concerned enough to make this a public health issue, because about half the rental population in the area is cost-burdened by rent. It leaves little income available for food, healthcare, transportation, clothing, education and other needs.

In response, Dick says a number of strategies have been compiled in the Regional Strategy for Housing Affordability, and was approved last fall as part of the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency's plan for the region. The report has been presented to each jurisdiction and

recommendations include reducing regulatory barriers and encouraging a different, more creative type of development.

The Nevada legislature has also developed a tool kit for local governments to tackle this issue, primarily through incentives in what remains a market-driven industry.

"We were successful in passing \$10 million in low-income housing tax credits that will close the gap on financing on some really good developers, some who are nonprofit, who are building affordable housing across the state," says Sen. Julia Ratti, assistant majority leader. "We passed another bill that gave local governments the authority to waive permitting fees or impact fees on developments that were targeting...low-income or extremely low-income families and the City of Reno has been working on a process to enact that ordinance."

But there is still a long road ahead, with recent reports showing 12,000 new units are needed to close the gap between demand and availability, and 60% of the region's housing stock still large, detached, single-family, suburban homes.

"Certainly I would encourage anyone to make sure they are staying in touch with their county commissioners, their city council officials and their legislators and let people know the ability to get a safe, affordable place to live is a top priority," says Ratti.



District health officer Kevin Dick says his agency has made housing affordability a public health issue.

PHOTO BY ERIC MARKS



TAKE ACTION!

Visit www.washoecounty.us/health to find the Health District's Strategic Plan, which lays out affordable housing as one of its top priorities.

See the Regional Strategy for Housing Affordability at www.tmaffordablehousing.org.

GROWING IN SYNC

BY
MELANIE
ANDERSON

Community stakeholders collaborate to ease the housing crunch

After the Great Recession, then-Governor Brian Sandoval launched an effort to diversify Nevada's economy. In 2012 and 2014 respectively, Apple and Tesla announced plans to build facilities in Northern Nevada.

"That opened the gate," says Washoe County Commissioner Marsha Berkgigler. "Companies from around the world started looking seriously at Nevada and particularly here in Northern Nevada. The ball has continued to roll to the point we're now...known as the Silicon Valley of Nevada."

Every month, The Reno + Sparks Chamber of Commerce gets upward of 100 relocation inquiries. "We let them know what a wonderful community there is in Washoe County," says

Ann Silver, the Chamber's CEO. "We don't know what to say in terms of affordability or workforce housing. We do tell them there are plentiful jobs...but you have to be able to afford where you live, have adequate transportation—be it public or personal—and...have a reasonable commute."

While the supply of affordable and workforce housing lags behind demand, there's no shortage of community stakeholders willing to collaborate on this issue. In October, Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency, Truckee Meadows Healthy Communities and Enterprise Community Partners

(a national nonprofit) released the Truckee Meadows Regional Strategy for Housing Affordability (tmaffordablehousing.org).

"It's loaded with specific strategies (and identifies) who could be the lead entity (for each one) and how long it might take," says Jeremy Smith, interim director of TMRPA. "The Reno

Housing Authority has been recommended as the lead agency to shepherd this strategy through all the public processes...and make sure folks are using it."

TMRPA's Governing Board, which includes reps from the county and the cities of Reno and Sparks, recently adopted the 2019 Regional Plan, which Smith says "emphasizes

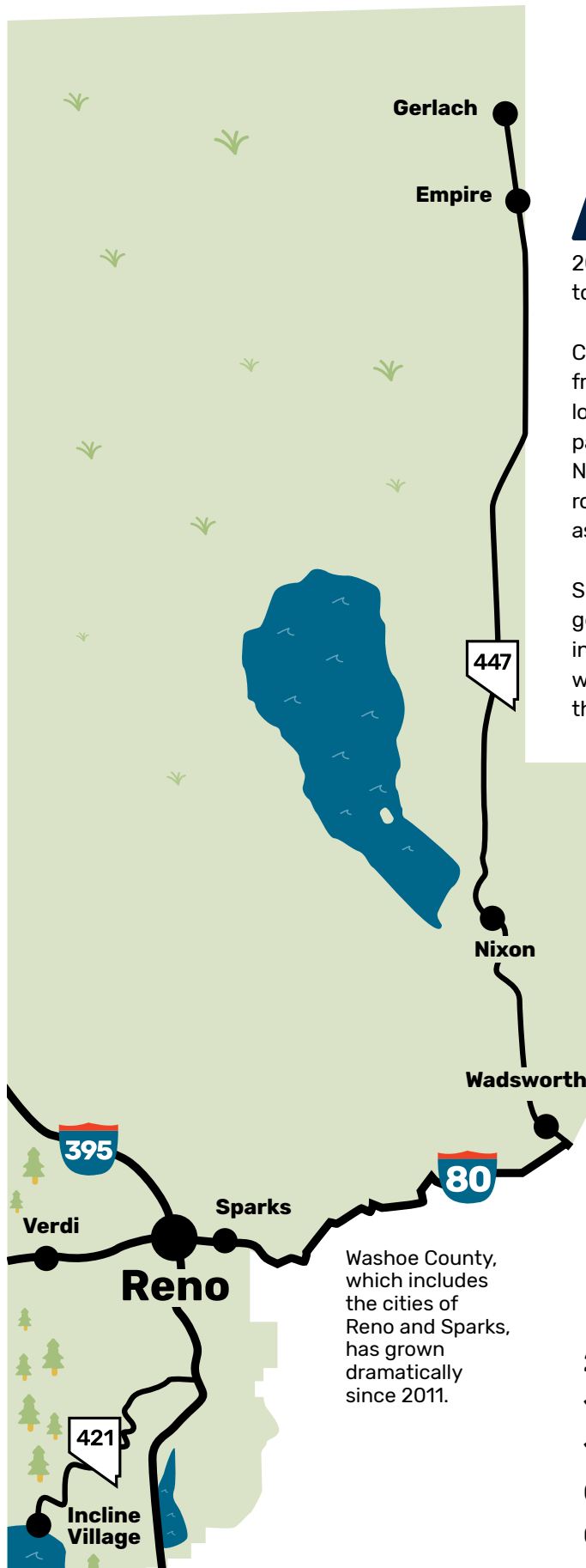
investment and growth to the degree that we can support it in the core of our community."

Meanwhile, Berkgigler says the county and two cities, along with faith-based organizations, are collaborating on a strategy for funding the County's Affordable Housing Trust Fund, which aims to provide incentives for builders.

"So many sincere and dedicated people and organizations are talking about housing," says Silver. "I like to believe that the collective brain trust of this community is all in sync with the type of community we want to live, work and play in."

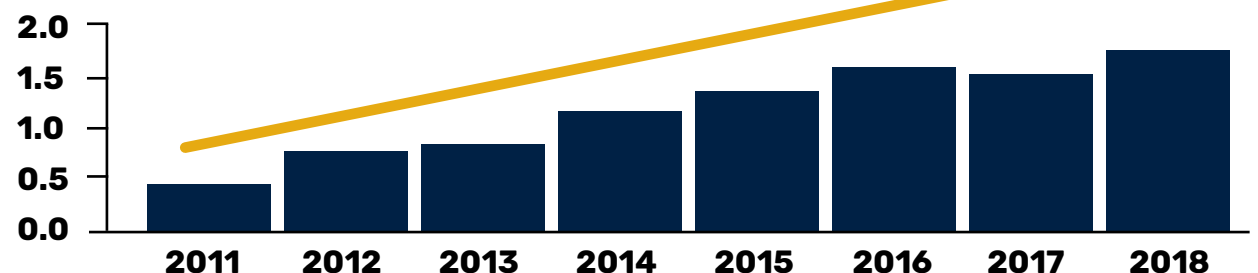
"There are plentiful jobs but you have to be able to afford where you live and have a reasonable commute."

Ann Silver
CEO, The Reno + Sparks
Chamber of Commerce



Washoe County, which includes the cities of Reno and Sparks, has grown dramatically since 2011.

Washoe County Growth Rate



Bessie Cain faces a 14-month wait for housing she can afford on her fixed income.

PHOTO BY ERIC MARKS



A RENTER'S PERSPECTIVE: ONE SENIOR'S STORY

As rents and house prices increase, low-income residents, like seniors, are at risk of losing their homes

BY KRYSTA SCRIPTER

Bessie Cain, a 91-year-old senior in Reno, is currently living with a friend and the friend's family. With a budget of \$1,400 a month, she says she can't afford rent any higher than \$500, and even that's pushing it.

"Even \$500 is steep because normally with the bills and everything, I have \$600 to take care of rent, food, and pills...for the whole month," she says.

Cain reached out to the Reno Housing Authority after her friend told her they could help. She was given a list of apartments to call for availability, but one landlord told her there was a 14-month wait. Without the help of the Reno Housing Authority, Cain says there are not many other options for her.

"That's the only way I'm going to get into an apartment," Cain says.

When asked if she's frustrated with the process, Cain admits she is a bit. "But now I'm just calling and doing the best I can," she says. "I'm not going to just sit there and stew about it because that's not going to help me."

JD Klippenstein, executive director at ACTIONN (Acting in Community

Together In Organizing Northern Nevada), says many seniors he's spoken with share Cain's feelings of anger and desperation.

"I mean, we did our share of building the town. So why aren't we catered to at least a little more than what they're doing now?"

Bessie Cain
Washoe County senior resident

"I think the desperation comes from they just literally are not quite sure where to go," he says. "And the anger comes from the frustration of just feeling powerless, but also because I think they feel they got left behind and kind of forgotten in the midst of it."

ACTIONN, a local, faith-based grassroots organization, has been working with policy- and decision-makers to identify the root causes of issues like the housing crisis. They also meet with those living in motels or those affected by the housing

crisis, which Klippenstein says are overwhelmingly senior citizens priced out of an affordable apartment: "And then their fixed income makes it so that they can't keep that. So many people who are just trying to scrape by...are ending up at the shelter or they're being forced to live in weekly motels."

Experts also cite another issue: developers bulldozing motels and other low-income housing to make way for high-end luxury homes and apartments. This has displaced hundreds of people, especially seniors on fixed incomes.

Cain says she ultimately doesn't understand why seniors like herself have to go through such an arduous process to find housing.

"My feeling is why are these big companies making such a big deal about getting apartments and so forth for the workers and the heck with seniors?" she says. "I mean, we did our share of building the town. So why aren't we catered to at least a little more than what they're doing now?"

Housing Crisis: Fast Facts

38% of all Truckee Meadows residents

are paying more than 30% of their income on housing costs.



40% of cost-burdened households

are low-income and pay more than 50% of their income on housing costs.

In 2017, as many as 1,106 individuals experienced homelessness in the region.



In 2018, more than 3,500 individuals were living in weekly motels.

WORKFORCE HOUSING

BY
WHIP
VILLARREAL

New employers are bringing in thousands of jobs to Northern Nevada—but where will all these new workers live?

The tech giant Tesla employs more than 7,000 people at its mammoth Gigafactory 1 facility. That is just one of a handful of newly transplanted companies that have set up shop locally.

According to data from the Nevada Department of Training, Rehabilitation and Employment, Nevada continues to grow its labor market across the state. In its September 2019 economic report, statewide, jobs increased by 3.2%, a gain of 45,200 new jobs added to the workforce since September of last year.

The Reno metropolitan statistical area added jobs at the rate of 6% during the same period, accounting for nearly 15,000 new jobs added to the region in just a single year. The unemployment rate was at 2.9%.

At this fast rate of job growth, the Northern Nevada region overall would seem to have no problem attracting new workers to the area.

However, a rude awakening may await incoming workers once they go on a quest to find a place to live, and employers are calling on city and county leaders to continue to develop creative solutions for workforce housing that is convenient, affordable and attractive.

According to data in the Apartment Survey from Johnson Perkins Griffin, the current vacancy rate is just a little more than 3%, and what is available won't be cheap. The survey shows the average rent for the Reno-Sparks metro area is at an all-time high of \$1,345, compared

to just four years ago, when the overall average rent was at \$889.

Sky-rocketing costs are reflected in home ownership across the region as well. According to a report from the Reno/Sparks Association of REALTORS, the median sales price for

The Reno metropolitan statistical area added jobs at the rate of 6%, accounting for nearly 15,000 new jobs added to the region in just a single year.

Nevada Department of Training, Rehabilitation and Employment

an existing single-family residence in Reno-Sparks for October 2019 was \$399,995, a 3.9% increase from October 2018. The report also shows there were 486 new listings in October 2019, which is down 14% from the previous year.

What impact is it having?

"In the last eight months, our HR folks tell us that there have been some limited number of situations where they have been interviewing a

prospective employee from out-of-state, and in the job acceptance process they ultimately declined to take the job offer because of their concern about how affordable housing would be," says Dean Dow, CEO of REMSA.

Kris McLean, senior manager of talent acquisition for Panasonic Energy of North America, agrees, and recently published an opinion piece calling on the community to address the housing crunch, warning local hires will be affected as well. "When Panasonic launched its Gigafactory operation, we committed to hiring and training local residents to become highly skilled manufacturing workers," he writes. "Our team members put long hours into learning the skills that put them on track to a brighter future. Now some of them worry that their dreams of home ownership and a better job in their hometown might be slipping away."



The Tesla Gigafactory 1 facility employs 7,000 people.
PHOTO COURTESY OF CRAIG ADDERLEY VIA PEXELS

BRINGING PRICES DOWN

BY KRYSTA SCRIPTER
AND WHIP VILLARREAL



New, innovative products are needed to meet the housing demand in Northern Nevada

As Washoe County grapples with rising costs and a shortage of homes that are affordable, community leaders are looking toward creative solutions to fit buyers' needs. With many new mid-size family homes priced at more than \$500,000, the typical three-bed, two-bath home is no longer accessible to middle-class residents.

Aaron West, CEO of the Nevada Builders Association, says one way to bring down housing prices is to offer different products.

"The traditional 6,000-square-foot lot with a 3,000-square-foot home in your typical subdivision...is not going to achieve the price point that we need for workforce housing," he says.

Instead, options like high-density units that share walls and two-story townhomes provide smaller footprints that still serve the public demand for housing.

"And it's really everything from the lot size to building size, and the idea that you're attaching it to other units in order to try and save on exterior," West says. "It's all driven by trying to bring that price point down to something that is achievable."

"The traditional 6,000-square-foot lot with a 3,000-square-foot home in your typical subdivision...is not going to achieve the price point that we need for workforce housing."

Aaron West, CEO
Nevada Builders Association

West says the demand for amenities also drives up the price. "We've kind of ingrained in people that you have to have tile showers and granite counter tops and wood floors... and so a lot of what's driving some of

these costs are those expectations," he says. "But if we could get past some of our expectations, the opportunity to bring that price point down is pretty significant."

West believes regulatory and building challenges can complicate matters, but he thinks things will change as the focus on this issue continues. In fact, one group looking at both state and national research—as well as various financing models—is the Nevada Advisory Committee on Housing.

"We are hearing presentations from experts from our own area and experts around the country and looking for what are the best ideas to move the needle so that by the time we get back to the next legislative session, hopefully we will have a couple of more bill drafts to focus on housing again," says the committee's legislative representative, Sen. Julia Ratti. "The current system is failing people, there is just no question about that. So I do think it is incumbent upon everyone in a position of influence—... elected officials, business leaders, developers, realtors—to lean in and work together to figure out how to do better by the people in our community. I think we have made some good steps forward, but we're going to have to figure out how to do more."

Different housing needs mean more variety

Not everyone needs a McMansion, with a three-car garage and a giant yard. The Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency found that 64% of households are made up of only one or two people, but only 40% of housing units offer less than three bedrooms.

Seniors, students, and small families could benefit from having a wider variety of housing options to fit their lifestyle needs.

A few examples include:

Townhomes

higher density projects that share walls could offer smaller living spaces for smaller households

Shared common areas

students, seniors, and those living on their own could share common areas like kitchens and laundry facilities

Studios

for single-person households, one bedroom will likely be enough, so studios fill the demand for single-person housing

TAKE ACTION!

Call the following numbers to reach decision-makers who can make a difference:

- ✓ **City of Reno (775-334-4636)**
- ✓ **City of Sparks (775-353-5555)**
- ✓ **Washoe County (Dial 3-1-1).**

HOW DO WE ADDRESS THE HOUSING ISSUE?

BY
KRYSTA
SCRIPTER

There is no one-size-fits-all solution, but a robust plan of action is desperately needed

According to a report by Enterprise Advisors and the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency, 38% of all Truckee Meadows residents are paying too much of their income for housing.

That same report states that nearly 1,106 individuals were homeless in 2017, and in 2018, more than 3,500 were living in weekly motels.

Christopher Kizzie, senior director at Enterprise Advisors, says there is no silver bullet to solve the region's housing challenges. What will work, he says, is a systematic approach that encompasses the multiple issues and key players.

"This approach will require more tools and more targeted deployment of limited resources—it will require robust coordination and collaboration across truly regional housing initiatives and strategies," he says.

Enterprise Advisors is working on just such a plan in partnership with 40 local, regional, state and federal stakeholders. This plan, "Housing Our Future," includes encouraging local coordination, reducing the cost of land development, and fostering a supportive policy environment in Washoe County.

"Implementing 'Housing Our Future' will strengthen and expand the region's housing toolbox while also addressing specific housing needs and market conditions across the region," Kizzie says.

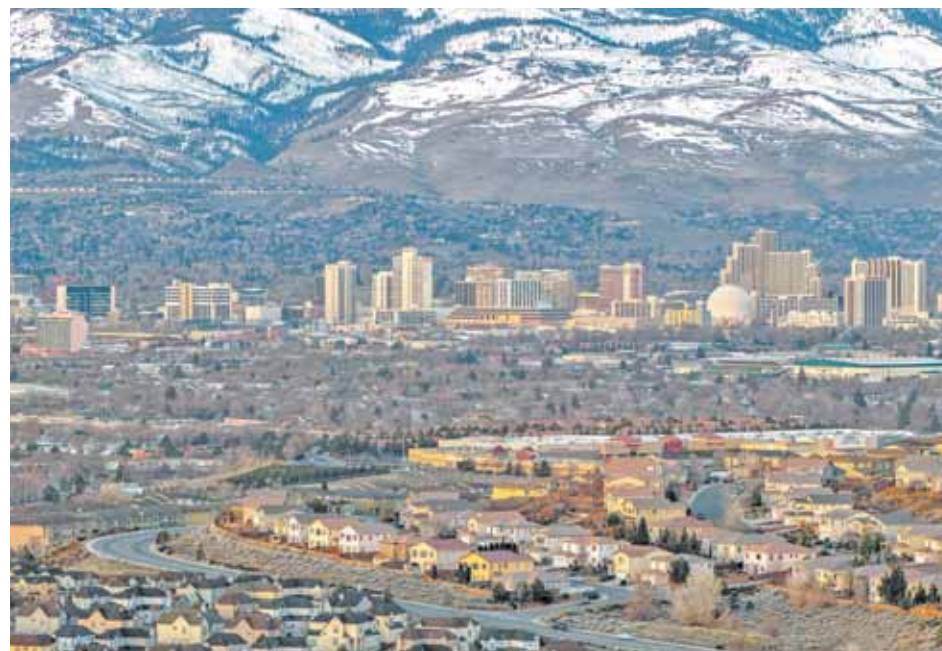
One issue is that the housing market doesn't match residents' needs. Finding ways to incentivize smaller-density projects that support a variety of renters and buyers across the income spectrum is a high priority.

"For example, 64% of households in the Truckee Meadows are composed of either one or two people, but only 40% of housing units offer less than three bedrooms," Kizzie says.

"For example, 64% of households...are composed of either one or two people, but only 40% of housing units offer less than three bedrooms."

Christopher Kizzie
Senior director,
Enterprise Advisors

"This mismatch can leave households paying for more house than they want or need, which can create housing cost-burdens."



Smaller-density urban projects would better support renters and buyers across the spectrum than suburban single-family homes.

Another solution may be applying for more federal funds that would support an expansion of mixed-income and mixed-use housing developments.

"If Reno and Sparks used their full available Section 108 Loan Guarantee Fund authorization from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, it would help establish a \$12 million dollar loan pool that could be leveraged to support mixed-income and mixed-use developments, while also attracting and leveraging additional private capital," he says.

Other potential solutions include dedicating funding for the Regional Housing Trust Fund, creating an early warning preservation system for at-risk residents, and establishing stronger incentives for affordable housing through the permitting processes and development fee structures.

Federal Housing Programs That Can Help

Federal funding supports housing affordability in local areas in a variety of ways. In 2017, for instance, the Truckee Meadows region received approximately **\$7 million in the form of direct assistance to low-income homeowners and renters**, as well as for housing development and land acquisition.

SECTION 108 LOAN GUARANTEE

Section 108 offers metropolitan cities and urban counties eligibility to qualify for funding through HUD's Community Development Block Grant program. **Loans are guaranteed by the federal government and can be used to:**

- ✓ Buy or rehabilitate properties that "principally benefit low- and moderate-income persons"
- ✓ Eliminate or prevent slums or blight

SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHERS

Section 8 helps low-income families, seniors and people with disabilities afford housing of their choice in the private market.

Here's how it works:

- 1.** A housing subsidy is determined
- 2.** The housing subsidy is paid directly to the landlord
- 3.** The participant makes up the difference
- 4.** If authorized by the public health agency, a family may use the voucher to purchase a home

VILLAGE ON SAGE STREET

A local developer is creating practical, attractive housing for some of the area's most vulnerable

BY KATHLEEN VIVALDI

Demand for housing is at crisis proportions for low-income residents in Washoe County, where rents are rising in some cases by more than 50%. But the Village on Sage Street, the brainchild of the Community Foundation of Western Nevada, is making big strides in helping low-income individuals meet their needs for housing.

The concept began when Chris Askin, president and CEO of the foundation, attended the Truckee Meadows Healthy Communities event in 2017, where he and other stakeholders began discussing the housing problem. They ultimately decided to act and implement a plan.

"The timeline was from conception of the idea in April 2018, to breaking ground in July of 2018, to project completion in July of 2019," Askin recalls. "We launched before we had funding and were able to secure most of the funding as we went along, but

still need to secure \$3.5 million of the total project cost of \$9.5 million."

"The goal is to house about 200 people at any given time...to either stabilize their lives or avoid homelessness."

*Chris Askin, president and CEO
Community Foundation
of Western Nevada*

The Village on Sage Street is composed of long, narrow modular structures, and is single-occupancy living. There are 216 dorm-style private rooms with shared bathrooms. The site, located at 300 Sage Street, is conveniently located near public transportation and the airport. The area is landscaped and includes a communal dining area, grab-and-go food options, a small store, laundry facilities, a gym, business services, an

outdoor fireplace and a service-animal relief area. Askin says occupancy is currently at 104 people with another 12 moving in.

Individuals qualify who earn 30-60% of median income in Nevada and pass a background check. Once accepted, they pay \$400 a month in rent.

"The goal is to house about 200 people at any given time, who have low income, to either stabilize their lives and/or avoid homelessness," says Askin. "Rents in Reno are typically \$800 or more, closer to \$1,100 for studio apartments, so low-income people who used to find cheap rents in local motels and older apartments have been priced out. There is no limit on how long people can stay, but we anticipate stays of months, not years, as people move to other housing."

Sage Street is made possible with collaboration from the City of Reno, Volunteers of America, private companies, Community Foundation



Sage Street offers dorm-style rooms and common areas.

PHOTO COURTESY OF COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF WESTERN NEVADA

donors, and community members. This project has won numerous awards in economic development, community partners and planning.

A FOREVER HOME

A nonprofit company is providing seniors with housing that is both affordable and attractive

BY KATHLEEN VIVALDI

The demand for thoughtful, appealing housing for the senior population—that can also fit a fixed-income budget—has been a longtime issue in Washoe County that has steadily grown over time.

Silver Sage Manor, Inc., founded in 1991, began when discussions started at a breakfast group in Reno. “Members of the group were concerned about the lack of affordable housing for a growing aging population and wanted to find a way to assist,” recalls executive director Chip Hobson. SSMI was founded soon after, with an all-volunteer board, to attempt to assist in identifying and developing high-quality housing for seniors with limited resources.

Early on, SSMI was focused on “learning and growing capacity through participation as a nonprofit partner in several partnerships with successful developers of affordable housing,” Hobson says. This led to SSMI’s first development, the 43-unit Silver Sage Senior Residence in Reno. That success led to three additional properties—Silver Sage at Neil Road,

Moran Street Senior Apartments and Lincoln Way Senior Apartments.

“...the primary goal is to...assist them in remaining independent and successful as long as possible.”

Chip Hobson
*Executive director,
Silver Sage Manor Inc.*

SSMI’s properties are available to those 55 years and older and serve populations at or below 50% of area median income. Overall, units are comprised of one or two bedrooms, including central heat and air, an in-unit washer/dryer, kitchens with energy-efficient appliances, a private patio or deck, and large bathrooms with modern features. Residences are centrally located to transportation, medical services and shopping areas.

Common areas at Silver Sage Residences and Silver Sage at Neil Road have amenities that include a recreational room, gathering area,

exercise room, library, computer lab, large TV, outside picnic area and a pet-walking area.

SSMI strives to achieve a community where residents can successfully age in place with their Senior Services Program. “In addition to direct interaction with residents, the primary goal of the program is to provide connection between residents of our communities and resources and programs that assist them in remaining independent and successful as long as possible,” says Hobson.

The company’s core values include integrity, compassion and a desire to serve others. SSMI also involves people of faith, and retains a commitment to their original mission of creating high-quality homes for seniors. It is thus not surprising, when combined with the growing influx of seniors to the region, a lengthy waiting list exists for all Silver Sage Manor, Inc. properties.



SSMI currently offers three attractive and affordable properties for people 55 and older.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SSMI



RTC is expanding its bus service to better connect residents.
PHOTO BY ERIC MARKS

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS BY MELANIE ANDERSON

Housing near transit helps cut costs, commutes and air pollution

As our population grows, RTC Washoe is rolling out innovative public transportation initiatives that aim to make it more convenient and affordable to move between home, work, school and community services.

To meet growing demand in urban centers, RTC is expanding its Bus RAPID Transit (BRT) service. “We’re seeing a lot of apartments and some of those are going in right across the street from our Centennial Plaza transit station (in downtown Sparks),” says Amy Cummings, RTC Washoe deputy executive director/director of planning. “That’s great because

those folks then have access to our BRT service on the Lincoln Line, and every 10 minutes they’ll be able to get on a bus that takes them straight to downtown Reno.”

The BRT Lincoln Line opened in December and features all-electric vehicles, eight new transit stations, sidewalk improvements and bike facilities. Similar improvements are being made in Midtown Reno as the BRT Virginia Line is extended to the University of Nevada, Reno. “We’re connecting residents

with jobs and a lot of the amenities and recreational opportunities in our community through these two BRT lines,” says Cummings.

As part of its ongoing Affordable

“We’re connecting residents with jobs and a lot of amenities and recreational opportunities through these two BRT lines.”

Amy Cummings
*Deputy executive director/
 director of planning,
 RTC Washoe*

Housing Study, RTC is exploring the possibility of developing some of its own parcels left over from past road construction projects. “The benefit of having affordable housing in our transit service area is so that people can walk

to our bus stops and have access to all of the services and education

and employment opportunities,” says Cummings. “Another benefit is for the environment (since) we’re driving less.”

In a designated area of Sparks, a new pilot program called FlexRIDE provides on-demand curb-to-curb service and connects to RTC Centennial Plaza—eliminating the need to walk to a bus stop. “When you hail your ride, typically that bus should arrive within eight to 15 minutes, and it doesn’t cost any more than a regular bus ride fare,” says Michael Moreno, RTC Washoe public affairs manager. “We’re seeing great results with that.”

In early 2020, RTC will begin seeking public input for its 2050 Regional Transportation Plan, which takes a long-term view of the region’s transportation needs.

A COMMUNITY PARTNER

BY
WHIP
VILLARREAL

The Reno Housing Authority is making a positive impact providing assistance to those in need of help

The RHA is taking several small steps to give assistance to those in need by giving financial aid and even providing its own housing for those who can't afford a place to live.

Brent Boynton, community outreach coordinator with the RHA, says there is an increasing number of applicants seeking help from the RHA. Currently, it has nearly 4,000 families on a waiting list to receive assistance. While those applicants wait to get help, the RHA is implementing programs and developing new housing for some of the most vulnerable in the community.

"We're currently building an apartment complex for low-income seniors and it is taking shape now on

Sutro Street across from the Livestock Events Center," Boynton says. "It will be 44 apartments for seniors and one out of four will be for seniors who have spent time in the homeless shelter or the weekly motels. We expect to start leasing in the spring. It's certainly small compared to the need of our community but it's a step in the right direction."

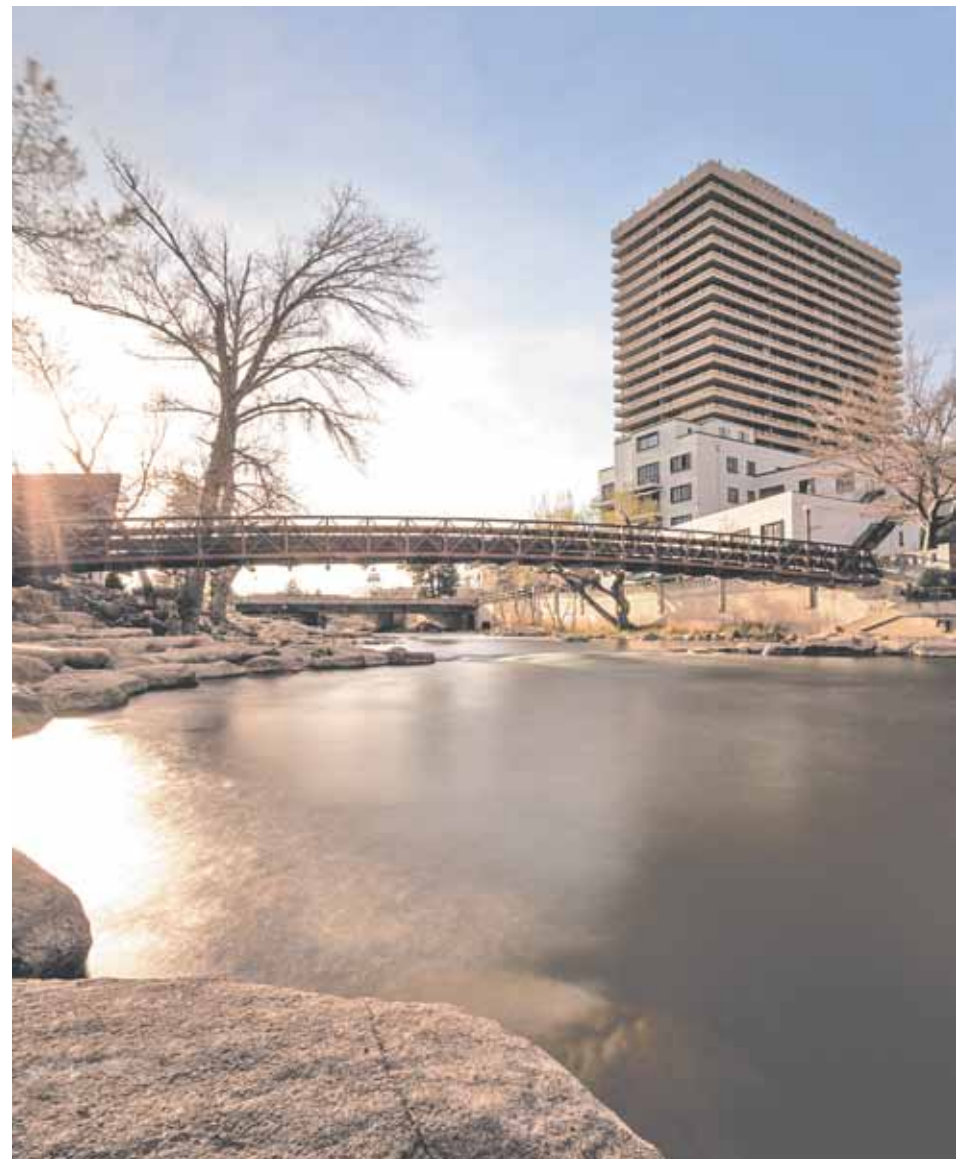
Boynton says there is also a homeless prevention program designed to help those who are at the last stages of being evicted. The program assists those who have a sudden catastrophic financial issue that keeps them from paying rent. The RHA, through the Washoe Affordable Housing Corporation, would pay one month's rent, one time, with the goal to prevent

someone from becoming homeless.

While the entity is making strides to assist the community, it also faces challenges. All of its assistance is tied to Rent Reasonableness, an

"It's certainly small compared to the need of our community but it's a step in the right direction."

Brent Boynton
Community outreach coordinator,
Reno Housing Authority



Reno Housing Authority is helping the city's most vulnerable residents through innovative programs and new housing.

official federal figure from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Those figures are three years old and prices in this region have gone up significantly in that time. For example, an applicant who is approved for a voucher and finds an apartment to live in that is listed at \$1,200, but is defined as \$900 through

Rent Reasonableness, will not move forward in RHA's process because of the outdated federal figures.

"(Rent Reasonableness) restricts what applicants can rent and it also restricts how much RHA can pay toward that rent," Boynton says. "So that has been difficult for our community at a time when it is growing and the need has been expanding."



TAKE ACTION!

Find average household income numbers and rates of homelessness in Washoe County by going to **www.washoecounty.us** and search Data Health Snapshot.

WE CAN DO IT TOGETHER

A variety of stakeholders is committed to providing homes for everyone in our region

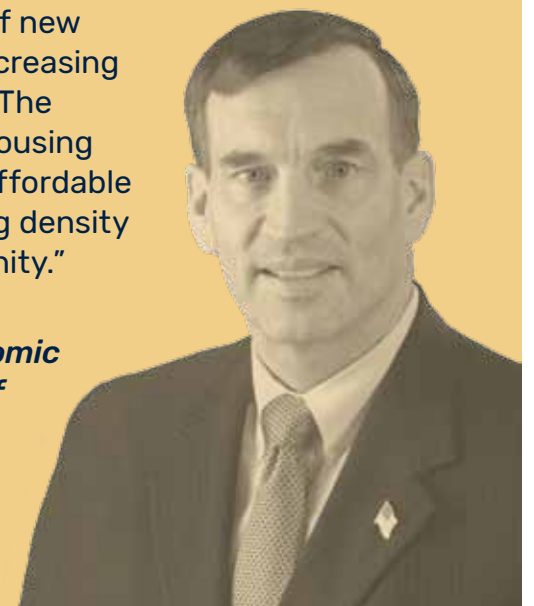
"Reno continues to be a destination for so many who want a better life. Whether you're a lifelong Nevadan or new resident, we want you to have the right home at the right price. We've worked hard to help encourage the building of all kinds of housing, from student renters and newlyweds, to retirees settling down in the Biggest Little City. We're not done yet—and 2020 will bring even more options right here to Reno."

Mayor Hillary Schieve
City of Reno



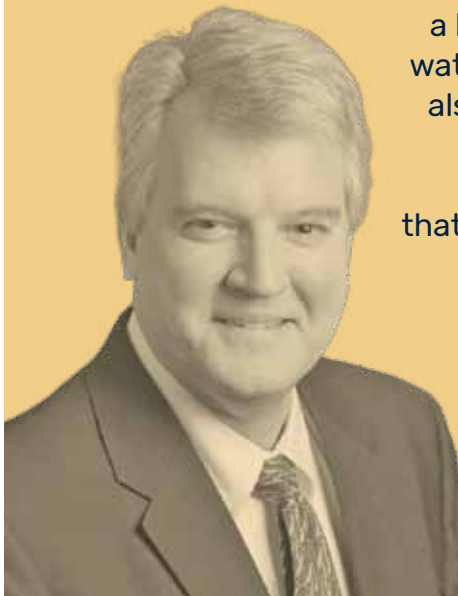
"Affordable housing is a critical need in the region. Our exceptional growth coupled with a shortage of new housing has resulted in increasing housing prices and rents. The solution is to build more housing that is smaller and more affordable while adding more housing density to the core of the community."

Mike Kazmierski
President and CEO, Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada



"The Washoe County Health District understands the importance of a healthy environment—clean air, water and safe food are vital. That also includes affordable housing. If we want to be a thriving and healthy community, it's crucial that we pull together to implement strategies that make housing affordability a reality."

Kevin Dick
*District Health Officer,
Washoe County Health District*



"Home prices and homelessness has surged in Nevada. It's been a problem for years that we've been dealing with at the local and state level. Low-income residents include our veterans, seniors and people with disabilities. I will continue to fight for Nevadans to enact legislation so affordable housing becomes a reality."

Julia Ratti
Nevada State Senator



WASHOE COUNTY HEALTH DISTRICT
ENHANCING QUALITY OF LIFE

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