

2012 Federal Legislative Platform



December 12, 2011



Dear Senator Reid:

On behalf of the people of the City of Sparks, I'd like to thank you for your continued service to our state and nation.

In the current economic and political climate, we are aware that there is significantly less funding available and much more intense competition for it. The City of Sparks has already begun adapting to do more with less, but there is a point at which even the most efficiently administered and effective programs are threatened.

In light of the severity of some of the cuts that have been proposed and the ongoing debate of controlling the national debt, the Sparks City Council and I believe it is important to support fully funding a number of Federal programs that benefit the people of Sparks. Specifically, we are concerned about Community Development Block Grants and HOME, surface transportation funding, Community Oriented Policing Services, firefighter grants, funding for our flood control project through the Corps, and Amtrak. All of these programs are effective ways of returning federal revenues to the cash-strapped states from which they originated. In addition, a long-term surface transportation bill would be very welcome in terms of economic security and job growth.

The citizens of Sparks are sympathetic to the situation our federal delegation finds itself in, and understand that we may no longer be able to afford many of the things we have come to rely upon. We respectfully ask you do whatever is in your power to promote the interest of Sparks and the residents of Nevada's 2nd District.

Sincerely,

**Geno R. Martini
Mayor**

Key Financial Highlights

Three primary sources comprise approximately 87% of the City's total General Fund revenue:

- Property Tax revenue is expected to decline in FY '12 by a total of 18.5% or \$4.4M since it peaked in FY '09, with further declines expected as home values continue to drop
- Consolidated & Fair Share Tax revenue (primarily sales taxes) is expected to decline in FY '12 by a total of 33.3% or \$9.1M since it peaked in FY '06
- Business Licenses and Permits revenue is expected to decline in FY '12 by a total of 25.6% or \$3.1M since it peaked in FY '07

The City's General Fund ending fund balance has been reduced by 54.1% or \$5.2M since the recession began

The City is currently operating at 1996 staffing levels

Most City bargaining groups have granted permanent pay and benefit concessions, generally equal to 7.5% of pay in FY '11

The City Council has adopted fiscal policies for FY '12 designed to strengthen the City's financial position and help sustain services provided

PLANK 1

Public Safety

Sparks must confront the challenges of foreclosed and abandoned homes



Foreclosed dwellings create a public safety risk and a serious threat to neighborhood stability and community well-being.

- Banks fail, or are slow in responding, to maintain properties.
- In many cases, banks fail to disclose ownership of properties, or fail to inform the city of their intentions with the property.

PLANK 1

Public Safety

Sparks Police Department has 1.14 officers per 1,000 citizens. This equates to approximately one officer per 1,000 population when the desired ratio is about 2 officers per 1,000 population.

56 more police officers would meet the national average.



Sparks police officers are routinely responding to an increasing number of community-generated calls for service and have limited time for routine patrol and other proactive policing strategies.

Homicides and violent crimes are on the rise. 9 homicides occurred in Sparks in calendar year 2011, and 4 to-date in FY 2012, comparable to Reno, a city triple the size of Sparks.

COPS Grant – Sparks' 2011 COPS (Community Oriented Policing Strategies) Grant for two officers remains on pending status. Six officers are employed from the 2010 COPS grant that expires in FY 2013.



*Uniform Crime Reports, a FBI Publication

PLANK 1

Public Safety

Sparks Fire Department's 3-person crews respond to most emergencies, but must wait for a second engine to arrive in order to attack an interior blaze.



The department was in the top 3 percentile to qualify for the SAFER Grant. The City could not guarantee the “no layoff” provision and declined the grant.

Today, aging equipment and the need for capital replacements present significant threats.

* There are approximately 1.5 FTE (full time equivalent) Sparks sworn fire and EMS personnel per thousand residents calculated on a 40-hour workweek. The average for a community comparable in size to Sparks is 2.16 personnel.

•Total fire personnel and operating expenditures per capita is \$146.24. The average is \$166.40.

Overall reduction of minimum daily staffing by 24% has crippled the department's ability to manage more than one significant event at a time, such as a residential fire.

*Source: 2010 ICMA Center for Performance Measurement

PLANK 2

Community Assets

Sparks' entitlement share of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is down 19.9% from the same time last year.

Poverty Rate in Sparks:

2009-2010: 7% (families)

2010-2011: 10.6% (families)

2009-2010: 9.4% (individual)

2010-2011: 12.8% (individual)

Sparks partners with Reno and Washoe County to support:

- Continuum of Care**
- Silver State Fair Housing Council**
- Critical non-profit organizations providing public services to low/moderate income families and individuals**

PLANK 2

Community Assets

CDBG programs that Sparks administers include:

*Housing Rehabilitation Program

Emergency Repair Grants: \$2,500 per household for emergencies such as water heaters, furnaces, plumbing and electrical repairs, or other necessities.

Deferred Payment Loan: up to \$20,000 for essential repairs (secured by a deed of trust on the home).



* Applicants must meet certain income requirements

PLANK 2

Community Assets

Low/moderate income homes and neighborhoods in Sparks have benefitted from CDBG funding, including new sidewalks, curb and gutters, and ADA compliance projects.



Through CDBG funding, Sparks provided \$175,000 for the design and construction of the rehabilitated running track at Sparks High School. Prior to the City's assistance, the running track was unpaved.



PLANK 3

Sustainable Energy

Decreased energy costs allow the city to use resources where needed most, such as public safety.

Sparks is generating close to 600 Kilowatts in solar power, equating to a savings of \$120,000.

Sparks Photovoltaic Projects include:

- Sparks Police Department
- Two Sparks Fire Stations
- Larry D. Johnson Community Center
- Golden Eagle Regional Park and Sports Complex



Aerial view of Sparks Police Department Photovoltaic Project

PLANK 3

Sustainable Energy

Cost/Benefits:

- NV Energy rebates cover costs for all photovoltaic projects
- Additional cost savings come from reduced power expenses

Possible future projects include:

- Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility
- Alf Sorenson Community Center
- Expansion of Larry D. Johnson Community Center

Future sustainability projects for Sparks could include wind energy



Roof view of Larry D. Johnson Community Center Photovoltaic Project

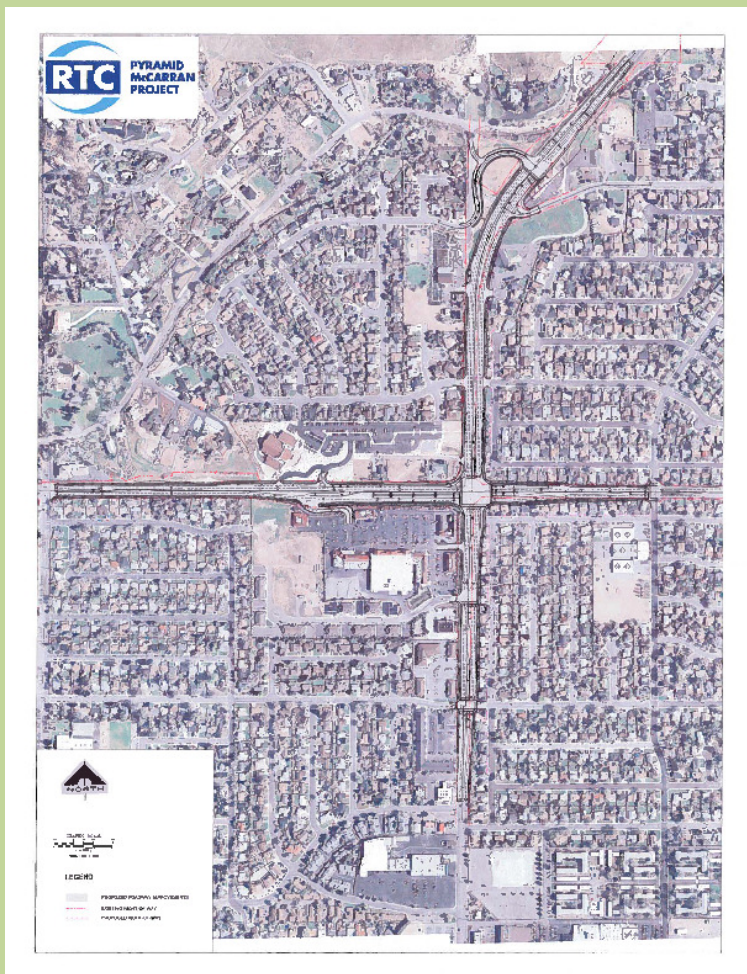
PLANK 4

Transportation

Priority transportation project for Sparks:

McCarran/Pyramid Way Intersection Improvement

- Fully funded, \$71 million
- Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) expected to be completed in 2012
- Construction to start as early as 2013
- Hardship acquisition enables RTC to purchase homes after identifying hardships prior to completion of EIS



PLANK 4

Transportation

Pyramid Highway | US 395 Connector Project is a critical project in Sparks

The connector is a component of the significant future improvements planned on Pyramid Highway between McCarran and La Posada Drive

The connector is designed to alleviate the pressure on the north/south traffic in Sparks and improve east/west connectivity from Pyramid to US 395 and east to Vista Boulevard

First phase of the Connector Project could be underway as early as 2016

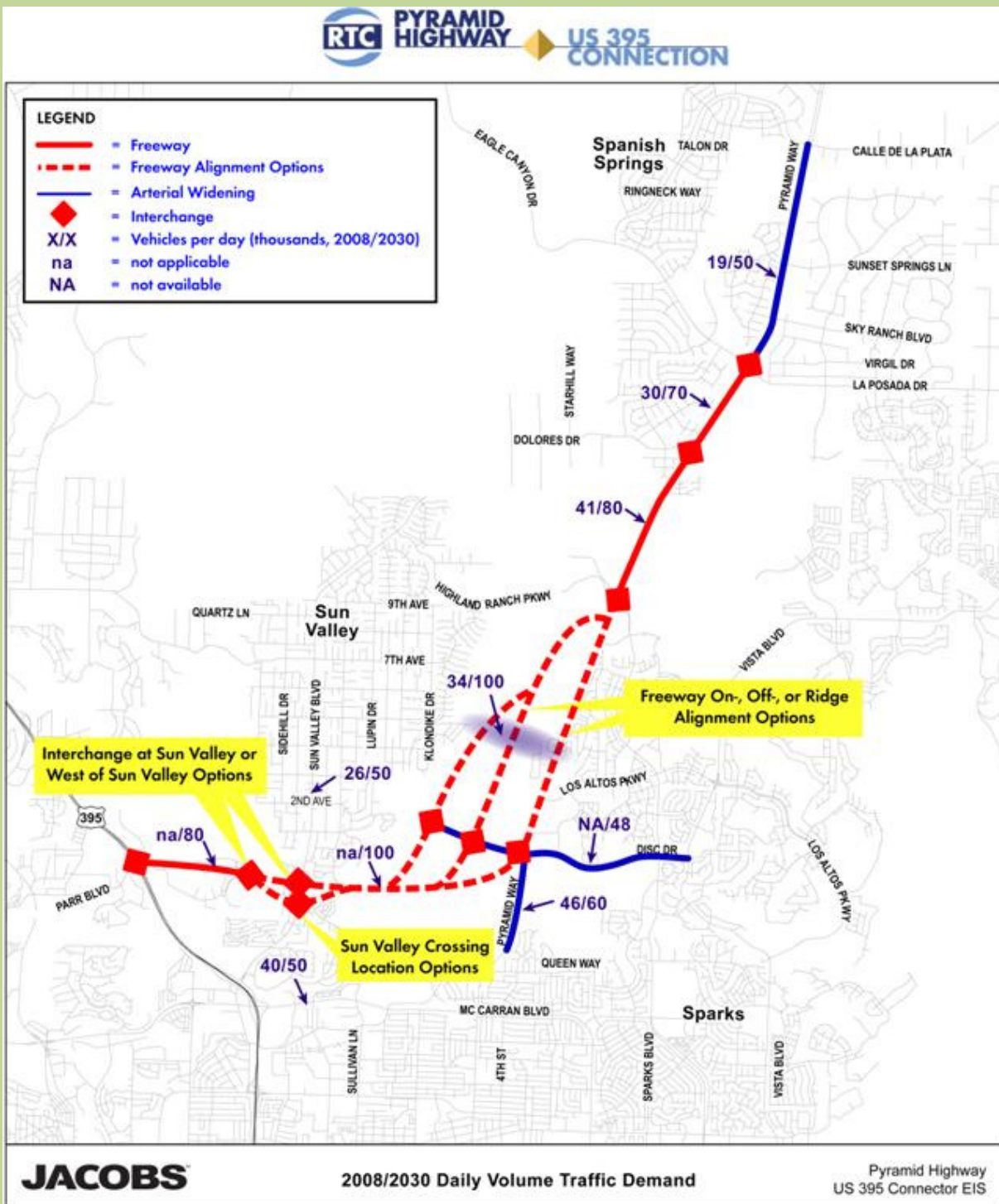
Total project costs estimated at \$150-200 million

Estimated time frame for the connector to be put in place is 2018

Trigger point for connector is 50,000 vehicles per day on the Pyramid Highway corridor. Today's volume is about 40,000 vehicles per day

PLANK 4

Transportation



PLANK 4

Transportation

Federal Interstate Transportation Programs remain important to Sparks.

Interchanges along Interstate-80 will soon be in need of repair and upgrades, i.e.: McCarran and I-80.

City will be participating in a study of the I-80 Corridor through California, Nevada, and Utah.

Sparks Mayor and City Council



**l-r: Councilwoman Julia Ratti,
Councilman Ed Lawson, Councilman
Ron Smith, Mayor Geno Martini,
Councilman Mike Carrigan,
Councilman Ron Schmitt**