

Southern Nevada Strong

Phase I Outreach Summary

May 2013



Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition
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Southern Nevada Strong Phase 1 Outreach Summary Executive Summary

Between October 2012 and April 2013, the Southern Nevada Strong project team conducted a variety of outreach activities to inform stakeholders and the public about the project, and to solicit input regarding community issues, challenges and opportunities, and opinions about the future of Southern Nevada. The outreach effort was part of Phase 1 of the Southern Nevada Strong Public Engagement Plan, the Assessment of Existing Conditions. The outreach goal was to understand issues, concerns and general priorities for the Southern Nevada community.

The outreach activities conducted included stakeholder interviews; the Southern Nevada Strong Regional Kick-Off event; a random-sample telephone survey of residents providing information and conducting surveys and map-based exercises at community events; and an online survey.

Key Findings

The following themes emerged most frequently across input gathered through all outreach methods.

A. Positive Attributes of the Southern Nevada Region

Participants in all stakeholder and public engagement activities mentioned the following as attributes that make the Southern Nevada region a desirable place to live.

- Great weather and climate
- Access to outdoor recreation opportunities, high quality natural environment, parks and open spaces
- Excellent urban amenities and varied entertainment options for all ages, available 24/7
- Relatively affordable cost of living
- Central location
- Diverse community
- Strong sense of community and pioneer/entrepreneurial spirit

B. Concerns and Issues in the Southern Nevada Region

Stakeholders and the public identified the following issues as of most concern to the region.

- Need to diversify the economy and create more, better jobs in the region
- Education at all levels needs improvement, including workforce education
- Need for transportation improvements including improved transit options, relief of traffic congestion and increased traffic/pedestrian safety
- Environmental issues such as water supply, need for improved sustainability and use of sustainable energy, and pollution

- Need to address social issues including lack of funding for social services, poor health and limited health care options, homelessness and crime rate
- Lack of affordable housing, poor state of housing market and too many vacant/foreclosed homes

C. Vision for the Future of the Southern Nevada Region

Outreach participants' vision for the future of the region included the following elements:

- A diversified economy with a wide range of job opportunities
- High quality educational systems and workforce education
- A multi-modal transit system that connects communities and is well-linked to regional and interstate connections
- A variety of housing options available for all preferences and income levels
- Increased public investment in social services and high quality health care
- Safe and engaged communities
- Adoption of green energy technologies and sustainable practices

Southern Nevada Strong Phase 1 Outreach Summary

I. Introduction

Between October 2012 and April 2013, the Southern Nevada Strong project team conducted a variety of education and outreach activities to inform stakeholders and the public about the project, and to solicit input regarding community issues, challenges and opportunities and opinions about the future of Southern Nevada. The outreach effort was part of Phase 1 of the Southern Nevada Strong Public Engagement Plan, the Assessment of Existing Conditions. The outreach goal was to understand issues, concerns and general priorities for the Southern Nevada community.

Southern Nevada Strong seeks to build a foundation for long-term economic success and community livelihood by better integrating reliable transportation, housing, and job opportunities throughout Southern Nevada. This collaborative regional planning effort is funded by a \$3.5 million dollar Sustainable Communities grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

II. Outreach Activities and Results

A. Stakeholder Interviews

During October 2012 to December 2012, representatives from the Southern Nevada Strong Project Team conducted interviews with a diverse group of stakeholders to begin a community-driven process to create a vision for the future of Southern Nevada. Interviews were conducted by members of the project team.

The interviewees were:

- Jeremy Agüero, Principal Analyst, Applied Analysis
- Mauricia M. Baca, Executive Director, Outside Las Vegas Foundation
- Ydoleena Yturralde, Council Liaison, on behalf of Ricki Y. Barlow, Las Vegas City Council, Ward 5
- Larry Brown, Clark County Commissioner, District C; Vice Chair, Clark County Commission
- Barbara Buckley, Executive Director, Clark County Legal Services; Former Speaker, Clark County Assembly, District No. 8
- Rod Davis, President/CEO, St. Rose Dominican Hospitals-Siena Campus
- Shawn Gerstenberger, Executive Associate Dean, School of Community Health Sciences, University of Las Vegas
- Timothy R. Hacker, City Manager, City of North Las Vegas
- Robert E. Lang, Director, Brookings Mountain West
- Debra March, Henderson City Council, Ward II
- John Marz, Henderson City Council, Ward III

- Vicki Mayes, Former City Manager, Boulder City
- DeDe Nave, Junior League of Las Vegas
- Lori Nelson, Vice President of Corporate Communications, Station Casinos
- Tina Quigley, General Manager, Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada
- Sabra Smith Newby, Director of Administrative Services, Clark County
- Don Snyder, Interim Dean, UNLV William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration; Chairman of the Board of Directors, Smith Center for Performing Arts
- Phil Speight, Deputy General Manager of Administration, Southern Nevada Water Authority
- Lawrence Weekly, Clark County Commissioner, District D

Participants were asked a standard set of questions regarding what they liked best about the region, what they hoped would change and be improved in the future, what they hoped would stay the same and their vision for the future of the area. The key themes that emerged were as follows:

Positive Attributes of the Southern Nevada Region (People and Places)

- Proximity to high quality natural environment
- Central location and desirable climate (most of the year)
- Relatively affordable compared to other areas
- Has urban amenities along with easy access to the outdoors
- Constant drive and willingness to re-invent
- Pioneer and entrepreneurial spirit is strong
- Impacts of recession stimulated a willingness to do things differently
- Area is still forming; region has huge potential

Concerns for the Region and Conditions that Need Change or Improvement

- Education at all levels need improvement
- Need to diversify the economy; region is too dependent on tourism and gaming
- Limited public investment in social and community services (due to low tax rate)
- Regional performance on health indicators is low
- Need for improved transit
- Need for better educated work force and opportunities to retain local talent

Vision for the Future

- Vibrant place to live, work and play
- Diversified economy with range of job opportunities
- Strong tourism and convention economy
- Communities well-connected by multi-modal transit system
- Transit system linked to regional and interstate rail connections
- High quality education and health care systems

- Collaboration and cooperation between governments

The stakeholder interviews are described in greater detail in a separate document, the *Southern Nevada Strong Stakeholder Interview Summary Report*.

B. Southern Nevada Strong Regional Kick-Off

On February 8, 2013, the Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition (SNRPC) hosted the Regional Kick-Off for the Southern Nevada Strong project. More than 150 invited local leaders attended the event which took place from 12:00 – 5:00 p.m. at Meet Las Vegas, 233 South 4th Street in downtown Las Vegas. It included an introduction to the project, a keynote presentation, and a panel discussion and presentations by local and national experts on various relevant topics.

Project Director Stephanie Garcia-Vause served as the program moderator and the keynote speaker was Shelley Poticha, National Director, Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Featured speakers included: Dr. Gianpaolo Baiocchi, Assistant Professor at Brown University and soon to be directing civic engagement efforts at the Gallatin School at New York University as the Director of the Urban Democracy and Mayor Scott Smith from Mesa, Arizona.

There was also a panel presentation moderated by Jeremy Aguero, Principal Analyst with Applied Analysis, that featured representatives from each of the six Southern Nevada Strong Task Groups. These Task Groups comprise subject matter experts, representing public, non-profit and private sectors, in the six topic areas identified for in-depth planning and analysis: Economic Development and Education, Environment, Healthy Communities, Housing, Public Engagement and Equity, and Transportation.

The regional Kick-Off is described in greater detail in a separate document, the *Southern Nevada Strong Regional Kick-Off Summary Report*.

C. Telephone Survey

Between March 2-12, 2013, project consultants completed a telephone survey with 943 randomly-sampled Southern Nevada residents.

Telephone Survey Participation

In order to help ensure that the process has broad, representative participation, telephone survey participants were asked their race or ethnic identification and their age. Half of the telephone survey respondents described themselves as Caucasian; an additional 27% identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino. The remainder were African American/Black (11%) and Asian/Pacific Islander (6%), with an additional 6% who identified themselves as “Other,” “Don't Know,” or who chose not to answer the question. In terms of age, participants were evenly distributed across the spectrum between the ages of 18 and 75+.

Community Issues and Satisfaction with Community Elements

Telephone survey participants were asked questions regarding what they considered to be the issues of greatest concern to the community, as well as what the important elements of the community are and their level of satisfaction with those elements. Following are the survey's key findings:

- Jobs, economy and schools trump all concerns
- More than 2/3 of respondents believe Southern Nevada is a good/excellent place to live

Other important community elements include:

- Availability of a variety of affordable housing types
- Reducing traffic congestion and shorter commute time
- Availability of places to safely walk and bike
- Access to healthy foods
- Access to parks trails and open space

Transportation and Transit Usage

Telephone survey participants were also asked a series of questions regarding what modes of transportation they use most frequently and about their use of public transit. The following summarizes their responses:

- Driving and walking are the most frequent modes of transportation
- 29% use public transit at least once a month
- Having a car and lack of convenience of public transit are main reasons people don't use it more
- High percentage of people who never ride transit strongly favor public transit improvement efforts
- Providing safe routes to schools received the most support of transportation related ideas tested in the survey

D. Outreach Events

Southern Nevada Strong project staff participated in a number of community events throughout the months of March and April 2013. At these events, project team members staffed a Southern Nevada Strong table/booth and/or conducted intercept surveys, depending on the nature of the event. Staff handed out fact sheets and Southern Nevada Strong-branded materials (pens, wrist bands and tote bags); used iPads to conduct brief surveys; and, at events where space was available, also conducted a map-based exercise to ask people where they live and to identify the challenges/opportunities in transportation, housing, economic development, environment, etc. near where they live and generally in the region.

The table below lists the public events attended and details of outreach activities, attendance and participation.

Event	Activities	Attendance	Participation
Workforce Development Fair Rafael Rivera Community Center, Las Vegas March 2, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table • Discussion with participants • Distribution of fact sheets and swag • iPad surveys • Map-based exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event advertised in El Tiempo and other outlets. • Job-seekers • Majority Spanish-speakers of Hispanic descent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80 participants stopped at table • 28 surveys completed
United Way “Earn It! Keep It! Save It!” Workshop Bill and Lillie Heinrich YMCA, Las Vegas March 16, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table • Discussion with participants • Distribution of fact sheets and swag • iPad surveys • Map-based exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 100 attendees seeking assistance with their taxes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 surveys completed • Approximately 25 tote bags, 10 pens and 2 flash drives distributed • 5-6 participants did mapping exercise
St. Baldrick’s Foundation 47th Annual St. Patrick’s Day Parade South Water Street, Henderson March 16, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intercept surveys along parade route • Distribution of pamphlets and swag • Discussion with participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All ages • Attendance in low thousands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46 surveys completed • 28 pens and 65 pamphlets distributed
United States Green Building Council Nevada Spring Mixer aka “The Big Show” Element Hotel, Summerlin March 21, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table • Discussion with participants • Distribution of fact sheets and swag • iPad surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionals in energy efficient building materials industry and utility companies • Majority white, middle-aged, middle to upper-middle class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 Surveys completed
Convene for Green City Hall and Civic Plaza, North Las Vegas April 4, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview presentation • iPad surveys • Breakout session with mapping exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invited attendees – regional sustainability stakeholders • Approximately 200 at event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 attendees at presentation • 6 surveys completed • 10 pamphlets, pens and bracelets distributed • 15 participants did mapping exercise
Henderson Heritage Parade and Festival Henderson April 6, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table • Discussion with participants • Distribution of fact sheets and swag • iPad surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoted in City newsletters and mediums • Majority white, non-Hispanic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 surveys completed • Approximately 23 pamphlets and 52 bracelets distributed

Event	Activities	Attendance	Participation
AFAN Aids Walk University of Nevada, Las Vegas April 14, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Booth • Discussion with participants • Distribution of fact sheets and swag • Intercept surveys with iPad • Incentivized gift card 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event promoted through ads, web, radio, LGBT event venues, etc. • Attendees included LGBT community, students and educators – large youth presence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 39 surveys completed • All 50 bags and pens and numerous brochures distributed
Passport to Immunizations and Health Fair Health District, Las Vegas April 20, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table • Distribution of pamphlets and swag • Discussion with participants • Intercept surveys with iPad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mothers with young children or young (25-44) families • Largely Hispanic/Latino and African American • Event promoted on local radio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 surveys completed • 27 pamphlets, 47 pens, 50 bags and 100 bracelets distributed
Green Fest/Festival of Communities UNLV Campus, Las Vegas April 20, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table • Distribution of pamphlets and swag • Discussion with participants • Intercept surveys with iPad • Map-based exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large number of students, but also wide variety of ages and ethnicities represented • Approximately 1,000 in attendance throughout day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75 surveys completed • 100 bags and numerous pens and pamphlets distributed • Filled one email sign-in sheet of people interested in receiving additional info • 2 participants did mapping exercise
Marketing Table Student Union, UNLV April 24, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table • Distribution of pamphlets and swag • Discussion with participants • Intercept surveys with iPad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly college students aged 18-24 • Some professors and other adults as well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 44 surveys completed • 25 thumb drives and numerous bags, pamphlets and pens distributed • Filled one email sign-in sheet of people interested in receiving additional info

The results of surveys from these events (plus one additional survey submitted independent of an outreach event) are detailed in the following section of this summary. Project staff also recorded verbal input given during discussion with participants. Comments pertained both to general conditions in the region and to site-specific challenges and opportunities. Following are the key themes that emerged during these discussions:

Economy/Employment

- Need for an increase in work opportunities including:
 - Construction and skilled trades
 - Education
 - Medical
 - Law and other professional

- Issues with current employers including:
 - Low pay
 - Decrease in hours
 - Layoffs
 - Discrimination
 - Challenges for immigrants
- Some specific areas do have many jobs available for all educational levels
- Adoption of green technologies could spur economic growth

Transportation

- Improvements in public transportation needed including:
 - More frequent service
 - More convenient/efficient routes
 - Better integration of route schedules
 - Buses don't meet scheduled times and/or do not stop
 - Need designated lanes
 - Improvements in safety on transit
 - Better signage in general, signage in Spanish
- Traffic throughout the region is congested
- Repairs to streets and signage improvements needed in many locations
- Poor pedestrian/bike/skateboard safety due to various factors, including:
 - Narrow sidewalks
 - Crosswalks too far apart and poorly lit
 - Streets in poor condition
 - Inattentive drivers

Education

- Poor quality K-12 education
- Lack of funding
- Language barriers
- Overcrowded schools
- Teachers are not engaged in motivating students
- Lack of security in schools
- Underutilized school sites

Safety

- High crime rate
- High rate of homelessness
- Empty homes are a blight
- Lack of safety near downtown Las Vegas
- Poor pedestrian/bike/skateboard safety (as described under "Transportation" above)
- Better lighting needed in many areas

- Need better police response and/or increased police presence in some areas

Housing

- Better housing options and more affordable housing needed
- Promote use of sustainable power and energy saving components; make them more affordable
- Too many vacant homes
- Housing in some areas is located too close to business hubs or being displaced by businesses

E. iPad Survey Results

Throughout March and April 2013, Southern Nevada Strong project team members surveyed members of the public at outreach events using iPads with Quicktap software. As of May 8th a total of 326 surveys had been submitted via this method. These survey responses are detailed below.

iPad Survey Participation

iPad survey respondents were given an opportunity to take the survey in either English or Spanish. A large majority (94%) opted to complete the survey in English, but a small number (6%) chose to complete it in Spanish. (Note that this option had not yet been developed at the time of the first outreach event on March 2nd, so these numbers do not include the 28 surveys taken at that event.)

The first question on the iPad survey asked respondents' zip code. Respondents came from all over the Southern Nevada region and represented the majority of zip codes in the area.

iPad survey participants were also asked how long they have lived in Southern Nevada. The majority of respondents have lived in the area long enough to have a good knowledge of conditions in the area. Sixty-three percent (63%) have lived in the region for ten years or more; this included a substantial number who have lived here thirty to sixty years. Of the remainder, a third (33%) were fairly evenly distributed over a period of one to nine years. Only 3% had lived in the area less than a year.

The final demographic question, necessary to help ensure that the process has broad, representative participation, asked iPad survey respondents how they describe themselves in terms of race or ethnic identity. Half (50%) described themselves as White (non-Hispanic); of the remainder, 24% identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino and 11% as African American/Black. Those identifying themselves as Asian, American Indian/Native American, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and mixed-race made up the balance.

What Do You Like Best About Living In This Region?

The iPad survey asked what respondents like best about living in the region. While the format of the question does not allow the responses to be quantified, certain common themes clearly emerged, and are listed below in the approximate (descending) order of popularity. The weather, climate and/or natural environment was by far the most popular quality of life in the

region – it was mentioned by about half of respondents.

- Favorable weather and climate, agreeable natural environment
- Access to outdoor activities, parks and open spaces
- A variety of activities and entertainment for all ages
- Sense of community, community events (both general area and specific communities)
- The 24/7 lifestyle
- Excellent amenities such as shopping, restaurants, etc.
- Unique character of Las Vegas
- Diversity and open-minded attitude
- Access to local schools, University and/or colleges
- The people, proximity to friends and family
- Access to jobs (in general or current job)
- Reasonable cost of living

Most Important Issues for Southern Nevada

Next, the iPad survey asked what respondents would say is the most important issue facing Southern Nevada today. This was also an open-ended question, and as with the previous question, some common themes clearly emerged.

The poor economy, lack of jobs and unemployment was mentioned most frequently followed by environmental issues (particularly water) and schools/education. Responses are listed below in the approximate (descending) order of popularity:

- Poor economy, unemployment, lack of jobs and job diversity
- Environmental issues – water, sustainability, sustainable energy, pollution
- Poor state of schools and education
- Social issues such as homelessness, inequity, hunger and youth crime/drug abuse
- Lack of transportation and public transit options, traffic congestion, pedestrian safety
- Safety (crime/violence, gangs)
- Housing (lack of affordable housing, foreclosures, unstable market)
- Lack of social services, particularly healthcare

iPad survey participants were asked to select their top three from among a number of issues that were surfaced during the team's initial research into existing conditions in the region. Two issues clearly emerged as most important to iPad survey respondents; the percentages of those choosing each issue as one of their top three are as follows:

- Creating new jobs: 70%
- Improving K-12 education: 56%
- Protecting the environment: 29%
- Providing housing that is affordable: 23%
- Attracting new businesses: 23%

- Increasing public transit: 16%
- Reducing traffic congestion: 16%
- Providing social services: 15%
- Improving my neighborhood: 14%
- Developing downtown Las Vegas: 8%
- Other: 4%

iPad survey participants were also questioned as to how they would rate their area of Southern Nevada as a place to live. The majority rated it as either good or excellent, as follows:

- Good: 45%
- Excellent: 37%
- Just Fair: 13%
- Poor: 5%

Finally, iPad survey participants were asked whether they think the quality of life in their area of Southern Nevada will improve, get worse or stay the same. As shown below, although expectations are somewhat tempered, the response was largely on the positive side.

- Somewhat better: 40%
- Stay the Same: 28%
- Much better: 18%
- Somewhat Worse: 13%
- Much Worse: 2%

F. Online Survey Results

Beginning in February 2013, an online survey was also made available through the SouthernNevadaStrong.org website. The questions on this survey were similar to those on the iPad survey, but not exactly the same, so these results are listed separately. As of May 8th a total of 32 surveys have been submitted via this method.

Survey Participation

Online survey respondents were asked how long they have lived in Southern Nevada. The majority - nearly three-quarters (72%) of respondents - have lived in the area 10 years or more.

The online survey also included a number of demographic questions, designed to help ensure that the process has broad, representative participation. Online survey participants were asked their race or ethnic identification, their total annual household income before taxes, and their age. A majority (91%) of online survey respondents identified themselves as White (non-Hispanic). Seventy-six (76%) of online survey respondents have an annual household income of \$50,000 or above. In terms of age, 81% of respondents are between the ages of 35-64.

What Do You Like Best About Living In This Region?

Online survey participants were asked what they liked best about living in the region. The common themes that emerged from their responses are listed below in the approximate (descending) order of popularity. The agreeable weather was the most popular quality of life in the region, mentioned by over half of online survey respondents.

- Good weather
- Access to outdoor recreation and natural beauty
- Quality of life – spacious, dynamic, diverse, Las Vegas as a global city
- Amenities such as shopping, restaurants and entertainment
- Reasonable cost of living
- The 24/7 lifestyle
- Convenient location (proximity to California and Arizona, international airport)

Desired Future for Southern Nevada

The online survey asked participants to provide three to five words that describe their desired future for Southern Nevada. The common themes of their responses are listed below in approximate (descending) order of popularity.

- Strong, stable and growing economy
- Diversified businesses including: small, local business; high technology jobs; green jobs
- Improved transportation including: more public transit (rail); walkability/bikeability throughout cities; improved traffic and connectivity
- Environmental sustainability, including use of sustainable energy sources, clean air and water, and protection of natural areas
- Improved education at all levels, including K-12, multiple high-quality universities and workforce education
- A strong, safe, family-friendly community
- Increased diversity
- Innovative, vibrant and collaborative, exciting
- Smart development including: downtown development; infill; improved infrastructure; mixed-use
- Increased amenities including shopping, restaurants and public spaces

Most Important Issues for Southern Nevada

Finally, online survey participants were asked to select their top three from among a number of issues identified as important in the region. Their responses were as follows:

- Improving K-12 education: 69%
- Creating more jobs: 56%
- Attracting new businesses: 47%
- Increasing public transit: 31%
- Protecting the environment: 22%
- Providing social services: 19%

- Developing downtown Las Vegas: 13%
- Other: 13%
- Reducing traffic congestion: 9%
- Providing housing that is affordable: 6%
- Improving my neighborhood: 6%