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Reply to: Reno

November 30, 2020

Via Email bthomas@rtcwashoe.com

Bill Thomas
Executive Director
Regional Transportation Commission
1105 Terminal Way, Ste. 217
Reno, Nevada 89502

Re: Downtown Reno Circulation Study

Dear Bill:

This letter is provided on behalf of the ROW Properties in response to requests for stakeholder input on the Downtown Reno Circulation Study being developed as part of the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan. As recognized by the Downtown Action Plan, deteriorating conditions in downtown is prompting a demand for investments in streetscape and transportation improvements, special events, and cultural and entertainment amenities to revitalize the downtown core and improve connectivity to the University and River districts. The ROW believes the Downtown Circulation Transportation Study provides an important opportunity to continue to explore collaborative efforts to secure these investments and revitalize downtown.

The ROW requests that the Study include a focus on new transportation investments along the Virginia Street corridor to revitalize downtown and create a clean, safe and attractive destination. These investments should seek to create connectivity throughout downtown to the University and Truckee River; improve safety and access for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and auto drivers; increase availability and convenience of public parking to support publicly owned entertainment and tourism facilities in the downtown core; facilitate alternatives to street closures for special events; and establish and enhance vibrant public spaces. Specifically, the ROW requests evaluation of the following concepts:

1. Revitalize and Activate Virginia Street between the Truckee River and University.

As recognized by the Downtown Action Plan, “to implement the vision for Downtown Reno, changes to the physical setting, the streets and streetscapes, and the building forms are necessary.” Improvements are needed to make Downtown better connected, more welcoming, safer and active. We request the study evaluate streetscape and landscape improvements to

lighting, landscaping, and sidewalks on Virginia Street. RTC's recent project in Midtown demonstrates the transformative nature streetscape improvements can have on a neighborhood. Activating Virginia Street will also accelerate considerations by the ROW properties to open their buildings up to pedestrian activity on Virginia Street through sidewalk cafes, etc. Illustrations of conceptual examples are shown below:



2. Virginia Street Bus RAPID Transit Extension Project

We request the study evaluate locating the Bus RAPID Transit line connecting the University and Midtown along Virginia Street from the University to 4th Street. We note that locating a BUS Rapid Transit line on Virginia St. north of 4th Street will impact street closures for special events, but we are amenable to exploring options to mitigate those impacts through the creation of multi-purpose special events areas described below. We would also like to explore possibilities of closing 4th Street between Center and Virginia Street for special events, depending on availability of other special events areas described below. Options should be evaluated for BRT bus stops on Virginia Street across from the ROW Properties.

3. Bicycle Connectivity

We request the study evaluate locating the north/south bicycle lane on Virginia Street running from the University to Midtown as shown in the attached diagram. We understand initial studies have considered Center Street as a possible location; however, we believe Virginia Street is a more appropriate corridor. Virginia Street generally has fewer vehicles and slower traffic than Center Street. Additionally, traffic signals and traffic patterns on Virginia Street accommodate both north and south bound traffic, suggesting increased safety and decreased cost. Additionally, Virginia Street provides greater access to retail and other business uses which are likely to be frequented by bicyclists. Activating Virginia Street with bicycle connectivity is more aligned with current and future development plans.





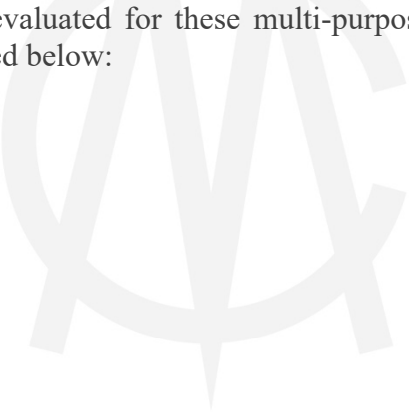
4. Parking

More parking is needed downtown, especially to support publicly owned tourism and revitalization projects such as the Reno Events Center, Ballroom, and National Bowling Stadium, downtown special events, and entertainment and recreation destinations such as Greater Nevada Fields, the Truckee River and Tahoe Pyramid bikeway. We request the study evaluate on street parking along Virginia Street, surface parking on Virginia Street (across from the Silver Legacy as depicted on the attached illustration), and one or more parking structures along 4th Street, including an underground parking structure on the block to the west of the National Bowling Stadium (conceptually similar to Union Square in San Francisco). The parking areas could serve multi-purpose (special event) functions as well, as described in paragraph #5 below. Illustrations of conceptual examples are shown below:



5. Special Events

Urban planners are increasingly realizing that investment in public spaces, especially creating or revitalizing the “town square” or “public plaza” which have been neglected for decades, can provide a competitive edge in luring new businesses and residents to the urban core. Downtown lacks that type of space, which has forced special events -- a critical economic driver in the downtown core -- to close down the streets to conduct these events. The absence of public space and street closures not only impedes traffic circulation, it creates impediments to conducting special events in the first instance. Recognizing that any revitalization of the Virginia Street transportation elements may require a reconsideration of street closures for these events, and consistent with the goals and recommendations of the Downtown Action Plan, we request the study consider and mitigate impacts to special events by establishing one or more special events plazas to facilitate the reduction in street closures and enhance pedestrian and vehicle traffic circulation during special events. These spaces could serve multiple public purposes, including surface or underground parking (similar to Union Square), urban green space and other arts and cultural purposes (e.g., ArTown events), civic purposes (e.g., outdoor ice rink and holiday festivities during winter) in addition to reducing street closures for special events. As shown in the attached, we ask that the half-block across from Silver Legacy and the block west of the National Bowling Stadium be evaluated for these multi-purpose parking/special event spaces. Conceptual examples are depicted below:



Union Square, San Francisco





Centerway Square, Corning, NY



Cleveland, Ohio public square (conceptual)



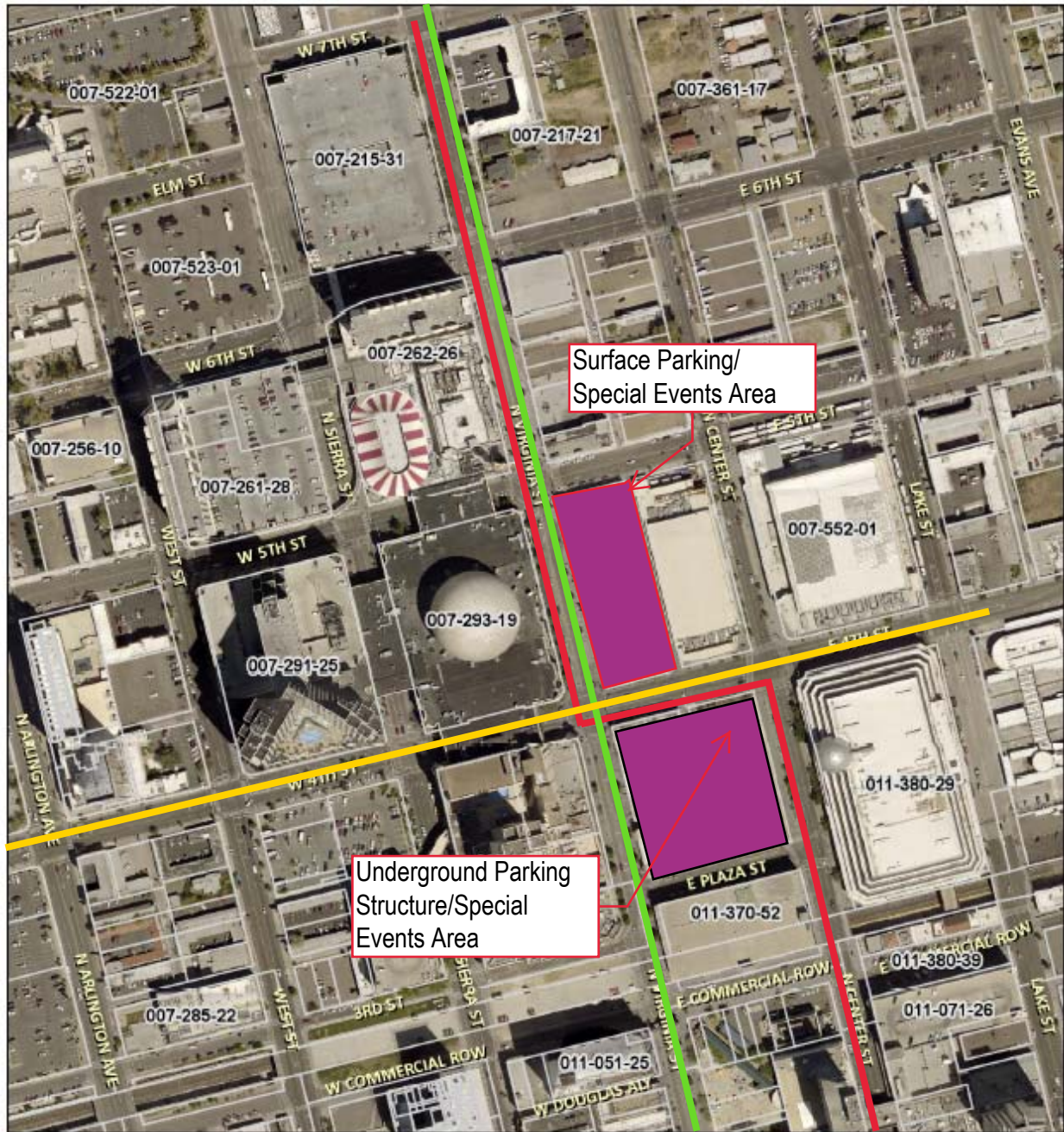
We appreciate your consideration of this information and inclusion in the upcoming study. We welcome the opportunity to explore discuss these concepts in more detail.

Sincerely yours,



Michael A.T. Pagni, Esq.

C: Gary Carano
Anthony Carano
Glenn Carano
Stew Massie
Rick Murdock



- Bus Rapid Transit (E/W)
- Bus Rapid Transit (N/S)
- Bicycle Lane/Cycle Track (N/S)