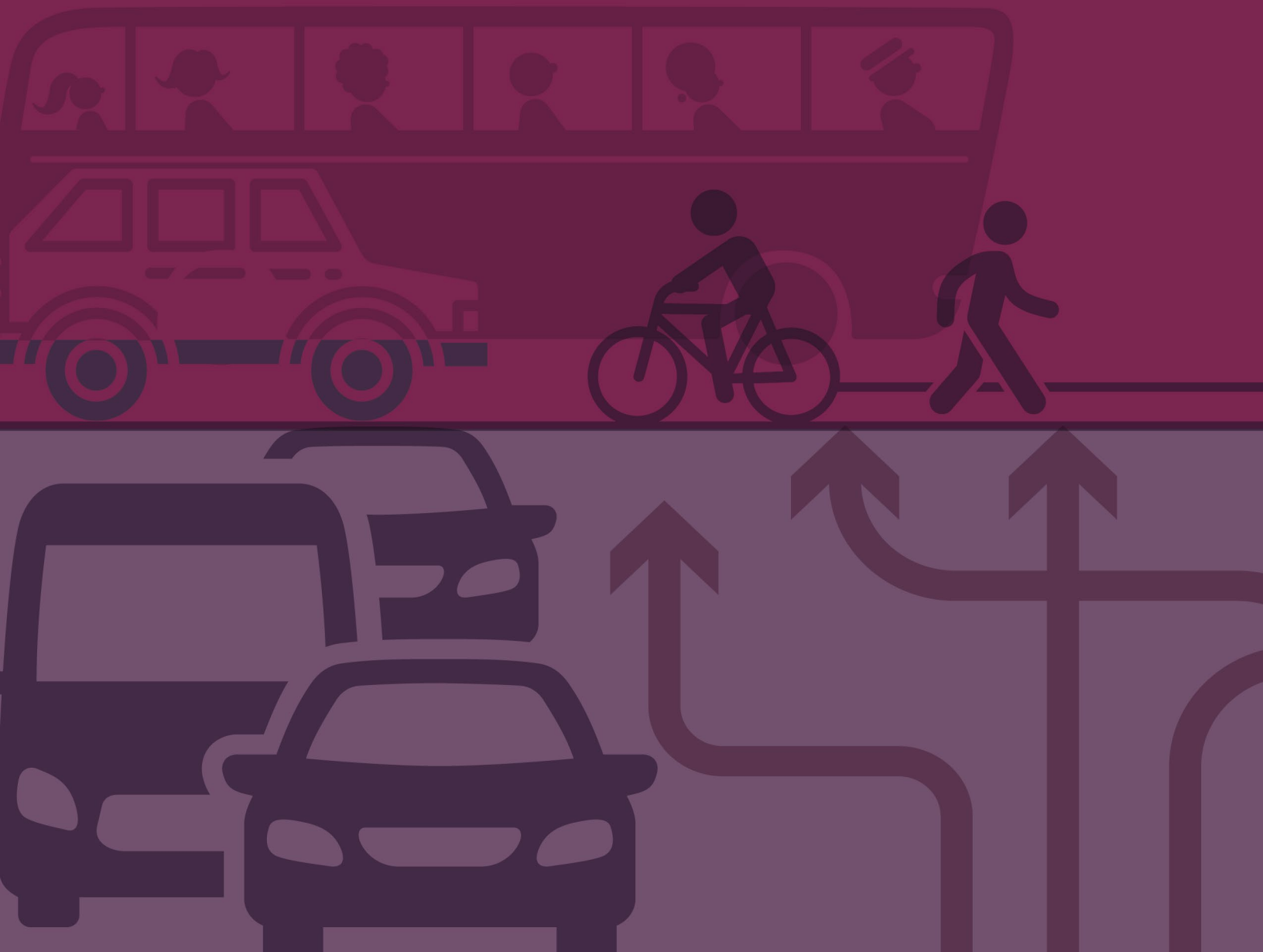


# Appendix W: Housing and Transportation Integration



# Integrating Housing and Transportation

## Regulatory Framework

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) introduced housing as a required planning factor and encourages metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to integrate housing, transportation, and economic development strategies. Specific housing-related aspects added to the MPO transportation process include the following:

- ▶ Incorporating improved connections between housing and employment.
- ▶ Including housing officials in the MPO consultation process.
- ▶ Requiring the consideration of projects and strategies that promote consistency between transportation and housing patterns.
- ▶ Adding the estimated distribution of population and housing to scenario planning in regional transportation plans (RTPs).
- ▶ Providing affordable housing organizations with an opportunity to comment on the RTP.
- ▶ Allowing the transportation planning process to integrate housing, transportation, and economic development strategies, including the development of a housing coordination plan.

The Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada (RTC) has fully incorporated the consideration of housing into the Let's Go 2050 RTP as described in this section.

## Southern Nevada Strong

Southern Nevada Strong is a comprehensive planning initiative administered by RTC in partnership with the regional agencies, local

jurisdictions, university and education partners, and community organizations. The Southern Nevada Strong Regional Plan identifies a vision and comprehensive strategies to manage regional growth. Through Southern Nevada Strong, the RTC is working with regional partners to address housing needs, a process that has been coordinated with development of the Let's Go 2050 RTP.

Improving housing options and transportation choices are key priorities of the Southern Nevada Strong Regional Plan. It includes an emphasis on complete communities that incorporates access to housing, jobs, health care, transportation, and amenities. Other Southern Nevada Strong priorities are:

- ▶ High-capacity transit to improve mobility and the jobs-housing balance.
- ▶ Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to support transit.
- ▶ Integrating neighborhoods and employment centers.
- ▶ Improving access to urban services.

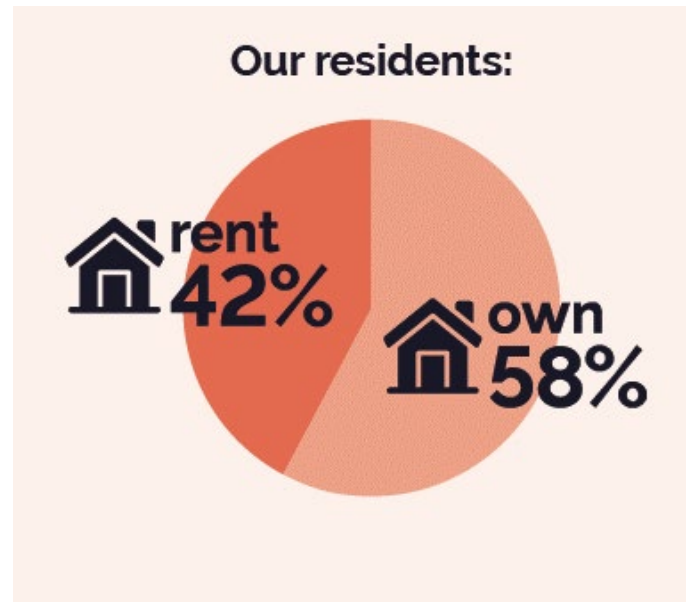
The Southern Nevada Strong vision for growth is based on increasing investments in downtowns, town centers, and transit corridors. However, population and employment trends indicate increased suburban development on the perimeter of the metro area. RTC has initiated an update to the Southern Nevada Strong Regional Plan that will incorporate recommendations from the Let's Go 2050 RTP.

## Housing Trends and Needs

The housing workshop included discussion of key housing data and trends, which are described in this section.

Clark County has a lower proportion of homeowners than the national average, at 58% (Figure 1) compared with about 67% for the nation. While homeowners may expect to have relatively stable mortgage payments over time, the 42% of area households that rent are more likely to experience frequent increases in housing costs.

Figure 1: Home Ownership and Rental Rates, Clark County



Source: US Census

The rent index monitored by the Nevada Division of Housing indicates that rents increased almost 70% between 2015 and 2022 in Southern Nevada, rising to an average of \$1,784 per month.

Clark County households experience a housing cost burden, with about half (almost 200,000) of renting households paying over 30% of their income on housing (Figure 2). Among all households, including both home owners and renters, about 38% are considered burdened by housing costs. The maximum amount often cited



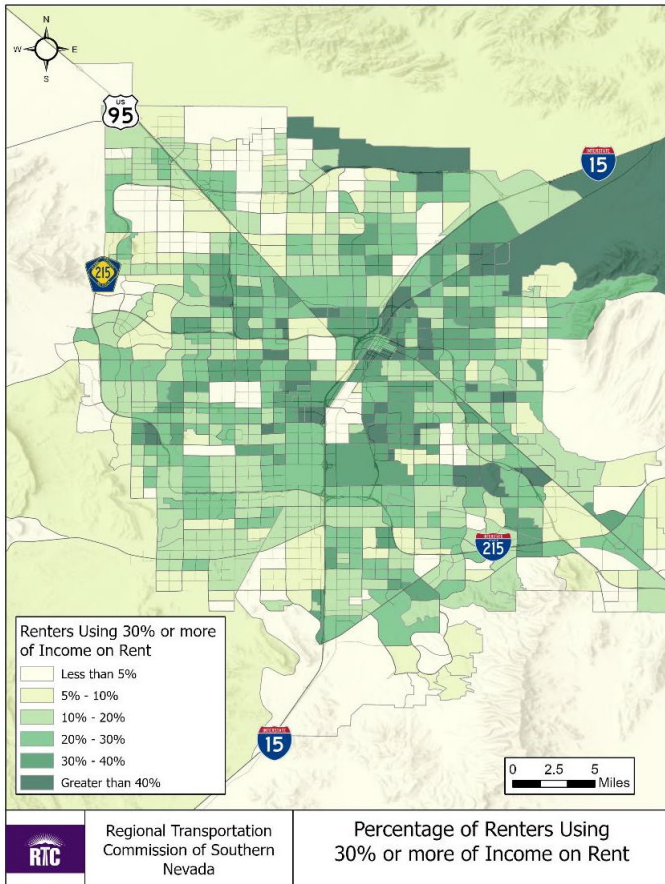
## Housing + Transportation Workshop

A workshop was held on February 21, 2024, to discuss how best to integrate housing development and affordability needs into the Let's Go 2050 process. A group of community advocates, state and local housing agency representatives, and local developers joined to discuss the critical housing needs facing the region and the role of transportation in supporting improved access between housing, jobs, and essential services. Southern Nevada Strong Steering Committee members and community leaders participated and discussed current housing initiatives and the upcoming plan update.



that a household should spend on either rent or a mortgage is 30%, and higher percentages indicate a lack of affordability.

**Figure 2: Percentage of Renters Spending 30% or More of Income on Housing**



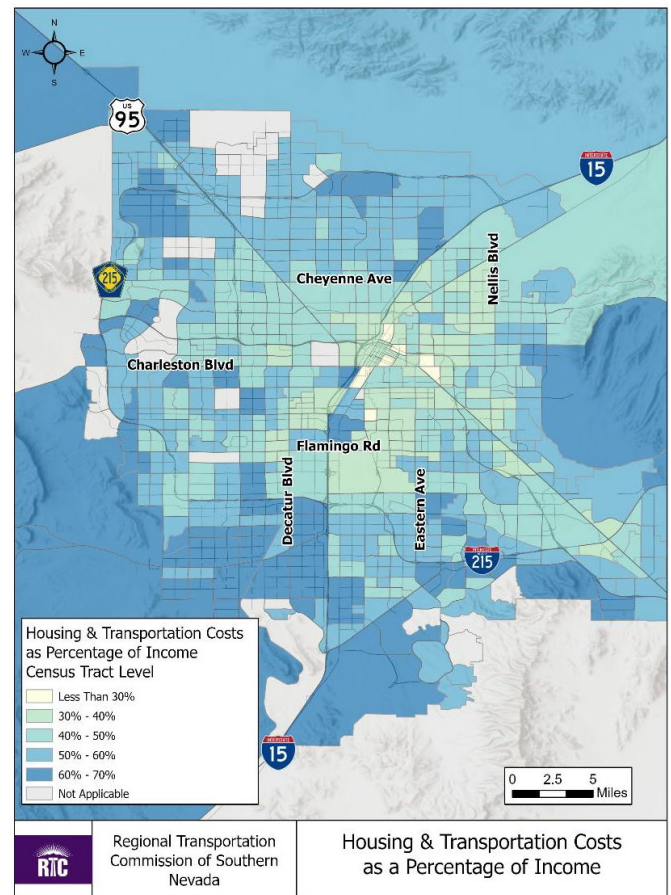
Source: US Census

Combined housing and transportation costs are a significant expenditure for area households. While the cost of land and some newer housing construction may be lower in outlying areas, this is often offset at least in part by longer trips to work and higher commuting costs. Figure 3 shows the combined housing and transportation cost index as a percentage of household income for the region. The lower housing and transportation cost burden is generally located in central Las Vegas, East Las Vegas, and the eastern part of North Las Vegas.

The recommended combined costs of housing and transportation is 45% of household income. A

typical Southern Nevada household making \$59,000 per year spends at least 29% of income on transportation, and 35% on housing, or 64% total. This is well above the recommended percentage of 45%. This is higher than other metro areas in the Intermountain West, which puts Southern Nevada at a disadvantage for attracting workers and industry. Research from Southern Nevada Strong indicates that rising housing and transportation costs, combined with stagnant wages, are straining families and social services in the region.

**Figure 3: Housing and Transportation Cost as a Percentage of Income**



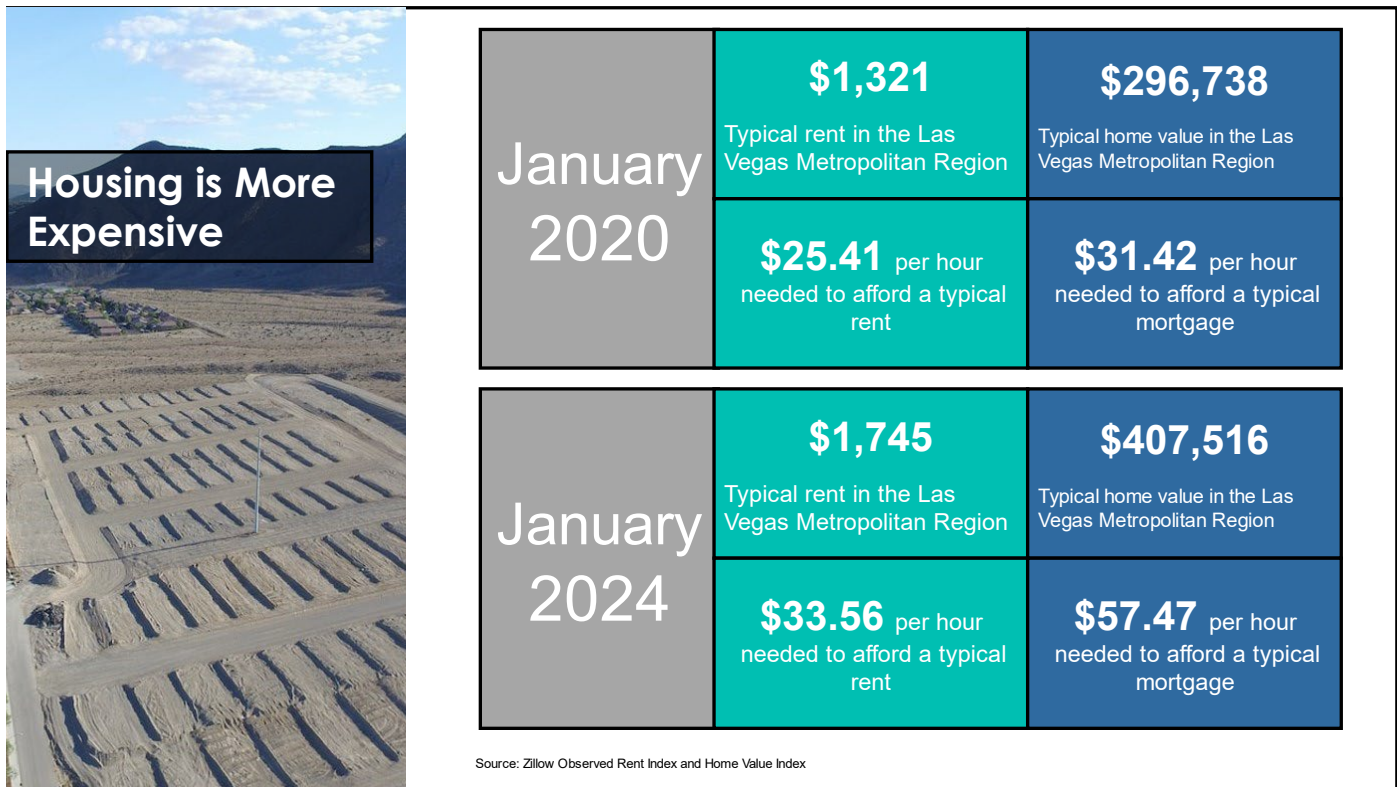
Source: US Census

Housing affordability is a serious concern for low-wage workers. As documented by the Nevada Housing Division, the rent affordable for a full-time minimum wage worker in Southern Nevada is \$585 per month. However, the fair market rent for

a one-bedroom unit is \$1,212 per month. The number of units for which rent costs less than \$1,000 per month has steadily decreased in Clark County, dropping 40% between 2017 and 2021.

generally being higher further from employment centers in the urban core. In addition, public transit is not expected to have available revenue to expand fixed-route service to new development on the suburban fringe.

Figure 4: Increases in Housing Costs, 2020-2024



Source: RTC Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan

Workshop participants highlighted the role of the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act in making more land available for affordable housing and the need to expedite the land disposal process. Section 7(b) of SNPLMA authorizes the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, to dispose of lands at less than fair market value for the development of affordable housing units. It should be noted that much of the available public lands are located on the periphery of the urban area. As discussed previously, the combined housing and transportation costs should be considered when evaluating affordability, with transportation costs

Land use and zoning policies, such as waivers for parking to encourage transit-oriented development (TOD), can also promote affordable housing near corridors with greater mobility options. Private developments can also do more to market and support transit and bike-share use. Housing vouchers could be considered for multifamily buildings with vacancies.

Housing assistance programs are vitally important in Southern Nevada as housing affordability concerns grow. Almost 8,000 emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent beds were identified in an inventory conducted in January 2023 (see Table 1).

Table 1: Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs Housing Inventory Summary

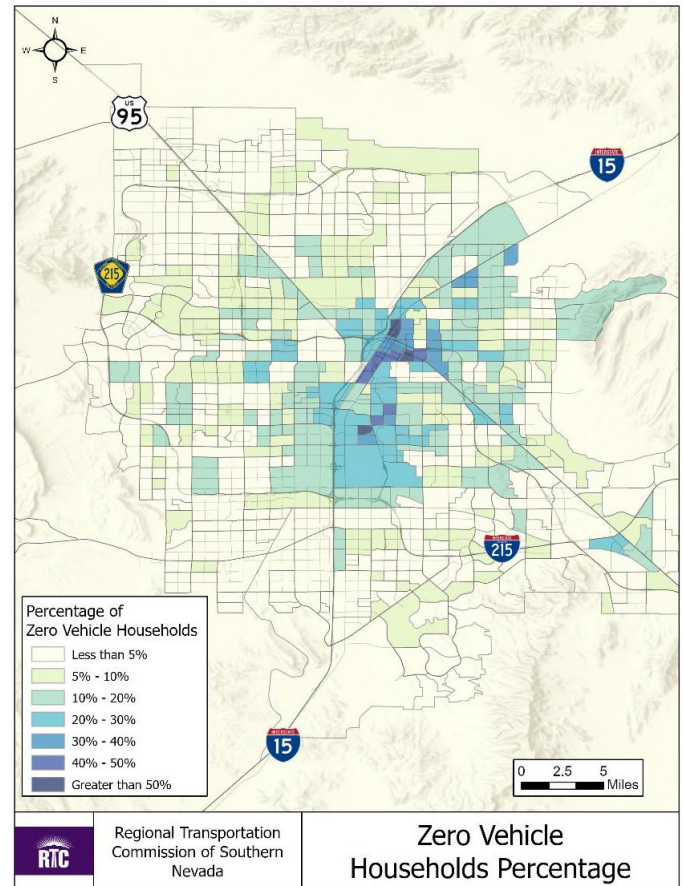
Types of Available Beds	Total Year-Round Beds
Emergency, Safe Haven, and Transitional Housing	2,709
Emergency Shelter	2,067
Transitional Housing	642
Permanent Housing	5,276
Permanent Supportive Housing	2,328
Rapid Rehousing	1,683
Other Permanent Housing	1,265
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,985</b>

Source: [https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/coc-housing-inventory-count-reports/?filter\\_Year=&filter\\_Scope=CoC&filter\\_State=NV&filter\\_CoC=&program=CoC&group=HIC](https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/coc-housing-inventory-count-reports/?filter_Year=&filter_Scope=CoC&filter_State=NV&filter_CoC=&program=CoC&group=HIC)

Safe multimodal transportation access is particularly important to area residents who do not have motor vehicles. About 7.7%, or 65,600 area households, do not have vehicles. As shown in Figure 4, the highest concentrations of households without a vehicle, which are more likely to rely on transit, walking, and bicycling for mobility, are in the central Las Vegas Valley.



Figure 4: Percentage of Households with No Vehicle

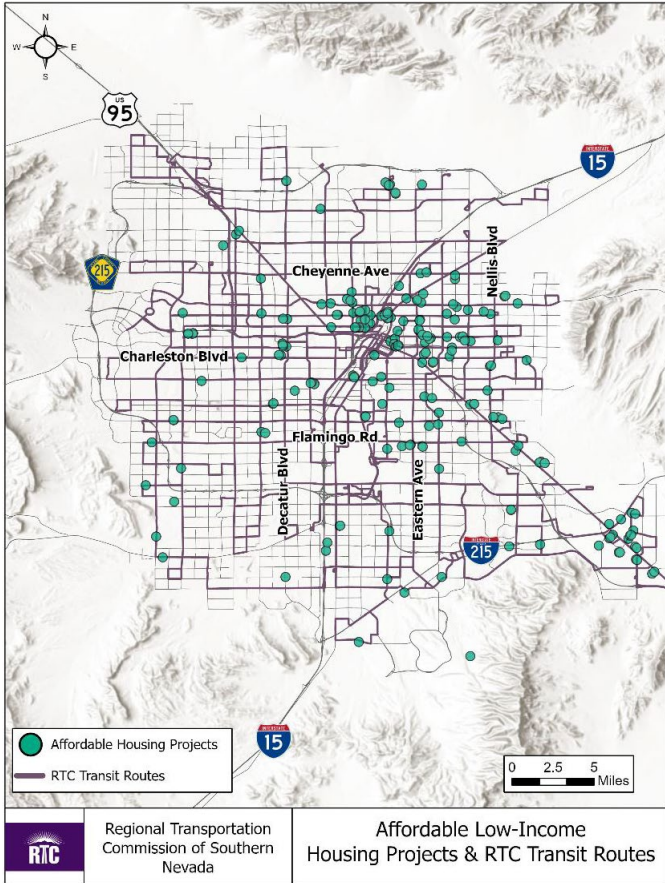


The Nevada Division of Housing maintains a database of low-income housing developments in the region. An analysis of affordable housing locations and transit routes indicates the majority of affordable developments are located within 1/4 mile of a transit route (Figure 5). Promoting the preservation and creation of affordable housing within the transit service area is vitally important to providing access to jobs and essential services.

The workshop participants emphasized the importance of affordable housing in transit corridors and investment in more high-frequency, high-capacity transit. Participants supported the construction of more affordable housing with convenient access to public transit, with a focus on transit corridors such as Maryland Parkway, Boulder Highway, and Charleston Boulevard. Land use policies and education to the development

community about the benefits of TOD were also encouraged by workshop participants.

**Figure 5: Low-Income Housing Projects and RTC Bus Routes**



An analysis of transportation safety near low-income housing developments was also conducted. Between 2016 and 2020, 36% of all pedestrian-involved crashes in Clark County occurred within 1/4 mile of low-income housing developments. Pedestrian safety near affordable housing developments is a critical need. Workshop participants advocated for improved pedestrian safety design, crosswalks, lighting, slowing vehicle speeds, and safety education programs in these high-crash areas. Providing accessible transportation services for the unhoused was also identified as a priority. The Let's Go 2050 Plan includes the City of Las Vegas Vision Zero program, which funds pedestrian safety improvements focused on underserved communities. The RTC high capacity transit

improvements planned for Boulder Highway and Charleston Boulevard will also improve pedestrian safety.

## Jobs-Housing Balance

Communities with well-integrated housing and employment land uses offer their residents improved access to jobs, lower commuting times, and reduced transportation cost burdens. This leads to a variety of other quality of life, environmental, and health benefits.

As shown in Figures 6 and 7, the Southern Nevada region has well defined employment centers Long I-15, particularly near the LAS airport, Resort Corridor, and Nellis Air Force Base. Residential housing density is dispersed throughout other areas of the Las Vegas Valley.

**Figure 6: Employment Density, 2022**

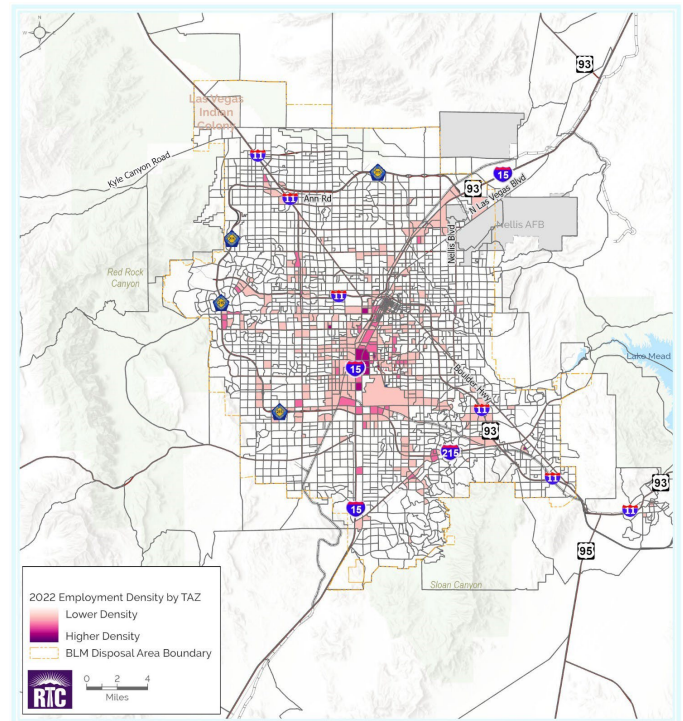
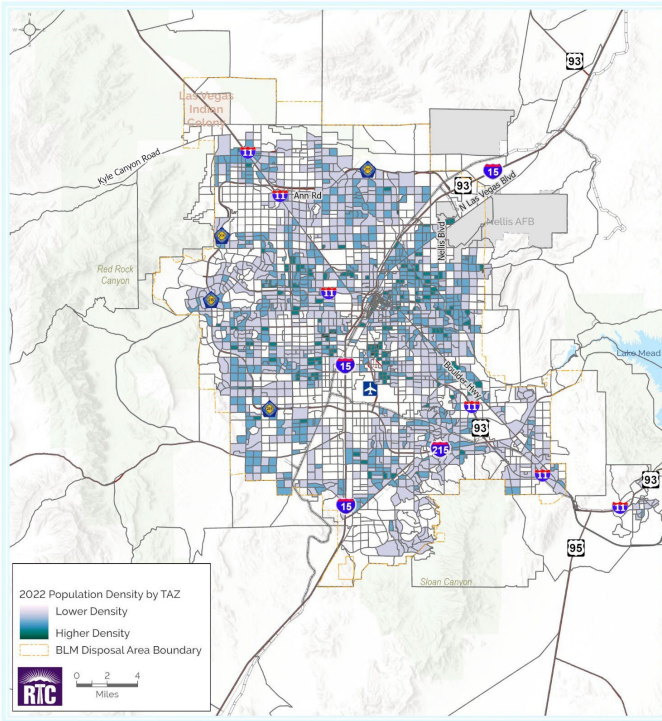


Figure 7: Population Density, 2022



Tools that can support increased integration of housing and employment land uses include the following:

- ▶ **TOD:** Mixed-use development is a hallmark of TOD. By creating walkable, bikeable developments with access to transit that incorporate residential, commercial, and office land uses, TOD optimizes the jobs-housing balance.
- ▶ **First and last mile strategies:** Offering a convenient way to connect from fixed route transit to nearby land uses improves accessibility and strengthens the jobs-housing balance. These tools can include micromobility options such as scooter and bike share, microtransit service such as RTC On Demand, and improve bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure connections.
- ▶ **Development with the transit service area:** Encouraging high density employment and residential land uses within the transit service area maximizes the transportation options for the community. This is

particularly important for medical facilities, education resources, and social services.

- ▶ **Integrated services for unhoused residents:** Transportation agencies can be a key partner in meeting needs of unhoused people. Transportation access to medical and social services, as well as employment opportunities, is a critical component of an integrated approach.

## Advancing Solutions

RTC is integrating multiple programs that will advance improved coordination between transportation and housing development. Through the upcoming Southern Nevada Strong Regional Plan update, RTC will continue the collaboration between developers, housing advocates, agency leaders, and transportation planners.

To encourage more affordable housing and other mixed-use developments in transit corridors, RTC is also advancing TOD planning initiatives. A TOD plan has been completed for Maryland Parkway to further support the high-capacity transit improvements that are underway in this corridor. Additional land use planning has been focused on the Boulder Highway Corridor, where Reimagine Boulder Highway has documented the initiative to encourage housing and mixed-use development in this planned bus rapid transit corridor.

The Let's Go 2050 RTP includes development of major high-capacity transit corridors on Maryland Parkway, Boulder Highway, and Charleston Boulevard. All of these investments are designed to improve safety; enhance multimodal connectivity and access; and support private investment, housing development, and affordable housing along these important regional corridors.

Other improvements in the Let's Go 2050 Plan are focused on transportation safety in underserved communities, including areas serving affordable housing. The City of Las Vegas Vision Zero initiative shares the goal of improving pedestrian safety for residents in urban neighborhoods.