
Western Nevada County Transit Development Plan Update

Final Report



Prepared for the
Nevada County Transportation Commission

Prepared by



LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.

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Valley / Rough and Ready (604 persons) and Lake Wildwood (517 persons). The southern portion of the county also have high numbers of disabled persons, including Alta Sierra (475 persons) and Lake of the Pines (419 persons). Not surprisingly, as a whole, Grass Valley has the highest total between Census Tracts 5.01, 5.02 and 6, where 7.9 percent of the population is disabled. Similarly, roughly 6.4 percent of Nevada City's population is disabled (within CT 8.01 and 8.02). This information is presented graphically in Figure 4 at the Block Group level.

Low-Income Population

Low-income persons are another likely market for transit services, as measured by the number of persons living below the poverty level. An estimated 10,152 low-income persons reside in the study area, representing 12.3 percent of the total population. Again, as with the other categories, the number of low-income residents has increased 52 percent since 2000. The percentage and concentration of those below poverty status are highest in Grass Valley, where 23.8 percent of the population in Census Tracts 5.01, 5.02 and 6 are considered low-income. Other areas with relatively large low-income populations include Washington / **North San Juan** (946 persons), Nevada City (CT 8.01 – 806 persons), Chicago Park (CT 7.01 – 712 persons) and Penn Valley / Rough and Ready (642 persons). See Figure 5 for details.

Zero Vehicle Households

The last important category to consider is households that do not have a vehicle available, as public transit is likely the only option for travel. The number of households without a vehicle available is estimated at 1,575, as shown in the table. This represents 4.5 percent of the total households in the area. Of all the transit dependent categories, this is the only one that decreased; the number of zero vehicle households actually went down roughly 2 percent since the 2000 Census. The greatest concentration of zero-vehicle households is in Grass Valley, where there are a total of 944 households without vehicles (or roughly 12.2 percent of households). This information is presented graphically in Figure 6.

ECONOMIC PROFILE

Historically, the local economy of western Nevada County was based on mining and timber. Today, services, retail trade and government dominate the current economic base. Additionally, many development professionals, high-tech companies and hardware and design firms add to the diversity of the economy.

Area Employers

Table 2 provides a list of the major employers within western Nevada County. As presented, there is a mix of industry associated with these employers, ranging from government offices to electronic manufacturers to grocery stores. The largest employer, by far, is the Sierra Nevada Memorial-Miners Hospitals, which employs over 1,000 persons in Grass Valley. The County of Nevada and the Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital organizations also employ significant numbers of persons in the area.

Unemployment

The US Census American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates for 2008 – 2013 provide insight into the employment conditions in Western Nevada County. The most recent data shows that the unemployment rate in Western County is roughly 10.7 percent (Table 3). The study area

Figure 5
 Number of People Living Below Poverty Level by Census Block Group

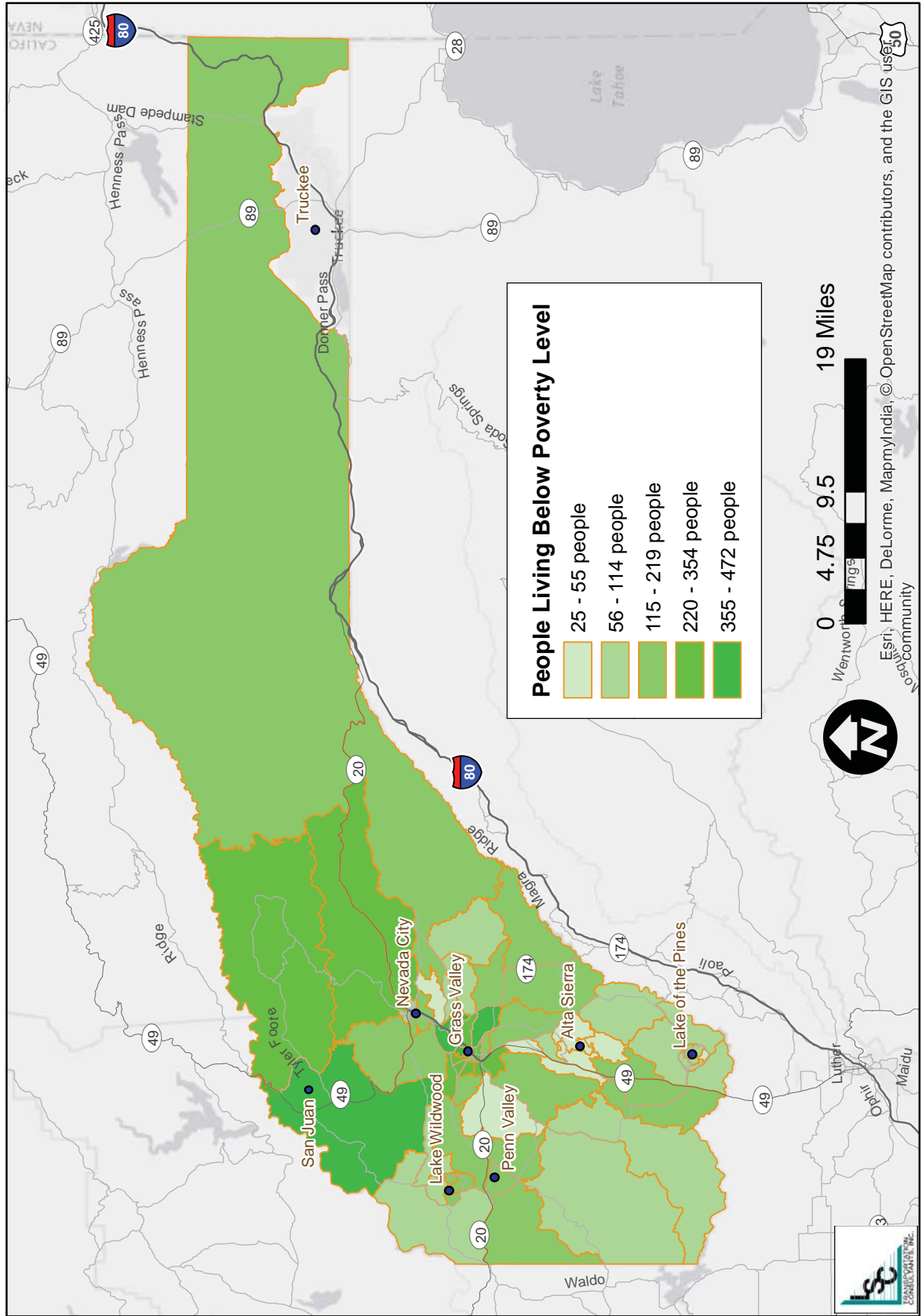
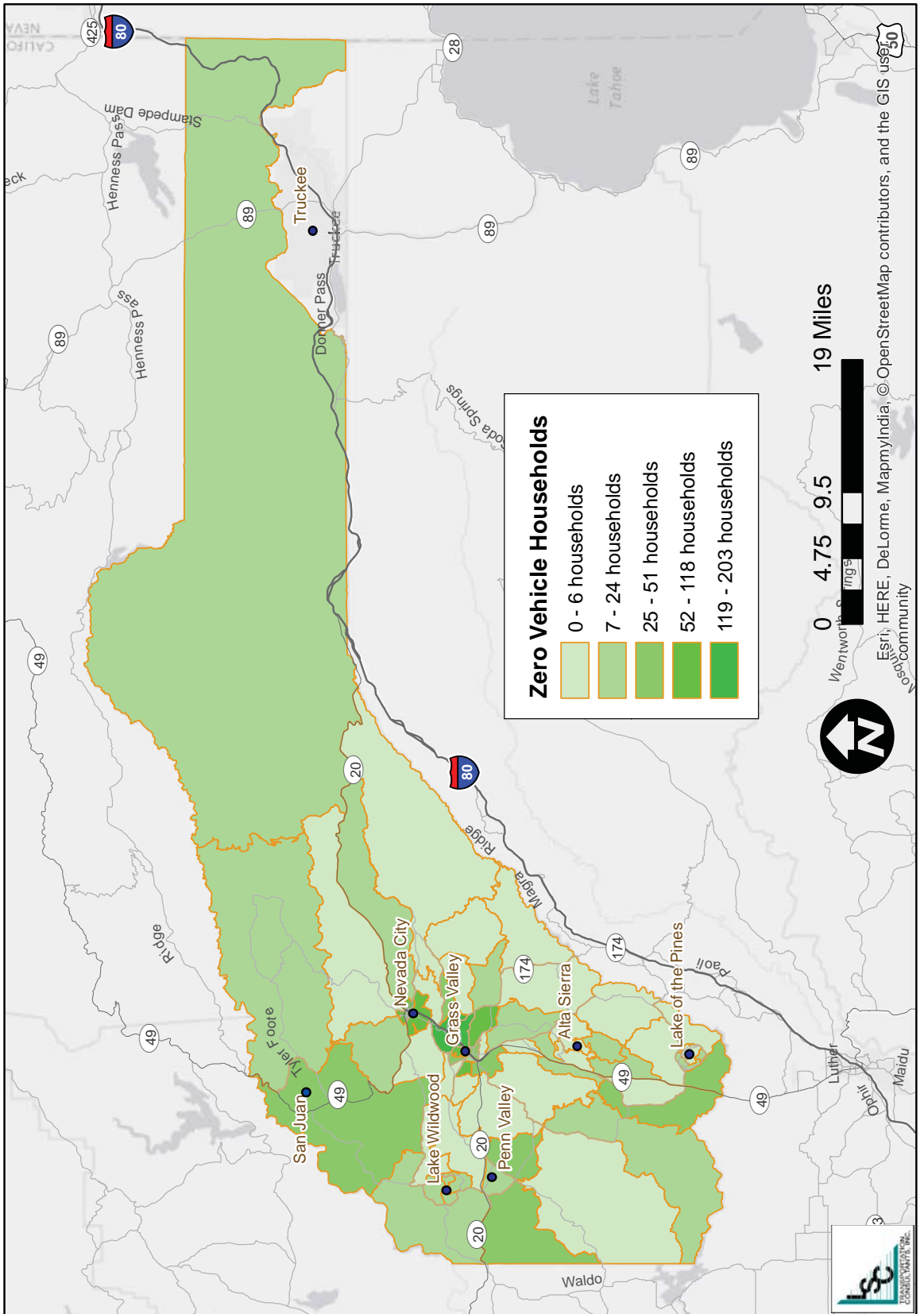


Figure 6
 Number of Zero Vehicle Households by Census Block Group



- ◆ Not surprisingly, the greatest numbers of jobs held by this population dataset are located in the Grass Valley and the Nevada City areas. Note that Census Tract 9 has a relatively high figure. This is likely due to a few factors – the Caltrans maintenance station located in Kingvale and the ski resorts in the Soda Springs / Donner Summit area.

The fact that most residents of western Nevada County also work within the study area is further evidenced by some basic commute data from the US Census. According to the 2009 – 2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, approximately 75.4 percent of study area residents work within Nevada County, while 23.8 percent work outside. While these figures themselves somewhat conflict with those provided by the LEHD data presented above, it is important to acknowledge that the general trend is similar, that primarily being that most residents stay within the study area for work. Further supporting this is that approximately 64.7 percent of workers that do not work at home have a commute of less than 25 minutes.

REVIEW OF EXISTING PLANNING DOCUMENTS

The following presents a review of relevant existing planning documents that have helped guide the transit program in Western Nevada County. This is not an all-inclusive list, but rather the most recent reports that have been completed.

Nevada County Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan Update (2014)

An updated *Nevada County Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan* was completed in 2014 by LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc. in December 2014. This plan focused on continuing and expanding the facilitation of transportation coordination among the various human service entities and the private and public transportation services in the region.

The Plan provided an overview of the existing transportation services in the area, and evaluated the coordination efforts, existing transit gaps, and existing transit needs. Additionally, a review of previous Coordinated Plan strategies was conducted to determine which strategies had been implemented and which were still relevant. The end of the document presented a number of strategies including:

High Priority Strategies

- ◆ *Expand Transportation Options for Eastern Nevada County Residents* – Included improved demand response services, year-round Highway 267 transit service, development of ridesharing programs, and other long term goals like increased commute options on the fixed route and transportation to outlying areas in Eastern County.
- ◆ *Expand Transportation Options for Residents Outside of Western County's Fixed Route Service Area and ADA Corridor* – Included shuttle services to connect areas outside of the fixed route service area (i.e. Penn Valley) to GCS and a lifeline service between Nevada City/Grass Valley and North San Juan.
- ◆ *Develop Communication and Coordination Mechanism to Facilitate Shared Use of Resources Among Human Service Agencies* – Included increased participation of Eastern and Western Nevada County entities in coordination efforts with social service agencies and regional councils/groups, and expanding the Dial 211 program to incorporate mobility management activities for the County.

Figure 16
 Transit Needs Index for Western Nevada County

