



## **Federal Transit Funds Key for Community Comeback in Northern Nevada** ***Revitalizing Neighborhoods and Improving Job Access for Thousands***

Few places were hit harder by the Great Recession than Nevada, which led the nation in unemployment and foreclosures. However, the local economy is growing again – and the Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County, Nevada (RTC) is spearheading a unique project to further support economic vitality.

The 4th Street/Prater Way Bus RAPID Transit Project will improve transit, support businesses, make multi-modal improvements, help people connect to jobs and educational opportunities as well as revitalize a particularly economically depressed area. The 4th Street/Prater Way area is in a census tract with a poverty level greater than 20 percent. There are also numerous resources to assist the homeless located in the area today. The corridor was once part of the famous Lincoln Highway. Its proximity to the railroad and neon-adorned motels played a pivotal role in the early growth of Reno and the neighboring city of Sparks.

Thanks to a \$16 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grant, the RTC is helping support resurgence. This crucial funding is the largest single award in the RTC's history.

As a result of this federal investment, the RTC will be able to acquire four fully electric buses to serve 4th Street in Reno, which becomes Prater Way in Sparks. The four, zero-emissions, state-

of-the-art buses will join a fleet that already includes four fully electric buses purchased with federal funds as part of a national demonstration project. The project also includes the addition of a new charging station. The improved transit service will help better connect downtown Reno and downtown Sparks, and will help people reach thousands of job and educational opportunities – including nearly 39,000 jobs served by extending Bus Rapid Transit service along the corridor creating Ladders of Opportunity.

Many businesses are taking root in the historical buildings along 4th Street and Prater Way. Not only will these businesses be supported by better transit, but new bike lanes and wider sidewalks that are accessible to all under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The project will create a more livable, walkable community that is supportive of economic revival.

In planning for the future of this corridor, the RTC is also preserving its history. The new transit stations will feature historical themes and there will be public art relating to the past of this important thoroughfare. The RTC partnered with historical organizations to create both a historical web site and app. The project included a multi-media oral history project so people would be able to hear about the heritage of 4th Street and Prater Way from those who lived or worked there through the decades. The web site may be accessed by going to: <http://4thprater.onlinenevada.org/>.

This investment in the community is moving forward as a result of federal funds. This significant investment will result in better connectivity between two cities, accommodate the many ways people get around and strengthen the economy. The partnership between the RTC and US DOT is growing America in northern Nevada.