

# Moving BRT Forward: The Experience of Reno/Sparks NV



**Regional Transportation Commission, Washoe County**

**Lee Gibson, Executive Director**

**Roger Hanson, Senior Planner**

# Presentation Outline



- Transit System Facts
- Economic Challenges in the Truckee Meadows
- RTC Transit Funding Trends
- Why BRT and Why Virginia Street
- RAPID Operating Concept
- RAPID Results
- Going Forward



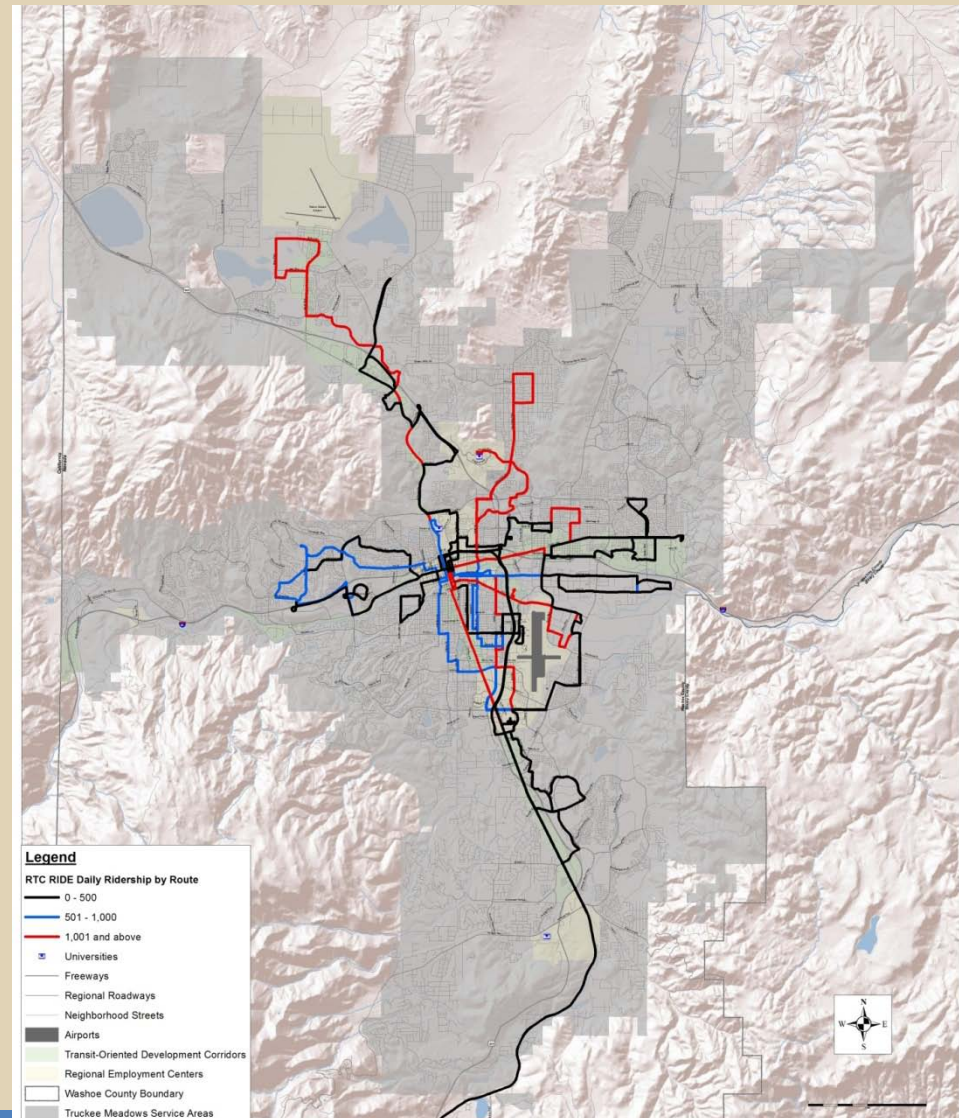
# Transit System Facts: RIDE



- 7.7 million rides in FY 2011
- 30.5 passengers per service hour
- 100% wheelchair ADA accessible



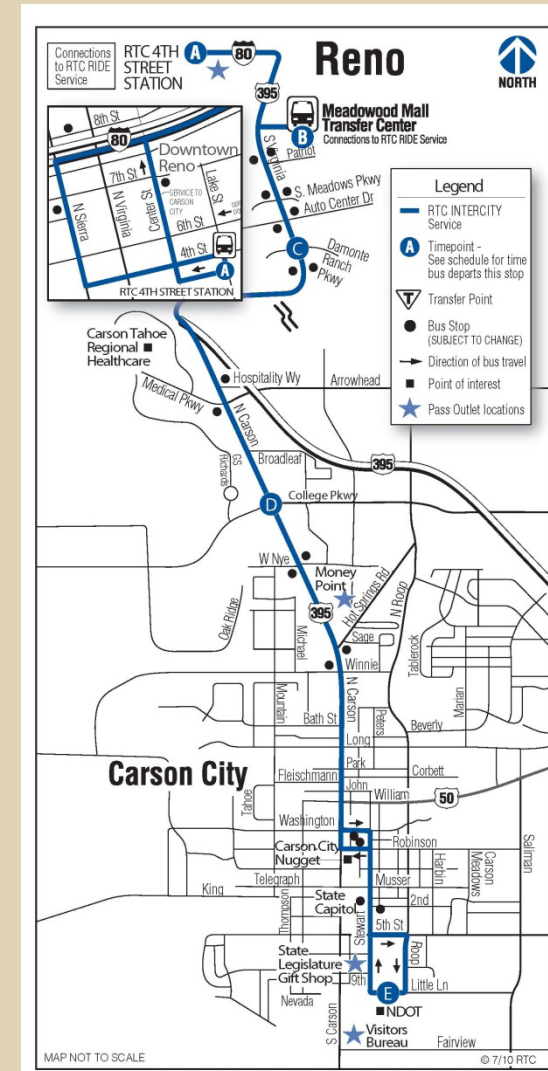
**Getting People to Work:  
46% of transit trips are to or  
from work**



# RTC INTERCITY



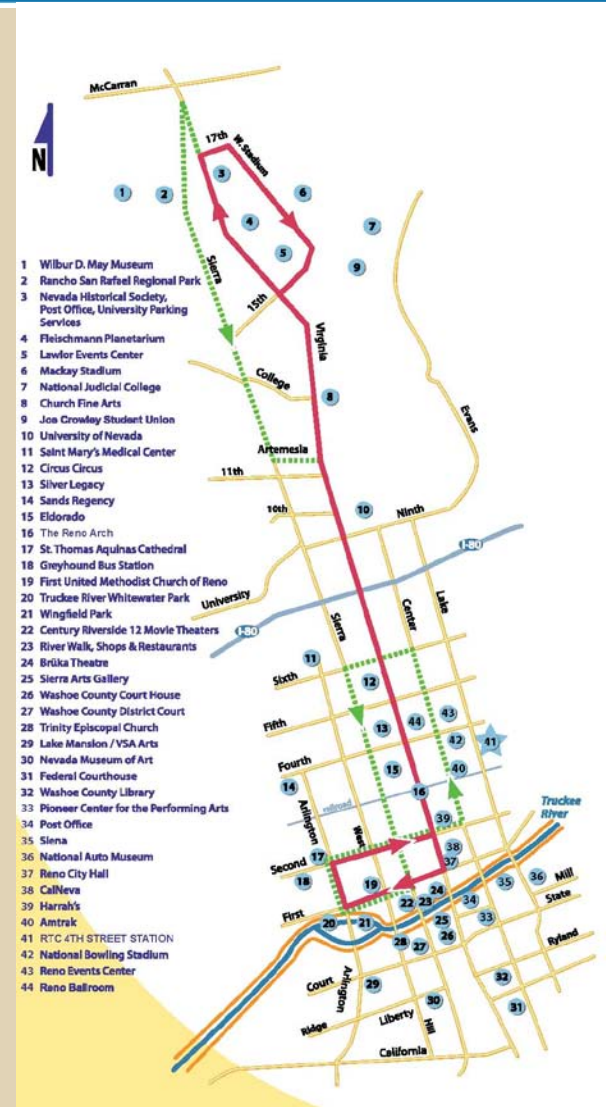
- Connects Reno and Carson City
  - Weekday Commuter Service
  - Links with Carson & Tahoe transit service
- 35,000 passengers in FY 2011



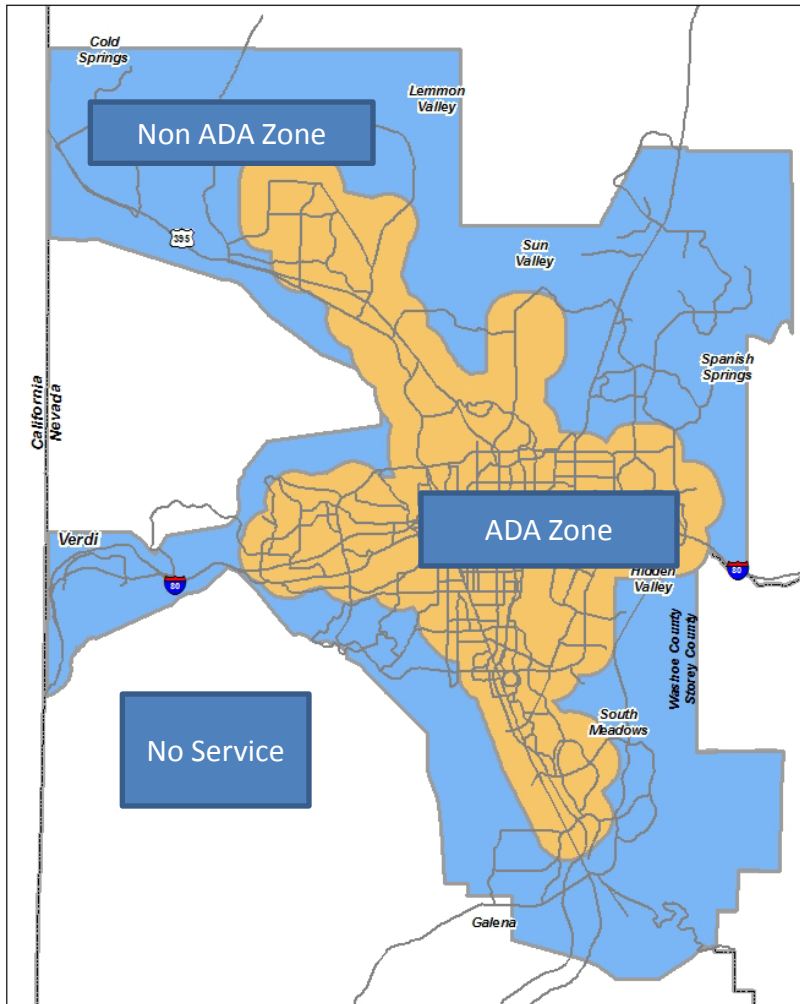
# RTC SIERRA SPIRIT



- Free circulator service between UNR and downtown Reno
- 15 minute headways
- 261,000 passengers in FY 2011



# RTC ACCESS

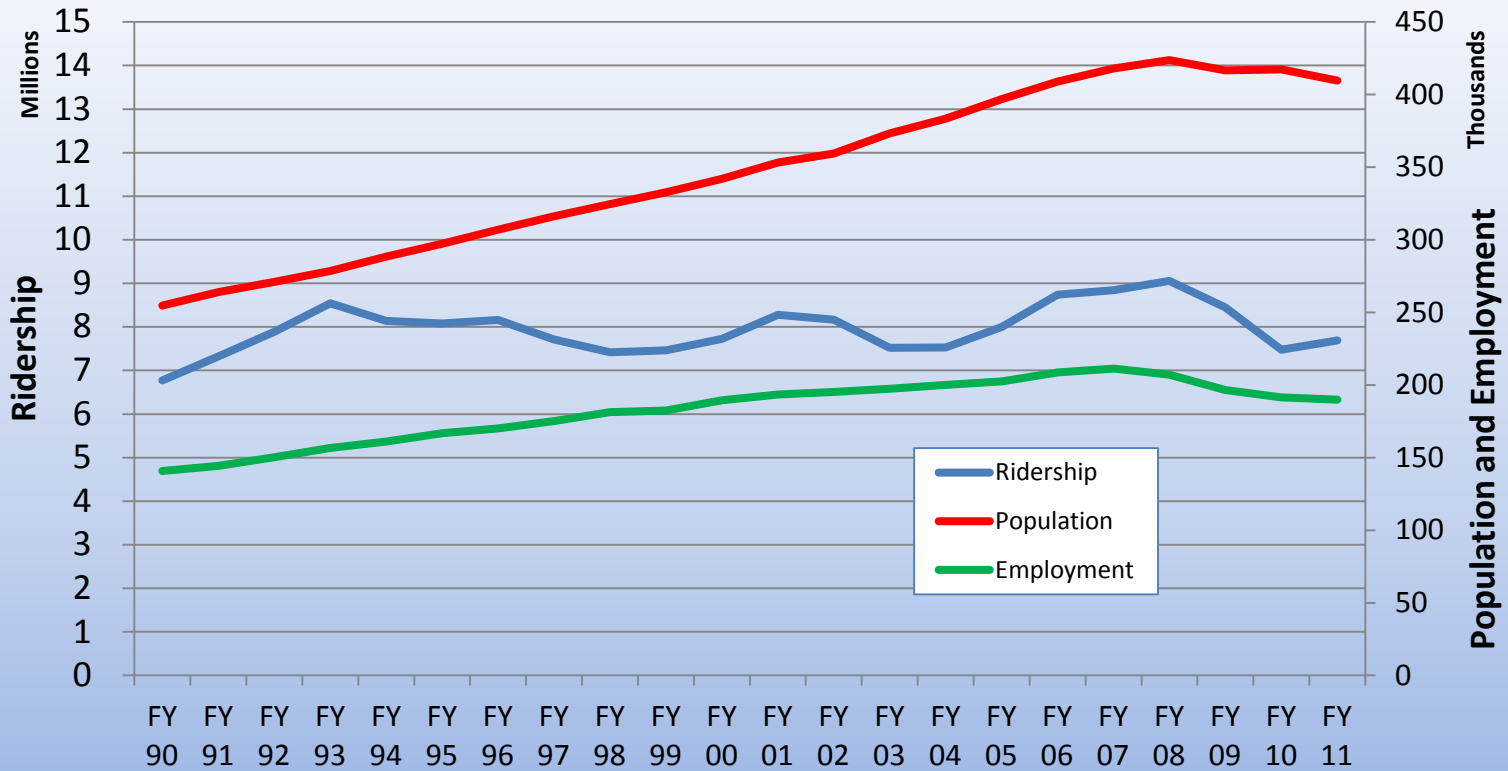


- Required by federal law to provide “complimentary” ADA door-to-door, demand-response service within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of all fixed routes.
- Service provided 24/7
- Service split into ADA and non-ADA zones
- Two fares:
  - ADA Service Area = \$3.00
  - Non-ADA = \$6.00

# Transit System Facts



## RTC Transit Ridership, Reno-Sparks Employment, and Washoe County Population



Employment and population are for calendar not fiscal year

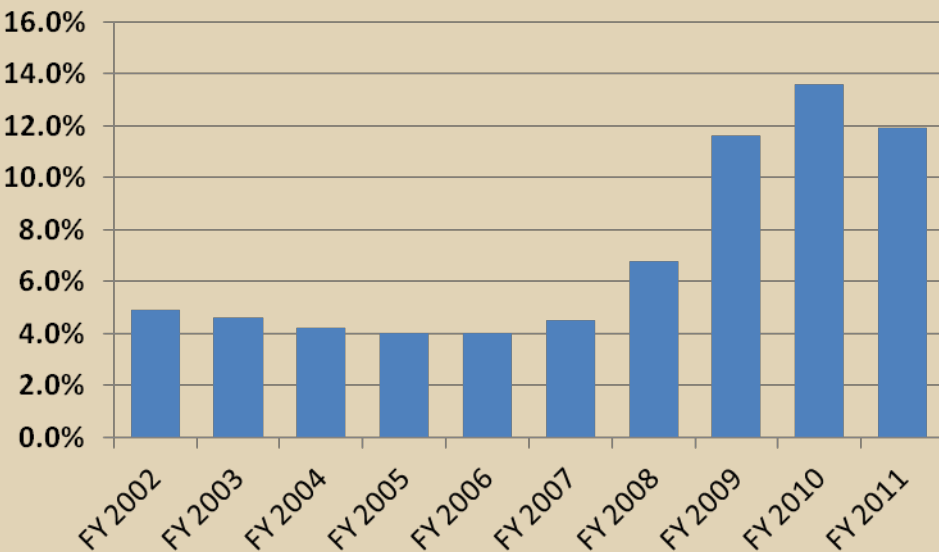
# Economic Challenges in Northern Nevada



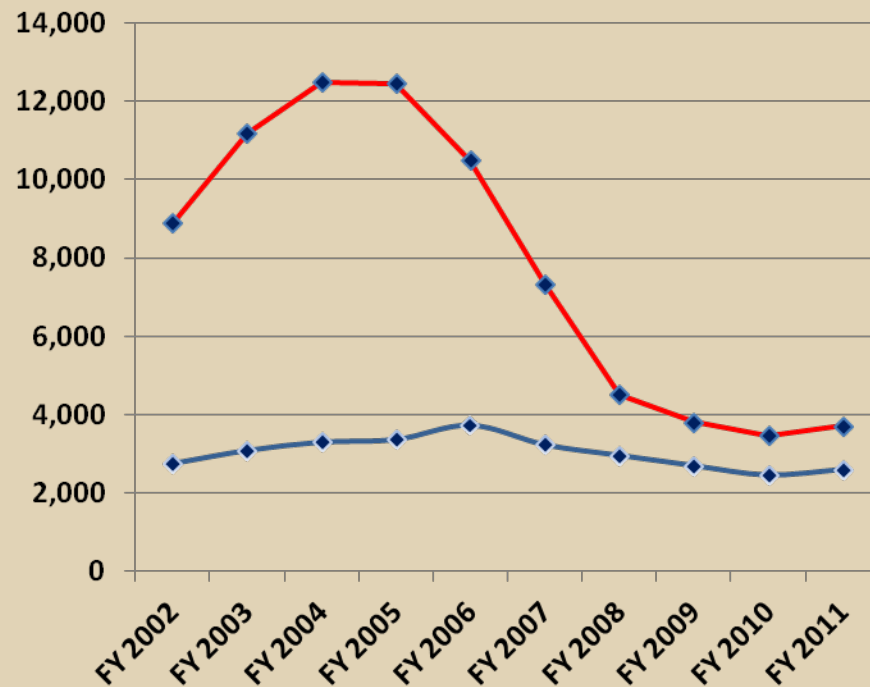
- Nevada Economy
  - Unemployment
  - Foreclosures
- Public Finances
  - Sales Tax – FY 2006 high of \$26.5 million to \$19.4 million in FY 2011; 27% difference
- Political Changes
  - Public employment
  - Transparency/responsiveness/accountability
  - Consolidation



# Economic Challenges in Northern Nevada



Unemployment Rates

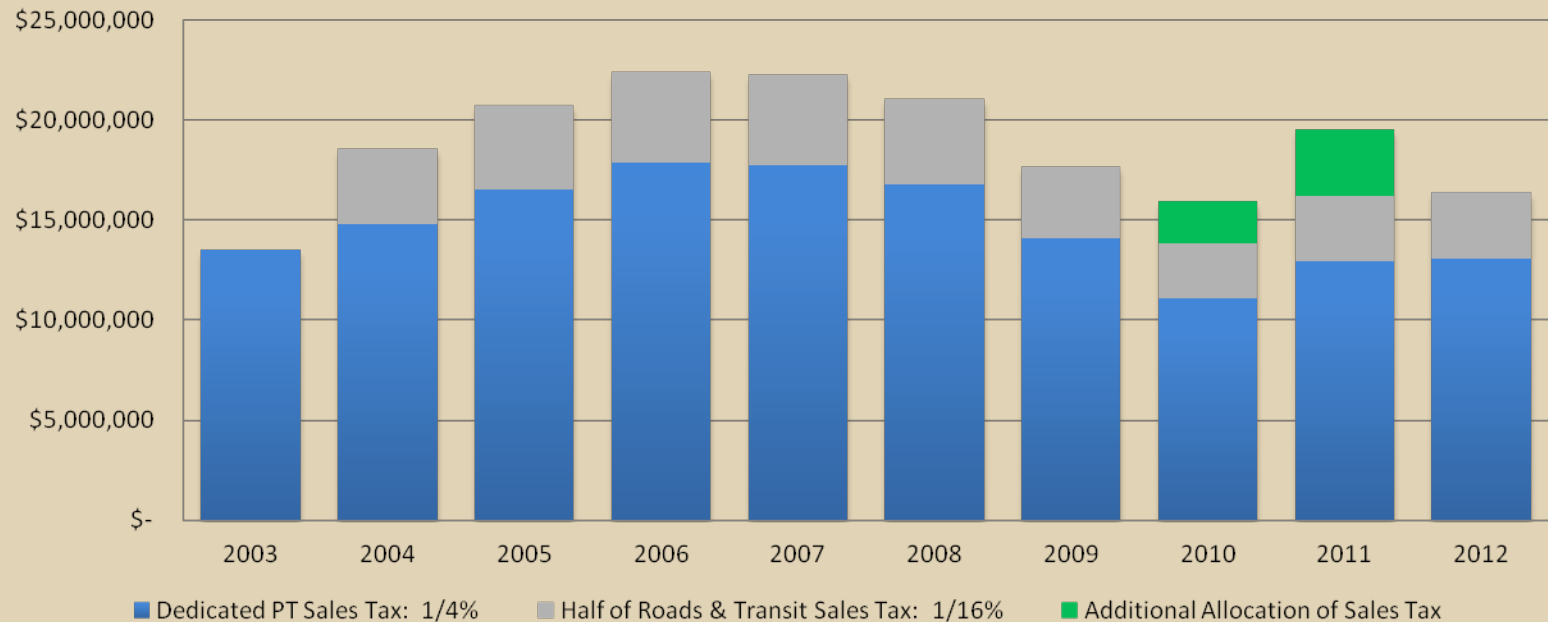


Building Permits

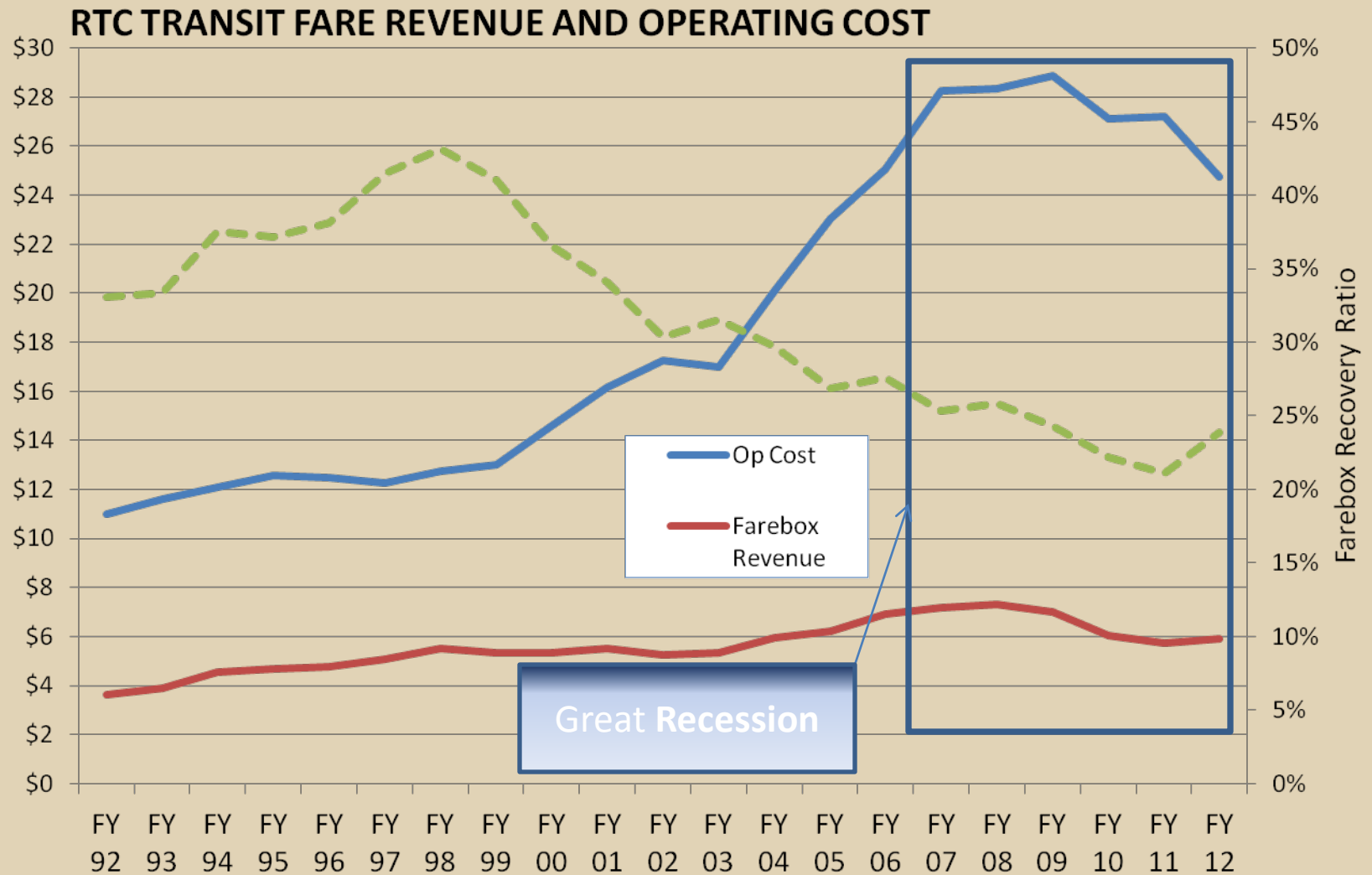
# RTC Transit Funding Trends



## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM SALES TAX REVENUES 10 YEAR HISTORY



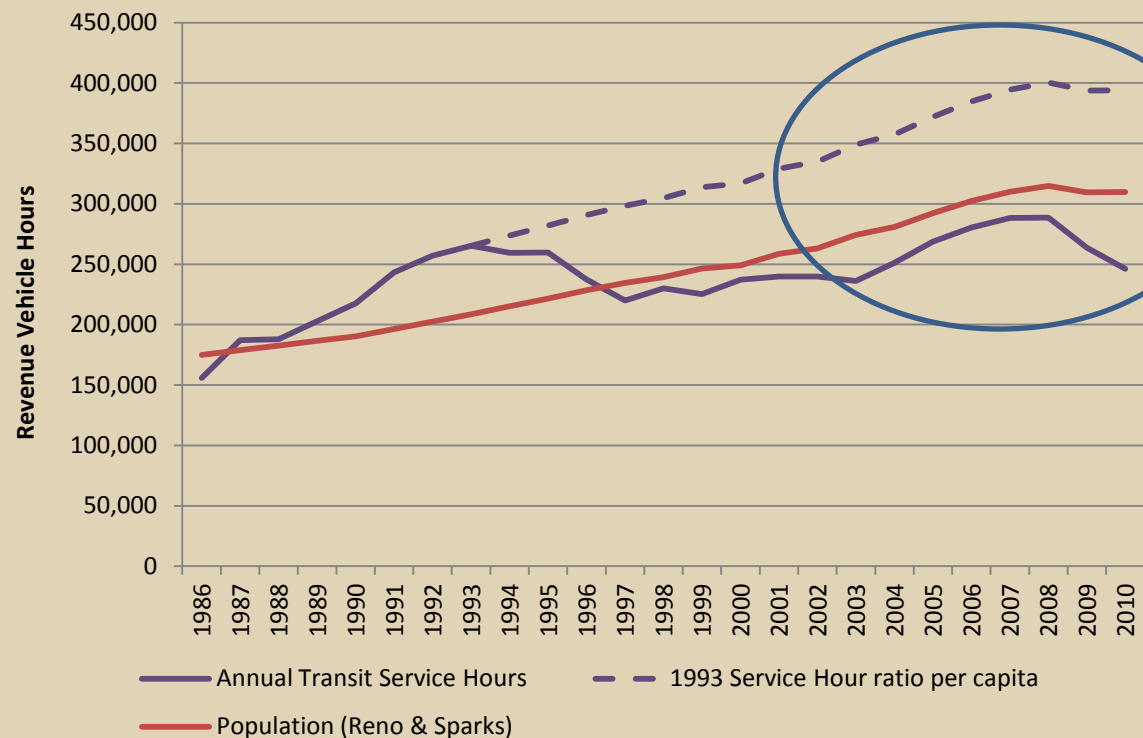
# RTC Transit Funding Trends



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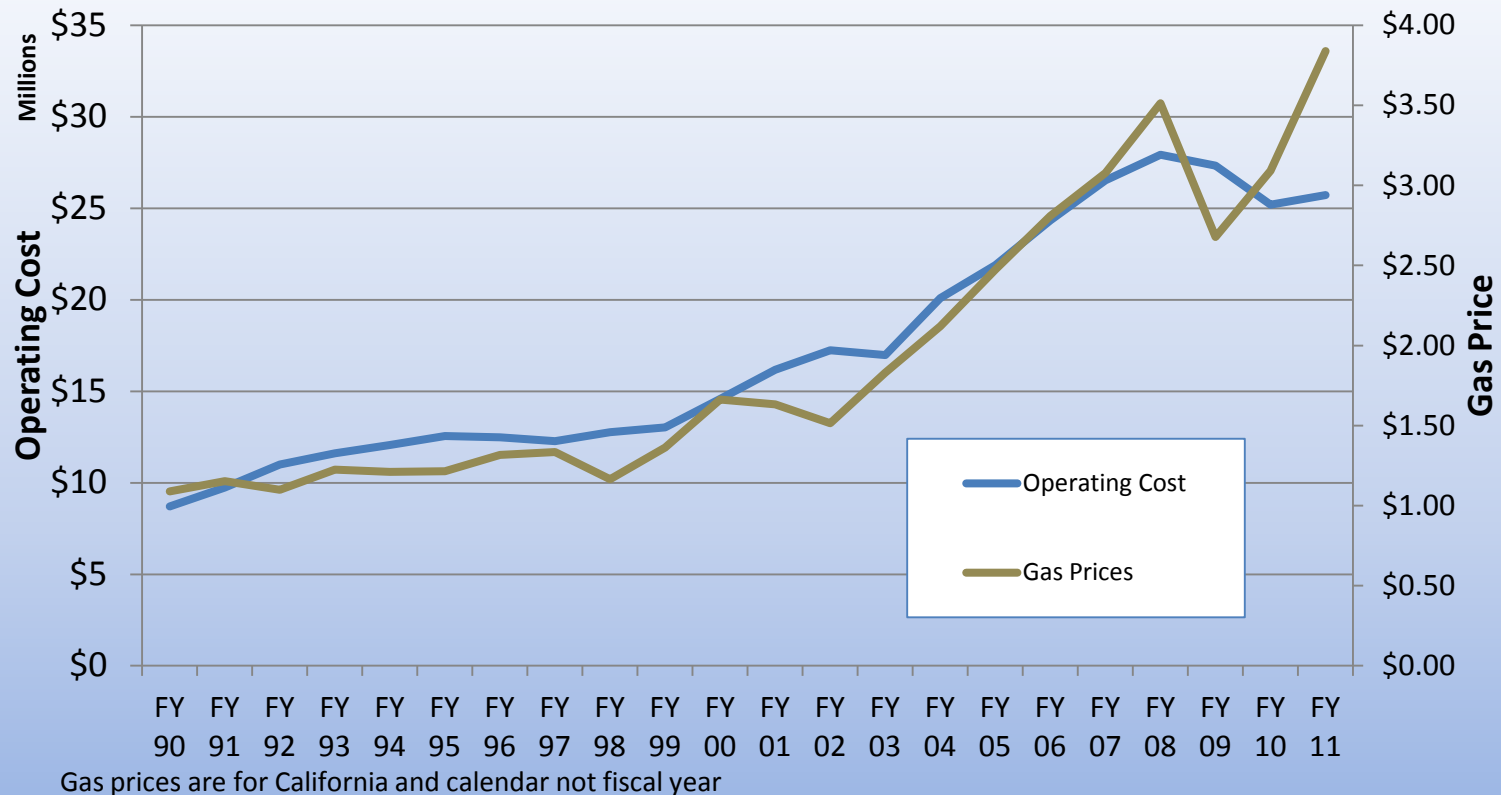
- 1.3 service hours per capita in 1993 (highest achieved at 265,000 RVH)
- Since 1993-Population: +48.5% RVH: -7.2%
- At 1993 ratio, 394,000 RVH but operating 251,000 RVH
- Transit funding in the Reno economy is not sustainable



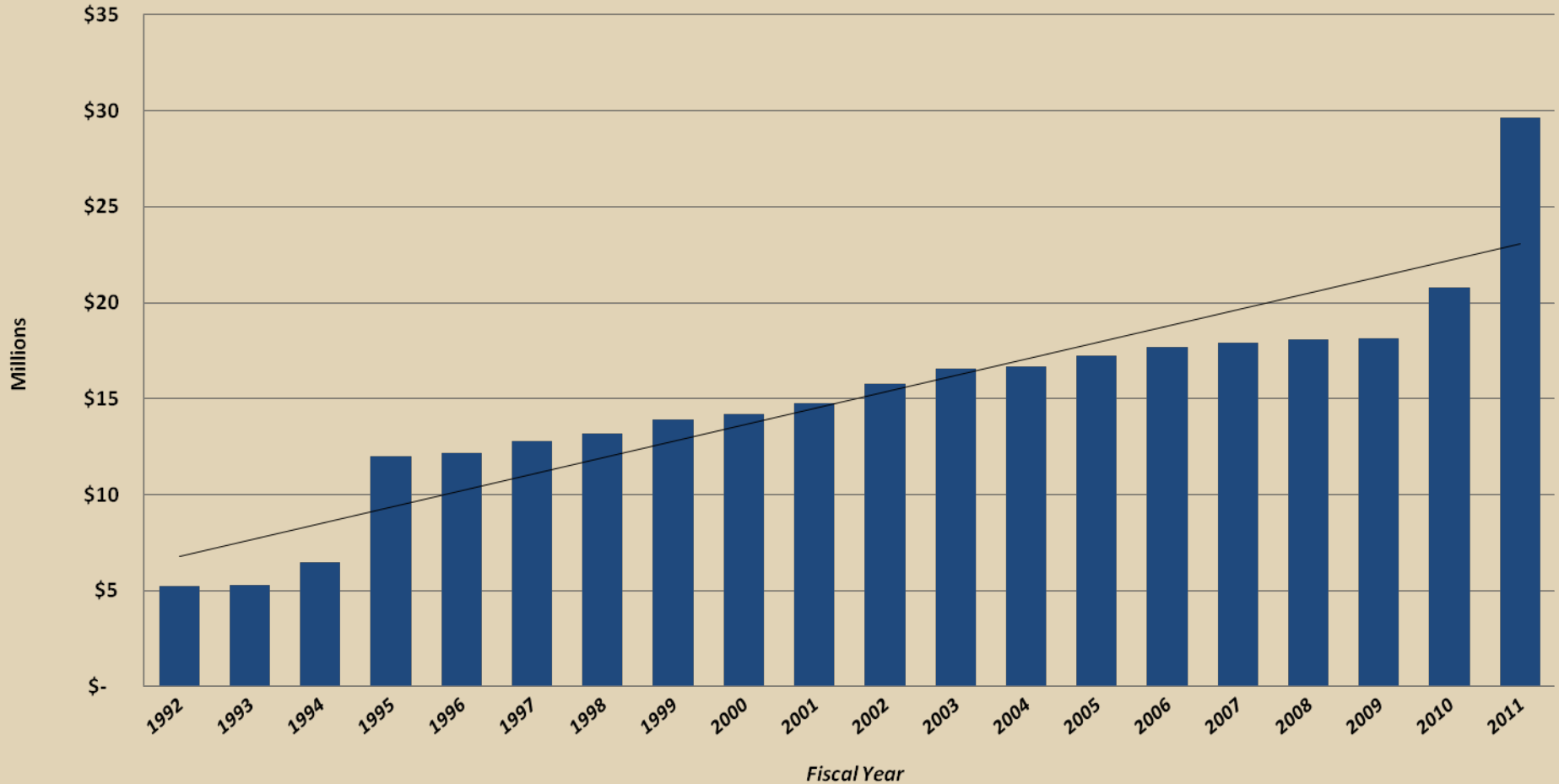
# RTC Transit Funding Trends



## RTC RIDE Operating Cost and Gas Prices



# RTC Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax Revenue



RTC 5 Fuel Tax Indexing went into effect in April 2010

# Why BRT and Why Virginia Street



- Operational challenges



*Long queue to board the bus*



*Route 1 Bus in Mixed-Flow Traffic*



*Crowded Bus*




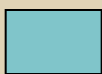




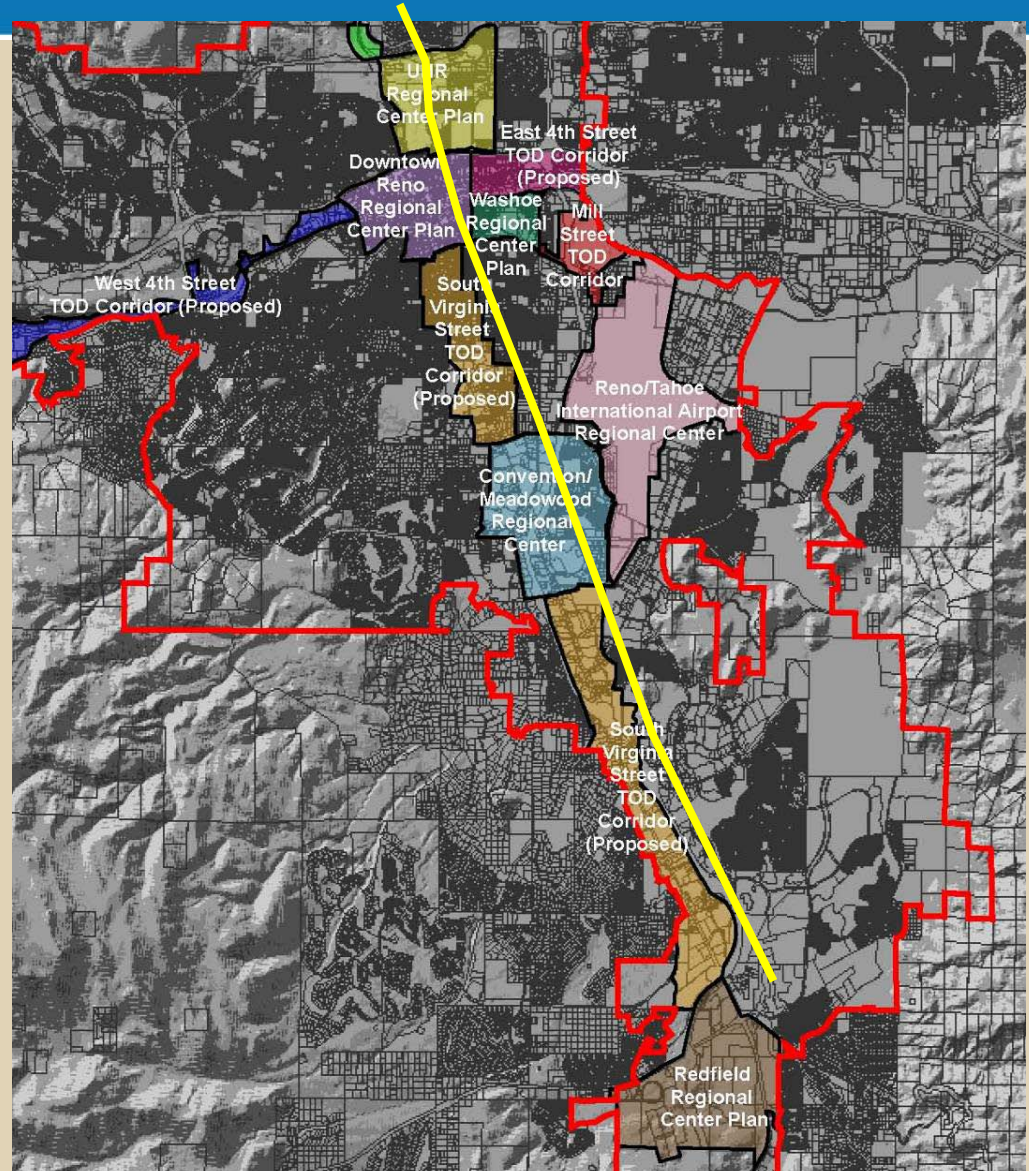
*Heavy Peak Traffic on Virginia Street*

# Supportive Land Uses



## City of Reno Master Plan Elements Transit Oriented Developments / Regional Centers

-  UNR Regional Center Plan
-  South Virginia Street TOD
-  Downtown Reno Regional Center Plan
-  Convention Center/Meadowood Regional Center Plan
-  Reno City Limits
-  Virginia Street

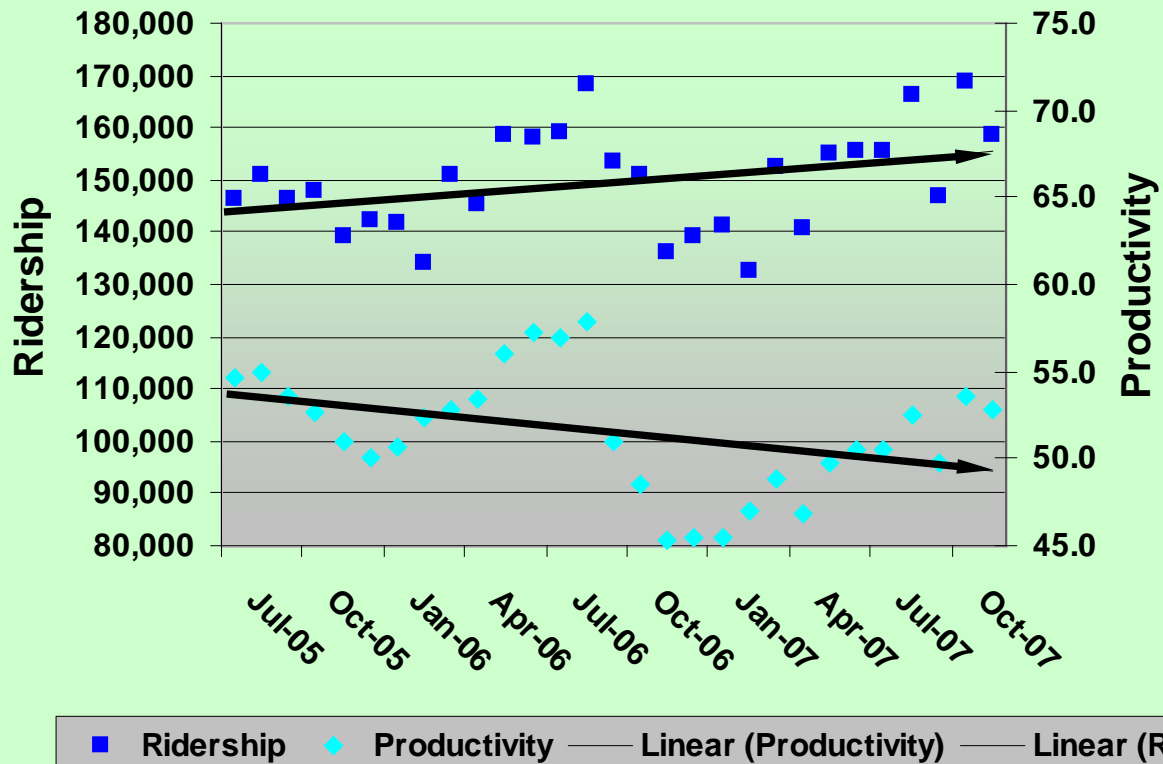




# Core Ridership Trends



## RTC RIDE ROUTE 1 OPERATING STATISTICS

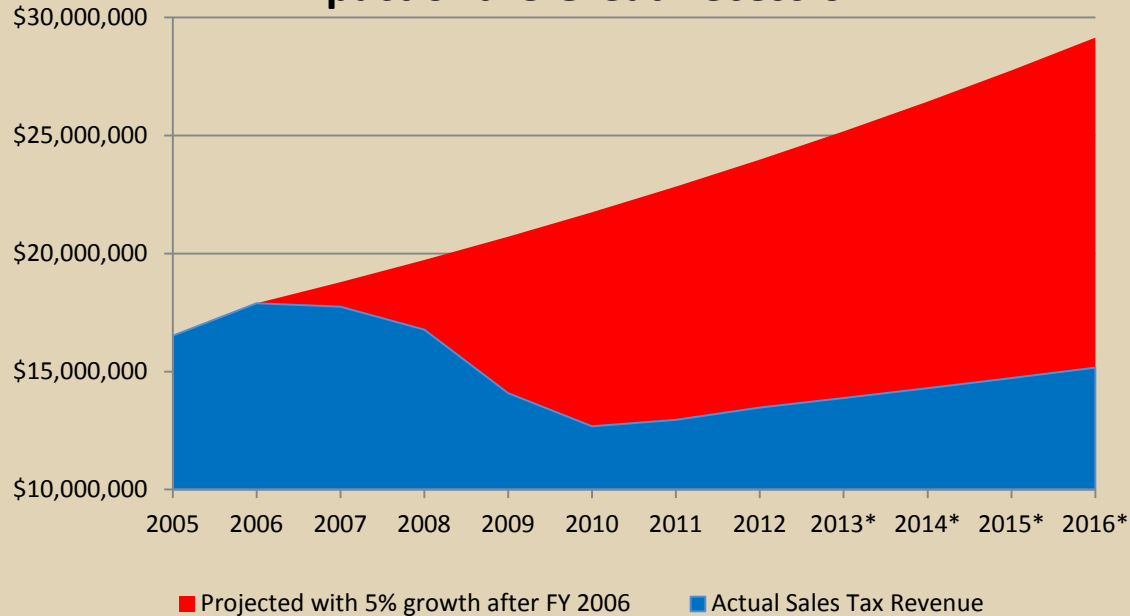


# Loss of Sales Tax Revenues



## RTC Transit Sales Tax: Impact of the Great Recession

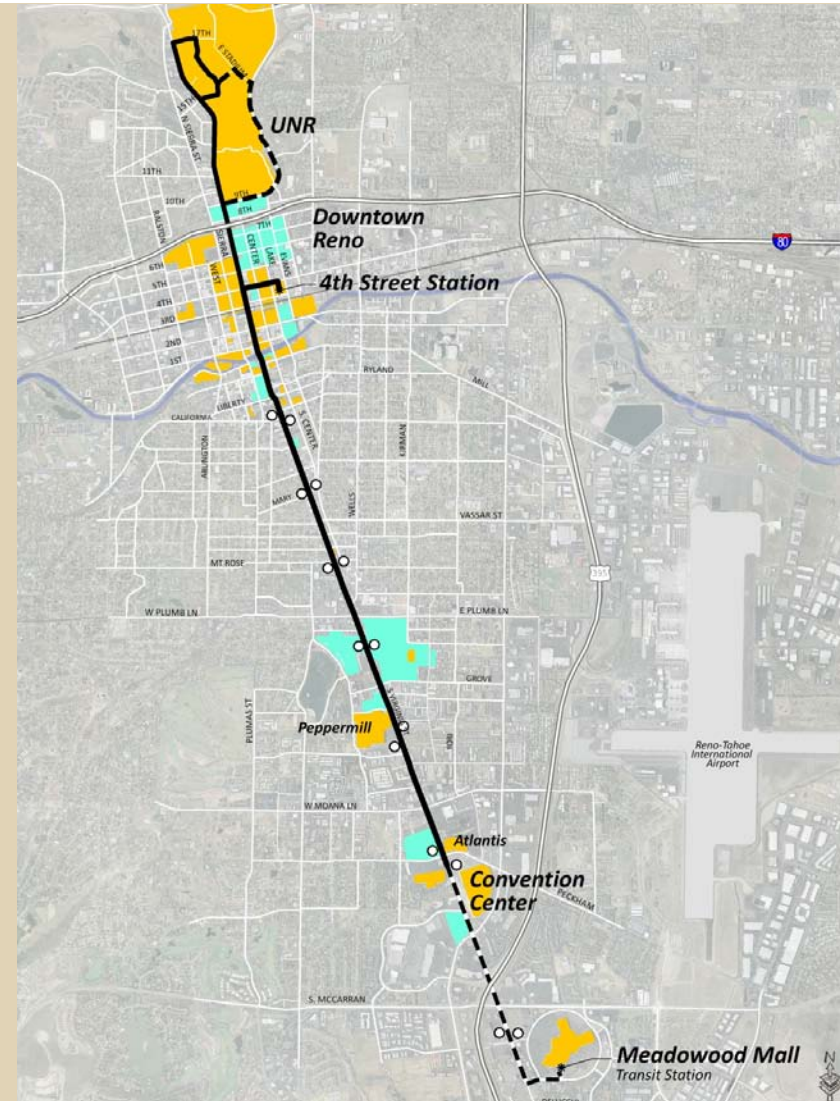
Shift revenue to  
non-sales tax  
sources



# RAPID Operating Concept



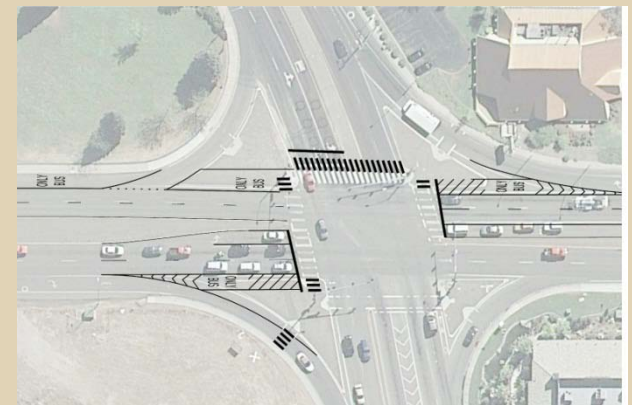
- Develop express and short haul feeder service
  - Operate a higher level of service
  - 10-minute headways between 5:30 AM and 8:00 PM.
  - New 30-minute local service, CONNECT
    - Feed RAPID express
    - Provide 24-hour service
- Save \$5.0M annually in local sales tax funds to offset remaining service cuts



# RAPID Operating Concept



- **Capital Costs: \$11,640,000**
  - 8 New Flyer Buses – \$7,400,000
  - 14 Stations – \$4,200,000
  - RIDE rebranding – \$40,000
- **Open 4<sup>th</sup> Street Station**
  - Downtown Reno transit center
- **Complete construction of 14 RAPID Stations**
- **Implement Transit Signal Priority & Queue Jump/Queue Bypass**



# RAPID Operating Concept



- Operating cost: \$4,787,000
  - RTC RAPID – \$3,307,000
    - (34,244 service hours)
  - RAPID LOCAL – \$1,480,000
    - (15,330 service hours)

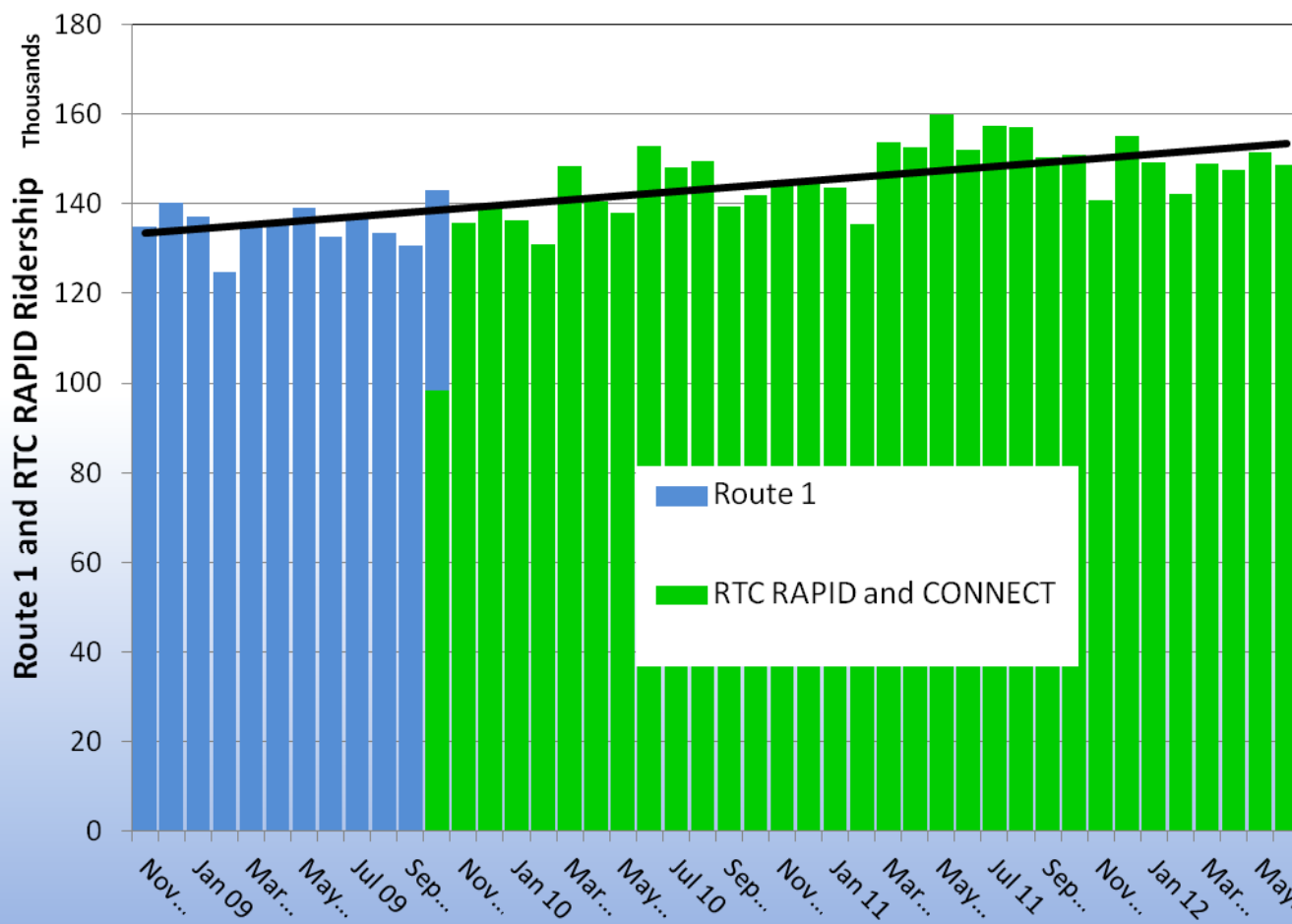
Service began October 11<sup>th</sup>  
2009



# RAPID Performance



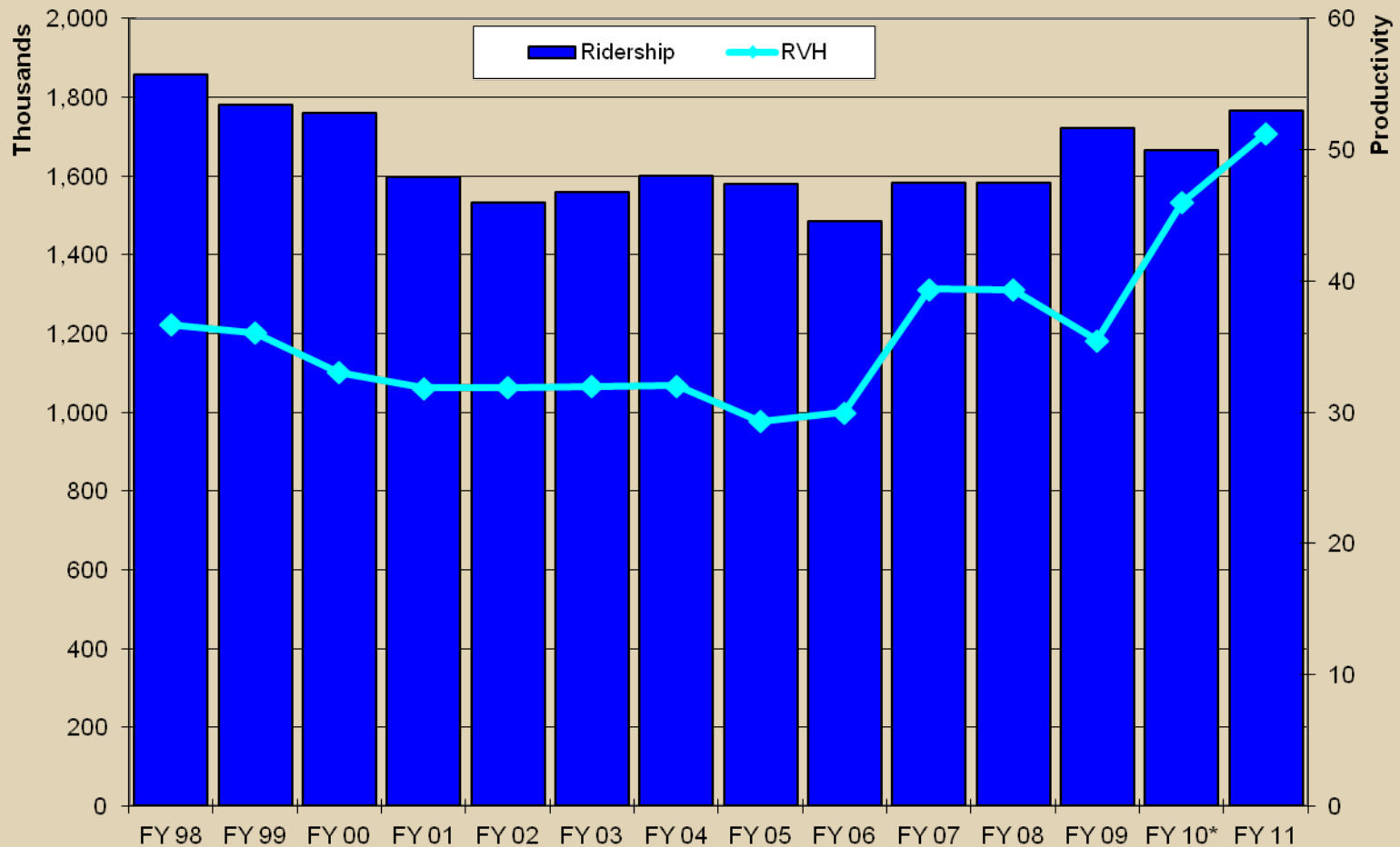
## RTC RAPID and CONNECT Ridership After Route



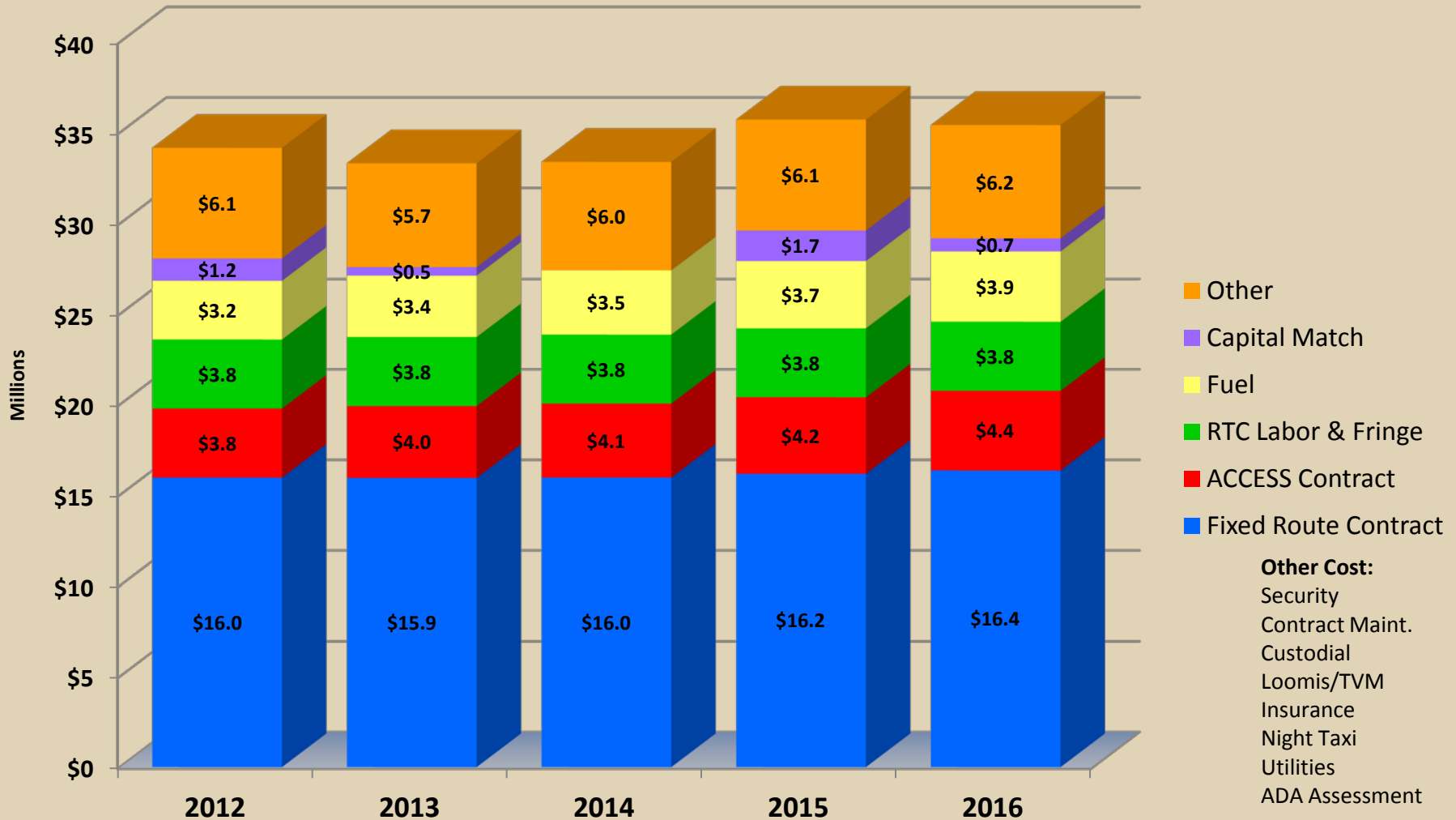
# Rapid Performance



RTC RAPID/ ROUTE 1/ 10 RIDERSHIP AND REVENUE HOURS

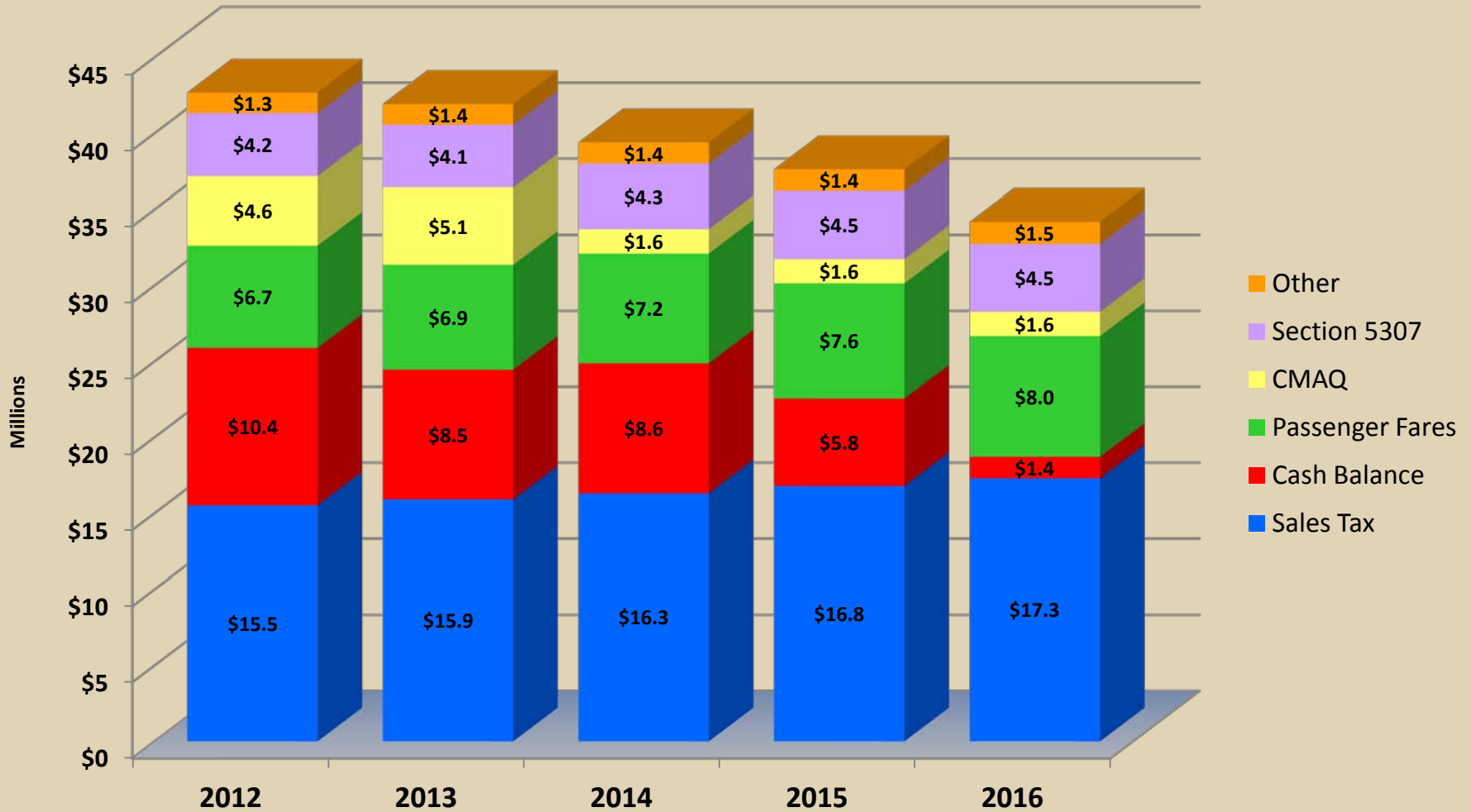


# Funding: Public Transportation Expenses





# RAPID Performance: Public Transportation Revenues



# Assessment



- Operational challenges overcome
  - Productivity and ridership increased
- Stations reinforce supportive land uses and compliment TOD efforts of the City of Reno
- Cost cutting measures have helped but revenue is still going down
- CMAQ funding helped bridge the deepest part of the Great Recession; yet
- Funding challenges still exist

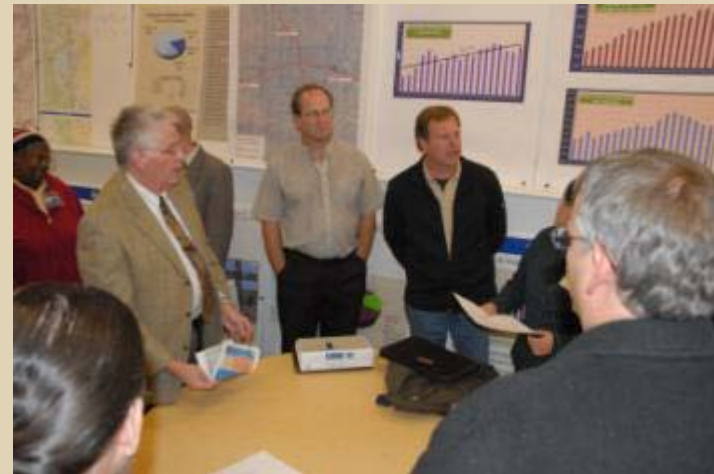


# Going Forward: RTP Update



Develop community-based vision to address changing needs

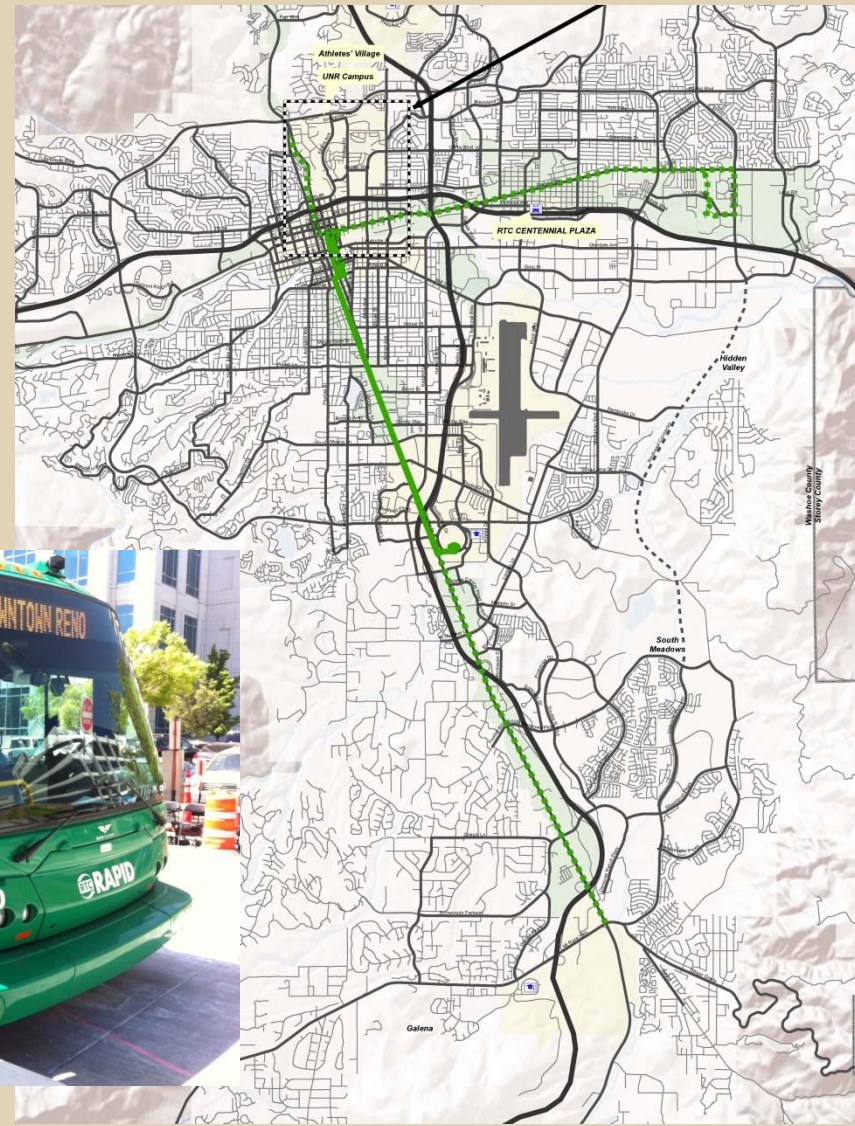
- Economic development and diversification
- Safe and healthy communities
- Sustainability
- Increased travel choices



# Going Forward: RAPID Extensions



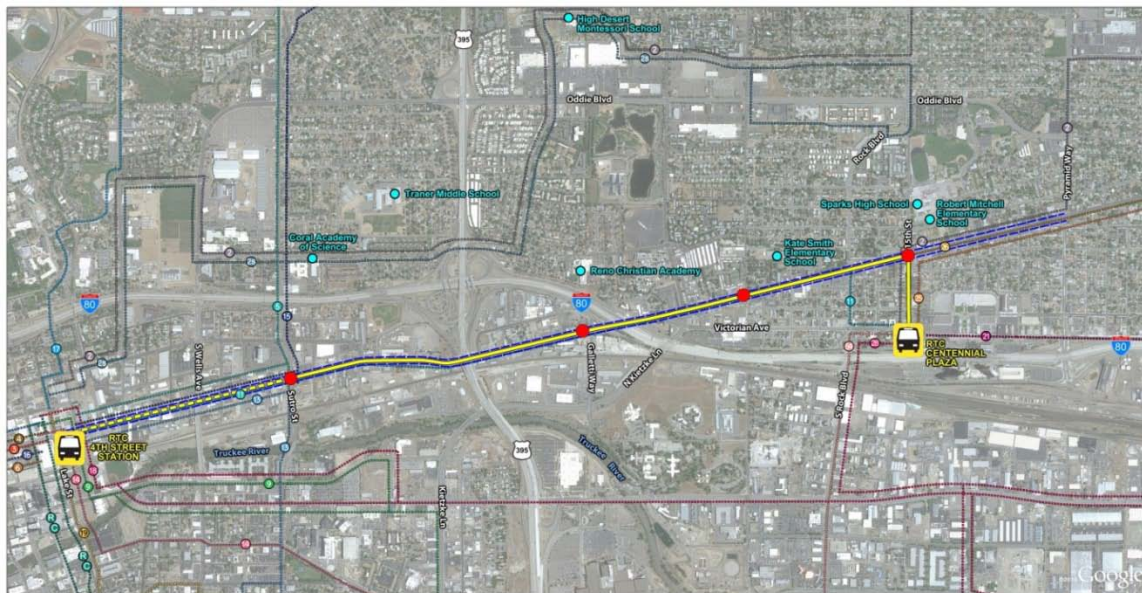
- Expand RAPID to UNR, Legends & Sierra Summit/Redfield



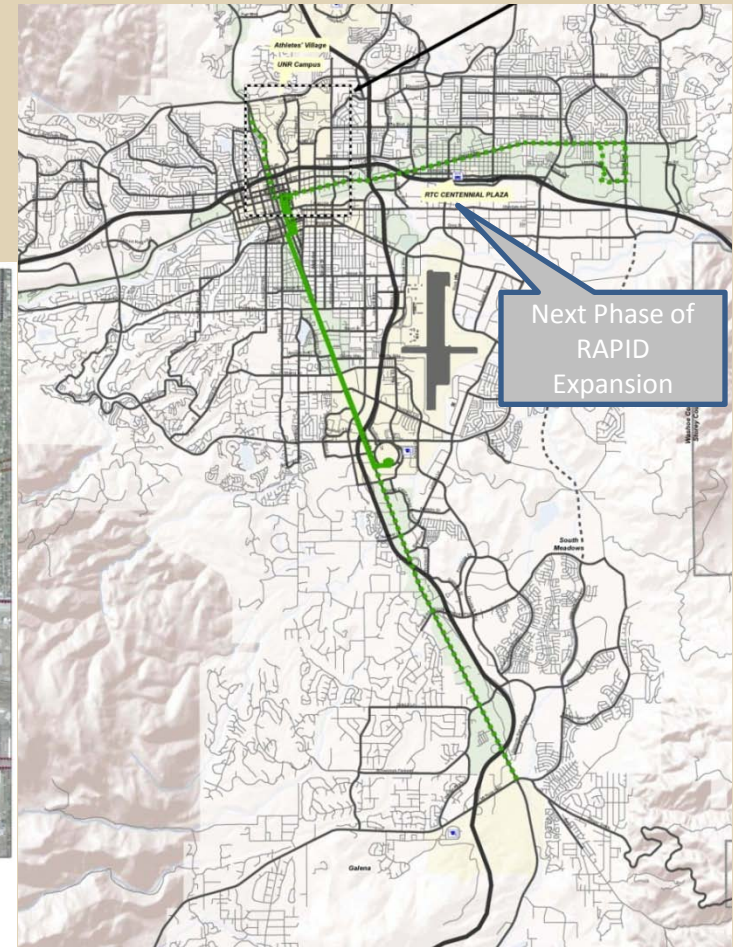
# Going Forward: 4<sup>th</sup> Street/Prater Way



- RAPID type service between 4<sup>th</sup> STREET STATION & CENTENNIAL PLAZA



- LEGEND**
- Proposed Enhanced Station
  - Proposed Bike Lanes
  - Proposed RAPID Route
  - Proposed RAPID Route (Eastbound Bus Only Lane)
  - Existing School
  - Existing Bus Routes



# Going Forward: New Technology



Proterra floor height is close to BRT station platform height



Proterra vehicles present the first opportunity for Reno to deploy an advanced technology vehicle . With a 24 mpg equivalent, the vehicles may hold an opportunity to substantially reduce RTC's fuel bill