



# 2013 / 2014 Federal Needs





MAYOR  
*Geno Martini*

CITY COUNCIL  
*Julia Ratti, Ward I*  
*Ed Lawson, Ward II*  
*Ron Smith, Ward III*  
*Mike Carrigan, Ward IV*  
*Ron Schmitt, Ward V*

CITY ATTORNEY  
*Chet Adams*

## Message from the Mayor

On behalf of the people of the City of Sparks, I'd like to thank you for your continued service to our state and nation.

In June 2007, the City of Sparks Team equaled 645 dedicated employees. Today, the City of Sparks has 445 full-time employees, a third less of the workforce that we had just a little more than five years ago.

Our city is no different from other cities across Nevada. We all share several common denominators. When revenues are on the decline, cities are forced to deal with the reality of less money with which to run government operations, fewer revenues to provide the services residents want and need and which they have become accustomed. Nearly five years ago the harsh reality of the new economy put us face-to-face with the most common of revenue-saving remedies. When cities are forced to deal with less money, tough choices have to be made. This recession brought with it several potential and unpopular possibilities.

Sparks leaders were forced to face the potential loss of vital programs and services the people of Sparks had become accustomed to enjoying. Postponement of the purchase of essential equipment became a harsh reality for many departments, including our fire and police departments.

In four key planks, this document outlines the priority needs for Sparks that can be brought to fruition through federal intervention. The City of Sparks is committed to working with our leaders in Washington D.C. to provide the resources our city needs to carry out the municipal services our residents require.

Thank you for your review and consideration of support.

Geno R. Martini  
Mayor



(left to right) Council Member Ratti, Council Member Lawson, Council Member Smith, Mayor Martini, Council Member Carrigan, Council Member Schmitt

## Financial Highlights

Three primary sources comprise approximately 89 percent of the City of Sparks total General Fund revenue.

- 1) Property Tax revenue is expected to remain flat in FY '14 at \$18.2 million, which is \$5.3 million below the peak in FY '09.
- 2) Consolidated & Fair Share Tax revenue (primarily sales tax) is expected to increase 2.5 percent over FY'13 estimates, but still down 28.5 percent or \$7.3 million since it peaked in FY '06.
- 3) Business Licenses and Permits revenue is expected to increase 3.3 percent over FY'13 estimates, but still down 19 percent or \$2.3 million since it peaked in FY '07.

The City's General Fund ending fund balance budgeted for FY '14 is \$3.4 million. This is a \$6.2 million or a 64 percent reduction from the \$9.6 million in FY'07 when the recession began.

The City of Sparks is currently operating at 1996 staffing levels.

## Plank 1: PUBLIC SAFETY

The City's top priority lies with its adopted Strategic Goal #1, "Promote the safety of our residents, businesses, and visitors."

**Sparks Police Department** – The Sparks Police Department has 1.14 officers per 1,000 residents. This equates to approximately one officer per 1,000 residents. The desired ratio is about two officers per 1,000 residents.

Sparks officers are routinely responding to an increasing number of community-generated calls for service, and have little time for routine patrol and other proactive policing strategies. A total of 56 more police officers are required to meet the national average for a city the size of Sparks.



The Sparks Police Department has partnered with the Reno Police Department and Washoe County Sheriff's office and has submitted a joint application for the federal COPS (Community Oriented Policing Strategies) grant. Sparks is requesting funding for five (5) new police officers.



**Sparks Fire Department** - The Sparks Fire Department requires new self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). The Department's current SCBAs are outdated and in dire need of replacement. Replacing all 80 SCBAs equate to \$480,000 (\$6,000 each).

## Plank 2: COMMUNITY ASSETS

**Truckee River Flood Control Project** – Clearly one of the highest priorities for the City to protect from flooding is the Sparks industrial area, which contributes to nearly 25,000 jobs, along with protection to the Reno/Tahoe International Airport and areas throughout the Truckee Meadows, including downtown Reno. The Army Corps of Engineers appears to have the potential to move Sparks closer toward its flood control goal. The Corps is considering a 50-year plan versus a locally preferred 100-year plan. The Corps's plan would require \$160 million in federal funding for a 50-year plan, which leaves the remaining funds, approximately \$160 to \$200 million, to be obtained from local sources in order to provide for the 100-year plan.



**Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility (TMWRF)** – TMWRF, jointly owned by the Cities of Sparks and Reno, and operated by Sparks, has provided service to residents for a half century. Sparks' five-year capital spending plan currently calls for a \$50 million investment in the aging facility, but falls short of funding required for major overhauls. Increasing federal regulatory standards and the need to implement treatment technology programs will require approximately \$30 million.

**Larry D. Johnson Community Center** – The next phase of the popular Community Center calls for a gymnasium and associated facilities. Estimated capital cost is estimated at \$3 to \$5 million.



**CDBG and HOME** - The City of Sparks strongly supports the continuation of the Community Development Block Grant and HOME Programs at HUD. CDBG and HOME are the workhorses at the local level, providing vital funding and control to communities to address local needs in the areas of economic development, housing and vital public services. Further reductions to these programs have a negative impact on our community's most vulnerable residents.

**CDBG** - Sparks' CDBG program has increased 9 percent (\$573,875 in FY 2012-13) to \$631,300 for FY 2013/ 2014, likely a result of the slower economic recovery compared to the rest of the nation. The allocations reflect the 5 percent reduction due to sequestration and the impact of annual changes to individual FY 2013 appropriation levels and the formula calculations based on the 2011 American Community Survey data as noted below.

<b>POVERTY RATE IN SPARKS</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
All Families	9.5
Families with Children under 18	14.6
Families with Children under 5	15.3
Families with single female-head of household w/children under 18	31.4
Families with single female-head of household w/children under 5	38.0
All People	12.9

Sparks utilizes CDBG funds to partner with the City of Reno and Washoe County to support Continuum of Care (a strategic planning initiative to move persons and families from homeless to shelter), the Silver State Fair Housing Council and the Community Assistance Center in Reno (homeless shelter).

The City of Sparks also utilizes a portion of its CDBG funding for rehabilitation of homes owned and occupied by low and moderate-income households. The Housing Rehabilitation Program is comprised of two elements:

1. Housing Rehabilitation Deferred Loan Program – assist qualifying single-family homeowners with 0 percent interest deferred loans up to \$20,000 to perform essential repairs of their primary residence.
2. Emergency Repair Grant Programs – assist qualifying single-family homeowners with a one-time grant up to \$2,500 to address life safety emergencies and ADA modifications of their primary residence.

Sparks invests the majority of its CDBG funding to upgrade aging infrastructure in Sparks' older, low and moderate-income neighborhoods. In FY 2012 / 2013, the City invested \$310,154 to improve the pedestrian environment along several blocks of 5th Street. This included new sidewalks, curb and gutter, and ADA accessibility improvements. In FY 2013 / 2014 the City anticipates investments exceeding \$500,000 for similar improvements on an adjacent street in this same neighborhood.

**HOME** - The City of Sparks continues to participate in the HUD funded Washoe County HOME Consortium (WCHC). In early 2013 a private developer began construction of a 43-unit affordable housing development (Aspen Village) located in the Oddie Boulevard corridor, one of Sparks' neighborhoods most in need of new investment. In addition to HOME funds, this project, with much of the affordable housing developed in this region over the last 10 years, is possible because of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program which provides federal tax credits in exchange for private investment in these projects. Unfortunately, the LIHTC is currently threatened. Most recently a bi-partisan tax reform proposal seeks to eliminate "all special [tax] provisions in the form of exclusions, deductions and credits and other preferences" unless they have "sufficient support" from Senators.

**CEMETARY** – The City of Sparks, working with Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Veterans Administration (VA), is exploring the possibility of developing a new cemetery. This facility would most likely accommodate veterans as well as other citizens from the region. Currently we are considering the options for land acquisition and facility management and are working with the BLM to identify potential sites including legal descriptions. Our goal is to ensure a nearby place to lay our Sparks' citizens, our Nation's veterans and their family member, to rest with honor and respect.

## Plank 3: SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

Sparks has made tremendous strides in building renewable energy (photovoltaic) projects at several locations around the City. The City is committed to continuing efforts to reduce energy costs through renewable energy projects, though funding sources to construct these projects are difficult to secure because the Nevada Energy Rebate program has been limited.

For those sites with solar energy, in 2012 the City reduced its power bill by more than \$86,000, a decrease of 56 percent.



Sparks Police Department Photovoltaic Project

**Photovoltaic Projects** - To continue the trend in reducing energy bills for the City of Sparks, savings can be put toward more critical services such as public safety. The following City facilities have the capacity to accommodate photovoltaic systems:

- Sparks Fire Stations Two and Three
- Alf Sorensen Community Center
- Parks and Recreation Center

Estimated cost to construct and install is \$750,000.

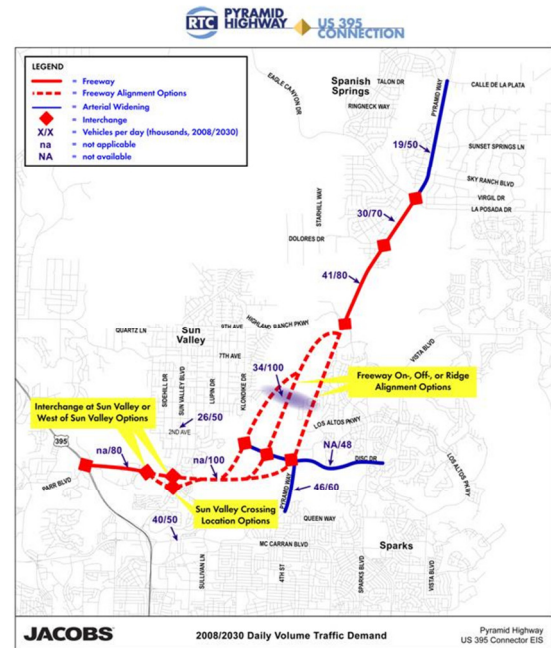
**Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility (TMWRF)** - In addition to necessary improvements noted in the Community Asset Plank, TMWRF seeks to lower energy and operational costs and to be energy self-sufficient in the future. To achieve these goals TMWRF is looking to retrofit the facility with a variety of different arrangements, estimated to cost between \$21 and \$38 million and making the plant 45 percent to 98 percent energy independent. As a result, the plant could save \$1.2 to \$4.9 million a year in energy and operational costs.



## Plank 4: TRANSPORTATION

**Transportation** – The City of Sparks supports maintaining and / or increasing federal transportation funds to support the region’s Metropolitan Planning Organization (Washoe County Regional Transportation Commission) to continue to fund priority projects for Sparks.

**Pyramid Highway / US 395 Connector** – Development in north Sparks and Spanish Springs has experienced dramatic growth since 2000 and has overwhelmed transportation facilities. The Connector is a component of significant future improvements planned on Pyramid Highway between McCarran and La Posada Drive. The Connector is designed to alleviate pressure on north / south traffic in Sparks and improve east / west connectivity from Pyramid to US 395 and east to Vista Boulevard. Total project costs are estimated at \$150-\$200 million. The first phase could be underway in early 2016.



**Interstate 11** – Congress recognized the importance of the US 93 Corridor between Phoenix and Las Vegas and designated it as the future Interstate 11 in the recent transportation authorization bill, *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act* (MAP-21).

Studies have presumed that if extended north of Las Vegas through the intermountain west to the Canadian border, the corridor has the potential to become a major multimodal route. Future alignments includes the segment between Las Vegas northward, with possible scenarios to include connectivity through Sparks/Reno.

Connecting Las Vegas to the Sparks-Reno region would support economic diversification efforts by improving linkage from northwestern Nevada to southern Nevada, as well as other major metropolitan areas between the Mexican and Canadian borders.