

Project Narrative

Destination Background: The tourism economy in Carson City, Carson Valley, and Virginia City is driven by a range of critical elements that leverage our unique historical, cultural, and natural assets. Northern Nevada has spent the last decade integrating public art into the landscape, creating an arts destination. Along with galleries, artisans, annual art and music festivals, and a creative class, we will showcase a unique experience for the cultural traveler.

As the state capital of Nevada, Carson City is rich in historical attractions. Key sites include the Nevada State Museum, the Nevada State Capitol, and the historic Kit Carson Trail. These attractions draw visitors interested in the state's political and historical heritage. The downtown area, with its preserved historic buildings and unique shops, contributes to the tourism appeal, offering a quaint, small-town atmosphere.

The Carson Valley is renowned for its picturesque landscapes, including lush valleys and stunning mountain views. The natural beauty of the area appeals to tourists interested in photography, nature walks, and scenic drives. Towns like Minden and Gardnerville in Carson Valley offer a laid-back atmosphere with local shops, historic buildings, and a slower pace of life that attracts those looking to escape more crowded destinations.

Virginia City is famous for its mining history, culture, and preserved 19th-century atmosphere. Attractions like the Comstock Lode and many historic buildings and museums provide insight into the area's gold and silver rush era. The Wild West ambiance of Virginia City, with its old-timey shops and saloons, provides a unique experience that stands out from more modern tourist destinations. With a deep history in the arts as a destination during the Victorian era and again in the 1960's and 1970's, it continues to be a hub for artists and musicians, including a significant literary scene, artist retreats and communities such as St. Mary's Art Center, and diverse performing arts at Piper's Opera House and the Red Dog Saloon, among others.

Together, all three areas will benefit from an alliance leveraging their historical significance and arts and cultural heritage to attract visitors interested in learning about the past and experiencing unique historic settings. Natural landscapes and recreational opportunities across our region provide diverse options for tourists looking to engage in outdoor adventures. Events and festivals play a significant role in drawing visitors and enhancing the local tourism experience, creating opportunities for community engagement and cultural celebration.

The Cultural Corridor will use the developing arts and culture scene as an added element in our multifaceted tourism economy to attract and engage visitors to Carson City, Carson Valley, and Virginia City.

Organizations: The Cultural Corridor has significant opportunities to develop the arts community and local creative economy through collaborative, authentic experiences that can be marketed as one destination.

The Cultural Corridor will collaborate with the initial steering committee members and other organizations, as listed below, to name a few:

Carson City: Carson City Parks, Recreation, & Open Space, Children’s Museum of Northern Nevada, Nevada Artists Association, Nevada State Railroad Museum, Nevada State Museum, The Stewart Indian School Cultural Center & Museum, V&T Railway, and Visit Carson City.

Carson Valley: Buffalo Creek Art Center, Carson Valley Arts Council, Carson Valley Inn, Carson Valley Visitors Authority, Carson Valley Museum & Cultural Center, Milazzo Artworks, Main Street Gardnerville, and Teri Sweeny Art.

Virginia City & Gold Hill: Historic Fourth Ward School Museum, Houston Boot Company, Piper’s Opera House, St. Mary’s Art Center, Virginia City Gallery of the West, and Virginia City Tourism Commission

Silver City: Silver City Arts and Silver City Resident Program

Organizations from each of these destinations were active in the community meetings over the past twelve months. Each asset brings a distinctive talent and vision to the project. The Destination Marketing Organizations have taken a back seat to allow the individual artists and those working hands on within the arts and culture to take the lead. This has already been a fruitful endeavor. Business owners and leaders from each area have been able to learn about each other’s communities and form a bond of cooperation and collaboration.

Brewery Arts Center has been a core venue for music, theater, international artist exhibitions, art and ceramic classes, poetry, and annual art, music, and heritage festivals. They have 3 buildings on campus for community use and have added 3 sculptures to the campus over the last year. The summer Levitt AMP Concert Series is free to the public and hosts an array of diverse acts from around the country, drawing thousands of attendees. They also are a key component to Sassabration, a parade and celebration of the LGBTQ+ communities of northern Nevada.

The Nevada State Museum is an incredible collection of the state’s history, heritage, and cultural importance. Carefully curated exhibits are informative and enlightening for all ages. The Museum also collaborates with other community organizations to put on significant events such as Cinco de Mayo, Dia de los Muertos, Lei Day, and the Lunar New Year Celebration.

Carson Valley Arts Council contains a rotating, local art gallery and provides arts outreach programs to area schools. They are in the process of creating an arts incubator and event/entertainment space that will be a draw for regional and national acts.

Main Street Gardnerville has a yearly calendar of events including the Heritage Park Garden Spring Forum & Expo, farmers markets, community paint nights, movies in the park, parade of lights, Cinco de Mayo, Dia de los Muertos and more.

The Virginia City Tourism Commission provides a platform for all the events taking place around the year. Visitors can take a step back in time and relive a brief moment from the mining booms of the 1860's. A 100-year-old boardwalk and C Street facade take people on a journey of imagination, filled with artisans creating handcrafted jewelry, boots, hats, and more. Quirky food and racing events are also a highlight that bring people far and wide to the magical jewel of the Sierra.

St. Mary's Art Center in Virginia City has been a standout in bringing a diverse, engaging, and eclectic mix of exhibitions, classes, art and writing retreats, and community driven experiences for locals and visitors to enjoy.

Individual artists and artisans, Teri Sweeny, Joe Milazzo, and Jake Houston have brought needed experience from the sector of the creative economy that the Cultural Corridor wants to build upon. They have successfully, over years, established themselves as entrepreneurs and experts in their field. They will have a viewpoint and guided opinions to help others in the region turn their creative expressions into a business model to compliment and improve the visitor experience.

The Resident Artist Programs in Silver City host art exhibitions and bring artists from all over the country to spend time within the community and to create a body of work. This enriches local interactions and creates brand ambassadors returning to their respective homes.

Each city in the Cultural Corridor has contributing factors for a successful integration. Carson City, Gardnerville, Genoa, Gold Hill, Minden, Silver City, and Virginia City are separate but equal agents for an authentic and appealing tourism experience.

Through community outreach, surveys, and meetings, the Cultural Corridor will ask for input before any key decision-making. The process has already strengthened bonds between organizations, individuals, and city & county administrators. The majority of committee members are actively engaged in community building and will bring an array of skills to link together individual efforts into common goals and successes.

Incorporating arts and culture into the rich history, heritage, and cultural events are instrumental in creating a welcoming environment for a diverse demographic by emphasizing inclusivity, community engagement, and cultural representation.

Multicultural festivals like Cinco de Mayo, Dia de los Muertos, Holi, Euskal Jaiak, and Powwows highlight the diverse cultural backgrounds of the community. These festivals feature food, music, and performances from different cultures, offering residents and visitors a taste of various traditions and fostering a sense of inclusion.

Activities & Descriptions:

Design a Unique Plan: The Cultural Corridor is a one-of-a-kind proposal with opportunities attached to multiple cities, counties, and a wide variety of partner organizations. With a future strategic plan and scope of activities spanning the next ten years, along with building an infrastructure and sharing the vibrant story of the region, the individuality of each has the potential to significantly and positively impact both the local community, artists, makers, and visitors.

Leverage Relationships: Our alliance of passionate arts and culture advocates and creatives is destined to offer a special brand. This collaboration of incredible resources and marketing will attract visitors from the Reno, Sparks, Lake Tahoe, surrounding markets and beyond. Being an arts and culture tourism draw will expand the burgeoning arts scene in Northern Nevada, encouraging visitors to extend their visits to include our destinations.

Through relationships and mutual passion showcasing the local art, culture, history, and heritage, the corridor will foster a sense of pride and identity among residents, while providing a platform for local artists and cultural organizations to present their work and narratives.

Preserving and highlighting historic sites and cultural landmarks, contributes to the conservation of the community's heritage. A curated addition of murals, sculpture, and wayfinding signage will tell the stories of our region's history and heritage.

The Cultural Corridor will have a transformative impact on both the local community and visitors. For residents, it promotes economic growth, community engagement, educational opportunities, and urban revitalization. For visitors, it enhances the attractiveness of the destination, offers convenient access to a range of cultural experiences, and facilitates cultural exchange. We will succeed with thoughtful planning and collaboration between community stakeholders, cultural organizations, city and county administrators, artists, performers, artisans, and local businesses.

Non-profit Formation: The Cultural Corridor will form its own non-profit alliance. A new alliance will bring substantial benefits to our arts and culture plan by expanding community engagement, diversifying resources, and enhancing programmatic offerings. We expect increased visibility, collaborative opportunities, and advocacy efforts that will strengthen the overall cultural landscape of our region. This new organization will have expanded abilities to generate funding support from grants, campaigns, and donations.

This new alliance will share resources, knowledge, and expertise from our partner organizations, contributing to a more robust and collaborative arts and culture ecosystem. We will be able to focus on underserved or niche communities, thereby expanding the reach of arts and culture to previously underrepresented groups.

Establish a Board of Directors: The board of directors will work with the Executive Director to develop a Strategic (10-year) Plan, establish the Mission, appropriate bylaws, policies, and provide oversight of the Executive Director. This board will include members from each of the three primary regions and have direct influence in the development, evolution, and success of the cultural corridor.

Engage an Executive Director: Another critical step for establishing a solid foundation and ensuring this new entity's success is to hire an Executive Director. This role will provide leadership and vision, driving the mission, goals, and long-term objectives, and ensuring that the non-profit

has a clear and actionable plan. They will develop operational systems and establish programming and processes that align with the non-profit goals and regulatory requirements.

The Executive Director will be responsible for leading fundraising efforts, including grant writing, donor cultivation, and organizing fundraising events. Their expertise is crucial for securing the financial resources needed to sustain and grow the organization.

The director will serve as the primary representative of the organization, building relationships with community leaders, artists, makers, and partners, sponsors, and other stakeholders. They will take the lead in implementing the 10-year destination plan and other initiatives.

Develop a Website: Included in our request is funding to support professional services to create a robust, engaging, branded website and in-web app, connecting the resources, events, creatives, and programming by providing various tools and resources for engagement, growth, and management.

A well-designed website also makes the Cultural Corridor easily accessible to a global audience and provides additional visibility to local artists and businesses, reaching and raising awareness for an audience that will want to visit the Corridor in person. The website will provide detailed information about upcoming events, exhibitions, workshops, and tours, including schedules, descriptions, and ticketing options. It can host educational content, such as articles, videos, and virtual tours, that supports the institution's mission and engages users in learning.

The website will facilitate online donations, memberships, and other forms of financial support and engagement. The platforms can be used for targeted marketing campaigns and analytics, including email newsletters and promotional offers, attracting new visitors and retaining current supporters.

Share an Interactive App: Apps can offer personalized content based on user preferences, such as tailored event notifications, customized exhibition tours, and recommendations. Features like augmented reality (AR) tours, interactive maps, and multimedia guides can enrich the visitor experience by providing deeper engagement with exhibits and content.

In case of sudden changes or emergencies, apps can quickly communicate important information to users.

Offer Forward-Thinking Technology: Where possible, we will integrate technology into cultural experiences to create virtual exhibitions, augmented-reality installations, and interactive digital displays. Gamification elements or interactive challenges related to exhibitions or historical, cultural sites can increase engagement and make visits more enjoyable. Visitors can purchase and store tickets, memberships, and event pass directly through the in-web app, simplifying the entry process and reducing physical touchpoints. Features like GPS-guided tours or location-based notifications enhance the visitor experience by providing relevant information based on the user's location.

The collection of data through apps, such as user behavior, preferences, and engagement patterns, will provide analytics to inform decision-making and improve services.

Our website will serve as a broad, informative platform accessible to a global audience, while the in-web app offers personalized, interactive features that can significantly enrich the in-person experience. By leveraging both platforms effectively, the Cultural Corridor will reach more people, offer a higher level of service, and build stronger connections with our audiences.

Provide Wayfinding: The development of the Cultural Corridor should include improved signage and wayfinding, making it straightforward to find attractions, amenities, and points of interest. This reduces confusion and frustration, ensuring a more enjoyable experience.

Well-designed wayfinding signs include features that cater to people with disabilities, such as braille and large, easy-to-read fonts. This makes the corridor more accessible to everyone, including those with visual impairments. Signs in multiple languages can accommodate a diverse audience, including international tourists and non-English speakers, thereby enhancing the inclusivity of the corridor.

Designed to reflect the visual identity and branding of the cultural corridor, wayfinding reinforces the theme, creating a cohesive look and feel throughout the space. This program would include educational content or interesting facts about the Cultural Corridor's features, enriching the visitor experience and providing additional context. The design of wayfinding signs will involve local artists and designers, adding a unique cultural touch and fostering community involvement in the cultural corridor's development.

Educate: The corridor will offer educational programs, workshops, and exhibitions that provide residents with opportunities to learn about their own and others' cultures, histories, and arts. Schools and youth organizations can benefit from partnerships and programs related to the Cultural Corridor, enriching educational experiences and fostering early interest in cultural and artistic pursuits.

Integrate Unique Public Art: We want to include a carefully crafted and curated public art infrastructure plan to add visual interest and artistic diversity to the corridor, breaking up monotony and creating focal points that capture attention.

Sculptures reflect the local culture, history, and values, serving as symbols of the community's heritage and identity. This creates a unique and meaningful space that resonates with both residents and visitors. Sculptures tell stories and commemorate significant events, figures, and traditions to enhance educational value.

Iconic or striking sculptures become landmarks within the Cultural Corridor, attracting visitors and encouraging them to explore the area. They become popular spots for photographs, which will increase social media visibility and word-of-mouth promotion for the Corridor.

Including sculptures provides opportunities for local and emerging artists to showcase their work, contributing to the development of the local arts scene and fostering community pride. Sculptures will be part of public art projects that involve community input and participation, such as artist

residencies, workshops, or community voting on design elements. This fosters a sense of ownership and engagement among residents.

Strategically placed sculptures can also serve as landmarks or unique wayfinding aids, helping visitors navigate the corridor and discover different areas and attractions, playing a crucial role in making the Cultural Corridor a vibrant, meaningful, and dynamic environment.

Eye-catching murals attract visitors and encourage them to explore the Cultural Corridor. They often become landmarks or photo opportunities, increasing foot traffic and engagement. Murals showcase a variety of artistic styles and techniques, reflecting different cultural, historical, and contemporary influences. This diversity enhances the visual richness of the corridor.

Murals celebrate and represent local culture, history, and traditions. By depicting significant figures, events, or themes relevant to the community, they help to forge a stronger sense of local identity and pride. Additionally, murals will involve community members in the creative process through workshops, public votes, or collaborative painting sessions, fostering a sense of ownership and connection to the Corridor.

Murals contribute to the branding and identity of the Cultural Corridor, making it stand out and creating a memorable impression. They become iconic elements associated with the corridor's unique character. By incorporating distinctive artistic styles or themes, murals can serve as markers of the corridor's cultural and artistic significance.

We will work with industry experts to develop a public art plan that will add elements to each city within the Cultural Corridor. Leveraging partnerships and with community input at every level.

Coordination Between Communities: Through coordination, a collective calendar, sharing of upcoming events and programs, and establishing events that attach the Corridor with individual locations, will further strengthen the brand, visitation, and tourism opportunities.

Develop and Track Goals and Outcomes: The Cultural Corridor's goals are to connect the arts, culture, heritage, and history destinations through branding and marketing to increase the number of cultural travelers coming to our region. We will strengthen the economic viability of existing artists, artisans, art studios, creators, performers, and arts, culture, and heritage businesses and organizations in the Corridor.

As part of our strategy and efforts to build, develop and grow, we will:

- Use the new non-profit model to attract other arts, culture, history, and heritage organizations to align in forming and marketing a regional arts and heritage destination that will increase the number of cultural travelers to the Corridor. We will develop organizational strength, using a new non-profit alliance to engage local communities and to become sustainable with income generating practices.
- Leverage the region's existing and emerging arts and culture resources to develop and market the Corridor to potential visitors and increase visitation to the Corridor and its stakeholders by 10%, from a 2024 benchmark, by 2034.

- Develop compelling products and experiences to attract and sustain cultural tourism. By creating and maintaining immersive art experiences and signature initiatives across the Corridor, we will elevate the Corridor’s reputation and build support for arts and culture at every level of engagement.
- Build promotional strength with a new, compelling name and unified brand. Using digital solutions to curate Corridor offerings, and to activate artists, artisans, performers, writers, and other arts and culture professionals and organizations. Proactively marketing to key target markets and audiences.
- Offer robust visitor infrastructure with wayfinding signage, sculptures, and dynamic murals. Partnering with organizations and municipalities in placement of new art acquisitions. Integrating technology into cultural experiences and creating signature, annual events that combine arts, culture, history, and heritage. Working with the Nevada Department of Transportation to identify signage and best routes for directing visitors to experience the Cultural Corridor.
- Create a plan in cooperation with organizations and municipalities to acquire a collection of public art, sculptures, murals, and interactive art. Fostering community engagement with the arts by creating opportunities for the public to sponsor art installations. We will create a comprehensive digital archive to conserve the Corridor’s history, works of art, literary contributions, and cultural heritage. Work with local artists and businesses to develop more retail spaces, cooperatives, and maker spaces for visitors to view and purchase locally made art.