A DESTINATION PLAN

FOR THE FRIENDS OF SUTRO TUNNEL







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Created through the Travel Nevada Destination Development Design (3D) Project

FRIENDS OF SUTRO TUNNEL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the people whose guidance, enthusiasm, and expertise made this plan possible.

FRIENDS OF SUTRO TUNNEL STEERING COMMITTEE

Alexia Sober, Director, Comstock Foundation

John Cassinelli, Lyon County Commissioner

Phil Cowee, Local business owner

Richard Mitrotz, Director, Dayton Chamber of Commerce

Stony & Laura Tennant, Historical Society of Dayton Valley

Jannette Hoffert, Local business owner

Jeff Sutich, Executive Director, Northern Nevada Development Authority

Josh Bonde, Director, Nevada State Museum

Brittney Somers, Realtor

Spencer Davidson, Caretaker, Sutro Tunnel

Pam Abercrombe, Grants, Friends of Sutro Tunnel

Rob McFadden, Friends of Sutro Tunnel Board Member

Helaine Morres, Fund Development, Friends of Sutro Tunnel

Shawnee McFadden, Marketing, Friends of Sutro Tunnel

FRIENDS OF SUTRO TUNNEL PLANNING AND CONSULTING TEAM

Cortney Bloomer, Destination Development Manager, Travel Nevada

Shari Davis, Director of Rural and Community Development, Governor's Office of Economic Development

Fred Steinmann, Director, University Center for Economic Development, University Center for Economic Development, University of Nevada, Reno

Denise Beronio, Director, Nevada Division of Outdoor Recreation

Deb Brown, Community Action Specialist, National Travel Center

Maree Forbes Gaughan, Chief Strategist and CEO, National Travel Center

3D PROJECT WORKING GROUP

Denise Berionio, Director, Nevada Division of Outdoor Recreation

Shari Davis, Director of Rural and Community Development, Governor's Office of Economic Development

Miles Kinsler, BLM Nevada Recreation, National Conservation Lands and Tourism Lead, United States Bureau of Land Management

Tony Manfredi, Executive Director, Nevada Arts Council

Fred Steinmann, Director, University Center for Economic Development, University of Nevada, Reno

Amanda Elliott, Business Development Advisor, Nevada Small Business Development Center

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Brenda Scolari, Director

Mary Ellen Kawchack, Chief Deputy Director

Kyle Schulz, Research Director

TRAVEL NEVADA

Rafael Villanueva, CEO

Nicole Orsua, Chief Industry Development Officer

Gabriel Mortensen, Research Analyst

Cory Munson, Content Developer

Kippy Spilker, Creative Manager

Susan Mowers, Creative Director

Cortney Bloomer, Destination Development Manager

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INTRODUCTION

Friends of Sutro Tunnel



OVERVIEW

In October 2023, the Friends of Sutro Tunnel applied to Travel Nevada's Destination Development Design Program (3D Project). Their application proposed a project to transform the Historic Sutro Tunnel and Site into a 100% publicly accessible historic park with full time onsite staff, daily guided tours, self-guided tours, regular events, site venue rentals, community events, and outdoor recreation.

The contents of this plan are a result of the four-month consultation period that Friends of Sutro Tunnel engaged in with Travel Nevada. During this time, a Steering Committee of local stakeholders was created, a 3D Advisory Team was assembled with state and industry experts, and community meetings were held in Dayton. The vision, goals, and key pillars outlined in this plan reflect the insights gained from the Steering Committee and community meetings and are supported by industry best practices, data collection, and research.

HOW THIS PLAN ALIGNS WITH THE FRIENDS OF SUTRO TUNNEL'S GOALS

Incorporated as a non-profit in 2020, Friends of Sutro Tunnel is leading the effort to preserve the historical integrity of this significant part of Nevada's mining history by restoring the Sutro Tunnel and Site while making it safe and accessible for visitors. The organization's long-term goal is to protect the site's remaining structures from further deterioration and to eventually reopen the Sutro Tunnel between Dayton and Virginia City. Through generous contributions from donors and the skills of its volunteers, the organization has made significant progress in restoring the Tunnel and cleaning up the Site.

Through the consulting period, the aims of the project evolved to include strengthening connections between the Site and historic Dayton, increasing local support and resident buy-in, and nurturing links to other Comstock communities and organizations.

This plan carefully considers the intent expressed in the Friends of Sutro Tunnel's 3D Project application while also taking into account various stakeholder perspectives throughout the community and the region. It provides a balanced approach to tourism that addresses the needs of both visitors as well as residents and stakeholders.



HOW THIS PLAN ALIGNS WITH TRAVEL NEVADA'S GOALS



The Nevada Division of Tourism—also known as Travel Nevada—operates within the Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs. In addition to promoting state tourism efforts, Travel Nevada works to bolster and diversify regional economies by providing development resources, training and grant assistance to communities and their stakeholders.

The development of tourism in Dayton—centered around the Sutro Tunnel and Site with connections to historic downtown Dayton and neighboring Comstock communities and attractions—aligns with Travel Nevada's efforts to improve economic health in rural Nevada through tourism development. This plan prescribes actions that will position the Sutro Tunnel and Site as a living history tourism destination. In addition to enhancing regional tourism, this will directly benefit the Dayton community by providing opportunities for future economic growth while developing, preserving, and showcasing local history, heritage, and cultural assets.

This plan aligns with Travel Nevada's goal to promote adventure and exploration in the state's rural areas—an effort best expressed in the organization's brand line: "Get a Little Out There." Its implementation would help form a strong platform for promoting the Dayton area as a compelling destination that offers visitors—and locals—authentic experiences that highlight the indelible mark of Comstock history and innovation on the world while celebrating the indomitable spirit of the men and women whose efforts and ingenuity made this remarkable story possible.

Over the past decade, outdoor recreation has developed into one of the most important tourism sectors, and Travel Nevada is focused on representing the state as a diverse adventure destination, evident in its investment in Adventure Centers, one of which will be in nearby Carson City. This project will help elevate the region's outdoor assets through developing motorized and non-motorized trail networks. These trails will combine outdoor recreation with historical interpretation and provide another way for recreationists to experience the Comstock region.

Finally, Travel Nevada holds a strong commitment to supporting tourism destinations that support the protection and preservation of their natural and cultural resources. This plan represents an important step towards responsible tourism that aligns with Travel Nevada's goals related to destination stewardship.

OVERARCHING GOALS

In their application, Friends of Sutro Tunnel listed three proposed goals for the project:



1. Maximize all aspects of the site to attract visitors while remaining stewards of the cultural resource.

Objective 1: Work with Travel Nevada to develop the plan leveraging their expertise.

Objective 2: Develop a plan for establishing the Historic Sutro Tunnel and Site as a Nevada cultural heritage destination.

2. Restore the Historic Sutro Tunnel and Site and sustain the Charity.

Objective 1: Obtain funding to support restoration through fund development activities.

Objective 2: Obtain funding to support the administration of the Charity.

3. Transform the property into a self-sustaining living history park for full public access by 2034.

Objective 1: Implement the plan for establishing the Historic Sutro Tunnel and Site as a cultural heritage destination in Nevada.

Throughout the development of this plan, Travel Nevada and the advisory team worked to hone in on metrics that align with the originally proposed goals, while providing clear and realistic goalposts for project success based on industry data and expert input. Travel Nevada suggests the following overarching project goal:

Based on baseline data collected during FY2026, drive an increase in visitation to the Sutro Site by 60% between 2026 and 2030.

According to research from Grand View Research, the US heritage tourism market is expected to grow nearly 30 per cent between 2024 to 2030 (CAGR 3.9%).

Currently, visitation to the Sutro Site and Dayton are limited. Taking into account the enthusiasm of the project team, the strong regional support for this initiative, and a considerable jump-start from the 3D Project funding, Travel Nevada believes the Sutro Site can outpace projected national growth in the heritage tourism sector while driving tourism development at the site and in Dayton. This projected increase, while achievable, would allow for incremental growth as infrastructure is developed, thereby helping to mitigate overtourism. This increase in tourism would also fuel the other goals identified in Friends of Sutro Tunnel's original project application, building a heritage tourism destination, generating revenue for the organization, and stewarding the resource.

As the project gets underway, it would be appropriate for stakeholders involved in the project to work together to set additional project goals. Goals should be SMART and measurable.



SUGGESTED AREAS FOR GOAL SETTING INCLUDE:

- An increase in new businesses, assets, or tourism-related employment in Dayton
- An increase in tourism experiences and events available for visitors
- An increase in community pride as measured on a resident sentiment survey
- Improvements in the quality of tourism experiences or visitor satisfaction as measured by a visitor sentiment study
- Metrics related to stewardship and preservation
- An increase in coordination and collaboration of project stakeholders and communities
- Metrics around financial stability grounded in a balanced portfolio of revenue sources to sustain the project

ACTUALIZING THE CONCEPT



The Sutro Tunnel, a remnant of the Silver Bonanza on the Comstock, was envisioned by immigrant and entrepreneur Adolph Sutro as a way to efficiently drain water from the Comstock Mines to reduce transportation costs and enhance underground mine safety. Construction began on the tunnel in 1869, and after nine years of work, the 3.8-mile-long tunnel connected to the Savage Mine on July 8th, 1878.

By the time the tunnel was completed, production at the Comstock Lode had already peaked. Sutro sold his shares and moved back to San Francisco. Use of the tunnel dwindled and was discontinued in 1942. Today, a handful of original buildings around the tunnel's portal remain, as does the pond, which Sutro built to accommodate the millions of gallons of water drained from the mines.



ACTUALIZING THE CONCEPT

This plan will develop the Site's historical remains—a warehouse, a mule barn, a woodshop, a carriage house—into an engaging and immersive living-history park for residents and visitors. Volunteers have made significant strides to clean up the Site, which had seen sporadic use over the years, and have succeeded in opening 300 feet of the Tunnel. To date, Friends of Sutro Tunnel have hosted occasional tours and events centered around the Tunnel's improvement.

Bringing this hidden gem back to life and stimulating visitor interest in the Dayton area will require a holistic approach that combines community connectedness, historic preservation, experience development, storytelling, and strategic partnerships. This approach will create value and intrigue for visitors who appreciate authenticity, uncommon experiences, and a welcoming community atmosphere.

This plan is built upon the belief that the Sutro Tunnel's hands-on opportunities to explore its fascinating engineering and outstanding connections to history—coupled with emerging outdoor opportunities—will create a compelling new destination for visitors. The Sutro Tunnel has the potential to introduce tourism as an important economic driver for Dayton and the region and source of community pride.

Tourism development in Dayton will hinge on a strong community and regional partnerships. These partnerships will not only strengthen the community's ability to grow tourism assets and attractions but will also engage visitors with a depth of experiences located on site and across the Comstock region.

As organizational structures fall into place in the early days of this plan, the region's stewardship mindset, up-and-coming heritage attractions, and nascent outdoor recreation industry will activate, attracting visitors who seek an enriching, immersive living history experience. Furthermore, it will be necessary for the community to address gaps, such as a lack of accommodations and small business support, to create tax revenue and maximize the benefits of tourism for the local economy.

As development at the tunnel continues and Dayton begins to see early wins in tourism, emerging opportunities for new and expanded cultural, outdoor, and interpretive experiences will increasingly build the destination's reputation while encouraging small business development and economic impact.

PRIORITY VISITORS



Travel Nevada's 3D Project Advisory team drew on a variety of sources to help clarify the category of visitor that would be the best fit for the Sutro Tunnel and Dayton. The 3D Project visitor study, completed in 2023, identified three key visitor segments that are likely to travel to Nevada and will be well-served by the experiences that the Sutro Tunnel has to offer.

While Road Trippers and Outdoor Adventures are certainly likely to enjoy the Sutro experience, the priority visitor segment for this project is the Cultural Traveler. These travelers, who make up 54% of respondents to Travel Nevada's 3D Visitor Study, enjoy experiencing how other people live while learning about and exploring unique museums and local arts, music, and food offerings. These visitors stay longer, spend more, visit more locations and will generally not miss something they want to do or see due to budget.

This audience for cultural and heritage tourism is poised to grow. According to a report from Future Market Insights, Inc., the world heritage tourism industry is set to grow to USD 45.6 billion by 2035. The market is anticipated to develop at a compounded annual growth rate of 7.8%. This growth rate is driven by tourists who are looking for in-depth historical experiences, heritage conservation programs by governments, and the growth of digital narratives in cultural tourism. Moreover, the appeal of heritage tourism is evident across all age demographics, which bodes well for future success for destinations who can provide the types of experiences that these travelers are seeking.

Travel Nevada recommends a five-part approach to engage with the growing heritage visitor segment and stimulate engagement as the project evolves and grows:

1. Encourage nearby residents and their guests to explore a newly developed attraction in their own backyards.

This early-win strategy not only provides awareness for the Sutro Tunnel and Site but also helps to foster community pride and appreciation for local history. This can pay dividends as local support grows and revenues can be reinvested into the site. Implement this strategy by working with a marketing company to develop messaging, coupled with a “locals” program to entice residents of Dayton and nearby communities to visit and become ambassadors for the site.

2. Inspire visitors to Reno/Tahoe and Virginia City to enhance their stays with a heritage tourism experience centered on celebrating history and embracing adventure.

In 2023, according to the Reno Sparks Convention and Visitor Authority, 3.9 million visitors arrived in the Reno-Tahoe area. Located within an hour’s drive of the Reno-Tahoe International Airport, the Sutro Tunnel is poised to capitalize on Reno heritage tourists who are keen to extend their stay in the region. Additionally, with its close ties to Virginia City and location within the Comstock Historic District, a Dayton-based tourism experience is a worthy add-on for visitors who want a more complete Comstock experience.





Adolph Sutro



3. Invite San Francisco residents who may be curious about the Sutro legacy to come experience the Sutro Site.

Adolph Sutro left a lasting imprint on San Francisco; after his time in Nevada. He later became the city's 24th mayor and owned an estimated 11% of its real estate. Many sites across San Francisco carry his name today, including the Sutro Baths, Sutro Library and Sutro Heights. This plan can stimulate engagement by persuading Bay Area residents to journey "over the hill" to satisfy their curiosity about Sutro and step into the Tunnel for an unforgettable history adventure.

4. Entice visitors with specific interests by offering special events and exhibitions that dive deeper into the destination's story.

Creating opportunities to work with specific visitor segments can be an effective way to increase visitation and enhance your destination's story. Examples specific to this project might include working with partners to offer a "Women of the Comstock" women's history month exhibition or collaborating with local farmers to offer a farm to table dinner celebrating Dayton's heritage as the "Breadbasket of the Comstock". These events have the advantage of building an audience by connecting with visitors who might not otherwise connect with the destination.

5. As tourism at the Sutro Tunnel and in Dayton develops and awareness grows, expand the marketing to visitors from a wider area, specifically targeting those interested in world history, mining, engineering, and more.

There are 18 million people living within a six-hour radius of Dayton. Furthermore, there are 69 million Americans who travel to enjoy heritage and culture. This group tends to spend more, stay longer, and visit more locations during their trip. Maximize your visibility with these tourists by partnering with nearby Carson City and Virginia City to develop bookable products and packages that create overnight stays and showcase the region's history and culture amenities.

KEY PILLARS

This plan has been built around a three-pronged strategy to highlight the region's assets, centered around the rich history and the one-of-its-kind tunnel that is poised to become an attraction for visitors from around the world. The thematic pillars of this plan – History and Heritage, Outdoor Recreation, and Arts and Culture – work synergistically to support tourism while also building a sense of place and fostering community pride. The plan lays out a framework for tourism success based on an authentic and immersive visitor experience that links the Sutro Tunnel and Dayton to the larger Comstock Historic District.

Throughout the planning process, the advisory team has been mindful of the potential drivers of tourism to the region, as well as the capacity and needs of the Friends of Sutro Tunnel, the Dayton community, and regional entities that will be critical partners as the Sutro Tunnel attraction grows to enhance the regional tourism economy. The three thematic pillars are underpinned by a framework for success—supportive structures and activators—that outlines organizational and capacity-building elements that are applicable across all thematic elements.



Collaborative Structures and Activators

For tourism to grow and thrive in Dayton, the community will need to establish a tourism identity that is separate from, but tied to, other communities of the Comstock. The Sutro Tunnel and Site will need to position itself as a destination driver for the region and work cooperatively with community partners to increase awareness of the destination while continuing to develop visitor appeal and amenities. Progress in this area will be supported by organizational infrastructure and strategic partnerships to grow tourism through a collective approach. As tourism is a new element for the Sutro Tunnel and Dayton, the visitor economy must grow in a careful, meaningful and considered way that aligns with the needs of the community while focusing on the sustainability and preservation of the region's historic assets.



Pillar 1: History and Heritage

Led by the Friends of Sutro Tunnel, the central focus of this project is undeniably the preservation, interpretation, and access to the region's rich and compelling history. Considering the community's ties to the Pony Express, long mining and milling history (including Sutro Tunnel), and historic downtown, there's plenty for a history buff to do and discover in Dayton. While initially focused solely on the Tunnel, a broader project that incorporates the entire community history while developing the Sutro Tunnel and Site as a destination driver delivers a more robust experience and provides additional context and meaning for visitors.

Pillar 2: Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor recreation offers a novel way to interact with the region's history, allowing visitors to explore beyond the Sutro Site or Dayton's downtown area. Thoughtfully planned, incremental development of outdoor recreation infrastructure and experiences will be vital in helping visitors experience the region's history in a new way while protecting the Comstock's cultural and natural resources. Additionally, investing in outdoor recreation allows the destination to appeal to a wider range of visitors, providing activities for the guests and companions of history enthusiasts to create a well-rounded trip.

Pillar 3: Arts and Culture

For centuries, communities have recognized that art is used to shape their environment. From sculptures in public squares to murals on building exteriors, art has been a powerful tool in creating places that give their populations a sense of pride and connectivity. Adolph Sutro also had an appreciation for art, recreating European statuary and incorporating artistic elements in his own properties to create aesthetic appeal. The Sutro Site features elements of art woven into its history and even once temporarily served as the residence for Nevada sculptor Greg Melton. Today, destinations can use art to help tell their stories and build community pride, boost engagement, and help promote the work of local artists and artisans.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTION STEPS

To develop a strategy that was as balanced as possible, Travel Nevada's 3D Project Advisory team carefully considered diverse stakeholder interests, visitor needs, and community priorities, while working to establish a symmetry between the pillars that ensures the region will grow in appeal to visitors with varied interests. This strategy's framework—laid out in this document—provides an actionable roadmap for tourism development and is designed to be approachable and realistic for those who will be responsible for implementation in the coming years.

There is considerable synergy between the pillars, and throughout the implementation process, the Advisory team recommends seeking out opportunities to combine pillars in ways that strengthen the overall project. This may include tactics such as integrating history and heritage interpretation into outdoor recreation infrastructure or utilizing the arts to help enliven the region's history and strengthen the destination's sense of place.

Each pillar is divided into three categories: Early Wins, Next Steps, and Future Possibilities. It is important to note that many of the priorities identified in the documents are aspirational and unfunded. Their inclusion will provide industry and government with the strategic direction to seek resourcing, if required, to deliver initiatives within their areas of responsibility.



EARLY WINS

Early wins are project catalysts and revenue drivers recommended as best first steps to provide momentum for the project and create immediate impact. These elements would be a good place to start when developing 3D Project funding requests or choosing where to dedicate early-stage resources, time, and personnel. Strategies and tactics in the Early Wins category are intentionally listed in the order that the Advisory Team believes would provide the most impact during the developmental stages of this plan.



NEXT STEPS

Next Steps are the evolution of the Early Wins. These suggested actions are intended to help grow amenities and attractions, increase visitor appeal, and continue the progression from an aspiring tourism attraction to an emerging destination to a must-do objective for heritage tourism.



FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

Future Possibilities are elements the Advisory Team feels would be beneficial to keep in mind but are not necessarily tied to a timeline—the project's early years will certainly see developments that could alter its trajectory and priorities. It is important for the stewards of this plan to remain open to emerging opportunities that are aligned with the plan and keep an eye on the adjacent possibilities that may develop over the course of implementation, leading to new and unforeseen outcomes. Take a step and see what happens.

PLAN FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT



COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURES AND ACTIVATORS

Collaborative Structures and Activators are the elements that create the ecosystem that this plan needs to be successful and sustainable.

This category includes things like the organizational structure to guide tourism development in the region, development of an identity to foster unity and growth and more. Building organizational capacity to advance tourism will be the first step towards success and will help set the Sutro Tunnel and Dayton on a clear course to destination development.

Early Wins

Establish a Regional Tourism Partnership for the purposes of guiding tourism in the region, building awareness and reputation of Dayton among visitors to catalyze economic growth, and fostering community pride and identity.

- This coalition will serve as the de facto destination management organization for the Dayton community. One of its foundational strategies will be to form and maintain regional partnerships. Membership may include organizations such as the Dayton Historical Society, the Comstock Foundation, Main Street, and Dayton Chamber of Commerce as well as representatives of special interests, such as local businesses, outdoor recreation, art, and tourism.
- It is important that this coalition is an egalitarian body whose primary focus and guiding interest is executing the objectives of this plan to create a unified visitor experience and driving tourism to the community as a whole. Representation must be fair and reflect the different interests that make up the tourism landscape in Dayton, with each community and pillar being championed as a crucial element of the whole. Participants must feel that their input is valuable, and that the cost of time invested is outweighed by the realization of outcomes in the community.
- Coalition members should leverage partnerships with state and federal agency partners to advance elements of the plan. These may include Nevada Division of State Parks, the Bureau of Land Management, the US Forest Service, and Travel Nevada.
- A regional collaborative increases competitiveness in the Nevada tourism landscape while addressing congestion and overtourism concerns by dispersing demand over a wider area.
- This project represents an opportunity for Dayton to strengthen its community identity and reconnect to its history while supporting the Sutro Tunnel as a regional tourism driver poised to deliver economic development through increased visitor spending.
- Tourism development offers possibilities for partnerships that uplift and strengthen individual elements of the community and region by leveraging collective promotional strength and storytelling. For example, the Pony Express Trail, Old Town Dayton, the Dayton Depot (once rebuilt), and the Dayton Museum provide narratives that appeal to—and enrich—the region's priority visitors.
- After the groundwork for development has been laid, the coalition can work together to develop a brand and identity that will become recognizable for visitors and create a cohesive feel throughout the entire community.
- Strengthen collaboration between coalition members and stay on track by hosting a "coffee and calendars" get together every quarter. Partners come together for coffee and bring their calendars to share and compare dates, avoid overscheduling events in the community, and identify opportunities to work together.

Create a vision for the future of the Sutro Tunnel and Site by developing a Site Use Plan.



- Establish an inventory of available facilities, as well as a list of facilities or infrastructure that will be needed in the future to help the site reach its full potential. This will help prioritize investments and guide decision making around restoration, preservation and development. Envision the best location for each use on the property from the outset.
- Many potential future uses of the site are identified throughout this plan, but there may be others that the authors of this plan have not considered. Consider potential used for the already existing buildings as well as buildings and structures that will be added to the site over time.
- Some suggested facilities for eventual development include the following:
  - workshop and demonstration space
  - artist residence
  - bookstore and artisan shop
  - campground and rental cabins
  - provisions and equipment rental marketplace
  - library and research room
  - event space for parties and weddings
  - outdoor performance and event venue
  - full-service restaurant or brewery,
  - bed and breakfast
  - bathhouse and public restroom facilities
  - trailheads and staging areas for outdoor recreation
  - transportation connectivity between the Site and Old Town,
  - parking areas that can accommodate individual visitors as well as tour bus staging and parking
- Consider infrastructure that will be needed to support these uses, such as water and sewer, broadband internet access and wifi, accessibility considerations, and site hardening to protect and preserve historic, cultural, and environmental resources.

Secure the site to welcome visitors.

- To enable extended hours at the site, install a security system to protect and preserve assets at the site. Combined with interpretation and signage, the addition of security measures will provide opportunities to offer visitors self-guided experiences that are not currently available.



Identify sustainable funding sources to support ongoing preservation work, development of the site, and staffing needs.

- As accommodations become available in Dayton, investigate an increase in local room tax dedicated specifically to reinvestment in Dayton tourism to create a sustainable funding source.
- Work with Lyon County to reassess distribution of existing room tax collections and close any loopholes in collection of room tax, for example, campgrounds and short term rentals.
- Using donations and working with a financial advisor, establish an endowment fund to support the Sutro Site in perpetuity.
- Create a business plan for the site that specifically outlines possible avenues for revenue generation and creates a timeline for implementation.
  - » Some examples of potential revenue sources include admission and ticket sales, site and event rentals, accommodations, retail sales, group sales and tours, and vendor fees. Consider what value-added services can be provided for an additional fee.
  - » Develop a price structure that balances operating costs with value for visitors.
- Work with small and large donors who support the work of Friends of Sutro Tunnel.
  - » Continue efforts around a major gifts campaign that can support large capital projects or serve as the basis for the endowment.
  - » Host fundraiser events that benefit not only the Sutro Tunnel and Site but also community organizations. One model is to host "Community Share" fundraisers where a portion of the proceeds are kept by the host organization and another portion are shared with a beneficiary partner.
  - » Create excitement and generate donations by raffling meaningful experiences. For example, create a raffle to win the first overnight stay in the Victorian bed and breakfast—once it's remodeled—or the first Tunnel tour once construction is complete.
  - » Work with local businesses who would benefit from increased tourism in Dayton to implement a "round up" campaign to support the Sutro Site and community preservation efforts.
- Supplement paid efforts with volunteer days, which have the added benefit of allowing volunteers to familiarize themselves with the site and become ambassadors.
- Seek project-specific grant funding to support initiatives tied to the project. This may be accomplished in partnership with other local 501c3 organizations.

Connect local residents to the Sutro Site

- Many residents of Dayton and the surrounding area have not visited the Sutro Site. Implement strategies to increase local visitation such as creating a local rate or an annual pass that locals can purchase.
- Create community days where locals can access the site for free in exchange for participating in a service project in the community.
- Utilize communication channels to share news about the tunnel and events to keep the community informed and connected to what is going on at the site.
- Share "wins" with the community to build pride and understanding about the project and its impacts in the community.



Next Steps

Collaborate and support the Dayton Chamber, Historical Society of Dayton Valley, and Dayton Main Street to bolster Old Town Dayton.

- These organizations, focused on supporting businesses, community beautification, historic preservation, and civic engagement, are valuable partners in advancing the goals, strategies, and tactics outlined in this plan.

Work with marketing professionals to develop a brand and voice that represent Dayton and help convey the experience to residents and visitors.

- With the guidance of a carefully selected marketing company, develop a brand that supports Dayton's identity as a historic gem with more to offer. The brand should spark curiosity among visitors with experiential messaging that focuses on authenticity. Avoid marketing strategies that are manufactured, "cookie-cutter," or transactional (i.e., messaging that prioritizes short-term benefits or revenue over long-term identity and sustainable growth).
- Working with Travel Nevada and your selected marketing agency, develop and implement a marketing strategy to disseminate messaging through multiple channels to potential visitors as identified in the Priority Visitors section of this document.

Develop amenities and services and the infrastructure needed in support.



- In the near term as the site is being developed, look for small business partnerships to help address visitor needs. An example of this would be hosting food trucks to provide visitors with options for food and beverage. This has the added benefit of helping to support local small businesses and bring their customers to the site.
- As visitation grows, ingress/egress from the site will become a concern. Proactively consider what can be done to help alleviate visitation impacts on neighboring residents and create a clear route for visitors. Consider off-site parking with transportation, like a bus that looks like an historic trolley or train car to transport visitors to the site, or between the site and Old Town.
- Consider the infrastructure such as a commercial kitchen, facilities, water and sewer that will be needed for development at the site to progress. Ensure that these needs are anticipated so they don't interfere with progress later on.
- Build your workforce by training tour guides and site workers to meet the demands of visitors. Consider hospitality training with a module like Travel Nevada's Battle Born Insider training to prepare workers to receive guests and provide a top-notch hospitality experience.
- Anticipate the needs and wants of guests and begin building inventory in different areas. This could include stocking the provisions, gear rental, retail souvenir gift shop and bookstore, and food and beverage.

Explore ways to add opportunities for room tax generation by developing accommodations at the site and in Dayton.

- There is an opportunity at the site and in Old Town Dayton to develop accommodations that meet a variety of visitor tastes and price points while meeting the desires of Nevada travelers, 30% of whom expressed that they are motivated to travel by the opportunity to stay in a unique lodging.
- Consider renovating the Victorian house on site to serve as a charming, historically themed bed and breakfast. Early on, instead of hosting breakfast on-site when there is not yet capacity to do so, perhaps a package could be developed for a local business to provide a breakfast voucher to guests.
- The camping element is discussed in the outdoor recreation section in more depth. Consider building a campground that offers amenities like a bathhouse along with a variety of options from tent camping and RV hookups to canvas glamping tents to a bunkhouse and private miners cabins.
- Accommodations in the community should not be limited to the Sutro Site. Remodeling buildings in Old Town as historic boutique hotels, bed and breakfasts or individual short term rentals can be a catalyst for more economic activity in the downtown area.
- Traditional hotels are still the preference of some travelers. As development continues to the east of town, work with developers to include hotel properties in their plans.



Future Possibilities

Enhance the pre-arrival visitor experience and visibility to online travelers by adding booking software and online booking channels.

- Work with Travel Nevada partners like Tourpreneur and Get Your Guide to design and build tour experiences and make them available on online booking engines.
- As accommodations become available, make sure they can be booked online through a website as well as platforms like Expedia that travelers are likely to use to plan their trip.

Establish a Destination Management Organization for Dayton.

- As tourism grows in the region, consider establishing a Destination Management Organization as an evolution of the regional tourism coalition. Work to identify funding that could support such an organization.

Work with local and regional government and economic development authorities to advocate for development and infrastructure that support both residents and visitors.

- Creating a successful tourism destination hinges not only on visitor satisfaction, but also on meeting the needs of locals and helping to enrich, not detract from, their quality of life. Ensure infrastructure is keeping up with capacity needs by working with agencies and planners to manage growth and build appropriately. Some examples of areas to consider include:
  - Small business support
  - Public Transportation
  - Traffic Mitigation
  - Water management and conservation
  - Public Safety



PILLAR ONE: HISTORY AND HERITAGE

The Sutro Tunnel and Site, and indeed the entire community of Dayton, are steeped in history and heritage.

The area's heritage and history are ready to be enjoyed by the many visitors who will be intrigued by Dayton's gold discovery, the ties to the Comstock, and the compelling narratives surrounding the tunnel itself. Attracting visitors will depend on great storytelling and placemaking to illustrate the story "on the ground". This will require a tangible experience where visitors can see and understand the history and legacy of the Comstock Lode.

Early Wins

Create interpretive experiences for visitors to help them understand the story.

- Currently, the Sutro Tunnel site may not provide the richest possible experience to visitors because it is not currently telling the story. To maximize understanding of the site, determine which stories should be told. Whose stories are they? Whose voice is speaking? Create a site map, consistent signage, mobile apps, and docent-led tours to contextualize the site for visitors. Do the same in Old Town Dayton, as well.
- Work with a developer to bring augmented reality to the Sutro Tunnel. Creating an accessible, visual way for visitors to interact with the site and see "the way things were" is a powerful tool that also helps to engage younger, tech-savvy visitors.
- Explore opportunities to create a site that is welcoming for all who wish to learn. Create interpretation that makes the site accessible for all. That might include traditional signage, paper maps, and brochures but may also utilize apps such as Aira to help visually impaired visitors.
- Although history is the main focus of interpretation at the site, consider including information that will drive curiosity and engagement for visitors with other interests as well. This could include other relevant topics such as geology, engineering, hydrology and more.
- Add interpretation for self-guided experiences so visitors can explore at their own pace while avoiding the need to drastically increase staffing in the short term.

Inventory the equipment and facilities on site to have a complete picture of the assets available to share with visitors.

- Create a log of assets and resources on site. This can be used to help prioritize preservation efforts, determine resources available for display, and serve as a catalogue to help protect and keep track of artifacts—especially as items are repatriated to the site.
- For items that are located at the Site, include interpretation to help visitors understand what they are and their purpose.
- Develop a list of disused historic buildings in Dayton that could be reactivated to support small business and economic development in town while building appeal and preserving history. Work in partnership with an organization like Main Street to accomplish this. It may be beneficial to include buildings that do not currently exist, like the Dayton Depot, that have the potential to become powerful destination drivers in the future.



Record oral accounts from local historians who can share their knowledge of the community and preserve the history for future generations.

- Capturing oral histories adds an element of connectedness that may be more difficult to achieve through the written word alone. Enthusiastic and knowledgeable storytellers build excitement and help relay the past in an engaging and memorable way.
- Oral storytelling is a time-honored tradition for sharing information and may capture nuance or word-of-mouth elements that are not relayed elsewhere. Recording these stories helps preserve history that would be lost otherwise. Make these stories available online and onsite.

Develop itineraries with partners to guide visitors through the region and maximize their experience.

- Dayton and the surrounding area are spoiled for choice when it comes to incredible and engaging historic attractions. Take advantage of this by working together with tourism partners to build itineraries that guide visitors through the region. An example might be a package that includes a visit to the Dayton Historical Society Museum, a tour of the Sutro Site, and dinner in Old Town Dayton. Thinking regionally: A great tour would be a ride on the V&T Railway, a tour of the Comstock Foundation's Donovan Mill, and a visit to the Sutro Tunnel.
- Itineraries don't have to be elaborate. Consider ways to highlight the various attractions in the region. Something as simple as a self-guided walking tour is a great option to help people explore.
- Itineraries don't have to focus solely on history. There may be creative ways to appeal to travelers with other interests by taking advantage of outdoor opportunities, small businesses (e.g., shops, cafes, restaurants, and bars).
- As the reputation of the Sutro Site and Dayton grows, develop plans for extended stays, building itineraries to keep visitors in the destination for a longer period of time.
- While accommodations are being developed in Dayton, work with DMOs in Carson City and Virginia City to develop tours that include increasingly longer visits with overnight stays.



Next Steps

Continue to implement plans and partnerships to restore, preserve, and activate historic buildings on the site and in Dayton.

- Working from the Site Use Plan and building inventory, move forward on the restoration and utilization of buildings as funding becomes available. Work on maximizing the potential of each structure to help tell the story and generate revenue where possible. (Refer to Supportive Structures and Activators #2 for additional guidance in this area.)

Elevate the experience at the Site by creating a living history park.

- After the initial development of interpretation at the site, work to take the experience to the next level by implementing a living history experience. A living history experience is an immersive and educational way for visitors to interact with knowledgeable historic reenactors who can bring the story to life.
- Include professional demonstrations that help illustrate what life would have been like in the town of Sutro. This includes blacksmiths, miners, mule skinners, and others who would have taken part in everyday life.
- Hold trainings for individuals who wish to be interpreters at the site so they can learn the history and become a character in the Sutro story. Focus on authenticity and an accurate portrayal of what life would have been like at the site or in Dayton at the time. Consider offering internships to history students or partner with community groups.
- Begin by offering this experience on a limited basis at certain times or on certain days that are clearly communicated to the public. As capacity is built, extend the hours and days that the living history park is available until it is a full-time park as outlined in the original 3D Project application.
- Look to successful living history models like Old Sturbridge Village or Colonial Williamsburg for implementation ideas and strategies to successfully build an experience that is educational, authentic, and enjoyable. Establish a program that accurately portrays what life at Sutro was like.
- Incorporate a historically inspired rail system using an electric "mule" and passenger cart. This nod to Sutro's original mining rail network will provide an immersive and educational experience, transporting visitors from the entrance area to key historic assets and—ultimately—into the tunnel itself. With the tunnel restored to a depth of a football field by late 2025—and expected to expand over time—this rail feature would offer both ADA accessibility, accessibility to those who are not ADA but have problems traveling long distances, and compelling interpretive value rooted in historical authenticity.

Work with experts in archaeology to help uncover the site and provide experiences for archaeological tourism.

- Capitalize on "Voluntourism" and conservation tourism trends to help bring visitors to participate in "citizen science" projects under the direction of professionals in the fields of archaeology and historic preservation. Many visitors relish the opportunity to go deeper and actually participate in service while they are traveling. This may be a potential way to help move important preservation efforts forward while creating memorable and meaningful visitor experiences.
- Partnering with UNR, participate in a field study program for students of history. Often, students need hands-on experiences to receive their degrees, and a field study program provides that with the added benefit of having critical work completed by up-and-coming professionals. Additionally, this gives visitors the chance to see the work in progress and ask questions about what is being uncovered.

Future Possibilities

Fully open the Tunnel for visitors to travel between Dayton and Virginia City.

- As funding becomes available, continue to extend the Tunnel, adding interpretation along the way.
- At the other end, work with stakeholders in Virginia City and Storey County to build the infrastructure necessary for Tunnel traversers to reach Virginia City.

Establish a Sutro museum that has the infrastructure in place to preserve art and artifacts from the time in such a way that they are protected from degradation.

- Work on developing exchange programs with other museums to offer exhibitions and displays.
- Host collections from individuals or other institutions in addition to items from the Site and art that interprets or celebrates aspects of life on the Comstock or other related topics.

Participate in the process to have the Comstock Historic District, including the Sutro Tunnel, listed as a World Heritage Site.

- Working cooperatively with other stakeholders, including the Comstock Foundation, undertake the process of eligibility and nomination to be added to the list of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites. This designation will add prestige to the site and place it rightfully among the growing list of locales that have outstanding historic or cultural value, adding a draw for visitors from around the world to travel to the region.



PILLAR TWO: OUTDOOR RECREATION

Outdoor recreation in Nevada contributes $8.1B in value-added GDP while supporting over 50,000 jobs in the state. The outdoor recreation economy in Nevada is one of the fastest growing in the nation, increasing 12.8% year over year from 2022 to 2023.

This segment represents a significant opportunity for growth and diversification in the Comstock region, where relics and artifacts from the region's heyday can be integrated into offroad tours, recreational trails, and guided experiences. Outdoor recreation offerings can enhance the appeal of the destination to a wider audience, or add additional options for couples and families who appreciate history but are looking for other activity options.

As outdoor recreation is developed at the Sutro Site and across the Comstock, consider the priority visitor who will be attracted to the region. Ensure that infrastructure and activities are developed for visitors of all abilities to access recreation opportunities. This may include wheelchair accessible trails, interpretation for blind or hearing-impaired guests, or access to equipment and technology to improve accessibility. Additionally, ensure that outdoor recreation infrastructure is designed in a way that helps support residents and visitors to the site by including connectivity and interpretation as key elements of an overarching trails plan.

Early Wins

Develop an Outdoor Recreation Plan for the Sutro Tunnel Site and Surrounding Area.

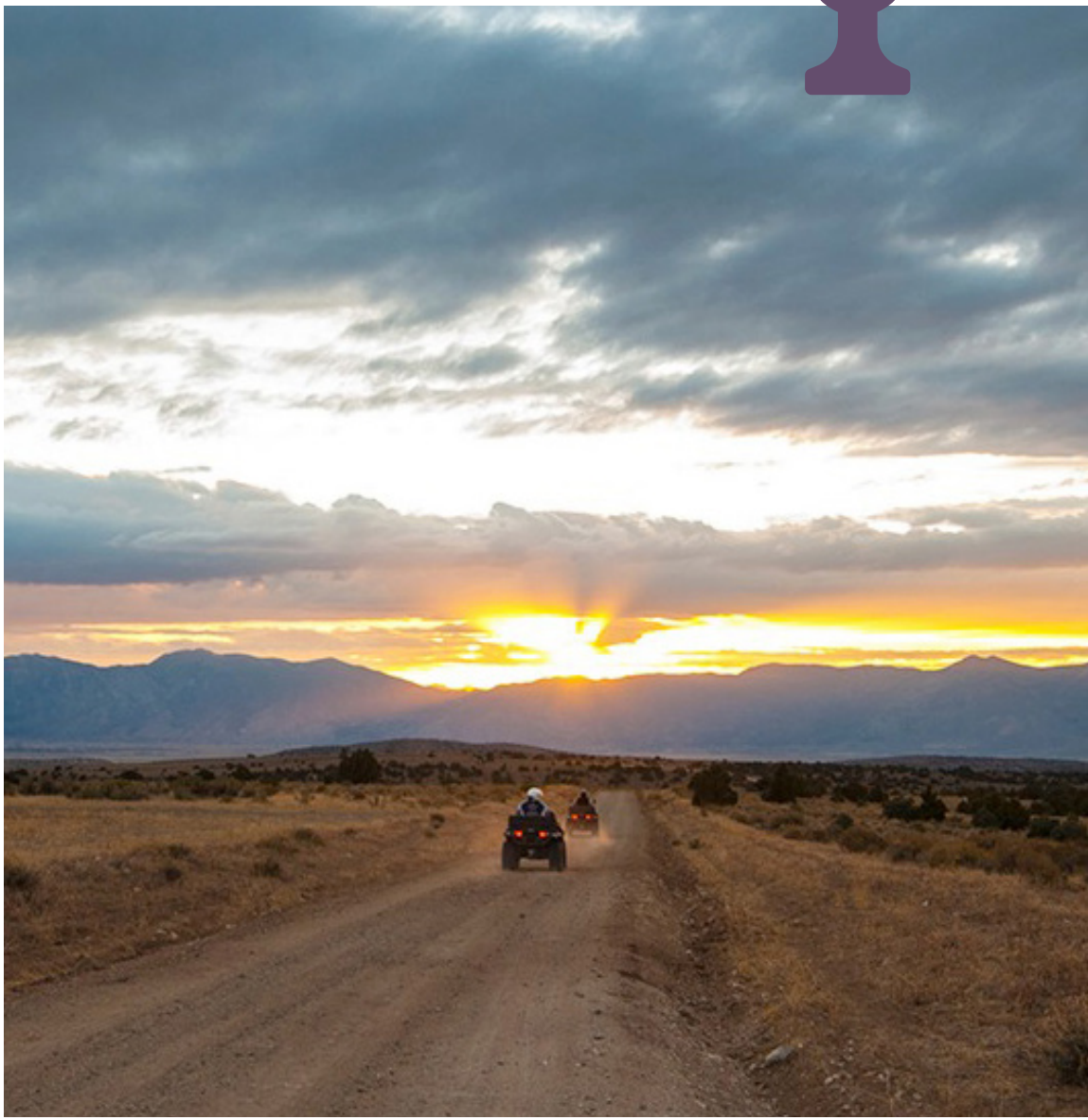
- Working with partners like the BLM, National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program, the Nevada Division of Outdoor Recreation, Travel Nevada, International Mountain Bike Association, Backcountry Horsemen of America, Nevada OHV and others, develop a plan for outdoor recreation at the site inclusive of all the potential outdoor recreation uses, including motorized and non-motorized trail, water-based recreation activities, and any other elements that may add to the enjoyment of the site by visitors and community members.
- Include safety as a plan element, working with the Nevada Division of Minerals Stay Out, Stay Alive messaging or similar to make visitors aware of the dangers of abandoned mine facilities and convey appropriate, safe behavior for recreating on the Comstock. Additionally, incorporate safety as a way to mitigate conflict between user groups on the trail.
- Include stewardship as part of the plan, since both cultural and environmental stewardship will be important for visitors to understand as they recreate in and around the site.
- Consider connectivity as part of the plan, looking for opportunities to utilize outdoor recreation infrastructure to link communities. Is there potential to install an interpretive trail on an historic railway alignment between the Site and Old Town Dayton, similar to the Mineral Belt Trail in Leadville, CO? Is there a way to tie the Tunnel site and Old Town Dayton to the Dayton State Park? How can trails enhance connectivity between Dayton and Virginia City to add an adventure element to the itinerary?
- While the infrastructure of the trail itself is important, interpretation and signage for the trail must not be overlooked. As the plan is developed, make sure that user-friendly trail navigation and interpretive signage that helps users understand their surroundings are included. Consider also using an app that can help visitors navigate the trail while offering interpretation.
- Once a plan is developed, investigate funding sources to implement the plan, such as Nevada OHV Grants, Polaris Trails Grants, Rails to Trails Conservancy, American Trails grants, the USFS Legacy Trails Program and Recreational Trails Grants administered by Nevada State Parks.

Create a Dayton to Virginia City offroad connection via the Sutro Tunnel Road.

- Work with BLM, private landowners, and stakeholders to create a safe connection for offroad enthusiasts to travel between Dayton and Virginia City.
- Working regionally, develop an offroad network plan and map to help locals and visitors find their way around the region on the vast network of historic roads. Engage the BLM, local law enforcement, and private landowners to develop a plan that serves varied interests, protects the area, and maximizes safety.

Develop Trailhead/ Staging Areas for recreationists to access the surrounding outdoor recreation opportunities from Sutro Tunnel.

- Work with BLM or other landowners to identify ideal trailhead/ staging area locations.
- Consider building a motorized trailhead first with ready access to the Comstock OHV route. This will allow the users who are already utilizing this trail to have a safe and convenient staging area, while minimizing degradation by user-created parking areas and social trails.
- As the non-motorized trail network becomes a reality, add a second trailhead to serve non-motorized uses, such as hiking, biking, and equestrian.
- Consider the need for accessory trailheads in other locations to create a more robust trail network, such as Old Town Dayton, Virginia City, or, depending on the location of the trails and access needs, Silver City or Stagecoach.
- Make sure that all trailheads have appropriate amenities such as kiosks with maps and trail etiquette, waste receptacles that are maintained, and shade structures, seating, and restrooms.



Next Steps

Build the trail network as envisioned in the Outdoor Recreation Plan.

- Make sure that any trail projects are meeting requirements such as NEPA and Section 106 to ensure that natural and cultural resources are being protected. Work with land agencies and landowners to ensure a smooth and legal project.
- Building a trail network can be a significant undertaking, and it is best to work with knowledgeable and experienced trail builders to ensure the best possible user experience. Travel Nevada recommends contracting with a trail building company like Sierra Trail Solutions, Great Basin Institute, or the International Mountain Biking Association to build trails that are enjoyable, sustainable, and safe.
- Consider all trail users and work with trail professionals to design and build a trail network that is inclusive of different levels of difficulty, mitigates conflicts between user groups, and is inclusive for users with physical limitations. Equestrians, cyclists, runners, hikers, and adaptive recreationists can all enjoy the trails.
- As trails are built, cultivate Champions who will help maintain the trail. A strong network of local volunteers will be critical to ensuring that the trail investment is cared for in the future and creates community buy-in. Look to regional groups like Muscle Powered or Carson Valley Trails Association for examples on how to engage the community and perform upkeep on the trail network. Groups like the local NICA Club can be a good source of volunteers and help instill the value of volunteering in the community's youth.
- Utilize the trails for events to help bring in additional visitors to the Site. The trail network will be both a visitor amenity and a community resource. Consider opportunities to host events like NICA races or a community fun run for locals and also think of larger events with a wider draw, like a Dayton to Virginia City uphill climb running challenge that is likely to draw participants from outside the area.
- Integration of an electric mule and passenger cart system with the outdoor recreation facilities offers a compelling opportunity to merge interpretive access with outdoor recreation. This rail-based system would allow visitors to explore the site's history through movement—traveling from the main entrance to key points of interest, and eventually into the restored tunnel itself. The ride would provide a low-impact, ADA-accessible, and environmentally responsible means of engaging with the region's mining legacy, while enhancing the visitor experience for both history enthusiasts and recreational tourists alike.

Offer tours that visitors can book to explore the region.



- Create partnerships with established businesses, like the Virginia City Offroad Experience, to offer bookable tours for guests to ride from the Site to Virginia City while hearing about the history and heritage of the area.
- Identify opportunities for small business development to address gaps in visitor experience. Help support local entrepreneurs by partnering with them to grow their offerings and services.
- Potential tours could include hiking expeditions, guided mule or horseback rides, bicycle tours of the region, and more. Visitors appreciate the comfort and confidence that comes from having a guide, and this also provides the opportunity for locals to create businesses that support their families and community. Tours that combine an outdoor recreation element while highlighting the culture and history of the area are likely to appeal to this plan's target visitors.



Develop an on-site campground to serve as overnight accommodation for visitors.

- Consider a phased approach to adding accommodations by first developing the infrastructure for an on-site campground where visitors can stay overnight at the tunnel site. Consider what infrastructure or amenities would need to be added to create a comfortable experience. A bathhouse for guests would be a nice addition, as would a small store with provisions and equipment rental, or some fire pits or grills. Look to examples like AutoCamp for inspiration.
- Make sure that the campsite facilities do not detract from the aesthetic and theme of the site. Consider using building materials and styles that complement the historic character. Consider placement of amenities so that the historic site can be closed off and protected at night.
- Initially, the campsites can be for dry camping only. This would require only a small investment to get started. Later, RV hookups could be added, some "glamping" canvas tent cabins, or some well-appointed rental cabins that resemble the structures that would have been characteristic of the early town of Sutro.
- Develop a fee structure and utilize a reservation platform for guests to reserve their accommodation. The campground can serve as an early revenue generator as the site is developed.
- Consider amenities that will provide entertainment for guests. Some ideas include frisbee golf, horseshoes, or cornhole. Additionally, there may be opportunities to add programming that will appeal to campers and locals, like campfire stories, s'mores and ghost story nights, or a community "movie under the stars".
- Collaborate with the campground at the State Park to increase capacity and accommodate larger numbers of campers.

Activate the lake for recreation.



- The small lake, made as a catchment basin for water being drained from the tunnel, presents another opportunity for passive recreation at the site.
- Explore opportunities for fishing in the lake with the Nevada Department of Wildlife. Even if the lake can't be stocked, visitors can still enjoy the Koi that live in the pond.
- Offer visitors the option to enjoy the lake on a paddleboard or in a canoe or rowboat. Though the lake is not large, it still offers respite from the Nevada heat and an opportunity to enjoy a small and unexpected oasis in the desert.

Foster small business development to serve visitors needs around outdoor recreation equipment rental and service.

- Encourage local entrepreneurs to bolster the local outdoor rec economy by partnering with organizations like the Chamber of Commerce, the Nevada SBDC, and others to help support up and coming small businesses.
- Provide space for small businesses to offer rental equipment and tours at the Sutro Site and in Old Town Dayton by adopting creative small business mechanisms like shared/cooperative spaces, "tiny businesses", or pop-up business spaces.
- Establish partnerships with Travel Nevada's Adventure Center in Carson City to support tour businesses and connect to a larger audience of regional visitors.

Welcome local residents

- Make the newly developed outdoor recreation infrastructure accessible to locals as well as visitors. One way to do this is by offering discounted day passes to residents, but an annual pass to use the trails and facilities could be offered, similar to the pass that State Parks offers.

Future Possibilities

Expand connectivity to offer regional outdoor recreation opportunities.

- As trail systems continue to be developed, work to position Dayton as an outpost to outdoor recreation. Look for ways to tie outdoor rec to the history of the region, like utilizing abandoned rail corridors for trail alignments that tell the story of the region's rail history, or offering an itinerary that allows visitors to ride the V&T to Virginia City and then descent the Comstock Trail to Dayton before being shuttled back to the train depot in Moundhouse.

Long term, explore ways to capitalize on the hot springs that may become accessible as the tunnel is opened further.

- Since it is unknown what opportunities will present themselves as the tunnel construction progresses, stay open-minded to new ways to delight visitors with uncommon experiences that cater to adventurous travelers.



PILLAR THREE: ARTS AND CULTURE

Adolph Sutro himself was an ardent appreciator of arts and culture and used a sizeable portion of his fortune to bring arts and culture to the public.

While the Tunnel itself was more about engineering than art, there were hints at his love of beauty in the details of the mansion that previously sat atop the hill overlooking the site. Upon his return to San Francisco, he transformed his property into an elaborate public garden and conservatory filled with statuary for the enjoyment of the community, much of which was financed by the proceeds from the sale of his shares in the Sutro Tunnel Company.

Sutro understood and appreciated the value of art as a placemaking tool and a public good, so it seems fitting to include art and culture as the final pillar to a holistic and comprehensive destination plan centered on his famous tunnel. This important pillar of the plan furthermore pays homage to later activities at the site, such as Greg Melton's creation in the 1980's of the statue of Sutro that now stands at the Nevada State Capital. At that time, Melton lived at Sutro for 15 years in one of the original houses, as did a few other Nevada artists. This plan represents an opportunity to enhance public life in Dayton through art and placemaking, just as Sutro would have done.

Early Wins

Invest in public art to create a sense of place and tell the stories of the community while uplifting regional artists and craftspeople.

- Develop an Arts and Culture Plan to identify opportunities to elevate the sense of place, define the visitor experience, and help tell the story of the destination.
  - Collaborate with the community, businesses, artists, and partner organizations, like the Nevada Arts Council, Main Street, the Chamber of Commerce and the Dayton Historical Society, to create a public art plan for Dayton.
  - The plan should aim to enhance the community's cultural identity by strategically integrating art into public spaces, fostering community engagement, and promoting civic pride.
  - Identify locations where public art could be displayed, as well as procedures for procuring, installing, and maintaining the art.
- Work with local artists to create art that tells important stories and strengthens residents' and visitors' understanding of the community's heritage and identity.
- Remember, public art is in the eye of the beholder and is meant to elicit an emotional response. Not all people will connect with all art, and that's ok. Create diverse art in various forms, styles and mediums that appeal to different audiences.
- Identify additional funding sources to continue expanding the community's collection of public art.



Collaborate with artists, artisans, and makers to offer demonstrations, classes and workshops in the Woodshop.

- One important way to connect with visitors is to create hands-on experiences. Allowing them to interact with a craftsperson doing a demonstration can help build an appreciation for the time and talent that goes into cultivating a craft.
- Taking it a step further, taking part in a class or workshop is another way to help a visitor feel connected and can also produce a meaningful souvenir of the trip. Offer instructional experiences for guests that include traditional crafts from the region and time period. Honor the Tribes whose traditional lands include the Comstock region by partnering with their craftspeople to feature traditional crafts, including basketry and beading.
- Classes and demonstrations need not be historical in theme. While classes that allow visitors to experience a historic craft or trade are encouraged, there is no need to limit offerings to this genre. Other types of arts or crafts, like photography or stained glass, may also be a good fit for visitors.



Host festivals, special events, exhibitions and celebrations that bring history to life and help tell the stories of the community in new, engaging ways.

- Festivals and events are a great way to help promote the community and give tourists a reason to visit. Identify a few key events that have a clear tie to the project to support and promote.
- These events can take place at the Sutro Site, in Old Town, or in other locations around the community as appropriate. Look for ways to connect and collaborate so everyone can be included.
- Partner with local businesses to uplift and support events that are already happening, like the Odeon Oldies Chautauqua events or paranormal investigations of the site.
- Explore ways to strengthen and reimagine existing community events, like Oodles of Noodles and Dayton Valley Days, to include richer storytelling and context, and to reach a wider audience. It's not about the booths, it's about the story and the feeling. Focus on the elements that add value to the experience.
- Use existing observances as catalysts and promote special visitor opportunities to the target audiences who are likely to appreciate a new or different perspective on the Site. Examples of this might be to host a Women on the Comstock" exhibit during Women's History Month or an exhibit highlighting the Chinese history of Dayton during the period around Chinese New Year, or celebrate National Book Month in October by featuring display of books about the region's history with references to Sutro's library and book signings by local authors.
- Work with partners to support community events in development that have a meaningful connection to the project, like a Basque Weekend during the running of the Borda sheep in Old Town Dayton, or Sutro Tunnel Days to welcome visitors to the Tunnel and celebrate the anniversary of the original completion of this engineering marvel.
- One drawback of events is that they are labor-intensive to plan and produce. Be judicious and work to ensure that you do not burn out your staff or volunteers trying to plan and support too many events.

Develop an Artist in Residence program to provide a platform for Nevada artists to create.

- Artist-in-residence programs benefit both the artist and the host organization by providing artists with time, space, and resources to create, explore, and connect, while offering the host organization new perspectives, audiences, and potentially, new works of art.
- An Artist in Residence Program can potentially lead to opportunities for new exhibitions, as well as new partnerships with other arts institutions, with schools, and with the public. Define the goals of the program and work with selected artists for mutually beneficial outcomes.
- While many programs feature visual artists, the program can also support artisans and makers, musicians and composers, and others in creative fields.
- Adapt the Artist in Residence idea to include "Experts in Residence". This could include tradespeople like master carpenters, blacksmiths, historic preservation specialists, chautauquans, geologists, and more who could bring value while enhancing the site and the visitor experience.
- Neighboring Silver City hosts a vibrant Artist in Residence Program. Connect with them to learn how they implement their program, how they connect with artists, and what steps to consider in developing the program in Dayton.



Next Steps

Develop photo opportunities and "Selfie Spots."

- Visitors love to capture photos of their adventure to keep as mementos of their trip. Increasingly, "Selfie spots" create a ready-made backdrop for photo ops. This is a fun way to appeal to younger travelers who enjoy sharing their adventures on social media.
- Be sure to create thoughtful spots that are safe and easy for visitors to access and minimize traffic in sensitive areas to preserve the site.
- Another way to help people create a memorable photo of their trip is to take it for them. This could be a future opportunity for a small business to operate, offering the chance for visitors to don period costumes and have their photo taken.

Create an on-site library for research and reflection.

- As a nod to Adolph Sutro's love of books, create a space on the site where visitors can immerse themselves in literature and history. Provide context to the space to help visitors understand this element of Sutro's history.
- Use the space as a reading room and quiet space for visitors who want to take a break from activity or want to take a deeper dive into history. Collect works on the history of the area and have them available to students and scholars who want to learn more.
- Feature books by local authors that tell the stories of the community. The library can also be used as a place to display local art.
- Use the library as a space to host both community members and visitors by creating opportunities to interact, such as a book club, author-led discussions or book signing events.

Explore agritourism and dining opportunities that tie to Dayton's past as the "Breadbasket of the Comstock."



- In addition to a mill and the tunnel site, Sutro also owned land around Dayton that served as farmland to feed the Comstock. To help bring this aspect of the Sutro story to life, partner with local farmers to build enthusiasm around local food in Dayton. This could include partnerships with the farmers market in Dayton, Farm to Fork events, or eventually, a Farm to Table restaurant on the site.
- Consider working with current owners of the ranchland previously owned by Sutro to begin to develop on-farm experiences such as tours or special events that elevate regional culture. Package these as itineraries with tours of the Site.

Create spaces for artists and artisans to connect with visitors.

- Visitors love opportunities to see artists and artisans at work. Travel Nevada recommends utilizing the woodshop for this purpose, since it has historic precedent as a place where art was made, however, there may be other places on the site or in Dayton that could serve this purpose equally well.
- In addition to providing a workspace, it is recommended to establish shops in which local artists and artisans can sell their products. An artist's village or a cooperative marketplace may be appropriate models to explore for this purpose.

Honor all stories by working with local tribes to acknowledge their presence on the land that is now Dayton and, if desired by the tribes, allow them to tell their stories.

- The area that is now Dayton was inhabited primarily by the Washoe (Waší•šiw) and the Northern Paiute (Numu) tribes. Work to establish partnerships with local tribes and allow them to take the lead on how (or if) they want their stories to be shared.
- Work with Nevada's Indian Territory to establish relationships and help with the development of tribal tourism in the community.
- Include a land acknowledgement at the site to recognize the Indigenous people who were the original stewards of the land and acknowledge the impacts of colonization. This can serve as a step towards reconciliation and equitable relationships while also educating visitors.

Future Possibilities

Interface with the Cultural Corridor 3D Project to help elevate regional arts and culture initiatives.

- The Cultural Corridor project aims to develop a regional arts and culture tourism identity for the Carson Valley/ Carson City/ Virginia City corridor. Developing a partnership with the fellow 3D recipient may help forge ties with the art community and could result in fruitful collaborations that further extend the region's reputation for art.

Open permanent galleries to display local art and celebrate art and artists of the Comstock.

- As the region's appreciation for art grows and a permanent collection is established, open permanent galleries in Dayton to house works of art, display pieces for public viewing, and serve as a focal point for the burgeoning local art scene.

Building on the agritourism potential, open a local craft brewery or distillery at the tunnel.

- Consider the possibility of a novelty on-site craft brewery, Tunnelwater Brewing, as a long-term possibility to create another draw for locals and provide an additional amenity for visitors. The brews could also be featured in the Millsite Restaurant.



HOW TO IMPLEMENT THIS PLAN



There's not a "right" way to approach this plan, but success will depend upon strong partnerships within Dayton, among the communities of the Comstock and with the agencies and organizations that operate in the region. It will also require these organizations and operators to take the lead on initiatives related to their work or interests. This list is not comprehensive but provides a starting point for identifying partnerships that will fuel the growth and success of tourism at the Sutro Site and in Dayton.

FRIENDS OF SUTRO TUNNEL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This plan's success will depend upon strong partnerships among many organizations. It will also require these organizations and operators to take the lead on initiatives related to their work or interests. This list is not exhaustive, but provides a starting point for recruiting the partners who will fuel the growth and success of the Corridor.

LEAD ORGANIZATION	***Friends of Sutro Tunnel***	Friends of Sutro Tunnel will serve as the lead entity, directing and prioritizing future efforts. The Organization will seek 3D funding and other resources to implement the elements of this plan and will be the convener of partner organizations included in this chart (or others) to help increase visitation and visitor experience at the Sutro Tunnel Site and in Dayton.
DMO ORGANIZATIONS AND THE TOURISM INDUSTRY	***Travel Nevada, Pony Express Territory, Reno-Tahoe Territory, Virginia City Tourism Commission, Visit Carson City, Dayton Tourism Coalition (once established)***	Travel Nevada, Pony Express Territory, and Reno-Tahoe Territory will provide support for tourism development in the destination. Travel Nevada will provide funding for tourism development and multi-state marketing campaigns, while Territory organizations will provide support at trade events and more. The region's DMOs will catalyze visitation to the Sutro Tunnel Site by promoting and enhancing its offerings and collaborating with project partners to develop and promote itineraries that highlight the site's cultural and historic value.
HISTORY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORGANIZATIONS, MUSEUMS, AND ARCHIVES	***Historical Society of Dayton Valley, The Comstock Foundation, Comstock Historic District Commission, Virginia & Truckee Railway, Nevada State Historic Preservation Office***	History is at the heart of the Friends of Sutro Tunnel's 3D Project, and this site will engage historians and preservation experts (both from the community the surrounding region) to bring the stories of Dayton's past to life in a way that is authentic and entertaining. Museums are integral to the region's heritage tourism strategy. Their role in preservation and education, as well as providing immersive experiences, contributes significantly to the overall appeal of a destination for heritage tourists.
ARTISTS, ARTISANS, CRAFTSPEOPLE, AND ARTS ORGANIZATIONS	***Nevada Arts Council, local and regional creators***	Art and culture organizations—including those that are local, regional, and state-operated—will be instrumental in shaping and enriching Dayton's heritage tourism landscape. Their creativity, collaboration, and commitment to preserving and promoting local culture and craftsmanship will contribute significantly to the overall success of tourism initiatives at the Sutro Tunnel and in Dayton. The individuals and organizations can also play an instrumental role in connecting artists and artisans with the project, thereby providing creative and compelling avenues for visitors to experience the community.

OUTDOOR RECREATION	***Nevada Division of Outdoor Recreation, Muscle Powered, Nevada Offroad Association, Tread Lightly, Bureau of Land Management***	Developing and expanding opportunities for outdoor recreation at the site and throughout Dayton are one of the plan's key pillars. Working with partners who are well-versed in land management, trail development, outdoor assets, and outdoor experiences will lead to thoughtful and sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities that tie history and adventure together in new and exciting ways.
LOCAL GOVERNMENT	***Lyon County, Storey County, Carson City***	Local governments play a multifaceted role in fostering tourism by creating a supportive environment, preserving heritage, facilitating collaboration, supporting the destination and region's cultural assets, and providing important services like public safety and law enforcement. Their efforts contribute to sustainable tourism development, which benefits visitors and the local community.
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES, NONPROFITS	***Dayton Chamber of Commerce, Storey County Chamber of Commerce, Dayton Main Street, Nevada Mining Association, Northern Nevada Development Authority, Western Nevada Development District***	Community organizations serve as essential partners in implementing a tourism strategy. They elevate local culture, organize events, facilitate community engagement, and contribute to the overall sustainable development of tourism. Their involvement can help create an authentic visitor experience and benefit the local community.
EXPERIENCE PROVIDERS	***Artists, Authors, Artisans, Historic Reenactors and Interpreters, Guides and Tour Operators***	Experience providers allow visitors to connect to a destination and experience it in a more engaging way, whether by participating in a workshop or tour or chatting with a local guide. They also contribute to a destination's aesthetic appeal, cultural richness, and economic development, and their creativity and cultural contributions enhance visitors' overall tourism experience while supporting local quality of life.
ACADEMIA	***University of Nevada – Reno, Mackay School of Mines, Western Nevada College, local schools***	The University of Nevada, Reno can provide a wide range of technical expertise in implementing everything from market research to economic analyses and academic support in areas such as anthropology, mining, and more. Local schools can partner with Friends of Sutro Tunnel to participate in varied learning opportunities that connect them to their community's history and heritage.
LOCAL BUSINESSES	***Restaurants and Bars, Retail, Art Galleries, Service providers***	Local businesses are be instrumental in the success of this project, both in the development of the Sutro Site as contributors and supporters, and in crafting a desirable visitor experience by helping to meet the needs of travelers who choose to shop, dine, and browse in the destination.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Recreation and Stewardship Grants

- Recreation Trails Program is a Federal Highway Administration assistance program to help states provide and maintain recreational trails for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail use.
- Land and Water Conservation Fund for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities.
- Conserve Nevada supports the conservation and enhancement of Nevada's natural, cultural, and recreational resources with funding awards to public and private projects that benefit all Nevadans and visitors.
- Urban and Community Forestry Grants encourage projects that plant trees and increase the benefits of tree canopy, create and support long-term and sustained urban and community forestry programs, and promote the care of trees in disadvantaged communities throughout Nevada.
- Non-point Source Water Pollution Prevention Funding improves conditions of Nevada's watersheds and protects against nonpoint source water pollution.
- Submit A Research Grant Proposal - Leave No Trace offers funding for research projects in which science will aid in understanding the issue.
- Grant | OFF-ROAD Nevada supports off-highway vehicle related projects in the state of Nevada.
- Conservation Districts Grant Opportunities | DCNR Nevada's Department of Conservation & Natural Resources list of conservation grant opportunities.

Tourism Grants

- Grant Funds — Tourism Cares | Travel and Tourism Industry Nonprofit Tourism Cares contributes nearly $2.5 million to tourism projects and organizations around the globe that focus on sustainability, community engagement and cultural preservation.
- Rural Marketing Grants - Travel Nevada distributes $1.5 million per year for rural destination marketing efforts. The 3D program does not fund marketing efforts as participants are encouraged to seek funding through this grant.
- UN Tourism Small Grants Programme is designed to empower rural communities with resources to implement impactful projects.

Nevada Non-Profit and Grant Support

- Resources - The Center for Nonprofit Business supports non-profit organizations under the umbrella of the Reno-Sparks Chamber of Commerce.
- Nevada GrantLab work focuses on increasing the amount of federal grants awarded in the state of Nevada.

Arts, Culture, History & Heritage Grants

- FY26 Grant Offerings | Nevada Arts Council has a diverse offering of grant programs that support arts & culture in the state of Nevada.
- Homepage | SHPO State Historic Preservation Office Grants support eight program areas that are required by the National Historic Preservation Act.

STUMBLING BLOCKS TO WATCH FOR

This plan is an ambitious attempt to transform the economic and cultural landscape in Dayton through a tourism effort centered on the development of the Sutro Site. There are many moving parts and myriad opportunities for success, however, a judicious approach is recommended to avoid overextending resources, burning out personnel, or making decisions in haste that could negatively impact the project in the future. Below is a list of potential pitfalls that implementers should be aware of as they move forward with project implementation:

Attempting to implement too many things at once.

- By trying to tackle too many objectives simultaneously, implementers run the risk of stretching resources too thin and diluting the whole effort. This plan is written to be approached in a step-wise fashion so as not to overwhelm staff, partners and volunteers responsible for implementation. Be sure to choose actions to take in a sequential fashion, always being mindful of capacity and resources, but also staying open minded to adjacent possibilities that may arise during the process.

Obtaining inconsistent funding that requires projects and implementation to start and stall.

- While the 3D Project grant will catalyze initial project efforts in the first two years, it will be critical to work diligently to identify and secure sustainable sources of funding. Some strategies around this are identified in the Collaborative Structures and Activators portion of this document.

Inconsistent marketing and promotion.

- This project is rooted in storytelling. It will be important to work with a skilled marketing company to develop marketing and promotional messages that promote the destination's authenticity. In addition to marketing efforts, this messaging should be carried out in-market to help reinforce the community's identity for the visitor once they arrive. Partners should be aware of the branding for Dayton and the Sutro Site and should work to reinforce it in their own campaigns as appropriate.

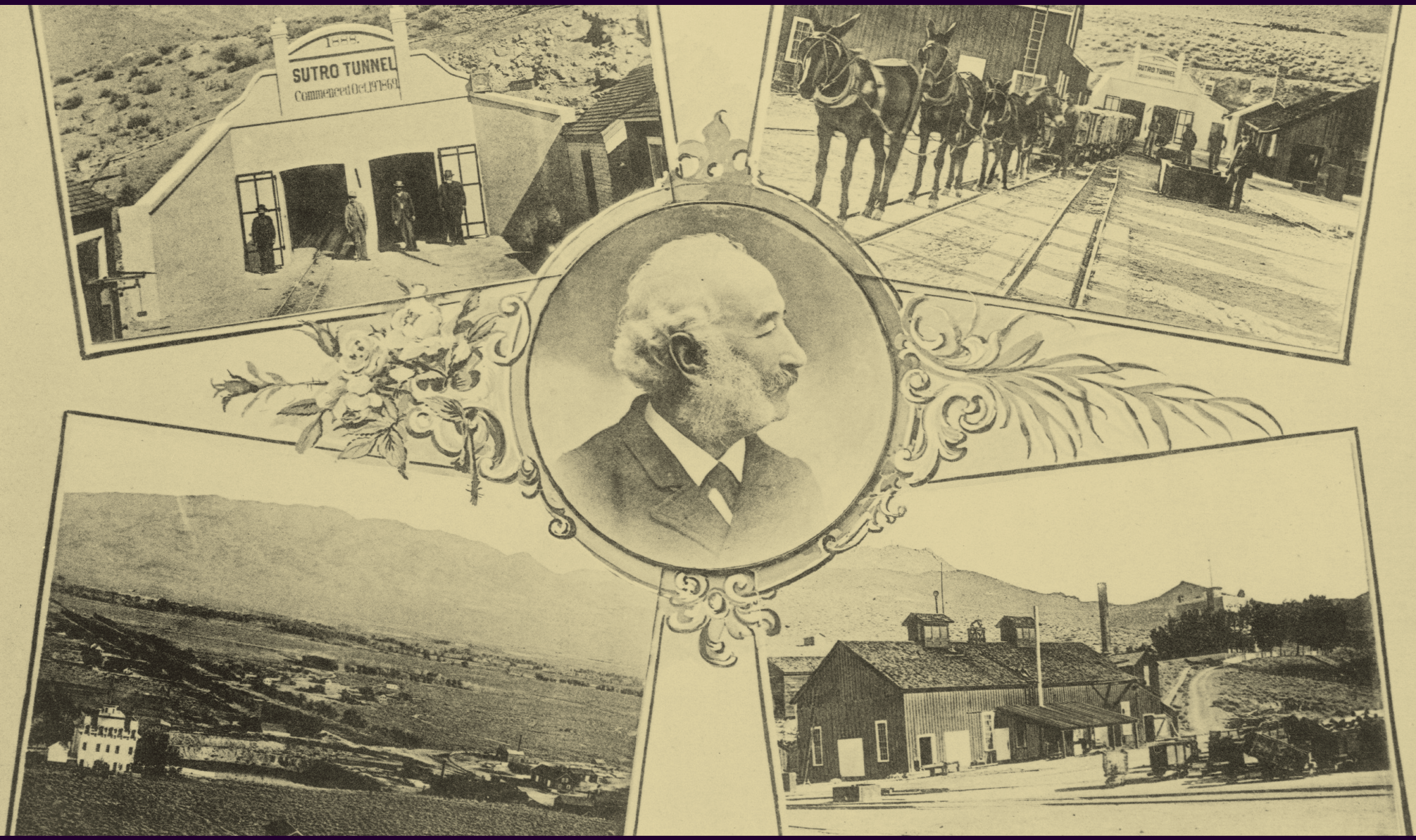
Further site degradation, theft and other site damage.

- Site stewards should maximize their efforts to protect the site from increased tourism by prioritizing conservation and stewardship messaging that communicated the responsible and respectful way to experience the history and natural beauty at the Site, in Dayton and all around the Comstock.
- Those implementing the project should take steps to protect the site as soon as possible. These include installing security at the site, undertaking efforts at site hardening, and building a sense of protection and stewardship among visitors to the site.

Lack of political and community alignment

- This plan's development will require support, commitment, and consensus among tourism, history and heritage, and art and culture organizations within the Dayton community as well as regionally. Continually work to educate and inform key stakeholders and build support for a broader regional tourism effort that can deliver benefits at the local level. Generate excitement around the project by showcasing early stage successes and sharing progress.
- Locals may be concerned about the potential negative impacts of tourism development. Overcoming potential resistance and gaining local support is crucial to developing this project. Engage local communities in this process and continually showcase examples of how the project is enhancing local quality of life. Care should be taken to ensure that initiatives align with local culture while inspiring acceptance.

APPENDICES



APPENDIX I

Travel Nevada

The Division of Tourism (Travel Nevada) operates within the Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs (DTCA) to help achieve the Governor's strategic priority of ensuring Nevada is recognized for its world-class destinations, its innovative and business-friendly economic environment, its quality of life, and its efficiently and effectively run state government. In addition to managing state tourism efforts, the Division provides communities and businesses with tourism development resources, training, and grant assistance that help bolster local economic bases and diversify regional economies.

Funded by a percentage of the state's lodging tax, Travel Nevada's mission and vision is to effectively communicate the enriching travel experiences Nevada offers and promote statewide economic health through tourism and enhance the quality of life for all Nevadans. (something about how we achieve the above through the following goals/initiatives):

- Increase overnight stays and spending.
- Contribute to the long-term growth and sustainability of local tourism economies.
- Lead the expansion of state partnerships to benefit communities.
- Foster welcoming and accessible rural destinations.
- Establish an understanding that local tourism products and services are a fundamental and important part of local economies.
- Affect awareness and perception of Nevada as a globally recognized brand.

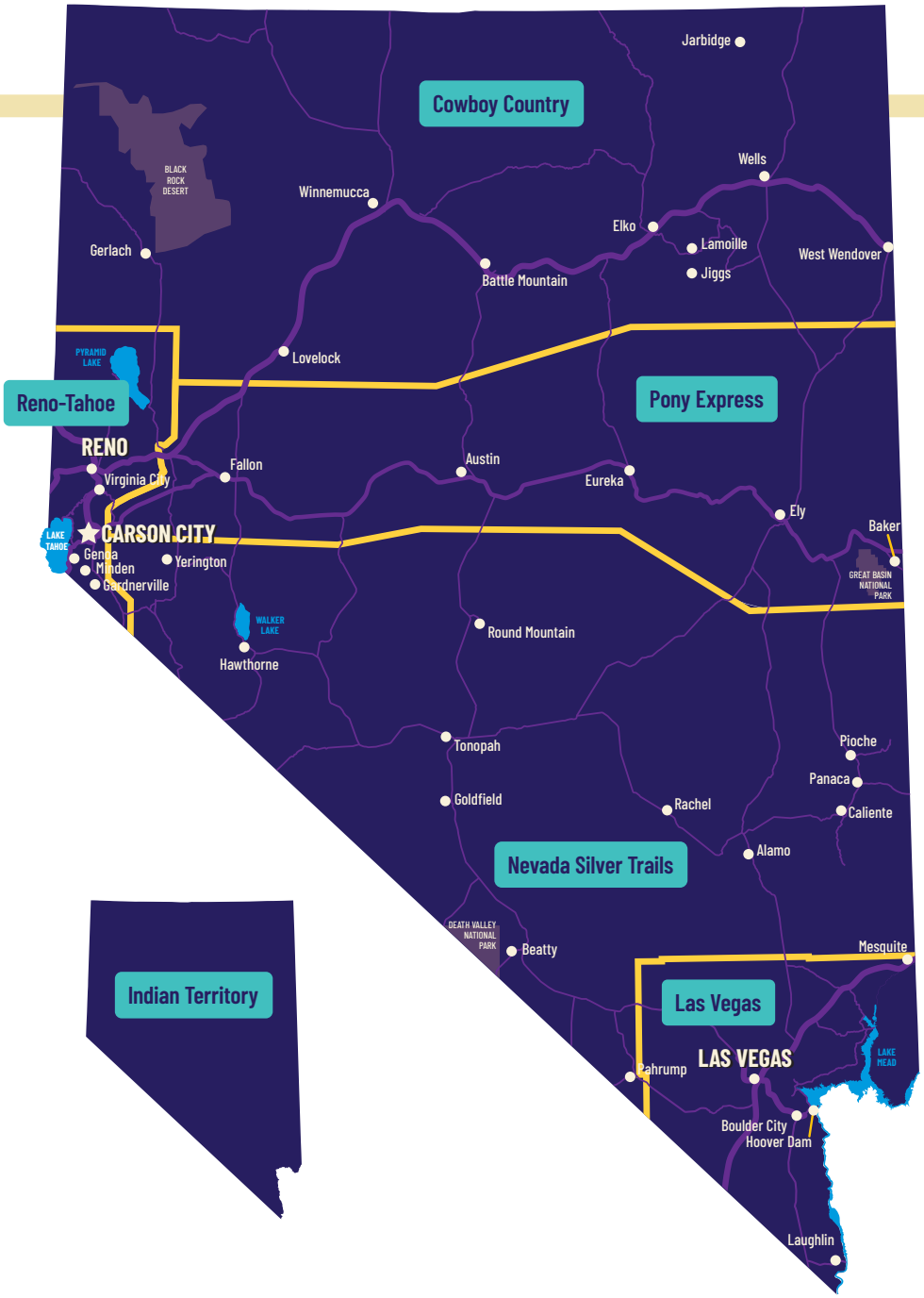


APPENDIX II

Nevada's Tourism Territories

The Nevada Commission on Tourism was created in 1983 at the proposal of Governor Richard H. Bryan with the intent of diversifying the state's gaming-based economy. The general goal was to create a more stable economic base in local communities in terms of economic development and to position Nevada as a business and leisure destination. As such, rural counties were divided into territories with the purpose of tourism promotion. Today the state's Territories offer support, education, and shared resources for destinations and tourism owners/operators.





APPENDIX III

Destination Development

The 3D Project, Travel Nevada's Destination Development Design program is a long-range, tourism-focused community and economic development program designed to foster intentional and strategic development in Nevada's rural communities. Through the destination development process, communities examine the qualities of their destination that contribute to the visitor experience and build a plan that capitalizes on strengths while addressing barriers and gaps. Identifying the key strategies necessary to enhance the visitor experience will inspire community investment and lead to improved quality of life for residents. The development of the 3D Project marked a significant evolution of Travel Nevada as it expands beyond its marketing legislation to the inclusion of destination development. This shift can be seen through adoption of a new identification, no longer a DMO (Destination Marketing Organization) but a DDMO (Destination Development and Marketing Organization).



The projects goals are to:

- **IMPROVE** quality of life for Nevadans through community-focused tourism development and placemaking/keeping efforts that convey authentic experiences that reflect local culture and values;
- **INCREASE** revenue and job opportunities for rural communities through increased visitor spend as a result of extended length of stay due to increased bookable product, enhanced tourism assets, and robust destination infrastructure;
- **EMPOWER** local communities to advocate for and adopt policies and practices to ensure the sustainability of their tourism economy, minimizing negative impacts on environmental and cultural resources through destination care and stewardship strategies and messaging;
- **EXPAND** state partnerships to benefit Nevada residents through increased capacity, technical expertise, and availability of resources;
- **BUILD** the adaptive capacity of rural Nevada communities through long-term tourism planning, to include hazard mitigation and crisis management strategies, economic diversification, infrastructure improvements, and workforce development;
- **FOSTER** a welcoming culture towards all residents and visitors by centering accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion in infrastructure, marketing, and in-market messaging statewide.
- **ESTABLISH** an understanding of the ways in which local tourism products and services are fundamental to a vibrant quality of life for all Nevadans, ensuring mutual benefits for visitors and residents;
- **ENCOURAGE** visitation through positive awareness and perception of Nevada as a globally recognized brand amongst global travel trade professionals and travelers

APPENDIX IV

Tourism Means More

Tourism can support local communities and their economy through direct and indirect spend pathways. Direct spend is categorized as dollars spent on accommodation, attractions and experiences, and transportation. Indirect revenue widens the scope to include ancillary spend at gas stations, grocery stores, and dining establishments. In Nevada, tourism spend means more through the collection of a lodging tax. In 2024, over 52 million travelers visited Nevada and generated $12.5 billion in lodging tax revenue in fiscal year 2023. Revenue generated by lodging tax not only supports the tourism industry as well as the state's school systems, transportation, infrastructure and more. To learn more about the benefits of tourism to the state of Nevada, and therefore your destination, visit Tourism Means More - Travel Nevada. For a more in-depth breakdown of lodging tax allocation, see Travel Nevada's Tourism Ecosystem report.



Created through the Travel Nevada Destination Development Demonstration (3D) Project

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