



A LETTER FROM GREEN CHIPS

Sustainability is, in many facets, a transformational word. It is transformative first in that the understanding of what it means to be “sustainable” has changed over several decades. Originally defined as the productive harmony between humans and nature that was necessary to guarantee the flourishing of mankind, sustainability has since taken on far more meaning. The economy, health, nature, built environment, energy, community, social equity and transportation now make up the components that ensure the endurance of prosperity.

Our community is a national leader in this area and Green Chips’ efforts have contributed significantly to that leadership through our mission to be the leading voice of sustainability in Southern Nevada. By promoting innovative partnerships among businesses, government and non-profits, Green Chips works to focus the region’s resources on the issues and challenges facing our community. Through this process, and programs such as Convene for Green, Green Chips amplifies and supplements local efforts that are dedicated to improving the quality of life and longevity of the region.

In this effort, Green Chips has three major goals: strengthening inclusive connections to continually improve our community, establishing action plans to meet high-level goals and metrics through collaborative cross-sector partnerships and leveraging the efficiency and synergy of shared economic and human capital. With a scope as broad as sustainability, the formation of an inclusive community network is imperative to address the diverse needs of the Las Vegas metropolitan area and its neighbors.

This network is committed to raising public awareness and identifying funding resources in support of educational outreach programs and site-based sustainability projects. The establishment of collaborative partnerships seeks to find synergy between the diverse organizations already engaging the community in the endeavor to promote sustainability, be it economic, environmental or social. Government entities, corporations and charities are just a few examples of the many resources available to Southern Nevada that will become more efficient and reach more residents by joining together. Finally, Green Chips assists its partner agencies in aggregating federal, state, local and foundation financial resources to bolster existing social services, environmental projects and economic development.

The purpose of this report is to provide the context surrounding the eight major pillars that support a sustainable community. In addition, it serves to highlight the positive strides made in this on-going effort throughout Southern Nevada, while also pinpointing the areas where additional attention, and progress, is needed. Coming full circle, sustainability is also transformative in that it demands continual progress. While the meaning of the word may have evolved over time, so too must our community to achieve its true potential.

Lauren Boitel, Executive Director



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The foundation of a sustainable community revolves around eight major pillars: economy, health, nature, built environment, energy, community, social equity and transportation. In an effort to build a brighter future for Southern Nevada, Green Chips compiled the Southern Nevada State of Sustainability Report 2016, which evaluates the current status of sustainability in the region and highlights areas in which Southern Nevada excels as well as potential areas in need of improvement.

TRANSPORTATION: Hybrid, electric and flexible fuel vehicles accounted for a record 6.4 percent of total registrations in 2015.

SOCIAL EQUITY: Children in poverty remains an issue in Southern Nevada, as the region reports one of the highest child poverty rates in the state.

COMMUNITY: Clark County high school graduation rates have increased since 2011, reaching 72.1 percent in 2015.

ENERGY: Nevada reports the nation's 14th highest share of renewable energy consumption as a percentage of total energy consumption.



ECONOMY: In 2015, average wage growth in Southern Nevada ranked fourth among the nation's 30 largest metro areas.

HEALTH: Clark County's uninsured population share fell from 23 percent in 2012 to 16 percent in 2014.

NATURE: Southern Nevada residents have been lowering water use on a per capita basis since 2006.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT: In 2015, Nevada ranked sixth in the nation for the amount of LEED-certified square footage per capita.

CONCLUSIONS:

In regards to these eight pillars, Southern Nevada has made great strides. Improvements in water conservation continually make Clark County a more efficient user of one of its most precious resources. Nevada is near the top of the nation in LEED-certified square footage per capita, indicating a commitment to conservation.

The economy, though hard hit by the recent economic downturn, continues to improve. With the addition of new medical educational resources, the health sector has the opportunity to evolve in a shifting health care environment. Though the journey towards sustainability is an ongoing process, Southern Nevada has taken considerable steps in promoting a community with sustainability at its core.