



2016 Winner

Downtown Truckee

Submitted by: Town of Truckee

Downtown Truckee, located off the Interstate 80 corridor between Sacramento and Reno, Nevada is the historic center of this high Sierra town as well as the Tahoe/Truckee region. Truckee was established in 1863 and incorporated in 1993. The downtown still retains the historic character of the late 1800s and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The area contains some of the most significant historic resources, as well as the greatest historic stories in the Truckee/North Tahoe Region. Downtown Truckee represents the most authentic historic built environment in a region dominated by some of the most magnificent natural features in California. The historic architecture, designed around the working class history of the high-elevation Sierra mountain town is far different from the more ornate buildings found in nearby gold-rush towns in the foothills and provides a truly unique experience for regional visitors. It creates the perfect juxtaposition to the majestic Donner Summit, nearby Lake Tahoe, and Donner Lake. The late 1800's buildings serve as the backdrop for the true character of Downtown's ribald and exciting past, where saloons outnumbered churches, gunfights were a regular occurrence, and ladies of the night plied their trade to those rugged enough to survive the epic winters.

Truckee has steadily and incrementally revitalized its historic downtown, starting with the town's current general plan, adopted in 2006. That plan stated a goal of infill development, reversing sprawl, and creating a town square. Based on that plan, the town has explored two distinct strategies. First, we set out to create the conditions for infill development to take place, including a multi-year community planning process, for a brownfield

Union Pacific property directly adjacent to downtown. Through years of hard work and a partnership with a determined developer, "The Railyard" has won infrastructure grants from the state and is moving ahead to build both affordable and market-rate housing with street-facing commercial in the downtown.



Second, the town has pursued a streetscape program in several stages. This project began with sidewalk, landscaping and public art improvements to the most iconic downtown buildings, and has expanded in several stages to cover over half of the downtown commercial properties. We expect that the streetscape projects will continue with strong community support based on this success. Together, these projects have been key in turning Truckee from a pass-through town on the way to Lake Tahoe, into a destination unto itself. By investing both redevelopment and general fund dollars in the downtown core, Truckee is succeeding in creating a walkable and livable town center.

Visually Interesting Design and Architectural Features Downtown has been recognized as the important center of the community as reflected in the Town's original General Plan and the ensuing Downtown Specific Plan. The Town continues to recognize the importance of the Downtown and invests in its heritage through significant streetscape improvements, historic preservation efforts with the Downtown Train Depot, the historic jail, as well as loan programs for business enhancement. Early efforts by the local merchants association created many of the lighting and streetscape improvements for Commercial Row in the early 1980's, funded in a large part by an annual event known as the "Truckee Follies" where fun is poked at civic leaders, local business owners, and others fortunate enough to call Truckee home. The Town Council, more recently, has continued to improve large sections of the Downtown, including the iconic Bridge Street intersection (known locally as "Malfunction Junction") and Brickelltown through sidewalk and pedestrian enhancements. Environmentally sound water quality and flood-capacity enhancements have occurred to Trout Creek, which flows through downtown, as well as storm water quality improvements associated with all streetscape projects.



Known as the "heart and soul" of Truckee, historic downtown Truckee provides a place for locals and visitors alike to enjoy through unique shops, eclectic restaurants, and beautiful art galleries -- all set in charming historic buildings with magnificent views of the surrounding Sierra Nevada Mountains. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, historic downtown Truckee embraces our heritage and proudly protects and restores historic buildings located in the district. Originally a stop along the first transcontinental railroad, the California Welcome Center and transportation hub is located in a 100+ year-old train depot set right in the heart of downtown. With recent streetscape projects, there are several community gathering places, complete with unique public art, for patrons to meet with friends and enjoy the Sierra sunshine that blankets the town. Truckee Thursdays, a street festival held for 11 weeks in the summer, brings people together to celebrate community and our historic downtown.

Contribution to Resident's Day-to-Day Living

Truckee is an authentic town that people love passionately, and a community that welcomes those who feel the same. Everyone who lives here has chosen it very intentionally, and I think that act of choosing runs deep. This is a town is friendly and welcoming, attracting healthy-minded outdoor enthusiasts such as skiers, climbers, hikers, bikers, runners and boaters, but also is a Base Camp for a Big Life for artists, entrepreneurs and families. Sometimes it isn't easy. Advice to those moving here may run along the lines of "bring your own job", and the housing market is not responding very quickly to the demand for the "missing middle". And yet, people love it. It is a place where everyone has a story of how they "found it", or for the smaller number of folks who were born here and continue to live here, a story of why it's the best place to live. Those stories often give way to passionate pursuits. Pro-skiers mingle with innovative designers. Locally owned coffee shops far outnumber those found in a standard urban shopping center. Locals have started businesses to make candles from re-purposed wine bottles, hand-made glass fishing lures, flashy trucker hats, home-brewed kombucha, playful art pieces of athletic figures made from railroad spikes, and the list goes on. We are a caring community-minded town that has high family values and are environmentally conscious. This is reflected through the staggering number of non-profit organizations offer services and seek to create community change on dozens of topics, supported by a community foundation committed to seeing all of these groups excel through funding, training and mentorship. For me, the culture of Truckee is captured by this story told to me by the owner of the local lumber yard. Years before when his father ran the company he was asked for a "local's discount" by a man buying lumber. He frowned, and asked the customer "what makes you a local?" The man replied, "Well, I just moved here but I really care about this place and I want to make it better." The discount was happily granted. Unlike any other small towns I have encountered, Truckee welcomes those who love the place and are eager to contribute. There's an authentic small town vibe here, friendly and vibrant, that is inspiring to be a part of. It's a Truckee thing.



Downtown Truckee serves as the communal "living room" for the local residents, recognized as the true heart and soul of the town. All major community events happen in Downtown Truckee. Truckee Thursdays has become very popular during the summer when the downtown is closed to vehicles to allow everyone

to enjoy the area with live music, food trucks, arts and local non-profit booths throughout the main core of downtown. Human powered events such as the bicycle portion of the Iron Man-Lake Tahoe triathlon happens in Downtown Truckee allowing the greater community to feel a part of these events. Small town local events also take place in Downtown Truckee including the local high school homecoming parade, Wine Walk and Shop, and the player's parade to kickoff the Little League season. The Downtown contains our favorite restaurants, our favorite watering holes, as well as our favorite shopping and entertainment venues.

Multi-Modal Transportation

Truckee is conveniently located with easy access right off Interstate 80, providing easy access to the San Francisco Bay Area / Silicon Valley or to Reno, Nevada as well as close proximity to nearby Lake Tahoe via Highway 89. This major hub benefits from a powerful system of transportation. Arriving by air is easy with the Reno-Tahoe International Airport just 35 miles away. The Amtrak California Zephyr train runs daily between Chicago and San Francisco, and stops in Truckee once a day eastbound and once a day westbound right in the heart of historic downtown Truckee. Amtrak, and Greyhound, also have several buses that stop in Truckee daily. The region is connected via the TART (Tahoe Truckee Area Regional Transit) bus system. TART has routes connecting the West Shore of Lake Tahoe, Tahoe City, Squaw Valley, Northstar, Incline Village, and Truckee. During both winter and summer, TART offers free night service along the West Shore, between Squaw Valley and Crystal Bay as well as connections to Northstar. During the winter months free ski shuttle service provides connections for visitors and resort employees from the North and West Shores to Squaw Valley, Alpine Meadows and Homewood. TART's Truckee local route offers service in the winter months throughout Truckee with connections to Donner Summit ski resorts daily. The Truckee local route offers service throughout the remainder of the year within the Town of Truckee Monday-Saturday. In addition the Truckee Dial-A-Ride service is available year-round to the general public as well as seniors and persons with disabilities.

The Senior Shuttle - North Tahoe/Truckee Transport offers out of the area inter-regional ADA accessible senior shuttle services. This service provides transport to essential needs appointments. There are several private limo, shuttle, and taxi services with Uber and Lyft recently starting up in the Truckee-Tahoe region as well. The past few years, collaborative public/private partnership efforts have increased the number of shuttles to and from events such as Truckee Thursdays (a signature downtown street festival held for 11 weeks in the summer) and restaurants and bars in downtown Truckee on New Year's Eve. Last year, law enforcement reported zero DUI's on New Year's Eve and attribute much of that success to the shuttles offered.

Donner Pass Road, Truckee's main street, was originally the historic Victory Highway, honoring World War I veterans with a highway from coast to coast. The bronze "Victory Eagle" statue, one of only six in the United States, is proudly located in Downtown Truckee honoring this highway. Later, the highway became US Highway 40, providing a true "coast to coast" driving experience.. Bicyclists and pedestrians utilize the friendly streets and sidewalks for their transportation needs and linking to the nearby Truckee River Legacy Trail, Trout Creek trail and connecting residential neighborhoods to Downtown. The Downtown serves as the multi-modal center for the community with the Downtown Train Depot that is located on the transcontinental railroad line.