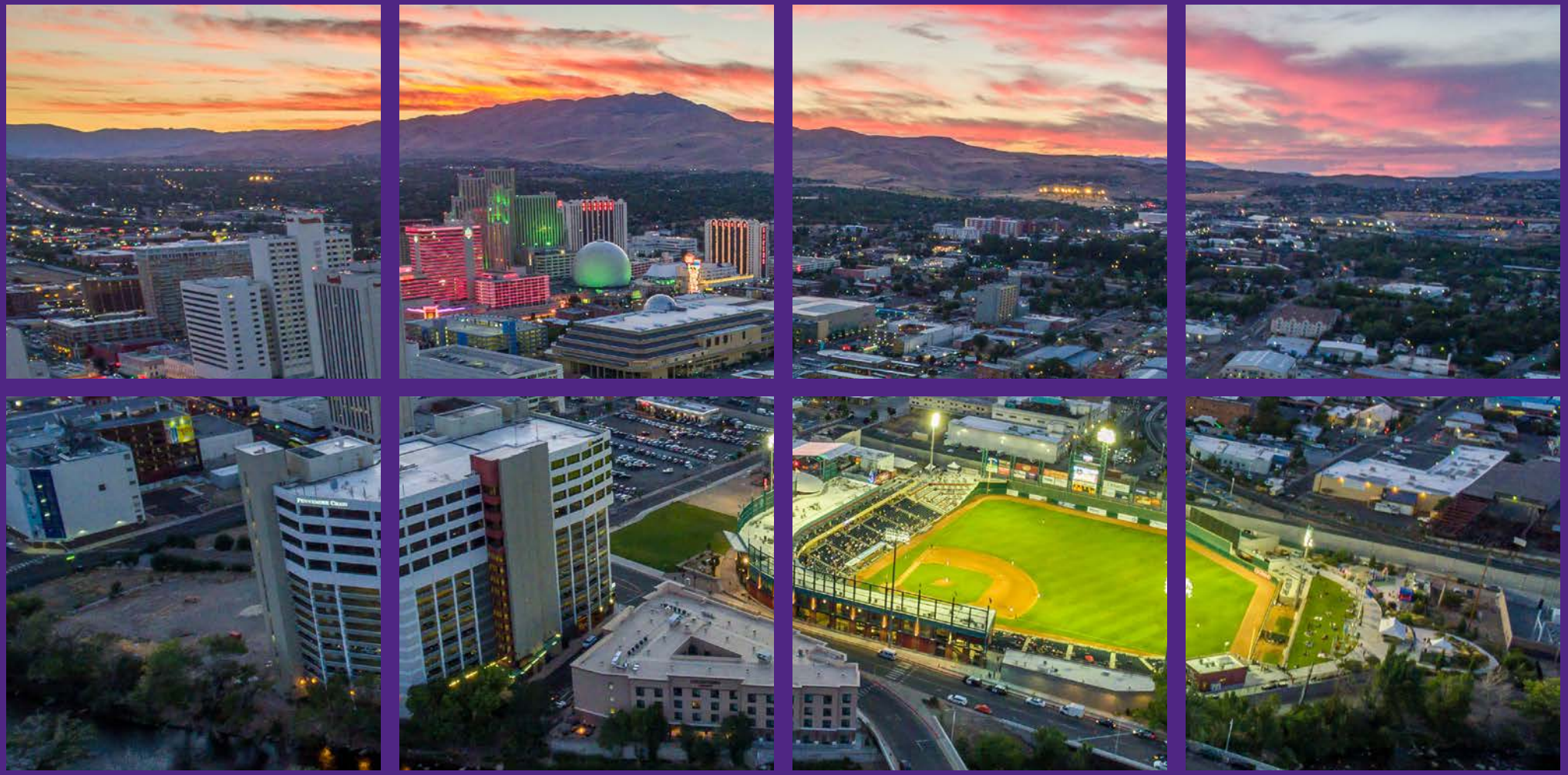


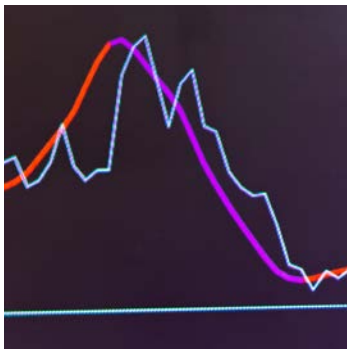
The Value of Downtowns: Comparisons

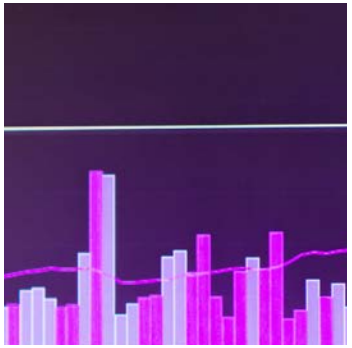
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF DOWNTOWN RENO, NEVADA
A 2026 IDA STUDY

A 2026 PUBLICATION CREATED BY
THE INTERNATIONAL DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION

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IDA

The International Downtown Association is the premier association of urban place managers who are shaping and activating dynamic downtown districts. Founded in 1954, IDA represents an industry of more than 2,500 place management organizations that employ 100,000 people throughout North America. Through its network of diverse practitioners, its rich body of knowledge, and its unique capacity to nurture community-building partnerships, IDA provides tools, intelligence and strategies for creating healthy and dynamic centers that anchor the well-being of towns, cities and regions of the world. IDA members are downtown champions who bring urban centers to life. For more information on IDA, visit **downtown.org**.

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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Overview

Strong downtowns are at the heart of any successful city or region. Their density brings people, firms, and ideas together in ways that grow the economy, create new opportunities, and form the basis of a community identity. As urbanist Richard Florida describes, "downtowns today are not just places to live, work and shop: They are the very best places for people and businesses to connect to each other. In big metros and small, downtowns occupy the most central locations and have the highest concentrations of spaces where people can come together."[1]

Downtown and UPMO leaders are facing a new reality in a post-pandemic environment. Return-to-office and visitation recovery have plateaued, and while rapid population growth continues in almost all downtowns, residents still make up just a small portion of the downtown customer base. These findings affirm that while downtowns are no less critical or important to their cities than they have ever been, repositioning for long-term sustainability is crucial.

The past few decades have seen consistent, steady growth in downtown Reno's residential population, fueled in part by hotel-to-apartment adaptive reuse. This growth signals downtown Reno's attractiveness to new residents, particularly young professionals, and indicates that downtown is already poised for its post-pandemic future.

However, employment in downtown Reno declined by 25% from 2002 to 2023, even when including the stabilizing presence of jobs on the University of Nevada, Reno campus. This employment retraction has been largely driven by a decline in the accommodation and food services sector, which includes casino-hotels. As tribal government gaming has grown in California, the hotels and casinos which put Reno on the map as "The Biggest Little City in The World" faced increased competition and challenges, leading to closures and job losses in downtown Reno. Nevertheless, the experience industry downtown is still strong relative to the comparison peers; only downtown New Orleans has a larger concentration of sales in these key visitation-driving sectors.

Methodology

IDA worked with the Downtown Reno Partnership to define a study area and align it to census tract boundaries for ease of incorporating publicly available data from the U.S. Census Bureau and other data sources.

Demographic data used in this report extends to 2024, and the jobs data used dates to 2023.

This comparison assesses how downtown Reno performs in key metrics across the principles of *economy*, *inclusion*, *vibrancy*, and *resilience*. It compares downtown to downtown using three distinct approaches:

1. Comparisons Peers

Downtown Reno's peer group includes the downtowns in Austin, Colorado Springs, New Orleans, Tacoma and Toledo. These comparison peers represent downtowns in our *Value of U.S. Downtowns and Center Cities* database which IDA and the Downtown Reno Partnership selected due to their similarity to downtown Reno across a number of variables.

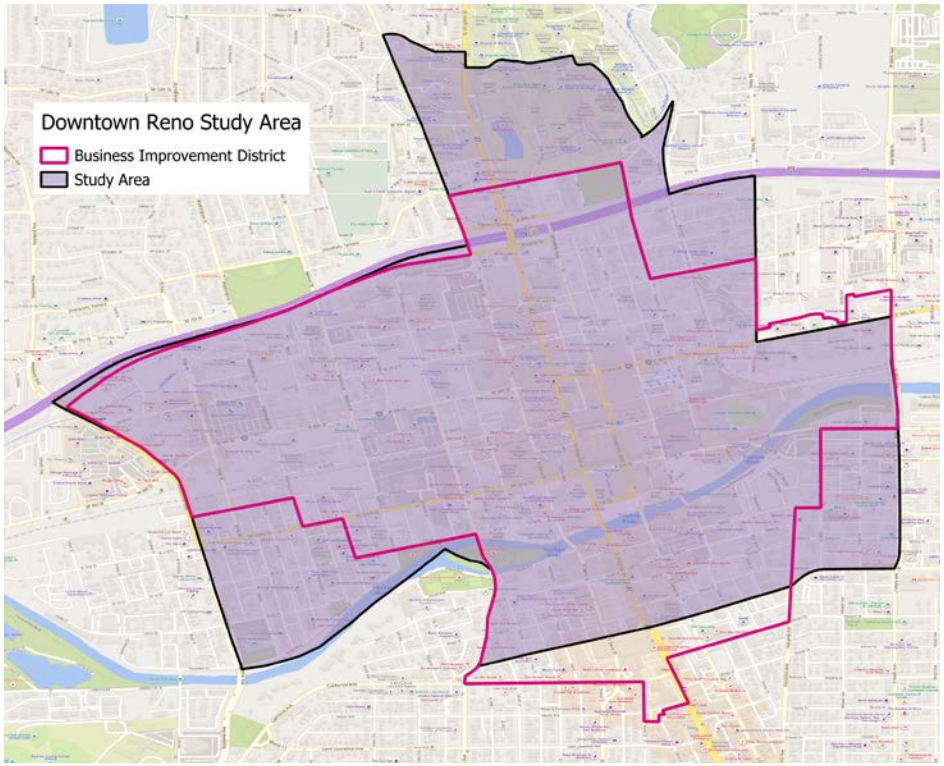
2. *Emerging* Tier

The *Value of U.S. Downtowns and Center Cities* study uses data collected across all districts, such as job and population density, property values, and growth over time to identify three tiers of districts, grouped by their stage of development. These groups: *established*, *growing* and *emerging* downtowns provide an additional lens for comparison. Downtown Reno falls into the *emerging* tier of districts.

3. All Value of Downtowns Participants

IDA has conducted its *Value of U.S. Downtowns and Center Cities* analysis for more than eight years. To date, the study has collected extensive data on 61 downtowns and commercial districts across the country, creating the basis for this comparisons report. The full list of downtowns and their tier classification appears in the Appendix.

Study Area



Downtown Typologies

Using data collected for the *Value of U.S. Downtowns and Center Cities* study, we identified three tiers of districts, defined by their stage of development. We divided the study districts into *established*, *growing*, and *emerging* tiers based on the significance of their population and jobs to their respective cities, as well as density of residents and jobs within the district, assessed value per square mile, the rate of population growth from 2010 to 2024, and the rate of job growth from 2010 to 2023. This analysis places Reno among the *emerging* tier of downtowns.

Emerging districts like downtown Reno could be described as those with the most potential; they have yet to accumulate the density of development found in *established* districts or enter a rapid growth period like growing districts. They often have lower land values and density, but these also present development opportunities for investors and developers. They also often have lower rents, making them more affordable for residents and more attractive to makers and creators.

For the full set of cities by tier, accompanying data points, and methodology, refer to the *Value of U.S. Downtowns and Center Cities Trends Report*, which is available on the IDA website, downtown.org.

Emerging Downtowns

Albuquerque	Jacksonville	Tucson
Baton Rouge	Lancaster	Tulsa
Birmingham	Little Rock	University Circle
Colorado Springs	Memphis	Waikiki
Corpus Christi	New Orleans	Wichita
El Paso	Norfolk	
Evansville	**Reno**	
Grand Rapids	Tacoma	
Huntsville	Toledo	

The Value of Downtowns Principles

ECONOMY



Downtowns and center cities occupy a small share of city land area but have substantial regional economic significance. As traditional centers of commerce, transportation, education, and government, downtowns frequently function as economic anchors of their regions. Because of a relatively high density of economic activity, investment in the center city provides a greater return per dollar than other parts of the city. Just as regional economies vary, so do the economic profiles of center cities—the relative concentration of jobs, economic activity, retail spending, tax revenue, and innovation varies across our sampling. Comparing the economic role of downtowns and center cities to the larger city or region is useful in articulating their unique value, as well as in setting development policy.

INCLUSION



Downtowns and center cities welcome all residents of the region as well as visitors, by providing access to opportunities, essential services, culture, recreation, entertainment, and civic activities. Though the specific offerings of each downtown may vary, they share the attributes of density, accessibility, and diversity, which promotes this access.

VIBRANCY



Thanks to a wide base of users, downtowns and center cities can support a variety of retail, infrastructure, and institutional uses that offer broad benefits to the region. Many unique regional cultural institutions, businesses, centers of innovation, public spaces, and activities are located downtown. The variety and diversity of offerings respond to the regional market and reflect the density of downtown development. As downtowns and center cities grow, their density—of spending, users, institutions, businesses, and knowledge—allows them to support critical infrastructure, such as public parks, transportation services, affordable housing, or major retailers that can't function as successfully elsewhere in the region.

IDENTITY



Downtowns and center cities preserve local heritage, provide a common point of physical connection for regional residents, and actively contribute to the brand of their region. Combining community history and personal memory, a downtown's cultural value plays a central role in preserving and promoting the region's identity. Downtowns and center cities serve as places for regional residents to come together, participate in civic life, and celebrate their region, which in turn promotes tourism and civic society. Likewise, the "postcard view" visitors associate with a region is virtually always an image of the downtown.

RESILIENCE



Resilience, broadly defined, represents a place's ability to withstand shocks and stresses. Because of the diversity and density of resources and services, center cities and their inhabitants can better absorb economic, social, and environmental shocks and stresses than their surrounding cities and regions. The diversity and economic strengths of downtowns and center cities equip them to adapt to economic and social shocks better than more homogenous communities. Consequently, they can play a key role in advancing regional resilience, particularly in the wake of economic and environmental shocks that disproportionately affect less economically and socially dynamic areas.

Key Downtown Reno Findings

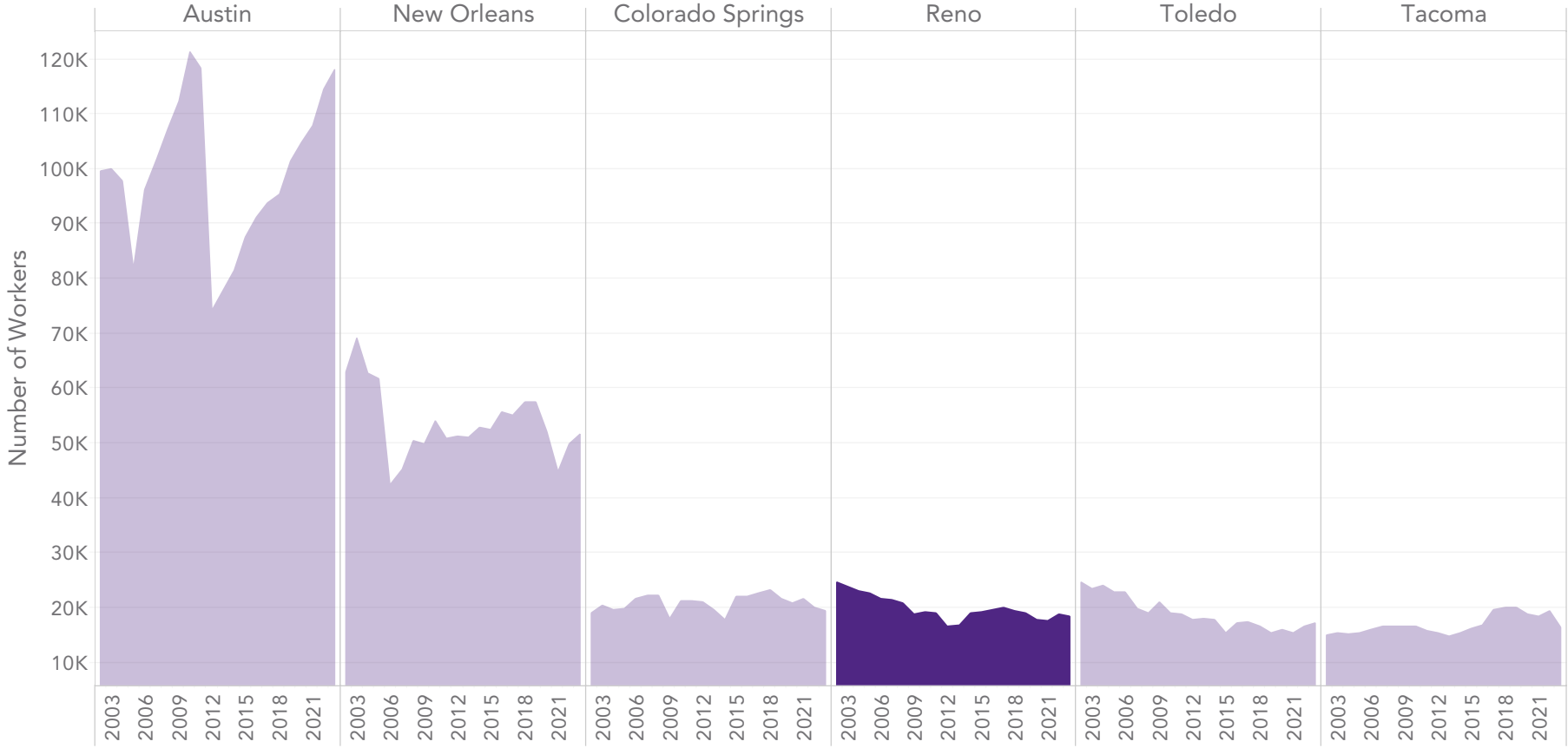
- Strong residential growth in downtown Reno has positioned it to thrive in a post-pandemic environment. With an 18% increase in downtown population from 2019 to 2024, the pandemic did not diminish interest in downtown living.
- Downtown employment has been on the decline over several decades. Since 2002, employment in downtown Reno has shrunk by 25% as a result of major gaming industry closures. However, employment has stabilized in recent years, with a 4% increase since 2020.
- Visitation has nearly recovered to pre-pandemic levels, a positive indicator for downtown Reno's large experience industry. In 2025, downtown Reno saw visitor foot traffic at 98% of 2019 levels.

Comparison Peers Overview

Downtown	Austin	Colorado Springs	New Orleans	Reno	Tacoma	Toledo
Land Area (Sq. Miles)	1.6	1.8	1.4	1.1	0.7	1.2
Primary Jobs	118K	19K	52K	18K	16K	17K
Job Change 2010–2023	-3%	-9%	-4%	-4%	-1%	-10%
Population	10.8K	4.7K	4.6K	8.9K	3.6K	3.9K
Population Change 2009–2024	149%	43%	148%	49%	18%	5%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2009, 2024) LEHD OnTheMap (2010, 2023)
Note: Refer to maps of each peer downtown in the Appendix on p. 35

Downtown Jobs Comparison



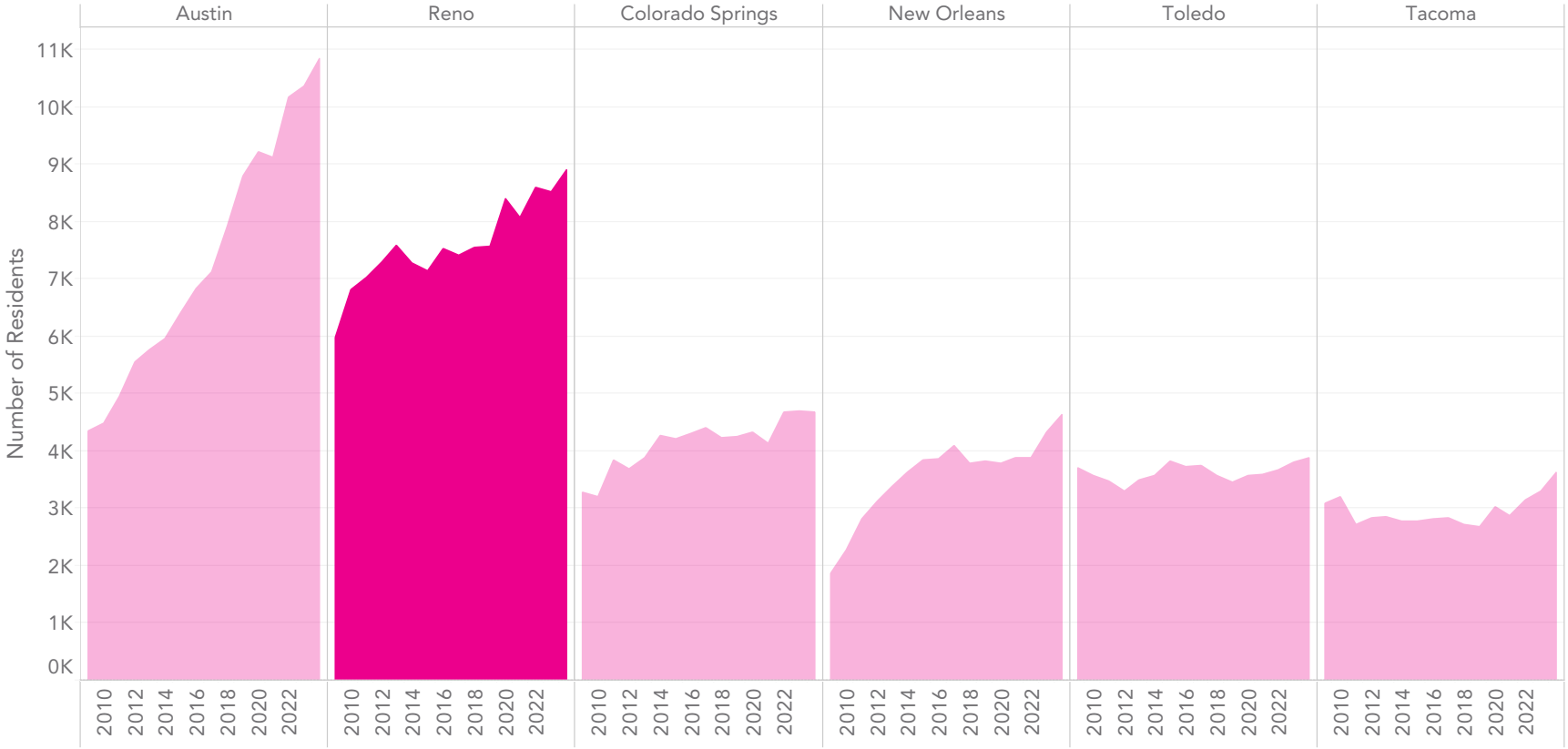
Source: LEHD On the Map (2002–2023)

Employment in downtown Reno has been on the decline overall since the early 2000s.

Since 2002, the number of workers in downtown Reno has fallen by 25%. This decline comes even when including employment at University of Nevada, Reno, which provides a significant and stable employment base. The decline has been largely driven by the accommodation and food services sector, which includes hotel and resort businesses. Since 2002, the number of jobs in this sector in downtown Reno has fallen from 12,000 in 2002 to just 5,000 in 2023.

Among the comparison peers, downtown Austin and New Orleans have the largest workforces, with Colorado Springs, Tacoma and Toledo being more comparable to downtown Reno's 18,000 jobs. Colorado Springs and Tacoma have generally held steady in total jobs, while Toledo has declined, roughly 31% from 2002 to 2023.

Downtown Population Comparison



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2009–2024)

Downtown Reno's population growth has been rising rapidly in recent years.

Currently, Reno has the second-largest residential population of any of the peers, behind only Austin. Downtown Reno's residential population has been steadily increasing over recent years, with a 49% increase from 2009 to 2024. This growth continued despite the COVID-19 pandemic, with an 18% increase in the 5-year period from 2019 to 2024, proving the ongoing appeal of downtown Reno as a residential neighborhood.

Among the comparison peers, Austin and New Orleans have grown in population significantly more than downtown Reno, each nearly doubling in population; but these are the only two downtowns which have grown more quickly among the peers. Though this population growth has not fully replaced the decline in downtown jobs, continued steady growth signals a shift in Reno from a recreation-focused visitation and employment hub to a more mixed-use downtown.

Economy

Employment	Downtown Reno	Comparisons Peers Median	Emerging Tier Average	Study Median
Share of City Land Area	1.1%	1.0%	1.2%	2.1%
Growth in Employment 2010–2023	-3.7%	-4.1%	-4%	10%
Citywide Jobs	11%	15%	14%	18%
Citywide Knowledge Jobs	11%	15%	16%	22%
Citywide Creative Jobs	21%	13%	17%	25%
Residents 25+ holding a Bachelor's Degree or Higher	29%	34%	43%	53%

Source: LEHD On the Map (2023), American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2019–2024)

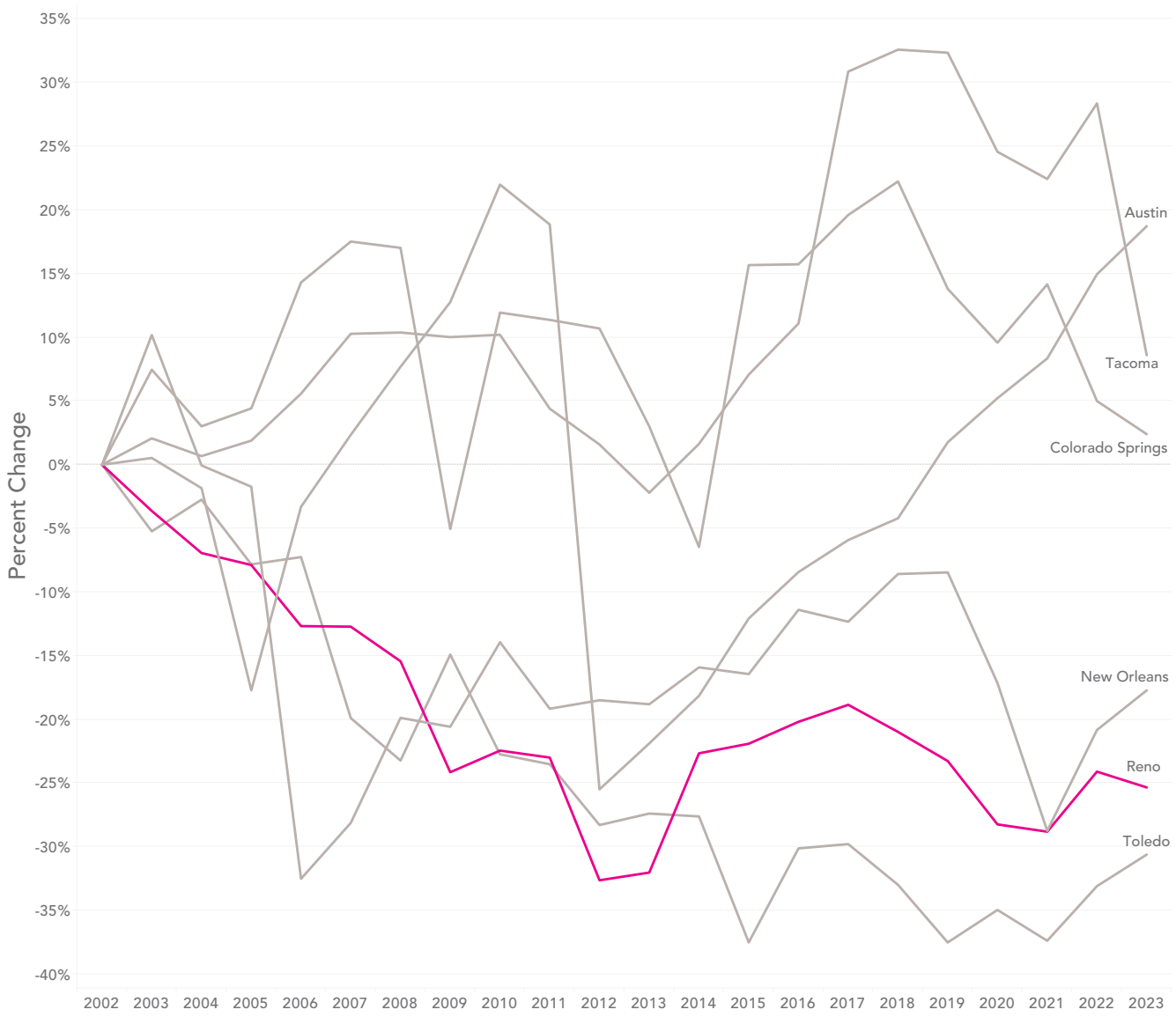
In just 1.1 square miles, downtown Reno contains 11% of the city's jobs, but employment has been declining.

Despite making up a very small portion of Reno overall, just 1.1% of the land area, downtown Reno is one of the area's largest employment centers, with 11% of all Reno jobs located in downtown's 1.1 square miles. Reno has retained its importance to the city and regional employment landscape even with challenges to the gaming industry and new regional employment centers arising. These figures include employment at the University of Nevada, Reno campus, which is partially inside the study area.

However, downtown Reno currently has a somewhat smaller share of the city's workforce compared to both the comparison peers and emerging tier generally. Historically, downtown Reno has had a much larger concentration of employment: in 2002, 20% of the city's jobs were located downtown, compared to 11% today.

When the employment and impact of UNR is included, it shows a picture of a relatively stable downtown Reno in recent years. Since 2010, employment levels have generally stabilized, fluctuating between 17,000 and 20,000 workers in the study area. This is a similar trend to both the rest of the comparison peers as well as the emerging tier of downtowns, which have also mostly held flat in employment or declined slightly.

Percent Primary Job Growth (Downtown)



Source: LEHD On the Map (2002–2023)

The number of jobs in downtown Reno has declined as increased competition in the casino business has moved jobs out of the city.

Among the comparison peers, downtown Reno has had the second poorest job performance since 2002. However, this trend is mostly concentrated in the 2000s and early 2010s. During that period, increased competition from the California gaming industry intensely pressured downtown Reno's famous hotels and casinos. Since 2014, employment in downtown Reno has remained relatively stable with less dramatic changes to the employment landscape. There is no single trend among the peers; three have had positive job growth overall and three have had negative job growth.

Percentage of Downtown Primary Jobs in Top Industries



Source: LEHD On the Map (2023)

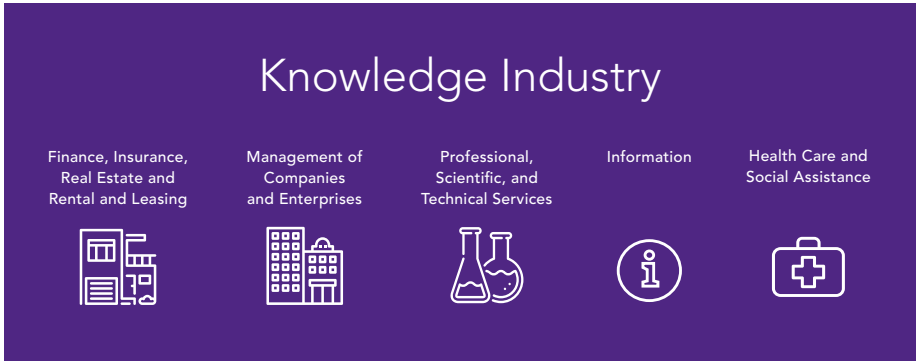
Declines in the casino-hotel business have left it roughly equal with educational services as the largest industries.

As the number of jobs in the accommodation and food services sector has been falling over the past two decades, it is no longer the dominant sector; it is now on par with educational services in the study area, which includes part of the University of Nevada, Reno campus. This embodies significant shifts in downtown Reno over the past two decades as the city reinvents itself and the University continues to expand. With new development and growth coming from the University, there also comes a shift from a downtown-adjacent institution to an important and integrated part of the downtown community. Another prominent industry downtown is health care and social assistance, anchored by St. Mary's Regional Medical Center.

Downtown Reno has the largest share of jobs in each of these three industries across any of the comparison peers. Together, these three sectors make up almost 7-in-10 jobs in downtown Reno.

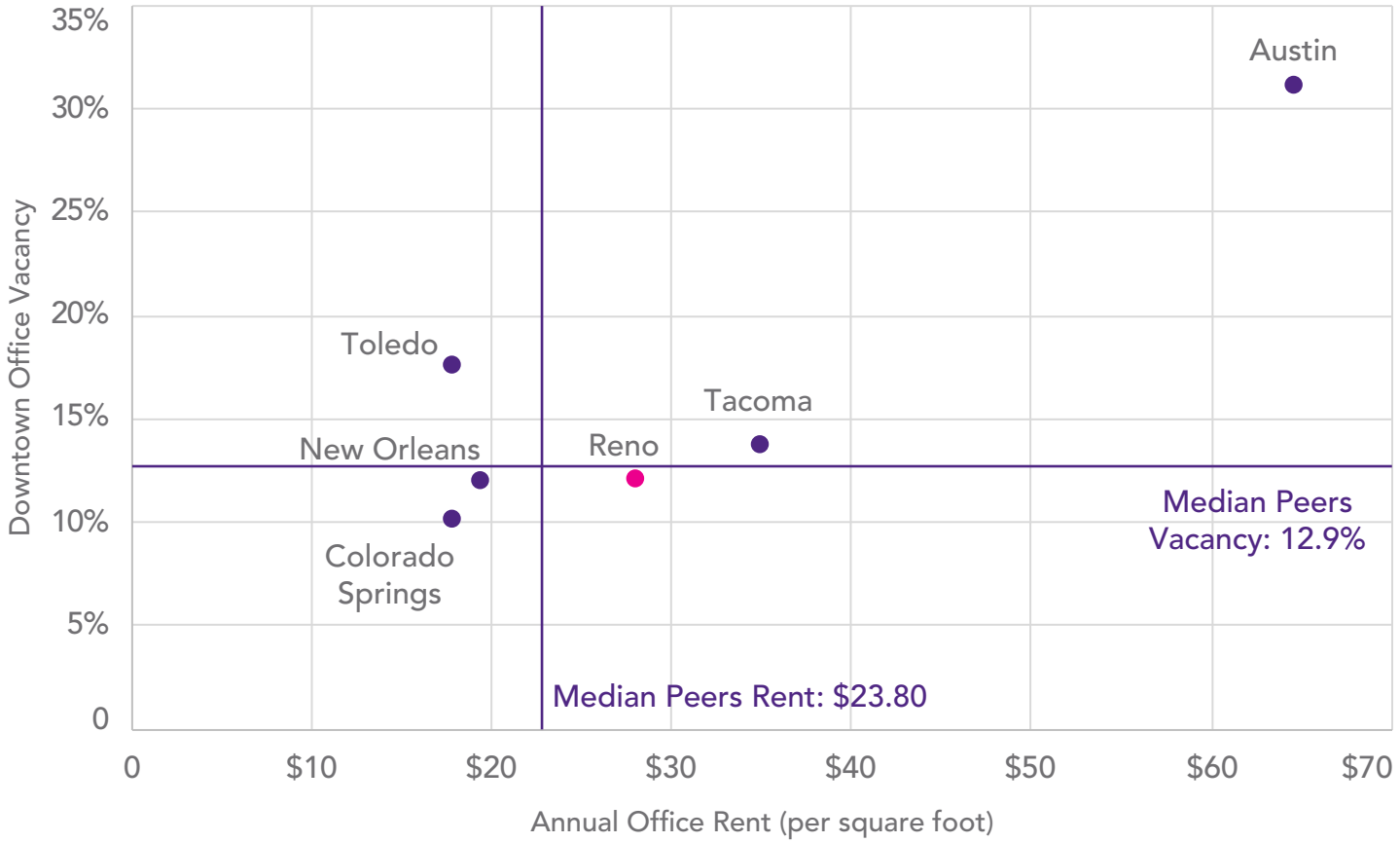
One prominent area of difference between downtown Reno and the comparison peers is public administration employment. Downtown Reno has the smallest share of downtown employment in this traditionally stable sector with just 3% of downtown workers in government employment. Meanwhile, four of the five peers have 18% employment or more in this sector. However, the Bruce R. Thompson federal courthouse is just outside the study area boundary. Including it would increase downtown Reno's share of public administration jobs to 9%.

Downtown Reno is in the middle of the pack of comparison peers in the knowledge industry, a collection of sectors that typically demand heavy use of technology and a highly skilled workforce but also offer high-paying work. Most of downtown Reno's employment in this industry is in the aforementioned health care and social assistance sector, but most of the peers have much larger shares of workers in finance and insurance as well as in professional, scientific, and technical services, a collection of sectors comprising a variety of white-collar fields like architecture and accounting.





Downtown Office Vacancy and Annual Rent



Sources: Colliers (2026), Cushman & Wakefield (2026), Downtown Colorado Springs Partnership (2026), New Orleans Downtown Development District (2025), Reichle Klein Group (2025)

Downtown Reno's office market is about on par with most of the peers, only Austin stands out.

Among the comparison peers, downtown Austin is the clear outlier, with both downtown vacancy and asking rents at levels far above any of the comparison peers. Downtown Reno's office market is at the peers' median for vacancy rate, and somewhat above the median in asking rents. Besides Tacoma and Austin, the remainder of the peers are below Reno in median office rent.

Downtown Reno has strong property values, on par with most of the peers.

Downtown Reno has property values estimated at $2.3 billion per square mile. Approximately 4% of the land value of Reno is located in the 1% of land that is downtown. Among the comparison peers, only downtown Austin stands far above the rest, with property value per square mile of nearly $11 billion. When excluding downtown Austin, the average of the comparison peers falls to $1.9B.

Land Value	Downtown Reno	Downtown Austin	Comparison Peers (weighted average)	Comparison Peers (excluding Austin)	Emerging Tier Average
Estimated Market Value per square mile	$2.3B	$10.9B	$3.5B	$1.9B	$1.9B
Share of Citywide Market Value	4%	10%	7%	5%	7%

Sources: Assessor's office in each UPMO partner county or city.



Inclusion

Population	Downtown Reno	Comparison Peers Median	Emerging Tier Average	Study Median
Land Area (square miles)	1.1%	1.3	1.2	2.5
Citywide Population	3.3%	1.3%	1.8%	3.3%
Resident Growth 2009–2024	49%	46%	18%	43%
Density (residents/acre)	12	7	6	10

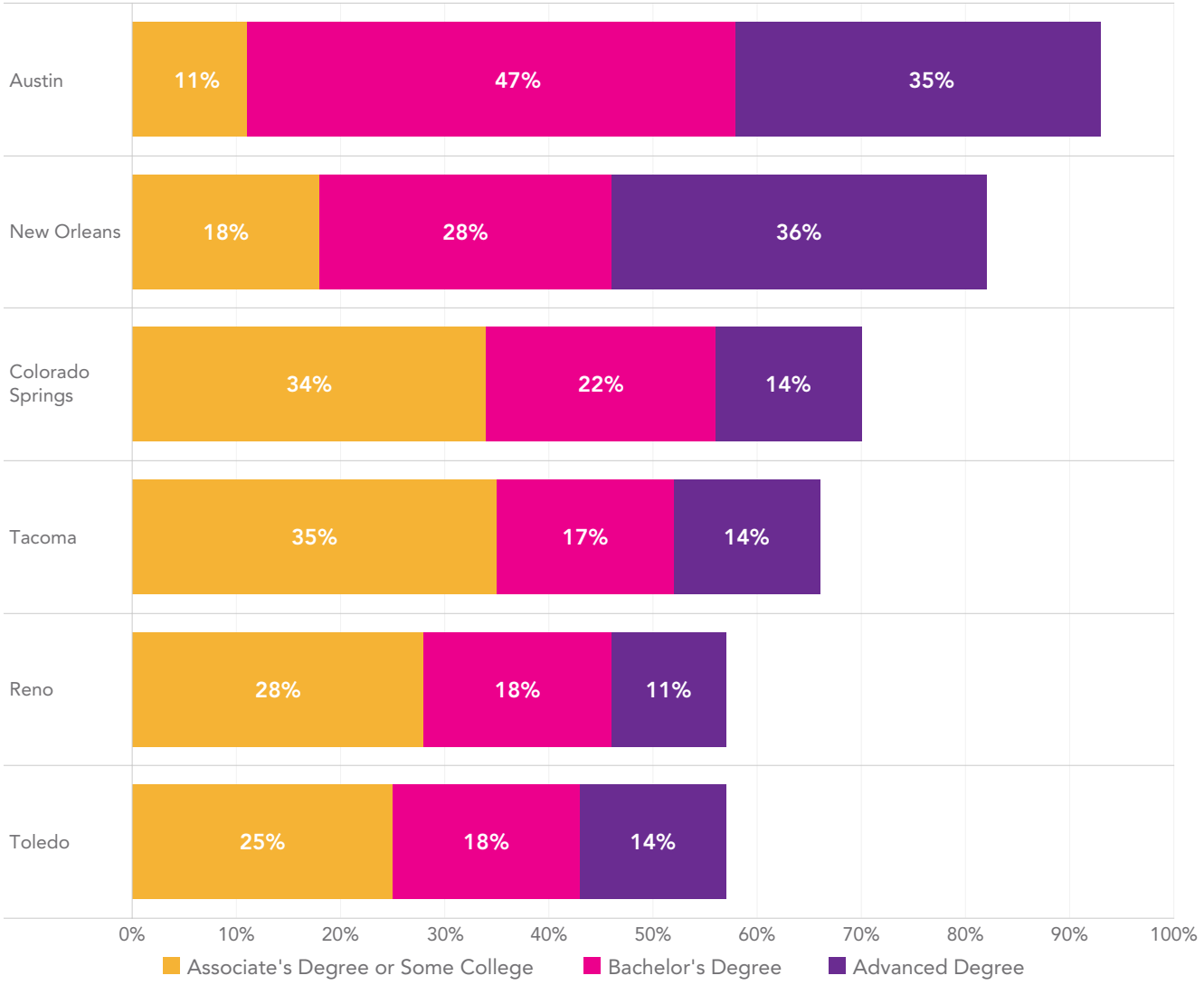
Sources: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2020–2024)

Downtown Reno has a strong share of the city's residents relative to emerging downtowns and the comparison peers.

With steady downtown residential growth, downtown Reno has built up its significance as a residential neighborhood in addition to a job center. With 12 residents per acre and 3.3% of Reno residents living downtown, Reno exceeds both the comparison peers and other emerging tier downtowns in both metrics. Downtown Reno also has a large overall population compared to the rest of the comparison peers, with nearly 9,000 residents. Only downtown Austin is larger, with nearly 11,000.

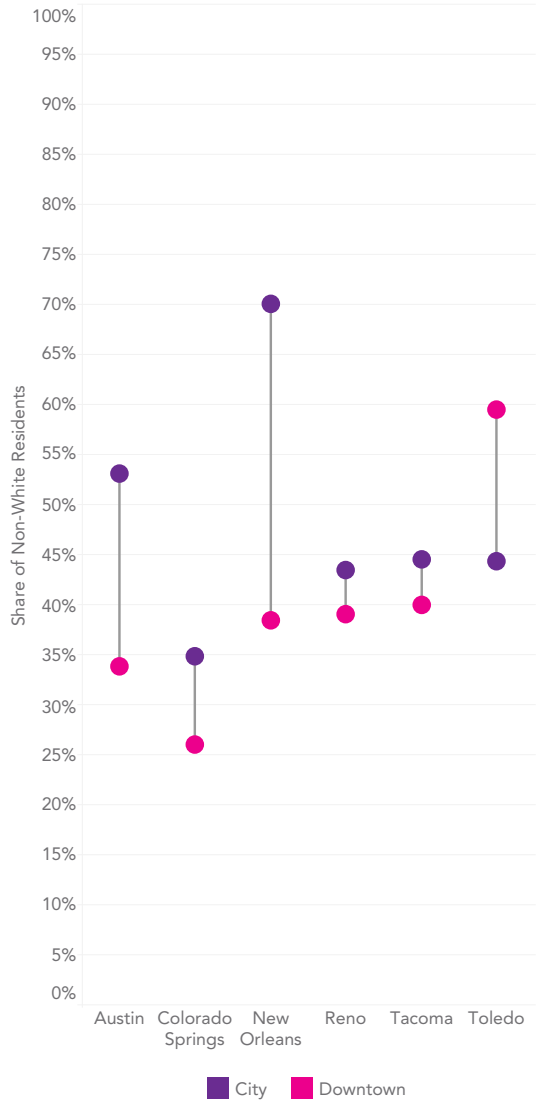
A variety of metrics can help to quantify the idea of downtown inclusivity. Relatively few downtown Reno residents have a college education compared to the rest of the peers, 29% have a Bachelor's degree or other higher education, and an additional 28% have an associate's degree or some college coursework. Only Toledo is lower among the comparison peers, but local context is critical. Downtown Reno's residents are similar in education level to the rest of the city, with 29% of downtown residents having a Bachelor's degree or other higher education, compared to 37% across the city.

Downtown Residents Educational Attainment



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2020–2024)

City vs Downtown Racial Diversity



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2020–2024)

Downtown Reno's residents are very similar to the rest of the city's in terms of racial diversity

Residential racial diversity can be an important measurement to quantify downtown inclusivity, but it must be understood within the context of the rest of the city.

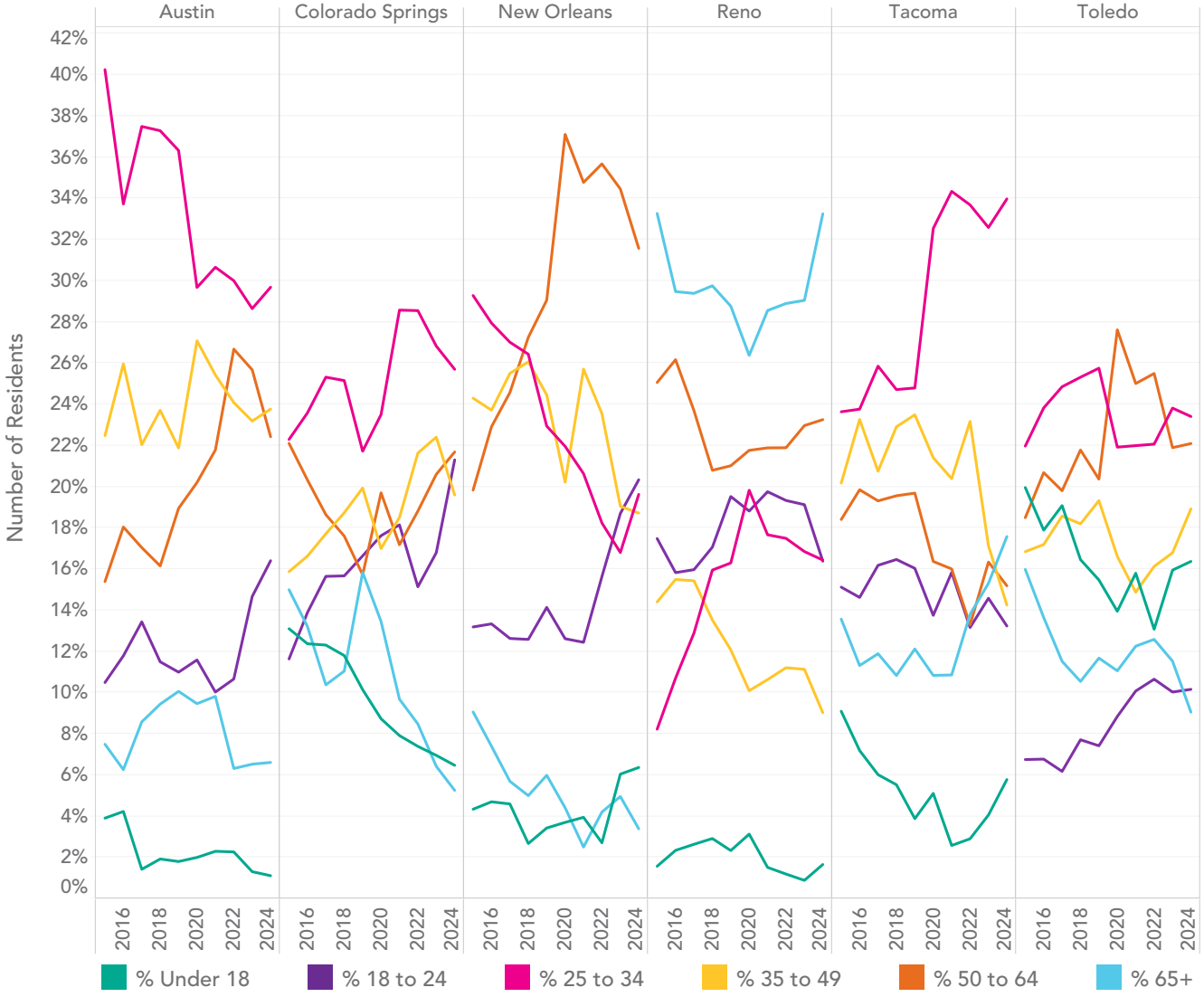
Among the comparison peers, no downtown is closer to the rest of its city in percentage of non-White residents than downtown Reno, though downtown Tacoma is similar in this area.

In recent years, downtown Reno's population growth has come with a rising share of population in the 25 to 34 year old age group, which increased from 8% of downtown's residents in 2015 to 16% in 2024. The 18 to 24 age group has also been growing rapidly over the past few years, after initially declining from 2015 to 2020, and as of 2024 has returned to 2015 levels.

Tacoma and Colorado Springs have also seen steadily growing 25-to-34 year old cohorts, likely a sign that all three downtowns including Reno have a growing appeal to young professionals. In nearly all downtowns, the share of 18-to-24 year olds is shrinking, with the only exception being Tacoma. Finally, in all downtowns in the comparison peers, the share of residents under 18 has shrunk over the past decade, showing a need across all six comparison peers for greater housing diversity to support families.



Percent of Residents by Age Over Time



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2014–2024)

Downtown Reno's typical rents are on par with most of the peers, but incomes are lower.

Median household income in downtown Reno is just over $35,000 per year. This is markedly below the median of the peer group, which stands just below $45,000. The highest incomes in the comparison peers can be found in downtown Austin, where median income for a household exceeds $160,000. Downtown Reno incomes are also significantly lower than the rest of the city, which has a median household income of roughly $81,000.

Median rents for Reno are much closer to the rest of the peers, however, with downtown Reno's median rent of $1,154 almost perfectly matching the peers' median of $1,164. The most affordable rents among the peers can be found in downtown Toledo, with typical rents under $1,000, and the most expensive in Austin, where they exceed $2,700. Downtown rents are also far lower than the rest of Reno, where the median rent is approaching $1,600. Rents in Reno generally have been on the rise, nearly doubling from 2015 to 2024, driven by new manufacturing jobs at the Tahoe-Reno Industrial Center drawing new, highly-paid residents to the region.

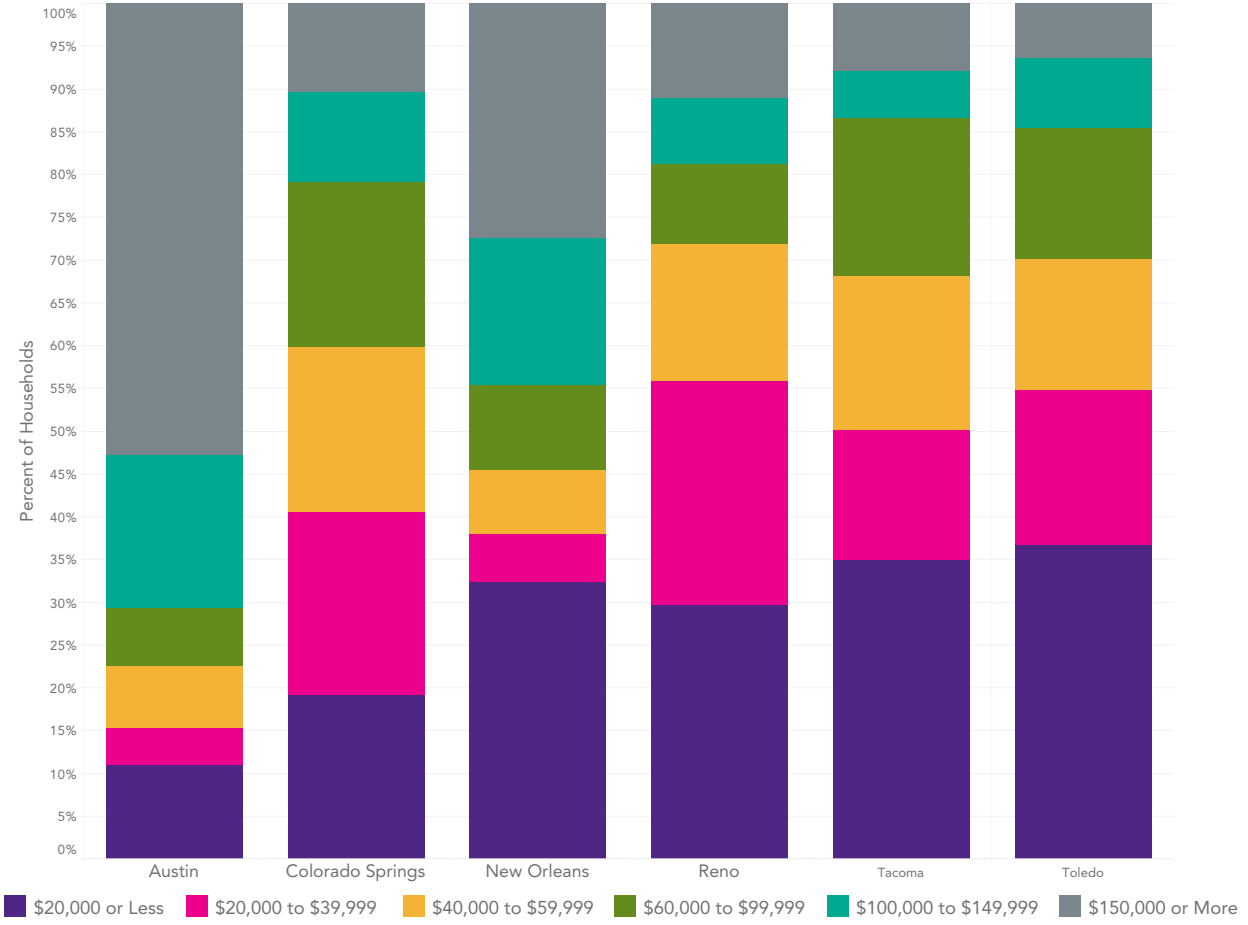
Residents	Downtown Reno	Comparison Peers Median	Emerging Tier Median
Renter-Occupied	82%	79%	84%
Median Household Income	$35,069	$44,718	$46,995
Median Gross Rent	$1,154	$1,164	$1,129

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2020–2024)

Downtown Household Income Distribution

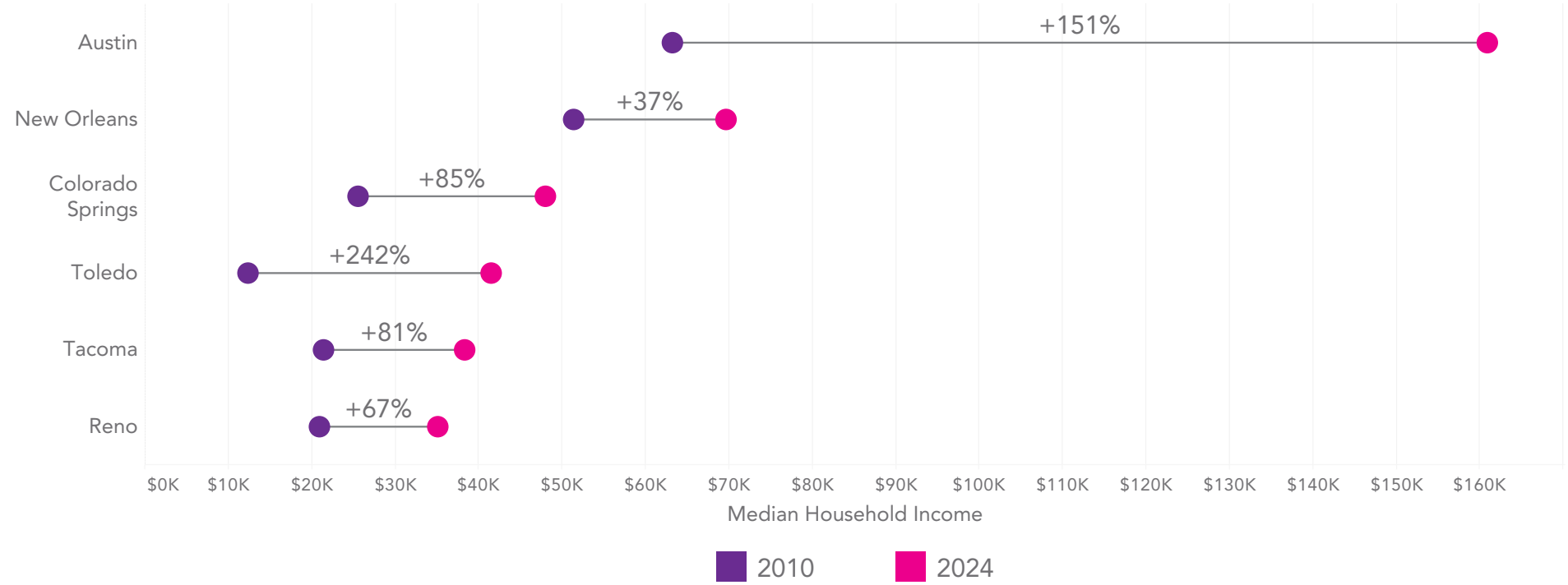
Downtown Reno has the lowest share of households earning over $60,000 among its peers.

While downtown Reno does not have the largest share of households at the lowest income levels, under $20,000, relatively few middle- and high-income households live in downtown Reno. Just 28% of downtown Reno households have annual income above $60,000, the smallest share of the peers, slightly less than downtown Tacoma (31%) and downtown Toledo (29%). This is driven in part by the very large share of 18- to 24-year-olds, as students often have minimal incomes, as well as the large share of retirees, who generally have fixed incomes. Austin stands out as truly exceptional among these peers. 53% of downtown Austin households have an income over $150,000.



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2020–2024)

Downtown Income Growth Comparison



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2010, 2024)

Vibrancy

Downtown Reno's retail environment compares well to the peers, only New Orleans and Austin are stronger.

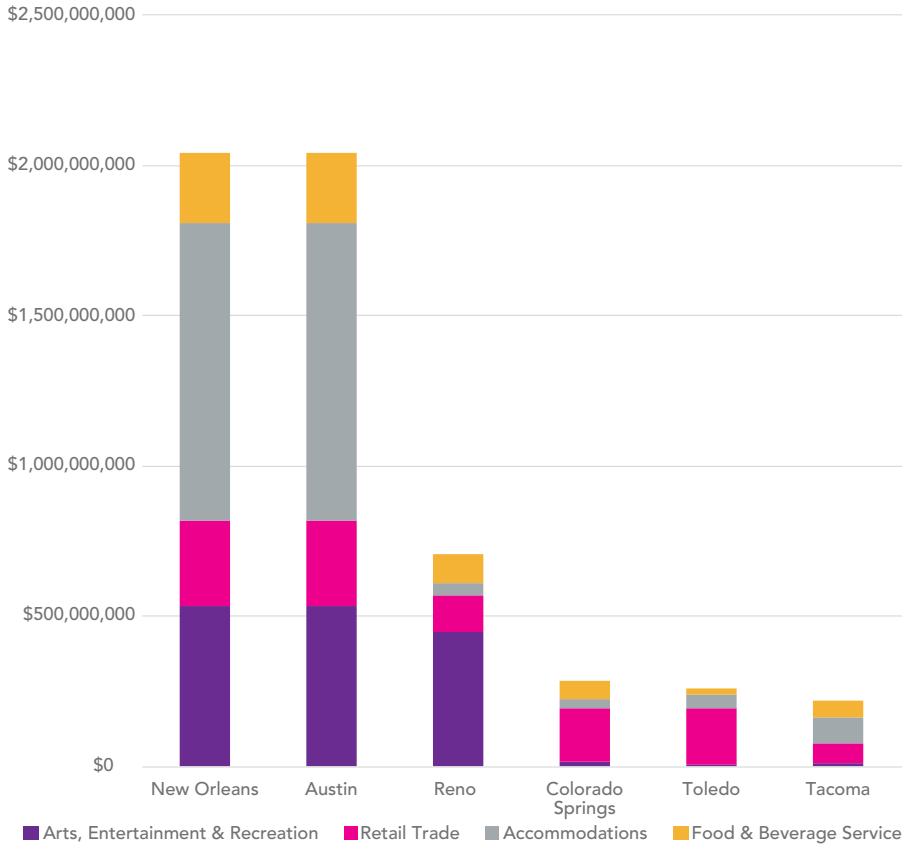
Several retail sectors that tend to aggregate in downtown are also key visitation drivers – retail trade, food and beverage service, accommodation business, and arts/entertainment/recreation are all among the hallmarks of downtown identity and also key draws for downtown visitors, both locally and outside the region. Together, these sectors make up the experience industry.

Among the rest of the comparison peers, New Orleans and Austin stand in a class of their own with over $2B in experience industry sales per square mile last year. Downtown Reno has a very strong showing in this area, with $826M in sales per square mile across the sectors making up the experience industry, well above the rest of the peers. Reno's outsized impact in this area is driven largely by the arts, entertainment, and recreation sector, which includes non-hotel/resort casino businesses. Despite declines in this industry and increased competition, it remains a powerful driver for downtown Reno.

Experience Industry	Downtown Reno	Comparison Peers Median	Emerging Tier Median
Experience Industry Sales per square mile	$826M	$367M	$312M
Businesses per square mile	296	215	171
Retail Trade Alone per square mile	$150M	$183M	$114M

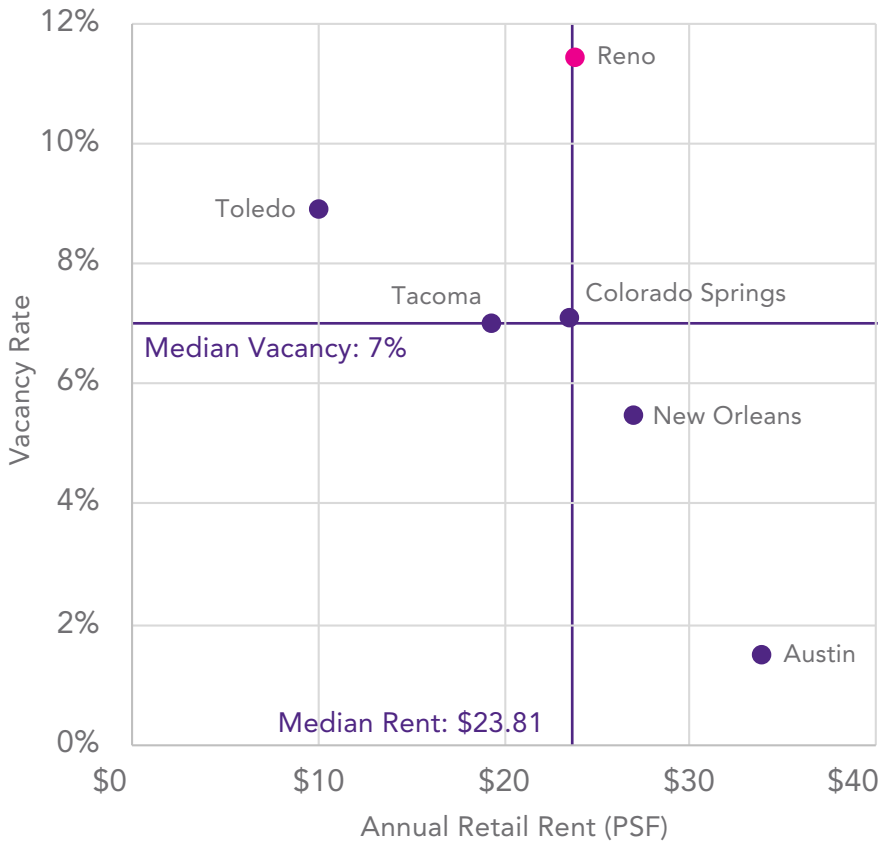
Source: ESRI Business Analyst Online (2025)
Note: Experience industry includes the following sectors; accommodation & food services (NAICS 72), arts, entertainment & recreation (NAICS 71), and retail trade (NAICS 44-45)

Downtown Experience Industry Sales per Square Mile



Source: ESRI Business Analyst Online (2024)

Downtown Retail Rent and Vacancy



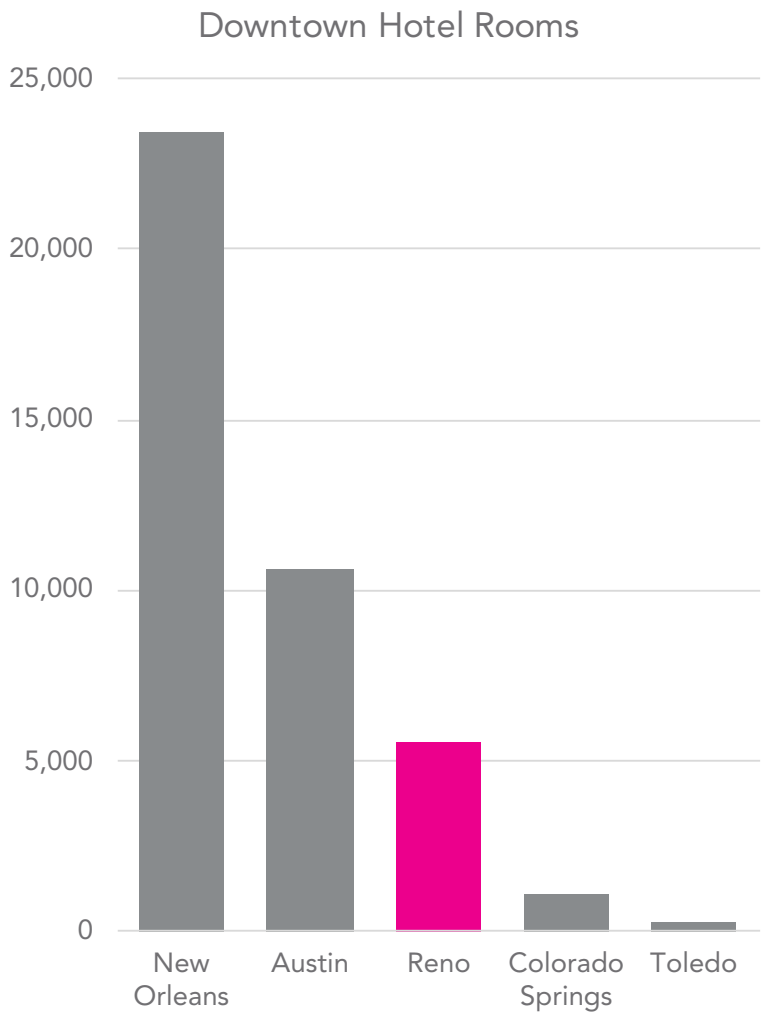
Source: Colliers (2026), Downtown Colorado Springs Partnership (2026), Lee & Associates Pacific Northwest (2025), New Orleans Downtown Development District (2025), Partners Real Estate (2026), Reichle Klein Group (2025)

Downtown Reno's hotel inventory falls near the middle of the peer group, though inventory varies widely across the peers.

Downtown Reno's retail vacancy rate is relatively high at nearly 12%, but asking rents remain near the peer median. Much of the vacant space consists of older storefronts that require significant upgrades to meet current code requirements, limiting their marketability. Among the peers, Tacoma, Colorado Springs, and New Orleans cluster near the median for both retail rents and vacancy, while Toledo has the lowest rents and Austin combines the highest rents with the lowest vacancy.

Experience industry sales provide additional context. Downtown Reno performs strongly overall, driven largely by arts, entertainment, and recreation uses, including non-resort casinos. Retail trade sales are more modest, ranking above only Tacoma and Colorado Springs among the peers, though still slightly above the typical emerging downtown.

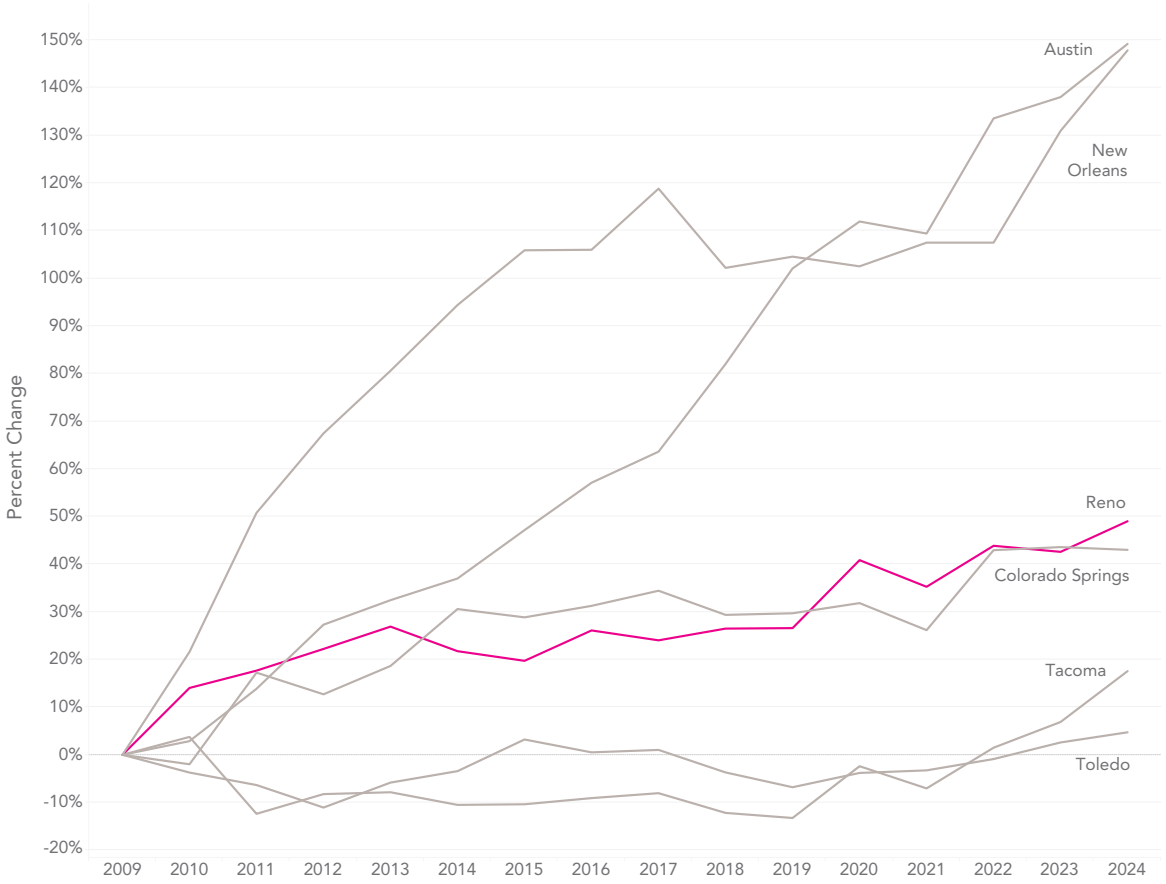
Visitation will remain a key driver of downtown vibrancy in the post-pandemic era. Downtown hotels play an important role in attracting and retaining out-of-town visitors near downtown amenities. Reno's hotel inventory is near the peer average, though the range is substantial, from more than 20,000 hotel rooms in downtown New Orleans to fewer than 250 in downtown Toledo.



Source: All urban place management organization partners in the Value of Downtowns study. See full list of downtowns in the Appendix.

Note: No hotel inventory data was available for Tacoma.

Relative Population Change

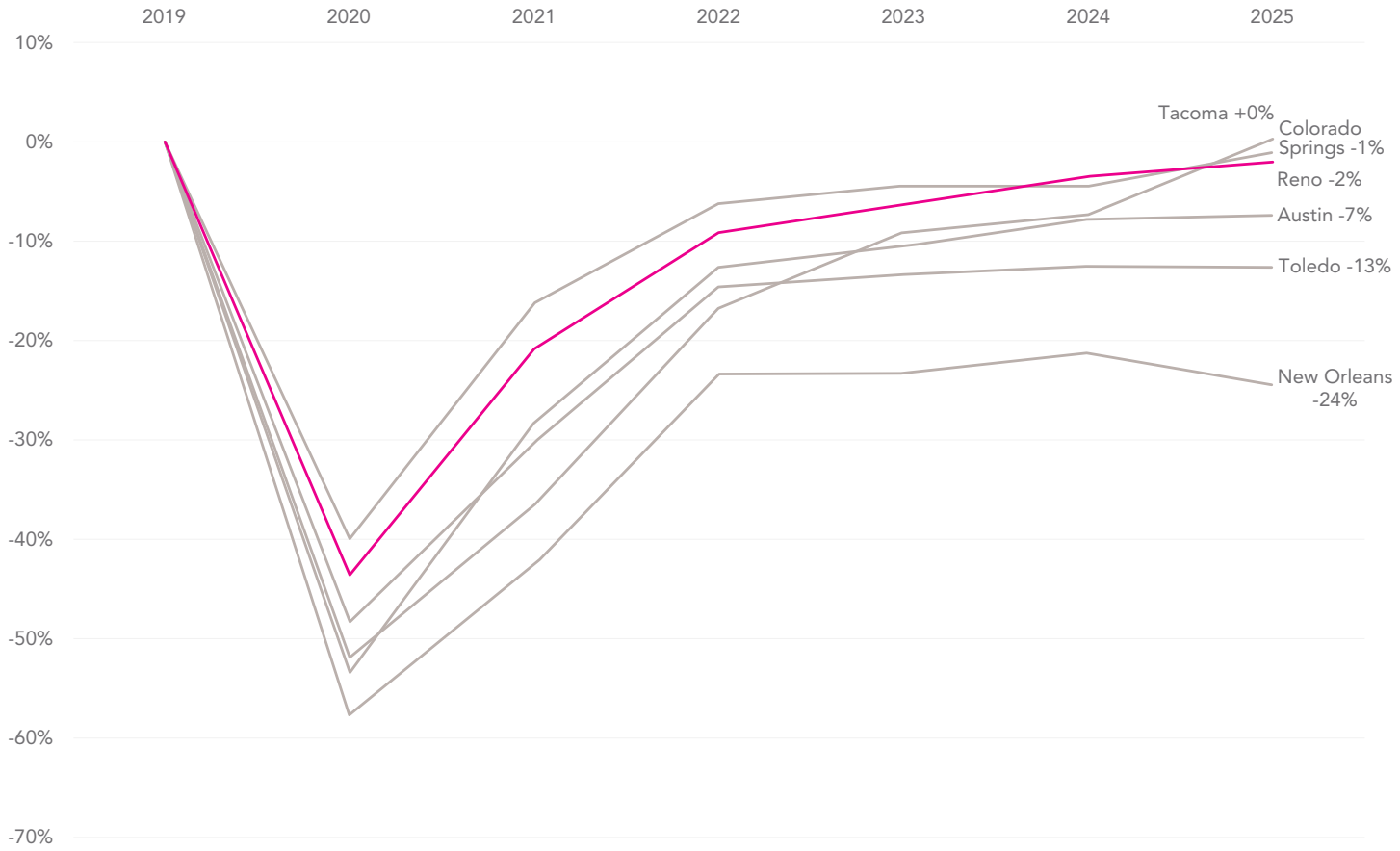


Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2009–2024)

Downtown Reno has been experiencing steady growth over recent years.

Downtown Reno's residential population has increased by 49% since 2009, reflecting consistent growth over the past 15 years. Reno's growth closely mirrors that of Colorado Springs, while Austin and New Orleans stand apart, each recording population growth of more than 140% during the same period.

Visitation Recovery

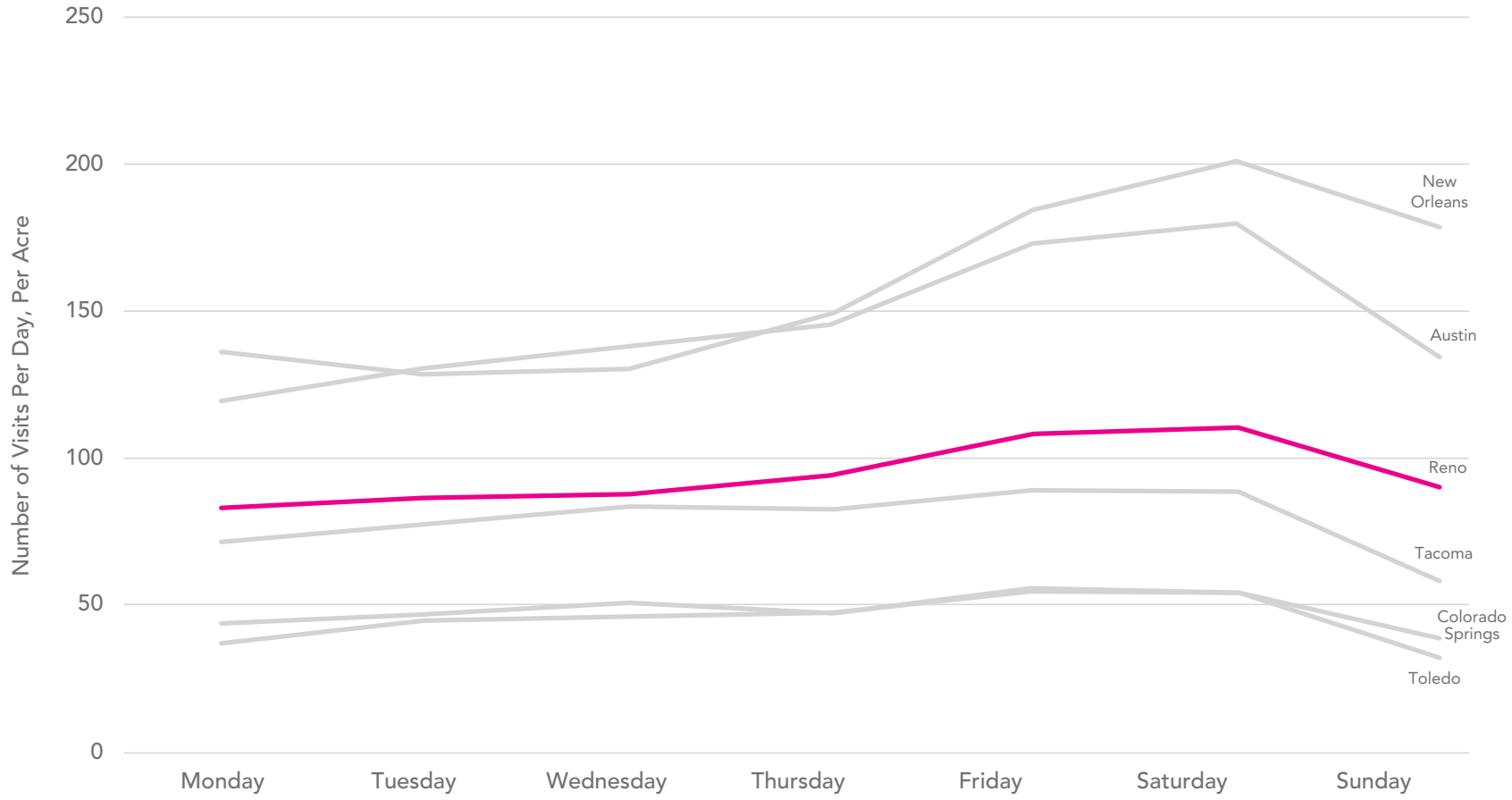


Source: Placer.ai (2025)

Downtown Reno has had one of the strongest post-pandemic visitation recoveries among the peers.

Downtown Reno experienced less decline in visitation as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic than any of the other comparison peers except Colorado Springs. Downtown Reno also recovered quickly, though it has yet to fully return to pre-pandemic levels of visitation; Tacoma is the only comparison peer that has fully surpassed 2019 visitation levels. But Reno, with 98% recovery of visitation to 2019 levels, is far ahead of peers such as New Orleans and Toledo which have plateaued far below pre-pandemic visitation levels, in spite of a decline in hotel room inventory downtown. In-person workdays have recovered strongly as well, to 93% of 2019 levels.

Daily Activity per Acre

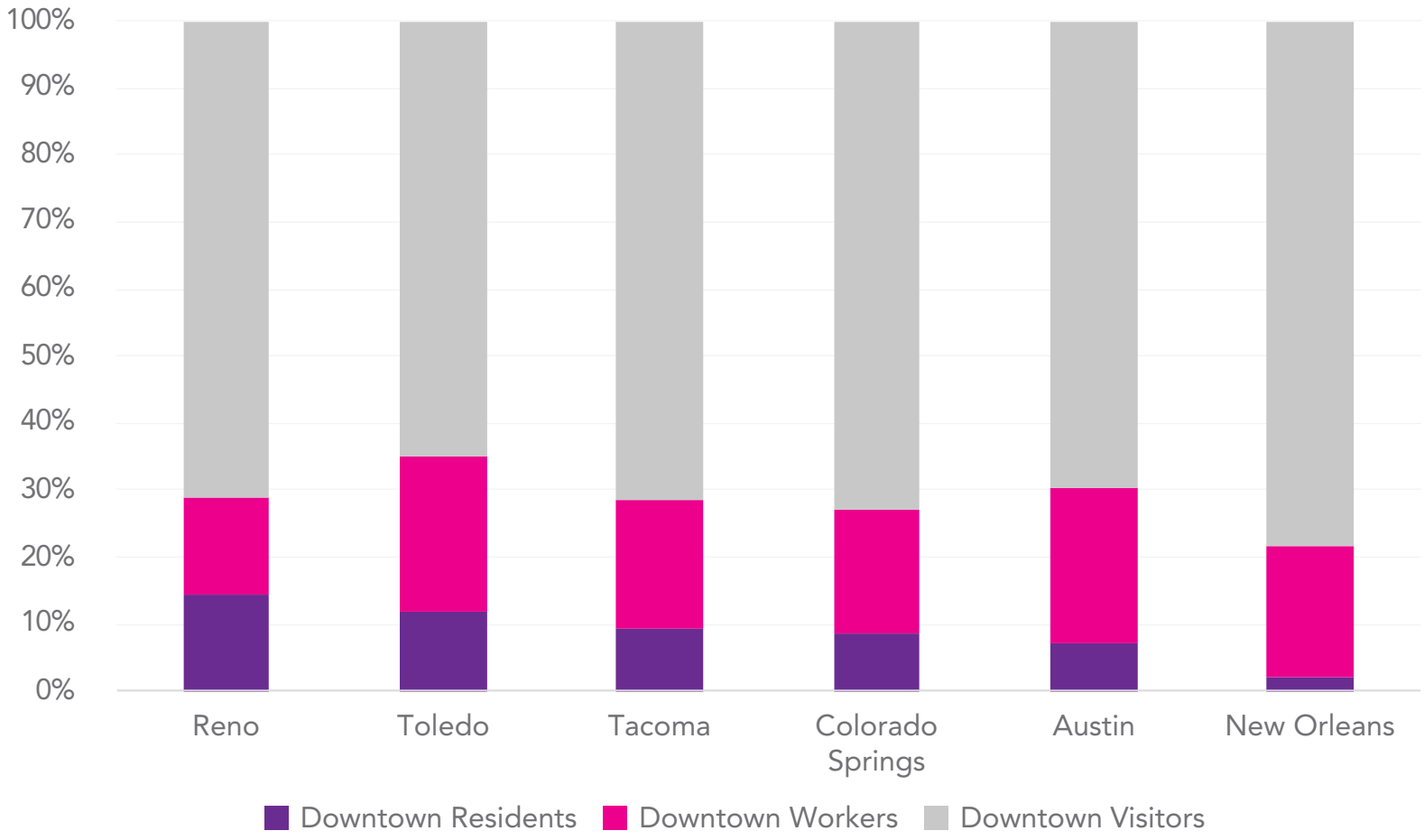


Source: Placer.ai (2025)

Downtown Reno is in the middle of the pack for the peers in daily foot traffic.

When normalizing for land area, downtown Reno is roughly in the middle of the pack in overall daily foot traffic. In Reno, there is a trend of increasing daily foot traffic throughout the week leading to a peak on Friday and Saturday before a Sunday lull. This is a pattern downtown Reno shares with the downtowns of New Orleans and Austin, though their visitation numbers are higher and peaks more pronounced.

Share of Daily Activity



Source: Placer.ai (2025)

Downtown Reno has the largest share of resident foot traffic among the peers.

Residents of downtown make up about 15% of street activity in downtown Reno, the highest among the comparison peers. Downtown Reno also has the smallest share of foot traffic from downtown workers. This reflects the broader patterns of downtown Reno among the peers: it has one of the largest residential populations but is on the smaller side for employment footprint.

Resilience

Transit ridership and biking are on the rise since the COVID-19 pandemic.

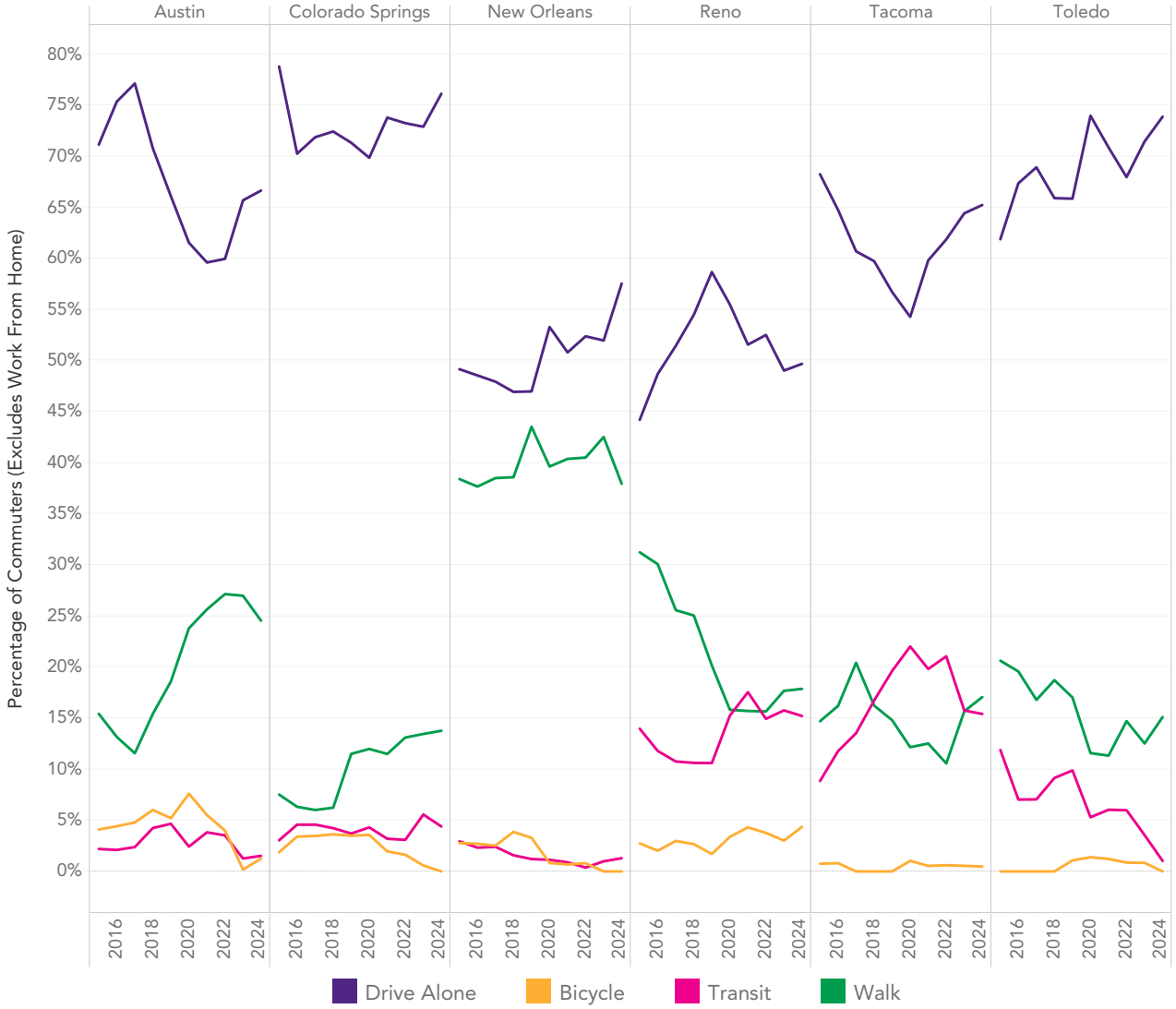
For those who live in downtown Reno, driving in their car alone remains the most common way to get to work. This is also true across the comparison peers, though the shares of driving residents vary significantly, with Reno the lowest at 50%, and Colorado Springs the highest at 76%.

While driving is still dominant in downtown Reno, in the years since the COVID-19 pandemic, transit usage and biking to work have both surged in popularity among downtown residents. Transit grew from 11% to 15%, and biking doubled from 2% to 4% in their shares of downtown residents' commute mode. Additionally, the share of downtown residents walking to work stabilized after a period of sharp decline. These alternative modes have eaten into the number of downtown residents driving to work, which fell from 59% to 50%, currently the lowest share among any of the comparison peers. Alternative modes should continue to increase in coming years. The Biggest Little Bike Network project is currently underway to add bike lanes totaling 4.15 new miles along four key corridors downtown. This project will both improve connectivity through downtown as well as further integrate the UNR campus to downtown, making it even easier for students to visit downtown.

Downtown Reno is also the only downtown among the comparison peers which is trending away from driving and towards alternative modes since 2019. Across all other comparison peers, driving to work has risen in popularity in that period. The share of downtown residents who bike to work doubling since 2019 indicates that efforts to improve connectivity in and around downtown are succeeding.



Commute Mode Share Over Time



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2014–2023)

Conclusion

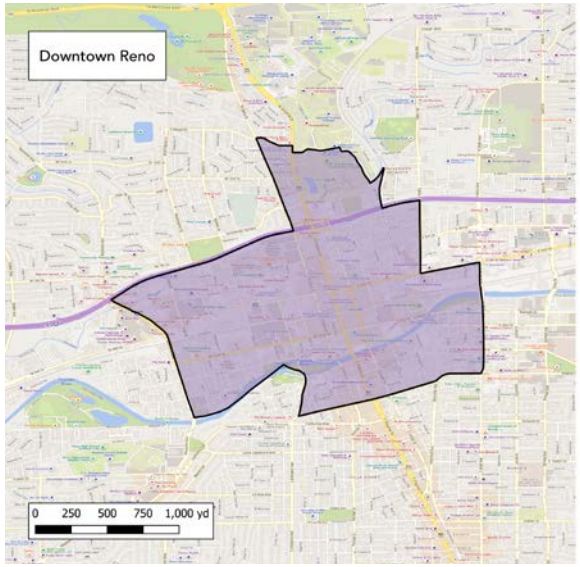
Despite significant challenges over the past two decades, downtown Reno compares favorably with its peer downtowns and leads in several key measures. While increased competition in the gaming industry contributed to substantial job losses, downtown has benefited from the stability and growth of sectors such as education and health care. Reno also stands out for its inclusiveness, with a level of racial diversity that closely mirrors the city as a whole.

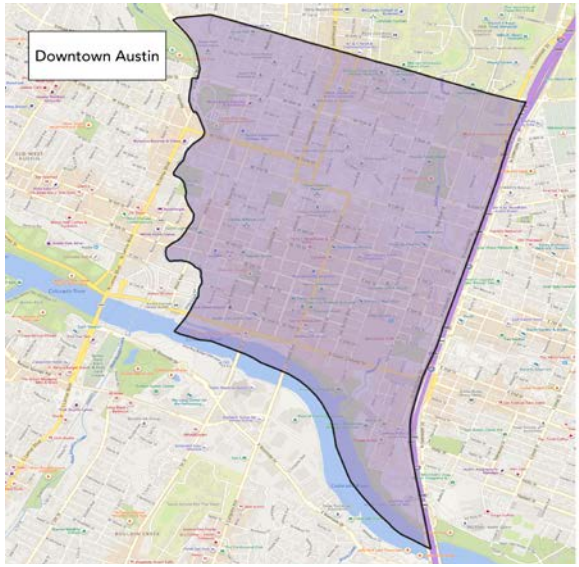
Downtown Reno remains a vibrant destination. Experience industry sales rank among the strongest in the peer group, while steady population growth and an expanding residential base are reinforcing downtown's role as a complete mixed-use neighborhood. The district has also demonstrated resilience, with visitation nearly returning to pre-pandemic levels and growing shares of residents choosing transit and bicycling for their commutes.

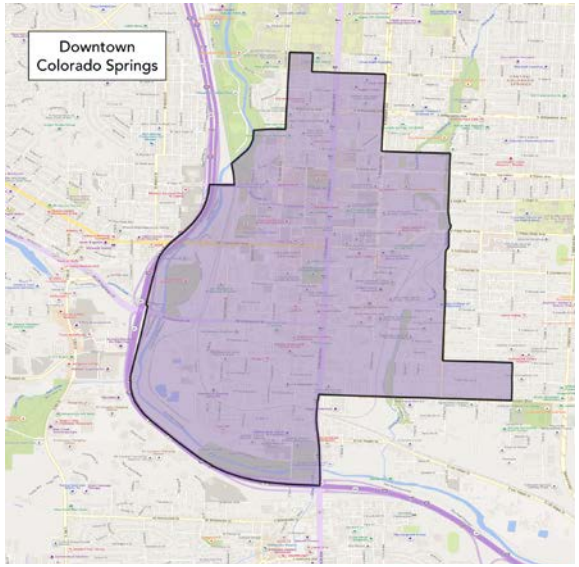
Looking ahead, continued growth at the University of Nevada, Reno and stronger connections between the campus and downtown present important opportunities. Together with downtown's growing residential population and established visitor economy, these assets position downtown Reno to continue evolving as a dynamic center for living, working, learning, and recreation.

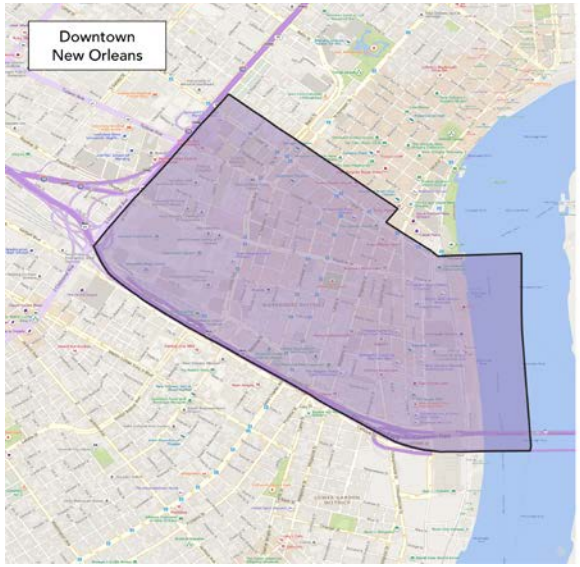


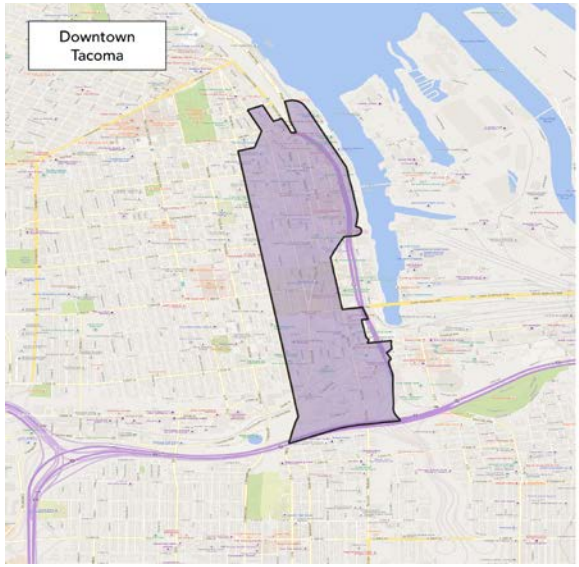
Comparison Peer Downtowns

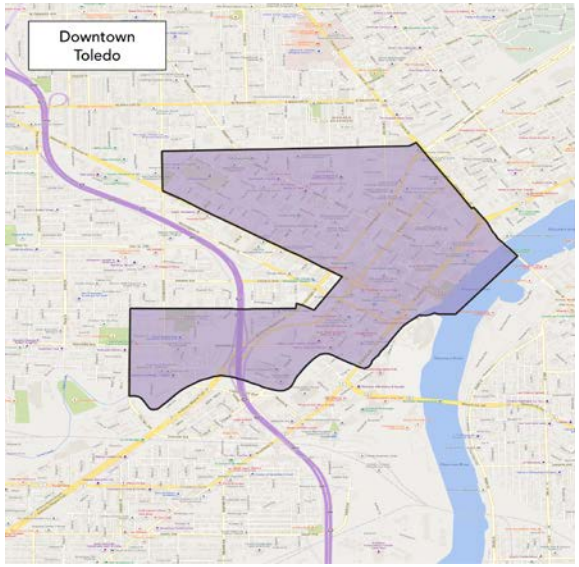












Full List of Value of Downtowns Participants

Participant	Tier	Population (2024)	Jobs (2023)	District Land Area (Miles/Sq.)
Baltimore	Established	48,960	129,588	3.69
Chicago	Established	25,897	459,855	1.09
Fort Lauderdale	Established	22,443	53,099	2.38
Hartford	Established	4,007	51,747	1.22
Miami	Established	111,849	188,411	5.05
Milwaukee	Established	30,965	81,899	2.76
Minneapolis	Established	47,337	154,954	3.35
New Haven	Established	15,626	53,103	1.81
Pittsburgh	Established	17,553	115,615	2.72
Richmond	Established	25,027	78,145	3.20
Saint Paul	Established	15,097	50,828	1.66
San Francisco	Established	46,931	278,445	1.20
Seattle	Established	87,870	325,288	3.59
West Palm Beach	Established	10,782	28,795	1.32
Ann Arbor	Growing	13,497	12,145	1.05
Atlanta	Growing	30,560	137,015	3.37
Austin	Growing	10,850	118,159	1.56
Boise	Growing	4,793	45,013	1.59
Charlotte	Growing	52,026	188,090	9.30
Cleveland	Growing	16,467	85,065	3.24
Dallas	Growing	15,094	123,504	1.75
Durham	Growing	12,932	27,847	2.91
Greensboro	Growing	26,293	31,270	3.71
Hollywood	Growing	28,927	28,791	1.40
Houston	Growing	17,478	155,746	1.73
Indianapolis	Growing	27,869	158,662	5.69
Lexington	Growing	28,346	43,205	4.41
Los Angeles	Growing	87,335	310,765	6.68
Nashville	Growing	11,838	6,781	1.74
Norfolk	Growing	8,641	30,192	1.12
Oklahoma City	Growing	9,765	60,289	4.28
Sacramento	Growing	25,494	108,332	5.00
San Antonio	Growing	3,606	53,696	1.36
San Jose	Growing	24,938	45,191	2.62
Santa Monica	Growing	5,600	21,354	0.69
Spartanburg	Growing	2,762	9,008	1.44
Tampa	Growing	24,841	87,388	2.86
Tempe	Growing	5,640	24,652	0.93
Albuquerque	Emerging	1,810	16,725	0.49
Baton Rouge	Emerging	9,259	28,818	4.00
Birmingham	Emerging	14,717	71,232	3.22
Colorado Springs	Emerging	4,685	19,442	1.81
Corpus Christi	Emerging	2,928	19,089	1.15
El Paso	Emerging	4,270	11,626	1.08
Evansville	Emerging	2,859	17,389	1.22
Grand Rapids	Emerging	5,685	43,947	0.95
Huntsville	Emerging	13,619	28,717	4.86
Jacksonville	Emerging	10,678	62,616	2.93
Lancaster	Emerging	4,171	3,800	0.69
Little Rock	Emerging	9,234	43,775	4.37
Memphis	Emerging	24,277	68,411	5.83
New Orleans	Emerging	4,637	51,694	1.38
Sioux Falls	Emerging	6,609	23,420	2.08
Reno	Emerging	8,901	18,402	1.13
Tacoma	Emerging	3,635	16,342	0.70
Toledo	Emerging	3,879	17,129	1.18
Tucson	Emerging	4,246	23,961	0.78
Tulsa	Emerging	4,351	28,168	1.39
University Circle	Emerging	7,509	27,449	1.25
Waikiki	Emerging	19,665	26,798	0.77
Wichita	Emerging	2,046	25,218	0.99

Photo Credits

Front Cover
Downtown Reno Partnership. (2024). *Twilight drone shot of Reno.* Reno, NV.
TOC
RSCVA. (2026). *Kayaker.* Reno, NV.
Page 4
Visit Reno Tahoe. (2026). *Downtown Reno.* Reno, NV.
Page 15
Visit Reno Tahoe. (2026). *Downtown Reno.* Reno, NV.
Page 17
Visit Reno Tahoe. (2026). *Street Market frontage.* Reno, NV.
Page 20
Visit Reno Tahoe. (2026). *Friends sharing a snack.* Reno, NV.
Page 32
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Page 34
Jeff Dow. (2026). *Reno skyline with mountains.* Reno, NV.
Back Cover
Raymond Carter. (2026). *Downtown Reno.* Reno, NV.

Endnotes

1 Florida, Richard. "Why Downtown Won't Die." Bloomberg.Com, 17 Aug. 2022, www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2022-08-17/as-remote-work-endures-downtowns-are-adapting.











INSPIRED LEADERS
SHAPING CITIES

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