



UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA LAS VEGAS

DOWNTOWN DESIGN CENTER

401 SOUTH 4TH STREET, SUITE 155

- LAS VEGAS, NEVADA 89101 -

702.895.1953

November 12, 2014

Tara Pike
4505 South Maryland Parkway Box 454015
Las Vegas, Nevada 89154
United States

RE: Letter of Affirmation for Sustainability Atlas for STARS Innovation Credit

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to support the University of Nevada, Las Vegas STARS initiative. In this letter of affirmation to support innovation credits, I will describe the 'sustainability atlas' work done by myself, and members of the UNLV Downtown Design Center.

The 'sustainability atlas' is a place-based research work that takes regional, city and municipal data to create an inventory and narrative for resiliency planning. The atlas contains relevant and significant information about the systems that support a specific metropolitan region: water, energy, transportation, food systems/agriculture, ecosystems, waste and pollution. Maps, diagrams, and text create a story to tell people in this metropolitan region or city how these systems work, where they are located, and what critical issues to resiliency might be for them.

The project is innovative as it takes data typically separated by topic (i.e. water and food may not be discussed together), or data relative to broad geographies and makes it place-specific; communicated in terms a layperson could understand. In short, the project is meant to be applied use of data to build a foundation for resiliency planning by clear and integrated narratives of systems in metropolitan areas or cities. In the atlas, we also use data to establish a hierarchy of issues to address in resiliency analysis and planning.

Ken McCown created an atlas for the City of Scottsdale in Arizona(SSSI), and he and the staff at the UNLV Downtown Design Center will release the 'Southern Nevada Inventory of Sustainable Systems' (SNISS) in December to build a framework for people in Las Vegas to understand sustainability in this metropolitan region.

There are no quantitative measurable outcomes from the SNISS. The project funders have met several times with the SNISS team in an advisory capacity. This set of meetings established relationships and centered conversation among Valley leaders focused upon resiliency. Students in the design studios at the UNLV Downtown Design Center are working on the atlas project, and a few of them are using the SNISS to direct and support their projects related to the sustainability and resilience of Las Vegas. It is expected the SNISS document will support and guide future students in the School of Architecture - to help them establish relevance and accuracy in their applied studies for designs and plans in the Las Vegas Valley.

The Scottsdale Sustainability Atlas (SSSI), supported at least two further initiatives, a funded neighborhood study for resiliency transition; and an NSF grant. The resiliency planning section of the NSF grant built off of the sustainability atlas and was funded for \$50,000 of a \$6.2 million dollar grant to study the implications of nanotechnology use in society. Additionally, the SSSI won two awards from the Arizona state chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects for communications and for research. The project also was a finalist at the national level for award from the American Society of Landscape Architects.

In addition to the project being used for these grant applications, students and faculty in the College of Design at Arizona State University are using the SSSI document to help guide their projects in terms of what questions to ask, and how best to respond with data informed decisions.

In summary, the sustainability atlases are the first of their kind and are helping students, faculty and communities to discuss resiliency and how to prioritize planning for more resilient communities. Both atlases facilitates relationships between the University and community leaders, and brought together interdisciplinary teams of students and faculty. The sustainability atlas for Las Vegas will be the foundation for a resilience plan, and an annual report to develop resiliency metrics. A brief summary of the SSSI can be seen on the web at: <http://www.unlvddc.org/#/community-research-scottsdale-sustainable-systems-atlas/> (all pages clickable to larger size). If there is any more information I can provide, please let me know.

Sincerely,



Ken McCown, ASLA, Associate AIA, President, CELA
Director, Downtown Design Center
Lincy University Professor
University of Nevada, Las Vegas