

**Topic:**

SouthEast Connector in Reno/Sparks Metropolitan Area

**Authors:**

Angie Lewis, Stephanie Nesler and Heather Simms

[ADLewis@washoeschools.net](mailto:ADLewis@washoeschools.net) [SNesler@washoeschools.net](mailto:SNesler@washoeschools.net) [HSimms@washoeschools.net](mailto:HSimms@washoeschools.net)

**Essential Question**

How have conflict and compromise shaped Nevada’s history of movement of people and goods across the Truckee Meadows?

**Related Nevada History Chapter**

Chapter 9 Modern Nevada

**Nevada Social Studies Standards**

H2.4.1 Discuss examples of compromise and conflict within Nevada.

H3.4.4 Explain how advances in **technologies** have impacted Nevada.

H3.4.5 Discuss major news events on the local and state levels.

G7.4.2 List examples of movement of people, **goods**, ideas into and across Nevada.

G8.4.1 Describe ways **physical environments** affect human activity in Nevada using historical and contemporary examples.

**NVACS**

RI.4.1 Refer to details and examples in the text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

RI.4.2 Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details and ideas.

RI.4.8 Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.

RI.4.9 Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

W.4.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

W.4.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

W.4.9.b Apply **Grade 4 Reading Standards** to informational texts.

SL.4.1 Engage in effective in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on **Grade 4 topics and texts**, building on others’ ideas and expressing their clearly.

SL.4.3 Identify the reasons and evidence a speaker to support particular points.

SL.4.4 Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

**Brief Overview of Lesson and Guided Discussion Question**

The Southeast Connector (SEC) will provide an alternative route to the heavily traveled US 395/I-580 freeway and Southeast McCarran Boulevard. Recent development in the eastern Truckee Meadows has resulted in more demand for travel routes from the south and west. This project will offer motorists another, more direct option between the northeast and south Truckee Meadows and alleviate congestion on parallel roadways and will assist with future demand. **Our Guided question is: “Does the positive impact of the SEC outweigh the negative impact?”** We will use the SAC discussion technique to read the article and then each student will form an opinion to write about.

**Brief Historical Background**

In the early 1980’s the idea was envisioned to construct a roadway to connect Sparks to Geiger Grade. During 1997, updated new traffic volume and watershed data showed the tremendous growth in the area to support the need for the Southeast Connector (SEC). In 2004, three potential corridors were considered. In January 2007, it was decided to proceed with the Valley Corridor. August 2007 the RTC initiated a plan to study traffic operations, safety, environmental impacts, cost, constructability, and flood control. In 2008, the RTC Board of Commissioners voted in favor of the recommended alignment for the Southeast Connector. As of 2016, the Southeast Connector is still under construction and will be opened in late 2017.

**Included Materials**

Actual Websites Before Line #'s

<http://www.southeastconnector.com>

<http://www.southeastconnector.com/project-history/>

<http://mynews4.com/news/local/on-your-side-southeast-connector-a-bridge-to-nowhere-01-19-2016>

<http://www.ktvn.com/story/31181991/construction-of-southeast-connector-on-schedule>

**Lesson Sequence:**

Approximate Time Frame	What is the teacher doing?	What are students doing?	Notes (additional scaffolds, logistical considerations, room arrangements, grouping, etc.)
Day 1 20 minutes	Pass out whole group background article, “Project History.”	Students will read the background article silently working on their annotative skills.	

Day 1 15-20 minutes	Facilitates classroom discussions on the issue. Ask questions for further clarification of the issue.	Students will share written ideas with peers and whole group.	
Day 2 30 minutes	Pass out “On Your Side: Southeast Connector, a Bridge to Nowhere” (con article)	In groups of four, students will read and annotate article.	
Day 2 10-15 minutes	Facilitates classroom discussions on the issue. Ask questions for further clarification of the issue.	Students will share ideas with peers based on their annotations.	
Day 3 30 minutes	Pass out “Construction of the Southeast Connector on Time” (pro article)	In groups of four, students will read and annotate article.	
Day 3 20 minutes	Facilitates classroom discussions on the issue. Ask questions for further clarification of the issue.	Students will share ideas with peers based on their annotations.	
Day 4 20 minutes	Circulating to each group and checking for understand.	Review the readings (all 3 articles) as to determine the specific point of view.	
Day 5 20 minutes	Assign the students a point of view: positive or negative impacts of SEC	Listing the evidence to support their side	
Day 5 20 minutes	Prep students for the presentation of each side. Use the SAC guides (attached). Split students into groups of four – two for and two against	Planning their arguments for their side.	
Day 6 60 minutes	Remind students about the rules for deliberation and monitor student groups	1. One side presents their two-three arguments to the other side. The other side needs to listen carefully, take notes,	Look at the formalities of structured academic controversy and decide on time allotments based on student need.

		<p>and then repeat the arguments back in order to be sure that they understand them, asking clarifying questions as necessary.</p> <p>2. The pairs switch and the process is duplicated.</p> <p>3. Each side provides feedback to the other until everyone is satisfied that their position has been heard and understood.</p> <p>4. Dissolve pairs to come to consensus/disagreement</p>	
Day 7 15 minutes	<p>Review positions and overall consensus/disagreement.</p> <p>Grade using opinion writing rubric.</p>	<p>Students complete reflection and self-assessment.</p> <p><b>Students complete the writing task explaining their final personal position, on their own.</b></p> <p>Debrief as a class.</p>	

## 1 Project History

2 A roadway extending from the south Truckee Meadows to the City of Sparks  
3 has long been considered. Proposed corridors have been deliberated upon  
4 and shown on various planning maps for over 40 years. Numerous decisions  
5 regarding zoning for residential and commercial development have also been  
6 made based on the assumption that a north-south connector road would be  
7 built, providing an alternate route for traffic currently using I-80, US 395/I-580,  
8 Virginia Street, South McCarran Boulevard, and Longley Lane.

Thought about  
something  
carefully

9 In the early 1980's, the concept for a roadway connection between Sparks  
10 and Geiger Grade, on the eastern side of the valley parallel to US 395 was  
11 envisioned. Three alternatives, with two sub-alternatives, were studied at that  
12 time. A preferred alternative was identified and right-of-way was set aside  
13 within the Rosewood Lakes Golf Course area.

14 In 1997, there was an update to the roadway connection based on new  
15 watershed data and new traffic volume data. The recent flood in the area,  
16 and the tremendous growth the area experienced, created a need to take  
17 another look at this project. Ten alternatives were evaluated during this  
18 review. In subsequent years, the project became known as the Southeast  
19 Connector (SEC) to more accurately reflect the purpose of the proposed new  
20 roadway.

Happened in  
the near past

Following  
years

21 Additional alternatives were added to the analysis of the SEC due to new  
22 development, increased population growth, and changing population  
23 densities. Five corridors were identified for additional study, two of which  
24 were subsequently dropped from further consideration due to extremely high  
25 construction costs and not adequately meeting the original purpose and need  
26 for the project.

27 In 2004, three potential corridors for a southeast connector were accepted for  
28 consideration by the RTC Board of Commissioners. These consisted of the  
29 Valley Corridor, Foothills Corridor, and the Sparks Industrial Corridor. In  
30 January 2007, following a preliminary impact assessment, the RTC Board of  
31 Commissioners voted to proceed with the Valley Corridor and directed RTC  
32 staff to complete a plan line study for the SouthEast Connector within the  
33 preferred Valley Corridor.

Possibility

Beginning test  
of the project

34 The RTC initiated the plan line study in August 2007. This study evaluated  
35 various alternative alignments based on multiple criteria including traffic

36 operations, safety, conformity with local and regional plans, environmental  
37 and cultural impacts, cost, constructability, and flood control integration.

38 On November 21, 2008, the RTC Board of Commissioners voted 3-2 in favor  
39 of the recommended alignment for the SouthEast Connector.

## It's a bird! It's a plane! IT'S SUPER ANNOTATOR!

She can analyze,  
synthesize,  
evaluate!  
But most of all,  
she can ANNOTATE!



Don't let her witty  
charm fool you! She is  
the leader of a gang of  
superheroes who  
regularly risk their lives  
in the great Jungle of  
Primary Sources!

### HUDDLE UP SUPERHEROES! IT'S TIME TO SUPER-ANNOTATE!

Common Core Anchor Standard	Annotation Guide (If different colors help you organize your thoughts, please use them!)
Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings.	Circle words ● that are unknown or that might need explanation to others. Double circle words that might have a unique connotation or meaning. If necessary, comment in the margins.
Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and make inferences from it.	Consider this the "huh, what?" section. Put a 🤔 next to areas where you say, "huh, what?" and write a brief description of your inference in the margin.
Determine central ideas of a text and summarize the key details and ideas.	1) At the top, write down a two-six word "central idea" of the document. 2) At the bottom, write a short summary explaining the main idea of the document (no more than two sentences).
Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevancy and sufficiency of the evidence.	<u>Underline</u> each specific argument or claim in the text. Is the argument or claim valid and relevant? On a scale of 1-3 (one is very relevant and valid and three is not relevant or valid), rate the evidence and explain. (e.g. V = 1, very historically accurate and persuasive)
Assess how point of view or purposes shapes the content and style of a text.	When a word or phrase helps you understand the author's point of view, draw a talking bubble ● in the margin and write a few words to describe the point of view.
Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to compare the approaches of the authors.	1) Does this relate to something else you know? If so, place a ★ next to the section and write the connection in the margin. 2) Draw arrows ↔ between your two documents when there is a connection. Write a phrase that describes the connection.

### ACCOUNTABILITY & SHARED KNOWLEDGE

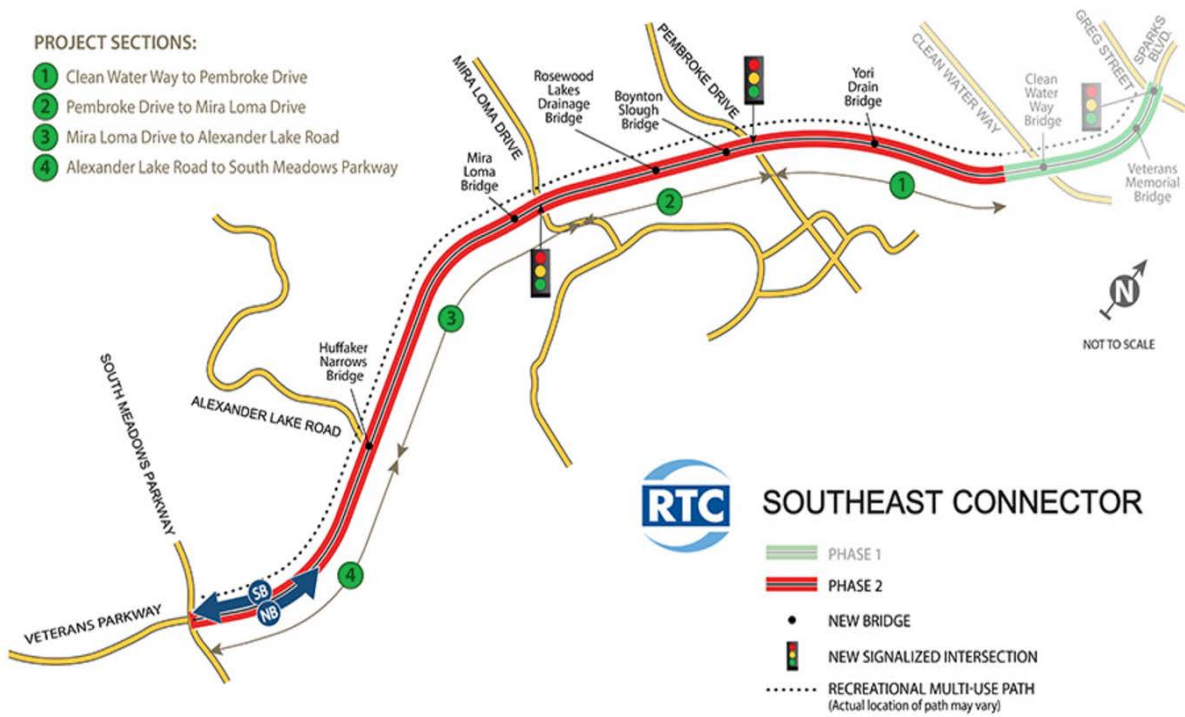
When the annotation process is complete, group will exchange materials with another group (so that each group is now looking at an unfamiliar text). Ask each group to compare the annotated version with the original, and then in discussion consider the following questions:

- ▶ How much difference did the annotations make to the comprehensibility of the text? What insights were possible with the annotated version that was not possible with the original?

# SouthEast Connector Phase 2 Construction

**PROJECT SECTIONS:**

- 1 Clean Water Way to Pembroke Drive
- 2 Pembroke Drive to Mira Loma Drive
- 3 Mira Loma Drive to Alexander Lake Road
- 4 Alexander Lake Road to South Meadows Parkway



## SOUTHEAST CONNECTOR

- PHASE 1
- PHASE 2
- NEW BRIDGE
- NEW SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
- RECREATIONAL MULTI-USE PATH  
(Actual location of path may vary)



1 On Your Side: Southeast Connector, a bridge to nowhere

2 BY Joe Hart

3 THURSDAY, JANUARY 22ND 2015

4

5 RENO, Nev. (MyNews4.com & KRVN) -- It is a nearly \$250 million  
6 project designed to speed up traffic in the Truckee Meadows, but  
7 News 4 has learned the project is on hold for now.

8

9 Phase one is finished. That is the bridge that starts out at Sparks  
10 Boulevard and Greg Street. But it is a bridge to nowhere right now,  
11 because there is a delay in getting a permit for the second and final  
12 phase.

13

14 While residents wait, the cost of the project is going up.

15

16 Garth Oksol is the Project Manager for the Regional Transportation  
17 Commission. "That's correct, we are waiting for the Army Corps  
18 permit (for phase 2)".

19

20 RTC applied for the permit in July 2013. After a year and a half, they  
21 are still waiting.

22

23 Oksol said the delay has already added up to \$4.5 million to the  
24 overall cost of the project because of higher, inflated construction  
25 costs. That is \$4.5 million in taxpayer dollars. "It's frustrating that we  
26 haven't been able to start construction yet," Oksol told News 4.

27

28 One of the issues holding this project back is mercury. There is quite a  
29 bit of it in the soil along Steamboat Creek and it has been there since  
30 the Comstock mining days, when mercury was used to separate silver  
31 from the ore that was mined.

32

33 The question now is will this next phase of construction disturb that  
34 mercury and possibly increase the hazard?

35

36 "There is a potential that birds, fish species, potentially humans  
37 consuming fish might be affected," said Kristine Hansen from the U.S  
38 Army Corps of Engineers.

39

40 But the RTC insists they are taking the proper steps to mitigate the  
41 mercury hazard by burying any soil that is

Stage in  
development

To make  
larger

Danger or  
risk

42 moved underneath the new road. They say that will isolate the  
43 mercury and eliminate any threat to people and wildlife.

44

45 "We're going to permanently encapsulate 22,000 pounds of mercury,"  
46 said Oksol. "Safely beneath the roadway."

47

48 On the other hand, Reno resident Kimberly Rhodemyre chairs the  
49 Upper South East Communities Coalition, a group of concerned  
50 residents who have hired a law firm to fight the Connector project.  
51 She said she is not convinced the mercury threat has been mitigated.

52

53 "We have a difference of opinion on what encapsulate means," said  
54 Rhodemyre. "Basically, they're just going to put some clean dirt on top  
55 of it."

56 Now, it is up to the Corps of Engineers to decide whether RTC is doing  
57 enough to protect the public and whether this project should move  
58 forward as planned. "We want to make sure we're making a balanced  
59 decision and that we have all the information."

60

61 News 4 asked if there is a chance the permit will not be approved.  
62 Hansen's response is that there is a chance. "That's the decision we're  
63 making right now."

64

65 The Corps of Engineers said it may be another 60 days before a  
66 decision is made on the permit. If it is a no-go, RTC said there are  
67 some alternate plans including connecting that bridge to Mill Street  
68 But for now, everything is simply at a standstill, as the Corps decides  
69 whether to approve the permit, deny it, or ask for more study on the  
70 issue.

1 **Construction of SouthEast Connector on**  
2 **Schedule**

3 *Posted: Feb 09, 2016 4:12 PM PST*

4 By Paul Nelson

5

6 The SouthEast Connector is a major arterial roadway that will  
7 eventually tie Sparks and south Reno together, and construction of  
8 Phase 2 of the project is in full-swing. Once completed, Veterans  
9 Parkway will connect to Sparks Blvd. between South Meadows  
10 Parkway and Greg Street. Phase 1 of the 5.5-mile road was  
11 completed in July, 2014, but many environmental and legal  
12 questions remained before the final 4.5 miles could be built. In July  
13 of 2015, construction began on Phase 2. Now, about two miles are  
14 under construction between Clean Water Way and Mira Loma  
15 Drive.

16

17 "This will be another north/south connection to help move traffic  
18 throughout our community," Garth Oksol, Project Manager for the  
19 SouthEast Connector said.

20

21 Much of the construction is happening on Rosewood Lakes Golf  
22 Course, where one of five bridges will be built. Two others have  
23 already been constructed as part of Phase 1, including the  
24 Veterans Memorial Bridge that spans the Truckee River. The six-  
25 lane road is expected to open in late 2017.

26

27 "A lot of earth work, a lot of environmental care is being done and  
28 then we do have two winters within that time period, that obviously,  
29 we have to slow down a little bit for what we're doing with  
30 construction," Oksol said.

31

32 The weather does play a role in how much work can be done. 200-  
33 250 people will work on the project during the summer  
34 months. Right now, only about 100 people are on the job on a daily  
35 basis.

36

37 "Obviously, when there's snow on the ground, and we get a lot of  
38 moisture, we've got to change our operations a little bit, but the nice  
39 thing is that we're still able to do construction throughout the winter  
40 time and that's just helping keep people employed," Oksol said.

41

42 The completion of the road has faced many challenges, including a  
43 lawsuit filed by the Upper South East Communities Coalition that  
44 wanted to block the project. The group feared environmental  
45 hazards like flooding and mercury contamination could have  
46 negative consequences. Despite litigation, construction continued

Stage in  
development

Regardless  
of being in  
the court  
system

47

48 and the suit was dismissed in November. "It was really just  
49 vindication that the work we had met all of the requirements from  
50 the federal level and that we did everything properly," Oksol said.  
51 "The judges saw that and it was a relief for the team to just know  
52 that we had done what we said we're going to do."

53

54 Oksol says Phase 2 includes several environmental upgrades,  
55 including an 80 acre wetland complex that will naturally clean  
56 contaminated water from the Yori Drain, restoration of a 90-acre  
57 riparian corridor along Steamboat Creek, and the planting of 600  
58 trees. Since July, crews have already removed 469 million pounds  
59 of invasive weeds. Most of it is white top and infested soil. 3.8  
60 million pounds of trash has also been removed.

61

62 "That was anything from old box spring mattresses, car parts,  
63 barrels of stuff, just a tremendous amount of trash was out here,  
64 laying underneath the weeds that people may not see from the  
65 road," Oksol said.

66

67 A 10-foot multi-use path will run along the road, for people to walk,  
68 run or bike. Oksol says the entire project is beneficial, especially  
69 the road.

70

71 "It's going to really greatly alleviate congestion, not only that we  
72 have today on a lot of the arterial roadways that we have down in  
73 south Reno, but also to help get traffic out of Sparks," Oksol said.

74

75 The public is invited to an open house at the Best Western Airport  
76 Plaza Hotel, from 11am to 7pm, Thursday.

77

78 Starting this month, people can also sign up for guided tours of the  
79 project. Those are offered every fourth Thursday of the month,  
80 weather-permitting.

## Structured Academic Controversy

Question:

My argument: \_\_\_\_\_

Background Reading	
Vocabulary terms/meanings I should know and use when I speak	Important facts from background reading that support my side
Preparing My Argument	
My Claims (statements that support my argument)	My Evidence and Reasoning to Support My Claims
1.	
2.	
3.	

<b>The Other Side of the Argument</b>	
<b>Opposing Claims</b>	<b>Opposing Evidence and Reasoning</b>
1.	
2.	
3.	
<b>Common Ground &amp; Further Questions</b>	
<b>We can agree that...</b>	<b>We need further clarification on...</b>
1.	1.
2.	2.
<p><b>What is your final personal (not assigned) position on the issue? Explain using at least three pieces of evidence.</b></p>	

### Reflection & Self-Assessment

**Reflect on your participation in the discussion. What did you do well? What will you improve upon in future discussions?**

Stating my points/claims clearly:

Using evidence from the text:

Using reasoning with my evidence to describe it in my own words:

Working with my partner:

Using eye contact:

Speaking loudly enough for my group to hear me:

Staying focused:

Listening and learning from the other side:

Helping the group to come to consensus:

Other:

**I would assess myself with a \_\_\_\_\_/10 for my participation in the discussion today.**

<b>4-Point Opinion Performance Task Writing Rubric (Grades 3-5)</b>					
Score	4	3	2	1	NS
<b>Purpose/Organization</b>	<p>The response has a clear and effective organizational structure, creating a sense of unity and completeness. The response is fully sustained and consistently and purposefully focused:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>opinion is introduced, clearly communicated, and the focus is strongly maintained for the purpose, audience, and task</li> <li>consistent use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas</li> <li>effective introduction and conclusion</li> <li>logical progression of ideas from beginning to end; strong connections between and among ideas with some syntactic variety</li> </ul>	<p>The response has an evident organizational structure and a sense of completeness, though there may be minor flaws and some ideas may be loosely connected. The response is adequately sustained and generally focused:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>opinion is clear, and the focus is mostly maintained for the purpose, audience, and task</li> <li>adequate use of transitional strategies with some variety to clarify relationships between and among ideas</li> <li>adequate introduction and conclusion</li> <li>adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end; adequate connections between and among ideas</li> </ul>	<p>The response has an inconsistent organizational structure, and flaws are evident. The response is somewhat sustained and may have a minor drift in focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>opinion may be somewhat unclear, or the focus may be insufficiently sustained for the purpose, audience, and task</li> <li>inconsistent use of transitional strategies and/or little variety</li> <li>introduction or conclusion, if present, may be weak</li> <li>uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end; and/or formulaic; inconsistent or unclear connections between and among ideas</li> </ul>	<p>The response has little or no discernible organizational structure. The response may be related to the opinion but may provide little or no focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>opinion may be confusing or ambiguous; response may be too brief or the focus may drift from the purpose, audience, or task</li> <li>few or no transitional strategies are evident</li> <li>introduction and/or conclusion may be missing</li> <li>frequent extraneous ideas may be evident; ideas may be randomly ordered or have an unclear progression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unintelligible</li> <li>In a language other than English</li> <li>Off-topic</li> <li>Copied text</li> <li>Off-purpose</li> </ul>