



WASHOE COUNTY

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: November 14, 2023

DATE: October 13, 2023
TO: Board of County Commissioners
FROM: Kelly Mullin, AICP, Division Director, Planning and Building,
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THROUGH: Dave Solaro, Arch., P.E., Assistant County Manager
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SUBJECT: Recommendation to provide direction to staff by confirming or modifying proposed prioritization of initial actions to begin implementing the Envision Washoe 2040 Master Plan. The subjects for prioritization for which staff is requesting Board input are as follows: (1) County-wide affordable housing initiatives; (2) resources to implement Envision Washoe 2040; (3) public noticing; (4) Tahoe Area Plan; (5) Warm Springs ground water rights dedications; and, (6) indicators for measuring Envision Washoe 2040 Master Plan achievement. (All Commission Districts.)

SUMMARY

The Envision Washoe 2040 Master Plan is scheduled for Board adoption the same day as this item. The master plan sets the policy-level vision that guides future growth and development in the unincorporated County. Should the Board adopt the new plan, this item is intended to identify initial next steps to implement this policy vision.

Washoe County Strategic Objective supported by this item: Economic Impacts.

PREVIOUS ACTION

On November 14, 2023, the Board is scheduled to consider adoption of the Envision Washoe 2040 Master Plan prior to hearing this item.

On October 16, 2023, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Envision Washoe 2040 Master Plan.

BACKGROUND

The Envision Washoe 2040 Master Plan adoption is the culmination of over three years of work with the community, partner agencies, elected/appointed officials, and other stakeholders. It provides a vision for how the unincorporated County will develop over the next 10-20 years. A master plan overhaul of this size and scope has not occurred since the 1990s, and this update is the result of tremendous dedication and effort. Implementing the master plan's vision will also be a multi-year, labor-intensive endeavor.

AGENDA ITEM # _____

The final chapter of the new master plan identifies short-term, medium-term and long-term actions intended to fulfill the vision and execute the policies within the plan. These actions will generally require code revisions, capital projects, additional plans or studies, the creation of programs, or allocation of resources. Implementation is anticipated to occur in stages over the next 20 years.

In order to best focus staff resources, the Board is asked to confirm or modify proposed prioritization of initial actions to begin implementing the Envision Washoe 2040 master plan. The intent of this action is to ensure that staff efforts align with Board priorities.

Proposed Initial Implementation Actions

The list below represents potential actions to begin implementation of the new master plan. It should be stressed that these are initial actions only, recognizing that the County is midway through FY24 and strategic initiatives reflecting current Board priorities have already been established. Board and community priorities are anticipated to shift over time, and annual strategic plan goal-setting by the Board is expected to help prioritize future implementation actions. Any initiatives requiring code amendments or budget augmentation will return to the Board for action at the appropriate time.

The following potential priority order is provided for the Board's consideration. It is important to note that implementation actions are generally expected to be completed consecutively (i.e. work on the current item to conclude prior to commencement of work on the next item). This expectation may evolve in the future as resources allow.

1. **County-wide affordable housing initiatives:** Numerous master plan policies and action items are intended to address housing affordability challenges in Washoe County over a several year period. This item is focused on shorter-term initiatives identified as part of the County's FY24 Strategic Plan to spur the creation of affordable housing and increase availability of diverse housing types. As the Board has already identified this as a critical need, it is recommended to be the highest priority implementation item. Due to the complexity of this topic, a separate staff report on this work is provided immediately following this agenda item. That report identifies a series of code amendment packages intended to make progress on the County's affordable housing initiatives.
2. **Resources to implement new master plan:** Implementation of the goals and policies within Envision Washoe 2040 is expected to occur in phases over the next 20 years. Recognizing that long-range planning efforts are often pre-empted by more time-sensitive project review processes, successful implementation of the new master plan is dependent on ensuring dedicated positions exist to complete that work. It is recommended the County explore hiring additional dedicated staff during the FY25 budget process, such as a long-range planning manager, to lead efforts to implement the vision and policies of the new master plan.
3. **Public noticing:** Input from the public, elected/appointed officials, and partner agencies has identified a need to examine current public notice practices for opportunities to increase effectiveness. An assessment is recommended to increase efficient engagement in the County's planning processes. This would be a subsequent phase to the introduction of "neighborhood meetings" in 2022. That effort was aimed at engaging residents earlier in the review process by requiring that developers meet with neighbors prior to

application submittal, and to identify how their proposals were updated to address community concerns.

4. **Tahoe Area Plan:** Amending the Tahoe Area Plan has been identified as a priority project for Chair Hill. Although the Tahoe Area Plan exists separately from the Envision Washoe 2040 Master Plan, the Board is asked to identify where to prioritize efforts to update this document. Amendments to the Tahoe Area Plan are expected to take approximately 9-12 months due to a more complex conformance and environmental review process by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA). The area plan was overhauled in 2021 and there are over 20 potential additional amendments that have since been identified by County staff, TRPA staff, the Washoe-Tahoe Housing Partnership, and community members. Topics include: affordable/workforce housing initiatives; updating County standards to align with TRPA standards that allow accessory dwellings on properties less than one acre in size; clarifying mixed use requirements; assessing permitting requirements and allowed uses in various regulatory zones; potentially removing minimum residential densities; incorporating future TRPA incentives for achievable housing projects in town centers; and several clean-up items.
5. **Warm Springs ground water rights dedications:** Within Warm Springs, current ground water rights dedication requirements are insufficient to meet the area's water demand. It is recommended that the County work with the community and the Nevada State Engineer to update the number of acre-feet of ground water required to be dedicated during development of property located within the Warm Springs Valley Hydrographic Basin.
6. **Dashboard indicators for measuring plan achievements:** This item focuses on establishing indicators that measure achievement of key aspects of the master plan. It also includes creating a functional dashboard to highlight successes/challenges and allow members of the community to view current implementation priorities quickly and easily.

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact is anticipated at this time, apart from staff resources used to begin implementation of the plan. Additional resources are likely to be requested during the FY25 budget process if needed for items 2, 4, and 6. Should future Tahoe-specific amendments require an environmental assessment to meet Tahoe Regional Planning Agency requirements, an item will be brought to the Board seeking budget authority for consultant assistance.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the Board provide direction to staff by confirming or modifying the proposed prioritization of initial actions to begin implementing the Envision Washoe 2040 Master Plan.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be:

“Move to confirm [or modify as follows _____] the proposed prioritization of initial actions to begin implementing the Envision Washoe 2040 Master Plan.”