



WASHOE COUNTY

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: November 14, 2023

DATE: October 13, 2023

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Eric Young, Senior Planner, Community Services Dept., (775) 328-3613, eyoung@washoecounty.gov; Kat Oakley, Planner, Community Services Dept., (775) 328-3628, koakley@washoecounty.gov

THROUGH: Kelly Mullin, AICP, Division Director, Planning & Building Division, Community Services Department, (775) 328-3619, kmullin@washoecounty.gov

SUBJECT: Public Hearing: To adopt Envision Washoe 2040, a comprehensive update to the Washoe County Master Plan. If adopted, this plan would replace the existing Washoe County Master Plan—excluding the Tahoe Area Plan—and provide a contemporary vision for growth and development in Washoe County for the next 10-20 years. Envision Washoe 2040 consolidates the 18 existing Master Plan documents into a single document. The new Master Plan would conform with both state law requirements and the 2019 Truckee Meadows Regional Plan and addresses certain topics such as housing, conservation, land use, transportation, public facilities and services, adaptation and resiliency, regional form and coordination, and population. And, if approved, authorize the chair to sign a resolution to this effect. Any approval by the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners will require a finding of conformance with the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan by the regional planning authorities before the updated Master Plan will go into effect. (All Commission Districts.)

SUMMARY

Envision Washoe 2040 is a comprehensive and structural update of the Washoe County Master Plan. It establishes a vision for unincorporated Washoe County, excluding areas inside the Lake Tahoe Basin, over the next 10-20 years and consolidates the 18 existing Master Plan documents into a single document. Official community engagement began in 2020. After a series of meetings, surveys, and other engagement with the general public, steering committees, and stakeholder groups, Envision Washoe 2040 is complete, has been adopted by the Washoe County Planning Commission, and is now being brought to the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners (“Board”) for its consideration for adoption.

AGENDA ITEM # _____

Washoe County Strategic Objective supported by this item:
Economic Impacts: Meet the needs of our growing community.

PREVIOUS ACTION

October 16, 2023. The Washoe County Planning Commission (PC) reviewed the proposed amendments to the Washoe County Master Plan and voted unanimously to adopt Master Plan Amendment WMPA23-0007 and certify the requisite resolution for submission to the Board. In adopting the master plan amendments, the Planning Commission was able to make all the findings included in Washoe County Code Section 110.820.15(d), as follows:

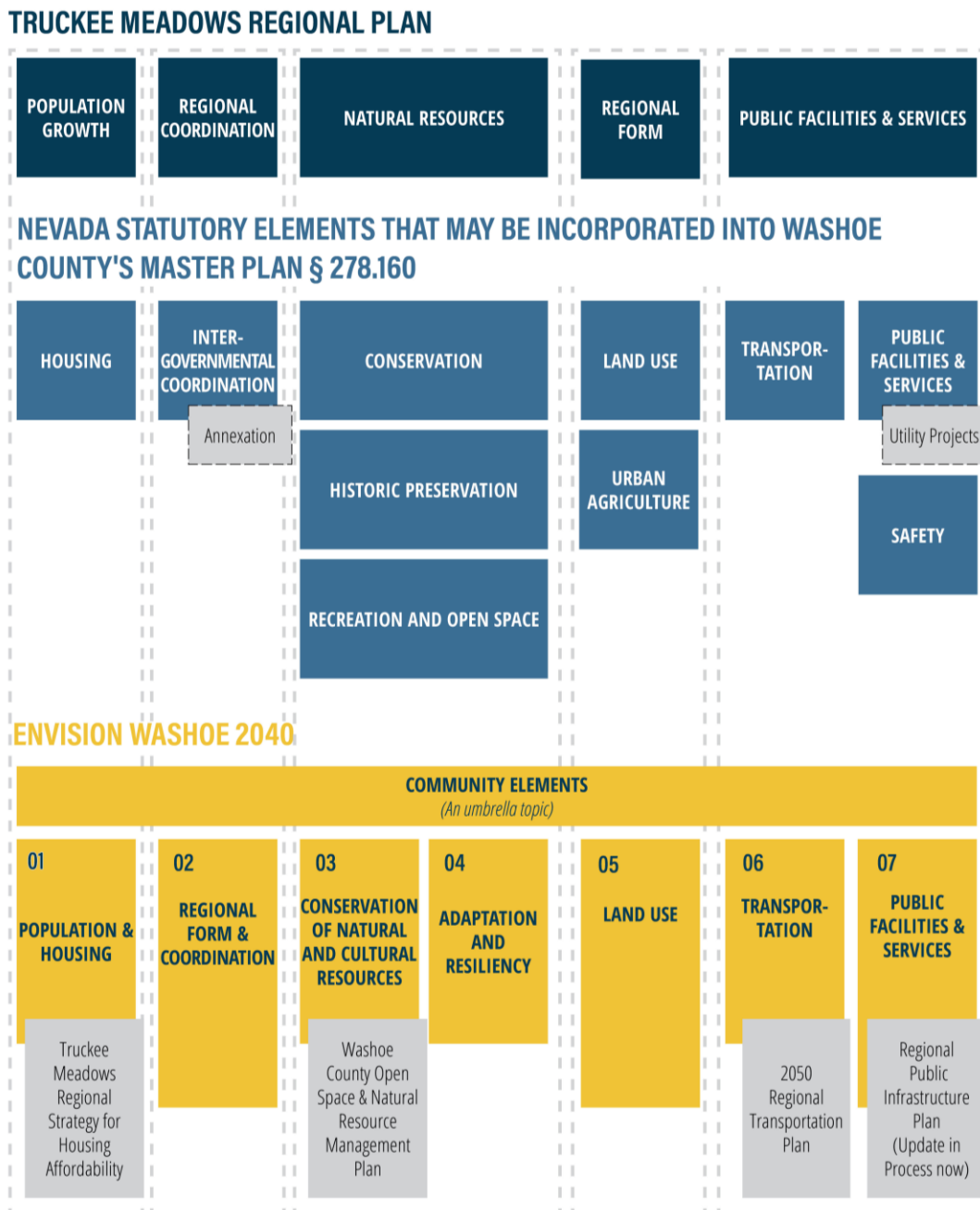
1. Consistency with Master Plan. The proposed amendment is in substantial compliance with the policies and action programs of the Master Plan.
2. Compatible Land Uses. The proposed amendment will provide for land uses compatible with (existing or planned) adjacent land uses, and will not adversely impact the public health, safety or welfare.
3. Response to Change Conditions. The proposed amendment responds to changed conditions or further studies that have occurred since the plan was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners, and the requested amendment represents a more desirable utilization of land.
4. Availability of Facilities. There are or are planned to be adequate transportation, recreation, utility, and other facilities to accommodate the uses and densities permitted by the proposed Master Plan designation.
5. Desired Pattern of Growth. The proposed amendment will promote the desired pattern for the orderly physical growth of the County and guides development of the County based on the projected population growth with the least amount of natural resource impairment and the efficient expenditure of funds for public services.
6. Effect on a Military Installation. The proposed amendment will not affect the location, purpose and mission of the military installation.

BACKGROUND

In 2020, Washoe County began a comprehensive update to the Master Plan to modernize and update Washoe County's community vision for land use in the unincorporated County and to ensure that the Master Plan conforms with both state law requirements and the 2019 Truckee Meadows Regional Plan. Both state law and the Regional Plan require Washoe County's Master Plan to include certain topics (otherwise known as "Elements"), as well as other detailed requirements and information that should be included in reviewing each element. State law requires the Washoe County Master Plan to include the following: (a) a Housing Element, (b) a Conservation Element, including a "conservation plan", and (c) a Public Facilities and Services Element, including a "population plan" and "aboveground utility plan". The Regional Plan requires Washoe County's Master Plan to address the following elements: Population Growth, Regional Coordination, Natural Resources, Regional Form, and Public Facilities and Services.

The following graphic details how the proposed master plan includes these overlapping required subjects.

PLAN ORGANIZATION



The Washoe County Master Plan has several intersections with the planning process: it identifies necessary capital improvements, describes future planning initiatives, and is an essential tool in the development review process. The Envision Washoe 2040 project is the first comprehensive update and restructuring of the Washoe County Master Plan since the early 1990's. In the intervening years, planning in Washoe County has changed considerably in both policy and substance. Some of these substantive changes include the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan, which was comprehensively updated in 2019, the

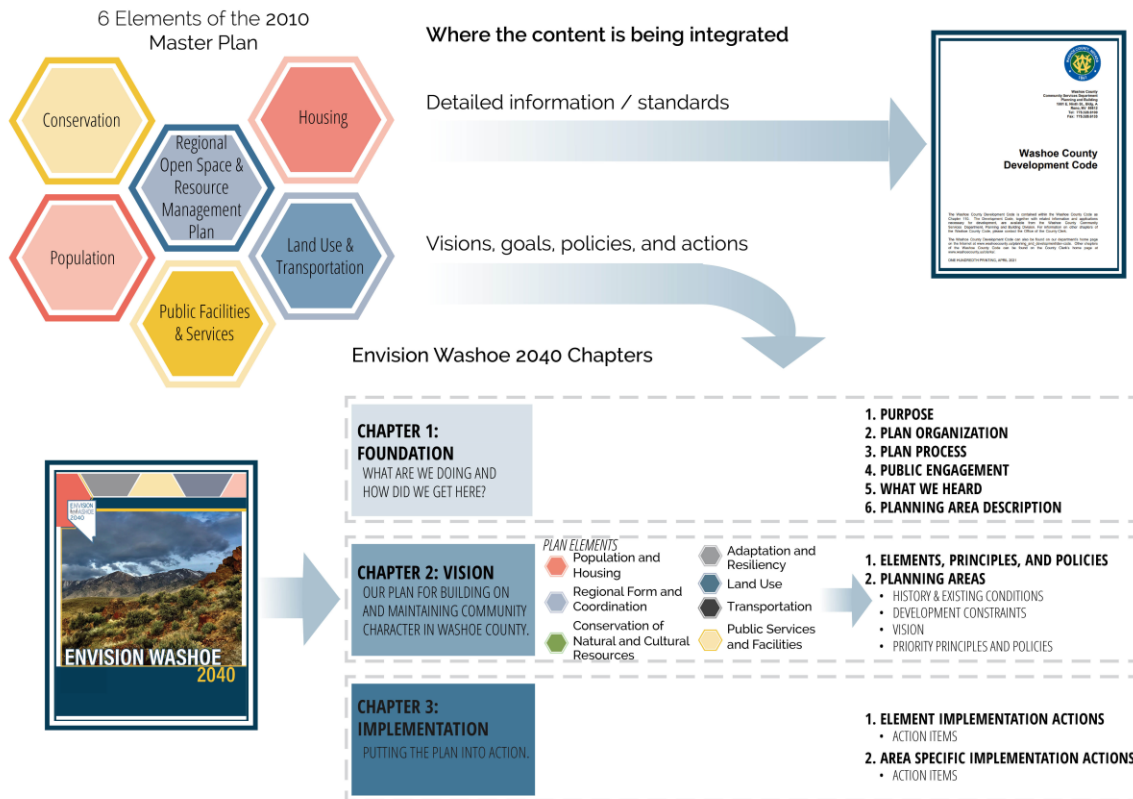
establishment of the Truckee River Operating Agreement, considerable boundary changes to both Reno and Sparks, and more. On the ground, the population has grown from approximately 340,000 in 1990 to 497,000 in 2022. Many areas planned for growth in the current Master Plan (2010 Master Plan) are now substantially built out and new challenges have come to the forefront, such as climate resiliency, affordable housing, and public health. Washoe County has changed, and so too must our plan for the future. As such, this project is better viewed as a “repeal and replace” than a standard master plan amendment.

In 2020, staff started the master plan update process by establishing three advisory committees: the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and the Steering Committee (SC.) Before beginning the broader public process, the SC identified 4 guiding principles for the Master Plan update: efficiency, clarity, accessibility, and support. The 2010 Master Plan is thousands of pages long and housed in 18 separate documents. Though it is meant to act as a guide for decision making, it is difficult for staff, consultants, the public and governing bodies to navigate. The guiding principles of Envision Washoe 2040 articulate the solution to these problems. Rather than being untenably verbose, Envision Washoe 2040 is 190 pages instead of 1,500, and is designed to contain only meaningful and actionable information. The language is more succinct and clearer, with the goal that everyone reading it walks away with the same understanding of what it says. This improved clarity will improve accessibility to all citizens of Washoe County, as will the increased use of graphics and links within the plan document. Finally, Envision Washoe 2040 is not a list of aspirations that will ultimately go unrealized. Instead, continuous stakeholder involvement will cultivate support both inside and outside of the County government. These goals guided the Envision Washoe 2040 project at every step, and the result is the draft document under consideration by the Board today.

PLAN STRUCTURE

After extensive public outreach and input from the steering and advisory committees, staff determined that a new form and structure for Washoe County’s Master Plan was needed. The new structure consolidates the 18 documents that currently comprise the 2010 Master Plan into one document, as reflected in the diagrams below.

Concepts Integration:



The 2010 Master Plan includes six “elements” and 13 area plans. While these elements and area plans are technically all part of the same master plan, they exist largely separate from one another. A goal of Envision Washoe 2040—as established early in the project by the Steering Committee—is to streamline the Master Plan into one concise and clear document that is accessible to all. As shown in the figure above, this is achieved by restructuring the plan to: (a) move language that contains specific development standards into the development code, and (b) incorporate the plans into a single document that contextualizes them in relation to each other. The result is a three-chapter plan.

Envision Washoe 2040’s first chapter, Foundation, provides background and context for the plan. It addresses the history and purpose of area plans (now called planning areas) in Washoe County; describes the process and engagement undertaken to create the master plan; and briefly chronicles existing conditions in the county. Additionally, this section places the Washoe County Master Plan in a regional context. Washoe County’s Master Plan is one such plan that exists in a network of other similar documents for other agencies/jurisdictions in the region. The ability of Washoe County to implement our Master Plan will be impacted by the plans of other agencies, such as the Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA), the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC), and the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency (TMRPA). The reverse is also true. Throughout, but in Chapter 1 particularly, this master plan places emphasis on describing the network of agencies that govern and influence land use in Washoe County.

Chapter Two, Vision, is focused on defining a vision for the future of the county. It describes where we are now and where we want to go. Chapter 2 is broken into two parts: the first part includes the elements and the second part includes the planning areas. Each element is a topic—such as Land Use, Transportation, or Conservation of Natural and Cultural Resources—that is in some cases required by state law to be addressed in a master plan. The elements contain an overall description, as well as the principles and policies which are applicable to the whole county. These policies will guide the county in pursuing its principles and goals, through development review and other methods.

The second half of Chapter 2 contains the planning areas. This section distills each existing area plan down to approximately four pages. As with the elements, much of the text in the existing area plans consists of specific rules and regulations that would be more appropriately contained in the development code. Accordingly, in concert with the master plan update (WMPA23-0007), there are also development code amendments (WDCA23-0002). What remains distills what is essential and unique to each area.

The third and final chapter focuses on implementation, or the “action” component in the figure above. Policies in Chapter 2 are tied to implementation actions that specify how that policy may be achieved, in what broad time frame (e.g. short term, medium term, long term, continuous), and what types of resources are required to complete the specified action. Depending on the policy, the action may be a development code revision, a capital project, creation of further plans and studies, or creation of programs and resources. These actions will not be a concrete to-do list that achieves every single policy, but rather a place to start in implementing the master plan.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Staff began phase one of public outreach efforts in 2021, which included county surveys, stakeholder interviews, presentations at citizen advisory boards (CABs), and workshops. A full list of CAB, committee, and other public meetings can be found on the project website “Meetings” page, located at <https://www.envisionwashoe2040.org/pages/meetings>, and in Exhibit B of the Planning Commission staff report (Attachment B). In addition to the 40+ meetings held from 2020-2023, the project team also conducted 20 stakeholder interviews, ran several questionnaires with over 500 respondents, and conducted 5 online surveys. Based on these efforts and feedback received, the project team established a new format for the Washoe County Master Plan that is described above.

Phase two of public outreach focused on getting feedback on drafts of the new Area Plans (Planning Areas). The Planning Areas have been a part of Washoe County’s planning process for decades. As such, staff wanted to have an extra phase of outreach and feedback to ensure that the new revised planning area documents retain everything that Washoe County citizens find valuable while being more concise and accessible to all. This phase of public outreach included a familiar suite of strategies, including online surveys, CAB meetings, advisory committee meetings, and in-person public workshops. All these tools were used both to develop policies within the elements of Chapter Two that have county-wide applicability, and to develop vision statements and policies specific to each planning area. Community meetings were held across the county, including one in Gerlach, and Washoe County Planning’s first-ever Spanish-language workshop in Sun Valley. Citizens also had the opportunity to comment on the draft plan online through a platform known as Konveio. Over the course of the workshops, 120

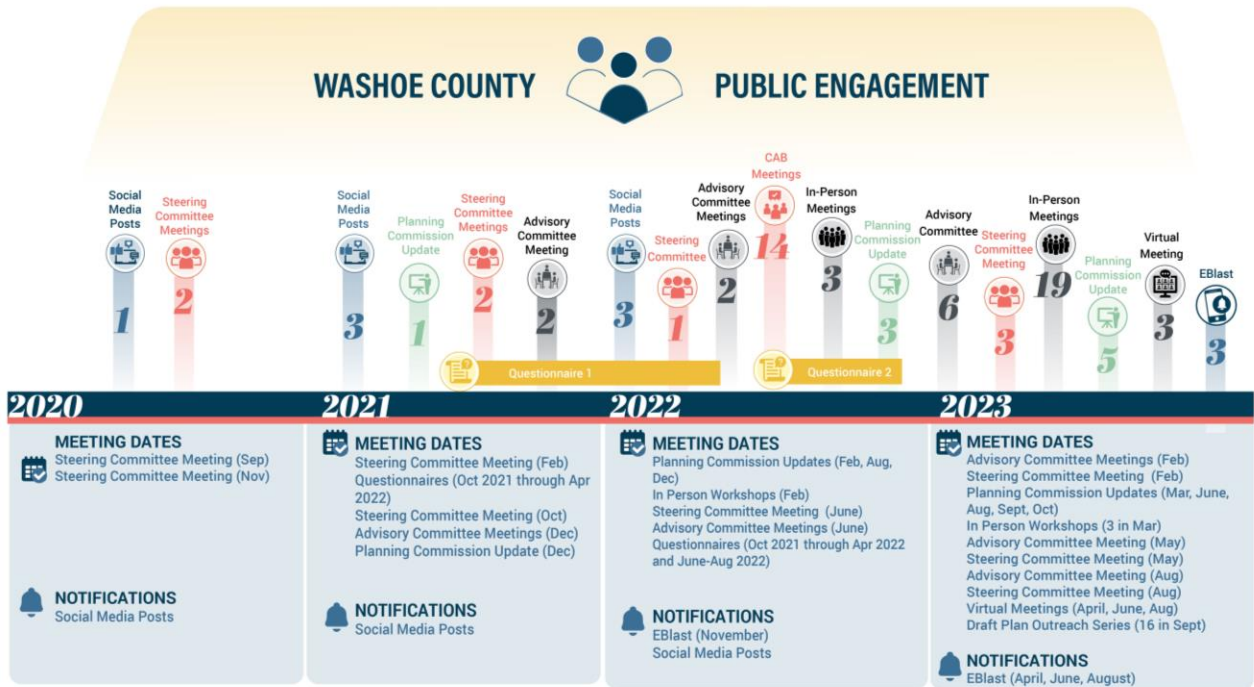
individuals provided comments in-person. The online platform, Konveio, had over 1,200 views and 217 comments.

During phase two of outreach, staff also had continuous meetings with agency partners to get feedback on the draft plan. Several agencies provided comments. A total list of agencies contacted throughout the process is included as Exhibit C of the Planning Commission staff report (Attachment B).

After incorporating feedback received from the public and from other agencies and stakeholders, staff embarked on Phase 3 of public outreach: full draft release and feedback. The first full draft of Envision Washoe 2040 was released on August 11, 2023, through Konveio, the same online commenting software used in Phase 2. It remained open for comment through September 15, 2023, and was advertised through several email lists, news releases, and flyers (in English and Spanish) posted at various locations throughout the county. Staff also hosted several in-person engagement opportunities, as described below:

- Presentations at all CAB meetings.
- Setting up tables at several community events, including the Bowers Mansion Bluegrass Festival, the Lazy 5 Music Series, and the Sierra School of Performing Arts' presentation of The Addams Family.
- Four "Planner at the Library" events where citizens could come speak to a planner about the Master Plan update.
- Five dedicated "Open House" events for people to come speak to planners about the project, including one for Spanish-language speakers.
- One online webinar providing an overview of the master plan update and showing how to use the online commenting platform.

Over the course of the public comment period, Konveio had over 1,600 views and 229 comments. Partner agencies had the opportunity to comment on a separate Konveio page, which had 218 views and 21 comments. The feedback received was incorporated into a final draft of the plan, which was adopted by the Planning Commission and is attached to this staff report as Attachment A for your consideration. All phases of public outreach are summarized in the graphic below.



PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice for master plan amendments must be given in accordance with NRS 278.220(3) and WCC 110.820.23, as amended.

Noticing for this proposal: A legal ad was placed with the Reno Gazette Journal on November 3, 2023.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

NRS 278.210(2) and WCC Section 110.820.20 require a neighborhood meeting for any proposed master plan amendment. The neighborhood meeting was held at 1001 E. 9th St., Building A, Atrium on September 5, 2023 from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm. A few people attended and asked questions of Planning staff. Over 15 similar events were held across the county in August and September of 2023. As a result, the online draft received over 1,600 views and 229 comments.

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners adopt and authorize the Chair to sign the resolution contained as Attachment A to this staff report to adopt Envision Washoe 2040 as set forth in Master Plan Amendment Case Number WMPA23-0007, subject to a favorable conformance review by the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Commission.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board approve the Staff’s recommendation, a possible motion would be: “Move to adopt Master Plan Amendment Case Number WMPA23-0007, to adopt

Envision Washoe 2040; and further authorize the Chair to sign the resolution contained in Attachment A to this staff report to that effect. In making this motion, I am able to make the six findings made by the Planning Commission in accordance with Washoe County Code Section 110.820.15(d).”

Attachments:

- A. Resolution
- B. Planning Commission Staff Report and Original Attachments, from October 16, 2023 Planning Commission public hearing
- C. Planning Commission Resolution (signed)
- D. [Recording of October 16, 2023 Planning Commission public hearing](#) (from time stamp 15:46 to 1:21:02).
- E. Public Comments