

Planning Commission



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Heat Mitigation Plan

July 7, 2026

Background



- AB 96 passed in 2025 Legislative Session
- Required jurisdictions in Washoe and Clark county to create a “Heat Mitigation Plan” in the Conservation Element of the master plan
- Must address specific topics

LEGISLATURE SUSTAINABILITY

Nevada bill would require cities to prepare for a hotter future

BY: JENIFFER SOLIS - FEBRUARY 19, 2025 8:33 AM



(Photo: Ethan Miller/Getty Images)

Image 1: Nevada Current Article 2/19/25

Envision Washoe 2040 Master Plan



- AB 96 requires master plan to address:
 - ✓ • Access to public cooling spaces
 - ✓ • Access to public drinking water
 - ✗ • Cool building practices
 - ✓ • Shade over paved surfaces
 - ✗ • Preference for native tree or drought-tolerant species

✓ **Already addressed**

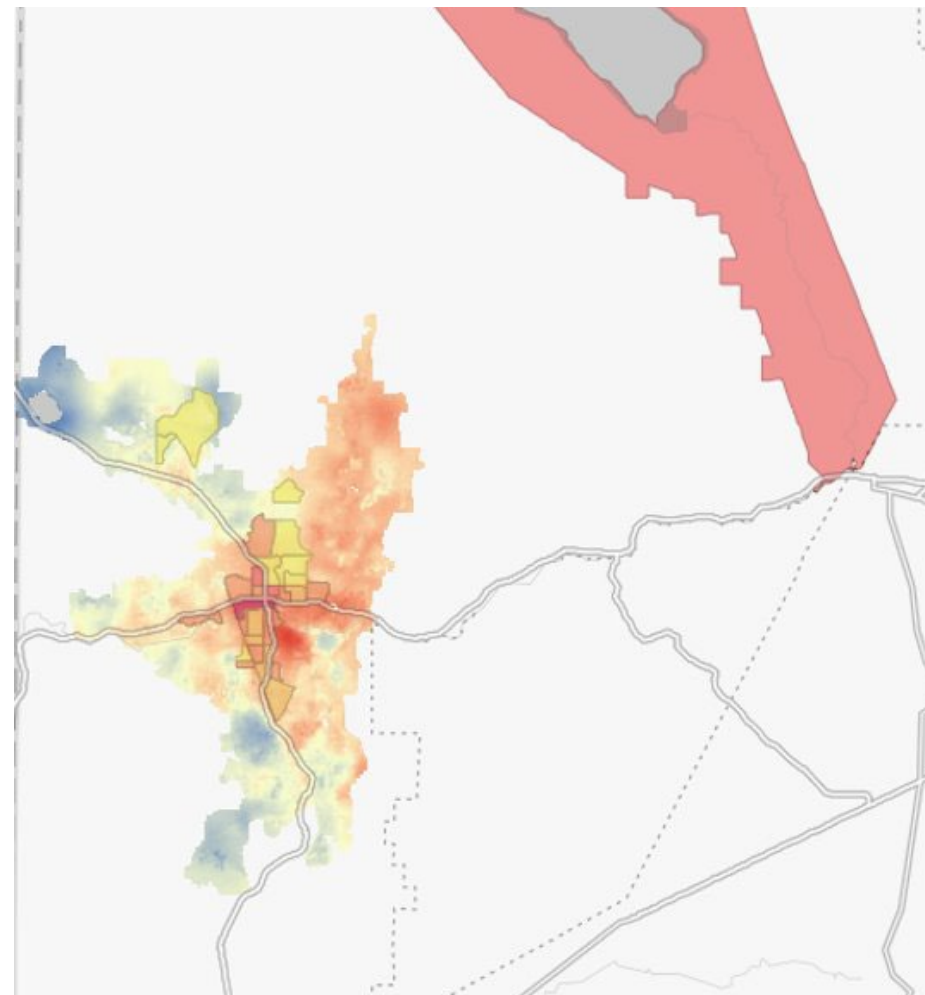


Image 2: Washoe County Heat Map

Urban Heat



- Urban heat islands (UHIs): areas of concentrated heat created by impervious surfaces like buildings, roads, and other paved surfaces that absorb and release heat

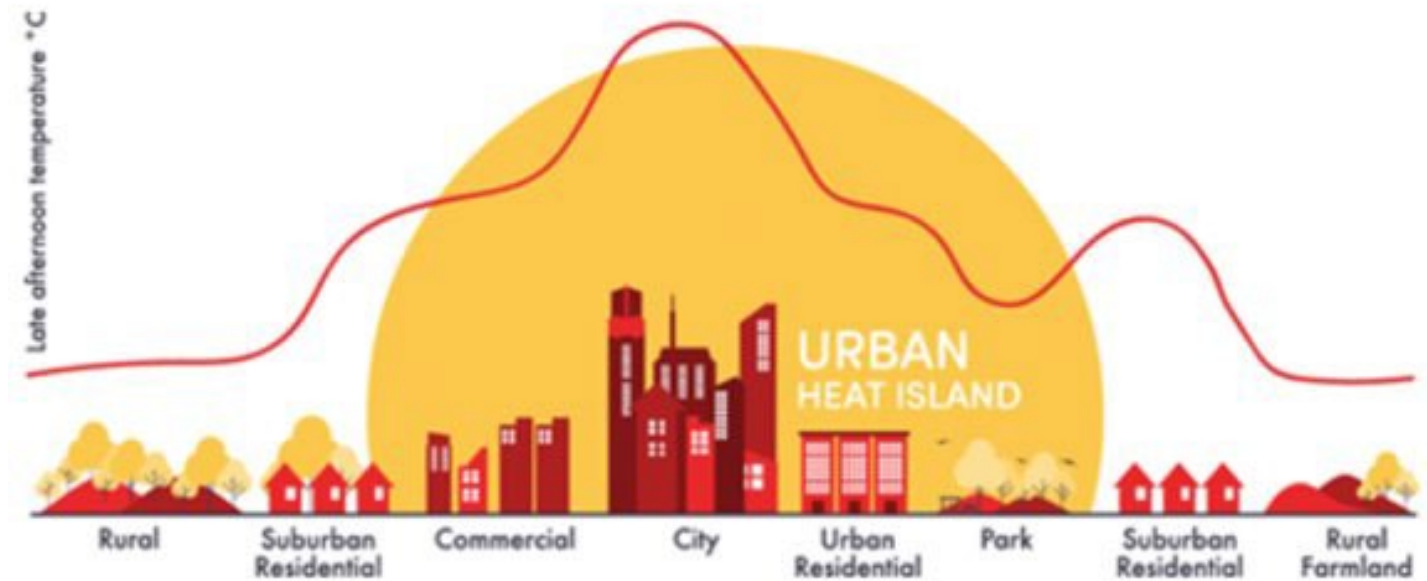


Image 4: Urban Heat Island Effect (World Meteorological Organization)

Urban Heat in Washoe County



- CAPA Heat Mapping project on August 10, 2024
 - 100+ volunteers; 200 sq. miles sampled
- Maximum mapped temperature differential between neighborhoods: **23 degrees Fahrenheit**
- Found that areas with more sparse suburban development and low tree cover can also concentrate heat in the day and evening

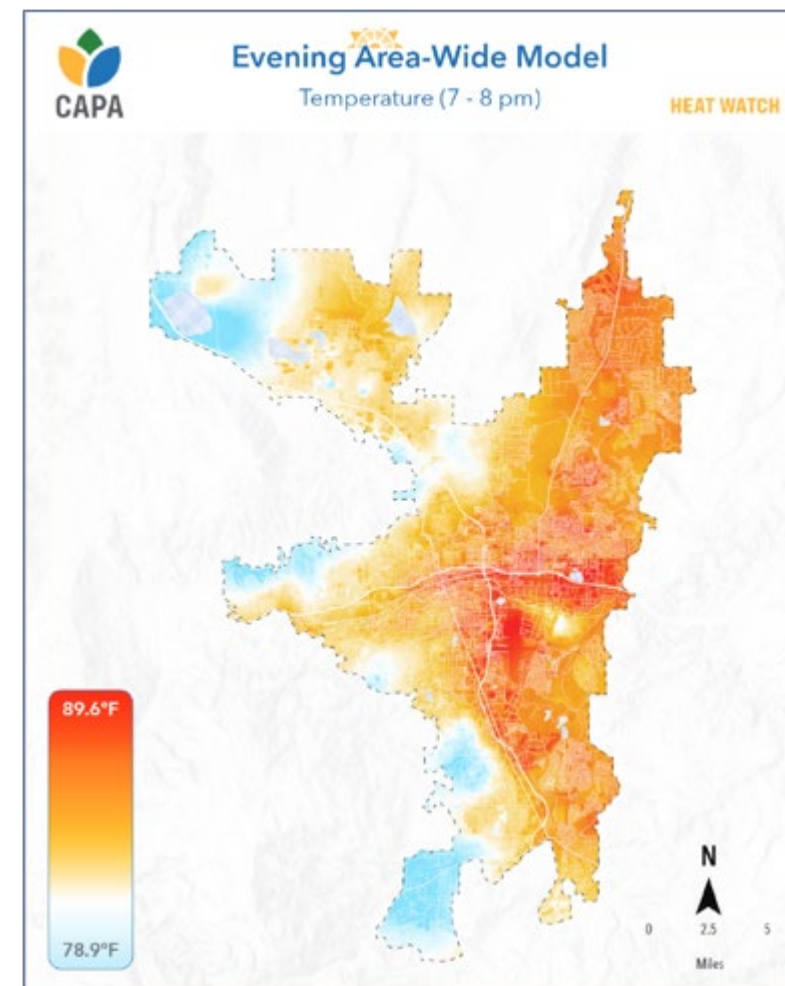


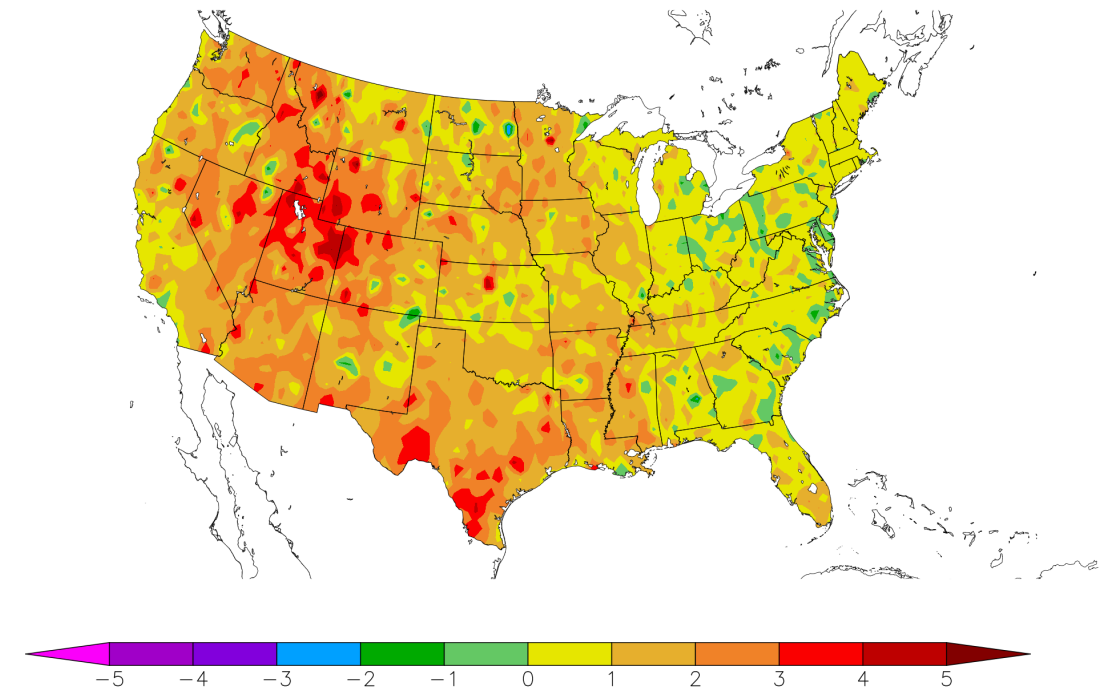
Image 4: Reno-Sparks Heat Map

Extreme Heat



- Rural areas also vulnerable to extreme heat
- Chronic and acute health impacts of heat
- Wide range of potential impacts
 - Economic
 - Public Health
 - Social
 - Agricultural
- Extreme heat events expected to increase

Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
1/1/2025 – 12/31/2025



Generated 1/20/2026 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services

Image 5: Departure from Normal Temperature Map (2025)



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Overview of Draft Amendments

Summary of Amendments



Attachment D

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- Reorganizing narrative create a “heat mitigation plan” and to address extreme and urban heat
- Modifying and adding policies related to extreme heat mitigation and management
- Using a red sun icon (☀) to mark principles and policies throughout Envision Washoe 2040 that are relevant to extreme heat and part of the heat mitigation plan
- Adding four new action items to Chapter 3

Heat Mitigation Plan Narrative



Attachment D

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- **Reorganize existing information** about urban heat and vulnerable communities
- Add information about extreme heat and its impacts, including:
 - Impacts to ozone, air quality, and attainment of **air quality** standards
 - Impacts to **community character**, including social vibrancy and isolation
 - Risks to and needs of **rural communities**, including water impacts, energy reliability, agricultural impacts, and emergency medical care access
 - Direct and indirect impacts to the **Tahoe Basin**
- Incorporate **2024 CAPA Heat Watch map data** to urban heat section
- Add more detailed information on **tree canopy**
- **Reference relevant plans**, including the 2025 Washoe County Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, Climate Action Plan, and Regional Transportation Plan

Adaption and Resiliency Policies



Addition of new principles and policies:

2.4 Coordinate with and support the efforts of **Washoe County Emergency Management** in hazard mitigation and emergency planning.

AR Principle 4 Manage the impacts of extreme heat.

4.1 Support efforts to **raise awareness and knowledge** about extreme heat and its impacts.

4.2 Collaborate with local and regional partners to **develop heat management resources** aimed at:

- Reviewing where **public cooling spaces** exist or can be enhanced.
- Reviewing where access to **public drinking water** exists or can be enhanced.
- Developing an **online map** resource to inform the public about access to cooling spaces and where access to public drinking water is available.

Adaption and Resiliency Policies



Addition of new principles and policies:

- 4.3 Support increasing the **resiliency of energy supply networks** and the accessibility of affordable energy.
- 4.4 Promote **increasing shade** on sites that serve **populations vulnerable to extreme heat**, such as children and seniors.
- 4.5 Promote **increasing shade** where appropriate in **public infrastructure** such as multimodal transportation stops and areas.
- 4.6 Assess the need for **rural-focused extreme heat strategies**, such as incentives for energy efficiency retrofitting, supporting access to medical care, and increasing grid resiliency and energy redundancy.
- 4.7 Support **cool building** practices such as awnings, light colored and living roofs, and increased insulation.

Adaption and Resiliency Policies



Revisions to existing policies:

AR Principle 3 Mitigate the impacts of **extreme heat and** climate change on residents.

3.2 ~~Assess the need to expand the County's tree canopy.~~ **Support expansion of the County's tree canopy, prioritizing the most vulnerable communities and key community resources, such as the Truckee River corridor.**

3.3 *Promote land uses and building techniques which reduce the use of heat absorbing surfaces and the urban heat island effect including limiting impervious surface;; reducing parking requirements;; promoting water-wise and drought tolerant landscaping;; ~~use of~~ **using** green building materials **such as green roofs, green walls, and cooling pavements;** and **promoting beneficial** site orientation.*

~~3.5 Work with the cities of Reno and Sparks to assess adequacy of access to public drinking water, shaded areas, and cooling centers within the County.~~

Add three new action items (short-term):

- Create **codes and measurable goals related to tree canopy coverage** with a preference for native tree or drought-tolerant species.
- Assess need for **rural-focused strategies** to manage the impact of extreme heat and, if needed, pursue those strategies.
- Conduct a study to **identify the areas of the county most at-risk from extreme heat** in order to prioritize investment in those areas.

Add one new action item (mid-term):

- Explore **incentives for cool building practices** in the Washoe County Development Code.

- Two neighborhood meetings, one in person and one online (two attendees)
- Online survey (35 responses)
- Revisions based on public input:
 - Additional narrative to address extreme heat in the **Tahoe Basin** and the indirect impacts of extreme heat in the Truckee Meadows on the Tahoe Basin.
 - Additional policy language supporting expanding **tree canopy in the Truckee River corridor**.
 - Additional detail regarding supported **cool building practices**.
 - Revisions to the proposed action items to include **establishing measurable goals** related to tree canopy.
 - Various small amendments to **improve clarity and detail** in the heat mitigation plan narrative.

Must make at least **three of five** of the following findings:

- Consistency with Master Plan. The proposed amendment is in substantial compliance with the policies and action programs of the Master Plan.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Motion - Approval



I move that, after giving reasoned consideration to the information contained in the staff report and information received during the public hearing, the Washoe County Planning Commission adopt the resolution contained at Attachment A of this staff report to amend the Master Plan as set forth in Master Plan Amendment Case Number WMPA26-0001 having made at least three of the following five findings in accordance with Washoe County Code Section 110.820.15(d). I further move to certify the resolution and the proposed Master Plan Amendments in WMPA26-0001 as set forth in this staff report for submission to the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners and authorize the chair to sign the resolution on behalf of the Planning Commission.

Thank you

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Mark and revise additional policies as part of the Heat Mitigation Plan:

RFC 3.2 Work with planning partners to develop funding sources and incentives for the acquisition, dedication, and maintenance of open space and sensitive lands.

RFC 3.5 Prioritize open space acquisitions which protect aquifer recharge areas, current and future wellhead protection areas, source water protection areas, **vegetation and tree canopies in areas with high urban heat island effect**, and areas with natural hazards (floodplains, steep slopes, forested areas, etc.).

LU 3.2 Promote landscaping that is consistent with best practices for resource sustainability, habitat preservation and enhancement, and natural hazard resilience.

Mark and revise additional policies as part of the Heat Mitigation Plan:

LU 3.3 *Incentivize residential cluster and common open space developments as an alternative to conventional subdivision development where clustering will achieve permanent protection of open space or valued natural resources.*

TR Principle 3. Prioritize multi-modal transportation to support healthy communities.

Mark and revise action items as part of the Heat Mitigation Plan (immediate):

- Review and amend the development and architectural standards with the goal of **reducing emissions and increasing resiliency**.
- Develop new methods, through zoning designations, overlays, or some other method, to **encourage walkability, multi-modal transportation, and residential development near commercial uses and transportation nodes**.

Mark and revise action items as part of the Heat Mitigation Plan (short-term):

- Create incentives for new developments and homeowners to incorporate **renewable energy generation** (solar, geothermal, wind, etc.) that generate at least 30% of household power each year.
- Amend the development code to provide standards for **passive solar energy** measures that encourages its use.
- Explore the establishment of a dedicated funding source for the acquisition of **permanent open space** for wildlife habitat protection, scenic vista protection, **heat mitigation**, and agriculture preservation.
- Establish requirements for standard subdivisions to **dedicate natural open space or park space** as part of new residential development.

Mark and revise action items as part of the Heat Mitigation Plan (short-term):

- Evaluate the need to include **Electric Vehicle Readiness** requirements into Development Code
- Establish **parking maximums** instead of parking minimums to avoid empty parking lots.
- Design neighborhood streets ~~with proper widths that~~ **to include tree canopies for shade, bike lanes, sidewalks, and street widths appropriate for residential areas to** encourage walkable communities.
- Explore tools for **transferring development potential** from rural areas to suburban areas
- Create development standards that mitigate urban heat through **surfacing, landscaping, and building design.**

Mark and revise action items as part of the Heat Mitigation Plan (short-term):

- Create development regulations to **support transit-oriented development** and require the installation of bikeways, sidewalks, **trees**, and pathways, starting in targeted Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts and streets.
- Conduct an assessment to identify locations and needs for **resilience hubs/cooling centers**.
- Work with local, state, and federal partners to **expand the urban canopy** and include trees on Washoe Transportation Projects.
- Develop an **educational outreach** program on strategies for living with extreme heat in partnership with regional medical centers.

Mark and revise action items as part of the Heat Mitigation Plan (mid-term):

- Develop design standards that allow for **public and private renewable energy generation** (solar, wind, etc.) and complement the existing character of an area.
- Identify **transit corridors** and multimodal lanes that would benefit from **increased shade** structures or urban canopy.