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## Purpose of the 2020 Master Plan

The 2020 Master Plan provides the overall foundation and framework for directing the County's future growth and development. This Master Plan was a community-based effort with nearly 500 residents who participated in the public process, through an online survey and 11 public meetings held throughout the County. The process was an opportunity to assess and explore trends and key issues that would influence the County's future, as well as an opportunity to articulate a shared, community-wide vision for the future and to explore potential trade-offs associated with that vision.

The result is a Master Plan that provides a road map for the County as it continues to grow and evolve. The Master Plan reflects the ideas, values, and desires of the community, aligning these with a range of plans, policies, and initiatives in place or underway in both Lyon County and the wider region. Moving forward, the Master Plan will help guide both day-to-day decision-making, short-term actions, and longer-term initiatives and strategies to achieve the community's vision.

## Plan Use

The 2020 Master Plan will serve as a tool to help guide the community toward its desired outcomes. It specifies policy guidelines that respect the individual, reinforce community values, support healthy functioning communities, and advocates for quality of life.

Public and private agencies, property owners, developers, community groups, and County staff will use the 2020 Master Plan for various reasons, including the general statements listed below.

1. The Master Plan provides guidance for County officials in making decisions about zone changes and developments.
2. Residents can use the Master Plan to understand the County's position on proposed changes in land use, zoning, development regulations, and broader policy issues.
3. The 2020 Master Plan forms the basis for other County plans and regulations. The Plan establishes policies that promote the County's role in actions related to capital improvements, road construction and maintenance, land use, and other matters.

The 2020 Master Plan applies to all the unincorporated areas of Lyon County, and is intended to be a living document. It will be updated and amended as needed to reflect progress made, changing conditions in Lyon County, and the evolving needs of the community and market conditions.

## The Plan's Scope

Although the Master Plan vision extends to the next two decades and beyond, the goals and policies of this 2020 Master Plan are intended to serve for about 10 years before amendments



and updates should be applied. The plan covers all areas of the County except Native American reservations and incorporated cities.

This 2020 Master Plan does not address areas that lie outside Lyon County's jurisdiction. For example, it does not outline a plan for new schools in the school district, but it does touch on issues such as the effect of new growth and development on schools. Additionally, many policies support the collaborative efforts necessary to protect the integrity of the public lands managed by agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

## Update Process

This Master Plan represents dialogue and analysis that has included a wide array of participants including the Board of Commissioners, the Planning Commission, community advisory boards, County staff and the community at large. To begin public input, a survey was available on the County's website to solicit input from all of the communities. A series of community meetings, open house events, and workshops were held throughout the county to obtain citizen input and recommendations, including four meetings focused on identification of important issues from November 2019 - February 2020, two Planning Commission meetings, and two Board of County Commissioners meetings. From August 2020 - September 2020, each of the County's seven Citizen Advisory Boards, the Planning Commission and County Commission had the opportunity to review and provide comment on the draft Master Plan. Following review of the draft Master Plan in November 2020, December 2020, January 2021, February 2021, March 2021, and December 2021 the Planning Commission made a recommendation for approval, and final approval was given by the Board of County Commissioners on December 16, 2021. All of the Master Plan update materials, including the draft Master Plan, were available for public review on the County's website.

## Master Plan Organization

The 2020 Master Plan is organized into eight chapters. These chapters deal with a wide range of topics that influence or are influenced by growth and development in the County. Each chapter provides goals, policies, and implementation strategies pertaining to the topic area that is the subject of the chapter.

The 2020 Master Plan is organized around seven broad topics, which serve as a framework for the implementation of the community's vision and the guiding principles, goals, and policies contained in each chapter. In addition to this introductory chapter, the Master Plan is comprised of the following chapters:



## Communities



Lyon County will respect and promote the distinct character and heritage of its communities, strive to retain its rural and agricultural culture and promote cohesive and high quality development to improve the overall image and function of its communities.

Through its Community Planning process, Lyon County will address individual community needs and desires while implementing county-wide policies and actions.

## Land Use



Lyon County will grow in an orderly fashion concentrating development within designated land uses, maintaining the diversity characterized by its settlement patterns and landscapes, providing jobs as well as housing, and sustaining quality public services and facilities.

## Transportation



Lyon County will strive to provide a cohesive circulation system for a range of transportation choices that are safe, reliable, and offer sufficient capacity. The system will meet the current and future needs of residents and businesses, and will be an asset for attracting and retaining employment opportunities in our communities.



## Natural Resources and Environment



The proximity of the natural environment will continue to be an important part of life in Lyon County, where residents will enjoy sustainable supplies of clean water for drinking and agriculture, clean air, wildlife, access to rivers, lakes and public lands, scenic views, and dark night skies. Lyon County will work to reduce or mitigate natural hazards such as wildfire, flooding, earthquakes and dust.

## Parks, Recreation and Open Space



Access to publicly-owned lands will provide opportunities for hiking, horseback riding, bicycling, off-road vehicle uses and other activities, while playgrounds, sports fields and recreation facilities will be available to children and families within communities.

## Public Facilities and Services



Lyon County residents will have access to excellent schools and libraries, and effective response from well-equipped emergency services. The timing and location of future development will be coordinated with improvements to services and infrastructure to provide cost-effective services to existing and future residents.



## Regional Coordination



Lyon County will coordinate with other jurisdictions, including incorporated municipalities, adjoining counties, state and federal agencies, and tribal authorities that manage lands and other resources in or near the county, to coordinate planning efforts and provision of services.

## Lyon County's Vision

The Vision, Goals, Policies and Strategies of the Lyon County 2020 Master Plan will guide the County in its decisions, and as new development or changes occur, help to maintain and enhance the qualities that make Lyon County a great place in which to live, work, and recreate.

- The Lyon County *Vision Statement* sets out a desired picture of the future of Lyon County. It represents a future toward which the County will strive.
- *Goals* are statements about what the County aims to achieve over the life of the 2020 Master Plan. Goals are intended to give decision-makers and citizens a clear idea about the County's intended direction.
- *Policies* provide ongoing guidance for elected and appointed officials, staff, and administrators as these community leaders make decisions about specific development, programs, and capital investments in the County.
- *Strategies* list detailed actions and methods for implementing the plan. Some strategies will be possible to accomplish in the near term, while others will be ongoing, or will take place later in the life of the 2020 Master Plan.



A vision statement describes an overall image of what the community wants to be and how it wants to look in the future. Lyon County's vision, as depicted in this Master Plan, is founded on the premise that the health of the County and the quality of life of its residents depend on the balancing of multiple factors, including environmental, economic and community/social considerations. These components are interrelated and essential to the continued health and sustainability of the community. Addressing these factors in a comprehensive manner provides a balanced and flexible basis for formulating the County's 2020 Master Plan.



## Vision Statement

Lyon County will guide growth and change to meet the needs of current and future residents, building on its heritage, and exploring new and innovative techniques to address challenges. The diverse communities within Lyon County will work together to meet shared goals while respecting and promoting the individual character of each community. Residents will enjoy an excellent quality of life characterized by diverse lifestyle opportunities, quality housing choices, plenty of clean air and water, access to open lands, recreation and wildlife, outstanding public schools, an efficient transportation network, a safe community, and a range of employment and occupational choices. Rural character and agricultural and mining heritage will continue to be a strong part of Lyon County's identity.

## Implementation and Use

### How Will the Master Plan Goals and Policies be Implemented?

In addition to the goals and objectives identified in the 2020 Master Plan, strategies have been suggested that are designed to achieve the stated goals and objectives. While it would be difficult to accomplish all of these strategies to their fullest extent over a short period of time, they provide the County with specific direction that can be followed over the life of the Plan.

Although the Master Plan is a general policy document to guide the physical development of the county, it does not have the force of law as a regulation or ordinance for the enforcement of its goals and policies. Zoning maps and ordinances must be adopted to create the regulations and enforcement authority to implement the Master Plan. Lyon County, through this 2020 Master Plan, has taken the approach that incentives should be used where possible to effect desired changes.

### How Does Zoning Relate to the Master Plan?

County zoning regulations consist of both a zoning map and a written ordinance that divides the county into zoning districts, including various residential, commercial, and industrial districts. The zoning regulations describe what type of land use and specific activities are permitted in each district, and also regulate how buildings, signs, parking, and other construction may be placed on a lot. The zoning regulations also provide procedures for re-zoning and other planning applications.



The zoning map and zoning regulations provide specific requirements for development of property, while the Master Plan provides a guide for the future development of the property. When changing the zoning of a particular property, it should be consistent with the Master Plan Land Use Map and Master Plan policies. That is to say, the Land Use Map and policies contained in this Master Plan should guide future re-zoning decisions.

Master Plan land use designations shown on the Land Use Maps are not the same as the zoning designations. The adoption of a master plan and Land Use Map does not change a property's zoning.

Master Plans are advisory in nature, serving to guide the community at a policy level and to guide future development decisions. Zoning is regulatory in nature, generally serving to implement the Master Plan and specify permitted uses, allowed densities and development standards.

In many instances, land use category designations on a Land Use Map may not directly correspond to a property's underlying zoning. Existing zoning is reviewed and considered throughout the development of a Master Plan so that consistency between land uses and zoning can be maintained to the maximum extent feasible, but unless the County chooses to proactively rezone properties that are inconsistent with the Land Use Map, properties retain their underlying zoning. If a property owner desires to change zoning as part of a development process, consistency with the Land Use Map will be required. However, if no zone change is proposed, there is no Nevada State law requirement that zoning be brought into compliance with the Master Plan and its Land Use Maps.

Per Nevada Revised Statutes, when there is an inconsistency between zoning and the Master Plan, the allowed uses per the zoning are permitted by right to the property owner. As an example, if a property is zoned for commercial development but the Master Plan denotes Rural Residential on the Land Use Map, the owner would still be permitted to construct commercial development.

## The Relationship to Private Property Rights

Although the Comprehensive Master Plan's policies direct the future development of private lands, they pose no limits on what landowners can do with their properties under their existing zoning. For example, many rural areas lie within a zoning district with a minimum parcel size of 20 acres; these landowners can continue to develop in accordance with that zoning. Although this plan does not encourage such development, it recognizes that owners are entitled to those development rights. The same approach holds true for existing commercial and industrial zones. Where the 2020 Master Plan recommends a change to existing land use patterns, it attempts to provide incentives and alternatives that benefit both the property owner and the county over the long term. The goal of the 2020 Master Plan is to provide more certainty in the development process, thereby maintaining or enhancing the economic viability of private property.



## Compliance with Nevada Revised Statutes

This Master Plan has been prepared in response to Nevada Revised Statutes 278.150 through 278.170 which state that a Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners shall prepare and adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the county. According to these statutes, the plan is to be referred to as the Master Plan and is to be prepared so that elements may be adopted by the governing body, as appropriate. Any ordinance pertaining to the use of land or the growth and development of the County should conform to the goals, objectives, and policies as they are presented in this Plan.

The Statutes also indicate how the Master Plan is to be adopted. In the preparation of the Master Plan and in the subsequent public hearings, the Nevada Revised Statutes were followed.