Contents

Natural Resources and Environment 5.2
Goals, Policies and Actions 5.3

The impact of future growth and development on Lyon County's natural resources and environmental quality is an issue of increasing public concern. Impacts accompanying population growth, such as new homes and commercial development, manifest themselves on the natural environment in many ways including:

- Reducing public access to open lands, lakes and rivers;
- Clearing of natural vegetation, and the loss of plant and wildlife habitat;
- Degradation of surface water quality in streams and rivers, and groundwater contamination;
- Air pollution;
- Encroachment into floodplains, areas of high wildland fire hazard and steep slopes;
- Increases in overall energy use and the use of fossil fuels;
- Disruption of natural water drainage systems; and
- Loss of scenic natural views.

Development to accommodate growth can occur without unduly threatening the County's natural resources and environmental quality if steps are taken to ensure that new development is designed and built in an environmentally sensitive and resource-conserving manner. Certain areas of Lyon County are more susceptible to environmental degradation or are more hazardous than others due to the presence of sensitive natural features or natural hazards. Future development should be directed away from sensitive and hazardous areas and guided to areas of the County where environmental impacts will be less detrimental.

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 and human caused hazards as identified in the Lyon County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP) (https://www.lyon-county.org/DocumentCenter/View/8670/Lyon-County-MJHMP--FINALDec-10-2018).

Goals, Policies and Actions

Goal NR 1: Public Access

Public lands, lakes, and rivers in Lyon County will be easily accessible by residents and visitors for recreation and enjoyment.

Policy NR 1.1: Access Points

New development should not close off key access points to recreation areas and attractions such as public lands, lakes and rivers.

Strategies:

- Encourage private property owners and developers to dedicate easements that allow for public access to recreation areas and attractions, and provide incentives in the subdivision ordinance.
- Consider acquiring strategic lands where necessary to protect public access to key recreation areas.

Goal NR 2: Wildlife

Lyon County will maintain adequate habitat for viable populations of a variety of desirable wildlife species.

Policy NR 2.1: Protect Critical Wildlife Habitat

Lyon County will work to protect critical habitat that is necessary to maintain viable wildlife populations.

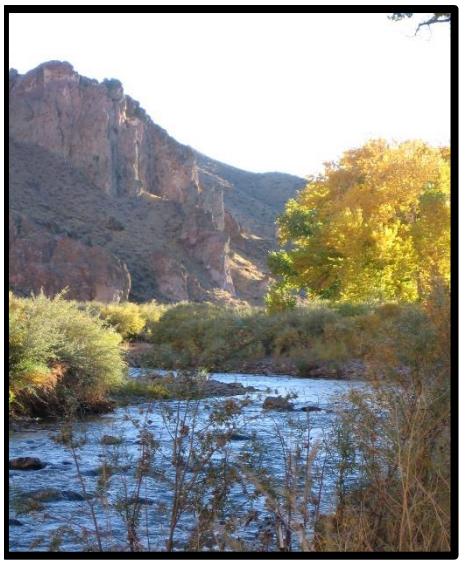
Strategies:

- Recognize species identified through community planning processes, such as wild horses and sage grouse, as species of community-wide importance, and prioritize habitat protection efforts and resources for these species.

- Identify the habitat of species of community-wide importance and identify critical habitat areas.
- Periodically review information and conditions to reveal changes in the range of species and amount of available habitat.
- Encourage land use patterns on private property that allows for new development while sustaining wildlife populations.
- Promote programs that educate residents about practices that can promote or endanger wildlife, such as waste disposal, land development, fencing, weed control, and others.
- Consider acquiring strategic habitat where necessary to protect, sustain, and allow migration of wildlife.

Goal NR 3: Clean Water

Adequate water supply will be available for current and future needs in Lyon County, including safe, healthy drinking water for all Lyon County residents.



Policy NR 3.1: Water Supply and Quality

Recognizing that clean water is a precious resource necessary to maintain our health, economy, and quality of life, Lyon County will protect the water supply and encourage efficient use of water resources.

Strategies:

- Maintain and expand the piped municipal water and sewer systems within the communities and urbanizing areas of the County.
- Control development density in semi-rural and rural areas to avoid contamination of wells by septic systems through adoption of density standards based on factors such as hydrology, soil structure, and other scientifically recognized parameters.

- Encourage a nitrate reduction program(s) to protect groundwater and public drinking water supplies.
- Encourage conservation and efficient use of water, through utility rate structure, landscaping standards, education, and other programs.
- Encourage each incorporated city to provide water and sewer to all new development within its area of influence.
- Require that new development install stormwater control features to offset increase in flood hazard created by development and facilitate groundwater recharge.
- Adopt low-impact development (LID) standards to reduce runoff and improve water quality.

Goal NR 4: Clean Air

Lyon County residents will have access to clean air.

Policy NR 4.1: Clean Air

Lyon county will continue to maintain and work to improve air quality

Strategies:

- Encourage compliance with federal and state air pollutant emissions standards.
- Encourage enforcement of dust control measures related to dust produced through development, construction, and cessation of agricultural production.
- Encourage reduced consumption of energy through lighting standards, incentives for efficient buildings, and education, and encourage development of low pollution energy resources.

Goal NR 5: Renewable Energy

Lyon County will encourage private efforts to develop and use renewable energy resources, such as solar and geothermal.

Policy NR 5.1: Geothermal, Solar and Wind

Lyon County will encourage utilization of available renewable energy resources, such as solar radiation, geothermal heat, and wind.

Strategies:

- Continue to encourage solar panels, geothermal, and small-scale wind turbines as permitted accessory uses on residential and commercial property in all compatible zoning districts.
- Identify sites in the county with significant solar, geothermal, or wind resources that may be suitable for future utility-scale development. Consider measures to encourage alternative energy development on these sites.

Goal NR 6: Natural Hazards

The County will work to prevent and reduce natural hazards to residents and businesses, including risks from flooding, wildfire, earthquakes, and dust.

Policy NR 6.1: Educate About Natural Hazards

Lyon County will strive to inform residents about natural hazards that exist in the county and how to reduce the risk that such hazards may pose, as identified in the Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP).

Strategies:

- Make information available about high natural hazard risks such as location of earthquake fault lines, floodplain areas, and high wildfire danger rating as identified in the Plan.
- Attempt to inform citizens when conditions are known to exist that can lead to substantial danger from hazards such as fire, earthquakes, flooding, or fugitive dust as identified in the Plan.
- Develop incentive programs and/or restrictions to minimize development in high hazard areas as identified in the Plan.

Policy NR 6.2: No Increase in Risk from Natural Hazards

To the extent possible, Lyon County will avoid or mitigate increased risk from natural hazards to persons or property that are caused by development.

Strategies:

- Limit new development on steep slopes, along seismic fault lines, and in flood-prone areas.
- Maintain floodplain management ordinance to restrict development within the floodway and floodplain.
- Continue to implement development standards that require stormwater control features in new subdivisions and new commercial and industrial development.
- Continue to implement provisions to reduce fire hazards in Urban-Wildland Interface areas in cooperation with the County's fire districts.
- Establish development buffer zones along all waterways and drainages subject to flooding.
- Continue to implement provisions that require hazardous fuels management and fire resistive

landscaping practices for development in Urban-Wildland Interface areas.

Goal NR 7: Open Space

Lyon County will identify and protect unique natural resources as permanent open space.

Policy NR 7.1: Unique Natural Resources

Identify unique natural resources of community-wide interest using the community planning process.

Strategies:

- Encourage and facilitate voluntary conservation easements on private property that protect unique natural resources.
- Continue to encourage and provide incentives for subdivision design that accommodates new development while protecting unique natural resources in accordance with the adopted zoning ordinance.
- Consider acquiring strategic open space where necessary to protect unique natural resources of community-wide interest.

Goal NR 8: Views

Lyon County will protect scenic views of mountain backdrops and dark skies.

Policy NR 8.1: Mountain Backdrop

Recognizing that views of the mountains in and around the county provide a unique scenic value for residents and visitors, Lyon County will strive to preserve such views.

Strategies:

- Continue to implement standards and incentives in the subdivision regulations so that streets, lots,

and buildings in new developments are aligned to maintain and maximize views of residences both within and around the new development.

- Restrict development on ridgelines and promontories to minimize impacts on the scenic quality of the mountain backdrop visible from existing and future communities in the County.
- Continue to implement setbacks, height limitations, or other regulations in urbanizing areas to minimize undesirable impacts to the views enjoyed by existing residences.
- As applicable, coordinate with the cities and counties that control lands outside the county that are part of the scenic backdrop, and with public agencies that regulate and manage lands within the county, and encourage them to maintain the scenic quality of these areas.

Policy NR 8.2: Dark Skies

Lyon County will minimize light pollution while allowing for adequate lighting for safety and security.

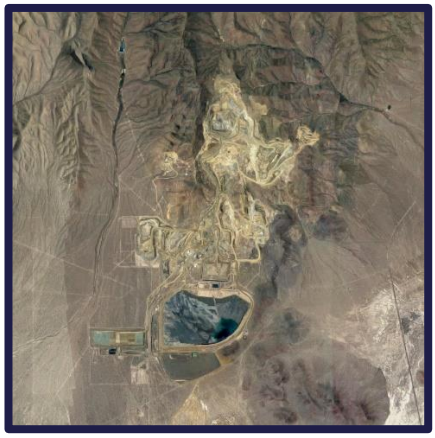
Strategies:

- Continue to implement lighting standards for commercial and industrial properties to address issues such as avoiding light intrusion onto neighboring properties, parking lot lighting scale and intensity, minimal security lighting outside of hours of operation, and similar.
- Update the zoning ordinance to ensure that the County will not provide or require street lights outside of communities and urbanizing areas.

Goal NR 9: Mining and Resource Extraction

Lyon County will promote the continued development of mineral and aggregate resources while working to prevent and reduce conflict between mining and other resource extraction activities and residential, commercial and industrial development.

Please note that Lyon County regulates land use on private property, which includes patented mining claims, but not projects on public lands. Lyon County is considered an "interested party" and provides comments on permits that are processed through the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for mining permit applications on public lands and the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) Bureau of Mining Reclamation/Regulation permits for any future mining projects.



Policy NR 9.1: Guide Development

Lyon County will encourage development away from areas where minerals and aggregate extraction is currently occurring and where significant resources are known to exist.

Strategies:

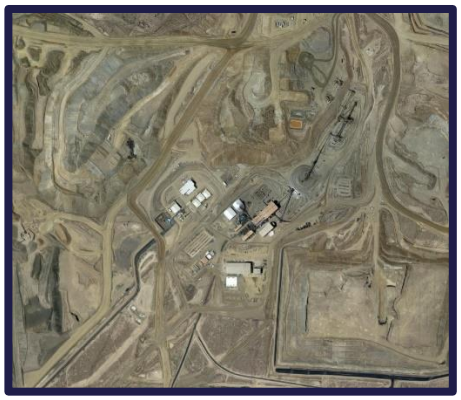
- Consider the location of known resources when reviewing new development.

Policy NR 9.2: Mining and Resource Extraction Education

Lyon County will encourage the distribution of information for residents regarding mining and other resource extraction activities that exist or may be developed in the county.

Strategies:

- Encourage mining operations to provide public education and information materials about hazards, hours of operations, traffic, etc.



Policy NR 9.3: Mitigate Operations

To the extent possible, Lyon County will require resource extraction projects to mitigate adverse operational impacts on such items as public infrastructure, traffic, agricultural operations, residential and commercial land uses, the visual character of the area, etc.

Strategies:

- Promote "limited impact"/environmentally safe resource extraction practices to protect the natural environment, enhance the quality of life of residents, and limit impacts on present and future public facilities and services.
- Work in close cooperation with the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, Nevada Division of Minerals, and other regulatory agencies to help ensure that State laws and regulations are being adhered to during exploration, development, and reclamation activities associated with mineral extraction projects.

Policy NR 9.4: Mitigate long-term impacts

To the extent possible, Lyon County will promote long-term reclamation and rehabilitation of extractive sites.

Strategies:

- Require resource extraction projects to submit detailed long-term reclamation and reuse plans and to provide documentation of adequate funding mechanisms to implement plans