



CHAPTER 3

WELL-MANAGED GROWTH

WHERE WE ARE TODAY

As of 2023, Carson City had a population of 58,923 people,¹ making it the tenth largest city in Nevada. In the 2006 Master plan, the City committed to striking a balance between supporting denser, mixed-use developments that blend residential, commercial, and recreational spaces and preserving traditional residential neighborhoods to accommodate future growth. As a result of this commitment, the City continues to encourage compact, infill development within the City's Urban Services Boundary and discourage intensive development in hazard prone areas.

Concerns around funding for infrastructure and public amenities, as well as the availability of developable land and water, are top of mind for residents, business owners, and City officials alike. Since the late 1970s, the City has utilized a Growth Management Program to ensure that adequate water and wastewater facilities exist for future development projects without compromising the City's ability to serve existing residents and businesses. Today, master planning of water and wastewater utilities are being executed to serve a population of 80,000 people. The Growth Management Program regulates growth by limiting the number of building permits for residential units on an annual basis and by establishing a water use threshold for commercial and industrial development. Through the implementation of its Hazard Mitigation Plan, Carson City also works with local, state, and federal partners to plan for and mitigate the effects of potential natural and human-caused disasters on life, property, and government services in the event of a major event.

Well-managed growth is essential for preserving Carson City's economic health and vitality, as well as the natural, scenic, and environmentally sensitive areas in and around the City, such as the Carson River and Prison Hill. Community members value and want to protect the open spaces, wildlife habitats, and historical sites that provide active and passive recreational opportunities for residents and visitors, and maintain access to the vast public lands that surround the City.

¹ Includes group quarters population (incarcerated individuals). This figure represents certified population figures released by the State Demographer as of July 1, 2023.



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Carson City will continue to prioritize development that makes efficient use of the land area and water resources the City has available for growth, that fosters the provision of infrastructure and services in a cost-effective manner, and that balances development with conservation of the natural environment—particularly where open lands abut the Urban Services Boundary. The City will also take steps to become more resilient in the face of natural disasters, such as wildfires and floods, through the implementation of hazard mitigation policies and sustainable development practices. Mindful collaboration with local organizations, as well as adjacent local, state, and federal agencies, will be essential to achieving the goals in this Chapter.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal 3.1—Promote the Efficient Use of Land, Water, and Infrastructure

3.1a—Growth Management

Ensure that the City's Land Use Map represents a level of growth that may be accommodated with available water resources and sewer capacity. Monitor growth trends and conduct an annual review of the City's growth capacity to ensure the Master Plan is consistent with the recommendations of the City's Water and Wastewater Master Plans. Continue to review applications in accordance with the Carson City Growth Management Ordinance.

What is the Urban Services Boundary?

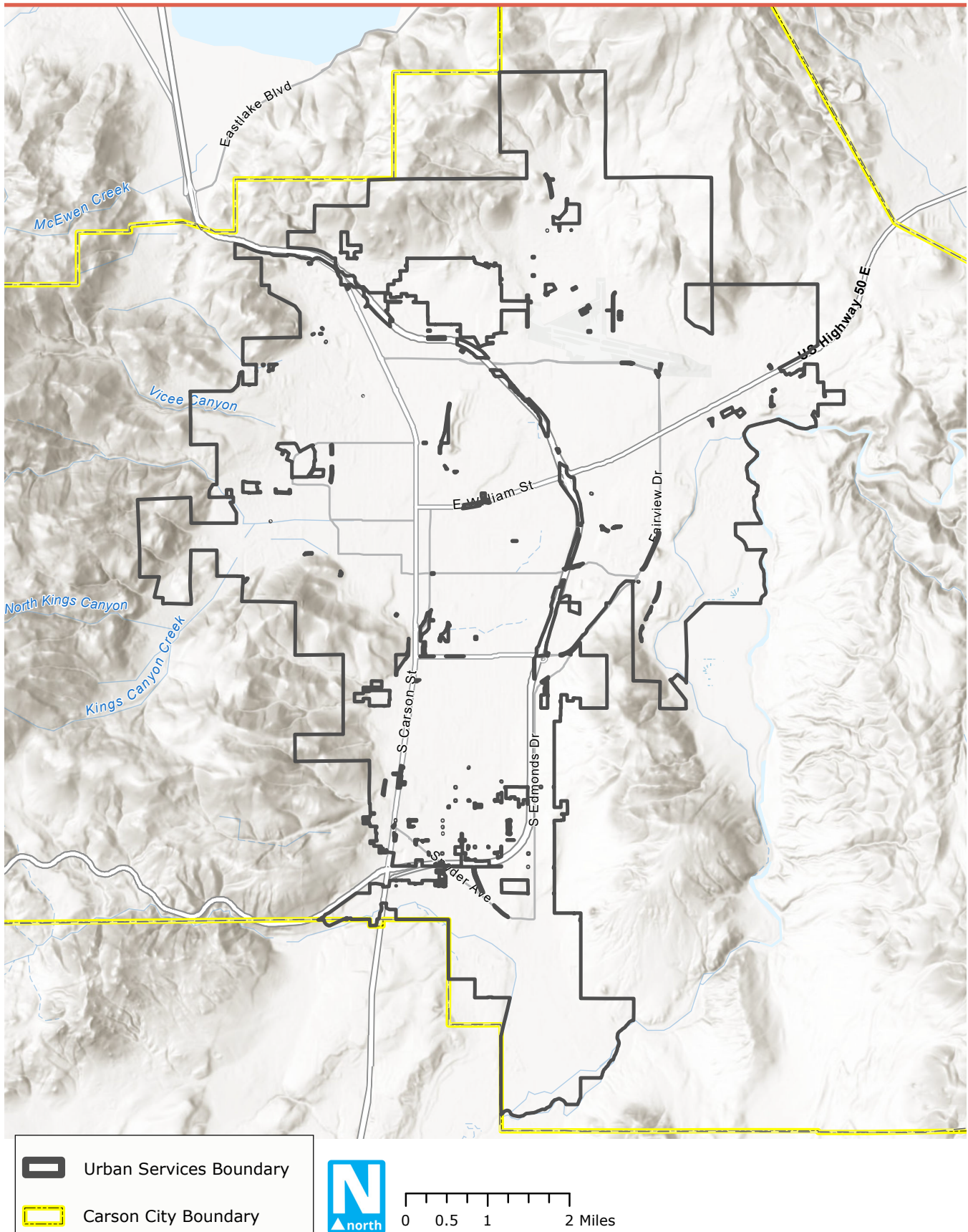
The Urban Services Boundary (as shown on the diagram on the following page and the Land Use Map) represents the planned limits of the City’s water and wastewater service capability according to the City’s Water and Wastewater Master Plans and the planned limits of future urban development. While public water and sewer are available to the majority of properties within the Urban Services Boundary, existing levels of service and infrastructure conditions vary from site to site. New infrastructure, or upgrades to existing infrastructure, may be required to support planned development densities depicted on the Land Use Map.

3.1b—Urban Services Boundary

Concentrate future development within the Urban Services Boundary to make efficient use of the City’s limited supply of privately-owned land, infrastructure, and services. Accommodate limited, low-intensity development (consistent with the Land Use Plan) in locations that are not currently served by urban services or not planned to be served by the City’s water and wastewater infrastructure, as identified in the City’s Water and Wastewater Master Plans. Consider potential expansion of the Urban Services Boundary on a case-by-case basis, provided that the proposed expansion and accompanying update to the Land Use Plan Map (if applicable):

- Is aligned with the vision, guiding principles, goals, and policies contained in the Plan;
- Will provide a demonstrable community benefit;
- Will not negatively impact the City’s fiscal health; and
- Will not negatively impact existing levels of service for City facilities and utilities.

Urban Services Boundary Map



See also, Chapter 10: Land Use Plan

See also, policies 5.2c, 5.4a, 6.2b, 6.2c, 7.4b, and 7.4c

3.1c—Range of Land Use Opportunities

Provide opportunities for a range of land uses at a variety of scales and intensities that are consistent with the City’s Land Use Plan and supported by existing and planned infrastructure capacity.

3.1d—Infill, Redevelopment, and Adaptive Reuse

Continue to encourage the creative use of vacant and underutilized sites through infill, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse as consistent with the goals and policies of this Master Plan.

Growth Terminology

Based on adopted policies and the Urban Services Boundary most development in Carson City will occur through infill, redevelopment, or adaptive reuse on vacant or underutilized sites, as defined below:

Vacant Sites. Includes previously undeveloped sites that are planned for residential, mixed-use, or employment uses on the Land Use Map, and are not designated as open space.

Underutilized Sites. Generally refers to sites that are developed at a substantially lower intensity than is planned on the Land Use Map (e.g., a one-story strip commercial center that is planned for higher-density mixed-use development). Properties or buildings that are largely vacant, or that have been entirely vacant for an extended period of time are also considered underutilized, as are properties where the value of the land is substantially higher than the value of the improvements on the land.

Infill Development. Development on a vacant or substantially vacant tract of land surrounded by existing development.

Redevelopment. Development on a tract of land with existing buildings where all or most of the existing buildings would be razed and a new building or buildings built. Redevelopment generally occurs on underutilized sites. Redevelopment activity is not limited to defined Redevelopment Areas.

Adaptive Reuse. The process of converting an existing building to a use other than that for which it was originally designed.



See also, policies 6.2a, MU 1.1, and MU 1.2.

3.1e—Infrastructure Improvements

Continue to enforce the City’s policy of requiring private developers to build and pay for the capital facilities (e.g., local streets, access improvements, new water or sewer lines, upsizing of existing water or sewer lines) needed to support proposed developments, particularly improvements that will serve new development directly, or that are needed to offset the potential impacts of a proposed development on established neighborhoods, businesses, or roads. Consider exceptions to this policy on a case-by-case basis to support the goals and policies contained in Chapter 6, or in instances when the public benefits associated with a project are sufficient to warrant an alternative approach.

3.1f—Mixed-Use Development

Provide opportunities for mixed-use development (with either a vertical or horizontal orientation, as appropriate given the surrounding development context) to offer flexibility in the face of changing market conditions, increase resident access to services and amenities, and encourage the revitalization of areas in need of reinvestment.

Goal 3.2—Mitigate the Potential Risk and Effect of Natural or Human-Caused Hazards on Life, Property, and Infrastructure

3.2a—Hazard Mitigation Planning

Continue to work with FEMA and other local and state agencies to adopt and implement preparedness, response, and recovery measures as part of the Carson City Hazard Mitigation Plan, Carson City Wildfire Protection Plan, Community Source Water Protection Plan for Public Water Systems in Carson City, and through strategic planning and coordination.

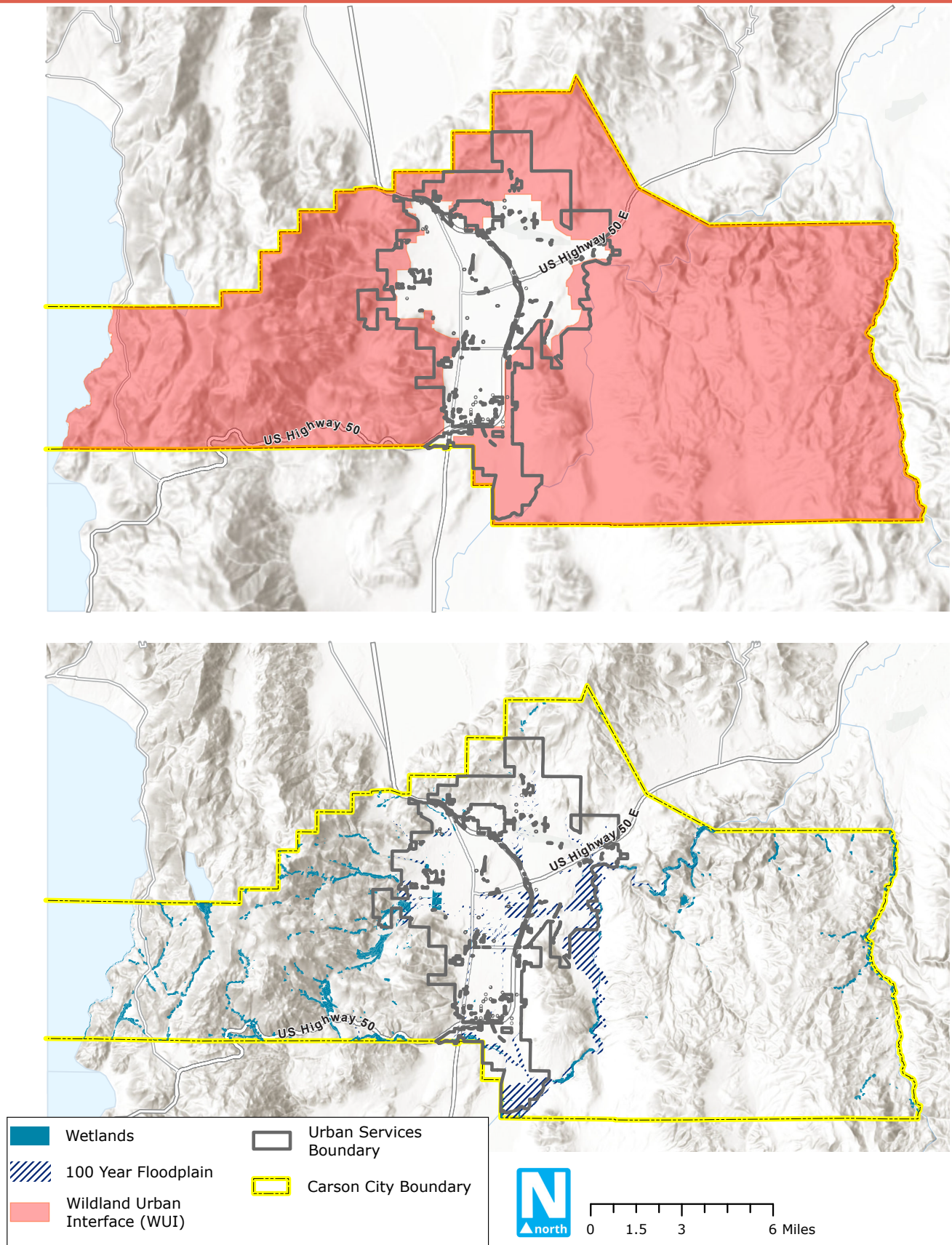


Planning for Hazards

The Carson City Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) is a collaborative plan created by Carson City in partnership with a variety of local, regional, state, and federal partners. The HMP identifies the possible causes, locations, and severity of potential natural or man-made hazards in Carson City, and recommends action items to mitigate the risk and effect of hazards on residents and property. Led by the Carson City Emergency Management Division, Carson City uses the HMP to guide projects and mitigation actions like public education, resource coordination, and preventative action. According to the HMP, Carson City has a high risk of experiencing wildland fires, flooding, earthquakes, severe winter storms, and acts of violence (due to Carson City's role as the state capitol), and a moderate risk of experiencing impacts from drought and less predictable weather patterns.

An interactive map of Natural Hazards is available at: <https://bit.ly/CarsonCityStorymap>

Natural Hazards Map





What is the Wildland Urban Interface?

The Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), as shown on the Natural Hazards Map, is the line, area, or zone where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels.

3.2b—Wildland Urban Interface

Discourage intensive development within the Wildland Urban Interface to limit the impacts of potential disasters.

3.2c—Floodplain Management

Continue to discourage development within the 100-year floodplain and require development on flood prone properties to be clustered out of the 100-year floodplain as defined by FEMA. Coordinate with Carson Water Subconservancy District, Alpine, Churchill, Douglas, and Lyon County on the implementation of the Carson River Watershed Floodplain Management Plan, as adopted.

3.2d—Geologic Hazards

Continue to require any development with an identified earthquake fault on site to have a professional geotechnical report to establish required setbacks from the fault to structures and other mitigation measures.





Goal 3.3—Protect Sensitive Natural and Visual Resources

3.3a—Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Protect environmentally sensitive areas, such as floodplain and wetlands, using available tools, including but not limited to, development setbacks, land dedication, and conservation easements.

3.3b—Protection of Existing Site Features

Ensure that development outside of the Urban Services Boundary is designed to minimize disturbances to natural features including existing stands of mature trees, distinctive topographic features (hillsides/ridgelines), and other character-defining features. Require a detailed site analysis for any development outside of the Urban Services Boundary to identify unique features to be protected.

3.3c—Hillside Development

Limit future hillside development through the retention of public lands at a local, state, or federal level. Minimize the impacts of hillside development on private lands through the implementation of applicable hillside development standards, placing a particular focus on areas identified on the Skyline Area Map.

3.3d—Dark Skies

Protect visibility of the City's dark skies, encourage energy conservation, and limit the impacts of light pollution on the community and surrounding public lands by reducing light trespass and glare created by development and the lighting of recreational areas, particularly at the edges of or outside of the Urban Services Boundary and near the Western Nevada College Observatory.

3.3e—Communication and Renewable Energy Facilities and Equipment

Ensure that communication and renewable energy facilities and equipment, such as cellular towers, utility scale solar, wind farms, and similar facilities are located and designed to promote land use compatibility and not detract from the City's visual quality.

3.3f—Carson City Freeway Corridor

Maintain signage controls for the Carson City Freeway Corridor that limit the height, type, size, and quantity of signs permitted.

Goal 3.4—Encourage the Use of Innovative, Low-Impact Development Practices

3.4a—Sustainable Construction Techniques

Require the use of energy conservation strategies through the enforcement of the International Energy Conservation Code, as adopted, and other programs as required by state law. Encourage the use of sustainable building materials and construction techniques to promote the development of energy efficient, sustainable buildings and communities.

3.4b—Water Conservation

Continue to encourage water conservation and water quality efforts at a community-wide and household level through education and incentive-based programs such as Carson City’s Every Drop Counts—Be Water Smart program, which promotes low-water landscaping. Continue to implement the Community Source Water Protection Plan for Public Water Systems in Carson City.

3.4c—Energy Conservation

Encourage the incorporation of site planning and building design techniques that promote energy efficiency in the construction of residential and non-residential development. Encourage the use of alternative energy and new and emerging technologies that lead to increased energy conservation for both residential and non-residential uses.

3.4d—Stormwater Management

Continue to require the use of stormwater best management practices (BMPs) and low impact development (LID) strategies that are designed to manage runoff to minimize the adverse effects of development on local waterways.



3.4e—Tree Preservation and Replacement

Maintain the City’s commitment to the Nevada Tree City USA Program and associated efforts to protect and enhance the City’s urban tree canopy on public and private land. Continue to encourage the retention of healthy, mature trees as part of the development process, and enforce requirements for replacement in instances where retention is not possible due to location, site constraints, or other factors.



3.4f—Pollinator-Friendly Landscapes

Incorporate pollinator-friendly plantings as part of City parks, open spaces, community gardens, and other public spaces. Require the use of pollinator-friendly plants in landscape plans for non-residential and multi-family residential developments.

3.4g—Water Quality Protection

Continue to facilitate cooperation and education between water purveyors, local and State agencies, industry, community leaders, and residents to aid in the protection and continued safety of public drinking water sources in Carson City through implementation of the Community Source Water Protection Plan for Public Water Systems in Carson City.

Goal 3.5—Foster Cooperation on Master Plan Issues

3.5a—Coordination with Neighboring Communities

Coordinate with neighboring communities to minimize land use conflicts at shared boundaries, identify opportunities for shared recreational access or amenities, and to ensure that applicable master plans for each jurisdiction are mutually compatible with the goals and policies of this Master Plan.

3.5b—Coordination with State and Federal Agencies

Coordinate with state and federal agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management and United States Forest Service, whose land holdings are adjacent to the City, to minimize land use conflicts within the urban interface, identify opportunities for shared recreational access or amenities, or land banking, and to ensure that plans for state and federal landholdings are mutually compatible with the goals and policies of this Master Plan.

See also, policy 5.1f.

3.5c—Coordination with Regional Planning Agencies

Coordinate with regional planning organizations, such as the Carson Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) to ensure that the City is appropriately engaged in ongoing regional planning activities and that adopted regional plans are mutually compatible with the goals and policies of this Master Plan.

3.5d—Coordination of Services

Continue to coordinate with internal service departments as well as other governmental organizations, such as the School District, that provide services to residents to ensure that existing and new neighborhoods have adequate services and school sites.

3.5e—Airport Compatibility

Support the safe and efficient operation of the Carson City Airport. Avoid development in airport critical flight path areas that poses immediate or long-term risks to flight safety or building occupants, such as tall structures, excessive reflectivity or lighting, and residential or high-occupancy uses.

3.5f—Local Utility Providers

Coordinate with utility companies, such as Nevada Energy and Southwest Gas, on the siting of new power lines and future facilities necessary to support the community. Encourage the undergrounding of existing power lines or the co-location of facilities as opportunities arise.

3.5g—Aboveground Utility Corridors

Coordinate with the Bureau of Land Management, the Governor’s Office of Energy, adjoining counties, and other entities as applicable on the siting of new aboveground utility corridors and expansion of existing aboveground utility corridors. Support increasing the capacity of existing utility corridors in Carson City over establishing new ones. If established corridors cannot meet utility demand, support the development of new multi-use utility corridors that ensure safe siting of transmission lines to minimize impacts on existing development. Additional aboveground utility corridors must be found to be compatible with the Master Plan.

Aboveground Utilities Plan

In accordance with NRS 278.165, Carson City has adopted by reference the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Utility Corridors identified in the Carson Field Office Consolidated Resource Management Plan (2001) and subsequent amendments as a part of this Master Plan. Additional corridors may be adopted through the City’s Master Plan Amendment process, as requested.

In accordance with Section 368(a) of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the BLM has designated 5,000 miles of energy corridors (“Section 368 corridors,” or “West-wide energy corridors”) to locate future oil, natural gas and hydrogen pipelines, and electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure. As preferred locations for energy transport rights-of-way on BLM-managed public lands, these corridors are intended to facilitate long-distance movement of oil, gas, or hydrogen via pipeline, and transmission and distribution of high-voltage electric power. West-wide energy corridors exist or are planned in neighboring counties and are identified in aboveground utility corridors included as part of the respective Master Plans for those counties. These corridors do not enter Carson City. The 2001 BLM Carson City District Resource Management Plan identifies two aboveground utility corridors in Carson City:

- **Walker Resource Area.** A right-of-way corridor following the existing major powerline from the Fort Churchill Power Plant to Reno and Carson City.
- **Reno Planning Area of Walker Resource Area.** A right-of-way corridor containing major powerlines from the Tracy Power Plant to Carson City and Gardnerville.

Nevada Energy does not have plans to acquire additional land for new utility corridors in Carson City within the 20-year planning horizon of this Master Plan.

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