

Chapter 3:

A Balanced

Land Use Pattern

INTRODUCTION

A city with a balanced land use pattern provides an adequate inventory of land for employment as well for a diverse choice of housing, recreational opportunities and commercial services. A balanced land use pattern promotes longevity and economic endurance. This chapter includes the goals and policies fostering a balanced land use pattern, the tables describing the Land Use Categories and the Land Use Plan. The intended achievement of the land use goals and policies is to balance the future growth, efficiently use the land and resources, encourage infill and redevelopment, foster economic vitality, and facilitate multi-modal transportation between land uses.

This Land Use Categories reduces the 70 existing land use designations on the previous Land Use Plan into fourteen land use designations and the six Transit Oriented Development (TOD) land use designations. Provided in Tables 1 through 5 are the descriptions of the new land use designations. The tables identify for each land use designation the density and intensity of development, the primary uses, other uses intended as secondary uses in the land use designation and general characteristics of that land use designation. The fourth column of these tables identifies how the former land use designations convert to the new land use category. The conversions are similar to the land use designation in density, intensity and general characteristics.

The Sparks Land Use Plan represents the City's official position on the development of public and private lands within the City of Sparks and the City's Sphere of Influence. The Land Use Plan allows the City to control population growth, guide commercial and industrial development, mitigate environmental impacts and plan for public services. During the community workshops discussing how the city should grow, Sparks' citizens and other interested parties provided input on their perspectives for the future of Sparks land

development. The Plan addresses the need for a variety of housing, establishes new employment areas while maintaining existing ones, provides for recreational options and a variety of shopping opportunities. It promotes infill development and redevelopment in Sparks, while also providing for growth in new areas such as the East Truckee Canyon.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal LU1 encourages a mix of land uses in all parts of the City including the City's Sphere of Influence. With the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Plan, there is an anticipated reduction in the number of master plan amendments and only will be approved when in the City's best interest in respect to surrounding area and infrastructure. The exception is the industrial area located south of I-80 and the railroad tracks. This area is to remain predominantly industrial to preserve and promote this existing employment area of the City.

❖ Goal LU1: Maintain Diversity in the Land Use Mix Including Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Employment and Recreational Areas Citywide

- ◆ **Policy LU1.1: The City shall use the Land Use Plan and Comprehensive Plan policies as the policy framework for decisions pertaining to development and growth.**
- ◆ **Policy LU1.2: The Land Use Plan shall provide for a diverse and integrated mix of land uses throughout the entire City with the exception of the industrial area south of I-80 and railroad tracks. The mix of land uses shall include a balance of residential and non-residential land uses which are fiscally responsible.**
- ◆ **Policy LU1.3: With the adoption of the Land Use Plan, the master plan amendments shall be minimized and only approved when the proposed master plan amendment is clearly and compelling in the City's best interest.**

Goal LU2 promotes redevelopment and new development that makes efficient use of land and resources. Efficient use of public and private infrastructure begins with neighborhoods that maximize the use of existing infrastructure. Compact development also reduces the footprint of the built environment providing opportunities for green spaces to absorb runoff and lower pollution washing into the waterways. It is also important that the City approve only development that can be fiscally supported by the City.

❖ Goal LU2: Promote the Efficient Use of Land and Resources

- ◆ **Policy LU2.1: When considering future master plan amendments, the City shall consider the impacts on the existing and planned public facilities and infrastructure.**

- ◆ **Policy LU2.2:** The City shall monitor growth patterns to evaluate whether the City's growth capacity can be supported by the City's resources.
- ◆ **Policy LU2.3:** When reviewing applications and plans, the City shall promote sustainable design and efficient use of the property.

Goal LU3 focuses on infill development or redevelopment of existing areas. This goal encourages reinvestment in the City's urban core including the industrial area south of I-80.

❖ **Goal LU3: Promote Infill and Redevelopment**

- ◆ **Policy LU3.1:** The City shall take an active role encouraging infill and redevelopment by conducting targeted infrastructure improvements, streamlining zoning and permitting, pursuing public/private partnerships, or offering incentives.
- ◆ **Policy LU3.2:** The City shall encourage mixed use infill development and assess the need for code amendments to encourage it.
- ◆ **Policy LU3.3:** The City will require new infill development to consider and be sensitive to the character of existing neighborhoods in regard to building scale, building placement, structure size, height transitions, landscape, streetscape, access and other design features of the existing neighborhood.

Goal LU4 fosters the preservation of existing employment areas and promotes the development of new employment generating land uses. The maintenance and reinvigorating employment areas is vital to the City's economic success.

❖ **Goal LU4: Foster Economic Vitality by Providing a Non-residential Land Use Base**

- ◆ **Policy LU4.1:** The City will strive to maintain an adequate supply of land for employment uses.
- ◆ **Policy LU4.2:** The City shall develop a system to monitor the inventory of suitable lands for employment-oriented land uses.
- ◆ **Policy LU4.3:** The City shall monitor the economic vitality of key commercial areas and encourage redevelopment in blighted or declining areas.
- ◆ **Policy LU4.4:** The City will monitor the ratio of jobs to housing units within the City as an indication of the job-housing balance within the City.

In decades past, Sparks was a place to live while most people worked and shopped elsewhere. Reflecting the input from the community workshops and current political policies, the Land Use Plan strives for a mix of employment opportunities; moreover the Land Use Plan promotes proximity of jobs and housing to achieve a job-housing balance within the community. Goal LU5

is intended to emphasize the importance of making sure that housing, employment, education, recreation and shopping are located near one another promoting intermodal transportation. It is the intent to reduce the dependence on the automobile and vehicle miles travelled.

❖ **Goal LU5: Foster a Land Use Plan Which Integrates Land Uses and Facilitates Access by Multiple Modes of Transportation**

- ◆ **Policy LU5.1: The City shall place new community facilities so they are accessible by multiple modes of transportation including walking, transit and bicycles.**
- ◆ **Policy LU5.2: When reviewing development applications, the City shall consider the proximity of jobs to residential development particularly in the emerging employment areas.**
- ◆ **Policy LU5.3: The Land Use Plan shall promote a mix of land uses in proximity of each other in order to reduce automobile use and vehicle miles travelled (VMT).**
- ◆ **Policy LU5.4: The City shall work with Union Pacific Railroad to plan for compatible adjacent development to ensure long-term viability of the railroad. New development along the trains should be uses that will utilize rail as part of their transportation of goods and products.**

Goals and Policies from Other Elements

The following adopted goals and policies are from the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan and are related to A Balanced Land Use Pattern.

Housing

❖ **Goal H1: Remove Regulatory Barriers to Increase the Availability of Affordable and workforce Housing.**

- ◆ **Policy H1.1: Allow for more flexibility in the zoning, building, and land use regulations to enable affordable housing units to be built throughout the community.**
 - **Program H1.1: Review the zoning code and consider the following revisions:**
 - Single-family homes will not be allowed in multi-family zones.
 - Evaluate the status of cluster developments, mobile homes, and multi-family developments as permitted uses by right. Allowing development by right in more zones for cluster, mobile home, and multi-family developments could increase the ability of developers to build affordable housing.

- Evaluate current housing densities, encourage higher-density development where appropriate, and consider lifting the ceiling on densities that require special use permits in particular zones or have higher maximum densities or none at all in designated areas.
 - Evaluate performance zoning for increased densities.
- ◆ Policy H1.2: Create an Affordable Housing Development Manual.
 - Program H1.2: The City will develop a manual to explain the City’s review processes as well as a list of incentives available to those that develop affordable housing. The City will make the Development Manual and procedure outline on the City’s website and at the Community Development.
- ◆ Policy H1.3: Streamline and expedite processing for residential development projects that include affordable housing. Review these processes and make adjustments on a project-by-project basis.
 - Program H1.3: Continue the “one-stop” permit process for residential developments for affordable housing. Continue to coordinate between different City departments to provide corresponding reviews of permits associated with projects and to expedite the project review process. Fast-tracking will be available to residential applications that propose at least 50 percent of the entire project set-aside for low income.
- ◆ Policy H1.4: Review the fees associated with housing development.
 - Program H1.4: Evaluate techniques that decrease the cost of housing. Consider a fee structure that takes the size and location of units into account (tiered approach). The City will conduct a review of ordinances to promote affordable housing development, particularly multi-family and infill developments.
- ◆ Policy H1.5: Provide more housing options.
 - Program H1.5: Create development standards for live/work units and mixed-use developments to facilitate the creation of more housing options for affordable and workforce segments of the population.

❖ **Goal H3: Provide Developer Incentives**

- ◆ Policy H3.1: Develop programs that allow for flexible land use regulation standards that will encourage developers to provide affordable housing units.
 - Program H3.1: Consider developing a local density bonus ordinance to include an incentive for building affordable and workforce units.
- ◆ Policy H3.2: Identify vacant and under-utilized land suitable for residential development.
 - Program H3.2: The supply of developable land with adequate infrastructure that is also zoned for residential use can support the

development of housing in the City. Identification of vacant and under-utilized residential land and its development potential will help to determine the residential development options in the City and assist in identifying ways to remove any constraints.

- ♦ Policy H3.3: Provide affordable housing developers with regulatory and/or financial incentives.
 - Program 3.3: Projects that include affordable housing (units for households earning up to 80 percent of the median household income) will be eligible for developer incentives. The City will specify regulatory and/or financial incentives to be considered and negotiated on a project-by-project basis in exchange for providing the affordable housing units. Financial incentives may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:
 1. Adjust specific standards such as setbacks and parking requirements;
 2. Offer a density bonus process;
 3. Assign priority processing status to affordable housing developments; and
 4. Provide technical assistance in project development and/or accessing funding for the affordable housing units.
- ♦ Policy H3.4: Promote affordable and workforce housing in the transit-oriented developments (TODs), Downtown Center and Emerging Employment Centers.
 - Program H3.4: Identify incentives for developers to build affordable and attainable housing in TODs, downtown center and emerging employment Centers. Since the TODs and Downtown Centers do not have maximum densities, a density bonus will not be effective. The City will develop a mixed-income policy for residential development in TODs and downtown center and emerging employment Centers that will create affordable units.
- ♦ Policy H3.5: Promote the development of affordable housing near services, transportation routes, schools, jobs, and child care by encouraging infill development that includes affordable housing.
 - Program 3.5: The City will promote infill residential development within the urban area and older parts of the City where small projects that can be integrated with existing neighborhoods. The City will develop and maintain a community-wide inventory of potential residential infill sites.
- ♦ Policy H3.6: Promote mixed-use development that includes affordable housing.
 - Program 3.6: The City will promote mixed-use residential/commercial developments in TODs, Downtown Center and in Emerging Employment Centers by providing incentives for

projects that include a specific number of housing units affordable to lower-income households.

- ◆ Policy H3.7: Promote the development of affordable housing through manufactured housing developments. Manufactured housing refers to homes that are built with materials that are manufactured and then delivered and assembled on-site rather than built completely on-site.
 - Program 3.7: Allow “by right” the development of manufactured homes on single-family lots.

West Pyramid Area Plan

- ❖ **Goal WP 1: To provide a balance of preserved open space, housing opportunities and a significant employment center within the region.**
 - ◆ Policy WP 1.1: The land use plan shall include commercial designations which support and complement the community.
 - ◆ Policy WP 1.2: To plan, promote, and enhance the West Pyramid Plan Area with connectivity and a jobs/housing balance.
 - ◆ Policy WP 1.3: Employment centers within the plan area will minimize impacts on Pyramid Highway and other arterials by creating a concentrated employment center near housing reducing commuting distances.
 - ◆ Policy WP 1.4: New development shall provide a range of housing types, both multi-family and single family, in a variety of types and sizes to promote diverse housing opportunities.
 - ◆ Policy WP 1.5: Provide continuity of development by maintaining equal density designations immediately adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods.
 - ◆ Policy WP 1.6: Support the continuation of aggregate mines until the resource is exhausted when reclamation shall occur.

Transit Oriented Development Area Plan

- ❖ **Goal TOD1.1: Prioritize Development and Enhancement of the Downtown Sparks Center**
 - ◆ Policy TOD1.1a: Establish a Distinctive Gateway to the City
 - ◆ Policy TOD1.1b: Enhance Victorian Avenue West of the Downtown Sparks Center.
 - ◆ Policy TOD1.1c: Continue to Implement Victorian Square Development Plan

- ❖ **Goal TOD2.2: Support and Integrate Existing Neighborhood and Commercial Areas**
 - ◆ Policy TOD 2.2a: Reinforce commercial activity along I-80 frontage
 - ◆ Policy TOD 2.2b: Improve pedestrian connections between developments

- ❖ **Goal TOD1.2: Highlight Oddie Corridor as an International Marketplace**
 - ◆ Policy TOD1.2a: Coordinated Planning and Financing

- ❖ **Goal TOD2.1: Highlight McCarran as a Regional Activity Center**
 - ◆ Policy TOD 2.1a: Establish a Major Activity Center at McCarran Boulevard / I-80
 - ◆ Policy TOD 2.1b: Establish a Major Activity Center at Prater Way / McCarran Boulevard
 - ◆ Policy TOD 2.1c: Establish Linkages between Major Activity Centers

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