



Community Development

"Dedicated to Excellence in Public Service"

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Washoe County Planning Commission

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AGENDA

JOINT MEETING OF

**WASHOE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
AND WASHOE COUNTY COMMISSION**
Washoe County Commission Caucus Room
Second Floor, Room A205,
1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada
Tuesday, November 10, 2009

9:00 a.m. **DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PUBLIC COMMENT (Limited to items not on this agenda; three-minute time limit, however the Commission reserves the right to reduce this three-minute time limit, as well as limit the total time for public comment. The same applies to public testimony on each agenda item.)

WORK SESSION between the Washoe County Commission and the Washoe County Planning Commission to discuss items of mutual interest relating to various planning issues—direction to staff may be given.

1. Presentation and discussion of proposed revised policies for consideration of property owner requests for land use designation (aka zoning) changes for their particular properties during area plan updates to the County's Comprehensive Plan, including the possibility that such requests as a policy matter no longer be included in Area Plan update processes except through separate application, and possible direction to staff.

Agendas and staff reports are posted to the Washoe County website at www.washoecounty.us/comdev/, on Friday, four days prior to the meeting. To access the agenda and staff reports, choose **Boards and Commissions**, click on the **Planning Commission**, then **Agendas, Staff Reports, Minutes and Roster**.

Notes: Items on the agenda without a time designation may not necessarily be considered in the order in which they appear. The Commission may take action on any of the items listed.

Facilities in which this meeting is being held are accessible to the disabled. Persons with disabilities who require special accommodations or assistance (e.g. sign language interpreters or assisted listening devices) at the meeting should notify the Washoe County Department of Community Development, at 328-3600, 24 hours prior to the meeting.

In accordance with NRS 241.020, this agenda closes three (3) days prior to the meeting date. Only items of interest and not requiring Commission action may be added to the agenda within the three-day period. This agenda has been posted at the following locations: Washoe County Administration Building (1001 E. 9th Street), Washoe County Clerk's Office-Courthouse (Court and Virginia Streets), Washoe County Library (301 South Center Street), and Sparks Justice Court (630 Greenbrae Drive).

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"Your Community Development Department"

2. Presentation and discussion on efforts to move to a "two-map" system in Washoe County that would, among other things, separate zoning designations and regulations from the County's Comprehensive Plan to create a separate master plan and zoning map and regulations; Washoe County Planning Commission guidance on converting from the one-map system currently in place that, among other things, combines both planning and zoning in one comprehensive plan; and possible direction to staff.

ADJOURNMENT



WASHOE COUNTY

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STAFF REPORT
JOINT MEETING OF
WASHOE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
AND WASHOE COUNTY COMMISSION
MEETING DATE: November 10, 2009

CM/ACM_____

Finance_____

DA_____

Risk Mgt._____

HR_____

Other_APF_____

DATE: November 10, 2009

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Eric Young, PhD, Planner, Community Development
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Bill Whitney, Senior Planner, Community Development
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THROUGH: Adrian P. Freund, FAICP, Director, Community Development

SUBJECT: Presentation and discussion on efforts to move to a "two-map" system in Washoe County that would, among other things, separate zoning designations and regulations from the County's Comprehensive Plan to create a separate master plan and zoning map and regulations; Washoe County Planning Commission guidance on converting from the one-map system currently in place that, among other things, combines both planning and zoning in one comprehensive plan; and possible direction to staff. (All Commission Districts)

SUMMARY

Converting the County's current one-map approach to a more traditional two-map system has been a topic of conversation since the 2002 update of the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan. Early in 2005, the County Commission agreed to obtain consulting services for a comprehensive review of the Development Code. One of the many findings of the subsequent report was that Washoe County should consider abandoning the one map approach. Subsequent to reviewing the report both the Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners have requested that staff provide more information concerning the relative value of the two systems. As part of this ongoing conversation Community Development staff has been investigating how such a conversion may occur in the most efficient manner. Staff is prepared to answer your questions regarding the two systems and to take your direction regarding whether or not to proceed with drafting a product for your consideration.

County Priority supported by this item: *Preserve and Enhance Our Quality of Life*

AGENDA ITEM # _____

PREVIOUS ACTION

On July 7, 2009, the Washoe County Planning Commission discussed with staff the potential conversion of the County's one-map system to a two-map system. The Planning Commission requested that staff move forward by bringing the discussion to the Board of County Commissioners. The Planning Commission's comments are attached for your review.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of the one-map – two-map conversion project is to create a new land use planning system in Washoe County that is better at the following important public functions than the current system:

1. Responding to citizen concerns about the stability and implementation of the long term community vision as depicted in the Washoe County Master Plan.
2. Responding to citizens' and developers' desire to discuss and review the site specific nature of development proposals on a parallel track with zoning amendments.
3. Responding to citizen and developer concerns over the market timing of development proposals.

Making the conversion

Staff is aware of the potential consequences involved in undertaking this project. In order to minimize the potential negative consequences and accentuate the positive, staff adopted a set of guiding principles to help guide and shape the work undertaken so far. These principles are:

- Maintain the existing zoning designation of all parcels. All existing development potential and development standards for any given parcel will remain unchanged.
- Maintain the existing nomenclature for parcels, the Master Plan and the Development Code.
- Focus on two primary tasks: Creation the Master Plan Land Use Designations (Master Plan Map) and amending the Development Code to describe the new system. Modifications to the new two map system, such as the creation of overlay districts, mixed use designations, or other new zoning tools should be considered in the future but should not be part of this effort to accomplish a clean conversion.
- Maintain the current Planned Land Use maps largely unchanged, with the chief exception being their location. [These maps would be referred to as zoning maps and would be located in the Development Code. Zoning amendments would then be accomplished through a Development Code amendment rather than a Comprehensive Plan amendment.

The conversion would be accomplished through a series of amendments to the Development Code and the Comprehensive Plan. The above stated purpose and principles would be used to guide each amendment.

The three primary divisions of the Development Code that would require amendments are:

- Division One, in order to describe the master plan designations and establish the existing designations as regulatory zones only (no double duty as land use designations).
- Division Two, in order to amend the modifiers section of each planning area to reflect any special development standards associated with zoning in the planning area. This section is currently thought of as the “modifiers” section of the code. The modifications currently reflected in this section as well as the modifiers referred to in the Area Plans would be established in Chapter Two.
- Division Eight, in order to establish the separate procedures for amending the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Map in the Development Code.
- Other Divisions may require minor modifications to ensure consistency throughout the document.

The Comprehensive Plan will need to be amended to reflect the two map approach as well. The primary areas needing modification would be:

- Creation of the Master Plan map.
- Transfer of Land Use Plan maps to Development Code from Area Plans.
- Amendment of the Introduction to provide narrative explanation of the new system and deletion of existing discussion regarding the one map approach.

Staff has developed a proposed timeline for the conversion process (attached).

Practically Speaking: One map vs. two maps

There are many differences between the two systems. Please refer to the attached Briefing Paper for a detailed discussion of the two systems and of Washoe County’s experience with the one-map approach.

Briefly, changing to a two-map system will separate the broader master plan designations from more specific zoning districts. Master Plan designations are referred to as “Land Use,” while zoning designations are referred to as “Regulatory Zones,” or simply “zoning.”

Master Plans represent the community’s long term vision. As such, the master plan is the long-range guiding plan for growth and development of the community. Although many planning programs utilize a twenty-year horizon for a master plan, the implementation of the goals of the master plan are dependent on many interdependent factors – community and/or regional needs, service availability, new technologies, etc. Like the focus of the master plan, the master plan land use categories need to be broadly descriptive of the community vision.

Zoning is tool for implementing the Master Plan Vision. **Regulatory Zones** represent a more specific implementation of the master plan classifications to which the zoning

districts are assigned. In other words, each Master Plan land use category may allow several different regulatory zones. Using the two map approach, the community vision for a particular area may be a residential land use. Market timing, infrastructure availability, and other factors will combine to determine the specific residential regulatory zones that are applied to that area – such as Low Density Suburban (one unit per acre), or Medium Density Suburban (three units per acre).

The Development Code attaches specific development standards (setbacks, uses, height, parking, landscaping, etc.) to each regulatory zone.

Within the legislative requirements of the regional planning statutes as applied to Washoe County, the zoning districts have to be compatible not only with the intent of the master plan classifications, but also be within the boundaries of those classifications as represented on the adopted master plan map.

One-map system: The one-map system combines land use and regulatory zone into one designation. This approach ensures that the community vision and the implementing zoning are always compatible. This can be a valuable approach for communities that do not experience significant growth. However, when a community finds itself in an environment of growth and change, the one map system makes it difficult to respond to market realities. This is partly because every zoning change is also a change to the community's vision as described on the Master Plan map. This in turn results in a lengthy review process (since each change is essentially a master plan and zoning amendment) hindering the County's ability to respond to changing conditions. The one-map system also works against mixed-use and development that provides a variety of housing types within a single project because it is not flexible enough to allow for different levels of zoning within a single master plan category. See the attached comparative time-lines for processing a "zone change" in each system.

Two-map system: A two-map system is generally thought of as a more flexible and dynamic approach to implementing and ensuring consistency with adopted planning policies, while still ensuring full public participation in the re-zoning procedures.

A community's vision under the two-map system has more "permanence" than a one-map system because you don't need to amend the Master Plan every time a zoning change is made. At the same time, some County residents may be uncomfortable with the two-map system for exactly the same reason, because their "Plan" is able to be changed more easily and they may need to be educated as to the dual "permanence" of the community vision (Master Plan) and the more "flexible" approach of implementing the plan through zoning changes.

However, one of the compelling advantages of the two map system for the community is the ability to review zone changes, tentative maps, and special use permits simultaneously, and if necessary, approve zone changes with conditions attached. Currently, changes to zoning in Washoe County must be conducted without the benefit of reviewing development plans, and without the ability to apply conditions to that development. This often proves frustrating to the PC, CABs, staff and other community members.

The process for a zone change under a two-map system will be codified in the Development Code and should include the same county/public review as a Comprehensive Plan Amendment currently does. A major difference is that County residents will have the final determination made by a vote of their appointed and elected officials and not subject to approval of the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Commission.

As the new system is brought forward, all the necessary changes to the Development Code and the Comprehensive Plan will be identified. However, an over-arching principle in the conversion is to make the most efficient, least disruptive changes possible. This includes a commitment to avoid any changes to a parcel's existing development potential, and whenever possible, to maintain the current nomenclature for all parcels.

Should the direction be given to move forward with the process to convert to a two-map system, staff will immediately come forward with a draft of a working two map concept that applies the principles stated above.

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of statutory noticing requirements as well as any currently unscheduled community meetings will be calculated if staff is given the direction to proceed with this project.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board and the Planning Commission receive the presentation and discuss the efforts to move to a "two-map" system in Washoe County that would, among other things, separate zoning designations and regulations from the County's Comprehensive Plan to create a separate master plan and zoning map and regulations; Washoe County Planning Commission guidance on converting from the one-map system currently in place that, among other things, combines both planning and zoning in one comprehensive plan; and provide possible direction to staff.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be:

“The Board and Planning Commission give the direction heard here today to Community Development staff on efforts to move to a "two-map" system in Washoe County that would, among other things, separate zoning designations and regulations from the County's Comprehensive Plan to create a separate master plan and zoning map and regulations; Washoe County Planning Commission guidance on converting from the one-map system currently in place that, among other things, combines both planning and zoning in one comprehensive plan; and possible direction to staff.”

Attachments: "A briefing paper."
Proposed Project Timeline
Comparative timeline for zoning amendment
Comments, questions and answers from the PC meeting of July 7, 2009

xc: David Childs, Assistant County Manager
Adrian Freund, FAICP, Director
Bob Webb, AICP, Planning Manager
Kim Robinson, Planning Manager

Washoe County's "One-map" Approach to Land Use Planning and the Potential Conversion to a "Two-map" Approach.

A Briefing Paper

Prepared by:

Washoe County Community Development Department Staff

October 2009

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Introduction

In 1992, Washoe County adopted an approach to land use planning that utilizes a single map to represent both the long range Master Plan and the implementation of the Master Plan, or Zoning. This approach is commonly referred to as a “one-map” system. The one-map approach is somewhat atypical compared with the more traditional “two-map” system wherein one map (Master Plan map) depicts the long range vision of the community as described in the Comprehensive Plan and a second map (zoning map) depicts the codified and more detailed implementation of the first map. It is worth noting that both the one-map and two-map systems have given rise to many variations as local jurisdictions tailored the approach to their own set of circumstances.

Each of these systems has its advantages and disadvantages and Washoe County’s experience with the one-map system has been mixed. Converting the County’s current one-map approach to a more traditional two-map system has been a topic of conversation since the 2002 update of the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan. Early in 2005, the County Commission agreed to obtain consulting services for a comprehensive review of the Development Code. One of the many findings of the subsequent report was that Washoe County should consider abandoning the one-map approach. Both the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners have requested that staff provide more information concerning the relative value of the two systems. There is a concern among both the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners that change to the current system should be driven by a lasting value to the community that warrants the effort required to make the conversion.

In responding to these concerns, Community Development staff has investigated the nation’s and the County’s experience with the one-map system. Staff has also worked to understand how any conversion to a two-map approach can proceed in the most efficient manner with the least disruption of ongoing development activities. This briefing paper is intended to assist elected and appointed officials in their efforts to better understand the one- and two-map approaches and to eventually provide direction on the issue of a potential conversion. The following background information provides a review of some of the advantages and disadvantages of each system and reviews the original context and reasons behind Washoe County’s decision to adopt the one-map approach some 17 years ago.

Before discussing the two systems, a few definitions may prove helpful:

Master Plan: Also referred to as the Comprehensive Plan. Through the use of maps, data analysis, goals and policies, the Master Plan serves as the primary Vision and growth guidance document for the community.

Development Code: Also referred to as the “zoning code.” Establishes the regulatory framework for the implementation of the Master Plan. Utilizes text, maps, and other graphics to establish codified development standards for all regulatory zones. Also establishes the integral public processes related to development activity.

Land Use: Refers to the Master Plan designation or category. Any given land use category may permit a variety of Regulatory Zones. Land uses are described in the Development Code and the Comprehensive Plan and are depicted on the Land Use map. The Land Use map is a component of the Master Plan.

Regulatory Zone: Also referred to as “zoning,” a Regulatory Zone is the codified designation on a parcel that enables the development of allowed uses and excludes others. The Regulatory Zone also establishes minimum development standards for the allowed uses. Regulatory Zones are described in the Development Code and are depicted on the Zoning Map. The Zoning Map is a component of the Development Code.

National Experience

Advantages and Disadvantages of the One-map System

In a broad historical context, the decision to adopt a one-map system can be seen as part of a nationwide trend that began in the mid 1980s and continued to the mid 1990s without ever gaining any substantial momentum. The movement to one-map systems occurred mainly in Florida and California, although scattered examples can be found throughout the nation. The motivation behind each jurisdiction’s decision to implement one-map systems is varied but generally follows one or both of two perceived advantages of the approach.

The first and most apparent advantage of the one-map system is the ability to ensure total and complete consistency between master plan and zoning. If the two are one and the same, then there is no possibility of establishing zoning that is inconsistent with the master plan. In this way, the community vision (master plan) is implemented via a direct and literal application of the master plan map, because it also serves as the zoning map. The one-map approach leaves little ground for arguing that a particular zoning designation is inappropriate to the community vision.

The flipside of this advantage is an inherent inflexibility in the application of zoning. Some degree of flexibility is advisable in order to respond to current market conditions. It is difficult to predict market conditions 5, 10, or 20 years in advance, and this uncertainty leads to a need to adjust the applied zoning on a property or within a sub region. A two-map system can readily accommodate a change of zoning to adjust density, or change residential to mixed use or local serving commercial. In order to make those changes under a one-map system, a master plan amendment is necessary, which can result in a less responsive plan. In general, attempts to change a community vision, or master plan, should involve a higher level of review. Furthermore, it can be argued that a one-map approach does not really constitute a plan for the future, but merely a reflection of zoning currently on the ground. In fact, the only component of a one-map system that provides guidance for the future is the policies, but certainly not the plan map itself.

Perhaps most importantly, this dynamic can lead to tension in the relationship between community development staff and citizens who tend to see changes in a different context. If staff approaches changes to land use designations as primarily zoning changes to respond to market and demographic conditions, and the public understands these changes to be fundamental alterations of the community vision, then a certain friction can arise in the relationship and lead to some challenging communication issues.

A second and less apparent advantage of the one-map system is how it facilitates growth management, particularly service and infrastructure planning. Service and infrastructure planning focuses on the Master Plan to understand future service needs. In a two-map system, any given master plan designation may authorize a range of zoning designations that in turn represent a range of service and infrastructure needs. This approach slightly complicates

service and infrastructure planning because until zoning is established and implemented through the exercise of a vested development right, it is not possible to know exactly what the service and infrastructure demands will be.

This is especially problematic if the assignment of zoning categories to land use categories is not done in a judicious manner. If any given land use designation has too expansive a range of zoning classifications assigned to it, then not only is the community vision blurred, but it becomes very difficult to determine future service needs. In theory, a one-map system avoids this pitfall by providing more direct insight into future service and infrastructure demands. This became increasingly important in Florida where strict growth management statutes require service and infrastructure is provided concurrent with development. Clearly, one avenue for managing concurrency requirements is to ensure the master plan map and the zoning map are identical. However, in practice, “zoning creep” can make the one-map system an unreliable basis for determining infrastructure needs. And ironically, the two-map system may decrease the amount of incremental upsizing of infrastructure by promoting the over sizing of infrastructure that is useful when planning for a range of development possibilities, or when considering the potential for future redevelopment.

The pitfalls associated with using the one-map system as a growth management tool are similar to the ones mentioned above. Typically, under the one-map system, growth is managed by not assigning land use with significant development capacity to all future growth areas, but by maintaining some land in a kind of holding pattern that maintains its low intensity designation until the local jurisdiction determines it is ready to begin extending services into those areas. The purpose of this approach is to maintain control over the location and timing of development and avoid “leapfrog” and other uncoordinated, un-integrated development that may occur when areas far from the current development envelope are assigned land uses prematurely. However, if the public perceives the master plan map as primarily a depiction of the long term vision for the community, they may feel frustrated at what they interpret as disingenuous planning process when the holding areas begin to feel pressure for development and land use designations in those areas are intensified.

In order to ensure that both lay citizens and professional planners have the same understanding of the meaning of the master plan map, great care must be taken to describe any holding areas as such. But beyond just simple nomenclature, a one-map system requires a significant investment in an ongoing public engagement routine to help the public understand when changes to the map are changes to the community’s long range vision or zoning changes that are more a function of the timing of development. Whether using one-map or two-map systems, it is critical that the community understand the master plan is more than a series of maps. The goals and policies of the master plan must be understood to be the framing document that guides change over time. The maps should be a reflection of these goals and policies.

In sum, the one-map system offers some technical advantages over the two-map system that can 1) better facilitate growth management and 2) ensure compatibility between the community vision and the zoning code. However, these technical advantages can be overshadowed by the difficulties the one-map system tends to generate in the public engagement process. To paraphrase a Commissioner in Beaverton, Oregon during a hearing to discuss whether or not to adopt the one-map approach, “the one-map system may be best for planners but it may not be best or most understandable for people who live in the area.”

The One-map Experience in Washoe County

Washoe County's Growth Management System

Washoe County's move to the one-map system was motivated by a combination of these two perceived advantages. However, Washoe County's experience with the one-map system confirms the disadvantages as well. The adoption of a new Regional Plan in 1991 compelled Washoe County to update its Comprehensive Plan to be in conformance with the new regional approach. Although a lengthy "transition period" would be necessary, it was determined that adopting a one-map system would be a more efficient and effective way to come into conformance with the regional plan. At the same time, the requirement to update the plan was seen as an opportunity to adopt a new growth management regime in the unincorporated county.

The growth management system that was developed and eventually adopted (our current system) can be described as a three legged stool. And as the old adage goes, each leg is equally important in making the whole system function as intended. [Article 104 of the Development Code and the Introduction to the Comprehensive Plan describe the County's one-map system (attached).] The three legs of the County's Growth management system are 1) the Comprehensive Plan, 2) the Capital Improvements Program; and, 3) the Development Code.

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to recognize the public's effort to plan for the future of the community. It consists primarily of goals and policies which form the foundation for the Development Code and the Capital Improvements Program. More than just a Master Plan map, the Comprehensive Plan provides policy guidance on the full range of growth issues in the community. It includes analysis and data relevant to the environment, population, infrastructure and service provision, and desired community form.

The Development Code is intended to provide guidance to private developers in the form of codes and regulations. The codes and regulations that private development must follow are based on the goals and policies contained in the Comprehensive Plan and serve as the primary vehicle for implementation of the vision described in the Comprehensive Plan. The Development Code also articulates the processes involved in undertaking private development including the process for reviewing and making determinations for discretionary permits (plan amendments, special use permits, tentative maps, etc.).

The role of the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is somewhat different and holds a critical place in the overall Growth Management System adopted by Washoe County. The Capital Improvements Program includes the following capital projects: water and sewer systems, streets and highways, flood control facilities, parks and recreation facilities and County buildings (among others). The role of the CIP in the County's Growth Management System is to provide the County Commission with a fiscal method for implementing the Comprehensive Plan and for exercising some control (management) over the location and timing of development. It accomplishes this role by providing a direct link between the County's budget and the County's Comprehensive Plan. Creating this link ensures that the county's limited resources are being applied to the implementation of the vision articulated in the Comprehensive Plan, and the policies that collectively support that vision. It also allows the County Commission to direct the timing and location of development by directing capital resources to the locations it determines are ripe for development. The Comprehensive Plan is the primary source of policy, data, and analysis to be considered in the development of the CIP.

So in theory, Washoe County's one-map system works by creating a series of policies that describe the community's vision regarding growth (the Comprehensive Plan). This vision is implemented by providing developers with a set of codes and regulations to follow in pursuing development activities (the Development Code). The County signals both private development and the citizenry that the timing for development is right for any given area by directing fiscal resources to those areas (the Capital Improvement Program).

Washoe County's Growth Management Program in Practice

Flexibility, Market Pressures, and Community Vision

The Development Code and the Comprehensive Plan. Washoe County's experience with this approach closely mirrors the advantages and disadvantages discussed earlier. The rapid growth period experienced in the region since the approach was adopted probably contributed to some magnification of the disadvantages associated with the system. Areas experiencing significant growth pressures often find that managing the pressures of "the market" to be very difficult. Even two-map systems can come under considerable pressure to make rapid changes that may or may not be in the best interest of the community. However, the one-map system's inherent inflexibility has meant that even reasonable adjustments to the market are seen as major changes to the community vision by the citizenry. During times of rapid growth it is important to be able to make reasonable changes, but it is also important to be able to understand when a change is a reaction to legitimate market concerns, or represents a more fundamental change of direction. Washoe County's one-map system has made it difficult see and act on this threshold.

The Development Code should provide some clarity on this issue, but unfortunately the reality may be the opposite. Washoe County's Development Code creates a land use category called General Rural. The General Rural category is described as having several different roles. It is intended to be an area for traditional rural uses – agriculture, mining, low density residential, etc. It is also intended to be the land use of choice to describe those areas with significant development constraints such as slope or wetlands, and thus should not be subject to development pressure. And finally, it is intended to be a holding area (suburban "transition") for future development.

This third function for General Rural clearly assumes a future rezoning to a land use category that enables more suburban or urban development opportunities. And in fact the Development Code does a good job in articulating this role for General Rural. However, in order to find any guidance on which General Rural areas may be considered holding areas and thus subject to future land use changes, it is necessary to look to both the Comprehensive Plan and the Capital Improvements Program and attempt to come to some conclusions on which areas of General Rural today may be Medium Density Suburban or Neighborhood Commercial tomorrow. Since the adoption of this system, there have been many experiences that illustrate just how frustrating for the entire community this approach can be.

Citizens, applicants, staff, and elected and appointed bodies are all asked to make a significant investment in managing and understanding the system. While staff and the Planning Commission are expected to understand and be able to explain the system, it may be unreasonable and even inappropriate to hold the other groups that make up the community to

the same high standard of understanding and commitment. The community at large deserves a plan that is approachable and user friendly, and that does not require the same level of in-depth understanding that staff is expected to maintain.

The Capital Improvements Program. The use of the Capital Improvements Program to guide the location and timing of development has proven problematic for Washoe County as well. In all communities, finding a balance between responding to legitimate market trends and implementing a collective community vision is at the essence of what planning departments must learn to do. In Washoe County, the one-map approach has often made finding this balance clumsy and difficult and has created some barriers to establishing trust throughout the community when it comes to matters of growth and development. Once again, we seem to be faced with an approach that works very well in theory, but suffers from some stark realities in practice.

The current approach almost assumes that the County Commission wishes to exert significant control over the pace and location of development. Even if this assumption is true, it also assumes that the biggest variables in determining the location and pace of development are the factors described in the Comprehensive Plan such as development constraints, demographic trends, and community vision. In practice, it leaves little room for consideration of market trends. Market trends tend to operate on a different time scale than Comprehensive Plans. Whereas market forces are operating daily and are tracked on at least a quarterly scale, Comprehensive Plans are tracked and updated on, at best, a five year schedule. So it is reasonable that market trends will not be in perfect harmony with the predictions and goals of a comprehensive plan. The system requires continuous updates to the comprehensive plan in order to keep the gap between the plan and market trends at a minimum. The time and resources necessary to continuously update the CIP to be consistent with the policy was probably underestimated or not well understood at the time of adoption of this approach in Washoe County.

Consequently, we can't expect the CIP to be a "spot on" prediction of where and when the market says development should proceed. And in Washoe County, this dynamic has tended to result in a constant and significant pressure to continually amend the CIP to be more consistent with market predictions. In turn this reverses the role of the CIP as a tool that implements the comprehensive plan by guiding the location and timing of growth, to a tool that enables market driven growth proposals. Once the CIP becomes focused more on following the market than on implementing the comprehensive plan, one of the three legs on the stool is broken, and the system will not function as it was intended.

The Truckee Meadows Regional Plan. In Washoe County there is one other disadvantage associated with the one-map system. The Truckee Meadows Regional Plan requires that any change to a local jurisdiction's master plan be found in conformance with the Regional Plan. Because Washoe County's zoning map is a component of the Comprehensive Plan, all changes to zoning approved by the County Commission must also be heard before the Regional Planning Commission regarding conformance with the Regional Plan. Under a two-map system, routine zoning changes would not have to be reviewed by the Regional Planning Agency. Only periodic changes to the Comprehensive Plan would be required to undergo regional conformance review. This extra layer of review, which is perfunctory in most cases regarding simple zoning amendments, adds a significant layer of time and cost to such changes, which contributes to the overall inflexibility of the approach.

Converting to a Two-map System

The 1992 conversion to the one-map system was complicated and cumbersome. Staff sees no reason why a conversion back to a two-map approach has to be so disruptive and difficult to grasp. Staff has identified an approach to the conversion that is efficient and easy to understand. It is based on the following principles:

- Maintain the existing zoning designation of all parcels. All existing development potential and development standards for any given parcel will remain unchanged.
- Maintain the existing nomenclature for parcels, the master [plan and the development code.
- Focus on the two primary tasks: Creation the Master Plan Land Use Designations (Master Plan Map) and amending the development code to describe the new system. Modifications to the new two map system, such as the creation of overlay districts, mixed use designations, or other new zoning tools should be considered in the future but should not be part of this effort to accomplish a clean conversion.
- Maintain the current Planned Land Use maps largely unchanged, with the chief exception being their location. [These maps would be referred to as zoning maps and would be located in the development code. Zoning amendments would then be accomplished through a Development Code amendment rather than a Comprehensive Plan amendment.

The three primary Divisions of the Development Code that would require amendments are:

- Division One, in order to describe the master plan designations and establish the existing designations as regulatory zones only (no double duty as land use designations.)
- Division Two, in order to amend the modifiers section of each planning area to reflect any special development standards associated with zoning in the planning area. This section is currently thought of as the “modifiers” section of the code. The modifications currently reflected in this section as well as the modifiers referred to in the Area Plans would be established in Division Two.
- Division Eight, in order to establish the separate procedures for amending the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning map in the Development Code.
- Other Divisions may require minor modifications to ensure consistency throughout the document.

The Comprehensive Plan will need to be amended to reflect the two-map approach as well. The primary areas needing modification would be:

- Creation of the Master Plan map.
- Transfer of Land Use Plan map to Development Code from Area Plans.
- Amendment of the Introduction to provide narrative explanation of the new system and deletion of existing discussion regarding the one-map approach.

As the new system is brought forward, all the necessary changes to the Development Code and the Comprehensive Plan will be identified. However, an over-arching principle in the conversion would be to make the most efficient, least disruptive changes possible. This includes a

commitment to avoid any changes to a parcel's existing development potential, and whenever possible, to maintain the current nomenclature for all parcels.

Should the direction be given to move forward with a conversion to a two-map system, staff will immediately come forward with a draft of a working two map concept that applies the principles stated on the previous page.

Summary

In 1992, Washoe County followed a national trend and adopted a "one-map" planning approach. Washoe County refers to this approach as its Growth Management Program. The approach relies on the close coordination for the Comprehensive Plan, the Development Code and the Capital Improvements Program to guide and shape growth in Washoe County. The technical advantages of the system rest upon some assumptions that may not bear out in actual practice. The public's need to have an approach to planning that is accessible, understandable and consistent work at odds to the quirky nature of the one-map approach. While the master plan is more than just a map, the map is the most public face of the Master Plan. But in its dual function as a zoning map, it can be difficult to reconcile the statement of the community vision from the necessary adjustments to land use that are periodically required to keep up with current conditions. While the use of the Capital Improvements Program as a tool to do this sorting is theoretically intriguing it is, in practice, unresponsive and very complicated.

In order to make the system more responsive, the Comprehensive Plan would have to be in a state of constant and continual update, and the Development Code would have to make clear divisions between holding areas for development and areas intended to remain rural. The staff resources that are necessary to fully implement the current Washoe County system are significant and probably unrealistic. Even if the Comprehensive Plan were in a state of continual update, the assumption the County Commission wishes to exercise such a strong hand in the direction of development is questionable. In sum, it appears that while the one-map system was adopted with the desire to make the planning process more intuitive, more responsive, and more consistent with the implementation of the community vision, in practice it has often led to the opposite result. In fact, there is little understanding in the community about how the adopted system is intended to work. There is considerable confusion regarding the difference between changes to a community's vision and changes to its zoning plan. The inflexible nature of the approach has quite possibly led to a general sense of frustration across the community.

Two-Map---Timeline (11/10/09 - Draft)

Dates

<u>July 09</u>	<u>WCPC</u> - Presentation and input to staff
<u>Nov. 09</u>	<u>BCC/PC Joint Meeting</u> – Presentation, discussion and direction on a proposed two map system including a project timeline
<u>Nov. 09</u>	<u>Technical Advisory Committee</u> -Form and send out notice of first meeting
<u>Nov. 09</u>	<u>Develop list</u> of Code and other changes required
<u>Nov. 09</u>	<u>Develop mailing list</u> ; <u>Develop FAQ sheet</u> ; <u>Create web-site</u>
<u>Dec. 09</u>	<u>External Stakeholders meeting</u> - BANN, AGC, DSAC, TMRPA, EDAWN Realtors, Flood Project, Tribes, NV Energy, WCSD
<u>Dec. 09</u>	<u>Internal Stakeholders meeting</u> - District Attorney, Assessor, Building & Safety, Public Works, Water Resources
<u>Dec. 09</u>	<u>Technical Advisory Committee</u> - Convene first of monthly meetings
<u>Dec. 09</u>	<u>BCC/PC</u> - Update on progress
<u>Jan/Feb 10</u>	<u>Citizen Advisory Board Outreach</u> – Presentations and discussion by staff to each individual CAB
<u>Mar. 10</u>	<u>All CAB & Public Workshop</u> - Open house format hosted by TAC
<u>Mar. 10</u>	<u>BCC/PC</u> - Update on progress
<u>Mar. 10</u>	<u>Internal review</u> & develop draft recommendations
<u>Mar. 10</u>	<u>Develop staff report</u> that includes list of required code changes
<u>April 10</u>	<u>Request external stakeholder endorsement</u> individually
<u>April 10</u>	<u>Request TAC's endorsement</u>
<u>April 10</u>	<u>WCPC</u> – Adoption of Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA)
<u>May 10</u>	<u>BCC</u> – 1st reading—Development Code Amendment (DCA)
<u>June 10</u>	<u>BCC</u> – 2nd reading—DCA approval—CPA approval
_____	<u>RPC</u> – Conformance review
_____	<u>RGB</u> – Conformance review

One-map to Two-map Comparison

Timelines for approval of a Regulatory Zone Amendment from one dwelling per acre (LDS) to three dwellings per acre (MDS) and approval of a residential subdivision

Current “one-map” system:

Month: 1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9
Application for Comp. Plan Amendment Submitted	→	First Citizen Advisory Board Meeting	→	Second Citizen Advisory Board Meeting	→	Planning Commission Public Hearing	→	Board of County Commissioners Public Hearing	→	TMRPA Regional Conformance Review Hearing	→	Application for Tentative Subdivision Map Submitted	→	Citizen Advisory Board Meeting	→	Planning Commission Public Hearing

Proposed “two-map” system*:

Month: 1		2		3		4		5
Application for Zone Change and Tentative Subdivision Map Submitted	→	Citizen Advisory Board Meeting	→	Planning Commission Public Hearing (approves TM subject to approval of zoning)	→	Board of County Commissioners Public Hearing on Zone Change	→	Board of County Commissioners Adopt Zoning by Ordinance

*Assuming the parcel is designated Residential Land Use in the Master Plan.

Conversion of Washoe County's one-map system to a two-map system.

Comments, questions and answers from the Washoe County Planning Commission meeting of July 7, 2009.

- Would like to see the County's map system (land use and zoning) be compatible with the two-map systems of the Cities of Reno and Sparks.

- Does not want the County to use *Planned Unit Developments* like the City of Reno does where every thing is possible under the single designation.

*Don't use local jurisdictions solely as an example of how a two-map system works. The key is to **not** make the master plan categories too broad.*

- Asked how applicants will be handled that have an application for development in progress at the same time the County would be changing to a two-map system.

Development applications will be handled as they are now under our existing one-map system until such a time that a new (two-map) system has been approved.

- Concern expressed that we are throwing out our present one-map system just to go back to one we had previously (17 years ago).

The theoretical advantages offered by a one-map approach (simplicity, predictability, certainty) may be more than offset by the inherent lack of flexibility in a single map system and may, in fact, become more pronounced as the County continues its efforts to implement character management concepts, community design ideas and density incentives as expressed in some of the newer area plans.

- Likes the idea that under the two-map system the County will not be required to take our zone changes to Truckee Meadows Regional Planning for conformance review as we presently are.

*We are **not** changing development potential on a parcel we are changing the way we can make changes to our master plan and zoning documents. The present one-map system forces landowners to make premature decisions on land use that may not work well in changing market conditions such as we've experienced lately.*

- Likes the full public participation that is included in a two-map system but doesn't want master plan categories that are so broad as to allow any type of development anywhere.

A two-map system would allow for a full public involvement process at both the comprehensive plan amendment and at the zoning change stages thus enabling the public to focus better on specifics.

- What is the input from the development community on our existing one-map system?

They try and work with Community Development within the confines of the existing system. When the two-map system is discussed they have questions mainly centered on maintaining existing entitlements.

- What would be the development community's involvement in changing to a two-map system?

The process will involve all the stakeholders both internal and external.