



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: LAND USE PLAN UPDATES

October 2017

What is a land use plan?

A land use plan is a tool to guide future development. It identifies the types and locations of development that are preferred to be built in the future in a geographic region, such as a city. The plan includes a map that visually shows the types and locations of the preferred development. The plan's purpose is to help implement a shared vision of the physical land in the region.

What are master plan land use categories?

Master plan land use categories describe the different types of preferred development in the land use plan. These categories are ultimately used to determine the zoning designation for each parcel of land.

What are zoning designations?

Zoning designations regulate how a parcel of land can legally be utilized. Additional detail on the zoning designations established in the City of Reno can be found in the [Reno Municipal Code](#).

It is important to note that the update to the City of Reno Master Plan will not change the zoning of any parcel. In some small instances, zoning changes may need to be considered in the future to better align with a new master plan land use category. This would involve a separate public process and public input. See question on page 4 of this document for information about locations where future zone changes may be needed.

Why is the land use plan being updated?

The City of Reno is updating its master plan, which is long-range policy document that shows a community as it is and recommends how it should exist in the future based on a shared community vision. The land use plan is one part of the master plan. Key objectives for the proposed land use plan are to:

- More clearly convey a “big picture” view of the types and locations of preferred development planned within the city and its sphere of influence (SOI);
- Support the tracking of demand for and capacity of the different types of land uses citywide; and
- Address compatibility concerns such as urban/rural interface issues, context-sensitive infill and employment land viability.

What are the new master plan land use categories?

Twelve land use categories are proposed as part of the city’s updated master plan. Each of the new master plan land use categories is described below. Zoning designations that would be allowed under each land use category are also shown. Learn more about the [current zoning districts](#) and the [current master plan land use categories](#).

Residential

Four residential land use categories are proposed (versus the two existing). The goal is to provide more specificity regarding the density and mix of housing types in different locations and to clarify where and what types of non-residential development should occur near housing. Although not called out explicitly for the individual land use categories below, uses such as parks, recreation facilities, schools, religious institutions, and other public/quasi-public uses are supported in all residential land use categories.

Density Range	Uses/Characteristics	Zoning Districts
LARGE LOT NEIGHBORHOOD		
Lot sizes between 0.5 and 2.5 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single family detached homes on large lots; may be located where public services and infrastructure are limited. • New large lot residential is only appropriate between rural and more intensive residential uses or at city edge to assure compatibility with unincorporated land. 	Large Lot Residential (2.5 acres), Large Lot Residential (1 acre), Large Lot Residential (0.5 acres), Planned Unit Development
SINGLE-FAMILY NEIGHBORHOOD		
Typically between 2 and 8 units per acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily single-family detached homes with varied lot sizes. May include accessory dwelling units and other complementary uses (e.g., parks, recreation facilities, schools). 	Single-Family Residential (15,000 sq. ft.), Single-Family Residential (9,000 sq. ft.), Single-Family Residential (6,000 sq. ft.), Planned Unit Development
MIXED NEIGHBORHOOD		
Typically between 8 and 15 units per acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a mix of housing options and densities within close proximity to small-scale retail, restaurants, and other neighborhood services. • Primary uses include single-family detached and attached homes on smaller lots; secondary uses include accessory dwelling units, triplexes, townhomes and smaller multifamily buildings, and supporting commercial and retail uses. May also include other complementary uses (e.g., parks, recreation facilities, schools). 	Single-Family Residential (4,000 sq. ft.), Multi-family (14 units per acre), Planned Unit Development
MULTI-FAMILY NEIGHBORHOOD		
Typically between 15 and 30 units per acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily a mix of higher density housing types, such as apartment buildings or condominiums, but may also include a broader mix of housing types and densities (e.g., 	Multi-family (21 units per acre), Multi-family (30

Density Range	Uses/Characteristics	Zoning Districts
	townhomes, triplexes, or duplexes). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should be located in areas that are proximate to transit, commercial uses providing neighborhood services, schools, parks, and/or employment and can be readily served by public transportation. 	units per acre), Planned Unit Development

Mixed-Use

Three mixed-use land use categories are proposed. These categories are proposed to replace the special planning area and urban residential/commercial designations. The goal is to better define the land use vision for the City’s centers and corridors where a diverse mix of uses is desired, and more accurately reflect variations in density and intensity by location. Although not called out explicitly for the individual land use categories below, uses such as parks, recreation facilities, schools, religious institutions, and other public/quasi-public uses are supported in all residential land use categories.

Density/Intensity	Uses/Characteristics	Zoning Districts
SUBURBAN MIXED-USE		
Low- to moderate density with no minimum density required; concentrated nodes of higher-intensity development are encouraged at major intersections and near existing or planned transit stations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes a mix of retail, commercial, office, and other uses in a less intense or more suburban context to meet the needs of adjacent neighborhoods and employment areas. Also provides opportunities for higher-density housing within close proximity to services and employment. 	Mixed-Use, Multi-family (30 units per acre), Neighborhood Commercial, Arterial Commercial, Community Commercial, Professional Office, General Office, Planned Unit Development
URBAN MIXED-USE		
Higher-intensity development; minimum density/intensity applies to support pedestrian and transit-oriented uses but may vary by location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A range of pedestrian and transit-oriented commercial, retail, employment, and service-oriented uses, as well as higher density housing. Serves adjacent neighborhoods and the broader community; well-served by existing and planned transit. 	Mixed-Use, Multi-family (30 units per acre), Planned Unit Development
DOWNTOWN MIXED-USE		
Most intense of the three mixed use categories; actual densities vary by downtown district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varies by downtown district; however, intended to include a mix of employment, sports and tourism-related uses (including gaming), specialty retail, bars and restaurants, arts and entertainment, offices, cultural facilities, and high density residential, civic and government facilities. Well served by existing and planned transit. 	Mixed-Use, Planned Unit Development

Employment

Two employment categories are proposed. The goal is to align with the outcomes of the City’s employment needs analysis and overall economic strategy. Although not called out explicitly for the individual land use categories below, uses such as parks, recreation facilities, schools, religious institutions, and other public/quasi-public uses are generally supported in

employment land use categories. However, limitations may exist in some industrial areas where potential compatibility issues arise.

Density/Intensity	Uses/Characteristics	Zoning Districts
INDUSTRIAL		
Varies; no minimum density is required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides opportunities for more intensive industrial uses that typically require larger sites such as: manufacturing/ processing operations, maintenance and repair shops, and warehousing and distribution facilities. May also include supporting airport uses and limited support services for the convenience of employees, such as restaurants and professional and medical offices. Generally, not suitable to adjacent residential development. However, small commercial activities may serve to transition between industrial and residential development uses. 	Industrial, Industrial Commercial, Planned Unit Development
MIXED EMPLOYMENT		
Varies; higher densities encouraged where appropriate (e.g., as part of UNR Innovation Area).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides concentrated areas of less intensive employment uses with activities that typically take place indoors and do not impact adjacent neighborhoods. Includes light manufacturing, processing, and wholesaling, as well as supporting airport uses and limited service uses, such as restaurants and professional and medical offices, and educational facilities. Also includes corporate office headquarters and educational facilities typically located in a campus setting. 	Industrial, Industrial Commercial, Industrial Business, General Office, Planned Unit Development

Other

The updates to these land use categories are meant to support the community’s emphasis on trails, connectivity, and outdoor amenities. The public/quasi public designation will include secondary schools and other facilities not previously called out in the land use plan.

Uses/Characteristics	Zoning Districts
PUBLIC/QUASI PUBLIC	
Public institutions, airports, cultural centers, religious institutions, government centers, libraries, hospitals, secondary schools and utility installations. Some major facilities may create impacts to adjacent properties that need mitigation and appropriate zoning districts should be determined based on intensity of use. Intensity of use is determined by vehicular trip generation, size and scale of development, and compatibility with residential development.	Public Facility, Planned Unit Development
UNINCORPORATED TRANSITION	
Includes unincorporated land within the sphere of influence that is largely undeveloped. Unincorporated land does not have immediate access to municipal services, but will likely develop within 20 years	Unincorporated Transition (5 acres), Unincorporated Transition (10 acres), Unincorporated Transition (40 acres)
PARKS, GREENWAYS AND OPEN SPACE	

Parks, open space, greenways, natural areas, and agriculture lands that have been preserved through conservation easements or other mechanisms.	Open Space, Public Facility, Planned Unit Development
SPECIAL PLANNING AREA	
<p>Allows any individual land use, or land uses in combination, which are compatible and complementary within the project boundaries and with adjoining properties.</p> <p><u>This land use will not be applied after the adoption of the updated Master Plan</u>, but has been retained for joint plan areas and certain locations where the range of development types and/or spatial flexibility found in some recorded PUD handbooks and existing SPD handbooks prohibits translation to the new land use categories.</p>	Planned Unit Development, Special Planning District, zoning specified in joint plans

Will the new land use categories create areas that don't match, or don't conform to, existing zoning designations?

While every effort has been made to minimize the creation of zoning districts that do not conform to the new land use categories, a small number of non-conformities will result. Non-conformities exist when an areas has zoning designation that is not allowed under the master plan land use category for that same area.

City staff has identified locations where existing zoning districts do not conform to the proposed land use categories and will be working in the future to get these properties into alignment with the updated master plan following its adoption. These areas generally include:

- The current Reno-Tahoe Airport Regional Center that currently has a special planning area land use designation and mixed use zoning designation
- The Reno Stead Airport Regional Center that currently has a special planning area land use designation and mixed use zoning designation
- The UNR Regional Center that currently has a special planning area land use designation and mixed use zoning designation
- The Dandini Regional Center that currently has a special planning area land use designation and mixed use zoning designation
- Areas in the eastern portion of the Convention Regional Center that currently have a special planning area land use designation and mixed use zoning designation
- Areas on the south side of Plumb Lane between Virginia Street and Kietzke Lane and various zoning designations
- Areas in the North Virginia Street Transit-Oriented Development Corridor and mixed use zoning designation
- Targeted areas owned by the City of Reno or other governmental entities where zoning should be aligned with either the public/quasi public or parks, greenways and open space land use categories
- Targeted areas where a wide range of zoning districts exist and translation to the new land use categories would result in the application of multiple land use categories rather than providing a cohesive land use approach

Maps showing the locations of the properties described above areas are [available](#) as well as a [list](#) of these properties that includes address and parcel number.

How will planned unit developments and existing specific plan districts that already received approval be handled?

One of the most significant changes being proposed as part of the land use plan update is the phasing out of the special planning area (SPA) master plan land use category, which is often utilized when a zoning designation of planned unit development (PUD) is desired. In the City's current master plan, the SPA category comprises 68 percent of the land area within the City and its sphere of influence (SOI). As a result, there is a general lack of clarity in the current land use plan as to the types of uses that are desired in a given location and the overall mix of uses that are proposed.

To the maximum extent possible, the SPA land use category has been reassigned to the new land use categories. However, due to the range of development types found in some PUD handbooks and SPD handbooks that already received approval, application of the new land use categories was not possible in all cases. New land use categories were assigned to areas with adopted PUD or SPD handbooks in place as follows:

Built-Out Planned Unit Development and Specific Plan Districts

Where development has concluded, new land use categories were assigned to existing planned unit development and specific plan zoning districts using land use plans, development concept maps, site plans, and/or other information included in the PUD or SPD handbooks. Where documents illustrating the type and location of development were not included in PUD or SPD handbooks, the density of existing residential development or the type of existing non-residential development was used to assign the new land use categories.

Planned Unit Developments and Specific Plan Districts Where Future Development Remains

Where development is underway or has yet to start, each existing PUD and SPD handbook was evaluated to determine if the type and location of identified development could translate to the new land use categories using land use plans, development concept maps, site plans, and/or other information included in the PUD or SPD handbooks. For those handbooks where translation was possible, the new land use categories were applied.

Some PUD and SPD handbooks allow for a range of development types that span multiple proposed land use categories or do not include maps showing the location of future development. For these areas, the special planning area (SPA) master plan land use will remain in place. The SPA land use category will be identified in the updated Reno Master Plan as a legacy land use that shall not be applied in the future.

New Planned Unit Development Handbooks (submitted after updated master plan is adopted)

For new PUD handbooks submitted after the master plan is adopted, the City will require land uses identified in PUDs to conform (or nest within) the new master plan land use categories in regards to types of development and/or ranges of residential density. Consistent with current practice, no new specific plan districts will be allowed.

Why are proposed land use designations assigned to parcels outside City limits?

Per state law, the City is allowed to assign land use designations in its sphere of influence (SOI). The SOI is outside of the city limits today, but is the area into which the City could be expected to expand its limits over a twenty year period. State law specifies that the SOI for the City be established in the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan and that any changes to the SOI require an amendment of that plan.

When will the new land use plan be adopted?

The updated land use plan with new master plan land use categories will take effect when the master plan is adopted. To formally adopt the new master plan, the Reno Planning Commission must adopt a resolution adopting the master plan and recommend the Reno City Council approve the new master plan. After that, the Reno City Council must also adopt the new master plan by resolution, subject to a finding of conformance with the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan. The Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency will then review the City's new master plan for conformance to the goals and policies of the Regional Plan. Following that review, the new master plan will take effect following certification by the Reno City Council. Currently, the approval process outlined above is anticipated to start fall 2017. The updated land use plan will remain in draft form until the master plan is finally adopted.