

CHAPTER 2

Citizen-Driven Themes & Guiding Principles



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2.1 Public Involvement

This master plan update was developed from public comments gathered in a series of open houses and workshops held by Storey County staff and the Storey County Planning Commission in communities throughout the county. Additional outreach to citizens, businesses, and stakeholders was achieved through engagement with community groups such as homeowners associations, community center boards, general improvement districts, and other groups. Ongoing consultation also took place between Storey County and federal, state, and local agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management, Nevada Division of State Lands, and other counties and jurisdictions throughout Nevada as necessary to update existing information.

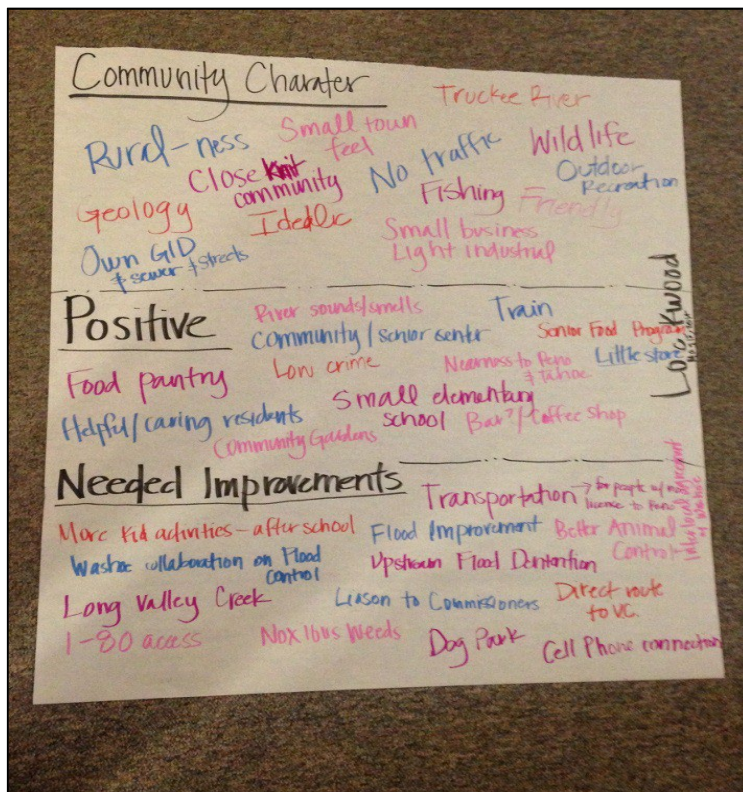


Figure 2.1-1: Public Workshop Comments. The Storey County Master Plan was built from the ground up, with extensive public participation occurring over years of workshops occurring in each of the county’s five communities. The image to the left is one of many records – in this case from a public workshop in Lockwood – of topics and concerns that were brought up by citizens during the earliest stages of master plan development.

The 2016 Master Plan was the culmination of public workshops that occurred from 2009 to 2016. In 2013, over 100 citizens of Storey County attended one of several posted community workshops to identify positive areas and items that need improvement for their communities and across the county. Between 2009 and 2016, public master plan workshops were a regular item on Planning Commission agendas. The Planning Commission and public received general updates of the plan’s evolution.

Key items and policy creation were discussed at the Commission meetings and other venues mentioned above. Controversial issues, where citizens’ interests split, were debated at length over many Commission meetings, and in many locations including each of the county’s separate communities. The resultant

policies in this master plan are a tribute to the insightful thinking of the citizens of Storey County as they logically interacted, compromised, and arrived at general consensus on direction for land use goals, policies, and objectives for the County.

In the summers of 2023 and 2024, meetings were held in the Storey County communities of Lockwood, Highlands, Mark Twain, and Virginia City/Gold Hill. The meetings examined the existing master plan language related to county-wide issues, along with identified issues for each community. Based on those meetings, County staff concluded that the residents generally found the existing master plan to be relevant, and with some updates and inclusion of newer topics, decided that an update to the 2016 Master Plan was more appropriate at this time rather than a complete re-write of the document.

Updated drafts of different chapters of the master plan were posted on the official website of the County in the fall of 2024, and County planning staff and planning commissioners received public comments from those drafts as they were continually updated. The conversations again were constructive and resulted in positive policy refinement.

2.2 Guiding Principles of a Master Plan

The goals, policies, and objectives of this master plan will guide County officials in their decisions regarding land uses, and as new development and changes take place, they will help to maintain and enhance the qualities that make Storey County a desirable and sustainable place in which to live, work, and play.

- Goals represent broad values and ideas for Storey County. They are intended to give decision-makers, citizens, and stakeholders a clear idea about the County’s intended direction.
- Policies are statements about what the County aims to achieve over the life of this master plan.
- Objectives provide guidance about more specific development, programs, and capital investments in the county. Many of the objectives are listed as detailed actions and methods for implementing the plan. Some objectives will be possible to accomplish in the near-term, while others will be ongoing during the life this master plan, or will take place later in life of this master plan.

2.3 Guiding Principles of Storey County

2.3.1 Themes and Guiding Principles

Six broad “themes” were identified as the basic principles behind both the community’s feedback and the master plan. The themes reflect the community’s vision at a broad policy level, highlighting areas where the County has opportunities to build on its strengths, and noting areas where change in policy direction is needed to improve a condition that is not consistent with the communities of Storey County. The six themes include:

1. Sustainable balance
2. Residential balance
3. Economic vitality and diversity

4. Livable communities
5. Connected county
6. Community partnerships

As a subset to each theme, a set of guiding principles are provided to describe the community's specific aspirations related to each theme. The guiding principles set the stage for the more specific goals and policies contained in the subsequent chapters of this master plan.

2.3.2 Sustainable Balance

Storey County will respect and promote the distinct character and heritage of its unique communities, and promote cohesive high-quality development as appropriate that complements the county's existing communities and fosters long-term sustainability.

Virginia City/Gold Hill is a mixed-use community defined by family neighborhoods, a commercial downtown, and sparse new and historic industrial uses. The area is rich with Comstock history, and tourism based on that history makes up its primary economic base. This community includes higher density development. The sloping topography on the side of Mount Davidson makes development in the area challenging.

The Highlands is a rural estate residential community. Parcels range from one acre to 40 acres or larger. There are no municipal water or sewer services and most of the roads are gravel and privately-owned. Open space and outdoor and equestrian activities are valued, along with the scenic rugged terrain of the area. There are no commercial or industrial uses in this area.

Mark Twain, including the Mark Twain Estates, is a rural estate residential community. Parcels within the Mark Twain Estates range from around one to five acres. The greater Mark Twain area has much larger parcels with uses ranging from grazing and forestry to mining. There are no municipal water or sewer services in this area. Roads in the residential areas are paved, while most other roads are gravel or unimproved. The update to this master plan has added the language Flowery Range to the Mark Twain land use area (Mark Twain-Flowery Range) to describe the area east of the Mark Twain Estates. This was done to differentiate the existing subdivision from currently undeveloped land and potential goals and future development that may be appropriate for the Flowery Range area but not the Mark Twain Estates subdivision.

Lockwood is a residential community adjacent to the Truckee River. This community contains mixed-uses including commercial and industrial, yet it is separated from the hustle of nearby Reno and Sparks. Long Valley Creek runs through the community and has been known to cause substantial flooding impacts. Municipal services, including sewer and water, are provided by the Canyon General Improvement District.

McCarran is home to the Tahoe-Reno Industrial Center, which encompasses much of the county's geography and influences much of the county's identity. McCarran is an intense industrial area with no residential uses. Water, sewer, paved roads, heavy rail, and an advanced water reclamation system are among the services provided at McCarran. McCarran has become a significant economic engine in northern Nevada.

The public feedback is that these general land use trends are working for the residents of Storey County. The public's strong opinion is to maintain these trends.

2.3.3 Residential Balance

The current trends of countywide development have been successful to limit conflicts between residential and non-residential uses. The citizens recognized the need for a mixture of residential, commercial, and industrial land use patterns for the success of its communities. This master plan strives to maintain a sustainable balance of residential and non-residential uses.

2.3.4 Economic Vitality and Diversity

While Storey County has made great gains over the last two decades, the citizens wish to continue the economic gains into the future. Mining did well for the county in the past; however, the citizens expect mining to be volatile in the future. Different and more stable industries are the desire for the future, and this master plan strives to promote economic diversity throughout the county.

2.3.5 Livable Communities

Rural living and limited public services are the preference residents. Citizens view the interaction with community groups and the schools as an asset. These special relationships are viewed as unique to Storey County and citizens wish to preserve them. Storey County is comprised of very unique communities. Except for in the most rural of its communities, this master plan strives to promote a wide range of residential and non-residential uses strategically organized to create livable and sustainable communities. Coordination between residents, businesses, government agencies and school districts, and community support groups in land use planning and policy is a significant part of creating livable communities.

2.3.6 Connected County

The population and economic centers of the county are separated by extreme geography, long distances, and lack of connecting infrastructure. Directly connecting each of the county's communities is oftentimes debated and is considered a controversial topic. Means by which to connect the county's communities while also preserving their existing quality and style of life may be evaluated further and will strongly involve potentially affected parties.

2.3.7 Community Partnerships

We draw upon our strengths as a community, embracing our diversity and acknowledging our common goals. Private and public interests work together successfully and recognize that a cooperative approach is necessary to create strong communities and protect the environment we share. Planning activities cross jurisdictions successfully because of the high degree of coordination between the County and its regional partners, including other local jurisdictions, and state and federal agencies and organizations. This master plan supports good resource-management practices, a process facilitated by interacting with state, federal, and tribal agencies during the development of each other's plans and policies. Building on our successes, we create strategic partnerships to implement plans that enhance the values we cherish.

2.4 Storey County Citizens Summary

The *Code of the West* was first chronicled by well-known western writer Zane Grey. The men and women who moved west in the 1800s were bound by this unwritten code of conduct.

Integrity and self-reliance guided their decisions and actions. In keeping with that spirit, this information is offered to help existing and future Storey County residents who wish to follow in the footsteps of those rugged individuals and live outside city limits.

Life in rural areas is different than life in cities. County governments typically don't offer the same level of service that city governments provide. Even though property taxes are paid to the County, the amount of tax collected does not cover the cost of city-level services provided to rural residents. Since the rural west will not change to accommodate urban lifestyle or expectations, rural residents should be prepared to adapt accordingly. This is the unique character of Storey County that the existing residents wish to maintain. This is also the lifestyle that future residents should expect.