

REGULATORY ZONE AMENDMENT INFORMATION

Explanation and Processing of a Regulatory Zone Amendment

The following explains a regulatory zone amendment, including its purpose and the review and evaluation process involved.

The purpose of a regulatory zone amendment (RZA) is to provide a method for amending the regulatory zone maps of Washoe County. The regulatory zone maps depict the regulatory zones (i.e., zoning) adopted for each property within the unincorporated area of Washoe County. The regulatory zones establish the uses and development standards applied to each property.

Regulatory zones are designed to implement and be consistent with the Master Plan by ensuring that the stability and character of the community will be preserved for those who live and work in the unincorporated areas of the County. **A regulatory zone cannot be changed if it conflicts with the objectives or policies of the Master Plan, including Planning Areas that further define policies for specific communities.** The Master Plan is the blueprint for development within the unincorporated County. Pursuant to NRS Chapter 278, any action of the County relating to zoning must conform to the Washoe County Master Plan.

Evaluation of the proposed regulatory zone amendment involves review for compliance with countywide policies and planning area policies found in the [Washoe County Master Plan](#). Additionally, the analysis includes review of the proposed amendment against the findings found in Article 821 of the Washoe County Development Code and any findings as set forth in an applicable Specific Plan.

Requests to change a regulatory zone affecting a parcel of land or a portion of a parcel are processed under Article 821, Amendment of regulatory zone, of the Washoe County Development Code. **Rezoning or reclassification of a lot or parcel from one regulatory zone to another requires action by both the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners.**

The Planning Commission may deny a regulatory zone amendment or it may recommend approval or modification of an amendment to the Board of County Commissioners. Upon an affirmative recommendation by the Planning Commission, the Board of County Commissioners is required to hold a public hearing which must be noticed pursuant to Section 110.821.20 of the Washoe County Development Code. Final action is taken by the Board of County Commissioners which may adopt, adopt with modifications, or deny the proposed amendment.

Regulatory Zone Amendment Public Notice

Notice for Regulatory Zone Amendments must be given in accordance with the provisions of Nevada Revised Statutes 278.260, as amended.

Owners of all real property to be noticed are owners identified on the latest County Assessor's ownership maps and records. Such notice is complied with, when notice is sent to the last known addresses of such real property owners, as identified in the latest County Assessor's records.

A minimum of 30 property owners within 750 feet of the area to which the proposed amendment pertains must be noticed by mail at least 10 days before the public hearing date. Notice must also be given in a newspaper of general circulation within Washoe County at least 10 days before the public hearing date.

Amendment of Regulatory Zone

WCC Section 110.821.15(d) of Article 821, **Amendment of Regulatory Zone**, requires **that all of the following findings be made** to the satisfaction of the Washoe County Planning Commission before recommending adoption to the Board of County Commissioners.

The proposed amendment may or may not be in substantial compliance with the policies and action programs of the Master Plan.

1. Consistency with Master Plan. The proposed amendment is in substantial compliance with the policies and action programs of the Master Plan.
2. Compatible Land Uses. The proposed amendment will provide for land uses compatible with (existing or planned) adjacent land uses, and will not adversely impact public health, safety or welfare.
3. Response to Change Conditions; more desirable use. The proposed amendment responds to changed conditions or further studies that have occurred since the plan was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners, and the requested amendment represents a more desirable utilization of land.
4. Availability of Facilities. There are or are planned to be adequate transportation, recreation, utility, and other facilities to accommodate the uses and densities permitted by the proposed amendment.
5. No Adverse Effects. The proposed amendment will not adversely affect the implementation of the policies and action programs of the Washoe County Master Plan.
6. Desired Pattern of Growth. The proposed amendment will not adversely affect the implementation of the policies and action programs of the Washoe County Master Plan.
7. Effect on a Military Installation When a Military Installation is Required to be Noticed. The proposed amendment will not affect the location, purpose and mission of a military installation.

Master Plan Amendment

WCC Section 110.820.15(d) requires the Planning Commission to **make at least three (3)** of the five (5) findings of fact to recommend approval of the amendments to the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners.

1. Consistency with Master Plan. The proposed amendment is in substantial compliance with the policies and action programs of the Master Plan.
2. Compatible Land Uses. The proposed amendment will provide for land uses compatible with (existing or planned) adjacent land uses, and will not adversely impact the public health, safety or welfare.
3. Response to Change Conditions; more desirable use. The proposed amendment responds to changed conditions or further studies that have occurred since the plan was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners, and the requested amendment represents a more desirable utilization of land.
4. Availability of Facilities. There are or are planned to be adequate transportation, recreation, utility, and other facilities to accommodate the uses and densities permitted by the proposed master plan designation.
5. Desired Pattern of Growth. The proposed amendment will promote the desired pattern for the orderly physical growth of the County and guides development of the County based on the projected population growth with the least amount of natural resource impairment and the efficient expenditure of funds for public services.

According to the Fifth Edition of the **Master Plan North Valleys Area Plan** Printed July of 2020

The North Valley Character Statement reads:

The North Valleys planning area is home to a great variety of natural, scenic, cultural and economic resources. The recreational, educational, scientific and lifestyle opportunities afforded by these resources make a significant contribution to the area's character and to its quality of life. This character is supported by land uses that are distributed within several distinct communities. While the land uses found in the North Valleys planning area range from very rural to heavily suburban, the area's communities enjoy many elements of a more rural character, particularly as they relate to the natural environment, subdivision design, and livestock ownership. Much of the North Valleys, in both suburban and rural areas, exhibits a distinctly equestrian character. In part, this is due to the large areas of designated open space under federal ownership, both to the south associated with Peavine Mountain United States Forest Service (USFS), and to the north associated with numerous Bureau of Land Management (BLM) holdings. Ready access to these areas has contributed to a proliferation of outdoor recreational opportunities. In fact, the pressure on these lands to accommodate all of the various uses and users will require an ongoing effort to effectively manage these important areas to prevent degradation of the resource, and negative impacts on residents. Future growth in the area will be managed to minimize negative impacts on the character of these communities, particularly those impacts related to the generation of light, air, and water pollution, open space, wildlife and wildlife habitat and the blending of new development with any existing development. The scenic value of the natural hills and valleys is an important component of the North Valleys' character. Extensive re-shaping of the landscape by grading prior to development is not characteristic of the North Valleys planning area.

Part of the North Valleys is subject to the Reno-Stead Corridor Joint Plan. The Joint Plan describes the land uses pattern, development standards, and amendment procedures for the area it covers. While the Joint Plan is a component of the North Valleys Area Plan, its status as a joint plan provides for a series of regulations and procedures that effectively create a separate master plan and zoning designation for that area.

- Silver Knolls is identified as: As a low density suburban residential community, the **Silver Knolls Community** *is similar to the Golden Valley Community in its land use pattern*. However, its location tends to provide Silver Knolls residents with a greater sense of isolation from other developed parts of the North Valleys. Silver Knolls is located at the west edge of the Reno-Stead Airport. It is bounded on the north and west by the Granite Hills range. Physically, the area can be characterized as gently sloping terrain at the base of this mountain range. These mountainous areas and the Reno-Stead Airport separate this community from developed areas in Reno-Stead, Cold Springs and Lemmon Valley. **Commercial land use designations are not desired**. Once again, the existence of livestock and other animals for recreational, educational and economic reasons is recognized as a significant contributor to the local character.
- 2. The **Golden Valley Community is characterized by a generally low-density residential suburban land use pattern**. Like Lemmon Valley, the existence of livestock and other animals for recreational, economic and educational purposes is recognized as a significant contributor to the local character. Access to equestrian and multi-use trails is an important component of the local character. The Bureau of Land Management lands to the north and east of Golden Valley provide a backdrop to the community, providing vistas and access to public lands utilized by equestrians and hikers. Because of the location of significant commercial development nearby, commercial land uses are not necessary in Golden Valley and are not desired. The use of curb, gutter and sidewalk is also minimal in Golden Valley and this design feature contributes to the rural character of this area, and provides runoff to replenish the Golden Valley aquifer.

The following Regulatory Zones are permitted within the **Silver Knolls Suburban Character Management Area**:

1. General Rural (GR – One unit per 40 acres).
2. Low Density Rural (LDR – One unit per 10 acres).
3. Medium Density Rural (MDR – One unit per 5 acres).
4. High Density Rural (HDR – One unit per 2.5 acres).
5. Low Density Suburban (LDS – One unit per acre).
6. Public/Semi-public Facilities (PSP).
7. Parks and Recreation (PR).
8. Open Space (OS).

9. **Vision and Character Management**

Land Use

Goal One: The pattern of land use designations in the North Valleys Area Plan will implement the community character described in the Character Statement.

Policies

NV.1.1 The North Valleys Character Management Plan (NVCMP) map shall identify the North Valleys Rural Character Management Area (NVRCA), the Silver Knolls Suburban Character Management Area (SKSCMA), the Lemmon Valley

Suburban Character Management Area (LVSCMA), and the Golden Valley Suburban Character Management Area (GVSCMA).

The combined policy growth level for the **Suburban Character Management Areas** is 2000 new residential units of land use capacity. Changes to the established regulatory zones will not add more than 2000 new units of land use capacity through 2025. The **Washoe County Department of Community Development** will be responsible for tracking increasing land use potential to ensure this growth level is not exceeded.

Policy growth levels for the **North Valleys Rural Character Management Area** are established for each hydrographic basin in the planning area as a function of the sustainable water resource yield in each basin. Changes to the established regulatory zones may add new units of **land use capacity only to 85% of each basin's sustainable yield as determined by the Washoe County Department of Water Resources**. The Washoe County Department of Community Development will cooperate with the Department of Water Resources to track increasing land use potential to ensure these growth levels are not exceeded.

The following Regulatory Zones are permitted within the **North Valleys Rural Character Management Area**:

1. General Rural (GR – One unit per 40 acres).
2. Low Density Rural (LDR – One unit per 10 acres).
3. Public/Semi-public Facilities (PSP).
4. Parks and Recreation (PR).
5. Open Space (OS).

The following Regulatory Zones are permitted within the **Silver Knolls Suburban Character Management Area**:

1. General Rural (GR – One unit per 40 acres).
2. Low Density Rural (LDR – One unit per 10 acres).
3. Medium Density Rural (MDR – One unit per 5 acres).
4. High Density Rural (HDR – One unit per 2.5 acres).
5. Low Density Suburban (LDS – One unit per acre).
6. Public/Semi-public Facilities (PSP).
7. Parks and Recreation (PR).
8. Open Space (OS).

The following Regulatory Zones are permitted within the **Golden Valley Suburban Character Management Area**:

1. General Rural (GR – One unit per 40 acres).
2. Low Density Rural (LDR – One unit per 10 acres).
3. Medium Density Rural (MDR – One unit per 5 acres).
4. High Density Rural (HDR – One unit per 2.5 acres).
5. Public/Semi-public Facilities (PSP).
6. Low Density Suburban (LDS – One unit per acre).
7. Parks and Recreation (PR).
8. Open Space (OS).

The following Regulatory Zones are permitted within the **Silver Hills Suburban Character Management Area**:

1. Public/Semi-public Facilities (PSP)
2. Low Density Suburban (LDS 1 – One unit per acre)
3. Low Density Suburban-Two (LDS 2 – Two units per acre)
4. Medium Density Suburban-Three (MDS 3 – Three units per acre)
5. Parks and Recreation (PR)
6. Open Space (OS)
7. Neighborhood Commercial (NC)
8. Specific Plan (SP)

https://www.washoecounty.gov/csd/planning_and_development/resources/master-plan-zoning/files/planning-maps/nv_area_plan.pdf