

Community Planning

Clark County/City of Las Vegas Interlocal Agreement

Article from the Clark County Cornerstone Newsletter

On January 2, 2002, an Interlocal Agreement between Clark County and the City of Las Vegas was approved to establish joint policies on corporate boundaries, annexations, land use planning (including zoning and development review), transportation planning, parks and trails planning, and urban services (including sewer, water and flood control facilities planning).

The northwest portion of the Las Vegas Valley is one of the most dynamic growth areas in Clark County. This area is unique because there are substantial incorporated lands within the City of Las Vegas as well as unincorporated lands remaining in Clark County. The unincorporated areas are predominately low density residential development and vacant lands while the areas inside the City are rapidly developing in higher density urban uses.

Due to the variety of land uses occurring in close proximity, northwest residents asked their elected representatives to address how growth was going to be accommodated with consideration given to the already established lifestyles. City and County representatives including Commissioner Maxfield along with Councilman Brown and Councilman Mack, sought to develop a framework for future growth in the northwest area by establishing mutually acceptable growth strategies. The two entities have undertaken long-range plans. The need for collaborative and compatible land use planning regardless of jurisdictional boundaries and increased coordination regarding annexation of land to the City. The interlocals provide a forum for better management of taxpayer dollars and the provision of services to residents in the Northwest.

There are nine primary components that make up the agreement:

- Corporate boundaries
- Future annexation
- Joint land use planning
- Development review and land use/zoning consistency
- Regional Flood Control master plan
- Joint transportation planning and integrated master plan of streets and highways
- Joint parks and trails planning
- Sewer service provision
- Water reuse plant

One of the intents of the agreement is to protect the established rural lifestyles of the residents in District C from development that could come about if the City annexed undeveloped land in the northwest. During the term of the agreement, large "County islands," designated as rural preservation areas are exempt from annexation. This was an understanding that was very important to establish due to new legislation passed in the 2001 Legislative Session in Carson City last spring. The new legislation (Assembly Bill 179) added provisions to State law that would allow for the annexation of all private undeveloped lands within County islands.

The agreement provides for creation of a "seamless" plan for the northwest valley so that residents and property owners will have more certainty about the types of development to expect in their neighborhoods. Over the past few years, the two land use plans for the northwest area the City of Las Vegas Centennial Hills Sector Plan and the Clark County Lone Mountain Land Use Plan, have become increasingly inconsistent where land uses and policy are concerned. An effort to update both plans into one has been initiated by the City and the County with an expected finish date of January 2003. In addition to this effort, staff will be reviewing inconsistent development standards and zoning regulations to determine a common set of standards and allowable uses for this City/County area.

Another area addressed by the agreement pertains to transportation improvements. The City and County have been underway on an arterial modeling study to determine arterial street improvements and to what degree these are necessary to meet short-term needs and long-term needs. The study is expected to address the possible reduction of street improvement cross sections for arterials not required for full development, identification and agreement of right-of-way reductions and termination of streets not needed for traffic purposes. Priority arterial streets will be identified for construction and be jointly supported. It is expected that a second interlocal agreement to address these issues will be entered into in the next six months.

And, good news for the rural properties. The City has agreed to adopt the Minimum Road Design Standards for Non-Urban Roadways as adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on January 2, 2001. These standards allow, for eligible roadways, a minimum paved street section with no curb, gutter or sidewalk that leaves ample shoulder to ride a horse or walk along in a Country setting. Additionally, the City and County have agreed to jointly develop and adopt non-urban roadway standards for streets greater than 60 feet in width.

By June of this year, the City and County will jointly consider adopting, as an addendum to their Recreation Plans, a Parks Plan, a Recreational Trails Plan and a Recreational Trails Map that clearly delineates the location and function of parks and recreational trails in the northwest area with careful consideration of linkages needed between both jurisdictions so that an interconnected system is developed.

In the areas described as Excepted Areas in the Exhibit A attachment of the agreement (Rural Preservation Areas), property owners will no longer be required by the City to sign an annexation agreement when requesting City sewer facilities. Also, the City and the County have agreed that the City is the primary sewer service provider within the area described as the "Joint Land Use Planning Area".

Finally, it was agreed that the lack of coordination by both entities of street development standards, local flood control and drainage studies and setting of street grades resulted in localized flooding problems. These problems will be addressed as a part of our efforts to jointly plan transportation improvements as mentioned earlier in this article.

The initial term of the agreement is for five years. An additional five year term is called for unless either governing body acts to terminate the agreement.

In closing, although this was a long and difficult process, the not so simple act of coming to agreement on issues we find mutually important has provided both entities with the direction they need to proceed with serving the northwest area more efficiently, more effectively and more collaboratively.