CLARK COUNTY, NEVADA

COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN
HOUSING ELEMENT

2019

Adopted by the Planning Commission on February 19, 2019
Adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on March 6, 2019

CLARK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING
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RESOLUTION
OF THE CLARK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
ADOPTING AN UPDATE OF THE HOUSING ELEMENT OF THE CLARK
COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, the Clark County Board of Commissioners (hereafter referred to as the Board) may adopt long-term master plans for the physical development of all unincorporated portions of Clark County, Nevada as specified by the Nevada Revised Statutes, Chapter 278.150 to 278.220 inclusive; and

WHEREAS, on February 19, 2019, the Planning Commission did adopt the updated descriptive text, goals and policies of the "Housing Element 2019 of the Clark County, Nevada Comprehensive Master Plan" and forward a certified copy to the Board, and;

WHEREAS, on March 6, 2019, a public hearing was held by the Board in accordance with Nevada Revised Statute 278.220 regarding the Housing Element 2019;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board:

1. That the Board does adopt the updated descriptive text, goals, and policies which is entitled "Housing Element 2019 of the Clark County, Nevada Comprehensive Master Plan."

2. That the Board adopts the certified copy of the "Housing Element 2019 of the Clark County, Nevada Comprehensive Master Plan" as an amendment to the Clark County Comprehensive Master Plan.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 6th day of March 2019.

CLARK COUNTY, NEVADA

By: Marilyn K. Kirkpatrick
Marilyn Kirkpatrick, Chair

ATTEST:

LYNN MARIE GOYA
COUNTY CLERK
RESOLUTION
OF THE CLARK COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
ADOPTING AN UPDATE OF THE HOUSING ELEMENT OF THE CLARK
COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, the Clark County Planning Commission (hereafter referred to as the Planning Commission) is charged with the preparation and adoption of long-term general plans for the physical development of all unincorporated portions of Clark County, Nevada as specified by the Nevada Revised Statutes, Chapter 278.150 to 278.220 inclusive; and

WHEREAS, on February 19, 2019, a public hearing was held by the Planning Commission in accordance with Nevada Revised Statute 278.210;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Clark County Planning Commissioners:

1. That the Planning Commission does adopt the updated descriptive text, goals, and policies which is entitled “Housing Element 2019 of the Clark County, Nevada Comprehensive Master Plan.”

2. That the Planning Commission adopts the certified copy entitled “Housing Element 2019 of the Clark County, Nevada Comprehensive Master Plan” as an amendment to the Clark County Comprehensive Master Plan.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 19th day of February 2019.

CLARK COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

By: EDWARD FRASIER III, CHAIR

ATTEST:

NANCY AMUNDSEN
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
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I. INTRODUCTION

Housing is a core component of our communities. Ray Oldenburg, as cited in the 2017 APA Planning Advisory Service Report, deemed the home the “first place” in his discussion of communities and social environment. Academic research continually reaffirms and expands the importance of the home for stability, development, and security for both families and individuals.¹

The concept of “fair housing” in the United States is rooted in the Federal Fair Housing Act. This law prohibits discrimination in the selling, renting, and financing of housing. It also requires state and local governments to take actions to promote diverse, inclusive communities.²

The purpose of the Housing Element of the Clark County Comprehensive Master Plan is to guide the County in making decisions as it strives to meet the housing needs of the community. Clark County’s United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Consolidated Plan³ and its Land Use Plans, as incorporated into the Comprehensive Master Plan, fulfill the Housing Element requirements of Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS). Specifically, these documents include NRS requirements for inventories of housing conditions, affordable housing, and plans for improving housing standards. The Population section of the Public Facilities and Services Element provides population trends and forecast estimates. Each goal provides a desirable objective, and the policies are the methods to pursue those goals.

How would one describe the root of the urban housing crisis? Many people might describe the issue as a “lack of affordable housing.” Others might say that “housing isn’t affordable.” Many people might use both phrasings interchangeably. But these two statements are not saying the same thing. The first statement treats “affordable” as a discrete category of housing, and diagnoses that there is not enough of it. The second statement applies to all housing, and diagnoses that it is all too expensive.⁴

Income levels referred to in this Element are defined by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development as follows: (1) a “moderate-income household” is any household earning up to 80 percent of the area median income; (2) a “low-income household” is any household earning up to 50 percent of the area median income; and (3) an “extremely low-income household” is any household earning up to 30 percent of the area median income. “Assisted housing” generally means owner-occupied or rental housing that is subject to restrictions on rent or sales prices as a result of one or more project-based governmental subsidies.

The Southern Nevada Strong (SNS) Regional Plan, adopted in 2015, states: “Attaining a healthy balance of well-planned housing and jobs while ensuring that the region’s natural resources are protected is important for its long-term economic competitiveness.”⁴ As stated in the HUD Consolidated Plan, this balance can be met by the following:

- Maintaining an adequate supply of land and a mix of housing choices with flexible zoning designations to meet the anticipated housing demand;
- Developing housing to meet the needs of workers in future industry sectors;
- Designing housing to meet the needs of residents with limited mobility and/or disabilities;
- Developing low-income and workforce housing in neighborhoods across the region;
- Considering the needs of the aging population; and
- Educating and informing the population regarding housing choice, needs, and rights.³

Another important component to consider when looking at overall housing conditions is to encourage “resource-efficient land-use and development practices” by promoting sustainability in housing in the region to ensure a durable housing supply that will reduce housing costs for homeowners and renters.⁵
II. ACCOMMODATING GROWTH AND MAINTAININGAFFORDABILITY

Housing affordability is influenced in part by land and housing supply, socio-economic conditions, regional and local land use policies, development regulations, and permit processes. This Element accommodates unincorporated Clark County’s portion of expected regional housing demand, in part created by expected employment and population growth in Southern Nevada. Because the Las Vegas Valley housing market is influenced by the various incorporated and unincorporated areas, Clark County and its neighboring cities in the region strive to work cooperatively. The following are the goals and policies to accommodate growth and help maintain affordability.

Goal 1    Encourage development of affordable housing units whenever possible as a share of the countywide need for affordable housing, consistent with the County HUD Consolidated Plan.

Goal 2    Maintain housing affordability over extended periods, usually 20-50 years.

Goal 3    Whenever possible, reduce the cost burden for households by supporting the creation and preservation of affordable housing.

Goal 4    Encourage sustainable practices in the region to ensure a durable housing supply.

Policy 1    Implement Clark County’s Housing Element through the combination of its adopted HUD Consolidated Plan and Land Use Plans.

Policy 2    Encourage mixed-use development in areas serviced by transit and neighborhood commercial zones.

Policy 3    Find opportunities for affordable Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) to coordinate housing, land use, human services, and urban design to support pedestrian-friendly communities. Ensure development maintains access to basic amenities, such as grocery stores, schools, and health facilities for populations who live in affordable housing developments and may be dependent on public transportation.

Policy 4    Consider access to transit service when preserving, rehabilitating, or redeveloping properties.

Policy 5    Participate in regional housing initiatives such as those initiated by Southern Nevada Strong.

Policy 6    Pursue grants and other sources of funding such as HOME Investment Partnership funds to rehabilitate affordable housing for rent or home ownership, including performing energy upgrades on homes to meet local codes and home energy rating improvements.
III. PROVIDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO LOWER INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

Providing affordable housing to low-income households is critical to ensuring that all residents have access to the diverse housing opportunities that exist in Clark County, and that existing disparities are reduced rather than exacerbated. Research shows that investing in affordable housing for lower income households yields a host of positive social and economic outcomes in areas such as education, employment, physical and mental health, and a more sustainable/stable community, especially for children and families. Sustaining a strong economy requires a sufficient affordable housing supply for everyone throughout the income spectrum.

To meet existing and future housing needs, a variety of methods can be implemented, including: new construction of affordable housing, rehabilitation of existing affordable housing, conversion of existing non-residential structures, subsidizing or incentivizing affordable units in market-rate buildings, requiring new development to provide affordable housing, and other tools that eligible households could use to rent housing in the open market. Housing may be provided by the public sector (the Southern Nevada Regional Housing Authority), non-profit housing development organizations, private property owners, and developers, and through other mechanisms such as land trusts and limited-equity cooperatives. Specific strategies and programs for the production and preservation of affordable housing are developed through the Clark County HUD Consortium Consolidated Plan and other programmatic plans. Supporting affordable housing projects outlined in these plans creates an avenue for leveraging local investments through federal and state resources. In addition, the rising cost of housing has become a challenge throughout Nevada. It will be important for Clark County to remain aware of legislative issues that will affect affordable housing.

Although the average inflation-adjusted prices of for-sale housing in submarket areas of Clark County have not surpassed peaks hit in 2006-2007, Clark County’s rental housing costs continue to rise. Rent prices are susceptible to sharp increases during periods of high demand, and this particularly impacts low- to moderate-income households. The National Low Income Housing Coalition “Out of Reach 2016: Nevada” and Clark County HUD Consortium Consolidated Plan provide data demonstrating that Clark County’s low-income households have disproportionately higher housing needs. Over 66,900 low-income households are paying 50% or more of their income for housing. This leaves families vulnerable to costly unforeseen events such as a serious illness or job loss. In addition, the financial burden of housing cost can impact access to opportunity, such as education or health and wellness, for cash-strapped families. This lack of opportunity can contribute to a cycle of poverty that impacts the entire community.

Homelessness is perhaps the most extreme impact of the financial burden of housing costs. An unexpected expense, such as a health issue or a car repair, can result in a housing cost-burdened household’s losing their housing. The Southern Nevada Homelessness Continuum of Care reports an annual estimate of 24,981 homeless people in 2017. The majority of homeless individuals surveyed (76.9%) reported living in Southern Nevada when they most recently became homeless. And more than half of the people surveyed had been renting a home or apartment prior to becoming homeless with an inability to afford rent being cited as a primary obstacle to obtaining permanent housing.

To address these issues, it is important for the County to periodically monitor and evaluate the supply of affordable, low-income, and moderate-income housing and the effectiveness of existing programs that provide that housing to understand whether existing programs are sufficient to meet the goals, including meeting the needs of special needs populations. In addition, the following goals and policies will help provide housing that is affordable to low-income households:
Goal 1  Rehabilitate and preserve existing affordable housing whenever practical, particularly in urban centers where most redevelopment pressure will occur.

Goal 2  Housing opportunities for low-income households should be dispersed throughout the County to support inclusion close to amenities and employment opportunities.

Goal 3  Encourage safe, affordable housing for existing residents of distressed areas through such means as rehabilitation and adequate maintenance of privately-owned rental housing, increased home ownership opportunities, and community revitalization and development efforts.

Policy 1  Support programs that provide financial assistance to lower income homeowners to maintain their properties in adequate condition.

Policy 2  Consider implementing programs to preserve or enhance currently affordable housing to retain opportunities for lower income households to meet the needs of residents with limited mobility and/or disabilities that live in Clark County. Explore permanent supportive housing options for populations that need additional services in order to maintain housing.

Policy 3  Recognize that the provision of housing affordable to lower income households can help provide lower income households with access to education, employment, and social opportunities. Consider access to affordable, quality child care for families as a factor in their ability to take advantage of education, employment, and social opportunities.

Policy 4  Encourage the preservation of existing lower income housing by using housing programs and funds to preserve existing housing that is susceptible to redevelopment or gentrification.

Policy 5  Encourage acquisition of housing by non-profit organizations, land trusts or tenants, thereby protecting housing from upward pressure on prices and rents.

Policy 6  Encourage the production of housing affordable to households of all incomes. Support affordable rents by considering such tools such as density bonuses, fee waivers or reductions, or expedited permit processing for certified nonprofit housing developers that commit to long-term, affordable rents for new developments.

Policy 7  Investigate inclusionary zoning options as a possible means to maintain affordability before corridors start to gentrify around future high-capacity transit lines.

Policy 8  Monitor housing policies at the State and Federal levels that may have impacts on affordable housing in Clark County.

Policy 9  Encourage a shared responsibility among the private and public sectors for addressing affordable housing needs.

Policy 10 Investigate affordable housing tools to preserve existing single-family character of neighborhoods while also contributing to the provision of high quality affordable housing.
IV. ENCOURAGING HOUSING DIVERSITY AND QUALITY

This section addresses both the development of new housing and the adaptation of existing housing to meet the needs and preferences of the current and future residents of the County. Residents are encouraged to find opportunities for home ownership in Clark County. The County also has an interest in safeguarding the condition, quality and of housing stock while maintaining attractive and livable neighborhoods.

From a longer-term perspective, planning for increased housing diversity and affordability also means ensuring housing availability that will keep people in the region and help to attract new residents and jobs to the area. Creating housing options that answer the needs of Southern Nevada’s diverse population, while sustaining and supporting existing neighborhoods, will result in a more prosperous, vibrant, and inviting region.6

Clark County’s zoning and development regulations are intended to allow development of housing that will satisfy varied consumer preferences. Many consumers have a strong preference for single-family homes for a number of reasons. One attractive reason is that this housing type provides yards or play areas immediately adjacent to homes, which are important to families with children.

As residential growth occurs, it will continue to be important to include affordable housing units (both single and multi-family) as part of the mix. According to second quarter 2018 figures provided by Lied Institute for Real Estate Studies at University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), asking rents were up 2.4 percent since second quarter 2017 and the vacancy rate has hovered at 7 percent in Southern Nevada.7 Per the U.S. Census, home ownership has trended downward over time with 54.4 percent of residents in 2017 living in their own homes.8 The following goals and policies encourage housing diversity and quality:

Goal 1 Encourage and support accessible design and housing strategies that provide all county residents the opportunity to remain in their own neighborhood as their housing needs change.

Goal 2 Consider new housing options as part of the County’s strategy for creating safe and habitable home ownership opportunities.

Goal 3 Implement strategies and programs to help support a range of housing opportunities in Clark County.

Goal 4 Achieve a mix of quality housing types that are attractive and affordable to a diversity of ages, incomes, mobility, household types, household sizes, and cultural backgrounds.

Policy 1 Diversify housing options to meet the needs of residents and future residents.

Policy 2 Increase the supply of high-quality multifamily housing in the region’s commercial cores and mixed-use commercial areas.

Policy 3 Work with for-profit and non-profit developers to encourage new mixed-income developments across the region.

Policy 4 When planning new mixed-use, senior and limited mobility and/or disabilities housing developments, locate projects near public transportation, shopping, community services, family support services and recreational facilities.

Policy 5 Support the Southern Nevada Regional Housing Authority (SNRHA) in seeking federal, state, and private resources to continue preserving, rehabilitating, or redeveloping its properties in a manner that best serves the needs of Clark County’s lower income population.
Policy 6 Seek opportunities to educate individuals on the housing needs and diversity of Southern Nevada’s residents.

V. SUMMARY

As stated in the Introduction, housing is a core component of our communities. This also means the home is important to create a place for stability, development, and security for both families and individuals. The concept of “fair housing” in the United States is rooted in the Federal Fair Housing Act, which prohibits discrimination in the selling, renting, and financing of housing. It also requires state and local governments to take actions to promote diverse, inclusive communities.2

Again, the purpose of the Housing Element of the Clark County Comprehensive Master Plan is to guide the County in making decisions as it strives to meet the housing needs of the community. Clark County’s United States Department of HUD Consolidated Plan3 and its Land Use Plans, as incorporated into the Comprehensive Master Plan, fulfill the Housing Element requirements of the NRS. Specifically, these documents include NRS requirements for inventories of housing conditions, affordable housing, and plans for improving housing standards.

Finally, the SNS Regional Plan states: “Attaining a healthy balance of well-planned housing and jobs while ensuring that the region’s natural resources are protected is important for its long-term economic competitiveness.”6
VI. REFERENCES


Multi-family et al. housing information retrieved from:
