

INTRODUCTION

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What is a Master Plan?

The Elko Master Plan is the City’s guiding document for all decision-making regarding land use, transportation, parks and recreation, open space, arts and culture, housing, and historic preservation. It is a vision statement of what the community would like Elko to be in the future, and its ultimate goal is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the community.

The Master Plan is a State authorized guiding document for the future development of a community. The Nevada State statute says that: “the Master Plan shall be a map, together with such charts, drawings, diagrams, schedules, reports, ordinances, or other printed or published material, or any one or a combination of any of the foregoing as may be considered essential.” (NRS 278.200)

Authority for Planning

The authority for local governments to develop long-range master plans is delegated by the State of Nevada through enabling legislation. The Nevada Revised Statutes §278.150~170 (<http://leg.state.nv.us/nrs/NRS-278.html#NRS278Sec150>) contains the specific requirements and duties of local governments in preparing planning documents:

NRS 278.150 Master plan: Preparation and adoption by planning commission; adoption by governing body of city or county.

1. The planning commission shall prepare and adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the city, county or region which in the commission’s judgment bears relation to the planning thereof.
2. The plan must be known as the master plan, and must be so prepared that all or portions thereof, except as otherwise provided in subsections 3 and 4, may be adopted by the governing body, as provided in [NRS 278.010](#) to [278.630](#), inclusive, as a basis for the development of the city, county or region for such reasonable period of time next ensuing after the adoption thereof as may



| ELKO QUICK FACTS | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Size | 14.5 sq miles |
| Elevation | 5,066 ft |
| 2010 Population | 18,297 |
| Mayor | Michael J Franzoia |
| Incorporated as city | 1917 |

practically be covered thereby.

3. In counties whose population is 100,000 or more but less than 400,000, if the governing body of the city or county adopts only a portion of the master plan, it shall include in that portion a conservation plan, a housing plan and a population plan as provided in [NRS 278.160](#).
4. In counties whose population is 400,000 or more, the governing body of the city or county shall adopt a master plan for all of the city or county that must address each of the subjects set forth in subsection 1 of [NRS 278.160](#).

The statute builds in flexibility for the less densely populated parts of the state, and counties with fewer than 100,000 residents may select the elements and topics to include in their plans. This 2010 Master Plan update includes the following elements:

- Population
- Land Use
- Traffic and Circulation
- Parks and Recreation
- Housing
- Historic Preservation
- Arts and Culture

Why Plan?

Planning serves the best needs of a community in several ways. The planning process itself brings citizens together in a collaborative effort which promotes public participation and brings pride to the community. The planning process also revitalizes the community and gives opportunities for residents to exercise their civic duties.

The Master Plan is specifically implemented through the City Community Developments, and Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances, as well as through administrative decision making. Therefore it is critical for public officials to remain well versed in the current Plan to ensure that day-to-day decision making does not in some way disrupt the policies and long term initiatives that are outlined therein.

Community planning is advantageous for a community because it:

- Serves the best interests of the community at large
- Promotes community thought and encourages public participation
- Promotes community pride and accomplishments
- Identifies goals and objectives for all aspects of the community.

- Establishes priorities and guidelines for spending public money
- Manages development and public infrastructure
- Shapes the physical appearance of the community
- Provides for the public's health, safety and welfare
- Responds to legislative change

It is important to note that a Master Plan cannot do the following:

- Produce immediate changes
- Be a substitute for action
- Create instant economic growth
- Replace zoning and subdivision regulations
- Solve all problems

What is the Process for Updating the Master Plan?

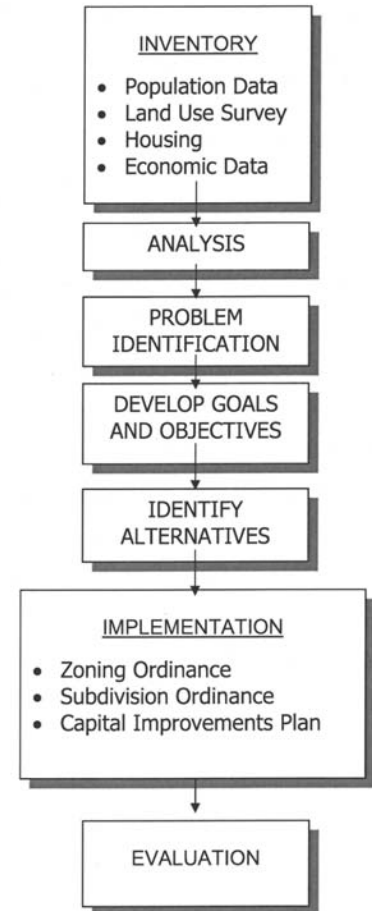
In order to develop a plan that reflects what the City Staff, Planning Commission, City Council, and Citizens want their community to be in the future, the ideas and desires of its citizens are collected. Existing conditions are then inventoried, while citizens decide what opportunities for improvement exist. Once the opportunities and constraints have been identified, goals and policies are developed to maximize the opportunities and mitigate the constraints. Finally, a course of action for implementing the policies is prepared. When the planning process is complete, the finished product typically is:

- A collection of ideas and desires of the citizens of the community as to what they want for their community in the future.
- A statement adopted by the governing body listing its objectives and policies for future development that informs property owners, developers, citizens, and the public agencies of the city's intentions.
- A guide for decision making for the advisory and governing bodies in the city, and federal and state agencies considering the funding of projects within the city.

How was this Master Plan Created?

Elko's Master Plan was first adopted in 1974, and has been updated at regular intervals since then. The 2010 Master Plan update builds on the most recent Plan, which was revised in 2007.

The 2010 update to the Master Plan was facilitated by a private consulting team working in conjunction with Elko City staff and the Planning Commission. The Master Plan update process began with a public workshop, which brought together residents, stakeholders, community organizations, and community leaders together to deliberate existing conditions and lay out visions for the City. The Planning Commission held monthly meetings with the consulting team to review and contribute to the update process. This ongoing feedback and input from the Planning Commission, staff and public was used to refine the draft.



Public involvement and input opportunities spanned the entire process and included the following:

- Public Visioning Workshop attended by 80 people.
- Survey sent to 10% of all mailing addresses in the City of Elko.
- A Facebook fan page allowed for online participation.
- A project website kept the community informed – www.envisionelko.com
- Monthly meetings with the Planning Commission, and the Arts & Culture Advisory Board included public comment.
- Draft Plan Open House presented the Plan and solicited input.
- An adoption process which included formal public hearings.



The Public Visioning Workshop was held on April 20, 2010 at the Elko Convention Center

The planning process was promoted City-wide through the following media outlets:

- Television and radio interviews and announcements by City officials about Master Plan update
- Consultant Interview on television (KENV News 10)
- Press and news coverage

A summary of public comments collected has been developed and can be found on the ATLAS maps numbers 1–4.

Plan Structure and Terminology

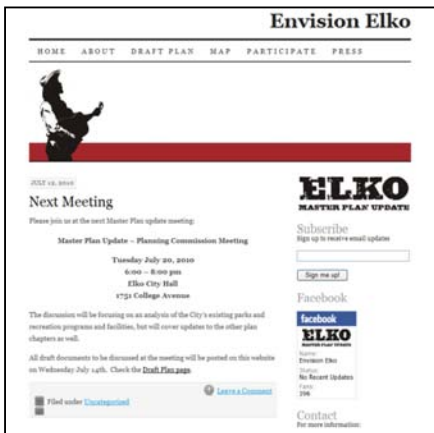
The structure of this update to the Elko's Master Plan is slightly different from that of its predecessor. The 2010 Master Plan is organized by topic, and then by three sections within each chapter:

1. Goals and Objectives
2. Existing Conditions
3. Best Practices

Goals and Objectives

The goals of the community are fundamental to the planning process. Goals are broad general statements on what is ultimately desired and form the basis for the Master Plan. Goals drive development alternatives and serve as the ultimate criteria for the selection of the preferred development option and other major decisions throughout the process.

Goals and Objectives form the basis of community plans, considering alternatives and evaluating results. They provide the means for making choices and affirming decisions. *For this reason Goals and Objectives need to be clear, simple, declarations of what the community hopes to achieve.* The Goals do not necessarily have to be fully achievable for a plan to be successful. Goals should instead represent long term targets toward which planning efforts are directed. Objectives are specific strategies to achieve the goal.



The above is a snapshot of the Master Plan update process website

Existing Conditions

The existing conditions sections of the Master Plan consist of an inventory and analysis of the City at the time of the Plan's writing. A thorough understanding of the City as it stands today is critical to identifying appropriate strategies, plans, and recommendations for the future.

Best Practices

The Best Practices section for each chapter includes a discussion of each objective, what it means to Elko, and how it can be accomplished. It summarizes tested and effective strategies in planning and design on the topic, and offers specific recommendations to the City for implementing the stated objectives. Best Practices will list available resources, programs, and tools to assist in implementation. The Best Practices sections are illustrated with images, diagrams and examples to assist the City with implementation.

Elko Tomorrow

Residents of Elko have chosen to live here because they enjoy the current quality of life, aesthetics, recreational opportunities, mix of land uses, and patterns of development that the City provides. A primary vision of the City of Elko Master Plan update is to ensure that these qualities are maintained, preserved, and enhanced.

Elko residents also pride themselves in the strong sense of community, can-do attitude, and rich cultural heritage in the City. The City of Elko is unique in its somewhat isolated location, resulting in a strong drive towards self-sufficiency and an appreciation for local establishments. The City maintains its small-town feel, while embracing development and socio-economic strategies that positively influence the local economy, culture, quality of life, and environment.

The preservation of quality of life is of utmost importance to residents and business owners. Elko views itself as a city where residents, tourists, businesses, and government come together to create an attractive, safe, and well-maintained community; a community where people can live, learn, work, and recreate.

The City recognizes the importance of preserving private property rights. As planning and regulatory decisions are made, the City should consider the impact of each decision on private property rights.

In the State of Idaho, the Attorney General has suggested that cities and counties ask a series of six questions to determine the legality of any land use regulatory decision. These same questions are relevant in the State of Nevada and may be worthwhile for the City of Elko to follow as a guide.

1. Does the regulation or action result in a permanent or temporary physical occupation of private property?



A revitalized and well-functioning downtown

Planning Commission Review - March 15, 2011

2. Does the regulation or action require a property owner to dedicate a portion of property or to grant an easement?
3. Does the regulation deprive the owner of all economically viable uses of the property?
4. Does the regulation have a significant impact on the landowner's economic interest?
5. Does the regulation deny a fundamental attribute of ownership? Examples include the right to exclude others, the right to develop according to local zoning, the right to sell underground mineral rights, etc.
6. Does the regulation serve the same purpose that would be served *by directly prohibiting the use or action; and does the condition imposed substantially advance that purpose?*

History of Elko



Western Pacific Railroad tracks being laid in Elko, December 1908. www.elkorose.com

The City of Elko is a true Western American town with a history that embraces ranching, the railroad, and mining. The name Elko is said to have been given to the town by Charles Crocker who was one of the directors of the Central Pacific Railroad. He added an 'o' to 'elk' because of large numbers of elk that were present in the town's surrounding hills in the mid 1800s.

Construction delays in the eastbound line of the Central Pacific railroad in 1868 turned the present site of the town into an eastern terminus for the railroad. The influx of railroad workers, families and ranchers led to a tremendous growth of the site and the establishment of the town. After the completion of the railroad, the Overland Stage Company put a stage-line between Elko and Hamilton, making Elko a leading shipping point on the railroad.



Ranching activity in Elko County (www.71-ranch.com)

By 1869, Elko was turning from a tent city to a town with more permanent buildings. Lot prices increased from \$500 to \$2,000 within a few months. Elko rapidly gained recognition in the region as a trade center and emerging population center. Public infrastructure was constructed and water was obtained by tunneling the hills of Kittridge Canyon, which was about eight (8) miles away. A sewer system was also installed in 1912. Major public buildings were constructed by the first decade of the 20th century including a building for the Elko County Seat, a public school, a courthouse, and a Presbyterian Church building.

In 1910, the Western Pacific Railroad also came through Elko with the first passenger train passing the City on August 20, 1910. Elko was made a freight division point for the Railroad, and the main offices of the Railroad's eastern division were also established in Elko. (source: www.nevadaobserver.com)

Elko's proximity to the California Trails, the Emigrant trail, the Pony Express route and the major railroad tracks established it as a major destination, as well as a sojourning point for people who traveled across the Western plains.

Elko County lies in the Great Basin of northeastern Nevada. This basin is perfect for ranching activity with far reaching sagebrush prairies, the Ruby Mountains, deep lush meadows and meandering willow-lined

creeks. This made the large ranches of Elko County a vital part of the American cattle industry. Even though there was a steady growth in the ranching and livestock business in the high desert valleys around Elko, other factors like mining and the railroad overshadowed the economic prominence of ranching to the City. The ranching industry continued to support this economic boom, and there was a rapid growth in population in response.

New discoveries of mining opportunities also created excitement. One of the first was the Tuscarora Mines. By 1911, Elko's population was approaching 3,000 residents. The Great Depression a few years later greatly affected Elko with bank failures and other economic factors leading to a decline in livestock prices. Several of the ranches around Elko were foreclosed and Elko's beef and wool economy fell. (source: www.nevadaweb.com)

The gaming and gambling industry picked up in Elko soon after it was made legal by the Nevada state legislature in 1931. Elko had a new industry and no longer depended exclusively on ranching, agriculture and mining to sustain the local economy. Tourism and gaming became increasingly important to the economic life of the City. With that, Elko entered a golden age towards the end of the 1940s and the potential for a bright future. The resurgence of the mining industry in the late 1970s and 1980s, due to technological advances, brought in an increase in the population and a diversification of employment and economic opportunities that continue to thrive today.

Elko was the first location of the University of Nevada, which was later relocated to Reno.

Community Profile and Demographic Study

Population and Projections

The 2010 Census states the population of the City of Elko as 18,297 – a 9.5% increase over the 2000 Census figure of 16,708. The Nevada State Demographer's Office projects Elko County's population to grow to approximately 57,953 by 2020; however, it does not provide projections for Elko City. Assuming the City of Elko grows at the same rate as Elko County, at approximately one percent each year, the population for 2020 can be estimated to be approximately 20,808. A comparison of population for the City of Elko and surrounding communities for 2000 and 2009 is found in Table 1.

| Table 1.1 | | |
|---------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Population | | |
| | 2000 | 2009 |
| Elko County | 45,291 | 51,325 |
| City of Elko | 16,708 | 18,428 |
| Carlin City | 2,161 | 2,345 |
| Wells City | 1,346 | 1,515 |

Source: Census 2000, estimates for 2009 from Nevada State Demographer's Office

The Nevada State Demographer anticipates Elko County's population to grow at approximately one percent each year until 2015, after which growth is expected to decrease to nearly zero percent in 2019. While the State demographer's projections are helpful as a baseline, they are necessarily conservative and do not account for potential increases that may occur due to mining technologies, ore discoveries, or diversification in the local economy.

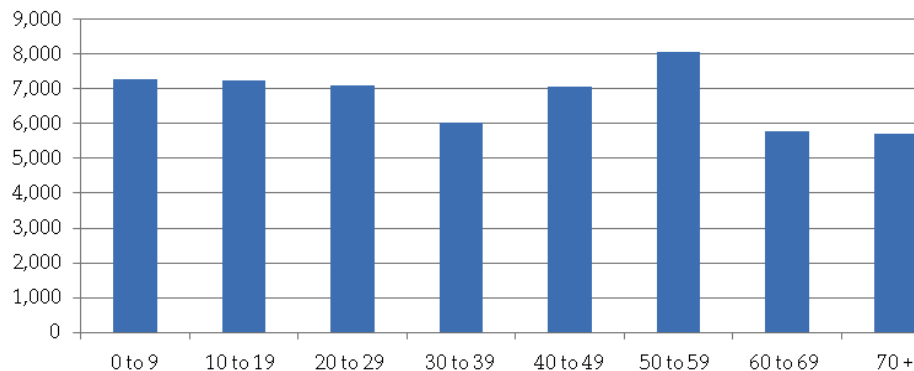
It is a goal of this Master Plan to plan for and encourage new industry and business to further promote growth in the City and to ensure Elko's population continues to rise.

Age

The following graph displays Elko County age estimates for 2010. Elko City has a large population of individuals over the age of 50, suggesting that the City will need to plan for the recreation needs of a baby-boomer population that will soon be retiring and demanding more leisure and recreation activities.

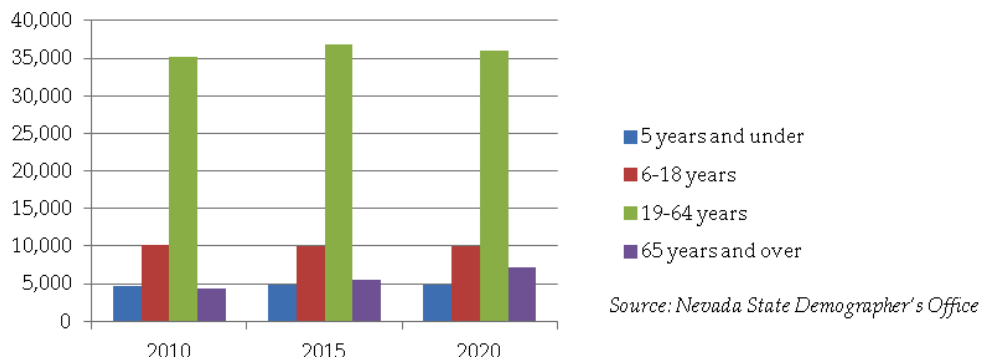
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ELKO COUNTY AGE ESTIMATES (2010)



Source: Nevada State Demographer's Office

The graph shows that this aging population is expected to increase in the next 20 years while other cohorts are expected to remain fairly constant.



Education

Approximately 80 percent of the population of the City of Elko has obtained a high school degree or higher, and approximately 17 percent have earned a bachelor's degree or higher. (Source: US Census 2000)

Race

Table 2 shows that approximately 83 percent of the City of Elko is white. The City of Elko has slightly more diversity than the surrounding communities of Carlin City and Spring Creek.

| Table 1.2 | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Race | |
| | Percent White |
| Elko County | 82% |
| City of Elko | 83% |
| Carlin City | 92% |
| Spring Creek | 93% |
| Wells City | 80% |

Source: Census 2000

Household Size

The City of Elko's household size was estimated to be 2.66 in 2000. Updated Census data estimates that Nevada State's household size has grown slightly. Elko County's household size has slightly decreased, a trend occurring throughout the Nation. The City of Elko is expected to follow Elko County trends and thus will likely experience a slight decrease in household size as well.

| Table 1.3 | | |
|------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Average HH Size | | |
| | 2000 | 2006-2008 |
| Nevada State | 2.62 | 2.65 |
| Elko County | 2.85 | 2.68 |
| City of Elko | 2.66 | |
| Carlin City | 2.73 | |
| Spring Creek | 3.1 | |
| Wells City | 2.56 | |

Source: Census 2000, ACS 2006-2008

Median Household Income

Table 4 shows median household income for Nevada, Elko County, the City of Elko, and surrounding communities. In 2000, the City of Elko's median household income was estimated to be \$48,608. While updated household income data is only available for Elko County and Nevada State it is estimated that median household income has grown at the same rate as Elko County, at approximately 38 percent from 2000 to 2008. This results in a median household income during this same time period of approximately \$67,321. The mining industry is a large reason for the higher than average incomes in Elko County.

| Table 1.4 | | |
|-------------------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Median Household Income | | |
| | 2000 | 2006-2008 |
| Nevada State | \$44,581 | \$56,348 |
| Elko County | \$48,383 | \$67,009 |
| City of Elko | \$48,608 | |
| Carlin City | \$49,571 | |
| Spring Creek | \$60,109 | |
| Wells City | \$35,870 | |
| <i>Source: Census 2000, ACS 2006-2008</i> | | |

Health

The Nevada Public Health Foundation references a recent report done by Trust for America’s (TFAH) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) stating that Nevada has the 32nd highest rate of adult obesity in the nation and the 11th highest rate of overweight youths (ages 10-17). Elko County specifically reports a 30 percent obesity rate. One recommendation by the Nevada Public Health Foundation for addressing obesity in Nevada is “increasing the number of programs available in communities, schools, and childcare settings that help make nutritious foods more affordable and accessible and provide safe and healthy places for people to engage in physical activity.” (www.nevadapublichealthfoundation.org)

Summary of Demographics

The demographic information found above shows that Elko County has an increasingly large elderly population with smaller household sizes and larger median incomes than state averages.

Elko County Economic Diversification Authority (ECEDA)

Elko County Economic Development Authority (ECEDA), is a professional non-profit economic development authority devoted to assisting business and industry in their quest for the ideal location to establish or expand operations. As the Economic Diversification Authority, ECEDA’s mission is to encourage and coordinate diversified development and economic growth in Elko County.

The ECEDA Board of Directors is composed of elected officials from each of the participating cities, the County, and representatives of major local businesses. The organization works to recruit, attract, and help place new businesses and industries into homes in Elko County, and will continue to play an important role in the future development and growth in the County and City of Elko. More information can be found at the organization’s website: www.eceda.com