

High Desert Area - DCA for Employee Housing

Community Services Department
Planning and Building
DEVELOPMENT CODE AMENDMENT
APPLICATION



Community Services Department
Planning and Building
1001 E. Ninth St., Bldg. A
Reno, NV 89512-2845

Telephone: 775.328.6100

Development Code Amendment

Washoe County Code (WCC) Chapter 110, Article 818, Amendment of Development Code provide for the method for amending the Development Code.

Initiation of Amendment. Except as provided in Section 110.818.60, amendments shall be initiated as provided in this subsection. The Board of County Commissioners or the Planning Commission may initiate an amendment to the Development Code through resolution. An owner of real property or the property owner's authorized agent may initiate an amendment through an application to the Planning Commission. Citizen advisory boards established by the Board of County Commissioners may petition the Planning Commission to initiate an amendment to the Development Code.

Development Application Submittal Requirements

Applications are accepted on the 8th of each month. If the 8th falls on a non-business day, applications will be accepted on the next business day.

If you are submitting your application online, you may do so at OneNV.us

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|--------------------|---|
| X | 1. Fees: See Master Fee Schedule. Most payments can be made directly through the OneNV.us portal. If you would like to pay by check, please make the check payable to Washoe County and bring your application and payment to the Community Services Department (CSD). |
| X | 2. Development Application: A completed Washoe County Development Application form. |
| X | 3. Owner Affidavit: The Owner Affidavit must be signed and notarized by all owners of the property subject to the application request. |
| X | 4. Proof of Property Tax Payment: The applicant must provide a written statement from the Washoe County Treasurer's Office indicating all property taxes for the current quarter of the fiscal year on the land have been paid. |
| Workshop to follow | 5. Neighborhood Meeting: This project may require a Neighborhood Meeting to be held prior to application submittal. Please contact Washoe County Planning at Planning@washoecounty.gov or by phone at 775-328-6100 to discuss requirements. |
| X | 6. Application Materials: The completed Development Code Amendment Application materials. |
| X | 7. Submission Packets: One (1) packet and a flash drive. Any digital documents need to have a resolution of 300 dpi. If materials are unreadable, you will be asked to provide a higher quality copy. |

Notes:

- (i) Application and map submittals must comply with all specific criteria as established in the Washoe County Development Code and/or the Nevada Revised Statutes.
- (ii) Based on the specific nature of the development request, Washoe County reserves the right to specify additional submittal packets, additional information and/or specialized studies that clarify the potential impacts and potential conditions of development in order to minimize or mitigate impacts resulting from the project. No application shall be processed until the information necessary to review and evaluate the proposed project is deemed complete by the Director of Planning and Building.

Washoe County Development Application

Your entire application is a public record. If you have a concern about releasing personal information, please contact Planning and Building staff at 775.328.6100.

Project Information		Staff Assigned Case No.: _____	
Project Name:			
Project Description:			
Project Address:			
Project Area (acres or square feet):			
Project Location (with point of reference to major cross streets AND area locator):			
Assessor's Parcel No.(s):	Parcel Acreage:	Assessor's Parcel No.(s):	Parcel Acreage:
Indicate any previous Washoe County approvals associated with this application: Case No.(s).			
Applicant Information (attach additional sheets if necessary)			
Property Owner:		Professional Consultant:	
Name:		Name:	
Address:		Address:	
Zip:		Zip:	
Phone:	Fax:	Phone:	Fax:
Email:		Email:	
Cell:	Other:	Cell:	Other:
Contact Person:		Contact Person:	
Applicant/Developer:		Other Persons to be Contacted:	
Name:		Name:	
Address:		Address:	
Zip:		Zip:	
Phone:	Fax:	Phone:	Fax:
Email:		Email:	
Cell:	Other:	Cell:	Other:
Contact Person:		Contact Person:	
For Office Use Only			
Date Received:		Planning Area:	
County Commission District:		Master Plan Designation(s):	
CAB(s):		Regulatory Zoning(s):	

Development Code Amendment Application Supplemental Information

(All required information may be separately attached)

1. What section of the Washoe County Code (WCC) 110 of the Development Code is being requested to be amended?

2. Provide the specific language you are seeking to delete and/or add to the Development Code?

3. What is the purpose to amend the Development Code?

4. Are there any negative impacts to amending this section of the Development Code?



September 8, 2025

Trevor Lloyd, AICP, Planning Manager
Washoe County Community Development
1001 E. Ninth Street, Building A, Second Floor
Reno, NV 89512

RE: High Desert Area Development Code Amendment – Employee Housing in Excess of GR Density Allowance

Dear Mr. Lloyd:

This letter and attached application is provided for a Development Code Amendment to the High Desert Area. This request is submitted on behalf of BRDR Properties, LLC who owns 640 acres of north of Gerlach and has prepared and submitted a Special Use Permit application for proposed uses at the Iveson Ranch.

The requested DCA would allow for greater flexibility for businesses and agricultural uses that are remotely located to establish company towns, bunkhouse and permanent employee housing to accommodate workers at business or agricultural uses.

Rationale for Request

Most of the High Desert Area of Washoe County is remotely located and travel distances for employees can be a significant barrier to efficient operation of uses needing seasonal or permanent employees. As a resolution to this situation, it is proposed that a measured allowance be provided to exceed the standard density limitation of 1 unit per 40 acres. As part of the proposed language addition to the High Desert Area modifiers, 110.206.10, a Special Use Permit would be required to obtain allowance for a employee housing density beyond the standard code allowance in the GR zone.

Neighborhood Meeting

Discussion with county staff prior to the submittal of this application identified that a workshop will need to be conducted via Zoom or similar prior to the request moving forward to the Washoe County Planning Commission. It is the commitment of the applicant for this DCA request that this workshop meeting will be conducted on a date to be determined.

Legal Findings Review

The following is a review of the legal findings that must be made for approval of a Development Code Amendment.

(1) Consistency with Master Plan.

It is the applicant's belief that the proposed Development Code amendment is in substantial compliance with the policies and action programs of the Washoe County Master Plan. The following are passages and specific policies from the Envision 2040 that help to support the proposed DCA being consistent with the master plan.

The High Desert Area Plan (HDAP) Character Statement states: "Included in the long-range vision of the High Desert Planning Area is the promotion of affordable housing through a variety of housing options." The proposed DCA helps to foster this long-range vision by providing housing for employees where only limited to no added vehicle miles travelled (VMT) will be necessary. The proposed DCA presents the opportunity to provide housing where housing is needed in a resource efficient manner. Latter in the Character Statement it is stated that "Cluster residential development without increasing density is encouraged in this area." The intent is identified to be a reduction in visual impact associated with development and to preserve as much open space as possible and decrease the cost of building and maintaining required infrastructure. The allowance of employee level housing beyond the 1 dwelling unit per 40 acre limits presented by the GR zone accomplishes this goal.

The HDAP Character Statement additional identifies the area as "an attractive place in which to work and live." The proposed DCA would allow for housing directly at the place of employment with surrounding BLM and open space lands, meeting this vision statement for the area.

It is recognized within the HDAP Character Statement that private lands within the area containing natural of man-made features of unique and significant interest may be considered for more intense development (not to exceed one dwelling unit per five acres). This statement does not directly apply to the DCA applicant's property as there are no recognized natural or man-made features of unique and significant interest, however this statement does recognize the acceptance of a greater density than 1 dwelling unit per 40 acres, when justified. The case can be made that employee housing at a project, agricultural or other site may be justifies by saving the environmental degradation in air pollution and other negatives associated with long commutes to work in a remote area.

In addition to the noted supportive statement from the HDAP Character Statement policy **HD 1.5** - Regulaory Zones permitted within the High Desert Rural Character Management Area include MDR and LDR zoning, which provides for densities of 5 DU/AC and 10DU/AC, respectively. This is important as consistent zoning allows for a greater density (potentially by-right) than the limit of 1 DU/40 AC, as is the limit in the GR zoning designation (also a consistent designation in this area). This is clearly supportive of acceptable allowance of greater densities than would typically be allowed under GR within the Rural Character Management area of the High Desert Area.

Additional policy considerations include **HD 2.5**, which addresses dark skies lighting. Through the appropriate clustering of employee housing to the level necessary to meet a remote use' workforce requirements, lighting can be consolidated. Appropriately shielded, down lighting can serve more than 1 house and sensors can be used to shut of lighting when no one needs lighting.

Policy HD 2.3 identifies that development items be submitted to the CAB, but Washoe County has identified that the CAB's are not required to hear development items. County staff had requested that this project conduct a workshop meeting, which will be completed prior to the request being heard by the Washoe County Planning Commission under formal review.

The Priority Principles and Policies contained within Envision Washoe 2040 identify the following, which are supportive to the DCA request:

PH Principal 1 - Policy 3.4 – Support accessory dwelling units as a method of providing affordable and workforce housing.

The application of workforce housing can be seen as multiple accessory dwelling units to meet the appropriate needs of a business or agricultural operation in a remote location, where is would not be beneficial to have employees commute to work, daily.

NCR Principal 1 - Policy 1.2 – Maintain dark night skies.

Through the appropriate clustering of employee housing to the level necessary to meet remote use's workforce requirements, lighting can be consolidated. Appropriately shielded, down lighting can serve more than 1 house and sensors can be used to shut of lighting when no one needs lighting.

LU Principle 5 -High Desert Policy - Identify methods to remove the barriers to development and general property improvement experienced in remote areas as a result of low availability of professional services including engineering, architecture, surveying, and heavy equipment operation.

The reasonable allowance of an appropriate amount of employee housing allows for appropriately skilled workers to be more readily employed at some of the outlying, remote uses in northern Washoe County.

PH Principle 3 – Policy 3.1 - Allow for more flexibility in the zoning and land use regulations to enable more housing types to be built throughout the community where adequate infrastructure exists.

PH Principle 3 – Policy 3.2 - Reduce regulatory barriers to the provision of affordable and workforce housing through methods including but not limited to streamlining

the development process or offering regulatory flexibility and/or financial incentives for affordable and attainable housing.

Policies 3.1 and 3.2 are directly related to the requested DCA in providing flexibility and reducing barriers to the provision of workforce housing, this being more directly in employee housing.

(2) Promotes the Purpose of the Development Code.

It is the applicant's belief that the proposed Development Code amendment will not adversely impact the public health, safety or welfare, and will promote the original purposes for the Development Code as expressed in Article 918, Adoption of Development Code.

The proposed DCA, allowing for an increased density of employee housing through justification and approval of a special use permit directly addresses the following purpose statement from 110.918.10:

*(a) – promote the public health safety, morals and convenience and general welfare
The provision of an appropriate number of employee housing units at a remote facility improves the health, safety, convenience and general welfare for the business or agricultural operation, the employees by not having to commute long distance where carbon emissions, air quality issues from dust and safety issues from driving are experienced.*

*(b) Lessen traffic congestion in the streets
The workers that reside at the employee housing while working do not create additional traffic on area roads.*

(e) Prevent overcrowding of land and to facilitate adequate provision of transportation, water, sewage, schools, parks and other requirements.

The consolidation of employee housing in an appropriate number to meet the needs of remote operations helps to prevent those employees from having to live as close as feasible and affordable in a more densely developed area.

(g) Promote the economic and social advantages gained from appropriately regulated use of land resources

The clustering of employee housing helps to provide efficient water, septic, lighting and access on a remote site. The number of employee housing units would be balanced between the number of employees that a business or operations need in a remote environment v. the available resources to serve the uses at the business or operation, inclusive of the employee housing.

(3) Response to Changed Conditions.

The applicant believes that the proposed Development Code amendment responds to changed conditions or further studies that have occurred since the Development Code was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners, and the requested amendment allow for a more desirable utilization of land within the regulatory zones.

The proposed allowance for additional employee housing at appropriate and justifiable levels of need and resources available for business or agricultural uses in the GR zoning designation of the High Desert Area

The Vision Statement from the High Desert Area Plan identifies the following goals of the plan:

- *Respects private property rights;*
- *Provides a range of housing opportunities;*
- *Ensures that infrastructure is coincident with development and appropriate in scale and character to the community character articulated [in the Area Plan]*

(4) No Adverse Affects.

The applicant believes that the proposed Development Code amendment will not adversely affect the implementation of the policies and action programs of the Conservation Element or the Population Element of the Washoe County Master Plan.

The area in which the allowance for additional employee housing is predominately remote and sparsely populated. The addition of employee housing would have a negligible impact on the environment and population in the area and will help to justifiably and appropriately cluster employee housing where needs exist for agricultural or business/non-residential uses.

Closing

Provided with this cover letter are the necessary application forms and materials for review of this request. Should you have any questions regarding this request, please do not hesitate to contact me at 775-856-7073.

Respectfully submitted,



R. David Snelgrove, AICP
Planning, Team Lead

HIGH DESERT AREA - REDLINE ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

Article 206

HIGH DESERT AREA

Sections:

110.206.00	Purpose
110.206.05	Mobile Home and Manufactured Home Placement Standards, Development Standards and Design Standards
110.206.10	General Rural Regulatory Zone Area Modifier
110.206.15	Temporary Residential Development
110.206.20	Squaw Valley Reservoir Community Modifiers
110.206.25	Downtown Gerlach Community Modifiers
110.206.30	Specific Plans

Section 110.206.00 Purpose. The purpose of this article, Article 206, High Desert Area, is to set forth special regulations to supplement the general regulations set forth in Article 202, Area Plan General Regulations, and to implement the High Desert Area Plan contained in Volume Two of the Master Plan and the other applicable plan elements contained in Volume One of the Master Plan.

[Amended by Ord. 1447, provisions eff. 9/9/10.]

Section 110.206.05 Mobile Home and Manufactured Home Placement Standards, Development Standards and Design Standards. Mobile home and manufactured home placement standards, development standards and design standards in the High Desert planning area shall be regulated by the following provisions, and are exempt from the provisions of Article 312, Fabricated Housing:

- (a) **Placement Standards.** Mobile homes and manufactured homes may be placed on any residential regulatory zone parcel in the High Desert planning area, including any Trailer (TR) Overlay zone in effect prior to May 26, 1993 with the exception of TR parcels that have the current regulatory zones of either General Commercial, Neighborhood Commercial/Office, Tourist Commercial, Industrial, Open Space, Parks and Recreation, or Public/Semi-Public Facility. Mobile homes and manufactured homes may also be placed on any General Rural Regulatory Zone parcel in the High Desert planning area.
- (b) **Development Standards.** All new placements of mobile homes and manufactured homes, including set-ups and installations, shall comply with the following development standards:
 - (1) **Density and Intensity Standards.** Mobile homes and manufactured homes shall be subject to the maximum number of units allowed per acre, site coverage and height of structures as set forth in Article 402, Density/Intensity Standards, for the regulatory zone in which they are located.
 - (2) **Lot Standards.** Mobile homes and manufactured homes shall be subject to the minimum and maximum size of lots and the minimum average lot

width as set forth in Article 404, Lot Standards, for the regulatory zone in which they are located.

- (3) Building Placement Standards. Mobile homes and manufactured homes shall be subject to the building setbacks and yard requirements as set forth in Article 406, Building Placement Standards, for the regulatory zone in which they are located.
 - (4) Parking. Properties on which mobile homes and manufactured homes are placed shall contain at least two (2) off-street parking spaces. These parking spaces do not have to be located in an enclosed garage or carport.
 - (5) Skirting. Complete perimeter solid skirting, of a material and color complimentary to the mobile home or manufactured home, shall be provided from the bottom of the mobile home or manufactured home to the ground surface within sixty (60) days of the set-up date. The exterior covering of the mobile home or manufactured home can be used to satisfy the skirting requirement, except that, when a solid concrete or masonry perimeter foundation is used, the exterior covering material need not extend below the top of the foundation.
 - (6) Foundations. The foundation system must be safe and secure and must comply with the manufacturer's set-up instructions or a federal agency's (HUD/FHA, VA, FNMA or FmHA) approved mobile home and manufactured home foundation system. The foundation system must be set so that the height at the perimeter does not exceed a maximum of thirty-six (36) inches as measured from the bottom of the frame (e.g. support I-beam) to the surrounding finished grade, with at least one (1) section of the perimeter not exceeding sixteen (16) inches in height. The transportation hitch and wheels must be removed from the mobile home or manufactured home within sixty (60) days of occupancy, and the equipment must be either physically removed from the parcel or stored under the unit and be completely concealed by the skirting.
 - (7) Flood Areas. Mobile homes and manufactured homes located in flood hazard areas or limited flooding areas shall comply with the requirements of Article 416, Flood Hazards.
- (c) Design Standards. All new placements of mobile homes and manufactured homes, including set-ups and installations, shall comply with the following appearance standards to ensure aesthetic compatibility with development in the High Desert planning area:
- (1) Exterior Siding. Exterior siding of the mobile home or manufactured home shall be made of a non-reflective material.
 - (2) Roofing Material. The roof of the mobile home or manufactured home shall be constructed of non-reflective materials. Tarps, cloth or other temporary weatherproofing material shall not be allowed as a permanent roof.

[Added by Ord. 875, provisions eff. 8/3/93. Amended by Ord. 939, provisions eff. 11/1/95; Ord. 1023, provisions eff. 7/1/98.]

Section 110.206.10 General Rural Regulatory Zone Area Modifier. In addition to the regulations of the General Rural Regulatory Zone described in Article 106, Regulatory Zones, and the allowed uses described in Article 302, Allowed Uses, the following regulation modifiers shall apply in the High Desert planning area:

(a) Allowed Uses:

(1) Residential Use Types:

- (i) Family residential - attached accessory dwelling;
- (ii) Family residential - detached accessory dwelling;
- (iii) Manufactured home parks; and
- (iv) Group home.

(2) Civic Use Types:

- (i) Administrative services;
- (ii) Child care - family daycare;
- (iii) Community center;
- (iv) Convalescent services; and
- (v) Postal services.

(3) Commercial Use Types:

- (i) Administrative offices;
- (ii) Animal sales and services - veterinary services, agricultural;
- (iii) Animal sales and services - veterinary services, pets;
- (iv) Commercial educational services;
- (v) Commercial recreation - commercial campground facilities;
- (vi) Lodging services - bed and breakfast inns;
- (vii) Medical services;
- (viii) Nursery sales - retail;
- (ix) Personal services;
- (x) Personal storage;
- (xi) Recycle center - remote collection facility;
- (xii) Repair services, consumer; and

(xiii) Retail sales - convenience.

(4) Agricultural Use Types:

(i) Agricultural processing;

(ii) Agricultural sales; and

(iii) Produce sales.

(5) Multi-Uses:

(i) Company towns, bunkhouse and permanent employee housing;

(ii) Livestock camps; and

(iii) Railroad camps, highway camps and temporary employee housing.

(b) Requiring a Board of Adjustment Approved Special Use Permit Subject to the Provisions of Article 810, Special Use Permits:

(1) Civic Use Types:

(i) Hospital services.

(2) Commercial Use Types:

(i) Adult entertainment;

(ii) Automotive and equipment - automotive repair;

(iii) Automotive and equipment - cleaning;

(iv) Automotive and equipment - equipment repair and sales;

(v) Automotive and equipment - storage of operable vehicles;

(vi) Automotive and equipment – truck stops;

(vii) Commercial centers – neighborhood centers;

(viii) Commercial recreation - indoor entertainment;

(ix) Commercial recreation - indoor sports and recreation;

(x) Commercial recreation – limited gaming facilities;

(xi) Construction sales and services;

(xii) Eating and drinking establishments - convenience;

(xiii) Eating and drinking establishments - full service;

- (xiv) Liquor sales – off-premises;
- (xv) Liquor sales – on-premises;
- (xvi) Retail sales - specialty stores;
- (xvii) Recycle center – full service recycle center;
- (xviii) Recycle center – residential hazardous substance recycle center;
- (xix) Secondhand sales; and
- (xx) Transportation services.

(3) Multi-Uses:

- (i) Private air strips and glider ports.

(4) Industrial Use Types: (ii) Company Towns, Bunkhouse and permanent employee housing in excess of the allowed GR density of 1 DU/40 Acres;

- (i) General industrial – heavy;
- (ii) General industrial – intermediate;
- (iii) General industrial – limited;
- (iv) Inoperable vehicle storage;
- (v) Laundry services;
- (vi) Salvage yards;
- (vii) Wholesaling, storage and distribution – heavy; and;
- (viii) Wholesaling, storage and distribution – light.

(5) Agricultural Use Types:

- (i) Animal slaughtering, commercial.

[Added by Ord. 916, provisions eff. retro. to 5/26/93, amended by Ord. 1378, provisions eff. 8/1/08; Ord. 1485, provisions eff. 3/27/12.]

Section 110.206.15 Temporary Residential Development. Temporary residential development associated with short-term commercial uses in the High Desert Planning Area, such as the annual Burning Man event, may be acceptable with a special use permit, provided the development does not require community facilities or services and it satisfies applicable health and safety requirements as stipulated by Northern Nevada Public Health and the Washoe County Community Services Department to ensure compliance with federal, state, and local health and safety regulations.

[Added by Ord. 1709, provisions eff. 12/22/23]

Section 110.206.20 Squaw Valley Reservoir Community Modifiers. Properties within the Squaw Valley Reservoir, as identified on Map 110.206.1 High Desert Planning Area Communities Map- Squaw Valley Reservoir, may be considered for more intense development (not to exceed one dwelling unit per 5 acres) when a development agreement is approved and any unique features are protected and preserved for public enjoyment. This development agreement may include, without limitation, the following:

- (a) Opportunities for residential development of mixed housing types.
- (b) Opportunities for local serving non-residential uses.
- (c) Opportunities for enhancement of tourism.
- (d) Development will be sited to blend with the surrounding developed and open space lands.
- (e) Development will minimize and mitigate its impacts on key resources.
- (f) Development will be compatible with and enhance the scenic quality of the High Desert planning area.
- (g) Development will promote the sustainable development goals of Washoe County.
- (h) Development will provide for public access to any features of unique and significant interest, including but not limited to significant wildlife, hydrological features, and reservoirs.

[Added by Ord. 1709, provisions eff. 12/22/23]

SECTION 110.206.25 Downtown Gerlach Community Modifiers. In order to promote the unique character of this rural freestanding community, the area identified as the Downtown Gerlach Community Area on Map 110.206.25.1 High Desert Planning Area Communities Map- Downtown Gerlach is subject to the following development standards and guidelines:

- (a) To promote a sense of neighborhood, to promote the functional and aesthetic integration of commercial uses with the community, and to promote the efficient use of resources and infrastructure in the High Desert planning area, commercial development proposals should include a residential component, or be closely integrated with nearby residential development. In order to facilitate this policy, special use permits to establish residential uses in commercial regulatory zones will not be required in the Downtown Gerlach Community Area. Residential uses shall be allowed on parcels designated General Commercial in the Downtown Gerlach Community Area.
- (b) Commercial and mixed-use development proposals must show how the unique character of the Gerlach Community will be preserved or improved, and must be consistent with all Principles and Policies in the Washoe County Master Plan.
- (c) Residential properties located within Downtown Gerlach shall be allowed Neighborhood Commercial uses without the requirement of a special use permit.
- (d) A consistent architectural style shall be used to unify these parcels. This unifying style should recognize the unique character of the Gerlach community. Building materials shall be chosen for their ability to blend with the landscape and should emphasize the use of wood, stone, stucco or related materials.

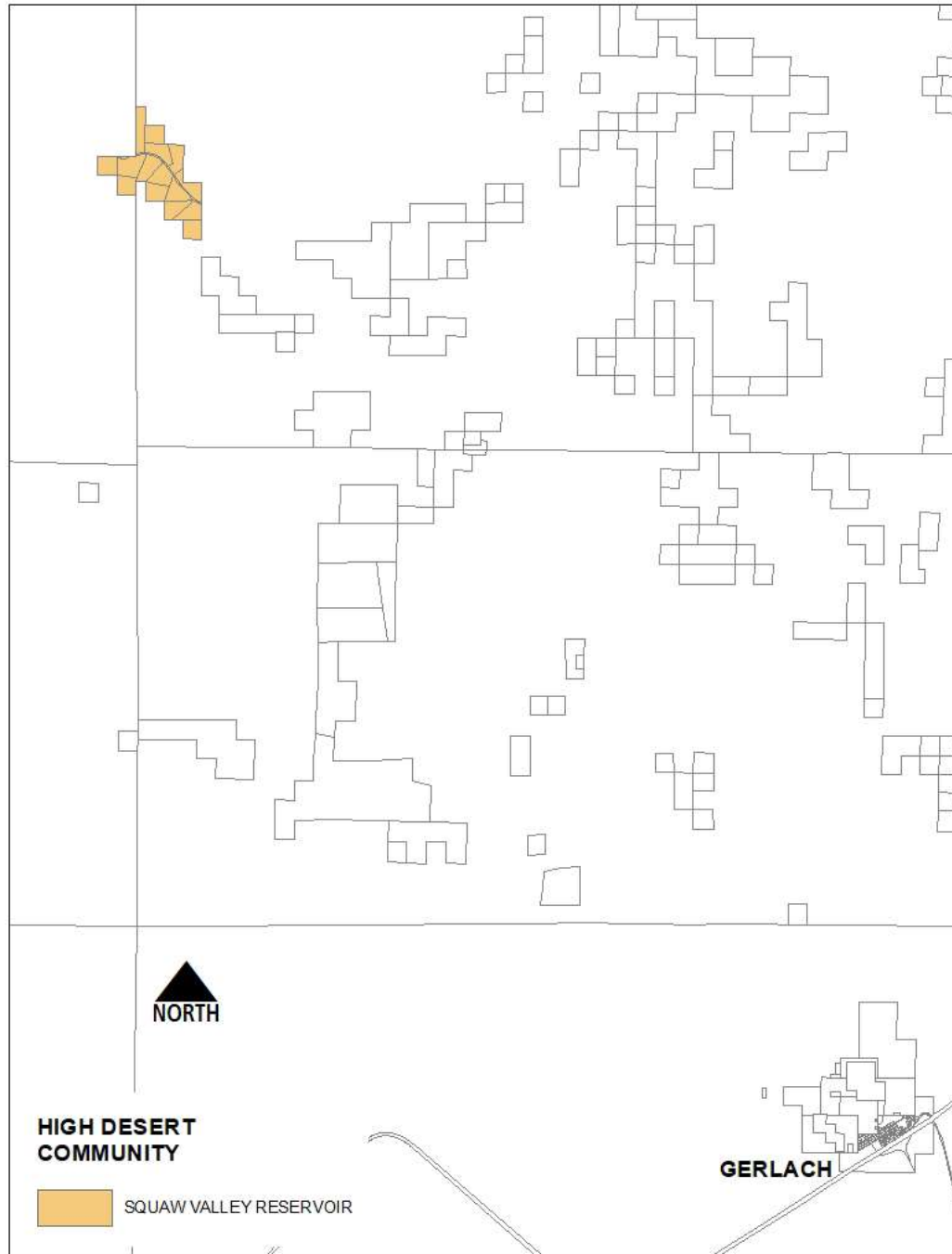
[Added by Ord. 1709, provisions eff. 12/22/23]

Section 110.206.30 Specific Plans. Some parcels in the High Desert planning area may be subject to a specific plan and/or a document labeled as a “specific plan” and its associated development standards. By way of example, the Black Rock Station Specific Plan falls within this

Planning Area. For the most up to date information on specific plans, visit the Washoe County Planning Program's website or the Washoe County Regional Mapping System.

[Added by Ord. 1709, provisions eff. 12/22/23]

Map 110.206.1 High Desert Planning Area Communities Map- Squaw Valley Reservoir



Map 110.206.25.1 High Desert Planning Area Communities Map- Downtown Gerlach

