

Project Charter - Board Objective: Economic Development

Prepared by/project manager: Kimberly Parker, Program Manager, Economic Development

Project Sponsor: Trisha Tillotson, Director Community Development Agency

Project Lead: Kimberly Parker

BACKGROUND AND PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

At the Board's 2019 workshop an objective for economic development was introduced. It was updated in 2020-2024 and most recently in 2025. In August 2022, a Program Manager was hired, and a physical office was created as part of the Community Development Agency.

Highlighted efforts include fostering sustainable economic growth in concert with our community partners, helping to advance county projects, securing funding, working with businesses at all levels, and showcasing the county as a place to live, work, and play. This initiative aims to create job opportunities, enhance the quality of life for residents, and position the county as a competitive player in the regional and national economies.

PROJECT SCOPE AND TIMELINE

The Board stated objective *promotes economic development by emphasizing resiliency and entrepreneurship; retaining and attracting high quality jobs; investing in major infrastructure projects; and working in partnership with our municipalities to support our small business and tourism sectors.*

The Economic Development Work Group (EDWG) focuses on activities that support economic growth and vitality in Nevada County. The goal of the EDWG is to implement the Board of Supervisors economic development objective and directed initiatives. The focus outlined in the Economic Development Two-Year Action Plan is *committed to coordinated actions with our partners to build a resilient, diversified economy that leverages our unique cultural and natural resources, embraces innovation, entrepreneurship and small businesses, and maintains a high quality of life for all.*

The Economic Development (ED) Initiatives follow with examples of work to be completed.

- Cultivate economic diversification, sustainability, and equity – The ED office in collaboration with county departments and local partners continue to implement the Economic Development Action Plan. As a member of the CA Jobs First Capital Leadership Council, the Economic Development Program Manager is assisting the county and community organizations with Catalyst and Implementation grant requests. The office also administers several contracts including Sierra Business Council, the Economic Resource Council of Nevada County, Sierra Commons, the Community Foundation of Nevada County, Local Freshies, and the Art in Public Spaces contract.

PROJECT CHARTER

- Funding and Advocacy – The office will identify, seek and secure funding for County and partner initiatives related to economic development and coordinate priority advocacy opportunities and engage State and Federal lobbyists as appropriate.
- Construct infrastructure & further projects & plans to support economic vitality - Efforts will focus on continuing the work on the NSJ Fire Suppression Project and will assist the airport with their implementation of the Revenue and Sustainability project. The Program Manager will continue to support efforts for the courthouse site and will engage community partners on continued projects (Donner Summit, InConcert Sierra, Penn Valley Community Center, etc.). Opportunities to improve permitting, warm handoffs, and initial consultations will be prioritized in 2025.
- Support business attraction, retention and growth – Working with partners, we will provide ongoing support to entrepreneurs and small business by building out the Business Retention and Expansion program. Additionally, we will continue business technical assistance through Sierra Business Council. Where feasible, we will identify capital opportunities for business. Through a joint position with the Nevada Joint Union High School district and local economic and educational partners efforts we will identify ways to advance youth and young adult workforce opportunities. Examples of next steps include:
 - Create a *How to do Business in Nevada County* guide.
 - solidify the Clinical Nurse Assistant (CNA) program with Sierra College and NJUHSD.
 - Host the Young Entrepreneur Pitch Week.

Following direction from the 2025 Board of Supervisor Workshop, the Economic Development Office will also:

- conduct community outreach with businesses in the unincorporated regions to share what a county business license program might look like and get input. Following that, bring a presentation to a Board of Supervisors that includes feedback, research conducted, and fee vs no fee options. Request next steps from the Board.
 - Bring First Priority Recommendations from the Finance and Incentive report back to the Board with greater detail on how these might be implemented.
 - Of the Second Priority Recommendations from the Finance and Incentive report, the Board is interested in having a report on what a Community Loan Fund for small business might look like.
- Support potential high growth sector development -
 - Tourism: The team will continue to improve and scale the gonevadacounty.com website and social media. The office will continue to bring tourism partners together in western county to collaborate on joint marketing strategies. Examples of 2025 focus includes:
 - creating a plan to promote Nevada County as a location for Executive Leadership Meetings and small conferences.
 - Direct funds to support coordinated regional marketing efforts through Visit CA and Gold Country Visitor Association.
 - Provide a staff memo on gonevadacounty.com in response to a request at the 2025 Board Workshop.

PROJECT CHARTER

- Agriculture: Working with the Resource Conservation District, county staff will help implement the Sustainable Agriculture Land Conservation (SALC) grant. The staff will also participate in a grant writing training program for farmers. The ED Office will engage with current and new ag related businesses and nonprofits needing assistance. The Department of Agriculture will participate in the 2025 Nevada County Farm Tour and will produce the Annual Crop report.
- Cannabis: Cannabis staff will implement the new \$500,000 Go-Biz Equity grant. In addition, having completed year one of the Department of Cannabis Control Retail Access grant, planning staff will carry out next steps related to the ordinance brought to the Board in 2024 allowing limited retail/storefront businesses in the unincorporated areas of Nevada County and providing an update to the BOS within 6-12 months of any dispensary opening . County staff will keep the Board of Supervisors apprised of any changes made to the State of California cannabis retail excise tax rate, which is currently 15%, to help evaluate impacts to our local cannabis retail business industry. Strengthen Rural and County Identity. A collaborative team of county staff and economic partners will continue work outlined in the Nevada County Action Plan to implement a campaign to boost Nevada County as a desirable place to live, work and play.

High Level Risks and Assumptions:

- Economic Downturn: External economic factors affecting the success of businesses in the region.
- Regulatory challenges: Unforeseen changes in regulations impacting the ease of doing business.
- Community resistance: Potential opposition from certain groups within the community to specific economic development initiatives.
- Insurance: The inability to properly address fire and liability insurance for homeowners and businesses.
- Housing: The inability to move housing projects forward.
- Broadband: Access and reliability of broadband with sufficient upload and download speeds for employers and remote workers.

Boundaries and limitations:

While there is tremendous opportunity for economic development, we need to be realistic in where we want to put our efforts as it is a one-person office. There is tremendous support from other county departments and community partners, so looking at opportunities to utilize others on projects and teams will enable us to make greater progress. Collaboration with local and regional partners and our cities and town in elements of the action plan is essential, but capacity and funding challenges will need to be taken into consideration as we set the strategy going forward.

Assumptions:

Federal support: With the change in government, it is unknown at this time what the impacts may be to counties and communities. While there was considerable funding for economic development

PROJECT CHARTER

initiatives last year, especially those tied to climate, and the sunset for money for infrastructure is currently set to go away in 2028, funding may be at risk.

State support: Because of California's budget status, current and potential funding may be realigned or jeopardized.

Tax revenue and Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) funding: Most county economic development offices receive substantial funding through the general fund and TOT support. Dependent on the economy, these funds could be impacted positively or negatively.

- Economic Trends: Using market research such as Brookings Institute data, industry analysis and economic analysis, assumptions will be made to determine if economic trends will generally be favorable for regional business growth.

Communications Plan:

- Participate as a member of the county's Public Information Office (PIO) team.
- Provide regular updates through the economic development newsletter, CDA newsletter, and other publications to keep stakeholders, county staff and supervisors informed about the progress of the Economic Development Office and upcoming activities.
- Participate in public meetings as requested including, but not limited to: Board of Supervisor meetings, town hall meetings, chamber and economic partner meetings, MACs, service clubs, etc. Provide a platform for open dialogue and communication.
- Ensure there is current information on the Economic Development webpage and gonevadacounty.com and maintain an active presence on social media platforms to share success stories, job opportunities, and important announcements.
- Engage local and regional media.

Summary Budget:

The Economic Development budget is approximately \$685K in ongoing costs including the staffing, overhead and the SBC and other contracts (the fiscal year 2425 budget is \$574k). Project specific costs already approved and carrying over from current budget allocations include NSJ Fire Suppression construction (\$1.4M), PV Community Center (\$500,000), Community Foundation (\$250,000 minus \$83,333 expected to be spent in fiscal year 2025, and the pending Art In Public Spaces contract (\$30,000) for approx. \$2M with a need for \$2.3M in current unfunded grants required for the NSJ project. Dept plans to apply for the next CDBG round for this additional funding for construction and reimbursement for eligible preliminary engineering costs.

Board Priority Ask: \$250,000 over 2 years (approx. \$125,000 per year) for Economic Development Action Plan implementation and \$175,000 for NSJ Fire Suppression Project continuance.

PROJECT CHARTER

Charter Budget Economic Development					
		Costs			
Initiative/Project	Board Workshop \$ (Board Priority Assign. GF)	Other Funded Costs	Unfunded Costs	Total Cost	Revenue Note
Economic Development		\$633,000	\$52,000	\$685,000	Estimated ongoing operational budget
Major project: PV Comm Center		\$500,000		\$500,000	
Major project: Community Foundation of Nevada County		\$250,000		\$250,000	
Major project: NSJ Fire Suppression Project	\$175,000 (includes \$64,000 ROW)	\$1,400,000	\$2,300,000	\$3,875,000	NSJ project construction cost \$3.7M, seeking grant opportunities for \$2.3M to match existing grant. GF is needed FY 25/26 for Engineering staff to apply for grants, well monitoring & ROW purchase to make the project shovel ready. Some costs may be reimbursable from a CDBG grant that will be applied for in May 2025.
Action Plan Initiatives based on Board Direction of priorities	\$125,000			\$125,000	Specific projects will be identified from Action Plan and proposed as part of FY 25/26 Budget.
Total	\$300,000	\$2,783,000	\$2,352,000	\$5,435,000	

PROJECT CHARTER

WORKGROUP MEMBERS – ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Team Member Name	Department	Roles/Responsibility
Core Members		
Kimberly Parker	Community Development Agency/Economic Development Office	Project Manager/Economic Development Lead
Trisha Tillotson	Community Development Agency	CDA Lead
Kristin York	Sierra Business Council	SBC Representative/Contract
George Schureck	Community Development Agency/Building Department	Building Lead
Matt Kelley	Community Development Agency/Code & Cannabis Compliance Dept. Director	Cannabis and Code Lead
Jeff Dellis	CEO Office/Career Technical Education/Youth Leadership Development Project Coordinator	Youth Commission and Internships Lead
Optional members		
Michelle Bodley	Treasurer/Tax Collector	Treasury and Tax i Lead
Carissa Cyr	Clerk of the Board Office	Clerk of the Board/Legislative Lead
Alison Lehman	CEO Office	Chief Executive Officer Lead
Other County Staff	Dept. with specific economic development activities to be addressed.	Varied
CDA Admin Support	Don't regularly attend meetings	
Vera De Ferrari	Community Development Agency	Communications Representative
Alicia Chaturvedula	Community Development Agency	Budget/Fiscal analyst

The workgroup meets on the 1st Tuesday of the month from 2:00 – 3:00 pm. Meetings serve as a time to share information, check on progress of activities and initiatives, bring forth areas for discussion, and identify emerging issues, and unmet opportunities.

Economic development is closely related to multiple other board objectives and teams (e.g. Broadband, Recreation, Cannabis, Climate, Housing). Alignment with these teams and their representatives is important and they are brought into workgroup meetings for discussion on topics with related to their department's work.

HIGH LEVEL REQUIREMENTS:

Major Stakeholders include:

1. County Departments
2. Businesses, developers, landlords, entrepreneurs, residents, and visitors.
3. Local, Regional, and Statewide economic partners
 - Economic Resource Council of Nevada County
 - Sierra Business Council/Small Business Development Center
 - Sierra Commons
 - Grass Valley, Nevada City, Penn Valley, and Tahoe Truckee Chambers
 - Nevada County Contractors Association and Contractors Association of Tahoe/Truckee
 - Nevada County Realtors
 - Cannabis Alliance
 - Nevada Joint Union High School District
 - Sierra College
 - Nevada County Arts Council
 - Alliance For Workforce Development
 - RCRC
 - CalEd
 - Resource Conservation District
 - Visit Tahoe Truckee
 - Others
4. Commissions/Groups including the MACs and others.
5. Government Agencies:
 - Go-Biz
 - Department of Cannabis Control
 - Food and AG
 - Others
6. The cities of Grass Valley, Nevada City, the Town of Truckee, and the unincorporated areas of Washington, Penn Valley, South County, and North San Juan.

Approved by (Project Sponsor): _____ Date: _____