



NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
BOARD AGENDA MEMO

MEETING DATE: January 24, 2025
TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Jeffrey Thorsby, Chief of Staff/Clerk of the Board
SUBJECT: Board of Supervisor’s Informational Items

RECOMMENDATION: Receive issue briefings and engage in discussion and provide desired direction as applicable.

FUNDING: N/A

BACKGROUND: As a part of the process to prepare the Board’s annual workshop, the County Executive Officer and workshop facilitator met with each Board member to identify their desired topics of discussion for the workshop. In response to the Board’s feedback, additional topics were requested to be discussed that include: 1) Community Wellness Initiative, 2) Environmental Health/Natural Resources/Mines Pilot, 3) Donner Pass Road (Old HWY 40) Snow Removal, 4) South Yuba River Shuttle Service, 5) Tribal Affairs Policy, 6) Spay and Neuter Program, and 7) Microtransit Pilot in East County. Therefore, the following items are slated for discussion.

Initiated: Jeffrey Thorsby, Chief of Staff/Clerk of the Board
Approved: Alison Lehman, County Executive Officer
Submittal Date: January 13, 2025

DISCUSSION ITEMS

DISCUSSION SUBJECT: Community Wellness

FROM: Supervisor Swarthout, District 3

RECOMMENDATION: Provide direction to staff to develop a framework for a county-wide Community Wellness Initiative for the Board's consideration.

FUNDING: N/A

BACKGROUND: It is with the goal of increasing the health and wellbeing of our community that I am requesting the Board discuss and explore support for a county-wide Community Wellness (Healthspan) Initiative. This initiative would involve several relevant and integral community partners and further our own internal public health initiatives.

The purpose of this initiative is to increase the quality of life for our citizens with a granular focus on a few areas to ensure success and by addressing these areas proactively. As shared by Dr. Neely (CEO of Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital), "while we have made extraordinary advances in treating disease, we have failed to prioritize wellness. To truly improve health, we need to focus on behavior, cognitive science, and equity. While a "Cancer Moonshot" is laudable, the most impactful change would be enabling people to make better daily decisions about their health."

The proposed initial focus includes:

- Food Systems
 - Desired Outcomes: Increase local food consumption, reduce diabetes
- Social connection
 - Desired Outcomes: Reduce depression rates, increase coordinated services
- Movement
 - Desired Outcomes: Reduce obesity rates and cardiovascular disease
- Youth and Families
 - Desired Outcomes: Increase activities for youth, reduce chronic absenteeism and risky behaviors (smoking, drinking, substance abuse, etc.)

DISCUSSION SUBJECT: Environmental Health/Natural Resources/Mines Pilot

FROM: Supervisor Hall, District 1

RECOMMENDATION: Provide direction to staff to further explore various options and provide recommendations for an Environmental Health/Natural Resources/Mines pilot position for the Board's consideration.

FUNDING: N/A

BACKGROUND: As evidenced by the recent Rise Gold mine hearings, the Lava Cap Mine Superfund Site within our County, and increasingly common extreme weather events such as devastating wildfire brought on by a changing climate, the time to act is now to proactively monitor and protect our natural resources. Protecting our natural resources will not only address environmental threats that affect the health and safety of

our community, but it will protect our economic vitality. The attached memo from the Community Development Agency provides information regarding natural resources in Nevada County and current County roles in protection of our natural resources. This memo will inform the Board discussion on this item regarding ensuring that there are no gaps in natural resource protection, proactively addressing environmental threats, and improving tracking and monitoring of both our natural resources in the County (environmental, unique ecosystems, threatened creatures, and flora) and environmental threats (mine waste, etc.).

As recent events indicate a need to protect our natural resources through proactive action, I am requesting the Board provide staff direction to further explore various options and provide recommendations for an Environmental Health/Natural Resources/Mines pilot position for the Board's consideration.

Nevada County is home to precious environmental assets whose location and history is not being formally preserved. In addition, it his home to thousands of mines – active, dormant, owned, and abandoned – which have not been mapped, are not being monitored, and pose both immediate physical threats (wildland firefighters, search and rescue folks, hikers and walkers), and ongoing threats to us all due to toxic releases into our waterways. Staff do a good job of responding to threats to our resources and to mine dangers when they come to our attention, but our County response is reactive, too often trying to mitigate expensive damage that has already happened and could be avoided with a more strategic, less costly and focused risk avoidance approach. This reactive approach is not only costly – it also eats up staff time with untrained staff trying to fill gaps in information, craft solutions, and figure out relationships. We need a person who can build and leverage the local, State and Federal agencies who have the skills to assess the threats and create cleanup plans, and to work with local partners (NID) with similar interests and challenges. It is high time we make staff and resources available in an intentional effort to proactively identify, track, and resolve problems that will only get worse over time. We must confront the reality that mine waste berms (dams) weaken over time, as do abandoned mine shaft and tunnel infrastructure, posing an increasing threat of physical harm and toxic releases. Conversely, we also want to do a better job of preserving the natural resources that draw people to our community, make us proud, and are also part of a healthy economy.

The attached memo from the Community Development Agency provides some options to address this gap, and some background on the large and disbursed number of agencies with pieces of this responsibility. This is meant to inform the Board discussion on this item.

I am requesting the Board provide staff direction to further explore various options and provide recommendations for an Environmental Health/Natural Resources/Mines pilot position for the Board's consideration.

Encl:

- Natural Resources in Nevada County Memo

DISCUSSION SUBJECT: Donner Pass Road (Old HWY 40) Snow Removal

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FROM: Supervisor Bullock, District 5

RECOMMENDATION: Provide direction to staff to review the issue and provide recommendations regarding Donner Pass Road snow removal for Board consideration.

FUNDING: N/A

BACKGROUND: Nevada County includes approximately 2,800 miles of public and private roads. The NC Department of Public Works maintains approximately 562 miles of public roads and an additional 50 miles established under various road maintenance districts including Permanent Road Divisions and County Service Areas. Due to funding and resource constraints, the County prioritizes its maintenance of roadways, including providing snowplowing during times of winter weather, through its annual Capital Improvement Plan.

As a part of its maintained mileage program, Donner Pass Road, also referred to as Highway 40, is maintained year around from I-80 to Donner Summit just .5 miles east of Sugar Bowl (Donner Summit Visitor Center (VC)). The section from this point to the east, down to Donner Lake (DL) (Donner Summit Visitor Center to DL), is not maintained in the winter by the County. Donner Summit VC to DL is maintained in winter by Sugar Bowl Ski Resort and is often closed in winter seasons due to weather conditions and lack of available resources to safely keep it open.

Old 40, in its entirety, provides access to the Soda Springs Community, Serene Lakes, Sugar Bowl Ski Resort, Donner Ski Ranch, Royal Gorge, Soda Springs Ski Resort, PG&E summit substation, and more. During the winter months the County plows snow on the upper section of Donner Pass Road between Interstate 80 and Donner Summit Visitors Center (approximately 6 miles), but does not snowplow the lower section of Donner Pass Road between the Visitor Center and Town of Truckee (Donner Lake) and is closed during snow events. This is a steep, narrow and winding section of Donner Pass Road famous for the scenic Rainbow Bridge. The County works very closely with the California Highway Patrol (CHP) on when to close this section of road until it can be safely plowed and opened to traffic and Sugar Bowl is required to plow this section as a condition of their use permit.

Historically, this was not an issue, as the residential community, emergency services, and visiting tourists would be able to get to Truckee on Interstate Highway 80. However, increasingly in recent years, California Highway Patrol (CHP) has continued to close Highway 80 on a regular basis, and now so often it is anticipated by residents to close on a daily basis including during rain events alone. As such, the importance and demand to use Donner Pass Road has increased exponentially and leaving residents, emergency responders, and critical staff and supplies with no other options.

It should be noted that the County works very closely with the CHP on when to close this section of road until it can be safely plowed and opened to traffic. Sugar Bowl also plows sections of Donner Pass Road as a condition of their use permit when it is safe to do so. Current snow plowing efforts on Donner Pass Road represent approximately

40% of the County's total snow plowing budget or approximately \$55,000 per mile/per year on the upper section.

However, as circumstances have changed and the need for use of Donner Pass Road has increased, I am requesting the Board provide staff direction to review the issue and come back to the Board with a cost benefit analysis, review on days closed and applicable traffic use, list of staffing and resources needed and a set of recommendations for the Board's consideration with the goal of keeping the road open in the winter of 2025/26. This may include a simple arrangement to make additional compensation to Sugar Bowl to assist maintaining the County road.

DISCUSSION SUBJECT: South Yuba River Shuttle Service
FROM: Supervisor Hoek, District 4
RECOMMENDATION: Direct staff to prepare and explore various service schemes to operate a river shuttle for Board consideration.
FUNDING: N/A

BACKGROUND: Over the past decade the South Yuba River recreational areas within Western Nevada County have seen the number of recreation visitors increase significantly, which is fantastic but has led to traffic and logistical challenges. These challenges include increased traffic congestion, illegal parking, vehicle break-ins, overcrowding, litter and access challenges for emergency responders. I have witnessed these challenges myself and continually hear from the community about these issues, and I want to make the river experience better for everyone.

The County has worked with South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL), California State Parks, and local community groups to develop strategies for mitigating some of these challenges while also supporting the ongoing use and enjoyment of South Yuba River recreation areas. One concept that has been discussed is the concept of a river shuttle, a service which has been attempted previously in 2018, to help limit the traffic issues and to create a better experience for residents and recreationalists.

As river visitation continues to increase and a solution must be found to improve these challenges, I am requesting the Board provide staff direction to prepare and explore various service schemes to operate a river shuttle. If directed, staff is prepared to explore options including a directly operated river specific seasonal shuttle, a contracted river shuttle, or the addition of seasonal shuttle services to the already operating Nevada County Connects Route 7 – North San Juan route.

DISCUSSION SUBJECT: Tribal Affairs Policy
FROM: Supervisor Bullock, District 2
RECOMMENDATION: Direct staff to develop a set of tribal affairs policy recommendations for Board consideration.

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FUNDING: N/A

BACKGROUND: Over the past several years, the County has increased engagement efforts with local tribal communities beyond required regulation. Tribal communities that recognize Nevada County as holding ancestral significance for them include the Nisenan Tribe of the Nevada City Rancheria, Tsi-Akim Maidu of Taylorsville Rancheria, and Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, not dismissing the potential of other tribes not yet self-identified. In addition, the United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC) located south of Nevada County at the Auburn Rancheria is also active promoting tribal interests and protecting cultural heritage sites by providing input on proposed development projects. Only the Washoe Tribe and UAIC are federally recognized, both the Tsi-Akim Maidu and Nisenan are working to have their federal recognition restored.

Many County departments are required by law to formally engage tribal communities on efforts such as proposed development projects (via the Nevada County Community Development Agency) and County health plans (via Health and Human Services Agency). Tribal communities also play a pivotal role in Board Objectives such as the development of the Nevada County Recreation & Resiliency Master Plan and vegetation management efforts coordinated by the Nevada County Office of Emergency Services. Other recent tribal engagement have included, but are not limited to, working with the Washoe Tribe and the Nisenan Tribe on efforts associated with the Climate Resilience Objective through participation of Nevada County Sustainability Summit, and partnering on the County's awarded Regional Resilience Planning Grant for the development of its Climate Action Adaptation Plan, respectively. Other efforts have included partnering with the Washoe Tribe on the development of a local tribal curriculum program with the Nevada County and Tahoe-Truckee Superintendent of Schools, working to protect cultural resources at risk from vandalism on popular trails on Donner Summit, and other efforts. The County has also worked closely with the Nisenan Tribe on projects related to land-use compliance and "land-back" efforts.

However, as engagement has increased over the last several years, it has become evident that efforts are not coordinated. This has resulted in multiple departments contacting tribes at various times without policy guidance. This ad-hoc and uncoordinated contact creates formality differences and context irregularities between inter-county, state, and federal tribal relationships. This conduct makes cultural and historic sensitivity or equitable engagement and relationship building very difficult for Nevada County staff and elected leadership. The County does not have any formal overarching tribal affairs policy to provide staff with guidance on how, and how **not** to engage tribal communities.

Therefore, in an effort to further enrich and enhance the County's ability to effectively and equitably work with tribal communities, I am requesting the Board provide direction to staff to develop a set of tribal affairs policy recommendations for Board consideration. Moreover, I also request these efforts be developed in coordination with an Ad-Hoc Subcommittee led by the Office of the Board of Supervisors who is actively engaged in current tribal affairs efforts and participating in the National Association of Counties Tribal Affairs Subcommittee advocating for tribal affairs policies at the national level. With a set of well-vetted and developed policies, the County will be able to increase communication efficiencies, mitigate risk associated with inter-tribal disputes, and

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advance partnership efforts with tribal communities in Nevada County for the wellbeing of both.

DISCUSSION SUBJECT: Community Spay and Neuter Program

FROM: Supervisor Swarthout, District 3

RECOMMENDATION: Provide direction to staff to develop a spay and neuter program for the Board’s consideration.

FUNDING: N/A

BACKGROUND: Counties across the nation, including Nevada County, are experiencing a rise in animal shelter intakes, particularly among kittens and puppies. From October 2023 to November 2024, our current Nevada County Animal Shelter took in 381 kittens and 263 puppies. That’s an average of about 27 kittens and 18 puppies each month—unwanted litters resulting from preventable pregnancies. With the median household income in Nevada County at \$84,905 and the cost of spaying or neutering a pet ranging from \$275 to \$750, many families are struggling to afford these essential procedures that could help prevent overpopulation.

To accompany the data, I continue to receive concerns from the community about the rising costs of spay and neuter procedures. I also receive reports of unwanted litters dumped in public places or simply being given away to unvetted homes, which created the potential for a continued cycle of unwanted litters. To address this, Nevada County could lead the way with a proposed Community Spay and Neuter Program, designed to provide low-cost spaying and neutering services to county pet owners. This initiative would allocate seed funding to help reduce the number of unwanted litters, alleviating the pressure on our animal shelter and supporting responsible pet ownership in our community.

DISCUSSION SUBJECT: Microtransit Pilot in East County

FROM: Supervisor Bullock, District 5

RECOMMENDATION: Provide direction to staff to analyze data and bring forward framework for a consultant to provide recommendations on a microtransit pilot program in East County for the Board’s consideration.

FUNDING: N/A

BACKGROUND: The Town of Truckee, in conjunction with Placer County, operate Truckee TART and Placer County TART (collectively Tahoe Truckee TART) fixed route bus and Dial-A-Ride services. These serve the Town of Truckee and Donner Lake, as well as the communities of Tahoe Donner, Prosser, Glenshire, and Hirschdale, and connect into the North Lake Tahoe areas along highways 89 and 267. The Truckee TART service schedule changes seasonally based on demand, with the current winter schedule being 6:30 AM – 6:30 PM seven days a week.

Since 2022, the Town of Truckee has been operating a microtransit pilot program, TART Connect, within the Town’s transit service area. Similar to Uber and Lyft, TART Connect is a curb-to-curb, app-based service encompassing the Town of Truckee, Donner Lake, Tahoe Donner, Prosser, Hirschdale, and Glenshire areas. The purpose of

this service is to meet community demand for transportation services as identified through community outreach and was inspired by a similar Placer County demonstration project in the North Lake Tahoe area. This service is offered as a supplement to the already provided TART fixed route and Dial-A-Ride services and provides connections to the TART regional fixed route bus system. The current microtransit program is operated through a contract with Downtowner as a turnkey operation (Downtowner provides staff, software, vehicles and customer app). The fixed route, Dial-A-Ride and microtransit services within the Town limits and unincorporated Nevada County areas are wholly managed and operated by the Town of Truckee.

Based on recent community input there may be a demand for additional services outside of the current Truckee TART/Connect service zone, specifically to the Donner Summit area. The following program lead by Sugar Bowl Resort began on December 9, 2024, and may address the potential service gap as described.

Sugar Bowl Resort, in coordination with North Tahoe Community Alliance (NTCA) and Truckee North Tahoe Transportation Management Association (TNT-TMA) have developed and implemented the Sugar Bowl/Donner Summit shuttle providing service between Sugar Bowl, Donner Ski Ranch and Truckee via the Cold Stream Rd bus stop. The shuttle service operates seven days per week, two trips in the morning and two trips in the afternoon/evening. This is a pilot program designed to establish consistent service and to verify the need for summit shuttle services. The program is funded through an NTCA grant with the actual services being operated by a contractor, My Ride To Work. The initial pilot period is December 9, 2024, to April 20, 2025.

Given that the shuttle is a pilot program with limited schedule and smaller vehicles the program partners have not promoted the service too heavily with the focus being on residents and employees of the summit. Information about the shuttle is available on the Truckee TART, Truckee North Tahoe Transportation Management Association, Sugar Bowl, and Placer TART websites.

In order to properly address the potential additional transit needs of the summit community, staff proposes the following items:

- Complete the current Sugar Bowl/Donner Summit shuttle pilot service (ending April 20, 2025)
 - Analyze the service data and review service performance with partner agencies
- Compare Sugar Bowl/Donner Summit shuttle pilot service with previous Donner Summit services and evaluate against recommendations in the Town of Truckee Transportation Development Plan and Short-Range Transit Plan

If after the above review and analysis of the current pilot service the partner agencies (Sugar Bowl, Donner Ski Ranch, Town of Truckee, TNT-TMA, Placer County) agree that the program warrants further consideration, then staff propose obtaining a consultant to complete a study to determine the most effective transit service type for future implementation.

Transportation to Donner Summit businesses for employees, contractors, and visitors is required for meaningful economic development. The goal is to understand utilization of

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transportation services while making direct outreach to Donner Summit stakeholders for better understanding of the actual needs and possible benefits of expanding services. Because the previously mentioned agencies have programs in place, the County is well positioned to support, help, and expand services with reasonable contributions. Therefore, I request the Board to direct staff to analyze data and bring forward framework for a consultant to provide recommendations on a microtransit pilot program in East County for the Board's consideration.