

Project Charter: Board Objective: Economic Development

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Project Sponsor: Trisha Tillotson, Director Community Development Agency.

BACKGROUND AND PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

At the Board's 2019 workshop an objective for economic development was introduced. It was updated in 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and most recently in 2024. 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.

1. 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 Initiatives follow with a sampling of work to be completed.

- Cultivate economic diversification, sustainability, and equity – The ED office in collaboration with county departments and local partners will implement the Economic Development Action Plan and will help identify opportunities for CA Jobs First grants. The office will also administer the Sierra Business Council contract.
- 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 County Storage building. The Program Manager will participate in the next best use for the courthouse site and will continue to engage community partners on their projects (Donner Summit, InConcert Sierra, Penn Valley Community Center, etc.). In coordination with CDA departments, opportunities to improve permitting and warm handoff processes will be considered.
- 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 SBC. 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. Next steps through the office also include creating a *How to do Business in Nevada County* guide.

- **Support potential high growth sector development -**
 - **Tourism:** By June 30, we will complete the Donner Summit promotion campaign. The team will continue to improve and scale the gonevadacounty.com website and social media. The office also looks to bring tourism partners together in western county to identify potential joint marketing strategies. The Program Manager will continue her participation on the Visit CA Regional Gold Country Advisory Committee.
 - **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 2024 Nevada County Farm Tour and will produce the Annual Crop report.
 - **Cannabis:** Cannabis staff will continue to roll out the cannabis equity program. As a recipient of the Department of Cannabis Control Retail Access grant, planning staff will draft an ordinance to be brought to the Board in early 2024 allowing limited retail/storefront businesses in the unincorporated areas of Nevada County.
- **Strengthen Rural and County Identify.** A collaborative team of county staff and economic partners will develop a strategy and if feasible implement a campaign to boost Nevada County as a desirable place to live, work and play.

Based on January 2024 BOS Workshop direction, separate charters will be developed for the following two topics that are related to economic development:

- Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operations (MEHKO)
- Cannabis

2. 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
Erika Seward	Community Development Agency/Recreation Division	Recreation Lead
Optional members		
Caleb Dardick	CEO Office	Asst. County Executive Officer Lead
Ariel Lovett	CEO Office	Project Administration Lead
Carissa Cyr	Clerk of the Board Office	Clerk of the Board/Legislative Lead

Amy Cobden	CEO Office	Grants Oversight 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.

The Economic Development Office holds a contract with Sierra Business Council to advance the Economic Development Objective by 1) providing Business Technical Assistance, 2) Warm-Handoff Coordination Services, and 3) Inclusive Private Business Collaboration. Two contracts are held with Local Freshies for the gonevadacounty.com website and the Donner Summit promotion project. Other contracts include Nevada County Arts Council for the Art in Public Spaces Program and Integrated Communications Strategies for the Two-Year Action Plan.

3. 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
 - Others
4. Commissions/Groups including the MACs and others.
5. Government Agencies:

- GoBiz
 - 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.

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, 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:** Currently, there is considerable funding for economic development initiatives, especially those tied to climate. However, the sunset for money for infrastructure is currently set to go away in 2028.
- **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 team.

PROJECT CHARTER

- 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.
- Reprint rack cards, storyboard, other collateral.

4. Summary Budget: The Economic Development budget is approximately \$650-\$700K in ongoing costs including the staffing, overhead and the SBC and other contracts (the 23/24 budget is \$485k). Project specific costs already approved and carrying over from current budget allocations include NSJ Fire Suppression construction (\$1.35M), PV Community Center (\$500,000), Community Foundation (\$250,000), and Arts Council (\$30,000) for approx. \$2M with a need for \$1.3 in current unfunded grants required for the NSJ project. Dept plans to apply for the next CDBG round for this additional funding need.

Board Priority Ask: \$250,000 over 2 years (approx. \$125,000 per year)

Charter Budget Economic Development					
Initiative/Project	Board Workshop \$ (Board Priority Assign. GF)	Costs			Revenue Note
		Other Funded Costs	Unfunded Costs	Total Cost	
Economic Development	\$0	\$650,000	\$0	\$650,000	Estimated ongoing operational budget
Major projects:	\$	\$2,000,000	\$1,600,000	\$3,600,000	PV Comm Center \$500k; Western County Comm Foundation \$250k; NSJ project total cost \$3M, seeking grant opportunities for \$1.6M
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 24/25 Budget
Total	\$125,000	2,650,000	\$1,600,000	\$4,375,000	

Please attach, list, or link source documents and active plans related to this objective.

Approved by (Project Sponsor): _____ **Date:** _____