



**COUNTY OF NEVADA**  
**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**  
**PLANNING DEPARTMENT**  
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**NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**  
**Board Agenda Memorandum**

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**MEETING DATE:** October 10, 2023

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** **Brian Foss, Planning Director**

**SUBJECT:** Informational Report to the Board of Supervisors regarding the Nevada County ADU Guidebook, accept the Guidebook in substantially the form attached.

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Accept the Planning Department's informational presentation regarding the new Nevada County ADU Guidebook and accept the Guidebook in substantially the form attached.

**FUNDING:**

No budget amendments are required.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Nevada County ADU Guidebook

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**PROJECT DESCRIPTION & STAFF COMMENT:** Nevada County was awarded funds from the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) under the Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) Grant. One of the projects included in the award was creation of an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Guidebook. The goal of the project was to develop a tool for homeowners and developers to encourage the development of ADUs with the intention of streamlining the ADU development process. Nevada County partnered with the Mother Lode counties of Mariposa, Amador, and Calaveras and entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to pool awarded funds and select a consultant to create an ADU Guidebook. The Mother Lode ADU team selected Community Planning Collaborative (CPC, formerly known as Baird & Driskell) to create the ADU Guidebook.

Early in the process, the Planning Department and CPC engaged the community groups and members of the public in providing feedback to shape the content of the Guidebook. Focus group meetings were held with the Nevada County Contractors Association and the Nevada County Association of Realtors, as well as other regional stakeholders, to provide feedback on important

topics for the Guidebook. Surveys were made available in the CDA lobby and sent to property owners and builders who had recently completed ADUs. Along with feedback from CDA counter staff, this information shaped the tone, approach, and content of the Guidebook to ensure that Nevada County residents are best served by this resource.

The Guidebook is comprised of seven sections: Getting Started, Learning the Rules, Budgeting, Design, Permitting, Construction, and Move-In. The first section, Getting Started, provides suggestions for thinking big picture about ADU goals and concerns, getting inspired with floor plans and photos, preliminary site planning, and estimating costs. The Planning Department, in collaboration with Building and Environmental Health, worked closely with CPC to ensure the Learning the Rules section reflects the most current ADU regulations and general information about building in Nevada County. The Budgeting section offers guidance on fine-tuning a budget and how to finance construction of an ADU. Both traditional site-built and prefabricated units are discussed in the Design section, as well as the recently published Nevada County Master Plans, all of which can be used to create an ADU. There are also tips for hiring an architect or designer. The Building Department was a key player in the Permitting section, which is a helpful guide for walking through the building permit process for any project in Nevada County. The Construction section provides invaluable advice on how to select and hire a general contractor and monitor construction. Finally, the Move-In section prompts homeowners to think about setting rental rates, writing a lease, and understand rental laws to be a successful landlord should they choose to rent their ADU.

On August 28, 2023, a press release was sent announcing that the Draft ADU Guidebook was available for public comment until September 18, 2023. The ADU Guidebook was also the focus of the Planning Department's booth at Collaboration Day at the Rood Center on September 8, 2023. In addition, Associate Planner Marie Maniscalco spoke about the ADU Guidebook and the public review period on KNCO radio twice during this time. The Planning Department received positive feedback about the Guidebook, along with general comments about the cost of construction and septic system development. No changes to the Guidebook were requested and none were made due to public comment. The Planning Department expects the Guidebook will be a helpful resource to homeowners as they develop plans and budgets for ADUs, and provide guidance on regulations and requirements related to septic systems.

The Guidebook will be available in print and online. In addition to the Guidebook, a full suite of ADU resources will be available through [www.motherlodeadu.org](http://www.motherlodeadu.org), including an ADU cost calculator, plans gallery, FAQs, glossary, development checklists, inspirational videos from real ADU owners in the region, worksheets, and more.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:** Only “projects” are subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Projects are generally defined as activities that could result in an adverse direct or indirect physical impacts to the environment (CEQA Section 21065). CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5) further excludes from the definition of a project “Organizational or administrative activities of governments that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment” from being subject to CEQA. The ADU Guidebook makes no changes to the Nevada County Land Use & Development Code and is strictly informational in nature. This report is being submitted for consideration by the Board of Supervisors as an informational update. The acceptance of the Nevada County ADU Guidebook would not result in the approval of any project

that will result in changes to the physical environment. All ADU projects require building permits and no change is being made to that process.

**SUMMARY:** Nevada County, in partnership with Calaveras, Mariposa, and Amador counties, has deployed REAP Funds to create an ADU Guidebook. The goal of the project was to develop a tool for homeowners and developers to encourage the development of ADUs with the intention of streamlining the ADU development process. In addition to the Guidebook, various online resources will also be published towards this goal. Therefore, staff recommends that the Board of Supervisors, after reviewing and considering the presentation, accept the Nevada County ADU Guidebook.

**Item Initiated by:** Marie Maniscalco, Associate Planner

**Approved by:** Brian Foss, Planning Director