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Trisha Tillotson  
Community Development Agency Director

**NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
BOARD AGENDA MEMO**

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**MEETING DATE:** March 26, 2024

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Trisha Tillotson, Community Development Agency Director

**SUBJECT:** Resolution adopting the Economic Development Action Plan 2024 - 2026

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**RECOMMENDATION:** Receive a presentation from Integrated Communications Strategies, LLC on the final draft of the two-year Economic Development Action Plan and approve the Resolution adopting the Economic Development Action Plan 2024 – 2026.

**FUNDING:** No funding is currently being requested. The Economic Development Action Plan includes actions/projects that will require staffing and fiscal resources to execute. The Economic Development Department will consider Board direction at today’s meeting and in past meetings and will bring actions back to the Board through the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget process.

**BACKGROUND:**

Consistent with the Board of Supervisor’s 2023 Board Objective for economic development, County staff contracted with Integrated Communications Strategies, LLC (ICS) in July 2023 to develop the first two-year Economic Development Action Plan to be enacted starting in the second quarter of the 2024 calendar year.

The objective of this seven-month project was to deliver a set of realistic and actionable economic development strategies and tactics that will (1) guide the actions and investments of the County, its elected officials, department leadership and staff; and (2) increase alignment in the actions between the County and its various economic development partners and community to improve economic efficiency and impact.

Because Nevada County’s Economic Development Office is relatively new, the Action Plan is intended to provide strategic direction for economic development efforts for 2024 - 2026.

It is a roadmap showing where the county office, local and regional organizations, and jurisdictions might align. A future goal upon completion of the Action Plan will be to take the learnings of the Action Plan and consider if the timing is right to move forward with a comprehensive, economic development master plan.

ICS is utilizing its experience in the theory and practice of sustainable and inclusive economic development strategy, combined with 1:1 interviews and small group facilitated discussions with a wide range of stakeholder groups, as well as interviews of and consultation with the County's elected and department leadership. The end product will feature a narrow set of economic development strategies, tactics, and performance measures starting in 2024 and ending in first half of 2026 for which there is alignment, justification, and support. The desired outcomes from this two-year action plan include, but are not limited to:

- Increased economic activity
- Increased tax revenues
- Improved business retention and expansion
- Improved County competitiveness and win rate for federal and state investments and grants
- Improved branding and awareness inside and outside the County about Nevada County assets and advantages
- Stepped up communication and knowledge-sharing between the County and local businesses
- More support for entrepreneurs and local small business
- Increased alignment between the County and economic development stakeholders on a shared set of measurable priorities

ICS worked closely with Kimberly Parker and the County's leadership to identify a list of key informants/stakeholders for ICS to interview about the economic priorities, demands and limitations facing the County today and over the next two years; priority investment areas; key socio-economic and industry trends based, and general advice. ICS conducted single person and group interviews, synthesizing the findings to identify common themes, gaps, and assets.

On November 17<sup>th</sup>, ICS organized a two-hour workshop in which the leadership from ERC, SBC, the four chambers, Sierra Commons, the two contractors' associations, the Realtors, the Alliance for Workforce Development, and the Arts Council met together in person and online to hear and offer reaction to the preliminary research findings and emerging focus areas of the Action Plan now in formulation.

On January 9, 2024, ICS made a preliminary presentation to the Board of Supervisors on the findings they heard during stakeholder interviews and meetings and their report reflected the varied contributions and perspectives. Additional feedback was received during the Board workshop.

The final document is focused on a commitment to sustainable job and business growth as well as new investment in the County that supports our high quality of life which will be advanced by the execution of the new Action Plan. Part of the execution of the Plan will be to enact formal written agreements identifying governance structures and roles and responsibilities of collaborative partners and stakeholders in the coordinated planning, decisions, and financing of plans or projects. This will enable greater capacity, better engagement, focused implementation and access to larger and more diverse pools of funding.

The Economic Development office seeks Board consideration and direction for the Two-Year Economic Development Action Plan to serve as a launch point for county staff, our economic partners and community organizations to work together to enrich our county's

business, cultural, recreational and rural ambiance and enhance the economic vitality and sustainability of the community and authorizes the Chair of the Board to sign for the adoption of the plan.

**Item Initiated by:** Kimberly Parker, Economic Development Office/Community Development Agency

**Approved by:** Trisha Tillotson, Community Development Agency, Director

**Submittal Date:**