

TO: Kathryn Gallino, Gabriel Elliot, Lee Kimball, County of Calaveras

FROM: Tom Infusino, Calaveras Planning Coalition

DATE: 9/16//22

RE: Economic Development through General Plan Implementation

## **I. Recommendation:**

Increase jobs and grow local businesses while improving Calaveras County using state and federal capital to implement programs that were included in the 2019 General Plan Update (GPU) and Housing Element.

## **II. Background**

On August 23, 2022, the Economic and Community Development Department sent out a press release asking for input on a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for five counties: Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Mariposa, and Tuolumne. The Calaveras Planning Coalition hopes that some component of that strategy will include securing state and federal funds to improve Calaveras County by implementing the provisions of the 2019 GPU and Housing Element listed below.

The Calaveras Planning Coalition is a group of community organizations and individuals who want a healthy and sustainable future for Calaveras County. We believe that public participation is critical to a successful planning process. United behind eleven land use and development principles, we seek to balance the conservation of local agricultural, natural and historic resources, with the need to provide jobs, housing, safety, and services.

The 2019 General Plan Update (GPU) was unanimously approved by the Board of Supervisors. The general plan also includes regularly revised Housing Element. The general plan was adopted after careful study of the County's future needs and opportunities.<sup>1</sup> Thus, it is no surprise that the general plan contains many programs to prepare Calaveras County for its future. These include programs to improve forest health and fire safety, to strengthen the agricultural sector of the economy, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to produce workforce housing, and to conserve energy. Since the GPU was unanimously approved, and the specific programs listed below are not regulatory in nature, implementing these programs should not be too politically controversial.

Each of these programs is eligible for state and/or federal funding. While some of that funding is available for individual applicants, much more of it can be secured by local government entities. These programs have been implemented in other rural communities.

Each year tens of millions of dollars of capital are taken out of the Calaveras County economy in the form state and federal taxes. It is important to get that money back to invest in the local economy to prepare Calaveras County for the future.

---

<sup>1</sup> 2008 GPU Issues and Opportunities Report; 2008 GPU Baseline Report Supplement – Chapter 12 Economic Analysis.

Each of these programs can use local businesses and local labor in their implementation. These programs can improve the agricultural, construction, and forestry sectors of the local economy.

Implementing these programs require relatively minimal local government effort in securing and administering funds. The actual work in the field should be done by the private sector, not by public employees.

### **III. Programs that grow the local economy and prepare Calaveras County for its future.**

Below is a list of implementation measures from the 2019 GPU and 2019 Housing Element that could help to employ more local people in local businesses.

#### **A) Greenhouse Gas Reduction**

##### **COS-5C**

##### **GHG Reduction Plan**

**Develop a GHG reduction plan outlining the strategies, goals, and actions for contributing to the overall reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions consistent with AB 32 and SB 32 by the end of 2022.**

A number of the proposed GHG reduction measures under review by the Planning Commission could be implemented by employing local labor and businesses. Not only is state funding available for these programs, but most of Calaveras County east of Highway 49 qualifies for the 35% of that funding set aside for low-income or disadvantaged communities. These programs provide funds to businesses, farms, local governments, and others. Local governments can receive funding for agricultural land conservation, zero-emission vehicle purchases, electric vehicle charging stations, technical assistance to agricultural operations, wildfire fuel reduction, carbon sequestration, composting, and recycling. In 2021, the California Climate Investments program spent \$2.2 billion and directly supported over 40,000 jobs in California, and indirectly supported another 70, 000 jobs.<sup>2</sup> Below we provide some examples of the specific funding programs that could be useful in Calaveras County. We also provide examples of how these programs have been implemented successfully in rural communities. (For more information go to <https://www.caclimateinvestments.ca.gov/funding-for-local-governments>.)

#### **B) Agriculture and Forestry**

##### **RP-2B**

##### **Agricultural Best Management Practices, Education and Stewardship**

**Undertake the following activities:**

---

<sup>2</sup> California Climate Investments 2022 Annual Report, pp. 8, 24.

- **Cooperate with the Calaveras County Resource Conservation District to facilitate the identification, acquisition, and promotion of programs and funding in support of these programs.**

Securing funding for local agricultural operations to implement practices for resource conservation and efficiency will modernize local agricultural production and keep it competitive with its competition.

Among the funding sources available are California's Healthy Soils Program. The Healthy Soils Program has spent over \$33 million on 466 projects statewide, including a reduced till and cover crop project on a San Joaquin County vineyard. Technical assistance to help farmers apply for state funds is provided by California's Climate Smart Agriculture Initiative that has provided help to over 800 farmers and ranchers since 2019.

### **RP-3A**

#### **Forest Conservation Programs**

**Ensure that the Agricultural Commissioner is aware and knowledgeable of the State and Federal forest conservation programs available to private owners so that useful advice may be provided in a manner that optimizes participation in those programs.**

Owners of local forested lands can receive funding to hire contractors to actively manage their property in accord with state conservation practices. This work makes forests more resilient to fire, makes neighboring forested communities safer, and ensures that forest meet multiple resource conservation objectives.

Among the funding sources available is California's Forest Health Program that has spent over \$390 million on 212 projects, including one project to plant trees in the area burned by the King Fire in El Dorado County.

### **COS-2D**

#### **Watershed Improvement Program**

**Support and participate in efforts such as the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program that strive to establish and maintain healthy forests.**

### **S-3E**

#### **Fire Fuel Treatments for County Rights of Way**

**Maintain and improve fuel treatments within County rights of way. Continue to pursue funding for maintaining and improving fuel treatments for County rights-of-way (e.g., Federal Fuels Grant Program).**

## **COS-2F**

### **Tree Mortality**

**Participate with federal, state, and other local programs to reduce tree mortality.**

## **S-3Q**

### **Dead and Dying Trees**

**Work with CalFire, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and other organizations and agencies to develop incentives and identify funding sources to assist landowners in dead tree removal.**

This work involves the removal of dead vegetation, thinning forests, revegetating disturbed soils, and restoring damaged meadows. This is labor intensive work that can be done by local contractors. Funding is available from the State of California. Among the funding sources is include California's Fire Prevention Program that has spent over \$205 million on 111 projects. The control burn funded at Lake Hogan this year is one local example. Some federally funded work is already done on public lands through the Stanislaus National Forest and the Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group.

## **COS-4F**

### **Voluntary Biological Resource Conservation Activities**

**Support efforts where appropriate to identify and acquire high value biological resource areas from willing sellers on private lands for the purpose of mitigating impacts to biological resources.**

There is state funding available for this program. Such funding could improve the financial status of local ranches from which conservation easements are purchased.

## **COS-4G**

### **Invasive Species**

**Cooperate with state and Federal agencies and programs and other organizations to control the spread of invasive species. Work to secure funding where available to support these efforts.**

## **COS-5G**

### **Emission Reduction Programs**

**Cooperate with the CCAPCD to implement emissions reductions programs such as the Carl Moyer Program, and to find methods of incentivizing the replacement or retrofit of small emissions sources throughout the County, such as the replacement of existing wood stoves with EPA Phase II certified appliances, and the installation of new replacement engines or technologies to reduce emission from off-road and on-road engines within the County.**

This program could help employ local mechanics and could benefit local stove retailers. In one project, 54 homes in Butte County replaced their wood stoves with funds from California's Woodsmoke Reduction Program. California's program to replace agricultural machinery with lower emission equipment has spent over \$240 million on 6,134 projects. In the San Joaquin Valley this program has helped farmers replace 900 old tractors with new low-emission tractors since 2018.

## **C) Energy Conservation and Production**

### **COS-5E**

#### **Incentives for Alternative Energy**

**Cooperate with and support state and federal programs that assist landowners in energy conservation and production.**

### **PF-3F**

#### **Alternative Energy Incentives**

**Support programs that provide incentives for property owners to install alternative energy facilities such as solar arrays, small windmills, and other energy systems.**

Local contractors can do energy conservation and solar installations. Among the funding programs available is California's Low-income Weatherization Program.

## **D) Housing**

Housing construction and rehabilitation can be done using local labor, local contractors, and local suppliers.

### **H-2A Pursue State and Federal Funding**

**The County shall pursue appropriate state and federal funding sources, including HOME, CDBG, and CalHome funds, to support the efforts of nonprofit and for-profit developers to meet new construction and rehabilitation needs of extremely low-, very low-, low-, and**

**moderate-income households. This could be done through First-Time Home Buyer assistance, self-help projects, etc. The County shall periodically update and review available housing programs to identify additional funding sources.**

**Responsible Department: Planning Department, Health and Human Services Agency**

**Time Frame: Annually, and as Notices of Funding Available (NOFA) are released.**

**Funding: General Fund, HOME, CDBG**

**Quantified Objective: Units for 16 extremely low-, 16 very low-, 16 low-, and 16 moderate-income households**

### **H-3C Funding for Emergency Shelters**

**The County shall pursue funding twice during the planning period for emergency shelter programs to be developed through inter-jurisdictional cooperation.**

**Responsible Department: Planning Department, HHSA, Board of Supervisors**

**Time Frame: Twice during the planning period, as NOFAs are released**

**Implements Policies: H 3.1, H 3.2**

**Funding: State and federal funding sources or any other available general funds**

### **H-3F Funding for Extremely Low-Income Households**

**The County shall pursue public-private partnerships and funding sources to facilitate the development of housing for extremely low-income households in the county. In addition, the County shall provide fee reductions, fee waivers, deferral payments, or installment payments for extremely low-income developments.**

**Responsible Department: Planning Department**

**Time Frame: Ongoing**

**Implements Policies: H 3.1, H 3.2**

**Funding: CDBG funds, state and federal funds**

**Quantified Objective: Units for 5 low-income households**

### **H-5A Rehabilitation Funds**

**The County shall apply annually for CDBG rehabilitation and other funds to provide down payment assistance, rehabilitation services, and rental assistance to very low- and**

**low-income households. The County shall promote the availability of funding and resources through public outreach and collaboration with nonprofits, local realtors, lenders, and escrow companies.**

**In addition, the County shall continue to administer the Calaveras County Housing Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Program to improve housing conditions in targeted locations in the county.**

**Responsible Department: County Administration, Building Department, CalWorks, Board of Supervisors**

**Time Frame: Annually, as appropriate**

**Implements Policies: H 5.1**

**Funding: CDBG funds**

**Quantified Objective: Units for 8 very low- and 8 low-income households**

#### **H-6D Weatherization Efforts**

**In an effort to assist homeowners, especially senior and low-income households, with property maintenance, the County will research and apply for weatherization programs as NOFAs are released. In addition, the County will utilize funding through the current Housing Rehabilitation Program (refer to program H-5A) to provide assistance to homeowners. The County will publish this information on the County's website and provide printouts, on request.**

**In addition, the State of California offers a Low-Income Weatherization Program (LIWP) that provides low-income households with solar photovoltaic systems and energy upgrades at no cost to residents.**

**Responsibility: Planning Department, HHSA**

**Time Frame: Ongoing, as NOFAs are released**

**Implements Policies: H 5.1**

**Funding: General Fund, CDBG, State of California**

**Quantified Objective: 10 lower-income households**

#### **S-3P**

##### **Existing Housing Stock**

**The County will evaluate the fire safety and preparedness of buildings or properties receiving local, state or federal funds administered by Calaveras County to rehabilitate**

**existing housing stock for affordable housing. As funding permits, and where permitted per the granting or lending agency guidelines, substandard fire safe housing deficiencies shall be addressed in rehabilitation activities to bring existing buildings up to current fire safety standards to the maximum extent feasible (e.g., building materials, vegetative hazards, perimeter access) without diminishing the cultural integrity or visual quality of the structure and its surroundings.**

#### **LU-4E**

##### **Historic Preservation Incentives**

**Facilitate implementation of state and federal incentive programs that provide financial and development incentives for historic preservation.**

This program can provide work for local contractors who want to preserve local historical buildings.

#### **E) Other Measures**

#### **COS-7I**

##### **Parks and Recreation Funding**

**Pursue funding and support efforts to provide funding for local community parks, recreation facilities and trail facilities using available funding sources.**

Park facility construction and landscaping can be completed and maintained by local contractors.

#### **C-5A**

##### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans**

**Update the bicycle and pedestrian master plan and implement the priority projects in those documents as funding allows. The County shall pursue available federal, state, and local funding for construction and maintenance of non-motorized transportation facilities.**

It is true that many communities in Calaveras County are too spread out and hilly for the popular use of bicycles and pedestrian paths. However, some communities have already updated their mobility plans or their safe routes to school plans (San Andreas, Murphys, Valley Springs). Construction and maintenance of these facilities can provide work for local contractors.

Among the possible funding options for projects in San Andreas is California's Sustainable Transportation Equity Project.