

**EXECUTIVE / MEDIA
SUMMARY**

**Sierra Reflections
Application Issues**

EXECUTIVE / MEDIA SUMMARY (02/28/26)

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Sierra Reflections Description and Location

D. Tentative Subdivision Map Case Number WTM24-001 (Sierra Reflections) and Special Use Permit Case Number WSUP25-0019 (Sierra Reflections Infrastructure)

[For possible action] – For hearing, discussion, and possible action to approve a common open space tentative subdivision map for a 940-lot common open space development, with lots ranging in size from 2,876+/- square feet to 68,008+/- square feet. The project will include major grading of 3.6 million cubic yards of excavation, and 625,000 cubic yards of fill. This project meets the standard for a project of regional significance because it contains housing of more than 625 units, sewage use greater than 187,500 gallons per day, water usage greater than 625-acre feet per year, and traffic counts greater than an average of 6,250 trips daily; as such, any approval by the planning commission is provisional subject to the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Commission's finding that the project is in conformance with the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan. The applicant also seeks approval of Special Use Permits for utility services (water tanks and two lift stations) and three bridge crossings over the Sensitive Stream Zone and Critical Stream Zone buffers for Steamboat Creek and Browns Creek.



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Citizen Involvement

South Valleys residents are making an active effort to have the current Sierra Reflections Application denied by the Board of County Commissioners. The Application in its current form is considered by most to be ill conceived, inappropriate, and dangerous to the public.

Over 1700 local residents have signed a petition requesting that the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners deny the current Sierra Reflections Application.

Local citizens have formed a **South Valleys Development Review Committee**. The Committee consists of Homeowners Associations and Nonprofit Organizations in Pleasant Valley, Steamboat Valley, Washoe Valley and St. James Village. The purpose of the Committee is to coordinate activities regarding proposed development in the South Valleys. The Committee also creates an extensive network to keep local residents informed and involved.

Citizens identified Areas of Concern with the Application. **Twenty Working Groups were formed** of local citizens who were highly qualified by education and work experience.

The Working Groups researched the effect of the proposed Sierra Reflections subdivision on identified areas of concern. The Working Groups researched the Washoe County Development Code, Master Plan Envision Washoe 2040, the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan, Nevada Revised Statutes, and other relevant documents. **Working Groups documented areas of non-compliance with the Application and determined which Findings could not be made.**

Thirty members of the Working Groups gave fact-based presentations at the Planning Commission meeting. The factual information provided in these presentations helped the Planning Commission to make an informed and correct decision to unanimously deny the Sierra Reflections Application in its current form.

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Noncompliance With Development Code and Master Plan

The Sierra Reflections Application is out of Compliance with the following Articles of the Washoe County Development Code:

Article 408 COMMON OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT
Article 412 LANDSCAPING
Article 416 FLOOD HAZARDS
Article 418 SIGNIFICANT HYDROLOGIC RESOURCES
Article 424 HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT
Article 432 OPEN SPACE STANDARDS
Article 608 TENTATIVE SUBDIVISION MAPS

The Sierra Reflections Application is out of compliance with the following Elements and Appendix 4 of the Washoe County Master Plan Envision Washoe 2040:

Element 01 POPULATION AND HOUSING ELEMENT
Element 02 REGIONAL FORM AND COORDINATION
Element 03 CONSERVATION OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES
Element 04 ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCY
Element 05 LAND USE ELEMENT
Element 06 TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT
Element 07 PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES ELEMENT

PLANNING AREAS – South Valleys

Appendix 4 CONSERVATION PLAN: WASHOE COUNTY REGIONAL OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

· BIODIVERSITY SUPPORT
CULTURAL RESOURCES AND SENSITIVE LANDS
NATURAL HAZARDS
RECREATIONAL RESOURCES
VISUAL AND SCENIC CHARACTER
WATER RESOURCES
SUSTAINABILITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

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Required Findings That Cannot be Made

Development Code Article 408 COMMON OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT **Section 110.408.28 Findings Required for Common Open Space Developments** Requires that all five Findings shall be made to approve a Common Open Space Development. The following Findings **cannot** be made:

- (a) Preserve or Provide Open Space. The application does **not** preserve existing steep slope areas or developmentally constrained areas.
- (b) Protect Natural and Scenic Resources. The Application does **not** protect natural and scenic resources including large diameter trees and habitat for special status species.
- (c) Achieve a More Efficient Use of Land. The development uses density clustering to destroy open space rather than **protecting and preserving it**.
- (e) Encourage a Sense of Community. The proposed subdivision divides the Pleasant Valley Community.

Development Code Article 608 TENTATIVE SUBDIVISION MAP **Section 110.608.25 Findings**. Requires that all 10 Findings shall be made to approve a Tentative Subdivision Map. The following Findings **cannot** be made:

- (a) Plan Consistency. The proposed map is not consistent with the Master Plan
- (b) Design or Improvement. The design or improvement of the proposed subdivision is not consistent with the Master Plan.
- (c) Type of Development. The site is not physically suited for the type of development.
- (e) Fish or Wildlife. The design of the subdivision will cause substantial environmental damage and avoidable injury to endangered wildlife and their habitat.
- (f) Public Health. The design of the subdivision is likely to cause public health problems.
- (h) Access. Proposed provided access is inadequate and dangerous.

Since all required Findings cannot be made, a Common Open Space Development cannot be approved.

Since all required Findings cannot be made, this Tentative Subdivision Map cannot be approved.

The unanimous denial decision of the Planning Commission must be upheld.

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Historic and Cultural Preservation

The geographic area proposed for the Sierra Reflections subdivision is rich in historic and cultural sites. The area has been utilized by Native Americans and more recently by Euro-American and Chinese workers who left evidence of their activities.

Archeological studies included in the application, as well as 15 others referenced, have identified at least 49 sites. Other than the V&T Railroad grade none have been identified or located by the Applicant on development maps and plans.

This is out of compliance with the Envision Washoe 2040 Master Plan which states that **these sites must be protected through the development review process.**

Significant physical historic features remain in the impacted area including historic gathering locations, building foundations, rock walls and a ranch bread oven. The Applicant has failed to locate, protect and buffer these locations in the Application.

This is out of compliance with Envision Washoe 2040 which states that **“known cultural resources within urbanized areas will be protected through the use of buffers and other appropriate mechanisms”.**

Massive grading is proposed which will cause collateral damage to irreplaceable historic sites which the Applicant has not properly documented.

Following Article 424 HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT procedures would prohibit excessive grading and help to preserve areas containing historic sites.

The Application is out of compliance with the following:

Envision Washoe 2040 Master Plan, Element 03 Conservation of Natural and Cultural Resources

Envision Washoe 2040, Appendix 4, Conservation Plan: Washoe County Regional Open Space and Natural Resource Management Plan.

For these reasons Finding (b) Design or Improvement for a Tentative Subdivision Map cannot be made.

The required Findings for a Tentative Subdivision Map cannot be made. The unanimous denial decision of the Planning Commission must be upheld.

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Rural Character

Sierra Reflections will not maintain the rural character of the South Valleys.

The small lot sizes of the development will not support livestock/farm animal ownership or agricultural uses. ENVISION WASHOE 2040 Priority Principal 6 is to maintain agricultural practices to support local food growth. ENVISION also states that livestock/farm animal ownership are elements of rural character.

The small lot sizes of the development are not consistent with the surrounding neighborhoods. ENVISION states that future residential development should mirror the existing development pattern and density. The existing density in Pleasant Valley is 1 unit/acre+ and the proposed density in the Sierra Reflections is 3.2 units/acre.

The dark night skies of the area will be significantly diminished by the development. The lights from 940 homes and vehicles making over 8000 daily trips will not preserve the dark night skies. This is not consistent with ENVISION NCR Priority Principle 1.2 - to preserve the remaining integrity of the region's dark night skies. It does not comply with Article 442 COMMON OPEN SPACE SPECIFIC PLAN STANDARDS 110.442.50 #11-the specific plan benefits the surrounding neighborhoods and will not have an undue and adverse impact on the reasonable enjoyment of neighboring properties. It also does not conform to SB 52 the "dark night sky" bill. Preserving dark night skies was recently identified as a top priority by this Board of County Commissioners.

Sierra Reflections is out of compliance with DEVELOPMENT CODE ARTICLE 442 SPECIFIC PLAN STANDARDS and with ENVISION WASHOE 2040.

The following findings cannot be made:

Tentative Subdivision Maps Finding (b) Design or Improvement

Common Open Space Development Finding (b) Protect Natural and Scenic Resources

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Dwelling Density and Parcel Size Issues

The Applicant proposes a Tentative Subdivision Map where the proposed parcel density exceeds the allowable limit, and the parcel sizes are below minimum standards.

The Applicant fails to properly consider constraints on development and improperly computes the density of parcels in the development.

The Applicant states a computed density of 1.24 units/acre which is below the allowed density of 1.43 units/acre. When Truckee Meadows Regional Plan (TMRP) criteria are properly applied, the actual density is over 2 units/acre.

The Applicant specifies parcel sizes smaller than allowed.

According to **TMRP Table 3.1 Regional Land Designation Requirements** the Maximum Density in the proposed subdivision is the highest existing density which is Medium Density Suburban. **This is 3 units/acre with a minimum lot size of 12,000 sq/ft. The Applicant has specified 681 parcels below that minimum size.**

Even if the Planning Department inappropriately allowed a zoning change, **the highest zoning allowed in Tier 3 Suburban Residential Areas is High Density Suburban (HDS) which is 7 units/acre with a minimum lot area of 5,000 sq/ft. The Applicant proposes 259 parcels smaller than that.** This is shown in TABLE 4. ENVISION WASHOE 2040 MASTER PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATIONS.

The Applicant uses Article 408 COMMON OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT to justify the small parcel sizes. However, according to Section 110.408.25 the only flexibility allowed when changing lot size for clustering homesites is lot width and setbacks. **There is no deviation allowed for lot area.**

The application is out of compliance with the following:

The Truckee Meadows Regional Plan

Envision Washoe 2040 Master Plan

Development Code Article 408 Common Open Space Development

The following Findings cannot be made to approve a Tentative Subdivision Map:

(a) Plan Consistency and (b) Design or Improvement

Based upon the above, the Planning Commission was correct in their decision to unanimously deny the Application. This decision must be upheld by the Board of County Commissioners.

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Inappropriate Subdivision Design and Premature Expansion

The Applicant proposes a high density, urban style subdivision in a Tier 3 Suburban Residential area. This area maintains a rural character due to lack of infrastructure and essential services.

The applicant proposes 90 “patio” homes with densities of up to **12 units/acre on lot sizes under 3,000 sq/ft**. This density equates to **Medium Density Urban**.

This intense urban density far exceeds the highest allowed density in a Suburban Residential area according to Envision Washoe 2040. The extremely small parcels with limited parking, shared driveways and small setbacks are not adequate to support a family lifestyle based on private vehicle transportation. The lack of essential services, employment, entertainment and public transportation seem incompatible with persons who would normally seek this level of housing. **The Truckee Meadows Regional Plan directs this type of housing to infill inside the McCarren loop.**

The Applicant proposes premature, inappropriate, and inconsistent outward expansion.

The Truckee Meadows Regional Plan in Map 2 - Regional Form designates areas in Washoe County where growth should go. **Pleasant Valley is designated a Tier 3 area.** This is defined as “Area that is generally **on the periphery of the TMSA and contains low density development**, that is undeveloped or **contains significant development constraints**. Development in this area is lowest on the priority hierarchy for lands within the TMSA. **Public facility or service provision is generally not available or planned for”**. The proposed urban style subdivision is most definitely premature, inappropriate, and inconsistent.

The Application is out of compliance with the following Plans:

- Truckee Meadows Regional Plan**
- Envision Washoe 2040 Master Plan**

Finding (b) Design or Improvement for a Tentative Subdivision Map cannot be made.

Based upon the above the unanimous decision of the Planning Commission to deny the Application must be upheld.

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Endangered Species

The proposed development lies entirely within the primary habitat of two endangered species, the Carson Wandering Skipper and the Cui-ui Sucker, and the threatened Lahontan Cutthroat trout. This information was provided by the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Application failed to identify these species or provide mitigation plans as required by the Application Question 12 and the Development Code.

Article 432 Section 35 Open Space Standards states that a habitat survey of the area shall include mitigation measures to reduce impacts and to allow for the long-term maintenance of environmentally sensitive habitats. Article 424 HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT Section 15 also states that this requirement shall be met.

The Applicant proposes to destroy large areas of habitat of these endangered species.

Article 432.35 states that no new development shall be permitted within a recognized primary habitat area of an endangered species.

The Application is out of compliance with the following Development Code Articles:
Article 432, OPEN SPACE STANDARDS
Article 424, HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT

The application does not comply with Article 432.35 Environmentally Sensitive Habitat therefore these findings cannot be made:

1. OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT Finding (b) Protect Natural and Scenic Resources
2. TENTATIVE SUBDIVISION MAP Finding (b) Design or Improvement
3. TENTATIVE SUBDIVISION MAP Finding (e) Fish or Wildlife.

Based on noncompliance with the Development Code and the inability to make the required findings, the unanimous denial decision of the Planning Commission must be upheld.

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Sensitive Migration Routes

The proposed development lies within the Pacific Flyway, a major mule deer migration corridor, and mule deer winter range. This information was supplied by Cody Schroeder, mule deer specialist for NDOW, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Applicant failed to identify these migration routes or provide mitigation measures to prevent adverse impacts as required by question 12 of the application and by Envision Washoe 2040.

Envision Biodiversity Goal 1.2 is to limit development activities that impede natural migration patterns between habitats on which migratory species depend.

The Applicant proposes to destroy areas of mule deer winter range at a time when their population is already in serious decline.

The Nevada State Wildlife Action Plan identifies mule deer as a species of greatest conservation need.

Envision Biodiversity Goal 2.3 states that the county will encourage the location of higher density development closer to urbanized areas and support limitations on development in rural areas with high biodiversity.

The development will not provide adequate migration habitats for mule deer or waterfowl.

Envision NCR Principle 3.1 is to protect key migration routes or critical seasonal habitats.

The application does not comply with Envision Washoe 2040 therefore these findings cannot be made:

Open Space Development Finding (b) Protect Natural and Scenic Resources

Tentative Subdivision Map Finding (b) Design or Improvement

Tentative Subdivision Map Finding (e) Fish or Wildlife

Based on noncompliance with Envision Washoe 2040 and the inability to make the above findings, the unanimous denial decision of the Planning Commission must be upheld.

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Steamboat Creek Pollution

Steamboat Creek is already classified as the largest nonpoint source of pollution to the Truckee River and the project will increase the pollution load. This information comes from the 2024 Nevada Water Quality Integrated Report, the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency, Envision Washoe 2040 and from Bryceton Schilling, environmental scientist with the Bureau of Water Quality Planning at the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection.

The nonpoint source pollution caused by years of construction and the unprocessed storm water runoff from 940 homes will damage Steamboat Creek. This does not comply with goal #1 of the **Nonpoint Source State Management Plan** -reduce nonpoint source pollution in impaired waters through support of activities that reduce pollution load. It is not consistent with the purpose of Article 418 SIGNIFICANT HYDROLOGIC RESOURCES-regulate development activity within and adjacent to perennial streams to ensure that these resources are protected and enhanced.

The increase in pollution will affect the endangered cui-ui and the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout. The project area is considered part of the range, distribution, and primary habitat of these fish. This is not consistent with the purpose of Article 432 COMMON OPEN SPACE -preserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas. It also does not comply with **Envision Biodiversity Goal #5**-protect important habitats from impacts or loss due to development.

The application is out of compliance with these Development Code Articles: Article 418 SIGNIFICANT HYDROLOGIC RESOURCES and Article 432 COMMON OPEN SPACE.

COMMON OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT Finding (b) Protect Natural and Scenic Resources cannot be made.

TENTATIVE SUBDIVISION MAP Finding (b) Design or Improvement and Finding (e) Fish or Wildlife cannot be made.

Based on noncompliance with the Development Code and the inability to make the required findings, the unanimous denial decision of the Planning Commission must be upheld.

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Tree Preservation

The Sierra Reflections Applicant's tree removal proposal is out of compliance with the Washoe County Development Code in several areas.

The Applicant's Tree Preservation/Removal Exhibit states and shows plans to remove over 50% of the large diameter trees on the property.

Landscaping Article 412, Section 25(c) Preservation of Significant Trees, states that "A minimum of 50% of existing Significant Trees **must** be preserved in their existing locations". Also in this Section, all non-prohibited trees with a caliper greater than 6 inches as measured 54" from the grade **shall** be preserved if feasible.

Hillside Development Article 424.40 states that "Existing trees and vegetation **shall** be retained and integrated into the site development plan to the maximum extent feasible..."

As Shown, the Sierra Reflections TREE PRESERVATION/REMOVAL EXHIBIT is out of compliance with the following Development Code Articles:

Article 412 LANDSCAPING

Article 424 HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT

The following Required Findings cannot be made:

Article 408 **COMMON OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT**, Section 110.408.28, **Finding (b) Protect Natural and Scenic Resources**.

Article 608 **TENTATIVE SUBDIVISION MAPS**, Section 110.608.25, **Finding (b) Design or Improvement**.

Based upon noncompliance with the Development Code and the inability to make required Findings, the unanimous Denial decision of Planning Commission must be upheld.

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Flooding Issues

Steamboat Creek has a long history of flooding events **with the existing floodplain intact**. There have been nine significant floods since 1980, averaging one about every five years. The Applicant's proposed actions will increase flood potential and damage.

The Applicant proposes to destroy the floodplain by capping 87% of it with eight feet of fill.

This action will destroy the floodplain's natural functions of stormwater retention and slow-release capabilities. This is out of compliance with Development Code Article 418 SIGNIFICANT HYDROLOGIC RESOURCES.

The Applicant's actions will confine Steamboat Creek to a 300-foot-wide channel bounded by rip rap. This action will increase water depth and velocity in the channel and increase erosive action during flood events.

This is out of compliance with Envision Washoe 2040, AR Principle 1 Policy 1.2 **which restricts development in floodplains that would constrict or otherwise result in higher floodwater levels or peak flows.**

Floodplain destruction and channelization of Steamboat Creek will increase the flushing of pollutants and contaminated sediments downstream. This will have a negative impact on the habitat of endangered Cui-ui sucker fish and threatened Lahontan Cutthroat Trout.

This does not comply with Envision Washoe 2040, NCR Principle 3, Policy 3.1 which states **"Protect key wildlife and fishery habitats of threatened, endangered or rare species"**.

The Applicant's actions are out of compliance with the following:

Development Code Article 418 SIGNIFICANT HYDROLOGICAL RESOURCES

Washoe County Master Plan Envision Washoe 2040

Findings which cannot be made for Article 608, TENTATIVE SUBDIVISION MAPS are:

(b) Design or Improvement and (c) Type of Development, (e) Fish or Wildlife and (f) Public Health.

Since the Application is out of compliance with the Washoe County Development Code and Master Plan and required Findings cannot be made for a Tentative Subdivision Map, the unanimous denial decision of the Planning Commission must be upheld.

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Floodplain Preservation

The floodplain in the proposed Sierra Reflections subdivision has many interrelated constraints. Development on this floodplain is out of compliance with existing Plans and Codes. The floodplain must be preserved as Open Space.

The Applicant proposes to cap the floodplain with eight feet of dirt and cluster 304 high density houses on it rather than preserve it as open space.

The following issues support preservation of the floodplain as open space:

1. The area is designated a FEMA 100 yr. floodplain which exhibits wetland characteristics.
2. The floodplain is contaminated with mercury. Required remediation would destroy it.
3. The Truckee Meadows Regional Plan designates the floodplain as a Natural Resource Consideration Area and a Critical Water Source Protection Area.
4. The floodplain is subject to very strong liquefaction during seismic events.
5. The floodplain is primary habitat for two endangered and one threatened species.

The Application is out of compliance with the following Plans and Codes:

Development Code Article 418 SIGNIFICANT HYDROLOGIC RESOURCES, Article 424 HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT, and Article 432 OPEN SPACE STANDARDS

Master Plan Envision Washoe 2040 Element 03 Conservation of Natural and Cultural Resources, Element 04 Adaptation and Resiliency and Element 07 Public Facilities and Services

The following Findings cannot be made for a Common Open Space Development:

- (a) Preserve or Provide Open Space, (b) Protect Natural and Scenic Resources and (c) Achieve a More Efficient Use of Land.

The following Findings cannot be made for a Tentative Subdivision Map:

- (a) Plan Consistency, (b) Design or Improvement, (c) Type of Development, (e) Fish or Wildlife and (f) Public Health.

In summary, the application is out of compliance with the Development Code and Master Plan and required Findings cannot be made. The unanimous decision of the Planning Commission must be upheld and the Application denied.

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Aquifer and Water Sustainability Issues

The Pleasant Valley aquifer runs West to East from the Mount Rose Ski Area to Toll Road. It serves many communities along Mt. Rose Highway.

According to the Nevada Division of Water Resources the Pleasant Valley Aquifer (Basin 088) is already **fully committed based upon existing pumping rights** verses estimated annual yield. The 2023 Basin Status Assessment shows that **the aquifer is pumping more water than the aquifer can support on a continuing basis.**

Approved Tentative Subdivision Maps for Ascente and St. James Village will already allow the construction of almost 500 additional homes. Now Sierra Reflections would add 940 more.

Groundwater mining to support development is not allowed by Master Plan Envision 2040, Element 07 PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES ELEMENT. This Element also requires that Sustainability of the water supply must be considered when new development is being considered.

The Applicant proposes to destroy the Sierra Reflections floodplain.

This will reduce aquifer recharge and is out of compliance with Development Code Article 418 SIGNIFICANT HYDROLOGICAL RESOURCES.

The Applicant proposes to export sewerage out of the Pleasant Valley Basin.

This contrasts with the current use of Septic systems which return a significant amount of water to the aquifer.

The Application does not comply with the following Washoe County Codes and Plans:

Development Code Article 418 SIGNIFICANT HYDROLOGIC RESOURCES Section 00

Master Plan Envision Washoe 2040, Element 07 PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The Application cannot make the following required Findings:

Tentative Subdivision Map Section 110.608.25, Finding (b) Design or Improvement and (f) Public Health

Based upon the above noncompliance with Washoe County Codes and Plans and the inability to make required Findings the unanimous decision to deny the application must be upheld.

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Serpa Well Pumping Test

The Sierra Reflections Tentative Subdivision Map Application documents the results of a pumping test on the Falcon Capitol Well in Washoe Valley. The inclusion of this test report indicates that the Applicant is considering the well as a source of water for Sierra Reflections. The test constantly pumped 406 gallons/minute for 10 days.

The 10-day test showed a measurable drawdown in nearby TMWA production wells. The wells slowly recharged to only around 70% after 14 days.

A simulation estimated that pumping the proposed 800 gallons/minute for five years would lower the groundwater level by over 20 ft. for over a mile from the well. This would severely degrade shallow domestic wells and create a public health issue.

The simulation estimated that pumping the proposed 800 gallons/minute could be conducted for about 5 years. Use of this well is not sustainable.

Water temperature from this well was 70 Degrees F. Normal water temperature is 50 – 55 degrees F. This well is located near the Steamboat Hot Springs fault line. Seismic activity could alter water flow or quality.

Use of the Falcon Capital Well would be out of compliance with Washoe County Master Plan Envision Washoe 2040, Element 07, Public Facilities and Services, PFS Principle 1, Policy 1.10 and Policy 1.15 and PFS Principle 2, Policy 2.1.

Finding (b) Design or Improvement and Finding (f) Public Health cannot be made for Development Code Article 608 TENTATIVE SUBDIVISION MAPS, Section 110.608.25.

Based upon noncompliance with the Master Plan and the inability to make required Findings, the unanimous Denial decision of Planning Commission must be upheld.

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Geohazard Issues

Nevada is the third most seismically active state in the United States. Development of hillside areas requires a site analysis to identify recently active earthquake faults and the preparation of a Development Suitability Map. It is extremely important that a detailed evaluation of the area of any proposed development be conducted for the sake of public health and safety.

Geologist Joyce Newman has prepared a 51-page report on geohazards relating to Sierra Reflections. It is available in the Public Comment section of the 01/06/26 Planning Commission Meeting. Detailed References are provided.

The Applicant used old and, in some cases, obsolete data in their analysis.

The Applicant **ignored 27 relevant references** including detailed, updated fault maps. The Applicant ignored the opinions of a group of 40 geoscientists who **concluded that the risk of large earthquakes existed in the region**. The Applicant ignored a map produced by the Nevada Bureau of Mines and the U.S. Geological Survey **which showed liquefaction potential bordering on severe in the floodplain in Sierra Reflections**.

The Applicant provided incomplete on-site earthquake fault identification and soil exploration. The consultant, Westex, recommended numerous times that this work be done while the actual grading and construction were underway.

Development Code Article 424 HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT **requires a Site Analysis and Development Suitability Map be submitted as part of the Application**. This cannot be complied with if the analysis is not properly completed beforehand.

The Application is out of compliance with Development Code Article 424 HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT Section 15 (a) 2 Application Requirements and Procedures and Section 20(c) 3 Determination of Developable Area.

The Application cannot make Tentative Subdivision Maps Section 110.608.25 Findings (a) Design or Improvement, (c) Type of Development, and (f) Public Health.

Based upon the above the unanimous decision of the Planning Commission to deny the Application must be denied.

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Spread of Mercury Contamination

In the early years of the Comstock Lode ore was transported to Washoe Valley for processing by mills located there. Part of the process involved the use of mercury. A large amount of mercury was lost into the ground. Over decades mercury was washed down Steamboat Creek. **Overflow from flooding washed the mercury onto downstream flood plains, including the one in the proposed Sierra Reflections subdivision.** As part of the Tentative Subdivision Map Application the applicant is required to submit a plan which explains how mercury contamination on the property will be remediated to make it safe for habitation.

Part of the Applicant's Mercury Remediation Plan involves digging up the most highly contaminated soil in the floodplain and dumping it in **other areas of the subdivision which were not previously contaminated. The Applicant calls these "Beneficial Sites" but that does not seem to be the case.**

This action spreads **the most highly contaminated soil** to areas which were not previously contaminated. **Two of these areas are proposed community parks. Other areas are adjacent to and in direct contact with parcels for homes.** This action is solely the applicant's decision. **It is not mandated by any regulation or government agency, so why would they allow it?**

Other potential contamination sources are dust, spillage during transport, stockpiling of contaminated soil until it can be graded and covered, and the cleaning of contaminated equipment.

The applicant is creating a Toxic Waste Remediation Site which must be monitored forever.

The County states that they will create an **irrevocable easement** for these areas so they can never be developed. They will also post signage showing mercury contamination in the stream buffer zone. It would seem logical that parcels established on contaminated areas, even if capped with clean soil, would contain language in the deed disclosing mercury contamination so that current and future property owners were aware of this hazard.

Given the dangerous situation being created by this Applicant, Findings (c) Type of Development and (f) Public Health for a Tentative Subdivision Map cannot be made.

The unanimous denial decision of the Planning Commission must be upheld.

EXECUTIVE / MEDIA SUMMARY (02/27/26)

Mercury Contamination – Inadequate Testing and Reporting

The Washoe Lakes and Steamboat Creek are part of an EPA Superfund Site for mercury contamination. During flood events mercury contamination has been spread into the flood plain which is part of Sierra Reflections. The Applicant, using consultant UES, tested mercury contamination on this floodplain to determine the location and level of contamination. Testing was attempted using 1/3-acre areas at soil depths of 0-4 ft. and 4-8 ft.

The test method used by UES was both **incomplete and not able to measure contamination to the required depth levels** in many areas.

Seventeen of the 225 test areas were inexplicitly excluded from the test. Forty of the areas were not sampled to the full 8 ft. depth. The entire site was not fully characterized as required. **NO DATA DOES NOT MEAN NO MERCURY.**

The Consultant's test method of boring holes every 100 ft. does not adequately show the spread of contamination.

Using a Flow Model, an experienced local Geologist was able to fill in between the dots to more accurately show the spread of contamination. This basis is data provided by UES. This extremely relevant data should be addressed by the Applicant prior to approval of a Tentative Map.

The Applicant did not provide complete mercury contamination data for areas other than the floodplain.

High levels of mercury are known to exist in other areas of the proposed project. Examples are the creek bed and the floor of Washoe Canyon. These areas are designated as trails and public recreation areas. Their use by the public without remediation would be a health hazard.

In summary, incomplete testing and unreported mercury contamination will create a public health hazard to both future residents and casual users of this area. Finding (f) Public Health for a Tentative Subdivision Map cannot be made. The unanimous denial decision by the Planning Commission must be upheld.

EXECUTIVE / MEDIA SUMMARY (02/28/26)

Traffic Issues

The proposed 940 dwelling Sierra Reflections subdivision creates numerous important traffic issues including high traffic volumes, safety of users sharing the road, and many issues with the proposed roundabouts.

The Applicant proposes two roundabouts as access to the Sierra Reflections Subdivision. The roundabout designs and locations are inadequate, improper and dangerous.

The proposed 940 homes will create 6000 – 8000 daily trips averaging about 20 miles on a **dangerous highway known for traffic accidents and animal encounters.**

The proposed **roundabouts are of inadequate size** to support large vehicles diverted off I-580 in emergency situations. They are barely adequate for large delivery vehicles.

The proposed roundabouts **do not have separate lanes for bicycles or merging.** This creates safety issues for bicycles and causes conflicts and backups during emergency evacuations.

The proposed roundabouts are involved with **steep terrain** which could cause **loss of traction while slowing down or stopping for conflicting traffic.**

The proposed Eastlake Blvd. roundabout will require **massive grading** and may still have **line of sight issues** due to terrain.

The proposed roundabouts both enter onto Old Hwy 395 within a half mile of each other. **A high wind fire event could close both. This scenario happened in the Washoe City fire.**

The Application is out of compliance with the following:

Article 424 HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT

Master Plan Envision Washoe 2040

The Truckee Meadows Regional Plan

The Washoe Valley Nevada State Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan

The following findings cannot be made to approve a Tentative Subdivision Map:

(b) Design or Improvement, (f) Public Safety and (h) Access

For the above reasons you must uphold the unanimous decision of the Planning Commission to deny the Application.

EXECUTIVE / MEDIA SUMMARY

Scenic Byway Preservation

The Washoe Valley Nevada State Scenic Byway was designated in 2010. The North End of the Byway starts at the top of Washoe Hill where Eastlake Blvd. meets Old Hwy 395.

The Sierra Reflections Application proposes destruction of this area to build a roundabout for traffic control. This would destroy the Northern Gateway of the byway.

This is out of compliance with **Envision Washoe 2040, NCR Principle 1** which states that **ALL** planning partners should collaborate to protect the region's significant visual gateways and viewshed. Required collaboration was not done. The **Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan** says to "avoid mass grading and large rock cuts visible from the highway".

The ridgeline along Old Hwy. 395 which provides separation between Washoe Lake State Park and the proposed development will be destroyed.

Truckee Meadows Regional Plan NR6 states "Local government master plans **SHALL** include policies that address visual impact of development on ridgelines to maintain the scenic value of the region. **Development Code Article 424 HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT** states that "Significant natural features **SHALL** be protected and preserved where appropriate and feasible including ridgelines....".

Destruction of the Scenic Byway gateway is out of compliance with the following:

Development Code Article 424 HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT Section 00 Purpose (h) and Section 30(h) Significant Natural Features.

Washoe Valley Nevada State Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan

Master Plan Envision Washoe 2040, Element 03, Conservation of Natural and Cultural Resources

Finding (b) Design or Improvement cannot be made for Development Code Article 608 TENTATIVE SUBDIVISION MAPS, Section 110.608.25.

Based upon noncompliance with the Master Plan, Development Code and the Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan and the inability to make required Findings, the unanimous Denial decision of Planning Commission must be upheld.

EXECUTIVE / MEDIA SUMMARY

Hillside Development and Grading Issues

The proposed Tentative Subdivision Map is subject to Washoe County Development Code Article 424, HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT. The Applicant has not incorporated the provisions of Article 424 into the tentative map design as follows:

The Applicant proposes massive cut/fill grading approaching 4 million cubic yards of soil at depths approaching 70 ft. There is no consideration of the existing topography.

The Applicant proposes the careless alteration of and disruption of the natural topography. This would **destroy the natural contours of the land and destroy the scenic character of the hillside areas.** Article 424 states that the natural topography **SHALL** be maintained to the greatest extent possible.

The Applicant proposes to use cut/fill grading techniques to terrace areas to about a 3% slope where houses are to be built. The Hillside Development Article requires that grading **SHALL** create varying gradients to avoid a manufactured appearance.

The Applicant proposes extensive grading in the environmentally sensitive floodplain area which is habitat to two endangered species and one threatened species. Article 424 states that grading **SHALL** occur only when necessary to protect, maintain, enhance or restore the habitat.

The proposed Tentative Subdivision Map is out of compliance with Article 424 HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT, Section 00 Purpose and Section 35 Grading and Drainage Standards.

Finding (a) Plan Consistency, Finding (b) Design or Improvement and Finding (c) Type of Development cannot be made for Development Code Article 608 TENTATIVE SUBDIVISION MAPS, Section 110.608.25.

Finding (b) Protect Natural and Scenic Resources cannot be made for Development Code Article 408 COMMON OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT, Section 110.408.28.

Based upon noncompliance with the Development Code and the inability to make required Findings, the unanimous Denial decision of the Planning Commission must be upheld.

EXECUTIVE / MEDIA SUMMARY

Hillside Development Building Design and Landscaping Issues

The proposed Tentative Subdivision Map is subject to Washoe County Development Code Article 424, HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT. The Applicant has not incorporated provisions of Article 424 into the tentative map design as follows:

The Applicant proposes graded pads and terraces for homes. Hillside Development states that **structures should be located on the natural slope of the land** to be **compatible with the character of hillsides** and to **minimize alteration of natural landforms**.

The Applicant proposes that housing areas have a uniform walled effect. Hillside Development states that **projects with multiple buildings should have a staggered arrangement with height variation**. Split pad and stepped foundations should be encouraged so **buildings step-up or step-down with the natural slope**.

The Applicant proposes level grading of entire housing areas. Hillside Development encourages minimal grading around building pads and access routes to houses to **retain the natural slope and vegetation** on the parcel.

The proposed Tentative Subdivision Map is out of compliance with Article 424 HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT, Section 30 Site Development Standards.

Finding (a) Plan Consistency, Finding (b) Design or Improvement and Finding (c) Type of Development cannot be made for Development Code Article 608 TENTATIVE SUBDIVISION MAPS, Section 110.608.25.

Based upon noncompliance with the Development Code and the inability to make required Findings, the unanimous Denial decision of Planning Commission must be upheld.

EXECUTIVE / MEDIA SUMMARY (02/22/26)

Issues with Community Park #1

As part of the Sierra Reflections subdivision the Applicant proposes to build a large community park. **The development methods proposed in the creation of this park highlight the Applicant's disregard for the Development Code and Master Plan.**

The Applicant proposes to retain the park by building a 12 ft. high masonry wall parallel to Steamboat Creek for almost 1/3 mile. This will destroy the scenic features of the canyon. The wall could extend into designated wetland areas and will destroy riparian areas.

This is out of compliance with Article 424 HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT which protects and preserves the scenic quality of canyons, ravines, creeks and rock outcroppings. This will also destroy the primary habitat of sensitive and endangered species.

The Applicant proposes to use soil which is highly contaminated with mercury to help fill in the park area.

This seems totally inappropriate for a community park, especially with a storm water detention basin above it which drains through it and spreads contamination.

The park will be in an area designated as containing historic remnants. These could be covered with fill dirt and be destroyed and lost forever.

This is out of compliance with Envision Washoe 2040 which protects cultural resources.

The Application is out of compliance with these Washoe County Codes and Plans:

Development Code Article 424 HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT

Master Plan Envision Washoe 2040

The Application cannot make the following Findings:

Common Open Space Development, Findings (a) Preserve or Provide Open Space and (b) Protect Natural and Scenic Resources.

Tentative Subdivision Maps, Findings (b) Design or Improvement, (e) Fish or Wildlife, and (f) Public Health.

The Application is out of compliance with the Washoe County Development Code and Master Plan Envision Washoe 2040. The required Findings cannot be made. The unanimous decision of the Planning Commission to deny the Application must be upheld.

EXECUTIVE / MEDIA SUMMARY

Common Open Space Development (02/12/26)

The proposed development uses Article 408 COMMON OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT as authority to create a high-density urban style subdivision in a rural setting. The inappropriate design of the subdivision prohibits the use of this Article.

The Applicant proposes to cap a 100 yr. floodplain with 8 ft. of fill and destroy this sensitive environmentally constrained area rather than preserve and protect it as required.

The destruction of the floodplain and its natural functions is prohibited by Article 418 SIGNIFICANT HYDROLOGIC RESOURCES and Article 432 OPEN SPACE STANDARDS. It is also out of compliance with Envision Washoe 2040 Element 03 CONSERVATION OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES and Element 04 ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCY.

The Applicant proposes to destroy natural and scenic resources and the habitat of Special Status Species.

The Applicant proposes excessive grading to destroy both the floodplain and the natural topography and vegetation throughout much of the proposed subdivision. This is out of compliance with Article 424 HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT.

The Applicant fails to use the most suitable areas for development and instead plans to build on environmentally sensitive areas.

The applicant proposes to build housing on environmentally constrained areas rather than areas which are more suitable for development.

The Application is out of compliance with three Development Code Articles and two Envision Washoe 2040 Master Plan Elements.

The Application cannot make the following Findings in Article 408 COMMON OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT Section 110.408.28 :

- (a) Preserve or Provide Open Space
- (b) Protect Natural and Scenic Resources
- (c) Achieve a More Efficient Use of Land

Based on non-compliance with the Master Plan and Development Codes, and the fact that required Findings cannot be made, A Common Open Space Development is not allowed. The unanimous denial decision of the Planning Commission must be upheld.

EXECUTIVE / MEDIA SUMMARY (02/26/26)

Public Safety Issues

Public safety support in the South Valleys has declined in recent years with the closing of a fire station and the inability of REMSA to provide timely ambulance transport service. Service and funding have migrated to the North to follow growth. Stretched budgets and personnel issues have reduced the County's overall ability to respond to growth.

Public safety support in the South Valleys area is at a barely acceptable level. The addition of 940 homes (3000 people) will make it unacceptable. Funding and staff issues will not allow the County to respond to this challenge.

Sheriff's Deputies assigned to the South Valleys currently **patrol a very large area from Hidden Valley to the Carson City line**. Depending on the location of the Deputy, response can be lengthy. **Adequate Deputies have not been available to support evacuations in emergency situations**. No substation exists in South Washoe County to facilitate operations.

Truckee Meadows Fire and Rescue face serious challenges in this area. The closing of the Bowers Mansion station has increased fire and EMS response times on the West side of the Valley. Resources at the remaining station are insufficient to support a sustained effort to fight fires when no municipal water services are available. A new station is proposed to **replace** the existing station, but funding is not available and it is unknown when it will be. Design changes to the proposed station to make it more affordable may cause it to be inadequate for proposed growth or sustained firefighting efforts.

Emergency Medical Services are limited in the South Valleys. Truckee Meadows Fire can respond with paramedic engines. Only one ambulance, operated by TMFPD, is available for rapid emergency transport. REMSA is short-staffed and cannot position an ambulance in the South Truckee Meadows. This situation will get worse with proposed growth.

Public Safety issues are primary when considering large scale growth. It is felt that necessary support cannot be provided at this time or in the immediate future. It is requested that the unanimous denial decision of the Planning Commission be upheld.

EXECUTIVE / MEDIA SUMMARY (02/25/26)

School Issues

This Summary address issues related to Pleasant Valley Elementary School traffic flow, volume and safety.

The Traffic Analysis is incorrect regarding volume during school hours.

The Traffic Analysis was conducted at the wrong times. The analysis was conducted between 7:00 – 9:00 am and 4:00 – 6:00 pm. Peak school traffic times are 9:05 – 9:25 am and 3:25 – 3:45 pm. The Traffic Analysis was conducted while COVID-19 was still an issue. Approximately 23% or 75 students were still doing remote learning which made traffic counts low. The Traffic Analysis must be redone in this area to provide a correct Analysis.

Traffic flow changes were not addressed to guarantee student safety.

The Traffic Consultant did not consider new streets and intersections to properly evaluate the traffic flow and congestion caused by vehicles going to, and coming from, Pleasant Valley School. This should be done to ensure student safety and must be done to provide a complete Traffic Analysis as required by the Application.

The Application is out of compliance with Development Code Article 608 TENTATIVE SUBDIVISION MAPS.

Finding (b) Design or Improvement and Finding (h) Access cannot be made to approve a Tentative Subdivision Map.

Please uphold the unanimous denial decision of the Planning Commission.

Financial Analysis and Washoe Valley Fire Station Support

This summary discusses financial information which allegedly pertains to the Sierra Reflections Application. It also discusses the Applicant's claim to contribute to the construction of the proposed new Washoe Valley Fire Station.

Financial Analysis

In the Appeal of the Planning Commission's unanimous denial of the Sierra Reflections Application, it was **falsely stated that a Financial Impact Analysis was submitted with the Application**. No such analysis has been identified by citizens or the Planning Division.

The financial information was included in a Brief attached to the Appeal and was not available, and therefore not relevant, to the Planning Commission Denial Appeal.

The financial information provided in the Brief was NOT for Sierra Reflections, but for a supposedly "similar" 2022 project. No supporting information was provided to gauge the similarity of the Applications. The financial information provided was only gross totals. No detailed information was provided to allow verification of the totals.

The financial information provided cannot be verified for content or accuracy. **This financial data is meaningless in addition to not being relevant to the Appeal.**

Washoe Valley Fire Station

The Applicant has stated only verbally that their "pro rata" share will be provided to assist with the construction of the proposed new Fire Station. **Nothing has been put in writing. The Applicant has not defined how "pro rata" is determined, what the amount would be, or how and when it would be paid.**

It is unlikely that any money would be paid up front. Construction could not start until the necessary utilities are installed. That could take years. The first phase of the development is only eight units. The Applicant also stated in a public meeting that the intent is to sell the land, not develop it. The property is listed for sale on the internet.

It is likely that the proposed Washoe Valley Fire Station will be built before funds are even available from the Applicant for its construction.