



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

CITY HALL

CITY OF SONORA 94 N. WASHINGTON STREET, SONORA, CA 95370 P: (209) 532-4541

SERVICE, INNOVATION, INTEGRITY, COLLABORATION, RESPECT, LEADERSHIP

DATE: August 17, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Tyler Summersett, Community Development Director and Cole Przybyla, Przybyla Advisors

SUBJECT: Presentation and Consideration of Adopting the City of Sonora 2026–2031 Economic Development Strategy

RECOMMENDATION:

Consider Adoption of Resolution No. 08-17-2026-C, Adopting the City of Sonora 2026-2031 Economic Development Strategy.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Sonora serves as the county seat, a regional retail and medical center, and a gateway to recreation and visitor destinations throughout the Central Sierra, including Yosemite National Park. This regional role brings substantial daily activity into the City and supports local businesses and sales activity, while also creating pressures related to housing, streets, public services, and downtown.

Over the past several years, the City and its regional partners have completed a number of planning and economic development efforts identifying recurring issues and opportunities affecting Sonora. These include business turnover and commercial vacancies, limited developable land, housing and workforce constraints, infrastructure and utility costs, small-business needs, Downtown revitalization, tourism, and the need to protect Sonora's historic character while planning for future growth. The Economic Development Strategy builds upon those prior efforts rather than replacing them.

The Strategy's appendix specifically connects its recommendations to the City's 2020 Economic Development Restart Findings Report, the 2023 Organization Review and Budget Stabilization Study, the Central Sierra Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, and the Sierra Jobs First Strategic Plan. The proposed Strategy is intended to convert that prior planning and community direction into an implementation-oriented work program for the period 2026 through 2031.

DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS:

The Economic Development Strategy is structured as a five-year strategic toolkit designed to strengthen Sonora's economy while balancing economic growth with preservation of the City's unique qualities. It is intended to serve as an accessible working document for City staff and community partners and focuses on practical, relatively low-cost and high-impact implementation tools.



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The Strategy recognizes the practical realities of a small city with limited staffing and fiscal resources. Accordingly, its recommendations emphasize manageable actions, partnerships, outside funding, and activities that can be incorporated into normal City operations rather than establishing a large stand-alone economic development program. Adoption establishes the strategic framework, and subsequent Council direction will provide the actionable items.

Survey

A Community Survey conducted in 2025 received more than 500 responses. In addition, more than 100 participants attended two Saturday community workshops, and approximately 10 key interviews were conducted with local Chamber leaders, Mother Lode Job Training, City Councilmembers, City staff, and Visit Tuolumne.

The community survey included in Appendix 2 further indicates that local jobs, housing, Downtown vitality, infrastructure, business support, activities, healthcare and education access, and tourism were among the areas identified by respondents as opportunities for economic and community improvement.

Key Objectives

The proposed Strategy is organized around five key objectives:

1. Business Basics;
2. Placemaking & Community;
3. Planning & Policies;
4. Funding; and
5. Workforce Development.

These objectives are intended to provide a community-focused roadmap with clear implementation actions that can be carried out by City staff and partners. The Strategy specifically identifies strengthening the economic base, revitalizing Downtown, and supporting local businesses as central priorities.

The proposed Strategy consolidates prior recommendations into one implementation framework.

The Strategy's crosswalk identifies direct connections between its five objectives and prior findings concerning Downtown vacancies, visitor amenities, business recruitment and retention, permitting and development barriers, workforce decline, housing, annexation planning, tourism, historic preservation, funding limitations, and regional economic diversification.

The Strategy also aligns its objectives with regional economic development efforts addressing housing, infrastructure, business capital, childcare, workforce retention, Downtown redevelopment, placemaking, trail connections, recreation, tourism, and outside funding.



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Next Steps

Following the adoption of the Economic Development Strategy, staff will return to the City Council with recommended year one implementation actions. Council direction received during the presentation of the Strategy will be incorporated into those recommendations.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Adoption of the Economic Development Strategy has no immediate additional fiscal impact. The FY 2026/27 Budget includes \$100,000 to support Economic Development strategies and activities. Specific projects requiring use of these funds will be presented to the City Council as part of a future implementation package for consideration.

ATTACHMENTS:

2026-2031 Economic Development Strategy

Resolution No. 08-17-2026-C

Economic Development Strategy Power Point Presentation Slides

CORE COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

Economic Development/Growth and General Plan