

City of

**SUTTER CREEK**

1854

# City of Sutter Creek

**2026 Sunstone Economic Development Challenge:  
Building an Entrepreneurship Ecosystem**

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Dalton Abrams  
Marilyn Yuan

# Our Team



**Abraham Tuchman**

Master of Public Administration  
Policy Advisor  
Orange County  
Board of Supervisors



**Dalton Abrams**

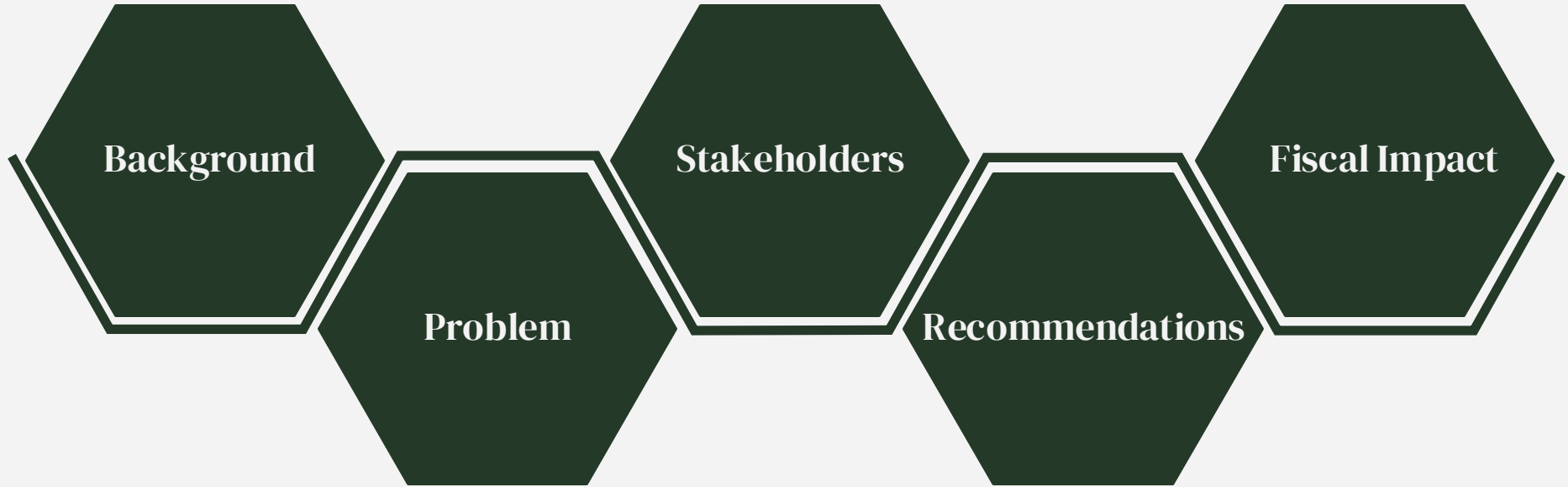
Master of Public Administration  
Administrative Analyst  
City of Riverside Public Works  
Director  
Riverside County Farm Bureau



**Marilyn Yuan**

Master of Public Administration  
Senior Office Assistant  
City of Pleasanton  
Library and Recreation

# Overview



# Background



- Historic Gold Rush City
- Established in 1854
- 2.7 sq. miles
- 45 miles east of Sacramento
- Near Sierra Nevada foothills



- Population: 2,649 residents
- Median Age: 48 years old
- Labor Force: 1,104 workers
- Median Household Income: \$64,255



- 174 businesses
- Dominant sectors:
  - Retail
  - Hospitality
  - Personal services
  - Agriculture



# Problem Statement & Vision

## Problem

Sutter Creek aims to **build a more diverse and resilient local economy** but struggles to stand out against larger regional centers, despite strong local assets.

### Obstacles:

- Aging workforce / constrained labor pool
- Limited job diversity
- Over reliance on tourism and small scale retail
- Difficulty attracting businesses
- Limited year round economic activity



## Strategic Vision

Strengthen Sutter Creek's economic foundation through both **business attraction and local capacity-building** while leveraging its unique assets to advance its vision as a place where small businesses **thrive within a historic, high-quality, and opportunity-rich setting.**

### Goals:

- Expand local employment opportunities
- Strengthen its business environment
- Enhance community vitality

# Stakeholders & Strategic Partnerships

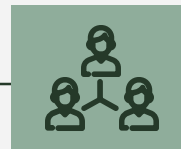
## Educational Institutions

Amador County Unified School District  
Amador College Connect  
CSU Sacramento Career Center  
Northwest I-Corps



## Tourism & Destination Marketing

Visit Amador  
Gold Country Visitors Association  
Amador Wine Country



## Clean Energy & Agricultural

AgBiotech  
Brightmark  
GreenWaste  
Vanguard Renewables



## Private Sector & Industry Partners

Local wineries, lodging operators, outdoor recreation providers, property owners, and commercial brokers  
Forestry and logging companies



## Agricultural / Land-Based

Amador County Farm Bureau  
Amador Resource Conservation District  
Farms of Amador  
University of California Cooperative Extension



## Business Orgs & Support Networks

Amador County



## Business Orgs & Support Networks

Amador County Chamber of Commerce  
CSU Sacramento Center for Small Business (CSB)  
Sutter Creek Business and Professional Association  
Amador Community Foundation

# Recommendations

## Recommendation 1

Develop a “Why Sutter Creek”  
Business Attraction Plan



## Recommendation 2

Establish an Entrepreneurship  
Development Center



## Recommendation 3

Develop an Innovation Campus  
and Business Incubator



## Recommendation 4

Launch a Sutter Creek  
Agriculture Innovation  
Pilot Program



# Recommendation 1 | “Why Sutter Creek/Why Amador County” Business Attraction Plan

## Target Materials/ Outreach Platforms

One-pagers  
website landing pages  
digital/social media marketing

Highlight demographics,  
affordability, and business  
opportunities

**Attract interest  
regionally → convert to  
local investment**



**Why Sutter Creek/  
Why Amador County**

## Two-Tiered Branding

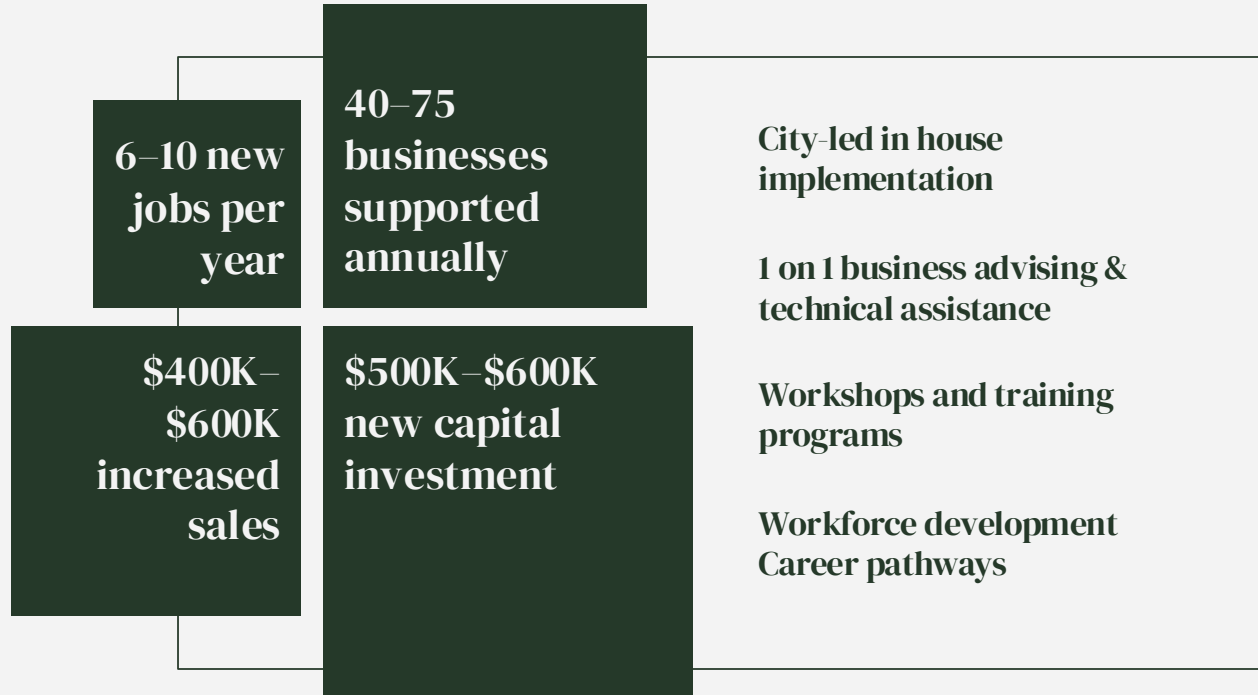
- **Amador** = regional, workforce & market access
- **Sutter Creek** = local, quality of life, small business appeal

## Goal

Align regional and local branding to **attract new businesses** while positioning Sutter Creek as a **launch point for growth** within Amador County.



# Recommendation 2 | Entrepreneurship Development Center



## Goal

Establish a centralized hub to **support business creation, expansion,** and **workforce development** in Sutter Creek.

# Recommendation 3 | Innovation Campus & Business Incubator

Develop a **Business Innovation Campus** within the EDC framework featuring an **7-8 week cohort-based incubator program** modeled on NSF I-Corps and Lean Startup methodologies.

Target key sectors: hospitality & tourism, value-added agriculture, outdoor recreation.



~3.5 jobs per  
business

~50% of  
participants  
launch or  
expand  
businesses

**Goal**

Create a structured pathway to help businesses **launch, grow, and scale** within Sutter Creek and the broader Amador region.

# Recommendation 4 | Agriculture Innovation Pilot Program

Launch a pilot program for **agricultural waste-to-value technologies** to align with CA climate and sustainability goals, create new revenues streams, and create skilled jobs in Sutter Creek and Amador County.

Implement through a public-private partnership (P3) model and integrate within the EDC & Innovation Campus ecosystem



## Key Partners



## Funding



## Goal

Leverage regional agricultural assets to **attract clean energy, biotech, and value-added agriculture businesses.**

# Implementation

## Foundation (0-6 months)

**Identify and prepare** EDC location (City-owned facility)

**Launch** “Why Amador” + “Why Sutter Creek” campaigns

**Establish** partnerships



## Activation (6-18 months)

**Launch** Entrepreneurial Development Center (EDC)

**Initiate** incubator cohort programs

**Roll out** digital marketing campaign (Bay Area & Sacramento)

**Begin** Agricultural Innovation Pilot (site selection + partners)

## Growth (2-5 years)

**Expand** EDC programming and regional reach

**Scale** Innovation Campus & incubator programs

**Launch** Ag-Innovation Pilot Program

**Formalize** regional entrepreneurial ecosystem (Siskiyou-style model)

**Expand** agricultural innovation pilots into scalable programs

**Attract** clean energy, ag-tech, and biotech firms

# Fiscal Impact

## Public Investment

- Utilized City Owned Facility
- Leverage State and Federal Grants
- In-House Implementation reduces long-term costs
- Public-Private Partnerships for Program Delivery

## Fiscal Returns

- Increased business licenses and permit revenue
- higher sales tax collection
- growth in transient occupancy tax
- increased local spending and job creation
- reduced economic leakage
- activation of vacant commercial space



## Economic Outputs

### Entrepreneurial Development Center

- 40-75 Businesses Supported/Yr
- \$500k-\$600k New Investment
- \$400k-\$600k increased sales

### Innovation Campus (Per Cohort)

- 4-5 new businesses
- 14-18 new jobs

## Proven ROI

- \$9 return for every \$1 invested
- Generates \$1M in annual economic activity
- Builds a self-sustaining local economy

Thank You

City of

**SUTTER CREEK**

1854

**USC**Price

Sol Price School of Public Policy