

JOHNSON MEADOW GREENWAY CONNECTOR IMPLEMENTATION GRANT

Recommended Action: Adopt Resolution 26-09-03 (Attachment 1) authorizing an implementation grant to El Dorado County (County) for up to \$2 million of Proposition 4 (Climate Bond) funding to construct the Johnson Meadow Greenway Connector Project (Project).

Executive Summary: The recommended action authorizes up to \$2 million in grant funding to the County to construct the Project. The County will construct approximately 1.2 miles of Class 1 shared-use trail, as part of the Dennis T. Machida Memorial Greenway (Greenway) and a connector segment across Johnson Meadow. The Project provides a connection between the Sierra Tract neighborhood, east of the Upper Truckee River, and the Barton Memorial Hospital area, west of the river (Attachment 2). Improvements include approximately one mile of asphalt shared-use trail through forested upland, approximately 900 linear feet of elevated boardwalk across Johnson Meadow, and a 140-foot shared-use pedestrian bridge on a new alignment across the Upper Truckee River to replace an existing damaged bridge. Approximately half of the Project area is located within easements on Conservancy lands, which the Conservancy Board authorized in June 2025. The recommended action is consistent with several Conservancy Strategic Plan goals, including: Provide Recreational Opportunities and Access for All, and Safeguard the Basin's Environmental, Tribal, Cultural, and Recreational Attributes for Future Generations.

Location: The Project area is located between Sierra Boulevard and Winnemucca Avenue in the City of South Lake Tahoe (City) and the County (Attachment 2).

Fiscal Summary: The Conservancy will award up to \$2 million in Proposition 4 (Climate Bond) funding to the County to construct the Project. Conservancy staff will process the grant agreement as part of its regular workload.

Overview

History

In the early 1960s, the State of California purchased property for a bypass freeway intended to address traffic congestion along U.S. Highway 50 in South Lake Tahoe. By the 1970s, changing environmental values precluded new major auto routes in the Lake Tahoe Basin (Basin) and public agencies envisioned alternative uses for these parcels. Conservancy staff worked with the California Department of Transportation to transfer

these properties to the Conservancy in 2000 to protect open space and natural habitat and to eventually develop the Greenway.

Conservancy staff began planning for the Greenway in 2002. The Greenway is a planned Class 1 shared-use trail located along the right-of-way alignment of the previously proposed freeway. The Conservancy and its partners envisioned that the Greenway would provide safe, off-street access for pedestrians and bicyclists. The route connects neighborhoods, schools, parks, recreation areas, and other community destinations throughout South Lake Tahoe. The Greenway is named in honor of Dennis T. Machida, the Conservancy's first executive director, who long advocated to expand public recreation and alternative transportation opportunities.

The Greenway has been implemented in phases through partnerships among local, state, federal, and regional agencies. The Conservancy and its partners have constructed the existing segments. The agency best positioned to deliver each portion of the project has led implementation. The Greenway alignment spans from Meyers all the way to Van Sickle Bi-State Park (Park) at the state line (Attachment 3). Since planning began, the Conservancy and its partners have constructed nearly two miles of shared-use trail extending from Sierra Boulevard to Herbert Avenue in the City. The trail crosses sensitive lands and streams, connects users to a variety of recreational and community destinations, and ties into the broader shared-use trail network in the south shore. Other sections currently in the planning phase include:

- Phase 1C, from Herbert Avenue to Ski Run Boulevard, which the City is undertaking with a planning grant from the Conservancy;
- Van Sickle Greenway Connector, within Van Sickle Bi-State Park, which the Conservancy is planning; and
- Johnson Meadow Greenway Connector, from Sierra Boulevard to the west, including a connector across Johnson Meadow, which the County is undertaking and is the subject of this implementation grant.

The Conservancy and its partners always hoped to add a connection to the Greenway across the Upper Truckee River to the Barton Memorial Hospital area. That connection was not feasible until 2018, when Tahoe Resource Conservation District acquired the 206-acre Johnson Meadow property. The acquisition created the opportunity to route a connector to the Greenway across the meadow while also supporting watershed restoration and habitat enhancement.

The County is a significant partner helping the Conservancy plan and construct the Greenway. In 2022, the County constructed Phases 1b and 2 of the Greenway segments east of Sierra Boulevard to Glenwood Avenue, which include a shared-use pedestrian bridge over Trout Creek and several sections of boardwalk. At that time, the County also began planning the Project to extend the Greenway west from Sierra Boulevard and a connection across the Upper Truckee River.

In June 2025, the Conservancy Board authorized the staff to execute a short-term license agreement and permanent easements with the County to construct, access, and maintain the portion of the Project that will cross through Conservancy land.

Detailed Description of Recommended Action

1. Major Elements and/or Steps of the Recommended Action

Upon Board authorization, Conservancy staff will negotiate and execute a \$2 million grant agreement with the County to support Project construction. The County has secured approximately \$9 million from a variety of other funding sources.

The County proposes to construct the Project over two field seasons in 2027 and 2028. The Project consists of a boardwalk through Johnson Meadow, a bridge over the Upper Truckee River, and paved shared-use trail in non-sensitive areas. The entire length of the new trail is approximately 1.2 miles.

2. Overall Context and Benefits

The Greenway is an important regional active transportation connection in South Lake Tahoe and has long been a priority for multiple public agencies and community partners. The Project is one of the highest priority shared-use trail projects in the Basin. The County will construct a new shared-use pedestrian bridge and boardwalk across the Upper Truckee River and its floodplain, restoring a critical connection that was lost in 2017 when the existing bridge was damaged by extreme winter storms. Locally known as the “Hospital Bridge,” it linked the Barton Memorial Hospital and many neighborhoods on both sides of the river. Without this connection, the public must take long detours to reach other Upper Truckee River crossing points. The public has expressed strong support for a new crossing. As part of the Greenway and the greater shared-use trail network, the Project provides a safer, more direct route for anyone walking, bicycling, or rolling across the south shore area.

Raised trail and bridge sections over creek and meadow crossings protect water flows and provide safe crossing for wildlife. The same structures will keep the trail open during high water flows from extreme weather events.

Extending the region’s active transportation network encourages people to walk, bike, or roll to various recreation destinations without needing a car. Consistent with other shared-use trails in South Lake Tahoe, the Project will meet Americans with Disabilities Act requirements, ensuring that everyone benefits from the connections and experiences these trails provide. In addition, the Project is located within an economically disadvantaged area of the City and County.

3. Schedule for the Project

Phase	Completion Date
Complete Engineering	September 2026
Secure Permits	December 2026
Advertise for Construction Bids	March 2027
Award Construction Contract	May 2027
Construct the Project	Fall 2028

Financing

The total Project cost is approximately \$11.7 million. This amount includes previous expenditures for planning and environmental analysis, along with construction costs and a ten percent construction contingency. The proposed \$2 million Conservancy grant increases the County's secured total to \$11,124,000. The County Board of Supervisors will consider approving an additional \$571,000 of County funding in late 2026 or early 2027.

Secured and Proposed Funding Sources	Amount
U.S. Federal Highway Administration: Surface Transportation Block Grant (secured)	\$3,861,000
California Department of Transportation: State Transportation Improvement Program (secured)	\$2,601,000
U.S Federal Highway Administration: Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (secured)	\$2,366,000
Tahoe Regional Planning Agency: Mitigation funds (secured)	\$296,000
<i>El Dorado County: County General Fund (proposed)</i>	<i>\$571,000</i>
<i>California Tahoe Conservancy: Proposition 4 (Climate Bond) (proposed)</i>	<i>\$2,000,000</i>
Total	\$11,695,000

Authority

Consistency with the Conservancy's Enabling Legislation

The recommended action is consistent with the Conservancy's enabling legislation. Specifically, Government Code section 66907.7 authorizes the Conservancy to award grants to public agencies for purposes consistent with its mission.

Consistency with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan

The recommended action is consistent with several Strategic Plan goals, including to Provide Recreational Opportunities and Access for All and to Safeguard the Basin's Environmental, Tribal, Cultural, and Recreational Attributes for Future Generations.

Consistency with the Conservancy's Program Guidelines

The recommended action is consistent with the Conservancy's Public Access and Recreation Program Guidelines. The Project will increase and enhance significant regional public access and public recreational opportunities consistent with natural resource preservation and increase non-motorized transportation and recreation opportunities.

Consistency with External Authorities

The recommended action is consistent with the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) because it facilitates the implementation of EIP project 03.02.02.0085. The Project is also identified as a top priority in the 2024 Lake Tahoe Active Transportation Plan. The Project is also consistent with the goals of the California Outdoors for All Strategy.

Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act

The County, acting as the lead agency, prepared an initial study (IS) and mitigated negative declaration (MND) for the Project to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The IS/MND is available for public review at the [CEQAnet Web Portal](https://ceqanet.lci.ca.gov/2024081292) at <https://ceqanet.lci.ca.gov/2024081292>. The County adopted the IS/MND on November 5, 2024 (SCH# 2024081292).

The Conservancy, acting as a responsible agency, previously reviewed and considered the IS/MND in connection with the Board's authorization to provide the County with a license and easements for the Project. On June 12, 2025, the Conservancy Board approved Resolution 25-06-02, finding that the Project as mitigated would not have a significant effect on the environment and adopting the County's Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan as a condition of approval. Conservancy staff filed a Notice of Determination (NOD) with the State Clearinghouse on June 13, 2025.

The County has not made changes to the Project nor are there any other circumstances triggering the need for further environmental review under CEQA Guidelines sections 15162, 15163, or 15164. If the Board approves the grant, the staff will file an NOD with the State Clearinghouse pursuant to CEQA guidelines, section 15096. Attachment 4 contains the Conservancy's NOD. No additional CEQA action is necessary.

List of Attachments

Attachment 1 – Resolution 26-09-03

Attachment 2 – Project Map

Attachment 3 – Existing South Shore Shared-Use Trail Network and Planned Greenway Sections

Attachment 4 – Conservancy's Notice of Determination

- Exhibit A – Location Map
- Exhibit B – California Department of Fish and Wildlife Filing Fee Receipt

Conservancy Staff Contact

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