WASHOE COUNTY

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: September 15, 2026

DATE: 09/01/2026

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Dave Solaro, Assistant County Manager

THROUGH: Kate Thomas, County Manager

SUBJECT: Adoption of resolution R26-82 adopting congested area boundary maps relating to the unlawful discharge of firearms, including the expansion of the current congested shooting area boundary south and east of Golden Eagle Regional Park and an area north of Sun Valley between Sun Valley and Hungry Valley. (All Commission Districts) [For Possible Action]

SUMMARY

Staff is requesting that the Board of County Commissioners adopt resolution R26-82 adopting congested area boundary maps relating to the unlawful discharge of firearms, including the expansion of the current congested shooting area boundary south and east of Golden Eagle Regional Park and an area north of Sun Valley between Sun Valley and Hungry Valley. This action is proposed in accordance with the authority granted to the Board under Nevada Revised Statutes 244.364(3) and the Washoe County Code, which empower the County to regulate the unsafe discharge of firearms and to establish, amend, and adopt congested area boundaries through resolution and map adoption.

The purpose of this report is to facilitate the modernization of boundary delineation by transitioning from metes and bounds legal descriptions to map-based boundaries, thereby improving clarity, public understanding, and enforcement of firearm discharge regulations in response to ongoing residential growth and evolving land use patterns in unincorporated Washoe County.

The adoption of updated congested area maps is intended to enhance public safety, ensure regulatory boundaries remain relevant and accessible, and provide a more efficient process for future amendments as community conditions change. This report provides the Board with the necessary context and legal framework to consider and act on the proposed resolution, ensuring alignment with both statutory requirements and the County's strategic goals.

PREVIOUS ACTION

On August 25, 2026, the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners introduced Bill Number 1959 and conducted the first reading of this ordinance, which amends Washoe County Code Chapter 50 by revising provisions related to the discharge of firearms.

On September 16, 2025, the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners approved a formal request from Assistant County Manager Dave Solaro to initiate amendments to Washoe County Code Chapter 50 regarding the delineation of congested areas for firearm discharge regulations. This request specifically sought Board direction to expand the congested shooting boundary south of Golden Eagle Regional Park.

BACKGROUND

The delineation and management of congested area boundaries for firearm discharge in Washoe County have evolved in response to changing patterns of residential growth, recreational use, and public safety priorities. Historically, the County relied on metes and bounds legal descriptions to define areas where the discharge of firearms is prohibited due to the risk posed to life and property. However, as residential development has expanded into previously rural or open space areas—particularly in regions adjacent to Golden Eagle Regional Park and between Sun Valley and Hungry Valley—these static legal descriptions have become increasingly difficult for both the public and law enforcement to interpret and enforce effectively. This has led to confusion regarding where shooting is permitted, especially as new subdivisions, parks, and community assets have emerged near existing boundaries, and as recreational use of public lands has intensified.

Advances in geographic information systems (GIS) technology now enable the County to transition to map-based boundary delineation, allowing for more timely and accurate updates that reflect current land use conditions and facilitate greater public understanding of firearm discharge restrictions. The move to adopt congested area boundaries by resolution and map, rather than by ordinance, is intended to provide a more flexible and transparent regulatory framework that can adapt to ongoing changes in community character and land use, while supporting the County's responsibility to proactively safeguard public safety in accordance with its statutory authority.

The attached maps depict the congested shooting boundary for each planning area as outlined in the Envision Washoe 2040 Master Plan. Areas on the map depict the area previously contained in metes and bounds survey within Washoe County Code and identify congested area, restricted area, and Warm Springs defined area restrictions within the legend. In addition to the existing locations staff has included proposed areas within the North Valley, Sun Valley, Northeast, Truckee Canyon, and Spanish Springs planning areas to be responsive to areas that have conflicts with expansion of the built environment creating unsafe conditions. The areas can be generally described as north of Sun Valley between Sun Valley and Hungry Valley and an area to the south and east of Golden Eagle Regional Park.

FISCAL IMPACT

The adoption of resolution R26-82, which establishes updated congested area boundary maps for the unlawful discharge of firearms, including the expansion of boundaries near Golden Eagle

Regional Park and north of Sun Valley—has limited direct fiscal implications for Washoe County. The primary financial considerations relate to the administrative processes required to implement the updated boundaries, such as the preparation, maintenance, and public dissemination of the new maps, as well as the posting of physical signage at boundary locations as required by Washoe County Code Chapter 50. These activities are expected to be managed within the existing operational budgets of the County Clerk's Office, the Office of the County Manager, and the Washoe Regional Mapping System, utilizing current staff and resources. No new appropriations or external funding sources are anticipated for the implementation of this resolution. Any incidental costs associated with signage, digital mapping updates, or public notification are projected to be minimal and will be absorbed within existing departmental allocations. Should future amendments to congested area boundaries require more extensive mapping or public outreach, such expenditures would be evaluated through the standard budgetary process.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Board adopt resolution R26-82 adopting congested area boundary maps relating to the unlawful discharge of firearms, including the expansion of the current congested shooting area boundary south and east of Golden Eagle Regional Park and an area north of Sun Valley between Sun Valley and Hungry Valley.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be:

"Move to adopt resolution R26-82 adopting congested area boundary maps relating to the unlawful discharge of firearms, including the expansion of the current congested shooting area boundary south and east of Golden Eagle Regional Park and an area north of Sun Valley between Sun Valley and Hungry Valley."