



Citizen Advisory Board

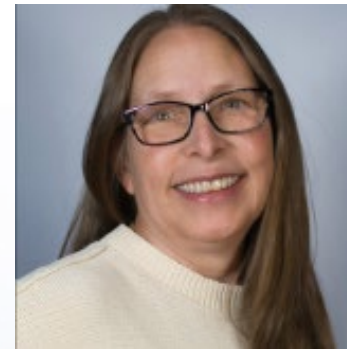
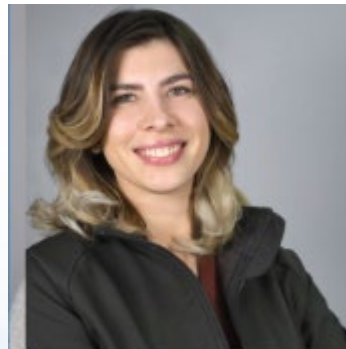
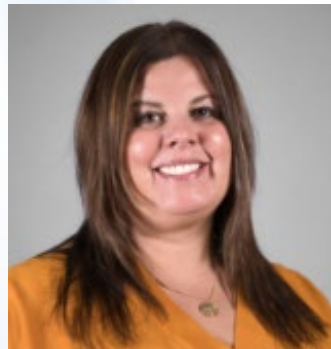
**Reimagination for Enhanced
Community Engagement**



Commissioner Support Team

The Commissioner Support program was born out of the need to provide **greater and more expansive community engagement** and specialized support to Washoe County's five County Commissioners.

There are currently three members of the team who support 72 CAB meetings per year, in addition to numerous other community meetings and engagement programs.



History of CABs

- **Established:** To assist/advise the Board of County Commissioners with local issues
- **Initial CABs:** Advisory boards for specific geographic areas
 - Incline Village/Crystal Bay CAB (1975), Verdi CAB (1981), & West Truckee Meadows CAB (1990)
- **Consolidation (2013):** Reduced from 15 to 9 CABs through the Citizen Involvement Revitalization Project, aimed at improving community feedback.
 - **Shift in Focus:** Development projects were included, then removed, and reinserted in CAB agendas several times over the years.
 - By 2021, CABs became community-topic based, with development discussions separated.
- **Dissolution and Reformation (2021):** Several CABs dissolved, with others reformed, showing ongoing struggles with community engagement through the CAB framework.
 - Introduction of Neighborhood Development Meetings (NDMs) created as freestanding to provide earlier input on development projects.
 - Development meetings allow for more flexible engagement without the constraints of open meeting laws.





Proposed questions

- With the goal being to provide **greater** and **more expansive** community engagement, are we effectively achieving that goal?
- What are opportunities for **true engagement** through creative means?
- How may we best utilize assets (technology & staff) to reach **more** people in **meaningful** ways?
- Contemplating **statistics** - is the “juice worth the squeeze?”



CABs – Stats & Staff

- 733 staff/presenters/CAB members and 838 public attendees (not unique)
 - Topic is king
 - If the 838 individuals were unique, we would still only be serving less than a quarter of one percent (.17%) of the population of Washoe County, yet CABs take up an estimated 20% of Commissioner Support staff time.
- A single staff member fills many roles:
 - Adherence to Open Meeting Law (legal), including reining in off-agenda topics
 - Security
 - Technology Services (setup & troubleshooting)
 - Subject Matter Experts (answering on-the-spot on topics we are not the experts on, i.e., community development, roads, and code enforcement.)
- We wonder... if staff were not creating, managing, and performing follow-up on 72 meetings per year– what community engagement could we be achieving?
- What is the role of government?



CAB & Topic-Based Meeting



Regularly Scheduled Citizen Advisory Board (CAB)



Senior Scam Seminar



Engagement Surveys & Focus Groups

Engagement

- Two surveys conducted over the past year: approx. 2000 responses on the first, 4,300 to the second.
 - Focused on how people wished to engage with the County.
- Held three focus groups: two with CAB members and one with stakeholders.

Results

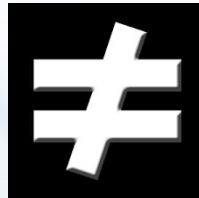
- Majority of respondents live within incorporated cities of Reno and Sparks. CABs focus only on unincorporated areas of Washoe County.
- Significant demand for online & text options, including participating on their own terms. Only 7% of respondents' prefer in-person meetings as 1st choice, while 41% find them not useful, compared to 21% who see value in them.
- Respondents feel comfortable calling their commissioner directly, or dialing 3-1-1.
- Focus groups indicated that CAB members “need a job” – seeking actionable items on agendas to feel worthwhile. Presenters can share the same data online as in-person, reducing the need for physical meetings.



Takeaways

- 72 CAB meetings per year with limited participation – quantity does not equal quality
 - Estimated \$43,000 in staff hours during 2023 CAB meetings to reach less than a quarter of one percent of the community (.17%).
 - Staff hours does not include consider time for preparation, planning, and post-meeting activities, which now include meeting minutes.
 - After-hours meetings mean hundreds of hours of cumulative “comp” leave or overtime and staff burnout.
- Topic-driven meetings are more focused, targeted, have seen greater participation, not limited by Open Meeting Law. Participants can attend only when interested in the topic, enhancing meaningful engagement.
- Not a communications issue – when topics of importance arise, people show up.

CABS



ENGAGEMENT



Possibilities Worth Exploring

From these data sources and surveys, the Commissioner Support team recommends using data-driven research to reassess the Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) program.

Benefits:

- Increased time to identify and host topic-based meetings to convey information to all Washoe County citizens, not just unincorporated.
- Reducing staff time working after-hours and weekend meetings, which lead to burnout and excess compensation, for minimal rewards.
- Opportunity to host semi-regular listening sessions between Commissioners and their constituents for an enhanced understanding of the topics of interest in each district.
- Increased jurisdictional messaging, both in incorporated and unincorporated parts of the County.
- Opportunity to grow existing or new programs, such as micro-Academies, text capabilities, and creative ways all residents may feel useful in providing advisement to the County.
- Greater support of Neighborhood Development Meetings (NDMs) through communications and outreach support.



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Thank you

