

Regional Early Action Planning Grants of 2019 (REAP) Close Out Report Form



Inyo County

11/9/2023

REAP Close Out Report Form Instructions

This form is for Regional Early Action Planning Grants of 2019 (REAP) grant holders to satisfy the reporting requirements of California Health and Safety Code section 50515.04. The report must be submitted to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) via email to reap@hcd.ca.gov no later than December 31, 2025.

Additional information about the REAP program is found at the program's webpage at: <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/grants-and-funding/programs-active/regional-early-action-planning-grants-of-2019>

Please proceed to the REAP Close Out Report Form on the next page and complete Parts I–X.

REAP Close Out Report Form

Part I – Summary

Briefly describe the grantee's REAP project(s), including but not limited to the following information:

1. Overview of the project
 2. Project start date, duration and completion
 3. Project goals and relevance to REAP goals
 4. Proposed uses and actions taken in support of proposed uses
 5. Actions that had the greatest impact on housing production
 6. Overall outcomes including quantified outcomes
-
1. Inyo County Inyo County conducted a vacant lands inventory and zoning and General Plan review of properties located in the County. This information was used to identify land that might be appropriate for zone and general plan changes to promote affordable housing opportunities primarily by increasing the allowable residential density. An Environmental Impact Report was prepared for the project. It included a regional Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) analysis and a goals and programs component that the REAP funding was used for. Lowering VMT is a State goal and compact, affordable housing is an important factor in VMT reduction. The County also entered into an MOU with the City of Bishop for the REAP funding that was shared between the two jurisdictions. The City of Bishop's report is separate.
 2. The County received an Executed contract from HCD in late February 2022. A consultant was brought on board in April 2022. The VMT study was conducted from May to the end of July and included 3-public outreach meetings. The information was included in the EIR for the vacant lands project EIR.
 3. The VMT study was a tool to help determine the necessary density to meet State VMT requirements. This relates directly to increased density and infill development, which are directly related to REAP goals.
 4. N/A
 5. N/A
 6. The County now has hard data on the required housing density to meet CEQA thresholds. This will greatly help us in the future as we work on housing policy as well as have the information for future CEQA documents.

Part II – Lead Agency and Partnerships

List lead agency and partnerships, including names, position titles, organizations, and the roles and responsibilities of each. What did those collaborative relationships and processes look like?

N/A

Part III – Drivers

Answer the following questions:

1. Did any local, state, or federal legislation or mandates drive the project(s)? (SB 35, AB 1397, etc.)
2. Was it a community-driven effort?
3. Were there additional funding opportunities present?

1. No
2. Community outreach was conducted for both the Vacant Lands project and the VMT study. Input was considered and used appropriately.
3. Yes, SB2 funding was used to conduct the Vacant Lands project and the accompanying EIR.

Part IV – Engagement Process

Answer the following questions:

1. Who were your stakeholders?
 2. What did the engagement process look like?
 3. What role did stakeholders play in the process? (Keep in mind: training, education, council formation, technical assistance, etc.)
 4. What were the outcomes of the engagement process?
-
1. Community members.
 2. Public meetings conducted at various places in the County as well as workshops with the Planning Commission.
 3. N/A
 4. Great questions that helped us think about how to use the data.

Part V – Challenges

Answer the following questions:

1. What challenges were encountered?
 2. What solutions were encountered or created?
 3. Are there areas for improvement of policy alignment at the state or federal level to help achieve this project more easily?
-
1. Community members are wary of changes to their communities. There is little to no land in Inyo County located near jobs and services to develop more housing.
 2. Infill, infill, infill.
 3. Any housing policy from the state or federal level should be better tailored to the needs of various communities. One size fits all does not always work. The people working for state and federal agencies need to listen and be flexible with communities as the struggle to find ways to meet mandates. We do want more housing for our people, it is just much more complicated in some areas.

Part VI – Outcomes

Answer the following questions:

1. What are the current or projected outcomes? What are the benefits?
 2. Did actual outcomes meet expectations?
 3. Have new opportunities arisen as a result of this project?
 4. What are the next steps?
-
1. Higher density housing. Several parcels were upzoned and with the VMT completed we have a targeted density.
 2. Yes, the VMT was prepared and used for the EIR as planned.
 3. Not yet, but it hasn't been that long.
 4. Work on design standards to promote more infill.

Part VII – Replicability

Answer the following questions:

1. What aspects of the project could be replicated in other communities?
 2. What useful resources and tools were implemented? Were there specific tools used for specific regions or sectors?
-
1. The VMT as part of the Vacant Lands exercise, could be replicated. Know how much and where developable properties as well as having a CEQA reviewed density can be helpful for any jurisdiction.
 2. GIS.

Part VIII – Project Highlights, Best Practices and Anticipated Achievements

Answer the following questions:

1. What are the most prominent project highlights and why?
2. What are some of the best practices that could be used by other agencies at a local, regional, state or federal level?
3. What are some long-term achievements that could result from the overall project?

1. The VMT study and the targeted density will be most helpful in the future.
2. N/A
3. Again, the ability to use the VMT and targeted density in future projects.

Part IX – Additional Resources

Provide web links to:

1. the project itself, and
2. resources used throughout the project, and any other relevant resources.

1. [Long Range Projects, Plans and Studies | Inyo County California](#)
2. County Assessor data, Cal Trans VMT modeling tools and GIS.

Part X – Further Information

Provide information on who can be reached for HCD to obtain more information about the project. Include names, phone numbers, and email addresses for one or more individuals.

Cathreen Richards

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Crichards@inyocounty.us

Regional Early Action Planning Grants of 2019 (REAP) Close Out Report Form



Inyo County -City of Bishop Suballocation

November 17, 2023

REAP Close Out Report Form Instructions

This form is for Regional Early Action Planning Grants of 2019 (REAP) grant holders to satisfy the reporting requirements of California Health and Safety Code section 50515.04. The report must be submitted to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) via email to reap@hcd.ca.gov no later than December 31, 2025.

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REAP Close Out Report Form

Part I – Summary

Briefly describe the grantee's REAP project(s), including but not limited to the following information:

1. Overview of the project
2. Project start date, duration and completion
3. Project goals and relevance to REAP goals
4. Proposed uses and actions taken in support of proposed uses
5. Actions that had the greatest impact on housing production
6. Overall outcomes including quantified outcomes

The City of Bishop proposed to use REAP funding to increase the scope and quality of the required CEQA needed to adopt the Specific Plan and Mixed-Use Overlay partially funded through SB2 funds. The downtown specific plan and mixed-use overlay is intended to allow for increased heights, density and mixed-use zoning by-right to increase housing options and encourage infill development. REAP funds provided augmented funding to support increased engagement tools such as rendering and visualization and technical studies for the preparation of an environmental impact report to allow for adoption and implementation of the plan.

The Downtown Bishop Specific Plan and Mixed-Use Overlay establish a framework to guide the growth, function, and aesthetics of Bishop's city center while maintaining its distinct small-town character and creating a vibrant pedestrian-friendly environment. The Plan and Overlay provide regulations and guidance for increased residential development and a broader mix of uses within their respective boundaries.

The project started in October 2019. The Environmental Impact report was prepared and made available for a 45-day public comment period beginning on May 27, 2022 and ending on July 11, 2022. The EIR was certified and the Downtown Bishop Specific Plan and Mixed Use Overlay was adopted in December 2022 allowing for implementation of the plan and the proposed zoning overlay ordinance. Housing construction in Bishop has slowed significantly in the past several decades to an average of one new unit per year between 2010 and 2020. The EIR determined a range of 123 new units to 373 new units could be developed over 20 years through implementation of this plan.

Part II – Lead Agency and Partnerships

List lead agency and partnerships, including names, position titles, organizations, and the roles and responsibilities of each. What did those collaborative relationships and processes look like?

The project was prepared by the City of Bishop Planning Department, in partnership with Alta Planning + Design, Inc and Helix Environmental, Inc.

City Council – Karen Schwartz - Mayor, Jim Ellis – Mayor Pro Tem, Karen Kong, Jose Garcia, Stephen Muchovej

City of Bishop Planning Department – Elaine Kabala - Associate Planner, Project Manager

Alta Planning + Design – Tim Bevins - Project Manager, James Powell – Project Manager

Helix Environmental, inc – Robert Edgerton – Project Manager

Part III – Drivers

Answer the following questions:

1. Did any local, state, or federal legislation or mandates drive the project(s)? (SB 35, AB 1397, etc.)
2. Was it a community-driven effort?
3. Were there additional funding opportunities present?

The project was initiated through community support demonstrated in multiple previous planning projects, including the 2015 Economic Development Update, the 2017 EPA Smart Growth Action Planning Grant, and multiple town hall meetings. The challenges Bishop faces are unique. The City of Bishop is completely land-locked by land owned and controlled by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), which has stifled development potential – particularly for housing. The specific plan is intended to increase opportunities for housing to address our housing imbalance by identifying opportunities for infill, mixed-use development, efficient use of land and infrastructure, and amenities to attract investment to realize housing and community development goals.

The project was funded by a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Grant, an SB2 Planning grant and the REAP grant.

Part IV – Engagement Process

Answer the following questions:

1. Who were your stakeholders?
2. What did the engagement process look like?
3. What role did stakeholders play in the process? (Keep in mind: training, education, council formation, technical assistance, etc.)
4. What were the outcomes of the engagement process?

The City of Bishop engaged with stakeholders and local residents to develop the project's vision and goals, and to influence the Plan and Overlay's development. A variety of methods were used to engage community residents and stakeholders throughout the process, including interviews, a project website, an online survey and public input map, virtual workshops, and in-person activities. Three community workshops were hosted and residents and stakeholders were engaged in facilitated and interactive activities designed to inform the planning process. In addition to these workshops, presentations to the Planning Commission and City Council were also conducted. Community members and stakeholders shared their impressions and experiences regarding current conditions related to housing, urban design, and mobility and shared their vision for the future of Downtown Bishop.

The city and project team convened stakeholders such as public officials, local groups, and government agencies to articulate the needs and challenges of the community. A total of ten interviews were conducted and were convened at the beginning of the planning process to share input on key topics including Main Street, their vision for downtown, housing, and mobility. The following stakeholder groups were interviewed:

- Bishop Chamber of Commerce
- Bishop Unified School District
- Caltrans District 9
- Eastern Sierra Transit
- Inyo County Planning Department
- Inyo County Supervisor - Second District
- Inyo Mono Advocates for Community Action (IMACA)
- Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP)
- Northern Inyo Healthcare District
- Bishop Paiute Tribe

To assist the City in determining the focus and scope of the analysis for the EIR for the proposed project and in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the City issued a NOP per CEQA Guidelines Section 15082 on May 17, 2021 to government agencies, special service districts, and individuals with an interest in or jurisdiction over the project. The comment period closed

on June 15, 2021. . The City of Bishop conducted one virtual public scoping meeting for this project, held on Thursday May 20, 2021 via Zoom. The meeting was attended by 29 participants. City staff provided an overview of the proposed project and potential environmental impacts, as identified in the NOP. Participants were then provided an opportunity to ask questions and clarify their understanding of the project description, and to provide comments regarding potential environmental impacts, content of the proposed project, and the CEQA processes associated with the proposed project.

A 45-day public comment period on the EIR opened on May 27, 2022 and closed on July 11, 2022. Following the preparation of the Final EIR, the Downtown Bishop Specific Plan and Mixed-Use Overlay and EIR were considered in noticed public hearings before the Bishop Planning Commission and the City Council. The City Council certified the EIR and adopt the Specific Plan in December 2022.

Part V – Challenges

Answer the following questions:

1. What challenges were encountered?
2. What solutions were encountered or created?
3. Are there areas for improvement of policy alignment at the state or federal level to help achieve this project more easily?

The most significant challenge met was the project was envisioned pre-COVID to incorporate interactive, on-site public engagement. The project team had to pivot to zoom-based public input, although one socially-distanced open design studio workshop was held in an empty storefront in the plan area during the week of November 16, 2020.

Generally, the community was supportive of increased zoning flexibility to create additional housing options. In implementation, certain state parking requirements, such as EV parking, have demonstrated barriers to reuse on properties that do not have sufficient space onsite to accommodate parking.

Part VI – Outcomes

Answer the following questions:

1. What are the current or projected outcomes? What are the benefits?
2. Did actual outcomes meet expectations?
3. Have new opportunities arisen as a result of this project?
4. What are the next steps?

The project was very successful in generating public engagement and documenting desired public realm improvements in the downtown. The project was also successful in building support for allowing for mixed-use residential uses within the commercial core of downtown. Several property owners have expressed interest in converting underutilized commercial spaces to residential. The City has already leveraged the plan to seek multiple grants for implementing streetscaping and wayfinding improvements.

The REAP funding was essential to augmenting the grant-funded budget for this project to complete a full Programmatic EIR to adopt and implement the plan and zoning ordinance. In December 2022, the City Council certified the EIR and adopted the Downtown Bishop Specific Plan and the associated Mixed Use Overlay Ordinance for implementation.

Part VII – Replicability

Answer the following questions:

1. What aspects of the project could be replicated in other communities?
2. What useful resources and tools were implemented? Were there specific tools used for specific regions or sectors?

Aspects of this project that can be replicated include building on community input to develop a strategic vision and supporting policies for implementation and education on the planning process and planning tools through public engagement. The project was initiated through proprieties identified in public workshops and town halls prior to the funding opportunities and leveraged grant funding strategically to develop a comprehensive vision with supporting implementation policies. The Downtown Bishop Specific Plan and Mixed-Use Overlay establish a framework to guide the growth, function, and aesthetics of Bishop's city center while maintaining its distinct small-town character and creating a vibrant pedestrian-friendly environment. The Plan and Overlay provide regulations and guidance for increased residential development and a broader mix of uses within their respective boundaries. The project addresses the housing goals and mandates of the State, while empowering the community to guide develop to enhance the desired character of the town.

The project benefitted from robust public outreach, which included online, interactive mapping and sruveys, virtual workshops, and open design office for community discussion within the study area. Investing in quality renderings of height and density alternatives and design standards ensured the plan was responsive to the character desired by the community.

Part VIII – Project Highlights, Best Practices and Anticipated Achievements

Answer the following questions:

1. What are the most prominent project highlights and why?
2. What are some of the best practices that could be used by other agencies at a local, regional, state or federal level?
3. What are some long-term achievements that could result from the overall project?

The highest success of the project was the ability to develop a comprehensive plan with supporting zoning amendments and CEQA completion to deliver a project that could be implemented upon completion. Additionally, the robust public engagement throughout the scope of the project reflected a quality project design, as well as a civically engaged public. The project was successful because it responded to the needs and desires of the community, not only for additional housing options, but to incentivize reuse and revitalization of dilapidated commercial real estate, and develop design and signage standards to preserve and enhance the character of the community. If the project is successful in the long-term, it will help implement the primary goal stated in the Bishop General Plan Economic Development Element – Create a vibrant, authentic and pedestrian-friendly downtown that is a destination for residents and visitors.

Part IX – Additional Resources

Provide web links to:

1. the project itself, and
2. resources used throughout the project, and any other relevant resources.

https://www.cityofbishop.com/departments/planning/environmental_documents.php

www.downtownbishopplan.com

https://www.cityofbishop.com/departments/planning/general_plan.php

https://library.municode.com/ca/bishop/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COOR_TIT17ZO_CH17.46MMIUSDOOVZO

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Part X – Further Information

Provide information on who can be reached for HCD to obtain more information about the project. Include names, phone numbers, and email addresses for one or more individuals.

For more information contact:

Ana Budnyk, Assistant Planner

abudnyk@cityofbishop.com