

Washoe County Planning Commission



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SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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**Special Use Permit Case Number WSUP23-0032  
(NV Energy Transmission Line)**

May 7, 2024

## The request is a Special Use Permit for:

1. A Major Public Facility use type for a 10.8-mile long (11.9 miles including California and Nevada portions – 6.8 miles in Washoe County, 4.1 miles in the City of Reno, and 1.1 miles in California), 120 kV overhead transmission line connecting the California substation near Verdi to the Bordertown substation.
2. To modify standards waiving all civic landscaping and parking requirements, vary the maximum height of 35' to allow for the proposed transmission line poles to be up to 105' in height, and vary the slope requirements of Article 438 to allow temporary slopes steeper than 3:1.

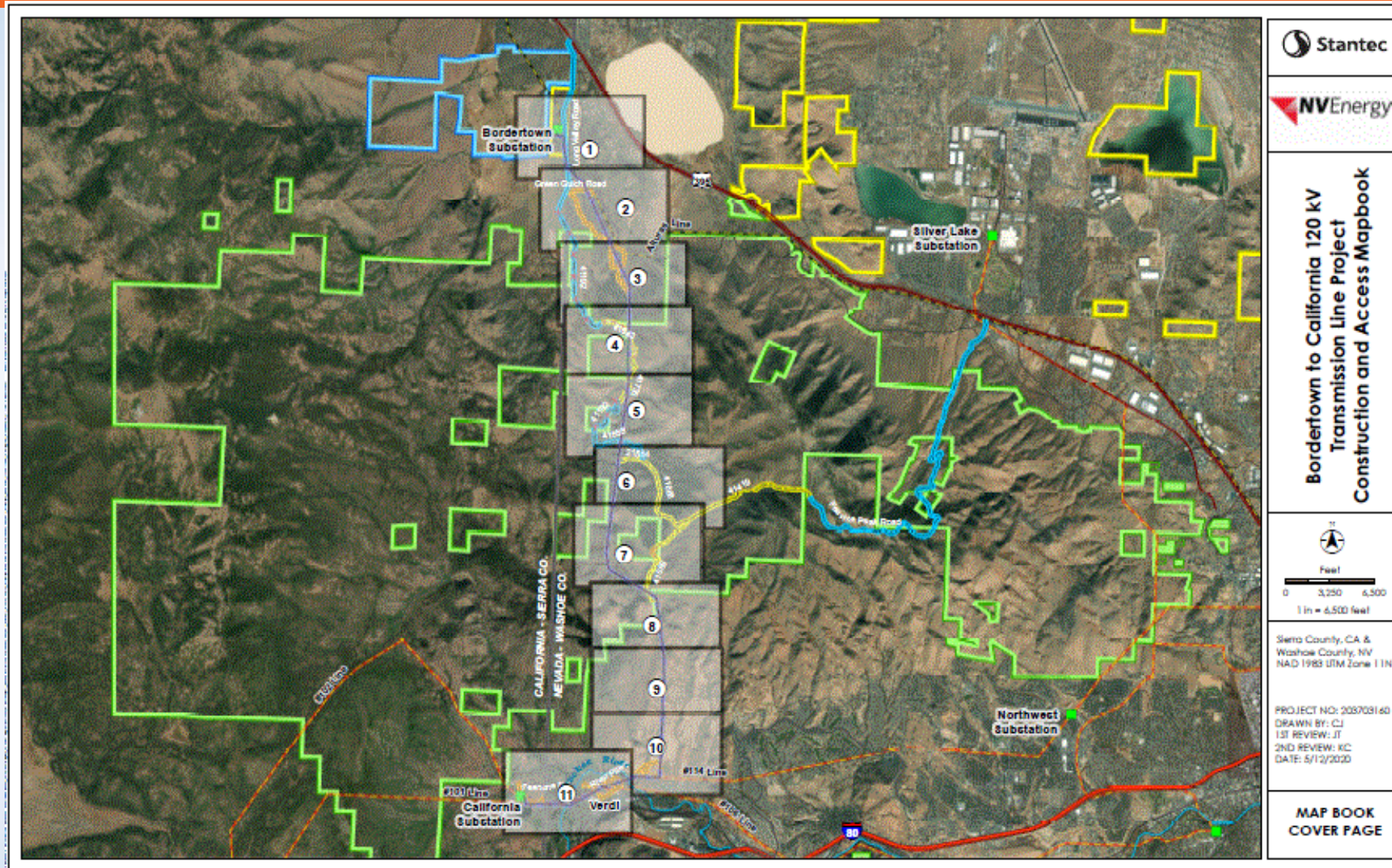
Project of Regional Significance because it entails construction of a transmission line that carries 60 kV or more and requires amendments to the Regional Utility Corridor Map to identify the location of the new transmission line.

# Vicinity Map

- Project traverses 27 parcels
- Verdi and North Valleys
- Zoned Low Density Suburban (LDS), Public Semi Public Facilities (PSP); General Rural (GR); Open Space (OS)



# Site Plan



Stantec

NVEnergy

**Bordertown to California 120 kV  
Transmission Line Project  
Construction and Access Mapbook**

11  
Feet  
0 3,250 6,500  
1 in = 6,500 feet

Sierra County, CA &  
Washoe County, NV  
NAD 1983 UTM Zone 11N

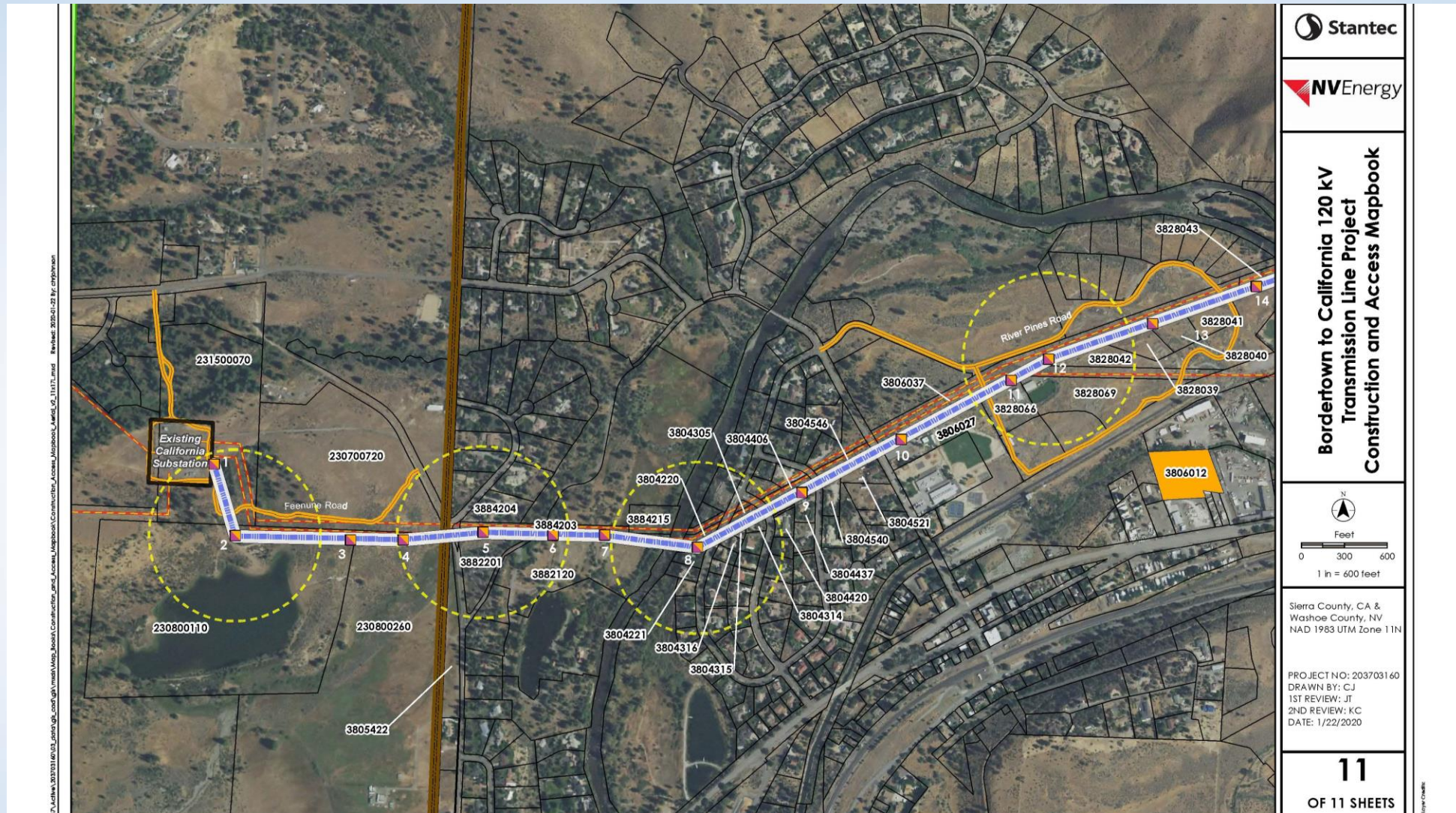
PROJECT NO: 205709160  
DRAWN BY: CJ  
1ST REVIEW: JT  
2ND REVIEW: KC  
DATE: 5/12/2020

**MAP BOOK  
COVER PAGE**

# Site Plan – Verdi Area



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# Site Plan – Verdi Area



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## The extension according to the applicant will provide the following:

“[R]eliable bulk transmission capacity to west Reno consistent with North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) Standard TPL-002-0. Historical load growth in the area, particularly on the west side of Reno has created bulk electrical transmission problems. Almost all of the power generation in the area's 120kV system is on the east side of Reno. The North Valley Road 345/120kV substation in north central Reno is currently used to move power through a network of 120kV lines to the west side. During periods of heavy load, loss of one line in the network could overload the remaining lines, causing a failure that could result in outages in west Reno, not meeting the NERC requirement.”

- Project crosses multiple jurisdictions – USFS, Washoe County, and City of Reno.
- An Environmental Impact statement (EIS) was required for the areas of the line within the areas of the USFS.
- The EIS prepared for this project - seven (7) year (2011 to 2018) process.
- Analyzed multiple alternatives to the proposed transmission line route and included significant mitigation measures to address potential consequences of the proposed project.
- Key point – the EIS identified positive and negative effects to the environment (e.g., biological resources), and offered alternative actions, including inaction, in relation to the proposed project.



- Unmanned transmission line - 78 poles along the 10.8-mile route - 52 poles in unincorporated Washoe County.
- Pole heights ranging from less than 35 feet to 105 feet tall in various locations.
- Average spacing of eight hundred (800) feet apart and, due to their design, should have minimal disturbance to the area.
- The utility line will be within a variable utility corridor of 300-600 feet in width – the width varies depending on the location along the transmission line.
- Located within public utility easements, federal permits/rights-of-way, and regional utility corridors.

- Temporary grading of 53,000 cubic yards in association with the necessary grading for access and road widening.
- Pursuant to WCC Section 110.438.35(b)(2), a special use permit is not required for major grading as part of public utilities within the public right-of-way or a public utility easement.
- The proposed transmission line will be within public utility easements, federal permits/rights-of-way, and regional utility corridors.
- Building permit required for grading and would be subject to the applicable requirements of Article 438, Grading Standards.
- Remediation of the temporarily graded areas is required by the USFS and will occur after the construction is complete.

- Transmission line traverses through the habitat for mule deer and black bear per the wildlife maps in the Master Plan - key winter, summer, and year-round habitats for the mule deer and the habitat/range for the black bear
- Project information was sent to NDOW for review and the following response was received:
  - *“For item 1, NDOW has been coordinating with NV Energy on the project on minimization and mitigation measures. We do not have any additional comments on this project.”*
- NDOW also reviewed and commented on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) - federal process.
- Wildlife Protection Plan (Exhibit I of Staff Report) was prepared by Stantec Consulting Services, Inc.
- The Wildlife Protection Plan sets forth mitigations for general practices, sensitive wildlife species, migratory bird species, raptors, mule deer, Lahontan cutthroat trout, avoidance timeframes, and habitat restoration.
- Exhibit A of Staff Report includes seventeen (17) conditions specifically addressing incorporating mitigations to protect biological resources.

# Modifications



The applicant is requesting the following Washoe County Code requirements to be varied:

Variance(s) Requested	Relevant Code
Maximum height of 105 feet instead of 35 feet	Table 110.406.05.1
Waive all landscaping requirements for a civic use	Article 412
Waive all parking requirements for a civic use	Article 410
Vary the slope requirement to allow slopes steeper than 3:1	Article 438

# Neighborhood Meeting



A neighborhood meeting was noticed and held at 6:00 PM on August 30, 2023, as a virtual meeting via Zoom. A total of eleven (11) members of the public attended the meeting. The common concerns from the public and the responses from the applicant's consultant, CFA, Inc., were as follows:

- Public Concern: Location of proposed line.

*Consultant Response: A presentation was given by CFA, Inc., detailing the approximate route and location to residential subdivisions.*

- Public Concern: Removal of poles – will there be an increase or decrease in the number of structures?

*Consultant Response: There will be a net removal of eleven (11) poles.*

- Public Concern: Possibility of undergrounding the transmission line to address aesthetics and wildfire dangers.

*Consultant Response: Undergrounding the transmission line requires a disturbance of larger areas of land and the increased costs will be passed to the rate-payers.*

- Public Concern: What will the structures look like (e.g., metal, wood) and what will their height be?

*Consultant Response: The support structures will be metal poles with a height of seventy (70) feet in certain locations.*

*Staff Comment: It should be noted that the maximum height of the support structures will be one hundred and five (105) feet under the proposal submitted.*

- Public Concern: Will there be aeronautical impacts (e.g., lights, required markers)?

*Consultant Response: There are no aeronautical impacts foreseen at this time.*

# Reviewing Agencies



- The project application was sent to twenty-three (23) agencies for review.
- Five (5) agencies provided conditions, which are included in Exhibit A of the staff report.

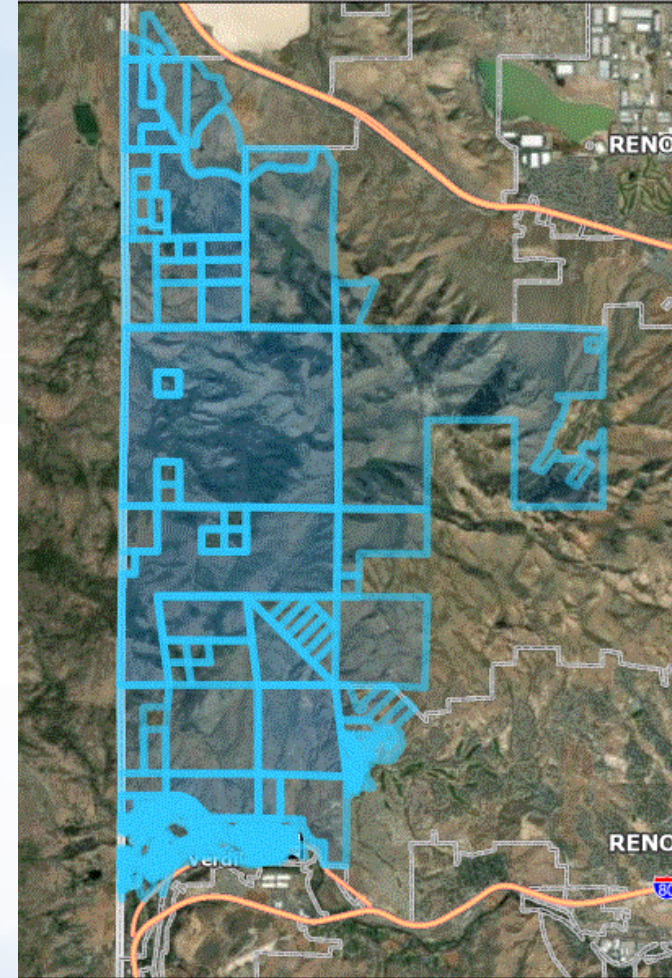
Agencies	Sent to Review	Responded	Provided Conditions	Contact
Natural Resources Conservation Service	X			
BLM - NV State Office	X	X		
BLM - Winnemucca Dist. Office	X			
Environmental Protection	X			
NDOT (Transportation)	X			
NDOW (Wildlife)	X	X		
Washoe County Building & Safety	X			
Washoe County Parks & Open Space	X	X	X	Faye-Marie Pekar, fpekar@washoecounty.gov
Washoe County Water Rights Manager (All Apps)	X	X		
WCSD Law Enforcement	X			
Washoe County Engineering (Land Development) (All Apps)	X	X	X	Rob Wimer, rwimer@washoecounty.gov; Janelle Thomas, jkthomas@washoecounty.gov
Washoe County Engineering & Capital Projects Director (All Apps)	X			
WCHD Air Quality	X			
WCHD Environmental Health	X	X	X	Jim English, jenglish@washoecounty.gov; Wes Rubio, wrubio@washoecounty.gov; David Kelly, dakelly@washoecounty.gov
Reno Fire	X			
TMFPD	X	X	X	Dale Way, dway@tmfpd.us; Brittany Lemon, BLemon@tmfpd.us
Truckee Meadows Regional Planning	X	X		
Washoe-Storey Conservation District	X	X	X	Jim Shaffer, shafferjam51@gmail.com
Nevada State Historic Preservation	X			
Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe	X			
Reno/Sparks Indian Colony	X			
Washoe Tribe of NV	X			
City of Reno	X			

# Public Notice



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- 860 Property Owners Noticed
- Twenty (20) public comments received – Nine (9) general inquiries and eleven (11) against



## **Staff is able to make all required findings, as detailed on page 17 and 18 in the staff report.**

- (a) Consistency. That the proposed use is consistent with the action programs, policies, standards and maps of the Master Plan and the Verdi, North Valleys, and Cold Springs Area Plans;
- (b) Improvements. That adequate utilities, roadway improvements, sanitation, water supply, drainage, and other necessary facilities have been provided, the proposed improvements are properly related to existing and proposed roadways, and an adequate public facilities determination has been made in accordance with Division Seven;
- (c) Site Suitability. That the site is physically suitable for the utility services use and for the intensity of such a development;
- (d) Issuance Not Detrimental. That issuance of the permit will not be significantly detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare; injurious to the property or improvements of adjacent properties; or detrimental to the character of the surrounding area;
- (e) Effect on a Military Installation. Issuance of the permit will not have a detrimental effect on the location, purpose or mission of the military installation.

### **Finding required by Verdi Area Plan for a special use permit:**

- (a) As required by Verdi Area Plan Policy V 27.13, the community character as described in the Character Statement of the Verdi Area Plan will be adequately conserved through mitigation of any identified potential negative impacts.

### **Finding required by North Valleys Area Plan for a special use permit:**

- (a) As required by North Valleys Area Plan Policy SV 12.3, no significant degradation of air quality will occur as a result of the granting of the special use permit.



## **Staff recommends the Planning Commission approve Special Use Permit Case Number WSUP24-0032 and provides the following motion:**

I move that, after giving reasoned consideration to the information contained in the staff report and information received during the public hearing, the Washoe County Planning Commission approve with conditions Special Use Permit Case Number WSUP23-0032 for NV Energy for the construction of 6.8 miles of a 120kV transmission line within unincorporated Washoe County, with the conditions included as Exhibit A, as amended, to this matter, having made all five findings in accordance with Washoe County Code Section 110.810.30. I further move to vary the development code standard in Table 110.406.05.1 to allow structures up to 105 feet in height, waive the parking standards of Article 410, waive the landscaping standards of Article 412, and the 3:1 slope standard of Article 438 of the Washoe County Development Code.

## The following additional conditions are being suggested by staff in Exhibit A:

- The conditions of approval shall apply to the project so long as the requirement contained within the condition language, codes, ordinances, and standards do not conflict with the requirements and stipulations that have been placed on the project through the Federal approval of the project.
- Construction activities shall be limited to the hours between 7am to 7pm, Monday through Saturday only. For construction on sections of the power line that are greater than ½ mile from any existing, legally established residential use, construction activities shall be limited to the hours between 6am to 7pm, Monday through Sunday. Any construction machinery activity or any noise associated with the construction activity are also limited to these hours.

# Thank you

Tim Evans, Planner  
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775-328-2314



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