

**FINAL
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
REPORT
for the**

**1998 Housing Element Update
Humboldt County General Plan
Volume II**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

The purpose of this EIR is to identify and evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the implementation of the proposed 1995 update of the County's Housing Element, which includes 1) adoption of the Element, 2) adoption of associated implementing ordinances, and 3) amendments to the Framework Plan to incorporate the new Housing Element text. The Housing Element sets policy guidelines and programs to guide for future growth and development for the unincorporated portions of Humboldt County. As provided by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an EIR is an informational document intended for review by members of the public and concerned public agencies. For this project, Humboldt County is the lead agency and will consider certification of the EIR and adoption of the Housing Element.

An Initial Study (Appendix A) was prepared for the Element and related ordinance and Framework Plan changes, and distributed to interested agencies and individuals along with a Notice of Preparation for the EIR (April 26, 1996). The Initial Study identifies those topics potentially subject to significant impacts from the project. These topics include the following factors: geologic hazards, biotic factors, hydrology, air quality, cultural resources, natural resources, transportation, and public services and facilities. This EIR was revised as of December 2, 1997 to include changes to the 1995 Draft Housing Element made by the Planning Commission. Additions are shown in underlined text and deletions are shown in ~~strikeout~~.

1.2 Scope of the Environmental Impact Report

This EIR has been prepared pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15168) for plan documents. The State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15168) identify the program EIR as advantageous for plan documents. The Guidelines state:

- (a) General. A program EIR is an EIR which may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related either:
- (1) Geographically,
 - (2) A logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions,
 - (3) In connection with issuance of rules, regulations, plans or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program, or
 - (4) As individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar ways.

The Housing Element provides a framework for future decisions and actions that affect development of housing and accessory uses in the unincorporated portions of Humboldt

County. It is a policy document rather than a proposal for a specific action. Consistent with its policy function, it contains a full set of programs that should be implemented to achieve its goals. Many of the implementation measures called for by the Housing Element involve the adoption of ordinance changes, which have been included in the project description of this EIR. Also, it will be necessary to change the Framework Plan to achieve consistency between that Plan and the proposed Element.

This EIR addresses environmental impacts on different levels. First, it addresses impacts on a level of detail appropriate for a planning document where future development proposals in the County will have specific project-level CEQA review and will be evaluated for consistency with the Framework Plan. This level of environmental impact analysis will focus on the changes to the Element from the 1992 version, which had environmental review performed prior to its adoption in December of 1992. Also, discussion of possible impacts arising from updating references to the new Housing Element which appear in the Framework Plan are assumed to be covered in the evaluation of impacts from changing the policies and programs in the Element.

For those programs being implemented immediately, such as the zoning ordinance changes, this EIR also addresses impacts on a level appropriate for those actions.

The CEQA Guidelines recognize the interactive nature of the planning process and the fact that some measures intended to mitigate the impacts of proposed projects may be incorporated into the project proposal. For many of the areas of concern, measures have been integrated into the Element and associated ordinance and Framework Plan changes to enhance and protect the environment. In some cases, measures will probably need to be incorporated into the project to mitigate potential impacts as yet unknown. This approach will help to ensure environmental protection in the County.

As required by the State CEQA Guidelines, a distinction is made between mitigation measures integrated into the project and mitigation measures proposed in the EIR. All of the additional future mitigation measures recommended in the EIR will be incorporated into the final version of the Housing Element and the proposed ordinance changes. These mitigation measures are also required to be identified in the Final EIR for this project. Impacts of the project have been evaluated against both existing conditions and potential development consistent with provisions in existing plans and policies.

The State CEQA Guidelines require that an EIR describe a "range of reasonable alternatives to the project..." The Guidelines also state: "The key issue is whether the selection and discussion of alternatives fosters informed decision-making and informed public participation." The County Planning Department evaluated three different alternative policy options. This EIR summarizes the three policy option alternatives and the potential environmental impacts of each alternative as compared to the proposed project.

1.3 Contents of the Environmental Impact Report

The Draft Housing Element contains the goals, policies, and programs designed to guide the physical development of housing in Humboldt County until the year 2002. This EIR relies on the 1995 Draft Housing Element, the adopted 1992 Housing Element, and numerous Plans, ordinances and standards. Those documents are listed in Attachment 1 of this EIR.

The EIR is composed of six chapters. Chapter 1, Introduction, provides an overview of the EIR.

Chapter 2, Summary of Proposed Actions and Consequences, describes the project, discusses major issues and summarizes the project's impacts and mitigation measures. A summary impact table is included. Chapter 2 also considers alternatives to the proposed project and the probable impacts of those alternatives. In addition, Chapter 2 summarizes the unavoidable and irreversible impacts of the proposed project. This Chapter includes a description of the relationship between the short term use of the environment, and the maintenance and enhancement of long term productivity.

Chapter 3, Project Description, presents the description of the project. It describes the Housing Element by summarizing its goals and programs for the County, and summarizes the process that was used to update the Element. It also describes the proposed ordinance and Framework Plan changes.

Chapter 4, Environmental Setting, references appropriate sections in the Housing Element.

Chapter 5, Environmental Impacts and Mitigation, describes, for each CEQA issue identified in the Initial Study, a brief summary of existing conditions, impacts of the project, and mitigation measures proposed to minimize potentially significant adverse impacts. The description of impacts assumes implementation of the Element's goals, policies, and programs.

Chapter 6, Persons Consulted, references the sources of information for the Element and EIR.

2.0 SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

2.1 Project Description

This project is comprised of three (3) parts. One part of the project is the update of the Humboldt County Housing Element, a required Element of the General Plan. The update is necessary to comply with State Law regarding Housing Elements, and to adopt local policy options to meet the documented housing needs. Below are the goals and policies contained in the 1997 Hearing Draft of the Housing Element.

OVERALL GOAL: TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE HOUSING AND A SATISFYING LIVING ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL SEGMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY.

GOAL: 1. TO PROMOTE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE DECISION- MAKING PROCESS REGARDING HOUSING IN HUMBOLDT COUNTY.

Policies

- 1.1 The Planning Department shall provide for the education of the public to motivate them to participate in the planning process.
- 1.2 The education of the public shall be provided prior to public hearings on the plan proposals in adequate time to insure informed participation.
- 1.3 The education of the public shall be provided through, but not limited to :
- Citizens Handbook
 - Print and electronic media
 - Public meetings
- 1.4. The County shall encourage the development and revision of Community Plans consistent with overall county policies in the Framework Plan (Volume I of the General Plan), which include the identification of adequate sites for homeless shelters.
- 1.5. The County shall insure that the variety of views within an area are taken into consideration, to the extent expressed.
- 1.6. The Planning Commission shall maintain clear, consistent and fair procedures for operation and relationships with the public, the Board of Supervisors, ad-hoc committees, and local, State and Federal agencies.
- 1.7. Planning Commission procedures shall be prepared in a format and language that is clear and readily available to the public.

- 1.8. The County shall encourage the formation of citizen organizations to provide input on specific matters in a format consistent with the adopted policies and procedures.
- 1.9 The Planning Department shall provide notification of meetings adequate to insure public participation consistent with the goals of this program.
- 1.10 The meetings of the Planning Commission, whenever practical, shall be held in the geographic areas under consideration, or where the meetings of the Commission concern countywide issues as addressed in the Framework Plan, such meetings shall be held in the regional centers most representative of the issues to be addressed.
- 1.11 Public hearings shall be organized to provide public opportunities to evaluate alternative proposals and participate in the choice of the preferred alternative.
- 1.12 The costs of review shall be minimized, consistent with the requirements of this section by the following:
- review on an exception or "consent calendar" approach;
 - focusing testimony and comments on specific issues being addressed.
- 1.13 The Commission should prepare and adopt rules of procedure to govern the conduct of hearings, solicitation and limitations on oral comments, and other business of the Commission.
- 1.14 The Planning Commission should be authorized to create subcommittees from their membership, and to create joint committees for the conduct of planning matters.
- 1.15 The Planning Commission shall encourage public participation in the land use decision-making process.

Goal: 2. TO STRENGTHEN COORDINATION BETWEEN PUBLIC AGENCIES AND PRIVATE ENTITIES.

Policies

- 2.1 The County shall encourage private developers, builders and financial institutions to work with public agencies and non-profit agencies in formulating strategies to solve local housing problems.
- 2.2 The County shall develop and maintain a housing stock inventory.
- 2.3 The County shall foster greater responsiveness to public needs.
- 2.4 The County shall provide centralized public access to all relevant documents and information regarding housing activities.
- 2.5 The County shall promote standardization of housing and zoning terminology throughout government and the housing industry.

- 2.6 The County shall give the Planning and Building Department responsibility for formulating, implementing, and evaluating strategies to solve local housing problems.
- 2.7 The County shall encourage the California Department of Transportation to conduct a recreational/nomadic housing travel study of Humboldt County and the North Coast area.

Goal: 3. TO PROVIDE FOR ADEQUATE SITES FOR ALL TYPES OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY.

Policies

- 3.1 The County shall develop and maintain a housing site inventory.
- 3.2 The County shall encourage and be receptive to new and experimental techniques to facilitate optimum utilization of available sites.
- 3.3 The County shall initiate appropriate plan and zone amendments which allow increased residential densities in areas where community health and safety will not be compromised.
- 3.4 The County shall facilitate compatible mixed residential and commercial uses.
- 3.5 The County shall designate sites for varying types of residential development in the Community Plans.
- 3.6 The County shall identify sites for permanent affordable housing, and for alternate facilities such as homeless shelters and transitional housing.
- 3.7 The County shall develop a homeless shelter site inventory and make provisions for the expeditious development of homeless shelters to enable a timely response.
- 3.8 Adequate housing sites for the low-income nomadic population of the County should be identified throughout the County in proportion to the specific local needs as part of the ongoing development of the Land Use Element of the General Plan.
- 3.9 The Planning Department should identify sufficient sites to accommodate the anticipated nomadic housing needs throughout the County in areas outside of the established community planning areas.
- 3.10 The County shall ensure that comprehensive Community Plan updates include consideration of sites for managed lower income special occupancy parks.

Goal: 4. TO CONSERVE EXISTING HOUSING THROUGH MAINTENANCE AND REHABILITATION.

- 4.1 Where consistent with State law, the Building Department shall encourage citizens to make partial repair of their dwellings without being required to rehabilitate beyond their economic means.

- 4.2 The County shall support tax programs which encourage citizens to maintain and repair their homes.
- 4.3 The County shall support the combination of private and public money to provide opportunities for financing not otherwise available to low and moderate income persons.
- 4.4 The County shall apply sensible and flexible housing standards to allow low-cost rehabilitation and repairs consistent with health and safety requirements.
- 4.5 The County shall develop housing replacement requirements for people displaced by rehabilitation, condemnation or condominium conversions.
- 4.6 The County shall endorse programs whereby students gain practical home construction, repair and weatherization techniques by repairing existing housing stock in the community.
- 4.7 The County shall encourage and support programs that preserve and/or restore the unique character of older residences and neighborhoods.
- 4.8 The County shall encourage relocation, rather than destruction, of sound older housing threatened by development.
- 4.9 Public funds for the rehabilitation of low-income rental housing shall ensure that these rehabilitated units remain part of the low-income housing stock.
- 4.10 The County may allow legal, non-conforming single family and multifamily structures to be retained in new residential subdivisions even where the retention of these structures means that the general plan density for the parcel is exceeded. However, the creation of any parcels without an existing dwelling must be consistent with planned densities. The County shall require the repair of building, plumbing, mechanical and electrical hazardous conditions that exist in such non-conforming structures to meet acceptable health and safety codes.

Goal: 5. TO UTILIZE TECHNIQUES AND PROGRAMS WHICH WILL REDUCE COSTS OF NEW RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION.

Policies

- 5.1 The County shall support the use of innovative construction and design methods that make more efficient use of land and building materials.
- 5.2 The County shall encourage the use of financial leveraging of public and private funding to construct owner-occupied and rental housing.
- 5.3 The County shall review and streamline the permit application process on an ongoing basis, in all departments involved, in order to shorten the time required to process all permits, and to provide adequate information to prospective builders and developers.
- 5.4 The County shall encourage the use of low-cost, energy efficient, low-consumptive housing designs, materials and construction methods that reduce costs.
- 5.5 The County shall form or contract with non-profit housing corporations to maintain and develop housing affordable to low and very low income persons.
- 5.6 The County shall encourage and support development by non-profit housing sponsors.
- 5.7 The County shall assist developers in using State and Federally-funded housing programs.

- 5.8 The County shall provide maximum opportunities for owner/builders to economize by doing what they can for themselves.
- 5.9 The County shall encourage the development of secondary units where there are adequate public services and where compatible with adjacent land uses, and allow them in resource lands where compatible with resource protection policies.

Goal: 6. TO ENCOURAGE RESOURCE-CONSERVING SITE UTILIZATION AND DWELLING UNIT CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES.

Policies

- 6.1 The County shall discourage encroachment of residential subdivisions upon agricultural and other natural resource lands. Subdivisions of resource lands shall be allowed only where the resulting uses will not adversely affect the resource use of the site.
- 6.2 The County shall encourage the preservation of natural features of terrain and vegetation in new subdivisions in residential zones by clustering development, providing common open areas, smaller, more appropriate roads, and other compatible land use innovations in the development of new residential areas.
- 6.3 The County shall encourage the rehabilitation, rather than condemnation, of deteriorated housing.
- 6.4 The County shall encourage the use of alternative energy sources such as solar and wind power, with consideration for solar and wind rights in residential developments.
- 6.5 The County shall consider house solar orientation and energy effective landscaping during the review process.
- 6.6 The County shall support active experimentation with water- conserving waste disposal systems, energy systems, dwelling designs, and uses of recycled materials for building.
- 6.7 The County encourages future development based on energy efficient travel patterns and the location of existing services.
- 6.8 The County, recognizing the need of tenants for energy-efficient housing, shall encourage the weatherization of rental units.
- 6.9 The County shall rezone lands designated for residential development under the General Plan to optimum development potential as soon as public sewer and water services become available. Until funding for expansion of public sewer and water facilities in the underdeveloped areas designated for urban development and urban expansion are obtained, the County will maintain zoning densities that reflect State and local health policies for individual wells and/or sewage disposal systems.
- 6.10 The County shall provide for development of single mobilehomes and mobilehome parks in residential zones throughout the community in accordance with the requirements of Government Code Sections 65852.3 and 65852.7 and consistent with General Plan/Community Plan residential land use densities.
- 6.11 The County shall seek federal and State funding for improvements to and expansion of sewer and water lines and facilities for community planning areas and coastal communities.

6.12 The County shall encourage the development of secondary units.

Goal: 7. TO PROMOTE SIMPLIFICATION, FLEXIBILITY, AND DIVERSITY OF HOUSING AND ZONING REGULATIONS TO ALLOW THE CONSTRUCTION OR MAINTENANCE OF VARYING TYPES OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS BY THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INTERESTS WHICH WILL PROVIDE FOR THE HOUSING NEEDS OF ALL SOCIO-ECONOMIC SECTORS IN THE COMMUNITY.

Policies

7.1 The County shall provide the library with a number of simplified and functional house plans approved by the County, that allow the construction of low and moderate cost housing.

7.2 The County shall encourage experimentation with new concepts in housing construction, designs, styles and ownership patterns.

7.3 The County shall mitigate regulatory problems and amend the housing codes to reflect acceptable alternative methods.

7.4 The County shall support alternative owner-built/ owner-occupied housing which does not infringe upon public health and safety.

7.5 The County shall promote helpful attitudes by regulatory agencies in order to encourage voluntary compliance with the regulatory process.

7.6 The County shall promote flexibility in parking requirements for housing developments, especially for seniors and in areas with public transportation.

7.7 The County shall provide the opportunity to consider the temporary placement and use of a second dwelling unit in excess of densities permitted in this General Plan in cases where specified findings can be made that there is legitimate hardship.

7.8 The County shall encourage the development of presently under-utilized residential parcels served by public sewer and water for optimum development potential under the zoning ordinance.

7.9 The County shall provide for development of secondary residential units in accordance with the requirements of Government Code Section 65852.2 as set forth in Humboldt County Ordinance 1633 adopted March 13, 1984.

7.10 The County shall provide for density bonuses for developments containing at least 25% of the units for low or moderate income households or at least 10% of the units for lower-income households as provided in Government Code Section 65915.

7.11 The County shall explore the feasibility of utilizing public or private campgrounds for use as temporary or transitional shelters during off-seasons.

- 7.12 The County shall develop and maintain an inventory of suitable sites for use for managed low income special occupancy parks in every planning area of the County.
- 7.13 Permanent sites shall be designated as emergency shelter sites which are geographically distributed throughout the County. Support services for those in need of shelter shall also be decentralized to avoid burdening the County seat of Eureka with disproportionate numbers of homeless persons.
- 7.14 Information on renter's rights, self-help housing, rehabilitation of inadequate housing, and low interest loans shall be distributed by the County to all non-profits and other agencies acting as homeless prevention advocates.
- 7.15 The County shall coordinate between the various agencies and non-profit groups directly involved with serving the needs of the homeless population activities aimed at alleviating hardships endured by homeless persons.
- 7.16 The County shall revise the Zoning Ordinance to reduce permit requirements to the maximum extent feasible. Some examples include, allowing some uses with a Special Permit rather than a Use Permit, and expanding the number of uses allowed by right where appropriate.
- 7.17 The County shall encourage the development of community and conservation land trusts that demonstrate valuable community interest.

Goal: 8. TO ASSIST HOUSING CONSUMERS AND SPECIAL POPULATION GROUPS.

Policies

- 8.1 The County shall support the elimination of housing discrimination.
- 8.2 The County shall actively assist the Humboldt County Housing Authority to develop and implement programs to assist minorities, families with children, very low, low and moderate income, elderly, handicapped, and homeless persons to secure housing.
- 8.3 The County shall promote housing and support services for elderly and handicapped persons which encourage an independent lifestyle.
- 8.4 The County shall investigate the need for an ordinance prohibiting age discrimination in housing.
- 8.5 The County shall actively participate in the development of the local capacity to package federal and State loans and grants.
- 8.6 In an effort to provide for lower income populations, the County shall amend the Zoning Ordinance to provide adequate sites for the development of special occupancy parks consistent with State law.

8.7 The County shall amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow for the full utilization of suitable sites of less than five (5) acres in size to provide for lower-income special occupancy parks consistent with State law.

8.8 The County shall develop and maintain a contingency plan to provide adequate emergency shelter to house refugees of catastrophic earthquakes, fire, flood, inclement weather or other crises.

Goal: 9. TO PROVIDE FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

Policies

9.1 The County shall actively pursue all possible funds to maintain and create low-cost housing.

9.2 The County shall actively assist in the construction of Federal and State assisted housing in diverse areas of the County.

9.3 The County shall encourage new housing developments for very low, low and moderate income, senior citizen and handicapped households.

9.4. The County shall support the preservation of existing, and encourage the construction of new low-cost rental units.

9.5 The County shall encourage self-help housing programs.

9.6 The County shall encourage new multiple-unit housing developments to build a certain percentage of their units for sale or rent at below-market rates for very low, low and moderate income families by providing a density, or other incentive bonus.

9.7 The County shall challenge, consistent with health and safety, State and Federal mandates which inhibit local ability to provide for affordable housing (e.g., increased building regulation standards).

9.8 The County recognizes and supports the rights of tenants to secure habitable housing.

9.9 The County shall encourage the inclusion of residential units for low and moderate income families in new developments within the coastal zone, where feasible, pursuant to Government Code Section 66590.

9.10 The County shall encourage the replacement of housing occupied by low and/or moderate income families when converted or demolished within the coastal zone, where feasible, pursuant to Government Code Section 66950.

9.11 The County shall actively lobby the State and Federal government to reinstate funding for self-help programs.

9.12 The County shall support all efforts to construct housing affordable to very low income persons.

9.13 The County shall ensure that comprehensive Community Plan updates include consideration of sites for managed lower income special occupancy parks.

9.14 The County encourage second units where there are adequate public services and where compatible with adjacent land uses, and allow them in resource lands where compatible with resource protection policies.

The second part of the project is the adoption of numerous zoning ordinance changes to implement the policies and programs in the Element. Following is a list of significant ordinance changes under consideration:

- a. Allow Cottage Industry as a principally permitted or Specially permitted use when certain criteria are met
- b. Allow the following with a Special Permit (rather than a Use Permit)
 - Second Units on a hardship basis with a Special Permit rather than a Use Permit
 - ~~In areas zoned "Unclassified", all uses consistent with the Plan designation that are not principally permitted~~
 - ~~In areas zoned with a "Planned Unit Development" overlay, all uses consistent with the Plan that are not principally permitted.~~
- c. Encourage the development of Planned Unit Developments.
- ~~d. Require a Special Permit for single family residential development in areas zoned for high density residential uses (recommendations of approval will be made only when it is shown such development will not significantly inhibit the use of the site for multifamily use).~~
- e. Allow caretaker apartments in commercial areas as a principally permitted use when subordinate to and supportive of the existing commercial use.
- f. Conserve existing multifamily housing by allowing non-conforming multifamily structures to be rebuilt with a Special Permit, and to not count them or existing single family structures towards density in the review of subdivisions.
- g. Facilitate the development of adequate sites to meet the needs of the very low to moderate income nomadic population by:

Requesting the Humboldt Transportation Authority to direct/request CalTrans to conduct a recreational/nomadic housing travel study of Humboldt County and the NorthCoast region to assist in assessing the current and future needs for sites, ~~Establishing a clear definition of nomadic housing structures which includes those typically used by low income nomadic persons,~~

Revising the definition of trailer park to accommodate nomadic housing structures,
~~Establish a Nomadic Housing Park Zone to allow the development of managed nomadic housing parks by right,~~
 Develop ~~nomadic housing park standards~~ special occupancy park standards to minimize capital costs of new park development while protecting neighboring land uses from potential adverse impacts from the parks.

- h. Allow second units ~~with Special Permits~~ in some areas zoned Agricultural General ~~or Unclassified~~ where General Plan densities are exceeded.
- ~~i. Allow a "zero lot line" side yard in residential zones.~~
- ~~j. Allow lots zoned for single family residential use to have minimum parcel sizes as low as 3,000 square feet.~~
- k. Modify the Coastal Zoning Ordinance to exclude test water wells from coastal permit requirements when specific criteria are met.

The third part of this project is the revision of the text of the General Plan to incorporate by reference the updated material of the Housing Element. Chapter 2 of the General Plan includes text from the Element explaining the 1985 projected housing needs, restating the goals, and discussing the housing needs of special populations, including the elderly and disabled persons. Appendix A of the General Plan includes all the implementation programs contained in Chapter 4 of the Element. To avoid duplication of the Housing Element text in the Framework Plan, these items will be incorporated by reference into the Framework Plan.

2.2 Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Potential impacts due to implementation of the Housing Element are addressed for a number of concerns in this report including: land use compatibility, open space, geology and soils, hydrology, biological resources, agriculture, community/cultural resources, transportation, community facilities, and air quality. The Summary Impact Table (Table 1) summarizes the potential impacts and mitigation measures for the Housing Element.

This EIR establishes general criteria for determining the significance of potential impacts. The potential impacts are discussed and identified for each issue area. A level of significance is determined by evaluating whether there will be impacts beyond those which will be addressed by existing and proposed requirements. For example, a potential impact may be less than significant after mitigation due to the Plan policies which serve to reduce the potential impacts. Following the discussion of potential impacts is a discussion of mitigation measures required to reduce impacts to a level of insignificance. Impacts are defined as:

- Potentially Significant (PS) Should be considered synonymous with significant. This designation is used to indicate pre-mitigation level of significance.
- Less than Significant (LS) An impact is defined as "less than significant" when there are no substantial adverse changes in the physical environment.
- Significant (S) A "significant" impact is identified where an impact will have a substantial adverse impact on the environment.
- Significant Unavoidable (SU) Considered to have a significant adverse effect on the environment which cannot be avoided even with implementation of the mitigation measures.
- Beneficial (B) When adoption of the Housing Element will result in a positive change in the environment, it is identified as a "beneficial impact."

The proposed project is the 1995 update of the County's Housing Element, which includes 1) adoption of the Element, 2) adoption of associated implementing ordinances, and 3) amendments to the Framework Plan to incorporate the new Housing Element text. The Housing Element sets policy guidelines and programs as a guide for future growth and development for the unincorporated portions of Humboldt County. In many cases, the post-mitigation level of significance was determined to be less than significant due to the continued administration of policies, programs, standards and other requirements by public agencies. In order to clearly illustrate the function of these requirements, they are identified and discussed in this EIR.

2.3 Major Conclusions and Areas of Interest

This EIR has examined the potential environmental impacts of implementation of the Housing Element. Specifically, the EIR has evaluated impacts on land use, visual quality, open space, geology and soils, biology, hydrology, cultural and archeological resources, transportation, public facilities, air quality, and noise. This EIR addresses environmental impacts on different levels.

First, it addresses impacts on a level of detail appropriate for a planning document where future development proposals in the County will have specific project-level CEQA review and will be evaluated for consistency with the Framework Plan. This level of environmental impact analysis will focus on the changes to the Element from the 1992 version, which had environmental review performed prior to its adoption in December of 1992.

Discussion of possible impacts arising from updating references to the new Housing Element which appear in the Framework Plan are assumed to be covered in the evaluation of impacts from changing the policies and programs in the Element.

For those programs being implemented immediately, such as the zoning ordinance changes, this EIR addresses impacts on a level appropriate for those actions.

Policies and programs in the Element as well as other existing requirements administered by public agencies are sufficient to reduce potential impacts to a level of insignificance for land use, open space, geology and soils, hydrology, cultural resources, public facilities, and air quality. Implementation of the Element is expected to cause significant and unavoidable impacts to visual quality and community character, biological resources, transportation, and noise levels. It will also conflict with the general plan.

2.4 Effects Found Not to be Significant

The areas of environmental concern which the Housing Element would not have a significant impact on are indicated in the Initial Study prepared for the project. The Initial Study concluded that the following issues were not potentially significant: 1) Displacement of Existing Housing, 2) Substantial reduction in public water supply, 3) Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature, or any change in climate locally or regionally, 4) Conflicts with transportation policies, 5) Impacts on rail, waterborne or air traffic, 6) Conflicts with adopted energy conservation plans, 7) Risk of accidental explosion or release of hazardous substances, 8) Possible interference with an emergency response plan, 9) Affects on historical resources, 10) Cause a physical change that would affect unique ethnic cultural values, and 11) Restricts existing religious or sacred uses.. The Initial Study is attached (Attachment 1), and incorporated herein.

2.5 Significant Environmental Effects Which Cannot be Avoided if the Proposal is Implemented

Section 15126(f) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires an EIR to discuss program or project effects that would be considered significant and unavoidable. CEQA Guidelines state that "a significant effect on the environment is defined as a substantial or potentially substantial adverse change in the physical conditions which exist in the area affected by the proposed project including land, air, water, minerals, flora and fauna, ambient noise and objects of historic or aesthetic significance." While the guidelines provide some elaboration of what is meant by a "significant" impact, it cannot be precisely defined.

This EIR has evaluated all of the potentially significant issues and identified where proposed new and existing requirements were not sufficient to mitigate potential impacts. For each impact, the specific mitigation measures are identified.

Several impacts have been identified as significant and unavoidable. These are:

- ~~Allowing second units in agricultural areas at densities greater than those allowed under the general plan will conflict with the general plan, and may result in impacts to agricultural uses.~~
- Encouraging ~~nomadic housing~~ special occupancy parks may impact existing community character.
- Encouraging housing development may affect the diversity of plants and animals, may create barriers to their movement and dispersal, may cause the introduction of new plant and animal species, and may reduce the population of rare and endangered species of plants or animals.
- Encouraging housing development may increase traffic in some areas.
- The increased traffic may contribute to increased noise levels in some areas.

2.6 Relationship Between Local Short-term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-term Productivity

The Draft Housing Element is a policy document that is intended to guide housing development through the year 2002. As such, it is considered to take a long-term view of the County's future. The Element presents information on the associated impacts of the increase in population and housing units in Humboldt County. The Element is proposed to benefit the local community consistent with existing requirements that protect the physical environment. Continued administration of existing requirements by public agencies will maintain the long-term productivity of the environment.

2.7 Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes Which Would be Involved in the Proposed Action Should it be Implemented

Development under the Housing Element would irrevocably commit some undeveloped portions of the county to primarily residential use for the foreseeable future. The commitment of financial resources, energy, raw materials, and labor would be associated with this conversion of land use. Environmental alterations which would accompany development under the Element include: land uses changes; changes in visual quality; loss of open land; increased runoff and need for drainage improvements; additional vehicular traffic and associated air pollutant and noise impacts; and increased demand for public services and utilities.

These environmental alterations must be weighed against the provision of increased housing to meet the future demands.. Although irreversible changes will occur after the adoption of the Element, the County will still retain its basic character.

2.8 Cumulative Impacts

The CEQA Guidelines (Section 15130) require discussion of cumulative impacts when they are significant. "Cumulative impacts" refers to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts (Section 15355).

The discussion of environmental impacts and mitigation measures (Section 5 of this EIR) assesses the impacts of the project from a cumulative perspective. The only cumulative impacts which may be significant are impacts on Transportation, Air Quality and Noise. These are discussed in more detail below.

Specific Cumulative Impacts

Transportation

The growth supported in the Element may add to the traffic congestion on major arterials as well as local streets. Several intersections in McKinleyville will begin to operate below an acceptable level of service, this is considered a significant unavoidable impact.

Air Quality

Increasing traffic in the County may increase the amount of particulate matter (PM₁₀) in the air. The increase in PM₁₀ is considered less than significant because there are no numerical standards on which to base a determination of significance. However, since this impact is directly related to increased traffic, it must be considered as part of a cumulative impacts of the project..

Noise

Also associated with increases in traffic may be increases in noise levels. Section 5 of this EIR demonstrates that higher traffic levels along Central Avenue will likely increase the areas with unacceptable noise levels for many uses adjacent to the road. This impact is considered significant and unavoidable.

2.9 Growth-Inducing Impact of the Proposed Action

The Draft Housing Element presents information on projected housing construction needs in the County. The Element and implementing ordinances accommodate and even encourage development, but do not have the potential to directly induce growth within the County. Rather, they establish guidelines for growth which would occur with or without the Element and ordinances. Expansion of sewer and water facilities and road capacity is designed to alleviate existing problems, serve the existing population more efficiently, and provide some capacity for additional growth.

The Element supports growth in certain areas, however these would be localized areas which have been identified as capable of handling projected growth. This could be considered an

indirect growth inducing aspect of adopting the Element. The growth projected by the Element is expected to result in an increase of 3,145 housing units by the year 2002.

Although additional growth will occur, many existing policies and other requirements help ensure that future development is sensitive to the environment and character of the County. The Element seeks to accommodate planned growth and not to stimulate growth beyond that which is envisioned in the Element.

2.10 Alternatives to the Proposed Action

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that a "reasonable range of alternatives" to a proposed project be considered in environmental impact reports. The evaluation of alternatives does not need to be as exhaustive as the evaluation of the project itself. Three alternative scenarios were considered during the preparation of the Housing Element: 1) the "No Project" alternative, 2) the "Delayed Implementation" alternative, and 3) the "Concentrated Development" alternative.

No Project Alternative

Under this alternative, the proposed Housing Element would not be adopted and future development in the county would occur under the programs and policies in the 1992 Element. The analysis shows there is very little difference in environmental impacts between the two alternatives for several reasons.

Land Use

Many of the policies and programs which were included in the previous Element have been carried through to the current version, and therefore will pose the same impacts on the environment as the proposed project. Attachment 2 of this DEIR shows the goals, policies and programs that have changed significantly between the two documents.

The exception is Implementation Program #10, which calls for the concurrent implementation of changes to the zoning ordinance to implement the goals and policies. The 1992 Element only called for the adoption of 6 changes to the zoning ordinance during the time frame of the element: 1) to encourage mixed residential/commercial uses, 2) to allow density bonuses, and 3) to allow handicapped access ramps to extend into setback areas. None of the proposed changes of the 1992 Element were found to lead to significant environmental impacts.

In contrast, the 1997 Element calls for the concurrent adoption of ordinance changes to implement the goals and policies. A number of these ordinance changes were found to lead to potentially significant impacts.

It can also be argued that there would be no difference in the number of units developed under the No Project alternative and the updated Element based on the following discussion. First, many policies and programs in both the 1992 Element and 1997 Elements encourage

the production of housing. For example, policies 3.3, through 3.6 were not modified between the two Elements. In both the 1992 and the 1997 versions, the policies read as follows:

3.3 The County shall initiate appropriate plan and zone amendments which allow increased residential densities in areas where community health and safety will not be compromised.

3.4 The County shall facilitate compatible mixed residential and commercial uses.

3.5 The County shall designate sites for varying types of residential development in the Community Plans.

3.6 The County shall identify sites for permanent affordable housing, and for alternate facilities such as homeless shelters and transitional housing.

Secondly, although housing needs are not projected beyond the year 1997 in the earlier version of the Element, new construction will occur after 1997 anyway; projections of housing needs have no direct affect on housing construction. And lastly, the 1992 and the proposed Elements do not contain any measures that will directly result in the construction of new housing. Instead, the programs strive to better accommodate anticipated growth, and facilitate affordable housing within anticipated growth. It is thus reasonable to assume the No Project alternative will not affect the *amount or rate* of new construction. Instead, the No Project alternative can be expected to affect only the *type and location* of construction.

The No Project alternative included a program calling for revisions to the zoning ordinance by January 1, 1994 to allow density bonuses. ~~would not make any changes to the zoning ordinance to allow density bonuses.~~ Since State law requires local jurisdictions to provide density bonuses regardless of the presence of a local ordinance, the The No Project alternative would thus be no different from the proposed project in this regard.

The No Project alternative would maintain existing prohibitions on the construction of second units in agricultural areas where general plan densities are exceeded. It would therefore not conflict with the general plan or zoning ordinance. Moreover, it may have less impacts than the proposed project on agriculture by reducing the potential encroachment of residential uses into resource areas, and by not converting as much agricultural land to residential uses. This impact would be reduced to less than significant levels.

Visual Duality and Community Character

The No Project alternative would not encourage the establishment of ~~nomadic housing~~ special occupancy parks, so it will not likely impact community character significantly,. No difference is anticipated between the No Project alternative and the proposed project with regard to other visual impacts (scenic vistas, light and glare, and ridgeline development).

Open Space

Both the proposed Element and the No Project alternative would have similar impacts on open space. Since the two alternatives will result in the same number of units built, they would have the same less than significant impacts on the conversion of open space to residential uses. Likewise, the two projects would have similar (insignificant) impacts on the need for new parks.

Geology

The No Project alternative will not result in exposing more persons to geologic hazards than the proposed Element since expected population growth will be similar. Likewise, the amount of grading and excavation done under either of these alternatives will probably be similar as will the impacts on mineral resources. Geologic impacts would therefore remain insignificant under the No Project alternative.

Biology

The No Project alternative would result in the same level of (significant) impacts on biological resources as the proposed Element since development levels are expected to be virtually the same. Although the No Project alternative may decrease to some extent the number of new residences constructed in rural areas, important plant and animal habitat is also found in urban areas.

Hydrology and Drainage

To the extent that the same number of people would be exposed to flood hazards as with the proposed project, the No Project Alternative would result in similar impacts as the proposed project. The No Project alternative may result in a slight shift of second units from rural to urban areas in comparison to the proposed project. Comparatively, this is unlikely to significantly increase impervious surfaces or drainage problems in urban areas, nor will it substantially increase stormwater pollutants, thereby reducing water quality in streams. The No Project Alternative would not result in a significant number of additional people exposed to hazard from dam failure and would also be similar to the proposed project with respect to impacts resulting from the potential rise in sea level. Accordingly, this alternative will have less than significant impacts on hydrology and drainage.

Cultural Resources

The No Project alternative may increase the number of second units constructed in urban areas in comparison to the proposed project. It is not known whether more archaeological resources occur within or outside urban areas. Assuming there are no substantial differences in the occurrence of archaeological resources within or outside urban areas, the No Project alternative is unlikely to result in greater impacts on cultural resources than the proposed project. This impact will remain insignificant.

Transportation

The most significant traffic problems associated with the projected future growth in the Housing Element occur within urban areas. Since the No Project alternative may steer a few second units from rural areas into urban areas, it could theoretically increase traffic problems

more than the proposed project. However, the marginal increase is not expected to be significant in comparison to the proposed project. This impact will remain significant under the No Project alternative.

Air Quality

Impacts on air quality will be about the same under the No Project alternative and the proposed project. PM₁₀, CO and ozone precursor emission impacts are anticipated to be similar under both alternatives since traffic levels are expected to be virtually no different, and vehicle traffic is the major source of these pollutants. Thus the impact would remain insignificant.

Noise

The most significant noise related impacts are anticipated to come from increased vehicular traffic. Since the No Project alternative and the proposed project will both generate similar amounts of vehicular traffic, they would also be expected to produce roughly the same level of significant noise impacts as well.

Delayed Implementation Alternative

Most Housing Elements do not concurrently implement its policies and programs. Instead, Housing Elements typically identify future dates for implementation of the measures being proposed. The future dates can be any time within the five year time frame of the Element. This alternative examines potential impacts if implementation measures proposed in the Element were delayed until a later date. The analysis shows that environmental impacts under the Delayed Implementation alternative are somewhere in between the proposed project and the No Project alternative. If delays in implementation are greater than three years; development under the new measures would only be for a period of two years or less, and few, if any developments can be expected to take advantage of the new measures in that short a time frame, and the environmental impacts would be nearly identical to the No Project alternative.

Land Use

Many of the policies and programs which were included in the previous Element have been carried through to the current version, and therefore will pose the same impacts on the environment whether the proposed project is implemented now or at a later date.

There would not likely be a substantial difference in the number of units developed under the Delayed Implementation alternative and the proposed alternative for a number of reasons. First, many policies and programs in the existing Element encourage the production of housing. And even though the existing Element does not project housing needs beyond the year 1997, new construction will occur after 1997 regardless. Secondly, neither the existing Element nor the proposed version contain measures that will directly result in the construction of new housing. Instead, the programs strive to better accommodate anticipated growth, and facilitate affordable housing within anticipated growth. Based on the above

discussion, it is assumed the Delayed Implementation alternative will affect only the type and location of housing development, not the number of units constructed.

The Delayed Implementation alternative would not make any immediate changes to the zoning ordinance to allow density bonuses. However, State law requires local jurisdictions to provide density bonuses regardless of the presence of a local ordinance, so the Delayed Implementation alternative would be no different from the proposed project in this regard.

Until the measure is acted on individually by the Board of Supervisors, the Delayed Implementation alternative would maintain existing prohibitions on the construction of second units in agricultural areas where general plan densities are exceeded. ~~Thus for a period of time, it would not conflict with the general plan. It may also have less impacts than the proposed project on agriculture by reducing the potential encroachment of residential uses into resource areas, and by not converting as much agricultural land to residential uses.~~ However, due to the small number of second units expected to be developed under this new program (especially if implementation is delayed for two or three years), these impacts will likely not be significant.

Visual Quality and Community Character

The Delayed Implementation alternative would not immediately encourage the establishment of ~~nomadic housing~~ special occupancy parks, so it will not likely impact community character as much as the proposed project. When the changes are made, however, they are expected to have a significant impact on community character. No difference is anticipated between the Delayed Implementation alternative and the proposed project with regard to other visual impacts (scenic vistas, light and glare, and ridgeline development).

Open Space

Both the proposed Element and the Delayed Implementation alternative would have similar impacts on open space. Since the two alternatives will result in the same number of units built, they would have the same impact on the conversion of open space to residential uses. Likewise, the two alternatives would have similar impacts on the need for new parks. Open space and park impacts will therefore remain insignificant under the Delayed Implementation alternative.

Geology

The Delayed Implementation alternative will not result in exposing more persons to geologic hazards than the proposed Element since expected population growth will be similar. Likewise, the amount of grading and excavation done under either of these alternatives will probably be similar as will the impacts on mineral resources. These impacts would remain insignificant.

Biology

The Delayed Implementation alternative would result in the same level of (significant) impacts on biological resources as the proposed Element since development levels are

expected to be virtually the same. Although the Delayed Implementation alternative may decrease to some extent the number of new residences constructed in rural areas, important plant and animal habitat is also found in urban areas.

Hydrology and Drainage

To the extent that the same number of people would be exposed to flood hazards the Delayed Implementation Alternative would result in similar impacts as the proposed projects. The Delayed Implementation alternative may result in a slight shift of second units from rural to urban areas in comparison to the proposed project. This is unlikely to significantly increase impervious surfaces or drainage problems in urban areas, nor will it substantially increase stormwater pollutants, thereby reducing water quality in streams. The Delayed Implementation Alternative would also not result in a significant number of additional people exposed to hazard from dam failure and would also be similar to the proposed project with respect to impacts resulting from the potential rise in sea level. Accordingly, hydrology and drainage impacts will remain insignificant.

Cultural Resources

The Delayed Implementation alternative may increase the number of second units constructed in urban areas in comparison to the proposed project. It is not known whether more archaeological resources occur within or outside urban areas. Assuming there are no substantial differences in the occurrence of archaeological resources within or outside urban areas, the Delayed Implementation alternative is unlikely to result in greater impacts on cultural resources than the proposed project, so impacts on cultural resources are expected to remain insignificant.

Transportation

The most significant traffic problems associated with the projected future growth in the Housing Element occur within urban areas. Since the Delayed Implementation alternative may steer a few second units from rural areas into urban areas, it could theoretically increase traffic problems more than the proposed project. However, the marginal increase is not expected to be large in comparison to the proposed project. Transportation impacts under the Delayed Implementation alternative will remain significant.

Air Quality

Impacts on air quality will be about the same under the Delayed Implementation alternative and the proposed project. PM₁₀, CO and ozone precursor emission impacts are anticipated to be similar under both alternatives since traffic levels are expected to be virtually no different, and vehicle traffic is the major source of these pollutants. Air quality impacts will thus remain insignificant.

Noise

The most significant noise related impacts are anticipated to come from increased vehicular traffic. Since the Delayed Implementation alternative and the proposed project will both

generate similar amounts of vehicular traffic, they would also be expected to produce roughly the same significant noise impacts as well.

Concentrated Development Alternative

The main purpose of the programs in the Housing Element is to better accommodate existing housing needs, to anticipate future needs, and facilitate affordable housing within anticipated growth. The proposed project seeks to accomplish these goals in a number of ways, including encouraging second units and density bonuses and allowing development of ~~nomadic housing~~ special occupancy parks for lower income persons.

Another possible way to meet the needs of lower income persons is to encourage higher density development in urban areas. As documented in the Housing Element, land costs and construction costs are the most significant determinants of housing costs (§2250 - Housing Costs, Chapter 2, p. 47). Concentrating development by building multifamily housing at high densities of thirty or more units per acre can significantly reduce housing costs (§1300 - Evaluation of the Previous Element, Chapter 1, p. 17).

Land Use

As discussed with the other two alternatives, many of the policies and programs which were included in the previous Element have been carried through to the current version, and therefore will pose the same impacts on the environment whether or not development is concentrated in urban areas.

There would also not likely be a substantial difference in the number of units developed under the Concentrated Development alternative and the proposed project for many of the same reasons stated in the previous discussion of the other two alternatives being considered. It is therefore assumed the Concentrated Development alternative will affect only the type and location of housing development, not the number of units constructed.

The Concentrated Development alternative would most likely include density bonus provisions, and would therefore be no different from the proposed project in this regard.

Under the Concentrated Development alternative, future lower income housing needs would be met with the construction of multifamily units in urban areas. Since there would be no need for modifying the second unit ordinance to provide additional affordable housing, proposed changes to the second unit ordinance would be dropped; hence there would be no conflict with the general plan. The Concentrated Development alternative may also have less impacts than the proposed project on agriculture by reducing the potential encroachment of residential uses into resource areas, and by not converting as much agricultural land to residential uses. These impacts would be expected to become less than significant under the Concentrated Development alternative.

Visual Quality and Community Character

The Concentrated Development alternative would seek to accommodate the housing needs of lower income nomadic persons by encouraging multifamily housing construction. This may result in another set of impacts on community character. Since many communities do not presently have areas developed to 30 units per acre or more, new multifamily units may not fit in well with existing community character. Therefore the potential exists for the Concentrated Development alternative to have significant impacts on community character. No difference is anticipated between the Concentrated Development alternative and the proposed project with regard to other visual impacts (scenic vistas, light and glare, and ridgeline development). They would remain insignificant.

Open Space

The Concentrated Development alternative would have less impacts on open space than the proposed project. Although the two alternatives will result in the same number of units built, the Concentrated Development alternative would reduce the amount of land converted from open space to residential uses. The two alternatives would have similar impacts on the need for new parks. These impacts will be less than significant under the Concentrated Development alternative.

Geology

The Concentrated Development alternative will not result in exposing more persons to geologic hazards than the proposed Element since expected population growth will be similar. Likewise, the amount of grading and excavation done under either of these alternatives will probably be similar as will the impacts on mineral resources. These impacts will be less than significant.

Biology

The Concentrated Development alternative would probably result in the same level of (significant) impacts on biological resources as the proposed Element since the amount of housing construction is expected to be virtually the same.

Hydrology and Drainage

The same number of people would be exposed to flood hazards with the Concentrated Development alternative as with the proposed project. It is also expected to generate similar insignificant increases in impervious surfaces, drainage problems in urban areas, and stormwater pollutants. The Concentrated Development alternative would also not result in a significant number of additional people exposed to hazards from dam failure and would be similar to the proposed project with respect to impacts resulting from the potential rise in sea level. All these impacts will be less than significant.

Cultural Resources

The Concentrated Development alternative will result in the same number of units constructed as the proposed project, however since the units will occupy less land area, there is less of a chance archaeological or historical resources would be disturbed. This impact is less than significant.

Transportation

The most significant traffic problems associated with the projected future growth in the Housing Element occur within urban areas. Since the Concentrated Development alternative may indirectly increase development in urban areas over the proposed project, it could theoretically make traffic problems even worse. This impact will be significant and unavoidable.

Air Quality

Impacts on air quality will be about the same under the Concentrated Development alternative as with the other alternatives. PM₁₀, CO and ozone precursor emission impacts are anticipated to be similar under each alternative since traffic levels are expected to be virtually no different, and vehicle traffic is the major source of these pollutants.

Accordingly, this impact is less than significant.

Noise

The most significant noise related impacts are anticipated to come from increased vehicular traffic. Since the Concentrated Development alternative may generate more vehicular traffic than the proposed project, it will have significant unavoidable noise impacts as well.

General Conclusions Regarding the Alternatives Analysis

The proposed Element and each of the alternatives have significant unavoidable environmental impacts. Since housing projections do not change, each alternative will indirectly result in an increase in population and housing construction. This will lead to significant impacts on Biological Resources, traffic and noise, regardless of which alternative is selected.

The alternatives differ from the proposed project in terms of land use impacts. ~~The proposed project is the only alternative which will 1) significantly conflict with the general plan and 2) may indirectly result in a significant amount of agricultural land converted to residential uses (although the Delayed Implementation alternative will cause these same impacts in the future).~~ The proposed project and Delayed Implementation alternative both have significant impacts on community character as they encourage development of ~~nomadic housing~~ special occupancy parks within the time frame of the Element. The Concentrated Development alternative substitutes multifamily development for ~~nomadic housing~~ special occupancy parks, but may still significantly impact community character. The No Project alternative will not significantly impact the environment in these areas.

Although the proposed project has the most impacts on the environment, it has been chosen as the preferred alternative for a number of reasons discussed below. The No Project

alternative is not feasible because the County would be out of compliance with State Housing Element law if the Housing Element is not updated. The State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) inferred this when they wrote to the County Administrative Officer on January 15, 1993 regarding their review of the Housing Element. In their letter, they wrote, "...in general, the element addressed the minimum requirements of housing element law...we look forward to receiving a more thorough housing element in 1993." Being out of compliance with housing element law per HCD's review This may result in the County being vulnerable to legal challenges and State and Federal grant funding cuts.

The Delayed Implementation alternative was not selected because this alternative would have the same impacts as the proposed project in the long run. Also, with the Delayed Implementation alternative, there is the potential for environmental impacts of the project to be considered on a piecemeal basis, and to inadequately assess the cumulative impacts of the project. And finally, it is less expensive for the County to review the Housing Element and implementing ordinances concurrently, rather than as separate items.

The Concentrated Development alternative was not chosen as the preferred alternative because communities have already rejected high density development at densities of 30 units or more. And while some proposals for increasing affordable housing in the updated Element may also be rejected, others may not.

TABLE 1
Impact Summary Table

Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Significance After Mitigation
5.1 Land Use		
5.1A Conflict with general plan or zoning	PS	<u>SULS</u>
5.1B Conversion of vacant land to housing development	PS	LS
5.1C Potential for Increased Growth Rate	PS	LS
5.1D Potential for loss of agricultural land	PS	LS
5.1E Conflict between existing agricultural operations and new residential development	PS	LS
5.2 Visual Quality		
5.2A Potential to conflict with community character	PS	<u>LSSU</u>
5.2B Potential impacts on views	PS	LS
5.2C Potential to generate light and glare	PS	LS
5.2D Potential for hillside/ridgeline development	PS	LS
5.3 Open Space		

5.3A	Loss of open space lands	PS	LS
5.3B	Increase future park needs	PS	LS
5.4 Geology and Soils			
5.4A	Increase exposure to geologic, seismic hazards	PS	LS
5.4B	Increased excavation, grading, filling	PS	LS
5.4C	Impacts on mineral resource areas	PS	LS
5.5 Biological Resources			
5.5A	Changes to diversity of plant or animal species	PS	SU
5.5B	Create barriers to animal movement and dispersal	PS	SU
5.5C	Introduce new species	PS	<u>LSSU</u>
5.5D	Reduce number of rare/endangered plants or animals	PS	SU

TABLE 1
Impact Summary Table (continued)

Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Significance After Mitigation
5.6 Hydrology and Drainage		
5.6A Increased exposure to flood hazards	PS	LS
5.7 Cultural Resources		
5.7A Potential to affect areas of archaeological or historical significance	PS	LS
5.8 Transportation and Circulation		
5.8A Deteriorate level of service on streets and highways	PS	SU
5.8B Affect public transit	LS	LS
5.8C Affect parking facilities	PS	LS
5.8D Increase traffic hazards	PS	LS
5.9 Public Services and Facilities		
5.9A Impact water supplies	PS	LS
5.9B Increase demand for sewer services	PS	LS
5.9C Increase need of additional public services (eg. schools, fire protection)	PS	LS
5.10 Air Quality		
5.10A Increase particulate matter emissions	PS	LS
5.10B Increase in carbon monoxide or ozone emissions	PS	LS
5.10C Consistency with local air quality plans	PS	LS
5.11 Noise		
5.11A Increase noise levels	PS	SU

3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

3.1 Planning Area Description

Humboldt County is located approximately 200 miles north of San Francisco in California. It includes a total of 2.28 million acres; Table 2 shows the percentage of acres in various uses.

TABLE 2
HUMBOLDT COUNTY LAND AREA

Total County	2,286,720	100%
State and Federal Public Lands Devoted to Timber Production	485,191	21%
State and Federal Public Lands Not Devoted to Timber Production	145,655	7%
Total State and Federal Public Lands	630,846	28%
County Parks	478	.02%
Incorporated Cities	23,143	1%
Timberland Production Zone	991,609	43%
Agricultural Preserves	198,814	9%
Areas designated for rural development (outside of Community Planning Areas)	131,471	6%
Community Planning Areas excluding Coastal Zone Area Plans	100,480	4%
Lands designated for Agriculture**	209,879	9%

See notes in text in Section 2501

** This Force Figure is a calculation, not an acreage count.

Source: Humboldt County General Plan - Volume I - Framework Plan, page 29 (Chapter 2).

Figure 1 shows a location map for the County and several of its cities and communities. Most of the County's residents live in the seven incorporated cities and the 16 community planning areas of the unincorporated County. Although the land area of the cities comprised only 1% of the land area, almost half (48%) of the County's population lived within cities in 1990.

FIGURE 1
LOCATION MAP

Prepared By: Humboldt County Planning Department

The 1995 Draft Housing Element presents a large collection of demographic and housing statistics for the county and its cities in Chapter 2.

3.2 Housing Element Purpose, Objectives and Description

The Housing Element update process provides an inventory, analysis, and needs assessment of current housing in the County. It also reviews the adequacy and performance of the previous Element and develops programs, policies, and quantified objectives to meet current and future housing needs, and other requirements of State law.

In 1992, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors found there was a need to revise and update the Housing Element in two phases to insure the timely release of Community Development Block Grant funds from the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). Phase I of the Housing Element update program was approved by the Board of Supervisors on December 14, 1992. It met the minimum requirements of the Housing and Community Development Department (HCD), and enabled the County to draw down approved grant funds. The 1995 Draft Element is Phase II of the update program. It provides a more comprehensive review of the County's housing needs and programs. It also extends the scope of review to the year 2002 to satisfy State requirements for the next Housing Element update, which is due in 1997.

The 1995 update of the Housing Element has been developed within a long tradition of housing advocacy. The first Housing Element was adopted in 1981 and updated in 1985 and 1992. The present update builds on the foundation of the 1981, 1985 and 1992 Elements and uses current data and projections to help chart a course for Humboldt's future housing.

3.3 Relationship to the Zoning Ordinance

A number of the programs in the Housing Element call for actions to be taken to address some of the documented housing needs. Some of the proposed actions involve amending the County's zoning ordinance. If adopted by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors (and, when necessary, the Coastal Commission), the changes to the zoning ordinance will implement the policies and programs of the Housing Element.

3.4 Relationship to the General Plan

Part of this project will involve amending those sections of the Framework Plan that contain references to the Housing Element to ensure consistency between the two documents. Following is a brief description of the relationship between the Housing Element and the Framework Plan.

All cities and counties in California are required to prepare and adopt a general plan. The California Government Code specifically defines the purpose and content of general plans. State law requires that a general plan be an integrated, internally consistent document with analysis and data supporting the objectives, policies, standards and actions contained in the plan.

The Government Code specifies that the general plan must include seven mandatory elements: land use, circulation, conservation, open space, noise, safety and housing. In addition, a local jurisdiction may adopt any other elements which relate to the physical development of the jurisdiction.

From an overall standpoint, the County's general plan identifies objectives, policies and implementation programs to address environmental protection, preservation of the unique character and visual quality of the county, provision of adequate public services and utilities, adequacy of circulation patterns, open space, housing, commercial services, and employment. The Housing Element of the general plan establishes the policies and programs related to the development, conservation and rehabilitation of housing.

The entire Housing Element is contained in Volume II of the County's General Plan. However, parts of the Housing Element are also found in two places in Volume I of the general plan, the Framework Plan. Chapter 2 of the Framework Plan includes population statistics taken from the 1985 Housing Element and the entire third and fourth chapters of the 1985 Element (**Housing Needs and Goals & Policies**). Appendix A of the Framework Plan also contains the entire text of Chapter 5 of the Housing Element. These sections of the Framework Plan that reference the 1985 Housing Element will be updated to refer to the new Housing Element.

3.5 Conformance with Other Plans and Policies

There are many other plans in the county which State law requires to be consistent with the Housing Element and the Framework Plan. These include each of the seven city general plans, all of the community plans, the coastal plans, Beach and Dunes Management Plan, Airport Land Use Plan, and the Integrated Waste Management Plan.

Since cities have jurisdiction over the lands within their boundaries, revisions of city plans, based on policy in the Housing Element, is strictly voluntary. In developing the Housing Element, county staff worked closely with the cities to ensure compatibility of the projected housing needs. Community plans were used to inventory land potentially available for housing.

The County will review potential inconsistencies with community plans and the coastal plans and will make revisions to these documents where necessary to ensure consistency. The Housing Element is consistent with the Beach and Dunes Management Plan, Airport Land Use Plan, and the Integrated Waste Management Plan.

3.6 Jurisdictional/Permit Granting Agencies

As the lead agency for this "project," Humboldt County will be responsible for considering certification of the EIR, adoption of the Element, and adoption of the proposed zoning ordinance amendments and changes to the Framework Plan. In addition to Humboldt County and each of the seven cities, there are a number of other jurisdictional and permit-granting agencies that have control over specific environmental concerns in the planning area. The following is a listing of agencies and their authority, jurisdiction or area of environmental concern. Each of those agencies may utilize this EIR:

Federal Agencies

National Marine Fisheries Service: Administers Endangered Species Act as it pertains to marine species.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Administers Endangered Species Act.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Issues permits for point source discharges.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Controls dredge and fill of U.S. waters including wetlands under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act; controls navigable waters under Section 10 of the River and Harbors Act; establishes wetlands boundaries.

State Agencies

California Coastal Commission: Reviews amendments to the coastal plans and coastal zoning ordinance; issues permits for development in mapped areas under authority of the California Coastal Act.

Department of Housing and Community Development: Reviews the adequacy of Housing Elements and funding for affordable housing programs.

State Lands Commission: Responsible for tidelands and historic waterways.

California Department of Transportation: CalTrans is responsible for the management of the Statewide transportation network.

The Native American Heritage Commission: Mandated to preserve and protect places of special religious or cultural significance pursuant to Section 5097 et seq. of the Public Resources Code.

California Department of Fish and Game: Reviews fish and wildlife issues.

California Department of Conservation: Division of Mines and Geology has special expertise in evaluating geologic and seismic hazards as well as mineral resource issues.

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board: Concerned with the effects of wastewater disposal on water quality and supply.

Air Resources Board. Responsibility for establishing State air quality standards, maintaining oversight authority in air quality planning, developing programs for reducing emissions from motor vehicles, developing air emission inventories, collecting air quality and meteorological data, and approving State implementation plans.

Regional Agencies

Humboldt County Association of Governments: HCAOG prepares regional housing needs determinations that must be addressed in local housing elements.

Air Quality Management District: Monitors air quality and has permit authority over certain types of facilities, including dry-cleaning plants, service stations, land fills, sewage treatment plants and industrial plants as examples.

Local Agencies

Humboldt County Cities: Arcata, Blue Lake, Eureka, Ferndale, Fortuna, Rio Dell, Trinidad. Responsible for future development within their communities.

Special Districts: There are many special districts in the County. Water districts such as the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District; and the McKinleyville Community Services District supply water, sewer and other services. Fire districts in the county are responsible for fire protection.

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

A complete description of the environmental setting is provided in the Housing Element, the Framework Plan, community plans and coastal plans. The Environmental Impact discussion (Section 5) of this EIR summarizes the information in these documents.

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

The following section includes an analysis of potential environmental impacts resulting from implementation of the 1995 Humboldt County Housing Element. As stated in the project description, there are three different components to this project: 1) adoption of the Housing Element, 2) amending numerous sections of the zoning ordinance to implement the goals, policies and programs of the Element, and 3) updating the Framework Plan references to the Housing Element. The discussion of impacts resulting from amendment of the Element and the Framework Plan is at a level of specificity appropriate for a plan document. The State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15146) state:

The degree of specificity required in an EIR will correspond to the degree of specificity involved in the underlying activity which is described in the EIR.

(a) An EIR on a construction project will necessarily be more detailed in the specific effects of the project than will be an EIR on the adoption of a local general plan or comprehensive zoning ordinance because the effects of the construction can be predicated with greater accuracy.

(b) An EIR on a project such as the adoption or amendment of a comprehensive zoning ordinance or a local general plan should focus on the secondary effects that can be expected to follow from the adoption or amendment, but the EIR need not be as detailed as an EIR on the specific construction projects that might follow.

The discussion of environmental impacts resulting from amending the zoning ordinance is more specific since the changes are more predictable. Allowing certain low impact cottage industries without a Conditional Use Permit, for example, is a proposed zoning ordinance change that will have potential environmental effects that can be more easily anticipated than impacts indirectly caused by general plan changes.

A number of policies in the draft Element serve to mitigate potentially significant environmental effects. Specifically, Policy 5.1 discourages encroachment of residential uses into agricultural areas, 5.2 encourages the retention of natural vegetation and terrain, and policy 5.4 encourages the use of alternative energy sources.

Likewise, many other County regulations will reduce impacts to less than significant levels. This EIR identifies many specific policies and other regulations as mitigation measures. Analysis of specific sites is beyond the scope of this EIR and is considered speculative. Therefore, further environmental review may be required for subsequent project -specific actions. The discussion of each environmental impact section is organized in the following manner:

Setting

This discussion describes the physical setting of the County as it exists before implementation of the Element. The information will assist the reader in understanding the project impacts.

Potential Impacts

A set of criteria is set forth establishing the rules upon which the decisions regarding the significance of an impact are based. Each potential impact is discussed separately.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures are identified for each potential impact. A distinction is made between mitigation in the plan itself and mitigation measures identified by this EIR.

Findings

A determination states whether the impact has been reduced to less than significant levels.

5.1 Land Use

Setting

The General Plan

The purpose of the general plan is to document existing land use and to direct future land uses. The first general plan for the County was written in 1968. It had only two parts then, the Southern Humboldt General Plan and the Northern Humboldt General Plan. They designated land uses for all unincorporated areas. They also discussed transportation, recreation and public services. Special attention was given to the more urban parts of the County; they were treated as individual "community planning areas".

A comprehensive revision of the 1965 plans was done with the adoption of the Framework General Plan (1985). The Framework Plan combined together the Northern and Southern Humboldt plans into one document. It did not contain land use designations for community planning areas, nor did it discuss anything about the coastal zone; both community planning areas and coastal areas have plans of their own. Table 3 of this EIR shows which community and coastal plans have been written. It shows that all of the coastal plans have been written, and most of the community plans have been completed. (An effort is underway to update the McKinleyville community plan for a second time due to the high growth rate there.)

According to State law, general plans are required to contain nine specific elements. Table 4 shows where those Elements are located in the Framework Plan. It shows the Housing Element is a separate document, but even the Housing Element has some excerpts that appear in the Framework Plan (the Housing Needs, Goals & Policies, and Implementation Programs sections).

TABLE 3

**Year of Adoption
Humboldt County Framework Plan,
Community Plans and Coastal Plans**

TABLE 4

**Relation of General Plan Organization
to State Mandated General Plan Elements**

State Housing Element law requires local governments update their housing elements once every five years. The Humboldt County Housing Element was first adopted in 1981; it has been updated in 1985 and 1992. The proposed project is the second part of the 1992 update. It is intended to satisfy State Housing Element requirements through 1992.

The Zoning Ordinance

Zoning Ordinances implement the land use designations of the general plan. Areas with residential land use designations in the general plan, for example, will normally have a residential zone designation as well. The zoning is much more specific than the general plan; it will tell you not only what the allowed uses are, but also building height restrictions, yard setback requirements and lot coverage requirements.

The County is split into two regions that each have their own individual zoning ordinances. Although the ordinances are similar in many ways, coastal areas have one zoning ordinance, and all non-coastal areas have another one.

Land Use

A complete discussion of land use is contained in the Framework Plan, each of the individual community plans, coastal plans, and in the Housing Element. These parts of the General Plan are summarized below. The Initial Study for this EIR identifies the section and page numbers for land use designations and zone districts which describe allowed land uses in each of the plans.

The County is split into two general categories of land uses - rural and urban. Table 2 of this EIR shows that most (90%) of the County is rural, with the remainder urban or near urban areas. Rural land use is dominated by State and Federal Public lands, and private timberlands, but it also includes other agricultural uses such as pastureland and cropland.

Table 20 of the Element shows that more than 70% of the County's development potential occurs in urban areas at densities greater than one unit per acre of land. Urban land uses tend to comprise mostly residential uses at densities of one to seven units per acre. For example, Table 20 of the Element shows that 95% of the urban residential land use in the Eureka and McKinleyville Community Plan areas is planned for single family homes while only 5% allows multifamily homes. The table also shows that urban plan designations could allow over 10,000 new single family homes to be constructed, and close to 2,500 multifamily homes could be constructed.

Other important components of urban land uses in the County are commercial and industrial sites. A review of the land use maps of the Framework Plan and other community plans shows that commercial uses cover slightly more of the land area than multifamily residential uses, while industrial sites make up less land area than multifamily residential sites.

Potential Impacts, Mitigations, & Findings

CRITERIA USED TO DETERMINE SIGNIFICANCE

Will the project conflict with the general plan or zoning ordinance?

Will future development in the unincorporated County alter basic development patterns and change the fundamental character of the area or result in conflicts between different types of land use?

Will growth rates increase as a result of adoption of the Element?

Will development in the unincorporated County result in a net loss of agricultural land?

Will future residential development in rural areas result in conflict with agricultural operations of such a magnitude as to result in forcing agricultural operations to cease?

IMPACT 5.1-A Conflict with general plan or zoning.

There are two ways the Housing Element may conflict with the Framework Plan, community plans or coastal plans. One potential conflict may arise with programs that encourage residential densities over what is specified in the Plan. The other potential source of conflict may occur by encouraging ~~nomadic housing~~ special occupancy parks when not allowed in the plans.

General Plan Density

There are two sets of programs that may lead to the development of housing at densities in excess of those allowed under the general plan. The proposed density bonus program and implementing ordinance allows densities up to 20% over those allowed in the general plan for projects that meet certain criteria for providing affordable or senior housing. Specifically, the implementing measure proposes to allow the following:

To grant a 25% density bonus over the otherwise maximum allowable density for housing developments of 5 or more units which provide: 1) 20% of total units for lower income households, or 2) 10% of the total units for very-low income households, or 3) 50% of the total units for seniors. In addition, staff is directed to work with non-profit and market rate developers to determine what other incentives are needed to encourage affordable housing under the density bonus program. Where feasible, Housing Element policies and/or the zoning ordinance shall be amended to provide the necessary incentives.

In addition to density bonuses, the other program that may lead to densities which exceed those allowed in the general plan involves the proposed changes to the second unit

ordinance. The existing ordinance does not allow second units in ~~agricultural areas~~ Agricultural General or Rural Residential Agricultural zone districts where general plan densities are exceeded; proposed changes will do away with that restriction as long as 1) the parcel is planned and zoned for parcel sizes of five acres or less, 2) a special permit is secured, 3) a finding is made that the second unit is not detrimental to agricultural uses, and 4) public health and safety are not compromised.

One of the primary reasons for density limitations is the protection of public health and safety. For example, allowing too many residences in an area with inadequate water supply, sewage disposal or road access normally leads to unsafe and unsanitary conditions. Another reason for density limitations is to protect existing resource-based non-residential land uses. Agricultural and timber production uses, for example, become uneconomical on small parcels. In order to ensure continued agricultural and timber production uses, the County allows only low density residential development in many areas. Section 65852.2 of State law allows local jurisdictions to provide for the development of second units in single family residential zones, and to find that second units do not exceed the allowable plan density even if it does. This section of State law also allows local jurisdictions to find that second units are a residential use that is consistent with the existing general plan and zoning designation for the lot.

Nomadic Housing Special Occupancy Park Land Use

Another potential conflict that may arise with implementation of the proposed project is when ~~nomadic housing~~ special occupancy parks are allowed under the zoning ordinance and not allowed in general plans. This project includes changes to the zoning ordinance to allow ~~nomadic housing~~ special occupancy parks just as ~~mobilehome parks~~ and trailer parks are allowed. However, the project does not include making changes to the Framework Plan, community plans or coastal plans to specifically allow ~~nomadic housing~~ special occupancy parks. It could be argued that allowing this use through the zoning ordinance conflicts with land use designations in the Framework Plan, which do not specifically allow ~~nomadic housing~~ special occupancy parks.

Mitigation

General Plan Density

Existing and proposed policies and programs will serve to mitigate many of the impacts of the proposed implementation measures that may lead to densities greater than those allowed by the general plan. All projects that use the proposed density bonus provisions will be subject to discretionary review because they are subdivisions. One of the necessary findings for approving discretionary projects is that it will not be detrimental to public health and safety. Likewise, the proposed ordinance changes to allow more second units in agricultural areas will require discretionary review. The required findings discussion of the zoning ordinances and subdivision ordinances shown in Attachment 1 will therefore serve to reduce the potential impacts of the density bonus and second unit ordinance amendments on public health and safety to less than significant levels.

Discretionary review of subdivisions and second units will also require consideration of the agricultural protection policies of the general plan and zoning ordinance. If a particular project is found to be inconsistent with those policies, it may not be approved. Thus, the required findings of the zoning and subdivision ordinances shown in Attachment 1 and included in the proposed second unit ordinance will serve to reduce the potential impacts of the density bonus and second unit ordinance amendments on general plan conflicts to less than significant levels.

On the other hand, the proposed density bonus and second unit ordinances will not protect resource-based uses from becoming uneconomical as a result of encroachment by residential uses. There may be existing marginal agricultural operations that are rendered uneconomical because of the conversion of agricultural land to residential and accessory uses. To reduce this impact to insignificant levels would involve requiring all proposed density bonus and second unit projects in agricultural areas to perform studies examining potential economic impacts. It is beyond the scope of this project and this EIR to establish procedures, guidelines and standards necessary for the review and approval of such studies. These factors render Impact 5.1 A significant and unavoidable.

Nomadic Housing Special Occupancy Park Land Use

Nomadic housing Special Occupancy parks are conceptually similar to mobilehome parks and include trailer park (RV parks), tent camps, incidental camping areas, and temporary RV parks. Presently, trailer parks and mobilehome parks are specifically allowed in the zoning ordinances, but they are not identified as allowed uses in the Framework Plan, community plans or coastal plans as shown in Attachment 1 of this EIR. Nomadic housing special occupancy parks will therefore be no less consistent with the general plan than trailer parks and mobilehome parks. Additionally, the Housing Element includes a resolution to be adopted by the Board of Supervisors (Appendix N) which directs nomadic housing to be addressed in all future comprehensive community plan revisions. This measure will further serve to reduce the potential conflict between the zoning ordinance and the general plan to less than significant levels.

Finding

Pursuant to §65852.2 of the California Government Code, the Agricultural General and Rural Residential Agricultural zone districts may be considered single family residential zones to allow the development of second units provided the parcels are planned and zoned to allow minimum parcel sizes of five acres or less. Where allowed by the zoning ordinance, second units may also be considered a residential use that is consistent with the general plan for the lot. Existing and proposed policies, programs, standards and other measures reduce many conflicts between the zoning ordinance, and the general plan of and the proposed implementation measures to insignificant levels. However, to reduce the impacts of the proposed new density bonus and second unit ordinances to less than significant levels, it would be necessary to require economic studies of such development on neighboring resource-based uses. It is beyond the scope of this project and this EIR to establish procedures, guidelines and standards necessary for the review and approval of such economic studies. These factors render Impact 5.1 A significant and unavoidable.

IMPACT 5.1-B Conversion of vacant land to housing development.

Policies and Programs

There are a number of policies and programs in the Housing Element that may indirectly lead to the conversion of vacant land to housing development.

The program with the greatest potential for converting vacant land is Implementation Program #20 (Affordable Housing Programs), which proposes the County continue to strive to meet projected housing needs by encouraging housing development. Based on projections of the previous 5 year time period, the document projects another 3,145 units will need to be constructed between the years 1997 and 2002 in the following income categories:

TABLE 5

**PROJECTED HOUSING NEEDS
HUMBOLDT COUNTY, 1997 - 2002**

Income Category	Housing Units	
	Unincorporated Areas	Total County
Very Low	874	1,555
Other Low	569	1,016
Moderate	730	1,196
Above Moderate	972	2,212
Total	3,145¹	5,979

Most of the moderate income and below moderate income housing will occur in urban areas primarily for two reasons. First, more than 70% of the County's development potential is in urban areas which generally have adequate public services to meet the needs of the potential development. For instance, the Environmental Impact Report for the Eureka Community Plan update states that approximately 2,780 new homes can be accommodated by the existing sewer facilities and that planned improvements will accommodate another 2,300 homes when necessary. (p. 36) The same excess capacity applies to virtually all other public services in Eureka, with the exception of the transportation system, which will need significant improvements after 3,500 more homes are built. (pp. 56, 64)

Second, urban areas can support smaller parcel sizes than rural areas because of the availability of public services such as water and sewer services. And since land cost is the most significant determinant of overall housing costs (p. 2-80 of the Housing Element), property in urban areas is virtually the only place moderate and below moderate income housing can be constructed.

The development of housing in urban areas may indirectly lead to the development of commercial sites. As more people move into an area, commercial businesses providing services to those people also tend to locate in that area to provide more convenient services. Without extensive marketing studies beyond the scope of this EIR, it is not possible to distinguish the number of new commercial businesses which started primarily to serve the new development from new commercial businesses started to serve the existing residents. However, it can be concluded with a high level of confidence that this possible commercial development will occur mostly in urban areas on parcels adjacent to existing developments. Implementation of existing policies and standards designed to limit the conversion of vacant land to other uses reduces this potential impact to a level of insignificance.

Other policies and programs in the Housing Element may also indirectly lead to the conversion of vacant lands to housing:

Policy 3.7 and Program #19 encourage development of homeless shelters to enable a timely response in a timely manner.

Policies 3.10, 3.11 6.13, 8.6, 8.7, 9.14 and Programs #1 and #10 encourage the accommodation of nomadic housing needs.

Policies 5.10, 7.12 and 9.15 and Programs #10 and #20 encourage second units.

Policy 7.16 and Programs #5, #6, #9 and #10 propose to facilitate housing development by reducing governmental constraints.

Policy 9.13 and Programs #1, #3, and #20 support very low income housing construction.

By encouraging housing development, the policies and programs of the Element will indirectly result in a change of land use from vacant land to residential uses. However, Basic land use patterns will remain the same with the projected development of the proposed Element. Implementation of existing policies and standards designed to limit the conversion of vacant land to other uses reduces this potential impact to a level of insignificance.

Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance Changes

Implementation of the Housing Element's programs by making changes to the zoning and subdivision ordinances may also indirectly impact land use within the County by facilitating the conversion of vacant land to housing. As with the policies and programs discussed above, there are 4 general categories of proposed zoning ordinance changes:

- 1) to encourage the accommodation of nomadic housing needs;
- 2) to encourage second units;
- 3) to facilitate housing development by reducing governmental constraints;
- 4) to facilitate very low income housing construction.

Each of these changes may indirectly lead to the conversion of vacant land to residential or other uses. For example, allowing second units in agricultural areas even when general plan densities are exceeded may lead to the conversion of vacant land to housing.

Due to existing plan policies, zoning, and other County and State regulations, much of the developed area of the County would be expected to retain its existing character, with minor redevelopment or new construction on infill parcels. The Initial Study for this Element (Appendix C) documents the existing policies and standards that will help mitigate potential impacts of new development on existing land use patterns (Checklist items I(a) - I(e)). Basic land use patterns will remain the same with the projected development of the proposed Element. Implementation of existing policies and standards designed to limit the conversion of vacant land to other uses reduces this potential impact to a level of insignificance.

Mitigation Measures

The following policies respond to Impact 5.1-B:

Goal 6. To Encourage Resource-Conserving Site Utilization And Dwelling Unit Construction Techniques.

Policies

6.1 The County shall discourage encroachment of residential subdivisions upon agricultural and other natural resource lands. Subdivisions of resource lands shall be allowed only where the resulting uses will not adversely affect the resource use of the site.

6.2 The County shall encourage the preservation of natural features of terrain and vegetation in new subdivisions in residential zones by clustering development, providing common open areas, smaller, more appropriate roads, and other compatible land use innovations in the development of new residential areas.

Implementation Programs

All of those policies, programs standards and regulations identified in Appendix C which were used in response to Checklist Item II(b) (Population and Housing - Growth Inducing Impacts) serve to mitigate potential impacts.

Finding

The ~~new~~ proposed policies in the Element and existing policies, programs, standards and regulations used to guide development in the County specifically address potential environmental impacts, and serve to mitigate potential impacts. These requirements reduce Impact 5.1-B to a level of insignificance.

IMPACT 5.1-C Potential for increased growth rate.

The rate of growth in Humboldt County has been fairly slow. Between 1980 and 1990, the total unincorporated population grew by close to 4,000 persons or 7%, which was less than half the rate of growth for cities in the County. The community of McKinleyville, which has public sewer, water and gas services, accounted for almost 75% of the growth of unincorporated areas during that time frame.

While Element policies and programs influence the location where growth will occur and may also have an impact on community design, it is not anticipated that implementation of the Element will affect the actual rate of growth. Therefore, the Element can be viewed as growth accommodating, not growth inducing. Many socio-economic factors not analyzed in this EIR influence growth rates.

The proposed Element and other existing plans and regulations include growth management policies and programs designed to manage growth to ensure that adequate

transportation, water and sewer facilities are available. Implementation of the Element will not adversely effect the growth rate in the County. Implementation of existing and proposed regulations and policies serves to mitigate potential impacts and reduce them to a level of insignificance. The Initial Study for this Element contains an inventory of policies and regulations that serve to mitigate growth-inducing impacts. (Attachment 1).

Mitigation Measures

The following programs respond to this impact:

New Proposed Implementation Programs

Implementation 20: Affordable Housing Programs

The County will continue to implement the following programs to meet the housing needs of Humboldt County residents.

- Building Permits Program
- Alternate Owner Builder Program
- Mortgage Credit Certificates
- Second Unit Program
- Farmers Home Administration Programs

Existing Implementation Programs

All of those policies, programs standards and regulations identified in Appendix C to respond to Checklist Item II(b) (Population and Housing - Growth Inducing Impacts) serve to mitigate potential impacts.

Finding

A new proposed program in the Element and existing policies, programs, standards and regulations used to guide development in the County specifically address potential environmental impact, and serve to mitigate potential impacts. They are referenced here to illustrate and clarify how potential impacts have been addressed in the project itself. The implementation of new and existing policies, programs, standards, and regulations which mitigate potential impacts reduce Impact 5.1-C to a level of insignificance.

IMPACT 5.1-D Potential for additional development resulting in the loss of agricultural land.

Future development in the County may result in the loss of agricultural land. Policies, programs, and zoning ordinance changes encouraging development of housing, easing governmental constraints, accommodating nomadic housing needs and encouraging second units may all indirectly lead to the conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses. This potential impact is not considered significant largely for two reasons. First, as stated previously in response to 5.1-B, most of the projected development is expected to occur in urban areas, which are predominantly non-agricultural. Second, numerous existing policies and requirements serve to protect agricultural lands from encroachment by non-agricultural uses.

Mitigation Measures

The following responds to Impact 5.1-D:

Goal 6. To Encourage Resource-Conserving Site Utilization And Dwelling Unit Construction Techniques.

Policies

6.1 The County shall discourage encroachment of residential subdivisions upon agricultural and other natural resource lands. Subdivisions of resource lands shall be allowed only where the resulting uses will not adversely affect the resource use of the site.

6.2 The County shall encourage the preservation of natural features of terrain and vegetation in new subdivisions in residential zones by clustering development, providing common open areas, smaller, more appropriate roads, and other compatible land use innovations in the development of new residential areas.

Implementation Programs

All of those policies, programs standards and regulations identified in Appendix C to respond to Checklist Item I(d) (Land Use and Planning - Agricultural Resources) serve to mitigate potential impacts.

Finding

The ~~new~~ proposed policies in the Element and existing policies, programs, standards and regulations used to guide development in the County specifically address potential environmental impacts, and serve to mitigate potential impacts, reducing potential impacts to a level of insignificance.

IMPACT 5.1-E Development of vacant land may result in conflicts between existing agricultural operations and new residential development.

The incompatibility of agriculture and residential uses has not resulted in many serious nuisance complaints primarily because open space buffers agricultural land uses. However, as residential uses encroach into rural areas, the possibility of nuisance complaints increases. Conflict with residential neighbors may arise with noise, dust and odors. These conflicts may result in trespass, vandalism theft, and can threaten the

viability of farming operations. The Right To Farm ordinance, adopted by the Board of Supervisors in June 1995, is intended to minimize these impacts.

One of the major goals of the Framework Plan is to protect agricultural operations. This theme is carried though in the Housing Element and many other existing policies and standards as well. These are described more fully under "Mitigation Measures" below.

Mitigation Measures

The following policies respond to Impact 5.1-E:

Goal 6. To Encourage Resource-Conserving Site Utilization And Dwelling Unit Construction Techniques.

Policies

6.1 The County shall discourage encroachment of residential subdivisions upon agricultural and other natural resource lands. Subdivisions of resource lands shall be allowed only where the resulting uses will not adversely affect the resource use of the site.

Implementation Programs

All of those policies, programs standards and regulations identified in Appendix C to respond to Checklist Item I(d) (Land Use and Planning - Agricultural Resources) serve to mitigate potential impacts.

Finding

Implementation of ~~new~~ proposed and existing policies, programs, standards, and regulations which mitigate potential impacts reduce Impact 5.1-E to a level of insignificance. A ~~new~~ proposed program in the Element and existing policies, programs, standards and regulations used to guide development in the County specifically address potential environmental impact, and serve to mitigate potential impacts. They are referenced here to illustrate and clarify how potential impacts have been addressed in the project itself.

5.2 Visual Quality and Community Character

Setting

A complete discussion of visual quality and community character is contained in the Framework Plan, each of the individual community plans, coastal plans, and in the Housing Element. These parts of the General Plan are summarized below. Attachment 1 of this EIR, the Initial Study, identifies the section and page numbers for policies, programs, standards and regulations protecting visual resources and community character.

In general, Humboldt County has a visual environment of very high quality, including views of open space, water, shoreline, hills and ridgelines, agricultural lands, stands of various types of trees and other natural features. Topographic features and the quality of the natural environment as promoted through the general plan significantly define community character.

In Humboldt County, the most notable visual qualities are the vast amount of open spaces and ocean views. The use of open space in the County for resource production protects it from development. Table 2 of this EIR shows that 65% of the land area of the County is used for private or public timberland. And although recently logged areas detract from the aesthetic value of nearby wooded slopes, only a small percentage of the land area is logged each year; the majority of Humboldt's forests appear well vegetated most of the time.

One of the common distinguishing characteristics of many of the smaller communities in the County derives from their history as former logging camps. This historical identity often carries through to the present with the continued use of adjacent forests as timberland resource areas.

Agricultural production constitutes another important use of the County's open. Table 2 estimates that the Williamson Act contracts protect close to 200,000 acres of land in the County (9% of the total land area), providing tax incentives in exchange for limiting development rights on high quality agricultural lands.

In addition to those lands in Williamson Act contract lands, restrictive zoning designations also protect many agricultural areas. Some areas, such as in the Eel River floodplain, prohibit parcels less than 40, 60, 160 or even 600 acres in size.

Not only are these open spaces valuable from a visual and natural resource standpoint, they also serve an important purpose as community separators. For example, large tracts of agricultural lands physically separate Arcata from Eureka to the south and McKinleyville to the north. This separation helps give individual communities a unique identity. Also, many local communities have historically been supported by agriculture, and this theme continues to define the present character of today's towns.

Other open areas in the County are protected from development by standards protecting natural habitats. The Streamside Management Area policies of the Framework Plan, for example, protect streams and vegetation along streams from development by requiring certain setbacks from the sensitive habitat areas. Natural habitat protection measures also extend to beach and dune areas along the coast, wetlands adjacent to Humboldt Bay and its sloughs, offshore rocks, and the shoreline of the lagoons along the coastline north of Trinidad.

Because of the many forested hillsides, open spaces, and unique community character, a number of areas in the County must comply with visual resource protection standards. Some communities have design review committees to evaluate proposed buildings and ensure their compatibility with the neighborhood and the natural environment. In other areas, the County reviews project designs for those purposes. The high quality visual environment coupled with the open space of timberlands and agricultural lands has set the tone for the community character of Humboldt County.

One of the issues the Housing Element considers are housing needs of lower income nomadic households. Nomadic households belong to a generally unnoticed demographic segment of our population that resides throughout the county during the year in various organized RV and trailer campgrounds, State and local parks, and other sites both public and private. The nomadic population distinguishes itself from other forms of housing styles by being mobile; they stay for awhile and then move on.

As with the other demographic categories, the nomadic population also has a spectrum of socio-economic income groups from high to moderate, to low and very low income groups. Examples of the higher income nomads include retirees on good pensions, driving state-of-the-art "Land Yachts" or "Fifth Wheelers", spending from a few weeks to sometimes a year or more in established parks and campgrounds around the County with full amenities.

On the other side of the spectrum, the lower income nomadic households may live in a camper shell on an old pickup truck or in a converted school bus, parking wherever they can without having to pay much (or any) fees. During the summer months these numbers go up to as high as 500 (according to social service personnel who visit their encampments).

The Element documents an obvious need for sites available to accommodate the County's lower-income nomadic households. Over the past few years, illegal encampments of these persons have sprung up in various rural areas of on the County, such as on the South Jetty, on the banks of the Eel River, Clam Beach, and most recently, on Baker Beach. Most people recognize the health and safety problems that result from illegal encampments and seek to remove them.

To encourage the development of shelter for this part of the County's population, the Element includes several new policies and programs (see policies 3.10 - 3.12 and 6.10). Also proposed zoning ordinance changes are designed to 1) allow the conversion of existing trailer parks to ~~nomadic housing~~ special occupancy parks, and 2) allow the development of new ~~nomadic housing~~ special occupancy parks. Development of these parks may significantly impact community character.

Potential Impacts, Mitigations, & Findings

CRITERIA USED TO DETERMINE SIGNIFICANCE

Does new development substantially alter the backdrop of undeveloped scenery and/or obstruct views of significant natural features?

Will new development fit in with the existing style, scale and character of Humboldt County?

Impacts on the visual quality and community character of Humboldt County could occur due to development encouraged by the Housing Element as well as the implementation of the various objectives, policies and implementation programs contained in the Element. Development in and of itself does not constitute a significant adverse impact on the visual quality of the environment. The criteria used to determine significance are listed above. As with all other impact discussions in this EIR, this discussion compares the impacts of the Housing Element with both existing conditions and with potential development under current plan policies and zoning designations.

IMPACT 5.2-A Potential for additional development, unless carefully sited and designed, may be inconsistent with the existing scale and character of development.

In general, implementation of the proposed Housing Element could result in impacts on the visual quality and community character of the County through additional development of residential uses, and possibly some commercial uses. Unless carefully sited and designed, this development would have the potential to block or alter water and scenic hillside and ridgeline views. Mitigation measures reduce this to a level of insignificance.

The Housing Element, Framework Plan, and numerous community plans and coastal plans contain numerous specific policies and implementation programs specifically designed to minimize visual impacts and maintain a high degree of design harmony with the environmental setting of the County and the scale and character of existing development. The zoning ordinance carries out these programs through application of zone designations and development standards. The implementation of the many existing policies, programs, standards, and requirements which serve to mitigate impacts reduces this impact to a level of insignificance.. These policies, programs, standards, and requirements are more specifically discussed under "Mitigation Measures" below.

However, those measures designed to accommodate the housing needs of lower income nomadic persons could indirectly significantly impact existing community character. Implementation of these ~~new~~ proposed policies and programs may potentially impact community character in a number of ways discussed below.

As envisioned by the Element, shelters for lower income nomadic persons may resemble public campgrounds in many ways. They would likely have paved driveways leading into a common area that offered basic amenities, such as showers, restrooms and cooking facilities. Fencing or landscaping would screen the parks from public roads and adjacent properties.

As with most private campgrounds, the park would have a 24 hour caretaker who would be responsible for keeping the park in a clean, sanitary condition commensurate with the surrounding neighborhood. They would also be required to have a 24 hour crisis response plan and regularly scheduled meetings with neighbors to minimize conflicts with surrounding land uses.

The parks may affect existing community character by allowing rural land uses (public campgrounds) in urban areas. Mitigation measures have been incorporated into the proposed ~~new~~ policies and ordinance changes to reduce possible indirect impacts, but not to a less than significant level, rendering this impact significant and unavoidable.

Mitigation Measures

Implementation of measures serving to mitigate potential impacts reduced this impact to a level of insignificance. Two ~~new~~ proposed policies contained in the Housing Element to protect visual resources and community character are the following:

Goal 6. To Encourage Resource-Conserving Site Utilization And Dwelling Unit Construction Techniques.

Policies

- 6.1 The County shall discourage encroachment of residential subdivisions upon agricultural and other natural resource lands. Subdivisions of resource lands shall be allowed only where the resulting uses will not adversely affect the resource use of the site.
- 6.2 The County shall encourage the preservation of natural features of terrain and vegetation in new subdivisions in residential zones by clustering development, providing common open areas, smaller, more appropriate roads, and other compatible land use innovations in the development of new residential areas.

Proposed zoning ordinance changes which help protect visual resources and community character include:

- Reducing permit requirements of new cottage industries that ensure compatibility with neighboring residential uses.
- Allowing Planned Unit Development subdivisions that encourage new development which is more compatible with the natural environment and neighboring land uses than conventional subdivisions.

- Reducing permit requirements for caretaker residences in commercial areas,
- Encouraging the preservation of established non-conforming multifamily units in new subdivisions.

Many other policies, programs, standards and requirements ensure consistency with the existing scale and character of development. They are identified in Attachment 1 of this EIR (references for response to Checklist Item XIII(b) - Negative Aesthetic Effects). With the exception of the policies and ordinance changes encouraging ~~nomadic housing~~ special occupancy parks, these policies, programs, standards, and requirements will reduce potential impacts to visual resources and community character to less than significant levels. No additional mitigation measures are required to address the impacts discussed above.

~~Nomadic housing~~ Special Occupancy parks may indirectly cause impacts to community character by allowing a typically rural use similar to public camping in urban areas. The policies of the Housing Element and implementing ordinances have incorporated mitigation measures to reduce these potential impacts. A summary of the policies, programs and ordinance changes encouraging ~~nomadic housing~~ special occupancy parks follows:

Goal3. To Provide For Adequate Sites For All Types Of Residential Development Throughout The County.

Policies

- 3.8 ~~The County should adopt amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to include a definition of and development criteria for low income nomadic housing sites and managed parks.~~
- 3.93.8 Adequate housing sites for the low-income nomadic population of the County should be identified throughout the County in proportion to the specific local needs as part of the ongoing development of the Land Use Element of the General Plan.
- 3.103.9 The Planning Department should identify sufficient sites to accommodate the anticipated nomadic housing needs throughout the County in areas outside of the established community planning areas.
- 3.143.10 The County shall ensure that comprehensive Community Plan updates include consideration of sites for managed lower income special occupancy parks.

Ordinance Changes

- ~~Define Nomadic Housing Structures and Nomadic Housing Parks. Definitions allow cars, trucks and buses to be used as approved housing structures. Revise the definition of trailer park to accommodate nomadic housing structures.~~
- ~~Include Nomadic Housing Parks in the discussion of development criteria for mobilehome and trailer parks. Development criteria include:~~
 - ~~Minimum parcel sizes of 1 acre, yard setbacks of 20'.~~
 - ~~Minimum recreation area of 1,500 square feet per acre.~~
 - ~~Paved access (50' total width) and circulation streets, 24' wide.~~
 - ~~Parking space requirements of 2 per site, plus 1 per 4 sites for guests.~~

- Fencing or screening required around perimeter, landscaping required in areas not used for other specific purposes.
- Site Plan Submittal Requirements. Site plan must show 1) the management staff of the park has expertise to provide an effective project, 2) 24 hour response plan for possible crises, 3) measures to ensure park is kept at least as clean as neighboring properties, and 4) agreement to enter into mediation with neighbors if unmitigated problems persist.
- ~~Limit the use of Nomadic Housing Structures to Nomadic Housing Parks.~~
Develop special occupancy park standards to minimize capital costs of new park development while protecting neighboring land uses from adverse impacts from the parks

These mitigation measures insufficiently reduce the possible indirect impacts of encouraging ~~nomadic housing~~ special occupancy parks. The impacts will remain significant and unavoidable.

Finding

Overall, With the exception of policies and programs encouraging special occupancy parks, mitigation measures reduce Impact 5.2-A to a level of insignificance. However, the impacts of the special occupancy park policies remain insignificant and unavoidable.

IMPACT 5.2-B Potential impacts on view corridors, bay views and coastal views.

Numerous important visual resources exist from many vantage points along Highway 101, including views of forested hillsides, rivers, Humboldt Bay, the Pacific Ocean, and the lagoons north of Trinidad. Construction may obstruct those views.

Specific unincorporated areas adjacent to these scenic areas which have development potential include the bluff along the Mad River in McKinleyville and property along Old Arcata Road between Arcata and Eureka.

Mitigation Measures

The Housing Element, Framework Plan, and many of the community plans and local coastal plans include policies to protect views of scenic areas from Highway 101 and other major roads. These policies are shown in Attachment 1 of this EIR (Checklist Item XII(a) - Impacts on Scenic Vistas or Highways). Implementation of these policies, reduces this impact to a level of insignificance.

Finding

~~New and Existing~~ and proposed new policies, programs, standards and other requirements currently being administered by local and State agencies specifically address potential impacts and serve to mitigate potential impacts. Many policies, programs, standards and requirements ensure consistency with the existing scale and character of development. These policies, programs, standards, and requirements are identified in Attachment 1 of this EIR (Checklist Item XIII(b) - Negative Aesthetic Effects), and will reduce Impact 5.2-B to a level of insignificance.

IMPACT 5.2-C Potential to generate additional light and glare.

Future development in the County would have the potential to generate additional light and glare which could disturb residents. This potential would be greatest in rural areas and in proximity to commercial and residential areas. This impact ~~should~~ will be addressed on a site specific basis.

Mitigation

The Housing Element, Framework Plan, and many of the community plans and local coastal plans contain policies requiring that the potential for light and glare be evaluated when development projects are proposed. These policies are shown in Attachment 1 of this staff report (Checklist Item XII(c) - Create Light or Glare). Subdivision review and environmental review required for development in these areas ~~would~~ will address the project/site-specific potential for generation of light and glare and ~~would~~ will identify any necessary mitigation measures.

Finding

Existing measures serving to mitigate this impact are specifically identified in Attachment 1 of this EIR (Checklist Item XIII(c) - Light Or Glare). Review prior to development renders Impact 5.2-C insignificant.

IMPACT 5.2-D Potential for hillside and/or ridgeline development to adversely impact a scenic resource.

Future development activities may scar hillsides or disrupt the scenic quality of the ridgeline. The use of the hillsides and ridgelines for timberland or agricultural purposes currently protects many significant hillsides and ridgelines. In other areas, the County has established policies and zoning ordinance controls to protect visually prominent hillsides and ridgelines. Although the potential for low density development in these areas exists, policies in the general plan and standards in the zoning ordinance mitigate these impacts to a level of insignificance. The specific policies, programs, standards and regulations protecting visual resources discussed in this EIR ~~should~~ clearly illustrate the mitigating nature of the existing development controls.

Mitigation Measures

Policies in the general plan and standards in the zoning ordinance mitigate these impacts to a level of insignificance. These requirements are shown in Attachment 1 of this EIR (Checklist Items XII(a) - (c) - Aesthetics).

Finding

~~New and Existing~~ and proposed new policies, programs, standards and other requirements currently being administered by local and State agencies specifically address potential impacts and serve to mitigate potential impacts, reducing Impact 5.2-D to a level of insignificance..

5.3 OPEN SPACE**Setting**

The Framework Plan, each of the individual community plans, coastal plans, and the Housing Element contain a complete discussion of open space. These parts of the General Plan are

summarized below. Attachment 1 of this EIR, the Initial Study, identifies the section and page numbers for policies, programs, standards and regulations protecting open space uses.

Open space provides spatial and visual buffers (community separators) between development areas, habitat for plant and animal communities, opportunities for recreation, wildlife corridors, and protection and use of other valuable resources. Policies in the General Plan have played a major role in the retention of open spaces within the County.

As discussed in the previous setting section on Visual Quality and Community Character, Humboldt has large amounts of open space. More than 3/4 of the total land area of the County (2.28 million acres) is in open space uses.

Since open space significantly contributes to the high visual quality of the County, policies and programs in the General Plan which serve to protect open spaces have been identified in the section of this EIR which discussed visual resources, above. As discussed in that section, the Framework Plan, community plans and coastal plans identify important open space lands which should be maintained for resource use or reserved as permanent public open space for either recreational or environmental protection purposes.

The Housing Element encourages Planned Unit Developments, which may become important sources of open space for urban areas. Policies in the Framework Plan, community plans, coastal plans, and other regulations identify additional techniques to achieve desired open space retention and acquisition. These techniques include transfer of development rights, regulation through low-density zoning, gifts, land dedication and the purchase of lands by public entities.

In addition to open space lands, Humboldt County has an extensive network of trails linking publicly owned land and developed areas. The Framework Plan, community plans and each of the coastal plans include maps, documentation and background information necessary to require the dedication of trails easements through the development review process. These documents include the following methods for acquiring trails: (1) required dedication as a condition of development approval; (2) voluntary dedication by a property owner; (3) purchase of trail easements; and (4) utilization of prescriptive rights.

Potential Impacts, Mitigation, & Findings

CRITERIA USED TO DETERMINE SIGNIFICANCE

Will implementation of Housing Element policies result in a net loss of open space lands?

Will the amount of open space in the County be inadequate for the projected growth?

IMPACT 5.3-A Loss of Open Space Lands

A number of policies and programs in the Housing Element may indirectly result in a loss of some open spaces as vacant lands are converted to primarily residential, but also some commercial uses.

The program with the greatest potential for indirectly reducing open space uses is Implementation Program #20 (Affordable Housing Programs). This program proposes the County continue to

strive to meet the projected housing needs by encouraging housing development. As discussed in Section 5.1 of this EIR (Land Use - Potential Impacts), the document projects another 3,145 units will need to be constructed between the years 1997 and 2002. In addition, the construction of this amount of housing will also result in the development of numerous commercial enterprises. However, as discussed in Section 5.1-A of this EIR, 75% of all the housing development occurred in urban areas in the 1980's. If historical trends continue through the time frame of this Element, only 800 units will be constructed on open space lands in rural areas of the County. According to land use maps for the Framework Plan, community plans and coastal plans, more than 90% of all commercial property lies inside urban areas.

Although some open space areas will be developed in urban areas, implementation of the Housing Element will have a beneficial impact on permanent open space lands (including public open space, parks, and trails) in the County. Numerous policies contained in the Framework Plan, community plans and coastal plans protect open space lands and support programs for increased open space through acquisition of undeveloped land under private ownership.

Mitigation Measures

The Initial Study for this Element (Appendix C) documents the existing policies and standards that will help mitigate potential impacts of new development on permanent open space (Checklist Items XV(a) and XV(b)).

Finding

Implementation of existing policies and standards designed to increase permanent open space in urban areas reduces Impact 5.3-A to a level of insignificance.

IMPACT 5.3-B Future Park Needs

In terms of local parks, Humboldt County has provided sufficient park land to serve the existing population. Relying on the standard found in the State's open space law (Gov. Code sections 66477 *et seq.*) of 3 acres per 1,000 persons, approximately 180 acres would be required for the population projected for the year 2002. Under a more stringent requirement of 5 acres per thousand persons, Humboldt would require approximately 300 acres of park land by the year 2002. County currently has more than 478 acres according to the information in Table 2 of this Element. Based on either standard, the existing local parks are sufficient to serve Humboldt County residents during the time frame of this Element. Although the total amount of park land is adequate, localized deficiencies for specific types of facilities may occur. For example, the 1995 Eureka Community Plan states, "(c)urrently, there are no County parks within the Planning Area" (page 75). Collecting and discussing information pertaining to specific needs exceeds the scope of this Element. However, there is clearly a need in some communities for programs such as Parkland Dedication ordinances, to develop more local parks.

Mitigation Measures

The policies, programs, standards and regulations referenced in Attachment 1 of this EIR (Checklist Items XV(a) - Demand For New Parks and XV(b) -Effects On Existing Parks) serve to reduce impacts.

Finding

Existing policies, programs, standards and regulations serve to reduce impacts. This finding determines Impact 5.3-B to exist at a level of insignificance.

5.4 Geology And Soils

Setting

The Framework Plan, community plans and coastal plans contain a complete description of geologic and soils conditions. Maps in the Framework Plan depict soils and geologic conditions and areas of relative hazard. The discussion below addresses these documents.

Geologic Hazards

Seismic activity in Humboldt could result in a number of hazards including surface fault rupture, ground shaking, liquefaction, slope failure, and tsunamis. The greatest potential hazards associated with surface rupture and ground shaking exist in areas underlain or in proximity to earthquake fault traces. The severity of potential impacts from geologic hazards triggered by earthquakes varies widely in Humboldt. Earthquakes can induce a number of events which can cause damage to persons and property, including liquefaction, landslides, differential settlement, and tsunamis.

Liquefaction occurs when saturated, unconsolidated granular material (silt, sand or gravel) transforms from a stable material into a fluid-like state. Landslides involve the downslope movement of soil and rock material. Landslides induced by earthquakes will generally occur in the same marginally stable areas as landslides induced by other natural energy sources, such as intense rainfall. Earthquakes may also cause differential, or uneven settlement on poorly consolidated granular soils adjacent to bedrock. During an earthquake these fine, unconsolidated materials settle into the air spaces between the coarser granules, causing compaction of the soil, and lowering the surface elevation relative to areas underlain by bedrock.

Humboldt County government agencies engage in a number of hazard protection and emergency response measures. In particular, the Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services has prepared an emergency response plan titled, "*County of Humboldt Emergency Operations Plan and Annexes*," originally adopted by the Board of Supervisors on August 17, 1993. This plan outlines actions to ensure effective disaster response to an earthquake event as described in the California Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 115, "*Planning Scenario in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties for a Great Earthquake on the Cascadia Subduction Zone*."

Mineral Resources

Numerous active mineral extraction mines exist throughout the County. The State Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) directs cities and counties to adopt policies to preserve and protect designated mineral resource sites from premature development or other land uses incompatible with mineral extraction. The State's seeks to ensure that necessary mineral and construction commodities are located reasonably close to their markets and that reclamation of mined lands prevents adverse effects on the environment and public health. Sixty-seven active mines currently extract minerals pursuant to SMARA.

Potential Impacts, Mitigation Measures, & Findings

CRITERIA USED TO DETERMINE SIGNIFICANCE

Will additional people be exposed to an unacceptable level of risk from seismic activity, or other geologic hazards which cannot be overcome by special design and construction techniques?

Will future development in the county result in additional excavating, grading, and filling which could change the topography or result in unstable soil conditions?

Will mineral resource sites be adversely affected by implementation of the plan?

IMPACT 5.4-A **Potential to expose more people to geologic, seismic and seismic related flooding hazards**

Since Humboldt County lies in a seismically active area, future development in the county will expose more people to surface fault rupture and ground shaking, and other geologic hazards triggered by earthquakes, such as liquefaction, landslides, and flooding. The General Plan cannot completely eliminate exposure to geologic and seismic hazards.

Depending on the severity of the earthquake, and underlying geologic conditions, ground shaking from seismic activity can cause heavy damage many miles from the fault trace. In the Humboldt Bay Area and on alluvial terraces, areas underlain by bay mud and river silt are particularly susceptible to ground shaking induced by earthquakes. Gentle sloping or foresting reduces this impact. Proximity to the Gorda Plate and the Mad River fault zone increases this impact.

The Franciscan and Yager complexes in the Coast Range are subject to landslides. Grassland and woodland soils above the Franciscan melange contribute to resulting mudslides. Landslides may be triggered by 1) type and structure of earth materials, 2) steepness of slope, 3) water, 4) vegetation, 5) erosion, and 6) earthquake-generated groundshaking.

The objectives, policies, and programs of the Framework Plan aim to reduce death, injuries, damage to property, and economic and social dislocation resulting from geologic hazards and other public health and safety concerns. The Plan intends not to remove all risks associated with each specific type of hazard, but to reduce risks to life and property and to make informed decisions about development near these hazards. These factors are considered in the type, location, design and density or intensity of development in the County. Implementation of mitigation measures also occur throughout the County's zoning ordinance and in the review of specific development proposals.

Mitigation Measures

The policies and programs in the Plan constitute part of the project, specifically address potential environmental impact, and serve to mitigate potential impacts. They illustrate and clarify how potential impacts have been addressed in the project itself.

Large areas of Humboldt County face multiple geologic hazards. However, the General Plan reduces this exposure by concentrating additional growth on more stable alluvial deposits and reducing planned densities in more unstable formations. The General Plan includes a number of standards and implementation measures listed in Sections 3292 and 5-3000 of the General Plan, which will further limit exposure to geologic hazards by increasing their identification and utilizing this information in the development review process.

The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone Act and other existing State law requires mandatory implementation of all the recommendations dealing with fault avoidance. Although this Act does not serve as a mitigation *per se* according to CEQA, it does serve

the same function as a mitigation. Site specific measures will further serve to mitigate this impact.

Finding

Implementation of the above standards and measures reduces this impact to a level of insignificance.

IMPACT 5.4-B **Potential for future development to result in increased excavating, grading or filling.**

Adoption of the Housing Element will not directly result in any excavating, grading or filling. Policies in the Framework Plan ensure that the development review process thoroughly reviews future development projects to address such geotechnical concerns as slope stability, bluff and wind erosion, seismicity and soils constraints. The Plan lacks an overall policy to address the issue of excavating, grading, and filling.

Mitigation Measures

Existing State and local requirements identified in Attachment 1 of this EIR (Checklist Item III - Geological Problems) mitigate Impact 5.4-B. These measures require new development in the County to adhere to the standards of the Department of Public Works and Building Inspections Department to minimize excavating, grading, and filling, while allowing for adequate access.

Finding

The mitigation measures referenced by this EIR reduce this impact to a level of insignificance.

IMPACT 5.4-C **Potential for impact to mineral resource areas.**

Encroachment of residential uses into areas used for mineral extraction can lead to safety and nuisance complaints by the residents against the operators of the mineral extraction facility. For example, there is often high levels of dust produced by trucks hauling material away from mineral resource areas. Where haul routes for these trucks pass near residences or residential traffic, concerns are sometimes raised by residents regarding the dust.

Mitigation Measures

Existing zoning ordinance requirements serve to mitigate potential impacts of the project on mineral extraction. These include §316-17 (Removal of Natural Materials), and §A314-36 (Surface Mining and Reclamation).

Finding

Implementation of existing State and local requirements serve to mitigate this impact, reducing it to a level of insignificance.

5.5 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Setting

A number of biological communities characterize Humboldt County. These communities include mixed evergreen forest, oak woodlands, douglas fir forest, old growth and coast redwood forest, grassland, coastal beach-dune vegetation, northern coastal scrub, chaparral, salt marsh, riparian, and freshwater marsh. The Framework Plan, community plans, and coastal plans contain detailed descriptions of each of these habitats..

On State, Federal, and most Native American owned lands, which compose more than 28% of the land area of the County, State, Federal and tribal habitat protection measures apply; the County has very little influence over these lands. Likewise, in areas zoned for timber production (which make up 52% of the land area of the County) where timber harvesting occurs pursuant to a Timber Harvest Plan, the County has almost no influence over potential environmental impacts of those land use decisions.

The County usually has some discretionary authority for all other land uses on privately held property in unincorporated areas. The Framework Plan, community plans and coastal plans guide the County in these decisions. These plans include policies for the protection and preservation of our biologically diverse county.

The most critical and widespread sensitive habitat types the Framework Plan protects are streams and riparian corridors. The Framework Plan includes "Streamside Management Area" policies which protect these important biological resources.

Streamside Management Areas (SMA's) are delineated on a case by case basis using the definitions set forth in the Plan. The Plan contains policies which are applied during discretionary and ministerial review of all development in order to ensure maximum habitat protection in these streamside areas. Development proposals that may impact these protected areas must submit an environmental assessment along with development plans showing how the project's potential impacts will be mitigated to less than significant levels. If it is not possible to mitigate the project's potential impacts to less than significant levels, preparation of an EIR will be required. Policies and implementation measures for SMAs protect stream resources, preserve existing and native vegetation, and protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitats.

Within the coastal zone, the Natural Resources zone designation and a set of combining zones which are applied to other base zone designations protect environmentally sensitive areas. An overlay to the zoning district designates the Coastal Wetland, Coastal Resource Dependent, Riparian and Stream Corridor, Offshore Rocks, Coastal Elk

Habitat, and Beach and Dune Area. The zoning overlay requires specific development review standards in accordance with the coastal plan policies in order to ensure maximum habitat protection in these coastal areas. Development proposals within the coastal zone that may impact the mapped sensitive habitat areas must submit an environmental assessment as part of their development application.

The California Department of Fish & Game (CDFG) has developed a list of "special status species." Plant or animal species may be identified as "special status species" even if they are not officially listed as threatened or endangered. "Special Status" species fall under one or more of the following categories:

1. Officially listed or proposed for listing under the State of California and/or the Federal Endangered Species Acts;
2. State of California or Federal candidate species for possible listing;
3. A California Department of Fish and Game Species of Special Concern;
4. Species that may be considered endangered or rare under Section 15380(d) of CEQA guidelines;
5. A Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or U.S. Forest Service Sensitive Species;
6. Species listed in the California Native Plants Society's Inventory of Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants of California;
7. Species that are biologically rare, very restricted in distribution, or declining throughout their range but not currently threatened with extinction;
8. Population(s) of species in California that may be peripheral to the major portion of a species' range but are threatened with extinction in Humboldt or California;
9. Species closely associated with a habitat that is declining in California at an alarming rate (e.g. wetlands, riparian, old growth forests, desert aquatic systems, native grasslands, valley shrub land habitats, vernal pools, etc.).

A number of "special status species" exist in Humboldt County. The California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) has also identified a number of Significant Natural Areas (SNAs). SNAs are designated sites that support extremely rare communities or species, populations of several special-status species, high-quality examples of special biological communities, or high species diversity. In addition to the specific sites identified as SNAs, other biological communities in the County require special protection.

Potential Impacts, Mitigations & Findings

CRITERIA USED TO DETERMINE SIGNIFICANCE

Will new development result in the elimination of habitat (including wildlife corridors) critical to the survival of animal species?

Will new development threaten the existence of any rare or endangered plant or animal species?

IMPACT 5.5-A Changes in the diversity of plant and animal species will occur during development due to removal of vegetation.

Alteration of the natural habitat may occur when undeveloped land is converted to residential and commercial uses. Changes in the diversity of plant and animal species will occur during development due to removal of vegetation. And although most of the impacts from this project will likely occur in urban areas, which tend to have less diversity of plant and animal species than rural areas, the indirect impacts of this project may still be significant.

Due to the general nature of a Program EIR on a general plan document and proposed zoning ordinance changes, it is not possible to accurately project the amount of habitat that could be impacted by the proposed programs. It is known, however, that for properties outside the coastal zone and SMA areas, very few policies, programs, standards or regulations address potential impacts on species diversity from housing construction, such as clearing trees and vegetation to prepare a building site. The indirect impacts of the proposed project on the diversity of plants and animals constitutes a significant impact since sensitive habitat areas lack protection in some circumstances.

Mitigation Measures

Numerous policies in the Framework Plan, community plans and coastal plans aim at avoiding any alteration of the diversity of species in sensitive biological communities. These include the Streamside Management Areas, and Coastal Zoning designations. Existing policies directed toward Streamside Management Areas protect valuable riparian and inland wetland habitat, while coastal zoning designations serve to protect sensitive habitat areas near the coast, bays, sloughs and lagoons. Protection of the riparian habitat will also indirectly result in reducing impacts to water quality from erosion, pollutants and stormwater run-off.

Effectuation of the policies, programs, and standards in the Framework Plan, community plans, coastal plans and other land use requirements identified in Attachment 1 of this EIR (Checklist Item VII(a) - Endangered, Threatened or Rare Species) will reduce the potential impacts of this project, but not to less than significant levels. To reduce the impacts to less than significant levels, mitigation measures would have to include the

complete mapping of important habitat areas for species, and an assessment of the impacts of all proposed development on these mapped habitat areas.

Finding

The County is already assessing impacts of development on species diversity in coastal areas and in SMA's. It is beyond the scope of this proposed project to require application of these review procedures to all the other areas of the County. The above factors render Impact 5.5-A significant and unavoidable.

IMPACT 5.5-B New development may create barriers to animal movement and dispersal.

New development may create barriers to animal movement and dispersal. Fences along property lines, or the presence of dogs can deter animals from moving through their territory. Fences, dogs and other changes that come from developing homes on vacant lots, may also push animals out of their home ranges, affecting the dispersal of animals. Although these impacts are probably less pronounced in urban areas, where most of the impacts of the proposed project will likely occur, they may be significant nonetheless. As stated above, it is not possible to accurately project the amount of habitat that could be impacted by implementation of the Housing Element.

Mitigation Measures

Although many measures serve to protect migration corridors and animal movement, existing policies, programs, standards and other regulations identified in Attachment 1 (Checklist Item VII(e) - Wildlife Dispersal or Migration Corridors) do not address all potentially significant impacts to animal movement and dispersal that may occur from this project.

Finding

To reduce this impact to less than significant levels, a comprehensive series of maps would be necessary identifying migration corridors and animal movement patterns for important species. Also, it would be necessary to compare proposed development projects with these maps during the building review process. The infeasibility of including these studies as part of this EIR renders Impact 5.5-B significant and unavoidable.

IMPACT 5.5-C There is a potential to introduce new species.

Introduction of new species will occur with new landscaping and when development on previously undeveloped lands requires removal of native vegetation. The removal of native vegetation may give aggressive exotic species a greater chance of being established.

Mitigation Measures

In Humboldt County, the Coastal Design Review zone district encourages the retention of native species and minimizing ground disturbance throughout the development process. Aside from these standards and the policies protecting SMA's and other sensitive habitats, no mechanisms exist to reduce the potential for this project to indirectly impact important biological communities by introducing new species.

Mitigation measures to reduce this impact to insignificant levels would need to require submittal of landscaping or revegetation plans for review of large projects that could potentially introduce significant numbers of new species. The plans would need to maximize the retention of existing plants by showing all disturbed areas, identifying the existing species mix on site, and proposing measures to return the site to its original species composition, or explain why that would not be feasible or necessary.

If it is not feasible or necessary to restore the original species composition, the landscaping plan would have to evaluate whether or not the project will significantly impact the native plant and animal species on the site by introducing exotic species. Further site-specific mitigation measures may be necessary to reduce those impacts to less than significant levels.

~~Ideally, Guidelines for the preparation and review of landscaping/ revegetation plans will become a part of the County's grading ordinance, which is called for in the 1985 Framework Plan, but has not yet been accomplished. In the interim, working with the Department of Fish and Game, the Planning Department will develop a set of guidelines and attach those guidelines to the Final EIR for this project. Implementation of these guidelines will temporarily not likely occur fast enough to reduce the impacts of this project with regard to the introduction of exotic species to less than significant levels.~~

Additional Mitigation Measures Required.

The landscaping/ revegetation guidelines discussed above should be incorporated into the County's grading ordinance, which is scheduled to be revised in the relatively near future.

Finding

Mitigation measures to reduce this impact to insignificant levels will involve implementation of measures to require the submittal of landscaping or revegetation plans for review of large projects that could potentially introduce significant numbers of new species. Since these new requirements may not be adopted during the time frame of this project, The above factors render Impact 5.5-C insignificant. Impact 5.5 C is considered significant and unavoidable.

IMPACT 5.5-D Potential reduction in the number of any rare or endangered species of plants or animals.

Alteration of the natural habitat may occur when undeveloped land is converted to residential and some commercial uses. Reduction in the numbers of rare or endangered plant and animal species will occur during development due to removal of vegetation. The indirect impacts of this project, which encourages housing development, may be significant.

Due to the general nature of a Program EIR on a general plan document and proposed zoning ordinance changes, it is not possible to accurately project the amount of rare or endangered animals that could be impacted by the proposed programs. As stated in the response to Impact 5.5-A, for properties outside the coastal zone and SMA areas, very few requirements mitigate potential impacts on rare or endangered species from housing construction. The indirect impacts of the proposed project on rare or threatened plants and animals constitutes a significant impact since sensitive habitat areas may not be protected in some circumstances.

Mitigation Measures

Many existing policies in the Framework Plan, community plans and coastal plans ensure the preservation of the habitat upon which many threatened and endangered species exist. These policies include the Streamside Management Area, and Coastal Zoning designations. Existing policies directed toward Streamside Management Areas protect valuable riparian and inland wetland habitat, while coastal zoning designations serve to protect sensitive habitat areas near the coast, bays, sloughs, and lagoons.

Finding

Continued implementation of the policies, programs, and standards in the Framework Plan, community plans, coastal plans and other land use requirements identified in Attachment 1 of this EIR (Checklist Item VII(a) - Endangered, Threatened or Rare Species) will reduce the potential impacts of this project, but not to less than significant levels. To reduce the impacts to less than significant levels, mitigation measures would have to include the complete mapping of important habitat areas for all rare or threatened species, and an assessment of the impacts of all proposed development on these mapped habitat areas.

As mentioned previously, the County is already assessing impacts of development on endangered, threatened and rare species in coastal areas and in SMA's. It is beyond the scope of this proposed project to require application of these same review procedures to all the other areas of the County. These factors render Impact 5.5-D significant and unavoidable.

5.6 Hydrology And Drainage

Setting

The Framework Plan, community plans, and coastal plans contain a complete description of hydrology and drainage conditions. Maps contained in the Framework Plan and Flood Hazard maps published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency depict hydrology and drainage conditions and areas of flooding or other hydrologic hazard in the County. The discussion below summarizes these parts of the County's general plan.

Three different types of flood hazards confront the county: flooding watercourses, flooding tidelands, and flooding from ocean waves. Development in Humboldt County has occurred in or near flood plains where storm water runoff, tidal action, and high surf cause flooding. In addition, tsunamis and seiche may occur. Tsunamis are large ocean waves generated by vertical faulting. Seiche are seismically-induced waves which can overtop dams and reservoirs.

Tsunamis subject coastal areas to inundation. Streams overflowing their banks from storm runoff or dam inundation causes flooding in the mountainous areas of the County. Deep, narrow beds which normally provide a sufficient amount of storage for runoff characterize the streams. However, during periods of intense rainfall, these streams may overflow their banks, and cause flooding of developed areas. On small streams, especially near the headwaters, water levels may rise quickly in heavy rainstorms, and flash floods can begin before the rain stops falling.

Along major rivers, many alluvial terraces often develop. These areas are subject to river flooding. Major water courses posing flood problems in unincorporated parts of the County include the Eel River, Van Duzen River, Mad River, Elk River, Little River, Redwood Creek, Mill Creek, Widow White Creek, and Jacoby Creek, Freshwater Creek, and Lindsey Creek. In addition to these major watercourses, numerous smaller streams within the county have caused considerable damage following heavy storms.

Other development in the county is on or near tidelands along Humboldt Bay. Many of these areas are low in elevation and occur as alluvial tidal flats; they often serve as floodplains for storm runoff, high tides, and river flooding.

Humboldt communities may also face increased flooding precipitated by a projected rise in the water level of the ocean and bay. Some Humboldt communities face inundation if any dams fails following a major earthquake.

Humboldt County government agencies engage in a number of flood protection measures. The Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services has prepared a emergency response plan which outlines actions to ensure effective disaster relief. The Public Works Department coordinates flood control construction projects.

Potential Impacts, Mitigation Measures, & Findings

CRITERIA USED TO DETERMINE SIGNIFICANCE

Future development in areas subject to flooding will expose people to unnecessary risk from flooding hazards.

Future development will result in increased storm water run-off and may reduce the water quality in the streams.

IMPACT 5.6-A As development occurs, more people and property may be exposed to flood hazards.

Compared to existing conditions, implementation of the revised Element will increase the potential exposure to flood hazards in floodplains. Damages in the County from the 1964 flood totaled \$100 million. Dam failure presents a possible hazard, with Trinity Dam and Ruth Dam posing the most substantial risk, with large volumes and short warning times. Such failure could occur due to earthquakes or slope instability. This failure would result in severe downstream flooding. Tsunamis and flood tides similarly pose flooding concerns.

Mitigation Measures

The goals and policies of the Hazards and Resources section of the Framework Plan serve to mitigate potential impacts through participation in the Federal Flood Insurance Program and through retaining agricultural lands in the flood plain. These and other measures are shown in Attachment 1 of this EIR (Checklist Item IV(b) - Exposure to Water Related Hazards).

Finding

Implementation of the policies in the Framework Plan reduces this impact to a level of insignificance.

5.7 Cultural Resources

Setting

The Framework Plan, community plans and coastal plans contain a complete description of cultural resources and conditions. The following discussion summarizes the information contained in those documents.

The generic term "cultural resources" describes prehistoric, historic, and architectural resources. "Historic properties" are cultural resources found to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Archeological sites are locations where past activities occurred. Surface and subsurface cultural remains mark these sites.

Many laws and regulations protect cultural resources for federal, State, and local projects. For federal projects, this includes the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA). Specific development projects must also comply with Section 5097 of the Public Resources Code and Section 7052 of the Health and Safety Code. These sections provide for the protection of Native American remains and specify special procedures to follow when remains are found.

Humboldt County is a sensitive area from an archaeological and historical perspective. Numerous Native American Indian tribes inhabited the County at the time of Euro-American contact; many descendants of those tribes still live in the County today. Figure 3 of the Housing Element shows that Native Americans constitute the largest ethnic group of non-whites in the County..

Many areas of the region have not been extensively surveyed and it is likely that additional unrecorded sites exist throughout Humboldt County. The majority of prehistoric archaeological sites that have been identified occur along the historical margins of the coast, Humboldt Bay, the lagoons north of Trinidad, at the base of hills, and on midslope terraces along watercourses. Particularly sensitive areas include dunes, drainage areas, and ridges.

Numerous archaeological sites likely remain undiscovered. The sites throughout the county should remain undisturbed and possible sites should be examined prior to development. The County is taking a number of steps to ensure that approved development does not impact archaeological resources. The Mitigation Measures section that follows discusses these steps.

The heritage of Humboldt County is associated with its Native American origins and its Spanish settlers. Timber harvesting, agriculture, grazing, and livestock activities were also important parts of the County's history, manifesting themselves in many ways. The discovery of gold in the California foothills in 1848 accelerated the pace of development; however, transportation linkages were minimal.

The 1982 "California Inventory of Historic Resources", prepared by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, lists 58 sites as California Historical Resources within Humboldt County. Sixteen sites have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and 661 sites are designated as Historical and Prehistoric Archaeological sites.

Early settlement patterns are still visible in many Humboldt County communities and the County contains many structures with historical value. The proposed Housing Element and existing Plan policies and other land use regulations help preserve designated historic structures through a special set of building code regulations.

Potential Impacts, Mitigations, & Findings

CRITERIA USED TO DETERMINE SIGNIFICANCE

Will future development in the County destroy or disturb cultural resources?

Will buildings of historical significance be destroyed by demolition or alteration?

IMPACT 5.7-A Future development in the County has the potential to adversely affect areas of archaeological or historical importance.

Since the Housing Element and implementing ordinances will indirectly affect development for all of unincorporated Humboldt County, it will include areas containing historic buildings and natural or cultural features. Future development could potentially impact cultural and archaeological resources in Humboldt. Existing County and State requirements will protect cultural and archaeological resources and preserve buildings and areas with special and recognized historic, architectural, or aesthetic value.

Mitigation Measures

Existing County policies, programs, standards, and other requirements identified in Attachment 1 of this EIR (Checklist Items XIV(b) - Archaeological Resources and XIV(c) - Historical Resources) sufficiently reduce any impacts on cultural and archaeological resources to a level of insignificance. The County uses different procedures for each of the three categories of development projects to reduce impacts of proposed development on archaeological resources.

First, before approving any discretionary permit for development, the County obtains a response from the Northwest Information Center of the California Archaeological Inventory at Sonoma State University on whether the proposed project may affect any mapped archaeological sites. If the records of that agency show the project may affect an archaeological resource, an on-site investigation and appropriate mitigation measures are required as necessary to protect the resource.

For other non-discretionary projects in areas with an "Archaeological" zone district, the Natural Resources Division of the County Public Works Division is consulted prior to project approval. That agency also has information on virtually all mapped sites throughout the County. In cases where the ministerial project is determined potentially to affect archaeological resources, a site investigation and appropriate mitigation measures are required prior to project approval.

For the third category of development projects, ministerial projects outside mapped archaeological resource areas, the County enforces Appendix K of the State CEQA Guidelines which identify the following criteria for use in protecting historical and archaeological resources:

- A. Is associated with an event or person of:
 - 1. Recognized significance in California or American History, or
 - 2. Recognized scientific importance in prehistory.
- B. Can provide information which is both of demonstrable public interest and useful in addressing scientifically consequential and reasonable or archaeological research questions;
- C. Has special or particular quality such as oldest, best example, largest, or last surviving example of its kind;
- D. Is at least 100 years old and possesses substantial stratigraphic integrity; or
- E. Involves important research questions that historical research has shown can be answered only with archaeological methods.

If cultural resources are encountered during construction, all work must cease and a qualified cultural resources specialist must be contacted to analyze the significance of the find and formulate further mitigation (e.g., project relocation, excavation plan, protective cover).

Existing requirements administered by the County also protect historical resources. Projects that involve designated historical sites may have their building permits processed under an alternative set of building codes, the Historical Building Code (Part 8 of the California Building Standards Code pp. 8-1 through 8-607). These alternative standards relax many of the typical building code requirements that would otherwise make maintenance or remodeling of historical structures infeasible.

For those projects that involve potentially historical structures (more than 40 years old), the County makes a referral to the local Historical Society for a determination on whether the project may qualify for an official historical designation. If the project qualifies for such a designation, the County encourages the applicant to pursue that designation.

Finding

Existing policies, programs, standards and other regulations adequately mitigate the potential indirect impacts of this project on cultural resources, reducing Impact 5.7-A to a level of insignificance.

5.8 Transportation And Circulation

Setting

A complete description of transportation and circulation conditions is contained in the Framework Plan, the Coastal Plans and the community plans. The Transportation section of the Framework Plan discusses the history of transportation planning within Humboldt County, describes the factors which have led to the existing conditions on the roadways and public transit, and recommends policies and programs to provide an effective transportation system in the future. The primary purpose of this section of the plan is to recommend policies and programs which will resolve the transportation requirements of unincorporated Humboldt County. It is summarized in the discussion below.

Road Network

The existing road network consists of principal, major and minor arterials, major, and minor collectors and rural connectors. Following is a description of the components of the road network.

1. The Rural Principal Arterial system consists of a connected rural network of continuous routes which have trip length and travel density characteristics indicative of substantial statewide or interstate travel.
2. The Rural Minor Arterial road system, in conjunction with the rural principal arterial system, links cities and towns above 5,000 in population and other major traffic generators, and forms an integrated network providing interstate and intercounty service.
3. Rural Connectors provide connections between the higher order system and have low-volume/long trip length characteristics.
4. The Rural Collector routes generally serve travel of primarily regional importance rather than statewide importance and constitute those routes on which (regardless of traffic volume) predominant travel distances are shorter than on arterial routes. The collector road system is subclassified into two categories:
 - a. Major Collectors and Major Collectors are spaced at intervals, consistent with population density, to collect traffic from local roads and bring all developed areas within a reasonable distance of a collector road.
5. The Rural Local Road system primarily serves to provide access to adjacent land and accommodate travel over relatively short distances as compared to higher systems.

6. Urban Principal Arterials in conjunction with Rural Principal Arterials, provide the highest level of conventional street service to virtually all area traffic generators.

Figure 4-3 of the Framework Plan (Chapter 4, p. 9) shows the location of some of these different road types.

Most of the cities and larger unincorporated communities are within a few miles of Highway 101. And although the road network provides access to all points of the county, the topography and natural barriers of Humboldt limit easy access between all communities. This configuration results in many local trips on Highway 101 and the other highways, treating them as principal arterials. Steep hills, environmental constraints, and community opposition prevent roads from being built over hills to connect adjacent valleys.

Level of Service

Traffic analyses generally use the concept of "Level Of Service" to express the adequacy of the road network to handle traffic. Level Of Service standards use a lettering system to compare streets, as shown below:

1. **Level-of-service A** Level A describes primarily free flow operations. Average travel speeds near 60 mph are typical. Vehicles are almost completely unimpeded in their ability to maneuver within the traffic stream.
2. **Level-of-service B** Level B also represents reasonably free-flow conditions, and speeds near 57 mph are typically maintained. The ability to maneuver within the traffic stream is only slightly restricted, and the general level of physical and psychological comfort provided to drivers is still high.
3. **Level-of-service C** Level C provides for stable operations, but flows approach the range in which small increases in vehicles will cause substantial deterioration in service. Travel speeds average around 54 mph. Freedom to maneuver within the traffic stream is noticeably restricted at LOS C, and lane changes require additional care and vigilance by the driver.
4. **Level-of-service D** Level D borders on unstable flow. In this range, small increases in vehicles cause substantial deterioration in service. Average travel speeds up to 46 mph can still be maintained. Freedom to maneuver within the traffic stream is severely limited, and the driver experiences drastically reduced physical and psychological comfort levels.
5. **Level-of-service E** The boundary between LOS D and LOS E describes operation at capacity. Operations in this level are extremely unstable, because there are virtually no usable gaps in the traffic stream. The range of flows encompassed by LOS E is relatively small compared to other levels, but reflects a

substantial deterioration in service. Maneuverability within the traffic stream is extremely limited, and the level of physical and psychological comfort afforded to the driver is extremely poor. Average travel speeds at capacity are approximately 30 mph.

6. **Level-of-service F** Level F describes forced or breakdown flow. Breakdown occurs when demand actually exceeds the roadway capacity. Average speeds are typically less than 30 mph and speeds of 10 mph or 15 mph are not unusual.

Source: Transportation Research Board, *Highway Capacity Manual*, 1985.

The County does not have any adopted standards for Level of Service. Most jurisdictions consider Levels of Service C and above to be adequate. According to these standards, Humboldt County has very good traffic operating conditions. Two recent studies of traffic conditions the area surrounding Eureka and in McKinleyville¹ found that both are currently operating at Level of Service (LOS) A or B. These areas would be expected to have some of the worst traffic conditions of the unincorporated County since they have high population densities (almost half of the County's population lives in these two areas that make up less than 1% of the total land area).

Transit

The majority of public transit service in the unincorporated County is provided by the Redwood Transit System operated by the Humboldt Transit Authority. Passengers from many areas of Humboldt from Garberville to Trinidad are served by this bus system.

Railroad

Northwestern Pacific Railroad (NWP), a subsidiary of Southern Pacific, is the only rail service into and out of Humboldt County. Although only freight service is available at this time, some areas zoned for manufacturing uses are suitable only because of the availability of the railroad and private spurs.

Bicycles

Presently bicycle lanes are provided in several of the more urban communities of the unincorporated County. For example, McKinleyville has bicycle lanes along Central Avenue and a bike path that connects with the City of Arcata along an abandoned set of railroad tracks. Humboldt County has developed a countywide bicycle plan that proposes to connect the cities, towns and colleges and provide safe access to local, regional, State and Federal Parks.

Potential Impacts, Mitigations & Findings

CRITERIA USED TO DETERMINE SIGNIFICANCE

¹*Administrative Draft of the Master Environmental Assessment for the McKinleyville Community Plan Update*, Winzler and Kelley; February, 1993, pp. X-7, X-13)

An impact is considered significant if:

Implementation of the Housing Element will precipitate an increase in traffic volume which will result in a decrease in the level of service in the unincorporated areas below LOS C.

The buildout anticipated under the Element will adversely affect public transit systems.

New development will cause an increased parking demand which cannot be accommodated and will exceed the capacity of existing parking facilities.

IMPACT 5.8-A The increase in households could result in a deterioration in level of service on streets and highways.

There will be an adverse impact on level of service on streets and highways with the growth projected in the Element. Most of the growth will likely occur in urban areas where traffic conditions are presently very good, and which have excess capacity to accommodate some of the increased traffic resulting from the projected growth.

The Eureka study found that even if all 3,100 units projected by the Housing Element were built in the Eureka area, all but one of the 20 streets included in the study would still be operating at LOS C or above (*Eureka Community Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report*, Humboldt County Planning and Building Department, 1992, p. 59). This project will therefore have no significant impacts on traffic conditions in the Eureka area.

If future development patterns echo historical development patterns, 75% of the growth in the unincorporated area will occur in McKinleyville. This would be expected to increase the peak hour traffic in that areas by as much as 4,650 vehicles.

The McKinleyville study also found that all roads in the McKinleyville area will be operating at LOS A or B if all the homes projected by the Element were constructed in McKinleyville. However, the traffic impacts from that level of new development will be significant for a number of intersections. If all the homes projected in the Housing Element were built in McKinleyville, the intersection of Hiller and Central Avenue will drop to LOS C with an average 2.2 second increase in delays at that intersection per vehicle. The LOS at the intersection between Murray Road and McKinleyville Avenue would also drop from LOS B to C. And on the average, vehicles will have to wait 17 seconds longer at the unsignalled intersection of Central Avenue and Murray Road, corresponding with a drop in the LOS for that intersection from D to E. Traffic impacts on the intersections described above are significant.

Development in rural areas is expected to be widely dispersed across the County. Based on historical development patterns, approximately 25% of the 3,100 units projected by the Element to be constructed over the next five years will be built in rural areas. These 800 units could potentially be dispersed across more than a million acres of land, which is served by many different arterials, collectors, major and minor roads.

Mitigation Measures

For most parts of the County, including both rural and urban areas, this project is not expected to have any significant adverse impacts on the LOS of roads. An exception is in the community of McKinleyville, where most of the population increase will probably take place. Although a more in-depth study may prove otherwise, it seems clear that several intersections in McKinleyville will probably deteriorate to below a LOS C unless specific improvements are made.

Policies, programs regulations and standards administered by the County, regional agencies and the State partially mitigate this impact, but not to a level of insignificance. They are identified in Attachment 1 of this EIR (Checklist Item VI(a) - Increased Vehicle Trips Or Traffic Congestion). It is beyond the scope of the Housing Element and this EIR to identify funding sources and a work program to complete the installation of transportation improvements necessary to reduce this impact to less than significant levels.

Finding

This impact is deemed significant and unavoidable.

IMPACT 5.8-B Growth projected in the Housing Element could adversely affect public transit systems.

The population of unincorporated areas is projected to grow at a rate comparable to growth rates in the past. Over the past five years, ridership of the HTA bus service has increased from 258,000 riders in 1990 to 262,000 in 1996, so it can be expected that with the development encouraged by this Element, ridership will increase by another 4,000 persons to 266,000 riders. According to officials at HTA (personal communication with Roger Murphy, General Manager on June 26, 1996), the busses would then be operating at 46% of their total capacity. During peak travel hours in the morning and afternoons, HTA is sometimes at 100% of their scheduled capacity. They have an additional 25% capacity in reserve to meet the demand during peak hours.

Mitigation Measures

Projected future development patterns are assumed to be similar to historical growth patterns. Historically, transit ridership has increased by 4,000 riders over the past 5 years, so it is expected that ridership over the next 5 year period will increase to 46% of total capacity. Thus this impact will not rise to a level of significance.

Finding

This impact is currently less than significant, and will remain less than significant during the time period of this Housing Element.

IMPACT 5.8-C New development in the county may adversely affect existing parking facilities and create a need for new parking facilities.

The projected increase in vehicle use indirectly resulting from implementation of the Housing Element will result in the need for additional parking facilities. Parking for residential and commercial development will be provided when the projects are built according to the standards in the zoning ordinance. All projected need for parking should be met by these regulations.

Mitigation Measures

Existing policies, programs, standards and other requirements serve to mitigate indirect impacts of the proposed Element on parking facilities. These are shown in Attachment 1 of this EIR (Checklist Item VI(d) - Insufficient Parking Capacity).

Finding

Due to implementation of existing policies, programs, standards and other requirements which mitigate indirect impacts of the proposed Element on parking facilities, this impact is reduced to a level of insignificance.

IMPACT 5.8-D New development in the county could increase traffic hazards.

Accident rates tend to correlate with the type of road and its general location (e.g. urban suburban or rural area). Traffic volumes are not necessarily highly correlated with accident rates. An exception occurs when Level of Service reaches F -- the stop and go driving in bumper-to-bumper conditions may raise the accident rate somewhat. According to an official at the California Highway Patrol Office in Arcata (personal communication with John Letzow, June 19, 1996), accident rates on roads in the unincorporated portion of the county are similar to other comparable counties.

As part of its overall road maintenance program the County corrects potential safety hazards on unincorporated area roads. Each city is responsible for roads within its boundaries. Except for a number of intersections in McKinleyville, there are no areas of the County where the LOS is expected to deteriorate to a significant degree. Therefore, the proposed plan is not anticipated to significantly increase traffic hazards.

Mitigation Measures

Existing regulations administered by public agencies minimize traffic hazards of new and existing development, thus keeping this impact from rising to a level of significance. These requirements are shown in Attachment 1 (Checklist Item VI(b) - Hazards to Safety From Design Features).

Finding

This impact is currently less than significant.

5.9 Public Services And Facilities

Setting

A complete description of public services conditions is contained in the Housing Element, Framework Plan, community plans and coastal plans. This information is summarized in the following discussion.

The largest water districts serving unincorporated areas are the Humboldt Community Services District (HCSD) and the McKinleyville Community Services District (MCSD). These agencies provide water to the areas surrounding Eureka, and the community of McKinleyville respectively. Other water districts serve Westhaven, Jacoby Creek, Willow Creek, Hydesville, Miranda, McKinleyville, Redway, Alderpoint, Shelter Cove, Weott and Orleans.

Wastewater treatment is provided in their respective districts by Humboldt, McKinleyville and Redway Community Services District (CSD), the Garberville and Loleta Sanitary Districts, and the Shelter Cove Resort Improvement District. The McKinleyville CSD has undertaken major plant expansion projects recently in order to accommodate development potential. Most other unincorporated areas utilize individual waste disposal systems.

Fourteen fire protection districts, six special districts and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection serve the unincorporated areas of Humboldt County. Most have mutual aid agreements with neighboring districts to assist with major fires.

Police protection in the cities and towns is provided by each jurisdiction's police department. Unincorporated areas are protected by the County Sheriff. There are County Sheriff stations at the County Courthouse in Eureka, in Hoopa, McKinleyville, and Garberville.

Humboldt County has 34 school districts,, a community college and a State university plus six parochial schools and two private schools providing education. At the time the Framework Plan was written, enrollment in public schools had been declining for several years.

Telecommunications is the transmission of information from one point to one or more other points using radio frequency signals. The land use implications of siting telecommunication facilities vary, depending upon whether the planned facility is a major use on the property, such as a transmitter tower site, or a minor use accessory to a residential or commercial development, such as a satellite dish. The federal government has primary regulatory power over telecommunications facilities through the Federal Communications Act. Local regulations can prescribe land use and construction guidelines, however the Federal Communications Commission can pre-empt local regulations that prohibit or discriminate against telecommunications facilities.

Garbage collection in the county is presently being done in two transfer stations, one in Redway and the other in Eureka. Solid waste is collected at these facilities, and then trucked to the Cummings Road landfill, which is in the unincorporated area just north of Eureka. The County has recently gone through the process of siting another landfill, which will be opened when the Cummings Road landfill reaches capacity, which is expected within the next ten years.

The county's waste management system is further described in the County Integrated Waste Management Plan (March 1992) and prepared in accordance with the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 ("AB 939").

Potential Impacts, Mitigations, & Findings

CRITERIA USED TO DETERMINE SIGNIFICANCE

Development in the County will result in an increased demand for water which exceeds the available supply, and exceeds the supply which the water districts have planned to develop.

Implementation of the Housing Element will result in a need for police and fire protection which exceeds the ability of these agencies to provide services.

The growth anticipated in the County will result in additional sewage flows which will overwhelm the ability of the sewerage agencies to accommodate new growth.

IMPACT 5.9-A Growth resulting from policies in the plan will impact the water supplies in the County, particularly the Humboldt Community Services District (HCSD) and the McKinleyville Community Services District (MCSD).

Section 2300 of the Housing Element (Residential Land Inventory, pp. 2-50 - 2-54) discusses the capacity of both the HCSD and the MCSD to provide water to meet the projected housing needs. The Element states that there will be more than enough water to meet projected future demands. HCSD currently has available a peak water supply of

4.8 million gallons per day (MGD). which is 0.6 MGD more than the projected water demand when all the area is built out. Since more than 5,500 new residences are planned for in that area, all 3,145 units projected by the Housing Element could be built there and not impact the water supply.

Currently, MCSD provides 2.3 MGD to homes and businesses in the McKinleyville area. Current allocations allow the District to increase its use by 3.5 MGD, enough to provide another 7,000 residences with water. Clearly, development of the 3,145 units encouraged by this Element will not significantly impact the capacity of MCSD to provide water.

New development is not expected to have a significant impact on the water sources for public water agencies. Water sources for public agencies are mapped, and these critical areas are protected from impacts of new development by existing requirements administered by the Health Department and the RWQCB.

Although most development projected by the Housing Element will probably occur in these two communities, some may occur in areas serviced by other water districts, and some will probably occur in areas outside the boundaries of any public water agency, where water is provided from individual water supply systems.

There is only one public water agency that is unable to provide additional water to new houses within its boundaries. The Westhaven Community Services District, which services the community of Westhaven, has required all new development within its jurisdiction to use individual water supply sources for the past several years because there is an insufficient supply for new hookups. That agency has documented cases in the past (before 1994) where individual water supply systems for approved new houses within the District's boundaries have subsequently failed, and the property owners were then placed on a waiting list for new hookups to the District. In those instances, policies encouraging new development impacted that agency by indirectly increasing the number of homes on the waiting list. As of May, 1995, the District had approximately 30 property owners on the waiting list for water services.

The County Health Department oversees the testing and development of individual water supplies. In 1994, that agency began enforcing a more stringent set of testing requirements for new water supply wells. Whereas previously they relied only on the records of the well drilling company to determine whether or not a new well had an adequate amount of water, the new regulations now require property owners to perform a series of pumping tests to measure the adequacy of new wells. New development without public water supplies is required to conform to these new standards.

Mitigation Measures

Both the Humboldt and McKinleyville Community Services Districts have adequate water supplies to meet the projected demand for water. There will be no significant impacts from the proposed project on the ability of these two agencies to provide water. And with the exception of the Westhaven Community Services District (WCSD), there

are no other public water agencies that will be significantly impacted by the proposed project.

The WCSD is the only public water agency known to be unable to serve additional homes with water. Before 1994, this District was impacted by policies encouraging growth in the County because some approved water individual supplies failed within a relatively short time after being approved. In 1994, changes in water system testing requirements were made to more rigorously establish adequate water supplies. Since these regulatory changes were put into effect, there have not been any approved residences in that District where the individual water system has failed. The regulatory changes have reduced the impacts of new development on the WCSD to a level of insignificance.

Individual water supply systems for new developments outside the boundaries of any public water agency are regulated by the Health Department and the Regional Water Quality Control Board. These agencies have established standards that must be met before new residences are constructed. They are identified in Attachment 1 of this EIR (Checklist Item XII(g) - Local or Regional Water Supplies). The impact of new development on individual water supply systems is made insignificant through the administration of existing requirements by Health and the RWQCB.

Finding

This impact is less than significant. The administration of existing requirements by Health and the RWQCB have reduced this impact to less than significance

IMPACT 5.9-B Development will result in an increased demand for sewerage disposal facilities

The Housing Element includes a discussion of the capacity of public sanitary districts to provide sewer services to meet the projected housing needs. Section 2300 (Residential Land Use Inventory) states that more than 2,700 new residences can be provided with public sewage disposal services in the Eureka area through the Humboldt Community Services District. And in McKinleyville, the MCSDD has recently received approvals for a project that will increase their capacity to provide sewer services to another 3,800 residential units. Assuming that future development will follow historical patterns, most of the projected development will occur in these two areas.

The remaining development encouraged by the Housing Element will likely occur in areas served by other sewage disposal districts, or in places outside sanitary district boundaries. Although there have been problems in the past with some treatment plants being unable to function properly, especially in periods of wet weather, the Framework Plan cites that corrective measures have been initiated on most of the treatment systems (§4520, p. 20, Chapter 4). There are currently no sanitary agencies that are not accepting new hookups for projects within their boundaries.

The County Health Department and the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) oversee testing and installation of individual sewage disposal systems. They require soils testing and engineered plans for each system. All new development is required to comply with the standards administered by the RWQCB and the Health Department.

Mitigation Measures

The sanitary agencies serving the areas most likely to receive most of the development encouraged by the Housing Element, HCSD and MCSD, have sufficient capacity to meet all the projected housing needs for the County. There are no public sanitation agencies that are not able to provide new hookups.

In areas not served by public sanitation agencies, existing requirements administered by Health and RWQCB specifically address potential environmental impacts, and serve to mitigate potential impacts. They are shown in Attachment 1 of this EIR (Checklist Item XII(d) - Sewer or Septic Tanks) to illustrate and clarify how potential impacts have been addressed.

Finding

This impact is less than significant.

IMPACT 5.9-C The development anticipated will result in a need for additional public services, including schools, fire, and police protection.

Fire protection services are generally adequate; however, in some areas the narrow winding roads make access difficult. New development in the County is required to provide adequate access, emergency water supply, defensible space, and address markers pursuant to a recently adopted ordinance (the SRA Fire Safe Regulations). Existing policies, programs, standards and regulations require that provisions are made for adequate fire protection, particularly in the rural areas.

New development will also result in additional demand for police protection. The demand for additional police protection in the unincorporated county will be accommodated through increases in staff and capital facilities as conditions warrant.

Additional development in Humboldt County will require new public infrastructure and public services. The amount of new infrastructure and services required will be determined by the amount and type of growth. Existing policies, programs, standards and other regulations require that new development pay the cost of infrastructure and public services it requires. Impacts on community facilities are less than significant with implementation of these existing requirements.

Mitigation Measures

Policies, programs and other requirements as listed in Attachment 1 of this EIR (Checklist Items XI(a) through (e) - Fire Protection, Police Protection, Schools, Public Facilities, Other Governmental Services) specifically address potential environmental impact, and serve to mitigate potential impacts.

Finding

This impact was determined to be less than significant.

5.10 Air Quality

Setting

Humboldt County is bordered by Del Norte County to the north; the Pacific Ocean to the west, Mendocino County to the south, and Siskiyou and Trinity County to the east.

The predominant wind direction for the County is from the northwest, primarily due to marine breezes from the Pacific Ocean. During winter, the sea breezes diminish and winds from the southeast occur more frequently. However, the winds from the northwest still predominate.

Ambient Air Quality Standards and Existing Air Quality

The Federal Clean Air Act establishes air quality standards for several pollutants and requires areas that violate these standards to prepare and implement plans to achieve the standards by certain deadlines. Federal standards are divided into primary standards, which are designed to protect the public health, and secondary standards, which are intended to protect the public welfare from effects such as visibility reduction, soiling, nuisance, and other forms of damage.

California has adopted ambient air quality standards that are more stringent than many of the federal standards. The California Clean Air Act of 1988 requires that areas violating the California standards prepare plans describing the steps to be taken to attain the California ambient standards.

Motor vehicles represent the largest potential source of air emissions associated with the implementation of the Housing Element. The following discussion focuses on the ambient standards for particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM₁₀), carbon monoxide (CO), and ozone because these pollutants are produced either directly or indirectly by motor vehicles.

Particulate Matter (PM₁₀)

Health concerns associated with suspended particles focus on those particles small enough to reach the lungs when inhaled. Few particles larger than 10 microns in diameter reach the lungs. Consequently, both federal and State air quality standards for particulate matter have been revised to apply only to these small particles (designated as PM₁₀).

State and federal PM₁₀ standards have been set for 24-hour and annual averaging times. The State 24-hour PM₁₀ standard equals 50 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) and the federal 24-hour standard is 150 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. The State annual PM₁₀ standard is 30 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ on an annual geometric mean whereas the federal annual PM₁₀ standard equals 50 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ on an annual arithmetic mean. Federal and State 24-hour PM₁₀ standards may not be exceeded more than 1 day per year whereas both annual standards may not ever be exceeded.

According to the *Particulate Matter (PM₁₀) Attainment Plan* adopted by the North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District (AQMD) May 11, 1995, several violations of the California PM₁₀ ambient standard have resulted in Humboldt County being classified as a PM₁₀ non-attainment area. Both the 24-hour and annual California PM₁₀ standards are violated on a regular basis in the Humboldt County. However, a violation of the federal PM₁₀ ambient standards has not been recorded in Humboldt County, primarily because the federal PM₁₀ standards are much less stringent than the California standards. The non-attainment designation indicates that the PM₁₀ levels in Humboldt County are a potential threat to public health.

Humboldt County PM₁₀ emissions are generated by a variety of sources. The primary sources of particulate matter in Humboldt County are road dust and residential fuel combustion (fire places and wood stoves). Motor vehicle traffic also would generate particulate and PM₁₀ emissions by lifting into the air dust and dirt particles that settle onto roadways and parking lots. Other significant sources of PM₁₀ emissions are industrial wood and paper plants, and slash burning.

Carbon Monoxide

CO levels are a public health concern because CO combines readily with hemoglobin and thus reduces the amount of oxygen transported in the bloodstream. Relatively low concentrations of CO can significantly affect the amount of oxygen in the bloodstream because CO binds to hemoglobin 220-245 times more strongly than oxygen. Both the cardiovascular system and the central nervous system can be affected when 2.5 to 4.0% of the hemoglobin in the bloodstream is bound to CO rather than to oxygen. State and federal ambient air quality standards for CO have been set at levels intended to keep CO from combining with more than 1.5% of the blood's hemoglobin (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 1978 and California Air Resources Board 1982).

State and federal CO standards have been set for both 1-hour and 8-hour averaging times. The State 1-hour CO standard is 20 ppm, while the federal 1-hour CO standard is 35

ppm. Both State and federal standards are 9 ppm for the 8-hour averaging period. State CO standards are phrased as values not to be exceeded. Federal CO standards are phrased as values not to be exceeded more than once per year.

CO is primarily a winter-period pollution problem. Motor vehicle emissions are the dominant source of CO in most areas. As a directly emitted pollutant, transport away from the emission source is accompanied by dispersion and reduced pollutant concentrations. Consequently, CO problems are usually localized, often the result of a combination of high traffic volumes and significant traffic congestion.

Outdoor CO levels are a fairly reliable indicator of potential indoor CO levels. CO is not chemically reactive and is poorly soluble in water. Thus, it is not adsorbed onto surfaces or otherwise altered as it enters open doorways, open windows, or building ventilation systems.

Data from previous studies suggest that CO problems occur primarily in the vicinity of major traffic arteries having significant amounts of commercial development. The presence of significant commercial development is an important contributing factor for two reasons. Parking lots for such developments represent a localized source of emissions that augments the CO emissions from vehicle traffic on adjacent roadways. Additionally, vehicles leaving major parking lots are likely to be in a cold start operating mode, resulting in higher CO emission rates than is typical for through traffic on major roadways.

Meteorological conditions are also a significant factor affecting the development of CO problems. High CO levels develop primarily during winter months when periods of light winds or calm conditions combine with the formation of ground-level temperature inversions (typically in the evening through early morning period). These conditions result in reduced dispersion of vehicle emissions, allowing CO problems to develop and persist during hours when traffic volumes are declining from peak levels. Motor vehicles also exhibit increased CO emission rates at low air temperatures.

North Coast Air Quality Facts, published by the AQMD in 1994 states that CO monitoring has not shown a violation of the State or federal CO standards. Consequently, Humboldt County is classified as a federal and State attainment area for CO.

Ozone

Ozone is a public health concern because ozone is a respiratory irritant that also increases susceptibility to respiratory infections. Ozone causes substantial damage to leaf tissues of crops and vegetation and damages many materials by acting as a chemical oxidizing agent.

The State 1-hour ozone standard is 0.09 parts per million (ppm), by volume not to be exceeded. The federal 1-hour ozone standard is 0.12 ppm, not to be exceeded more than three times in any 3-year period.

North Coast Air Quality Facts states that ozone monitoring has not shown a violation of the State or federal CO standards. Consequently, Humboldt County is classified as a federal and State attainment area for ozone.

Ozone, the main component of photochemical smog, is primarily a summer and fall pollution problem. Ozone is not emitted directly into the air, but is formed through a complex series of chemical reactions involving other compounds that are directly emitted. These directly emitted pollutants (also known as ozone precursors) include ROG and NOx. The time period required for ozone formation allows the reacting compounds to be spread over a large area, producing a regional pollution problem. Ozone problems are the cumulative result of regional development patterns, rather than the result of a few significant emission sources.

Air Pollution Control Agencies and Air Quality Management Plans

Many agencies are involved in air pollution control, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the California Air Resources Board (ARB), and air pollution control districts and air quality management districts (air districts). The responsibilities of these agencies have recently changed as a result of two new laws:

- the federal Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 and
- the California Clean Air Act of 1988.

EPA's traditional responsibilities in air quality management have included establishing national ambient air quality standards, requiring that air districts develop air quality plans to meet standards imposing sanctions when plans are not met, establishing mobile source controls, and developing guideline documents for controlling air emissions.

The original federal Clean Air Act mandated the establishment of ambient air quality standards and required areas that violate these standards to prepare and implement plans to achieve the standards by certain deadlines. The deadline for attaining both the ozone and CO standards was August 31, 1988. Areas that do not meet federal primary air quality standards are designated as non attainment areas. Areas that comply with federal air quality standards are designated attainment areas. Areas for which monitoring data are lacking are formally designated unclassified areas, but are generally treated as attainment areas. Attainment and non attainment areas are pollutant specific.

The federal Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 give the EPA additional authority to require states to reduce emissions of CO, PM₁₀, and ozone precursors in non attainment areas. The amendments set new attainment deadlines based on the severity of the problem.

ARB's responsibilities have traditionally included establishing State air quality standards, maintaining oversight authority in air quality planning, developing programs for reducing emissions from motor vehicles, developing air emission inventories, collecting air quality and meteorological data, and approving State implementation plans.

Responsibilities of air districts include overseeing stationary source emissions, approving permits, maintaining emissions inventories, maintaining air quality stations, overseeing agricultural burning permits, and reviewing air quality related sections of environmental documents required by CEQA.

The California Clean Air Act of 1988 substantially added to the authority and responsibilities of air districts. The California Clean Air Act designates air districts as lead air quality planning agencies, requires air districts to prepare air quality plans, and grants air districts authority to implement transportation control measures. The California Clean Air Act focuses on attainment of the State ambient air quality standards which, for certain pollutants and averaging periods, are more stringent than the comparable federal standards. The California Clean Air Act requires designation of attainment and non attainment areas with respect to State ambient air quality standards. The California Clean Air Act also requires that air districts prepare an air quality attainment plan if the district violates State air quality standards for CO, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, or ozone. No locally prepared attainment plans are required for areas that violate the State PM₁₀ standards.

The California Clean Air Act requires that the State air quality standards be met as expeditiously as practicable but, unlike the federal Clean Air Act, does not set precise attainment deadlines. Instead, the act established increasingly stringent requirements for areas that will require more time to achieve the standards. The least stringent requirements are set for areas that expect to achieve air quality standards by the end of 1994. The most stringent requirements are set for areas that cannot achieve the standards until after 1997.

The California Clean Air Act emphasizes the control of "indirect and area wide sources" of air pollutant emissions. The California Clean Air Act gives local air pollution control districts explicit authority to regulate indirect sources of air pollution and to establish transportation control measures (TCM's).

Air Quality Management in the Air Quality Management District

On May 11, 1995, the North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District (AQMD) board of directors adopted the 1995 Particulate Matter Attainment Plan. This plan, required by the California Clean Air Act of 1988, is designed to bring the District into compliance with the State PM₁₀ standards. The programs put forth by the plan include transportation control measures (eg. public transit), assisting with drafting and adopting air quality elements of general plans, and open burning measures (eg residential burning and wood stoves). There are not numerical standards to achieve PM₁₀ standards, nor is there an implementation schedule for the programs. It is beyond the scope of this project

to come up with numerical PM₁₀ standards or an implementation program schedule to achieve those standards.

Potential Impacts, Mitigations & Findings

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING SIGNIFICANCE

According to the State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15064[e] and Appendix G), a project will normally have a significant adverse impact if it would.

Violate any ambient air quality standard;

Contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation;

Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations;

Result in substantial air emissions or deterioration of air quality;

Create objectionable odors; or

Alter air movement, moisture, or temperature, or result in any change in climate, either locally or regionally.

Result in inconsistency with air quality plans designed to bring an area into attainment with the federal or State ambient standards.

IMPACT 5.10-A Increase in PM₁₀ Emissions.

PM₁₀ emissions consist of particulate exhaust, worn tire particles, and entrained road dust. Since the Housing Element encourages residential development, it will likely indirectly lead to more persons driving in the County, and hence more PM₁₀ emissions. However, the AQMD have found that in fact, average PM₁₀ emissions over the past two decades have been showing a steady decline despite the increase in vehicle trips taken by the County's residents (*North Coast Air Quality Facts*, North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District, 1994, p. 10). Thus, the project is not expected to indirectly result in a net increase in emissions.

Mitigation Measures

Existing policies programs, standards and other requirements shown in Attachment 1 of this EIR (Checklist Item V(a) - Air Quality Standards) further reduce the impacts of the project to levels of insignificance.

Finding

This impact is considered less than significant.

IMPACT 5.10-B No Exceedances of the Carbon Monoxide or Ozone Standards

Carbon Monoxide and Ozone levels in Humboldt County are presently below State and federal standards. The AQMD states that neither of these pollutants have ever approached the State and Federal standards, and that "it is unlikely that they will in the foreseeable future (*North Coast Air Quality Facts*, North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District, 1994, p. 11).

Mitigation Measures

Existing policies programs, standards and other requirements shown in Attachment 1 of this EIR (Checklist Item V(a) - Air Quality Standards) further reduce the impacts of the project to a level of insignificance.

Finding

As with PM₁₀ emissions, this impact is considered less than significant.

IMPACT 5. 10-C Consistency with the Air Quality Management District Particulate Matter (PM₁₀) Attainment Plan.

As described above, programs in the AQMD 1995 PM₁₀ attainment plan includes transportation control measures, a program to facilitate adoption of Air Quality Elements to local general plans, and measures to decrease emissions from open burning sources. The proposed Element as well as other local and State requirements directly and indirectly supports the programs of the attainment plan. Impacts of the proposed project on the attainment plan are considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

Existing policies, programs, standards and other requirements are consistent with the programs contained in the attainment plan. These requirements are specifically identified in Attachment 1 of this EIR (Checklist Item V(a) - Air Quality Standards).

Finding

Those existing policies, programs, and standards reduce this impact to a level of insignificance.

5.11 Noise**Setting**

The Framework Plan, community plans, and coastal plans contain a complete description of noise. The following discussion summarizes the information in these documents.

The generally used description of noise is the day-night average sound level (Ldn). The day-night average sound level is the average sound level over a 24-hour time period. Ldn is expressed in decibels (dB), which is the standard measure of sound pressure. Since the human ear can detect noise at some frequencies more easily than noise at other frequencies, filters used with sound level measuring equipment suppress frequency ranges that the ear cannot readily detect. Measurements of noise normally use the "A" filter, since it was designed to match the frequency sensitivity of the human ear. Hence, noise levels are normally expressed as "A-weighted" levels. All sound or noise levels in this element are A-weighted levels, abbreviated as dB or dBA. Also, all discussion of Ldn assumes that Ldn is measured in A-weighted decibels.

Because decibels are logarithmic units of measure, changes in decibels can be somewhat difficult to interpret. A change of three decibels, for example is hardly noticeable, while a change of five decibels is quite noticeable. An increase of ten decibels is dramatic and is perceived as a doubling of the noise level. An increase of ten decibels (from 50 dB to 60 dB) increases the percent of the population highly annoyed at the noise source by about seven percent, while an increase of 20 dB (from 50 dB to 70 dB) increases the percentage by approximately 25 %.

Traffic Noise

Traffic noise along roads is the primary source of noise in Humboldt County. Other major sources of noise include: (1) aircraft in the vicinity of airports; (2) railroad traffic along the Northwestern Pacific right-of-way; and (3) noise from stationary sources, such as the Louisiana Pacific pulp mill or construction sites.

Traffic Noise Sources

Based on historical development patterns, most of the development encouraged by the Housing Element will probably occur in McKinleyville and Eureka. Accordingly, recent noise studies of these two communities can be used to predict the major noise impacts of this project.

In the Eureka area, a noise study was conducted for the 1995 Eureka Community Plan. Although projections of noise levels were not shown, the EIR for that project found that implementation of the Plan, which encourages the construction of 5,500 residential units, would significantly increase traffic in the area. Moreover, the EIR found implementation of the plan would significantly and irreversibly increase noise levels, primarily because of the increase in traffic (*Eureka Community - Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report*, Humboldt County Planning Department, 1992, pp. 35, 76).

Projections of McKinleyville

The Administrative Draft of the Master Environmental Assessment for the McKinleyville Community Plan Update (Winzler & Kelley, 1993) projected the impacts of future development on the most noisy road segment in McKinleyville, Central Avenue. That study found that obtrusive noise levels would encroach between three and fifteen feet into property adjacent to the street. In one area north of Holly Drive, many land uses are

not acceptable within 50 feet from the edge of Central Avenue (as compared to existing conditions, which would not allow those same land uses within 35 feet from the edge of the street.)

Other Areas

The same factors rendering traffic impacts insignificant also render insignificant increased noise levels from traffic added by new development in areas outside McKinleyville and Eureka. Based on historical development patterns, approximately 25% of the 3,100 units projected by the Element to be constructed over the next five years will be built in rural areas. These 800 units could potentially be dispersed across more than a million acres of land served by many different arterials, collectors, major and minor roads. The impact of this low density development is deemed to be insignificant since it is not expected to increase noise levels appreciably on any particular road, but will rather add minor amounts of noise to a large number of roads.

The State Vehicle Code contains vehicle noise limits. Proper muffling can bring the exhaust system of most motorcycles, cars, and trucks into compliance with State noise limits. The State Vehicle Code also limits noise levels from sound amplification systems in automobiles. The California Highway Patrol and County Sheriffs are responsible for enforcement of the Vehicle Code.

Aircraft Noise

There are **seven** airports in Humboldt County. A master plan was prepared for the sites in 1993 to provide the County with guidelines **to** make decisions on the development of airport facilities and adjacent land uses. Noise measurements of the airports were made for the plan, and policies were established for future land use in the vicinity of the airport.

Noise from aircraft is often more intrusive and has a higher potential noise impact than noise from traffic along roadways. The visibility of aircraft at low altitudes and typically lower background noise levels at airports seems to create a heightened awareness of general aviation activity. The number of aircraft, the type of aircraft, the distance between the flight path/runway and the receiver, and the presence or absence of physical barriers between the flight path/runway and the receiver influence noise levels.

Railroad Noise

Two trains pass through portions of the County each day. The joints between the tracks were formerly bolted together, whereas they are now welded together. The new joints provide a smoother transition between sections of track, reducing the amount of noise generated by the wheels of trains as they pass over these joints. The noise of trains may be intrusive in residential sleeping areas.

Construction Noise

Noise from construction activities often creates a considerable number of noise-related complaints filed with the County Sheriff's Department. The Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has established standards which protect workers

from exposure to excessive levels of noise. OSHA requires that firms provide hearing protection to workers exposed to noise levels of more than 85 dBA. OSHA also prohibits exposure of workers to noise levels exceeding 120 dBA.

The Federal Highway Administration and the California Department of Transportation have similar policies for new roadway construction and roadway expansion. These policies contain noise abatement criteria for lands adjacent to highways and selected roads. These criteria are used to determine when noise abatement measures should be evaluated.

Code Requirements

The State Uniform Building Code requires certain sound insulation measures to be incorporated into the design and construction of all new residential construction other than detached single-family dwellings. The County Building Inspection Department is responsible for enforcing State Building Code requirements.

Humboldt County Code restricts the creation and continuation of loud, unnecessary, or unusual noise. This ordinance, enforced by the County Sheriff's Department, prohibits excessive noise levels from various sources including motor vehicles, amplification systems, and persons yelling.

Potential Impacts, Mitigation Measures, & Findings

CRITERIA USED TO DETERMINE SIGNIFICANCE

Future development in the County will cause noise levels which exceed acceptable levels.

IMPACT 5.11-A Development in the County may result in increased noise levels from an increased automobile traffic, railroads, aircraft, stationary noise sources, and construction noise.

Sources of noise will remain basically the same under the proposed project. Highways and streets will presumably continue as the major noise sources in the County.

The Northwest Pacific Railroad transitway may constitute an additional source of noise within the County. The most significant noise problem associated with trains derives from the engine and horn. Noise generated by the wheels of railroad cars passing over joints between sections of railroad ties and warning signals at grade crossings also contribute to noise levels along railroad lines.

Diesel-powered trains are the loudest. Moving at an average speed of 45 to 50 miles per hour, diesel-powered trains generate noise levels of 88-93 dBA at a distance of 50 feet, while diesel buses and light rail trains typically generate noise levels of 76 to 85 dBA at the same distance. Given the proximity of some residential uses, potentially significant "peak" noise problems may arise as vacant land in these residential areas is developed.

The master plan for County airports indicates that the number of aircraft in the County is expected to not increase appreciably between 1991 and 2011 (*Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan - Humboldt County Airports*, Hodges & Shuff, 1993, pp. 4-5, 4-11, 4-17, 4-23, 4-29, 4-37, 4-41). Policies in the Airport Land Use Plan restrict development in areas subject to noise impacts from airports.

Implementation of the Housing Element will indirectly lead to the development of housing, not normally considered a significant source of noise. Performance standards contained in the proposed measures supporting Cottage Industries will ensure that use does not generate unacceptable levels of noise.

Construction of new buildings can also generate excessive noise levels. Air compressors can achieve 85 dBA, saws can exceed 90 dBA, and trucks can create noise levels of 95 dBA. Noise problems from construction activity are especially acute in quiet areas and during quiet periods of the day, such as between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. Other factors which influence the degree of noise exposure include the topography of the site and its surroundings, the distance between the construction sites and the receiver, and the access route to the construction site.

Mitigation Measures

Numerous policies, programs, standards and other requirements will help reduce the impacts, but not to less than significant levels. Mitigation measures to reduce this impact to less than significant levels would include increasing required setbacks or sound attenuation devices such as sound walls. It exceeds the scope of the Element to recommend the implementation of such measures.

Finding

Studies of projected future noise levels in both the Eureka area and in McKinleyville found significant increases in noise levels from traffic. New development supported by this Element will probably also indirectly increase exposure of people to unacceptable levels of noise from trains, aircraft and construction. (There are not expected to be significant increases in stationary source noises.)

Numerous policies, programs, standards and other requirements will help reduce the impacts, but not to less than significant levels, rendering Impact 5.11-A significant and unavoidable.

6.0 PERSONS CONSULTED

In addition to those persons listed in Appendix F of the Housing Element (Agencies and Persons Consulted), the following persons were consulted for this EIR:

John Letzow, Officer, California Highway Patrol, Arcata
Roger Murphy, General Manager, Humboldt Bay Transit Authority
Linda Nellist, Director, Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services
Bob Torzynski, Air Quality Planner Specialist, North Coast Unified Air Quality
Management District

7.0 COMMENTS ON THE DEIR AND RESPONSES TO THOSE COMMENTS

This section of the Final EIR contains all the comments received on the Draft EIR, and responses to those comments as they pertain to the environmental analysis.

Comment #1. Letter from the Farm Bureau dated December 2, 1997.

Issue: Inconsistency of the Housing Element with the other components of the County's General Plan have not been reviewed, the public and public agencies have not been informed of how the conflicts will be resolved, and the environmental effects have not been assessed in the EIR.

Response: This issue was most recently discussed in a staff report to the Board of Supervisors dated December 17, 1997. In that report, it was clarified that to fix the potential inconsistencies, it was decided that changes must be made to the other portions of the County's General Plan that are in conflict with the new Housing Element policies. These changes, which are included in the final adoption package for the project; are summarized in the following table.

TABLE 1
General Plan Consistency Analysis

Housing Element Policies	General Plan Component	Plan Policy	Necessary Changes
3.4 (Mixed Uses)	Framework Plan, Northern Humboldt Plan, Southern Humboldt Plan, All Community Plans All Coastal Plans	Plan Designations	Add provisions for mixed residential and commercial uses to residential and commercial plan designations.
6.13, 8.6, 8.7, 9.14 (Nomadic Households)	Framework Plan, Northern Humboldt Plan, Southern Humboldt Plan, All Community Plans All Coastal Plans	Plan Designations	Add special occupancy parks to the list of compatible uses in some land use designations (those where the implementing zone designation allows them).
7.10 & 9.13 (Density Bonuses and Very Low Income Housing)	Framework Plan, Northern Humboldt Plan, Southern Humboldt Plan, All Community Plans All Coastal Plans Open Space Element	Plan Designations	Add language to the density range of residential land use designations to allow the maximum density to be exceeded pursuant to §65915 of the California Government Code.

At the time that staff report was written, it was believed the changes to the second unit ordinance also required making changes to the general plan. However, it has subsequently been determined that State law pertaining to second units (§65852.2 of the California Government Code) gives local jurisdictions the authority to find second units meet general plan densities and are consistent with the applicable plan designations in single family residential zones. Changes proposed as part of the project will allow the waiver of planned densities in the Agricultural General (AG) and Rural Residential Agricultural (RA) zone districts where the plan and zone allow parcels five acres in size or less. Since these AG and RA zones are considered single family residential zones, there is no need to modify the general plan pursuant to §65852.2 of State law.

Comment #2. Letter from the Marty McClelland dated October 16, 1997

Issue: A change in the second unit ordinance to allow them as a principally permitted use will be inconsistent with established densities, particularly on parcels whose sizes are less than twice the parcel size allowed by zoning

Response: The existing zoning ordinance already allows second units as principally permitted uses in numerous zone districts, including the Agricultural General zone district. Furthermore, §65852.2 of State law allows the County to find that second units are consistent with general plan density, and that the use is consistent with the zone designation.

Comment #3. Letter from the Lynn Ellen Skaggs dated April 10, 1997

Issue: A change in the second unit ordinance to encourage them in rural areas will contribute to increased fire hazards, sewage disposal problems, water supply problems, and a loss of community character, and impacts on wildlife.

Response: The proposed second unit ordinance continues to require that second units in rural areas meet density standards of the general plan, which took into account fire hazards, sewage disposal and water supply constraints and community character when they were established.

Comment #4. Letter from the Marty McClelland dated April 10, 1997

Issue: A change in the second unit ordinance to allow them to exceed planned densities in AG and RA zones will likely lead to significant impacts on water supply, sewage disposal, road access, and other public service impacts

Response: The proposed ordinance requires a discretionary permit for second units in AG and RA zoned areas. Through the required permit review process, the potential impacts of each specific project on water supply, sewage disposal, road access and other services will be assessed. If there are found to be significant impacts for a particular project in any one of these areas, the project may not be approved until the impacts are mitigated to less than significant levels, or until an EIR that fully assesses those impacts.

Comment #5. Letter from the George Waller dated July 18, 1996.

Issue: The policies of the Element should be included in the EIR.

Response: The proposed policies are now included in the EIR.

Issue: The policies of the Element should be studied separately from the implementation programs.

Response: A more comprehensive analysis of the project can be made if the effects of the implementation programs are assessed at the same time as the adoption of the policies

Issue: The discussion of alternatives was not detailed enough to adequately compare the alternatives. The implementing ordinances should have been written for the other alternatives as well..

Response: The discussion of alternatives gave the decision makers sufficient information to compare between the various alternatives. It included a description of each alternative, and compared the alternatives in terms of land use impacts, visual impacts, open space impacts, impacts on geology, biological impacts, hydrological and drainage impacts, cultural resource impacts, transportation impacts, air quality impacts, noise impacts. At no time during the review of the project were other possible alternatives proposed or debated that differed substantially from those considered in the EIR. This analysis meets the intent of the alternatives analysis requirement of CEQA.

Comment #6. Letter from Dennis Kalson dated May 31, 1996.

Issue: The policies of the Element relating to nomadic housing seem to encourage the County lower its housing standards for poor people, which will result in increased death, disease and infant mortality. These impacts should be addressed in the EIR..

Response: The proposed nomadic housing policies have been modified to comply with minimum State health and safety requirements for special occupancy parks. State health and safety standards were developed to prevent death, disease and infant mortality.

**ATTACHMENT 2 OF THE
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
FOR THE
1997 HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE**

**Goals, Policies, and Programs
In the 1997 Housing Element**

Attachment 2 shows the goals, policies and programs that have changed significantly between the 1992 and 1997 Housing Elements. Deleted text is shown in strikeout, and added text is shown with double underlines. There are two sections: 1) Goals and Policies, and 2) Implementation Programs.

Section 1. GOALS AND POLICIES

SUMMARY OF HOUSING NEEDS

The purpose of this section is to consolidate the broad range of specific housing needs into a brief, comprehensive statement.

- A. Humboldt County needs to perpetually assess the demographic composition of its citizenry to determine specific, ongoing housing needs, including evaluation of ~~Census 2000~~ future Census data to determine specific housing needs in the County.
- B. Humboldt County needs an ongoing, current housing stock inventory in order to anticipate availability for an expanding population, and to set priorities for meeting the more critical housing shortages.
- C. Humboldt County needs incentives to rehabilitate, weatherize and maintain existing housing stock.

- D. Humboldt County needs to identify regulatory and tax constraints that effectively discourage rehabilitation and maintenance, and act to mitigate them.
- E. Humboldt County needs a to complete and maintain a housing site inventory for the entire County. ~~excluding economic, resource and hazardous zones or any other zones that could preclude residential development including identification of emergency shelters and low income nomadic housing park sites.~~
- F. Humboldt County needs to do all within its power to facilitate the production of affordable housing, particularly for low and very low income residents.
- G. Humboldt County citizens and government together ~~need to continue to reduce the rift between the government and the citizenry and to~~ should be encouraged to devise mutually acceptable means to meld our efforts to address the problems common to us all.
- H. Humboldt County needs with all deliberate speed to carefully complete an up-to-date, internally consistent, responsive General Plan and Zoning Ordinance that address the current needs and problems of the County citizenry, and which set forth a compatible vision for the future.
- I. Humboldt County needs to incorporate quantitative and qualitative analyses of ~~Census 2000~~ future Census data into this document at the earliest possible date, in order to assess the types, quantities and locations of housing that are needed for various sizes of families in various income groups.
- J. Humboldt County needs to complete and maintain a comprehensive land use map.
- K. Humboldt County needs to complete and maintain a land use inventory for all residentially zoned areas.
- L. Humboldt County needs to provide for the development of affordable, managed low-income ~~nomadic housing parks and campgrounds~~ special occupancy parks throughout the County.
- M. Humboldt County needs to revise the Zoning Ordinance to ~~allow secondary units in all zones throughout the County that permit residential uses as long as the secondary units meet reasonable health and safety criteria. encourage~~ second units where there are adequate public services and where compatible with adjacent land uses, and allow them in resource lands where compatible with resource protection policies

- N. Humboldt County needs to provide for ~~smaller scale housing units on smaller scale lots to provide~~ more affordable new housing ownership opportunities for low and very low income households, including smaller scale housing units.
- O. Humboldt County needs to acknowledge and make adequate provision for the County's nomadic households in vehicular dwellings as they are a significant and complex socio-economic component of the county population that eludes census date.

GOALS AND POLICIES

OVERALL GOAL: TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE HOUSING AND A SATISFYING LIVING ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL SEGMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY.

GOAL: 1. TO PROMOTE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE DECISION- MAKING PROCESS REGARDING HOUSING IN HUMBOLDT COUNTY.

Policies

- 1.1 The Planning Department shall provide for the education of the public to motivate them to participate in the planning process.
- 1.2 The education of the public shall be provided prior to public hearings on the plan proposals in adequate time to insure informed participation.
- 1.3 The education of the public shall be provided through, but not limited to :
- Citizens Handbook
 - Print and electronic media
 - Public meetings
- 1.4. The County shall encourage the development and revision of Community Plans consistent with overall county policies in the Framework Plan (Volume I of the General Plan), which include the identification of adequate sites for homeless shelters.
- 1.5. The County shall insure that the variety of views within an area are taken into consideration, to the extent expressed.
- ~~1.6 Community preferences for urban and urbanizing areas, which otherwise are consistent with the overall County policies, shall be given preferential consideration in the process of project evaluation.~~

- ~~1.7~~1.6. The Planning Commission shall maintain clear, consistent and fair procedures for operation and relationships with the public, the Board of Supervisors, ad-hoc committees, and local, State and Federal agencies.
- ~~1.8~~1.7. Planning Commission procedures shall be prepared in a format and language that is clear and readily available to the public.
- ~~1.9~~1.8. The County shall encourage the formation of citizen organizations to provide input on specific matters in a format consistent with the adopted policies and procedures.
- ~~1.10~~1.9The Planning Department shall provide notification of meetings adequate to insure public participation consistent with the goals of this program.
- ~~1.11~~1.10The meetings of the Planning Commission, whenever practical, shall be held in the geographic areas under consideration, or where the meetings of the Commission concern countywide issues as addressed in the Framework Plan, such meetings shall be held in the regional centers most representative of the issues to be addressed.
- ~~1.12~~1.11Public hearings shall be organized to provide public opportunities to evaluate alternative proposals and participate in the choice of the preferred alternative.
- ~~1.13~~1.12The costs of review shall be minimized, consistent with the requirements of this section by the following:
- review on an exception or "consent calendar" approach;
 - focusing testimony and comments on specific issues being addressed.
- ~~1.14~~1.13The Commission should prepare and adopt rules of procedure to govern the conduct of hearings, solicitation and limitations on oral comments, and other business of the Commission.
- ~~1.15~~1.14The Planning Commission should be authorized to create subcommittees from their membership, and to create joint committees for the conduct of planning matters.
- ~~1.16~~1.15The Planning Commission shall encourage public participation in the land use decision-making process through the following:
- by encouraging ad-hoc citizen's advisory committees in every community in the incorporated area of the County;
 - by providing for citizen involvement at the initial stages of, and throughout, every planning process;

by formulating open, clear and consistent procedures for citizen involvement in the planning process;

by establishing the immediate housing needs of the communities, as expressed by members of the citizens' advisory committees, as a high planning priority;

by fostering County staff cooperation and responsiveness to public participation.

(See General Plan Volume I Section 1500 Planning and Coordination for the complete set of goals, policies and standards covering citizens' participation in the planning process.)

GOAL: 2. TO STRENGTHEN COORDINATION BETWEEN PUBLIC AGENCIES AND PRIVATE ENTITIES.

Policies

- 2.1 The County shall encourage private developers, builders and financial institutions to work with public agencies and non-profit agencies in formulating strategies to solve local housing problems.
- 2.2 The County shall develop and maintain a housing stock inventory.
- 2.3 The County shall foster greater responsiveness to public needs.
- 2.4 The County shall provide centralized public access to all relevant documents and information regarding housing activities.
- 2.5 The County shall promote standardization of housing and zoning terminology throughout government and the housing industry.
- 2.6 The County shall give the Planning and Building Department responsibility for formulating, implementing, and evaluating strategies to solve local housing problems.
- 2.7 The County shall encourage the California Department of Transportation to conduct a recreational/nomadic housing travel study of Humboldt County and the North Coast area.

GOAL: 3. TO PROVIDE FOR ADEQUATE SITES FOR ALL TYPES OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY.

Policies

- 3.1 The County shall develop and maintain a housing site inventory.
- 3.2 The County shall encourage and be receptive to new and experimental techniques to facilitate optimum utilization of available sites.
- 3.3 The County shall initiate appropriate plan and zone amendments which allow increased residential densities in areas where community health and safety will not be compromised.
- 3.4 The County shall facilitate compatible mixed residential and commercial uses.
- 3.5 The County shall designate sites for varying types of residential development in the Community Plans.
- 3.6 The County shall identify sites of available land for permanent affordable housing, and for alternate facilities such as homeless shelters and transitional housing.
- 3.7 The County shall develop a homeless shelter site inventory and make provisions for the expeditious development of homeless shelters to enable a timely response in a timely manner.
- ~~3.8 The County should adopt amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to include a definition of and development criteria for low-income nomadic housing sites and managed parks.~~
- 3.93.8 Adequate housing sites for the low-income nomadic population of the County should be identified throughout the County in proportion to the specific local needs as part of the ongoing development of the Land Use Element of the General Plan.
- ~~3.103.9~~The Planning Department should identify sufficient sites to accommodate the anticipated nomadic housing needs throughout the County in areas outside of the established community planning areas.
- ~~3.113.10~~The County shall ensure that comprehensive Community Plan updates include consideration of sites for managed lower income special occupancy parks.

~~3.12—In order to allow nomadic structures as a permitted use, the County should petition the State Department of Housing and Community Development for an amendment to or exemption from State laws prohibiting such use on parcels less than five acres in size. These amendments should provide for local flexibility to innovate variations tailored to meet local needs consistent with health and safety criteria.~~

GOAL: 4. TO CONSERVE EXISTING HOUSING THROUGH MAINTENANCE AND REHABILITATION.

- 4.1 Where consistent with State law, the Building Department shall encourage citizens to make partial repair of their dwellings without being required to rehabilitate beyond their economic means.
- 4.2 The County shall support tax programs which encourage citizens to maintain and repair their homes.
- 4.3 The County shall support the combination of private and public money to provide opportunities for financing not otherwise available to low and moderate income persons.
- 4.4 The County shall apply sensible and flexible housing standards to allow low-cost rehabilitation and repairs consistent with health and safety requirements.
- 4.5 The County shall develop housing replacement requirements for people displaced by rehabilitation, condemnation or condominium conversions.
- 4.6 The County shall endorse programs whereby students gain practical home construction, repair and weatherization techniques by repairing existing housing stock in the community.
- 4.7 The County shall encourage and support programs that preserve and/or restore the unique character of older residences and neighborhoods.
- 4.8 The County shall encourage relocation, rather than destruction, of sound older housing threatened by development.
- 4.9 Public funds for the rehabilitation of low-income rental housing shall ensure that these rehabilitated units remain part of the low-income housing stock.
- 4.10 The County may allow legal, non-conforming single family and multifamily structures to be retained in new residential subdivisions even where the retention of these structures means that the general plan density for the parcel is exceeded. However, the creation of any parcels without an existing dwelling must be consistent with planned densities. The County shall require the repair of building, plumbing, mechanical and electrical hazardous conditions that exist in such non-conforming structures to meet acceptable health and safety codes

GOAL: 5. TO UTILIZE TECHNIQUES AND PROGRAMS WHICH WILL REDUCE COSTS OF NEW RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION.

Policies

- 5.1 The County shall support the use of innovative construction and design methods that make more efficient use of land and building materials.
- 5.2 The County shall encourage the use of financial leveraging of public and private funding to construct owner-occupied and rental housing.
- 5.3 The County shall review and streamline the permit application process on an ongoing basis, in all departments involved, in order to shorten the time required to process all permits, and to provide adequate information to prospective builders and developers.
- 5.4 The County shall encourage the use of low-cost, energy efficient, low-consumptive housing designs, materials and construction methods that reduce costs.
- 5.5 The County shall form or contract with non-profit housing corporations to maintain and develop housing affordable to low and very low income persons.
- 5.6 The County shall encourage and support development by non-profit housing sponsors.
- 5.7 The County shall assist developers in using State and Federally-funded housing programs.
- 5.8 The County shall provide maximum opportunities for owner/builders to economize by doing what they can for themselves.
- 5.9 The County shall encourage the development of secondary units where there are adequate public services and where compatible with adjacent land uses, and allow them in resource lands where compatible with resource protection policies.

GOAL: 6. TO ENCOURAGE RESOURCE-CONSERVING SITE UTILIZATION AND DWELLING UNIT CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES.

Policies

- 6.1 The County shall discourage ~~further~~ encroachment ~~by non-resource oriented development of residential subdivisions~~ upon agricultural and other natural resource ~~production~~ lands. Subdivisions of resource lands shall be allowed only where the resulting uses will not adversely affect the resource use of the site.
- 6.2 The County shall encourage the ~~maximum use~~ preservation of natural ~~terrain features of terrain~~ and vegetation in new subdivisions ~~and smaller minimum lot sizes, where appropriate in residential zones by clustering development, providing common open areas, smaller, more appropriate roads, and other compatible land use innovations in~~ the development of new residential areas.
- 6.3 The County shall encourage the rehabilitation, rather than condemnation, of deteriorated housing.
- 6.4 The County shall encourage the use of alternative energy sources such as solar and wind power, with consideration for solar and wind rights in residential developments.
- 6.5 The County shall consider house solar orientation and energy effective landscaping during the review process.
- 6.6 The County shall support active experimentation with water- conserving waste disposal systems, energy systems, dwelling designs, and uses of recycled materials for building.
- 6.7 The County encourages future development based on energy efficient travel patterns and the location of existing services.
- 6.8 The County, recognizing the need of tenants for energy-efficient housing, shall encourage the weatherization of rental units.
- 6.9 The County shall rezone lands designated for residential development under the General Plan to optimum development potential as soon as public sewer and water services become available. Until funding for expansion of public sewer and water facilities in the underdeveloped areas designated for urban development and urban expansion are obtained, the County will maintain zoning densities that reflect State and local health policies for individual wells and/or sewage disposal systems.
- 6.10 The County shall provide for development of single mobilehomes and mobilehome parks in residential zones throughout the community in accordance with the requirements of Government Code Sections 65852.3 and 65852.7 and consistent with General Plan/Community Plan residential land use densities.

- 6.11 The County shall seek federal and State funding for improvements to and expansion of sewer and water lines and facilities for community planning areas and coastal communities.
- 6.12 The County shall encourage the development of secondary units ~~where site capability and infrastructure is under-utilized.~~

GOAL: 7. TO PROMOTE SIMPLIFICATION, FLEXIBILITY, AND DIVERSITY ~~AND IMAGINATIVE APPLICATION~~ OF HOUSING AND ZONING REGULATIONS TO ALLOW THE CONSTRUCTION OR MAINTENANCE OF VARYING TYPES OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS BY THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INTERESTS WHICH WILL PROVIDE FOR THE HOUSING NEEDS OF ALL SOCIO-ECONOMIC SECTORS IN THE COMMUNITY.

Policies

- 7.1 The County shall provide the library with a number of simplified and functional house plans approved by the County, that allow the construction of low and moderate cost housing.
- 7.2 The County shall encourage experimentation with new concepts in housing construction, designs, styles and ownership patterns.
- 7.3 The County shall mitigate regulatory problems and amend the housing codes to reflect acceptable alternative methods.
- 7.4 The County shall support alternative owner-built/ owner-occupied housing which does not infringe upon public health and safety.
- 7.5 The County shall promote helpful attitudes by regulatory agencies in order to encourage voluntary compliance with the regulatory process.
- 7.6 The County shall promote flexibility in parking requirements for housing developments, especially for seniors and in areas with public transportation.
- 7.7 The County shall provide the opportunity to consider the temporary placement and use of a second dwelling unit in excess of densities permitted in this General Plan in cases where specified findings can be made that there is legitimate hardship.
- 7.8 The County shall encourage the development of presently under-utilized residential parcels served by public sewer and water for optimum development potential under the zoning ordinance.
- 7.9 The County shall provide for development of secondary residential units in accordance with the requirements of Government Code Section 65852.2 as set forth in Humboldt County Ordinance 1633 adopted March 13, 1984.

- 7.10 The County shall provide for density bonuses for developments containing at least 25% of the units for low or moderate income households or at least 10% of the units for lower-income households as provided in Government Code Section 65915.
- 7.11 The County shall explore the feasibility of utilizing public or private campgrounds for use as temporary or transitional shelters during off-seasons.
- 7.12 The County shall develop and maintain an inventory of ~~available vacant sites~~ suitable sites for use as ~~campgrounds for the homeless~~ for managed low income special occupancy parks in every planning area of the County.
- 7.13 Permanent sites shall be designated as emergency shelter sites which are geographically distributed throughout the County. Support services for those in need of shelter shall also be decentralized to avoid burdening the County seat of Eureka with disproportionate numbers of homeless persons.
- 7.14 Information on renter's rights, self-help housing, rehabilitation of inadequate housing, and low interest loans shall be distributed by the County to all non-profits and other agencies acting as homeless prevention advocates.
- 7.15 The County shall coordinate between the various agencies and non-profit groups directly involved with serving the needs of the homeless population activities aimed at alleviating hardships endured by homeless persons.
- 7.16 The County shall revise the Zoning Ordinance to reduce permit requirements to the maximum extent feasible. Some examples include ~~the following measures: 1) Special Permits should be required instead of Use Permits, 2) the list of appropriate uses allowed by right shall be expanded, 3) side yard setback standards should be relaxed, and 4) parking standards should be less restrictive.~~ allowing some uses with a Special Permit rather than a Use Permit, and expanding the number of uses allowed by right where appropriate.
- 7.17 The County shall encourage the development of community and conservation land trusts that demonstrate valuable community interest.

GOAL: 8. TO ASSIST HOUSING CONSUMERS AND SPECIAL POPULATION GROUPS.

Policies

- 8.1 The County shall ~~actively pursue~~ support the elimination of housing discrimination.
- 8.2 The County shall actively assist the Humboldt County Housing Authority to develop and implement programs to assist minorities, families with children, very low, low and moderate income, elderly, handicapped, and homeless persons to secure housing.
- 8.3 The County shall promote housing and support services for elderly and handicapped persons which encourage an independent lifestyle.
- 8.4 The County shall investigate the need for an ordinance prohibiting age discrimination in housing.
- 8.5 The County shall ~~encourage~~ actively participate in the development of the local capacity to package federal and State loans and grants.
- 8.6 In an effort to provide for lower income populations, the County shall amend the Zoning Ordinance to provide adequate sites for ~~campgrounds and recreational vehicle use by low and very low income households and homeless persons~~ the development of special occupancy parks consistent with State law.
- 8.7 The County shall amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow for the full utilization of suitable sites of less than five (5) acres in size to provide for lower-income special occupancy parks consistent with State law.
- 8.8 The County shall develop and maintain a contingency plan to provide adequate emergency shelter to house refugees of catastrophic earthquakes, fire, flood, inclement weather or other crises.

GOAL: 9. TO PROVIDE FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

Policies

- 9.1 The County shall actively pursue all possible funds to maintain and create low-cost housing.
- 9.2 The County shall ~~encourage further~~ actively assist in the construction of Federal and State assisted housing in diverse areas of the County.

- 9.3 The County shall ~~provide~~ encourage new housing developments for very low, low and moderate income, senior citizen and handicapped ~~housing in new housing developments.~~ households.
- 9.4 The County shall support the preservation of existing, and encourage the construction of new low-cost rental units.
- 9.5 The County shall encourage self-help housing programs.
- 9.6 The County shall encourage new multiple-unit housing developments to build a certain percentage of their units for sale or rent at below-market rates for very low, low and moderate income families by providing a density, or other incentive bonus.
- 9.7 The County shall challenge, consistent with health and safety, State and Federal mandates which inhibit local ability to provide for affordable housing (e.g., increased building regulation standards).
- ~~9.8 The County shall 1) support a revision of Article 34 of the State Constitution to promote the development of affordable housing by requiring those opposing publicly funded multifamily housing development to pass a ballot measure to defeat the project, and 2) put an Article 34 referendum on the ballot upon request of a government agency or a citizens group willing to campaign for such a measure.~~
- ~~9.9~~9.8 The County recognizes and supports the rights of tenants to secure habitable housing.
- ~~9.10~~9.9The County shall ~~require~~ encourage the inclusion of residential units for low and moderate income families in new developments within the coastal zone, where feasible, pursuant to Government Code Section 66590.
- ~~9.11~~9.10The County shall ~~require~~ encourage the replacement of housing occupied by low and/or moderate income families when converted or demolished within the coastal zone, where feasible, pursuant to Government Code Section 66590.
- ~~9.12~~9.11The County shall actively lobby the State and Federal government to reinstate funding for self-help programs.
- ~~9.13~~9.12The County shall support all efforts to construct housing affordable to very low income persons.
- ~~9.14~~9.13The County shall ensure that comprehensive Community Plan updates include consideration of sites for managed lower income special occupancy parks.
- ~~9.15~~9.14The County shall encourage second units where there are adequate public services and where compatible with adjacent land uses, and allow them in resource lands where compatible with resource protection policies.

Section 2. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

TABLE 1

**SUMMARY OF HOUSING PROGRAMS
UNINCORPORATED AREAS, 1995 - 2002**

Program Name	Related Policies	Program Description
1. Planning for Housing	All	Provides guidelines for updating community plans.
2. Public Education	1.4, 1.5, 1.6	Specifies housing issues to be included in high school curriculum; committee to make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors by 7/1/99.
3. Non-profit Housing Corporation	2.1, 5.5, 5.6, 7.14, 7.15	Committee to make recommendations to the BOS on whether or not another non-profit housing corporation could help meet housing needs.
4. Article 34 Referendum	n/a	Encourages putting an Article 34 Referendum on the ballot.
5. Permit Process	5.3, 5.10, 7.7, 7.16, 9.15	Proposes adoption of various measures to speed up the permit review process.
6. Owner-Builder Regulations	5.8, 5.9, 7.4	Encourages retention of existing owner-builder regulations.
7. Building Appeals Process	n/a	Provides guidelines for the building permit appeals process.
8. Housing Condition Advisory Service	n/a	Provides guidelines for the Housing Condition Advisory Service.
9. On-Site Sanitation	7.2, 7.3, 7.5	Proposes study of the alternating leachfield system, encourages alternative on-site sewage disposal systems, committee to study wet weather testing criteria.
10. Zoning Ordinance Revisions	5.3, 5.10, 7.7, 7.16, 9.15	Proposes numerous changes to the zoning ordinance to encourage affordable housing.
11. Tax Constraints on Rehabilitation	4.2	Encourage legislation to remove tax burden for repairing or improving homes.
12. Condominium Conversion Ordinance	4.5	Proposes an ordinance to restrict the conversion of multifamily rental housing to ownership housing when there is a need for such an ordinance.

TABLE 1 (Continued)

SUMMARY OF HOUSING PROGRAMS
UNINCORPORATED AREAS, 1995 - 2002

Program Name	Related Policies	Program Description
13. Solar Rights Ordinance	6.3, 6.4	Encourages development of an ordinance to protect structures from being shaded.
14. Discrimination	8.1, 8.4	Retains existing non-discrimination measures.
15. Tenant/Landlord Relations	9.9	Proposes seeking direction on this issue from the Human Rights Commission.
16. Alternative Housing Design and Ownership Patterns	7.3, 7.4	Encourages planned unit developments and other alternative housing design and ownership.
17. Encourage Housing Finance Programs	n/a	Proposes exploring alternative housing financing methods, such as tax increment districts.
18. Community Development Block Grants	n/a	Provides guidelines for obtaining grant funding through the CDBG program.
19. Homelessness	3.6, 3.7, 7.13, 7.14, 7.15, 8.2	Proposes various programs to meet the housing needs of the homeless.
20. Affordable Housing Programs	3.6, 5.5, 9.7, 9.13	Encourages continued support of affordable housing programs.

IMPLEMENTATION 1: PLANNING FOR HOUSING IN HUMBOLDT COUNTY.

In order to establish and prepare for these specific needs the County shall take the following actions:

1. Establish and maintain a housing site inventory for all unincorporated community planning areas that identifies specific areas planned and zoned for residential use, particularly multifamily residential use.
2. Establish and maintain a housing stock inventory.
3. Collect necessary information and establish and maintain a housing needs inventory which anticipates the needs for 5 years ahead for both rehabilitation and new construction.
4. Provide sufficient sites through zoning to meet the County's identified housing needs in the revised Land Use Element of the General Plan.
5. During the community planning phase of the General Plan Revision Program, seek maximum opportunities to apply the Residential, Multiple Family designation (RM 7 to 30 dwelling units/acre) within urban core areas with ample public services (sewer, water, roads, and fire protection).
6. After the adoption of the last community plan, the Planning Department, in coordination with the cities, shall prepare a summary report on the amount of residential lands planned and zoned for multiple family dwellings within each of the communities and cities within the county.
7. Community Plans, in the course of formulation or revision should henceforth designate adequate sites to accommodate the proportionate nomadic housing site needs for each community.

8. The Planning Department shall present to the Board of Supervisors proposed amendments to this Element to include the housing needs for the years 1997 - 2002 projected by HCAOG when they become available.
9. Concurrent with the adoption of the Housing Element, the Planning Department shall present to the Board of Supervisors amendments to the Framework Plan (Volume I of the General Plan) to make the policies in the Framework Plan consistent with those in the Housing Element.

IMPLEMENTATION 2: ENCOURAGE BROADER PUBLIC EDUCATION ON HOUSING.

1. The Board of Supervisors hereby encourages the local Boards of Education to broaden curriculum objectives to include more emphasis on housing information such as home finance, repair, and tenant/landlord rights.
2. The Board of Supervisors should ensure that ample opportunities are afforded the Humboldt County Office of Education and local school districts to either co-sponsor or endorse the concept of broader public education on housing and to actively participate in the study phase of the program
3. The Board of Supervisors should then appoint a Housing Education Advisory Committee to investigate the means by which broader public education on housing may be achieved in Humboldt County. It is the County's objective to establish the Committee by January 1, 1999.

IMPLEMENTATION 3: NON-PROFIT HOUSING CORPORATION.

1. An ad-hoc technical advisory committee composed of public and private sector persons generally qualified or knowledgeable in the subject of finance, law, housing programs, corporate structure, etc. (including two members of RCAA) should be created to advise the Board of Supervisors what programs RCAA is presently not involved in, but are demonstrated needs that may best be addressed with a non-profit housing corporation. The objective of this Element is to establish such a committee by July 1, 1999, and to direct the committee to make their recommendations to the Board of Supervisors by January 1, 2000.
2. The County shall coordinate efforts to compete for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and other State and Federal funds to help meet the County's housing needs.
3. The County shall coordinate applications for (and administration of) housing-related State and Federal funding with RCAA, the Housing Authority and other housing providers to ensure consistency with the County's General Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION 4: ARTICLE 34 REFERENDUM

1. The County shall put an Article 34 Referendum on the ballot upon request of a government agency, or a citizens group willing to campaign for such a measure.

IMPLEMENTATION 5: SIMPLIFY AND SPEED UP THE PERMIT PROCESS

1. Contract with a consultant well-versed in systems analysis to complete a thorough analysis of the building permit and subdivision process.
2. Provide the staffing necessary to process building permits and subdivision applications in a timely fashion.

3. Adopt fees for service which support the cost of the permit and land use review processes.
4. County departments shall thoroughly review building and development codes and ordinances with an eye to eliminating requirements not necessary to the protection of public health, safety and welfare.
5. If there is no decisive action on a completed application within 30 days for construction of a project consisting of 4 or less units, the applicant's permit is automatically approved (a completed application is defined as in compliance with all affected County Agency requirements--i.e., septic tank clearance, lot split clearance, soils reports, encroachment permits, etc.)
6. Once a final building, sanitation or subdivision permit is issued, it cannot be retroactively denied, unless the permit was issued on the basis of false information of a substantial nature or significant information is obtained subsequent to the issuance of the permit.
7. The County should institute a comprehensive one-step pre inspection for all concerned departments involved in processing permits.
8. The County shall prepare a comprehensive development handbook which explains the permit and subdivision process.
9. During the subdivision or building permit process, an applicant may choose any one of the agencies that he or she feels creates the greatest obstacle to approval and receive a do-pass or a rejection from that agency before proceeding (this includes public hearings).
10. When requested by applicants, permitting agencies shall make appointments for on-site inspections. If agency representatives cannot keep appointments, they should make reasonable efforts to inform the person who made the appointment.
11. All ministerial permit denials shall include in writing specific statutes applicable. If possible, discretionary permit denials should include, in writing, specific statutes, regulations and policies applicable.
12. During building inspections, all noncompliance items must be listed and all subsequent inspections shall be limited to new work and verification of corrections of prior noted deficiencies.
13. A comprehensive land data system should be developed with on-line data terminals in each County department. Consideration should be given to developing a system whereby this information can be provided to each person purchasing property.
14. Refer any review of changes to the subdivision application process to the ad hoc committee for revision of the subdivision ordinance for their comments and suggestions.
15. The County shall annually review the permit process to identify measures to minimize time delays, to maximize administrative efficiency, and foster greater cooperation and understanding between the permitting agencies and the public.

16. The County shall annually implement measures according to the findings made above.

IMPLEMENTATION 6: OWNER BUILDER REGULATIONS

1. Regulatory changes that cumulatively enhance the ability of Humboldt County's citizens to build and repair their own homes for their own use in a manner suited to their needs and desires shall continue to be encouraged. (Board of Supervisors Resolution #79-122 adopted September 11, 1979).
2. Building permit requirements for owner-built housing should be minimized consistent with the reasonable protection of health and safety..
3. The County shall maintain ordinances which allow the Building Inspection Division to approve building permits for residences and accessory structures in rural areas that are constructed to meet standards less restrictive than the Uniform Building Code (UBC).
4. The County shall issue building permits for residences and accessory structures pursuant to the above ordinance.
5. If revisions to any of the Alternative Owner-Builder Ordinances are warranted, a formal Regulations Committee shall be officially constituted pursuant to the Board of Supervisors Policy on Committees and Commissions to perform ordinance review and revision tasks as outlined in an approved work program.

IMPLEMENTATION 7: REFORM BUILDING APPEALS PROCESS.

1. The appeals process shall be clearly noticed upon the building permit. (not a separate handout)
2. The Appeals Board shall be convened after normal working hours to ensure that the appellant and the voluntary members of the Appeals Board are not losing work days due to the appeal.
3. The Appeals Board shall meet on neutral ground, such as the County Courthouse.
4. The Appeals Board shall be able to exercise its finding authority to limit potential abatements of structures to clear cases of danger to health and safety.
5. Appeals Board shall meet within ten working days of filing. In the event the Appeals Board does not meet within the allotted time frame, it will be deemed that the appeal is granted by default.
6. At least two members of the Appeals Board shall be owner-builders.

IMPLEMENTATION 8: HOUSING CONDITION ADVISORY SERVICE.

1. The Building Inspection Division and the Health Department shall provide inspections of homes to determine whether the structure complies with minimum health and safety requirements.
2. The Building Division shall publicize the availability of a voluntary building condition inspection to be conducted for a fee commensurate with the service rendered.

3. The Health Department shall also publicize the availability of a comparable service.
4. Information on the availability of the inspection service should focus on communities containing a significant number of dwellings in need of repair.
5. The inspections service shall be strictly non-punitive, and shall be publicized as such.

IMPLEMENTATION 9: ON-SITE SANITATION

1. The County Health Department will initiate a study of the efficiency of alternating leachfield system designs when grant funding or other means of conducting a study are available. The Health Department shall actively pursue the necessary funding for this study.
2. Before January 1, 1999, the Health Department shall modify the Experimental Sewage Disposal Program (ESDP) to make it consistent with the Basin Plan and new plumbing code to facilitate participation by interested applicants.
3. The County shall use Appendix G of the 1994 Uniform Plumbing Code (“Greywater Systems for Single Family Dwellings”), or a more recently adopted version, as the guidelines for approving alternative greywater sewage disposal systems.

WET WEATHER TESTING CRITERIA

4. A committee should be formed which includes representatives from the Health Department, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF), the Regional Water Quality Control Board, engineers and contractors to make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on how to best change the soils testing criteria. This Committee should be formed before January 1, 2001, and shall provide ample opportunity for public input.
5. If the committee decides that changes are necessary, before January 1, 2002, the Health Department shall seek approval from the Regional Water Quality Control Board to modify its criteria for accepting wet weather soils tests to better link the testing period to actual soil conditions in different parts of the County. It is recommended by CACHE that unless a more accurate measurement can be found, the testing criteria should be based on rainfall data collected at CDF stations dispersed throughout the County.

IMPLEMENTATION 10: ZONING AND SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE REVISIONS.

1. **Density Bonuses.** Concurrent with the review of this Element, Planning Department staff shall present and make recommendations to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors on a draft zoning amendment to grant a 25% density bonus over the otherwise maximum allowable density for housing developments of 5 or more units which provide: 1) 20% of total units for lower income households, or 2) 10% of the total units for very- low income households, or 3) 50% of the total units for seniors. Where feasible, Housing Element policies and/or the zoning ordinance shall be amended to provide the incentives deemed necessary to encourage the provision of affordable units under the density bonus program.
2. **Encourage Housing Development Which Meets the County's Housing Needs.** Concurrent with the review of this Housing Element, Planning Department staff shall present and make recommendations to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors on draft zoning and subdivision ordinance amendments to do the following.

- a. Allow Cottage Industry as a principally permitted or Specially permitted use when certain criteria are met
- b. Allow Second Units on a hardship basis with a Special Permit rather than a Use Permit
- c. Encourage the development of Planned Unit Developments.
- d. Allow caretaker apartments in commercial areas as a principally permitted use when subordinate to and supportive of the existing commercial use.
- e. Conserve existing multifamily housing by allowing non-conforming multifamily structures to be rebuilt with a Special Permit, and to not count them or existing single family structures towards density in the review of subdivisions.
- f. Facilitate the development of adequate sites to meet the needs of the very low to moderate income nomadic population by:

Requesting the Humboldt Transportation Authority to direct/request CalTrans to conduct a recreational/nomadic housing travel study of Humboldt County and the NorthCoast region to assist in assessing the current and future needs for sites,

Revising the definition of trailer park to accommodate nomadic housing structures, and

Develop special occupancy park standards to minimize capital costs of new park development while protecting neighboring land uses from potential adverse impacts from the parks.

- g. Allow second units with Special Permits in some areas zoned Agricultural General where General Plan densities are exceeded.
 - h. Modify the Coastal Zoning Ordinance to exclude test water wells from coastal permit requirements when specific criteria are met.
3. Special consideration should be given to the following:
 - a. Requirements for orientation for solar heating, etc.;
 - b. Requirements for wind generation of electricity;
 - c. Aesthetic characteristics of the surrounding neighborhood;
 - d. Preservation of significant vegetation, i.e., large trees, native rhododendron or azaleas.
 4. The County should consult with former members of the Citizens Advisory Committee on the Housing Element (CACHE), other organizations and agencies concerned with housing in Humboldt County during the preparation of the revised zoning ordinance.
 5. During the preparation of the revised zoning ordinance the County shall provide for mobilehome parks as a permitted land use on all land planned and zoned for residential land use as designated by the applicable general plan by means of the use permit process as appropriate and consistent with general plan densities.

6. The County should develop replacement housing provisions for the coastal zone in accordance with the requirements of Government Code Section 65590. Until these provisions are formally adopted, the County will require low and moderate income and replacement housing on a case-by-case basis only when feasible on the same site.

IMPLEMENTATION 11 TAX CONSTRAINTS ON REHABILITATION AND/OR CONVERSIONS.

1. The County should study the provisions of A.B. 1488 regarding reassessment rules on rehabilitation or additions to existing dwellings which may tend to discourage or inhibit upgrading of the County's existing housing stock.
2. The County should study and pursue legislation that might remove any tax disincentive to maintenance or rehabilitation of the County's housing stock.
3. Any pending legislation related to property tax relief for residential rehabilitation efforts shall be analyzed by the County Assessor and reported to the Board of Supervisors. By June 30, 1999 the Planning Division shall draft a letter for signature by the Chairperson of the Board of Supervisors requesting the Assessor include in their analysis of pending legislation 1) reiteration of relevant County housing policy, and 2) an analysis of the potential impact of such legislation on rehabilitation efforts within the County.
4. It is recognized that such changes require legislation at the State level that would affect all 58 counties. Humboldt County cannot accommodate the foregoing independently.

IMPLEMENTATION 12: CONDOMINIUM CONVERSIONS ORDINANCE.

The County should, by ordinance when necessary, limit the amount and rate of rental conversions to condominium ownership. Such an ordinance should ensure that a minimum number of rental units proportional to the need be maintained.

IMPLEMENTATION 13: SOLAR RIGHTS ORDINANCE.

1. The County should establish a solar rights ordinance to protect structures built to use solar energy from being shaded.
2. The County should refer this matter to the Energy Advisory Committee for review and recommendation.

IMPLEMENTATION 14: DISCRIMINATION.

The County shall continue to distribute and post information on the enforcement program of the State Fair Employment and Housing Commission.

IMPLEMENTATION 15: TENANT/LANDLORD RELATIONS.

By July 1, 1999, the Planning Division shall draft a letter for signature by the Chairperson of the Board of Supervisors asking the Human Rights Commission to review this issue and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

IMPLEMENTATION 16: ALTERNATIVE HOUSING DESIGN AND OWNERSHIP PATTERNS.

The County should encourage the Planned Unit Development, Condominium, Limited Equity Cooperative, and Stock Cooperative housing as four methods to achieving more affordable housing.

IMPLEMENTATION 17: ENCOURAGE HOUSING FINANCE PROGRAMS.

The County should explore various financing methods, such as creating tax increment districts, establishing land trusts and leveraging private money with public money for housing construction and rehabilitation.

IMPLEMENTATION 18: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANTS (CDBG)

1. The County shall annually compete for CDBG funds as a means of developing local communities.
2. The County should also work with the California Department of Housing and Community Development to reduce the discrimination toward rural counties and cities inherent in the current CDBG programs.
3. The County should coordinate with cities to develop an integrated program to secure CDBG funding for homeless shelters and transitional housing.
4. The process for soliciting potential CDBG projects for the general allocation proposal process should begin in the spring with decisions on the following years projects to be made by September 1 of each year.
5. The County shall consider contracting with RCAA and other appropriate agencies to perform the task identified above.

IMPLEMENTATION 19: HOMELESSNESS

1. The County shall continue to retain a County Homeless Coordinator in the County Administrative Office. The Homeless Coordinator would be initially responsible for facilitating the implementation of the following short-term recommendations and eventually, long-term recommendations:

Short-Term

- a. Facilitate the cooperation between public and private agencies serving the homeless.
- b. To insure that information/referral and other services are created for the homeless, facilitate the cooperation of public and private entities and the acquisition of funding for the development, siting and staffing of 24 hour shelter, support and self help centers in Eureka, Garberville, and Arcata/McKinleyville. These centers would provide volunteer and peer support; scheduled professional services: e.g. information and referral, mental and public health services, social services, career development and job services, and access to showers, locker space, child care, mail receipt, tools, etc.
- c. Develop a community educational program and a consensual process to assist in enlisting the cooperation of the general public and especially neighbors of the centers, in creating programs that will assist the homeless.
- d. Develop an eviction prevention and intervention program which would identify and assist low income people in danger of losing their homes. Work with community agencies serving this population and with the Real Estate Board and providing institutions to make a viable program

- possible. Other responsible agencies include Mental Health, the Human Rights Commission, and RCAA.
- e. Continue to have a representative and alternate from Southern Humboldt on the Task Force to lead in exploring the particular needs of the rural homeless and in reporting back to the Board of Supervisors with recommendations.
 - f. Extend the mandate of the Humboldt County Homeless Task Force in order to provide information and contribute their diverse access to resources to the implementation of both the short-term and long-term recommendations.
 - g. Locate and staff with full eligibility workers satellite Social Service centers with posted hours and days of operations in Southern Humboldt and the North East portion of the County. In this way, the requirement of centralized services will be reduced, thus reducing the influx of the homeless to Eureka, while preserving the needs of rural areas of Humboldt County. There will be numerous local and State agencies involved with this measure.
 - h. Locate transitional facilities for specific sub-groups of the homeless that are small, and scattered into communities where people feel at home, combined with case management or other social service supervision would help alleviate the need for mass emergency or transitional shelter space. Numerous other agencies will likewise take part implementing this measure.
 - i. Apply for and administer planning and technical assistance grants to study the most effective way to provide the transitional housing and support system. Possible options are vouchers, campgrounds, women's supported housing developments, non-profit and tenant owned mobilehome parks, non-profit motel with support services, therapeutic care communities, residential/work programs, sweat equity development projects, and limited equity cooperatives.
 - j. Identify zoning and General Plan amendments necessary to allow these transitional housing and service programs to be developed, and direct Planning Department staff to implement such changes.
 - k. Identify sites appropriate for housing homeless persons
 - m. Support existing programs for the homeless, and ensure that shelter services are provided in northern and southern Humboldt for winters.
 - n. Develop the capacity to provide, locate, manage, and fund campgrounds/safe zones in Humboldt County.
 - o. Help educate the community regarding who the homeless are and how we can best assist them through the use of the media, a County Newsletter and by targeting various communities for special outreach.

Long-Term

- p. Facilitate the securing of funding for the development, siting and staffing of secure transitional housing facilities appropriate to different populations of the homeless for overnight stays and where services of longer duration may be provided.
- q. Promote job training for the homeless, including remedial education, where needed. Coordinate with the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) Program. Work with community programs versed in ways of enhancing one's sense of self, and other rehabilitation programs to minimize the need for sanctioning of GR, AFDC, and Food Stamp recipients and maximize chances of breaking the cycle of poverty. Other responsible agencies include Mental Health, the Department of Social Services, the Employment Development Department and RCAA.
- r. Develop a family recovery program that addresses the nexus of issues of domestic violence, alcohol and there drug abuse, sexual molestation and homelessness so as to help them develop life-sustaining skills. Include a healthy parenting program that would subsequently bring the family back together so as to maximize the possibility of keeping families intact.
- s. Support and coordinate the development of affordable housing for low income citizens, including multifamily, single family, and single room occupancy (SRO) units. Promote legislation on the local, State and Federal levels to aid in the funding of these developments. There will be various other responsible agencies involved with this measure.
- t. Promote legislation aimed at securing State funding for the General Relief Program and at equalizing payment levels of General Relief throughout the State.
- u. Support and encourage the development of transitional housing
- v. Encourage the establishment of a family recovery program.
- w. Encourage the creation of an eviction prevention program and a revolving loan fund.
- x. Encourage the development of job training/employment development programs.

IMPLEMENTATION 20: AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMS

- 1) The next comprehensive Housing Element Update should include a housing affordability survey to supplement the affordability data provided by the Census.
- 2) The County shall continue to implement the following programs to meet the housing needs of Humboldt County residents.

Building permits The objective of the County is to facilitate the construction of 3,030 additional single family units and 84 multifamily units by 2002.

Alternative Owner Builder (AOB) program. The objective of the County is to facilitate the construction of 260 units under this program in the next seven years.

Mortgage Credit Certificates. The objective of the County is to secure funding of an additional 54 Certificates in the next seven years.

Second Units. The objective of the County is to facilitate the construction of 190 additional second units between 1995 and 2002.

Farmers Home Administration (FmHA). Assuming the historic level of activity continues, there will be 259 multifamily units constructed, and 236 mortgages for single family residences funded through this program between 1995 and 2002.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Housing Preservation Grant (HPG), California Housing Repair Program (CHRP) and Self Help Housing Programs. The County's objective is to assist the rehabilitation of an additional 55 units through the CDBG program, and 95 units through the HPG program (funding for the CHRP and Self Help Housing programs may not be available in the future).

Section 8 Rental Assistance and Voucher Programs. If funding continues at previous levels, there will be an additional 110 units funded through the Section 8 programs in the next seven years (between 1995 and 2002).

Weatherization. The best estimate is that PG&E will weatherize 1,600 units between 1995 and 2002. As before, half of these units will be affordable to low income households, and the remainder will be affordable to very low income households.