

Chapter 4. Managing Growth

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter presents planning concepts to address what have been key issues during the public outreach and plan development process: population growth and land supply, urban and rural boundaries, infrastructure and available land inventory. The topics and policies presented here are key components of the land use element, and should be reviewed and updated during housing element revisions.

4.2 Background

County Population Trends

According to the 2000 Census, the total population in Humboldt County was 126,518. The population as of 1/1/2007 is estimated at 131,959, an increase of almost 6,000 persons over the 7 year timeframe. The distribution of people within the County is illustrated graphically in Figure 1-1.

Humboldt County's population growth rate increased in the late 1980s and early 1990s and has since returned to a level more consistent with historic growth rates over the past 20 years. Between 1985 and 1990, the County grew by about 8,000 people (7.3 percent), with an average annual increase of 1.4 percent (see Table 1-1). The current annual growth rate is about 0.7 percent. California DOF projections indicate an anticipated total compounded growth of 11.6 percent over the next 20 years (to 2025), which is lower than the growth experienced in the past 20 years (16.6 percent). These trends indicate that the population has a net increase of between 600-1200 people per year, a combination of births and net in-migration. The trends also indicate an aging population, where older persons represent an increasing percentage of the populace. This trend has implications for the type and location of housing that is needed, proximity to health care and other services, and urban design issues.

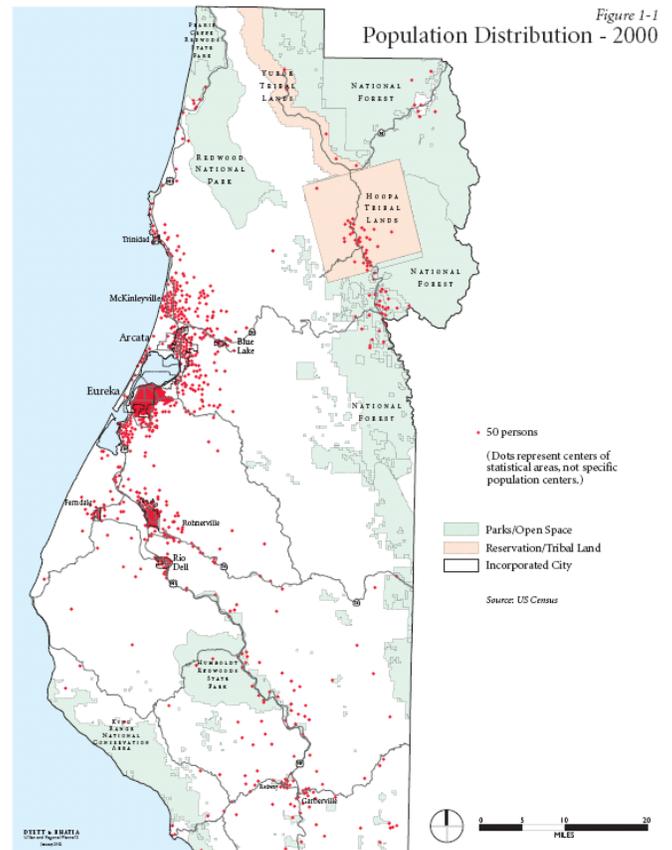


Table ____: Historic and Projected Population Growth in Humboldt County, 1980-2030

<i>Year</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Average Annual Increase</i>	<i>Percent Change</i>
1980	108,500		
1985			
1990	119,100	0.98%	9.77%
1995			
2000	126,500	0.62%	6.21%
2005			
2010	134,785	0.65%	6.55%
2015			
2020	142,167	0.55%	5.48%
2025			
2030	147,217	0.36%	3.55%

The primary growth areas of the County have been the community of McKinleyville and the cities of Arcata and Fortuna, which accounted for 32.3 percent of the population in 2000, up from 29.3 percent in 1990 (see Table 1-2). By comparison, according to the U.S. Census and DOF, Eureka’s population dropped slightly in the 1990s, with growth occurring in the surrounding communities of Cutten, Bayview, and Humboldt Hill. The total **unincorporated** population of the county grew 18.6 percent between 1980 and 2000, rising from 56,688 to 67,242 people, averaging 0.9% per year.

Table 1-2: High- and Low-Growth Regions of Humboldt County, 1990-2000

	<i>McKinleyville</i>	<i>Arcata</i>	<i>Fortuna</i>	<i>Eureka</i>	<i>Garberville Area*</i>
2000 Population	13,599	16,651	10,497	26,128	4025
Percent Change 1990-2000	26.0%	9.6%	19.4%	3.4%	-4.5%
County Share 1990	9.1%	12.8%	7.4%	21.9%	3.5%
County Share 2000	10.8%	13.2%	8.3%	21.4%	3.2%
Change in County Share	1.7%	0.4%	0.9%	-0.5%	-0.3%

* Sum of Census block groups 060230113004, -005, -006, and -007.

Source: US Census 1990-2000

These numbers indicate that about 19,000 more people will live in Humboldt County in 2030 than in 2000, requiring about 8,000 additional housing units countywide (assuming the existing average household size of 2.38 persons remains constant). The County unincorporated share of this total housing need is expected to be 54%, or about 4,320 units. This Plan includes a policy recommendation to review these trends every 5 years and provide adjustments as may be necessary.

4.2.2 Community Planning Areas

Community planning areas have been designated in various areas of the County to allow for more precise mapping and application of plan policies. These areas include most of the County's population and urbanized areas. As such, they will continue to be the focus of development activity and planning efforts. Defining these areas also allows for more direct citizen involvement in the planning of their communities, as well as increased opportunities for coordinated infrastructure planning.

4.2.3 Urban Study Areas

As part of the planning process for developing this plan, urban study areas were identified to review and assess service capacities and expansion opportunities. The study areas were intended to be inclusive of areas where services may be feasible to provide, rather than to suggest all lands within these areas should be committed to development. Within the Urban Study Areas, 3 sub-areas were defined:

Urban Service Study Areas are areas where sewer and water exist or may be feasible to provide, and urban planned densities greater than one unit per acre are appropriate to consider.

Water Study Areas are those areas where water service exists or may be feasible to provide, and planned densities less than one unit per acre are appropriate to consider. Sewer service to these areas is not anticipated within the time frame of the plan or is unlikely at any time because of existing buildout patterns and or terrain.

Potential Water Study Areas are those areas where water service or the authority to provide it does not exist but may be desirable to consider for planned water service.

Once assessed, these **study areas** will become either **urban service areas**, **urban expansion areas**, or **water service areas**, for use in the community planning areas for guiding land use densities and service needs.

Urban Service Areas are areas that can feasibly provided with public sewer and water services and are generally appropriate to be developed to a density of one or more dwelling units per acre.

Urban Reserve Areas are areas which may be defined, because of their importance for logical buildout, as areas that should only be developed when urban services are available, and may require annexation to the adjacent city, where called for in the relevant city general plan or where the adjacent city is the logical service provider.

12.2.4 Development Timing

In order to assure, insofar as possible, the orderly development of the urbanizing areas of Humboldt County, it is necessary to devise a means of studying and planning for the physical growth of these areas.

The development timing measures in the General Plan indicate where, how and under what conditions urban development should take place. These measures involve a unique partnership between the County, Local Agency Formation Commission, the cities, special districts, and community members. Some issues to be addressed by this partnership include:

1. Timing growth to be consistent with public service capacity.
2. Arranging urban land uses to the benefit of the community, while giving due consideration to individual property rights.
3. Estimating the amount of development that can be absorbed and its relationship to the environment.

These and other related issues are addressed in those regions of the County that are located within community planning areas. As stated in the previous section, planning areas contain the most densely populated communities in the County. Thus, the use of a community planning approach will allow for expanded public participation in determining the timing, intensity, and location of future development.

The development timing system will be applied to the community planning areas in a flexible and dynamic manner, responsive to community needs. Basically, this system sets the framework with which to designate regions for urban development and expansion (those regions are referred to in the General Plan as urban development and expansion areas).

An urban development area contains land developed to a density of one or more dwelling units per acre. This area is typically serviceable with public water and wastewater, and constitutes an identifiable urban community, substantially more developed than surrounding lands. Urban density requirements and land use designations apply to the urban development area. The basic premise behind the establishment of such an area is to promote physical development in a region that can be most effectively and economically provided with necessary public services.

Closely related to the urban development area is the urban expansion area. The urban expansion area can be viewed as a phased extension of urban development. The concept is to hold land within the expansion area in reserve at rural densities until necessary facilities and services are provided that can support urban level development.

A fundamental objective of establishing areas for urban development and expansion is to direct community development to locations dictated by the free market and best equipped to handle growth. Urban growth can be handled, for example, in regions provided with adequate public water and sewer facilities, roads and streets, or electricity, etc. The purpose of utilizing the development timing policies of the General

Plan is to time development and public services in a manner that will be most effective, and economical for Humboldt County.

4.3 Goals and Policies (preferred Plan Alternative B)

4.3.1 GOAL

To accommodate expected population growth and the resulting urban development, ~~while achieving maximum efficiency in the provision of orderly and economic services with the least adverse effect on the environment.~~ promote the development and efficient use of urban services, while maintaining and enhancing the qualities of our urban communities.

4.3.2 POLICY

Urban Development

1. An urban development area shall be identified and mapped for all applicable communities within adopted community plans in the County. ~~Boundaries to these areas shall also be established and should follow geographic land features.~~
2. Lands located within the urban development area should be suitable for development at a density greater than one dwelling unit per acre, where public water and sewer services with necessary capacity can be ~~are~~ provided. ~~Lands connected to public water systems shall also be considered a part of the urban development area.~~
3. The utilization of on-site sewage disposal systems shall not be acceptable in the urban development area, unless it can be determined that:
 - A. Public sewer services are not available to serve the proposed development; and
 - B. Mitigation measures will assure that the proposed development density will not cause adverse cumulative health or environmental impacts.
4. Utilization of public water services should be encouraged in the urban development area.
5. ~~The urban development area shall be considered urban for development purposes and subject to urban development policies of the appropriate community plan.~~

Urban Expansion

6. An urban expansion area shall be identified and mapped for all applicable communities within adopted community plans in the County. Boundaries to

these areas shall also be established and should follow geographic land features and other definitive limits, (i.e., roads, streams).

7. The urban expansion area consists of land not provided with public water or sewer services, but expected to be developed to urban densities and provided with public water ~~or~~ and sewer services in the near future.
8. ~~The urban expansion area shall be compatible with applicable sphere's of influence, when adjacent to a city or special district.~~
9. When land within the urban expansion area is connected to a public water or sewer system such land will be removed from said area and added to the urban development area, upon Planning Commission approval. Noncontiguous additions to the urban development area shall be discouraged.
10. The outer boundary to the urban expansion area shall remain fixed until modified through a General Plan amendment.
11. ~~The area within and beyond the urban expansion area shall be considered rural for development purposes.~~

Countywide Planning/Intergovernmental Coordination

12. ~~Establishment of urban development and expansion areas shall not be a commitment by the County of Humboldt to approve land divisions or other development proposals at urban densities. Rather, it establishes the maximum extension of such development.~~
13. Lands not suited for resource production should be developed prior to the conversion of resource production lands.
14. Factors such as public water and sewer availability, road and street capacity, police and fire protection, proximity to educational and health facilities, and solid waste management should be assessed in urban development proposals. Fiscal impacts of new development on public facilities should also be assessed.
15. The County shall review public works projects for conformity with the adopted General Plan or part thereof.
16. The County shall encourage the preparation of Capital Improvement Programs.
17. The Planning Department shall record and review information related to the adequacy of the development timing policies of the General Plan.

2634 STANDARDS

1. ~~Development: (The various types of development are defined in the glossary)~~
2. "Urban development area" means land generally developed to a density of one or more dwelling units per acre. This area is typically provided with public water and/or sewer services. The urban development area constitutes an identifiable

- community that is substantially more developed than surrounding lands, and has an adequate supply of land as determined in the community plan areas.
3. "Urban development boundary" means the limit to the urban development area and includes all parcels within 300 feet of the shortest route of existing public water and/or sewer system lines with capacity to serve such parcels.
 4. "Urban expansion area" means land outside the urban development boundary that is expected to receive public water and/or sewer services when further development in the urban development area is not feasible. The urban expansion area contains an adequate supply of land as determined in the community plan.
 5. To determine whether it is feasible to extend urban level development into the urban expansion area, the following criteria shall be used.
 - A. The Planning Commission finds that the amount of land available within the urban development area for urban uses is insufficient to maintain an open and competitive development market; and,
 - B. Public service systems have current capacity to serve the proposed addition, if other systems are not available.
 6. Removing lands from the urban expansion area and adding them to the urban development area consists of modifying the urban development boundary to include the new addition. The addition should be adjacent to the existing urban development area and must assist in the completion of an orderly and contiguous extension of urban development.
 7. The urban expansion boundary is a fixed boundary, which contains an adequate supply of land available for urban development as determined in the community plan.
 8. The County shall encourage each special district, school district, and each agency created by a joint powers agreement to prepare a five-year Capital Improvement Program, pursuant to Government Code Section 65403.

NOTE: The section below will fall out of the 'final' version of the General Plan when it is adopted. It is provided here to assist the review process.

3.4 Staff Analysis and Alternatives

Staff Recommendations

The policies of this chapter are largely based on the 1984 Framework Plan. Some updates to the text and standards have been made, as well as incorporation of coastal policies to be applied within the coastal zone. The key differences are to identify the Urban Development and Expansion Areas as areas where sewer exists or is contemplated. (The current Framework Plan identifies these areas as either water or sewer served areas.) The additional designation of Water Service Areas addresses areas where public water service can be provided, but where sewer is not anticipated.

This section also includes a discussion of population projection and housing needs. These will be reviewed in more detail at the Planning Commission hearing. The latest population projections from the State are higher than the previous estimates.

Alternatives

The body text of the chapter represents Alternative B, the proposed project. Alternative D, the existing Framework General Plan, follows as an attachment for comparison purposes. Other text Alternatives have not been developed as of this date. The primary difference in Alternatives for this section will be reflected on the land use maps, rather than the text policy.

**HUMBOLDT COUNTY
GENERAL PLAN**

Framework General Plan excerpt:

2630 DEVELOPMENT TIMING

2631 Background

In order to assure, insofar as possible, the orderly and harmonious development of the urbanizing areas of Humboldt County, it is necessary to devise a means of studying and planning for the physical growth of these areas. In the past, development in the unincorporated part of the County had been initiated by individual efforts of each of the specific growth areas. As a result, the full potential of advanced planning was not realized, and reactionary courses of action were taken.

The development timing measures in the General Plan indicate where, how and under what conditions urban development should take place. These measures involve a unique partnership between the County, Local Agency Formation Commission, the cities, special districts, and community members. Some issues to be addressed by this partnership include:

1. Timing growth to be consistent with public service capacity.
2. Arranging urban land uses to the benefit of the community, while giving due consideration to individual property rights.
3. Estimating the amount of development that can be absorbed and its relationship to the environment.

These issues and others that may be identified will be addressed in those regions of the County that are located within community planning areas. As stated in the previous section, planning areas contain the most densely populated communities in the County. Thus, the use of a community planning approach will allow for expanded public participation in determining the timing, intensity, and location of future development.

The development timing system will be applied to the community planning areas in a flexible and dynamic manner, responsive to community needs. Basically, this system sets the framework with which to designate regions for urban development and expansion (those regions are referred to in the General Plan as urban development and expansion areas).

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HUMBOLDT COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

Humboldt County. Specific land use policies will be formulated after an extensive program of citizen participation.

2632 GOAL

To accommodate expected population growth and the resulting urban development, while achieving maximum efficiency in the provision of orderly and economic services with the least adverse effect on the environment.

2633 POLICY

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