



AGENDA ITEM NO.

COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: December 9, 2008

Date: November 20, 2008
To: Board of Supervisors
From: Kirk Girard, Community Development Services Director
Subject: General Plan Update - Status Report

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Receive the General Plan Update Status report.
2. Provide direction to staff on the proposed work plan and schedule as necessary.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Community Development Services – Planning Division (#277), grant revenues, and user fees.

DISCUSSION:

This status report on the General Plan Update is being prepared in response to the direction your Board provided to staff during your last General Plan Update discussion held on April 15, 2008. The purpose of the status report is to allow your Board to review the progress made to date and review the work plan and anticipated schedule for the completion of the Plan and implementing ordinances.

Prepared by _____
Kirk Girard, Director

CAO Approval _____

REVIEW:

Auditor _____ County Counsel _____ Personnel _____ Risk Manager _____ Other _____

TYPE OF ITEM:

- ____ Consent
 Departmental
____ Public Hearing
____ Other _____

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

Upon motion of Supervisor
Seconded by Supervisor
And unanimously carried by those members present,
The Board hereby adopts the recommended action
contained in this report.

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No. A - E3 - G1- E-1

Meeting of: 09/20/05 - 02/07/06 - 12/05/06 - 04/15/08

Dated: _____
Kathy Hayes, Clerk of the Board

By: _____

Phase IV - Draft Preliminary Plan

In October 2000, your Board reviewed and approved the proposed work plan for the General Plan Update. The work plan included six phases:

- I. Critical Choices – determine the most important issues for the Plan Update
- II. Technical Background Reports – research and publish information important for decision-making
- III. Selection of Preferred Alternative – choose an alternative for the hearing draft of the Plan and EIR
- IV. Draft Preliminary Plan – prepare a hearing draft of the Plan and EIR including a range of alternatives
- V. Public Review and Adoption of Final Plan – receive input and adopt the Final Plan and EIR
- VI. Preparation of Implementing Ordinances – prepare ordinance revisions necessary to implement the Plan

The last comprehensive status report on the General Plan Update was provided to your Board on December 5, 2006. At that meeting your Board approved the work plan for drafting the preliminary Plan and EIR which was Phase IV of the General Plan Update. As you know the Planning Commission Hearing Draft of the General Plan was released on November 20, 2008, and provided to your Board and Planning Commission members.

The work completed by staff in Phase IV included:

- Secured funding and prepared a Water Resources Element and Technical Report
- Secured funding and prepared a Infrastructure and Public Services Element and Technical Report
- Drafted preliminary chapters of the General Plan Update
- Conducted Planning Commission hearings on preliminary chapters (February 2007 through March 2008)
- Edited preliminary chapters in response to public comments
- Prepared General Plan Update Maps for a range of Sketch Plan Alternatives
- Conducted public workshops on Housing Element affordable housing policies and programs
- Conducted community workshops on proposed Plan Map Alternatives
- Prepared base-line greenhouse gas emissions evaluation
- Prepared county-wide traffic study (in progress)
- Prepared draft EIR (in progress)
- Prepared Housing Element
- Prepared consolidated Planning Commission Hearing Draft

With the exception of the draft EIR, which is awaiting completion of the county-wide traffic study, all of Phase IV work is complete, meaning the General Plan Update has now entered Phase V - Public Review and Adoption of the Final Plan.

At your April 15, 2006 Board meeting, your Board directed staff to consolidate Phase V - Public Review and Adoption of the Final Plan with Phase VI – Preparation of Implementing Ordinances. Staff has made it possible to achieve this consolidation while the Final Plan is under Planning Commission review.

Implementing ordinances have been identified within the Hearing Draft of the General Plan as specific Implementation Measures of Plan policies. During Plan review, the Planning Commission will consider and make recommendations to your Board to prepare implementing ordinances consistent with preliminary policy choices by the Planning Commission. As the Planning Commission makes their

recommendations, staff will present the recommendations to your Board to give your Board the choice to prepare all or a portion of the implementing ordinances before final adoption of the Plan. For budgetary or scheduling reasons, the Planning Commission may recommend, or your Board may decide, to prepare some implementing ordinances after the Final Plan is adopted.

Phase V - Public Review and Adoption of the Final Plan and Implementing Ordinances

Release of the Planning Commission Hearing Draft

Phase V officially began with the release of the Planning Commission Hearing draft of the General Plan Update on November 20, 2008. The Plan was made available to the public on the GPU website at www.planupdate.org and is available for viewing at the Humboldt County Library (all branches), Kinko's and the Community Development Services Department front counter.

The Hearing Draft is a substantial revision to the previous preliminary hearing draft discussed before the Planning Commission in 2007 and early 2008. Major changes were made to respond to comments and create a more cohesive, concise and easier to read Plan.

Review guides will be provided to help navigate through these changes and support public input and Planning Commission and Board of Supervisor decision-making in Phase V. The review guides will:

- Explain how the Draft Plan was changed from the preliminary Planning Commission hearing draft, including response to public comments;
- Explain how the Draft Plan varies from the Framework Plan;
- Explain what the major issues are and how to use the review guides; and
- List the Goals, Policies, Standards, and Implementation Measures for plan alternatives A, B, C and D in one chart for comparison purposes.

On December 18, 2008, staff is holding a study session with the Planning Commission and the public to review changes in the Plan and discuss the hearing and public input process going forward. The review guides will be distributed and discussed at that study session. This meeting will be designed to be a study session only. No action will be taken by the Planning Commission regarding the Draft Plan. The first Planning Commission meeting on the Hearing Draft is not scheduled until January 22, 2009 to give people adequate time to review the Plan and guidance documents. Notices of these dates and subsequent hearings will be provided to those individuals on our mailing list and published in the paper.

Housing Element Release

A public review draft of the Humboldt County Housing Element will be released on Thursday, December 18, 2008. The release of the draft document will initiate a 30 day public review process that will precede any public hearings. The Housing Element is bound as a separate document and serves as the housing element portion of the General Plan for unincorporated areas. The Housing Element is on a different update schedule than the General Plan; State law requires the Housing Element to be updated no later than August 31, 2009.

Public Hearing Process

Phase V will consist of public hearings before the Planning Commission and your Board to receive public input, deliberate, and ultimately adopt the Final Plan, EIR and implementing ordinances. The process will begin with public review and comment on the hearing draft versions of the General Plan, EIR and implementing ordinances before the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will receive the

input and direct modifications to the hearing drafts. The Planning Commission will ultimately forward their recommended final hearing drafts to your Board.

The final documents recommended by the Planning Commission for adoption by your Board will go through a second round of public review and comment and a second series of public hearings before your Board. Your deliberations and straw votes on individual goals, policies, standards and implementation measures will lead to the proposed final versions of the General Plan, EIR and implementing ordinances. Your adoption of the final versions of these documents will conclude the General Plan Update.

Plans for Public Participation

There will be numerous opportunities for public input and involvement in the remaining Phases of the General Plan Update. The Department's website will provide detailed guidance for public, agency and jurisdictional involvement.

The majority of public interaction in the remaining Phases of the Update is via review and comment on draft documents. Electronic versions of all draft documents will be available for public review on the Department's website, by e-mail request or through CD copies. Hard copies will be available for public review at our office, the County library and at local copy centers (for copying).

The Department will publish hearing drafts of the Plan, EIR and ordinances at least thirty days prior to Planning Commission and Board review. Updated versions, revised through public hearings, will be published at least ten days prior to Planning Commission and Board review, unless your Board or the Planning Commission modifies the public review time period.

All deliberations on draft documents by the Planning Commission and your Board will be conducted at noticed public hearings. Each hearing will provide an opportunity for the public to provide written and oral testimony. The Planning Commission may call special hearings on specific topics such as resource lands or infrastructure and may opt to conduct select meetings on Saturdays, if required. Hearing schedules will be maintained as far in advance as possible on the Department's website. Written comments from interested parties on draft documents will be compiled for the Planning Commission and your Board. Written comments on the draft EIR will receive formal responses in the Final EIR.

The Department is also planning outreach to cities, service districts and agencies in order to receive comments on specific aspects of the Plan and EIR. In addition, the Department may hold community meetings to receive input on proposed zoning and plan designation changes. Additional meetings are planned for Fieldbrook, Willow Creek, and the lower Eel River sub-basin.

Community meetings will be advertised as widely as possible in local media and noticed to individual property owners as required by law.

Project Schedule

Planning Commission public hearings are scheduled to take place from January 2009 through July 2009. Board of Supervisor hearings are scheduled to commence in October 2009 and run through March 2010. Final adoption of the General Plan, EIR and implementing ordinances is scheduled for April 2010. This time schedule may be modified based on public interest, the need for additional meetings or to prepare implementing ordinances as directed by your Board. Staff recommends periodic evaluation of the schedule by your Board as work progresses.

The next revision of the Housing Element of the General Plan is required to be submitted to the State of California by August 31, 2009. Therefore, the Housing Element will follow its own time schedule for

adoption in parallel with the review of the balance of the Plan. Planning Commission meetings will commence on the Housing Element in January 2009 and conclude in March 2009. Your Board will consider the Housing Element between April 2009 and July 2009 with final adoption in August 2009.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Funds for the project as proposed have been budgeted for Fiscal Year 2008-2009. The level of consultant effort necessary to complete implementing ordinances may exceed Community Development Services – Planning Division’s professional consultant budgeted allowances. If increased costs are anticipated, the Planning Division will prepare a supplemental budget for the Board’s consideration.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Community Development Services’ website includes a complete listing of local, state and federal agencies involved in the General Plan Update. The project will require extensive involvement of the Public Works Department for roads, drainage and subdivision planning.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Your Board could modify the proposed scope of the work and schedule for the last Phase of the General Plan Update in any way your Board deems appropriate.

ATTACHMENTS:

None