



PLANNING DIVISION
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

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DATE: March 5, 2007
TO: Humboldt County Planning Commission
FROM: Kirk A. Girard, Director of Community Development Services
SUBJECT: **Staff Report # 2 for Group 1 Documents (Part 1 of the General Plan Hearing Draft)**

RECOMMENDED COMMISSION ACTION:

It is recommended that the Commission take the following actions:

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Open the public hearing and receive the staff report presentation.
2. Survey the audience for anyone who would like to discuss the staff report or draft chapters.
3. Deliberate on the markup of the draft chapters (Attachment A), and provide direction to staff on suggested modifications.

SUMMARY

At the Planning Commission's first meeting on Group 1 on February 15, 2007, the Commission received an overview of the staff report outlining the General Plan Update Program and the review process for the Preliminary Hearing Draft.

The Commission received testimony from 16 people, and has received nine written comments to date regarding the Group 1 draft. Staff reviewed and indexed these comments, and together with the Commission's discussion, staff has drafted a markup of Group 1 (Attachment A) that considers this input, and forms the staff recommendation for Commission consideration.

The markup of Group 1 includes marginal notations which indicate when comments were made about a section, with a comment index number to indicate the source of the comment. Written comments are indexed as "W1, W2", etc, verbal comments are "V1, V2" etc., and Planning Commission comments are referenced as "PC1, PC2" etc. The Commission was already presented with all the written comments; summaries of verbal comments from the public at the 2-15-07 hearing and Planning Commission comments are attached.

Attachment B provides the staff analysis of the proposed changes in the markup of Group 1. In making recommendations to the Commission, staff is focused on providing a clear, consistent document, and on developing a good set of alternatives which reflect a reasonable range of choices. Staff will continue to recommend classifying each policy as either Alternative A, B, or C, according to the Board approved definitions. It is staff's recommendation that the Commission will ultimately select a combination of policies that, whether they be from A, B, or C, becomes the Planning Commission's preferred alternative.

Proposed Planning Commission Review Process

Currently, the workshop materials are posted on the web and available for review 30 days prior to the first Planning Commission Hearing. It is recommended that the Planning Commission take comments throughout this time period, hold the public hearing workshop and make proposed revisions. Any proposed revisions will then be brought back to the Commission for review at the next available Planning Commission General Plan meeting (usually 30 days from the first meeting). The Planning Commission will continue to take comments during this process to be incorporated into the final hearing draft. If

will continue to take comments during this process to be incorporated into the final hearing draft. If needed, a third meeting will be scheduled for review and revision of the draft materials. If we are able to keep the Planning Commission hearing schedule that was approved by the Board of Supervisors on December 5th, 2006, we will provide a 60 day review of the Final Hearing Draft in its entirety prior to the Planning Commission's final round of public hearings.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: March 4, 2007 Markup of Group 1 (Part 1 of the Preliminary Hearing Draft)
- Attachment B: Staff discussion and analysis of Markup and comments.
- Attachment C: Planning Commission comments and staff responses from the meeting of 2/15/07
- Attachment D: Summary of verbal testimony presented at the 2/15/07 meeting

Attachment A
March 4, 2007 Markup of Group 1
(Part 1 of the Preliminary Hearing Draft)



Part 1 – Setting

Section Overview

Part 1 of the plan discusses the purpose, form and content of the General Plan. This includes a review of the Plan's intended uses and guiding principles, the Plan development process and a reader's guide. Also included are policies regarding public participation, maintenance and amendments to the Plan, and inter-governmental coordination.

Humboldt County

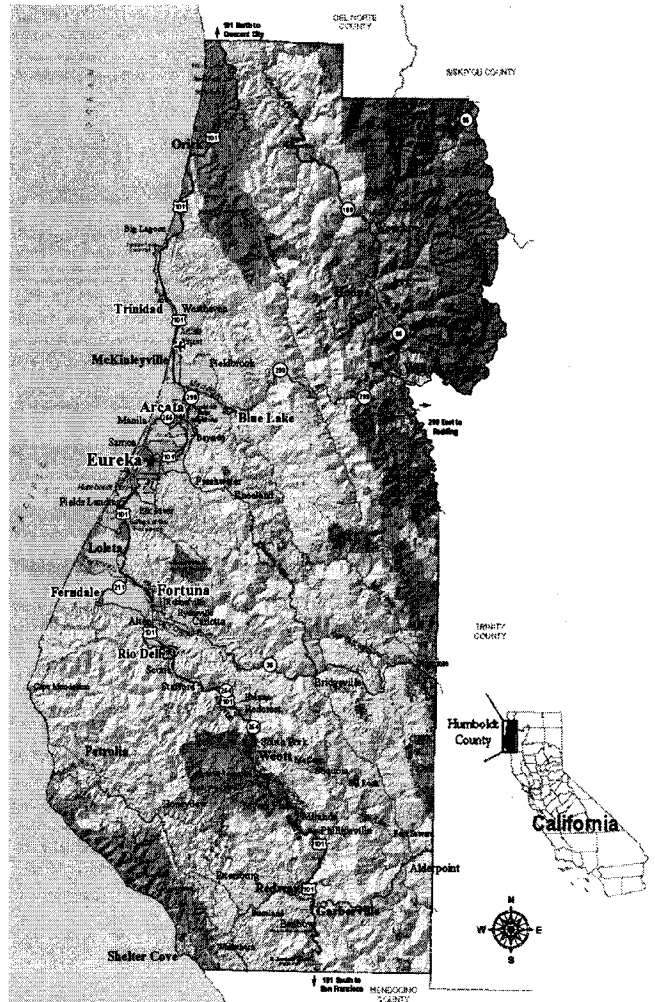
Humboldt County, located in northwest California, is the southern gateway to the Pacific Northwest. The County encompasses 2.3 million acres, 80 percent of which is forested. Thirty percent of the County is State or Federal public lands, with major land holdings including Redwood National and State Parks in the north, Six Rivers National Forest in the east, King Range National Conservation Area along the south coast, and Humboldt Redwoods State Park along the Avenue of the Giants in the south central area.

Humboldt County typically leads the state in timber production. Agriculture and fishing are other important base industries.

The major population centers include Eureka, Arcata, McKinleyville, and Fortuna. Humboldt Bay acts as the focal point of the County, serving as the port and center of commerce, as well as a significant natural resource area, including the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Area. The Bay also provides most of the State's oyster production. The extensive bottom land flood plains of Humboldt Bay and the Eel River delta support the County's dairy industry.

The Coast Ranges dominate the landscape of much of the County, and include the Eel, Van Duzen, Mattole, and Mad River drainages in the central and southern areas, and the Redwood Creek drainage in the northwest. In the northeast, the higher steeper terrain of the Klamath Mountains province is drained by the Klamath and Trinity Rivers. Offshore of Cape Mendocino is one of the most seismically active areas in the world, where three tectonic plates converge. It is also an area of intensive ocean upwelling and rich marine productivity.

The natural resources and scenic beauty of the County make it a popular tourist destination, and the reason why many people choose to live here.



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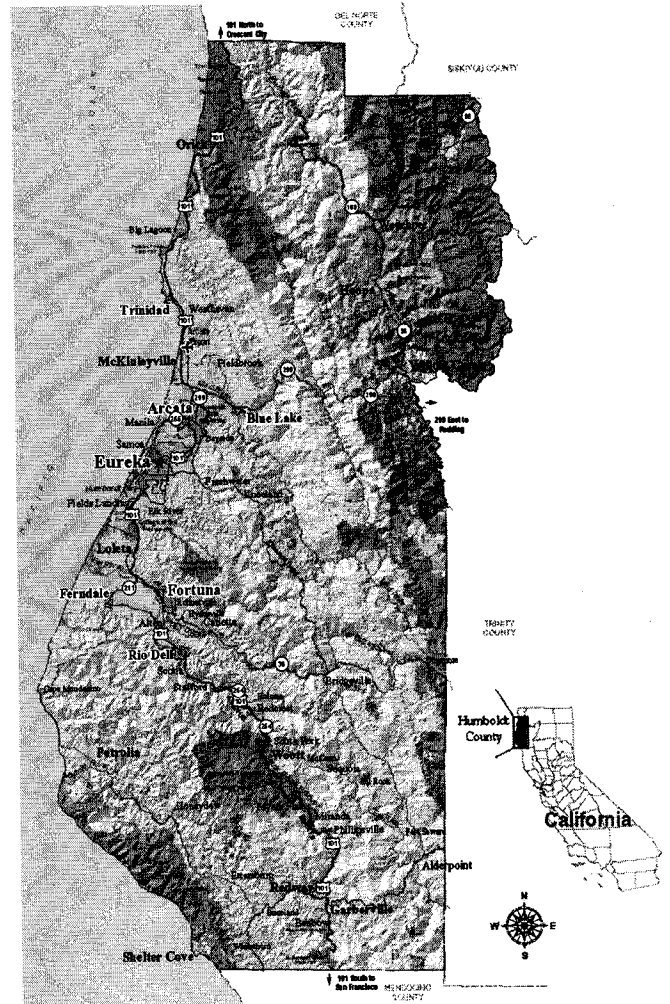
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Chapter 1. Introduction

What is a General Plan?

The Humboldt County General Plan is the comprehensive guide for the long term growth and development of the County. The California Supreme Court has called the general plan the "constitution for future development." The general plan expresses the community's goals, visions, and policies relative to future land uses, both public and private. The general plan is mandated and prescribed by state law (Cal. Gov. Code §65300 et seq.), and forms the basis for most local government land use decision-making.

The general plan establishes the kinds, locations, and intensities of land uses as well as applicable resource protection and development policies. This is done through a series of maps (or "diagrams") showing land use plan designations, constraints, and facilities, accompanied by policies. Zoning maps and regulations provide specific implementation of the land use plan.

Purposes of a General Plan

In addition to expressing the community's goals, visions, and policies relative to future land uses, preparing, adopting, implementing, and maintaining the general plan serves to:

- W8 • Identify the community's land use, circulation, environmental, economic, and social goals and policies as they relate to land use and development.
- W8 • Provide a basis for local government decision-making, including decisions on development approvals and exactions.
- Provide citizens with opportunities to participate in the planning and decision-making processes of their communities.
- W8 • Inform citizens, developers, decision-makers, and other cities and agencies of the ground rules that guide development within a particular community.
- W8 • Establishes a basis for subsequent planning efforts, such as formulating specific development codes and ordinances, preparation of specific plans, redevelopment plans, and special studies.

Background on Developing this Plan

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This Plan is a comprehensive update of the 1984 Humboldt County Framework General Plan. Additionally, this Plan consolidates the Coastal Area Plans and most of the individual Community Plans into a consistent, comprehensive format.

Guiding Principles

One outcome of the public process leading up to the development of this plan was a set of "Guiding Principles" to guide the drafting of the goals and policies in the Plan. The Principles are presented here with some modification to not only to guide drafting the Plan, but to also create a desired vision for the future.

These Guiding Principles are utilized throughout the Plan to guide policy choices. They are also to be used when considering amendments to the plan.

PC, W8

PC3, PC5,
W2, W4,
W5, W8,
V6, V13

PC1, PC3,
PC4, PC5,
W2, W4,
W5, W8,
V11, V15

PC1, PC4,
W2, W4,
W8, V6

PC1, W2,
W3, W4,
W5, W8

PC1, PC3,
W2, W4,
W8

PC3, W2,
W4, W8

PC5, W2,
W4, W8

PC1, W2,
W4, W8

1. *The plan must work to preserve and enhance the unique character of Humboldt County and the quality of life we enjoy.*
2. *The plan must provide sufficient developable commercial, industrial, and residential land, and contain policies to encourage development of address the current scarcity of affordable housing for all income levels and prevent scarcity under a range of population growth scenarios.*
3. *The plan must ensure efficient use of water and sewer services and focus development in those areas and discourage low density residential conversion of resource lands and open space.*
4. *The plan must include actionable plans for infrastructure financing and construction.*
5. *The plan must support the County's economic development strategy and work to retain and create living wage job opportunities.*
6. *The plan must contain long-term agriculture and timber land protections such as increased restrictions on resource land subdivisions and patent parcel development.*
7. *The plan must include unambiguous natural resource protections; especially for open space, water resources, water quality, scenic beauty and salmonids.*
8. *The plan must be practical and actionable.*
9. *The plan must provide a clear statement of County land use values and policies to provide clarity in the County's permit processing system and to simplify review of projects that are consistent with the General Plan.*

Principles Guiding the Alternatives:

- W2, W4, W8 10. *A reasonable range of alternatives must include an environmentally superior alternative that would result in the least conversion of lands to development.*
- W4, W8 11. *A reasonable range must also include an alternative that would result in a greater supply of land available for affordable housing and economic development.*
- W4, W8 12. *Development of the proposed project and alternatives must involve stakeholders and be supported with accurate and relevant data.*

PC | ~~These Guiding Principles are utilized throughout the Plan to guide policy choices. They are also to be used when considering amendments to the plan.~~

Within the Coastal Zone, the California Coastal Act provides key policy guidance for land use decisions, and its policies should also be consulted to guide policy choices within the Coastal Zone.

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.

W8

Staff Analysis and Alternatives

Chapter 1 provides a brief introduction to the plan, explaining what a general plan is and what its purposes are. The chapter also includes a set of "Guiding Principles" which are proposed to provide overall policy guidance and to create a desired vision for the future.

Staff Recommendation

The staff recommendation is presented in the preceding text of Chapter 1, and forms the recommended **proposed project Alternative B**.

The policy choices and discussion focus on the Guiding Principles. The set of Guiding Principles that are presented in Chapter 1 are based on those that were approved by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors at the end of the Sketch Plan Alternative review. Because the original Principles were primarily designed to give policy guidance on creating the alternatives to be considered, some modification was warranted. Based on public input, two principles were added (1 and 9) which speak to preserving quality of life and providing a clear statement of policy for permit processing. The principle which speaks to providing sufficient land for development was broadened to include commercial and industrial.

Other possible changes and additions are presented in the Alternatives section below.

For ease of comparison, the Guiding Principles as originally approved were:

- *The proposed project must ensure efficient use of water and sewer services and focus development in those areas and discourage low density residential conversion of resource lands and open space.*
- *The proposed project must provide sufficient developable residential land and policies to address the current scarcity of affordable housing and prevent scarcity under a range of population growth scenarios.*
- *The proposed project must include actionable plans for infrastructure financing and construction.*
- *The proposed project must support the County's economic development strategy and work to retain and create living wage job opportunities.*
- *A reasonable range of alternatives must include an environmentally superior alternative that would result in the least conversion of lands to development.*

- *A reasonable range must also include an alternative that would result in a greater supply of land available for affordable housing and economic development.*
- *The proposed project must contain long-term agriculture and timber land protections such as increased restrictions on resource land subdivisions and patent parcel development.*
- *The proposed project must include unambiguous natural resource protections; especially for open space, water resources, water quality, scenic beauty and salmonids.*
- *The proposed project must be practical and actionable.*
- *Development of the proposed project and alternatives must involve stakeholders and be supported with accurate and relevant data.*

Alternatives

- PC1, V14 **Plan Alternative A** is the same as the preferred Alternative B as shown in the main body text, except Guiding Principles 2, 3, 4, and 5 are rewritten and adds the following guiding principles for walkable communities, jobs/housing balance, and sustainability are added.
- W4 2. The proposed project must provide sufficient developable commercial, industrial, and residential land and contain policies to encourage the development of housing affordable to low and moderate-income residents and prevent scarcity under a range of population growth scenarios.
- W4 3. The proposed project must ensure efficient use of water and sewer services and focus development in those areas and disallow low density residential conversion of resource lands and open space.
- W2, W3, W4, W5, W8, PC 4. The proposed project must include actionable plans for financing and construction of efficient and cost-effective infrastructure.
- W4 5. The proposed project must support the County's economic development strategy and work to retain and create living wage job opportunities in close proximity to housing.
- W2, W4, W5, W7, W8 13. Promote the development of walkable communities that meet daily needs, offer a healthy lifestyle, and reduce the need for automobile trips.
- W2, W4, W5, W8 14. Promote design concepts and development patterns which increase affordable housing opportunities convenient to workplaces and assist in balancing jobs and housing.
- PC5, PC6, W4, W5, W7, W8, V8 15. The plan must promote sustainable development.

While the above concepts are contained in a number of specific policies throughout the plan in the preferred alternative, including them as guiding principles would raise their status in the plan.

Plan Alternative C is the same as the preferred Alternative B as shown in the main body text, except Guiding Principles 2, 3, 6, and 7, and 8 are rewritten as follows: