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## 3.1 Land Use, Housing and Population

This section contains an analysis of the impacts that the General Plan Update (GPU or Plan) may have on land use, population, and housing in Humboldt County. The section provides a description of existing land use pattern, population trends, and housing conditions as well as a brief analysis of regulations and plans pertinent to the implementation of the General Plan Update.

Existing land use, population, and housing conditions are described in detail in Chapter 2, Project description, Section 4.2 – Growth Planning of the GPU, and Appendix G of the Housing Element, August 2014 (Appendix K of this document). The General Plan Update process relied upon the *Building Communities Report*, February 2002 (Appendix C), which includes a discussion of existing land use patterns, population and housing, development trends, resource land conversion, and future land use requirements. Discussions of population and housing in the County are also found in the *Community Infrastructure and Services Technical Report*, July 2008. These reports are incorporated herein by reference, and summarized below. The reports are available for review at the Planning Division public counter at 3015 H Street in Eureka during normal business hours, or for download at <http://humboldt.gov.org/571/Background-Reports>. Where any discrepancies may exist between the referenced material and the material presented here, the material presented here should be considered as the most up to date and is to be relied upon for the environmental setting and analyses.

### 3.1.1 Land Use, Housing and Population -Environmental and Regulatory Setting

#### State Land Use Planning Law

California state law requires that each city and county adopt a general plan “for the physical development of the county or city and any land outside its boundaries which bears relation to its planning” (California Government Code, Section 65300). The plan can be understood as an expression of a community's values and its vision for the future, a “blueprint” for anticipated growth and development, both public and private, which forms the basis for most local government land-use decision making. In a larger sense a county general plan is a “constitution for future development,” which is how the California Supreme Court has described it.

The general plan establishes the kinds, locations, and intensities of land uses as well as applicable resource protection and development policies. Land use maps are used to show land use plan designations, constraints, and public facilities. According to California law, a general plan must contain at least seven elements: land use, open space, conservation, housing, circulation, noise, and safety. It may also contain other elements that a county wishes to adopt. The law also requires periodic review and revision of a general plan, as necessary.

Article 10.6 of the California Government Code defines the requirements for General Plan Housing Elements. The Housing Element must analyze existing and projected housing needs, examine special housing needs within the population, evaluate the effectiveness of current goals and policies, identify governmental and other constraints, determine compliance with other housing laws, and identify opportunities to incorporate energy conservation into the housing stock. The element must also establish goals, policies and programs to maintain, enhance, and develop housing. State Housing Element law also requires that each city and

county accommodates its fair share of its region's new housing construction needs for all income groups and ensure there is, or that there will be, adequate zoned land, infrastructure, and services present for such housing. The feasibility of accommodating lower-income housing (homes for households earning 80% of less of median county income) typically requires higher densities, which in turn must often be served by public or shared water and sewer facilities, even in rural areas.

The General Plan sets forth the general distribution and location of uses within the County, as well as standards of population density and building (Government Code 65302) and zoning regulations serve as the primary implementation tool for the general plan, and must be consistent with the general plan (Government Code 65860).

The State Aeronautics Act (Public Utilities Code Section 21001) sets forth requirements for airport land use compatibility planning around public use airports. The California Airport Land Use Planning Handbook (California Department of Transportation [Caltrans] 2011) provides guidance for determining consistency between a general plan and an Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP). The ALUCP contains policies relating to airport noise, the height of structures, trees, and other objects in the vicinity of an airport that affect the use of that airport, and potential safety risks both to people on the ground and to the occupants of aircraft. General plan amendments must be consistent with any applicable ALUCP unless a local governing body overrules the plan by a 2/3 vote and makes specific findings. Prior to amendment of a general plan, a local agency must refer the proposed amendment to the Airport Land Use Commission.

### Local Land Use Planning

**Humboldt County General Plan.** Humboldt County's General Plan was last updated in a comprehensive manner in 1984. However, the current General Plan contains elements and community planning maps and policies that were adopted as long ago as 1966. There is a complete discussion of the current General Plan in Chapter 2, Project Description. Chapter 2 describes the existing Humboldt County General Plan – Volume I - Framework Plan, adopted in 1984; the ten Community Plans, adopted between 1981 and 2002; the Northern Humboldt, Arcata, and Southern Humboldt General Plans which were adopted between 1965 and 1968; as well as the Open Space and Conservation Elements, Recreation Element, Noise Element, Trails Element, and Seismic Safety and Public Safety Elements; all of which comprise the County's current General Plan. These components of the General Plan apply to varying degrees in different areas of the County. The Housing Element for the Humboldt County General Plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on May 13, 2014.

**Community Plan Areas.** The Framework General Plan identified and mapped 18 inland Community Plan Areas (CPA). Some CPAs have an adopted Community Plan, and others do not. The purpose of a Community Plan is to develop an internally consistent General Plan, allow for expanded public participation in the planning process, and meet the needs of individual communities. Given that the Hoopa Valley Community Plan boundary is coterminous with the Hoopa Valley Reservation and almost exclusively under the jurisdiction of the Hoopa Valley Tribe and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, no community plan was prepared for that area, and the Hoopa Valley Community Plan Area is not included in further discussion. The following is a brief description of the inland Community Plan Areas:

- The Arcata CPA (no adopted Community Plan) is approximately 5,000 acres and is comprised of five separate areas, including pocket areas between the City of Arcata

and the coastal zone boundary, portions of the Aldergrove, Warren Creek and West End Road areas, and the Fickle Hill area.

- The Avenue of the Giants CPA (Community Plan adopted in 1999) includes five separate areas totaling approximately 11,250 acres, begins in Stafford in the north and extends south along SR 254 (the Avenue of the Giants), and includes Pepperwood, Holmes, Redcrest, and the communities of Shively and Larabee across the Eel River. The Avenue of the Giants CPA area also includes the four additional separate community areas: Weott, Myers Flat, Miranda, and Phillipsville. This CPA contains mapped Urban Developed Areas in Miranda, Myers Flat, Phillipsville, and Weott, and Urban Expansion Areas in Redcrest and Weott.
- The Blue Lake CPA (no adopted Community Plan) is approximately 7,500 acres and surrounds the City of Blue Lake, including the West End/Hatchery Road areas on the south side of the Mad River and the Liscom Hill and Korbel areas on the north side of the river.
- The Carlotta-Hydesville CPA (Community Plan adopted in 1985) is approximately 12,000 acres and extends east along the Van Duzen River and SR 36 from the coastal zone boundary, and includes the communities of Carlotta and Hydesville with a mapped Urban Development Area in Hydesville.
- The Eureka CPA (Community Plan adopted in 1995) is approximately 11,000 acres and includes the developed area around Eureka outside of the coastal zone, including Cutten, Ridgewood, Pine Hills, Humboldt Hill, and portions of Myrtle town. Urban Development Areas and Urban Expansion Areas (see Section 4-7, Growth Planning, of the General Plan Update for a detailed discussion of Urban Development and Expansion Areas) within this CPA are defined in terms of density and service available rather than mapping.
- The Fortuna CPA (Community Plan adopted in 1984) is approximately 5,500 acres and includes the Palmer Creek area and pocket areas around the City of Fortuna, including Rohnerville; Wolverton Gulch; the Mill Street area and the golf course; and the areas along Loop Road, Newburg Road, and Carson Woods Road. Urban Development and Urban Expansion Areas are mapped within the Palmer Creek area and around the City of Fortuna.
- The Fieldbrook-Glendale CPA (no adopted Community Plan) is approximately 12,500 acres in area and includes the Fieldbrook valley and community, and extends south to include Glendale.
- The Freshwater CPA (Community Plan adopted in 1984) is approximately 7,000 acres and includes the inland portions of Indianola, upper Mitchell Heights and Cummings Road, and the entire Freshwater valley.
- The Garberville-Redway-Benbow-Alderpoint CPA (Community Plan adopted in 1985) is approximately 13,000 acres and includes the communities of Alderpoint, Benbow, Garberville and Redway, as well as areas between them and the hill slopes along Old Briceland Road west of Garberville. This CPA includes mapped Urban Expansion Areas in Redway.
- The Jacoby Creek Community Plan (adopted in 1982 – prior to the adoption of the Framework Plan) is approximately 11,500 acres and includes the entire Jacoby Creek drainage as well as the communities of Jacoby Creek and Bayside. This CPA includes a large Urban Development Area in the lower Jacoby Creek valley and an Urban Expansion Area along Graham Road.
- The McKinleyville Community Plan (adopted in 2002) is approximately 10,000 acres and includes the developed McKinleyville area and the surrounding watersheds as well as the Dows Prairie area. Most of the developed area of McKinleyville is mapped as an Urban Development Area and the Dows Prairie, Beau Pre Heights, and areas off of Azalea Avenue are mapped as Urban Expansion Area.

- The Orick Community Plan (adopted in 1985) is approximately 1,350 acres and includes the inland portion of the town of Orick. Core areas along US 101 are mapped as Urban Development Area, and as Urban Expansion Areas.
- The Orleans CPA (no adopted Community Plan) is approximately 5,500 acres containing the Orleans community on either side of the Klamath River and surrounded by Six Rivers National Forest.
- The Rio Dell-Scotia CPA (no adopted Community Plan) is approximately 4,200 acres and includes the Monument, Dinsmore Plateau, and Metropolitan areas around the City of Rio Dell. In addition, the Scotia area is added by this GPU, connecting this CPA to the Avenue of the Giants CPA.
- The Shelter Cove CPA (no adopted Community Plan) is approximately 1,800 acres and contains the inland residential areas on the upper hill slopes.
- The Trinidad-Westhaven CPA (no adopted Community Plan) is approximately 1,900 acres in area and includes the hill slopes primarily east of US 101 between Stumptown Road and Little River.
- The Willow Creek CPA (adopted in 1984) is approximately 5,000 acres and includes the developed area of Willow Creek along SR 299 and SR 96 as well as along Patterson and Seeley McIntosh Roads. The Green Point area where SR 299 crosses Redwood Creek is also included in this CPA.

Within the Humboldt County coastal zone there are six Local Coastal Program coastal planning areas, listed below from north to south:

- The North Coast Area Plan extends from the Del Norte/Humboldt County line to Patrick's Point and includes the lagoons, portions of Orick and Big Lagoon.
- The Trinidad Area Plan, extends south from the North Coast Area Plan to Little River, and includes all of the developed area of Patricks Point, areas surrounding Trinidad, and Westhaven.
- The McKinleyville Area Plan extends from the Trinidad segment to the Mad River.
- The Humboldt Bay Area Plan extends from the Mad River to Table Bluff and includes the north and south spits, the Arcata Bottoms, Indianola, Freshwater, Mitchel Heights, King Salmon, Fields Landing, and the Humboldt Bay Wildlife Refuge.
- The Eel River Area Plan extends from Table Bluff to Centerville and includes Loleta, Fernbridge, the Ferndale bottoms, Waddington, and Alton.
- The South Coast Area Plan extends from the Eel River Area Plan to the Mendocino County line and includes Cape Mendocino, the Petrolia area, the King Range, and Shelter Cove.

**Humboldt County Zoning Regulations.** Humboldt County Inland Zoning Regulations can be found in Title III, Chapter 4 and Coastal Zoning Regulations can be found in Title III, Chapter 3). When a general plan amendment creates inconsistency with zoning regulations, the zoning regulations must be changed to re-establish consistency "within a reasonable time" (Government Code 65860(c)). However, state law does not specify what constitutes "a reasonable time" to re-establish consistency, so the Governor's Office of Planning and Research General Plan Guidelines (2003) recommends that "for extensive amendments to the general plan (such as a revision that results in the inconsistency of large areas)", two years would be considered a reasonable amount of time.

The Humboldt County Zoning Regulations set forth regulations relating to minimum lot size, maximum building height and setback from property lines, as well as the uses that are principally permitted and those that require a use permit. The Zoning Regulations also specify procedures

for things such as variances to compensate for hardships such as the size, shape, or topography of a site, and for zoning modifications, consistent with the General Plan.

The Zoning Regulations contain the following zoning districts:

**Table 3.1-1 Zoning Districts**

Use Types	Inland Zoning Districts	Coastal Zoning Districts
<b>COMMERCIAL</b>	C-1: Community Commercial Zone C-2: Community Commercial Zone C-3: Industrial Commercial Zone CH: Highway Service Commercial Zone	CN: Commercial Neighborhood CG: Commercial General CR: Commercial Recreational CRD: Coastal Dependent Commercial Rec.
<b>INDUSTRIAL</b>	MB: Business Park Zone ML: Limited Industrial Zone MH: Heavy Industrial Zone	MB: Business Park Zone ML: Industrial, Light MG: Industrial General MC: Industrial Coastal Dependent
<b>PUBLIC</b>	AV: Airport Zone	PF1: Public Facility – Urban PF2: Public Facility - Rural
<b>NATURAL HAZARD/FLOOD</b>	DF: Design Floodway Zone FP: Flood Plain Zone	NR: Natural Resource
<b>RESIDENTIAL</b>	RS: Residential Suburban Zone R-1: Residential One-Family Zone R-2: Residential Two-Family Zone R-3: Residential Multiple Family Zone R-4: Apartment Professional Zone RA: Rural Residential Agriculture	RA: Rural Residential Agricultural RS: Residential Single Family R-2: Residential Mixed RM: Residential Multi-Family
<b>RESOURCE</b>	AE: Agriculture Exclusive Zone AG: Agriculture General Zone FR: Forestry Recreation Zone TPZ: Timberland Production Zone	AE: Agriculture Exclusive Zone TC: Coastal Timberland TPZ: Timberland Production Zone
<b>UNCLASSIFIED</b>	U: Unclassified Zone	N/A

In addition to the principal zone districts, there are over 20 different combining zones that may be applied to modify in some way the land uses allowed in the principal zone when necessary for sound and orderly planning. Examples of combining zones include: “AP”, Airport Safety Review, which is intended to assist in maintaining compatibility between proposed land uses and development and Humboldt County airports; “B”, Special Building Site, which is intended to be combined with any principal zone in which sound and orderly planning indicate that lot area and yard requirements should be modified; and “F”, Flood Hazard Areas, which is applied to minimize public and private losses due to flood and tsunami conditions in specific areas of the County.

**City General Plans and Spheres of Influence.** There are seven incorporated cities within Humboldt County. All cities but the City of Ferndale have Spheres of Influence beyond their city boundaries ranging in size from 160 acres (City of Trinidad) to 8,200 acres (City of Eureka). The boundaries of the city Spheres of Influence are subject to review and approval by the Humboldt County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo). Cities in the County have General Plans that were adopted between 1966 and 2014 that have planning areas that include some or all of their Spheres of Influence. No city in the County has executed an agreement with the County, pursuant to Government Code Section 56425, to “ensure that development within the sphere occurs in a manner that reflects the concerns of the affected city and is accomplished in a manner that promotes the logical and orderly development of areas within the sphere.”

**Humboldt County Airport Land Use Planning.** In Humboldt County, the Board of Supervisors serves as the Airport Land Use Commission and conducts airport land use compatibility planning

around the nine public use airports within the County. On January 27, 1998, the Humboldt County Airport Land Use Commission adopted the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan for the California Redwood Coast – Humboldt County Airport (previously Arcata-Eureka Airport). See “Airport Safety” and Impact 3.7.3.2, Airport Safety Hazards, in Section 3.7, Hazards, for a more detailed description of airport land use compatibility planning in Humboldt County.

### 3.1.2 Land Use, Housing and Population - Standards of Significance

This analysis uses the significance criteria from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Appendix G. The proposed General Plan Update would result in a significant impact related to land use if it would:

#### Land Use and Planning

- a) Physically divide an established community.
- b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.
- c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

#### Population and Housing

- a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure).
- b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.
- c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

Land Use and Planning item “a” is discussed in Impact 3.1.3.1, Divide an Established Community. Item “b” is discussed in Impact 3.1.3.2, Conflict with Other Applicable Land Use Plans. Item “c” is discussed in Chapter 3.11, Biological Resources, Impact 3.11.3.5, Habitat Conservation Plans. Population and Housing item “a” is discussed in Impact 3.1.3.4, Induce Population Growth. Items “b” and “c” are discussed in Impact 3.1.3.5, Displace Existing Housing or People.

### 3.1.3 Land Use, Housing and Population – Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The Land Use Element frames the policies that will govern the use and intensity of development for lands located in the unincorporated area. These policies impact a broad spectrum of uses and development, ranging from creating new residential, commercial and industrial lots, and constructing or remodeling structures on existing lots, to minor projects such as accessory structures. The policies also cover a broad spectrum of land use types ranging from agricultural lands to high-density residential areas.

### Impact 3.1.3.1 Divide an Established Community

Implementation of the General Plan Update would result in construction of new facilities or infrastructure, or other land use changes, which could result in the division of existing communities.

This impact analysis addresses Land Use and Planning item “a” of the significance standards listed in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines as provided in Section 3.1.2 above. Pursuant to these standards, the proposed County General Plan Update would have a significant impact if it would:

- a) Physically divide an established community.

The General Plan Update Circulation Maps show a number of new road segments in the Eureka and McKinleyville Community Plan Areas. These local road segments are largely comprised of connecting roads between neighborhoods where one currently does not exist and are intended to bridge gaps between existing County roads and new roads in currently undeveloped areas that are planned for future development. Given that these roads are intended to make new connections between neighborhoods, none of these road segments represent facilities that would divide existing communities. In addition, the General Plan Update does not propose any freeways or other major transportation systems or other development that would act to divide established communities.

Rather than divide existing communities, the General Plan Update land use map maintains existing communities and continues a development timing system that identifies urban development and urban expansion areas in a CPA within and adjacent to existing communities. Urban development areas are suitable for development at greater than one unit per acre, where public services are provided. Urban expansion areas are not provided with public water or sewer services, but are expected to be developed to urban densities and to be provided with public water and sewer services in the near future. The General Plan Update identifies these areas to guide future urbanization. The General Plan Update areas also maintains the existing areas of separation between communities that is intended to preserve the unique identities of the county’s cities and communities.

#### *Analysis of Relevant General Plan Update Policies*

The General Plan Update has a number of policies that are directed toward protecting community character and help to avoid dividing an established community. Land Use Element, Urban Land Goals UL-G2, Design and Function, and UL-G4, Community Character, call for aesthetically appealing urban development areas that preserve and enhance existing community character and identity, and are supported by several policies. Policy UL-P5, Community Identity, directs the County to preserve community features that residents value and to create development that compliments or adds to community identity and character. Policy UL-P8, Neighborhood Connectivity, requires that subdivisions be designed to promote road and trail circulation between neighborhoods, schools, parks and open space areas, and requires that the subdivision ordinance specify standards and limitations for cul-de-sacs, dead end roads, and block sizes. Policy UL-P11, Natural Amenities, encourages the County to incorporate natural amenities, such a landmark trees and rock outcroppings, into new project design. UL-P12, Design Review, requires development within designated Design Review overlay zones to undergo design review consistent with an adopted Design Review Ordinance. Policy UL-P20 requires all designs to use landscaping to, among other things, enhance the appearance of

neighborhoods. Implementation Measure UL-IM8, Review and Update Design Review Ordinance and Areas, directs the County to comprehensively review and update the Design review standards of the zoning ordinance and maps of areas subject to design review.

The General Plan Update Circulation Element contains policies that are directed toward maintaining neighborhood integrity, connectivity and non-motorized accessibility. Circulation Element goal C-G2, Diverse Transportation Opportunities, seeks a transportation system that integrates and balances needs of vehicles, transit, bicycles, and pedestrians.

Circulation Element Policy C-P1, Circulation System, encourages development of a circulation system that supports orderly development. C-P25, Multimodal Level of Service (LOS) and Quality of Service (QOS) Standards, directs the County to use objective methods and criteria to formulate LOS and QOS standards that consider “walkability audits” and “bikeability audits” suitable for the locality, to assess and plan the multi-modal quality and capacity of County roads and intersections. C-P26, Bicycles and Pedestrian Facilities in New Subdivisions, provides that bicycle and pedestrian facilities should be encouraged to connect neighborhoods, and that standards for urban, suburban, rural and remote contexts shall be developed. Policy C-P28, Landscape Buffer Strips, requires the County to provide landscape buffer strip standards as part of the Countywide Transportation Plan road cross-section standards and according to the context of urban, suburban, rural and remote, and suggests the County should use landscape buffer strips to segregate pedestrian walkways from arterial and collector roadways, where feasible. C-P27, Right-of-Way Design Standards, requires that the County develop and include in the Countywide Transportation Plan right-of-way design standards incorporating the needs of all users, consistent with urban, suburban, rural or remote community character, and also requires the development of incentives for development of multi-modal facilities to offset any potential loss of developable land. C-P29, Removal of Obstacles in Pathways, requires that where feasible and consistent with the Countywide Transportation Plan, new pathways and sidewalks shall be free of obstacles such as utility poles and mailboxes, and where obstacles are unavoidable on existing sidewalks or pathways, pedestrian facilities would be widened or otherwise designed to provide the least amount of obstruction to users. C-P30, On-Street Parking, directs that on-street parking be designed to minimize conflicts with all users consistent with the Countywide Transportation Plan and where appropriate, creative on-street parking arrangements such as parking pockets or bays are required to be considered to improve design flexibility. C-P31, Design Standards for All Pathways, requires that design standards appropriate to urban, suburban, rural and remote character shall be used by the County Public Works Department for the design and construction of pedestrian and bicycle facilities. C-P32, Traffic Calming, directs the County to use traffic calming measures, where feasible and appropriate, as a means of improving safety for all users. C-P?, Encourage Bicycle and Pedestrian-Friendly development, directs that incentives should be given to developers who provide non-motorized facilities that connect neighborhoods in a design that is appropriate to the character of those neighborhoods.

These policies are supported and implemented by Standards and Implementation measures. Standard C-S2, Neighborhood Connectivity, requires that local roads shall be planned to allow for orderly development of the community. Standard C-S7, Transit, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Quality/Level of Service Standards, requires that bicycle and pedestrian Quality of Service and Level of Service standards shall be specified in County code, and that the County shall reference Transit Level of Service standards specified in the Public Transit Service Element of the Regional Transportation Plan as amended. Standard C-S8, Pedestrian and Bicycle System, requires that a Board adopted Pedestrian and Bicycle System Plan consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan shall identify trails and routes considered a part of the County maintained circulation system, and that development projects proposed on lands that include a County

maintained trail or route may be required to dedicate easements or make improvements. Standard C-S9, Prioritization of Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities and Routes, requires that objective criteria shall be used to prioritize construction of pedestrian and bicycle facilities and routes, and that criteria be developed that reflects consideration of providing safe and continuous connections between a variety of community facilities and areas, reductions in motorized vehicles miles traveled, and community demand and public interest.

Circulation Element implantation measures are defined to ensure that the above neighborhood connectivity programs are carried out. In particular, C-IM1, County-Wide Transportation Plan, requires the County to adopt a clear plan for development and improvement of multi-modal transportation infrastructure consistent with land use plans, intended community character and community priorities in unincorporated Humboldt County; the plan will also include a review and update of roadway, pedestrian, and bicycling facility standards. C-IM12, Pedestrian and Bicycle System Plan, directs the County to prepare a Pedestrian and Bicycle System Plan consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan and incorporate appropriate implementation standards in Title III – Land Use and Development Division 2 Subdivision Regulations.

### ***Conclusion***

The General Plan Update does not propose changes such as roads or other public facilities or other land uses that would result in the division of existing communities. In addition, the General Plan Update contains a series of policies in the Land Use and Circulation Elements to prioritize programs that preserve existing communities and facilitate neighborhood connectivity. Therefore this impact would be **less than significant**.

### ***Mitigation***

None required.

### Impact 3.1.3.2: Conflict with Applicable Land Use Plans, Policies or Regulations

Implementation of the General Plan Update could result in development that conflicts with state law, County zoning or other land use regulations, city general plan, public land management plans, or other applicable land use plans, policies or regulations.

This impact analysis addresses Land Use and Planning item “b” of the significance standards listed in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines as provided in Section 3.1.2 above. Pursuant to these standards, the proposed County General Plan Update would have a significant impact if it would:

- b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

#### State General Plan Law

California Government Code, Title 7, Division 1, Chapter 3, Article 5, Authority for and Scope of General Plans, beginning with Section 65300, and Article 6, Preparation, Adoption, and Amendment of the General Plan, beginning with Section 65300, together with other relevant statutes and the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research *General Plan Guidelines*, govern and guide the preparation and content of a general plan. The General Plan Update has been prepared consistent with these and other relevant statutes and guidelines.

**Open Space Requirements.** After October, 2015, when the Board of Supervisors concluded its review of the General Plan Update, state law was revised to specify additional types of open space land to be included in the open-space element of a county general plan and the local open space plan. At the time the Board of Supervisors concluded its review, Government Code Section 65560 defined open space lands to include open space for the preservation of natural resources, managed production of resources, outdoor recreation, and public health and safety.

In 2016, Government Code 65560 was revised (AB 2651, SB 974) to add open space in support of the mission of military installations that comprises areas such as military training routes (Government Code 65560(5)) and Open space for the protection of places, features, and objects described in Public Resources Code Sections 5097.9 (which generally includes Native American sanctified cemeteries, places of worship, religious or ceremonial sites, or sacred shrines located on public property) and 5097.993 (which generally includes Native American historic, cultural, or sacred sites) of the Public Resources Code (Government Code 65560(6)). Consequently, these open space areas are not included in the General Plan Updated Conservation and Open Space Elements.

Although these two open space types are not included in the General Plan Update Conservation and Open Space Elements narrative (pages 10-1 and 10-2, which contain a list of the types of open space lands) and Conservation and Open Space Policy Summary (Table 10-A), they are addressed fully in the General Plan Update. Conservation and Open Space Elements Section 10.6, Cultural Resources, includes Standard CU-S1, Significant Cultural Resources Defined, which defines Public Resources Code Sections 5097.9 and 5097.993 as significant cultural resources and ties these important open space types to resource protection policies and consultation requirements of the Conservation and Open Space Elements. The Safety Element describes Military Training Routes and Military Operating Areas on page 14-8 in a

description of airport safety and shown in GPU Military Operation Area Figure 14-1. Protections for these open space types are included in Safety Element policy S-P1, Reduce the Potential for Loss which directs the County to plan land uses and regulate new development to reduce the potential for loss of life, injury, property damage, and economic and social dislocations resulting from natural and manmade hazards, and S-PX7, Military Operating Areas, which directs the County to provide notification and project information to the military for discretionary development projects within military airspace operating areas as may be required by the California Government Code.

**Unincorporated Legacy Communities.** In 2011, SB 244 (Wolk) amended the Government Code to require counties to identify the infrastructure and service needs of unincorporated legacy communities in their general plans at the time of the next Housing Element update. SB 244 defines an unincorporated legacy community as a place that meets the following criteria:

- Contains 10 or more dwelling units in close proximity to one another;
- is geographically isolated and has existed for more than 50 years; and
- Has a median household income that is 80 percent or less than the statewide median household income.

The 2014 Housing Element included a detailed analysis of legacy communities in the Housing Element Appendix (§8.20.22), and included an implementation measure, H-IM34, Revise the Land Use Element to Facilitate Development in Legacy Communities, to reference that analysis in the Land Use Element of the Framework Plan in §2611 – Community Plan Areas: Background. To date, the Framework Plan has not been amended to include this reference.

### **California Coastal Act**

The California Coastal Act governs land use and development activities within the coastal zone. The Act empowers the California Coastal Commission to review and approve (certify) local coastal programs (LCP). LCPs meet the requirements of, and implement the provisions and policies of, the Coastal Act at the local level, and serve as local government's land use plans and zoning regulations within the coastal zone.

Changes proposed by this countywide general plan update may require amendment of the County's LCP. The current LCP will continue to govern land use within the coastal zone unless and until amendments are submitted to and certified by the California Coastal Commission. This certification review will ensure amendments proposed by this General Plan Update will not conflict with the provisions of the Coastal Act.

Under Section 15251 of the CEQA Guidelines, the Secretary of Resources has certified the Coastal Commission's regulatory program as a "functionally equivalent process" to CEQA. Accordingly, this EIR is not a decision document for amendments within the coastal zone, but may be used as a technical background document in assessing the project's environmental effects and conformance with applicable policies and standards of the County's LCP and/or the Coastal Act.

## Humboldt County Community Plans

Project Description Section 2.4, The Proposed Plan, Key Features, describes proposed changes to the Humboldt County Community Plans that would be included in the General Plan Update. See Section 2.7, Relationship to Other Documents, in Chapter 2 Public Guide of the General Plan Update, including the portion of that section entitled “Companion Documents” for a detailed discussion of proposed amendments to the Community Plans to maintain consistency with the proposed General Plan Update. Proposed changes to the Community Plans include changes in land use designations; the deletion or modification of the existing Community Plan glossary, definitions and policies; the addition of terms, definitions and policies; the renumbering of all policies; and the consolidation and incorporation of Community Plans, except the Avenue of the Giants, Eureka, and McKinleyville Community Plans, into a single document entitled Community Area Plans Extract (Appendix C). The Avenue of the Giants, Eureka, and McKinleyville Community Plans and the Housing Element, will remain as stand-alone documents, but are subject to the mapping and policy revisions to maintain consistency with the General Plan Update.

Adoption of the General Plan Update would therefore add/delete/amend certain Community Plan definitions and policies, harmonize Community Plan land use designations with the General Plan Update, and amend Community Plan land use maps. It would also incorporate all Community Plans, except the Avenue of the Giants, Eureka, and McKinleyville Community Plans, into a single document, Appendix C, Community Area Plans Extract of the General Plan Update. Chapter 2, Public Guide, of the General Plan Update states that the Plan is considered to be the Community Plan for those communities included in Appendix C until such time that the Community Plans are updated. Adoption of Appendix C, which would occur with the adoption of the General Plan Update, would maintain consistency between these Community Area Plans and the General Plan Update.

As part of its review of modifications to Community Plan policies, the Board of Supervisors also considered changes to the three stand-alone Community Plans in a document entitled “Suggested Revisions to Other Community Plans to Maintain Consistency with the General Plan Update.” This document contained suggested changes to the Avenue of the Giants, Eureka, and McKinleyville plans that relate to land use designations revised as a part of the General Plan Update; references to the Framework General Plan or other plans that have since been updated; and corrected references to state law or County Zoning Regulations. Adoption of the “Suggested Revisions to Other Community Plans to Maintain Consistency with the General Plan Update” would be required in order to maintain consistency between the Avenue of the Giants, Eureka, and McKinleyville Community Plans and the General Plan Update.

## Humboldt County Zoning Regulations

The County’s Zoning Regulations provide implementation for the General Plan land use designations, and are administered in a manner consistent with the General Plan. Section 4.8, Land Use Classifications, of the General Plan Update, describes each the general plan land use designation, including the allowed use types within each classification and density or intensity standards. The use types are defined within the Zoning Ordinance to help ensure consistency. Section 4.8 of the General Plan Update also provides a Zoning Consistency Matrix for inland land use designations (Table 4-H) and for coastal land use designations (Table 4-I) that identify which zones are compatible with which land use designations.

Amendments to the Zoning Regulations will be necessary to implement the General Plan Update and ensure continuing consistency between to two documents. Examples of required amendments include:

- Changes to Streamside Management Area regulations specified in BR-S5, Streamside Management Area Defined, which will require amendments to Streamside Management Area Regulations contained in Title 3, Division 1 of the County Code, addressed in Conservation and Open Space Element Implementation Measure BR-IMx4, Modifications to the Streamside Management Area Ordinance.
- Establishment of mixed use zoning as directed by the Land Use Element, Urban Lands Policy UL-P6, Mixed Use Zoning, would implement the Mixed Use "MU" plan designation set forth in General Plan Update Section 4.8 and applied in various areas around the County.

In addition, adoption of the General Plan land use map will cause some zoning districts to be inconsistent with the General Plan. The zoning map will need to be amended within "a reasonable time" to re-establish consistency. The following is a general discussion of zoning inconsistencies that will result from the amendment of the General Plan as well as other zoning map changes that will need to occur within approximately two years of General Plan Update Adoption.

**Unclassified.** Approximately 655,000 acres of the County is zoned Unclassified, "U." The "U" zoning is applied to areas of the County that have not been sufficiently studied to justify precise zoning classifications, and includes regulations to protect the health, safety and general welfare of the citizens and to insure orderly development in conformance with the General Plan. Within the "U" zone, single family dwellings and general agriculture are principally permitted, and all other uses that are consistent with the General Plan are conditionally permitted. Comprehensive zoning for Humboldt County was carried out in the middle 1970's, and at that time "U" zoning was applied to certain areas. Some areas that were originally zoned "U" have since been precisely zoned. A focus of the General Plan Update is to carry out comprehensive planning to allow the precise zoning of those remaining areas currently zoned "U."

**Zone Inconsistencies.** Zoning inconsistencies with the General Plan exist within the County and may be the result of circumstances such as expected sewer or water system expansions that did not occur, or planned zone changes that have not yet occurred. Upon adoption of the General Plan Update, the zoning of approximately 14,000 acres would remain or become inconsistent with the General Plan.

In the majority of cases, the zoning of a property is consistent with the proposed General Plan Update land use designation, or is zoned "U" and would therefore be re-zoned as part of the comprehensive planning to allow the precise zoning of areas currently zoned "U" described above. However, in some instances, most particularly for landowner requested land use changes considered by the Board of Supervisors described in the Land Use Requests section below, parcels with resource zoning are proposed to be given a residential land use designation. In this case, the resource zone can only be considered consistent with the General Plan Update as a "holding zone." The use of the term "holding zone" implies there is a plan to rezone the property to a zone consistent with the General Plan uses and density or intensity. Therefore, zone changes, or a plan to carry out zone changes would be required.

For areas with land use and zoning inconsistency, consistency could be achieved by one of several zoning map amendments: (1) where the principally or conditionally permitted uses are not consistent with the range of allowable uses of the land use designation specified in the Land

Use Element, apply a new zone classification from Table 4-H, Zoning Consistency Matrix; (2) where the minimum lot size of the zone is not consistent with the density range of the Land Use Designation, apply a combining zone, such as "B", Special Building Site, to ensure that the density/minimum lot size criteria are consistent; and (3) where a resource zone is applied to a non-resource Land Use Designation, evaluate whether or not that planned use is expected to be developed within a "a reasonable time."

**Land Use Requests.** Property owner requests to change the land use on their property were considered by the Board of Supervisors during the General Plan Update land use mapping process. The Board considered the specifics of each landowner request; a map of the parcel showing its location and current and proposed land use designations, zone, and community planning area, if any; information regarding service availability; and public input. The Board deliberated on each individual request, eventually tentatively accepting all landowner requests for a change in land use without concern for the zoning inconsistency that would result from some of the granted land use changes. Some of these land use inconsistencies resulting from landowner requests occur in resource zones where the concept of "holding zones" as described in the section above would apply. The majority, if not all, changes in land use that result in "holding zones" are a result of Board granted requests for land use changes.

### **Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans**

Airport land use compatibility plans (ALUCP) are required to be prepared for each public airport and the area surrounding the airport within a county to reduce the potential for land use conflicts between airports and surrounding uses. Government Code Section 65302.3 requires that the general plan be consistent with the airport land use compatibility plan adopted or amended pursuant to Section 21675 of the Public Utilities Code. General Plan Update Chapter 14, Safety Element, contains goals, policies, standards, and implementation measures relating to airport land use compatibility and airport safety and noise. Consistency between the General Plan Update and the adopted ALUCP is analyzed in Section 3.7 Hazards, Impact 3.7.3.2: Airport Safety Hazards. Prior to approval of the General Plan Update, it will be referred to the Airport Land Use Commission for a review for consistency between the Plan and the adopted ALUCP.

### **City General Plans**

The seven incorporated cities within Humboldt County all maintain General Plans for their jurisdictional areas. In some cases these General Plans have planning areas that extend into County jurisdiction. Since the cities do not have jurisdiction in these unincorporated areas, differences between city plans and County plans would not be a conflict of applicable land use plans. However such differences inform a discussion of potential areas of concern. To quote the City of Arcata's General Plan EIR, "Defining a Planning Area is a means by which the city can communicate its concerns for the future of surrounding lands under the jurisdiction of the County or neighboring cities."

**City of Arcata.** Arcata adopted a revised General Plan in 2000, with a planning area that includes the lands west of the city between Humboldt Bay and the Mad River out to the Pacific Ocean, and the entire Jacoby Creek watershed to the east. The Arcata General Plan accommodates projected population growth of approximately 4,000 persons through 2020, with 1,686 dwelling units based on mid-point density range estimates.

On the west side of the Arcata planning area there is generally a match between Arcata's general plan and the proposed County General Plan Update. Two properties identified for residential development in the Arcata General Plan (Assessor's Parcel Number 505-161-011 and

505-192-004) are designated Urban Reserve in the General Plan Update, which reserves these parcels for annexation and development consistent with the City plan. These two parcels are planned in a manner consistent with the Arcata General Plan. Two other parcels that are designated industrial and residential urban reserve, respectively, in current County plans, are designated Agriculture Exclusive in the General Plan Update to match the Arcata plan. APN 505-151-006 is a vacant approximately 12 acre parcel used for the production of hay and grazing is designated RE2.5 in the General Plan Update, which differs from the Agriculture-Exclusive designation applied in the Arcata General Plan. The balance of the land in this area is designated Agriculture Exclusive and Natural Resources in the Arcata plan and the General Plan Update.

On the northeast side, there is general agreement between Arcata's general plan and the proposed County General Plan Update. However the Arcata plan designates most of the Jacoby Creek watershed area Natural Resources (NR), which includes existing residential development and land zoned Timberland Production Zone (TPZ). The Arcata plan NR designation allows timber production and buildout of one residential unit per existing parcel. Therefore, the General Plan Update allowance for buildout at greater than one unit per existing parcel would not be consistent with the City of Arcata's preference. However, because Arcata's plan is not the applicable land use plan outside city limits, the County's proposed General Plan Update does not conflict with an applicable plan in this case. The City continues to pursue land acquisitions of forested land within the Jacoby Creek watershed area, consistent with the goals of their plan, and these land transactions are aided by the County's General Plan designations, which help maintain a reasonable market value during appraisal and acquisition. Since the City continues to produce timber on these lands, these acquisitions are consistent with the County's General Plan designation of Timber Production.

**City of Eureka.** The City of Eureka's general plan was adopted in 1997, and has a planning area that covers the unincorporated areas of Cutten, Ridgewood Heights, and Humboldt Hill. The City's plan for these areas is generally consistent with the County's existing 1995 Eureka Community Plan and the proposed General Plan Update. The City's plan has slightly higher densities for the Low Density Residential areas (4.1- 8 units per acre) than the County's existing Plan (1- 7 units/acre) or the proposed General Plan Update (3 – 8 units/acre), and encourages accommodation and retention of neighborhood commercial areas, similar to the County plans. The City of Eureka is in the process of updating its General Plan; however, the adopted land use map was not available during the period of this analysis for comparison.

**City of Fortuna.** The City of Fortuna updated its General Plan in October 2010. Humboldt County initiated its General Plan Update prior to the City of Fortuna and mapped land uses around the City in consultation with City staff. There are several differences between the proposed General Plan Update land use map and the Fortuna General Plan Land Use Diagram (Figure LU-1, Land Use Diagram, Fortuna General Plan 2030). Based on past consultations with City staff, the General Plan Update land use map identifies several areas as Urban Reserve; however, these areas do not entirely match the City of Fortuna's annexation planning carried out as part of that jurisdiction's general plan update process. The City of Fortuna has recently annexed the River Walk Annexation Area and portions of the Carson Woods Annexation Area, and is in the process of annexing portions of the Strong's Creek Annexation Area. The County General Plan Update plans portions of the Strong's Creek Annexation Area as Urban Reserve.

The Fortuna General Plan Land Use Diagram is largely similar to the proposed General Plan Update land use map. Some of the major differences include portions of the unincorporated area to the north, east, and south east of the city that the Fortuna General Plan Land Use Diagram identifies as Open Space. The Fortuna Open Space land use designation provides for

natural resource use such as timberland management, public uses, and hazards areas, and specifies no residential use. Over half of these lands are proposed to be planned Agriculture Grazing (AG) or Timberland (T) and the remainder is proposed to be planned Rural Residential and Residential Estates under the General Plan Update. Most of these areas contain scattered rural residential development with parcels greater than five acres. Another area of difference would be the area along Hillras Way north of the Rohnerville Airport, which the General Plan Updates plans Residential Estates and the Fortuna General Plan Land Use Diagram plans Industrial. However, because Fortuna's plan is not the applicable land use plan outside city limits, the County's proposed General Plan Update does not conflict with an applicable plan in this case.

**City of Rio Dell.** The City of Rio Dell updated its General Plan in 2008. The City identified a planning area that includes the entire City's Sphere of Influence, but does not identify land use designations or zoning classifications for areas outside the City. The General Plan Update identifies land use designations for all unincorporated area around the City. In addition, the General Plan Update identifies approximately 44 acres of the unincorporated area as Urban Reserve/Rural Residential 5-20 (acres per unit), outside of the City of Rio Dell Sphere of Influence. This area was jointly identified as Urban Reserve by City of Rio Dell and County staff. The City of Rio Dell Sphere of Influence area is proposed to be planned Rural Residential 5-20, but is not identified as Urban Reserve. However, because Rio Dell's plan is not the applicable land use plan outside city limits, the County's proposed General Plan Update does not conflict with an applicable plan in this case.

**City of Trinidad.** The City of Trinidad General Plan was last updated in 1992. The City of Trinidad General Plan indicates that proposed land uses in the City of Trinidad Planning Area (Plate 2 of the Trinidad General Plan) which includes all land between the City and the Burris Creek watershed to the north, (approximately 3.25 miles north of the City limit) and the Luffenholtz Creek watershed to the south (approximately 1.5 miles south of the City limit). The land uses mapped in the City of Trinidad General Plan include rural residential, suburban residential, and resource production, and are generally consistent with the proposed General Plan Update.

**City of Blue Lake.** Humboldt County consulted with the City of Blue Lake in identifying land uses for the unincorporated areas surrounding the City of Blue Lake. Humboldt County utilized draft pre-zoning maps provided by the City of Blue Lake consulting planner to determine the City's plans for these areas. The land uses contained on the proposed General Plan Update or very similar to those mapped by the City of Blue Lake on the draft pre-zoning map.

**City of Ferndale.** The City of Ferndale General Plan Land Use Map was initially adopted in the 1970s and has undergone few revisions since that time. Ferndale has had a very stable population of just over 1300 for more than 40 years. The 1970 population was 1352; the 2010 population count is 1371. The General Plan Update proposes no changes in land use designations adjacent to the city, and the policies of the proposed plan should help to maintain the existing uses surrounding the town.

### **Public Land Management Plans**

Various federal and state agencies manage lands within Humboldt County and a number of these lands have adopted management plans. Land Use Element Section 4.7, Public Lands, of the General Plan Update contains goals and policies to promote consistency between the General Plan Update and the management plans of other agencies.

### *Conclusion*

With respect to applicable land use plans and policies, the above analysis does not identify any inconsistencies between the proposed General Plan Update and other applicable plans, programs, and regulations with jurisdiction over the project that would result in adverse physical effects pursuant to CEQA. However, the description of open space types on pages 10-1 and 10-2 in the Conservation and Open Space Element does not include new open space definitions established in recent changes in state law. Although Policies and Standards in the Conservation and Open Space Elements and the Safety Element contain protections for these newly defined open space lands consistent with state law, they are not adequately described as open space land.

Regarding unincorporated legacy communities, the Housing Element contains the analysis that is required by Government Code Section 65302.10(a)(2). However, the General Plan Update should include a policy to require that on or before the due date for each subsequent revision of its Housing Element, the County shall review, and if necessary amend, the General Plan to update the analysis of unincorporated legacy communities.

As part of its review of modifications to Community Plan policies, the Board of Supervisors also considered changes to the three stand-alone Community Plans in a document entitled "Suggested Revisions to Other Community Plans to Maintain Consistency with the General Plan Update." This document contained suggested changes to the Avenue of the Giants, Eureka, and McKinleyville plans that relate to land use maps; land use designations revised as a part of the General Plan Update; references to the Framework General Plan or other plans that have since been updated; and corrected references to state law or County Zoning Regulations. Adoption of the "Suggested Revisions to Other Community Plans to Maintain Consistency with the General Plan Update" would be required in order to maintain consistency between the Avenue of the Giants, Eureka, and McKinleyville Community Plans and the General Plan Update.

In addition, the proposed changes to the General Plan Update land use map would cause the zoning of various areas of the County to either remain inconsistent or become inconsistent with Plan land use designations. State land use regulation requires that cities and counties re-establish consistency within a reasonable time after a comprehensive general plan revision, which is interpreted to be up to two years. The General Plan Update contains some specific policies and programs to map zoning changes, such as UL-IM2, Neighborhood and Town Centers, which would create a zoning overlay for this land use type, or AG-IM1, Develop Planned Rural Development Program, which directs the Zoning Regulations to be updated to include provisions for a planned development program for rural areas. However, there are no implementation measures or programs to ensure that consistency between the General Plan land use map and zoning map is re-established in a reasonable time. As a result, the above described deficiencies would pose a **potentially significant impact**.

### *Mitigation*

The following implementation measure below shall be fulfilled to help address the potential impacts related to the re-establishment of zoning consistency with the General Plan Update.

**Mitigation Measure 3.1.3.2.a.** Add the following implementation measure to the Growth Planning section of the Land Use Element to reduce potential impacts related to conflict between the General Plan Update and applicable land use regulations:

**Implementation Measure GP-IMX, Zoning Consistency.** *Within two years after the adoption of the General Plan Update, revise the Zoning Regulations to re-establish zoning consistency with the policies of the General Plan and amend the Zoning Map to achieve consistency with the General Plan Land Use Map.*

**Mitigation Measure 3.1.3.2.b.** Add the following narrative to Section 10.1.1, Relationship to Other Elements, and Table 10-A Conservation and Open Space Policy Summary, of the Conservation and Open Space Elements to fully demonstrate consistency between General Plan Update and state law:

**Add the following text to the Section 10.1.1, Relationship to Other Elements:**

- **Open Space for military bases, installations, and operating and training areas** — *areas adjacent to military installations, military training routes, and underlying restricted airspace that can provide additional buffer zones to military activities and complement the resource values of the military lands. [add to the bottom of page 10-1]*
- **Open Space for Native American historic, cultural or sacred site** — *Open space for the protection of places, features, and objects described in Sections 5097.9 and 5097.993 of the Public Resources Code. [add to the bottom of page 10-1]*

**Open Space for military bases, installations, and operating and training areas:**

- *Narrative description of these open space lands and a map showing their locations is included in the Safety Element.*
- *Policies to minimize impacts to military trainings areas are included in the Safety Element.*
- *Policies to provide notification to the military are included in the Safety Element. [add to the bottom of page 10-2]*

**Open Space for Native American historic, cultural or sacred site:**

- *Narrative description of these open space lands is included in the Cultural Resources Section of the Conservation and Open Space Elements.*
- *Policies relating to Native American Tribal consultation are included in the Cultural Resources Section of the Conservation and Open Space Elements.*
- *Policies relating to the identification, protection, and enhancement of cultural resources are included in the Cultural Resources Section of the Conservation and Open Space Elements. [add to the bottom of page 10-2]*

<b>Add to Table 10-A. Conservation and Open Space Policy Summary</b>	
<b>Open Space for Military Training Areas</b>	Safety Element
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Minimize impacts to military trainings areas</li> <li>B. Provide notification to the military of projects that could affect military readiness.</li> </ul>	

**Mitigation Measure 3.1.3.2.c.** Add a map identifying the Unincorporated Legacy Communities within the County as well as the following policy to the Community Infrastructure and Services

Element to reduce potential impacts related to conflict between the General Plan Update and state General Plan law:

**Appendix F: Map Book.** Add a map of Humboldt County showing the location of Unincorporated Legacy Communities.

**Policy IS-PX3, Unincorporated Legacy Communities.** On or before the due date for each subsequent revision of its Housing Element, the County shall review, and if necessary amend, the General Plan to update the analysis of unincorporated legacy communities.

### **Level of Significance after Mitigation**

Therefore, with implementation of the mitigation measure identified above, impacts related to conflict between the General Plan Update and applicable state laws relating to the open space and land use elements would be **less than significant**.

### **Impact 3.1.3.3: Habitat Conservation Plans**

Implementation of the General Plan Update would facilitate additional development that could conflict with habitat conservation or natural community conservation or recovery plans.

This impact analysis addresses Land Use and Planning item “c” of the significance standards listed in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines as provided in Section 3.1.2 above. Pursuant to these standards, the proposed County General Plan Update would have a significant impact if it would:

- c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

For a discussion of potential conflict with any habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan see Chapter 3.11, Biological Resources, Impact 3.11.3.5, Habitat Conservation Plans.

### **Impact 3.1.3.4. Induce Population Growth**

Implementation of the General Plan Update would create opportunities for new development that could induce growth directly or indirectly.

This impact analysis addresses Population and Housing item “a” of the significance standards listed in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines as provided in Section 3.1.2 above. Pursuant to these standards, the proposed County General Plan Update would have a significant impact if it would:

- d) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure).

Implementation of the General Plan Update would maintain and create new opportunities for the development of residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. These additional growth opportunities could induce growth directly (e.g., through the construction of new dwelling units) or indirectly (e.g., through the creation of new jobs or the extension of roads, or the extension of sewer or water mains). Population growth itself is not considered growth inducing if it is consistent with what has been projected in regional population forecasts.

The General Plan Update is the long range land use plan that establishes development patterns and guides future growth in the unincorporated area. The land use map identifies areas for development of residential and commercial land uses, as well as roads and other infrastructure, to accommodate forecasted population growth. As such, the General Plan Update would induce population growth; however, growth would not be considered substantial unless the General Plan Update induced growth beyond state and regional projections.

Humboldt County is projected to grow at a significantly slower rate than the rest of the State of California. The State of California is anticipated to grow approximately 38 percent from 39,255,883 in 2016 to 54,266,115 in 2040. The DOF forecasts that Humboldt County will grow approximately 2.4 percent between 2016 and 2040 to a population of 138,307 in 2040. The County would represent substantially less than one percent of the statewide population in 2040.

Unlike most areas of the state, growth projections are not prepared by the regional transportation planning agency for this county. The HCAOG relies on DOF population forecasts for the regional transportation plan. Therefore, growth that can be accommodated by the General Plan Update cannot be compared with state or regional projections other than DOF projections.

The Humboldt County Board of Supervisors adopted the County Housing Element that identifies, based on the 2014-2019 Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA), a need to construct 859 new dwelling units in the unincorporated area at various income levels during the 2014 through 2019 planning cycle. The Housing Element identifies a specific need for 212 units for the extremely low and very low income categories (0 to 50 percent of median income), 135 for the other low income (51 to 80 percent of median income), 146 for moderate income (81 to 120 percent of median income), and 366 for above moderate income households. The General Plan Update estimated maximum feasible development potential is 38,972 dwelling units (See Section 2.5, Proposed Plan Estimated Maximum Feasible Development Potential, of the project description for additional information regarding the estimated maximum feasible development potential). The General Plan Update land use map provides a wide range of locations that can accommodate growth, which would ensure that the implementation of the Housing Element would not be jeopardized.

The General Plan Update provides sufficient flexibility in terms of its ability to accommodate growth to allow for the Housing Element to be implemented without obstruction. In order to provide a reasonable opportunity to obtain the RHNA housing goal, adequate potential area for development of various housing types has been provided. The General Plan Update maintains the potential area for development as considered in the Housing Element, and therefore, would not conflict with the Housing Element housing objectives.

According to the project description, the proposed General Plan Update provides for modest expansion of urban areas. The General Plan Update also provides for a slight increase in planned urban residential densities, increasing infill opportunities and urban-serviceable

development. Additional industrial and commercial lands would be made available based on historic proportion to residential land uses.

Development under the General Plan Update has the following characteristics:

- Generally maintains the characteristics of existing communities.
- Applies land use designations that support mixed-use development and other techniques to increase efficiency of land utilization, including the use of alternative subdivision standards, density bonuses, second unit incentives, live-work commercial centers, etc.
- Maintains current planned residential densities outside of community planning areas and facilitates opportunities for second residential units.
- Increases resource production land protections using a range of planning tools such as, clustered development incentives, open space standards, conservation easements and regulatory reform.

### **Analysis of Relevant General Plan Update Policies**

The Land Use Element, Housing Element, Community Infrastructure and Services Element, Conservation and Open Space Element, and Water Resources Element provide a framework to accommodate future development in an efficient and sustainable manner that is compatible with the character of unincorporated communities and the protection of valuable and sensitive natural resources. Humboldt County has not been confronted with significant growth pressures in recent decades. However, even though population growth rates are low, the supply of land in urbanized areas capable of supporting development continues to decrease. In order to accommodate growth, the General Plan Update establishes increased residential densities and mixed use zones, encourages the provision of diverse housing choices, commercial facilities, and infrastructure to accommodate forecasted growth while protecting resource lands and the established character of existing urban and rural neighborhoods. The Land Use Element also contain development timing policies, which are described in Impact Topic 3.1.3.1, Divide an Established Community, above, that are intended to allow for the orderly expansion of existing urban areas.

### **Conclusion**

The proposed General Plan Update accommodates the growth that is projected to occur within the County by the State Department of Finance. Population growth in Humboldt County is projected to peak in 2028 and then steadily decline thereafter through the remainder of the planning period and beyond. The General Plan Update does not propose any specific development proposals or contain policies that are intended induce growth. These policies address how growth is intended to be accommodated. The General Plan Update utilizes development timing policies similar to what is currently reflected in the community plans. The General Plan Update also provides for a slight increase in planned urban residential densities in a few cases, increasing infill opportunities and urban-serviceable development, as well as maintains or increases densities in other areas. Such policies are not intended to induce growth, but would accommodate growth to the greatest extent possible within urbanized area that can best provide needed community services.

The General Plan Update is a comprehensive plan to guide future growth throughout the County and accommodate growth to the greatest extent possible within urbanized areas

that can best provide needed community services. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in the direct or indirect inducement of unplanned population growth and potential impacts would be **less than significant**.

### ***Mitigation***

None required.

### **Impact 3.1.3.5 Displace Existing Housing or People**

Implementation of the General Plan Update would facilitate new development that could displace substantial numbers of existing housing units or people, thereby requiring construction of replacement housing in a different location.

This impact analysis addresses Population and Housing items “b” and “c” of the significance standards listed in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines as provided in Section 3.1.2 above. Pursuant to these standards, the proposed County General Plan Update would have a significant impact if it would:

- b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.
- c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

The General Plan is a long range land use plan that defines development patterns and establishes guidance for future growth in the unincorporated area, including the development of housing. New development or infrastructure consistent with the proposed General Plan Update could have the potential to displace existing housing, and would result in a significant impact if replacement housing would be required elsewhere outside of the unincorporated area.

The General Plan Update Land Use Element is intended to support growth within urban areas, maintain levels of development elsewhere, and increase resource production land protections. A substantial portion of the population growth projected by the Department of Finance would be expected occur in areas within CPAs and is intended to occur in a manner that maintains the characteristics of existing communities.

Humboldt County has dedicated substantial resources to the analysis of housing unit capacity within the County, especially within Urban Development and Water Service Areas. The Humboldt County Planning and Building Department has been refining its analysis of residential development capacity since the adoption of the 2003 Housing Element, and has utilized an on-line housing inventory to gather information from the public regarding development potential and constraints at the Assessor’s parcel level. The ongoing housing inventory analysis was informed by the Urban Study Area planning that was conducted as part of the preparation of the Community Infrastructure and Services Technical Report, 2008, and provided the basis for the Housing Element housing inventory and the land use projections for the General Plan Update. In addition, Dyett and Bhatia conducted a housing demand and land capabilities analysis as part of the preparation of the Building Communities Report, 2002.

The development capacity analyses described above confirm that the proposed land use map would allow for an adequate number of dwelling units to meet the projected population growth within the unincorporated area, and additional housing outside the unincorporated area would not be required to accommodate demand.

The General Plan Update does not contain specific development projects; rather it contains policies and applies land use designations to guide development within the unincorporated area. The implementation of the proposed General Plan Update would generally retain the existing land use pattern of the unincorporated area. However, development consistent with the General Plan Update could displace existing housing. Some areas that currently contain residences are designated for commercial or other non-residential land uses under the current General Plan and the General Plan Update; future construction of these non-residential land uses would have the potential to displace the existing housing. However, existing and increased residential density in adjacent areas or other areas of the unincorporated area would sufficiently offset displaced housing so that replacement housing elsewhere would not be necessary.

### **Analysis of Relevant General Plan Update Policies**

The Land Use and Housing Elements contain a series of policies intended to assure adequate land for residential development within the unincorporated area. Housing Element policy H-P9, Maintenance of an Adequate Supply of Residential Land, requires that the County maintain an adequate supply of residentially zoned land to meet projected housing needs. Pursuant to the Land Use Element, Urban Development Areas and Water Service Areas are intended to accommodate the levels of development that are projected to occur over the 20 year planning period of the General Plan. Policy GP-S7, Required Findings for Urban Expansion, contained in the Growth Planning Chapter of the Land Use Element, states that it is permissible to expand into Urban Expansion Areas when land within Urban Development Areas and Water Service Areas are not sufficient to meet Housing Element goals and service systems can accommodate additional demands.

### **Conclusion**

Development during the General Plan Update planning period has the potential to displace people or housing units necessitating the construction of new units elsewhere. However, the General Plan Update does not contain specific development projects; rather it contains policies and applies land use designations to guide development within the unincorporated area. The proposed General Plan Update policies described above would lessen potential impacts to the displacement of people or housing by providing more than sufficient land to accommodate growth during the planning period. Therefore, the General Plan Update would not displace substantial numbers of existing housing units, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. Therefore, impacts relating to the displacement of people or housing resulting from the General Plan Update would be **less than significant**.

### ***Mitigation***

None required.