
Chapter 3. Governance Policy

3.1 Purpose

This chapter describes the County's governance policies related to this Plan. Administrative topics include Plan implementation, Plan amendment, public participation, and inter-governmental coordination. This chapter also discusses governance issues such as combining regulations and incentives and balancing private property rights and public interests. Additionally, the topics of environmental justice, sustainability, and climate change are addressed.

3.2 Relationship to Other Elements

Administrative policies guide the implementation of the entire Plan. Topics such as public participation, inter-governmental coordination, and the permit application process are central to the practical success of the entire Plan. Topics such as regulations and incentives, private property rights, environmental justice, sustainability, and climate change have been considered in the drafting of each of the elements with the intention of developing a coherent policy approach that is consistent throughout the Plan.

3.3 Background

Plan Implementation

One of the Plan's Guiding Principles is to adhere to a practical implementation strategy. Many of the Plan policies are implemented through the building and planning permit application process. Development proposals must be consistent with the Plan in order to obtain permit approval. Implementation also occurs through the work programs of County Departments. Public Works' road improvement projects and Planning and Buildings' affordable housing or small business assistance programs are examples of projects that implement the General Plan. Other implementation examples include updating a specific ordinance in accordance with this Plan and policy positions taken by the Board of Supervisors on issues that affect the County. With regard to the latter example, the Plan can provide the basis for the County's position on state legislation or a specific project, such as a dam relicensing application. To be effectively implemented, Plan policies must be clear, realistic, and, in the case of work programs, capable of being funded through state and federal grants or County revenues over time.

Amendments

As a long-term policy document with a 20-year planning horizon, the General Plan will likely undergo course corrections and refinements. While planning is a continuous process and periodic review to consider changes in circumstances is necessary, the Plan must also represent a sufficiently solid vision for long-term implementation such as infrastructure investments.

The Plan should strike a balance between the flexibility needed to respond to unique situations and the rigidity necessary to guide development decisions in a predictable and consistent manner.

Major reviews of the entire Plan are scheduled to coincide with state mandated five-year periodic review of the Housing Element. Major plan amendments should be responsive to changed circumstances, such as deviations from anticipated population growth, or address strategic needs, such as updates to community plans.

Apart from County-initiated amendments, there will be requests from private property owners for amendments to the land use designation for individual parcels. While this amendment process is critical to the flexibility of the Plan, the General Plan is a policy document for the entire County and may only be amended "in the public interest" as determined by the Board of Supervisors. In other words, the Plan can only be amended when the change benefits the entire County, not merely because the change would benefit a particular property owner. Every General Plan amendment must also be consistent with the rest of the Plan or appropriate changes need to be made to the Plan to achieve consistency with the proposed amendment.

Public Participation

The policies for citizen participation recognize the need for public involvement in the planning process. The successful application of any law depends to a great extent on the citizens' understanding and support of that law.

The planning process, then, must provide for the education of the public. Armed with knowledge of the process, the citizen can have meaningful access to the decision makers, evaluate alternative proposals, and make specific recommendations in support of, or for change to, hearing draft proposals.

In the local determination of the future character of Humboldt County, the public must understand the process, the alternatives and the reasons for decisions made that affect our County and our neighborhoods.

The goals and policies in this chapter strive to increase transparency and improve access so that citizens may influence and shape the future of the County. They are rooted in the following findings from the 1984 Framework Plan:

1. It is essential to the function of the democratic society that public policy shall be reflective of the needs of the citizenry as expressed by the citizens themselves.
2. Citizens will participate when they feel their participation will have an effect.
3. The large size of the County limits the opportunity for centralized citizen participation.
4. The disparate nature of the County creates conflicting interests within the County and points to the need for a forum for resolution.
5. County financial resources can potentially limit the opportunity for citizen participation.

Citizens want opportunities for meaningful and informed participation in the County's land use decision-making processes. This participation can be fostered at the staff, advisory committee, Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors levels through improved noticing, sharing of information and well designed participation processes. The

goals and policies of this chapter strive to increase transparency and improve access to give citizens the opportunity to influence and shape the future of the County. In order to provide for the maximum participation by the public the following process and educational tools should be considered for use by County staff and decision makers in planning processes:

- Community Advisory Committees
- Citizen Advisory Committees
- Planning Advisory Committees
- Community workshops
- Stakeholder workshops
- Presentations to community groups
- Planning charrettes
- Interviews with local media
- Citizen's Handbook
- Electronic noticing (including but not limited to maintaining an email distribution list for projects and updates)
- Print noticing (including but not limited to direct notices, newspaper notices, press releases, PSA's, flyers posted in the communities, posting in local libraries)
- Updated County Website and mapping GIS
- Technical reports

Inter-Governmental Coordination

Citizens expect close coordination and cooperation between local jurisdictions and branches of the state and federal government. Aligning goals and synchronizing processes is critical to achieving efficient governance and Plan implementation.

California planning law contains numerous provisions directing inter-governmental coordination during the administration and update of a general plan. In addition to enumerated coordination provisions, broad public and agency involvement in plan preparation is directed and encouraged. Of particular importance to this Plan is coordination with city and tribal governments.

Because areas adjacent to the County's major cities represent some of the better opportunities for locating new growth, which also has the potential to impact these cities, close cooperation between the County and municipalities is imperative. Meeting regional housing needs and providing infrastructure and services called for in this Plan will require unprecedented levels of coordination between the County, cities, and local service districts.

Fostering good working relationships with tribal governments is of particular importance to Humboldt County. The County has the highest per capita Native American population of any county in California. Tribal governments in Humboldt County govern significant land area and are important partners in stewardship of natural resources. There is a rich cultural resource history associated with Humboldt County and culturally sensitive areas need tribal consultation when development proposals are being considered.

Intergovernmental coordination in the regulatory process is particularly important to avoid redundancy and inefficiency. This Plan supports distinguishing relative authority between regulatory agencies unless polices of this Plan require overlap. For example, if a project requires an air quality permit from the North Coast Air Quality Management

District, the land use permitting process will rely on the air quality permit process to ensure compliance with state and federal standards and imposition of mitigations to maintain air quality impacts below levels of significance. Due to the legal requirements imposed on Lead Agencies under CEQA, which is typically the County's role, this form of reliance requires considerable coordination with permitting agencies.

Board of Supervisors

The Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, as the elected legislative body, is the chief policy making body for the County. The Board has sole responsibility and authority to adopt the General Plan as the County's statement of public policy on land use. The Board is required by law to hold at least one public hearing to receive public testimony and to review the report and recommendations of its advisory agency, the Planning Commission. The Board, through the establishment of the Planning Commission, the provision of funding for the work on this plan and the adoption of policies to maximize public participation, has provided the greatest opportunities for public awareness and understanding of the plan.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission consists of seven people who are appointed by the Board of Supervisors as the advisory agency on all planning matters. One Commissioner comes from each supervisorial district and two are appointed at-large. The Commission must report to the Board and provide recommendations on the adoption and revision of the General Plan. The Commission is required by law to hold at least one public hearing to take testimony on plan proposals. In order to provide for maximum public input, the Commission may recommend the formation of advisory committees. The Commission held over seventy five public meetings on the draft plan concerning policy issues now included in the Hearing Draft of General Plan.

Planning and Building Department

The Planning and Building Department is responsible for planning and facilitating land use development based on the policies of the General Plan and its implementing Ordinances, as well as State and Federal regulations. Planning and Building works with many facets of the community to gather comments regarding proposed developments and provide input into the formation of policies and plans to guide the development of the County. The Planning and Building Department includes Current Planning, and Long Range Planning.

The Planning and Building Department also provides planning services to the Board, the Commission, and the public. These services include: the gathering, presentation, and/or coordination of information; making recommendations; and implementing the Plan. Planning staff makes recommendations on discretionary projects and/or legislative items to the decision making body (either the Planning Commission or the Board of Supervisors) based upon the policies of the General Plan and its implementing Ordinances, as well as State and Federal regulations. The Planning and Building Director is appointed by the Board with the staff appointed by the Director. The staff level and supporting appropriations are determined annually by the Board during the budget process.

Permit Application Process

An efficient and effective permitting system is critical to Plan implementation. Throughout the General Plan update process, permit applicants expressed their need for a fast permitting system that produces consistent, fair, and accountable decisions. Applicants want clear guidelines, a straightforward process, and a positive and helpful attitude from County employees. Citizens want an open and transparent process that produces credible and enforceable outcomes. Members of the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors want public hearing processes that give interested parties an opportunity to be heard and focus on key issues with clear identification of problems and potential solutions. Maintaining a permit application process that achieves these objectives is a high priority of this Plan.

Regulations and Incentives

Regulations establish mandatory community standards. Incentives provide economic benefits to landowners when the proposed development is consistent with General Plan goals. For example, Planned Urban Developments offer density bonuses and design flexibility when the landowner voluntarily offers amenities supported by the Plan. The regulatory process can serve as an incentive, wherein the Plan specifies an expedited or minimal permit process for projects that fulfill the goals of the Plan.

This Plan contains a mix of regulatory and incentive-based approaches, recognizing that a combination of required and voluntary measures supported by public education and a competent permitting process provides the best means to achieve General Plan goals.

Private Property Rights and Public Interests

The Plan attempts to strike a balance between individual private property rights and the promotion of public health, safety, and welfare. The promotion of public welfare includes the protection of public trust resources, such as air, water, and wildlife. Restrictions on the use of private property can suppress lawful business and personal livelihood and affect the overall wealth of the community. Regulations that restrict the use of private property need to be justified based on a rational relationship to public interests.

Environmental Justice

Environmental justice is defined as the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. The concept of environmental justice is incorporated into the general policies put forth in this chapter and is reflected in various policies throughout the Plan.

The issue is a civil rights matter, grounded in the Equal Protection Clause of the U. S. Constitution. The Fourteenth Amendment expressly provides that the states may not "deny to any person within [their] jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." Both U. S. and California law includes directives to consider this issue in local decision making. Recent California law recommends general plan provisions that specifically foster equitable distribution of new public services and facilities, avoidance of pollution in proximity to schools and residential areas, and promotion of expanding opportunities for transit-oriented development.

Problems of environmental justice can manifest themselves through procedural inequities in the planning process as well as through geographic inequities that concentrate undesirable land uses in certain neighborhoods. Policies throughout all elements of the General Plan are designed to be supportive of environmental justice.

Sustainable Development

Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs is the essence of sustainable community development. The State of California encourages cities and counties to consider policies to promote sustainability through general plans. The concept of sustainability was addressed by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors in 1972 when they adopted the following resolution:

"We the people of Humboldt County recognize and acknowledge our total dependence upon the land and accept our obligation to use the land in a manner which will sustain and benefit man and all other living things."

During the Critical Choices phase of the General Plan update, individuals expressed concerns about trends they felt might undermine the County's long-term sustainability. These concerns were ultimately expressed through the Guiding Principles of this Plan. As a result, principles of sustainability are embedded in the various chapters and elements that make up the Plan. For example, community members expressed concerns that the declining profitability of timber harvesting combined with an increased demand for rural housing might lead to conversion of timberlands that could ultimately threaten the County's economy over the long term. To address this concern, several Plan policies are designed to protect timberlands from conversion and declining profitability.

In Part 2, Building Communities, sustainability objectives are translated into urban development policies that direct growth to areas where services are currently available or may be responsibly extended, while protecting the resource lands. Mixed-use policies in the Land Use Element encourage walkable communities and compact development and seek to restore traditional downtown areas. The Circulation Element encourages a balanced transportation network that accommodates motorized vehicles, public transit, bicycles, and pedestrians. These policies are intended to shore up the long-term economic viability of our urban development areas while protecting the long-term economic potential of resource lands. They also work to enhance the character of our urban areas, conserve fuel and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In Part 3, Resource Management, new elements such as Water Resources, Energy Resources, and Waste Management are introduced that, in combination with the other resource-related chapters, provide the framework for making land use decisions that offer long-term economic, social, and environmental benefits. The Open Space and Conservation elements provide a framework of goals and policies for long-term use and protection of open space lands. In some cases, this is achieved through policies that protect sensitive resource areas from development. In much of the County, because the long-term protection of open space depends upon profitable agricultural and forest resource production, policies have been designed to maintain profitability.

Climate Change

In the fall of 2006, Governor Schwarzenegger signed AB 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act, into law. The bill requires reductions in statewide greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2020. This requires a 28% reduction in current annual greenhouse gas emissions. In 2016, Governor Brown signed SB 32, requiring California to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030.

This legislative action is a response to the effect of greenhouse gas emissions on the environment. Potential effects of concern to Humboldt include:

- Earlier snowmelt and significant reductions in snowpack, increasing stress on reservoirs, groundwater, and river systems, and reducing statewide water supplies.
- Increased rain on snow events, possibly causing increased flooding.
- Decreased yields of crops or health of forests that are already near climate thresholds.
- Changes in natural ecosystems resulting from higher temperatures.
- Increased wildfire potential.
- Rise in sea level.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was amended to require a “good-faith effort” to “describe, calculate or estimate” greenhouse gas emissions of a project and the analysis of impacts should include consideration of the extent to which the project would increase or reduce greenhouse gas emissions; exceed a locally applicable threshold of significance; and comply with “regulations or requirements adopted to implement a statewide, regional, or local plan for the reduction or mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions. To be consistent with state legislation and recent court decisions, the Plan and its implementation programs will need to consider greenhouse gas impacts in future years that are consistent with both AB 32 and SB 32 in 2020 and 2030, and make “substantial progress” toward the statewide target of 80 percent below 1990 emissions levels by 2050.

This Plan supports continued County participation and leadership in the countywide climate protection campaign initiated through the Redwood Coast Energy Authority. The policies of the Plan also directly mitigate carbon emissions; for example, reductions in vehicle miles traveled are achieved through policies that promote compact growth and infilling, increased transit use, and pedestrian friendly design. Climate protection is directly addressed in the Air Quality Element. The Plan also includes an Energy Element that promotes energy self-sufficiency, conservation, efficiency, and green building standards; promotes increased reliance on renewable energy sources; and provides guidelines for siting wind and hydro energy developments. The Plan includes forest policies that support carbon banking and continued forest product production.

With respect to addressing adverse impacts of climate change, the Safety Element incorporates by reference a countywide multi-agency local hazard mitigation plan and a flood hazard mitigation plan pursuant to federal pre-disaster mitigation law. These plans provide systematic and ongoing programs to reduce or eliminate long-term risks from natural hazards. Intensified severe weather, dam and levee failure, wildland fire, flooding, and tsunamis are among the hazards addressed by these plans. Concerns

about the rising sea level are addressed by limiting development within the tsunami run-up area.

Lastly, the climate change issue is included in the Economic Development Element, recognizing that the world's efforts to reduce global warming may present economic opportunities for Humboldt County in the areas of green technology and expertise, and carbon sequestration incentives for agriculture and forestry.

3.4 Goals and Policies

Goals

- G-G1. Plan Implementation.** Consistent and successful implementation of Plan policies throughout the planning period.
- G-G2. Plan Maintenance.** A current General Plan responsive to community needs, which is updated on a regular basis.
- G-G3. Public Participation.** An open, inclusive, and responsive process for public participation in County land use decision making and greater understanding of the Plan.
- G-G4. Comprehensive Planning Documents.** A set of planning documents that is a comprehensive statement of public policy concerning land use and the provision of public services.
- G-G5. Accessible General Plan.** A comprehensive General Plan written in understandable language which is readily accessible to the public and encourages citizen participation throughout the planning process in the geographic area under consideration, whenever possible.
- G-G6. Educated Public.** An informed and educated public with a meaningful planning role and multiple opportunities for participation in the planning process.
- G-G7. Timely and Effective Coordination.** Timely and effective intergovernmental coordination that encourages coherent planning and public communications and efficient permitting, service delivery, and expenditure of public funds.
- G-G8. Effective Permit Processing.** An efficient permitting system that permit applicants, community members, and decision makers can rely upon to implement the goals and policies of the General Plan.

Policies

Plan Implementation

- G-P1. Priority.** Implementing the General Plan shall be a high priority of the County and be given at least equal weight to the implementation of state and federal mandates.
- G-P2. Board of Supervisors Role.** The Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, as the elected legislative body, is the chief policy making body for the County. The Board has sole responsibility and authority to adopt the General Plan as the County's statement of public policy on land use. The Board of Supervisors shall have the ultimate responsibility to interpret the General Plan and oversee its implementation. The Board holds public hearings to receive public testimony and to review the report and recommendations of its advisory agency, the Planning Commission. The Board, through the establishment of the Planning Commission, the provision of funding for the work on this plan and the adoption of policies to maximize the public participation has provided the greatest opportunities for public awareness and understanding of the plan.
- G-P3. Planning Commission Role.** The Planning Commission consists of seven people who are appointed by the Board of Supervisors and shall serve as the primary quasi-judicial body on land use matters and the primary advisory body to the Board of Supervisors on legislative land use matters. The Commission must report to the Board and provide recommendations on the adoption and revision of the General Plan. The Commission holds public hearings to take testimony on plan proposals. In order to provide for maximum public input, the Commission has the ability to recommend to the Board the formation of advisory committees. The Commission procedures shall be prepared in a format and language that is clear and readily available to the public.
- G-P4. Planning and Building Department's Role.** Under the direction of the Board of Supervisors, the Planning and Building Department is responsible for planning and facilitating land use development based on the policies of the General Plan and its implementing ordinances, as well as State and Federal regulations. Planning works with many facets of the community to gather comments regarding proposed developments and provide input into the formation of policies and plans to guide the development of the County. The Planning Division also provides planning services to the Board, the Commission, and the public. These services include: the gathering, presentation, and/or coordination of information; making recommendations; and implementing the Plan. Planning staff makes recommendations on discretionary projects and/or legislative items (such as general plan amendments) to the decision making body (either the Planning Commission or the Board of Supervisors).
- G-P5. Community Plans.** Community Planning Areas shall continue to be individually planned through periodic updates of Plan and Zone designations and community-specific General Plan policies.
- G-P6. Environmental Justice.** County decision making shall avoid disproportionately impacting disadvantaged populations.

Plan Amendments

G-P7. Periodic Review. Periodically review and update the Plan for consistency with state law. At the Board of Supervisors' discretion, the County will comprehensively review and update chosen Element(s) to coincide with the state-mandated Housing Element periodic update cycle or every five years.

G-P8. Required Findings and Criteria for Amendments. A petition for amendment of this Plan may be accepted for processing upon the Board of Supervisors making one or more of the following findings:

- A. Base information or physical conditions have changed; or
- B. Community values and assumptions have changed; or
- C. There is an error in the plan; or
- D. To maintain established uses otherwise consistent with a comprehensive view of the plan; or
- E. The proposed amendment has the potential for public benefit and is consistent with the Guiding Principles and applicable goals of the Plan.

The Board must also determine the revision is not appropriate for the next scheduled update.

For approval of Plan Amendments, the Board must make the findings that the proposed revision is in the public interest, and is consistent with the Guiding Principles in Section 1.4 and applicable goals of the Plan.

G-P9. Errors in the Plan. Where there is an obvious error in the Plan that would prevent a land use decision otherwise consistent with the Plan, the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors may act on the matter based on a comprehensive view of the Plan, noting the error in the decision and referring the error to the next available set of amendments.

Public Participation

G-P10. Public Participation. Encourage and facilitate the public's right to fully participate in all land use planning decisions by dissemination of information with adequate time for review through a variety of media sources, noticing of projects and Plan changes, and through direct communication with the public by the use of explanatory guides and handouts. Planning and implementation programs shall include actions designed to engage affected interests and ensure general public involvement.

A. **Outreach Program.** The County shall aggressively solicit the input of the public through an "outreach" program of public participation and encourage public participation through workshops and other methods of direct public education and engagement for County-initiated zone and plan amendments in the geographical area under discussion. To ensure general public involvement, planning and implementation programs shall include actions designed to motivate and engage the public and affected interests.

B. **Citizen Committees.** The County shall encourage the formation of working groups, citizen organizations, and citizen committees to provide

input on specific matters in a format consistent with the adopted policies and procedures. The Planning Commission should be authorized to create subcommittees or recommend the creation of adhoc committees from their membership, and to create joint committees for the conduct of planning matters.

- C. **Public Meeting Accessibility.** Public meetings pertaining to the General Plan shall be held in the geographic areas under consideration whenever practical,, or where the meetings of the Commission concern countywide issues as addressed in the General Plan, such meetings shall be held in the regional centers most representative of the issues to be addressed.
- D. **Public Notification of Planning Commission Meetings.** The Commission shall provide notification of meetings adequate to insure time for the public to access and review relevant documentation in order to maximize informed public participation consistent with the goals of this Plan.
- E. **Timing.** The time period from public input to adoption of the plans shall be minimized.
- F. **Direct Access to Decision Makers.** The policy making organizational structure shall provide the most direct relationship between the public and the decision makers, and the planning process shall maximize public access to the decision making process.
- G. **Process Education.** The County shall maximize the opportunities to educate the public about the planning process, the citizen's role in the process, and be provided this information prior to public hearings on the plan proposals in adequate time to insure informed participation.
- H. **Evaluation of Alternatives.** Written materials and public hearings shall be organized to provide public opportunities to evaluate alternative proposals and participate in the choice of the preferred alternative.
- I. **Educate the Public.** Educate the public about land use issues by supporting public access to video and audio broadcasts of Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors meetings on cable, satellite, internet, and radio.

G-P11. Accessibility. Use plain language in public communications and planning documents. Distribute information using modern information technology, such as remote interactive tools, but also use traditional means, such as libraries, copy centers, county offices, newspapers of general circulation, radio and TV and regular mail. The County shall make the Plan understandable and accessible to all segments of the population.

G-P12 Evaluations. Public participation in any general planning legislative amendment and revisions process shall be continually evaluated.

Intergovernmental Coordination

G-P13. City-State-County Coordination. Promote coordination between city, state, and County planning efforts through consistent communication, cooperative working relationships, and joint projects.

- G-P14. City General Plans.** Give consideration to city general plans and city council input when updating this Plan.
- G-P15. Joint Planning.** For major land use decisions adjacent to a city, involve the city early on in the planning stages through official notifications, joint staff meetings, and presentations to planning commissions and city councils.
- G-P16. Water Service Provider Coordination.** Coordinate with water service providers on water supply and demand in their respective areas, and participate in the five-year updates of urban water management plans.
- G-P17. Annexations.** Support annexation of urbanized areas to adjacent cities where they are the logical service provider and are in a better position to serve and support these areas. This includes annexation of planned urban development areas around the cities of Eureka and Fortuna and any other applicable areas around cities. The County shall utilize this Plan when representing its position on annexations to LAFCO.
- G-P18. Incorporation.** Support incorporation of McKinleyville.
- G-P19. Public Works Projects.** The County shall review public works projects for conformity with this Plan.
- G-P20. Real Property Transfers and Street Abandonment.** County acquisitions and disposals of real property and street vacations or abandonment shall be reviewed for conformity with this Plan.
- G-P21. Capital Improvement Plans.** The County shall encourage and support efforts by special districts and local agencies responsible for public facilities to prepare and maintain capital improvement programs.
- G-P22. Regional Transportation Plan.** The County shall coordinate with Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) in the preparation of the Regional Transportation Plan.
- G-P23. Tribal Government Coordination.** The County shall coordinate with affected tribal governments during General Plan updates and amendments.
- G-P24. Tribal General Plans.** Within reservation boundaries, the County shall utilize the tribal government's general plan for policy guidance where the County may need to exercise land use or permitting authority on non-trust lands.
- G-P25. Legislative Priorities.** The policies included in this Plan are intended to be used by the County in formulating its legislative priorities and in drafting policy response to local, state, and federal proposals.

Permit Application Process

- G-P26. Continuous Improvement.** Building, Planning, Public Works, and Environmental Health land use permit processes shall be continually evaluated to eliminate inefficiencies, reduce response time, and simplify procedures.

- G-P27 Military Training Routes.** The County shall coordinate with the US Navy during discretionary review of projects that could encroach into military training routes or operating areas shown in Figure 14-1.
- G-P28. Customer Service.** The permit process shall be managed to increase customer communication and satisfaction. Customers include permit applicants, community members with interest in an application, involved agencies, and decision makers.
- G-P29. Customized Permit Processes.** The County shall design streamlined permit processes for high priority classes of projects identified in this Plan.
- G-P30. Adequate Resources.** Resources shall be provided to ensure adequate permit staffing levels, use of modern processes and technology, innovation, and continuous improvement.
- G-P31. Common Sense Principle.** The General Plan should be interpreted in a common sense manner to encourage reasonable development which can meet the needs of the community with minimal impacts on the environment and demands on public services. Taking a comprehensive view of all relevant plan policies, the result must balance the intent of these policies, in a practical, workable, and sound manner. When using the Common Sense Principle, findings shall be made by the Planning Commission and/or Board of Supervisors indicating how the use of this principle balances the needs of the community and Plan policies.

3.5 Standards

- G-S1. Environmental Justice.** The County shall consider social and economic effects, including effects on disadvantaged populations, when assessing the significance of physical changes on the environment under CEQA pursuant to Section 15131(b) of the CEQA Guidelines.
- G-S2. Tribal Government Coordination.** The County shall coordinate land use actions with tribal governments pursuant to Government Code Section 65092: Public Notice to California Native American Indian Tribes; Sections 65351–65352.5: General Plan Consultation; and Sections 65560–65562.5: Consultation on Open Space.
- G-S3. State and Federal Permitting Coordination.** The County shall rely upon local, state, and federal permitting processes and regulatory standards when compliance with the state and federal standards will meet or exceed the requirements of this Plan and are feasible, enforceable, and adequate to reduce environmental impacts to less than significant levels.
- G-S4. Public Education.** The education of the public shall be provided through, but not limited to:
- A. Citizens Handbook
 - B. Print and electronic media
 - C. Public meetings
 - D. Community Advisory Committees

- E. Public workshops, charrettes, facilitated discussions
- F. Direct mailings and email notices
- G. Internet Web pages
- H. Technical reports
- I. Interactive live remote

G-S5. Planning Advisory Committees. Planning Advisory Committees (PAC) may be created to help educate and facilitate public participation, and review and prepare recommendations concerning updates and special or technical planning matters that may have countywide significance. Such PAC's should:

- A. Be established and appointed, subject to Board concurrence, by the Planning Commission;
- B. Report directly to the Commission;
- C. Be charged with a specific list of tasks and a schedule for completion;
- D. Not be created as a standing committee; and
- E. Be composed of lay citizens and technical advisors.

G-S6. Community Advisory Committees. Community Advisory Committees (CAC's) should be created to review and prepare recommendations on planning matters that affect their individual communities. Such CAC's should:

- A. Be formed in the community;
- B. Be representative of the community make-up, report on the selection process used to form the CAC and be confirmed by the Board based on a recommendation by the Commission;
- C. contain not less than five (5) nor more than eleven (11) members;
- D. Adhere to common CAC organizational guidelines adopted by the Board;
- E. In cooperation with County staff, direct all comments and questions on planning matters to the Planning Commission; CAC's will be provided County staff for answering questions, and making recommendations to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors;
- F. Establish a work program, regular meeting schedule and completion date;
- G. Prepare a map showing the limits of the community's area of interest and all such limits should be approved by the Planning Commission;
- H. Designate a contact person who will communicate with the Planning Commission and inform the public;
- I. Hold local workshops and public meetings to receive public comments.
- J. Educate the public about its community plan and other planning programs that affect the community;
- K. Provide a forum for citizen comments, and provide a mechanism for relaying those comments to the Planning Commission;

- L. Advise the Planning Commission on planning matters that affect the community;
- M. Provide input to the Commission on specific matters in a format consistent with the adopted policies and procedures;
- N. Develop hearing drafts of Community Plans consistent with overall County policies in the Framework Plan;
- O. Should be included in all planning notification procedures that affect their area; and
- P. Be advised of the CAC's role and responsibility, and, in addition to the education of the public, to listen to community members, bring forward their preferences and concerns in order to facilitate consensus building.

G-S7. Citizens Handbook. The Citizens Handbook is intended to serve as a self-help tutorial and syllabus to facilitate individuals, communities and special interest groups in the understanding of the Humboldt County planning process. The handbook shall provide a user friendly format with figures and flowcharts, a reference index to locate specific topics, and a glossary of definitions for commonly used general planning and zoning nomenclature. The Handbook, at minimum, shall contain the following specific chapters:

CHAPTER ONE: PLANNING LAW

- A. California Legislative History - Milestones in Planning Laws
- B. Present State Statutes
- C. Office of Planning and Research Guidelines (OPR) Summary of What is Required of the County

CHAPTER TWO: COUNTY HISTORY OF PLANNING

- A. 1965 Adoption of Original Plans
- B. Subsequent Planning Activity
- C. Humboldt County General Plan Documents
 - 1. a. Regional Plans
 - 2. b. City/Community Plans
 - 3. c. Plan Elements

CHAPTER THREE: GENERAL PLAN REVISION PROGRAM

- A. 1980 - 1984: County General Plan Revision Program
- B. 1980: Twelve Policy Background Studies
- C. 1980 -1982: Citizen Participation Program Development
- D. 1981-1982: Public Participation Policy Adopted (§1500)
- E. 1982: Citizens Handbook Adopted
- F. 1984: Framework Plan Adopted
- G. 1982 - 2002: County Community Plans Adopted
- H. 1999 - Forward: General Plan Update Process

CHAPTER FOUR: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- A. Citizens Handbook, Maintenance and Updating
- B. Opportunities for participation

- C. Citizen Participation: Individuals; Planning Advisory Committees; Community Advisory Committees; Ad-hoc Workgroups; Special Interest & Stake Holder Workgroups;
- D. Hearing Drafts and Environmental Assessments
- E. Draft Plan Review and Adoption
- F. Mapping & Zoning
- G. General Plan Amendments

APPENDIX

- A. Glossary
- B. Bibliography

- G-S8. Evaluation of Planning Process.** Provide evaluation forms in paper and/or electronic format for input on special meetings and workshops. The evaluation forms submitted from each meeting shall be collected and made available to the public.

3.6 Implementation Measures

- G-IM1. Progress Reports.** A General Plan Annual Progress Report shall be prepared by the Planning and Building Department on or before April 1 of each year pursuant to Government Code Section 65400(a)(2). The Progress Report shall be copied to the Planning Commission and presented to the Board of Supervisors in a public hearing.
- G-IM2. Budget Allocations.** Planning and Building shall include priority Plan implementation measures in its annual budget submittals to the Board of Supervisors.
- G-IM3. Update Schedule.** Maintain a periodic review of the General Plan for consistency with state law. Review on a five-year cycle, updates of individual elements and community plans on an as-needed basis directed by the Board of Supervisors, and periodic General Plan amendments to respond to individual Plan Amendment petitions and routine maintenance requirements.
- G-IM4. Consistency Review of Ordinances for Plan Amendments.** Review and update related ordinances for consistency with criteria for Plan amendments and Plan revision schedules as required by Government Code Sections 65300 and 65583 et seq.
- G-IM5. Meaningful Participation.** Comprehensively review and update the public participation processes to provide adequate time, information, and means of input to ensure early and meaningful community involvement in planning projects as required by state law. Whenever possible, public input sessions for County-initiated legislative changes should be formatted in such a way as to encourage meaningful participation and be held in the geographic areas under consideration. Provide interactive live remote, whenever possible.

- G-IM6. City-State-County Coordination.** County staff shall be available to work with city and state staff on issues and projects of mutual interest. County staff shall keep the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors informed to support policy level decision making on issues that require joint coordination pursuant to Government Code Section 65103(f).
- G-IM7. Water Service Provider Coordination.** County staff shall share land use data with service providers and support projects and plans that are consistent with this Plan pursuant to Government Code Sections 65302(d) and 65352.5
- G-IM8. Public Works Projects.** The Public Works Department shall list proposed public works projects recommended for planning, initiation, or construction during the ensuing fiscal year to the Board of Supervisors for review, and report as to conformity with this Plan pursuant to Government Code Section 65401.
- G-IM9. Real Property Transfers and Street Abandonment.** The County shall not acquire, dedicate, dispose, vacate or abandon real property unless in conformance with this Plan pursuant to Government Code Section 65402.
- G-IM10. Capital Improvement Plans.** County staff shall be available to coordinate with special districts, including schools, in the preparation of five-year Capital Improvement Plans pursuant to Government Code Section 65403.
- G-IM11. Regional Transportation Plan.** The County shall maintain its representation on the Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG), and staff of Public Works and Planning and Building shall participate in the preparation of the Regional Transportation Plan.
- G-IM12. Improvement Projects.** Planning and Building shall maintain a prioritized list of on-going permit process improvement projects. The status and implementation of improvement projects shall be periodically reported to the Board of Supervisors.
- G-IM13. Customer Service Training and Satisfaction.** Permitting staff shall receive periodic customer service training, and customer service satisfaction feedback should be collected and evaluated on a regular basis.
- G-IM14. Custom Permit Processes.** Planning and Building shall design less costly or less time consuming permit processes for specific classes of projects that have been deemed eligible to receive this incentive by this Plan.
- G-IM15. Performance Measurement.** Workload records and elapsed permit processing times shall be maintained by Planning and Building and reported to the Board of Supervisors on an annual basis through the budget process.
- G-IM16. Citizen Handbook.** A Citizen Handbook will be updated and made available to the public, in all County library branches, at public planning meetings, at the Planning Division front counter and to members of the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, Planning Advisory Committees and Community Advisory Committees, especially when beginning their services on these committees.

- G-IM17. Improve Public Participation With New Technology.** Staff shall annually review technology improvements as they relate to public participation and notification, and incorporate them into public participation processes whenever possible.

- G-IM18. Evaluation of Public Participation Process.** Establish a process to evaluate the effectiveness of ongoing citizen participation at community meeting and public workshops.