

### 3.13 POPULATION AND HOUSING

This section describes the environmental and regulatory setting for population and housing. It also describes existing conditions and potential impacts relative to population and housing that would result from implementation of the proposed project. Descriptions and analysis in this section are based on population and housing information provided by the California Department of Finance (DOF) and USCB, and the County General Plan and its Housing Element.

#### 3.13.1 Environmental Setting

The 2017 County General Plan has identified and mapped 18 inland CPAs. Some of these CPAs have an adopted a Community Plan, and others have 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 (Humboldt County 2017c). The General Plan also identifies the project site in a housing opportunity zone, which is an area suitable for future development, and is served or potentially served by public water and sewer.

The Eureka CPA, which has an adopted Community Plan as of 1995, encompasses 11,000 acres and includes the developed area around Eureka, outside the coastal zone, including Cutten, Ridgewood, Pine Hills, Humboldt Hill, and portions of Myrtle town (Humboldt County 2017c, 1995). Although the SOI for the Eureka CPA does not include the entire proposed project area, the North McKay development is specifically discussed and has relevant policies in the Community Plan and is therefore relevant to this section.

#### Population Trends

##### *Current Population and Housing Estimates*

The total population in the County was documented at 136,373 persons on July 1, 2018, according to the USCB (USCB 2018). The population as of April 1, 2010 was 134,623 persons, representing an increase of 1,750 persons over an eight-year timeframe. The County's population growth rate increased in the late 1980s and early 1990s and has since returned to a level rate that is more consistent with historic growth rates over the past 20 years. Between 1985 and 1990, the County grew by about 8,000 persons (7.3 percent), representing an average annual increase of 1.4 percent (USCB 2018). Further, the average household size in the County between 2014 and 2018 was 2.43 persons per household (USCB 2018).

As of January 1, 2019, the DOF estimated the population of the County at 135,333 persons. Total number of housing units were estimated to be 63,138 units.

##### *Historic Growth*

###### *Population*

The County population has grown at a moderate rate since 1990. The County's population increased at the highest rate of 4.7 percent from 1990 to 1995, slowed to less than 1 percent from 2010 to 2015, and then decreased between 2015 and 2019, growing at an annual rate of 0.5 percent. The County's historic population growth between 1990 and 2019 is summarized in Table 3.13-1.



**Table 3.13-1: Humboldt County Historic Population Growth**

Year	Population	Change from Previous (Percent)
1990	119,118	--
1995	124,721	4.7
2000	126,476	1.4
2005	131,467	3.9
2010	134,623	2.4
2015	135,435	0.6
2019	135,333	-0.1
<b>Annual Growth Rate</b>		<b>0.5</b>

Source: DOF 2007, 2012, 2019

*Housing Units*

The historical housing growth is calculated from 1990 to 2019. The County's housing units increased at a higher rate from 1990 to 2010. Between 2010 and 2019, the growth rate slowed to slightly above 1 percent. The County's housing growth between 1990 and 2019 is summarized in Table 3.13-2.

**Table 3.13-2: Humboldt County Historic Housing Units Growth**

Year	Population	Change from Previous (Percent)
1990	51,134	--
1995	53,948	5.5
2000	55,912	3.6
2005	58,738	5.1
2010	61,559	4.8
2015	62,327	1.2
2019	63,138	1.3
<b>Annual Growth Rate</b>		<b>0.8</b>

Source: DOF 2007, 2012, 2019

***Projected Countywide Population***

According to the County General Plan, the current annual growth rate is about 0.75 percent over the last 35 years, and DOF estimates that the annual growth rate between 2020 and 2025 is projected to be 0.24 percent. The County population is expected to have a positive growth rate until 2030, and then the growth rate is expected to decline through 2040 (Humboldt County 2017c).



**Population of Cutten Area**

The community of Cutten is an unincorporated, census designated place within the County that has a current population of 2,907 persons (Data USA 2017).

**Housing Trends**

**Countywide Trends**

According to DOF population and housing data, in the County’s Eureka area, in 1990 there were approximately 11,137 occupied housing units, with an average of 2.35 persons per household and a 5.47 percent housing vacancy rate. By 2000, there were approximately 10,957 occupied housing units, with an average of 2.26 persons per household and a 5.84 percent housing vacancy rate (DOF 2007). Table 3.13-3 shows the projected regional housing needs assigned to the County. As shown in the table, the County permitted construction of 549 fewer units than the total projected housing needs during the 2014-2018 time period, meeting about half of the projected housing need (Humboldt County 2017c, Housing Element Amended August 20, 2019).

**Table 3.13-3: Comparison of Housing Constructed and Quantified (2014-2018)**

Housing Type	Housing Units Unincorporated Areas		
	Quantified Objective	Actual Housing Construction	Surplus (Deficit)
Single-Family	814	376	-438
Multi-family	206	116	-90
Second Units	113	57	-56
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,133</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>-584</b>

Source: Humboldt County 2017c, Housing Element amended August 20, 2019

**Eureka Community Plan Trends**

The Eureka Community Plan includes development potential for the various neighborhoods within the Eureka CPA, including the neighborhood of Cutten and the North McKay area (i.e., the proposed project). Table 3.13-4 below shows the proposed development potential within these areas, as noted in the Eureka Community Plan. The proposed project actual residential mix would include additional multi-family units in addition to the units below.



**Table 3.13-4: Development Potential**

Location	Residential Low Density	Residential Medium Density	Total Housing Units
Cutten	150	80	230
North McKay	320	--	320

Source: Humboldt County 1995, as Amended 2017

**Regional Housing Need Allocation**

The Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) prepares the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) to allocate regional housing growth among County communities. The RHNA indicates that the County is expected to accommodate 3,390 new housing units within the four income levels between the 8.7-year projection period that began December 31, 2018 and ends August 31, 2027. Table 3.13-5 summarizes the regional housing needs allocation by income category. It indicates that approximately 60 percent of the housing need will be moderate- to upper-income households, and 40 percent will be very low to low income households (Humboldt County 2019).

For the same 8.7-year projection period, the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has cited a projected population increase of only 4,978 residents, which is much lower than the projected 3,390 housing units. The methodology used by HCD in determining the overall RHNA determination is based on projected population and projected households for the County. HCD applies additional units to correct for overcrowding, low vacancy rates, and demolition rates.

**Table 3.13-5: Regional Housing Need Allocation**

Jurisdiction	Very Low Income	Low Income	Moderate Income	Above Moderate Income	Proposed Total RHNA Allocation
Arcata	142	95	111	262	610
Blue Lake	7	4-	5	7	23
Eureka	231	147	172	402	952
Ferndale	9	5	6	13	33
Fortuna	73	46	51	120	290
Rio Dell	12	8	9	22	51
Trinidad	4	4	3	7	18
Unincorporated Area	351	223	256	583	1,413
RHNA Targets	829	532	613	1,416	3,390

Source: Humboldt County 2019



### 3.13.2 Regulatory Setting

#### State

##### *California Housing Element Law*

The state law requires each city and county to adopt a general plan for future growth. This plan must include a housing element that identifies housing needs for all economic segments and provides opportunities for housing development to meet that need. At the state level, HCD estimates the relative share of California's projected population growth that would occur in each county in the state, based on DOF population projections and historic growth trends. Where there is a regional council of governments, such as HCAOG, HCD provides the regional housing need to the council. The council then assigns a share of the regional housing need to each of its cities and counties. The process of assigning shares provides cities and counties the opportunity to comment on the proposed allocations. HCD oversees the process to ensure that the council of governments distributes its share of the state's projected housing need.

Each city and county must update its general plan housing element on a regular basis (approximately every five years). Among other things, the housing element must incorporate policies and identify potential sites that would accommodate a county's share of the regional housing need. Before adopting an update to its housing element, a city or county must submit the draft to HCD for review. HCD will advise the local jurisdiction whether its housing element complies with the provisions of California Housing Element Law.

The councils of government are required to assign regional housing shares to the cities and counties within their region on a similar five-year schedule. At the beginning of each cycle, HCD provides population projections to the councils of government, which then allocate shares to their cities and counties. The shares of the regional need are allocated before the end of the cycle so that the cities and counties can amend their housing elements by mandated deadlines.

#### Local

##### *Humboldt County General Plan*

The County General Plan (adopted October 23, 2017) contains several policies that directly pertain to population and housing. The County General Plan Housing Element was revised in August 2019, and the policies from the revised Housing Element that are relevant to the project include the following:

**Goal H-G1. Housing Production.** Regulatory policies, practices and financial incentives that promote the creation of affordable housing, protect the public health, safety and welfare, promote clear development requirements, advance equity, minimize the environmental impacts of housing development and reflect the goals and priorities of this Plan.

**Goal H-G2. Housing Diversity.** An adequate supply of all types of housing for all income levels in all areas of the County, including urban, suburban, rural, hamlet and remote areas.



**Goal-G3. Workforce Housing.** An adequate supply of rental and homeownership opportunities affordable to wage earners within close proximity to local businesses, recreational facilities, community services, transit corridors and schools.

- **Policy H-P1: Development of Properties in the Residential Land Inventory.** The County shall encourage development of parcels in the residential land inventory for the current planning period at targeted residential density.
- **Policy H-P6: Contributions to Infrastructure and Service Development.** Market-rate housing will pay its fair share of infrastructure and public service costs. Housing with long-term affordability covenants and restrictions requiring units to be available to, and occupied by, persons or families of low, very low or extremely low income for at least 20 years may be eligible for subsidies to pay for applicable infrastructure and public service costs.
- **Policy H-P7: Residential Subdivision Approvals within Housing Opportunity Zones.** The density of residential subdivisions within Housing Opportunity Zones shall not be reduced below the calculated minimum number of units per Standard H-S2 unless the County makes specified findings.
- **Policy H-P8: Residential Subdivision Permit Process.** The County shall maintain an efficient, streamlined and predictable permitting process designed for residential subdivisions that meet the goals and policies of this Element.
- **Policy H-P9: Expedited Residential Subdivision Review in Housing Opportunity Zones.** The County shall streamline environmental review of residential subdivisions in Housing Opportunity Zones by establishing standardized thresholds of significance. When funding is available and in partnership with the developer, the County may complete pre-development environmental studies for parcels eligible for subdivision into five or more parcels.
- **Policy H-P13: Support Innovative Construction and Design Methods.** The County shall support the use of innovative construction and design methods and building materials that make more efficient use of land and materials, including water conserving waste disposal systems, energy systems, dwelling designs, and uses of recycled materials for building. The County shall also encourage and support sweat-equity and collaborative construction methods.
- **Policy H-P14: Encourage New and Experimental Techniques.** The County shall encourage and be receptive to new and experimental construction techniques.
- **Policy H-P16: Reduce and Avoid Impacts to Biological Resources.** The County shall refer all building permit applications for structures whose water source is from perennial streams or rivers, or from wells within 100 feet of a perennial stream or river, or from springs within 100 feet of a perennial stream or river to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).
- **Policy H-P18: Housing Opportunity Zones.** The County shall continue to stimulate residential and infrastructure development within Housing Opportunity Zones. The County shall review and consider the expansion of or the addition of new Housing Opportunity Zones, as needed and where appropriate.
- **Policy P-21: Siting of Multifamily Housing Developments.** The County shall plan, prioritize, and support development proposals that locate multifamily uses along major transportation corridors, near transit stops, public services, recreation areas, neighborhood commercial centers and work opportunities.



- **Policy H-P22: Allowances for a Mixture of Housing Sizes and Types.** The County shall allow a variety of housing types and sizes in all residential subdivisions in areas served by public sewer to encourage a mix of housing opportunities for all income categories.
- **Policy H-P24. Promote Fair Housing and Improved Access to Opportunity.** The County shall support the enforcement of state and federal fair housing and anti-discrimination laws and improve public information and community engagement on fair housing topics.

The Growth Element includes goals and polices to promote and sustain economic prosperity in the County. The following policies are from the County General Plan Growth Element:

**Goal ED-G1. Stable Economy.** A diverse, stable, and growing local economy.

- **Policy ED-P1: Economic Stability and Diversity.** Promote economic stability, growth and diversity by emphasizing development of industries identified as priorities in the County's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (without excluding other industries) and encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship, and global competition.
- **Policy ED-P3: Job Growth and Workforce.** Collaborate with economic development entities in the region to promote job growth, and entrepreneurship in industries identified as priorities in the County's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (without excluding other industries). Work with the education and private sectors to promote education, vocational training, professional development, and lifelong learning in the workforce.

### **Eureka Community Plan**

The Eureka Community Plan, adopted April 25, 1995, and amended on October 23, 2017, contains several policies that directly pertain to population and housing, including the following:

**Goal 2210.1.** To ensure that adequate land is designated with appropriate densities to allow the Planning Area to absorb its share of anticipated Humboldt County population growth, while retaining as much as possible the current quality of life.

**Goal 2310.1.** To develop and maintain community and neighborhood commercial uses to support the expected increased residential growth.

**Goal 2310.2.** To establish commercial areas close to neighborhoods to reduce traffic on our roads and conserve energy resources.

**Goal 2410.1.** To provide adequate housing and a satisfactory living environment for all community residents.

**Goal 2410.3.** To provide for affordable housing.

- **Policy 2420.2.** To reduce conflict between two different land uses, approval of uses on the edges of a zoning district or general plan designation should include provisions for insuring compatibility such as landscaped buffer areas.
- **Policy 2420.6.** The County encourages the use of a Design Review process for construction of new multiple-family projects. The process shall be included as an implementation measure of this Plan.



**Goal 2510.1.** To protect resource production lands (agriculture, timberlands) in the outlying areas by concentrating future development around existing communities and infrastructure.

**Goal 2510.2.** To assure rural residential development will occur in a manner consistent with rural fire safety standards.

- **Policy 2520.1. Subdivisions.** Subdivisions for residential purposes, including subdivisions developed in phases, shall not be approved unless the roads planned to serve such subdivision or individual phases are acceptable to Public Works for development at planned densities and for use by emergency vehicles. Costs of bringing new on-site roads up to standards shall be borne by the subdivider.

**Goal 2531.1.** To convert timberland only where necessary to provide for the logical expansion of the existing community.

**Goal 2610.1.** To concentrate new development around existing public services and improvements.

**Goal 2610.2.** To protect the area's numerous drainage gulches (greenway/open space areas) while providing for development along hillside terrain.

**Goal 2610.3.** To provide opportunities for public recreation.

**Goal 2610.4.** To ensure that new development will be provided with adequate infrastructure and services.

- **Policy 2620.1. Residential Density and Lot Sizes:**
  - a) The Eureka Community Plan density for all Residential Single Family (RL) designations shall be from 1 to 6 dwelling units per acre.
  - b) The Eureka Community Plan density for all Residential Multiple Family (RM) designations shall be from 7 to 30 dwelling unit per acre.
  - c) The minimum lot sizes for all Residential zoning districts (R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4) with the exception of the Residential Suburban (RS) zone, shall be 6,000 square feet, unless otherwise specified on the zoning maps.

### 3.13.3 Methodology for Analysis

Impacts on population and housing were assessed by reviewing existing and anticipated population and housing data provided in the County General Plan and the Eureka Community Plan. The proposed project's impacts were evaluated by determining their consistency with these estimates and projections.

### 3.13.4 Thresholds of Significance

The CEQA Guidelines' Appendix G Environmental Checklist was assessed during the NOP scoping process to identify the proposed project components that have the potential to cause a significant impact. The following thresholds of significance were used to determine if further evaluation within this EIR was warranted to ascertain whether the proposed project may:

- Induce substantial unplanned 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)



- Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere [refer to Section 7, Effects Found Not To Be Significant]

### 3.13.5 Project Impact Analysis and Mitigation Measures

This section analyzes the proposed project's potential to result in significant impacts to population and housing. When a potential impact was determined to be potentially significant, feasible mitigation measures were identified to reduce or avoid that impact.

#### *Unplanned Population Growth*

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**Impact POP-1: The proposed project would not induce substantial unplanned 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).**

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#### **Impact Analysis**

Direct growth consists of activities that directly facilitate population growth. The construction of new dwelling units is considered an activity that directly results in population growth. Indirect growth inducements consist of activities that in and of themselves do not facilitate growth, but instead indirectly cause growth. Examples include the creation of new jobs in a sparsely populated area that results in workers moving into the area or the removal of a physical barrier to growth, such as the extension of a sewer service to an unserved area.

#### **Direct Population Growth**

A key consideration in evaluating growth inducement is whether the activity in question constitutes "planned growth." A residential project that is consistent with the underlying General Plan and zoning designations would generally be considered planned growth because it was previously contemplated by long-range documents and, thus, would not be deemed to have a significant growth-inducing effect. Likewise, a project that requires a General Plan Amendment and re-zoning to develop more intense uses than are currently allowed may be considered to have a substantial growth-inducing effect, because such intensity was not contemplated by the applicable long-range documents. It should be noted that these are hypothetical examples and conclusions about the potential for growth inducement will vary on a case-by-case basis.

The proposed project consists of the development of 320 residential units and approximately 22,000 square feet of commercial floor area as part of the North McKay Tract. The residential units would consist of 146 single-family dwellings, as well as 174 multi-family dwellings. Out of the 320 dwelling units, 18 would be affordable housing for very low to low-income families. Based on the USCB's average housing size for the County of 2.43 persons per household, the County's population would increase by 778 people, assuming the project is fully occupied (USCB 2018). The General Plan population projections show a decline between 2020 and 2040. However, the HCD population projections show a population growth of 4,978 residents between 2018 and 2027. The population growth attributable to the proposed project would represent approximately 16 percent of the HCD's forecasted growth between 2016 and 2027. The proposed project would be phased over 10 to 20 years, and this growth would be further spread out. Additionally, the proposed project would provide up to nine percent of the housing stock required under RHNA.



As discussed in the Eureka Community Plan, the North McKay Tract is discussed and analyzed as part of the planned unit development for the Cutten area. Policy 2620.8 of the Eureka Community Plan specifically discusses the parameters of the proposed North McKay tract, including maximum unit amounts, rezoning requirements, access requirements, and open space to be included in final design. The proposed project would be consistent with this policy and would be considered a planned unit development that would provide needed housing to the Cutten area, rather than introduce unplanned population growth to the area.

The proposed commercial uses would generate approximately 44 jobs based on the industry standard of one job for every 500 square feet. The California Employment Development Department indicates that as of January 2020, there were 2,500 unemployed persons in Humboldt County (EDD 2020). Accordingly, it would be expected that the proposed project's new jobs could readily be filled from the local workforce. These jobs would be absorbed by the existing local population and labor pool and would not result in induced growth.

### **Removal of Barrier to Growth**

The proposed project would result in the extension of urban infrastructure to an area that is currently not serviced. In particular, potable water and sewer service would be extended to the project site. The proposed project also requires construction of a water storage tank and extension of sewer lines that would connect to the existing manhole on Hemlock Street and Walnut Drive. However, this would not be considered removal of a barrier to growth, because the project site is within HCSD's SOI and would require annexation to receive services. Furthermore, the project site is already identified as a Housing Opportunity Zone in the General Plan, indicating that the area is suitable for residential use where urban services are available or anticipated to be available. Therefore, development of the project was anticipated and planned for in the County General Plan during the most recent update of this long-range planning document, in 2017. As such, the extension of this urban infrastructure is "growth accommodating," because it is intended to facilitate planned growth instead of inducing new unplanned growth.

Therefore, the proposed project would not introduce substantial unplanned population growth in the County, and this impact would be less than significant.

### **Level of Significance Before Mitigation**

Less Than Significant Impact.

### **Mitigation Measures**

None required.

### **Level of Significance After Mitigation**

Less Than Significant Impact.

