



**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
PLANNING DIVISION
COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT**

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To: Humboldt County Planning Commission
From: Kirk Girard, Director, Community Development Services
Date: November 20, 2008
Re: Transmittal of the November, 2008 Hearing Draft General Plan

Staff of the Community Development Services Department is pleased to transmit to you the November, 2008 Planning Commission Hearing Draft General Plan. This draft is a substantial revision to the previous preliminary hearing draft discussed before the Planning Commission in 2007. Major structural changes were made to consolidate the various topical chapters into more cohesive chapters organized around mandatory and optional elements. Much of the redundancy of the previous draft was reduced or eliminated, providing a more concise and easier to read plan.

Chapter narratives were revised for consistency and clarity and to highlight the key issues addressed by each element. Goals were written in a uniform tense reflecting a desired end state or condition instead of a process or action. Policy revisions were primarily directed toward clarity and refinement, and to respond to public comments. Standards and Implementation Measures were modified to avoid redundancy between elements and to achieve logical connections and order between policies, standards and implementation measures within each element.

Review guides will be provided to help the reader navigate through these changes. The review guides will:

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

In addition to the review guides, staff proposes to hold a study session with the Planning Commission and the public on December 18th, 2008 to review changes in the Plan and discuss the hearing and public input process going forward. The review guides will be distributed and discussed at the study session. This meeting will be designed to be a study session only. No action will be taken by the Planning Commission regarding the Draft Plan. The first Planning Commission meeting on the Hearing Draft will be in late January 2009.

The following is a section by section summary of the changes made compared to the 2007 preliminary hearing drafts you reviewed last year. This has been provided to get you started on your comparative review.



SUMMARY OF CHANGES FROM 2007 PRELIMINARY HEARING DRAFTS

PART 1- SETTING:

Chapter 1 Introduction, Chapter 2 Public Guide, and Chapter 3 Governance Policy

Chapters 1, 2, and 3 were reorganized for easier reading and better flow. The tense of the language assumes the Plan has been adopted, reflecting how it will look post-adoption. A Preamble has been added, and the planning area description which originally came first has been moved back. The Guiding Principles have been edited to remove the "the plan must" phrasing, and to make substantive changes as discussed by the Planning Commission and public.

Chapter 3 "Governance" has expanded discussion on current topics of importance, including environmental justice, sustainability, and climate change. The goals, policies, standards, and implementation have undergone some refinement and revision. Some of the specific statutory references previously included in the policies have been moved to the standards and implementation sections.

PART 2- BUILDING COMMUNITIES:

Chapter 4 Land Use Element

The Land Use Element was reorganized and consolidated to include the former Chapter 4 – Growth Planning (renamed from "Managing Growth"), and to reorder the former topical chapters into sections. The significant changes are noted below.

Growth Planning: This section containing development timing policies and urban growth areas was rewritten to clarify the various terms used and to provide a more consistent set of policies and standards. Population background information was moved to this section.

Urban Lands: This is a new section to provide a place for the various policies that apply to urban areas, including community-oriented policies. The previous chapter on Design Review has been incorporated into this section.

Rural Lands: The significant changes to this section include rewritten goals and revisions to eliminate redundancy and conflicts with other sections.

Agricultural Resources: The significant changes to this section include new policies, standards and implementation measures that provide greater flexibility for the allowance of supplemental farm income and "no net loss" of prime agricultural lands. A new policy was also included to provide County support for the continued agricultural production on lands placed into conservation easements or acquired by public agencies for conservation purposes.

Forest Resources: Revisions made to this section include: the addition of a policy concerning residential construction on TPZ lands; the deletion of the policy guiding rezoning of TPZ lands; the inclusion of a standard requiring state clearance from Cal Fire

for the conversion permit for building permits on TPZ lands; and a re-write of the policies, standards and implementation for infrastructure needs to concentrate on the movement of forest products. Policies pertaining to water quality, fire protection and sensitive habitat were moved to those chapters in the document that pertain specifically to those issues or deleted as redundant. As was indicated in the preliminary draft, the rural subdivision standards were moved to the Rural Lands section. The subdivision standards included in this section pertain strictly to lands designated as Timberlands. Finally, an implementation measure to direct staff towards the development of a TPZ Ordinance to implement the policies of the plan, in particular, residential use of lands zoned TPZ has been included.

Public Lands: The significant changes to this section include rewritten goals and minor other revisions.

Land Use Classifications: The significant changes to this section include rewritten land use classification descriptions for consistency in style, and addition of allowable land uses and development standards tables.

Chapter 5 Community Infrastructure and Services Element

The introductory narrative and policies of the Community Infrastructure and Services Element were edited for clarity. Where possible and to reduce redundancy, goals, policies, standards and implementation measures that were originally divided into policy topic areas were consolidated. Many policies were better suited to be implementation and were edited, as necessary, and moved the implementation measures section. Policies were added to address the following issues: to establish criteria to prioritize county investments in infrastructure and services; and to enter into agreements with cities to ensure fiscal impacts associated with new development are mutually mitigated across jurisdictional boundaries.

Some policies were moved from Community Infrastructure and Services to other elements. The telecommunications related narrative, policies and implementation measures were moved to the new Telecommunications Element based on public comment to include a Telecommunications Element in the General Plan. Stormwater Drainage related policies, standards, and implementation measures that did not address capital improvement funding or drainage maintenance were moved to the Water Resources Element.

Chapter 6 Telecommunications Element

Telecommunications issues, goals, policies, and implementation measures were previously addressed in the Economic Development and Community Infrastructure and Services Elements in the preliminary public hearing draft General Plan Update. Proposed policies addressed telecommunications planning, broadband communications redundancy, and service availability. Based on overwhelming public input, a Telecommunications Element was added to the proposed General Plan Update and existing telecommunications policies were moved to this new element.

Members of the Redwood Technology Consortium and others provided input on the background narrative and policies contained in the Telecommunications Element. The telecommunications policy topic areas were broadened to include telecommunications planning, wireless telecommunications facility siting criteria, incentives for vehicle trip reduction, and subdivision improvement requirements, as well as other topic areas.

Chapter 7 Circulation Element

The Circulation Element was modified in several ways in response to comments received on the Preliminary Draft, and in response to current conditions. In response to comments from Public Works, the road right of way standards were modified, and the standards for Level of Service were taken out of the Element and put over into an implementation measure. The new Element is also more supportive of using railroad right of ways for bike and pedestrian uses when they do not compromise future railroad uses, and it is more supportive of multimodal transportation.

Chapter 9 Economic Development Element

Minor revisions were made to this chapter, including: the "Regional Role" section was re-written to better communicate the regional context; "Quality of Life" was re-written to better describe the relationship to economic development; "Large Format Retail" was re-written to better describe the trade offs and therefore the evaluation recommended in the policies; "Competitive Quality of Life," was re-written to better describe the connection to the industries of the county; "Telecommunications," was renamed from "Broadband Internet" and re-written to more succinctly describe the relationship to economic development; and, "Transportation Networks" was re-written to be more succinct and inclusive of all transportation modes. A brownfields implementation measure was added. A standard and implementation measure for "Disadvantaged Communities" was added. Implementation measures for "Large Format Retail" and "Transportation and Infrastructure" were added. Some goals, policies and implementation measures were also renumbered.

PART 3- RESOURCE MANAGEMENT:

Chapter 10 Conservation and Open Space Elements

The Conservation and Open Space Element has been reorganized to include four related sections that were originally presented as separate chapters in the Preliminary Hearing Draft, and the addition of one new section titled "Open Space". The newly incorporated sections include Biological Resources, Mineral Resources, Waste Management and Cultural and Scenic Resources. These chapters were consolidated into this Element because of their relationship to the topics mandated by state law for consideration in County's Open Space and Conservation Element. The majority of the policy suites have remained the same for these sections. Significant changes are discussed below.

Open Space: Although this section was not originally found in the Open Space and Conservation Element, the majority of the background information was included in the text of the Preliminary Draft. A new subsection has been included titled "Conservation and Open Space Action Program" that incorporates information from the now deleted "Open Space for Outdoor Recreation" section with background information included in the draft document. However, the Open Space Action Program sets up a framework for new policy, standards and implementation measures that address development in open space lands that were not originally found in the draft document. In particular, a new program for determining consistency with the Conservation and Open Space Element for building and discretionary permits in certain zones has been included.

Biological Resources: The background section was expanded and clarifying edits were made to discussion of sensitive species and habitats. The goals were rewritten, and the first three policies were rewritten regarding compatible land uses and critical and essential habitats, and these terms were defined. The policy allowing for reduction of a

Streamside Management Area was edited per a Dept. of Fish & Game comment. A policy and standard for oak woodland protection was added. Other minor edits were made.

Mineral Resources Section: As part of chapter reorganization, the topic of mineral resources became a section of the Conservation and Open Space Elements chapter. A new goal was added to address in-stream sand and gravel extraction. The policies, standards and implementation measures were re-ordered and re-numbered. A new policy was added on the maintenance of mineral haul routes. A new standard was added on reclamation permit requirements. There were some minor wording changes to a few policies, standards and implementation measures to add clarity.

Waste Management Section: There are very few substantive changes to the Waste Management Section. The background section has been reorganized to "callout" the process for siting solid waste facilities in Humboldt County. This provides a framework for the subsequent goals, policies, standards and implementation measures to follow. While much of the language remains the same, the policies have been consolidated resulting in a reduction from 13 policies to 9. This same approach reduced the number of standards from 7 to 4 without a substantive change to the section. Two standards (WM-S6 and S7) were deleted completely as it was determined they were unnecessary and found in other places in the document. Four new implementation measures have been presented to ensure that the proposed policies and standards have appropriate mechanisms to be implemented once the Plan is adopted.

Cultural Resources Section: As part of chapter reorganization, the topic of cultural resources became a section of the Conservation and Open Space Elements chapter. Although extensive revisions were developed, reviewed and considered, the original preliminary hearing draft reviewed by the Planning Commission in 2007 was left largely unchanged. Minor background text revisions were made in response to suggestions made during tribal consultations. A key edit to the first policy was made to clarify that cultural resource protection is applied at both the ministerial and discretionary permit levels.

Scenic Resources Section: There are very few substantive changes to the Scenic Resources Section. The background section has been edited to focus on the critical issues that affect Humboldt County's scenic beauty and heritage landscapes. Scenic Resources goals, like many goals contained in the Public Hearing Draft, were reworded to more appropriately reflect the desired ideal future condition. Several policies have been edited to clarify responsibility or to provide a more appropriate title. The most significant changes to this section are in the Implementation Measures where responsibility for carrying out the policies is changes from "provide staffing" to the appropriate County department.

Chapter 11 Water Resources Element

Six key topic areas were identified and further discussed in the background section. These include: surface and groundwater, water resources and land use, watershed planning, public water supply, water exports, and stormwater. With these topic issues at the forefront, the water resources element was reorganized and structured to provide for a better focus on these issues. The previous surface water and ground water sections were merged in a section on water resources and land use. Each policy was given a short name.

Some of the policy wording was revised to be more in accordance with the topic issues. Some new policies were proposed to be more responsive to the topic issues. Some old policies that were redundant or did not relate to the topic issues were deleted. The order of the sections was changed. The watershed management section was re-titled to watershed planning. Some conservation and reuse policies were merged into one policy and placed within the public water supply section. The conservation and reuse section was deleted. The importing and exporting section was renamed to water exports. A new section was added on stormwater drainage, and some policies from other sections were moved to this new section. Standards and implementation measures were revised to be consistent with the restructuring of the rest of the element.

Chapter 12 Energy Element

The background section was revised to provide a focus on energy as it relates to land use. A text box on energy use and cost in Humboldt County was added to the background section. Some minor wording changes were made to some goals to add clarity. Goal G5 on self-sufficiency in energy use was revised and made into a policy on local management and ownership of energy supplies. Policies and implementation measures were re-ordered and re-numbered for a better logical flow. A policy and an implementation measure were added to address the Comprehensive Action Plan for Energy (CAPE) to be implemented by the Redwood Coast Energy Authority. Increased energy efficiency and conservation policies were deleted as they are dealt with in the CAPE. A new standard was added to address consistency with the Climate Action Plan.

Some of the policy wording was revised to be more in accordance with the topic issues. Some new policies were proposed to be more responsive to the topic issues. Some old policies that were redundant or did not relate to the topic issues were deleted. The order of the sections was changed. The watershed management section was re-titled to watershed planning. Some conservation and reuse policies were merged into one policy and placed within the public water supply section. The conservation and reuse section was deleted. The importing and exporting section was renamed to water exports. A new section was added on stormwater drainage, and some policies from other sections were moved to this new section. Standards and implementation measures were revised to be consistent with the restructuring of the rest of the element.

PART 4- PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Chapter 13 Noise Element

The significant changes to this chapter are a new standard for the maximum permissible noise levels in each zone, adding several stationary noise sources to the inventory, and inserting a discussion of airport noise.

Chapter 14 Safety Element

The significant changes to this chapter include rewritten goals and moving most drainage policies to the Water Resources Element. A fire protection services policy was moved to Infrastructure,

Chapter 15 Air Quality Element

The significant changes to the Element are new text, policies, implementation measures and standards to address new requirements of new State law regulating greenhouse gas emissions.