



PLANNING DIVISION
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

3015 H STREET

EUREKA, CALIF. 95501-4484 PHONE (707) 445-7541

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

RECOMMENDED COMMISSION ACTION:

It is recommended that the Commission take the following actions:

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

SUMMARY

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

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

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

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

Proposed Planning Commission Review Process

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

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

ATTACHMENTS

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

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



Part 1 – Setting

Section Overview

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

Humboldt County

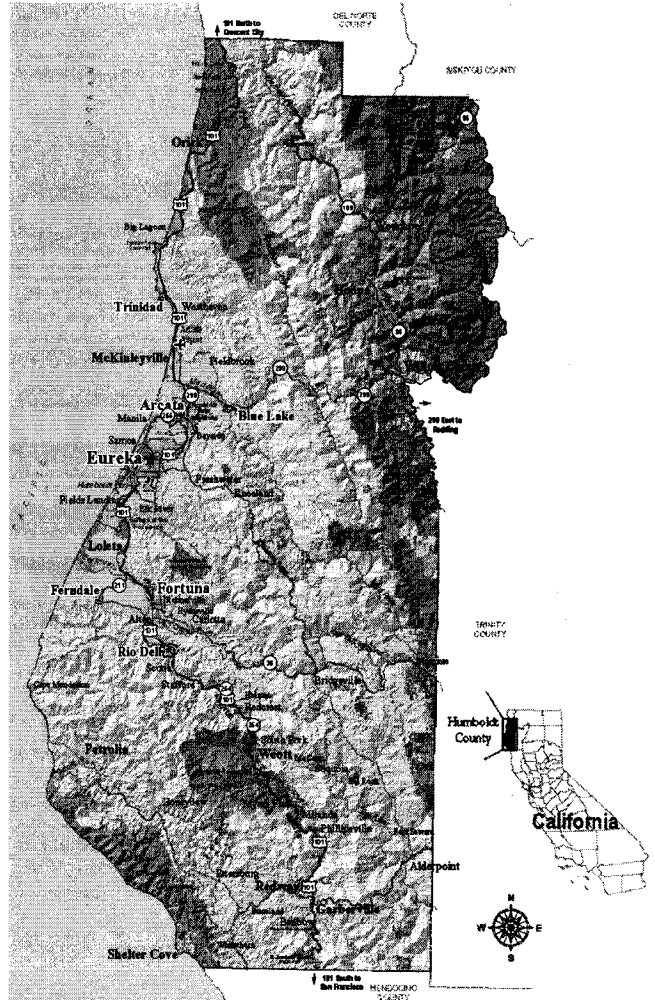
Humboldt County, located in northwest California, is the southern gateway to the Pacific Northwest. The County encompasses 2.3 million acres, 80 percent of which is forested. Thirty percent of the County is State or Federal public lands, with major land holdings including Redwood National and State Parks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

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

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

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

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



W8

W8

W8



Part 1 – Setting

Section Overview

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

Humboldt County

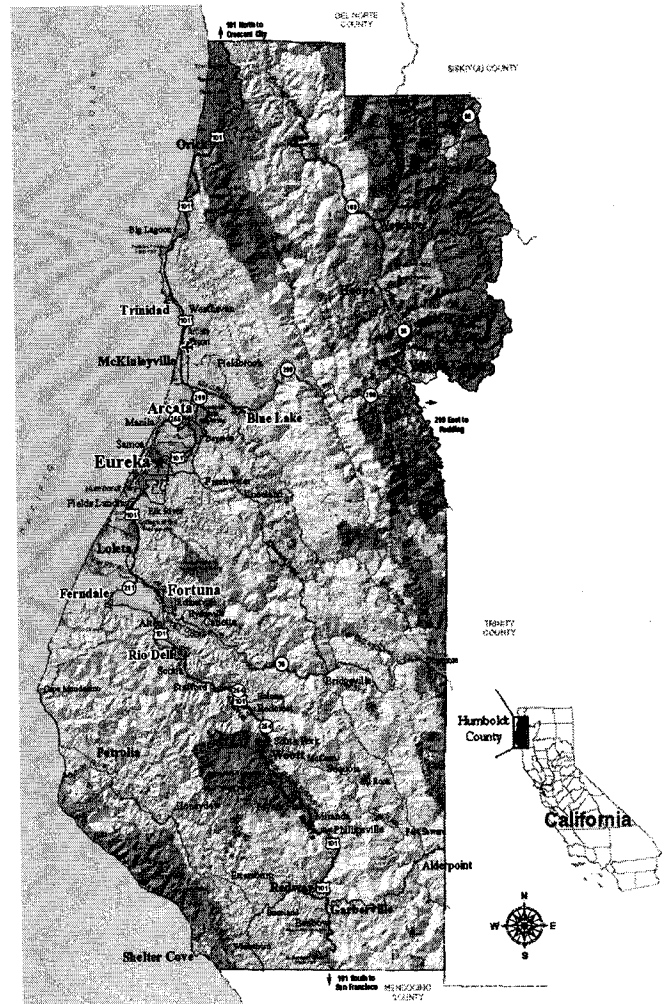
Humboldt County, located in northwest California, is the southern gateway to the Pacific Northwest. The County encompasses 2.3 million acres, 80 percent of which is forested. Thirty percent of the County is State or Federal public lands, with major land holdings including Redwood National and State Parks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

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

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

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

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



W8

W8

W8

Chapter 1. Introduction

What is a General Plan?

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

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

Purposes of a General Plan

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

- w8 • Identify the community's land use, circulation, environmental, economic, and social goals and policies as they relate to land use and development.
- w8 • Provide a basis for local government decision-making, including decisions on development approvals and exactions.
- Provide citizens with opportunities to participate in the planning and decision-making processes of their communities.
- w8 • Inform citizens, developers, decision-makers, and other cities and agencies of the ground rules that guide development within a particular community.
- w8 • Establishes a basis for subsequent planning efforts, such as formulating specific development codes and ordinances, preparation of specific plans, redevelopment plans, and special studies.

Background on Developing this Plan

W8

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

Guiding Principles

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

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

PC, W8

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

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

PC1, PC4,
W2, W4,
W8, V6

PC1, W2,
W3, W4,
W5, W8

PC1, PC3,
W2, W4,
W8

PC3, W2,
W4, W8

PC5, W2,
W4, W8

PC1, W2,
W4, W8

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

Principles Guiding the Alternatives:

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

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

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

NOTE: The section below will fall out of the 'final' version of the General Plan when it is adopted. It is provided here to assist the review process.

W8

Staff Analysis and Alternatives

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

Staff Recommendation

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

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

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

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

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

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

Alternatives

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

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

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

2. *The plan must provide sufficient developable land and policies to address a range of population growth scenarios.*
3. *The plan must ensure efficient practical use of water and sewer services and encourage focus development in those areas where such services are available and discourage development that will result in conversion of resource lands and open space.*
6. *The plan must encourage contain long-term investments in agriculture and timber land protections production.*
7. *The plan must include measures for the conservation of natural resources, protections, especially for open space, water resources, water quality, scenic beauty and salmonids.*
8. *The plan should be practical and implemented across the board equitably for all projects.*

This wording for Alternative C would provide less specific and demanding land use restrictions and resource protections. Principle 6 has been shortened, and “unambiguous” has been removed from 7.

Plan Alternative D, the No Project alternative, is the 1984 Framework General Plan. While that document did not have explicit guiding principles, it led off with a land use ethic which served a similar purpose:

“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.” (Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, August 27, 1972)

W8

Plan Alternatives Comparison Chart

The “Vote” column is provided for the user to indicate a policy preference. Enter a Retain, Delete or Modify.

Plan Alternative				Principle	Staff Remarks	Vote: R, D, M
A	B	C		1. <i>The plan must work to preserve and enhance the unique character of Humboldt County and the quality of life we enjoy.</i>		
	B			2. <i>The plan must provide sufficient developable commercial, industrial, and residential land, and contain policies to encourage development of address the current scarcity of affordable housing for all income levels and prevent scarcity under a range of population growth scenarios.</i>		

A			<i>2. The proposed project must provide sufficient developable commercial, industrial, and residential land and contain policies to encourage the development of housing affordable to low and moderate-income residents and prevent scarcity under a range of population growth scenarios.</i>		
		C	<i>2. The plan must provide sufficient developable land and policies to address a range of population growth scenarios.</i>		
	B		<i>3. The plan must ensure efficient use of water and sewer services and focus development in those areas and discourage low density residential conversion of resource lands and open space.</i>	See revised wording for Alt. C	
A			<i>3. proposed project must ensure efficient use of water and sewer services and focus development in those areas and disallow low density residential conversion of resource lands and open space.</i>		
		C	<i>The plan must ensure efficient practical use of water and sewer services and encourage focus development in those areas where such services are available and discourage development that will result in conversion of resource lands and open space.</i>	Revised wording for Alt. C	
	B	C	<i>4. The plan must include actionable plans for infrastructure financing and construction.</i>		
A			<i>4. The proposed project must include actionable plans for financing and construction of efficient and cost-effective infrastructure.</i>		
	B	C	<i>5. The plan must support the County's economic development strategy and work to retain and create living wage job opportunities.</i>		
A			<i>5. The proposed project must support the County's economic development strategy and work to retain and create living wage job opportunities in close proximity to housing.</i>		
A	B		<i>6. The plan must contain long-term agriculture and timber land protections such as increased restrictions on resource land subdivisions and patent parcel development.</i>	See revised wording for Alt. C	
		C	<i>6. The plan must encourage contain long-term investments in agriculture and timber land protections production.</i>	Revised wording for Alt. C	
A	B		<i>7. The plan must include unambiguous natural resource protections; especially for open space, water resources, water quality, scenic beauty and salmonids.</i>	See revised wording for Alt. C	
		C	<i>7. The plan must include measures for the conservation of natural resources, protections; especially for open space, water resources, water quality, scenic beauty and salmonids.</i>	Revised wording for Alt. C	
A	B		<i>8. The plan must be practical and actionable.</i>		
		C	<i>8. The plan should be practical and implemented across the board equitably for all projects.</i>		
A	B	C	<i>9. The plan must provide a clear statement of County land use values and policies to provide clarity in the County's permit processing system and to simplify review of projects that are consistent with the General Plan.</i>		
Principles Guiding the Alternatives					
A	B	C	<i>10. A reasonable range of alternatives must include an environmentally superior alternative that would result in the least conversion of lands to development.</i>		

A	B	C	11. A reasonable range must also include an alternative that would result in a greater supply of land available for affordable housing and economic development.		
A	B	C	12. Development of the proposed project and alternatives must involve stakeholders and be supported with accurate and relevant data.		
Alternative Principles					
A			13. Promote the development of walkable communities that meet daily needs, offer a healthy lifestyle, and reduce the need for automobile trips.		
A			14. Promote design concepts and development patterns which increase affordable housing opportunities convenient to workplaces, and assist in balancing jobs and housing.		
A			15. The plan must promote sustainable development.		
Existing Framework Plan					
		D	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.	From Framework Plan, Sec. 1200	

W8

Preliminary Environmental Impact (CEQA) Analysis

While this introductory chapter does not contain policies that will be used directly as project approval criteria, the guiding principles will guide policy development and be used as criteria for approving plan amendments. Because of this, differences in the wording of these principles could result in varying degrees of impacts, and in the long term, for certain options, could result in cumulatively significant impacts.

W4

At this point in the process, a discussion of impacts is limited to the relative merits of the Alternatives. It is anticipated, and it is staff's intent, based on policy guidance provided thus far, to recommend a proposed project (Alternative B) that in most cases, contains policies that reduce impacts to less than significant levels. Alternative A is described as an environmentally superior alternative, and thus is anticipated to have lower environmental impacts. Decision-makers may find the policy options presented in Alternative A to be infeasible or not meeting the basic objectives of the project, but staff will strive to provide realistic, viable policy options. Alternative C, as the highest capacity plan, is expected to have the highest level of impacts of the three crafted alternatives, but is expected to have a level of impact similar to or slightly less than the no project Alternative D, the existing general plan.

Chapter 2. Public Guide to the General Plan

Purpose This chapter provides a guide for reading and using the plan. It describes the organization of the plan, the alternatives that are presented in the plan and how to track them, the layout of a typical chapter, and the relationship of this document to other planning documents.

2.1 Plan Organization

PC7 Gov. Code §65301 states in part that the general plan may be adopted in any format deemed appropriate or convenient by the legislative body, including the combining of elements. The State's Office of Planning & Research (OPR) *General Plan Guidelines* additionally advise that in the statutory descriptions of the elements, a number of issues, such as floodplain management and open-space conservation, appear in more than one element. To avoid redundancies, combining elements or organizing the plan by issue often makes practical sense. have been combined and organized along functional lines, and the plan

OPR's publication *Element Consolidation* was utilized to help guide the organization of the Plan, which both combines elements where appropriate and provides individual chapters on specific topical issues (e.g. water resources) of particular importance in Humboldt County.

The basic organization of the Plan is divided into four parts, plus appendices and companion documents:

- **Part 1 – Setting:** An introductory section describing the purpose of the Plan and how to use it, as well as how the Plan is to be administered and amended, and how it relates to other documents and other governmental organizations.
- **Part 2 – Building Communities:** This part of the Plan focuses on the built environment, and includes the main components of the statutorily required land use, circulation, and, by reference, the housing element. (The full housing element will continue as a stand alone document because of its bulk and special update cycles.) The required conservation, open space, noise and safety elements are given indirect treatment in this section by reflecting their policy considerations in the land use element.

This part of the Plan also includes treatment of development timing and infrastructure planning, as well as community design and economic development.

- **Part 3 – Environmental Resource Management:** This part of the Plan focuses on the natural environment and how land use activities interact with it. The required conservation and open space elements are given primary and direct treatment in this section, mainly organized by issues. This part of the Plan also includes the optional elements water resources, energy, and air quality.

Part 4 – Health and Safety: This part of the Plan includes the required noise and safety elements, as well as chapters on airport safety and waste management.

- **Part 5 – Appendices:** This part of the Plan includes an implementation plan summary, glossary, index, and technical support documents.

Companion Documents – Separately bound documents which are associated with this General Plan document.

2.2 Chapter Layout

Individual chapters in the General Plan have a consistent layout that is generally described as follows:

Introduction

This section presents an overview of the purpose of the chapter, and explains its relationship to other components of the plan.

Background

This section discusses key findings from the technical background studies and other research supporting the proposed policy direction. Depending on the complexity of the particular topic, this section may be broken into subchapters.

Goals and Policies

This section presents the goals and policies of the preferred Plan alternative. (*Goals and policies for the other alternatives are in later sections.*) In concert with the land use maps, the goals and policies help establish the kinds, locations and intensities of land use. Goals and policies are sometimes also used to direct County resources.

Standards and Implementation Measures

The next two sections in a typical chapter identify the performance standards and implementation measures that come from the goals and policies. They define the goals and policies in more concrete terms. Each policy is supposed to have at least one corresponding implementation measure. Standards are the yardsticks used to determine whether a project is consistent with the policies.

Staff Analysis and Alternatives

This section will be removed from the draft after the Plan is adopted. This section explains staff's recommendations and discusses alternatives. It is shown in a different font to help distinguish it from the parts of the chapter that will be retained. It also includes a Plan Alternatives Comparison Chart that condenses all the options into a single table with columns for the reader to provide feedback. The policy alternatives are flagged to indicate with which alternative they are associated. A "Vote" column is provided for the user to indicate a policy preference: enter a **Retain**, **Delete** or **Modify**.

The last part of the section provides a preliminary environmental impact (CEQA) analysis of the alternatives. These impacts will also be discussed in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) being prepared concurrently.

Table 1-1. Plan Alternatives Comparison Chart

Plan Alternative			Principle	Staff Remarks	Vote R, D, M
A	B	C	1. The plan must work to preserve the unique character of Humboldt and the quality of life we enjoy.		
A	B	C	2. The plan must provide sufficient developable commercial, industrial, and residential land, and policies to address the current scarcity of affordable housing and prevent scarcity under a range of population growth scenarios.		
A	B		3. The plan must ensure efficient use of water and sewer services and focus development in those areas and discourage low density residential conversion of resource lands and open space.	See revised wording for Alt. C	
		C	3. The plan must ensure efficient use of water and sewer services and focus development in those areas.	Revised wording for Alt. C	

Sample Plan Alternatives Comparison Chart

2.3 Key Terms

Below are a few key terms that are used throughout the plan and are important to gain an understanding of the plan. Additional terms are described in the Glossary.

Goal: Sets direction toward ideal future end related to public health, safety, welfare. Not necessarily quantifiable or time dependent. Expresses community values.

Policy: Specific statement that guides decision-making. Must be a clear guide to action that is unambiguous. Indicates commitment of local legislative body to a particular course of action.

Standard: ~~Concrete specification that defines abstract terms of policies. Rule or measure. Yardstick to determine whether a project is consistent with policy. A specific, often~~ quantified guideline which helps define how a policy will be enacted. Standards can often directly translate into regulatory controls.

Implementation Measure: Action, procedure, program or plan used to carry out general plan policy, such as a zoning ordinance.

2.4 Maps

In addition to the text, the General Plan includes maps, of which there are two types, official and background. Official maps show the geographic application of the plan policies, while the background maps (referenced as figures in the main text) provide support information. The official maps consist of the following map sets:

Land Use: These maps include the general plan land use designations, or the planned land use. These maps do not always reflect existing land use, but rather the planned use. They indicate the kind and intensity of planned land use, such as rural residential, 5 to 20 acres per dwelling unit.

Biological Resources: These maps show identified sensitive biological resources. Because of variation in the level of information or knowledge, these maps do not reflect a uniform mapping of such resources. Project-specific mapping is often necessary to determine the actual location and extent of such resources. These maps act more to flag that specific review should be undertaken to determine the nature and extent of the resources present.

Flood Hazard: This map series shows generally the areas subject to periodic flooding, based on computer versions (Q3) of the 100 year floodplain. The hardcopy FEMA FIRM and Floodway maps which are referenced by this general plan provide specific regulatory implementation of floodplain management.

Geologic: These maps show relative slope stability, major faults, and areas subject to liquefaction. These maps do not reflect a uniform mapping of such features, and, again, act as a flag that specific review should be undertaken.

Circulation/Public Facilities: This map series show the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, airports, port terminals, and other local utilities and facilities.

Because the County now uses a GIS (Geographic Information System) to generate its maps, the above maps are available at virtually any scale, and are actually individual layers in a unified comprehensive base map. Official versions of these maps will be produced as hardcopies at set scales and be generated as .pdf files for digital distribution.

W8

Interpretation: There are inherent limitations on the accuracy associated with any countywide map set. State planning law in fact refers to them as "diagrams" rather than maps to emphasize this point. It is clear, however, that local governments need to be able to administer their plans with substantial certainty, and be clear about which land use designations and policies apply to any given parcel of land.

The linework on the general plan map sets should be interpreted according to the following rules. Where a line is intended to follow an administrative boundary such as a city limit or parcel line, the actual location of the administrative boundary is the intended location of the general plan line. Where a line is intended to follow a natural feature, the actual location of the natural feature is the intended location of the general plan line. This is distinct from an interpretation which would use scaled bearings and distances of linework to discern boundaries.

2.5 Relation to Other Documents

W8

This document supersedes the Humboldt County General Plan Framework Plan that was first adopted in 1984 (hereinafter referred to as the 1984 Framework Plan). This document also consolidates the following documents:

Humboldt County General Plan Framework Plan, Volume I, (1984)

Humboldt County General Plan, Community Plans, Volume II:

Jacoby Creek Community Plan (1982)

Freshwater Community Plan (1985)

Fortuna Community Plan (1985)

Willow Creek Community Plan (1986)

Hydesville-Carlotta Community Plan (1986)

Garberville-Benbow-Redway-Alderpoint Community Plan (1987)

Avenue of the Giants Community Plan (2000)

Orick Community Plan (1985)

Northern Humboldt County General Plan (1965) (covering Orleans, Trinidad-Westhaven (inland), Fieldbrook-Glendale*, and Blue Lake unincorporated area)

Arcata General Plan (1966) (unincorporated area around Arcata not in the coastal zone or Jacoby Creek)

Southern Humboldt General Plan (1968) (unincorporated Rio Dell and the inland portion of Shelter Cove)

W4

The McKinleyville (2002) and Eureka (1995) Community Plans, because of their complexity, will remain standalone separately bound documents as the applicable general plans for those

areas. Their land use designations and policies are subject to amendment as part of this General Plan Update Program.

Within the Coastal Zone, this document will supersede the following Local Coastal Program (LCP) land use plans once the coastal related portions of this document are effectively certified through the California Coastal Commission:

- North Coast Area Plan
- Trinidad Area Plan
- McKinleyville Area Plan
- Humboldt Bay Area Plan
- Eel River Area Plan
- South Coast Area Plan

The Housing Element (2004) is bound as a separate document and serves as the housing element portion of the general plan countywide for the unincorporated areas.

The Zoning Regulations, Sections 311 – 319 of Title III, Division 1 of the Humboldt County Code, provide the zoning implementation for this general plan. Title III, Division 2, contains the Subdivision Regulations, governing subdivisions of lands, and Division 3 contains the Building Regulations, governing construction, grading, and flood plain management.

NOTE: The section below will fall out of the 'final' version of the General Plan when it is adopted. It is provided here to assist the review process.

w8

2.6 Staff Analysis and Alternatives

State Requirements

The State requires at a minimum the General Plan include discussion of seven items or "Elements": the **Land Use Element** identifies the location and intensity of planned uses such as agriculture, residential and commercial; the **Circulation Element** includes maps of the County's existing transportation facilities and planned transportation improvements; the **Housing Element** identifies housing needs in the unincorporated areas of the County, and directs the implementation of policies and programs to address those needs; the **Conservation & Open Space Elements** address the conservation, development and use of natural resources; the **Noise Element** estimates future noise levels and prescribes measures to protect residents from excessive noise; and the **Safety Element**, which contains policies to keep people and property out of harm's way.

General plans may be adopted in any format deemed appropriate or convenient by the Board of Supervisors. State guidelines advise that organizing the plan by issue and combining some of the elements together often makes practical sense as a number of issues, such as floodplain management and open-space conservation, appear in more than one element.

The State Office of Planning and Research (OPR) publication *Element Consolidation* was utilized to help guide the organization of the Plan. It combines some elements where appropriate and breaks others up into their own chapters for issues of particular importance in Humboldt County, like water resources.

Staff Recommendation

There are no policy alternatives specific to Chapter 2 presented. Typically each chapter will contain a discussion of possible alternatives for the chapter. In this chapter, the Reader's Guide to the Plan, the overall Plan Alternatives are described below.

As the preferred alternative, **Alternative B** is presented as the main text and policies in the body of each section. It is described as follows:

Plan Alternative B: Scalable Capacity Alternative (the Proposed Project)

w4

The Proposed Project has the following characteristics:

- a. Focused development within existing urbanized areas serviced by water and sewer.
- b. Specific urbanization expansion plans including precise land use maps, urban boundary adjustments and water, sewer, road and drainage system improvements.

PC8,
PC9,
PC10,
PC11,
PC12

- c. Land use designations that support high density urban development including use of alternative subdivision standards, density bonuses, second unit incentives, live-work commercial centers, etc.
- d. Reduction in existing large lot residential subdivision potential outside of community planning areas
- e. Increased resource land protection from residential and other conversion using a range of planning tools such as; clustered development incentives, minimum lot-sizes, patent parcel development standards, conservation easements and regulatory reform.
- f. A plan for alternative land use on large resource production lands proven to have no long-term economic viability.

Plan Alternative B is a scalable proposed project with a range of specific urbanization plans designed to give the Planning Commission and Board flexibility during the adoption phase. Plan B contains a series of specific urbanization expansion plans that allow for increasing residential, commercial and industrial development up to twice the amount necessary to meet projected fair share housing goals. The expansion plan alternatives will be evaluated for their timing and development potential, infrastructure needs, environmental impacts and cost. The expansion plans will be ultimately ranked using evaluation criteria such as number of units served, infrastructure cost per unit, readiness, transportation effects and resource land consumption. This analysis will be completed in cooperation with cities, service districts and the public and be included in the EIR and supporting technical reports.

Plan Alternative B also includes a number of options for resource land protections. These options will be developed and refined with stakeholders and included as a menu of choices evaluated in the EIR and available for inclusion in the final General Plan. (Plan Alternative B follows the narrative of the original Sketch Plan 3 described in the Sketch Plan Alternatives report, except where modified by the above.)

Alternatives

W4

Based on Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission recommendations from the Sketch Plan Alternatives phase, this Plan presents three defined alternatives for consideration, plus the “No Project” alternative. In large part, the three alternatives are reflected in differences in the proposed Land Use maps and build-out tables. Alternative A, for instance, has slightly higher urban densities (e.g. Residential Low density = 3-8 units per acre, versus 1-7 units per acre), less land devoted to acreage lots, tighter urban boundaries, and little resource land conversion. The discussion below more fully describes each alternative:

Plan Alternative A: Fair Share Infill Scenario

W4

Plan Alternative A would meet the County’s fair share Regional Housing Needs solely through infill development served by existing water and sewer lines. The Plan would include resource land protections and significant limitations on large lot residential development. This carefully controlled and urban focused growth plan would be the “environmentally superior” alternative as defined by CEQA. Plan Alternative A is a modified version of Sketch Plan 3 described in the Sketch Plan Alternatives report.

Plan Alternative C: A High Residential Capacity Scenario

W4

Plan Alternative C would accommodate the demand for approximately 18,000 new dwelling units at an average density of 3 units/acre. This average density would be attained through infilling existing water and sewer areas and extension of water and sewer services to lands adjacent to existing urbanized areas. Existing entitlements for large lot residential development would remain but would not be increased. Industrial and commercial lands would be made available in proportion to residential development. Plan Alternative C is a modified and more carefully planned version of Sketch Plan 4 described in the Sketch Plan Alternatives report.

The “No Project” Alternative D

The “no project” alternative, as required under CEQA, in this case means a continuation of using the 1984 Framework General Plan and its associated Community Plans as the general plan for the unincorporated areas of Humboldt County.

Policy options belonging to (a) particular alternative(s) are shown in the Policy Option worksheets at the end of each section.

Background on Developing this General Plan

Humboldt County last revised its General Plan in 1984. In the spring of 2000, the County initiated a comprehensive General Plan Update, with a multi-phased work program. The development of the General Plan can be described as consisting of the following Phases:

- **Phase 1: Issue Identification and Workplan for the Update**
- **Phase 2: Technical Background Studies**
- **Phase 3: Sketch Plans and Policy Alternatives**
- **Phase 4: Phase 4. Planning Commission Hearings Preliminary Plan Chapters**
- **Phase 5: Public Review and Adoption of the Final Plan and EIR**
- **Phase 6: Implementing Ordinances**

Phase 1. Identifying Issues and Scope of Work for the Plan Update

Phase I, which was completed in early 2001, focused on an extensive public outreach effort to engage the public in the General Plan effort. During this step, the community was informed of the overall update process. Through a series of over 40 public meetings, public input was received on land use issues and policy concerns. Additional public outreach efforts included development of a web site, newsletter publication, and community survey. Phase I culminated in a compilation of public concerns and issues entitled the Critical Choices Report. The report analyzed the issues identified by the public and outlined a proposed scope of work for the General Plan Update. The Board of Supervisors approved the recommended workplan in March 2001.

Phase 2: Technical Background Studies

W4

Phase 2 involved compilation of technical background information and preparation of reports. Three major technical reports were prepared entitled “Buildings Communities”, the “Natural Resources and Hazards” and “Moving Goods and People”. Other reports were prepared on special topics such as agricultural land preservation, forest resources and residential land availability. These reports document current conditions and trends in population, development patterns, transportation, hazards and natural resources. This information is useful for understanding where we are today and the potential effects of General Plan alternatives. Most of these reports are available on the County’s website at www.co.humboldt.ca.us/planning.

<p>14 Supporting Reports: Analysis of current conditions, trends, future scenarios:</p>	<p>GIS DATA SETS</p>
<p>Building Communities Natural Resources and Hazards Moving Goods and People Agricultural Resources and Policies Forest Resources and Policies Residential Land Availability Survey Community Design Toolkit Sketch Plan Alternatives Related Studies: Airport Master Plan Prosperity! Update Telecommunications Plan Fire Plan</p>	<p>Parcel Base Map Parcel Characteristics: Size, Existing Land Use, Zoning Transportation: Roads, Traffic Model Administrative: Cities, Spheres, Service Districts Infrastructure: Water, Sewer, Hazards: Floodplain, Slope, Faults Resources: Forests, Agriculture, Minerals Environment: Geology, Wetlands, Open Space</p>

Phase 2 ended and Phase 3 began with a Deliberative Dialogs meeting in December, 2003 which presented a synopsis of the background material compiled to date and an introduction of the next phase.

Phase 3: Sketch Plan & Policy Alternatives

Workshops were held during 2004 to obtain input and evaluate the merits of alternative plans and policies. The outreach effort included organizations, the general public, individuals interested in special topics and public agencies. The Planning Division released the Sketch Plan Alternatives Report in early June 2004, in order to provide generalized depictions of proposed land use development scenarios for the General Plan Update process. The Report presented four sketch plan alternatives designed to illustrate different approaches to updating the General Plan for the unincorporated areas of Humboldt County and to compare the impacts of these alternatives to the existing Framework Plan. The report also included policy options that could be mixed and matched with the sketch plans to get the best fit for future development in the County. These sketch plans and policy options were developed based upon Board of Supervisor direction received at the

conclusion of the Critical Choices phase, technical background studies and discussions with city and service district staff.

Public workshops and meetings with community groups were held during June, July and August to explain and receive public input on the sketch plan alternatives. The primary purpose of these workshops was to ensure that the sketch plans reflect a reasonable range of alternatives and to select a proposed project for CEQA analysis. During that time 24 meetings were held, including community workshops in Willow Creek, Petrolia, Garberville, Redway, Fieldbrook and Blue Lake, and presentations to numerous organizations, community service districts, all incorporated city councils (and available planning commission members and city staff), HSU administration, the Wiyot tribe and others.

The Sketch Plan Alternatives played a useful role in promoting a discussion of growth and development patterns. The broad public concerns regarding anti-sprawl, resource protection, affordable housing and infrastructure planning came to the forefront of the discussion. As noted in the Sketch Plan Alternatives report, the alternatives were expected to evolve based on public input, and it was expected that a new alternative would be developed to represent the proposed project alternative. Since there was little public support for Sketch Plans 2 and 4 which had significant expansions of water service areas, and because there was consensus opinion against sprawl, these plans were determined to not be reflective of community values and the public input received. Staff then developed recommendations for alternatives that reflected the range of opinion on development capacity and density, and the consensus opinion on promoting infilling, infrastructure planning, and development timing issues. To avoid confusion with the previous alternatives, the new proposed alternatives were renamed "A", "B", and "C". Proposed Alternative B was effectively the Sketch Plan 5 that was described early on as being the final Plan that would incorporate the preferred components chosen by the public and the Board of Supervisors and that would be presented as the preferred alternative.

Based upon the comments received during these community meetings and the Board of Supervisors public workshop of August 25, staff prepared a staff report. This report summarized the public input into 10 findings, and reframed the alternatives to be reflective of the input received.

The Planning Commission held public hearings on September 2nd and 9th on the revised sketch plans A, B and C, introduced in the Board Report dated August 25, 2004. After deliberation, the Planning Commission renamed the findings "guiding principles", made minor edits, and forwarded their recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on September 9, 2004. The Board then held a public hearing on September 13th to consider the Planning Commission's recommendations and the comments of the public, and approved a set of summary recommendations for guidance in preparing this hearing draft general plan.

The Board of Supervisor's recommendations to staff included a set of "guiding principles", a range of alternatives for the CEQA process, the proposed project alternative, and proposed policy options and optional General Plan Elements. These recommendations can be found in the report "Sketch Plan Alternatives: Summary of Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors Recommendations."

Phase 4. Planning Commission Hearings on Draft Chapters of the Preliminary Plan

In Phase IV, preliminary chapters of the proposed hearing draft of the Plan will be prepared and presented to the Planning Commission for deliberation. The Planning Commission will review the preliminary chapters to select preferred goals, policies, standards and implementation measures to be included in the Planning Commission version of the final hearing draft Plan and EIR. Chapters related by subject matter will be bundled and reviewed by the Planning Commission according to a proposed Planning Commission meeting schedule described later in this report.

Phases 5 and 6. Public Review and Adoption of the Final Plan and EIR, and Implementing Ordinances

Phases V and VI will consist of public hearings before the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors to receive public input, deliberate, and ultimately adopt the Final Plan, EIR and implementing ordinances. The process will begin with public review and comment on the hearing draft versions of the General Plan, EIR and implementing ordinances before the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will receive the input and direct modifications to the hearing drafts. The Planning Commission will ultimately forward their recommended final hearing drafts to the Board of Supervisors.

The documents recommended by the Planning Commission for adoption will go through a second round of public hearing review and comment before the Board of Supervisors. Board adoption of the final versions of these documents will conclude the General Plan Update.