

## **7 Humboldt County 2025 General Plan Policy Recommendations**

This chapter summarizes Master Fire Protection Plan (MFPP) policies that will also be incorporated into the *Humboldt County 2025 General Plan* (General Plan). These policies can also guide and support the implementation of the measures outlined in Chapter 8 - *Implementation Measures*.

While the County is not directly responsible for responding to fires, maintaining fire apparatus, or hiring firefighting personnel, it plays a key role in the fire planning process. This role has traditionally included incorporating fire safe practices into the land use planning process and maintaining current district service information through the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) process. Incorporating the MFPP policies into the General Plan will help to maintain the County's traditional role in fire planning and expand it.

A policy is a specific statement that guides decision-making and indicates a commitment of a local legislative body to a particular course of action. Many of these policies contained herein originated as objectives developed by the County Fire Safe Council. Others have been formulated to address needs identified through the community risk assessment process, and to respond to issues identified through the surveys conducted for the Fire Plan.

It is important to note that no singular policy will result in making Humboldt County's communities firesafe. Actions that are consistent with overall policy direction and are carried out as prescribed by related implementation measures will be most effective for reducing fire risk/hazard and responding to fires when they occur. Nexus with the associated recommendation from Chapter 6 is indicated in parenthesis following each policy statement. Emphasis has been placed on developing policy statements for recommendations deemed a high priority by the Fire Safe Council.

Individual policy recommendations are organized by six topics that are consistent with the Master Fire Protection Plan (MFPP) Goals identified in Chapter 1:

- 7.1 Fire Protection Capability
- 7.2 Fire Safe Education
- 7.3 Risk and Hazard Assessment
- 7.4 Risk Reduction and Management
- 7.5 Community Preparedness and Response
- 7.6 Fiscal Issues

### **7.1 Fire Protection Capability**

- 7.1A Establish minimum levels of fire protection service for Humboldt County communities (Recommendation 6.1-1).

- 7.1B Support the Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association in establishing appropriately located regional fire training facilities that include classrooms, a burn tower, and fire and rescue training props (Recommendation 6.1-2).
- 7.1C Support the Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association/Fire Training Officers Group in establishing regular fire training programs/classes at the local level, by region, and throughout the County (i.e., Southern Humboldt, North Eastern Humboldt, Northern Humboldt, Eel River Valley, Humboldt Bay, etc.; Recommendation 6.1-2).
- 7.1D Support local volunteer fire department recruitment, training, and equipment procurement efforts (Recommendation 6.1-2).
- 7.1E Schedule regular regional workshops throughout the County facilitated by the Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association. Workshops will be designed to disseminate information about local, state, and federal regulations (qualifications, fire safety, reporting, etc.) that impact the volunteer fire department operations (Recommendation 6.1-2).
- 7.1F Establish a network through the Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association via which surplus apparatus and equipment can easily be distributed from departments with excess to those departments in need (Recommendation 6.1-3).
- 7.1G Support pre-fire planning, mutual aid agreements, sphere of influence reorganization (i.e., consolidation), and cooperative Federal and State agreements that provide adequate fire protection and overcome limitations on fire response assistance (Recommendation 6.1-3).
- 7.1H As available, disseminate funding information about purchase of fire equipment, technical assistance information for fire training and updated fire fighting technology, and identification of funding sources for staffing, fire prevention/ protection programs and educational materials (Recommendation 6.1-3).
- 7.1I Promote efficient and flexible fire planning and coordination among all agencies (Recommendation 6.1-3).
- 7.1J Support communication and collaboration between fire and public safety agencies while maintaining the integrity of their distinct public service roles (Recommendation 6.1-3).
- 7.1K Encourage the improvement of fire protection services for every community by enabling more districts and agencies to employ career firefighters (Recommendation 6.1-4).
- 7.1L Support additional fire protection services for unprotected and under-protected areas of Humboldt County (Recommendation 6.1-4).
- 7.1M Encourage local cost-benefit assessment of fire resources (devoted to specific fire safety activities) to determine needed levels of fire suppression and prevention (Recommendation 6.1-4).

## **7.2 Fire Safe Education**

- 7.2A Provide fire safety education to residents and the homebuilding, insurance, real estate, landscaping and building supply industries. This would include information about non-combustible roof coverings, fire safe construction for high fire risk areas, techniques for reducing flammability in home ignition zones, adequate emergency water supplies, visible address and road identification/signage, access road clearances, and emergency evacuation procedures (Recommendation 6.2-1).
- 7.2B Provide descriptive maps to county residents which make them aware of what areas and assets are currently located within a fire protection district and which ones are not (Recommendation 6.2-2).
- 7.2C Expand existing community and school fire prevention education programs countywide, and coordinate dissemination of program materials. Foster a proactive approach to preventing fire, and emphasize the relationship between fire prevention/hazard reduction and other rural issues such as forestry and ecological restoration (Recommendation 6.2-3).
- 7.2D Coordinate with appropriate federal, state and local government agencies (e.g., USFS, BLM, CDF, local non-governmental organizations, local fire organizations, local Fire Safe Councils, local schools, etc.), volunteers, and the media to provide ongoing educational information designed to raise Humboldt County residents' awareness of fire safety techniques (Recommendation 6.2-3).

## **7.3 Risk and Hazard Assessment**

- 7.3A Identify community areas and assets at greatest risk and the corresponding level of desired fire protection. Make risk assessment tools and methodologies available to communities upon request (Recommendation 6.3-1).
- 7.3B Update the Risk Assessment portion of the Master Fire Protection Plan every five years with determinations of those unincorporated County areas at greatest risk from wildfire (Recommendation 6.3-1).

## **7.4 Risk Reduction and Management**

- 7.4A Consider the wildland/urban fire interface in the planning process, and address future fire safety needs and requirements associated with development in wildland/urban interface areas (Recommendation 6.4-1).
- 7.4B Coordinate vegetation management plans with the appropriate federal, state and local government agencies (e.g., transportation agencies, County Public Works, etc.). Institute development conditions on new subdivisions designed to control vegetation

alongside roads and in public areas, thus reducing the risk of fire spreading to or from private property (Recommendation 6.4-1).

- 7.4C Establish guidelines for the use of fire-resistant construction materials for new residential construction and home remodeling in areas of high fire risk (Recommendation 6.4-1).
- 7.4D Define and identify strategies to assist local communities, and community-based organizations in their fire risk reduction and management efforts (Recommendation 6.4-1).
- 7.4E Require fire risk disclosures for new development in high fire-risk areas. Impose conditions on new development in these areas to provide onsite fire protection and prevention measures (e.g., fuel breaks, adequate water sources) (Recommendation 6.4-1).
- 7.4F In cooperation with landowners, promote programs that will provide strategies for biomass conversion and utilization, providing energy and resulting in reduced fuel loads (Recommendation 6.4-2).

## **7.5 Community Preparedness and Response**

- 7.5A Promote the goals and objectives of the Humboldt Fire Safe Council and other local Fire Safe Councils within Humboldt County (Recommendation 6.5-1).
- 7.5B Coordinate with other County Fire Safe Councils, especially Del Norte, Siskiyou Trinity, and Mendocino Counties (Recommendation 6.5-2).
- 7.5C Maintain the Humboldt County Fire Safe Council as the group charged with working with the HCFCA, local FSCs and fire protection organizations, and other involved organizations to provide fire plan oversight, review, implementation recommendations, and funds dissemination (Recommendation 6.5-3).
- 7.5D Incorporate wildland fire safety measures, fire hazard mitigations, accessible roads data, emergency water supply locations, flammable vegetation clearance for defensible space techniques, and other fire safety techniques into local community planning endeavors (Recommendation 6.5-7).

## **7.6 Fiscal Issues**

- 7.6A Provide technical support to local organizations that seek to establish (tax) benefit assessment areas as well as alternative funding mechanisms. Coordinate with state/federal government funding programs (e.g., Amador) as sources of funding for community fire protection (Recommendation 6.6-1).
- 7.6B Encourage the provision of fire protection services through a district or local agency that provides a stable source of revenue from property tax, assessments, fees, or other sources (Recommendation 6.6-1).

- 7.6C Establish funding and resource pools for various fire department administrative, purchasing, and expense categories (such as vehicle maintenance and workers compensation and liability insurance ) that can be maintained through Humboldt County, the Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association, or a similar local organization (Recommendation 6.6-1).
- 7.6D Support reallocation of Proposition 172 funds to local fire agencies (Recommendation 6.6-2).
- 7.6E Support the allocation of a portion of Title III funds to local Fire Safe Councils and local fire protection agencies for coordination and planning (Recommendation 6.6-3).
- 7.6F Provide resources to assist local fire organizations and local Fire Safe Councils with grant writing and funding pursuits, and administrative requirements and technical needs related to fire service, fire hazard reduction, and fire prevention activities (Recommendation 6.6-4).