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**For Meeting of: April 2, 2024**

Consent Item;  Public Hearing Item

To: City Council

From: Kevin Caldwell, Community Development Director 

Through: Kyle Knopp, City Manager

Date: March 28, 2024

Subject: General Plan Annual Progress Report

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**Recommendation:**

That the City Council:

1. Receive and file the General Plan Annual Progress Report.

**Discussion:**

Every jurisdiction in the State is required to prepare a General Plan Annual Progress Report. The report has been prepared pursuant to the requirements of Government Code Section 65400. Guidance for preparation of the report is provided by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR).

The purpose of the document is to report on the City of Rio Dell's progress in implementing its General Plan. The document will also be provided to the Planning Commission for their review on April 23, 2024. The report was submitted to OPR and the Department of Housing and Community Development as required by State law.

**Attachment 1: General Plan Annual Progress Report**

**City of Rio Dell  
General Plan Annual Progress Report  
Year 2023**



**Prepared by the  
Community Development Department**

*March 19, 2024*

**City of Rio Dell  
General Plan Annual Progress Report  
Year 2023**

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## **I. Introduction**

This report has been prepared pursuant to the requirements of Government Code Section 65400. Guidance for the preparation of the report is provided by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR).

The purpose of the document is to report on the City of Rio Dell's progress in implementing its General Plan. The document was provided to the City Council and Planning Commission for their review on March 19, 2024, and April 23, 2024, respectively, and will be submitted to OPR and the Department of Housing and Community Development following these reviews.

### **Background**

The City adopted a comprehensive update to the General Plan in 2008. The Plan replaced, reformatted, and updated the previous General Plan in its entirety. As a result of many meetings, the General Plan was updated to include new land use designations and associated zoning text amendments.

The City's Circulation, Open Space and Conservation Elements were updated in 2013. The Safety Element was updated and adopted in 2016 and amended in 2023. The Housing Element was updated in November of 2020 and again in 2022.

All of the City's General Plan Elements and Zoning Regulations can be found at the City's website: <https://cityofriodell.ca.gov/>

### **Informational Document**

This document is a reporting document and does not create or alter policy. The content is provided for informational purposes only and is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per Guidelines Section 15306, Information Collection.

### **Organization**

After the previous introductory section, a summary of projects and issues addressed in the last year is provided, and then each General Plan element is addressed. Following these topics, the City's continuing efforts to address minor implementation issues, compliance activities, and changes in state law requiring updates to the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance are addressed.

## **II. Plans, Projects, and Accomplishments**

During 2023 the City processed numerous projects, including Building Permits, Use Permits, Lot Line Adjustments, Subdivisions(s) text amendments to both the City's Zoning Regulations and General Plan. The following summaries provide a brief overview of these projects and

programs, and are not intended to be exhaustive.

## **Building Permits**

The Building Division of the Community Development Department issued 232 Building Permits in 2023. Total valuation of these projects was \$5,255,690.00. Building permits were issued for 1 new single-family home, and 1 Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). The total valuation for the new homes was \$624,547.00. Thirty-One (31) permits were issued for new roofs and seven (7) permits for new solar systems. The City is thirty (30) other permits for electrical panel upgrades, HVAC systems, hot water heaters, and siding replacement among other things. The City received approximately \$97,109.00 in Building Permit Fees in 2023.

## **Planning Projects**

The Planning Division processed a variety of planning projects during 2023, including Use Permits, Design Review, General Plan and Zoning Amendments, the Dog Park project, updating the City's CDBG Guidelines, and establishing a Rental Housing Inspection Program. Of the projects heard by the Planning Commission, General Plan and Zoning Amendments are sent to the City Council with a recommendation of approval for the Council to consider the applications.

## **Projects Reviewed During 2023**

The following projects were reviewed by the Planning Commission and/or the City Council in 2023.

**1. Applicant: Humboldt 454, File No. 205-111-068; Case No. CCLUO 23-01 Modification.** An application for a Modification to an existing Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to convert approximately 1,692 sq. ft. of drying area to a nursery. Relocate the drying area to four (4) 8' x 40' cargo containers placed on the north side of the existing building. The cargo containers will be provided power for heating, cooling, and humidity control. Cargo containers to be anchored and electrical services and appliances will be located above the base flood elevation.

***Result:*** The Planning Commission approved the modification with findings and conditions of approval.

**2. Mingo's/Patron Building Façade Improvement Program (FIP) Grant Application.** The Façade Improvement Program (FIP) is a reimbursement grant program provided to a business and/or property owner for the improvement of existing commercial buildings throughout the City of Rio Dell. The program provides a matching grant of 50% of the façade improvement cost to the business and/or owner up to a maximum dollar amount \$15,000 per approved project.

***Result:*** The Planning Commission approved the Design Review of the project.

**3. Discussion of the proposed Rental Housing Inspection Program.** Staff will provide an overview of the proposed Rental Housing Inspection Program and ask that the Commission make a recommendation to the City Council.

***Result:*** The Planning Commission approved the proposed ordinance and recommended that the City Council approve the ordinance. The City Council approved and adopted the ordinance at their meeting on January 16, 2024.

**4. Text amendments to the Zoning Regulations** to **(1)** define and allow for residential care homes with six or fewer persons by right in all residential zones subject only to the same restrictions in that zone.; **(2)** Update the definition of family to state the following. Family -- “one or more persons living together in a dwelling unit.”; and **(3)** provide for farm employee housing in zones that allow agriculture as a permitted use pursuant to the State Employee Housing Act (Health and Safety Code Sections 17021.5 and 17021.6.

***Result:*** The Planning Commission approved the proposed text amendments and recommended that the City Council approve the text amendments. The City Council approved and adopted the recommended text amendments.

**5. Safety Element Amendment.** The City amended the Safety Element to include a brief discussion on the December 20, 2022 and January 1, 2023 earthquakes and to incorporate the County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) by reference and to include the Rio Dell element of the LHMP in the Safety Element.

The current Safety Element was approved in 2016. The Safety Element is one of seven mandated elements of the General Plan. The purpose of the Safety Element is to reduce the potential risk of death, injuries, property damage, and economic and social dislocation resulting from fires, floods, earthquakes, landslides, and other hazards. The safety element overlaps topics also mandated in the land use, conservation, and open-space elements.

The Safety Element identifies hazards and hazard abatement (mitigation) provisions to guide local decisions related to zoning, subdivisions, and entitlement permits. The element contains general hazard and risk reduction strategies and policies supporting hazard mitigation measures. Policies address the identification of hazards and emergency response, as well as mitigation through avoidance of hazards by new projects and reduction of risk in developed areas. The Safety Element is being amended to reflect the recent earthquakes that caused more than 30 million dollars in damage and to incorporate the County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) by reference and to include the Rio Dell element of the LHMP.

On December 20, 2022, a magnitude 6.4 earthquake occurred approximately 8 miles west of Ferndale and at a depth of approximately 10 miles. The initial earthquake was followed by multiple aftershocks, with the largest being a magnitude 5.4 that occurred about nine (9) miles southeast of Rio Dell on January 1, 2023. These two earthquakes resulted in over 250 structures “yellow tagged” (requiring repairs), over 90 structures “red tagged” (unsafe to enter), and over

90 households displaced.



For the initial 6.4 magnitude earthquake on December 20, 2022, more than 5,900 people have responded on the United States Geological Survey's (USGS) "Did You Feel It?" report. More than half of those reports came in within an hour of the earthquake. Respondents in Eureka, the closest city to the epicenter, reported very strong shaking, but people hundreds of miles away in San Jose, CA, Reno, NV, and Klamath Falls, OR also reported weak shaking.

This region has a history of abundant seismic activity; a sequence of overlapping earthquakes of magnitude 6.2 and 5.7 occurred nearby almost exactly a year ago on December 20, 2021. Earthquakes are common in this area because it's close to where the Pacific, North America, and Juan de Fuca plates meet; a spot known as the Mendocino Triple Junction. In the past century, there have been at least 40 other earthquakes of magnitude 6 or larger, including six earthquakes magnitude 7 or larger, that have occurred within roughly 150 miles of the Ferndale earthquake

**Local Hazard Mitigation Plan** - The City of Rio Dell is one of 23 local jurisdictions that participated in the development in the 2020 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) for Humboldt County. The City, the Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services and our planning partners worked with bay area consultant Tetra Tech in developing the LHMP.



Hazard mitigation planning reduces loss of life and property by minimizing the impact of disasters. It begins with state, tribal and local governments identifying natural disaster risks and vulnerabilities that are common in their area. After identifying these risks, they develop long-term strategies for protecting people and property from similar events. Mitigation plans are key to breaking the cycle of disaster damage and reconstruction. The City's Safety Element of the General Plan is a key local tool in reducing risks associated with disasters, including flooding, earthquakes and fire.

It is impossible to predict exactly when and where all disasters will occur or the extent to which they will impact an area, but with careful planning and collaboration among public agencies, stakeholders and citizens, it is possible to minimize losses.

Jurisdictions with FEMA-approved and formally adopted mitigation plans are eligible to apply for funding under FEMA's hazard mitigation assistance programs, including Hazard Mitigation

Grant Program, Pre-Disaster Mitigation and Flood Mitigation Assistance grant programs.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) encourages multi-jurisdictional planning for hazard mitigation. All participating jurisdictions must meet the requirements of Chapter 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations (44 CFR):

*“Multi-jurisdictional plans (e.g. watershed plans) may be accepted, as appropriate, as long as each jurisdiction has participated in the process and has officially adopted the plan.” (Section 201.6(a)(4)).*

For the Humboldt County Hazard Mitigation Plan, a planning partnership was formed to leverage resources and to meet requirements of the federal Disaster Mitigation Act for as many eligible local governments as possible. The Disaster Mitigation Act defines a local government as follows:

*“Any county, municipality, city, town, township, public authority, school district, special district, intrastate district, council of governments (regardless of whether the council of governments is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under State law), regional or interstate government entity, or agency or instrumentality of a local government; any Indian tribe or authorized tribal organization, or Alaska Native village or organization; and any rural community, unincorporated town or village, or other public entity.”*

Two types of planning partners participated in this process for the Humboldt County Hazard Mitigation Plan, with distinct needs and capabilities:

- Incorporated municipalities
- Special districts

Each participating planning partner prepared a jurisdiction-specific annex to the LHMP. The City of Rio Dell’s annex is included in Chapter 7 of Volume 2 of the Humboldt County Operational Area Hazard Mitigation Plan and is incorporated into the City Safety Element and was included as Appendix A.

The Humboldt County Operational Area Hazard Mitigation Plan was approved by the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) on 10/24/2019 and submitted to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for approval. On 1/2/2020, FEMA determined the Hazard Mitigation Plan is eligible for approval pending adoption by participating jurisdictions. A copy of the approved Hazard Mitigation Plan can be found here: <https://humboldt.gov/3011/County-Emergency-Plans>.

The Planning Commission considered and approved the minor amendments to the Safety element at their meeting of February 8, 2023. The City Council approved and adopted the amendments at their meeting of February 13, 2023.



**5. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Owner Occupied and Owner Investor Guidelines.** The City updated our CDBG Owner Occupied Rehabilitation (OOR) guidelines in 2023. The City also expanded the program to add Owner Investor Rehabilitation properties as well. In addition, the City and County recently executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) where the County is currently administering the City’s CDBG program.

***Result:*** The Planning Commission and City Council reviewed and approved the revised Guidelines and the Memorandum of Understanding with the County.

**6. 2022 Housing Element and General Plan Annual Progress Report:** Every jurisdiction in the State is required to prepare a General Plan Annual Progress Report. The 2022 report was prepared pursuant to the requirements of Government Code Section 65400. Guidance for the preparation of the report is provided by the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR).

***Result:*** The Planning Commission and City Council received and discussed the reports.

## **Other Plans and Projects**

The following discussion summarizes other projects that involved efforts from the Community Development Department, Planning Division staff in 2023.

● **Cannabis** - The City allows and taxes commercial cannabis activities. The Council recognized the state of the cannabis industry has changed dramatically over the past few years. The City has three outdoor farms located on the Dinsmore Plateau. In addition, there are two indoor cultivation facilities located at the Humboldt Rio Dell Business Park. There are also two cannabis retail facilities in the City. Staff continually monitors the activity of the cannabis operations within the City.

### ● **Climate Action Plan Update**

In November of 2023, staff presented an update to the City Council on the status of the Regional Climate Action Plan (CAP).

The City has been collaborating with the County of Humboldt, the City of Eureka, the City of Arcata, the City of Blue Lake, the City of Trinidad, the City of Ferndale, the City of Fortuna to craft a regional approach for addressing the challenges of climate change through the development of a Regional Climate Action Plan (CAP).

This regional approach enables improved coordination and maximizes the effectiveness of Green House Gas (GHG) reduction measures. Throughout the development process of the draft CAP, all jurisdictions have been included in the conversations around decision-making.

The completion of the Humboldt Region Climate Action Plan (CAP) encountered complications that require attention. Specifically, the consultants (Rincon) hired to conduct the environmental review for the Draft CAP requested supporting information to demonstrate the existing strategies can be achieved. Rincon concluded that the draft CAP is overly ambitious and the goals cannot be achieved. Attachment 1 is a detailed discussion explaining the complications that have been encountered in proceeding to the adoption of the CAP. These limitations prevent the Draft CAP from meeting the State requirements for a “qualified” CAP. A qualified CAP is one that meets State requirements so that future development projects requiring environmental review under State law can streamline greenhouse gas (GHG) impact analyses by demonstrating consistency with the qualified CAP. A qualified CAP also allows opportunities for potential grant funds for local jurisdictions.

In order to produce a qualified CAP, Rincon recommended modifying the inventory of greenhouse gases to eliminate those baseline emissions that are not under local government control, and; design measures and goals to achieve a qualified CAP. A point of controversy has been whether to include point sources in the inventory. In consultation with Rincon, it is debatable whether there is sufficient local control over these emissions so point source emissions are not being included in the CAP.

The Board of Supervisors (BOS) received a report from the County Planning Department regarding the complications associated with the draft CAP on October 17, 2023. At that meeting, the BOS approved the request to move to the preparation of a qualified CAP.

It is anticipated that the draft CAP will be completed by the end of March 2024, the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) completed by the end of September 2024, the Final EIR (FEIR) completed by the end of 2024, and the public hearings to begin in January 2025.

#### ● **Dog Park**

The Planning Department assumed the lead role in the grant from the California Department of Parks and Recreation application for a proposed Dog Park. Staff prepared the Request For Proposals. Construction is to begin in the spring of this year.

#### ● **Nuisance Committee**

The Community Development staff provides support to the City’s Nuisance Committee which meets monthly. The Nuisance Committee provides oversight and advice to the Code Compliance Manager and the Police Chief on priorities and courses of action.

#### ● **CDBG Loan Committee**

The Community Development Director along with the City Manager and Finance Director make up the City’s CDBG Loan Committee. Committee members consider applications for low- to moderate-income families homebuyer and rehabilitation loans under CDBG grant programs.

### **III. General Plan Elements**

California state law requires that every city adopt a General Plan to guide the physical development of both public and private lands within the city limits. The role of a community's general plan is to act as a "constitution;" a basis for rational decisions regarding a city's long-term physical development.

The General Plan details the City's goals and guiding principles for a variety of planning topics and is the constitution for future development. California Government Code Section 65300 et seq. provides direction and specifications for the content of the General Plan. The following seven elements are required:

- Land Use
- Circulation
- Conservation
- Open Space
- Noise
- Safety
- Housing

The elements may be combined or renamed, but basic requirements must be included. An agency may adopt any type of optional element, such as an Economic Element, at its discretion. Only the Housing Element must be certified by another agency (i.e., HCD).

The General Plan is a snap shot of a certain period in time and is both an expression of Rio Dell's community values and a legal document. The General Plan must be comprehensive, long term, and internally consistent. All of the City's other land use regulations, including zoning, subdivisions, specific plans, and redevelopment plans must conform to the General Plan. The General Plan is a bridge between these physical regulations and Rio Dell's community values, visions, and goals.

#### **Land Use Element**

The City of Rio Dell is required to periodically update their General Plan. The City adopted the current Land Use element in 2008. The prior Land Use Element was revised in 1980.

There have been a number of amendments since the adoption of the current Land Use Element. The most significant amendment occurred in 2012 when the City redesignated approximately 37 acres in the "Avenues" neighborhood from Town Center to Urban Residential. The area was redesignated after residents complained about the ability to insure residences which were considered legal non-conforming uses.

In 2022, staff discovered that residential densities were not included in the Neighborhood Center and Community Commercial designations. In addition, the Town Center designation specified a density range of 10 – 22 units per net acre. The City approved Resolution No. 1542-

2022 specifying a density of up to 20 units per net acre for all three commercial designations and amending the City's Residential Multifamily and commercial land use designations to include State mandated Supportive and Transitional Housing projects and Low Barrier Navigation Centers.

### **Circulation Element**

The Circulation Element was adopted in 2013. The previous Circulation Element was adopted in 1977.

The Circulation Element identifies the guiding principles for moving people and goods within the City and identifies the infrastructure necessary to assure that the transportation network will serve the City at General Plan build-out.

A majority of trips are made by automobile. The Circulation Element identifies the roadway system necessary for automobile traffic by setting levels of service, hierarchy of roads, and areas where road improvements are necessary.

The Circulation Element also identifies alternative travel modes, such as walking, bicycles, bus transit, and rail transit. The alternative transportation is important to reduce pressure on roads, conserve energy, and improve the public health through exercise.

The road system provides many functions in addition to carrying vehicle traffic. It provides open space separating dwelling units and commercial uses. If properly landscaped, streetside landscaping provides location for trees to support the urban forest. If developed with safe pedestrian and bike ways, it serves as a non-motorized transportation corridor, a linear park, and an attractive network for healthy exercise. If properly designed, it provides the background for the community urban design and appearance. Finally, it provides the right of way for most of the City's public utilities infrastructure.

### **Conservation and Open Space Element**

The previous Conservation Element was adopted in 2001 and the previous Open Space Element was adopted in 1972. The current Open Space and Conservation Element was adopted in 2013.

The Open Space and Conservation Element is concerned with the conservation of natural resources and the provision of open space within community. Open Space and Conservation are combined because the natural resources and open space provide the framework for the built areas of the City, and the overall appearance of the City integrates natural and man-made elements.

The primary vision of the Open Space and Conservation element is to maintain and encourage development that compliments the natural visual setting of Rio Dell. The City is located in a portion of the County with high quality aesthetic value due to its many natural and community

resources. The bluffs on the east side of the City provide outstanding aesthetic value. In addition, Rio Dell is at a transition point where the Eel River Valley's redwood covered slopes open up to the broad Eel River delta. Sweeping vistas associated with the Eel River valley contribute to the City aesthetic setting.

The Conservation Element guides the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources (water, forests, soils, rivers, mineral deposits, and others), while the Open Space Element guides the comprehensive and long-range preservation and conservation of open-space lands, including parks. Together, these elements present a framework of goals and policies for use and protection of all the natural resource and open space assets of the City.

Conservation goals include development, and utilization of natural resources such as water and its hydraulic force, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, fisheries, wildlife, minerals, and cultural resources. Open space goals include limiting hillside development, creek and river setback areas, biologically sensitive habitat, and natural forests.

The Open Space and Conservation elements addresses the conservation of open space lands, including issues related to working lands and park lands, the orderly development of residential land, and coordination with other agency programs related to conserving open space lands.

State planning law provides a detailed description of open space lands and the topics that must be addressed in the Open Space and Conservation Elements. These topics include Open Space for the Preservation of Natural Resources, Open Space for the Managed Production of Resources, Open Space for Outdoor Recreation and Open Space for Public Health and Safety:

State law (Government Code 65560 et seq.) requires a local open-space plan (element) for the comprehensive and long-range preservation and conservation of open-space land within its jurisdiction, and that the open space plan contain an action program that identifies how the plan or element is to be implemented.

The City continues to consult with tribal intergovernmental representatives to conserve and protect cultural and historical resources. Cooperation with the two incorporated cities, special districts, and State and Federal agencies continues to preserve the County's cultural heritage, historical and archaeological structures, sites, and landmarks.

### **Noise Element**

The Noise Element is one of the City's older General Plan Elements. It was approved and adopted in August of 2001. Although noise standards have not dramatically changed since 2001, City staff hopes to update the Noise Element in 2024.

Government Code Section 65302(f) requires each California city and county to include within its general plan a noise element that analyzes and quantifies noise levels and the extent of noise exposure in their jurisdictions from the following sources:

- Highways and freeways;
- Primary arterial and major local streets;
- Passenger and freight online railroad operations and ground rapid transit systems;
- Commercial, general aviation, heliport, helistop, and military airport operations, aircraft overflights, jet engine test stands, and all other ground facilities and maintenance functions related to airport operation;
- Local industrial plants, including, but not limited to, railroad classification yards; and
- Other ground stationary noise sources identified by local agencies as contributing to the community noise environment.

The Noise Element is required to map noise level contours such that it may be used as a basis for land use decisions. It must include implementation measures and possible solutions to existing and foreseeable noise problems. Furthermore, the policies and standards of the Noise Element must be sufficient to serve as a guideline for compliance with sound transmission control requirements.

The Noise Element aims to protect the City's residents and visitors from the harmful and annoying effects of exposure to excessive noise. The primary source of noise within the City is Highway 101.

### **Safety Element**

The Safety Element was updated and adopted in 2016. The purpose of the safety element is to reduce the potential risk of death, injuries, property damage, and economic and social dislocation resulting from fires, floods, earthquakes, landslides, and other hazards. The safety element overlaps topics also mandated in the land use, conservation, and open-space elements. The components of this Element include:

- Geologic/Seismic Hazards
- Flood Hazards
- Fire Hazards
- Airport Safety
- Industrial Hazards
- Hazardous Materials
- Emergency Management

The safety element must identify hazards and hazard abatement provisions to guide local decisions related to zoning, subdivisions, and entitlement permits. The element contains general

hazard and risk reduction strategies and policies supporting hazard mitigation measures. Policies address the identification of hazards and emergency response, as well as mitigation through avoidance of hazards by new projects and reduction of risk in developed areas.

Land development is subject to a number of hazards to life and property, including seismic and non-seismic land instability, flooding, fire, and dangers from airport operations.

The degree of risk associated with these hazards can only be measured in relative terms. What constitutes 'acceptable risk' varies with the type of development involved. For instance, a hospital should meet very strict earthquake standards in order to ensure that it is able to function in the event of a serious earthquake. A warehouse, on the other hand, would not need to be designed to the same rigorous standards because its functions during an earthquake would not be critical to the community's response to the emergency, nor would it pose serious risk to large numbers of people should it fail.

The General Plan manages risk through the use of land use designations to limit exposure to hazardous areas and through policies tailored to specific hazardous conditions. The goals, policies and implementation measures of this Element are many of the same existing policies found in Chapter 5, the Open Space and Conservation Element. All of the goals, policies and implementation measures are designed to proactively improve overall safety conditions within the City.

As mentioned previously, the City Safety Element was updated in 2023 to include a brief discussion on the December 20, 2022 and January 1, 2023 earthquakes and to incorporate the County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) by reference and to include the Rio Dell element of the LHMP in the Safety Element.

### **Housing Element**

The Housing Element identifies existing and projected housing needs and establishes goals, policies, standards, and implementation measures for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing in the City of Rio Dell (City). It meets detailed requirements of state Housing Element law, including requirements for a residential land inventory sufficient to meet the City's share of the state-prescribed regional housing need. The Housing Element is the component of the City's General Plan that provides an eight-year vision for housing.

The California housing element law, enacted in 1969, mandates that local governments adequately plan to meet the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community. The law acknowledges that, in order for the private market to adequately address housing needs and demand, local governments must adopt land use plans and regulatory systems that provide opportunities for, and do not unduly constrain, housing development. This document presents an effective housing element that discusses the necessary conditions for preserving and producing an adequate supply of affordable housing. Among other things, the housing element provides an inventory of land adequately zoned or

planned to be zoned for housing, certainty in permit processing procedures, and a commitment to assist in housing development through regulatory concessions and incentives.

The California state legislature has identified the attainment of a decent home and suitable living environment for every resident as the state's major housing goal. Recognizing the important role of local planning programs in pursuing this goal, the legislature has mandated that all cities and counties prepare a housing element as part of their comprehensive general plan. Section 65302(c) of the Government Code sets forth the specific components to be contained in a community's housing element.

The primary purpose of a housing element is to:

- Preserve and improve housing and neighborhoods,
- Provide adequate housing sites,
- Assist in the provision of affordable housing,
- Remove governmental constraints to housing investment, and
- Promote fair and equal housing opportunities.

This Housing Element consists of the following sections:

1. Housing Goals, Policies, and Programs
2. Review of the Previous Housing Element Programs
3. Housing Needs Assessment
4. Housing Resources
5. Housing Constraints
6. Quantified Objectives

California law requires that each city and county, when preparing its state-mandated housing element, develop local housing programs to meet its "fair share" of existing and future housing needs for all income groups. This fair-share concept seeks to ensure that each jurisdiction provides housing for its residents with a variety appropriate to their needs. The fair share is allocated to each city and the county by HCD. One of the major goals of the housing element is to develop policies and programs to meet the goals established through the fair-share allocation.

State law requires local governments to provide adequate sites for the construction of housing to meet the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) plan. Table 26 presents the fair-share allocation for each city in Humboldt County as well as the unincorporated County area during the sixth-cycle Housing Element planning period, as published in the Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) Regional Housing Needs Plan (RHNP).

Meeting the housing needs of the City's residents is an important goal for the City. The Housing Element works to provide housing for all of the community, and addresses the needs of specified populations based on income. The City is not obligated to ensure the units are built, the City only needs to ensure that sites are available for the units.



At present, the City is responsible for accounting for potential development sites for both its fifth- and sixth cycle RHNA allocation in this Housing Element Update. Accordingly, the City will need to identify sites for a total of 82 units, as shown in Table 28 of the Housing Element.

**Table 28  
Comparison of the Regional Housing Need and Residential Sites Capacity**

Income Group	Fifth and Sixth Cycle RHNA	Approved Project Capacity	Remaining RHNA	Site Inventory Capacity	Projected ADU Capacity	RHNA Surplus
Very Low	20	25	7	38	30	61
Low	12					
Moderate	13		13	28	10	25
Above Moderate	37	1	36	22	--	0*
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>72</b>

*Source: City of Rio Dell 2020; HCAOG.*

*\* It is assumed that surplus from other income categories would provide additional capacity for the above moderate-income group.*

Table 28 of the Housing Element compares the City of Rio Dell’s RHNA to the site inventory capacity. Based on the River Bluff Cottages, and the current sites capacity, the City has a surplus of 61 units available to lower-income households (including extremely low-, very low), 25 units available to moderate-income households. The City’s biggest need for housing is for Above Moderate housing sites.

In 2023, CalFire purchased what is locally known as the Todd property. The Todd property is an 18+/- acre parcel that was and still is designated Community Commercial. The acquisition by CalFire is truly a “game-changer” for the City. Not only was the City’s largest prime commercial site removed from potential commercial, visitor-serving, housing, all tax-generating uses, it also had a significant impact on our Housing Element. Approximately 100 units were identified on the Todd property. Staff plans to initiate a comprehensive General Plan update to redesignate properties in the City in 2025 to make up for the potential loss.

The City continues to work with service providers to provide for the needs of lower- income households, the disabled, and other special needs populations, per the direction provided in the Housing Element.

#### **IV. General Plan and Zoning Code Updates**

In 2023 City staff continued to identify and address minor implementation issues based on specific projects, compliance activities, and changes in state law that affect these land use documents. Amendments to the Zoning Code were completed addressing these issues. This update approach will be repeated on an as-needed basis.

## **V. Conclusion**

The General Plan is the City's constitution, development blue-print and guiding vision. Upkeep and maintenance of the General Plan is a continuous process. The City implements the General Plan's vision on a day-to-day basis in its many planning projects, and strives to include the public in the decision-making process.

The City conducted many planning activities in 2023, as identified in this report, and continued its project review responsibilities to further the General Plan's goals, policies, programs, and implementation measures. Updates to the remainder of the General Plan and the zoning ordinance are expected to continue to move forward in 2024.