




Community Development Department
675 Wildwood Avenue
Rio Dell, CA 95562
(707) 764-3532

For Meeting of: February 17, 2026
☒ Consent Item; ☐ Public Hearing Item

To: City Council
From: Kevin Caldwell, Community Development Director 
Through: Kyle Knopp, City Manager
Date: February 11, 2026
Subject: 2025 General Plan Annual Progress Report

Recommendation:

That the City Council:

1. Receive and file the 2025 General Plan Annual Progress Report.

Discussion:

Every jurisdiction in the State is required to prepare an annual General Plan 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 Report was presented to the Planning Commission at their meeting of January 27, 2026. After submitting the report to the City Council, the report will be submitted to OPR as required by State law.

Attachment 1: General Plan Annual Progress Report

City of Rio Dell General Plan Annual Progress Report Year 2025



**Prepared by the
Community Development Department**

January 22, 2026

City of Rio Dell General Plan Annual Progress Report Year 2025

Table of Contents

	Page
I. Introduction	1
II. Plans, Projects, and Accomplishments	1
III. General Plan Elements	9
Land Use Element	10
Circulation Element	10
Conservation and Open Space Element	11
Noise Element	11
Safety Element	12
Housing Element	13
IV. General Plan and Zoning Code Updates	15
V. Conclusion	15

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 February 3, 2026, and January 27, 2026, 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 and 2025. 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 2025 the City processed numerous projects, including Building Permits, Use Permits, Lot Line Adjustments, Notice of Merger, 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 139 Building Permits in 2025. Total valuation of these projects was \$2,328,426.00. There was one (1) Building Permit issued for single-family manufactured home and one (1) Building Permit for an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). Thirty-six (36) permits were issued for new roofs and nine (9) permits for new solar systems. The City issued ninety-four (94) other permits for foundation repairs, interior improvements, electrical panel upgrades, HVAC systems, hot water heaters, and siding replacement among other things. The City received approximately \$41,500 in Building Permit Fees in 2025.

Planning Projects

The Planning Division processed a variety of planning projects during 2025, including Use Permits, Design Review, Notice of Mergers, General Plan and Zoning Amendments and updating the City's CDBG Guidelines. 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 2025

The following projects were reviewed by the Planning Commission and/or the City Council in 2025.

1. PG&E's Rule 20A Undergrounding Program. The City held hearings regarding PG&E's Rule 20A Undergrounding Program. The Rule 20A undergrounding program offers a *ratepayer-funded pathway* for Rio Dell to convert overhead electrical distribution lines to underground service. The City had to amend the boundaries of Underground District No. 2 to meet the required public interest criteria. The City's engagement with PG&E on Rule 20A work will result in a dramatic aesthetic benefit to the community along Wildwood Avenue. PG&E, AT&T and Optimum are currently in the planning and engineering stages to underground the overhead utilities.

Result: The City Council approved the amended District boundaries at the meeting on March 4, 2025.

2. Heussler Fourplex Design Review. The Planning Commission considered a Design Review application for the construction of new 2-story 4-plex containing (4) 3-bedroom, 2-1/2 bathroom units, with attached 1-car garage and 1 additional off-street parking space. Each unit features its own separate covered entrance, a covered back porch, and a private covered balcony at the second floor.

Result: The Planning Commission approved the proposed project at their meeting on April 29, 2025.

3. Humboldt Seed Company Cannabis Dispensary Conditional Use Permit. Staff processed an application for a Conditional Use permit to establish a cannabis dispensary in an existing 1500+/- square foot building. The parcel is provided with community water and sewer.

Result: The Planning Commission approved the proposed project at their meeting on June 25, 2025.

4. Housing Text Amendments. Staff processed State mandated housing text amendments, including updating the City's Density Bonus Regulations, establishing Reasonable Accommodations Regulations, Single Room Occupancy Unit Regulations and amending the Town Center (TC) and Residential Multifamily (RM) designations to allow Single Room Occupancy Units.

Result: The Planning Commission approved the text amendments at their meeting on June 25, 2025 and the City Council approved and adopted Ordinance No. 415-2025 implementing the amendments at their meeting on July 15, 2025.

5. Industrial Commercial Text Amendments. In 2025, the City of Rio Dell undertook updates to its Industrial–Commercial (I-C) zoning regulations to better support economic development, business attraction, and land use flexibility. The text amendments modernize outdated provisions, clarify permitted and conditionally permitted uses, and remove regulatory barriers that have limited investment and adaptive reuse of existing properties.

The amendments are intended to encourage a broader range of commercial and light industrial activities, streamline the development review process, and ensure zoning regulations align with current market conditions and community goals. By improving clarity and flexibility within the I-C zone, the City aims to promote job creation, support local businesses, and strengthen Rio Dell's economic resilience while maintaining appropriate development standards.

Result: The Planning Commission approved the text amendments at their meeting on November 26, 2024 and the City Council approved and adopted Ordinance No. 411-2025 implementing the amendments at their meeting on March 4, 2025.

6. Fire Hazard Severity Maps.

In 2025, the City of Rio Dell adopted updated Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) maps as issued by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). The adoption ensures the City's local planning and development regulations align with current state fire hazard data and wildfire risk standards.

The updated maps identify areas of moderate and high fire hazard severity and provide a consistent framework for applying fire-safe building standards and land use requirements. Adoption of the FHSZ maps supports public safety, improves wildfire preparedness, and enhances community resilience while maintaining compliance with state law.

Result: The City Council approved and adopted Ordinance No. 413-2025 establishing Chapter 8.45 of the Rio Dell Municipal Code at their meeting on April 15, 2025.

7. Margro Advisors Conditional Use Permit. Staff processed an application for a Conditional Use Permit to allow two Vacation Dwelling Units on the upper floor of an existing commercial building. The units were originally motel units and have been used as apartments for decades. The parcel is provided with community water sewer.

Result: The Planning Commission approved the proposed project at their meeting on June 25, 2025.

8. Accessory Dwelling Unit Amendments. Staff processed amendments to the City's Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Regulations to incorporate State mandated changes pursuant to SB 1211

Result: The Planning Commission approved the text amendments at their meeting on August 26, 2025 and the City Council approved and adopted Ordinance No. 418-2025 implementing the amendments at their meeting on September 16, 2025.

9. Safety Element Update Incorporating the 2025 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. Staff process an amendment to the Safety Element incorporating the 2025 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP). The Humboldt County Multi-Jurisdiction Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) 2025 serves as an update to the local agencies and districts ongoing efforts in hazard mitigation planning. The initial plan, developed in 2007, identified resources, information, and strategies to reduce risks from natural hazards and called for regular updates. The plan was last updated in 2020, and the 2025 LHMP fulfills this ongoing update requirement.

Result: The Planning Commission approved the amendment at their meeting on August 26, 2025 and the City Council approved and adopted Resolution No. 147-2025 amending the Safety Element to incorporate the 2025 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan at their meeting on September 16, 2025.

10. Sign Regulations Amendments. Staff processed updates amending the City's Sign/Billboard regulations to (1) facilitate a third billboard on the east side of Highway 101 within the Humboldt Rio Dell Business Park (HRDBP); (2) establish a definition and use type for community-oriented billboards; and (3) rezone a portion of the City's wastewater disposal field in the west side of Highway 101 to facilitate one billboard to be used as a community-oriented billboard for use by the City and Chamber of Commerce; and (4) establish a Qualified (Q)

Combining zone.

Result: The Planning Commission approved the amendments at their meeting on November 25, 2025 and the City Council held the first public hearing on December 2, 2025 and approved and adopted Ordinance No. 419-2025 at their meeting of January 6, 2026.

11. School Impact Fees. Staff presented a report regarding the Rio Dell School District's proposed School Impact Fees to the City Council on November 18, 2025.

Result: The City Council considered the proposed impact fees and took no action.

12. Application Submittal to the Wildlife Conservation Board for Phase II of the Eel River Trail. Staff prepared and the City Council authorized the submittal of an application to the WCB for Phase II of the Eel River Trail project in April 17, 2025. The Eel River Trail project includes a 1,600+/- foot Class I shared-use path (pedestrian, bicycle) with associated trailhead improvements. Phase II includes a concrete accessible switch-back style ramp structure to transition from Davis Street down to the lower trail grade. The ramp also includes stairs as part of the design of the ramp.

Result: The WCB approved the Grant application on August 28, 2025. The project went out to bid in early December 2025 and the bid was awarded to Hooven and Company on January 20, 2025.

13. 2024 Housing Element and General Plan Annual Progress Report: Every jurisdiction in the State is required to prepare a General Plan Annual Progress Report. The 2025 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 report.

14. Façade Improvements Applications: 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.

The purpose of the FIP is to induce private investment that results in quality improvements and enhancements to business-use properties. It is the City's intention that the FIP serve public-private incentive for significant aesthetic improvements to the commercial area in which the property is located. **Funded projects must result in significant aesthetic improvements to the**

commercial area in which the property is located.

The following projects were reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission in 2025.

- Rio Dell Laundromat – New siding, windows, doors, signage and paint.
- Margro Advisor's Building - New fencing between the applicant's building and the building next door on the Wildwood Avenue side and some fencing on the Monument Drive side of the building. Solar light caps are proposed on the fence posts. In addition, solar lighting of the mural on the Monument side of the building is also proposed. Also proposed is decorative security screen doors, a planter with flowers and a bench.

Result: The applications were approved.

15. Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grant: Staff prepared and submitted a grant application seeking Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) assistance to acquire, improve and modernize Davis Park, a key neighborhood park that provides vital recreational opportunities for residents of all ages. The Park is currently on lands owned by the Rio Dell School District. The project focuses on acquisition, enhanced maintenance, and expanding safe, inclusive outdoor recreation options for the community.

Result: The application is currently under review. It's expected that the grants will be awarded next month.

16. Humboldt Catalyst Grant: The Humboldt Catalyst Grant supports high-impact projects that advance economic recovery, resilience, and long-term prosperity in Humboldt County. The program prioritizes collaborative efforts that create jobs, strengthen infrastructure, and deliver measurable benefits to rural and underserved communities.

The City of Rio Dell made application for a Humboldt Rising grant funding to support development of a regional meat processing facility at the Humboldt Rio Dell Business Park (HRDBP). The application was made because the region's only meat processing facility, Redwood Meats, closed in 2024. The facility would provide critical processing capacity for local livestock producers, reducing costs and travel distances while keeping agricultural value within the region. A similar application was awarded to another organization.

Staff is working with the group and hopefully the facility will be built at the Humboldt Rio Dell Business Park (HRDBP). If built, the project will create local jobs, support small and mid-scale ranchers, and improve regional food security by stabilizing local supply chains. Humboldt Rising funding will help advance site development and infrastructure necessary to establish a compliant, sustainable facility that delivers long-term economic and community benefits to Rio Dell and the surrounding region.

Result: The grant was awarded to another organization.

17. Community Development Block Grant: Staff prepared and submitted two grant applications to the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for funding to design and construct critical drainage improvements along Second Avenue and Pacific Avenue. These streets experience recurring flooding during storm events, which threatens public safety, damages public infrastructure, and impacts nearby homes and businesses—particularly those serving low- and moderate-income residents.

The proposed project will improve stormwater conveyance, reduce roadway flooding, and enhance overall street safety and accessibility. Upgrades will help protect adjacent properties, extend the useful life of public infrastructure, and improve emergency access during severe weather events. The project directly supports CDBG objectives by addressing infrastructure deficiencies in a rural community and providing clear public health and safety benefits.

CDBG funding will allow Rio Dell to address long-standing drainage issues, increase community resilience to flooding, and improve quality of life for residents while ensuring compliance with state and federal standards.

Result: The City was not awarded the grants.

18. CALFIRE Project: Staff continues to monitor the progress and work with DGS in exploring shared use of the Todd parcel as part of the proposed relocation of the CAL FIRE Humboldt–Del Norte Unit Headquarters. The City’s goal is to accommodate CAL FIRE’s operational needs while allowing for complementary uses that support broader community and economic development objectives.

CAL FIRE and the Department of General Services (DGS) held an Open House at the elementary school in April regarding the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The City submitted to DGS in May of 2025. Rio Dell’s comments highlighted the need for the EIR to evaluate land use compatibility, infrastructure and utility capacity, traffic and access, and potential effects on surrounding properties and future development opportunities. The City also noted the importance of considering shared-use opportunities on the site and ensuring that project design and mitigation measures align with local planning goals and public safety objectives.

Overall, the City’s comments were intended to support a thorough and transparent environmental review while helping to identify opportunities for a project that is operationally effective for CAL FIRE and compatible with the City’s long-term planning and community interests. The City developed a conceptual shared site plan.

The City has had numerous discussions with DGS and CAL FIRE emphasizing coordination on site planning, access, and long-term compatibility to ensure the parcel can serve multiple public purposes. The City will continue working with DGS and CAL FIRE to evaluate feasibility and identify opportunities for a mutually beneficial shared-use arrangement.

Other Plans and Projects

The following discussion summarizes other projects that involved efforts from the Community Development Department, Planning Division staff in 2025.

● Climate Action Plan Update

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 Humboldt Regional Climate Action Plan and associated Environmental Impact Report was approved in December 2025. The agencies are continuing to work together in implementing the Plan, including establishing a regional Program Manager to coordinate the regional implementation of the plan.

● 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.

● Traffic Committee

The Community Development staff provides support to the City's Traffic Committee which meets on an "as-needed basis". The Traffic Committee provides oversight and advice to the City Council, City Manager and the Police Chief on priorities and courses of action, including text amendments to the City's traffic regulations. The committee met numerous times to discuss commercial truck parking regulations. As a result, the parking regulations were amended based on public comments and direction from the City Council.

● 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 family's homebuyer and rehabilitation loans under CDBG grant programs. A number of loans were processed and made for repairs for earthquake damage in 2025.

The Community Development Department provided support in administering capital projects, including the Painter Street sewer line upsizing, the water tank replacement projects and the construction of the small dog area at the City's Dog Park. Staff also processed, reviewed, approved and/or participated in the following projects and activities:

- Roscoe Subdivision Improvement Plans
- Participate in UC Berkeley's Transferable Development Rights (TDR's) program
- Provide update/summary to Humboldt OES regarding earthquake repairs/permits
- Updated ADU, Electrical Handouts
- Attend CALBO, NEC and Energy Code Webinars
- Meeting with Retail Strategies to discuss Economic Development
- Facilitate W-Trans Traffic Impact Study – Avenues Neighborhood
- Participated in HCAOG Housing Element Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) methodology meetings to discuss potential options regarding Housing-Jobs alternatives.
- Request proposals from PLACEWORKS and PLANWEST for the 7th Cycle Housing Element
- Facilitate enrollment in the California Uniform Public Construction Cost Accounting Act (CUPCCAA)
- Respond to HCD's inquiry Housing Element implementation programs (mixed-uses and housing by right in all residential zones)
- Complete and submit Humboldt Area Foundation (HAF) grant application for new LED sign
- Review and submit comments HCAOG's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

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, street side 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. The Safety Element was again amended to incorporate the 2025 LHMP in September of 2025.

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. The County, Cities and the Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) have been working on the RHNA methodology since September of 2025 for the **7th RHNA cycle**, which covers **2028–2037** (the allocation process HCAOG is undertaking based on the state’s housing need determination).

In December of 2025 the HCAOG Board of Directors approved the following methodology for the 7th cycle.

- Allocates housing using a **50/50 weighting of population and jobs**.
- Applies a **20% income-category adjustment** to better balance allocations across income levels.

Under HCAOG’s approved methodology the City of Rio Dell is obligated to identify sites for 95 housing units. Below is a table of the adopted allocations for the County and seven cities, including Rio Dell.

Summary - 50/50 Jobs/Population - Low Income RHNA per VMT and Opportunity									
Jurisdiction	Acutley Low (0% - 15% MHI)	Extremely Low (15% - 30% MHI)	Very Low (30% - 50% MHI)	Low (50% - 80% MHI)	Moderate (80% - 120% MHI)	Above Moderate (120%<MHI)	Total Jurisdictional Allocation	Total Low Income RHNA	Total High Income RHNA
Arcata	103	160	117	206	89	367	1,042	586	456
Blue Lake	3	7	4	8	4	15	41	22	19
Eureka	179	267	193	328	154	619	1,740	967	773
Ferndale	6	9	7	11	5	19	57	33	24
Fortuna	50	75	53	93	44	164	479	271	208
Rio Dell	7	11	6	16	10	45	95	40	55
Trinidad	3	4	3	5	6	6	27	15	12
Unincorporated County	211	333	244	397	253	1,043	2,481	1,185	1,296
Total Regional Allocation	562	866	627	1,064	565	2,278	5,962	3,119	2,843

The City of Eureka decided to appeal HCAOG’s RHNA methodology for the 7th cycle (2028–2037) primarily because of how the adopted allocation formula affected Eureka’s distribution of housing needs by income category and what city officials see as reinforcing a concentration of lower-income housing in Eureka.

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 2025 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 2025, 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 2026.