

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Meeting on October 23, 2017

Resolution No. 17 -94

**A Resolution of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Humboldt
Certifying the Final Environmental Impact Report for the
2017 Humboldt County General Plan,
Making the Findings of Fact and
Adopting a Statement of Overriding Considerations**

WHEREAS, in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a formal Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was issued on January 22, 2007 soliciting public input regarding the EIR for the Humboldt County General Plan Update. The NOP was sent by certified mail on January 22, 2007 to all the responsible and trustee agencies. The comment period ran from January 22, 2007, to February 22, 2007; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a series of public hearing between April, 2009 and March, 2012 in order to take straw votes and refine the Planning Commission Approved Draft General Plan Update; and

WHEREAS, a Draft EIR (State Clearinghouse No. 2007012089) for the Planning Commission Approved Draft General Plan Update was circulated for comment on April 2, 2012, and the Planning Commission considered the Draft EIR for the Project at public hearings on April 19, May 10, and May 17, 2012, accepting public comments on the Draft EIR through June 15, 2012; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors held public hearings and accepted comments on the proposed General Plan Update during approximately 75 meetings held between 2004 and 2016 resulting in the Board of Supervisors Markup Draft (Humboldt County General Plan Update); and

WHEREAS, a Revised Draft EIR (RDEIR) was prepared to evaluate the environmental effects which may reasonably be expected to occur during the 24-year planning period of the Humboldt County General Plan Update; and

WHEREAS, a Notice of Availability for the RDEIR was published in accordance with Public Resources Code section 21092 and CEQA Guidelines section 15087 on April 24, 2017 and was sent by mail to organizations and individuals who requested such notice and recirculated for public comment commencing on April 20, 2017 and ending on June 9, 2017 that was subsequently extended to June 30, 2017; and

WHEREAS, the Notice of Availability contained substantially all of the information required by Public Resources Code section 21092 and CEQA Guidelines section 15087 and was published in the manner required by law; and

WHEREAS, a Notice of Completion for the RDEIR was filed with the Office of the State Clearinghouse on April 24, 2017 per CEQA Guidelines section 15085; and

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WHEREAS, the Revised Draft EIR describes the environmental impacts of the proposed Humboldt County General Plan Update, and concludes the Humboldt County General Plan Update will have significant and unavoidable impacts on the environment; and

WHEREAS, the County received public and agency comments on the revised draft document;

WHEREAS, in accordance with CEQA, all comments received on the Revised Draft EIR during the public comment period were responded to and included in a Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR) completed on September 22, 2017; and

WHEREAS, Public Resources Code section 21002 sets forth the policy of CEQA that:

a) public agencies should not approve projects (including amendments to a general plan) as proposed if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen the significant environmental effects of such projects;

b) the procedures required by CEQA are intended to assist public agencies in systematically identifying both the significant effects of proposed projects and the feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures which will avoid or substantially lessen such significant effects; and,

c) in the event specific economic, social, or other conditions make infeasible such project alternatives or mitigation measures, individual projects may be approved after certification of an EIR in spite of one or more significant effects that have been identified, provided certain additional findings can be made; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors held a duly noticed public hearing to review and consider and receive testimony on the Humboldt County General Plan Update and the Final EIR on October 23, 2017; and

WHEREAS, on October 23, 2017, the Board of Supervisors completed its deliberations, and now desires to certify the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Humboldt County General Plan Update, make environmental findings as required by Public Resources Code Section 21081(a) and CEQA Guidelines Sections 15091 and 15092, and adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21081 (b) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15093;

Therefore, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Humboldt, having received the Revised Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report relating to the Humboldt County General Plan Update, finds as follows:

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1. The Final EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA as more fully set forth in the above recitals.
2. The Final EIR has been presented to the Board of Supervisors in advance of the public meeting on October 23, 2017.
3. The Board of Supervisors reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final EIR before it will approve the General Plan Update.
4. The final EIR reflects the County of Humboldt's independent judgment and analysis.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors hereby certifies the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Humboldt County General Plan Update (consisting of the Revised Draft EIR, Final EIR, and all appendices); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Humboldt finds as follows:

1. The Final EIR identifies and describes significant effects that may occur as a result of the Humboldt County General Plan Update. With the implementation of the mitigation measures discussed in the Final EIR, these effects can be mitigated to levels of less than significant, and those mitigation measures have been incorporated in the General Plan Update.
2. Nineteen significant impacts have been determined to be unavoidable, as discussed in the Findings of Fact (Attachment 1) and the Statement of Overriding Considerations (Attachment 2).
3. There is no substantial evidence that the proposed Humboldt County General Plan Update will have a significant effect on the environment in those areas described in the Final EIR and Findings of Fact as areas of no significant impacts and areas with less than significant impacts.
4. There are also areas described in the Findings of Fact involving potentially significant environmental effects that have not been fully mitigated. In considering these environmental impacts, the Board finds that there are overriding social, economic and other considerations that are described in the Statement of Overriding Considerations (Attachment 2) which justify approval of the Humboldt County General Plan Update despite these impacts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors hereby adopts the Findings of Fact contained herein and in Attachment 1, attached hereto and fully incorporated herein; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors hereby adopts the Statement of Overriding Considerations in Support of the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Humboldt County General Plan Update (Attachment 2 attached hereto and fully incorporated herein); and

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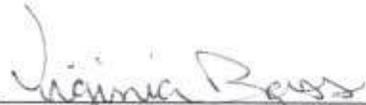
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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the individual parts of this resolution are severable, such that if one or more parts are determined to be invalid, all the other parts will remain in full force and effect.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Director of Planning is directed to promptly file a Notice of Determination as provided in CEQA Guidelines Section 15094.

Dated: October 23, 2017



VIRGINIA BASS, Chair
Humboldt County Board of Supervisors

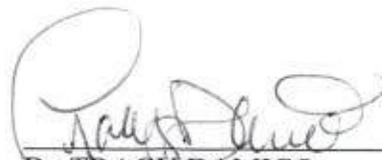
Adopted on motion by Supervisor Wilson, seconded by Supervisor Sundberg, and the following vote:

AYES: Supervisors: Bohn, Bass, Sundberg
NOES: Supervisors: Wilson
ABSENT: Supervisors: Fennell
ABSTAIN: Supervisors --

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
County of Humboldt)

I, KATHY HAYES, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, County of Humboldt, State of California, do hereby certify the foregoing to be an original made in the above-entitled matter by said Board of Supervisors at a meeting held in Eureka, California.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Seal of said Board of Supervisors.



By TRACY DAMICO
Deputy Clerk of the Board of Supervisors of
the County of Humboldt, State of California

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FINDINGS OF FACT

In Support of the
Final Environmental Impact Report
For the
Proposed Humboldt County General Plan Update

(SCH #2007012089)

AND

STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS

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SECTION 1: THE ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD

For the purposes of CEQA and the findings contained in this document, the administrative record of the County relating to the project includes:

A. Meetings, Hearings and Workshops: Throughout the review process, there have been various opportunities for public input on the land use mapping, goals, policies and implementation measures of the General Plan Update, including workshops and public hearings held between 2000 and 2017. The minutes of public hearings are part of the record of proceedings. All staff reports, memoranda, maps, letters, minutes of meetings and other Planning documents prepared by the County staff relating to the project are included in the record of proceedings. The following is a summary of meetings held on the General Plan Update:

1. The Humboldt County Planning Commission held public hearings and accepted comments on the proposed General Plan Update during approximately 111 meetings held between 2004 and 2016.
2. The Board of Supervisors held public hearings and accepted comments on the proposed General Plan Update during approximately 75 meetings held between 2004 and 2016, plus ten additional joint public meetings with the Planning Commission between 2000 and 2005.
3. Members of the Board of Supervisors and planning staff attended approximately 27 publicly noticed meetings of city councils and special district boards to accept comments on the proposed General Plan Update between 2000 and 2010.
4. Members of the Board of Supervisors and planning staff attended approximately 47 publicly noticed community workshops to accept comments on the proposed General Plan Update between 2000 and 2011.
5. Members of the Board of Supervisors and planning staff attended at least 60 additional meetings with business, non-profit, and community organizations to accept comments on the proposed General Plan Update between 2000 and 2015.
6. Members of the Board of Supervisors and planning staff held a number of meetings with Native American Tribes, coordinated closely with Tribal Historic Preservation Officers regarding the preparation of the Cultural Resources Section of the Conservation and Open Space Elements, and initiated Senate Bill 18 consultation within Native American Tribes on March 24, 2014, regarding the proposed Tribal Lands (TL) and Tribal Trust Lands (TTL) land use designations.

B. Documents: The documents on which the Board of Supervisors has relied in making its findings concerning the proposed General Plan Update and FEIR include, but are not limited to the following:

1. The Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report for the project.
2. The Final Environmental Impact Report for the project.

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C. Location of Record: The record of proceedings for the Board's decision on the proposed Project is in the custody of the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors located at 825 5th Street, Eureka, California 95501 and all other parts of the record are in the custody of the Humboldt County Planning and Building Department, Planning Division, located at 3015 H Street, Eureka, California 95501.

SECTION 2: DRAFT AND FEIR; COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED IN THE FEIR

FINDING: Summary of the Alternatives Analysis

For this project, the No Project Alternative would not be the environmentally superior alternative as it would leave the site under the existing 1984 Humboldt County Framework General Plan, potentially resulting in more impacts than identified for the proposed project. The Environmentally Superior Alternative would be Alternative A which had an estimated maximum feasible development potential of 34,720 housing units, 4,250 units less than the Project. While Alternative A does meet all of the project objectives, it included different language for Guiding Principle 6, did not include GP 7 and did include GP 8 which is not a Guiding Principle in the project, so it was not selected.

Though Alternative B is designed to balance protection of resource lands with the need for residential development through focused development, appropriate urban expansion, and incentive-based clustering policies to encourage conservation of resource production lands, this alternative resulted in the same findings as Alternative A. For this reason, Alternative B was not selected.

Alternative PC may be more protective than the project with the exception of Standard BR-S5 Streamside Management Areas Defined. However, as with Alternative A and B, it included different language for Guiding Principle 6, it did not include GP 7 and did include GP 8 which is not a Guiding Principle in the project, so it was not selected.

EVIDENCE: Humboldt County GPU RDEIR 4-5, 4-6, 4-7, 4-8.

SECTION 3: GENERAL EXPLANATION OF FINDINGS

In subsequent sections, the Board of Supervisors will make findings concerning the significant adverse impacts and potentially adverse impacts which have been identified in the RDEIR. These findings will also set forth mitigation measures proposed in the RDEIR.

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SECTION 4: POPULATION GROWTH FORECASTS. The existence and/or extent of many of the impacts discussed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report is affected by the amount of population growth, and consequent residential, commercial, industrial, and other development that will occur as a result of the GPU. When assessing this growth, and the consequent environmental impacts, the EIR must make a reasonable forecast of the growth that is likely to actually occur as a result of the General Plan Update. The EIR is not required to engage in speculation in order to analyze a "worst case" scenario regarding such growth. Rather, the EIR must determine the amount of growth that is reasonably foreseeable as a consequence of the General Plan Update in order to permit preparation of a meaningful and accurate report on its impacts.

As set forth in the EIR, estimated maximum feasible housing development potential of the General Plan Update land uses is far greater (38,972 housing units) than can reasonably be expected to be developed within the planning period of the General Plan (2016-2040). Having received, reviewed, and considered the entire record, both written and oral, relating to the GPU, and associated Revised Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report, the Board of Supervisors concurs with the analysis and conclusions of the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report and finds that this worst case "buildout" estimate is speculative and does not provide a reliable basis upon which to evaluate the direct environmental impacts of the General Plan Update.

Numerous factors make it speculative and unlikely that such worst case buildout growth will actually occur as a consequence of the General Plan Update, including various site specific constraints that preclude maximum density development on any given property (e.g., slope, wetlands, floodplains, soils unsuitable for building, etc.), social and economic forces limiting population increase and development in Humboldt County, market forces that control demand for growth in Humboldt County (i.e., limit the number of persons desiring to reside, do business in, or otherwise pursue or generate development in, Humboldt County), and future discretionary actions of the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors and other regulatory agencies.

The Revised Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report contains an analysis of the amount of growth that is likely to occur as a consequence of the General Plan Update, based upon population growth statistics and projections provided by the California Department of Finance (i.e., a 2040 population of 138,307). Having received, reviewed, and considered the entire record, both written and oral, relating to the GPU, and associated Revised Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report, the Board of Supervisors concurs with the analysis and conclusions of the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report and finds that the amount of growth forecast by the EIR is accurate and reasonable, and provides a reliable basis for environmental review of the direct impacts of the General Plan Update. The Board concludes, based on the analysis and information contained in the Revised Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report and the administrative record, that the population growth analysis set forth in the Revised Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report is accurate and reasonable and provides the reliable data necessary to evaluate the direct environmental effects of the General Plan Update and to permit preparation of a meaningful and accurate report on those impacts.

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The Revised Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report utilize maximum feasible housing development potential estimate to evaluate the combined cumulative impacts of the General Plan Update and other reasonably foreseeable projects. Although there remains considerable uncertainty that the maximum density population growth estimate and associated development will actually occur even under cumulative conditions, the EIR adopts a deliberately conservative approach and assumes that this growth estimate could occur under cumulative conditions. Without contradicting, or reducing the import of, the Board's findings regarding the evaluation of the General Plan Update's direct impacts, the Board concludes that such a conservative approach is appropriate for evaluation of cumulative impacts (which necessarily requires consideration of future projects in addition to the General Plan Update itself).

SECTION 4: FINDINGS CONCERNING LESS THAN-SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

FINDING AND RATIONALE: The RDEIR and FEIR discussion and analysis determined that the goals, policies, standards and implementation measures set forth in the General Plan Update would either have no effect, or as a result of those goals, policies, standards and implementation measures, potential environmental effects would be less than significant, and that no mitigation or alternatives need be considered, as follows:

1. Land Use, Housing and Population Chapter
 - a. 3.1.3.1 Divide an Established Community (RDEIR pp. 3.1-7 - 3.1-9);
 - b. 3.1.3.4 Induce Population Growth (RDEIR pp. 3.1-19 - 3.1-22)
 - c. 3.1.3.5 Displace Existing Housing or People (RDEIR pp. 3.1-22 - 3.1-23)
2. Agricultural and Timber Resources Chapter
 - a. 3.2.3.2 Conflict with Agricultural Zoning, Williamson Act contracts or Timberland Production Zoning (RDEIR pp. 3.2-40 - 3.2-41)
3. Utilities and Services Chapter
 - a. 3.3.3.1 Wastewater Services (RDEIR pp. 3.3-37 - 3.3-44)
 - b. 3.3.3.3 New Storm Water Drainage Facilities (RDEIR pp. 3.3-56 - 3.3-59)
 - c. 3.3.3.4 Solid Waste Disposal (RDEIR pp. 3.3-59 - 3.3-61)
4. Public Services Chapter
 - a. 3.4.3.1 Schools (RDEIR pp. 3.4-12 - 3.4-17)
 - b. 3.4.3.2 Fire Protection (RDEIR pp. 3.4-17 - 3.4-22)
 - c. 3.4.3.3 Law Enforcement (RDEIR pp. 3.4-22 - 3.4-24)
5. Transportation Chapter
 - a. 3.5.3.4 Air Traffic (RDEIR pp. 3.5-30 - 3.5-31)
 - b. 3.5.3.5 Road Safety (RDEIR pp. 3.5-31 - 3.5-32)
 - c. 3.5.3.6 Inadequate Emergency Access (RDEIR pp. 3.5-33 - 3.5-35)
 - d. 3.5.3.7 Conflict with Multi-Modal Policies, Plans or Programs (RDEIR pp. 3.5-35 - 3.5-38)

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6. Noise Chapter
 - a. 3.6.3.1 Noise Exposure (RDEIR pp. 3.6-7 - 3.6-11)
7. Hazards and Hazardous Materials Chapter
 - a. 3.7.4.1 Hazardous Materials (RDEIR pp. 3.7-20)
 - b. 3.7.4.3 Emergency Response Plans (RDEIR pp. 3.7-35 - 3.7-37)
8. Geology and Soils Chapter
 - a. 3.8.3.3 Soil Stability (RDEIR pp. 3.8-19 - 3.8-20)
 - b. 3.8.3.4 Septic Suitability (RDEIR pp. 3.8-20 - 3.8-21)
9. Mineral and Energy Resources Chapter
 - a. 3.9.3.1 Loss of Known Mineral Resources (RDEIR pp. 3.9-3 - 3.9-5)
10. Hydrology and Water Quality Chapter
 - a. 3.10.3.3 Alter the Existing Drainage Patterns, etc. (RDEIR pp. 3.10-28 - 3.10-30)
11. Biological Resources Chapter
 - a. 3.11.3.1 Sensitive Species and Sensitive Habitat Areas (RDEIR pp. 3.11-7 - 3.11-12)
 - b. 3.11.3.3 Wildlife Corridors and Nursery Sites (RDEIR pp. 3.11-14 - 3.11-16)
 - c. 3.11.3.4 Local Policies and Ordinances (RDEIR pp. 3.11-16 - 3.11-17)
12. Air Quality Chapter
 - a. 3.12.4.3 Objectionable Odors (RDEIR pp. 3.12-16 - 3.12-17)
13. Cultural Resources Chapter
 - a. 3.14.3.2 Archaeological and Paleontological Resources (RDEIR pp. 3.14-8 - 3.14-11)
 - b. 3.3.3.1 Human Remains Outside Formal Cemeteries (RDEIR pp. 3.14-11 - 3.14-14)
14. Parks and Recreation Chapter
 - a. 3.15.3.2 Construction of New Recreational Facilities (RDEIR pp. 3.15-9 - 3.15-12)
15. Energy Consumption and Conservation Chapter
 - a. 3.17.4.2 Land Uses re Construction of New Energy Facilities (RDEIR pp. 3.17-18 - 3.17-21)

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SECTION 6: FINDINGS REGARDING SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE IDENTIFIED IN THE FEIR

A. Findings Regarding Recommended Mitigation Measures to be incorporated in the General Plan Update Which Avoid or Substantially Lessen Significant Environmental Effects. (PRC § 21081 (a)(1); Guidelines §15091 (a)(1))

1. Land Use, Housing and Population Chapter

a. 3.1.3.2 Conflict with Other Applicable Land Use Plans

(1) **Potentially Significant Effect.** Implementation of the General Plan Update could result in development that conflicts with state law, County zoning or other land use regulations, city general plan, public land management plans, or other applicable land use plans, policies or regulations. With respect to applicable land use plans and policies, the analysis contained in the RDEIR does not identify any inconsistencies between the proposed General Plan Update and other applicable plans, programs, and regulations with jurisdiction over the project that would result in adverse physical effects pursuant to CEQA. However, the description of open space types on pages 10-1 and 10-2 in the Conservation and Open Space Element does not include new open space definitions established in recent changes in state law. Although Policies and Standards in the Conservation and Open Space Elements and the Safety Element contain protections for these newly defined open space lands consistent with state law, they are not adequately described as open space land.

Regarding unincorporated legacy communities, the Housing Element contains the analysis that is required by Government Code Section 65302.10(a)(2). However, the General Plan Update should include a policy to require that on or before the due date for each subsequent revision of its Housing Element, the County shall review, and if necessary amend, the General Plan to update the analysis of unincorporated legacy communities.

As part of its review of modifications to Community Plan policies, the Board of Supervisors also considered changes to the three stand-alone Community Plans in a document entitled "Suggested Revisions to Other Community Plans to Maintain Consistency with the General Plan Update." This document contained suggested changes to the Avenue of the Giants, Eureka, and McKinleyville plans that relate to land use maps; land use designations revised as a part of the General Plan Update; references to the Framework General Plan or other plans that have since been updated; and corrected references to state law or County Zoning Regulations. Adoption of the "Suggested Revisions to Other Community Plans to Maintain Consistency with the General Plan Update" would be required in order to maintain consistency between the Avenue of the Giants, Eureka, and McKinleyville Community Plans and the General Plan Update.

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In addition, the proposed changes to the General Plan Update land use map would cause the zoning of various areas of the County to either remain inconsistent or become inconsistent with Plan land use designations. State land use regulation requires that cities and counties re-establish consistency within a reasonable time after a comprehensive general plan revision, which is interpreted to be up to two years. The General Plan Update Land Use Element contains some specific policies and programs to map specific zoning changes; however, there are no implementation measures or programs to ensure that consistency between the General Plan land use map and zoning map is re-established in a reasonable time.

(2) Recommended Mitigation Measure

Mitigation Measure 3.1.3.2.a. Add the following implementation measure to the Growth Planning section of the Land Use Element to reduce potential impacts related to conflict between the General Plan Update and applicable land use regulations:

***GP-IMX, Zoning Consistency.** Within two years after the adoption of the General Plan Update, revise the Zoning Regulations to re-establish zoning consistency with the policies of the General Plan and amend the Zoning Map to achieve consistency with the General Plan Land Use Map.*

Mitigation Measure 3.1.3.2.b. Add the following narrative to Section 10.1.1, Relationship to Other Elements, and Table 10-A Conservation and Open Space Policy Summary, of the Conservation and Open Space Elements to fully demonstrate consistency between General Plan Update and state law:

Add the following text to the Section 10.1.1, Relationship to Other Elements:

- ***Open Space for military bases, installations, and operating and training areas** — areas adjacent to military installations, military training routes, and underlying restricted airspace that can provide additional buffer zones to military activities and complement the resource values of the military lands. [add to the bottom of page 10-1]*
- ***Open Space for Native American historic, cultural or sacred site** — Open space for the protection of places, features, and objects described in Sections 5097.9 and 5097.993 of the Public Resources Code. [add to the bottom of page 10-1]*

Open Space for military bases, installations, and operating and training areas:

- *Narrative description of these open space lands and a map showing their locations is included in the Safety Element.*
- *Policies to minimize impacts to military trainings areas are included in the Safety Element.*
- *Policies to provide notification to the military are included in the Safety Element. [add to the bottom of page 10-2]*

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Open Space for Native American historic, cultural or sacred site:

- Narrative description of these open space lands is included in the Cultural Resources Section of the Conservation and Open Space Elements.
- Policies relating to Native American Tribal consultation are included in the Cultural Resources Section of the Conservation and Open Space Elements.
- Policies relating to the identification, protection, and enhancement of cultural resources are included in the Cultural Resources Section of the Conservation and Open Space Elements.
[add to the bottom of page 10-2]

| Add to Table 10-A. Conservation and Open Space Policy Summary | |
|---|----------------|
| Open Space for Military Training Areas A. Minimize impacts to military trainings areas B. Provide notification to the military of projects that could affect military readiness. | Safety Element |

Mitigation Measure 3.1.3.2.c. Add a map identifying the Unincorporated Legacy Communities within the County as well as the following policy to the Community Infrastructure and Services Element to reduce potential impacts related to conflict between the General Plan Update and state General Plan law:

Appendix F: Map Book. Add a map of Humboldt County showing the location of Unincorporated Legacy Communities.

Policy IS-PX3, Unincorporated Legacy Communities. On or before the due date for each subsequent revision of its Housing Element, the County shall review, and if necessary amend, the General Plan to update the analysis of unincorporated legacy communities.

- (3) **Finding and Evidence:** Based on the analysis and information contained in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report and the administrative record, the Board finds that implementation of the above described mitigation measures would generally ensure that project conflicts with applicable Humboldt County General Plan policies would be reduced to less-than-significant levels by ensuring consistency between the General Plan land use map and zoning map, thus mitigating the potentially significant environmental effects indicated in the RDEIR. (RDEIR pages 3.1-1 through 3.1-17)

b. 3.1.3.3 Habitat Conservation Plans

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(1) **Potentially Significant Effect:** Implementation of the General Plan Update would result in additional development that conflicts with adopted habitat conservation plans. The first four of the Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) listed in Section 3.11.1 of the RDEIR apply to lands planned for continued timber production under the existing and proposed general plan land use designations. While most timber harvesting and management activities are under the permit jurisdiction of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the County has the jurisdiction to permit a list of compatible uses on these lands. One of the more controversial and significant uses is residential. Under the proposed General Plan Update, residential uses are planned at densities of 40 to 160 acres per dwelling unit. At maximum buildout, this could theoretically result in the construction of as many as 20,000 housing units on the 900,000 acres of planned timberlands, although historical growth trends and Department of Finance projections would indicate that only limited demand for possible development is likely to exist.

(2) **Recommended Mitigation Measure:**

Implement **Mitigation Measure 3.11.3.5:** To avoid impacts to established Habitat Conservation Plan areas through direct conversion to other uses, the following policy shall be added to the Conservation and Open Space Element, Biological Resources section that states the following:

***BR-IM1. Biological Resource Maps.** The County shall maintain the best available data in the form of GIS maps for the location and extent of wetlands, critical habitats, streamside management areas, Habitat Conservation Plan Areas, rookeries, and ranges of species identified in the California Natural Diversity Database.*

(3) **Finding and Evidence** Based on the analysis and information contained in the Draft and Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report, the above described changes to the project would reduce this potential impact to less than significant levels by alerting decision-makers to the areas covered by Habitat Conservation Plans so they can be avoided when approving new development, and thus mitigate the potentially significant environmental effects identified in the EIR. (RDEIR 3.11-17 through 3.11-18)

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2. Transportation Chapter

3.5.3.2-2 U.S. 101/Broadway in the City of Eureka

Implementation of the General Plan Update will result in increased traffic that will cause U.S. 101/Broadway in the City of Eureka to operate at LOS D in 2028 and 2040, which is the minimum acceptable LOS on U.S. 101 in urban areas in Caltrans District 1. U.S. 101 within the City of Eureka consists of Broadway between 6^h Street (south of the one-way couplet) to Herrick Avenue, where the freeway begins. The travel demand model projects that Broadway will operate at LOS D in 2028 and 2040. Broadway is a four-lane, north-south urban principal arterial highway in a mixed land use area. From approximately 800 feet south of the Kmart Traffic Signal to Washington Street, Broadway has a TWLTL. The Broadway corridor is approximately 3 miles in length. The Transportation Concept Report for this facility indicates that Broadway operates at a signalized unstable flow, which means that signalized intersections control level of service, and some intersections within the segment experience unstable flow at peak hour.

The collision rate at certain locations along Broadway reaches as high as four times the statewide average when compared to similar facilities. The corridor also experiences significant traffic congestion and poor mobility for all modes of transportation. The options for improvement include various capacity enhancements, such as added lanes or improved coordination (e.g. signal timing); freeing up capacity by converting trips from vehicles to other modes; and diverting trips to alternative routes, potentially including a bypass. Adding lanes to US 101 is generally infeasible as the route runs through areas that are fully built out, leaving little available space to create new lanes without taking land from adjacent properties. While limited relief could be achieved through optimized signal timing, changes in traffic patterns occur routinely and signal timing should therefore be modified as necessary to reflect such changes (City of Eureka General Plan Update Mobility Policy Paper (<http://www.eureka2040gpu.com/Links/pdfs/Mobility%20Policy%20Paper%203-23-15.pdf>)).

The traffic model projects that buildout of the General Plan Update, in conjunction with the implementation of city general plans within the County, would result in traffic levels that would reduce the LOS of the U.S. 101 Broadway corridor at or below "D," which is the General Plan update LOS standard and the LOS concept established by Caltrans for this facility. Therefore, this would be a potentially significant impact. (RDEIR pages 3.5-1 through 3.5-38)

(2) Recommended Mitigation Measure:

Mitigation Measure 3.5.3.2.d. A Circulation Element policy shall be added to direct the County to participate in joint planning for the Broadway corridor:

"C-Px, U.S. 101/Broadway Corridor. The County shall participate in joint planning for capacity improvements relating to the U.S. 101/Broadway corridor with HCAOG, Caltrans, and the City of Eureka."

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(3) **Finding and Evidence:** According to the forecasts of the 2028 and 2040 travel demand model, the LOS on this section of US 101 will reach LOS D as a result of the implementation of city general plans within the County. Based on the analysis and information contained in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report and the administrative record, the Board finds that the benefits to LOS of future Caltrans capacity improvements to U.S 101 cannot be definitively determined or tested at this time and no funding source has been identified. However, with implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.5.3.1.d, impacts related to the future capacity of U.S 101 would be reduced and LOS D is considered acceptable on U.S. 101. This impact is less than significant. (RDEIR pages 3.5-1 through 3.5-38)

3. Noise Chapter

a. 3.6.3.2 Groundborne Vibration and Construction Noise

(1) **Potentially Significant Effect:** Implementation of the General Plan Update could result in changes in land use designations that would directly lead to construction activities that could result in excessive ground vibration or temporary or periodic increases in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity.

Common sources of ground-borne vibration are trains, buses on rough roads, and construction activities such as blasting, pile driving and the operation of heavy earth-moving equipment. In Humboldt County, train operations were suspended in 2001 due to the deteriorating condition of railway infrastructure. Therefore, construction activities would be the more common ground-borne vibration source. Construction and demolition activities associated with project growth during the General Plan Update planning period have the potential to result in varying degrees of temporary or periodic noise increases or temporary ground-borne vibration, depending on the specific construction tools or equipment used, the location of construction activities relative to receptors, and the operations involved. For example, air compressors, heavy equipment and power tools used during construction activities can all generate disturbing levels of noise. Vibration generated by construction equipment spreads through the ground and diminishes in magnitude with increases in distance. In addition, the type and density of soil can also affect the transmission of energy.

The noise standards contained in the General Plan Update would establish limits to short-term noise within each zoning classification and specify the parameters for discretionary project noise impacts but do not clearly indicate that they are applicable to construction related noise and vibration. Therefore, this impact would be potentially significant.

(2) **Recommended Mitigation Measure:**

Mitigation Measure 3.6.3.2.a. Amend Implementation Measure N-IM7x., Noise Control Ordinance, to the Noise Element to require that construction noise parameters for discretionary projects be specified.

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N-IM7x. Noise Control Ordinance. Prepare and consider a noise control ordinance to regulate noise and vibration sources in order to protect persons from existing or future excessive levels of noise and/or vibration which interfere with sleep, communication, relaxation, health or legally permitted use of property. The ordinance shall define excessive levels of noise for construction activities to be incorporated as permit requirements and other noise sources and may exempt or modify noise requirements for agricultural uses, ~~construction activities~~, school functions, property maintenance, waste collection and other sources. The ordinance shall include responsibilities and procedures for enforcement, abatement and variances.

(3) **Finding and Evidence:** Based on the analysis and information contained in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report and the administrative record, the Board finds that the above described changes to the project would reduce this potential impact to less than significant because the noise ordinance would clearly indicate that it applies to construction related noise and vibration and thus mitigate the potentially significant environmental effects identified in the RDEIR. (RDEIR pages 3.6-1 through 3.6-13)

b. 3.6.3.3 Airport Noise

(1) **Potentially Significant Effect:** The proposed County General Plan Update would have a significant impact if it would locate development within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, and expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels; or expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels from a private airstrip.

Projected growth during the General Plan Update planning period would result in new urban land uses in the vicinity of certain Humboldt airports and rural residential uses in proximity to others. New development near airports could expose residents and workers to excessive noise from aviation. This is of most concern in the McKinleyville area near Arcata-Eureka Airport; however, development near other airports could also expose sensitive receptors to excessive aviation noise. According to the most recent Airport Master Plans, the projected future airport noise levels around all airports, except Arcata-Eureka and Garberville Airports would be considered normally acceptable for uses allowed by adjacent land use designations. Policies in the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP), which applies to Arcata-Eureka, place limitations on development in areas subject to noise impacts from airports and consistent with the ALUCP, a noise impact combining zone is applied to area affected by noise impacts.

The General Plan Update requires the application of noise impact combining zones in areas where noise exceeds adopted standards and the use of project-specific noise mitigation measures (completion of acoustical studies, use of buffering, and implementation of other noise abatement measures, as necessary) would be required. Implementation of this program and others in the General Plan Update described above, would reduce the potential for noise levels in areas of new noise-sensitive land uses to exceed the standards contained in Table 13-D. Land Use/Noise Compatibility Standards.

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As indicated in the RDEIR, noise levels that would exceed normally acceptable criteria would extend beyond the Garberville airport into areas planned for future residential uses. This is not within a noise impact combining zone. Therefore, this impact would be potentially significant.

(2) **Recommended Mitigation Measure:**

Mitigation Measure 3.6.3.3.a. The following implementation measure shall be added to the Noise Element.

N-IMx. Garberville Airport Noise Impact Combining Zone. Add a Noise Impact (N) Combining Zone to the areas surrounding the Garberville Airport that are subject to noise levels equal to or above 60 CNEL according to Figure 5B of the 2007 Garberville Airport Master Plan Report, or the most recent Garberville Airport Master Plan Report.

(3) **Finding and Evidence:** Based on the analysis and information contained in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report and the administrative record, the Board finds that the combination of these mitigation measures would reduce this potential impact to less than significant because noise levels that would exceed normally acceptable criteria would be within a noise impact combining zone. (RDEIR pages 3.6-1 through 3.6-16)

4. Hazards and Hazardous Materials Chapter

a. 3.7.4.2 Airport Safety Hazards

(1) **Potentially Significant Effect:** Implementation of the General Plan Update could result in new development, including new urban land uses, in the vicinity of airports that could result in airport safety hazards. Development in the vicinity of airports would be required to comply with safety, noise, and compatibility standards contained in the Safety Element which are intended to reduce the likelihood of accidents affecting land uses on the ground. Safety Element policies provide for consistency between the ALUCP and General Plan, direct the utilization of an airport safety combining zone to ensure consistent application of the Airport Land Use Compatibility Criteria matrix, and regulate land use around airports according to the Airport/Land Use Safety Compatibility Criteria and require the County to update these criteria consistent with amendment to the ALUCP. Other policies would facilitate the maintenance of obstruction-free approach surfaces around airports. However, there is no implementation measure that requires the update of the General Plan Safety Element to be consistent with changes to the ALUCP and General Plan Update land use map would result in conflicts around the Arcata/Eureka, Garberville, Kneeland, Murray Field, and Shelter Cove Airports.

(2) **Recommended Mitigation Measure:**

Mitigation Measure 3.7.4.2a. To ensure consistency between the ALUCP and the General Plan, prior to adopting the Land Use Diagram:

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Prior to adopting the General Plan Update, amend land use maps to ensure that maximum allowable residential densities and maximum allowable building occupancies are consistent with the Recommended Compatibility Zones contained in the March 1993 Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan.

Or, The following standard shall be added:

S-SX. Airport Land Use Compatibility Zone Overlay. *An Airport Land Use Compatibility Zone for all public use airports shall be established that matches the Recommended Compatibility Zones contained in the March 1993 Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, as amended, for Humboldt County Airports, and that limits the maximum allowable residential density and building occupancy for each land use designation subject to such zones, to the Airport/Land Use Safety Compatibility Criteria of the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (Table 14-A).*

Mitigation Measure 3.7.4.2b. To ensure consistency between the ALUCP and the General Plan, the following implementation measures shall be added:

S-IMx4. Update Airport/Land Use Safety Compatibility Criteria. *The County shall update Airport/Land Use Safety Compatibility Criteria (Table 14-A), consistent with amendments to the ALUCP.*

S-IMx5. Airport Safety Review Combining Zone. *Amend the Zoning Maps to apply an Airport Safety Review Combining Zone, indicated by "AP", that matches the outer boundaries of the Recommended Compatibility Zones contained in the March 1993 Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, as amended, for Humboldt County Airports. Until such time as the Zoning Maps are amended, places a note on the record for each parcel in Humboldt County's online permit management system that lies within the outer boundaries of the Recommended Compatibility Zones.*

(3) **Finding and Evidence:** Based on the analysis and information contained in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report and the administrative record, the Board finds that the above described changes to the project would reduce this potential impact to less than significant because the GPU now contains implementation measures that require the update of the General Plan Safety Element to be consistent with changes to the ALUCP and General Plan Update land use map, and thus mitigate the potentially significant environmental effects identified in the RDEIR. In addition, an Airport Land Use Overlay was added to the Land Use maps of the GPU in Appendix F to alert persons using those maps for development purposes to the standards of the ALUCP to ensure consistency between the land use maps and the ALUCP. (RDEIR pages 3.7-4 through 3.7-12, and 3.7-25 through 3.7-35)

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5. Geology and Soils Chapter

a. 3.8.3.2 Soil Erosion or the Loss of Topsoil

(1) **Potentially Significant Effect:** Development of roads, storm drainage infrastructure, homes, and commercial structures consistent with the General Plan Update could result in increased erosion and the loss of topsoil. Erosion is accelerated by site preparation activities such as excavation and grading, and cuts and fills. Exposed rock or soil surfaces associated with development-related site preparation can lead to increased erosion. Erosion potential can also be enhanced by changing the permeability or runoff characteristics of the soil, or by modifying or creating new drainages. After development has been completed, slopes that are not effectively contoured, compacted, or revegetated may also be susceptible to erosion. Unless specific erosion controls are in place, people and structures could be exposed to increased risk of injury or damage resulting from mudslides, landslides, or other similar hazards.

Slope stability is also of importance and necessary to consider. The degree of slope and instability of the soils in these areas contributes to hazards associated with erosion. Further, in most cases, land planned rural residential or for timber production is in hilly topography. Development in these areas would be expected to contribute to increases in erosion regarding water quality that could be substantially impacted, and could result in soil erosion in greater quantities than land planned for urban development. Proposed development in urban areas, especially non-discretionary development would not be expected to involve offsite improvements on previously undeveloped and would therefore require less ground disturbance.

The General Plan Update requires that site-specific reports addressing geologic hazards be prepared and that grading standards and best management practices be implemented to reduce sedimentation and avoid erosion. However, adding additional development in areas of soil instability would increase erosion such that water quality could be substantially negatively impacted, or substantial soil erosion could result. Therefore, impacts in this regard would be potentially significant.

(2) **Recommended Mitigation Measure:**

Mitigation Measure 3.8.3.2.a. To lessen impacts relating to water quality resulting from increased erosion, the following mitigation is required: Implement Mitigation Measures 3.10.3.1.a and 3.10.3.1.b from Impact 3.10.3.1: Degrade Water Quality or Exceed Waste Discharge Requirements in Chapter 3.10, Hydrology and Water Quality as shown below.

Mitigation Measure 3.10.3.1.a. The following policy and implementation measure shall be added to the Water Resources Element to lessen impacts resulting from erosion, sedimentation, and siltation:

WR-Px. Continue to Implement Water Quality Regulations. Continue to implement Division 3, Building Regulations, Section 331-12, Grading, Excavation, Erosion, and Sedimentation Control Regulations, and Division 1, Planning Zoning Regulations Chapter 6 - General Provisions and Exceptions Section 314-61.1 Streamside Management Area Ordinance.

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Mitigation Measure 3.10.3.1.b. The following policy shall be modified to apply to all development in order the Water Resources Element to improve water quality within watersheds subject to TMDL Controllable Sediment Discharge Inventories:

WR-Px2. Mitigate Controllable Sediment Discharge Sites. Proposed Discretionary development applications involving a site identified as part of the TMDL Controllable Sediment Discharge Inventory shall be conditioned to reduce sediment discharge.

(3) **Finding and Evidence:** Based on the analysis and information contained in the Draft and Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report, the above described changes to the project would reduce this potential impact to less than significant because these mitigation measures reduce the potential for erosion from new development in areas of soil instability, and thus mitigate the potentially significant environmental effects identified in the EIR. (RDEIR 3.8-17 through 3.8-19)

6. Hydrology and Water Quality Chapter

a. 3.10.3.2 Deplete Groundwater Supplies, etc.

(1) **Potentially Significant Effect:** Implementation of the General Plan Update would result in additional development that could impact groundwater recharge and supply. Approximately 1,721 housing units are projected to be developed by the General Plan Update planning period population peak. Of the 1,721 new units, approximately 1,378 would be located within the groundwater basins listed in the Setting Section above, of which 133 would likely need to utilize on-site groundwater wells or surface water diversions. The following table lists the allowable units that could be constructed within each groundwater basin. It should be noted that additional non-residential development would also be expected to be developed within and these groundwater basins, with similar impacts.

Potential impacts to new development supplied domestic water from on-site water wells resulting from the General Plan Update is addressed through policies, standards and implementation measures in the Water Resources Element relating to Watershed Data, Sustainable Management, Protection for Surface and Groundwater Uses, Groundwater Quality Protection, and Sustainable Groundwater Management Plans, which supports the development of Sustainable Groundwater Plans consistent with state law. The General Plan Update Land Use Element also contains policies intended to address groundwater supply associated with rural development reliant upon on-site sewage disposal. Additionally, Water Resources Element policies require that any subdivision of land shall be conditioned to require evidence of sufficient water supply during drought conditions to meet the projected demand associated with the proposed subdivision. Under this policy, sufficient water supply shall include the requirements of the proposed subdivision and existing and planned future uses as well as contain requirements for water storage in flow impaired watersheds

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Development allowed under the General Plan Update could result in significant impacts to groundwater recharge and groundwater supplies. However, most of the County's watersheds are listed on the 303(d) list of impaired water bodies because of high water temperatures associated with low streamflows, and while the General Plan Update will reduce impacts of new development on temperature-impaired watersheds to less than significant levels by disallowing water withdrawal from streams during the dry months, the GPU does not include policies that encourage existing and new development to enhance groundwater storage capacity.

(2) **Recommended Mitigation Measure:**

Mitigation Measure 3.10.3.2.a. The following policy shall be added to the Water Resources Element to improve groundwater recharge capacity:

WR-Px. Enhance Groundwater Recharge Capacity. Encourage watershed management practices that enhance infiltration of rainfall into the groundwater.

(3) **Finding and Evidence:** Based on the analysis and information contained in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report and the administrative record, the Board finds that the above described changes to the project would reduce this potential impact to less than significant because the GPU now includes policies that encourage existing and new development to enhance groundwater storage capacity, and thus mitigates the potentially significant environmental effects identified in the RDEIR.

b. 3.10.3.4 Housing within a 100-year Flood Hazard Area, etc.

(1) **Potentially Significant Effect:** Implementation of the General Plan Update would result in additional development located in areas subject to flooding, tsunami, and mudflows. Approximately 81 of the 1,721 housing units that are projected to be developed by the General Plan Update planning period population peak are expected to be developed within the 100-year Flood Zone. A significant flood hazard exists along the County's major rivers. Population increases as anticipated in the General Plan Update may result in additional life and property being exposed to these hazards. Floodplain or floodway encroachment could alter flood-carrying capacity along watercourses, possibly creating additional hazards. Residential land uses designations planned in areas subject to flooding would have the highest potential to expose populations to risk of flooding.

Dam failure would cause a flood hazard similar to that described above, except that inundation would occur more rapidly. There are 20 dams of concern that are either in Humboldt County or impound rivers that flow through the County (see Humboldt Operational Area Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Volume 1: Planning-Area-Wide Elements-Chapter 8. Dam Failure, Table 8-1. Dams in the Planning Area or with Inundation Areas that extend into the Planning Area. Mass movement (a collective term for landslides, debris flows, falls and sink holes, and which are caused by a combination of geological and climate conditions, as well as the encroaching influence of urbanization) are common in Humboldt County and occur particularly in response to intense, short-duration storms, and in combination with larger earthquakes.

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Tsunamis that have occurred within the County in the past and the likelihood of tsunamis in the future. RDEIR Impact 3.8.3.1, Exposure to Seismic-Related Hazards, analyzes tsunami hazard associated with the General Plan Update and determined that tsunamis are a significant hazard in Humboldt County due to its proximity to the Cascadia Subduction Zone. Implementation of the General Plan Update could result in new land uses and development in close proximity to the Pacific Ocean, Humboldt Bay, and the low-lying areas near the shore, and therefore would potentially expose people and structures to the risk of tsunamis generated primarily by high-magnitude earthquakes. Tsunami inundation areas lie almost exclusively within the Coastal Zone, where they are addressed as part of the Hazards section of the certified Local Coastal Program and the Coastal Act.

The Water Resources Element comprehensively deals with water management and conservation issues, and incorporates various policies and implementation measures that would serve to prevent potential impacts to water resources. The Water Resources Element in conjunction with the Safety Element would serve to further flood hazard delineation, thus supporting other plan elements designed to avoid placing housing in the 100-year flood hazard area. The policies, standards and implementation measures would serve to avoid exposing people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding because of the failure of a levee or dam, or from inundation by seiche, or mudflow. However, the County does not yet have equivalent policies to avoid damage from tsunami hazards. Mitigation is required to prevent damage from tsunami hazards.

(2) **Recommended Mitigation Measure:** (quote)

3.10.3.4.a. The following Safety Element implementation measure shall be added to require the County address new development in tsunami hazard areas:

***S-S7. Tsunamis.** New development below the level of the 100-year tsunami run-up elevation shall be limited to public access, boating, public recreation facilities, agriculture, wildlife management, habitat restoration, and ocean intakes, outfalls, pipelines, and dredge spoils disposal.*

(3) **Finding and Evidence:** Based on the analysis and information contained in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report and the administrative record, the Board finds that the above described changes to the project would reduce this potential impact to less than significant because the GPU now contains a policy for new development to avoid damage from tsunami hazards, and thus mitigate the potentially significant environmental effects identified in the RDEIR. The 100 year tsunami run-up elevation is described in the document on file with the Planning Division titled, "Tsunami Predictions for the West Coast of the Continental United States (Technical Report H-78-26 by the Corps of Engineers)." (RDEIR pages 3.10-1 through 3.10-13, 3.10-23 through 3.10-27)

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7. Biological Resources Chapter

a. 3.11.3.2 Wetlands

(1) **Potentially Significant Effect:** Land uses and development consistent with the General Plan Update could result in the direct loss of or modification to, existing wetlands. Potential direct and indirect effects from development adjacent to wetlands include, but are not limited to: altered hydrology; diminished water quality from the discharge of pollutants such as sediment, pesticides, petroleum products, pathogens and other toxic substances; vegetation removal; disturbance to wildlife from noise, night lighting, and domestic animals; introduced invasive plant and animal species; altered microclimate; and human intrusion such as off-road vehicle use, homeless encampments, trash dumping, and illegal filling.

Under Policy BR-P7, Wetland Identification, the presence of wetlands in the vicinity of a proposed project must be determined during the review process for discretionary projects and for ministerial building and grading permit applications when the proposed building development activity involves new construction or expansion of existing structures or grading activities. Wetland delineation by a professional when wetland characterization and limits cannot be easily inventoried and identified by site inspection. Also, under Policy BR-Pxxx, Wetlands Banking, the County supports the development of a wetlands banking system to mitigate for otherwise permitted wetland impacts.

Under Standard BR-S11, Wetlands Defined, the County must follow the identification and classification policies of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife which considers wetlands as lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water. In Standard BR-S11, wetlands must have the following three attributes: (1) at least periodically, the land supports hydrophytes, (2) the substrate is predominantly undrained hydric soil, and (3) the substrate is non-soil and is saturated with water or covered by shallow water at some time during the growing season of each year. This definition does not work well because areas cannot logically have both hydric soil substrate and non-soil substrate at the same time.

This definition does not work well because areas cannot logically have both hydric soil substrate and non-soil substrate at the same time. The above definition of wetlands contains a logical flaw, and needs to be revised.

(2) **Recommended Mitigation Measure:** The following implementation measure helps address the potential impacts related to the definition of wetlands in the General Plan Update:

Mitigation Measure 3.11.3.2. Replace BR-S11 with the below definition of wetlands:

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***“BR-S11. Wetlands Defined.** The County considers wetlands as lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water. ~~Wetlands must have all of the following three attributes: (1) at least periodically, the land supports hydrophytes, (2) the substrate is predominantly undrained hydric soil, and (3) the substrate is non-soil and is saturated with water or covered by shallow water at some time during the growing season of each year. An area is wetland if, under normal circumstances, (1) the area has continuous or recurrent saturation of the upper substrate caused by groundwater, or shallow surface water, or both; (2) the duration of such saturation is sufficient to cause anaerobic conditions in the upper substrate; and (3) the area’s vegetation is dominated by hydrophytes or the area lacks vegetation.”~~*

Comments received on the RDEIR from the Mercer Fraser Company and the Humboldt Coalition for Property Rights suggest the above language of the mitigation measure is not as clear as it could be, and recommended the mitigation measure be deleted. They also mentioned, and staff concurs that the intent of the Board of Supervisors is to use the three-parameter wetland criteria used by the US Army Corp of Engineers in defining wetlands. In response to their comments, the FEIR proposes alternative language for Standard BR-S11 in **Mitigation Measure 3.11.3.2**:

“BR-S11. Wetlands Defined. The County shall follow the US Army Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation manual in the identification and classification of wetlands which considers wetlands as those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas. ~~lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water. Wetlands must have all of the following three attributes: (1) at least periodically, the land supports hydrophytes, (2) the substrate is predominantly undrained hydric soil, and (3) the substrate is non-soil and is saturated with water or covered by shallow water at some time during the growing season of each year. An area is wetland if, under normal circumstances, (1) the area has continuous or recurrent saturation of the upper substrate caused by groundwater, or shallow surface water, or both; (2) the duration of such saturation is sufficient to cause anaerobic conditions in the upper substrate; and (3) the area’s vegetation is dominated by hydrophytes or the area lacks vegetation.”~~

(3) **Finding and Evidence:** Based on the analysis and information contained in the Draft and Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report, the modified language for BR-S11 that appears in Mitigation Measure 3.11.3.2 of the RDEIR removed the logical flaw in the original wording for BR-S11 in the GPU, so it reduced this potential impact to less than significant, and thus mitigated the potentially significant environmental effects identified in the RDEIR. The versions of Standard BR-S11 in both the GPU and the RDEIR were equivalent because they rely on three-parameters to define wetlands: the presence of hydrophytic vegetation, the presence of water, and hydric soils. The revised language for Mitigation Measure 3.11.3.2 in the FEIR maintains the same three-parameter definition for wetlands, and removes

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the logical flaw that occurs in the GPU, so it is equally effective in mitigating the potentially significant impacts of the GPU on wetlands as the RDEIR. (RDEIR 3.11-13 through 3.11-14, Humboldt County GPU FEIR 4-13)

b. 3.11.3.5 Habitat Conservation Plans

(1) **Potentially Significant Effect:** As stated previously on page 8 of the Findings of Fact, Implementation of the General Plan Update would result in additional development that conflicts with adopted habitat conservation plans. The first four of the Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) listed in Section 3.11.1 of the RDEIR apply to lands planned for continued timber production under the existing and proposed general plan land use designations. While most timber harvesting and management activities are under the permit jurisdiction of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the County has the jurisdiction to permit a list of compatible uses on these lands. One of the more controversial and significant uses is residential. Under the proposed General Plan Update, residential uses are planned at densities of 40 to 160 acres per dwelling unit. At maximum buildout, this could theoretically result in the construction of as many as 20,000 housing units on the 900,000 acres of planned timberlands, although historical growth trends and Department of Finance projections would indicate that only limited demand for possible development is likely to exist. Housing construction was not an issue that was considered or addressed by the HCPs indicated above.

(2) **Recommended Mitigation Measure:**

Mitigation Measure 3.11.3.5: To avoid impacts to established Habitat Conservation Plan areas through direct conversion to other uses, the following policy shall be added to the Conservation and Open Space Element, Biological Resources section that states the following:

***BR-IMI. Biological Resource Maps.** The County shall maintain the best available data in the form of GIS maps for the location and extent of wetlands, critical habitats, streamside management areas, Habitat Conservation Plan Areas, rookeries, and ranges of species identified in the California Natural Diversity Database.*

(3) **Finding and Evidence:**

Based on the analysis and information contained in the Draft and Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report, the above described changes to the project would reduce this potential impact to less than significant levels by alerting decision-makers to the areas covered by Habitat Conservation Plans so they can be avoided when approving new development, and thus mitigate the potentially significant environmental effects identified in the EIR. (RDEIR 3.11-17 through 3.11-18)

8. Air Quality Chapter

a. 3.12.4.2 Sensitive Receptors

(1) **Potentially Significant Effect:** Implementation of the General Plan Update would result in additional development that could adversely impact sensitive receptors by generating air pollution. Toxic air contaminants (TACs) can be released by the ongoing

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activities of certain commercial and industrial operations such as asphalt batch plants, through the emissions of on-road heavy-duty diesel trucks, off-road heavy diesel trucks such as construction vehicles, and the operation of diesel railroad train engines. The proposed General Plan Update would have a significant affect if it would allow the exposure of sensitive receptors to substantial levels of TAC.

Proposed stationary sources or TACs would be subject to NCUAQMD rules and regulations. NCUAQMD would analyze such sources (e.g., health risk assessment) based on their potential to emit TACs. The NCUAQMD would utilize the Air Quality and Land Use Handbook to evaluate and reduce air pollution impacts from new development.

In addition, the ARB adopted emission standards whereby engine manufacturers are now required to meet exhaust standards for NOx and PM starting in 2011 that are more than 90 percent lower than current levels, making emissions from off-road engines similar to those from on-road heavy duty diesel engines. As a result, future construction-related TACs emissions would be less likely to expose sensitive receptors to substantial emissions of TACs as the vehicle fleet is replaced. It is also important to note that compliance with the construction dust mitigation requirements would also reduce PM exhaust emissions.

During construction as well as mining and agricultural operations, various diesel-powered vehicles and equipment would be in use. In 1998, ARB identified particulate matter from diesel-fueled engines as a toxic air contaminant. ARB has completed a risk management process that identified potential cancer risks for a range of activities using diesel-fueled engines (ARB, 2000).

Health risks from TACs are a function of both concentration and duration of exposure., Construction diesel emissions are temporary, affecting an area for a period of days or perhaps weeks. Additionally, construction-related sources are mobile and transient in nature, and the bulk of the emission occurs at a substantial distance from nearby receptors. Because of its short duration, health risks from construction emissions of diesel particulate would be a less-than-significant impact.

(2) Recommended Mitigation Measure:

Mitigation Measure 3.12.4.2: Add Implementation Measure AQ-IM7 to the Draft General Plan as follows:

"AQ-IM7. Regulate the location and operation of land uses to avoid or mitigate harmful or nuisance levels of air emissions to the following sensitive receptors: residential uses, hospitals and nursing/convalescent homes, hotels and lodging, schools and day care centers and neighborhood parks. New development shall follow the recommendations for siting new sensitive land uses consistent with the ARB's recommendation as shown in Table 3.12-4."

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(3) **Finding and Evidence:** AQ-IM7 will regulate the location and operation of land uses to avoid or mitigate harmful or nuisance levels of air emissions to the following sensitive receptors: residential uses, hospitals and nursing/convalescent homes, hotels and lodging, schools and day care centers and neighborhood parks. New development shall follow the recommendations for siting new sensitive land uses consistent with the ARB's recommendation. Based on the analysis and information contained in the RDEIR, the above described inclusions to the project would reduce this potential impact to less than significant, and thus mitigate the potentially significant environmental effects identified in the EIR. (RDEIR 3.12-12 through 3.12-16)

9. Parks and Recreation Chapter

3.15.3.1 Deterioration of Parks and Recreational Facilities

(1) **Potentially Significant Effect:** Implementation of the General Plan Update could facilitate population growth that outpaces improvements to existing parks and recreation facilities, resulting in their overuse and deterioration. Population growth that is projected by the State of California Department of Finance (DOF) to occur during the planning period would likely utilize park and recreation facilities at a similar rate as the current population. In general, significant environmental effects would occur if population growth and park use outpace the improvements to parks and recreation facilities resulting in the deterioration of existing facilities. If park and recreation facilities are not developed at a rate commensurate with population growth, the proposed General Plan Update could result in overuse and deterioration of existing parks and recreation facilities. To avoid deterioration, sufficient additional parkland acres should be provided in order to maintain or exceed the current population to parklands acres ratio.

Table 3.15-3, Needed Acres of Park Land, specifies the number of additional parkland acres that would be required to maintain the current ratio of park acres to residents within Community Planning Areas that have park requirements. The application of policies, programs, and implementation measures contained in the General Plan Update could provide a framework for coordinated planning for park and recreation facilities to ensure that new residential development includes provisions for adequate parks and open space in order to avoid an undue burden on existing facilities which would otherwise lead to deterioration. However, there is no guarantee that setting standards will ensure that development allowed under the General Plan Update would not place undue burdens on existing parkland. Therefore, impacts to parks facilities resulting from the implementation of the General Plan Update would be potentially significant.

(2) **Recommended Mitigation Measure:**

Mitigation Measure 3.15.3.1.a. In order to protect existing parkland from deterioration that could result from development pursuant to the General Plan Update, the following Policies and Implementation Measures shall be added to the Community Infrastructure and Services Element:

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***IS-Px. Parks Master Plan.** In cooperation with other park service providers, the County shall establish and maintain a Parks Master Plan that would assess current facilities within each inland and coastal planning area, determine appropriate locations for new facilities, and identify funding options.*

***IS-Sx. Interim Parks and Recreation Standards.** Parks and recreation standards contained in the Government Code Section 66477 shall be used as the standard for parkland dedication in the review of divisions of land for which a tentative map is required pursuant to Section 66426, until such time that the County has established parks and recreation standards for new development that differentiate between urban and rural settings; specify acreage of park land of 3 acres per 1,000 residents; and specify land dedication, in-lieu fee, or other mechanisms to fund park and recreation improvements and funding for operation and maintenance.*

(3) **Finding and Evidence:** Based on the analysis and information contained in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report and the administrative record, the Board finds that the above described changes to the project would reduce this potential impact to less than significant because it adds a framework for coordinated planning for park and recreation facilities to ensure that new residential development includes provisions for adequate parks and open space in order to avoid an undue burden on existing facilities which would otherwise lead to deterioration, and thus mitigates the potentially significant environmental effects identified in the EIR. (RDEIR pages 3.15-1 through 3.15-12)

B. Findings Regarding Mitigation Measures or Project Alternatives Identified in the Final EIR Insufficient to Avoid or Substantially Lessen Significant Environmental Effects Due to Specific Economic, Legal, Social, Technological or Other Considerations Making Infeasible Such Mitigation Measures or Alternatives. (PRC § 21081 (a)(3); Guidelines §15091 (a)(3))

1. Utilities and Services Chapter

a. 3.3.3.2 Water Supply

(1) **Potentially Significant Effect:** Population growth during the General Plan Update planning period could result in insufficient water supplies from existing entitlements and resources, or result in the construction of new water treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects. Demand for water would continue to increase with the population and job growth projected to occur during the General Plan Update planning period, and the need for additional water supply, treatment, and distribution facilities would also increase. Future residential development is encouraged within Urban Development and Community Plan Areas, and such development would obtain water services from special districts or public utilities providing service to each respective area. Areas outside of such boundaries would require individual onsite water sources.

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Areas served by the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District (HBMWD) include the Fieldbrook-Glendale, Humboldt, Manila, and McKinleyville Community Service Districts, the Jacoby Creek County Water District (through the City of Arcata), the Town of Samoa, and the cities of Arcata, Blue Lake, and Eureka. A significant portion of planned development is expected to be concentrated in existing urban areas that are supplied by the HBMWD. HBMWD can deliver up to 20 million gallons daily. Growth projected to occur by 2040 in areas served by HBMWD is not expected to require significant expansion of existing water supply facilities.

Table 3.3-8, Projected Housing Units (2028) by Water Service Provider, lists the existing and available water connection for each of the municipal water provides in the County and the housing units that are projected to be developed within the service boundaries of each provider at the DOF projected population peak in 2028.

Table 3.3-8. Projected Housing Units (2028) by Water Service Provider.

| <i>Provider</i> | <i>Connections</i> | | <i>Housing Units 2028</i> |
|---|--------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| | <i>Existing</i> | <i>Currently Available</i> | |
| 1-South Fork Eel River Planning Watershed | | | |
| Benbow Water Company | 134 | 50 | 17 |
| Briceland CSD | 26 | 0 | 0 |
| Garberville SD | 396 | 25 | 3 |
| Miranda CSD | 143 | 77 | 25 |
| Phillipsville CSD | 65 | 0 | 0 |
| Redway CSD | 735 | 0 | 74 |
| Weott CSD | 140 | Unknown | 3 |
| 2-Lower Eel River Planning Watershed | | | |
| Loleta CSD | 258 | 56 | 10 |
| Palmer Creek CSD | 128 | 59 | 33 |
| Riverside CSD | 98 | 60 | 0 |
| Scotia CSD | 315 | 1,117 | 0 |
| 3-Middle Main Eel River Planning Watershed | | | |
| Alderpoint CWD | 79 | 66 | 0 |
| 4-Lower Klamath River Planning Watershed | | | |
| Orleans CSD | 150 | 0 | 2 |
| 6-Lower Trinity River Planning Watershed | | | |
| Willow Creek CSD | 976 | 609 | 10 |
| 7-Van Duzen River Planning Watershed | | | |
| Hydesville CWD | 457 | 319 | 37 |

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Table 3.3-8. Projected Housing Units (2028) by Water Service Provider.

| <i>Provider</i> | <i>Connections</i> | | <i>Housing Units 2028</i> |
|---|--------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| | <i>Existing</i> | <i>Currently Available</i> | |
| 8-Redwood Creek River Planning Watershed | | | |
| Orick CSD | 140 | 37 | 3 |
| 9-Cape Mendocino Planning Watershed | | | |
| RID (Shelter Cove) | 470 | 520 | 133 |
| 10-Trinidad Planning Watershed | | | |
| Big Lagoon CSD | 36 | 0 | 0 |
| Westhaven CSD | 233 | 0 | 0 |
| 11-Mad River Planning Watershed | | | |
| Fieldbrook Glendale CSD | 584 | Not limiting (HBMWD) | 76 |
| McKinleyville CSD | 5,517 | Not limiting (HBMWD) | 229 |
| 12-Eureka Plain Planning Watershed | | | |
| Humboldt CSD | 7,698 | Not limiting (HBMWD) | 649 |
| Jacoby Creek CWD | 569 | Not limiting (HBMWD) | 1 |
| Manila CSD | 347 | Not limiting (HBMWD) | 79 |

Source: Community Infrastructure and Services Technical Report, 2008; Humboldt County Planning and Building, 2016.

For Benbow Water Company, Garberville SD, Miranda CSD, Phillipsville CSD, Weott CSD, Loleta CSD, Scotia CSD, Alderpoint CWD, Willow Creek CSD, Hydesville CWD, Orick CSD, RID No. 1 (Shelter Cove Area), Riverside CSD, and Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District Service Area, projected growth during the planning period would not result in insufficient water supplies available to serve planned development from existing entitlements and resources or require or result in the construction of new water treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities.

For Briceland CSD, Big Lagoon CSD, Redway CSD, Orleans CSD, and Westhaven CSD, projected growth during the planning period would likely exceed water supplies available to serve planned development from existing entitlements and resources or require or result in the construction of new water treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects.

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Table 3.3-9, Projected Growth (2028) by Type of Water Service, identifies the number of new housing units within each planning watershed that would be expected to use onsite water systems or would be expected to connect to public water systems.

Table 3.3-9, Projected Growth (2028) by Type of Water Service

| Planning Watershed | Water System Type | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|------------|--------------|
| | Public | On Site | Total |
| 1-South Fork Eel | 122 | 29 | 151 |
| 2-Lower Eel | 43 | 11 | 54 |
| 3-Middle Main Eel | 0 | 16 | 16 |
| 4-Lower Klamath | 2 | 10 | 12 |
| 5-South Fork Trinity | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 6-Lower Trinity | 10 | 1 | 11 |
| 7-Van Duzen | 37 | 24 | 61 |
| 8-Redwood Creek | 3 | 7 | 10 |
| 9-Cape Mendocino | 133 | 19 | 151 |
| 10-Trinidad | 1 | 8 | 8 |
| 11-Mad River | 304 | 34 | 339 |
| 12-Eureka Plain | 730 | 176 | 906 |
| Total | 1,384 | 337 | 1,721 |

Approximately 337 housing units are projected to be constructed in areas outside of the boundaries of water service providers during the General Plan Update planning period. Housing units in these areas would be expected to use onsite water systems: either wells or new surface water diversions. Approximately 40 percent of these units are projected to be located within the Eel, Klamath, Mad, Trinity, Van Duzen River systems, which are fully appropriated.

Housing unit growth projected to occur in areas outside of the boundaries of water service providers during the General Plan Update planning period would result in increased demand for water. The fully appropriated stream systems identified above may have insufficient supplies to meet that demand. Although detailed analyses of water availability have not been completed, it is assumed that other stream systems and groundwater basins may also have insufficient supplies to meet future demand from rural development at the maximum allowable density. Therefore, impacts relating to additional water supply entitlements are considered potentially significant.

The General Plan Update seeks to focus growth in areas where it can be most easily accommodated. Communities and districts would need to plan for increased growth to accommodate additional housing allowed under the plan. Under the General Plan Update, system upgrades and infrastructure expansions required for new development would be the responsibility of new development and the local service provider. The construction of new or expanded facilities could result in potentially significant impacts. The above-listed General Plan

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Update policies direct the County to work cooperatively with water service providers to plan and implement infrastructure projects consistent with this plan.

The nature and location of potential new or expanded water treatment, storage, or transmission facilities that would be constructed by another agency and that do not trigger a County land use approval is not known. As a result, the potential impacts of these facilities are too speculative for evaluation. Such potential water-related facilities are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of other public agencies, and not the County, and appropriate mitigations can and should be adopted by such other agency.

If the new or expanded water-related facilities were to be constructed as part of a subdivision or other process requiring County land use approval, such as an amendment to the General Plan Land Use Map, rezone, use permit, or a special permit, the County would ensure that environmental impacts are addressed through the application of the policies listed above, appropriate Zoning Regulations, and its land use authority. Therefore, with implementation of the General Plan Update policies, General Plan Update impacts relating to need for new or expanded water treatment, storage, or transmission facilities triggered by the General Plan would be less than significant.

However, growth projected to occur during the General Plan Update planning period could result in significant impacts to surface and groundwater supplies. To address this, the General Plan Update provides protections for critical watersheds and groundwater basins within them, and assesses potential cumulative impacts to water supply as part rural subdivisions and zone reclassifications. While the proposed General Plan Update policies and programs would reduce some of the adverse impacts effects to water resources from discretionary development, protections would be focused on critical watersheds and would not address ministerial development, which may not address all potential water supply impacts of the General Plan Update. Although most of the County's watersheds are listed on the 303(d) list of impaired water bodies, there is no guarantee that the full extent of each watershed will be designated as critical watersheds. Because the General Plan Update water supply protections are focused on designated critical watersheds, the impacts of ministerial permits to water supply may not be addressed. As a result, this would be a potentially significant impact.

(2) Recommended Mitigation Measure:

Mitigation Measure 3.3.3.2.a. The following implementation measure shall be added to the Water Resources Element to ensure that water supply and availability is fully characterized within each watershed where such information is not adequately known:

***“WR-IMx. Water Supply Evaluation and Monitoring.** Conduct watershed level evaluations within two years after the adoption of the General Plan Update to determine the long term surface and groundwater supply, including seasonal, average, dry year, and multiple dry year supplies, and beneficial uses of water to determine an estimate of the quantity of water available for future development. Work with water and wastewater related special districts, regulators, and other appropriate organizations to monitor watershed conditions.”*

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In comments on the RDEIR, the Green Diamond Resource Company concluded, "the mitigation proposed is an onerous undertaking and it is likely unrealistic that such an evaluation could be completed within a two-year timeframe." Staff concurred, recognizing the scope of the proposed mitigation could be interpreted to go beyond reducing the impacts associated with the project, which is not the intent of the mitigation. Accordingly, in the FEIR staff proposes modified language for this mitigation measure on page 2-195 as shown below in underline and strikethrough text:

"Mitigation 3.3.3.2.a. is revised as follows:

WR-IMx. Water Supply Evaluation and Monitoring. Conduct watershed level evaluations within two years after the adoption of the General Plan Update to ~~determine the~~ ensure sufficient long term surface and groundwater supply, including seasonal, average, dry year, and multiple dry year supplies, and beneficial uses of water ~~to determine an estimate of the quantity of water will be available for the level of future development described in the Revised Draft EIR for the GPU.~~ Work with water and wastewater related special districts, regulators, and other appropriate organizations to monitor watershed conditions."

In response to comments at the public hearing that the proposed revisions to the implementation measure were confusing, and that the program would be difficult to implement in the timeframe provided, the Board of Supervisors approved the following modifications to clarify the meaning of the program and to specify a five year completion date rather than the two years reflected in the FEIR. The revisions considered and approved by the Board of Supervisors at the October 23, 2017 meeting are as follows:

"WR-IMx. Water Supply Evaluation and Monitoring. Conduct watershed level evaluations Within ~~two~~ five years after the adoption of the General Plan Update the County shall prepare a watershed analysis to determine whether the long term surface and groundwater supply is available, including seasonal, average, dry year, and multiple dry year supplies, and preservation of existing beneficial uses of water. The study shall ~~to determine an estimate of the quantity of water will be available for the level of future development described in the Revised Draft EIR for the GPU.~~ Work with water and wastewater related special districts, regulators, and other appropriate organizations to monitor watershed conditions ~~will be available.~~"

The revised language clarifies the scope of the mitigation measure is intended to mitigate the impacts of the development analyzed in the GPU. It is equally effective at mitigating the impacts associated with the project as the mitigation in the RDEIR because it would reduce cumulative water supply impacts that could result from development described in the RDEIR where such development does not trigger discretionary review.

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(3) **Analysis of how the mitigation measure is insufficient to avoid or substantially lessen the environmental effect to a less than significant level and the specific factors making it infeasible to do so.** Policies contained in the Community Infrastructure and Services Element, Water Resources Element and Land Use Element would limit development potential of discretionary permits if it is found that it would exceed the available water supply and capacity of water systems and ensure that it is not approved. However, potential impacts could still result from the approval of ministerial development that exceed available surface water and groundwater supply. The proposed mitigations would reduce cumulative water supply impacts that could result from such development. However, the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation cannot be definitively determined or tested at this time; therefore, with implementation of this mitigation measure, environmental impacts will be reduced, but perhaps not to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable. (RDEIR pages 3.3-1 through 3.3-61)

(4) **Project Alternatives identified in EIR:** Alternative A would further reduce this impact because it included a plan and zoning program would decrease the availability of rural residential lands for homestead development:

“RL-IMx. Decrease Inventory of Rural Residential Lands. Initiate a plan designation and zoning program to decrease the inventory of lands planned Rural Residential (RR) to meet homestead development demands.”

This program would reduce the number of homes that could be developed in rural areas, thereby reducing the demand for water from surface and groundwater supplies from ministerial development. However, as with the proposed mitigation measure, the effectiveness of the RL-IMx cannot be definitively determined or tested at this time; therefore, with implementation of this mitigation measure, environmental impacts will be reduced, but perhaps not to a less-than-significant level. Alternative A was not selected as the Preferred Alternative because it did not meet all the project objectives. In particular, Alternative A does not include the first part of Guiding Principle 7, “Support individual rights to live in urban, suburban, rural or remote areas of the county while using a balanced approach to protect natural resources...” (RDEIR pages 3.3-1 through 3.3-61 and 4-1 through 4-81)

(5) **Finding:** Even with the proposed mitigation, potential impacts on surface and groundwater supply could still result from the approval of ministerial development that exceeds available surface water and groundwater supply. The proposed mitigations would reduce cumulative water supply impacts that could result from such development. However, the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation cannot be definitively determined or tested at this time; therefore, with implementation of this mitigation measure, environmental impacts will be reduced, but perhaps not to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable.

2. Transportation Chapter

a. 3.5.3.1 Increase in VMT

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(1) **Potentially Significant Effect:** Implementation of the General Plan Update would generate levels of development that result in a greater number of vehicle trips and increased traffic volumes on roads within the County that could cause congestion. Due to already established auto-oriented land use patterns, the private automobile would likely continue to be the dominant mode of transport in Humboldt County. The General Plan Update seeks to reduce vehicle miles traveled per person by providing balanced transportation opportunities, whereby the needs of motorized vehicles, public transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians are considered during land use and transportation planning.

Growth projected to occur during the General Plan Update planning period would generate levels of development that result in a greater number of vehicle trips and increased traffic volumes on roads within the County. The proposed General Plan Update, plus growth that would be allowed by each city general plan, would generate about 3,769,686 vehicle miles traveled per day (65 miles per dwelling unit per day) by the year 2040, up from approximately 3,541,683 vehicle miles traveled per day in 2010 (63 miles per dwelling unit per day). The cumulative traffic generated by both the County and the seven cities could cause congestion on some County or city roadways and would also affect air quality and greenhouse gas emissions. Air quality and greenhouse emission related impacts are evaluated in Section 3.12 Air Quality and Greenhouse Emissions.

In general, the General Plan Update seeks to reduce vehicle trips and trip length by encouraging growth within existing communities, improving pedestrian and bicycle facilities and connectivity, and encouraging transit service expansion. The General Plan Update includes policies to reduce the length and frequency of vehicle trips by encouraging mixed use zoning; focusing planned residential uses within neighborhood and town centers, thereby locating residential development in proximity to transportation and work; ensuring neighborhood connectivity; and providing incentives for housing and infrastructure development in housing opportunity zones located within urban development areas.

Given that there are no applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, increased vehicles miles traveled is used as a measure of congestion for purposes of this analysis. As noted above, the growth anticipated under the General Plan Update would increase the absolute number of vehicle miles traveled within the County as well as the vehicle miles traveled per dwelling unit. This could result in a potentially significant effect on roadway operation and maintenance.

(2) **Recommended Mitigation Measure:**

Mitigation Measure 3.5.3.1.a. The following policies shall be added to the Circulation Element and would require the implementation of transportation demand management programs with new larger scale development in the unincorporated area.

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C-P3. Consideration of Transportation Impacts in Land Use Decision Making.

Decisions to change or expand the land use of a particular area shall include an analysis of the impacts to existing and proposed transportation facilities and services so as to minimize or avoid significant operational, environmental, economic, and health-related consequences.

C-Px9. Regional Transportation Demand Management Funding. *Encourage HCAOG to seek funding to support transportation demand management planning and to promote strategies that can lower the demands made on the road and highway system, reduce energy consumption, and improve air quality.*

C-Px10. Transportation Demand Management Programs. *Require residential subdivisions and multifamily development that would result in fifteen or more dwelling units, and non-residential development that would employ greater than ten persons, and that require a discretionary permit, to comply with County transportation demand management programs.*

C-IMX6. Transportation Demand Management. *Amend the Zoning Regulations to include criteria for the development and implementation of transportation demand management programs as required by this Plan.*

(3) **Analysis of how the mitigation measure is insufficient to avoid or substantially lessen the environmental effect to a less than significant level and the specific factors making it infeasible to do so.** The additional policies and implementation measures described in the above Mitigation Measure may help reduce VMT per person. However, the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation cannot be quantified at this time. The proposed mitigation does not include standards to reduce VMT by definite amounts; therefore, with implementation of this mitigation measure, environmental impacts will be reduced, but perhaps not to a less-than-significant level. (RDEIR pages 3.5-1 through 3.5-38)

(4) **Project Alternatives identified in EIR:** Development under Alternative A would result the fewest number of new homes of any alternative, and because part of the increase in VMT is due to an increase in population Alternative A is expected to result in a lower VMT than the proposed project. Also, Alternative A encourages proportionately more of the development potential within urbanized areas, which would also likely reduce VMT because persons would have to travel fewer miles to get between their place of residence and their place of work, commerce and leisure which tend to be concentrated in more urban areas. Alternative A was not selected as the Preferred Alternative because it did not meet all the project objectives. In particular, Alternative A does not include the first part of Guiding Principle 7, "Support individual rights to live in urban, suburban, rural or remote areas of the county while using a balanced approach to protect natural resources..." (RDEIR pages 3.5-1 through 3.5-38, and 4-1 through 4-81).

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(5) **Finding:** Even with the proposed mitigation, potential increases in VMT could still result from new development allowed by the GPU. The proposed mitigations would reduce VMT impacts that could result from such development. However, the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation cannot be quantified at this time; therefore, with implementation of this mitigation measure, environmental impacts will be reduced, but perhaps not to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable.

b. 3.5.3.2 Unacceptable LOS on Roadways within the County

(1) **Potentially Significant Effect:** Implementation of the General Plan Update would generate levels of development that result in increased traffic volumes on roads within the County that could cause existing levels of service to fall below LOS C as a result of cumulative growth within the County that is projected to occur between 2010 and 2040. The road segments of U.S. 101 between 6th Street and S.R. 255; Main Street Fortuna, between 7th Street and 13th Street; and Kenmar Road in Fortuna, between U.S. 101 and Fortuna Blvd are all projected to fall below level of service "C" due to cumulative growth during the General Plan Update planning period.

3.5.3.2-1 U.S. 101 between S.R. 255 in Arcata and 6th Street in Eureka

The travel demand model indicates that implementation of the General Plan Update will result in increased traffic that will cause U.S. 101 between S.R. 255 in Arcata and 6th Street in Eureka to operate at LOS D/E in 2028 and 2040. The minimum acceptable LOS on U.S. 101 in urban areas in Caltrans District 1 is LOS D. Caltrans is in the process of completing planning and designs for the Eureka-Arcata Route 101 Corridor Improvement Project (SCH Number 2001092035), which includes the area in question. Caltrans has completed a Final Environmental Impact Statement and a Final Environmental Impact Report for the Eureka-Arcata Corridor Improvement Project (http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist1/d1/projects/eureka_arcata/reports.htm). Caltrans is planning on certifying these documents and approving this project in early 2017. Permits will then need to be obtained and a final design will need to be approved.

Major proposed project features include safety and operational improvements to U.S. Highway 101 between Eureka and Arcata in Humboldt County, including a grade separated interchange at Indianola Road, a half signal at Airport Road, and a bridge replacement. The primary purpose of the proposed project is to improve safety at uncontrolled left turns on and off the highway. No other improvements are planned by Caltrans.

Projected growth during the General Plan Update planning period in conjunction with growth in the cities within the County would increase vehicle trips on U.S. 101 between the cities of Eureka and Arcata. Future traffic levels are projected to cause the highway to fall to LOS "D/E"; therefore, implementation of the General Plan Update would result in a potentially significant impact. The General Plan Update policies and measures referenced above would reduce the anticipated impacts but not necessarily to a less-than-significant level. The mitigation measures described below would help reduce the impacts of the General Plan Update on U.S. 101 Between S.R. 255 in Arcata and 6th Street in Eureka. (RDEIR pages 3.5-1 through 3.5-38)

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3.5.3.2-3 The segments of Main Street between 7th Street and 13th Street, in Fortuna

Implementation of the General Plan Update will result in increased traffic that will cause Main Street between 7th Street and 13th Street to operate at LOS D in 2028 and 2040. Main Street and Fortuna Boulevard (North and South) in Fortuna are the former alignment of U.S. 101, prior to the construction of the freeway along the western edge of the City. The segment of Main Street between 7th St and 16th Street comprises the downtown portion of Fortuna and has been upgraded to provide bulbouts and other features that improve the pedestrian experience and provide protected parking areas. This section of Main Street will slightly exceed the County's LOS C standard but is not a candidate for improved capacity. The City of Fortuna General Plan Draft EIR determined that no additional lanes would be needed in this area, however it states that the 9th Street and Main Street and 12th Street and Main Street intersections will drop to F in 2030, and includes a mitigation measure for a signalized new left-turn lane to east and west approaches to the 9th Street and Main Street intersection. Intersection improvements at 12th and Main also required. After mitigation, these intersections will drop to D. Policy TC-1.2 says LOS D is acceptable on Main Street.

Based on the travel demand model, growth projected to occur during General Plan Update planning period in conjunction with the growth in the cities within the County would reduce the LOS of the segments of Main Street in Fortuna, between 7th Street and 13th Street to LOS D. However, any mitigation involving capacity improvements, typically include the addition of travel lanes, and this would mean adding lanes to areas that are largely built out, leaving little available space to create new lanes without taking land from adjacent properties. or degrade the desired downtown amenities in the area. Therefore, this impact would be significant and unavoidable. (RDEIR pages 3.5-1 through 3.5-38)

3.5.3.2-4 Kenmar Road between U.S. 101 North Bound Ramps and S. Fortuna Blvd in Fortuna

Growth projected to occur during the General Plan Update planning period in conjunction with the growth in the cities within the County will result in increased traffic that will cause Kenmar Road between U.S. 101 NB ramps and S. Fortuna Blvd. to operate at LOS D or below in 2028 and 2040. The minimum acceptable LOS on U.S. 101 in urban areas in Caltrans District 1 is LOS D. Kenmar Road is located in the City of Fortuna and extends from South Riverwalk Drive to Rohnerville Road. The portion of Kenmar Road from U.S. 101 to South Fortuna Boulevard currently operates at a LOS "D" according to the travel demand model. Based on the Fortuna General Plan EIR, the intersection with Eel River Drive currently operates at a LOS "C", and the southbound 101 off-ramp to Kenmar is currently at an LOS "E". By 2028 and 2040, the travel demand model projects that the Kenmar Road from U.S. 101 to South Fortuna Boulevard road segment will degrade to LOS "D".

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The Fortuna General Plan EIR identifies the following mitigation programs that will improve the operation of this segment and related intersections: South Fortuna Boulevard-Ross Hill Road/Kenmar Road - implement right-turn overlap phasing on both Kenmar Road approaches; Kenmar Road/Eel River Drive – the northbound Eel River Drive approach will need to be widened to provide a right-turn lane; Kenmar Road/U.S. 101 North Ramps – signalize and operate with permitted left-turn phasing (no additional lanes would be needed); Kenmar Road/U.S. 101 South Ramps – signalize, add a right-turn lane on the eastbound approach and operate with permitted left-turn phasing. Upon implementation of these improvements this segments and associated intersections would operate at LOS “C” or better.

Based on the travel demand model, the 2028 and 2040 forecasts of growth projected to occur during the General Plan Update planning period in conjunction with the growth in the cities within the County indicate that, the LOS on this section of Kenmar Road would be reduced to LOS D. The City of Fortuna General Plan identifies a series of mitigations intended to improve the future operation of the Kenmar Road/Eel River Drive, Kenmar Road/U.S. 101 North Ramps, and Kenmar Road/U.S. 101 South Ramps to LOS “C”. LOS benefits resulting from mitigation measures contained in the City of Fortuna General Plan Update DEIR cannot be definitively determined or tested at this time; impacts related to the future capacity of Kenmar Road would be reduced, but not necessarily to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, as the full implementation of these mitigation measures may not be sufficiently effective, and implementation of the mitigation is the jurisdiction of the City of Fortuna and not Humboldt County, this impact would be significant and unavoidable. (RDEIR pages 3.5-1 through 3.5-38)

(2) **Recommended Mitigation Measures:** Mitigation for each segment (U.S. 101 between 6th Street and S.R. 255; Main Street Fortuna, between 7th Street and 13th Street; and Kenmar Road in Fortuna, between U.S. 101 and Fortuna Blvd) are described in greater detail below. The following more general mitigations are proposed to limit undesirable transportation impacts and, in combination with specific mitigations listed below, would reduce impacts relating to these four roadway segments.

To help reduce impacts of the General Plan Update on Levels of Service on county roads, the following mitigation measures are necessary.

Mitigation Measure 3.5.3.2.a. Amend existing policies and add the following implementation measure to the Circulation Element that establishes a multi-faceted program to lessen impacts relating to traffic congestion:

***“C-IMX7. Congestion Relief Planning and Implementation Program.** The County shall utilize the best available traffic information, including the Humboldt County Travel Demand Model, other models and plans, and transportation impact analyses to identify roads that are currently capacity constrained or projected to become capacity constrained at some point as a result of General Plan implementation, and shall work cooperatively with HCAOG, Caltrans, applicable cities, HTA, or other agencies to implement a coordinated traffic management strategy to plan and prioritize*

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transportation demand measures and roadway improvements to reduce roadway congestion along such roadways.

The County shall use state and federal transportation improvement funds available directly to the County or through HCAOG, other grant funds, project related exactions, other available County funds, and impact fees to fund congestion relief improvements.

The following steps shall be taken to address specific capacity limitations:

- A. Monitor vehicle trips and other modes of travel at regular intervals.*
- B. Solicit public involvement in transportation improvement planning prior to implementing any improvements.*
- C. Identify transportation demand management measures that could be applied to the areas served by the specific roadway(s) to reduce peak-hour vehicle trips and congestion, such as:*
 - 1. Coordinate with school districts to expand school bus operations, create a "walking school bus" program, create programs for shared rides to school, or other programs to reduce school-related vehicle trips;*
 - 2. Coordinate with transit providers to identify strategies to improve and expand bus service and encourage ridership;*
 - 3. Coordinate with businesses served by the roadway(s) and encourage the use of appropriate transportation demand measures to reduce employee-related vehicle trips;*
 - 4. Identify bicycle and pedestrian enhancements that improve the ability of motorists to shift short trips to non-motorized modes.*
- D. Use the following roadway and intersection improvements, as appropriate, in combination with "E" below, to accommodate additional traffic volumes while providing a safe multi-modal circulation system:*
 - 1. Public education*
 - 2. Signage*
 - 3. Stop signs*
 - 4. Traffic signals or roundabouts*
 - 5. Traffic signal timing changes and signal coordination*
 - 6. Striped turn-lanes*
 - 7. Turn movement prohibitions*
 - 8. Bulb-outs and chicanes*
 - 9. Change stop sign location of two-way stop signs at four-way intersections to reduce unwarranted stops on parallel alternative routes*
 - 10. Develop parallel routes or make parallel routes into couplets*
- E. Implement the following measures in a stepwise manner to provide additional vehicle capacity on existing two-lane roads:*
 - 1. Within the existing curbs, provide a two-way left turn lane (2WLTL), two travel lanes, and up to two parking lanes when space permits – provides a capacity of up to 16,000 vehicles per day.*

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2. Provide 2WLTL, two travel lanes, two bike lanes, and up to two parking lanes when space permits (usually a parking lane needs to be removed to add bike lanes) - provides a capacity of up to 16,000 vpd.
 3. Identify parallel alternate routes with available traffic capacity to which some of the excess traffic can be diverted and utilize intersection improvements listed in "D" above to encourage drivers to divert to identified alternate routes.
- F. If transportation demand management measures and capacity improvements located within the existing two-lane cross-section have been demonstrated to be inadequate:
1. Consider accepting a lower level of service;
 2. Within the existing curbs, provide four lanes consisting of two travel lanes and no parking - provides a capacity of up to 20,000 vpd. Note: Although a four-lane undivided roadway section provides more capacity than two lanes and one 2WLTL, the section with a 2WLTL is considered safer.
 - a. Within the existing curbs, same as above but with a.m. and p.m. peak hour left turn prohibitions into driveways and side streets - provides a capacity of up to 22,000 vpd.
 - b. Within the existing curbs, same as above but with a.m. and p.m. peak hour left turn prohibitions into driveways and side streets; widen curbs to provide left turn pockets at key intersections - provides a capacity of 24,500.
 3. Consider widening the curbs to provide additional travel lanes, bike lanes, 2WLTL, medians, parking lanes, and sidewalks, all as needed to meet demands."

"C-Px. Countywide Traffic Impact Fee Program. In coordination with the cities within the County, shall develop and implement a countywide traffic impact fee program that addresses impacts on major roads resulting from development in cities and unincorporated areas. Adopt this fee within one year of the adoption of the General Plan Update. A traffic impact fee is currently being evaluated for the Greater Eureka Area, encompassing the Eureka urbanized area."

Mitigation for 3.5.3.2-1 U.S. 101 between S.R. 255 in Arcata and 6th Street in Eureka:

Mitigation Measure 3.5.3.2.c. Modify Policy C-P17 to demonstrate support for the implementation of Caltrans U.S. 101 Eureka-Arcata Corridor Improvement Project, in a manner consistent with the General Plan Update.

C-P17. Highway Improvements. Encourage state and federal highway improvements that promote safety and connectivity for all users, especially for communities with highway arterials. The County supports a strategy for safety and operational improvements to the U.S. Highway 101 Safety Corridor that is implemented in a manner consistent with the General Plan.

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Mitigation for 3.5.3.2-3 the segments of Main Street between 7th Street and 13th Street, in Fortuna: None available.

Mitigation for 3.5.3.2-4 Kenmar Road between U.S. 101 North Bound Ramps and S. Fortuna Blvd in Fortuna: None available.

(3) Analysis of how the mitigation measure is insufficient to avoid or substantially lessen the environmental effect to a less than significant level and the specific factors making it infeasible to do so.

3.5.3.2-1 U.S. 101 between S.R. 255 in Arcata and 6th Street in Eureka

Based on the analysis and information contained in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report and the administrative record, the Board finds that the future U.S. 101 LOS benefits resulting from Mitigation Measure 3.5.3.2.c cannot be definitively determined or tested at this time. In addition, improvements that would involve construction outside of the existing highway cross-section would be within an area that contains significant environmental constraints. Implementation of the Highway 101 Safety Corridor improvements within the General Plan Update planning period would be unlikely. Therefore, with implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.5.3.2.c, impacts related to the future capacity of U.S. 101 would be reduced, but not necessarily to a less-than-significant level. This would be a significant and unavoidable impact. (RDEIR pages 3.5-1 through 3.5-38)

(4) Project Alternatives identified in EIR

3.5.3.2-1 U.S. 101 between S.R. 255 in Arcata and 6th Street in Eureka,

3.5.3.2-3 The segments of Main Street between 7th Street and 13th Street, in Fortuna,

3.5.3.2-4 Kenmar Road between U.S. 101 North Bound Ramps and S. Fortuna Blvd in Fortuna

Development under Alternative A would result the fewest number of new homes of any alternative, and because part of the increase in traffic on the above road segments is due to an increase in population Alternative A is expected to result in lower traffic levels than the proposed project. Also, Alternative A encourages proportionately more of the development potential within urbanized areas, which would also likely reduce traffic because persons would have to travel less distance to go between their place of residence and their place of work, commerce and leisure, which tend to be concentrated in more urban areas. Alternative A was not selected as the Preferred Alternative because it did not meet all the project objectives. In particular, Alternative A does not include the first part of Guiding Principle 7, "Support individual rights to live in urban, suburban, rural or remote areas of the county while using a balanced approach to protect natural resources..." (RDEIR pages 3.5-1 through 3.5-38, and 4-1 through 4-81).

(5) Finding

3.5.3.2-1 U.S. 101 between S.R. 255 in Arcata and 6th Street in Eureka,

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3.5.3.2-3 The segments of Main Street between 7th Street and 13th Street, in Fortuna,

3.5.3.2-4 Kenmar Road between U.S. 101 North Bound Ramps and S. Fortuna Blvd in Fortuna

Even with the proposed mitigation, potential increases in traffic could still result from new development allowed by the GPU. The proposed mitigations would reduce traffic impacts that could result from such development. However, the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation cannot be quantified at this time; therefore, with implementation of this mitigation measure, environmental impacts will be reduced, but perhaps not to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable.

c. 3.5.3.3 Regional Level of Service Standard

(1) **Potentially Significant Effect:** Implementation of the General Plan Update would generate levels of development that result in increased traffic volumes on roads within the County that could conflict with an applicable regional level of service standard. The Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) is the Regional Transportation Planning Agency for Humboldt County. There is no regional congestion management agency in Humboldt County. The HCAOG Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) was adopted in 2014, The RTP does not establish level of service standards for roadway or multi-modal facilities.

The HCAOG Regional Transportation Plan (Variety in Rural Options of Mobility, HCAOG 20-Year Regional Transportation Plan 2014 Update, http://hcaog.net/sites/default/files/vroom_adopted_w_8.5x11_maps_0.pdf) Policy HR-11 states that level of service (LOS) standards are to be used to measure the performance of all regionally significant roadways that contribute to the regional transportation network. Objectives that are intended to carry out this policy call for the development and maintenance of a list of regionally significant roadways with established minimum acceptable LOS for each, and periodic traffic volume counts to determine whether minimum LOS levels are being maintained. A second objective calls for the traffic volume LOS to be coordinated with other bicycle and pedestrian LOS to achieve balanced multi-modal use of roadways.

Table HR-1 on page HR-2 of the RTP lists regionally significant streets roadways that are identified by members of city and County staff (the list of regionally significant roads in the unincorporated area identified by County staff is presented herein under the heading Major County Roads in 3.5.1 Transportation/Traffic -Environmental Setting). Given that Policy HR-11 includes an objective to establish a list of regionally significant roadways, it is not clear if the list in Table HR-1 is the official HCAOG list or if it represents an intermediate step towards establishing such a list. In addition, the 2014 RTP does not establish a regional LOS standard. Nonetheless, it is clear from Impact 3.5.3.1 above that projected growth during the General Plan Update planning period would result in additional traffic congestion and contribute to reductions in the level of service on County roads, state highways, and city streets.

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As noted above, the growth projected to occur during the General Plan Update planning period has the potential to exceed level of service standards for certain roads and highways. The HCAOG Regional Transportation Plan does not specify a level of service standard for designated roads or highways, nor does any other HCAOG adopted document. The policies, standards and implementation measures listed above under Impact 3.5.3.2, address this impact and would require that transportation demand measures or road improvements are implemented in a timely manner so as to avoid deterioration in levels of service. However, this EIR cannot guarantee that transportation management programs would be implemented or would be completely successful, and that capacity related roadway improvements could feasibly be constructed. Therefore, this is a potentially significant impact.

(2) **Recommended Mitigation Measure:** Mitigation measure 3.5.3.2.a will add an implementation measure that involves using best available traffic information, and working with other agencies to implement a coordinated traffic management strategy to plan and prioritize transportation demand measures and roadway improvements to reduce roadway congestion along such roadways, which will help reduce this impact as well.

(3) **Analysis of how the mitigation measure is insufficient to avoid or substantially lessen the environmental effect to a less than significant level and the specific factors making it infeasible to do so.** Mitigation 3.5.3.2a establishes a program for congestion relief by planning cooperatively with HCAOG, Caltrans, applicable cities, HTA, or other agencies to implement a coordinated traffic management strategy to plan and prioritize transportation demand measures and roadway improvements to reduce roadway congestion along such roadways and to use of a Countywide traffic impact fee program to support project implementation. These programs have the potential to reduce future congestion. However because potential congestion relief projects have not been identified, and coordination between affected agencies has not yet occurred, the benefits to LOS of future capacity improvements cannot be definitively determined or tested at this time; therefore, with implementation of these mitigation measures, future capacity related impacts would be reduced, but not necessarily to a less-than-significant level. This impact would remain significant and unavoidable. (RDEIR pages 3.5-1 through 3.5-38)

(4) **Project Alternatives identified in EIR:** Development under Alternative A would result the fewest number of new homes of any alternative, and because part of the increase in traffic on the above road segments is due to an increase in population Alternative A is expected to result in lower traffic levels than the proposed project. Also, Alternative A encourages proportionately more of the development potential within urbanized areas, which would also likely reduce traffic because persons would have to travel less distance and therefore cause less traffic between their place of residence and their place of work, commerce and leisure, which tend to be concentrated in more urban areas. Alternative A was not selected as the Preferred Alternative because it did not meet all the project objectives. In particular, Alternative A does not include the first part of Guiding Principle 7, "Support individual rights to live in urban, suburban, rural or remote areas of the county while using a balanced approach to protect natural resources..." (RDEIR pages 3.5-1 through 3.5-38, and 4-1 through 4-81).

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(5) **Finding:** Even with the proposed mitigation, potential increases in traffic could still result from new development allowed by the GPU. The proposed mitigations would reduce traffic impacts that could result from such development. However, the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation cannot be quantified at this time; therefore, with implementation of this mitigation measure, environmental impacts will be reduced, but perhaps not to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable.

3. Hazards and Hazardous Materials Chapter

a. 3.7.4.4 Wildland Fire Risk

(1) **Potentially Significant Effect:** Implementation of the General Plan Update could allow establishment of urban land uses, including residences, within high fire danger areas including the wildland urban interface, which could result in increased fire related risk to people and structures. In addition to the potential loss of life and property, wildfires may result in the loss or permanent change of natural resources. Locating urban land uses adjacent to, or within, an area containing wildland vegetation such as forests, shrubs, or grasslands (the wildland urban interface) can result in increased fire related risk to people and structures. The areas with the highest hazard for wildfires are found in foothills and mountainous areas of eastern Humboldt County and in grasslands located throughout the County. However, areas of high fire danger follow the forested areas throughout the County and extend even to the coast and the edges of the urbanized Humboldt Bay Area. Approximately 779 new dwelling units are projected to be developed within high and very high wildfire hazard areas during the General Plan Update planning period. Approximately 83 percent of this development would occur within or directly adjacent to urban areas. Adding additional development into the wildland urban interface areas would add additional ignition sources, add to fire suppression complexity and cost, and put additional lives and property at risk from wildfire.

The proposed policies, standards and implementation measures in the Safety Element and Community Infrastructure and Services Element would lessen the exposure of people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands. However, adding additional development within areas of high and very high hazard would expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.

(2) **Recommended Mitigation Measure:**

Mitigation Measure 3.7.4.5a. To lessen impacts resulting from the exposure of people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, the following mitigation is required. Amend Standard FR-S2 Forestland-Residential Interface (FRI), Section E to read as follows:

FR-S2. Forestland-Residential Interface (FRI). Require new residential subdivisions adjacent to TPZ and public forestlands to include forested buffers and building setbacks between residential uses and adjacent timberlands to minimize use conflicts and safety

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hazards and, if necessary, require fire breaks around all or a portion of the development in consultation with CALFIRE.

For residential development, require compliance with fire safe standards, and ongoing fire protection management programs developed by qualified experts.

For residential development in high and very high fire severity zones, require the establishment and maintenance of a fire breaks and open space adjacent to forestlands, consistent with CALFIRE recommendations, and ongoing fire protection management programs developed by qualified experts to ensure defensible space.

(3) **Analysis of how the mitigation measure is insufficient to avoid or substantially lessen the environmental effect to a less than significant level and the specific factors making it infeasible to do so.** The above described changes to the project would lessen impacts; there is no guarantee that local fire protection will be available to structural fire protection or crucial initial response to wildfire incidents. Therefore, the proposed mitigation would lessen impacts related to wildland fire risk the General Plan Update, but not to a less-than significant level. This impact is significant and unavoidable. (RDEIR pages 3.7-4 through 3.7-18, 3.7-37 through 3.7-41)

(4) **Project Alternatives identified in EIR** Alternative A would further reduce this impact because it included a plan and zoning program would decrease the availability of rural residential lands for homestead development:

“RL-IMx. Decrease Inventory of Rural Residential Lands. Initiate a plan designation and zoning program to decrease the inventory of lands planned Rural Residential (RR) to meet homestead development demands.”

This program would reduce the number of homes that could be developed in rural areas, thereby reducing the fire risk from new homes developed in rural areas subject to fire hazards. However, as with the proposed mitigation measure, the effectiveness of the RL-IMx cannot be definitively determined or tested at this time; therefore, with implementation of this mitigation measure, environmental impacts will be reduced, but perhaps not to a less-than-significant level.

Alternative A was not selected as the Preferred Alternative because it did not meet all the project objectives. In particular, Alternative A does not include the first part of Guiding Principle 7, “Support individual rights to live in urban, suburban, rural or remote areas of the county while using a balanced approach to protect natural resources...” (RDEIR pages 3.7-4 through 3.7-18, 3.7-37 through 3.7-41 and 4-1 through 4-81)

(5) **Finding:** Based on the analysis and information contained in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report and the administrative record, the Board finds that the above described changes to the project would lessen impacts; there is no guarantee that local fire protection will be available to structural fire protection or crucial initial response to wildfire incidents. Therefore, the proposed mitigation would lessen impacts related to wildland fire risk

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the General Plan Update, but not to a less-than significant level. This impact is significant and unavoidable. (RDEIR pages 3.7-4 through 3.7-18, 3.7-37 through 3.7-41 and 4-1 through 4-81)

4. Hydrology and Water Quality Chapter

a. 3.10.3.1 Degrade Water Quality or Exceed Waste Discharge Requirements

(1) **Potentially Significant Effect:** Implementation of the General Plan Update could result in increased stormwater runoff; mobilization of sediment, household chemicals, metals, hydrocarbons, nutrients and other pollutants; sanitary sewer overflows; and vegetation removal; all of which can have potentially significant impacts on water quality. Based on DOF projections, approximately 1,721 new housing units will be constructed by the planning period population peak, 2028. Approximately 90 percent of those units are expected to be located within more urbanized areas (Community Planning Areas and Coastal Zone Areas), and approximately 10 percent would be located within rural areas outside community planning areas.

Development allowed under the General Plan Update would result in impervious surfaces in the form of new structures, roadways, parking areas, and supporting. New surfaces such as roofs; concrete or asphalt sidewalks, parking lots or roads; as well as areas of compacted soil would likely be impervious to rainwater. Stormwater moves over impervious surfaces and collects natural and human generated substances such as sediment, nutrients, and trace metals, and carries them to the drainage system and eventually to wetlands, streams, rivers, and coastal waterways. Impervious surfaces increase the amount of stormwater runoff and significantly impede or prevent the natural percolation of rainwater into the soil, resulting in higher levels of mobilized sediment and other pollutants entering receiving water bodies as a nonpoint source pollutant, thereby decreasing the quality of receiving waters.

The General Plan Update policies propose to lessen potential impacts by conducting planning on a watershed basis and focusing regulatory efforts within impaired watersheds; updating sediment and erosion control regulations to reflect the new Water Resources and Conservation and Open Space Element standards, controlling the discharge of other pollutants (such as oils, fertilizers, pesticides and other chemicals, encouraging low-impact development design to reduce stormwater flows and improve water quality, and implementing a drainage ordinance to regulate stormwater drainage consistent with the General Plan.

While these policies and programs would reduce some of the adverse impacts to water quality associated with non-point source pollution from projected development during the General Plan Update planning period, clear standards would need to be established to implement sediment and erosion controls, and additional implementation measures would be required to amend the grading ordinance, low impact development standards would be required to be mandatory within impaired watersheds. Without clear standards and additional storm drainage protections, especially within impaired watersheds, projected development during the planning period could substantially degrade water quality, result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site, or violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements. As a result, development under the GPU could result in potentially significant hydrology and water quality impacts.

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(2) **Recommended Mitigation Measure:**

Mitigation Measure **3.10.3.1.a.** The following policy and implementation measure shall be added to the Water Resources Element to lessen impacts resulting from erosion, sedimentation, and siltation:

***WR-Px. Continue to Implement Water Quality Regulations.** Continue to implement Division 3, Building Regulations, Section 331-12, Grading, Excavation, Erosion, and Sedimentation Control Regulations, and Division 1, Planning Zoning Regulations Chapter 6 - General Provisions and Exceptions Section 314-61.1 Streamside Management Area Ordinance.*

Mitigation Measure **3.10.3.1.b.** The following policy shall be modified to apply to all development in order the Water Resources Element to improve water quality within watersheds subject to TMDL Controllable Sediment Discharge Inventories:

***WR-Px2. Mitigate Controllable Sediment Discharge Sites.** Proposed Discretionary development applications involving a site identified as part of the TMDL Controllable Sediment Discharge Inventory shall be conditioned to reduce sediment discharge.*

(3) **Analysis of how the mitigation measure is insufficient to avoid or substantially lessen the environmental effect to a less than significant level and the specific factors making it infeasible to do so.** The above described changes to the project minimize water quality impacts of future land uses and development to the extent practicable, however, without quantifiable thresholds, there is no guarantee that even with the adoption and implementation of these mitigations would reduce this impact to a less than significant level. Therefore, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable: (RDEIR pages 3.10-1 through 3.10-13, 3.10-16 through 3.10-23)

(4) **Project Alternatives identified in EIR.** Alternative A would reduce this impact because it included a plan and zoning program would decrease the availability of rural residential lands for homestead development:

"RL-IMx. Decrease Inventory of Rural Residential Lands. Initiate a plan designation and zoning program to decrease the inventory of lands planned Rural Residential (RR) to meet homestead development demands."

This program would reduce the number of homes that could be developed in rural areas, thereby reducing the soil erosion from new homes developed in rural areas with steep slopes. However, as with the proposed mitigation measure, the effectiveness of the RL-IMx cannot be definitively determined or tested at this time; therefore, with implementation of this mitigation measure, environmental impacts will be reduced, but perhaps not to a less-than-significant level. Alternative A was not selected as the Preferred Alternative because it did not meet all the project objectives. In particular, Alternative A does not include the first part of Guiding Principle 7, "Support individual rights to live in urban, suburban, rural or remote areas of the county while

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address the potential for significant impacts to scenic resources during ministerial and discretionary permit review."

(3) **Analysis of how the mitigation measure is insufficient to avoid or substantially lessen the environmental effect to a less than significant level and the specific factors making it infeasible to do so.** The proposed mitigation will reduce potential adverse impacts to scenic highways that could be caused by ministerial projects. Humboldt County Highways listed in Sections 263.1 through 263.8 of the California Streets and Highways Code should be considered as eligible Scenic Highways. The County will address potentially significant impacts to scenic resources during discretionary permit review. However, while the mitigation addresses potential visual impacts to scenic resources adjacent to mapped scenic roads, other scenic viewsheds have not been specifically identified in the GPU, such as the forested hillsides between Arcata and Eureka that have not been mapped. These scenic resources may be significantly impacted by new development allowed by the GPU through the construction of new buildings and removal of vegetation. (RDEIR 3.16-5 through 3.16-9).

(4) **Project Alternatives identified in EIR** - Alternative A would reduce this impact because it included a plan and zoning program would decrease the availability of rural residential lands for homestead development:

"RL-IMx. Decrease Inventory of Rural Residential Lands. Initiate a plan designation and zoning program to decrease the inventory of lands planned Rural Residential (RR) to meet homestead development demands."

This program would reduce the number of homes that could be developed in rural areas, thereby reducing the visual impacts from new homes developed in scenic rural areas. However, as with the proposed mitigation measure, the effectiveness of the RL-IMx cannot be definitively determined or tested at this time; therefore, with implementation of this mitigation measure, environmental impacts will be reduced, but perhaps not to a less-than-significant level.

Alternative A was not selected as the Preferred Alternative because it did not meet all the project objectives. In particular, Alternative A does not include the first part of Guiding Principle 7, "Support individual rights to live in urban, suburban, rural or remote areas of the county while using a balanced approach to protect natural resources..." (RDEIR pages 3.16-5 through 3.16-9 and 4-1 through 4-81)

(5) **Finding:** Based on the above analysis and information contained in the RDEIR, the Board finds that this mitigation measure would lessen impacts to some scenic resources resulting from development consistent with the General Plan Update; however, because not all scenic resources have been mapped and are therefore not specifically identified, such impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

b. 3.16.3.2 Effect on Visual Quality and Community Character

(1) **Potentially Significant Effect:** Implementation of the General Plan Update would result in increased development that could impact the visual quality and community

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using a balanced approach to protect natural resources..." (RDEIR pages 3.10-1 through 3.10-13, 3.10-16 through 3.10-23 and 4-1 through 4-81)

(5) **Finding.** Based on the analysis and information contained in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report, the Board finds that the above described changes to the project minimize water quality impacts of future land uses and development to the extent practicable, however, without quantifiable thresholds, there is no guarantee that even with the adoption and implementation of these mitigations would reduce this impact to a less than significant level. Therefore, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable.

5. Scenic Resources Chapter

a. 3.16.3.1 Adverse Effect on Scenic Vistas and Scenic Resources

(1) **Potentially Significant Effect:** Implementation of the General Plan Update would allow additional development and changes in land use, and contains new policies that could lead to damage or destruction of scenic resources and vistas. Potential impacts could include conversion of timber or agricultural lands adjacent to communities or along candidate scenic highways or roadways, or allow the construction of structures that would block coastal views or damage scenic vistas. This is a potentially significant impact.

Adverse changes to scenic resources resulting from the implementation of the proposed General Plan Update could result from a number of circumstances. These include dramatic large and small-scale shifts from one land use to another, such as the change from open space to urban use, or project-specific impacts such as construction of large homes on hillsides or ridgelines. Aesthetic and visual resources are subjective by nature. In addition, specific development proposals that could take place under the proposed General Plan Update are currently unknown. As a result, site-specific impacts resulting from allowable development cannot be determined until it is proposed and undergoes design review and/or environmental review.

Scenic roadways have not yet been adopted in Humboldt County and as a result, development consistent with the General Plan Update that permanently affects such roadways could occur prior to the development of a program for coordinated protection of scenic roads.

(2) **Recommended Mitigation Measure:**

Mitigation 3.16.3.1.a. Standard SR-SXXX, Scenic Highway Map, shall be added to the General Plan Update to reduce potential adverse impacts to scenic highways that could be caused by ministerial projects until SR-IM1, Mapping of Scenic Areas and Scenic Highways, is implemented:

"SR-SXXX. Scenic Highway Map. Until such time as a General Plan Scenic Highway Roadway Map is prepared and adopted, Humboldt County Highways listed in Sections 263.1 through 263.8 of the California Streets and Highways Code shall be considered to be Scenic Highways pursuant to Policy SR-P3, Scenic Highway Protection, and the County shall

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character within the County. This impact is potentially significant. The construction of additional residential, commercial and industrial development, and the construction of roads and other infrastructure supporting such development, or the continued use of illegal billboards or the installation of new billboards will have an impact on aesthetic qualities of the community. The most likely development types that could affect visual character of existing communities would include large subdivisions on undeveloped land or underdeveloped areas that are planned for significantly higher development density. While the proposed General Plan Update does discourage the extension of urban services into community separators, it does not prohibit development at higher densities within open spaces between communities, and would therefore allow growth between communities that could diminish the value that these open spaces provide to community character.

Orick, South Eureka, McKinleyville, and Carlotta are highlighted in this analysis because each of these areas contains vacant land, typically comprised of an old industrial facility, which is planned for more development. A 15-acre undeveloped parcel on the north side of the Redwood National and State Parks Thomas H. Kuchel Visitor Center in Orick will be re-designated from Commercial Recreation (CR) to Mixed Use (MU). Although many of the commercial uses allowable in the CR land use designation are also allowable in MU, multi-family residential uses at a density of up to 16 dwelling units per acre would now be allowable, subject to the availability of community wastewater service. This can potentially change the character of this part of Orick.

The South Eureka Urban Development Area includes Cutten, Ridgewood, Bayview, and Rosemont. The Bayview and Rosemont areas have only limited undeveloped land, and new development would be expected to primarily occur as infill. Development of these parcels consistent with the proposed land use diagram and the 1995 Eureka Community Plan would replace forested areas with urban levels of development. Although gulch areas would be retained as open space, new houses, commercial structures, and roads with attendant utilities and lighting would be developed. The character of this area and the surrounding community would be permanently changed.

In McKinleyville, west and south of the McKinleyville Shopping Center, approximately 44 acres are proposed to be re-designated from Commercial Services (CS) to MU. This proposed change would not necessarily increase the intensity of urban development in this area, but could change the ultimate mix of uses. The development of the McKinleyville Town Center area would substantially alter the existing visual character of the project site and its surroundings by replacing open fields containing interspersed trees and shrubs visible from adjacent areas with urban development.

The town of Carlotta has property previously owned by the Pacific Lumber mill and it is currently planned industrial with remnant mill structures and is proposed to be re-designated Mixed Use (MU). This would allow many commercial uses, inevitably changing the character of this Carlotta area.

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(2) **Recommended Mitigation Measure:**

Mitigation 3.16.3.2.a. The following policy would lessen potential impacts to natural amenities that are important to visual character:

***“BR-Px. Landmark Trees.** Establish a program to identify and protect landmark trees, including trees that exhibit notable characteristics in terms of their size, age, rarity, shape or location.”*

(3) **Analysis of how the mitigation measure is insufficient to avoid or substantially lessen the environmental effect to a less than significant level and the specific factors making it infeasible to do so.** Implementation of the above mitigation measure would lessen impacts to community character, but the effectiveness of would depend on landowner participation, the extent of which cannot be predicted. Consequently, it cannot be determined if this program would be effective in protecting the visual quality of developing areas. The impact may be reduced, but perhaps not to a less than significant level. No other feasible mitigation measures are available to further reduce impacts to the visual character of existing communities that would result from additional planned urban development that would permanently alter community character. This impact remains significant and unavoidable.

(4) **Project Alternatives identified in EIR -** Alternative A includes the most protective measures of any alternative to protect scenic resources. For example, Policy SR-P2 Heritage Landscapes is worded to protect “heritage landscapes” by requiring review of new development by historic resource specialists. This goes beyond the proposed mitigation measure, which protects heritage trees. However, as with the proposed mitigation measure, the effectiveness of the Heritage Tree program cannot be definitively determined or tested at this time; therefore, with implementation of this mitigation measure, environmental impacts will be reduced, but perhaps not to a less-than-significant level. Alternative A was not selected as the Preferred Alternative because it did not meet all the project objectives. In particular, Alternative A does not include the first part of Guiding Principle 7, “Support individual rights to live in urban, suburban, rural or remote areas of the county while using a balanced approach to protect natural resources...” (RDEIR pages 3.16-5 through 3.16-9 and 4-1 through 4-81)

(5) **Finding:** Based on the above analysis and information contained in the RDEIR, the Board finds that this mitigation measure would lessen impacts to some scenic resources resulting from development consistent with the General Plan Update; however, because the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation would depend on landowner participation, the extent of which cannot be predicted, such impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

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c. 3.16.3.3 Sources of Light and Glare

(1) **Potentially Significant Effect:** Implementation of the General Plan Update would result in increased development that would include new sources of light that may have adverse impacts on day or nighttime views. Urbanized areas of Humboldt County currently generate significant sources of light, glare, or light trespass into the night sky. New urban development planned as part of the General Plan Update would likely be located within or adjacent to these existing urban communities and would increase sources of light, glare, or light trespass into the night sky. In addition, development proposed under the General Plan Update could increase the amount of light in the County due to new street lighting, signage, floodlights, security lighting, private residential lights, automobile lights, and other similar sources.

The General Plan Update would allow development near wetland and other streamside management areas and within forest land and other sensitive habitat areas that support insects, mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, and other wildlife species. Such lighting could have the effect of altering wildlife behaviors, foraging areas, and breeding cycles.

The Humboldt County Zoning Regulations contain general exterior lighting requirements for new development within several combining zones such as the "D" Design Review and Planned Development (P) combining zones, as well as exterior lighting performance standards for several uses such as for Cottage Industry, and industrial uses. These regulations require that new lighting be compatible with the surrounding setting and not be directed beyond the boundaries of the parcel.

(2) **Recommended Mitigation Measure:**

Mitigation Measure 3.16.3.3.a: In order to minimize light trespass, light pollution, and glare, new development and projects that would make significant parking lot improvements or add new lighting would be required to prepare a lighting plan. The following new program would need to be added to the Scenic Resources Chapter of the Conservation and Open Space Element:

SR-IMX Lighting Design Guidelines. Amend the Zoning Regulations to include lighting design guidelines for discretionary projects. Require new development and projects that would make significant parking lot improvements or add new exterior lighting to submit a lighting plan consistent with these guidelines. Lighting design guidelines should address:

- A. *Intensity* – Acceptable standards shall be defined for various land uses and development types specifying the maximum allowable total lumens per acre.
- B. *Directional Control* – Standards shall be developed to minimize the upward transmission and intensity of light at various distances from its source through the use of full-cutoff lighting, downward casting, shielding, visors etc.
- C. *Signage* – Standards with respect to illuminated signs shall be developed that prohibit or limit the size, spacing, design, upward transmission of light, and hours of operation. In addition, signs should be white or light colored lettering on dark backgrounds.

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- D. *Night Lighting – Hours of operation for various uses shall be specified in order to prohibit all night lighting except when warranted for public safety reasons. On demand lighting shall be encouraged.*
- E. *Incentives – The County shall develop incentives for residents and businesses encouraging the conversion of existing lighting sources to compliant ones.*
- F. *Enforcement – These standards shall be incorporated into the County Development Code and design review process for new development.*

(3) **Analysis of how the mitigation measure is insufficient to avoid or substantially lessen the environmental effect to a less than significant level and the specific factors making it infeasible to do so:** Implementation of the above mitigation measure would reduce adverse changes to scenic resources and ecological impacts to wildlife resulting from additional sources of lighting that would occur from implementation of the proposed General Plan Update. However, because the intensity and directional standards are not identified in the mitigation, sources of lighting could continue to impact scenic resources and wildlife, so the impacts may not be reduced to a less-than significant level. Therefore, this would be a significant unavoidable impact. (RDEIR page 3.16-15)

(4) **Project Alternatives identified in EIR.** Alternative A includes the most protective measures of any alternative to protect against light and glare impacts. For example, Alternative A includes performance standards for all new outdoor lighting in Standard SR-SX - Light and Glare. This Standard was included in the General Plan. However, as with the proposed mitigation measure, the lighting performance standards would still allow some off-site lighting, so environmental impacts will be reduced, but perhaps not to a less-than-significant level. (RDEIR pages 3.16-5 through 3.16-9 and 4-1 through 4-81)

(5) **Finding:** Based on the above analysis and information contained in the RDEIR, the Board finds that this mitigation measure would reduce light and glare impacts resulting from development allowed by the General Plan Update. However, the performance standards in the GPU and the mitigation measures continue to allow some lighting to extend beyond property boundaries, and they do not address lighting impacts on wildlife. Therefore such impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

C. Findings Regarding Environmental Effects Identified in FEIR as Significant with No Feasible Mitigation or Alternative. (PRC § 21081 (a)(3); Guidelines §15091 (a)(3))

1. Agricultural and Timber Resources Chapter

a. 3.2.3.1 Conversion of Farmland or Forest Land

(1) **Significant Effect:** Implementation of the General Plan Update could result in changes in land use designations that would directly convert farmland or forest land to non-agricultural land use, or could include new policies which could facilitate conversion of farmland or forest land. Farmland may be converted for one or more of the following reasons: direct

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conversion to urban uses, falling idle due to conflicts with nearby urban uses, subdivision, and a change in use to parkland or open space. The conversion process involves a complex interplay of a number of factors, including farm profitability, urban growth, land value, personal lifecycle considerations, community expectations, and government incentives and regulations.

Conversion can also occur when parcel sizes of resource lands (for both agricultural and timberlands) become too small for economic viability through either subdivisions or the break-up of ranches and timber holdings from the sell-off of patent and/or legal parcels. Maintaining parcels in large, minimum sizes no longer protects resource lands as effectively as in the past, as such parcels have become attractive places to live for an increasing number of people. These parcels are acquired primarily for residential purposes. Parcelization can create land use conflicts with surrounding properties still in resource production.

The General Plan Update contains three resource land use mapping designations to compliment the Land Use Element policies for the identification and protection of agricultural and timberlands in Humboldt County: Agricultural Exclusive (AE), Agricultural Grazing (AG), Timberland (T).

Approximately 1,037 acres of the 42,000 acres identified as prime agricultural lands by the County's GIS mapping program (primarily through the identification of prime soils) have been re-designated to a non-agricultural designations, such as Public Lands, Residential or Commercial. These changes reflect either the acquisition by a public agency or the current use and parcelization of the land.

The proposed Rural Residential Agriculture (RA) designation replaces existing land use categories that are currently represented as agricultural lands in the Framework Plan, such as Agricultural Lands (AL) and Agricultural Rural (AR). Lands designated AL or AR were re-designated as RA per request via the Humboldt County Farm Bureau. The RA designation applies to large lot residential uses that typically rely upon onsite water and wastewater systems. Agricultural uses are considered a compatible use, but not the primary use.

The second largest change reflects proposed changes from AG to RA. In the proposed General Plan Update, most AG lands designated in the current 1984 General Plan have been designated AG or T in the General Plan Update, which reflects the current primary use of these properties and does not reflect a conversion from resource production use. In some cases though, AG lands have been re-designated to RA to reflect the de facto use of these lands. There are approximately 1,060 more acres designated RA in the GPU than in the Framework Plan.

The General Plan Update consists of various policies, standards and implementation measures aimed at maintaining resource production lands in agricultural and timber use. These measures will not completely eliminate the non-agricultural dependent development of the County's resource production lands, but would substantially reduce it. Land Use Element, Agricultural Resources Policy AG-P5, Conservation of Agricultural Lands, requires that agricultural land be conserved (which includes prime agricultural lands) and that conflicts be minimized through

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various means including: promoting infill, minimizing land use conflicts through proper zoning and infrastructure planning; and only allowing lot line adjustments on agricultural lands when planned densities are met and there is not increase in the number of building sites. In particular, Policy AG-P5 requires the establishment of stable zoning boundaries and buffer areas that separate urban and rural areas by developing lands within Urban Development Areas prior to the conversion of agricultural resource production lands in the Urban Expansion Areas.

The General Plan Update would only allow conversions of agricultural and resource lands in specified urban development and expansion areas after other non-resource lands have been developed. In order to lessen the effects of potential future conversions of prime agricultural lands, the General Plan Update includes Policy AG-P6, Agricultural Land Conversion – No Net Loss, which requires that land planned AE or AG shall not be converted to non-agricultural uses unless it can be found that there are:

- no feasible alternatives that would prevent or minimize conversion,
- there is an overriding public interest in the conversion supported by facts; and,
- for lands outside of Urban Development Boundaries, sufficient off-setting mitigation has been provided to prevent a net reduction in the agricultural land base and agricultural production.

AG-Pxx on page 4-30 of the GPU, Protect Productive Agricultural Soils, minimizes the placement of any buildings and impermeable surfaces on prime agricultural lands for those lands planned for agriculture. AG-S1, Subdivision of Planned Agricultural Exclusive (AE) Lands, reduces the current allowable subdivision potential on AE lands (those containing prime agricultural lands) going from a 20 acre minimum parcel size to 60 acres. AG-S2, Agricultural Grazing (AG) Land, specifies the minimum parcel size for parcels designated AG is 160 acres, and specifies findings that must be made for rezoning these properties to as small as 40 acres that demonstrate that the protection of agricultural operations will be ensured, maintained or enhanced. Further, Policy AG-P7, Agricultural Production in Conservation Areas, lessens the effects of potential agricultural land conversions by requiring the County to support continued agricultural production on lands placed into conservation easements or acquired by public agencies for conservation purposes through the use of enforceable provisions contained in the terms of the sale, lease or deed restriction that shall require the continued management for agriculture production.

The policies and programs of the General Plan Update would direct future development primarily into urban development and water service areas within community planning areas and away from prime agricultural lands. Policies and programs of the General Plan Update would continue to promote the economic viability of agriculture and timber production in the County. As a result of the planned growth pattern and the policies described in the Land Use Element, substantial agricultural and timber resource areas will be protected in unincorporated Humboldt County. However, conversion of resource lands to other uses may still occur.

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Implementation of the General Plan Update would result in the re-designation of approximately 1,037 acres of prime agricultural lands in the unincorporated area from an agricultural and timberland use designation to non-agricultural or timber designations.

The Board considered but rejected a Ranchlands (AGR) land use designation as an additional designation proposed for the large ranches currently protected under a Williamson Act Contract. The minimum parcel size was set at 160 acres. The use of the Ranchlands designation would have reduced the maximum buildout numbers by 70% from approximately 17,000 units to approximately 5,000 units for lands planned Agriculture Grazing (see table 4.1 of this EIR). This land use designation did not meet all the project objectives, particularly Guiding Principle 7, "Support individual rights to live in urban, suburban, rural or remote areas of the county while using a balanced approach to protect natural resources..." (RDEIR pages 4-1 through 4-81)

While the implementation of the General Plan Update policies, standards and implementation measures would ensure that further conversion of agricultural and timberland is minimized, it does not fully mitigate the loss of these lands from direct conversion to other uses. Plan policies partially mitigate the loss of agricultural lands by identifying policies and programs to help protect and preserve these lands. However, the loss of agricultural lands cannot be mitigated to a level of insignificance once land is permanently converted to non-agricultural land use, and therefore, is **a significant unavoidable impact** of the General Plan Update.

The Plan also does not fully protect against the loss of timber lands from increased parcelization. Current County Code contains a Merger Ordinance that directs the County to merge substandard parcels zoned TPZ into those that meet density requirements; however, this ordinance was never fully implemented. The proposed Plan recommends revising this section of the code to remove the merger requirement because it was not implemented. This will allow a higher density development on lands planned T and allow conversion of timberlands to rural residential uses. Therefore, the loss of timber lands cannot be mitigated to a level of insignificance once these lands are converted to a non-timber land use, and therefore **is a significant unavoidable impact** of the General Plan Update.

The Plan also does not fully protect against the loss of resource production lands from conversion to rural residential. Limiting housing on lands managed for industrial timberlands may prevent the conversion of resource production lands to other uses, but this policy option is not considered feasible because it could significantly diminish the economic value of those lands and the Industrial Timberland land use designation did not meet all the project objectives, particularly Guiding Principle 7, "Support individual rights to live in urban, suburban, rural or remote areas of the county while using a balanced approach to protect natural resources..." (RDEIR pages 4-1 through 4-81). Therefore, the loss of timber lands cannot be mitigated to a level of insignificance once these lands are converted to a non-timber land use, and therefore, **is a significant unavoidable impact** of the General Plan Update.

(2) Analysis of why there is no feasible mitigation measure or alternative to reduce effect to a level less than significant due to specific economic, legal, social,

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technological or other considerations. Protecting agricultural and forest land from conversion to other uses would involve eliminating non-agricultural and non-forestland uses in the agricultural and Timber production land use designations. Prohibiting non-agricultural and non-forestland uses would not accomplish one of the objectives of the GPU - Guiding Principle 7 cited above.

(3) **Conclusion:** The loss of agricultural lands cannot be mitigated to a level of insignificance once land is permanently converted to non-agricultural land use, and therefore, is **a significant unavoidable impact** of the General Plan Update. The loss of timber lands cannot be mitigated to a level of insignificance once these lands are converted to a non-timber land use, and therefore, is **a significant unavoidable impact** of the General Plan Update.

2. Geology and Soils Chapter

a. 3.8.3.1 Exposure to Seismic-Related Hazards

(1) **Significant Effect:** Implementation of the General Plan Update would result in new land uses and development being located in portions of the unincorporated County that are subject to seismic ground shaking, and could therefore expose people or structures to hazards including fault rupture, seismic-related ground failure, landslides and tsunamis.

The primary goal of the General Plan Update Safety Element is to prevent unnecessary exposure to hazards and minimize loss to communities. The Safety Element contains Standard S-S1, Geologic Report Requirements, which requires that reports address geologic hazards and geologic conditions, and requires that the report be prepared in compliance with County Land Use and Development regulations for Geologic Hazards. These regulations (Humboldt County Code, Title III, Division 3, Chapter 6, Section 336-5) require proposed development (that is the subject of the geologic report) to be sited, designed and constructed in accordance with the recommendations of the report in order to minimize risk to life and property on the project site and for any other affected properties. Standard S-S2, Landslide Maps, requires the use of California Division of Mines and Geology, North Coast Watersheds landslide mapping as information in the review of developments. Standard S-S3 requires use of California Mines and Geology Board Policies and Criteria as standards of implementation within Alquist-Priolo Fault Hazard Zones. Standards S-S1 through S-S3, including Building Regulations, and Alquist-Priolo Zoning Regulations which are fundamental to these standards reduce the potential impacts in this category by preventing development in hazards areas or by requiring that development adhere to appropriate standards to address hazards.

The Safety Element also contains policies that would lessen the potential effects of the General Plan Update due to rupture of a known earthquake fault, strong seismic ground shaking, seismic-related ground failure, and tsunami through planning and coordination. Policy S-P6, Structural Hazards, would apply and enforce state adopted building codes and Alquist-Priolo zone requirements to new construction in an effort to protect life and property. Through Policy S-P7, Improved Information, Humboldt County would encourage the development of detailed

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scientific analysis of Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake risks, probabilities, and anticipated effects to inform future land use planning.

Policy S-P8, Earthquake Mitigation Planning, sets the standard for the potential for a local earthquake in excess of magnitude 9.0 (Richter scale) to be considered in disaster planning, risk assessment, and pre-disaster mitigation efforts. Through Policy S-P9, Cascadia Event Disaster Response, the County shall maintain readiness for a comprehensive response to a major earthquake consistent with the nationwide emergency management hierarchy and the adopted Emergency Response Plan for the Humboldt Operational Area. Finally, through Policy S-PX1, Site Suitability, new development may be approved only if it can be demonstrated that the proposed development will neither create nor significantly contribute to geologic instability or geologic hazards.

As noted above, Standard S-S1, Geologic Report Requirements, specifies that reports prepared consistent with County Building Regulations addressing geologic hazards and geologic conditions be prepared as part of the review of discretionary development and ministerial permits. This standard lessens potential environmental effects relating to surface fault rupture, strong seismic ground shaking, and landslides. Standards S-S2, Landslide Maps, and S-S3, Alquist-Priolo Fault Hazard Zones, would utilize California Division of Mines and Geology Landslide Mapping and Policies and Criteria for Alquist-Priolo Fault Hazard Zones as North Coast Watersheds landslide mapping. The use of mapping from these sources would identify areas subject to hazards and the application of regulations specified by the standards would ensure that potential impacts associated with known hazards are reduced.

The General Plan Update could expose a significant number of persons to the geologic hazards which exist throughout the County. Pursuant to Policy S-S1, Geologic Report Requirements, and S-S3, Alquist-Priolo Fault Hazard Zones, development planned for hazardous areas would require detailed assessments and mitigation under the Plan. The Policies and Standards referenced above combined with the hazard awareness and emergency preparedness policies and programs of the General Plan Update would minimize the exposure of people and development to the adverse effects of surface fault rupture within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. These policies and programs would reduce the number of new structures built on active fault traces and improve building construction within such areas. However, while these measures would reduce the exposure of people and structures to the adverse effects of surface fault rupture for minor to moderate events to a less-than significant-level, they would not do so for severe events.

(2) Analysis of why there is no feasible mitigation measure or alternative to reduce effect to a level less than significant due to specific economic, legal, social, technological or other considerations. Humboldt County is subject to: serious liquefaction and subsidence hazards; the highest concentration of earthquake events anywhere in the continental U.S. and is located the closest county to the Cascadia Subduction Zone which can produce earthquakes of magnitude 9 and devastating tsunamis; significant landslide hazards countywide; and fault rupture zones associated the San Andreas, Little Salmon, and Mad River faults are

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present in the County which can generate highly destructive earthquakes. Although it is possible to limit impacts associated with minor to moderate events from these hazards through the policies, standards, and regulation described above, it is not feasible to limit impacts from the most significant hazards.

(3) **Conclusion:** Implementation of the General Plan Update would have the **significant and unavoidable impact** of allowing new development located in portions of the unincorporated County that are subject to seismic ground shaking, and could therefore expose people or structures to hazards including fault rupture, seismic-related ground failure, landslides and tsunamis.

3. Air Quality Chapter

a. 3.12.4.1 Increases in particulate matter (PM10) emissions above state and federal standards

(1) **Significant Effect** Implementation of the General Plan Update would result in additional development that could result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of criteria pollutants (i.e., PM₁₀) for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable national or State ambient air quality standard (PS). It would also result in a significant impact if it would include policies that are inconsistent with the PM10 Attainment Plan adopted by NCUAQMD (May 11, 1995) or produce PM10 emission levels that would contribute to exceedances of the state PM10 standard.

Humboldt County is in attainment of all federal and State criteria air pollutant standards, except for State PM10 levels, for which the entire North Coast Air Basin is currently designated as a non-attainment area.

Particulate matter is the term used for a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets found in the air. Coarse particles are those that are larger than 2.5 microns but smaller than 10 microns, or PM10. PM2.5 refers to fine suspended particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 2.5 microns or less that is not readily filtered out by the lungs. Nitrates, sulfates, dust, and combustion particulates are major components of PM10 and PM2.5. These small particles can be directly emitted into the atmosphere as by-products of fuel combustion, through abrasion, such as tire or brake lining wear, or through fugitive dust (wind or mechanical erosion of soil). They can also be formed in the atmosphere through chemical reactions. Particulates may transport carcinogens and other toxic compounds that adhere to the particle surfaces, and can enter the human body through the lungs.

During grading and construction activities, dust would be generated. Most of the dust would result during grading activities. The amount of dust generated would be highly variable and is dependent on the size of the area disturbed at any given time, amount of activity, soil conditions, and meteorological conditions. Unless controlled, fugitive dust emissions during construction of the proposed project would be a potentially significant impact.

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Implementation of Mitigation Measure AIR-1 would assure that best management practices are implemented to feasibly control fugitive dust emissions, and this impact would be considered less than significant with mitigation.

Construction activities also generate exhaust emissions from construction equipment and the hauling materials to and from construction sites, and from motor vehicles transporting construction crews. Exhaust emissions from construction activities vary daily as construction activity levels change. Fugitive dust from a project construction site is typically the main source of PM10 emissions.

Development allowed under the proposed General Plan Update is projected to lead to increases in the number of vehicle trips and VMT by Humboldt County residents, which in turn will result in increased PM10 emissions. Base year 2010 daily VMT for the unincorporated county is estimated at 1,940,309 using the origin-destination method of traffic modeling. Peak VMT coincides with projected peak population in 2028, when daily VMT is expected to be 2,078,296. The daily VMT estimate at the end of the project planning period (2040) is 2,051,668, an increase of approximately six percent over 2010 levels.

Vehicle travel on paved and unpaved roads represents approximately 63 percent of PM10 emissions in the County. The extent to which this may be attributable to travel to and from remote unpermitted illegal cannabis cultivation sites is not addressed by the NCUAQMD Attainment Plan or the General Plan Update policies, standards, or implementation measures.

(2) Analysis of why there is no feasible mitigation measure or alternative to reduce effect to a level less than significant due to specific economic, legal, social, technological or other considerations. While adoption of the proposed General Plan Update would not conflict with or obstruct the application of the current NCUAQMD PM10 Attainment Plan, there is no evidence that plan is adequate to reduce PM10 to a level less than significant. Because the County is in nonattainment status for PM10, increases in PM10 emissions that could increase exceedances are significant. Implementation of the proposed General Plan Update would result in a cumulatively considerable net increase in PM10 emissions. Development allowed under the General Plan Update is projected to lead to increases in the number of vehicle trips and VMT by Humboldt County residents, which in turn will result in increased PM10 emissions. The only way for the General Plan Update to not result in significant increases in PM10 emissions would be to not allow any future development.

Page 1-3 through 1-4 of the General Plan Update list the Guiding Principles, which are the objectives of the General Plan. Guiding Principles #2 through #7 all contain language that supports new development:

- “2. Preserve and enhance the diverse character of Humboldt County and the quality of life it offers.
3. Promote and facilitate the creation of affordable housing opportunities to meet current and future demands for all income levels.

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4. Cooperate with service providers and promote efficient use of roads, water, and sewer services by encouraging development that is consistent with Land Use maps contained in the General Plan. Support home construction methods and alternative wastewater systems that are proven to minimize threats to human health and safety with a goal of reducing energy and water usage.
5. Support the County's economic development strategy and other efforts to retain and create living-wage job opportunities.
6. Encourage, incentivize and support agriculture, timber ecosystem services and compatible uses on resource lands.
7. Support individual rights to live in urban, suburban, rural or remote areas of the County while using a balanced approach to protect natural resources, especially open space, water resources, fisheries habitat and water quality in cooperation with state and federal agencies."

Prohibiting new development to mitigate the impact of PM10 emissions is counter to each of the above Guiding Principles.

(3) **Conclusion:** Implementation of the General Plan Update would have the **significant and unavoidable impact** of allowing new development that increases PM10 emissions in conflict with the current NCUAQMD PM10 Attainment Plan.

4. Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Chapter
 - a. 3.13.4.1 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

(1) **Significant Effect:** The project could generate an increase in direct and indirect greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Under the thresholds of significance set forth in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, evaluation of whether or not GHG emissions generated as a result of implementation of the General Plan Update would have a significant impact on the environment, or would conflict with applicable plans, policies or regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing emissions of GHG, cannot be definitively determined until the inventory of GHG emissions for 1990 has been updated in accordance with currently accepted protocols

The draft General Plan Update includes policy AQ-P9 and implementation measure AQ-IM3 that requires the development and implementation of a Climate Action Plan to achieve reductions consistent with AB 32 and SB 32. The preparation of a revised GHG inventory for 1990 using the currently accepted methodology is essential so that appropriate targets can be established for the preparation of a Climate Action Plan that complies with the statutory requirements.

The primary sources of the General Plan Update GHG emissions are anticipated to be combustion of fossil fuels from grid-delivered electricity use and from motor vehicles. Additional water and wastewater treatment and distribution facilities, as described in the Capital Improvements and Public Facilities Element, could someday be located in the project area. These plants could generate some amount of GHG emissions associated with operations, pumping and emergency back-up generators. No other significant stationary source generators (e.g. fossil-fuel burning power plants) are anticipated in the project area.

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Implementation of the General Plan Update through development anticipated during the planning period would contribute to long-term increases in GHGs as a result of traffic increases (mobile sources) and residential building heating (area sources), as well as indirectly, through electricity generation.

Table 3.13-3 shows the 2005 GHG inventory for unincorporated Humboldt County (RCEA, 2014) along with the “business-as-usual” (BAU) emissions forecasts for the years 2020, 2028, 2030, and 2040, using population, housing, and employment forecasts for the County prepared as part of this Revised DEIR. 2028 is included because it represents peak population and housing over the planning horizon, coinciding with peak passenger vehicle traffic and peak residential energy use under BAU conditions. As a result, 2028 also represents peak total GHG emissions for the unincorporated County expected during the project planning period.

Table 3.13-3. Unincorporated Humboldt County GHG Emissions Inventory for 2005 and BAU Forecasts for 2020, 2028, 2030 and 2040

| Sector | Humboldt County GHG Emissions (MTCO _{2e}) | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | 2005 ^a | 2020 | 2028 | 2030 | 2040 |
| Residential Energy Use | 112,477 | 117,291 | 119,859 | 119,417 | 117,207 |
| Commercial Energy Use | 117,436 | 123,751 | 127,119 | 128,452 | 135,119 |
| Industrial Point Sources | 197,641 | 206,101 | 210,612 | 209,836 | 205,954 |
| On-road Transportation | 346,162 | 333,759 | 338,138 | 334,802 | 324,277 |
| Off-road Transportation | 58,177 | 61,305 | 62,974 | 63,634 | 66,937 |
| Solid Waste | 39,898 | 41,764 | 42,758 | 42,821 | 43,135 |
| Landfill | 41,991 | 28,717 | 21,192 | 19,641 | 13,434 |
| Water & Wastewater | 2,984 | 3,124 | 3,198 | 3,203 | 3,227 |
| Fugitive Leakage of Refrigerants | 1,532 | 1,604 | 1,642 | 1,644 | 1,656 |
| Livestock | 227,025 | 353,718 | 353,718 | 353,718 | 353,718 |
| Total Emissions | 1,145,324 | 1,271,134 | 1,281,211 | 1,277,170 | 1,264,663 |

Notes: 2005 emissions for all sectors except for On-road transportation are from RCEA, 2014

During the course of the planning period, incremental increases in GHG emissions associated with traffic increases, residential space heating, and increased energy demand would contribute to increases in GHG emissions and associated climate change effects. Total emissions in 2005

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were approximately 1,145,324 MTCO₂e. By 2028, the year that represents peak population in unincorporated Humboldt County, GHG emissions are forecast to be 1,281,211 MTCO₂e, an increase of approximately 135,887 MTCO₂e (or 12%) over 2005 levels, but comparison to 1990 levels has yet to be established. Total emissions will decrease slightly by 2030 due to the projected population decrease from 2028 to 2030, a trend that is expected to continue through 2040, when anticipated development associated with the project under BAU conditions is expected to produce 1,264,663 MTCO₂e.

Table 3.13-4 presents the estimated GHG reductions expected in the County from the implementation of these state measures for the years 2020, 2028, 2030, and 2040, resulting in an “adjusted Business As Usual (BAU)” forecast for each year. **Table 3.13-4. Adjusted BAU Forecasts for Unincorporated Humboldt County Accounting for GHG Reductions from State Measures**

| Category of GHG Reductions from State Measures | 2020 | 2028 | 2030 | 2040 |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Renewables Portfolio Standard | 38,668 | 45,541 | 55,357 | 55,971 |
| Title 24 Standards | 3,448 | 4,580 | 4,778 | 6,144 |
| Lighting Efficiency and Toxics Reduction Act | 5,509 | 4,297 | 3,993 | 3,993 |
| Solar Hot Water Heating | 246 | 224 | 229 | 229 |
| Pavley / Advanced Clean Cars | 8,172 | 57,669 | 65,284 | 83,721 |
| Low Carbon Fuel Standard | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| AB 32 Vehicle Efficiency Measures | 402 | 402 | 402 | 402 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>56,445</i> | <i>112,711</i> | <i>130,044</i> | <i>150,460</i> |
| BAU Emissions for the County | 1,271,134 | 1,281,211 | 1,277,170 | 1,264,663 |
| Adjusted BAU Emissions with State Measures | 1,214,689 | 1,168,499 | 1,147,126 | 1,114,203 |
| Percent Reduction | 4% | 9% | 10% | 12% |

Other Emissions Sources and Sinks

The County’s forested lands also sequester carbon. Since sequestration is part of the existing natural carbon cycle and only anthropogenic emissions are included in the County’s GHG inventory per inventory protocol (ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability USA. 2013), sequestration is not included in the analysis. However, efforts to reduce GHG emissions and enhance carbon sequestration on natural and working lands do contribute toward GHG emission reductions in the County. Therefore, the net change in sequestration resulting from forest management can help the county meet its future GHG emissions targets. The draft ARB **2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan Update** includes a commitment for development of systems for quantification and inclusion of methods for incorporating sequestration from natural lands,

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forests and agricultural lands as part of the state plan for meeting 2030 GHG reduction goals, which may be of special significance for Humboldt County because of its extensive area of forest, rangeland, natural open space and wetlands.

For informational purposes, an estimate of the County's potential carbon sequestration was developed. State and national estimates have been prepared for the net flux of CO₂e associated with forest and rangelands. The CEC has identified forests and rangelands as carbon sinks, and estimated the net removal of CO₂e from these lands to be 13.05 million metric tons (MMT) CO₂e per year, or 8.76 MMTCO₂e per year net of emissions for the State (CEC 2006). The ARB has used the 13.05 MMTCO₂e per year estimate and updated the net source emissions estimates to produce statewide net sink estimates ranging between 4.719 and 3.981 MMTCO₂e per year for 2000 - 2008 (ARB 2011). Considering that Humboldt County has 7.6 percent of the state's forestland, it is estimated that between 300,000 to 357,000 metric tons CO₂e are stored by Humboldt forests each year.

Humboldt County is home to two pioneering efforts to account for carbon sequestration of forest lands in conjunction with the state's Cap and Trade Program -- the Fred VanEck Foundation Forest, created with the assistance of the non-profit Pacific Forest Trust, and the city-owned Arcata Community Forest. The potential exists to expand on those programs utilizing the 1,000 acre County-owned McKay Community Forest, and other public or privately owned lands in the County.

Humboldt County GHG Emission Reduction Targets

In order to comply with AB 32 and SB 32, the County will adopt county-wide GHG emissions targets for the years 2020 and 2030 (and possibly also 2040) as part of a Climate Action Plan that will incorporate an updated 1990 GHG Inventory, to be prepared in accordance with policy AQ-P9 and implementation measure AQ-IM3.

The level of GHG Emissions in 1990 is the statutory baseline established by AB 32 and SB 32 for establishing GHG reduction goals for 2020 and 2030, and is the reference point for the 2050 target set forth in Executive Order S-3-05. What the results of a revised GHG inventory for 1990 using the currently accepted methodology is unknown at present. It is clear however that adding emissions from livestock would likely increase the 1990 total GHG emissions by approximately 220,534 MTCO₂e, based on the livestock data included in the 1990 Crop and Livestock Report published by the Humboldt County Agricultural Commissioner and the methodology used by RCEA in its 2014 report. Utilizing a 2005 baseline or other metric that does not recognize GHG reductions attributable to the decrease in industrial point sources and industrial energy uses that occurred in Humboldt County between 1990 and 2005 would result in setting targets that are much higher than are required by the statutory standard. Said another way, the higher the GHG emissions that existed in 1990 in Humboldt County, the lower the emission reduction targets will need to be in future years.

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The figures in the table below illustrate this point.

| Table 3.13-5. Comparison of Effect of Adjustments to 1990 GHG Emissions Inventory Baseline | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------|---|---------------------|---|---------------------|
| | 2020 Goal = 1990 | Reduction needed | 2030 Goal = 40% <1990 | Reduction needed | 2040 Goal = 60% <1990 | Reduction needed |
| 1990 baseline* | 1,821,532 | 0 | 1,092,919 | 184,250 | 728,613 | 536,051 |
| 1990 baseline + livestock | 2,042,066 | 0 | 1,225,239 | 51,930 | 816,826 | 447,837 |
| - State measures | | 56,445 | | 130,044 | | 150,460 |
| Maximum net local reduction required | | 0 | | 54,206 | | 385,591 |

* Source, RCEA, 2008, for illustrative purposes only. Updated 1990 GHG Emissions Inventory compliant with current protocols is required.

(2) **Analysis of why there is no feasible mitigation measure or alternative to reduce effect to a level less than significant due to specific economic, legal, social, technological or other considerations.** Implementation of specified polices from the Air Quality Element, Energy Element, Land Use Element, and Circulation Element would help reduce GHG emissions from future development under the proposed General Plan update. Additional reductions would be achieved by Climate Action Plan actions, that the County may develop as called for in policy AQ-P9, County Climate Action Plan, that encourage the use of alternatively fueled and electrified equipment. However, specific information about construction projects and yet-to-be developed Climate Action Plan measures to reduce construction emissions are unknown at this time. It is uncertain whether the future intensity the proposed General Plan Update would exceed an adopted GHG significance threshold. Consequently, this impact is conservatively determined to be significant. Ensuring that emissions will fall below an adopted GHG emissions threshold is not feasible at this time because the County has not selected the measures to be included in the Climate Action Plan. Therefore, this impact is considered significant and unavoidable.

(3) **Conclusion:** Implementation of the General Plan Update would have the **significant and unavoidable impact** of allowing new development that increases GHG emissions without identifying specific measures to reduce GHG emissions. Although the County is committed to developing a Climate Action Plan to reduce GHG emissions in the future, no definitions or standards of that Plan are included in the GPU.

14. Cultural Resources Chapter

a. 3.14.3.1 Historical Resources

(1) **Significant Effect:** Implementation of the General Plan Update would result in additional development that could adversely impact historical resources. Adverse changes to the

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significance of a historical resource may occur if a resource is removed, if alterations are made and the historic character of a property is not retained and preserved, or if alterations are made to their immediate surroundings which change the historic character of the resource.

As contemplated by the General Plan Update, growth in the next 20 years has the potential to impact historic resources either through direct impacts to resources themselves or impacts to their immediate surroundings. Due to widespread distribution of historic resources in Humboldt County, the potential for significant impacts on resources and/or their immediate surroundings exists in community centers, rural centers, rural lands, agricultural lands and public lands.

Development within Urban Development Areas has the greatest potential to impact historical resources because of the intensity of development planned to occur in such areas. Also, future development within other portions of community planning areas or in rural centers, rural lands, or agricultural lands, though at a relatively lower density, has the potential to adversely impact historic resources. Impact could occur due to development on existing legal lots of record. Such action may be done as ministerial projects which would not be subject to additional CEQA review. The county review state and local historic resources before issuing any building permits.

Impacts to historic resources may occur as result of neglect. Potentially historic structures can become obsolete due to changes in ownership, changes in the use of the land, and eventual abandonment. Any project that contains a potential historic resource of over 50 years or older must be referred by the county to the local Historical Society for review to qualify for historical designation.

Another potential source of impact is the development of infrastructure and facilities to support future growth under the proposed General Plan, including projects contemplated by the Circulation Element. Such improvements may include constructing roads, highways, public water systems, wastewater facilities, storm drain systems, and other amenities associated with urban land use.

The policies proposed within the General Plan Update enhance methods and procedures for protecting historic resources and avoiding or mitigating actions related to development that might otherwise result in destruction, relocation or alteration of historic resources or their surroundings. However, those proposed policies may not fully protect resources from demolition through actions unrelated to discretionary development permits and review.

(2) Analysis of why there is no feasible mitigation measure or alternative to reduce effect to a level less than significant due to specific economic, legal, social, technological or other considerations. Historic structures may be removed or substantially altered when building sites are prepared for new construction under a ministerial building permit. When considering the policies of the Cultural Resources section of the Conservation and Open Space Element that address historic resources at their public hearings on November 15 and December 2nd, 2014, Board members expressed the policies selected to protect historic structures

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were the best fit for protection of historic resources considering the overall objectives of the GPU.

(3) **Conclusion:** Implementation of the General Plan Update would have the **significant and unavoidable impact** of allowing new development that could damage or alter historic resources.

17. Energy Consumption and Conservation Chapter

3.17.4.1 Land Use or Development Patterns Causing Wasteful, Inefficient or Unnecessary Consumption of Energy

(1) **Significant Effect:** Residential and commercial development generated by population growth during the General Plan Update planning period could cause wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy that have an adverse physical effect on the environment. Approximately 1,721 new housing units and 3,130,717 square feet of commercial and industrial buildings are projected to be constructed during the General Plan Update planning period. During construction and following the occupancy of homes and commercial spaces, energy would be consumed in the form of fossil fuels and electricity, including for transportation, which could have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

In April 2017, RCEA and Environmental Indicator Accounting Services staff prepared energy consumption forecasts for population, households, employment, commercial and industrial building square feet, and vehicle miles travelled. Forecasts, using actual values from 2005, based on population and employment growth levels for the years 2010, 2016, 2028, 2030, and 2040 during the General Plan Update planning period. See Appendix U, Humboldt County Energy Consumption Forecast- Calculation Methodology, for additional detail regarding forecasts of unincorporated area energy consumption during the General Plan Update planning period.

Sector-specific compound annual growth rates were calculated based on the following data:

- Residential energy consumption growth – Unincorporated household estimates
- Commercial energy consumption growth – Unincorporated commercial and industrial square footage estimates calculated using employment data. Employment data by sector was provided for Unincorporated County. The number of jobs for each sector was then multiplied by the estimated square footage per employee, as provided by the County and shown in Appendix A. Estimated square footage for each employment sector was summed to produce a total square footage estimate each year.
- Industrial energy consumption growth – Identical to estimates used for Commercial energy consumption growth.
- Transportation energy consumption growth – Unincorporated vehicle miles traveled

Table 3.17-3. Forecasts of Unincorporated Area Energy Consumption.

| Sector | Fuel Type | | | | | | |
|--------|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | | 2005 | 2010 | 2016 | 2028 | 2030 | 2040 |
| | | | | | | | |

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| Sector | Fuel Type | 2005 | 2010 | 2016 | 2028 | 2030 | 2040 |
|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | | Residential | Electricity | 766,840 | 777,780 | 790,909 | 817,167 |
| Natural Gas | 861,015 | | 873,299 | 888,040 | 917,522 | 914,139 | 897,226 |
| Propane | 180,753 | | 183,332 | 186,426 | 192,616 | 191,905 | 188,355 |
| Wood | 231,109 | | 234,406 | 238,363 | 246,276 | 245,368 | 240,829 |
| Commercial | Electricity | 517,714 | 527,157 | 538,487 | 561,149 | 567,132 | 597,046 |
| | Natural Gas | 1,484,301 | 1,511,372 | 1,543,858 | 1,608,829 | 1,625,982 | 1,711,749 |
| Industrial | Electricity | 21,915 | 22,315 | 22,794 | 23,754 | 24,007 | 25,273 |
| | Natural Gas | 19,602 | 19,960 | 20,389 | 21,247 | 21,473 | 22,606 |
| Transportation | Gasoline | 3,648,759 | 3,738,804 | 3,846,859 | 4,062,968 | 4,054,859 | 4,014,315 |
| | Diesel ² | 1,472,529 | 1,508,868 | 1,552,476 | 1,639,691 | 1,636,419 | 1,620,056 |
| Total | | 9,204,536 | 9,397,293 | 9,628,601 | 10,091,217 | 10,095,439 | 10,116,546 |

1) Note that the number of significant figures reported do not indicate precision, but are provided for transparency in calculation results. A formal error analysis was not conducted for these projections.

2) Projected diesel consumption for 2005 in the Inventory was roughly 18% less than tracked fuel sales provided by the North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District for the year 2005. The source of this discrepancy has not been addressed. The potential impact to total MMBtu values shown here is roughly 3%.

Source: Humboldt County Energy Consumption Forecast- Calculation Methodology, Redwood Coast Energy Authority and Environmental Indicator Accounting Services, April 4, 2017.

According to Section 3.5, Transportation, of this RDEIR, vehicle miles travelled is projected to increase by 8.7% between 2010 and 2028; the year population is projected to peak during the planning period. During the same period, population is projected to increase by 4.8%. Humboldt County's average number of vehicle miles travelled is currently higher than more urban counties due to the size of the County and its rural nature (Humboldt County Energy Element Background Technical Report, July 2005, Page 1, Energy Use and Cost).

The General Plan Update does not include specific development projects. Rather, the Plan identifies land uses and policies to accommodate the growth that is projected to occur during the planning period. In accommodating projected growth, the General Plan Update encourages energy efficiency, maintains existing land use patterns, and promotes mixed use land use patterns in urbanized areas which would reduce vehicle trips by placing residences near services. The proposed Energy Element requires that major development submit a transportation management plan that addresses energy conservation measures such as connectivity to alternative transportation modes and proposes the use of incentives to encourage energy efficiency and conservation from other development and supports the implementation of the CAPE by RCEA and its member jurisdictions.

The Air Quality Element also specifies that a County-wide CAP be prepared and that the General Plan and land use regulations be amended to reflect that plan. Energy efficiency and conservation would be an important component of the County-wide Climate Action Plan. For new County-owned buildings, the General Plan Updates specifies LEED "Silver" or better

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energy efficiency standards and the preparation of a Climate Action Plan for County government greenhouse gas emission reductions would also result in energy efficiency and conservation.

The proposed General Plan Update policies, standards and implementation measures addressing energy efficiency, greenhouse gas emission, land uses, and development patterns, combined with current laws and regulations would help to reduce the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resulting from new development. In addition, the RCEA CAPE and the other RCEA incentives to encourage the installation of increased insulation and renewable energy systems in existing structures; and will help reduce energy consumption from existing development.

The General Plan Updates specifies the development and implementation of a County-wide Climate Action Plan that is intended to achieve reductions in greenhouse gas emissions consistent with state law. It is assumed that a County-wide Climate Action Plan that is consistent with state law would include measures to increase energy efficiency, reduce energy consumption, and reduce energy waste in new and existing development.

(2) Analysis of why there is no feasible mitigation measure or alternative to reduce effect to a level less than significant due to specific economic, legal, social, technological or other considerations: Because specific information about new development projected to occur during the General Plan Update planning period is unknown at this time; the effectiveness of the soon to be updated CAPE and the yet-to-be developed CAP measures at reducing energy use or increasing energy efficiency cannot be determined; and because the County has not yet adopted GHG thresholds that would strongly influence future energy use, the degree to which General Plan Update land uses or development patterns cause wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy cannot be determined. Consequently, this impact is conservatively determined to be significant. Ensuring that could cause wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy that have an adverse physical effect on the environment is not feasible at this time. Therefore, this impact is considered significant and unavoidable.

(3) Conclusion: The General Plan Update allows land uses and development patterns that may cause wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy, which cannot be quantified at this time. Consequently, this impact is conservatively determined to be significant and unavoidable.

D. Findings Regarding Equivalent Mitigation Measures Introduced in the FEIR

(1) Mitigation Measure 3.11.3.2

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Under Standard BR-S11, Wetlands Defined, the County must follow the identification and classification policies of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife which considers wetlands as lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water. In Standard BR-S11, wetlands must have the following three attributes: (1) at least periodically, the land supports hydrophytes, (2) the substrate is predominantly undrained hydric soil, and (3) the substrate is non-soil and is saturated with water or covered by shallow water at some time during the growing season of each year. This definition does not work well because areas cannot logically have both hydric soil substrate and non-soil substrate at the same time.

This definition does not work well because areas cannot logically have both hydric soil substrate and non-soil substrate at the same time. The above definition of wetlands contains a logical flaw, and needs to be revised.

The following mitigation measure in the RDEIR is intended to address the potential impacts related to the definition of wetlands in the General Plan Update:

Mitigation Measure 3.11.3.2. Replace BR-S11 with the below definition of wetlands:

***“BR-S11. Wetlands Defined.** The County considers wetlands as lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water. ~~Wetlands must have all of the following three attributes: (1) at least periodically, the land supports hydrophytes, (2) the substrate is predominantly undrained hydric soil, and (3) the substrate is non-soil and is saturated with water or covered by shallow water at some time during the growing season of each year.~~ An area is wetland if, under normal circumstances, (1) the area has continuous or recurrent saturation of the upper substrate caused by groundwater, or shallow surface water, or both; (2) the duration of such saturation is sufficient to cause anaerobic conditions in the upper substrate; and (3) the area’s vegetation is dominated by hydrophytes or the area lacks vegetation.”*

Comments received on the RDEIR from the Mercer Fraser Company and the Humboldt Coalition for Property Rights suggest the above language of the mitigation measure is not as clear as it could be, and recommended the mitigation measure be deleted. They also mentioned, and staff concurs that the intent of the Board of Supervisors is to use the three-parameter wetland criteria used by the US Army Corp of Engineers in defining wetlands. In response to their comments, the FEIR proposes alternative language for Standard BR-S11 in **Mitigation Measure 3.11.3.2:**

“BR-S11. Wetlands Defined. The County shall follow the US Army Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation manual in the identification and classification of wetlands which considers wetlands as those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas. ~~lands transitional between~~

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~~terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water. Wetlands must have all of the following three attributes: (1) at least periodically, the land supports hydrophytes, (2) the substrate is predominantly undrained hydric soil, and (3) the substrate is non-soil and is saturated with water or covered by shallow water at some time during the growing season of each year. An area is wetland if, under normal circumstances, (1) the area has continuous or recurrent saturation of the upper substrate caused by groundwater, or shallow surface water, or both; (2) the duration of such saturation is sufficient to cause anaerobic conditions in the upper substrate; and (3) the area's vegetation is dominated by hydrophytes or the area lacks vegetation.~~

Based on the analysis and information contained in the Draft and Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report, the modified language for BR-S11 that appears in Mitigation Measure 3.11.3.2 of the RDEIR removed the logical flaw in the original wording for BR-S11 in the GPU, so it reduced this potential impact to less than significant, and thus mitigated the potentially significant environmental effects identified in the RDEIR. The versions of Standard BR-S11 in both the GPU and the RDEIR were equivalent because they rely on three-parameters to define wetlands: the presence of hydrophytic vegetation, the presence of water, and hydric soils.

The revised language for Mitigation Measure 3.11.3.2 in the FEIR maintains the same three-parameter definition for wetlands, and removes the logical flaw that occurs in the GPU, so it is equally effective in mitigating the potentially significant impacts of the GPU on wetlands as the RDEIR. (RDEIR 3.11-13 through 3.11-14, Humboldt County GPU FEIR 4-13)

(2) Mitigation Measure 3.3.3.2.a

The RDEIR called for the following implementation measure to be added to the Water Resources Element to ensure that water supply and availability is fully characterized within each watershed where such information is not adequately known:

***“WR-IMx. Water Supply Evaluation and Monitoring.** Conduct watershed level evaluations within two years after the adoption of the General Plan Update to determine the long term surface and groundwater supply, including seasonal, average, dry year, and multiple dry year supplies, and beneficial uses of water to determine an estimate of the quantity of water available for future development. Work with water and wastewater related special districts, regulators, and other appropriate organizations to monitor watershed conditions.”*

In comments on the RDEIR, the Green Diamond Resource Company concluded, “the mitigation proposed is an onerous undertaking and it is likely unrealistic that such an evaluation could be completed within a two-year timeframe.” Staff concurred, recognizing the scope of the proposed mitigation could be interpreted to go beyond reducing the impacts associated with the project, which is not the intent of the mitigation. Accordingly, in the FEIR staff proposes modified language for this mitigation measure on page 2-195 as shown below in underline and strikethrough text:

“Mitigation 3.3.3.2.a. is revised as follows:

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WR-IMx. Water Supply Evaluation and Monitoring. Conduct watershed level evaluations within two years after the adoption of the General Plan Update to ~~determine the~~ ensure sufficient long term surface and groundwater supply, including seasonal, average, dry year, and multiple dry year supplies, and beneficial uses of water to ~~determine an estimate of the~~ quantity of water will be available for the level of future development described in the Revised Draft EIR for the GPU. Work with water and wastewater related special districts, regulators, and other appropriate organizations to monitor watershed conditions."

The revised language clarifies the scope of the mitigation measure is intended to mitigate the impacts of the development analyzed in the GPU. It is equally effective at mitigating the impacts associated with the project as the mitigation in the RDEIR because it would reduce cumulative water supply impacts that could result from development described in the RDEIR where such development does not trigger discretionary review.

SECTION 7: STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS

As set forth in the administrative record for the General Plan Update (GPU, Plan, Project), the County's approval of the Project will result in significant adverse environmental effects that cannot be avoided. Despite these effects, pursuant to Public Resources Code §21081(b) and CEQA Guidelines §15093, the County chooses to approve the proposed Project because in its view, the economic, legal, social, technological and other benefits of the Project outweigh its unavoidable significant adverse environmental effects, rendering these effects acceptable.

This Statement of Overriding Considerations identifies the reasons why, in the County's judgment, the benefits of the Project outweigh its unavoidable adverse significant effects. Any one of these reasons is sufficient to justify approval of the Project. Thus, even if a court were to conclude that not every reason is supported by substantial evidence, the County would stand by its determination that each individual reason is sufficient. The substantial evidence supporting the various benefits can be found in the Project administrative record.

I. Significant Unavoidable Environmental Impacts

As set forth in the Project administrative record, the adoption and implementation of the GPU would have the following significant unavoidable environmental impacts related to: Agricultural and Timber resources, Utilities and Services, Transportation, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Geology and Soils, Hydrology and Water Quality, Air Quality, Green House Gas Emissions, Cultural Resources, Scenic Resources, and Energy Consumption and Conservation. These impacts are as follows:

AGRICULTURAL AND TIMBER RESOURCES

Impact 3.2.3.1: Convert Farmland or Forest Land

Implementation of the proposed County General Plan Update would have a significant impact if it would convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance

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(Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to nonagricultural use, and could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use, or result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

UTILITIES AND SERVICES SYSTEMS

Impact 3.3.3.2: Water Supply

Population growth during the General Plan Update planning period could result in insufficient water supplies from existing entitlements and resources, or result in the construction of new water treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects.

TRANSPORTATION

Impact 3.5.3.1: Vehicle Miles Traveled

Implementation of the proposed County General Plan Update would have a significant impact if it would cause a conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, or cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system.

Impact 3.5.3.2: Unacceptable LOS on Roadways within the County

Implementation of the proposed County General Plan Update would have a significant impact if it would exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways.

Impact 3.5.3.2-1: Unacceptable LOS on U.S. 101 Between S.R. 255 in Arcata and 6th Street in Eureka

The travel demand model indicates that implementation of the General Plan Update will result in increased traffic that will cause U.S. 101 between S.R. 255 in Arcata and 6th Street in Eureka to operate at LOS D/E in 2028 and 2040. The minimum acceptable LOS on U.S. 101 in urban areas in Caltrans District 1 is LOS D.

Impact 3.5.3.2-2: Unacceptable LOS on U.S. 101/Broadway, City of Eureka

Implementation of the General Plan Update will result in increased traffic that will cause U.S. 101/Broadway in the City of Eureka to operate at LOS D in 2028 and 2040, which is the minimum acceptable LOS on U.S. 101 in urban areas in Caltrans District 1.

Impact 3.5.3.2-3: Unacceptable LOS on Main St, Between 7th St and 13th Street, Fortuna

Implementation of the General Plan Update will result in increased traffic that will cause Main Street between 7th Street and 13th Street to operate at LOS D in 2028 and 2040.

Impact 3.5.3.2-4: Unacceptable LOS on Kenmar Road between U.S. 101 NB Ramps and S.

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Fortuna Blvd, Fortuna

Growth projected to occur during the General Plan Update planning period in conjunction with the growth in the cities within the County will result in increased traffic that will cause Kenmar Road between U.S. 101 NB ramps and S. Fortuna Blvd. to operate at LOS D or below in 2028 and 2040. The minimum acceptable LOS on U.S. 101 in urban areas in Caltrans District 1 is LOS D.

Impact 3.5.3.3: Regional Level of Service Standard

Implementation of the General Plan Update would generate levels of development that result in increased traffic volumes on roads within the County that could Conflict with an applicable regional level of service standard.

HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Impact 3.7.3.4: Wildland Fire Risk

Implementation of the proposed County General Plan Update would have a significant impact if it would expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands.

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Impact 3.8.3.1: Exposure to Seismic-Related Hazards

Implementation of the proposed County General Plan Update would have a significant impact if it exposes people or structures to potential substantial risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault, strong seismic groundshaking, seismic-related ground failure (e.g., liquefaction), or as a result of landslides, erosion, or other unstable slope conditions.

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Impact 3.10.3.1: Degrade Water Quality or Exceed Waste Discharge Requirements

Implementation of the proposed County General Plan Update would have a significant impact if it would violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements; substantially alter the existing drainage patterns, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation; or otherwise substantially degrade water quality.

AIR QUALITY

Impact 3.12.5.1: Conflict with Air Quality Plan or Violate an Air Quality Standard

Implementation of the proposed County General Plan Update would have a significant impact if it would conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan or violate an air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation, or

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result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Impact 3.12.5.1: Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Under the thresholds of significance set forth above, evaluation of whether or not GHG emissions generated as a result of implementation of the General Plan Update would have a significant impact on the environment, or would conflict with applicable plans, policies or regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing emissions of GHG, cannot be definitively determined until the inventory of GHG emissions for 1990 has been updated in accordance with currently accepted protocols

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Impact 3.14.3.1: Historical Resources

Implementation of the proposed County General Plan Update would have a significant impact if it would cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5.

SCENIC RESOURCES

Impact 3.16.3.1: Adverse effect on Scenic Vistas and Scenic Resources

Implementation of the General Plan Update would allow additional development and changes in land use, and contains new policies that could lead to damage or destruction of scenic resources and vistas

Impact 3.16.3.2: Visual Quality and Community Character

Implementation of the General Plan Update would result in increased development that could impact the visual quality and community character within the County.

Impact 3.16.3.3: Sources of Light and Glare

Implementation of the General Plan Update would result in increased development that would be new sources of light that could have adverse impacts day or nighttime views.

ENERGY CONSUMPTION AND CONSERVATION

Impact 3.17.1: Land uses or development patterns cause wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy

Residential and commercial development generated by population growth during the General Plan Update planning period could cause wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy that have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

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II. Benefits of the Proposed Project/Overriding Considerations

The County finds that based on substantial evidence in the Project administrative record, the proposed Project would have the following economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits:

1. The Project provides a strategic framework to accommodate a reasonable share of projected regional population growth at intensities that are appropriate with respect to existing development, environmental resources, community character, available services, and available infrastructure.
2. The Project promotes sustainable development through goals and policies that balance the need for adequate infrastructure, housing, and economic vitality with the need for resource management, environmental protection, and preservation of quality of life for residents in the unincorporated County.
3. The Project concentrates development in areas served by public infrastructure surrounded by areas of lesser intensity, thereby avoiding urban sprawl and minimizing land consumption while maintaining open space, habitat, recreation areas, and agriculture and timberlands, and other uses associated with rural areas.
4. The Project includes community plan updates which will allow individual communities and neighborhoods to provide direction for their future growth and successful economic development while maintaining and preserving each unique community within the County.
5. The Project provides a realistic land use map that accounts for existing development, physical constraints, hazards, and incompatible uses and assigns densities and use types accordingly to ensure that communities and neighborhoods remain safe and livable.
6. The Project improves mobility through enhanced connectivity, supports community development patterns, limits traffic congestion, promotes public and alternative transportation methods, and supports the goals of adopted regional transportation plans.
7. The Project directs the preservation and environmental stewardship of the County unincorporated area's vast array of natural, cultural and historic resources that uniquely define the character and ecological importance of the region.
8. The Project addresses adverse environmental effects associated with global climate change by facilitating sustainable development, promoting energy efficiency, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions county-wide.

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9. The Project improves public safety by locating future development closer to fire stations, reducing the potential for wildland-urban interface, providing for essential public facilities and services, and establishing goals and policies that minimize hazards and threats to personal safety and property.
10. The Project is the product of a comprehensive public planning effort driven by over 175 public meetings, hearings, and workshops, and continual input and refinements through public comments and public hearing testimony that resulted in a thoughtful balance of stakeholder, community, and environmental interests.
11. The Project minimizes public costs of infrastructure and services by correlating their construction with the timing of residential, commercial and industrial development, thereby allowing taxpayer dollars to be spent more efficiently.
12. The Project enhances the local economy and provides opportunities for future jobs and business development commensurate with forecasted growth by planning for commercial development near existing businesses, transportation hubs and walkable residential areas. Moreover, the Project promotes continued resource production as an integral part of the region's economy by placing appropriate densities and compatible use types in prime farmland areas.

III. Conclusion

Having adopted all feasible mitigation measures, rejected as infeasible a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed Project, recognized all significant unavoidable impacts, and balanced the benefits of the proposed Project against its significant and unavoidable impacts, the Board hereby finds that the benefits of the proposed Project outweigh its significant and unavoidable environmental effects, and therefore finds these effects to be acceptable.

This Statement of Overriding Considerations shall be included in the record of Project approval, and its adoption shall be identified in the Notice of Determination for the Project.