



# COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 3/24/2026

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File #: 26-172

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**To:** Board of Supervisors

**From:** Planning and Building Department

**Agenda Section:** Consent

**Vote Requirement:** Majority

**SUBJECT:**

A Petition for a General Plan Amendment (GPA) and Zone Reclassification (ZR) Regarding a Portion of the Westfall Agricultural Preserve Property

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Accept the petition and adopt the attached resolution (Attachment 1) based on the findings in the staff report; and
2. Direct the Clerk of the Board to give notice of the decision to the Planning Department and any other interested party.

**STRATEGIC PLAN:**

This action supports the following areas of your Board's Strategic Plan.

Area of Focus: Sustainable Natural Resources & Infrastructure Stewardship  
Strategic Plan Category: 5005 - Implement landscape stewardship through the General Plan

**DISCUSSION:**

The Board is being asked to accept a General Plan Amendment (GPA) and Zone Reclassification (ZR) petition to change the Land Use Designation from Residential Agriculture (RA10) to Residential Agriculture (RA4), and to change the zoning from Agriculture Exclusive (AE) to Agriculture General (AG-B-5(4)) on a 4.36-acre portion of the larger 77-acre Westfall Agricultural Preserve property. The GPA and ZR will allow the 4.36-acre parcel, with a 1,200 square foot house, to be retained as part of the county housing stock and maintain the existing character of the area. The remaining 73-acre portion of the property will be dedicated to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for public access and habitat conservation. The Save the Redwood League has been extremely accommodating to allow the house to be retained while the rest of the property is dedicated.

The 77-acre property was originally put into a Williamson Act Contract as an agricultural preserve in 2008 by the Westfall family and purchased by Save the Redwoods League in 2016. Save the Redwoods League purchased the property in collaboration with the BLM with the intention of dedicating the property to the BLM for habitat conservation. The property contains a significant redwood forest, floodplain meadow and a mile-long frontage of Elk River, where restoration for Coho salmon habitat is underway in partnership with BLM. The property includes a renovated 1,200 square-foot single-family house built in the 1930's and a barn. Under BLM ownership, the house and barn would need to be destroyed, as BLM does not acquire developed land as an agency-wide policy. Removing the 4.36 acres from the transfer is required to save the existing residence and barn while dedicating the remainder of the property to the BLM. However, because the existing land use designation and zoning are not consistent with a 4.36-acre residential use parcel, a GPA and ZR are required. If the petition is approved, the GPA and ZR will proceed to the Planning Commission and ultimately to the Board of Supervisors for adoption.

The subject property has a land use designation of RA10, specifying 10-acre minimum parcel size. By changing to RA4, minimum parcel size would be 4-acres, which would be consistent with the proposed project. The property to the north of Elk River Road is zoned AG-B-5(10) for 10 acres per unit. By changing the zoning to AG-B5(4)), the zoning designation would be consistent with the proposed parcel size of 4.36-acres.

The 77-acre property is one legal parcel, comprised of two Assessor Parcel Numbers (APN), APN 311-041-034 (30.79-acres) and APN 311-041-036 (46-acres), both owned by Save the Redwoods League and under non-renewal status within a Williamson Act Contract, set to expire December, 2034. The house and barn are located on APN 311-041-034, approximately 45 feet from Elk River Road and approximately 250 feet from the South Fork of the Elk River.

**Required Findings for all Amendments:**

The General Plan Amendment and Zone Reclassification Petition is consistent with the Humboldt County Zoning Ordinance required findings and criteria for amendments. A petition for an amendment may be accepted for processing upon the Board of Supervisors making the following findings pursuant to Section 312-50.3:

1. The amendment is in the public interest; and
2. The amendment is consistent with the County General Plan; and
3. The proposed amendment does not reduce the residential density for any parcel below that utilized by the Department of Housing and community Development in determining compliance with housing element law.

**Amendment is in the public interest:**

The proposed approximately 73-acres of land being transferred to BLM for public access and habitat conservation purposes as well as the 4.36-acre portion to be retained for a residence and barn, is believed to be in the public's interest. Should the 4.36-acre developed parcel not be separated from the 77-acre Agricultural Preserve, the structures would need to be destroyed. This would result in the loss of a residential unit in Humboldt County which would be detrimental to a housing supply shortage and property tax revenue. It is in the public interest to preserve existing housing stock when feasible. This action will enable Save the Redwoods to retain the residence as a separate legal parcel and convey the remainder of the property to BLM to support habitat conservation and public access.

**Amendment is consistent with the County General Plan:**

The proposed General Plan Amendment and Zone Reclassification is consistent with the County General Plan and guiding principles. The Guiding Principles of the General Plan focus on preserving the county's unique character and quality of life, specifically focusing on preserving and enhancing the diverse character of Humboldt County. The Housing Element identifies existing and projected housing needs and establishes goals, policies and standards to implement the preservation, improvement and development of housing. Goal number 2 of the General Plan Housing Element focuses on providing an adequate supply of all types of housing, affordable for all income levels in all areas of the county. Destroying the residence and barn would not support this goal. Within the Conservation and Open Space Element Biological Resources section of the General Plan, policy number BR-G3, fish and wildlife habitats should also be protected on a sustainable basis to generate long-term public, economic, and environmental benefits. As identified within the Public Lands Section of the General Plan, the Headwaters Forest is one of the four most significant publicly owned areas within Humboldt County. Maximizing the long-term public and economic benefits from biological resources within the county by maintaining and restoring fish and wildlife habitats is a core focus of the General Plan. The BLM owns multiple properties along the Elk River, adjacent and contiguous to the subject property, and by acquiring the property, conservation and public access will expand along this water way. By approving the amendment to change the Land Use Designation and rezone the 4.36-acre residential portion of the property, the remnant parcel will maintain the established uses and be consistent with the comprehensive view of the General Plan.

**Amendment does not reduce the residential density of any parcel:**

The proposed General Plan Amendment and Zone Reclassification on a 4.36-acre portion of the approximately 77-acre Westfall Agricultural Preserve is intended to protect one unit of housing (with the potential of one additional unit of housing), while promoting habitat conservation and public access on the remaining approximately 73-acres. Should the 4.36-acre developed parcel not be separated from the 77-acre Agricultural Preserve, the structures would need to be destroyed. This would result in the loss of a residential unit in Humboldt County which would be detrimental to the housing supply shortage. It is in the public interest to preserve existing housing stock when feasible. This action will enable Save the Redwoods to retain the residence as a separate legal parcel and convey the remainder of the property to BLM.

Current General Plan Land Use designations for the subject properties:

APN 311-041-034: Agriculture Exclusive (AE) minimum parcel size 60-acres and Agriculture General (AG) minimum parcel size 20-160-acres. Eureka Community Plan (ECP).

APN 311-041-036: Agriculture Exclusive (AE) minimum parcel size 60-acres. Eureka Community Plan (ECP).

Current zoning on the subject properties:

APN 311-041-034: Agriculture Exclusive (AE).

APN 311-041-036: Agriculture Exclusive (AE) and Timber Production Zone (TPZ).

**SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

Applicant fees.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

Narrative Explanation of Financial Impact:

There will be no impact on the General Fund. The applicant is responsible for paying all actual costs involved in the processing of the application.

**OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:**

The project was referred to responsible agencies and all responding agencies have either recommended approval or conditioned approval.

**ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Board could reject the petition if it believes the required findings cannot be made. Staff believes the necessary findings for accepting the petition may be made, so staff does not recommend further consideration of this alternative.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1: Draft Resolution

Attachment 2: Location Map

**PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:**

Meeting of: N/A

File No.: N/A