



# COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 4/16/2026

---

File #: 26-344

---

**To:** Planning Commission  
**From:** Planning and Building Department  
**Agenda Section:** Consent

SUBJECT:

**Westfall Agricultural Preserve General Plan Amendment and Zone Reclassification**

Assessor Parcel Numbers: 311-041-034 and 311-041-036

Record Number: PLN-2025-19187

Elk River Area

A General Plan Amendment (GPA) and Zone Reclassification (ZR) on a 4.36-acre portion of the approximately 77-acre Westfall Agricultural Preserve property, to change the General Plan 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)). The 4.36-acre proposed parcel is developed with an existing 1,200 square foot single-family residence and barn, which would be retained as housing stock and subsequently sold to a private buyer. The remaining approximately 73-acres would be dedicated to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to be added to public lands adjacent to the Headwaters Forest Reserve for conservation and public access purposes.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Planning Commission:

1. Adopt the resolution, (Attachment 1) which does the following:
  - a. Make all of the required findings for approval based on evidence in the staff report and public testimony; and
  - b. Recommend that the Board of Supervisors approve the General Plan Amendment and Zone Reclassification.

DISCUSSION:

A General Plan Amendment (GPA) and Zone Reclassification (ZR) on a 4.36-acre portion of the approximately 77-acre Westfall Agricultural Preserve property, to change the General Plan 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)). This will facilitate the transfer of most of the Westfall property to the Bureau of Land Management to be added to the Headwaters Forest Reserve public lands.

The 4.36-acre proposed parcel is developed with an existing 1,200 square foot single-family residence and barn, which would be retained as housing stock and subsequently sold to a private buyer. The remaining approximately 73-acres would be dedicated to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to be added to public lands adjacent to the Headwaters Forest Reserve for conservation and public access purposes. If approved, immediate cancellation of the existing Williamson Act Contract on the 4.36-acre parcel would occur as part of the GPA and ZR. The entire 77-acre property has already been placed into non-renewal status under PLN-2025-19186 and will be removed entirely from the Williamson Act Contract in December 2034. If cancellation is approved, a cancellation penalty fee up to 25 percent of the appraised value of the property can be assessed. This project was brought before the Williamson Act Advisory Committee on July 31, 2025 (attachment 4), and the partial cancellation was recommended for approval. A petition for the amendment was accepted by the Board of Supervisors on March 24, 2026 (attachment 5). Changing the land use designation, zoning and cancelling the Williamson Act Contract on the 4.36-acre parcel will facilitate the transfer of land to the BLM and preserve the existing single-family house and barn. The GPA and ZR ensure that the remaining parcel of land after the BLM transfer is consistent with county requirements.

**Required Findings for all Amendments:**

The General Plan Amendment and Zone Reclassification can be found consistent with the Humboldt County General Plan and Zoning Ordinance pursuant to the required findings and criteria for amendments. An Amendment may be approved 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:**

Protecting contiguous open space for public access and habitat conservation and retaining existing housing is in the public interest. The proposed General Plan Amendment and Zone Reclassification on the 4.36-acre portion of the 77-acre Westfall Agricultural Preserve will help facilitate the transfer of the remaining approximately 73-acres of land to BLM to be added to the Headwaters Forest Reserve for public access and habitat conservation purposes. Maximizing the long-term public and economic benefits from biological resources within the county by maintaining and restoring fish and wildlife habitats is in the public interest. Additionally, by removing the 4.36-acre proposed parcel from the

BLM transfer, the existing residence will be retained as housing. Should the 4.36-acre developed parcel not be separated from the 77-acre Agricultural Preserve, the residence would need to be destroyed. This would result in the loss of a residential unit which would be detrimental to a housing supply shortage and property tax revenue, which is not in the public interest.

**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 existing land use designation on the proposed 4.36-acre parcel is Residential Agriculture with a minimum parcel size of 10-acres (RA10) and is proposed to change to Residential Agriculture with 4-acre minimum parcel size (RA4). The change in land use designation would allow a smaller parcel size to maintain the existing character of the area. 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 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. Approving the amendment to change the Land Use Designation and zoning on the 4.36-acre developed portion of the property, and if approved the partial cancellation of the Williamson Act Contract, 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 which would be detrimental to the county housing supply. This action will enable Save the Redwoods to retain the residence and facilitate the conveyance of the remainder of the property to BLM.

Based on review of Planning Division reference sources and comments from all responding referral

agencies, planning staff believe that the applicant has submitted evidence in support of making all of the required findings for approving the General Plan Amendment and Zone Reclassification and, if approved, partial cancellation of the Williamson Act Contract.

**Project Location:** The project site is located in the Elk River area, on the south side of Elk River Road, approximately 2,100 feet south of the intersection of Wrigley Road and Elk River Road, on the property known as 8224 Elk River Road.

**Present General Plan Land Use Designation:** The Land Use Designation of the proposed 4.36-acre parcel is Residential Agriculture with a minimum parcel size of 10-acres (RA10). Eureka Community Plan (ECP). Slope Stability (0) - Relatively Stable and (2)- Moderate Instability.

**Present Zoning:** Agriculture Exclusive (AE).

**Environmental Review:** Project is exempt from environmental review per Section 15305 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)- Minor alterations in land use limitations.

**State Appeal:** Project is not appealable to the California Coastal Commission.

**Major concerns:** None.

**Monitoring Required:** None.

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:

1. The Planning Commission could elect not to approve the project. This alternative should be implemented if your Commission is unable to make all of the required findings. Planning Division staff is confident that the required findings can be made. Consequently, planning staff does not recommend further consideration of this alternative.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution
  - A. Draft Ordinance for Adoption by the Board of Supervisors
    - i. Exhibit A: Rezone area map
    - ii. Exhibit B: Legal Description
  - B. Site Map

2. Location Map
3. Williamson Act Advisory Committee Meeting 07/31/2025 draft minutes
4. BOS petition Board Report March 24, 2026

**Applicant:**

Save the Redwoods League  
c/o Adrianna Andreucci  
111 Sutter Street, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94104

**Owner:**

Save the Redwoods League  
111 Sutter Street, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94104

Please contact Alice Vasterling, Associate Planner, at [avasterling@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:avasterling@co.humboldt.ca.us) or (707)268-3777 if you have any questions about this item.