



City of Arcata Community Development Department

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www.cityofarcata.org

GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT

OVERVIEW

The City's General Plan Any General Plan Amendment must be consistent with California Planning and Zoning Laws and the City's Land Use Code Chapter 9.92, Amendments.

HOW TO APPLY

General Plan Amendment applications are available at the Community Development Department, or on the Department's website at www.cityofarcata.org. Staff can assist you with the materials needed for a complete application packet. Submit the completed application packet along with the application fee to the Department for processing.

THE PROCESS

Step 1: Application

Once your application has been submitted and fees collected, Staff will perform an initial application review for completeness. Should your application be found incomplete, you or your designated agent will be contacted and advised what items must be submitted before processing can continue. The General Plan Amendment application shall be signed and filed by **all** owners of the subject property or their authorized agents. The application will initiate the General Plan Amendment pursuant to Land Use Code § 9.92.020.

Preliminary Review Option: Applicants can pay a fee to get the permit review process started rather than waiting until all required items are submitted for staff to begin review of your project. This will provide you with an assessment of how the proposed General Plan Amendment complies with applicable standards. The application must be complete to proceed beyond that.

Step 2: Environmental Review

The assigned planner will review the project in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to determine if the project is statutorily or categorically exempt from CEQA, or if it is subject to CEQA and further environmental review is required. If the project is exempt from CEQA, then Step 2 is complete. If the project is not exempt from CEQA, then an initial study will be prepared, which determines the required environmental document that must be prepared and circulated for agency and public comment.

Step 3: Department and Agency Referrals

Once your application has been accepted as complete, the assigned planner will send copies of your application materials to other City departments and public agencies having jurisdiction or authority over your project. If the responding Departments or agencies identify issues to be resolved prior to the continued processing of your application, or if additional information is required by those Departments or agencies, you or your designated agent will be advised as to what is needed. These Department and agency comments may affect the form and content of the environmental document.

Step 4: Planning Commission Staff Report

Staff will prepare a written report that describes the proposed project, discusses the legal findings, presents staff's recommendation, and lists conditions for approval. The findings will determine whether the proposed amendment is consistent with applicable general or specific plans adopted by the City. A copy of the staff report will be sent to you prior to the public hearing.

Step 5: Conditions of Approval and Findings

Staff reports will include the findings the City must make to approve the requested General Plan Amendment, and conditions under which the amendment would be finalized. The findings are that the proposed amendment is consistent with all other provisions of the City's General Plan, would not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience or welfare of the City; and the affected site is physically suitable (including access, compatibility with adjoining land uses, provision for utilities, and absence of physical constraints) for the requested zoning designation and proposed or anticipated uses and development (§ 9.92.050.B.). Conditions will include mitigation measures from the CEQA document.

Step 6: Planning Commission Public Notice and Hearing

The Planning Commission and the City Council shall each conduct one or more noticed public hearings regarding the amendment application.

The Notice of Public Hearing will be sent to all property owners within 300 feet of the property being subdivided if the project is exempt from CEQA. For projects not exempt from CEQA, notice will be sent to all property owners within 500 feet of your property. The notice, which must be mailed at least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing will state the date, time, and place for the public hearing. You and/or your agent should attend the public hearing in case there are project specific questions. At the public hearing, any person may present verbal and/or written testimony for or against the project. The review authority will take into account the whole record, including all of the public testimony before making a decision. The review authority may make a decision at the hearing, or may continue the matter if more information is needed.

After conducting a noticed public hearing, the Planning Commission shall forward a written recommendation, and reasons for the recommendation, to the City Council whether to approve, approve in modified form, or disapprove the proposed General Plan Amendment, based upon the findings identified in Land Use Code § 9.92.050.B.

Step 7: City Council Staff Report

Staff will prepare a staff report for the City Council including findings the City must make to approve the requested Zoning Map Amendment, conditions under which the amendment would be finalized, and the recommendation of the Planning Commission. A copy of the staff report will be sent to you prior to the public hearing.

Step 8: City Council Public Notice and Hearing

At a noticed public hearing, upon receipt of the Planning Commission’s recommendation, the City Council shall approve, approve in modified form or disapprove the proposed amendment based upon the required findings. If the City Council proposes to adopt a substantial modification to the amendment not previously considered by the Planning Commission during its hearing(s), the proposed modification shall first be referred to the Planning Commission for recommendation in compliance with State Law (Government Code Section 65857).

Step 9: Appeals

Planning Commission actions are appealable to the City Council by the property owner or any other adversely affected person. Appeals to the City Council must be filed with the City Clerk within 10 calendar days of the actual date of the final decision. Appeals must be submitted in writing and be accompanied by the required fees.

Step 10: Complying with Conditions of Approval

The conditions of approval discussed in Step 5 must be completed prior to changes to the General Plan. City staff must verify that all conditions are completed in accordance with the Conditions of Approval for the project.

EXPIRATION

Any General Plan Amendment not completed within 12 months of approval shall expire and become void, unless a condition of approval or other provision of the Land Use Code establishes a different time limit, or where an extension of time is approved in compliance with Land Use Code § 9.79.070.

General Plan Amendment Application Checklist

Visit the Community Development Department page at www.cityofarcata.org. Select the Land Use Code from the menu and then see Chapter 9.92 for complete Amendment regulations.

- Preliminary Review Option: Applicants can pay a fee to get the permit review process started rather than waiting until all required items are submitted for staff to begin review of your project.

Talk with Arcata Community Development Department Planning Staff to determine which of the following items must be submitted along with a completed and signed application form. **Incomplete or inaccurate information will cause a delay in permit processing.**

- Application form with signatures of all owners of the affected parcels.
- Application fee deposit as indicated on the application form.
- A Plot Plan with all applicable information as required on the "Plot Plan Checklist".
- Project description - three paper copies and one electronic copy compatible with MS WORD, including discussion on existing and proposed uses for the site, the number of properties involved, the existing and proposed General Plan designation, the reason for the amendment, etc.
- To request an exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), submit justification and evidence to support a CEQA exemption; or
- For projects not exempt from CEQA, submit a CEQA checklist. See staff for a Negative Declaration or Environmental Impact Report determination.
- Technical Studies – 3 paper copies and one electronic copy, including: soils report; wetland delineation, noise study, traffic study, solar access, and others as deemed necessary.
- Preliminary Title Report – dated not more than 3 months from the date of the General Plan Amendment application date (one copy).
- Written responses for each Zoning Map Amendment finding (§ 9.92.050.B). One paper copy and one electronic copy compatible with MS WORD.
- If subject to Historic and Design Review requirements, complete the items on the Historic and Design Review checklist.
- Cultural Resource Review from North Coastal Information Center (NCIC) - Refer to the latest fee schedule and make checks payable to: The City of Arcata.

Subject to changes or additions at any time. Applications may require additional information for continued processing.