



# STAFF REPORT – CITY COUNCIL MEETING

January 20, 2016

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

**FROM:** Larry P. Oetker, Director of Community Development

**PREPARER:** Alyson Hunter, Senior Planner

**DATE:** November 18, 2015

**TITLE:** **2015 Annual Report of the City of Arcata Planning Commission.**

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends the Council receive the following Annual Report from the Planning Commission.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Pursuant to Government Code section 65400, the Annual Report of the Planning Commission is submitted to the City Council. The discussion items were updated in the Council's Resolution No. 123-07 dated October 3, 2012.

### **1. Progress on the Planning Commission's Goals from 2015 -**

- a. CONTINUE TO MAKE THE LOCAL COASTAL PLAN UPDATE A PRIORITY FOR THE PLANNING COMMISSION AND THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT. The Coastal Commission grant program ends April 30, 2016. Staff has drafted an internal administrative land use plan and coastal zoning ordinance (implementation plan) based on Coastal Commission guidelines, public input, Planning Commission and Council discussion and direction and consultation with local Coastal Commission staff. We have shared draft Chapters 1, 3, 4 and 5 with Coastal Commission staff to get early feedback. The two year timeframe for the LCP update completion under the grant has been difficult to meet statewide. We will be asking the Coastal Commission to consider a time extension. Humboldt County is also undertaking an update and will also be requesting an extension. The City of Eureka is updating its LCP using other funding and is, therefore, operating under a different timeframe.

The Planning Commission/City Council study session was on August 27, 2015. It focused on the LCP update, progress to date and next steps. Public outreach took place over six separate planning commission meetings. These participation opportunities were widely advertised in the paper, posters, social media and on the City's new dedicated website. The study session also touched on the subject of terminating the Historic & Design Review Commission (HDCR). More on this item in 2)b. below.

- b. INITIATE THE PERIODIC REVIEW PROCESS ON THE LAND USE CODE TO FURTHER REFINE THIS IMPLEMENTATION TOOL OF THE GENERAL PLAN. Two (2) of the more significant LUC amendments in 2015 were the Creamery District and the Medical Marijuana Innovation Zone (MMIZ) (still in process). As directed by the City Council, the Planning Commission held several public meetings on both items and received draft LUC amendment language for recommendation to the Council on both. There was considerable public testimony on the MMIZ, both for and against the concept. The City Council held community meeting on October 28, 2015, in the vicinity of the MMIZ which was well-attended. The Creamery District amendment has been adopted and is now effective. The MMIZ will likely be adopted, in some form, in early 2016.

Changes to the LUC §9.72 - Design Review will include changes to the procedures for processing large and small Design Review projects, codification of the DR Exception table developed by the Director in April 2014, changes to the Review Authority section and the applicability section.

- c. PROVIDE LOCAL TRAINING FOR COMMISSIONERS. Staff has offered several historic preservation webinars hosted at City Hall and the California Bar Association's Environmental Branch Annual Workshop in Eureka was heavily advertised. All Commissioners are up-to-date on their required ethics training.
- d. CONDUCT STUDY SESSIONS ON REGIONAL PLANNING ISSUES THAT AFFECT ARCATA. In addition to the annual study session between the Planning Commission and the City Council, the Council will hold a Study Session in early 2016 to discuss the "big picture" vision for student housing in the neighborhoods around HSU. This relates to the several large housing projects either recently approved, currently under review or on the verge of submittal. See 2) e below.
- e. MAKE THE LAND USE CODE EFFECTIVE IN THE COASTAL PORTIONS OF THE CITY. The Coastal Commission adopted the City's LCP Amendment LCP-1-ARC-14-0015-1 at its meeting on March 11, 2015, making the LUC effective throughout the Coastal zone.

## 2. **Planning Commission Goals for 2016 -**

- a. FINALIZE THE LCP UPDATE.
- b. FINALIZE THE MMIZ LUC AMENDMENT.
- c. DESIGN REVIEW LUC AMENDMENTS. In an effort to streamline the Design Review (DR) process, the Council directed the Historic & Design Review Commission (HDRC) to work with staff on amendments to §9.72 that would provide exceptions for certain minor improvements or materials replacement projects based on location and other criteria. The HDRC has had several meetings to discuss a variety of potential changes and these will be coming to the Planning Commission for further review in early 2016.
- d. HDRC TRANSITION. As mentioned above, the Council has begun the transition to eliminate HDRC. In an effort to streamline the DR process and give the PC, which is a State-mandated regulatory body, more projects to review, the Council has directed staff and the HDRC to wrap up the aforementioned LUC amendments to finalize this change

in bodies. There will still be a DR permit process, but the new process will break DR into Large and Small projects: large will go to the PC and small will go to the Zoning Administrator (ZA). The final procedural details are still being worked out. Part of the reason for this transition relates to the PC having 10 out of 24 meetings cancelled primarily due to lack of projects.

- e. STUDY SESSION WITH THE COUNCIL TO DISCUSS THE OVERALL VISION FOR MULTI-FAMILY DEVELOPMENT. There have been several large multi-family projects either recently approved (Strombeck, 40 units) or on the verge of action (Kramer, 142 units) or on the verge of submittal (The Village, 280 units; Strombeck, 74 units; Danco annex, ±157 mixed residential units). The 3 large projects on the verge of submittal all require Rezoning and General Plan amendments, among other permits, to obtain entitlements. The City has long had a housing issue relating to finding the balance between student housing and affordable housing for everyone else. The Village is student-only which, theoretically, might open up a wider variety of other multi-family developments to families and other non-student residents.
- f. BAYVIEW NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION AREA (NCA) ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY. Staff conducted and the Historic Landmarks Committee (HLC) has reviewed this architectural survey. Recommendations for Landmark, Noteworthy and Contributory or Non-Contributory properties will be making their way through the HDRC before it is eliminated and on to the PC in 2016 for final recommendation to the Council. Planning Commission recommendation is needed for Landmark properties as the designation process requires the addition of an :HL combining zone to properties designated by the Council as Landmarks.

## OTHER PROJECTS

- On October 13, the Planning Commission approved the Creamery Row 18-unit affordable housing project on O Street between 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Streets. This project has been in the works for many years and includes the relocation of Jolly Giant Creek to improve flood control and riparian habitat features and will result in the clean-up of a long-contaminated former mill site.
- On June 23, the PC denied an appeal by the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District, approved 22 additional multi-family units within the existing 14-unit Hidden Grove complex off of Bayside Road, and approved a Use Permit application for the development of a wholesale fertilizer mixing and repackaging operation within a portion of the old Flakeboard Plant of West End Road. This Use Permit represents the first new development at this site which is adjacent to the proposed MMIZ and under the same ownership as the remainder of the Flakeboard property.
- On April 14, the Commission recommended to the City Council a LUC amendment pertaining to the rezoning of the Old Jacoby Creek School property at 2212 Jacoby Creek Road. This action is required to prepare for the annexation of the property. The annexation was denied by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) on September 15.
- On February 24, the Commission recommended to the Council that it approve the annexation

of a portion of the Sunnybrae Forest Management Unit (323) acres into the City for public access and resource management purposes. The Council approved the annexation and LAFCo also approved the annexation at its September 15 meeting.

- The Boyd Road annexation also went to the September 15 LAFCo meeting, but was not approved. We are awaiting direction from LAFCo on how to proceed.