



STAFF REPORT – CITY COUNCIL MEETING

January 18, 2017

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: David Loya, Director of Community Development

PREPARER: Alyson Hunter, Senior Planner

DATE: January 10, 2017

TITLE: **Receive the 2016 Annual Report of the Planning Commission**

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Council receive the following Annual Report of the Planning Commission.

INTRODUCTION:

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

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. 2016 Annual Report of the Planning Commission (PDF)

Planning Commission Annual Report 2016

INTRODUCTION: Pursuant to Government Code Section 65400, the following is the Annual Report of the Planning Commission to the City Council. The following discussion items were updated in the City Resolution No. 123-07, dated October 3, 2012.

1. Progress on the Planning Commission's Goals from 2016 –

- 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 ended April 30, 2016, and Staff submitted a very rough 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 on time and in compliance with the terms of the grant. We received the full grant monetary award, but have not received any feedback or comments from Coastal Commission Staff.

The draft submitted to the Coastal Commission contained only a very cursory analysis of sea level rise (SLR) and potential impacts to properties adjacent to Humboldt Bay. Staff continues to employ the latest studies and technology in our efforts to prepare accurate analysis, adaptation measures and policy for the Planning Commission and City Council's review.

We had a Study Session between the Planning Commission and City Council on August 25, 2016, that touched on the LCP update, but was more focused on a comprehensive review of a variety of Land Use Code and General Plan amendments and the upcoming Happy Valley Specific Plan. We have another Study Session coming up with the City Council on December 15th that will focus solely on SLR and requesting that the Council provide direction on several key policy measures.

- b. INITIATE THE PERIODIC REVIEW PROCESS ON THE LAND USE CODE TO FURTHER REFINE THIS IMPLEMENTATION TOOL OF THE GENERAL PLAN. The Medical Marijuana Innovation Zone (MMIZ) was adopted by Ordinance in March 2016. Since its adoption, Staff has received four Use Permit applications for operations in Zone 2 and has reviewed and issued several Zoning Clearances and Commercial Cannabis Activity Permits (CCAP) in Zone 1. Staff will be returning to the Council in December for an update on how the new process has rolled out.

Changes to the LUC §9.72 - Design Review section is ongoing with an expectation of going to the Planning Commission early 2017. It 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. Since the dissolution of the Historic & Design Review Commission (HDRC) in May of this year, the Planning Commission has become the review authority for all Design Review and has reviewed 15 Design Review permits and several more that are associated with other permit types.

- c. PROVIDE LOCAL TRAINING FOR COMMISSIONERS. Staff notifies Commissioners of training opportunities as they arise. All Commissioners are up-to-date on their required ethics training.
- d. CONDUCT STUDY SESSIONS ON REGIONAL PLANNING ISSUES THAT AFFECT ARCATA. The Council held a Study Session in January 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. The Sunset Terrace 142 unit multi-family project was approved by the Planning Commission on June 28th after several well-attended meetings. Traffic impacts from this project were included in the Central Arcata Areawide Traffic Impact Study (Study) which included all the large projects in the Sunset Avenue neighborhood and is due to be completed by the consultant by the end of this year. City Staff is working closely with HSU and Caltrans to come up with intersection improvements to minimize bike/ped conflicts on

Sunset. In addition to potential traffic impacts, the ability of the wastewater treatment plant to accommodate the proposed growth has been a primary concern in the review of these applications.

2. Planning Commission Goals for 2017 -

- a. FINALIZE THE LCP UPDATE.
- b. CONTINUE DESIGN REVIEW LUC AMENDMENTS AND SMOOTH TRANSITIONING OF DESIGN REVIEW AUTHORITY TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION AND STAFF.
- c. BEGIN TO ADDRESS ZONING AND GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENTS TO ACCOMMODATE THE LEGALIZATION OF RECREATIONAL CANNABIS.
- d. COMPLETE THE WEST END RD/ALDERGROVE SPECIFIC PLAN.
- e. HISTORIC PRESERVATION EDUCATION AND THE BAYVIEW NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION AREA (NCA) ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY. Staff and members of the Historic Landmarks Committee (HLC) will continue to provide HP training to the Commission in preparation for its review of the Bayview Neighborhood Conservation Area.
- f. COLLABORATE WITH ARCATA MAINSTREET ON GETTING THE PLAZA ONTO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES.
- g. BEGIN UPDATES TO THE GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS WITH FOCUS ON ENERGY, GROWTH MANAGEMENT, PARKS & RECREATION, AND LAND USE.

OTHER PROJECTS

- Staff is working on a City-wide General Plan/Zoning Amendment and Urban Services Boundary/Sphere of Influence adjustment (36 properties) to address several clean-ups, mostly consisting of City acquisition properties that never went through the amendment process. Staff intends to forward this to the Planning Commission in early 2017 for a recommendation to the City Council for final action.
- The Community Development Director is working with the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District to develop a more comprehensive and equitable approach to responding to the District's needs concerning its high-pressure transmission line that traverses the City so that individual applicants are not overly burdened by requirements at the project level.
- A working group was formed to assist Staff in the development of the City's new Mills Act Tax Abatement Program. Once the program guidelines and processes are completed, Staff will conduct an outreach effort, with the help of the HLC, to spread the word about the new financial incentive program for historic preservation.
- The large Sunset Avenue Area housing projects (Village Student Housing project (240 units), the Canyon Creek multi-family project (74 units) and the Creekside Annexation (57 units + 100 bed residential care facility)) continue to move forward through permitting and environmental review. Traffic and wastewater treatment plant impacts are the primary constraints to completing these projects, but other environmental constraints and cumulative impacts will be addressed through CEQA. The City and HSU have frequent liaison meetings with housing needs for students and staff as a priority topic and have been close contact regarding the transportation needs and safety concerns of developing additional housing in close proximity to the Sunset/Hwy 101/LK Wood Blvd intersection.