



**Notice of Availability of a
Draft Environmental Impact Report and
Notice of Public Hearing to Provide Comments on the Draft EIR**

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) (SCH# 2022020107) for the Arcata General Plan Comprehensive Update, including the Gateway Area Plan, and the Gateway Code is now available for review. Public comment on this document is invited for a 45-day period extending from **January 31, 2024, through March 18, 2024, at 5 p.m.**

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Arcata General Plan is a planning document with text and diagrams that express the goals, objectives, and policies necessary to guide the community toward achieving its vision over a long-term planning period (typically approximately twenty years). City decision makers rely on the General Plan as the basis for making decisions on matters such as land use, transportation, open space and conservation, provision of public services, and environmental quality and safety. It is also a policy document that guides decisions related to protecting and enhancing what the community values most, such as open space, coastal resources, and protecting and enhancing the character of the community.

The City is preparing an update of its existing General Plan as well as preparing a “Gateway Area Plan,” which will be a new Element of the General Plan as well as associated zoning amendments to implement the Gateway Area Plan. The Gateway Area Plan will provide additional specificity within the Gateway Area, which is an approximately 138-acre area entirely within City limits that is generally north of Samoa Blvd, west of K Street, and south of Alliance Rd (see Figure 2). A portion of the Gateway Area and City’s Planning Area are located in the coastal zone (see Figures 1 and 2). The General Plan update, Gateway Area Plan and zoning updates are collectively the “Project.”

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project will update and amend the City’s existing General Plan, including a new General Plan Element (the Gateway Area Plan) to encourage infill development in the Arcata Gateway Area, in accordance with State Bill (SB) 375 and California Government Code (CGC) Section 65302. Together these documents will be called the “Arcata General Plan 2045.” The Arcata General Plan 2045 seeks to build upon but not substantially change the vision established in the Arcata 2020 General Plan (adopted in the year 2000). The Arcata General Plan 2045 will also update the goals, policies, and implementation programs that articulate the vision for the City’s long-term physical and economic development, while preserving open space areas and enhancing the quality of life for Arcata residents. The Arcata General Plan 2045 is anticipated to be adopted in late 2022.

As a part of this Project, all existing General Plan Elements (other than the Housing Element) will receive minor focused updates to:

- Satisfy modern State mandates for General Plans that have been issued since the General Plan was last updated;
- Re-emphasize infill development to preserve greenbelts around the City;
- Adjust to climate-change and promote sustainability;
- Promote social justice and racial equity;
- Amend inconsistencies; and
- Ensure consistency and compliance with other City plans that have been adopted or revised in recent years, such as the 2019 Housing Element.

California Government Code, Section 65302, subdivision. (h)(1) requires an Environmental Justice element in the General Plans of certain communities. Arcata does not meet the thresholds for such an Element to be required because the City does not contain any Disadvantaged Communities as identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency Pursuant to Section 39711 of the Health and Safety Code. Instead, the City is electing to reflect social justice and racial equity values in all Elements of the General Plan. Since the Housing Element was updated and adopted in late 2019, the Housing Element will not be modified as a part of this Project.

In addition to the minor updates outlined above, the following General Plan Elements will receive additional, more comprehensive updates to accommodate more targeted infill policies and ensure consistency with the Gateway Area Plan:

- Land Use (modifications to land use map and development standards)
- Transportation and Circulation (modifications to proposed circulation systems)
- Public Facilities and Infrastructure (modifications to support utility upgrades in priority development areas)
- Parks and Recreation (replace existing adopted Element with the 2010 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, which will serve as the new Parks and Recreation Element)

Accordingly, the following summarizes the anticipated degree of changes for each Element:

- New Element
 - Gateway Area Plan
- Minor updates and consistency updates:
 - Introduction
 - Vision
 - Growth Management
 - Open Space Element
 - Resource Conservation and Management
 - Air Quality
 - Design
 - Historical Preservation
 - Public Safety
 - Noise
- Comprehensive updates
 - Land Use
 - Transportation and Circulation
 - Public Facilities and Infrastructure

- Parks and Recreation
- No change
 - Housing Element

Anticipated Significant Environmental Impacts: The DEIR identifies significant impacts to the following California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) environmental issue areas: air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, noise. As described in the DEIR, many of these impacts can be fully mitigated, but some cannot. The Project would result in significant unavoidable impacts to air quality and cultural resources. All other impacts can be fully mitigated to a less-than-significant impact.

Public Review Process for the Draft EIR:

One purpose of CEQA is to inform the public of the likely environmental consequences of public and private projects such as the proposed General Plan Comprehensive Update. The purpose of this Notice, consistent with Sections 15086 and 15087 of the State CEQA Guidelines is to consult with and request comments on the DEIR's environmental analyses from responsible agencies, organizations, and interested parties.

Document Availability. The Draft EIR and other project materials will be available for review and download on the City of Arcata website on the Strategic Infill Redevelopment Program webpage at <https://www.cityofarcata.org/896/Strategic-Infill-Redevelopment-Program> on January 31, 2024. Printed copies of the documents are available for public review at the following locations during normal business hours:

- Arcata City Hall, Community Development Department, 736 F Street, Arcata, California
- Arcata Public Library, 500 7th Street, Arcata, California

The review period for the DEIR ends at the end of the first business day after 45 days have lapsed. The public review period will start on January 31, 2024, and will run through 5 p.m., March 18, 2024.

Public Comment. The purpose of public review of the DEIR includes: sharing expertise, disclosing agency analysis, checking for accuracy, detecting omissions, discovering public concerns, and soliciting counter proposals (CEQA Guidelines Sec 15200). Comments received on the DEIR during the review period will be addressed in the Final EIR. Comments may be mailed to:

David Loya, Director
General Plan EIR
736 F Street
Arcata, CA 95521

or emailed to:

dloya@cityofarcata.org with subject line "General Plan EIR".

Draft EIR Public Hearing. A public hearing is scheduled for the Arcata Planning Commission meeting on March 12, 2024, at 5:30 p.m. The purpose of the hearing is to solicit input and comments from public

agencies and the public on the DEIR for the General Plan Comprehensive Update. This hearing will be held at:

Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission
City Council Chambers - Arcata City Hall
736 F Street, Arcata, CA 95521.

There will be no transcription of oral comments at this public hearing or any subsequent hearings. Comments received will be summarized by staff for inclusion in the Final EIR. Those who wish to have their verbatim comments incorporated in the Final EIR must submit their comments in writing.

The meeting facilities will be accessible to persons with disabilities. If special translation or signing services or other special accommodations are needed, please contact Bridget Dory, City Clerk, at 707-825-2103 or bdory@cityofarcata.org at least 48 hours before the meeting.

If you have any questions regarding this notice, please contact Community Development Director David Loya at dloya@cityofarcata.org.

Final EIR. Following the close of the public review period for the DEIR, the City will prepare a final EIR, incorporating all comments received during the public comment period, for consideration by the Planning Commission, at a date for which notice shall be provided. As required by CEQA (Section 21092.5), the final EIR, including written responses to the comments submitted by public agencies, will be available at least 10 days prior to certification.

Hazardous Waste Sites: Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sec. 15087(c)(6), there are sites located within the City of Arcata that are on lists enumerated under Government Code Section 65962.5. The actions contemplated under the DEIR do not have a significant impact on hazardous waste sites. However, interested parties are encouraged to learn more about Section 65962.5 at <https://calepa.ca.gov/sitecleanup/corteselist/section-65962-5a/>, including a list of sites located in the City of Arcata that are on this list.