



NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR ARCATA GENERAL PLAN 2045 AND GATEWAY AREA PLAN

ANNOUNCEMENT:	Notice is hereby given that the City of Arcata as Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to evaluate the environmental effects associated with the proposed "Arcata General Plan 2045" (Project). This Project includes analysis of the Draft Gateway Area Plan as a new Element of the General Plan, and associated zoning amendments necessary to implement the General Plan. The City is soliciting comments regarding the scope and content of the environmental information.
ANNOUNCEMENT DATE:	February 2, 2022
PROJECT TITLE:	Arcata General Plan 2045
PROJECT LOCATION:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• City of Arcata Planning Area (see Figure 1 below)• Gateway Area Plan Boundary (contained within the above) (see Figure 2 below)
LEAD AGENCY:	City of Arcata
LEAD AGENCY CONTACT PERSON:	David Loya, Director Community Development Department dloya@cityofarcata.org Phone: 707-825-2045 City of Arcata 736 F Street Arcata, CA 95521
NOP PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:	The Notice of Preparation (NOP) review period begins on Friday, February 4, 2022, and closes on Monday, March 7, 2022. Please submit written responses by 5:00 p.m. on March 7, 2022, to the address or email above.
SCOPING MEETING:	A virtual public scoping meeting will be conducted on February 24, 2022, beginning at 5:30 pm via zoom communications and may be accessed via https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85803996010?pwd=YkdVQzJxamlLVk9wT25ndCs5NjRvdz09 .

PURPOSE OF THIS NOTICE OF PREPARATION

The City of Arcata (City) will serve as lead agency under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be prepared to analyze the proposed Project. The EIR will identify the potential for significant environmental effects to satisfy the requirements of CEQA [Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.].

In accordance with the California Code of Regulations Section 15082, the City has prepared this Notice of Preparation (NOP) to inform agencies and interested parties that an EIR will be prepared for the proposed Project. The purpose of this notice is:

- (1) to serve as the notice to provide interested parties, including members of the public, potential responsible agencies, agencies involved in funding or approving the Project, agencies providing public services, (schools,



utilities, medical and emergency services), and trustee agencies responsible for natural resources affected by the Project, with sufficient information to provide meaningful responses as to the scope and content of the EIR; and

(2) to advise and solicit comments and suggestions from interested parties regarding the preparation of the EIR, environmental issues and alternatives to be addressed in the EIR, and any related issues.

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

The new **Gateway Area Plan Element** will establish new policies, land use designations, and development standards within the “Gateway Area” which is an approximate 138-acre location entirely within City limits that is directly west of Arcata’s downtown core and generally north of Samoa Blvd, west of K Street, and south of Alliance Ave (see Figure 2). The Gateway Area currently primarily consists of former industrial lands. Due to its proximity to the downtown and core infrastructure, the Gateway Area represents a priority opportunity area for future redevelopment and infill growth.

The **Land Use Element** will continue to include the general distribution and general location and extent of the uses of land for housing, business, industry, open space, agriculture, natural resources, recreation, enjoyment of scenic beauty, education, public buildings and grounds, solid and liquid waste disposal facilities, greenways, and other categories of public and private uses of land within the City and its Planning Area, which is unchanged from the 2020 General Plan adoption on 2000 (see Figure 1). The Land Use Element will continue to accommodate projections of population and economic growth using infill principles, including growth anticipated in the Gateway Area. The City’s anticipated growth during the planning period is expected be contained within the present City boundary and concentrated largely within the Gateway Area Plan Boundary and other “Potential Infill Opportunity Zones” identified in the City’s adopted 6th Cycle Housing Element in 2019 (Figure 3). Growth will be concentrated in and around the downtown area, the Gateway Area Plan Boundary, existing neighborhood commercial centers, and Humboldt State University. Targeted upzoning (or increases in the allowable uses and development standards) will be necessary in these priority development areas to meet



the City's 6th Cycle housing allocation, in addition to twenty-year growth projections. Outside of the Infill Opportunity Zones, the Land Use Map and development standards are anticipated to receive only minor changes from the Arcata General Plan 2020 (adopted in the year 2000).

The **Transportation and Circulation Element** will continue to include the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares; vehicle, bike, and bus transportation routes; terminals; and other local public utilities and facilities, all correlated with the Land Use Element of the General Plan. To accommodate anticipated growth, the Transportation and Circulation Element will also be updated to include plans for a more balanced, multi-modal transportation network that meets the needs of all users of streets, roads and highways (including bicyclists, children, persons with disabilities, motorists, movers of commercial goods, pedestrians, users of public transportation, and seniors) for safe and convenient travel in a manner that is appropriate within the context of our community. The City's Pedestrian and Bike Master Plan (adopted 2010) will inform this update. Outside of the Gateway Area Plan Boundary, the Transportation and Circulation Element will receive only minor changes from the Arcata General Plan 2020, including:

- A new analysis of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and Level of Service (LOS) will be added to the Element;
- An update of the Street Functional Classifications Map;
- An update of the Existing and Projected Traffic Volumes and Intersection Levels of Service;
- An update of Existing and Projected Transit Ridership;
- An update of Existing Travel Demand Management;
- Enhancements to the goals and policies; and
- A modernization of implementation programs.

Likewise, the **Public Facilities and Infrastructure Element** will support growth in the identified Potential Infill Opportunity Zones and plan for upgrades to facilities such as the City's Wastewater Treatment Facility. This update will analyze necessary updates to development strategy based on recent planning documents, including the Humboldt County Association of Government's Regional Transportation Plan-VROOM 2022-2042, the City's Wastewater Treatment Improvements Project Facility Plan (2017), Wastewater Treatment Plant Rehabilitation Plan (2020), Infill Market Study (2021), and the City's Capital Improvement Program. The Public Facilities and Infrastructure Element update will leverage this analysis and identify infrastructure upgrades required to address population buildout over the planning period. This Element will consist of substantial changes from the Arcata General Plan 2020.

The new **Parks and Recreation Element** will draw heavily upon the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (adopted 2010) and upon goals and policies previously described in the Open Space Element. The Parks and Recreation Element will include an assessment of the current condition of parks and related facilities, analyze the existing and projected public demand for parks and recreation facilities, establish policies and guidelines for park planning and development, and identify funding sources for these initiatives. It will also include current demographic and needs data. This Element consists of substantial changes from the Arcata General Plan 2020, with the entire Element being replaced.

The **Design Element** and **Historical Preservation Element** identify detailed design policy in various neighborhoods throughout the City with particular emphasis on standards and review of the Arcata Plaza area, which constitutes the City's current downtown core. Updates to the Design Element are anticipated to be primarily limited to policy around Potential Infill Opportunity Zones and the development of objective design standards that can be applied for with new residential development designed at a higher density and intensity of use than what has historically been encouraged throughout these areas. The 2019-2027 Housing Element and Infill Market Study (2021) will inform the update of this Element. The changes to the Historic Preservation Element will be minor. These Elements will receive only minor changes from the Arcata General Plan 2020.

The **Public Safety Element** will continue to identify risks of fires, floods, droughts, earthquakes, tsunami, and landslides. An update of the Public Safety Element will comply with CGC Section 65302(g) and SB 375. Climate change adaptation



will be a principal focus of the Public Safety Element update. The Public Safety Element will acknowledge the context of other relevant plans at the regional and state level and align City goals and policies with these efforts. The City is currently included in the Humboldt County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (adopted 2020) and County-wide Climate Action Plan (in progress). The Local Coastal Program update will address sea level rise. This Element received only minor changes from the Arcata General Plan 2020.

The **Open Space Element** will continue to include details regarding the preservation of natural resources, the managed production of resources, outdoor recreation, public health and safety, as well as tribal resources, within the context of related state and regional plans. The update of the Open Space Element will comply with CGC Sections 65302(e) and 65560 for the comprehensive and long-range preservation and conservation of open space land within the City. The Open Space Element will continue to include details regarding the preservation of natural resources, the managed production of resources, outdoor recreation, public health and safety, and tribal cultural resources, within the context of related state and regional plans. This Element will receive only minor changes from the Arcata General Plan 2020.

The **Resource Conservation and Management Element** will continue to address the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources including water, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, harbors, fisheries, wildlife, minerals, and other natural resources. The Resource Conservation and Management Element update will consider the effect of infill development, as described in the Land Use Element, on other natural resources located on public lands. This Element received only minor changes from the Arcata General Plan 2020.

The **Growth Management Element** will reaffirm the Urban Growth Boundary for the City and will continue to bolster the policies and programs of the Open Space Element. The update of the Growth Management Element is to align the existing Element with the Local Coastal Program and updated Municipal Services Review per the Humboldt County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo). The Growth Management Element amendments will emphasize infill development, including new policies to reaffirm an internal focus on future growth. This Element received only minor changes from the Arcata General Plan 2020.

The **Noise Element** will continue to provide a basis for comprehensive local programs to control and abate environmental noise and to protect citizens from excessive exposure. The update of the Noise Element will address the changes resulting from residential densification in Potential Infill Opportunity Zones, including more intense and diverse uses. This Element will receive only minor changes to the Arcata General Plan 2020.

The **Air Quality Element** will continue to address air pollution concerns and will bolster the policies and programs of the Air Quality Element. The update of the Air Quality Element will continue to have goals and objectives related to reducing air quality emissions from a variety of point and area sources, as well as mobile emissions. The Air Quality Element will continue to enforce the Regional Air Quality Standards enforced by the North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District. This Element received only minor changes from the Arcata General Plan 2020.

Zoning Amendments. The General Plan update will require zoning amendments to implement the new vision. Specifically, the Land Use Element will establish growth targets that will require new zoning to accommodate. Population growth is anticipated to be absorbed throughout the City primarily through infill. The City expects rezoning to accommodate new residential development, upzoning to allow higher densities in current residentially designated districts, and ordinances to address state law related to accessory dwelling units (second units) and small lot subdivision requirements (SB 9 – 2020).

EIR ANALYSIS

The City of Arcata, as the lead agency under CEQA, will prepare an EIR for the Arcata General Plan 2045 in accordance with CEQA. The Arcata General Plan 2045 is considered a “project” under CEQA and is therefore subject to CEQA review.



As a policy document, the General Plan provides guidance and sets standards for several areas of mandatory environmental review for later “projects” that would be undertaken by local government and the private sector. The EIR will evaluate potential environmental impacts associated with adoption and implementation of the Arcata General Plan 2045. The EIR will disclose potential impacts of the Arcata General Plan 2045, propose mitigation measures to avoid and/or reduce impacts deemed potentially significant, identify reasonable alternatives, and compare the environmental impacts of the alternatives to the proposed Project’s impacts.

Pursuant to Section 15063(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, an Initial Study will not be prepared. The EIR will evaluate the full range of environmental issues contemplated under CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, including the following resource categories: Aesthetics, Agricultural and Forestry Resources, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Energy, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use, Mineral Resources, Noise, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Transportation and Circulation, Tribal Cultural Resources, Utilities and Service Systems, and Wildfire.

The following resource categories may have potentially significant impacts, and mitigation measures may be required to reduce potential significant impacts: Air Quality, Biological Resources, Historic and Cultural Resources, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Noise, Population and Housing, Transportation, and Utilities and Service Systems. The EIR will also evaluate potential cumulative impacts, growth inducement and other CEQA-required topics.

Scoping Meeting

A virtual scoping meeting will be conducted on February 24, 2022 beginning at 5:30 pm. The meeting is being conducted utilizing teleconferencing and electronic means consistent with State of California Executive Order N-29-20 dated March 17, 2020, regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. In accordance with Executive Order N-29-20, the public can observe and participate in the meeting by attending the virtual meeting that may be accessed at

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85803996010?pwd=YkdVQzJxamlVk9wT25ndCs5NjRvdz09>. Verbal comments regarding the scope of the proposed EIR will be accepted at the meeting. Members of the public may also provide public comment by sending comments to David Loya, Director of the Community Development Department by email at dloya@cityofarcata.org, with cc to comdev@cityofarcata.org by 5:00 p.m. on March 7, 2022. This NOP is available for review on the City’s General Plan webpage at: <https://www.cityofarcata.org/160/General-Plan>.

Please contact Community Development Department Director David Loya at 707-825-2045 or dloya@cityofarcata.org with any questions regarding this notice, the scoping meeting or ways to comment on this NOP.

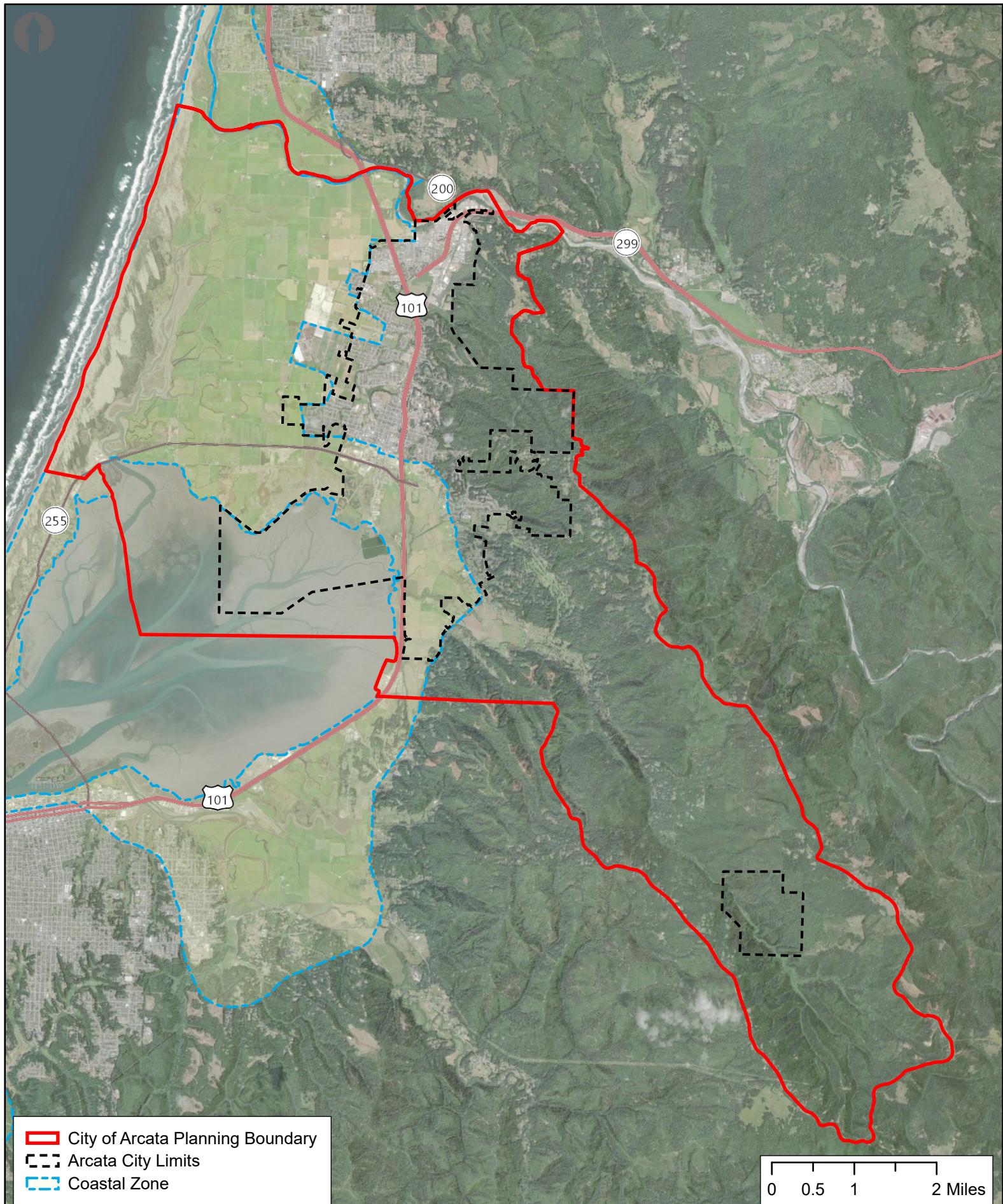


Figure 1 City of Arcata Planning Area



Created by GHD
Map Date: 1/27/2022

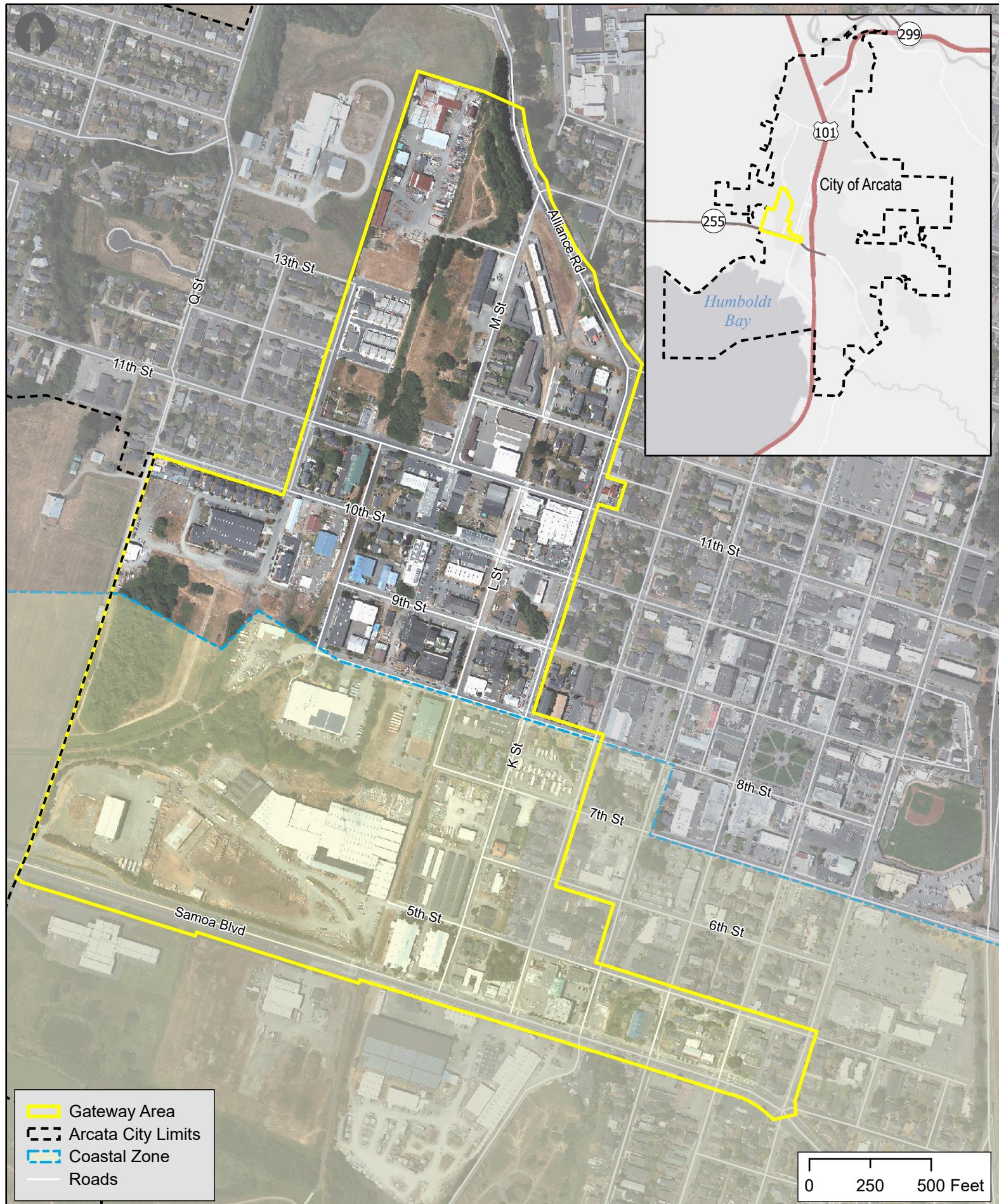


Figure 1 **Gateway Area Plan Boundary**

Created by GHD
Map Date: 1/27/2022



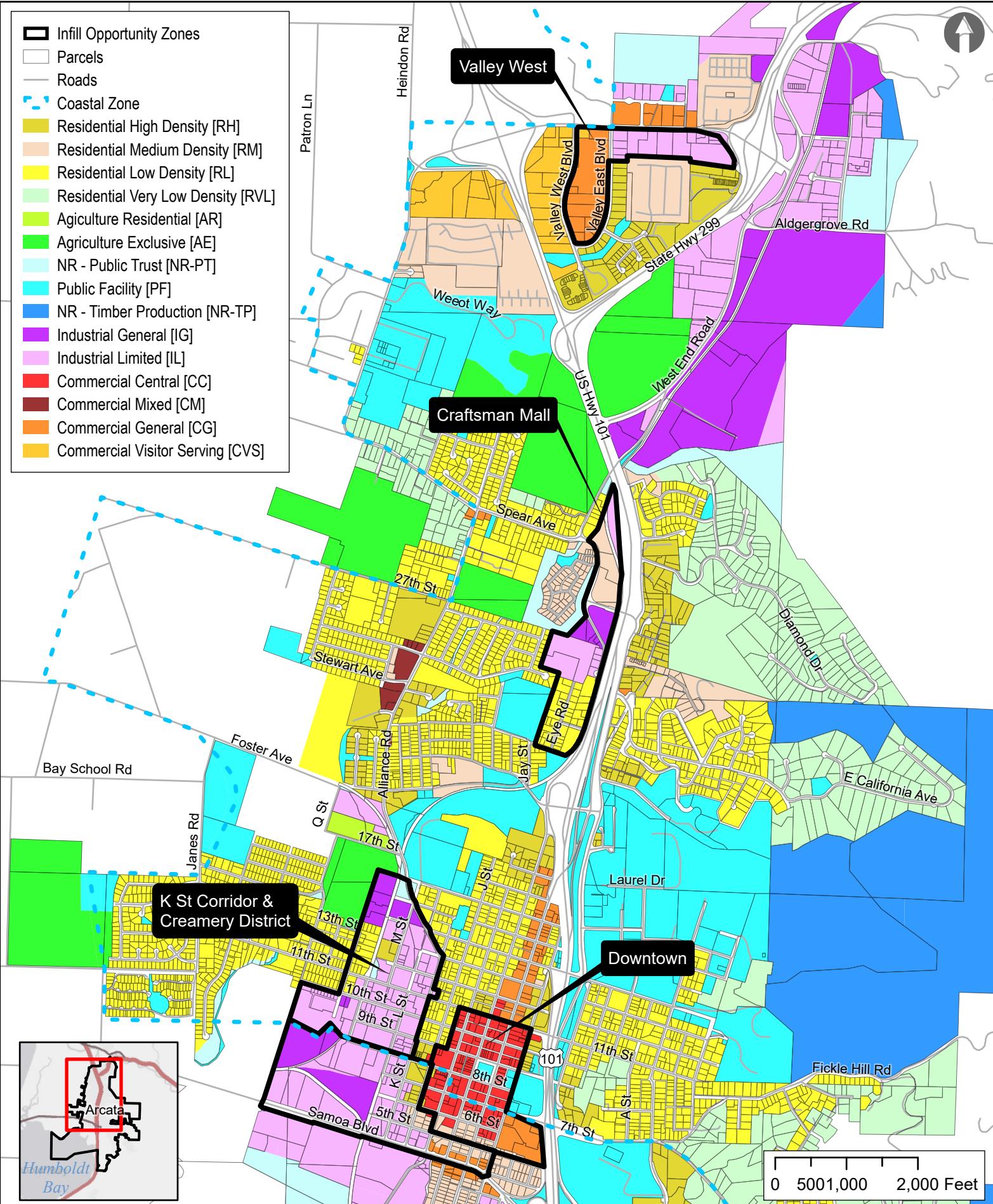


Figure 3 Potential Infill Opportunity Zones



Created by GHD
Map Date: 1/27/2022