



April 9, 2024

Mayor Meredith Matthews  
City of Arcata  
736 F Street  
Arcata CA 95521

Dear Mayor Matthews,

We, the Board of Directors for the Arcata Fire Protection District (AFPD), are writing to emphasize the critical importance of incorporating adequate fire protection measures into the final drafting of Arcata's 2045 General Plan, particularly concerning zoning and form code permitting for residential and mixed-use buildings taller than 40ft in designated opportunity zones such as the Gate Way Area Plan.

Our recommendation is rooted in the fundamental need to ensure the safety of building occupants and the capacity of our fire suppression staff to effectively respond to emergencies. Specifically, we propose that the permitting of such buildings be conditioned upon the establishment of sufficient fire protection features, systems, and emergency service capacity as outlined in existing fire codes. These include but are not limited to considerations such as fire department access, roadway width and height, water supply for fire suppression, automatic fire sprinkler systems, and emphasis on occupant egress, especially given our current staffing limitations.

We have previously communicated our concerns to the City in various forums, including letters, presentations, and meetings with key stakeholders. It is our shared responsibility to ensure that AFPD and our mutual aid partners are adequately equipped and trained to respond to fires and emergencies in buildings as anticipated in the General Plan.

To address these concerns, the City, the District, and Cal Poly Humboldt are collaborating on a Standards of Coverage analysis conducted by an independent contractor. This analysis aims to provide guidance on expanded staffing, facilities, equipment, and training requirements, along with associated costs. We anticipate this analysis to be completed by late 2024, at which point we can work towards achieving consensus on the necessary measures to fulfill the City's obligations to its residents.

However, until funding is established, and district expansion is underway, we believe it would be imprudent to approve building permits and begin occupancy in the envisioned residential buildings. The AFPD Board anticipates substantial increases in staffing, new or expanded stations, equipment, and training facilities to adequately meet the needs of our growing community.

We urge the City Council to consider our recommendation seriously and work collaboratively towards implementing necessary fire protection measures in the final drafting of the 2045 General Plan.

Sincerely,

Eric Loudenslager  
Board President  
Arcata Fire District

cc: Arcata City Council

COPY



April 18, 2024

David Loya  
Director, Community Development  
City of Arcata  
736 F Street  
Arcata, CA 95521

RE: Written Public Comment for May 14, 2024, Planning Commission Public Hearing  
on the Arcata General Plan Comprehensive Update and Gateway Code

Director Loya,

On April 9, 2024, the Board of Directors of the Arcata Fire Protection District approved a letter to the Arcata Mayor and City Council proposing additions to the draft 2045 Arcata General Plan and Gateway Area Plan and Code to better ensure the safety of residence and AFPD staff in buildings anticipated to be built over the next 20 years.

Just after sending the letter the District received a Notice of Public Hearing of the City of Arcata Planning Commission: Arcata General Plan Comprehensive Update and Gateway Code. The April 9 AFPD letter applies to the May 14, 2024 public hearing, and we request that it be included in public hearing as written public comment to be provided to the Planning Commissioners and included in the written record of the meeting.

Sincerely,

Eric Loudenslager, President  
Arcata Fire District Board of Directors

Enclosure