

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Meredith Matthews](#); [Stacy Atkins-Salazar](#); [Alex Stillman](#); [Kimberley White](#); [Sarah Schaefer](#); [City Manager's Office](#); [David Loya](#)  
**Subject:** General Plan 2045, Gateway Area Plan, Gateway Code  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 17, 2024 12:27:29 PM

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Dear City Council and City Leaders,

The City of Arcata's approval of the Gateway Area Plan, General Plan 2045, Gateway Code could potentially lead to legal conflicts due to concerns raised by the Arcata Fire District (AFD) and the Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury. Here are some key points:

1. **Arcata Fire District's Concerns:** [The AFD has expressed concerns about the rapid pace of the Gateway Area Plan, which allows for the construction of 4-7 story buildings<sup>1</sup>. The AFD is currently understaffed and lacks the necessary equipment to handle emergencies in such high-rise buildings<sup>1</sup> 2. They have requested a limit on building size until they can catch up with their staffing and equipment needs<sup>1</sup>.](#)
2. **Grand Jury Report:** [The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury released a report warning that the AFD is approaching desperate financial conditions<sup>3</sup>. The report suggests that without increased funding, the AFD may not be able to maintain its current level of service or provide adequate services to a growing population<sup>4</sup>.](#)
3. **Potential Legal Conflicts:** If the City of Arcata approves the Gateway Area Plan before addressing these concerns, it could potentially face legal conflicts. [For instance, if there are factual errors in the environmental impact, not addressing the Arcata Fire District concerns, not addressing conflicts with the California Coastal Act before approving the report, the city could be legally vulnerable<sup>5</sup>. There have also been discussions about conflicts of interest among city decision-makers regarding the Gateway project<sup>6</sup> 7.](#)
4. **Future Steps:** [The City of Arcata, the AFD, and Cal Poly Humboldt have contributed funds for a "Standards of Coverage" analysis to determine future staffing, equipment, training, and financial needs of the AFD<sup>8</sup>. This report is expected to be received by the end of 2024<sup>8</sup>.](#)

It's important to note that these are potential conflicts and concerns, and the actual legal implications would depend on various factors, including how the city addresses these concerns and the specific circumstances surrounding any potential disputes or lawsuits. It's recommended that the City of Arcata type in policy or in the codes in the General Plan 2045 that they won't implement the four through seven story floors in the Gateway Area until such that the City and the Arcata Fire District come to Consensus. This is the statement from the Arcata Fire District. If the City Council votes on approval of the General Plan 2045 and Gateway Area Plan and Gateway Code without addressing the Arcata Fire District, Grand Jury Report and Coastal Act the potential legal risks for the Arcata City Council, Public and Leadership would be great.

Sincerely,

Gregory Daggett

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Meredith Matthews](#); [Kimberley White](#); [Alex Stillman](#); [Sarah Schaefer](#); [Stacy Atkins-Salazar](#); [Karen Diemer](#); [David Loya](#)  
**Subject:** Listen to Grand Jury Report & AFD Board!  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 17, 2024 2:53:43 PM

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**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear City Council members,

I thought I had said all I have to say about the danger of erecting tall buildings in the Gateway and/or in other "opportunity zones" as a fire safety hazard. But I just got the Mad River Union today and read that the AFD Board of Directors met recently to discuss the district's future and to figure out responses to the recent Civil Grand Jury report ("Fire District, agrees with, responds to GJ report").

The Grand Jury report speaks for itself: "It may not be evident to the public, but the Arcata Fire District is approaching desperate financial conditions and may soon need to again reduce service levels, including the closure of one fire station." This situation is unlikely to improve any time soon, as the GJ report makes clear. For one thing, people aren't stepping up to volunteer for firefighter positions like they used to, and staffing is a perennial problem for departments all across the county, whether it concerns finding new doctors, nurses, social workers, police, or firefighters. And with funding cuts looming at both the County and State levels, it would be foolish to expect to be given favorable treatment.

Also, according to the MRU piece, "One of the problems with both the benefit assessment and Measure F is that they don't increase with inflation." Please note that Measure R was defeated in 2020, and Measure F just narrowly passed, as it included an expiration date. "While the District can propose a new tax structure, it's ultimately up to the voters to decide the issue." Yes it is! Keep in mind that we are all struggling to keep up with inflation, just as the fire district is struggling. "The concern is that people won't want to pay higher taxes that are perceived as subsidizing Cal Poly and Arcata Gateway high rise projects." You got that right!

I have voted for every tax measure proposed by the City in the past, but I don't care to reward foolish behavior that puts our safety at risk (like slapping up tall buildings all over the place). So I will vote down the next tax proposal that comes along, even for the AFD which I generally support, UNLESS and until you start to show some sanity by listening to your fire chief and the AFD Board!

What are they asking of you? Just that you put some language in the GAP and GP 2045 plans to indicate you won't allow construction of tall buildings (over 3 stories or 40 ft) until the Standard of Coverage study is completed and you have reached a consensus with the AFD for how to proceed. Otherwise, you are just kicking the can down the road and endangering Arcatans by failing to do what the fire professionals have very reasonably requested of you. As I've said many times, that's clearly negligent and a dereliction of your duty of care to ensure the safety of all Arcatans.

It's similar negligence that led to the construction of tall buildings like Sorrel Place and Plaza Point without a fire safety plan in place. Right now, TODAY, if a fire were to break out there,

the fire department lacks the capacity to respond to a conflagration in these tall structures, even just to evacuate the buildings, as your fire chief has informed you. If you are going to go on ignoring AFD's recommendations and the Grand Jury report, the liability and responsibility should rightfully be yours. Just saying.

Your fire chief and the AFD Board are the experts on fire safety, not you, not CD Director David Loya, nor the city attorney! Listen to the fire professionals, read the Grand Jury report and act to protect the citizens of Arcata by curtailing your eagerness to throw up tall building long enough to read the study and proceed thoughtfully. You owe a duty of care to the citizens of Arcata to ensure our safety and well being. Please don't neglect that side of the equation. Thank you.

Respectfully,  
Lisa Pelletier  
Arcata resident

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Meredith Matthews](#); [Sarah Schaefer](#); [Kimberley White](#)  
**Cc:** [David Loya](#); [Karen Diemer](#)  
**Subject:** Comments for 7/17/2024 Council meeting- GAP, Gateway Codes, GP 2045  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 17, 2024 10:27:08 AM

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Hello-

I have a few comments regarding the latest updated GAP Draft and Gateway Code drafts released last week. The conjoined General Plan 2045 draft has been modified to show Gateway Area changes and I will add mention as well.

It appears that there are some changes shown in response to your comments and considerations presented at the May 29th, 2024 meeting in regards to the L Corridor/Linear Park vision. The changes incorporate some of the specific details described at the meeting but it would appear there is still plenty of ambiguity for the Linear Park vision. Figure 7-Conceptual Open Space Plan (GAP-page 60) shows a full length L Linear Park as well as other parks and details. Figure CM-f from the Circulation Element of the General Plan 2045 draft (page 2-53) shows the "L" Linear Park Corridor with a full length (from Samoa to Alliance) Shared Street Woonerf Concept. Similar changes are shown in Figure CM-e (GP 2045 draft page 2-49) for Vehicular Circulation. My understanding from looking back at statements made by Council is that there is not a desire nor plans to add additional vehicular traffic on sections of L that currently do not have roads. I realize that details will be worked out through public process in the future, but now is a good time to cement some of the important details that are critical for the future planning of a People Centric Linear Park vision. Clearly the intentions of of the Community and this Council are not for adding new roadways!

In addition, the added protections for and from developments along all Parks, including the future L Corridor Linear Park should be greater. Figure 2-38 (Page 27 of the Gateway Codes) shows the purple lines depicting Enhanced Step-backs that would start on the 4th Story of new development. Clearly there should be protection for the entire length of the L Corridor Linear Park as well as other listed parks for the Gateway Area. I would further add that ground level Setbacks should be required and the upper Step-backs of 10 feet is not adequate to relieve shading for Parks.

**On a related note-** Page 39 of the Gateway Area Plan draft shows Primary Opportunity Zones. If you look at the Site Reference B column, in the "Opportunities" column description, it is still stating that this area would be "An

excellent site for... ..an extension of L Street". The City of Arcata does not own nor have the rights to create an "Extension of L Street" on this location. **Please remove the statement and any other references to the creation of a street at this location.**

Please take the time to get these details better described in the current drafts before agreeing and adopting the documents.

Regards- Chris Richards