

GROWTH MANAGEMENT ELEMENT

2.2.1 INTRODUCTION

Growth Management Overview. Arcata's population was estimated to be 18,900 in the 2020 Census. The General Plan anticipates approximately 1-1.4% year-over-year population growth with a maximum population of 27,000 persons, by the year 2045.

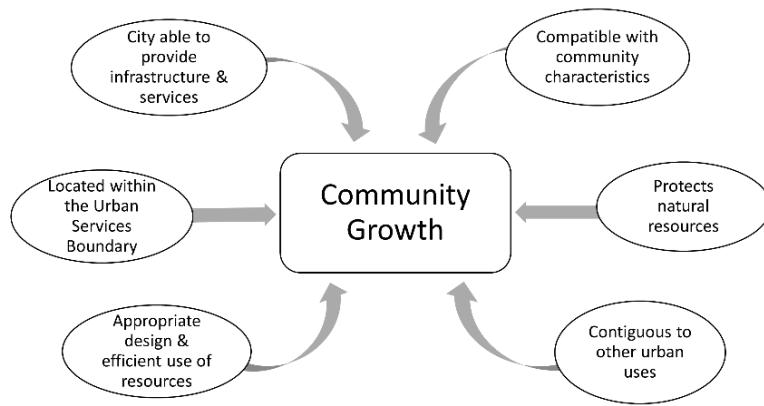
The majority of the City's growth has been, and is planned to be, within the present City boundary and concentrated within identified Infill Opportunity Areas (see Land Use Element), including the Gateway Area as well as around the downtown area, within existing neighborhood commercial centers, and near California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt (Cal Poly Humboldt). Growth is directed to these areas because they have existing urban services and infrastructure.

In addition, infill implements the Humboldt Regional Climate Action Plan and the City's sea level rise adaptation plan, preserves the natural and open working lands surrounding the City, and provides needed reinvestment in existing developed areas.

Cal Poly Humboldt is a major driver for both economic and population growth. There are currently about 5,739 students enrolled at Cal Poly Humboldt, with projected enrollment of 11,000 (full time equivalent) students by 2028. While a proportion of these students are anticipated to be remote learners, and Cal Poly Humboldt will be housing a large proportion of newly enrolled students, Cal Poly's growth will impact the population.

Guiding Principles and Goals.

- A. Lands in the Sphere of Influence should remain rural and under the land use authority of the County until it can be demonstrated that urban services and annexation by the City is necessary.
- B. Preserve the existing community character and promote resource protection in the Planning Area.
- C. Maintain an Urban Services Boundary that includes only the existing urban area, and areas appropriate for development by the year 2045.
- D. Prioritize infill development in areas within or contiguous to existing urban uses and services and concentrate growth around existing activity centers.



Growth Management Considerations

- E. Exclude flood-prone, steeply sloped, and other natural hazard areas, streamside buffers, productive natural resource, agricultural, and forest lands from urban development.
- F. Incorporate greenbelts, designated natural areas, and other open space into the planning area to maintain an identity separate from surrounding communities.
- G. Manage the timing and amount of growth in accordance with acceptable levels of service and quality of life for existing and new residents.

Planning Areas. The City of Arcata incorporated area is defined by its City limits. The City also has an Urban Services Boundary that defines the anticipated limits for extending City services and infrastructure within the General Plan time frame. There is also a Sphere of Influence that includes unincorporated lands which ultimately may be annexed to the City and developed; and a Planning Area which also includes nearby unincorporated lands. Collectively, these planning areas and the policies that guide related development activities, such as annexation, constitute much of the City's growth management program. The City's Urban Services Boundary and Sphere of Influence are shown on Figure GM-a and the Planning Area is shown on Figure LU-b. Each of these features is described in more detail below.

Annexations / Expansion of City Boundaries. The Cortese/Knox/Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 sets forth regulations under which Arcata may apply to the Local Agency Formation Commission to expand its City boundary. The intention is to encourage orderly growth and development, which is considered essential to the social, fiscal, and economic well-being. It recognizes that the formation of local agency boundaries is an important factor in assuring orderly development and the efficient delivery of services. The Cortese/Knox/Hertzberg Act gives Local Agency Formation Commissions review authority for annexations of territory to a city.

Sphere of Influence. Before the Local Agency Formation Commission may approve an annexation, that territory must be within the City's Sphere of Influence. A Sphere of Influence defines the City's probable physical boundaries and service area as determined by the Local Agency Formation Commission.

The Sphere of Influence includes unincorporated lands (under County jurisdiction) that may be annexed in the General Plan time frame. The City's Sphere of Influence is adopted, as required by state law, by Humboldt Local Agency Formation Commission, a county-wide agency.



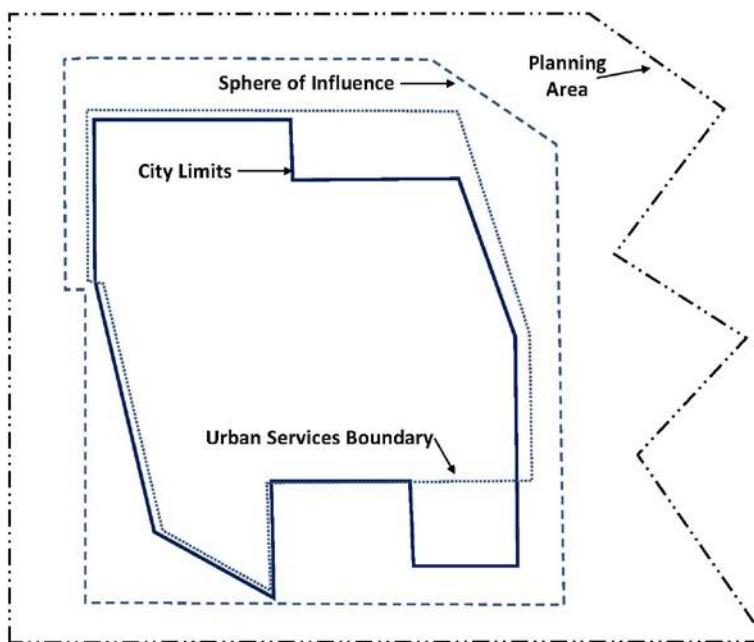
Designating unincorporated lands in the Sphere of Influence:

1. Allows the City to plan for the eventual annexation and extension of services as part of community growth.
2. Allows the City to designate uses compatible with adjacent City lands.

Arcata Planning Area. California planning law requires the City to adopt a general plan for lands within its limits and also for any land outside its boundaries which bears relation to its planning. Defining a Planning Area is a means by which the City can communicate its concerns for the future of surrounding lands under the jurisdiction of the County or neighboring cities. The Planning Area may extend beyond the City's Sphere of Influence.

The Planning Area includes the City, the Sphere of Influence and surrounding county lands beyond the Sphere of Influence intended to remain unincorporated, where uses and activities impact the City. The Planning Area boundary is determined by geographic features, such as the Pacific Dunes, Pacific Ocean, Mad River, Fickle Hill ridgeline, and hydrological features such as the watersheds of Arcata's creeks (Figure LU-b). Other considerations for determining the Planning Area include preserving viewsheds and maintaining a greenbelt around the City.

The Urban Services Boundary. The Urban Services Boundary is a mapped limit line surrounding the City's developed and developing areas. It can also include the Sphere of Influence where urban development is planned. Inside the City limits, the boundary excludes areas inappropriate for urban development, such as agricultural lands and the community forest.



Where it extends beyond the City limits, it does not extend outside the City's Sphere of Influence. The boundary is determined by the City's interest in extending services and infrastructure (water, wastewater collection, police services, etc.) to urban uses. The City provides certain areas, such as Jacoby Creek, with "water only" services. The Urban Services Boundary encompasses the area wherein urban development may occur during the General Plan's twenty-year time frame.

Illustrative of City Limit, Urban Services Boundary, Sphere of Influence and Planning Area Boundary

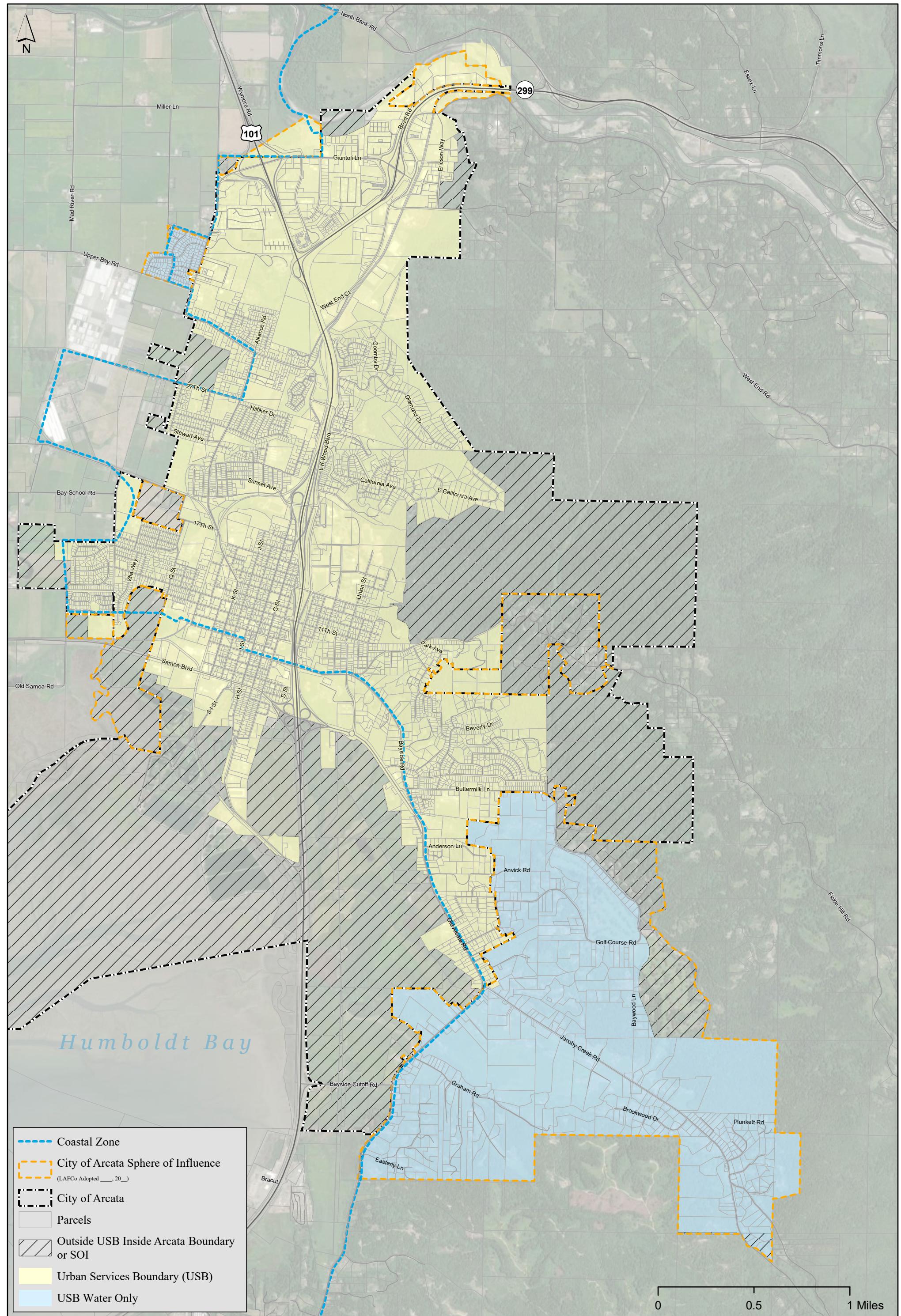
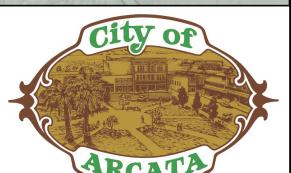


Figure GM-a

Sphere of Influence will be updated on
LAFCo Adoption

Created by Planwest Partners
Map Date: 7/2/2024

City of Arcata Urban Services



Relationship with Other General Plan Elements and Office of Planning and Research General Plan

Guidelines. The Growth Management Element includes guiding principles, policies, and implementation to ensure municipal services and management operations are coordinated concurrently with anticipated development and consistent with Land Use, Circulation, Housing and other element plans and policies. The Growth Management Element guides and sets parameters under which future development may occur, consistent with the Land Use Element. The Growth Management Element provides guidelines for analyzing future boundary changes, development project proposals and mitigation. The City can apply growth management guidance to prioritize public facilities and services access that enhances quality of life, including transportation, housing, parks, open space, trails, greenbelts, recreational facilities (including senior and youth centers), community centers, grocery stores, health care facilities, childcare centers, libraries, and cultural centers. Ensuring sufficient community facilities and support services is important to maintain social equity.

The Growth Management Element is consistent with state planning priorities (California Government Code section 65041.1) to promote equity, strengthen the economy, protect the environment, and promote public health and safety, as summarized below:

- (a) To promote infill development and equity by rehabilitating, maintaining, and improving existing infrastructure that supports infill development and appropriate reuse and redevelopment of previously developed, underutilized land presently served by transit, streets, water, sewer, and other essential services, particularly in underserved areas, and to preserving cultural and historic resources.
- (b) To protect environmental and agricultural resources by protecting, preserving, and enhancing natural resources, including working landscapes such as farm, range, and forest lands, natural lands such as wetlands, watersheds, wildlife habitats, and other wildlands, recreation lands such as parks, trails, greenbelts, and other open space, and landscapes with locally unique features and areas deserving special protection.
- (c) To encourage efficient development patterns by ensuring that any infrastructure associated with development, other than infill development, supports new development that does all of the following: uses land efficiently; is built adjacent to existing developed areas to the extent consistent with the priorities specified pursuant to subdivision; is located in an area appropriately planned for growth; is served by adequate transportation and other essential utilities and services; and minimizes ongoing costs to taxpayers.

2.2.2 POLICIES

The Growth Management Element contains the following policies:

- GM-1 Planning Area
- GM-2 Sphere of Influence
- GM-3 Annexation
- GM-4 Urban Services and Urban Services Boundary

POLICY GM-1 PLANNING AREA

Objective. Advocate for appropriate Planning Area land uses and management of surrounding creek watersheds, the Arcata Bottoms, and coastal areas, in recognition that they will affect Arcata's future community form. The intent is that land uses shall be limited to timber and agricultural production and natural resources management and development only at rural densities be approved within the Planning Area.

- GM-1a **Planning Area.** The Planning Area shall include all lands shown on Figure LU-b. The Planning Area includes lands where any future changes in use or management practices are likely to impact the City of Arcata. The City shall provide mapping showing the planning area boundary and request that all land use and development applications received by the County, or resource management plans received by other agencies, be referred to the City for review and comment. The City shall also advocate that the County implement policies and that property owners manage for the conservation of these unincorporated lands. This policy applies to unincorporated lands within the Planning Area.
- GM-1b **Referrals from Humboldt County.** The City shall review all development and infrastructure proposals affecting the Planning Area and communicate the City's position on these matters to the applicable decision-making body. Humboldt County shall be requested to refer all planning studies and applications for development in the Planning Area to the Arcata Community Development Department, for review and comment, prior to taking action.
- GM-1c **Land-use designations within the Planning Area.** The City shall request that the County of Humboldt retain timber, agricultural, and rural-designations on lands located within the Planning Area. The City shall request that the County adopt consistent land use designations for lands within the planning area, as shown on Figure LU-b.

GM-1d **Greenbelt.** The rural and agricultural lands within the Planning Area are designated by the City as open space or greenbelt. The intent is that such lands shall not be developed with urban densities or uses and that land uses shall be limited to timber and agricultural production and natural resources management and development only at rural densities be approved.

GM-1e **Resource Protection in the Planning Area.** Proposals which could affect the Planning Area's resources, including those resources addressed in the Resources Conservation and Management Element, shall be reviewed by the City. City review shall address the proposal's compatibility with the applicable General Plan policy. The City shall communicate the intent of this policy to agencies with jurisdiction



within the Planning Area (for example, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection for timber management, and the Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District for Humboldt Bay tidelands management) together with the policies in the Resource Conservation and Management Element.

POLICY GM-2 SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

Objective. Designate an appropriate amount of urban reserve land in the Sphere of Influence to provide for the ultimate development of the City.

GM-2a **Sphere of Influence.** The Sphere of Influence defines land eligible for annexation to the City in the future, shown on Figure GM-a. The City shall minimize land in the Sphere of Influence to accommodate future growth, consistent with the goals and policies of this plan. Annexation of property may not proceed unless or until such lands are within the Sphere of Influence.

GM-2b **Sphere of Influence updates and amendments.** The Local Agency Formation Commission updates the Sphere of Influence every five years, as necessary, but more frequently if appropriate. The City can also apply directly to the Local Agency Formation Commission for a Sphere of Influence amendment. Amendments to the Sphere of Influence shall be considered by the Planning Commission and recommended to the City Council, prior to Local Agency Formation Commission action. Any City decision to amend the Sphere of Influence shall be based on the following:

1. The area has an adequate supply of land to accommodate projected housing needs allocated by the Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG).
2. Any property owner may request that the City add their lands to the Sphere of Influence.
3. Any such proposal shall also identify the requested land use designations and any other necessary or appropriate General Plan amendments.
4. In considering such requests, and during each Sphere of Influence update, the City Council, upon Planning Commission recommendation, shall determine whether it would serve the public interest to designate additional lands to receive municipal services and be developed with urban uses.
5. A Sphere of Influence update, to include additional lands, shall be subject to environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.
6. A Sphere of Influence update may be considered concurrently with an annexation request.
7. Any Sphere of Influence adjustment must incorporate adequate open space and resource management provisions.

GM-2c **Areas in Sphere of Influence intended only for partial services.** Some Sphere of Influence areas are only for the purpose of receiving City water service, such as the Jacoby Creek residential area. Such areas are not to be considered for annexation during the 20-year time frame of this Plan.

GM-2d **City land-use designations.** The City's land use designations for parcels in the Sphere of Influence are shown in Figure LU-a. These designations have legal force and effect only upon annexation to the City.

GM-2e **Prezoning of Sphere of Influence parcels.** Lands in the Sphere of Influence shall not be prezoned until annexation is proposed. Prezonings shall apply corresponding City land use designations, or a General Plan Amendment would be required. The purpose shall be to provide maximum latitude to the City to determine the appropriate timing of expansion of the City boundaries, extension of services, and urban development.

GM-2f **County land-use and zoning designations in Sphere of Influence.** The City shall request that Humboldt County adopt agricultural, timber, natural resource, or other rural land use designations outside the Sphere of Influence and within the City's Greenbelt as a holding zone to limit development. The County's land use designations are legally binding unless annexation to the City is completed.

POLICY GM-3 ANNEXATIONS

Objective. Provide for logical annexations of unincorporated areas, within the City's Sphere of Influence and/or Planning Area, only when existing or proposed development is consistent with community character and City services can be adequately provided.

GM-3a City annexation procedure. The City prefers to consider annexation requests prior to Local Agency Formation Commission consideration. If property owner(s) request that the City initiate an annexation request to the Local Agency Formation Commission, the following City review procedures shall apply:

1. Initiation and City review prior to Local Agency Formation Commission application filing:
 - a. A petition must be signed by no less than twenty-five percent of the registered voters, or at least twenty-five percent of property owners who also own twenty-five percent of the assessed value of land within the territory proposed for annexation.
2. The Planning Commission shall review and make a recommendation on the proposed annexation to City Council.
3. Action shall be taken by City Council to pass a Resolution of Application to Local Agency Formation Commission for annexation or advise property owners that a City application will not be filed. Property owners may apply directly to Local Agency Formation Commission by petition in accordance with petition thresholds in the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000.
4. Following City Council approval, including any accompanying General Plan amendment, pre-zoning ordinance and/or environmental document, the City shall prepare and transmit an annexation request application to Local Agency Formation Commission for its consideration and decision.

GM-3b Required materials for consideration of non-urbanized land area annexations. The following shall apply to annexation proposals where the land proposed to be annexed to the City is not developed with urban land uses:

1. The City shall prepare an annexation study addressing items "a" through "f" listed below. The annexation study costs, including City administrative costs, shall be borne by the property owner(s) proposing the annexation.
 - a. A fiscal impacts analysis projecting revenues and expenditures for proposed development in the annexed territory. One-time capital costs of facilities, as well as operating costs and revenues, including tax revenues and parcel assessments, shall be evaluated;
 - b. A study and/or proposal for tax-sharing agreements with other taxing entities, such as the County;
 - c. An accompanying General Plan Amendment, if requested or appropriate;

- d. A proposed preliminary development plan, including phasing if appropriate;
- e. An assessment of the City's capacity to provide facilities and services, including: wastewater collection and treatment; stormwater management; water supply and distribution; streets and circulation; fire protection; police services; parks; and others as appropriate;
- f. A prezoning ordinance.

2. An environmental document pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.
3. A Planned Development, master plan, or other comprehensive plan for development may be required for any land area greater than five acres.

GM-3c Criteria for annexation of undeveloped land areas. The City shall apply for annexation of undeveloped lands only if the following criteria are met. The proposed annexation area shall:

1. Be within Urban Services Boundary and adjacent to existing urban development; unless the annexation area is City owned land for the purposes of resource/habitat management or for the purpose of fulfilling the City's greenbelt policies.
2. Not exceed the City's capacity to provide services and infrastructure to accommodate proposed development.
3. Have annexation timed so that availability of services and infrastructure is concurrent with need.
4. Have a positive or neutral fiscal impact, or other overriding public benefits.
5. Be in compliance with General Plan policies.
6. Not include prime agriculture land (Storie Index 60 or higher) other than with designation and prezone as Agriculture Exclusive [A-E], Natural Resources [NR], or Public Facility [PF]. The Natural Resource and Public Facilities designation may be applied for uses consistent with the Open Space Element, the Resource Conservation Element, and City plans adopted pursuant to these Elements.

GM-3d Criteria for annexation of areas with existing urban development. The City shall apply for annexation of existing urban development only if the following criteria are met. The proposed annexation area shall:

1. Be within the Urban Services Boundary and adjacent to existing city boundary.
2. Have facilities brought up to City standard prior to or concurrent with annexation.
3. Have costs of service extensions borne entirely by owners of annexing properties and not by existing City taxpayers or ratepayers, or, have a financing mechanism in place prior to annexation.

POLICY GM-4 URBAN SERVICES AND URBAN SERVICES BOUNDARY

Objective. Define the boundary or City services and urban uses, within the City's incorporated area and Sphere of Influence. Extend City services-only when they will not exceed the City's planned system capacities.

GM-4a Urban Services Boundary. The City shall maintain an Urban Services Boundary beyond which urban services shall not be provided (except as provided for in Policy GM-4b), and urban development shall not be approved (see Figure GM-a). Rural residential development may be approved outside the Urban Services Boundary only if the development would not require the extension of water, sewer, and other public facilities. The area within the Urban Services Boundary shall be annexed at the time of development.

Any Urban Services Boundary changes shall be based on development capacity analysis of site characteristics such as soils, vegetation, topography (slope) and natural hazards, availability of public water, sewer and other municipal services, existing property lines, existing land use, and development potential. The Urban Services Boundary shall not be extended into the prime agricultural land or flood-prone areas on the west and south, nor extend past the Mad River on the north. To the east, the Urban Services Boundary shall not be extended into the steeper portions of Fickle Ridge, as designated on the General Plan Map. Parts of the Jacoby Creek and Bayside areas are included within the Urban Services Boundary.

Only the Agriculture Exclusive [A-E], Natural Resource [NR], and Public Facilities [PF] land use designations shall be applied to areas outside the Urban Services Boundary and within the Coastal Zone.

GM-4b Services outside City boundary. The City shall not extend sewer or water infrastructure, or provide new service connections outside the City Limits except under the following conditions:

1. The City may provide an emergency sewer or water line extension, when approved by the Local Agency Formation Commission, under the following conditions:
 - a. The property is located within the City Urban Services Boundary for water and sewer.
 - b. The property is adjacent to the City limits.
 - c. The on-site sewage disposal system has failed.
 - d. It is not feasible to replace or repair the on-site sewage disposal system as evidenced by a letter from the County of Humboldt Division of Environmental Health.
 - e. The on-site sewage disposal system failure is considered a health hazard

by the County of Humboldt Division of Environmental Health.

- f. The owner has submitted a complete application to the City of Arcata for annexation of the property.
- g. Local Agency Formation Commission has approved the emergency sanitary sewer connection.
- h. The sewer connection shall be sized to only accommodate the failed system.

2. The City may contract to provide sewer services to other service districts subject to the following guidelines:
 - a. Only those areas with existing contracts as of December 31, 1998, shall be served.
 - b. No new contracts for services shall be approved.
 - c. No new connections shall be allowed to the sewer lines in the area between the City Limits and the Arcata Planning Area Boundary.

GM-4c Requirements and procedures for modifying Urban Services Boundary. The following findings must be made to modify the Urban Services Boundary:

1. There are existing or planned urban uses for the area being considered.
2. There is sufficient existing or planned infrastructure capacity to extend water, sewer, police protection, and other services, without reducing service standards for other areas.
3. The area to be served is adjacent to existing urban development.
4. The area to be served is within the City limits or Sphere of Influence.
5. City services extensions will not adversely impact natural resources in the area.

2.2.3 IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

#	IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIME FRAME
GM -1	<p>Annexation Procedures (LUC Amendment) Update City annexation criteria and procedures in the City's Land Use Code for consistency with General Plan policies.</p>	Community Development Dept./ Planning Commission	Year 1
GM -2	<p>Sphere of Influence/Planning Area Application Review Continue to participate in the County application review process that provides for City review and input on all proposed actions in Sphere of Influence/Planning Area lands. Submit mapping showing the Planning Area boundary and request that all land use and development applications received by the County be referred to the City.</p>	Community Development Dept.	Year 1 & Ongoing

GM -3	Jacoby Creek Water Service Area Develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the City of Arcata and the Jacoby Creek County Water District that addresses how services will be provided long term once the Davis-Grunsky loan payoff occurs.	Community Development Dept.	Year 5
GM -4	Update Sphere of Influence Boundary Coordinate with Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) to comprehensively evaluate the Sphere of Influence boundary to ensure that City growth and resource protection objectives are being met. In coordination with LAFCo as part of the next municipal service review and Sphere of Influence update process evaluate potential Sphere of Influence reductions in the following areas: east of Aldergrove/Ericson Way, Bay School Road, east of Buttermilk Lane near Baywood golf course, and Bracut.	Community Development Dept.	Every 5 Years