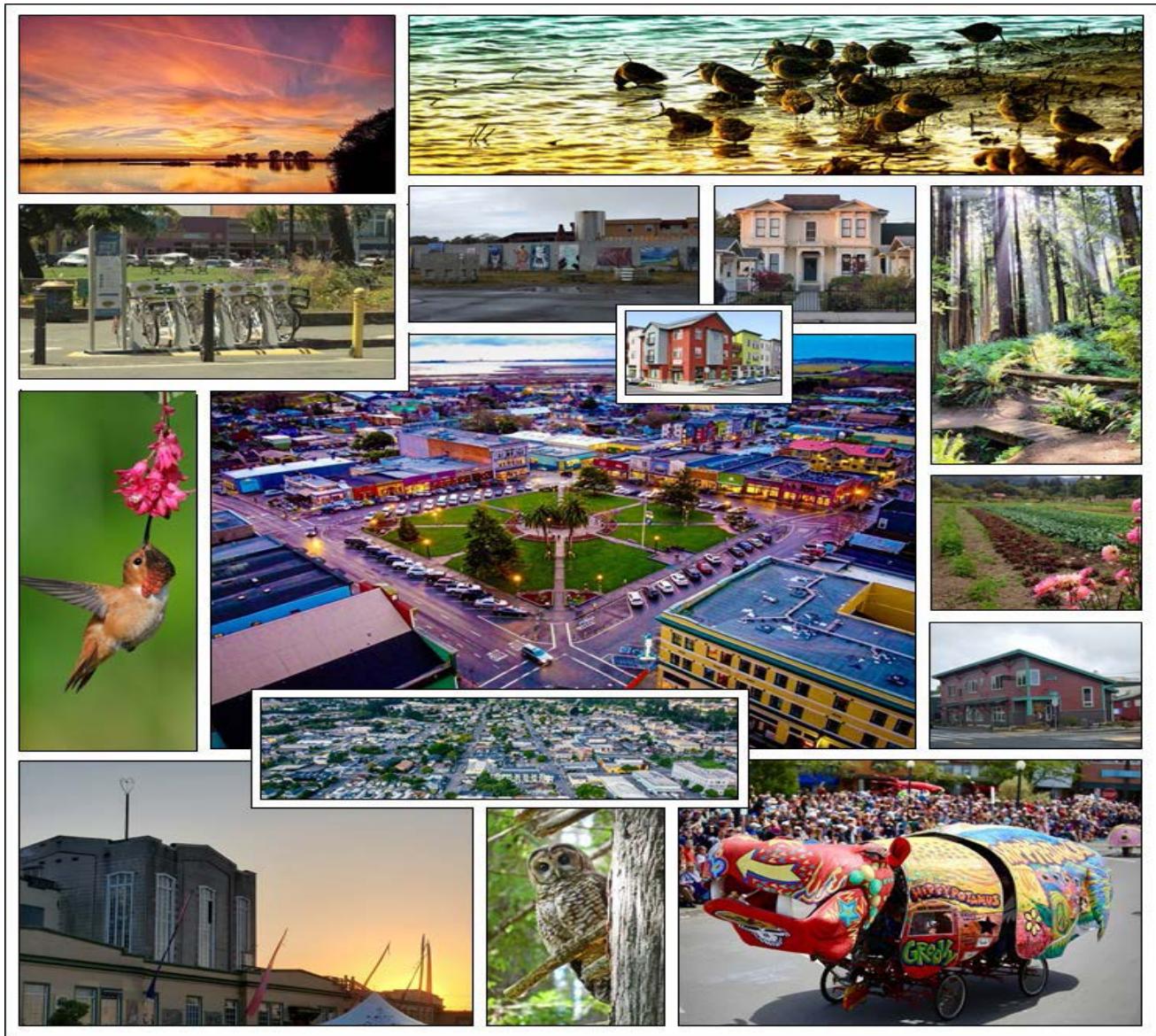


City of Arcata General Plan

2024 Annual Progress Report to the State Office of Planning and Research



Planning Commission Approved: March 11, 2025
City Council Adopted: March 19, 2025

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Arcata General Plan shapes how the city will look, function, provide services, and manage resources over the next 20 years. As the City's guiding framework for land use and physical development, it serves as the legal foundation for specific plans, subdivision regulations, and zoning ordinances, ensuring consistency across local land use policies. Comprehensive in scope, the General Plan reflects the core values that will direct Arcata's future growth—both in physical form and community services.

The City of Arcata is pleased to present the **2024 General Plan Annual Progress Report**, which highlights the City's efforts to implement and update the General Plan. This report fulfills state requirements under Government Code Section 65400, mandating that local jurisdictions submit an annual report, approved by their legislative bodies, to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) and the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD).

Prepared by the Community Development Department, this report details Arcata's progress in implementing the General Plan, advancing Housing Element goals, and planning for upcoming updates to various plan elements. The Planning Commission will review the report at their meeting on March 11, 2025, and the City Council will consider adoption via resolution on March 19, 2025.

The City of Arcata adopted a comprehensive update to the General Plan on July 17, 2024. The updated plan includes 15 elements organized in six (6) chapters:

- 1) Community Vision Statement
- 2) Community Development
- 3) Housing and Human Services
- 4) Environmental Quality and Management
- 5) Design and Historical Preservation
- 6) Health and Safety

SECTION 1. HOUSING ELEMENT

This section reviews the City's progress toward meeting its Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) goals for the current 8-year cycle (2019-2027). The **Housing Element Annual Progress Report (APR)** has been submitted separately to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). However, a summary of housing production in 2024 by income level is provided below.

In 2024, the City of Arcata issued **building permits for 22 housing units**. Cumulatively, Arcata has now **exceeded its RHNA allocations for very low-income and moderate-income housing**. Only **five additional low-income units** are needed to fully meet that category's target for this planning period. While the City has made strong progress in lower-income categories, **above-moderate-income housing production continues to lag**. Despite this, overall RHNA progress remains positive—Arcata has permitted **83% of its total RHNA allocation**, exceeding the expected benchmark of 75% at this point in the cycle.

The City remains committed to supporting housing production across all income levels through policy initiatives, streamlining efforts, and incentives to encourage development where it is most needed.

Arcata's RHNA Allocation		RHNA Allocation by Income Level	2024 Housing Element Report								
Income Level			2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total Units to Date (19-2024)	Total Remaining RHNA by Income Level	Percentage Completed
Very Low	Deed Restricted	142	0	43	36	78	0		167	0	118%
	Non-Deed Restricted		0	5	0	5	0	0			
Low	Deed Restricted	95	0	0	1	60	0		90	5	95%
	Non-Deed Restricted		10	2	0	2	8	7			
Moderate	Deed Restricted	111	0	0	0	0	0		144	0	130%
	Non-Deed Restricted		6	10	3	10	110	5			
Above Moderate		262	9	10	14	20	41	10	104	158	40%
Total Units		610	25	70	54	175	159	22	505	163	83%

SECTION 2. GENERAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE PROGRESS 2024

Implementation Measure	Responsible Party	Time Frame	2024 Status
Land Use			
LU-1 Zoning Amendments Revise the City's Land Use Code and other zoning codes so zoning districts and land use regulations are consistent with the General Plan land use designations, densities, primary and secondary uses, building intensity, lot sizes, and coverages.	Community Development Dept., Planning Commission	Year 1	Received \$1 million HUD Pathways to Removing Obstacles to Housing (PRO Housing) grant for creation of an updated Land Use Code, ADU ordinance and loan program, and Valley West Form-Based Code.
LU-9 Inclusionary Zoning Adopt an ordinance implementing Inclusionary Zoning citywide requiring at a minimum 3% of the units reserved for very low-income, 6% for low-income, and 10% for moderate income households. The requirements will apply to projects with 15 or more base density units. The Council expects this measure to be initiated within three months of adoption of the General Plan.	Community Development Dept.	Immediate upon adoption	Planning Commission made recommendations on the draft Inclusionary Zoning ordinance at their July 9, 2024 meeting. City Council and Planning Commission discussed Inclusionary Zoning at their October 30, 2024 Study Session.
Circulation			
CM-7 Rail Right-of-way Coordination with Great Redwood Trail Agency Coordinate with the Great Redwood Trail Agency in planning for use of the former Trail Agency rail right-of-way for a multi-use trail.	Engineering Dept.	Ongoing	Completed 60 % PS&E phase for the Annie and Mary Trail project.
CM-10 Improve accessibility and mobility The City shall undertake a comprehensive program to assess and improve accessibility and mobility for people of varied physical abilities and disabilities.	Engineering Dept.	Year 5	Implemented free bus rides from June 1 - July 31, 2024, through Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP).

Implementation Measure	Responsible Party	Time Frame	2024 Status
<p>CM-11 Safe, convenient, connected and multi-modal transportation</p> <p>Ensure current versions of the Regional Transportation Plan, Humboldt Regional Bicycle Plan, ADA Transition Plan and Local Road Safety Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus pedestrian and bicycle transportation infrastructure improvements near primary areas of activity, including schools, town centers, commercial clusters, and workplace districts. 2. Ensure public health and equity considerations are included as part of transportation network improvement decisions, including accessibility and mobility considerations for people of diverse abilities and disabilities. 3. Plan capital improvements that will ensure sidewalks and other pedestrian routes are continuous, creating a cohesive network. Continue to assess existing sidewalks and bike lanes (or existent lacks thereof) throughout the City and identify those most in need of construction or improvement as part of yearly Capital Program planning. 4. Identify opportunities for the creation of a non- vehicular network of paved and/or unpaved trails, paths, or other travel-ways through blocks or open spaces to reduce travel distances and create safer routes for pedestrians and bicyclists. 	Engineering Dept., Transportation Safety Committee	Ongoing	Continued to make progress on successful transition of the City Transit System to HTA.

Implementation Measure	Responsible Party	Time Frame	2024 Status
<p>CM-12 Increase Transportation Accessibility</p> <p>1. Plan capital improvements that will remove physical barriers to and/or build facilities for walking and biking along transportation routes—especially those with higher volumes of pedestrians and bicyclists, routes known to have concentrations of people without vehicles, and along routes that provide access to major destinations including local schools.</p> <p>2. Require new projects to build transportation network improvements for pedestrians, bicyclists, and wheelchairs on sites and along adjacent streets as part of new developments/improvements (and especially those in areas where there are clusters of activity and/or existing transit stops).</p>	Engineering Dept., Transportation Safety Committee	Ongoing	<p>1. The Engineering Dept. constructed the installation of speed tables on South I Street through the Arcata Marsh to slow traffic for marsh users.</p> <p>2. Completed paving (1836 tons of asphalt) and Complete Streets improvements on City streets including the Plaza, LK Wood, and 13th and 14th Streets.</p> <p>3. Completed construction of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. 8th and 9th Streets Improvement Project ii. Old Arcata Road Pesterian Improvements Project.

Implementation Measure	Responsible Party	Time Frame	2024 Status
<p>CM-13 Targeted Improvements to Existing Transportation Network</p> <p>1. Increase street lighting around Arcata to increase safety of walking/biking during early mornings and evenings, especially those with higher volumes of pedestrians and bicyclists, routes known to have concentrations of people without vehicles, school zones, and along routes that provide access to major destinations.</p> <p>2. When designing new or improving existing streets, implement complete streets policy to incorporate pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements. Ensure that facilities and design promote and support mobility by people whose mobility is impaired, who move slowly, or who need mobility assistance. Use cost-effective street improvements such as striping, cones, and temporary features to test improvements throughout the City in a cost-effective manner and address needs temporarily when funding does not permit a more permanent solution.</p> <p>3. When designing new or improving existing streets, use traffic-calming techniques (such as narrowing traffic lanes or adding flashing beacons/radar signs) to improve street safety and access (especially in residential neighborhoods, school zones and areas with high pedestrian traffic).</p> <p>4. Consider developing City-operated traffic lights with appropriate signals for people with impaired vision, hearing, or mobility.</p>	Engineering Dept., Transportation Safety Committee	Ongoing	Awarded \$25M Reconnect Arcata grant via The Reconnecting Communities: Highways to Boulevards (RC:H2B) grant program. City received recognition at the State level.
Public Facilities			
<p>PF-1 Urban Water Management Plan</p> <p>Update the City Urban Water Management Plan, at least every five years, to assess system efficiency and ensure there is adequate storage capacity and fire flow. The Management Plan will also include economic incentives, education programs, and monitoring measures to promote water conservation.</p>	Environmental Services Dept.	Every 5 Years	Completed the Tank 1C project greatly expanding the City's water storage and several water storage maintenance projects.

Implementation Measure	Responsible Party	Time Frame	2024 Status
PF-2 Wastewater Collection System Maintenance Program Update the City Wastewater Collection System Maintenance Program, at least every five years, to assess collection system capacity and condition, ensure there is adequate treatment and disposal capacity, and recommend improvements necessary to reduce groundwater infiltration and surface water inflow. The Maintenance Program will also include economic incentives, education programs, and monitoring measures to reduce wastewater generation.	Environmental Services Dept.	Every 5 Years	1. Made significant progress on the Phase 1 of the City's Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrade Project including: ultra violet Disinfection system; electrical building, rehabilitation of primary Clarifier # 2, headworks bypass and installed piles for new headworks. 2. Transitioned fully to UV disinfection of wastewater effluent and no longer need to use chlorine for wastewater disinfection.
PF-5 Arcata Wastewater Treatment Facility Operations and Facilities Plan Review and update the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) operations and facilities plan periodically to take into account changes associated with sea level rise and climate change	Environmental Services Dept.	Ongoing	In November 2024 the Environmental Services and Community Development Departments hosted a public workshop aimed to involve the public in the draft Sea Level Rise Risk Assessment and AWTF Upgrades Feasibility Study.
Gateway Area Plan			
GA-1.1 Gateway Zoning Code	Community Development Dept	2022 to 2023	Complete, adopted Summer 2024
GA-2.1 Create Community Benefits Program	Community Development Dept	2022 to 2023	Adoption planned for early 2025

Implementation Measure	Responsible Party	Time Frame	2024 Status
Housing Element			
HE-1 Promotion of Owner-Occupied Units Increase proportion of owner-occupied units in Arcata by increasing the number of homeowners living in the City and reducing the number of absentee homeowners	Community Development Department, Planning Commission, City Council	2019 and Ongoing	Adopted CalHOME First Time Homebuyer Mortgage Assistance for Mobilehome Guidelines and began accepting applications.
HE-2 Housing Review and Rehabilitation Program Identify neighborhoods with housing requiring rehabilitation, then offer financial assistance to lower income households for housing rehabilitation through code enforcement and a rental inspection program.	Community Development Department, Redwood Community Action Agency (RCAA), HBHDC, Environmental Services	Apply annually or as funding becomes available.	1. Adopted Manufactured Housing Opportunity and Revitalization (MORE) Program Grant guidelines and began accepting applications to rehabilitate mobile homes for some of our most vulnerable citizens. 2. Implemented City's Residential Rental Inspection Program (RRIP), with more than 1,500 registered to date to ensure rentals meet minimum requirements
HE-5 Development and Acquisition of Affordable Multifamily Housing Provide programs for development of multifamily housing for very low-, low-, and moderate-income tenants.	Community Development Department	2019 and Ongoing	Provided Permanent Local Housing Allocation (PLHA) funds for pre-development activities for the Roger's Garage affordable housing project.

Implementation Measure	Responsible Party	Time Frame	2024 Status
HE-11 Infill Development Program Meet Arcata's housing needs through infill development as opposed to development in the City's green belt.	Community Development Dept., Building Division, City Council, Housing Authority of the County of Humboldt	2019 and Ongoing	The Gateway Area Plan was adopted by City Council July 17, 2024.
HE-12 Mixed Use Meet housing needs by combining commercial and retail uses with residential units.	Community Development Dept., Building Division, Planning Commission, City Council	2019 and bi-annually	The Gateway Area Plan was adopted by City Council July 17, 2024.
HE-17 Address the Shelter and Other Needs of the Homeless Population Continue to identify needs of the homeless population, including homeless students and encourage the development of housing for the homeless on the parcels preapproved for Emergency Housing and transitional housing in other areas zoned multifamily.	Community Development Dept., Environmental Services, Planning Commission, City Council	Review zoning ordinance revisions by 2020 and make revisions by 2021.	The City facilitates the Homeless Services Working Group in order to coordinate with service providers and other local homeless advocate groups.

Implementation Measure	Responsible Party	Time Frame	2024 Status
HE-19 Residential Development Information Program and Development Review Process Streamlining Make information readily available and reduce processing time for residential development.	Community Development Dept., Building Division, Historic and Design Review Commission, Planning Commission, City Council	2019 and annually, The SB 35 written policy or procedure will be completed by January 2023	The Gateway Area Plan was adopted by City Council July 17, 2024.
HE-25 Residential Uses and Definitions Evaluate Land Use Code definitions and allowed uses to ensure compliance with state law (e.g. ADU processes)	Community Development Dept.	December 2022	Received \$1 million HUD Pathways to Removing Obstacles to Housing (PRO Housing) grant for creation of an updated Land Use Code, ADU ordinance and loan program, and Valley West Form-Based Code
Parks and Recreation			
PR-4 Increase Use of Public Spaces In collaboration with community organizations, establish a calendar of City-sponsored programs and events taking place in public spaces, including offerings that encourage physical activity, educational opportunities, arts programming, and community outreach.	Environmental Services Dept.	Ongoing	1. Redwood Day Camp was reignited at full camp capacity at the newly renovated Redwood Park. 2. Hosted free drop-in and pop-up programming in Valley West including youth basketball skills development at Valley West Park and Food Truck Fridays at Carlson Park.

Implementation Measure	Responsible Party	Time Frame	2024 Status
<p>PR-6 Park Development and Maintenance Continue to implement Park and Recreation Master Plan recommendations relating to park development and maintenance, including those for Master Planning and Design, universal design upgrades, Natural Resource Management, and Maintenance Practices.</p>	Environmental Services Dept.	Ongoing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Transformed Carlson Park into a recreation destination for all ages with a river-themed playground, pickleball courts, special event area and river access. Renovated Redwood Park with a large-scale playground replacement and creation of a bicycle pump track. Completed the replacement of playground equipment at two neighborhood parks Windsong and Westwood. Initiated construction on the Arcata Ball Park to enhance accessibility and improve the façade and entry plaza.
<p>PR-8 Natural features and built facilities Prioritize improvements to areas with comparatively less open space/public facilities access as part of the ongoing established public space maintenance schedule</p>	Parks and Recreation Dept.	Ongoing	Transformed Carlson Park into a recreation destination for all ages with a river-themed playground, pickleball courts, special event area and river access.

Implementation Measure	Responsible Party	Time Frame	2024 Status
Air Quality			
AQ-4 Climate Action Plan Adopt a Climate Action Plan and collaborate regionally to implement the plan.	Community Development Dept. and City Council	Year 1 and ongoing	<p>1. Community Development staff participated in the public hearings for the Countywide CAP in Fall of 2024 including a public meeting on September 10. An updated draft CAP was reviewed by the County BOS in October 2024 and the CAP DEIR comment period will end April 5, 2025.</p> <p>2. In addition, the Environmental Services Department completed a re-inventory of the Barnum and Lucchesi forest carbon projects under the Climate Action Reserve.</p>
Design			
D-2 Valley West Public Improvements Program The City of Arcata shall work to obtain funding to develop a specific public improvements program to improve the appearance of Valley East and Valley West, and Giuntoli Boulevards. These improvements may include uniform landscaping, pedestrian enhancements, and directional signage.	Environmental Services and Engineering Departments	Year 2	Awarded a contract to Housing Tools to create a plan for a Valley West Community Center & released community survey.
Public Safety			
PS-9 Brownfield sites Record and map sites having known contaminants, contingent upon funds availability.	Community Development Dept.	Year 2	Received \$399,235 Department of Toxic Substance Control's Equitable Community Revitalization (ECRG) grant for environmental analysis at Butcher Slough.

Implementation Measure	Responsible Party	Time Frame	2024 Status
<p>PS-13 Community policing</p> <p>1. Continually publicize the training that APD officers complete on an ongoing basis related to racial equity, implicit bias, cultural humility, and interacting with individuals who have mental illnesses, intellectual disabilities, and substance use disorders.</p> <p>2. Increase support for programs for in field mental health response, which allows Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) Behavioral Health Branch staff to work with the APD in responding to incidents that involve people with mental/behavioral health issues and/or substance use disorders.</p> <p>3. Increase support for programs such as the City of Arcata's Community Ambassador Program, which has a stated mission of welcoming all community members to Arcata businesses and inviting and guiding them to retail, restaurant, entertainment, recreational, and supportive options and services all while enhancing the beautification and safety of Arcata.</p> <p>4. Raise awareness around the APD's internship program, available to Cal Poly Humboldt and College of the Redwoods students, which allows participants to collaborate on developing best practices in policing and to share information on student expectations of law enforcement in Arcata.</p> <p>5. Raise awareness around APD's ride-a-long program, available to any member of the community, which allows residents to see how APD delivers public safety services, meet APD staff, and ask questions.</p> <p>Incentivize City staff and APD officers to engage with local cultural learning opportunities and equity trainings outside of those mandated in their line of duty.</p>	Police Department, City Manager's Department	Ongoing	The City's Police Department participated in monthly meetings with Cal Poly Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion to improve communication with the university.

Implementation Measure	Responsible Party	Time Frame	2024 Status
Health			
H-1 Access to services 1. Identify opportunities to cross-promote local health resources on the City website and in City facilities. 2. Identify opportunities for Arcata City Council and staff participation in coalitions and stakeholder groups addressing health within Arcata and the North Coast Region. 3. Pursue partnerships to create centers equitably distributed throughout the City that provide resources to the community and makes residents feel connected, welcome, supported, and cared for. 4. The City shall work with existing healthcare institutions and medical practices in Arcata to retain services and improve access to them.	City Manager's Office and Community Development Dept.	Ongoing	The Environmental Services Department partnered with Changing Tides Family Services to provide our highest number of income-qualified enrollments in City of Arcata Summer Camps.
H-5 Support Arcata arts & artists 1. Implement the Arcata Strategic Arts Plan (ASAP) with intermittent re-evaluations of priority projects. 2. Identify and pursue sources of funding that could be used to support arts organizations and endeavors in Arcata. 3. Explore funding sources and possible locations for the development of artist housing/live-work spaces in Arcata. 4. Prioritize support of intersectional arts and equity projects/collaborations in Arcata area schools.	City Manager's Office and Community Development Dept.	Ongoing	Implemented the 2024 Call for Art with murals completed at Carlson Park and the Arcata Library and a community performance provided at Redwood Park. Additional sculptures and murals will be installed by artists in 2025.

Implementation Measure	Responsible Party	Time Frame	2024 Status
<p>H-6 Equitable City operations</p> <p>1. Provide equity, diversity, inclusion, bias, and/or cultural competency training to City staff and elected/appointed officials on a regular basis.</p> <p>2. Continue supporting the equity arcata network. Alter job descriptions to include involvement with equity arcata in key City staff positions that integrate well with the collective's working groups.</p> <p>3. Scope and initiate an inclusive, community-driven process to update the Draft Solution Set addressing current racial inequities in Arcata, and assessing progress made since its initial drafting.</p>	City Manager's Office - Personnel	Ongoing	Hired new full-time Equity Arcata Manager.

SECTION 3. GENERAL PLAN UPDATES

A comprehensive update to the General Plan was adopted by the City Council on July 17, 2024, marking the first full update since 1999. This long-overdue revision reflects the City's commitment to sustainable growth, community identity, and environmental stewardship.

This update introduced two significant new elements:

- **Health Element** – Recognizing the connection between the built environment and public health, this element focuses on promoting walkability, access to healthy food, safe housing, and equitable healthcare opportunities. It integrates strategies to reduce environmental hazards, support mental well-being, and enhance active transportation options.
- **Gateway Area Plan** – As a key implementation component, this area-specific plan provides a framework for high-density, mixed-use infill development near the City's core. It emphasizes pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, sustainable infrastructure, and a mix of housing options to support economic vitality and climate resilience. To ensure predictable, high-quality development, the City also adopted a Form-Based Code for the Gateway Area, guiding urban design and land use based on physical form rather than conventional zoning regulations.

The updated General Plan is rooted in three core priorities:

1. **Encouraging Infill Development** – The General Plan 2045 vision prioritizes growth within existing urban areas to reduce sprawl, support public transit, and maximize infrastructure efficiency. Policies incentivize redevelopment of underutilized sites while preserving the City's historic and cultural character.
2. **Building a Sense of Place and Culture** – Community engagement shaped a vision for neighborhoods that reflect local identity, support the arts, and foster social interaction. The updated elements emphasize high-quality urban design, public spaces, and pedestrian-oriented development to create vibrant, welcoming places.
3. **Preserving Open Space** – The update reinforces protections for agricultural lands, natural habitats, and scenic resources. It promotes conservation easements, sustainable land management, and greenbelt strategies to maintain the region's ecological integrity and recreational opportunities.

The General Plan update was made possible through multiple funding sources, including:

- **Sustainable Agricultural Land Conservation (SALC) Grant** – Awarded by the California Department of Conservation, this grant supported updates to the General Plan that reduce farmland conversion and promote compact, efficient urban development. The General Plan updates strengthened conservation and infill policies.

- **SB 2, Local Early Action Planning (LEAP) and Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) Grants** – Awarded by the California Department of Housing and Community Development, these funds were instrumental in developing housing-friendly policies, streamlining permitting processes, and updating zoning regulations in the Gateway Area form-based code to align with state housing goals.

This comprehensive update lays the foundation for a more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient future, ensuring that the City continues to evolve while maintaining its unique character and quality of life.