

INTRODUCTION

The Arcata General Plan: 2020 will help shape how the city of Arcata will look, function, provide services, and manage resources for the next 20 years. The plan is the City's "constitution" for physical development and change within the existing and future city boundaries. The plan is a legal mandate that governs both private and public actions. The general plan is atop the hierarchy of local government laws regulating land use. Other laws and policies, such as specific plans, subdivision regulations, and the zoning ordinance are subordinate to, and must be consistent with, the general plan. Comprehensive in scope, the plan conveys the fundamental values that public decision-makers will use to guide the City's evolution, from its physical development to the ever-changing network of services provided to its citizens.



AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

California State law requires cities and counties to prepare and adopt a general plan. The Government Code Sections requiring general plans are listed and summarized in the box on the following page.

PLANNING COMMISSION & CITY COUNCIL REVIEW & ADOPTION

The City of Arcata Planning Commission conducted public hearings and reviewed the Draft General Plan prepared at the direction of the City's General Plan and Specialized Task Forces. They forwarded a Planning Commission Draft to the City Council. After conducting their own public hearings, the Council adopted this General Plan on October 4, 2000.

Government Code § 65300. Each planning agency shall prepare and the legislative body of each county and city shall adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan.

Government Code § 65300.5. The Legislature intends that the general plan and elements and parts thereof comprise an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies for the adopting agency.

Government Code § 65300.7. Requires planning agencies and legislative bodies to implement this article in ways that accommodate local conditions and circumstances, while meeting minimum requirements.

Government Code § 65302. The general plan shall consist of a statement of development policies and shall include a diagram or diagrams and text setting forth objectives, principles, standards, and plan proposals. The plan shall include the following elements:

Land Use	Circulation	Open Space	Safety
Housing	Conservation	Noise	

Government Code § 65303. The general plan may include any other elements or address any other subjects which, in the judgment of the legislative body, relate to the physical development of the county or city.

California Coastal Act. Public Resources Code § 3000 et. seq. The General Plan must comport with legislative policies relating to the California Coastal Act (see box on next page).

LOCAL COASTAL LAND USE PLAN

A large portion of Arcata lies within the California Coastal Zone. The Coastal Act of 1976 requires the City to have a Local Coastal Program certified by the State Coastal Commission. The Local Coastal Program consists of two parts. The first part is the Coastal Land Use Plan comprised of goals and regulatory policies. The second part is a set of implementing ordinances to carry out the policies of the Coastal Land Use Plan. The Arcata General Plan: 2020 is a combined document meeting both the State General Plan requirements and serving as the Coastal Land Use Plan portion of the City's Local Coastal Program [LCP]. Policies which are a part of the LCP are designated with a wave symbol. 

Chapter three of the Coastal Act, "Coastal Resource Planning and Management Policies," provides the standards for the review and certification of the Coastal Land Use Plan. These standards are briefly summarized in the following box. A matrix (Table I-1 Coastal Policy Matrix) located at the end of the Introduction lists Coastal Land Use Plan policies, together with the specific Coastal Act requirements to which each policy is addressed. Various plan maps and diagrams throughout the plan show the boundary of the Coastal Zone.

California Coastal Act

The Coastal Act's policies guide coastal zone conservation and development decisions to protect California's coastal resources and provide for their wise use. These state policies call for:

- Providing for maximum public access to and recreational use of the coast, consistent with private rights and environmental protection.
- Protecting marine and land resources- including wetlands, rare and endangered habitat areas, environmentally sensitive areas, tidepools, and stream channels.
- Maintaining productive coastal agricultural lands.
- Directing new housing and other development to urbanized areas with adequate services rather than allowing a scattered, sprawling, wasteful pattern of subdivision.
- Protecting the scenic beauty of coastal landscape.
- Locating any needed coastal energy and industrial facilities where they will have the least adverse impact.
- Designating coastal dependent development, where appropriate.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

The Arcata General Plan 2020 consists of six chapters which arrange thirteen elements into related groups, as shown in Figure I-a. In addition to the seven required elements identified in Government Code § 65302, this General Plan includes six optional elements:

Growth Management (Chapter 2)	Design (Chapter 5)
Air Quality (Chapter 3)	Parks and Recreation (Chapter 3)
Public Facilities and Infrastructure (Chapter 2)	Historical Preservation (Chapter 5)

The required Housing Element and the optional Parks and Recreation Element were not revised as part of this update. The Housing Element (adopted January 6, 1993) and Parks and Recreation Element (adopted November 16, 1994) are in separate documents.

Each element begins with an introduction, which includes an overview, guiding principles and goals. The introduction is followed by a detailed policy section and concludes with a section identifying implementation measures which require future actions. All elements have equal weight under the law and are designed to be consistent with each other.

The previous comprehensive update of the General Plan was completed over twenty years ago. Since that time, several of the elements were individually updated and several implementing plans have been adopted by the City. These implementing plans include:

Community Forest Management Plan	Creeks Management Plan
Drainage Master Plan	Source Reduction and Recycling Element

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN CREATING THE PLAN

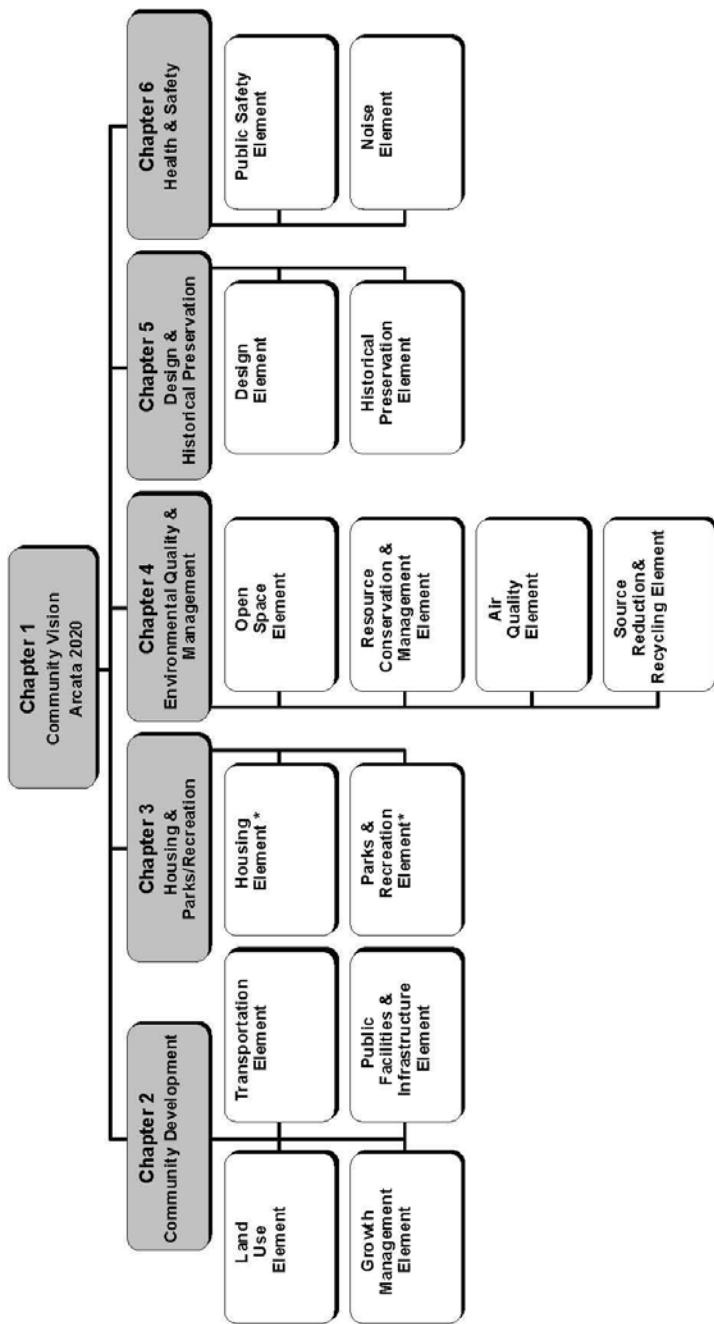
Preparation of this General Plan was a community effort, guided initially by General Plan Task Forces. Task Force-sponsored neighborhood forums, and a community-wide "visioning" and goal-setting workshop were held to collect community input. Community representatives, especially the 34 members of the General Plan Task Force and three specialized Task Forces (Environmental Policy, Health and Safety, and Design and Historical Preservation) volunteered countless hours throughout the phases of the plan's preparation. The final adopted plan followed numerous public hearings by the Planning Commission and City Council, where additional community input was received and incorporated.

The City of Arcata made General Plan preparation an open process with many opportunities for review and comment. Opportunities for public participation were incorporated into all phases of the General Plan's progress. Public participation was initiated by appointment of citizens to the General Plan and Specialized Task Forces. This was followed by five neighborhood forums, held in November and December of 1996, to gather citizen input. A community-wide workshop, held in April, 1997, and attended by more than 130 community members, helped to define goals and overall direction. The Task Forces held more than 100 regular meetings, all open to the public.

The four Task Forces convened regularly to complete a Preliminary Draft of the General Plan, which was submitted to the Planning Commission and the City Council, in April 1998. The Commission and the Council held a General Plan study session in April 1998 to review Task Force recommendations, after which the Preliminary Draft Plan was the subject of public review and discussion at two neighborhood workshops in May and June. The Task Forces reviewed input from these workshops and completed their revisions to be incorporated into the public hearing draft of the General Plan. The Public Hearing Draft, along with an Environmental Impact Report, was completed in September 1998.

The Planning Commission (pictured, from left to right: Jack Hitt, Aldaron Laird, Carlol Dellabalma, John Graves, Elizabeth Conner, Robert Ellint, and Ann King Smith) conducted hearings for the General Plan starting in early 1999.



FIGURE I - a GENERAL PLAN ORGANIZATION

REGIONAL AND LOCAL SETTING

Regional Setting. The City of Arcata is located on the Northern California coast, 275 miles northwest of San Francisco, in the heart of the redwood region. It is in the west-central portion of Humboldt County, six miles north of the City of Eureka, the County seat. Arcata is situated at the north end of Arcata Bay, which is part of Humboldt Bay, the second largest marine embayment in California. The City is located on U.S. Highway 101, which connects to Eureka and the San Francisco Bay Area to the south, and to Crescent City and the Oregon Coast to the north. The City is at the western terminus of State Highway 299, which connects Arcata and the north coast to Redding and the Upper Sacramento Valley to the east.

Local Setting. The City is situated on a coastal terrace, the lower portions of Fickle Ridge and the easterly portions of the Arcata Bottom, between Arcata Bay and the Mad River.

Arcata's Neighborhoods. Arcata is a city comprised of several distinct neighborhoods and recognized community areas. While the Plaza is the commercial, cultural, social, and civic center of activity, residential neighborhoods and employment centers offer unique living, working, shopping, learning, recreation, and community opportunities and facilities. Figure I-b shows the general locations and names of the City's varied neighborhoods.

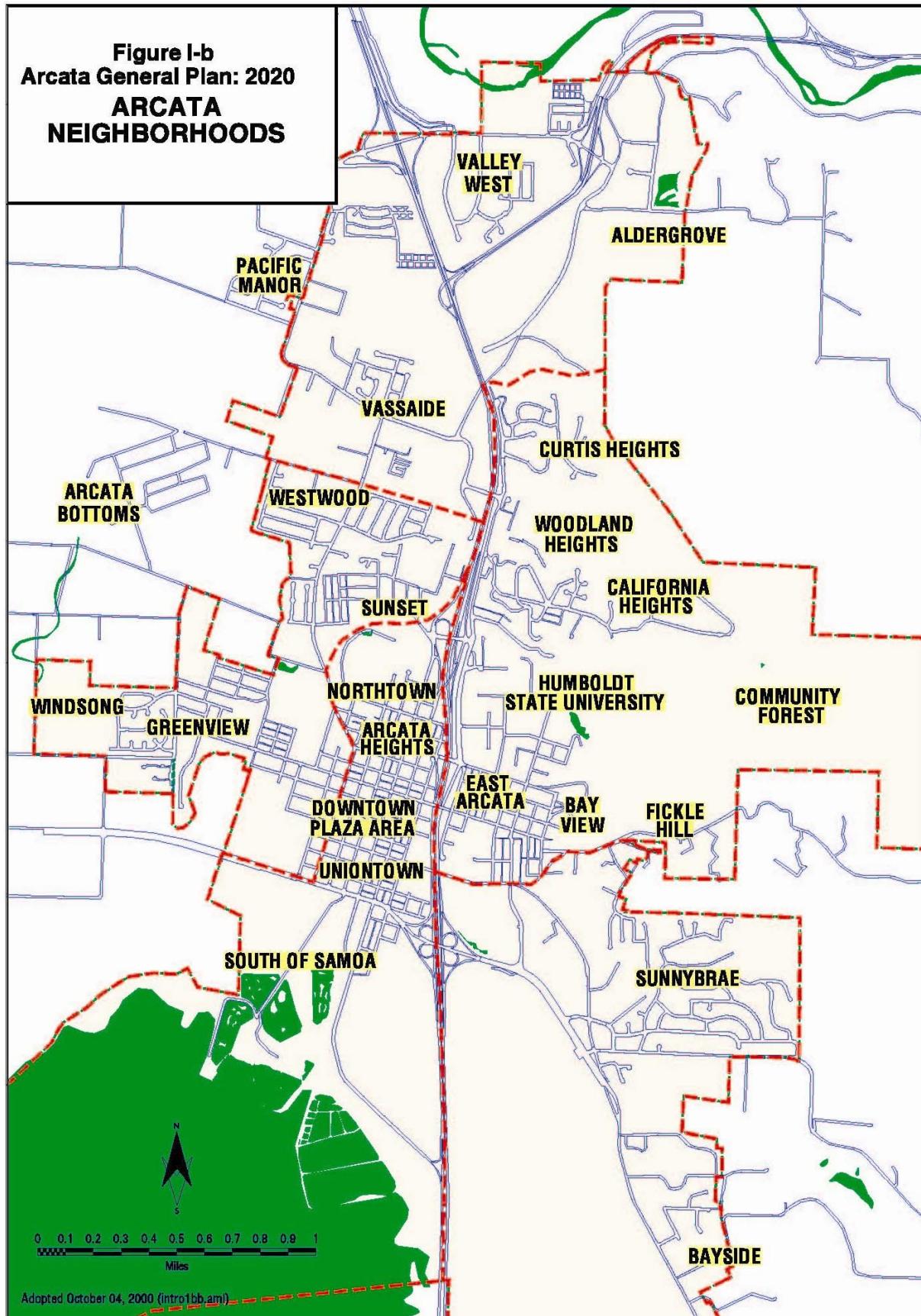
FUTURE TRENDS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The last twenty years have brought significant changes to Arcata and further changes seem certain for the future. The Arcata General Plan: 2020 includes goals, policies and implementation measures that anticipate and help shape those changes, to ensure that they reflect the community's shared sense of values. Future trends may reflect changes in social, economic, cultural, and environmental factors that come from both inside and outside, but will be shaped locally by the guidelines expressed in this plan.

The most significant ongoing trends concern Arcata's working, living, learning and natural environments. For example, most of the large-scale timber-industry employers are now gone. Today's Arcatans are more likely to work for Humboldt State University, a small employer, or to be self-employed.

General Plan Assumptions

1. Modest growth from 16,400 in 1997, to a 2020 population of about 20,000.
2. No new large-scale employers.
3. Continue to be a City where HSU, health providers, education facilities, small-scale manufacturing, agricultural, and retail trade are the primary employers.
4. HSU will operate year-round instruction and enrollment will increase from 7,500 in 1997 to 8,500 full-time equivalent students in 2020.
5. Infrastructure will be limited.
6. The Coastal Zone, resource constraints, and greenbelt will limit outward expansion.



In terms of physical development patterns, it is expected that there will be increased use of vacant and underdeveloped parcels within City limits as opposed to outward expansion. The Growth Management Element establishes an Urban Services Boundary that limits the extension of City services and outward growth of the City.

Transportation and other community infrastructure systems are expected to increase in efficiency, due to changes in travel choices and improved management of facilities. The General Plan emphasizes non-motorized vehicle connections throughout the city and more efficient transit service to reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles. Water, wastewater, energy conservation, and source reduction measures will minimize the need for increases in infrastructure capacity and promote more efficient operation of existing systems.

Protection and enhancement of the natural environment and preservation of open space will continue to be high priorities. Creek, wetland, bayland and tideland, agriculture, forest, soil and mineral resource issues, and the broader issue of natural biological diversity and ecosystem function, are specifically addressed in the General Plan. The protection of open space within the City and an agricultural and forest greenbelt around the City are integral to the future form of the City.

Reduced air, water, and noise pollution, along with increased protection from natural and man-made hazards, are expected in the future. Emergency preparedness will increase through neighborhood-based efforts such as the Neighborhood Emergency Services Teams (NEST), and improved coordination with emergency response agencies. California's North Coast is seismically active and care must be taken to avoid unnecessary human exposure to hazardous and unstable areas. Improved identification of these areas, and construction methods to increase stability of new and retrofitted structures, will help minimize risks and reduce potential damage.

The architectural diversity and historic structures that form Arcata's special ambience and character are important community assets to be preserved for the future. The General Plan includes Design and Historical Preservation Elements that provide guidelines for compatible design and resource protection.

The Design Element is intended to ensure community diversity and quality in the built environment, with small-scale structures that are harmonious with their neighborhood context and natural settings. The Historical Preservation Element designates significant landmarks and sites that are representative of the City's various periods in social and physical development.



IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

At the end of each element there is a list of measures that will implement General Plan policies. The implementation measures have an alpha-numeric reference corresponding to their related element. For example implementation measures related to the Land Use Element are labeled LU-1, LU-2, and so on. For each measure, a responsible party is identified and a time frame is given. Time frames are expressed as Year 1, Year 2, and so on, to indicate the year after General Plan adoption they are scheduled to be carried out. Some of the implementation measures are identified as ongoing. Many of the measures will be incorporated into the City's Land Use Code which will replace the Land Use and Development Guide (LUDG). These code amendments are all identified as Implementation Measure LU-1, as shown in the example below.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE

#	IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIME FRAME
LU-1	Land Use Code Amendments Revise the City's Land Use Code (formerly the Land Use and Development Guide, or LUDG) zoning districts and land use regulations to be consistent with the General Plan land use designations, densities, and policies.	Community Development Department/ Planning Commission	Year 1



DEFINITION OF TERMS

The most frequently used General Plan terms are defined below. A more complete definition of terms may be found in the glossary.

Goal A general, overall, and ultimate purpose, aim, or end toward which the City will direct effort.

Principle An assumption, fundamental rule, or doctrine that will guide general plan policies, proposals, standards, and implementation measures. The State Government Code (§65302) requires that general plans spell out the objectives, *principles*, standards, and proposals of the general plan. “Adjacent land uses should be compatible with one another” is an example of a principle.

Policy A group of related actions or means that will be employed to achieve objectives.

Objective A specific measurable statement of desired future condition toward which a policy is directed. Where possible, objectives are time-specific. The State Government Code (§65302) requires that general plans spell out the objectives, principles, standards, and proposals of the general plan. “The addition of 100 units of affordable housing by 2005” is an example of an objective.

Standard A rule or measure establishing a level of quality or quantity that must be complied with or satisfied. The State Government Code (§65302) requires that general plans spell out the objectives, principles, *standards*, and proposals of the general plan. Examples of standards might include: five acres of parkland per 1,000 population; the traffic Level of Service (LOS) C; or a residential density standard of two units per acre.

Implementation Measure Actions, procedures, programs, or techniques that carry out policies.

Program An organized activity carried out in response to adopted policy to achieve an objective. Programs establish the “who,” “how,” and “when” for carrying out the “what” and “where” of goals and objectives, subject to budgetary allocations of resources.

TABLE I -1 COASTAL PLAN POLICY MATRIX

Note: the Coastal Act Requirements and General Plan Policies have been paraphrased for this table; please see text of the plan for complete language.

COASTAL ACT REQUIREMENTS		ARCATA LOCAL COASTAL LAND USE PLAN POLICIES			
Topic	Section	Requirements	Element	Policy	Policy Name
	30244	where development would adversely impact archeological or paleontological resources, reasonable mitigation measures shall be required	Historical Preservation	H-7a	Archaeological surface reconnaissance studies
			Historical Preservation	H-7b	Mitigation of potential archeological impacts
			Historical Preservation	H-7c	Monitoring of construction
			Historical Preservation	H-7d	Discovery of archaeological resources
	30250a	proximity of new urban development to existing development	Growth Management	GM-4a	Urban Services Boundary
			Public Facilities	PF-5b	City administrative and operation facilities
			Land Use	LU-2a	Residential land use classifications
			Land Use	LU-4a	Industrial uses
	30250b	location of new hazardous industrial development	Land Use	LU-3a	Commercial Land Use classifications
	30250c	visitor-serving facilities outside existing developed areas	Land Use	OS-3b	Development limitations and management for productive resource areas
	30251	scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance	Open Space	LU-1a	Land Use Plan diagram
	30252	maintenance and enhancement of public areas through the amount and location of new development	Land Use	LU-1g RC-4c	Coastal Dependent Land Uses Habitat value protection
	30255	priority of coastal dependant development over other development	Land Use Resource Conservation		

New Urban Development

TABLE I -1 COASTAL PLAN POLICY MATRIX (continued)

Topic	Section	Requirements	Element	Policy	Policy Name
	30210	access to recreational opportunities; conspicuously posting access entrance	Open Space	OS-4b	Coastal access policy
	30211	development not to interfere with the public's right of access to the sea	Resource Conservation	RC-4b	Access to Arcata Bay
	30212	new development projects; provision for access from the nearest public roadway; exceptions	Resource Conservation	RC-4a	Protection of Arcata Bay open waters and mudflats
	30212.5	public works facilities distribution through out the area to mitigate against impacts	Resource Conservation	RC-4f	Management of bayfront and marsh areas for coastal access, recreation and tourism
	30213	lower cost visitor and recreational facilities protected, encouraged, and provided; encouragement and provision, overnight room rentals	Land Use	LU-5a	Public Facility uses
	30214	implementation of public access policies for time, place, and manner of public access	Resource Conservation	RC-4b	Access to Arcata Bay
					Protection of Arcata Bay
					Management of bayfront and marsh areas for coastal access, recreation and tourism
					Coastal-dependant and public trust tidelands uses
					Management of bayfront and marsh areas for coastal access, recreation and tourism
					Access to Arcata Bay
					Coastal-dependant and public trust tidelands uses
					Commercial use classifications

Public Access & Recreation

TABLE I -1 COASTAL PLAN POLICY MATRIX (continued)

Topic	Section	Requirements	Element	Policy	Policy Name
	302220	protection of certain water-oriented activities that are not suited for inland water	Resource Conservation	RC-4c	Coastal-dependendant and public trust tidelands uses
	302221	oceanfront land suitable for recreational use and development shall be protected	Resource Conservation	RC-4c	Coastal-dependendant and public trust tidelands uses
	302222	visitor-serving recreational facilities have a priority over private residential, general industrial or general commercial, but not over agriculture or coastal-dependant industry	Open Space	OS-2b	Development limitations and management for maintenance of biotic resources and diversity, including aquatic resources and sensitive habitats
	302222.5	oceanfront land suitable for aquaculture use and development shall be protected	Resource Conservation	RC-4e	Aquaculture and agricultural use of coastal wetlands and tidelands
	302223	upland areas necessary to support coastal recreational uses shall be reserved	Land Use	LU-5a	Public Facility Uses
	302224	encourage recreational boating use by developing boating facilities	Resource Conservation	RC-2c	Permitted uses and activities in streamside protection areas
			Resource Conservation	RC-4c	Coastal-dependendant and public trust tidelands uses
			Resource Conservation	RC-4f	Management of bayfront and marsh areas for coastal access, recreation and tourism

Public Access & Recreation (continued)

TABLE I -1 COASTAL PLAN POLICY MATRIX (continued)

Topic	Section	Requirements	Element	Policy	Policy Name
	30230	marine resources shall be maintained, enhanced, and where feasible, restored; special protection shall be given to areas and species of special biological or economic significance	Resource Conservation	RC-1c	Habitat value protection
			Resource Conservation	RC-2c	Permitted uses and activities in streamside protection areas
			Resource Conservation	RC-2g	Maintenance of streams as natural drainage systems
			Resource Conservation	RC-4a	Protection of open waters and mudflat areas of Arcata Bay
			Open Space	OS-1a	Designation of native biotic resources & ecosystems
	30231	coastal waters maintenance to protect human health; maintain optimum marine organism populations; minimize adverse waste water, runoff, surface water effects.	Community Facilities	CF-2b	Arcata Marsh Wastewater treatment system
			Community Facilities	CF-2a	Capacity and management of city wastewater collection system
			Community Facilities	CF-3a	Utilization city streams and watercourses as natural drainage systems
			Community Facilities	CF-3b	Control of stormwater runoff, flooding and erosion
			Resource Conservation	RC-2c	Permitted uses in streamside protection areas
			Resource Conservation	RC-2g	Maintenance of streams as natural drainage systems
			Resource Conservation	RC-4c	Coastal-dependant & public trust uses of tidelands

Water & Marine Resources

TABLE I -1 COASTAL PLAN POLICY MATRIX (continued)

Topic	Section	Requirements	Element	Policy	Policy Name
	30233	diking, filling or dredging permitted where there is no feasible less environmentally damaging alternative; mitigation	Resource Conservation	RC-3b	Filling of wetlands
	30234	commercial fishing and recreational boating facilities protected and upgrade in accordance with demand	Resource Conservation	RC-4d	Diking, dredging, filling, and shoreline structures
	30234.5	economic, commercial, and recreational importance of fishing shall be recognized and protected		RC-2c	Permitted uses and activities in streamside protection areas
	30235	revetments, breakwaters, etc. permitted when designed to eliminate or mitigate adverse impacts			
	30240	environmentally sensitive habitat areas shall be protected against any significant disruption; adjacent developments shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade the area	Resource Conservation Land Use Open Space	RC-1c LU-6a OS-2b	Habitat value protection Agricultural and Natural Resource classifications Development limitations and management for maintenance of biotic resources and diversity, including aquatic resources and sensitive habitats
	30243	productivity of soils and timberlands protected; conversions	Resource Conservation	RC-2c	Permitted uses and activities in streamside protection areas

TABLE I -1 COASTAL PLAN POLICY MATRIX (continued)

Topic	Section	Requirements	Element	Policy	Policy Name
	30260	location or expansion of coastal-dependant industrial facility	Land Use	LU-4a	Industrial uses
	30261	use of tanker facilities; natural gas terminals	Land Use	LU-4d	New business park
	30262	oil and gas development	Land Use	LU-4g	Coastal related resource extraction and processing
	30263	refineries or petrochemical facilities	Land Use	LU-4g	Coastal related resource extraction and processing
	30264	thermal electric generating plants	Land Use	LU-4g	Coastal related resource extraction and processing
	30265	offshore oil transport and refining	Land Use	LU-4g	Coastal related resource extraction and processing
	30265.5	coordination of offshore oil transport and refining activities	Land Use	LU-4g	Coastal related resource extraction and processing
	30232	oil and hazardous substance spills	Public Safety	PS-6d	Siting of facilities handling hazardous waste
	30236	alteration of rivers and streams permitted for water supply, flood control and improvement of marine habitat	Resource Conservation	RC-2c	Permitted uses and activities in streamside protection areas
	30253	safety, stability, pollution, energy conservation, visitors	Public Safety	PS-2a	Development within fault zone/ fault rupture areas
			Public Safety	PS-4c	Limitations on development within floodplains
			Open Space	OS-5a	Open space easements for safety hazard areas

TABLE I -1 COASTAL PLAN POLICY MATRIX (continued)

Topic	Section	Requirements	Element	Policy	Policy Name
Agriculture	30241	maximize the amount of prime agricultural land maintained in agriculture production to assure the protection of the agricultural economy, conflicts minimized	Resource Conservation	RC-2c	Permitted uses and activities in streamside protection areas
			Resource Conservation	RC-4d	Diking, dredging, filling and shoreline structures
			Resource Conservation	RC-5a	Protection of agricultural lands and uses in the City
			Land Use	LU-1e	Protection of natural resources and agriculture lands
			Land Use	LU-6a	Agriculture & Natural Resource classifications
	30241.5	agricultural lands viability determination	Land Use	LU-6c	Protection of Agricultural lands and uses
	30242	lands suitable for agricultural conversions	Land Use	LU-6c	
	30254	new or expanded public works facilities shall be designed and limited to accommodate needs generated by development or uses permitted consistent with the provisions of this division	Resource Conservation	RC-4b	Access to Arcata Bay
			Resource Conservation	RC-4c	Coastal-dependant and public trust tidelands uses
			Resource Conservation	RC-4f	Management of bayfront and marsh areas for coastal access, recreation and tourism
Public Works				GM-4b	Services outside City boundary
Community Facilities				GM-4c	Requirements and procedures for modifying Urban Services Boundary
Capacity and management of city water system					

TABLE I -1 COASTAL PLAN POLICY MATRIX (continued)

Topic	Section	Requirements	Element	Policy	Policy Name
30254.5		sewage treatment plants and conditions	Community Facilities	CF-2b	Arcata Marsh Wastewater treatment system
			Community Facilities	CF-2a	Capacity and management of city wastewater system