

Humboldt County
General
Plan

October, 1984

Volume 1 of 11
Framework Plan
Humboldt County Planning Department

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The background studies provided technical information and policy recommendations on critical issues facing this County. Although these studies contained the best available data, certain deficiencies were identified as a result of the public review process. This process lasted over two years and yielded new information which was incorporated into the data base for the County General Plan. In some cases, the information resulted in amended policy proposals, and in others it supported existing policies. The objective of maintaining the data base is to provide a continual check on policies and assist in the environmental assessment of proposals.

The basic land use plans which this hearing draft would revise were approved in the late sixties with numerous additions of individual elements as required by the State. The most recent revision was the Housing Element adopted by the Board of Supervisors in September of 1981

1500 PLANNING AND COORDINATION

1510 OVERVIEW

The policies for citizen participation recognize the need for public involvement in the planning process. The successful application of any law depends to a great extent on the citizens' understanding and support of the law.

The planning process, the, must provide for the education of the public. Armed with knowledge of the process, the citizen can have meaningful access to the decision makers, evaluate alternative proposals, and make specific recommendations in support of, or for change to hearing draft proposals.

The local determination of the future character of Humboldt County, the public must understand the process, the alternatives and the reasons for decisions made that affect our County and our neighborhoods.

Besides the individual residents and property owners, other citizens in form of corporate, municipal and special district entities must also participate in the planning process. In Humboldt county there are seven incorporated cities, more that fifty special districts providing varied services plus school and street lighting districts that will be affected by this plan. Much of the resource land of the County is in corporate and other forms of business ownership and 28% of the County is in public ownership. This section of the plan provides direction for public participation in the planning process.

1520 FINDINGS

1. It is essential to the function of the democratic society that public policy shall be reflective of the needs of the citizenry as expressed by the citizens themselves.

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2. Citizens will participate when they feel their participation will have an effect.

3. The large size of the County limits the opportunity for centralized citizen participation.

4. The disparate nature of the County creates conflicting interests within the County and point to the need for a forum for resolution.

opportunity for citizen participation

1530 GOALS

1531 Program Goals

1. To establish a set of planning documents that is a comprehensive statement of public policy concerning land use and the provision of public services;
2. To coordinate the preparation of regional plans that include more than one incorporated city, community, special district, and/or unincorporated area;
3. To provide a comprehensive General Plan in understandable language which is readily accessible to the public and encourages citizen participation throughout the planning process.
4. To maximize the opportunity for individuals and groups to have meaningful participation in the planning process.

1532 The Citizen Goals

- 1 The County shall maximize the opportunities to educate the public about the planning process and the citizen's role in it.
2. The planning process shall maximize public access to the decision making process.
3. The County shall aggressively solicit the input of the public through an "outreach" program of public participation.
- 4.. The time period from public input to adoption of the plans shall be minimized.

1533 Goals for the Organizational Structure

- 1 The policy making organizational structure shall provide the most direct relationship between the public and the decision makers.
2. The funding to provide opportunities for public participation in the land use planning shall be maximized consistent with the budgetary constraints of the County.

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1540 POLICIES

1541 Education

1. The County shall provide for the education of the public to motivate them to participate in the planning process.
2. The education of the public shall be provided prior to public hearings on the plan proposals in adequate time to insure informed participation.
3. The education of the public shall be provided through, but not limited to:
 - Citizens Handbook
 - Print and electronic media
 - Public meetings

1542 Access to Decision Makers

1. The Commission shall maintain clear, consistent and fair procedures for operation and relationships with the public, the board of Supervisors, ad-hoc committees, and local, and Federal agencies.
2. Commission procedures shall be prepared in a format and language that is clean and readily available to the public,
3. The County shall encourage the formation of citizen organizations to provide input on specific matters in a format consistent with the adopted policies and procedures.
4. The County shall encourage the development of Community Plans consistent with overall county policies in the Framework Plan (Volume I of the General Plan).
5. The County shall insure that the variety of views within an area are taken into consideration, to the extent expressed.
6. Community preferences for urban and urbanizing areas, which otherwise are consistent with the overall county policies, shall be given preferential consideration.
7. The Commission shall provide notification of meetings adequate to insure public participation consistent with the goals of

this program,

8. The meetings of the Planning Commission, whenever practical, shall be held in the geographic areas under consideration, or where the meetings of the Commission concern county wide issues as addressed in the Framework Plan, such meeting shall be held in the regional centers most representative of the issues to be addressed.

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9. Public hearings shall be organized to provide public opportunities to evaluate alternative proposals and participate in the choice of preferred alternative.

1543 Timing

1. The costs of review shall be minimized, consistent with the requirements of this section by the following:

- review on an exception or "consent calendar" approach'
- focusing testimony and comments on specific issues being addressed.

2. The Commission should prepare and adopt rules of procedure to govern the conduct of hearings, solicitation and limitations on oral comments, and other business of the Commission

3. The Commission should be authorized to create subcommittees from their membership, and to create joint committees for the conduct of planning matters.

1550 STANDARDS

1. Planning Advisory Committees (PAC) may be created to review and prepare recommendations concerning special or technical planning matters that may have countywide significance. Such PAC's should:

- a. Be established and appointed, subject to Board concurrence, by the Planning Commission;
- b. Report directly to the Commission;
- c. Be charged with a specific list of tasks and a schedule for completion;

- dê. Not be created as a standing committee;
 - e. Be composed of lay citizens and technical advisors.
2. Community Advisory Committees (CAC's) should be created to review and prepare recommendations on planning matters that affect their individual communities. Such CAC's should:
- a. Be formed in the community;
 - b. Be representative of the community make-up, report on the selection process used to form the CAC and be considered by the Board based on a recommendation by the Commission;
 - c. Generally contain not less than five (5) or more than eleven (11) members;

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- d. Adhere to common CAC organizational guidelines adopted by the Board;
- e. Direct all comments and questions on planning matters to the Planning Commission;
- f. Establish a work program, regular meeting schedule and completion date;
- g. prepare a map showing the limits of the community's area of interest and all such limits should be approved by the Planning Commission;.
- h. Designate a contact person who will communicate with the Commission and inform the public;
- i. hold local workshops (planning staff assistance, maps and comments may be provided to CAC's subject to departmental budget limitations).

3. Advisory Committees should be charged with the following tasks:
 - a. Educate the public about its community plan and other planning programs that affect the community;
 - b. Provide a forum for citizen comments, and provide a mechanism for relaying those comments to the Planning Commission;
 - c. Advise the Planning Commission on planning matters that affect the community;
 - d. Provide input to the Commission on specific matters in a format consistent with the adopted policies in the Framework Plan;
 - f. Community Advisory Committees, should be included in all planning notification procedures that affect their area.