

General Plan Consistency Update



GPA24-0007

Board of Supervisors

December 3, 2024

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Housing Element Background

- The current Housing Element was approved by the Board of Supervisors on August 22, 2023 and certified by the State on October 26, 2023.
- The Housing Element includes a Housing Action Plan containing 85 actions across 32 programs.
- Program 15k: "Adopt any text amendments to the General Plan that are needed to ensure consistency with the Housing Element not later than December 2024"





Program 15k: General Plan Consistency

- The General Plan sections that must be updated for consistency are contained in:
 - General Plan Introduction
 - Land Use Element
 - Glossary
- **Amendments to the Introduction** are proposed to clarify the County's authority to make General Plan consistency determinations.
 - Amendments do not give the County new authority when making consistency determinations.





Program 15k: General Plan Consistency

Amendments to the Land Use Element to:

- Clarify that General Plan policies supersede Specific and Area Plans
- Clarify County's ability to apply discretion to projects
- Clarify limits to discretion on by-right development of Housing Element inventory sites

Amended Policies:

- Policy LU-1a
- Policy LU-6b
- Policies LU-15a, LU-15b, and LU-20b
- Objective LU-16.1 and Policies LU-16g, LU-16h, LU-16p





Program 15k: General Plan Consistency

Amendments to Glossary

- Add **Housing Element Rezone Site**: A parcel rezoned after January 31, 2023 and added to the Housing Element Site Inventory as an adequate site for lower-income housing units to accommodate the County's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) for lower-income households.
- Update definition of Agricultural Employee Housing to include agricultural employee housing as permitted under the State Employee Housing Act.





Program 15k: General Plan Consistency

At Housing Element adoption, some policies were identified as potentially inconsistent with the Housing Element but are not included in the proposed amendments for the following reasons:

- Some identified policies contain language that is not mandatory and therefore did not need revision.
- Some potential inconsistencies were resolved with other text amendments that support by-right development of Housing Element inventory sites.
- Some potentially inconsistent area policies are no longer needed because the proposed sites in those areas were not added to the site inventory.





General Plan Consistency Finding

The proposed amendments will resolve existing inconsistencies created by adoption of the Housing Element.





Environmental Determination

- An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared and certified by the Board of Supervisors at adoption of the Housing Element.
- The project is within the scope of the Housing Element EIR (CEQA Guidelines §15168)
- No further CEQA analysis is required (§15162):
 - No substantial changes are proposed to the project
 - No substantial changes to the circumstances analyzed in the EIR
 - No new information of substantial importance





Staff Recommendation

Adopt the resolution to amend the text in the General Plan Introduction, Glossary, and Land Use Element as recommended by staff in Attachment 1, Exhibit A.



Questions



Reference Slides



1.3 Purpose of the Plan

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The broad purpose of GP 2020 is to express policies which will guide decisions on future growth, development, and conservation of resources through 2020 in a manner consistent with the goals and quality of life desired by the county's residents. Under State law all subsidiary land use plans and codes, many actions on private land development, such as Specific Plans, Area Plans, and zoning, as well as development project approvals such as for subdivisions and use permits, public agency projects and other decisions must be consistent with the General Plan. The Goals, Objectives, and Policies set forth in the plan will be applied in a manner to insure their constitutionality. Each policy of the plan shall be interpreted and applied in compliance with applicable governing law. For instance, policies in the Land Use Element and Circulation and Transit Element that describe or provide for discretionary review of development projects, are understood to apply only to the extent that applicable law allows the County to use its own judgment in reviewing and conditioning approval of a development project. This is true even if a policy that describes or otherwise relates to discretionary action does not expressly refer to discretionary projects.

The County, in its sole discretion and to the extent allowed by law, shall determine a proposal's consistency with the General Plan. In general, a proposal is consistent if, considering all its aspects, the proposal will further the overall objectives and policies of the General Plan and not obstruct their attainment. A proposal may be consistent with the overall objectives of the General Plan even if it is not consistent with every policy and objective. In making a consistency determination, the County may exercise discretion to weigh, balance and harmonize policies in a manner that it determines best achieves the County's overall goals.



General Plan Introduction 1.3

Reference Notes



This plan has relied extensively upon policies and designations set forth in previous Specific Plans and Area Plans. The County shall continue to use the following selected Specific Plans and Area Plans to implement this plan. A Specific or Area Plan may establish more detailed policies affecting proposed development, but may not include policies that are in conflict with the General Plan. In any case where the County determines, in its discretion, that there appears to be a Specific or Area Plan conflicts with or is incompatible with ~~conflict between~~ the General Plan, the ~~and any~~ Specific or Area Plan provision shall not, ~~the more restrictive policy or standard shall~~ apply.

...

The following plans shall be repealed, but development guidelines contained therein shall be reviewed and updated and considered for adoption as "Local Area Development Guidelines", provided that they are consistent with the General Plan. ~~Until such a time that these guidelines are adopted, any policies contained in these plans shall continue to apply provided they are consistent with the General Plan:~~



Policy LU-1a

Reference Notes



Policy LU-6b: Site specific environmental factors shall be considered in making discretionary decisions on development permits, to the extent that the County has discretion to consider these factors in its review of a particular project. Site specific factors which create health or safety problems or result in unmitigated significant environmental impacts may at times reduce densities that are allowed by the Land Use Map and zoning.

Policy LU-15a. Phase ~~residential and commercial~~ and discretionary residential development within the Forestville Urban Service Boundary to allow the community facilities and services adequate time to absorb new growth, and to maintain the community character. ~~For any project of 10 or more housing units, require a precise development plan or master plan that specifies the maximum number of new residential units to be built per year.~~

Policy LU-15b. Require design review for major subdivisions within the Forestville Urban Service Boundary, to the extent that the County has discretionary authority to conduct design review. Only objective design standards shall be applied to ~~apply to zoning-compliant housing~~ development on a Housing Element Rezone Site. When applicable, discretionary dDesign review approval shall assure that:

Policies LU-6b, LU-15a, LU-15b

Reference Notes



Objective LU-16.1: Avoid urban development within the Urban Service Boundary of Santa Rosa until annexation, except where allowed by the General Plan, Specific or Area Plan as of 1986.

Policy LU-16g. Unless otherwise provided in the General Plan, or in existing Specific or Area Plans to the extent applicable pursuant to Policy LU-1a, designate lands within the Santa Rosa Urban Service Area as "Rural Residential" in order to hold them for future annexation by the City. Maintain densities in these areas at the lower end of the range for this category.

Policy LU-16p: In general, significant Redevelopment and/or intensification of existing uses in the Santa Rosa Urban Service Area south of Todd Road is not desirable without the extension of sewer service. Development applications prior to annexation should generally be limited to uses that can be served by septic systems.

Policy LU-20b: In general, encourage annexation by the city prior to urban development on parcels that are within the Sonoma Valley Sanitation District and within the city's primary Sphere of Influence. Require annexation for urban residential development in this area, except zoning-compliant development on a Housing Element Rezone Site. Parcels within the Sonoma Valley Redevelopment Area are exempt from these policies.



Policies LU-16g, LU-16p, LU-20b

Reference Notes



Agricultural Employee Housing: See Farmworker Housing. Also refers to employee housing as defined in California Health and Safety Code Section 17008 that is located on a parcel with an agricultural land use designation, and consistent with Health and Safety Code Section 17021.6.

Housing Element Rezone Site. A parcel rezoned after January 31, 2023 and added to the Housing Element Site Inventory as an adequate site for lower-income housing units to accommodate the County's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) for lower-income households. See Tables 15 and 16 of the Housing Element Site Inventory as of December 5, 2023, and any later rezoned sites that meet these criteria.



Glossary

Reference Notes

