

STAFF REPORT

City Council Consent Item

DATE: April 17, 2023

TO: Honorable Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Liz Shorey, Deputy Community Development Director

THROUGH: Merritt Perry, City Manager

SUBJECT: **Approval of the 2022 General Plan Annual Progress Report for Submittal to the State Office of Housing and Community Development and the State Office of Planning and Research**

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council approve the 2022 General Plan Annual Progress Report, and direct staff to file the report with the California State Office of Housing and Community Development (HCD) and the State Office of Planning and Research (OPR).

1. Introduction

Government Code Section 65400 requires the City to prepare a report annually regarding the status of the City's General Plan, and provide the General Plan Annual Progress Report to HCD and OPR. The purpose of the General Plan Progress Report is to annually review and report on the implementation of the General Plan and the carrying out of its policies and programs. This General Plan Progress Report summarizes the General Plan implementation progress for 2022.

The General Plan is the City's official policy document that guides decisions affecting the physical, social, and economic development and change within the City. The General Plan was adopted on October 26, 2010. The General Plan contains the seven State-required elements and additional elements as follows: Land Use Element, Economic Development Element, Housing Element, Transportation and Circulation Element, Natural and Cultural Resources Element, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element, Public Facilities Element, Health and Safety Element, and Community Design Element.

Each Element of the General Plan includes a set of implementation actions, or programs, that are intended to carry out a policy and achieve objectives. The programs provide the basis from which to carry out General Plan progress.

State law allows the General Plan to be amended four times annually. Amendments allow Cities to respond to changing community needs. General plan amendments may be initiated by a local jurisdiction, or by a private entity through submittal of an application. At a publicly noticed hearing the planning commission makes a recommendation to the City Council, and the Council makes the final determination at a public hearing.

The following discussion is based on the content requirements of the General Plan report pursuant to Government Code Section 65400.

2. General Plan Amendments in 2022

Since its adoption on October 26, 2010, the General Plan has been amended a total of ten times. Five of these amendments have been in the form of a land use designation change accompanying a zoning map amendment. Three annexations have included general plan land use designation amendments. In 2018, the Health and Safety Element was amended to clarify the application of the noise decibel standards. And in August 19, 2019, the Housing Element was adopted, and subsequently certified by HCD (see the separate Annual Housing Progress Report provided under separate cover, including housing application and construction counts for 2022 and housing element program implementation).

Previous general plan map amendments outside of the 2022 planning period include a 2019 amendment of the General Plan land use designation map, amending a commercially developed parcel from Public to Commercial. This parcel is located on Twelfth Street, a commercial street, and is developed with a commercial building that was dilapidated and long-vacant. The City's plans to build a new police station were abandoned at this site, so the parcel was rezoned from a public zone to commercial, with an accompanying general plan map amendment.

A second amendment was done on 9/7/21, when the City approved a Map Amendment from Residential Very Low (RVL) to Residential Low (RL), reducing the size of setbacks on certain hillside lots and thereby increasing the developable land for residential uses, and from Commercial (COM) to Public (PUB) to allow remodeling a vacant commercial building to a new police station.

The general plan map amendment that was approved in 2022 consists of a land use amendment of two parcels from Residential Low to Residential Medium to create a multifamily parcel and convert an existing single family residence to a four-plex. Adjacent to the City's Downtown district, the conversion to a higher density residential use takes advantage of the pedestrian, commercial, and social amenities of the neighborhood.

A significant in-process General Plan amendment consists of the Mill District Specific Plan which will create a mix of light industrial, commercial retail, and mixed use in the 75-acre former mill site. The proposed activities will be consistent with the existing general plan designation is Mill District (MD)/ However, a general plan amendment is being studied to determine if changes will be needed to allow additional commercial square footage, and allow limited development within the floodplain. It is anticipated that the project will be scheduled for hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council in the next several months.

Withdrawn / Uninitiated / Denied General Plan Amendments in 2022—There were no withdrawn, uninitiated, or denied General Plan Amendments in 2021.

3. General Plan Implementation Progress

The following section presents the progress the City has made towards implementing the actions of the General Plan during the 2022 reporting period, pursuant to Government Code Section 65400(a)(2)(A).

Program LU-2. The City shall use GIS technology to more accurately portray City

infrastructure and to economize building and planning permit tracking.

Discussion: This is in the process of being implemented through the application of SB2 grant funds, which includes a program to update the City’s GIS layers including to show infrastructure needs especially with regards to affordable housing development, as well as updating the City’s improvement plan standards, and identifying costs and sources of funding to install the infrastructure.

Program LU-16. The City shall prepare and adopt design and development standards and criteria for the Mill District to accommodate a range of development options including building types and uses.

Discussion: The City is underway with a Mill District specific plan which, under an HCD LEAP grant, is studying commercial and mixed use land use designations, design standards, and improvement standards for the 75-acre former mill site located in the center of town.

ED-14. The City shall pursue and distribute funding and technical assistance to upgrade and enhance the transportation and infrastructure facilities within the city that are necessary for facilitating economic growth and development.

Discussion: The City recently utilized State Highway Transportation funds to prepare 30% plans for the Kenmar/Highway 101 Interchange Improvements, and adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration on March 20, 2023. This will allow the City to pursue additional funding for next phases—final plans and construction. The purpose of the interchange improvements is to improve pedestrian and auto traffic, and to facilitate economic growth by promoting commercial development of the Mill Site and the Riverwalk area.

TC-1.16 Capital Improvements. The City shall implement street widening, narrowing, and other circulation improvements that are related to both improved circulation on existing streets and new development in conjunction with the City’s capital improvements program.

Discussion: The City has recently completed 30% design plans for the Kenmar/Highway 101 Interchange project, and the Council has adopted a mitigated negative declaration of environmental impact. The City will pursue funding to complete final plans and ultimately construct the improvements.

TC-10. The City shall ensure that proposed parking lots of 10 spaces or more are visually buffered from any existing or proposed residential uses by trees and vegetation, and that proposed parking lots of 20 spaces or more include islands with tree plantings (at least one for every 20 spaces) to reduce visual impacts and solar radiation.

Discussion: The City recently approved The Orchards, a 70-unit multifamily apartment that includes 97 parking spaces. The entry to the development from Smith Lane is landscaped and visually screened with 4 trees, as well as shrubs and ground. In addition, the parking lot contains 12 trees that soften the effect of the paved area.

NCR-13. Where possible, through available grant funding or assessment districts, the City shall maintain and repair streams with high sedimentation by installing habitat restoration and fish passage structures, restoring gravel beds, and creating deep ponds.

Discussion: The City completed the Rohner Creek improvements, which restored habitat and improved salmonid passage, while concurrently resolving flood control issues between Main Street to 12th Street.

PROS-2.7 Community Pool. The City shall support efforts by the community to identify suitable locations for a community pool and pursue potential partnerships, (e.g., schools) to share development and operational costs.

Discussion: The City continues to participate in and support the endeavors of the Rohner Community Recreation and Park District in its study of funding, constructing, and operating a community pool. A funding study has recently been completed, and the current task is to undertake a vote of the community to determine bond support.

PFS-9.3 Adequate Facilities/Personnel. The City shall strive to provide police facilities, equipment, and personnel sufficient to maintain adopted service standards using new law enforcement technologies.

Discussion: The City is currently under construction with remodeling plans to convert an existing commercial building into a new police facility, creating sufficient office space for the City's needs, and upgrading equipment and other safety infrastructure.

HS-4.5 New Construction. The City shall strive to limit exterior noise levels for existing and future dwellings in residential areas to levels of 60 dBA L_{dn} and interior noise levels of 45 dBA L_{dn}.

Discussion: The City continues to require compliance with these noise standards when new development is being reviewed, and the City is currently in the process of developing and implementing noise standards for existing activities that affect residential and other areas.

CD-3.9 Minimum Building Design Requirements. The City should encourage new development along major corridors to comply with the following minimum building requirements:

- All outdoor storage of goods, materials, and equipment and loading dock areas shall be screened from major roadways;
- Developments with multiple buildings should have a uniform design theme and sign program;
- Earth tones shall be used as the dominant color; colors such as white, black, blue, and red should be used as accents. Building surfaces should have color schemes that reduce their apparent size;
- Metal buildings shall be allowed only with enhanced architectural and landscaping treatment (such as use of trim bands, wing walls, parapets, and reveals); and
- All exterior elevations visible from major roadways should have architectural treatment to alleviate long void surfaces. This can be accomplished through varying setbacks, breaking buildings into segments, pitched roof elements, columns, indentations, patios, and incorporating landscaping into architectural design.

Discussion: The City has been effective in implementing design standards that ensure quality

development and aesthetics for new large buildings that adhere to these design principles. Exemplary projects in 2022, for example, include the Orchards 70-unit multifamily development, and the Eel River Brewery expansion warehouse.

ENVIRONMENTAL/CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) REVIEW

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 153378(b)(5), the Fortuna 2030 General Plan Annual Progress Report is an administrative activity not considered a “project”, and no further environmental review is required.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct financial cost associated with staff’s preparation of the Housing Report or with the Council’s review and approval, or with submission to HCD and OPR.

RECOMMENDED COUNCIL ACTION:

Staff recommends that the Council approve the General Plan Annual Progress Report and direct staff to submit it to HCD and OPR. Consent agenda vote.