

City of Arcata General Plan

2023 Annual Progress Report to the State Office of Planning and Research



March 18, 2024

Planning Commission Approved: _____

City Council Adopted: _____

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Arcata General Plan shapes 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.

The City of Arcata is pleased to share the General Plan Annual Progress Report for 2023. The report presents and summarizes the City's major efforts to update and implement the General Plan. This report is in compliance with Government Code Section 65400, which requires 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. This report is submitted by the City of Arcata Community Development Department to provide the State of California Governor's Office of Planning and Research with information regarding the city's current General Plan implementation, Housing Element progress, and forthcoming updates to certain elements of the General Plan.

This report will be reviewed by the Planning Commission at their meeting on March 26, 2024, and presented to the Arcata City Council for their acceptance via Resolution at the April 3, 2024, City Council meeting.

SECTION 1. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

This section reviews City progress toward implementing the following elements: Land Use, Growth Management, Transportation, and Public Facilities & Infrastructure.

2023 Projects Related to the Land Use Element:

1. Opened the second Project Homekey hotel-to-housing conversion adding 80 units of affordable housing.
2. Issued 554 building permits including Westwood apartments, Valley West apartments and temporary occupancy to Open Door Health Clinic. Processed 15 code enforcement actions, 125 sewer lateral permits and 68 encroachment permits.
3. Held a special Panel Discussion on Sea Level Rise with the City Council and Planning Commission.

General Plan Policies/Implementation Measures Associated with these projects:

LU-1b Coastal land-use plan. The western portion of the Arcata Bottom, lands south of 7th and 8th Streets west of State Route 101, and lands south of Bayside and Old Arcata Roads east of State Route 101 are within the Coastal Zone, created by the California Coastal Act. The land use designations within the Coastal Zone are part of the City's Local Coastal Program (LCP).

LU-1f Promotion of infill development. The City encourages appropriate redevelopment of certain parcels of land which are either underutilized, brownfields, or vacant but surrounded by existing urban development. These sites represent development opportunities using existing infrastructure and shall have priority for development over vacant sites that are located outside the urban services boundary (designated in the Growth Management Element) which require investment in extension of infrastructure and services. Infill development may include new residential units on upper floors of commercial structures, development of second units on residential lots, and new or expansion of existing residential and commercial structures consistent with the provisions of the applicable land use plan designations. The Planned Development procedure shall be encouraged for coordinated development on larger infill sites.

2023 Projects Related to the Transportation Element:

1. Added the Green and Gold bus routes with funding from Cal Poly Humboldt servicing Valley West area every half hour.
2. Transitioned transit driving services to Humboldt Transit Authority and assisted in the 5-year Transit Development Plan.
3. Implemented free bus rides from June 1 - July 31, 2023, through a state grant.
4. Purchased and put into service the first two electric buses in Arcata.
5. Partnered with HCAOG to bring Dan Burden for several walkability audits and a site visit in Arcata.
6. Maintained the City's trail network. The total Bike & Pedestrian counts at three stations along the North Humboldt Bay trail has climbed to 857,028.
7. Held a successful Bike Rodeo and added bikes and users to the bike share program. To date the bike share program has logged 5,093 rentals by 1,137 different users.

8. Implemented Complete Streets improvements and paving on M Street.
9. Held a community input meeting for designs on the proposed improvements including roundabouts at the LK Wood Blvd. and Sunset Ave. intersection.
10. Updated to the City's Policy for Installing Speed Tables, Humps and Lumps for Local Streets.
11. Completed many other capital projects including:
 - a. Annual sidewalk improvements for walkability and accessibility.
 - b. Annual Paving: West End Road (Giuntoli to City limits), H street (Sunset Ave to 11th street) & G street (5th to 7th Streets).
 - c. Broke ground on Old Arcata Road improvements.
 - d. Terrace Avenue repairs.
12. Awarded grants from Sustainable Transportation Planning Program for:
 - a. South Arcata Multimodal Safety Improvement Plan (SAMSIP) to improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity in South Arcata (Samoa Blvd and South G street).
 - b. Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S) for Fuente Nueva Charter school for self-assessment and pop-up demonstrations of safety features.

Transportation Element Policies/Implementation Measures Associated with these projects:

T-1b Interconnections and transfers between travel modes. The City shall provide and maintain a Transit Center to facilitate interconnection and transfers between bus routes and systems. As funding permits, Transit Center facilities shall be improved to encourage its use as a multi-modal transfer point. Pedestrian and bicycle amenities shall be provided at other locations which serve as modal transfer points such as bus stops and park-and-ride lots.

T-1c Intercity travel. The City shall coordinate with Humboldt County and Caltrans to provide adequate facilities for vehicles, buses, and bicycles to serve intercity demand. Joint efforts may include transportation improvements outside of Arcata which serve intercity travel, such as bicycle links, timed-transfer bus stops, park-and-ride lots, and regional transit service and development of park-and-ride lots in Arcata to reduce intercity vehicular travel.

T - 2: Pavement Management Program. A pavement management program will evaluate roadway conditions, and schedule and complete needed maintenance and repair in a timely manner.

T - 3: Capital Improvements Program (CIP). Include transportation improvements, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, in the City's CIP.

T-3d Transfers between routes and systems. The public transit system shall provide convenient transfers between routes, other transit services, and other modes of travel. The Arcata Transit Center shall serve as the primary multi-modal transfer station. Bus stops should be located near municipal parking lots or future park-and-ride lots. The A&MRTS and Redwood Transit System schedules shall be coordinated to provide a timed-transfer system at key stops.

T-4h Street maintenance. The Pavement Management System shall be maintained to identify and prioritize street maintenance projects in the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The maintenance program shall include regular street cleaning and repair of pavement, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes, and pay particular attention to conditions that discourage bike usage.

T-5f Pedestrian enhancements. Prioritize implementation of improved pedestrian facilities and enhancements in areas of the city with the greatest need including the Arcata Plaza, Westwood Center area, the Sunset Avenue neighborhood, Samoa Boulevard, Alliance Road, Spear Avenue, Janes Road in the vicinity of the Pacific Union School, and Bayside Road in the vicinity of Jacoby Creek School. The following pedestrian improvements and safety enhancements should be considered in future planning for these areas:

1. Close sidewalk gap.
2. Install vertical curbs to keep vehicles from parking on sidewalks.
3. Reduce street crossing distance with curb extensions and smaller curb radii.
4. Use on-street parking as a pedestrian buffer.
5. Install textured crosswalks.
6. Provide adequate street lighting focused on crossings.
7. Restrict parking near crosswalks to improve sight distance.
8. Install rumble strips on approaches to crosswalks.
9. Plant street trees or place street trees in planters in the parking lane.
10. Relocate intersection stop bars five feet back from crosswalks to improve driver and pedestrian visibility.

T-5g Pedestrian pathways and multi-use trails. Pedestrian pathways or multi-use trails for the exclusive use of non-motorized transportation modes should be provided. Pathways may be long facilities located along corridors or short facilities providing direct access through development projects or connecting areas not directly accessible by streets. Pathways should be planned to serve both recreational and commuter needs. The following shall apply to pedestrian pathways or multi-use trails:

1. Easement dedication. Dedication of easements for pathways through new private developments may be required.
2. Cooperation with local and regional agencies and jurisdictions. The City shall cooperate with other agencies to establish and maintain off-street pathways and trails utilizing creek, utility, and railroad right of way.
3. Foster Avenue Extension. Multi-use paths or trails shall be included in the Foster Avenue extension to Sunset Avenue.
4. Other Locations. Other potential locations for multi-use paths are within the North Coast Railroad right of way from Giuntoli Lane to Samoa Boulevard, along the west side of Samoa Boulevard/Old Arcata Road east of State Route 101, and along the perimeter of Arcata Bay towards Manila.

2023 Projects Related to the Public Facilities & Infrastructure Element:

1. Broke ground and completed a full construction season for the Arcata Wastewater Treatment Facility upgrade while concurrently continuing daily wastewater treatment operations.
 - a. Completed construction and testing for the new wastewater discharge point and ultraviolet disinfection system.
2. Completed the Sewer Pre-Treatment Enforcement Response Plan.

Public Facilities Policies/Implementation Measures Associated with these projects:

PF-1a Water supply. Surface and subsurface water quantities that supply the City are dependent on rainfall and adequate upstream storage. The City shall continually monitor the water quantity and quality in its system and adhere to the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District's rationing system to ensure that adequate supplies reach all users. The City shall also develop additional water sources to meet current peak use and future use demands.

PF-2a Capacity and management of City wastewater collection system. The wastewater collection system is designed to transport community sewage to the treatment plant. The City shall update its Collection System Maintenance Program, at least every five years, to maintain current projections, management, and contingency programs for wastewater collection. The Plan shall identify needed collection system improvements and anticipated extensions, so that they can be budgeted for in the City's Capital Improvement Program. The City shall continue to monitor groundwater infiltration and surface water inflow (I/I) and take necessary action to ensure that these sources do not cause the collection system or the treatment plant to exceed capacity. The City wastewater collection system shall not be extended beyond the Urban Services Boundary except as provided in Policy GM-4b.

PF-2b Arcata Marsh wastewater treatment system. The City shall update its Wastewater Treatment Plant Master Plan, at least every five years, to evaluate the entire system; reflect any changes in treatment standards; ensure wastewater treatment is meeting current standards; verify that there is adequate treatment system capacity; and assure adequate water flows to maintain habitat. The City shall maintain the existing facilities of the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary and construct new facilities consistent with the Marsh Enhancement Plan adopted by the City Council.

PF-2c Compliance with California Regional Water Quality Control Board wastewater treatment and discharge standards. The City shall regularly test its wastewater and make necessary adjustments in treatment levels, to ensure that it meets California Regional Water Quality Control Board standards. The City shall also keep its National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permit (NPDES) current and in compliance with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency standards.

SECTION 2. HOUSING & HUMAN SERVICES

This section reviews City progress toward implementing the following elements: Housing and Parks and Recreation.

The Housing Element Annual Progress Report has been sent to the State Housing and Community Development Department separately from this report; however, a summary of units created in 2023 by income level is provided below. The City of Arcata is on an 8-year Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) cycle, spanning 2019 to 2027. Arcata received building permits for 152 housing units in 2023. The City has now exceeded our very-low income and moderate-income allocation, with only 12 more units in the low-income level remaining in this planning period (2019-2027). The City has now permitted 79% of our total RHNA allocation, which is above where the City should be (62.5%) at this point in the RHNA cycle.

Arcata's RHNA Allocation									2023 Housing Element Report		
Income Level		RHNA Allocation by Income Level	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total Units to Date (19-2023)	Total Remaining RHNA by Income Level	Percentage Completed
Very Low	Deed Restricted	142	43	43	36	78	0		167	0	118%
	Non-Deed Restricted		5	5	0	5	0				
Low	Deed Restricted	95	0	0	1	60	0		83	12	87%
	Non-Deed Restricted		10	2	0	2	8				
Moderate	Deed Restricted	111	0	0	0	0	0		139	0	125%
	Non-Deed Restricted		6	10	3	10	110				
Above Moderate		262	9	10	14	20	41		94	168	36%
Total RHNA											
Total Units		610	73	70	54	175	159	0	483	180	79%

2023 Projects Related to the Housing Element:

1. Adopted a Homebuyer Downpayment Assistance for Community Land Trust Acquisition Only Program.
2. Received a Manufactured Housing Opportunity and Revitalization (MORE) Program Grant for up to \$3 million for individual residential mobile home rehabilitation.
3. Adopted the Residential Rental Inspection Program (RRIP) to address substandard rental properties and preserve the quality of Arcata's neighborhoods and available housing. To date 1,122 units have been registered.
4. Supported the Planning Commission and Community through many public meetings to finalize a recommendation to the City Council on an updated General Plan and Gateway Area Plan.
5. Amended the City's Short-Stay Vacation Rental Program to continue to reduce impacts on housing.
6. Adopted a shelter crisis designation to support continuation of the safe parking program for residents currently living out of their cars. The program served over 150 individuals this past year and transitioned 60+ into more permanent housing through the program.
7. Assisted 57 residents with Tenant Based Rental Assistance.

Housing Element Policies/Implementation Measures Associated with these projects:

HE IM-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.

HE IM 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.

HE IM 6 State and Federal Grants and Loans. Identify, advocate, sponsor, and connect developers with state and federal housing programs, grants, and loans.

HE IM 8 Community Land Trust. Coordinating with the Community Land Trust to develop, and resale restricted affordable housing units to very low-, low-, and moderate-income households.

HE IM 13 Development of Additional Living Units in Residential Zones. Provide opportunities for construction or conversion of existing living space into additional residential units.

HE IM 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.

2023 Projects Related to the Parks and Recreation Element:

1. Completed the installation of the new non-motorized boat launch at the Arcata Marsh.

2. Secured a lease with Woodsman Hall in Valley West to serve as a recreation community building in Valley West.
3. Upgraded Bloomfield Park with new play and fitness equipment.
4. Initiated construction at Carlson Park and accepted a \$1 million grant from Senator McGuire to assist with both active recreation amenities and natural area restoration.
5. Completed the bicycle pump track at Redwood Park.
6. Extended the advanced mountain biking Jump Trail and Lorax Trail in the Community Forest.
7. Creatively hosted summer camps for youth in new locations within the City, including in Valley West, due to construction at Redwood Park.
8. Brought back the first youth basketball season since Covid with 341 participants.
9. Completed a successful first Call for Artists for painting murals on fire hydrants along the G & H and 8th & 9th Street corridors.

Parks & Recreation Policies/Implementation Measures Associated with these projects:

PR-1c Create a public space network that promotes physical, mental, and social wellbeing. Design an accessible public space network that promotes physical and mental health, contributes to a sense of community, improves air quality, and supports storm water management.

PR-1d Ensure a diversity of public spaces. Plan for a variety of types of open spaces including plazas, parks, playgrounds, and amphitheaters/stages - that accommodate a variety of types of activities (formal, informal, structured, and unstructured) and promote physical activity and social interaction. Prioritize areas lacking in existing parks, facilities, and/or recreational opportunities in the development of new public spaces.

SECTION 3. ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND MANAGEMENT

This section reviews City progress toward implementing the following elements: Open Space, Resource Conservation & Management, and Air Quality.

2023 Projects Related to the Resource Conservation Element:

1. Completed the carbon re-inventory for the Sunnybrae Forest Climate Action Reserve.

Resource Conservation Policies/Implementation Measures Associated with these projects:

RC-8d Restoration for Greenhouse Gases Absorption. Foster and restore forests and other terrestrial ecosystems that offer significant carbon mitigation potential.

SECTION 4. DESIGN AND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION

This section reviews City progress toward implementing the following elements: Design and Historical Preservation

2023 Projects Related to the Design and Historical Preservation Elements

1. The Historic Landmarks Committee reviewed and provided recommendations on a historic assessment of a building at 785 18th Street and a proposed subdivision and reuse of a 1940's barn at 3030 Alliance Road.

Historical Preservation Policies/Implementation Measures Associated with these projects:

H-1f Design criteria for alterations of and additions to local Historic Landmarks. At the discretion of the Community Development Director and/or Historic and Design Review Commission, an owner proposing any construction or alteration that may affect the historical character of the structure may be required to obtain an analysis of the proposed changes by a cultural resources consultant or other knowledgeable professional to determine the impact on the building's historical features.

SECTION 5. HEALTH & SAFETY

This section reviews City progress toward implementing the following elements: Public Safety and Noise

2023 Projects Related to the Public Safety and Noise Elements:

1. Continued to build the Community Ambassador Program. This past year the Ambassadors checked in with businesses 1,840 times, with tourists or shoppers 2,252 times, and with unhoused residents 5,121 times. They picked up 3,852 5-gallon buckets of trash, found 15 lost wallets/phones or other personal items and were thanked 4,593 times.
2. Launched the digital Police Radio System securing communication coverage for our officers throughout Arcata.
3. Received a Title II Grant from the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention for the Arcata Juvenile Diversion Program to support hosting the Parent Project Program in Partnership with Humboldt Teen Court.
4. Equity Arcata hosted four Home Away from Home food and household supply giveaways, transitioned to a new board of directors, hired students to staff the Student Advisory Group on Equity (SAGE) and supported several local events through coordination and day-of volunteering.
5. Continued the contract with Playhouse Arts to provide CUNA support services in the Valley West neighborhood. This year CUNA
 - a. Held eight (8) participatory budget meetings.
 - b. Hosted Monthly Clean the Street events and food distributions.
 - c. Sponsored or supported several special events including a Tianguis, Community BBQs, Santa comes to Valley West (with the Chamber), teen meet-up movie night and a mural workshop at the Grove.

Public Safety Policies/Implementation Measures Associated with these projects:

PS-7b Community-based policing. Community-based policing has proven effective in reducing crime by involving citizens in crime prevention. The City Police Department provides training to business and neighborhood groups in how to discourage crime and best respond when crime occurs. The City shall continue to provide citizen training, maintain relationships with community groups, and encourage Business Emergency Services Teams (BESTs) to reduce crime and augment the essential services of the Police Department. Foot and bike patrols shall be promoted to maximize interaction between citizens and police, to foster friendship, understanding, and mutual help.

PS-7e Education and crime prevention funding. The City recognizes that funds spent on education and crime prevention are more effective in reducing crime than funds spent on apprehending, prosecuting, and incarcerating criminals. The City shall pursue a long-term strategy of funding education and crime prevention programs.

PS-8b Social services programs. The City administers certain social services, such as temporary and permanent housing programs. Other public agencies, including the State of California, and Humboldt County, offer social services, such as public assistance, and food subsidy programs. There are also non-profit, religious, social, and other organizations, as well as businesses that offer social services such as counseling, educational, family assistance, childcare, health education, and food subsidy programs. Social service needs shall be monitored, through population trend analysis and other indicators, and information disseminated to other social service providers.

PS-8c Needs of cultural groups and special populations. Cultural groups, such as Native Americans and other local ethnic populations, and special populations, such as those with physical and mental disabilities, may require more specialized services than those provided in community-wide programs. The City shall allow, where appropriate, use of public spaces for cultural group activities, and shall consider the needs of special populations in City programs, activities, and land use planning.

SECTION 6. GENERAL PLAN UPDATES

The last comprehensive update to the general plan was in the year 2000. The City's Land Use and Resource Conservation and Management Elements were updated in 2008.

No General Plan goals, policies, objectives, standards, or other plan proposals have been deleted, amended, or otherwise adjusted in the past 12 months. Like last year's report, the City is in the process of updating several elements of the General Plan. This work has been funded through a Sustainable Agricultural Land Conservation grant through the Department of Conservation as well as through the State Department of Housing and Community Development's SB2 and LEAP grant programs to undertake updates to the General Plan that

will guide future growth and development in the city, promote housing creation, and protect Arcata's natural and working agricultural lands by prioritizing and streamlining infill development.

These updates are combined into a long-term planning strategy known as Arcata's "Strategic Infill Redevelopment Program", which includes updates to General Plan goals and policies and City's Coastal Land Use Element, as well as implementation measures including updates to the city's zoning code to increase allowed residential density. These updates will prioritize targeted infill zones as well as create form-based provisions to guide the look and feel of future development.

The City released the General Plan Environmental Impact Report on January 31, 2024 with circulation ending March 18, 2024. We anticipate the General Plan updates will be adopted in Spring 2024 and will have updates to share in our 2024 General Plan Annual Report.

More information on the City's Strategic Infill Redevelopment Program and how it intersects with the General Plan can be found on the City's website.