COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 3/20/2025

File #: 25-386

To: Planning Commission

From: Planning and Building Department

Agenda Section: Departmental Report

SUBJECT:
A Public Workshop on the Inland Lighting Ordinance adding Section 314-105.1 and amending 314-141, 314-142, 314-147, and 314-154 in Chapter 4 of Division 1 of Title III of the County Code to include design guidelines for outdoor lighting to protect unincorporated Humboldt County from light pollution and light trespass.

Assessor Parcel Numbers (APN) 000-000-000
Record No.: LRP-2023-18849
All of the unincorporated areas of Humboldt County.

RECOMMENDATION(S):
That the Planning Commission:

1. Request that staff present the staff report;
2. Receive public comment;
3. Deliberate and comment on the Draft Inland Lighting Ordinance; and
4. Provide guidance to Planning & Building Staff on any desired amendments to the draft ordinance prior to a public hearing.

DISCUSSION:
Project Location: All unincorporated areas of Humboldt County, outside of the Coastal Zone.

Present General Plan Land Use Designation: All land use designations.

Present Zoning: All zoning districts.

Environmental Review: N/A for workshop.

State Appeal: N/A for workshop.

Executive Summary:
The Outdoor Lighting Ordinance addresses community concerns of maintaining dark skies and light trespass.

The department has received numerous complaints regarding light trespass, from both residential and commercial uses, onto neighboring parcels, creating glare, and causing light pollution. Light pollution affects wildlife and our ability to maintain dark skies.

To minimize light pollution, light trespass, and preserve our darks skies, the ordinance sets design standards for outdoor lights. Outdoor lights must be designed to minimize the amount of light that spills into unwanted areas like neighboring properties or the sky, and to avoid creating excessive glare for people nearby.

The Outdoor Lighting Ordinance implements the County's 2017 Conservation and Open Space Element of the General Plan, specifically Scenic Resources Standard 4 - Light and Glare and Implementation Measure 5 - Lighting Design Guidelines.

> ***SR-S4: Light and Glare.*** *New outdoor lighting shall be compatible with the existing setting. Exterior lighting fixtures and street standards (both for residential and commercial areas) shall be fully shielded and designed and installed to minimize off-site lighting and direct light within the property boundaries.*
>
> ***SR-IM5: Lighting Design Guidelines****. Amend the Zoning Regulations to include lighting design guidelines for discretionary projects. Require new development and projects that would make significant parking lot improvements or add new exterior lighting to submit a lighting plan consistent with these guidelines. Lighting design guidelines should address:*
>
> *A. Intensity - Acceptable standards shall be defined for various land uses and development types specifying the maximum allowable total lumens per acre.*
>
> *B. Directional Control - Standards shall be developed to minimize the upward transmission and intensity of light at various distances from its source through the use of full-cutoff lighting, downward casting, shielding, visors etc.*
>
> *C. Signage - Standards with respect to illuminated signs shall be developed that prohibit or limit the size, spacing, design, upward transmission of light, and hours of operation. In addition, signs should be white or light colored lettering on dark backgrounds.*
>
> *D. Night Lighting - Hours of operation for various uses shall be specified in order to prohibit all night lighting except when warranted for public safety reasons. On demand lighting shall be encouraged.*
>
> *E. Incentives - The County shall develop incentives for residents and businesses encouraging the*

conversion of existing lighting sources to compliant ones.

F. Enforcement - These standards shall be incorporated into the County Development Code and design review process for new development.

Note: Section C of SR-IM5 has been addressed with the Sign Ordinance (Ordinance 2735). The Sign Ordinance was adopted on April 9, 2024, to address community concerns and complaints relating to signs and billboards and implementing SR-IM2 and SR-IM5 by amending zoning regulations to provide a uniform set of standards for the development, setting, size, and installation of signs within the unincorporated areas of Humboldt County.

The intent of this workshop is to discuss this ordinance with the Planning Commission and receive public comment. This is the Inland version of the Lighting Ordinance. After the workshop, staff will compile and implement comments from the Commission and public to revise the Inland version and draft the Coastal version of the Lighting Ordinance.

Staff will bring the updated inland and coastal ordinances back to the Planning Commission for deliberation at a noticed public hearing.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:
The draft ordinance will be referred to other agencies after the workshop and any comments will be presented at the public hearing.

ATTACHMENTS:
1. Draft Inland Lighting Ordinance

Please contact Reanne Meighan, Associate Planner, at rmeighan@co.humboldt.ca.us or 707-268-3713 if you have questions about this item.