



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 4/14/2026

File #: 26-213

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Planning and Building Department

Agenda Section: Consent

Vote Requirement: Majority

SUBJECT:

A petition from McCullough Ranch LP to amend the General Plan on 320 acres from Residential Agriculture to Timberland. If Approved, this Amendment Would Allow for a Zone Reclassification on 320 Acres from Unclassified Zone to Timber Production Zone

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Accept the petition and adopt the attached resolution (Attachment 1) based on the findings in the staff report; and
2. Direct the Clerk of the Board to give notice of the decision to the applicant and any other interested party.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

This action supports the following areas of your Board's Strategic Plan.

Area of Focus: Sustainable Natural Resources & Infrastructure Stewardship
Strategic Plan Category: 5004 - Preserve agricultural and timber land

DISCUSSION:

Your Board has been requested to accept a petition for an applicant-initiated General Plan Amendment to change the designation of approximately 320 acres of McCullough Ranch LP property from Residential Agriculture (RA 40) and Residential Agriculture (RA 160) to Timber (T). This change will make the General Plan designation consistent with the historic management of the parcels and will maintain established uses of the parcels. A zone reclassification would follow the General Plan Amendment that would see the parcels zoned entirely as Timber Production Zone (TPZ).

The applicant submitted a letter supporting the findings required to make an amendment to the General Plan (Attachment 2).

The project site is located in the Titlow Hill area, on the south side of State Highway 299, approximately 3,500 feet east of the intersection of Titlow Hill Road and State Highway 299, on properties located in Sections 20 and 29, Township 6 North, Range 4 East, Humboldt Base & Meridian.

There are three parcels included in this petition. Parcel 316-184-004 is 160 acres and has a General Plan Land Use designation of Residential Agriculture with a 160-acre minimum parcel size. Parcel 316-184-002 is 80 acres and has a General Plan Land Use designation of Timber (T); this parcel is included in the petition to maintain spatial continuity in the General Plan Amendment petition area. Parcel 316

-185-005 is 160 acres and has a split designation of Residential Agriculture with a 160-acre minimum parcel size (40 acres) and Residential Agriculture with a 40-acre minimum parcel size (120 acres).

The parcels, existing and proposed Land Use designation amendments, and proposed zone reclassification are described in Attachment 2 - Applicant's Petition Letter and Attachment 3 - Site Plan.

If accepted, the proposal would include a change of the zoning on 320 acres of unclassified land (U) to Timber Production Zone (TPZ).

Requirements for a Petition for General Plan Amendment:

The General Plan Amendment Petition is consistent with the General Plan's required findings and criteria for amendments. A petition for amendment of the Plan may be accepted for processing upon the Board of Supervisors making one or more of the following findings:

- A. Base information or physical conditions have changed; or
- B. Community values and assumptions have changed; or
- C. There is an error in the plan; or
- D. To maintain established uses otherwise consistent with a comprehensive view of the plan; or
- E. The proposed amendment has the potential for public benefit and is consistent with the Guiding Principles and applicable goals of the Plan.

The Board must also determine whether the revision is not appropriate for the next scheduled update.

For approval of General Plan Amendments, the Board must make the findings that the proposed revision is in the public interest and is consistent with the Guiding Principles in Section 1.4 and applicable goals of the Plan.

Criteria for Amendment:

D - The proposed petition is to amend the land use designation of approximately 320 acres from Residential Agriculture (RA-40) and (RA-160) to Timber (T). Parcel 316-185-005 has a mixed land use designation, a portion of the parcel is designated as Residential Agriculture (RA-40) and a portion is designated Residential Agriculture (RA-160). The petition proposes making the General Plan designation consistent across the applicant's land holding and within their individual parcels. The applicant states that these parcels meet the definition of "Timberland" and stocking standards, and that the goal of forest management warrants a General Plan Amendment. The proposed change will make the land use designation more consistent with the proposed use of the parcels.

E - The proposed project addresses the discrepancy between the General Plan and the current land

use on the properties. It is in the public interest to correct such discrepancies to have accurate planning and zoning documentation and guidance. Though the proposed petition does not specifically address any of the Guiding Principles in Section 1.4, the petition does encourage, incentivize and support agriculture, timber ecosystem services and compatible uses on resource lands (Principle 1.4.6) by maintaining continuity of land use (Timber Production) throughout the entirety of the landholding.

Not appropriate for next scheduled update:

The proposed project is to address the discrepancy between the General Plan and the current land use, bringing the General Plan into consistency with the existing land use. Because of this discrepancy, this change would not be appropriate for the next scheduled update.

Requirements for a Petition for Zone Reclassification (Zone Boundary Adjustment):

Amendments to this division may be approved only if the following findings are made:

1. The amendment is in the public interest; and
2. The amendment is consistent with the County General Plan.
3. The proposed amendment does not reduce the residential density for any parcel below that utilized by the Department of Housing and Community Development in determining compliance with housing element law (the midpoint of the density range specified in the plan designation) unless the following written findings are made supported by substantial evidence:
 - a. The reduction is consistent with the adopted general plan, including the housing element, and
 - b. The remaining sites identified in the housing element are adequate to accommodate the County's share of the regional housing need pursuant to Section 65584 of the Government Code, and
 - c. The property contains insurmountable physical or environmental limitations and clustering of residential units on the developable portions has been maximized.

Public Interest:

It is in the public interest to align zone district boundaries with physical use of the land. From the 2017 General Plan: "While forestlands are unquestionably the County's greatest long term economic asset, they are also the County's greatest natural resources asset, providing a wealth of ecological values. They influence the supply and quality of water resources. They provide habitat for wildlife and plants, some of which is critical to endangered species. And because trees remove carbon from the atmosphere, they are pivotal to the state's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions." The General Plan acknowledges the public interest in maintaining forest lands for timber and ecosystem uses.

Consistent with the General Plan:

Forest Resources Implementation Measure 2 in the Humboldt County General Plan states that the

county shall: Develop Incentive Program to Encourage Timber Production and Ecosystem Values. Develop incentives for property owners and forestland managers to encourage continued timber production and ecosystem services on forestlands. The proposed change to Timberland would reduce the likelihood of further subdivision of the subject parcels, thus preserving the productive capacity of the land and its ecosystem value.

Consistent with the Humboldt County Code:

The adjustment of the zone from Unclassified (U) to Timber Production Zone is consistent with Humboldt County Code. The Unclassified Land (U) zoning designation is reserved for lands where the preferred land use has not been adequately studied to determine the best use of the land. The applicant has submitted evidence that shows the most preferable use of the property is for continued timber production. The Timber Production Zone is the preferred zoning designation for lands where the use of the land is for timber production.

Residential Density:

The three parcels owned by McCollough Ranch LP (APN's 316-184-004, 316-185-005, and 316-184-002) were not included in the 2019 Housing Element Inventory. The proposed General Plan Amendment would not reduce the residential density for either parcel below that utilized by the Department of Housing and Community Development.

The decision to be made at this time is whether the Board will accept the proposed application for processing, review, and consideration. If accepted for review and consideration, more in-depth analysis will be performed assessing whether the proposed General Plan Amendment is both in the public interest and consistent with the General Plan.

A petition to accept an application for a General Plan Amendment is not a project as defined in Section 21065 of the Public Resources Code and is not subject to CEQA.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Applicant Fees

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The administrative cost of the General Plan Amendment and zone reclassification does not impact the General Fund. The applicant is responsible for paying all actual costs involved. If the Zone Reclassification is approved, there will be an impact on property tax revenue. Tax revenue would be approximately \$1,672 less per year after the property is rezoned. Some of that tax revenue would be recouped through the timber yield tax when timber is harvested and sold.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The project was referred to County Counsel, which has not expressed concern with the proposed petition. Should the petition be accepted, responsible and trustee state and local agencies will be involved in the referral process of the Reclassification, including Native American Consultation pursuant to SB 18 and AB 52, and as part of the environmental review for the project.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Board could accept the petition with modifications if it believes the required findings cannot be made. Staff believes the necessary findings for accepting the petition may be made, so staff does not recommend further consideration of this alternative.

The Board could reject the petition if it believes the required findings cannot be made. Staff believe the necessary findings for accepting the petition may be made, so staff does not recommend further consideration of this alternative

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Draft Resolution

Attachment 2: Applicant's Petition Letter

Attachment 3: Site Plan

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Meeting of: N/A

File No.: N/A