

## Planning Commission Annual Report for 2022

January 18, 2023

This is the Annual Report of the Planning Commission to the City Council. The Council adopted the format and content of the report by resolution in 2012 (Resolution No. 123-07). The Planning Commission approved this report on January 10, 2023, and directed staff to submit the report to Council.

### **1. Progress on the Planning Commission's Goals from 2022**

- a. **Finalize the Local Coastal Program (LCP).** This has been an ongoing goal of the Commission for a number of years. The City currently has a Coastal Commission grant awarded in November 2022 to complete the LCP. The Commission reviewed the Land Use Plan of the LCP at five meetings at the end of 2020 and one in January of 2021. The Commission provided staff with direction regarding land use and zoning, as well as the broader policy associated with the Land Use Plan, at two meetings in early 2022. Staff has been working on updates to the Implementation Plan and Coastal Zoning. The Commission is expecting to see the Zoning in early 2023. A draft of the Coastal Land Use Element of the General Plan has been reviewed by the Planning Commission, and the Coastal Zoning Ordinance is the subject of the 2022 LCP grant. The Planning Commission anticipates having a submission-ready LCP by the end of 2023.
- b. **Strategic Infill Redevelopment Program.** The Commission focused most of its meetings in 2022 on the Gateway Area Plan and the General Plan updates. In total, the SIRP was considered at 19 meetings. The Commission made significant progress reviewing the Gateway Area Plan, including recommendations from City Committees. The Commission has also had the opportunity to review several of the General Plan Element updates. The Commission is looking forward to finalizing the Gateway Area Plan and General Plan updates over 2023. This work is ongoing.
- c. **Streamline Permitting Appropriately.** The Commission has an ongoing goal to ensure the public's resources are best used to achieve appropriate planning efficiently. The Planning Commission will continue to work towards improving the process, making necessary code amendments, and reviewing policy to ensure it aligns with community goals and vision. The majority of the work on this goal was completed in conjunction with the SIRP outreach and public hearings. The Commission has addressed this through several discussions on long-range plans, as guided through experiences on individual project reviews. The Commission will continue to focus on these efforts in 2023.
- d. **Regional Planning.** The draft of the Climate Action Plan (CAP) was completed in 2022, and the County is taking the lead on the necessary environmental review. The Commission anticipates reviewing the CAP in the summer of 2023. In addition, staff is working with regional planning staff and the Humboldt County Association of Governments on a regional Vehicle Miles Traveled model. This work is funded by the Regional Early Action Planning grant that the HCAoG received. Staff anticipates the work will be under review by the Commission in mid- to late-2023.
- e. **Training.** The Commission had the opportunity to attend the Association of Environmental Planners' CEQA training this year. In addition, all Commissioners are up to date on their required ethics training. Lastly, staff provides a range of updates and information about the planning profession. The Commission continues to prioritize training and makes the appeal to the Council that they fund training for Commissioners in the Budget for Fiscal Year 2023/24.

- f. **Historic Preservation and Plaza Historic Designation.** Staff is still working with the Historic Landmarks Committee to complete an historic survey and to designate the Plaza. This should be a continuing goal to streamline permitting and elevate the historic nature of the Plaza, respectively.
- g. **Targeted Redevelopment.** The Commission reviewed the Infill Opportunity Zones identified in the Housing Element at least once in 2023. These sites will likely be the next areas identified for targeted redevelopment.
- h. **Projects.** The Commission reviewed and made recommendations on, or approved, several projects in 2022. The Commission made a recommendation on the Housing for Homeless combining zone amendments. These resulted in the addition of approximately 150 units of housing for homeless individuals and small households. The Commission also approved three Use Permits, six Design Review Permits, three Planned Development Permit amendments, and the Capital Improvement Program General Plan Consistency determination. In addition, the Planning Commission reviewed the General Plan Annual Performance Report. Lastly, the Commission considered a Mills Act Contract.
- i. **Cancelations.** The Commission had fewer cancellations than typical. While there were three cancelations related to holidays, there were two special meetings scheduled to make up the missed meetings. The regular meeting on August 23 was replaced by the Joint City Council/Planning Commission Study Session.

## **2. Planning Commission Goals for 2023**

- a. **Update the General Plan.** Public engagement around updates to the General Plan and targeted rezoning, including the Arcata Gateway Area Plan, are well underway. The General Plan will provide the policy guidance on which the targeted rezoning will be based.
- b. **Finalize the Local Coastal Program.** The Commission would like to see the update to the LCP completed in 2023. The Commission will make special meetings as necessary to ensure staff has the resources needed to complete the public engagement and obtain the necessary approvals to finish this longstanding update.
- c. **Streamline Permitting Appropriately.** The Commission has an ongoing goal to ensure the public's resources are best used to achieve appropriate planning efficiently. The Planning Commission will continue to work towards improving the process, making necessary code amendments, and reviewing policy to ensure it aligns with community goals and vision.
- d. **Regional Planning.** The Commission looks forward to seeing the completed Climate Action Plan. The Commission plans to focus on regional efforts on sea level rise and hazard and resiliency planning in 2023.
- e. **Targeted Redevelopment.** When the SIRP is complete, the Commission will shift its focus to the remaining Infill Opportunity Zones.
- f. **Historic Preservation.** The Commission will work with the Historic Landmarks Committee to identify effective programs for historic preservation in planning.
- g. **Training.** The Commission would like more formal training to better understand its roles and responsibilities, as well as technical capacity, for the decisions it makes. Training and subscription services, electronic or otherwise, will need to be budgeted to accomplish this goal. The Planning Commission would like the Council to consider a regional collaboration for high-impact training for Planning Commissioners.