



AGENDA SUMMARY EUREKA CITY COUNCIL

TITLE: Waterfront Eureka Plan

DEPARTMENT: Development Services - Planning

PREPARED BY: Caitlin Castellano, Senior Planner

PRESENTED FOR: Action Information only Discussion

RECOMMENDATION

Receive report and provide comment.

FISCAL IMPACT

No Fiscal Impact Included in Budget Additional Appropriation

COUNCIL GOALS/STRATEGIC VISION

- 2040 General Plan Goal LU-2: A thriving, compact, and pedestrian oriented Core Area that serves as the heart of Eureka's civic, cultural, business and visitor activity and is appealing to new investment.
- 2040 General Plan Policy LU-2.11 Core Area Specific Plan: Initiate a specific plan for the Core Area to create a framework to focus community efforts and enhance the ability to attract funding for reinvestment.
- 2019-2027 Housing Element Goal H-1: Eureka's development regulations, permit processing procedures, and customer service standards are development-friendly and conducive to the production of housing.

DISCUSSION

The City of Eureka is proposing to adopt a specific plan, the Waterfront Eureka Plan (WEP), in the City's Coastal Zone Core Area (Commercial Bayfront, Old Town, and Library Districts) (Figure 1). The purpose of the WEP is to accelerate housing production and streamline housing approvals, and to provide a roadmap for the development and redevelopment of the vacant and underutilized sites and buildings along and near Eureka's central waterfront.

Figure 1: Location Map



What is a Specific Plan

A specific plan is used to plan the future of a particular area at a finer level of detail than a general plan, and it is a standalone document, separate from the general plan. A specific plan combines a policy document (i.e. goals, policies and programs of a general plan) with a regulatory document (zoning regulations). Public agencies use specific plans to set realistic development expectations while also signaling the big picture of the plan and vision for a particular area. Developers, in turn, use that information to determine where and what to build.

Public Review Draft

Development Services - Planning and Dudek, the project consultant, have prepared a Public Review Draft of the WEP, which has been posted to the project website: waterfrontereka.com, for review and comment since mid-May 2023.

Staff is asking the City Council, and the public through public comment, to provide input/comment on the draft WEP (Attachment 1).

In addition to the opportunity to comment at tonight's meeting, comments on the draft WEP may be submitted through waterfrontereka.com, or directly to Development Services – Planning. Final design and formatting of the WEP will be consistent with Draft WEP Chapter 2 (Background Report). The other draft chapters have not yet been formatted, so the current view of the other chapters is focused on content.

A CEQA Streamlining workplan for future development projects in the Plan Area is still in-process. The goal of the CEQA Streamlining workplan is to provide a level of certainty in the environmental review process for future development projects that are consistent with the WEP. The workplan would describe potential CEQA exemptions, with additional information to support use of the Class 32 Infill Development categorical exemption (§15332 of the CEQA Guidelines) to ensure approval under the Class 32 exemption "...would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality." For projects that don't qualify for a CEQA categorical exemption, the workplan is anticipated to include a CEQA Initial Study checklist that would be used to identify what environmental information/analysis is already covered by the 2040 General Plan EIR and subsequent WEP Addendum, and when additional site-specific information/analysis (i.e., traffic, biological, geotechnical reports, etc.) may be needed to complete the necessary CEQA environmental document.

Furthermore, adoption of the WEP is subject to CEQA, and an Addendum to the 2040 General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (SCH#2016102025) is still in-process. A General Plan and Coastal Act consistency analysis is also in process which will show how the WEP is consistent with the goals and policies of the 2040 General Plan as well as the applicable California Coastal Act policies. The City intends to use the information collected for the WEP to inform and facilitate the ongoing comprehensive LCP update, and to eventually incorporate the land use and development standards from the WEP into the LCP. Given that the LCP update is anticipated, and an LCP amendment will be necessary to implement the WEP, the WEP does not need to be fully consistent with the currently certified LCP at this time. However, the WEP must be fully in conformance with the California Coastal Act and the 2040 General Plan.

Next Steps

Staff anticipates bringing the final WEP, CEQA Addendum, CEQA Streamlining workplan, and Consistency Analysis to the to the Planning Commission at a noticed public hearing in September 2023 to make a recommendation to the City Council for consideration. Staff then anticipates presenting the final WEP and associated documents for adoption, as well as any comments and recommendations from the Planning Commission, to the City Council at a noticed public hearing in October 2023. The public review period for the Public Review Draft of the WEP is anticipated to close on August 11, 2023 so staff has adequate time to incorporate any necessary changes into the Final WEP prior to the noticed public hearings in September and October. The public hearings will provide additional opportunities to comment on the final documents.

Attachment 1: Public Review Draft Waterfront Eureka Plan

Attachment 2: WEP Appendices A and B

REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY:

- City Attorney
- City Clerk/Information Technology
- Community Services
Development Services
- Finance
- Fire
- Human Resources
- Police
- Public Works