



MENDOCINO COUNTY GENERAL PLAN ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT FOR 2023

Pursuant to Government Code § 65400(a)(2), the Planning and Building Services Department (PBS) is required to provide an annual report to the Board of Supervisors, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, and the state Department of Housing and Community Development on the status of the General Plan and progress in its implementation. This report is intended to compliment the Housing Element Annual Progress Report, submitted separately, which contains the bulk of the information required in that section of the Government Code. This report covers the period from **January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023**.

The Mendocino County General Plan is the comprehensive, long-term plan for the physical development of the county. Implementation and maintenance of the General Plan is predominately the responsibility of PBS, though the ultimate authority to rule on and change it resides with the Board of Supervisors, subject to the prescribed scope and requirements delineated in Government Code § 65300 et seq.

Adopted General Plan Updates

The Mendocino County General Plan underwent no amendments in 2023.

Forthcoming General Plan Updates

GP_2022-0001, a General Plan amendment to recognize and address the disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs) that exist within the county, as required by Government Code § 65302.10, is set to go before the Planning Commission for review in 2024 and expected to go before the Board of Supervisors for adoption shortly thereafter.

In September 2022 the County applied for, and on November 16, 2022 was awarded, an LCP Local Assistance Grant to perform a comprehensive update to the Local Coastal Plan, including the General Plan's Coastal Element. While it underwent minor amendments in 2005 and 2021, a comprehensive update has not occurred since 1992. The overall goal of the project is to improve local coastal planning in Mendocino County to better address coastal resiliency and climate change adaptation by updating technical studies, descriptions, policies, maps, and the implementation plan for the LCP in order to adapt to the impacts of climate change, sea level rise, and associated coastal hazards while maintaining the overall quality of the coastal zone environment in the interest of all people. On August 31, 2023, the County also received a rolling grant for the planning and development of a coordinated and organized Sea Level Rise Resilience Strategy for Mendocino County, which will be folded into the LCP update.

Once the LCP update has been completed (anticipated certification in December 2026), the County also aims to perform a comprehensive update to the rest of the General Plan, possibly breaking out each legally-required element into a separate chapter. This is expected to coincide with the 7th Cycle Housing Element, expected to go into effect in late 2027. The last such comprehensive update of the General Plan (excepting the Coastal Element) occurred in 2009.

As needed, the County considers minor updates to the General Plan Designation maps to accommodate rezones. These are rare, and when necessary multiple proposals are considered together as a single potential update, so as to maintain consistency with the four-amendment-per-year maximum established in Government Code § 65358. Two such applications are currently under review: GP_2021-0002, to expand the Visitor Accommodations and Services Combining District to an additional parcel in the Coastal Zone, and GP_2023-0002, to rezone approximately 160 acres from Rangeland (RL-160) to Rural Residential (RR-10).

Additional Implementation Notes

The Planning Development Department continues to implement the General Plan in reviewing development permits and interpreting and enforcing the County code. Recommendations for approval of all discretionary use permits are required to make the finding that the proposal conforms with the General Plan. Standards for approving ministerial permits were also developed in conformance with the General Plan. Decisions of the Planning Commission, Subdivision Committee, Mendocino Historical Review Board, and other such public hearing bodies must also remain consistent with the General Plan.

A draft for a comprehensive update to the Inland Zoning Code is currently being prepared. While this is not expected to necessitate an amendment to the General Plan, it will adapt the implementation of the existing goals and policies to better reflect the current planning landscape.

The County website was recently updated to improve accessibility of the most up-to-date versions of each component of the General Plan, and of the most recent studies prepared to inform it, such as the Climate Vulnerability Assessment Report, Coastal Groundwater Study, and State Route 1 Corridor Study.

The County remains committed to coordinating with the neighboring incorporated cities and tribal governments to maintain a strong regional planning strategy.

The Mendocino County General Plan is available at <https://www.mendocinocounty.gov/government/planning-building-services/plans/mendocino-county-general-plan>. Questions regarding the General Plan can be submitted to PBS (see contact info in the letterhead above). Interested parties may also contact individual County Supervisors or speak during the Public Comment period at publicly noticed Board of Supervisors Meetings. Public engagement remains key to the planning process.

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