II. INTRODUCTION

1 WHAT IS A GENERAL PLAN?

CALIFORNIA LAW REQUIRES each City and County to adopt a comprehensive and long-term General Plan to define how the area will develop over the next twenty years. The General Plan has been referred to as the “constitution” or “blueprint” for development. It provides the long-term and comprehensive policy program for all aspects of development, growth, and use in the Ukiah Valley. The City of Ukiah and its location in Mendocino County are shown in Figure II.1-A on page 2.

The law requires that a General Plan address seven broad topics called elements. Each element focuses on a specific set of issues, but at the same time ranks in equal importance with the other elements. The General Plan is the ultimate legal control over issuance of building permits, approval of new subdivisions, use permits, general development, and even the acquisition, construction or expansion of City and County facilities. The General Plan represents the City Council’s and Board of Supervisors’ policy programs. The Plan provides guidance to the Planning Commission and Staff and is the foundation upon which all development and building regulations are based.

The Ukiah General Plan revision and Growth Management program is more comprehensive than just a development program. The Plan is intended to meet the needs of the City Council for the incorporated City and its sphere of influence. It is also intended to meet the needs of the Board of Supervisors for the unincorporated portions of the Ukiah Valley. The Plan addresses the important beliefs about how the area will grow as determined by those who live and work in the Valley. It proposes goals and policies for not only the City proper but the entire unincorporated Valley — subject to Board of Supervisors concurrence. The General Plan represents a compilation of dreams, aspirations, instructions to the future, and the reasons why each is important to the area.

To provide the legal mechanisms of making the General Plan work for the people of the Valley, the dreams are converted to statements called goals. The aspirations become the City Council’s — and potentially Board of Supervisors’ — policies or policy direction to its staff. The instructions for the future will be spelled out as implementation measures. So that in the future people will understand why the City and possibly the County took these actions, the reasons are spelled out as summaries of major findings.
Figure II.1-A: Regional location map — Mendocino County and the City of Ukiah

Adopted by the City Council, December 6, 1995
The General Plan is divided into four major components — the Overall General Plan Goals and Policies, the Resource Elements, the Infrastructure Elements, and the Development Elements. Each of the fourteen Ukiah elements fall under one of these four components:

**Overall General Plan Goals and Policies:** Not technically an element, this component contains goals and policies that define the Vision Statement (See Chapter III) and form an umbrella over the entire General Plan.

**Resource Elements:** (1) Energy Element, (2) Noise Element\(^1\), (3) Open Space Element\(^1\), Conservation Element\(^1\), and (4) Safety Element\(^1\).

**Infrastructure Elements:** (5) Airport Element, (6) Community Facilities and Services Element, (7) Historic and Archeological Resources Element, and (8) Parks and Recreation Element.

**Development Elements:** (9) Circulation and Transportation Element\(^1\), (10) Community Design Element, (11) Economic Development Element, (12) Housing Element\(^1\), (13) Land Use Element\(^1\), and the (14) Fiscal Impact Assessment.

### 1.01 The purpose of the General Plan

The General Plan is a *policy document* to be used by cities and counties to direct development over a long-term period in a comprehensive manner. The role of a General Plan differs from a *regulatory program* — such as a zoning ordinance or subdivision ordinance — because its job is to provide the “big picture” of long-range development and capital improvement programs. The General Plan describes how the community will appear in twenty years. The zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance implement the goals and policies of the General Plan and directly control development.

The process for developing a general plan has evolved since the mid-1950s into a series of requirements guided by a combination of state mandates through legislation, regulatory requirements through the *California Code of Regulations*, and court decisions, also called *case law*. To assist local governments in preparing a General Plan, the Governor’s *Office of Planning and Research* (OPR) has developed a document called the *General Plan Guidelines* to provide all agencies with its interpretations of the various General Plan requirements. In the *Guidelines*, OPR defines that “[a] general plan provides a basis for rational decision making regarding a city’s or county’s long-term physical development.”\(^2\) The legislative charter for General Plans states the document’s purpose to be to provide for “the physical development of the ... city, and any land outside its boundaries which in [its] judgement bears relation to its planning.”\(^3\)

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\(^1\)Elements marked with a printer’s cross (†) are the seven State-mandated elements.


\(^3\)California Government Code (GC) §65300.
Figure II.1-B: General Plan Planning Area

Adopted by the City Council December 6, 1995
Figure II.1-C: Ukiah City Limits (1994)

Adopted by the City Council, December 5, 1995
1.02 General Plan legal requirements

The State has imposed certain minimum requirements on the contents of a General Plan. It has identified seven elements that must be addressed. The Legislature has indicated that other elements are optional at local discretion. Most important, the law requires that "...the general plan and elements and parts thereof comprise an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies for the adopting agency." Internal consistency means that each element and all of its components have equal weight in the eyes of the law.

This means that the General Plan cannot skirt areas of controversy in one element by avoiding decisions or making either/or comparisons in another element. The Guidelines' example states "...the land use and open-space elements cannot contain different land use intensity standards rationalized by statements such as 'if in any instance there is a conflict between the land use element and the open-space element, the land use element controls'." The General Plan must grasp the issues and provide a distinct and direct resolution.

1.02.01 Mandatory elements

The seven mandatory elements are defined in the law as Land Use, Circulation, Open Space, Conservation, Housing, Noise, and Safety. Each has certain requirements for its minimum contents. The State, however, provides some degree of flexibility in element content. The Legislature directed that "...planning agencies and legislative bodies implement this article in ways that accommodate local conditions and circumstances, while meeting its minimum requirements." Utilizing this flexibility, elements can be combined. The Ukiah General Plan consolidates the Open Space and Conservation Elements into one element. In addition, some of the requirements for mandatory elements have been separated into independent elements for the City's General Plan. The issues associated with sewer, water, and public infrastructure are separated from the Land Use and Circulation Elements to the Community Facilities Element. Park and recreation issues are separated from Open Space and Land Use element requirements and are discussed in the Parks and Recreation Element.

1.02.02 Optional elements

State law permits local government to add any number of optional elements. The law states "[t]he general plan may include any other elements or address any other subjects which, in the judgment of the [City Council] relate to the physical development of the of the city or county." The Ukiah General Plan revision and Growth Management program adds a number of optional elements. These are: Airport, Community Design, Community Facilities, Economic Development, Fiscal Impact, Historic and Archaeological Resources, and Parks and Recreation. The Ukiah General Plan has a total of fourteen elements.

1.02.03 Environmental review

California has a requirement that prior to any governmental agency taking action on a General Plan, it must first or concurrently complete an environmental analysis of the project. This requirement is

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*GC § 65300.5.
*GC § 65300.7.
*GC § 65303.

Adopted by the City Council, December 6, 1985
contained within the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The administrative requirements for implementing CEQA are established in Title 14 of the California Code of regulations, known as the State CEQA Guidelines. The City authorized preparation of an environmental impact report (EIR) that was integrated into the General Plan during the adoption and hearing process. For final publication, the EIR was removed in order to provide for a complete and comprehensive General Plan.

One purpose of an EIR is to provide decision-makers with an understanding of the long-term environmental consequences if they were to adopt and carry out the General Plan. Another purpose is to provide the public with an opportunity to comment on both the General Plan and its environmental impacts. The EIR is a disclosure document. Its preparation, responses to comments, and certification results in the decision-makers furnishing a written record of the reasons supporting their decision. The General Plan was prepared with a consolidated environmental impact report certified by the City Council on July 19, 1995.

1.02.04 The area covered by the General Plan

The General Plan covers three differing areas. The primary focus is within the City limits or incorporated area. The other two boundaries are within the unincorporated area. One is the Sphere of Influence, the adoption of which is briefly described on page 8. The third limit is the Planning Area.

The City limits cover the lands currently within the City of Ukiah. This incorporated territory is governed by the five person City Council in a Council-Mayor-Manager form of government. This means that the Mayor is elected separately from the City Council members. General administration and day-to-day operations are directed by the City Manager who is appointed by the Council. The City of Ukiah is a general law municipality, principally governed by the requirements of State law in conjunction with its local ordinances.

Land use matters within the City are reviewed by a Planning Commission appointed by the City Council to oversee use permits, development permits, variances, and other discretionary permits that are approved by quasi-judicial actions. Development proposals that are considered legislative actions, such as the General Plan and its amendments, the zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, and other policy documents, must also be approved by the City Council following a recommendation from the Planning Commission. The Council may also appoint other advisory bodies to make decisions or provide the Council with recommendations. Figure II.1-C shows the City Limits at the time the General Plan was adopted in 1995.

California law requires that each City have a Sphere of Influence to represent the ultimate limits to which the City will extend its services, embrace new territory, and anticipate its growth over the next twenty years. The City proposes a new Sphere of Influence in the General Plan and submits the selected boundaries to the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) for approval. The proposed Sphere of Influence map is Figure II.1-D.

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8Public Resources Code §21000 ET SEQ
9This differs from a Council-Manager government, in which the Mayor is elected from among the members of the City Council.
10The other type of City is a "charter city," in which the laws that govern the City are enacted directly by voters. The City is run with a constitution called a "charter." San Diego and Los Angeles are charter cities.

Adopted by the City Council. December 6, 1995
State law requires that a Sphere of Influence be adopted if a City wants to consider any annexations. Later policies in the General Plan define territories proposed to be annexed by the City during the short-term planning period (the period from one to five years after adoption of the General Plan). Although the City Council and Board of Supervisors do not have a standardized tax sharing agreement, and the Ukiah City Council has not implemented an “aggressive” annexation policy, the Preliminary General Plan identifies areas in which the City can better serve the businesses and residents. Mendocino County controls land use within the Sphere until it is annexed by the City.

The Planning Area (See Figure II.1-B) represents the total area studied for the General Plan. This boundary, which encompasses the Ukiah Valley and includes the City of Ukiah, is entirely within the unincorporated County. The purpose of utilizing such a large Planning Area is to provide a comprehensive and consistent policy program for development that can be used by both the City and the County. The County Board of Supervisors has indicated it will consider adopting the General Plan policies related to the Planning Area as an Area Plan to be a part of the Mendocino County General Plan.

The Planning Area includes lands which are unlikely to be annexed within the next twenty years, but in which development influences or impacts the City and its residents. The Planning Area is an area in which the City and County are likely to cooperate to provide quality public services and facilities.

2 THE GENERAL PLAN REVISION AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

2.01 Community involvement

During the summer and fall of 1990, people who call the Ukiah Valley their home and place of business decided they needed to come together and develop a shared picture of the City’s future. To best accomplish this objective, the City Council authorized a revision to its General Plan. While General Plans are required by State law, the City’s approach was to use the process to achieve a greater community consensus and participation.

In order to include a broad cross-section of people and ideas, the City initiated a process to prepare a citizen-driven General Plan revision and Growth Management program. This process involved nearly 130 people working on Citizen Advisory Committees.

To provide the foundation for the General Plan, a series of public workshops were held in late 1990 and early 1991. From these sessions, members of the community created a wish-list for the future. This lengthy list resulted in the draft Vision Statement presented in Volume III of the General Plan.

2.02 How the General Plan becomes part of the Community

The work of the separate committees was presented to the 35-member Growth Management Steering Committee (GMSC) for consolidation into a single General Plan document, as well as issue-by-issue review. When the GMSC completed its review — which included extensive input from the public — it sent a complete General Plan, called the Preliminary General Plan, to the Planning Commission.

In Spring 1992, three workshops were hosted by the Citizen Advisory Committees to present an opportunity for members of the public to examine the proposed goals and

Adopted by the City Council December 6, 1995
policies, together with the reasons the different Element Committees believed these issues to be important. The workshops provided a session at which interested members of the community presented comments, interpretations, or suggestions for enhancement directly to the Element Committee members.

The Workshops successfully provided opportunities to listen, gather ideas, and rework or polish the elements. The materials presented were recommendations proposed by the various element Committees.

The work of the Citizen Advisory Committees was combined with legal requirements, other recommendations, and direction from the Steering Committee to form the Initial Version of the Plan. The Initial Version represented a working version of the General Plan from which the Steering Committee concentrated its review to prepare the Citizen-driven version of the General Plan. The Steering Committee worked on the Initial Version Plan from June, 1992 through August, 1994. The Initial Version provided a “first cut” by the Steering Committee so that the group could take a look at all the work of the Citizen Advisory Committees and incorporate its views into the process. The lengthy debates, discussions, and decisions were completed on July 26, 1994.

Over a concentrated period on August 8, 9, and 10, 1994, the Growth Management Steering Committee reviewed its work and sought concurrence to pass its recommendation of the General Plan to the Planning Commission and the public. This document, called the Preliminary Version of the General Plan and Growth Management Program (Preliminary Plan) represents the Steering Committee’s work. The Committee seeks adoption of the Plan by the Planning Commission, City Council, and the County. The Preliminary Version of the Plan is the first “official” General Plan document prepared in this process. It is presented to the Planning Commission for its review, hearings, and recommendations.

At the Planning Commission stage, the General Plan as proposed by the Growth Management Steering Committee was combined with a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). This provided the Planning Commission with an assessment of the General Plan’s impacts on the Ukiah Valley environment and the City and County budgets. The Planning Commission was also presented with options and alternatives to the recommended policy directions in the Preliminary Plan. The alternatives were generated from options which were discussed but not selected through the Growth Management Steering Committee’s review. This approach ensured that the Planning Commission had knowledge of the various opportunities and options which were discussed, not only those selected.

The Planning Commission conducted two public hearings and eleven deliberation sessions over a five month period. In the process, the Commission invested nearly fifty hours reviewing and revising the text. This phase began in November, 1994, and ended with the official action adopting the Draft General Plan on April 12, 1995. The Planning Commission made many changes to the text originally submitted by the Growth Management Steering Committee. These changes are identified throughout the document with a “red-line” highlight through the new or revised text. To gain a view of the GMSC’s version without the Planning Commission’s changes, one must read the unaltered text plus the stricken text.
Following the Commission's action on April 12, 1995, the Draft General Plan and an accompanying Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) were sent to the City Council. The Council held public hearings and deliberation sessions in May, June, and July, 1995 preceding adoption on August 16, 1995. It reviewed the Plan, considered comments and alternatives, examined the options selected and declined, the environmental consequences of the Plan's implementation, responses to comments, and the fiscal results of implementing the Plan. The Council balanced all of the administrative record of options and certified the Environmental Impact Report on June 10, 1995, prior to adopting the Final General Plan and Growth Management Program.

Following the City's adoption of the General Plan, there are a number of additional steps that must be taken. The Mendocino County Board of Supervisors is committed to reviewing the Plan for consideration of its adoption by the County as an area plan or special plan for the unincorporated lands within the Ukiah Valley. To take this step, the City of Ukiah General Plan, as adopted by the City Council, must first be reviewed and considered with at least one public hearing by the Mendocino County Planning Commission and then considered with at least one public hearing by the Board of Supervisors.

One of the components of the General Plan is an identification of the Sphere of Influence. The Sphere is a boundary that represents the ultimate City limits for the City of Ukiah. The Sphere of influence is proposed in the General Plan but must be approved by the Mendocino County Local Agency Formation Commission. LAFCos is an independent body created in State law. The Commission has the power to approve or deny annexations, incorporations, or formation of most special districts. LAFCos also must approve spheres of influence for all cities and special districts. A city cannot annex land that is not a part of its sphere.

When the 1981 version of the General Plan was adopted, the sphere of influence was basically the entire Ukiah Valley. During the process of preparing the 1992 revision to the General Plan, it was determined that this boundary area was too large for a sphere of influence. The Steering Committee will define a sphere as part of its review of the Initial Plan.

There are other participants in the adoption of the General Plan. The California Department of Housing and Community Development must review the Housing Element. The California Division of Mines and Geology must review the mineral resource components of the Open Space, Conservation, and Land Use elements, and it must also review the Safety Element. The Mendocino County Water Agency, special districts providing fire protection, sewer, and water service in the Plan area must also consider its implications on the growth and ability of the Districts to serve their existing and future populations.

In 1990, a joint task force of Valley public agencies was created to provide a comprehensive and consistent program of service to the public. These agencies prepared a task force report that was adopted and released in August, 1992. The Valley Wide Task Force prepared recommendations for the distribution and consolidation of public service delivery in the area. These recommendations are incorporated into the Community Facilities Element. Some of the districts or agencies may need to take an action related to the implementation of the General Plan.
3 THE GENERAL PLAN

The City of Ukiah adopted its first General Plan in 1974. The adoption signified a compilation of separate work on General Plan elements during the early part of the 1970s. Between 1974 and 1981, various amendments — predominantly to make land use map changes — were adopted. On November 30, 1981, the City Council adopted a comprehensive and long-term General Plan that has guided the City since that time. The Noise Element was updated in December, 1982. A Community Facilities Element was added in 1983. Recreation and Community Design, Community Facilities, Circulation-Transportation, Scenic Highways, and Land Use elements were amended in 1983. The Housing Element was last updated in 1985, as required by law. The revision program that started in 1990 will result in a comprehensive adoption of a new General Plan replacing the 1981 Plan as it has been amended.


The Preface and Introduction, Chapters I and II, provide information about the role of the General Plan, its adoption and hearing process, and its requirements. Chapter III, The Vision, provides the Vision Statement, its relationship to the overall General Plan goals and policies, and information related to amending and updating the General Plan. The General Plan elements are contained in Chapter IV, Resource Elements, Chapter V, Infrastructure Elements, and Chapter VI, Development Elements. Chapter VII, the Fiscal Impact Analysis provides an assessment of the financial impacts of each applicable implementation measure. Chapter VIII, the Appendices, reproduces supporting data and information that helped the City establish its implementation programs. Chapter IX, the Glossary, defines significant terms used in the General Plan.

Within each chapter of the General Plan, the elements are divided into sections by issues addressed within the element. Within the issues, there are two sections: Summary of major findings, and General Plan goals, policies, and implementing program. These two sections contain important information critical to understanding the General Plan’s contents.

The “Summary of Major Findings” section briefly explains the reasons behind the decisions that make the goals important. Sometimes the Summary contains factual data either because it is required by law or needed to support the reasons. Many times, the information in the summary represents the beliefs of the citizens participating in the process.

The “General Plan goals, policies, and implementing program” section contain the programs that will put the General Plan into effect. This section forms the Plan action program and is the direction that the City must follow once the Element is adopted. To understand what is meant by each, the following explanations are used in the General Plan as a consistent definition of the words.

Findings. Findings are the reasons that a recommendation is being presented as a goal. A finding represents the thought process, the reasoning, and any relevant supporting factual evidence that provide a means for a reader of the General Plan to understand why a particular goal is proposed. Findings are presented as “summaries of major findings” within the Plan.
Goals. Goals are broad statements that provide the blueprint for the future. Each goal establishes what the City desires to accomplish over the life of the Element. Goals are what the community desires to achieve.

Policies. Each goal is further defined by City Council policies. The policies provide direction to Staff, the public, and future councils as to how each project is to be reviewed under the provisions of the Element. A policy breaks the goal into achievable segments.

Implementation measures. In order to put the Element into day-to-day effect, implementation measures are adopted to provide guidance in reviewing projects and to define standards which are to be achieved. For the most part, implementation measures are time specific or measurable standards. Time specific implementing measures tell the Council that a certain action is to be accomplished at a specific time. This assists in settling budgets for City Departments (such as the Roads Department or Planning Department). Measurable implementation measures tell Staff which standards of review are to be used on an ongoing basis when assessing a project for approval.

Planning periods. Implementation of the Plan is carried out through a series of planning periods. The short-term planning period covers the time from adoption through the fifth anniversary of the Plan’s adoption. The intermediate-term planning period is six to ten years following adoption. The long-term planning period runs from eleven years through the end of the General Plan horizon, its twentieth anniversary.

Figures, tables, and explanations. “Figures” are maps and graphics that are used to reflect information in the Plan. “Tables” incorporate data used in the Plan. “Explanations” are notes generated as further explanation of issues.

4 GENERAL PLAN MANDATED CONTENTS AND ISSUES

State law sets the minimum scope of issues which the seven mandatory elements of a general plan must address. State law, however, provides flexibility in the method of presenting the required minimum scope of issues. The Ukiah General Plan establishes fourteen elements. Within these fourteen elements, all of the state required issues are addressed. Table II.4–1 provides a matrix that shows each of the required issues from General Plan law and in which element or elements the issue is addressed.

Adopted by the City Council December 6, 1995
### Table II.4-1: General Plan contents checklist

#### Mandatory Element Issues

**Key to Column 1:**

- ★ - Applies to City of Ukiah
- ★ - Applies to the County of Mendocino
- ○ - Applies to City and County
- X - Not applicable to this General Plan

Shaded columns are the State-mandated elements.

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#### Circulation

- ○ Major thoroughfares
- ○ Transportation routes
- ○ Terminals
- ○ Other local public utilities and facilities

#### Open Space

**Areas for preservation of natural resources**

- ○ vegetation
- ○ wildlife habitat
- ○ fish habitat

**Areas for ecologic and other scientific study**

**Areas for managed production of resources**

- ★ forest lands
- ★ rangeland
- ★ agricultural lands

Adopted by the City Council December 6, 1995
### Mandatory Element Issues

**Key to Column 1:**
- ★ - Applies to City of Ukiah
- ⚠ - Applies to the County of Mendocino
- ◯ - Applies to City and County
- × - Not applicable to this General Plan

Shaded columns are the State-mandated elements.

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### Conservation

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### Mandatory Element Issues

**Key to Column 1:**
- $\star$ Applies to City of Ukiah
- $\star\star$ Applies to the County of Mendocino
- $\circ$ Applies to City and County
- $X$ Not applicable to this General Plan

Shaded columns are the State-mandated elements.

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### Safety

**Protecting community from unreasonable risks**

- $\circ$ seismic events
- $\circ$ slope instability
- $\circ$ geologic hazards
- $\circ$ flooding
- $\circ$ wildland and urban fires

### Standards for known fire and geologic hazards

- $\circ$ evacuation routes
- $\circ$ peakload water supply requirements
- $\circ$ minimum road widths
- $\circ$ clearances around structures

### Housing

- $\star$ Existing households and housing units
- $\star$ Lower income households overpaying for housing
- $\star$ Special housing needs groups
- $\star$ Overcrowded households
- $\star$ Housing units needing rehabilitation
- $\star$ Housing units needing replacement
- $\star$ Five-year projected new construction needs
- $\star$ Revision of COG regional housing needs justification
- $\star$ Employment and population trends
- $\star$ Land inventory
- $\star$ Housing constraints
- $\star$ Quantified objectives
- $\star$ Public participation of all economic segments

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*Adopted by the City Council December 6, 1995*
## Mandatory Element Issues

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