Response to Comments Received on the 2019-2017 Housing Element Update Initial Study/Negative Declaration

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, the Draft Initial Study/Negative Declaration was circulated for public review for 35 days on July 23, 2019 through August 26, 2019. One comment from the Mendocino County Farm Bureau (Bureau) was received on August 26. The Bureau's summarized comments and City responses are provided below.

The City received a letter from the State Clearinghouse on September 3, 2019 stating that no comments were received as a result of the Initial Study/Negative Declaration being distributed to other agencies.

Mendocino County Farm Bureau (Bureau) Comments

Comment (Agriculture and Forestry resources): The Bureau states although there are no agriculturally zoned districts within the City limits, if the City's Sphere of Influence is expanded in the future and project sites identified in the City's Housing Element are developed, impacts to agriculture and forestry resources may occur and should be considered. Specifically, the Bureau states that impacts to farmland should be reviewed; the Agriculture Zoning Overlay District should be further developed; and the City should adopt a "Right to Farm" ordinance similar to Mendocino County's.

Response: The City understands the importance of protecting agriculture and forestry resources. The 2019-2027 Housing Element only identifies vacant and underutilized sites that could accommodate housing currently located within the City limits, which do not include these resources. However, if the City expands the Sphere of Influence to incorporate agriculture and forestry lands in the future, the City will consider all impacts to those lands including the actions suggested by the Bureau. Additionally, all development would be reviewed and analyzed for impacts to agriculture and forestry resources on a project-by-project level basis.

Comment (Biological Resources and Hydrology/Water Quality): The Bureau expresses concern regarding impacts to water quality and adjacent agricultural properties from trash, debris and hazardous materials being transported downstream in creeks within the City limits. The Bureau states that future development needs to consider these impacts.

Response: The 2019-2027 Housing Element Update is a policy document that identifies suitable lands for future housing development. However, it does not propose development. All future development will be analyzed on a project level basis and will be subject to stormwater management regulations and construction best management practices to reduce impacts to water resources, biological resources and potential hazardous materials.

Comment (Wildfire): The Bureau expresses concern regarding wildfire hazards to western Ukiah. Specifically, the Bureau states that all future development in the Hillside Zoning District should be carefully analyzed for impacts associated with wildfire.

Response: The City takes wildfire risks seriously. As the Bureau mentioned, the Western Hills Fuel Break was constructed and will be maintained in an effort to reduce wildfire risks to western Ukiah. In addition, all development within the Hillside Zoning District will be subject to review by on a project level basis. All development will be required to meet applicable fire life safety and building codes.

Received Aug 26, 2019 via email

August 27, 2019

City of Ukiah Community Development Department C/O Michelle Irace 300 Seminary Ave.
Ukiah, CA 95482

RE: IS/ND for the City of Ukiah 2019-2027 Housing Element Update

Dear Ms. Irace,

The Mendocino County Farm Bureau (MCFB) is a non-governmental, non-profit, voluntary membership, advocacy group whose purpose is to protect and promote agricultural interests throughout the county and to find solutions to the problems facing agricultural businesses and the rural community. MCFB would like to submit the following comments on the IS/ND for the City of Ukiah 2019-2027 housing element update.

P. 6 General Comments

The regional housing need allocation (RHNA) for Ukiah has been identified as 239 housing units over the next 8 years.

The 2019-2027 Housing Element identifies lands to accommodate up to 496 new residential units. However, the Housing Element does not include specific development designs or proposals, nor does it grant any entitlements for development. However, all development potentially identified within the Housing Element would be in residential or commercial zoning districts where housing development is already generally allowed or permitted by the zoning code and General Plan. All future development would be analyzed on a project level basis for consistency with land use policies; all development would be subject to discretionary and environmental review, and both individual and cumulative impacts will be considered at that time.

MCFB appreciates the City of Ukiah proposing to work to maintain future housing development projects in residential or commercial zoning districts. This being said, MCFB would like to make sure that lands in agricultural production being considered for future incorporation and agricultural lands adjoining city property are protected.

MCFB understands the need to meet housing needs, however with the potential construction of 200+ units within eight years, there needs to continue to be priorities places on projects that infill the existing footprint of the City and prevent urban sprawl as much as possible. A number of the draft housing element goals speak to improving the use of infill and this is appreciated.

P. 13 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

Environmental Setting: There are no zoning districts within the City limits for Agriculture or Timber Preserve. While there is an overlay for agriculture in the zoning ordinance, it is not applied over any parcel within the City limits. There are a small number of City parcels which have current agricultural use, such as existing vineyards. However, they are ongoing non-conforming uses within nonagricultural zoning districts. Further, none of the parcels currently supporting agriculture are within active Williamson Act agreements.

Discussion: (a) - (e) No impact. Adoption and implementation of the Housing Element would not conflict with or cause the rezoning of forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned timberland. The Element does not involve any other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could

result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. No impact would occur.

MCFB would like to ensure that all properties in agricultural production, within or adjoining the City boundaries, are protected. As mentioned above, the IS/ND discussion points (a)-(e) for agriculture and forestry resources find NO IMPACT. However, within the timeline of the next eight years that this document covers, there may be proposed or adopted changes to the City sphere of influence. If the city is looking to incorporate existing lands in active agricultural production or adjoining agricultural production, there would most likely be impacts to existing farmland and possible conversion.

If changes to the City limit boundaries were to occur and housing projects under this IS/ND were incorporated, the following will need to be considered:

- The environmental review of impacts to existing farmland, potential farmland conversion and lands under Williamson Act contracts.
- The further development of the agricultural overlay zoning designation within the City.
- The adoption of a "Right to Farm" ordinance similar to Mendocino County Code Chapter 10A.13.

P. 16 Biological Resources

Environmental Setting: One of the greatest natural assets in the Ukiah Valley is the interconnected system of waterways and riparian areas that comprise the Russian River system. The river and its tributaries support a diversity of riparian plant communities and provide habitat corridors for wildlife and fish. The City's three main creeks, Orrs, Gibson and Doolin, provide sheltered corridors that allow wildlife to move between habitats and open space areas.

MCFB agrees that the Ukiah Valley has a great natural asset with the Russian River watershed. One ongoing issue that agricultural properties contend with that adjoin the City limits and connected tributaries or drainages that originate within the City is the flow of trash, debris and other waste. During the onset of the rainy season, the amount of trash and related materials that ends up on agricultural properties primarily on the east side of Highway 101 is exorbitant. These property owners then have to deal with the cleanup or mitigation to keep the debris from clogging the drainage system and from being further distributed throughout their properties.

All of this water ultimately drains to the Russian River. MCFB feels that the City needs to consider this first flush trash issue as related to the impact of water quality, fisheries species, etc. in the context of this document. It is understood that a number of efforts are undertaken in relation to storm water regulations, but any future development needs to consider these impacts as well as the impacts to adjoining properties. This issue is also relevant to the discussion of impacts related to the transport of hazards and hazardous materials (p.23) from motor oil and other materials that wash from urban areas.

P.27 Hydrology and Water Quality

Discussion: (a-c) Less than significant impact. The Housing Element would not cause the violation of any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality. The Element will not cause the alteration of the existing drainage pattern of the area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation, substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite; or create or

contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff. Further, the Housing Element does not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan.

See comments above regarding water quality concerns and related impacts.

P.34-35 Wildfire

Discussion: (a-d) Less than Significant. The Housing Element itself would not result in significant impacts from wildfire. Future potential housing development within the western hills which consists of steep, densely vegetated lands, could expose persons to increase fire risks. However, each development would be analyzed on a project level basis through the discretionary review process, as all development within the western hills (Hillside Zoning District) requires a Use Permit with Planning Commission approval. Development would be required to comply with all fire life safety regulations which would reduce risks associated with wildfire. In addition, the fuel break that was constructed is intended to further reduce the risk of wildfire for the community. Impacts related to wildfire from the Housing Element would be less than significant

From the wildfire experiences that were seen in Mendocino County in 2017 and 2018, there is a heightened awareness with future fire prevention. The recent fire line and fuels reduction project in the western hills area is a start, but the City needs to continue to work with the county, property owners and other agencies to maintain these efforts. Without continued maintenance, the fuel break will not be a resource during a fire event.

Historical fire experiences have shown how fires have wreaked havoc on the west side of Ukiah. It is hard to know the extent of the impact a wildfire would have on the residents and adjoining resource properties within the west side today. Let's hope we never find out. However, the City needs to continue to fully vet any proposed housing projects within the Hillside Zoning District especially for concerns related to fire safety and prevention.

MCFB appreciates the opportunity to provide comment on the IS/ND for the City of Ukiah 2019-2027 housing element update. If there are any questions, please feel free to contact the MCFB office.

Sincerely,

George Hollister MCFB President

CC: Mendocino County Department of Agriculture, Jim Donnelly Mendocino County Board of Supervisors, Chair Carre Brown



STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Governor's Office of Planning and Research State Clearinghouse and Planning Unit



RECEIVED

SEP 03 2019

COMMUNITY GEVELOPMENT

August 27, 2019

Michelle Irace Ukiah, City of 300 Seminary Avenue 2019079078 Ukiah, CA 95482

Subject: City of Ukiah Housing Element

SCH#: 2019079078

Dear Michelle Irace

The State Clearinghouse submitted the above named NEG to selected state agencies for review. The review period closed on 8/26/2019, and no state agencies submitted comments by that date. This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, https://ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/2019079078/2.

Please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process. If you have a question about the above-named project, please refer to the ten-digit State Clearinghouse number when contacting this office.

Sincerely,

Scott Morgan

Director, State Clearinghouse

Notice of Completion & Environmental Document Transmittal Mail to: State Clearinghouse P.O. Box 3044, Sacramento, CA 95812-3044, (916) 445-0613

For Hand Delivery/Street Address: 1400 Tenth Street, Sacramento, 6		sc sc	CH #			
Project Title: CITY OF UKIAH HOUSING ELEMENT						
I and Annual CITY OF HISIAH		Contact Person: MIC	HELLE IRACE			
Mailing Address: 300 SEMINARY AVENUE		Phone: 707.463.6207				
City: UKIAH	Zin: 95482	County: MENDOCINO				
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Project Location: County: MENDOCINO		nunity: UKIAH				
Cross Streets: N/A						
Longitude/Latitude (degrees, minutes and seconds):°	_'" N /°		tal Acres:			
Assessor's Parcel No.: VARIOUS	Section: T	wp.: Rai	nge: Base: MDM			
Within 2 Miles: State Hwy #: 101						
Airports: UKIAH MUNICIPAL	-		nools: VARIOUS			
Document Type: CEQA: NOP Draft EIR Early Cons Supplement/Subsequent EII Neg Dec (Prior SCH No.) Mit Neg Dec Other:	NEPA: ☐ R ☐	NOI Other: EA Draft EIS FONSI	☐ Joint Document ☐ Final Document ☐ Other:			
Local Action Type:						
General Plan Update General Plan Amendment General Plan Element Community Plan Specific Plan Master Plan Planned Unit Developme Site Plan		ion (Subdivision, etc	Annexation Redevelopment Coastal Permit Other: HOUSING ELEMENT			
Development Type:						
Residential: Units Acres Office: Sq.ft. Acres Employees Commercial: Sq.ft. Acres Employees Industrial: Sq.ft. Acres Employees Educational: Recreational: Water Facilities: Type MGD		Mineral	MW MGD			
Project Issues Discussed in Document:						
Aesthetic/Visual Agricultural Land Air Quality Archeological/Historical Biological Resources Coastal Zone Drainage/Absorption Economic/Jobs Fiscal Flood Plain/Flooding Geologic/Seismic Minerals Noise Population/Housing Balar	Schools/Unive Septic Systems Sewer Capacit Soil Erosion/C Solid Waste nce Toxic/Hazardo					
Present Land Use/Zoning/General Plan Designation:						
N/A-CITY WIDE HOUSING ELEMENT						
Project Description: (please use a separate page if necessary)						

SEE ATTACHED

	agencies may recommend State Clearinghouse distrib have already sent your document to the agency pleas				
x 	Air Resources Board Boating & Waterways, Department of California Emergency Management Agency California Highway Patrol Caltrans District # 1 Caltrans Division of Aeronautics Caltrans Planning Central Valley Flood Protection Board Coachella Valley Mtns. Conservancy Coastal Commission Colorado River Board Conservation, Department of Corrections, Department of Delta Protection Commission Education, Department of Energy Commission	X	Office of Historic Preservation Office of Public School Construction Parks & Recreation, Department of Pesticide Regulation, Department of Public Utilities Commission Regional WQCB # 1		
Local I	Public Review Period (to be filled in by lead agenc	:y)			
Starting Date Tues July 23, 2019		_ Ending	Ending Date Monday August 26, 2019		
Lead A	gency (Complete if applicable):				
Consulting Firm: Address: City/State/Zip: Contact: Phone:		_ Addres _ City/St	Applicant: CITY OF UKIAH Address: 300 SEMINARY AVENUE City/State/Zip: UKIAH, CA 95482 Phone: 707.463.6207		
 Signat	ure of Lead Agency Representative:	~	Clum Date: 7/22/19		

Reviewing Agencies Checklist

Authority cited: Section 21083, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 21161, Public Resources Code.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Project Location

The 2019-2027 Housing Element Update ("Housing Element" or "Project") encompasses all areas within the boundaries of the City of Ukiah.

2. Environmental Setting

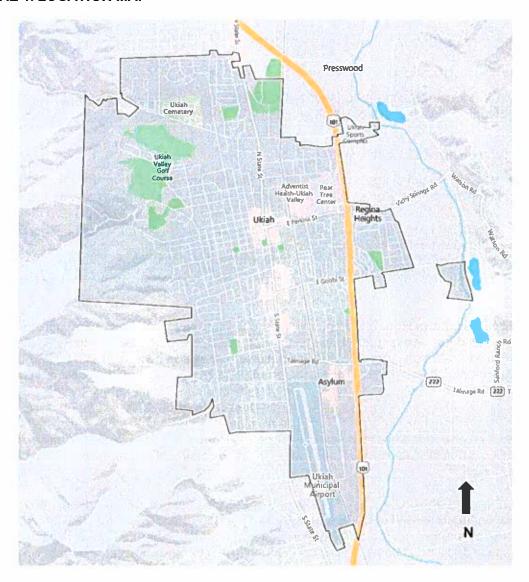
The Ukiah Valley is located approximately 30 miles east and inland from the Pacific Ocean. It runs north-south for about 9 miles, with a maximum width of about 3 miles. With an average elevation of about 630 feet, the hills surrounding the Valley range up to about 3,000 feet. The Russian River enters the Valley at the north end and runs south along the Valley floor. Ukiah is located in southeast central Mendocino County along the Highway 101 corridor and near the east/west intersection of Highway 20, two hours north of the Golden Gate Bridge (see Figure 1, Location Map). Incorporated in 1876, Ukiah is the largest city and county seat in Mendocino County.

Current Population and Housing. According to the California Department of Finance, population of the City of Ukiah in January 2018 was estimated at 16,226 persons. As shown in Table 2.2, the annual growth rate between 1990 and 2018 (current) averaged approximately 0.3%. Between 2000 and 2010, the City added 545 residents, or 3.7%, to its population. This compares to growth rates of 12.3% for the State of California, 1.3% for Mendocino County, 6.4% for the City of Fort Bragg, and a loss of 1.3% for the City of Lakeport during the 2000-2010 period. Overall, the City of Ukiah's population has increased moderately over the past nearly 30 years, with a more accelerated increase in the last four years. Projections from the California State University Chico Center for Economic Development- Mendocino County Economic/Demographic Profile show this trend continuing.

Of the 6,158 households in the City of Ukiah, 3,611 (58.6%) consisted of families, 1,809 (29.4%) consisted of households with children under 18 living at home; and 2,317 (or 37.6%) households being headed by married couples. Of the married couple households, 1,012 (16.4%) had children under the age of 18 living at home. California Department of Finance housing estimates in January 2018 show the majority (55 %) of the City's housing stock is comprised of single family detached homes. The second most common type of housing was multi-family (19 percent). Between 2010 and 2018, there continued to be very few 2-4 unit complexes or mobile homes. According to the 2010 Census, the overall vacancy rate in Ukiah was 5.3 percent, including units vacant for seasonal or occasional use, rented and sold units that were vacant at the time of the Census, and other unclassified vacant units.

The City of Ukiah has implemented a variety of incentive-based programs over the preceding five years in an attempt to increase housing production for all economic segments of the community. These include creation of a housing trust fund- the Ukiah Housing Trust Fund, creation of a new Housing Division within the Department of Community Development, development and implementation of a new (2017) Housing Strategy designed to increase production of affordable and middle-income market-rate housing, and deployment of other programmatic strategies. The result has been entitlement or construction of 145 new housing units between 2014-2018.

FIGURE 1. LOCATION MAP



3. Background

The project is to update the Housing Element of City of Ukiah as required by Government Code Section 65583. The Housing Element is a comprehensive statement by the City describing the housing needs of Ukiah and how the City plans, policies, action items and regulations facilitate the development, improvement and preservation of housing for all economic segments of the community. The Housing Element, one of the seven State-mandated elements of the General Plan, that sets forth the City's plan for housing in the community, was last adopted on June 1, 2016, for the 2014-2019 Planning Cycle. The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) certified the City's Housing Element later that same year. In accordance with State Housing Element Law, the Housing Element has been updated for the 2019-2027 Planning Cycle.

Under California law, every city and county has a legal obligation to respond to its fair share of the projected future housing needs in the region in which it is located. For Ukiah and other Mendocino County jurisdictions, the regional housing need allocation (RHNA) is determined by the Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG), based upon an overall regional need number established by the State. The RHNA for Ukiah has been identified as 239 housing units over the next eight years. One of the primary purposes of the Housing Element is to demonstrate the City's ability to accommodate residential development to meet the housing allocation.

The 2019-2027 Housing Element represents the City of Ukiah's efforts to fulfill requirements under the State Housing Element Law and responds to Ukiah's housing needs by identifying policies and implementing actions for meeting those needs. State law defines the general topics that Ukiah's Housing Element must cover. Specifically, the element must: (1) document housing related conditions and trends; (2) provide an assessment of housing needs; (3) identify resources, opportunities and constraints to meeting those needs; and (4) establish policies, programs and quantified objectives to address housing needs.

The 2019-2027 Housing Element identifies lands to accommodate up to 496 new residential units. However, the Housing Element does not include specific development designs or proposals, nor does it grant any entitlements for development. However, all development potentially identified within the Housing Element would be in residential or commercial zoning districts where housing development is already generally allowed or permitted by the zoning code and General Plan. All future development would be analyzed on a project level basis for consistency with land use policies; all development would be subject to discretionary and environmental review, and both individual and cumulative impacts will be considered at that time.

4. 2019-2027 Planning Cycle Housing Plan and Goals

The Housing Plan within the Housing Element Update identifies the City's housing goals, polices, and implementing programs. It consolidates existing strategies and policies into one plan and presents a balanced and diverse array of policies that cover housing needs identified through this Update, input from the public, and four overall areas of concern: construction, rehabilitation, conservation, and administration. The goals and policies of the Housing Element were organized into concise goal and policy directives.

The Draft 2019-2027 Housing Element includes the following goals to be implemented. This Initial Study / Negative Declaration (IS/ND) evaluates the foreseeable impacts of these goals (and subsequent policies and implementing programs). A list of all draft goals, policies and implementing programs can be found in Attachment A of the IS/ND.

Goal H-1: Conserve, rehabilitate, and improve the existing housing stock to provide adequate, safe, sustainable, and decent housing for all Ukiah residents.

Goal H-2: Expand housing opportunities for all economic segments of the community, including special needs populations.

Goal H-3: Remove governmental constraints to infill housing development.

Goal H-4: Promote well-planned and designed housing opportunities and projects for all persons, regardless of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, marital status, or national origin.

Goal H-5: Provide support for future housing needs.

City of Ukiah Notice of Intent and Public Hearing to Adopt a Negative Declaration for 2019-2027 Housing Element Update

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that an Initial Study/Negative Declaration (IS/ND) under the California Environmental Quality Act has been prepared and is available for public review on the proposed 2019-2027 Housing Element Update, described below.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The 2019-2027 Housing Element of the Ukiah General Plan is mandated by State law, and federal requirements, to address the long-term development of housing in the City of Ukiah. The purpose of the Housing Element is to identify and analyze existing and projected housing needs. The Housing Element also provides a statement of goals, policies, quantified objectives, and scheduled programs for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing for all economic groups.

The Housing Element is subject to CEQA. No specific projects or development is proposed as part of the Housing Element; it is strictly a planning and policy document.

PROJECT LOCATION: The Housing Element includes the City of Ukiah limits in its entirety.

PROJECT IMPACTS: The IS/ND prepared for the project has determined that the proposed project will have a less than significant impact on the environment. The project is not located on a listed hazardous waste disposal site compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.

REVIEW PERIOD: The public review period for the IS/MND is from Tuesday July 23, 2019 through Monday August 26, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. The IS/MND is available for review at the City of Ukiah Community Development Department (address provided below) or online at https://www.cityofukiah.com/projects/housing-element-update/. Comments may be submitted via email to mirace@cityofukiah.com, submitted in person, or mailed to the Community Development Department, ATTN: Michelle Irace, at the address below.

HEARING DATE/TIME: Wednesday August 14, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 300 Seminary Ave. The City of Ukiah Planning Commission will conduct a public hearing on recommendations by the Planning Commission to the Ukiah City Council regarding approval by the City Council of (1) a proposed Initial Study and Negative Declaration for and (2) the update of the City of Ukiah General Plan Housing Element for the 2019-2027 planning cycle. More information, including the pertinent documents may be found online at http://www.cityofukiah.com/meetings/, or may be obtained from the Department of Community Development at the Ukiah Civic Center.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: All interested parties may contact Michelle Irace, Planning Manager, at 463-6207 or mirace@cityofukiah.com; or, visit the Community Development Department, located at 300 Seminary Avenue, Ukiah, CA 95482. Office hours: 8:00 am to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday.