



- NOTICE OF PREPARATION - Draft Environmental Impact Report for City of Ferndale Land Use and Safety Element Updates

ANNOUNCEMENT:	Notice is hereby given that the City of Ferndale as Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to evaluate the environmental effects associated with the proposed General Plan Land Use and Safety Element Updates (Project). This project includes associated zoning amendments necessary to implement the General Plan. The City is soliciting comments regarding the scope and content of the environmental information.
ANNOUNCEMENT DATE:	February 3, 2023
PROJECT TITLE:	Ferndale Land Use and Safety Element Updates
PROJECT LOCATION:	City of Ferndale Planning Area
LEAD AGENCY:	City of Ferndale
LEAD AGENCY CONTACT PERSON:	Vanessa Blodgett, Contract City Planner vanessab@planwestpartners.com Phone: (707) 786-4224 City of Ferndale PO Box 1095 Ferndale, CA 95536
NOP PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:	The Notice of Preparation (NOP) review period begins on Friday, February 3, 2023 and closes on Monday, March 6, 2023. Please submit written responses by 5:00 p.m. on March 6, 2023, to the address or email above.

PURPOSE OF THIS NOTICE OF PREPARATION

The City of Ferndale (City) will serve as lead agency under CEQA and an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be prepared to analyze the proposed Project. The EIR will identify the potential for significant environmental effects to satisfy the requirements of CEQA [Public Resources Code §21000 et seq.].

In accordance with the California Code of Regulations §15082, the City has prepared this Notice of Preparation (NOP) to inform agencies and interested parties that an EIR will be prepared for the proposed Project. The purpose of this notice is:

- (1) To serve as the notice to provide interested parties, including members of the public, potential responsible agencies, agencies involved in funding or approving the Project, agencies providing public services (schools, utilities, medical and emergency services), and trustee agencies responsible for natural resources affected by the Project, with sufficient information to provide meaningful responses as to the scope and content of the EIR; and
- (2) To advise and solicit comments and suggestions from interested parties regarding the preparation of the EIR, environmental issues and alternatives to be addressed in the EIR, and any related issues.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Ferndale General Plan is a planning document with text and diagrams that express the goals, objectives, and policies necessary to guide the community toward achieving its vision over a long-term planning period (typically 20 years). City decision makers rely on the General Plan as the basis for making decisions on matters such as land use, transportation, open space and conservation, provision of public services, and environmental quality and safety. It is also a policy document that guides decisions related to protecting and enhancing what the community

values most, such as historic preservation, protecting and enhancing the character of the community, and open space.

The City is preparing an update of two of its existing General Plan Elements; Land Use and Safety. The City of Ferndale's General Plan was last comprehensively updated and adopted in 1986. Since then, the City's land use needs have changed due to economic and demographic conditions and updates to state guidelines and policies. The Land Use Element also serves as the City's consolidated Open Space and Conservation Elements and provides the City an opportunity to review and program City-wide land uses for future growth. There have been changes to state guidelines since the Safety Element was drafted in 2014; the element will be updated to bring it into compliance with current regulations.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project will update and amend the City's existing General Plan Land Use and Safety Elements. The Project will update the goals, policies, and implementation programs that articulate the vision for the City's long-term physical and economic development, while preserving open space areas and enhancing the quality of life for residents. These elements have been prepared to comply with the requirements of California Government Code §65300 which mandates that each city and county adopt a comprehensive, long-range, internally consistent plan for future development. The proposed updates:

- Satisfy modern State mandates for General Plans that have been issued since the General Plan was last updated;
- Emphasize infill development to preserve greenbelts around the City;
- Adjust to climate-change and promote sustainability;
- Promote social justice and racial equity;
- Amend inconsistencies; and
- Ensure consistency and compliance with other City plans that have been adopted or revised in recent years, such as the 2019 Housing Element.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element will continue to include the general distribution, location, and extent of the uses of land for housing, business, industry, open space, agriculture, natural resources, public buildings and grounds, and other categories of public and private uses of land within the City. As the Land Use Element was last updated in 1986, the data, analyses, and policies in the plan will be updated to reflect the current conditions and vision of the City. The intent of the proposed Land Use Element is to provide more flexibility in housing options while still protecting the historic character of the area. The Land Use Element will also continue to accommodate projections of population and economic growth using infill principles. The City's anticipated growth during the planning period is expected to be contained within the present City boundary and concentrated largely within already developed residential areas and planned development areas as identified in the Element. Targeted increases in land use density (or increases in the allowable uses and development standards) will be necessary in portions of the City to be consistent with the policies and programs set forth in the City's 6th Cycle Housing Element that was prepared in 2019 and to prepare for anticipated growth allocations in the City's 7th Cycle Housing Element scheduled for 2027.

Safety Element

The Safety Element will continue to identify potential risks to persons and property resulting from fires, floods, earthquakes, landslides, and other hazards. The Safety Element is intended to provide an overview of potential hazards in the area and provide policies to help improve City infrastructure to be more resilient against hazards. The Safety Element Update includes new State-mandated safety considerations for climate change and emergency evacuation routes to comply with CGC Section 65302(g) and SB 375. Ferndale may experience some

effects from climate change such as changing precipitation patterns which can lead to more intense flooding, increased chance of wildfire to the south, and changing drainage patterns due to sea level rise. The Public Safety Element will acknowledge the context of other relevant plans at the regional and state level and align City goals and policies with these efforts. The City is currently included in the Humboldt County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (adopted 2020) and County-wide Climate Action Plan (in progress).

Zoning Amendments

The proposed project will require zoning amendments to implement. Specifically, the Land Use Element proposes increased density and implementation programs that will require new zoning to accommodate. Population growth is anticipated to be absorbed throughout the City primarily through infill. The City expects rezoning to accommodate new residential development, smaller lot areas, and ordinances to address state law related to accessory dwelling units (second units).

EIR ANALYSIS

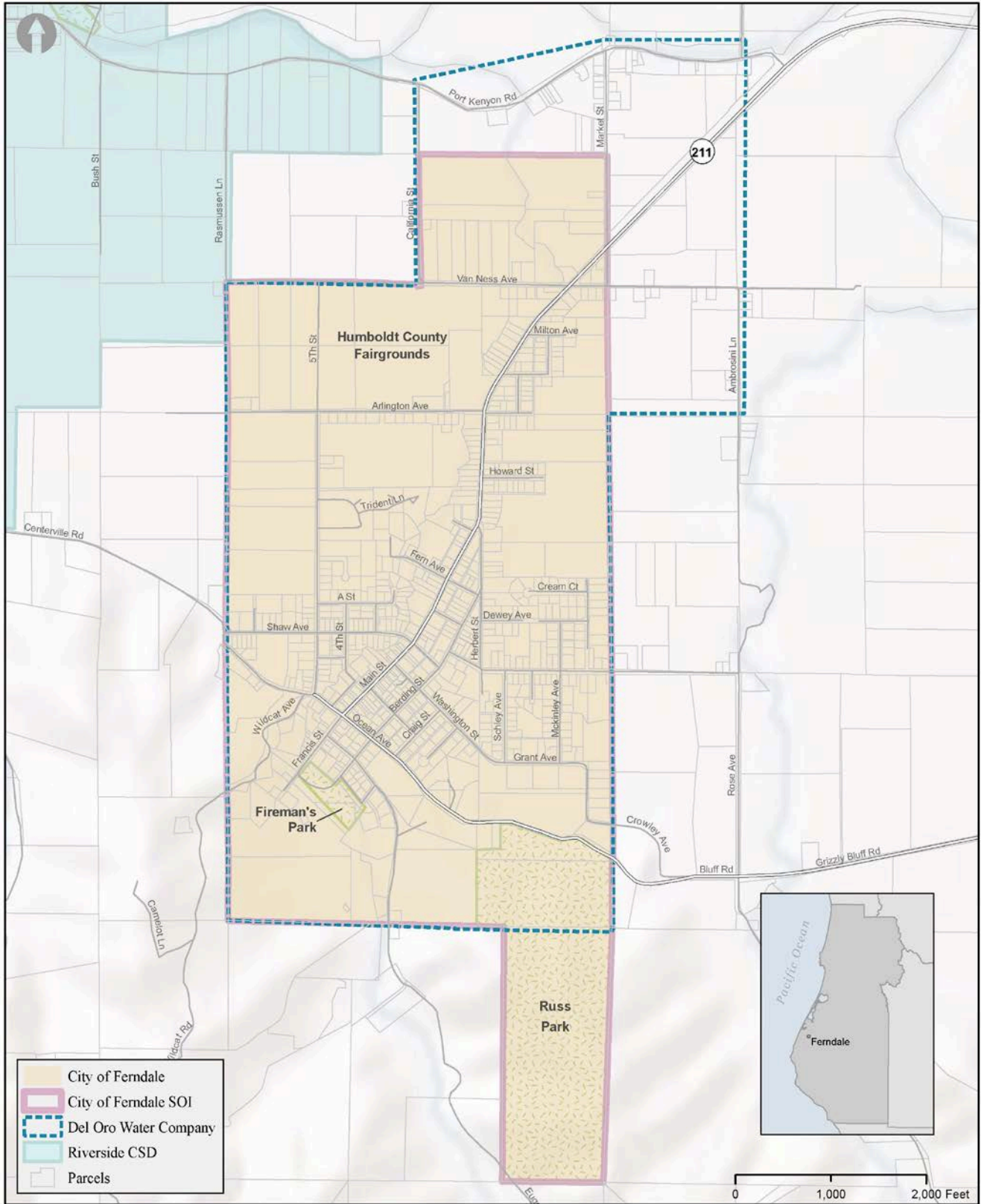
The City of Ferndale, as the lead agency under CEQA, will prepare and EIR for the Ferndale Land Use and Safety Element Update in accordance with current CEQA Guidelines. The Ferndale Land Use and Safety Element Update is considered a “project” under CEQA and is therefore subject to CEQA review. As a policy document, the General Plan provides guidance and sets standards for several areas of mandatory environmental review for later “projects” that would be undertaken by local government and the private sector. The EIR will evaluate potential environmental impacts associated with adoption and implementation of two of the General Plan Elements; Land Use and Safety. The EIR will disclose potential impacts of the Ferndale Land Use and Safety Element Update, propose mitigation measures to avoid and/or reduce impacts deemed potentially significant, identify reasonable alternatives, and compare the environmental impacts of the alternatives to the proposed Project’s impacts.

Pursuant to Section 15063(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, an Initial Study will not be prepared. The EIR will evaluate the full range of environmental issues contemplated under CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, including the following resource categories: Aesthetics, Agricultural and Forestry Resources, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Energy, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use, Mineral Resources, Noise, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Transportation and Circulation, Tribal Cultural Resources, Utilities and Service Systems, and Wildfire.

The following resource categories may have potentially significant impacts, and mitigation measures may be required to reduce potential significant impacts: Air Quality, Biological Resources, Historic and Cultural Resources, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Noise, Population and Housing, Transportation, and Utilities and Service Systems. The EIR will also evaluate potential cumulative impacts, growth inducement, and other CEQA-required topics.

Comments regarding the scope of the proposed EIR can be submitted to vanessab@planwestpartners.com or mailed to City of Ferndale, P.O. Box 1095, Ferndale, CA 95536. Please submit written responses by 5:00 p.m. on March 6, 2023. This NOP is available for review on the City’s General Plan webpage at: <https://ci.ferndale.ca.us/documents/general-plan/>.

City of Ferndale Regional Setting



City of Ferndale Current Land Use/Zoning

