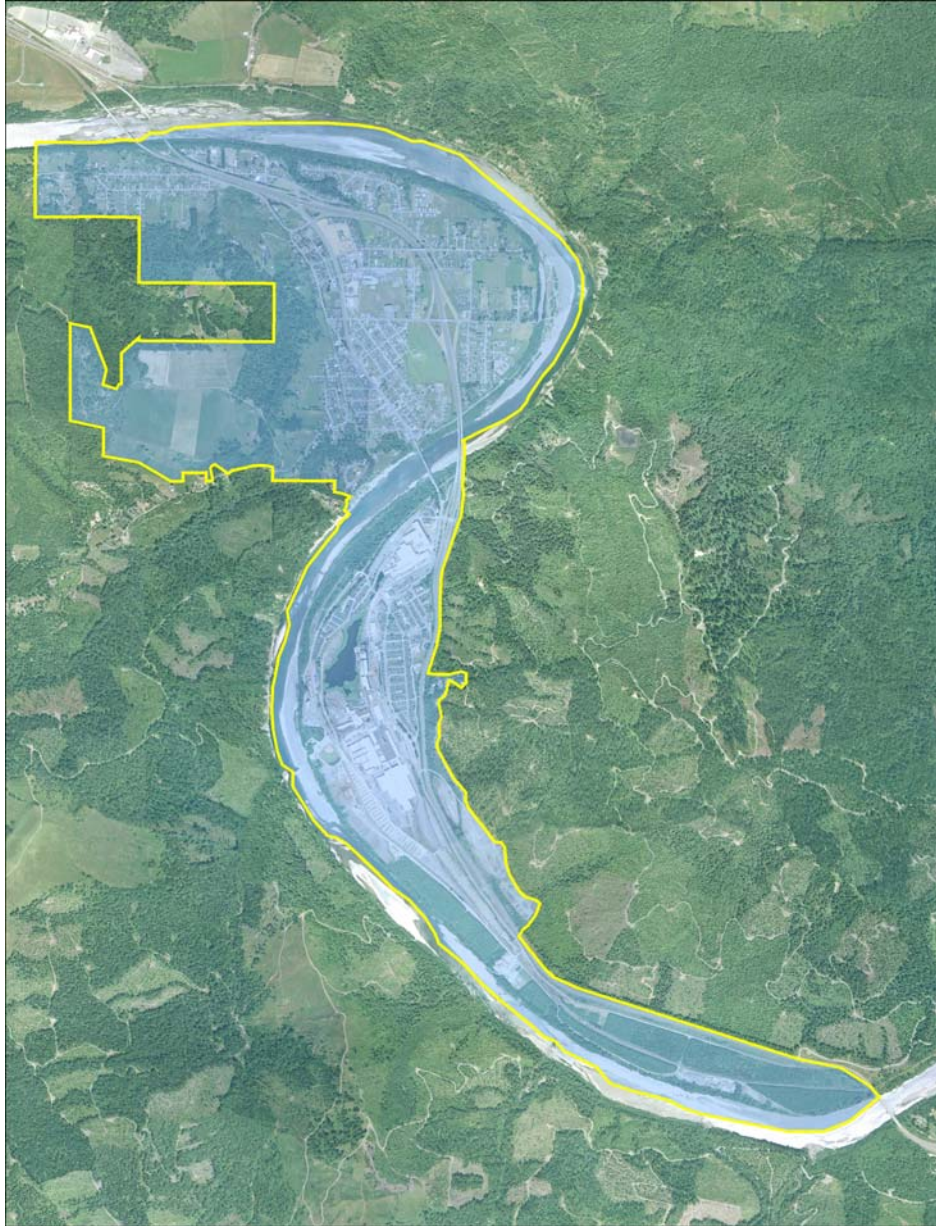


## General Plan 2015



**Administrative Draft  
October 2006**



**City of**



**Administrative Draft**

**General Plan 2015**

**Prepared by:**



**October 2006**



# CITY OF RIO DELL GENERAL PLAN 2015

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# INTRODUCTION

## THE RIO DELL GENERAL PLAN, 2015

### Introduction

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California state law requires that every city adopt a General Plan to guide the physical development of both public and private lands within the city limits. The Plan may also include lands outside the city boundaries, i.e., the planning area and Sphere of Influence (SOI), which bears a direct relation to city planning. A city's General Plan is like a "constitution" and serves as a basis for rational decisions regarding a city's long-term physical development.

A General Plan must be comprehensive, long term, and internally consistent. The City's other land use regulations, including zoning, subdivisions, specific plans, and redevelopment plans must conform to the General Plan. The General Plan is a bridge between regulations governing the physical environment and Rio Dell's community values, visions, and goals.

The current Rio Dell General Plan will guide planning through 2015. Each Element conforms to that time frame, except for the Housing Element, which has a State mandated five-year review period. The most recent Housing Element was adopted in January 2004. Rio Dell will monitor the relevance of its General Plan to ensure that it remains useful to an evolving community. Approximately every five years Rio Dell should review the entire General Plan to determine if it still reflects the community's visions and goals.

### Scope and Purpose

The introduction addresses the role of the General Plan, community setting, (i.e., Rio Dell City limits, SOI and Planning Area), relationship of the General Plan to other plans and programs, state law requirements, and General Plan goals, policies and implementations measures.

Rio Dell's General Plan has three main purposes:

- To provide a basis for determining whether specific development proposals and public projects are compatible with Plan policies; and
- To allow City departments, other public agencies, and private developers to design projects that will enhance the character of the community, preserve and enhance critical resources, and minimize hazards; and
- To provide the basis for establishing and setting priorities for a capital improvement program.

## Contents of the General Plan

The following is a description of the scope of each of the Rio Dell General Plan Elements:

**Land Use Element.** The Land Use Element functions as a guide to planners, the Rio Dell Community, the general public, and decision makers as to the ultimate pattern of development for the city at build-out. The Land Use Element has perhaps the broadest scope of the seven mandatory elements. In theory, it plays a central role in correlating all land use issues into a set of coherent development policies. Its objectives, policies, and programs relate directly to the other elements. Although all general plan elements carry equal weight, the Land Use Element is often perceived as being most representative of “the general plan.” The Land Use Element has a pivotal role in zoning, subdivision, and public works decisions. The element’s objectives and policies provide a long-range context for those short-term actions.

**Housing Element.** Unlike the other mandatory elements, the Housing Element is subject to detailed statutory requirements regarding its content and must be updated every five years. The Housing Element is also subject to mandatory review by a state agency. This reflects the statutory recognition that the availability of housing is a matter of statewide importance and that cooperation between government and the private sector is critical to attainment of the state’s housing goals.

**Noise Element.** The purpose of the Noise Element is to limit the exposure of the community to excessive noise levels. The element includes implementation measures and possible solutions to existing and foreseeable noise problems. Furthermore, the policies serve as a guideline for compliance with sound transmission control requirements. The Noise Element directly correlates to the land use, circulation, and Housing Elements. The Noise Element is used to guide decisions concerning land use and the location of new roads and transit facilities since these are common sources of excessive noise levels. The noise levels from existing land uses, including mining, agricultural, and industrial activities, must be closely analyzed to ensure compatibility, especially where residential and other sensitive receptors could be affected.

**Circulation Element.** The Circulation Element is not simply a transportation plan. It is an infrastructure plan addressing the circulation of people, goods and energy. By statute, the Circulation Element must correlate directly with the Land Use Element. The Circulation Element also has direct relationships with the Housing, Open Space, Noise and Safety Elements. The provisions of a Circulation Element affect a community’s physical, social, and economic environment.

**Conservation and Open Space Element.** The Conservation Element provides direction regarding the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources. Its requirements overlap those of the open-space, land use, safety, and Circulation Elements. The Conservation Element is distinguished by being primarily oriented toward natural resources. Population growth and development continually require the use of both renewable and nonrenewable resources. One role of the Conservation Element is to establish policies that reconcile conflicting demands on those resources.

The open-space element guides the comprehensive and long-range preservation and conservation of “open space land” (Government Code §65563). Open-space land is defined in statute as any parcel or area of land or water that is essentially unimproved and devoted to open-space use (Government Code §65560(b)). Along with the Housing Element, the open-space element has the most detailed statutory intent (Government Code §65561 and §65562) and, next to land use, is the broadest in scope. Because of this breadth, open-space issues overlap those of several elements and the open-space element is commonly combined with other elements

**Cultural and Scenic Resources Element.** The Cultural and Scenic Resources element is an optional element not required by the *State of California General Plan Guidelines*. The element was included in the Rio Dell General Plan due to the cultural and scenic resources that comprise the identity and character of the area. The element outlines existing Federal, State and City plans and programs aimed at the preservation of cultural and scenic resources. In addition, specific goals, policies and implementation measures also geared towards the preservation of the cultural and scenic resources are provided.

**Public Safety Element.** The aim of the Safety Element is to protect public health, safety and welfare from floods, earthquakes, landslides, and other hazards. The Safety Element overlaps topics also mandated in the Land Use, Conservation, and Open Space Elements. The Safety Element identifies hazards and hazard abatement provisions to guide local decisions related to zoning, subdivisions, and entitlement permits. The element contains general hazard and risk reduction policies supporting hazard mitigation measures.

## Organization of the Elements

Each of the elements are organized in a similar manner using the following topic headings:

**Introduction.** The introduction of each element provides information relating to the purpose, scope and content of the element.

**Setting and Context.** The setting and context section of each element addresses the existing conditions and issues related to the topic element. When appropriate, figures are presented in this section to illustrate information.

**Related Plans and Programs.** Plans and programs, which may have a relationship with this document, are covered in this section.

**Relationship to Other General Plan Elements.** In each element this section describes the relationship with the other General Plan Elements in this plan.

**Goals.** A goal is a general, overall vision that describes the City’s desired future. *Example: To preserve the rural, small town character of Rio Dell.*

**Policies.** A policy is a specific statement that guides decision makers. It indicates a clear commitment by the City to a particular course of action. *Example: Encourage infill*

*development of vacant and underdeveloped land in the Town Center and adjacent commercial areas before amending the General Plan to obtain additional commercial land elsewhere.*

**Implementation Measures.** Implementation measures are actions, procedures, programs, or techniques that carry out policies. *Example: The City shall revise the zoning ordinance to encourage a mixture of land uses in the Town Center and Community Commercial zoning districts.*

## Setting and Context

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The prior Rio Dell General Plan consisted of the following seven elements:

- Land Use Element, previously updated in 2004
- Housing Element, previously updated in 2004
- Noise Element; last updated in 1972
- Circulation Element, last updated in 1977
- Conservation and Open Space, adopted in 1972
- Cultural and Scenic Resource Element (previously Scenic Highway Element, last updated in 1970)
- Public Safety Element, adopted in 1972

All of the above listed Elements, except for the Housing Element, were revised as part of the 2006 General Plan Update.

## Regional Setting

The City of Rio Dell is located in Humboldt County, California, along Highway 101 within the Eel River Valley. The City of San Francisco is approximately 250 miles south of Rio Dell, Eureka is approximately 25 miles north, and the Oregon/California border is approximately 125 miles to the north. The Rio Dell Planning Area, SOI and City Limits are described below. Figure I-1 shows the location of Rio Dell in Humboldt County.

## Planning Area

The Planning Area for the City of Rio Dell consists of the area within the City boundaries, which includes the Town of Scotia, the City's Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) adopted SOI and the area known as Metropolitan located across the U.S 101 bridge to the north of Rio Dell. When establishing its planning area, the State of California General Plan Guidelines recommends that a city consider using its SOI as a starting point.

Figure I-1 Location of Rio Dell in Humboldt County

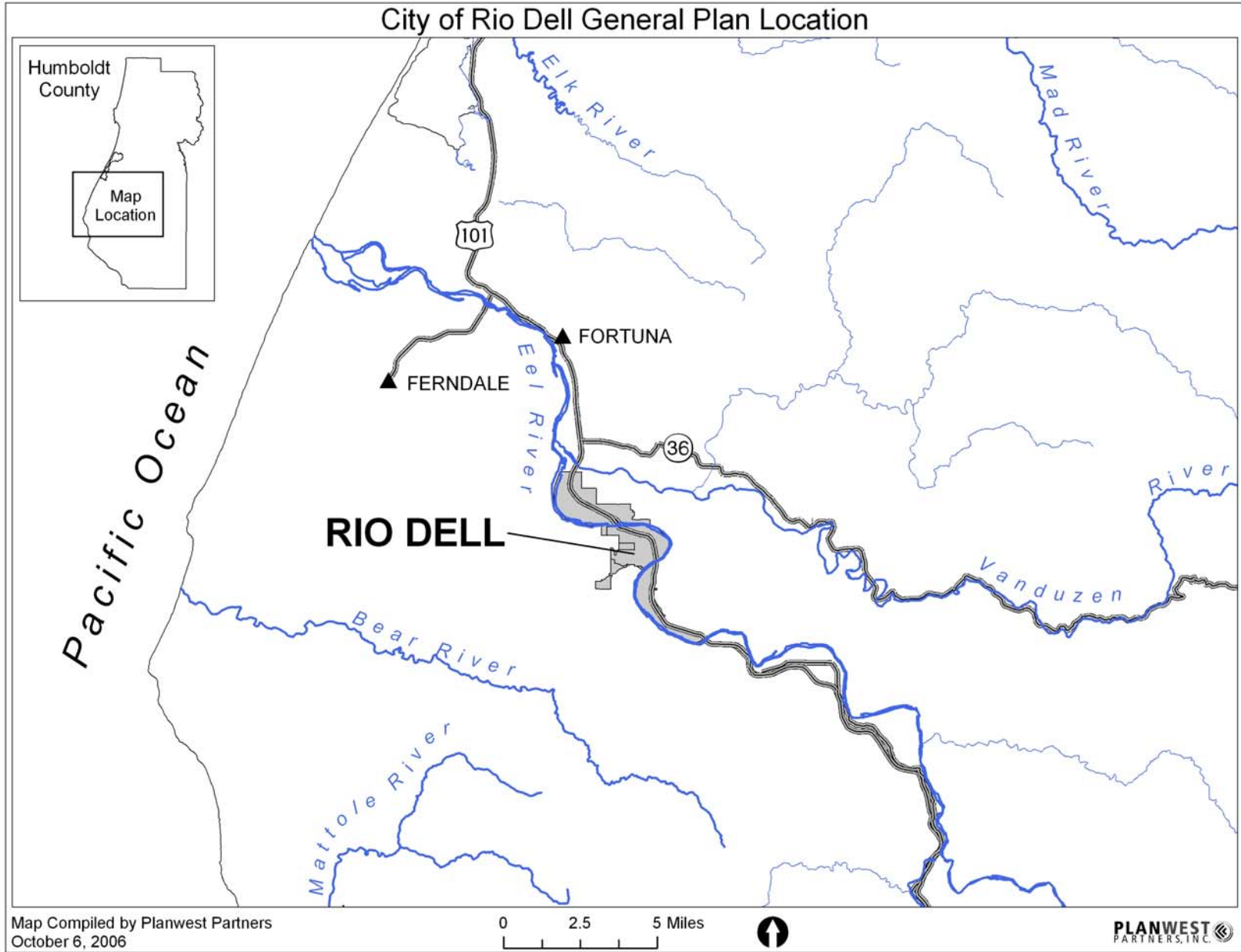
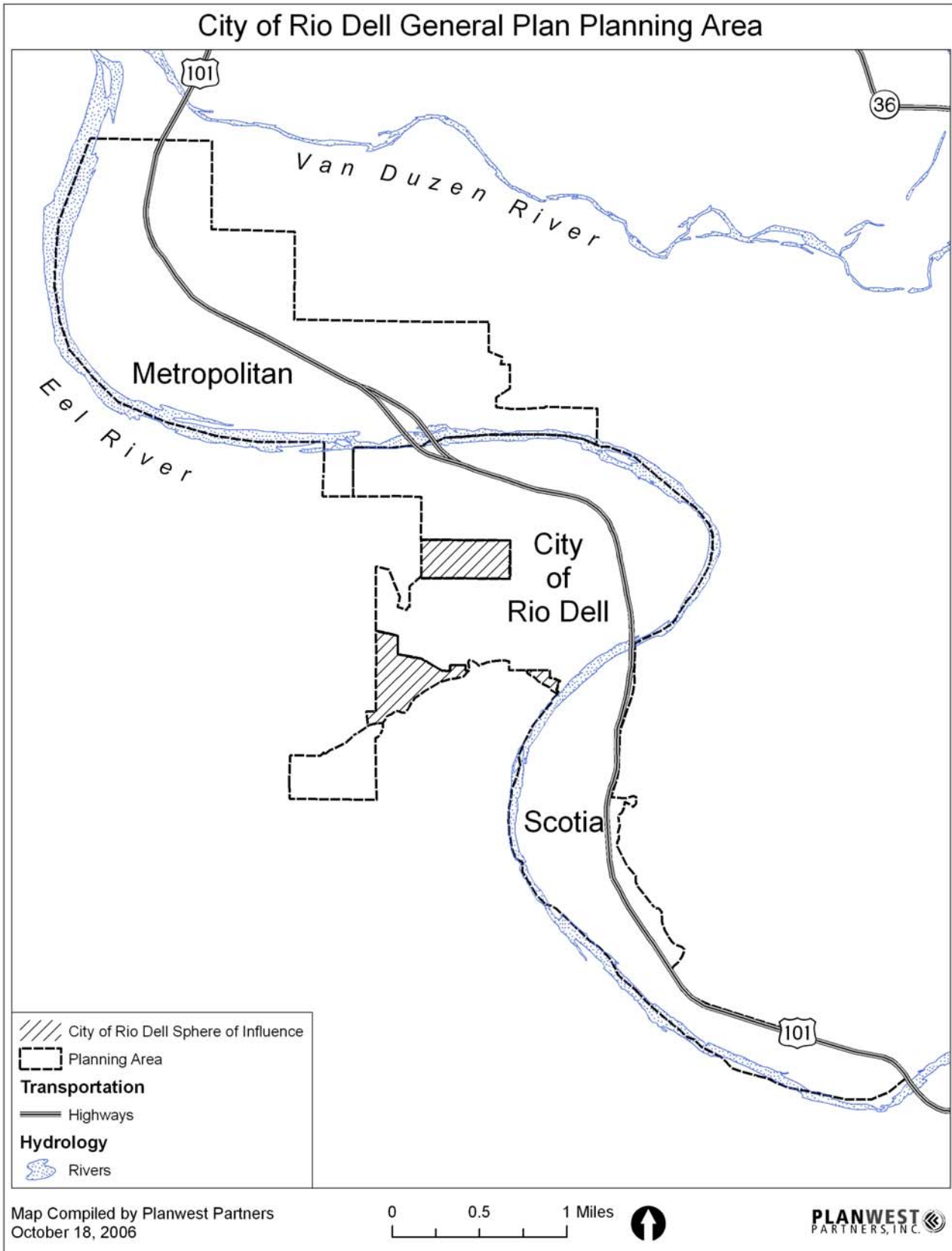


Figure I-2 Map of Planning Area



The Humboldt County LAFCO is charged with adopting a SOI for each city in the County to represent “the probable physical boundaries and service area” of that city (Government Code §56076). The LAFCO uses SOI’s as the basis to regulate the expansion of City boundaries. Although there is no direct requirement that the SOI and the Planning Area match, the SOI provides a convenient measure of the city’s region of interest. The General Plan must cover a local jurisdiction’s entire planning area, and address the broad range of issues associated with a city’s development. The Rio Dell Planning Area totals 2324 acres or 3.63 miles. Figure I-2 shows a map of the Planning Area, SOI and City Limits.

## **Rio Dell Sphere of Influence**

The SOI for Rio Dell encompasses 160 acres beyond the city limits and is coterminous with present City boundaries, with three exceptions: including (1) the Monument Road area; (2) the Dean Creek area; and (3) the Peninsula area.

**Monument Road Area (81 acres).** The Sphere of Influence includes those parcels between Monument Road and the City’s southern boundary at the Dinsmore Ranch Annexation. Existing development in this area is rural residential use.

**Dean Creek Area (7 acres).** The boundary of the Dean Creek area runs from the present City limits to the Eel River. This area is included in the Rio Dell Fire District, and is presently served by the City’s water system. There are four residential lots here, two of which have been developed. No sewer service is provided.

**Peninsula Area (72 acres).** The Peninsula area is located at the top of Monument. The peninsula was created as a result of the Dinsmore Ranch Annexation and is sparsely developed. The area is located within the Rio Dell Fire District but was excluded from the annexation due to resident opposition and the City’s current inability to provide services for reasons of topography and finances.

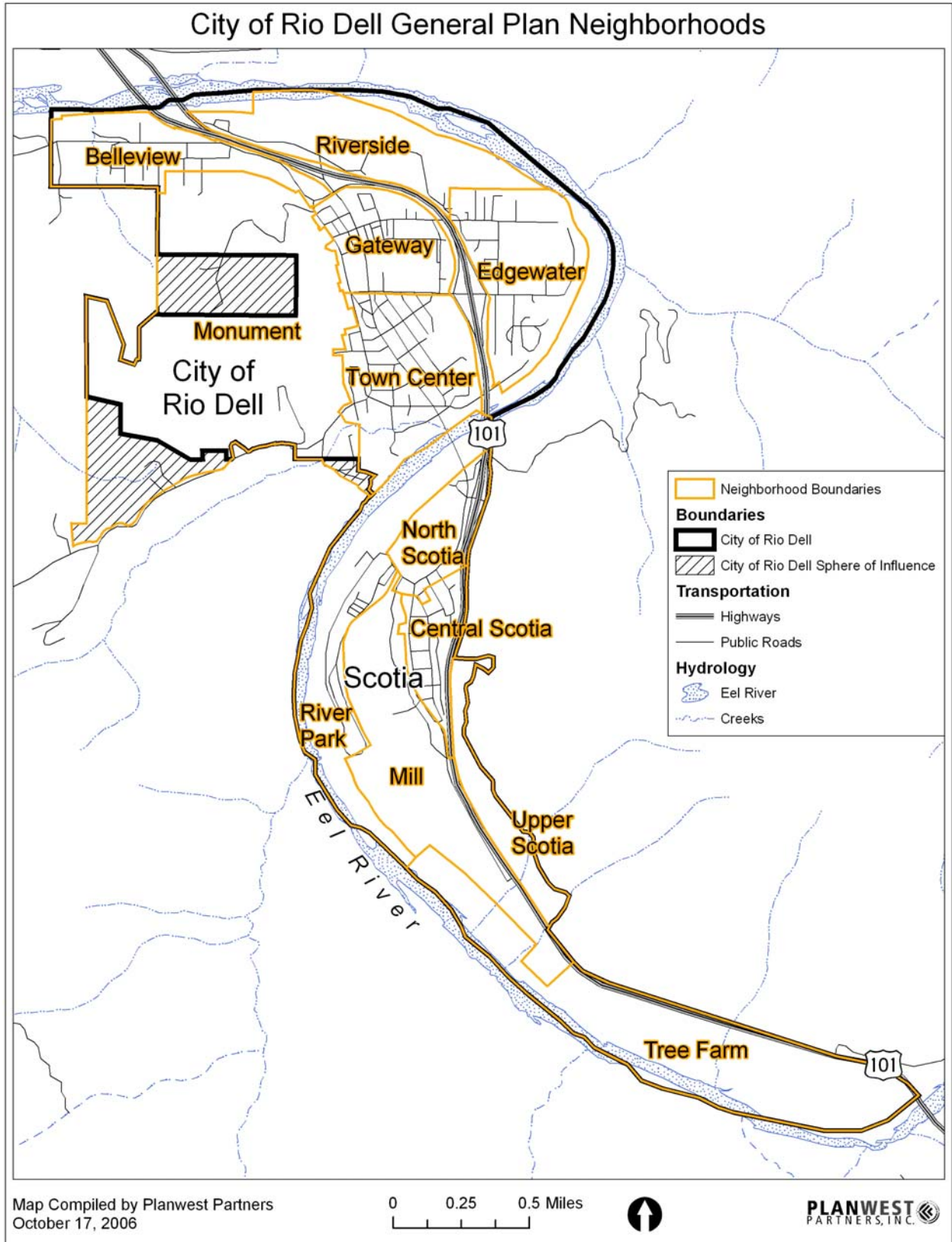
## **City Limits**

The City is approximately three square miles (1,920 acres) in size. The Eel River borders the City limits both north and south of the Eagle Prairie Bridge. The Eel River borders the northern and eastern City limits to the north, bisects the City and then borders the northern, southern, and western City limits south of the Eagle Prairie Bridge. The City limits extend to the mid-point of the Eel River channel. The Scotia Bluffs, which make up the eastern bank of the Eel River across from Rio Dell, and the steep, wooded, slopes on the west side of town are the dominant natural features of the City. Highway 101 bisects the City and the Eagle Prairie Bridge (State Route 283), which is the most prominent man-made feature in the City.

## **Neighborhoods**

Rio Dell is divided into eleven neighborhoods, including Scotia. The significant features that divide the neighborhoods include the U.S. 101 alignment that extends north and east through the City, the slopes and plateau on the west side of the City and the Eel River that bisects North from South. Figure I-3, which shows the neighborhoods in Rio Dell.

Figure I-3 Rio Dell Neighborhoods Map





The neighborhoods that comprise Rio Dell north of the Eagle Prairie Bridge are:

### **Bellevue**

The Bellevue neighborhood is primarily single family residential with some rural and commercial uses. The Bellevue neighborhood is designated Suburban, Urban Residential, and Neighborhood Center. A few of the parcels border on the Eel River and the larger parcels in the west encompass a small tributary stream. There are also a number of intermittent streams that drain the slopes of Monument Hill into the neighborhood. Bellevue has a mix of lot sizes with some being small compact lots and others deep, narrow lots that extend back up into the forested hillside of Monument. Lot sizes range from 10,000 square feet to 7 acres.

### **Riverside**

The Riverside neighborhood is primarily single family residential with some industrial uses including a heavy equipment storage yard and auto dismantler/materials-recycling yard. The Riverside neighborhood is designated Urban Residential and Neighborhood Center. Many of the parcels in the Riverside neighborhood border along the Eel River and along an unnamed stream, which runs through the Fern Court area. Riverside was once an agricultural area, but now almost all of the parcels have been developed. The lot sizes range from 10,000 square feet to 12 acres. The Riverside Neighborhood is located between Highway 101 and the Eel River, and gains access from the Highway 101/ Wildwood Avenue interchange. Highway 101 separates the Riverside neighborhood from the Gateway neighborhood.

### **Edgewater**

The Edgewater neighborhood is primarily single-family residential with a small mix of other uses. Edgewater is designated Suburban, Urban Residential, Neighborhood Center, and Public Facility. Many of the Edgewater parcels along the Eel River are designated for a minimum lot size of 1 acre. Edgewater contains the City's municipal Wastewater facility. Edgewater is separated from the Town Center by U.S. 101 and is accessible from the Davis Street interchange. Edgewater has some agricultural land and other parcels that could be developed. This neighborhood was once an agricultural area but current residential development patterns have reduced the economic viability of farming. Lot sizes range from 10,000 square feet to 12 acres.

### **Gateway**

The Gateway neighborhood is a mix of single-family residences, mobile home parks, commercial, and civic uses. Gateway is the location of Monument Middle School, Eagle Prairie Elementary, the Fire Station and other civic uses. This neighborhood is primarily designated Urban Residential, but also contains Community Commercial, and Public Facility. Gateway is located north of the Town Center and has access to U.S. 101 at two locations, Wildwood and Eeloa and at Davis. Gateway has no agricultural or forest resources. Lot sizes range from 12,000 square feet to 10 acres.

### **Town Center**

The Town Center neighborhood is a mix of single-family residential, general commercial, retail, office, lodging, and civic uses, including City Hall. This neighborhood is designated Urban Residential, Town Center, Community Commercial, and Public Facility. It allows minimum lot sizes as small as 2,500 square feet to provide the highest density neighborhood in Rio Dell. The

Town Center includes Monument Road, Wildwood Ave., and Pacific Ave., and is the main access point to the adjacent Town of Scotia. Lot sizes range from 2,5000 square feet to 17 acres.

### **Monument**

The Monument neighborhood is primarily rural residential, timber and agricultural land. It is designated Rural, and Suburban Residential and is located on the terrace and slopes to the west of the Town Center. Monument is accessible from Monument Road and from some small farm driveways. The majority of Monument is on steep forested slopes, with some parcels containing gentle topography suitable for grazing. Lot sizes range from 5 to 118 acres.

The neighborhoods south of the Eagle Prairie Bridge (Scotia) are:

### **North Scotia**

The North Scotia neighborhood is located south of the Eel River, west of Highway 101 and east of the North Coast Rail Authority (NCRA) rail line. The neighborhood is a mix of Urban Residential, Industrial and Community Commercial. North Scotia includes the Winema Theater, the Scotia Inn, the Post Office, the Hospital, and the Museum.

### **River Park**

The River Park neighborhood is bordered by the Eel River on the north and west, Carpenters Field to the South and the NCRA rail line and Log Pond to the east. The River Park neighborhood is a mix of Natural Resource, Urban Residential, and Public Facility Land Use designations. River Park contains single family residential, riparian areas, the soccer field, Scotia Fireman's Park, the Carpenter Field, and the Sewage Treatment Plant.

### **Central Scotia**

The Central Scotia neighborhood is bordered by Highway 101 on the east, the Hospital, Scotia Inn and Post Office to the north and the Pacific Lumber Company (PALCO) facilities to the west and south. The Central Scotia neighborhood is a mix of Urban Residential and Public Facility. The Scotia School and Fire Department facilities are located in the Central Scotia neighborhood.

### **Mill**

The Mill Neighborhood is south of the North Scotia neighborhood, east of the River Park neighborhood, and west of the Central Scotia neighborhood. The Mill Neighborhood is designated Industrial and contains the majority of PALCO's wood products processing facilities located in the City of Rio Dell.

### **Upper Scotia**

The Upper Scotia neighborhood is located to the east of Highway 101. The fire water tanks, treated domestic water tank, finished domestic water tank and filter plant are located in this neighborhood. This neighborhood has Public Facility and Natural Resource land use designations.

## **Tree Farm**

The Tree Farm neighborhood is east of the Eel River, west of Highway 101 and south of Mill neighborhood. The neighborhood contains the PALCO tree farm and aggregate operation. Plans for the neighborhood include the continued managed production of timber and aggregate resources and surface disposal of treated wastewater effluent and biosolids.

## **Public Participation**

Local governments have been given broad latitude by the State regarding General Plan preparation. However, State law requires that “during the preparation or amendment of the general plan, the planning agency shall provide opportunities for the involvement of citizens, public agencies, public utility companies, and civic, education, and other community groups, through public hearings and any other means the city or county deems appropriate” (Government Code §65351).

The City Council and the Planning Commission are the appropriate public bodies to act as a review committee for the General Plan process. The Council and Commission held many joint study sessions, to discuss the plan update, which were open to the public. The study sessions covered topics related to the environment, provision of services, policy updates and element updates. Public hearings were held at both the Planning Commission and the City Council during the adoption process.

## **Related Plans and Programs**

**The California Government Code.** The California Government Code §65300 (all subsequent reference to California law will be to the Government Code unless otherwise specified) requires that, “each planning agency shall prepare and the legislative body of each county and city shall adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan.” Government Code §65300.5, requires that the general plan and elements and parts thereof comprise an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies for adopting agencies.”

The Government Code (§65302) requires that the General Plan address seven specific Elements. These Elements are Land Use, Transportation, Housing (further specified in Government Code §65580), Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety. The General Plan may also contain other optional Elements, such as public facilities, historic preservation, community design, and economic development (Government Code §65303). The Elements may be combined at the discretion of the local agency (Government Code §65301). In some cases, combining Elements can improve the Plan by eliminating redundancy.

California state law requires that an annual report be submitted to the City Council on the status of the General Plan and what progress has been made on implementing the Plan’s goals and policies. State law also requires that an annual report on progress in meeting the City’s share of regional housing needs be made to the Office of Planning and Research, and to the Department of Housing and Community Development.

**The California Environmental Quality Act.** The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Public Resources Code (beginning at §21000) requires state and local public agencies to review the potential environmental impacts of all discretionary activities proposed to be carried out or approved by California public agencies. In addition, State law requires that any amendment or adoption of a General Plan comply with CEQA and often requires preparation and consideration of an environmental impact report (EIR). The primary purpose of an EIR is to inform decision makers and the public of the potential significant environmental effects of a proposal, less damaging alternatives, and possible ways to reduce or avoid the possible environmental damage.

Rio Dell prepared a “Program EIR” to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the General Plan. A Program EIR is a particular EIR approach authorized by CEQA for use in evaluating the environmental effects of general plans and other “programs” that involve a series of interrelated actions that can be characterized as one project to achieve the overall program goal.

In addition to natural resources, CEQA considers impacts on historic and cultural resources. To determine if a project or plan will have significant impacts on historic resources, CEQA applies a two-part test; the resource must be “historically significant” and the plan/project would cause “substantial adverse change” to the resource. In order to qualify as historically significant, a resource must meet one of three qualifications:

- It can be listed in, or eligible for, the California Register or Historical Resources.
- It can be considered historically significant if it is listed in a local register of historic resources, or if it has been identified as important in a cultural resources survey.
- It can be considered significant if the Lead Agency responsible for CEQA review determines it to be so.

CEQA treats both archaeological and historic resources under the term “historically significant.” A resource that is historically significant under CEQA may be a pre-contact archaeological site or a post-contact building, object, structure, site, or district. The guidelines applied for evaluating the California Register eligibility are the same for both types of resources

## **Relationship to Other General Plan Elements**

The Introduction provides background information and establishes the setting for the entire General Plan. The Introduction also contains overall goals and policies that establish planning framework and the structure for the General Plan and each of its elements.

## **Goals, Policies and Implementation Measures**

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Goals provide a direction for the City. Policies represent commitment to certain actions. They may refer to existing programs or call for the establishment of new ones. Implementation measures provide the avenue for actions geared towards achieving the policy and therefore

meeting the City's goals. Together the goals, policies and implementation measures articulate a vision for Rio Dell that the General Plan seeks to achieve.

Policies in the General Plan are organized using an alpha and numeric character(s). The alpha refers to the element name and the numeric is the order in which the policies appear in the element. The policies in the previous General Plan Land Use Element were organized using one alpha P, which represented policy and four numbers, which indicated the section number and numeric order of the policies as they appeared in the section. Policies retained from the previous General Plan update have the previous alpha and numeric classification in parenthesis at the end of the policy.

## **Goals**

General Plan goals and policies must be internally consistent and each must be considered when making decisions. The following goals and associated policies and actions are intended to work together to establish and maintain the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations:

- To express a long-term vision of the physical development of Rio Dell. (G1.1-1)
- To provide a basis for the Planning Commission and the City Council to judge whether development proposals and public projects are consistent with that vision. (G1.1-2)
- To enhance the character and overall appearance of Rio Dell, enhance critical natural resources, and minimize residents' exposure to hazards. (G1.1-3)
- To inform citizens, developers, decision makers, and other jurisdictions of the rules that will guide development within Rio Dell. (G1.1-4)
- To establish a guide for the City Council to set priorities and develop implementation programs. (G1.1-5)
- Promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the people of Rio Dell.
- To preserve the rural small town character of Rio Dell.

## **Policies**

The following policies are intended to work together with the goals and actions to establish and maintain the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations:

- I-1. Establish review procedures to monitor the relevance of the General Plan on a continuous basis. (P1.4-1)
- I-2. Instill a culture of "Plan For The Future" in City government. (P1.4-3)
- I-3. Make City planning an open and inclusive process.

## Implementation Measures

Table I-1 provides the implementation measures and the corresponding policy number(s) from this section of the Rio Dell General Plan.

**Table I-1** Implementation Table

<b>Policy Number</b>	<b>Implementation Measure</b>
I-2	The City shall adopt the attached Land Use Diagram as the General Plan Map, and adopt the enclosed Land Use Designations as the General Plan Designations
I-2	The City shall adopt the attached Land Use Diagram as the City Zoning Map, and adopt the enclosed Land Use Designations as the City Zoning designations
I-1 I-2 I-3	The City shall require that the Planning Commission submit an annual report in March of each year showing progress made on implementing the General Plan, on meeting the City’s share of regional housing needs, and on the status of the Capital Improvement Plan
I-1 I-2	The City shall require that the Planning Commission review the General Plan every five years and recommend to the City Council whether the Goals and Policies should be retained or modified
I-2	The City shall promote neighborhood/city identity and the role of historic preservation in community enhancement.
I-1 I-2 I-3	The City shall review and amend applicable ordinances, resolutions, and regulations to ensure consistency with the General Plan. These shall include, but not be limited to: Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, Development Standards and Design Guidelines

# CHAPTER 1

## LAND USE ELEMENT

### Introduction

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The Land Use Element is the core of the General Plan. It has the broadest scope of all the required elements, provides an overview of the long-term development and conservation goals of Rio Dell, and plays a pivotal role in zoning, subdivision, and public facility decisions.

The Land Use Element addresses conditions and land use policies for the following:

- Land Use
- Economic Activity
- Public Service

### Setting and Context

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The City Council has determined that the Land Use Element will receive the first priority in the process to update the Rio Dell's General Plan. The Land Use Element, with the attendant Land Use Diagram, has the most impact on the community's image and development patterns.

The City of Rio Dell has determined that the neighborhood is the basic planning unit for the development of the General Plan. A description of each of Rio Dell's neighborhoods and the General Plan Planning Area is found in the Introduction. The descriptions in the Introduction establish the setting for the Land Use Element.

### Related Plans and Programs

California law requires that the Land Use Element designate the general distribution and location of land for housing, business, industry, open space, agriculture, natural resources, recreation, enjoyment of scenic beauty, education, public buildings and grounds, solid and liquid waste disposal facilities, and other categories of private and public uses of land (Government Code §65302(a)). The element must include a statement of the standards of population density and building intensity, and identify areas for natural resources and conservation.

### Relationship to Other General Plan Elements

This element is related to the other six elements in the Rio Dell General Plan because the information contained within this element from the most recent update has been

distributed throughout the other elements. The land use section includes policy and diagrams for the types and distribution of land uses in the City. The other elements relate to land use in various ways: the Circulation Element identifies transportation routes to serve the designated land uses; the Safety Element identifies potential hazards associated with land uses; the Noise Element identifies potential sources for noise based on land uses; the Cultural and Scenic Resources Element identifies potential land marks within various land use areas; the Conservation and Open Space Element identifies conservation, development, and use of natural resources and open space land uses; and finally, the Housing Element provide policy relating to the land designated residential in the Land Use Element.

## Goals, Policies and Implementation

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### Goals

The City of Rio Dell has the following Land Use, Economic and Public Service goals:

- To establish the neighborhood as the basic planning unit for City infrastructure and services;
- To retain the Commercial Centers (Along South Wildwood in Rio Dell, and along North Main in Scotia) as the historic, civic, cultural, and commercial contours of town;
- To grow sustainably, provide economic opportunities, and local jobs;
- To promote a variety of commercial uses and allow light manufacturing in appropriate commercial areas;
- To improve public facilities and systems to maintain a safe and efficient system of public services, including emerging technologies as a component of the City's infrastructure; and
- To provide an adequate, consistent, and safe supply of water to meet our domestic, commercial, and fire safety requirements.

### Policies

The City of Rio Dell has the following Land Use policies.

#### Land Use

- LU-1. Adopt appropriate design and orderly development principals through periodic updates of the zoning and subdivision ordinances.
- LU-2. Develop a review procedure as part of the zoning ordinance to ensure that proposed uses are compatible with existing uses. (P2.2.1-2)
- LU-3. Encourage new construction in the Town Center that complements it's the Town Center-historic character. (P2.2.1-3)



- LU-4. Encourage infill development of vacant and underutilized land in the Town Center before amending the General Plan to allow additional commercial and residential land elsewhere. (P2.2.1-4)
- LU-5. Prepare and adopt a mixed-use plan for the Wildwood Corridor that includes architectural guidelines, streetscape pedestrian improvements and parking regulations. (P2.2.1-5)
- LU-6. Encourage residential development in the Town Center for a variety of social and income groups. (P2.2.1-6)
- LU-7. Retain and rehabilitate low and moderate-income housing units through the use of Community Development Block Grant funds. (P2.2.1-7)
- LU-8. Protect adjacent residential neighborhoods with guidelines that scale down development at the periphery of the Town Center. (P2.2.1-9)
- LU-9. Prevent and abate nuisance situations such as excessive noise, abandoned or non-operational vehicles, dangerous or blighted buildings or uses, and accumulation of refuse through the development and enforcement of nuisance abatement procedures. (P2.2.1-10)
- LU-10. The *standard of residential building intensity* is shall be stated in terms of the allowable range of dwelling units per net acre where a net acre is defined as that ~~part of the gross area of a parcel or lot available for development after all constrained, or otherwise dedicated areas have been excluded (i.e., street and utility rights of way and steep slopes.)~~ portion of a site that can actually be built upon. For example the Urban Residential designation allows 4 to 10 dwelling units per net acre. The following are not included in the net acreage of a site: public or private road rights-of-way, public open space, and flood ways (as defined by The California Planning Roundtable - California General Plan Glossary) (this policy was extracted as a Land Use Element implementation measure from the Rio Dell General Plan, 2004)
- LU-11. The *standard of residential population density* is shall be derived by multiplying the allowable number of dwelling units per net acre by the average number of persons per dwelling unit as calculated by the Department of Finance. ~~The average population density can be used as a tool to estimate projected build-out in each neighborhood. The average population density can also be used in Capital Improvement Plans to estimate the projected requirement for water and wastewater disposal capacity and the need for other City services. This standard is a planning tool only and is not official policy of the City of Rio Dell. If we look again at Using the Urban Residential designation which encompasses approximately 322 acres, at an average of 7 dwelling units per net acre it might be possible to have 2,200 dwelling units x 2.57 persons for an assumed population of 5654 persons within this land use designation.~~ (This policy was extracted as a Land Use Element implementation measure from the Rio Dell General Plan, 2004)
- LU-12. The *standard of non-residential building intensity* is shall be expressed in terms of a maximum floor area ratio (FAR). The floor area ratio is the

ratio of the building square footage to the lot square footage. For example, a 10,000 net square foot lot with a floor area ratio of 1.0 will allow a building of 10,000 square feet. This building could be one story, or two stories of 5,000 square feet each. A FAR of 2 would allow a 20,000 square foot building. (This policy was extracted as a Land Use Element implementation measure from the Rio Dell General Plan, 2004)

- LU-13. The *standard for a secondary dwelling unit* ~~is~~ shall be based on California Government Code §65852.2. The standard shall include:
- The secondary unit is on a lot that contains an existing single family dwelling located in a zoning district that allows residential uses; and
  - The secondary unit may not be sold separately from the main unit; and
  - The secondary unit may not exceed 30 per cent of the floor area of the main unit to a maximum of 1,200 square feet; and
  - The City may adopt a Second Unit Ordinance that could refine or modify this standard. (This policy was extracted as a Land Use Element implementation measure from the Rio Dell General Plan, 2004)
- LU-14. The *standards for attached dwelling units* ~~are~~ shall be designed to maintain Rio Dell's small town atmosphere. These standards shall include:
- A dwelling unit group may not contain more than four attached units; and
  - Each dwelling unit must have a ground floor front door that faces a public street; and
  - Each dwelling unit must have a sidewalk from the public street to the front door that is separate from any driveway; and
  - Parking for the dwelling unit group should be located at the rear of the building; and
  - Each dwelling unit should have a covered stoop or porch at the front door. (This policy was extracted as a Land Use Element implementation measure from the Rio Dell General Plan, 2004)
- LU-15. The *standards for average minimum lot size* ~~are~~ shall be designed to maintain the building intensity and population density requirements of the General Plan, while allowing some flexibility in the sizes of new or adjusted lots. These standards shall include:
- The number of parcels created shall not exceed the total number of lots permitted by the land use designation; and
  - The number of primary residences or non-residential buildings shall not exceed the number permitted by the density or FAR requirements; and
  - The lots meet the intent of the land use designation. For example in the Suburban designation, with a one acre minimum lot size and a density

of one unit per acre, a ten acre subdivision could have no more than ten lots and no more than ten primary residences. Since the intent of the Suburban designation is to provide a mix of small-scale agriculture and low density residential, attached housing would not be compatible with this designation. (This policy was extracted as a Land Use Element implementation measure from the Rio Dell General Plan, 2004)

- LU-16. Encourage the harmonious, orderly, efficient and sustainable growth and development of Rio Dell.
- LU-17. Strengthen and diversify the local economy and maintain and improve property values.
- LU-18. Designate the U.S.101/Wildwood Avenue, U.S. 101/Davis Street, and U.S. 101/Main Street entrances as “City Gateways” and develop an integrated program that includes signage, landscaping, marketing information, and strategic partnerships with local agencies (nearby cities and Humboldt County), chambers of commerce, and Caltrans to increase tourism and business activity in Rio Dell.
- LU-19. Residential uses within new buildings on lots located adjacent to Wildwood Avenue between Elm Street and the Eagle Prairie Bridge shall be limited to upper floors only. Exceptions for live-work uses may be provided through a conditional use permit where residential activities are located at the back of buildings.
- LU-20. Establish a Planned Development Overlay Zone to provide flexibility in implementing development standards to encourage project amenities such as improved project design, natural resource protection and affordable housing.

## **Economic Activity**

- LU-21. Encourage the creation and retention of employment opportunities that provide sustainable wages and benefits for Rio Dell residents by promoting a thriving local retail, personal services, and commercial sector. (P2.2.2-1)
- LU-22. Encourage the use of public/private partnerships as a means of redeveloping and revitalizing selected areas and analyze the use of such techniques as business improvement districts, redevelopment areas, and assessment districts. (P2.2.2-2)
- LU-23. Provide sufficient land for business expansion and attraction of new employers by designating a mixed-use corridor along Wildwood Avenue and in the Town Center. (P2.2.2-3)
- LU-24. Promote economic development in Rio Dell through preparation and implementation of an Economic Development Strategy. (P2.2.2-4)

## Public Services

- LU-25. Adopt regulations that help the City meet its facility and infrastructure needs through exactions, dedications, impact fees, in-lieu fees, and other development fees and techniques.
- LU-26. Explore and adopt per capita staffing, level of service and response time standards for police and emergency personnel and other City services. (P2.2.3-1)
- LU-27. Cooperate with the Rio Dell Fire Protection District to ensure that emergency services are adequate to protect existing and future residents and businesses. ~~support the Rio Dell General Plan 2015.~~ (P2.2.3-2)
- LU-28. Pursue grant funds for projects and programs to achieve a lower ISO rating for the City of Rio Dell, to reduce fire insurance rates. (P2.2.3-3)
- LU-29. Encourage new development to contribute its fair share to providing all public services and infrastructure necessary to serve that development. (P2.2.3-4)
- LU-30. Explore additional techniques for reducing solid waste ~~disposal and~~ complying with AB 939 waste diversion goals. (P2.2.3-5)
- LU-31. Periodically evaluate water supply and demand, and water conservation measures, to plan for future water needs of the community, using a combination of incentives, educational programs, and ongoing system audits to promote water conservation. (P2.2.3-6)
- LU-32. Periodically evaluate the wastewater system to plan for future wastewater needs of the community. (P2.2.3-7)
- LU-33. Require underground utilities throughout the neighborhoods as public improvements and new developments are planned and approved. (P2.2.3-9)
- LU-34. Prepare and adopt a street lighting master plan that addresses street lighting and financing needs and develops a system that contributes to pedestrian and traffic safety and reduces vandalism. (P2.2.3-11)
- LU-35. Prepare and maintain a five-year capital improvement plan that will guide the financing and construction of infrastructure to support the Rio Dell General Plan 2015. (P2.2.3-12)
- LU-36. Consolidate public services and infrastructure systems where feasible.
- LU-37. Manage water rights for the community benefit.
- LU-38. The City shall encourage the siting of child care, disabled, mentally disabled and elderly facilities compatible with needs, land use and character, and encourage such facilities to be located near employment centers, homes, schools, community centers, recreation facilities, and transit hubs.
- LU-39. Require the dedication to the City of Rio Dell of Public Utility Easements adjacent to the street right of way as part of new development approvals.

## Land Use Designations

Below are detailed descriptions of Rio Dell land use designations.

### **Rural (R)**

The Rural designation provides for agricultural and very low-density residential areas. The minimum lot size is five acres and the required open space is 90 percent.

### **Suburban (S)**

The Suburban designation provides for a mix of small-scale agricultural and low-density residential areas. The minimum lot size is one acre and the required open space is 75 percent.

### **Suburban Residential (SR)**

The Suburban Residential designation provides for low-density residential areas. The minimum lot size is 12,500 square feet and the required open space is 50 percent.

### **Urban Residential (UR)**

The Urban Residential designation provides for neighborhood residential areas and establishes two density ranges. The minimum lot size is 6,000 square feet for detached single-family dwellings with a density of 4 to 7 units per net acre, and 4,000 square feet for attached single-family dwellings with a density of 7 to 10 units per net acre. The required open space is 50 percent.

### **Town Center (TC)**

The Town Center designation is the heart of Rio Dell. It is a mixed-use district that contains residential, commercial, office, lodging, and civic uses. The minimum lot size is 2,500 square feet. The required open space for residential uses is 35 percent, and there is no requirement for open space for non-residential uses.

### **Neighborhood Center (NC)**

The Neighborhood Center designation provides for small-scale neighborhood shopping areas located within residential neighborhoods. The minimum lot size is 2,000 square feet and there is no open space requirement.

### **Community Commercial (CC)**

The Community Commercial designation provides for large-scale commercial uses. It may also contain office, lodging and civic uses. The minimum lot size is 5,000 square feet and the required open space is 10 percent.

### **Public Facility (PF)**

The Public Facility designation provides for lands that are reserved for civic, recreation, infrastructure and cultural uses. There is no minimum lot size or open space requirement.

### **Industrial (I)**

The Industrial land use designation provides for large-scale industrial uses. The minimum lot size is one acre and the required open space is 10 percent.

**Natural Resources (NR)**

The Natural Resource designation provides for the protection or managed production of natural resources. There is no minimum lot size or open space requirement.

Land Use The City of Rio Dell land use designations support the retention of the Rio Dell hillsides, suburban uses at the edge of the City, and a vibrant downtown. Table 1-1 shows total acreage of each land use designation in the City and its SOI. Table 1-2 lists the land use designations and the permitted uses allowed in each land use designation.

**Table 1-1** Rio Dell Land Use Designations, Total Acreages

Land Use Designations		City of Rio Dell		Sphere of Influence		Total	
		Acres	Pct.	Acres	Pct.	Acres	Pct.
R	Rural	410	41%	160	15%	570	25%
S	Suburban	119	12%	0	0%	119	5%
SR	Suburban Residential	15	1%	0	0%	15	1%
UR	Urban Residential	332	33%	59	6%	391	17%
TC	Town Center	48	5%	0	0%	48	2%
NC	Neighborhood Commercial	6	1%	0	0%	6	0%
I	Industrial	0	0	271	26%	271	12%
NR	Natural Resources	0	0	497	48%	497	21%
CC	Community Commercial	33	3%	15	1%	48	2%
PF	Public Facility	50	5%	43	4%	93	4%
	Road Rights of Way/River	0	0%	0	0%	266	11%
<b>Total</b>		<b>1013</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1043.3</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,324</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 1-2** City Of Rio Dell General Plan Land Use Designations

<b>Designation</b>	<b>Map Label</b>	<b>Permitted Uses</b>	<b>Minimum Lot Size</b>	<b>Open Space</b>	<b>Density/Far*</b>	<b>Building Height</b>
Rural	R	<p>Agricultural uses including crop production and animal grazing.</p> <p>Residential uses including detached residential units and live-work units.</p> <p>Limited commercial uses including retail sales of items produced on the property, and nurseries and greenhouses as accessory uses.</p> <p>Limited office uses including professional services in a residential building.</p> <p>Limited lodging uses including bed and breakfast inns and rooming houses in a residential unit or in an accessory building</p> <p>Civic and cultural uses including parks.</p>	5 acres average	90%	.2 units per net acre plus 1 secondary dwelling unit per lot	Maximum 3 stories, or 45 feet
Suburban	S	<p>Agricultural uses including crop production and animal grazing.</p> <p>Residential uses including detached houses, cottages, and live-work units.</p> <p>Limited commercial uses including retail sales of items produced on the property, and nurseries and greenhouses in a residential unit or in accessory structures.</p> <p>Limited office uses including professional services in a residential unit.</p> <p>Limited lodging uses including bed and breakfast inns and rooming houses in a residential unit.</p> <p>Civic and cultural uses including day care centers and parks.</p>	1 acre average	75%	1 unit per net acre plus 1 secondary dwelling unit per lot	Maximum 2 stories, or 35 feet

<b>Designation</b>	<b>Map label</b>	<b>Allowable uses</b>	<b>Lot size</b>	<b>Open space</b>	<b>Density/ Far*</b>	<b>Building height</b>
Suburban Residential	SR	Residential uses including detached houses, cottages, and live-work units.  Limited office uses including professional services in a residential unit.  Limited lodging uses including bed and breakfast inns in a residential unit  Civic and cultural uses including day care centers and parks.	12500 square feet average	50 %	3 units per net acre plus 1 secondary dwelling unit per lot	Maximum 2 stories, or 35 feet
Urban Residential	UR	Residential uses including detached and attached houses, cottages, live/work units.  Limited office uses, including professional services and health services in a residential unit  Limited lodging uses including bed and breakfast inns and rooming houses in a residential unit.  Civic and cultural uses including day care centers, and parks.	6,000 square feet average <hr/> 4,000 square feet average for attached dwellings.	50 %	4 to 7 units per net acre plus 1 secondary dwelling unit per lot <hr/> 7 to 10 units per net acre	Maximum 2 stories, or 35 feet
Town Center	TC	Residential uses including detached and attached houses, cottages, live-work units, and in the upper floors of mixed-use buildings.  Commercial uses including retail sales, retail services, restaurants, theaters, and galleries in a commercial building, or in a mixed-use building.  Office uses including commercial services, professional services, and health services in an office building, in a mixed-use building, or in a live-work unit.  Lodging uses including hotels, bed and breakfast	2,500 square feet average	None required for commercial, office, and lodging buildings, or mixed-use buildings. 35% for separate residential uses	10 to 22 units per net acre  Far - 2	Minimum 2 stories, maximum 3 stories, or maximum of 45 feet



Chapter 1 Land Use

Designation	Map label	Allowable uses	Lot size	Open space	Density/ Far*	Building height
		<p>inns, and rooming houses in a lodging building, or in a mixed-use building.</p> <p>Civic and cultural uses including city offices and other governmental services, city parking facilities, conference centers, museums, libraries, day care centers, and parks.</p>				
Neighborhood Center	NC	<p>Residential uses restricted to upper floors of mixed use buildings.</p> <p>Neighborhood commercial uses including retail sales, retail services, and restaurants in a commercial building, or in the ground floor of a mixed-use building.</p> <p>Limited office uses including commercial services, professional services, and health services in a mixed-use building.</p> <p>Limited lodging uses including bed and breakfast inns, and rooming houses in a mixed-use building.</p> <p>Civic and Cultural uses including city offices and day care centers.</p>	2,000 square feet average	None required	FAR – 1.5	Maximum 3 stories, or 45 feet
Community Commercial	C	<p>Residential uses restricted to upper floors of mixed use buildings.</p> <p>Commercial uses including large-scale retail sales, super markets, automotive sales, automotive services contained entirely within a building, gas stations, and light manufacturing contained entirely within a building.</p> <p>Office uses including commercial services, professional services, and health services in an office building or in a mixed-use building.</p>	5,000 square feet.	10%	FAR – 1.5	Maximum 3 stories, or 45 feet

Chapter 1 Land Use

Designation	Map label	Allowable uses	Lot size	Open space	Density/ Far*	Building height
		Lodging uses including motels in a lodging building or in a mixed-use building, RV parks.  Civic and Cultural uses including city offices and other governmental services and city parking facilities.				
Industrial	I	Wood products manufacturing.  Power generation.  Other industrial uses including stores and services such as carpentry and cabinet-making, clothing manufacture, handicraft manufacture, lumber yards, metal working shops, wholesale outlet stores, painters' and decorators yards, plumbing shops, and printing and lithographing.  Research and development  Research and light industrial  Administrative, business and professional offices  Ancillary and complementary (with a use permit)	1 Acre	10%	.35	Maximum 4 stories or 60 feet
Natural Resources	NR	Resource Protection  Public Recreation where compatible with resource management and protection.  Management for fish and wildlife habitat  Wetland/Watershed Restoration  Timber Production (with TPZ overlay zone)  Aggregate Resources Production (with a CUP)	None required	None required	None required	None required

<b>Designation</b>	<b>Map label</b>	<b>Allowable uses</b>	<b>Lot size</b>	<b>Open space</b>	<b>Density/ Far*</b>	<b>Building height</b>
Public Facility	PF	Residential uses restricted to a caretaker apartment. Commercial uses including gift shops and restaurants that are part of the civic or cultural use Office uses including civic or cultural offices. Lodging uses including lodging provided as part of the civic or cultural use. Civic and Cultural uses including governmental services, city parking facilities, conference centers, museums, libraries, day care centers, and parks. Water and wastewater systems Parks, ball fields and recreation facilities Recreational uses	None required	None required	1 caretaker unit per lot	Maximum 3 stories, or 45 feet

\*Density relates to residential develop (units per acre) and floor to area ratio (FAR – the ratio of the gross building square footage to the net square footage of the lot or parcel) relates to commercial development.

## Implementation

The following table provides the implementation measures corresponding to Land Use policies.

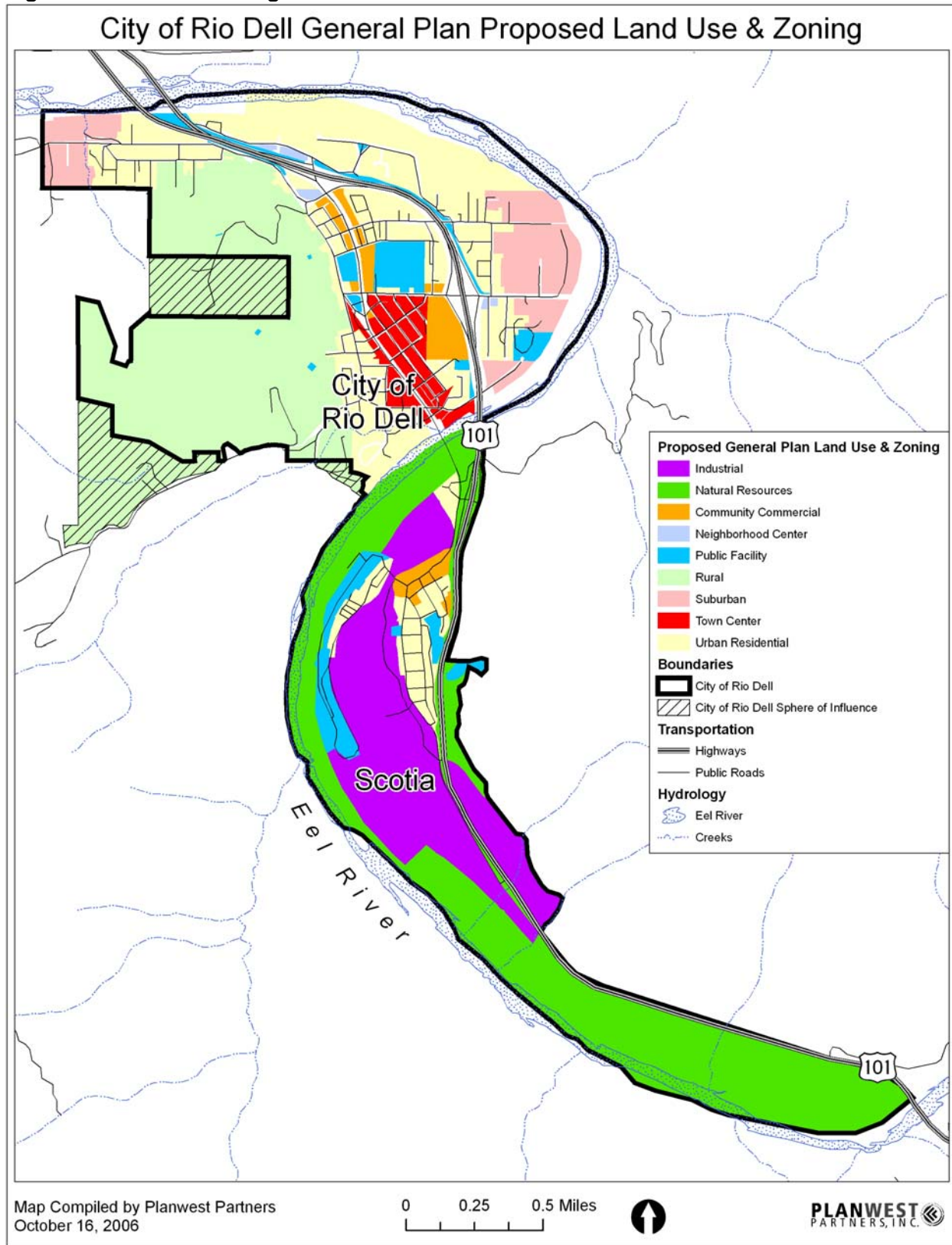
**Table 1-3** Implementation Table

Policy Number	Implementation Measure
<i>Land Use</i>	
LU-1 LU-2 LU-9 LU-10 LU-11 LU-12 LU-13 LU-14 LU-15 LU-20	<p>The City shall prepare a new Land Use and Development Code that is consistent with the General Plan and addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Zoning Districts and Allowable Land Uses;</li> <li>▪ General Development Standards;</li> <li>▪ Design Review Standards;</li> <li>▪ Permit Procedures;</li> <li>▪ Subdivision Standards and Procedures</li> <li>▪ Environmental Review; and</li> <li>▪ Development Code Administration and Fee Schedule.</li> </ul>
LU-5 LU-18 LU-19	The City shall prepare and adopt a Wildwood Corridor Plan to identify potential uses, architectural guidelines and streetscape improvements.
LU-7	The City shall prepare review standards that identify how a proposed local, state, or federal grant helps implement General Plan policies.
<i>Economic Activities</i>	
LU-21 LU-22 LU-23 LU-24	The City shall prepare and maintain an Economic Development Strategy Plan.
<i>Public Services</i>	
LU-32	The City shall prepare and adopt a Water and Wastewater Master Plan that addresses build out identified in the General Plan.
	The City shall prepare and adopt a Drainage Master Plan that encourages on site retention, maintains current stream and drainage channel integrity, and reduces non-point pollution loads.
LU-34	The City shall prepare and adopt a Street Lighting Master Plan.
LU-33 LU-34 LU-35	The City shall prepare and maintain a current Five Year Capital Improvement Program.

## Land Use Diagram

The Rio Dell general plan includes a diagram (Figure 1-1) showing the spatial distribution of Land Uses for the City.

Figure 1-1 Land Use Diagram



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# CHAPTER 2

## CULTURAL AND SCENIC RESOURCES ELEMENT

### Introduction

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Cultural and scenic resources distinguish cities, towns, and rural landscapes and enhance everyday life. Local landmarks, architectural treasures and historic neighborhoods are valued as sources of pride for the populations they serve. These cultural resources tell the story of Rio Dell and its citizens and how the community grew both economically and culturally. This cultural landscape illustrates the varied occupations, ethnic and cultural origins, social and civic life of the community.

The preservation of our heritage resources enriches the formal educational experience, and is a good business practice for both the public and private sectors. Solid, established buildings served by roads, utilities, and infrastructure offer a cost-effective alternative to the escalating price of new construction. When new uses are found for older, abandoned, or underused buildings, we are sensibly recycling and conserving our increasingly scarce natural resources. We are also contributing directly to the formation of new businesses, the stimulation of tourism, and preserving or increasing property values.

The purpose of the Cultural and Scenic Resources Elements is to encourage the maintenance, preservation and recognition of public places, historic right of way and public works projects, cemeteries, archaeological sites and the cultural landscape that define the essential character of Rio Dell, and thereby to stabilize historic neighborhoods, districts and areas of cultural importance within the City. Historic buildings, whether commercial or residential, unify neighborhoods and older settlements; and furnish focal points for community identity and maintain a unique sense of place that enhances the quality of life in Rio Dell.

This element outlines plans and programs related to cultural and scenic resource protection. The relationship of this element to other elements in the General Plan is briefly addressed. In addition, the element provides goals, policies, programs and implementation measures related to cultural and scenic resource preservation.

### Setting and Context

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The City of Rio Dell is located above the Eel River, adjacent to the Scotia Bluffs. Rio Dell was incorporated in 1964, and is the newest city in Humboldt County. Historically, the beautiful setting along the river was the territory of the Wiyot Indian people.

In 1849, James Marshal discovered gold in the American River at John Sutter's Mill. The ensuing California gold rush would prove to have a major impact on Humboldt County by stimulating the demand for North Coast lumber. One year later in 1850, the initial settlement of Humboldt Bay began with the construction of a primitive sawmill. The first successful sawmill on Humboldt Bay, in operation by 1852, had four gang saws and a crew of 40 men, and produced 60,000 board feet of lumber and 40,000 laths per-day. The Pacific Lumber Company was incorporated shortly after the Civil War on February 27, 1869 as an investment company. By that time, PALCO had acquired 10,000 acres of what was then described as “the richest belt of timber lying out of doors.”

Euro-American colonization began in the 1870s, when the area now known as Eagle Prairie was purchased by Lorenzo D. Painter. He founded the town of Rio Dell, attracting other farmers and ranchers to the area. The neighboring community of Scotia originated as the site of a mill in the area known as Forestville, established in 1863 by Henry Weatherby and A.W. McPherson.

The steam locomotive was introduced into North Coast logging operations in 1875. The steam donkey, a type of stationary steam engine used to haul logs to a landing, was introduced a few years later in 1882. PALCO officially began its operations in Humboldt County that same year. California Governor B.F. Low and James A. Rigby of San Francisco assisted PALCO by incorporating both the Humboldt Bay and Eel River Railroads for the purpose of transporting logs between the town of Scotia (then called Forestville) and Fields Landing. In 1885, PALCO constructed a railroad line between the town of Scotia and the nearby community of Alton. The lumber utilized to construct PALCO’s first sawmill was shipped to Scotia from Bluff Prairie (now known as Shively). Completed in 1887, the sawmill dimensions were approximately 200-foot long by 80-foot wide, and contained a triple circular saw, a double circular saw, two edgers, hand trimmers, and a few planers. In addition to the sawmill, a power plant was built in 1892. A few years later in 1888, PALCO completed a new mill and employed 150 men.

The Town of Scotia was originally established as a logging camp, largely comprised of an immigrant workforce from the province of New Brunswick, Canada. The town name officially changed from Forestville to Scotia in 1888, and a Post Office was established that same year. Also in 1888, the first hotel in Scotia was constructed, although it was first utilized as a residence for one of the officials of the company. Telephone lines, Western Union lines, and a Wells Fargo Express office were installed.

In 1890, Scotia installed a 90 light incandescent plant, predecessor of the co-generation plant that turns wood waste into power. PALCO’s original sawmill was lost to a fire in 1895—the construction of the existing Mill A began that year and was completed in 1896. Lumber was shipped by PALCO’s own schooner, and in 1901, the company began exporting lumber to both Hawaii and Japan. The existing Scotia Inn was constructed in 1903.

By 1904 the Humboldt County lumber industry was dominated by three large corporations: PALCO, the Hammond Lumber Co., and the Northern Redwood Lumber Co.; the "Big Three" own 64 percent of the county's timberlands and account for 60 percent of total milling capacity. PALCO sold a portion of its railroad to the Santa Fe Railroad Company. PALCO of Maine was



formed in 1905 by the consolidation of Pacific Lumber Company, the Freshwater Lumber Company and the Pacific Lumber Company of New Jersey.

The cultural landscape of each community reveals that they have been interdependent throughout their history. Scotia is comprised of primarily industrial land and compact single family dwellings while Rio Dell includes a variety of residential and commercial lots of various sizes, agricultural open space and very little industrial development. Until 1913 a ferry connected the two towns. Since 1914, Rail and road bridges have united the two communities, maintaining a connection despite floods, slides and earthquakes. The community is on the scenic and historic Redwood Highway (US 101).

While the lumber mill was the primary employer for residents of both communities, the occupants of Rio Dell were more diverse. Around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Italian immigrants became one of the largest segments of lumber industry workers in Northern California. By 1911, fourteen of the nineteen houses on one block in Scotia were occupied by Italian families. They also settled in section of Rio Dell, then called Wildwood, where they developed various businesses along with large family homes.

A study of the historic resources of downtown Rio Dell was conducted by Stillman and Associates in 2002, which identified potential historical resources, architectural types, and provided examples. Design guidelines for the historical resources in Scotia were developed by TBA West in 2006. Both of these documents are on-file at the City.

Rio Dell has valuable scenic resources (i.e., Scotia Bluffs and Eel River) in addition to its rich cultural history. Highway 101, which passes through the Rio Dell planning area, is eligible for official scenic highway designation. A corridor study has already been prepared for the portion of Highway 101 from the Mendocino County line to the Rio Dell City limits. Highway 36, which terminates at Highway 101 just north of Rio Dell is also eligible for scenic highway designation.

This General Plan marks another turning point, a new beginning in the history of Rio Dell. The Cultural and Scenic Resources Element will assist in documenting the unique history of each town and facilitate the blending of these distinct communities.

## Related Plans and Programs

**National Historic Preservation Act.** Enacted in 1966, the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) provides for preservation of significant historical features (buildings, objects and sites) through a grant-in-aid program to the States, established a National Register of Historic Places under the Secretary of the Interior, created the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and established a review process for protecting cultural resources. The NHPA provides the legal framework for most state and local preservation laws.

The NHPA established the Section 106 review procedure to protect historic and archaeological resources that are listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places from the impacts of projects by a federal agency or projected funded or permitted by a federal agency.

Federal Highway and HUD-funded Community Development Block Grant projects are examples of those subject to Section 106 review.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings were developed to provide guidance to federal agencies in reviewing impacts to historic resources. The *Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, Standards for Rehabilitation, 1995* are as follows:

- A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
- The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
- Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
- Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
- Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
- Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
- Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
- Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
- New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
- New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired. (National Parks Service September 20, 2004.)

**The State of California Office of Historic Preservation.** The State of California Office of Historic Preservation administers the California Register program. The office meets the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act with a State Historic Preservation Officer who enforces a designation and protection process, has a qualified historic preservation review commission, maintains a system for surveys and inventories, and provides

for public participation in its activities. Most nominations to the National Register of Historic Places are processed through the California State Historical Resources Commission, and staff of the OHP participates in federal review process for Section 106 and Tax Act for Certified Rehabilitation projects.

The California Register is modeled on the National Register and recognizes properties that meet at least one of the following eligibility criteria:

- It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California, or the United States; or
- It is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history; or
- It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values; or
- It has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

In addition to meeting one of these criteria, the resource must possess integrity. Resources that possess integrity “retain enough of their historic character or appearance to be recognizable as historical resources and to convey the reasons for their significance” (California Office of Historic Preservation 2001).

**The California Scenic Highway Program.** The California's Scenic Highway Program was created by the Legislature in 1963. The purpose of the Scenic Highway program is to, “preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change which would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways,” (Caltrans, September 29, 2006). The state laws governing the Scenic Highway Program are found in the Streets and Highways Code, Section 260 et seq. The program includes standards, guidelines and a Master Plan map showing which state highways are eligible for official designation. When a city or county nominates an eligible scenic highway for official designation, it must identify and define the scenic corridor of the highway. The agency must also adopt ordinances to preserve the scenic quality of the corridor or document such regulations that already exist in various portions of local codes. These ordinances make up the scenic corridor protection program.

The scenic corridor protection plan and program must include as a minimum:

- Regulations of land use density or intensity of development; and
- Provisions for review of site planning on proposed development; and
- Control of outdoor advertising (including a ban on billboards); and
- Careful attention to and control of earth moving and provisions for landscaping cuts and fills; and
- Control of the design and appearance of structures and equipment.
- Citizen involvement during the corridor study and development of the local program is stressed.

In order for a state highway to receive official designation, the following steps must be taken by the city or county with jurisdiction over lands adjacent to the highway, (Caltrans, September 29, 2006):

- Inspect and evaluate the route to determine if it meets the current scenic highway criteria and to what extent, if any, development has intruded on the scenic views.
- Submit a Resolution of Intent Package to the Departmental Transportation Advisory Committee (DTAC) through the appropriate Caltrans district office.
- Prepare and adopt a scenic corridor protection program. Caltrans staff and DTAC review the protection program. If it is determined that the program meets the legislative standards, a recommendation to designate the highway as scenic will be forwarded to the Caltrans Director.



Scenic Highways are identified by colorful "poppy" signs, logo of the scenic highway program, along the route. Also, the poppy logo identifies scenic highways on travel maps, and maps produced by the State Department of Transportation.

**National Wild and Scenic River System.** The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, (Pub. L. 90-542 as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1271-1287) established a method for providing Federal protection for certain of our country's remaining free-flowing rivers, preserving them and their immediate environments for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. Rivers are included in the system so that they may benefit from the protective management and control of development for which the Act provides. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act provides two methods for adding a river to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The first method is by an act of Congress the second is through the authority granted to the Secretary of the Interior in section 2(a)(ii) of the Act.



To be eligible for inclusion in the system through either method, rivers must meet certain criteria set forth in section 2(b) of the Act. Procedures for proposing State-administered rivers for designation have been issued by the Department of the Interior. Rivers can receive one of three designations under the Wild and Scenic River System, wild, scenic, and recreational. The Eel River as it passes through the City of Rio Dell has been designated a Recreational River under the act. The definition of a Recreational River is as follows, "those rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past." These criteria are interpreted as follows:

- "Readily accessible by road or railroad." River areas classified as recreational may contain existing parallel roads or railroads in close proximity to one or both banks of the river as well as bridge crossings and roads fording or ending at the river.
- "Some development along their shorelines." Lands may have been developed for the full range of agricultural and forestry uses, may show evidence of past and ongoing timber harvest, and may include some residential, commercial or similar development.

- "Some impoundment or diversion in the past." There may be some existing impoundments, diversions and other modifications of the waterway having an impact on the river area. Existing low dams, diversion works, riprap and other minor structures will not bar recreational classification, provided the waterway remains generally natural and riverine in appearance. The classification criteria are summarized in Table 2, appended to these guidelines.

Land uses and developments on private lands within the river area, which were in existence when the river was designated, may be permitted to continue. New land uses must be evaluated for their compatibility with the purposes of the Act. (National Parks Service October 3, 2006).

## Relationship to Other General Plan Elements

Cultural, historic and scenic resource planning should be part of a comprehensive planning strategy utilized by the City of Rio Dell. Policies concerning cultural resources were included in the Rio Dell General Plan Land Use Element, which was updated and adopted in 2004. A Scenic Highway Element was adopted in 1972, but scenic resources in addition to the highway were not addressed. Although the inclusion of a Cultural Element and/or a Scenic Resource Element in a City's General Plan is not required by state planning law, elements addressing those resources have been included in this iteration of the Rio Dell General Plan in order to provide a framework for comprehensive planning. In addition, the protection of cultural and scenic resources will ensure that the community's identity and character are preserved as well.

A Cultural and Scenic Resource Element has specifically been created to complement the present and future goals of land use planning for the City of Rio Dell.

Scenic Resources will also draw information from the Conservation and Open Space Element. In addition, there are policies in the Circulation Element that address scenic highway improvements and construction.

## Goals, Policies and Implementation Measures

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### Goals

- To encourage both public and private stewardship of the City's cultural resources.
- Protect, preserve, promote and enhance Rio Dell's distinctive architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage and contributing elements.
- Foster civic pride in a shared heritage.
- Protect, preserve and maintain the scenic and cultural landscapes of the City, which includes, but is not limited to the Eel River and the Scotia Bluffs.

## Policies

### Identification, interpretation, designation and preservation

- CS-1. Areas of archeological, paleontological, and architectural significance should be identified, assessed, and protected from destruction. (P2.2.4-2)
- CS-2. In appropriate circumstances, when archaeological resources are likely to be present at a construction site, monitoring of excavation and other soil disturbing activities by archeological and/or Native American observers shall be required.
- CS-3. Upon discovery of archeological or paleontological materials, all grading or other land-disturbing construction activities at the site shall be suspended until the nature of the cultural resources has been ascertained and the appropriate disposition method determined.
- CS-4. Work with community organizations to develop and staff a local historic museum. (P2.2.4-3)
- CS-5. Establish a Design Control Overlay zone to protect cultural and historical resources or to control design in new development areas.

### Planning, permitting, and development

- CS-6. Ensure that planning decisions integrate information about cultural resources, and provide for consultation and collaboration with outside entities. (P2.2.4-1)
- CS-7. Incorporate historic preservation principles and consideration of historic and cultural resources as a major aspect of the City's development and planning process. (**Note for Draft:** Previously stated as a General Plan Goal, but determined to be a policy statement rather than a goal)
- CS-8. Use Design Guidelines to evaluate potential impacts to historic resources.
- CS-9. Refer discretionary actions on historic resources to a design review board.
- CS-10. Group historic resources and adjacent uses that could affect those resources, in a Conservation district.
- CS-11. Establish an active program to identify, interpret and designate the City's cultural and historic resources. (**Note for Draft:** Previously stated as a General Plan Goal, but determined to be a policy statement rather than a goal)

### Enhancement and Compatibility

- CS-12. Promote the City's cultural resources as a means to enhance the City's potential for heritage tourism and economic development.
- CS-13. Ensure compatibility between new development and existing cultural resources

## Funding

- CS-14. Actively pursue funding for the historic preservation program, including funds needed for educational materials, studies, surveys, staffing, and incentives for preservation by private property owners.

## Scenic Resources

- CS-15. Study the development of a hillside vista point that provides a view of the city, the Eel River and the Scotia Bluffs. (P2.2.5-1)
- CS-16. Encourage the provision of street trees and landscaping in new developments and consider ways that street trees, landscaping and other natural features can be provided in public rights-of-way. (P2.2.5-2)
- CS-17. Encourage local civic groups to landscape and maintain unused portions of street rights-of-way. (P2.2.5-3)
- CS-18. Preserve land and water areas of historic, unique, or unusual character for use by the general public. (P2.2.5-4)
- CS-19. Assist existing businesses with improvements to buildings exteriors/facades through the development of a façade improvement program. (P2.2.5-5)
- CS-20. Adopt design and landscaping guidelines for developments adjacent to U.S. Highway 101. (P2.2.5-6)
- CS-21. Develop a landscaping plan along Wildwood Avenue and the other designated City gateways that enhance the Gateway Project. (P2.2.5-6)
- CS-22. The City shall protect natural resources such as geological features, heritage trees, and landscapes in the planning and development review process and in park and open space planning. (P2.2.2-7)
- CS-23. The City shall pursue official designation of eligible roads in the Scenic Highway program, which includes control of the design of highly visible structures within the view sheds and limitations on outdoor advertising.

## Implementation Measures

Table 2-1 provides the cultural and scenic resource implementation measures and corresponding policy number(s).

**Table 2-1** Implementation table

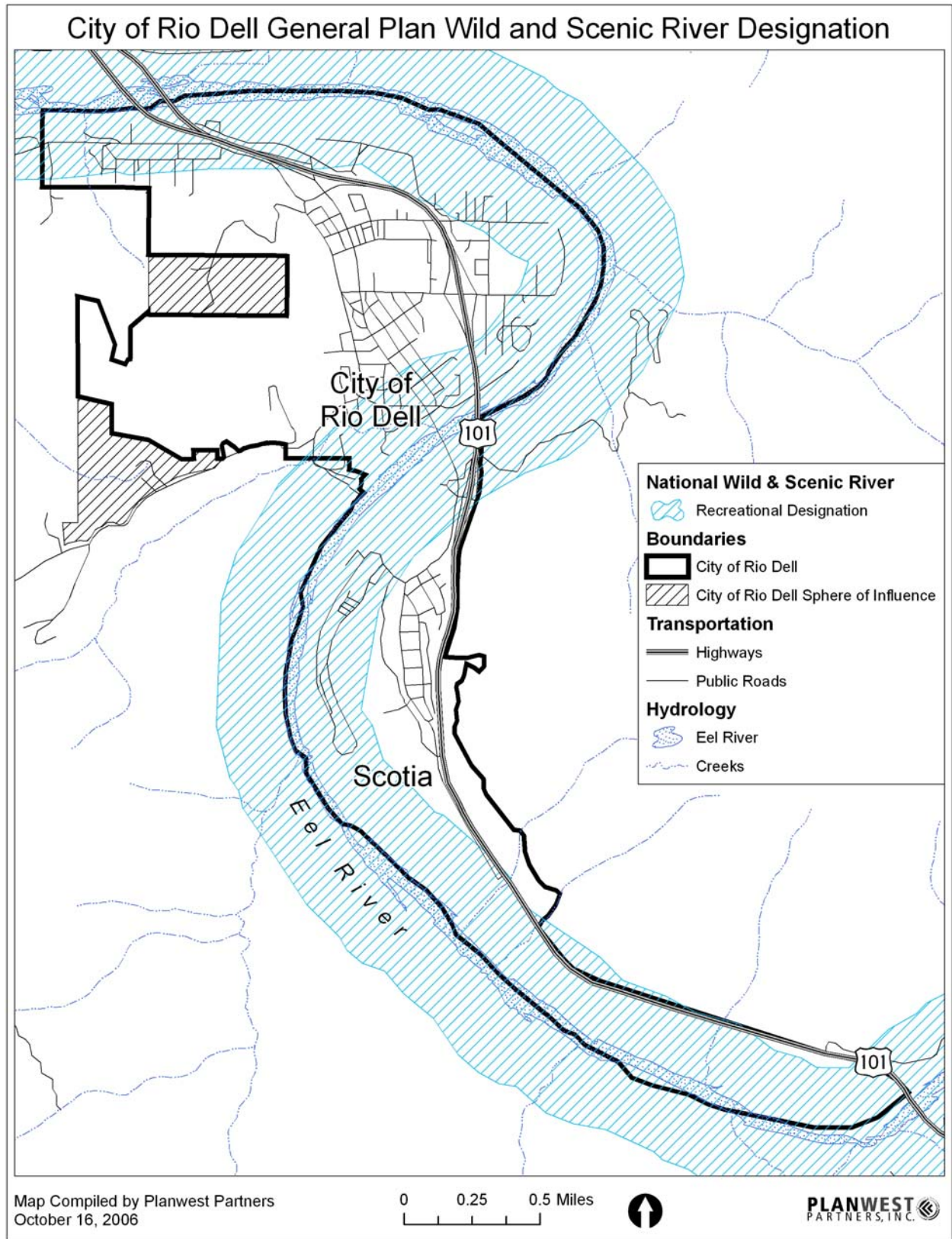
<b>Policy Number</b>	<b>Implementation Measure</b>
<i>Identification, interpretation, designation and preservation</i>	
CS-1	The City shall prepare, adopt, and implement a cultural resources ordinance that provides definitions and standards for identification and protection of cultural resources and provides penalties for their disturbance
CS-1 CS-2	The City shall actively protect and maintain City owned archaeological sites and traditional cultural properties listed on or eligible for local, state, or federal registers. The City shall ensure compliance with federal regulations governing Native American remains.
CS-1	The City shall actively protect and maintain City owned historic and cultural resources. Such resources may include buildings, structures, objects, monuments, landscapes, and right of way improvements, such as retaining walls, granite curbs, entry monuments, light standards, street trees, and the scoring, dimensions, and patterns of sidewalks, driveways, curbs and gutters, historic transportation corridors and streetscapes.
CS-1 CS-4	The City shall actively pursue a comprehensive program to identify and document historic buildings, structures, districts, sites (including archaeological sites), objects, historic transportation corridors, landscapes and natural features that reflect the cultural, social and economic context of the city's development
CS-1	The City shall solicit the cooperation of the owners of cultural resources, encourage those owners to treat these resources as assets rather than liabilities, and encourage the support of the general public for the preservation and enhancement of these resources
CS-1 CS-2 CS-3	The City shall solicit the views of the Native American Heritage Commission and/or the local Native American community in cases where development may result in disturbance to sites containing evidence of Native American activity and/or sites of cultural importance
CS-1 CS-2	The City shall coordinate with Humboldt County to promote the preservation and maintenance of archaeological resources in the Planning Area
CS-1	The City shall, within its power, maintain confidentiality regarding the locations of archaeological sites in order to preserve and protect these resources from vandalism and the unauthorized removal of artifacts
CS-1	The City shall provide information to citizens, and the building community about accepted procedures to undertake upon the discovery of archaeological resources and burial sites, as well as the treatment, preservation and repatriation of such resources
CS-1	The City shall work in partnership with local cultural, historical and preservation organizations, college and university programs, schools and community organizations, museums and heritage societies, and interested individuals to promote the recognition and preservation of historic and cultural resources within its jurisdiction
CS-4	The City shall work with community organizations to finance and develop a City museum



Policy Number	Implementation Measure
<i>Planning, Permitting and Development</i>	
CS-6 CS-7 CS-8	The City shall prepare and adopt Design Review Guidelines that provide for architectural review of new developments and of exterior alterations to existing structures in the “Design Control” overlay zone based upon the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties
CS-6 CS-7 CS-9	The City shall adopt procedures for review and approval of all City-permitted projects involving ground disturbance and all building and/or demolition permits that will affect buildings, structures, or objects identified as historically significant
CS-6 CS-7	The City shall use historic preservation as a tool for adaptive reuse and core area redevelopment
CS-7 CS-11	Where appropriate, the City shall apply the State Historical Building Code to ensure that City building code requirements do not compromise the integrity of significant cultural resources
CS-6 CS-7 CS-9	The City shall select individuals to serve on the Design Review Board who have background, skills or education in the field of historic preservation
CS-7	The City shall take the historic character of the building into consideration before issuing a demolition permit to the property owner
CS-7 CS-11	Promote the conservation of valuable building materials, historic fabric and energy resources by promoting preservation and adaptive use of historic buildings and structures
CS-7 CS-11	The City shall require that discretionary development projects identify and protect from damage, destruction, and abuse, important historical, archaeological, and cultural sites and their contributing environment. Unavoidable impacts, whenever feasible, shall be reduced to a less than significant level and/or shall be mitigated by extracting maximum recoverable data. Determinations of impacts, significance, and mitigation shall be made by qualified archaeological or historical consultants, depending on the type of resources in question
CS-11	The City shall consider acquisition, through grants and other external funding, programs as a means of preserving significant cultural resources that are not suitable for private development. Organizations that could provide assistance in this area include, but are not limited to, the Archaeological Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy, and the Northcoast Regional Land Trust
CS-7	The City shall use code enforcement, zoning ordinances and building and fire safety codes as tools for helping to protect historic and cultural resources
CS-7	The City shall coordinate historic preservation with other activities within its government structure
CS-6	The City shall encourage the preservation of historic and cultural resources controlled by other governmental agencies, including those related to federal, state, county, school district and other agencies that are within the sphere of influence of the City
CS-7	The City shall prepare Development Regulations that include cultural and historic properties
<i>Enhancement and Compatibility</i>	
CS-12	The City shall conduct educational programs to promote public, City department, boards, commissions and elected officials appreciation and understanding of the significance of the City’s historic and cultural resources, the criteria for historic designation, historic design review processes, building permit requirements and methods for rehabilitating and preserving historic buildings, sites and landscapes

<b>Policy Number</b>	<b>Implementation Measure</b>
CS-12	The City shall support and encourage the development of interpretive programs and facilities, museums and historic sites that promote a better understanding of the shared heritage of the community, its historic sites, neighborhoods, and the individuals and cultural groups that are part of its history
CS-13	The City shall use its design review process to encourage the compatibility of street design, public improvements, and utility infrastructure with cultural and archaeological resources
CS-13	The City shall submit its own building projects to the same design review process required of privately funded projects
CS-12 CS-13	The City shall protect and enhance the integrity of the cultural landscape by supporting the restoration, rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings and compatible infill projects
<i>Funding</i>	
CS-14	The City shall provide financial and non-financial incentives to promote the restoration, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of historic and cultural resources
CS-14	The City shall use financial resources from state, federal and private programs to assist in the identification, designation and preservation of historic and cultural resources
<i>Scenic Resources</i>	
CS-15	The City shall study the development and establishment of a vista point that provides a view of the cultural landscape, and scenic river corridor, see Figure 2-1.
CS-18	The City shall promote the preservation, designation, and adaptive reuse of historic cultural landscape features and historic transportation corridors such as pedestrian paths and trails, railways, bridges, and neighborhood circulation paths, and may pursue funding or designation through urban trails programs, inter-modal and multi-modal transportation projects, Rails to Trails, Trails Trust of Humboldt Bay, the California Scenic Highway Program and Transportation Enhancement funds from the California Department of Transportation
CS-16 CS-22	The City shall prepare Development Regulations that include landscaping and design guidelines
CS-20 CS-23	The City shall prepare Development Regulations that require proposed development along U.S. Highway 101 to submit landscaping and building design plans for City approval
CS-21	The City shall prepare and adopt a Wildwood Corridor Plan that enhances the Gateway Project
CS-17 CS-19	The City shall develop programs that help property owners improve building facades, and help local groups landscape and maintain unused City properties

Figure 2-1 Wild and Scenic River Designation



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# CHAPTER 4

## NOISE ELEMENT

### Introduction

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The Rio Dell General Plan Noise Element provides policies and implementation measures that are intended to assure compatibility between Rio Dell's land uses and the existing and future noise environment, and to ensure that any potentially negative effects of noise are minimized or avoided entirely. The existing community environment is characterized by low levels of noise. Noise generators include the mill facilities and power plant in Scotia and US 101. The NCRA railroad right of way is also a potential source of noise. The Noise Element contains a description of noise definitions and measurement techniques; descriptions of the noise generators and noise sensitive land uses; a noise contour map; and noise related land use policies and implementation programs.

### Setting and Context

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Pursuant to the Government Code (§65302(f)), a Noise Element is a required component of each jurisdiction's General Plan. The Noise Element must analyze the current and future noise levels associated with local noise sources (freeways and major streets, rail operations, aviation activities and local industrial facilities) and develop noise contours for these sources using noise modeling or actual measurement. The Noise Element is also required to include implementation measures and possible solutions for existing and potential noise problems.

The City of Rio Dell adopted the prior General Plan Noise Element in July 1972. At that time, noise levels within the downtown area were high because the US 101 bypass had not yet been constructed and Wildwood Avenue served as the highway route. The first Noise Element emphasized the importance of understanding the nature and sources of noise and discriminating between harmful and harmless noises.

### Noise Concepts and Measurement

Noise is often defined as unwanted or annoying sound. The human response to objectionable sound, or noise, is a subjective reaction to characteristics of a physical phenomenon. The objectionable nature of sound could be caused by either tone pitch or loudness. Pitch is the height or depth of a sound, which depends on the relative rapidity (frequency) of the vibrations produced. Loudness is the intensity, or amplitude, of sound waves combined with the reception characteristics of the human ear.

There are several methods of characterizing sound. The standard unit of intensity, or sound level, measurement is the decibel, which is represented by the initials "dB." The decibel system of measuring sound gives a rough correlation of the intensity of sound and its perceived loudness

to the human ear. Unlike linear measurement units such as inches or pounds, decibels are measured using a logarithmic scale. On a logarithmic scale, a ten dB increase is ten times more intense than a one dB increase, and an additional 20 dB increase would be 100 times more intense. Noise measurements are usually based on the range of sound frequencies which most human ears can hear, called the “A-weighted” scale; as a result, most measurements are reported as “dBA.” See Figure 4-1 for examples of sound levels and a subjective description of the response to those sound levels.

**Figure 4-1** Examples of Sound Levels

Noise Source	Sound Level	Subjective Description
AMPLIFIED ROCK 'N ROLL → JET TAKEOFF @ 200 ft. →	120 dBA	DEAFENING
BUSY URBAN STREET →	100 dBA	VERY LOUD
JET SKI / FREEWAY TRAFFIC @ 5 ft. →	80 dBA	LOUD
CONVERSATION @ 6 ft. → TYPICAL OFFICE INTERIOR →	60 dBA	MODERATE
SOFT RADIO MUSIC → RESIDENTIAL INTERIOR →	40 dBA	FAINT
WHISPER @ 6 ft. →	20 dBA	VERY FAINT
HUMAN BREATHING →	0 dBA	

Sound dissipates exponentially with distance from the noise source. This phenomenon is known as spreading loss. For a stationary source (a noise from a fixed source such as an air conditioning unit attached to a building as opposed to a mobile source like an automobile), sound levels decrease by approximately six dB for each doubling of distance from the source. Noise generated from a mobile source decreases by three dB for each doubling of distance in a reflective environment (concrete landscape) and over four dB for each doubling of distance in a flat environment with absorptive vegetation.

Beyond the measurement of sound levels, a discussion of “noise levels” requires that a standard be identified. The most commonly used measures of noise levels are the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) and the Day/Night Noise Level ( $L_{dn}$ ). These measures are used to

account for the fact that people are more sensitive to unwanted sound occurring during evening and nighttime hours. The CNEL measure is an average of A-weighted noise over a 24-hour period, with an increment of five dBA added to the noise level between the hours 7:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. and 10 dBA added to noise levels between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. The CNEL is most often used in relation to airport noise contour maps. The  $L_{dn}$  measure uses the same methodology except that there is no artificial increment added to noise occurring within the hours between 7:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

**Rio Dell Noise Environment.** The 1972 Noise Element predicted that the US 101 freeway bypass would lower Wildwood Avenue surface noise by at least 10 dBA. The document does not however define what Wildwood Avenue surface noise levels were before the bypass was constructed. Current significant transportation noise sources in Rio Dell are:

Highway 101-corridor ambient and single event noises are only significant at three locations:

- Riverside Drive north of Painter Street [78 dBA]; and
- Ireland Street adjacent to the freeway [79 dBA]; and
- Belleview Avenue near River Street [79 dBA].

US 101 freeway noise is effectively dampened to 55 dBA within the Meadowbridge subdivision adjacent to the freeway. Noise levels at two Rio Dell highway interchanges are high: the freeway 101 onramp northward at Eeloa Avenue morning sound level can reach 81 dBA as commuting traffic accelerates up the ramp, and muffler noise is noticeable; southbound surface traffic on Wildwood Avenue at West Bridge Street can reach 76 dBA sound level as vehicles accelerate on the bridge leaving Rio Dell for Scotia.

Commercial and industrial traffic road noise within the city is mainly on Wildwood Avenue, Monument Road, Pacific Avenue and Davis Street. When logging trucks and delivery trucks accelerate they cause single event levels up to 86 dBA on these commercial traffic streets.

Rare railroad sounds from the Northwest Railway line across the Eel River below the Scotia bluffs are of such low amplitude that they are barely measurable and are a novelty.

Motorcycles, large trucks, noisy vehicles and Highway Patrol sirens will briefly raise single event freeway noise levels at fifty feet on the edge of the city from 75 dBA to 80 dBA. Freeway ambient noise levels are increased at off ramps and sometimes are lessened by the relative elevations of the freeway, ramp and adjacent land parcels. Differences in elevation generally attenuate and thus lessen apparent highway noise levels.

Rio Dell single event noise sources:

- Rio Dell Volunteer Fire Department station sirens and fire truck sirens are mandatory single event public service sounds.
- Rio Dell Police Department patrol sirens are mandatory public safety single event sounds.

- Playground noise from the Rio Dell School, Firemen's Park and the municipal baseball diamond are moderate in amplitude, since they reflect periodic group activities.
- Shift work sirens at Pacific Lumber Company in Scotia are a traditional single event sound of low amplitude.
- Automotive repair shop noise is single event and of low local domestic activity can generate single event noise of 64 dBA to 86 dBA from chain saws, lawn mowers [ranging from 95 dBA at 3 feet to 70 dBA at 100 feet], neighborhood travel of logging and delivery trucks and
- Barking dogs, crowing roosters, loud parties, loud music, construction activity and verbal disputes.

The primary noise impacts are from traffic on US 101, at highway interchanges and from the mill. Single event, daytime noise levels, from sources such as truck traffic and commercial activity in the Town Centers are occasionally in excess of noisy urban daytime design standards of 60 dBA. Delivery and log truck traffic using Wildwood Avenue, Monument Road, Pacific Avenue, and Davis Street and Main Street contribute to single event noise and cause levels up to 86dBA. In addition, local domestic activity can generate a single noise event of 64 dBA to 86 dBA from chain saws, lawnmowers, leaf blowers and other power equipment. Overall, the City can be defined as having low ambient noise levels. Currently the City does not have a noise ordinance.

**Scotia Noise Environment.** An environmental sound assessment was conducted for the Scotia area in July 2005. The purpose of the environmental sound assessment was to measure and establish baseline sound levels near residential property lines for selected locations in Scotia with the highest probability of sound coming from sources outside the residential areas. The study identified the co-generation power plant, the PALCO sawmill and planer facility, and U.S 101 as the primary noise sources affecting Scotia residential areas.

Some residents of Scotia, closest to the mill operations, currently experience noise levels above what is normally acceptable. Portions of Scotia's residential areas are impacted by Industrial uses and do not meet noise standards. A short-term noise source that was identified in the study was the equipment used to move green waste dropped off at the mill site. This equipment typically operates during the day, and for relatively short duration compared to the adjacent mill operations. Although Mill A is currently not in use, the facility is zoned for Industrial use and could be a future source of noise.

Figure 4-2 illustrates the approximate daytime ambient noise levels for Rio Dell.



Figure 4-2 Ambient Noise Levels

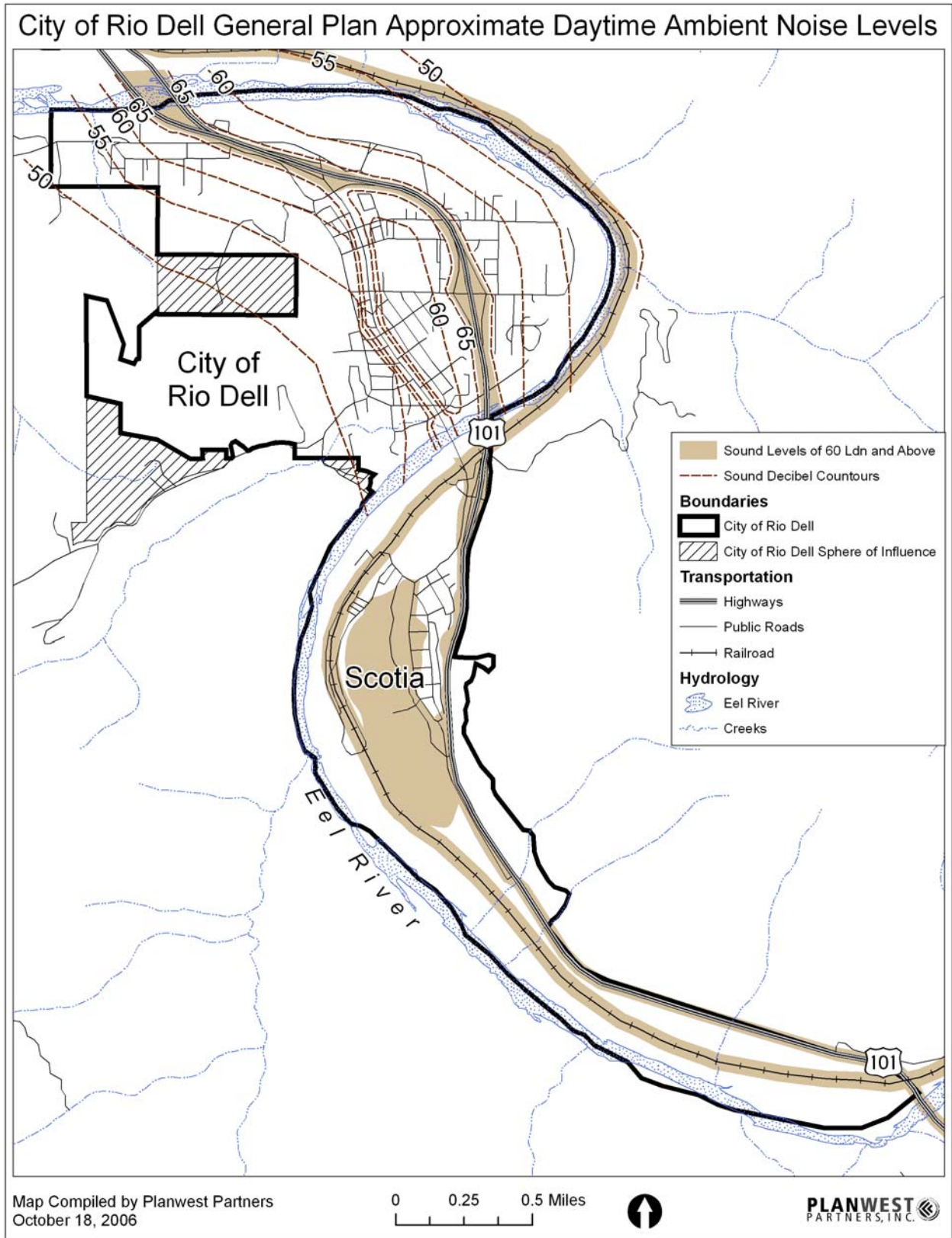



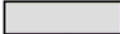
Table 4-1 provides the Land Use noise compatibility Standards provided in the 2003, Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, “State of California General Plan Guidelines.”


**Table 4-1** Land Use Noise Compatibility Standards

Land Use Category	Community Noise Exposure <i>L<sub>dn</sub></i> or <i>CNEL</i> , dB					
	55	60	65	70	75	80
Residential - Low Density Single Family, Duplex, Mobile Homes	[Lightest shading: 55-60 dB]					
Residential - Multi-Family	[Lightest shading: 55-60 dB; Medium shading: 60-70 dB; Darkest shading: 70-80 dB]					
Transient Lodging - Motels, Hotels	[Lightest shading: 55-60 dB; Medium shading: 60-70 dB; Darkest shading: 70-80 dB]					
Schools, Libraries, Churches, Hospitals, Nursing Homes	[Lightest shading: 55-60 dB; Medium shading: 60-70 dB; Darkest shading: 70-80 dB]					
Auditoriums, Concert Halls, Amphitheaters	[Medium shading: 60-70 dB; Darkest shading: 70-80 dB]					
Sports Arena, Outdoor Spectator Sports	[Medium shading: 60-70 dB; Darkest shading: 70-80 dB]					
Playgrounds, Neighborhood Parks	[Lightest shading: 55-60 dB; Medium shading: 60-70 dB; Darkest shading: 70-80 dB]					
Golf Courses, Riding Stables, Water Recreation, Cemeteries	[Lightest shading: 55-60 dB; Medium shading: 60-70 dB; Darkest shading: 70-80 dB]					
Office Buildings, Business Commercial and Professional	[Lightest shading: 55-60 dB; Medium shading: 60-70 dB; Darkest shading: 70-80 dB]					
Industrial, Manufacturing, Utilities, Agriculture	[Lightest shading: 55-60 dB; Medium shading: 60-70 dB; Darkest shading: 70-80 dB]					

**INTERPRETATION:**

 **Normally Acceptable**  
Specified land use is satisfactory, based upon the assumption that any buildings involved are of normal conventional construction, without any special noise insulation requirements.

 **Conditionally Acceptable**  
New construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements is made and needed noise insulation features included in the design. Conventional construction, but with closed windows and fresh air supply systems or air conditioning will normally suffice.

 **Normally Unacceptable**  
New construction or development should generally be discouraged. If new construction or development does proceed, a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements must be made and needed noise insulation features included in the design.


 **Clearly Unacceptable**  
New construction or development should generally not be undertaken.

Table 4-2 provides the Maximum Allowable Ambient Noise Exposure for the different Land Use Designations in the City of Rio Dell.

**Table 4-2** Maximum Allowable Ambient Noise Exposure

<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Suggested Maximum</b>
Rural (R)	75 Ldn
Suburban (S)	60 Ldn
Suburban Residential (SR)	60 Ldn
Urban Residential (UR)	65 Ldn
Town Center (TC)	70 Ldn
Neighborhood Commercial (NC)	65 Ldn
Industrial (I)	75 Ldn
Natural Resources (NR)	70 Ldn
Community Commercial (CC)	70 Ldn
Public Facility (PF)	70 Ldn

## Related Plans and Programs

Many plans and programs enacted through State and local legislation directly relate to the Noise Element. These plans and programs are administered by agencies with powers to enforce State and local laws.

**California Environmental Quality Act.** The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was adopted by the State legislature in response to a public mandate for thorough environmental analysis of projects that might affect the environment. The provisions of the law and environmental review procedure are described in the CEQA statutes and the CEQA guidelines. Excessive noise is considered an environmental impact under CEQA. Implementation of CEQA ensures that during the decision making stage of development, City officials and the general public will be able to assess the potential noise impacts associated with private and public development projects.

**California Noise Insulation Standards (Title 24).** The California Commission of Housing and Community Development officially adopted noise insulation standards in 1974. In 1988, the Building Standards Commission approved revisions to the standards (Title 24, Part 2, California Code of Regulations). As revised, Title 24 establishes an interior noise standard of 45 dB(A) for residential space (CNEL or Ldn). Acoustical studies must be prepared for residential structures to be located within noise contours of 60 dB(A) or greater (CNEL or Ldn) from freeways, major streets, thoroughfares, rail lines, rapid transit lines, or industrial noise sources. The studies must demonstrate that the building is designed to reduce interior noise to 45 dB(A) or lower (CNEL or Ldn).

**Rio Dell Zoning Ordinance.** The Rio Dell Zoning Ordinance was established to promote and protect the public, health, safety, morals, comfort, convenience and general welfare, to provide a plan for sound and orderly development and to ensure social and economic stability within Rio Dell.

**Rio Dell Ordinance pertaining to Parades, Assemblies and Loud Noises.** Rio Dell Ordinance No. 204 (8/21/1990) provides the basis for the City of Rio Dell to control noise associated with certain temporary land use activities. This ordinance establishes rules and regulations pertaining to parades and assemblies in the City of Rio Dell.

## Relationship to Other General Plan Elements

The Land Use, Circulation, Housing and Conservation and Open Space Elements are most closely related to the Noise Element.

Potential noise sources are identified in the Noise Element and policies and implementation measures are developed to reduce potential noise impacts. The Noise Element must be used to guide decisions concerning land use and to ensure that current and planned land uses identified in the Land Use Element are protected from excessive noise. At the same time, policies contained in the Land Use Element ensure that environmental conditions, including noise, are considered in all land use decisions. Preventing the intrusion of negative environmental conditions, such as excessive noise, in order to create a healthy environment is a central objective of the Land Use Element.

The transportation issues discussed in the Circulation Element are also directly related to the Noise Element. Noise from roads, highways and transit facilities is largely responsible for excessive noise levels in certain locations in urban environments. Projected noise distribution, depicted as noise contours, is corollary to the Circulation Plan. Noise policies and implementation are largely based on the Circulation Element and are aimed to minimize the effects of transportation noise on current and planned land uses.

The Conservation and Open Space Element is also related to the Noise Element. Enjoyment of parks and open spaces can be diminished by excessive noise, and noise information provided in the Noise Element should be considered in planning new recreational areas. At the same time, where appropriate, open space areas can serve as effective buffers between sensitive land uses and noise producers.

## Goals, Policies and Implementation Measures

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### Goals

- Reduce noise to acceptable levels at the source.
- Maintain an environment in non-industrial areas that is not negatively impacted by noise.
- Bring all noise sources into compliance with noise guidelines by strongly encouraging voluntary compliance, pursuing funding for noise attenuation measures to mitigate any financial hardships, and through enforcement of a Noise Ordinance.
- Encourage cooperative and voluntary action by business and industry, to reduce noise to acceptable levels.

## Policies

The City of Rio Dell has the following noise policies:

- N-1. Require additional setbacks and attenuation techniques for non-residential uses that are in proximity to sensitive receptors such as nursing homes, schools and convalescent facilities. (P2.1.6-2)
- N-2. Existing and potential incompatible noise levels should be reduced through operational or source controls.
- N-3. Existing and potential incompatible noise levels that would have offsite impacts should be reduced through land use planning, subdivision review, building code enforcement, and other administrative means.
- N-4. The land use noise compatibility standards (Figure 4-1) shall be utilized as the compliance standard for General Planning and zoning purposes.
- N-5. Identify and evaluate potential noise sources exceeding acceptable levels on a continuing basis.
- N-6. Establish a Noise Impact Overlay Zone (N) to regulate and maintain, within single-family and multi-family structures and within structures designed for transient habitation, acceptable interior noise levels.

## Implementation

Table 4-3 provides the noise implementation measures and corresponding policy number(s).

**Table 4-3** Implementation Table

Policy Number	Implementation Measure
N-1 N-2 N-3 N-4 N-5 N-6	The City shall update the zoning ordinance in order to establish noise generation standards and noise exposure levels.
N-1	The City shall require acoustical analysis for all new construction in proximity to sensitive receptors.
N-3 N-4 N-6	The Rio Dell Police Department shall maintain a database of noise complaints in order to identify troubled areas for future updates to the Noise Element.
N-1 N-2 N-3 N-5	The City shall maintain current information about noise monitoring and attenuation techniques effective in identifying and reducing noise.
N-2	Source controls shall include the use of barriers, enclosures and silencers in addition to monitoring of noise levels to ensure that acceptable noise levels are maintained on adjacent sites.

<b>Policy Number</b>	<b>Implementation Measure</b>
N-3	Incorporate measures to reduce interior noise levels for new residential construction, including reconstruction after fires or natural disasters and additions, but not for retrofits of existing construction in the N combining zone.
N-1	The City shall work with local industries to incorporate noise control technology through building and site design and engineering solutions.
N-2	
N-3	Noise mitigating measure shall be emphasized during site planning and project design.

# CHAPTER 5

## CIRCULATION ELEMENT

### Introduction

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The safe movement of people and goods is essential to every community. The Circulation Element identifies the future circulation system needed to allow Rio Dell residents and visitors to move about the community in an efficient manner. The Element also addresses the physical circulation system, which consists of streets, parking, highways, bicycle routes and sidewalks, as well as available modes of transportation including, cars, transit, bicycles, and walking.

### Setting and Context

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The City of Rio Dell transportation system consists of roadways, transit routes, pedestrian facilities, and bicycle facilities.

#### Roadways

The City of Rio Dell circulation network includes approximately 17.5 miles of public streets, approximately 13 miles north of the Eagle Prairie Bridge and 4.5 miles south of the bridge. U.S. 101 is the most prominent Rio Dell transportation feature and bisects the City along a north to south axis. In addition to public streets, there are paved and un-paved private streets and alleys that provide primary and secondary access to homes and businesses at various locations within the City.

The Humboldt County Association of County Governments (HCAOG) Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) establishes a system to classify public roads within the County according to function. The following is a description of the HCAOG functional roadway classifications that apply to Rio Dell:

**Principal Arterials.** Principal arterials constitute routes whose design is expected to provide for high overall travel speeds, with minimum interference to through movement, see Figure 5-1. These routes serve corridor movements with trip length and travel density characteristics indicative of substantial statewide or interstate travel. U.S. 101 would be the only roadway within the planning area that qualifies as a principal arterial.

**Major Collectors.** Major collectors provide service to larger towns not directly served by the arterial system, and to other traffic generators of equivalent intra-county importance, such as major recreational areas, schools, airports, and commercial activity centers, see Figure 5-2. Major collectors also link these locations with nearby routes of higher classification. Based on the classifications provided in the RTP, Wildwood Avenue /Main Street (also referred to as State Route 283), qualifies as a major collector.

**Minor Collectors.** Minor collectors provide service to the remaining smaller communities within the county and link the locally important traffic generators with these rural areas, see Figure 5-3. The alignment of minor collectors is often dependent on the terrain. Minor collectors in Rio Dell consist of Davis Street and Bellevue Avenue (which becomes Blue Slide Road outside City limits and connects to Ferndale).

**Local Roads.** The rural local road system serves primarily to provide access from local roads to adjacent land, see Figure 5-4. Local roads provide travel over relatively short distances compared to arterials and collectors. The remaining public roads in Rio Dell are local roads.

Figure 5-1 Principle Arterials

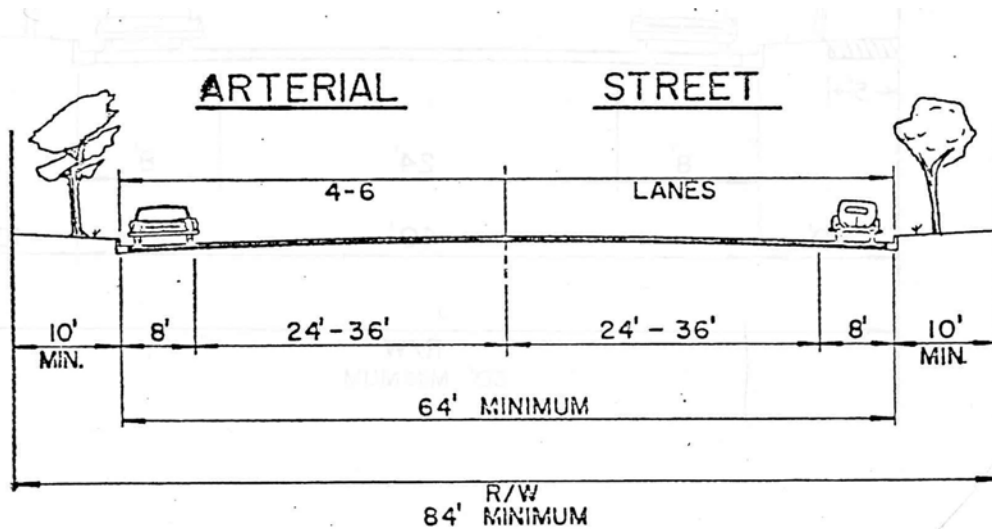


Figure 5-2 Major Collectors

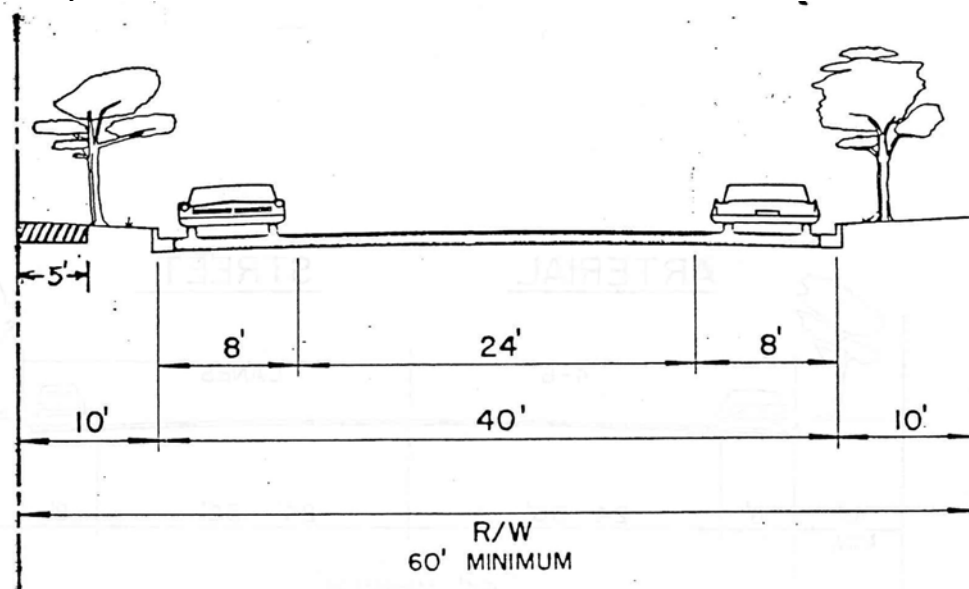




Figure 5-3 Minor Collectors

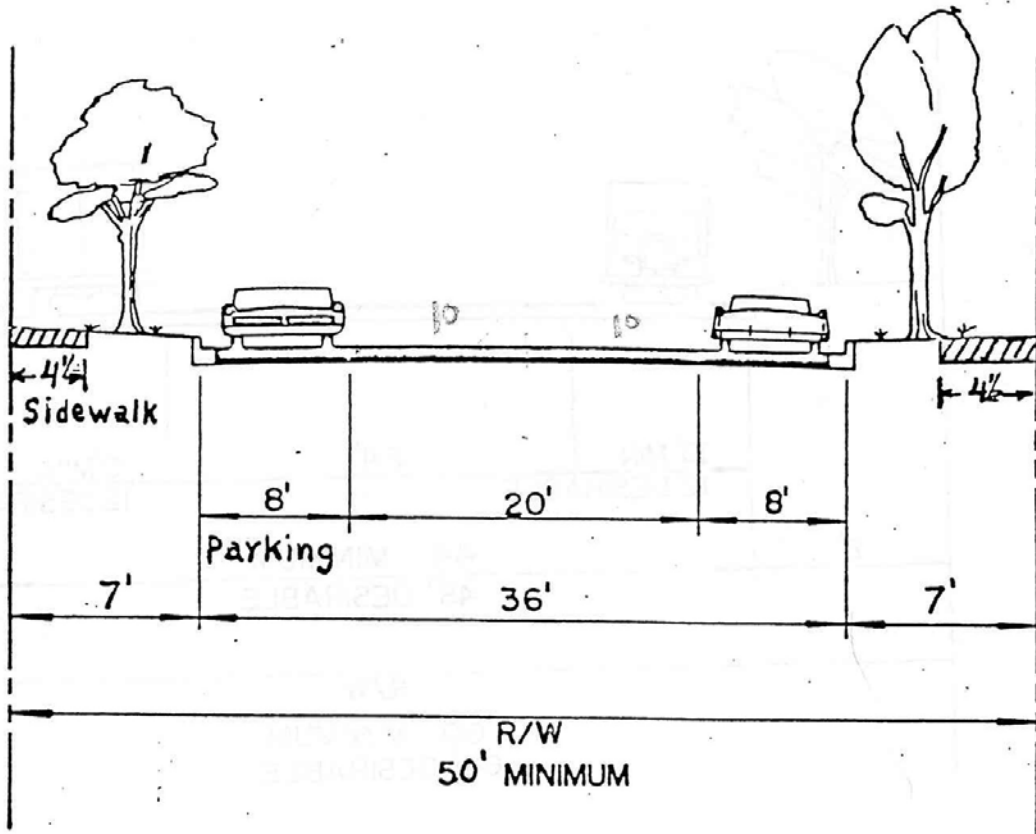
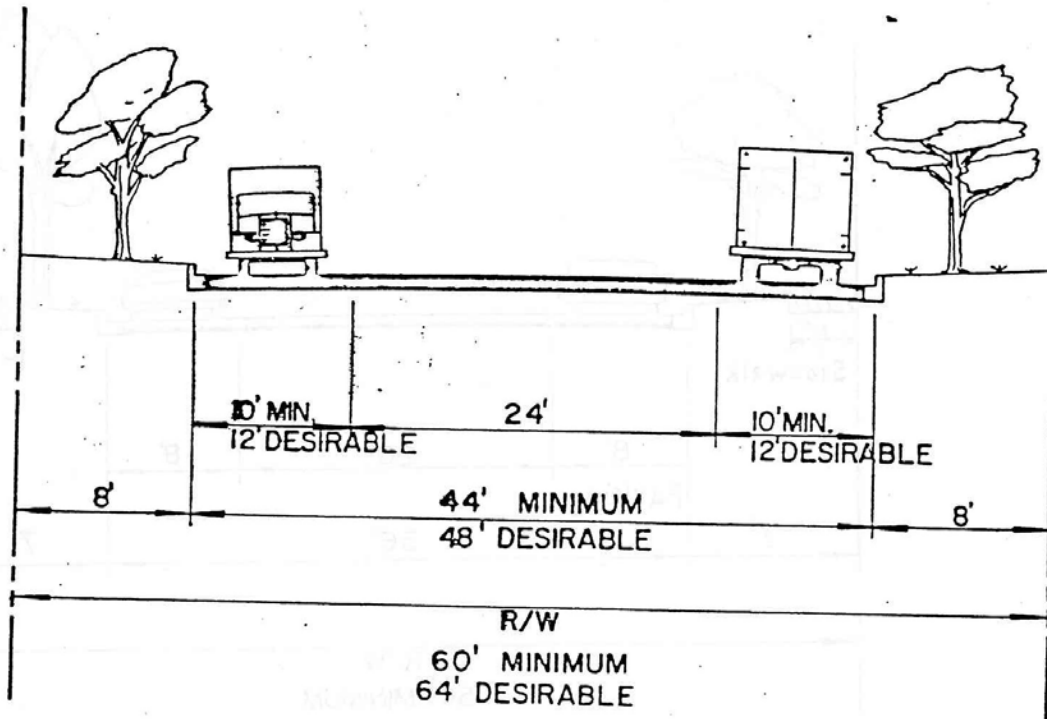


Figure 5-4 Local Roads



The following is a listing of roads within the City of Rio Dell by functional classification:

**Table 5-1** Rio Dell Roads

<b>Road Name</b>	<b>Functional Class</b>	<b>Length*</b>
<i>North of the Eagle Prairie Bridge</i>		
Ash Street	Local	0.17
Atlanta Street	Local	0.05
Belleview Avenue	Collector	1.14
Berkeley Street	Local	0.18
Birch Street	Local	0.09
Butcher Street	Local	0.06
Cedar Street	Local	0.12
Center Street	Collector	0.43
Cherry Lane	Local	0.14
Columbus Street	Local	0.15
Dixie Street	Local	0.28
Douglas Street	Local	0.19
Edwards Drive	Local	0.35
Elko Street	Local	0.08
Eola Avenue	Local	0.66
Fern Street	Local	0.16
First Avenue	Local	0.47
Fourth Avenue	Local	0.12
Greyland Heights Street	Local	0.30
Gunnerson Lane	Local	0.25
Ireland Street	Local	0.28
Meadowbrook Street	Local	0.21
Monument Road	Local	0.68
Ogle Avenue	Local	0.53
Orchard Lane	Local	0.03
Orchard Street	Local	0.12
Pacific Avenue	Local	0.78
Painter Street	Local	0.75
Rigby Avenue	Local	0.50
Rio Dell Avenue	Local	0.18
Riverside Drive	Local	0.73
Second Avenue	Local	0.43
Sequoia Street	Local	0.10
Third Avenue	Local	0.29
Townsend Street	Local	0.07
W. Elko Street	Local	0.05
W. Center Street	Local	0.09
W. Painter Street	Local	0.09
Wildwood Avenue	Collector	1.16
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>12.46</b>
<i>South of the Eagle Prairie Bridge</i>		
Main Street	Collector	1.76
B Street	Local	0.49
Church Street	Local	0.28
North Court	Local	0.06

<b>Road Name</b>	<b>Functional Class</b>	<b>Length*</b>
North Court B	Local	0.03
Mill Street	Local	0.12
Eddy Street	Local	0.10
1 <sup>st</sup> Street	Local	0.11
2 <sup>nd</sup> Street	Local	0.06
3 <sup>rd</sup> Street	Local	0.08
4 <sup>th</sup> Street	Local	0.08
5 <sup>th</sup> Street	Local	0.06
6 <sup>th</sup> Street	Local	0.04
Bridge Street	Local	0.14
Williams Street	Local	0.67
7 <sup>th</sup> Street	Local	0.07
8 <sup>th</sup> Street	Local	0.06
Mill Lane	Local	0.03
School Lane	Local	0.13
Pond Avenue	Local	0.11
Water Road	Local	1.00
Playground Lane	Local	0.08
Outlet Lane	Local	0.04
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>5.61</b>
<b>Total Rio Dell Roads</b>		<b>18.06</b>

\*in miles

## Transit

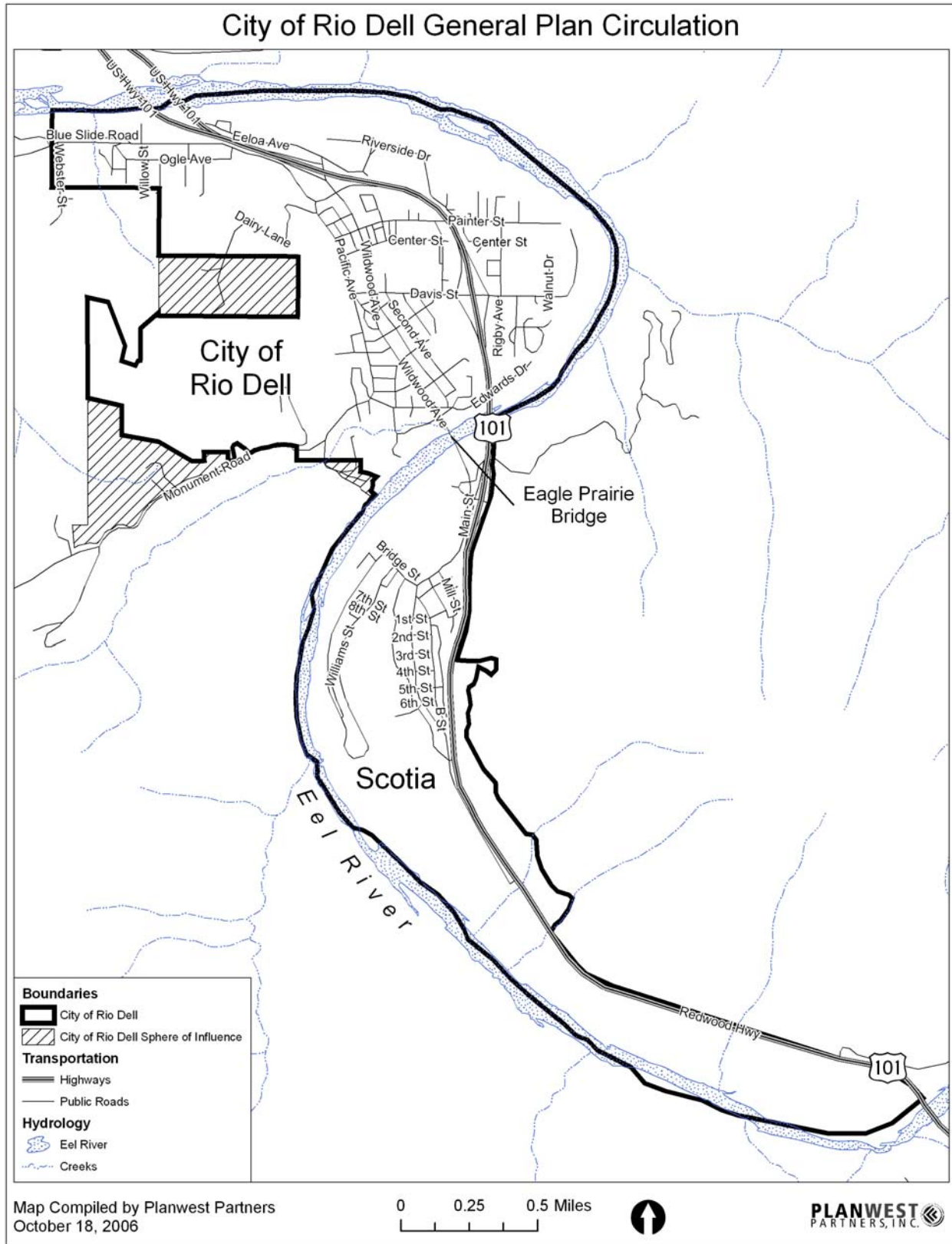
Humboldt Transit Authority, a Joint Powers Authority of which the City of Rio Dell is a member, operates the Redwood Transit System (RTS). RTS offers service from Trinidad to Rio Dell, with stops on both sides of the Eagle Prairie Bridge. Rio Dell residents can take seven northbound and five southbound weekday, and four Saturday busses, to Fortuna or the Eureka/Arcata area from three bus stop locations, including: Rio Dell City Hall; Rigby and Davis Streets; and Center and Rigby Streets. At present, there is one bus stop at Hoby’s Market in Scotia.

## Pedestrian Transportation

Rio Dell’s pedestrian facilities are primarily in the form of sidewalks or shoulders on public streets. There are gaps in the sidewalk system throughout the City. Only a portion of the City street network north of the Eagle Prairie Bridge includes sidewalks, largely the Wildwood Avenue corridor. The Gateway Project, which was constructed in 2005, included pedestrian improvements along the Wildwood corridor. South of the Eagle Prairie Bridge, there are sidewalks along at least one side of most roads.

Figure 5-5 illustrates the circulation network in the City of Rio Dell

Figure 5-5 Rio Dell Circulation Network



## Bicycle Transportation

There are ten designated bicycle facilities (a bike lane designated by roadway striping or a paved lane separated from motor vehicle use) within the City of Rio Dell. The City has recently improved Wildwood Avenue from the off-ramp of Hwy 101 to the Town Center, to include a bike lane and other improvements. In addition, Highway 101 as it passes through Rio Dell and Blue Slide Road/Belleview Avenue and Wildwood Avenues are bike routes regularly used by cyclists riding through Rio Dell. U.S. 101 is designated as a Pacific Coast Bike Route.

Bicycle parking facilities are available at all schools within the City, City Hall, and at the City parking lot in the Town Center area on Wildwood Avenue. The HCAOG Regional Bicycle Transportation Plan Update contains a classification of bike facilities, which is as follows:

**Class I Bikeway.** Typically called a “bike path” or “shared use path,” a Class I bikeway provides bicycle travel on a paved right-of-way completely separated from any street or highway. The recommended width of a shared use path is dependent upon anticipated usage:

**Class II Bikeway.** Often referred to as a “bike lane,” a Class II bikeway provides a striped and stenciled lane for one-way travel on either side of a street or highway. To provide bike lanes along corridors where insufficient space is currently available, removing a traffic lane, narrowing traffic lanes, or prohibiting parking can provide extra room. The width of the bike lanes vary according to parking and street conditions

**Class III Bikeway.** Generally referred to as a “bike route,” a Class III bikeway provides routes through areas not served by Class I or II facilities or to connect discontinuous segments of a bikeway. Class III facilities can be shared with either motorists on roadways or pedestrians on a sidewalk (not advisable) and is identified only by signing. There are no recommended minimum widths for Class III facilities, but when encouraging bicyclists to travel along selected routes, traffic speed and volume, parking, traffic control devices, and surface quality should be acceptable for bicycle travel. A wide outside traffic lane (14’) is preferable to enable cars to safely pass bicyclists without crossing the centerline.

The following is a listing of existing Rio Dell bicycle facilities from the Regional Bicycle Transportation Plan:

**Table 5-2** Existing Rio Dell Bicycle Facilities

Facility Name	Location		Class
	From	To	
U.S. 101	City limits	City limits	Class
Belleview Avenue	City limits	Wildwood Avenue	Class III
Wildwood Avenue	Davis Street	Eagle Prairie Bridge	Class III
Wildwood Avenue	U.S. 101	Davis Street	Class II
Main Street	Eagle Prairie Bridge	U.S. 101	Class III
Painter Street	Wildwood Avenue	Rigby Avenue	Class II
Center Street	Wildwood Ave	Ireland Street	Class II
Rigby Street	Painter Street	Davis Street	Class III

Ireland Street	Center Street	Davis Street	Class III
Davis Street	Wildwood Avenue	Rigby Avenue	Class II

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The Regional Bicycle Transportation Plan Update also contains a listing proposed Rio Dell bicycle facilities improvements.

## Related Plans and Programs

**Regional Transportation Plan.** The Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) is responsible for preparing the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) pursuant to California Government Code §65080 et seq., the United State Code Title 23, and California Transportation Commission guidelines for all member jurisdictions in Humboldt County, including the City of Rio Dell. The RTP is prepared to provide a clear vision of the regional transportation goals, policies, and objectives that are jointly developed by the Rio Dell, Humboldt County and the six other cities in the county, Caltrans, and other stakeholders. The RTP prioritizes transportation projects throughout the county and is used as the basis to distribute federal and state funding to local jurisdictions.

The RTP uses “level of service” (LOS) as a measure of operating conditions for main roadway segments in the county. The LOS for a road segment is denoted by a letter grade from “A” (indicating light traffic and minimal delay) to “F” (heavy traffic and high levels of delay), corresponding to progressively worsening traffic conditions. According to the RTP, roadways are considered acceptable if they are operating at an LOS of C or better.

**Regional Bicycle Transportation Plan.** The HCAOG Regional Bicycle Transportation Plan Update was developed as a coordinating and resource document to guide the creation of a primary bikeway network and associated system enhancements, programs, and safety improvements in Humboldt County. Like the RTP, the Regional Bicycle Transportation Plan addresses existing and proposed bicycle facilities in each of the seven Humboldt County cities, including Rio Dell, as well as the unincorporated area. This plan will help HCAOG and its member agencies prioritize bicycle improvements for implementation and gain access to the California Bicycle Transportation Account and other state and federal funding programs for bicycle transportation projects for which Caltrans plays an oversight and review role.

**Humboldt County Regional Pedestrian Needs Assessment Study.** The Humboldt County Pedestrian Needs Assessment Study, prepared by HCAOG, addresses the need to provide pedestrian access and improve safety conditions to ensure the county and its communities are walkable and safe places to live. This Study looks at the seven Humboldt County cities, including Rio Dell, as well as the unincorporated area to identify the existing pedestrian network and develop recommendations to improve pedestrian access. The Needs Assessment focuses specifically on routes through intersections, to schools, transit, downtowns, civic centers, commercial districts, recreation resources, and neighborhoods.

**Air Quality Management.** The North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District (NCUAQMD) regulates air quality in Humboldt County. The primary responsibility of the NCUAQMD is to achieve and maintain federal and state air quality standards. Humboldt County benefits from generally good air quality with only air pollutant, particulate matter,

exceeding federal or state standards. The NCUAQMD adopted a Particulate Matter (PM<sub>10</sub>) Attainment Plan in 1995 to present available information about the nature and causes of exceeding the PM<sub>10</sub> standards, and to identify cost-effective control measures that can be implemented to reduce PM<sub>10</sub> levels to meet California Ambient Air Quality Standards for PM<sub>10</sub> by the earliest practicable date.

## Relationship to Other General Plan Elements

State planning law requires the Circulation Element to be consistent with other General Plan elements. The Land Use and Noise Elements are most closely related to the Circulation Element.

Land use and circulation issues are closely related. The development potential of vacant or underutilized properties throughout the City identified in the Land Use Element is the basis for the future traffic volumes used to evaluate roadway adequacy in the Circulation Element.

The transportation policies found in the Circulation Element are also directly linked to the programs and policies developed in the Noise Element. Transportation facilities are largely responsible for excessive noise levels in certain locations in the community. Projected noise distribution, depicted as noise contours in the Noise Element, is corollary to the Circulation Plan. Policies and plans contained in the Noise Element are largely based on the Circulation Element and are aimed to minimize the effects of transportation noise on current and planned land uses.

## Goals, Policies and Implementation Measures

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### Goals

The City of Rio Dell has the following Public Safety related goals:

- Provide a street system that considers the neighborhood as the basic planning unit.
- Develop a balanced transportation system of streets, public transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and a freeway.
- Continue long-range transportation planning in coordination with HCAOG and other jurisdictions.
- Maximize return on capital investment in city infrastructure.
- Provide adequate parking in residential areas, especially older neighborhoods, and commercial areas.

## Policies

The City of Rio Dell has the following circulation policies:

### Roadway and Parking

- C-1. Require new development on vacant land to construct a street grid that connects to existing streets. (P2.2.6-4)
- C-2. Design new subdivisions that do not require cul-de-sacs. (P2.2.6-5)
- C-3. Developers shall be required to construct transportation improvements along their property frontages. (Modified policy from Page 4 of 1975 Circulation Element).
- C-4. Where appropriate, a traffic impact study shall be required that identifies on- and off-site impacts and mitigation measures.
- C-5. Developers may be required to make the following transportation facility related improvements:
  - If development is located along an existing street:
    - Dedication of right of way;
    - Widening of street along property frontage to provide for a travel lane;
    - Bicycle lane and parking lane;
    - Reconstruction of curb, gutter, and sidewalk;
    - Transit facilities; and
    - Landscaping within right of way.
  - If development is located in new growth area not served by streets:
    - Dedication of right of way to construct a street to connect the project site to a public street;
    - Construction of the street and connecting intersection(s) to City standards;
    - After the dedication is accepted, the City will maintain the street.
- C-6. In all instances, the developer shall be responsible for mitigating any off-site traffic impacts of the proposed development in a manner consistent with the policies of this plan.
- C-7. The developer shall be required to provide all necessary access and circulation facilities within the property, and such facilities shall be designed and constructed to meet City standards.
- C-8. Developers shall be required to establish mechanisms, such as homeowners associations, to fund the total cost of on-going maintenance of on-site streets and other transportation facilities that are not accepted for dedication by the City of Rio Dell.
- C-9. Develop additional off-street parking facilities in the commercial portion of the Town Center Neighborhood. (Page 3 of 1975 Circulation Element).



- C-10. Utilize private voluntary cooperation (chamber of commerce, downtown merchant groups, etc) to the maximum extent possible to address parking (Page 3 1975 Circulation Element)
- C-11. Utilize all available sources of funding for transportation related improvements in the commercial portion of the Town Center Neighborhood. (Page 3 1975 Circulation Element)
- C-12. Consider the formation of a special downtown improvement district to fund the rehabilitation and maintenance of transportation facilities and landscaping in the commercial portion of the Town Center Neighborhood. (Page 3 1975 Circulation Element)
- C-13. Special parking standards should be created for Wildwood Avenue south of Davis Street to encourage the utilization of existing commercial structures. (Page 3 1975 Circulation Element)
- C-14. Where any portion of road is reconstructed, the natural grade should be followed as much as possible – minimizing cuts and fills. (Page III-3 1970 Scenic Highway Element)
- C-15. Scenic roads should be designated for moderate travel speed. (Page III-3 1970 Scenic Highway Element)
- C-16. Improvements related to the scenic route system, such as route location and directional signs, roadside rests and vista points, should be provided where possible, and be attractively designed to blend with the scenery. (Page III-3 1970 Scenic Highway Element)
- C-17. Natural landscaping, particularly on cuts and fills, should be provided for scenic improvements and erosion control (Page III-3 1970 Scenic Highway Element)
- C-18. Allow street cross section standards to be modified on a case-by-case basis when it can be demonstrated that traffic safety is not diminished and adequate parking, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities are provided.

## **Bicycle and Pedestrian**

- C-19. Establish street right-of-way standards that reduce vehicular speeds and enhance bicycle and pedestrian facilities. (P2.2.6-2)
- C-20. Develop standards for alternate access routes including alleys, walking paths, and bicycle routes. (P2.2.6-6)
- C-21. Design a pedestrian network that responds to the access needs of the physically disabled. (P2.2.6-1)

## **Transit**

- C-22. Provide greater access to public transit service for neighborhood residents, business owners, employees, and customers. (P2.2.6-3)

## Implementation Measures

Table 5-3 lists the circulation element implementation measures and corresponding policy number(s).

**Table 5-3** Implementation table

<b>Policy Number</b>	<b>Implementation Measure</b>
<i>Roadway and Parking</i>	
C-1 C-3 C-5 C-12 C-15 C-16	The City shall prepare new General Development Standards and Subdivision Standards that are consistent with the policy direction developed in the General Plan
C-1 C-7 C-18	Update street right of way standards to reflect street hierarchy and connectivity.
C-2	Update subdivision ordinance to set standards for transportation improvements for new development.
C-4 C-6 C-8	Require traffic impact analysis for those projects that could significantly increase trip generation and require mitigation as determined by the analysis.
C-9 C-10 C-13	Establish minimum parking requirements for all zones in zoning ordinance.
<i>Bicycle and Pedestrian</i>	
C-19 C-20	Prepare a bicycle and pedestrian facilities master plan.
<i>Transit</i>	
C-22	Work with Redwood Transit System to maintain regular bus service in Rio Dell.

# CHAPTER 6

## CONSERVATION AND OPEN SPACE

### Introduction

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The Conservation and Open Space Element emphasizes protection of natural resources: agricultural resources, wildlife habitat; hydrology and water resource. It also addresses air and water quality, energy sources and conservation, materials recycling, minerals resources. The Conservation and Open Space Element establishes City policies relating to natural resources protection and management and the use and preservation of open space for various types of recreation uses.

### Setting and Context

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#### Conservation

**Soils and Geologic Resources.** Rio Dell is underlain by undifferentiated non-marine terrace deposits of the Holocene (8,000 years ago to the present) and Pleistocene (1.8 million to 8,000 years ago) Epochs. This material is dissected and/or uplifted gravel, sand, silt, and clay deposited by the Eel River. The slopes surrounding the main terrace are marine and non-marine overlap deposits from the late Pleistocene to middle Miocene (23.8 to 5.3 million years ago).

The Eel River flood plain includes alluvial deposits of clay, silt, sand, and gravel. There are no active faults identified within the Rio Dell City limits, however, nearby fault zones pose a potential seismic hazard. Landslides and ground shaking from a major seismic event could cause damage within the City. Disturbances to steep slopes with highly erodible soils can lead to ground slippage or landslides.

Prime agricultural soils are present on the Dinsmore plateau and at the Scotia tree farm. Prime soils on the Dinsmore Plateau consist of Rohnerville and Hookton series silt loam and prime tree farm soils consist of Ferndale and Loleta series silt loam and fine sandy loam. The tree farm is managed by PALCO for timber production and portions of the Dinsmore plateau are used for cattle grazing and hay production.

**Hydrology and Water Resources.** The Eel River makes an “S” shaped bend through Rio Dell, thus the entire City of Rio Dell is located within the Lower Eel watershed. The Eel River is a dominant feature throughout Rio Dell and contains the majority of the City’s natural resources. Rio Dell is located within the Dean Creek sub-watershed, which is comprised of Dean Creek, which drains the southern portion of town, Slater Creek, which drains the western portion of town, and two unnamed creeks that drain the remaining slopes. The Scotia area is within two sub-watersheds, Monument Creek and Jordan Creek.

Numerous large floods have occurred in Rio Dell as a result of intense winter storms and upslope land disturbances. The highest recorded Eel River discharge in Rio Dell is 752,000 Cubic Feet per Second (CFS) in December 23, 1964, with an estimated recurrence interval of 290 years. This and other large floods have caused damage in the City primarily to the lumber industry, railroad property, and roads, and bridges. However, the majority of Rio Dell's developed land is currently outside of the 100 and 500-year floodplains.

**Biological Resources.** The City of Rio Dell is situated within the lower Eel River Valley. The Eel River is the third largest river system in California, with a watershed area of more than 3,684 square miles, and extending beyond Humboldt County into parts of Trinity, Mendocino, Glenn, and Lake Counties. Natural resources are primarily confined to the Eel River and surrounding riparian corridor although forest and grazing land can be found on the plateau above downtown Rio Dell. Vegetation throughout the town consists of native, ornamental, and exotic species common in this area of Humboldt County.

The Eel River riparian vegetation generally consists of a moderately dense overstory of red alder (*Alnus rubra*), willow spp. (*Salix scouleriana*, *S. sitchensis*, and other species), and American dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) with scattered black cottonwood (*Populus balsmifera*) and willow saplings. The sporadically dense to moderately open understory is dominated by Pacific bramble (*Rubus ursinus*), Himalayan blackberry (*R. discolor*), horsetail spp (*Equisetum arvense* and *E. hyemale*), mugwort (*Artemisia douglasiana*), white sweetclover (*Melilotus alba*), and tall flat-sedge (*Cyperus eragrostis*) with various native and non-native grass species.

Upland area within the City is Rio Dell is comprised of North Coast coniferous forest. The moderately open overstory is dominated by a canopy of redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), and tan oak (*Lithocarpus densiflora*). The shrub layer varies from dense to depauperate and consists of salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), evergreen huckleberry (*Vaccinium ovatum*), Pacific bramble, and poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*). The herbaceous layer is dominated by Douglas iris (*Iris douglasiana*), ox-eye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), modesty (*Whipplea modesta*), and a variety of native and exotic grass species.

In addition to the riparian habitat along the Eel River and the upland forested areas, the approximate 20 acre constructed millpond in Scotia contains biological habitat. The millpond is located in the western portion of the town and is bordered by residential homes, Williams Avenue, the Mill "B" complex, and other PALCO facilities. This pond has been used as a log pond for many years, but is currently utilized as a stormwater collection basin and for treating Scotia's wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) effluent.

**Air Resources.** The climate of Rio Dell is generally mild. The average annual daily temperature in Rio Dell is approximately 55 degrees Fahrenheit (as measured in Scotia and reported by the Western Regional Climate Center) with approximate average maximum and minimum temperatures of 63 and 46 Fahrenheit, respectively. The City of Rio Dell benefits from generally good air quality. Sources of air emissions within Rio Dell include motor vehicle traffic, the PALCO power plant and mill facilities, wood burning, and dust. Rio Dell and the Eel River valley have a low potential for forming ozone smog because of good ventilation from

winds and natural air drainage along the Eel River corridor. Sources of ozone precursor emissions are low enough that ozone smog does not rise to significant levels even when there is no wind. Also, the air basin has good vertical mixing in summer months, which helps disperse pollutants before they can build up to harmful levels. No air quality standards exceedances for Rio Dell have been observed.

Air on the North Coast is in attainment for the majority of the criteria pollutants. Attainment means that the values the government set for air quality are not exceeded in an area. Nonattainment classification means that the air quality for that pollutant does not meet the standard for healthy air. The only standard currently listed, as nonattainment on the North Coast, is the state standard for particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>).

Particulate matter refers to inhalable particles that are less than 10 microns in diameter (PM<sub>10</sub>). Particulates are classified as primary or secondary depending on their origin. Primary particles are unchanged after being directly emitted (e.g., road dust) and are the form of PM<sub>10</sub> that are most commonly analyzed and modeled. Because it is emitted directly and has limited dispersion characteristics, primary PM<sub>10</sub> is considered a localized pollutant. Primary PM<sub>10</sub> sources are derived from both human and natural activities. A significant portion of PM<sub>10</sub> is generated from human activity. These types of activities include agricultural operations, industrial processes, combustion of wood and fossil fuels, construction and demolition activities, and entrainment of road dust into the air. Natural sources also contribute to the overall PM<sub>10</sub> problem. Natural sources include windblown dust and wildfires.

Secondary PM<sub>10</sub> sources emit into the atmosphere air pollutants that form or help form PM<sub>10</sub>. These pollutants are considered precursors to PM<sub>10</sub> formation. Secondary PM<sub>10</sub> pollutants include emissions of ROG, NO<sub>x</sub>, and sulfur oxides (SO<sub>x</sub>). Control measures that reduce PM<sub>10</sub> precursor emissions tend to have a beneficial impact on ambient PM<sub>10</sub> levels.

PM<sub>10</sub> levels tend to be high in summer months because auto traffic is about 20 percent higher than average, farm activities raise dust, and little rainfall occurs to wash pollutants out of the air. In the winter, temperature inversions trap emissions very close to the ground. Emissions from the burning of timber slash and yard waste, wood stoves and fireplaces, and motor vehicles are all significant sources that contribute to high levels of wintertime PM<sub>10</sub>.

Almost all violations of the State PM<sub>10</sub> standard (50 ug/m<sup>3</sup>) occur in the six-month period from October through March (cool months). About eight percent of all days during the year exceed the standard; therefore about 16 percent (or one day in six) violates the standard during the cool months. The North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District regulates air emission, including PM<sub>10</sub>. Current PM<sub>10</sub> emissions within the Air Basin must be reduced by about 50 percent in order to meet the state PM<sub>10</sub> standard.

**Energy.** Electric power is currently provided to residential and commercial users in Scotia by PALCO. PALCO operates a 25-megawatt co-generation plant (combined heat, and power) using wood wastes from milling operations to produce electricity to run the manufacturing facilities and homes and businesses in Scotia. PALCO sells excess power generated to the Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) and is considered a “qualifying facility” (which is defined as a small

power producer that meets the federal Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 guidelines and qualifies to supply generating capacity to electric utilities, which must purchase this power at a price approved by the California Public Utility Commission).

PG&E distributes power throughout Rio Dell, pursuant to its franchise agreement with the City and rules and regulations adopted by the Public Utilities Commission. PALCO owns the electrical distribution facilities within the mill facility.

**Mineral Resources.** The majority of gravel and sand extraction in Humboldt County takes place along the Eel River-Van Duzen Rivers (76 percent). According to the Army Corps of Engineers, the Eel River has the highest recorded average annual suspended sediment yield per square mile of drainage area than any river its size or larger in the United States. This yield in tons per square mile is more than 15 times that of the Mississippi River and more than 4 times that of the Colorado River.

Permitted gravel extraction does occur within the Rio Dell Planning Area. PALCO is permitted to remove gravel from four locations within Scotia: Scotia Dam Bar, Truck Shop Bars (2 sites), Dinner Creek Bar, and 3 Mile Bridge Bar.

Pursuant to the California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA), Public Resources Code (PRC) §2776, and based on a public and administrative review and evaluation of historic and continued mining use by PALCO over the last 123 years, a determination of "Vested Rights" was granted by Humboldt County on February 21, 1995.

## Parks and Open Space

**Parks and Recreation.** On the north side of the Eagle Prairie Bridge, parks and recreation facilities include the following: Fireman's Park (owned by the Rio Dell Fire Protection District) containing a parking area, baseball field, playground equipment, and bocce ball courts; Rio Dell School District tennis courts, baseball fields, parking lot (maintained by the City of Rio Dell); Triangle Parks located adjacent to City Hall and at the intersection of Fern Street and Riverside Drive are limited to a small park. On the south side of the bridge, recreation facilities include a community park, recreation center, baseball field, and soccer field. Fireman's Park, also known as Scotia Park, is the community park in Scotia, and is a fenced park with redwood trees, picnic tables and barbeques. The park's proximity to the Eel River, the ball field and the soccer field makes it convenient to a large number of users, primarily Scotia residents and visitors.

The baseball field, known as Carpenter's Field, is a fenced baseball field with bleachers, located opposite Fireman's Park. The soccer field is located north of the park and consists of a fenced and maintained grass playing field. The baseball field, park, and soccer field together form the core recreation area south of Eagle Prairie Bridge. The recreation center is located at the east end of Mill Street.

**Agricultural Resources.** As described in the Soils and Geologic Resources section, little agricultural production occurs within Rio Dell. With the exception of hobby farming on

smaller lots, agricultural activities are limited to hay production, cattle grazing and the PALCO tree farm.

**Timber Resources.** PALCO operates a 150-acre redwood tree farm, between US Highway 101 and the Eel River, south of the main industrial area. The tree farm is designated Agricultural Exclusive (AE) in the Humboldt County General Plan and zoned Timber Production (TPZ). The trees are 22 to 24 years old and were last thinned commercially in 2005. In addition to the tree farm, there are additional timber resources that are not actively managed. This land includes the forest resources on the east side of Highway 101 and the trees on the east bank of the Eel River, adjacent to the Mill A building and Railroad Avenue.

## Related Plans and Programs

**Natural Resource Lands.** Lands along the Eel River including the tree farm are designated Natural Resource (NR). These areas are primarily forested and riparian areas. Additional NR lands are located along the east side of the Highway 101 corridor extending to where the water tanks are located.

**PALCO Habitat Conservation Plan.** The 1999 PALCO Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) is designed to ensure the continued health of the biological communities on PALCO's property and to minimize and mitigate impacts of PALCO activities on individual species and their habitats. The HCP protects species such as coho salmon, northern spotted owls, and marbled murrelets. The PALCO HCP is a long-term comprehensive program that is consistent with the objectives of the California Fish and Game Code (FGC) and is guided by the Federal and California Endangered Species Acts.

**California Timberland Productivity Act.** The Timberland Productivity Act (TPA) discourages premature and unnecessary conversion of timberlands to urban and other uses. (PRC § 51102) The key tool of the TPA is to base property tax on sustainable timber yields, and not on a higher and better use.

**California Water Quality Control Board.** The Water Quality Control Board regulates water quality in California. Humboldt County is part of the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, which has a mission to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California's water resources, and to ensure their proper allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations. The policies in this General Plan are intended to comply with the Board's standards.

**Surface Mining and Reclamation Act.** Pursuant to SMARA, a reclamation plan is required of all mining operations to provide, at minimum, details of the mining operation, the final post-mining reclamation of mined lands, an environmental assessment of the proposed reclamation activities, a schedule for reclamation, and an accurate estimate of reclamation costs. This plan constitutes a project subject to full environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act CEQA. SMARA also requires that "Financial Assurances" be provided by the operator to insure that dedicated funds are available to cover the estimated reclamation costs. This requires that a bond or similar mechanism be posted to cover

reclamation costs, as approved by the State Office of Mine Reclamation (“OMR”) and as periodically reviewed by the lead agency (Humboldt County). Documentation of the assurance is required prior to issuance of a mining permit by the local lead agency.

## Relationship to Other General Plan Elements

This element combines the Conservation and Open Space Elements required under the General Plan Guidelines due to the close relationship between these two of the seven mandatory elements. The Conservation and Open Space Element provides policies to protect natural resources and their uses. Many of the issues covered in this Element directly overlap those required in the Land Use, Safety, Cultural and Scenic, and Noise Elements. The Conservation and Open Space Element discusses various uses and preservation of natural resources, addresses ecological, cultural, historic, scenic and recreation areas. While the Public Safety Element addresses potential community risks due to seismic activity and geological conditions, this element identifies where those conditions exist, and how they are managed.

## Goals, Policies and Implementation Measures

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### Goals

- To prevent air, land, and water pollution that would reduce our quality of life.
- To preserve natural and man-made resources which create a unique scenic character for Rio Dell.
- To preserve river, stream, and drainage channels that collect run-off, provide natural habitat, and serve as scenic open space.
- To maintain the small-scale agricultural uses in the Monument and Belleview neighborhoods.
- To protect our citizens by regulating clearing and development of steep slopes and river, stream, and drainage channels, and their flood plains.
- To provide an adequate, consistent, and safe supply of water to meet our domestic, commercial, and fire safety requirements.
- To preserve current low ambient noise levels in Rio Dell.
- To maintain our existing air quality.
- To minimize loss of life and property from natural and man-made hazards.
- To develop a system of public parks and open spaces for our residents to enjoy.



## Policies

The City of Rio Dell has the following policies relating to Conservation and Open Space.

### Soils and Geologic Resources

- CO-1. Increase minimum parcel sizes in areas that have greater than 25 percent slopes.
- CO-2. Grading standards for erosion and sedimentation control. The design, extent, and location of grading shall minimize disturbance of the natural terrain and land features and shall not impact offsite areas. Trees and native vegetation shall be retained around graded areas to stabilize hillsides; retain moisture; reduce erosion, siltation and nutrient runoff; and retain the natural beauty of the area. Cut and cleared areas susceptible to erosion shall be balanced so that no materials are transported offsite.
- CO-3. Sound soil conservation practices shall be required, and impacts of proposed developments, with regard to water quality and effects on watersheds.

### Hydrology and Water Resources

- CO-4. Identify improvements that can be made to municipal drainage facilities so they can better convey runoff and minimize flood impacts. (P2.1.2-2)
- CO-5. Require new development projects to incorporate on-site drainage features such as retention and infiltration systems to reduce runoff and maximize infiltration. (P2.1.2-3)
- CO-6. Use a combination of incentives, educational programs, and ongoing system audits to promote water conservation. (P2.1.2-4)
- CO-7. New projects that affect the quantity and quality of surface water runoff shall be required to allocate land necessary for detaining post-project flows and/or for incorporating measures to mitigate water quality impacts related to urban runoff. To the maximum extent feasible, new development shall not produce a net increase in peak storm water runoff.
- CO-8. New project designs shall minimize drainage concentrations, maximize permeable surfaces (such as unpaved parking areas) and maintain, to the extent feasible, natural site drainage conditions.
- CO-9. The quality of runoff from urban and suburban development shall be improved through use of appropriate and feasible mitigation measures including, but not limited to, artificial wetlands, grassy swales, infiltration/sedimentation basins, riparian setbacks, oil/grit separators, and other best management practices (BMPs).
- CO-10. Wetlands and drainage courses, shall be carefully examined.

## Energy and Mineral Resources

- CO-11. Coordinate with energy suppliers and agencies to educate residents, property owners, and business operators about the need for and benefits of conserving energy. (P2.1.5-1)
- CO-12. Maintain and distribute current information about building insulation, energy efficient appliances, lighting, and heating; other conservation measures and materials; and home power alternatives. (P2.1.5-2)
- CO-13. Require that new construction and retrofits comply with energy efficient construction codes including high-energy windows, water heaters, and furnaces, to reduce energy consumption. (P2.1.5-3)
- CO-14. Manage mineral resources to allow aggregate extraction consistent with SMARA.

## Biological Resources

- CO-15. Ensure that environmentally sensitive habitat areas (ESHAs) such as the Eel River corridor, streams and drainage channels with riparian habitat, and forested areas that could potentially support sensitive species, are buffered to protect against any significant disruption of their habitat values. (P2.1.7-2)
- CO-16. Maintain water quality in the City watersheds.

## Agricultural and Timber Resources

- CO-17. Require large lots in the Monument and Belleview neighborhoods for rural agricultural use. (P2.1.8-2)
- CO-18. Manage timber resources for timber production, habitat and public facility uses.

## Parks and Recreation Resources

- CO-19. Prepare and adopt a recreation master plan that analyzes the opportunities and constraints for recreation within the City including walking paths and bicycle routes. Explore the acquisition of open space land to serve residential neighborhoods in Rio Dell. (P2.2.3-10)
- CO-20. Manage parklands for both active and passive recreational uses.
- CO-21. Maintain a range of recreational uses for community members and visitors.
- CO-22. Allow for camping in areas designated as PF along the Eel River as a conditionally permitted use.
- CO-23. Prepare and adopt a recreation master plan that analyzes the opportunities and constraints for recreation within the City including walking paths and bicycle routes. Explore the acquisition of open space land to serve residential neighborhoods in Rio Dell. (P2.2.3-10)

- CO-24. Encourage the use of joint use agreements with other local agencies to promote the efficient use of tax revenue and preserve the health and general welfare of the people of Rio Dell by providing adequate facilities and programs for community recreation.

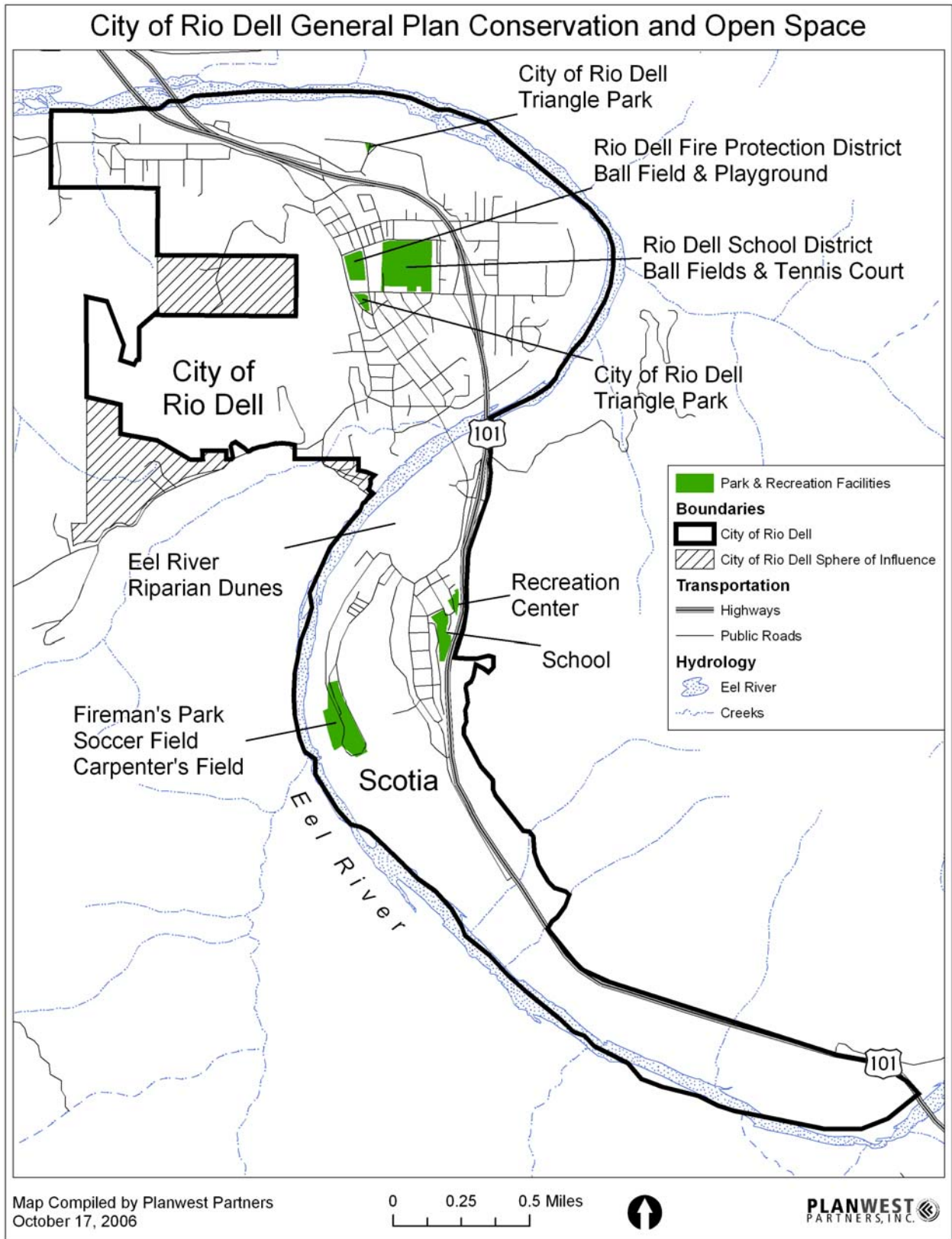
## Implementation

The following table provides the implementation measures for corresponding Conservation and Open Space policies.

**Table 6-1** Implementation Table

<b>Policy Number</b>	<b>Implementation Measure</b>
<i>Soils and Geologic Resources</i>	
CO-1	Prepare Hillside Development Regulations to control the density and location of development on parcels that include slopes of 15% or greater.
CO-2	Prepare a Grading Ordinance.
<i>Hydrology and Water Resources</i>	
CO-4	Maintain GIS data on stream and drainage channels and identified flood plains and make available to the public large-scale hazard maps.
CO-5	Prepare Development Regulations that require Drainage Plans for proposed development to show on-site retention or improvements to the municipal drainage system.
CO-7	
CO-8	
CO-9	
CO-6	Pursue funding for a detailed study of the conditions of the municipal drainage system. The study should include an assessment of drainage improvements required for build-out of this General Plan.
<i>Energy and Mineral Resources</i>	
CO-11	Participate in countywide energy conservation programs and initiatives.
CO-12	Seek funding to establish a library of energy conservation and “Green” construction techniques for use by building permit applicants.
CO-13	Support the energy efficiency construction standards of Title 24 in local building codes.
<i>Biological Resources</i>	
	Protect natural resources such as geological features, heritage trees, and cultural landscapes in the planning and development review process and in park and open space planning.
CO-15	Prepare Development Regulations that require the identification of open space and sensitive habitat areas in proposed developments.
<i>Agricultural and Timber Resources</i>	
CO-18	Prepare Development Regulations that control logging operations within the City Limits. Adopt a timber production overlay zone.
<i>Park and Recreation Resources</i>	
	Establish a parks and recreation committee to oversee City parks and open space.
CO-19	Develop a park master plan for parks, ball fields and open space along the Eel River. See Figure 6-1 for locations of park and recreation facilities in Rio Dell.
CO-20	
CO-21	The City shall prepare and adopt a Park and Recreation Master Plan.

Figure 6-1 Conservation and Open Space



# CHAPTER 7

## PUBLIC SAFETY ELEMENT

### Introduction

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The Rio Dell General Plan Public Safety Element contains policies and implementation measures that address potential hazards within or affecting Rio Dell and that minimize potential dangers to residents, workers, and visitors. The Public Safety Element covers the following hazard areas: geology, including earthquakes, slope stability and landslides; fires; hazardous materials; and storm events, including floods. The Public Safety Element contains descriptions of the hazards effecting Rio Dell; a hazard map; and hazard related land use policies and implementation programs.

### Setting and Context

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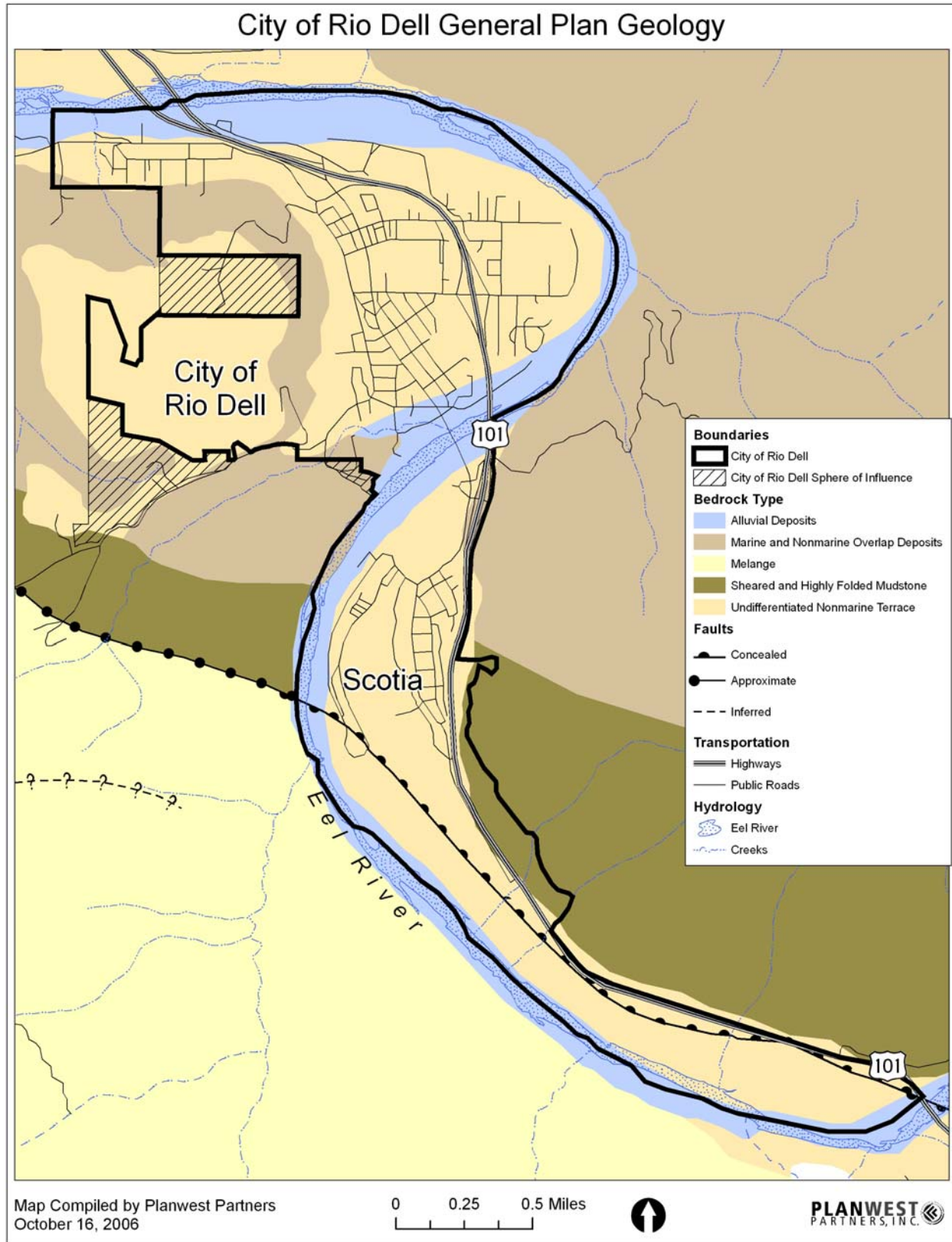
Potential hazards that could exist in Rio Dell include earthquakes, floods, wildland fires, landslides, extreme weather, and hazardous materials. Hazards that have caused damage to Rio Dell in the past include earthquakes and flooding. In addition to the damage to Rio Dell caused by the 1992 earthquake, severe winter storms in 1995, 1996, 1997 and 2005 caused damage, which included flooding, erosion, siltation of drainages, and damage to streets and utilities.

### Seismic and Geologic Hazards

Seismic and geologic hazards represent constraints on development that need to be considered in the General Plan to protect public health and safety. The following is a summary of seismic and geologic hazards in the Planning Area.

**Seismicity.** Rio Dell is located within an active seismic setting. The geology of the area plays an important role in determining the suitability of sites for construction of buildings and infrastructure. In 1992, the City experienced three earthquakes of magnitude 6.7, 6.8, and 7.2 (Richter Magnitude), which caused serious damage to infrastructure, un-reinforced masonry and wood buildings and a fire that destroyed Scotia's commercial area. There are not any active faults within the City limits; however the Russ Fault lies approximately two miles southwest of the City and the Little Salmon Fault lies approximately five miles north of the City. In addition, the Mendocino Triple Junction lies approximately 17 miles to the west of Rio Dell and experiences among the highest concentrations of earthquakes in the continental United States. There are no Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones within three miles of the City of Rio Dell. See Figure 7-1 for Rio Dell geology and faults.

Figure 7-1 City of Rio Dell General Plan Geology and Faults



**Seismic Risk to Development.** The state has not designated any Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zones within the Planning Area, nor is there any known or inferred active faults. Thus, the potential for ground rupture within Rio Dell is considered low.

**Ground Shaking.** Earthquakes generated on the active Russ or Little Salmon faults could result in strong ground shaking within the City. Seismic intensity was estimated at VIII using the Modified Mercalli Intensity Scale. An instrument station operated by the California Geological Survey located on a Rio Dell freeway overpass recorded accelerations up to .55 g during the April 25 main shock, as well as during the first major aftershock on April 26. Strong motion instruments near the epicenter of the 1992 earthquakes, approximately 10 miles from Scotia, recorded accelerations exceeding 2.0.

**Liquefaction.** Because the City of Rio Dell is located partly on young, unconsolidated Eel River alluvium, there is a potential that liquefaction may occur during strong earthquakes. Liquefaction is defined as the loss of “shear” (the ability of soils to withstand pushing forces) in saturated soils due to the build up of pore pressure during an earthquake. A potential for liquefaction is found in saturated loose sandy layers. Because these layers are typically above the zone of saturation, liquefaction potential is only likely in the presence of perched groundwater, and is most likely in isolated lenses. The liquefaction potential is significantly reduced (or eliminated) in non-saturated materials, as well as in cohesive fine-grained sediments and underlying gravels. Cracking was observed in the log pond embankment following the 1992 earthquakes, which could be attributable to liquefaction beneath the Scotia log pond.

**Expansive Soils.** Highly expansive soils can cause structural damage to foundations and roads and are less suitable for development than non-expansive soils, because they swell when they absorb water and shrink as they dry. Detailed soils and geologic investigations may be necessary to ensure that proper construction techniques and materials are used.

**Landslides.** In addition to seismically induced ground shaking, ground movement can also be triggered by heavy rains or by grading. Landslide potential is influenced by a number of factors, including geology, water influences, and topography. Mass movement of material on hillsides often accompanies moderate and strong earthquakes. This may occur in the form of landslides, rock avalanches, mud and debris flows, or other types of slope failure. The steep natural or artificial slopes and high water content that is present in portions of Rio Dell may favor such failures. The Monument neighborhood contains the greatest amount of steeply sloped land within the City limits and therefore would appear to have the most stability issues. The Riverside and Edgewater neighborhoods contain the banks of the Eel River and the smaller drainages within the town may have limited stability. The majority of land within Rio Dell that is not subject to slopes is categorized as stable. See Figure 7-2 for slope hazards.

## **Flooding**

The City is located adjacent to the Eel River, but the majority of the developed land is outside the 100 and 500-year floodplains (based on Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Data, derived from the most recent Flood Insurance Rate Maps). Numerous large floods have occurred in Rio Dell as a result of intense winter storms and upslope land disturbances. The highest recorded Eel River discharge at Rio Dell is 752,000 CFS, which occurred on December

23, 1964, with an estimated recurrence interval of 290 years. This and other large floods have caused damage in the City primarily to roads, drainage facilities, and other public improvements.

## **Wildland Fire**

Natural resource lands, primarily forestlands, surround many communities in Humboldt County. The areas where communities abut natural resource lands are known as the “wildland-urban interface.” The interface is often an environmental condition where a mix of fuel, weather, and topographical conditions make a community at risk of wildland fire. Population and demographic trends, economic and tax issues, and land use planning and policy issues, all play a part in influencing the wildland-urban interface. An interface can also be defined as a zone where human-made infrastructure is in, or adjacent to, wildfire prone areas. At a community-level perspective, the interface can be defined as the conditions that make a neighborhood or community vulnerable to a wildland fire (Humboldt County Fire Safe Council 2004).

Although the City has not experienced any recent wildland fires, the geography of the area and the condition of the adjacent forests are fire hazards. Rio Dell sits at the edge of forestlands that pose a moderate to high fire risk to the community. As a result, the Humboldt Fire Safe Council has placed Rio Dell on its Communities at Risk Candidate List.

The Rio Dell Fire Protection District (RDFPD) operates two fire stations within the Planning Area. Although wildland fire protection is not its primary responsibility, the RDFPD possesses apparatus and equipment designed for wildland fire protection and responds to wildland fire incidents. Wildland fires usually occur within the State Responsibility Area (SRA), which consists of land with vegetative cover and natural resource values as enumerated in Public Resource Code Section 4126, and surrounds the City of Rio Dell. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) Humboldt Del Norte Unit is responsible for protecting the State Responsibility Area. CDF is headquartered in Fortuna, approximately ten miles north of Rio Dell. CDF is also responsible for enforcing state laws relating to the clearance of flammable vegetation around homes located within the SRA.

## **Hazardous Materials**

Hazardous material means any material that, because of its quantity, concentration, physical or chemical characteristics, poses a significant present or potential hazard to human health and safety or to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment. “Hazardous materials” include, but are not limited to, hazardous substances, hazardous wastes, and any material, which a handler, or the administering agency, has a reasonable basis for believing that it would be injurious to the health and safety of persons or harmful to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment. This definition is not limited to just those chemicals with long-term detrimental effects. It also includes materials that present a hazard because of their physical nature (explosive, corrosive, flammable.)

Exposure to hazardous materials and wastes could cause various short-term or long-term health effects. Health effects of exposure to hazardous materials would be specific to each chemical or combination of chemicals. Possible health effects of exposure may be acute (immediate, or of short-term severity), chronic (long-term, recurring, or resulting from repeated exposure), or both.



Hazardous materials are commonly used in various commercial, agricultural, and industrial applications.

Hazardous materials exist in Rio Dell because they are used by businesses, transported on highways and streets, and are present in small quantities in private homes in the form of solvents, cleaning fluids and other substances. Although there are not any hazardous waste sites in the area, such materials may be present in the Planning Area due to current and historic industrial uses, the operation of gas stations, or due to materials deposited in dump sites prior to current regulations governing sanitary landfills.

## Related Plans and Programs

**City Emergency Operations Plan.** The City has an adopted Emergency Operations Plan, which identifies the City's emergency planning, organization, response policies and procedures. The plan also addresses the integration and coordination with other local, state, and federal emergency response operations.

**Flood Insurance Rate Maps.** The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) manages the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), providing insurance to the public in communities that participate in the program. FEMA is the main federal government agency contact during natural disasters and publishes the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM), which identify the extent of flood potential in flood prone communities based on a 100-year flood (or base flood) event.

**Humboldt County Master Fire Protection Plan.** The Humboldt County Master Fire Protection Plan (MFPP) was prepared to serve as the guiding document for reducing the risk of fire to Humboldt County communities. Policy recommendations from the MFPP are also intended to support the preparation of the Humboldt County General Plan and influence future development patterns.

**North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District.** The North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District (NCUAQMD) regulates local stationary source emissions, including toxic air contaminants. NCUAQMD Rule III established toxic air contaminant rules.

**Consolidated Unified Program Agency.** The Humboldt County Department of Environmental Health is authorized by the California State Environmental Protection Agency as a Consolidated Unified Program Agency (CUPA) for the administration, regulation, and enforcement of environmental programs that fall under the CUPA umbrella. The Unified Program (UP) was created by Senate Bill 1082 (1993) to consolidate, coordinate, and make consistent the administrative requirements, permits, inspections, and enforcement activities for the following environmental and emergency management programs: Hazardous Materials Release Response Plans and Inventories(Business Plans); California Accidental Release Prevention (CalARP) Program; Underground Storage Tank Program; Aboveground Petroleum Storage Act Requirements for Spill; Prevention, Control and Countermeasure (SPCC) Plans; and

Hazardous Waste Generator and Onsite Hazardous Waste Treatment (tiered permitting) Programs.

## Relationship to Other General Plan Elements

State planning law requires the Public Safety Element to be consistent with other General Plan elements. The Rio Dell General Plan Public Safety Element most closely relates to the Land Use and Circulation Elements.

Policies and implementation measure contained in the Public Safety Element are intended to protect current and planned land uses identified in the Land Use Element from hazards. Potential hazards identified in the Public Safety Element are addressed through measures to avoid or mitigate public safety impacts associated with planned development. The Land Use Element also contains policies to ensure that environmental conditions, including hazards, are considered in all land use decisions.

A well-planned and maintained circulation network is an essential public safety concern. Evacuation routes utilizing the City circulation system are also described in the Safety Element.

The Public Safety Element addressed potential community risks due to seismic activity and geological conditions. The identification of where those conditions exist, and how they are managed is addressed in the Conservation and Open Space Element.

## Goals, Policies and Implementation Measures

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### Goals

- Build safely, by avoiding areas that are geologically unstable, and strengthening buildings to better withstand seismic event.
- Avoid development in flood prone areas of the community.
- Make Rio Dell fire safe.
- Restrict use of new hazardous materials, and safely handle and dispose of hazardous materials present in the community.
- Prepare the community to safely respond to emergencies.

### Policies

The City of Rio Dell has the following Public Safety Element policies:

#### Seismic and Geological Hazards

- PS-1. Maintain current data on areas of geological instability and require that geotechnical reports be prepared by qualified professionals for geological

investigations prior to any proposed development in areas with potential slope stability.

- PS-2. Make soils and geologic resources information publicly available.

## **Flooding**

- PS-3. Participate in the National Flood Insurance Program.
- PS-4. Allow no development in floodways. Require that any development in flood prone areas demonstrate that it can be adequately flood proofed, and that it will not result in greater flood impacts.

## **Fire**

- PS-5. Buildings in areas of high wild land fire risk shall use non-flammable exterior materials, maintain defensible space around structures, and provide on site water storage capacity for fire suppression.
- PS-6. Circulate development plans to the Rio Dell Fire Protection District for fire safety review.

## **Hazardous Materials**

- PS-7. Require new commercial and industrial uses that could potentially handle or release hazardous materials develop and implement a hazardous materials storage, use and disposal plan. (P2.1.4-3)
- PS-8. Restrict siting of businesses or expansion of businesses that have the potential for a significant hazardous materials release within close proximity to schools.
- PS-9. Enforce regulations regarding proper storage, use and disposal of hazardous materials to prevent leakage, potential explosions, fires, or the escape of harmful gases, and to prevent individually innocuous materials from combining to form hazardous substances, especially at the time of disposal.
- PS-10. Support measures to responsibly manage hazardous waste consistent with protection of the public health, welfare, safety and the environment.
- PS-11. Enforce Federal, State and Local requirements and standards regarding the transportation of hazardous materials. Support, as appropriate, legislation that strengthens safety requirements for the transportation of hazardous materials.
- PS-12. Work with businesses and property owners to secure funding to clean up and reuse contaminated property.

## Emergency Response

- PS-13. Identify corrective actions that can be taken to minimize threats to community residents, property, and vital services. (P2.1.4-2)
- PS-14. Establish and maintain an effective emergency response program that anticipates the potential for disasters, maintains continuity of life-support functions during an emergency, and institutes community-based disaster response planning, involving businesses, non-governmental organizations, and neighborhoods

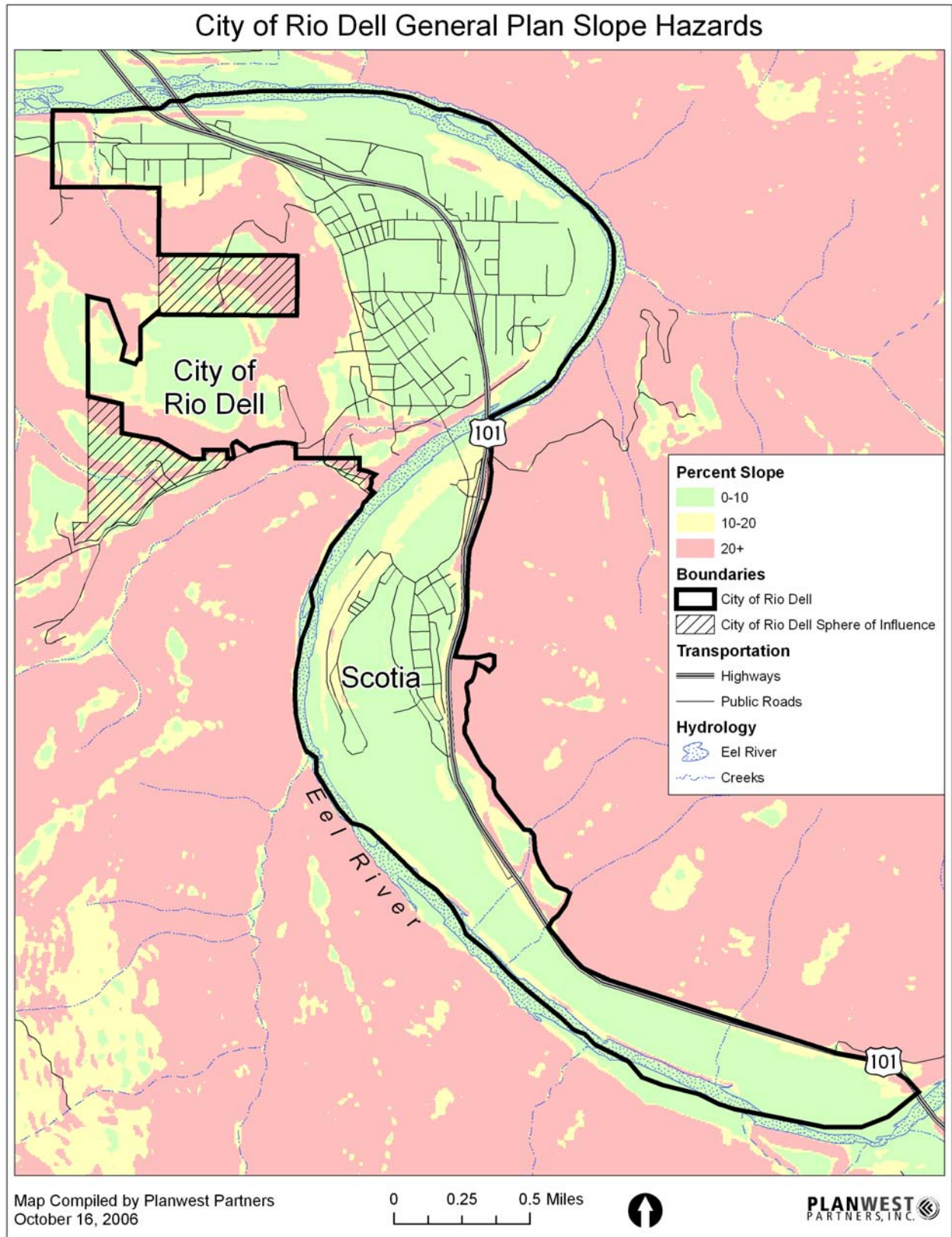
## Implementation Measures

The following table provides the implementation measures for corresponding Public Safety policies.

**Table 7-1** Implementation Table

<b>Policy Number</b>	<b>Implementation Measure</b>
<i>Seismic and Geological Hazards</i>	
PS-1 PS-2	Update seismic safety standards and structural standards in the zoning ordinance.
<i>Flooding Hazards</i>	
PS-3 PS-4	Update floodplain regulations in the zoning ordinance.
<i>Fire Hazards</i>	
PS-5 PS-6	Develop “fire safe” standards, including minimum clearances around buildings and minimum water storage requirements.
<i>Hazardous Materials</i>	
PS-8	The City shall maintain GIS data on natural and man-made hazards and make available to the public large-scale hazard maps
PS-7 PS-8 PS-9 PS-10 PS-11	The City shall maintain GIS data on all locations that handle hazardous materials or are required to file a Hazardous Materials Business Plan
PS-12	The City shall seek out state, federal, and other funding, as appropriate, to identify contaminated property and perform remediation activities.
<i>Emergency Response</i>	
PS-13 PS-14	Coordinate with Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services and Rio Dell Fire Protection District, for Emergency service plans.

Figure 7-2 Slope Hazards



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