



City of Ferndale

P.O. Box 1095
Ferndale, CA 95536
707-786-4224

Notice of Availability and 45-Day Comment Period for a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report and Notice of Public Meeting

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR THE DRAFT PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Ferndale as Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has prepared a draft program environmental impact report (PEIR) (SCH# 2023020217) that evaluates the environmental effects associated with the proposed General Plan Land Use and Safety Element Updates (Project).

Availability of the Draft PEIR

The draft PEIR and other project materials will be available for review and download on the City of Ferndale website on the General Plan page of the Documents webpage at <https://ci.ferndale.ca.us/documents/general/> on August 26, 2024. The draft PEIR can be also accessed by scanning the below QR Code:



Printed copies of the documents will be available for public review at the following locations during their posted business hours:

- Ferndale City Hall, 834 G Street, Ferndale, California
- Ferndale Public Library, 807 Main Street, Ferndale, California

PEIR Public Review Period

The 45-day public review and comment period begins August 26, 2024, and will run through 5:00 p.m., October 10, 2024.

Project Overview

The Ferndale General Plan is a city-wide planning document with text and diagrams that express the goals,

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

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

Project Description

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

- Satisfy new State mandates and objectives for General Plans that have been issued since the General Plan was last updated;
- Encourage infill development to preserve agricultural lands and open space in the City;
- Establish a stream protection zone along Francis Creek to maintain its riparian habitat values and prevent soil erosion;
- Adjust to climate change and promote sustainability;
- Resolve inconsistencies between existing land uses and the General Plan; and
- Resolve inconsistencies between the General Plan and other City plans that have been revised in recent years.
- Targeted increases in land use density and increases in the allowable uses and development standards to provide adequate housing sites, promote fair and equal housing opportunities, and resolve inconsistencies with the City's adopted 2019 Housing Element;
- Remove governmental constraints to housing investment.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element will continue to include the general distribution, location, and extent of the uses of land for housing, business, industry, open space, agriculture, natural resources, public buildings and grounds, and other categories of public and private uses of land within the City. As the Land Use Element was last updated in 1986, the data, analyses, and policies in the plan will be updated to reflect the current conditions and vision of the City. The intent of the proposed Land Use Element is to provide more flexibility in housing options while still protecting

the historic character of the area. The Land Use Element will also continue to accommodate projections of population and economic growth using infill principles. The City's anticipated growth during the planning period is expected to be contained within the present City boundary and concentrated largely within already developed residential areas and planned development areas as identified in the Element. Targeted increases in land use density (or increases in the allowable uses and development standards) will be necessary in portions of the City to be consistent with the policies and programs set forth in the City's 6th Cycle Housing Element that was adopted in 2019.

Safety Element

The Safety Element will continue to identify potential risks to persons and property resulting from fires, floods, earthquakes, landslides, and other hazards. The Safety Element is intended to provide an overview of potential hazards in the area and provide policies to help improve City infrastructure to be more resilient against hazards. The Safety Element Update includes new State-mandated safety considerations for climate change and emergency evacuation routes to comply with CGC Section 65302(g) and SB 375. Ferndale may experience some effects from climate change such as changing precipitation patterns which can lead to more intense flooding, increased chance of wildfire to the south, and changing drainage patterns due to sea level rise. The Public Safety Element will acknowledge the context of other relevant plans at the regional and state level and align City goals and policies with these efforts. The City is currently included in the Humboldt County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (adopted 2020) and County-wide Climate Action Plan (in progress).

Zoning Amendments

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

Potential Environmental Effects of the Project

The draft PEIR provides a detailed project description, an analysis of physical environmental effects of the project, and an identification of feasible mitigation measures and alternatives that would avoid or lessen the severity of project impacts. The draft PEIR finds that the Project could result in significant and unavoidable impacts related to air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and transportation/circulation related. Impacts in all other areas were found to be less than significant or less than significant with incorporation of mitigation measures. The Project does not include sites on a hazardous waste list enumerated under Section 65962.5 of the California Government Code.

Public Review Process for the Draft PEIR

One purpose of CEQA is to inform the public of the likely environmental consequences of public and private projects such as the proposed General Plan Comprehensive Update. The purpose of this Notice, consistent with Sections 15086 and 15087 of the State CEQA Guidelines, is to consult with and request comments on the draft PEIR's environmental analyses from responsible agencies, organizations, and interested parties.

Public Comment

Written comments received on the draft PEIR during the 45-day review period will be addressed in the final PEIR.

Written comments may be submitted via email or mail. Please include the name and physical address of the commenter in the body of the email or letter.

Mail comments to:

City of Ferndale Planner
City of Ferndale
P.O. Box 1095
Ferndale, CA 95536

Email comments to:

longrangeplan@ci.ferndale.ca.us

PUBLIC MEETING TO PROVIDE COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Ferndale City Council and Planning Commission will hold a joint public meeting on **Wednesday, September 4, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.**, at 834 Main Street, Ferndale, California. The purpose of the meeting is to solicit input and comments from public agencies and the general public on the draft PEIR for the update of the Land Use and Safety Elements of the Ferndale General Plan.

Written comments may be submitted via email or mail. Email written comments to cityclerk@ci.ferndale.ca.us. Mail written comments to City of Ferndale, P.O. Box 1095, Ferndale, California 95536. Written comments received by 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 7, 2024 will be provided to the Commission for their consideration.

There will be no transcription of oral comments at this public meeting or any subsequent meetings or hearings. Comments received will be summarized by staff for inclusion in the Final PEIR. Those who wish to have their verbatim comments incorporated in the Final PEIR must submit their comments in writing.

The City of Ferndale endeavors to be ADA compliant. Should you require assistance with written information or access to the facility, or a hearing amplification, please call 707-786-4224 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Final PEIR

Following the close of the public review period for the draft PEIR, the City will prepare a final PEIR, incorporating all comments received during the public comment period, for consideration by the Planning Commission, at a date for which notice shall be provided. As required by CEQA (Section 21092.5), the final PEIR, including written responses to the comments submitted by public agencies, will be available at least 10 days prior to certification.

Kristene Hall
City Clerk