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CITY OF UKIAH ANNEXES OVER 750 ACRES IN THE WESTERN HILLS

Annexation Will Support Housing Development and Preserve Open Space

Ukiah, CA. November 14, 2024. – The City of Ukiah just received approval by the Mendocino Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) to annex 752 acres of unincorporated open space in the Western Hills. This area is mountainous, but has room for safe residential development in proximity to City services. By bringing the land into the City, development in the area can now move forward while preserving open space and effectively managing the wildland urban interface.

“Annexing Ukiah's Western Hills is essential to preserving open space that is otherwise zoned for private development, while providing opportunities for needed housing, and advancing goals, such public safety and open-space access,” said Jesse Davis, Chief Planning Manager for the Ukiah Department of Community Development. “This will enable us to apply strategic growth principles and concentrate residential development in proximity to existing services and utilities, while preserving a significant portion of the acquired land for potential trails and accessible open space. By providing municipal infrastructure and managing growth properly, we can address our housing needs while avoiding sprawl.”

Over the past several decades, the Greater Ukiah Valley has suffered from uncoordinated development and urbanization. This has resulted in newly developed areas not getting necessary services to support increased residential and business needs. By folding this Western Hills area into the City, there will now be a clear plan and guidelines that ensure the new development is properly sited and accompanied by appropriate services and efficient access to affordable and reliable City utilities. Now that they are within the City limits, the new properties will receive electricity from Ukiah’s municipal utility, which offers energy at a significantly lower cost and greater reliability than PG&E. Additionally, Ukiah’s water, sewer, and roads infrastructure will have greater funding and more robust maintenance plans than areas within unincorporated county land.

Annexation of this area also helps improve public safety by allowing the City access to proactively address fire danger and reduce risks.

“Annexation of this area will offer more coordinated land use and a controlled growth plan,” said Ukiah City Manager Sage Sangiacomo. “This improves safety and sustainability for our growing community.”

Ukiah has taken a series of steps in recent years to better position the Ukiah Valley for sustainable development. It has reviewed and updated its General Plan, as well as adopted numerous zoning policies to encourage infill development. In coordination with Mendocino LAFCo, the City conducted a Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update to inform and coordinate service delivery for utilities like water and sewer. Additionally, the City worked with the County of Mendocino and the cities of Fort Bragg, Willits, and Point Arena to adopt a Master Tax Sharing Agreement. This tax sharing agreement will ensure all residents in the area pay an equal amount for the services they receive, and all residents have access to the proper level of municipal services for their community.

“It is crucial for the Greater Ukiah Valley that City boundaries match where we all live, work, shop, and play, so annexation is a necessary step,” added Sangiacomo. “This will prevent a patchwork of disconnected projects or unequal access to utilities and services. Annexation is the right way to manage growth and ensure a high quality of life in our community.”

For more information, visit the City website [here](#) or contact Deputy City Manager, Shannon Riley, at sriley@cityofukiah.com.



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