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CITY OF UKIAH HOSTS COMMUNITY WORKSHOP ON PROPOSED ANNEXATION, GATHERING PUBLIC INPUT AND SHARING INFORMATION ON LAND USE, PUBLIC SAFETY, AND FISCAL IMPACTS

Ukiah, CA. May 1, 2026. – On Thursday, April 30, the City of Ukiah held a community workshop at the Ukiah Valley Conference Center to discuss its proposed annexation map and related public information materials. The workshop drew community members, property owners, and stakeholders from across the Ukiah Valley, and provided an opportunity for direct engagement with City staff.

The meeting began with a public comment period, allowing attendees to share questions, concerns, and general feedback with City leadership. The workshop then transitioned into small group breakout discussions focused on four key topics: land use and planning, financial impacts (City and County), public safety, and the annexation process that runs through the Mendocino Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo). Each session was staffed by subject matter experts to provide detailed information and respond to questions. The workshop concluded with a return to large-group discussion to ensure additional opportunities for public input.

In April 2025, the City introduced its initial annexation proposal, called the “Valley Oak Option,” which encompassed a large portion of the Ukiah Valley. Following community feedback regarding the scale and potential impacts of that proposal, the City committed to refining the approach, reducing the footprint, and conducting additional analysis.

On April 23, 2026, the City released a revised proposal, called the “Sapling Option,” which reflects a significantly smaller study area. The updated map reduces the extent of land included north of the City, while maintaining much of the southern area. While this refined approach responds to community input, it also includes fewer revenue-generating areas, meaning the City anticipates a short-term fiscal strain in the early years following annexation but over time, financial balance would be achieved through the phased implementation of the Master Tax Sharing Agreement that was negotiated and adopted previously with the County.

Ukiah is officially a city of approximately 16,000 residents, but as the county seat and regional economic hub, it serves more than 50,000 people each day who come to work, shop, attend school, access healthcare, and participate in community life. This regional role places growing demands on City services and infrastructure that extend well beyond Ukiah's current boundaries. Annexation is the formal process by which the City can bring

those service areas within its official jurisdiction, ensuring that growth is planned strategically, properly funded, and public services are managed responsibly.

“One of the clearest benefits of annexation is improved street maintenance,” said Shannon Riley, Ukiah’s Deputy City Manager. “The City has dedicated funding and staff focused specifically on roads and sidewalks, which allows us to address needs more quickly and plan for long-term improvements. Unlike the County, which must spread limited resources across a large geographic area, the City can concentrate its investments locally and deliver more consistent, responsive service to these neighborhoods.”

“For the fire department, nothing would change for residents because we already serve these areas and are able to provide high-quality, responsive service,” said Battalion Chief Justin Buckingham of the Ukiah Valley Fire Authority. “If annexation occurs, a portion of the sales tax generated in the newly incorporated areas would come back to the City, providing additional resources to support local fire services over time.”

“We have an important and coordinated relationship between the City of Ukiah Police Department and the County Sheriff’s Office. We work well together,” said Ukiah Police Chief Tom Corning. “Our goal is to put more law enforcement officers in the Ukiah Valley, and our shared responsibility is to keep the community safe. The City Police Department is well-staffed – we have 31 of 32 officer positions filled and have the authority to hire up to 34. We also have offers out to several candidates who are completing training and will be able to start soon. If annexation occurs, we would hire four additional officers – going above the standard staffing levels recommended by the International Association of Chiefs of Police – ensuring we can maintain strong public safety services within City boundaries while the Sheriff’s Office continues to serve unincorporated areas.”

Before any changes occur with potential annexation, the proposal must be reviewed and approved by the Ukiah City Council, followed by submission of a formal application to LAFCo. From there, it enters an official review process that includes public notification, hearings, and an opportunity for affected property owners and voters to participate in a protest vote process in accordance with California law.

As the meeting concluded, Ukiah City Councilmember Doug Crane stated, “Thank you all for coming and speaking to these issues. We can do a lot more if we try and figure out how to make it work, not how to shoot it down.”

Community members are encouraged to review the proposed maps, watch the [City’s informational video](#), and stay engaged throughout the process. Background materials, frequently asked questions, and additional information are available at CityofUkiah.com/annexation.



Shannon Riley, Deputy City Manager

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