



AGENDA SUMMARY REPORT

SUBJECT: Discussion with Possible Direction to Staff Regarding the City of Ukiah’s Long-Term Land Use Planning Policy for Ukiah and the Ukiah Valley.

DEPARTMENT: Community Development

PREPARED BY: Craig Schlatter

ATTACHMENTS:

- [Attachment 1- Mendocino LAFCo P&P Manual 2018](#)
- [Attachment 2- Mendocino LAFCo 4-1-19 agenda packet](#)
- [Attachment 3- UVAP Chap. 3- Land Use and CD](#)
- [Attachment 4- UVAP Map-Planning Area \(Figure 9.1\)](#)
- [Attachment 5- Ukiah Valley Fire District Map](#)

Summary: Council will discuss the status of planning documents relating to long-term land use planning in Ukiah and the Ukiah Valley, with possible direction to Staff. This item specifically addresses the “Actionable Items” identified in the Council’s Strategic Plan under “Plan for the Future: Utilize sound principles for valley-wide planning.”

Background: The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 ("CKH Act"), enacted through the passage of AB 2838, combined existing statutes--such as the act formerly known as the Cortese-Knox Act--into a single law and significantly and comprehensively reformed local government reorganization law. The CKH Act provides the framework for proposed city and special district annexations, incorporations/formations, consolidations, and other changes of organization. This law establishes a Local

RECOMMENDED ACTION: 1) Receive report and discuss; 2) direct Staff to proceed with Policy Directives 1, 2, and 3 as outlined in this Staff Report.

BUDGET AMENDMENT REQUIRED: No

CURRENT BUDGET AMOUNT: N/A

PROPOSED BUDGET AMOUNT: N/A

FINANCING SOURCE: N/A

PREVIOUS CONTRACT/PURCHASE ORDER NO.: N/A

COORDINATED WITH: David Rapport, City Attorney

Approved: 
Sage Sangiacomo, City Manager

Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) in each county, empowering it to review, approve, or deny proposals for boundary changes and incorporations/formations for cities, counties, and special districts. LAFCos were first created by the Legislature in 1963. Currently, although exercising both regulatory and planning functions, the major planning task of LAFCos across the state is the "establishment, periodic review, and update of spheres of influence (SOI) for the various governmental bodies within their jurisdiction" (Office of Planning and Research--LAFCos, General Plans, and City Annexations, 2012).

The Mendocino County Local Agency Formation Commission ("Mendocino LAFCo") is the LAFCo for Mendocino County. Mendocino LAFCo annually reviews its five-year rolling work plan and associated budget, primarily focusing on municipal service reviews ("MSRs") and SOI Updates. Mendocino LAFCo also reviews and updates its policies and procedures manual as needed. The Mendocino Local Agency Formation Commission Policies & Procedures Manual (Attachment 1), last updated and adopted on November 5, 2018, sets forth policies and procedures for carrying out Mendocino LAFCo's functions.

A Sphere of Influence is "a plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local government agency as determined by the commission," while a municipal service review is a "comprehensive review of all agencies that provide the services LAFCo identifies" (Office of Planning and Research, 2012).

Mendocino LAFCo's 2019 five-year rolling work plan and associated budget was adopted on April 1, 2019 (Attachment 2). Included in the work plan was to update the MSR and SOI for the City of Ukiah, planned as being undertaken in Fiscal Year 2020-21. Mendocino LAFCo also voted to re-prioritize the MSR/SOI update for Ukiah Valley Fire District, originally planned to be completed in FY 2019-20, to FY 2020-21 to correspond with the City of Ukiah MSR/SOI update. The City's MSR was last updated in 2012. An update to the City's SOI has not been completed since 1984. AB 2838 and the CKH Act require the local LAFCo to review and update each local agency's SOI every five years. The law also requires local LAFCos to conduct MSRs before or in conjunction with the establishment or update of SOIs.

Both City Staff and Mendocino LAFCo staff have been in communication regarding a tentative work plan for these MSR/SOI updates since 2017. Of significant relevance has been the timing of the City's General Plan Update which, through extensive community engagement and the establishment of other long-term policies, sets forth the City's future intentions for surrounding unincorporated lands within the City's SOI. As the SOI describes the probable physical boundaries and service area for the City, it is important these two advanced planning projects are coordinated and aligned between the City and Mendocino LAFCo as much as possible.

Of additional importance is the City Council's Strategic Plan, which sets as a priority "Plan for the Future: Utilize sound principles for valley-wide planning." The recommended strategy for this item is to "Review and revise land use planning documents to be reflective of the long-term vision for the community." The "actionable items" associated with that strategy are 1) update the Ukiah General Plan; 2) update the City of Ukiah's sphere of influence; 3) prepare and adopt annexation policies, and; 4) evaluate and amend the city zoning code to improve efficiencies/public service and protect natural resources.

Discussion: Although the City's MSR/SOI updates are not scheduled to be undertaken by Mendocino LAFCo until 2020-21, there are primarily two reasons Staff is seeking Council's input regarding policy at this juncture:

1) Mendocino LAFCo has received, or may receive prior to the City's updating of the MSR/SOI, proposals from single- or multi-purpose districts in the City's SOI to annex portions of lands within the City's SOI. Under existing Mendocino LAFCo policy, "where an area could be assigned to the sphere of influence of more than one agency, the following hierarchy typically applies:

- a) Inclusion within a city's sphere
- b) Inclusion within a multi-purpose district's sphere
- c) Inclusion within a single-purpose district's sphere"

2) Mendocino LAFCo's guidelines state "in all of its decisions and actions, the Commission's desired result is the most efficient and effective delivery of services by local entities..." and "preference shall be given to those local agencies which can provide services in the most effective and efficient manner." Given the efficiency and potential capacity of both existing and future City services, Staff believes it important that the City outline its potential policy for these services for the future. This policy should be shared publicly but especially outlined to Mendocino LAFCo, the County of Mendocino, and special districts within the City's existing and proposed SOI.

Staff has researched historical City and Ukiah Valley policies regarding long-term growth management planning and analyzed the status of current land use and availability in Ukiah and the Ukiah Valley with the capacity of municipal services. Below are policy recommendations for the Council's consideration and discussion:

Policy Directive No. 1: The goals and vision of the Ukiah Valley Area Plan will be utilized as the basis for the City's policy towards future reorganization efforts in the Valley.

Adopted by the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors in 2011, the Ukiah Valley Area Plan ("UVAP") is a "comprehensive and long range inter-jurisdictional planning document" envisioned as one that would "meet the needs of the County, as well as shared needs of the City" [of Ukiah], "by addressing the important issues that affect how the area will grow..." The UVAP also sets forth a vision that "The Ukiah Valley is understood to be one community with collaborative decision-making between County and City agencies." UVAP policies "take precedence over the [Mendocino County] General Plan" for land use and development proposals in the Valley.

Section 3 of the UVAP, Land Use and Community Development (Attachment 3), lists several goals on Page 3-3 in support of this policy. Promoting compatible land uses and managing future growth to ensure essential support infrastructure is in place prior to development recognizes "that the Ukiah Valley is one community[.]" Realizing the vision of a coherent community will not be possible without the coordinated and efficient provision of services to lands in the Ukiah Valley.

Policy Directive No. 2: Maintain the City's current Sphere of Influence as the City's long-term Sphere of Influence.

Although past attempts were made by the City to revise its SOI, no update has been successfully completed, nor approved by LAFCo, since the 1984 SOI. The 1984 SOI, which is coterminous to the UVAP planning area, "extends from Highway 20 in the north to Boonville Road in the south and from ridge to ridge on east and west" (Attachment 4).

At the time of adoption of the 1984 General Plan, Mendocino LAFCo, working with the City, identified the SOI/planning area to consider the areas surrounding Ukiah that would have an impact on the ultimate development of the City." At that time, the General Plan was "based upon a policy that growth will occur, but will be directed toward existing developed areas and those locales unsuitable for viable agricultural production."

In restating the current (1984) SOI as the City's long-term SOI, the City will reaffirm that the level of growth and/or service delivery anticipated by the City remains consistent for 2020-40 and aligned with the Ukiah Valley Area Plan. Ukiah is the county seat and commercial hub of a growing region that extends over 5,000 square miles, including the counties of Sonoma, Mendocino, Lake, and Humboldt. Ukiah will invariably continue to grow in the coming years. Planned well, that growth can result in a vibrant, healthy, and sustainable community. Unmitigated, the piecemeal provision of services leads to piecemeal development, which leads to urban sprawl and/or the lack of supporting infrastructure.

Staff also recommends reaffirming the current SOI as the City's long-term SOI to ensure efficiency and reliability of service delivery within the Ukiah Valley. As an example, the Ukiah Valley Fire District spans an area larger than the City's city limits (see Attachment 5), and as recent wildfire seasons have shown, having a well-funded and operated Fire Authority is important for the continued safety of the region. Additionally, as much-needed housing is developed, it will be important to ensure adequate water and sewer infrastructure is in

place. By utilizing existing tax measures and revenue sources, the City can ensure the effective and efficient provision of services. Reaffirming the current SOI as the long-term SOI will help ensure the City has an active role in directing urbanized growth to appropriate areas in our community and ensuring "the preservation and enhancement of the existing and potential agriculture within the valley," which is one of the primary visions set forth in the 1984 General Plan.

Policy Directive No. 3: Implement an annexation plan, with the first phase designating the area to be annexed within the first 10 years.

In multiple planning documents produced over the past 35 years, including the 1984 Ukiah General Plan, the 1995 Ukiah General Plan, both the 2009-14 and 2014-19 Housing Elements, and the 2011 Ukiah Valley Area Plan, two common and recurring themes emerge: 1) our community values the rural and agricultural identity of Ukiah and its surrounding valley; and 2) our community seeks to preserve that identity through well-designed projects and conservation of open space and agricultural lands.

In developing and adopting a growth management phasing plan, the first 10-year phase would identify the area around existing and forecasted urbanized development north and south of the city limits as the focus of the City's annexation efforts. Encouraging infill development where services are already concentrated will limit unnecessary sprawl and protect agricultural uses.

Development of a growth management phasing plan will ensure adequate services and infrastructure are in place for existing development, as well as ensuring that future development occurs in a sustainable manner. This policy would preserve the agricultural identity of the Valley, including preservation of an existing natural "green belt" around these areas.

Summarizing, Staff recommends Council direct Staff to implement the following three Policy Directives:

1. The goals and vision of the Ukiah Valley Area Plan will be utilized as the basis for the City's policy towards future reorganization efforts in the Valley.
2. The City will maintain the City's current Sphere of Influence as the City's long-term Sphere of Influence.
3. The City will implement an annexation plan, designating the area to be annexed within the first 10 years.