



GREG PLUCKER
DIRECTOR

COUNTY OF COLUSA

DEPARTMENT OF
PLANNING AND BUILDING ADMINISTRATION

220 12th Street
Colusa, California 95932
TELEPHONE (530) 458-0480 FAX (530) 458-2035

GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT

GENERAL INFORMATION AND OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

What is the General Plan?

Mandated by State Law, a General Plan is an official public document that comprehensively plans for the physical development of the County. State courts have characterized the General Plan as the “constitution” for land use in the County. The document consists of texts and maps adopted by the local government through a public hearing process. The document also provides policies for decision makers that must be considered when evaluating development proposals. In broad terms, the General Plan indicates in a general way how the County should develop.

The General Plan consists of several sections called “elements.” The State mandates seven elements that a General Plan must have: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety. A General Plan may also include additional elements not mandated by the State. These elements may be adopted individually or as part of a comprehensive document. In either case, all elements must be consistent with one another and the entire General Plan must represent a compatible and “internally consistent” statement of policies.

Though all elements of the General Plan must be considered when approving development projects, the Land Use Element is usually the dominant element. The Land Use Element contains policies and maps that designate what lands are to be used for residential, commercial, agricultural, industrial, recreation, open space, public facilities, and other categories of private and public land uses. This one element usually gives a good idea of how an area will develop because the land use categories of the element take into consideration the policies of the other elements.

What is the difference between the General Plan and the Zoning Ordinance?

The General Plan is the County’s long-term plan for the development of the County. It guides decisions about County regulations, ordinances, and public improvements. The Zoning Ordinance establishes the development standards for land within the County. Where the General Plan is a guide of how the County would like to develop, the Zoning Ordinance is a tool used to help implement the General Plan. The Zoning Ordinance deals with property and its relationship to the neighborhood.

Can the General Plan be amended?

Yes, State law allows up to four amendments of a mandatory element each calendar year. However, each amendment may include more than one change to the General Plan. General Plan amendments can be initiated by the County or private individuals. Amendments can be to the policies and text of the General Plan, the maps, or both.

How do I find out my General Plan designation?

If you wish to determine what your property’s General Plan designation is you can call Planning staff at 530-458-0480 to find out. Before you do, make sure you have the property’s address and County Assessor’s Parcel Number (APN). You can get your parcel number from your property tax bill.

How do I apply for a General Plan amendment?

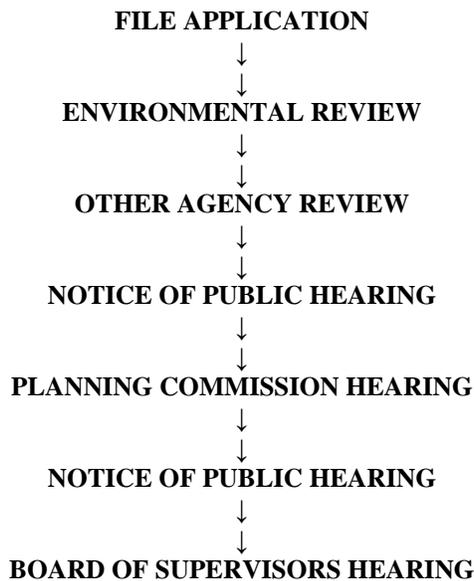
An applicant may apply by submitting the appropriate application and fees. Application and fee information may be obtained from the Department of Planning and Building and on this website. Before filing your application, a preliminary review of the project is recommended. The review of the proposal by the Planning staff is recommended so that many of the potential problems that may affect or delay your application can be avoided.

What is the process to change my General Plan designation?

A General Plan Amendment can be a lengthy process due to the limited number of changes permitted in a year and the level of consideration necessary. The process entails public hearings before both the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. Property owners within a minimum distance of 300’ of the proposed site are notified of the General Plan amendment request by the County via mailed notice. If your neighbors feel adversely affected by the proposed General Plan change, they may submit written or verbal (at hearing) objections to your request.

Once an application is submitted to the Department of Planning and Building the application is reviewed for completeness. Other County departments are also requested to review the application for compliance with health and safety standards and potential conflicts with their respective jurisdictions. A California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis will then be performed.

After these steps, the Department of Planning and Building forwards its recommendations to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission holds a public hearing at which time anyone can voice their opinion. The Commission then gives its recommendation to the Board of Supervisors, who after holding a public hearing, approve or deny the General Plan amendment. The steps are summarized below.



How long will it take?

Time is required to assess the project’s environmental impacts, and to provide notice of the public hearings. Generally a General Plan Amendment will take between six to eight months to complete. Timelines vary depending on the size and scope of the amendment. It is best to contact Planning staff at 530-458-0480 to determine timelines.

If you have any additional question regarding the process, please call Planning staff at 530-458-0480.