



**COUNTY OF MENDOCINO**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES**

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## MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 15, 2021

TO: PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: NASH GONZALEZ, INTERIM PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT #GP\_2021-0001: RECOMMENDATION OF SAFETY ELEMENT UPDATE ADOPTION TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS (**CAL FIRE REVISIONS OVERVIEW**)

**Introduction:** On April 5, 2021, the Darft Safety Element consisting of the updated Development Element and the Resource Element were submitted to Cal Fire for their review and comment. Cal Fire completed their review of the two revised/updated elements of the General Plan that make up the Safety Element on April 13, 2021 and advised the County's consultant of the recommended changes, which are shown in the attached Development Element and outlined below in this memorandum. It should be noted that the only recommended changes apply to the Development Element, with no changes to the Resource Element. Based on this, the County of Mendocino has completed the review with the Cal Fire Land Use Planning Program of the Development and Resource Management Elements of the General Plan. The next steps will include the acceptance of the changes by the County and the Element moving forward to the State Board of Forestry for certification in early May 2021. Once the State Board of Forestry has certified the Safety Element, the County's updated Safety Element will be in compliance with the provisions of SB 1241, SB 379, and SB 99.

**Background:** SB 1241 – Fire Hazard Safety – requires that the Safety Elements of general plans be revised upon the next update of the Housing Element to address State Responsibility Areas (SRAs) and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. This review is conducted with Cal Fire's Land Use Planning Program which includes a checklist of key issues to ensure all required elements are adequately addressed. Upon completion of this review, the County is eligible to submit the Element to the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection for review and adoption. The purpose of the Cal Fire review is to ensure that review and adoption by the Board is successful. As of April 13, 2021 the review process has been completed, resulting in revisions to the Development element to ensure full compliance with SB 1241 requirements.

**Element Revisions:** The following revisions, which are highlighted in the Development Element were necessary to comply with SB 1241 requirements:

**Page 3-40, Second Paragraph: Additional text added**

Referenced in the MJHMP are key strategies for the long term maintenance of fire hazard reduction projects (including community fire breaks), vegetation management along private and public roadways, and the location of County facilities within the fire hazard severity zones mapped in the County.

**Page 3-104, Policy Revision**

Policy DE-156: Ensure all roadways within the County use unique names/identifiers and provide street addressing and signage that is highly visible to ensure effective emergency response and evacuation.

**Page 3-114, Additional Action added**

Action Item DE-219.9: Annually conduct trainings and exercises with County staff that meet County emergency management and hazard mitigation needs and support Fire Protection District training needs.

**Page 3-115, Action Revision**

Action Item DE-228.5: Develop an inventory of vulnerable populations locations (senior housing, group homes, multi-family housing, etc.) structures, roads, utilities, and essential public facilities within High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones to be incorporated into the County's EOP.

**Page 3-116, Two Policy Revisions and One Action Added**

Policy DE-230: Approval of parcel maps and tentative maps in SRAs or VHFHSZs is conditional based on meeting the SRA Fire Safe Regulations and the Fire Hazard Reduction Around Buildings and Structures Regulations, particularly those regarding public and private road standards for ingress, egress, and fire equipment access. (Gov. Code, § 66474.02.)

Policy DE-231: Development shall facilitate and integrate the ability for fire protection agencies to access and maintain fuel and firebreaks, water supplies, and public and private emergency access routes.

Action DE-231.1: The County shall make fuels reduction along County roads within existing rights of way a regular part of the ongoing County road maintenance operations. The County shall encourage owners of private roads and driveways to do the same.

**Page 3-117, Two Policy Revisions and One Action Added**

Policy DE-234: Coordinate with fire protection districts to determine and report capabilities to adequately serve existing and potential development.

Action DE-234.1: Develop a service level inventory for all fire protection authorities that identifies existing fire station locations, staffing levels, and typical response times for service areas.

Policy DE-235: Developments shall be approved only if sufficient firefighting resources, such as fire stations, equipment, personnel, hydrants, and water supplies, will be available to serve all phases of development and include ongoing operations and maintenance.

**Page 3-118, Policy Revision**

Policy DE-237: Areas within the SRA and Fire Hazard Severity Zones shall be evaluated to determine the appropriate type, density, and locations of new development or reconstruction, and ensure adequate circulation, infrastructure, and services are available.

**Page 3-119, Policy Revision**

Policy DE-242: The County shall coordinate with tribal nation governments and communities within the County to complete vegetation and fuel management projects surrounding their communities, including public and private roads.

**Recommended Action**: The Planning Commission recommends acceptance of these revisions to the Development Element to the Board of Supervisors incorporating these changes into the Resolution of Adoption.

**Attachments**

Attachment 1: Revised Development Element with Cal Fire Revisions Highlighted