



City Council Staff Report

TO: City Council **DATE:** June 23, 2025

DEPARTMENT: Community Development Department

PREPARED BY: MJC

PRESENTER: Marie Jones

AGENDA TITLE: Receive a Report, Hold a Public Hearing, Receive Planning Commission's Recommendation, and Introduce, by Title Only, and Waiver Further Reading of an Ordinance 1015-2025 Amending (LCP1-24), Certified by the Coastal Commission, to:

1. Amend Map LU-4 of the Coastal General Plan to Add a Third Plan Area; and
2. Amend Table 2-10 of the CLUDC to Allow a Science Center with a Use Permit in the Public Facilities Zoning District; and
3. Add a Definition of Science Center to the CLUDC; and
4. Amend the General Plan Land Use Map and the Zoning Map to: I) Rezone the Noyo Center Parcel to Public Facilities Zoning District, and II) Rezone the Coastal Trail Parcels to Parks & Recreation Zoning District and III) Rezone the Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Parcels as Medium Density Residential Zoning.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Adopt an Ordinance of the Fort Bragg City Council Adopting an Ordinance, Certified by the Coastal Commission, to:

- a) Amend Map LU-4 of the Coastal General Plan to Add a Third Plan Area; and
- b) Amend Table 2-10 of the CLUDC to Allow a Science Center with a Use Permit in the Public Facilities Zoning District; and
- c) Add a Definition of Science Center to the CLUDC; and
- d) Amend the General Plan Land Use Map and the Zoning Map to: I) Rezone the Noyo Center Parcel to Public Facilities Zoning District, and II) Rezone the Coastal Trail Parcels to Parks & Recreation Zoning District and III) Rezone the Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Parcels as Medium Density Residential Zoning.

BACKGROUND

A large portion of the City's coastal zone (approximately 40 percent) is comprised of a former lumber mill site with lands designated and zoned for timber industrial uses. The former Georgia-Pacific Mill Site (hereafter "Mill Site"), which ceased operations in 2002, is an approximately 433-acre bluff-top site located on the Noyo Headlands west of State Route 1 that is planned and zoned for Timber Resources Industrial (IT) uses under the City's certified LCP. The Mill Site is currently the only property in the City designated and zoned IT, with allowable uses limited to timber-resource and forest-products related manufacturing, aquaculture, and public access and recreation. The Mill Site is largely vacant, underutilized, or developed with permitted or legal nonconforming uses unrelated to timber industrial uses, including, but not limited to: (1) remnant industrial access roads, warehouses, and infrastructure throughout its interior; (2) an over 3-mile-long Class 1 segment of the California Coastal Trail along the length of the western bluff of the Mill Site; and (3) four existing legal non-conforming residential units on the southern end of the site.

Since the decline of the timber industry, growth in the local economy has become oriented towards retail, tourism, and service sectors, and future growth in these areas, rather than in timber industrial uses, is projected. In 2008, when the Commission certified a comprehensive update to the City's LCP,² policies and standards were added requiring completion of a comprehensive planning process for the Mill Site to enable different land use and zoning designations than those currently allowed for the subject IT lands.³ This comprehensive planning process would afford the community an opportunity to plan for its future, engage in consensus building, and develop comprehensive land use and economic development strategies.

The City's existing certified Land Use Plan (LUP)⁴ includes Map LU-4 that depicts two Plan Areas for the Mill Site subject to the comprehensive community planning process: Plan Area A and Plan Area B. Plan Area A covers the northern half of the 433-acre site from the ocean to the western terminus of Oak Street (at the southeastern end of the plan area) to the western terminus of Elm Street/intersection with Glass Beach Drive (at the northeastern end of the plan area). Plan Area B extends (generally) from Oak Street south to Noyo Bay and west to the ocean.

This LCP Amendment application proposes to add a third planning subarea for the Mill Site, Plan Area C, to LUP Map LU-4 as well as to redesignate and rezone the land within this new Plan Area. The lands within proposed Plan Area C are comprised of a contiguous strip of IT designated/zoned lands that extends all along the generally western portion of the Mill Site and that collectively includes lands under the following ownerships: City of Fort Bragg, Noyo Center for Marine Science, and Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians (Pomo). The new plan area consists mostly of ocean-fronting and bay-fronting lands extending from Glass Beach in the north to Noyo Bay in the south. Table 1 summarizes the lands affected by the subject LCP amendment and the proposed new land use and zoning designations, and Exhibit 2 depicts the proposed new Plan Area C.

Community-based planning for the Mill Site, including for the lands within proposed Plan Area C, has been extensive and comprehensive, dating to 2003.

- In 2003, the City initiated a community-based planning process, which prioritized the development of a marine science and education center as a priority reuse option for a portion of the Mill Site.
- In 2006, with the assistance of a group of scientists and administrators of successful biological field stations across the nation, the City prepared a Strategic Plan for the center and coined its name: the Noyo Center for Science & Education at Fort Bragg ("Noyo Center").
- In 2010, the City obtained grant funding to prepare a development program, site plan, floor plans, elevations, and schematic designs for the Noyo Center. In 2011, the City acquired the subject Noyo Center lands from the property owner at that time (Georgia-Pacific) using a grant from the State Coastal Conservancy, which imposed a deed restriction that limits the use of the Noyo Center lands to a science center and/or to passive recreation.
- Between 2009 and 2012, the City, the community, and Georgia-Pacific engaged in a collaborative planning process to prepare a specific plan for the Mill Site that would redesignate and rezone the Mill Site lands from IT to other uses. The specific plan process included 29 community meetings held over six years. The draft land use plan maps generated out of these meetings included the designation of areas planned for the coastal trail and open space (finalized in 2008) and areas planned for the Noyo Center's facilities and the Pomo's lands identified on draft LUP maps in 2009-2010.
- By 2012, a preliminary draft of the specific plan had been produced based on extensive public outreach resulting in the development draft policies and regulations for the specific plan, draft revised citywide design guidelines, a draft master tentative map, a draft utility master plan, and numerous resource and background studies for an EIR including botanical and wetland studies, a traffic study, an archaeology report, and a geotechnical study, among others. However, the process abruptly stopped in the fall of 2012 when Georgia-Pacific withdrew its specific plan application and ceased funding the planning process due to a three-party lawsuit between Georgia-Pacific, Office Max, and the City regarding the liability for remediation of the Mill Site.
- In 2017, the City initiated a new comprehensive community-based planning process for the site, funded in part by a Coastal Commission grant. This comprehensive community-based planning process included numerous community meetings, Planning Commission meetings, and City Council meetings to craft and draft land use maps as well as policies and regulations for the redevelopment of the Mill Site.
- In 2018 prior to shelving the project, the City submitted an LCP amendment to the Coastal Commission to request revisions to the two key policies of the Coastal General Plan which required a Specific Plan to rezone or process an LCP amendment for the properties zoned Timber Resources Industrial (the mill site) in Fort Bragg. The Coastal Commission approved policy revisions to require a comprehensive planning process instead of a Specific Plan.

Through all the various permutations of land use maps developed to date, all have included the coastal trail/park uses, visitor- serving/science-oriented Noyo Center uses, and Pomo-owned land residential uses as mapped in proposed Plan Area C and as proposed to be redesignated/rezoned under this LCP amendment.

For this LCP Amendment process, the process has included the following steps:

1. On August 14, 2024, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing to consider the LCP amendment, accept public testimony and adopted a resolution recommending that City Council submit the LCP amendment.
2. September 9, 2024, the City Council held a duly noticed public hearing to consider the LCP amendment, accept public testimony and adopted a resolution to submit the LCP Amendment to the Coastal Commission.
3. On April 9, 2025, the Coastal Commission considered the LCP Amendment at a properly noticed public hearing and certified the LCP Amendment with a minor modification to add a definition of Science Center; and
4. on June 23, 2025, the City Council held a public hearing and accepted public testimony regarding the LCP Amendment ordinance.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The 2018 LCP amendment revised the planning process from requiring a Specific Plan to one requiring a Comprehensive Planning Process.

Policy LU-7.2: Comprehensive Planning Process Required. LCP amendments that propose to redesignate lands designated Timber Resources Industrial must be developed through a comprehensive community-based planning process that addresses at a minimum an area including one or more of the subareas as shown on Map LU-4. Community participation shall be solicited throughout the planning process in accordance with established City practices and CLUDC requirements. The LCP amendment shall:

- a) Designate new land use classifications, and include development policies and standards that establish the kinds, locations and intensity of land uses;
- b) Identify adequate connections for existing and future infrastructure such as roads, utilities, and coastal access to surrounding developed and undeveloped areas, including ensuring adequate public vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian access is provided from Highway One to the coastal trail within each of the subareas shown on Map LU-4;
- c) Establish orderly phasing for development and future rezoning activities, including ensuring that adequate public services are available for new development;
- d) Include other measures as needed to protect the health, safety, and well-being of the community;
- e) Map land uses and transportation facilities, including coastal access; and
- f) Be consistent with the all policies of the Coastal Act and Fort Bragg's LCP.

Amended Map LU-4, as Certified in 2018



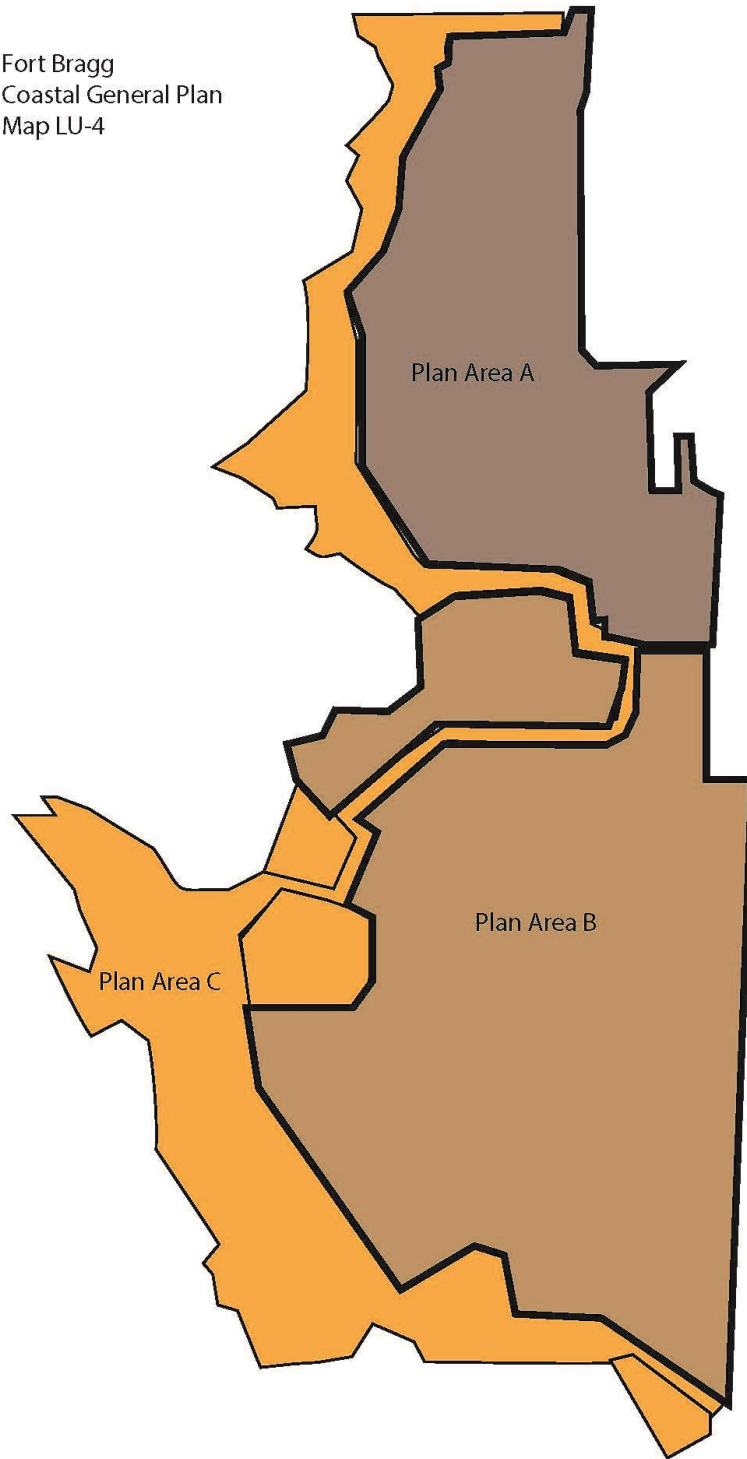
This Ordinance (LCP Amendment) includes a revision to Map LU-4 to rezone a comprehensive land use plan for a new Plan Area C, so that the comprehensive planning area includes the Noyo Center Parcel, adjacent lands owned by the City of Fort Bragg and the Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo. This allows the City to rezone these parcels in conformance with the Land Use Maps that came out of the two Mill Site comprehensive planning processes already described: namely the Georgia-Pacific Specific Plan effort from 2009 to 2011 and the City led LCP amendment process in 2017-2018. For both of these planning processes the City, community and property owners have consistently planned for the following uses for this area:

1. The Fort Bragg Coastal trail parcels were intended to be re-zoned as Parks and Recreation. The City acquired this property in sections between 2006 and 2010 and all parcels have a deed restriction that requires they be used for coastal access and recreation. The Fort Bragg Coastal Trail received three Coastal Development Permits (for the three sections) and the entire project was constructed between 2014 and 2017. This coastal access project is now complete.
2. The Noyo Center parcel was always designated for a Marine Science Center. The City acquired this property in 2010 with a Coastal Conservancy grant and the property has a deed restriction that limits the use of the site to a Science Center and/or passive recreation. This project is in the planning stage, with the exception of the Crows Nest which was established in 2015.
3. The property occupied by the members of the Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo, has been occupied by members of this Tribe since the 1950s when the Army Corp of engineers relocated their homes to this parcel to make way for an Army Corp project in the harbor. The community and the tribe have always envisioned this as a low-density residential zoning district which would continue to be occupied by local tribal members. The existing zoning makes it difficult for these residents to make changes to their residences or add second units because the residencies are considered legal non-conforming uses with the current Timber Resources Industrial zoning. This property was transferred from Georgia-Pacific to SVBP in 2021. The SVBP has requested that the property be rezoned as Medium Density Residential in order to make the existing four residential units on two parcels conforming to the zoning district.

Furthermore, as these properties are all held by landowners (City of Fort Bragg, Noyo Center

for Marine Science, Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo) who are different than the remainder of the Mill Site (which is owned by Mendocino Railroad), it makes sense to separate these parcel into a third planning area (Plan Area C). See proposed revised Map LU-4.

Fort Bragg
Coastal General Plan
Map LU-4



Additionally, the ordinance includes a text amendment to the use tables to allow a Science Center in the Public Facilities zoning District.

1. Amend Table 2-14 of 17.26.030 to add Science Center to the Public Facilities zoning district as noted below:

ABLE 2-14 Allowed Land Uses and Permit Requirements for Special Purpose Zoning Districts	Permitted Use, Zoning Clearance required P Permitted Use, Zoning Clearance required MUP Minor Use Permit required (see Section 17.71.060) UP Use Permit required (see Section 17.71.060) S Permit requirement set by Specific Use Regulations — Use not allowed			
	PERMIT REQUIRED BY DISTRICT			Specific Use Regulations
LAND USE (1)	OS	PR	PF	
Nature preserve	P	P	P	
Storage - Warehouse	-	-	UP	
Library, museum, science center	-	UP	UP	
Meeting facility, public or private	-	UP	UP	
School - Specialized education/training	-	-	P	
Caretaker quarters	MUP	MUP	MUP	
Accessory retail or services	-	P	P	

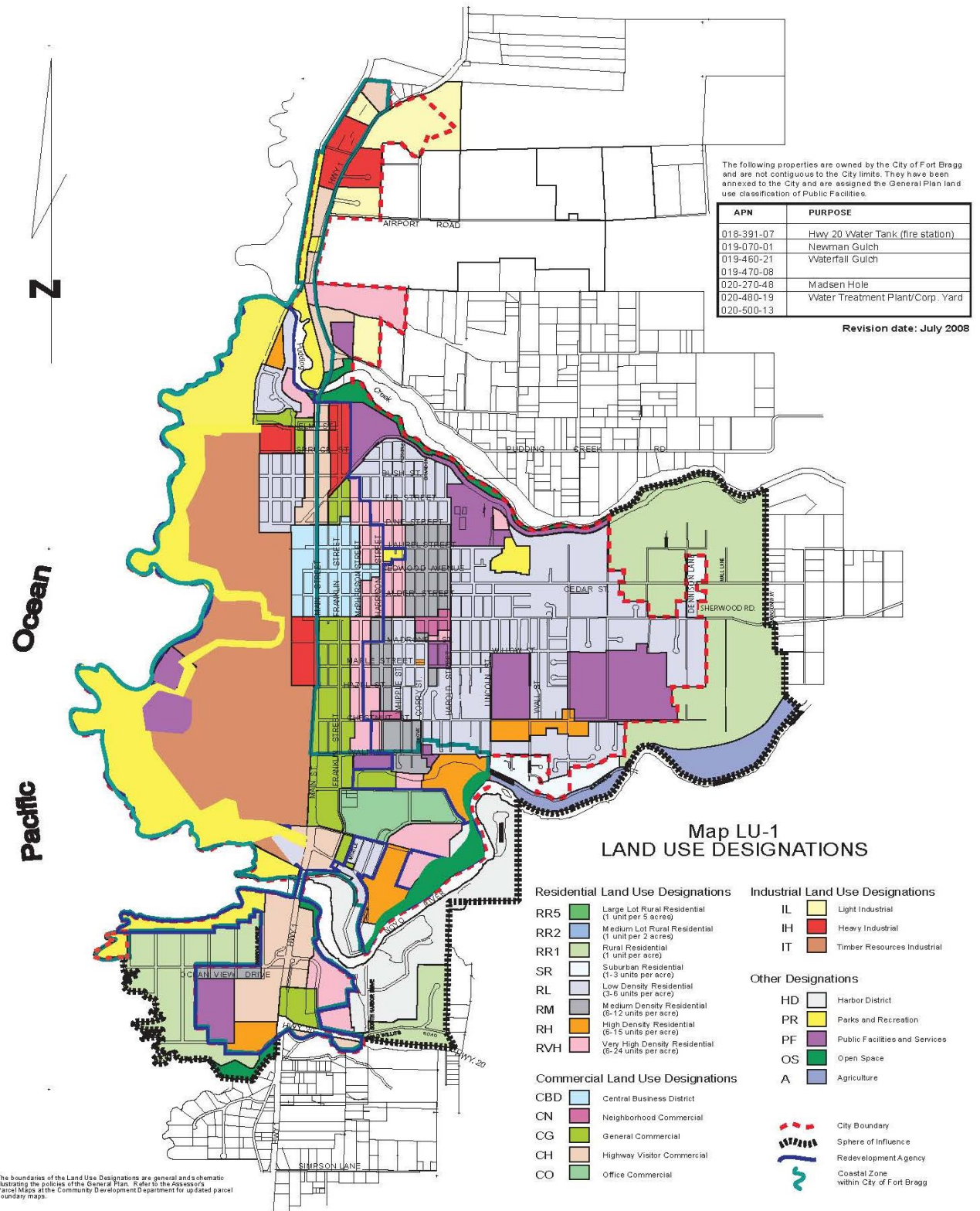
The Coastal Commission requested that the CLUDC be amended to include a definition for Science Center as follows:

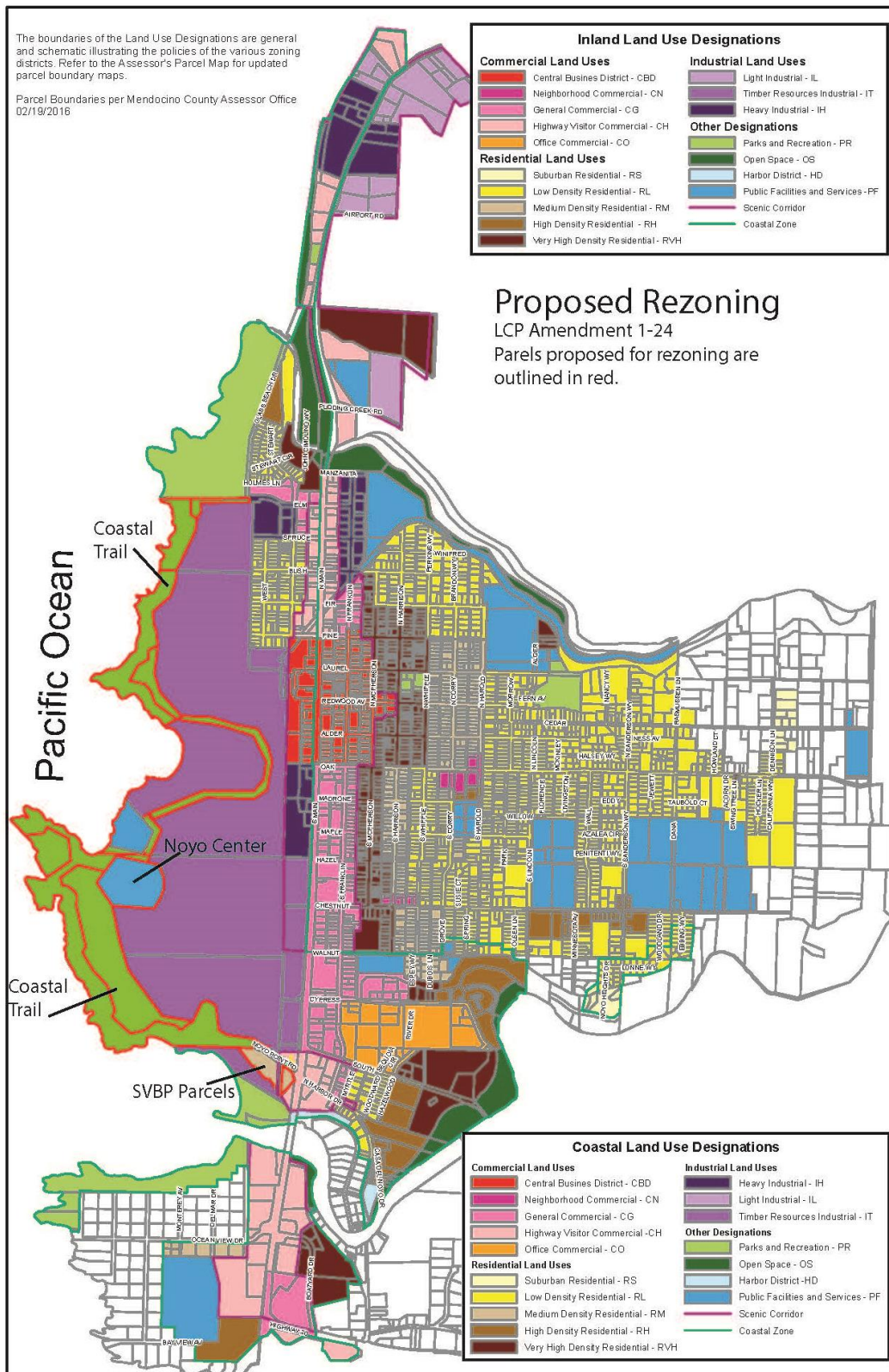
Science Center: A facility such as a museum, visitor center, or classroom building devoted primarily to scientific education and research, which includes interactive exhibits and technology to educate and provide a hands-on learning experience in one or more science subjects and which may include a research laboratory and incidental housing for researchers.

It will also amend the Coastal General Plan Land Use Map (Map LU-1) and the Zoning Map as follows and illustrated below:

- a. Rezone the Noyo Center parcel to Public Facilities, and
- b. Rezone the Coastal Trail parcels to Parks & Recreation, and
- c. Rezone the SVBP parcel to Low-Density Residential.

Amended Coastal General Plan Map LU-1





Finally, the City Council will need to make the following findings for adoption of the proposed

Ordinance to amend the Fort Bragg Coastal General Plan, the Coastal Land Use and Development Code and the Coastal Land Use Map:

A. Findings for General Plan Amendments and Zoning Map Amendments.

1. *The amendment is internally consistent with all other provisions of the General Plan and any applicable specific plan;*

The proposed amendment is consistent with the applicable General Plan policies as described in Attachment 4 of the Staff report.

2. *The proposed amendment would not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or welfare of the City; and*

The proposed amendment would establish a third planning area for rezoning of the former GP Mill Site and adopt changes to the Land Use Plan and Zoning Map which comply with existing uses of those sites. Those uses include open space, public coastal access, residential units of SVBP members and a Science Center. None of these uses would be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety or welfare of the City.

3. *The affected site is physically suitable in terms of design, location, shape, size, operating characteristics, and the provision of public and emergency vehicle (e.g., fire and medical) access and public services and utilities (e.g., fire protection, police protection, potable water, schools, solid waste collection and disposal, storm drainage, wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal, etc.), to ensure that the proposed or anticipated uses and/or development would not endanger, jeopardize, or otherwise constitute a hazard to the property or improvements in the vicinity in which the property is located.*

The existing SVBP residential units, coastal trail access and Crow's Nest are physically suitable and have not, during their operation, endangered, jeopardized, or otherwise constitute a hazard to the property or improvements in the vicinity in which the property is located. Additionally, the proposed La-Bone-atory is a small building of 2,400 SF located on a flat 11-acre parcel with easy public and emergency vehicular access from Main Street. Utilities are nearby (at the WWTF), and all public services are available to serve this proposed building. The project will not endanger, jeopardize, or otherwise constitute a hazard to the property or improvements in the vicinity in which the property is located.

B. Findings for Development Code and Zoning Map text amendments.

1. *Findings required for all Development Code and Zoning Map text amendments:*

a. *The proposed amendment is consistent with the General Plan and any applicable specific plan; and*

b. *The proposed amendment would not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or welfare of the City.*

2. *The proposed amendment is internally consistent with other applicable provisions of this Development Code.*

The proposed CLUDC text amendment would add Science Center to the use category that includes Libraries and Museum. This minor change would be consistent with the General Plan purpose of the Public Facilities zoning district and as a Science Center is fairly similar to a museum and a library. It would not be detrimental to the public interest,

health, safety, convenience, or welfare of the City.

3. *Additional finding for Zoning Map amendments: The affected site is physically suitable in terms of design, location, shape, size, operating characteristics, and the provision of public and emergency vehicle (e.g., fire and medical) access and public services and utilities (e.g., fire protection, police protection, potable water, schools, solid waste collection and disposal, storm drainage, wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal, etc.), to ensure that the requested zoning designation and the proposed or anticipated uses and/or development would not endanger, jeopardize, or otherwise constitute a hazard to the property or improvements in the vicinity in which the property is located.*

As previously noted, the Coastal Trail parcels and the SVBP parcels are physically suitable for the uses for which they would be rezoned, because those uses are pre-existing and have not endangered, jeopardized, or otherwise constituted a hazard to the property or improvements in the vicinity in which the property is located. Additionally as analyzed and conditioned in the remainder of this report the Noyo Center site is physically suitable for the La-Bone-atory and ultimately a Marine Science Center, although that project would be required to get a Use Permit and a more detailed analysis would be completed for that project at the time of application.

The LCP amendment must also address all the requirements of General Plan Policy LU-7.2 points a through f.

Policy LU-7.2: Comprehensive Planning Process Required. LCP amendments that propose to redesignate lands designated Timber Resources Industrial must be developed through a comprehensive community-based planning process that addresses at a minimum an area including one or more of the subareas as shown on Map LU-4. Community participation shall be solicited throughout the planning process in accordance with established City practices and CLUDC requirements. The LCP amendment shall:

- a) *Designate new land use classifications, and include development policies and standards that establish the kinds, locations and intensity of land uses;*

The proposed LCP amendment will redesignate lands to existing zoning districts, which already define the kinds, locations and intensity of land uses allowed in each zoning district. All relevant Certified LCP policies related to the zoning districts for Parks and Recreation, Low Density Residential and Public Facilities will remain in full force. These policies and development standards were certified by the Coastal Commission in the 2008 LCP Amendment, and there is no need to modify them. Please see the attached Consistency Analysis.

- b) *Identify adequate connections for existing and future infrastructure such as roads, utilities, and coastal access to surrounding developed and undeveloped areas, including ensuring adequate public vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian access is provided from Highway One to the coastal trail within each of the subareas shown on Map LU-4;*

These parcels are already largely developed for their intended uses. Roads, utilities, and coastal access are already provided to the Coastal Trail and the Sherwood Valley

Band of Pomo's parcels. The companion Coastal Development Permit includes special conditions to ensure that utilities will be adequately provided as the parcel is developed into the future and public roads and public access are also addressed for this site.

- c) *Establish orderly phasing for development and future rezoning activities, including ensuring that adequate public services are available for new development;*

This LCP amendment would result in zoning changes to bring parcels that are already developed into conformance with the Coastal General Plan and CLUDC. Currently the SVBP parcel has legal non-conforming development (4 residential uses), which makes it difficult for tribal residents to expand their residential structures or add second units. Additionally, the undeveloped Noyo Center parcel is adjacent to already developed parcels, the Coastal Trail and Wastewater Treatment Facility, where there are already utilities and there are adequate public services (police, fire and trash). Any future expansion in utility expansion is addressed through a special condition in the CDP for that Noyo Center project.

- d) *Include other measures as needed to protect the health, safety, and well-being of the community;*

There are no new measures needed to protect the health, safety, and well-being of the community due to these rezoning activities for the SVBP and the Coastal Trail parcels as these are existing uses for ten+ years and no issues have been identified in the time. Furthermore, the Noyo Center site rezone to Public Facilities would result in a Use Permit requirement for a Science Center or Museum. To approve a Use Permit the City would be required to make the following finding: *"The site is physically suitable in terms of design, location, shape, size, operating characteristics, and the provision of public and emergency vehicle (e.g., fire and medical) access and public services and utilities (e.g., fire protection, police protection, potable water, schools, solid waste collection and disposal, storm drainage, wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal, etc.), to ensure that the type, density, and intensity of use being proposed would not endanger, jeopardize, or otherwise constitute a hazard to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or welfare, or be materially injurious to the improvements, persons, property, or uses in the vicinity and zoning district in which the property is located."*

- e) *Map land uses and transportation facilities, including coastal access; and be consistent with all policies of the Coastal Act and Fort Bragg's LCP.*

This finding can be made, please see attachment 2 for the Coastal Act Consistency Analysis; attachment 3 for an overview of land uses, transportation facilities & Coastal Access; and attachment 4 for the General Plan Consistency Analysis.

FISCAL IMPACT

The proposed amendment will have a minor net positive fiscal impact on the City as it will result in a small increase in the taxable value of the properties which will be rezoned.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Therefore, the proposed project is statutorily exempt from further environmental review under CEQA Guidelines 15265 Adoption of Coastal Plans and Programs.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

As described throughout the body of this report, there have been countless community meetings on the rezone for these parcels and there has been very little controversy regarding the rezone.

CONSISTENCY

The consistency of the proposed ordinance has been analyzed as part of the LCP submittal process and the Coastal Commission's Certification of the LCP Amendment. Please see the attachments 2 and 3.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Receive report, hold a public hearing, deliberate and decide not to adopt the ordinance or
2. Receive report, hold a public hearing, continue the public hearing and request additional information.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Ordinance of the Fort Bragg City Council Adopting Coastal Plan Amendment (LCP 1-24), Certified by the California Coastal Commission, to:
 - a) Amend Map LU-4 of the Coastal General Plan to Add a Third Plan Area; and
 - b) Amend Table 2-10 of the CLUDC to Allow a Science Center with a Use Permit in the Public Facilities Zoning District; and
 - c) Add a Definition of Science Center to the CLUDC; and
 - d) Amend the General Plan Land Use Map and the Zoning Map to: I) Rezone the Noyo Center Parcel to Public Facilities Zoning District, and II) Rezone the Coastal Trail Parcels to Parks & Recreation Zoning District and III) Rezone the Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Parcels as Medium Density Residential Zoning.
2. LCP Amendment - Coastal Act Consistency Analysis
3. LCP Amendment - Land Use & Transportation Analysis
4. LCP Amendment - Coastal General Plan and CLUDC Consistency Analysis.
5. A Resolution of the Fort Bragg Planning Commission recommending that the City Council submit LCP Amendment 1-24 to the Coastal Commission to: 1) amend MAP LU-4 of the Coastal General Plan to add a third plan area; and 2) amend table 2-10 of the CLUDC to allow a Science Center with a use permit in the Public Facilities zoning district; and 3) amend the zoning map to: a) rezone the Noyo Center parcel to Public Facilities zoning district, b) rezone the coastal trail parcels to Parks & Recreation zoning district and c) rezone the Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo (SVBP) parcels as Low or Medium Density Residential zoning.