

In 2004, the City of Fort Bragg obtained \$125,000 in grant funding from the State Coastal Conservancy to support a community visioning process and development of strategic alternatives for the reuse of the GP Mill Site. The City hired the consulting firm MIG (with subconsultants: Economic Planning Systems (EPS) and Marie Jones Consulting) to help facilitate a community-based planning process for the reuse of the Mill Site. The goal of this Mill Site Reuse Study was to develop a basic framework and market study for reuse of the site along with some specific tools to assist in that endeavor. Five reports were prepared, presented to and accepted by City Council, including:

- Volume I: Land Use Principles and Concepts – MIG
- Volume II: Demographic and Market Analysis – Economic & Planning Systems
- Volume III: Economic Development Strategy – Marie Jones Consulting
- Volume IV: Economic Development Tools and Resources – Marie Jones Consulting
- Volume V: Community Survey and Focus Group Results – Marie Jones Consulting. This survey identified the Coastal Trail and a marine research facility as the top priorities for the reuse of the Mill Site and the City has made significant progress on both accounts, with the acquisition, construction and opening of the North and South Coastal Trail and the acquisition of a site for the Noyo Center, relocation of the Crows' Nest building and establishment of the Noyo Center non-profit. Other top priorities identified in the survey include affordable housing, a museum, an art center.

This work formed the basis for later work on the Specific Plan which started in 2007 with the submittal of an application by GP and an agreement to reimburse the City for its costs in preparing and processing the Specific Plan and the associated EIR.

In 2008, the City and GP jointly selected RRM Design to prepare the Specific Plan. This initiated a collaborative planning process between the City and GP for reuse of the Mill Site. The collaborative process was intended to establish a general consensus between the City, the community and GP regarding the key components and policies of the Specific Plan. The Specific Plan process included the following:

1. Three well-attended community meetings were conducted early in the process, setting the tone, land use groupings, and policy objectives of the Specific Plan.
2. Seventeen workshops and meetings with City Council and/or the Planning Commission were held to get feedback on and assist in the preparation and drafting of the Land Use Map, the Development Limitations, the Citywide Design Guidelines for the Mill Site Specific Plan, the Mill Pond Complex Restoration Project, and the Mill Site Specific Plan.
3. From 2008 through 2012, the City Council and Planning Commission received periodic oral and written reports and provided direction regarding the status and the content of the Mill Site Specific Plan.
4. Additionally, the Council's Mill Site ad hoc committee provided input and served as a sounding board for City staff throughout negotiation and preparation of the Specific Plan. The ad hoc committee met on numerous occasions during the four-year planning process.
5. City staff met with GP and the consultant team on a monthly basis over the four-year Specific Plan drafting period to help shape and focus the plan so that GP's Specific Plan application would best respond to the needs and wishes of the City and its residents as represented in the many meetings mentioned above. This process was at times difficult,

as GP's team did not always agree with the City's input and suggestions. As the Specific Plan was GP's application; GP's team did not have to make changes based on staff, community, Council or Commission input. However, recognizing that the final Specific Plan would have to be approved by the Planning Commission, City Council and the Coastal Commission, GP made significant changes to their initial plan based on input received.

6. The draft Specific Plan was presented to the California Coastal Commission on three occasions. Coastal Commissioners offered important insights regarding the proposed level of development and the land use map. On all three occasions, a majority of Coastal Commissioners requested less development and more land committed to open space and wildlife corridors, even as the amount of development was decreased and the amount of open space was increased as the plan evolved. (See **Attachment 1** – Coastal Commission Input.)

A draft Mill Site Specific Plan was completed in early 2012. On January 18, 2012, the City Council and Planning Commission conducted a joint work session to receive public input and provide feedback on the first four chapters of the Specific Plan. At both the January 18, 2012 Mill Site workshop and the January 17, 2012 community scoping session, some members of the City Council, Planning Commission and the public again expressed concerns about:

- 1) The amount of development that would be allowed;
- 2) The geographic extent of the development shown on the proposed Land Use Map; and
- 3) Other changes to specific policies and standards in the Specific Plan.

Attachment 2 provides the minutes from this meeting.

On February 29, 2012, a joint City Council/Planning Commission work session completed the review on the remaining five chapters of the preliminary draft Specific Plan (Chapters 5 through 9).

Attachment 3 includes the minutes from this meeting.

The Mill Site Specific Plan process was suspended shortly after this meeting because GP withdrew its application and terminated its cost-reimbursement agreement with the City. GP withdrew the Specific Plan application when GP entered into a three-part lawsuit with the City of Fort Bragg regarding the allocation of remediation costs between Georgia Pacific, OfficeMax and the City of Fort Bragg. (The lawsuit was settled in 2014, with the entire cost of remediation allocated to GP and OfficeMax.) However, at the time of the application withdrawal, the Specific Plan was not yet complete and over the intervening years the Specific Plan and the rezoning process for the Mill Site has languished, as the City has not have the financial resources to finish it. Specifically, the financing plan, infrastructure plan and the EIR were not yet completed for the Specific Plan. The cost to complete these remaining components of the Specific Plan was estimated at around \$500,000.