SECTION 6

NATURAL RESOURCES

This section contains goals, policies, and programs that establish the framework for the protection of the valuable natural resources of the Eureka area.

This goals and policies of this section are organized topically according to the following categories, each of which relates to a key objective for protection of the Eureka Area's natural resources.

- Aquatic Resources and Marine, Wetland, and Riparian Habitat
- Agricultural Preservation
- Conservation of Open Space
- Timber Resources
- Air Quality--General
- Air Quality--Transportation/Circulation

AQUATIC RESOURCES AND MARINE, WETLAND, AND RIPARIAN HABITAT

Goal 6.A: To protect and enhance the natural qualities of the Eureka area's aquatic resources and to preserve the area's valuable marine, wetland, and riparian habitat.

Policies

6.A.1. The City shall maintain, enhance, and, where feasible, restore valuable aquatic resources, with special protection given to areas and species of special biological or economic significance. The City shall require that uses of the marine environment are carried out in the manner that will sustain the biological productivity of coastal waters and that will maintain healthy populations of all species of marine organisms adequate for long-term commercial, recreational, scientific, and educational purposes.

6.A.2. The City shall establish a comprehensive wetland management program that includes all of Eureka's restored and natural wetland areas.

6.A.3. The City shall maintain and, where feasible, restore biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, and estuaries appropriate to maintain optimum populations of aquatic organisms and for the protection of human health through, among other means, minimizing adverse effects of wastewater and stormwater discharges and entrainment, controlling the quantity and quality of runoff, preventing depletion of groundwater supplies and substantial interference with surface water flow, encouraging wastewater reclamation, maintaining natural vegetation buffer areas that protect riparian habitats, and minimizing alteration of natural streams.

6.A.4. The City shall require that channelizations or other substantial alterations that could significantly disrupt the habitat values of rivers and streams incorporate the best mitigation measures feasible. Such channelizations and alterations shall be limited to the following:

a. Flood control projects where no other method for protecting existing structures in the floodplain is feasible and where such protection is necessary for public safety or to protect existing development;

b. Developments where the primary function is the improvement of fish and wildlife habitat.

6.A.5. The City shall permit revetments, breakwaters, groins, harbor channels, seawalls, cliff retaining walls, and other such construction that alters natural shoreline processes only when required to serve coastal-dependent uses or to protect existing structures or public beaches in danger from erosion.

6.A.6. The City declares the following to be environmentally sensitive habitat areas within the Coastal Zone:

a. Rivers, creeks, sloughs, gulches and associated riparian habitats, including, but not limited to Eureka Slough, Fay Slough, Cut-Off Slough, Freshwater Slough, Cooper Slough, Second Slough, Third Slough, Martin Slough, Ryan Slough, Swain Slough, and Elk River.
b. Wetlands and estuaries, including that portion of Humboldt Bay within the City's jurisdiction, riparian areas, and vegetated dunes.
c. Indian Island, Daby Island, and the Woodley Island wildlife area.
d. Other unique habitat areas, such as waterbird rookeries, and habitat for all rare or endangered species on state or federal lists.
e. Grazed or farmed wetlands (i.e., diked former tidelands).

The areas are shown on 1:500 scale maps that are available for review at the City of Eureka Community Development Department. These maps are incorporated by reference into this General Plan and are a formal part of it. However, all environmentally sensitive habitat areas may not be shown on these maps and shall, if they exist, be identified as part of any project application.

6.A.7. Within the Coastal Zone, the City shall ensure that environmentally sensitive habitat areas are protected against any significant disruption of habitat values, and that only uses dependent on such resources shall be allowed within such areas. The City shall require that development in areas adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade such areas, and be compatible with the continuance of such habitat areas.

6.A.8. Within the Coastal Zone, prior to the approval of a development, the City shall require that all development on lots or parcels designated NR (Natural Resources) on the *Land Use Diagram* or within 250 feet of such designation, or development potentially affecting an environmentally sensitive habitat area, shall be found to be in conformity with the applicable habitat protection policies of the General Plan. All development plans, drainage plans, and grading plans submitted as part of an application shall show the precise location of the habitat(s) potentially affected by the proposed project and the manner in which they will be protected, enhanced, or restored.

6.A.9. The City shall permit the diking, filling, or dredging of open coastal waters, wetlands, or estuaries only under the following conditions:

a. The diking, filling or dredging is for a permitted use in that resource area;
b. There is no feasible, less environmentally damaging alternative;
c. Feasible mitigation measures have been provided to minimize adverse environmental effects;
d. The functional capacity of the resource area is maintained or enhanced.

6.A.10. The City shall support dredging and spoils disposal to avoid significant disruption to aquatic and wildlife habitats and water circulation. Dredge spoils suitable for beach replenishment should be transported for such purposes to appropriate beaches or into suitable long shore current systems.

6.A.11. The City shall require that diking, filling or dredging of a wetland or estuary maintain or enhance the functional capacity of these resources. Functional capacity means the ability of the wetland or estuary to be self-sustaining and to maintain natural species diversity. In order to establish that the functional capacity is being maintained, all of the following must be demonstrated.

a. Presently-occurring plant and animal populations in the ecosystem will not be altered in a manner that would impair the long-term stability of the ecosystem, i.e., natural species diversity, abundance and composition are essentially unchanged as the result of the project;
b. A species that is rare, threatened, or endangered will not be significantly adversely affected; and
c. Consumptive (e.g., fishing, aquaculture and hunting) or nonconsumptive (e.g., water quality and research opportunity) values of the wetland or estuary ecosystem will not be significantly reduced.

6.A.12. The City shall require that dredging, when consistent with the provisions of this General Plan or other adopted City regulations and where necessary for the maintenance of the tidal flow and continued viability of the wetland habitat or for flood control purposes, shall be subject to the following conditions:

a. Dredging shall be prohibited in breeding and nursery areas and during periods of fish migration and spawning.
b. Dredging shall be limited to the smallest area feasible.
c. Designs for dredging and excavation projects shall include protective measures such as silt curtains, weirs, etc., to protect water quality in adjacent areas during construction by preventing the discharge of refuse, petroleum spills, and unnecessary dispersal of silt materials.

6.A.13. The City shall require that diking or filling of a wetland that is otherwise in accordance with the policies of this General Plan, shall, at a minimum, require the following mitigation measures:

a. A detailed restoration plan shall be required as part of the project application for each specific restoration site. The restoration plan shall include provisions for purchase, if required, and restoration of an equivalent area of equal or greater biological productivity, and dedication of the land to a public agency or other method which permanently restricts the use of the site to habitat and open space purposes. The restoration site shall be purchased or otherwise made available prior to any permitted diking or filling;
b. Areas adequate to maintain functional capacity shall be opened to tidal action or other sources of surface water shall be provided. This provision shall apply to diked or filled areas which themselves are not environmentally sensitive habitat areas, but would become so if, as part of a restoration program, they are opened to tidal action or provided with other sources of surface water. All of the provisions for restoration, purchase (if necessary), and dedication described under item a. of this policy shall apply to any program or activity performed pursuant to this policy.
c. Mitigation shall, to the maximum extent feasible, be of the same type as the wetland to be filled (i.e., freshwater marsh for freshwater marsh, saltwater marsh for saltwater marsh, etc.).
d. Where no suitable private or public restoration or enhancement sites are available, an in-lieu fee may be required to be paid to an appropriate public agency for use in the restoration or enhancement of an area of equivalent productive value or surface area.

6.A.14. Consistent with all other applicable policies of this General Plan, the City shall limit development or uses within wetlands that are neither farmed nor grazed, or within estuaries,

to the following:

a. Port facilities.
b. Energy facilities.
c. Coastal-dependent industrial facilities, including commercial fishing facilities.
d. Maintenance of existing or restoration of previously dredged depths in navigation channels, turning basins, vessel berthing and mooring areas, and boat launching ramps.
e. Incidental public service purposes which temporarily impact the resources of the area, such as burying cables or pipes, inspection of piers, and maintenance of existing intake and outfall lines.
f. Restoration projects.
g. Nature study, aquaculture, or similar resource-dependent activities.
h. New or expanded boating facilities in estuaries, consistent with the demand for such facilities.
i. Placement of structural piling for public recreational piers that provide public access and recreational opportunities.

6.A.15. The City shall limit uses and development in grazed or farmed wetlands to the following:

a. Agricultural operations limited to accessory structures, apiaries, field and truck crops, livestock raising, greenhouses (provided they are not located on slab foundations and crops are grown in the existing soil on site), and orchards;
b. Farm-related structures, including barns, sheds, and farmer-occupied housing, necessary for the performance of agricultural operations. Such structures may be located on an existing grazed or farmed wetland parcel only if no alternative upland location is available for such purpose and the structures are sited and designed to minimize adverse environmental effects on the farmed wetland. No more than one permanent residential structure per parcel shall be allowed.
c. Restoration projects, including the PALCO on-site restoration and enhancement program.
d. Nature study, aquaculture, and similar resource-dependent activities; and,
e. Incidental public service purposes which may temporarily impact the resources of the area, such as burying cables or pipes.

6.A.16. Consistent with all other applicable policies of this General Plan, the City shall limit uses within open coastal waters to the following:

a. Port facilities.
b. Energy facilities.
c. Coastal-dependent industrial facilities, such as commercial fishing facilities.
d. Maintenance of existing or restoration of previously dredged depths in navigation channels, turning basins, vessel berthing and mooring areas, and boat launching ramps.
e. Incidental public service purposes which temporarily impact the resources of the area, such as burying cables and pipes, inspection of piers, and maintenance of existing intake and outfall lines.
f. Restoration projects.
g. Nature study, aquaculture, or similar resource-dependent activities.
h. New or expanded boating facilities.
i. Placement of structural pilings for public recreational piers that provide public access and recreational opportunities.

6.A.17. The City shall require that any uses that involve substantial alterations of streams and rivers incorporate the best mitigation measures feasible and shall be limited to the following:

a. Flood control projects where no other method for protecting existing structures in the flood plain is feasible and where such protection is necessary for public safety or to protect development.
b. Developments where the primary function is the improvement of fish and wildlife habitat.

6.A.18. The City may permit new fill for repair and maintenance purposes on lands adjacent to the previously filled northern waterfront provided that it is consistent with other General Plan

policies and where all of the following apply:

a. Fill will be placed in previously filled areas which have been subject to erosion;
b. Fill will not be placed beyond the existing bulkhead line;
c. Fill is necessary to protect existing development, coastal-dependent uses, or redeveloped areas from erosion;
d. Fill will not interfere with commercial fishing activities and facilities; and
e. Placement of the fill is consistent with the coastal public access policies of the General Plan.

6.A.19. The City shall require establishment of a buffer for permitted development adjacent to all environmentally sensitive areas. The minimum width of a buffer shall be 100 feet, unless the applicant for the development demonstrates on the basis of site specific information, the type and size of the proposed development, and/or proposed mitigation (such as planting of vegetation) that will achieve the purposes(s) of the buffer, that a smaller buffer will protect the resources of the habitat area. As necessary to protect the environmentally sensitive area, the City may require a buffer greater than 100 feet. The buffer shall be measured horizontally from the edge of the environmental sensitive area nearest the proposed development to the edge of the development nearest to the environmentally sensitive area. Maps and supplemental information submitted as part of the application shall be used to specifically define these boundaries.

6.A.20. To protect urban wetlands against physical intrusion, the City shall require that wetland buffer areas incorporate attractively designed and strategically located barriers and informational signs.

6.A.21. The City shall require that all land use activities adjacent to gulch greenways be carried out in a manner that avoids vegetative removal below the break in slope (usually those areas with a slope of 30 percent or greater) and that does not alter natural land forms and drainage patterns.

6.A.22. The City shall maintain Indian Island as a site for habitat, scientific research and education. Existing uses may be maintained but shall not be expanded, except that reburial of Native American remains shall be permitted as part of the mitigation for coastal-dependent industrial development elsewhere in the Planning Area.

6.A.23. The City, in consultation with the Department of Fish and Game, Coastal Conservancy, Coastal Commission, Humboldt County, Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation, and Conservation District, affected landowners, and other interested parties shall prepare a detailed, implementable wetlands management, restoration and enhancement program consistent with the provisions of this General Plan. The objectives of the program shall be to enhance the biological productivity of wetlands; to minimize or eliminate conflicts between wetlands and adjacent urban uses; to provide stable boundaries and buffers between urban and habitat areas; to provide restoration areas, including the City-owned lands on the Elk River Spit that may benefit from restoration and enhancement, to serve as mitigation in conjunction with future projects that may include wetland areas. Upon completion, the wetlands management and restoration program created by this policy shall be submitted to the Coastal Commission for review and approval.

6.A.24. Within the Coastal Zone, where there is a question regarding the boundary, buffer requirements, location, or current status of an environmentally sensitive area identified pursuant to the policies of this General Plan, the City shall require the applicant to provide the City with the following:

a. Base map delineating topographic lines, adjacent roads, location of dikes, levees, of flood control channels and tide gates, as applicable;
b. Vegetation map, including identification of species that may indicate the existence or non-existence

of the sensitive environmental habitat area;

c. Soils map delineating hydric and non-hydric soils; and

d. Census of animal species that may indicate the existence or non-existence of the sensitive environmental habitat area.

The City shall transmit the information provided by the applicant pursuant to this policy to the Department of Fish and Game for review and comment. Any comments and recommendations provided by the Department shall be immediately sent to the applicant for his or her response. The City shall make its decision concerning the boundary, location, or current status of the environmentally sensitive habitat area in question based on the substantial evidence in the record and shall adopt findings to support its actions.

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION

Goal 6.B: To protect agricultural lands for their resource, aesthetic, and economic values.

Policies

6.B.1. The City shall not approve non-agricultural development on agricultural lands with Class I or Class II soils within the Planning Area.

6.B.2. The City shall require the retention in agricultural use of agricultural lands within the Coastal Zone with soils other than Classes I or II in agriculture use, except under the following conditions:

a. Continued or renewed agricultural use is demonstrated to be infeasible,
b. Conversion to urban uses would locate development within, contiguous with, or in close proximity to, existing developed areas, or
c. Farmed wetlands are proposed and funded through a wetland management and restoration program for restoration of resource-dependent activities.

6.B.3. The City shall limit uses in grazed or farmed wetlands to the following:

a. Agricultural operations (except for greenhouses on slab foundations).
b. Farm-related structures (including barns, sheds, and farmer-occupied housing) necessary for the continuance of the agricultural operation. Such structures may be located on an existing grazed or farmed wetland parcel only if no alternative upland location is available for such purpose and the structures are sited and designed to minimize the adverse environmental effects on the farmed wetland. No more than one primary residential structure per parcel shall be allowed.
c. Restoration and enhancement projects.
d. Nature study, aquaculture, and similar resource-dependent activities.
e. Incidental public service purposes which may temporarily impact the resources of the area, such as burying cable and pipes.

6.B.4. The City shall ensure that expansion of public services and public service facilities, which is otherwise consistent with the provisions of this General Plan, does not reduce agricultural viability through increased assessment costs.

6.B.5. Consistent with the Coastal Act (California Resources Code Section 30250(a)), the City shall prohibit land division of existing agriculturally-designated land within the Coastal Zone, other than for leases for agricultural uses.

CONSERVATION OF OPEN SPACE

Goal 6.C: To support the continued protection of valuable open space resources in and around Eureka.

Policies

6.C.1. The City shall preserve vital portions of open-space areas around and within the city in their natural state in order to insure their maintenance as wildlife and fish habitat areas, natural drainage areas, agricultural areas, and areas of passive recreation and outdoor education.

6.C.2. The City shall protect critical habitat areas and preserve the ecosystem of existing natural areas within the city.

6.C.3. The City shall retain open-space needed to provide community and neighborhood identity, efficiency, and amenities;; insulate conflicting land uses; and act as a noise barrier between noise-sensitive and excessive noise-generating uses.

6.C.4. The City shall coordinate its open space planning, acquisition, and development efforts with those of Humboldt County and regional and state agencies.

6.C.5. The City shall prepare and adopt Gulch Greenway Preservation/Management Guidelines that identifies and protects the vegetation and habitat in and the hydrologic capacity of Eureka's gulch greenways. These guidelines shall include provisions for defining the boundaries of gulch greenways, as generally indicated in Figure 6-1, identifying the boundaries of all affected parcels lying wholely or partly within the gulch greenways, ensuring new development is compatible with the environmental and public safety values of the gulch greenways, and restoring gulch vegetation and habitat as appropriate.

6.C.6. The City shall permit private property owners adjacent to gulch areas to develop, where appropriate, by utilizing Planned Unit Development (PUD) concepts while ensuring that gulch slopes and bottoms are retained in their natural state and that development does not occur in areas subject to flooding or where slopes exceed 30 percent.

6.C.7. The City shall require that areas of unique historic and scenic quality and areas containing identified critical habitats be preserved.

6.C.8. The City shall encourage multiple use of open-space resources consistent with other policies and standards of this General Plan.

TIMBER RESOURCES

Goal 6.D: To conserve the Eureka area's timber resources, enhance the quality and diversity of forest ecosystems, reduce conflicts between forestry and other uses, and encourage a sustained yield of forest products.

Policies

6.D.1. The City shall work with Humboldt County and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) to encourage the sustained productive use of timberland as a means of providing open space and conserving other natural resources.

6.D.2. The City shall work with Humboldt County and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) to discourage development that conflicts with timberland management.

6.D.3. The City shall encourage and promote the productive use of wood waste generated in the Eureka area.

AIR QUALITY--GENERAL

Goal 6.E: To protect and improve air quality in the Eureka Area.

Policies

6.E.1. The City shall cooperate with other agencies to develop a consistent and effective approach to air quality planning and management and to develop mitigation measures to minimize stationary and area source emissions.

6.E.2. The City shall support the North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District in its development of improved ambient air quality monitoring capabilities and the establishment of standards, thresholds, and rules to more adequately address the air quality impacts of new development.

6.E.3. The City shall require project-level environmental review to include identification of potential air quality impacts and designation of design and other appropriate mitigation measures or offset fees to reduce impacts. The City shall work with project proponents and other agencies in identifying, ensuring the implementation of, and monitoring the success of mitigation measures.

6.E.4. The City shall submit development proposals to the North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District for review and comment in compliance with CEQA prior to consideration by the Planning Commission and/or City Council.

6.E.5. In reviewing project applications with potential for creating air quality impacts, the City shall consider alternatives or amendments that reduce emissions of air pollutants.

AIR QUALITY--TRANSPORTATION/CIRCULATION

Goal 6.F: To integrate air quality planning with the land use and transportation planning process.

Policies

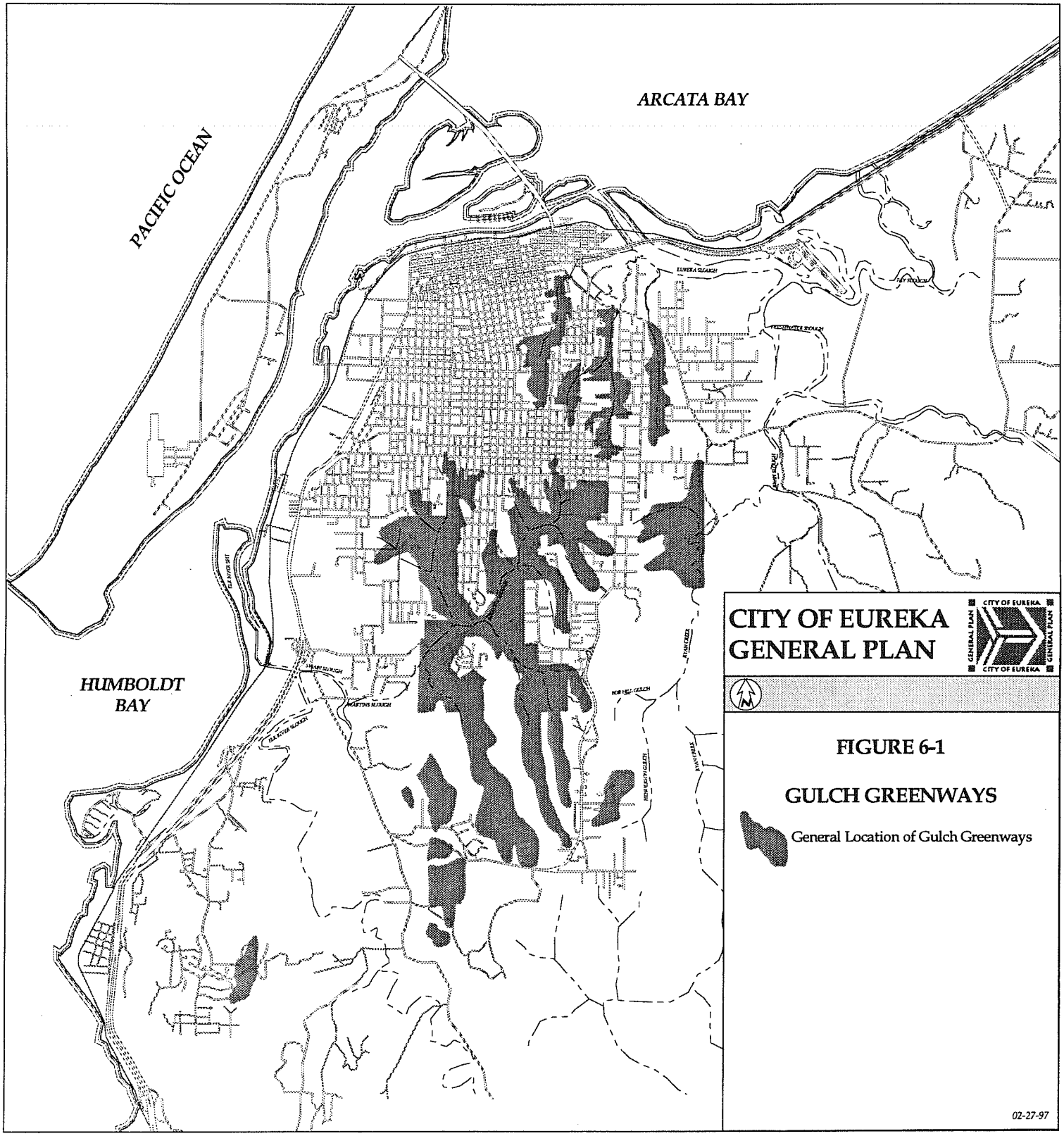
6.F.1. The City shall attempt to ensure smooth-flowing traffic conditions for major roadways through planning of traffic signals and traffic signal coordination, parallel roadways, and intra- and inter-neighborhood connections where significant reductions in overall emissions can be achieved.

6.F.2. The City shall continue and, where appropriate, expand the use of synchronized traffic signals to smooth traffic flow and thereby reduce pollutant emissions.

6.F.3. The City shall encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation by incorporating public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian modes in City transportation planning and by encouraging new development to provide adequate pedestrian and bikeway facilities.

6.F.4. The City shall consider instituting disincentives for single-occupant vehicle trips, including limitations in parking supply in areas where alternative transportation modes are available and other measures identified by the North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District.

6.F.5. The City shall endeavor to secure adequate funding for transit services so that transit is a viable transportation alternative. New development shall pay its fair share of the cost of transit equipment and facilities required to serve new projects.


ARCATA BAY
PACIFIC OCEAN
HUMBOLDT BAY
EUREKA SLOUGH
MARTINS SLOUGH
CITY OF EUREKA
GENERAL PLAN
CITY OF EUREKA
GENERAL PLAN
GENERAL PLAN
CITY OF EUREKA
FIGURE 6-1
GULCH GREENWAYS
General Location of Gulch Greenways
02-27-97

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

6.1. The City of Eureka, in consultation with the Department of Fish and Game, Coastal Conservancy, Coastal Commission, Wildlife Conservation Board, Humboldt County, Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation, and Conservation District, the Army Corps of Engineers, potentially affected landowners, and other interested parties shall prepare a detailed, comprehensive, and implementable program for wetlands management and restoration in and adjacent to the city. In the preparation and implementation of the wetlands program, Eureka shall seek the expert and financial assistance of the State Coastal Conservancy, the Wildlife Conservation Board, and Department of Fish and Game. The program shall include all of Eureka's restored and natural wetland areas and shall include development of a Wetland Mitigation Bank as a comprehensive tool for mitigating the loss of wetlands to development.

Responsibility: Utilities Department
Community Development Department
Time Frame: FY 97-98

6.2. The City shall prepare, adopt, and implement an enhancement plan for the PALCO Marsh.

Responsibility: Engineering Department
Community Development Department
Time Frame: FY 97-98

6.3. The City shall undertake a program to identify wetlands on all City-owned property. The potential for impacts to these wetlands shall be identified, including potential impacts from development consistent with this General Plan. As part of this program, the City shall consider approaches to creating a wetland mitigation bank from these City-owned parcels.

Responsibility: Utilities Department
Time Frame: FY 97-98

6.4. The City shall prepare and adopt guidelines for siting development near environmentally sensitive habitat areas. The guidelines shall include provisions for identifying the precise boundaries on each affected parcel of the sensitive areas and any required buffer areas.

Responsibility: Community Development Department
Time Frame: FY 97-98

6.5. The City shall prepare and adopt guidelines for gulch greenway preservation/management that identify and protect the vegetation and habitat in and the hodrologic capacity of Eureka's natural gulches. These guidelines shall include provisions for defining the boundaries of the gulch greenways, identifying the boundaries of all parcels, lying wholly or partly within the gulch greenways, ensuring that new development is compatible with the environmental and public safety values of the gulch greenways, and restoring gulch vegetation and habitat as appropriate.

Responsibility: Planning Commission
Community Development Department
Time Frame: FY 97-98

6.6. The City shall prepare and adopt guidelines for drainage and stormwater management that shall address new development and existing developed areas. The guidelines shall identify appropriate best management practices (BMPs) that are applicable to and effective in controlling both the quantity and quality of runoff in the city.

Responsibility: Utilities Department
Time Frame: FY 98-99

6.7. The City shall work with the County in preparing a map or maps delineating the boundaries between the various watersheds within the Planning Area. The map should delineate both natural watershed boundaries and watershed boundaries as affected by storm drainage and surface drainage alternatives.

Responsibility: Engineering Department
Community Development Department

Time Frame: FY 98-99