COUNTY OF MENDOCINO
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES
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OCTOBER 2026 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

Introduction Highlights

Planning & Building Services (PBS) continues to improve transparency, permitting operations, and long-term planning. Monthly performance metrics are published to track application volumes, workloads, and processing times across divisions. The County is also advancing implementation of the new Accela cloud-based permitting system, with the formal project kickoff planned for October 2026 and system development anticipated to begin in November. Full implementation is expected to take approximately 12 months. The County has also initiated recruitment for a new Planning and Building Services Director, with the position posted in early October.

The Planning Division is progressing several key initiatives, including the drafting of the Data Center Ordinance, Short-Term Rental Ordinance, and Housing Element. Additionally, the Sea Level Rise Resiliency Strategy remains on schedule for final execution by December 31, 2026. Public workshops were held in coastal communities from September 29 through October 5 to gather community input.

I. Effective County Government Organization

- To support transparency and track departmental performance, monthly metric reports are published on our webpage. These reports provide an overview of permit and project application submittal volumes, current workloads, and processing timeframes for each division. The most recent reports can be accessed here: https://www.mendocinocounty.gov/departments/planning-building-services/metrics-and-permits.
- The County has initiated the recruitment process for a new Planning and Building Services Director. The position is being filled on an interim basis, and the recruitment was posted in early October.
- PBS continues to move forward with implementation of Accela, the County's new cloud-based permitting system. County staff and the contracted implementation team are preparing for the formal project kickoff in October, which will establish the project structure, implementation approach, and expectations for the work ahead. Members of the project's Core Team will also participate in Agile training with the contractor in preparation for the development and testing phases of the project. In the meantime, project work is underway to develop the implementation backlog, which identifies and organizes the workflows, reports, documentation, system functionality, and other items that will be configured and developed within the new system. The first project sprint (development cycle) is anticipated to begin in November, when the PBS Core Team will begin actively developing, reviewing, and testing these components with the implementation team. Implementation is anticipated to take approximately twelve (12) months.
- Planning Division staff met with the Data Center Ad Hoc Committee to review ongoing work on the Data Center Ordinance and associated use classifications. Staff is incorporating public comments and feedback from the Board of Supervisors' September 1, 2026 meeting, during which the moratorium was enacted.
- A draft Short-Term Rental Ordinance has been completed and reviewed by Planning staff. The Planning Division anticipates bringing the ordinance before the Planning Commission prior to the end of the calendar year.

- A draft Housing Element has been completed and is under review by Planning staff. The Planning Division is planning to present it to the Planning Commission by the end of the calendar year.

II. A Safe and Healthy County

- The vendor contract for the General Plan Resource Management Element update has been finalized. Planning Division staff will be meeting with the consultant team to initiate work on this component of the General Plan.

III. A Thriving Economy

- No specific activities were reported under this priority area during this reporting period.

IV. A Prepared and Resilient County

- Mendocino County is continuing to update its Local Coastal Program ("LCP"), which guides land use and development along the coast. PBS staff updated the Board of Supervisors on the status of the LCP update project at their meeting in Fort Bragg on September 15, 2026. Background and technical studies are nearing completion, and County staff are beginning to draft policy amendments.
- The Mendocino County Sea Level Rise Resiliency Strategy is still on track to have a final execution date of December 31, 2026. The County's consultant hosted a series of public workshops along the coast from September 29 to October 5 to receive input on the Resiliency Strategy, including in-person workshops in Westport, Fort Bragg, Mendocino, Point Arena, Gualala, as well as a fully virtual option.
- PBS continues to advance the Sea Level Rise Baseline Policy LCP Update (GP_2026-0001). Draft baseline policies were presented to the Planning Commission at their meeting on August 20, 2026. The Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the policy amendments to the Board of Supervisors. The Department anticipates that the Board will hear the proposed amendments in October.

Other/Additional Information

- Planning and Building Services Online Customer Survey is Live! Click the link to complete our confidential Customer Survey. https://forms.office.com/g/UjZnVN4eHe