

February 1, 2007

Humboldt County Board of Supervisors
825 Fifth Street
Eureka, CA 95501

Dear Chairperson Neely and Supervisors,

The NCHB and Humboldt Builders Exchange want to thank you for holding the recent hearing to discuss the course of action for public hearing and review process for the draft documents for the General Plan update. We are supportive of the overall order of draft Plan documents to be reviewed and the plan document format as shown in the mock-ups presented by staff. However, NCHB requested on the record at that hearing a time frame of 60 days for public review of the draft documents is needed to “turn around” comments within the various group structures, to allow for interested parties/groups to participate in the update and to come up with substantive comments for consideration by the Planning Commission and for your Board on the various chapters and elements. It is our recollection that in the discussion had by your Board, the Board agreed to discuss the draft document review period separately, at a different time.

Please accept this letter as a respectful re-iteration of that request. We would like to see your consideration of modifying the public review period for draft plan documents from 30 to 60 days put on a Supervisors agenda as soon as possible. Please accept the following for your consideration in this matter:

- The plan group draft documents are long, and very detailed. Some plan update 'groups' will sometimes include more than three documents/reports for review at one time for a given public hearing before the Planning Commission or before the Board of Supervisors. This is a huge amount of information to digest. To ensure a good General Plan, adequate time should be given all interested parties to review and to comment on the draft documents.
- Usually, group sub-committees meet only once monthly; any comments that are generated therein need to go to the lead committee or Board for approval *before* comments can be submitted to Planning staff. 60 days would allow for the above process as well as any editing that is required of the comments.
- Additionally, at a recent Planning Commission hearing, the Planning Commissioners voiced a preference to see public comments received by staff **BEFORE** they hear plan update group draft documents to save time and potential controversy at a given hearing. We agree with that idea; it provides a courtesy to the Commission that they are due, as well as to your Board when the time comes.
- Through one of NCHB's recent information requests to the County, we were informed that the Planning staff is and has been actively working with other groups such as ours who have been making contributions to the plan in their areas of expertise on draft documents and reports

before the official public review period; the Industrial Timber Owners, Humboldt Watershed Council and others have been working with staff on the Forest Resources and Agricultural Resources reports to name some. The acquired records show that some of these efforts began years ago. Our groups are interested in, and have expertise and concerns about the above mentioned plan components as well as others. We would like to be afforded the same opportunity to fully participate in the plan update as others have been.

We, like all interested parties, support the County in its goal of creating a new General Plan that encourages a balance of infill and growth at an acceptable rate to protect our citizens and our natural resources while supporting the local economy. There is a lot at stake; the interest and property rights of landowners, jobs and education, the level of growth of our local communities, the health and safety of the citizens that live here, public health and safety, and the environment.

We understand that the Plan update has been going on for sometime, and we understand the modification of the draft document review period from 30 days to 60 days may add time to the update process. Having said that, we do not want a rushed public hearing and input portion of the Plan update to result in a "new" Plan that falls short of being a good Plan for Humboldt County. We believe that with the change from 30 to 60 days for document review incorporated into the update process, the end product will be a better Plan for the future of our County.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the above and we look forward to working together on the General Plan update.

For the Northern California Association of Home Builders,

Jim Furtado, President

For the Humboldt Builders Exchange,

Rob McBeth, President

cc: All Humboldt County Planning Commissioners
NCHB Board Members
Humboldt Builders Exchange Board of Directors
Kirk Girard, Humboldt County Planning Director
Loretta Nickolaus, Humboldt County CAO
Tamara Falor, Humboldt County Counsel