

Testimony before the Humboldt County Planning Commission, March 15, 2007
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Dear Commissioners:

Before I make specific recommendations on language changes to the Plan, I would like to make the following three observations:

All alternatives, but for D, would force most new housing into existing communities and cities where services exist. The rural character of our area is characterized by larger parcels adjacent to more urbanizing communities. If we discourage larger parcels and force more people into smaller and smaller parcels, I believe that we will lose our rural character. I do not believe that crowded urbanized settings are the character we need to create.

I have the sense that staff hopes that you quickly accept recommendations and move ahead at a rapid rate. Although I probably will not agree with all of your specific recommendations, I have significant confidence in your collective wisdom and hope that you will move ahead with deliberate consideration and discussion. After all, you are the Planning Commission and you have the responsibility to recommend a plan you believe in.

The language should have clear meaning. If staff is to evaluate projects that must conform to ambiguous language, I shudder to think of the consequences.

I make the following recommendations for change:

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3. The plan must ensure efficient (Definition of efficient?) use of water and sewer services and focus development in those areas and discourage low density residential conversion of resource lands and open space.

What does the term "efficient use" of services mean?

6.1. The plan must contain long-term agriculture and timber land protections .such as increased restrictions on resource land subdivisions and patent parcel development. (Too specific for guiding principles)

The two examples should be placed in specific policy sections not in the general guiding principles.

8. The plan must be practical, and actionable and should minimize additional costs for housing and job creation.

With housing at a very low affordability, this plan should work to implement the collective vision of the future of Humboldt County and develop policies that minimize increased cost of housing and development. With the goal of increasing living-wage

jobs, we do not want a plan that would add significant additional costs to creating those jobs and make job creating projects economically non-viable.

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13. Promote the development of walkable communities that meet daily needs, offer a healthy lifestyle (what does that mean?), and reduce the need for automobile trips.

I am not sure what the definition of a healthy lifestyle is that is recommended and I am concerned that Planning and Public Works staff will evaluate proposals for the lifestyle choices they offer.

15. The plan must promote sustainable (what does that mean?), development.

I shudder to think of how Public Works staff will evaluate the sustainability of a proposed development.

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The Housing Element (2004) is bound as a separate document and serves as the housing element portion of the general plan countywide for the unincorporated areas.

With the controversy over the Housing Element, I am shocked that staff has recommended that it be incorporated directly into the new plan.

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Reduction in existing large lot residential subdivision potential outside of community planning areas

Please consider that larger parcel sizes are what characterize much of our county and we should not force everyone to live in an urban like setting.

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GP-P1 The public's right. The public has a right to fully participate in **all** land use _____
_____ planning decisions.

If this means that every project had to go to a public hearing the costs would escalate significantly.