



www.helpumboldt.com

“ Jobs, Housing & Property Rights for working families ”

August 15, 2007

Mr. Thomas Herman, Chairman
Planning Commission
County of Humboldt
825 Fifth Street, Room 111
Eureka, California 95501

Subject: General Plan Update
Economic Development Element

Dear Chairman Herman and Members of the Commission:

HELP is a group of volunteers from many walks of life who came together in January 2004 to encourage the County to bring balance to the update of the General Plan. Members include homebuilders, former Humboldt County planner, landowners with small single family lots as well as owners of larger properties, realtors, people working for utility companies, teachers, high school students, those in finance and accounting, insurance sales, chamber of commerce members, general contractors and suppliers, consultants specializing in timber lands, attorneys, retired people, homemakers, landplanners, landscape architects, a Humboldt Harbor Commissioner, forest product sales, a member of the Humboldt Community Services District Board, homeowners, and individuals who would like to be homeowners someday.

We are pleased that an Economic Development Element is being added to the County's General Plan. As stated on the County's website regarding the Economic Development Element:

This chapter establishes a consistent set of policies that provide general direction to local government on how the community can focus resources to retain local business, stimulate new firm creation and business expansion within existing and emerging industries, support the tax base, and sustain the ability to provide public services for current and future residents.

We agree. It is private businesses that generate tax revenues to fund vital public services. Creating an atmosphere that encourages businesses to locate, grow here and create jobs, is essential to a vital economy. Policies that encourage jobs and housing are paramount to that environment, including:

1. Adequate land, with available and cost-effective infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, drainage, etc) to support housing, commercial, and industrial uses.
2. Commercial and industrial land must have adequate access to markets beyond County boundaries. Rail and highway transportation to support Humboldt Harbor operations are key components to the County's future competitiveness.
3. Air transportation, in terms of both passenger and freight, must be enhanced to facilitate long term economic development.
4. Entitlement costs typically represent about 40% of the cost of development. Policies to minimize entitlement expenses should be implemented by County officials.

Mr. Thomas Herman, Chairman, 8-15-07 cont'd

5. Policies to help revitalize the timber and fishing industries are important to providing jobs and tax revenues.
6. Humboldt County has a unique opportunity to be a key player in the Pacific Northwest's trade with foreign markets. Access to markets via the harbor and rail is crucial for competing in the international marketplace.
7. Policies that respect property rights are not only legally consistent with the U.S. Constitution, they are morally correct and economically healthy.
8. Policies which recognize the needs of County citizens and generate the supply to meet those needs must be adopted and implemented.

Written policies are meaningless if they are not implemented.

Current practices by County officials, whether they are intentional or merely the unintended consequences resulting from anti-business agendas, too often discourage economic development. HELP urges a new era of a "can do" philosophy that will stimulate the County's economy and enhance its residents' way of life.

The General Plan update process is a most important opportunity to address Humboldt County's severe problem with a lack of good jobs and affordable housing. The Economic Development Element should be a key part of the effort to serve the residents of this County by encouraging job creation and housing development while protecting property rights. Sketch Plan A is a deficient proposal that hinders the achievement of these vital objectives. The Commission should take care not to be overly influenced by a very vocal minority that is aggressively pushing a no growth agenda that is contrary to the best interests of the majority of the residents in this County.

We appreciate this opportunity to participate in the General Plan update and urge you to adopt these recommendations as you plan for future generations. We especially thank you for being open to considering the various view points from all County citizens.

Sincerely,

Kay Backer, representing
Humboldt Economic & Land Plan

cc: Bruce Emad, Planning Commissioner
Mary Gearheart, Planning Commissioner
Richard Hansis, Planning Commissioner
Scott Kelly, Planning Commissioner
Sef Murguia, Planning Commissioner
Jeff Smith, Planning Commissioner
Supervisor Jimmy Smith, District 1
Supervisor Roger Rodoni, District 2
Supervisor John Woolley, District 3
Supervisor/Chair Bonnie Neely, District 4
Supervisor Jill Geist, District 5
Loretta A. Nickolaus, County Administrative Officer
Kirk A. Girard, Community Development Services Director
Ralph Faust, County Counsel
Robert K. Best, Trainor Fairbrook Attorneys

helpcountyherman19