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HUMBOLDT COUNTY  
PLANNING COMMISSION

Mr. Jeffrey C. Smith, Chairman  
Planning Commission  
Humboldt County  
825 Fifth Street, Room 111  
Eureka, CA 95501

Re: Chapter 10, Community Design

Dear Chairman Smith and members of the Commission:

Since the meeting of last Thursday was long and covered a presentation of all the communities of Humboldt County, little time was available for comment on Chapter 10. Please accept this letter as my comment on the proposed chapter. I have gone over Chapter 10 a number of times, and make the following observations:

1) 10.1 Introduction: The chapter is optional, and, in my view, redundant since at least 10 other chapters are referenced as influencing "community design". To claim that community design will solve crime, pollution, and other problems is ludicrous. Eliminate this chapter. It is counter productive.

2) 10.2: Is McKinleyville being used as a model for the balance of the county? I know of no other area like McKinleyville. Other areas have different topography and a different history and should be treated on an individual basis. Not a good model. Besides, the impression I have of Chapter 10, is that it is lifted from an urban document and imposed on this rural area. Use appropriate models.

3) 10.3: "and they want to discourage sprawl". Do you mean by that families should not have the opportunity to have a house and a yard? Do you want to control how/where families live?

4) Did I miss something? Nowhere in Chapter 10 is a streamlined permit process addressed. In fact, Chapter 10 would increase the cost/burden of building in this county.

Goals & Policies:

CD G1 - 5 Quotes from McKinleyville.

CD-G-3: Mixed use buildings: The mixed use zone specifies living space on the second floor above commercial space. Some of the proposed mixed use zones have existing buildings and could accommodate commercial use by having the residential use to the side or rear of the site. As proposed, the regulation would eliminate persons with mobility problems.

CD-P 9: Reducing parking requirements is self defeating. Businesses cannot succeed in an area where they are not readily accessible. And we do need our cars to go to work, school, shopping, etc. There is no other way to get around in this county.

CD-P15: We have front porches now. They are called 2-car attics, workshops, utility rooms. Haven't you seen doors open and folks working in them? And neighbors visiting, and kids playing hoops in the street? Get real!

CD-P16 Alleys are usually dark and less frequented than streets. The area from which I come closed the alleys because of the crime and drug trafficking. Alleys can be a very serious security problem. Don't do it.

CD-P17: The problem isn't in the garages facing the street, it is in the sameness of the houses in a new subdivision. It takes a number of years for trees to grow and landscaping to mature and owners to remodel and change the houses to suit their changing needs. View subdivisions that are 20-25 years old as examples.

CD-P19: Cul de sacs are a legitimate design tool in PUDs and help create a feeling of a special place. I have seen the ends of cul de sacs used for neighborhood celebrations, garage sales and the like. Cul de sacs help create a feeling of neighborhood.

There are other points to make, but I think you understand my point of view. Chapter 10 is unnecessary, optional, and should be eliminated. It creates more burdens. Thanks for your attention.



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cc: Planning Commissioners Scott Kelly, Tom Herman, Richard Hansis, Mary Gearheart, Bruce Emad, Sef Murguia. Supervisors Jill Geist, Bonnie Neely, John Woolley, Roger Rodoni, Jimmy Smith, Loretta Nickolaus, CAO, Kirk Girard, Director Community Development Services, Tom Hofweber, senior planner.