

Dear Supervisors:

Unfortunately, I cannot attend your meeting tonight because I have agreed to attend an event that will publicize the One Laptop per Child initiative that I believe is an extremely important effort to bring education to children worldwide including in our county. I understand that you will be considering the Community Infrastructure & Services Element for the General Plan Update, and that this section of the general plan only makes passing reference to the need to have a significant Telecommunications Plan as a part of the General Plan. Ms. Tina Nerat sent me a summary of recent events with the Planning Department which is copied below. I urge you to carefully consider her request that telecommunications policy be made a major part of the plans for the development of our region. There are few issues that are more important to the future of our young people, our healthcare, our ability to deal with emergency situations, the diversification of our struggling economy and the poverty that results, and, of course, the educational opportunities that will be available to the people of our region. Please instruct the Planning Department to use the materials that Ms. Nerat has provided to them and to include a separate Telecommunications section in the General Plan. Thank you for considering my views and again my apology for not making a personal appearance at the meeting tonight. Thanks to you also for your leadership of our good community. We are fortunate to people of your caliber as Supervisors. Rollin

History:

In 2004, I was contracted by the County to do a telecom assessment of the County. One of the deliverables was a proposed Telecom Element for the General Plan Update. Another deliverable was an assessment of the proposed Wireless Transmission Facility Ordinance. See proposed plan and background at [http://www.neratech.net/docs/final\\_report.pdf](http://www.neratech.net/docs/final_report.pdf) starting on page 66. My comments on the ordinance are on page 78. This Element would have made Humboldt the first in the state to have a Telecom Element.

Feedback in 2004-2005 from the County on the proposed Telecom Element was favorable and it seemed to be generally understood that some version of it would be included in the General Plan Update as a standalone Element. County personnel have talked as if it was a done deal. And in fact, this proposed Telecom Element has been discussed by the Governor's Broadband Task Force members and word has spread around the state that "Humboldt has a model you should look at". I have gotten calls asking for the link to my report.

So .... when I saw the content of the proposed element last week, I scheduled a meeting with the Planning Department. They agreed that omission of Telecommunications policy was an oversight, and we've been in very positive discussions over the last week to correct the oversight. However, the current architecture of the General Plan Update requires Board of Supervisors approval to add a standalone Telecom Element. If there isn't a standalone Element, telecom policy will be scattered around in Circulation, Land Use, and Economic Development Elements. The Planning Department can't change the structure without us advocating to the Commission and Board of Supervisors.

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