



PLANNING DIVISION
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DATE: January 9, 2008
TO: Humboldt County Planning Commission
FROM: Kirk A. Girard, Director of Community Development Services
SUBJECT: **Staff Report # 11 for January 17th Meeting**

RECOMMENDED COMMISSION ACTION:

It is recommended that the Commission take the following actions:

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Open the public hearing and receive the staff report.
2. Continue taking public input on Group 7b Sections: Community Infrastructure and Services, Circulation, and Water Resources Elements
3. Provide Commission direction on suggested modifications.
4. Introduce Group 7c Sections; Draft Land Use Plan Maps, and Community Design
5. Discuss Plan review schedule and process
6. Continue meeting to January 31st, 2008.

SUMMARY

Infrastructure, Circulation, and Water Resources

At the Planning Commission's meeting on December 20, 2007, the Commission reviewed the Community Infrastructure and Services, Circulation, and Water Resources Elements. A summary of the public comments is included as Attachment A. A summary of the Commissioner comments is included as Attachment B. Written comments on the draft documents received between December 20th and January 9th are included as Attachment C. Anticipated comments from HCS and the City of Eureka have not been received as of this date.

Planned Land Use Maps

Chapter 6 – The Planned Land Use Maps are a key component of the general plan. They defined the kinds, intensity, and locations of planned land uses. Draft maps were prepared for most areas for a series of community meetings covering the following areas: Willow Creek/Orleans, Orick/Big Lagoon, Trinidad/Westhaven, McKinleyville, Fieldbrook/Glendale/Blue Lake, Arcata/Eureka, South Eureka, Fortuna/Hydesville/Carlotta, Garberville/Redway, and Petrolia. Input received at these meetings and through correspondence is being used to produce revised draft maps for each of the four Plan Alternatives. Because of public controversy regarding rural resource (timber and ag) land uses, mapping for Alternatives A & B will be delayed until the Commission has had additional time to discuss and provide direction on these matters. The January 31st meeting is scheduled to provide a more in depth discussion and review of the draft maps.

Community Design Element

Chapter 10 – The Community Design Element addresses the basic design elements of development pattern, streetscape, building form, and open space. Policies and implementation measures in the Community Design Element help define and promote community character.

Planning Commission Review Process

Your Commission may wish to set aside some time to discuss the future schedule and review process for the General Plan.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Summary of public comments at December 20th, 2007 meeting.

Attachment B: Summary of Commissioner Comments at December 20th, 2007 meeting.

Attachment C: Written comments received between December 20th and January 9th.

Attachment D: Chapter 10 – Community Design

Attachment A:

Summary of public comments
at December 20th, 2007 meeting

**Verbal Public Comments
General Plan Update
Preliminary Hearing Draft
Planning Commission Hearing 12/20/07**

Index #	Synopsis of comments received during Planning Commission meeting
	Jennifer Bergman – the County has committed itself to curbing greenhouse gases. 45% of the County’s greenhouse gases are from transportation. Alternative A provides a balance of different transportation modes. Treat these modes as the prize itself, not just a bonus prize. Look forward to including greenhouse gas issues in the policies of the circulation element
	Nancy Marie – the general plan needs to address climate change. So much of our transportation results in greenhouse gas emissions. If we set up our communities so people have to rely on cars, we’re going in the wrong direction
	Jeannine Kaprielian - Concur with the above speakers. Would love to see more walkable communities. The grocery store relocated out of my neighborhood, now I need to take a car to get groceries. Like Plan A
	John Winzler - Concerned about the Circulation Element, in particular the South Eureka area. Lots of development potential on these 2 parcels. We need a major east-west road from Walnut Avenue to Elk River. That route needs to be maintained in the Element. Show it on the map, and the property owners need to be notified. Reardon relief road is referred to in the Eureka Community Plan.
	Susanne Simpson - I’m a senior citizen, and I do a lot of hiking and biking trails. I encourage the County to put in more hiking and biking trails.
	Lew Litzky - I’m also a senior citizen. We need safer bike lanes and hiking trails. I think it would be a real blessing for better hiking and biking facilities. Eco hostel project in Eureka – there’s an enormous potential for ecotourism in this County. Facility in Wales draws 80,000 visitors per year. It’s as far from London as we are from San Francisco. People want to come here to park their cars, get on their bikes, and visit the local destinations. Put bike trails on the front burner. Response from Tom Herman I just think it’s important to account for the aging population.
	Tina Christensen HAR. - Comments on Infrastructure Report – the deadline needs to be extended. Staff Response: there are a number of technical reports that serve as background for the General Plan. The comments on the report will continue to be a part of the public record, but after January 1, those comments will not result in changes to the technical report. But the service districts need more time to provide comments. Staff Response: the service providers have been at the table in development of the report, and were provided an early release of the draft, so we don’t anticipate many comments from them. (Herman) Is there a problem allowing more time for review of the report? Staff Response: it may result in delays to the review process. (Gearheart) comments may also be addressed in the environmental documents.
	Tim Olson – Briceland Fire Department. We are a bake sale fire department. We run on a 42K budget, and it’s going up. We just got a 100K grant. 90% of our calls are medical. We get no revenue from taxes. We get 20K from donations. When CDF leaves the area, we cover for them. We made 32K by covering for CDF. But that funding is not secure. We need some help because our medical calls are going to bankrupt us in the future.
	Chris Rail. Backlog of road maintenance. Congestion is bad in some areas and it’s going to get worse. Instead of thinking of multimodal as an extra obligation thing, we need a fundamental shift. Are we dealing with roads, or is it a transportation system. The Element doesn’t seem to change the course of our policies, so the

	system is just going to get worse.
	Aaron Antrim - 25% of the community doesn't have drivers licenses. Senior mobility event. Kathleen and Bud Tillinghast are seniors, and are dependent on public transit and other modes of travel. People are going to go for 6 years of their life without cars. We need to serve these people with transit oriented development. Need adequate sidewalks. A more balanced approach to circulation.
	Debbie Provolt – HAR. Infrastructure Element – IS-P27. No new discretionary development unless it is in a fire district or ...(some alternatives). This policy highlights the importance of discretionary vs ministerial permit requirements. I'd like to see maps of the fire protection districts. It seems that this is a backdoor way to shut down development on TPZ parcels.
	Victoria Copeland – Policy worksheets should be included in the consolidated document and it should be presented to allow for discussion.
	Brian Cox – Director of Environmental Health 58% of HC residents are overweight or obese. 41 % of school age children are overweight, or at risk of becoming overweight. Public Health is seeing these trends reflected in public health indicators, such as the increase in Type II diabetes, which is a preventable disease. We should encourage more bicycling and pedestrian. The Element needs to be revised. It has good standards for roads, but lacks the same for other modes of travel. Increasing the width of roads may not result in improvement for bike and pedestrian uses. It should give bike and pedestrian use as detailed treatment as roads. Should have LOS standards for bike and pedestrian use, and we're ready to help.
	Julie Williams – concerned about developer impact fees. Inclusionary zoning is another issue that is coming up. These Elements are core to the GPU. We need at least another 30 days to review the report. Service Districts haven't had enough time to comment.
	Jen Rice. Blueprint planning links land use and transportation planning. (gave a Sacramento example). By tinkering with land use mix, you can reduce vehicle miles traveled. Need more linkage between the land use element and circulation element. We get what we plan for, and what we have is what we tend to plan for, transportation planning for cars - it's an endless loop. We need to get people out of their cars. It will help support our local economy. And with the water resources element, Plan A policies that have the County regulations reflect State laws will help streamline restoration efforts. If a property owner knows up front that there are going to be all those restrictions that apply to their land, like salmonid habitat, etc., that would really help property owners make better decisions about purchasing their property and using it.
	Lee Ulansey – we need more time to review the technical reports.
	Kay Backer – (read into record comment letter W-138 on infrastructure study) Growth area on p. 18 – p 32 – waste water services costs are unknown are some of these same areas are growth areas. How many hookups will HCS D be able to provide? What population growth rates were used? Sketch Plan 3 was used for modeling, and it was replaced – how are they reconciled. Where should growth occur? Good job by John Miller and Winzler and Kelly. They weren't given enough time to complete the report. They should be funded to complete the work program.

Attachment B:

Summary of Commissioner comments
at December 20th, 2007 meeting.

**Planning Commissioner Comments
General Plan Update
Preliminary Hearing Draft
Planning Commission Hearing 12/20/07**

Commissioner	Synopsis of comments received during Planning Commission meeting
TPZ continued meeting	
Hansis	Please direct comments to the issue, not staff
Kelly	Public trust comment – my comment was not that County staff had failed, it was the whole system failed
Murguia	Seconded Hansis comments about staff. We're not here to indemnify anybody's investment, but we're also here to not do anyone harm.
Gearheart	The County's biggest asset is our trees. We need to get back to that. It's sad to see such conflict.
Herman	I'm interested in getting to the meat of the plan. There's a lot of work ahead of us. I think we're headed in the right direction
Infrastructure Element	
Kelly	Reading through this, it points out the potential for fees for a whole host of services. Are those new fees? If so, we really have to simplify the process for administering the fees. Response: we don't have a payment structure for replacing the capacity that was put into place 30 years ago or more pre Prop 13. Other jurisdictions have a more aggressive pay as you go fee structure. Fees on new development can't be used to fix systems for existing development. Could accept lower levels of service. The fees that we've got in place are typically paid for at the time of development. At the rate of new development, how are we going to pay for the new service? These are the big questions.
Hansis	You mentioned rate shock – can you speculate what the dollar amount is that we're talking about? Response: no
Herman	It seems backwards to set a level of service that is infeasible and then do an economic or feasibility analysis. Response: we have per unit costs to compare costs of development in different areas, which can be. You're right that we shouldn't adopt a level of service we can't afford. It seems hard to adopt a general plan that is based on some future study.
Murguia	There are base levels of service we are committed to by law. We aren't reinventing the wheel. Development is going to be most economic is where development already is. Very extensive development in undeveloped areas is going to be expensive. We don't have to figure it out at a project level. I don't think we're dealing with something that is all that difficult. We're already doing economic feasibility analysis all the time. New development is going to have to pay its way, and in areas without developed infrastructure, it's going to be expected to build there. More pressing is the issue of how do we deal with developed areas that are at capacity or have exceeded capacity. Infill development in areas without adequate services – how do we deal with that?
Herman	Let's take a lot in McKinleyville, for example. We're going to set an area up for development, and what if the cost of services are too high there, and

	<p>development doesn't end up going there. Nobody will build it, and no one will come. When we establish new fees for new development, we can't price it so high that the development can't come.</p> <p>Response: what we've learned is that it is an engineering solution to bring services to undeveloped areas. A lot of the angst of the development community is that there are few areas ready to build. Development in rural areas will probably be more expensive from a public investment perspective. Other communities are able to blend sales tax with fees from new development, but the County doesn't have much sales tax revenue, so fees on residential development are going to have to pay a higher share of the cost for new services.</p>
	<p>I assume that rural enforcement costs more than in urban areas – are we headed to a two tier fee, where rural areas would pay more?</p> <p>Response: It does cost the County more to respond to rural calls. The new fees could reflect that disparity.</p>
Circulation Element	
Kelly	<p>P 74 of packet- connection between public health and non-motorized transportation, there should be data backing this up. There may be some data available. Clarify, McKinleyville Community Plan policies not included – what is the status of those policies.</p> <p>Response: Certain McKinleyville CPA policies would apply Countywide.</p> <p>- Page 88 table of classifications, sidewalks and bikeways – table says “yes”, does that mean that they all apply in urban areas.</p> <p>Response: Table from consultants work. Public Works is not prepared at this time to address these standards at this time. Public works has not completed review at this time.</p> <p>-Did we decide to identify roads by name and specific standards, and were maps provided?</p> <p>Response: maps will be provided at a later date, Public Works may help out in mapping.</p> <p>-I have questions regarding C-IM9, what is the intent of this measure?</p> <p>Response: Timely, indicates that any change to corridor affects other corridors and should be comprehensively planned.</p> <p>-Would Old Arcata project be held hostage by CDP? Caltrans should comment on this.</p> <p>Response: policy is consistent with Caltrans comments.</p>
Hansis	<p>P 98 contains interesting facts from Regional Transportation Plan, increase in VMT and fuel consumption. In light of AB32, green house gas issues, is this realistic?</p> <p>Response: this is a deficiency in the Element regarding increases in green house gasses; this will be dealt with in EIR and could feed back into Element. Attorney General taking strong position on global warming and General Plans, especially Circulation Elements.</p>
Gearheart	<p>Average age increasing, school enrolment decreasing, should consideration of this be given to livable communities for senior citizens. Circulation would be good Element to address this in.</p> <p>Response: mixed use development proposals would place commercial near residential and would be more convenient to seniors.</p>

Attachment C:

Written comments received
between December 20th and January 9th.

Attachment D:

Chapter 10 – Community Design