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John Miller, Michael Richardson
Humboldt County Planning & Building

Maya Conrad, Chair
McKinleyville Municipal Advisory Committee

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear John, Michael and Maya,

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Discussion Draft of the McKinleyville Town Center Ordinance. I have been following the process of developing the plans for this area, and appreciate your work in bringing the project to this milestone. I offer the following comments for consideration by the Advisory Committee and the County:

1. Page 5, **Figure 2.3.3 Map 3 – Parks and Open Space Map.** The areas labeled “Gathering Area/Farmers Market” and “Gathering Area/Transit Plaza” have the potential to be great amenities to the community. The “gathering area” function would be greatly enhanced if these two spaces could be combined and reconfigured so that the transit circulation flow does not bisect it.
2. Page 7-9, **Table 3.1-1: Allowed Land Uses and Permit Requirements by Area.** This table is clearly going to be a workhorse of the implementation of this plan, setting out what is and is not allowed in each zoning category, and what type of permitting process would apply. In the TC-AS (Active Open Space) category, several of the uses listed under “Open Space Use Types” do not seem appropriate as Principally Permitted uses, including Wetland Restoration, Fish and wildlife management and Watershed Management. These seem the appropriate uses for the areas designated TC-OS (Open Space Preservation). Also, Caretakers Residence does not seem an appropriate use (even, as shown, with a Use Permit required) for the limited area designated for this category, when ample residential area is provided in the other categories adjacent to these areas.
3. Also on Page 7-9, **Table 3.1-1.** There seems to be a disconnect between the Notes at the end of the Table, and the places where footnotes appear in the listings above. Notes 1 and 6 are duplicates of each other. The footnote about residential density seems to only be called from entries for Commercial Uses and Services. There is a footnote 2 on the listing for Trails, but none of the Notes seem to have to do with Trails. And the rest of the Notes do not appear to be called out from anywhere in the Table.

4. Also on Page 9, at the end of **Table 3.1-1**. The optional text to consider adding is not clear. “All permitted uses must be conducted within completely enclosed buildings unless otherwise expressly authorized.” Is this not the case whether stated or not? What is the concern that this language seeks to address?
5. Page 11, **Section 3.3.1 Purpose**. The Active Open Space area is referred to here as TC-AOS, where everywhere else so far in the document it is referred to as TC-AS. This should be clarified. Also, it refers to “passive or active open space” – shouldn’t passive open space be in the Open Space Preservation category, while this category is intended for active use?
6. Page 12, **Section 3.4.3.1 Block Dimensions**. Provision of mid-block alleys will have a great benefit to the circulation and appearance of the Town Center area as it develops. However, if the blocks feature mid-block alleys that are 20 feet wide and parking is permitted, their access function will quickly be blocked. Perhaps this should refer to “access to parking.”
7. Also on Page 12, **Section 3.4.3.1**. The standard for eliminating mid-block parking access between Dahlia and Gwin Roads, replaced by a continuous alley behind redeveloped buildings, is a good one which should improve circulation and pedestrian/bicycle safety along Central Avenue. The block between Holly and Dahlia should be included in this standard for the same reasons.
8. Page 13, **Section 3.4.4.1 Frontage Types for New Development**. The concept of a “forecourt” sounds like a very pleasant amenity for a new business in the Town Center area. The proposal to include an option for a forecourt design seems to contradict the possible added language noted in #4 above. If a forecourt were included in the design of a new structure, would it not be permitted to have any of the permitted use take place in that area? Note that Section 3.4.5.2 also relates to potential uses of forecourt areas.
9. Page 16, **Section 3.4.5.1 Storefront Articulation Standards**. This is a great idea, and will greatly enhance the aesthetics of the Town Center area as it develops. The proposed standard to require articulation every 40 feet contradicts the language in Note 4 of Table 3.4.4.2, Building Form and Site Design Criteria on page 14, which specifies articulation “no wider than 45 feet.”
10. Page 22, **Section 4.1 Thoroughfare Standards**. The emphasis on addressing the needs of all users (pedestrians, bicycles, etc.) is appreciated. The section indicates that “each subdivision shall be evaluated ... Appropriate requirements will be imposed at the time of subdivision approval ...” Would it be appropriate to say “subdivision or other development” in case there is a proposal to develop the land that does not involve subdividing it?
11. Page 24, **Figure 4.2.1 Central Avenue (Dahlia Way to Gwin Road)**. The proposal to provide diagonal parking, while accommodating pedestrian and bicycle travel as shown, has the potential to help reduce the speed of traffic on Central Avenue, something which the community has expressed a desire for. However, applying this treatment to only a single block in the middle of the long run of Central Avenue won’t accomplish as much benefit in this regard as may be hoped for. It would be desirable to extend this approach farther along Central Avenue, and to provide some sort of transition into it at each end, to achieve the desired effect.
12. Page 35, **Section 6.2 Sign Types**. The provision of guidance to allowable types of signs for new developments should greatly assist with the aesthetics of the Town Center area. The inclusion of “A-frame & Standing Signs” seems in contradiction to the statement in Section 6.1, “Signs should be an integral part of the design of storefront alterations and new

construction.” If there is a desire to include these as allowable types of signs, there should be a requirement that they be sized and placed so they do not obstruct the pedestrian path of travel.

13. Page 39, **Section 7.2 Preservation of Important Trees.** The proposed requirement to protect significant existing trees throughout the Town Center area will go a long way toward retaining the special sense of place that is associated with this site. Does this requirement apply to all such trees within the Town Center plan area, or only within the portion designated as Wetland areas? It would be desirable to apply it throughout the Town Center site. Also, language is included that “trees ... that cannot feasibly be retained may be removed as a component of a wetland restoration plan.” Would such a plan include a requirement to replant trees of the same species at a particular ratio, and to monitor their success for a given period of time? If not, it would be beneficial to propose such a requirement in this section of the Town Center Ordinance.

Thank you for considering my comments and suggestions. Please contact me by email or phone (see info above) if you have questions or need additional information. I look forward to this planning work moving forward toward the successful implementation of the Town Center concept envisioned in the McKinleyville Community Plan.

Warm regards,

Rick Marshall (e-signature)

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