

Spencer, Martha

From: Lodes, Sharyn on behalf of CDS Feed Back
Sent: Friday, April 13, 2007 10:26 AM
To: Spencer, Martha
Subject: FW: Noise and Safety Elements: Chris Rall

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APR 13 2007

HUMBOLDT COUNTY
 PLANNING DIVISION

-----Original Message-----

From: cjr16@humboldt.edu [mailto:cjr16@humboldt.edu]
Sent: Thursday, April 12, 2007 1:35 PM
To: CDS Feed Back
Subject: Noise and Safety Elements: Chris Rall

CDS Website Feedback Form Submittal

Thursday, April 12, 2007

BrowserType	Mozilla/5.0 (Windows; U; Windows NT 5.1; en-US; rv:1.8.0.11) Gecko/20070312 Firefox/1.5.0.11
Comments	<p>Dear Planning Commission and Staff,</p> <p>Below are my comments on the noise and safety elements of the draft updated Humboldt County General Plan. Specific policies to address these issues would probably be placed in the Land Use and Circulation Elements, but they would affect noise and safety heavily.</p> <p>Noise Element The source of most noise mentioned in the Noise Element is traffic, and yet there is no mention of plans to reduce the source of noise. There should be a provision in the Noise Element referring to Land Use and Circulation Elements, stating that that these elements will work aggressively to reduce the proportion of trips by car and vehicle miles traveled to help reduce noise in the county.</p> <p>Safety Element The first sentence in the Safety Element reads: "The purpose of the Safety Element is to reduce the risk of death, injuries, property damage, and economic and social dislocation resulting from earthquake, fire, flood, and other hazards." One of the "other hazards" is the elephant in the room. The risk of death from automobile accidents is more than twenty times higher than the risks from earthquake, fire and flood combined. Property damage from accidents far exceeds that from fires. And yet there is no mention of the best ways to go about reducing this huge threat to our physical safety and the safety of our property. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, motor vehicle accidents account for about half of all accident fatalities, while fire represents 1.9%. Earthquakes and tsunamis don't even make it onto the chart. Motor vehicle accidents are the number one cause of death in the U.S. for people 1-35 years old¹. On average, 42,000 Americans are killed and 3.5 million are injured each year in motor vehicle accidents. Property damage from auto accidents is substantial (around \$45 billion per year² compared with only \$6 billion from fires³).</p> <p>Luckily, there is a way to improve safety and reduce property damage. Public transit is 5-10 times safer per passenger mile⁴. Non-motorized transport is also safe for the community. Pedestrians bumping into each other don't generally hurt each other, and bicycle accidents are almost never fatal as long as there are no cars involved. So while measures to improve safety with regard to fire, earthquake and flood are a good idea, the Safety Element needs to address the single biggest threat to safety, motor vehicles. I suggest adding a provision in the Safety Element referring to Land Use and Circulation Elements, and stating that that these elements will aggressively encourage reduction in proportion of trips by car, a corresponding increase in the use of non-motorized transportation and mass transit, and a reduction in motor vehicle miles traveled to reduce the impact of transportation on safety in the county.</p>

Specific recommendations for land use policy
 Compact mixed development will enable people to live closer to places of work and shopping, enabling travel by walking or bicycling. High density development will facilitate more effective mass transportation. The county should include scaleable density in this element. Scaleable density, means adding provision that allows for changing the empirical level of density for the categories of low, medium and high density development if demand for development outstrips supply of build-able space. This will enable the presumed "Alternative A" (still not available for review) to incorporate growth beyond what is projected, however unlikely.
 Means for relaxing parking standards (reducing the parking required per unit) should be provided to facilitate high-density development that encourages car-free living in high density areas well-served by transit.

Specific recommendations for transportation policy
 Transportation policy must be focused on reducing the community's dependence on the automobile as the sole mode of travel. To do this, pedestrian and bicycle safe routes should be a high priority. County level bus service should be expanded. Specifically, Redwood Transit (RTS) should offer more frequent service, and service on Sundays. Garberville should be offered morning and evening service to Eureka, similar to the Crescent City and Willow Creek Buses. Investigation of the feasibility of Bus Rapid Transit along the RTS route should be conducted, and this service should be developed in phases with between-phase evaluation.
 Safe bicycling and walking routes should be made available within and between all developed areas.

- 1<http://webappa.cdc.gov/cgi-bin/broker.exe>
- 2<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00020814.htm>
- 3<http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa-43.pdf>
- 4Todd Litman. 2005. Terrorism, Transit and Public Safety. Journal of Public Transit 8:33-46. (<http://www.vtpi.org/transitrisk.pdf>)

URL	
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Site	/planning/building
Category	General Plan Update
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