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From: Aaron Antrim [aaron@arcatacommunity.org]
Sent: Friday, February 01, 2008 12:12 AM
To: Richardson, Michael; Scott Kelly; Spencer, Martha; Mary Gearheart; Richard Hansis
Cc: Woolley, John; Pat Bitton; Bob Peterson; Joshua Koenig; Brandon Hemenway; Chris Rall
Subject: Consider information technology opportunities in General Plan Circulation Element

Humboldt County Planning Commission and staff:

We would like to offer comments on the Circulation Element to suggest a planning basis that will maximize investment in existing roadways, help to minimize future congestion and emissions issues, and potentially contribute to telecom infrastructure and services development in Humboldt County.

We recommend that information technology-based programs and solutions to reduce peak-hour vehicle trips be explicitly considered in the plan to provide a basis for their future consideration and implementation. Such information technology approaches should be considered as part of a suite of transportation demand management approaches against which to compare cost and benefit for new road construction projects. In some cases, information technology-based approaches, whether pursued singly, or with a suite of other strategies, may provide greater benefit at equal or less cost.

To further explain information-technology based transportation demand management solutions, here are some examples from around the world:

- **Telework:** One of the commonly-known information technology-based approaches is the development of telework or telecommuting programs, described in detail here: www.vtppi.org/tdm/tdm43.htm. In Amsterdam, Cisco Systems plans to create neighborhood-located "work centers" and "telepresence" facilities for high-fidelity video conferencing.
- **Electronic transit trip planning:** In Humboldt County, the launch of Google Transit, a transit trip itinerary planner, and improved transit websites, contributed to a 30% increase in Redwood Transit System ridership over one year. In Seoul, South Korea, Cisco Systems is working on a GPS-enabled "travel companion" to help commuters use transit and motorists avoid congested roads. More here: weblog.infoworld.com/sustainableit/archives/2007/12/cisco_clinton_g.html
- **Wireless infrastructure for mobile vehicles.** Municipal wireless networks can serve public and private vehicles and services to improve efficiency and make public transit more appealing. For example, next-generation wide area wireless networking technology could coordinate fare systems and automatic vehicle location services for transit while simultaneously providing internet service to bus passengers.
- **Electronic ridematching.** One of the best examples is at www.smartcommute.ca, a service for the Greater Toronto Area for online ridematching service with mapping, location-aware search, and social networking features.

Monterey County plans to include language about "Intelligent Transportation Systems" (information technology applied within the traditional transportation network used to facilitate the movement of people or goods) in their General Plan Update (www.refinegpu.org/Circulation%20Element.pdf). A Google Search shows several other counties are including Intelligent Transportation Systems in the General Plans.

Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates, a consultant retained by the Humboldt County Department of

Health, has suggested that General Plan language be changed to provide decision-makers with the basis and tools to evaluate cost-effectiveness of roadway capacity enhancements against programs that reduce peak-hour vehicle trips. If Nelson/Nygaard suggestions are followed, including information technology-based solutions in the suite of programs that reduce peak-hour vehicle trips may yield more effective strategies as well as create new opportunities for telecom infrastructure and service development and partnerships that will have positive economic development effects.

In 20 years, the lifespan of the General Plan we expect to see climate change and traffic congestion become more pressing problems in Humboldt County, while information technology solutions to address these problems will increase in number and viability. We have the opportunity to turn future traffic congestion and emissions challenges into telecom infrastructure and economic development opportunities in Humboldt County if we take the right steps beginning with the General Plan.

Here are suggestions for new language to be included in the General Plan's Circulation Element:

- *Information technology solutions or which make travel by non-single occupant vehicle modes more convenient, desirable, or efficient, and which would reduce peak-hour automobile travel demand, shall be considered as mobility management solutions that may, singly or with a suite of other solutions, substitute for projects which would increase roadway capacity.*
- *Consider information technology solutions such as telework and teleconference programs and facilities that allow for the substitution of vehicle travel as mobility management solutions that may, singly or with a suite of other solutions, substitute for projects which would increase roadway capacity.*

Signed,
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