

W 170



January 24, 2008

Humboldt County Planning Commission
Re: Draft Community Infrastructure and Services Element and Circulation
Element of the Humboldt County General Plan

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Executive Committee to the Trails Trust of Humboldt Bay, we would like to thank the Commission for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Circulation Element to the Humboldt County General Plan Update. This element is important to the Trails Trust because we want the focus for transportation for the next 20 years to include **trails as transportation**. Currently the carless in our community, which include children, seniors, the disabled, and the poor, suffer a serious disadvantage in society as our transportation system does not provide adequate alternatives to driving a car. Furthermore, this disadvantage puts them at greater risk of injury or death from being involved in a collision with an automobile. Trails are an **equitable and safe** means of travel and have the additional benefits of reducing automobile emissions, improving public health, providing access to recreational opportunities, developing the local economy and attracting tourism.

The Trails Trust is a group of local residents advocating for regional multi-use trail system that connects the Hammond Trail, Annie and Mary Rail Trail and the Humboldt Bay Trail and completes the California Coastal Trail in the Humboldt Bay region. In order for us to compete for state and federal funding to complete this vision, we need supportive plans and policies. Below you will find examples of Goals, Policies and Implementation measures as well as our analysis of the current draft that we believe will help strengthen the Circulation Element as a guiding document for the next 20 years of transportation in Humboldt County.

General Comments:

We prefer the policies in Alternative A as they appear to go the furthest in demonstrating that trails are transportation.

We are glad to see the trail implementation measures from the Mckinleyville Community Plan are incorporated into the preferred alternative. These measures are the result of a lot of public discussion and hard work, applying them countywide is a positive step forward. The measures on page 8-15 should be moved to the multimodal section for clarity's sake.

We prefer the Quality of Service (QOS) as opposed to Level of Service (LOS) as a performance indicator. QOS evaluates the function of the entire



transportation system which would facilitate a better performing network rather than evaluating each mode and dimension of travel incrementally.

All non-motorized transportation implementation measures should require best practices be used.

Specific Recommendations:

CP 31 is the Protection of Designated Trails but there is no mechanism for designation on a county wide basis. This could be done through community plans but only if there is a mechanism for trails from one community plan to connect with those of adjoining community plan(s).

It should be specified that the Pacific Coast Bike Route, Humboldt Bay Trail, California Coastal Trail and Hammond Trail extensions are designated and that these trails serve a north/ south interregional connection but with the exception of the Annie and Mary Rail Trail there are no identified east/ west connecting trails.

C-P55 Circulation Planning for Bicycles and Pedestrians. All future circulation planning shall include bicycle and pedestrian pathway routes. The process for implementing this policy needs to be explained.

Policy Topic #6 - Marine Transportation. There should be an implementation measure for the Humboldt Bay Paddle Trail.

C-P34. Encourage Access to Recreation Areas. This Element should specify that trails and non motorized routes in the county will tie into trails in California State Park, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and Redwood National State Parks lands. Hikers and backpackers should be able to easily and safely access trailheads by bicycle rather than car.

C-P32. Encourage Bicycle Storage Facilities. Encourage the provision of secure, weather protected bicycle storage facilities at bus stops, businesses, and public buildings as needs. [FRWK] This language should be strengthened to require covered bicycle parking, perhaps under the eaves of buildings.

Funding:

IS-IM 8 the draft infrastructure element discusses the need for a secure roadway funding source. The county also needs a secure a funding source for trails. Transient occupancy tax is an appropriate funding source for trails and parks because these are some of the facilities tourists use when they are here.



Salem, Oregon is spending some of its transient occupancy tax on parks and trails which Humboldt could do as well. This would secure a long term, base level funding source for trails.

IS-IM9 should also be reworded to include trails.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rick Littlefield
Vice Chairperson
Trails Trust of Humboldt Bay