

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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January 31, 2008

1-HUM-General
General Plan Update
Circulation Element

Michael Richardson, Senior Planner
Community Development Services
Planning Division--County of Humboldt
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95503

RECEIVED

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HUMBOLDT COUNTY
PLANNING DIVISION

Dear Mr. Richardson,

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on draft chapters 7 and 8 for the Circulation and Community Infrastructure & Services Elements of the Humboldt County General Plan Update (GPU). The following comments include both recommended language for inclusion in the General Plan Update policies as well as more general comments:

Description of Transportation Facilities—Non-Motorized Transportation

1. In addition to the health benefits offered by bike paths and trails, we recommend this section reflect that these non-motorized facilities also benefit air quality and roadway capacity/congestion.
2. Page 8-5 states that maps and descriptions of existing and proposed future non-motorized transportation facilities are shown in Appendix "XX." Neither the appendices nor the companion documents include this information. We request to review the above maps and descriptions to ensure their accuracy with respect to the current routing designation for the Pacific Coast Bike Route.

Multi-modal Transportation

3. We recommend that the following language be considered for inclusion in the General Plan policies for multi-modal transportation: "The County shall support the current route designation of the Pacific Coast Bike Route and alternative routes and participate in the formalization of future route designation and alternative Routes. The County shall participate in various project activities for proposed improvements to the Route when said Route is designated off the State Highway System and inform the Department when the County initiates future proposed route changes due to changes of land use, transportation, and capital improvements."

4. Several policies, C-P21, C-P24, C-P25 and C-S7, refer to multi-modal Level of Service (LOS). Based on the non-specific language of these policies, we interpret some of these policies to intend that County staff are directed to use different methodologies (i.e., Highway Capacity Manual, Bicycle Compatibility Index, or other methodologies) for determining LOS under different scenarios. We recommend that the County specify which methodology will be used to determine multi-modal LOS and, if more than one methodology is accepted, under what circumstances will those methodologies be applied.

Interagency Cooperation

Comments numbered 5, 6 & 7 include suggested policy language as a guide for when the County should consult with Caltrans regarding discretionary approvals for local development and to ensure that County practices are consistent with applicable laws. Each proposed policy includes a reference to the full text of the law:

5. "For a project of statewide, regional, or areawide significance, the County shall consult with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) with respect to transportation facilities within the County's jurisdiction which could be affected by the project, as stated in section 21092.4 of the Public Resources Code."
6. "The County Community Development Services Department shall transmit one copy of any proposed tentative map within one mile on either or both sides of any state highway to the California Department of Transportation district office, as stated in section 66455 of the Government Code, to allow the Department to make recommendations regarding the effect of the proposed subdivision upon the highway or highway route. The County shall consider these recommendations before acting on the tentative map."
7. "The County shall notify the California Department of Transportation whenever surface mining operations are proposed in the 100-year flood plain for any stream, as shown in Zone A of Flood Insurance Rate Maps issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and within one mile, upstream or downstream, of any state highway bridge that the application has been received, as stated in section 2770.5 of the Public Resources Code. The lead agency shall not issue or renew the permit until the Department of Transportation has submitted its comments or until 45 days from the date the application for the permit was submitted, whichever occurs first."

Avenues of the Giants Community Plan

8. Circulation Policy, C-P74, has been incorporated from the Avenue of the Giants

Community Plan and requests that Caltrans comply with section 157 of the "Streets and Freeways Code." Caltrans supports local jurisdiction efforts to influence transportation priorities within their sphere of influence and we are willing to consider community requests, however, we are unable to find a section 157 in the Streets and *Highways* Code. We request that this reference be clarified.

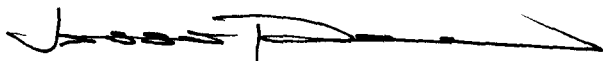
Community Plans (in general)

9. We recommend that the County Community Development Services Department consider incorporation of State Department of Transportation-funded Environmental Justice and Community Based transportation plans as part of the Community Plans. For the benefit of the unincorporated communities within the County, we recommend that, to the extent feasible, the County Department of Public Works identify and incorporate community plan recommendations for transportation and circulation-related improvements into the County's work plan for project prioritization and implementation.

10. We encourage the County to implement a program for "Blueprint Planning" as it has been demonstrated that scenario-based planning can have a beneficial effect on road networks by reducing trip generation and vehicle miles traveled.

We look forward to continued cooperation with the County on the Update for the General Plan. If you have questions or need further assistance, please contact me at the number above or contact Jeremy Mills of District 1 Community Planning at (707) 441-4542.

Sincerely,



Jesse Robertson
Associate Transportation Planner
District 1 Office of Community Planning