

July 7, 2009

Humboldt County Planning Department  
Community Development Services  
Attn: Martha Spencer  
3015 H Street  
Eureka, CA 95501

**Re: Land Use Element, Urban Lands Section**

Dear Planning Commissioners,

I look forward to well-planned urban environments in Humboldt County which welcome a diversity of residents, activities, and uses, and which feature energy-efficient lifestyle choices. I look forward to living in the middle of town and going carless in my geriatric years, and I look forward to luring my new grandchild's parents here from New York City where they love the dynamism, compactness, and efficiency of their lives. I am especially hopeful that these urban environments will also celebrate the beauty of Humboldt County through the incorporation of easy trail access to natural areas, and native landscaping in developments and urban parks.

Please consider the following Comparison Chart changes:

**UL-P11. Natural Amenities.** Encourage new development projects to incorporate natural amenities (i.e. landmark trees, ~~and~~ rock outcroppings, mature native plant communities) and connector trails to parks and natural areas into their design.

**COMMENTS: Modified Alt A & B** *Mature native plant communities have been undisturbed long enough to retain or regain natural form and associations. Islands of mature native plant communities in urban zones provide habitat for pollinators necessary for garden productivity and important connectivity to larger wildlife habitat areas. ( How would this policy be implemented? Incentives? Overlay zones? Design Review?)*

**UL-P20. Landscaping.** All designs shall screen or soften the visual impact of new development through the use of landscaping that incorporates local native species, and other plants common to the area, which are known to be low maintenance, fire resistant plants, and drought tolerant plants.

**COMMENTS: Modified Alt A** *The choice of local native plants, which are naturally pest resistant and adapted to local climate and soil, would reduce water, chemical, and energy use.*

**UL-S6. Landscaping Standards.** Landscaping shall be required for new development which creates five (5) or more new parking spaces. The landscaping policies shall be accomplished by the submittal of a landscaping plan, which shall include the information described below.

- A. The landscape plan shall show all existing trees on the property, and indicate those planned to be removed, and those that are to be preserved. It shall show the location of lawn areas, ground cover areas, shrub masses, and new trees to be planted. The plan shall include the use of native and fire resistant species where feasible, and shall be designed to eliminate or minimize the use of herbicides, pesticides, chemical fertilizers, and the need for mowing and leaf-blowing.
- F. Not more than 25% of the landscaped area shall be covered by non-living materials (e.g., rock, pavers, bark, etc.) Permeable alternatives shall be included where feasible.

**COMMENTS: Modified Alt A & B** *Natural water absorption into the soil should be preserved and landscaping chemicals avoided whenever possible to reduce non-point pollution from urban runoff into our impaired waterways. The water, chemical, and energy reductions might count toward AB32 mandate to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.*

Thank you for the opportunity to comment .

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