



HUMBOLDT ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® INC.

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Commission

July 14, 2010

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Jeff Smith, Chairman
Humboldt County Planning Commission
Community Development Services Department
3015 H Street
Eureka, California 95501

RE: General Plan update, use of word "rural" in Section 4.8, Land Use Designations and Zoning Classifications

Dear Chairman Smith and Commissioners:

At the July 8th Planning Commission meeting the Humboldt Association of REALTORS® spoke about use of the word "rural" in zoning classifications and Land Use Designations, e.g. "Rural Residential" (page 4.8 – 5 in the Land Use Designation "voting chart"). This letter is a follow-up to our presentation.

The appearance of the word "rural" in zoning classifications or Land Use Designations can complicate financing of rural properties. A problem exists if a lender's underwriter calls the county zone phone and he or she hears the word "rural". If the underwriter contacts a planner to confirm land description, the planner at the counter may cite the Land Use Designation during the conversation. When the underwriter hears the word "rural", in either case, he or she thinks this doesn't meet Fannie Mae/Freddie Mac guidelines, "I can't make that loan".

Over 40 acres is not really the problem. These properties are usually privately financed, use agricultural loans or other special, more costly financing or are all cash. Properties 40 acres and under are the ones that may want to use standard, institutional financing and therefore must meet the Fannie Mae/Freddie Mac guidelines.

The proposed Land Use Designation "Rural Residential" covers land anywhere from 5 to 160 acres. We would like to suggest splitting the proposed designation of "Rural Residential" into two parts.

First, create a new designation of "Suburban Residential" for 40 acres and less. If the word "suburban" is not acceptable, then we propose using the word "exurban" as in "Exurban Residential". "Exurban" is a commonly used term in the planning world. Second, leave the proposed "Rural Residential" for lands over 40 acres.



Jeff Smith, chairman
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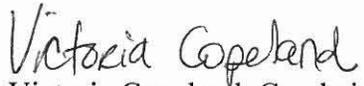
There is also a proposed designation of "Rural Community Center". This allows some housing. We propose a split here as well, again because of the appearance of the word "rural".

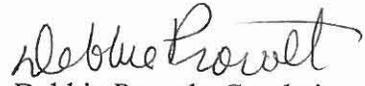
First, create a new designation of "Suburban Community Center" for land 40 acres and less. If the word "suburban" is not acceptable, then we propose using the word "exurban" as in "Exurban Community Center". Second, leave the proposed "Rural Community Center" for lands over 40 acres. We request the Commission consider and approve these changes.

Additionally, at the June 24th meeting we also heard planner Tom Hofweber volunteer that there is only one zoning designation which uses the word "rural" and he is willing to delete it. We request that the Commission direct this be done.

The Association would appreciate your consideration of these suggestions and requests.

Sincerely,


Victoria Copeland, Co-chair
General Plan Subcommittee


Debbie Provolt, Co-chair
General Plan Subcommittee

cc: Kirk Girard, Director
Tom Hofweber, Supervising Planner
Martha Spencer, Supervising Planner