

To: Humboldt County Planning Commission  
Humboldt County Planning Department

RCUD  
8/12

From: Bonnie Blackberry  
Civil Liberties Monitoring Project  
PO Box 544 Redway, CA 95560

Date: August 12, 2010

**RE: Public Input to the Telecommunications Element of the Humboldt County General Plan Update**

**Focus: Live interactive telecommunication sites in outlying rural communities**

We are currently experiencing changing times and with the advancement of telecommunications technology, it is now possible to have live interactive telecommunications from remote locations. SKYPE is an example of this technology.

Humboldt County has the opportunity to improve access to Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission proceedings that are held in Eureka for the residents living in the outlying rural areas, enabling more rural citizens to "remotely attend" and participate in important meetings and decision making from a location closer to their homes.

In Garberville, the Court House stands empty most of the time. The space could be utilized on non Court days and evenings as a community live remote location. People from outlying areas around Garberville could come to Garberville, instead of driving all the way to Eureka to be able to observe and participate during public input periods. Other outlying remote areas could have similar set ups.

The current requirement to drive to Eureka for Board of Supervisor and Planning Commission meetings is very difficult and somewhat dangerous, if not impossible during bad weather. It's about 150 miles round trip from Garberville, and a significant number of people have a long drive just to get to Garberville. And who wants to drive to Eureka from Garberville, for 2 or maybe 3 minutes of input. Consequently very few people from the more remote rural areas of the county attend Planning Commission; Board of Supervisor meetings or workshops on issues affecting their property and lives.

Since the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors don't want to hold meetings in the under served outlying rural communities, the people are expected to do the driving. There needs to be some mitigation to lift this burden from the rural population, enabling people living in remote rural areas to have more equal access to our local government and decision making.

Implementation of this interactive live remote option would increase citizen participation through easier, access to our local government. The Resolution of the Board of Supervisors on closing the Digital Divide fits with this type of broadband use. ( See Attachment )

Developing live interactive remote sites in outlying rural communities such as Garberville is compatible with following items for all Plan Alternatives and should be included in the General Plan Update.

**T-1M10 e Government.** Continuously improve County government's use of telecommunications and digital technology to educate and provide public services with a focus on internet services, geographic information systems, and public safety and emergency telecommunication.

Respectfully submitted,



Bonnie Blackberry

att: Closing the Digital Divide Resolution of the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, December 1, 2009

**RESOLUTION**  
OF THE  
**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**  
**COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT**

**WHEREAS**, closing the Digital Divide is vital to the economic prosperity and quality of life for residents in Humboldt County and throughout California; and

**WHEREAS**, 38% of all Californians and 40% of low-income households are not connected to the Internet with broadband, leaving more than 14 million Californians without high-speed Internet access at home; and

**WHEREAS**, the use of broadband by Humboldt County families and children is healthy, productive, promotes self-sufficiency, and saves both time and money while helping to bridge the economic divide; and

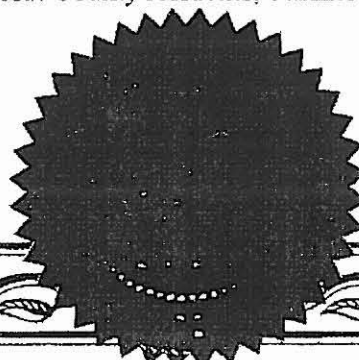
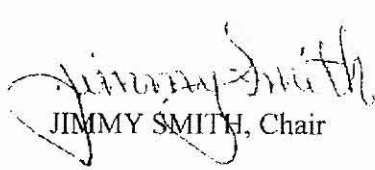
**WHEREAS**, high-speed Internet connectivity and the availability of computing devices both at school and at home are critical teaching and learning tools for academic achievement and helps students obtain the highest-quality education possible; and

**WHEREAS**, broadband is a strategic "green" technology that decreases greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on foreign oil by enabling e-government and the provision of more services online, reducing our carbon footprint; and

**WHEREAS**, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors is committed to Digital Inclusion to increase citizen participation in the public process, recognizes the opportunity to impact broadband deployment and adoption in its several local government roles and responsibilities, and welcomes the opportunity to partner with the California Emerging Technology Fund along with the Governor, Legislature, other local governments, civic leaders, community organizations, employers, labor representatives, educators, and policymakers to encourage adoption of broadband technology.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors hereby joins with the California Emerging Technology Fund in launching and promoting Get Connected! —a public awareness program to close the Digital Divide—and declares 2009 and 2010 as target years for all Humboldt County residents, businesses, and community organizations to Get Connected!

Dated: December 1, 2009

  
  
JIMMY SMITH, Chair