



"Jobs, Housing & Property Rights"

November 16, 2011

Mrs. Mary Gearheart, Chair  
Planning Commission  
County of Humboldt  
825 Fifth Street, Room 111  
Eureka, California 95501

Subject:           General Plan Update  
                  Chapter 1, Introduction  
                  Chapter 2, Public Guide  
                  Chapter 3, Governance

Dear Chair Gearheart and Planning Commissioners:

The notice of the subject chapters of the General Plan update (Introduction, Public Guide, and Governance) was first issued yesterday, on November 15, 2011. (See attached)

In keeping with the County's policy to allow a thirty-day (30) review period of the various draft documents prior to holding a public hearing, we respectfully request these sections be rescheduled for your December 15, 2011 meeting, or later.

Thank you for respecting the County's policy, and for the public's need to have adequate time to participate in the update of the General Plan.

Sincerely,

*Kay Backer*

Kay Backer, representing  
Humboldt Economic and Land Plan

cc:           Board of Supervisors  
              Planning Commissioners  
              Phillip Smith-Hanes, County Administration Officer  
              Wendy Chaitin, County Counsel  
              Carolyn Ruth, Assistant County Counsel  
              Kirk Girard, Community Development Services Director  
              Michael Richardson, Senior Planner  
              Kathy Hayes, Clerk of the Board  
              Norma Lorenzo, Planning Commission Clerk

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November 17, 2011

Mrs. Mary Gearheart, Chair  
Planning Commission  
County of Humboldt  
825 Fifth Street, Room 111  
Eureka, California 95501

Subject: General Plan Update  
Chapter 1, Introduction  
Section 1.4, Guiding Principles

Dear Chair Gearheart and Planning Commissioners:

As we have stated in the past, the County's policy to provide a thirty-day (30) review period before the various sections of the General Plan update goes to a public meeting, is not being respected. Because we have had only two (2) days since the staff report was made available for the subject chapter, we are raising only one issue this evening. It has to do with the Guiding Principles presented on page 1-3 of the staff report:

## **1.4 Guiding Principles**

Guiding Principles are presented in this section to provide a statement of community values and of the overall objectives of the General Plan.

Throughout the process of updating this General Plan, the residents of Humboldt County have expressed their interest in preserving the county's unique character and quality of life. They desire to have the county remain a place with a small town feel; a place to raise a family; a place with quality housing, schools, and recreational facilities. Residents also value the existing rural and natural character of their communities and, through an appropriate balance of regulations and incentives, want to protect forest and agricultural lands for continued timber and agricultural production. They also desire improved streets and roads and expanded pedestrian and bicycle access. Additionally, they want to grow and diversify the economy to create increased high-quality job and career opportunities that can support families. They want a range of housing opportunities and recognize a significant shortage of affordable housing in existing urbanized areas. Though they seek to discourage sprawl, they desire to encourage new development by simplifying and streamlining the development review process to minimize the risks and financial costs of getting new construction approved.

As has been communicated numerous times over the past several years, the "community values" were not properly captured during the outreach meetings conducted by your planners over the past decade. It was why the HELP group was formed. It was the subject expressed by large groups as they filled the chambers to capacity during Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors meetings. It was the subject of a letter written by attorney Allison Jackson of the Harland Law Firm on March 16, 2007, where she states:

At the point I became aware of this irregularity, a young man by the name of Hans Parshall had been speaking to the Commission. I was immediately impressed by how Mr. Parshall presented himself and the sincerity of his message of wanting to realize his dream of being able to have an acre of land after he graduated college. He said that he hadn't even intended to speak or even known what was on the agenda, but that it seemed like the proposed Update was going to make that dream impossible. When I glanced over at the note taker, I saw that he had completely quit taking notes. Neither Mr. Parshall's name nor his remarks had been documented. The previous speaker's name was Diane and spoke on behalf of Healthy Humboldt. Her remarks were recorded fairly in depth.

Mrs. Mary Gearheart, Chair  
Planning Commissioners  
November 17, 2011, cont'd

The values that are being represented in the County's base documents, which lay the foundation for the rest of the General Plan update, represent only a small segment of the Humboldt community. This remains very troubling to many of us, including, but not limited to the members of HELP. It is the subject (General Plan Section 1500) of a recent lawsuit filed against the County by some of its citizens.

To properly represent what the majority of County citizens are concerned about, i.e., their "values", please consider a poll conducted by a professional polling company, Moore Information, Public Opinion Research, during August 2004. It is statically sound and can be scientifically validated. It clearly demonstrates your constituent's value:

<b>Issue Number</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Jobs &amp; Economic Development</b>	<b>87 %</b>
	<b>2</b>	<b>Housing</b>	<b>69</b>
	<b>3</b>	<b>Crime / Safety</b>	<b>66</b>
	<b>4</b>	<b>Growth / Land Use</b>	<b>64</b>
	<b>5</b>	<b>Taxes &amp; Government Spending</b>	<b>60</b>
	<b>6</b>	<b>Health Care for Needy</b>	<b>60</b>
	<b>7</b>	<b>Protecting Open Space</b>	<b>57</b>
	<b>8</b>	<b>Traffic / Transportation</b>	<b>50</b>

It would be reasonable to expect the concern for jobs to have increased beyond what it was seven (7) years ago, because jobs have continued to become more and more scarce. We would be glad to have a presentation made to your Commission, of the Moore findings, if you wish.

We respectfully request you to pause, and take the time to properly capture the true concerns and values of your citizens before moving forward. Several years ago, when your staff bypassed Chapters 1, 2 and 3, of the GPU, and decided to address those subjects last (Introduction, Guiding Principles, and Governance), many of us objected. Even at this point, it is not too late.

We support your philosophy to complete the GPU as soon as possible, however we have to believe it is better to get it right now, rather than continue down a path that has been driven off course.

Thank you for considering these very important issues.

Sincerely,

*Kay Backer*

Kay Backer, representing  
Humboldt Economic and Land Plan

cc: Board of Supervisors  
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**Planning Commission meeting reminder!**

**Next GPU meeting November 17, 2011**

**on Chapter 1 (Introduction),**

**Chapter 2 (Public Guide), and**

**Chapter 3 (Governance).**

**Humboldt County Draft General Plan Update**

**Humboldt County Planning Commission Meeting**

On **Thursday, November 17, 2011 starting at 6:00pm**, the Planning Commission will hold a continued public hearing on the Humboldt County General Plan Update, Planning Commission Hearing Draft. The Commission intends to begin deliberating on **Chapter 1, Introduction, Chapter 2, Public Guide and Chapter 3, Governance**. The Commission may also deliberate on outstanding issues for Chapter 13, Noise Element and Chapter 14, Safety Element.

The hearing will be held in the Board of Supervisors' Chamber, Humboldt County Courthouse, 825 Fifth Street, Eureka, California, (wheelchair access is available from the 829 Fourth Street entrance). The Planning Commission Hearing Draft, support documents and a schedule of the proposed hearing dates for the Draft Plan are available at the Humboldt County Planning Division's website: [www.planupdate.org](http://www.planupdate.org).

Planning Division of the Humboldt County Community Development Services

Dated: November 15, 2011

**Martha Spencer**

Senior Planner

Humboldt County Community Development Services

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