

Subject: Guiding Principles

On Monday June 3rd the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors will consider the Guiding Principles which provide a statement of the overall objectives of the General Plan.

The Guiding Principles currently in the Plan are essentially those written a decade ago. They were amended as a result of substantial public outcry to add #'s 1, 11 and 12, which are the public participation provisions which exist in the current General Plan. One can only wonder why encouragement of public participation was left out a decade ago, and why it took so much public outrage to have it finally included.

I fully support the Principles proposed by Estelle Fennell and Rex Bohn, which is the first page attached. The second and third pages are the current language. Some of the differences are slight, and others are significant.

In #1, the word themselves was removed, which seems superfluous.

In #2 The proposed language changes the word "preserve" to the word "honor". To me, the word preserve denies any future change, and why would a General Plan do that?

#3 is completely re-written. The proposed version describes the County roll in housing well. The County does not build housing, and housing construction is needed to "prevent housing scarcity".

#4 is also completely re-written. The existing version focuses development in area's served by public water and sewer, and "discourages low density residential" use of the lands owned by many property owners in the county who desire a rural lifestyle. The proposed version honors the desire of people to live a rural lifestyle. I believe that the use of scientifically proven alternative waste management systems will allow the rural lifestyle to have a lighter environmental touch, and that is a great addition.

In #5, the proposed language removes the words "the County's strategy", which makes a lot of sense to me. I personally support creation of the jobs we so desperately need whether they fall within the County's formally adopted economic strategy or not.

#6 of the existing plan calls for increased restrictions on those who live a rural lifestyle, and singles out Patent Parcels, as though they were something particularly evil. A Patent Parcel is simply one which was created by a Patent from the State or Federal government. It is no different than a parcel created by a Deed anytime prior to 1972 (for parcels 20 acres and larger, which includes virtually all patent parcels). The proposed version supports those who face restrictions under the existing language.

In #7 Estelle and Rex honor a landowners right to live on the land, while using a balanced approach to protect the environment as well. This is precisely what I personally want the General Plan to do.

#8 of the existing language does not appear in the proposed version. I expect that is a result of the Board action at their last meeting, which removed proposed regulations which could have levied unreasonable fees on small development. I support the deletion.

In Estelle and Rex's #8, they finish the thought which is expressed in the existing #9, using common sense and constructive cooperation. This is an important addition.

Existing #10, (which is proposed #9), "Provides a clear statement....to provide clarity" which is redundant. Estelle and Rex deleted the redundant language, and also removed the limiting language "that are consistent with the General Plan" which is found in the existing plan. In the event a project is proposed which is not consistent with the General Plan, it should still be considered. It may require a plan revision, or a project revision, but it should not be excluded from consideration.

The remaining two Principles are identical in both versions, and I support them.

I thank Estelle and Rex for their hard work on this. I believe their proposals are sound, and are right for Humboldt County

D. Ellis Provoct

Enabling Participation in Public Planning Processes

9.4 PWC also enabled wildlands advocates to participate in important public planning processes at the county and federal levels. By helping to keep wildlands interests "at the table," PWC made it more likely that conservation objectives will be codified in these plans. Most planning processes take a long time to reach a conclusion, however. As a result, ongoing advocacy is critical to future conservation success but somewhat mismatched to PWC's need to demonstrate short term wins.

PWC supported a number of conservation organizations to provide input to public plans, by participating in forums, comment periods, and appeals processes. This engagement enabled grantee ideas to be integrated into public plans, not just organizational ones. "Allowing groups the ability to participate in public planning processes, as opposed to just doing their own plans, is important," one respondent explained. PWC supported organizations to participate in county-level public planning processes, as well as public lands management planning.

County Planning Processes

The Strategy Book noted a significant challenge in terms of county-level attention to conservation goals. "Throughout California's rural counties, elected officials are decidedly anti-conservation, which creates barriers for organizations seeking to secure increased wildlands conservation in rural areas." Respondents echoed this sentiment, acknowledging that where county plans can be improved, conservation success is more likely. "Unfortunately, most of these plans are county-wide or portions of counties and they don't always look outside their planning boundaries. So the intent of the act isn't always met, in terms of regional planning," explained one respondent.

Over time, the PWC program gave increased attention to county planning by funding organizations to participate by developing alternative visions or alternative pieces of the plans. With early work in Humboldt County, the program ultimately became involved in planning initiatives in Amador, Calaveras, Orange, San Diego, and targeted counties in the Sierras. All of these processes have taken a very long time and require ongoing investment by conservation advocates.

- **Humboldt County General Plan Update.** PWC made five grants to organizations and consultants working to inject wildlands considerations into the Humboldt General Plan Update. In 2003, PWC funded Michael Smith and Steven Steinberg at Humboldt State University to analyze existing infill potential of vacant and underutilized lands in Humboldt County, develop alternative growth scenarios and conduct a public education campaign. The expectation was that the infill analysis would show that the county could continue to grow, without consuming its open space. PWC also funded the Humboldt Watershed Council and consultant Terry Watt to carry out analysis and outreach so as to have more effect on the outcomes of the planning process. HWC helped to create a Healthy Humboldt Coalition involving conservation, affordable housing and healthy lifestyle groups.

While the General Plan Update is still not complete, the Board of Supervisors selected an alternative that allowed new development at urban densities and only in areas served by sewer and water, thereby protecting 10,000 acres of resource lands from development.

According to the HWC, "This has been an excellent achievement for the Healthy Humboldt Coalition, as all of the worst-case development scenarios have effectively been taken off the table. Though certain provisions of Plan B still require attention, we now have the opportunity to continue working to achieve the best-possible general plan, rather than just fighting to prevent the worst."

PRESERVING WILD CALIFORNIA AN EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Report to the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation



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