

Planning Commission's review of the Conservation and Open Space Element of the GPU

Nancy Stephenson, McKinleyville

- Trail User
- Volunteer Humboldt Trails Council (not speaking on behalf of the board)
- Full time real estate marketer

First I want to thank you for being here. I'm sorry so many of your were sick on Tuesday.

I have a few things I would like to comment on:

- 1) If we had met on Tuesday I was going to ask that you add to the agenda for *tonight* a re-vote of your decision to remove the goal of *regional trail system* from the Open Space Element. It seems obvious now that the complete language needs to be included to utilize all the planning and prioritizing done so far. Inclusion in the Circulation Element is not enough.
- 2) Considering how many items there are on the short list, and how long it's taking to go over them, take a realistic approach and don't make any additional changes to policies you haven't even had a chance to review or discuss yet. Limit your review to only the short list, and only take up other policies if there is a compelling and widespread demand from members of the public. It strikes me as a waste of time and money to be extending the process, with questionable results.

I've been having discussions with a variety of folks about trails, the GPU, property right issues, and concerns expressed by the Humboldt Association of Realtors and others. Views are all over the map, and conflicting information seems to be the theme. I know you've heard many compelling arguments, but I wanted to offer a couple things to underscore the importance of staying open minded. ✨

- 1) Realtors statewide and nationally have diverse feelings about what contributes to community health and well being, in regards to trails. I was looking for examples and came across this. The National Association of Realtors, America's largest trade association, recognizes realtors every year for their public service.

REALTOR® Award Finalists Recognized for Volunteer Efforts

Lynn H. Reecer, Reecer Properties, Inc., Fort Wayne, Ind.

Reecer co-founded and led a nonprofit to design and build a state-of-the-art bicycle and pedestrian trails system in Fort Wayne and Allen County, Ind. Following the tragic death of a dear friend and cyclist in 2001, Reecer co-founded Aboite New Trails (now Fort Wayne Trails), raised \$13 million, built over 20 miles of new trails, lobbied the city of Fort Wayne to hire a manager position and partnered with the public sector to make Fort Wayne **safer, pedestrian friendly and economically viable**. Her success has inspired similar initiatives throughout the state.

- ✨ 2) With regards to concerns about eminent domain being a threat to property owners, the Humboldt County Coastal Trail Implementation Plan has some language that should ease those concerns:

Executive Summary page III "Ownership: Routes will only be developed on publicly held lands or on parcels with willing private landowners. Where corridors are not available to the public, alternative routes are suggested." And Ch1 page 3: "Objective 1.6 Ensure that primary CCT route/s will utilize public corridors and reduce impacts to coastal habitat as much as possible. Where public corridors are not available along a preferred alignment, routes will be developed only with the participation of willing landowners."

No one has been able to come up with any examples of eminent domain or other mechanisms used to complete a multi-purpose trail corridor locally - nor does that seem to be a method that is ever discussed as a means to complete a trail. There HAVE been quite a few examples of places where a private landowner was not interested, and as a result the trail routing became more circuitous and perhaps more expensive but the trail was completed just fine.

When local property owners have agreed to sell their property for a public trail, the purchase price is fair market value based upon a recent (<2yrs) appraisal by a mutually-agreed upon 3rd party appraiser.