



CITY OF EUREKA

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CITY COUNCIL

(707) 441-4172

August 17, 2010

Clif Clendenen
Chair, Humboldt County Board of Supervisors
The County of Humboldt
825 5th Street
Eureka, CA 95501-1153

RE: *Ridgewood Village*

Dear Chairman Clendenen:

We are sending this letter to the Board of Supervisors to inform you of major concerns that we have regarding the Ridgewood Village project and the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for that project. We are extremely concerned and troubled that many obvious impacts of the project on City services and infrastructure have not been identified, analyzed or mitigated. We are also very concerned with the perceived rush to certify the EIR and approve the Ridgewood Village project. For your information, city staff will be sending a letter to the Humboldt Community Development Services Department with the City's detailed comments on the DEIR.

This is the largest subdivision in Humboldt County since (perhaps) Shelter Cove. The proposed Ridgewood Village project entails placing, literally, a small city on the outskirts of the City of Eureka; the development of which will result in substantial impacts on our public services and infrastructure, and on our citizens. We feel the DEIR grossly ignores these impacts. Further, we are disturbed and disappointed at the lack of coordination, consultation and communication by Humboldt Community Development Services staff with City staff, which would have been invaluable in the preparation of the DEIR. We can assure you that City staff is more than willing and fully capable of aiding County staff in the identification of potential impacts and possible mitigation measures to reduce those impacts.

With regard to a lack of communication, during the County/City Coordination meeting held on January 6, 2010, attended by Supervisors Neely and Smith, and Council members Glass and Leonard, Kirk Girard, Director of Community Development Services, informed those in attendance that due to economic constraints, although much of the fees and EIR costs have been paid, that the Ridgewood Village project was on hold. Mr. Girard further stated that the applicants may be waiting for some of the infrastructure improvements to catch up with them before continued processing of the project. We had no reason to question Mr. Girard or his statements; after all, if anyone should know the status of this large project, it would be the

Director. The City heard nothing more from the County on the status of the project, when much to our surprise on May 11, 2010, we received a copy of the DEIR with a comment deadline on the DEIR of June 26, 2010. Mr. Girard's reason for not informing the City of the continued processing of the project and completion of the DEIR is that there were no County/City Coordination meetings at which he could have advised us.

We are troubled by the County's seeming rush to certify the DEIR and approve the project despite the inadequacies of the DEIR and the overwhelming neighborhood objections to the project. It appears from the Public Notices and the statements of Mr. Girard, that the County Planning Commission is scheduled to take action on the project in early September. We have grave doubts that County staff will be able to respond to all of the comments on the DEIR in the week between the close of the comment period and the scheduled public hearing. We fully supports the County taking as much time as necessary to review all DEIR comments and prepare appropriate written responses to those comments, including additional analysis, traffic modeling, and mitigation measures where needed. This is too big of a project to attempt to expedite processing.

A few of the major concerns for the City include, but are not limited to:

Commercial Development. Since 2007, we have expressed our concern over the size of the proposed commercial space. The project includes 327,000 square feet of commercial retail/office space. For comparison, this is nearly one-half the size of the Bayshore Mall; which, including the three anchor stores, is approximately 760,000 square feet. We do not believe that the development of 327,000 square feet of commercial retail/office in this suburban neighborhood is appropriate, nor do we believe that it is "neighborhood commercial" development – it is just too large. In fact, the DEIR acknowledges that this extensive commercial development will greatly contribute to blight in our downtown, yet there is no analysis and no mitigation measures proposed to address this potentially serious problem.

Traffic. The City has significant comments on the Traffic and Circulation section of the DEIR including the use of a fundamentally flawed traffic model. Similar concerns were expressed by Caltrans in their letter to Mr. Wheeler dated August 3, 2010. In addition to our technical comments, the City Council fails to understand how the County can process the DEIR, run a traffic model, identify (or not identify as the case may be) significant mitigation measures within the City limits and on the State's facilities without including the City of Eureka and Caltrans at the table.

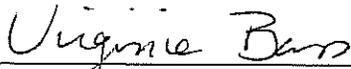
Lundblade Drive. The proposed connection to Lundblade Drive with the amount of traffic described in the DEIR, and the proposed traffic signal at Lundblade Drive and Fairway Drive are not acceptable to the City. It was never envisioned that traffic generated by 1,442 dwelling units and 327,000 square feet of commercial/office use would or could be accommodated by developing a connection between Fairway Drive and Ridgewood Drive; and certainly not through Lundbar Hills via Lundblade Drive. As proposed, the developer intends to send more than 5,000 average daily trips through Lundbar Hills with the only mitigation measure being the construction of a traffic signal

at the intersection of Lundblade Drive and Fairway Drive. This is totally unacceptable, it would change Lundblade Drive from a local street to a major thoroughfare. In addition, it is our Staff's opinion the intersection will be unsafe due to a number of factors that will be addressed in their technical letter.

In summary, we urge the Board of Supervisors to not rush this project through; that you take all the time needed to listen to all of your constituents, properly evaluate all written comments received on the DEIR, have staff run an appropriate traffic model with coordination with the City of Eureka and Caltrans, and include the City of Eureka and Caltrans as a signatory to the Development Agreement since mitigation measures are proposed in both jurisdictions. We also urge that you require the developer to revise their plans to scale back the entire project to fit the neighborhood consistent with adopted Eureka Community Plan.

We appreciate your consideration of our concerns. We look forward to working with the County to properly identify all project impacts, in order to protect all the citizens in our community.

Sincerely,



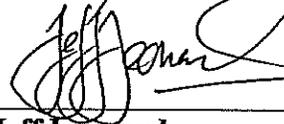
Virginia Bass
Mayor



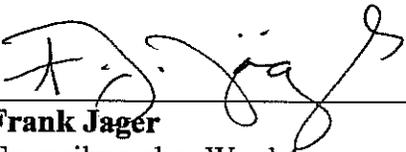
Larry Glass
Councilmember Ward 1



Linda Atkins
Councilmember Ward 2



Jeff Leonard
Councilmember Ward 3



Frank Jager
Councilmember Ward 4



Mike Jones
Councilmember Ward 5

CC: Humboldt County Board of Supervisors
Eureka City Council

