

Lippre, Suzanne

From: Stevie Luther <stevie.luther@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 7, 2022 10:31 AM
To: Johnston, Desmond
Subject: Humboldt Trails Council comments on McKay Ranch subdivision

Dear Des,

I'm writing today as a Board Member for the Humboldt Trails Council (HTC). HTC is a partner with the County and currently has an MOU in place to provide volunteer trail maintenance on the Hammond Trail and the Humboldt Bay Trail South. We will provide similar volunteer labor for the planned McKay Community Forest trail, including both construction and ongoing maintenance of the trail system. The Volunteer Trail Stewards (VTS) program is a tried and true method to provide eyes and ears on the trail. Trail stewards not only help construct the trails, but provide critical maintenance services beyond what the County alone can provide. We are excited about the easement and trail connector elements of the project, and happy to see bicycle lockers included, but believe more trail amenities will improve the public benefits.

HTC commented on the Draft EIR for the North McKay Ranch project, and the Final EIR included this response to our comments: *"The commenter provides general approval of the 20-foot-wide trail easement to the McKay Tract and requests additional amenities be added to the proposed project related to the trail. This comment is acknowledged and will be provided to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors for their consideration during review/consideration of the proposed project. The comment does not address environmental issues evaluated in the Draft EIR or address the adequacy of the analysis in the Draft EIR, therefore no further response is necessary."* (page 2.44).

The Board of Supervisors is being asked to certify this EIR based on an overriding consideration of the project's recreational benefits, despite significant and unavoidable impacts related to greenhouse gas emissions. At the January 6 Planning Commission hearing, Chair Bongio expressed a strong desire to ensure public safety on the trail system. On top of that, the Planning Commission recommended the Board consider how the trail would be maintained and patrolled. While much of that discussion relates to the McKay trail itself and is not part of this subdivision project, we believe there is room for the Supervisors to add conditions to the project requiring the developer to pay a share for trail amenities that would beautify the public space and make it more user-friendly. Examples of trail amenities include signage, information kiosks, restrooms, drinking fountains, bike repair stations, seating, landscaping, public art, and trash receptacles. The Board could consider placing conditions on the permit to provide any of the above in order to help improve trail user experience and maximize the public benefits of the project.

At the February 3 PC hearing, I spoke with the specific suggestion for the County to place a storage shed on-site with access given to the VTS trail coordinators, and for the developer to perhaps share the cost for this storage shed if appropriate. A storage shed near this section of trail would be beneficial for the County and greatly support trail maintenance efforts because the transportation of tools to worksites is a common barrier to efficient maintenance. Since this shed would likely be in the area dedicated to the County for open space and trail management, I'm not clear how this condition would be written and responsibility divided between the County and developer. In addition, Public Works had one shipping container already available for the McKay forest trail and additional coordination is needed with them.

We appreciate any consideration by staff, Mr. Kramer, and the Supervisors in incorporating additional trail amenities into the final project approval.

Sincerely,

Stevie Luther
HTC Board of Directors

To: Humboldt County Supervisors, Planning Department, Eureka City Councilmembers

From: Bill Hole, Eureka City and Humboldt County Resident
3683 Dolbeer St., Eureka

Date: February 28, 2022

All,

In receipt of North McKay Ranch Subdivision Notice ahead of the March 8, 2022 public hearing, I write to express my serious concerns.

The most recent experience of community support was the rejected plan for City of Eureka to move their corporation yard to the Kennedy Ball field's site between W and Dolbeer Sts. The major concerns expressed by the community for that project then still exist.

The Schneider/Bode 49-unit, 3-story apartment complex at 2409 Redwood Rd. still is a plan that'll add at least 60 vehicles added to Hemlock/Walnut Dr. intersection. It is a 3-acre timber conversion plan that resulted so far in clear-cutting the lot of 35+ redwoods and causing extreme watershed damage to neighboring properties through a change of air circulation and caused significant windfall onto adjacent properties.

This new subdivision development proposes about 500+ more automobiles in an overtaxed traffic corridor. While the plan proposes to pump the sewage waste up and out of our watershed to a gravity feed exit at Walnut and Hemlock Sts., it offers no solution to the growing arterial traffic congestion.

Back in 2010, as details of the Ridgewood Village plans emerged, members of the Humboldt-Cutten Citizens for Responsible Development, residents of the surrounding neighborhoods grew more and more concerned. "Its so-called "smart growth" amenities are mere window dressing, they claimed, for a massive, poorly planned nightmare of a development that would have forever transformed their quiet neck of the woods into a dangerous, traffic-clogged mess, one whose long-term costs would be foisted upon taxpayers." (Northcoast Journal, Ryan Burns, 8/5/10)

As a resident on the border between Eureka and Humboldt County, I am concerned with the pace of progress and lack of traffic infrastructure in this busy and community-oriented neighborhood. As a resident of this area, I often hear folks say, "Oh, you live by Sequoia Park, what a great neighborhood!" However, recent changes in development, landscape, and another proposed large subdivision have raised my questions that, at best, have leadership members of local government raising their shoulders in a collective shrug and answer of "there isn't much I can do to help your traffic hazard concerns."

Housing quotas are significant, and insufficient for State and Federal funding regulations. True, that is a reality for our local governments; however, without addressing the life and safety realities of those who live and walk firsthand on these traffic corridors, those planners and consultants making hypothetical, analytical decisions without living in the reality are not honestly addressing the long-term solution. This community needs a "bleeder artery" that will allow drivers to escape southeast Eureka and Cutten at 35-40 MPH, as many drivers drive these speeds through our neighborhood streets today for a lack of solution. While logistically and financially a quagmire, accepting a new,

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large development without addressing the expensive and time-consuming viable traffic calming solution is negligent and continues to face my criticism and rally continued neighborhood discontent.

As stated in the Eureka City Transportation Safety Action Plan, its mission is to make Eureka safe for all modes of transportation.

“Residents of all Eureka city streets have the right to a safe environment; right to a fair share of law enforcement resources; and, protection from disproportionate increases in undesirable traffic conditions. When using city streets to travel between destinations or for purposes of recreation, city residents have the right to safe travel and crossing of these public facilities.

Stable residential neighborhood traffic requires efficient arterial and collector traffic flow to minimize incentives to cut through residential neighborhoods.”

There have been over 26 cars junked within 300-feet of the Dolbeer & Hemlock St. corner since 1980 because of driver error and poor road design. It’s surprising that pedestrians haven’t perished to date. Neighbors and visitors and we have all lost cars in front of our houses; plus we ended up with a car wrapped around the corner of our house in the middle of the night; seven times since 2003. We live on a “roulette” corner, waiting for the next impatient, speeding driver to crash because of a lack of traffic calming (as well as the usual impairment-issue), as do the hundreds of pedestrians who walk daily around the near mile-round walkway of this neighborhood.

Sequoia Park is a major attraction to families and tourists. It has been the major recreational location for Eureka City since the early 1900’s. The adjacent softball fields are a busy summertime venue that plugs street parking on both Dolbeer and W on a regular basis. The new “Sky Walk” at the Zoo and playground improvements on “W” St. certainly clog the neighborhood arteries, an anticipated component to the approved zoo plan. The improvements are great, the lack of traffic solution is not.

Washington Elementary and Cutten Elementary, Glen Paul School for severely handicapped, and Winship Junior High schools are all close within a mile of each other. Access needs for parents and busses are clearly impacted already, at both ends of school days.

Commuter traffic is clearly impacted already at both ends of all workdays.

Traffic calming will occur with a main transportation artery that is not a series of neighborhood surface streets. As a major gateway to Eureka into unincorporated Humboldt County, the Walnut and Hemlock 3-way stop is a major congested arterial blockage point at many times of day, and the frustration of a 25 and 30 mile-per-hour corridor is beyond patience of many drivers needing to cross the long combination of neighborhood streets to transit between the County neighborhood of Cutten into Eureka, and back.

Two raised crosswalks have been installed in the City to help reduce vehicle speeds at pedestrian crossing locations on both Dolbeer and W Sts., which hardly restrains the speed of impatient drivers; more are needed. In the County, a traffic light was installed at Walnut and Fern and various street-widening strategies have occurred to reduce tight congestion. However, the flow of traffic only grows with time, and the proposed developments in Cutten will exacerbate an already difficult neighborhood reality where pedestrians and school children outnumber the average locations.

These are some of my concerns. Thank you,

Bill Hole



and Colleen Hole

