



Humboldt Economic & Land Plan
“ Jobs, Homes & Individual Rights ”

NEWS RELEASE

January 30, 2008

**INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF COUNTY’S INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY
FINDS SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS WITH COUNTY’S APPROACH**

EUREKA – HDR International Engineering, one of the largest engineering firms in the world, today released an independent peer review of Humboldt County’s infrastructure study, finding it to be confusing, lacking in sound planning assumptions and not including the “necessary information from which policy decisions can be made.”

HDR International Engineering’s completed review is timely – coming one day before the County’s November 2007 report is to be considered by the Planning Commissioners this Thursday, January 31, 2008.

For about a decade, County planners have been devoted to the update of the 25-year General Plan vision. In doing so, numerous technical reports have been developed and paid for, to the tune of approximately \$10 million, according to HELP’s estimate. County officials will not identify just how many of our tax dollars have been spent to date.

HELP had serious concerns about the amount of time allowed for the infrastructure study to be performed when the contract was awarded to Winzler & Kelly almost a year ago.

With that in mind, HDR International, Inc. was engaged to perform a peer review. Their findings are dire indeed. HDR found the County’s report to be confusing, lacking in sound planning assumptions, overstated development projections, absent of population growth estimates for the year 2025, no cost estimate for future infrastructure through the year 2025, and void of “the necessary information from which policy decisions can be made.”

(The full HDR report is available on the HELP website at helphumboldt.com.)

HDR is a 100-year old international engineering firm with more than 6,600 professionals in 150 locations worldwide and projects in all 50 states and in 60 countries. They ranked 19 in Engineering News-Records 2007 “Top 500 Design Firms”.

HDR is not the only credible source with criticism for the County’s November 2007 report. The City of Eureka’s 12-page letter to the County points to similar concerns, as does the Humboldt Community Service District’s report to the County.

The County’s own Public Works officials have expressed trepidation about the content of the Winzler & Kelly report and are expected to communicate their opinion to the Planning Commissioners this Thursday evening.

“Why do we care about all this?”, HELP asks. “Because it’s about whether water that comes out of our faucets will be drinkable. It’s about whether there will be adequate sewer service. It’s about how we will be getting to and from work between now and the year 2025. It’s about how much bigger and deeper the potholes will become before our roads and streets get badly neglected and needed maintenance. It’s about whether our streets will be safe for future generations.”

So where do we go from here?

Community members believe it is essential that the General Plan update process be suspended until we know what the current status of our infrastructure is. Each of the elements mandated by the State of California (Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety) is impacted one way or another by infrastructure. And all elements are required by law to be internally consistent.

HELP urges the County to get it right.....right now. HELP is committed to helping.