

# THE HUMBOLDT COUNTY GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

## MYTH VS. FACT

*MYTH: Options A and B do not allow any new development on rural land.*

FACT: All options allow development on rural land. Land designated Rural Residential (RR) can be developed with a primary home AND a second residential unit BY RIGHT. There are more than 1,600 vacant Rural Residential parcels in the county, and these are not under consideration for rezoning (Draft Housing Element 12-30-08, p. 8-6).

*MYTH: Options A and B will eliminate AOB (the Alternative Owner Builder ordinance, which exempts rural homesteaders from standard building codes).*

FACT: NO OPTIONS WOULD RESCIND AOB!

All options continue the AOB program. Option A does not count AOB units towards meeting low income housing needs, to encourage low-income housing near public services. (Draft Housing Element 12-30-08, p. 8-12, H-S1)

Section H-P28 supports “innovative construction and design methods ... including water conserving waste disposal systems, energy systems, dwelling designs, and use of recycled materials for building.” Section H-P29 states “The County shall encourage and be receptive to new and experimental construction techniques....”

*MYTH: Homes will not be permitted on land designated as Ag or Timber.*

FACT: Options A and B allow homes on Ag and Timber lands. Option A would allow one house per 40-160 acres on Non-Industrial Timberlands that are being managed for timber. On Industrial Timberlands, one house per 600 acres would be allowed. Options A and B would also allow multiple houses if 90% of the property is set aside for resource management (Forest Resources policy FR-S1 in chapter 4.6 of the Land Use Element).

*MYTH: A plan such as proposed in 2007 by MAXXAM to sell off 160-acre TPZ parcels as residential “kingdoms” would require environmental review.*

FACT: Such a plan is currently legal and would continue to be legal under Options B, C, and D. According to Giny Chandler, Chief Legal Counsel for CALFIRE, the <3 acre conversion exemption is a ministerial permit that exempts the homesite from environmental review. Only Option A proposes to limit the use of this exemption to one house per 600 acres on lands zoned *Industrial Timberland*. Option A would still allow one house per parcel on *Non-Industrial Timberlands*.

TO SEE YOUR PARCEL’S current zoning, as well as proposed zoning under the Plan Options, go to <http://gis.co.humboldt.ca.us/> and click on [General Plan Update](#). Search by parcel number or address. Then click on the Alternatives to see the zoning proposed under A, B, C, and D.

*MYTH: If your parcel is less than 600 acres, you will be forced to merge with your neighbors.*

FACT: You cannot be forced to merge your property with your neighbor's! The Merger Ordinance, enacted in 1986, applies to owners with multiple adjacent parcels under 160 acres that are zoned TPZ or under Williamson Act contract. Option B recommends rescinding the Merger Ordinance for TPZ parcels. No one will be required to merge substandard parcels with other owners, under ANY option.

*MYTH: All Ag and Timber parcels must be at least 600 acres.*

FACT: Ag parcels are allowed from 20-160 acres depending on the type of Ag zoning and which option of the GPU is adopted. Many smaller Ag and Timber parcels are being reviewed for rezoning to Rural Residential (RR) as part of this General Plan Update to reflect existing residential use.

*MYTH: New regulation will make septic mandatory.*

FACT: In Humboldt County, currently your soil must percolate for septic in order to qualify for an experimental sewage disposal system. This is a regulation that is under jurisdiction of the County Environmental Health Department. Humboldt County staff and officials have expressed willingness to review current regulations. With constructive citizen input, regulations could be changed to allow for safe, sound, water-conserving non-septic waste disposal on rural land.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

READ the Land Use Element (Chapter 4) of the General Plan Update and the draft Housing Element! Online at <http://co.humboldt.ca.us/gpu/> Click on the "Plan Alternatives - Key Issues and Comparison Charts" for the various policy alternatives under consideration.

COPIES of the GPU and Housing Element drafts are available at the Garberville library, the Redway and Garberville service district offices, at the Redwood Times newspaper office. Or call Martha Spencer at the Planning Department, 268-3074, to obtain your own printed copy.

For more information, visit [www.healthyhumboldt.org](http://www.healthyhumboldt.org) or contact the Healthy Humboldt Coalition at 682-5292.

*Healthy Humboldt is a coalition of public interest groups working for a County General Plan that provides healthy housing and transportation choices while protecting resource lands and watersheds by focusing future growth in existing communities.*