




TRINITY COUNTY

Office of the County Administrator

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TO: The Honorable Elizabeth Johnson, Presiding Judge

FROM:  Wendy G. Tyler, County Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: 2012-2013 Trinity County Grand Jury Report
GP 2012-2013-001-Timeliness of General Plan Updates
For the People's Protection

DATE: June 14, 2013

The Grand Jury Ad-Hoc General Plan Committee has requested a written response to their final report GP012/2013-001. In my capacity as County Administrative Officer my response is as follows:

FINDING 2: *Public access to and the awareness of the general plan is considerably restricted.*

RESPONSE: I agree with this finding.

RECOMMENDATION 2: *The general plan should be available in its entirety on line and at all public libraries.*

RESPONSE: Will be implemented. Hard copies of the General Plan will be in place at the Weaverville, Hayfork and Trinity Center libraries by September 1, 2013. The process of placing the General Plan on line will be cumbersome as the entire document is not available in an electronic format. While we could simply scan the document and upload it to the website the quality of the document would be sub-par. Instead we will have to create an electronic version. Given the workload and staffing levels in the Planning Department, this would be a low priority project.

FINDING 5: *Only "new construction" fees prescribe a set aside portion of the fee to be reserved for general plan update expenses.*

RESPONSE: I disagree with this finding. The County has adopted a "general plan maintenance fee" which apply to only new construction. There is an additional fee of \$50 (for planning) and \$75 (for building) for all other project applications that is also designated as a "general plan

maintenance fee. I have attached the page from the County Fee Schedule indicating this additional fee.

RECOMMENDATION 5: *All fees collected by the planning department should include a set aside portion to pay for general plan update expenses.*

RESPONSE: Will not be implemented. While they are not set aside in a restricted fund, the other fees charged by the planning department assist in funding the general plan updates. It is necessary to have some unrestricted monies available to fund the routine planning department functions, which ultimately contribute to the general plan update processes.

FINDING 6: *A segment of the community BELIEVES STRONGLY that any plan that meets state or federal law cannot be in the best interest of the local citizens of Trinity County.*

RESPONSE: I agree with this finding.

RECOMMENDATION 6: *You can convince them or out-shout them, but you cannot ignore them. Taking the time – to explain how the general plan is the county's best assurance that we are protecting our own interests-is the job of everyone in the process.*

RESPONSE: Has been implemented. County officials and staff devote substantial time in educating citizens about the role of the general plan in protecting our land, culture and lifestyle. This is done through individual and group meetings, as well as public hearings. The input of the public is very valuable to this process.

FINDING 7: *State law does take a more urbanized approach to the general plan elements.*

RESPONSE: I am not familiar enough with the law to respond to this finding.

RECOMMENDATION 7: *Continue to take every advantage to lobby with other rural counties for a more nuanced set of regulations.*

RESPONSE: As indicated above, I am not familiar with the law and regulations surrounding the general plan process; however, I feel this recommendation has been implemented in that the County does take every opportunity to lobby for statutes and regulations that work to the advantage of our rural communities.

FINDING 8: *The complexity of the law requires that consultants who have specialized in rural counties be retained when the Planning Department itself is not staffed to accomplish the task.*

RESPONSE: I am not familiar enough with the law to respond to this finding.

RECOMMENDATION 8: *Consider farming out some projects to other qualified county agencies, departments or qualified non-profits such as DOT, RCD, Watershed Research and Training Center and HRN, thus minimizing consultant expense.*

RESPONSE: Has been implemented. Currently the RCD is drafting the Safety Element, utilizing funding from the CDBG-Disaster Recovery Initiative Grant.

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