

# N o y o H e a d l a n d s



February 3, 2010

Dear Fort Bragg City Council members and staff:

Thank you very much for your efforts to provide a policy framework for the redevelopment of the Noyo Headlands. We appreciate the hard work this effort takes, and the staff's willingness to listen to our views.

We also applaud the City Council's current demonstration of leadership on the future of the Noyo Headlands. As elected representatives, your guidance will determine the city's future. With that in mind, we respectfully encourage the Council to provide guidance on the following key principles:

## **Set Fort Bragg on a path to economic sustainability**

For centuries, lumber and fishing were Fort Bragg's primary industries. The Noyo Headlands reuse development should set Fort Bragg on a path to economic sustainability by supporting industries that create jobs that match the skills of Fort Bragg residents, and that pay well. These businesses should provide goods and services that fulfill needs locally and that can bring in dollars from outside the area.

In view of this, we wonder if the conceptual land use plan has been analyzed by Economic and Planning Systems or other economists for its job creating potential. What sorts of long-term jobs will it provide? If the plan has not fully identified an economic engine that will generate long-term, well-paying jobs for Fort Bragg residents, then we need to start developing one. The Noyo Center and the Industrial Arts Center are both beginnings of such a vision. Their extension into an energy producing eco-industrial park, a niche textile industry or a small sustainable lumber mill are the types of plans we need to start developing if Fort Bragg is going to become economically strong in the future.

Right now, we encourage the Council to support the following policies:

- Require job creation triggers for when residential construction occurs.
- Establish local hiring and living wage policies for both construction and permanent jobs.

We also ask the City Council to think pragmatically about what it will take for this business growth to occur. Will the current plan successfully provide for locally-grown businesses that are expanding? Will Fort Bragg attract employers based on its high quality of life and its highly-

skilled workforce? To succeed, the non-residential entitlements in this plan should be granted only as part of a Development Agreement that will:

- Establish and support the operations of small-business, industry-specific incubation facilities.
- Build and operate a job-training program tailored to target industries.

Because this current plan marks the transition between an extraction economy and Fort Bragg's future economy, this is the appropriate time for these plans and endowments to occur.

### **Ensure that Fort Bragg has secure, economical long-term access to utilities**

Global warming and the impending energy crisis provide a future scenario that also needs to be planned for. The most careful jurisdictions are beginning to require new developments to not only reduce their use of water, energy, and road space (i.e., traffic) but to actually offset any use that does occur. To that end, we encourage that all mill site development be:

- **Water-neutral:** Any water used on the mill site shall be offset by funding water reductions elsewhere within Fort Bragg. East Bay Municipal Utility District is one source for guidance on implementing this policy.
- **Energy-neutral:** The mill site could actually produce more energy than it consumes, eliminating one of the major local economic leakages and producing a product that can be sold outside the area. One possible way is through an Energy District with co-generation and incentives for new business' and job development.
- **"No new traffic:"** After reducing traffic demand as much as possible, any new traffic should be offset by making it possible for other residents to drive less. Many strategies could give Fort Bragg residents the option not to drive, such as providing the jobs and neighborhood services people need closer to their homes, by increasing bus service or extending it later into the evening, by subsidizing the cost of bus service, by establishing a "bike share" program, and so forth. In general, this plan could use more attention as to how car travel will be reduced and offset. Planning funds for this could be available through the Governor's Strategic Growth Council <http://www.sgc.ca.gov>
- **Supportive of the area south of the millpond held for education and sustainability:** This may include food raised in greenhouses and a new Food Center. The Noyo Center for Science and Education will be the anchor here and an eco-industrial park could offer job training and creation as well as other educational opportunities.

### **Use this beautiful location to its fullest**

The Noyo Headlands is a beautiful place that connects Fort Bragg's downtown to the Pacific Ocean. Nature provided it with attributes that could be restored to enhance its beauty, such as creeks that could bubble down to the ocean. The development should steward and care for this land. Planning can make sure we use the land well. It can be an icon and identity for Fort Bragg.

- Devote land to cultural and community infrastructure, such as a historical museum, Pomo cultural center and a performing arts center.
- Plan to use the land well

- Set parking maximums and encourage structured parking, to limit the land wasted on parking lots;
- \* Do not exempt single-family homes from further entitlement efforts. Spreading out buildings, one home at a time, has greater impacts on the community than more compact and clustered planning.
- Set density minimums, and do not cap densities: use a form-based system for determining the density.
- Require developments to receive “LEED-Neighborhood Development” (LEED-ND) approvals as soon as registration opens for the newly created system. In its pilot-testing phase, over 60 neighborhood-scale projects won certification, including the Hercules Bayfront, the Emeryville Marketplace, and the San Mateo Station Park Green.
- A terrific link to Green Building Ordinances and their implementation can be found on the Attorney General’s web site: <http://www.ag.ca.gov/globalwarming/>
- Include wildlife corridors and waste water marsh to benefit the environment and add to the openspace and overall value of the property
- Plan compact development that allows more open space, which is what the community expects after being denied public access for so many years.

### **Ensure the Noyo Headlands Development Benefits Fort Bragg Residents**

Like any effort, it is easy to get caught up in the process and “the way things are done,” and to lose sight of why it is being done. The City Council needs to anchor this effort by speaking up for the outcomes it wants for its current and future residents. Your leadership here will determine the near future. As the planning ends and the development begins, Fort Bragg residents will ask: how is this going to make our lives better? To help ensure this happens, the City Council could:

- Establish meaningful public participation in the mill site reuse planning by creating a group that supervises the mill site redevelopment, that has power over decisions and that includes members of the public.
- Match home rents and purchase prices to Fort Bragg income distributions, as outlined in the Housing Element. For example, asking for a land donation for a public charity to develop new, lower-cost homes might be appropriate.
- Carefully consider the job and hiring recommendations above.
- Include in Development Agreements the critical support that the community needs, particularly more disadvantaged sectors, to help it share in efforts to bring greater sustainability and prosperity to Fort Bragg.
- Make sure the rest of Fort Bragg is not left behind and that current businesses are not negatively impacted by mill site reuse development. Phasing and triggers are important to encourage east to west development.
- Promote green roofs as part of linking the stormwater chain and as possible new green industry for Mendocino County. This rapidly growing sector of the green economy increases energy efficiency, decreases stormwater issues, and promotes biodiversity. Educational value too!

The test that should be applied to all planning is: how will this development benefit the average Fort Bragg resident?

In general, we encourage the City Council to carefully scrutinize the plan and ask the consultants and staff:

- Will this create the kind of jobs that current Fort Bragg residents could apply for and want?
- Will the teenagers that are currently attending Fort Bragg High School be able to get the jobs that will be created? Will they have the skills?
- What will those jobs pay?
- Based on what these jobs pay, will people who currently live in Fort Bragg (or just outside of it) be able to buy or rent a place on the Noyo Headlands?
- As the teenagers move out and take local jobs, will they be able to live on the Headlands?
- How will people get from their home to their work? Will they still need to drive everywhere and pay whatever gas stations charge?
- As we all get older and increasingly become unable to drive, will we be able to move to places on the Headlands?
- Are we using the land well and saving the land that we do not need to use for development, so that future generations have some options?

Beyond the valuable work of the Georgia-Pacific staff, RRM, and other consultants on this plan, fifteen or thirty years from now, it will be the Mayor, the City Council, and the planning staff whom the community could present with Lifetime Achievement Awards for making the Noyo Headlands into what it becomes. It is your responsibility to make sure this comes true.

Sincerely,

George & Jim