

Humboldt County's Future, "Scene" Through the Looking Glass

SUMMARY

What does the future of Humboldt County look like?

***Scene 1:** You wake up in the morning, get yourself a fresh cup of coffee, and look outside at the morning sunrise. Everything is beautiful. Your plan for today is to walk the trails and then perhaps go shopping. You pause a minute to think about the future. You wonder if your kids will ever be able to afford a home in Humboldt County. Will they be able to earn a living wage? You are thankful that your life has been so rewarding. You **hope** things will be the same for them.*

or, perhaps,

***Scene 2:** You wake up in the morning and hustle to get the kids dressed and off to school. You need to get to work by 8 a.m. for your first job and then off to the second job by 3 p.m. You leave a note for your partner to be sure to pay the rent. You wish you could get a full time job that paid more than minimum wage. In spite of the struggles, you and your partner are committed to raising your three children, but you **hope** the future provides them with a better life.*

or, perhaps,

***Scene 3:** You wake up in the morning, or is it the morning? Did the kids get themselves off to school on time? You can't hear them so you guess they left. Tired of living with your parents, tired of looking for a job, tired of waiting for a low-income apartment, tired, just tired. You can't think of anything to do today, so you decide to just go back to sleep. Being a single parent with kids is not what you expected. You have been so depressed lately but **hope** your kids will have a better life.*

or, perhaps,

***Scene 4:** You shiver awake in the morning to cram all your worldly possessions into your shopping cart. You and your best friend need to move on before the shop owner shows up. You wish you could stay at the shelter, but your animal companion is not welcome so you choose to live on the streets. You **hope** that one day you will no longer live on the streets, and that your dignity will be restored.*

Each of these citizens belongs to our community, yet their lives have taken very different paths. However, they each share hope for positive changes in their lives and their community. They all realize that securing a better life for themselves and their children cannot be achieved without community involvement. Although they may not realize it, their best hope is for the community and county leadership to work toward and to accept positive change.

This raises the question: Is Humboldt County government positioned and the Board of Supervisors (BOS) ready to accept this challenge? The 2017-2018 Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury (HCCGJ) has identified five potential weaknesses in the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors' governing priorities that may impact their ability to succeed. The five areas of concern are:

1. An uncommunicated vision for our future
2. Planning with inconsistent follow through
3. The existence of a silo-riddled government
4. Inadequate support of rural areas
5. A lack of housing

HCCGJ opened this investigation in order to assess whether these weaknesses truly exist and, if so, to what extent they affect our county citizens. Our concerns were validated.

This report addresses Humboldt County leadership's opportunity to impact the future of its residents. Realizing some of the weaknesses mentioned above are experienced not only at the county level, but also statewide and nationwide, the HCCGJ offers some provocative recommendations which, if implemented, should position Humboldt County government to lead us to greater community health and prosperity.

BACKGROUND

On June 29, 2017, the Honorable Judge Joyce Hinrichs swore the 2017-2018 Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury (HCCGJ) into office. We were 19 citizens coming together for the first time, learning about each other, and how the county and cities function. We took an oath to serve you, the citizens of Humboldt County, by helping our county and city governments be more efficient, effective, and accountable.

When a new grand jury is seated, most official records of the previous grand jury have been purged with the exception of those investigative files it has voted to forward to the incoming grand jury for its consideration. We were presented with a file containing a letter the former HCCGJ (2016-2017) had written to the citizens of Humboldt County. Its desire had been that this letter, referred to as the "Preamble," would be released along with their other eight reports. However, the previous grand jury was unable to validate its facts and findings within the time constraints. As a result the Preamble was not published.

The current HCCGJ read the letter many times and strongly felt the points raised merited its attention.

Humboldt County Government

Humboldt County leadership consists of five elected supervisors who represent approximately 134,600 county residents. They currently administer the expenditure of \$377.5 million this fiscal year (2017-2018) with the support of 2,238 employees. Nearly one half of the budget, or \$185.9 million, is received by the Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS). The remaining budget is distributed to county agencies such as public works, law enforcement, administration, planning, building, and other such agencies.

The BOS must work within certain parameters as it makes its decisions. These include the following realities: In terms of size, Humboldt County is the 14th largest county in California. It covers an area of 3,573 square miles. There are six small cities and vast rural areas. It has eight federally recognized American Indian tribes living within its boundaries. The county's population growth rate has been 1.7% over the last seven years, and its per capita income is approximately \$25,000.

It is vital for Humboldt County's leadership to consider these realities, as well as any other special conditions that might arise, as it develops a strategic framework to guide staff in the execution of each year's budget.

METHODOLOGY

In preparation for this report, the Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury:

- Conducted numerous interviews with department heads, deputy directors, and other county employees
- Attended many meetings of the BOS as well as its appointed county boards and committees
- Researched the county website and statements made by county employees to the public in both open forums and media
- Researched numerous websites related to the aforementioned five areas of concern
- Reviewed the *Humboldt County Fiscal Year 2017-2018 Budget* including the message from the County Administrative Officer
- Reviewed the W. Brown Creative Partners report and the *DHHS Integrated Progress & Trends Report, 2017 Quarter 2*
- Read many articles relating to Humboldt County government and other county governments
- Spoke with and listened to numerous citizens of Humboldt County
- Met individually with all members of the BOS

DISCUSSION

A Vision for our Future

Does Humboldt County have a vision for our future? If so, what is it and why do we need it? To answer these questions, we must first understand the nature of a vision or vision statement.

According to multiple sources, a vision statement is sometimes called a "picture of your organization in the future." It is the inspiration and the framework for all strategic planning. A vision statement articulates the dreams and hopes for an organization or, in our case, our community. It describes what the community is trying to build and serves as a touchstone for its future actions. Finally, it is important to understand that a vision looks 10-25 years into the future. It does not address only a single year.

There are numerous conditions prevalent in Humboldt County that indicate its need to develop a vision statement. The county scores high within California in areas that lead many citizens to a feeling of hopelessness. Poverty, drugs, unaffordable housing, and crime are eating away at our community. We have the highest arrest rate in the state, the seventh highest poverty rate, and the second highest drug-related death rate. With our low median household income (seventh lowest in state) and rental costs in the upper third, renters cannot afford housing without spending at least 50% of their income. The national average is 30%. Perhaps what is more concerning is that all of these measurements are trending in the wrong direction.

Our citizens hope the future will be brighter, affordable housing will be available, they can obtain a job paying a living wage, they can obtain medical care locally, drug use and crime will decline, and feelings of self-worth will improve. Perhaps most of all, our citizens need to believe if change for the better is not possible for their generation, it will be better for future generations.

To determine if Humboldt County has an existing vision, or vision statement, the HCCGJ interviewed more than 20 county employees and all members of the Board of Supervisors (BOS). Each employee was asked, "Are you aware if Humboldt County has an advertised Vision Statement?" We concluded that no one knew whether such a document existed. In addition, we visited the offices and checked official bulletin boards of most county departments searching for a posted vision statement. We read documents published by the BOS and county departments looking for a county vision statement. The mere fact that no one could identify a vision statement led us to believe that one did not exist. However, after interviewing numerous county representatives and employees, the HCCGJ inadvertently found a vision statement was created by the BOS at their May 2017 retreat in Benbow. That vision statement was included in a memorandum from the County Administrative Officer (CAO) to the BOS, dated May 24, 2017, and is attached as Appendix A.

In addition, we walked the halls of the county courthouse looking for a vision statement. We visited the offices of the CAO, Assessor, Auditor-Controller, Human Resources, County Counsel, and Sheriff. We did not find a posted vision statement. We visited the DHHS facilities on F Street and, again, no county vision statement could be found.

In looking for evidence supporting a county vision, we did find numerous vision statements for individual county departments. In most cases, these localized vision statements articulate the support services the departments provide to the public and describe how they might improve services into the future. For that matter, the BOS approved Strategic Framework (2017) document identifies the county's mission, focus, core values, priorities, and goals for a single year. This document directs county operations for the year in which it is published. However, a single year document does not provide the more expansive vision required to guide this county into the future.

A Vision for our Future - Summary

In the end, members of the HCCGJ found no supportable evidence that the county has committed itself to a viable vision/vision statement. Perhaps George Washington Carver said it best, "Where there is no vision, there is no hope." With no vision and no pathway to an envisioned prosperous future, our citizens may feel little hope their lives will change for the better. Leadership, guided by a vision and a strategic plan, can provide the changes needed to instill hope.

County Planning and Follow Through

Planning is something that most of us do on a daily basis. As individuals, we recognize that it takes commitment, action, time and, in many cases, money to successfully develop and implement a plan. This is also true of our county government. Having a vision statement of what Humboldt County should look like 20 years from now is like a finished puzzle. The plans to make a vision attainable are the pieces of that puzzle. The execution and funding of these plans bring the puzzle pieces together, creating the quality of life change our citizens are hoping for from our leadership. Alan Lakein may have said it best: "Failing to plan is planning to fail. Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it."

Through the HCCGJ's research and interviews, we found a multitude of county plans and studies generated over the last 10-20 years. Most had substance and meaningful actions. However, follow through has been seriously deficient. For example, the county paid a contractor to develop the 2008 Facility Master Plan only to place it on a shelf without taking action. As another example, in 2008 the BOS entered into a settlement with the United States Department of Justice for the county to become compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). That settlement was not acted upon, which led the Justice Department to issue a consent decree in 2016 against Humboldt County. The decree lays out what projects Humboldt County must complete within three and a half years in order to be compliant. This process will involve considerable expense. More recently, the county reached an agreement with the California Attorney General to correct a decades-old systemic problem of failure to adequately investigate reports of child abuse and neglect. Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury reports in 1986, 1987, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2014, and 2017 identified these same concerns and recommended solutions. The HCCGJ hopes these concerns and solutions will be taken seriously in the future.

While the county does appear to do some short term planning, the planning scenario that seems to work best is the single year funded execution plan, i.e., budget. This type of planning does not meet the level of strategic planning this county needs for a new and more prosperous tomorrow.

So what constitutes effective strategic planning, one of the most important functions performed by organization leaders? Through this process, our leaders outline their future goals and how they may be achieved. Think of it this way: success in county government is an ongoing journey to achieve a vision. A strategic plan provides a road map for this journey, highlighting what may come down the road next, and suggesting possible routes to get there.

Remember the puzzle concept mentioned earlier, which contains numerous actionable plans. Each puzzle piece plays a part in completing the picture of our future. A strategic plan for county government might include such topics as a general plan, a facility master plan, an economic development plan, a revenue generator plan, a job creation/salary enhancement plan, a continuous improvement plan, a housing plan, and a transportation plan. Although such plans could stand alone, their value and effectiveness come from their interaction. Just as the picture begins to take shape when the puzzle pieces come together, so does a strategic plan as county leadership embraces its vision for the future of Humboldt County.

As mentioned above, the HCCGJ interviewed numerous county employees including department directors, their deputies, and the BOS. We also scoured the county website for any documents relating to planning. In particular we were interested in finding any mention of the reports (or puzzle pieces) identified in the prior paragraph. We found the newly approved General Plan, an outdated Economic Development Plan, and a Request For Proposal regarding a Facility Master Plan. We heard about earlier facility plans that had been paid for but not enacted. We learned

about the BOS' Strategic Framework for 2017 (a one year plan without assigned actions) and reviewed prior years of BOS Mission and Value Statements. In the end, however, we were unable to find any evidence of a comprehensive strategic plan.

County Planning and Follow Through - Actual Results

General Plan - A general plan, by law, is a comprehensive long-term framework for development. It establishes the types, locations, and intensities of land use, as well as applicable resource protections and development policies. In simple terms, it sets forth the rules and regulations that must be followed for all future land use.

After 20 years of development, the BOS adopted its new General Plan in October 2017. The document is 457 pages long. It covers a multitude of land use issues including building communities, resource management, and public health and safety. The plan contains well over 100 *implementation measures*, yet it fails to identify any actionable assignments. Without assigned actions, this document becomes little more than a desk guide for county regulations.

Facility Master Plan - A Facility Master Plan is an evolving document developed through an ongoing process. Both the process and document are designed to ensure that a community-based plan is created through consensus of participants. The purpose of the plan is to develop and communicate an efficient process to ensure that Humboldt County facilities adequately accommodate and enhance both current and future community support services programs. The Facility Master Plan determines the scope of repairs, modernization, upgrades, and/or new construction needed to serve the current and future county facility needs, normally up to 25 years into the future.

Did the HCCGJ find a facility master plan? A 2008 document with that title was found sitting on a shelf in a county department. It was incomplete; its suggestions were never implemented. We learned from Public Works that county master planning had occurred as early as 1964, but actions generated from those plans were very limited and almost non-existent over the last 15 years.

Then we found a Request for Qualification (RFQ)/Request for Proposal (RFP) on the county website for developing a facility master plan. This document was out for bid with a closing date in December 2017. It seemed unusual that the county would ask for an RFQ and RFP together since standard procedure would be to have the RFQ completed first so as to know your requirements prior to asking for proposals. When the HCCGJ attempted to refer back to the RFP, it could not be found. Upon contacting Public Works, we were told they likewise did not know the status, as they were not the authors. A discussion with the CAO clarified the status of this RFQ/RFP. After bids closed in December, a county committee, including the CAO and Public Works, reviewed the two bids. The BOS was expected to select one bid as early as March this year.

The HCCGJ concludes that at this time the county has no current facility master plan but, in fact, is pursuing the development of a comprehensive facility master plan to meet county requirements today and into the future.

Economic Development Plan - An economic development plan provides a comprehensive overview of the local economy. It sets policy direction for economic growth; it identifies strategies, programs, and projects to improve the economy.

The closest thing the HCCGJ could find to an economic development plan was the County's initial *Prosperity 2012* report, and the final *Redwood Coast Targets of Opportunity 2012*,

published in March 2013. The latter document summarized the results of a three year effort to address county job growth, career opportunities, and increased pay. These documents were followed by the release in March 2013 of the *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2013-2018* report. This document uses the components first suggested in *Prosperity 2012* to offer goals and strategies to encourage economic development beyond 2013. These economic development documents all focus on building small business opportunities. They omitted discussion of bringing new technologies to our region, which had been included in some previous documents. The actionable opportunity, as stated in this series of documents, is "leaders will look for the moments when leadership, funding, and the community are ready." The HCCGJ is concerned that these moments may never align. Based on all we have read, it appears the county currently has no viable economic development plan.

Strategic Framework (2017) - This is the Board of Supervisors' annual message to the citizens regarding its mission, focus, core roles, priorities, and goals. This two page document clearly conveys the BOS' commitment to meeting the needs and concerns of the community, and enhancing the quality of life. What is lacking are any actions to be taken to meet the stated goals. The BOS stated, "Fiscal Year 2017-18 is expected to be another year of slow growth in revenues, with growth in necessary expenditures consuming all available growth in revenues." It appears the BOS does not anticipate much change in its constituency's quality of life during this fiscal year.

The value of the Strategic Framework seems to be that each time the county spends county money, it references that the expenditure is in accordance with the goals of this plan.

County Planning and Follow Through - Summary

The HCCGJ could find no effort to develop county plans to address the more serious issues facing Humboldt County today and in the future. Our research uncovered no BOS strategic plans to solve the lack of affordable housing for all citizens; create jobs with living wages; ensure a sustainable growth rate to support the county needs; identify what facilities will be needed for the future; or develop ways to meet future transportation needs.

Perhaps even more troubling was that in all our interviews with county employees we heard of only one effort to look at existing processes with the aim of improvement. In this case, County Human Resources needs to be commended for initiating a continuous improvement program. Improved processes can lead to savings as well as speed up county services to the public. A well-identified and well-run continuous improvement program could save this county millions of dollars. Even a savings of 1% could approach \$4 million. Any savings could then be reinvested into the county allowing for more services to the citizens, and/or higher wages to attract and keep more professionals. Other government and private organizations have set goals as high as 10% savings.

Silo-Riddled Government

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the noun *silo* as "a tower or pit on a farm used to store grain." It also offers a second meaning for *silo*, which refers to being "isolated from others." Silos sometimes are necessary and can serve important functions. However, they also can create barriers and inefficiencies. During our investigation into whether Humboldt County operates as a "silo-riddled" government, we looked for any duplication of effort; lack of communication between county entities working on similar work with common goals; lack of knowledge of what functions other employees perform; and a management style that favored information going up the organizational chain before being shared with others.

According to *Business Dictionary*, an organization with a silo mentality possesses a mindset in which certain departments or sectors do not wish, or are not allowed, to share information with others in the same organization. *Business Dictionary* goes on to state this type of mentality reduces efficiency in the overall operation, reduces morale, and may contribute to the demise of productivity. Executive leaders (such as the BOS) and management (county department heads) have a duty to prepare and equip their teams with the proper mindset to break down these organizational barriers. In addition, the HCCGJ found silos cost money and, even more importantly, reduce funds that the county could well spend in other areas.

We interviewed five department heads, three deputy directors, and six county managers during this portion of our investigation. We also attended many county-appointed board meetings, talked with numerous citizens, and reviewed documents such as the W. Brown Creative Partners report, the CAO message regarding the budget, and minutes from the BOS meetings.

We found evidence of duplication in fiscal, information technology, human resources, motor pool, and record keeping functions within the county government. Frequently heard from department heads and department deputies was both the word "silo" and that information was not being passed from one group to another without first moving to the top of the chain of command. Many county employees could not describe the functions performed in the office next door. Further interviews and research strongly supported the fact that Humboldt County government is operating with a silo mentality.

When speaking with county residents, many expressed total frustration in trying to locate the specific county government offices needed to get the services they required. They reported being sent from office to office because the county employees they asked didn't know where to send them. During a number of community board meetings, the HCCGJ also heard citizens complain of silos existing within DHHS.

During our document review we found the word "silo" used to describe DHHS by W. Brown Creative Partners, a consultant firm hired by the BOS to improve DHHS services. We likewise found news articles using the word "silo" to describe multiple county functions. Perhaps most startling was, when interviewing county employees who were never asked about silos, over 50% of the interviewees spontaneously used the word "silo" to describe our county government.

Silo-Riddled Government - Summary

During our interaction with county employees, we also heard many good things about county government and its attempt to improve transparency and integrate services. At least 50% of the county employees we interviewed said collaboration among departments is improving. We also were told about the "All Hands" training day held last October that brought employees together to hear the same message. While all of this is encouraging, these positive comments were overshadowed by the concerns expressed by the public, and the minimal collaboration the HCCGJ heard of during our interviews.

Rural County Support Services

There are multiple definitions of the term "rural," but seldom are these definitions in agreement. For some, rurality is a subjective state of mind. For others, rurality is an objective quantitative measure. When the HCCGJ investigated how county support services were provided to all citizens, it became apparent the farther one lived from the central hub of county government (Eureka) the less likely timely services were available. Residents in Orick, Orleans, Hoopa, Willow Creek, Bridgeville, Garberville-Redway, and Shelter Cove cannot easily obtain services located in Eureka. Residents in Fortuna, Ferndale, McKinleyville, Trinidad, and Blue Lake are

in closer proximity, but even they can be limited by transportation and time constraints.

How satisfactory are county service levels in these outlying areas? We asked this question of both citizens and county government officials. What we found is not surprising, based on the fact county government is still recovering from the 2008-2012 recession. The lack of funding during those years eroded earlier attempts to improve county services. While some are on the mend, others continue to be limited or unavailable. When services are gradually restored, they tend to radiate outward from the center of county government, with initial restoration beginning in Eureka.

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) has been successful in bringing deputies back to patrol in most rural locations. Shelter Cove, Bridgeville and Alderpoint-Blocksburg vicinities are currently without an assigned deputy. Humboldt County still needs restoration of routine patrols and a general increase in the level of service to rural communities.

Fire suppression organizations have benefited from an increase in funding since 2015. New equipment has been provided to places such as Kneeland, Carlotta, and Shelter Cove to name but a few. In total, 36 volunteer fire districts have upgraded their safety equipment. These small departments now have personal protective clothing; fire attack hosing; and reliable, updated fire response apparatus.

Likewise, road maintenance has seen an increase in funding in an attempt to address the large backlog of repairs. The priorities are to first repair rural roads, and secondly maintain them. These priorities are yet to be addressed in BOS approved budgets. Documentation indicates that only 40 miles of county roads in the rural areas were repaired during this last budget cycle.

The DHHS has continued to provide minimal support to these rural areas. We found community support services, such as a county Family Resource Center, as far out as Bridgeville, but for many rural communities, services are very limited and offered once weekly at best. We found that services are increasing in most outlying areas of the county, with the exception of public health. For more serious public health needs, citizens are required to commute to Eureka.

Rural County Support Services - Summary

The improvement of county support services in rural areas has benefited from Measure Z funding. In our interviews with county managers, we heard the desire to improve these services. Given the current budget limitations and centralization of services, it is unlikely the BOS can support an increase in rural programs, at this time.

Lack of Housing

Addressing California's housing crisis is one of the most difficult challenges facing state and county policy makers. The scope of the problem is massive. Millions of Californians struggle to find housing that is both affordable and suits their needs. Humboldt County residents find themselves included in this struggle for available and affordable housing. The isolation of the county from other nearby county housing options only exacerbates the problem.

How serious is Humboldt County's housing crisis, and what impact is it having on our citizens? As discussed earlier in this report, Humboldt County has one of the lowest median household incomes in the state, yet it is in the upper third of the state in the cost of housing. It is not unusual for a family living in Humboldt County to spend half or more of their income on housing. This leaves little to spend on quality of life improvements.

Humboldt County's Housing Affordability Index is at "36," meaning that only 36% of individual families can afford to purchase a median-priced, single family home. A family would need to make \$61,000/year to qualify for a loan to purchase a median-priced home. If renting, a family should plan on spending 51% of its income on a rental unit.

Just as serious as the cost is the scarcity of housing in Humboldt County. There is a lack of housing at all levels of affordability. Without housing in the top tier, prosperous home buyers decrease the availability in the next tier, and so on. As a consequence of this "trickle-down effect," rent may be artificially inflated. The end result is those at the bottom of the housing market have few options available to them and may be at risk of homelessness.

The recently approved General Plan indicates the county has adequate space zoned to allow for an increase in housing starts which would seemingly increase available housing. However, the General Plan limits housing starts to barely cover the expected growth in population. A weakness in the General Plan is it fails to adequately address the current lack of available, affordable housing. Consequently, the projections appear inadequate to meet the current or future housing needs of the county. There is no discussion about how a larger housing supply might influence lowering rental rates.

The HCCGJ interviewed numerous county citizens and employees to determine what possible impact the lack of housing/affordable housing is having on our residents. In our interviews we repeatedly heard how housing issues are negatively affecting county government and community services.

When discussing with county department directors their challenges to fill professional vacancies, we were told two major contributing causes are the lack of housing, and the affordability of housing. The Public Health Department indicated that if we want more doctors in Humboldt County we need more high-end housing. Child Welfare Services explained how the lack of housing is an issue when trying to hire social workers from outside the county. The Sheriff's Office told us a correctional officer's income is insufficient to purchase a home in Humboldt County, thus leading to limited candidates.

When questioning homelessness advocates, both working for the county and nonprofits, the HCCGJ was told how there is a serious lack of low end housing to help reduce homelessness, and how the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements are adding to this lack of suitable housing. We were also told that in Southern Humboldt County there just is no housing available.

In our research, the HCCGJ read recent articles that highlight the fact that up to 20% of Humboldt State University students cannot find/afford suitable housing. Other research further revealed the county has hundreds of thousands of dollars to help homeless individuals afford rent, but virtually no properties available for people to move into.

Lack of Housing - Summary

The lack of housing in Humboldt County is real, both from an availability and affordability aspect. These housing issues are affecting the county's ability to hire and provide services to its citizens. If we want more doctors, teachers, social workers, psychiatrists, law enforcement officers, first time home buyers, and a reduction in rental costs, then we need to take action now. As mentioned by one resident, ignoring the issues will not cause them to go away. County leadership needs to step up to the challenge and address these issues in a very aggressive manner. The BOS recently has taken a first step by forming a Housing Trust Fund and Homelessness Solutions Committee.

FINDINGS

- F1. We found the majority of county employees to be hardworking, dedicated, and committed to public service.
- F2. The Board of Supervisors has not yet communicated and implemented a clear and viable vision for the county, nor have they developed a strategic plan supporting such a vision.
- F3. Humboldt County leadership seems unfamiliar with the value of creating and implementing a Continuous Improvement Program.
- F4. A silo mentality pervades many Humboldt County government entities (such as departments, programs, special districts, etc.) and their functions.
- F5. Citizens often are frustrated by a lack of interdepartmental communication when attempting to access services.
- F6. Duplication of many county services is confusing and wasteful.
- F7. Although county services in rural areas are improving, they remain inadequate to sufficiently meet the needs of rural residents.
- F8. Loss of Measure Z funding would be disastrous to rural communities.
- F9. For many county residents, lack of affordable housing is a root cause of a declining quality of life.
- F10. Humboldt County leadership decisions in the past often maintained the status quo rather than offering creative solutions for the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury **hopes** the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors is willing to accept this challenge of improving the quality of life for all Humboldt County citizens. The HCCGJ offers the following recommendations which we believe, if implemented, should position Humboldt County government to improve the overall quality of life.

The HCCGJ strongly encourages the BOS to add these recommendations to its discussions during the upcoming Strategic Workshop scheduled for May 2018.

- R1. The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors (BOS) develop and implement an alternative county administration system, with an executive officer supervising all non-elected county department heads, departments, and county employees in order to maximize governmental efficiencies and interdepartmental communication, as well as minimize duplication of effort. This should position the BOS to be free from routine business matters, thus providing ample time to focus on strategies to improve the quality of life for Humboldt County citizens. This change should occur with the beginning of fiscal year 2019-2020. **(F4, F5, F6)**

- R2. The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors task county government with performing a study on county work functions to determine which ones can be merged, how to increase collaboration, and how to reduce silos where warranted. This study should be completed and presented to the Board of Supervisors by December 31, 2018. **(F4, F5, F6)**
- R3. The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that during the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors Strategic Workshop in May 2018, a Vision of Humboldt County from the present through the year 2030 be created. **(F2, F10)**
- R4. The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that this Vision of Humboldt County be shared with county and city governments, and county citizens during the first quarter of fiscal year 2018-2019. **(F2, F10)**
- R5. The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors develop a comprehensive strategic framework document which identifies the type of planning to be completed in support of the 2030 vision statement. This strategic framework document should be completed by December 31, 2018. **(F2, F7, F10)**
- R6. The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors take immediate action to address both the short and long term housing shortage facing the county, which must include strategies beyond the current Affordable Housing Trust Fund and Housing First models. Such strategies might include modifying the General Plan to allow for additional housing starts and alternative housing options, and reducing building fees to encourage development. **(F9)**
- R7. The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors initiate a continuous improvement program setting annual goals for savings each year which can offset losses in other areas. This program should be fully implemented by December 31, 2018. **(F3)**
- R8. The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors promote and advertise all accomplishments of Measure Z including positions funded by the measure. This statement to the citizens of Humboldt County should be made public no later than October 31, 2018. **(F8)**

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05, the Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury requires responses as follows:

From the following governing bodies:

- Humboldt County Board of Supervisors **(R1, R2, R3, R4 R5, R6, R7, R8)**

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.

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APPENDIX A



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

AGENDA ITEM NO.

I-2

For the meeting of: June 27, 2017

Date: May 24, 2017

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Amy S. Nilsen, County Administrative Officer *AN*

Subject: County Administrative Officer Report: Board Strategic Workshop

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors receive an oral report from the County Administrative Officer (CAO) regarding the recent Board Strategic Workshop, and take action as may be required.

SOURCE OF FUNDING: N/A

DISCUSSION:

The CAO, County Counsel and your Board participated in a Board Strategic workshop in Benbow, CA on May 22. This workshop was facilitated by Bill Chiat of the Alta Mesa Group. In order to make the most of this strategic workshop it is important to clarify the direction your Board expressed during this day. The following items were noted:

Communications:

1. Department heads to create a communication structure for Board members in the absence of the department head, and/or issue specific.
2. CAO to create a Customer Service Inquiry, a cheat sheet of sorts to help direct questions.

Prepared by Amy S. Nilsen CAO Approval *E. Wilson Hayes*

REVIEW: Auditor _____ County Counsel _____ Human Resources _____ Other _____

TYPE OF ITEM:

_____ Consent

Departmental

_____ Public Hearing

_____ Other _____

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No. _____

Meeting of: _____

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

Upon motion of Supervisor *Fennell* Seconded by Supervisor *Sundberg*

Ayes *Sundberg, Fennell, Bass, Bohn*

Nays _____

Abstain _____

Absent *Wilson*

and carried by those members present, the Board hereby approves the recommended action contained in this Board report.

Dated: *June 27, 2017*

By: *Kathy Hayes*

Kathy Hayes, Clerk of the Board

Action Items: CAO to work with department heads to establish departmental contacts for your Board by department and/or by issue.
CAO in collaboration with departments to create a county directory.

Agenda Review and Items:

1. Agenda items must be to the CAO 9 business days before the scheduled meeting.
2. CAO to provide input on department head evaluations on agenda process follow through.
3. Provide additional information on "Special Presentations" in the Board's Rules.
4. Agenda items must be present at agenda review in order to be on the agenda, unless there are extraordinary circumstances.

Action Items: CAO to update the Board's Rules to include the above items.
CAO to include revised information from the Board's Rules in the annual CAO Agenda Item memo.
CAO to provide feedback to the Board on department head evaluations concerning the agenda item process.

Vision and Goals:

1. Share with department heads the 20 year vision for 2037.
2. CAO to work with departments to create department specific goals for the next 12-18 months as identified by your Board.

Action Item: CAO to organize a meeting with department heads to share and discuss your Board's vision and goals.
CAO to return with an agenda item containing department goals and timeframes.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact to hearing the oral report. However, in order to work with departments to obtain goals for the next 12 to 18 months there will be a facilitation cost of \$2,510 which was contained in Alta Mesa Group's original proposal.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT: None.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS: Board's discretion.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 2037 20 year Vision
2. 12-18 Month Goals

2037 20 year Vision

Cutting-edge technology

- Energy, cannabis, biomass
- Transpacific cable

Plan for sea level rise

More advanced in food production

- More diversified; export

Fish in the rivers -- healthy rivers

\$10.2 million in reserves

Campus-like facilities

Four airlines

Thriving/working waterfront

More local \$; more from State

Tourism: Avenue of Giants, Cannabis Tourism, Creative Arts, International Tourism, Cruise Ships

Attract and retain best county employee

Active living infrastructure

State of the art medical facilities and doctors

State of the art community, roads-parks-train

Roads – parks – train – cruises

Notes: Planning around transportation/multimodal/energy efficient.

County Facilities

Notes: Facilities co-locate/strategy/flexible/desirable to work and be in.

Diversified economy with living wage jobs for both blue and white collar

Notes: Concentrate on “value added” industries, not just resource extraction.

Energy independence

Healthy forests watersheds/return to healthy fish populations

Notes: Manage our forest lands/sustainable biomass management/timber and jobs.

Cannabis economy stabilize

12-18 Month Goals

- Update of local coastal plan (esp. Humboldt Bay)
- Facilities plan for county facilities
- Cannabis facilities permitted and on tax base
- Streamline permitting process (accommodate state regs.)
Notes: Co-location
- ADA compliance
- Complete General Plan with implementation
- Change narrative of Humboldt County
-> Branding
- Measure Z – next steps
- Identifying synergies between DHHS and County
- Homeless/Affordable Housing
- Complete employee contract negotiations
- Commercial Cannabis ordinance complete
- Expedited code enforcement