



# imagine humboldt!

BUILD OUR VISION



FINAL REPORT  
September 2013



# Think

about the communities we would like to leave for future generations.



# Inform

elected officials and key jurisdictional staff about what is important to us.

# Create

an ongoing conversation among community members as we become more knowledgeable together about planning and increase our capacity to engage successfully in the public process.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2009, Humboldt County Association of Governments, the agency responsible for the County's Regional Transportation Plan, launched **imagine humboldt!**, the Humboldt County Blueprint Planning Process. Primarily funded through grants from Caltrans, this initiative was an effort to build a county-wide (regional) vision for growth and development addressing land use, transportation, infrastructure, energy, housing, and other important policy areas.

**imagine humboldt!** is not prescriptive for local governments; instead it provides a framework that will help guide local planning decisions. Implementation of this vision will need to be carried out by local planners and the private sector. The strength of the plan lies in the widely held beliefs about what makes Humboldt County a great place to live as well as the challenges that will need to be overcome to maintain a quality lifestyle. This plan lays out the vision and principles for future development, provides insight into the feasibility and desirability of different possible growth scenarios and identifies ways that the success of future development might be measured.

**Participants were asked to look out to the year 2050, when Humboldt County was estimated to have approximately 25,000 more resident than currently- a growth averaging .5% per year over a 40 year period.** They were challenged to think

out beyond today's issues and their lifetimes to the communities we would like to leave our children's, children's children. Questions posed throughout the process were:

- How shall we grow?
- Where should we grow?
- How will we travel around the region?
- How will growth effect our environment and our lifestyle?
- What services will we need?

## Community Values

- Economic Opportunity
- Natural Environment & Beauty
- Personal Freedom & Civic Responsibility
- Well-maintained Infrastructure
- Rural Lifestyle
- Self-sufficiency/ Sustainability
- Well-designed Communities

During a series of face-to-face meetings throughout the County, an online survey, and a web-based "open house", community members created a vision, defined principles of future development, reviewed possible development scenarios and identified how success might be measured. Three hundred forty three (343) people attended community meetings, almost 1,000 surveys were completed, and over 475 comments were provided through Crowdbrite, the web-based open house.

The rural lifestyle and natural beauty of the area were the two most cited reasons why people came to the area and quality jobs is viewed as the region's greatest challenge.

**Fifty One percent (51%) of the people answering the online survey thought the quality of life in Humboldt County would be worse in 2050 than it is today.**

Through the outreach process commonly held community values were identified.

Everyone agreed on the following:

## HUMBOLDT COUNTY ASSETS

1. Natural beauty, proximity and access to forests, rivers & beaches.
2. Rural lifestyle, open space and choices about city or country living.
3. Small communities with distinct character.
4. Jobs connected to the land in agriculture forestry, fishing and aquaculture.
5. Clean air and water.

## HUMBOLDT COUNTY CHALLENGES

1. Lack of affordable transportation options for moving within and outside the County.
2. Lack of shopping opportunities and access to goods and services.
3. Poor economy and lack of well-paying jobs.
4. Drug influence and increased crime.
5. Balancing development and environmental concerns (growth/no growth dilemma).

## PRINCIPLES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

As part of the **imagine humboldt!** planning process participants identified principles for future development that they believed would result in the Humboldt County that they envisioned for the future.



### COMMUNITIES

- Enhance “small town feel” and provide space for residents to enjoy the out of doors.
- Maintain small communities with distinct character.
- Integrate bike and walking paths/trails into community design.
- Encourage and support the development of a wide range of housing options.
- Connect neighborhoods and communities to services and shopping with options for getting around.
- Improve the public’s feeling of safety

### ECONOMY

- Invest in infrastructure that improves the worldwide competitiveness of local business/industry.
- Provide businesses with a clear and predictable regulatory environment.
- Conserve existing agricultural and forested resources lands for production.
- Minimize the use of regulation and government interference in attaining desired outcomes.
- Support the development of strong downtowns

### INFRASTRUCTURE

- Increase regional energy self-sufficiency using a wide variety of strategies appropriately scaled to our area.
- Permit a variety of low tech/ smaller scale options for rural /small community residential and commercial.
- Maintain and monitor public and private water and wastewater systems.
- Innovate in developing public transportation options.

### ENVIRONMENT

- Protect valuable habitat areas.
- Preserve open vistas.
- Assure access to natural amenities for recreation and cultural needs.



### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Plan thoughtfully taking into consideration a variety of future scenarios including sea level rise.
- Support open transparent planning processes.
- Provide processes for meaningful public and stakeholder engagement in planning.

“*Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now.*”

—Alan Lakein

## PLANNING SCENARIOS

Four alternative growth patterns were mapped and presented to the community.

1. **Rural Living:** the majority of the growth was scattered fairly evenly across the rural landscape.
2. **Community Living:** focused growth close to current urbanized areas primarily Eureka, Arcata, McKinleyville, and Fortuna.
3. **Conserving Resource Lands:** More intensely focused growth in areas that are presently developed in order to conserve 80% of existing agricultural and producing forestlands.
4. **Rebuilding Small Towns:** Identified 7 communities—Orick, Glendale, Willow Creek, Samoa, Fields Landing, Hydesville and Redway/Garberville which were once larger for focusing new development.

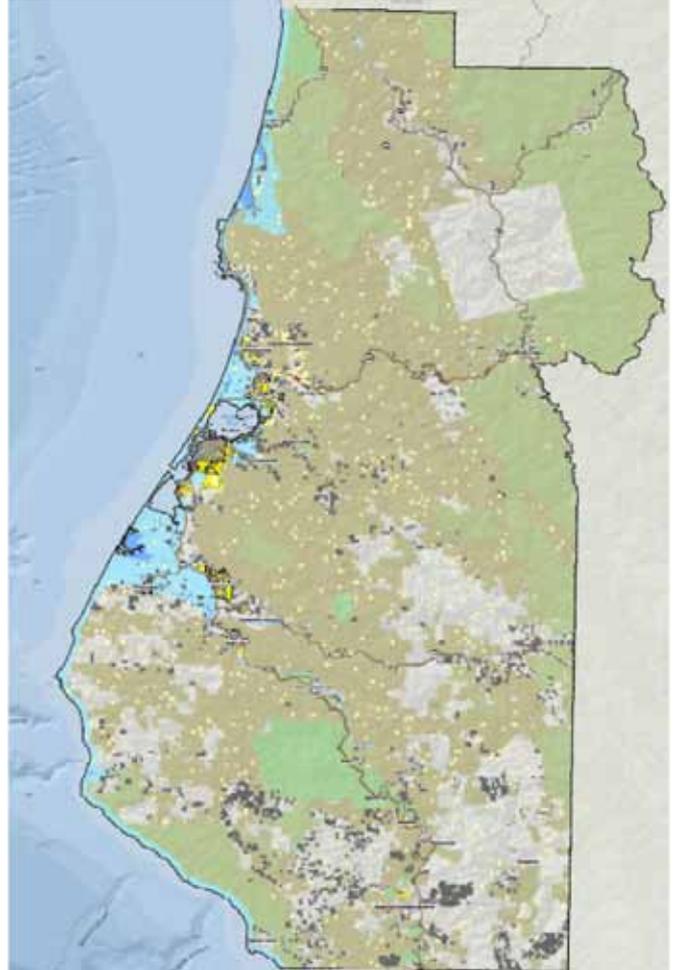
Comments on scenarios were gathered at meetings and through online. Concerns included the lack of water resources to serve development in outlying areas, and unrealistic expectations regarding the capacity to serve residences in outlying areas with fire and safety services. In addition, the challenge of quality road construction and maintenance were mentioned several times.

Participants were concerned that scenarios focusing development in existing cities would negatively affect the rural feel and character of those cities. The desire for housing choices, both urban and rural surfaced in most meetings. People were worried about a loss of social cohesion (knowing your neighbors) as cities grew, making scenarios that focused development in the cities less desirable.

### Small Towns: Preferred Growth Scenario

Seven cities were originally identified for increased housing and economic development including: Orick, Glendale, Willow Creek, Samoa, Fields Landing, Alton and Garberville/Redway. Participants felt Hydesville was a better choice than Alton (originally chosen due to its proximity to Highway 101 for ease of

## REBUILDING SMALL TOWNS



*Rebuilding small towns — preferred growth scenario.*

commercial development.) Other communities were also identified that should be added to the list including Loleta, Rio Dell/Scotia, Petrolia, Whitethorn and Alderpoint. Creating quality communities will be important to attracting new residents. Development in these communities should include housing, jobs and downtown enhancements. Communities are presently struggling with

inadequate infrastructure to support current residents.

The need to invest in infrastructure in those communities was recognized including water, wastewater, roads, parks and trails and downtown restoration/revitalization. Finding alternatives for infrastructure in terms of scale and design are desired for affordability and aesthetics.



## IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

Crowdbrite, a new type of online convening, was used to solicit additional ideas about improving existing communities and thinking about the future. Maps were created and participants could go online and “post” ideas or thoughts as well comment or show support for the ideas of others.

There were 8 canvases or maps created by Crowdbrite on which participants could post. The county was broken down into community areas and within each map there were images highlighting

smaller communities within that area. Above is the canvas of Humboldt County. The red outlined regions on the County map identify maps on other canvases.

Input from Crowdbrite not only provides a library of ideas people believe would make Humboldt County a great place to live, now and in the future, it also provided another opportunity to test drafted values, priorities and principles for future development.

## MEASURING PROGRESS

### Great Communities

- Few homeless.
- Our kids can stay if they choose.
- Most people can afford to buy a house if they choose.
- Communities have distinct character.
- There is diversity of people and thought.

### Transportation

- There are routine bicycle commuters and no bicyclists killed.
- People are walking and jogging.
- Public transportation is available and utilized.
- Goods, services and information are transported efficiently and effectively.

### Strong Economies

- Economy is less dependent on the illicit drug trade.
- Increased median wage, closing the gap with the state median wage.
- Full employment.
- Local businesses are thriving.

### Productive Resource Lands

- Forestry industry is healthy.
- There are jobs in fisheries and aquaculture.
- Businesses are thriving.
- People are living on small farms and local food is available for sale.

### Local Energy

- Local fuels are generating locally consumed electricity (biomass for example)

- The majority of our future energy comes from renewable sources including water, tides, waves & wind.
- Humboldt County is energy self-sufficient.

### Housing Choices

- More and different multi-family housing options exist including mixed generation, housing with shared community space, small, well-designed units—detached house, townhouses/condos and apartments.
- Housing available to all income levels.
- Supportive housing for residents with disabilities and/or mental illness.

### Infrastructure

- Roads are well maintained.
- Water and sewer infrastructure is well maintained and rates are affordable.
- Rural dwellers have access to clean water.
- Full utilization of the deep water port of Humboldt.
- Flight costs are reasonable.

**While these are the measures identified by participants they are not exhaustive of the possible ways the quality of life in Humboldt County could be measured in the future. Participants agreed that identifying and agreeing on measures is important but only useful if there is one or more organizations willing to take leadership to make sure progress is measured periodically over time, assure resources are available, and report out to the public the results.**

# WHY IMAGINE HUMBOLDT?

50 years ago the vast majority of the jobs in Humboldt County were either directly or indirectly tied to the land and natural resources—primarily agriculture, timber and fishing. Communities sprang up across the county close to jobs concentrating people around Humboldt Bay and creating scattered communities across

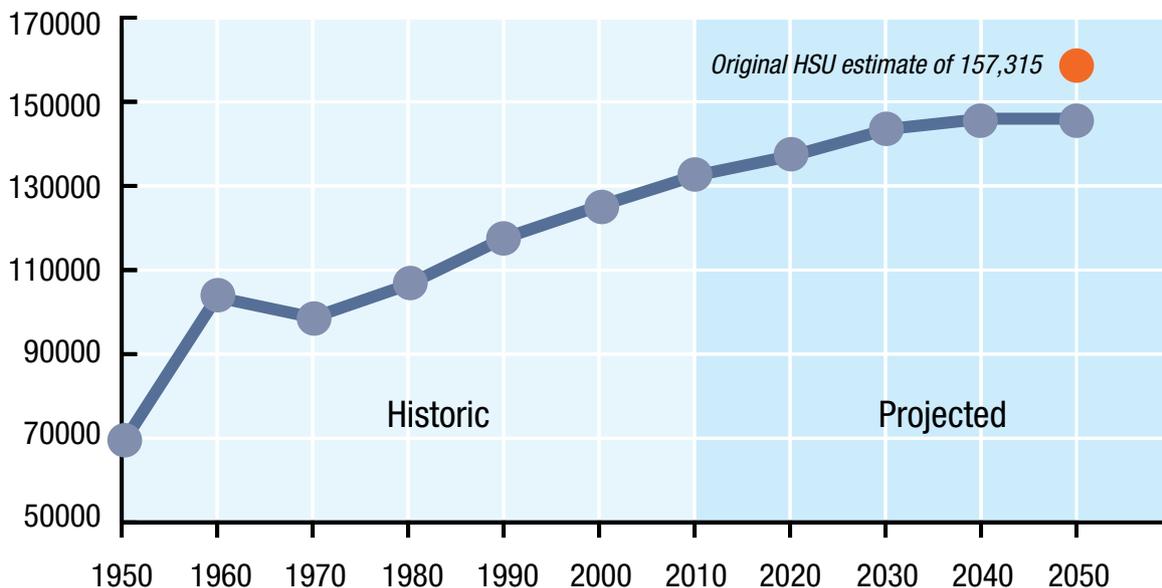
the landscape. Since that time the structure of jobs in the economy has changed significantly.

As the economy shifted, jobs became concentrated in communities which met the needs of a broader array of businesses. Towns which were once vibrant timber based communities withered

as the hundreds of mills, small and large, closed. Those places continue to struggle to redefine their economic drivers. Businesses are continuing to evolve and as their operations change, jobs and where they are located also change. People live in communities where they chose, where they can afford

housing or where they feel at home. Residents, who once lived and worked in the same community commute, move closer to their places of employment or change jobs. People live in Fortuna and work in Arcata, people live in Ferndale and shop in Eureka, people work in Arcata and play in Willow Creek.

## Humboldt County Population 1950–2050



*In 2010 Humboldt State University economics department estimated the Humboldt County population would be 157,315 in 2050. Since that time trends in state population growth have changed and the new estimate from the Dept. of Finance is 147,997*

Where people will live, work, and shop 50 years from now will be influenced by decisions we make now. Planning for the future could mean the difference between a community blowing away in

the wind or becoming a vibrant and interesting place to live. Investments now will influence what type of employment is available, the affordability of housing, how people and goods get around. It could even effect

what people will see looking out their windows. While we cannot predict the future, and there will be many unknowns, we should not sit idle, waiting for someone else to decide it for us. We can develop a vision

of what our communities might look and feel like and identify steps down a pathway that will get us there— **imagine humboldt!** was designed to engage residents in that process.

## OUR PROCESS

**imagine humboldt!** was funded by grants from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) through the Regional Blueprint Planning program. Regional Blueprints are collaborative planning processes that engage residents in articulating a vision for the long term future of their region. The regional vision is developed from residents' values and priorities and informed by modeling tools that help participants envision the impacts of growth and planning decisions. The resulting community vision can then guide regional and local land use and transportation decisions resulting in future that sustains a high quality of life for all.

October  
2010

### ROLLOUT

- Held at Aquatic Center-Eureka
- Community leaders
- Introduced **imagine humboldt!**
- Recruited BAC members



Nov – Dec  
2010

### ONLINE SURVEY

- Utilized Survey Monkey
- Hard copy surveys provided in southern & eastern Humboldt County
- Focused on quality of life questions



Jan – Mar  
2011

### FIRST ROUND COMMUNITY MEETINGS

- 7 meetings held at county high schools
- Introduction of **imagine humboldt!**
- Student presentations
- Posters soliciting input on general themes



## BLUEPRINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BAC)

At the Rollout event in October 2010 community leaders gathered for an introduction to Blueprint Planning. From that gathering an advisory committee was developed. The BAC's key purpose was to guide the community outreach and visioning events and processes for **imagine humboldt!**. More specifically, the roles of the BAC were to:

- 1) Oversee community engagement efforts to ensure broad-based community participation,
- 2) Ensure that community input was collected objectively and translated accurately into a shared community vision, and
- 3) Facilitate information dissemination and networking.

“*[The future] depends on the direction set now for protecting healthy environment/uniqueness of rural life, access to jobs & educational opportunities.*

—Eureka resident

September  
2012

**SECOND ROUND  
COMMUNITY MEETINGS**

- 6 meetings held throughout County
- Handout of results from 1st meetings
- Economy handout
- Scenario Maps
- Performance Measure Maps
- Intro to Crowdbrite



Sept – Oct  
2012

**ONLINE PUBLIC OPEN  
HOUSE**

- Online access to Crowdbrite canvases
- Posting of ideas, projects and best practices
- Work at the community level as well as the county level



Sept  
2013

**FINAL IN-PERSON  
OPEN HOUSES & FINAL  
REPORT**

- Reveal of process outcomes
- Use Crowdbrite canvases
- Opportunity for additional input
- Arts Alive Eureka
- Final printed reports
- Jurisdictional presentations



**BLUEPRINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Rio Anderson  
Stephen Avis  
Virginia Bass  
Brenda Bishop  
Dana Boudreau  
Bob Brown  
Clif Clendenen  
Kristina Combs  
Craig Compton  
Elizabeth Conner  
Helen Edwards  
Dorina Espinoza

Jeff Farley  
Estelle Fennell  
Deborah Giraud  
Barbara Groom  
Susan Harincar-Driscoll  
Joyce Hayes  
Jacque Hostler  
Bonnie Hughes  
Alyson Hunter  
Dan Johnson  
Jennifer Kalt  
Barbara Kennedy

Michael Kraft  
John Leboyteaux  
Lindsay Magnuson  
Brian Mitchell  
Larry Oetker  
Jay Parrish  
Jeff Pauli  
Bill Peckham  
Paul Pitino  
Rollin Richmond  
Duane Rigge  
Terry Roberts

Jon Sapper  
Mark Schaffner  
Ruthann Schulte  
Tony Smithers  
Connie Stewart  
Alex Stillman  
Warren Tamerius  
Leishara Ward  
Ken Zanzi  
Katherine Ziemer  
Jim Zoellick

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In late 2010 and early 2011, **imagine humboldt!** reached out to the residents using an online survey administered using Survey Monkey, and in paper form, to solicit input about the future of the region. In addition to the survey, **imagine humboldt!** hosted six community meetings at Humboldt County high schools including Miranda, Fortuna, Eureka, Arcata, McKinleyville, Hoopa where high school students presented their perspectives about the future and residents were encouraged to provide input on a wide variety of topics. An additional meeting was held in Garberville. A complete listing of comments and results of the summary are available in their entirety at [www.hcaog.net/imaginehumboldt](http://www.hcaog.net/imaginehumboldt).

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2010

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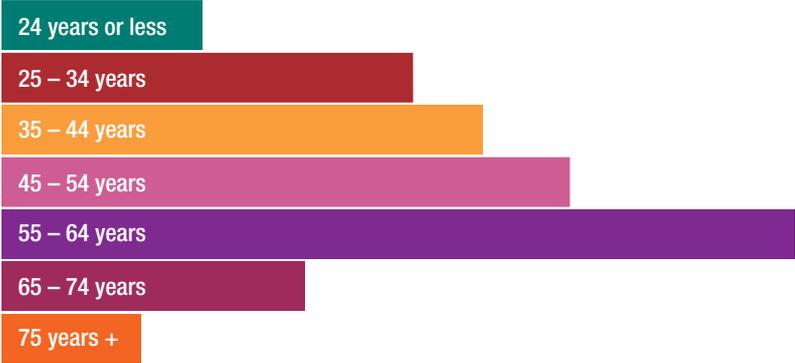


*without civic participation guiding the growth and development of the county we will have overdevelopment, environmental destruction and decreased quality of life.*

—Blue Lake resident

# WHO TOOK THE SURVEY...

## Age Groups



- 1,324 people started to the survey; 68% completed it
- 79% were employed; 62% full-time
- 59% were women; 37% were men

- 76% were homeowners; 21% renters; 3% declined to state
- Almost 90% had some college education
- Four surveys were completed in Spanish
- Southern and eastern areas of Humboldt County were under-represented in the responses.

## Job Category



## LIVING

Generations are integrated and all feel welcome. Community members participate in civic life because their actions make a difference.

We love our rural lifestyle and support a wide variety of housing options both in town and in rural settings.

We are concerned about negative effects of development on our environment including water quality and availability as well as habitat destruction.

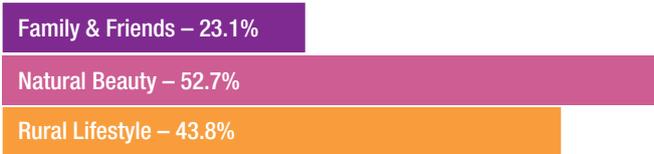
We want to develop in a way that retains high environmental standards.

### Housing Affordability



Percent of Humboldt County households that qualified to buy  
 DATA SOURCE: Humboldt Co. Assoc. of Realtors (www.harealtors.com)

### Why We Choose To Live In Humboldt County



DATA SOURCE: Imagine Humboldt 2011 Survey

*We value well planned communities with convenient access to shopping, services and jobs.*

## WORKING

We are concerned that regulations, at both the local and state levels are standing in the way of residential and business development.

Availability of quality jobs is a key challenge.

How do we ensure that agricultural and timber lands are available for farming and lumber production for future generations?

### Median Household Income



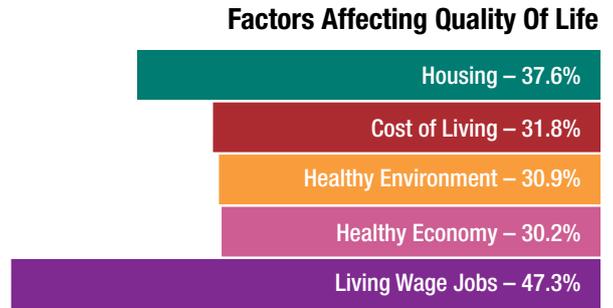
DATA SOURCE: 2010 US Census (www.quickfacts.census.gov)

*Entrepreneurship should be encouraged and small business supported by our infrastructure including transportation and telecommunications.*

How do we support local businesses and enhanced local shopping opportunities.

*We believe that a diverse economy is critical and that ours should include jobs connected to natural resources.*

How do we identify our best opportunities for economic growth and how do we make them happen?



DATA SOURCE: Imagine Humboldt 2011 Survey

**PLAYING**

We recognize the need to become more self-sufficient and increase utilization of renewable energy and believe we have the capacity to develop those resources in our region.

How can we reduce our dependence on automobiles when it is difficult to develop an affordable, convenient and accessible public transportation?

*We value our clean water, healthy forests and beaches and want to see our beautiful natural environment and our ability to enjoy it preserved for the future.*

How can we create a lively, active participatory, diverse citizenry, who wear many hats and remain civil despite disagreements?

*We enjoy safe bicycle and walking trails/ sidewalks and would like to see more of them interconnected throughout the County.*

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT II

Based on the community values identified in the first round of meetings and the online survey, materials were developed for a second round of face to face meetings as well as an online open house provided through Crowdbrite. In alignment with the Blueprint planning process, four alternative scenarios depicting patterns of potential future growth were developed using a computer model called UPLAN. Pros and cons of scenarios were discussed as well as and how they affected six measures of qualities of life. While there was not a “vote” taken for a preferred future growth scenario, general preferences, as well as questions and concerns were solicited for each.

Month	Activity	Details
September 2012	SECOND ROUND COMMUNITY MEETINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 6 meetings held throughout County</li><li>• Handout of results from 1st meetings</li><li>• Economy handout</li><li>• Scenario Maps</li><li>• Performance Measure Maps</li><li>• Intro to Crowdbrite</li></ul>
Sept – Oct 2012	ONLINE PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Online access to Crowdbrite canvases</li><li>• Posting of ideas, projects and best practices</li><li>• Work at the community level as well as the county level</li></ul>
Sept 2013	IN-PERSON OPEN HOUSES & FINAL REPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reveal of process outcomes</li><li>• Use Crowdbrite canvases</li><li>• Arts Alive Eureka</li><li>• Final printed report</li><li>• Jurisdictional presentations</li></ul>

## Alternative Growth Scenarios

**imagine humboldt!** utilized Uplan, a computer modeling program developed at the University of California at Davis to develop four maps depicting alternative scenarios for how Humboldt County might accommodate the 25,000+ new residents anticipated by the year 2050. The scenarios are not maps of what will be, but were created to start a conversation with residents about preferences and concerns as our population grows. The four alternatives were called: Community Living, Rural Living, Conserving Resource Lands and Rebuilding Small Towns.

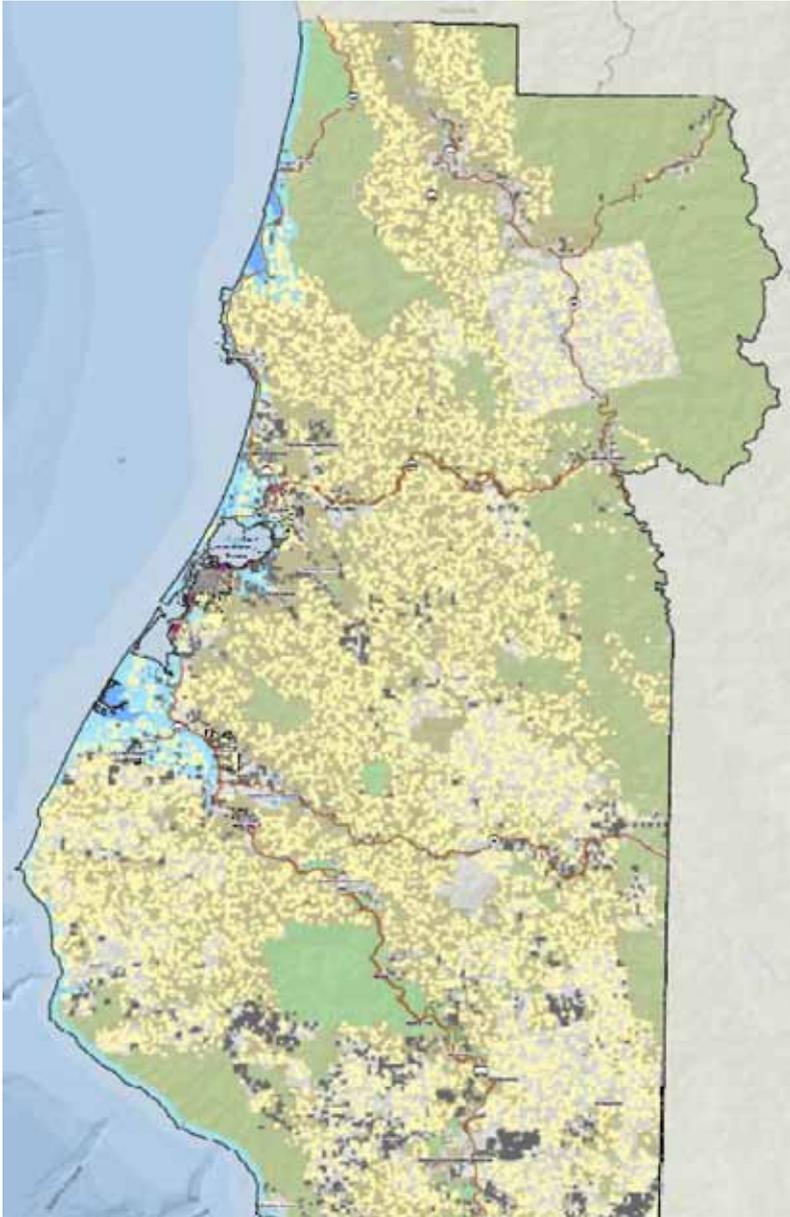
Households Allocated	Ave Lot Size	# of New Households
Apartments and Townhouses	.06 ac/unit or 17.68 units/ac	50
In Town	.20 ac/unit or 5 units/ac	90
Rural	.20-3.28 ac/unit or .30-5 units/ac	10,484

“When they find a new source of water”

—Garberville

**Rural Living**

The majority (98%) of the new residential development is in rural areas. Parcels are scattered throughout the rural areas of the County on parcels that are presently permitted for residential. 85% in ranches of 39 acres or more, 13% low density lots between 3.25-39 acres. Employment development is increased in rural areas.



“Services are already so expensive, this doesn’t make sense”

—Arcata



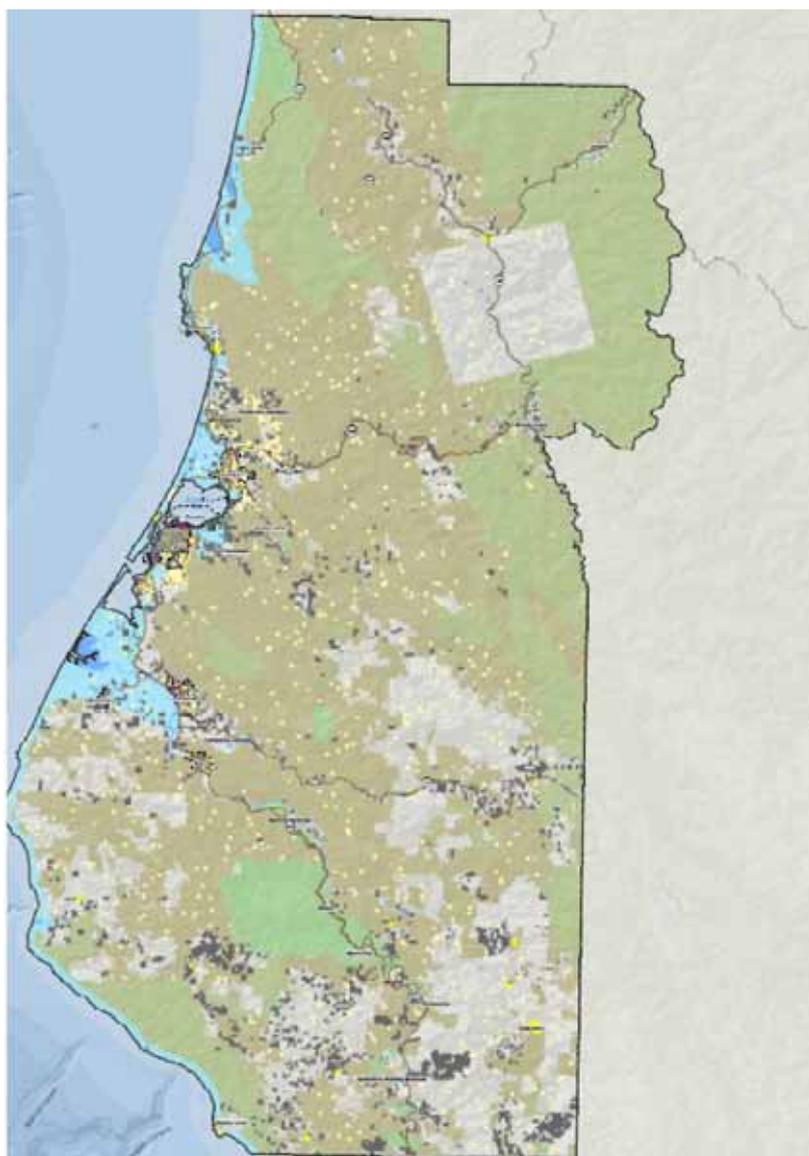
Households Allocated	Ave Lot Size	# of New Households
Apartments and Townhouses	.06 ac/unit or 17.68 units/ac	1,417
In Town	.20 ac/unit or 5 units/ac	7,415
Rural	.20-3.28 ac/unit or .30-5 units/ac	1,801

## Community Living

70% of the new housing are single family residences in typical community neighborhoods. Smaller lots averaging .25 acres are clustered in or near cities and communities. Larger parcels are spread out across rural areas. Commercial and industrial development follows present patterns in existing cities and larger communities within the County.

*How do these scenarios account for population influx due to climate change?*

—Eureka



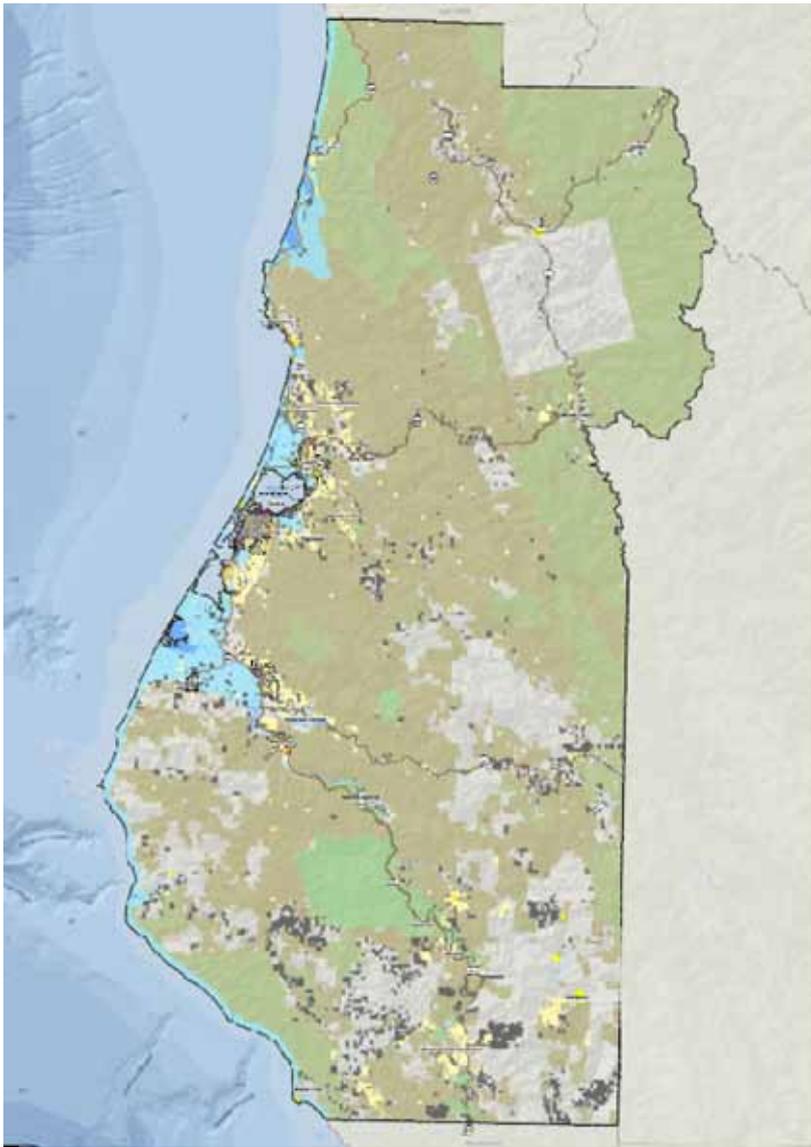
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In Town	.20 ac/unit or 5 units/ac	7,415
Rural	.20-3.28 ac/unit or .30-5 units/ac	1,801

“*Maintain Ag. & Farm Land*  
—McKinleyville

**Conserving Resource Lands**

This model increases density of residential development in order to conserve 80% of the resource lands (Ag & Timber) that presently exist. Ag and Timberlands were identified by zoning as well as property tax treatment (those covered by Williamson Act Contracts and/ or Timber Protection Zones.) Similar to the Community Living scenario but residences are less spread out with more multi-family units (condos and apartments.) Focuses even large lots nearer existing communities.

“*The Williamson Act needs to be defined*  
—Garberville



**L E G E N D**

Employment	Apartments & Townhouses	In Town	Rural
Developed	Protected Lands	Undeveloped	Coastal Zone

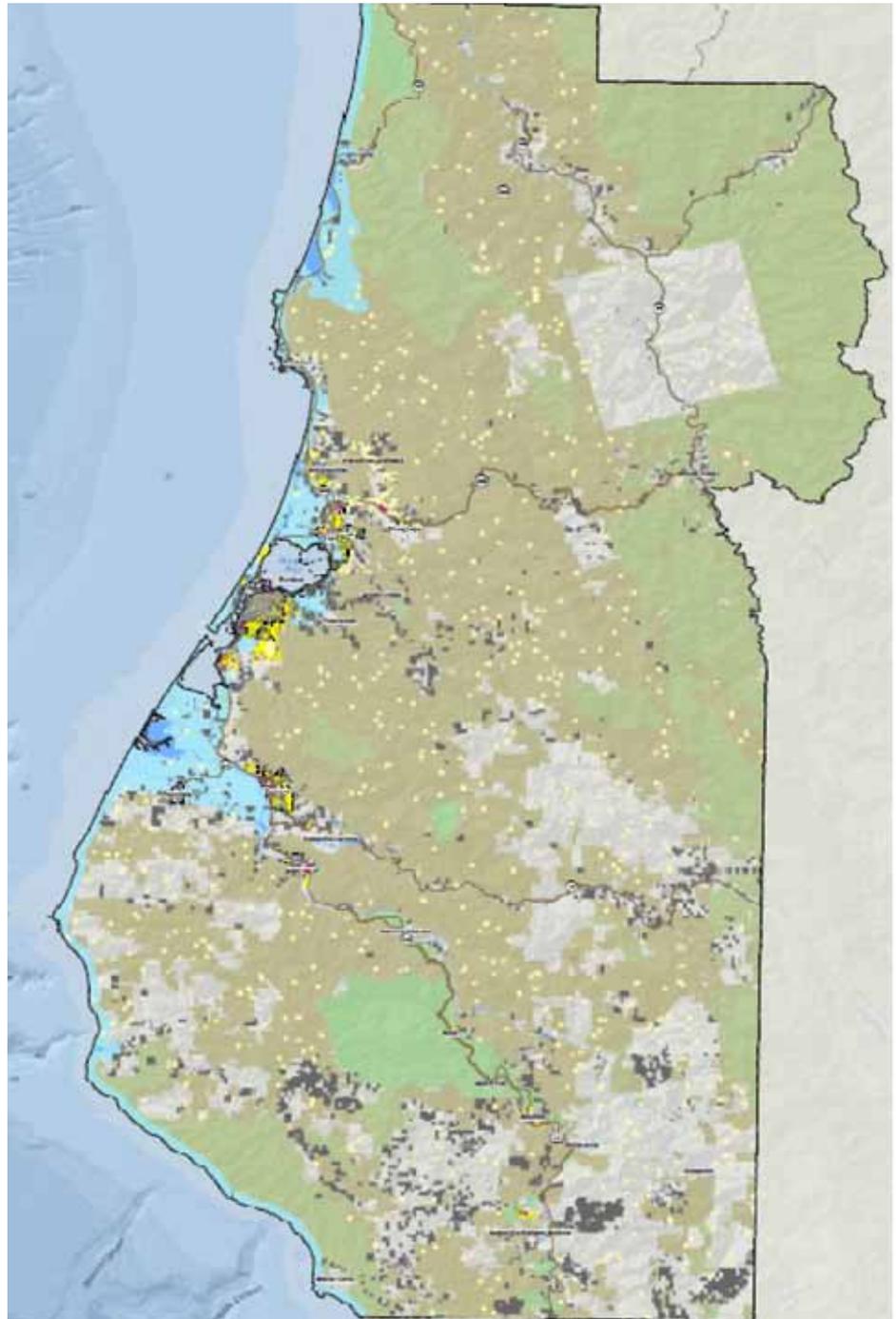
Households Allocated	Ave Lot Size	# of New Households
Apartments and Townhouses	.06 ac/unit or 17.68 units/ac	1,417
In Town	.20 ac/unit or 5 units/ac	7,945
Rural	.20-3.28 ac/unit or .30-5 units/ac	1,269

## Rebuilding Small Towns: The Preferred Alternative

Focuses on rebuilding the communities of: Orick, Glendale, Willow Creek, Samoa, Fields Landing, Alton, and Redway/Garberville. Many of these areas were once bigger but shrunk due to the reduction in timber industry jobs. New single-family residences were located near community centers. Requires new infrastructure development as well as economic development in those communities to create jobs and reduce the need to commute for work.

“Should also consider  
*Whitethorn, Alderpoint  
and Petrolia*

—SoHum





*Rebuilding small towns represents a blend of advantages of rural & urban living — I think this is the best choice for a sustainable future.*

—Arcata

## Feedback on Scenarios

Participants commented on scenarios at both face to face meetings and through Crowdfunder online.

There were several comments about whether the Rural Living scenario really represented a development pattern that was remotely likely. This map was created by instructing the Uplan computer model to place 80% of the new growth outside of existing cities. While it may not be a likely scenario, it does represent growth on parcels that presently exist and are zoned to accept single family units. The Rural Living scenario surfaced concerns about the lack of sufficient water resources to serve development in outlying areas as well as the fire danger and the unrealistic expectation that public services could be provided to adequately serve safety and fire suppression needs. In addition, the challenge of quality road construction and maintenance were mentioned several times in connection with watercourse siltation concerns.

Models where existing cities increased density, including Community Living and Conserving Resource Lands, were not particularly popular due to the threat of those areas becoming “like Santa Rosa” and the perception that housing choices would be diminished taking away options for rural lifestyles. There was concern that densifying cities would endanger the social benefits associated with small town living — knowing people and being known, distinct character, local goods and services, smaller scale and slower pace of life. While a focus on developing larger, more dense cities didn’t seem appealing, participants did value conserving resource lands for agricultural and timber production.



*Should be rebuilding Hydesville not Alton*

—Fortuna

## Rebuilding Small Towns- The Preferred Scenario

There were several ideas for small communities that could be the focus for developing in addition to the 7 modeled, suggestions included: Petrolia, Alderpoint, Whitethorn, Briceland, Hydesville, Loleta and the Rio Dell/Scotia area. All have community centers that were once much more robust than they are presently.

Development in these communities should include housing, jobs and downtown enhancements to reduce the need to commute out for work or basic shopping. It was recognized that there would be the need to invest in infrastructure in order to develop in those communities including waste water treatment, roads, downtown restoration/revitalization etc. Several of those communities are presently struggling with inadequate infrastructure to support current residents. Finding alternatives for infrastructure in terms of scale and design are desired.

Residents are interested in being engaged in the

discussion about the future of their small communities. Only one, Rio Dell, is an incorporated city with a governance structure separate from the County. McKinleyville, the largest community outside an incorporated city only recently developed a County appointed advisory committee to help guide future growth. Garberville has been researching becoming a city with separate governance but the cost of separating from the County is high. Giving residents adequate say in the future of their communities, along with the cost of infrastructure to support growth will be significant challenges to Rebuilding Small Towns.

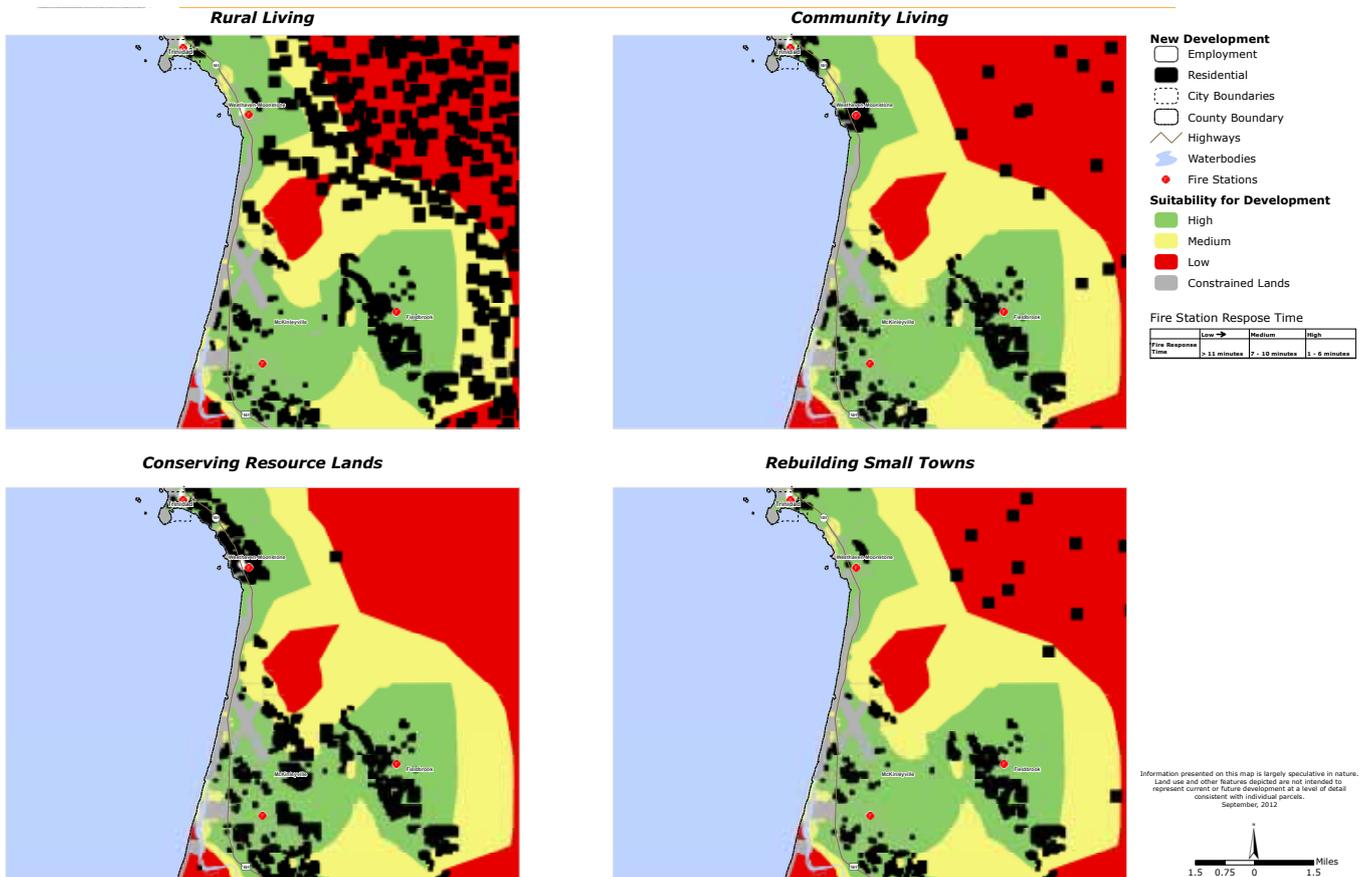
# PERFORMANCE MEASURES

In addition to the maps of the alternative growth scenarios community members reviewed how each alternative performed according to 6 performance measures including:

- Fire Response Time
- Distance to Urgent Care
- Distance to Schools
- Prime Soils, Timber and Williamson Act Lands
- Access to Water and Sewer
- Access to Bus Routes

Six maps were created for each community area and were displayed at the second round of community meetings for comment. Below is an example. To view all maps go to [www.hcaog.net/imaginehumboldt](http://www.hcaog.net/imaginehumboldt).

## FIRE RESPONSE TIMES MAP McKinleyville/Trinidad



# AN EYE ON SUSTAINABILITY

Participants, from the comments made, were interested in sustainability including an increase in energy self-sufficiency and a reduction in vehicle travel dependence driven particularly by the cost of fuel. Each scenario was analyzed to determine the effect of the specific growth pattern on vehicle miles traveled (vmt), the resulting estimated gallons of gasoline and diesel consumed and the level of Green House Gas Emissions and compared to current levels (baseline).

## Description of the four 2050 projection scenarios analyzed in this report

Scenario	Total Daily VMT	Total Households	Total Employment	Employment In Rural AT	Households In Rural AT
Community Living	5,518,746	67,012	55,921	9,559	23,210
Conserve Resources	5,509,998	67,048	55,918	9,737	23,041
Rebuilding Small Towns	4,065,836	67,040	55,917	10,537	18,282
Rural Living	4,708,230	66,948	55,918	10,882	23,537

## Estimated consumption of gasoline and diesel (in units of gallons) from EMFAC2011

Scenario	Gasoline	Diesel
Baseline	85,002,000	25,996,000
Community Living	85,623,000	26,186,000
Conserve Resources	85,487,000	26,145,000
Rebuilding Small Towns	63,081,000	19,292,000
Rural Living	73,048,000	22,340,000

## Transportation-related emissions results by scenario, in units of equivalent carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>e). Emissions of carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide are quantified.

Scenario	Total Daily VMT	CO <sub>2</sub> e Emissions (Tons / Year)	% Of Baseline
Baseline	5,478,691	727,852	100%
Community Living	5,518,746	733,173	100.73%
Conserve Resources	5,509,998	732,011	100.57%
Rebuilding Small Towns	4,065,836	540,152	74.21%
Rural Living	4,708,230	625,495	85.94%

Tables from Greenhouse Gas Emissions for HCAOG — Future Scenarios, a report commissioned from Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA) using the EMFAC2011 model, with input from UPlan and TransCAD modeling results provided by Vestra and Cambridge Systematics, respectively.

# ONLINE OPEN HOUSE CROWDBRITE

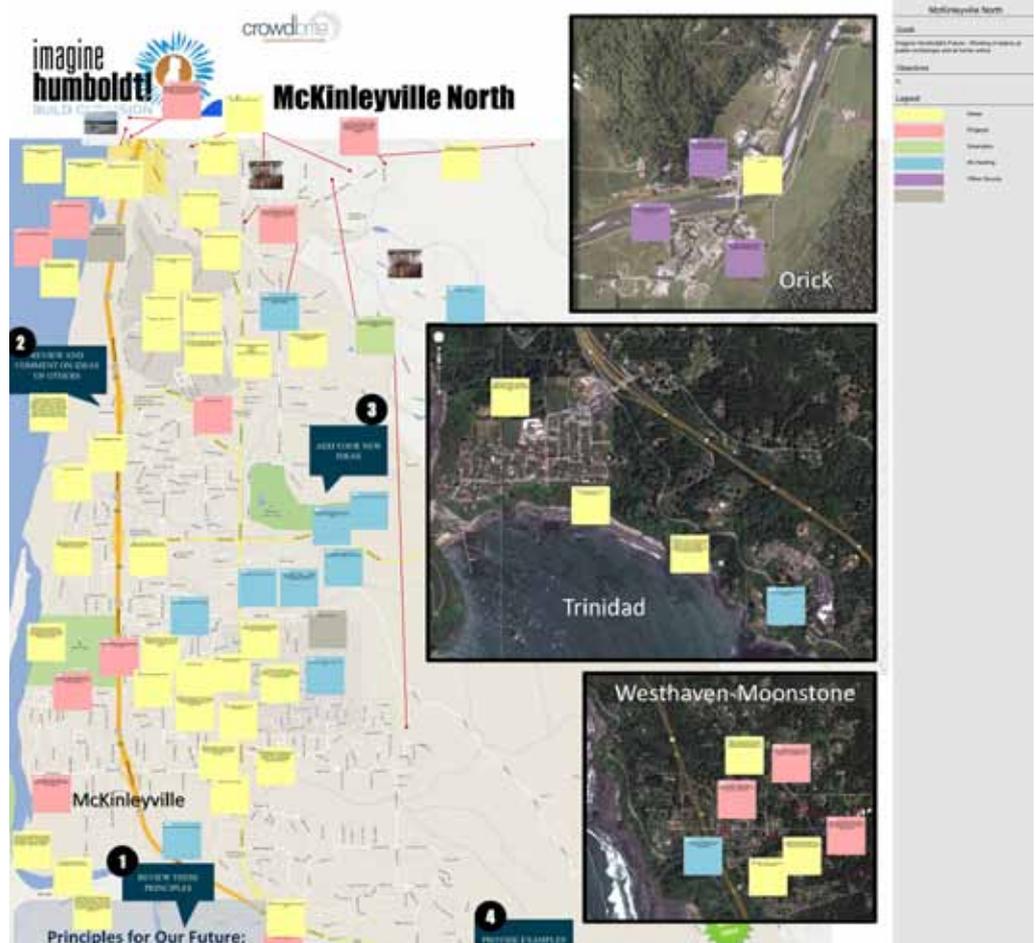
Crowdbrite, a new type of online convening, was used to solicit additional ideas about improving existing communities and thinking about the future. Maps were created and participants could go online and “post” ideas or thoughts as well comment or show support for the ideas of others.

## IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

There were 8 canvases or maps created by Crowdbrite on which participants could post. To the right is the canvas of McKinleyville and areas north. Various colored sticky notes are posted on the map are ideas.

Input from Crowdbrite not only provides a library of ideas people believe would make Humboldt County a great place to live, now and in the future, it also provided another opportunity to test drafted values, priorities and principles for future development.

To view all the maps and the ideas and comments, visit [www.hcaog.net/imaginehumboldt](http://www.hcaog.net/imaginehumboldt).



56 IDEAS ON THE MAP

### Humboldt County

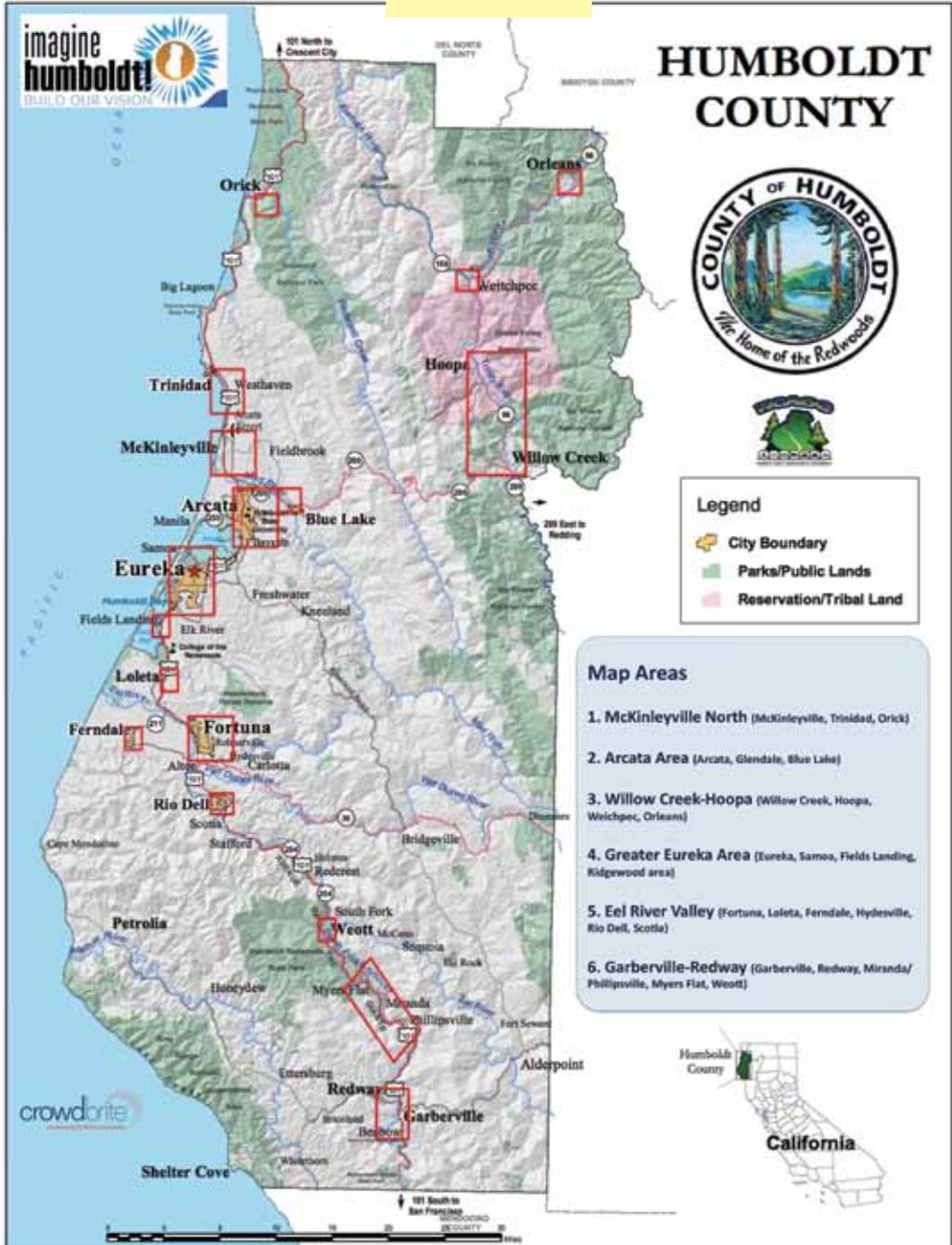
Energy independence for the NW Coast — develop sustainable power sources as close to the users as possible. —Online comment

Newport Oregon an example of good waterfront design. —Online comment

Network of bicycle tourist infrastructure: hostels, kiosks, bike friendly businesses. Continue road improvements to provide safe riding for the thousands of riders who come from around the world to ride on 101 through the redwoods. —Online comment

Build a network of connected communities across the County and adjacent places! —Online comment

## Humboldt County



## Arcata/Blue Lake

Increase quantity and quality of walking and biking routes, safety & comfort important.

—Online comment

Preserve & utilize our ag. Lands in the Arcata Bottoms.

—Arcata meeting comment

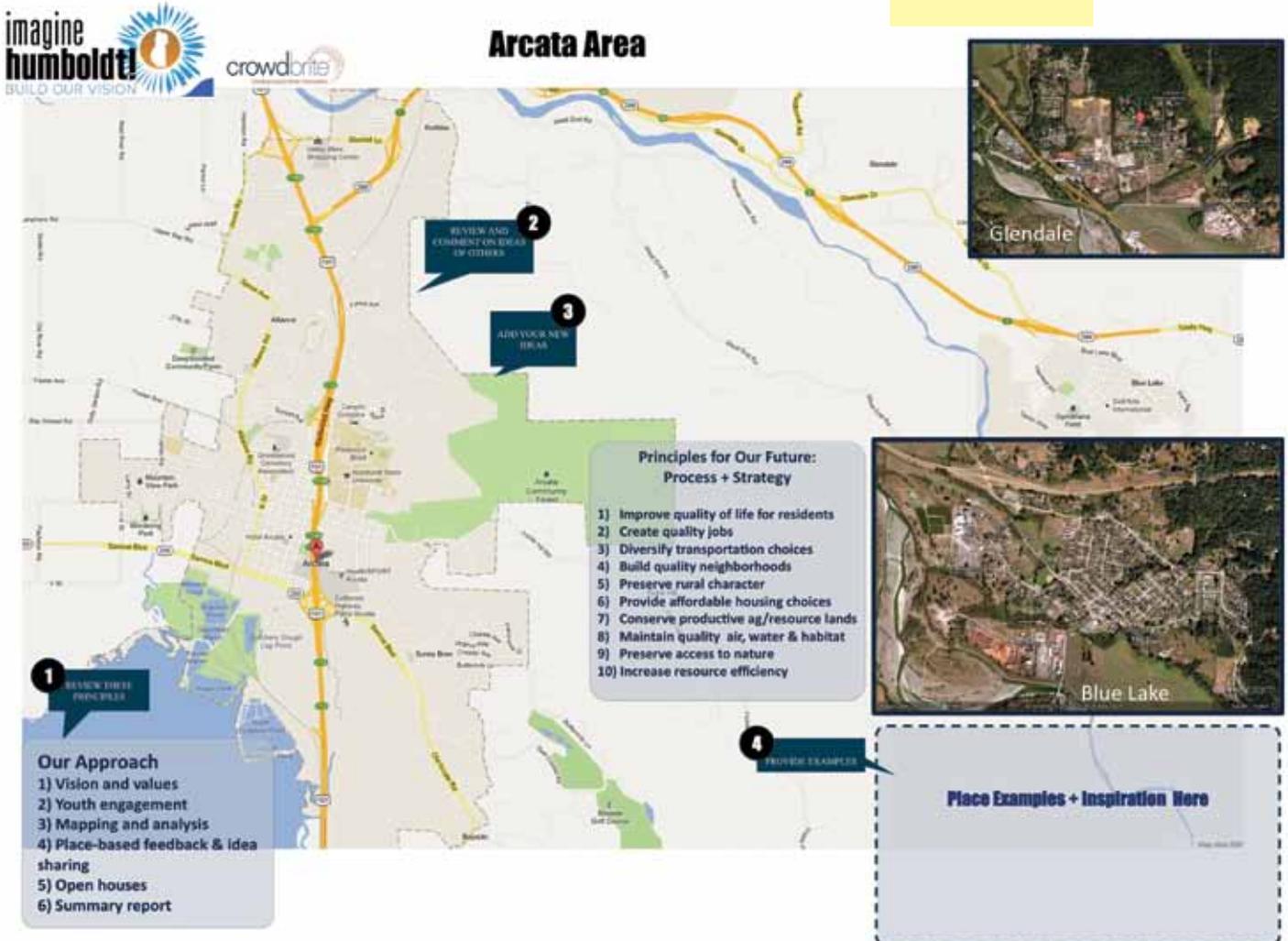
Basically, Arcata is a model of good planning...mix of housing, retail, manufacturing, parks, marsh! Keep going!

—Online comment

Eureka to Arcata bike/ped/rail trail.

—Arcata meeting comment

57  
IDEAS  
ON THE  
MAP



# Eel River Valley

Bike route connecting Newburg Park and School Street, fitness and safe transportation.

—Online idea

Loleta has a strong working town character, farming and ranching. Former Creamery has potential.

—55 Loleta community interviews

Put in horse trail on existing RR Right of Way to Carlotta.

—Online idea

25 IDEAS ON THE MAP

**imagine humboldt!**  
BUILD OUR VISION

**Eel River Valley**

**Our Approach**

- 1) Vision and values
- 2) Youth engagement
- 3) Mapping and analysis
- 4) Place based feedback & idea sharing
- 5) Open houses
- 6) Summary report

**Principles for Our Future: Process + Strategy**

- 1) Improve quality of life for residents
- 2) Create quality jobs
- 3) Diversify transportation choices
- 4) Build quality neighborhoods
- 5) Preserve rural character
- 6) Provide affordable housing choices
- 7) Conserve productive ag/resource lands
- 8) Maintain quality air, water & habitat
- 9) Preserve access to nature
- 10) Increase resource efficiency

**Place Examples + Inspiration Here**

**crowdsource**

## Garberville Redway

51  
IDEAS  
ON THE  
MAP

Public WiFi hotspots in G'ville/ Redway. Affordable highspeed broadband for rural residents. Support for telecommuters and internet based small businesses.

—Online comment

Adaptation of locavore principles is vital to stopping major leaks in our economic bucket.

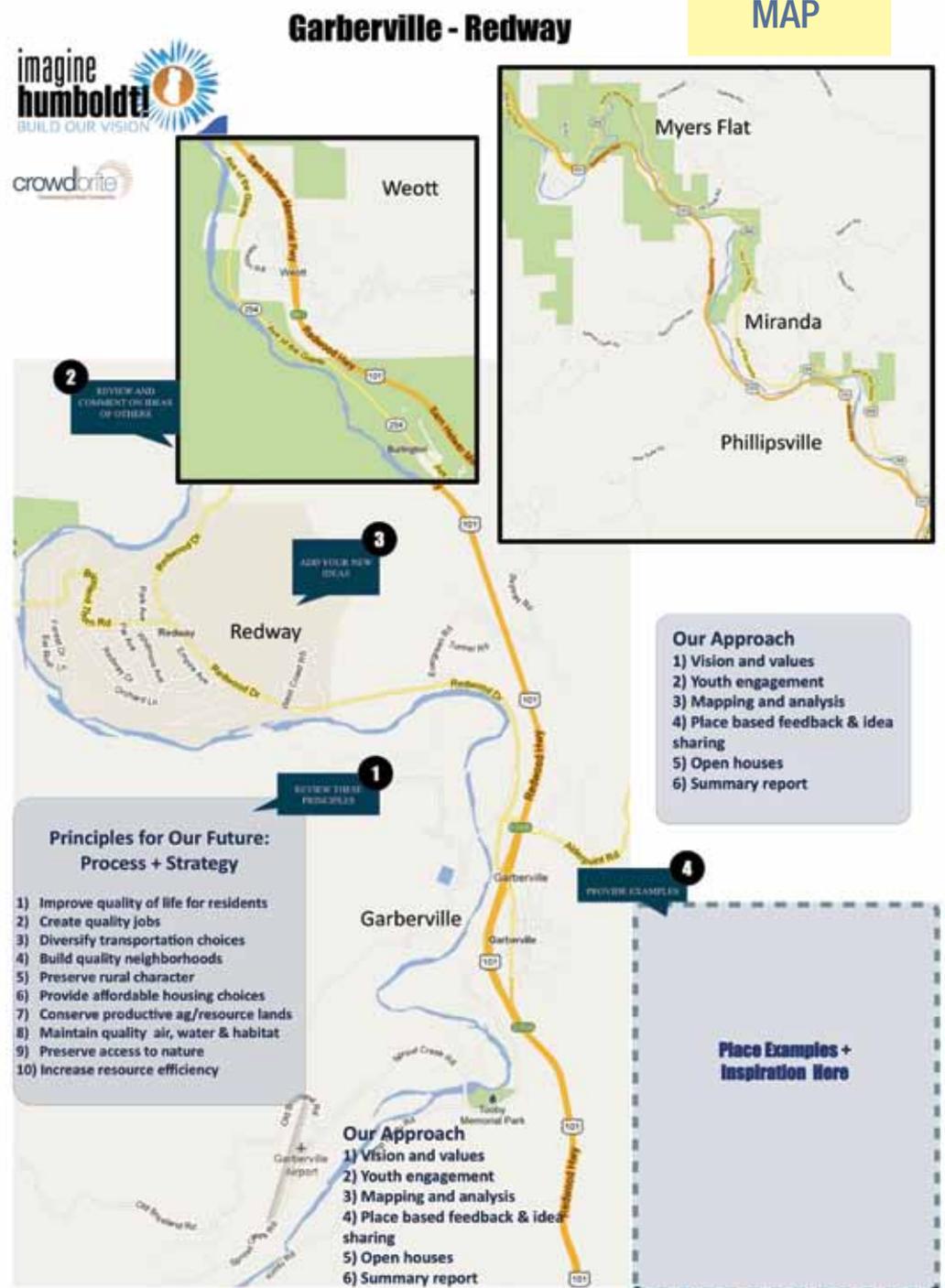
—Garberville comment

Telecommuting/  
Teleconferencing

—Garberville comment

Close Avenue (of the Giants) to vehicle traffic except for local traffic to allow for bicycle and pedestrian save access.

—Online comment



## Greater Eureka

Eureka has great architecture, enhance and promote it. It is a lost resource, but valuable.

—Online comment

101 is not an asset. It detracts from the hidden treasures within the city. Needs enhancement.

—Online comment

Need policy and systems changes to sustain desired improvements

—Eureka meeting comment.

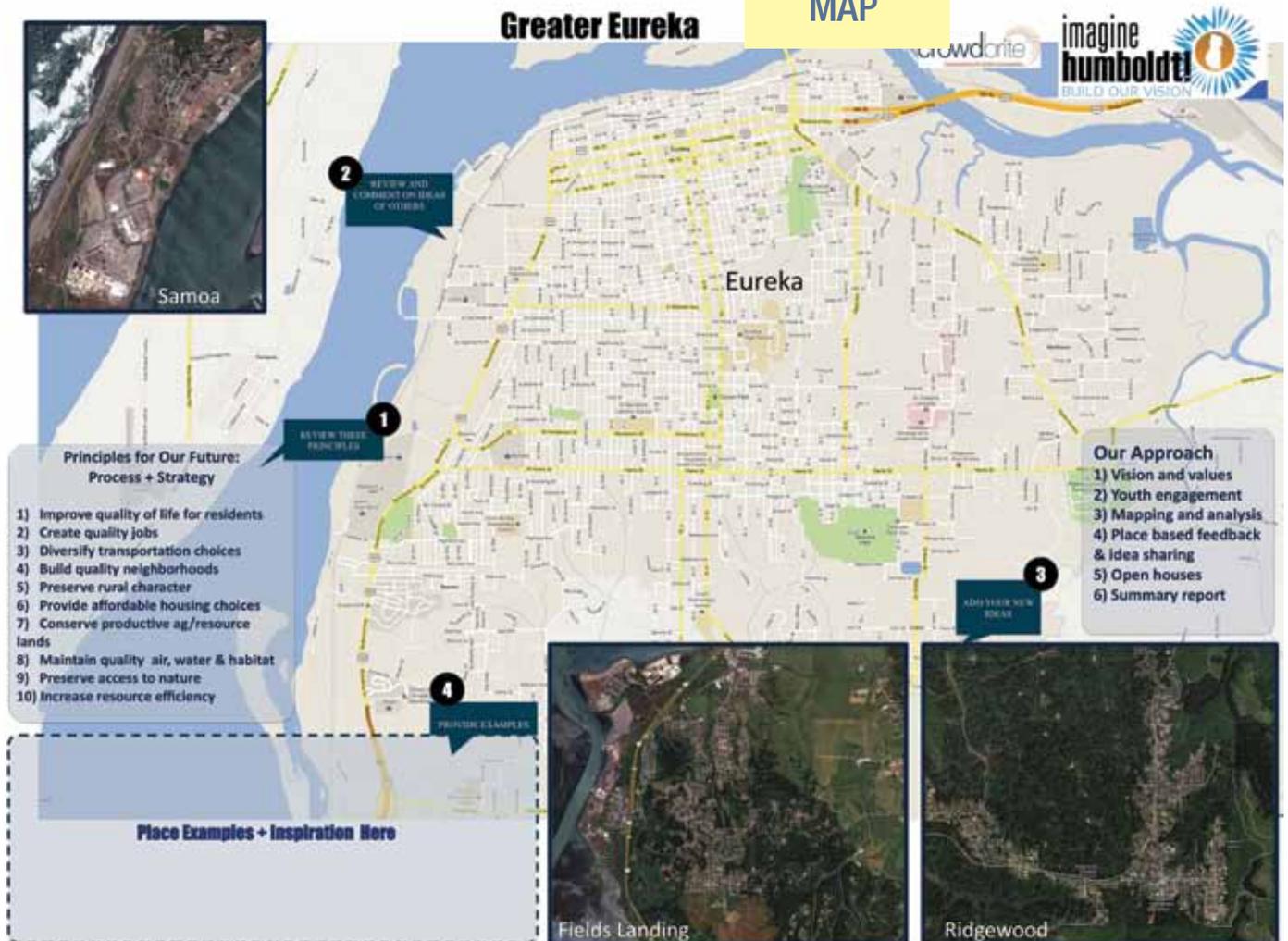
Run bike trail from Eureka to CR.

—Online comment

*If the county and it's residents don't embrace change, the young people will keep leaving.*

—Eureka resident

69  
IDEAS  
ON THE  
MAP



## McKinleyville North

More east/west trails connecting the town center.

—Online comment

McKinleyville needs clusters of low maintenance edible plants in parks, along the trails and in other publicly accessible areas to create a food dynamic community.

—McKinleyville comment

Maintain ag. & farmland.

—Online comment

Carmel and Mendocino are good models for Trinidad, few sidewalks, narrow streets for traffic calming.

—Online comment

57 IDEAS ON THE MAP

**Principles for Our Future: Process + Strategy**

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**Place Examples + Inspiration Here**

# Willow Creek/Hoopa Area



36 IDEAS ON THE MAP

Infrastructure for Willow Creek Sewer and Clean water. —Willow Creek comment

299 will be fixed for big trucks within the next 5 years will be the biggest asset to manufacturing jobs— transporting goods. —Willow Creek comment

Affordable housing choices in Willow Creek- medium income housing. —Online comment

Two airstrips, revamp for tourism and to attract it (private planes). —Online comment

**imagine humboldt!**  
BUILD OUR VISION

**crowdortie**

**Willow Creek - Hoopa**

**Weitchpec**

**Orleans**

**Hoopa Reservation**

**Hoopa**

**Willow Creek**

**Place Examples + Inspiration Here**

**1** REVIEW IDEAS PRINCIPLES

**2** REVIEW AND COMMENT ON IDEAS OF OTHERS

**3** ADD YOUR NEW IDEAS

**4** PROVIDE EXAMPLES

**Our Approach**

- 1) Vision and values
- 2) Youth engagement
- 3) Mapping and analysis
- 4) Place based feedback & idea sharing
- 5) Open houses
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# VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTY

In the future, Humboldt County consists of a collection of small and medium size towns each with distinct character. Open vistas showcase small farms, ranches and dairies as well as the forested landscape. Towns are well planned with vibrant downtowns where residents spend time walking and meeting friends.

Neighborhoods and communities are connected by a network of trails and bike paths. Bicyclists of all ages enjoy riding for business and pleasure—they feel safe and are able to get around their communities easily. Residents enjoy using public transportation to get around the county and find it affordable, convenient and pleasant.

People have choices where they will live, in the downtown area, in neighborhoods and on acreage. Downtowns are stabilized by residents living in apartments above commercial buildings and who enjoy strolling along streets and running errands in businesses close by. There are parks and gathering spaces to sit and chat. Streets feel safe and there is little or no homelessness. Neighborhoods have a mixture of architecture and types of housing. Historic houses are well maintained and a pride to the community.

People also live in the rural areas and take responsibility in caring for the environment where they live. Resources are valued for the quality habitat, clean water and fresh air they provide and for the jobs they sustain. The pride we take in where we live is evident by our level of sustainability and self-reliance.

There is work for all including both office and outdoor related jobs. Entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity are valued and developed in our children throughout their education. As a result, there are unique shops and restaurants, technology based businesses and local manufacturers providing services and making products we are proud of and paying living wages. All are contributing to the economy in positive ways—the secretive and dangerous drug culture has dissipated.

Many residents are actively involved in governance

and planning. Diversity in lifestyles and perspectives are welcome and opinions are valued. Disagreements result in discussion not fights. Leadership is evident and

works to build cohesion. Challenges are openly addressed and problem solving in the public setting is common place.

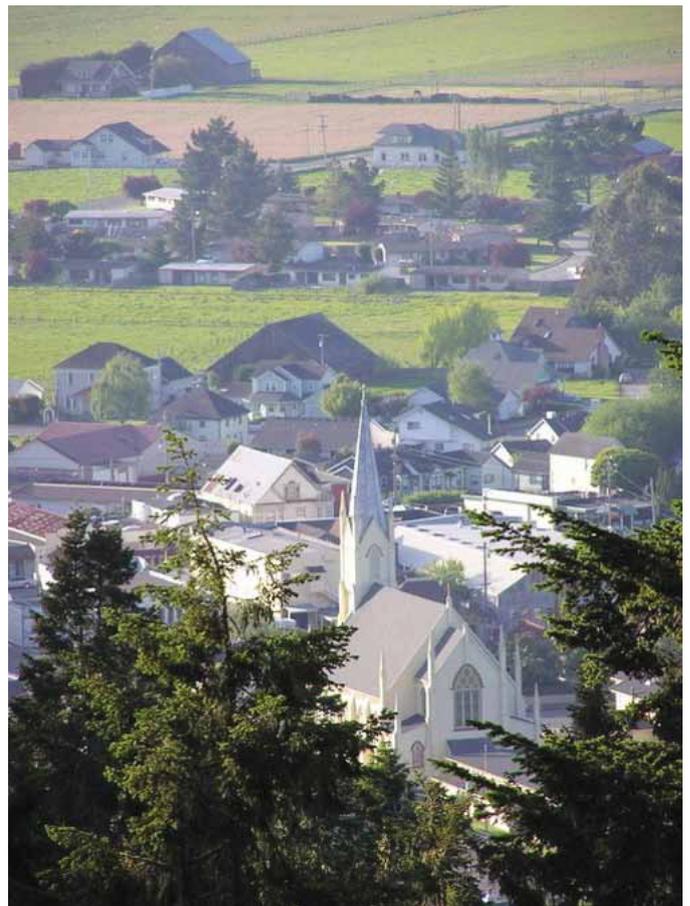




Photo courtesy Alisha Oloughlin



Photo courtesy Sara Mosser



Photo courtesy Andrew Goff and the North Coast Journal



Photo courtesy Planwest Partners

# PRINCIPLES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Community input was used to draft Principles for Future Development — messages they would give to elected officials and planning agency staff about what was important to creating great communities for the future. BAC members reviewed the development of the draft principles and participants had several opportunities to comment, add to and change them to make sure they reflected the best current thinking.

## Principles for Future Development

### Communities

- Enhance “small town feel” and provide space for residents to enjoy the out of doors.
- Maintain small communities with distinct character.
- Integrate bike and walking paths/trails into community design.
- Encourage and support the development of a wide range of housing options.
- Connect neighborhoods and communities to services and shopping with options for getting around.
- Improve the public's feeling of safety.

### Economy

- Invest in infrastructure that improves the worldwide competitiveness of local business/industry.
- Provide businesses with a clear and predictable regulatory environment.
- Conserve existing agricultural and forested resource lands for production.
- Minimize the use of regulation and government interference in attaining desired outcomes.
- Support the development of strong downtowns.

### Infrastructure

- Increase regional energy self-sufficiency using a wide variety of strategies appropriately scaled to our area.
- Permit a variety of low tech options for rural /small community residential and commercial.
- Maintain and monitor public and private water and wastewater systems.
- Innovate in developing public transportation options.

### Environment

- Protect valuable habitat areas.
- Preserve open vistas.
- Assure access to natural amenities for recreation and cultural needs.

### Public Participation

- Plan thoughtfully taking into consideration a variety of future scenarios including sea level rise.
- Support open and transparent planning processes
- Provide processes for meaningful public and stakeholder engagement in planning.

# IMAGINE HUMBOLDT IMPLEMENTATION

Humboldt County is anticipated to grow slowly over the next 40 years. Current estimates of the increase in population have declined since **imagine humboldt!** began, primarily due to a reduction in the State’s anticipated population increase resulting from immigration. There is little change to our population forecasted aside from that resulting from an increase the State’s overall population. That said, residents voiced concerns about a possible increase in rate due to climate change concerns and water shortages anticipated in other parts of California making it less hospitable.

**imagine humboldt!** lays out a preferred vision for the future. Participants believe that by focusing investments for accommodating growth in smaller communities that once had bigger populations the County could maintain the rural feel, the strong social fabric of small communities and the distinct character of each town.

## Challenges

- Forecast for slow growth can result in complacency about long range planning. Without intentional development of housing that meets the needs of all incomes and lifestyles and downtowns that have amenities that make them places where people want to live, Humboldt County could look very different than this vision in 2050.
- Rebuilding Small Towns will necessitate finding new solutions to meeting infrastructure needs as it is difficult for small populations to afford and maintain investment in sophisticated and expensive infrastructure, potentially over engineered for small rural populations.
- Attention needs to be paid to both infrastructure (water, wastewater, schools, etc), and good downtown design (live/work spaces, parks, walkability, etc) to enable small communities to attract new residents.
- Most of the communities that could be enhanced are not incorporated and so are reliant on the County for planning, permitting and governance. Many of those same communities would like a greater voice in how they develop and the County should address how to engage residents in meaningful ways.

## Opportunities

- Planning processes have been beleaguered over the past decade. **imagine humboldt!** is a vision that participants want to see implemented and may be an opportunity to build greater agreement and cohesion across the county.
- The County is in the process of adoption of an update to the General Plan that could incorporate many of the **imagine humboldt!** Principles of Future Development.
- A slow growth period is a good time to plan for the future as there is less immediate pressure from specific development projects.
- The State of California is supportive of the Blueprint Planning process and there is likely to be funding available for infrastructure and planning process for those communities who have completed the Blueprint planning process.
- Most of the small towns that have potential for development have active citizenry interested in seeing their communities develop into well designed, vibrant small towns.



*Look for ideas that promote our united regional identity, in architecture, business, tourism, exports. Emphasis historical uniqueness in environment and past development (Victorian seaport, mining support, agriculture)*

—Mckinleyville resident



### Proactive Planning:

- Scenario planning is used to engage residents.
- Government budgeting is a participatory process.
- Community discussions are lively and active with diverse citizens who wear many hats and remain civil despite disagreements.
- We have a plan for possible sea level rise.
- Full utilization of the deep water port of Humboldt.



### Great Communities:

- Few homeless.
- Our kids can stay if they choose.
- Most people can afford to buy a house if they choose.
- Communities have distinct character.
- There is diversity of people and thought.

*I think we are coming together to plan for the future, and if we do indeed have a regional bike path, alternative energy sources, and care for our rivers and forests I think that our quality of life will increase. I also feel a sense of increased civic participation with will benefit us all.*

—Ferndale resident

## Transportation Options:

- There are routine bicycle commuters and no bicyclists killed.
- People are walking and jogging .
- Public transportation is available and utilized.
- Goods, services and information are transported efficiently and effectively.



## Housing Choices:

- More and different multi-family housing options exist including mixed generation, housing with shared community space, small, well-designed units—detached house, townhouses/condos and apartments.
- Housing available to all income levels.
- Supportive housing for residents with disabilities and/or mental illness.

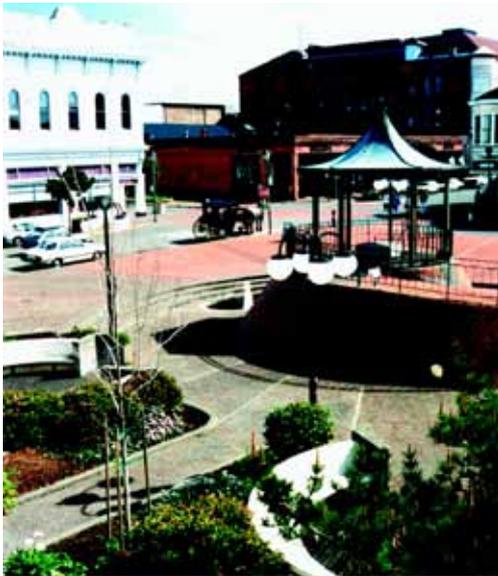


# How will we know we're heading



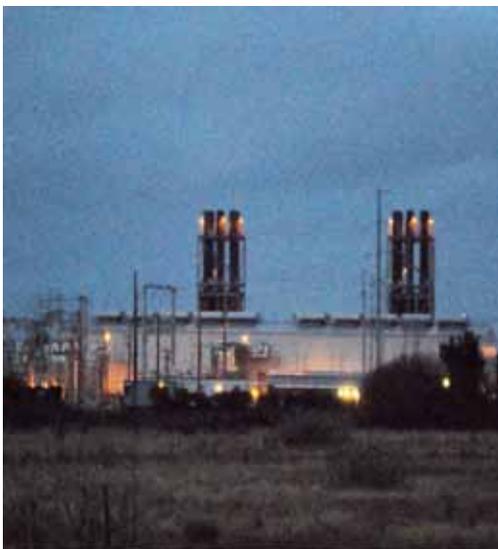
*Good planning + people caring about future*

—Fortuna resident



## Healthy Economies:

- Economy is less dependent on the illicit drug trade.
- Increased median wage, closing the gap with the state median wage.
- Full employment.
- Local businesses are thriving.



## Local Energy:

- Local fuels are generating locally consumed electricity (biomass for example).
- The majority of our future energy comes from renewable sources including water, tides, waves & wind.
- Humboldt County is energy self-sufficient.

# in the right direction?

**“***Growth can be smart, as in muscle-building, as in infrastructure/beefing up what you have, or it can be putting on fat — inert, slow-you-down. Please choose the former.*

—Arcata resident

## Adequate & Well Maintained Infrastructure:

- Roads are well maintained.
- Water and sewer infrastructure is well maintained and rates are affordable.
- Rural dwellers have access to clean water.
- Flight costs are reasonable.



## Productive Resource Lands:

- Forestry industry is healthy.
- There are jobs in fisheries and aquaculture.
- Businesses are thriving.
- People are living on small farms and local food is available for sale.



# look like?

# IMPLEMENTATION TOOLBOX

The following are tools and strategies for planning agencies in Humboldt County to consider in implementing [imagine humboldt!](#).

## Community Education

- Expose residents to design concepts successfully implemented in other small towns. These could include downtown design, multi-family housing units, live/work arrangements, public spaces etc.
- Specifically, educate local planning commissions, decision-makers and developers about small town development, and how it could look as well as infrastructure design alternatives.
- Use scenario planning to initiate community dialogue, and “what if” thinking”. Topics identified in the [imagine humboldt!](#) process include sea level rise, faster than anticipated growth, peak oil concerns and regional self-sufficiency in times of emergency as well as over the long term.

## Regional and Local Planning

- Create community plans with residents. Over the past 20 years, communities where residents created community plans, accomplished several of the projects identified. Having a plan in place even before resources are available for implementation increases capacity to be proactive when opportunities arise.
- Integrate the Principles for Future Development identified in [imagine humboldt!](#) into General Plans as they are updated.
- Review the County General Plan Update in process to identify opportunities to better align with the [imagine humboldt!](#) vision.
- Develop new, or review existing public participation policies using best practices.

## Technical Tools

- Utilize scenario thinking (Scenariothinking.org is a good source) to help residents dialogue about difficult subjects allowing decision-makers the opportunity to understand community concerns and opportunities that arise from uncertainties in the future.
- Increase planning transparency and regional collaboration by using online community interface tools (Crowdbrite or a similar tool for community outreach, review, and input).
- Take advantage of technical assistance from State agencies, University of California, Humboldt State University and specialist consultants.

## Zoning, Codes, Fee Structures and other Policies

- Develop a set of forward looking designs for residential and commercial development that can be pre-permitted. Doing this in conjunction with the creation of community plans will reduce uncertainties and encourage the development communities hope to see.
- Consider using reduced or waived fees for developments that adhere to community plans and the [imagine humboldt!](#) principles.
- Provide clarity to the public about what development standards are set at the state level and work to reduce the regulation, time and cost of home improvements for residents.
- Provide a fast track permitting process for developments that are identified in community plans as desirable.
- Support the development of quality residential units on in downtowns to increase foot traffic and a feeling of public safety.

## Collaboration

- Work with other rural counties in the state to remove barriers at the State level to utilizing lower cost infrastructure solutions.
- Continue to develop capacity to share and utilize collaboratively GIS data layers.
- Find opportunities for decision-makers and residents from multiple jurisdictions to be exposed to new design ideas together.

## Performance Monitoring and Celebrating Progress

- Create a regional set of progress measures that has broad based support. Include a broad range of quality of life measures as well as key measures from [imagine humboldt!](#) such as energy self-sufficiency, miles of bike paths and trails, housing affordability, and employment. This should be an ongoing commitment to measure on a periodic basis; every five years for example.
- Celebrate even small successes in rebuilding small towns, success will encourage others.



**imagine humboldt!** is made possible by a generous grant from the California Regional Blueprint Program.



# imagine humboldt!

BUILD OUR VISION

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