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To: [Meredith Matthews](#); [Sarah Schaefer](#); [Kimberley White](#); [Alex Stillman](#); [Stacy Atkins-Salazar](#)
Cc: [Karen Diemer](#); [David Loya](#)
Subject: Please change language in Gen'l Plan to preserve/protect open space
Date: Thursday, February 1, 2024 9:36:32 AM

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Dear Mayor Mathews and City Councilmembers,

I'd like to direct your attention to the public comments made by Lisa B, who previously served on the Open Space Committee, at the January 3 city council meeting. She said that she had sent you a letter regarding OS-IE of the General Plan with the original language of this policy on the "diversity of resources within their management, including interpretation and recreational use." She further remarked that "the following language has been added to the end of this policy: 'allows for development of open space lands contrary to the original policy.' The added language reads 'Allow for the development of existing vacant and underutilized properties with low natural resource value as a strategy to permanently protect high resource value open space and provide high quality open space.' In my opinion, this is a lot of mumbo jumbo to obscure the fact that open space is being (or will be) taken away to serve the interests of developers to the detriment of the community.

As Lisa B said, "I am strongly opposed to this policy addition. This is a departure from the past and current directives and policies to preserve and protect our open space lands by utilizing infill development as opposed to resource land development. We do not have to look too hard to see where the City is taking underutilized and damaged resource lands and transformed them into the treasured jewels of our community that they are: the Arcata Community Forest (sustainable forest management), the Arcata marsh, etc."

"One important purpose of the Gateway policies and proposed General Plan 2045 is to continue to protect Arcata's resource lands. If we begin to pit our natural resource lands against each other for their presumed value, at any given moment in time, we depart radically from the community's strong commitment to protect our natural and open space lands both inside and outside of our city limits."

I couldn't agree more with Lisa B's comments. I'd just like to add that it's our open spaces that make Arcata a beautiful place to live in. And it's why many of chose to move here. Please, if you care about this as a "community benefit," don't destroy the natural resources that we already have to make way for development (i.e. housing or other uses)! **Please change the language in OS-IE of the General Plan to reflect that.**

Also, we've had an abundance of rain recently, accompanied by flooding in many neighborhoods in Arcata. We can expect to have even more flooding if we develop the remaining open spaces that help to absorb the runoff. Preserving our open spaces, especially wet lands, also has a huge impact in stemming climate change, as I wrote to you in a previous letter.

Please do your utmost to preserve and protect our open spaces by changing the language in the General Plan to reflect that.

And please agendaize this discussion for a future meeting. Thank you.

Lisa Pelletier
Arcata resident