

# Democracy & Local Control for McKinleyville



Presentation to  
McKinleyville MAC  
by  
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and  
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## Tonight's Presentation

- Introduction to CA (un)Incorporated
- Local governance and local services
  - McKinleyville Case Studies
    - McKinleyville as a City
- How do we get there from here?

# CALIFORNIA (un)INCORPORATED COALITION

Alameda - *Ashland, Castro Valley*

Humboldt - *McKinleyville*

El Dorado - *El Dorado Hills*

Kern - *Lamont*

Los Angeles - *East Los Angeles*

Placer - *North Lake Tahoe*

Orange - *Ladera Ranch*

Riverside - *Winchester*

Sacramento - *Arden Arcade, Rio Linda Elverta*

Santa Barbara - *Isla Vista*

San Joaquin - *Mountain House*

Stanislaus - *Salida*

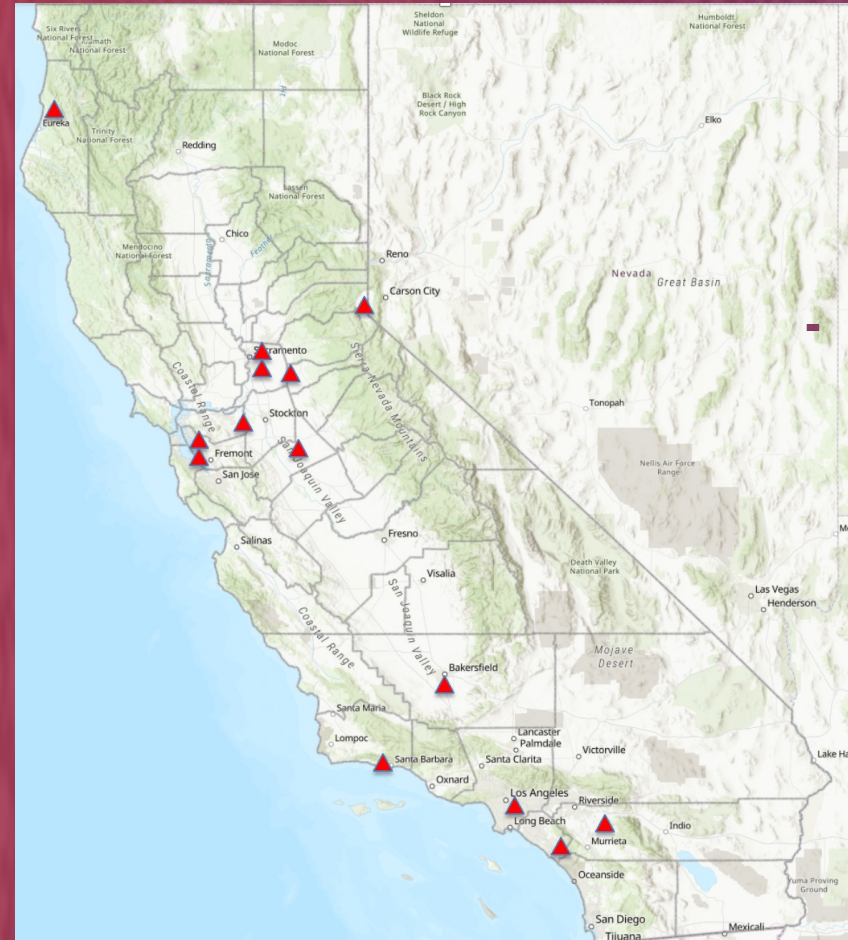
# McKINLEYVILLE & CALIFORNIA (un)INCORPORATED

## To be very clear

There is no movement to promote cityhood for McKinleyville now

## Participation w/California (un)Inc.

- Learn about municipal incorporation
- Understand
  - ✓ State level barriers to potential incorporation
  - ✓ Whether/how they can be addressed
- Network w/ other CA communities
  - ✓ Share concerns
  - ✓ Information that could be of service
- Information exchanges such as this one today



## LOCAL GOVERNMENTS in CALIFORNIA

### 58 Counties

- Countywide functions (jails, courts, tax collection, welfare, etc.)
- Municipal functions for unincorporated areas
- Constitutionally subordinate – have to do what the state says
- McKinleyville has more people than 5 of the 58 counties

### 482 Cities

- Relatively independent of the state compared to counties
- Charter cities have “supreme authority over municipal affairs”
- General Law cities operate within the general laws of the state
- McKinleyville has more people than 1/3 of the 482 cities

### 3400 Special Districts

- 2 serving McKinleyville

### 1029 School Districts

- 2 serving McKinleyville

### 73 Community College Districts

- 1 serving McKinleyville

## GOVERNANCE – UNINCORPORATED CALIFORNIA

### 5 M People Live in Urbanized Unincorporated Areas

- No Mayors or City Councils to focus on local priorities
- Counties responsible for municipal services
- Business model that depends on the kindness of strangers
- **UNFAIR**
  - ✓ Less rights & privileges than city dwellers
  - ✓ 40% ROI per each \$1 of municipal taxes
- **UNDEMOCRATIC**
  - ✓ Cannot elect, vote against or recall 4/5 of governing body
  - ✓ Meager representation means voices are not heard

## GOVERNANCE - HUMBOLDT COUNTY

Place	Municipal Government	Population (2017)	Muni Elected Official per Constituent
Humboldt Co		134,754	
Eureka	Mayor&Council	27,177	1:5,435
Arcata	Mayor&Council	18,304	1:3,600
<b>McKinleyville</b>	<b>County BOS</b>	<b>15,117</b>	<b>1:27,351</b>
Fortuna	Mayor&Council	12,191	1:2,438
Rio Dell	Mayor&Council	3,408	1:632
Ferndale	Mayor&Council	1,873	1:275
Blue Lake	Mayor&Council	1,265	1:253
Trinidad	Mayor&Council	369	1:72

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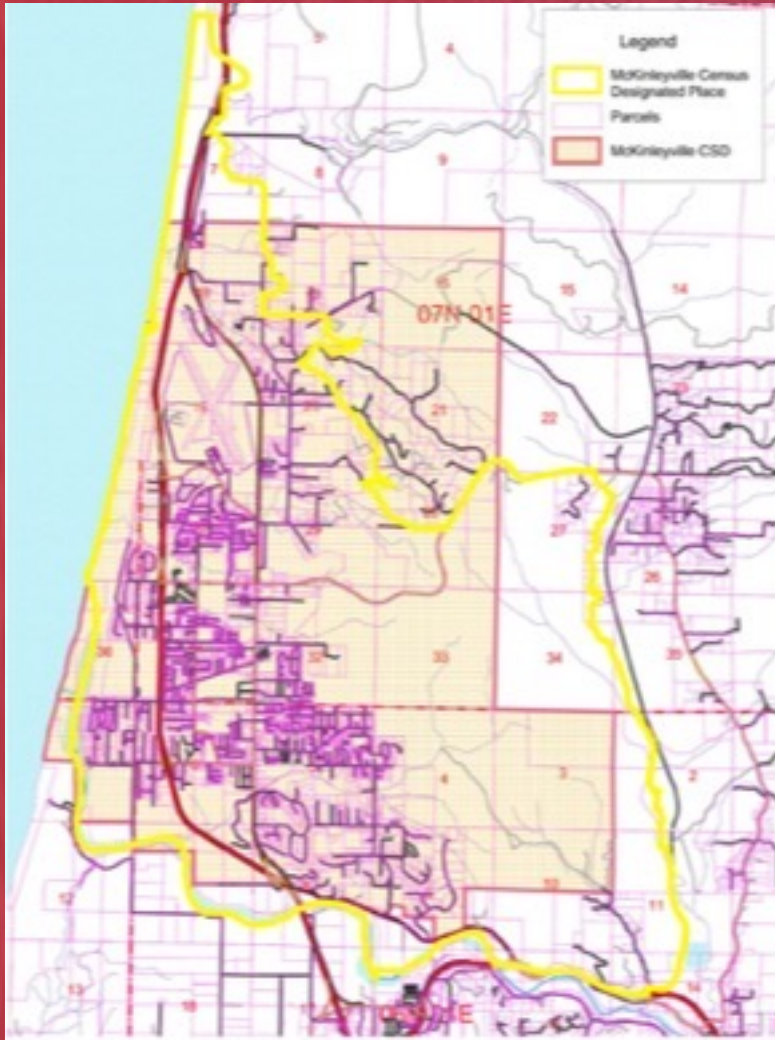
55% of  
Supervisorial  
District

Actions need  
votes by 3  
Supervisors

If a city, ratio  
would be  
1:3000



## MUNICIPAL SERVICES IN MCKINLEYVILLE



### County Provides

- Local Law Enforcement (w/ CHP)
- Public Works Infrastructure  
streets, storm drains, garbage
- Land Use & Economic Development
- Building & Business Permits
- Animal Control

### Suboptimal?

- 1 Supe north of Mad River
- County Depts & staff are spread across County - not specific to McKinleyville
- Citizens need time & knowledge to navigate County bureaucracy
- MCSD blamed for County performance

# MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS – MOBILITY PLANNING

## Multi-modal Connectivity & Safety

### 2018

- Volunteer Trails Group founded
- Trails Group added to MMAC

### 2019

- Priorities identified
- Non-profit pro bono & volunteers apply to Caltrans grant program on behalf of County

### 2020

- Trails group sidelined
- Volunteers maxed out during Covid & MMAC Town Center effort

### 2022

- Next steps – how are the planning efforts continued and implementation prioritized

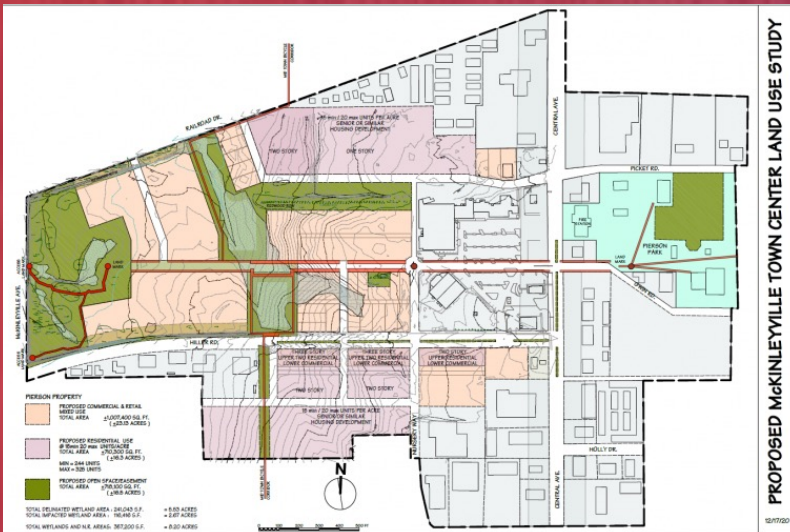


# MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS - TOWN CENTER



## Longstanding problem

- What is a town center?
  - ✓ Economic hub
  - ✓ Community identity
- Existing “core”
  - ✓ spread out
  - ✓ no cohesion
  - ✓ no signage / wayfinding



## County planning

- Community Plan has good vision
- County ordinance development with MMAC requires citizens to engage in complex land use planning

## BEING A CITY MEANS LOCAL CONTROL

### Builds community

- Sense-of-Place
- Responsive government
- Seats at the tables

### Sustainability

- Commercial prosperity
- Valued Activity Center
- Housing
- Transportation hub
- Resource protection

### Fiscal advantages

- Local taxes spent locally
- State subventions
- Grant programs



## CALIFORNIA NEEDS MORE CITIES

### Population Growth

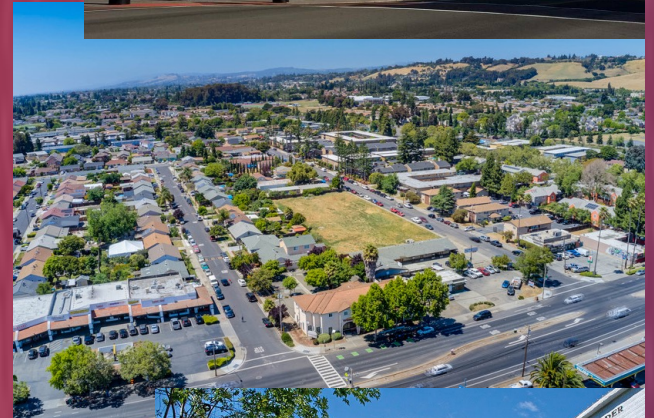
- California has nearly 40 million people
- Where to put millions more?

### State Policies Depend on Cities

- Urban policies are driven through cities
- Successful cities matter for state's prosperity
  - ✓ Quality of life
  - ✓ Affordable housing
  - ✓ Sustainability, climate change
  - ✓ Infill/smart growth

### End Development Based on Sprawl

- New subdivisions & industrial parks for tax revenue
- Lack of infrastructure maintenance going forward
- Adverse for open space, farms, forests, wildfires
- Reliant on unlimited fossil fuels & abundant water



## MUNICIPAL INCORPORATION

### SHIFTS County Services to New City

- Local Law Enforcement
- Public Works Infrastructure  
streets, storm drains, garbage
- Land Use & Economic Development
- Building & Business Permits
- Animal Control

### Improves Local Law Enforcement

- Responsive to City Council/citizens
- Actual traffic enforcement (not CHP)

### Improves Governance

- Mayor & City Council for local issues
- Listening behavior/accountability
- Local determination of local taxes
- Budget transparency



“If the County is making money on McKinleyville, McKinleyville should be getting more services. If it’s losing money, the County might well want to get out from under the burden of running a city”

– 5<sup>th</sup> District Supervisor Steve Madrone  
{“McKinleyopolis”, *North Coast Journal*, 06/27/2019}

## BECOMING A CITY

### McKinleyville Can Be a City

- Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act (LAFCO Law)
  - ✓ Financial feasibility study
  - ✓ CEQA analysis
  - ✓ LAFCO approval
- Public Vote

### HaHa, Just Kidding

- Costs → millions of dollars
- Contracts you cannot control
- LAFCO structural bias
- Policy barriers (e.g. VLF, CEQA)
- Process favors special interests (not yours)

“There is nothing more difficult and dangerous, or more doubtful of success, than an attempt to introduce a new order of things in any state. For the innovator has for enemies all those who derived advantages from the old order of things, whilst those who expect to be benefited by the new institutions will be but lukewarm defenders.”

Niccolo Machiavelli, “The Prince”

## WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

### Revise and Simplify C-K-H Act

- Fiscal fairness for new cities
  - ✓ VLF revenue stream
  - ✓ Common-sense alimony (County-New City)
- Reduce costs for proponents
  - ✓ CEQA exemption
  - ✓ Fiscal analysis by State Controller
  - ✓ Grants & incentives for city formation

### Think Outside the LAFCO box

- Empower CSDs to lead transitions to cities
- Empower other Special Districts to lead transitions to cities





## WHAT IF THE PROCESS WAS IMPROVED?

### Municipal Incorporations Could Resume

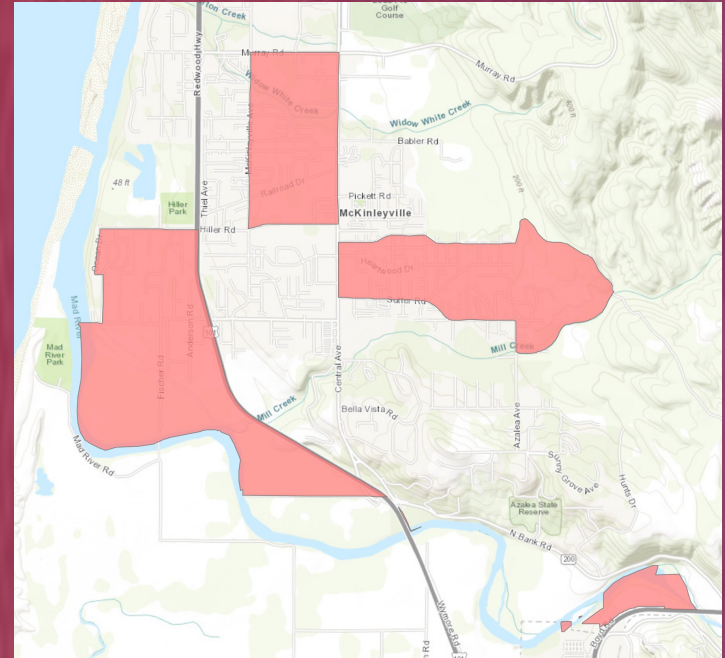
#### Local Governments Could

- Resolve that new cities are needed
- Sponsor fiscal analysis
- Seek validation from State Controller
- Put measure on the ballot for voters to decide

#### LAFCO Could

- Assume review and comment role
- Focus on boundaries instead of politics
- Promote incorporations for DUCs\* instead of just annexations

\* Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities. Areas w/ at least 12 registered voters (or a cluster of 10 homes) where median income is less than 80% of State median (\$49,000).



CallAFCO map of DUCs in McKinleyville vicinity

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

### Talk With Your Legislators

- 2022 elections will change  $\frac{1}{4}$  of membership
- Meet with legislators BEFORE election
- Your State Senator has a key leadership position

### Add Your Voices

- Find common ground with County government
- Support California (un)Incorporated coalition

### Work With Local Leaders

- Let them know that:
  - “No harm comes to any Special District as the result of an incorporation”
- Learn needs and wants of Special Districts and community-based organizations
- Seek consensus as to potential for added value from incorporation
- Get to know Humboldt LAFCO



THANK YOU!



Visit, like us and comment on Facebook

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