

# APPENDIX A

# Key Person Interview Responses

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As described in Chapter 1 of this report, Key Person Interviews were conducted with stakeholders in the community. Interviews lasted from 20 minutes to over an hour. The list of interviewees is included below, followed by individual responses. The views expressed are those of the interviewees and not representative of the Consultant's views, Action Network's views, or CTAA's views.

## LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

### In Person:

1. **Leslie Dahlhoff**, Mayor of Point Arena;
2. **Bill Osterland**, President, Community Resources Connection (CRC)
3. **Bruce Richard**, Director of MTA
4. **John Marchant**, Chair of AN, and a former chair of CRC
5. **Phil Dow**, Executive Director of MCOG

### On the Phone

6. **David Colfax**: Mendocino County Supervisor
7. **Shanon Price**, Executive Director of the Senior Center
8. **Ray Edland**, local supervisor for MTA
9. **Bill McCarthy**, GMAC Gualala Municipal Advisory Council
10. **Brian Albee**, Sonoma County Transit

### By E-mail

11. **Susan Holcomb**, Mendocino Private Industry Council

## LIST OF RESPONSES

1. **What are the most pressing issues facing the Redwood Coast, and how do public transportation issues rank?**
  - a. #1, employment: #2, housing: #3, health services. Adequate transit is crucial in terms of meeting the other needs.
  - b. The largest problem is affordable housing. Also, to get community resources, they must be placed in Point Arena or Gualala, and once provided, people do need transportation to access them. We need transportation to get youth to places and activities, especially in summer.
  - c. There is an inconsistent educational system. There isn't a good melding of ethnic groups. There are pockets of abject poverty versus wealth, and no mingling. Transportation is an issue, particularly for medical appointments.

There is a lack of high paying jobs. Kids who graduate from high school here either wait tables or go into construction. It's a nice place to retire, but difficult place to have a career.

- d. #1, jobs; #2, health care access; #3, transportation. There are few choices because the area is so isolated.
- e. Jobs first. Transportation is third.
- f. Four years ago we identified nine action items for addressing issues in the region, and none of them could be done without transit.
- g. Transportation is one of the bigger problems. The Senior Center has one van which can accommodate 7 people and one wheelchair. For special events, we can borrow the CRC van, but that only provides for seven more spots. Outreach is a big problem for the Senior Center. Many clients don't have phones and are unable to drive. We conduct home visits weekly to ascertain needs.
- h. #1, schools; #2, healthcare; #3, youth activities. Transportation is not a high priority. Most people in the area have their own means of transportation.
- i. Remoteness. We're at the end of the line from two directions: the Sea Ranch is at the end of Sonoma County, and Gualala at the end of Mendocino County. It makes it difficult to access medical care, and we're low priority for the counties. It's a particular problem for the elderly. In fact, people move away because the distance to medical care becomes overwhelming.

The low-income population has difficulty accessing jobs and childcare. Housing is a problem.

Infrastructure is a problem. Gualala is growing, but there's been a lack of planning. It's getting better. There is a lack of local governance and that needs to be remedied. There are parking and traffic problems.

- j. I believe three of the most pressing issues are employment, education and transportation. All three are dependent on each other and access to them contributes to the success of individuals and the community as a whole.

**2. What do you see as the greatest unmet transportation needs in the Redwood Coast region? (Who needs it, and where do they need to go?)**

- a. Particularly inadequate for the elderly and disabled.
- b. Within the region, outside trips are limited, but realistically, pretty comprehensive considering our geographical isolation. Locally, we do not fair so well. We need to get people to classes, GED programs (in Fort Bragg).

What can be done to improve school bus efficiency? Too many parents are either driving their kids to school or driving them to the bus stops. Why are they driving them? Do they feel that they are unsafe to walk (which would be healthier)?

- c. “Essential Needs” are met through CRC, but there is a lack of transportation for social interactions, errands. There is a lack of transportation for emergent situations that don’t meet the 48 hour reservation requirement.

CRC takes care of almost 100% of the local requests.

- d. I’m not sure where they need to go, but it is underserved. An increased frequency is needed, with more destinations.
- e. Disabled or senior folks who live remotely, going almost anywhere. Local service within the area.
- f. The general public needs it. There are no taxis, no buses. It is needed for medical services.
- g. Medical appointments. CRC only handles able-bodied passengers. They won’t transport someone for dialysis or using a walker.

Just getting to the store is important, or to the pharmacy (though one does deliver).

Vans go back and forth, back and forth to meet the needs.

- h. There is trunk line transportation provided. A lot of people would like to have local transit service, but there isn’t enough population to make it viable. Service is needed to the local Native American Rancheria, where they are economically deprived.

There is very good Senior Center service, and CRC provides transportation for those who have medical needs.

- i. The greatest need is for non-emergency medical trips for the handicapped and elderly—to RCMS, the pharmacy, and to Santa Rosa. Also, for low-income individuals who can’t afford adequate transportation. The area is highly dependent on these people. They need access to jobs and child care.
- j. While I was working at the One Stop in Point Arena, I heard many times the problems with not having transportation to work, or to attain their GED and classes to upgrade their skills at the college.

### **3. How could existing transportation services be improved?**

- a. Not enough service—not remotely adequate. For the County as a whole, the Redwood Coast region receives transit on par with the other rural areas (Anderson Valley,

Hopland, etcetera). The only area that gets a modicum of service is Ukiah. The coast is on par with other rural areas, but has greater potential because of its linear nature.

- b. A local jitney sort of circular route, serving the Gualala/Point Arena area by driving up the coast and down the ridge (or vice-versa) may be desirable. Also, incorporating flex routes on the regular MTA routes could help some riders considerably.

Would this area support a local, privately run, taxi service?

- c. MTA follows State Route 1, and few people live on State Route 1. Yet it is too long to serve east and west. There is a lack of services. DAR might work from 9-5.
- d. I'm not sure. It's difficult.
- e. Impossible. Services there could be expanded for disabled and seniors.
- f. By having one! MTA makes one daily trip, which doesn't serve maids with an early shift, schools. It arrives late in the evening. It's inconvenient for most people.
- g. I would love to see providers working together more. The seniors could work with CRC. In the future if someone gets a service going, SCS would love to coordinate with that.
- h. Money and politics—the usual. We could increase the level of service. On a trial basis, double the long distance routes. Most of the need is to outlying areas. Service has been provided for 25 years, and I can't imagine it's going to change much. It is where it is because of the region.
- i. WHAT existing transportation? There is only one trip per day to Santa Rosa. It takes a long time to get there and you can't arrive early and can only spend a couple of hours there. The only person I know who uses it (Route 95) is someone who takes it on occasion when they're taking a long distance flight.

CRC tries to alleviate the need, but they're dealing with volunteer drivers. As gas goes up, it's harder to do. It would be good if they could have a subsidized daily van with a paid driver. Also, MTA's frequency of service could be improved. Maybe there could be a local route or a dial-a-ride.

#### **4. Who should be involved in providing transportation?**

- a. Ideally, the community, in expressing needs. As for government, the local government is too small, but the state might help if compelled to do so. This issue is hand-in-glove with housing.
- b. MTA. Tax dollars. MCOG is very supportive of transit. Also, local nonprofits and maybe even a local entrepreneur could fill some of the gaps in public transportation.

- c. CRC could, but there are a finite number of volunteers. With “mission creep” CRC might not be able to provide transit. It would have to change its business model. CRC is efficient, but logistics do get tough. Now, volunteers choose a date to drive, and it’s not hard to do.
- d. MTA. Nothing should be done without their involvement. That doesn’t preclude locals having involvement, but the MTA is the Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) for the County, and therefore should be involved.
- e. MTA, the Senior Center, and another player (perhaps the CRC).
- f. Competition is good. If only MTA provides the service, they may not take it as seriously, may be more liable to drop it.
- g. The Senior Center, MTA, CRC.
- h. For public transit, MTA is doing the best they can with what they’ve got. There won’t be any new services until the budget improves. South Coast Seniors does a great job. A volunteer program seems the most likely. There are a lot of people here with time on their hands and no financial constraints.
- i. The logical entity would be the MTA. Are they capable of managing a loop service or dial-a-ride? If not, some new entity should be established.

Gualala is looking at forming new districts—they might create a transportation district if that would be helpful or appropriate. But it is a big effort requiring legal help and money. If we had to form one to get transportation, it would be an extra hurdle, but it could be done. The question is, could the MTA and STA work with a transportation district?

**5. What are the appropriate role of local government, the Pomo Tribe, and social service programs (both public and private)?**

- a. Essentially, they should be involved in the fine-tuning stages. In this, they play a critical role. There has been good public input, but no adequate transit has come out of that.
- b. MTA is good at soliciting public input and participation through the “unmet needs” process, the make-up of the Board of Directors, and the various committees that report to the board. The coast should be more involved with the MTA. Right now, any Redwood Coast Committees have to go to Ukiah frequently to be involved. It might be nice if they could be involved through teleconferencing to encourage participation.
- c. I don’t have faith in local ability to provide transit. Government requires money, which requires taxes. That is difficult to achieve. Almost 100% of the CRC volunteers are from Sea Ranch. The Native Americans have a disproportionate number of ambulance calls, so we’re trying to see if the BIA can fund an ambulance. Most Native Americans are on MediCal, which does little to reimburse ambulance costs.

- d. In California, transit is a local issue. It is appropriate for local government to have a role (in this case, the county government is both local and regional).
- e. Planning and input, with the exception of the Senior Center, which is a capable provider.
- f. The Pomo Tribe is distanced from the rest of the community. Action Network and CRC are the only viable local entities. Perhaps the Gualala Municipal Advisory Council (GMAC).
- g. I don't know how the Pomo should be involved, but they do have money.
- h. The only "local" government is Point Arena, and they get things done at an appropriate level. The rest of the area has a desire and perceived needs, but there is no population to support it.
- i. The County would have to be involved. Beyond that, I don't know.

## **6. Who should pay for transportation?**

- a. Without federal support, it can't be done. I don't know what the chances are for that. We need a change in our administration before transit and housing will be funded—a new president.
- b. The public through taxes, fares, gasoline taxes. Ultimately, it is the public who pays.
- c. We need a means test, a stable middle class. It would be optimal if we could provide transit on a sliding scale.
- d. Certainly the riders. If a local area wants enhanced services beyond what the region is providing, it should be handled locally.
- e. The state of California.
- f. The same people who pay in larger communities.
- g. It would be nice if the community would pay. Many clients are on a fixed income. Philanthropists, possibly tax payers, the federal government.
- h. Most enlightened nations have well run, mostly subsidized transportation (Europe and Japan). Mexico has efficient, cheap transit which is generally privately provided. There should be some subsidized transit in urban areas. In rural areas, we're lucky to have any services.
- i. My instinct is that people who use it should pay, but nowhere in the country does that happen. I can't answer.

**7. Do you feel there is much public support for public transit services?**

- a. There has been a lot of public input, and the RCCTC report shows extensive public support.
- b. Yes, but it does not necessarily translate into ridership.
- c. No one is against it, but who pays?
- d. I've been hearing that. Surveys for the regional plan show support, but no one uses transit (only 2% of the population). Everyone wants it, but for their neighbor. Primarily it is needed for the transit dependent.
- e. Yes. See the Short Range Transit Plan. One former MTA employer caused a brouhaha, which he followed with a series of letters to the editor about mismanagement of MTA, but it is an important service for those who are unable to drive.
- f. Yes. At public meetings, people have said they want taxis or dial-a-ride service.
- g. Not really. It's amazing how many people don't know about transit. The bus drops people off at 8:00, and there is no return until the next morning. I've had to find people places to stay because they arrived in town not knowing there was no return service until the next day. It would be very helpful to have better information available regarding transportation options.
- h. Yes—mostly vocal. Those who actually use it have DUI's or are economically disadvantaged or disabled. Few use transit voluntarily who can afford other means of transportation.
- i. I don't know. If there was a survey taken, I don't know about it. People I talk to feel there is a need. Most wouldn't use it, but know there is a need for some people. We need the people who need the service.

**8. Do you feel there is political support for public transit services?**

- a. This is difficult to answer. Absolutely none in terms of what we see on the ground. But if you asked if there is a need, people would strongly agree. No one wants to pay.
- b. Yes. At all levels, it is well supported.
- c. I've never met a local politician. A tax increase requires a 2/3 majority, so I don't see how that can happen.
- d. It varies. There is more support than not. When buses go by empty, elected officials notice that.
- e. Yes.

- f. No. There are no politicians here.
- g. No, not for our area. We are the forgotten frontier coast.
- h. Yes. It is very politically viable to have public transit. There is a very small percentage that feels it is a waste of taxpayer money, but mostly it is supported.
- i. Our local supervisor is supportive. Of the 5 supervisors, probably 3 are supportive. But we're broke. No one wants to pay.

**9. How can transit services best be coordinated?**

- a. It is now as good as you're going to get. More resources are needed to get management and professionals to operate the service. It doesn't attract that.
- b. CRC could do a better job if its efforts were coordinated with other providers. We could tweak service to better meet needs (with South Coast Seniors, etcetera) if someone pointed out where the needs were.
- c. I'm not sure what there is to coordinate.
- d. It is well coordinated. It is a countywide service, rather than having one service in Ukiah, another in Fort Bragg, another in the County. Services are tailored to the population rather than to political boundaries. There are two routes to Santa Rosa, and both hook up with Greyhound, Amtrak and Santa Rosa Transit. If you ride MTA for two hours into Santa Rosa, then they'll take you where you need to go. People are continuously being dropped at non-scheduled stops, and many are picked up by flagging the bus down. Also, MTA contracts and finances the operation of six senior centers, including South Coast Seniors.
- e. We could be better coordinated through meetings of various agencies, and through better marketing.  
  
It's difficult for the SCS, which has two sites, with only one director and three employees.
- f. MTA is the only public transit, except STA, which contracts with MTA for long distance trips. If there were any sort of DAR system, it would have to involve both counties.
- g. Have a coordinating board, as we have done (the RCCTC). MTA should provide all of the transportation because it is difficult to coordinate with multiple groups.

**10. What are the barriers to coordination?**

- a. I don't see coordination as a big issue. But there is not a well-organized rural constituency.

- b. Lethargy. There's no pressing need for coordination. CRC does a nice job doing what they do.
- c. The barriers are that the population is relatively small and dispersed. There are no major activity centers, no large employers, no government centers. The area doesn't lend itself to efficient transit.
- d. We have done well to eliminate major barriers. The biggest barrier is in trying to coordinate with Amtrak and Greyhound because of their unreliable timing.
- e. Politics and money. Getting two counties together. Route 95 works, but Sonoma County could provide more.

## 11. Additional comments?

- a. I saw the report (Moving Toward Action), and it's quite an investment. It's a beautiful dream. It identifies real needs, but I can't see how we can break out of the current system. Perhaps we break out of the JPA and reorganize as rural versus urban. Right now we are serving people with genuine needs, but leave out many.

I was on the MTA board for seven months. It was a waste of time to be involved, because it is going nowhere. It's under poor management with no resources.

The report is impressive and ambitious, but there is no mechanism in place to make it happen. It would be a nowhere job to manage such a system. I wouldn't recommend it to anyone.

Until the federal government does something about money for housing and transportation, there is no way to move forward.

- b. People who can afford to have a car, do, and that is how they get around unless they are physically incapable of driving (including too young).
- c. People who live here need to be fit or should move. It's too expensive to support them. It would be more cost effective to council them to move than to try to bring services to them.
- d. Some feel ignored by the inland structure. It comes down to priorities. The idea that the County could go anywhere and be anything ended in the 1980s when it realized it couldn't serve everywhere. Service is provided at a level that meets minimum requirements and population levels. We have to concentrate services where it the best efficiency is—it only makes fiscal sense. Service is population based.
- e. It seems the role of transit on the Redwood Coast should be that of providing long distance transportation. If there could be more than one bus daily, that would be great. The Senior Center is in a position to provide within the area, but that ends at the county

line. CRC provides another niche for short and long distance trips. Service needs to be personalized, like CRC. It isn't reasonable to transport a chemotherapy patient and expect them to wait for transit.

There is no way MTA can come close to its performance standards of productivity in providing service in the Redwood Coast region. A volunteer service is needed if the area wants to do more. The service doesn't get used that much.

- f. The population isn't on the highway, but on "the Ridge."
- g. DAR is very expensive. It would be good to get a private entity to try it. They can't expect much subsidy because it is so expensive to operate.

What we have is efficiently run. It seems to have evolved into what it is because it is the appropriate service. Though there have been several attempts to expand, it hasn't paid off. What is working pretty well is the MTA service to Fort Bragg and Ukiah (Route 75). That could be expanded to seven days a week. Another possibility is to run a reverse route 75 and 95 at the same time (i.e. as Route 95 starts in Point Arena towards Santa Rosa, a bus starts at the same time in Santa Rosa toward Point Arena). This would double the service and give people more options. Also, it would serve a greater demographic base.

MTA has enlightened management. They are willing to try things, within financial constraints. They are going through difficult financial times. They're willing to try things where there is a demonstrated need.

Regarding barriers, the coast is confined to State Route 1. If something happens to State Route 1, such as flooding on the Garcia River (which closes the road for 3 to 4 days every other year or so), transit and emergency trips can't be completed. There are no good detours. Southbound there are more options for detouring.

- h. School transportation is also an issue. Only children who travel a certain distance have service available. There are no sidewalks at the new school. Many cars currently park at the airport to meet the bus, and this causes congestion. It's an issue that should be considered.