

Moving Toward Action – Strategic Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose

The purpose of the Community Based Transportation Planning Grant (CBTPG) was to implement a local community planning process to document the Redwood Coast’s local transportation needs and to identify potential funding opportunities to address those needs.

Goals

Through this planning process, the following three goals were established for the Redwood Coast Region between the communities of Elk and Fort Ross.

1. Enhance transportation opportunities by assisting local government agencies and community based organizations to capitalize on existing and new funds that will expand transportation choices.
2. Increase coordination of existing resources to address identified local transportation needs to enhance transportation opportunities.
3. Communicate with stakeholders and continue involving the community in the transportation planning process to ensure that the planning process is community driven.

Regional Priorities

Criteria Used

Community leaders learned that this region’s population desires transportation improvements that meet the following criteria:

- ⌘ improve public safety;
- ⌘ increase vehicular circulation;
- ⌘ result in more alternative transportation opportunities;
- ⌘ integrate land use, affordable housing and transportation planning; and,
- ⌘ be done within the constraints of the resources already available.

High Priority Projects

Following several months analyzing the documented transportation needs, community leaders, through this planning process, identified the following projects as the region's highest priority:

1. Support CalTrans in its effort to maintain the safe operation of SR – 1, particularly as year-round route.
2. Request that Mendocino County prioritize construction of a bridge over the Garcia River to connect Windy Hollow Road to improve local circulation and improve public safety.
3. Develop a transit improvement plan in partnership with the Mendocino Transit Authority and advocate for a more localized public transportation system.
4. Establish a more comprehensive specialized transportation program, particularly development of a non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) program that provides the region's residents with disabilities and senior citizens who cannot access conventional public transportation.
5. Develop an engineering plan that leads to the construction of safe pedestrian and bicycle access over the Gualala River Bridge.
6. Support efforts to further integrate affordable housing, land use, and transportation plans that lead to affordable housing being located near shopping, services, and public transportation.

Transportation Categories and Project Description

A. Local Streets, Roads, and Highways

1. Maintain SR – 1 as a year-round route: It is recommended that CalTrans reduce the potential for flooding along SR – 1 between PM 17.56 and PM 17.70 (near Minor Hole Road) and, between PM 18.05 and PM 18.50 (the Garcia River Flats) to ensure that SR – 1 remains open year-round.

2. Windy Hollow Bridge: The Garcia River divides the Manchester-Point Arena Band of Pomo Indians Rancheria. Tribal leaders and the Bureau of Indian Affairs is concerned that public safety is compromised. Therefore, construction of a bridge that connects Windy Hollow Road has been identified as a high priority for the region.

B. Public Transportation

3. Improve Public Transportation Options: Action Network applied for assistance through the Rural Passenger Transportation Technical Assistance Program, funded through a Rural Business Enterprise Grant by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to develop a public transit service model for the Redwood Coast Region. Upon completion, this plan will be submitted to the Mendocino Transit Authority for inclusion in the MTA unmet needs process.

4. Non-Emergency Medical Transportation: Community Resources Connection (CRC) volunteer non-emergency medical transportation relies upon more than 70 volunteer drivers to transport residents in the volunteer's provide automobiles. CRC also uses a Dodge Caravan leased from MTA for \$1 per year. While this is a wonderful service and CRC is meeting their mission in the community, other regional non-emergency medical transportation needs are not being met.

Several case studies were examined on how other states manage their NEMT programs. Therefore, the Plan recommends exploring the feasibility of developing a program to reimburse volunteers for their out of pocket expenses.

C. Non-Motorized Transportation

5. Gualala River Bridge: The need for pedestrian and bicycle facilities on the Gualala River Bridge have been identified as a local transportation need. Currently there is limited space (approximately 2-feet) for pedestrians on both sides of the bridge and no bike path. While it is the right of bicyclists to use the travel lanes, they must ride in a traffic lane as far to the right as possible.

Due to the proliferating use of bicycles and pedestrians, the RCCTC recommends that CalTrans give consideration to pedestrians and bicyclists by adding both north and southbound paths for common use. In addition, facilities must be constructed on either end of the bridge to support the project on the bridge itself by providing access to the Gualala Point Regional Park and The Sea Ranch.

6. Integration of Land use, Affordable Housing, and Transportation Planning: Over the past decade there has been an increasing development of policy and plans that integrate local plans. However, upon review of local plans the RCCTC has determined that existing plans may not be accomplishing their objectives. Therefore, the RCCTC is recommending that the various jurisdictions review these policies and explore policies that will encourage more affordable housing that's located near shopping and public transit services.

Funding and Implementation

Successful implementation and funding of each of these projects requires additional program review and collaboration amongst the various jurisdictions involved. Therefore, as a first step, community leaders recommend that Action Network continue its role as the facilitator and advocate by continuing to bring together the region's community leaders and decision-makers from the various transportation planning agencies and local governments responsible for funding and implementing transportation programs. Finally, the Plan recognizes that with the Safe, Affordable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFE – TEA) there may be significant changes in federal and state funding policies affecting local transportation conditions; therefore it is imperative that the Redwood Coast Region have a facilitator that can be positioned to respond to changes and advocate the region's transportation priorities in a timely manner.