

Moving Toward Action – Strategic Plan

INTRODUCTION

Community Based Transportation Planning Grant

Development of this Plan follows more than three years of program review, public comment, and policy analysis. The result is a planning process that brought together the region's community leaders and collaboration between the region's social service and transportation agencies that have an interest in the region's transportation planning outcomes. Together, Action Network and agency representatives and local community leaders, referred to as the Redwood Coast Community Transportation Coalition (RCCTC), worked together to assimilate information learned from the region's residents to document local transportation needs, establish goals and objectives, and criteria to select projects for implementation.

This planning process began in December 2000, when Action Network conducted a regional forum to discuss the Redwood Coast's transportation needs to seek ideas on how to address these needs. In order to seek funding to resolve these issues, Action Network learned that the region needed a strategic plan before funding could become available.

In late 2001, Action Network successfully applied for and received a California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) Community Based Transportation Planning Grant (CBTPG) to identify and document local transportation needs, and establish a Transportation Plan for the Redwood Coast Region. Since Action Network is an agency that represents the region, the City of Point Arena contracted with Action Network to implement this planning process.

The intent of the CBTPG has been to implement a community based planning process that is inclusive and includes significant community involvement. This process resulted in a community needs survey, nine public meetings; a review of local transportation plans, and a series of monthly meetings. Altogether this process has yielded input from more than 1,250 individuals, which represents about 18 percent of the region's residents.

This process has provided local community leaders the opportunity to look at the specific needs of their respective communities, determine what can be done today, and what can be done in the future. Already, these efforts have resulted in improved public transportation services. For example, local collaboration has already resulted in new public transportation service each Saturday between The Sea Ranch and Fort Bragg and the 45 families living in The Sea Ranch Apartments now have access to public transportation so they may have more reliable service within the region as well as to Ukiah and Santa Rosa. As for the future, the Coalition has prepared this plan to address longer-range projects.

Community leaders participating in this process, (the Redwood Coast Community Transportation Coalition) learned that the region's residents value transportation improvements that improve safety, reliability, and accessibility. They learned the region's residents expect services to be delivered with available resources and that they should be highly coordinated. Meanwhile, the region's residents expect more public transportation services tailored to meet the needs of the region's senior citizens and people with disabilities. And, community leaders realize the region needs a sustainable self-governance model that can continue facilitating the coordination of the region's resources.

The Plan positions the region and each governmental agency providing transportation services and projects the opportunity to apply for and receive state and federal grants targeted towards the needs of the region's residents. This is important because in the last decade many state and federal program dollars have been allocated to support other projects created by the various local, state and federal agencies, and commissions. Therefore, this planning effort is significant since the Redwood Coast region will now be positioned to apply for and receive new funding opportunities.

The Plan serves as a broad-based strategy for shaping future regional transportation planning decisions and policy components. In addition, the Plan functions as a primary road map offering consistent direction for making funding decisions.

The Plan reflects the thinking that within the Redwood Coast region each community should have local autonomy to establish its own priorities if it feels they are in the best interest of the community to do so. For example, the City of Point Arena is an incorporated city with statutory powers while the Manchester/Point Arena and Kashia Bands of Pomo Indians are Sovereign Nations. This is different from the traditional approach of relying upon regional control. Therefore, the plan documents local needs and integrates these needs into the planning work programs of the various agencies that are responsible for delivering transportation services to the region. The idea is to capture the best of both; local independence supported by regional coordination. This will involve closer collaboration amongst local social service agencies and regional and local transportation governing bodies.

The Plan acknowledges the evolving and adaptive nature of how transportation-planning decisions are funded to meet community needs, and calls for continuous communication among the jurisdictions and local decision-makers, and leaders to remain relevant. It contains objectives intended for immediate implementation as well as goals to be accomplished in phases over time, such as development of a more comprehensive public transportation system that meets the needs of local residents. Recommended strategies recognize current and anticipated fiscal limits as well as the ever-changing demographics of the communities served.

REGIONAL ORGANIZATION

Action Network – Its Mission and Role

The City of Point Arena, in partnership with the Manchester-Point Arena Band of Pomo Indians (MPA) supported the regional planning effort by being CBTP grant co-applicants. However, since both of these local governments represented a small percentage of the region's population, development of this Community Based Transportation Plan was facilitated by Action Network, a local non-profit agency established to bring the region's community leaders together. Early on the Action Network Board of Directors has established the following mission, purpose and goals for the agency, and they remain relevant.

MISSION: Action Network is a non-profit organization that is committed to building a strong coastal community through a collaborative partnership of individuals, organizations, schools, businesses and government. Our mission is to identify ALL community resources and to form a unified, unduplicated front to address community needs for the people from Elk/Irish Beach to Fort Ross, promoting a stronger, healthier more productive commUNITY for all.

PURPOSE:

1. To facilitate the creation of strong, concrete, mutually beneficial linkages between public institutions, the private sector, individuals and associations.
2. To increase the capacity of community groups to work together and discover new ways to mobilize the many and varied resources available in order to solve the problems of the community.
3. To form a network of teams working together strengthening the social and economic fabric and addressing community needs of this isolated coastal community, including Elk/Irish Beach, Manchester, Pt. Arena, Anchor Bay, Gualala, The Sea Ranch, Stewarts Point, Annapolis, Kashia and Fort Ross.

GOALS:

- To provide avenues of communication between and among peoples and organizations on the coast.
- To work with Sonoma and Mendocino County governments, agencies and organizations to bring services to the area.
- To promote quality community leadership through a program of mentoring and creating opportunities for new community leaders.
- To identify, problem solve and/or tackle community problems, and bring together resources to provide solutions.

Throughout the planning process Action Network has strived to keep community leaders and local jurisdictions, such as the City of Point Arena and the MPA involved in the development of this Plan. Meanwhile, in recognition of the importance of keeping community leaders involved in the plan's development, Action Network brought together community leaders and various social service and transportation agency decision-makers to assist in the documentation and identification of what transportation needs should be addressed in the Redwood Coast Region.

To do this, Action Network's Board of Directors decided it was in the best interest of the Redwood Coast region to establish an advisory committee to guide the plan's development. Meanwhile, community leaders, transportation and social service agency officials, and local decision-makers called the Redwood Coast Community Transportation Coalition (RCCTC) had been meeting to discuss and solve transportation issues. In an effort to avoid duplication, and recognizing the Coalition's vested interest in the plan's outcome, Action Network appointed the RCCTC to serve as its advisory committee. This decision insured that both transportation and social service agencies have the opportunity in determining the outcomes of the region's transportation planning outcomes.

The RCCTC—Its Composition, Role and Mission

Its Composition

One of the primary objectives of the CBTPG was to implement a community based planning process that is inclusive and includes significant community involvement by residents and community leaders. Therefore, Action Network decided it was in the best interest of the region to appoint an advisory committee to oversee and provide input into the planning process. Since its formation in 2002, the Redwood Coast Community Transportation Coalition (RCCTC) had already been working on short-term solutions to local transportation needs and had been accumulating knowledge and expertise about the region's transportation needs.

The RCCTC members overseeing the CBTPG planning process consists of community leaders and representatives of the various governmental agencies that are responsible for delivering transportation services within the region. The individuals who have contributed their time to this effort are as follows:

- ◆ Mike Lane, Action Network
- ◆ Shirley Marks, South Coast Senior Center, Inc.
- ◆ Richard Kuehn, Community Resources Connection
- ◆ Ray Edlund, Mendocino Transit Authority
- ◆ Tami Bartolomie, Retired Seniors Volunteer Program

- ◆ Jesse Robertson, CalTrans District 1
- ◆ Joan Clearwater, Lions Club
- ◆ Jo Rouse, Action Network Consultant
- ◆ Doug Pilant, Consultant
- ◆ Janet Kukulinsky, Action Network, Soroptimist, and Redwood Coast Chamber of Commerce
- ◆ Patti Bruder, North Coast Opportunities
- ◆ Javier Chavez, Action Network and Hispanic Community
- ◆ Steven Schmitz, Sonoma County Transit
- ◆ Roy Austin, Community Resources Connection
- ◆ Don Kemp, The Sea Ranch Association Planning Member
- ◆ Bill McCarthy, Gualala Municipal Advisory Council
- ◆ John Marchant, Action Network and Rotary Club
- ◆ Jeannette Bulkeley, Local Resident Representative
- ◆ Mayor Leslie Dahlhoff, City of Point Arena and Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) Representative
- ◆ Rick Poe, Manchester-Point Arena Band of Pomo Indians
- ◆ Dr. Virginia Sutter, Manchester-Point Arena Band of Pomo Indians
- ◆ Sheila Miller, Manchester-Point Arena Band of Pomo Indians

The Mission

When the Coalition began meeting in April 2002, its objective was to identify short-term transportation needs and solutions. Meanwhile, as discussions progressed, the members recognized that each agency represented had differing priorities. However, the participants also realized that each agency had a common interest in transportation related decisions. Therefore, the members agreed that since all members had an interest in transportation that organizing as a coalition would be the most appropriate and efficient organizational model. In January 2003, the Coalition completed its strategic planning process and adopted the following mission statement.

“The Redwood Coast Community Transportation Coalition (RCCTC) will expand transportation opportunities and resources using a creative approach to serve coastal residents living in the northern Sonoma and southern Mendocino Counties.”

In carrying out its mission, the RCCTC has been assisting Action Network by developing and recommending goals, objectives, and oversight and input into developing criteria to determine what project should be the project’s highest priority. Meanwhile, the Coalition has also provided, when necessary, specific

feedback and technical input in the development of the various technical memos and studies that provided the basis for the Plan's development.

The Transportation Planning Role

The Coalition's composition and mission has determined its role in the CBTP planning process. Initially, when the RCCTC formed its primary concern was to identify transportation needs that could be addressed immediately. For example, the Coalition became the catalyst to bring Mendocino Transit Authority and Sonoma County Transit together to begin providing new service to low-income residents living at The Sea Ranch Apartments. In addition, the Coalition determined that it was in the best interest of the region to advocate that MTA eliminate a school bus service and use those resources to provide Saturday service between The Sea Ranch Apartments and Fort Bragg. In addition, they were the catalyst to changing the vehicle contract between Redwood Coast Medical Services to allow the vehicle to be used for more mileage within a year. Finally, through a fact-finding process, they were able to determine that funding used to purchase the South Coast Senior Center Van permitted this vehicle to provide transportation services in Sonoma County.

Upon approval of the CBTP planning grant Action Network envisioned using the Coalition's experience and knowledge of the region's transportation needs and serve as an oversight committee for the planning process. Therefore, the Coalition has continued to meet monthly to review the various technical memos, discuss project priorities, and define the scope of work for the projects. Meanwhile, the Coalition has participated in other planning activities and has supported and participated in discussions with CalTrans and the Gualala Municipal Advisory Council (GMAC) to reduce traffic speed and improve pedestrian and bicycle traffic flow along SR – 1 within Gualala.

Over the past several months, as the RCCTC has developed and prioritized projects, it has considered which criteria should be used to select projects. These criteria include safety, traffic circulation, leveraging resources, and increasing transportation alternatives for the region's senior and disabled residents. Meanwhile, the RCCTC has given careful consideration on how Action Network can continue bringing together the region's community leaders and advocating to the various local governments to implement the highest priority projects. In summary, the Coalition's participation in this planning process has resulted in the following process.

1. Documented the various transportation needs
2. Evaluated the needs for services and projects
3. Established criteria to advance transportation services and projects.
4. Reviewed and developed scopes of work for transportation services or related activities
5. Considered the costs for those services and projects

6. Reviewed the various governmental policies affecting the local planning processes

Finally, as a preferred methodology to complete the Community Based Transportation Plan, the Coalition has followed the following process for the Plan's development: The **First Phase**; defines the existing conditions while the **second phase** defines which transportation service and projects needs to be provided in the future. The **third phase** applied the criteria to determine the regions highest priority; and, the **fourth phase** develops specific plans and identifies funding sources to address local transportation needs.

The Community Based Transportation Plan

Progress to Date

In December 2000, Action Network conducted a community forum to discuss the region's transportation needs. Action Network was interested in knowing which specific transportation needs existed and was interested in obtaining funding that could be allocated to address these needs. Following this community forum it was realized that in order to advance the needs that were identified at that forum the region would have to complete a local transportation planning process. To meet this objective, Action Network partnered with the City of Point Arena and the Manchester-Point Arena Band of Pomo Indians and applied for a CalTrans Community Based Transportation Planning Grant. Following the CalTrans approval of the grant Action Network, began its strategic transportation planning process in the Spring of 2003.

Following CalTrans approval of the Community Based Transportation Planning Grant the first step was to complete a Community Needs Survey. Next, a series of nine community forums were held between Annapolis and Elk. The Community Survey and Public Forums generated a lot of new ideas, a few complaints, and a variety of opinions. The information generated from these activities provided the RCCTC with the necessary information to develop criteria and establish goals and objectives for the region.

Next, the Coalition began looking closely at the region's demographics, transportation and land use, and affordable housing plans; and began exploring the various partnerships needed to assist in the coordination of the transportation resources to meet local needs. The RCCTC realized the highest priorities are to continue seeking new funding opportunities that continue the region's planning process to further investigate how the region's transportation needs can be met. Meanwhile, the Coalition developed priorities and established criteria for project selection. For example, throughout the discussions the Coalition became particularly concerned about transportation improvements that addressed highway safety and public safety as well as improving specialized transportation programs for the region's senior and disabled residents. The Coalition also recognized that citizens expect projects that improve intra-regional traffic circulation and address public safety by connecting Windy Hollow Road with a bridge over the Garcia River.

Upon completion of the Community Transportation Needs Survey, the public forums, and technical memos, the RCCTC developed and defined the region's strategic issues to further develop a strategic plan. These issues are as follows:

1. Support Action Network's role as an advocate and facilitator to improve coordination amongst the various transportation, land use, and social service agencies.

2. Identify and prioritize transportation programs and projects, and advocate for their inclusion into the appropriate agencies' planning processes for funding and implementation.
3. Advocate for projects that increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the region's existing resources.
4. Develop recommendations that establish new programs to increase transportation alternatives for the region's senior and disabled residents.
5. Recommend improvements for public safety as well as vehicular safety for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists along SR – 1.
6. Develop "programs of projects" to fund documented transportation needs.

The Plan's Goals

The Community Based Transportation Plan consists of three goals that are specifically focused on increasing expanding transportation choices, coordinating the region's transportation resources, and continuing a dialogue with community leaders and governmental agencies responsible for funding transportation projects within the region. Following are the three goals along with specific projects that were identified through the community involvement processes.

- Increase transportation opportunities by assisting local government agencies and community based organizations to qualify for existing and new funds to expand transportation opportunities to improve: public and highway safety; traffic circulation; integration of local transportation, land use, and housing plans; and, increase public transportation options for the region's senior and disabled residents.
- Enhance transportation opportunities by utilizing existing resources in a more efficient manner by advocating for improved public transportation services within the region, improving the coordination of the Community Resources Connection and South Coast Senior vans, developing a strategy to provide more non emergency medical transportation, and support efforts to better integrate land use, affordable housing, and transportation planning.
- Communicate with stakeholders and community leaders to ensure that the Community Based Transportation Plan addresses community priorities by educating the public and keeping them active, and to maintain local volunteer morale and support.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND COMMUNITY NEEDS

The Redwood Coastal region's planning area is a large region with 689 square miles located along the southern Mendocino and northern Sonoma Counties' coastal area. The region is sparsely populated, with an average density of 10 people per square mile with the majority of the population clustered along the coast on either side of the Gualala River between Gualala and The Sea Ranch where the population density reaches 92 and 71 people per square mile respectively. The region also primarily consists of unincorporated settlements with the City of Point Arena being the region's only incorporated city while the Manchester-Point Arena and Kashia Rancherias' are Sovereign Nations¹.

The Gualala River runs east-west through the middle of the region, effectively splitting the region and its two largest population centers, Gualala and The Sea Ranch, both physically and politically dividing Mendocino and Sonoma Counties. Furthermore, a coastal mountain range provides a barrier between the region and the population centers of Santa Rosa and Ukiah.

A careful analysis of the region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the communities of the region revealed to the RCCTC that these physical barriers fragment the region's decision-making processes due to the fact that these physical barriers have created political boundaries that require coordination between multiple governmental agencies. As a result, these decision-making processes *appear* cumbersome to the average citizen, particularly since transportation service decisions are often dependent upon the coordination of multiple agencies headquartered outside of the region. Although each agency's internal systems work well, together they lack synergy. Therefore, community leaders wish to benefit from each agency's planning processes by learning how to work within the constraints of these various systems to create more synergy through increased coordination.

In an attempt to understand and work within the constraints of each governmental agency's process, the RCCTC identified the various transportation related needs of the region, prioritized them, and has developed recommendations on what actions the various agencies should include in their respective program of projects and planning processes. These priorities have been categorized under the following headings:

1. Local Streets, Roads, and Highways
2. Public Transportation
3. Non-Motorized Transportation

¹ Attachment A: Maps of Redwood Coastal Region

Local Streets, Roads, and Highways

State Route 1 (Shoreline Highway)

SR-1 is the primary north-south transportation route connecting the region's communities. The Shoreline Highway also serves as "*Main Street*" for the various settlements throughout the region. Together, CalTrans Districts 1 and 4 are responsible for maintaining this transportation corridor. District 1, headquartered in Eureka, provides service from northern Mendocino County to the Gualala River. Meanwhile, District 4, headquartered in Oakland, provides services from the Gualala River, south throughout Sonoma County.

The RCCTC learned through public input that local residents desire improvements to improve public safety. Improvements included reducing traffic speeds within their respective communities: installation of more call boxes; longer passing lanes through The Sea Ranch Corridor; constructing wider shoulders to accommodate bicycle lanes in both directions; roadway improvements designed to keep SR - 1 open year round; and, providing safe pedestrian and bicycle access across the Gualala River Bridge.

Seasonal Road Closures

Two sections of SR-1 north of Point Arena are frequently subject to seasonal closures due to flooding, oftentimes for several days. In many cases, the only viable detour requires a journey of several hours to Highway 101 and back. It is recommended that Caltrans initiate two projects to raise the grades of SR-1 between PM 17.56 and PM 17.70 (near Miner Hole Road) and, between PM 18.05 and PM 18.50 (the Garcia River Flats). Viable engineering solutions are available and should be immediately considered for study, design, and funding.

Longer Turnouts Along The Sea Ranch Corridor

Currently, there are only two official paved turnouts in this corridor. Southbound, there is one between mile marker 56.37 and 56.25. Northbound, there is a short turnout at mile marker 52.21. Both are very short, and difficult to use without coming to a complete stop. The Sea Ranch is approaching build out. About 66% of the 2,300 lots now have houses, and new construction is at a rate of about 45 per year. Also, there is an increasing trend toward full time residency with an increase in egress and ingress of local traffic. That, coupled with increased tourist traffic makes the Sea Ranch corridor a high use area. There is also a disparity between the speeds of regular users and visitors increasing the probability of rear ender collisions, impatient passing in dangerous areas and road rage.

It is recommended that the existing two turnouts be lengthened to allow smooth and efficient passing, and adding more turnouts where space permits in both directions. This would be to the advantage of both those

who know the road well traveling at about speed limit and the slower visitors who tend to meander for sightseeing and/or exercise caution, due to visibility and curves. All of SR – 1 is difficult, and can be dangerous if not properly negotiated. The Sea Ranch corridor has become a high use area, and as build out progresses, and as more tourists are attracted to the North Coast region, this corridor needs more opportunities for turnouts to facilitate smoother safer traffic flow.

County Road Systems

Sonoma County Department of Public Works is responsible for maintaining county roads within Sonoma County while the Mendocino County Department of Transportation is responsible for maintaining county roads in Mendocino County.

Sonoma County

Public input from communities within Sonoma County revealed that residents are primarily concerned about maintaining Annapolis, Skaggs Springs, Fort Ross, and Meyers Grade Roads as all-season routes to provide an alternate route when seasonal rains cause slippage and slides that close SR – 1, often for days at a time. Meanwhile, local residents desire transportation improvements that provide bicyclists and pedestrians with safer alternate routes.

Mendocino County

Alternate North-South Route

Consolidation of the name addresses and functions along Eureka Hill Rd, Ten Mile Rd, Ten Mile Cutoff Rd, Fish Rock Rd, Iversen Rd, Old Stage Rd, and Old State Highway. Integration of the County road system would improve public safety by providing emergency personnel ability to quickly identify addresses when responding to emergencies. Establishing one road network would enable the Mendocino County Public Works Department to treat all of these roads as “one road project” versus seven separate road projects. This new route would establish consistent safety standards for the entire length of the route by standardizing the roads base, shoulders, curves, and the road surface. This new route would also provide a safe alternate route for local traffic thus reducing traffic on the Shoreline Highway.

Windy Hollow Bridge

The Garcia River divides the Manchester-Point Arena Band of Pomo Indians Rancheria. There are essentially two Windy Hollow Roads. One road leads from SR – 1 south to the river while the

second travels north from Riverside Drive in Point Arena. Tribal Leaders, local residents, as well as the Central California Bureau of Indian Affairs support any effort to complete a plan that leads to the construction of a bridge across the Garcia River.

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. Mendocino County Department of Transportation has also identified construction of a year round bridge as a high priority for the region's residents.

Traffic Control through Gualala

Essentially, the Shoreline Highway serves the community of Gualala's "main street" that local residents use to access shopping, services, and schools. Because SR - 1 serves as the region's primary north-south route, tourists and local traffic cause traffic to become congested certain times of the day. Currently, the Coastal Element of the Mendocino County General Plan contains a plan called the Gualala Town Plan. This plan includes a generalized land use plan with policies to support mixed use development. However, the plan is silent on how to specifically mitigate reduced traffic speeds through the community's commercial district.

In April of 2004, the Gualala Municipal Advisory Council (GMAC) conducted a Traffic Safety Forum to discuss specific safety issues. CalTrans attended the meeting and subsequently worked with the GMAC to reduce the speed limit to 25 MPH.

Other Documented Streets, Roads, and Highway Needs

1. Improve site visibility along SR - 1 and County Roads
2. Install more call boxes and restrooms along SR-1
3. Collaborate with CalTrans to ensure that future SR-1 improvements result in 30 to 32 foot lane sections
4. Increase sighting visibility for intersection of SR-1 (Main Street, Point Arena) at Iversen Avenue
5. Support CalTrans effort to plan and construct lateral roads along SR - 1
6. Increase availability of parking within the Gualala business district
7. Plan and construct a north/south route through Point Arena

8. Maintain Seaview, Timber Cove, Fort Ross, and Meyers Grade Roads at all times to serve as alternatives during SR-1 closures

Public Transportation Systems

Public Transportation

Mendocino Transit Authority, a joint-powers agency, providing public transportation services throughout the Redwood Coastal Region with financial assistance from Sonoma County Transit². Currently three routes serving the region which are:

- Route 70: Provides one round trip between The Sea Ranch Apartments/Gualala and Fort Bragg via SR – 1 each Saturday.
- Route 75: Operates Monday through Friday providing one daily round trip between The Sea Ranch Apartments/Gualala and Ukiah.
- Route 95: This route operates seven days per week, providing one daily round trip between Point Arena and Santa Rosa.

Community needs identified in the Community Survey and at the nine Community Forums indicated the region's population desire improved public transportation services. Specific services that were identified included a local dial-a-ride service, a local fixed schedule service that operates daily between the region's communities, and more connections to Santa Rosa. The Community Needs Survey illustrated that about 11.2% of the region's households lack access to shopping, services, recreational activities, daycare providers, after school programs, medical, employment opportunities, and transportation to Santa Rosa because they lack transportation.

In January 2004, 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). This program was created to assist rural communities to enhance economic growth and development by improving community transportation services. The program provides planning assistance for facility development, transit service improvements and expansion, new system start-up, policy and procedure development, marketing, transportation coordination, training and public transit problem-solving.

Action Network intends to utilize this program to develop an appropriate 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.

² MTA Maps and Schedules of public transit services serving the Redwood Coast Region

Specialized Public Transportation

There are currently two forms of specialized public transportation being operated in the Redwood Coastal Region. Community Resources Connection (CRC), a local non-profit, operates a volunteer non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) service to transport residents needing transportation between their homes and medical facilities. South Coast Seniors, Inc, also a local non-profit, is designed to transport senior citizens between their homes and meal sites in Point Arena and Gualala.

Non-Emergency Medical Transportation

Community Resources Connection volunteer non-emergency medical transportation relies on more than 70 volunteer drivers, who use their private autos, to transport residents needing transportation. In addition, CRC uses a Dodge Caravan leased from MTA for \$1 per year. Local residents are transported to medical facilities within the region and to Fort Bragg, Ukiah, and Santa Rosa. MV Transportation, a private company, also provides limited service between the region and Santa Rosa.

The Community Needs Survey revealed that almost 10% of the households in the region do not have adequate access to medical facilities because they lack transportation options. Analysis of input from the Community Forums concluded that transportation services for seniors and disabled residents are the region's highest transportation priority.

CRC maintains a dedicated contingent of volunteers willing to provide transportation. While CRC is meeting its mission within the community, the analysis reveals that there is a greater unmet need.

For the past year the RCCTC has studied case studies on how other NEMT programs in other states are funded and operated. Therefore, the RCCTC recommends that Action Network explore the feasibility of creating a business model that qualifies for transportation cost reimbursement from MediCAL, and submit a waiver to the US Department of Health & Human Services' (DHHS) Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services permitting the Redwood Coast to use MediCAL resources to directly fund NEMT services.

Members of the California Association for Coordinated Transportation (CalACT), Community Association of America (CTAA), and The California Commission on Aging, and the Mendocino County Public Health Rural Access to Transportation Committee have recognized there is State of California Administrative Law Regulations preventing many California residents access to NEMT. These associations have been actively pursuing development of strategies to change many of these administrative rules and regulations. The RCCTC recommends that

Action Network become an active participant in this movement to ensure that all Californians living in rural areas may have adequate access to medical services.

Senior Transportation

The South Coast Senior Center Transportation program currently provides senior citizens with transportation between their homes and meal site locations in Point Arena and Gualala. In addition the program provides a “meals on wheels” service where they deliver food to homebound senior citizens. Once each month the senior bus is available to transport, by request, seniors to Santa Rosa, Fort Bragg, or Ukiah to access shopping, services, and medical facilities.

The Coalition recommends that strategies to increase coordination of local resources to expand the usage of the vehicle by seeking other resources to increase the usage of the bus.

Other Documented Public Transportation Needs

1. Create a local carpool or rideshare program
2. Establish park and rides along SR – 1
3. Increase transit connections between Elk and Point Arena
4. Coordinate with local inns and motels to determine feasibility of participating in funding a trolley, local event, and jitney services
5. Identify and communicate to agency officials the barriers preventing the use of the Indian Health Van and local school buses to transport children and the general public

Non – Motorized Transportation

Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety

State Route One (SR – 1), the main transportation corridor along the Redwood Coast, is vital to the region. Due to the unique nature of SR – 1, projects to repair or realign the highway due to slides, slip-outs, flooding, safety considerations, etc are necessary. It is encouraged that Caltrans, where possible, replace the highway at those locations with a minimum 32-foot section (two 11 or 12 foot travel lanes with two 4 or 5 foot shoulders in each direction). This allows for improved bicycle and pedestrian access as well as traffic safety considerations.

The Redwood Coast Region is a popular touring route along SR – 1 during the spring, summer and fall months. Most of those touring cyclists travel from north to south to take advantage of the prevailing winds. As is the case with experienced cyclists, they prefer to remain on the highway to take shorter

routes and better-maintained shoulders, where available. For those reasons, a Class II (wide 4' to 8' shoulder) designated bikeway is the preferred facility over Class I (separate bike path). Also they prefer to avoid bike paths as walkers, joggers, strollers, etc. generally share them, and are seldom swept or maintained and do not match the grades and direct throughways provided by the major highway. Meanwhile, recreational cyclists and pedestrians prefer separated Class I bike paths, particularly along scenic corridors. In this case, the bluff-tops along the coast are the most requested sites for these facilities.

The responsible agencies for wider shoulders and signage along SR - 1 are CalTrans District 1 in Mendocino County and District 4 in Sonoma County. In many locations, the highway is built on an easement and any widening would require purchase of right-of-way. Also, the California Coastal Commission must review and approve any construction within the coastal corridor. Class III bike and pedestrian paths usually fall within the responsibility of various agencies including: Parks & Recreation Districts, Counties, Cities, and CalTrans (where the project falls within ROW).

Gualala River Pedestrian/Bicyclists Crossing

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

The bridge was originally designed primarily for vehicles and has little room for added safe use by pedestrians and bicyclists. Due to the proliferating use of bicycles, it is recommended that pedestrians and bicyclists are given consideration to adding both north and southbound paths for common use. At present, there is only a narrow concrete walkway in both directions. The existing railings could be removed, and the walkways could be widened by bolting lateral beams to the concrete and cantilevered out to the required width. The beams would provide the basic foundation for a roadway, and for new railings attached on the outboard sides. The lanes should be separated into a pedestrian walkway with a separate pathway for bicycle use on each side of the bridge.

A project would require supporting data to present to the responsible agencies: such as number accidents, fatalities, etc. involving bicyclists, pedestrians at the site, vehicle counts supporting need as well as average daily traffic across the bridge. In addition, facilities must be constructed on either end of the bridge to support the project on the bridge itself. Currently, the access to the bridge from the north (Mendocino County) and south (Sonoma County) is SR-1 with limited shoulder width and no sidewalks. Immediately to the south of the bridge lies Gualala Point Regional Park and The Sea Ranch, both of whom need to participate as well as both CalTrans Districts.

City of Point Arena Bikeway

City of Point Arena residents and its visitors currently access Arena Cove by Port Road and Iversen Avenue. Currently, there isn't any safe or convenient pedestrian and bicycle access to the Arena Cove³ which is an important community and tourist destination.

Action Network and RCCTC support the City of Point Arena's effort to fund construction a Class I Bikeway through City of Point Arena owned property and a Class II Bikeway along Port Road and develop a point of access parking lot with public restroom, bus stop, bike racks, and streetscape lighting.

Other Documented Non-Motorized Transportation Needs

1. Plan for the construction of more walking and bicycle paths
2. Work with CalTrans and Counties to develop plans that lead to the installation of more bicycle signs along SR - 1 and county roads
3. Develop and implement driver and bicycle safety education programs
4. Plan and construct pedestrian sidewalks and crosswalks in Gualala
5. Create a Community Action Plan for Gualala to update the Gualala Town Plan to reflect current need for traffic calming, pedestrian and bicycle safety, parking, economic development and affordable housing
6. Become active in future development of Sonoma and Mendocino Counties' General Plans
7. Develop plans that increase availability of affordable housing that's near transit stops, shopping, and local services
8. Establish dialogue with school districts to continue development of safe routes to local public schools

Regional Priorities

Action Network and the RCCTC identified the following projects as the region's highest priorities:

Local Streets, Roads, and Highways

Establish a year-round route over the Garcia River when SR - 1 is closed due to seasonal flooding. There are two potential solutions.

Shoreline Highway: It is recommended that CalTrans initiate two projects to raise the grades of SR - 1 between PM 17.56 and PM 17.70 (near

³ Map of City of Point Arena Bikeway Project

Miner Hole Road), and between PM 18.05 and PM 18.50 (the Garcia River Flats) to ensure that SR – 1 remains open year-round.

Windy Hollow Bridge: The Garcia River divides the Manchester-Point Arena Band of Pomo Indians Rancheria. Tribal leaders and the Bureau of Indian Affairs are concerned that public safety is compromised. Therefore, construction of a bridge that connects Windy Hollow Road has been identified as a high priority to improve access to medical services. Community leaders recommend that Mendocino County, Tribal Leaders and the Bureau of Indian Affairs consider a plan that deeds the bridgehead ROW to the MPA and pursue funding opportunities through the BIA's Road Department.

Public Transportation

Increase Public Transportation Options: In the Fall of 2003, Action Network requested that Mendocino Transit Authority include more local public transportation service for the region. MTA determined the request was too vague so in January 2004, 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 an appropriate public transit improvement plan 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.

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.

RCCTC has examined case studies on how other states manage their NEMT programs. Therefore, the RCCTC recommends that Action Network explore the feasibility of developing a program that would qualify for full transportation cost reimbursement from MediCAL.

Non-Motorized Transportation

Gualala River Pedestrian and Bicycle Crossing: 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 lanes. 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.

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. Action Network and the RCCTC recognize that with SAFE TEA there may be significant changes in federal and state funding policies affecting local transportation conditions, therefore it's 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.

Table 1 – Redwood Coast Region High Priority Projects

Project Location	Applicant	Project Description	Potential Funding Source	Fiscal Year	Estimated Cost
Regional	AN	Transit operations plan to determine appropriate service, budget, and funding.	USDA/CTAA	04-05	Approved
Windy Hollow Rd.	MPA/AN	Windy Hollow Bridge Feasibility Study	EJ Grant	05-06	\$62,343
Gualala	MPA/AN	Gualala River Pedestrian/ Bicycle Feasibility Study	EJ Grant	05-06	\$56,620
Regional	AN	Bicycle and pedestrian improvements along SR – 1, emphasizing coastal access	CCC Access Planning Grant	05-06	\$50,000
Gualala	MCOG	Amend various Gualala Town Plan elements so they may be based upon community input	CBTPG CDBG	05-06 05-06	\$100,000
Gualala	MCOG	Preliminary engineering, and construction of Gualala Town Plan along SR-1 from Old State Hwy Ocean Drive	TEA – Caltrans TEA – MCOG	05-06	\$1,000,000
Point Arena	Point Arena	Bikeway to Cove; lot acquisition, restroom, and landscaping.	State/Federal TEA	05-06	Approved \$200,000
Regional	CRC	Purchase non emergency medical transportation van	Section 5310	05-06	\$60,000
Regional	CRC	12 – 15 Passenger transit vehicles	Section 5310	05-06	\$70,000
Gualala	AN	Construct pedestrian/bicycle path along SR-1 between Ocean Drive and Pacific Woods Road - .4 miles	LTF – MCOG	05-06	\$50,000
Regional	MCOG/AN	Develop a non-emergency medical transportation improvement program that includes an operations plan, budget, and capital improvement plan	Transit Technical Assistance Grant	06-07	\$50,000
Regional	MCOG/AN	Develop formal partnerships with various local, state, and federal transportation and social service agencies to fund a non-emergency transportation program	Partnership Planning Grant	07-08	\$50,000

CONCLUSION

“Moving Toward Action” is the result of a three-year CBTPG planning process documenting community identified regional priorities and is designed for the region’s community leaders to pursue solutions that enhance safety, increase transit options, improve traffic circulation, and provide for continued public involvement. This plan will require continued collaboration and support from the various state and local governmental agencies providing transportation services within the region, particularly from Caltrans Districts 1 and 4, the California Coastal Commission, local and state social service agencies, Mendocino Transit Authority, Sonoma and Mendocino Counties, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and the Mendocino Council of Governments.

There are many local, state, and federal policies and procedures determining how funding decisions are made, where monies for transportation improvements will come from, and when these transportation projects will be implemented. Many of the processes are complex and most require long lead times, which sometimes can be several years.

These planning and funding realities are compounded by the fact the Redwood Coastal Region is a bi-county region that’s primarily comprised of unincorporated settlements. The region has only one local government, the City of Point Arena with a population of 450, and two Sovereign Nations, the Manchester-Point Arena Band of Pomo Indians and the Kashia Band of Pomo Indians at the Stewarts Point Rancheria. These local governments are supportive of this local process since they understand the need for the region to be represented as whole. Local community leaders recognize the need for an agency that can continue to coordinate this planning process and advocate for funding and implementation of the region’s transportation priorities.

Action Network’s role in transportation planning was a response to community leaders’ realization that the overall health of the community was dependent upon an efficient and responsive transportation system. For the past three years Action Network has worked diligently to build collaborations to meet the bi-county region’s transportation objective. As a result of this process Action Network and community leaders have developed the knowledge and expertise about transportation issues, the funding processes, and development of the necessary partnerships throughout Sonoma and Mendocino Counties.

RCCTC has determined that Action Network should continue bringing the region’s community leaders and transportation and social services agencies together to advocate for funding of the region’s priorities. In addition, the RCCTC recommends that Action Network continue providing leadership by providing planning services until such time that another entity is assumes responsibility for regional transportation planning and delivery of services that addresses the transportation services as the region’s residents deem necessary.

Because Action Network is a non-profit community based organization, state and federal regulations prevent it from being an applicant for many state and federal funding sources. Therefore, implementation of this plan must be completed by partnering with already established state and local government agencies that are responsible for planning and funding projects in the region. Action Network plans to apply for the following funding sources by partnering with the various local, state, and regional agencies:

1. Environmental Justice: Context-Sensitive Planning for Communities Grant(s) through the Manchester-Point Arena Band of Pomo Indians for the Windy Hollow Bridge and Gualala River Pedestrian/Bicycle Feasibility Studies
2. Community Based Transportation Planning Grant on behalf of the Gualala Municipal Advisory Council through the Mendocino Council of Governments to amend the Gualala Town Plan to meet community values, and prepare for preliminary engineering and construction of the improvements between Old State Highway and Ocean Drive
3. Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 Capital Improvement Grant on behalf of Community Resources Connection through the Mendocino Council of Governments with the Mendocino Transit Authority providing vehicle procurement assistance
4. Federal Transit Administration Section 5313(b) grant for the development of a non-emergency medical transportation improvement plan through the Mendocino Council of Governments

The City of Point Arena and the two Sovereign Nations, as eligible applicants for many funding sources, will continue to plan and implement their own projects while collaborating with the region as a whole.