

STRATEGIC ISSUES – PLANNING PROCESS

Overview

How can transportation choices increase for the Redwood Coast Region's residents without additional funding?

In March 2002, under the auspices of a local non-profit agency, Action Network, the Redwood Coast Community Transportation Coalition (RCCTC) was formed and set out to find a thoughtful answer to what that question would involve. The answer, the Coalition discovered, is not simple.

A careful analysis of the region's transportation system strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the communities of southern Mendocino and northern Sonoma Counties revealed that a fragmented transportation decision-making process exists. It is the byproduct of the region being divided by political and physical boundaries, and that the region is primarily inhabited by several small-unincorporated settlements¹. Consequently, the region's transportation system is governed by several governmental agencies, each with their independent funding allocation processes that prevents the region from being treated as one political subdivision. To the uninitiated, the planning process appears cumbersome, particularly since these governmental agencies are headquartered outside of the region.

Moreover, in the last several decades various special interest groups, commissions, and agencies have been formed to implement state and federal laws and rules. One such example is the California Coastal Commission Act of 1976 that resulted in the creation of the California Coastal Commission (CCC). One of the byproducts of this Commission has been the creation of The Coastal Element of the Mendocino County General Plan. This plan introduced new rules and regulations affecting land use, housing, and transportation that establish standards with the intent of preserving access to coastal areas. Therefore, before planning decisions can be made, plans must be submitted for review and approval by the CCC. This additional step further complicates the planning process to the residents unfamiliar with laws and regulations.

¹ Appendix A.: Redwood Coast Regional Service Area Maps

Strategic Issues

The Funding Situation

In late December 1991, following several months of debate, federal lawmakers authorized a landmark transportation funding bill called the Intermodal Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) to provide more flexibility and funding opportunities to meet more local transportation needs. Then, in 1997, the Federal Government sought to reauthorize ISTEA, the authorization resulted in a new program called the Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). The purpose of TEA-21 was to build upon the successes of ISTEA and make technical corrections to the law. Since its authorization, funding has been targeted towards projects promoting safety, environmental protection, enhancement of the existing infrastructure, and maintenance of the existing national transportation infrastructure.

TEA – 21 has resulted in funding programs that have allowed states the flexibility to provide local communities the opportunity to direct these resources to projects that meet the highest local needs. These funding programs have also been designed to allow state and federal administrators the opportunity to transfer funds between transit and highway accounts. This flexibility has enabled local communities the opportunity to design projects that will qualify for funding.

Currently federal lawmakers are working closer to a new authorization called the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act of 2003 and is known as **SAFETEA**. The purpose of SAFETEA is to address the significant challenges in the areas of safety, security, congestion, intermodal connectivity and timely project delivery. Building upon the principles, values, and achievements of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act and TEA-21, this authorization is proposing to address these challenges and creates a safer, simpler and smarter Federal program.

In late 2000, CalTrans announced the availability of the Community Based Transportation Planning Grant funding program enabling local communities the opportunity to develop transportation plans that mitigate the social and environmental impacts of transportation decisions and provided an opportunity for an inclusive transportation planning decision-making process.

The implication of this transportation funding policy has allowed community based planning process to evolve that creates projects that

are representative of the perceived needs of residents living within the southern Mendocino and northern Sonoma Counties' coastal area.

Meanwhile, since 2001, the State of California has amassed a budget deficit of more than \$37 billion dollars that resulted in lawmakers downsizing state-funded programs. Programs that have been affected the most include both transportation and social service programs, such as MediCal, which is a state and federal programs designed to ensure that all Californians have access to medical services. Other program cuts include reduced availability of money to conduct transportation planning and capital assistance to purchase replacement transit vehicles.

In response, the RCCTC is recommending that the CBTPG funds be used to complete a planning process that identifies projects and other funding sources to either further develop these projects to assist local government agencies and community based organizations to receive future funding. Leaders from throughout the region have confidence there will be new state and federal funding opportunities and therefore wants the region to be positioned to take advantage of these opportunities.

Rules Affecting Local Transportation Decisions

A number of state and federal polices affect Mendocino and Sonoma Counties' transportation systems. These policies include the California Transportation Development Act, the California Coastal Act of 1976, the State Transportation Improvement Program, Americans with Disabilities Act, the Clean Air Act Amendment, and the Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century, Regional Surface Transportation Program, and the Safe Routes to School Program.

These policies determine the amount of available funding, the process by which funding will be allocated, and which considerations must be included in the local transportation planning process. For example, the Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century requires regional governments submit transportation plans that are based upon local public input that determined the needs. These regional governments are also responsible for establishing local processes to access these funding.

Local Governance

Since the region is politically divided and there is no regional government to unify the region, community leaders created a non-profit agency to fulfill this role. For the past several years, Action Network has been involved in various community projects designed to bring the region's

leaders together to solve local issues that cross political boundaries. Over the years Action Network has observed that transportation is the common barrier preventing the region's population from being able to enjoy a higher standard of living.

Therefore, following the December 2000 Community Forum, Action Network, through a partnership with the City of Point Arena, and the Manchester-Point Arena Band of Pomo Indians, pursued a CBTPG to bring the necessary resources to the community to develop a local plan. Action Network's role has been to facilitate the development of the CBTPG and be an advocate to communicate these needs to the various governmental agencies responsible for transportation services within the region.

Action Network

Action Network, a local non-profit agency, was established to bring the region's community leaders together. Over the years the Action Network Board of Directors has established the following mission, purpose and goals for the agency.

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 to strengthen the social and economic fabric and address the 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.

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 which transportation needs should be addressed in the Redwood Coast Region.

Therefore, Action Network decided it was in the best interest of the Redwood Coast region to appoint these community leaders and agency decision-makers such as the Redwood Coast Community Transportation Coalition (RCCTC) to act in an advisory role to guide the plan's development. The RCCTC consists of both social service and transportation agencies decision-makers and community leaders who have an interest in the outcome of transportation decisions within the region. The inclusion of both local and regional social service agencies has provided them the opportunity to participate in determining the transportation planning outcomes for the region.

Redwood Coast Community Transportation Coalition

One of the primary objectives of the CBTP was to implement a community based planning process that includes significant community involvement by residents and community leaders to document local community transportation needs. To do this, 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 been working on short-term solutions to local transportation needs and subsequently had accumulated knowledge and expertise of the region's transportation needs. To avoid duplication and take advantage of the RCCTC knowledge and experience, the Action Network Board of Directors determined it was in the best interest of the

region to appoint the RCCTC as an advisory committee to oversee and provide input into the planning process.

RCCTC members overseeing the CBTPG planning process consists of representatives from the various governmental agencies responsible for delivering transportation services within the region and local community leaders. 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
- ◆ Tammi Bartolomie, Retired Seniors Volunteer Program
- ◆ Jesse Robertson, CalTrans District 1
- ◆ Joan Clearwater, Lions Club
- ◆ Jo Rouse, Action Network
- ◆ Janet Kukulinsky, Action Network
- ◆ Patti Bruder, North Coast Opportunities
- ◆ Javier Chavez, Action Network
- ◆ 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, 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

When the Coalition began meeting in April 2002, its objective was to identify short-term transportation needs and solutions. Meanwhile, as discussions progressed, they recognized that each agency represented had differing priorities. 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 which projects should be the region’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.

To do this, the Action Network developed the following guidelines to assist in prioritizing local transportation needs:

1. Identify the transportation needs of the local general public, and senior and disabled residents.
2. Identify and coordinate the use of available resources.
3. Advocate for new and expanded transportation projects and services in the local area.
4. Develop processes that bring other stakeholders and community leaders together to agree upon and prioritize transportation needs.
5. Advise the Action Network Board of Directors regarding the most productive use of local transportation resources.

In the past year, the RCCTC has applied these five tasks in the planning and public involvement processes to fully understand the transportation needs of the region. Its process began by studying the various transportation planning completed by the various jurisdictions as outlined in Technical Memo # 1², which was prepared to review the plans that had already been completed by CalTrans, Mendocino Council of Governments, Sonoma and Mendocino Counties. These plans were studied to determine if previous planning efforts reflected the current needs which were identified in the December 2000 Transportation Forum which is included in Appendix C³ of this document.

² Appendix B, Tech Memo #1: Summary of Redwood Coast Transportation Plans

³ Appendix C: Summary of December 2000 Transportation Forum

Progress to Date

In March 2002, while waiting for the CalTrans CBTPG approval, Action Network began a short-term planning process to address immediate transportation issues. This process resulted in the formation of the RCCTC. The Coalition's objective was to identify short-term goals and objectives that could be achieved within a short period of time.

Following the implementation of this planning process, Action Network and the RCCTC advocated for the following improvements to be made to the region's public transportation system. First, new transit service was initiated between Fort Bragg and Gualala on Saturdays. Next, transit service was extended to 45 families living at The Sea Ranch Apartments, providing them safe and reliable access to public transportation services.

Meanwhile, during this short-term planning process, the Coalition completed a Community Needs Survey⁴ and conducted a series of nine community forums between Annapolis and Elk⁵. The Community Survey and Public Forums were valuable because they generated a lot of new ideas, a few complaints, and a variety of opinions about what the region's transportation system should look like in the future.

Next, the Coalition closely examined the Redwood Coast's demographics⁶ to provide a means to quantify transportation needs throughout the region. Meanwhile, in addition to transportation planning documents, the Coalition reviewed other planning documents prepared by the various governmental agencies providing services in the region such as land use,⁷ and affordable housing plans⁸. Finally, the Coalition explored the various partnerships⁹ required to assist in the coordination of the transportation resources to meet local needs. Finally, the RCCTC prioritized projects designed to continue seeking funding opportunities that would further the region's priorities and further determine how the region's transportation needs can be met.

In summary, the Coalition became especially concerned about improving specialized transportation programs for the region's senior and disabled residents, and to follow up on strategies that would address intra-regional traffic circulation such as connecting Windy Hollow Road with a bridge over the Garcia River.

⁴ Appendix D: Summary of Community Needs Survey

⁵ Appendix E: Summary of Community Forums

⁶ Appendix F: Tech Memo #2: Summary of the Redwood Coast Area Demographics

⁷ Appendix G: Tech Memo #3: Strategic Partnerships for the Redwood Coastal Area

⁸ Appendix H: Tech Memo #4: A Summary of Redwood Coast Regional Land Use Plans

⁹ Appendix I: Tech Memo #5: Summary of the Redwood Coastal Area Affordable Housing Plans

Documented Community Needs

Community leaders identified three goals for the plan to be focused upon. These goals are to enhance transportation opportunities, increase the coordination of existing resources, and communicate with stakeholders to ensure the plan is community driven. Meanwhile, the Coalition documented and prioritized projects to address local transportation needs. Below is a summary of what community leaders learned from the Community Needs Survey and public forums.

Goal A: Enhance transportation opportunities by assisting local government agencies and community based organizations to capitalize on existing and new funds that will expand transportation choices.

Objective A.1: Promote Safety

- ✓ Plan for the construction of more walking and bicycle paths
- ✓ Improve site visibility along SR-1 and County Roads
- ✓ Work with CalTrans and Counties to develop plans that lead to the installation of more bicycle signs along SR-1 and county roads
- ✓ Raise the grade of SR-1 along the Garcia River floodplain between Old Miner and Windy Hollow Roads
- ✓ Develop plans that lead to the construction of wider shoulders and more passing zones along SR-1
- ✓ Install more call boxes and restrooms along SR-1
- ✓ Plan and construct a east/west route through The Sea Ranch
- ✓ Support the efforts of local school districts and jurisdictions to increase and improve pedestrian access to local schools
- ✓ Work with local jurisdictions to develop and implement driver and bicycle safety education programs
- ✓ Build pedestrian and bicycle lanes on the Gualala River Bridge
- ✓ Collaborate with CalTrans to ensure that future SR-1 improvements result in 30 to 32 foot lane sections
- ✓ Reduce speed of traffic through Gualala

Objective A.2: Improve Traffic Circulation

- ✓ Provide adequate sighting, visibility at the intersection of Iversen Avenue and SR-1 (Main Street)
- ✓ Support CalTrans effort to plan and construct lateral roads along SR-1
- ✓ Increase availability of parking within the Gualala business district
- ✓ Plan and construct pedestrian sidewalks and crosswalks in Gualala
- ✓ Plan and construct a north/south route through Point Arena
- ✓ Develop a plan and construct a bridge that connects Windy Hollow Road at the Garcia River
- ✓ Maintain Seaview, Timber Cove, Fort Ross, and Myers Grade Roads at all times to serve as alternatives during SR-1 closures

Objective A.3: Integrate Land Use, Housing, and Jobs in Transportation Planning

- ✓ Update the Gualala Town Plan to include traffic circulation and provisions for transit service
- ✓ Become active in future development of Sonoma and Mendocino Counties General Plans
- ✓ Develop solutions that lead to the increased availability of affordable housing that's near transit stops, shopping, and local services

Objective A.4: Increase Alternative Transportation Options

- ✓ Create a local carpool or rideshare program
- ✓ Establish park and rides along SR-1
- ✓ Develop a public transportation plan that considers the following services: evenings and weekends, dial-a-ride, a trolley that serves tourists and local special events, local taxi or jitney service, and a local fixed route
- ✓ Increase availability of specialized public transportation for youth, elderly, and disabled residents by increasing the Community Resources Connection and South Coast Senior Center, Inc. services
- ✓ Increase transit connections between Elk and Point Arena

- ✓ Construct 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
- ✓ Establish dialogue with school districts to continue development of safe routes to local public schools

Goal B: Increase coordination of existing resources to address identified local transportation needs to enhance transportation opportunities.

Objective B.1: Coordinate Resources

- ✓ Coordinate with local inns and motels to determine feasibility of participating in funding a trolley, local event, and jitney services
- ✓ Increase funding to Community Resource Connection's transportation program through the use of Medicaid Title 19 funds to better serve the region's low income families, senior citizens, and disabled residents
- ✓ Coordinate existing resources and utilize the South Coast Senior Center's van to increase specialized transportation services
- ✓ Select a lead agency model with a role and responsibility of coordinating the region's transportation resources
- ✓ 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

Goal C: Communicate with stakeholders and continue involving the community in the transportation planning process to ensure that the planning process is community driven.

Object C.1: Educate and Keep the Public Active

- ✓ Publish a schedule at least four times per year to communicate available specialized and public transportation options
- ✓ Educate local residents about the planning process and explain needs to solicit additional assistance from the community
- ✓ Increase marketing of public transportation services
- ✓ Arrange community meetings between both counties to express ideas and identify solutions
- ✓ Establish support network of agency/elected officials

Objective C.2: Maintain Volunteer Morale and Support

- ✓ Seek volunteer input and incorporate their needs into the plan
- ✓ Provide support and appreciation for volunteers by publicly thanking them in the media and newsletters
- ✓ Increase volunteer support through a coordinated recruitment program

Regional Priorities

Success of the CBTP relies upon partnerships of all social service and transportation agencies responsible for funding transportation and social service projects within the Redwood Coast planning area. To ensure success, Action Network will collaborate with CalTrans, the City of Point Arena, the Manchester-Point Arena Band of Pomo Indians, and the counties of Mendocino and Sonoma transportation and social service agencies in the implementation of the Redwood Coast Region's Program of Projects¹⁰.

Improve local transit services

- Develop a transit operations plan to improve transit services between the communities within the Redwood Coast planning area.
- Enhance the South Coast Senior Center and Community Resources Connection special transportation programs by seeking local state and federal funding opportunities.
- Expand the Community Resources Connection non-emergency medical transportation program by partnering with Action Network, Redwood Coast Medical Services, and South Coast Senior Center.

Promote regional solutions

- Complete a local public transportation plan and consult with Sonoma County Transit and Mendocino Transit Authority to include recommended service improvements in each agency's unmet needs processes.
- 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 Minor 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.
- Action Network will initiate discussions concerning the creation of a bi-county special district to assume future responsibility of planning, funding, and implementing transportation solutions.

¹⁰ Appendix J: The Redwood Coast Region's Program of Projects

- Facilitate discussions between the Mendocino County Department of Transportation, the Manchester-Point Arena Band of Pomo Indians, and Bureau of Indian Affairs to transfer the Windy Hollow Road ROW at the Garcia River to the MPA Band of Pomo Indians to position the region to construct a bridge that connects Windy Hollow Road.
- Complete feasibility and preliminary engineering studies to further develop plans to construct a bridge that connects Windy Hollow Road.
- Establish dialogue with local school districts, county governments, and CalTrans to further develop pedestrian and bikeway projects that provide safer access to the coast, local schools, parks, and recreation centers.

Improve public safety

- Complete preliminary engineering to mitigate environmental concerns and to provide a safe pedestrian and bikeway route across the Gualala River Bridge.
- 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, slipouts, flooding, safety considerations, etc are necessary. It is recommended 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.
- Seek funding to complete a preliminary engineering study to upgrade Windy Hollow Road between Riverside Drive and the Garcia River and between SR-1 and the Garcia River.
- Consolidation of the addresses along Riverside Drive, Eureka Hill Rd, Ten Mile Rd, Ten Mile Cutoff Rd, Fish Rock Rd, Iversen Rd, Old Stage Rd, and Old State Highway would improve public safety by improving emergency personnel ability to quickly identify addresses when responding to emergencies. Consolidation of these roads into one road network would establish the precedence for Mendocino County to treat all of these roads as “one road project” versus seven separate road projects. This new route would also lay the groundwork to improve safety standards by establishing one standard for the entire length of the route by standardizing shoulders, curves, and the road surface. This new route would also provide a safe alternate route and reduce traffic on SR-1.

- ❑ Action Network will support coordination of transportation, land use, affordable housing, and location of jobs to achieve community livability goals by facilitating discussions between the various communities, CalTrans, the Counties, and Coastal Commission where SR-1 serves as the main street.
- ❑ Action Network will coordinate with local groups such as the Gualala Municipal Advisory Council to further develop plans for inclusion of affordable housing in plans such as the Gualala Town Plan. These recommendations would be focused on locating affordable housing near transit stops and pedestrian access to shopping and medical services.
- ❑ Provide assistance to agencies (CalTrans, Coastal Commission, Sonoma and Mendocino County's Departments of Transportation, and Mendocino Council of Governments) to discuss limiting access to SR-1 by providing lateral roads. There are numerous access openings on SR-1 that have less than desirable sight distance. Since scattered rural development exists along the route, access management strategies will have the potential to improve safety by reducing traffic conflicts, congestion, and collisions.

Market benefits of a regional system

- ❑ Convene a workshop that educates the benefits of a regionally coordinated transportation system. Seek technical and financial assistance from the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) to bring transit professionals from across the nation to assist in development of a transit operations plan and share insights to solving issues through increased coordination.
- ❑ Educate community decision-makers about the costs, impact, and benefits of improving public transportation services for their constituents. Action Network will implement a continuous public involvement program that brings together local communities and leaders to identify transportation needs within their respective communities.
- ❑ Involve providers of public transportation services (Sonoma County Transit, Mendocino Transit Authority, Community Resources Connection, and South Coast Seniors, Inc.) and their customers in the planning phases to improve transit services within the region.
- ❑ Create a public involvement process that enables Action Network to define its relationship between itself and the jurisdictions within the CBTPG area to continue coordinating the development of transportation resources and services.

- Involve community leaders and public safety agencies to discuss the benefits of public safety by constructing a bridge across the Garcia River to connect Windy Hollow Road.
- Initiate discussions with Sonoma County, CalTrans, and The Sea Ranch Association that will lead to the development and construction of bicycle and pedestrian routes that can serve as alternatives to using SR-1.

Leveraging resources

- Complete a demographic profile to define and provide a statistical verifiable quantification of the transportation need throughout the region. The demographic profile will aid in geographically quantifying transportation need, estimate demand, compare needs and demands to existing service levels, and provide an in-place model to be used to quantify and measure cost benefits of leveraged transportation services.
- Complete development of a plan to establish an entity to act as a regional coordinator to facilitate the coordination of the region's transportation resources. The Plan should establish a regional solution to direct resources to provide reliable public transportation, develop affordable housing, jobs, bicycle and pedestrian safety, improving the safety of SR-1 through the use of lateral roads.
- Implementation of many transportation needs requires a quasi-governmental body that can receive and disburse funds. An excellent way to accomplish this by using a Community Sewer District (CSD). Since creating a CSD can duplicate existing CSD's, be expensive and time-consuming to establish, it is best if an existing organization is used. For example, one idea may be to explore the feasibility of expanding the Gualala Community Sewer District (GCSD) to assist in the implementation of the Gualala Town Plan. While the GCSD is dedicated to providing sewer services to the community of Gualala, and because the Gualala Town Plan area is within its boundaries it may be possible to expand the powers of this entity to facilitate the funding to assist the Gualala Municipal Council advance the Gualala Town Plan.

Policy Development

- On February 24, 2004, the Government Accounting Office (GAO) reported that over 60 federal programs could fund transportation services for certain "transportation disadvantaged populations" that lack the ability to provide their own transportation¹¹. To

¹¹ Appendix K: Tech Memo #6: Summary of Potential Transportation Project Funding Opportunities

promote and encourage further coordination, access to these programs requires development of a local infrastructure to plan, develop policy and procedures, and accounting systems to manage a coordinated transportation system.

Over the past three years Action Network has developed expertise and internal processes and established the capacity to manage grants and regional planning processes. However, as non-profit agency, its ability to access many state and federal resources are limited. Therefore, Action Network will need to continue facilitating a process to further develop the agency's mission by bringing together community leaders, jurisdictions, and all interested parties to discuss the creation of an agency or system to support a regionally coordinated system to ensure successful implementation of the CBTP's goals and objectives. Such policies could include the creation of a special district to provide the region with the necessary entity to coordinate transportation resources.

- Decisions affecting transportation are primarily made by public agencies whose headquarters are outside of the region. These agencies include Sonoma and Mendocino Counties, CalTrans Districts 1 and 4, and the California Coastal Commission. The only local governments existing in the region are the City of Point Arena, and the Kashia and Manchester-Point Arena Bands of Pomo Indians. Action Network, a local non-profit agency, was created with the mandate of identifying all common resources and to develop strategies that use these resources to address local needs within the region.

To fulfill this mission, it will be necessary to begin designing the necessary system to develop regional projects so they may be funded and implemented in a phased and timely manner. Transportation projects are typically long-lead-time efforts involving such issues as feasibility studies, environmental issues, billing and financial controls, communication and dispatching systems, fleet requirements and capital replacement policies, data management information systems, capital equipment purchase programs and training.

Completing projects important to the region's residents will require development of a formally recognized entity or process. Projects important to the region's residents are listed in their respective priorities:¹²

¹² Appendix L: Tech Memo #7: Summary of Potential Organizational Options+ to Coordinate the Region's Resources

Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT)

- Community Resources Connection provides non-emergency medical transportation to residents needing transportation between their home and medical facilities. Existing public transportation services are not designed to provide this service. The RCCTC analysis concluded there is a dedicated contingent of volunteers who are willing to provide local residents transportation. But, their analysis also revealed the problems inherent with maintaining this volunteer pool and the need to expand the availability of NEMT to area. Therefore, the RCCTC has concluded that Action Network should investigate the feasibility of creating an NEMT program that qualifies for cost reimbursement from MediCAL, and create a business and operations plan to request that MediCAL 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.

There are many State of California Administrative Law Regulations that prevents many California residents access to NEMT. There are members of the California Association for Coordinated Transportation (CalACT), Community Association of America (CTAA), and the Mendocino County Public Health Rural Access to Transportation Committee actively pursuing the development of strategies to change many of these administrative rules and regulations. Action Network and the RCCTC can play a vital role by becoming an active participant in this movement to ensure that all Californians living in rural areas may have adequate access to medical services.

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 Indian Bureau Affairs supports any effort to complete a plan that leads to the construction of a bridge across the Garcia River.

Tribal leaders and the Indian 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.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

- The Redwood Coast Region is a popular touring route along SR-1 during the summer and fall dry seasons. A majority 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 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. While it is the right of bicyclists to use the travel lanes, they must ride in a traveled way as far to the right as is practical.

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 give 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.

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 buildout. 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, 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 the speed limit and the slower visitors who tend to meander for sightseeing and/or who feel insecure because of 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 buildout progresses, and as more tourists are attracted to the North Coast region, this corridor needs more opportunities for turnouts to facilitate smoother and safer traffic flow.

Conclusion

Over the recent months, the RCCTC has discussed the emerging opportunities and threats that have resulted through the State's funding crisis. The Coalition determined that the State's budget deficit is redefining every aspect of state and local governments' ability to allocate funding. Since fewer funds are available to fund transportation improvements and services, the RCCTC has recognized that many of these changes may substantially improve the coordination of resources by creating an environment where local governments and community based organizations must increase collaboration in order to do more with less.

Meanwhile, the Coalition has reviewed the new federal transportation authorization bill, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Equitable, Transportation Efficiency Act (SAFETEA). The RCCTC has determined this legislation provides new funding priorities that are compatible with the region's transportation needs. Therefore, community leaders began to examine how this new funding authorization can fund the region's transportation priorities.

Meanwhile, the Coalition discovered that the Government Accounting Office (GAO) identified more than 60 federal programs that can fund public transportation services. The RCCTC has determined it's in the best interest of the region to pursue the development of a specialized transportation system model that can utilize these resources in order to increase specialized public transportation alternatives for the region's low-income, disabled, and senior citizen residents.

Clearly, all State and Federal mandates support coordination of local transportation resources. Therefore, the Coalition is pursuing a strategy to work within the established processes of the various governmental agencies providing transportation services. Meanwhile, the Coalition is seeking a plan that's consistent with all State and Federal funding priorities.

ADDED FROM "MOVING TOWARD ACTION" DOCUMENT

In the past several years the State of California's budget deficit has resulted in fewer funds being available to fund local transit service and transportation projects. In addition, it has redefined many aspects of state and local government's decision-making processes. Throughout this planning process the RCCTC recognized that some of these changes have the potential to substantially improve the coordination of resources already available along with the processes in which funding decisions are

made; therefore, the opportunity for increased local collaboration provides the opportunity to do more with existing resources.

Over the recent months, community leaders have discussed emerging opportunities that have arisen through the State's funding crisis. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Equitable, Transportation Efficiency Act (SAFETEA) offers potentially new funding opportunities for the region. Community leaders have examined and discussed the possibility how this new funding authorization can fund the region's transportation priorities. Meanwhile, the Government Accounting Office (GAO) has identified more than 60 federal programs that can fund public transportation services and community leaders determined have determined that by establishing an entity designed to bring these resources together may be used to increase the region's non-emergency medical transportation for the region's senior and disabled residents.

State and Federal mandates support coordination of local transportation resources. Therefore, this plan is intended to support all of the various government agencies providing transportation services in the region by working within the established planning systems.

Community leaders have increasingly begun to recognize the vital role transportations plays in the region's ability of community based organizations to deliver social services. This Plan provides a blueprint for continued community dialogue to continue planning for a safe and reliable transportation system throughout the region. In the past, Action Network has fulfilled its mission of bringing together the region's community leaders to discuss regional issues. Community leaders recommend that Action Network continue this role to ensure the region has an informed advocate that can successfully continue pursuing funding opportunities to implement this Plan to enhance the region's mobility.

Glossary

BTA – State Bicycle Transportation Account
CalTrans – California Department of Transportation
CBTP – Community Based Transportation Plan
CBTPG – Community Based Transportation Planning Grant
DSMP – District 1 System Management Plan
GMAC – Gualala Municipal Advisory Council
GTP – Gualala Town Plan
HCD – Department of California Housing and Community Development
ITS – Intelligent Transportation System
LTF – Local Transportation Fund
LOS – Level of Service
MCOG – Mendocino Council of Governments
MTA – Mendocino Transit Authority
MTC – Metropolitan Transportation Commission
OTS – Office of Traffic Safety
PCBR – Pacific Coast Bike Route
ROW – Right of Way
RSTP – Regional Surface Transportation Program
RTIP – Regional Transportation Improvement Program
RTPA – Regional Transportation Planning Agency
SCT – Sonoma County Transit
SR-1 – State Route 1
SR2S – Safe Routes to School Program
STIP – Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
TCR – Transportation Concept Report
TDA – Transit Development Act
TDM – Transportation Demand Management
TDP – Transportation Development Plan
TEA – Transportation Enhancement Activities
TSRA – The Sea Ranch Association