Bay [T]rail Advocates • www.baytrailplan.org

May 31, 2013

Re: Support of the City of Arcata TIGER grant application

To Whom It May Concern:

Beginning about 18 months ago, a coalition that grew to include some 400 individuals, a dozen community organizations, and a number of area businesses coalesced in an effort to add new momentum to the creation of a multi-modal trail from Eureka to Arcata, along the perimeter of beautiful Humboldt Bay. Currently, the only option for cyclists and pedestrians is to use the shoulder of a treacherous six-mile stretch of freeway/expressway. The coalition includes members of our local medical community who see the health benefits of a Bay Trail; members of the environmental community who see the Bay Trail as a way of reducing our environmental footprint; businesses that see the potential attraction for visitors; and numerous other individuals who see immense safety benefits and are excited about an opportunity to complete a gap in the California Coastal Trail.

For more than 15 years, Humboldt Bay bike-pedestrian alternatives have been the subject of a number of studies (Humboldt County Bicycle Facilities Planning Project, 1997; Humboldt Bay Trail Feasibility Study, 2001; the California Coastal Trail plan, 2003; Humboldt Bay Trail Feasibility Study: Arcata-Eureka, 2007; Humboldt County Coastal Trail Implementation Strategy, 2011). After considering a wide variety of options, these studies have repeatedly concluded that the best routing of the multipurpose trail uses the land west of U.S. Highway 101. We are ready to cease studying and begin building and using.

The City of Arcata has developed detailed plans for a three-mile multipurpose paved path from Samoa Boulevard in Arcata along the west side of U.S. Highway 101 to the Bracut property. This would connect with a planned, approved, and funded trail that extends north from Samoa Boulevard to an area near Larsen Park in Arcata.

Our coalition, the Bay [T]rail Advocates, enthusiastically supports the City of Arcata plan and proposal to create the trail to Bracut.

We also believe that the completion of the northern portion of the Eureka-Arcata trail will serve as the catalyst for completion of the southern half. The southern effort achieved important momentum last year and that momentum continues to build. In 2012 Bay [T]rail Advocates worked extensively with local governance (the cities of Eureka and Arcata, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, and the Humboldt County Association of Governments) as well as Caltrans, the Coastal Commission, and the North Coast Railroad Authority (NCRA). A critical change came
from the NCRA at its December board meeting. The Board voted (1) to authorize some exceptions to its current trail policy to enable development of a trail within the railroad right-of-way and (2) to prioritize rail infrastructure restoration and trail development between Arcata and Eureka. HCOAG and the County of Humboldt have since commissioned more detailed engineering studies on the Bracut-to-Eureka portion of the trail to be completed by this fall. This analysis will allow the search for funding to begin in earnest. In addition, Caltrans has already pledged $1 million toward the construction of the Eureka-to-Bracut section of trail. (Feb. 6, 2013 Caltrans letter to California Coastal Commission.)

Eureka and Arcata are the two largest communities along the Pacific Coast north of San Francisco. Since Arcata and McKinleyville are already linked with a very popular bike-ped bridge and trail, more than 70 percent of the population of Humboldt County will potentially benefit enormously by the completion of the Arcata-Bracut link in the California Coastal Trail and eventually, the link from Bracut to Eureka.

Rees Hughes

On Behalf of all Bay [T]rail Advocates
Don Banducci
Judy Hodgson
Dr. Rees Hughes
Dennis Rael

- Community Organizations

- Businesses
Los Bagels, Arcata/Eureka, North Coast Journal, Eureka, Kinetic Koffee, The Samoa Pacific Group and Danco, Bayfront Restaurant, Eureka, Greenway Partners, MikkiMoves Real Estate, Fieldbrook Winery, Revolution Bicycle Repair, Makino Studios, Cal Coast Computer, Arcata Scoop, Ramones Bakery and Cafes

- Families/Individuals
Nancy Langyel, John Calkins, Carl Chatfield, Susan Anderson, Nancy Stephenson, Frank Onstine, Jim Maher, Susan Penn, Eli Asarian, Eric Grantz, Joan Grantz, Merritt Perry, Stacy Becker, Gretchen Stadler, Chris DeHart, Richard Engel, Corey Lewis, Michael Proulx, Barry Evans, Louisa Rogers, Emily Sinkhorn, Jay Schock, Judy Webb, Judi Paul, Jan Friedrichsen, Peter Lehman, Amy Uyeki, Rees Hughes, Dr. Lawrence