Humboldt County, California, plans to implement an active transportation system that will make it feasible for residents and visitors of this rural ‘micropolitan’ redwood region to save money and travel more safely and efficiently. Home to segments of the California Coastal Trail, Pacific Coast Bike Route and the 30-year old Kinetic Sculpture Race, this scenic region has a community-minded populace, the political drive and institutional capacity to get more people traveling by less expensive, healthy, environmentally beneficial means. By developing and improving connections between pedestrian, bike and multiple-use trail facilities and establishing education campaigns that shift travel behaviors, the ‘Humboldt People Powered Pathways’ (HP3) coalition will increase use of non-motorized transportation modes by at least 10 percent by 2015.

Local and state government entities are motivated to address high rates of ped- and bike-auto collisions, high levels of chronic disease associated with physical inactivity, some of the highest gas prices in the nation and a desire to provide this historically blue-collar workforce with ‘green’ infrastructure jobs. North coast residents desire safer, reliable, realistic means to propel themselves to goods, services, education, employment and recreation. With increased funding for ‘active’, non-motorized transport from the federal transportation bill reauthorization, proposed HP3 projects and programs will leverage state, local and foundation resources. They will make non-motorized access to daily needs more practical, and make active transport safer for those of all economic means. Humboldt County has both the strong need and high capacity to accomplish these goals.

**Contacts**

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707.825.2200, kdiemer@cityofarcata.org

Jennifer Rice, Natural Resources Services Division Co-Director  
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904 G Street, Eureka, CA 95501  
707.269.2060, jen@nrsrcaa.org

**HP3 Partners**

- County of Humboldt (Lead Agency)
- City of Eureka
- City of Arcata
- Caltrans District 1
- City of Rio Dell
- City of Blue Lake
- City of Fortuna
- City of Ferndale
- Humboldt County Tribal Transportation Commission
- Karuk Tribe
- Hoopa Valley Tribe
- Redwood Community Action Agency

**HP3 Website**

trailstrust.org/hp3

**2010 Campaign for Active Transportation**

rails2trails.org/whatwedo/trailadvocacy/2010Campaign.html
**Active Transportation System Needs**

**Need for Transportation Options** Humboldt County’s footprint is equal to nearly half of the state of Massachusetts. Its 130,000 citizens live among 3,600 square miles of coast, bays, forests, mountains and rivers. Approximately 60% of the population lives in Humboldt Bay cities and communities, the population center of California’s north coast. The seven incorporated cities and numerous unincorporated communities are connected by state highways or rural two-lane roads that lack dedicated non-motorized facilities -- replacing short auto trips with walking and biking is easy to do in small cities and towns. Although segments of a regional active transport system exist, there are currently no multiple-use trails or bike lanes that connect communities.

Humboldt County gas prices are consistently among the very highest in the nation and residents have some of the lowest household income levels in California. County residents’ **median income is two-thirds of the California median for all households** (65.9%) and 19.5% of families are impoverished compared with the state average of 14.2% (RCAA et. al., 2006). Access to less-costly transport options can give struggling families the opportunity to afford healthier food and better housing.

**Cyclist and pedestrian injuries and deaths** in Humboldt County are among the highest in the state for the population size. Pedestrian fatalities are the top cause of death for teens of 13-15 years and one-quarter of pedestrian fatalities are aged 0-24. Highways serve as main streets, and US 101 through Eureka has the highest concentration of pedestrian- and bicycle-auto collisions in northwestern California (ibid.). The **Federal Highways Administration** recently chose US 101 in Eureka for a pilot ‘Pedestrian Road Safety Audit’ and to test a demonstration ‘Pedestrian Safety Action Plan’ process on the county and Eureka.

Humboldt County is home to the **largest number of indigenous Native Americans** as well as the most acreage of Tribal lands of any California County. Many native residents live in their ancestral territory, much of which is remote, often connected only by highways and rivers and commonly devoid of safe non-motorized travel options -- these are, ironically, not friendly places to walk (or bike).

From 2020-2050, the number of people ages 50-79 in Humboldt County will increase by 13%, and the population of people over 80 will increase by 151% (HCAOG, 2008b). An aging population with fewer drivers relies more on non-motorized transport to meet basic needs.

Though the redwood coast is widely regarded as a ‘healthy’ place to live, the majority of Humboldt County residents are physically inactive, rely heavily on motorized transportation and experience a disproportionate number of pedestrian- and bike-auto collisions (HCDHHS, 2008a). See attached Supporting Materials I for photos, II for maps.

**Opportunities to Strengthen Transit with Active Transportation** Humboldt County’s public transit providers have made remarkable efforts to expand service for a rural region; public transit plays an integral role in the region’s active transport systems. For example, this is one of the first and few areas in the country served by Google Transit (redwoodtransit.org). Humboldt State University (HSU) provides a transit pass for students and staff. Due to these and other efforts, transit ridership increased by approximately 100,000 trips in the last two fiscal years. During peak bus commute hours, bike demand consistently exceeds capacity and transit managers are seeking solutions. HP3 proposes to increase cyclists’ transit use by providing bike loan/rent stations at key transit hubs (e.g. bicing.com). Transit stops are in proximity to enough residents that **more inviting active transport facilities will greatly improve transit access**. In Eureka, 88% of the population lives within one-quarter mile of a transit stop – in Hoopa 11% and in Fortuna 28% (HCDHHS, 2008a). All communities can be better served by “safer routes to transit.”

**Mobility Needs of Those Who Do Not Drive** Humboldt County has explored Title VI and Environmental Justice mandates in efforts to better serve the roughly one-third of the population who do not drive – those who are ‘transportation-disadvantaged’ by a system built for cars. As reported in the Humboldt County Transportation Disadvantaged Populations Report (maps available in Supporting Materials II), countywide averages of each transport-disadvantaged population (with high percent by Census Block Group) are as follows:

- Carless households: 9% (high of 38%)
- Seniors: 13% (34%)
- Youth: 20% (39%)
- Low-income households: 20% (91%)
- Physical or mental disability: 19% (41%)
- Minorities: 18% (90%)
Five Planning for Active Transportation & Health reports funded by the Caltrans Environmental Justice program present new planning approaches to address the needs of these populations (RCAA et. al., 2006). Findings from these reports are included in the 2008 Regional Transportation Plan and the 2008 Health Impact Assessment of the County’s General Plan Update alternatives, and were recognized with a state award (see ‘Awards & Recognition’, below). Health Impact Assessment findings indicate that land use and transport decisions that promote density and active modes of travel will decrease transportation costs and therefore benefits those of lesser economic means (HCDHHS, 2008a).

Current Mode Shares In 2000, approximately 10% of residents used non-auto modes for travel (see chart). County residents drove 27 miles/day compared to a state average of 24/day (HCDHHS, 2008a). A survey conducted for the 2008 Humboldt County Regional Pedestrian Plan indicated that more than 70% of respondents walk 1-2 days per week.

Past Accomplishments Despite financial and geographic challenges, Humboldt has laid the foundation for a network of non-motorized transportation infrastructure and programs. A partial list of significant active transport accomplishments include:

Existing Multi-Use Trails
- The Hammond Railroad was converted to a segment of the California Coastal Trail, ongoing since 1979
- City of Arcata has maintained trail systems in community marsh and forest since late 1970s
- Eureka Waterfront and Sequoia Park trails development ongoing since the 1980s

Active Transport Systems
- The City of Arcata, home of HSU, employs cutting edge design and creative solutions to improve and expand its active transport system – traffic calming, extensive bike lane network and sidewalk infill programs, four Safe Routes to School (SR2S) grants, SR2S GIS and toolkit, ‘sharrows’ for bike encouragement, (future) bike boulevards and more
- Some of the first bike racks on regional buses in the nation were installed by Redwood Transit Service in the early 1980s
- Caltrans District 1 is one of the first and only Districts that allows bikes on state freeways and expressways, developed the original guidebook to ‘context sensitive planning’ and has past and active planning efforts for pedestrian access and for bicyclist access in work zone guidance (they already include “watch for bikes” signage)
- Humboldt Bay Area Bike Map published in 2000 (nsrcaa.org/bikemap)
- Pacific Coast Bike Route (PCBR) Plan for Caltrans District 1, award-winning PCBR signage, bike-specific campsites and pamphlet (see Supporting Materials I)
- Local jurisdictions (and one school) have successfully received state Safe Routes to Schools funding for every cycle of the program; SR2S student and/or parent surveys have been conducted in more than 20 schools
- The Willow Creek Community Services District has worked with Caltrans to make State Route (SR) 299 functional for active modes via the Scenic Highway and Downtown Enhancement ‘SHADE’ project

Capacity-Building
- Since the early 1990s, Redwood Community Action Agency (RCAA) and more recently the Humboldt Partnership for Active Living (HumPAL) have brought many of the nation’s ‘active living by design’ experts to provide training and consulting expertise, including: Michael Corbett, Dan Burden, David Engwicht, Dr. Dick Jackson, Charlie Gandy, Victoria Transport Policy Institute, Transportation & Land Use Coalition, Local Government Commission, Alta Planning + Design, and others
- HumPAL (humpal.org) promotes ‘cross-pollination’ of planning, engineering, public health, school and advocacy organizations to pursue ‘active living by design, not privilege’; has hosted numerous walkability audits and school site assessments; a 2006 SR2S Forum, May 2008 SR2S Summit and an SR2S Toolkit; numerous trainings and workshops
- A first-of-its-kind Health Impact Assessment of County General Plan Update alternatives was completed in 2008 by Humboldt County DHHS, Human Impact Partners, and HumPAL (HCDHHS, 2008a)
- A number of pedestrian and bicycle safety design trainings and webinars have been hosted by Caltrans and local governments
- HumPAL hosted a two-day ‘Policy Charrette’ in 2007 where health, planning, engineering and advocacy representatives received training and drafted healthy transportation and land use policy submitted to General Plan and Regional Transportation Plan update efforts
Recent Awards & Recognition In June 2008, Caltrans awarded two State Excellence in Transportation honors to local partner organizations and agencies that filled a gap in the Hammond Coastal Trail and to District 1 and RCAA for a Pacific Coast Bike Route demonstration project (dot.ca.gov/awards). Caltrans District 1 was also awarded a Pedestrian Audit for US 101 in Eureka by the Federal Highway Administration. In May 2008, the City of Arcata received a Bicycle Friendly Community 2008-2012 ‘Bronze’ award from the League of American Bicyclists. Green Wheels awarded the County Public Works Director with the ‘Govie Award’ in April of 2008. In fall of 2007, the California Chapter of American Planning Association presented RCAA and team with an Advocacy Planning Award for the ‘Planning for Active Transportation & Health’ (PATH) effort (nrsrcaa.org/path) funded by the Caltrans Environmental Justice Program.

Data Collection A summary of baseline data from which to measure change.

- Summer 2008 data indicates bike use of the Hammond Coastal Trail doubled in ten years since a 1998 study (RCAA, 1999), from 8.3 to 16.9 cyclists per hour.
- The General Plan Health Impact Assessment (humpal.org/hia) established baseline indicators from which to measure the influence of transport facilities and land use on physical activity (HCDHHS, 2008a).
- In 2006, Humboldt County ranked the sixth highest by vehicle miles traveled of 58 counties for pedestrian-auto collisions and the City of Eureka ranked third highest in its size category (HCAOG, 2008b). From 1992-2001, bicycle injuries in Humboldt were significantly higher than the state average, particularly in Eureka (RCAA, 2006).
- Baseline school Body Mass Index (BMI) data has been collected by DHHS to track overweight trends in area schools targeted in 2006 by HumPAL for SR2S efforts (see table of the first schools surveyed).
- A 2007-08 survey of nearly 10% of Arcata residents rated trails and non-motorized connectivity between destinations as the top priority for potential sales tax revenue investment. Nearly 90% of respondents listed improving bike and ped safety as important or highly important -- 81% said they could afford a one-half cent City sales tax increase. The top transport improvement priority was safer walking paths to schools.
- Caltrans District 1 was awarded a grant from their Office of State Research & Planning to establish a cost effective, replicable system for regularly collecting and sharing data about non-motorized use of state highways.

Existing Active Transportation Master Plans

- Humboldt County Association of Governments’ (HCAOG) 2008 Pedestrian Plan & 2004 Bicycle Transport Plan
- HCAOG 2008 Regional Transportation Plan (hcaog.net)
- Arcata Ped & Bike Master Plan, 2003 and Parks & Open Space Plan (updates in 2008, (cityofarcata.org)
- Current Local Option Sales Tax Study, 2008 (1/6 proposed to non-motorized uses, hcaog.net)
- Humboldt Bay Trail Feasibility Study: Arcata to Eureka Segment, 2007 (hcaog.net)
- Hammond Coastal Trail South Implementation Strategy, 2005 (nrsrcaa.org)
- Eureka Waterfront Trail & Promenade Recommendations, 2005 (eurekaweb.com/cityhall/trails)
- Traffic Calming and Safety Enhancement in the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation: A Conceptual Plan for “Downtown” Hoopa, 2005
- Manila Transportation Plan – Phase I, 2003 and Phase II, 2005
- Annie & Mary Rail-Trail Feasibility Study, 2003 (including Draft Rail-Trail Planning Guidelines; planning map enclosed in Supporting Materials II)
- Caltrans District 1 Pacific Coast Bike Route Study, 2003
- Completing the California Coastal Trail, State Coastal Conservancy 2003
- Willow Creek Community Action Plan, 2003
- Redwood Pathways Strategy (Avenue of the Giants trail system), 2003
- Humboldt Bay Trails Feasibility Study, 2001 (nrsrcaa.org/baytrails)
- Hammond Coastal Trail Extension Analysis: Trinidad to Fortuna, 2001
- Blue Lake Trail Loop Design Recommendations, 1999
- Humboldt County Bicycle Facilities Planning Project, 1997

Current:

- Caltrans District 1 Bicycle and Pedestrian Needs Assessment;
- Caltrans District 1 non-motorized feasibility studies on SR 255 corridor and US 101 in Eureka;
- HCAOG’s Regional Trail Master Plan; and
- RCAA’s Humboldt County California Coastal Trail Implementation Strategy. 

Results of HumPAL 2006 student travel survey that was paired with DHHS body mass index testing.
Systems & Programs Local jurisdictions, Tribes, the HCAOG, Caltrans District 1 and community organizations all have plans for improving active transport infrastructure -- increasingly, these plans also call for programmatic efforts that influence public travel behavior. For $50 million in federal transportation funds, Humboldt County will implement a diversity of projects that improve active transport options within and between communities, as well as programs that promote safe active travel for all segments of the population. A HP3 Coordinator based with County Public Works will administer the project and facilitate planning and decisionmaking among HP3 partners.

HP3 maps (Supporting Materials II) depict existing and proposed bike and multi-use trail facilities in most communities. Proposed projects have several primary criteria: 1) system connectivity to key trip generators like goods, services, employment, schools, and recreation in a variety of county communities; 2) reduction in or prevention of ped- and bike-auto collisions; 3) equal access to opportunities via non-automobile means for people of all incomes and neighborhoods; 4) efficiency of design (e.g. in existing transportation corridors and leveraging a variety of funders); and 5) documented community priorities. Pedestrian and transit facilities are not shown for readability, however a map of priority ped improvement corridors in Eureka – where the vast majority of ped collisions occur – is enclosed from the 2008 Regional Pedestrian Plan.

A summary of cost estimates (Supporting Materials V) are organized into categories of priority ‘pedestrian’, ‘bicycle’, ‘multi-use trail’ and ‘outreach and education programs’. While the local jurisdictions, Tribes and Caltrans submitted a list of over $400 million in projects and programs, $50 million in priorities were identified based on the five criteria listed above. Approximately half of the proposed funds are tentatively allocated to regional multi-use trail systems, just less than a quarter each to pedestrian and bicycle systems, and approximately four percent to countywide outreach and education programs not associated with individual projects.

Environmental & Climate Change Support letters from major regional environmental organizations are listed in Supporting Materials IV. They understand that transportation and land use efficiencies are an enormous gain to their cause. The County and the City of Arcata signed on to a world-wide group of local governments for sustainability, ICLEI.

Potential As A Model As noted, for a rural region, Humboldt County has been able to make perhaps more progress than other isolated regions due to political support, functional partnerships, creativity and success at seeking a diversity of funding sources. The HP3 effort and track record can serve as a model to other rural regions with a ‘can-do’ attitude about active transportation. Unique aspects of work in Humboldt County address health impact assessment, transportation equity, active living by design (not privilege), and ensuring project design fits the rural context.

Existing Active Transport Culture Recent research indicates active transport ‘culture’ is a very important determinant of active lifestyles in a community (Handy, 2007). Active transport is an important community and political priority for Humboldt County residents.

- Outdoor Magazine and Utne Reader ranked the Arcata-Eureka in the top ten places to live in the U.S.
- Humboldt Bay Bicycle Commuters’ Association (HBCCA) has been promoting bike commuting since 1981
- 14 years of spring Bike to Work and more recently ‘Bike Month’
- HBCCA’s “Bike Smart” summer program (humbike.org/safety.htm)
- The Trails Trust of Humboldt Bay (trailstrust.org) pursues development of a multi-use trail network with a membership that recently doubled and $13,000 in donations and grants to help produce the HP3 case-statement
- The Friends of the Annie & Mary Rail-Trail is working to pursue rail-trail development between the Cities of Arcata and Blue Lake
- Green Wheels is a community organization dedicated to sustainable multi-modal transport options (green-wheels.org)
- Car Free Day events organized by Green Wheels and Humboldt State U. since 2003
- HSU’s Bicycle Learning Center has been teaching bike repair skills since the late 1980s
- Arcata’s Bike Library (bikelibrary.org) has been providing bike loans to residents since 1997
- Weekly ‘Happy Trails’ radio show (live and podcast at khum.com) and ‘Anti-Traffic Report’ (green-wheels.org/anti-traffic-report)
- The Avenue Trails Committee actively promotes multi-use trails on the world-famous Avenue of the Giants

For References, see Supporting Materials VI.
I. Images & Current News
- HP3 Challenges
- HP3 Successes
- News Article: Pump Shock: Commuters

II. HP3 & Supporting Maps
- HP3 Proposed & Existing Active Transportation Facilities Map Overview
- HP3 Map 1: McKinleyville & Trinidad
- HP3 Map 2: Arcata & Blue Lake
- HP3 Map 3: Eureka
- HP3 Map 4: Fortuna, Rio Dell & Ferndale
- HP3 Map 5: Garberville, Redway & Avenue of the Giants
- HP3 Map 6: Hoopa Valley & Orleans
- Humboldt Pedestrian Plan Map of Eureka Ped Improvement Corridors
- PATH Transportation-Disadvantaged Populations: Carless Households Map
- PATH Transportation-Disadvantaged Populations: Bay Access to Transit Map
- PATH Transportation-Disadvantaged Populations: County Access to Transit Map
- PATH Transportation-Disadvantaged Populations: Eureka Low Income Neighborhoods with Ped- & Bike-Auto Collision Locations
- Humboldt Bay Trail, Eureka-Arcata: Planning Segment Map
- Proposed Annie & Mary Rail-Trail Planning Map
- Caltrans District 1 Bicycling Guide

III. HP3 Partner Resolutions
- County of Humboldt
- City of Eureka
- City of Arcata
- Caltrans District 1
- City of Rio Dell
- City of Blue Lake
- Karuk Tribe
- Hoopa Tribe
- Redwood Community Action Agency

IV. Letters of Support
- 1st District Assemblywoman Patty Berg
- 2nd District California Senator Patricia Wiggins
- California Department of Transportation, District 1
- State Coastal Conservancy
- Humboldt County Tribal Transportation Commission
- Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services
- Headwaters Fund, Humboldt County Community Devt. Services
- Redwood Region Economic Development Commission
- Humboldt Bay Bicycle Commuters Association
- Humboldt County Healthy Start, School & Community Partnership
- Northcoast Environmental Center
- Green Wheels
- California Native Plant Society
- Blue Lake Rancheria
- Humboldt Transit Authority
- Keep Eureka Beautiful
- Trails Trust of Humboldt Bay

V. Cost Estimates
- List by jurisdiction and type of project

VI. References
### V. Cost Estimates

for high priority projects & programs

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**Humboldt People Powered Pathways**

**V. Cost Estimates**

for high priority projects & programs

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<td>Leave Your Car At Home Map</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>$42,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike 'kitchens' in six area high schools</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>$252,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Trail Patrol</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>$52,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport &amp; Land Use curricula: fit 6-12th grade standards</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before and after ped/bike counts on new facilities</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>$157,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL COST ESTIMATE**

$50,000,000

* 'Enhanced' Class III refers to roadways that can be improved for bicycle travel beyond mere signage, but not quite to full bike lane standards.
VI. References


HCDHHS/Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services, Public Health Branch. 2008b. Humboldt County Action Plan For Healthy Communities and Active Living. Eureka, CA.


NCJ/North Coast Journal. 2007b. All The Pieces: The candidates for Humboldt County Supervisor on jobs, land use, law enforcement and trails. Last retrieved from www.northcoastjournal.com/issues/2008/05/22/all-pieces.

RCAA/Natural Resources Services Division of Redwood Community Action Agency. 1999. Humboldt Bay Bicycle Use Study. Eureka, CA.