

CHAPTER 3

COMMUNITY INPUT

The community is the largest active transportation stakeholder. As a result, the community’s input was sought in order to construct a well-rounded Regional Trails Master plan. This input is presented in a separate chapter, to highlight the community’s active transportation system vision and priorities.

COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

A series of community workshops were held to solicit input for the 2010 Humboldt County Regional Trails Master Plan. The workshops were held at the Wharfinger Building in Eureka, the Monday Club in Fortuna and Azalea Hall in McKinleyville prior to the draft plan release.



The community workshop format consisted of two presentations and two participant exercises. The first presentation provided an overview of the plan purpose, content and methods used to collect plan data. The second presentation reviewed the concept of a Humboldt County active transportation system, and trail classification and development guidelines. For the workshop exercises, participants were asked to provide an active transportation system or trail vision and participate in a trail development fund prioritization exercise. The workshop closed with small group discussions, a show of hands survey, and a description of next steps in the planning process.

Public Service Announcements (PSA) were distributed to local print and radio media, community based organizations and advocacy groups, stakeholders, and agency staff. The PSAs identified workshop locations, dates and times, and contact information. Community members that could not attend the meetings, but wished to provide Regional Trails Master Plan input, were able to submit written comments (see Appendix A) via email or the regular mail service.



The following workshop goals guided community workshop format development:

- To provide an understanding of the 2010 Humboldt County Regional Trails Master Plan content;
- To clarify the criteria being used to delineate and classify Humboldt County trails;
- To develop an active transportation system community vision; and
- To understand how the community would prioritize trail development funds.



It is important to note that the information in this chapter represents the views of the Humboldt County residents that submitted written comments and attended the community workshops and not necessarily the views of all Humboldt County residents. It can be assumed that the workshop attendees comprise residents with a great interest in the development of an active transportation system. Although the input received is not representative of the overall population, it does provide valuable insights and is worth considering with respect to trail development funding priorities at both a regional and local level.

Visualization Exercise

For the visualization exercise, participants were asked to provide an active transportation system or trails vision that focused on: 1) the areas of the community connected by active transportation facilities, 2) the desired types of facilities to include in the active transportation system and 3) the systems users. Workshop participants were given a few minutes to develop a vision and then asked to write their vision on one to three, five by three inch sticky notes, and to post the notes at a designated location.

The sticky notes were grouped into categories in order to provide a visualization summary as part of the workshop. It is interesting to note that the majority of the visualization comments from all three workshops pertained to multipurpose trail connectivity between communities.

The following is a summary of the community's Humboldt County active transportation system vision. Appendix A contains a complete list of the comments received at the community workshops.



Active Transportation System Vision

The active transportation system is envisioned as a complete and seamless network of trails throughout and between all Humboldt County communities. The trails would be a combination of contextually appropriate facilities that are well maintained thus providing incentives to utilize non-motorized transportation. Multipurpose trails and Class I bike paths would provide regional connectivity between communities as far north as Trinidad and as far south as Rio Dell. The multipurpose trails and bike paths would be separated from the road network, providing safe and convenient access for a variety of people (e.g., old, young, urban, and rural) and users (e.g. walkers, bicyclists, runners, equestrians). Trail connections would also be established within communities and to adjoining recreational facilities and destinations.

Well established local trail networks between neighborhoods and community centers would provide community connectivity. The local trail connections within communities would be a combination of footpaths, bicycle facilities, and multipurpose trails. Community trails would link open space corridors and provide safe access to transit stops.

To support users, thus making trails inviting, support facilities would include covered bike parking, bathrooms with changing tables, night lighting, picnic tables and benches, exercise stations, and directional or way finding signs indicating “best routes”. Where appropriate and applicable, it was envisioned that trails could be located adjacent to shops, lodging and restaurants.

Prioritization Exercise

For the workshop prioritization exercise, participants were asked to indicate their trail preference financially using Humboldt Trails Bucks. The prioritization exercise included the use of Humboldt Trails Bucks in order to obtain quantitative data and provide workshop participants with something tangible to express their trails preference. A comprehensive understanding of the community’s desires for an active transportation system is achieved by juxtaposing the qualitative vision and quantitative prioritization data.

The prioritization exercise began with an explanation of the exercise, an overview of what the Humboldt Trails Bucks represented, and instructions about completing the exercise. The Humboldt Trails Bucks were distributed to and spent by participants at two prioritization stations. Participants were informed that 1) the Humboldt Trails Bucks represented funds specifically allocated for trail development, operations and maintenance and not monies allocated for other forms of transportation (e.g., roads and highways), and 2) that Humboldt Trails Bucks distributed at prioritization two should not be spent at prioritization one.



At the first prioritization station participants were given \$400 Humboldt Trails Bucks each and asked to distribute the funds between local (i.e., trails within communities) and regional trails (i.e., trails between communities). At the second prioritization station participants were given \$800 Humboldt Trails Bucks each and asked to distribute the funds between Class I bike paths, Class II bike lanes, Class III bike routes, and multipurpose trails.



Of the \$28,400 Humboldt Trails Bucks distributed at the three community workshops, workshop participants indicated a priority for regional and multipurpose trails. A total of \$19,600 or 69 percent of the funds distributed were spent on regional trail development, as opposed to \$8,800 on local trail development. The results of the regional versus local trail development exercise coincide with the visualization comments received (i.e., the majority of the visualization comments pertained to developing trails that connect communities, as opposed to developing trail connections within communities).

A total of \$62,400 was spent on Class I, Class II, Class III and multipurpose trail development at all three workshops; \$40,200 or 64 percent of the funds distributed were spent on multipurpose trail development, \$13,700 or 22 percent was spent on Class I bike path development, \$5,400 or nine percent was spent on Class II bike lane development, and \$3,100 or five percent was spent on Class III bike route development. The results indicate that although participants believe all four facility types are a necessary component of an active transportation system, they would prefer the majority of trail development and maintenance dollars be spent on multipurpose and Class I facilities. As to be expected, the multipurpose and Class I facility prioritization preferences coincide with the visualization comments received.

Participants desire a network of safe, multipurpose and Class I facilities connecting communities, which translates into a network of trails separated from the road network. Table one on the next page provides details on the total amount and breakdown of Humboldt Trail Bucks spent at each workshop.



Table 1: Prioritization Exercise Results

	EUREKA		FORTUNA		MCKINLEYVILLE		TOTAL	
Geographic Prioritization Station								
Total Trail Bucks	\$ 10,000.00	100%	\$ 9,200.00	100 %	\$ 9,200.00	100 %	\$28,400.00	100%
Regional Trails	\$ 6,400.00	64.0 %	\$ 6,100.00	66.3 %	\$ 7,100.0	77.2 %	\$19,600.00	69.0%
Local Trails	\$ 3,600.00	36.0 %	\$ 3,100.00	33.7 %	\$ 2,100.0	22.8 %	\$8,800.00	31.0%
Trail Type Prioritization Station								
Total Trail Bucks	\$ 24,800.00	100%	\$ 19,200.00	100 %	\$ 18,400.00	100 %	\$62,400.00	100%
Class I (Bike Path)	\$ 8,700.00	35.1 %	\$ 2,500.00	13.0 %	\$ 2,500.00	13.6 %	\$13,700.00	22%
Class II (Bike Lane)	\$ 2,500.00	10.1 %	\$ 1,300.00	6.8 %	\$ 1,600.00	8.7 %	\$5,400.00	9%
Class III (Bike Route)	\$ 1,500.00	6.0 %	\$ 600.00	3.1 %	\$ 1,000.00	5.4 %	\$3,100.00	5%
Multipurpose	\$ 12,100.00	48.8 %	\$ 14,800.00	77.1 %	\$ 13,300.00	72.3 %	\$40,200.00	64%

SOUTHERN HUMBOLDT COUNTY FOCUS GROUP

In addition to the workshops described in the prior section, a Southern Humboldt County focus group was assembled in Garberville to gather Regional Trails Master Plan input. Southern Humboldt County is a geographically-isolated region that contains numerous rural communities separated by narrow two-lane county roads and/or State highways. The focus group allowed for facilitated dialog surrounding active transportation facility connectivity within and between Southern Humboldt communities. Members of the Southern Humboldt Working Together and Southern Humboldt Community Park assisted with finding a meeting location and recruiting focus group participants.

The focus group included two presentations and two exercises. The first presentation provided an overview of the plan purpose and content and the second presentation reviewed trail classification and development guidelines. For the workshop exercises, participants were asked to provide a trail vision and participate in identifying priority trail connections within and between Southern Humboldt communities.

Visualization Exercise

The visualization exercise followed the same format as in the community workshops visualization exercise discussed above. Participants were asked to provide an active transportation system or trails vision that focused on: 1) the areas of the community connected by active transportation facilities, 2) the desired types of facilities to include in the active transportation system and 3) the systems users. Workshop participants were given a few minutes to develop a vision and then asked to write their vision on one to three, five by three inch sticky notes, and to post the notes at a designated location.

The majority of the focus group visualization comments pertained to trail connectivity between communities, which coincides with the visualization comments from the community workshops. Below is a summary of the trails or active transportation system vision. Appendix A contains a complete list of focus group and community workshop visualization comments.

Active Transportation System Vision

The focus group envisions a safe and interconnected Southern Humboldt active transportation system. A combination of appealing, accessible and contextually appropriate off-road trails and on-street bike facilities would allow people of all ages, abilities, and financial means safe travel between communities. Multipurpose and developed/improved trails would provide access from Garberville to recreational opportunities at the Southern Humboldt Community Park, South Fork of the Eel River and Benbow. Class I bike paths, Class II bike lanes and Class III bike routes would either separate or designate bicycle travel along county roads and highways providing regional connectivity between communities (e.g., Avenue of the Giants communities, Redway, Garberville, and Benbow). Trail connections would also be established within communities, such as lower Redway (near the Eel River) to upper Redway. Southern Humboldt County residents desire a safe and accessible active transportation system that enables them to live actively and economically.

Trail Identification and Prioritization Exercise

For the trail identification and prioritization exercise, participants were given a worksheet and asked to describe trail connections needed between and within communities. The participants were then given four aerial maps to visually illustrate priority trail routes. The maps covered four southern Humboldt geographic areas: 1) Avenue of the Giants, 2) Redway to Garberville, 3) Garberville to the Southern Humboldt Community Park, and 4) Southern Humboldt Community Park to Benbow Lake State Recreation Area. The aerial maps identified streets, communities, parks and County of Humboldt proposed bikeway projects. Participants were asked to work in small groups and illustrate on the maps priority trail alignments and types (i.e., Class I bike path,



Class II bike lane, Class III bike route, multipurpose trail and developed/ improved trail). The participants identified four priority areas for trail development: 1) the southern terminus of Avenue of the Giants / SR 254 to Redway Rive exit, 2) from Garberville to Redway, 2) from Garberville to the Southern Humboldt Community Park, and 4) improved facilities in the Benbow Lake State Recreation Area.

At the Avenue of the Giants/SR 254 southern terminus, participants identified the need for a Class I bike path or multipurpose trail separated from US Highway 101 connecting to the Redwood Drive / US Highway 101 exit to Redway.

For the Redway to Garberville area, participants identified the need for a Class I bike path or Class II bike lanes to connect Redway and Garberville along Redwood Drive. Additionally, a Class I bike path that routes above the bluffs to the US Highway 101 right-of-way was identified to be an alternative to Redwood Drive.

For the Garberville to the Southern Humboldt Community Park area, participants identified several alignments along Sprowel Creek Road and Camp Kimtu Road. The trail types described for these multiple alignments were mostly shared-use, natural-surfaced trails.

For the Southern Humboldt Community Park to Benbow Lake State Recreation Area area, participants identified the need to improve the existing footpath to developed/improved standards. Currently the existing path only accommodates hikers, yet residents desire to bike and possibly ride horses on this trail.

It should also be noted that participants generally agreed that a Class III bike route along the Avenue/SR 254 is sufficient. However, they believed that certain high traffic and narrow shoulders sections should be considered for Class I bike paths and/or Class II bike lanes to increase bicycle user safety.

The trail identification exercise emphasized that participants desire a continuous network of off-street and on-street trail system facilities for the four priority areas mentioned above.

COMMUNITY PROVIDED TRAIL CANDIDATES

Trail candidate projects were identified by workshop and focus group participants through the visualization exercise and small group table discussions. The trail candidate projects are facilities participants would like to see constructed in the near future. The below table contains the list of community identified trail candidate projects organized by jurisdiction.

Table 2: Community Provided Trail Candidates

City of Eureka
Develop Class II bike lanes on H and I Streets
Construct footpaths at Myrtle, west and north of the County Office of Education
Develop foot and bike paths all thru town
Develop trails connecting gulches and greenways
Develop a multi-use trail connecting Eureka Waterfront with Henderson Center
Provide access for Worthington School to Myrtle off Harris
Develop more signage and space for bicyclists on Walnut, Ridgewood and Elk River Road
City of Ferndale
Develop a sidewalk or trail that continues along Bluff Street to Rose Avenue
City of Fortuna
Develop a pedestrian friendly trail from Downtown to South Fortuna Boulevard
City of Trinidad
Beach access trails
Developed/improved trails connecting neighborhoods
Trail from Indian Beach up Parker Creek to Scenic Drive
County of Humboldt
Complete the Mid-Town Trail through Mill Creek Falls (McKinleyville)
Multi-use trail from Alton to Swains Flat
Develop a bicycle and hiking path from Honeydew to Petrolia
Develop a multi-use trail from McKinleyville to Fieldbrook (Murray Road to Fieldbrook Road)
Mountain biking trail in the Southern Humboldt Community Park
Develop/Improved trails connecting southern Humboldt communities - similar to trails in Salmon Creek
Trail along the South Fork of the Eel River
Class I, II, III facilities on residential roadways in Garberville, Redway, Phillipsville, and Miranda
Developed/Improved trail from lower Redway -Eel River to Upper Redway

Trails connecting topographically adjacent communities that are not connected by roadways (e.g., Salmon Creek and Briceland)
Multipurpose trail from Garberville to the Southern Humboldt Community Park and eventually connecting Kimtu and Benbow
Class II bike lanes along Shelter Cove Road
Trail on old Railroad grade in Westhaven
Developed/Improved trail separate, but adjacent to Westhaven Drive
Remove bridge at Luffenholtz and build a bike/hike/horse bridge that isn't a barrier to salmon and trout
Multipurpose trail from Garberville to the Southern Humboldt Community Park and eventually connecting Kimtu and Benbow
Developed/Improved trails connecting McKinleyville neighborhoods to key destinations
Multiple Jurisdictions
Develop a Class I bike path between the cities of Eureka and Arcata, preferably railbanked on the railroad right-of-way
Develop trails separated from roads that connect Eureka, the College of the Redwoods, Fortuna, and Rio Dell, preferably utilizing the railroad right-of-way and with equestrian access
Develop a multi-use trail system that compliments the railroad (proposed excursion train around Humboldt Bay) between Scotia and Humboldt Bay
Develop Class I bike paths connecting the cities of Arcata, Blue Lake, Eureka, Trinidad and the community of McKinleyville
Develop a multi-use trail connecting Arcata and Manila, using the small existing road between Humboldt Bay and Route 255, then constructing part of it on the levee/railroad right-of-way surrounding the bay
Develop a Class I bike path on the Annie and Mary corridor, between the cities of Blue Lake and Arcata
Route the Annie and Mary Rail-Trail through Fieldbrook to connect to the Hammond Trail
Make improvements to North Bank Road to allow safe bicycle and pedestrian access
Develop a trail, separated from US 101, between Central Avenue/North Bank Road to Valley West
Extend the Hammond Trail north to Trinidad (Patricks Point)
Extend the coastal trail across Little River and up Scenic Drive, to Stagecoach Road and Patricks Point Drive
Construct a trail and bridge over Little River (from Crannel to South Scenic Drive)
Develop a multi-use trail that connects Westhaven (on east side of freeway) to the CA Coastal Trail and beaches
Develop a multi-use trail parallel to / within the Westhaven Drive right-of-way
Pursue cooperative agreements with Green Diamond and Humboldt Redwood Company for recreation access to fishing and swimming locations
Develop a regional bike route from Orick to Piercy

Formalize the trail connecting Highland to Golf Course Road
Develop a trail from Humboldt Hill to Elk River
More accessible trails that link Eureka to outlying communities of Freshwater, Elk River, Humboldt Hill, and Cutten
Construct a Class I bike path along Highway 36, with safe crossings at towns
Develop a Class I bike path along the railroad right-of-way from Alton to Carlotta
Develop a Class I bike path or multipurpose trail along the Eel River levee from Riverwalk area to Alton
Develop a multi-use trail from Rio Dell to Alton
Improve and open old logging roads, such as along Highway 36
Connect Ferndale and Fortuna, via trail from Fernbridge south along the river to the Riverlodge
Develop connections to Ferndale that does not involve riding across Fernbridge
Develop a seasonal bridge for bicycles/pedestrians across the Eel River
Develop multi-use trails, with equestrian access, that link Fortuna and the Headwaters Forest
Develop equestrian trails with large parking areas for trailers and other amenities
Develop an equestrian trail from Fortuna to Eureka
Develop a multi-use trail linking Table Bluff to Tompkins Hill, possibly following railroad right-of-way (except for tunnel)
Develop a trail along Avenue of the Giants
Continue the Lost Coast trail in the King Range north, with equestrian access
Develop a multi-use trail along Avenue of the Giants that connects to Humboldt Redwood State Parks on Honeydew Road to Albee and Cuneo creek
Develop a multi-use trail on the west side of SR 255, between Peninsula Road and Lupin Avenue to the north
Trail between Trinidad and Westhaven, either on old railroad grade, scenic drive, or Westhaven road
Trail connecting McKinleyville to Fieldbrook
Trail connecting Trinidad to Redwood National Park
Trail connecting Trinidad to Big Lagoon either on Stage Coach Road, Paricks Point Drive, or US Highway 101
Connect Arcata to McKinleyville from New Mad River Bridge to west side frontage to cantilver on North Bank Road exit overpass to Turner and then Central Road
Pedestrian/bike/horse cross-over between Trinidad and Westhaven
Class II Bike Lane on State Route 299
Cantilever crossing on Little River Bridge

CONCLUSION

Through a show of hands survey, the majority of workshop participants expressed an interest in doing volunteer work to assist with the development or maintenance of trails, and a willingness to financially support active transportation system development. Although it can be argued that participants are trail and bicycle enthusiasts, it can also be argued that additional research should be conducted to discern if there is enough community support to pursue alternative revenue streams for the construction and maintenance of the active transportation system.

Both the qualitative and quantitative comments indicate a community preference towards regional multipurpose trails that connect Humboldt County communities. Multipurpose trails are preferred because they accommodate a wide variety of users and are separated from the road network, which provides a measure of safety. However, both workshop and focus group participants also expressed the desire for local connectivity, or connectivity within communities, through a variety of facility types. The overarching community message was the desire and overwhelming support for the development of an active transportation system for recreational, commuting and health purposes.

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