

### 3. COMMUTER TRAILS ELEMENT

Trails are made in a variety shapes, textures, and places. There are a variety of trails which accommodates a variety of uses, as depicted by terms such as hiking trail, walking trail, mountain bike trail, multi-use trail, cross-country ski trail, rail trail, etc. The Trails Element describes Humboldt’s existing, planned, and desired regional trails network in the context of a regional transportation system. For the purposes of the Regional Transportation Plan, we focus on trails used for transportation, meaning trails used to travel from one destination to another. We do not cover recreational trails if they are not used for transportation.<sup>1</sup> In the Commuter Trails Element we are focusing on regional trails, meaning those that link destinations not just within but between communities. Note that the “Complete Streets Element” covers sidewalks, bike lanes (Class II), and bike routes (Class III).

Other plans and studies have detailed information on local trails and regional trail networks. We rely on those plans for details on the histories, existing conditions, and proposed designs of the region’s trails. The Commuter Trails Element relies specifically on three adopted HCAOG plans:

- *Humboldt County Regional Trails Master Plan* (HCAOG, 2010)
- *Humboldt County Regional Pedestrian Plan* (HCAOG, 2008)
- *Humboldt Regional Bicycle Plan* (HCAOG, 2017 pending)

These adopted HCAOG plans are incorporated, by reference, into VROOM. Thus, their adopted policies and projects that pertain to regional trails, for transportation, are incorporated into this Element.

Other important planning documents to refer to for existing conditions, supporting policies, priority projects, and implementation actions include (but are not limited to):

- *Humboldt Bay Trail Feasibility Study* (California Coastal Conservancy, 2001)
- *Humboldt Bay Trail Feasibility Study: Eureka to Arcata* (HCAOG, 2007)
- *Humboldt County Coastal Trail Implementation Strategy* (California Coastal Conservancy, 2011)
- “*State of the Trails*” Report: *Expanding Regional and Local Trails in Humboldt County* (County of Humboldt, June 2016)

#### EXISTING REGIONAL TRAILS

This section describes existing and planned regional, multi-use trails in Humboldt County. For the transportation system, regionally significant trails are those that serve as travel corridors, connecting communities and major destinations in the region (as opposed to being solely

As a major element in California’s outdoor recreation industry, trails help generate \$85 billion in consumer spending and \$27 billion in wages and salaries every year.  
— *California State Bike & Ped Plan, 2017*

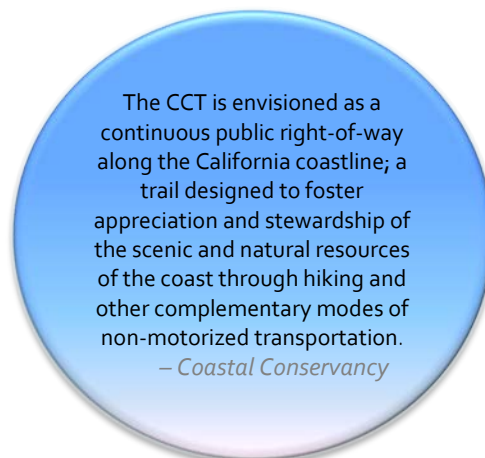
<sup>1</sup> For information on recreational trails in Humboldt County, see the referenced plans, particularly the *Humboldt County Regional Trails Master Plan* (HCAOG, 2010).

recreational trails). Proposed trails projects, including extensions to existing trails, are described in the next section, Action Plan.

## CALIFORNIA COASTAL TRAIL



The California Coastal Trail (CCT) is a partially completed trail from the Mexican border to the Oregon border following Highway 1 and the California Coast. Nearly half complete, the CCT is currently comprised of discontinuous segments along the coastline. When completed, the CCT will extend the length of California’s 1,200 mile coastline along beaches, bluffs, seaside roads, and through coastal towns and communities. While primarily for pedestrians, the CCT accommodates various user groups, such as bicyclists, wheelchair users, equestrians, and others as opportunities allow.



The CCT is envisioned as a continuous public right-of-way along the California coastline; a trail designed to foster appreciation and stewardship of the scenic and natural resources of the coast through hiking and other complementary modes of non-motorized transportation.  
 – Coastal Conservancy


Humboldt is California’s longest coastal county, and it has the longest portion of the CCT. There are 154 miles of CCT in Humboldt County; the Coastal Conservancy deems 92 miles to be “adequate” (the most of any county). These trail miles are a mixture of separated multi-use paths (such as the Hammond Trail), rural roads, designated bike lanes, bike routes, and shoulders on State Route 101. Many miles still need to be improved, or even rerouted. For example, trail segments on the highway, or where the trail detours inland from the coast to avoid private lands.

### Improvements Needed to Complete the Coastal Trail (estimated linear mileage)

	Highway corridor improvements	Acquisition/construction on private lands	Construction on public lands	Current improvements adequate	Total CCT miles
Statewide	245	269	245	548	1,307
Humboldt	3	50	9	92	154

Source: <http://californiacoastaltrail.info/cms/pages/trail/done.html>, accessed February, 2017.

The *Humboldt County Coastal Trail Implementation Strategy* (California Coastal Conservancy, 2011) outlines a proposed CCT route along Humboldt’s coastline. The Strategy was developed locally, which included talking with stakeholders from residents to agency staff. The Strategy recommends actions to complete the CCT in Humboldt County.

(The Coastal Trail symbol  identifies trails that are and/or would be a designated part of the California Coastal Trail.)

## PACIFIC COAST BIKE ROUTE

The Pacific Coast Bike Route (PCBR) runs the length of California, from the California/Oregon State line to the California/Mexico border. The northern tip begins on Highway 101 in Del Norte, takes local roads around Crescent City, and enters Humboldt County via the Newton B. Drury Scenic Parkway in Redwood National & Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park. Within Humboldt, the PCBR travels local roads in McKinleyville, Arcata, and Eureka. Several of these roads are also part of the California Coastal Trail.

## HAMMOND TRAIL

The Hammond Trail links the south bank of the Mad River with Clam Beach County Park and travels through coastal McKinleyville to the Hammond Bridge. The trail is approximately 5.5 miles long of Class I multi-use trail, paved, and separated from motorized traffic. The Hammond Trail is part of the Pacific Coast Bike Route, and was designated a part of the California Coastal Trail in June 2010.

## EUREKA WATERFRONT TRAIL & PROMENADE

The Eureka Waterfront Trail is envisioned to run the length of the city's bayfront, from Tydd Street (near the Eureka Slough) to Herrick Avenue at the Pound Road Park-and-Ride. Some segments of the trail are already in place: Eureka Slough trail (bayside of the Target Store), the trail near the Adorni Center, the Old Town Boardwalk, PALCO Marsh trail, and the 1.5-mile multi-use Hikshari' Trail in south Eureka's Elk River Access Area. Hikshari' is the Wiyot place name for this coastal area west of Broadway Street where the Elk River flows into Humboldt Bay. The City of Eureka completed "Phase A," in December 2016, which extends the trail north from the Hikshari' Trail, adding Class I multi-use trail from Truesdale to Del Norte Street. Phase B, from Del Norte to C Street, and Phase C, from Halvorsen Trail to Tydd Street, will be constructed in 2017. Existing segments of the Waterfront Trail are part of the Pacific Coast Bicycle Route.

## HUMBOLDT BAY TRAIL

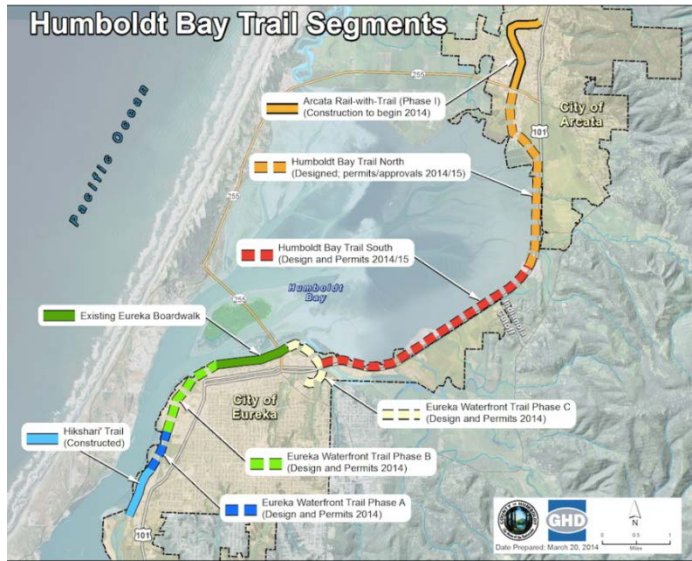
What is now collectively referred to as the Humboldt Bay Trail has been the region's top trail priority for over a decade. The grand vision is to have a multi-use trail for non-motorized travel from Blue Lake to College of the Redwoods. This is a multi-jurisdictional trail within Humboldt County.



The following briefly summarizes current progress on the trails.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Source: County of Humboldt, *State of the Trails Report*, June, 2016.

Caltrans: Caltrans will be implementing a large-scale wetland mitigation project and has taken responsibility for incorporating, within that project, most—and possibly all—of the wetland mitigations required for the Bay Trail North segment.



City of Arcata—*Bay Trail North (Samoa Blvd to Bracut Industrial Park)*: The City of Arcata constructed this portion in the summer/fall of 2017, and the trail opened in October. [\[photo of ribbon cutting to be inserted\]](#)

County of Humboldt—*Bay Trail South (Bracut Industrial Park to Eureka City limits)*: The County is the lead agency for developing this four-mile segment. They are working on the engineering and permitting phases. This project will take several years to complete due to right-of-way and environmental characteristics and other complexities of the site.

City of Eureka—*Eureka Waterfront Trail*: The City of Eureka completed constructing Phase A in 2016 (from Hikshari’ Trail at Truesdale Street north to Del Norte Street), and in 2017 constructed Phases B (Del Norte Street north to C Street) and C (a 600’ boardwalk near Eureka slough). [\[photo of ribbon cutting to be inserted\]](#)

The *Regional Trails Master Plan* describes the local trail networks within the jurisdictions of the seven cities and County, and within territories/communities of the Hoopa Valley, Karuk, Wiyot and Yurok Tribes, and the Blue Lake and Trinidad Rancherias.

## GOAL, OBJECTIVES, & POLICIES

**GOAL:** Humboldt’s trail network is regionally and locally connected and gives people options countywide for safe, active transportation.

The California Coastal Trail within Humboldt County is a continuous public right-of-way along the coastline and a contiguous trail for non-motorized travel. The CCT fosters appreciation and stewardship of the scenic and natural resources of the North Coast.

**Objectives:** To strive for this goal, HCAOG shall support policies that help achieve the RTP’s main objectives/planning priorities (in alphabetical order):<sup>3</sup>

- ❖ Balanced Mode Share/Complete Streets

<sup>3</sup> The objectives are described in more detail in Chapter 1, Introduction.

- ❖ Economic Vitality
- ❖ Efficient & Viable Transportation System (includes Preserving Assets)
- ❖ Environmental Stewardship & Climate Protection
- ❖ Equitable & Sustainable Use of Resources
- ❖ Safety

The Commuter Trails Element’s policies are derived, in part, from the goals, objectives, and policies adopted in the *Humboldt County Regional Trails Master Plan (2010)*, *Humboldt County Regional Pedestrian Plan (2008)*, and *Humboldt Regional Bicycle Plan (2017)*.

## OBJECTIVE: BALANCED MODE SHARE/COMPLETE STREETS

**Policy Trails-1** HCAOG shall coordinate and support local jurisdictions in developing a regional trails network. HCAOG shall support lead agencies in completing a contiguous California Coastal Trail (CCT) in Humboldt County. HCAOG supports implementing “Complete Streets” projects and policies for the CCT along the shoreline of Humboldt’s coastal communities. *(Also supports objective: Economic Vitality, Equitable & Sustainable Use of Resources)*



**Policy Trails-2** HCAOG shall pursue, and help member entities pursue, active transportation system funding to implement priority trail projects identified in the Commuter Trail Element and the *Humboldt County Regional Trails Master Plan*. *(Also supports objectives: Balanced Modes Share/Complete Streets, Economic Vitality)*

## OBJECTIVE: EFFICIENT & VIABLE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

**Policy Trails-3** HCAOG shall pursue and support using existing public right-of-way for trails to the maximum extent feasible in order to preserve land, assets, and financial resources. *(Also supports objectives: Environmental Stewardship, Equitable & Sustainable Use of Resources.)*

## OBJECTIVE: ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP & CLIMATE PROTECTION

**Policy Trails-4** HCAOG shall support entities to design and locate regional trails to minimize impacts to environmentally sensitive habitat areas and prime agriculture lands to the maximum extent feasible. *(Also supports objectives: Efficient & Viable System, Equitable & Sustainable Use of Resources)*

**Policy Trails-5** HCAOG encourages municipalities to update Local Coastal Programs (LCPs) to fully address coastal access policies and ensure getting applicable routes designated as the California Coastal Trail. *(Also supports objectives: Efficient & Viable System)*

## OBJECTIVE: EQUITABLE & SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES

**Policy Trails-6** HCAOG supports and encourages the design principles, as applicable, that the Coastal Conservancy outlines in “Completing the California Coastal Trail” (2003), which are: proximity to the sea, connectivity, integrity, respect, and feasibility. *(Also supports objectives: Balanced Mode Share/Complete Streets, Efficient & Viable System, Environmental Stewardship)*

**Policy Trails-7** The regional trails network shall provide travel options for residents and visitors, with equitable access for transportation-disadvantaged populations. *(Also supports objectives: Balanced Mode Share.)*

## OBJECTIVE: SAFETY

**Policy Trails-8** HCAOG will prioritize planning, design, construction, adequate maintenance, and other actions to improve the safety of the regional trails system. *(Also supports objective: Efficient & Viable System)*

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The *Regional Trails Master Plan* (HCAOG 2010) documents regional trails system needs, which were assessed through reviewing state and local adopted plans (literature review), getting community input for a trail vision, and analyzing constraints, trail development strategies, and trail priorities. The *Regional Trails Master Plan* states:

HCAOG funded this plan in response to a growing and intensified interest on the part of Humboldt County residents for enhance development of a non-motorized (“active”) transportation facility network. A regional active transportation system is of particular interest in this region because there are limited options for active travel between north coast communities, other than small, narrow two-lane county roads and/or highway shoulders.






In late 2012, the North Coast Railroad Authority (NCRA) held a series of public meetings to facilitate a community discussion and dialogue regarding rail and trail development in Humboldt County. From that process, the NCRA adopted Findings and Recommendations, which included the finding that, “There is tremendous community support for rail and trail development in the Humboldt Bay rail corridor, particularly the reach between Eureka and Arcata” (NCRA Resolution No. 2012-13, December 12, 2012). That reach has been a regional trail priority for at least a decade, and the concept for the Humboldt Bay Trail now envisioned would connect from Scotia to Arcata, and to Blue Lake along the future Annie & Mary Trail. The ad-hoc 101 Corridor-Bay Trail Committee has been meeting regularly since 2014 to assess needs, plan collaboratively, and coordinate building the trail. HCAOG facilitates the Committee’s meetings.

Regional trail needs are also assessed when HCAOG updates the *Regional Bike Plan* (currently every five years) as well as annually when HCAOG performs a progress report of plan implementation. HCAOG convenes and facilitates an ad-hoc Bicycle Advisory Committee for each progress report.






## ACTION PLAN: PROPOSED PROJECTS


HCAOG’s Action Plan is to carry out the policies of the Commuter Trails Element and ultimately implement the projects identified in Table *Trails-1*. Projects come from the HCAOG plans incorporated here by reference. Projects were identified and prioritized by agency staff, public and private stakeholders, and community members at-large as part of agency coordination, public outreach, and public review. The Action Plan projects are proposed multi-use trails that scored high in the *Regional Trails Master Plan* (RTMP) and/or are top priorities in one or more adopted HCAOG plan.

**Table *Trails-1*. Regional Commuter Trail Projects**

Trail Project	Jurisdiction	Description	In Other HCAOG Adopted Plan(s)!
Annie and Mary Rail Trail	Arcata, Blue Lake, Blue Lake Rancheria, Humboldt Co.	6.8-mile trail corridor that would run east from the Aldergrove Industrial Park in Arcata to the City of Blue Lake, following the inactive NCRA railroad corridor and a segment along SR 299.	HCCTIS, RPP, RTMP
Arcata Rails with Trail 	Arcata, Humboldt County	Trail from West End Road to Samoa Boulevard, with segments along railroad tracks. This trail would link the Annie & Mary Trail and the Humboldt Bay Trail.	HCCTIS, RBP, RPP
Baylands Trail 	Arcata	Within Baylands Park – Class I	RTMP
California Coastal Trail 	HCAOG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage Caltrans to design improvements for pedestrians and bicycles on the bridges crossing the Eel River and Mattole River.</li> <li>Work towards implementing the <i>Humboldt County Coastal Trail Implementation Strategy</i>, in coordination and cooperation with local jurisdictions, agencies, and other public and private stakeholders to design, locate, fund, acquire, and maintain segments of the California Coastal Trail.</li> <li>Work with private landowners to acquire public access rights at locations from Centerville Beach to Cape Mendocino.</li> </ul>	HCCTIS, RPP
Eureka Waterfront Trail* 	Eureka	From Tydd Street to Herrick Avenue, including existing segments of trail in Halvorsen Park and along the existing Eureka Boardwalk. The segments still to be built and/or upgraded are: Phase B (Del Norte St. to C St.) and Phase C (Halvorsen Park Trail to Tydd St.).	HCCTIS (Priority Project), RTMP
Hammond Trail 	Arcata, Eureka, Humboldt County	Extend the Hammond Trail from the Mad River bridge south, connecting to the City of Arcata (downtown) and Eureka. Extend the trail north to Westhaven and Trinidad. Replace the Hammond Trail pedestrian/bicycle bridge across the Mad River.	HCCTIS, RBP, RPP, RTMP

(Continued on next page)

Trail Project	Jurisdiction	Description	In Other HCAOG Adopted Plan(s) <sup>1</sup> :
Humboldt Bay Trail North and South* 	Arcata, Humboldt County	Arcata to Eureka Segment: A 6.5-mile Class I/multi-use path around the east side of Humboldt Bay, between Arcata and Eureka. The trail would follow the North Coast Railroad rail corridor and parallel U.S. 101.	HCCTIS, Humboldt Bay Trail Feasibility Study, RBP, RPP, RTMP
Humboldt Bay Trail (Continuation)* 	Humboldt County	This would continue the Class I/multi-use path from Humboldt Bay Trail South Trail further south in three conceptual segments: Elk River to King Salmon; King Salmon to Fields Landing; and Fields Landing to the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge and College of the Redwoods.	<i>new in 2017 RTP Update</i>
Hoopa Valley Trail	Humboldt County	A 6-mile segment along SR 96 from the south end of Shoemaker Road northward (in Caltrans right-of-way). The long-term vision is to expand the trail throughout the Hoopa Valley.	RPP
John Campbell Memorial Greenway*	Fortuna	Multi-purpose from the Riverwalk Trail to the south entrance of the Headwaters Reserve	RBP, RTMP
Little River Trail (Hammond Trail Extension)* 	Humboldt County	Multi-use (Class I) trail between Clam Beach and Moonstone Beach. The trail would connect the Hammond Trail and Clam Beach Road to Scenic Drive.	RBP
Manila Shared Use Path*	Humboldt County	Class I multi-use trail adjacent to Highway 255, from the intersection of Dean Street and Pacific Avenue, to Carlson Avenue intersection.	RBP
Orick Levee Coastal Trail 	Humboldt County	Multi-purpose trail on north Redwood Creek levee to the U.S. 101 bridge (0.69 miles), south levee to Redwood National Park Visitor Center (2.45 miles).	HCCTIS (Priority Project)
Riverwalk Trail 	Humboldt County	Fortuna City limits to Sandy Prairie	RTMP
Eureka Loop Trail*	Eureka	Multipurpose trail connecting the north and south ends of the Eureka Waterfront Trail to key destinations in the south, east and west of Eureka and portions of the Greater Eureka Area.	

The symbol  identifies trails that are or would be part of the California Coastal Trail.

<sup>1</sup>HCCTIS=*Humboldt County Coastal Trail Implementation Strategy* (2011); RBP=*Regional Bicycle Plan* (2017); RPP=*Regional Pedestrian Plan* (2008); RTMP=*Regional Trails Master Plan* 2010).

\*See the Complete Streets Element, Table *Streets-4* for estimated project costs.



## REFERENCES

### CITATIONS

**California Coastal Conservancy 2001** *Humboldt Bay Trail Feasibility Study*.

**California Coastal Conservancy 2003** *Completing the California Coastal Trail*. (January 2003)

**California Coastal Conservancy 2011** *Humboldt County Coastal Trail Implementation Strategy*. Prepared for State of California Coastal Conservancy by Redwood Community Action Agency Natural Resources Services Division, Alta Planning + Design, Planwest Partners, and Streamline Planning Consultants. (January 2011)

**HCAOG 2007** *Humboldt Bay Trail Feasibility Study: Eureka to Arcata*. Prepared for HCAOG by Alta Planning + Design and Redwood Community Action Agency.

**HCAOG 2008** *Humboldt County Regional Pedestrian Plan*. Prepared for HCAOG by Alta Planning + Design, Redwood Community Action Agency, SHN Consulting Engineers. (June 2008)

**HCAOG 2010** *Humboldt County Regional Trails Master Plan*. Prepared for HCAOG by Planwest Partners, Redwood Community Action Agency Natural Resources Services Division, Alta Planning + Design.

### RESOURCES

*Annie & Mary Rail Trail Feasibility Study*. Prepared for the California Coastal Commission by Redwood Community Action Agency. (2003)

*Annie & Mary Trail: Next Steps*. Prepared for HCAOG by Alta Planning + Design. (June 2008)

*Coasting: Wandering the California Coastal Trail in Humboldt*. Rees Hughes, North Coast Journal. (February 21, 2013)

*Little River Feasibility Study*. Prepared for the State Coastal Conservancy by Redwood Community Action Agency. (April 2014)

*Manila Community Transportation Plan: Phase II Final Report*. Prepared for the County of Humboldt by Whitlock & Weinberger Transportation, Inc. (December 28, 2005)

*“State of the Trails” Report: Expanding Regional and Local Trails in Humboldt County*. County of Humboldt. (June 2016)