6. LAND USE-TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION

Land use decisions affect transportation decisions and vice-versa. Clearly, where cities and counties put houses, businesses, parks, industry, shopping, and other uses will affect how people travel from one to the other. And, how and what transportation infrastructure is built will dictate the travel choices people have.

Land uses, from a regional or state level to the neighborhood and street level, are transformed by the transportation corridors and travel means surrounding them—or intersecting them. As we have witnessed in the United States in the last few generations, transportation decisions have ended up dictating land use developments, which then dictate what transportation options are possible. To develop land, or conserve and preserve it, our best strategy is to plan land use and transportation together.

> Land use directly influences how we travel. More efficient land use can expand mobility options, reduce travel times, and limit emissions, all while addressing California's housing shortage.
>
> *– CTP 2050*

The State recommends actions to "encourage efficient land use." The *California Transportation Plan 2050* describes how land uses and transportation systems correspond to one another:

> Improving accessibility involves bringing origins and destinations closer together, such as housing, schools, shopping, parks, and entertainment. This can be achieved in urban, suburban, and rural parts of the state, not only by concentrating future housing and job growth, but also by improving the balance of different land uses. These changes can be supported by infrastructure investments such as complete streets, transit and active transportation infrastructure, and last-mile connections that support compact, mixed-use developments.
>
> …(I)mproving land use efficiency can lead to gentrification as accessible neighborhoods attract higher-income earners and displace low-income residents from their long-time communities. To address this, we must ensure that tenant protections, anti-displacement, and housing-affordability measures are in place (Caltrans 2021).

HCAOG promotes proactive planning policies and actions that mutually consider transportation and land use, such as those presented in Caltrans' *Smart Mobility Framework* (Caltrans, 2010). Smart Mobility, Caltrans explains,

> emphasizes the application of land use strategies and the use of transit, carpool, walk, and bike travel to satisfy travel needs through a shift away from higher-polluting modes. For maximum effectiveness, transportation and land use strategies need to be complemented by travel demand management initiatives including innovative approaches to parking and to transportation pricing. The benefits don't just affect the physical environment—they affect public health as well, because reduced auto use is associated with more physically active travel that contributes to better health, lower household transportation cost, and greater reliability (Caltrans, 2010).

HCAOG supports applying *Smart Mobility Framework* concepts and activities to guide planning, investment, design, and management for transportation and land use. The *Smart Mobility Framework* promotes creating meaningful travel choices by:

- A transportation system with facilities and services that offer highly-connected multi-modal networks with complete streets.
- Development and urban design characteristics that create communities where walking, biking, and transit use are common choices—including density levels that contribute to shortening many trips and supporting productive transit use.
- A supply of housing that allows people of all incomes and abilities to live within reasonable distance of jobs, school, and other important destinations, so travel does not take too big a bite out of household time and budgets.
- Facilities for all modes that are designed and operated to enhance their surroundings, and that support economic development by creating favorable settings for investing in development and revitalization.

Additional strategies for promoting good connections and functionality between transportation and land uses include efforts to:

- Integrate land use and transportation planning to maximize limited natural and financial resources, to minimize impacts on environment, and to support community values and quality of life.
- Support regional multi-modal travel on major routes that connect main population centers and major destinations. A seamless network of pedestrian and bicycle routes should be the goal in more densely populated areas.
- Support policies that reinforce providing schools in locations that balance walkability and diversity. Promote land use policies for locating and designing school sites to safely accommodate students arriving and departing by all modes of transportation; prioritize safe access for children who are bicycling or walking.
- Promote citizen involvement at all levels of planning so that local communities and neighborhoods help determine their particular transportation needs.
- Design, promote, or require traffic calming features through land use planning in order to maximize safety and encourage walking and bicycling. Traffic calming helps minimize noise, speeding, and discourages drivers from using residential neighborhoods as thoroughfares.

Humboldt County's regional transportation system serves a population of 135,000 residents dispersed over 3,573 square miles.

Figure 6.X (see Maps Tab) shows general land uses in Humboldt County. Figures 6.Xa, b, and c show population centers and major destinations.

LAND USE PATTERNS: SOME PAST & PRESENT

The land of the California Pacific Northwest is unceded territory of indigenous people. Within Humboldt County's political boundaries are traditional, ancestral territory and current homelands of several indigenous nations, including (and not limited to) the Hupa, Karuk, Mattole, Tolowa, Wailaki, and Yurok. Indigenous

peoples and tribes have been here for millennia. They established travel and trade routes, by land and by water, that are primary routes upon which Humboldt communities and businesses depend today.

In California, the early white settlements (or Spanish missions) that developed into today's major cities were started in the late 18th century, when people traveled mostly by foot for daily destinations. Land uses, and the streets that followed, were built on a pedestrian scale in the denser urban areas, surrounded by agriculture and undeveloped natural lands. Cities emerged from the pedestrian-scale street grids (commonly with intersecting streets named with letters and numbers) such as in Old Town Eureka and around the Arcata Plaza. Historic "old towns" throughout the state (and U.S.) are walkable places. As towns and cities became more prosperous, streets could be built wider to accommodate a radius that a horse-drawn carriage would need to turn around. Then, as is widely known, as the automobile became mass produced and mass marketed, communities started to be built away from urban centers, and the drive to suburban —and more segregated—housing began.

The suburbs, too, are part of the history of white settlement. It was not just the car that induced the suburbs, but housing policies (at the federal, state, and local levels) that actively promoted and mandated racial segregation and housing discrimination. One example is the Federal Housing Administration (established in 1934). The FHA categorically denied insurance mortgages for African-American neighborhoods while it subsidized builders to construct entire subdivisions elsewhere, especially in suburbs. The FHA stipulated that homes would be sold to whites, and explicitly prohibited selling (or reselling) the homes to African-Americans. Another example housing policy that can discriminate are zoning laws that require single-family homes and prohibit apartments; such zoning effectively discriminated against non-white homebuyers or residents when the banking industry would not approve home loans to African American families. Bank loan officers also approved car loans for white families while commonly denying loans to African American families, or approved loans but with higher payments, fees, and interest rates.

Suburbanization in the U.S. was (and is) advanced by the federal interstate highway system. The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 provided 90% of construction funds for a 41,000-mile network of interstate highways. Planners designed highways to open up the suburbs, in some cases literally bulldozing through urban neighborhoods (some thriving African American neighborhoods). Land use patterns in the U.S. now largely revolved around the private automobile, and arguably the commercial freight truck.

For most of the 20th century, transportation professionals considered their fundamental pursuit to be to maximize driving speeds and vehicle throughput. By the 1970s, the discourse began to realize the inefficiency and unintended consequences of relying on single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips as the default. "The way we build roads and design communities to achieve high vehicle speed often requires longer trips and makes shorter walking or bicycling trips unsafe, unpleasant, or impossible" (Transportation For America, 2019).

A decade or two into the 21st century, Finally, the transportation field is beginning to take seriously, at least in the discourse, the perils of the global climate crisis and the transportation sector's large output of greenhouse gas emissions. The field is also acknowledging that car-based land use patterns: require too much land (resulting in loss of natural lands and driving up land/housing costs); tend to diminish public health (air and noise pollution and sedentary lifestyles); invite speeds that make travel more dangerous (increasing mortality and the severity of injuries from car accidents); and often work in conflict with providing other transportation choices, such as public transit, walking, and bicycling (i.e., active transportation). The current paradigm sees the greater benefits of planning land use and transportation "for people not cars."

GOAL, OBJECTIVES, & POLICIES

The point of transportation is to get people where they need to go. Where people need to go is based on land use patterns. "Access" describes being able to get to where you want to go, and having quality transportation options to get there. "Accessibility" can be defined as the ease of reaching a destination or activity, and the end goal is having access to opportunities.

HCAOG shall carry out regional transportation planning with this land-use goal:

GOAL: Throughout Humboldt County, we grow communities equitably and efficiently to create safe, sustainable access to places and opportunities, while conserving or utilizing land respectfully so that future generations can also enjoy optimal land uses and value. All our communities benefit from having quality transportation choices for getting to jobs, services, and home.

OBJECTIVES

The policies listed in the Land Use-Transportation Element will help meet the RTP's main objectives (listed in alphabetical order).

The tree symbol indicates Safe & Sustainable Transportation objectives (see Chapter 2 for all SST objectives and targets.)

MAIN OBJECTIVES:	LAND USE-TRANSPORTATION SUB-OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES
Active Transportation Mode Share/ Complete Streets	Sub-objectives: ◆ Expand healthy community development by designing neighborhoods around safe, attractive, walkable, bikeable streetscapes designed for people (not cars and trucks) and for social, cultural, economic, recreational, and residential activities. ◆ Create safe and effective walking and bicycling facilities that create neighborhood connectivity and continuity. ◆ Reduce the number and miles of work-commute trips by car. ◆ Increase percentage of all trips, combined, made by walking, biking, micro-mobility/matched rides, and transit, and decrease driving regionally and in each jurisdiction.
	POLICY LAND-1 Reduce driving: HCAOG encourages and supports land use planning and projects that accommodate reducing driving, such as through infill development, pedestrian-friendly streets, bicycle infrastructure, and transit-oriented development. HCAOG staff will provide information on transit-oriented development, as requested. HCAOG encourages member and committee agencies to engage transit operators when planning or reviewing new developments. **Policy Land-2 Expand transit ridership:** HCAOG advocates for and supports land use policies and programs that will enable enriched intra- and inter-regional transit service and multi-modal connections in urbanized areas throughout the county. HCAOG shall advocate for and support expanded and stable funding for transit.
	Sub-objectives:

Economic Vitality	◆ Increase data collection necessary to assess how well the transportation system connects people to economic opportunity. ◆ Optimize the proportion of land utilized for higher economical and sustainable purposes than storing private vehicles (i.e. free parking) foremost around key destinations where land values are premium.
	Policy LU-3 Sustainable tax base: HCAOG advocates for local governments to develop codes and ordinances that result in land use development patterns that will be affordable to maintain, for the life of the infrastructure, with the communities' tax base and fee revenues, and that will foster healthy municipal cash flows and affordable housing supply. **Policy LU-4 Nearby access to essential services:** HCAOG supports mixed-use land uses for fostering successful commercial and work opportunities near where people live, and advocates for mixed-use development patterns to include affordable housing and essential services for people with low and very low incomes.
Efficient & Viable Transportation System	Sub-objectives: ◆ Coordinate transportation systems with land use for efficient, sustainable use of resources and minimize the consumption and use of finite resources such as fossil fuels. ◆ Increase data collection and assessments for active transportation connectivity, quality, and quantity in the region. ◆ Increase the number of electric-vehicle chargers per capita.
	Policy LU-5 Transportation for compact, mixed-use development: HCAOG shall work towards increasing coordination with land use decision-making agencies to identify and prioritize specific transportation investments needed to support compact, mixed-use development. HCAOG recognizes transit-oriented development transit service as valuable investments for achieving efficient land use. (*CTP 2050* recommended action) **Policy LU-6 Repurpose for compact, mixed-use development:** HCAOG will encourage and support local agencies to pursue opportunities to repurpose antiquated land uses, such as gas stations, parking lots, and large shopping centers, to support compact, mixed-use development and sustainable mobility options. *(CTP 2050 recommended action)* **Policy LU-7 Reduce subsidized parking costs:** HCAOG advocates for land use policies and projects that curtail the amount and/or cost of tax-subsidized parking in commercial and mixed-use areas. HCAOG will support local agencies in reducing parking minimum and/or enacting parking maximums, and will provide support in identifying funding for and implementing mobility solutions that reduce parking demand. *(CTP 2050 recommended action)*
Environmental Stewardship & Climate Protection	Sub-objectives: ◆ Reduce transportation-related fossil fuel consumption in Humboldt County. ◆ Conserve open space by redirecting urban and rural sprawl towards better, more transportation-efficient land use patterns.
Equitable & Sustainable Use of Resources	Sub-objectives: ◆ Expand equitable and sustainable access to jobs, education, and essential services, achieved by following holistic policies and programs that address global climate crisis, racial justice, access to affordable housing and economic opportunities.

	◆ Increase percentage of electric-vehicle charging stations installed equitably in multi-family residential areas and higher density/lower-income areas.  ◆ Increase the percentage of attainable housing units located in places with safe, comfortable, and convenient access to employment, shopping, and recreation by walking, biking, rolling, or transit.  ◆ Increase the equitable distribution of county residents who live in homes/ apartments/dorms where they can safely, comfortably, and conveniently travel to everyday destinations by walking, biking, rolling, or transit/micro-transit. 
	POLICY Land-8: Support local communities in developing integrated transportation and land use strategies for responding resiliently to climate change, and codifying such strategies in General Plans, Regional Transportation Plans, Local Coastal Programs, and Climate Action Plans. HCAOG will review proposed development projects in member jurisdictions and provide feedback on the projects' impacts on regional efforts to meet adopted targets for greenhouse gas emission reductions, VMT, mode shift, traffic safety, and zero emission vehicles. **Policy LU-9 Prioritize community needs:** HCAOG shall prioritize investments in under-resourced (disadvantaged) communities to improve mobility and access to jobs, education, health care, services, and recreation. HCAOG shall focus on investments that are aligned with community-identified transportation needs. (*CTP 2050 recommended action*) **Policy LU-10 (Anti-displacement):** HCAOG supports policies to protect marginalized and disadvantaged communities from displacement and community fragmentation that may result from transportation investments (e.g., tenant protections, affordable housing production, and affordable housing preservation). (*CTP 2050* recommended action)
Safety & Health	Sub-objectives: ◆ Build more walkable and bikeable neighborhoods to increase active transportation for benefits to public health. ◆ Reduce VMT to foster reducing transportation-related injuries and deaths.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

It is important for members from the whole community to participate and have a voice in assessing the community's land use needs, which are varied and complex. To name just a few, needs include affordable housing, healthy natural resources, working lands, and meeting climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience goals. The jurisdictions of the cities and the unincorporated county have land use authority, and are responsible for having relevant long-range planning documents; chief among them are General Plans.

HCAOG is statutorily authorized and required to coordinate and ultimately adopt housing supply requirements for the jurisdictions. The process is called the Regional Housing Needs Allocation, described below.

REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ALLOCATION

The State of California requires jurisdictions in the state to plan for providing a "fair share" of the housing supply for residents needs statewide. HCAOG is responsible for administering the process, called the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA, pronounced "ree-na") (Government Code Sections 65580 et seq.), to establish a methodology for assessing how housing supply needs will be distributed among the seven incorporated Cities and the unincorporated County. The State, through the Housing and Community Development Department (HCD), then makes a final determination for the jurisdiction's final allocation. For Humboldt, the 6th Cycle RHNA term is an 8.7-year projection period, which began December 31, 2018 and ends on August 31, 2027.

Below are excerpts from the *Humboldt 6th Cycle RHNA* (HCAOG 2018).

> Although HCD has cited a projected population increase of only 4,978 residents over the next 8.7 years, their methodology calls for the planning of 3,390 housing units in the planning period.
>
> The opportunities and constraints to developing additional housing in each member jurisdiction include the following:
>
> - *Most cities have cited issues with increased capacity, but there is no action that would "preclude the jurisdiction from providing necessary infrastructure for additional development."*
> - *Both the City of Ferndale and the County of Humboldt cited significant limitations due to resource lands and prime agricultural soils.*
> - *High-housing cost burdens are a region-wide problem; therefore, no adjustments to the methodology based on this factor were considered.*
>
> State law requires that the final RHNA Plan shall be consistent with the following objectives:
>
> 1. Increasing the housing supply and the mix of housing types, tenure, and affordability in all cities and counties within the region in an equitable manner, which shall result in each jurisdiction receiving an allocation of units for low- and very low-income households.
> 2. Promoting infill development and socioeconomic equity, the protection of environmental and agricultural resources, and the encouragement of efficient development patterns.
> 3. Promoting an improved intraregional relationship between jobs and housing.
> 4. Allocating a lower proportion of housing need to an income category when a jurisdiction already has a disproportionately high share of households in that income category, as compared to the countywide distribution of households in that category from the most recent decennial United States census.
>
> Consistent with these objectives, the adopted methodology utilized in this plan seeks to increase housing opportunity with a mix of housing types, tenure and affordability in all jurisdictions within the region by allocating units to each jurisdiction in each income category. Each jurisdiction's allocation is trended towards the regional income category average, thus working to improve imbalances in the income distributions within the region. Existing data of income categories for each jurisdiction, compiled by HCD, is provided in Appendix B. Jurisdictions must plan and zone accordingly for different levels of density, thus making different product types available for development. Higher density zoning offers the option of providing more affordable units.

Additional Housing Units Needed in Humboldt County for Period from December 31, 2018 to August 31, 2027[1]

Income Category	Percent	Housing Unit Need
Extremely-Low (12.3%) and Very Low	24.4%	829
Low	15.7%	532
Moderate	18.1%	613
Above Moderate	41.8%	1,416
Total	**100.0%**	**3,390**

[1]HCD Regional Housing Need Determination (August, 2018)

Final 2019 RHNA Allocation, by Income Category

Jurisdiction	Very Low Income Allocation	Low Income Allocation	Moderate Income Allocation	Above Moderate Allocation	Total RHNA Allocation
Arcata	142	95	111	262	**610**
Blue Lake	7	4	5	7	**23**
Eureka	231	147	172	402	**952**
Ferndale	9	5	6	13	**33**
Fortuna	73	46	51	120	**290**
Rio Dell	12	8	9	22	**51**
Trinidad	4	4	3	7	**18**
Unincorporated Area	351	223	256	583	**1,413**
RHNA Targets	**829**	**532**	**613**	**1416**	**3,390**

Final 2019 Overall RHNA

Jurisdiction	EDD Employment Data	DOF Population (1/1/2018)	Jobs Distribution	Population Distribution
Arcata	10,362	18,398	22.5%	13.5%
Blue Lake	182	1,280	0.4%	0.9%
Eureka	16,956	26,362	36.8%	19.4%
Ferndale	422	1,367	0.9%	1.0%
Fortuna	3,819	12,042	8.3%	8.9%
Rio Dell	246	3,348	0.5%	2.5%
Trinidad	387	340	0.8%	0.2%
Unincorporated Area	13,754	72,865	29.8%	53.6%
Totals	**46,128**	**136,002**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

EDD = Economic Development Dept.; DOF = Dept. of Finance

ACTION PLAN: PROPOSED PROJECTS

Table *Land Use*-1 **Regional Land Use Planning Projects**

Agency	Project Description	ST or LT*
HCAOG	**Equity evaluation criteria —** Develop social equity metrics for evaluating processes *and* outcomes of HCAOG's planning and projects. Evaluating *both* process and outcome will create accountability to ensure social equity is centered and achieved in the implementation of the policy. Policymakers should engage equity stakeholders to define the metrics. The equity metrics should identify and measure progress on economic, social, health, and environmental issues applicable to policy. Conduct regular process and outcome evaluations throughout implementation process.	ST
HCAOG	**Charging Infrastructure —** Coordinate with local land use authorities to support ZEV charging at residential developments, job centers, and public buildings, (*California Transportation Plan 2050* recommended action)	ST (and ongoing)

[1] ST: short-term is 1-10 years; LT: long-term is 11-20 years.

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