

PATH ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS: PARTICIPANTS & KEY ISSUES

This is a summary of the feedback NRS and Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates received during three roundtable discussions on November 9th and 10th, 2005 as the first part of at least two sessions to present information and solicit input for the development of a planning framework for improved transportation equity: 'Planning for Active Transportation & Health'.

This is a **snapshot of the key issues and general feedback** from roundtable participants, but is not a full transcription or minutes of the roundtable discussions. The project team received a great deal of beneficial feedback on the key transportation issues and challenges in Humboldt County, as well as important suggestions on how to create a better transportation planning process to achieve broad community goals.

The attendees and feedback received at each session is summarized below. A copy of the presentation made at each of the roundtables by Jen Rice (NRS) and Linda Rhine (Nelson\Nygaard) is also attached.

ROUNDTABLE 1: HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, SOCIAL SERVICES & ADVOCACY GROUPS

Wednesday, November 9, 2:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Invited groups (those in attendance marked with an X):

Health Professionals

- Eureka Police Department
- Humboldt County Environmental Health
- Humboldt County Mental Health
- Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services
- Humboldt County Public Health
- Humboldt County Public Health Nurse Director
- Humboldt County Social Services
- North Coast Nutrition and Health Collaborative
- St. Joseph's Home Health
- United Indian Health Services, Inc. (UIHS)

Transportation Stakeholder Groups

- Adult Day Health Care, Mad River
- Arcata Endeavor
- City of Arcata Transportation Safety Committee
- Area 1 Agency on Aging
- Butler Valley, Inc.
- Eureka Adult School: Newcomer Center
- Even Start
- Family Resource Centers
- First 5 Humboldt
- Healthy Moms
- Healy Senior Center
- Humboldt Access Project
- Humboldt Bay Bicycle Commuters Association
- Humboldt Community Access and Resource Center (HCAR)
- HCAOG Citizen's Advisory Committee
- Humboldt County Human Rights Commission
- Humboldt Partnership for Active Living
- Humboldt Senior Resource Center
- HSU CA Center for Rural (Health) Policy
- Latino NET
- Lighthouse of the Northcoast
- Manila Community Services District
- Mary Bendle Health Resource Center
- Open Door Clinics
- Orick Community Resource Center

"Many people with low-incomes and transportation challenges live in west Eureka, but the health services are in east Eureka: this is one example of a transportation need and gap."



- x__ Planwest Partners
- ___ Redwood Coast Energy Authority
- x__ Redwood Community Action Agency (RCAA)
- ___ RCAA Family Services, Multiple Assistance Center (MAC)
- x__ RCAA Youth Services Bureau (YSB)
- x__ St. Joseph's Community Benefits and Healthy Communities Program
- ___ Trails Trust of Humboldt Bay
- x__ Tri-County Independent Living
- ___ Two Feathers Native American Family Services



Key Issues

- Transportation is the **most important component of providing all community services** and has numerous cumulative community impacts. It is vital for access to health care, food and other basic services, to find and maintain employment, independent living, social engagement and development for those of all ages and abilities, civic participation, recreational needs, and after-school activities.
- Public services (particularly health care facilities) are generally too **dispersed**, which creates problems for those relying on public transit or non-automobile modes. Facilities and services should be developed closer to health care facilities, affordable housing, and job opportunities.
- There is a need for **more regional and local connectivity**. Numerous examples of disjunct sidewalks, bicycle facilities and transit routes suggest a general need to “connect the dots” between destinations.
- **Can services be brought to people?** In-home care and mobile medical outfits have worked in the past, but the transportation component is difficult to fund. Can other services (education, food, etc...) be brought to people in a similar manner?
- There should be a more **meaningful process for public participation**. Stakeholder groups and the public want to provide planners with transportation needs information, however there is not an effective, encouraging processor means to deliver that information. Groups representing transportation-disadvantaged populations want to know how best to channel information into the planning process so that it is useful.
- The Social Services Technical Advisory **Committee** seems to be a wasted effort: meetings often don't happen. Sometimes committees don't seem to be organized to maximize volunteer time. Could existing committees have more strategic representation of various groups?
- It would be beneficial if people could give input and see **how that information is used** as well as track it through the planning and project development process.
- Most private and public developments create **disincentives to ride bicycles**, and they're often developed in direct conflict with existing policies. For example, bicycle parking is often very poor or not provided, road shoulders are either poorly paved or unpaved, and intersection designs often terminate space for cyclists.
- Stakeholder groups **don't expect government to solve all of their constituencies' problems**, and would like to consider possibilities, contribute resources and find solutions.
- **Collaboration** among stakeholder groups and governments will help the community empower themselves and address problems at a community-wide level.
- Consider basing decisions on **available funding sources** and community needs.
- **Do more with the existing systems** rather than creating new services.
- Many people **rely on public transit to access basic health care**, which is for the most part in eastern Eureka. Transit to health care basically works for those not in isolated areas, but there are usually many transfers, costs and much time involved. In other cases it can be difficult to get to and from various aspects of the health system by transit only.

“Residential development is occurring in areas where there is no current or planned transit access: why? Why is transit not a part of the planning process?”

- There is an **inadequate amount of affordable housing near jobs and services**, forcing low-income families to live in outlying areas where housing is cheaper and transportation issues more intense.
- **Meetings should come to the people** they need to hear from, not make those people come to the meetings, because they won't.
- **Project development considerations:** improved bike/ped amenities; linkages between residential and service areas. Is there a modal balance when evaluating overall lists of projects?

ROUNDTABLE 2: TRANSPORTATION PROFESSIONALS

Thursday, November 10, 9:00 a.m. to noon

Invited stakeholder groups (those in attendance marked with an X):

- x__ Arcata and Mad River Transit System (A&MRTS)
- ___ Bear River Band of Rohnerville Rancheria
- ___ Blue Lake Rancheria and Dial-A-Ride
- x__ Blue Lake and Ferndale Public Works Department Contractor
- ___ Bridgeville Community Center Van
- ___ CAE Medi-Trans – Dial-A-Ride / Dial-A-Lift
- ___ Caltrans District 1 Chief of Planning
- x__ Caltrans District 1 Chief of Local Assistance and Regional Planning
- ___ Caltrans District 1 Title VI Coordinator
- x__ Caltrans District 1 Planning Department
- x__ City of Arcata Public Works
- x__ City of Eureka Engineering Department
- ___ City of Eureka Traffic
- ___ City of Fortuna Public Works
- ___ Del Norte Local Transportation Commission
- ___ Ferndale “Bridge-the-Gap” Program
- ___ Fortuna Senior Bus
- x__ Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG)
- ___ Humboldt County Public Works Director
- ___ Humboldt County Public Works Deputy Director
- x__ Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA)
- x__ K/T Net (Klamath Trinity Non-Emergency Transportation)
- ___ Lake County Areawide Planning Council
- ___ Mendocino Council of Governments
- ___ Siskiyou County Transportation Commission
- ___ Southern Humboldt Rural Transit Service (the “Quail”)

“Collaboration is needed to attract more funding sources and to ensure more stable funding.”



Key Issues

- The **‘senior tsunami’** is coming; learn from other communities that have planned for it.
- Economic development and land use decisions are **driving transportation projects** more than transportation projects are driving them: not a balance, hard to keep up.
- Need **public education**. public fear of infill/density causes sprawl; need for stakeholders to be informed of the ‘big picture’, **money for education and marketing** is also important to make sure that projects/successes are utilized
- **Funding:**
 - There is a general feeling that there is a need to ‘protect your turf’ as opposed to offering funding help – **need a team orientation between the cities and county**.
 - Sources are generally competitive, which is a **disincentive to cooperate**, and funding fluctuates so much, there is a need to ‘get the projects while you can’
 - Federal discretionary money requires **scarce or non-existent local matches**
 - Need **collaboration/partnerships to attract more funding** and ensure more stable funding
 - Traditionally, ‘gentleman’s’ **agreements to rotate annual prioritizations** of funds have worked, but there is no way to monitor/maintain

- Perception that funding is limited – **early-on identification of potential funding sources could be used as the carrot** to bring people to the table
- Planning decisions are often **politically motivated, and policy goals in Plans may not be followed**, or the Plans may just be bad
- Need for **more collaboration**:
 - **Multi-disciplinary understanding of projects is needed.**
 - Different perspectives within different departments often **hinders collaboration.**
 - Needs to be regional collaboration **focused on non-automobile transportation**: non-automobile projects are the most difficult to program/implement/fund
- Institutional **barriers to regional coordination**:
 - Internal, political and community **pressure to fund programmed projects** – transit usually an exception
 - Cities and county are **focused on their own projects** – hard to expand to a regional focus
- A big backlog of **maintenance projects** that often drives decision-making.
- **Community & Stakeholder Input**
 - Input is often parochial and **‘micro-level’**
 - **All input** can be useful
 - Input from organizations, groups of organizations **carries more weight**
- Would be very **difficult to have standard, county-wide evaluation criteria or prioritization process**:
 - Needs to be **city-by-city**
 - **Too much variation** between projects and/or funding sources
- There is a general feeling that the **current transportation investments decision-making process works**, and that regional priorities tend to get implemented appropriately – links will be addressed in General Plan
- For road projects, **rehabilitation projects generally dominate the focus**: little funding for new capital projects
- All communities are different – **need to find commonalities to better cooperate**, though

“Maximizing resources and efficiency could result in rural areas being more underserved. Can we bring services to accommodate the ‘20%’ without those services?”

“Public hearings don’t really work.”

ROUNDTABLE 3: LAND USE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS

Thursday, November 10, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Invited stakeholder groups (those in attendance marked with an X):

Economic Development Professionals

- Arcata Economic Development Corporation
- Employment Development Department
- Humboldt Area Foundation
- Humboldt County – CalWorks
- Humboldt County Economic Development Department
- Humboldt County Office of Education
- Humboldt State University, Economics Department
- Humboldt State University, Community and Economic Development
- Redwood Region Economic Development Commission
- Small Business Development Center

Land Use Professionals

- City of Arcata, City Council
- City of Arcata Community Development
- City of Eureka Community Development
- City of Fortuna Planning Department

- ___ Hoopa Tribal Planning
- x__ Humboldt County Community Development
- x__ Humboldt State University, Natural Resources Planning Department
- x__ City of Rio Dell
- ___ Wiyot Tribe – Table Bluff Reservation
- ___ Yurok Tribal Planning Department

Key Issues

- Achieving a **good jobs/housing balance** is a transportation solution
- Need **access to goods, services, employment**
- **Measurement Tools:**
 - Traditional needs assessments require **quantification of how a project meets an “existing unmet need”** (process dominates transportation planning). Existing unmet need is difficult to measure because existing situations may be so dangerous or unappealing/lacking facilities/services that bike/ped/transit use is discouraged; new investments can induce demand; (e.g. Old Arcata roundabouts, very little no existing bikes/peds and now many use this area)...if you build it they will come.
 - Level of Service analysis (LOS) as part of their Environmental Impact Reports (EIR) helps departments **negotiate an impact fee or other mitigations** to address the problems that may be caused by the new trips; **perhaps we need a similar process for equity analysis**, but the key is that in order to be legally defensible you must establish a nexus and pass the ‘rough proportionality’ test, and in order to do that you need quantitative analysis.
 - **Need measurements of disadvantaged population** – quantifiably weigh importance in decision-making processes.
 - Need a method to **quantify the cumulative multidimensional benefits** of new transportation investments. Projects with multiple nexuses, that address multiple problems at once across jurisdictional, institutional, or professional boundaries
 - **Link community problems** (obesity, etc.) to actual projects and programs.
 - Need a way to measure the **impacts and benefits** – the lack of evaluation measures prevents the ability to quantify impacts.
 - **Impact mitigation:** Local plans have done policy guidelines that suggest/require that impacts be quantified and mitigated, and this is increasingly becoming the model in the County.
 - Need **better non-automobile modeling:** traffic modeling for new developments leaves out non-auto modes because they are ‘difficult’, but in many of these areas, those uses are not there because the facilities/services aren’t there, but would be with new developments/if facilities and services were there.
- **Public Participation:**
 - **Inclusive:** Need innovation in public outreach processes, such as attending community dinners and pancake breakfasts, etc...
 - People don’t even know what HCAOG is or what it does, so **how can they be involved meaningfully in the RTP process?**
- One person’s impacts can be another’s benefits:
 - Need to **think through highway bypasses** around towns very carefully
 - How does Caltrans deal with **economic impact mitigation?**
- Land use designs and goals have typically looked at **capacity building objectives**, but they should look at the total person increase as opposed to auto increases: need more bike/ped focus.
- How do we make sure the **main arteries (highways) reflect changing community values and priorities.**
- Even though Humboldt Co. is a rural and relatively dispersed county, 59% of the population lives around the Bay, contributing to **two different kinds of transportation needs (e.g. rural and urban)**

“To grow entrepreneurs in Humboldt County, we need communities with a high quality of life that retain our talent - that means mixes of uses and services, coffee shops that double as offices, streets that encourage people to walk and ride bikes, home-based businesses and broadband service that mean less transportation demand.”

- Examples of cities where **non-motorized transportation investments resulted in economic development**: Monterey pedestrian trail, San Luis Obispo Creek path, Ashland OR.
- **Term ‘disadvantaged’ is too narrow**: rest of us are also underserved by auto-focused transport system.
- **Tourism: auto orientation** (e.g. of the Avenue of the Giants) **discourages people from staying/spending in local communities** and doing a walking tour. Avenue communities want and need a trail: neither Caltrans or State Parks will help make it happen. Highway design goals move tourists through fast, doesn’t attract them to stop.
- Humboldt Co. highways are not STAA compliant, so standard, new larger trucks can’t travel here and **goods have to be reloaded into smaller trucks**, adding expense to local goods and services. With no railroad service, there is no alternative for freight movement.
- Non-highway **corridors available for non-motorized transport** also need to be considered: flood zones, bayshores, stream zones, rail corridors.
- **Good transportation projects/process** are often community-initiated efforts, not initiated by HCAOG/Caltrans processes: Willow Creek, Rio Dell, Hoopa examples.
- Caltrans engineers view/approach projects very differently than planners (**priorities are calculation- and model-driven**), and they have almost absolute decision-making control; it takes a very long time to complete projects, and during this time lag, people loose track of project monitoring and important community elements fall off the projects.
- **Shared funding**: Economic development agencies have partnered with transportation projects in the past and have shared costs, this is a model that should be pursued.
- Caltrans should adopt **more innovative and progressive designs**
 - **Alternative transportation** corridor development
 - Attention to **aesthetics**
 - Ensure the application of **context sensitive designs**
- **Integrate community goals**: multiple project goals, agencies involved, and funding sources; need to do planning and design of transportation projects in a way that integrates with other community goals and ongoing projects (Salmon Creek example).
 - Statewide fish passage program is currently replacing culvert and bridges throughout the state, and **ped/bike could be integrated into these new facilities** at that time rather than at a later date... more cost-effective.
- **Community identity as a focal point**: Planning criteria for preserving and enhancing community identity. Current transportation practice is not about developing a sense of place; its about getting between places.
- **Land use**: We don’t want to sprawl into resource areas, but in order to avoid doing that we need better design requirements in order to accommodate density/new growth in existing areas.
- Using moveable delineations to allow access to **more or less highway lane capacity as needed to accommodate peak traffic loads** rather than reserving shoulder ROW indefinitely for potential highway widening, which prevents bike/ped facilities from ever getting built.
- **Coastal access and recreational facilities**: Many of the ped/bike facilities on existing bridges on the North Coast provide important links in the Coastal Trail and public access to the coast; Caltrans doesn’t take this seriously, such as on the Hammond Trail project, but the trail is a *state* goal.



AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

Roundtable slideshow presentation: “Planning For Active Transportation & Health: The PATH Model. A Report On Preliminary Project Information”