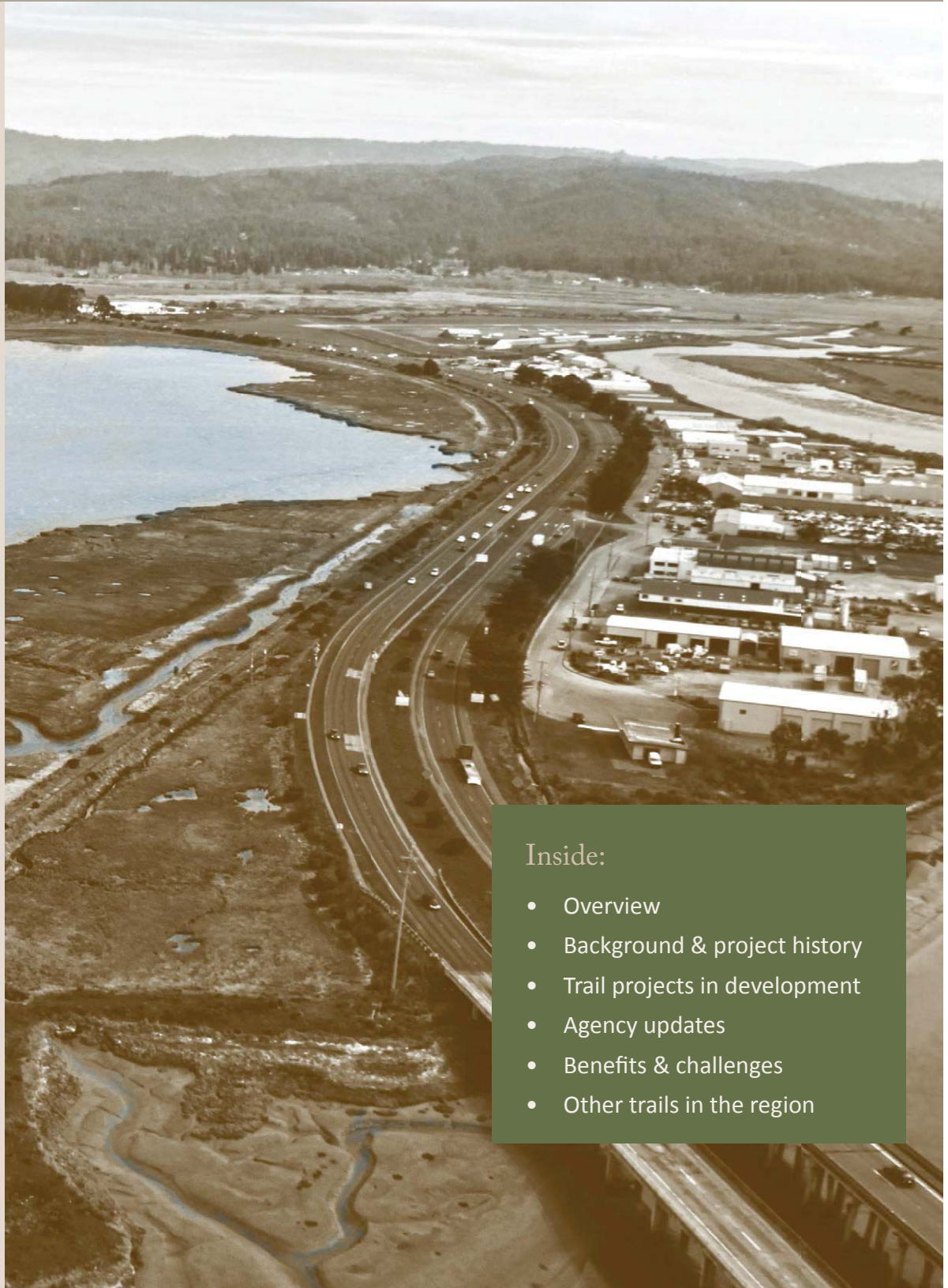


Humboldt Bay Trail

Project Update

June 2014
No. 1



Inside:

- Overview
- Background & project history
- Trail projects in development
- Agency updates
- Benefits & challenges
- Other trails in the region

OVERVIEW



Milestones and Momentum

The Humboldt Bay Trail is envisioned as a network of trails providing non-motorized access for transportation and recreational use throughout the Humboldt Bay region. The Humboldt Bay Trail is being developed as a collaborative effort between the Humboldt County Association of Governments, Humboldt County, City of Arcata, City of Eureka, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), State Coastal Conservancy, North Coast Railroad Authority (NCRA), and a variety of other agencies and organizations.

The current focus is on developing a continuous trail from central Arcata to south Eureka over the next several years for a total length of approximately 13 miles. Public support is high for a trail connection between the two largest cities of Humboldt County, and the project has been a regional priority for many years.

The portion of the Humboldt Bay Trail between Eureka and Arcata is proposed to be situated within

the U.S. Highway 101 and railroad transportation corridors. This portion is being developed in conjunction with the Highway 101 Eureka-Arcata Corridor Improvement Project, which will improve highway safety and operations at six at-grade intersections and has been a regional priority since 2000. Completion of the Humboldt Bay Trail between Eureka and Arcata was made a permit condition by the California Coastal Commission in September 2013. In addition to improving transportation safety and making the Highway 101 corridor a “complete street,” the proposed Humboldt Bay Trail will achieve a critical link in the state-wide California Coastal Trail. The trail project also provides an opportunity to improve and stabilize the deteriorating railroad grade.

As such, the Humboldt Bay Trail reflects a convergence of State mandates and represents an opportunity to partner with multiple agencies to leverage funding sources in order to provide transportation, recreation, and coastal access opportunities.

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BACKGROUND & PROJECT HISTORY

Making Connections

Interest in trails for transportation and recreation surged in the 1970s. The first study looking at potential trail routes around Humboldt Bay was developed by Redwood Community Action Agency (RCAA) in 1997. RCAA went on to develop the Humboldt Bay Trails Feasibility Study in 2001. The 2001 study expressed the vision of (1) connecting communities around the bay with facilities for safe non-motorized transportation, and (2) connecting people to the bay by enabling people of all ages and abilities to access and experience it directly. A bicycle and pedestrian trail between Arcata and Eureka, separated from Highway 101, was identified as the most popular and highest-priority trail concept. The most significant challenges identified included constraints posed by existing development and infrastructure; regulatory requirements to protect sensitive resources; the costs of planning, design, construction, and maintenance; and the need for regional coordination.

Analyzing Options and Moving Forward

In 2006, local agencies and stakeholders initiated a cooperative planning process to analyze the feasibility of developing a separated, multi-use trail between Arcata and Eureka. Four trail options were developed and evaluated in a report completed in 2007. The City of Arcata moved forward in 2008 with planning and design for the Arcata Rail with Trail Connectivity Project to extend from Sunset Avenue south to Bracut. The portion of Arcata's project between Samoa Boulevard and Bracut is currently designated "Humboldt Bay Trail North."

Also in 2008, the City of Eureka initiated planning and grant applications for the 1.5-mile Hikshari' Trail near the Elk River Access Area. In 2013, Humboldt County initiated technical studies and conceptual design for the "Humboldt Bay Trail South" segment which would extend from Bracut south to X Street in Eureka.

Regional Priority

Over the last several years, the concept of a trail between Eureka and Arcata has been identified as a high-priority project in several regional planning documents. In 2008, the state legislature passed the California Complete Streets Act to promote a "balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all users of streets, roads, and highways." In 2013, the Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) initiated an update to the county-wide Regional Transportation Plan which includes a Complete Streets element. This plan includes a policy recognizing the high level of public support for a dedicated bicycle and pedestrian trail in the railroad and highway corridor between Eureka and Arcata and supporting multi-jurisdictional, public and private efforts to develop the Humboldt Bay Trail. In addition, the trail is supported by a variety of community organizations.

Agency Collaboration

In 2012, the NCRA commissioned the Humboldt Rail Corridor Committee to assess the condition of the railroad corridor around the bay and identify opportunities for restoration and future use. The consensus from the committee was to pursue trail projects that are consistent with NCRA trail policy and future restoration of freight and passenger excursion service.

In September 2013, the Humboldt Bay Trail was formally linked to the Eureka-Arcata Highway 101 Corridor Improvement Project to ensure consistency with the California Coastal Act. At the September 2013 hearing of the Coastal Commission, Caltrans and HCAOG proposed that the corridor improvement project would not commence construction until funding and right-of-way for the portion of the Humboldt Bay Trail between Eureka and Arcata had been secured. The Coastal Commission accepted this proposal and made it a condition of future permitting.

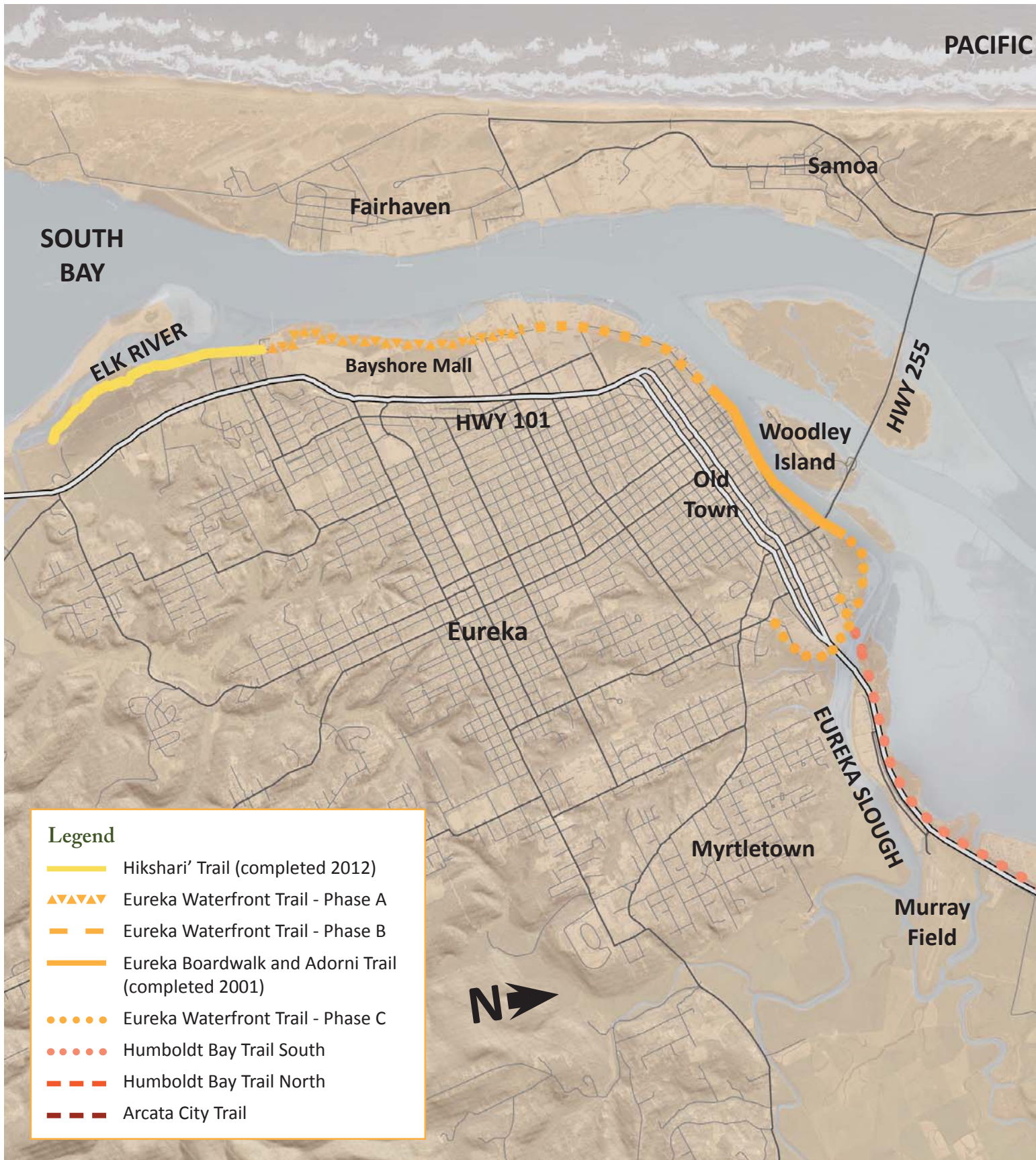


In December 2013, HCAOG formed an ad hoc committee with representatives from the City of Arcata, City of Eureka, Humboldt County, and Caltrans to ensure close coordination and collaboration on the linked highway and trail projects.

Project Delivery

Six trail projects are currently in development. A map depicting the locations of the projects is provided in Pages 3-4, and a table summarizing the current status of each project is provided on Pages 5-6.

TRAIL PROJECTS CURRENTLY IN DEVELOPMENT



OCEAN



Manila

NORTH BAY

HWY 255 / SAMOA BLVD

Arcata Marsh

Arcata

HSU

Wastewater Treatment Plant

Bracut

HWY 101

Indianola

Bayside

OLD ARCATA RD

PROJECT DELIVERY STATUS

Projects	Lead Agency	Approximate Trail Length (miles)	Initial planning
Hikshari' Trail	City of Eureka	1.5	Complete
Eureka Waterfront Trail Phase A (Hiskhari' Trail at Truesdale Avenue to Del North Street)	City of Eureka	1.2	Complete
Eureka Waterfront Trail Phase B (Del Norte Street to C Street)	City of Eureka	1.4	Complete
Eureka Waterfront Trail Phase C (Adorni Park to Tydd Street)	City of Eureka	1.1	Complete
Humboldt Bay Trail South (Eureka Slough to Bracut Industrial Center)	Humboldt County	3.8	In progress (complete by August 2014)
Humboldt Bay Trail North (Bracut Industrial Center to Samoa Boulevard in Arcata)	City of Arcata	3.0	Complete
Arcata City Trail (Samoa Boulevard to Foster Avenue)	City of Arcata	1.3	Complete

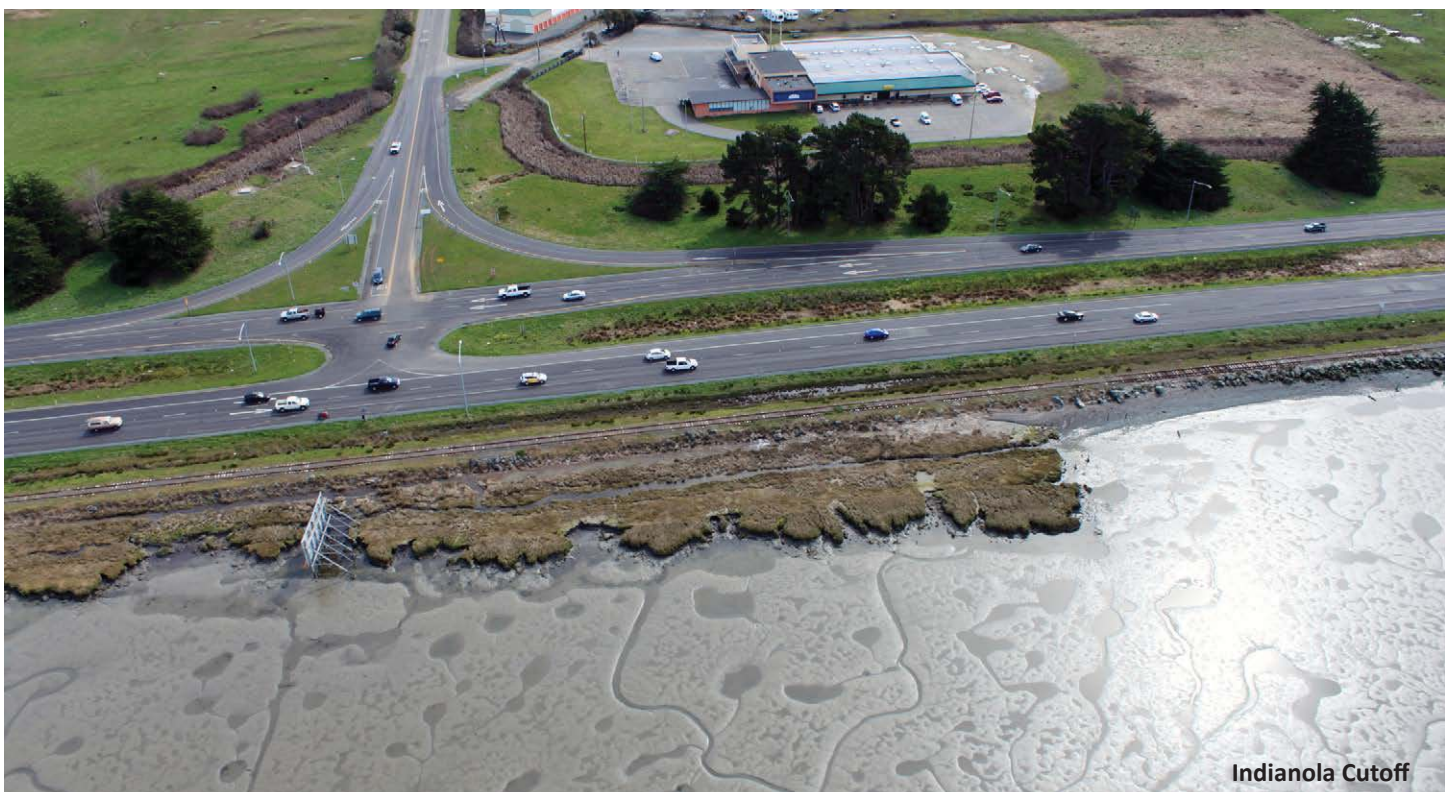
Key: Complete Funded Not currently funded

Project Development

The project development process for transportation projects involves six primary components:

1. **Initial planning**
Define the purpose and need of the project; identify issues and constraints; develop conceptual designs and evaluate feasibility; prepare a scope, cost, and schedule for future components.
 2. **Preliminary engineering, environmental evaluation, permitting**
Technical studies to define the project design and extents; evaluation of alternatives and opportunities to avoid or minimize impacts; documentation to apply for regulatory permits.
 3. **Engineering plans & specifications**
Preparation of plans, specifications, and estimates of material quantities and costs which provide the basis for the construction contract.
 4. **Right-of-way**
Acquisition of property interest (ownership or easement) or formal authorization to construct a project.
 5. **Construction**
Performance of work to build or improve the transportation facility.
 6. **Mitigation and Monitoring**
Implementation of mitigation measures to offset potentially significant impacts, and monitoring to ensure effectiveness.
- The components of project development are typically performed sequentially and funded separately. Completion of each component prior to construction is defined by "milestone" documents specified by the policies and procedures of the lead agency and the funding program. The preliminary engineering, environmental evaluation, and permitting component often has the longest duration due to the iterations needed to avoid or reduce environmental impacts and the administrative processes of the various federal, state, and local regulatory agencies.

Preliminary engineering, environmental evaluation, permitting	Engineering plans & specifications	Right of way	Construction	Mitigation and Monitoring
Complete	Complete	Complete	Complete (2012)	Complete (monitoring in progress)
In progress (complete by March 2015)	Scheduled to begin August 2014 (duration: 9 months)	To be determined	To be determined	To be determined
In progress (complete by March 2015)	In progress (complete by July 2014)	To be determined	To be determined	To be determined
In progress (complete by March 2015)	Scheduled to begin August 2014 (duration: 9 months)	To be determined	To be determined	To be determined
Scheduled to begin August 2014 (duration: approx. 18-24 months)	Scheduled to begin 2016	To be determined	To be determined	To be determined
In progress (complete by March 2015)	In progress (complete by March 2015)	In progress	To be determined	To be determined
Complete	Complete	In progress (complete by August 2014)	Scheduled to begin late Summer 2014	To be determined



AGENCY UPDATE: CITY OF EUREKA

City of Eureka

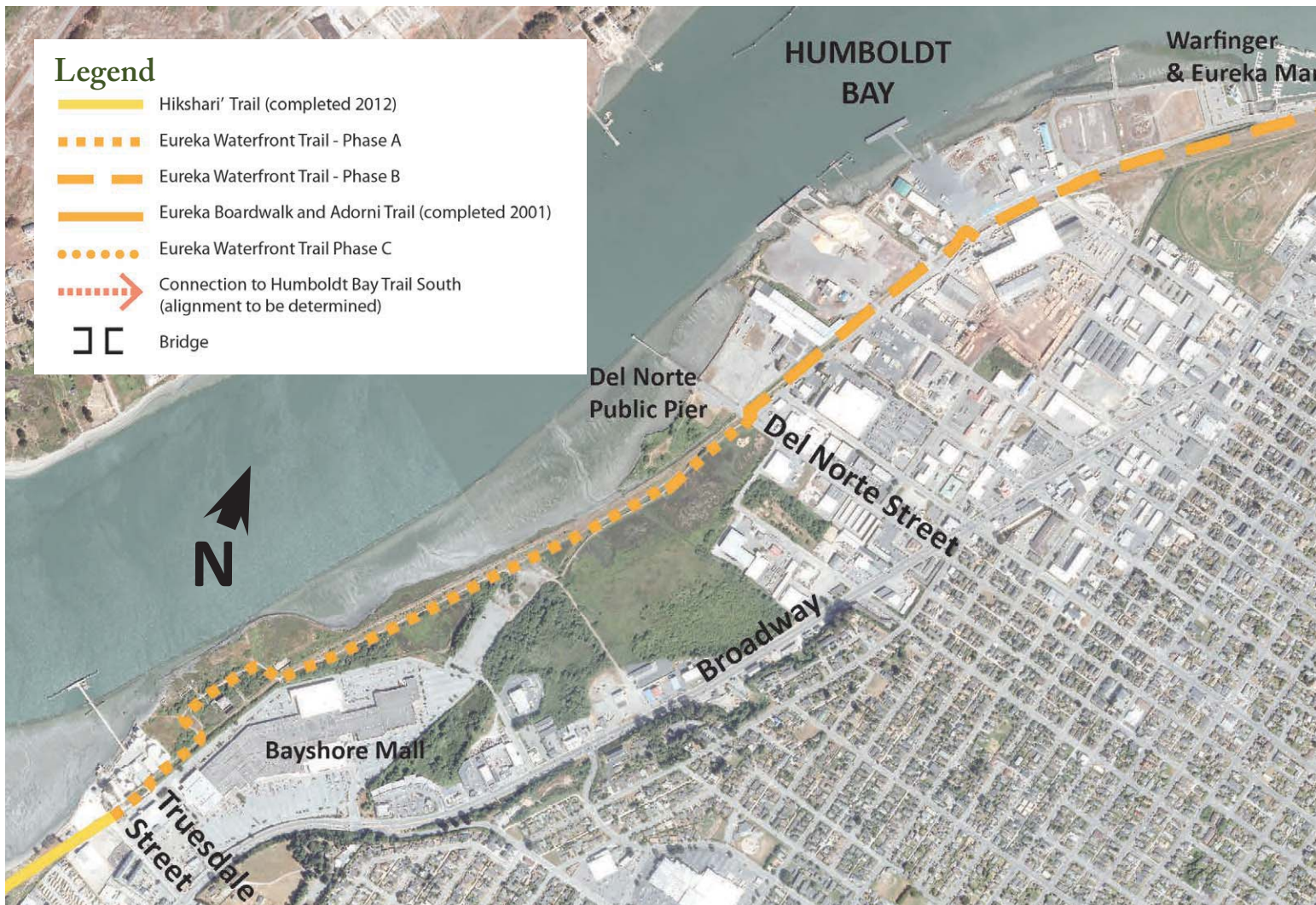
The City of Eureka is developing three trail projects (Phases A, B, and C) to complete the Eureka Waterfront Trail. These projects are designed to fill the gaps between the recently constructed Hikshari' Trail in south Eureka, the existing promenade boardwalk in Old Town, the existing shoreline trail in Halvorson Park, and the existing trail near the Target store. Completion of the Eureka Waterfront Trail is a primary goal of the City Council's strategic visioning plan and a priority for the City's Open Space, Parks, and Recreation Commission.

Once complete, the Eureka Waterfront Trail will provide a continuous 6.3-mile trail along the bay that provides an alternative route from Highway 101 for non-motorized travel through the city. Completion of the trail will significantly benefit public safety by creating a transportation option separated from roads.

The recently constructed Hikshari' Trail in south Eureka traverses 1.5 miles through the Elk River Wildlife Sanctuary along the Elk River. The Hikshari Trail extends from the Pound Road park-and-ride lot to Truesdale Street. This project was completed in

2012 with funding from the Coastal Conservancy, Natural Resources Agency (River Parkways Program), and Pacific Gas & Electric.

The Phase A project will connect to the Hikshari' Trail at Truesdale Street and extend north for 1.2 miles through the Palco Marsh behind the Bayshore Mall to Del Norte Street. Development of engineering plans and specifications is scheduled to begin in August 2014. The Phase A project has funding for construction (\$1.2 million) and is targeted to be built in 2015 or 2016.



The Phase B project will begin at the northern terminus of the Phase A project at Del Norte Street and continue north along Railroad Avenue and Waterfront Drive to C Street, near the Fisherman's Terminal Building. Phase B will connect to the existing promenade boardwalk which passes through Old Town to the Adorni Recreation Center, where the Waterfront Trail transitions to an existing paved trail through Halvorson Park.

The Phase C project will extend from the Halvorson Park trail along the margin of Humboldt Bay to the

existing Target trail along Eureka Slough, and then continue from the Target trail through a proposed undercrossing of Highway 101 to Tydd Street in the Myrtle town area, near the Eureka Open Door Health Clinic. The Phase C project would intersect with the Bay Trail South segment of the Humboldt Bay Trail in the vicinity of the Target trail and Eureka Slough.

Engineering plans and specifications for the Phase B and Phase C projects are expected to be complete in July 2014. In May 2014, the City of Eureka applied for \$4.3 million from the state Active Transportation Program



to secure funds for right-of-way and construction of the Phase B and Phase C projects. The results of this funding round are expected as early as August 2014.



AGENCY UPDATE - CITY OF ARCATA

City of Arcata

Arcata initiated planning and design for the Arcata Rail with Trail Connectivity Project in 2008 with funding from the Coastal Conservancy. The trail will be funded and constructed in two phases, and will ultimately connect the central portion of the city with Humboldt Bay. The "Arcata City Trail" portion will extend from the Arcata Skate Park at Sunset Avenue south around Arcata High School and along L Street to Samoa Boulevard, for a total length of 1.5 miles. This project was identified as a priority project in the city's planning documents to provide safe connectivity to youth and family destination spots throughout the community and help reduce single occupant vehicle trips. This project was awarded funding for construction in March 2014 through the State Transportation Improvement Program, and construction is scheduled to begin later this summer.

The second phase, also known as Humboldt Bay Trail North, will extend from Samoa Boulevard south along the shoreline of the bay to the Bracut Industrial Center. This project will connect to existing trails within the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary and then integrate with the railroad and highway corridors. The majority of the trail will be constructed along the east side of the railroad prism at the required setback distance. Permits and completed engineering plans and specifications are expected by March 2015. In April and May 2014, the City of Arcata applied for construction funds (\$3 million) from two sources: the federal Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) VI grant program and the state Active Transportation Program. Results are expected in August 2014. Additional information on this project is available at the City of Arcata's web site.



AGENCY UPDATE - HUMBOLDT COUNTY

Humboldt County

Humboldt County is leading the development of the Humboldt Bay Trail South segment which will provide the interconnecting link between Eureka's and Arcata's trail projects. The project area extends from the Bracut Industrial Center to X Street in Eureka near the Target store, for a total length of 3.8 miles.

In April 2013, the County began preparing an Initial Engineering Study to study the constraints within the railroad and highway corridors and refine the trail design concepts, in order to identify opportunities to reduce construction costs and reduce impacts to coastal resources. Alignment options generally include "rail-with-trail" (trail closer to the railroad) and "highway-with-trail" (trail closer to the highway). The ultimate project will likely incorporate both rail-with-trail and highway-with-trail designs to accommodate the various constraints, however a final

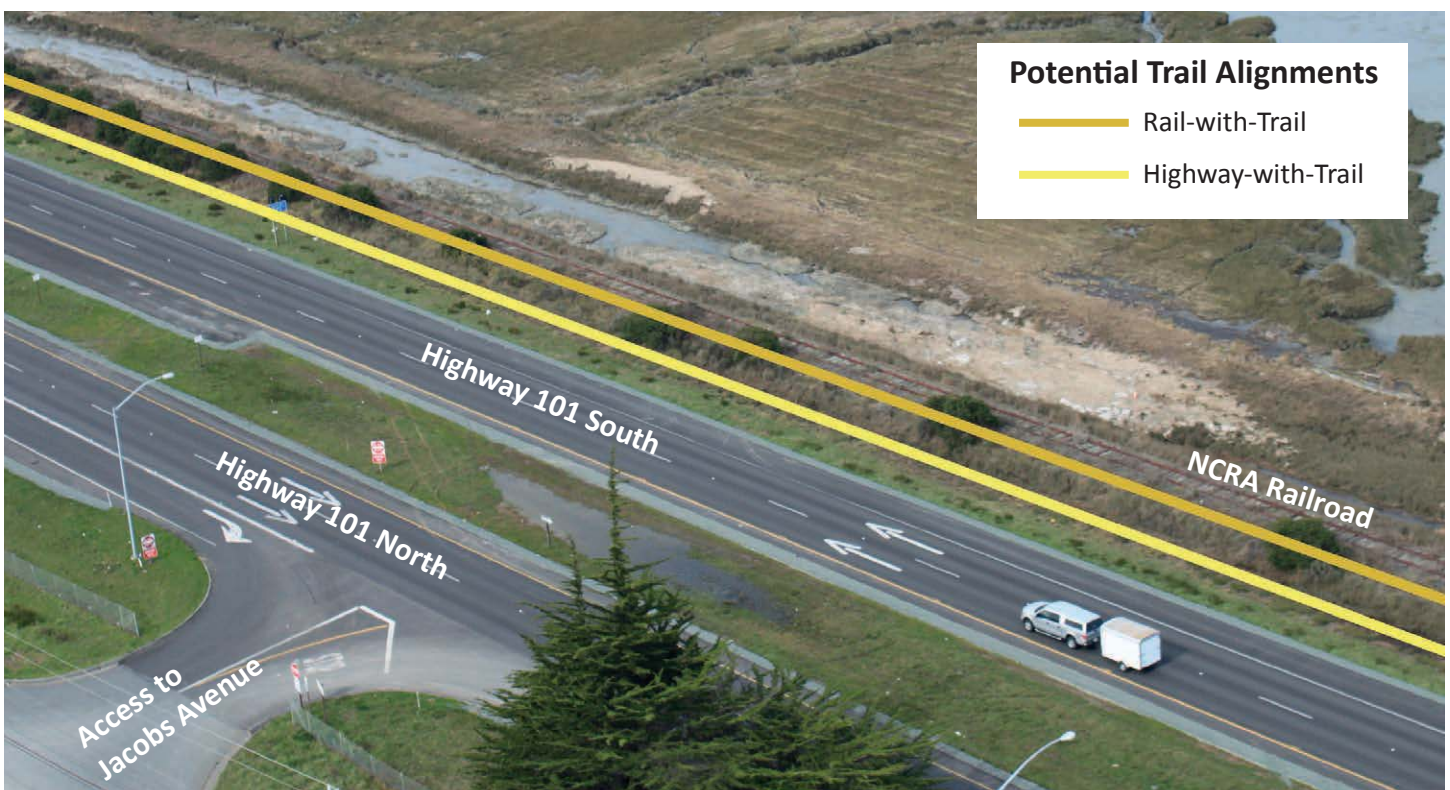
trail design is not expected until 2015 during the next component of project development. The preliminary design includes rehabilitation work for the railroad prism where a rail-with-trail segment warrants upgrades to preserve the integrity of the prism and where needed for construction access. The proposed trail has a 10-foot-wide paved surface with two-foot-wide shoulders on each side with barriers to separate the trail from the railroad or highway as needed.

In March 2014, the County was allocated \$2 million through the State Transportation Improvement Program to complete preliminary engineering, environmental studies, and permitting and to develop engineering plans and specifications. This work is scheduled to begin in August 2014 and is expected to require two to three years due to significant challenges.

Primary challenges to be addressed with this project include:

- Constrained right-of-way
- Need for compatibility with railroad, highway, and private property
- Need to accommodate drainage
- Proximity to sensitive coastal resources / regulatory compliance requirements
- Crossing Eureka Slough
- Mature stand of Eucalyptus trees
- Potential for inundation and/or erosion along the bay shoreline

Preliminary cost estimates for right-of-way and construction range from \$9 to \$12 million. Costs for environmental mitigation are estimated at \$1.5 to \$2.0 million. Future funding will need to be secured for these components.



PARTNER UPDATES

Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG)

HCAOG is a joint powers authority that serves as the regional transportation planning agency. HCAOG leads the development of regional transportation plans, assists local agencies to administer state transportation funding, and coordinates with Caltrans on regional priority projects. HCAOG will be finalizing the Regional Transportation Plan in 2014, and will be coordinating with its member agencies on how to distribute limited regional funds for trail maintenance.

North Coast Railroad Authority (NCRA)

NCRA is the state agency responsible for managing the railroad in the counties of Marin, Sonoma, Mendocino, and Humboldt. In March 2014, the NCRA approved a license agreement for the City of Ukiah to develop a rail-with-trail project within the railroad corridor. This agreement was the first one approved under the NCRA's 2009 Policy & Procedures Manual for trail projects and provides a model for future proposals.

In April 2014, the NCRA applied for federal funds to perform a regional planning study for the railroad around Humboldt Bay and extending south to Dyerville. This plan would provide a strategy for NCRA to collaborate with local jurisdictions and interests to improve and utilize the railroad corridor for freight and excursion train use in conjunction with developing regional trails and also addressing existing flooding hazards and environmental impacts. Rail-with-trail projects provide a strategic opportunity to upgrade portions of the rail corridor which otherwise would not be maintained or upgraded and preserve the corridor for future rail use.

Caltrans

Caltrans is currently finalizing the environmental review document for the Highway 101 Corridor improvement Project to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and the California Environmental Quality Act. In addition to the Humboldt Bay Trail condition, Caltrans is working to address conditions established by the Coastal Commission in September 2013 related to visual impacts, wetland mitigation, and sea level rise. Caltrans is also coordinating with the City of Arcata on the design of a new bridge on Highway 101 over Jacoby Creek that will integrate with the future adjacent trail.

California Coastal Conservancy

The Coastal Conservancy is the lead state agency for planning and supporting development of the California Coastal Trail, which is envisioned as a continuous network of public trails along the coastline that provides non-motorized recreation and transportation opportunities for the widest possible range of potential users.

The Conservancy views completion of the Humboldt Bay Trail as a high priority because it will close a significant gap in the California Coastal Trail.

Volunteer Trail Stewards

The Volunteer Trail Stewards is a program of the Humboldt Trails Council to support local public agencies with maintenance and monitoring. The Trail Stewards organize volunteers to help offset the costs of managing and maintaining trails and provide the eyes and ears of the community to promote safe and appropriate use. The Trail Stewards are currently organized to provide regular support for the Hammond Trail, Hikshari' Trail, Arcata Community Forest, and Humboldt Coastal Nature Center, and are signing up volunteers in anticipation of working at the new McKay Community Forest. The Trail Stewards have a strong track record of organizing dedicated and skilled volunteers for fun and meaningful work in support of trails. Further information is available at humtrails.org/Trail_Stewards.html.

Other partners and supporters

- Arcata Chamber of Commerce
- Bay [T]rail Advocates
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Eureka Chamber of Commerce
- Friends of the Arcata Marsh
- Green Wheels
- Humboldt Area Foundation
- Humboldt Baykeeper
- Humboldt Bay Bicycle Commuters' Association
- Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District
- Humboldt County Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Humboldt Trails Council
- Northcoast Environmental Center
- Redwood Community Action Agency
- Timber Heritage Association
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- California Transportation Commission
- California Natural Resources Agency
- Pacific Gas & Electric

BENEFITS & CHALLENGES

Benefits

Mobility

- Provides non-motorized trails that are accessible to a wide range of users
- Supports an increase in the number of trips made by bicycling and walking

Safety

- Upgrades transportation facilities to provide separation between vehicles and non-motorized travelers
- Reduces transportation-related crashes, injuries, and fatalities
- Incorporates measures to prepare and adapt for sea level rise

Recreation

- Enhances access to Humboldt Bay
- Expands opportunities for bicycling, walking, jogging, skating

Education

- Provides opportunities for nature study and observation

Social

- Connects communities

Health & Fitness

- Provides opportunities for exercise and active living

Environmental

- Reduces fuel consumption and vehicle emissions

Economic

- Enhances quality of life to retain and attract a strong workforce
- Attracts visitors who patronize local businesses
- Increases affordable options for traveling to work locations

Governance

- Delivers a showcase project to demonstrate implementation of the Complete Streets vision
- Leverages public funds for multiple benefits
- Improves and stabilizes the deteriorating railroad infrastructure

Sea Level Rise

The regional rate of sea level rise along the Pacific Coast during the 20th century was eight inches, based on long-term tide gage records at sites on stable ground. Due to the complex tectonic activity in the Humboldt Bay region and the trend of subsidence (downward vertical land motion), the local effective rate of sea level rise around Humboldt Bay appears to be nearly double the regional rate, at 1.5 feet over the last 100 years. Continued sea level rise is expected to increase the risk of flooding, erosion, wave impacts, and rising groundwater for areas along the coast.

Local public agencies are coordinating through the Humboldt Bay Sea Level Rise Adaptation Planning Group, formed in 2013 with funding from the Coastal Conservancy, to support informed decision-making and encourage a unified, consistent regional adaptation strategy to address the hazards associated with sea level rise in the Humboldt Bay region.

Maps depicting areas vulnerable under current and future sea levels, based on detailed topographic data and hydraulic analysis, were completed in April 2014. Local

agencies have started using these vulnerability maps to analyze potential impacts to key assets, including transportation infrastructure. In addition, agencies are starting to consider potential adaptation strategies such as protection, re-design, or re-location. The scale of sea level rise and the cost and complexity of adaptation poses a considerable challenge to all coastal communities.

Highway 101 is one of the most important transportation assets in Humboldt County. In late 2014, Caltrans will complete an analysis of climate change vulnerabilities of the highway between Arcata and Eureka.



OTHER REGIONAL TRAILS

Visions of the Future

Efforts are ongoing to expand regional trails beyond the Humboldt Bay area for transportation and recreation benefits, to ensure safe and equitable access for non-motorized travelers:

① Little River Trail

In April 2014, RCAA completed a study evaluating the feasibility of options for extending the Hammond Trail between Clam Beach and the Westhaven/Trinidad area. The Hammond Trail currently terminates at Clam Beach County Park. The proposed northern extension would pass through Little River State Beach, cross Little River on the Highway 101 bridge which would be widened, and connect to Scenic Drive. The Coastal Conservancy has offered to provide partial funding for the next component of project development if a 20% cost-share can be generated.

② Annie & Mary Trail

The Arcata & Mad River Railroad line represents an opportunity to develop a regional trail connecting Arcata, Glendale, and Blue Lake. RCAA completed a feasibility study in 2003. In 2008, NCRA passed a resolution expressing willingness to cooperate with local stakeholders in effectuating multi-modal transportation use of the line. Following this resolution, HCAOG and Humboldt County initiated preliminary technical studies to evaluate potential subsurface contamination and analyze the right-of-way. Planning and conceptual design work is ongoing.

③ Samoa Boulevard

Caltrans has conducted preliminary studies of a Class I bikeway along Highway 255 between Arcata and Manila. The NCRA railroad right-of-way along this stretch could also provide rail-with-trail opportunities.

④ ⑤ McKay Community Forest

In April 2014, Humboldt County was awarded the final funding to acquire 1,000 acres of forestland southeast of Eureka to establish a community forest. One of the primary purposes of the community forest will be to provide recreational trails. A future vision is to establish a continuous trail between the McKay Community Forest and the Headwaters Forest Reserve.

⑥ Eureka to Fortuna

The NCRA railroad corridor could potentially provide a trail from south Eureka (Hikshari Trail) to Fortuna.

⑦ John Campbell Memorial Greenway

Former mayor John Campbell envisioned a bicycle and pedestrian trail through Fortuna extending from the Eel River to the Headwaters Forest Reserve. In March 2014, the City of Fortuna completed a study analyzing



Hikshari Trail south access point

trail options from the Fortuna River Lodge through the city along Strongs Creek to the base of the south end of the Headwater Forest. This trail would improve east-west connectivity, provide recreational opportunities, and serve as a convenient way to reach city parks and local shopping destinations.

⑧ Headwaters to Fortuna

The Bureau of Land Management is currently exploring options that could connect the Headwaters Forest to the City of Fortuna.

⑨ Rio Dell

Rio Dell has applied for outside funding to explore city-wide trail options as well as a potential rail-with-trail connection from Rio Dell to Fortuna.





References:

- *Project Study Report – Humboldt Bay Trail: Bay Trail South Segment (Eureka-to-Bracut), X Street in Eureka to Bracut Industrial Facility* (Humboldt County, 2014)
- *Initial Engineering Study – Humboldt Bay Trail: Bay Trail South Segment (Eureka-to-Bracut), X Street in Eureka to Bracut Industrial Facility* (GHD, 2014)
- *Humboldt Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) -- 2013/14 Update “VROOM”* (HCAOG, 2013)
- *Findings and Recommendations of the North Coast Railroad Authority’s Ad Hoc Humboldt Bay Rail Corridor Committee* (NCRA, 2012)
- *Humboldt Regional Bicycle Plan* (HCAOG, 2012)
- *Humboldt County Coastal Trail Implementation Strategy* (RCAA et al, 2011)
- *Humboldt County Regional Trails Master Plan* (HCAOG, 2010)
- *Humboldt County Corridor Preservation Report* (HCAOG, 2010)
- *Humboldt County Regional Pedestrian Plan* (HCAOG, 2008)
- *Humboldt County Regional Transportation Plan* (HCAOG, 2008)
- *Humboldt Bay Trail Feasibility Study: Arcata to Eureka* (Alta Planning + Design et al, 2007)
- *Humboldt Bay Management Plan* (Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District, 2007)
- *Humboldt Bay Trails Feasibility Study* (RCAA, 2001)
- *Envisioning a Humboldt Bay Shoreline Trail on California Coast & Ocean* (Coastal Conservancy, 1997)
- *Feasibility Analysis: Humboldt County Bicycle Facilities Planning Project* (RCAA, 1997)

Monthly meetings:

The Highway 101 Corridor and Bay Trail Ad Hoc Committee meets on the second Thursday of each month at 1:00 pm. Meetings are held at the HCAOG office located at 611 I Street, Suite B, in Eureka and are open to the public. Agendas are posted at <http://www.hcaog.net/>.

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