



**HUMBOLDT COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS**  
**Regional Transportation Planning Agency**  
**Humboldt County Local Transportation Authority**  
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**AGENDA ITEM 8a**  
**HCAOG Board Meeting**  
**September 17, 2026**

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DATE: September 9, 2026  
TO: HCAOG Board of Directors  
FROM: Oona Smith, Senior Regional Planner  
SUBJECT: **Partnering Assets & Authorities for Comprehensive Transit (PAACT)**  
**Project: Drafts of Transit Network Concepts for Ridership vs. Coverage and**  
**Draft Survey Questions**

## **STAFF REPORT**

### **Contents:**

- Staff Summary
- Example of Transit [Coverage Concept link](#) (Remix software platform)
- Example of Transit [Ridership Concept link](#) (Remix software platform)
- Draft survey questions (enclosure)

### **Discussion Item:**

1. Introduce the item as a discussion item;
2. Allow staff to present the item;
3. Receive public comment;
4. Discuss item, provide comments, and direct staff as applicable.

### **Staff Summary:**

(See PAACT background summary at end of staff report.)

As you may recall, in April the PAACT project team held a public Stakeholder Workshop as well as a two-day Design Retreat with the Project Steering Working Group. The consultants from Jarrett Walker + Associates took work gathered at these workshops, and subsequent review by HTA and HCAOG committees (Technical Advisory Committee and Social Services Transportation Advisory Council), and drafted transit network concepts. The concepts illustrate the competing objectives, if resources are limited, of maximizing bus frequencies (“ridership” concept) and maximizing the geographic area served (“coverage” concept). Summarized another way:

We often hear that people want transit service to:

1. Be faster, more frequent and/or run more hours, and
2. Serve more areas.

The first is a **Ridership** request, meaning faster and more frequent service will increase the number of people who use transit in the areas that it serves. The second is a **Coverage** request, meaning there are more households and businesses within ¼ mile of a transit stop.

At the Board meeting, I will present the draft maps of the two concepts. The concepts are not proposals for changing the existing transit routes. The examples are tools to illustrate the competing transit goals. Our objective is to solicit feedback on preferences and values in order to form policy and inform investment priorities.

One example of the concepts is mapped for the Humboldt Bay Area. Below lists key differences of those two network concepts.

**Humboldt Bay Area Coverage Network Concept:**

Click [Coverage Network link](#) (Remix software platform)\*

- Overall: Mostly hourly services providing coverage within the bigger cities, service every 2 hours to smaller and outlying communities, and Humboldt Flex service to other smaller communities.
- Includes a (new) shuttle route providing service to Blue Lake and Manila every 2 hours.
- Adds regular service to Blue Lake and Manila.
- Does not deviate RTS to Manila and keeps consistent 60-minute frequency (and travel time) between McKinleyville and Eureka.
- There is 30-minute frequency only on the RTS segment between Cal Poly and CR.

**Humboldt Bay Area Ridership Network Concept:**

Click [Ridership Network link](#) (Remix software platform)\*

- No service to Trinidad, Blue Lake, and Manila.
- No Humboldt Flex service.
- New route in Arcata between Valley West and Cal Poly Humboldt; allows (through staggered service) 15-minute frequency between Cal Poly and Valley West, and between Cal Poly and Arcata downtown.
- 15-minute frequency on ETS “E3” route (serves Old Town, Myrtle town, and St. Joseph Hospital).
- Humboldt Flex resources are used to increase frequency of service on RTS in McKinleyville and Fortuna.

\*Route colors denote frequency of service:

- Red is every 15 minutes
- Blue is every 30 minutes
- Green is every hour or 60 minutes
- Light brown is every 2 hours or 120 minutes, and
- (Disabled: light gray for express routes, which provide a limited number of trips per day.)

The concept maps will be part of the “Network Concept Survey,” which asks, in a nutshell, *do you prefer planning and investing in transit that emphasizes a “ridership” goal, or a “coverage” goal?* The public survey will be opened by late September or October 2, 2026, at the latest. The survey will be open for four weeks or longer if warranted. Survey responses will inform drafting a “Comprehensive Plan for Regional Transit & Multimodal Networks & Networking” as well as inform drafting guidance for integrating land use and transit/active mobility in local planning procedures.

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### **PAACT Project Background: Core Tasks and Official Partners**

To recap the PAACT project, the major components are:

- ❑ To increase networking and develop a comprehensive plan for regional transit and multimodal networks, based on:
  - Transit network’s existing conditions, demographics, destinations (i.e., points of interest/activity), and land use patterns.
  - An assessment of the transit market and system assets.
  - Preferences and values expressed by agency staff, decision-makers, and the public.
- ❑ To amplify land use-transportation policy connections in planning and buildout.
- ❑ To strengthen government-to-government working relationships, including regular agency consultation with HTA, and strengthen agencies’ standard procedures for integrating land use and transit/active mobility decisions.

HCAOG and HTA were awarded a Caltrans Strategic Partnerships–Transit Program grant for the PAACT project. The grant award is \$479,500, with a required local cash match of \$62,150 (11.47%). The grant term is through June 30, 2027.

Official grant partners, who are grant recipients and/or contributing matching funds, are:

- Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA)
- Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of Trinidad Rancheria
- City of Arcata
- City of Blue Lake
- City of Eureka (contributing local match, not receiving grant funds)
- City of Fortuna
- City of Trinidad (Has an executed MOA with HCAOG but has not participated so far)
- County of Humboldt–Planning & Building Dept.
- Yurok Tribe