



HUMBOLDT COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
Regional Transportation Planning Agency
Humboldt County Local Transportation Authority
Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies

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AGENDA ITEM 4b
SSTAC Meeting
March 4, 2026

DATE: February 25, 2026
TO: Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC)
FROM: Stephen Luther, Associate Regional Planner
SUBJECT: **Dial a Ride Analysis Report**

DISCUSSION ITEM
STAFF REPORT

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- Staff Summary

Staff Summary:

In 2024, HCAOG enlisted the support of researchers at the Western Transportation Institute (WTI) to analyze the Dial a Ride (DAR) system. WTI is based at Montana State University and provided technical assistance through funding received by the National Association of Development Organizations' Research Foundation. (The WTI team may sound familiar as they led and prepared the McKinleyville Transit Study in 2020).

DAR is the ADA-required paratransit service required within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of fixed-route transit. A&MRTS and ETS are the only two fixed-route systems, as RTS is classified as a commuter line. Therefore, the paratransit service mandated by the ADA is within the Arcata and Eureka boundaries. In 2017 HCAOG entered into a funding agreement for DAR that included additional non-mandated ("premium") service zones that include the Samona peninsula, Humboldt Hill, Fields Landing, King Salmon, Old Arcata Road, McKinleyville, Ridgewood Heights and Elk River.

The conclusion of the report suggested a mileage and hours-based allocation. According to the WTI analysis that looked at 3 months of DAR data from 2023, completed trips that began and ended within Eureka accounted for **45% of completed rides** but only 23% of total hours an 15% of miles. Together with rides within Arcata, the service within the mandated areas accounts for 50% of the total rides and just 20% of the total hours/miles. That leaves 80% of the hours/miles coming from trips that go between mandated zones and supplemental zones. As the rising costs are driven by hours/miles, the recommendation of the report is to adjust the cost allocation to reflect where the hours and miles are coming from. In addition, HCAOG is recommended to be removed from the funding allocation because HCAOG's share comes out of LTF funds which would otherwise go to general transit operational funding. It is also not a common or regular practice for RTPAs like HCAOG to directly fund DAR services. In addition, HCAOG's share

comes from Priority 3 of the LTF for the CTSA/Supplemental DAR line item. This is capped at 5% and there is very little left after accounting for just the CTSA share.

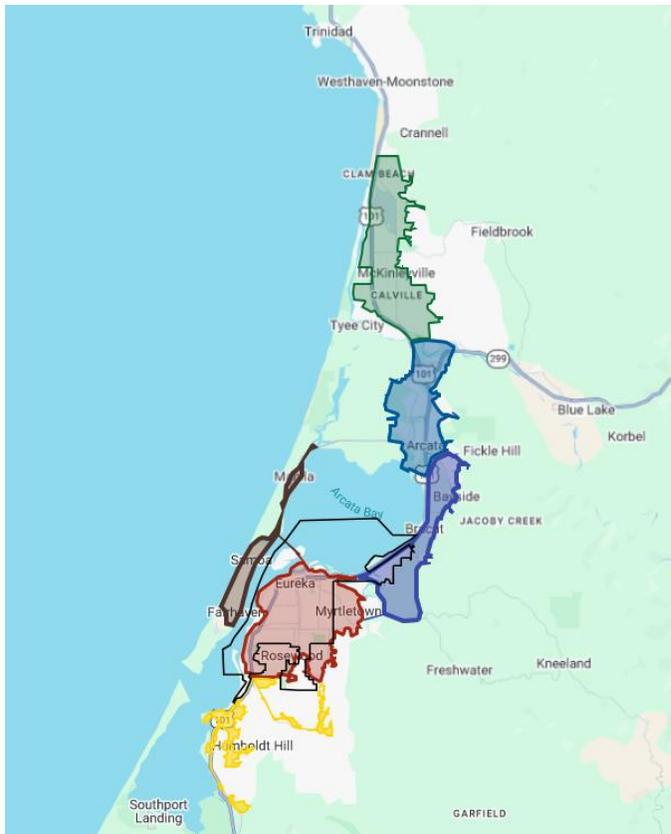
The table below summarizes the conclusion of the report with respect to the cost share allocation based on hours and miles with the removal of HCAOG. It should be noted that the County does not have available funds to cover those additional costs and this is not a feasible recommendation. At the same time, the prospect of reducing costs by reducing service to supplemental zones is not currently being considered although in the future it may have to be. Two potential avenues to explore are setting DAR policy to limit long-haul rides and setting fares higher for long distances.

Table 5: Updated DAR Funding/Cost Allocation

Total Cost Allocation	Existing Allocation	Example Scenario 1	Example Scenario 2	Based on Hours/Miles
Eureka/HTA	58%	29%	46%	19%
Arcata	10%	6%	12%	2%
Humboldt County	18%	18%	15%	79%
HCAOG	14%	47%	26%	

Note: Example Scenarios from Humboldt County TDP 2023

The item today is for discussion purposes to receive input from members of the SSTAC. Staff is coordinating with HTA, the County and other stakeholders to identify potential recommendations, however at this time there is no specific recommendation on the table.



The various zones for DAR and microtransit. For DAR, only the red around Eureka and light blue around Arcata are required paratransit. The other zones shown are supplemental service zones that were initiated by HCAOG over a decade ago. In further analysis of