

Humboldt County Transit Development Plan 2023-2028



Technical Memorandum 1 Existing Conditions



January 9, 2023



Prepared by LSC Transportation Consultants

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The Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) is a Joint Powers Agency (JPA) composed of the County of Humboldt and the seven incorporated cities in the county (Arcata, Blue Lake, Eureka, Ferndale, Fortuna, Rio Dell, Trinidad). HCAOG is the designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for Humboldt County and therefore responsible for transportation planning projects. HCAOG is aware of the important role of public transit in meeting the transportation needs of local residents, and therefore has retained LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc., to prepare an update to the Transit Development Plan (TDP) for transit programs serving Humboldt County.

A TDP assesses current transit operations and related transportation issues in the study area to identify potential changes that could improve the public transit program over the next five years. Before analyzing any potential modifications to existing transit services, there first needs to be a detailed understanding of the factors currently influencing transportation in Humboldt County. This first Technical Memorandum (Tech Memo) is an interim study document that reviews current and future demographic conditions, recent transportation plans, input from public outreach, the recent operating history of public transit services, and information on connecting services in Humboldt County. Future Tech Memos will present an evaluation of service, capital, management, and financial alternatives. Ultimately, the findings from each Tech Memo will be used to determine the recommended service improvements and implementation strategy presented in the final, updated Humboldt County TDP.

STUDY ISSUES

This study takes direction from issues that have impacted transit in Humboldt County during recent years, as well as changing conditions that will likely impact transit demand in the near future. More specifically, the study issues guiding the development of this TDP were identified by Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG), transit providers and their staffs, and local stakeholders and community representatives. The study issues identified include the following:

- **Ridership:** Ridership dropped sharply during the COVID-19 pandemic and has only slowly begun to recover. What can the Humboldt County transit providers do to attract passengers back to transit? What routing and scheduling changes are necessary to meet the needs of current riders, or is a new service model possible? How can the transit providers encourage people to ride the bus versus using their personal vehicles?
- **Funding:** Funding is the biggest limiting factor for transit. The need to convert to a zero-emission fleet is expensive and exacerbates the problem as local match requirements lessen the availability of operating funds. What is the funding outlook for the next five years? What public and private sources of revenue are available? What cost-sharing opportunities or expectations are involved?

- **Service Efficiency:** What is the most appropriate service plan to meet the varied transit needs? What routing and scheduling changes are necessary to maximize efficiency? Can routing be improved to reduce travel time on existing routes in Eureka and Arcata? What will be the costs/benefits of a new service plan?
- **Perception of Transit:** Many people consider public transit to be for the needy and people without choices. There is a perception that transit is not safe or clean, and this deters riders. How can transit programs change this perception?
- **Alternative Transportation:** Is microtransit or other on-demand service appropriate for portions of Humboldt County? Would it be cost-effective? How can first-mile/last-mile transportation needs best be addressed?
- **Converting Fleets to Zero-Emission Vehicles:** The State of California’s Innovative Clean Transit Regulation will go into effect during the upcoming planning period, requiring transit agencies to begin acquiring zero-emission buses. HTA was just awarded a \$38 million grant to procure 11 zero-emission hydrogen fuel cell electric buses and supportive infrastructure. The new buses will serve the local Trinidad-to-Scotia route as well as a new intercity route (the Redwood Coast Express) to Ukiah. How will this fleet change impact services? What other capital needs will there be during the plan period and how should transit agencies fund these purchases?
- **New Transit Center:** Humboldt Transit Authority has procured money for a new, multimodal transit center in Eureka that will accommodate buses, paratransit, and bikes/scooters. How can transit providers support passengers for the first and last miles of their trips (to and from the transit center)?
- **Branding:** Public transit in Humboldt County currently consists of four transit operators, which collectively operate eight different transit services. Rebranding with a common theme, unified fare structures, and joint marketing may make the travel experience easier for passengers and help new riders learn about the transit services. A branding study was completed recently, and current marketing efforts should consider the pros and cons of unified branding.
- **Fares:** Are the fares for the various Humboldt County transit services reasonable? Can the sale of discounted passes be used to boost ridership? What are the appropriate fares for A&MRTS, which hasn’t raised fares for many years?
- **Intercity Services:** There are minimal transit services in Humboldt County outside of Eureka and Arcata. What is the need for intercity transportation in Humboldt County and beyond? How can providers better meet these needs?
- **Coordination:** Land use development in Humboldt County has made it difficult to serve many residents with public transit. Can transit providers better coordinate with city and county planning officials to ensure transit is considered in new development plans?
- **Service Frequency:** The low frequency of services was often mentioned in stakeholder interviews as a deterrent to using transit. Are there any services which warrant an increase in

frequency? How can increased frequency be funded? Does this require a trade-off in reduced service areas?

- **Paratransit and On-Demand:** Paratransit ridership has been slow, yet some complain that they are unable to book rides when they want them and find the reservation system frustrating. Do reservation policies need to be reviewed? How effective is paratransit? Could general-public dial-a-ride services be offered and combined with paratransit as a service option?
- **Student Transportation:** Student ridership decreased during the pandemic, but classes are now returning as hybrid options. At the same time, California Polytechnic State University - Humboldt (Cal Poly Humboldt) is planning to expand to an enrollment of 12,000 students in upcoming years, many of whom will be housed in locations with limited parking. How will their transportation needs be met, and how will this growth affect transit services county-wide? How can HTA and Cal Poly Humboldt best coordinate to ensure equitable service and funding?

These study issues provide a framework for analyzing the recent history of the various transit services and for developing a thorough and effective service plan for the Humboldt County transit providers for the next five years. The TDP serves as an opportunity to improve public transit services to better serve the greater Humboldt County community of both now and the future.

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STUDY AREA

Spanning 3,568 square miles in northwestern California, Humboldt County is world renowned for its stunning geography, characterized by towering redwood forests and rugged coastline. Humboldt County is quite rural, with a population density of only 38 people per square mile. There are seven incorporated cities in the county: Arcata, Blue Lake, Eureka, Ferndale, Fortuna, Rio Dell, and Trinidad. There are also dozens of census-designated places, with two of the larger ones being McKinleyville and Garberville. Eight federally recognized tribes call Humboldt County home: the Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria, Big Lagoon Rancheria, Blue Lake Rancheria, Hoopa Valley Tribe, Karuk Tribe, Trinidad Rancheria, Wiyot Tribe, and the Yurok Tribe. Logging and agriculture have historically been the backbone of the Humboldt County economy, but recent decades have seen other sectors such as government services, medical, education, tourism, and recreation grow significantly.

Humboldt County's road network consists of approximately 1,400 miles of county roads and city streets, as well as 378 miles of state highways and other federal roadways. US Highway 101 (US 101) is the major north-south roadway, passing through most of the county's population centers. State Route (SR) 299 is the main east-west corridor across the county, traveling from the Pacific coast east to Weaverville and Redding, where travelers can then access Interstate 5 (I-5). There are no interstates in Humboldt County. The study area is shown in Figure 1. Humboldt County's vast size and rugged landscape make it difficult to travel around, never mind provide reliable and timely public transportation. Despite the challenging terrain, there is growing demand for public transit services. The demographic characteristics influencing transit ridership in Humboldt County are explored further in the following section.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Historic and Projected Population

Population changes can greatly impact demand for transit services. Table 1 shows the recent population history of Humboldt County, the County's cities (including unincorporated McKinleyville) in comparison with the State of California. Overall, the Humboldt County population grew by 4,996 people from 2005 to 2020 to a total of 136,463 people. This equates to an increase of only 0.2 percent annually, a slower rate compared to the State of California. Arcata and Fortuna saw the greatest growth over the last 15 years (0.7 and 0.6 percent annual growth, respectively), while Blue Lake, Eureka, Ferndale, and Trinidad saw either neutral or negative population growth (Table 1).

To effectively plan for the future of the transit system, it is important to consider not only recent population changes but population forecasts as well. While there is an aspect of uncertainty with

**Figure 1
Humboldt County Site Map**



population models, they are still useful when trying to predict how transit demand may change in upcoming years. Humboldt County population projections by age category, sourced from the California Department of Finance (DOF), are shown in Table 2. Highlights include:

- Humboldt County's population is predicted to grow slightly from 2020 to 2030 (0.8 percent), before declining in the decade following (-2.2 percent), negating the previous growth.
- The number of children ages 5 to 17 will decrease faster than the overall county population.
- The adult population between the ages of 18 to 24 will fluctuate during upcoming years with an anticipated net decrease of 1 percent between 2020 and 2040.
- The size of the adult population of traditional working age (25 to 64) will experience a net 5 percent decrease between 2020 and 2040.
- The senior population between the ages 65 and 74 is expected to decrease significantly from 2020 to 2040 (-25 percent).
- Seniors between the ages of 75 and 84 will grow at the fastest rate out of all the age categories in Humboldt County in the next decade, growing by a whopping 78.7 percent between 2020 and 2030 before declining by about 5 percent in the following decade.
- Finally, the senior population ages 85 and above is expected to grow significantly during the current decade (41.7 percent) before increasing even further in the following decade (81.8 percent). This is also the age group that is most likely to become transit dependent.

A key takeaway of the population forecast for Humboldt County is that the rapid increase in the number of senior adults ages 75 and older in coming years will likely result in increased demand for public transit. This expected demand means new or expanded transit services should consider the needs of seniors. Examples of transit services popular among seniors are demand response, paratransit, or non-emergency medical transportation programs.

While the Humboldt County population is expected to stay consistent in upcoming decades according to the DOF, Humboldt County's Economic Development Division is projecting the population will grow. The number of part-time Humboldt County residents, a group not fully accounted for in the DOF population projections, is expected to increase in upcoming years as California Polytechnic University Humboldt (Cal Poly Humboldt) expands and the county continues to be a desirable destination for vacationers and climate refugees. It is important to note that these changes, along with high home prices and a small housing stock, will exacerbate the housing issues experienced by challenged many local residents. The US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) data shows the county's rental vacancy rate decreased by 43 percent from 2010 to 2020, resulting in Arcata, Eureka, and McKinleyville all having rental vacancy rates below the state average of 4.1 percent. Despite the increasingly competitive rental market, ACS data shows the number of occupied homes in Arcata, Eureka, and McKinleyville decreased from 2010 to 2020 by 2, 1, and 8 percent, respectively, suggesting homes have been purchased by seasonal residents or to be vacation rentals.

Table 1: Historic and Current Population

	2005		2010		2015		2020	
	Population	% Annual Growth	Population	% Annual Growth	Population	% Annual Growth	Population	% Annual Growth
Humboldt County	131,467	-0.5%	134,623	0.5%	135,052	0.1%	136,463	0.2%
Arcata	17,000	0.4%	17,211	0.2%	18,085	1.0%	18,857	0.8%
Blue Lake	1,212	1.3%	1,253	0.7%	1,278	0.4%	1,208	-1.1%
Eureka	26,793	0.5%	27,125	0.2%	26,811	-0.2%	26,512	-0.2%
Ferndale	1,427	0.6%	1,371	-0.8%	1,435	0.9%	1,398	-0.5%
Fortuna	11,479	1.8%	11,897	0.7%	11,882	0.0%	12,516	1.0%
McKinleyville ¹	15,247	2.3%	16,896	2.1%	16,291	-0.7%	16,292	0.0%
Rio Dell	3,265	0.6%	3,368	0.6%	3,414	0.3%	3,379	-0.2%
Trinidad	342	1.8%	367	1.4%	368	0.1%	307	-3.6%
Unincorporated Areas	54,702	-4.3%	55,135	0.2%	55,488	0.1%	55,994	0.2%
State of California	35,869,173	1.1%	37,253,956	0.8%	38,907,642	0.9%	39,538,223	0.3%

Source: US Census and California Department of Finance.

Note 1: McKinleyville is an unincorporated community but the third largest community in Humboldt County.

Table 2: Humboldt County Population Projections by Age Category

Year	Total (All Ages)	Preschool (0-4 years)	School Age to Young Adult (5-17 years)	College Age (18-24 years)	Working Age (25-64 years)	Young Retirees (65-74 years)	Mature Retirees (75-84 years)	Older Seniors (85 or older)
2010	135,102	7,834	19,456	16,782	73,204	9,767	5,481	2,578
2020	132,706	6,926	20,279	17,033	62,664	16,182	6,869	2,753
2030	133,738	6,182	19,242	17,926	59,083	15,130	12,274	3,901
2040	130,791	6,170	17,304	16,864	59,511	12,204	11,645	7,093
<i>2010 to 2020 Change</i>								
Number	-2,396	-908	823	251	-10,540	6,415	1,388	175
Percent	-1.8%	-11.6%	4.2%	1.5%	-14.4%	65.7%	25.3%	6.8%
<i>2020 to 2030 Change</i>								
Number	1,032	-744	-1,037	893	-3,581	-1,052	5,405	1,148
Percent	0.8%	-10.7%	-5.1%	5.2%	-5.7%	-6.5%	78.7%	41.7%
<i>2030 to 2040 Change</i>								
Number	-2,947	-12	-1,938	-1,062	428	-2,926	-629	3,192
Percent	-2.2%	-0.2%	-10.1%	-5.9%	0.7%	-19.3%	-5.1%	81.8%

Source: California Department of Finance.

Transit Dependent Population

A large portion of transit ridership nationwide tends to be drawn from what is known as the transit dependent population. The potentially transit dependent population is comprised of youths, senior adults, persons with a disability, low-income persons, and persons who live in zero-vehicle households. Table 3 presents key demographic data showing where potentially transit dependent persons live within Humboldt County at the census tract level. Detailed figures representing this data are included in Appendix A. Highlights from Table 3 include the following:

- About one-fifth of the Humboldt County population are **youth** (children younger than 18). Areas with relatively high numbers of youth include Eureka (25.6 percent of the overall youth population), Fortuna (15 percent), and McKinleyville (12.5 percent).
- **Senior adults** over the age of 65 are currently 18 percent of the Humboldt County population (24,287 persons). This is a slightly greater proportion compared to the State of California (15 percent). Large percentages of the countywide senior population live in Cutten area of Eureka (5.7 percent), Bayside and Jacoby Creek (5 percent), and Myrtle town (4.9 percent).
- People with a **disability** that limits their ability to drive are often reliant on public transit. According to the US Census Bureau definition, there are 22,711 disabled persons in Humboldt County (17 percent). This is a higher proportion than California (11 percent). Many disabled persons live in Eureka (28.4 percent of the countywide disabled population), Fortuna (11 percent), Arcata (9.9 percent), and McKinleyville (9.5 percent).
- Due to the high costs associated with owning and maintaining a vehicle, many **low-income** individuals instead choose to ride public transit to get around. 19 percent of Humboldt County's population is estimated to be living under the federal poverty level, which is a higher rate than the State of California (12 percent). One of the factors contributing to this higher rate is that many of the students attending Humboldt State University and living near the school in Arcata are considered to be low-income. Other areas with large numbers of low-income individuals are Old Town Eureka, Fortuna, Loleta, and the Hoopa Reservation.
- Whether or not a household has a vehicle available is a strong indicator of potential transit dependence. As of 2021, there were estimated to be 3,903 households in Humboldt County without a vehicle. Many of these **zero-vehicle households** are located in the Old Town and Henderson Center in Eureka (10.1 percent and 6.9 percent of the countywide zero-vehicle households, respectively), around Humboldt State in Arcata (5.7 percent), the Hoopa Reservation (5.6 percent), and in the Rosewood neighborhood of Eureka (5.5 percent).

Table 3: Humboldt County Demographic Characteristics

Census Tract	Area Description	Total		Youth (Under 18 Years)		Seniors (65+)		Persons with a Disability		Persons Below Poverty Level		Zero-Vehicle Households	
		Total Persons	Households	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1	Eureka / Old Town	4,337	1,957	670	2.6%	540	2.2%	902	4.0%	1,397	5.3%	396	10.1%
2	Eureka / Henderson Center	5,981	2,443	1,223	4.7%	693	2.9%	1,005	4.4%	661	2.5%	269	6.9%
3	Eureka / Rosewood	5,097	2,370	951	3.7%	996	4.1%	906	4.0%	1,037	4.0%	215	5.5%
4	Eureka / Herrick Ave	4,245	1,514	888	3.4%	770	3.2%	970	4.3%	1,017	3.9%	139	3.6%
5	Eureka / Old Town	4,361	1,716	832	3.2%	818	3.4%	742	3.3%	1,099	4.2%	270	6.9%
6	Eureka	5,253	2,041	970	3.7%	755	3.1%	1,041	4.6%	618	2.4%	139	3.6%
7	Eureka / Zoo	5,521	2,156	1,109	4.3%	1,383	5.7%	892	3.9%	679	2.6%	90	2.3%
8	Myrtle town	5,186	2,155	897	3.5%	1,193	4.9%	1,117	4.9%	818	3.1%	87	2.2%
9	Bayside / Jacoby Creek	5,325	2,240	796	3.1%	1,209	5.0%	504	2.2%	723	2.8%	19	0.5%
10.01	Arcata / Downtown	3,355	1,226	187	0.7%	401	1.7%	185	0.8%	997	3.8%	88	2.3%
10.02	Arcata / HSU	2,962	934	205	0.8%	213	0.9%	332	1.5%	832	3.2%	223	5.7%
11.02	Arcata / Alliance	4,496	1,950	756	2.9%	549	2.3%	604	2.7%	2,242	8.6%	99	2.5%
11.03	Arcata	2,152	784	266	1.0%	215	0.9%	249	1.1%	489	1.9%	89	2.3%
12	Arcata / Blue Lake	4,815	1,813	654	2.5%	639	2.6%	585	2.6%	1,188	4.5%	114	2.9%
13	Arcata / Samoa	1,423	627	250	1.0%	289	1.2%	291	1.3%	207	0.8%	25	0.6%
101.02	Willow Creek	2,382	917	748	2.9%	449	1.8%	465	2.0%	450	1.7%	56	1.4%
102	Trinidad / Big Lagoon	2,989	1,213	705	2.7%	623	2.6%	457	2.0%	500	1.9%	32	0.8%
103	Blue Lake	3,223	1,415	517	2.0%	740	3.0%	452	2.0%	498	1.9%	70	1.8%
104	Clam Beach	3,644	1,411	742	2.9%	611	2.5%	711	3.1%	199	0.8%	51	1.3%
105.02	E. McKinleyville	5,626	2,253	1,381	5.3%	823	3.4%	1,021	4.5%	1,013	3.9%	42	1.1%
105.03	Central McKinleyville	2,987	1,478	1,043	4.0%	534	2.2%	549	2.4%	899	3.4%	189	4.8%
105.04	W. McKinleyville	3,844	1,483	811	3.1%	700	2.9%	583	2.6%	714	2.7%	116	3.0%
106	Freshwater	1,992	769	328	1.3%	463	1.9%	254	1.1%	229	0.9%	6	0.2%
107.01	Humboldt Hill	4,644	1,704	1,159	4.5%	794	3.3%	417	1.8%	709	2.7%	33	0.8%
107.02	Pine Hills / Fields Landing	2,882	1,013	292	1.1%	593	2.4%	668	2.9%	540	2.1%	146	3.7%
108	Fortuna / Loleta	4,748	1,818	954	3.7%	661	2.7%	940	4.1%	1,176	4.5%	114	2.9%
109.01	Fortuna / Newburg	4,635	1,816	1,042	4.0%	683	2.8%	881	3.9%	868	3.3%	193	4.9%
109.02	Fortuna/Hydesville	4,096	1,643	698	2.7%	898	3.7%	683	3.0%	579	2.2%	43	1.1%
110	S. Fortuna	4,941	1,878	1,208	4.7%	898	3.7%	902	4.0%	586	2.2%	15	0.4%
111	Rio Dell/Scotia	4,405	1,909	1,034	4.0%	743	3.1%	750	3.3%	574	2.2%	96	2.5%
112	Petrolia/Ferndale	3,435	1,331	736	2.8%	928	3.8%	699	3.1%	391	1.5%	37	0.9%
115.01	Garberville/Redway	2,177	935	395	1.5%	663	2.7%	258	1.1%	122	0.5%	41	1.1%
115.02	Shelter Cove	1,120	653	0	0.0%	442	1.8%	244	1.1%	354	1.4%	20	0.5%
116	Garberville/Alderpoint	3,431	1,525	566	2.2%	709	2.9%	575	2.5%	657	2.5%	124	3.2%
9400	Hoopla	3,348	1,030	932	3.6%	669	2.8%	877	3.9%	1,148	4.4%	217	5.6%
	Total	135,058	54,120	25,945	19%	24,287	18%	22,711	17%	26,210	19%	3,903	7%

Source: US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2020-2021.

X% = (bolded) tracts with the highest percentage of population type.

Transit Needs Index

The different transit dependent subgroups analyzed in the previous section are not exclusive from one another. As there is overlap between the various transit dependent groups, it is helpful to consider the combined transit dependent population to better understand what areas of Humboldt County have the greatest overall need for transit services.

The data presented in Table 3 was used to develop a Transit Needs Index (TNI) for each census tract in the county (Table 4). The TNI ultimately ranks each census tract based on the relative demand for transit services from the population living in the area. The relative demand was calculated by first determining the density of each of the transit dependent populations in the census tract (for example, the number of low-income persons per square mile), and then dividing the range of densities for each subpopulation into quintiles. Population densities in the lowest quintile were assigned a score of 1 to represent the low density, and therefore low transit need, while the highest population densities were assigned a score of 5 to represent the greater need for transit services. The scores for each subgroup were then summed to yield an overall transit needs index rank (Table 4 and Figure 2). These overall ranks range in value from 5 to 25. The areas with scores close to 25 have the “greatest transit need,” as defined by having the highest density of youth, zero vehicle households, older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income populations.

Humboldt County’s population has a greater proportion of transit dependent persons compared to the State of California, with high numbers of senior adults, disabled persons, and low-income persons. Based on the TNI, the area with the greatest need for transit services in Humboldt County is Eureka. Specifically, the Old Town, Henderson Center, and Rosewood neighborhoods were the census tracts with the highest overall TNI ranks in all of Humboldt County. Besides Eureka, other census tracts with high overall need for transit services are in Arcata, McKinleyville, and Fortuna.

Colleges

Colleges and universities influence the culture, economy, and demographic composition of the communities where they are located. There are two colleges/universities in Humboldt County which contribute to transportation needs: College of the Redwoods and California Polytechnic State University – Humboldt (Cal Poly Humboldt).

College of the Redwoods

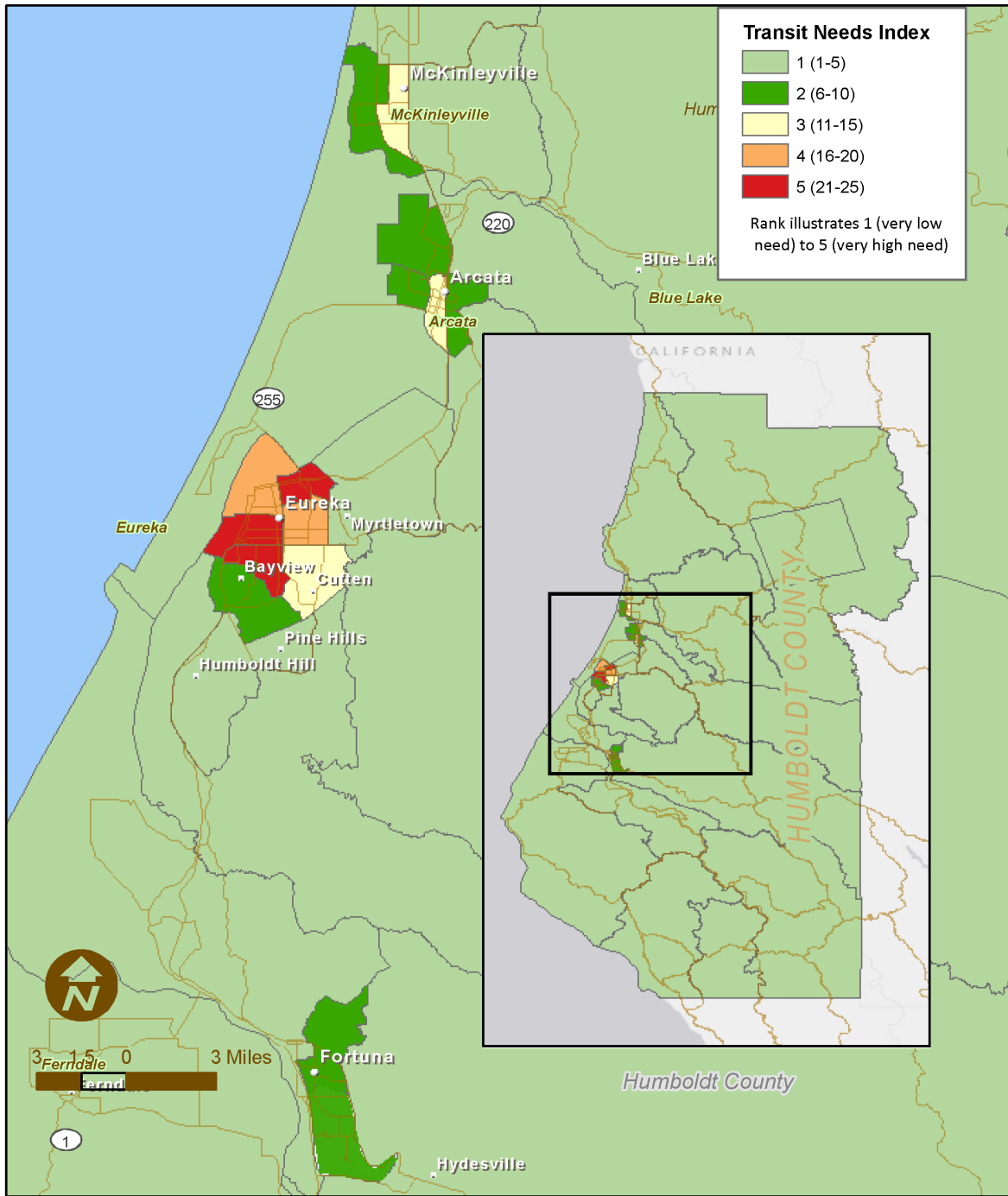
College of the Redwoods is a two-year community college located south of Eureka, with approximately 4,500 students enrolled as of the 2022 fall semester. College of the Redwoods provides housing for only 150 students, meaning the vast majority of students commute. Prior to the pandemic, College of the Redwoods students and staff were frequent bus passengers, but this changed when the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily forced colleges to switch to virtual instruction in March 2020. Enrollment also declined during the pandemic, and it remains to be seen whether College of the Redwoods enrollment will return to previous levels.

Table 4: Humboldt County Transit Needs Index

Census Tract	Square Miles	Total Persons	Youth (Under 18 Years) Rank	Senior Adults (65+) Rank	Persons with a Disability Rank	Persons Below Poverty Level Rank	Zero-Vehicle Households Rank	Overall Transit Needs Index Rank
1	1.5	4,337	3	3	4	4	5	19
2	1.2	5,981	5	4	5	3	4	21
3	1.2	5,097	4	5	5	4	4	22
4	2.7	4,245	2	2	3	2	1	10
5	1.0	4,361	5	5	5	5	5	25
6	1.3	5,253	4	4	5	2	2	17
7	2.4	5,521	3	4	3	2	1	13
8	6.1	5,186	1	2	2	1	1	7
9	24.8	5,325	1	1	1	1	1	5
10.01	0.8	3,355	2	3	2	5	3	15
10.02	1.3	2,962	1	1	2	3	4	11
11.02	2.8	4,496	2	2	2	4	1	11
11.03	0.9	2,152	2	2	2	3	2	11
12	251.8	4,815	1	1	1	1	1	5
13	16	1,423	1	1	1	1	1	5
101.02	782.4	2,382	1	1	1	1	1	5
102	240.6	2,989	1	1	1	1	1	5
103	250.4	3,223	1	1	1	1	1	5
104	14.1	3,644	1	1	1	1	1	5
105.02	11.2	5,626	1	1	1	1	1	5
105.03	1.4	2,987	4	3	3	3	3	16
105.04	2.4	3,844	2	2	2	2	1	9
106	81.4	1,992	1	1	1	1	1	5
107.01	7.0	4,644	1	1	1	1	1	5
107.02	36.2	2,882	1	1	1	1	1	5
108	39.5	4,748	1	1	1	1	1	5
109.01	2.7	4,635	2	2	2	2	2	10
109.02	404.9	4,096	1	1	1	1	1	5
110	2.8	4,941	3	2	2	1	1	9
111	116.4	4,405	1	1	1	1	1	5
112	384.2	3,435	1	1	1	1	1	5
115.01	123.2	2,177	1	1	1	1	1	5
115.02	218.0	1,120	1	1	1	1	1	5
116	393.0	3,431	1	1	1	1	1	5
9400	140.7	3,348	1	1	1	1	1	5

Source: LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.

Figure 2
Transit Needs Index



Cal Poly Humboldt

Cal Poly Humboldt is a four-year California State University in Arcata with an enrollment of 5,858 as of fall 2022. This is a decrease from a peak enrollment of 8,790 students in fall of 2015. The local Arcata population greatly increases when Cal Poly Humboldt is in session, as prior to the COVID-19 pandemic about one quarter of students lived on campus and the remainder typically lived in rental housing in Arcata and nearby communities. Prior to the pandemic, the Cal Poly Humboldt student body made up a large portion of the Arcata & Mad River Transit System ridership. Similar to the College of the Redwoods, Cal Poly Humboldt began virtual instruction during the pandemic, forcing the campus to almost entirely close and eliminating the need to commute to campus, reducing transit ridership rates. Enrollment declined, and many students didn't even move to Humboldt County, instead living in other areas of the state or country while attending classes remotely.

Each April, Cal Poly Humboldt conducts a survey of faculty, staff, and students to determine what modes of transportation people are using to commute to campus. Results from these commuter surveys are shown in Table 5. Prior to 2021, there was no option to answer "Telecommute" on the survey, therefore telecommuters were grouped in with those who walked to campus in the results. Key takeaways from Table 5 include that prior to the pandemic, most faculty and staff drove to campus. Most students either drove or walked, and 15 percent of students rode the bus. In Spring 2020, the number of faculty and students who either walked or telecommuted rose significantly over the previous year. By Spring 2021, the vast majority of faculty, staff, and students telecommuted to campus. The proportion of students who rode the bus to campus plummeted from 15 percent the previous year to 1 percent. In Spring 2022, most people were once again commuting to the actual Cal Poly Humboldt campus, although bus ridership rates were still below 2019 levels among faculty, staff, and students.

Cal Poly Humboldt has multiple initiatives through its Parking and Commuter Services dedicated to increasing students' mobility and encouraging public transportation use. The university has partnered with Zipcar, a car-sharing program, to provide two cars for the campus that eligible students can reserve for periods ranging from one hour to a full day, with rates starting at only \$5.50 per hour. The university has also partnered with the City of Arcata and Tandem Mobility to reinstate a bike share program within the city and on campus, with rates starting at \$1.50 per every half hour. Carpoolers are given choice parking spots closest to campus. The Homeward Bound Bus Charter Program helps students go home during breaks by providing discounted round-trip transportation between Arcata and San Francisco or Los Angeles. Lastly, Cal Poly Humboldt's JackPass program provides students and participating staff with unlimited access to the transit services managed by the Humboldt Transit Authority and the Arcata & Mad River Transit System. This program is discussed further in Chapter 3.

Table 5: Cal Poly Humboldt Commute Modes

2019 - 2022

	Automobile		Bike		Carpool		Public Bus		Walk ¹		Telecommute
	%	# Miles / Trip	%	# Miles / Trip	%	# Miles / Trip	%	# Miles / Trip	%	# Miles / Trip	%
Spring 2019											
Faculty	68%	9.4	7%	3.4	14%	11	3%	13	9%	0.8	0%
Staff	68%	9.4	7%	3.4	14%	11	3%	13	9%	0.8	0%
Students	34%	9.6	8%	1.6	9%	7.4	15%	4.2	34%	0.7	0%
Spring 2020											
Faculty	53%	8.7	16%	3.5	11%	6.9	3%	9.5	18%	0.8	--
Staff	71%	10.1	5%	1.8	13%	10.3	2%	12.1	9%	0.6	--
Students	31%	9.2	8%	1.2	6%	6.2	15%	4.8	40%	0.6	--
Spring 2021											
Faculty	12%	5	1%	2.3	1%	5.1	0%	0.0	3%	0.8	84%
Staff	21%	10.9	1%	3.2	0%	23	0%	0.0	4%	0.6	73%
Students	3%	6.7	20%	1.5	0%	1.5	1%	3.8	2%	0.5	93%
Spring 2022											
Faculty	51%	7	11%	2.2	11%	5.6	2%	6.3	16%	0.9	9%
Staff	65%	8.9	4%	2.6	12%	8.6	1%	10.3	6%	0.7	12%
Students	35%	10	4%	1.6	4%	3.3	6%	3.4	37%	0.3	14%

Source: Cal Poly Humboldt Commuter Surveys

(bolded) = highest values

Note 1: In 2020, those who commuted by either walking or telecommuting were grouped together into one category.

Note 2: **bolded %** are those with the highest values.

Top Employers

Historically, large employers have generated a high level of transportation needs, a portion of which had the potential to be served by transit. The transportation needs can be generated by employees (such as those of the Sun Valley Group) or by customers or clients (such as Humboldt County Social Services or Target). As with education, some employment opportunities switched to remote work during the pandemic, lessening trip making. Some medical and social service appointments also were conducted virtually. However, as COVID impacts decrease, it appears more employees are returning to in-person work, and more appointments are returning to in-person. Large employers therefore still have the potential to generate transit demand, both for employees and for customers. Table 6 shows the top employers in Humboldt County, based on data from the California Employment Development Department. The top employers represent diverse sectors including medical services, agriculture, service industry and government. As seen in the table, all the top employers are located in either Eureka, Arcata, Trinidad, Blue Lake and Korbek, with the largest employer in the county being Providence St. Joseph Hospital in Eureka. Sun Valley Group operates a green house and farm in the Arcata bottoms, a singular location with day-time work hours which might be served by transit. On the other hand, Green Diamond Resource Company sends employees with company vehicles into the field and would not be well served by transit.

Table 6: Humboldt County Major Employers		
Company	Location	# Of Employees
Providence St. Joseph Hospital	Eureka, CA	1,000-4,999
Sun Valley Group, Inc.	Arcata, CA	500-999
Bettendorf Trucking	Arcata, CA	250-499
Blue Lake Casino & Hotel	Blue Lake, CA	250-499
Eureka City Clerk	Eureka, CA	250-499
Green Diamond Resource, Co.	Korbek, CA	250-499
Humboldt County Social Services	Eureka, CA	250-499
Mad River Community Hospital	Arcata, CA	250-499
Newmarket International, Inc.	Eureka, CA	250-499
Umpqua Bank	Eureka, CA	250-499
Costco Wholesale	Eureka, CA	100-249
County of Humboldt	Eureka, CA	100-249
Danco Group	Arcata, CA	100-249
Eureka High School	Eureka, CA	100-249
Hospice of Humboldt	Eureka, CA	100-249
Humboldt County Dept. of Health	Eureka, CA	100-249
Humboldt County Behavioral Health	Eureka, CA	100-249
Humboldt County Sheriff's Office	Eureka, CA	100-249
Pacific Seafood, Co.	Eureka, CA	100-249
Redwood Memorial Hospital	Fortuna, CA	100-249
Schmidbauer Lumber, Inc.	Eureka, CA	100-249
Target	Eureka, CA	100-249
United States Postal Service	Eureka, CA	100-249
Winco Foods	Eureka, CA	100-249
<i>Source: California Employment Development Department, Labor Market Info, 2022</i>		

Local Commute Patterns

The US Census Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics dataset (2019) contains information on the nation's commuting patterns. From this data, it is possible to estimate the number of commuters traveling in and out of a specific community for work. Table 7 details commuting patterns for the four most populous communities in Humboldt County. The column on the left shows where local residents of the specific community commute to for work, while the right column shows where those who work in that community are commuting from. It is important to note that this table shows the number of jobs, and not the number of people. One person may hold multiple jobs across the study area. Nonetheless, this data provides helpful information in determining work trip patterns.

As seen in Table 7, half of Eureka working residents are employed in the city; besides the city itself, the top two communities that supply workers to Eureka are Arcata (14.8 percent) and McKinleyville (3.0 percent), while a third of workers come from all other locations. Arcata similarly has 42 percent of working residents in the City, and almost a quarter who work in Eureka. In McKinleyville, which is more of a bedroom community, only 15.3 percent of working residents are employed in McKinleyville, while 29.0 percent work in Arcata and 24.7 percent work in Eureka. Fortuna is similarly a bedroom community with only 24.8 percent of working residents also living there. As to where workers are commuting from, between 38.7 to 54.8 percent commute from locations outside of the four largest communities, emphasizing the challenges of meeting commuter needs with transit, but also showing the potential need for intercity service.

RECENT PLANNING STUDIES

There have been a number of recent planning studies relevant to the current TDP effort. These plans include the most recent updates to the Humboldt County Regional Transportation Plan, Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan, the General Plan, and findings from the most recent Unmet Transit Needs Hearing, among others. These studies provided data for the current TDP and were considered in the development of this TDP update to ensure goals are compatible with the goals of other adopted plans across the region. A review of important recent planning studies is provided in Appendix B.

Table 7: Humboldt County Local Commute Patterns

2019

Eureka

<u>Residents Commute to:</u>	<u># of Jobs</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>Workers Commute from:</u>	<u># of Jobs</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Eureka	5,294	49.2%	Eureka	5,294	28.0%
Arcata	1,591	14.8%	McKinleyville	1,682	8.9%
Myrtle town	325	3.0%	Arcata	1,569	8.3%
All other locations	3,553	33.0%	All other locations	10,370	54.8%
Total Number of Jobs	10,763		Total Number of Jobs	18,915	

Arcata

<u>Residents Commute to:</u>	<u># of Jobs</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>Workers Commute from:</u>	<u># of Jobs</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Arcata	2,831	42.0%	Arcata	2,831	25.7%
Eureka	1,569	23.3%	McKinleyville	1,972	17.9%
McKinleyville	321	4.8%	Eureka	1,591	14.5%
All other locations	2,025	30.0%	All other locations	4,606	41.9%
Total Number of Jobs	6,746		Total Number of Jobs	11,000	

McKinleyville

<u>Residents Commute to:</u>	<u># of Jobs</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>Workers Commute from:</u>	<u># of Jobs</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Arcata	1,972	29.0%	McKinleyville	1,040	39.6%
Eureka	1,682	24.7%	Arcata	321	12.2%
McKinleyville	1,040	15.3%	Eureka	250	9.5%
All other locations	2,110	31.0%	All other locations	1,017	38.7%
Total Number of Jobs	6,804		Total Number of Jobs	2,628	

Fortuna

<u>Residents Commute to:</u>	<u># of Jobs</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>Workers Commute from:</u>	<u># of Jobs</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Eureka	1,222	26.5%	Fortuna	1,141	36.2%
Fortuna	1,141	24.8%	Eureka	244	7.7%
Arcata	282	6.1%	Rio Dell	192	6.1%
All other locations	1,964	42.6%	All other locations	1,576	50.0%
Total Number of Jobs	4,609		Total Number of Jobs	3,153	

Source: US Census Bureau LEHD Database, 2019

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EXISTING TRANSIT SERVICES OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

There are several transit organizations and providers across Humboldt County that help local residents meet their transportation needs. The Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA) is responsible for operating and maintaining a few of the larger transit providers in the county. This TDP will focus on the services affiliated with the HTA, as well as the Arcata and Mad River Transit System, Fortuna Transit, and the Blue Lake Rancheria Transit System. This chapter provides an overview of the services provided by these agencies and organizations. Additionally, other Humboldt County transportation services which contribute to the regions' mobility are described at the end of the chapter.

HUMBOLDT TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Organization

HTA was established in 1975 by a joint-powers agreement between the County of Humboldt and the Cities of Arcata, Eureka, Fortuna, Rio Dell, and Trinidad. HTA leadership consists of a seven-member Board of Directors. The Board is comprised of one representative each from the five incorporated cities included in the joint-powers agreement and two representatives from Humboldt County. The HTA's daily operations are led by the General Manager and supported by key staff such as the Operations Manager, Director of Maintenance, Finance Manager, Human Resources Manager, Administrative Assistant, and ADA Specialist/Title VI Coordinator/Receptionist. The HTA is headquartered in Eureka.

Services Provided & Service Area

HTA operates most of the intercity public transit services across Humboldt County, providing connectivity between the communities and amenities along the US 101 corridor as well as service along CA 299 between Arcata and Willow Creek. HTA is also responsible for overseeing and operating local fixed route service within the City of Eureka via the Eureka Transit Service (ETS). While HTA does not operate the Arcata & Mad River Transit System (A&MRTS), it does provide maintenance services and minor record keeping. ETS operations and maintenance and A&MRTS maintenance are provided by HTA through separate contracts with each provider. HTA also administers ADA paratransit Dial-a-Ride services for eligible passengers within four designated service areas which are operated under contract with the City Ambulance of Eureka.

HTA is the Consolidated Transportation Service Agency (CTSA) for Humboldt County. As the CTSA, HTA coordinates the region's various public transportation services and ensures transit operations comply with applicable federal regulations. The overall goals of the CTSA are to: increase the number of transit services available for mobility limited individuals and seniors; reduce the costs for public transit; and identify and improve the efficiency of community transportation operations.

Redwood Transit System

The Redwood Transit System (RTS) consists of a mainline, intercity service that travels north-south between the communities of Scotia and Trinidad. On weekdays RTS operates from 6:18 AM until 8:46 PM and on Saturdays RTS operates with a limited schedule from 8:30 AM to 9:27 PM. Headways range from less than a half hour to over two hours, with the highest frequency offered between Valley West in north Arcata and the College of the Redwoods in Fortuna. On four of the southbound and five of the northbound trips, RTS serves Manila on the west side of Humboldt Bay instead of staying on Highway 101 on the east side of the bay as it does on the majority of runs.

The RTS provides connectivity for the communities of Eureka, Arcata, Fortuna, McKinleyville, Westhaven, Trinidad, Fields Landing, Rio Dell, Scotia, and King Salmon, as well as Cal Poly Humboldt, College of the Redwoods, and the California Redwood Coast-Humboldt County Airport (also known as the Arcata Airport, though it is located in McKinleyville). Additionally, RTS connects with Amtrak services in Arcata, Greyhound in Arcata and Eureka, and Redwood Coast Transit in Trinidad, McKinleyville (at the airport) and Arcata. The RTS is shown with other regional transit services in Figure 3.

Southern Humboldt Intercity

The Southern Humboldt Intercity (SHI) service is a fixed route that runs north-south between Eureka and Benbow, traveling through Fortuna, Rio Dell, Redcrest, Weott, Meyers Flat, Miranda, Phillippsville, Redway, and Garberville along the way. The SHI is also shown in Figure 3. While the Southern Humboldt Local service has been discontinued, SHI passengers traveling between Benbow and Redcrest are still eligible for the Southern Humboldt Local service fares (Table 8B). The SHI service completes three northbound runs and two southbound runs daily, operating between 6:46 AM and 7:15 PM Monday through Friday and between 8:30 AM and 7:00 PM on Saturdays.

Willow Creek Intercity Transit

The Willow Creek Intercity Transit (WC) service operates three round trips between Arcata and Willow Creek, Monday through Saturday. The WC service starts in Willow Creek each morning before traveling 37 miles west to Arcata, stopping at Valley West Boulevard, near Arcata High School at 16th and H Streets, and the Arcata Transit Center. Weekday service begins at 7:15 AM and ends at 5:58 PM and Saturday service begins at 8:25 AM and ends at 7:45 PM. The route is shown in Figure 3.

Samoa Transit

The Samoa Transit System began in January 2021 and provides service between the Phyllis Rex Apartment Complex in Samoa and 3rd and H Streets in Eureka. The bus also stops at Vance and Rideout Streets in Samoa. The service makes seven roundtrips on weekdays between 7:05 AM and 7:00 PM and four roundtrips on Saturdays between 8:05 AM and 6:00 PM. This service was introduced to provide important connectivity to ETS and RTS due to the limited schedule of service on the Samoa Peninsula.

Figure 3

Regional Routes Serving Humboldt County



Dial-a-Ride Services

The HTA administers Dial-a-Ride (DAR) services across Humboldt County for eligible ADA passengers through a contract with the City Ambulance of Eureka (CAE, discussed further below). Passengers must register with HTA before scheduling any rides. Paratransit services are available in four zones, shown in Figure 4, which include Eureka, Arcata, McKinleyville and supplemental service in Manila, Samoa, Humboldt Hill, King Salmon, Fields Landing, the College of the Redwoods, and along Old Arcata Road. Passengers must call to schedule a ride. Passengers may be picked up and dropped off in any zone but must pay an additional fare for each zone they cross during their trip. Fares are \$3.00 per ride per zone. All rides must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance.

Fare Structure

Tables 8A and 8B show the fare structures of the HTA services, as well as the fares for the other transportation providers that will be discussed in this TDP. Passengers pay varying fares depending on their demographics, the service they are utilizing, and their method of payment. There are also weekly or monthly transit passes that can be utilized on RTS, SHI, and WC buses. These pass products consist of daily and monthly magnetic swipe passes that passengers use upon boarding. Passes are good for unlimited rides until their expiration date. There is also a monthly regional transit pass available for \$50 that passengers can use to board any RTS, SHI, WC, ETS, and A&MRTS bus. Pass products can be purchased from the driver (cash only), the HTA office in Eureka, the HTA online store, and the Token Transit App. Free transfers are provided between RTS buses for passengers to complete a single trip.

Cal Poly Humboldt's Jack Pass program allows students to ride the RTS, WC, ETS and A&MRTS routes an unlimited number of times by swiping their current student identification cards through the farebox. Students pay for this service as part of their tuition fees. Staff, faculty, and Extended Education participants can buy the Jack Pass for \$60 per semester or \$45 during the summer session. Students not enrolled in classes during the summer can also buy the Jack Pass for \$45.

HTA is acquiring card readers for vehicles, including DAR vehicles, which will enable passengers to swipe a preloaded payment card. The card will automatically deduct the correct fare. Implementation is planned for January 2023.

Facilities & Maintenance

HTA conducts maintenance in-house at the HTA administrative facility located at 2nd and V Streets in Eureka. The facility includes three bus bays, and an extra lane as well if needed. There is also a storage bay and a room to store vehicle spare parts. Vehicle parts are tracked throughout the shop by barcodes and fleet maintenance software (provided by Ron Turley and Associates) to make sure that the correct agency is charged for each repair. Maintenance staff includes the Shop Supervisor, two mechanics, three technicians, and a cleaner. Maintenance staff are on-site working from 4:30 AM to 7:30 PM. Buses can be fueled up to midnight, during which electronic mileage readings and other



Figure 4
Humboldt Transit Authority Dial-a-Ride Areas

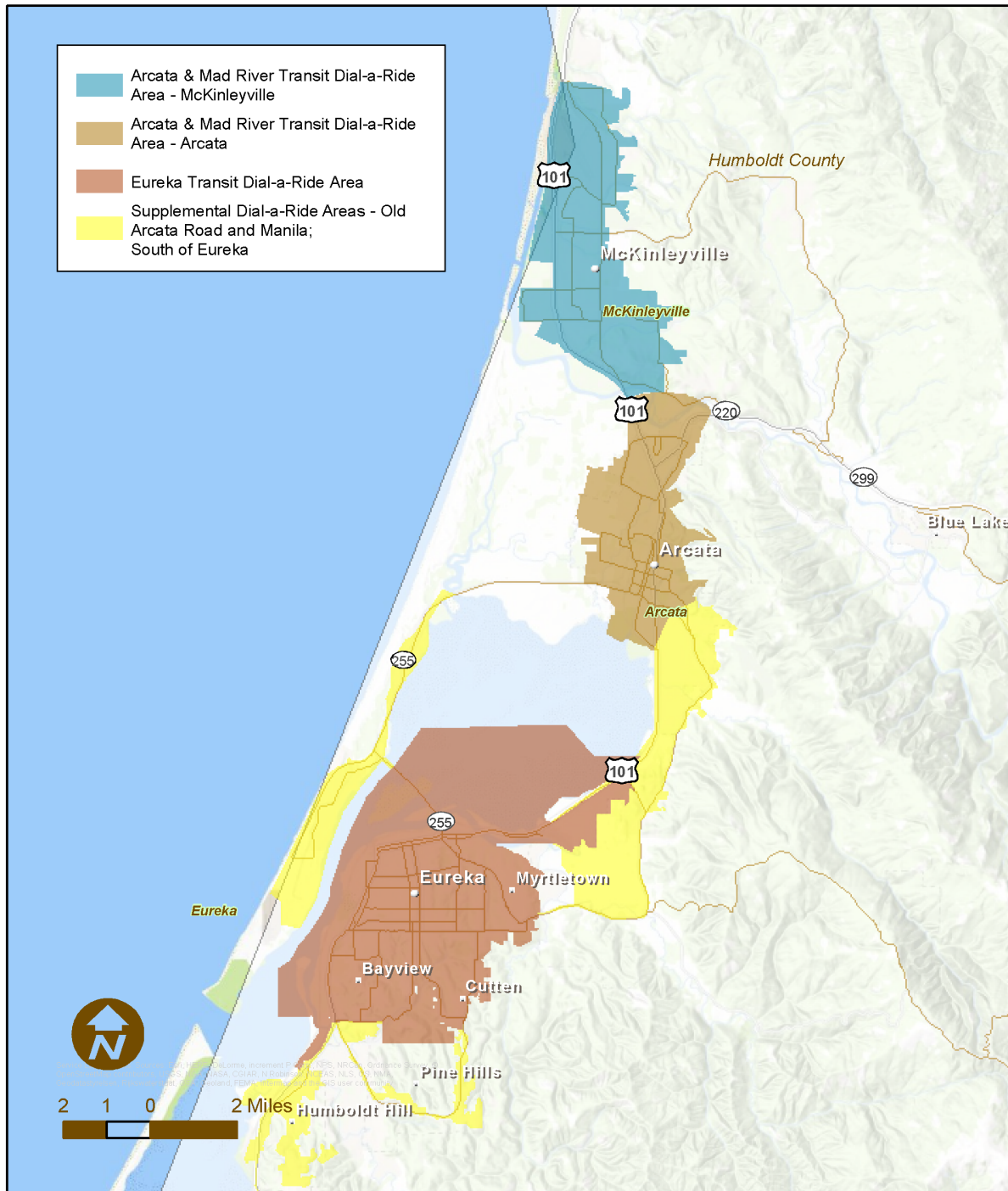


Table 8A: Humboldt County Transit Fares

Arcata & Mad River Transit System (A&MRTS)				
<u>Fare Type</u>	<u>Cash</u>	<u>Transit Pass Rate</u>	<u>Day Pass</u>	<u>Monthly Pass</u>
Adult (18-62)	\$1.75	\$1.25	\$2.50	\$30
Youth (3-17)	\$1.25	\$1.00	\$1.50	\$25
Senior (62+)	\$1.25	\$1.00	\$1.50	\$25
Disabled (with valid ID card)	\$1.25	\$1.00	\$1.50	\$25
Blue Lake Rancheria Transit System (BLRTS)				
<u>Fare Type</u>	<u>Cash</u>	<u>10-ride pass</u>	<u>20-ride pass</u>	
Adult (18-62)	\$1.65	\$15	\$25	
Senior (62+)	\$1.25	\$11	\$20	
Disabled (with valid ID card)	\$1.25	\$11	\$20	
Student	\$1.50	\$13.50	\$22.50	
Eureka Transit Service (ETS)				
<u>Fare Type</u>	<u>Cash</u>	<u>Transit Pass Rate</u>	<u>Day Pass</u>	<u>Monthly Pass</u>
Adult (18-62)	\$1.70	\$1.40	\$3.95	\$48.00
Youth (3-17)	\$1.30	\$0.95	\$3.00	\$41.00
Senior (62+)	\$1.30	\$0.95	\$3.00	\$41.00
Disabled (with valid ID card)	\$1.30	\$0.95	\$3.00	\$41.00
Fortuna Senior Bus Transit				
<u>Fare Type</u>	<u>Cash</u>	<u>15-ride pass</u>		
Senior (50+)	\$2.50	\$22.50		
Disabled	\$2.50	\$22.50		
Redwood Transit System (RTS)				
<u>Fare Type</u>	<u>Cash</u>	<u>Day Pass</u>	<u>Week Pass</u>	<u>Monthly Pass</u>
Adult (18-62)	\$3.50	\$5.25	\$15.75	\$62
Youth (3-17)	\$3.15	\$5.25	\$13.75	\$57
Senior (62+)	\$3.15	\$5.25	\$13.75	\$57
Disabled (with valid ID card)	\$3.15	\$5.25	\$13.75	\$57
<i>Source: HTA, HCAOG, the City of Fortuna, the Blue Lake Rancheria</i>				

Table 8B: Humboldt County Transit Fares

Samoa Transit			
<u>Fare Type</u>	<u>Cash</u>	<u>Monthly Pass</u>	
Adult (18-62)	\$3.50	*See RTS Pass Prices	
Youth (3-17)	\$3.15		
Senior (62+)	\$3.15		
Disabled (with valid ID card)	\$3.15		
Southern Humboldt Transit System – Intercity (SHI)			
<u>Fare Type</u>	<u>Cash</u>	<u>Card</u>	<u>Monthly Pass</u>
Adult (18-62)	\$6.25	\$4.00	\$113
Youth (3-17)	\$5.75	\$3.45	\$102
Senior (62+)	\$5.75	\$3.45	\$102
Disabled (with valid ID card)	\$5.75	\$3.45	\$102
Southern Humboldt Transit System – Local¹			
<u>Fare Type</u>	<u>Cash</u>	<u>Card</u>	
Adult (18-62)	\$1.65	\$1.10	
Youth (3-17)	\$1.40	\$0.95	
Senior (62+)	\$1.40	\$0.95	
Disabled (with valid ID card)	\$1.40	\$0.95	
Deviated Route Trip	\$1.75		
Willow Creek Transit (WC)			
<u>Fare Type</u>	<u>Cash</u>	<u>Card</u>	<u>Monthly Pass</u>
Adult (18-62)	\$5.00	\$3.30	\$86.00
Youth (3-17)	\$4.40	\$2.75	\$81.00
Senior (62+)	\$4.40	\$2.75	\$81.00
Disabled (with valid ID card)	\$4.40	\$2.75	\$81.00
Humboldt Transit Authority Dial-a-Ride			
<u>Fare Type</u>	<u>Cash</u>	<u>Six-Tickets</u>	* A single ticket or cash fare is charged for each DAR zone served per trip.
ADA Eligible Only	\$3.00	\$18.00	
<i>Source: HCAOG</i>			
Note 1: Passengers traveling on the SHI service between Benbow and Redcrest are eligible for Southern Humboldt Local fares.			

downloaded data is exported from the bus. Historically, it has been a challenge to hire enough local mechanics and technicians to staff the maintenance facility. It will likely become even more challenging to find qualified staff to work on the agency's electric or hydrogen-fuel buses. HTA will need to invest in training staff on proper methods for working with zero-emissions buses.

Fleet Inventory

HTA's fleet consists of 32 active vehicles which are used for the RTS, SHI, WC, and DAR services (Table 9). Fifteen vehicles are designated for use on the RTS, seven are used for the SHI, two are used for the WC, and eight are used for DAR. All HTA vehicles are equipped with wheelchair lifts and tie downs, complying with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 requirements. Many of the larger buses have bicycle racks. HTA has begun converting its fleet to zero-emissions buses, with one electric bus in its fleet at the time of writing.

EUREKA TRANSIT SERVICE

Organization

The Eureka Transit Service (ETS) operates local transit services within the City of Eureka. Established in January 1976, ETS's main legislative body is the five-member Eureka City Council. ETS is overseen and managed by the City's Finance Department, which in turn is overseen by the City Manager. HTA operates the fixed route system under contract with ETS, while the Dial-a-Ride service is administered by HTA and operated under a separate contract with the City Ambulance of Eureka. ETS has contracted HTA to operate its services since the mid-1980s.

Services Provided & Service Area

ETS provides transit services throughout the Eureka metropolitan area. Since June 2021, ETS has operated four routes on weekdays and two routes on Saturdays. The Purple, Gold, Rainbow, and Red routes arrive at H and 3rd at 0:59 minutes after the hour. The Purple route departs at 0:59 and the other routes depart at the top of the hour, providing opportunities for transfers as long as the buses are operating perfectly on time. All five routes have layovers of eight or nine minutes at Harris and F Street offering varying opportunities for transfers. Routes run on hourly headways between approximately 7:00 AM and 6:00 PM on weekdays and between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM on Saturdays. Figure 5 shows the ETS service area and fixed routes.

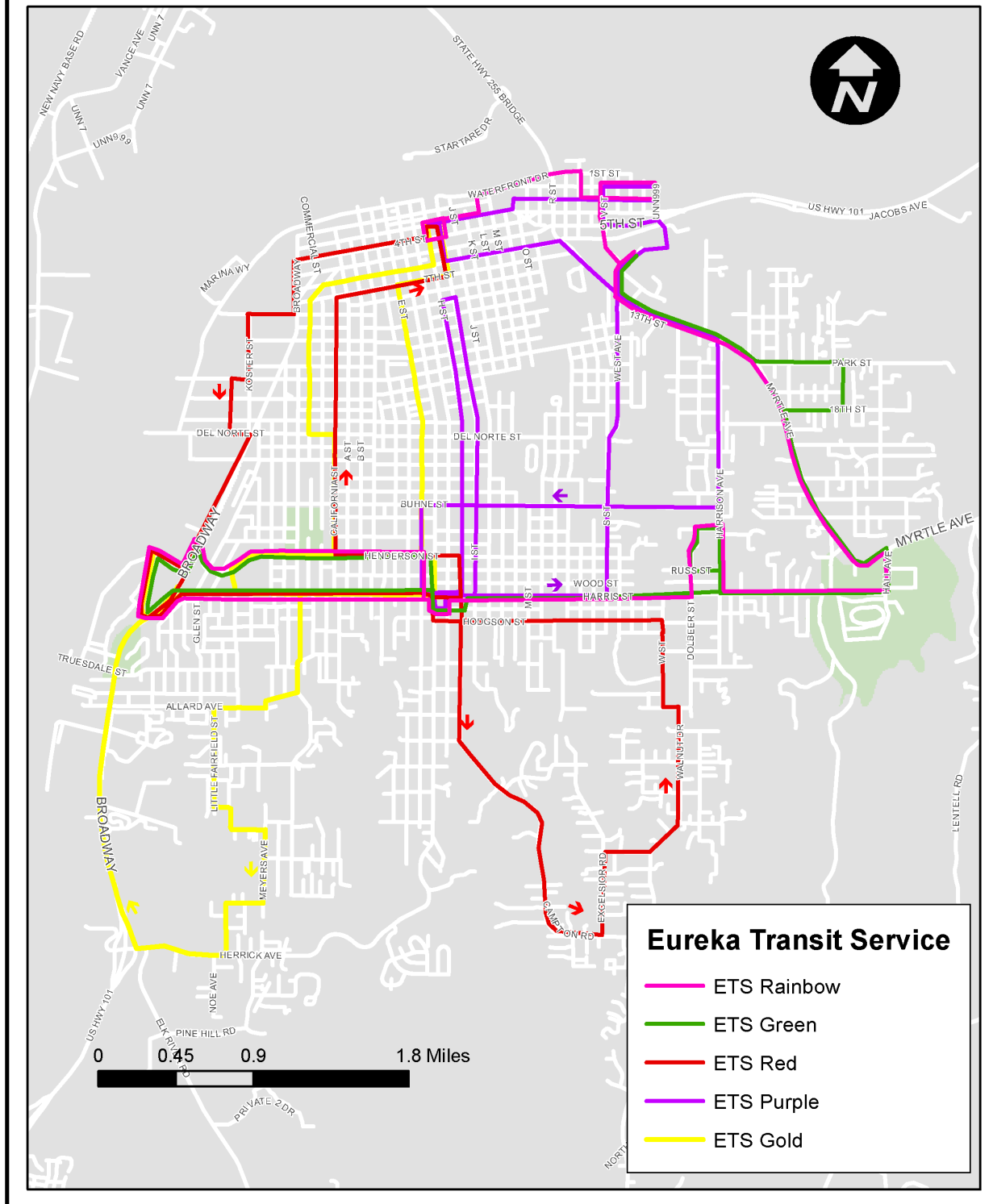
Gold Route

The Gold Route follows a figure-eight shape through Eureka, serving Old Town/Downtown, Bayview, Pine Hill, Bayshore Mall, and Henderson Center. A layover at Harris and F is scheduled from 0:38 to 0:47 each hour, overlapping with the Rainbow and Green routes. The route operates Monday through Friday between 7:00 AM and 6:00 PM and on Saturday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

Table 9: Humboldt County Transit Fleet Inventories

Year	Make	Model	Quantity	Fuel Type	Service
Humboldt Transit Authority					
2011	Gillig	Low Floor Bus	2	Diesel	RTS
2012	Gillig	Low Floor Bus	2	Diesel	RTS
2014	Gillig	Low Floor Bus	5	Diesel	RTS
2015	Gillig	Low Floor Bus	4	Diesel	RTS
2017	Gillig	Low Floor Bus	1	Diesel	RTS
2018	Proterra	ZX5	1	Electric	RTS
2015	Freightliner	--	3	Gasoline	SHI
2015	Ford	--	1	Diesel	SHI
2017	Chevrolet	--	1	Gasoline	SHI
2018	Freightliner	--	1	Diesel	SHI
2019	Chevrolet	--	1	Gasoline	SHI
2015	Freightliner	--	1	Diesel	WC
2016	Freightliner	--	1	Diesel	WC
2012	Ford	--	1	Gasoline	DAR
2015	Ford	--	3	Gasoline	DAR
2017	Ford	--	1	Gasoline	DAR
2019	Ford	--	3	Gasoline	DAR
Eureka Transit System (ETS)					
2009	Gillig	Low Floor Bus	3	Diesel	ETS
2014	Gillig	Low Floor Bus	2	Diesel	ETS
2019	Gillig	Low Floor Bus	2	Diesel	ETS
2021	Gillig	Low Floor Bus	1	Diesel	ETS
Arcata & Mad River Transit System (A&MRTS)					
2005	Ford	--	1	Gasoline	A&MRTS
2009	Gillig	Low Floor Bus	2	Diesel	A&MRTS
2010	Ford	Cutaway	1	Diesel	A&MRTS
2012	Ford	--	1	Gasoline	A&MRTS
2014	Gillig	Low Floor Bus	2	Diesel	A&MRTS
2014	Dodge	--	1	Gasoline	A&MRTS
2019	Chevrolet	--	1	Gasoline	A&MRTS
Fortuna Transit					
2011	Ford	Aerotech Cutaway	1	Gasoline	Fortuna Bus
2015	Ford	El Dorado	1	Gasoline	Fortuna Bus
2017	Ford	Aerotech Cutaway	1	Gasoline	Fortuna Bus
Blue Lake Rancheria Transit System					
2013	Ford	--	1	Biodiesel	BLRTS
2014	Chevrolet	--	1	Biodiesel	BLRTS
2019	Ford	--	1	Biodiesel	BLRTS
--	--	--	1	Electric	BLRTS
<p><i>Source: HTA, Fortuna Transit, Blue Lake Rancheria</i></p>					

Figure 5
Eureka Transit Service



Green Route

The Green Route serves both of the local hospitals in Eureka (Providence St. Joseph’s and General Hospitals), Myrtle town, Silvercrest, as well as the Bayshore Mall and Harris Street. This route only operates on weekdays, running daily from 7:09 AM to 6:09 PM. A layover at Harris and F is scheduled from 0:44 to 0:52 each hour, overlapping with the Gold and Rainbow routes.

Purple Route

The Purple Route also serves downtown Eureka, then serving Silvercrest, the General Hospital, Henderson Center, and the Burre Center as well. Currently, the service only operates on weekdays from 6:59 AM to 5:59 PM. A layover at Harris and F is scheduled from 0:24 to 0:32 each hour, overlapping with the Red route.

Rainbow Route

The Rainbow Route serves a large swath of Eureka, including downtown, Broadway, Bayshore Mall, Henderson Center, Sequoia Park, the General Hospital, the zoo, Costco, and Myrtle town. The Rainbow Route only operates on Saturdays, running from 9:00 AM until 4:59 PM. A layover at Harris and F is scheduled from 0:42 to 0:50 each hour, overlapping with the Gold and Green routes.

Red Route

The Red Route serves downtown Eureka, the Forest Service, Eureka, Bayshore Mall, Sequoia Park, Henderson Center, Cutten, and California Street. The Red Route also serves Costco, a highly trafficked grocery store in the area. This route operates Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM to 5:59 PM. A layover at Harris and F is scheduled from 0:18 to 0:27 each hour, overlapping with the Purple route.

Fare Structure

ETS’ fares vary depending on the fare type and media (Table 8A). Day and monthly passes are available for purchase onboard the buses (cash only), at the HTA office in Eureka, through the HTA online store, or with the Token Transit app. Passengers can also board ETS using the \$50 regional monthly transit pass (described above under the HTA/Fare Structure section). Cal Poly Humboldt students can ride ETS for no additional fees through the Jack Pass program (also described above).

Facilities & Maintenance

ETS’s fleet is maintained at HTA’s administrative facility in Eureka by HTA’s maintenance staff as part of the operations contract. To organize the costs of the labor and mechanical parts needed for each repair, the maintenance staff track spare parts with barcodes and fleet maintenance software. This organization system ensures that costs are charged appropriately for each bus and transit system.

Fleet Inventory

As seen in Table 9, there are eight active vehicles in the ETS fleet. Per the accessibility requirements of the ADA, all ETS vehicles are equipped with wheelchair lifts and tie downs. ETS buses are not equipped with bicycle racks however, which has prompted many passengers to request bicycle racks as a capital upgrade. At this point, all of the ETS vehicles are powered with diesel.

ARCATA & MAD RIVER TRANSIT SYSTEM

Organization

The City of Arcata established the Arcata & Mad River Transit System (A&MRTS) in 1975 with the intention of providing alternative transportation for mobility limited individuals within the community, as well as Cal Poly Humboldt (then Humboldt State University) students. A&MRTS's main legislative body is the five-members of the Arcata City Council. Operations are overseen by the City Manager. The transit agency is administered by the Public Transportation Superintendent within the Building and Engineering Department.

Services Provided & Service Area

A&MRTS provides fixed route services within the City of Arcata. There are three routes, named after different colors, all of which begin and end at the Arcata Intermodal Transit Center on hourly headways. The A&MRTS fixed routes and service area are shown in Figure 6.

Gold Route

The Gold Route operates on weekdays between 7:00 AM and 5:00 PM, serving Cal Poly Humboldt, downtown Arcata, and the Valley West Shopping Center.

Red Route

The Red Route operates solely on weekdays from approximately 7:00 AM until 5:00 PM, serving downtown Arcata, Cal Poly Humboldt, Sunny Brae, Lakewood Boulevard, and the Arcata Community Center, among others.

Orange Route

The Orange Route (a combination of Gold and Red) only operates during the evening hours on weekdays (between 5:00 PM and 10:00 PM), serving downtown Arcata, Cal Poly Humboldt, Greenview Market, Sunny Brae, and the Valley West Shopping Center, among other destinations. On Saturdays, the Orange Route operates from about 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM.

Fare Structure

A&MRTS's fare structure is shown in Table 8A. Passengers can utilize A&MRTS services using specific agency passes, the Humboldt County regional pass, described under the HTA/Fare Structure section, as well as the Jack Pass program (also described above).

Facilities & Maintenance

The Arcata Intermodal Transit Facility, or the Arcata Transit Center, serves not only as the key transfer point for the A&MRTS routes but also as an important regional hub for transportation services along the entire North Coast. From the Intermodal Transit Facility, passengers can transfer to RTS, WC, and Blue Lake Rancheria transportation services in addition to other regional services such as Redwood Coast Transit, Amtrak Thruway buses, and Greyhound buses, all of which will be discussed later in the text. The Arcata Transit Center is located at 925 E Street in downtown Arcata.

HTA handles maintenance of the A&MRTS fleet according to a contract between the two organizations. Maintenance is therefore done at the HTA maintenance facility located at 2nd and V Streets in Eureka, described under HTA/Facilities and Maintenance.

Fleet Inventory

The A&MRTS fleet is comprised of nine vehicles (Table 9). These vehicles are powered by either diesel or gasoline; A&MRTS purchased two electric vehicles from Gillig in November, 2022, but these vehicles have not yet been delivered or incorporated into the active fleet. All A&MRTS vehicles comply with ADA requirements, as each bus has wheelchair lifts and tie downs.

FORTUNA TRANSIT

Organization

Fortuna Transit is administered and operated by the City's Parks and Recreation Department; the Department's director serves as the transit manager. Fortuna Transit's legislative body is the five-member City Council. The City Manager oversees the Parks and Recreation Department.

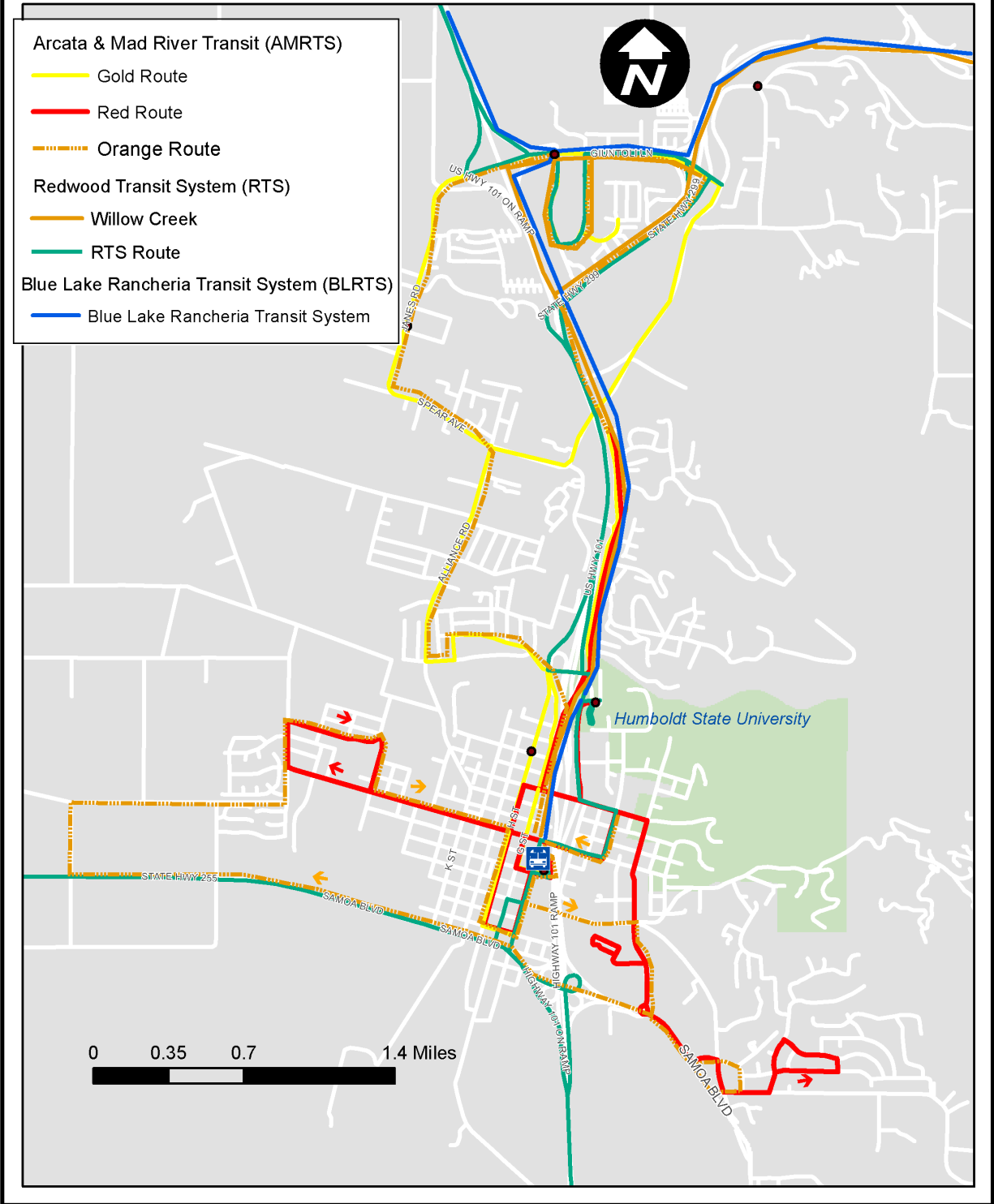
Services Provided and Service Area

Fortuna Transit is a demand-response, curb-to-curb transportation service that provides rides for seniors ages 50 and older or disabled persons who are unable to drive. People younger than 50 years old may also be eligible for Fortuna Transit services if they provide a medical note stating they are unable to drive.

Passengers can schedule rides by calling dispatch. Passengers can make reservations up to one month in advance for medical appointments, one week in advance for other types of appointments, and the day before for purposes such as shopping.

Fortuna Transit operates almost entirely within city limits, using two zones as general guidance (a north zone and south zone). These zones were developed to maximize service efficiency and effectiveness. Passengers can schedule rides Monday through Friday between 8:30 AM and 4:00 PM. Since 2018, Fortuna Transit has also provided transportation outside of city limits to Eureka for medical appointments on Tuesdays between 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM.

Figure 6
Arcata & Mad River Transit System



Fare Structure

Passengers can purchase a one-way fare using cash for \$2.50 (Table 8A). Fortuna Transit also offers a 15-ride pass for \$22.50, which equates to a 40 percent discount over the base fare.

Facilities & Maintenance

Vehicles undergo regular maintenance inspections at the City of Fortuna's corporation yard located at 190 Dinsmore Drive.

Fleet Inventory

The Fortuna Transit fleet consists of two Ford Aerotech cutaway buses and one Ford Eldorado. The buses were purchased in 2011, 2015, and 2017 (Table 9). Fortuna Transit plans to purchase an electric vehicle when they next need to procure a new vehicle. All of the vehicles can accommodate two wheelchairs, therefore complying with accessibility requirements of the ADA.

BLUE LAKE RANCHERIA TRANSIT SYSTEM

Organization

The Blue Lake Rancheria Transit System (BLRTS) has been providing transit services since 2002. BLRTS is operated by the Blue Lake Rancheria, a federally recognized tribe in northern Humboldt County located near the City of Blue Lake along CA 299. BLRTS is partially funded by grants awarded through the FTA's Tribal Transportation Program. It is also partially funded by the City of Blue Lake through its TDA fund allocation. BLRTS is administered by the Tribal Transportation Department. The Tribal Transportation Department also coordinates with the Tribe's Meals Programs to deliver meal to homebound seniors in Blue Lake and Fieldbrook, however this program has its own vehicles separate from BLRTS.

Services Provided & Service Area

The BLRTS operates a deviated fixed route system that transports passengers from the Rancheria and the City of Blue Lake to the Intermodal Transit Facility in Arcata, where passengers can transfer to A&MRTS, HTA, and other intercity services. BLRTS completes five roundtrips between the Rancheria and Arcata between 7:00 AM and 6:00 PM on weekdays. This service has in the past been used by students at both Cal Poly Humboldt and Arcata High School as an affordable alternative for getting to class. BLRTS also partners with the New Horizons Program, so clients are able to reliably ride the bus as needed. The portion of the BLRTS route in Blue Lake is shown in Figure 3, above, and the portion in Arcata is shown in Figure 6, also above.

Fare Structure

As seen in Table 8A, the one-way base fare for BLRTS is \$1.65. Senior adults ages 62 or older and disabled persons can ride for \$1.25, while students can ride for \$1.50. Passengers can purchase ten-ride passes for \$11 to \$15, or 20-ride passes for \$20 to \$25 depending on their fare category.

Facilities & Maintenance

As BLRTS is administered by the tribe's Transportation Department, buses are stored on tribal land. BLRTS has struggled since the beginning of the pandemic to find qualified maintenance staff to work on its vehicles and has also experienced challenges with acquiring the parts necessary for repairs. This at times has limited the number of active vehicles available for transit services. The Rancheria recently installed two charging stations for electric vehicles on tribal land.

Fleet Inventory

The Rancheria has four vehicles used for BLRTS: a 2013 Ford bus, a 2014 Chevy shuttle, a 2019 Ford Bus, and an electric shuttle (Table 9). BLRTS uses biodiesel generated on-site at the Rancheria to fuel its non-electric vehicles.

OTHER HUMBOLDT COUNTY AND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Other transportation providers that operate in Humboldt County and provide mobility and connectivity in the region are described below.

Redwood Coast Transit

Redwood Coast Transit (RCT) is the public transportation provider for Del Norte County, which borders Humboldt County to the north. RCT provides intercounty service between Del Norte and Humboldt Counties via Route 20, which travels between the communities of Smith River and Arcata. Route 20 southbound passengers arrive in Arcata at 9:26 AM, 12:15 PM, and 5:14 PM. Passengers can board Route 20 northbound at 10:00 AM, 12:50 PM, and 5:50 PM. The standard fare for trips between the two counties ranges from \$2 to \$10 depending on the length of the trip. Local service within Del Norte County ranges from \$1.25 to \$4, and local service within Humboldt County costs \$5. This service is scheduled to allow transfers to and from Amtrak at the Arcata Transit Center.

Trinity Transit

The public transit system in Trinity County, which is to the east of Humboldt County, is Trinity Transit. The Trinity Transit fixed route system consists of four routes that originate in Weaverville and then travel to the north, south, east, and west. The westbound route brings passengers to Willow Creek, where passengers are then able to transfer to the HTA Willow Creek/Arcata service. This important regional connection therefore allows Humboldt County residents to travel all the way from the coast eastbound to Redding via the HTA and Trinity Transit. Redding is an important destination for many living in northern California, especially for medical appointments. Trinity Transit fares from Weaverville to Willow Creek and from Weaverville to Redding are both \$10.00 per one-way trip. A trip from Eureka to Redding using public transit would therefore have a combined base fare of \$28.50 one way, with discounts available for eligible passengers.

Yurok Tribal Transit Service

The Yurok Tribal Transit Service (YTTS), established in 2013, is a demand-response service operated by the Yurok Tribe Transportation Department and overseen by the Yurok Tribal Council. The Yurok Tribal Headquarters are located in Klamath (Del Norte County), with satellite offices in Eureka and Weitchpec (both Humboldt County). The YTTS DAR service is funded by FTA Tribal Transit Formula Grants (5311(c) funding). The YTTS also began operating a seasonal River Ferry service in 2015, which is funded by Tribal Transit Program Funds. This report will discuss the YTTS bus services.

The YTTS is a weekday service that provides transportation primarily between the communities of Klamath and Crescent City (both in Del Norte County) and Wautec, Weitchpec, and Hoopa (all in Humboldt County). The service is available to both tribal and non-tribal members alike. Passengers can schedule rides by calling dispatch. The YTTS fleet consists of 10 vehicles, all of which are ADA compliant. One of these vehicles has four-wheel drive capabilities and another has all-wheel drive capabilities to allow drivers to reach more remote locations on the reservation.

Since the Klamath-Trinity Non-Emergency Transit (KT-NET) service was discontinued during the pandemic, the Yurok Tribe has begun planning a new fixed route service that would operate between Willow Creek and Orleans, stopping in Hoopa and Weitchpec along the way. The Yurok Tribe Transportation Departments intends to operate the route two times per day, two days per week and one Saturday per month. The service frequency may then change depending on demand. This fixed route would help to address the service gap left by KT-NeT and would allow passengers to travel to Arcata and Weaverville by enabling transfers to HTA and Trinity Transit in Willow Creek. The Yurok Tribe is soon planning to conduct a Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) for the Tribe.

Amtrak

Amtrak San Joaquins Route 7 provides "Thruway" bus service between Arcata in Humboldt County south to Martinez in Contra Costa County. Within Humboldt County, the bus has stops in Arcata (at Cal Poly Humboldt and the Arcata Transit Center), Eureka, Fortuna, and Garberville. Recently, Amtrak San Joaquins began offering bus-only tickets, eliminating the prior requirement to purchase a train ticket along with the Route 7 bus ticket. Southbound departures are daily from Arcata at 6:55 AM and 9:50 AM, and northbound arrivals into Arcata are at 5:25 PM and 8:35 PM each day. One-way fares range from \$5 for short trips (such as between Arcata and Fortuna) to \$42 for longer trips (such as from Arcata all the way to Martinez).

Greyhound

Greyhound operates a line along US 101 between the Bay Area and Humboldt County, with Arcata serving as the northern terminus for the service. Passengers can purchase tickets and board the Greyhound bus at the Arcata Transit Center. The bus also stops in Eureka and Garberville. Other stops further south on the route include Ukiah and Santa Rosa. Greyhound departs from Arcata at 8:45 AM, operating on Monday and Tuesday, Fridays, and the weekends. One-way fares for the bus from

Arcata to Santa Rosa are \$47 on weekdays and \$63 on Fridays and weekends. It costs \$42 to get from Arcata to San Francisco (no return trip) on weekdays and \$47 on Fridays and weekends. Northbound buses arrive in Arcata at 8:00 PM, except for Tuesdays and Wednesdays on which there is no northbound Greyhound service.

Area 1 Agency on Aging Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program

The Area 1 Agency on Aging (A1AA) operates a volunteer driver program. The program was initially established to help people get to medical appointments in the Eel River Valley and has since expanded to serve everywhere between Scotia and Trinidad, and all the way east to Blue Lake. People are eligible for the service if they are 50 or older who live independently and have limited resources. Once the A1AA determines eligibility, passengers can use the program to get to medical appointments and to go grocery shopping in Humboldt County. Rides can be scheduled Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM and must be scheduled at least five days in advance.

As of November 2022, there were 12 volunteer drivers and 79 repeat riders in the A1AA volunteer driver program. These numbers represent reductions from the program capacity pre-pandemic, when the program had upwards of 40 volunteer drivers and around 200 repeat riders. A1AA staff are actively working to recruit drivers so that more riders can benefit from the program. In 2021, 95 clients were served in total, and 15,411 miles were reimbursed. So far in 2022 the program is on track to serve a similar number of clients as the previous year; in 2022, 87 clients have been served and approximately 10,462 miles have been reimbursed. To be a volunteer, individuals must go through an annual training, pass a background check, and maintain a high level of car insurance. Volunteers do not have to undergo a drug-test. A1AA inspect drivers' vehicles before they begin volunteering. Drivers are reimbursed \$0.585 per mile. Most of the volunteer drivers are also older adults.

Funding has come from various grants, private foundations, and individual donations. Two staff members work with the volunteer driver program directly, with one staff member overseeing the program and the other managing daily tasks. The 2022 budget was around \$50,000 for both staff time and mileage reimbursement; however, the ideal level of funding would be closer to \$200,000, at least. A greater annual budget would potentially allow A1AA to purchase vehicles for the volunteer driver program, eliminating the need for volunteers to use their own cars, and also would allow the program to reimburse rides to other destinations besides medical appointments and grocery stores.

City Cab / City Ambulance of Eureka

City Cab / City Ambulance of Eureka (CAE) provides transportation services in the greater area around Eureka, Arcata, and McKinleyville. With a fleet of over 40 vehicles, CAE provides taxi services to customers for profit, as well as non-emergency medical transportation services through a contract with the Redwood Coast Regional Center (discussed below) and demand responsive, ADA-compliant transportation through a contract with HTA (described above in the HTA/Dial-a-Ride services section). Dial-a-Ride ridership information is discussed further in Chapter 4.

Redwood Coast Regional Center

The Redwood Coast Regional Center (RCRC) is one of twenty-one private, non-profit regional centers across California serving people with developmental disabilities. The RCRC serves citizens of Del Norte, Lake, Mendocino, and Humboldt Counties. While the RCRC does not provide any transit services directly, it still helps clients with transportation by providing financial assistance or contracting other organizations to provide transportation services.

RCRC helps Humboldt County residents who utilize their programs connect with private rides and provides fare assistance for public fixed route and Dial-a-Ride services across the region. RCRCs also refers clients to A1AA's Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program. RCRC contracts with various supportive living agencies, board and care homes, adult day services, and other organizations (such as CAE) across Humboldt County to provide both in-county and out-of-county transportation (Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan, 2021).

REGIONAL SERVICE COORDINATION

Given the number of transit operators in Humboldt County, it is important to prioritize coordination among the various agencies in order to provide the most effective services to Humboldt County residents and save resources. The Humboldt County transit operators have demonstrated a commitment to regional coordination, and through their cooperative network they have developed several products and services to benefit customers and improve operations. These coordinated services and products are highlighted below.

Customer-based Service Coordination

- **Regional bus pass** — A 31-day regional transit pass is available for unlimited use on RTS, SHI, WC, ETS, and A&MRTS buses. The regional allows passengers to board for a discounted rate.
- **Transit system connections** – Many of the fixed routes across Humboldt County enhance regional connectivity by allowing passengers to transfer to other services at key locations:
 - Downtown Eureka – Connections between ETS, RTS, SHI, Greyhound, and Amtrak buses are all possible, with the correct fares ready, along 3rd, 4th, 5th, and H Streets in Eureka.
 - Bayshore Mall (Eureka) – Connections between RTS, ETS routes, and SHI.
 - Arcata Intermodal Transit Center – Connections between A&MRTS routes, BLRTS, RTS, and WC are possible. Connections between Humboldt County transit and Redwood Coast Transit (Del Norte County), Greyhound, and Amtrak Thruway buses are also possible.
 - Fortuna – Connections between RTS and Fortuna Senior Transit. (It is worth noting, however, that very few Fortuna Transit passengers transfer to RTS as the passengers are all seniors or disabled, and primarily traveling just within the local community).
 - Downtown Willow Creek – Connections between WC and Trinity Transit, allowing passengers to travel east to access other services in Weaverville and Redding.
- **Dial-a-Ride (DAR)** – The City Ambulance of Eureka/City Cab is contracted by the HTA to provide DAR services for eligible passengers who are unable to use the fixed route system in

Eureka, Arcata, and McKinleyville, as well as some areas outside of these communities that are still complimentary to the ETS and A&MRTS fixed routes. The DAR service area is split up into zones. The DAR service meets the criteria of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

- **Electronic fareboxes** — The larger Humboldt County transit agencies (HTA systems, ETS, and A&MRTS) have all installed electronic fareboxes, allowing for fare media that is transferable on any of these systems (i.e., the Regional Pass). Fare revenues are credited to the transit agency on which the trip took place.
- **Central depository** — HTA serves as the central depository of fare revenues for HTA services, ETS, and A&MRTS. Given these services all park their buses at HTA facilities, the vaults are taken off the buses at night during refueling. HTA staff then counts fares and distributes revenue shares to the appropriate agency. The City of Arcata sends checks to HTA for transit passes sold at the Arcata Intermodal Transit Facility.
- **Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC)** — The SSTAC is comprised of representatives from local transportation agencies, the CTSA, Cal Poly Humboldt, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 1, the City Ambulance of Eureka, the County of Humboldt, and members of the public, as well as representatives from non-profit agencies dedicated to improving conditions for senior, low-income, and disabled residents across the region. The previous Service Coordination Committee has been consolidated into the SSTAC since the last TDP update. The objective of the SSTAC is to enhance the mobility of transit dependent residents across the county by helping to identify unmet transit needs and figuring out how to address reasonable unmet needs. This is done in part by helping HCAOG organize the annual “unmet transit needs” hearing.

Service Changes Since the 2017 Transit Development Plan

There have been several service changes since the previous TDP update was adopted in November 2017. Besides temporary pandemic-related changes, there have been three notable changes:

- **Discontinuation of Tish Non-Village Service:** It was recommended in the 2017 TDP that the Tish Non-Village service be discontinued due to its low efficiency and productivity. HTA discontinued the service in June 2019.
- **Discontinuation of the Southern Humboldt Local Service:** The Southern Humboldt Local Service served Redway and Garberville but was discontinued (per the TDP recommendation) due to low ridership. In lieu of the previous service, the Southern Humboldt Intercity service provides route deviations to serve these communities and offers a lower local fare when traveling between Benbow and Redcrest.
- **Discontinuation of the Klamath-Trinity Non-Emergency Transit (KT-NeT) service:** The KT-NeT service had met an important transit need by providing non-emergency transportation to residents living in northeastern Humboldt and northern Trinity Counties. There used to be service between Willow Creek, Hoopa, Orleans, and Weitchpec. YTTS is set to begin service in the Orleans/Hoopa/Willow Creek area to help address the need for transportation in the wake of KT-Net being discontinued.

EVALUATION OF TRANSIT SERVICES

In this chapter, available operating and financial data is evaluated for each of the services operated and administered by the HTA, A&MRTS, Fortuna Transit, and BLRTS. The following analyses reveal the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the performance of each service and then the relative recovery experienced by each since, as well as the importance of student ridership for Humboldt County transit providers.

HTA EVALUATION

Operating Data

Passenger Trips

Figures 7, 8, and Table 10 all explore HTA ridership. HTA ridership from Fiscal Year (FY) 2019-20 through FY 2021-22 is shown by service in Figure 7, which clearly shows the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on ridership, as all the HTA services saw ridership decrease drastically in FY 2020-21. Ridership began to recover in FY 2021-22, with RTS providing 214,973 one-way passenger trips, ETS providing 106,390 one-way passenger trips, SHI providing 12,553 one-way passenger trips, WC providing 9,805 one-way passenger-trips, and the Humboldt Dial-a-Ride (DAR) services providing 17,315 one-way passenger trips, totaling 343,721 passenger-trips in all. Of all the HTA offerings, the WC and Humboldt DAR services saw the smallest decrease in ridership (proportionally) over the last three years (13 percent) while the SHI service saw the greatest decrease (45 percent). 90 percent or more of one-way passenger-trips made in FY 2021-22 on RTS, ETS, SHI, and WC were completed on weekdays (Table 10).

As discussed in previous chapters, students from Cal Poly Humboldt and College of the Redwoods have historically been a large proportion of Humboldt County transit ridership. Figure 8 displays the impact of college student ridership on the HTA fixed route services' performance during the last three calendar years. Each year, weekly ridership totals were calculated for RTS, ETS, SHI, and WC, for one week when Cal Poly Humboldt and College of the Redwoods were in session ("In Session") and then another week when students were on break. Overall, HTA carried between 1,487 to 2,764 more passenger-trips the last three years during the weeks the schools were in session versus not. While all four services carry large numbers of students, the proportion of students on each service varies. For instance, when the schools were on break in 2022, WC ridership was only 62 percent and RTS ridership was only 64 percent of in-session ridership levels. Comparatively, ETS and SHI ridership levels were less impacted by students, with out-of-session ridership equaling 87 and 84 percent of in session ridership, respectively.

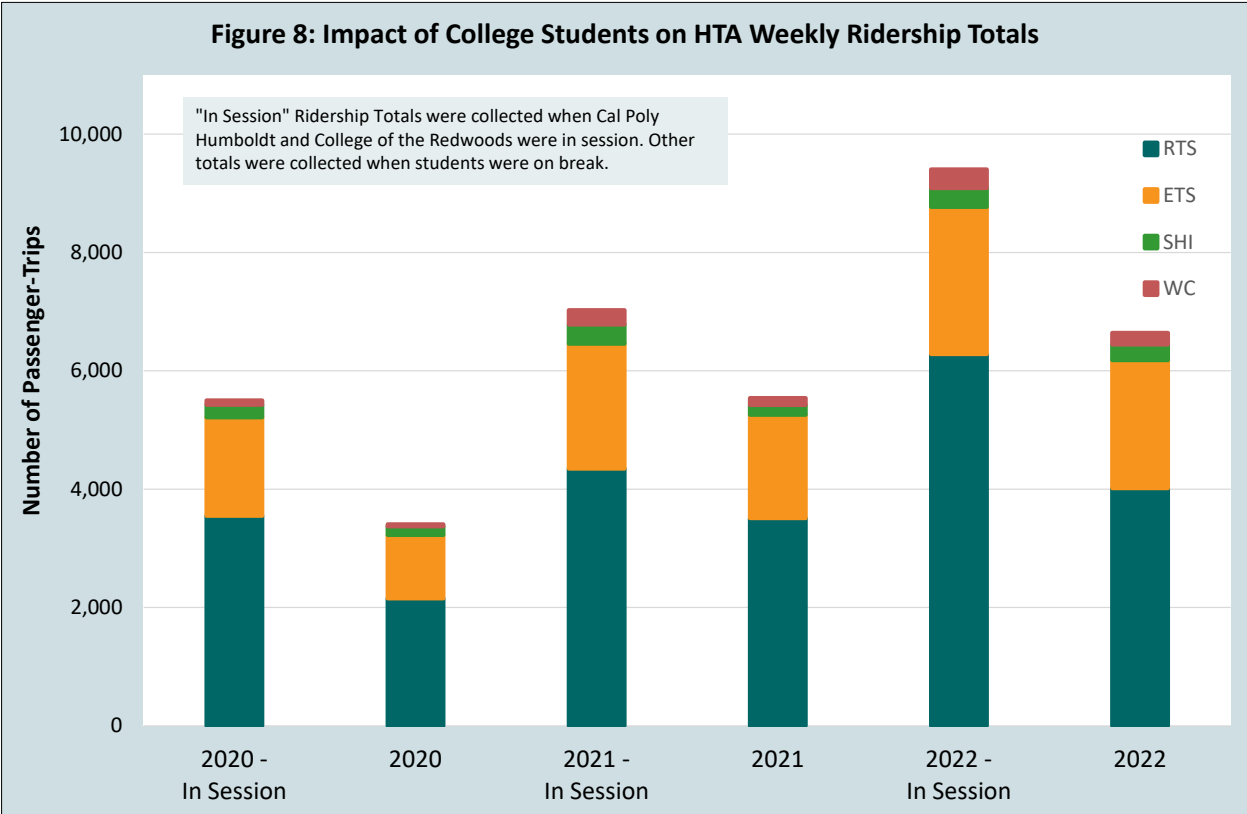
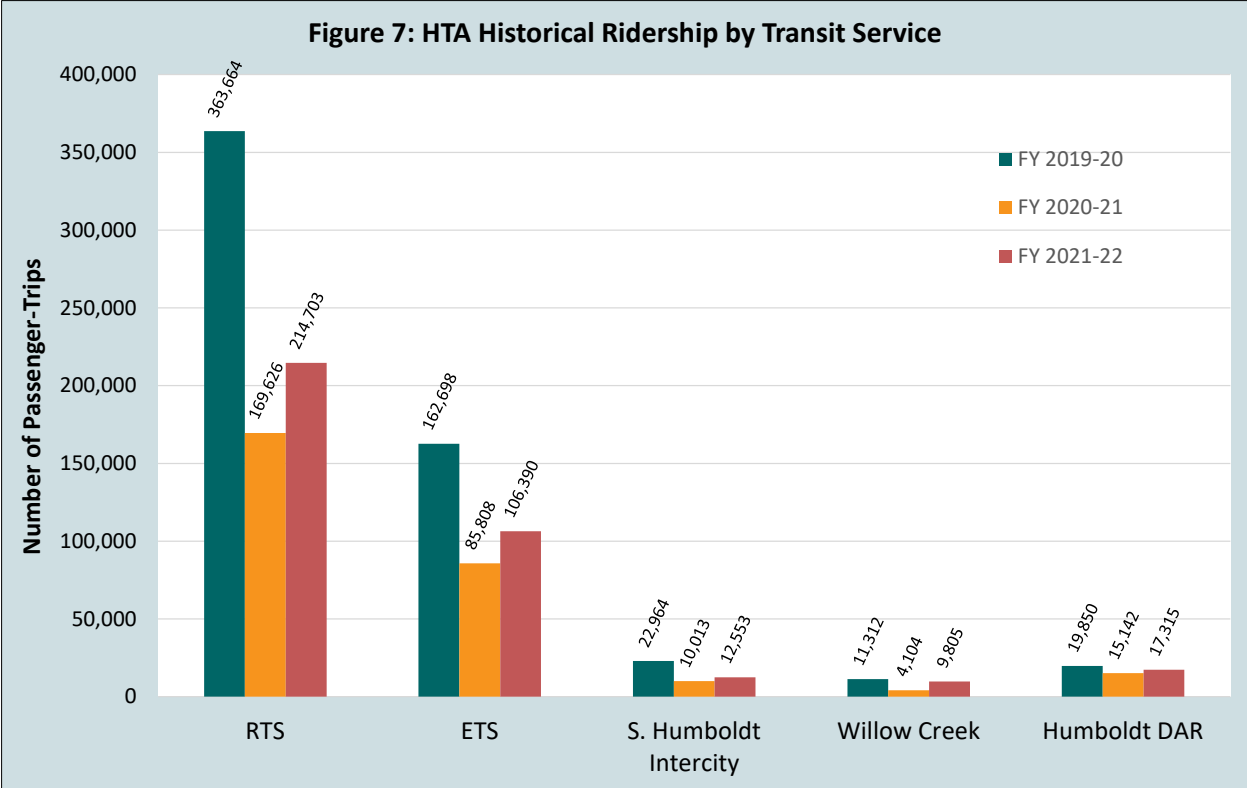


Table 10: HTA Operations and Performance

FY 2021-22

Performance Data and Indicators	Transit Service					Total
	Redwood Transit System	Eureka Transit Service	S. Humboldt Intercity	Willow Creek Intercity	Humboldt Dial-a-Ride	
Passengers						
Weekdays	194,968	97,664	11,269	9,405	--	313,306
Saturdays/Holidays	20,005	8,726	1,284	400	--	30,415
Total	214,973	106,390	12,553	9,805	17,315	343,721
Vehicle Service Miles						
Weekdays	563,880	111,536	115,062	69,342	--	859,820
Saturdays/Holidays	50,400	12,894	25,368	15,400	--	104,062
Total	614,280	124,430	140,430	84,742	85,034	1,048,916
Vehicle Service Hours						
Weekdays	26,704.95	10,424.00	3,154.68	1,942.00	--	42,226
Saturdays/Holidays	2,299	1,150	696	419	--	4,563
Total	29,004	11,574	3,850	2,361	6,910	46,789
Operating Costs	\$3,630,188	\$1,554,425	\$589,917	\$346,561	\$790,440	\$6,911,531
Fare Revenues	\$699,001	\$303,032	\$93,721	\$95,486	\$70,011	\$1,261,250
Operating Subsidy	\$2,931,187	\$1,251,393	\$496,197	\$251,075	\$720,429	\$5,650,281
Cost per Passenger-Trip	\$16.89	\$14.61	\$46.99	\$35.35	\$45.65	\$20.11
Subsidy per Passenger-Trip	\$13.64	\$11.76	\$39.53	\$25.61	\$41.61	\$16.44
Farebox Return Ratio	19%	19%	16%	28%	9%	18%
Passenger-Trips per Hour	7.4	9.2	3.3	4.2	2.5	7.3
Passenger-Trips per Mile	0.3	0.9	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3

Source: June 2022 HTA Board Report

Vehicle Miles and Hours

HTA operated 1,048,916 miles and 46,789 hours of service across its various transit services in FY 2021-22 (Table 10). About 60 percent of both vehicle service miles and hours were operated on RTS. A quarter of vehicle service hours were operated on ETS, but only 12 percent of vehicle service miles, reflecting the short trips of urban service compared to intercity service. The Humboldt DAR services also required a greater proportion of vehicle service hours versus miles, while both the WC and SHI services represented a slightly greater proportion of overall HTA vehicle service miles operated compared to hours.

HTA Performance Indicators

Ridership and operations data were used to assess the performance of the transit systems/services. Table 10 includes information on important performance indicators for each HTA service in FY 2021-22. Key takeaways from Table 10 include:

- Operating Cost per Passenger Trip: Considering all services operated by HTA, the average operating cost¹ per passenger-trip was \$20.11 in FY 2021-22. Operating costs per passenger-trip ranged from \$14.61 on RTS to \$46.99 on SHI, which was slightly more expensive per passenger-trip than the DAR. Typically, DAR services are the costliest type of transit service.
- Subsidy per Passenger Trip: An excellent measure of the cost efficiency of a transit service is the subsidy per passenger-trip, a value that represents the total public investment per passenger-trip. In FY 2021-22, the overall subsidy per passenger-trip for HTA passengers was \$16.44. The most cost-effective service (i.e., the lowest subsidy per passenger-trip) was ETS services (\$11.76) and the least was the DAR service (\$41.61).
- Farebox Return Ratio: The farebox ratio represents the proportion of operating costs paid for by fare revenues. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the California Transportation Development Act (TDA) required rural transit agencies (such as all of those in Humboldt County) to have a farebox ratio of at least 10 percent (or to make up the difference using local funds) in order to receive TDA funding. As of November 2022, this TDA requirement has not been reinstated. The HTA made the TDA farebox ratio requirement in FY 2021-22 (18 percent); the DAR services had the lowest farebox ratio (9 percent) while the WC service had the highest farebox ratio at 28 percent.
- Passenger-Trips per Hour and Per Mile: The passengers carried per hour of service indicates the relative productivity of the transit system, and therefore its effectiveness. There were 7.3 passenger-trips completed per hour on HTA systemwide in FY 2021-22, ranging from a low of 2.5 on the DAR to high of 9.2 on the ETS service. An average of 0.3 passenger-trips per mile were completed across HTA in FY 2021-22, with values ranging from 0.1 to 0.9 passengers per mile depending on the service.

HTA Operating Costs

HTA's budgeted operating costs for FY 2022-23 are shown in Table 11, categorized by type of expenditure. HTA's operational and administrative costs are projected to equal \$6.82 million and maintenance costs to equal \$1.68 million in FY 2022-23, meaning HTA's direct expenses will total \$8.5 million. The largest operational and administrative cost will be payroll and benefits (76 percent of the operational and administrative budget) and the largest maintenance costs will be for vehicles (70 percent of the maintenance budget). The percentage of operational and administrative funds spent on payroll and benefits increased slightly in FY 2022-23 (this expense represented 72 percent of the

¹ Operating cost data was provided by HTA and includes fully allocated costs.

operational and administrative budget in FY 2020-21 and 71 percent in FY 2021-22). In contrast, the percentage of maintenance funds spent on vehicle costs has decreased over time; vehicle costs represented 79 percent of the FY 2020-21 maintenance budget and 72 percent of the FY 2021-22 maintenance budget. While ridership has significantly decreased in recent years primarily due to the pandemic, operating costs have increased, therefore impacting the cost-effectiveness of HTA.

HTA Revenues

Expected FY 2022-23 revenues for the various HTA services are shown in Table 12. Operating revenues, which include contract revenue, fare revenue, CARES Act funds, and LCTOP revenues, are projected to comprise 32 percent of total revenues (\$2.7 million). The proportion of revenues generated by operating sources had declined in recent years, in part due to low ridership rates during the pandemic. Non-operating revenues include Local Transportation Funds (LTF), State Transportation Assistance (STA) funds, State of Good Repair (SGR) funds, and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant funds, Joint Power Agreement member assessment fees, advertising revenues, and rents and leases. The total non-operating revenue in FY 2022-23 is expected to be \$5.76 million—61 percent of which was LTF allocations and 18 percent of which was STA funds. Based on the HTA budget, revenues are expected to increase by 9 percent over FY 2021-22 (\$7.77 million).

A&MRTS EVALUATION

Operating Data

Passenger Trips

Table 13 shows A&MRTS ridership data for FY 2019-20 through FY 2021-22. The COVID-19 pandemic had a clear impact on A&MRTS ridership; A&MRTS ridership dropped by 70 percent from 242,796 passenger-trips in FY 2019-20 to 72,512 one-way passenger trips in FY 2021-22. Ridership in the past fiscal year is only 30 percent of what it was pre-pandemic, representing a much slower recovery than on other services in the region.²

The A&MRTS stops with the greatest average daily boarding and alighting activity from June 1 to December 31, 2022, are shown in Table 14. The Library Circle stop at Cal Poly Humboldt, served by all three A&MRTS routes, was the most popular stop among passengers, with an average of 73 people either boarding or alighting at the stop each day. The other stops where over 50 people either boarded or alighted on the average service day were as follows: 10th Street and G Street, Arcata Transit Center, and Valley West Boulevard (McDonald's).

² Per Figure 7, ridership on HTA services are between 54 to 87 percent of ridership prior to the pandemic, averaging 62 percent of pre-pandemic levels.

Table 11: HTA Operational, Administration, and Maintenance Budgeted Expenses
 FY 2022-23

	RTS	ETS	WC	SHI	A&MRTS Maintenance	CTSA	Samoa	Dial-a-Ride	Admin.	Maintenance	Total
Operational & Admin. Expenses											
Payroll and Benefits	\$1,495,200	\$668,100	\$185,962	\$386,688	\$47,274	\$116,402	\$9,400	--	\$1,221,750	\$1,034,250	\$5,165,026
General Operating Expenses ¹	--	--	--	--	\$200	\$500	--	--	\$52,350	\$25,650	\$78,700
Administrative Expenses ²	\$3,500	\$600	\$100	\$200	\$300	\$750	\$134,287	\$830,630	\$216,300	\$3,000	\$1,189,667
Operational Expenses ³	\$207,250	\$48,300	\$26,975	\$51,520	\$155	\$41,500	--	--	--	\$8,700	\$384,400
Total Operational & Admin. Expenses	\$1,705,950	\$717,000	\$213,037	\$438,408	\$47,929	\$159,152	\$143,687	\$830,630	\$1,490,400	\$1,071,600	\$6,817,793
Maintenance Expenses											
General Maintenance ⁴	\$17,500	\$7,800	\$2,200	\$3,900	\$4,800	\$3,000	--	--	\$2,800	\$61,000	\$103,000
Vehicles ⁵	\$643,600	\$181,800	\$92,100	\$162,500	\$26,700	\$17,000	--	--	--	\$48,798	\$1,172,498
Facilities ⁶	\$55,572	\$55,571	\$55,571	\$55,571	\$55,571	\$72,713	\$55,571	--	--	--	\$406,140
Total Maintenance Expenses	\$716,672	\$245,171	\$149,871	\$221,971	\$87,071	\$92,713	\$55,571	\$0	\$2,800	\$109,798	\$1,681,638
TOTAL DIRECT EXPENSES	\$2,422,622	\$962,171	\$362,908	\$660,379	\$135,000	\$251,865	\$199,258	\$830,630	\$1,493,200	\$1,181,398	\$8,499,431

Source: HTA Adopted Budget 2022-2023

Note: Values represent budgeted amounts and not actual totals.

Note 1: Includes dues & subscriptions, general operating supplies, office supplies, printing, meetings and trainings

Note 2: Includes legal expenses, accounting & bookkeeping, outside consultants, advertising, cost of funds, non-vehicle insurance, ERMA liability, mileage & per diem, postage, service charges, specialized services

Note 3: Includes driver uniforms & shoes, GFI, WiFi, schedule printing, vehicle insurance, operations supplies

Note 4: Includes general maintenance supplies, shop tools, safety supplies and gear, shop uniforms

Note 5: Includes contract services, contract repairs, fuel, special studies/permits, parts, small tool allowance, tires, Economic Uncertainty Reserve

Note 6: Includes computer and software, facility contract repairs, rental & leases, contract maintenance, utilities, general facility maintenance and repair

Table 12: HTA Revenues

FY 2022-23

	RTS	ETS	WC	SHI	A&MRTS Maintenance	CTSA	Samoa	Dial-a-Ride	Admin.	Maintenance	Total
Operating Revenues											
Contract Transportation	\$56,769	\$4,508	\$92	--	\$135,000	--	--	--	--	--	\$196,369
Fares	\$600,000	\$235,000	\$30,000	\$50,000	--	\$50,000	\$500	--	--	--	\$965,500
CARES Act	\$634,593	\$223,078	\$155,350	\$138,743	--	--	\$64,471	--	--	--	\$1,216,235
Miscellaneous Revenues (LCTOP)	\$227,034	\$115,319	\$4,104	\$13,915	--	--	--	--	--	--	\$360,372
Non-Operating Revenues											
Advertising Revenue	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	\$51,000	--	\$51,000
Rent & Leases	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	\$0
LTF/JPA Member Assessment	\$1,698,530	\$280,883	\$260,469	\$608,547	--	--	--	\$717,435	--	--	\$3,565,864
Federal Operating	\$487,163	\$108,259	\$100,000	\$200,000	--	--	--	--	--	--	\$895,422
State Operating Funds											
STA	\$132,000	\$292,561	--	--	--	\$161,865	\$134,287	\$113,195	\$211,614	--	\$1,045,522
State of Good Repair (SGR)	\$60,000	\$30,000	--	--	--	\$40,000	--	--	--	\$73,147	\$203,147
TOTAL REVENUES	\$3,896,089	\$1,289,608	\$550,015	\$1,011,205	\$135,000	\$251,865	\$199,258	\$830,630	\$262,614	\$73,147	\$8,499,431
<i>Source: HTA Adopted Budget 2022-2023</i>											
Note: Values represent budgeted amounts and not actual totals.											

Vehicle Hours and Miles

A&MRTS reduced service levels due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in fewer vehicle service miles and hours being operated in FY 2020-21 compared to the year prior (Table 13). In FY 2021-22, A&MRTS operated 68,599 miles and 5,681 hours, representing an 11 percent decrease and 2 percent increase over service levels in FY 2019-20.

A&MRTS Performance Indicators

A&MRTS performance was greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic due to the fact that a large portion of ridership had previously been students attending Cal Poly Humboldt in person. When Cal Poly Humboldt went virtual in March 2020, student, faculty, and staff ridership plummeted (discussed in Chapter 2). Table 13 reviews important performance indicators for A&MRTS and the impact of Cal Poly Humboldt switching to remote instruction during the pandemic.

Performance Data and Indicators	Fiscal Year			% Change FY 20 - FY 22
	FY 19-20	FY 20-21	FY 21-22	
Passengers	242,796	54,593	72,512	-70%
Vehicle Service Miles	76,848	56,285	68,599	-11%
Vehicle Service Hours	5,580	4,252	5,681	2%
Operating Costs	\$680,229	\$680,232	\$821,064	21%
Fare Revenues	\$226,717	\$38,981	\$38,072	-83%
Operating Subsidy	\$453,512	\$641,251	\$782,992	73%
<i>Cost per Passenger-Trip</i>	\$2.80	\$12.46	\$11.32	304%
<i>Subsidy per Passenger-Trip</i>	\$1.87	\$11.75	\$10.80	478%
<i>Farebox Return Ratio</i>	33%	6%	5%	-86%
<i>Passenger-Trips per Hour</i>	43.5	12.8	12.8	-71%
<i>Passenger-Trips per Mile</i>	3.2	1.0	1.1	-67%
<i>Source: A&MRTS Farebox and Ridership Reports</i>				

- Operating Cost per Passenger-Trip: The operating cost per passenger-trip on A&MRTS increased by four-fold from \$2.80 in FY 2019-20 to \$11.32 in FY 2021-22. While this represents a significant increase, A&MRTS still was more cost-effective than many of the other transit services in Humboldt County in FY 2021-22.

- Subsidy per Passenger-Trip: The subsidy per passenger-trip, which is as previously mentioned an excellent indicator indicators of cost effectiveness, increased almost six-fold, from \$1.87 in FY 2019-20 to \$10.80 in FY 2021-22 (Table 13).
- Farebox Return Ratio: A&MRTS’s farebox ratio went from 33 percent before the pandemic, which was quite high for a public transit system, to around 5 percent in the last two years.

Table 14: A&MRTS Bus Stops with Greatest Boarding and Alighting Activity
June 1 2022 - December 31 2022

Bus Stop Location (Arcata)	Daily Average		Average Total Activity
	Boardings	Alightings	
Cal Poly Humboldt - Library Circle	32	42	73
10th St & G St	35	30	65
Arcata Transit Center	31	22	54
Valley West Boulevard (McDonald's)	25	28	53
Humboldt Plaza Apartments	29	16	44
Alliance Rd & Stromberg Ave	23	18	41
Buttermilk Ln & Bayside Rd	14	20	34
Diamond Drive	20	12	32
Uniontown Shopping Center	16	15	31
Foster Ave & Alliance Rd	19	10	29
Crescent Way (Northside)	15	13	27
Valley West Boulevard (South)	16	11	27
Greenview Market	11	15	26
Alliance Rd & Spear Ave	13	13	26
Valley East Boulevard	18	8	26
Parkway Apartments	11	14	25
2nd St & V St	12	13	25
H St & 10th St	2	21	24
18th St & G St	11	11	23
Ridge Road	10	12	22
Mad River Hospital	10	12	22
Zehdner Ave & S St	13	9	22
Renner Station	8	13	21
H St & 6th St	7	13	21
16th St & G St	10	10	20
Camp Curtis	10	10	20
Mad River Gardens	11	9	20

Source: A&MRTS & HTA

This is below the TDA requirement for rural transit systems, although this requirement has not been reinstated at the time of writing.

- Passenger-Trips per Hour and Per Mile: During the last three years, the number of passengers carried per hour of service dropped by 71 percent from 43.5 to 12.8. In addition, the number of passengers were carried per mile of service dropped from 3.2 to 1.1. A&MRTS used to be the most productive Humboldt County transit service but has not been in the last two years.

A&MRTS Operating Expenses

The City of Arcata's public transit expenses for the last three years are shown in Table 15. The budgets shown include Dial-a-Ride (administered by HTA and operated by CAE). A&MRTS expenses ranged from \$963,956 in 2020-21 to an adopted budget of \$1,294,377 in FY 2022-23. The biggest budgeted expenses for FY 2022-23 are employee salaries and benefits (\$540,098), and the JPA member fees (\$243,783), which are paid to the HTA for the City of Arcata's share of the RTS and Arcata DAR services.

A&MRTS Revenues

A&MRTS revenue data is also displayed in Table 13. Due to the decline in ridership, fare revenue also decreased over the three years considered (83 percent). A&MRTS revenues were only \$38,072 in FY 2021-22 but are projected to increase during FY 2022-23 as ridership hopefully increases.

FORTUNA TRANSIT EVALUATION

Operating Data

Passenger Trips

Fortuna Transit ridership and operations data for FY 2019-20 through FY 2021-22 is displayed in Table 16. Fortuna Transit provided 8,118 one-way passenger-trips in FY 2019-20, 7,444 one-way passenger-trips in FY 2020-21, and 7,713 one-way passenger-trips in FY 2021-22. This data shows that Fortuna Transit was only minimally impacted by the pandemic (-8 percent). Ridership levels increased in FY 2021-22 as well, meaning Fortuna Transit ridership only declined by 5 percent over the three years analyzed.

Vehicle Miles and Hours

Fortuna Transit operated 22,710 vehicle service miles and 2,671 vehicle service hours in FY 2021-22, representing slight increases over FY 2019-20 service levels (5 and 8 percent, respectively).

Table 15: City of Arcata Public Transit Expenses

FY 2020-21 - 2022-23

	Actual		Adopted
	FY 20-21	FY 21-22	FY 22-23
A&MRTS			
Regular Salaries	\$133,995	\$154,127	\$212,065
Overtime Wages	\$1,151	\$2,005	\$1,000
Part-time & Temporary Salaries	\$91,512	\$120,473	\$161,000
Employee Benefits	\$101,135	\$121,540	\$166,033
Utilities	\$1,583	\$2,038	\$1,750
Advertising	\$1,095	\$755	\$1,500
Training & Conferences	\$185	\$864	\$20,000
Clothing & Personal Expenses	\$90	--	\$600
Membership & Dues	--	\$560	--
Taxes & Other Fees	\$324	\$810	\$500
Insurance	\$55,012	\$67,555	\$74,304
CARES Act Expenditures	\$19,743	--	--
JPA Agreements	\$236,682	\$236,682	\$243,783
Postage, Photocopies, Office Supplies	\$180	\$426	\$1,700
Other Department Supplies	\$7	\$1,985	\$500
Small Tools	--	--	\$500
Fuel & Lubricants	--	--	\$60,000
Equipment Maintenance	\$149,915	\$206,408	\$135,000
IT Services & Maintenance	\$12,033	\$20,628	\$25,390
Overhead	\$64,940	\$77,920	\$79,630
Total A&MRTS Operating Expenses	\$869,582	\$1,014,776	\$1,185,255
Dial-a-Ride			
Regular Salaries	\$6,328	\$7,027	\$7,440
Overtime Wages	\$83	\$74	--
Employee Benefits	\$5,025	\$5,156	\$6,174
JPA Agreements	\$79,281	\$79,281	\$83,312
IT Services & Maintenance	\$3,657	\$7,051	\$12,196
Total DAR Expenses	\$94,374	\$98,589	\$109,122
TOTAL A&MRTS OPERATING EXPENS	\$963,956	\$1,113,365	\$1,294,377
<i>Source: City of Arcata Adopted Budget 2022/23</i>			

Table 16: Fortuna Transit Operations and Performance

FY 2019-20 - 2021-22

Performance Data and Indicators	Fiscal Year			% Change FY 20 - FY 22
	FY 19-20	FY 20-21	FY 21-22	
Passengers	8,118	7,444	7,713	-5%
Vehicle Service Miles	21,608	20,834	22,710	5%
Vehicle Service Hours	2,470	2,220	2,671	8%
Operating Costs	\$168,110	\$181,264	\$218,112	30%
Fare Revenues	\$15,261	\$11,689	\$16,000	5%
Operating Subsidy	\$152,849	\$169,575	\$202,112	32%
<i>Cost per Passenger-Trip</i>	\$20.71	\$24.35	\$28.28	37%
<i>Subsidy per Passenger-Trip</i>	\$18.83	\$22.78	\$26.20	39%
<i>Farebox Return Ratio</i>	9%	6%	7%	-19%
<i>Passenger-Trips per Hour</i>	3.3	3.4	2.9	-12%
<i>Passenger-Trips per Mile</i>	0.4	0.4	0.3	-10%

Source: Fortuna Bus Monthly Transit Reports

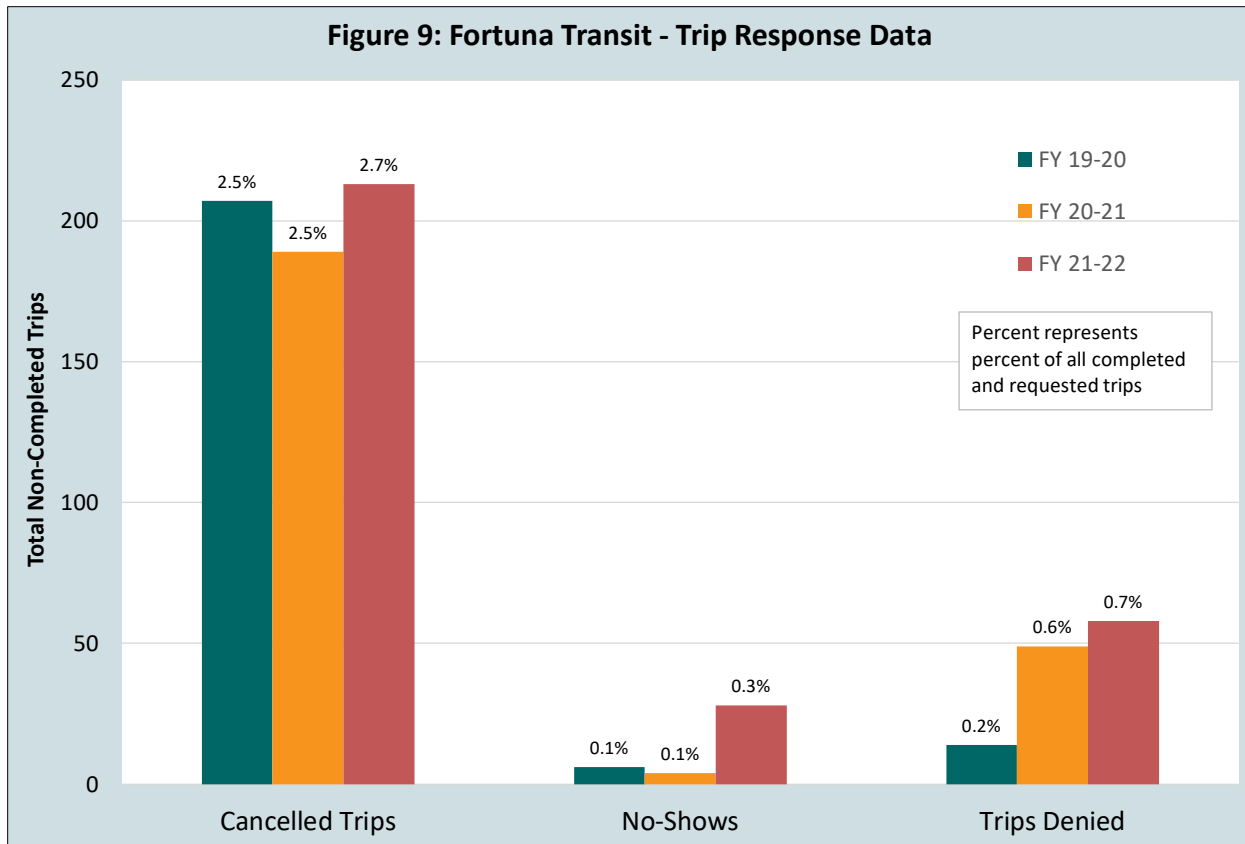
Fortuna Transit Performance Indicators

As seen in Table 16, Fortuna Transit performance was analyzed by considering a number of performance indicators. The results of this performance analysis were as follows:

- Operating Cost per Passenger-Trip: As operating costs increased by 30 percent from FY 2019-20 while ridership decreased by 5 percent, the operating cost per passenger-trip increased from \$20.71 to \$28.28 over the last three years (a 37 percent increase).
- Subsidy per Passenger-Trip: Similarly, , the subsidy per passenger-trip increased by 39 percent between FY 2019-20 and FY 2021-22 from \$18.83 to \$26.20 per passenger-trip.
- Passenger-Trips per Hour and Per Mile: The passengers carried per hour of service dropped from 3.3 in FY 2019-20 to 2.9 FY 2021-22. The number of passengers carried per vehicle service mile also dropped over the three years considered from 0.4 to 0.3. These values are on par with other demand-response systems across the state and country.
- Farebox Return Ratio: The annual farebox ratio was calculated by dividing the year’s fare revenues by operating costs. The Fortuna Transit farebox ranged from 9 percent in FY 2019-20 to 7 percent in FY 2021-22, which is below the not yet reinstated 10 percent TDA requirement.

Fortuna Transit Trip Response Data

As a senior and disabled transit service provider, Fortuna Transit tracks trip response rates as a service quality measure. The tracked metrics include cancelled trips (where passenger made appointments but cancelled prior to taking them), no-shows (where passengers cancelled with less than an hour's notice or did not appear for their trip), and trips denied (where a request was made but was not able to be scheduled). All three of these metrics have increased slightly over the past three years, as seen in Figure 9, but remain well within a reasonable response. Most recently, 0.3 percent of trips resulted in no-shows, 0.7 percent of trips were denied, and 2.7 percent of scheduled trips were cancelled.



Fortuna Transit Revenues and Expenses

Table 17 shows Fortuna Transit revenues and expenses over the last three years. The largest revenue source for Fortuna Transit is the City of Fortuna's TDA revenue allocation; TDA revenues are expected to be 94 percent of Fortuna Transit's overall revenues in FY 2022-23. Senior bus fees, or fares, are expected to be \$16,000. Operating expenses include salaries, services, and supplies, and the HTA contract (for RTS services which operate within Fortuna).

Table 17: Fortuna Transit Expenses and Revenues

FY 2020-21 - 2022-23

Fund History	Actual FY 20-21	Estimate FY 21-22	Adopted FY 22-23
Beginning Fund Balance	\$125,758	\$95,524	\$81,112
Revenues			
Senior Bus Fees	\$11,689	\$16,000	\$16,000
TDA Revenue Allocation	\$316,695	\$344,000	\$381,987
Other	\$6,037	\$2,400	\$2,400
Transfer	\$4,431	\$5,000	\$5,000
<i>Subtotal</i>	\$338,852	\$367,400	\$405,387
Operating Expenditures			
Salaries and Benefits	\$150,761	\$182,572	\$197,944
Service and Supplies	\$30,503	\$35,040	\$37,742
Contract Services - HTA	\$163,697	\$163,700	\$168,700
Depreciation	\$24,125	--	--
<i>Subtotal</i>	\$369,086	\$381,312	\$404,386
Net Activity	-\$30,234	-\$13,912	\$1,001
Ending Fund Balance	\$95,524	\$81,612	\$82,113
<i>Source: City of Fortuna FY 2022-23 Adopted Budget</i>			

BLUE LAKE RANCHERIA TRANSIT SERVICE EVALUATION

Operating Data

Annual Passenger Trips and Vehicle Hours and Miles

BLRTS operating data for FY 2021-22 is shown by month in Table 18. Last year, BLRTS provided 5,831 passenger-trips, with the most passenger-trips being completed in September 2021 (594). This is significantly below ridership levels seen prior to the pandemic, when BLRTS carried over 10,000 passenger-trips annually. However, BLRTS has also decreased service levels in response to lower ridership, cutting three of its daily runs. BLRTS operated 1,284 hours and 28,755 miles of service in FY 2021-22. Variations in service levels each month were due primarily to the number of service days.

Passenger Trips per Hour and Per Mile:

On average, BLRTS carried 4.5 passengers per hour of service in FY 2021-22 (Table 18). Productivity was greatest in September 2021, the month with the greatest ridership. Passengers carried per mile averaged 0.2 throughout the entire year.

Table 18: Blue Lake Rancheria Transit System Operations and Performance

FY 2021-22

Month	Operating Data			Performance Indicators	
	Passenger Trips	Vehicle Service Hours	Vehicle Service Miles	Passenger Trips per Hour	Passenger Trips per Mile
July	439	109	2,623	4.0	0.17
Aug.	535	109	2,422	4.9	0.22
Sept.	594	109	2,436	5.4	0.24
Oct.	547	104	2,359	5.3	0.23
Nov.	528	103	2,333	5.1	0.23
Dec.	522	111	2,630	4.7	0.20
Jan.	439	102	2,284	4.3	0.19
Feb.	447	98	2,160	4.6	0.21
Mar.	478	114	2,533	4.2	0.19
Apr.	437	105	2,284	4.2	0.19
May	478	110	2,386	4.3	0.20
June	387	110	2,305	3.5	0.17
Total	5,831	1,284	28,755	4.5	0.20

Source: BLRTS, HCAOG

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INTRODUCTION

Public outreach is an essential component of any successful planning effort. During the development of this TDP, multiple outreach efforts will be conducted. In the early phase of the study, outreach has been focused on assessing how Humboldt County residents currently use public transit, their impressions of public transit, and what service improvements would encourage residents to use public transit more often. These efforts also provided data regarding existing transit needs across the county. The public outreach conducted for the early phase of the TDP update has included:

- Online Community Survey
- Onboard Passenger Surveys
- Stakeholder Interviews

The primary findings of these outreach efforts are highlighted in this chapter, with detailed results included in Appendices C (Online Community Survey), D (Onboard Passenger Surveys), and E (Stakeholder Interviews). The next phase of public outreach will include two community workshops. These workshops will be designed for the public to provide feedback on the findings of the existing conditions analysis and the potential service alternatives being considered in the study.

ONLINE COMMUNITY SURVEY

An online community survey was made available to the public from November 7 to 25, 2022. The online community was intended for both those use public transit as well as those who do not, as it is important to hear from both perspectives in order to determine the potential service changes that could result in increased transit ridership across the entire community. The survey assessed the community's awareness of the various public transit services available in Humboldt County and current impressions of these services. The survey also asked about the respondents' past history of riding the bus, and what service changes might encourage them to ride the bus more, or at all.

The survey was distributed to the public by emailing key stakeholders across the region flyers with the survey information, who in turn shared the information with their own networks. HCAOG also paid for promotional advertisements on Facebook and Instagram. A total of 183 valid survey responses were received online. While these results represent only a tiny portion of the overall Humboldt County population and are not entirely representative of the population as a whole, the results still provide useful insights about perceptions of transit and transit needs in Humboldt County. The detailed results are provided in Appendix C, and highlights are discussed below.

Current Impressions

- The majority of survey respondents described existing Humboldt County transit services with negative words, emphasizing the limited and infrequent nature of the services.

- When asked to describe their ideal Humboldt County public transit system, the most popular words used were frequent, reliable, safe, and convenient.
- Only 8 percent of respondents said they believe there is adequate funding for public transit service in Humboldt County. This indicates that people believe Humboldt County transit could benefit from increased funding.

Propensity to Use Transit

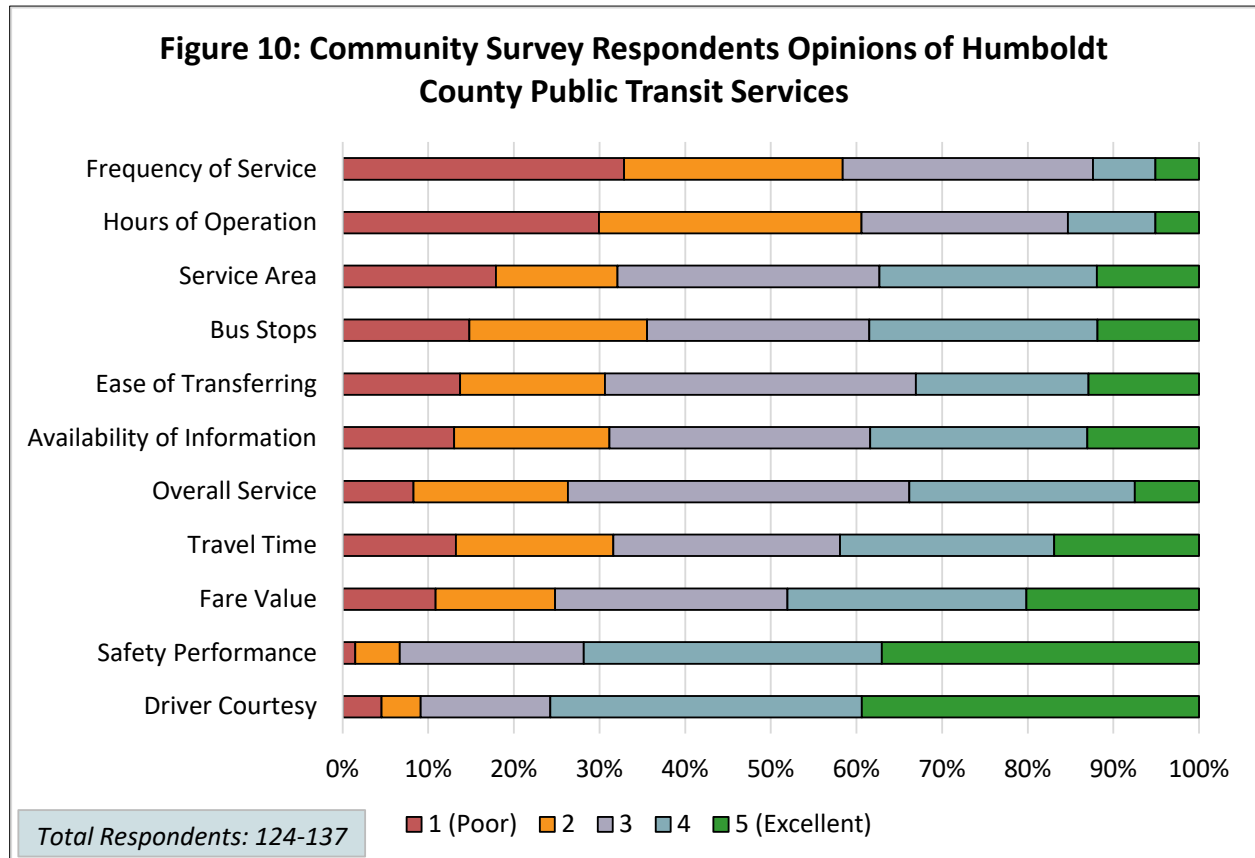
- Almost all of the participants had either heard of or had some level of familiarity with the Redwood Transit System (RTS) (93 percent). The majority of survey respondents also knew, at least somewhat, about the Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA), Arcata and Mad River Transit (A&MRTS), and the Eureka Transit Service (ETS). Samoa Transit and the Yurok Tribal Transit Services were the least well known.
- 83 percent of community members surveyed, or 148 individuals, said they had used public transit in Humboldt County at some point in the past. That left only 31 individuals who had never used any of the Humboldt County transit services, and who **were further directed to answer questions about why they do not use transit or what** improvements might encourage them to use transit. The most common reason given for not using transit, among the 31 people who answered, were:
 - They have their own personal transportation
 - The transit services are too infrequent
 - The bus takes too much time
 - The service area does not include where they need to go
- The top service improvements that would encourage the 31 respondents who have never ridden public transit in Humboldt County to potentially begin using transit services were increased service frequency, expanded service area, and better information.
- 8 individuals said that having bike lockers at the bus stations would help them travel to local bus stops on their own.
- 15 individuals said that they would only ever ride the bus if they didn't have a car. The only 14 individuals who answered the question indicated that they either would be open to riding the bus even if they still had a car, or that they weren't sure.

Transit Use Patterns

- The most popular transit services used by the respondents in the past were RTS (74 percent), ETS (52 percent), and A&MRTS (46 percent).
- Overall, the community survey respondents are not frequent transit users; only 12 percent ride the bus 5 or more days per week, while 34 percent ride 1 day a month or less.
- Very few (5 percent) had used Humboldt Dial-A-Ride in the last two years.

Opinions on Transit Service

The community survey asked respondents to rank various characteristics of the transit services from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). As seen in Figure 10, driver courtesy and safety performance were the two highest ranked factors, with an average rating of 4.0. The lowest ranked factors were the frequency of services and the hours of operation (both 2.3).



Similarly, Respondents were also asked to rate aspects of the Humboldt DAR on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). Only 9 people responded, however among those 9 individuals the best aspects of the DAR service are the driver courtesy (3.1) and the service area (2.8). The service attributes with the lowest ratings were the value received for fare (2.0), availability of information, and wait-times before getting picked up (both 2.3).

Respondent Demographics

- 32 percent of respondents live in Eureka, 29 percent live in Arcata, and the remaining live in various communities throughout Humboldt County.
- The respondents came from homes with varying incomes, with 59 percent of the 161 respondents living in homes with annual incomes of \$60,000 or less and the remaining 41 percent coming from homes with greater incomes.

- The majority of respondents were adults aged 23 to 45 (33 percent). Only 1 respondent was younger than 18 and only 5 percent of respondents were adults aged 18 to 22. Senior adults aged 71 or older represented 7 percent of total respondents.
- Of the 161 individuals who provided a response, 26 percent live alone, 43 percent live in a household with 2 people, 26 percent live in a 3- to 4-person household, and 5 percent in a household with five or more people.
- Only a small proportion of community survey respondents were likely transit dependent individuals; only 10 percent of respondents had no licensed drivers in their household and 17 percent lived in homes with no vehicles available. However, 15 percent of respondents did say that they have a disability that limits use of fixed route buses.

ONBOARD PASSENGER SURVEY

Onboard surveys were conducted between October 31 and December 16, 2022, on the HTA Services, A&MRTS, and Fortuna Transit. Surveys were available for passengers to self-administer, and then surveys were collected by the drivers. Agency staff later scanned and returned the surveys to LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc., for analysis. To encourage further participation, a trained surveyor rode each A&MRTS route for a total of 10 hours the week of December 5. Also, HCAOG staff rode ETS buses for a few hours on December 16 to ask passengers to participate.

The survey instruments consisted of a one-page questionnaire that was available in both English and Spanish. There were also forms with larger font available in English for visually impaired passengers on RTS, ETS, and Fortuna Transit. In all, 155 survey responses were received across the various services. Appendix D contains a discussion of the detailed survey results, while some of the key takeaways are included below.

Transit Use Patterns

- Almost half of the surveys were completed by passengers on RTS (46 percent). The services with the second and third highest response rates were A&MRTS (27 percent of the total surveys) and ETS (15 percent).
- Most of the surveyed passengers boarded the bus in the morning (65 percent).
- Top boarding locations included the Library Circle Stop at Cal Poly Humboldt (16 percent), the Arcata Transit Center (6 percent), and Valley West and Valley East Boulevards in Arcata (4 percent). The top alighting locations also included Library Circle (18 percent of alightings) and the Arcata Transit Center (7 percent), as well as College of the Redwoods (7 percent).
- The majority of the surveyed passengers walked to the bus stop before boarding (83 percent) and to their final destination after alighting (92 percent).
- Many of the surveyed passengers are regular transit riders; 89 percent of the respondents ride the bus at least two days a week, if not more frequently.

Transit Dependency

Some of the survey questions were designed to assess the potential transit dependency of the Humboldt County public transit passengers, such as whether the individual being surveyed had a car available for their trip, whether they used a scooter or wheelchair, and or how many vehicles they had in their household. The results of these questions were as follows:

- Over 75 percent of passengers reported that they were riding the bus roundtrip, suggesting that the bus was either their only option for travel, or at least the best option. This transit dependency is supported by the fact that only 15 percent of riders had a car available for their trip, even though 42 percent have a driver's license.
- Just like in the onboard survey effort for the 2017 TDP, only 2 percent of survey respondents used a wheelchair or scooter to get to fixed route bus services.
- About 17 percent of the surveyed passengers find it difficult to plan trips using other regional transit services, which is a slight decrease compared to 2017 survey results (-3 percent).
- Half of the passengers came from homes with no vehicles available, and another 28 percent have only one vehicle in the household.
- When the passengers were asked how they would have made their trip if they had been unable to ride the bus, nearly 40 percent said they would have not made the trip at all, once again suggesting potential transit dependency. 28 percent said they would have walked instead.
- Young adults represented about one-third of the surveyed passengers, reflecting the high ridership rates among local students. However, this still is a notable decrease compared to the 2017 TDP onboard survey effort in which 59 percent of the respondents were young adults and 8 percent of the passengers surveyed were adults 65 or older. The 2017 surveys were conducted before the COVID pandemic altered college class structures.

Other Trip and Passenger Characteristics

- The primary reasons why the passengers were riding the bus were to go to school or college (38 percent) or to go to work (35 percent). These answers varied though depending on the transit system; 64 percent of the passengers on A&MRTS were going to school or college while 64 percent of the SHI passengers were going to work.
- The top sources among the surveyed passengers for information on the transit services is the internet (38 percent), the printed guide (31 percent), posted information at stops (30 percent), and Google Maps (29 percent). This data represents an increase in the use of digital tools for learning about the transit system compared to the 2017 TDP, when only 28 percent of passengers said they used the internet to get information about the bus.
- 72 percent of passengers said they prefer to pay for transit fares using a monthly pass product. Only 17 percent indicated they would prefer cash, followed by 7 percent who would like to pay via phone application.
- Similar to the 2017 TDP, about a third of passengers reported that they use the Jack Pass through Cal Poly Humboldt. Jack Pass use was most common on A&MRTS (64 percent). As

Fortuna Transit is only available to senior adults or disabled persons, passengers were asked whether they use the Fortuna Transit Punch Pass, and all six respondents indicated they do.

- Over half of the surveyed passengers were a student of some sort in the county (Cal Poly Humboldt, College of the Redwoods, high school, or other schools). 47 percent of the passengers were employed either full or part time.

Passenger Opinions

Similar to the online community survey, the passengers taking the onboard survey were asked to rank characteristics of the Humboldt County public transit services on a scale of “poor” (1) to “excellent” (5). Altogether, the passengers ranked the services an average of 4.3, indicating that most passengers have good perceptions of the Humboldt County public transit services. The number of respondents who ranked each service ranged from 6 (Fortuna Transit) to 69 (RTS). Fortuna Transit was ranked the highest of the five services considered (5.0), while SHI was ranked the lowest (3.9), albeit both rankings were from small samples of passengers. Across the various services, driver courtesy, system safety, and trip length were some of the service factors consistently ranked highly, while phone information services, bus stops, and the services areas were consistently ranked low.

At the end of the survey, the passengers were given the opportunity to describe any other service improvements they would like to see implemented. Table 19 shows the most requested service improvements by indicating the percentage of respondents from each of the transit services that requested the improvement, and then as well as the total percentage of respondents across all the services who asked for each improvement. As seen in Table 19, later service was the most requested improvement (24 percent), followed by Sunday service (16 percent) and earlier service (10 percent). Appendix D provides details on some of the more specific service improvement requests.

Table 19: Most Requested Service Improvements by Onboard Survey Participants						
Improvement	RTS	A&MRTS	ETS	SHI	Fortuna	Total
Later Service	28%	27%	0%	11%	60%	24%
Sunday Service	12%	31%	7%	22%	0%	16%
More Bus Stops	14%	4%	0%	0%	0%	8%
Better Information	10%	4%	7%	0%	0%	7%
Earlier Services	14%	4%	0%	33%	0%	10%
Lower Fares	8%	4%	0%	0%	0%	5%
More Frequent Service	12%	4%	7%	11%	0%	9%

STAKEHOLDER INPUT

To learn more about transportation issues in Humboldt County, interviews were conducted with stakeholders including elected officials, social service providers, nonprofit agencies, and others either with an interest or representing those with an interest in transportation. This list of potential stakeholders was developed at the beginning of the planning process. Staff from LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc., reached out to 22 individuals (up to three times) to participate in an interview. Ultimately, 14 individuals participated. This section briefly reviews some of the themes consistent throughout the various interviews, while a thorough review of interview takeaways is included in Appendix E.

Who Should be Served by Transit

When asked who should be served by transit, some stakeholders pointed out that it should be for “everyone.” Many also pointed out that services should be geared towards the growing populations of Cal Poly Humboldt students and staff, retirees, and persons displaced by extreme weather or natural disaster events caused by extreme weather (climate refugees). A few pointed out that while transit is obviously vital for the transit dependent, services should be made more attractive to other groups to eliminate the perception that public transit is only for those dependent on the services.

Primary Transit Issues

The stakeholders were asked what they believe to be the big issues impacting Humboldt County public transit. Many mentioned the upcoming expansion of Cal Poly Humboldt as likely impacting transit demand in both the Arcata area and beyond. The growing populations of retirees, climate refugees, and seasonal tourists will also likely increase demand for transit services. The slow return of ridership after the pandemic was discussed by stakeholders, as well as the need to encourage greater ridership by making transit more useful and desirable to residents. The top operations challenges discussed by the stakeholders were low frequency, limited hours of operation, limited serviced areas, and insufficient funding for existing Humboldt County services.

Effectiveness

Stakeholders expressed that Humboldt County public transportation is effective at meeting the needs of those who need it most, and especially given limited funding. However, population centers have changed, and routes have not, leaving many local residents with no stops near their homes. A lack of funding makes it difficult to expand existing service areas though, leaving a gap in service.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Existing Services

Stakeholders were asked to describe the strengths and weaknesses of the Humboldt County transit providers. Some of the common themes in the interview answers (paraphrased) included:

- Strong leadership has enhanced regional coordination efforts and modernized the transit systems.
- Drivers are great and enhance the passenger experience.

- There is excellent coordination behind the scenes between the transit providers, between the transit providers and Cal Poly Humboldt, and between the various municipalities and tribes. However, coordination could still be improved further.
- Some of the most common service improvement requests across Humboldt County are to increase service frequency and expand current services to more areas. While these changes are both needed and would likely increase ridership, funding is limited and its nearly impossible to do both.
- Eureka and Arcata routes have not been updated in decades and are confusing to many. In Eureka, the route structure means it may take you 10 minutes to get to a certain destination, but 50 minutes to get home, making it less desirable to take the bus.
- Bus stop improvements would benefit passengers and help increase perceptions of safety. Humboldt County could complete passenger amenities plan similar to Lake County.

Branding

Currently, there are four transit providers and eight services operating in Humboldt County. Stakeholders were asked about their thoughts on branding all of the systems under one name/logo. They tended to agree that in the long-run, consistent branding would be beneficial, especially for individuals less familiar with the systems. Having an integrated payment system was mentioned as being the top benefit. However, many also mentioned that they don't think branding should be a priority given that ultimately, the impact on ridership is unknown and funding is limited.

Changes in Humboldt County Impacting Transit Services

Stakeholders were asked what changes they believe will impact the need for public transit, or just impact the services themselves, in the next five years. The top changes identified were:

- The planned expansion of Cal Poly Humboldt. This was by far the most common issue mentioned by the stakeholders.
- The expected growth of the senior and disabled populations.
- The new transit center in Eureka will enhance the passenger experience and likely increase ridership but may also require service changes.
- There are plans to begin pilot microtransit programs across the county, which may drive demand.
- New businesses and housing may impact transit demand. The transit providers and local planners need to coordinate to make sure that these locations can be served by transit.
- New climate plans are promoting infill development in the region, which should benefit the transit system.
- Zero emissions initiatives are going to require the transit providers to purchase zero-emissions buses and install the appropriate infrastructure. Routing changes may also be necessary.

Appendix A
DEMOGRAPHIC MAPS

DEMOGRAPHIC MAPS AND EMPLOYMENT DATA

DEMOGRAPHIC MAPS

This Appendix contains demographic maps that supplement information provided in Chapter 2 of this Humboldt County Transit Development Plan (TDP). The maps depict where potentially transit dependent persons live in Humboldt County. The population categories analyzed include:

- Figure A-1, Youths under 18 years of age – many youths have commitments outside of the home but are not yet old enough to drive or do not have a parent/guardian available to give them a ride. Those who can drive may not yet have a car available to use.
- Figure A-2, Elderly population ages 65 and older – there are many senior adults who are not as comfortable driving or not able to drive anymore, yet still need to get out of the home, particularly to attend medical appointments.
- Figure A-3, The population living below the poverty level –who often lack the means to acquire or maintain a private automobile. This population is defined by several factors including household income and the number of dependent children.
- Figure A-4, Individuals with a disability – who may have limited abilities to drive.
- Figure A-5, Households without a vehicle available – those who live in home without a vehicle available are very likely to rely on alternative transportation such as public transit.

**Figure A-1
Youth Population Density (Under 18 Years of Age)**

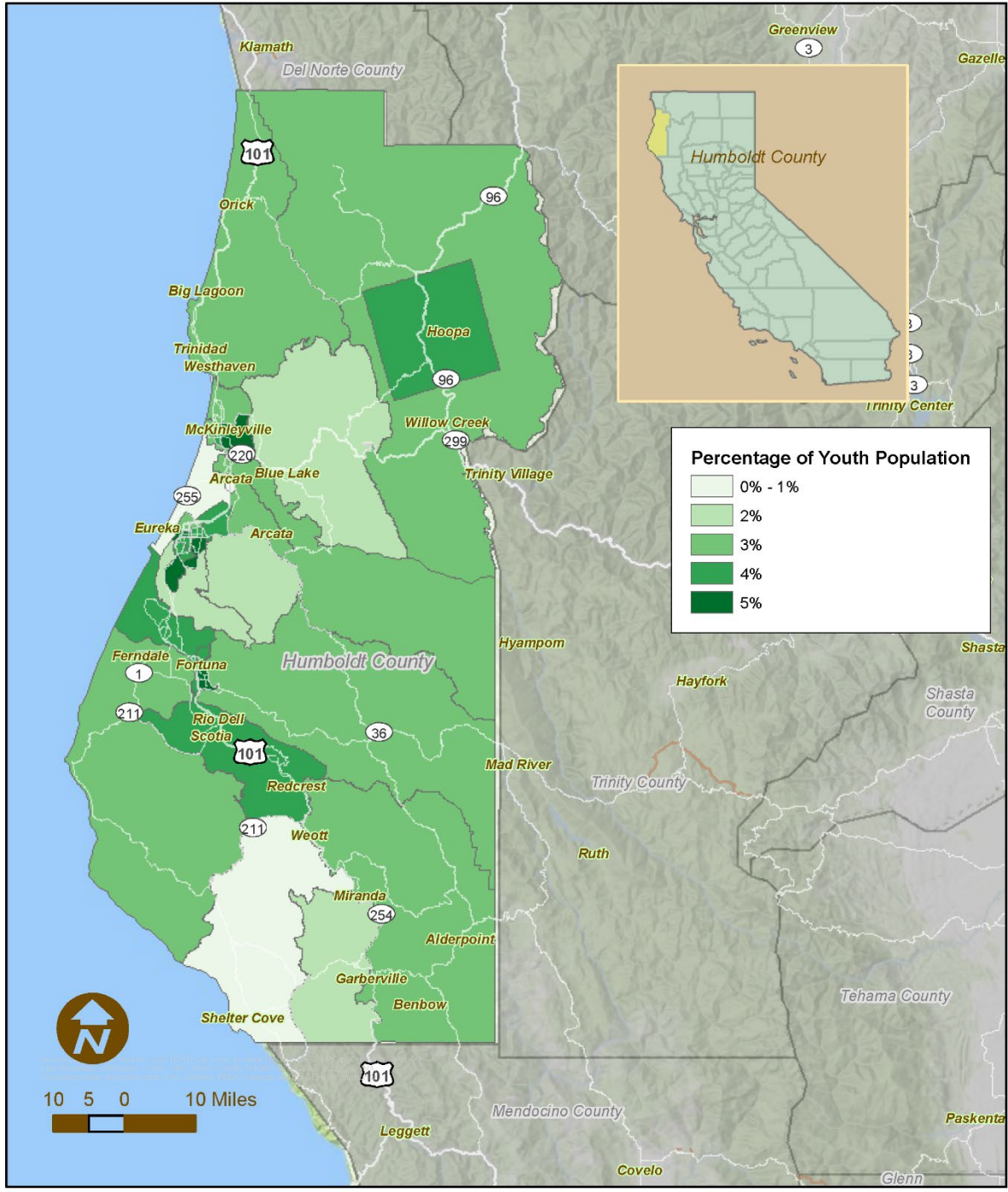


Figure A-2
Senior Population Density (Ages 65 and Older)

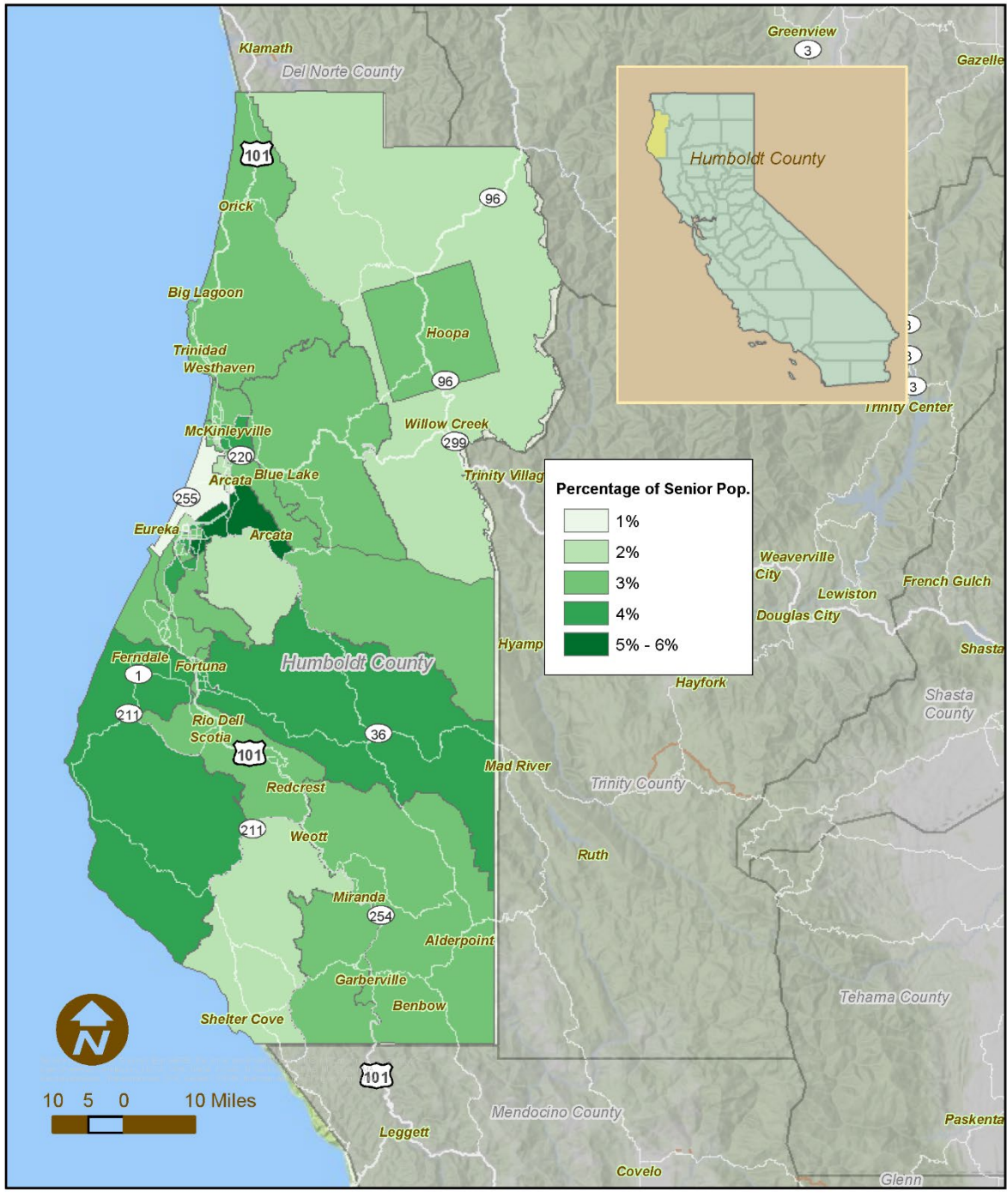
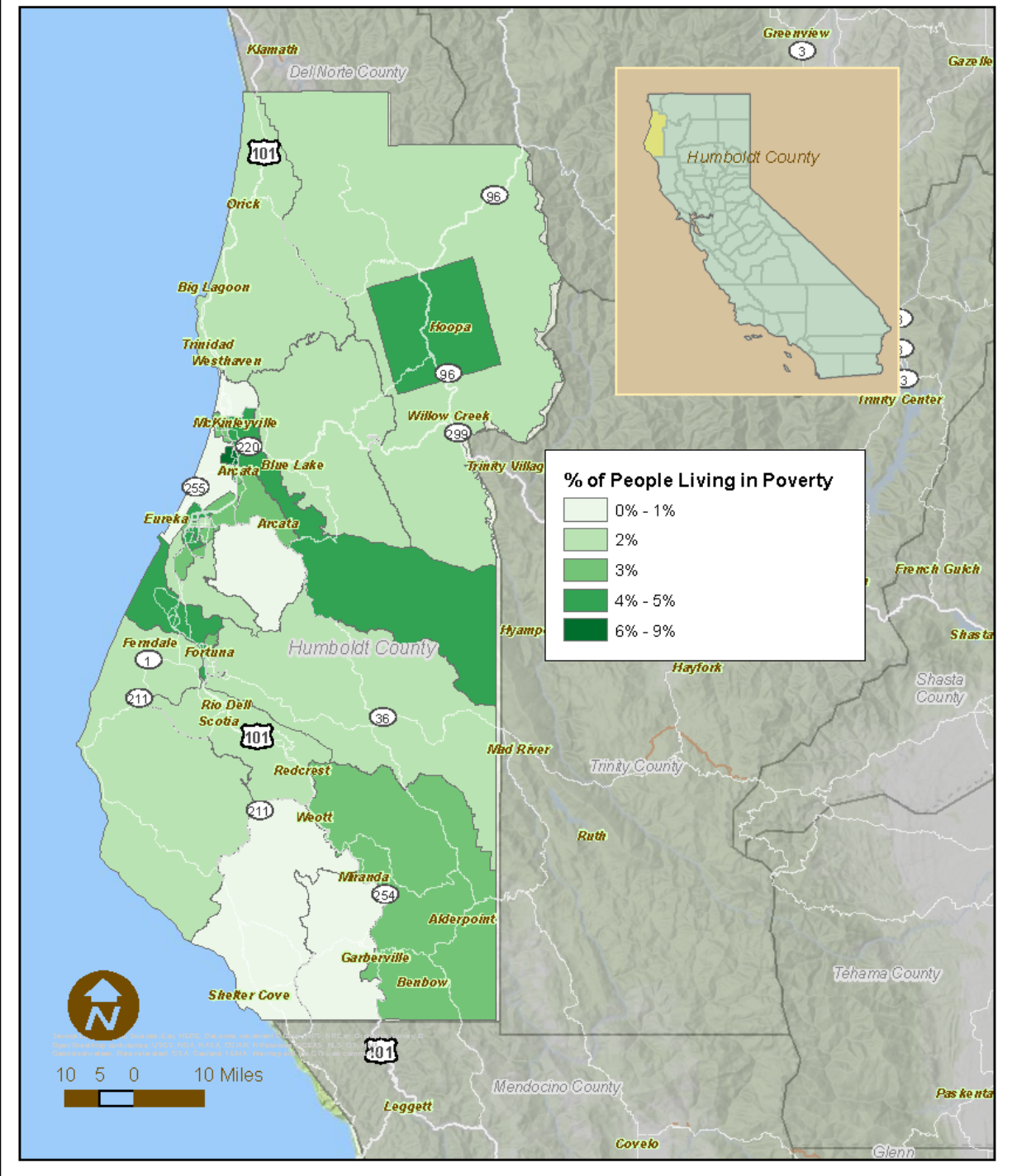


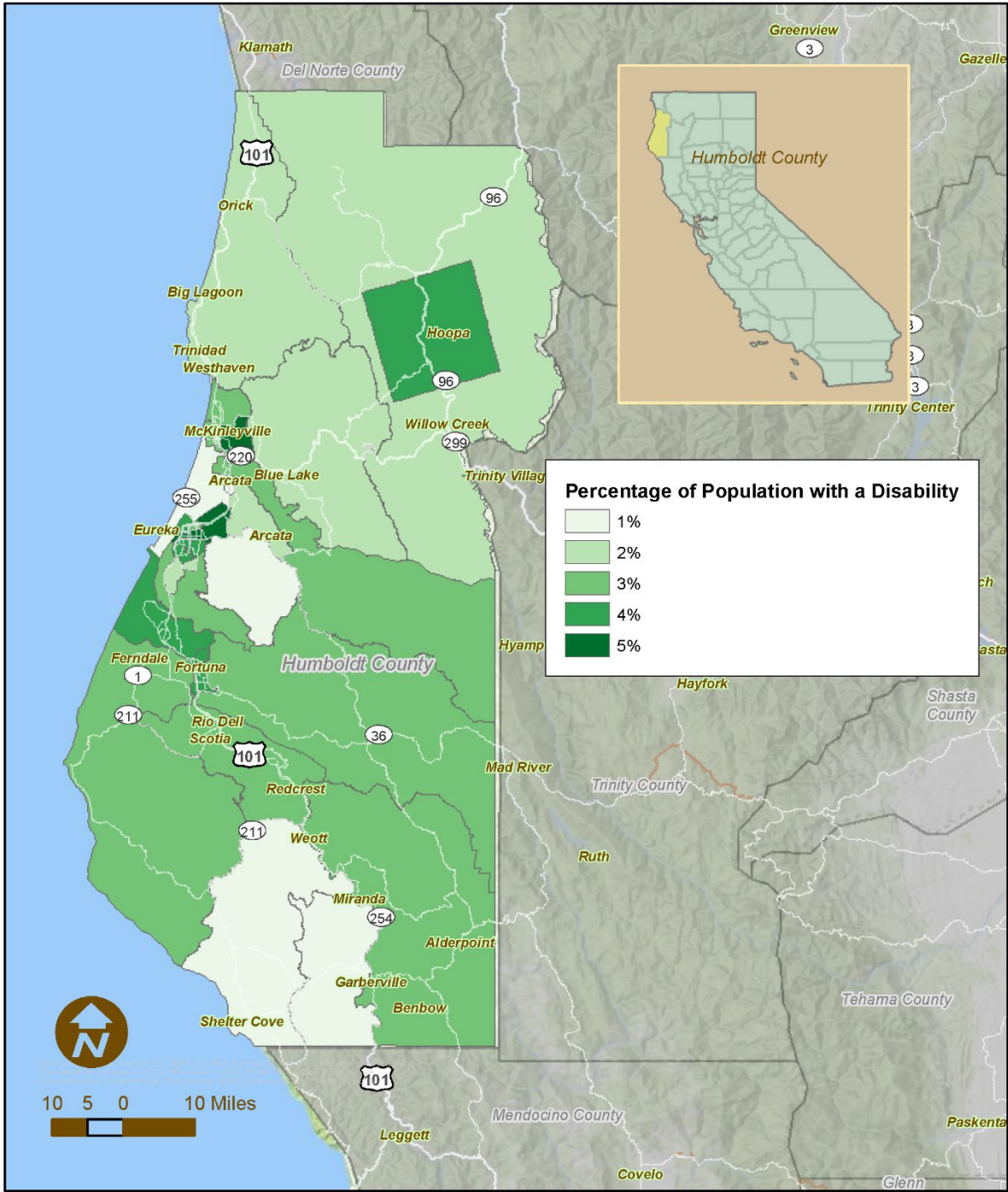


Figure A-3

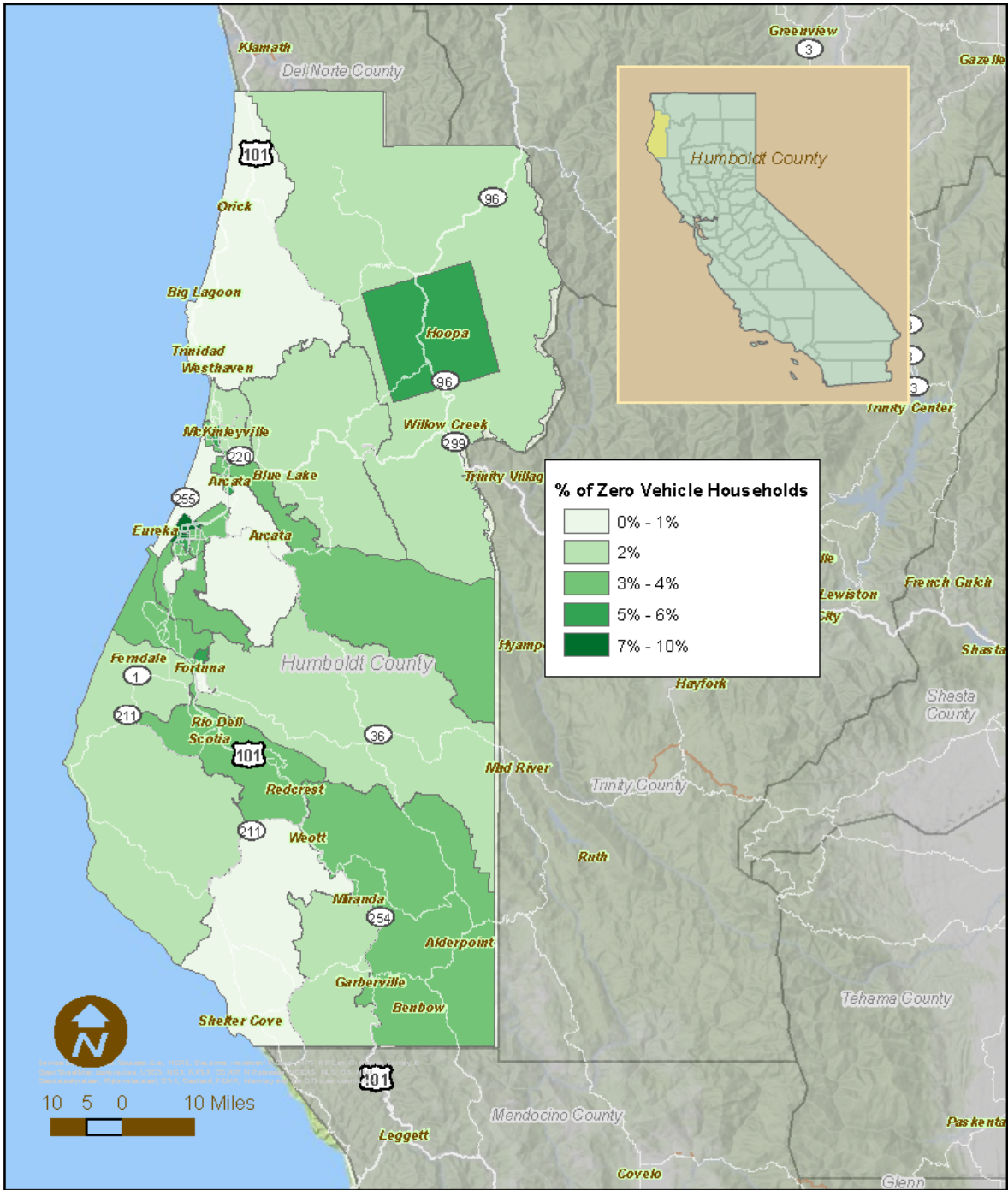
Population Density of People Living Below the Poverty Line



**Figure A-4
Population Density of Persons Living with a Disability**



**Figure A-5
Zero Vehicle Household Density**



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Appendix B
REVIEW OF RECENT PLANNING STUDIES

REVIEW OF RECENT PLANNING DOCUMENTS

INTRODUCTION

There are a number of recent planning efforts that are related to the current Transit Development Plan (TDP) update. Many of these studies have been organized by the Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) and the various transportation agencies which operate in Humboldt County. This Appendix only briefly discusses the components of these plans relevant to public transit and the TDP. When necessary, the plans reviewed in this section are referenced in the main TDP report to ensure coordination of planning efforts.

Humboldt County Regional Transportation Plan (2022)

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is a long-term planning document covering a 20-year horizon. The RTP outlines goals and projects for each transportation sector across Humboldt County. All of the various projects described in the report support the overall goal of working “for Humboldt County to have a carbon-neutral, multi-modal transportation system that is comprehensive, safe, sustainable, and equitable.” The RTP described the following short-term projects for public transit (not including vehicle replacements):

- Study benefits, tradeoffs, and feasibility of local/regional fare-free transit programs (2022-24)
- Design and construct hydrogen fuel station (2024)
- Install zero-emission fueling infrastructure in Willow Creek (2024)
- Establish a satellite office/transit hub in Redway (2023)
- Establish a McKinleyville Transit Hub in the center of town (2025)
- Establish Eureka Intermodal Transit Center (2024)
- Bus parking restructuring (2022)
- Construct additional maintenance bays for the Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA) (2022)
- Install solar PV system at HTA maintenance facility in Eureka (2022-2025)
- Microtransit pilot program in McKinleyville (2025)

Additionally, the RTP long-term vision includes:

- Arcata: Install solar PV system on transit center roof (2031)
- HTA: Feeder bus lines to McKinleyville, Manila, Trinidad, and Fortuna to connect to the RTS commuter line (2023-43)
- HTA: Park-and-Ride lots with multi-modal facilities (e.g., bike lockers, bus shelter), located near transit stops (2023-33)
- HTA: Increase frequency of Redwood Transit System (RTS) services (e.g., express service between McKinleyville and Eureka, & late night service)

Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Plan: Humboldt County (2021)

The Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Plan (CPTHSP) describes projects that will improve the state of transportation specifically for persons with disabilities, senior adults and persons with low

incomes living. For projects to receive funding from Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310, they must be included in the CPTHSP. Humboldt County's most recent update to its CPTHSP outlines the following priority strategies for coordinating transportation services, addressing unmet transit needs, and improving transportation for those in need:

- Maintain, evaluate, and strengthen transportation services
- Review the internal structure and methodology for changing entities and setting fares before expanding on-demand services
- Review and evaluation of the needs for non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT)
- Multi-organizational approach to solutions
- Maintain and strengthen interregional transportation connections.

McKinleyville Transit Study (2021)

The McKinleyville Transit Study was developed for HCAOG and the Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA) primarily to assess the viability of implementing fixed route services in McKinleyville like those provided in Eureka and Arcata. The study team identified two key themes when reviewing old planning documents and conducting public outreach: *"1. There is strong interest in improving HTA's Redwood Transit System ('RTS'); and 2) there is recognition that McKinleyville could use its own service, separate from RTS."* Although there was evidence of interest in implementing more transit services within McKinleyville, the study team also found through analysis that it would be unlikely a fixed route service in McKinleyville would experience the same levels of ridership as the transit agencies in Eureka and Arcata. Considering the interest in more intra- and intercity services in the McKinleyville area and the project costs and ridership levels, the study ultimately recommended that new intracity transit service in McKinleyville be introduced in the form of a one to two year flexible microtransit service. Staff could analyze the productivity of the microtransit program to determine if fixed route service is merited.

Total Cost of Ownership Comparison between Fuel Cell and Battery Electric Transit Fleets for Humboldt County (2021)

The Schatz Energy Research Center analyzed the total cost of ownership (TCO) of battery electric and fuel cell electric bus options to help prepare the HTA and the other transit agencies in Humboldt County for the transition to zero-emissions buses (ZEBs). As it will be extremely likely that charging infrastructure will be shared by multiple transit services, the study considered all of Humboldt County's transit services, as well as Del Norte County's Redwood Coast Transit and Trinity County's Trinity Transit. The study considered the TCO for five different deployment plans which ranged from full fleet conversion to battery electric buses (BEBs) to full fleet conversion to fuel cell electric buses (FCEBs). It was found that adopting a fleet of entirely BEBs would result in higher upfront capital costs and lower operating costs while a fleet of entirely FCEBs would result in the opposite cost scenario. Having a mixed fleet of BEBs and FCEBs would result in capital costs similar to the all-FCEBs scenario and operating costs between the all BEBs and the all FCEBs scenario. While having a fleet of entirely BEBs would result in cheaper operating costs, BEBs would require Humboldt County to either expand the size of its transit fleets or overbuild charging infrastructure to ensure buses can reliably provide service.

Climate Resilient Battery Electric Fleet Feasibility Assessment for Humboldt County Public Transit (2020)

California’s Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) Regulation has prompted transit agencies across the state to quickly begin converting their fleets to ZEBs. This process requires not only procuring new buses, but also installing optimally located charging infrastructure that will allow buses to safely complete their routes. In this report, the study team considered the electrification of Humboldt County’s transit fleets through the lens of climate change. The team considered the anticipated impacts of climate change in Humboldt County, and how these changes may impact roads, electricity, charging infrastructure, and communications infrastructure. The assessment’s final recommended fleet electrification strategy was for HTA to do pilot deployments of ZEBs. The study recommended first trying ZEBs for the routes in the Arcata and Mad River Transit System and Eureka Transit System. Potential near-term funding opportunities identified include the PG&E Electric Vehicle Fleet Program, the California Department of Transportation Strategic Partnership Grant, and the Carl Moyer Infrastructure Application. The top barriers to electrifying the Humboldt County transit fleets identified by the study were the limited range and power of ZEBs and the charging requirements.

Mobility-on-Demand Strategic Development Plan (2020)

The Mobility-on-Demand Strategic Development Plan was developed to support the overarching goal of “*providing affordable and accessible mobility solutions for all travelers.*” The Plan describes ways for Humboldt County to advance projects and potential pilots related to integrated and technology-enabled mobility. A framework for measuring the relative success of these pilot programs was also outlined. Near term potential pilot projects identified in the report include:

- Streamline the Redwood Transit System (RTS) Mainline alignment by eliminating three current deviations. This would be done by expanding dial-a-ride and on-demand options within the local communities impacted so people can still get to the RTS stops. An example mentioned was eliminating the Fortuna deviation and then opening the Fortuna Transit Senior Bus to all ages.
- Begin a “modern hitch-hiking” program, where the public transit agency procures and deploys an app-based service that matches available drivers with passengers in need of rides.
- Expand bike-share options, especially near transit stops.

Blue Lake Rancheria Transit Study (2019)

The primary purpose of the Blue Lake Rancheria Transit Study was to analyze the costs and benefits of a potentially expanding the Blue Lake Rancheria Transit System (BLRTS) services to include service to McKinleyville, Fieldbrook, western Glendale, and Korbel. The study assessed seven different scenarios, and eventually recommended that the Rancheria consider implementing two of the seven.

The first recommended alternative was to coordinate with HTA to have the Willow Creek Intercity Service stop in Blue Lake along its current route between Willow Creek and Arcata. This service would enable BLRTS to focus its resources on supplementing the Willow Creek service by performing two morning runs to Arcata, a morning commuter run to McKinleyville through Fieldbrook. BLRTS would then provide two evening runs to Arcata and an evening commuter run from McKinleyville through Fieldbrook. The BLRTS bus would provide deviated fixed route service. The study team found that this

alternative was the most feasible way to provide service to Fieldbrook, but if implemented would likely impact both the City of Blue Lake’s and Humboldt County’s transit budgets.

The second recommended alternative also consisted of BLRTS coordinating with HTA to have the Willow Creek service stop in Blue Lake throughout the day, allowing BLRTS to use its resources to expand service to new areas. In this scenario, BLRTS would provide two morning runs to Arcata and back, one morning deviated commuter run to Arcata through McKinleyville, and then the same number of runs in the afternoon. This scenario was the most financially feasible and provided Rancheria residents with the most opportunities per day to get to the Arcata Intermodal Transit Facility but would require passengers to endure longer trip times.

Humboldt Transit Development Plan (2017-2022)

The Transit Development Plan (TDP) is a short-term planning document that outlines a service, capital, and financial plan for the transit system for a 5-year time period. The last TDP was prepared by LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc., for HCAOG and adopted in 2017. The TDP also included a strategic plan for the Humboldt County Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC). Summarized below are some of the highlights from the recommended service plans for each of the Humboldt County transit agencies analyzed:

- **Arcata & Mad River Transit System (A&MRTS):** Adjust the schedule to better match the class schedule at Cal Poly Humboldt, make the Community Center an on-demand stop, extend transit service to South G Street, and (depending on funding) provide a high frequency shuttle between Cal Poly Humboldt and Downtown Arcata during peak periods.
- **Redwood Transit System (RTS):** Develop an “Express Service” between Eureka and Arcata and implement later Saturday service on the Mainline.
- **Southern Humboldt Intercity (SHI) Service:** Begin providing SHI service on weekends.
- **Willow Creek (WC):** Add on-demand stop in Blue Lake.
- **Eureka Transit Service (ETS):** Begin earlier weekday service.

No changes in service were recommended for the Fortuna Transit Senior Bus or the Blue Lake Rancheria Transit System. Some changes have already been implemented since the 2017 TDP was adopted, such as eliminating the Tish Non-Village and Southern Humboldt Local services. It is important to reevaluate Humboldt County transit services in this current TDP effort, as this new update will consider how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted public transit.

Humboldt County General Plan for Areas Outside the Coastal Zone (2017)

The Humboldt County General Plan was adopted in October 2017. Overarching goals of the plan related to public transportation include encouraging transit-oriented development and mitigating carbon emissions by increasing transit use. The Circulation Element of the General Plan promotes having a balanced transportation network that includes public transportation services. Policies recommended in the Circulation Element related to public transit include circulation planning for public transit access, coordinating existing and future public transit services between rural and more urbanized areas in the county, integrating automobile and bicycle transportation with the public transportation network by ensuring there are the appropriate parking amenities at bus stops, increasing the percentage of trips made by public transit in the county compared to by personal

vehicle, and designing bus stops that are convenient to activity centers and promote increased ridership. These policies and goals are considered during this TDP effort when relevant.

Unmet Transit Needs (2022)

The California Transportation Development Act (TDA) requires regional transportation planning agencies (RTPAs) to hold an annual hearing to determine unmet transit needs across the region. TDA funding must be spent on any unmet transit needs deemed at the hearing to be reasonable to meet before the RTPA can allocate any TDA funding to projects not directly related to public transportation and pedestrian facilities. As of the 2017 TDP, HCAOG defines unmet transit needs as:

1. "Trips requested from residents who do not have access to public transportation, specialized transportation, or private transport services or resources for the purpose of traveling to medical care, shopping, social/recreational activities, education/training, and employment; or
2. Proposed public transportation, specialized transportation, or private transport services that are identified in the following (but is not limited to): a Transportation Development Plan, Regional Transportation Plan, Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan."

HCAOG uses four criteria to determine whether unmet transit needs are reasonable to meet. These criteria assess the short-term and long-term operational feasibility and financial sustainability of each proposed transit service change. At the FY 2022-23 hearing, held in April 2022, 156 comments were received. 35 of these comments were found to be unmet transit needs per the definition adopted by HCAOG. 31 of these unmet needs were found to be unreasonable to meet. Some of the unmet needs had already been addressed: later weekday service between Eureka and Arcata was set to begin in July, HTA had already added a new bus stop near Burney Vista Point, earlier weekday service to McKinleyville was set to begin in July, and there are already transportation services to Del Norte County. In addition, the SSTAC conducted detailed research to determine the feasibility of transit services between Humboldt County and local destinations in Humboldt County, but this type of transit program was found to still be unreasonable.

Appendix C
DETAILED COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

DETAILED COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

ONLINE COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

To gain a better understanding of how local residents both utilize and perceive the various transit systems across Humboldt County, an online community survey was made available from November 4 to December 2, 2022. The online survey was intended for everyone from regular transit users to those who have never ridden the bus before. The value of the online community survey results, therefore, is that they provide insight into the travel patterns and views of the community at large. This information can then be used to design effective service improvements that can be implemented throughout the next five years and potentially increase transit ridership countywide.

The community survey was advertised by emailing Humboldt County stakeholders, who in turn distributed the survey to their own networks, primarily via email and social media posts. HCAOG also posted the survey information to its website and social media. The Mad River Union ran an advertisement for the survey for a two-week period. The online community survey was also mentioned in a local TV news special.

The survey was entirely online, with a simple introduction and 30 questions in multiple choice, short-answer, or comment format. Survey logic was used, so in certain instances only those who answered a question one way were invited to answer more questions on that topic. There were English and Spanish versions of the survey available, but everyone answered in English. A total of 183 people completed the survey. The number of answers per question varies, as people did not provide an answer to every question. This Appendix contains detailed results by question, while highlights of the community survey are referenced in the main text of the TDP.

CURRENT IMPRESSIONS

Q1 & Q2. Current Versus Ideal Public Transit System (176 Responses)

The survey respondents were asked to describe the existing public transit system in Humboldt County with three words, and then they were asked to describe the ideal public transit system they would like to see in Humboldt County with three different words. Figure C-1 shows a word cloud of the top words used to describe the current system and Figure C-2 shows a word cloud of the top words used to describe the ideal system.

The top words used to describe the current public transit system were limited, infrequent, and slow (Figure C-1). These words are rather negative and suggest that a common view held by Humboldt County community members is that the transit system, while essential and helpful for those who need it, is not widespread, frequent, or reliable enough for people to want to ride the bus regularly.

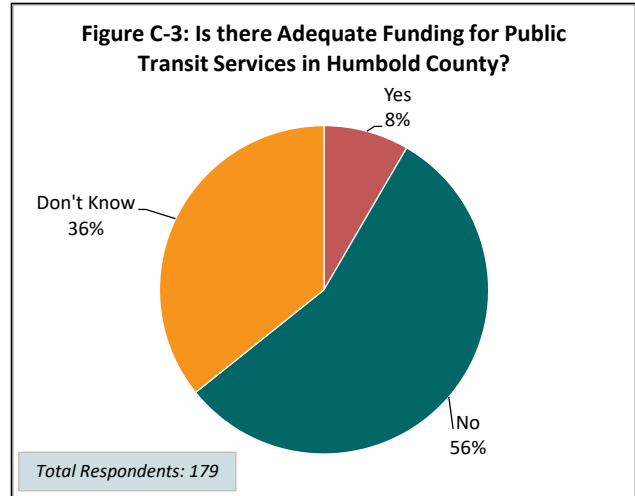
The top words used to describe the ideal transit system were frequent, reliable, safe, and convenient (Figure C-2). These words are nearly the opposite of the top words used to describe the current local transit system, suggesting the top service changes that residents would like to see are expanded service areas, more frequent service, and longer hours. Many people expressed how they hoped for a transit system that promoted green and ecofriendly transportation.

Figure C-1: How Community Survey Participants Describe Current Transit System in Humboldt County



Q3. Is there Adequate Funding for Public Transit Services in Humboldt County? (179 Responses)

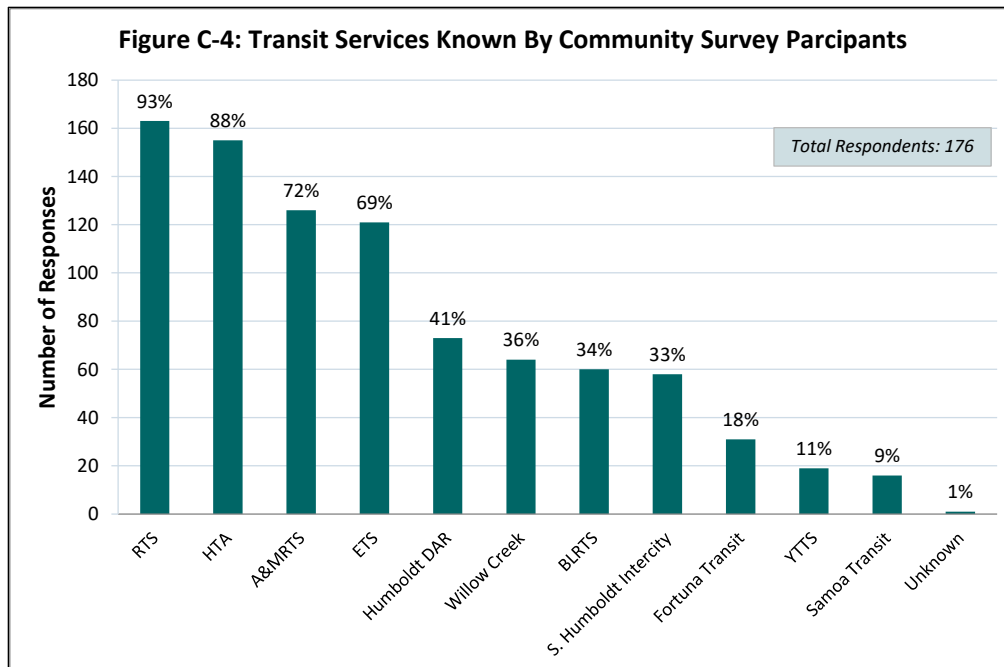
As seen in Figure C-3, when asked if there is adequate funding for public transit services in Humboldt County, the majority of respondents said no (56 percent). Only 8 percent of respondents thought current funding levels are adequate, while the remaining 36 percent said they were unsure.



KNOWLEDGE OF LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSIT

Q4. Transit Services Known by Community Survey Participants (176 Responses)

To assess how familiar the community survey respondents are with the various transit services available in Humboldt County, the participants were asked to select from a list all of the transit services they had either heard or knew of. The Redwood Transit System (RTS) was the most known among the survey respondents (93 percent), followed by the Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA) (88 percent), the Arcata & Mad River Transit System (AMRTS), and the Eureka Transit Service (ETS) (69 percent). The remaining transit services were known by less than half of the participants (Figure C-4).



POTENTIAL TO USE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Q5. Past Public Transit Use in Humboldt County (179 Responses)

The vast majority of the community survey respondents have used public transit in Humboldt County at some point in the past (83 percent). The remaining respondents have never ridden buses locally.

Q6. Reasons for Not Using Public Transit in Humboldt County (29 Responses)

The respondents who said they had never used public transit in Humboldt County in Question 5 were then asked to select the primary reasons why they don't ride the bus. The top reason among the participants was that they have their own personal transportation available (66 percent). Regarding the actual transit services themselves, the respondents said they don't ride the bus

because the bus comes too infrequently (59 percent), riding the bus takes too much time (52 percent), and the service area is too limited (48 percent). Table C-1 displays the other reasons cited by the survey respondents for why they choose not to ride public transit.

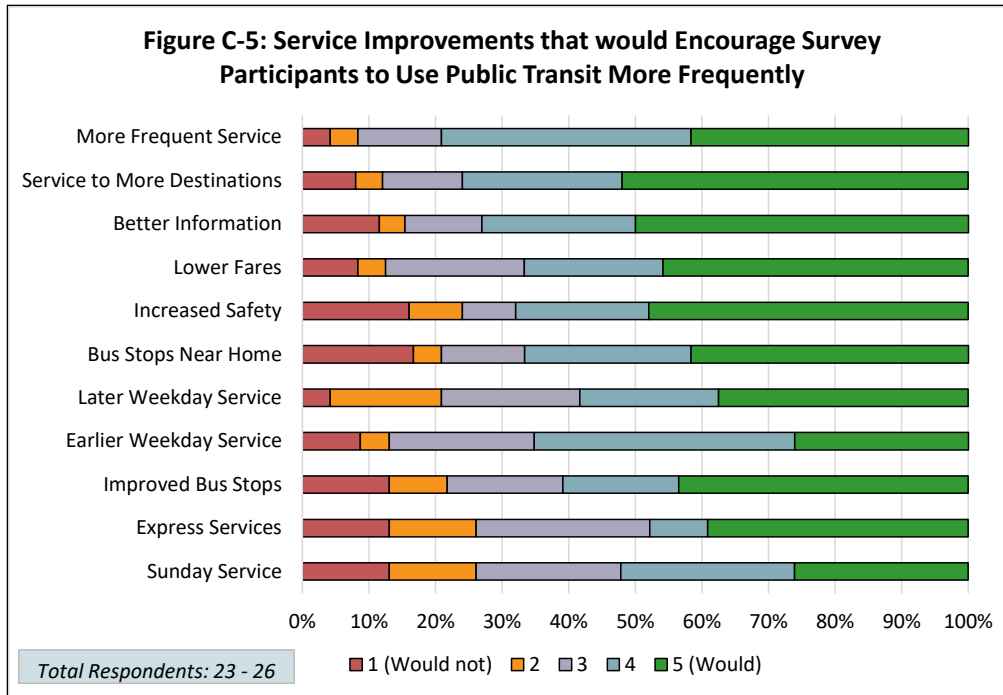
Reason	# of Participants	% of Participants
Have Personal Transportation	19	66%
Service Frequency	17	59%
Takes too Much Time	15	52%
Service Area	14	48%
Difficult to Use	10	34%
Hours of Operation	10	34%
Don't Know About the Services	6	21%
Costs too Much	3	10%
No Services or Passes for the District	2	7%
Don't Need to Travel Far	1	3%
Safety Concerns	1	3%
Total Responses	29	100%

Q7 & Q8. Service Improvements that would Encourage Survey Participants to Use Public Transit More Frequently (23-26 Responses)

The survey respondents who have never ridden the bus in Humboldt County were asked to rank several service improvements on a scale of 1 (would not) to 5 (definitely would) on the likelihood of whether the improvement, if implemented, would encourage them to use transit (Figure C-5) The most popular service improvements among the respondents were more frequent service (4.1), service to more destinations (4.0), and better information on the available services (4.0). Operating transit services on Sunday and starting new express transit services received the lowest amount of support (3.4 and 3.5, respectively). When asked to rank the single most important service improvement that would encourage the survey respondents to ride public transportation more often, more frequent service was the highest ranked.

Q9. Amenities that would Help Participants Get to Bus Stops (18-19 Responses)

Of the survey respondents who said that having bus stops closer to home was important to getting them to ride transit more often, having bike lockers at the bus station was ranked as being the most useful amenity, followed by having the ability to put a bike on the bus.



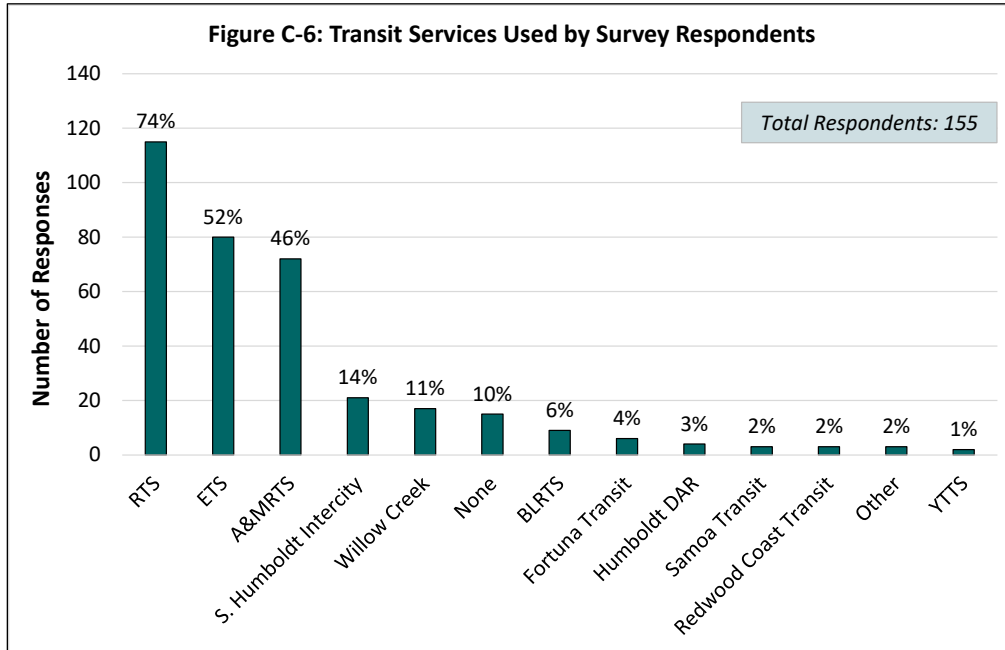
Q10. Would the Survey Participants Ride the Bus Even if they had a Personal Vehicle (29 Responses)

The 29 individuals who had never ridden public transit in Humboldt County were asked whether or not they would ride the bus even if they had a personal vehicle available. Half of these respondents said that they would be willing to ride the bus even though they had a car, indicating that there is potential for these individuals to ride the bus if certain service improvements are implemented.

PAST TRANSIT EXPERIENCE

Q11& Q12. Transit Services Used by Survey Respondents (155 Responses)

The survey respondents who have used public transit in Humboldt County in the past were asked to select all of the transit services they have used (Figure C-6). Nearly three quarters of the respondents had ridden RTS, just over half had ridden ETS, and just less than half had ridden A&MRTS. 15 percent or less of the respondents had ridden the Southern Humboldt Intercity (SHI) service, the Willow Creek (WC) service, Blue Lake Rancheria Transit System (BLRTS), or any of the other Humboldt County transit services (Figure C-6). Redwood Coast Transit is the public transit system in Del Norte County, which directly north of Humboldt County. The respondents were asked to select one of the transit services they have ridden in the past to discuss more in the survey. The results specific to each of the Humboldt County public transit systems are discussed below. It is worth noting that the answers provided are not representative of all Humboldt County transit riders towards these various services, as only small numbers of survey participants evaluated each system, and many of these participants are not frequent transit riders. However, the answers provided can still provide insight into general views and perceptions of each transit system, as well as some of the service improvements which would potentially encourage greater transit ridership.



Q13, Q14, Q15, & Q16.
Experience with Redwood Transit System (RTS) (57-66 Responses)

Over 40 percent of the 67 respondents who chose to evaluate the RTS reported that they ride the RTS either 5 or more days per week or 2 to 4 days per week, meaning nearly half of the people who

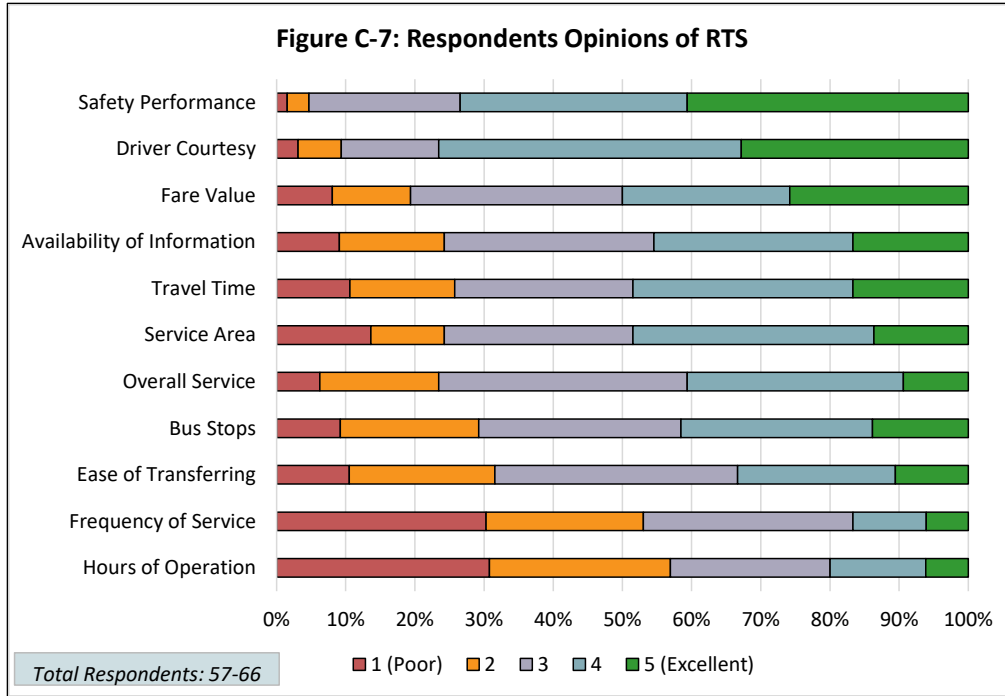
evaluated the RTS in the online survey are regular riders. Table C-2 shows the full results of how frequently participants ride RTS.

Table C-2: Frequency Respondents Ride RTS

Frequency	# of Participants	% of Participants
5 or More Days / Week	14	21%
2-4 Days / Week	14	21%
1 Day / Week	3	4%
1-4 Days / Month	1	1%
< 1 Day / Month	30	45%
Don't Know	5	7%
Total Responses	67	100%

The respondents were then asked to evaluate RTS by ranking various service characteristics on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). As seen in Figure C-7, the highest ranked factors were safety performance (4.1) and driver courtesy (4.0), while the lowest ranked characteristics were RTS's hours of operation and service frequency (both 2.4). In all, the respondents had generally average perceptions of RTS, rating the overall service an average of 3.2 out of 5.

The respondents were then presented with a list of service improvements and asked to how likely they would be to ride RTS more frequently if each improvement was implemented on a scale of 1 (would not) to 5 (definitely would). The most popular service improvement was more frequent service (4.3), followed by service to additional destinations and improved bus stops (both 4.1). The service improvements that would be the least influential towards encouraging the respondents to ride RTS more often were later weekday service (2.5) and lower fares (3.2). When asked to choose the single most important service improvement, 24 percent said more frequent service.



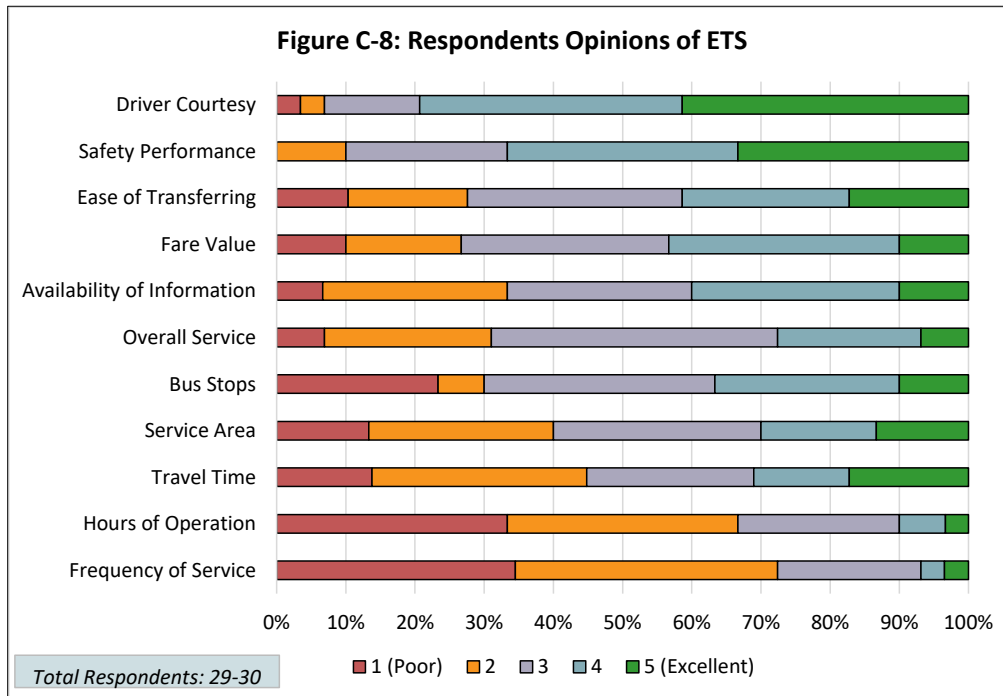
Q13, Q14, Q15, & Q16.
Experience with Eureka
Transit Service (ETS) (27-
31 Responses)

31 individuals evaluated ETS in their survey. Most of these people only ride ETS semi-regularly; 31 percent ride ETS 1 to 4 days per month and 24 percent ride less than once per month. Full results for how frequently the respondents ride ETS are shown in Table C-3.

Frequency	# of Participants	% of Participants
5 or More Days / Week	2	7%
2-4 Days / Week	5	17%
1 Day / Week	1	3%
1-4 Days / Month	9	31%
< 1 Day / Month	7	24%
Don't Know	5	17%
Total Responses	29	100%

The respondents then ranked ETS by service feature on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). Figure C-8 shows the results to this question. The respondents ranked the overall service an average of 3.0. Driver courtesy (4.1) and safety performance (3.9) were the highest ranked aspects of ETS, similar to RTS. The lowest ranked service features were ETS’s frequency (2.0) and hours of operation (2.1), which were also the lowest ranked features of RTS as well.

Just like the respondents who evaluated RTS, the participants then ranked service improvements on the likelihood the improvement would influence them to ride ETS more often. Also, just like RTS, the most popular potential ETS service improvement was more frequent service (4.6). This was followed by service to additional destinations (4.4) and later weekday service (4.3). The service improvements least likely to influence the participants to ride ETS more were new express routes (3.3) or earlier weekday service (3.6). After prioritizing their most important service improvements, more frequent service was the most important for nearly 20 percent of the respondents.



Q13, Q14, Q15, & Q16. Experience with Arcata & Mad River Transit System (A&MRTS) (15-17 Responses)

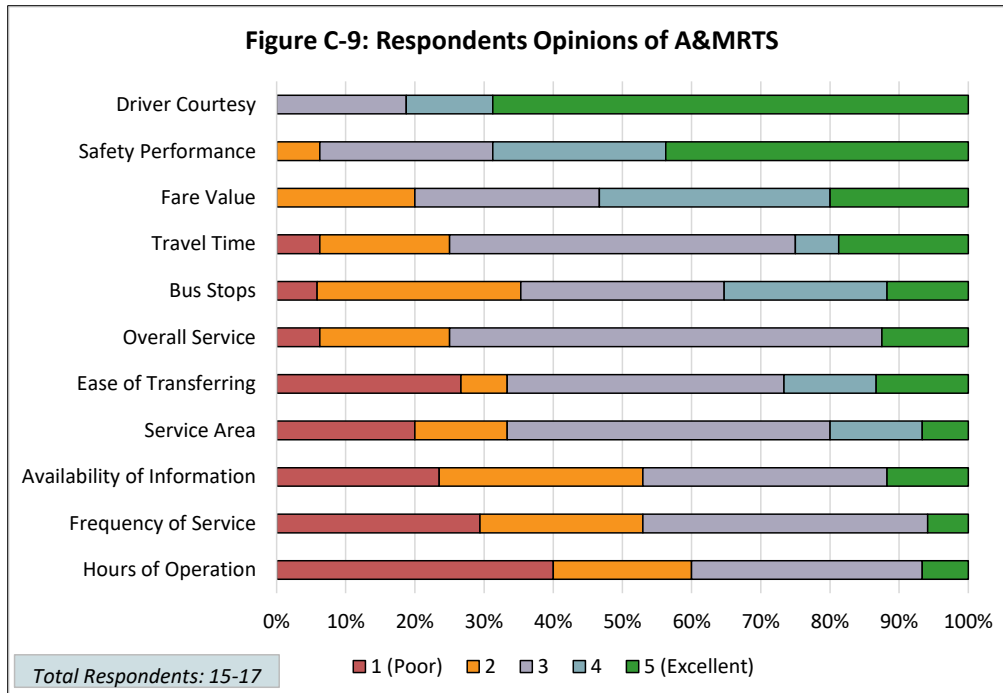
Only 17 survey participants chose to evaluate A&MRTS in their survey. As seen in Table C-4, about 60 percent of these respondents ride A&MRTS either once a week or less. Nobody reported to riding A&MRTS 5 or more days per week.

Table C-4: Frequency Respondents Ride A&MRTS

Frequency	# of Participants	% of Participants
5 or More Days / Week	0	0%
2-4 Days / Week	3	18%
1 Day / Week	0	0%
1-4 Days / Month	5	29%
< 1 Day / Month	5	29%
Don't Know	4	24%
Total Responses	17	100%

The respondents evaluated A&MRTS various service characteristics on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), shown in Figure C-9. Much like the other transit systems, the highest ranked factors were driver courtesy (4.5) and safety performance (4.1). The lowest ranked characteristics were the hours of operation (2.1) and service frequency (2.3), also just like the other systems and reflecting an overall trend in the answers of the community survey respondents.

Out of the potential service improvements listed on the survey, the ones considered by the survey participants to be the most likely to encourage them to ride A&MRTS more often were more frequent service (4.3), service to additional destinations, and improved bus stops (both 4.1). The service improvements least likely to encourage the respondents to ride A&MRTS more were later weekday service (2.5) and lower fares (3.2).



Q13, Q14, Q15, & Q16. Experience with Other Humboldt County Public Transit Services (27-31 Responses)

Two people evaluated the Blue Lake Rancheria Transit System (BLRTS). One rides BLRTS two to four days per week and the other rides between one to four days per month. Safety performance and driver courtesy were the highest ranked aspects of the BLRTS service, while availability of information and bus stops were the lowest.

Only one person evaluated Fortuna Transit. This person uses Fortuna Transit 1 to 4 days per month and ranked the overall service 3 out of 5. The respondent ranked six components of Fortuna Transit service above average (4 out of 5) but said they would be more likely to use the service if there was service to additional destinations and Sunday service.

One person evaluated the new Samoa Transit Service. This person uses the Samoa Transit service one to four days per week. They thought the best aspect of the service is the value received for the fare, but that the hours of operation, service frequency, information, and bus stops could all be improved. Increasing the service frequency was the top change that would encourage the person to ride Samoa Transit more.

Five people evaluated the Southern Humboldt Intercity (SHI) service. Only three of these people answered how frequently they use the SHI, of which two people ride less than one day per month and one person rides two to four days per week. Safety performance and driver courtesy were the two highest ranked aspects of the SHI service (both 3.8). The service improvements considered the most likely among the respondents to cause them to ride the SHI more was service to additional destinations and later weekday service.

Three people evaluated the Willow Creek (WC) Intercity service, of which one person rides the WC bus two to four days per week, one person rides one day per week, and the other uses the service

with an unknown frequency. The highest ranked aspects of the WC service by the respondents were the travel time and ease of transferring, while the lowest ranked was the frequency of service. The respondents indicated that more frequent service, lower fares, and service to additional destinations would likely result in them using the WC service more often.

PAST EXPERIENCE WITH HUMBOLDT DIAL-A-RIDE

Q17. Use of Humboldt Dial-a-Ride in Last Two Years (167 Responses)

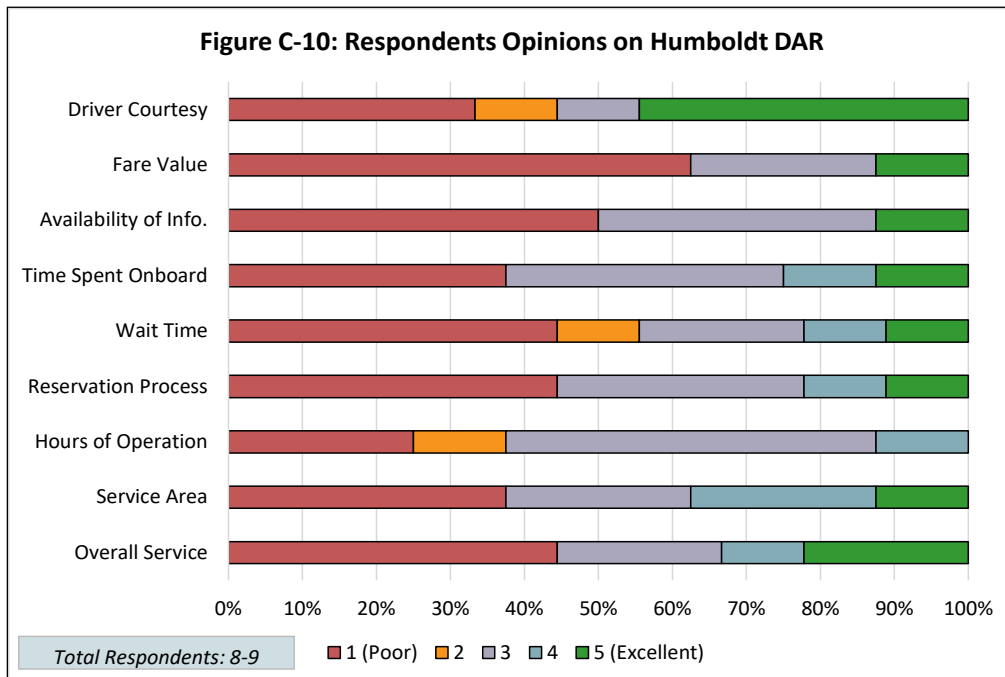
Only 9 individuals who were surveyed (5 percent of total responses) had used Humboldt Dial-a-Ride (DAR) services in the last two years. The low use of Humboldt DAR among the respondents may not be eligible for the service. Others may live outside the service area.

Q18. Frequency Respondents Ride Humboldt DAR (9 Responses)

The respondents who indicated that they had used Humboldt DAR during the last two years were asked how frequently they used the service. Three people regularly used Humboldt DAR, taking rides at least once per month or more. Four people used Humboldt DAR less frequently, requesting rides less than once per month. Two people didn't know how often they used the service.

Q19. Respondents Opinions on Humboldt DAR (8-9 Responses)

Similar to the question asked of the respondents evaluating Humboldt County fixed route services, the respondents who had ridden Humboldt DAR in the past were asked to rank various aspects of the service on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). Figure C-10 shows the results to this question, and that the few respondents who ranked the Humboldt DAR service did not think highly of the service. The highest ranked aspects of the service were the service area (2.8) and the time spent on the DAR vehicle (2.6). These results are from a very small sample of mostly irregular riders; therefore they are not representative of the views of Humboldt DAR riders at large.



INFORMATION ON SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Q20, Q23, Q27, Q28, Q29, & Q30. Demographics of Survey Respondents (161 -166 Responses)

Table C-5 summarizes the demographic information of the community survey respondents. Overall, the most common demographic groups represented by the respondents were adults ages 23 to 45 years old, Eureka residents, full-time employees, people without a disability limiting their use of fixed routes, and people who identify as white/Caucasian.

Table C-5: Demographics of Survey Respondents					
	#	%		#	%
Age			Employment Status		
Younger than 18	1	0%	Employed Full-Time	80	48%
18 - 22 Years	12	5%	Employed Part-Time	25	15%
23 - 45 Years	74	33%	High School Student	1	1%
46 - 61 Years	42	19%	Cal Poly Humboldt Student	16	10%
62 - 70 Year	21	9%	College of the Redwoods Student	9	5%
71 Years or Older	16	7%	Homemaker	4	2%
Total	166	100%	Retired	36	22%
Community of Residence			Unemployed	5	3%
Eureka	53	32%	Disabled	3	2%
Arcata	48	29%	Other	3	2%
Fortuna	11	7%	Total	166	100%
McKinleyville	10	6%	Annual Household Income		
Cutten	7	4%	\$10,000 or less	20	12%
Manila	6	4%	Between \$10,001 and \$20,000	23	14%
Blue Lake	5	3%	Between \$20,001 and \$30,000	17	11%
Rio Dell/Scotia	4	2%	Between \$30,001 and \$60,000	35	22%
Willow Creek	3	2%	Between \$60,001 and \$75,000	22	14%
Ferndale	2	1%	Between \$75,001 and \$100,000	23	14%
Trinidad	2	1%	Over \$100,000	21	13%
King Salmon	2	1%	Total	161	100%
Shelter Cove	2	1%	Race/Ethnicity		
Redway	2	1%	Asian or Pacific Islander	5	2%
Westhaven	2	1%	Black or African American	1	0%
Other Humboldt Locations	4	2%	Hispanic or Latinx	16	7%
Total	165	100%	Hmong	0	0%
Does Respondent Have Disability that Limits Use of Transit			Multiracial	3	1%
Yes	24	15%	Native American or Alaskan Native	8	4%
No	139	85%	White or Caucasian	124	55%
Total	163	100%	Other	8	4%
			Total	165	100%

Q21. Major Intersections Near Survey Respondents' Homes (158 Responses)

To determine more specifically where the survey respondents live, and whether or not transit services can be provided near their homes, the respondents were

asked to identify the nearest major intersection to their home. Table C-6 shows the top responses. Some of the most popular streets, rather than intersections, were Alliance Rd in Arcata (11 responses), Harris St in Eureka (11 responses), 11th St in Arcata (7 respondents), Rohnerville Rd in Fortuna (5 responses), and E street in Eureka (5 responses).

Table C-6: Major Intersections near Survey Respondents' Homes

Street	Community	# of Participants	% of Participants
Alliance Ave & Foster Ave	Arcata	4	3%
11th St & Janes Rd	Arcata	3	2%
West Ave & Myrtle Avr	Eureka	3	2%
Samoa Blvd & Union St	Arcata	3	2%
11th St & N St	Arcata	2	1%
4th & R St	Eureka	2	1%
Bayside Rd & Crescent Way	Arcata	2	1%
Central Ave & Murray Rd	McKinleyville	2	1%
Lupin Dr & Peninsula Dr	Manila	2	1%
Wringley Rd & Elk River Rd	Eureka	2	1%
Sutter Rd & Central Ave	McKinleyville	2	1%
Rohnerville Rd & School St	Fortuna	2	1%
Total Responses		158	100%

Q22. How Participants Learned about the Online Survey (166 Respondents)

As described in the introduction to this Appendix, the online community survey was distributed to key stakeholders across Humboldt County, who then provided the survey materials to their own networks via multiple different platforms. Table C-7 lists all of the ways the respondents learned about the online survey. The top

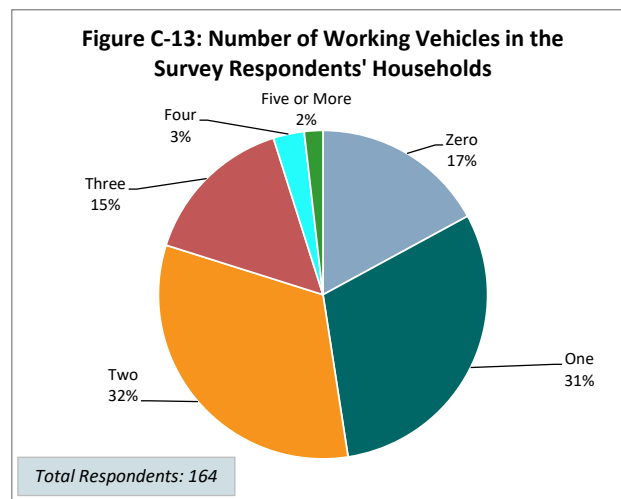
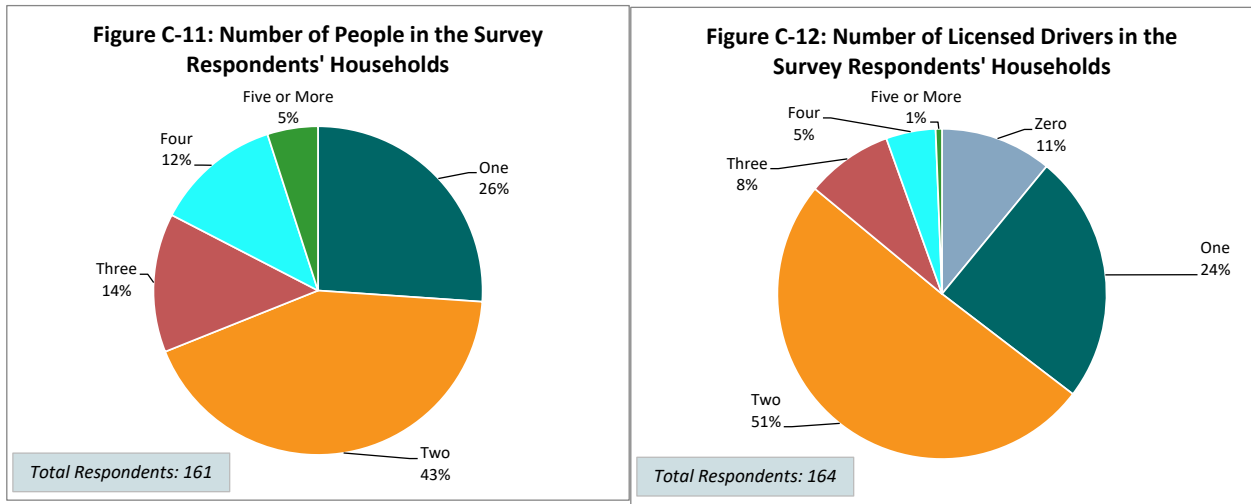
ways that people saw the survey information was on Facebook, Instagram, and through an email blast from the Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities (CRTP). This data indicates that social media platforms were effective at communicating public outreach information for transit planning in Humboldt County, at least in this instance.

Table C-7: How Participants Learned about the Online Survey

Source	# of Participants	% of Participants
Facebook	77	46%
Instagram	25	15%
CRTP	23	14%
HCAOG Website/Email	12	7%
Friends or Family	6	4%
Email	6	4%
Transit Website	4	2%
Work	4	2%
Don't Know	3	2%
TV	2	1%
Onboard Transit Bus	2	1%
Other	4	2%
Total Responses	166	100%

Q24, Q25, & Q26. Number of People Able to Drive and the Number of Vehicles Available per Household (161-164 Responses)

To determine the relative access to personal vehicles in each of the survey respondents' households, they were first asked to identify how many people live in their home (Figure C-11). The survey respondents were then asked how many licensed drivers live in their homes (Figure C-12). From these two figures, it is evident that there are many homes in which not every person has a driver's license. For instance, 31 percent of the community survey respondents live in homes with three or more people, but only 14 percent live in homes with three or more licensed drivers. Figure C-13 then shows the number of working vehicles available in each of the survey respondent's homes. One takeaway from both Figures C-12 and C-13 is that 11 percent of community survey respondents live in homes with no licensed drivers and 17 percent live in homes with no working vehicles, indicating that potentially these community members may benefit from public transit. While 74 percent of the respondents live in homes with two or more people (Figure C-11), only 52 percent live in homes with two or more cars (Figure C-13).



Appendix D
DETAILED ONBOARD SURVEY RESULTS

DETAILED ONBOARD SURVEY RESULTS

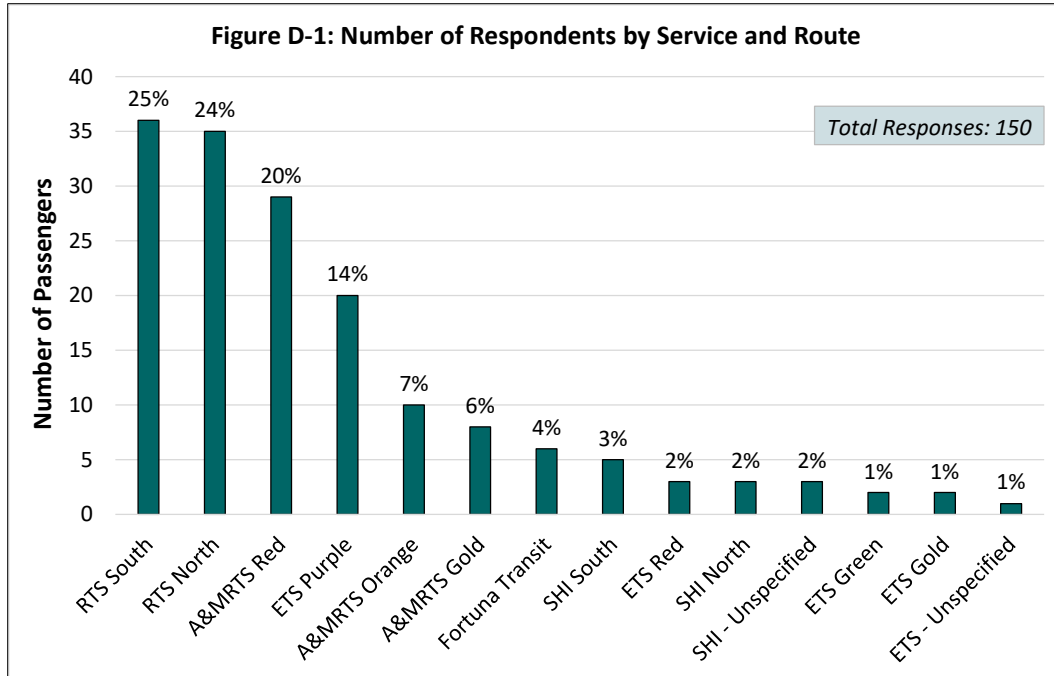
ONBOARD SURVEY RESULTS

Public outreach is an essential component of any successful transit planning effort. To learn about how current passengers use the various Humboldt County transit services, and whether these services are meeting the transportation needs of local residents, an onboard survey effort was conducted during the development of the Humboldt County Transit Development Plan (TDP). Surveys were available for passengers to self-administer from October 31 to December 16, 2022, on Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA), Arcata and Mad River Transit System (A&MRTS), and Fortuna Transit vehicles. Drivers collected the completed surveys, and then agency staff scanned and returned them to LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc., to analyze. Flyers with QR codes were also provided to the transit operators to post onboard vehicles and at key stops, such as the Arcata Transit Center, so passengers could scan the QR codes and complete digital versions of the surveys. Additionally, a trained surveyor rode A&MRTS buses for ten hours and a HCAOG staff member rode Eureka Transit Service (ETS) buses for about four hours to encourage people to complete surveys.

All survey materials and flyers were available in both English and Spanish. Each survey instrument consisted of a short introduction and between 22 to 25 questions, depending on the service, in multiple choice, short-answer, or comment format. Survey instruments with large text were also provided for Redwood Transit System (RTS), ETS, and Fortuna Transit passengers. A total of 155 people completed an onboard passenger survey on five separate transit services. Only one person completed their survey in English. The onboard survey results are discussed in depth in this Appendix, while highlights are summarized in Chapter 5 of the TDP.

Q1. Number of Respondents by Service and Route (150 Responses)

Figure D-1 shows which transit services and routes the passengers were riding when they completed the onboard survey. Nearly 50 percent of the passengers surveyed were riding the RTS Mainline, with an almost equal number riding northbound and southbound (Figure D-1). One fifth of the onboard survey participants were riding the A&MRTS Red Route, 7 percent were riding the A&MRTS Orange Route, and 6 percent were riding the A&MRTS Gold Route. The most popular ETS route among the surveyed passengers was the Purple Route (14 percent of total survey responses).



Q2. Boarding Times (137 Responses)

Most of the passengers boarded the bus in the morning (65 percent), with the most popular time period for boarding being between 8:00 AM and 9:59 AM (28 percent) (Table D-1). Only 16 percent of the passengers who completed an onboard survey boarded the bus after 4:00 PM.

Table D-1: Boarding Times

Time	# of Participants	% of Participants
6:00 AM - 7:59 AM	23	17%
8:00 AM - 9:59 AM	39	28%
10:00 AM - 11:59 AM	27	20%
12:00 PM - 1:59 PM	13	9%
2:00 PM - 3:59 PM	14	10%
4:00 PM - 5:59 PM	16	12%
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM	5	4%
Total Responses	137	100%













Q3 & Q5. Top Boarding (141 Responses) and Alighting Locations (142 Responses)

It is important to know where passengers are boarding and alighting to plan effective routes and to prioritize potential

Table D-2: Top Boarding Locations

Stop / Intersection	Community	# of Participants	% of Participants
Library Circle (Cal Poly Humboldt)	Arcata	23	16%
Arcata Transit Center	Arcata	9	6%
Valley West Blvd & Valley East Blvd	Arcata	6	4%
3rd St & H St	Eureka	5	4%
5th St & H St	Eureka	5	4%
Bayshore Mall	Eureka	5	4%
Buttermilk Ln & Bayside Rd	Arcata	4	3%
Crescent Way	Arcata	4	3%
School Rd	McKinleyville	4	3%
5th St & D St	Eureka	3	2%
Greenview Market	Arcata	3	2%
Total		141	100%

bus stop improvements. Tables D-2 and D-3 show the most popular boarding and alighting locations among the surveyed passengers. The Library Circle stop at Cal Poly Humboldt was both the top boarding (16 percent) and alighting (18 percent) location

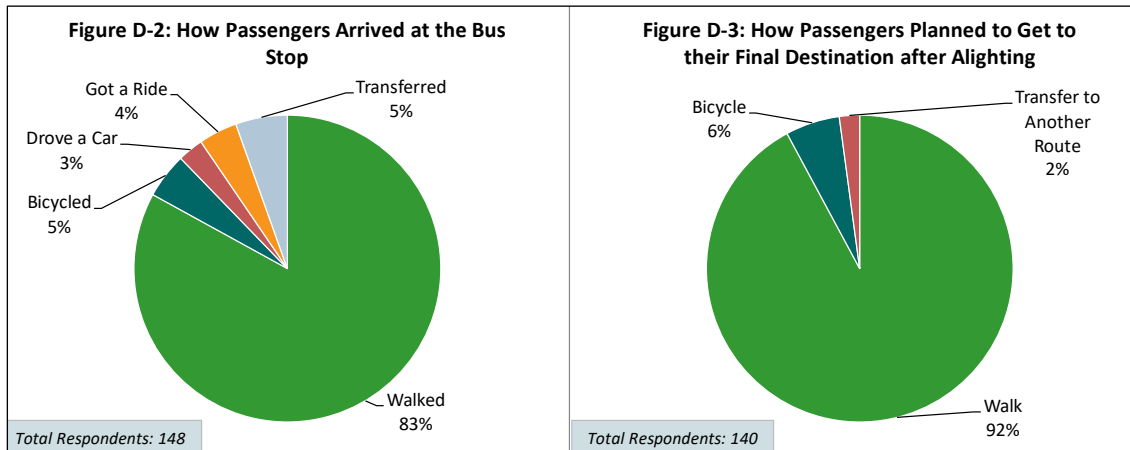
Table D-3: Top Alighting Locations				
Stop / Intersection	Community	# of Participants	% of Participants	
Library Circle (Cal Poly Humboldt)	Arcata	26		18%
Arcata Transit Center	Arcata	10		7%
College of the Redwoods	Eureka	10		7%
Bayshore Mall	Eureka	7		5%
Valley West Boulevard	Arcata	6		4%
5th St & U St	Eureka	4		3%
5th St & G St	Arcata	3		2%
Burre Center	Eureka	3		2%
14th St & B St	Arcata	2		1%
4th St & B St	Eureka	2		1%
Broadway St & Del Norte St	Eureka	2		1%
Total		142		100%

among the surveyed passengers, reflecting the return of Cal Poly Humboldt student, staff, and faculty ridership post-pandemic. The Arcata Transit Center was also a highly used stop among the surveyed passengers (6 percent of boardings and 7 percent of alightings). A number of people were traveling to College of the Redwoods in Eureka (7 percent of alightings).

Some of the other communities where passengers were either traveling from or to, but which are not shown in the tables, included Fortuna, King Salmon, Loleta, and Rio Dell. Due to the service area, all of the Fortuna Transit passengers boarded and alighted in the City of Fortuna.

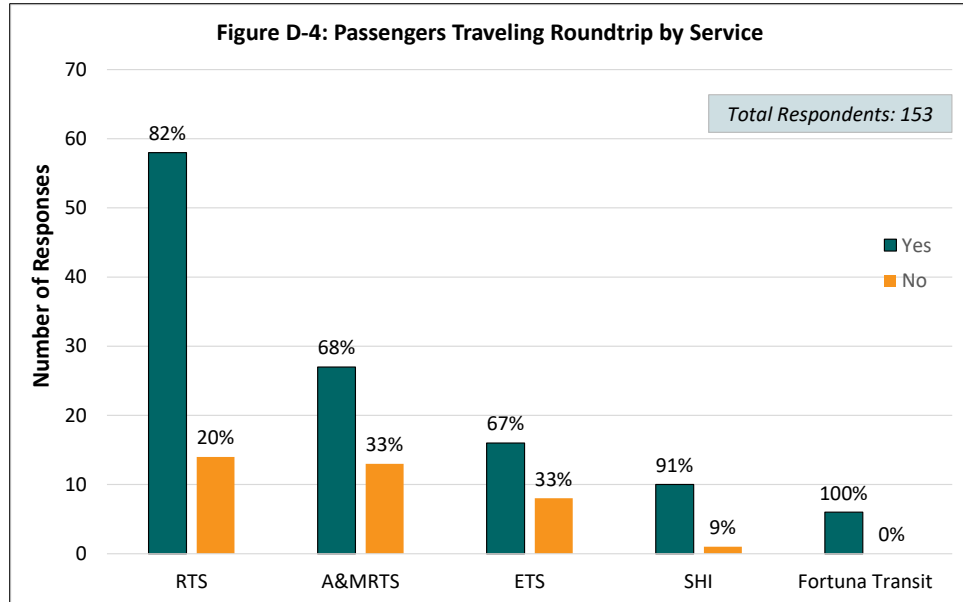
Q4 & Q6. How Passengers Arrived at the Bus Stop (148 Responses) and then got to their Final Destination (140 Responses)

To better understand public transit passengers’ overall travel patterns, passengers were asked how they got to the bus stop prior to boarding, and then how they planned to get to their final destination after alighting. As seen in Figures D-2 and D-3, the vast majority of passengers reported that they had walked to the bus stop (83 percent), and that they would then walk to their destination (92 percent). The high rates of walking support the emphasize the need for the Humboldt County public transit agencies to continue to implement first/last mile solutions for passengers, as it is much more difficult for passengers to get to destinations further from the bus routes if they are walking. Besides walking, small numbers of people got to and from the bus stop by bicycling or by transferring between buses.



Q7. Roundtrip Travel Patterns by Service (153 Responses)

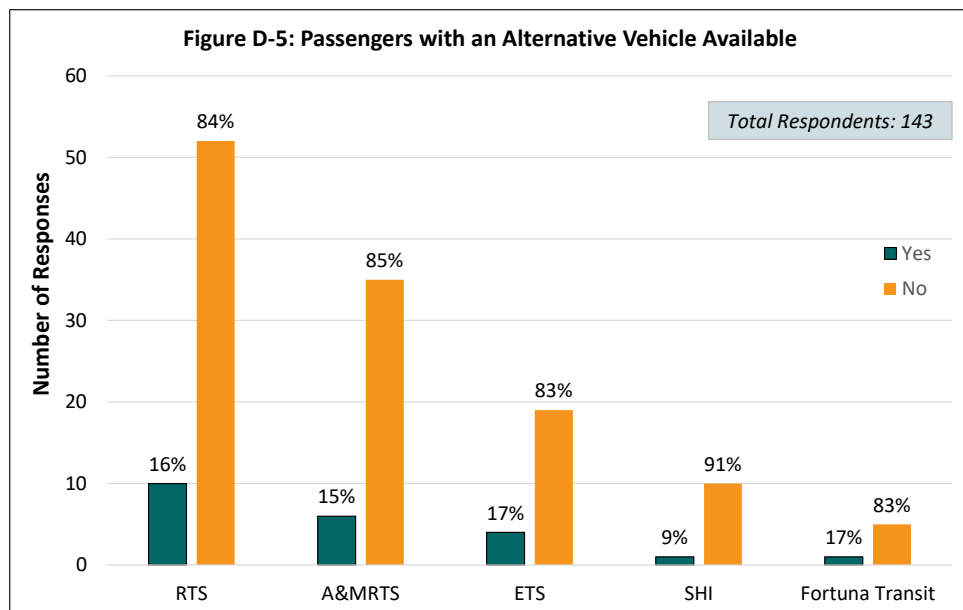
If a passenger is transit dependent, they will likely need to ride the bus both to and from their destination. Over three quarters of the surveyed passengers reported that



they were riding the bus roundtrip, indicating that a large portion of Humboldt County public transit riders are potentially transit dependent (Figure D-4). By service, 81 percent of the passengers riding RTS and about two thirds of the passengers on both A&MRTS and ETS were riding roundtrip. All of the passengers riding Fortuna Transit and all but one of the passengers riding the HTA’s Southern Humboldt Intercity (SHI) service were riding the bus roundtrip the day they were surveyed.

Q8. Alternative Vehicle Availability (143 Responses)

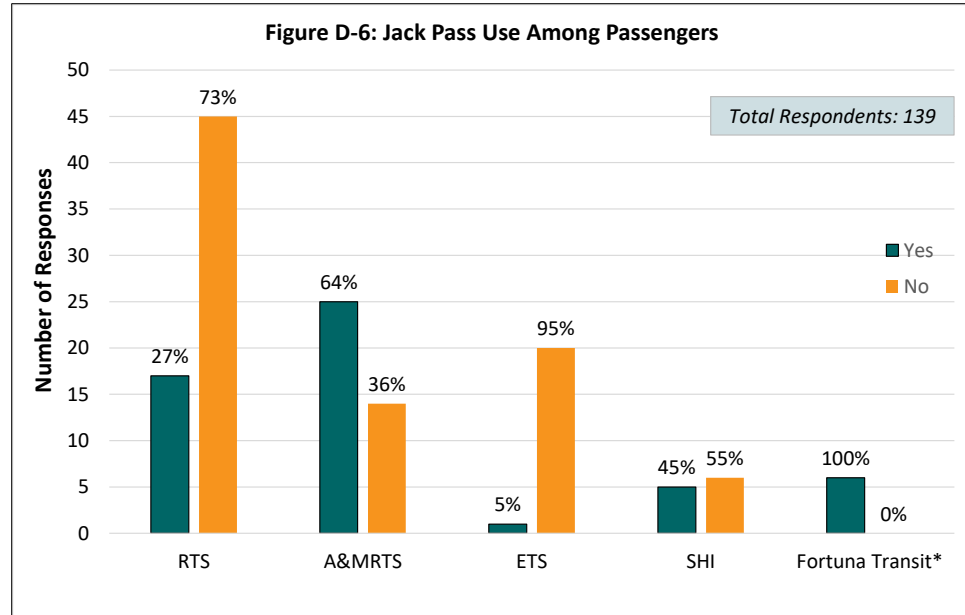
Whether or not someone has a vehicle available is another indicator of potential transit dependency. As seen in Figure D-5, most passengers reported that there was no



alternative vehicle available for them to use (85 percent), suggesting that a large portion of Humboldt County public transit riders rely on the bus for their mobility needs. RTS had the greatest proportion of passengers with a car available (19 percent), followed by A&MRTS (17 percent).

Q9. Jack Pass Use Among Passengers (139 Responses)

Cal Poly Humboldt offers the Jack Pass for students, staff, and faculty. Jack Pass users have unlimited free rides on RTS, ETS, A&MRTS, SHI, and the HTA’s Willow Creek (WC) service.



This product is described in greater detail in Chapter 3 of the TDP. Figure D-6 shows that 36 percent of the surveyed passengers use the Jack Pass program, another data point that reflects the returning Cal Poly Humboldt student, staff, and faculty ridership. As expected, Jack Pass use was highest on A&MRTS. As Fortuna Transit only serves senior adults or persons with disabilities, most Fortuna Transit passengers are not affiliated with Cal Poly Humboldt, therefore they were asked about whether or not they use Fortuna Transit’s punch pass. All six Fortuna Transit passengers surveyed use the punch pass.

Q10. Primary Trip Purpose (153 Responses)

Knowing why passengers are traveling on the bus can provide insights into where and when they may need public transit services. Table D-4 shows the percent of passengers riding for each specific trip purpose, as well

Trip Purpose	RTS	A&MRTS	ETS	SHI	Fortuna	Total
School/College	41%	64%	0%	18%	0%	38%
Work	38%	31%	29%	64%	0%	35%
Shopping	11%	19%	29%	0%	40%	16%
Personal Business	15%	7%	25%	9%	20%	14%
Medical/Dental	10%	5%	8%	0%	40%	8%
Multipurpose	7%	10%	8%	9%	0%	8%
Recreational/Social	6%	7%	8%	0%	0%	6%
Other	1%	5%	0%	0%	0%	2%

as the total percentage of onboard survey respondents traveling for the said purpose. Across the services, the top reason for riding the bus was to go to school or college (38 percent). A&MRTS had the greatest proportion of riders going to school or college (64 percent), followed by RTS (41 percent). The second most popular trip purpose among the surveyed passengers was to go to and from work (35 percent), with 64 percent of SHI and 38 percent of RTS passengers traveling for this reason. Full results are shown in Table D-4.

Q11. How Passengers would have Made Trip if Transit was Unavailable (152 Responses)

Passengers were asked how they would have completed their trip if the service they were riding was unavailable. The most popular answer was

Table D-5: How Passengers Would Have Made Trip if Transit was Unavailable

	RTS	A&MRTS	ETS	SHI	Fortuna	Total
Not Made the Trip	51%	22%	38%	18%	50%	39%
Walked	13%	61%	21%	18%	33%	28%
Got a Ride	21%	10%	25%	18%	0%	18%
Driven Alone	16%	10%	8%	9%	0%	12%
Taxi/Uber/Lyft	1%	2%	17%	36%	17%	7%
Bicycled	4%	2%	0%	0%	0%	3%
Social Service Agency Ride	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
School Shuttle	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Other Bus	0%	0%	0%	0%	17%	1%

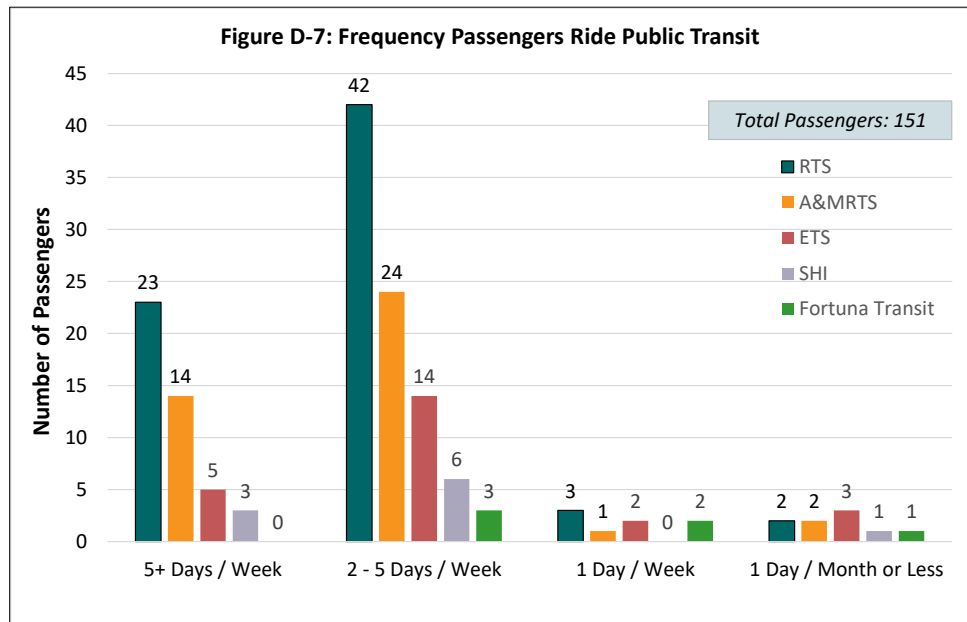
that the passengers would not have made their trip at all (39 percent of total responses) (Table D-5). However, most of the A&MRTS passengers said they would have instead walked (61 percent) and the most popular alternative for the SHI passengers would have been to call a taxi, Uber, or Lyft (36 percent).

Q12. Preferred Payment Method for Transit Fares (138 Responses)

The Humboldt County transit providers have worked to make it easier for passengers to pay fares on the various transit services by developing new payment methods. From the passengers’ perspective, 72 percent of those surveyed said they prefer to pay their fares with a monthly pass product, 17 percent prefer cash, 7 percent prefer using a phone application, and only 4 percent prefer using a credit card.

Q13. Frequency Passengers Ride Public Transit (151 Responses)

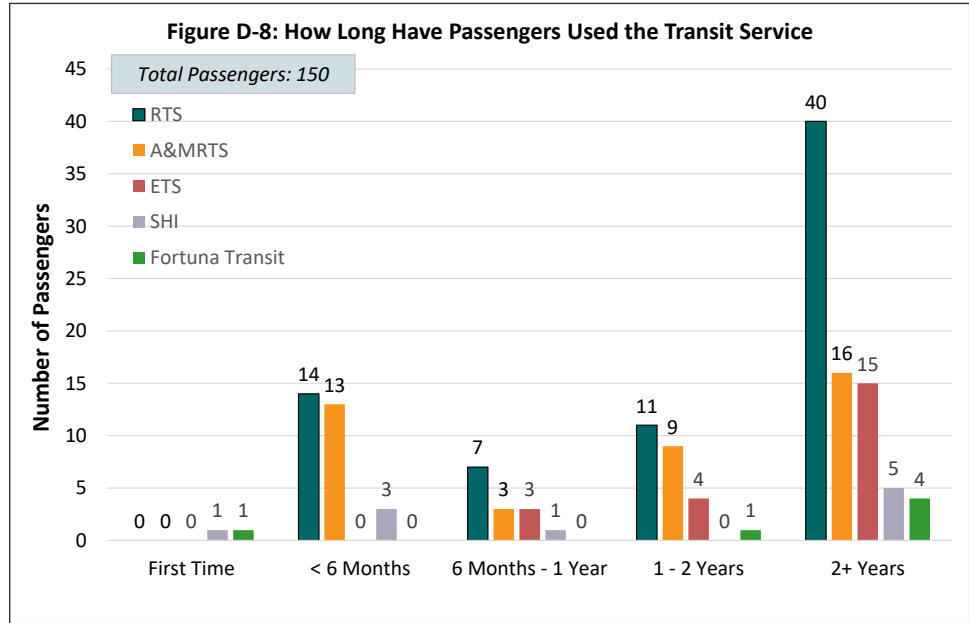
Most of the passengers surveyed are frequent transit users, with 89 percent that reported to riding the bus at least two days a week or more. As seen in Figure D-7,



most of the passengers on each service reported to riding the bus two to five days a week. The regular ridership reported by the onboard survey participants suggests that many current passengers are able to use Humboldt County public transit for their daily needs.

Q14. How Long have Passengers used the Transit Service (150 Responses)

Figure D-8 shows how long the passengers have been using the service they were riding when they completed the survey. Most passengers have used the transit service they were



riding for two years or more (53 percent). The only service on which more than half of passengers had begun riding within the last two years was A&MRTS, which is likely due to the high number of students who ride. Many Cal Poly Humboldt students are new riders because they either recently enrolled at the university, or they recently moved to the area for the first time to attend classes in person since pandemic restrictions lifted.

Q15. Primary Sources for Transit Information (146 Responses)

For passengers to rely on the transit system, they need to be able to get accurate information from accessible sources. Table D-6 shows the primary sources used by the surveyed passengers to get transit information. The most popular source was the internet (38 percent), followed by the printed guide/schedule (31 percent), and then by the printed information at bus stops (31 percent). Compared to the previous TDP, far more participants said they use phone applications or websites (30 percent use Google Maps and 8 percent use the Transit App). These rates were lowest among the Fortuna Transit Passengers (0 percent use either source), which follows the national trend of older adults being less likely to use technology compared to younger persons.

Information Source	RTS	A&MRTS	ETS	SHI	Fortuna	Total
Internet	51%	25%	27%	50%	0%	38%
Printed Guide / Schedule	25%	30%	50%	50%	0%	31%
Bus Stops	28%	43%	14%	50%	0%	30%
Google Maps	26%	43%	9%	50%	0%	29%
Bus Driver	16%	23%	41%	50%	50%	25%
Cal Poly Humboldt	6%	18%	0%	20%	0%	9%
Telephone	6%	10%	5%	0%	50%	8%
Transit App	15%	5%	0%	0%	0%	8%
Family / Friend	6%	18%	0%	20%	0%	9%
Cal Poly Humboldt	6%	5%	0%	20%	0%	5%
College of the Redwoods	4%	3%	0%	0%	0%	3%
Other	3%	0%	5%	0%	0%	2%

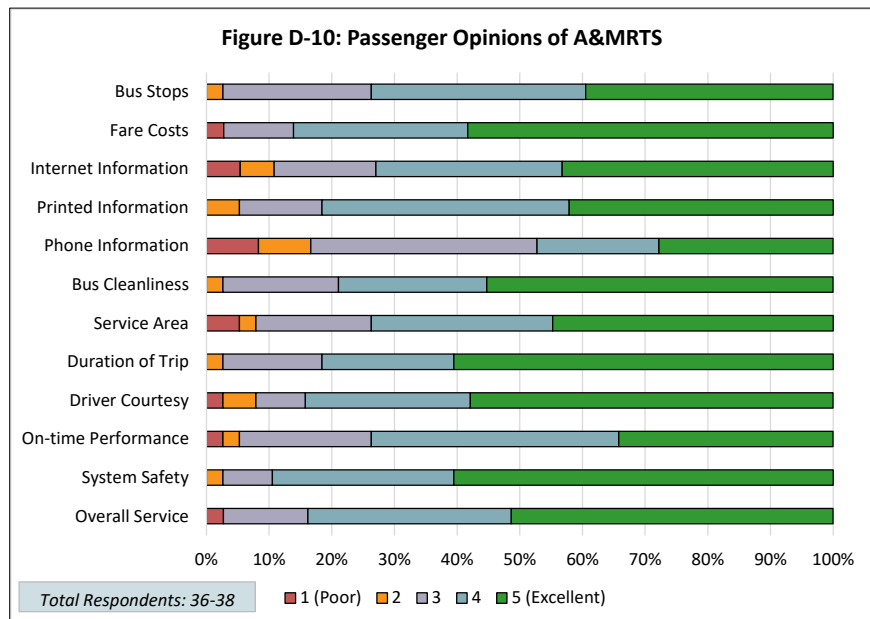
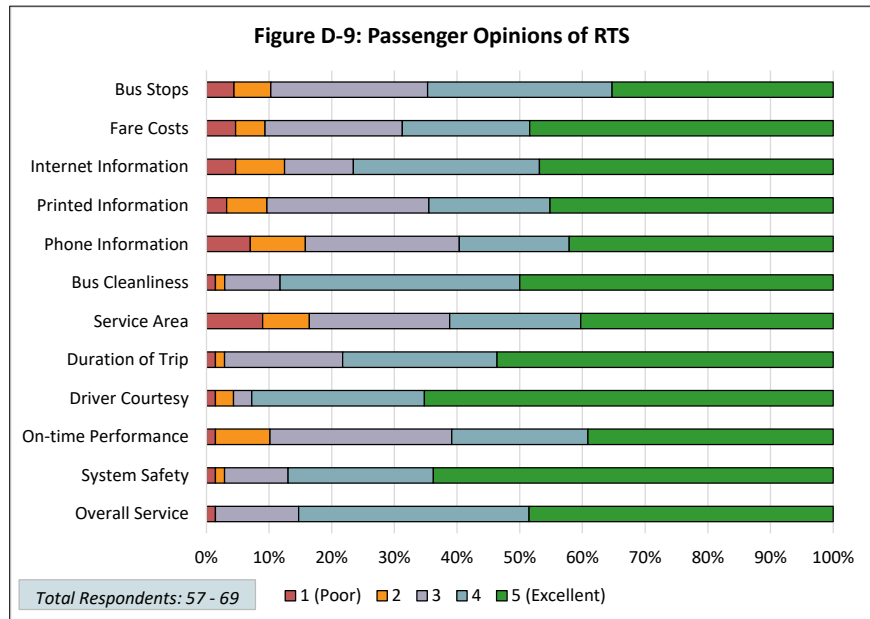
Q16. Do Passengers Find it Difficult to Plan Connections to Regional Transit Services? (122 Responses)

The public transit system in Humboldt County is complex, with eight separate transit services operating solely within the county in addition to other interregional services. 17 percent of passengers said they find it difficult to plan connections to other regional transit services. Improved or redesigned informational resources may help some of these passengers plan interregional trips.

Q17. Passenger Opinions on the Humboldt County Public Transit Services (6-69 Responses)

Each passenger was asked to evaluate the service they were riding by ranking the service characteristics on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). Overall, 69 people evaluated RTS (Figure D-9), 38 evaluated A&MRTS (Figure D-10), 23 evaluated ETS (Figure D-11), 10 evaluated SHI, and 6 evaluated Fortuna Transit. While these samples are small, the results can still reveal some basic trends in what passengers enjoy or dislike about each of the transit services.

RTS passengers ranked system safety and driver courtesy the highest out of all the service features considered (both 4.5). They also had good perceptions of the travel times (4.3) and the information available via the internet (4.1). The lowest ranked RTS service characteristics



were phone information and service area (both 3.8), and on-time performance and bus stops (both 3.9). In all, 74 percent of the rankings provided by RTS passengers were either a 4 or 5, indicating generally good perceptions.

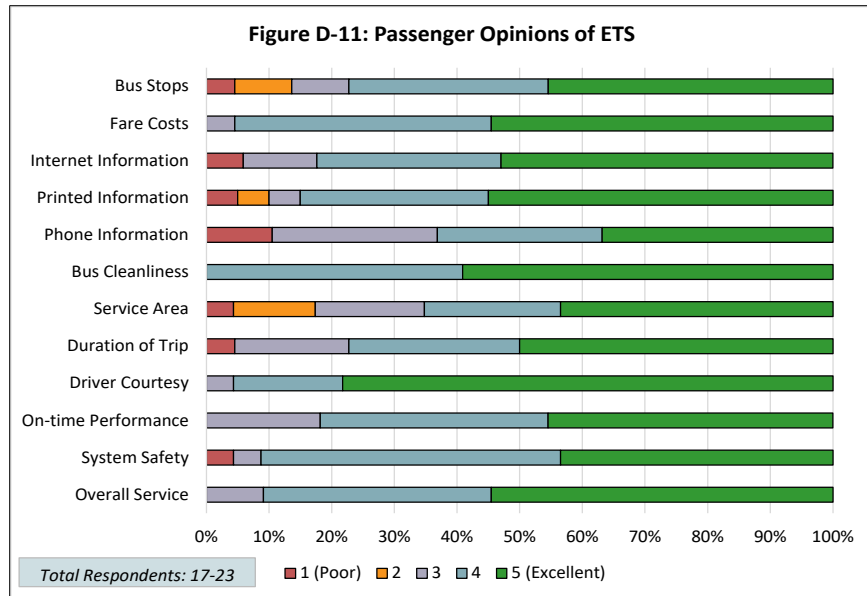
For A&MRTS, the highest ranked characteristic was also system safety (4.5), followed by the cost of

fares and trip duration (both 4.4). The lowest ranked A&MRTS service characteristic was the phone information services (3.5). The next lowest ranked service characteristics were the on-time performance and internet information (both 4.0). 77 percent of the total responses were either a 4 or 5, once again indicating that A&MRTS passengers are generally satisfied with the service.

ETS passengers had the most positive perceptions of driver courtesy (4.7), bus cleanliness (4.6), and fare costs, while they had more neutral opinions on the ETS’s phone information (3.8), service area (3.9), and bus stops (4.0). As with RTS and A&MRTS, ETS passengers overall have good opinions on the service; 84 percent of the total rankings were either a 4 or a 5.

The ten passengers who evaluated SHI had the most neutral views comparatively, with only 72 percent of answers being a 4 or 5. The highest ranked SHI features were the trip length (4.6) and driver courtesy (4.3), while the lowest ranked features were the bus stops (3.5), and the service area and phone information (both 3.6). The six passengers who evaluated Fortuna Transit had excellent perceptions of the service, with almost every feature being ranked an average of 5.

Considering all of the services, the features consistently ranked highly were system safety, driver courtesy, trip length, and fare costs. The features most consistently ranked low were phone information, service area, and on-time performance. As previously noted, these results were generated from small samples of passengers, however they can prompt discussion about potential service improvements which could improve the travel experience for passengers.



Q18, Q20, Q21, Q22, Q23, & Q24. Demographics of Survey Respondents (161 -166 Responses)

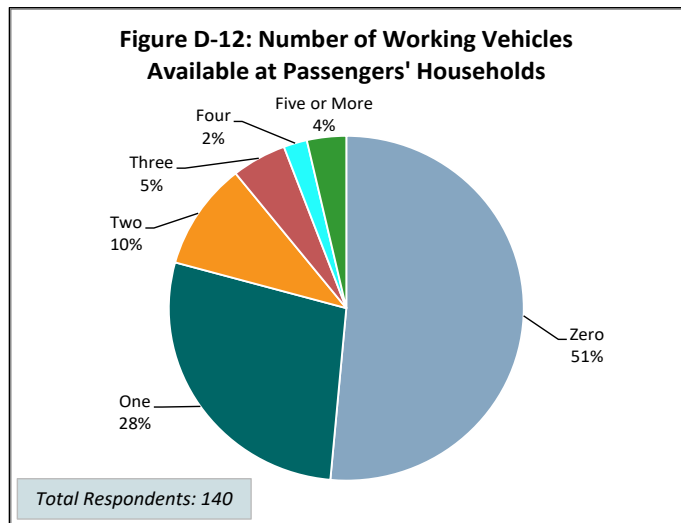
Table D-7 provides an overview of the surveyed passengers’ demographics. The most common demographic groups represented by the respondents were adults between the ages of 18 to 34 years old (31 percent), people who live in Arcata or Eureka (72 percent), students (51 percent), non-wheelchair users (98 percent), and people without their driver’s license (58 percent). Six people indicated that their primary language is not English (four speak Spanish, one speaks Swahili, and one speaks Thai), but only one of these people said that this makes it harder for them to use the bus.

Table D-7: Demographics of Survey Respondents

	#	%	#	%
Age				
Younger than 18	5	2%		
18 - 34 Years	71	31%		
35 - 54 Years	31	14%		
55 - 64 Years	16	7%		
65 - 74 Year	12	5%		
75 Years or Older	6	3%		
Total	141	100%		
Community of Residence				
Arcata	62	44%		
Eureka	40	28%		
Fortuna	8	6%		
McKinleyville	7	5%		
Sunny Brae	6	4%		
Rio Dell/Scotia	3	2%		
Greenview	2	1%		
Blue Lake	1	1%		
Cutten	1	1%		
Fields Landing	1	1%		
Hoopa	1	1%		
Miranda	1	1%		
Samoa	1	1%		
Stafford	1	1%		
Willow Creek	1	1%		
Other Humboldt Locations	5	4%		
Total	141	100%		
Employment Status				
Employed Full-Time	30	20%		
Employed Part-Time	41	27%		
High School Student	24	16%		
Cal Poly Humboldt Student	31	21%		
College of the Redwoods Student	11	7%		
Other Student	11	7%		
Homemaker	1	1%		
Retired	24	16%		
Unemployed	12	8%		
Unable to Work	16	11%		
Disabled	1	1%		
Total	150	100%		
Wheelchair Usage				
Yes, Passenger has Wheelchair	3	2%		
No Wheelchair	133	98%		
Total	136	100%		
Driver's License Status				
Yes, has Driver's License	61	42%		
No Driver's License	83	58%		
Total	144	100%		

Q19. Number of Vehicles Available per Household (140 Responses)

Whether or not someone has access to a vehicle is an indicator of potential transit dependency. 51 percent of the surveyed passengers live in home with no vehicles (Figure D-12), or “zero-vehicle households.” The distribution of zero-vehicle households across Humboldt County is discussed further in Chapter 2 of the main report and in Appendix A. 28 percent of the surveyed passengers live in homes with access to only one vehicle.



Q25. Top Ideas for Service Improvements (105 Responses)

The final survey question asked passengers to describe the service improvements they would most like to see. Table D-8 shows the top service improvements overall, as well as the percentage of passengers on each service who requested said improvement. The most popular improvements among the passengers were to have later service hours (24 percent), implement more Sunday service options (16 percent), and have earlier service hours (10 percent). The most popular service improvements on each respective service were as follows: RTS passengers most requested later service (28 percent), A&MRTS passengers most requested Sunday service (31 percent), ETS passengers most requested Sunday service, more frequent service, and better information (7 percent each), SHI passengers most requested earlier service (33 percent), and Fortuna Transit passengers most requested later service (60 percent).

Some of the other comments provided by the respondents that are worth noting include that students at both Cal Poly Humboldt and College of the Redwoods said they would benefit from both later services so they could take the bus home after later classes or studying. Other passengers specifically asked for later service on Friday and Saturday nights. Many passengers asked for either more frequent service, earlier service, later service, or Sunday service because they would like to be able to ride the bus to work but are unable to do given the constraints of the current transit schedules.

Improvement	RTS	A&MRTS	ETS	SHI	Fortuna	Total
Later Service	28%	27%	0%	11%	60%	24%
Sunday Service	12%	31%	7%	22%	0%	16%
Earlier Service	14%	4%	0%	33%	0%	10%
More Frequent Service	12%	4%	7%	11%	0%	9%
More Bus Stops	14%	4%	0%	0%	0%	8%
Better Information	10%	4%	7%	0%	0%	7%
Lower Fares	8%	4%	0%	0%	0%	5%

HUMBOLDT COUNTY TDP – STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

HUMBOLDT COUNTY TDP STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

INTRODUCTION

For a Transit Development Plan (TDP) to be effective, it needs to address the mobility needs of residents in the study area. Local stakeholders, such as elected officials, social service program directors, business owners, and citizens at large, can provide insight into transportation issues that are impacting various demographic groups. To learn more about the mobility needs and barriers in Humboldt County that should be considered in this TDP, twenty-two (22) stakeholders were invited to participate in an interview, of which fourteen (14) participated. Interviews were prefaced that they would be confidential, and therefore takeaways from the interviews are grouped generally by topic.

Stakeholder Participants – Familiarity with Public Transit

Most of the stakeholders who were interviewed had a thorough understanding of public transit in Humboldt County through either their professional or personal experiences. Some of the participants, however, answered questions on behalf of their constituents and were less familiar with the services, instead offering opinions based on the experiences of their clientele.

Who Should be Served by Humboldt County Public Transit Systems

- Nordic farm on the Samoa Peninsula, which will be a magnet for other industries.
- Offshore wind farm/Harbor assembly & maintenance.
- Housing development in Cutten (though no accommodations for transit in plans).
- College of the Redwoods and Cal Poly Humboldt students. It would be great as the student population grows that they could not have a car.
- People who choose not to have a car, who can't afford a car, or who have physical limitations that prohibit them from driving.
- People who choose the bus for environmental or other reasons.
- Retirees, climate refugees are moving here.
- McKinleyville is appealing to tourists since it's closer to RNP and beaches, and has the airport.
- [Public transit]'s critical for the quality of life for a lot of people—allows them to function, get to appointments, shopping.
- People assume it's for students, homeless, people with DUIs. It would be great to change that perception, so it attracts choice riders.
- Large employers need to be brought in to allow their employees to get to work/school by transit: Cal Poly Humboldt, Fish Farm, Co-op (large employer).
- Students, seniors, youth, and disabled.
- Everybody should be served, but realistically, it's the transit dependent.
- College of the Redwoods and Cal Poly Humboldt.
- Should make transit more attractive so it's not just for transit dependent.

- Everyone, but by different modes.
- Everybody who wants to or needs to. Those with the highest needs, but that is a very widespread, diverse group.
- Climate conscious may choose it more.
- Aging baby boomers—who have never taken transit and have to be taught—like my dad who had Alzheimer’s.
- More people with increased cost of living, inability to afford driving a car, stagnant economy.
- Cal Poly Humboldt students, faculty, staff.
- Everybody. It’s a need that’s growing, especially with the cost of fuel, owning a vehicle.
- All the public, and students.
- Everybody, both long term and short term [residents].
- Everyone who wants to use it.
- Focus should be on elderly and people with physical conditions limiting use.
- Everyone. There will continue to be an increase in individuals that will not be able to transport themselves due to health issues, aging, inability to drive, or lack of a car.

Primary Transit Issues

- Need to identify the actual goal of the TDP—is it to increase ridership, or meet mobility needs?
- Health care is difficult to access. Long wait for appointments (especially going south to out-of-area appointments).
- For the senior population and people with disabilities, accessibility is an issue. Many [seniors and persons with disabilities] cannot get to the closest public transportation on their own.
- The public say they want more stops, times, days, hours of service, but when implemented, the ridership doesn’t support it. There’s a disconnect between requests and use.
- Skilled drivers and finding drivers: the salary is decent, but still hard to attract.
- Lack of frequency.
- Hours/frequency are major issues.
- Frequency, safety at stops (transients, lighting); bus stops too far from need.
- As Cal Poly Humboldt grows, there will be demand for a Park-n-Ride (in Eureka or Arcata).
- Need express services to Cal Poly Humboldt; from Arcata, Eureka, McKinleyville, direct to campus with few stops
- Aging population.
- Arcata and Eureka hospitals are not well served by transit.
- Biggest issue—people are prejudiced against riders and have a perception that riders are homeless or have DUIs.
- RTS not bad in terms of stops, direct service. However, there is 1.14 miles between the 4th/B and B & Hawthorne stops, which is too far.
- Not convenient.

- With the increase in fuel prices, maybe we can get more people on buses. But Humboldt County residents are used to single occupancy vehicles. Hard to change the mindset.
- Can't offer 10-minute service.
- JPA – everyone wants multiple stops in their communities, but that slows down service.
- Express service was recommended in last plan, but people threw a fit, so it didn't work. You need to offer something else if you're taking service away (thus microtransit).
- Fuel, cost of doing business, driver wages all increasing. To meet these increased costs leaves nothing for improving operations.
- Funding from feds is for capital, and zero-emissions buses in particular. No operations funding.
- Transit has to be competitive in terms of time efficiency and comfort.
- Lack of funds.
- Eastern Humboldt County is very limited in medical services, groceries. People need to get from Orleans to Willow Creek for services. YTTs will be offering new service to help these people.
- Low density, scattered communities with long distances between (hard to serve).
- Lack of infrastructure (first/last mile issues).
- Need to look at alternative technologies. Cell phone reception is weak, so that limits some technologies.
- Cooperation/collaboration with Tribes. Caltrans is not that useful to tribes. Not all tribes can manage transit. Important to include tribes in public participation.
- Not enough frequency.
- Not enough stops. In the north/south continuum, a lack of stops. Like McKinleyville, for example—very few stops and far apart. We need to address first/last mile issues.
- Frequency and hours (span) of service.
- Culturally “better off” people assume it's for carless, poor, young, “others”
- Association with the bus as being for certain people. City council candidates were asked if they had ever ridden the bus—and they hadn't. Changing perceptions should be part of the leaders' roles.
- People don't like to use transit because they have the perception that it's not clean. We need to reinforce the idea that it is—like with our new electric buses.
- People still fear getting sick on the bus—there's a stigma.
- Land use: To get the choice riders, we need frequency. For frequency, we need density. Better coordination between land use and transportation planning.
- Funding. HTA does a phenomenal job with resources they have, but the constraints are real.
- Fundamental issue is funding. HTA does a really good job with what they have, but the farebox rules and landscape make it challenging.
- Insufficient funding, which is related to the status. City council unwilling to increase funding for earlier, later services. Assume people aren't using for work, so no need to start earlier, end later. Leads to poor funding.

- Taking a bus from Arcata to Eureka is an excruciatingly long ride. If you try to combine it with biking (and walking), that's limited by bike racks on buses, safe parking for bikes, and safe infrastructure to get around.
- Frequency is limited. If you miss the bus, the next one isn't for a while
- In McKinleyville, the bus only serves the center. McKinleyville has poor pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, so it's difficult to get to stops. At stops, there's a lack of bike locks/lockers.
- COVID had a huge impact on ridership. How, as a collective body, do we renew interest in public transit? Ridership is returning, but very slowly.
- It takes a long time to get around by transit. If someone misses a bus, they have to wait a long time for another. And transit takes much longer than cars, so there's no incentive unless they have to use transit or choose to for environmental reasons.
- How do you move people from cars to buses?
- We get requests for "late night service", weekends, and earlier.
- Climate destination—also creating growth. How do we develop the infrastructure?

Effectiveness – How Well are Humboldt County Transit Services Meeting Needs

- Buses aren't full. Is that an indication of a lack of demand, or a lack of service to meet the demand?
- Grateful that transit is there. The challenge is overcoming the hurdles due to timing, length of travel on buses. People generally only use it when they have to because it's not convenient.
- HTA is dedicated to meeting needs and does a fantastic job with resources. But the goals for meeting needs are conflicting: frequency versus coverage.
- In certain ways, [the transit services are] doing really well. But it's not at a point where it's drawing choice riders. It's a last option.
- For social services, doing great for the money available, but it's not frequent enough and doesn't have service from outlying areas that connect to the core.
- Current modes don't serve people well, but in large part because of funding mechanisms and how things are done.
- Behind the scenes, there's a lot going on. SSTACs are proactive. The McKinleyville plan to start transit is great. People are excited about that.
- Not well because the routes serve a main corridor (in Arcata) and people have to walk too far.
- As housing has grown, routes have not adjusted. The TDP needs to look at routing.
- Overall, well (in terms of DAR). [The DAR} serves a much larger area than the ADA dictates we should serve, so it goes above and beyond.
- [Need] express service to Cal Poly Humboldt.

Strengths of Humboldt County Public Transit Systems

- HTA/Redwood Transit System has a clear goal of trying to get frequency up.
- Greg Pratt has a vision, dedication. (Strong leadership)

- Good service at certain times of the day between Eureka and Arcata.
- Well used by students and to an extent, commuters.
- HTA does a good job coordinating/keeping up with the times in terms of how people pay for fares, get information about routes.
- Planning effort for the downtown Eureka hub has been very positive.
- HTA did a really good job rolling with the punches through COVID.
- Electronic ticketing.
- HTA director! He works with Mendocino, others to build a better system
- Glad we have transit. Heck of a lot better than nothing.
- Strength is in leadership. Greg Pratt has taken the bus and is an excellent advocate. Did a great job with the Earth Center planning—integrated planning.
- Planners are doing well. Younger people excited about mode shift.
- It's great to see transit planning and problem solving at the grass roots level; if an issue comes up, the agencies put their heads together and work on solutions.
- 30-minute headways between College of the Redwoods and Arcata.
- Intercity is performing well. Southern Humboldt Intercity and Willow Creek Intercity services meet farebox ratios.
- Tying communities together.
- Regional pass.
- Yurok has a rideshare program from McKinleyville to Klamath.
- Credit card readers soon to be installed. Tap on, tap off will help a certain demographic.
- Coordination with northern counties: Del Norte to Humboldt; Humboldt to Lake.
- RTS Strengths:
 - Drivers are awesome
 - Management is receptive to concerns
 - Affordable fares (though made the suggestion to have available for sale at stores, not just at the transit office and on buses)
 - Simple for the most part, somewhat frequent, serves a large area
 - Symmetry—takes as long to go as to come
- ETS Strengths
 - Great drivers
 - Reliable (on time)
 - Scheduled so buses meet at the transfer center at the same time.
- Relationships and coordination; HTA is sensitive to concerns of Cal Poly Humboldt.
- Good drivers and reliable funding.
- A lot of work has been done on route efficiency and route management.

Weaknesses of Humboldt County Public Transit Systems

- Not enough buses (service). Too slow.
- Constant conundrum of choosing between coverage and frequency.
- Coverage vs efficiency—don't envy management for trying to figure it out.
- People don't use it now due to a lack of frequency. Long term, we need more funding to increase frequency to draw more riders.
- In the [Unmet Transit Needs] process, many of the requests ultimately do not meet the bureaucratic definition of unmet needs, so people feel like they're screaming into the void, and that's frustrating.
- If there's a new development, people might ask for service, but to do so would take away from something else.
- The general public have mostly never used transit.
- Some routes not maximized; Eureka has been long-known to have a poorly designed route system. Arcata similarly has poor routes.
- Arcata has hourly service—same as 1979.
- RTS Mainline—north of McKinleyville & south of Fortuna are poorly served. Creating some sort of local service that connects to the Mainline seems like the needed direction. For example, McKinleyville study called for an on-demand service that would feed into the RTS route instead of the RTS trying to provide local service.
- Duplication—why yellow school buses AND public transit?
- Design of buses could be better (as in Australia—even in rural areas; common storage area, nice seats, can see out windows).
- Infrastructure is weak, but that is the role of the cities and counties, not transit agencies.
- Lake County identified stops, facilities in a large plan and then were able to get funding for those—Humboldt needs to do similarly.
- Amtrak Arcata to Martinez—the stop is in back of a Denny's.
- Very capable and dynamic agencies with strong leadership (Greg, James, ...) Just need more funding and help. HTA has hired the Schatz institute for technological advice. It's great to have that expertise, but it's expensive. Smaller rural areas don't have that.
- Stigma attached to riding.
- Eureka Transit Service - Loop system means you may get someplace in 10 minutes, but 50 minutes to get back. RTS is twice/hour, but Eureka only meets it 1x/hr.
- Travel time.
- Dial-a-Ride is structurally off. Eureka is paying for trips to Arcata that should not be complementary. There's a premium service—rider pays \$3, Eureka pays \$7, Arcata pays nothing? Need to look into it. Takes an hour and a half to provide one trip to Arcata, whereas 15 could be provided locally in Eureka.
- Serving Manila takes an extra 8 minutes from the RTS route. Should serve with microtransit.
- Look at past unmet needs, and address those.

- RTS weaknesses:
 - Not very frequent outside of the Arcata/Fortuna corridor or in off-peak hours.
 - Limited hours.
 - Lack of systems maps on buses or at stops. Newcomers arriving at the airport have no information about taking the bus. Maps should be at the airport, mall, CPH campus, etc.
 - The county library is a couple of blocks from the route and requires people to cross 4th and 5th (Highway 101), meaning they must go a few blocks for a crosswalk. Lots of patrons are elderly, disabled.
- ETS weaknesses:
 - Infrequent service.
 - HATE the purple route.
 - Lack of symmetry. Can get to the hospital quickly, but it's super long to get home.
 - Confusing routes.
- A&MRTS has confusing routes which double back on themselves.
- Poor frequency, need improved access (safe stops), there is no Sunday service, and coverage in Arcata doesn't serve residential areas well (outdated).
- Difficult to recruit drivers, especially because of the pandemic and drug testing requirements. Also, difficult to recruit volunteers for volunteer driver programs.

Pros and Cons of Branding all Transit Systems in Humboldt County Under One Name and Logo

- Not convinced it's an absolute benefit, but from passenger perspective, being on one system feels more seamless.
- From a business perspective, there could be an economy of scale (if the systems were actually integrated).
- Makes sense in the long run.
- It would be great! One system of payment especially.
- Yes, if they have a unified fare system.
- Arcata and Eureka have loop routes which don't really complement the HTA services. If better coordination could come out of mutual branding, that would be worthwhile.
- It's long been discussed. It would be helpful.
- It would be an opportunity to address the cultural perception of transit and address the connectivity.
- Yes [it would be beneficial]. HTA and Eureka are already integrated. Not sure why Arcata isn't.
- It's confusing to new people and would be beneficial, but ultimately, it's word of mouth that gets information out there. Branding only takes you so far.
- Simplifies for riders. Not just branding, but regional passes.

- [HTA] uses wraps and advertises. Only A&MRTS doesn't advertise, and they have the bright scheme. Still, [the transit agencies] could put the Ride Humboldt logo on the side [of the buses] and then people know they can tap their pass or credit card.
- Not necessarily. One payment is already available. Having individual systems gives you a better sense of where the buses go, what area they serve. Color branding might be good so buses could be used interchangeably for various systems if a bus breaks down.
- [The success of a regional pass system] depends on how its presented and laid out so everyone has an equal say. Need to consider different funding sources (e.g., Tribal funding).
- Depends on perception and marketing.
- Not against it. It may be beneficial for those who use multiple services and would like a more streamlined experience. But not sure that should be the #1 priority for funding. Don't think it will increase ridership.
- Having the branding under one name/logo can be beneficial, especially if the information for those transit systems will be all in one place for clients to access.

Changes that will Impact the Need for Public Transit in the Humboldt County in the Short-Term Future

- Cal Poly Humboldt has been given an increase in funding. This increase in funds will lead to an increase in students and an increase in the need for transportation for those students.
- As Cal Poly ramps up with increasing students/faculty, that will drive a lot of demand.
- In 2023, Cal Poly Humboldt will be adding 1,000 beds in Valley West, with just 310 parking spaces.
- Increase in students.
- Obvious—Cal Poly growth.
- Ability to provide housing in Arcata [for Cal Poly Humboldt] is limited, so [housing] will likely go other places, and that distance will create a need for / opportunity for transit.
- The 60+ population is supposed to grow exponentially, adding to the number of older adults requiring transportation services.
- Earth Center—the theory is incredible. It will be interesting to see if that changes transit use.
- Reduced parking may force people to choose transit, or walking.
- Gen Z doesn't like to own cars. Better services could attract these riders.
- Yurok is growing...building more homes; just built 8 homes and a community center on Tule Creek Road (near tribal offices).
- YTTS starting service from Orleans to Hoopa. YTTS would love Hoopa to start their own service.
- Even without Cal Poly Humboldt, there will be pressures which will increase the need for transit. Climate refugees, unaffordable driving.
- Both aging and younger people are more likely to use transit in the future.
- Increase in affordable housing.

- McKinleyville Town Center Plan will include graduated care senior living facility, which the town lacks now.
- Cal Integrated Travel Project – working on developing ride tracking, technology.
- Demand will change based on what is presented. Traditional bus service has been declining for 8+ years. HTA will be testing some on-demand microtransit.
- County of Humboldt planning is placing projects in locations not conducive to transit (Samoa peninsula, Old Arcata Road). Sprawl is a problem to serve.
- Zero emissions initiatives.
- Trinidad may start services.
- Charters—opportunity for special event transportation? Reggae on the River, etc.? Could serve a need and bring in revenue.
- Caltrans has a goal to serve National Parks. What are the coordination opportunities for that?
- Uber in Humboldt County is really expensive—close to \$25 from Arcata to Eureka. Maybe Humboldt County could establish a program similar to “Pay-your-Pal” in Lake County.
- Need bus lanes, HOV lanes, protected bike lanes (City of Eureka is resistant).
- Scotia Lodge, new businesses may drive desire for more transit
- Westwood area is growing.
- Open Door Clinic in the Sunset area is being built with limited parking. Where will employees and patients park?
- Cutten housing w/lack of amenities.
- Demand will change as supply changes. We don’t have enough supply, and until we do, there will be no change in demand. There’s been hardly any change since 1979. No bus to Ferndale, no service on Old Arcata Road (used to be), lack of quality shelters. We need smaller vehicles. When all of that changes, demand will change.
- Climate plan promotes infill development. All new housing is to be in transit accessible areas.
- Increased density should generate more support by HTA/HCAOG.
- Indianola housing; developer has suggested putting in a bus stop is enough.
- Many plans (County plan, McKinleyville Town Center, Gateway Plan, parking plan in Eureka, etc.); there’s opportunity for a coordinated effort to improve all facets.
- Climate refugees, Cal Poly, investment in Arcata—more people, more pressures. Arcata won’t be able to meet all of the needs, so they will spread to other communities.
- It’s exciting to see the Earth Center, hydrogen buses.
- There should be greater connectivity to other modes. Eureka isn’t safe for bikes and pedestrians, but the opportunities to improve that are there. It’s flat, a grid system, and wide roads. H Street near the high school, for example, there are three lanes, with parking on both sides of the road. There could easily be a dedicated bike lane and reduced parking.
- HCAOG is representative of all communities, and as such, it should do more to encourage coordination among the cities/county, be an advocate for integrated planning.

CONCLUSIONS

While the comments provided by stakeholders cover a range of topics of issues, a few key themes were evident across the interview. These themes include:

Who Should be Served: Stakeholders acknowledged that ideally public transit should be able to be used by everyone in the community. There should be a focus on meeting the needs of Cal Poly Humboldt students, College of the Redwood students, seniors, and persons with disabilities. Although transit services should be for everyone, the stakeholders also acknowledged that due to current service frequencies and routes, the people riding the bus are mostly those with no other choice.

Primary Transit Issues: Many of the stakeholders mentioned that current transit hours, frequency, and service areas do not allow many people to take advantage of these services, making increasing ridership difficult. Some also mentioned the conflicting goals of designing transit services which are frequent but also provide enough coverage to the region given limited resources. Stakeholders expressed the need to help residents with first/last mile solutions. Limited funding was also cited as an issue preventing the implementation of service improvements. Also mentioned was overcoming the prevalent stigma people have against public transit to encourage more people to ride the bus.

Effectiveness: The stakeholders overall thought that the various Humboldt County public transit operators are doing well given the resources they have, however they believe that services are inadequate due to low levels of funding and political support.

Strengths: Transit leadership and regional coordination efforts were cited as some of the strongest aspects of the local transit network. Stakeholders also spoke highly of the electronic ticketing systems and the plans for the new Earth Center.

Weaknesses: Some of the primary weaknesses mentioned by stakeholders were current transit frequency, travel time, and service areas. Safety at bus stops was also mentioned as a concern. Stakeholders were also aware that limited funding opportunities obviously impacts the service upgrades that are possible.

Branding: The stakeholders interviewed overwhelmingly agreed that branding all of the transit systems in Humboldt County under one name and logo would ultimately be beneficial, helping to improve the passenger experience and help those less knowledgeable about existing services feel capable of trying to ride the bus. However, many mentioned that branding should not be the prioritized over other issues.

Future Demand: According to the interviewed stakeholders, the key trends that will influence transit demand in Humboldt County are the expansion of Cal Poly Humboldt, the region's growing senior adult population, and new housing developments across the region. Stakeholders emphasized that new developments should consider transit and projects which increase density should be prioritized.