



HUMBOLDT COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

Regional Transportation Planning Agency
Humboldt County Local Transportation Authority
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AGENDA ITEM 4a
SSTAC Meeting
February 4, 2026

DATE: January 26, 2026
TO: Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC)
FROM: Stephen Luther, Associate Regional Planner
SUBJECT: **Regional Transportation Plan Final Draft and CEQA Addendum**

STAFF REPORT

Contents:

- Staff's Recommended Action
- Staff Summary
- Final Draft of *VROOM 2026-2046*
 - All RTP chapters
 - Maps
 - Appendix A: Public and Stakeholder Engagement
 - Appendix B: Airport Ground Access Improvement Plan
 - Appendix C: CEQA FEIR Addendum 3
 - Appendix D: Safe and Sustainable Transportation Targets Baseline Report
 - Appendix E: Caltrans District 1 Project List

Staff's Recommended Action:

1. Introduce the item as an action item;
2. Allow staff to present the item;
3. Receive public comment;
4. Direct staff as necessary or consider making the motion,
“I move that the SSTAC recommend that the HCAOG Board adopt the
Addendum to the FEIR and approve the final draft of the RTP update,
VROOM 2026-2046.

Staff Summary:

The full draft of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update, *Variety in Rural Options of Mobility (VROOM) 2026-2046*, is included in this packet for review. Additionally, the Appendices listed above are included as attachments.

The official public comment period for the draft Regional Transportation Plan update closed on December 29th, 2025. Following the November 20th, 2025, Board approval to release the public review draft plan, staff sent a notice to our list of 560 email subscribers, published a press release, and encouraged widespread public participation through social media channels including a paid ad which received 1,800 views.

Key findings from the final public engagement results are summarized and included in the “Renewing Communities” chapter along with a synopsis of the stakeholder outreach process.

Findings from the survey include:

- 43% were satisfied, 25% neutral, and 31% dissatisfied with the transportation system.
- Shopping, recreation, and healthcare were the most difficult places for people to get.
- Majority of respondents drove a personal vehicle daily, but there were 8% who never did.
- 11% of survey takers used public transit daily. While 51% never used transit, 53% stated they would like to use transit more often. Top reasons included available routes, frequency of service, and hours of operation.
- The top transportation challenges people selected were poor road conditions, lack of safe places to walk or bike, public transit service hours, and vehicle speeding.
- Only 18% of respondents agreed that roads are maintained well.
- Local road maintenance was by far the most popular project type followed by Complete Streets rehabilitation.

Overall, the survey results show a balanced view of the variety of public opinions about transportation needs in the region. Road maintenance jumps out as a top priority. This makes sense, as roads in poor condition will impact drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians, and bus riders alike. With over 200 responses to the survey, there are many individual concerns and suggestions that cannot all be addressed specifically. However, having a large body of public opinion about long-range regional transportation needs is essential to completing the RTP. The comprehensive comments are included in Appendix A of the RTP (attached) and are referenced by staff in daily work.

Comments on Public Review Draft

HCAOG received 41 written public comments on the public review draft during the review period. Of these, 31 emails were sent in support of an action alert put out by CRTP, EPIC and 350 Humboldt. All of these community members were in support of three main points which called on HCAOG to restore the use of the term “climate crisis,” keep the existing date by which 80% of new housing would be located in areas with convenient car-free access to destinations; and to keep the funding consistency analysis.

Based on the discussion and direction from the Board on January 15th, the final draft reverses the strike out of climate crisis and restores its use throughout. In addition, the Safe and Sustainable Transportation Target on the location of new permitted housing units (page 2-16) keeps the target date of 2022 rather than moving the target out to 2030. Staff notes there is additional analysis needed to quantify this target, especially with relation to transit travel times. The majority of the Board found the goal would be more motivating and urgent if the current date is kept. There was no consensus from the Board on the revised Finance Policy F-1, so the revision is carried forward.

Caltrans District 1 provided a comment letter (included as the last page of Appendix A) with suggestions that comprise the bulk of the edits made to the final draft. Additionally, HTA reviewed the Public Transportation Element and provided suggested edits.

For your reference, the table below describes the updates.

Element/chapter	Changes made since Public Draft
1. Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor corrections e.g. Cal Poly Humboldt designation
2. Renewing Our Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added summary of public outreach/engagement program. • Safe and Sustainable Transportation Targets (SSTT) proposed revisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adjusted ZEV Charger goals in line with 2024 CEC report ○ Revision of Housing Goal (iv) to better align with current draft RHNA Cycle 7 methodology goals (i.e. small amount of housing continuing to be allocated to higher VMT jurisdictions)
3. Global Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restored the word “crisis.” (Board recommendation) • Updated synopsis of global climate change impacts.
4. Tribal Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
5. Emergency Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised narrative to recommend caution pursuing voluntary disaster registries based on state OES guidance.
6. Land Use-Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
7. Complete Streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added Hiller Road / US 101 long-term project
8. Commuter Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added Samoa to Arcata Trail project along GRTA Corridor
9. Public Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added Major Transit Stops for stops that were at least ~1% of the total daily boarding/alightings, or 50 on/off daily average. • Updated pictures. • Corrected route name for North State Express 101 and 299. • Added Ride Humboldt description.
10. Aviation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated projects that have been completed.
11. Goods Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor updates related to Caltrans letter.
12. Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responded to Caltrans comments
Maps/Figures	None

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Addendum #3:

The Board will consider certifying an updated EIR Addendum (per California Environmental Quality Act) and adopting *VROOM* 2026-2046 on February 19, 2026. For the update to the Regional Transportation Plan in 2013 (two cycles ago), the HCAOG Board certified a Program Environmental Impact Report (including an Initial Study) before adopting the RTP Update.

For the subsequent RTP update, in 2017, the HCAOG Board adopted an addendum to the Final Program EIR (State Clearinghouse #2013102063; Resolution 17-17). Briefly stated, an addendum is appropriate where the changes to the project or plan “will not result in any new or substantially more severe significant effects than were identified in the certified EIR” (CEQA Guidelines Section 15164).¹

The 2017 addendum added information and analysis to environmental topics: Air Quality, Biological Resources, Greenhouse Gas Emissions/Climate Change, Transportation/Circulation, and Long-Term Effects. Both the 2017 and 2021 addendum found that the policies and projects included in the RTP updates did not induce impacts that were more significant and did not require additional mitigation measures to what was included in the original Final EIR.

For the current 2026 update, HCAOG staff recommends updating the addendum, and by extension, the Final EIR. Conditions of the regional transportation system have not changed substantially since the Final EIR was adopted. Likewise, the 2021 update, *VROOM 2022-2042*, proposed policies and actions within the scope and intent as that envisioned in the Final EIR. The *VROOM 2026-2046* update maintains the emphasis on transportation’s role in addressing issues of climate change, housing, safety, and equity and establishes greenhouse gas emissions-reduction targets and performance measures into the elements.

The current environmental impact assessment concludes that the proposed plan update, *VROOM 2026-2046*, (1) is not anticipated to result in new significant impacts or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; and (2) would not require major revisions to the previously certified FEIR; therefore, impacts are deemed consistent with those in the FEIR. The proposed *VROOM 2026-2046* plan will not result in more significant impacts; neither changes to nor new mitigation measures are required.

Following discussion and any final recommendations, staff is asking the SSTAC to recommend the Board certify the updated EIR addendum #3 and adopt *VROOM 2026-2046* at their February 19, 2026, Board meeting.

¹ Section 15164 also allow that “(c): An addendum need not be circulated for public review but can be included in or attached to the Final EIR.”