



HUMBOLDT COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

Regional Transportation Planning Agency
Humboldt County Local Transportation Authority
Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies

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AGENDA ITEM 8b
HCAOG Board Meeting
November 20, 2025

DATE: November 12, 2025
TO: HCAOG Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)
FROM: Brendan Byrd, Executive Director
SUBJECT: **Regional Transportation Plan Update: Full Public Draft for Formal 30-Day Public Review & Comment Period**

STAFF REPORT

Contents:

- Staff's Recommended Action
- Staff Summary
- Full Public Draft of RTP for Formal Public Review and Comment Period. Includes: All RTP chapters and maps (track changes)
- Clean copy of Draft RTP

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 PAC recommend that the HCAOG Board approve the full public draft of the RTP update, *VROOM 2026-2046*, for the formal 30-day public review and comment period."

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 and discussion. Staff presented an overview of the existing RTP at the August Board meeting and received direction on the overall goals and content. Staff also presented an overview of the RTP update to the SSTAC at the September meetings, and comments from those two committees were taken into consideration with what is proposed in this 2026 draft update.

Updates to the RTP are shown with track changes. A clean version with the edits accepted is included to improve the reading experience. The 2022 update to *VROOM* was more substantive, with several entirely new elements, the inclusion of Safe and Sustainable Transportation Targets, and a reorganization of the plan's structure. In the proposed update "tune up" before the Board

today, there are no new elements, the targets remain largely as is, and the structure is unchanged. The updates in this draft are primarily focused on cleaning up information that is out of date. Additional details pointing to changes to policies or projects are included in the table below. Additionally, several updates shown as potential revisions are a result of recommendations from staff, or from the TAC or SSTAC. In developing this draft it was staff's goal to bring all recommended changes forward to the Board, so that the Board can consider what to modify (or not).

The "Renewing Our Communities" element will be updated with feedback from community outreach once the final survey results are in. We anticipate closing the online survey in mid-December. Staff will share a snapshot of results from the current 80 responses in the presentation. All comments received on the draft plan will be included in an appendix that will describe the whole public outreach program.

For your reference, the table below describes the updates.

Element/chapter	Changes made since Administrative Draft
1. Introduction	• Emphasized continuity with VROOM 2022; highlighting traffic safety and maintenance of existing infrastructure. • Updated section on HCAOG accomplishments since the last RTP and completed local and regional projects. • Minor updates to consistency with other plans, including reference to Humboldt County Climate Action Plan.
2. Renewing Our Communities	• Updated demographic data tables and discussion. • Pending summary of results from public outreach/engagement program. • Safe and Sustainable Targets (SST) are refined in this RTP to be more efficient in tracking and aligned with other key objectives. The proposed revisions are consistent with recommendations reviewed by the SSTAC, TAC, and Board in previous meetings. Proposed revisions include: ○ Addition of recommended metrics to quantify mode shift ○ Removal of targets that have been completed (ZEV (i) and (ii), Efficiency in New Housing (ii) ○ Extension of timeline for ZEV infrastructure charging goal (note – goal is currently well behind target), housing access goal, and general plan zoning goal ○ Removal of school buses from ZEV transition (TAC recommendation) ○ Revision of fleet transition goals to reflect consistency with 1) HTA current fleet transition plans and 2) the California Clean Fleets Rule ○ Revision of Housing Goal (iv) (i.e. small amount of housing continuing to be possible for smaller, high VMT jurisdictions, consistent with RHNA housing and Housing Element requirements)

	○ Removal of ATP education goal (TAC recommendation, could also consider modifying) ○ Extended deadline and added ‘complete streets to discretionary funding goal.
3. Global Climate Change	● Change references of ‘Climate Crisis’ to ‘Climate Change’ (TAC recommendation based on desire to use more conventional language). ● Updated synopsis of global climate change impacts. ● Updates to IPCC findings; state reports such as Statewide Climate Adaptation 2024; and countywide greenhouse gas emissions.
4. Tribal Transportation	● Removed Policy Tribal-2 because state legislation (Ramos 2023) addressed the issue of waiving sovereign immunity in transportation contracts. ● Section pending additional updates from Tribal Transportation departments.
5. Emergency Transportation	● Revised narrative to recommend caution pursuing voluntary disaster registries based on state OES guidance. ● Revised proposed project to be more actionable with regard to planning output. Concept is to partner with emergency planners to lead emergency evacuation planning for access and functional need (AFN) population, primarily through the SSTAC.
6. Land Use-Transportation	● Updated with new regional housing need determination and allocation methodology. ● Removed background on California housing legislation, as housing laws are too numerous and frequent to be tracked within the RTP.
7. Complete Streets	● Project table – added 30% costs for projects being carried over. ● Completed projects were highlighted. ● Referenced the 2024 Complete Streets Bill which added transparency and accountability to how Caltrans implements its own Complete Street policy, including an increased focus on transit.
8. Commuter Trails	● Updates to trail work including completion of Humboldt Bay Trail!
9. Public Transportation	● Added major transit stops (previously added by resolution to the RTP in 2024). ● Removed out of date information and historic background information. ● Added information on new transit systems (RCX, microtransit). ● Updated planning references, needs, and TDP recommended projects. ● Small addition to policy Transit-4 to acknowledge the role of the SSTAC in administration of Measure O transit funds.

10. Aviation	• Updated projects that have been completed.
11. Goods Movement	• Minor updates.
12. Financial	• Incorporated IIJA legislation into federal highway section. • Added Measure O revenue to tables. • Adjusted assumption of inflation costs from 2% to 2.5%. • Edits to Complete Streets finances to reflect current program funding. • Pending final updates to Complete Streets funding tallies. • Addition of new transit funding like TIRCP and SB125. • Minor adjustments to Goods Movement and Aviation financing. • Proposed change in policy: removed project to complete a funding consistency analysis, and instead added policy for “Grant Leveraging with Discretionary Funds” (page 12-17)
Maps/Figures	Minor updates made to the existing maps

The PAC is invited to comment on any and all elements of the draft RTP, but there are several items of particular interest to mention in addition to the proposed revisions to the SSTs noted above.

One issue to note is the proposed change to Finance Policy F-1. The previous RTP had a Project recommending a funding consistency analysis to review discretionary funding allocations and determine if a future project rating system should be developed for projects listed in the RTP. In 2023 staff completed a draft funding consistency analysis, which determined that complete streets projects and projects encouraging VMT reduction and mode shift represented the largest portion of discretionary funding investments, without a project ranking system. In 2025, the TAC recommended that an Ad Hoc Committee be formed to explore the potential of an RTP policy focused on leveraging grant funding through the STIP (or other discretionary programs). In the TAC’s recommendation it was stated that the intent of the committee was not to explore a project rating/ranking system. The Board approved formation of said committee with that understanding at the March 2025 meeting. The committee has since met and staff are close to finalizing a draft policy framework, consistent with the proposed updated Policy F-1, which will be reviewed by the Ad Hoc committee and the TAC at a future meeting. Due to the findings of the draft consistency analysis, and the subsequent directive to explore a policy of funding leveraging (with a focus not on ranking), staff are proposing the current redlined change to Policy F-1.

Another new project inclusion proposed in the RTP is in Section 5 – Emergency Transportation. Previous RTP language presented the expectation that HCAOG would participate as needed in developing regional guidelines for emergency evacuation related response. After some discussions with TAC members, in addition to discussion with the SSTAC, HCAOG staff is recommending to change the language and recommend that HCAOG take a leading role in coordinating emergency response planning across the region. Although this concept is not developed in detail at this time, the thought is that HCAOG could lead an update to the ‘conventional’ portion of roadway-based emergency evaluation planning, and with it include coordination and consideration for transit and paratransit evacuation response, Trail-based emergency evacuation, and coordination with

Caltrans. Staff will note that the SSTAC, the TAC, and Caltrans have all commented favorably on this proposed revision, and are seeking further input from the Board.

Two final items that staff would like to bring special attention to are in relation to Section 2 – Global Climate Crisis/Change. As the Board will see, a revision proposed by the TAC at their September meeting was to consider changing the language referencing the issue from ‘Climate Crisis’ to ‘Climate Change’, with the reasoning that Climate Change is more conventional language in referring to this issue. After receiving the recommendation, staff can also confirm that this revision would make the references consistent with how ‘Climate Change’ is referred to in the soon-to-be adopted Regional Climate Action Plan. However, staff will also note that some comments from members of the SSTAC and the public have shown hesitancy proposing this revision, arguing that the use of ‘crisis’ is important to highlight the severity of the issue. Staff will note that this suggested revision has no impacts to the goals or intent of the chapter, and that other updates presented are consistent current information on the topic from the state and scientific bodies. Staff are seeking direction from the Board on how to move forward with the TAC recommendation. Lastly, in the Global Climate Change chapter no policy has yet to be added regarding the role of HCAOG in conjunction with the Regional Climate Action Plan, the Climate Committee, or the Climate Program Manager. Staff will note that per direction from the Board in July, staff are still exploring the details of HCAOG taking on this role, and anticipate bringing this back to the Board in December or January for further consideration (including further details). In any event, staff would like to hear from the Board if they would like to see any language included in the draft RTP at this time, be it either in certain terms (shall) or uncertain terms (consider).

The SSTAC and the TAC both voted to recommend that the HCAOG Board approve the release of the Administrative Draft 2026 RTP as currently presented at their November meetings. Following discussion of the item at this meeting, the PAC is asked to recommend the Board approve the enclosed draft elements for public release. Staff will kick-off the formal public review and comment period on Monday, November 24th. The comment period will last 30 days. During this time staff will continue working internally on the RTP, and as appropriate will address any additional concerns or comments that arise during the public review period. The Board will consider certifying an updated EIR Addendum (per California Environmental Quality Act) and adopting *VROOM* 2026-2046 on February 19, 2026.