



December 2017

# Humboldt County Association of Governments

## Regional Transit Marketing and Unified Branding Plan



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## Section 1 | Situational Analysis

Public transit services in Humboldt County play a vital role in the community by providing reliable and affordable transportation. Promotion is important for maintaining “top-of-mind” awareness. Marketing of a transit service should:

- Establish “top-of-mind” service awareness.
- Increase ridership and fare revenue.
- Increase community awareness and support.
- Raise awareness of regional transit connectivity.

Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) is also exploring the possibility of developing a unified brand for public transit services provided throughout the county. A unified brand would potentially be beneficial in encouraging travel throughout the region, as it might remove the potential mental barrier of having to transfer between services. A unified website may also increase the likelihood of riders utilizing transit services to move throughout the region.

Before a unified regional brand or marketing plan can be implemented for Humboldt County transit systems, it is important to conduct a situational analysis to identify the county’s transit customers, potential customers, business environment, and the impact these factors may have on the Humboldt transit systems.

### California’s Redwood Coast

Humboldt County is a geographically large and mostly rural county located in northwest California. It has seven incorporated cities: Arcata, Blue Lake, Eureka, Ferndale, Fortuna, Rio Dell, and Trinidad, in addition to several unincorporated towns and smaller communities which are Census-designated places within the county.

Humboldt County is home to ancient redwood forests, the mythical Big Foot, and high-quality marijuana farms. The geography is coastal and mountainous with approximately 1,400 miles of county roads and city streets along with 378 miles of state highways and roadways. Mudslides occasionally close the road system and isolate the county. Humboldt County’s mix of urban and rural communities creates a unique challenge for providing public transit services. Further, transportation services are currently provided by multiple organizations, which adds to the complexity of service.

According to an online community survey of 242 Humboldt County residents about transit needs and perceptions conducted in Spring 2017, the top three transit services utilized by respondents were Redwood Transit System (RTS) Mainline (45.9 percent), Eureka Transit Service (ETS) (24.4 percent), and Arcata & Mad River Transit System (A&MRTS) (16.9 percent). A near-equal number of survey respondents indicated they used transit less than one day per month in the past year (39.3 percent) as those who used it two to five times per week (36.5).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix - Technical Memorandum One: Existing Conditions and Transit Review, Humboldt County Transit Development Plan 2017-2022 (TDP Appendix).



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As discussed in Technical Memorandum One: Existing Conditions and Transit Review of the Humboldt County Transit Development Plan 2017-2022 (TDP) (the source for the tables utilized in this document), Humboldt County’s population of approximately 135,000 is largely concentrated around Humboldt Bay in downtown Eureka, downtown Arcata, and west McKinleyville. This is illustrated in Figure 1.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 1: Historic Population of Humboldt County**

	2005		2010		2015	
	% Annual		% Annual		% Annual	
	Population	Growth	Population	Growth	Population	Growth
<b>Humboldt County</b>	131,467	-0.5%	134,623	0.5%	135,052	0.1%
<i>Arcata</i>	17,000	0.4%	17,211	0.2%	18,085	1.0%
<i>Eureka</i>	26,793	0.5%	27,125	0.2%	26,811	-0.2%
<i>Fortuna</i>	11,479	1.8%	11,897	0.7%	11,882	0.0%
<i>McKinleyville</i>	15,247	2.3%	16,896	2.1%	16,291	-0.7%
<i>Balance of county</i>	60,948	-2.1%	61,494	0.2%	61,983	0.2%
<b>California Population</b>	35,869,173	1.1%	37,253,956	0.8%	38,907,642	0.9%

*Source: California Demographic Research Unit, US Census*

### Humboldt is Growing

As indicated in Table 2, the population of Humboldt is expected to grow slowly between 2010 and 2030.

#### Retirees

The most significant population increase is expected to be of persons age 62 and older, which is estimated to increase by 92.1 percent between 2010 and 2030. This is compared to an overall decrease of 10.9 percent among school-age youth, and decrease of 2.4 percent of working age adults. High proportions of persons age 62 and older live in the Westhaven/Trinidad area, Loleta, Fortuna, and near the zoo in Eureka, as well as in Petrolia and Garberville.<sup>3</sup> These projections suggest a significant need for an increase in senior transportation services.

#### Youth

Although the youth population is expected to decrease over the next two decades, areas with relatively high concentrations of persons aged 5 to 24 include Hoopa, the Herrick Avenue area south of Eureka, Samoa/Manila, and South Fortuna.<sup>4</sup>

In Arcata, Humboldt State University (HSU) increases the City’s population by approximately 50 percent between late August and late May. HSU students are the primary riders of the Arcata & Mad River

<sup>2</sup> Technical Memorandum One: Existing Conditions and Transit Review, Humboldt County Transit Development Plan 2017-2022 (TDP).

<sup>3</sup> TDP.

<sup>4</sup> TDP.



Transit System. The College of the Redwoods is a two-year community college located south of Eureka and enrolls approximately 7,600 commuter students annually.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 2: Population Projections by Age Groups for Humboldt County**

Age Range	2010	2020		2030		From 2010	
	Population	Population	% Annual Change	% Change From 2010	Population		% Annual Change
Preschool Age (0-4 years)	7,733	6,362	-2.0%	-18%	6,458	0.1%	-16%
School Age (5-17 years)	19,314	18,914	-0.2%	-2%	17,217	-0.9%	-11%
College Age (18-24 years)	16,529	15,131	-0.9%	-8%	16,319	0.8%	-1%
Working Age (25-61 years)	73,331	71,284	-0.3%	-3%	71,581	0.0%	-2%
Young Retirees (62-74 years)	9,749	17,541	5.9%	80%	16,895	-0.4%	73%
Mature Retirees (75-84 years)	5,459	7,178	2.7%	31%	13,274	6.1%	143%
Seniors (85 or more)	2,548	2,724	0.7%	7%	3,941	3.7%	55%
All Ages	134,663	139,132	0.3%	3%	145,684	0.5%	8%

Source: California Demographic Research Unit

### Low-Income

Humboldt County has a significant number of low-income residents. According to the US Census, there are 28,158 persons in Humboldt County living below the federal poverty level (21.4 percent of total population, compared to 16.3 percent in California as a whole). Much of the population around HSU is considered to be living below the poverty level due to their student status. However, other areas with higher levels of poverty include downtown Arcata, downtown Eureka, Fortuna, and Hoopa.<sup>6</sup>

### Humboldt’s Potential Riders

An indication of transit dependence can be noted by the number of households that do not own or have access to a personal vehicle. In Humboldt County, there are 4,275 such households, with a concentration in Eureka’s downtown and Henderson Center, around Humboldt State in Arcata, and in Fortuna. In addition, there are 18,531 households that have only one vehicle available, which can result in transit dependency if multiple drivers share one vehicle or if that vehicle becomes inoperable.<sup>7</sup>

According to the 2017 online community survey, 58.3 percent of non-transit user respondents said that vehicle ownership was the number one reason why they did not utilize the bus systems. Other reasons indicated were, “It’s not frequent enough” (8.3 percent) and “It does not operate the hours I need” (8.3 percent). In the same survey, 40 percent of non-transit user respondents indicated that the single most important improvement to the system(s) would be to have bus stops closer to their home. More than 43 percent indicated they were between the ages of 23 to 45 and 29.4 percent indicated they were between the ages of 46 to 61. These were the two largest age groups of survey respondents. Roughly

<sup>5</sup> TDP.

<sup>6</sup> US Census Table S1701, Poverty in the Past 12 Months, ACS 2011-2015 5 Year Estimates (%).

<sup>7</sup> US Census Table B25044: Tenure by Vehicles Available, ACS 2011-2015 5 Year Estimates.



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half of respondents indicated they had two licensed drivers in their household (48.3 percent). Nearly 66 percent of respondents said they had access to one or two working vehicles.<sup>8</sup>

Table 4 lists the commute travel characteristics within Humboldt County as drawn from the American Community Survey (ACS). Most notable from this table is that 72.3 percent of all Humboldt County commuters choose to drive to work alone.<sup>9</sup>

**Table 4: Humboldt County Commute Travel Characteristics**

Census Tract		Drove Alone		Carpooled		Public Transit		Walked		Other		Worked at Home		Total Commute to Work
#	Description	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
1	Eureka / Old Town	1,232	66.9%	184	10.0%	14	0.8%	296	16.1%	79	4.3%	37	2.0%	1,842
2	Eureka / Henderson Ctr	2,093	73.5%	199	7.0%	128	4.5%	113	4.0%	71	2.5%	245	8.6%	2,849
3	Eureka / Rosewood	1,715	72.3%	270	11.4%	123	5.2%	106	4.5%	31	1.3%	128	5.4%	2,373
4	Eureka / Herrick Ave	1,174	77.2%	190	12.5%	18	1.2%	15	1.0%	62	4.1%	62	4.1%	1,521
5	Eureka / Old Town	1,214	68.2%	144	8.1%	33	1.9%	220	12.4%	94	5.3%	75	4.2%	1,780
6	Eureka	1,420	63.6%	324	14.5%	17	0.8%	108	4.8%	214	9.6%	151	6.8%	2,234
7	Eureka / Zoo	1,731	73.3%	254	10.8%	0	0.0%	131	5.6%	73	3.1%	171	7.2%	2,360
8	Myrtle town	2,304	89.4%	92	3.6%	1	0.0%	56	2.2%	8	0.3%	117	4.5%	2,578
9	Bayside/Jacoby Creek	1,680	68.7%	220	9.0%	22	0.9%	150	6.1%	153	6.3%	222	9.1%	2,447
10	Arcata/HSU	1,057	42.0%	172	6.8%	87	3.5%	843	33.5%	149	5.9%	210	8.3%	2,518
11.01	Arcata downtown	1,937	68.4%	310	11.0%	123	4.3%	211	7.5%	176	6.2%	74	2.6%	2,831
12	Arcata/Fickle Hill	1,235	63.0%	134	6.8%	52	2.7%	228	11.6%	149	7.6%	163	8.3%	1,961
13	Somoa/Arcata	472	75.8%	35	5.6%	4	0.6%	22	3.5%	19	3.0%	71	11.4%	623
101.02	Willow Creek	676	70.3%	76	7.9%	8	0.8%	21	2.2%	7	0.7%	173	18.0%	961
102	Westhaven/Trinidad	633	65.0%	50	5.1%	25	2.6%	75	7.7%	2	0.2%	189	19.4%	974
103	Blue Lake	1,311	80.1%	116	7.1%	3	0.2%	68	4.2%	6	0.4%	132	8.1%	1,636
104	Clam Beach	1,312	78.8%	66	4.0%	60	3.6%	55	3.3%	16	1.0%	156	9.4%	1,665
105.01	W. McKinleyville	2,847	80.2%	501	14.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	68	1.9%	134	3.8%	3,550
105.02	E. McKinleyville	1,985	90.3%	107	4.9%	0	0.0%	34	1.5%	0	0.0%	72	3.3%	2,198
106	Freshwater	641	87.0%	66	9.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.3%	2	0.3%	26	3.5%	737
107	Humboldt Hill	2,493	78.7%	294	9.3%	13	0.4%	93	2.9%	35	1.1%	241	7.6%	3,169
108	Loleta/Fortuna	1,006	72.2%	96	6.9%	19	1.4%	82	5.9%	11	0.8%	180	12.9%	1,394
109.01	Fortuna	1,097	61.1%	315	17.6%	31	1.7%	218	12.2%	68	3.8%	65	3.6%	1,794
109.02	Bridgeville	1,257	83.1%	132	8.7%	0	0.0%	13	0.9%	9	0.6%	101	6.7%	1,512
110	S. Fortuna	1,476	81.1%	246	13.5%	11	0.6%	24	1.3%	23	1.3%	41	2.3%	1,821
111	Rio Dell/Scotia	1,530	80.6%	181	9.5%	0	0.0%	83	4.4%	15	0.8%	90	4.7%	1,899
112	Petrolia	918	59.1%	130	8.4%	0	0.0%	191	12.3%	29	1.9%	284	18.3%	1,552
115	Redway / Shelter Cove	731	52.8%	181	13.1%	110	7.9%	159	11.5%	0	0.0%	203	14.7%	1,384
116	Garberville	877	61.9%	148	10.4%	54	3.8%	152	10.7%	0	0.0%	186	13.1%	1,417
9400	Hoopa	814	86.4%	68	7.2%	0	0.0%	12	1.3%	0	0.0%	48	5.1%	942
<b>Humboldt County</b>		<b>40,868</b>	<b>72.3%</b>	<b>5,301</b>	<b>9.4%</b>	<b>956</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>3,781</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>1,569</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>4,047</b>	<b>7.2%</b>	<b>56,522</b>

Source: US Census ACS 2015 5-Year Estimates, Table DP03: Selected Economic Characteristics

A relatively small proportion of Humboldt County commuters use public transit to get to work. Areas with the largest percentage are Fortuna, Eureka, west McKinleyville, south of Fortuna, and Redway/Shelter Cove. Considering that Humboldt County is proud of its natural surroundings, an environmental appeal might prompt some of these choice riders to utilize transit services.

<sup>8</sup> Humboldt TDP Appendix.

<sup>9</sup> TDP.



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Table 5, drawn from the US Census 2010 Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics, illustrates the number of commuters traveling in and out of the county’s larger communities for work.<sup>10</sup> Opportunities for appealing to potential transit riders can be drawn from the following data:

- Nearly 39 percent of Arcata working residents stay in Arcata to work, while more than 76 percent of Arcata workers come from outside Arcata.
- Nearly 46 percent of Eureka working residents stay in Eureka to work, while nearly 74 percent of Eureka workers come from outside Eureka.
- Just 27 percent of Fortuna working residents stay in Fortuna to work, while 77 percent of Fortuna workers come from outside Fortuna.
- Eureka and its surrounding area are the largest source of outside workers in both Arcata and Fortuna.
- The area surrounding Eureka is the largest source of outside workers in Eureka, followed by McKinleyville.

**Table 5: Commuters Into and Out of Humboldt County Communities**

Arcata residents going to work in....			Arcata workers commuting to work from....		
Arcata	2,372	38.9%	Arcata	2,372	23.9%
Eureka and Surrounds	1,442	23.7%	Eureka and Surrounds	1,971	19.8%
McKinleyville	240	3.9%	McKinleyville	1,767	17.8%
Sacramento	100	1.6%	Fortuna	235	2.4%
Redding	92	1.5%	Bayview	119	1.2%
Crescent City	60	1.0%	Blue Lake	112	1.1%
Fortuna	59	1.0%	All Other Locations	3,366	33.9%
Trinidad	50	0.8%			
All others	1,676	27.5%			
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,091</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>9,942</b>	

Eureka residents going to work in....			Eureka workers commuting to work from....		
Eureka	4,432	45.7%	Eureka	4,432	26.1%
Arcata	1,286	13.2%	McKinleyville	1,459	8.6%
Eureka Area	869	9.0%	Arcata	1,205	7.1%
Fortuna	270	2.8%	Fortuna	1,000	5.9%
McKinleyville	209	2.2%	Eureka Area	2,312	13.6%
Sacramento	140	1.4%	Bayview	484	2.9%
Redding	104	1.1%	Hoopa	189	1.1%
Crescent City	84	0.9%	All Others	5,885	34.7%
All Others	2,314	23.8%			
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,708</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>16,966</b>	

Fortuna residents going to work in....			Fortuna workers commuting to work from....		
Fortuna	950	27%	Eureka	1,000	24%
Eureka	270	8%	Fortuna	950	23%
Rio Dell	178	5%	Arcata	235	6%
McKinleyville	102	3%	Eureka Surrounds	171	4%
Yreka	89	3%	Ferndale	76	2%
Hydesville	81	2%	Hydesville	64	2%
Arcata	59	2%	Redding	61	1%
Loleta	57	2%	Sacramento	59	1%
Other	1,757	50%	Other	1,504	37%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,543</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>4,120</b>	

Source: US Census 2010, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics

<sup>10</sup> TDP.



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This data suggests there is a considerable amount of home-to-work travel between communities in Humboldt County. For reference, commute distances for the most common pairings are shown below.

**Table 6: Commute Travel Times/Distances**

<b>Commute pairing</b>	<b>Mileage/ Commute Time (One-Way)</b>
Arcata to/from Eureka	9 miles/14 minutes
Fortuna to/from Eureka	18 miles/21 minutes
McKinleyville to/from Eureka	16 miles/20 minutes
McKinleyville to/from Arcata	8 miles/9 minutes

### Humboldt Works

According to the California Department of Labor, the top employers in Humboldt County today include agricultural, medical, educational, and governmental entities. As shown in Table 6, the largest employer is the St. Joseph Hospital in Eureka, with over 1,000 employees, followed by Sun Valley Group which employs between 500 and 1,000 in greenhouses in Arcata. All of the top employers are in Eureka, Arcata, Trinidad, Blue Lake, and Korbek.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> TDP



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**Table 7: Top Humboldt Employers**

Employer	Location	Industry	# of Employees
St Joseph Hospital	Eureka	Hospitals	1000-4999
Sun Valley Group	Arcata	Greenhouses	500-999
Bettendorf Trucking	Arcata	Trucking	250-499
Blue Lake Casino & Hotel	Blue Lake	Casinos	250-499
Eureka City Clerk	Eureka	Government Offices-City, Village & Twp	250-499
Green Diamond Resource Co	Trinidad	Foresters-Consulting	250-499
Green Diamond Resource Co	Korbel	Foresters-Consulting	250-499
Humboldt Cnty Office-Education	Eureka	Schools	250-499
Humboldt County Social Svc	Eureka	Government Offices-County	250-499
Mad River Community Hospital	Arcata	Hospitals	250-499
Sierra Pacific Industries	Arcata	Lumber-Manufacturers	250-499
Trinidad Rancheria	Trinidad	Associations	250-499
Umpqua Bank	Eureka	Banks	250-499
CHER-AE Heights Casino	Trinidad	Casinos	100-249
Costco	Eureka	Wholesale Clubs	100-249
County-Humboldt-Health & Human	Eureka	Government Offices-County	100-249
Eureka High School	Eureka	Schools	100-249
Humboldt County Dept-Health	Eureka	Clinics	100-249
Humboldt County Mental Health	Eureka	Hospitals	100-249
Humboldt County Sheriff Dept	Eureka	Government Offices-County	100-249
Pacific Choice Seafood Inc	Eureka	Prepared Fish & Seafood Products (mfrs)	100-249
Target	Eureka	Department Stores	100-249
United Indian Health Svc	Arcata	Clinics	100-249
Walmart	Eureka	Department Stores	100-249
Winco Foods	Eureka	Grocers-Retail	100-249

Source: California Department of Labor



## Section 2 | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

Developing a SWOT analysis allows an organization to better understand where it stands in the market by examining its respective strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. *Strengths* are internal attributes within an organization that can be used for developing a competitive advantage or achieving specified goals. *Weaknesses* are other internal attributes that may work against an organization’s objectives. *Opportunities* are external conditions, usually out of an organization’s control, that are helpful in achieving objectives. *Threats* are external conditions that work against objectives and are also often out of an organization’s control.



By examining all transit providers within Humboldt County, we are able to see the “big picture” of transit within the county; therefore, some *weaknesses* may not apply to every operator. The table below summarizes the current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for public transit in Humboldt County.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitates regional connections</li> <li>• Rider base that is transit-dependent (and therefore reliable)</li> <li>• Individual systems are well recognized within respective communities</li> <li>• Individual systems have strong relationships with community</li> <li>• Individual systems have high customer service standards</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lacking cohesive regional transit information.</li> <li>• Limited interaction between individual providers and the Humboldt County community at large</li> <li>• Inconsistent/limited hours of operation</li> <li>• Inconsistent availability of online information</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet is primary source for transit information for current riders</li> <li>• Unified brand for regional trip planning and transit education</li> <li>• Environmental initiatives (e.g., SB 375)</li> <li>• Local educational institutions with high number of students</li> <li>• Medical facilities are target areas of riders</li> <li>• High instances of poverty and/or student status leads to transit-dependent residents</li> <li>• Caltrans grants</li> <li>• Federal funding programs</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preference for, and dominance of, personal vehicles</li> <li>• Changes to federal funding/regulatory climate</li> <li>• Lack of understanding about what regional public transportation encompasses (e.g., services provided regionally vs. provider-specific services)</li> <li>• Individual system reluctance to adopt regional branding/loss of identity</li> <li>• Regional branding of transit system is viewed as both complementary and competitive by local transit services</li> </ul>



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Each transit system in Humboldt County serves a base of loyal riders and provides a valuable travel alternative. By forging new and continued partnerships with academic institutions, healthcare facilities, and community services organizations, operators can increase ridership and fare revenue both regionally and within their individual systems.

Investing in social media, well-branded regional marketing materials, and community/employer outreach programs could attract new riders to Humboldt County transit systems and help portray public transportation as an eco-friendly and, perhaps, “cool” alternative to driving a personal vehicle.

### Elements of Marketing

A well-rounded marketing program has multiple facets, each with a distinct purpose. Moore & Associates recommends utilizing a combination of marketing, advertising, and public communications to promote a regionally branded Humboldt transit systems.

#### Marketing

Marketing is the process by which the Humboldt unified regional brand motivates the consumer. It involves thinking about the regional systems and services in terms of customer needs and satisfaction and then educating the customer why he/she needs to ride various systems.

#### Advertising

Most advertising seeks to increase sales of a product or service through paid messaging that is often general in nature. Advertising builds on price, product, promotion, and place to actively communicate the message to customers.

#### Public communications

Public communications is the transmittal of information from an organization to the public. It can be used to communicate news such as schedule or fare changes, new destinations, and important milestones; upcoming promotions or activities; and advise the community of involvement opportunities.

### Marketing Activities

There are two primary types of marketing activities – Those that support the regional brand on an ongoing basis, and those that support a specific campaign or activity. Ongoing marketing activities include the preparation and distribution of informational collateral such as rider guides, maintenance of the regionally branded HTA website, and design and implementation of tools that make it easier to use the various regional systems (such as online trip planning and mobile applications). They are general in nature and are often targeted to the population as a whole, rather than a single demographic or segment. Campaign- or activity-based activities support a specific campaign and are usually used for a defined period of time and in combination with ongoing marketing activities. Such activities may be targeted to a specific socio-demographic segment with tailored themes and messaging.

While a marketing campaign may include some paid advertising, it enhances a consistency of messaging through collateral, communications, and customer service. It creatively conveys the benefits of having a unified regional Humboldt County Transit Authority while targeting one or more customer segments.



## Section 3 | Analysis of Marketing

During the course of the TDP and marketing plan development, Humboldt Transit Authority has significantly redesigned its website. Subsequent to initial discussions about implementation of a regional transit website, HTA incorporated many elements that bring the site closer to a comprehensive regional site for public transportation in Humboldt County. (Further discussion of the regional transit website process and scenarios is provided in Section 5.)

This section provides an analysis of key marketing elements for each Humboldt County transit operator.

### Humboldt Transit Authority

#### Website

Located at [www.humboldttransit.org](http://www.humboldttransit.org), the HTA website serves as an information clearinghouse for the majority of transit service in Humboldt County. The website also provides information on the Authority itself through Administrative Information links located at the bottom of the page.

The HTA website is interactive and easy to use, featuring a trip planning, service-specific route and schedule information, a map of the region, and separate pages for “How to Ride” and “Fares and Passes.” The trip planner uses Google Maps and also provide links to download the Transit app for real-time arrival information. The site is also searchable and offers a translation option.

Transit options included under “Choose a service provider” include Redwood Transit System (RTS), Willow Creek Intercity, Arcata & Mad River Transit System (A&MRTS), Eureka Transit Service (ETS), Tish Non Village Transit, Southern Humboldt Intercity, Southern Humboldt Local, Blue Lake Rancheria, and Dial-A-Ride. Not included on the list of providers are KT Net and Fortuna Transit.

The bottom of the main page features a short blurb about transit in Humboldt County as well as links to “About HTA,” “Staff Directory,” “Advertise Onboard,” “Requests for Proposals,” “Jobs,” “HTA Board of Directors,” “Local Government Links,” “Transit Planning,” and “Title VI Non-Discrimination Policy and Complaint Procedure.” Individual logos also serve as links to service information for individual operators. All links appeared to be working appropriately at the time of our review.

The homepage also includes an area for news, which currently features two links to news items (a public transportation survey and information about an ongoing stop closure).

The “How to Ride” page includes links to information on “Passenger Conduct and Rules,” “Accessibility,” “Dial-A-Ride,” “Bring your bike onboard,” “Holidays,” and “Related Transportation Services.” The “Related Transportation Services” page includes links to neighboring transit systems Redwood Coast Transit/Del Norte Public Transit and Trinity Transit, as well as a link to KT Net.

The “Fares and Passes” page offers information about fares for each service as well as how to purchase multi-ride passes. It also offers a link to download the Token Transit app (for electronic payment) and a link to the HTA online store, which allows online pass purchases.

We did notice that we had problems with the service maps being visible when using the Firefox and Safari browsers, though they were there and interactive when using the Chrome browser.



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## Regional Transit Marketing and Unified Branding Plan

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### Collateral

All routes and services included on the HTA website have downloadable collateral available. However, the nature of this collateral varies by provider. This includes:

- Arcata & Mad River Transit System - .pdf of timetables only.
- Redwood Transit System – .pdf of Routes, Maps, and Schedules brochure.
- Southern Humboldt Local – .pdf of timetable only.
- Southern Humboldt Intercity – .pdf of timetable only.
- Eureka Transit Service – .pdf of Routes, Maps, and Schedules brochure.
- Tish Non Village Transit – .pdf of route map (with RTS) and schedule.

### Social Media

- Facebook page with approximately 625 followers. Regular postings, averaging three per month, regarding route and community information. More information could be shared via Facebook, including surrounding transit system information.

### KT Net

#### Website

The KT Net site is a stand-alone website at [www.ktnet.org](http://www.ktnet.org). The system would benefit greatly from being better integrated into the HTA website (including the trip planning function and interactive map). A menu system utilizing icons as links would create a significantly more user-friendly experience. There is an online purchasing capability for buying books of tickets. The agency's Title VI Program is downloadable from the homepage.

#### Collateral

- .pdf brochure with service information, map, and schedule (updated October 2017).

### Social Media

Facebook page contains images, original content, route information, and ticket purchasing capabilities. However, only 75 people are following.

### Blue Lake Rancheria

#### Website

This system currently has a webpage within the Blue Lake Rancheria's website ([www.bluelakerancheria-nasn.gov/boTransit.html](http://www.bluelakerancheria-nasn.gov/boTransit.html)). The system would benefit greatly from being better integrated into the HTA website (including the trip planning function). A simple menu system utilizing icons as links would create a significantly more user-friendly experience. A downloadable comment/complaint form is also available on the webpage.

#### Collateral

- .pdf brochure with service information and schedule.



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#### Fortuna Transit

##### Website

Fortuna Transit has a webpage within the City of Fortuna's website ([www.friendlyfortuna.com/index.aspx?nid=98](http://www.friendlyfortuna.com/index.aspx?nid=98)). Because the system offers service only to seniors and persons with disabilities, the information contained within the webpage is sufficient. However, Fortuna Transit should, at a minimum, be included as a link under HTA's list of service providers. Links on the left side of the page offer additional information including flyers about Unmet Transit Needs, Fortuna Transit Riders Guide, Transit Rider Emergency Information Form, Title VI Program (including complaint procedures and complaint form), ADA complaint form, and additional transportation options.

##### Collateral

- .pdf of Fortuna Transit Riders Guide brochure (on sidebar as Letter to Riders).



## Section 4 | Marketing Tactics

In the 2017 Transit Development Plan for Humboldt County, the consultant recommended a number of specific service changes. We have identified recommended marketing tactics for each of those TDP recommendations. We have followed this discussion with a series of general marketing tactics which can be applied across each individual operator or utilized to promote a regional unified brand.

### TDP-specific Marketing Tactics

#### Arcata & Mad River Transit System

**TDP Recommendation:** Adjust transit schedule to better match HSU class schedules/increase trip choices.

**Recommended marketing tactics:** There are two key elements necessary to this recommendation. The first is the provision of up-to-date schedule information through the A&MRTS website and printed collateral. This is a standard component of any schedule change. The second is marketing of the schedule alignment. The purpose of the schedule change is to enhance connectivity and increase travel options among transit riders. To that end, A&MRTS should promote this service change, particularly on the HSU campus. It is likely that this service change will attract new riders who do not currently ride because of the existing tight schedule. We recommend notifying current and potential riders of this service improvement using the following tactics (listed in priority order):

- Social media content (HTA Facebook and HSU Facebook and Twitter),
- Media release,
- Onboard notices (car cards),
- Flyers/posters at HSU, and
- News post on [www.humboldt.edu](http://www.humboldt.edu) homepage,
- Display advertisement in the *Lumberjack* newspaper.

**TDP Recommendation:** Make the community center an on-demand stop.

**Recommended marketing tactics:** Given the community center currently requires a deviation from the primary alignment of the Red Route, and ridership is consistently low, converting this to an on-demand stop is a reasonable tactic. However, A&MRTS should undertake some specific marketing activities to mitigate the impact of this change for those who do use the stop.

- Post onboard notices advising customers of the proposed change.
- Prepare informational material about how to use an on-demand stop.
- Address the seniors who utilize the meal program to notify them that the 11:01 a.m. and 1:01 p.m. service to the community center will be regular stops and will not need to be requested.
- Update service information to reflect the on-demand nature of the stop.

**TDP Recommendation:** Extend transit service to South G Street.

**Recommended marketing tactics:** One of the purposes of a TDP is to ensure the transit service being provided meets the needs of the community. The extension of transit service to South G Street and South H Street would provide service to an area with high-density housing and commercial properties.



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A&MRTS should take steps to notify existing riders as well as residents and visitors to the South G Street area that the service is being extended. We recommend the following tactics:

- Updating of informational collateral to reflect the new alignment,
- Onboard notice (car card), and
- Direct mail (postcard) to high-density housing (especially multi-family dwellings) and commercial businesses.

**TDP Recommendation:** Provide a high-frequency shuttle between HSU and downtown in peak periods (contingent upon funding).

**Recommended marketing tactics:** Should sufficient funding be identified to implement this service, it will require focused promotion in order to build up ridership (and not just poach riders from other A&MRTS routes). The recommended marketing tactics are largely the same as those proposed for the schedule adjustment discussed earlier, though here they are prioritized somewhat differently.

- Social media content (HTA Facebook and HSU Facebook and Twitter),
- Media release,
- News post on [www.humboldt.edu](http://www.humboldt.edu) homepage,
- Display advertisement in the *Lumberjack* newspaper,
- Onboard notices (car cards), and
- Flyers/posters at HSU.

### Humboldt Transit Authority

(Inclusive of Redwood Transit Service, Willow Creek, Southern Humboldt, Tish Non Village, and Eureka Transit Service)

**TDP Recommendation:** Introduce RTS Mainline express service between Eureka and Arcata.

**Recommended marketing tactics:** The RTS Mainline service currently experiences overcrowding. The TDP recommends deploying one additional bus between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. to increase frequency and improve service quality on the Mainline service. While informing current riders of the improvement is important, a ridership on the new trips of primarily existing customers simply redistributes the existing ridership while adding service hours. Therefore, it is critical to get the word out into the community about the service improvements that are being made. Therefore, we recommend:

- Media release,
- Social media content (Facebook),
- Onboard notices (car cards), and
- Display advertisement in the *Eureka Times-Standard*.

**TDP Recommendation:** Eliminate weekday Southern Humboldt local service and provide Southern Humboldt Intercity Service on weekends.

**Recommended marketing tactics:** This recommendation would eliminate the Southern Humboldt Local service, which travels between Benbow and Miranda eight times per day. The Southern Humboldt Intercity service, which includes the Local alignment, operates five trips per day. This results in 13 trips per day within the Local corridor, which has relatively low performance. The TDP recommends



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eliminating weekday Local service and maintaining Intercity service, which would still provide five trips per day and would allow Intercity service to operate on the weekends.

This service recommendation requires careful handling. The elimination of weekday Local service must be adequately noticed so that current riders can make alternate arrangements. However, we recommend the overall message for this change should focus on the positive – the introduction of weekend service in Southern Humboldt. Messaging should emphasize the expansion of regional connectivity to seven days a week, and should minimize the reduction of service while still conveying necessary information. Recommended tactics include:

- Media release,
- Onboard notices (car cards),
- Social media content (Facebook), and
- Notices at Southern Humboldt Local bus stops.

**TDP Recommendation:** Add Willow Creek Service stop in Blue Lake.

**Recommended marketing tactics:** The Willow Creek Service currently travels past Blue Lake as it travels from Arcata to Willow Creek along State Highway 299, but it does not stop there. This recommendation would add an on-demand stop in Blue Lake, which would have little impact to the regular route. The Blue Lake Rancheria Transit System (BLRTS) already provides service between Blue Lake and Arcata, but the Willow Creek Service would augment that service by offering one midday trip and one evening trip when BLRTS is not operating. The emphasis should be on additional opportunities for those traveling to/from Blue Lake, rather than encouraging existing BLRTS customers to use the Willow Creek Service. Recommended tactics include:

- Media release,
- Onboard notices (car cards) on the Willow Creek Service as well as the Blue Lake Rancheria Transit System, and
- Social media content (Facebook).

**TDP Recommendation:** Eliminate Tish Non Village service.

**Recommended marketing tactics:** The TDP recommends eliminating this service, which has performed poorly throughout its existence. Messaging should focus on notifying current riders and coordinating with the Bear River Band of Rohnerville Rancheria regarding the change. The RTS Mainline stops in Loleta on the weekends, and the Tribe provides some transportation services for elders and children. Recommended tactics include:

- Media release,
- Outreach to Bear River Band of Rohnerville Rancheria,
- Onboard notices (car cards),
- Signage at the Loleta bus stop, and
- Social media content (HTA Facebook, plus the Bear River Band’s Facebook).

**TDP Recommendation:** Provide later Saturday service on RTS Mainline.

**Recommended marketing tactics:** This TDP recommendation would add one additional hour of service in both directions on Saturday evenings on the RTS Mainline service between College of the Redwoods



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and Valley West. This was a frequent request on the surveys conducted in conjunction with the TDP. Marketing should focus on current customers with notification to the general public. Recommended tactics include:

- Media release,
- Onboard notices (car cards), and
- Social media content (Facebook).

**TDP Recommendation:** Provide earlier weekday service on ETS.

**Recommended marketing tactics:** Earlier weekday service in Eureka would facilitate access to jobs and transfers to regional routes before 8:00 a.m. The TDP recommendation would add 46 minutes of service (starting at 6:14 a.m.) on the Red Route and 41 minutes of service (starting at 6:11 a.m.) on the Green Route. The primary marketing focus would be on potential customers who do not use transit because it does not provide the early morning travel they need. Recommended tactics include:

- Media release,
- Onboard notices (car cards) (on ETS and connecting regional services),
- Social media content (Facebook, as well as City of Eureka Facebook and Twitter), and
- Display advertisement in the *Eureka Times-Standard*.

### Capital Recommendations

**TDP Recommendation:** Replacement of 23 transit vehicles across the next five years. Consider transitioning to electric-powered vehicles.

**Recommended marketing tactics:** Replacement of so many transit vehicles across the next five years provides a valuable opportunity to move toward unified branding. Should HCAOG and the transit operators wish to move forward with a fully unified brand, it is often a more cost-effective decision to start with branding new buses than to spend money rebranding buses that will be replaced soon. This way buses can be branded with the regional brand as they are replaced.

If a true unified brand (that involves a consistent look throughout the County's transit system) is desired, it is important to have the branding ready to go when the first vehicles are replaced. This effort should be accompanied by a media release informing the community about the unified brand and what they can expect to see over the coming years. If HCAOG elects to begin transitioning to electric vehicles as well, Humboldt County's commitment to the environment should also be promoted through general marketing as well (media releases, social media, etc.).

The TDP also included a number of other capital recommendations, such as bus stop amenities, technology, and vehicle amenities. Transit operators should take advantage of any such improvements to get the word out to the community, as improvements or enhancements are excellent messages. Ideal (and inexpensive) tactics for promotion of such enhancements include media releases and social media. New customer-focused technology often has a learning curve, so any such introductions should be accompanied by adequate instructional materials, whether an online tutorial, brochure, or how-to video.



## General Marketing Tactics

In addition to implementing the recommendations included in the [Marketing Analysis](#), which is specific to website and online regional branding, and the tactics specific to TDP recommendations (listed above), Moore & Associates recommends the following activities as HCAOG moves toward a unified regional brand. (While several brand names are proposed in the following section, we have used “HTA” as the unified brand for clarity’s sake in this discussion.)

### Social Media in Phases

To provide comprehensive regional transit information, Moore & Associates suggests that the HTA establish a robust social media presence to provide route information and real-time updates for all of the individual systems within Humboldt County.

- **Phase One:** In Phase One of the social media roll out, individual transit systems can continue utilizing their own social media platforms as HTA maximizes its profiles on Facebook and Twitter and establishes itself as the regionally branded transit authority.
- **Phase Two:** Once HTA has increased its following to include followers from the independent provider networks and has consistently generated original and noteworthy content, the individual transit systems should begin integrating HTA social media into their own online outreach. Each system could incorporate the regionally branded social media links on individual websites and perhaps discontinue or “merge” their own social media platforms by inviting followers to move with them to the HTA unified regional branded page.

### Facebook

Redesign the HTA Facebook page to reflect the unified regional brand. Post at least three times per week with “official” information. Rider alerts should be posted on an as-needed basis and should be inclusive of all transit systems in the County.

- Designate representatives from individual transit operators to share and post information.
- Follow local organizations/events/politicians/business owners in all Humboldt County transit service areas.
- Provide direct links to individual transit system websites (including those in neighboring counties).
- Consider targeted Facebook advertising.
- Create relevant and regionally branded hashtags (#).

*Evaluation – Facebook Insights* is useful to determine how the account most efficiently engages with its audience. We recommend the following performance measures for Facebook:

- No less than three unique posts per week.
- Average at least 400 post views per month.



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### Twitter

Redesign the HTA Twitter page to reflect the unified regional brand. Post four times weekly with “fun” messaging.

- Designate representatives from individual transit operators to share and post information.
- Follow local organizations/people/businesses.
- Use hashtags to tie Twitter postings to larger topics and broaden exposure (e.g., #transit, #commuter, #bluebus).
- Follow, retweet, and @mention relevant messages posted elsewhere.

*Evaluation* – Twitter does not currently feature high-level analytics tools. Tracking followers, tweets, @mentions, and retweets is the most valid measure of exposure within the Twitter community. We recommend the following be a standard for performance measures for Twitter:

- No less than four unique postings per week.
- Steady increase in number of @mentions and retweets each month.
- Steady increase in followers each month.

### Community Outreach

#### Participation in Community Events

Participation in community-wide events can not only raise awareness of programs and services provided by all transit systems included in the regional brand, but can promote the regional brand as a good community partner while reinforcing a positive perception of public transit and expanding knowledge of regional services. We recommend HTA enroll in or volunteer to participate in events such as:

- Trinidad to Calm Beach Run,
- Farmer’s Markets,
- Art Walks,
- Humboldt Flea Market,
- HSU Film Festival, and
- Humboldt Crabs Baseball.

*Evaluation* – Immediate evaluation of community participation is difficult to assess. Be mindful of customer feedback regarding the ease of use and perception of public transit. Metrics to consider could also include the amount of marketing material/giveaways distributed and the number of visitors to event/booths.

#### Sponsorship of Community Events

Similar to participating in community events, sponsorship of such events is an excellent way to place (and maintain) a regional transit brand in the spotlight while enhancing the perception of the brand as a trusted and valued community partner. Many events have multiple levels of sponsorship; we recommend focusing on one or two events per year where the united regional brand is the primary sponsor for at least one of those events.

We also recommend creating partnerships with the College of the Redwoods and Humboldt State University in addition to considering sponsorship of:



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- Humboldt County Roller Derby,
- Arcata Main Street,
- Eureka Main Street, and
- Avenue of the Giants Marathon.

*Evaluation* – See Participation in Community Events evaluation.

#### Student Rider Appreciation Day

We recommend teaming up with the College of the Redwoods and Humboldt State University to set up a unified regional brand booth on both campuses and provide giveaways and service information to riders (and non-riders) to celebrate their use of public transit. If someone is new to transit, take the opportunity to inform them of the unified regional brand. If they have a bus pass, provide them with a small thank-you gift in appreciation of the continued support of the transit system. Use the opportunity to showcase the transit systems contained within the regional brand, allow for onsite pass purchases, and conduct a “How Are We Doing?” survey in conjunction with the event to learn how transit systems are viewed on college campuses.

This could be done in conjunction with service changes affecting HSU (such as the schedule adjustment and/or introduction of express service to downtown) to maximize marketing dollars.

*Evaluation* – Monitor the number of giveaways and/or thank-you gifts distributed and surveys collected during a defined period of time. Also track any media mentions.

#### Dump the Pump Day

Humboldt County is an environmentally conscious area that prides itself in promoting an earth-friendly lifestyle. We recommend sponsoring an environmentally friendly Dump the Pump Day using the regional brand. The goal should be to inform the public and persuade eco-minded non-riders to consider utilizing Humboldt County’s transit services instead of driving a personal vehicle.

National Dump the Pump Day usually takes place in mid-June. HTA should market the event to both current and prospective customers with eblasts, media blasts, social media, onboard notices, and direct mail to business and academic institutions.

*Evaluation* – Develop a tracking mechanism to identify how many people rode transit specifically for Dump the Pump Day versus those that normally ride the bus (e.g., encourage Dump the Pump Riders to post on social media and track hashtags or advertise electronic fare code for riders to utilize on Dump the Pump Day). Track mentions in local and industry media. Assess customer perception through rider surveys.

#### Giveaway Items

Maintaining an active inventory of giveaway items typically used at community events and sponsored transit days, such as Dump the Pump Day, will assure readiness when opportunities arise to connect with potential riders and the community at large. We recommend keeping a stocked inventory of items such as token motivator gifts (such as water bottles, frisbees, reusable shopping bags, pens, post-its, and hand sanitizer featuring the regional brand) and event table décor (e.g., foldable table, tent, tablecloth,



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posters, handouts, easel, plexiglass displays, etc.) to ensure HTA is always ready for community outreach opportunities.

### Public Communications

#### Media Releases

Issuing regular media releases regarding regional activities, especially route updates, expanded services, community outreach activities, partnerships, and awards, is an excellent way to communicate with the public. We suggest a minimum of one media release per month be distributed to an established database of media contacts. Archive all media releases under the “News” tab on the regional transit website and maintain news items for six months.

*Evaluation* – Track the appearance of news items related to the various Humboldt County transit services in local and industry media. Google Alerts can assist with this tracking.

#### Newsletter Eblasts

We suggest creating a customized eblast template for a consumer newsletter (e.g., Ride Humboldt News) on a platform such as MailChimp. Each eblast should utilize a branded header and catchy subject line as an email teaser. Distribute eblasts to a defined mailing list. Content should be informational and brief with multiple graphics. Include an option to subscribe to the newsletter on the regional website.

*Evaluation* – Mailchimp provides clickthrough and open rate analytics. The first eblast will most likely have the highest performance. An average of 25 percent open rate and 10 percent clickthrough rate thereafter should be expected.

### Advertising

#### Local Advertising

Colorful advertisements in local newspapers and magazines can help HTA control a regionally branded message. We recommend running colorful and branded print ads for events such as Dump the Pump Day in publications such as:

- HSU – *The Lumberjack*,
- *Humboldt County News Online*,
- *Humboldt Magazine*,
- *The Arcata Eye*,
- *Eureka Times-Standard*,
- *Mad River Union*,
- *North Coast Journal*, and
- *The Humboldt Independent*.

*Evaluation* – Review circulation figures to determine reach of print advertisements.

#### Radio

Radio ads target potential customers in their personal vehicles, which can deliver timely messages about the convenience of Humboldt County’s transit services while people, particularly students and professionals, are sitting in traffic or making a long drive.



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We recommend running radio ads on popular English and Spanish-language stations for campaigns such as Dump the Pump Day and Student Rider Appreciation Day. Paid listening stations (e.g., Sirius Radio) and internet radio (e.g., Pandora or Spotify) should also be targeted. Include a call to action, such as “Choose public transit on Dump the Pump Day.” Stations to consider:

- Radio Free Humboldt,
- KWSW,
- KWPT,
- KHSU,
- KMUE, and
- KSLG – FM.

*Evaluation* – Assess penetration of radio advertisements by monitoring the increase in ridership in relation to when advertisements air.

#### Vehicle Display Advertising

Regionally branded vehicle advertising on buses in various transit systems throughout Humboldt County is an effective marketing tactic to “catch the eye” of non-riders and the Humboldt County community at-large. We recommends utilizing a colorful and branded displays for campaigns such as Dump the Pump Day, Student Appreciation Day, and other community events HTA is sponsoring or participating in.

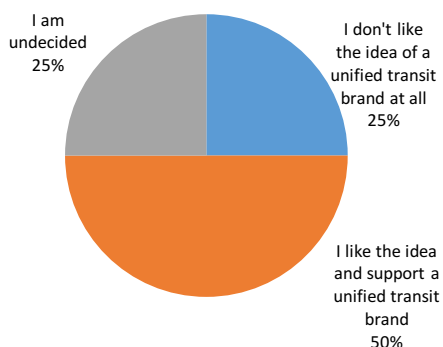
*Evaluation* – Assess impact through customer communications.



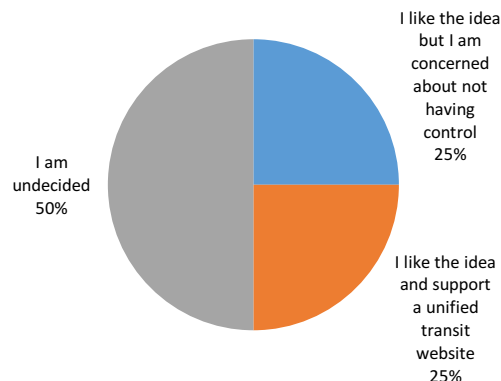
## Section 5 | Unified Branding Plan

In an effort to determine support for a regional brand and regional transit website, Humboldt County transit operators were invited to provide their input. Five operators responded to the survey. Results were mixed.

### Support for a Regional Transit Brand



### Support for a Regional Transit Website



Based on the responses received, some of these concerns were clearly defined.

- Rebranding is expensive and time-consuming.
- Our brand is representative of our community and we don't want to change.
- We don't want to confuse our customers.
- We just spent a lot of money updating our website, and we don't want that effort to go to waste.
- Who is going to keep the website information up to date?

But there were clear benefits defined as well.

- It will make it easier to find information about transit in Humboldt County.
- There would be a single point of access for visitors and those who are not familiar with the area or transit programs.
- It presents transit as a network rather than just a single system.



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What do we mean by a "unified brand"?	
What it is:	What it isn't:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representative of transit operators throughout the county</li> <li>• Makes Humboldt County transit operators easy to identify</li> <li>• Simplifies access to information</li> <li>• Expands awareness of transit operators throughout the region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formation of a single consolidated transit agency</li> <li>• An automatic loss of individuality/local identity</li> <li>• A complete rebranding at a significant cost</li> <li>• A cause of confusion for current customers</li> <li>• A lot of extra work for transit operators</li> </ul>

HCAOG and the transit operators were presented with four website and branding scenarios, ranging from coordination to full brand consolidation. Here, "GoHumboldt" is used as the example of a regional brand.

Unified Regional Transit Website	Unified Regional Brand
<p><b>Scenario 1:</b> All local websites include "Part of the GoHumboldt Regional Network" and have links to all other services in the county.</p> <p><b>How it works:</b> Modest changes are made by each individual operator. There is no additional stand-alone website.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> HTA adds links to routes operated by KT-Net and Blue Lake Rancheria to the main page of its website. KT-Net includes links to all transit systems in the county on its web page.</p> <p><i>Works with Branding Scenarios #1 and 2.</i></p>	<p><b>Scenario 1:</b> All operators add "Part of the GoHumboldt Regional Network" to all vehicles and marketing collateral. Operators retain their own identities.</p> <p><b>How it works:</b> Business as usual. Operators will simply add a decal to their buses and some additional language to online and print marketing and information materials.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Redwood Transit continues to be operated by HTA using existing vehicles. A decal is added to the bus and extra wording to marketing collateral.</p> <p><i>Works with Website Scenarios #1, 2, and 3.</i></p>
<p><b>Scenario 2:</b> HTA website incorporates data from all services into its trip planner and includes links to other operators. Would remain under the control of HTA. Could be identified by a regional brand name even if managed by HTA.</p> <p><b>How it works:</b> HTA takes responsibility for adding KT-Net and Blue Lake Rancheria to its trip planner and continues operating its website as usual. Each operator would continue to operate its own individual website. Links to all operator websites are included on HTA.org.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> KT-Net and Blue Lake Rancheria schedule information is incorporated into HTA's trip planner. All sites add links to other operators as in Scenario #1.</p> <p><i>Works with Branding Scenarios #1, 2, and 3.</i></p>	<p><b>Scenario 2:</b> All operators add "Part of the GoHumboldt Regional Network" to all vehicles and marketing collateral and coordinate schedules to better facilitate connectivity for riders. Operators retain their own identities.</p> <p><b>How it works:</b> Pretty much the same as Scenario 1, except that additional regional planning will be needed to better coordinate schedules at connection points to enhance regional connectivity.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Service to Arcata Transit Center provided by Redwood Transit System and A&amp;MRTS is coordinated so long waits are not required for connecting passengers.</p> <p><i>Works with Website Scenarios #1, 2, and 3.</i></p>



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## Regional Transit Marketing and Unified Branding Plan

Unified Regional Transit Website	Unified Regional Brand
<p><b>Scenario 3:</b> One regional website includes service information from all operators, replacing individual operator websites. Operators retain individual identities.</p> <p><b>How it works:</b> One entity manages all transit information for operators throughout the county via one website. This could be an expansion of the HTA website. Operators do not continue to operate their individual transit websites but do retain individual identities.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> HTA.org becomes the source for all transit trip planning and service information in the county. Links are provided to neighboring operators outside the county.</p> <p><i>Works with Branding Scenarios #1, 2, and 3.</i></p>	<p><b>Scenario 3:</b> All operators are absorbed into a single regional brand but retain their own identities. Operators coordinate schedules to better facilitate connectivity for riders. Route naming is unified. Individual routes may be provided by specific operators.</p> <p><b>How it works:</b> All transit service is provided under a new brand, such as Humboldt Transit. Routes are renamed to offer consistency across the county. Individual operators continue to provide specific routes.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Route 20: Arcata North is operated by Arcata &amp; Mad River Transit System. Route 50: Hoopa-Willow Creek is operated by KT-Net. Route 72: Tish Non Village is operated by Redwood Transit System.</p> <p><i>Works with Website Scenarios #2 and 3.</i></p>
<p><b>Scenario 4:</b> One regional website represents a single regional transit system. Operators do not retain individual identities.</p> <p><b>How it works:</b> All transit is provided under a single unified brand, and therefore information is provided on one single website. In practice, this is very similar to Scenario 3, but it represents a unified brand rather than individual operators.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> A new stand-alone website with a trip planner is created to reflect the new unified brand. Links are provided to neighboring operators outside the county.</p> <p><i>Works with Branding Scenario #4 only.</i></p>	<p><b>Scenario 4:</b> All operators are absorbed into a single regional brand, which includes a single “look” (logo, color scheme, etc.) for vehicles, route names, etc. Operators do not retain individual identities.</p> <p><b>How it works:</b> Over time, existing vehicles will be replaced by uniform vehicles with the same color scheme and branding. Routes are renamed to offer consistency across the county. All transit will be provided under the new brand, with no differentiation regarding who is operating which route.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> A new brand entity (such as Humboldt Transit) operates all routes using vehicles with a consistent look.</p> <p><i>Works with Website Scenario #4 only.</i></p> <p><i>(Note: Whether this requires operational consolidation is outside the scope of this marketing plan.)</i></p>

Upon review of the scenarios, HCAOG and the transit operators opted to move toward Scenario 3 for both the website and branding, with potential to move to Scenario 4 at some point in the future. Therefore, the balance of this chapter focuses on implementation of Scenario 3 as well as proposes several options for new branding.



### Implementation Plan

The focus of Scenario 3 is to provide a unified look and information resource while still maintaining the individual identities of the various Humboldt County transit programs. As such, the following steps are proposed for implementation of the unified regional website and the unified brand.

### Unified Regional Brand

It may be desired to phase in full incorporation of the unified regional brand given the extent of some of the implementation activities. For example, adding the unified brand to existing transit vehicles may be relatively straightforward and simple to accomplish in Phase One, while reprinting all collateral to reflect new route names and the unified brand might be undertaken as part of Phase Two.

1. **Selection of a regional brand (name, logo, tagline, colors, etc.).** Several proposed brand identities are provided later in this section.
2. **Addition of regional brand to all transit vehicles.** We envision this being accomplished using a stand-alone decal, which can be applied to the vehicles without requiring a change to their existing branding.
3. **Publication of all printed information, bus stop signage/information, marketing collateral, websites/online resources, etc. under the regional brand.** This will likely require extensive revisions to existing collateral, as well as updates to online information, new bus stop signs, fare media/passes, etc.
4. **Renaming of routes using consistent naming conventions throughout the county.** This activity would provide descriptive names for each route, which would all be offered under the regional brand. The individual transit operators would be the operators of the routes. Recommended nomenclature for the routes are as follows:
  - Route 10: Mainline (operated by Redwood Transit System)
  - Route 20: Willow Creek Intercity (operated by Humboldt Transit Authority)
  - Route 22: Blue Lake (operated by Blue Lake Rancheria Transit System)
  - Route 24: Weitchpec-Hoopa-Willow Creek (operated by KT Net)
  - Route 30: Arcata North (operated by A&MRTS)
  - Route 32: Arcata South (operated by A&MRTS)
  - Route 34: Arcata Saturday (operated by A&MRTS)
  - Route 40: Eureka Central (operated by Eureka Transit Service)
  - Route 42: Eureka East (operated by Eureka Transit Service)
  - Route 44: Eureka West (operated by Eureka Transit Service)
  - Route 46: Eureka North (operated by Eureka Transit Service)
  - Route 48: Eureka Crosstown Saturday (operated by Eureka Transit Service)
  - Route 50: Southern Humboldt Intercity (operated by Humboldt Transit Authority)
  - Route 52: Southern Humboldt Local (operated by Humboldt Transit Authority)
  - Route 54: Tish Non Village (operated by Humboldt Transit Authority)
5. **Coordination of schedules to facilitate connectivity between operators.** As a final step, schedule coordination would ensure meaningful connections for regional travel. For example, for a rider traveling from Eureka to the airport, there is anywhere from a 12- to 43-minute gap between



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arriving at the ETS Green Route stop at 4<sup>th</sup> and D (at one minute after the hour) and the arrival of the northbound RTS Mainline bus with service to the airport. Such a long wait time can make use of public transit much less appealing, and many would choose to drive if the option were available. Coordinating local schedules to act as “feeders” to the regional services to the greatest extent possible can greatly enhance the attractiveness of the regional network.

#### Unified Regional Website

Given recent updates to the HTA website, much of the work has already been done. However, there are a couple of items which are necessary in order to fully achieve Scenario 3.

1. **Integration of all transit information into the existing HTA website.** Currently, the HTA website includes schedule information for all operators except KT Net and Fortuna Transit. In addition, Blue Lake Rancheria simply redirects to the external BLRTS page. The HTA website should, at a minimum, list KT Net and Fortuna Transit on the right side of the page under “Choose a Service Provider.” Ideally the pages would then have the schedule information right there, but at the very least should redirect to an external page (as it does for Blue Lake Rancheria). While Fortuna Transit is a Dial-A-Ride service, it should still be listed and can display the same type of information currently included on the Dial-A-Ride page.
2. **Elimination of stand-alone transit information pages, except as referrers to the HTA website.** This would require the elimination of stand-alone information pages such as Blue Lake Rancheria, KT Net, and Fortuna Transit. All transit information would be maintained on the unified regional HTA website.

#### Unified Regional Branding

In developing potential unified regional brands, we considered themes and elements that would be representative of Humboldt County as a whole. The primary goal was to develop several brand identities that would convey movement, motion, or progress while being characteristic of the region. Four concepts are presented on the following pages.



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### Concept #1: Go Humboldt

Go Humboldt, which was used throughout the branding discussion phase of this marketing plan, is the simplest of the concepts. It reinforces motion using the word “go” and is consistent with branding for the region’s airport, Fly Humboldt. The logo features a bus image against a background of evergreen trees. The yellow border sets off the image.



### Concept #2: The 'Boldt

The 'Boldt plays on the name Humboldt using lightning bolt imagery. The lightning bolt implies swiftness and motion, which is beneficial for a transit system. In the logo design shown, the lightning bolt pierces the O. The yellow lightning bolt contrasts with the green text for high contrast imagery. This logo would also be very effectively reproduced in grayscale.



### Concept #3: Ride Humboldt

The Ride Humboldt concept is very similar in nature to Concept #1, but focuses on the rider aspect of using transit. The logo design puts the rider on the bus traveling through Humboldt County. The shape evokes a patch that one might find on a jacket or in a souvenir shop. The color palette features blues and greens, reflective of the natural environment.



### Concept #4: Bigfoot Transit

Finally, Concept #4 takes a more whimsical tone as it plays off the mythology of Bigfoot. Rather than focusing on an image of Sasquatch, we elected to focus on the “foot” element of Bigfoot for the Bigfoot Transit logo. Two logo options are provided below. The first features a more realistic footprint image and a natural dark green and brown color palette. The second has a more stylized foot which is adorned with forest and river elements. Both designs could be effectively portrayed in grayscale as well.

