Board of Directors
NATALIE ARROYO, CHAIR
County of Humboldt
DEBRA GARNES, VICE CHAIR
City of Rio Dell
LESLIE CASTELLANO
City of Eureka
ALEX STILLMAN
City of Arcata
TAMI TRENT
City of Fortuna
JACK TUTTLE
City of Trinidad
MIKE WILSON
County of Humboldt

HTA Board Staff
KATIE COLLENDER
General Manager
CONSUELO ESPINOSA
Secretary to the Board

Humboldt Transit Authority
Governing Board of Directors
North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District
Conference Room - 707 L St, Eureka, CA 95501
AGENDA

Public Participation In-Person or Teleconference
Microsoft Teams
Join on your computer, mobile app or room device
Join the meeting now
Meeting ID: 234 271 049 372 3
Passcode: RZ37YT78

November 9, 2026 | 9:30 AM | Special Board Meeting

A. Call Meeting to Order
B. Roll Call & Introductions
C. Staff Communications
D. Community Members Communication
Members of the community are invited to comment on items or issues not on the agenda.

E. Special Presentation
1. Ride Humboldt Flex Presentation
Staff: Katie Collender
Staff will present an overview of the Flex program.
Action Recommended: Discuss as necessary.

F. Consent Calendar
By motion, recommend the approval of the following items considered to be routine and enacted in one motion. Items may be removed from the consent calendar upon request and will be heard separately.
1. Minutes from October 7, 2026, Regular Board Meeting Page 03
Staff: Consuelo Espinosa
Staff have prepared the minutes from the prior meeting.
Action Recommended: Approve Minutes.
2. FY 25/26 Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) Cycle B Page 12
Staff: Jerome Qiriazi
This year there were two cycles for the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program funding. The second cycle, "B," has been released and staff plan to apply for no-cost rides and passes, and marketing of transit services.
Action Recommended: Adopt resolution 26-16 authorizing application for LCTOP Cycle B grant funds and authorize the General Manager to execute all required documents of the LCTOP grant.

G. Item Removed from Consent Calendar

H. Reports

1. Caltrans District 1 Report
   Caltrans Staff: Saskia Rymer-Burnett & Tasha Ahlstrand
   No action required.
2. HTA Projects Update — Page 15
   Staff: Seth Beres
   No action required.

I. New Business

1. Cal Poly Service — Page 16
   Staff: Katie Collender
   Cal Poly is requesting to continue late night service for Arcata, and the Board should consider that this will result in a shift in staff priorities and delay the 30 minute RTS implementation timeline.
   Action Recommended: Discuss and direct staff as necessary.
2. Amtrak Thruway Study — Page ??
   Staff: Katie Collender
   Amtrak is conducting a Thruway Study and has been working with HTA staff to make edits to the original report to more accurately reflect discussions between the entities.
   Actions Recommended: Discuss and direct staff as necessary.

J. Board Communications

K. Closed Session

1. Public Comment
2. The Board will meet in closed session pursuant to Government Code section 54957(b)(1), performance evaluation, General Manager.
3. Report out of closed session

L. Adjournment

Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA) is committed to a policy of non-discrimination pursuant to the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Persons who require special accommodations, accessible seating, or documentation in alternative formats under the American with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact HTA at least two days prior to the meeting.

Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA) se compromete a una norma de no discriminación de acuerdo a los requisitos del Artículo VI del Acto Derechos Civiles de 1964. Las personas que requieren alojamiento especial de acuerdo con el American with Disabilities Act, o personas que requieren servicios de traducción (libre de cargo) deben comunicarse con HTA al menos dos días antes de la reunión.

Humboldt Transit Authority
Regular Board Meeting

October 7, 2026, 9:00 a.m.
North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District
Conference Room
707 L Street, Eureka, CA 95501

Present
Board Chair Natalie Arroyo – County of Humboldt
Alex Stillman - City of Arcata
Councilmember Jack Tuttle - City of Trinidad
Councilmember Tami Trent – City of Fortuna
Councilmember Leslie Castellano - City of Eureka

Absent
Supervisor Mike Wilson – County of Humboldt

Staff
Katie Collender – General Manager
Consuelo Espinosa- Secretary to the Board
Carolann Aggeler – Finance Manager
Seth Beres – Project Manager

Teams
Board Vice Chair Debra Garnes – City of Rio Dell
Nancy Diamond - HTA Legal Counsel

1, CALL TO ORDER

- Chairperson Natalie Aroyo called the meeting to order at 9:04 am.

2. Staff Communications

General Manager Katie Collender gave the board an update:

- Hydrogen fuel and mobile fueling completed through an emergency procurement with GTL Leasing; most buses refueled to ~90% enabling short-run service (shortest RTS run ~100 miles). Tanks hoped to reach ~300 miles (about 3 days per fill). Temporary on-demand fueling contract in place with GTL; longer-term, lower-cost sources in Central Valley expected soon.
- Driver training for hydrogen buses underway (several drivers today and more tomorrow).
- LINC Housing soon to issue resident bus passes; local "live/work" preference discussed for selection.
- Service cuts outside HTA: Mendocino Transit and Redwood Coast Transit reduced service; North State Express Saturday leg from Crescent City ends Oct 31.
- Staff recommended moving printed board packets to email distribution (sent Friday) and having printed copies available at the meeting instead of mailing paper packets.

3. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

Joanne McGarry

- Hydrogen buses and exhaust emissions: Shared concerns about excessive exhaust fumes, noise, and rattling on an older bus while traveling to Blue Lake for a flood-related event. Expressed support for transitioning to buses without exhaust emissions.

- Expanded bus service in South Arcata: Requested bus service south of Samoa Boulevard, particularly along G Street, including evening service. Suggested that Arcata Transit and RTS consider rerouting buses to serve this area.
- Transportation safety and alcohol service: Emphasized the importance of providing transportation options for people who should not drive after drinking, while supporting local small businesses.
- Flood preparedness and passenger safety: Encouraged greater public awareness during heavy rain and flooding. Urged transit agencies to ensure bus drivers are prepared to operate safely during severe weather and that passengers can travel as safely as possible.

Colin Fiske — Public Comment

- Impact of Saturday Route 20 cuts: Emphasized that RCTA Route 20 reductions affect not only passengers traveling between Crescent City and Eureka, but also Humboldt County residents traveling from Orick, Trinidad, and other communities to Arcata and Eureka.
- Connections with Humboldt Transit: Noted that Route 20 supplements RTS service and provides transportation options in areas farther north that RTS does not serve.
- Long-term funding sustainability: Warned that the service reductions could foreshadow similar challenges for Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA) in the coming years if additional funding is not secured.
- Advocacy for sustainable funding: Encouraged continued advocacy for more robust, long-term transit funding at the state or local level to avoid a future funding shortfall.
- Acknowledgment of Measure O: Expressed appreciation for the county's Measure O funding while emphasizing the need to address long-term budget challenges and establish a sustainable funding source.

4. Special Presentations

Public Hearing – Unmet Transit Needs – Stevie Luther, HCAOG

- At 9:34 a.m., the Chair opened the public hearing on Unmet Transit Needs and invited public comment.
- Public comments were received from members of the public and the Board regarding transit service frequency, evening and Sunday service, microtransit, and other transportation needs.
- At 9:47 a.m., the Chair closed the public hearing.

Stevie Luther presented an overview of the annual Unmet Transit Needs process, regional transit ridership, available services, and the evaluation of requests for additional transit service. He reported that regional ridership had recovered to pre-pandemic levels, approaching 800,000 rides. The presentation highlighted the Ride Humboldt program, the consolidated $2 fare, North State Express, and Ride Humboldt Flex microtransit service.

Stevie explained that the annual process evaluates unmet transit needs and whether they are reasonable to meet, considering projected ridership, operating costs, farebox recovery, and sustainable funding. Approximately $6 million in Local Transportation Fund (LTF) revenue was received regionally in the prior year, with approximately $5 million allocated to cities and counties after administrative costs. Approximately $170,000 was allocated to non-transit purposes. Common requests included more frequent service, earlier and later service hours, and expanded Sunday service. Public comments and survey responses help prioritize potential service improvements when funding becomes available. The survey remains open through December 31.

Public Comment

- **Joanne McGarry** commented on the difficulty of attending evening events in Trinidad and returning home by bus. She encouraged expanded evening service and noted that the Regional Climate Action Plan could provide opportunities to support transit improvements and funding.
- **Colin Fiske** reported that increased service frequency was the most common request identified through CRTP outreach to bus riders. He noted that limited evening and Sunday service discourages transit use, including among Cal Poly Humboldt students who may ultimately purchase vehicles due to service limitations.
- **The Board Chair** shared an example of an emergency room patient who was unable to use a bus pass to return home after discharge because bus service was unavailable on Sunday, highlighting the need for Sunday transportation options.
- **Chair Natalie Arroyo** encouraged increased outreach to youth regarding transit services, noting that young people have expressed a need for more convenient bus access.

Board Comments and Discussion

- **Microtransit:** Natalie Arroyo asked whether Ferndale could potentially use Local Transportation Fund revenue to pilot microtransit service. The possibility was raised for consideration.
- **Ride Humboldt Flex:** Board members discussed the service's operating hours, public outreach, and potential to address transportation gaps. The discussion indicated weekday service hours of 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and Saturday hours of 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.
- **Regional service coverage:** Members discussed limited late-evening connections to Trinidad and noted that an RTS service overhaul was underway, subject to driver availability and implementation requirements.
- **Ridership reporting:** Board members discussed differences between regional ridership totals and RTS-specific figures, including the treatment of campus shuttle rides in reported totals.
- **Transit access and safety:** Members raised concerns about tight turning areas, parked vehicles, red curb zones, and crosswalk placement affecting bus operations, particularly in Arcata and near the university. Discussion emphasized continued coordination with local jurisdictions to improve transit access and safety.
- **Public participation:** The Board encouraged continued public input through the unmet transit needs survey, which remains open through December 31.

4. Consent Calendar

- Item 1 – September 2, 2026, Regular Board Meeting Minutes: Approved the minutes from the September 2, 2026, Regular Board Meeting.
- Item 2 – Rejection of Claim: Approved directing staff to send a notice of rejection to Ezia White regarding a claim filed against Humboldt Transit Authority.
- Item 3 – Project 24-01, Maintenance Bay Retrofit Project: Pulled from the Consent Calendar for separate discussion. The Board discussed bid responsiveness and the recommendation to award the contract to Adams Commercial General Contracting Inc. for $772,835, waive inconsequential bid irregularities, authorize the General Manager to execute the contract, and approve a $150,000 contingency budget.
- Item 4 – Side Letter with AFSCME for Shop Employee Bid Process: Approved the side letter establishing a seniority-based process for shop employees to bid on shifts and authorized the General Manager to sign the agreement.

Consent Calendar – Items 1, 2, and 4

- The Board considered Consent Calendar Items 1, 2, and 4. No public comments were received.
    - Motion by Councilmember Leslie Castellano and second by Councilmember Alex Stillman to approve the Consent Calendar Items 1, 2, and 4, with Item 3, Project 24-01 Maintenance Bay Retrofit Project Invitation for Bid; Response to Submitted Bids, pulled for separate discussion.

Motion Approved Unanimously.

5.Items Removed From Consent Calendar

Consent Calendar – Item 3: Award of Maintenance Space Project

- Chair Natalie Arroyo explained that staff reviewed the bids received and, with assistance from legal counsel, determined that the lowest bid submitted by McKeever was non-responsive due to significant irregularities in the bid bond documentation.
- Legal counsel clarified that the bid bond deficiencies included conflicting bond documents and failure to meet required bid security provisions, which could not be resolved based on the submitted bid.
- The second-lowest bid, submitted by Adams Commercial/ACGC, was determined to be responsive, with minor clerical irregularities that could be waived by the Board. Staff confirmed that the bidder was registered with the Department of Industrial Relations and that the bid bond met HTA's requirements.
- The Board discussed the option of rejecting all bids and soliciting new bids. Staff noted that doing so would delay the project and require adjustments to the project schedule.
- No public comments were received in the room or online.

    - Motion by Councilmember Alex Stillman and second by Councilmember Tami Trent to approve the staff recommendation to waive inconsequential irregularities in the ACGC bid and proceed with the award recommendation.

Motion Approved Unanimously.

6. Reports

CalTrans District 1 – Saskia Rymer-Burnett

- District Transit Plan: The draft plan was received from Caltrans headquarters on September 28, 2026, and is undergoing internal review by District 1 units. Comments are due October 16, 2026. The public review period is scheduled for November 16 through December 14, 2026.
- Sustainable Transportation Planning Grants: Applications for Fiscal Year 2027–28 grants are due October 9, 2026. Caltrans anticipates increased competition due to a higher number of applications.
- Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) Grants: Grant award announcements have been delayed from September 17 to late October. The Mendocino Transit Authority (MTA) is awaiting the outcome of its application for a mixed-use transit center in Ukiah.
- RCTA Route 20 Saturday Service: The Redwood Coast Transit Authority (RCTA) Board voted on September 28 to discontinue Saturday service on Route 20, part of the North State Express, effective October 31, 2026. Weekday service will continue. The estimated annual savings are $220,000, primarily due to high fuel, driver, and dispatch costs. RCTA is considering potential alternatives to the service reduction.
- UCLA Transit and Homelessness Research Project: Caltrans shared an opportunity for transit agencies, including Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA), to participate in a UCLA Institute of Transportation Studies research project examining homelessness on public transit, including the

frequency and reasons for transit use as temporary shelter and potential support interventions. HTA staff were invited to indicate interest in participating.

No Public Comment in the room or online.

7. HTA Projects Update – Seth Beres:

HTA's Project Manager provided an update:

- Hydrogen Fueling Infrastructure: The pre-construction bid walk was held September 15 and was well attended. Bids are under review. The project schedule has been delayed, with substantial completion currently projected for March 2027.
- Temporary Hydrogen Fueling: Most hydrogen buses have been fueled to approximately 90%, allowing shorter service runs, training, and performance testing to resume.
- Hydrogen Production Buses: All 10 production buses have been delivered. Remaining inspections and performance testing are resuming as fuel becomes available.
- Maintenance Bay Retrofit: Four bids were received. Following Board approval of the staff recommendation, the notice to proceed was expected to begin October 14.
- Eureka Transit Center: Demolition began in September. Work is continuing on earthwork and base compaction. Staff are coordinating with the architect and Danco on remaining interior design details.
- W Street Facility Improvements: Work resumed following adjustments to incorporate demolition work associated with the maintenance bay project. The improvements will provide additional space for bus circulation and parking and are expected to be completed by the end of October, ahead of hydrogen station construction mobilization.
- Next-Generation Facility: Staff are completing a second review of the feasibility study before submitting it to the architect.
- Office Remodel and Cedar House: Both projects are substantially complete, with minor remaining items being addressed with the general contractor.

Board Discussion: Board members asked about the cost of temporary hydrogen fueling compared with the planned permanent fueling station. Staff explained that temporary fueling costs are incorporated into the overall capital project budget, making a direct cost comparison difficult. Board members also commented favorably on the W Street facility improvements and bus parking layout. Staff explained that buses will be staged according to their assigned runs and departure order to improve site efficiency and allow buses to exit forward through the new gate.

No Public Comments in the room or online.

8. Draft July 2026 Statistics and Financial Statements for all Systems Operated by HTA– Carolann Aggeler, HTA Finance Manager

Stats & Financial Statements – Carolann Aggeler, HTA Finance Manager

- Report Update: Added subsidy per passenger to line 35 of the report, consistent with the Transit Development Plan. Additional information will be provided in future reports.
- Overall Ridership: July ridership was 5% lower than July of the prior year, when the entire month offered free fares.
- North State Express Route 101: Ridership reached a record high for the second consecutive month and was 13% higher than July of the prior year.

- North State Express Route 299 to Willow Creek: Ridership increased 42% compared with July of the prior year. The additional run introduced the previous July will allow for more comparable year-over-year comparisons going forward.
- Diesel Fuel Costs: In response to a Board question, staff confirmed that HTA purchases diesel at market prices and experienced a substantial increase in fuel costs, affecting the budget.
- Jack Pass and Campus Shuttle Ridership: Staff clarified that July Jack Pass figures reflected summer passes used on regular service. The campus shuttle between the dorms and library did not operate in July. Staff estimated approximately 100,000 rides on the short, frequent shuttle route over the year.
- College of the Redwoods Service: The service was included in the report in preparation for the new fiscal year but did not begin until September.

Board Discussion: Board members discussed the impact of diesel price increases on HTA's budget, the relationship between free-fare promotions and ridership, and ridership reporting for the Jack Pass program and campus shuttle. Staff noted that the prior year's free-fare month appeared to contribute to higher ridership and that the North State Express routes continued to show strong use.

No Public Comments in the room or online.

9. New Business

Reschedule November Board Meeting – Katie Collender, General Manager

- Meeting Reschedule: Due a conflict with the regular meeting date, the Board discussed rescheduling the regularly scheduled November 4, 2026, meeting.
- Proposed Date and Time: Board members and staff discussed availability and identified Monday, November 9, 2026, at 9:30 a.m. for a special meeting.

Board Discussion: Board members discussed scheduling conflicts and staff availability for the proposed November 9 meeting. The Board considered adjusting the meeting time to 9:30 a.m. to accommodate members' travel schedules and confirmed that the proposed date and time worked for the majority.

Public Comment was received regarding the proposed meeting change. A member of the public supported the change and suggested posting meeting notices on HTA buses so riders could learn about upcoming meetings and participate in person or remotely. No additional online comments were noted in the transcript.

- Motion by Councilmember Leslie Castellano and second by Councilmember Alex Stillman to cancel the November 4, 2026, meeting and direct staff to schedule and publicly notice a special meeting for November 9, 2026, at 9:30 a.m.

Motion Approved Unanimously.

10. Discussion on Transportation Options at the California Redwood Coast-Humboldt County Airport (ACV)

Presenters: Katie Collender, HTA General Manager, and Justin Hoffman, Aviation Director, California Redwood Coast–Humboldt County Airport

- Transit Information Banner: HTA is preparing a 4-by-6-foot banner highlighting Ride Humboldt transit options, including Eureka Transit Service (ETS), Arcata and Mad River Transit System (AMRTS), regional

routes, and Ride Humboldt Flex. The banner will include QR codes linking passengers to additional information.
- Airport Coordination: Katie Collender reported that HTA staff are working with Aviation Director Justin Hoffman to identify a suitable location for the banner and explore additional wayfinding opportunities to promote transit service to and from the airport.
- Transit Service Promotion: The collaboration aims to increase awareness of public transit as a transportation option for airport travelers. Weekday bus service to the airport operates approximately 15 times daily.
- Digital Signage and Real-Time Information: Board members discussed displaying transit information on airport baggage claim screens, including upcoming northbound and southbound bus departures. Staff noted that real-time signage could be explored as part of broader transit technology improvements.
- Schedule Information and QR Codes: Board members suggested providing a QR code linking directly to the airport bus schedule and considering additional signage or printed materials to help travelers plan trips.
- Ongoing Outreach: Airport staff expressed support for promoting HTA services and helping travelers understand available transportation options.

Board Discussion: Board members expressed support for strengthening coordination between HTA and the airport. Discussion focused on improving transit visibility through signage, baggage claim displays, real-time departure information, and direct links to airport bus schedules. Members emphasized the importance of accurately representing route stops and highlighting the frequency of service. Staff noted that the Ride Humboldt website and app provide trip-planning information, and the airport indicated its willingness to accommodate additional transit information and signage.

Public Comment: Two members of the public commented. One shared experience using transit to reach the airport and highlighted the need for consistent service connections and consideration of an additional stop near the developing business park, where pedestrian access is limited. Colin Fiske expressed support for the collaboration and encouraged HTA service to be promoted more prominently than private transportation options, citing public service, labor practices, and regional climate action goals.

11. Regional Climate Action Plan (RCAP) MOU

Katie Collender, HTA General Manager

- MOU Overview: Katie Collender reviewed the Regional Climate Action Plan MOU, noting that several participating jurisdictions had already adopted it. HTA's adoption would help maintain the timeline established by Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA).
- HTA Participation: Participation would make HTA a member of the joint powers authority (JPA) and allow it to participate in regional climate action committees. Collender clarified that HTA would not be required to provide funding under the MOU.
- Committee Representation: The Board discussed appointing an HTA representative to the Regional Climate Action Committee. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) would be represented by staff, while the regional committee would have a Board representative.
- Appointment Considerations: Members discussed whether to appoint a representative immediately or wait until early 2027, when Board membership and other representatives' roles might change. The Board agreed that an interim appointment would ensure HTA could participate if meetings began before the end of the year.
- Representative Selection: Alex Stillman volunteered to serve as HTA's representative on the Regional Climate Action Committee. The Board planned to revisit the appointment in early 2027 if needed.

Board Discussion: Board members expressed support for participating in the Regional Climate Action Plan and discussed the timing and flexibility of committee appointments. Members noted that representatives could be reassessed after the new year in response to potential changes in Board membership or overlapping committee responsibilities. The Board supported appointing an interim representative so HTA would be prepared to participate when meetings begin.

Public Comment: A public commenter expressed support for the formation of the Regional Climate Action Plan effort.

- Motion by Councilmember Leslie Castellano and second by Councilmember Jack Tuttle to adopt the Regional Climate Action Plan MOU and appoint Alex Stillman as HTA's representative to the Regional Climate Action Committee.

Motion Approved Unanimously.

12.Updates to the Personnel Policy, Allocation Plan, and Office Staffing

Katie Collender, HTA General Manager

- Personnel Policy Manual: HTA's General Manager presented revisions to the HTA Personnel Policy Manual for unrepresented employees following a CalPERS retirement audit review. The updated longevity language reflects CalPERS requirements by using percentage-based language rather than step references. The changes clarify existing policy and do not alter employee benefits or compensation.
- Deputy Operations Manager Position: Staff recommended adding a Deputy Operations Manager position to support the significant growth in transit service and driver staffing. The position would help manage daily operations, employee scheduling, call-outs, and operational coverage, reducing the workload currently concentrated in the Operations Manager role.
- Staffing Allocation Plan: The proposed allocation plan updates the authorized driver count to reflect 20 additional drivers already accounted for in the budget. The change corrects the staffing allocation table and does not authorize additional hiring or create a budgetary impact.
- Administrative Assistant I/II Job Description: Staff proposed revising the job description to reflect the position's current operational and dispatch-related responsibilities, including responding to service issues and coordinating detours. The updated description also addresses applicable Department of Transportation drug and alcohol testing requirements. No pay change was proposed.
- Office Staffing and Public Hours: Staff recommended reducing in-person walk-in office hours from five days to four days per week, likely closing the office to walk-ins on Fridays. The recommendation follows six months of monitoring, which showed relatively low daily visitor traffic. Phone service and transit operations would continue on the day the office is closed to walk-ins.
- Future Transit Center Staffing: Collender explained that the future Eureka Transit Center may provide an opportunity to share front-desk staffing and public information services with other agencies. Staff will continue exploring options as the transit center project advances.

Board Discussion: Board members discussed the proposed Deputy Operations Manager position and recognized the workload and operational responsibilities currently handled by the Operations Manager. Members expressed support for additional staffing capacity and discussed the potential impact of the future Eureka Transit Center on customer-facing services and staffing arrangements. The Board also discussed reducing walk-in office hours to four days per week, noting that other local agencies have adopted similar schedules. Staff clarified that the specific day of closure would remain at its discretion.

Public Comment: A member of the public expressed support for the proposed staffing changes, particularly the addition of a Deputy Operations Manager. The commenter also suggested establishing a volunteer group, tentatively called "Friends of Humboldt Transit Authority," to help support HTA's work and promote public transportation in the region. No online public comments were reported.

- Motion by Councilmember Leslie Castellano and second by Chair Natalie to approve the staff recommendations, including the updated HTA Personnel Policy Manual for Unrepresented Employees, Resolution 26-15 amending the Classification Plan and Salary Schedule, the new and updated job descriptions, and authorization for HTA to be open to walk-in visitors four days per week.

Motion Approved Unanimously.

13. Board Communications

- Car-Free Travel Experience: Chair Natalie Arroyo shared her experience participating in a week of traveling primarily without driving, using bicycling, walking, public transit, and microtransit. She noted that the experience highlighted the challenges faced by people without access to a personal vehicle and expressed interest in arranging a ride-along video to promote microtransit.
- Bicycle Access on Microtransit: Staff noted that HCOG had funded bicycle racks for microtransit vehicles, with plans to improve connections between bicycling and Ride Humboldt Flex service.
- Senior Medical Transportation: Chair Arroyo expressed concern that Fortuna would need to discontinue its once-monthly medical transportation trips for seniors to Eureka due to budget constraints.
- Trinidad Resilience Fair: Councilmember Jack Tuttle announced that Trinidad would host its first Resilience Fair on October 17, focused on emergency preparedness, including maintaining access to water and electricity during disruptions. He highlighted available bus connections to and from the event.
- Alternative Transportation and Tourism: Board members discussed the reported closure of a local taxi service due to rising insurance costs and suggested opportunities to promote bicycling and skateboarding through local tourism materials, including a possible bicycle-focused brochure.
- Walkability and Streetscape Engagement: Councilmember Leslie Castellano reported working with CRTP, HTA, the City of Eureka, and Eureka Main Street to gather community feedback on walkability, public art, cultural representation, pedestrian comfort, and the experience of public spaces. Planned activities included community walks, an online self-guided feedback portal, and a public meeting.
- Board Communications and Meeting Length: Board members discussed whether to retain Board Communications as a standing agenda item. Members agreed to keep it on the agenda while making reports brief and avoiding extended discussions or informal direction to staff. Potential future agenda items should be raised with the Chair or staff outside the meeting, with longer discussions scheduled as formal agenda items. Members noted that meetings have been running long and emphasized the importance of staying on topic.

14. Closed Session

- Public Comment: The Chair invited public comment on the closed-session item.
- The Board convened in closed session pursuant to California Government Code Section 54956.9(d) to discuss exposure to litigation involving one case.
- Report Out of Closed Session: The Board reconvened in open session at 12:07 p.m., nothing to report from closed session.

15. Meeting Adjourned at 12:08 p.m.

133 V Street
Eureka, CA 95501

A Public Entity Serving Humboldt County Since 1975

Office: (707) 443-0826
Fax: (707) 443-2032
www.hta.org

TO: Chair Arroyo
All Governing Board Members

FROM: Jerome Qiriazi, Transit Planner

DATE: November 9, 2026

SUBJECT: FY 25/26 Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) – Cycle B

LCTOP is one of several programs that are part of the Transit, Affordable Housing, and Sustainable Communities Program established by the California Legislature in 2014 by Senate Bill 862 (SB 862). The LCTOP was created to provide operating and capital assistance for transit agencies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve mobility, with a priority of serving disadvantaged communities. Approved projects in LCTOP will support new or expanded bus or rail services and intermodal transit facilities, and may offset equipment acquisition, fueling, maintenance and other costs to operate those services or facilities, with each project required to show a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

The 25/26 LCTOP was broken up into two application cycles to accommodate delays in revenue from the California Cap and Trade Program which funds the LCTOP. The Board approved staff's application to Cycle A in April of this year for $263,214 to support capital costs of HTA's transition to fuel cell electric buses. CalTrans opened applications for Cycle B in October and announced $168,640 in available funding. HTA staff is recommending applying for the full amount to fund the HTA 25/26 Reduced Fares and Ticket Vouchers project. This project will provide no-cost rides and passes, and continue implementation of our marketing campaign, to raise awareness of public transportation. This will support social service programs and give riders an opportunity to try transit at a reduced fare. Passes for social service programs will be coordinated and distributed in partnership with Tri-County Independent Living. Promotional campaigns such as free summer rides for youth will be funded.

Action Recommended: Adopt Resolution 26-16 authorizing application for LCTOP Cycle B grant funds and authorize the General Manager to execute all required documents of the LCTOP grant.

RESOLUTION No. 26-16

A RESOLUTION OF THE HUMBOLDT TRANSIT AUTHORITY GOVERNING BOARD OF DIRECTORS AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF THE CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES AND AUTHORIZED AGENT FORMS FOR THE LOW CARBON TRANSIT OPERATIONS PROGRAM (LCTOP) FOR THE FOLLOWING PROJECT(S):
HTA 25/26 Reduced Fares and Ticket Vouchers: $168,640

Recitals

WHEREAS, the Humboldt Transit Authority is an eligible project sponsor and may receive state funding from the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) for transit projects; and

WHEREAS, the statutes related to state-funded transit projects require a local or regional implementing agency to abide by various regulations; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 862 (2014) named the Department of Transportation (Department) as the administrative agency for the LCTOP; and

WHEREAS, the Department has developed guidelines for the purpose of administering and distributing LCTOP funds to eligible project sponsors (local agencies); and

WHEREAS, the Humboldt Transit Authority wishes to delegate authorization to execute these documents and any amendments thereto to Katie Collender, General Manager.

WHEREAS, the Humboldt Transit Authority wishes to implement the following LCTOP project(s),

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the Humboldt Transit Authority that the fund recipient agrees to comply with all conditions and requirements set forth in the Certification and Assurances and the Authorized Agent documents and applicable statutes, regulations and guidelines for all LCTOP funded transit projects.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Katie Collender, General Manager be authorized to execute all required documents of the LCTOP program and any Amendments thereto with the California Department of Transportation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the Humboldt Transit Authority that it hereby authorizes the submittal of the following project nomination and allocation request to the Department in FY2025-2026 LCTOP Cycle B funds:

Project Name: HTA 25/26 Reduced Fares and Ticket Vouchers

Project description: This project will support the purchase of free and reduced fares to promote ridership growth and to support local social service programs.

Amount of Cycle A LCTOP funds requested: $168,640

Benefits to Priority Populations: Yes

Amount of Priority Populations benefits: $168,640

Contributing Sponsors: Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG)

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Humboldt Transit Authority of Humboldt County, State of California, at a regular meeting of said Board Meeting held on the 9th Day of November 2026 by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSENT:

Chair of the HTA Governing Board of Directors

ATTEST:

HTA Secretary to the Board

133 V Street
Eureka, CA 95501

RIDE THE BUS
HTA
HUMBOLDT TRANSIT AUTHORITY
A Public Entity Serving Humboldt County Since 1975

Office: (707) 443-0826
Fax: (707) 443-2032
www.hta.org

TO: HTA Chair Natalie Arroyo
All Governing Board Members

FROM: Seth Beres, Project Manager

DATE: November 9, 2026

SUBJECT: Humboldt Transit Authority Project Updates

TIRCP Cycle 5 Grant

This project funds the purchase of fuel cell electric buses, construction of a hydrogen fueling station, upgrades to maintenance bays, and construction of an intermodal transit center.

- Hydrogen Fueling Infrastructure
  a. 90% design completion is pending Linde final vent stack design.
  b. Construction Mobilization is estimated early December.
  c. Draft critical path schedule now shows end of March 2027 for station completion.

- Temporary Fueling
  a. No update since emergency fuel procurement; staff awaiting further updates from Linde.

- Hydrogen Buses
  a. No update: all 11 buses are delivered and are undergoing post-delivery inspections and performance testing.

- Retrofit of Maintenance Bays
  a. Notice to Proceed was issued on 11/2; ACGC's anticipated completion date is April 2027

- Eureka Transit Center
  a. Earthwork is complete; currently installing underground utilities.
  b. HTA staff working with IT to develop AV and data design.
  c. Coordinating interior design elements with architect and general contractor.

Miscellaneous

- W Street Resurfacing
  a. Phase 1 to be completed this week.
  b. Substantial completion is expected by the end of the month
- Next Generation Facility Project: Architect working on 2nd round of HTA feedback
- Office Remodel and Cedar House Demolition Projects substantially complete.

No Action Required

133 V Street
Eureka, CA 95501

A Public Entity Serving Humboldt County Since 1975

Office: (707) 443-0826
Fax: (707) 443-2032
www.hta.org

TO: Chair Arroyo
All Governing Board Members

FROM: Katie Collender, General Manager

DATE: November 9, 2026

SUBJECT: Cal Poly Funded Arcata Services

HTA took over operations and management of the Arcata and Mad River Transit (A&MRTS) on July 1, 2025. Before this, the City of Arcata ran A&MRTS directly. Cal Poly Humboldt (CPH) has contracted with the City of Arcata for many years to allow students to use the service with their ID card (or "Jackpass"), as well as directly funding the only late-night service in Arcata from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm. Cal Poly added an additional route, the Green and Gold, in Fall 2023. The City of Arcata billed Cal Poly for the cost of running these services. When HTA took over A&MRTS, Cal Poly contracted with HTA directly at a set hourly rate to continue these services and added an additional dormitory shuttle. There were five more options to renew the annual agreement. A total of 1,028 riders used evening routes in the first quarter of 2026, 72% of which used their Cal Poly student ID. Cal Poly was paying for thirty-four (34) weeks of service, excluding summer and winter breaks.

On June 16, 2026, representatives from Cal Poly contacted HTA to set up a meeting to discuss their contract. At this meeting, HTA was notified that due to budgetary constraints, they were not able to continue paying for public transit services. At the HTA Board meeting on August 5, 2026, staff from CPH attended to request continuation of the dormitory shuttle. Board members explained that HTA, as a public transit provider funded by the Federal Transit Administration, is not authorized to provide this service as it cannot compete with private industry because it is subsidized. During this meeting, a compromise was reached where HTA agreed to continue the dormitory shuttle through December 19, 2026, so CPH could find an alternative provider. CPH agreed to fund one evening Arcata route during this time. After this meeting, HTA staff connected CPH with eight turnkey transit companies, which were given to CPH for follow-up.

Since then, CPH students have expressed their interest in seeing the university continue to put their student transportation fees towards public transit in Arcata. CPH is willing to fund public transit into the next semester and are going to provide HTA with their budget so service recommendations can be made appropriately. They have received bids for the dormitory shuttle and HTA is not able to provide this service after December 19, 2026.

The Board should consider this request for another semester of service against the other priority projects at HTA. The Redwood Transit Service 30-minute headway project will require 4 additional bids, so HTA will need to hire 4 additional drivers, and complete the training for the 5 Class C licensed new hires currently on staff. Preparing a driver takes for the road takes approximately three months from when they begin their Class B training. This includes classroom, behind the wheel, and route training.

Another challenge is that CPH has traditionally funded services with exact start and stop dates that coincide with their semesters, and do not include funding those resources during breaks. When HTA

133 V Street
Eureka, CA 95501

A Public Entity Serving Humboldt County Since 1975

Office: (707) 443-0826
Fax: (707) 443-2032
www.hta.org

increases staffing for a route, those drivers continue to be employed at HTA during these gaps in service, costing the agency without bringing in the revenue associated with that resource. The specialized timelines of these services and little advance notice of whether or not they will be requested, means that there are extensive administrative and resource costs associated with them. For the public, they cannot trust in their presence enough to commit to using them as their primary transportation, so consistency is greatly preferred when establishing a service. HTA has been billing using the average cost of service on an hourly basis only for service hours, which does not include these other costs and periods without service but still employing drivers and doing administrative work. That rate also excludes asset depreciation, which is paid for with grants and JPA member contributions. Cal Poly has indicated that they are willing to pay the full cost of service and support solutions to make the service more consistent.

Required Bids:

- Current bid requires 50 drivers to maintain basic service (not counting releasing some to train)
- RTS 30 minute headways without Arcata Late Night: 57
- RTS 30 minute headways with 1 Arcata Late Night: 59
    - Orange weekday evenings and Saturday evening
- RTS 30 minute headways with 2 Arcata Late Night: 60
    - Red and Gold weekday evenings, Orange Saturday evening

Current roster:

- 53 drivers, 48 Class B trained, 5 training or waiting to train
- Trying to train 3 drivers at a time
- Time to train a driver: 3 months

30 Minute RTS:

- Need to hire 4 more drivers
- Need to train 9 more drivers (including 5 hired and training or waiting to train and 4 unhired)
- Time to train: 9 drivers/3 drivers trained per cohort*3 months to train = 9 months until we can do RTS 30 minutes (assuming we don't lose anyone)

30 Minute with 1 Arcata Late Night:

- Need to hire 5 more drivers
- Need to train 10 more drivers (including 5 hired and training or waiting to train and 5 unhired)
- Time to train: 10 drivers/3 drivers trained per cohort*3 months to train rounded= 12 months until we can do RTS 30 minutes with Late Night (assuming we don't lose anyone)

30 Minute with 2 Arcata Late Night:

- Need to hire 6 more drivers
- Need to train 11 more drivers (including 5 hired and training or waiting to train and 6 unhired)
- Time to train: 11 drivers/3 drivers trained per cohort*3 months to train = 12 months until we can do RTS 30 minutes with Late Night (assuming we don't lose anyone)

Action Recommended: Discuss and direct staff as necessary.

133 V Street
Eureka, CA 95501

A Public Entity Serving Humboldt County Since 1975

Office: (707) 443-0826
Fax: (707) 443-2032
www.hta.org

TO: Chair Arroyo
All Governing Board Members

FROM: Katie Collender, General Manager

DATE: November 9, 2026

SUBJECT: Amtrak Thruway Bus Study

The San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJJPA) is conducting a study of the Gold Runner Amtrak Thruway Bus network to evaluate service efficiency, operating costs, ridership, and opportunities for improved regional connectivity. A draft study was released in September 2026, with final consideration by the SJJPA Board anticipated in November 2026. HTA staff have been in contact with SJJPA about making edits to the draft report that is published online, those edits will be included in the final draft and are attached here.

Route 7 is particularly important to Humboldt County, providing interregional bus service between Arcata and Martinez, with connections to Amtrak rail services and stops throughout the North Coast and North Bay. The route serves essential travel needs, including medical appointments, employment, education, and connections to the broader transportation network. It is distinct from HTA's North State Express 101, as the two services serve the public very differently. Route 7 has no transfers and makes swifter connections in a more comfortable coach, whereas NSE101 serves more communities and does so more slowly with more connections at a much lower price. The HTA Board authorized a letter of support to be sent from HTA to SJJPA outlining the importance of continuing Route 7 service to Arcata.

Amtrak has its own version of a farebox requirement, with revenue from train ticket connections being added to the bus ticket sales to recover costs. Route 7 is underperforming, although overall Amtrak is meeting its requirement. The long distance of the route requires an overnight stay by the driver and the low population density means that the cost per hour will not be recouped easily. There is a great equity benefit to this route, which is not reflected in revenue. HTA's NSE101 service has the same challenge, and it's farebox only recently passed 1% of fares divided by operating costs.

The SJJPA is interested in restructuring Route 7 to include a transfer in Ukiah, potentially with a HTA operating the northern segment between Ukiah and Arcata. This would eliminate the existing direct bus connection between Humboldt County and Martinez and impact passenger convenience, connection reliability, ticketing, and service coordination. HTA staff have communicated for many years that this potential solution is not viable in the near-term for HTA and should only be mentioned in the report as something to explore, rather than something that is likely to occur. For reasons listed above, it would be very unlikely that HTA operating the service would bring its revenue over costs to a place that would meet Amtrak's requirement for this route and it would encounter the same barriers as it has now.

133 V Street
Eureka, CA 95501

A Public Entity Serving Humboldt County Since 1975

Office: (707) 443-0826
Fax: (707) 443-2032
www.hta.org

From conversations with SJJPA, they are considering reducing the frequency of Route 7 service to Arcata and cuts are not on the table at this time. They may reduce the number of days per week it operates and/or consider seasonal schedule changes. HTA staff have communicated that continuing Route 7 is essential to our community and should not be discontinued.

Action Recommended: Discuss and direct staff as necessary.

Route 7: Martinez – Santa Rosa – Arcata/Cal Poly Humboldt

Route Overview

Route 7 is one of the longest routes in the Thruway Bus network, connecting Martinez with Santa Rosa and Arcata/Cal Poly Humboldt. With a 61% cost recovery ratio, the route's length and associated operating costs prevent it from achieving the established threshold for cost effectiveness, making it important to identify opportunities to improve efficiency while maintaining connectivity to key passenger markets.

Recommendations for this route focus on optimizing stopping patterns, evaluating stop locations to improve passenger and operator safety, and better aligning service with demand through seasonal or day-of-week service patterns. Particular attention should be given to the Highway 101 corridor, where targeted service modifications could streamline operations while continuing to serve the corridor's strong ridership demand.

Although this study focuses on near-term recommendations, SJJPA should investigate the potential for a longer-term partnership with Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA) for service north of Ukiah. This approach has the potential to improve operating efficiency while maintaining connectivity to destinations in Northern California.

Author
Deleted: continue

Author
Deleted: o evaluate

Author
Deleted: to truncate Route 7 at Ukiah, with HTA providing

Potential Improvements

Evaluate alternative service patterns

Route 7 is a prime opportunity to explore alternative service patterns to improve cost effectiveness based on ridership patterns.



Figure 27: *Route 7 Daily Ridership beyond Ukiah to Cal Poly[1] (June 2025-2026)*

Based on these trends, there is the opportunity to adjust weekly service patterns to focus higher levels of service on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays, with lower levels of service on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

Seasonal ridership trends indicate a potential to introduce or focus service to Arcata around peak periods. While additional round trips could be considered for these days, another option could involve a college express bus which would provide additional express service with limited stops including Santa Rosa, Ukiah, and Cal Poly Humboldt. This would reduce travel times while targeting higher performing stops with higher levels of service during peak periods. This strategy has been implemented to an extent in recent schedule modifications to Route 7, but can be further studied to align additional service with university-based peak travel periods.

Opportunities to tailor service to day-of-week and seasonal ridership patterns should continue to be explored, and planning work should be conducted in coordination with Amtrak, Caltrans, local and regional agencies, and universities along the route. This

Dan Leavitt
Deleted: For example, one round trip between Martinez and Arcata can be truncated to Santa Rosa on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays in order to right-size service to the level of demand. Alternatively, an entire round trip from Martinez to Arcata could be eliminated mid-week, and the potential for increased service on peak days (Friday and Sunday) could be explored. This may better allocate resources to the route based on observed demand in order to boost cost effectiveness.

Coordinate with HTA and Mendocino Transit Authority to investigate the potential for partnership with HTA between Ukiah and Arcata

While HTA is not ready or equipped to discuss a partnership with SJJPA in the near-term, SJJPA should explore the possibility for a future partnership with HTA as the operator for Gold Runner service between Ukiah and Arcata. This potential partnership would be supported with operational funding from Gold Runner (since it would be the Route 7 service between Ukiah and Cal Poly Humboldt), and other potential state, local, and regional funding sources.

SJJPA should coordinate with HTA and Mendocino Transit Authority to investigate whether a partnership model similar to that of Route 5 could work in the longer-term future for Route 7. This study would include determining if HTA could provide Route 7 service north of Ukiah while maintaining guaranteed connections to Thruway Bus service and integrated ticketing with Amtrak. This concept could potentially maintain connectivity to the full Route 7 corridor while reducing SJJPA's operational costs associated with the long route by introducing additional funding sources. This service could potentially be supported by a diversified mix of local, regional, and state funding sources, including additional support from Caltrans.

Author
Deleted: A longer-term goal for SJJPA should be to coordinate with HTA with the goal of truncating this route in Ukiah so HTA can solely run the service north from Ukiah.

Author
Deleted: what would be needed to enable

Author
Deleted: that

Author
Deleted: replacing

Author
Deleted: determine if

Author
Deleted: where

Recommendations

- Study feasibility of alternative service patterns based on day of week and seasonality.
- Study connectivity to SMART stations, including at Rohnert Park and the future Healdsburg Station.
- Study locations of stops along the route for safety and customer experience including Santa Rosa, Arcata, Sonoma, and connections to Sonoma County Airport.

Author
Deleted: and service reductions

- Initiate discussions with Caltrans, HTA, Mendocino Transit Authority, and Amtrak to study the potential for a partnership in the long-term with HTA for service between Ukiah and Cal Poly Humboldt.
- Partner with transportation agencies along the Highway 101 corridor to study whether targeted service modifications could streamline Route 7 operations in the North Bay Area while continuing to serve the corridor's strong ridership demand.
- Work with Cal Poly Humboldt, Sonoma State, and Santa Rosa Junior College to better promote the Gold Runner service to these educational institutions.
- Study the possibility for connecting service to Richmond, potentially through coordination with CJJPA

Author
Deleted: regarding what is needed for long-term service coordination between Ukiah and Cal Poly Humboldt, with the goal of coordinating with HTA, Caltrans

Author
Deleted: truncate route in

Author
Deleted: in the future

Tier 1

	1	Increase marketing and advertising for the Thruway Bus connection to LAX FlyAway at Union Station and see if LAX Flyaway could get into Amtrak ticketing.
	1	Partner with the LOSSAN Joint Powers Authority to have them assist in marketing the Route 1 connections to the Pacific Surfliner.
	1C	Work with UCLA to better promote the Gold Runner service to UCLA.
	3	Coordinate with BCAG, Amtrak, and Caltrans on implementing a potential partnership to have BCAG operate the Thruway Bus service between Sacramento and Chico in advance of BCAG's proposed start of service in early 2027. Coordinate service realignment to best serve the Stockton-Sacramento-Davis corridor.
	5	Monitor ridership and revenue performance and timed train connections. Continuous active marketing measures throughout FY 26/27 and track performance.
	18	Strongly encourage KART to secure a ticketing agreement with Amtrak and to operate the Hanford to Visalia service on Sundays and holidays.
	18	Update the Gold Runner website to include KART service between Hanford and Visalia.
		Develop partnerships with Metrolink and other transit providers to help promote

Author
Deleted: Study feasibility of alternative service patterns and service reductions based on day of week and seasonality.

Tier 2A

Move first recommendation to Tier 2B.

		promote Gold Runner service.
	7	Study feasibility of alternative service patterns based on day of week and seasonality.
	7	Work with Cal Poly Humboldt, Sonoma State, and Santa Rosa Junior College to better promote the Gold Runner service to these educational institutions.
	7	Initiate discussions with Caltrans and HTA regarding the possibility for long-term service coordination between Ukiah and Cal Poly Humboldt.
		Evaluate providing an additional round-trip between Santa Barbara and

Tier 2B

Move Route 7 recommendation from Tier 2A to Tier 2B: Study feasibility of alternative service patterns based on day of week and seasonality.

Tier 3

Tier 3	3	service connect to the new Valley Rail Midtown Sacramento Station once it is constructed.
	6	Coordinate with VTA to strengthen connections to Mineta San Jose International Airport.
	7	In coordination with HTA, Mendocino Transit Authority, Caltrans, and Amtrak, evaluate the potential for a partnership with HTA for service between Ukiah and Arcata.
	7	Study the possibility for connecting service to Richmond, potentially through

Author
Deleted: truncate route in Ukiah in the future