



**MENDOCINO**  
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### Grant Awarded for Rail-Trail Corridor Plan

Caltrans has awarded the Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) a \$90,000 grant to develop a "Rails with Trails Corridor Plan" for the Mendocino County railroad corridor, focusing on the urban areas from Hopland to Willits. It is contemplated that a trail would be built adjacent to the North Coast Railroad Authority (NCRA) railroad tracks.

MCOG board member and Ukiah council member Mari Rodin commented, "This grant will take us one step closer to solidifying trail connections with our neighbors in Marin, Sonoma, and Humboldt Counties to build a globally recognized and renowned trail system linking San Francisco to Eureka. Once completed, a rail with trail corridor through Mendocino County will bestow economic, public health, and environmental benefits all along the North Coast region."

This planning project will result in a prioritized list of rails-with-trails projects along the rail corridor, taking into account potential inter-regional connections with other bike and pedestrian routes. The intent is to eventually connect Mendocino County's trail with the leg to be built in Humboldt County. The trail would be developed in phases, following approvals and as funding becomes available.

The grant award dovetails with burgeoning efforts to make walking and biking a more common form of transportation. Ukiah city council member Mary Anne Landis is a member of Walk and Bike Mendocino's 2-Mile Challenge that will begin in April 2011, "This grant is a boon to our efforts to increase biking and walking in Ukiah and it will build on the tremendous amount of grassroots support for this effort that we are already enjoying."

MCOG has contributed \$10,000 of local funds to match Caltrans' planning grant. The project is expected to start in early 2011. There will be several opportunities for public comment.

Community Based Transportation Planning grants are awarded annually by Caltrans. This year, MCOG received the only such award in Mendocino County. This will be MCOG's sixth grant of this kind in as many years, having successfully completed four plans to date in Gualala, Laytonville, and Point Arena, with a fifth one in progress, to plan a coastal trail near Westport.

NCRA is a public agency created by the California legislature to restore and preserve rail service along the North Coast.

MCOG formed as a joint powers agreement in 1972, as mandated by state law, to disburse state and federal funds for transportation, to provide regional planning, and to serve as a regional forum. MCOG is overseen by a board consisting of two county supervisors, a countywide public appointee, and one council member from each of the four incorporated cities. For more information, call the MCOG office at 463-1859 or consult the agency's web site at [www.mendocinocog.org](http://www.mendocinocog.org).

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