

Great Redwood Trail Agency

A Regional Economic Driver for Northern California

Presented by: Elaine Hogan, Executive Director

Presented to: RISE Economic Development Finance Working Group

307

Total Trail Miles

231

Miles in GRTA Area

5

Counties Served

47+

Miles Already Open along GRT

About the Great Redwood Trail Agency

Who We Are & Our Mission

What is GRTA?

The Great Redwood Trail Agency (GRTA) is a state created public agency established by Senate Bill 69 in 2021, succeeding the North Coast Railroad Authority.

GRTA is governed by a Board of Directors representing Humboldt, Marin, Mendocino, and Sonoma Counties, plus a city representative.

Our mission is to plan, design, construct, operate, and maintain the Great Redwood Trail along the former North Coast Railroad right-of-way.

GRTA Service Area: Mendocino, Trinity & Humboldt Counties
Sonoma & Marin segments planned/built by SMART



Plan & Build

231 miles of multi-use trail from Mendocino to Humboldt Bay



Restore & Protect

Environmental enhancement, habitat restoration, and tribal partnership



Connect Communities

Linking 29 towns across 3 counties with trail access and economic opportunity

The Great Redwood Trail

A World-Class Rail-to-Trail Project

307 miles · San Francisco Bay to Humboldt Bay · One of the Longest Rail-Trails in the United States

Old-Growth Redwood Forests

Iconic ancient forests traversed by the trail through Humboldt County

Eel River Canyon

Dramatic Wild & Scenic river canyon — one of America's most scenic rail corridors

Oak Woodlands & Vineyards

Rolling hills through Mendocino wine country near Hopland and Ukiah

Humboldt Bay Shoreline

Coastal estuary habitat and waterfront communities at the trail's northern terminus

Trail Users



Hikers & Runners



Cyclists



Equestrians



Wheelchair Users



Backpackers



Kayakers

Trail Use & Design

Trail Types



Backcountry trail



Paved multi-use trail



Crushed stone multi-use trail



Trail Vision



A Transformational Economic Engine

Estimated Annual Economic Benefits — 231-Mile Trail Corridor

\$102.6M

TOTAL ANNUAL BENEFITS

60%

\$61.7M

Recreation, Tourism
& Retail Benefits

37%

\$38.5M

Health &
Mortality Benefits

3%

\$2.4M

Transportation
& Emissions Benefits

+ \$5.49M in Annual Tax Revenue for Local, Regional & State Jurisdictions (Sales & Transient Occupancy Tax)

Recreation, Tourism & Retail Benefits

60% of Total Annual Economic Benefits

Trail Demand

6.2 – 9.2 Million

estimated annual trips on the completed trail

33% Visitor (Non-Local) Trips

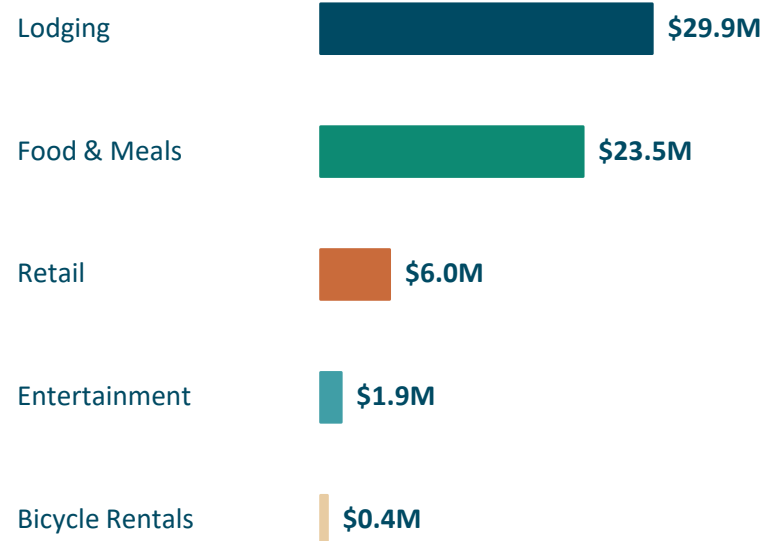
67% Local User Trips

Non-local visitors bring outside dollars into the region — driving the majority of direct economic impact.

Trail Towns

29 cities, towns & communities will benefit from trail-oriented economic development — expanded lodging, restaurants, bike rentals, and retail — supported by 180,000 residents within 3 miles of the trail.

Visitor Spending Breakdown | \$61.7M Annually



Avg. Non-Local Group Spending per Visit: \$64 Food · \$60 Retail · \$93 Lodging · \$31 Entertainment*
*2023 \$ estimates
(Order of Magnitude estimates rounded to nearest \$1,000)

Health & Transportation Benefits

Cost Savings for the Region

HEALTH BENEFITS — \$38.5M Annually

More people walking and biking reduces health-care costs for the entire region.

Rural Northern California faces significantly higher rates of stroke, heart disease, and obesity than the rest of the state.

The trail will increase physical activity, cardiovascular health, and mental well-being for residents and visitors alike.

\$7.08

Health-care savings
per new walking trip

\$6.31

Health-care savings
per new biking trip

TRANSPORTATION BENEFITS — \$2.4M Annually

The trail replaces short vehicle trips with walking and biking — saving households money and reducing emissions.

3 Million vehicle miles reduced per year — equivalent to driving from Cloverdale to Arcata 15,500 times.

3M

Annual vehicle miles
eliminated

1,230

Metric tons CO₂
reduced per year

\$669K

Crash Cost
Reduction

\$1.26M

Household Vehicle
Savings

\$188K

Road Maintenance
Savings

\$206K

Congestion
Reduction

Economic Benefits by County

Regional Distribution of Annual Benefits

Humboldt County

118 miles

TOTAL ANNUAL BENEFITS

\$48.1M

Recreation, Tourism & Retail **\$28.8M**

Health Benefits **\$18.0M**

Transportation Benefits **\$1.3M**

Annual Tax Revenue Increase **\$2.8M**

Mendocino County

101 miles

TOTAL ANNUAL BENEFITS

\$49.2M

Recreation, Tourism & Retail **\$29.7M**

Health Benefits **\$18.5M**

Transportation Benefits **\$1.0M**

Annual Tax Revenue Increase **\$2.6M**

Trinity County

12 miles

TOTAL ANNUAL BENEFITS

\$103K

Recreation, Tourism & Retail **\$61K**

Health Benefits **\$38K**

Transportation Benefits **\$3.8K**

Annual Tax Revenue Increase **\$9K**

Project Prioritization Framework

A Strategic Approach to Building Out the Trail

The Master Plan establishes a two-stage prioritization process for all 43 trail segments across 4 reaches, ensuring geographic equity and real-world strategic value.

STAGE 1 — Criteria Scoring

Impact Criteria:

Access · Trip Demand · Continuity · Ecological Restoration

Feasibility Criteria:

Structures · Natural Features · Planning Status · Railbanking Status

STAGE 2 — Project Readiness Refinement

Strategic overlay applied by GRTA team and local partners:

Community Support · Willing Trail Partners
Strategic Value to Local Agency Partners

Tier 1

High impact + high feasibility with existing momentum. 16 segments identified as top priority across all reaches.

Tier 2

High in impact OR feasibility — often near population centers or bridging gaps between Tier 1 segments.

Tier 3

Lower impact and feasibility — longer-term segments with more complex challenges to overcome.

Tier 1 Priority Segments

16 High-Impact, High-Feasibility Segments Across the Corridor

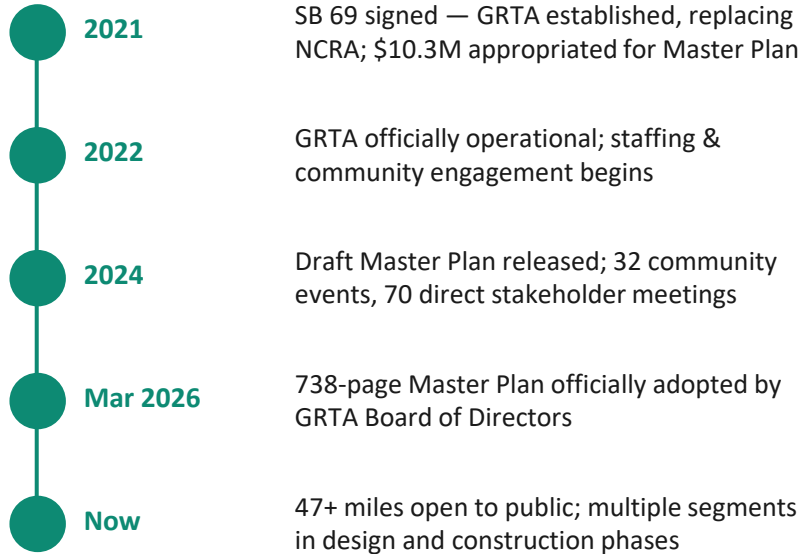
South Reach	Eel River Canyon	North Reach	Spur Trails
Hopland: Hwy 101 to Nelson Ranch Rd	Eel River Canyon Preserve: Island Mountain to Cain Rock Bridge	Rio Dell / Scotia Bluffs	Blue Lake: Glendale Dr to Mad River Levee
South Ukiah: Nelson Ranch Rd to Plant Rd	Alderpoint: Cain Rock Bridge to Steelhead Creek	Alton	
North Ukiah: Brush St to Moore St	Steelhead to Fort Seward	Fortuna: Riverwalk Dr to SR 211	
Redwood Valley: Moore St to Laughlin Way	McCann to Founders Grove	Loleta: SR 211 to Tompkins Hill Rd	
South Willits: CAL FIRE Station to Hill Rd		College of the Redwoods to Eureka	

Key Principle: Prioritize continuity, connect to existing trails & population centers, and build upon existing momentum first.

Current Status & Progress

From Rail to Trail — Building Momentum

Key Milestones



At a Glance



Community & Tribal Engagement:

35 tribes consulted · 32 community events · 70 direct stakeholder meetings · Robust tribal partnership built into all phases

Funding Strategy

A Diversified, Multi-Source Funding Model

GRTA employs a layered funding approach — combining state allocations, climate bond funding, ongoing property revenue, and competitive grant programs.



State Allocations

\$11 Million

Legislative appropriations for GRTA operations and trail development programs.



Proposition 4 (Climate Bond)

\$50 Million

Significant Prop 4 funding allocation supporting trail construction, tribal cultural resource preservation, and environmental restoration.



License & Lease Revenue

Ongoing

Revenue from property use agreements: road crossings, utility crossings, space usage along the right-of-way.



Competitive Grant Funding

Multiple Sources

SCC (State Coastal Conservancy) · ATP (Active Transportation Program) · Federal & foundation grants for future segments.

Future Funding Model: Competitive grant programs — including SCC, ATP, and other state and federal sources — will continue to be the primary mechanism for funding construction of segments beyond current allocations. GRTA actively builds partnerships to unlock these opportunities.



A Legacy Trail for Northern California

The Great Redwood Trail will connect communities, generate lasting economic opportunity, improve regional health, and preserve the extraordinary landscapes of Northern California for generations to come.

Executive Director: Elaine Hogan

Website: TheGreatRedwoodTrail.org

Email: info@greatredwoodtrail.org

Phone: (707) 463-3280

From Rail to Trail — Transforming Northern California's Economic Future