

Humboldt County, CA

Healthy Rural Roads: Planning for Active Transportation and Health (PATH)

Governments at all levels increasingly find it difficult to fund multimodal transportation investments necessary to respond to growing populations, changing development patterns, demographic shifts, and new community priorities. This problem is particularly acute for local and county governments in rural regions, which experience significant resource constraints at the same time their transportation infrastructure needs are evolving beyond maintaining local roads and ensuring state highway connectivity.

In order to help resolve these challenges facing rural regions like Humboldt County, the Redwood Community Action Agency (RCAA) contracted with Nelson\Nygaard to assist them in developing the Planning for Active Transportation and Health (PATH) model to provide a workable blueprint for resource-limited local governments in rural regions to better plan for, fund, and implement multimodal transportation projects. The PATH model recommended procedural and policy reforms of local transportation planning and funding in order to achieve community goals in the areas

of public health/safety, social equity, economic development, and environmental sustainability.

Nelson\Nygaard, and their panel of expert advisors, helped RCAA to research best practices from jurisdictions that incorporated health, economic development, and land use factors into transportation planning efforts. In addition, they helped define measures that can be used to identify transportation-disadvantaged populations. Nelson\Nygaard also helped identify federal and state funding sources to implement multimodal projects. Finally, the team helped facilitate community outreach events and helped to refine recommendations based on the real-word feedback of policymakers, planners, and service providers.

The Northern California chapter of the American Planning Association (APA) awarded the project a 2007 Leadership Award for its “social commitment to...support the needs of society’s less fortunate members,” and the project was also recognized by the California APA with a statewide 2007 Leadership Award.



Project Duration:
2005-2006

Total Budget:
\$70,000

Nelson\Nygaard Budget:
\$62,038

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