



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

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September 12, 2023

Tony Tavares
Director, California Department of Transportation
1120 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Letter of Support for the City of Fortuna's Grant Application to Caltrans Reconnecting Communities: Highways to Boulevards (RC:H2B)

Dear Mr. Tavares,

On behalf of the County of Humboldt, I would like to extend our support to the City of Fortuna in their efforts to implement the RC:H2B planning, development, and implementation process within underserved communities in Fortuna. The process will reconnect communities harmed by transportation infrastructure through community-supported planning activities and capital construction projects. The nature of the grant is to fund the full lifecycle of a project from concept to final completion. Through various planning processes, the community selected the Kenmar Road Interchange Modernization project as a major need, which embodies the improvements to the US 101 interchanges at Kenmar Road. This project will restore a natural growth pattern for the city, reconnect the city to Eel River, enable access to the river for bikes and pedestrians, improve safety, reduce congestion, support significant residential and commercial development, and spur economic growth in our disadvantaged community. This is only one component of a larger initiative that Fortuna will consider in meeting the RC:H2B funding goals.

The County of Humboldt owns and maintains Eel River Drive, adjacent to the Kenmar Interchange with Highway 101 and recognizes the importance of this project to allow to improve vehicular, bike and pedestrian access across Highway 101. Improving this interchange is also critical to allowing for economic development on the Former Palco Mill Site, and to create much needed housing within the city. Without this project, it is possible the important projects such as these could not proceed, and the community may not be able to proceed with important housing and economic development projects. Improving the Kenmar Interchange with Highway 101 will also provide much needed bike and pedestrian connectivity between both sides of the highway, where there are currently no bike or pedestrian facilities.

We are committed to leveraging existing relationships with various government agencies, industry, and the tribal community to support Fortuna with this project. We will encourage collaboration between the county and the city of Fortuna in the planning and design of transportation improvements to ensure regional planning continuity, meet zoning requirements, and enhance county-wide interconnectivity. Lastly, we will share existing statistics and data and reference possible resources to guide the RC:H2B planning process.

Thank you for your consideration in approving the grant funding to the City of Fortuna.

Sincerely,

Steve Madrone, Chair

Humboldt County Board of Supervisors