

March 14, 2018

California Natural Resources Agency
Attn: Urban Greening Coordinator
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: "A New Avenue to Wellness: Urban Greening in Willits, California"

To Whom It May Concern,

The City of Willits is preparing a grant application for Round 2 of the Urban Greening Program for a bicycle and pedestrian trail along the right of way owned by the North Coast Railroad Authority (NCRA), a state agency created by the Legislature pursuant to Government Code 93000. The NCRA Board of Directors strongly supports the City's application for funding from the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) Urban Greening Program for the above referenced project.

NCRA welcomes this project along its right of way through the City of Willits and is open to the development of Rail with Trail projects, particularly in urbanized areas where trails maximize the community benefit of this important transportation corridor. We understand that the CNRA is willing to participate in the planning, design, and implementation process for this project and is committed to the broad objectives of the California Air Resources Board.

Traffic on Highway 101/Main Street, the only north/south route through the City of Willits, can be dangerously fast and subject to congestion. A safe and attractive option for pedestrian and bicycle travel is currently lacking. The proposed project will provide a dedicated pedestrian and bicycle route that will encourage increased use of non-motorized methods of transportation for commuting, incidental trips, recreation and health.

This project, with an emphasis on community health and carbon sequestration, offers multiple community and environmental benefits. These benefits will be enhanced with a connection to the existing Haehl Creek Trail and collaboration with Howard Memorial Hospital, the Hospital Foundation, and other community partners. The project will also result in a neighborhood watch presence, which will enhance public safety and reduce blighted conditions that occur in places along the railroad right of way. The project is supported by the current Mendocino County Rail-with-Trail Corridor Plan and is consistent with the NCRA Rail with Trail Guidelines.

The NCRA Board of Directors respectfully encourages your favorable consideration of the City of Willits' funding request for the project "A New Avenue to Wellness: Urban Greening in Willits, California."

Sincerely,

Hal Wagenet
Chair