



Selected Reflections from the 2023 Week Without Driving

From October 2-8, 2023, thirty residents of Humboldt County, California participated in the first National Week Without Driving. In doing so, they challenged themselves to live their lives without driving a car, in order to gain a better understanding of the experiences of people who can't drive for reasons such as disability, age or income. Many participants shared reflections on their experiences with CRTP or in posts on social media.

“I really am fortunate to live very close to work, shops, and most of the places I need to go, so I have abundant options to get around - not everyone does.”

-Humboldt County Supervisor Natalie Arroyo

“Years ago our family went without a car for a couple years when our children were young. It was challenging getting to appointments, school, work and grocery shopping. It was difficult when it was cold and wet. My husband needed to take 2 separate bus lines to get to work.”

-Eureka City Councilmember Renée Contreras-DeLoach

“You can see the schedule, the transit, those things have to come together for someone who doesn't have a car...The biggest thing is planning. Your timetable is so important...If it's going to take you two hours to get there, you have to schedule your appointments that much farther out.”

-Rio Dell Mayor Debra Garnes

“As someone who used to ride and walk everywhere, I am finding this challenge to be a wonderful way to get back into the habit...The challenge was trusting there was enough time to make everything on time. Another stressor was how to dress work appropriate and ride my bike.”

-Eureka Mayor Kim Bergel

“This week is helping me to better recognize the work I’m doing with [McKinleyville Municipal Advisory Committee] to zone a downtown [that] will create much more ability to meet basic needs and beyond in a walkable setting and just how important that really is.”

-McKinleyville Municipal Advisory Committee Chair Lisa Dugan

“I already use this [bus] system about once a month. But using on the regular has given me some new perspective.”

-Humboldt County Supervisor Mike Wilson

“I very much try to acknowledge that privilege to have the ownership of a private vehicle...and that’s one of those privileges that I’ve had to think about this entire week.”

-Eureka City Councilmember G. Mario Fernandez

“I'm lucky I live pretty close to work, with a shortcut through my back yard, because if I had to take a bus to the Chamber office from elsewhere it would have taken forever.”

-Arcata Vice Mayor and Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Meredith Matthews

“If I couldn't afford a car, then I would either rely on others to drive my kid to daycare, or I would have to walk which, with a toddler, would take a very long time.”

-Humboldt Transit Authority Transit Planner Jerome Qiriaz

Elected Officials Who Participated in the 2023 Week Without Driving

Humboldt County Supervisor Natalie Arroyo

Eureka City Councilmember Scott Bauer

Eureka Mayor Kim Bergel

Eureka City Councilmember Leslie Castellano

Eureka City Councilmember Renee Contreras-DeLoach

Eureka City Councilmember G. Mario Fernandez

Rio Dell Mayor Debra Garnes

Arcata Vice Mayor Meredith Matthews
Arcata City Councilmember Alex Stillman
Humboldt County Supervisor Mike Wilson

Planners & Other Local Leaders Who Participated in the 2023 Week Without Driving

Eureka Senior Planner Caitlin Castellano
McKinleyville Municipal Advisory Committee Chair Lisa Dugan
Julie Fulkerson, Fulkerson & Associates
Arcata Community Development Director David Loya
Humboldt County Association of Governments Associate Regional Planner Stevie Luther
Humboldt Transit Authority Transit Planner Jerome Qirazi
Topher Reynolds, Copious Glass
Humboldt County Association of Governments Senior Regional Planner Oona Smith