

**Howard N. Dashiell**  
**DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION**

Road Commissioner  
County Engineer, RCE 42001  
County Surveyor, PLS 7148



**FUNCTIONS**

Administration & Business Services  
Airports  
Engineering  
Land Improvement  
Roads and Bridges  
Solid Waste & Landfills  
Water Agency

**COUNTY OF MENDOCINO**  
**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

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October 17, 2023

Mendocino County Board of Supervisors  
501 Low Gap Road, Room 1010  
Ukiah, CA 95482

RE: ACCEPTANCE OF INFORMATIONAL UPDATE BY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ON TOWN OF MENDOCINO PUBLIC STREETSIDE LITTER CONTAINERS AND APPROVAL OF AMENDMENT TO COUNTY POLICY NUMBER 14 "ENCROACHMENT PERMITS", ADDING PROVISIONS FOR AN ADOPT-A-CAN PROGRAM (TOWN OF MENDOCINO AND HOPLAND AREAS)

Honorable Board Members:

For several years now, the twenty-six public streetside litter containers in the Town of Mendocino have been plagued with problems, including attracting illegal household dumping and animal access causing trash to be spread on the sidewalk. In July 2022, the level of service to the cans was increased permanently by one day per week, resulting in three pickups per week during the high tourist season and two weekly pickups during the low season. This helped to alleviate the issue but has not solved it completely. On February 28, 2023, the Board of Supervisors held a discussion regarding the ongoing issues and directed staff to return with a plan to remove the containers. Following media coverage of the Board's discussion, Department of Transportation (DOT) was contacted by numerous business owners and residents in the Town of Mendocino, pleading for the County to not remove the cans. At this point, DOT agrees the cans should not yet be removed and proposes to try some other interim solutions prior to taking the drastic measure of removing the service altogether.

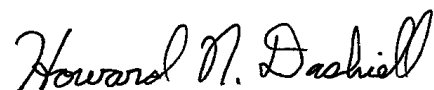
Shortly after the February meeting, DOT drafted and sent a letter (attached for reference) to all property owners in the Mendocino Village without curbside hauling service as well as to an email listserv of Town of Mendocino residents and business owners that was provided by one of the callers. The letter informed residents, businesses, and property owners of the prohibition against disposing of residential or commercial waste in the street cans, and the possible ramifications of doing so. The letter also informed landlords of their legal requirement to provide waste receptacles for tenants and provided information on curbside hauling and transfer station services. In the months following the letter, DOT staff did three surveys of the cans on different days of the week and different times of day to gauge whether the current level of service is sufficient. On no occasion did staff find a single can overflowing, indicating the service level is adequate. The one issue noted was a small amount of fugitive litter, which may be caused by animals pulling it out of the cans.

To address the animal issue, there are a couple possible solutions. One option would be to replace the cans with new, animal resistant receptacles. This option would be quite costly, with cans ranging from \$800 to \$2,000 each, plus the cost of installation. A second option worth trying is implementation of an "Adopt-a-Can" program, similar to the largely successful Adopt-a-Road program administered by DOT. The proposed program would allow volunteer residents or businesses to "adopt" a can to maintain, expecting them to check on the can at regular intervals and collect any fugitive litter. The can would continue to be serviced at the current frequency by Redwood Waste Solutions (RWS). In exchange for their service, the volunteer would be provided safety equipment and a plaque would be mounted on the receptacle thanking them for helping to keep the community clean and free of litter. DOT estimates this program would cost no more than \$500 per year on an ongoing basis, with the possibility of slightly higher startup costs in staff time to develop processes, conduct community outreach, and to purchase initial plaques. DOT has drafted a proposed amendment to County Policy No. 14 "Encroachment Permits", attached for the Board's review and consideration, which would allow for the implementation of such a program. The program would also be available in the Hopland area where the County also maintains public streetside litter containers. DOT recommends and respectfully requests the Board approve the proposed amendment to County Policy No. 14, adding provisions for an Adopt-A-Can Program.

For the Board's information, the following are other recent developments related to the Town of Mendocino public streetside litter containers: All cans were recently cleaned and repainted by RWS, improving their appearance drastically. Additionally, DOT staff has looked into the option of purchasing split liners to allow for recycling on one side of the receptacles. Staff was only able to find the split liners available from one company and received a quote of over \$8,500 for the new liners. Although it may be possible to budget funds for this purchase, staff does not believe the purchase is worthwhile considering the high amount of recycling contamination likely to occur. Other jurisdictions with split trash and recycling receptacles have reported contamination levels so high that contents of both sides have to be landfilled.

I will, of course, respond to any questions the Board may have.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Howard N. Dashiell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

HOWARD N. DASHIELL  
Director of Transportation