

# MENDOCINO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Approved MINUTES  
Monday, April 5, 2010  
Ukiah City Council Chambers

**The Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) meets as the Board of Directors of:**  
Mendocino Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) and  
Mendocino County Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE)

**1. Call to Order / Roll Call .** After the Board members' bus tour of Ukiah transportation projects (10:00 a.m. to approximately 12:15 p.m. followed by lunch), the meeting was called to order at 1:37 p.m. with Directors Jesse Robertson (PAC), Lauren Sinnott, Larry Stranske, John Pinches, Susan Ranochak and Dan Gjerde present; Chair Gjerde presiding. Directors Kendall Smith and Mari Rodin arrived soon after.

Staff present: Phil Dow, Executive Director; Janet Orth, Deputy Director for Administration; Loretta Ellard, Assistant Executive Director; and Nephele Barrett, Senior Planner.

**2. Convene as RTPA**

**3. Recess as RTPA - Reconvene as Policy Advisory Committee.**

**Public Expression.** None .

**4 - 6. Regular Calendar.** The Chair first addressed Agenda Item #6.

Director Smith arrived at 1:39 p.m.

**6. Report and Discussion of State Planning & Research Grant for Bicycle & Pedestrian Data – Caltrans District 1.** Director Robertson, as the Caltrans representative, introduced the issue. District 1 has received a State Planning and Research grant to do bicycle and pedestrian counts at numerous locations throughout the district, which includes Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino and Lake Counties. The first two sites to be studied are both on Route 1, one between Ten Mile Bridge and City of Fort Bragg, and the other at the Laurel Street intersection in Fort Bragg.

Director Rodin arrived at 1:40 p.m.

Director Robertson continued his verbal report. Counting equipment will be purchased, using a video detection method. They would like to work with local agencies in the District and possibly loan the equipment to them after the grant project is completed. He invited questions, as follows:

- Are these two sites the only ones the District plans to study in Mendocino County? (Gjerde) Yes.
- If the equipment is loaned to the Cities or County afterward, can it be used on city streets or county roads? (Gjerde) The District would like to be able to, however there may be grant limitations.
- Several years ago Caltrans started a formal process of reviewing and prioritizing ways to improve bicycle safety on coastal Route 1. Did the site selection come from that effort? (Dow) Unknown, however it is consistent with "Complete Streets" legislation and policies with emphasis on bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The recent pilot project made a needs assessment, using both temporary and permanent vehicle count stations. Results have given more certainty of vehicle usage than

bicycle and pedestrian data on state highways, so this study will continue efforts to determine capacity needs of various transportation modes.

- Cycling on Route 1 is popular, in the presence of both beauty and danger. Does District 1 intend to study more rural sections of the highway? (Sinnott) The segment from Ten Mile Creek to Fort Bragg is meant to be representative of those conditions.
- Meetings with City staff and District 1 have indicated from GIS right-of-way data that opportunities exist to widen the roadway, adding shoulders in some locations. (Gjerde) There is a bicycle and pedestrian planning coordinator in the District office. Programming of projects for incremental shoulder improvements on Route 1 is ongoing as opportunities arise.

Director Robertson offered to follow up with further details on request. He will keep MCOG informed as the project develops. No action was taken.

**4. Presentation: City of Ukiah Transportation Plans and Projects.** Chair Gerde introduced Mr. Tim Erikson, Director of Public Works and City Engineer, who verbally summarized the morning's tour. He hopes to continue working on all of these projects. Sites visited included:

- Downtown Streetscape Improvement Plan and State Street Tree Project
- Ukiah Railroad Depot and rail trail site
- Orchard Avenue and Orr Street Bridges
- Perkins/Orchard Ramp Project
- Gobbi, Oak Manor, and Babcock projects—realignment, bicycle lane and trail
- Gobbi Rail Crossing

Mr. Dow thanked him and Rick Seanor, Deputy Director-Public Works; MTA for providing the trolley bus and driver; and all who helped organize the tour. He noted the variety of modes and types of projects represented, with good efforts made to date. Chair Gjerde expressed appreciation for the opportunity to see these projects first hand. No action was taken.

**5. Report and Discussion of Transportation Best Practices Workshop & East Bay Tour, March 18-19.** Chair Gjerde gave a slide presentation of the tour and the concepts represented. Board discussion included the following issues. Charlie Stump, Ukiah City Planner, commented at Director Rodin's request. No action was taken.

- David Brower Center in Berkeley demonstrates environmental green building principles. (Sinnott)
- The planning concepts are appropriate to future updates of City of Ukiah's General Plan, addressing such matters as density and public health, with less parking and more bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. (Mr. Stump) Various approaches and strategies such as incentives can be considered for density and parking. (Gjerde, Stump)
- Pros and cons of higher density development are to be considered for differing needs of senior citizens and other groups. (Stranske, Sinnott, Gjerde, Rodin)
- Data on community-wide access to healthy foods and walkability is of interest. The City of Richmond, despite its disadvantaged communities, has made significant progress. (Smith, Sinnott) The health presentation was made relative to the California Endowment's co-funding of the trip. (Gjerde)
- Socioeconomic impacts are to be documented in required environmental studies. (Stump)
- There are opportunities to implement these ideas through "blueprint planning" by each local government entity, coordinated through MCOG's Regional Blueprint project. (Rodin, Gjerde)
- The jobs-housing imbalance problem identified by MCOG's 2004 study is still relevant. (Rodin)

- How can smart growth principles apply to rural areas? (Pinches) “Priority development areas” can be established through the regional blueprint process, scaled for Mendocino County. (Gjerde)
  - Funding issues may involve mitigating impacts from prior development patterns, jurisdictional tax boundaries and other local conditions. New agreements and methods may be needed. (Pinches, Gjerde, Dow, Rodin)
- a. Relationship to Mendocino Regional Blueprint Process. Nephele Barrett distributed a handout on regional blueprint planning and made a slide presentation. She noted ways that MCOG’s approach differs from that of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) in the Bay Area. She foresees a more grassroots approach. MCOG’s process uses the U-Plan land-use model. Grant funding is secured for Phases 1 and 2, and an application has been submitted for a third phase. Stakeholder input will be sought to develop various growth scenarios. In the Phase 3 proposal, the identified preferred scenarios would be offered with strategies for implementation. She reviewed the handout, showing how Shasta County conducted a similar process, called ShastaFORWARD, as a single-county region in a mostly rural setting, much like the Mendocino region. She passed around a copy of survey results conducted online under Shasta’s blueprint process. She has emailed to the Council members a link for more information on Shasta’s process. Questions and discussion included the following:
- How would the Blueprint project apply the data from the Wine Country Interregional Partnership (IRP) study of the jobs-housing imbalance? (Rodin) It could be a factor in the process of looking at current trends and community values and how they would play out. Alternate scenarios would address problems found with current trends. The model would fine tune to get a more accurate picture. (Barrett) The IRP findings will not be forgotten and can be incorporated into this process. (Dow)
  - How is this relevant to MCOG? (Pinches) Incentives will be available, from state and perhaps federal government, to use blueprints for best use of limited transportation funds and resources. Some of these issues are unfamiliar and outside MCOG’s usual role, yet are interrelated. Results will be presented and member entities may choose to implement some of the options identified. (Dow)
  - Problems may result if development is driven by a vision that conflicts with statewide or other mandates, for instance when preferred scenarios increase greenhouse gas emissions. (Rodin)
  - Shasta’s regional blueprint scenarios, as a fast-growing region, may differ from potential scenarios for Mendocino County, where a reduction of vehicle trips may be desirable. (Dow, Gjerde, Barrett, others)

Ms. Barrett concluded with a basic schedule of next steps for the regional blueprint process.

- b. Funding Resources. Executive Director Dow commented on how strategies that result from this process could be funded for implementation. Some funding sources cannot always be relied upon, such as the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) capital funds and Proposition 42 under the Governor’s “tax swap.” Conclusion of the Willits Bypass will present new policy opportunities. He reviewed MCOG’s process to date for soliciting STIP projects, in which the local entities make proposals. In future, the Council could develop policies that give priorities to certain kinds of projects and targets. A brief discussion followed.

**7 - 11. Consent Calendar.** Loretta Ellard clarified that Agenda Item #11, OWP amendment, was considered a matter of administrative cleanup and therefore did not go to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for a recommendation, and the reasons for this approach. She reported two requests from TAC members resulting in a minor text change.

**Upon motion** by Rodin, second by Smith, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (8 Ayes – Robertson (PAC), Sinnott, Rodin, Stranske, Pinches, Smith, Ranochak, and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 0 Absent): IT IS ORDERED that consent items are approved:

**7. Approval of March 1, 2010 Minutes – as written**

**8. Acceptance of Executive Committee Minutes of February 26, 2010 – as written**

**9. Acceptance of 2008/09 Fiscal Audit of Mendocino Council of Governments -- MCOG received a clean audit report.**

**10. Acceptance of 2008/09 Fiscal Audit of Mendocino Transit Authority (MTA) -- MTA received a favorable audit report.**

**11. Approval of Fourth Amendment to Fiscal Year 2009/10 Planning Overall Work Program (OWP) – Exchanges funding sources to meet eligibility requirements for State reimbursement, with no net fiscal change to the OWP:**

- Moves \$41,687 of Planning, Programming & Monitoring (PPM) funds to Local Transportation Funds (LTF) for Work Element 5, City of Willits Street & Construction Standards
- Moves \$41,687 of LTF funds to PPM funds for Work Element 17-2, Regional Blueprint, Phase 2

**12. Recess as Policy Advisory Committee - Reconvene as RTPA - Ratify Action of Policy**

**Advisory Committee.** Upon motion by Rodin, second by Ranochak, and carried unanimously (7 Ayes; 0 Noes; 0 Absent): IT IS ORDERED that the actions taken by the Policy Advisory Committee are ratified by the MCOG Board of Directors.

Director Smith left the meeting at appx. 3:55 p.m.

### **13. Reports - Information**

- a. Mendocino Transit Authority. Bruce Richard, General Manager, thanked MCOG for the East Bay trip, with regret that he had to stay behind and work on identifying ways to cut MTA's budget. At their Board meeting of March 25, a variety of proposals were considered. MCOG's Executive Committee and staff recommendation for Fiscal Year 2010/11 added about \$150,000 to transit funds, which was very helpful. A series of proposed service cuts were discussed at MTA's meeting, mainly to Willits and Laytonville service, but also affecting Ukiah and the South Coast. Also considered for mitigating the revenue shortfall was a fare increase of approximately 25 percent, and use of some of MTA's own operating reserve. All of these measures together were not enough to close the shortfall by the time MTA's agenda packet was issued. Subsequently, the State Legislature and Governor reinstated the State Transit Assistance (STA) funds that had been suspended, which will help to reduce the amount of MTA service cuts and number of driver layoffs. Mr. Richard detailed uses of this funding source. Meanwhile, the Mobility Management program is nearly ready to start up. The first three vans for the agricultural-worker van pool have been received, to start in early May. He then invited questions. Chair Gjerde, in reference to the Bay Area tour, asked whether MTA ever analyzes density along its service routes, suggesting that higher density eventually could make some routes more cost effective. Mr. Richard replied that to date MTA has not conducted any such studies, however he was aware of the concept.

- b. North Coast Railroad Authority. There was no report.
- c. MCOG Administration & Planning Staff
  - 1. *Summary of Meetings*. Mr. Dow referred to his written staff report.
  - 2. *Complete Streets Training - May 6, 2010*. Ms. Ellard reported on this local workshop opportunity and asked the Council whether they would be interested in attending a session for elected officials. Various options were discussed and direction given to staff.
  - 3. *State Budget: Governor's Tax "Swap."* Mr. Dow summarized new information since his written staff report. He did not yet know the implications for Mendocino County. A brief discussion followed.

Director Rodin left the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

- 4. *Senate Bill 83 (Hancock) Traffic Congestion: Motor Vehicle Registration Fees*. Mr. Dow reported on this recent law that allows RTPAs to place measures on the ballot to increase vehicle license fees for specific purposes, by a simple majority vote, in \$1 increments up to \$10. This is a potential revenue source to be considered along with other options such as traffic mitigation fees and special sales taxes for transportation. This may be used for maintenance and rehabilitation of streets and roads and various other types of projects. An expenditure plan is required.

Vice Chair Pinches requested placement on a future agenda for discussion. Chair Gjerde suggested a discussion following the strategic planning session in June. Director Ranochak estimated a cost of approximately \$30,000 to place the matter on the ballot with a regularly scheduled countywide election.

- 5. *Miscellaneous*. None.

- d. MCOG Directors. There were no reports.
- e. California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG) Delegates. Chair Gjerde, as the Delegate, announced that he will not attend the annual delegates' meeting in Monterey, April 29-30. Mr. Dow and Ms. Ellard plan to attend as staff. Director Sinnott will consider attending as the Alternate Delegate.

**14. Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Submitted: PHILLIP J. DOW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By Janet Orth, Deputy Director for Administration