

MENDOCINO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Approved MINUTES

Monday, June 6, 2011

U.C. Farm Advisors' Conference Room, 890 North Bush Street, Ukiah

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 . The meeting was called to order at 1:35 p.m. with Directors Larry Stranske, Lauren Sinnott, John Pinches, Susan Ranochak, and Dan Gjerde present; Chair Gjerde presiding. Directors Jesse Robertson (Caltrans/PAC), Mari Rodin and Kendall Smith arrived subsequently.

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

2. Convene as RTPA

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

Public Expression. None.

Director Robertson arrived at 1:36 p.m.

4 - 6. Regular Calendar.

4. Fiscal Year 2011/12 RTPA Budget. Mr. Dow introduced the matter, noting last month's budget workshop covered most of the details. He then turned to Ms. Orth, who had produced all of the documentation. She recommended action to adopt four budget resolutions, noting one technical amendment to the required finding for allocation of funds to Mendocino Transit Authority, with no change to the proposed allocation. She also called attention to the fourth resolution, new this year, that details background of MCOG's Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) allocation policies and proposes adding a new staff position, partially funded by RSTP, that would provide increased local assistance to the five member governments. Mr. Dow's supplemental staff report further described this proposal, which originated from MCOG's strategic planning workshop. (Discussion was continued under Agenda #4d below.)

Director Rodin arrived at 1:40 p.m.

Director Smith arrived soon after, during staff's report.

Ms. Orth reported further on MCOG's RSTP current policy and this year's funding level, noting it is unknown whether the program will continue, until Congress enacts a new transportation bill. MCOG's standing policy sets aside funds for its Partnership Funding Program; the first use of this is the Simpson Lane roundabout project under construction this year on State Route 1. Director Smith elaborated on the success of this leveraging of funds with Caltrans and the County.

Upon motion by Sinnott, second by Ranochak, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (8 Ayes – Robertson/PAC, Rodin, Stranske, Sinnott, Pinches, Smith, Ranochak, and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 0 Absent): IT IS ORDERED that the following four budget resolutions are adopted.

- a. Adoption of Resolution Finding That There Are No Unmet Transit Needs That Are Reasonable To Meet for Fiscal Year 2011/12

Resolution No. M2011-06

Finding That There Are No Unmet Transit Needs
 That Are Reasonable To Meet for Fiscal Year 2011/12
 (Reso. #M2011-06 is incorporated herein by reference)

- b. Adoption of Resolution Allocating Fiscal Year 2011/12 Funds and 2010/11 Carryover Funds for Administration, Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities, and Planning

Resolution No. M2011-07

Allocating Fiscal Year 2011/12 Funds
 and 2010/11 Carryover Funds for
 Administration, Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities, and Planning
 (Reso. #M2011-07 is incorporated herein by reference)

Local Transportation Fund (LTF)		
MCOG Administration	323,725	
2% Bicycle & Pedestrian	48,949	
Planning Program – new funds	50,000	
LTF carryover – Planning program	24,462	
Total LTF		447,136
Other funding sources - Planning		1,137,741
Total Allocations		1,584,877

- c. Adoption of Resolution Allocating Fiscal Year 2011/12 Local Transportation Funds, State Transit Assistance, and Capital Reserve Funds and FY 2010/11 Carryover Funds to Mendocino Transit Authority

Resolution No. M2011-08

Allocating Fiscal Year 2011/12 Local Transportation Funds,
 State Transit Assistance, and Capital Reserve Funds and
 FY 2010/11 Carryover Funds to Mendocino Transit Authority
 (Reso. #M2011-08 is incorporated herein by reference)

Local Transportation Fund (LTF)		
MTA Operations	1,980,954	
Unmet Transit Needs	0	
Senior Center Operations	367,556	
Capital Reserve Fund	0	
Total LTF		2,348,510
State Transit Assistance (STA)		
MTA Operations	272,445	
MTA & Senior Center Capital	202,284	
Capital Reserve Fund	0	
Total STA		474,729

Capital Reserve Program		
Current Year – MTA	77,735	
Current Year – Senior Centers	40,000	
Long Term – MTA and Seniors	440,454	
Total Capital Reserve		558,189
Total Transit Allocations		3,381,428

d. Adoption of Resolution Allocating Regional Surface Transportation Program Funds for Fiscal Year 2011/12 MCOG Partnership Funding Program, Local Assistance, and Distribution By Formula To Member Agencies. Staff answered questions about the proposal to fund regional local assistance. Discussion included:

- How would the cost of the new staff position be shared? Use of the service should be tracked so that only those member agencies that use it would pay for it. (Gjerde) All members should pay for availability of the service. (Stranske, Sinnott) The service would be of some benefit to the entire region, not only each jurisdiction. (Lauren) There will be unknowns in the first year. (Gjerde, Dow)
- MCOG would provide this resource at two levels: 1) regionwide availability, and 2) fee for service as needed. The staffer would be a project manager, to keep project phases moving forward on time, avoiding forfeiture of any project funds. (Dow)
- What are some examples of projects requiring assistance? STIP projects would be the first priority, for example East Side Potter Valley Road, or other projects funded by MCOG. In some cases, a member agency needs help delivering a project not funded through MCOG. (Pinches, Dow)
- How would this work logistically? As the contractor, Executive Director Dow hires and manages all staff work. Both he and the local assistance employee would know whether any one agency is using too much of the service and would moderate the activities. All work would be reported with invoices for reimbursement. (Pinches, Dow, Sinnott)
- City of Point Arena plans to use its own share of RSTP funds for a project manager, so will not depend too much on MCOG’s assistance. (Sinnott)

Resolution No. M2011-09

Allocating Regional Surface Transportation Program Funds
for Fiscal Year 2011/12 MCOG Partnership Funding Program,
Local Assistance, and Distribution By Formula To Member Agencies
(Reso. #M2011-09 is incorporated herein by reference)

MCOG Partnership Funding Program		100,000
Local Assistance - Project Delivery		90,000
Formula Distribution to Members		
Mendocino County DOT	98,091	
City of Ukiah	132,009	
City of Fort Bragg	88,139	
City of Willits	82,726	
City of Point Arena	54,677	
Total Formula Distributions		455,642
Total Allocations		645,642

5. Technical Advisory Committee Recommendation of May 18, 2011: Adoption of Final Fiscal Year 2011/12 Planning Overall Work Program (OWP). Ms. Ellard detailed the process of OWP

development and the TAC's review. She described the addition to the Draft OWP of nine work element fund balances carried over and two grant applications with MCOG's local match funds. If the grants are not awarded, the local match will be amended out and made available for other projects. She reviewed the Summary of Funding Sources, explaining the large amount of carryover of State funds. The future of Planning, Programming & Monitoring (PPM) allocations is uncertain, as this funding source relates to the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). She then invited questions. Chair Gjerde expressed appreciation for her work to manage projects so as not to forfeit any "use or lose" funding. Director Rodin noted how Work Element 9, Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan Update, is related to a City of Ukiah technical assistance grant.

A motion was made by Director Ranochak, seconded by Director Sinnott, to approve the recommended action. **Discussion on the motion:**

- Director Pinches stated he would not support the motion to adopt the program with the Regional Blueprint project included in it, which he does not consider to be of any value. The County General Plan already exists as the guiding document.
- As a rural area it is in MCOG's interests to complete the Blueprint process, as eventually a mandate can be expected that will require one in order to qualify for some kinds of funding; the region may be at a future disadvantage without it. Caltrans grant applications already ask Blueprint-related questions. (Stranske, Dow, Ellard)
- Director Sinnott described some aspects of the Regional Blueprint program's effectiveness.

The motion carried on roll call vote (7 Ayes – Robertson/PAC, Rodin, Stranske, Sinnott, Smith, Ranochak, and Gjerde; 1 No - Pinches; 0 Abstaining; 0 Absent): IT IS ORDERED that the 2011/12 Final Overall Work Program is adopted as recommended by the Technical Advisory Committee, and the Executive Director is authorized to sign appropriate certifications and the OWP Agreement and to forward to Caltrans as required.

6. Transit Productivity Committee (TPC) Recommendations. Ms. Orth reported on the TPC's discussion, its recommendations, and the requested actions. Two of the TPC's recommendations were previously addressed as part of the budget, dealing with Unmet Transit Needs and funding for MTA. She detailed the balance of TPC business accomplished at its April meeting. She and MTA's General Manager Bruce Richard answered questions.

- a. Acceptance of April 19, 2011 TPC Minutes
- b. Adoption of Transit Performance Standards – Administrative Update for Cost Inflation. This is a routine annual update of the Operating Cost per Vehicle Service Hour and Cost per Passenger, based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The other two standards, Passengers per Hour and Farebox Ratio, are recommended to remain unchanged. The TPC observed that Operating Cost standard has been difficult to meet as rising costs have outpaced the index.
- c. Acceptance of Report - Annual Review of Mendocino Transit Authority Performance Against MCOG Standards. Performance of four service types (Dial-A-Ride, Short and Long Distance Bus Routes, and Senior Center contracted services) were reviewed and reported.

There were no objections to the TPC's recommendations in the written staff report to:

- Direct staff to research CPI rates that are more transit-specific or appropriate in this context;
- Direct staff to return to the TPC with a new recommended base rate for Cost per Hour;
- Not adopt any Flex Route standards for at least another year, because of continuing adjustments to these new services;
- Request MTA staff to provide available Dial-A-Ride data for the next TPC meeting, to include, at a minimum, total ridership.

Chair Gjerde appreciated the innovative “e-Ride” service recently launched. Director Pinches complimented MTA and the Senior Centers on their service to the transit dependent people of the region, including those with disabilities.

Upon motion by Smith, second by Stranske, and carried unanimously (*8 Ayes; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 0 Absent*): IT IS ORDERED that the Transit Productivity Committee’s meeting minutes are accepted as written and the recommendations are approved, adopting the updated Transit Performance Standards, accepting the report, and acknowledging good performance by MTA and the Senior Centers.

7. Consent Calendar. Upon motion by Rodin, second by Ranochak, and carried unanimously (*8 Ayes; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 0 Absent*): IT IS ORDERED that consent items are approved:

7. Approval of May 2, 2011 Minutes – as written

8. Recess as Policy Advisory Committee - Reconvene as RTPA - Ratify Action of Policy Advisory Committee. Upon motion by Rodin, second by Stranske, 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.

9. Reports - Information

- a. Mendocino Transit Authority. General Manager Bruce Richard thanked MCOG for allocating the bulk of MTA’s operating funds. MTA currently faces a shortfall of approximately \$158,000 for FY 2011/12, a gap they can find ways to close administratively. He is monitoring State budget progress and watching for a grant extension to MTA’s Mobility Management program. Depending on the outcome, MTA’s shortfall could increase to over \$300,000, requiring further steps. He described service cuts already made, eliminating the Laytonville route. Cuts are being made generally to Saturday services. The Willits Rider flex route has been reduced by half, after two years of startup, despite strong efforts by Councilmember Stranske and MTA to attract riders. Greyhound ticket sales are being dropped after 10-15 years as a ticket agent, as it is no longer cost effective relative to commissions earned. He reported on progress of MTA’s new e-Ride volunteer driver program in Covelo and answered questions.
- b. North Coast Railroad Authority. Ms. Ellard called attention to items in MCOG’s Information Packet, including a letter to NCRA as directed by the Council last month regarding “Rails with Trails” and disposition of the Eel River Canyon segment. A federal emergency order was lifted, allowing freight service to resume from Lombard to Windsor. She is monitoring status of the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Russian River Division Freight Rail Project, which was released for public review in May.
- c. MCOG Administration & Planning Staff
 1. *Summary of Meetings.* Mr. Dow referred to his written staff report, noting staff has been “extremely busy.” Director Sinnott thanked him for attending two meetings in Point Arena to address traffic speed studies in the community.
 2. *Meeting with U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, May 19, 2011.* Mr. Dow answered questions about this invitational meeting. Priority issues raised with the Secretary included streamlining of environmental procedures, a common concern.

Director Rodin left the meeting at 3:05 p.m.

Mr. Dow reported some of the issues that he raised with Secretary LaHood. The gasoline tax is no longer an appropriate revenue structure as it is based on fuel consumption. Rural RTPAs have the disadvantage of not being recognized by the federal government along with urban MPOs, cities and counties; MCOG's sole access to federal programs is through Caltrans. Discussion followed.

3. *Meeting with Westport Municipal Advisory Council, May 5, 2011.* Mr. Dow and Caltrans representatives met with WMAC and made progress toward resolving some of their transportation-related concerns. They plan to meet again in September and possibly conclude discussions by that time. WMAC has been appreciative of these efforts. He and Director Robertson (PAC-Caltrans) answered questions about pedestrian safety issues.
 4. *Quarterly Status of Projects.* Mr. Dow reviewed highlights of his written report. There was discussion of several items. Chair Gjerde noted there are about 30 projects ongoing.
 5. *Vision Mendocino 2030 - Regional Blueprint Planning Program.* Ms. Barrett reported status and handed out a written report. The Phase II vision and outreach effort is nearly concluded and Phase III will soon begin to compare several conceptual scenarios identified. Mr. Dow invited all to attend an upcoming meeting in Lakeport to see what the end product looks like in Lake County, where the Regional Blueprint proposes amendments to County of Lake's General Plan. Questions and discussion followed on the number of participants and how a county plan can be affected by a regional blueprint. Director Robertson commented on the example of Humboldt County's regional blueprint, noting that these blueprints can influence land uses in general plans and provide a forum for a County to take another look at specific issues raised by the community.
 6. *MCOG Draft Annual Report.* Mr. Dow and Ms. Orth handed out a preview of this report of FY 2010/11 highlights, as an alternative to the newsletter. Staff invited comments and ideas for its content, format and distribution. A brief discussion followed.
 7. *Miscellaneous.* Mr. Dow will attend the California Transportation Commission's Town Hall meeting in Redding tomorrow. MCOG staff participated in their last one in Eureka. His message will be "taking care of the complete system" and not go into specific project details. He also reported on the current funding outlook for the Willits bypass project.
- d. MCOG Directors. Director Smith reported on the recent groundbreaking ceremony for the Simpson Lane roundabout construction project. Caltrans' goal for completion is November 2011. She and Director Pinches also reported on status of the Confusion Hill project proposal by Caltrans for a Transportation Enhancement grant as initiated and coordinated by MCOG, which funded a feasibility study completed by the County of Mendocino. Mr. Dow detailed next steps, and discussion followed.
 - e. California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG) Delegates: Annual Regional Issues Forum, April 28-29, 2011. Staff handed out a report by CALCOG's new Executive Director. Director Sinnott attended as Delegate and reported on the forum, which she considered a success. She approved of the new direction CALCOG is taking and its choice of executive director. She reported highlights of the presentations.

10. Adjournment. Upcoming meeting dates were reviewed. Meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Submitted: PHILLIP J. DOW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By Janet Orth, Deputy Director for Administration