

MENDOCINO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Approved MINUTES

Monday, April 2, 2012

Town Hall, 363 N. Main St., Fort Bragg

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 Fort Bragg area transportation projects (10:30 a.m. to approximately 2:00 p.m.), the meeting was called to order at 2:10 p.m. with Directors Rex Jackman (Caltrans/PAC), Benj Thomas (Alternate), Holly Madrigal, John Pinches, Lauren Sinnott (Alternate), Carre Brown, and Dan Gjerde present; Chair Gjerde presiding. Alternate Director Kendall Smith was also present. Director Terry Hughey was excused.

Staff present: Phil Dow, Executive Director; Janet Orth, Deputy Director for Administration; Loretta Ellard, Assistant Executive Director; and James Sookne, Regional Project Manager.

2. Convene as RTPA

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

Public Expression. None.

4. Regular Calendar.

4. Discussion of City of Fort Bragg Transportation Planning Projects and Related Matters.

Chair Gjerde summarized the tour locales: from the new Simpson Lane roundabout south of town on State Route 1, to projects throughout the City limits, continuing north on Highway 1 to a coastal site near Westport, and returning with a stop at the former Georgia Pacific mill site. Print copies of his presentation had been handed out on the tour and were made available at the meeting, soon to be posted to MCOG's website: www.mendocinocog.org. Mendocino Transit Authority provided the bus and driver. The members expressed appreciation for the first-hand look at a comprehensive project area.

Discussion of observations and lessons learned included:

- Effectiveness of multiple agencies cooperating to achieve goals, opportunities for partnerships. (Thomas, Madrigal, Smith)
- Value of planning grants and completing plans that can identify and make projects eligible for implementation funds and draw the attention of funding agencies. Multiple funding sources contributed to all projects on the tour. Until the economy eventually turns around and construction funds become more available again, a strategic approach would be to make good use of MCOG's planning funds while seeking funds that are still available for interim phases such as traffic calming and sidewalks. (Gjerde)
- How funds can be leveraged for various project stages, such as preliminary engineering and acquisition of right-of-way, using discretionary dollars where available, and anticipating the need for discretionary funds far enough in advance. (Smith)
- Ways to provide for maintenance after construction is completed, such as identifying operational costs during the planning process, as well as any aspects that may be overlooked, and finding out whether the project will be sustainable or not. (Thomas, Gjerde)

- Public skepticism about effectiveness of plans has been dispelled in Fort Bragg with a track record of performance, resulting in more support and higher expectations of planning. (Thomas, Gjerde)
- Example of the how City of Fort Bragg created a park using mitigation funds shows value of forward thinking, in-kind exchanges, and other ways of meeting mutual needs. (Madrigal)
- How project management can be more efficient, with fewer delays and change orders, by more integration between departments, more cross-talk and staff participation in one another's meetings, resolving differences, such as between engineering and community development. Result is a better project at the end. (Sinnott, Gjerde)
- Similar experience of Fort Bragg on a larger scale at County of Mendocino, with disconnects among departments that are involved in a given project. The County is moving forward with initial steps to better integrate environmental health, planning and transportation aspects. (Smith)
- Comparison to experience of Gualala's Community Action Plan, generally favored by the public, but parking remains an issue there. In Fort Bragg, business owners were happy with the end product of downtown revitalization. The main concern was the construction schedule during the crucial summer tourist season, creating some hardship on small local businesses. Advice is to schedule around them, phase in sections, build during off-seasons, communicate with shop owners, allowing them time to adapt to the project schedule. (Sinnott, Gjerde)
- Future of Fort Bragg's transportation sales tax, including renewal, public support, other sales tax increases, future needs such as alley improvements, and much work remaining toward improving the Pavement Condition Index of streets and roads. (Ellard, Gjerde)
- Pros and cons of using consultants versus in-house staff; how Fort Bragg was able to build up its planning department resources over time, now using its own cost-effective staff more often and consultants less frequently than in the past. (Gjerde)
- Resources for bicycle and pedestrian projects include MCOG's periodic update of the Regional Bikeway Plan; which qualifies member entities' identified projects for State Bicycle Transportation Account (BTA) funds, making it easier to compete for grants without a separate plan. BTA funds improvements for commuters to work, school, and shopping, but not recreational uses, although projects can connect to recreation trails. City of Fort Bragg is making use of two BTA grants. (Dow, Gjerde)
- Also included in MCOG's planning program are Safe Routes to Schools Plans. City of Willits and Ukiah and County of Mendocino's plans are in various stages, with the intent to finish all three by next year. City of Point Arena already has a Community Action Plan that resulted in a Safe Routes to Schools project being implemented. (Dow)

No action was taken.

5 - 9. Consent Calendar. Upon motion by Pinches, second by Brown, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (7 Ayes –*Jackman /PAC, Thomas/Alt., Madrigal, Pinches, Sinnott/Alt., Brown, and Gjerde*; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 1 Absent - *Hughey*): IT IS ORDERED that consent items are approved:

5. Approval of March 5, 2012 Minutes – *as written*

6. Acceptance of February 29, 2012 Executive Committee Minutes – *as written*

7. Amendment of MCOG Bylaws Section 5.3, Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

Membership Composition – *continued from March 5, 2012* – *Status of the seat designated for one rail representative appointed by North Coast Railroad Authority is changed to non-voting membership.*

8. **Acceptance of 2010/11 Fiscal Audit of Mendocino Transit Authority**
– *MTA received a clean audit.*
9. **Adoption of Resolution Approving the Allocation of California Proposition 1B Funds, Fiscal Year 2010/11 Transit System Safety, Security, and Disaster Response Program, for Mendocino Transit Authority's Eligible Project**

Resolution No. M2012-04

Approving the Allocation of Proposition 1B Funds,
Fiscal Year 2010/11 Transit System Safety, Security
and Disaster Response Program
(Reso. #M2012-04 is incorporated herein by reference)

10. Recess as Policy Advisory Committee - Reconvene as RTPA - Ratify Action of Policy Advisory Committee. Upon motion by Thomas, second by Madrigal, and carried unanimously (6 Ayes; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 1 Absent - Hughey): IT IS ORDERED that the actions taken by the Policy Advisory Committee are ratified by the MCOG Board of Directors.

11. Reports – Information

- a. Mendocino Transit Authority. There was no report.
- 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; there were no questions.
 2. *2012 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)*. Mr. Dow reported the 2012 STIP schedule, which goes into effect July 1 and spans five years. MCOG's Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) proposed two new highway projects, a transit vehicle project, and a Transportation Enhancement (TE) type of project. No changes to the RTIP were made by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) when the STIP was adopted at their March 28 meeting.
 3. *U. S. 101 Bypass of Willits*. Mr. Dow reported that Director Pinches accompanied him to the CTC's continued meeting on March 29, and asked him to report. Director Pinches noted attendance by union members and others, and that out of scores of agenda items, approval of funds for this project drew applause throughout the room. The bypass project was funded for Phase 1 construction, a good start for an eventual second phase. It was a successful day for Mendocino County.

Director Sinnott asked for more details of this culmination of 22 years of work. Mr. Dow reported the Mendocino delegation also included former CTC commissioner Margie Handley of Willits, former Supervisor and MCOG board member Hal Wagenet, and Willits Mayor Bruce Burton. He described events of the day and opportunities related to this milestone, such as the Brooktrails Second Access road project. He summarized the bypass construction schedule, to break ground as early as October, with the major work to begin next year. Questions and discussion followed.
 4. *Miscellaneous*. There were no further staff reports.

- d. MCOG Directors. Director Madrigal reported on City of Willits' application for a Caltrans Community Based Planning Grant for their Railroad Avenue Corridor Study. She described a recent 12-mile walk along the railroad tracks from Walker Road in southern Willits to Redwood Valley, where she observed and documented condition of the railway.

Mr. Dow reported progress and status of MCOG's Rails With Trails Corridor Plan and several planning grant applications submitted by the March 30 due date.

- e. California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG) Delegates. Ms. Orth reported that as staff she and Ms. Ellard will attend the Annual Regional Issues Forum, April 26-27 in Monterey. Regretfully, the delegate and alternate delegate, Directors Brown and Smith, were unable to attend due to meeting conflicts. Discussion followed, with recognition that, as an association member, MCOG should participate in the forum to represent its rural interests.

12. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 3:07 p.m.

Submitted: PHILLIP J. DOW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By Janet Orth, Deputy Director for Administration