

# MENDOCINO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Approved MINUTES

Monday, February 4, 2013

County Administration Center, Board of Supervisors 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 .** The meeting was called to order at 1:34 p.m. with Directors Rex Jackman (Caltrans/PAC), Terry Hughey, Benj Thomas, Holly Madrigal, Doug Hammerstrom, John Pinches, Susan Ranochak, and Dan Gjerde present; Chair Gjerde presiding.

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

**2. Election of Officers – Chair and Vice Chair.** Deputy Director Orth introduced this item, reviewing staff's recommended procedure for the election as outlined in her written report. She noted the absence of an adopted rule and the option to adopt a rule of procedure for MCOG's officer elections. With no one objecting or proposing another method, Ms Orth conducted the election.

Nominations were opened for the office of Chair. Director Pinches nominated Director Gjerde. There were no further nominations for the office of Chair. **Upon motion** by Director Pinches, second by Director Ranochak, and carried unanimously (*7 Ayes; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 0 Absent*): IT IS ORDERED that nominations for the office of Chair are closed. **Upon motion** by Director Pinches, second by Director Thomas, and carried unanimously (*7 Ayes; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 0 Absent*): IT IS ORDERED that **Director Gjerde is re-elected Chair**.

Nominations were opened for the office of Vice Chair. Director Ranochak nominated Director Pinches. There were no further nominations for the office of Vice Chair. **Upon motion** by Director Hammerstrom, second by Director Hughey, and carried unanimously (*7 Ayes; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 0 Absent*): IT IS ORDERED that nominations for the office of Vice Chair are closed. **Upon motion** by Director Thomas, second by Director Madrigal, and carried unanimously (*7 Ayes; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 0 Absent*): IT IS ORDERED that **Director Pinches is re-elected Vice Chair**.

Ms. Orth thanked the Council members for their cooperation and Chair Gjerde presided over the remainder of the meeting.

Director Madrigal then excused herself from the meeting with apologies, expressing her interest in continuing to serve on the Executive Committee.

**3. Convene as RTPA**

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

**Public Expression.** Mr. J. R Rose, "senior advocate," Ukiah, called attention to the crisis of affordable housing for seniors throughout the county, particularly with the "baby boomer" generation retiring. Housing and other costs of living are rising. He cited examples and expressed hope that the Council would consider ways to address and resolve this worsening problem. He has been talking about this issue for at least six years now.

Mr. Javier Silva, Transportation Planning Director, Potter Valley Tribe and member of Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo in Willits, introduced himself as the newly hired transportation planner for Potter Valley Tribe. Other tribes in Mendocino County also are adding transportation planners now, and he offered assistance with any issues of concern in common with MCOG. He was personally affected by the elimination of the Blosser Lane transportation enhancement project in Willits. He will be in contact with MCOG staff or designees to cooperate for mutual benefit.

**5 - 9. Regular Calendar.** Mr. Dow offered to review the role of MCOG's Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) and how the agenda is structured for it, for new members of the Council. He introduced Cheryl Willis, Deputy Director at Caltrans District 1, appointed PAC member for MCOG since 1992 and Caltrans employee for 30 years. She will retire February 15 and was invited to the podium for recognition of her service. She said it has been great experience serving for 20 years on this PAC covering many issues, appreciated working with the various board members over the years and praised MCOG's staff. Mr. Dow said that her retirement will mean the loss of a valuable resource. All applauded Ms. Willis.

**5. Discussion and Presentation of Final Report: Pacific Coast Bike Route / California Coastal Trail Engineered Feasibility Study – Alta Planning + Design, Consultant.** Mr. Dow introduced the project, giving credit to Cheryl Willis for initiating this cooperative effort with Caltrans District 1 and the consultant team of four companies. The 105-mile route has lacked safety features since the bicentennial when it was designated and began attracting touring cyclists. He emphasized the size, scope and difficulty of the problem, which this study has started to address by conducting a systematic review and mapping of conditions and environmental constraints, and identifying potential improvement segments with cost estimates for funding as opportunities arise. Ms. Orth, responsible for MCOG's role on the management team, also made brief opening remarks, noting the Final Report document handed out today to the board members would be available on Caltrans and MCOG websites, and agendaized for acceptance on the March agenda. She then introduced Nora Daley-Peng, Senior Associate with Alta Planning + Design, who gave a slide presentation and invited questions. Extensive discussion included the following points:

- PCBR spans British Columbia to Mexico, with California a popular segment for touring cyclists; economic benefits are reported by local business owners despite the recession. (Gjerde)
- Will this investment in planning lead to funding of projects? (Pinches) Federal funding sources with bicycle and pedestrian eligibility previously available in SAFETEA-LU, for example the Transportation Enhancements (TE) program--were replaced or changed in MAP-21, into others such as the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). These have not yet been implemented by State of California, so funding is uncertain. TAP will likely provide less funding for rural regions than did the TE program, with about half of it likely going to statewide competitive grants. This study produced a tool to compare potential improvement segments, giving Caltrans a rational basis for selecting projects when funding opportunities arise. This high-level study provides much good data on each highway segment, which can now be broken down to priorities by quarter mile to compete well for TAP grants. (Jackman, Dow)
- Could shoulder improvements be done with minimal cost in some areas during regular road maintenance activities, or incremental improvements added to expand on existing work? (Hammerstrom) A good idea. Work on the coast costs more than in other areas, so this study helps to target such incremental improvements. In the past when Caltrans applied for funds, mainly construction capital was available, and projects turned out to need much more funding in environmental, right-of-way, and other preliminary work than previously thought. The study identifies order-of-magnitude costs and shows Caltrans how to best approach needs such as a

safety project. From the public outreach activities, community and local agencies' priorities are now better understood so that Caltrans can align with them. (Jackman, Willis)

- When bridge improvement projects create an opportunity to make bridges safer and more bicycle and pedestrian friendly, does Caltrans look at traffic volumes for those modes and is that a factor that moves a project forward? (Thomas) Yes. Projected volumes are used because of the long time frame for such construction projects. (Jackman)
- The touring cyclists seem to be most at risk, traveling in groups at high speeds, under hazardous conditions, who may not have researched safety of the route before arrival; please comment on the way PCBR has been promoted before fully developing the route. (Hughey) The 1976 PCBR designation attracts people who want that experience of cycling the coastal route, regardless of safety issues. Tourism caters to those visitors. The problem is being addressed after the fact. Caltrans is responsible for safety of the route. Discussion. (Dow, Jackman)
- Concern that high-speed rail funding will eclipse other transportation needs and divert dollars away; California has a State Rail Plan, with Caltrans the lead agency for rail, diverting truck weight fees to that mode. (Pinches) There have been certain funding sources dedicated to bicycle and pedestrian modes. It is anticipated that some level of federal dollars will be available in future than cannot be diverted to other uses. (Dow)
- As a commuter between Fort Bragg, Point Arena and Gualala for many years, saw cycling tours along the PCBR route, creating an economic engine for the coast and a precursor to ecotourism. Those businesses and groups are providing initial advertising for the coast an ecotourism area; others might see that and instead visit local campgrounds and other attractions. This should be viewed and supported as not only as recreational, but also as an economic issue. (Hammerstrom)

The Chair opened the floor to public comment (2:45 p.m.)

Mr. Lee Otter, California Coastal Commission staff, commented on the SR-1 corridor as an economic engine and sees the places along the coast "like a string of pearls" to be improved if it can be done without spoiling their essence. This corridor planning effort incorporates three main modes of travel—motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Senate Bill 901 authorized the California Coastal Trail, eventually to create a continuous hiking trail all along the coast. Most plans have addressed just one mode at a time; this PCBR study is an excellent example of integrating those modes. The Coastal Commission is vitally committed to not only maintaining but also improving the route, especially for safety. Continuity is key, and most lacking is the pedestrian mode, because only sections of trail are available; often hikers must continue on the highway as the only right-of-way to get "from one of those pearls to the next one." Beyond the good concept, execution was very well done. Community participation in this effort was high considering the low population. The consultants were very capable and did a good job. Caltrans' leadership and vision, especially that of Cheryl Willis, means this won't be just another plan that gathers dust on shelf. The Commission will submit more thorough comments subsequently to Caltrans. Individual projects will need to be considered on their own merits as they are developed, which the Commission will address at the time. This study gives MCOG an opportunity to compete for funds in future and partner with others, such as land conservancies or trusts on the coast. This is a legacy for the long run, "keep it going."

Mr. Jackman recognized the contributions of Jesse Robertson, Caltrans District 1 planner on the project. No action was taken (to be continued to the March agenda).

**6. Public Hearing: Adoption of Resolution Approving First Amendment to 2012 Regional Transportation Improvement Program to (RTIP) to Reprogram Transportation Enhancement Funds.** Mr. Dow gave a staff report summarizing the issue and necessary action as recommended in the draft resolution provided. The Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds will no longer be

available as they have in the past, as it is not authorized in the MAP21 bill. The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) will likely run out of Enhancements money in the fourth year of its timetable. He explained why a new TE project should not be started now and reported on the two projects recommended by MCOG's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The County's proposed project in Laytonville has leveraged other funds and would link several projects together; also it is important as the result of a community planning effort. City of Ukiah's downtown streetscape project identified priorities and also leverages other funds. Both projects are in the right years for the STIP. It is important not to delay or the funds could be forfeited. Ms. Barrett specified the procedure for today's action. The RTIP amendment would first deprogram City of Willits' Blosser Lane project, then program the two recommended projects.

Chair opened the public hearing at 3:07 p.m.

Howard Dashiell, Director, Mendocino County Department of Transportation, was invited to the podium to answer questions about the proposed pedestrian bridge at Branscomb Road in Laytonville. He clarified funding, redesign, materials and maintenance issues. The structure would be prefabricated and low maintenance. He reported progress and status of environmental delays and consultant study work, which could conclude this year, right-of-way next year, and construction the following year.

With no one wishing to speak, the hearing was closed at 3:11 p.m.

**Upon motion** by Pinches, second by Hammerstrom, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (7 Ayes –*Jackman/PAC, Hughey, Thomas, Hammerstrom, Pinches, Ranochak, and Gjerde*; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 1 Absent - *Madrigal*): IT IS ORDERED that the following resolution is adopted.

**Resolution No. M2013-01**

Adopting the First Amendment to the 2012  
Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)  
(Reso. #M2013-01 is incorporated herein by reference)

City of Willits Blosser Lane Elementary School TE Project	\$ <604,000>	
City of Ukiah Downtown Streetscape Project		\$ 489,000
County of Mendocino Pedestrian/Multi-Use Bridge on Branscomb Rd		\$ 115,000

**7. Report and Discussion of Regional Blueprint - Vision Mendocino 2030 Update.** Mr. Dow introduced Ms. Barrett, who gave a summary of status, reporting very poor turnout at the public workshops. The online survey is available at [www.visionmendocino2030.org](http://www.visionmendocino2030.org) with condensed information from the workshops. Council members are encouraged to take the survey and select their preferred growth scenario. The schedule for presentations was accelerated due to lack of public input, so these have already started. Ms. Barrett announced the upcoming presentations.

Mr. Dow emphasized the change of direction and reason for going now to elected bodies. There was not a sufficient level of input to make a valid analysis. The State has encouraged all regions to do produce the Blueprints. Although we have not seen growth here over the past several years, there will be growth in future, likely moderate in Mendocino County over the next 20 years. There is not much to motivate people to participate, but more input is needed.

Discussion included:

- High cost of this project, which follows after the County's General Plan process; it's not surprising people may wonder why to go through it again. The issue is more about sustainability than growth. The General Plan cost about \$8 million and also dealt with the Ukiah Valley Area Plan. (Pinches)

- Funding was from the Blueprint grant? (Gjerde) Yes. The intent of SB 375 was to implement this type of planning process statewide, with incentives. The resulting Regional Blueprint can be accepted or rejected by the five governing bodies in Mendocino County. It is hoped some good ideas will come out of it. Incentives include actual funding for projects that have been vetted through this process, thus qualifying for specific funds. (Dow)
- The legislation's intent is being carried out. Future spending of taxpayer dollars will benefit from this process of identifying how development should occur and related factors. Even though not much community input has been received, this will be valuable to agencies for saving taxpayer dollars in future. (Hammerstrom)

This agenda item was for information only; no action was taken.

**8. Appointments to Standing Committees.** Chair Gjerde and staff summarized duties of each committee for review.

- a. Executive Committee. According to MCOG's bylaws, the Chair and Vice Chair are members of this committee (formalized by following board action) with the addition of a third member. **Upon motion** by Thomas, second by Ranochak, and carried unanimously (*7 Ayes; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 1 Absent - Madrigal*): IT IS ORDERED that the Council re-appoints **Chair Gjerde, Vice Chair Pinches, and Director Madrigal** to the Executive Committee.
- b. Transit Productivity Committee. After discussion and inviting volunteers, **Chair Gjerde** re-appointed himself and appointed **Director Hammerstrom** to the Transit Productivity Committee, according to Bylaws procedure, with concurrence of the members.
- c. California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG). Chair Gjerde expressed interest in serving as the Alternate Delegate, which would satisfy the Bylaws that either the delegate or alternate is a member of the Executive Committee. None of the members present volunteered to serve as the delegate. The former delegate, Carre Brown, is now an alternate MCOG member, so it was considered preferable to have a full member as the new delegate. The upcoming Annual Regional Leadership Forum in April was noted as the next delegates meeting. This agenda item was continued to the March 4 meeting.
- d. Optional Appointment to North State Super Region. Status of this group was reported; to date no board members have been called upon to participate, but might in future. **Upon motion** by Ranochak, second by Hammerstrom, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (*7 Ayes; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 1 Absent*): IT IS ORDERED that the Council re-appoints **Vice Chair Pinches as the Delegate.** (No Alternate Delegate was appointed.)

**9. Adoption of 2013 Board Calendar with Educational Options.** Ms. Orth confirmed the change of regular venue from City Hall to the Supervisors Chambers. The draft calendar was discussed; a conflict with the LAFCO meeting was noted for April 1. For the tentatively scheduled April meeting and tour, Director Pinches suggested that the whole Council attend the groundbreaking ceremony for the U.S. 101 Bypass of Willits upcoming in the spring, perhaps as early as April, since it will be "the largest construction project in history of Mendocino County." A brief discussion followed, with direction to staff to research alternate dates for April. The item was continued and no action was taken.

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

**10. Approval of December 3, 2012 Minutes – as written**

**11. Acceptance of Social Services Transportation Advisory Council Minutes of November 14, 2012**

**12. Approval of Technical Advisory Committee Recommendations of January 9, 2013:**

**Third Amendment to Fiscal Year 2012/13 Planning Overall Work Program (OWP)**

- *Programs additional Rural Planning Assistance (RPA) funding made available by Caltrans to Work Element 16 (Multi-Modal Transportation Planning);*
- *Adds a new task to existing Work Element 16 to provide transportation planning assistance to the County Health & Human Services Agency (HHS) to help implement their “Safe Routes to Schools Mini-Grants” program;*
- *Reprograms funding within existing Work Element 17-3 (Regional Blueprint) to transfer funds under-claimed by local agency staff to MCOG staff before the grant expires;*
- *Adds a new Work Element 27 to administer the “Safe Routes to Schools Mini-Grants” for County Health & Human Services Agency; and*
- *Increases total OWP funding from \$1,565,843 to \$1,607,230.*

**13. Adoption of Resolution Approving Mendocino Transit Authority's Grant Application for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5311 Non-Urbanized Program - Annual Regional Apportionment for Transit Operating Assistance**

**Resolution No. M2013-02**

Approving the Programming of FTA Section 5311  
Non-Urbanized Program Funds for  
Mendocino Transit Authority Operating Assistance  
(Reso. #M2013-02 is incorporated herein by reference)

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

**Advisory Committee.** Upon motion by Thomas, second by Hammerstrom, and carried unanimously (6 Ayes; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 1 Absent): IT IS ORDERED that the actions taken by the Policy Advisory Committee are ratified by the MCOG Board of Directors.

Director Thomas left the meeting at 3:48 p.m.

**15. Reports - Information**

- a. Mendocino Transit Authority. Interim General Manager Dan Baxter briefly reported MTA is working with several of the senior centers on Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 program grant applications for replacement vehicles.
- b. North Coast Railroad Authority. There was no report; NCRA had not met since the last report.
- c. MCOG Administration & Planning Staff
  1. *Summary of Meetings.* Mr. Dow referred to his written staff report, noting a busy past two months for staff, despite the holidays. There were no questions from the Council.
  2. *Current Audits of MCOG.* Ms. Orth reported and described three simultaneous audits that staff has been undergoing over the past few months, soon to be concluded: 1) annual fiscal audit, 2) triennial performance audit, and 3) periodic State grant pre-award audit. The Executive Committee will review and report further to the Council when done.
  3. *Summary of Applications Received – Draft FY 2013/14 Transportation Planning Overall Work Program (OWP).* Ms. Ellard reported on this annual process. To date there is not enough funding available to fully fund all proposals. The Technical Advisory Committee will bring its recommendations to the Council.

4. *Quarterly Status of Projects.* Mr. Dow stated this report is intended to show MCOG's involvement with various projects throughout the county, by several categories. The format is subject to change.
5. *Miscellaneous.* Ms. Ellard reported that MCOG is hosting and sponsoring two technical trainings for local agency staffs, with about 40 people attending each event. Also, proposals for Caltrans transportation planning grants will be brought to the Council in March with requests for support in the form of sponsorship, match funds, or endorsement. Completed applications are due to Caltrans by April 2.

Mr. Dow called attention to an item in the Information Packet, an excerpt of the California Transportation Commission's Annual Report to the Legislature. The full report is available online. Also included in the packet is his white paper of December 2012 on impacts to rural regions of funding by population formula, relative to ongoing discussions in statewide meetings on MAP-21 implementation.

- d. MCOG Directors. Chair Gjerde handed out his written report of two statewide meetings he and MCOG staff attended in January, a CALCOG meeting and the California Transportation Foundation's annual forum.
- e. California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG) Delegates. There was no further report.

**16. Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 4:08 p.m.

Submitted: PHILLIP J. DOW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By Janet Orth, Deputy Director for Administration