

MENDOCINO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Approved MINUTES

Monday, February 2, 2015

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 and Roll Call – Welcome New Members – Orientation Opportunities. The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. with Directors Jackman (Caltrans/PAC), Doug Hammerstrom, Larry Stranske, Trevor Sanders, Susan Ranochak, Tom Woodhouse, and Dan Gjerde present; Chair Gjerde presiding. Director Steve Scalmanini was absent.

Staff present: Phil Dow, Executive Director; Janet Orth, Deputy Director/CFO; Loretta Ellard, Deputy Planner; and Nephela Barrett, Program Manager.

New members are Tom Woodhouse, 3rd District Supervisor, and Steve Scalmanini, Ukiah City Councilmember. Executive Director Dow offered to meet individually or as a group for board member orientation. Ms. Orth offered updates to the Board manual for all members, in their choice of print and/or electronic formats. Staff then presided over the following officers election.

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 Gjerde was nominated. With no further nominations, Ms. Orth closed nominations for the office of Chair. **Upon motion** by Hammerstrom, second by Sanders, and carried unanimously (*6 Ayes; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 1 Absent*): IT IS ORDERED that **Director Gjerde is re-elected Chair**.

Nominations were opened for the office of Vice Chair. Director Hammerstrom was nominated. With no further nominations, Ms. Orth closed nominations for the office of Vice Chair. **Upon motion** by Ranochak, second by Woodhouse, and carried unanimously (*6 Ayes; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 1 Absent*): IT IS ORDERED that **Director Hammerstrom is re-elected Vice Chair**.

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

3. Adoption of 2015 Board Calendar with Educational Options. The draft calendar was reviewed and discussed. The fall transportation tour and meeting in Hopland was set for October 5, in place of the regular meeting. **Upon motion** by Stranske, second by Hammerstrom, and carried unanimously (*6 Ayes; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 1 Absent*): IT IS ORDERED that the 2015 MCOG Board Meeting Calendar is adopted as amended.

4. Convene as RTPA

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

Public Expression. None.

6 - 10. Regular Calendar.

6. Public Hearing: Unmet Transit Needs for Fiscal Year 2015/16 – *continued from December 1, 2014 and Re-Noticed 30 Days in Advance of Hearing*

- a. Finding of Proper Notice. Ms. Orth reported 30 days' notice, as required, was published in four newspapers, showing proofs of publication. The notice also was posted on MCOG's website and emailed to a list of interested stakeholders. **Upon motion** by Ranochak, second by Stranske, and carried unanimously (7 Ayes; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 1 Absent): IT IS ORDERED that this hearing was properly noticed.
- b. Public Hearing. Ms. Orth reported status of this annual process. Testimony from December 1 was provided again as an attachment to the SSTAC minutes in the Board's Information Packet. No additional written testimony had been received since December 1. The Chair opened and closed the public hearing at 2:02 p.m., with no one coming forward to speak.
- c. Board Action. **Upon motion** by Hammerstrom, second by Stranske, and carried unanimously (7 Ayes; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 1 Absent): IT IS ORDERED that 1) MCOG receives as testimony all needs reported on December 1, 2014 by the SSTAC, 2) the testimony received includes "unmet transit needs" as qualified by MCOG's adopted definitions, and 3) all testimony is directed to Mendocino Transit Authority for analysis and to the Transit Productivity Committee for further review and recommendation.

7. Appointments to Standing Committees

- 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, reflecting a city-county balance of representation. Ms. Orth requested a meeting in February for annual business. Director Woodhouse volunteered to serve.
Upon motion by Ranochak, second by Stranske, and carried unanimously (7 Ayes; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 1 Absent): IT IS ORDERED that the Council appoints **Chair Gjerde, Vice Chair Hammerstrom, and Director Woodhouse** to the Executive Committee.
- b. Transit Productivity Committee. There was a brief discussion of duties. Ms. Orth itemized the four topic areas. The Chair re-appointed **Dan Gjerde and Doug Hammerstrom** to the Transit Productivity Committee. (According to the Bylaws, appointments are made by the Chair.)
- c. California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG). Duties and upcoming events were noted, with the Annual Regional Leadership Forum in April as the next delegates meeting. **Upon motion** by Hammerstrom, second by Ranochak, and carried unanimously (7 Ayes; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 1 Absent): IT IS ORDERED that the Council appoints **Director Trevor Sanders as the Delegate and Chair Dan Gjerde as the Alternate**.

8. Report and Discussion of 2015 Overview - Goals and Priorities. Mr. Dow introduced the issue, referring to his written staff report, which covered Administration & Fiscal Services, Transportation Planning Services, Local Assistance/Project Implementation, and SAFE Program. Questions and discussion included the following.

Funding Cycles

- Suggestion to outline when major events or decisions occur on MCOG's calendar, for example, STIP programming cycles. An overview of the Regional/State Transportation Improvement Program (R/STIP) biennial process, starting with the Fund Estimate and concluding with STIP adoption by the CTC. (Hammerstrom, Dow)

- Caltrans transportation planning grants applications usually are due annually in October.
- 2% Local Transportation Fund Bicycle & Pedestrian Program grant awards will again be made by MCOG next year. (Gjerde, Ellard)
- California's Active Transportation Program (ATP) is currently the major funding source available; Cycle 2 applications will be due this spring. Much competition and a wide range of proposals are anticipated. MCOG expects several proposals from around Mendocino County. Staff offered a workshop to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to share lessons learned in Cycle 1 and ensure the best candidate projects are submitted. Numerous community plans completed by MCOG have generated ready projects, many of them where the main street is a state highway, such as Gualala, Point Arena, Laytonville, Westport, Covelo, and Anderson Valley. Cycle 1 ATP proposals were submitted by Cities of Willits, Fort Bragg and Ukiah; Westport Municipal Advisory Council; County Health & Human Services Agency; and by MCOG for the Covelo trail project. Three received funding: two under the statewide category, and one under small urban/rural. Covelo was successful because fresh, detailed information was available from MCOG's recently completed plan, with community process documented. Other proposals lacked documentation of public process and necessary data. Having served on the statewide review committee, evaluating and scoring 34 proposals, Executive Director Dow learned what made a proposal successful or not. (Gjerde, Dow, Woodhouse)

US-101 Bypass of Willits

- Additional funding is anticipated to be requested soon for environmental and mitigation projects; Caltrans will ask MCOG for the established 15 percent share. Reasons for cost increases need to be made clear to the public. Caltrans conducted a thorough Risk Management Plan process so as not to come back multiple times for funding. (Stranske, Jackman, Dow)
- The mitigation plan includes more projects to complete than just construction of the facility; had hoped for installment payments, however this will take funds from other needs for years to come. Someday it might be questioned whether many other local projects could have been funded instead of this one large one. At the December meeting, the Council left unresolved an open issue of whether MCOG should contribute a percentage indefinitely. (Hammerstrom)
- Commitment to the 15 percent share was agreed to long ago; staff will research evidence for the present Council. Every project has problems and setbacks. In addition, a continuous effort by those who don't want this project has added many millions to the cost. (Dow)
- Four separate projects include the Sherwood Road intersection, wetlands creation, and two other environmental mitigations. It would be helpful to see these itemized to address as needed in future. (Dow, Woodhouse)

No action was taken.

9. Review and Discussion of Draft Public Transit – Human Services Coordinated Plan. Ms.

Barrett introduced the issue. Copies of the Administrative Review Draft were made available. The purpose is to identify projects that qualify for funding under certain federal programs. University of the Pacific staff prepared the plan under a state contract. Extensive public outreach was conducted, including workshops both coastal and inland, and MCOG's Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) had input. Existing transportation services for elderly, disabled and low-income individuals, both public and private, were identified, as well as strategies to address needs and gaps. She summarized sections of the plan and their resulting data and demographics. There is an increased need for these types of services in our region and for coordination among available services. Mendocino County is doing the best at coordination among those regions surveyed. She

reviewed the recommended strategies in the plan. There is still an opportunity to provide input to the draft plan, before adoption at the next MCOG meeting. Questions and discussion included:

- Services provided by Willits Senior Center and funding sources; MTA now contracts with Willits Seniors to provide “curb-to-curb” service. (Stranske, Barrett, Dan Baxter)
- Alternatives to car use needed due to affordability or physical disability; whether pedestrian infrastructure funding is addressed. (Hammerstrom) Within certain proximity of transit stops it is identified as a need, though not as a high-priority strategy in the draft plan. (Barrett)
- The only program that requires this plan is the FTA Section 5310 grant program, which funds transit for elderly and disabled constituents. 5310 typically is applied for by the senior centers for replacement vehicles and related equipment. (Barrett)
- More transit riders could be attracted under programs that fund pedestrian facilities within a certain distance of a transit stop. (Gjerde) This does not apply to 5310, but perhaps other transit funding programs. (Barrett)

Chair invited audience questions (none). Ms. Barrett invited additional questions or comments up to February 13. No action was taken.

10. Authorization to Accept Implementation Responsibility for Mendocino County Health & Human Services Agency’s Active Transportation Program Grant for Non-Infrastructure Safe Routes to Schools Project. Mr. Dow introduced this item and referred to his written report. Ms. Stacey Cryer, Director of HHSA was present for this item. She reported her department’s application and award of a \$871,000 grant, now moving toward allocation by the California Transportation Commission (CTC). She has concerns about HHSA’s capability to deliver the project. She had met with MCOG staff to explore alternatives. As a worthy project, she was reluctant to lose the funding or to not implement the project well, which might affect them in future. Discussion included:

- County staff has certain expertise; would they still have a role? Yes, County and MCOG staffs would divide tasks; County would be a subcontractor to MCOG. No County staff would be lost as a result; there are open positions currently. In this case it is better to work with MCOG, who knows how to deliver this project. (Hammerstrom, Cryer)
- There is some overlap between the Covelo project and this one, with opportunities to coordinate and expand the scope to more schools, rather than duplicate efforts. (Gjerde)
- MCOG currently has the capacity to do this because planning staff is not preparing the Regional Transportation Plan update this year. MCOG staff would manage the project and contract out to best available sources for the work. (Dow)

Ms. Cryer expressed appreciation to the Council for considering the proposal. **Upon motion** by Hammerstrom, second by Ranochak, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (*7 Ayes – Jackman/PAC, Hammerstrom, Stranske, Sanders, Ranochak, Woodhouse, and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 1 Absent – Scalmanini*): IT IS ORDERED that staff’s recommendation is approved to accept implementation responsibility for the Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) Safe Routes To School (SRTS) Project and the Chair is authorized to sign a letter to the California Transportation Commission indicating acceptance of implementation responsibility for this Active Transportation Program project.

11. Consent Calendar. Upon motion by Stranske, second by Ranochak, and carried unanimously (*7 Ayes; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 1 Absent*): IT IS ORDERED that the one consent item is approved:

11. Approval of December 1, 2014 Minutes – as written

12. Recess as Policy Advisory Committee - Reconvene as RTPA - Ratify Action of Policy Advisory Committee. Upon motion by Ranochak, 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.

13. Reports - Information

- a. Mendocino Transit Authority. Mr. Dan Baxter, General Manager, reported that MTA is applying for another Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5311f program grant to add service to the currently funded Route 65 expansion of trips to Santa Rosa, which will start in Fiscal Year 2015/16.
- b. North Coast Railroad Authority. There was no report.
- c. MCOG Staff - Summary of Meetings. Mr. Dow referred to his written staff report and reported two amendments to it.
- d. MCOG Administration Staff
 1. *U.S. 101 Bypass of Willits*. The written report provided by Project Manager Mauricio Serrano was submitted one day before the collapse occurred on the section of viaduct construction. Mr. Jackman (Caltrans/PAC) invited questions. It is not yet known how long the safety investigation will take to make findings. They anticipate that most if not all costs will be borne by the contractor and its insurance. All debris has been removed from the creek and there is a plan to restore any damage.
 2. *Road Usage Charge as an Alternative to the Gasoline Tax*. Mr. Dow referred to his past discussions of this topic, formerly called VMT (Vehicle Miles Traveled). His staff report discussed reasons to look beyond the gas tax, including a white paper from a statewide working group. Similar conclusions are made as in 1991, but now matters are more critical. The gasoline tax has failed to keep up with infrastructure needs, as it is based on a unit of commodity, not on price variance. The excise tax originally was meant to handle both improvement costs and maintenance. The re-emergence of electric vehicles has detracted from the tax and will need to contribute revenue eventually. Several areas of California are committed to encouraging EV sales to meet air quality goals. There are several reasons for looking at ways revenues are collected for use of the highway system, a major issue now. Oregon and Washington have taken the lead in this process. California is conducting a pilot program to determine the best approach (SB 1077). Staff has been attending meetings on this subject and will keep the Council informed.

Discussion included various methods under evaluation for tracking, reporting and collecting payments for mileage. A state committee will deliberate over the coming year.
 3. *Miscellaneous*. Ms. Orth distributed annual notices to file Form 700, Statement of Economic Interests.
- e. MCOG Planning Staff
 1. *Mendocino/US 101 Hopland "Main Street" Engineered Feasibility Study*. Ms. Ellard reported status of this community planning project. The consultant and MCOG are publicizing a community workshop February 11-12 in Hopland for identifying potential transportation improvements for future funding. Mr. Dow noted this project is the last community MCOG has not yet studied where the state highway is Main Street.

2. *Miscellaneous.* Ms. Ellard reported a kickoff meeting of staff and consultants for the Greater Ukiah Area Micro-simulation Model (GUAMM) project. She described the purpose of this work element in the current year's Planning program. MCOG has contracted with Caliper Corporation, fully funded by Caltrans at \$250,000. Mr. Jackman noted District 1 has worked with this firm several times and believes it will result in a valuable and useful product, particularly for the highway interchanges, but also for the entire Ukiah Valley area circulation. Standards and formulae from the highway design manual are applied in a model to see how effective various applications would be, before investing in improvements.

Staff discussed related efforts such as the countywide model and its uses, and noted MCOG's 2005 study of the Ukiah Valley 101 corridor to address problems and safety concerns. Recommendation from that study are now behind schedule and need to be funded. This is a long-term tool to involve coordination with County DOT and City of Ukiah on several potential projects such as a Redemeyer Road extension.

- f. MCOG Directors. Director Hammerstrom noted Fort Bragg returned STIP funds, terminating its programmed project on Route 1. Citizens group preferences in the downtown area were expressed to the City Council, whereas Caltrans has a safety focus. What becomes of that money? Mr. Dow commented on MCOG's perspective and the long timeline for funding. The CTC met December 10, where it was determined the project had reached its maximum time extension limit and the funds must be allocated to it or forfeited. Eventually the funds will return to MCOG's share for reallocation.

Director Hammerstrom requested time on the next agenda to give a presentation on the Walk21 conference he recently attended.

- g. California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG) Delegates. There was no report.

14. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 3:59 p.m.

Submitted: PHILLIP J. DOW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By Janet Orth, Deputy Director/CFO