



# MENDOCINO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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**To: Mendocino County News Media**

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## **Federal Grant Meets Top Transit Needs**

Many months of community work have resulted in three public transit needs being met. Mendocino Council of Governments' annual Unmet Transit Needs process identified a long list of needs, three of which were found "reasonable to meet" if a federal grant was approved.

Mendocino Transit Authority (MTA) announced that the California Department of Transportation has awarded a federal grant of \$300,000 to expand Route 65 service to Santa Rosa, meeting three needs on MCOG's list that add trips and extend the route.

The town of Mendocino will connect to Route 65, more weekday and Saturday trips will be added to the Fort Bragg-Willits run, and connections will be better timed for transfers to Golden Gate Transit from Santa Rosa to San Francisco. There will be two round trips daily, six days a week, starting as early as September.

"MTA is very excited that we are able to meet a service need that has been identified by the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council. We also want to thank everyone who has been involved with this project, as all of their hard work is now coming to fruition!" stated Carla Meyer, MTA General Manager.

The Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC), a standing committee of MCOG made up of transit stakeholders representing various community-based agencies, met last November for a brainstorming session that kicked off the annual process of identifying needs. It was the best attended SSTAC meeting in recent years, with more than a dozen participants, each representing a range of constituents. MTA had gathered public testimony throughout the year, which were added to the list.

In December, MCOG accepted the SSTAC list and heard further testimony from members of the public in its annual public hearing. The resulting list was forwarded to MTA for analysis, which was reviewed in May by MCOG's Transit Productivity Committee, consisting of two MCOG board members, two MTA board members, and a representative of five senior centers in Mendocino County.

MCOG's Board of Directors acted on both committees' recommendation that "there are unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet for Fiscal Year 2016/17, contingent on approval of MTA's grant proposal under the Federal Transit Administration Section 5311f program," identifying the three most currently feasible needs.

While there is seldom enough local funding available to start new transit services, the annual Unmet Transit Needs process often results in one or more needs met through grants or minor route adjustments. MCOG funds about two-thirds of MTA's operating budget from the quarter-cent transportation sales tax, typically close to \$3 million a year.

MCOG formed as a joint powers agreement in 1972, as mandated by state law, to disburse state and federal funds for transportation, to provide regional planning, and to serve as a regional forum. MCOG is overseen by a board consisting of two county supervisors, a countywide public appointee, and one council member from each of the four incorporated cities. For more information, call the MCOG office at 463-1859 or consult the agency's web site at [www.mendocinocog.org](http://www.mendocinocog.org). MTA can be reached at 1-800-696-4MTA or <http://mendocinotransit.org>.

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