



MENDOCINO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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December 5, 2017
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
End Date: January 31, 2018

To: Mendocino County News Media

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SB1 Brings Millions for Transportation Projects in Mendocino County

At its meeting Monday, the Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) approved the 2018 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP), programming \$3,024,000 for transportation projects over the next five-year cycle.

The recent enactment of Senate Bill 1, increasing transportation taxes to fund a backlog of deferred maintenance throughout California, made it possible to fund these projects. Without it, MCOG officials had expected to see a shortfall of RTIP funds until at least 2022. The State's fund estimate included \$3 million of new programming capacity for MCOG as a result of SB1. Statewide revenue projections are an estimated \$5.4 billion a year. An influx of new jobs has already started.

Cities and counties will receive increased Local Streets & Roads gas tax revenue directly from the State, to supplement existing maintenance budgets. Three cities in Mendocino County will get an additional reward for taxing themselves with voter-approved transportation sales taxes for the past 15 years. The Active Transportation Program (ATP), which funds bicycle, pedestrian and trails projects through competitive grants, is also augmented.

"The number one complaint that I hear is poor road conditions," commented 3rd District Supervisor and MCOG board member Georgeanne Croskey. "I think it's important for people to see that the money has to come from somewhere, and right now that money is going to be here because of SB1. If that law is repealed, the chances of getting our roads fixed will dramatically plummet. I want to help them, but we haven't had the money to help them. With SB1 hopefully we will."

SB1 created four new programs and supplemented four existing programs. Mendocino County gets immediate economic benefits from five of these: the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), Local Streets & Roads, Local Partnership Program, Caltrans state highway maintenance (a.k.a. SHOPP), and planning grants.

MCOG learned this week of its successful grant proposal for a \$179,000 Caltrans planning grant to develop a countywide pedestrian facilities inventory and feasibility study to fill infrastructure gaps. This will create a list of local prioritized projects, positioned and ready to compete in future cycles of the State’s ATP grants. The ATP combines hundreds of millions in state and federal funding programs for what is now called “active transportation.”

Three of the cities in Mendocino County have enacted voter-approved sales taxes dedicated to transportation, joining a coalition of 20 “self-help” counties. This qualifies them for State matching funds through the Local Partnership Program. Fort Bragg, Willits and Point Arena each will receive \$100,000 per year, far more than previous levels. MCOG staff worked hard on guidelines committees to ensure that rural agencies that taxed themselves were rewarded. The Cities intend to use these funds to improve street and road conditions through repaving and maintenance work.

Projects that made MCOG’s regional program list, subject to approval by the California Transportation Commission, are:

- North State Street improvements in Ukiah – environmental phase at \$132,000
- US-101 Intersection/Interchange improvements in Ukiah Valley – design phase at \$468,000
- South Main Street pedestrian improvements in Fort Bragg – environmental, design and construction at \$1,485,000
- Gualala Downtown Streetscape – design phase at \$575,000
- Sherwood Road Geometric Upgrade in Willits – construction at \$100,000
- Willits Bypass Main Street Relinquishment – through construction at \$98,000
- MCOG Planning, Programming & Monitoring at \$298,000.

“In addition to all of these benefits, we will be watching for improvements coming from the new Trade Corridor Enhancement Program over the long term,” reported MCOG Executive Director Phil Dow. “Access to Mendocino County highways will improve through proposed work to be funded in adjacent counties that have projects ready for construction and eligible for this new SB1 program.”

For more information on SB1 transportation investments, visit <http://rebuildingca.ca.gov/>.

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.