

MENDOCINO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

APPROVED MINUTES Monday, November 6, 2023

Primary Location:

County Administration Center, Board of Supervisors Chambers
Room 1070, 501 Low Gap Road, Ukiah

Teleconference Locations:

Fort Bragg City Hall, 416 N. Franklin St., Fort Bragg
Point Arena City Hall, 451 School St., Point Arena
Caltrans District 1, 1656 Union St., Eureka

General Public Teleconference by Zoom

ADDITIONAL MEDIA:

[Mendocino County Video](http://www.mendocinocog.org) or find
[YouTube link at http://www.mendocinocog.org under Meetings](http://www.mendocinocog.org)

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. The meeting was called to order at 1:32 p.m. with Directors present: John Haschak, Mike Carter, Greta Kanne and Dan Gjerde in Ukiah; Bernie Norvell in Fort Bragg; Jeff Hansen in Point Arena; and Tatiana Ahlstrand (Caltrans/PAC) in Eureka. Josephina Duenas was absent. Chair Gjerde presiding.

Staff present in Ukiah: Nephele Barrett, Executive Director; Janet Orth, Deputy Director & CFO; Loretta Ellard, Deputy Planner; and James Sookne, Program Manager. Ms. Orth announced that MCOG's clerk, Jody Lowblad, was away at a training conference for Board Clerks and Secretaries.

Staff present by Zoom: Lisa Davey-Bates, Transportation Planner; Alexis Pedrotti, Program Manager; and Michael Villa, Project Coordinator.

2. Assembly Bill 2449 Notifications and Considerations. This item is to receive and address requests from Board members to participate in the meeting from a non-posted location, subject to conditions set forth in AB 2449. There were no such requests.

3. Convene as Convene as RTPA

4. Recess as RTPA – Reconvene as Policy Advisory Committee

5 - 8. Consent Calendar. Upon motion by Carter, second by Haschak, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (6 Ayes – Haschak, Carter, Kanne, Norvell, Ahlstrand/PAC and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 1 Absent – Duenas): IT IS ORDERED that consent items are approved. [Clerk's note: Director Hansen was unable to vote due to technical difficulties, resolved later in the meeting.]

5. Approval of October 2, 2023 Minutes – as written

6. Third Amendment to Fiscal Year 2023/24 RTPA Budget: Adoption of Resolution Revising Allocation of 2023/24 LTF, STA, and FY 2022/23 Carryover Capital Reserve Funds to Mendocino Transit Authority – to reduce Local Transportation Funds allocation to funds available

Resolution No. M2023-11

Revising Allocation of 2023/24 LTF, STA, and FY 2022/23
Carryover Capital Reserve Funds to Mendocino Transit Authority,
Superseding Resolutions #M2023-04 and #M2023-07
(Reso. #M2023-11 is incorporated herein by reference)

- 7. Technical Advisory Committee Recommendation of October 25, 2023: Approval of Third Amendment to Fiscal Year 2023/24 Transportation Planning Overall Work Program (OWP)** – *To add a Caltrans Rural Planning Assistance (RPA) Discretionary Grant award of \$100,000 for Work Element 10, to Update/Expand Local Road Safety/Action Plans within Mendocino County. Total OWP funding increased from \$1,277,012 to \$1,377,012, an increase of \$100,000. The Executive Director is authorized to sign certifications and a revised OWP Agreement as needed and forward to Caltrans as required.*
- 8. Authorization of Executive Director to Complete the Redwood Region RISE (Resilient Inclusive Sustainable Economy) High Road Transition Collaborative Collective Partnership Agreement Letter and to Participate in the HRTC Voting Member Block**
- 9. Public Expression.** Mr. Dave Shpak of Gualala expressed appreciation for the opportunity to participate in MCOG’s Technical Advisory Committee meetings. The TAC members have made him feel welcome, and he has learned a lot from them.
- 10. Review/Discussion/Direction: Draft 2024 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP).** Program Manager Sookne summarized his written staff report and draft RTIP provided in the agenda packet for discussion. The State’s 2024 Fund Estimate identified a target of \$11,731,000 available to the region and a maximum of \$36,177,000. MCOG’s Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) had scored and ranked proposals received. Total requests came to \$27,950,875 for seven projects. He explained an issue with certain quantitative scores, where staff recalculated results, moving the County’s Ackerman Creek Bridge replacement project from third to first place and the others remaining in order. In addition to the TAC’s recommendation, staff presented two alternative options; these would fund either three or four projects. The Council could choose a different selection. Direction was requested to further develop the draft document. Board discussion included:
 - Amounts above the target would borrow from future funding shares. All three options exceed the target. Pros and cons, prudent levels reviewed. (Haschak, Kanne, Gjerde, staff)
 - Could project funding be reduced? If the North State Street/US-101 intersection roundabout (the most costly project) were not fully funded, it could not be programmed unless the County commits or secures the balance of funds, or MCOG reserves shares from the next STIP cycle. (Gjerde, staff)
 - Review of other sources and how applied to projects, such as Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP), Caltrans contributions, and County’s road fund contribution. (Sookne)
 - Could the target amount change? Unlikely, as adopted by the California Transportation Commission (CTC). If revenues do not materialize, target would be reduced in the 2026 Fund Estimate. (Gjerde, staff)
 - Alicia Winokur, Deputy Director – Engineering, Mendocino County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) was invited to discuss the North State Street projects in Ukiah and potential funding sources in addition to MCOG’s regional funds. County is working on CEQA and NEPA documents. This would be a good project to program with “borrowed” funds and has regional importance. She will look into further funding options with MCDOT Director.
 - Question of whether developer fees could be raised based on future development. (Gjerde)

- Importance of and options for road rehabilitation projects proposed by MCDOT, which could be completed by end of next summer if funded, or rising costs if delayed. (Winokur)

Director Hansen’s audio issue was resolved at approximately 2:00 p.m.

- Funding road rehabilitation now will go farther than later on. (Norvell)
- Support for Mountain View Road rehabilitation project as valuable to coastal residents. (Hansen)
- Discussion of Ackerman Creek Bridge project on North State Street in Ukiah, including regional, environmental and safety benefits, and support of Pinoleville Tribe. The funding request is a small portion of cost and leverages other identified funds for a larger project. MCDOT plans to advertise for construction next summer. (Barrett, Winokur)
- Question/discussion of Fund Estimate levels over past cycles, varying widely, now more stable. Revenue factors include decreasing fuel taxes as vehicle efficiency improves, while excise taxes are adjusted to reflect sales tax equivalency. Previous STIP targets have been fairly accurate in recent years. (Kanne, Barrett)
- Review of projects in light of five-year STIP span and likelihood of funding in excess of target. Advantages/disadvantages of advancing future funds to save on costs. (Barrett, Kanne, Haschak)
- Support for limiting to the two top-ranked projects. (Kanne)
- Discussion of the Gualala Downtown Streetscape project.

The Chair invited public comment.

Mr. Dave Shpak: While a tough decision, this system is designed to accommodate some future spending; the ability to allocate earlier is a big advantage--deal with backlog today. The Gualala project is of great importance to the South Coast, having invested much time and effort to date. Funds were reserved in last STIP cycle; encourages MCOG to keep its commitment and complete the project now.

Ms. Katie Everett, Gualala project manager, Caltrans: Spoke in favor of the project and cited its many benefits, noting support of the local community.

Discussion concluded with final remarks:

- The Gualala project is nearing end of the Plans, Specifications & Engineering (PS&E) phase. Caltrans will be coming to the Council to present its final concept, possibly at the next regular board meeting. (Barrett)
- Any interest charges for advancing future shares? No. (Gjerde, Barrett)
- This differs from budget issues; favors getting more money now. (Haschak)

Upon motion by Haschak, second by Carter, and carried on roll call vote (6 Ayes – Haschak, Carter, Hansen, Norvell, Ahlstrand/PAC and Gjerde; 1 No – Kanne; 0 Abstaining; 1 Absent – Duenas): IT IS ORDERED that staff’s Alternative #2 is approved for further preparation of the 2024 Regional Transportation Improvement Program.

Alternative 2

Project	Rank	Requested Funding	Recommended Funding	Cumulative Total Recommended
County – Ackerman Creek Bridge	1	\$ 602,300	\$ 602,300	\$ 602,300
County - N. State Intersection	2	13,900,000	13,900,000	14,502,300
Gualala Downtown Streetscape	3	1,200,000	1,200,000	15,702,300
Ukiah – Downtown Streetscape Ph 3	4	6,718,576	0	15,702,300
County – Mountain View Rd.	5	2,000,000	2,000,000	17,702,300
County – Comptche Ukiah Rd.	6	2,000,000	0	17,702,300
County – N. State Road Repairs	7	1,533,000	0	17,702,300

11. Review/Discussion/Direction: SB 125 - Transit & Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) and Zero Emission Transit Capital Program (ZETCP) Draft Allocation Plan.

Executive Director Barrett summarized her written report and staff’s working draft allocation package, as presented in the agenda materials, prepared in consultation with Mendocino Transit Authority representatives. Of the total regional formula allocation to MCOG of \$11,063,615, she identified \$5.3 million available in the first year. To receive funds in FY 2023/24, the allocation plan needs to be adopted and submitted to California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) by December 31, 2023. Staff requested direction to prepare a full draft plan for approval at the December meeting. Responsibilities for MCOG will include maintenance of data, reporting and other requirements.

She described required components including a regional strategy. MTA has proposed three project elements: 1) Ukiah Transit Center development, to be primarily funded with a traditional competitive TIRCP grant application, so this would be an initial \$2 million for property acquisition. 2) Laytonville & Covelo service pilot project, resulting from MCOG’s recent Mobility Solutions study, to connect with existing transit services. Battery-electric vehicle technology is a limiting factor for this demonstration. MCOG staff has concerns that MTA’s initial service design would not be used by riders as much as the design proposed in the study. Staff will be meeting with CalSTA concerning project eligibility. Amendments to the allocation plan are allowed, so modifications could be made to the project. 3) ZEV fleet transition to continue capital investments to meet MTA and State goals.

Board discussion included:

- Alternative approaches to the pilot service operational and capital components, subject to eligibility and/or amendment. (Gjerde, Barrett)
- MTA General Manager Jacob King agreed with a flexible approach.
- MTA plans to station the vehicle in Willits. Described trip proposal with transfers to fixed route service. (Barrett)
- A Mobility Solutions meeting indicated concerns about non-emergency medical transportation, shopping, and access to various necessities of life. Several transfers on the transit system could be a deterrent--look at other options. (Haschak)
- MTA currently logs about 2,800 miles per day countywide. The proposal is similar to daily service now. MTA has experience with this, has not heard negatives from ridership. (King)
- Question of EV range for round trip Ukiah-Laytonville with elevation changes, charging. (Carter)
- Efficiencies of stationing the vehicle in Willits with local supervisor and charging infrastructure. Driver pool post-pandemic is coming from Willits and Ukiah areas. (King)
- All three projects elements are reasonable, trusts MTA to resolve logistics. (Kanne)

The Chair invited public comment; no one came forward. Ms. Barrett noted Board members’ concerns for the proposed operational element and will explore other feasible options with MTA, for some flexibility in the final draft plan.

Upon motion by Haschak, second by Carter, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (7 Ayes – Haschak, Carter, Kanne, Hansen, Norvell, Ahlstrand/PAC and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 1 Absent – Duenas): IT IS ORDERED that the major program elements proposed by staff and Mendocino Transit Authority, with flexibility in design of operational services, are approved for further development of the TIRCP and ZETCP Allocation Plan.

Project	TIRCP	ZETCP
Administration – MCOG	\$ 110,636	
Ukiah Transit Center Development	2,000,000	
Zero Emission Vehicles	2,237,593	\$ 505,296
Laytonville & Covelo Service	500,000	
Total Year 1 – FY 2023/24	\$ 4,848,229	\$ 505,296
	\$ 5,353,525	

12. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Recommendation of October 25, 2023: Approval of Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) Policy and Call for Projects – *Federal funding for infrastructure projects.* Program Manager Sookne reviewed his written report and documents recommended by staff and the TAC for approval as presented in the agenda packet. He described this new funding source through Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) and how he arrived at the proposed policy and project selection strategy as required, noting some details. The TAC’s review resulted in a minor modification to evaluation criteria in the Call for Projects template. There will be five funding cycles.

Board questions and discussion:

- Obligation deadlines noted, any due dates for local proposals? Not yet, though anticipate opening to applications in January. (Gjerde, staff)
- Funding levels are set? Yes, these are formula shares to MCOG; subsequent years are assumed at similar levels to the first two. This is a relatively small funding source. (Gjerde, staff)
- Discussion of eligibility of various project types. These are expected to be more easily implemented, though with more administration, reporting, and environmental review due to federal source. For example, projects that do not involve right of way or CEQA/NEPA exclusion, or with fewer project development needs. Addition to an existing federalized project would be a good candidate. (Group, staff)

The Chair invited public comment, hearing none. **Upon motion** by Kanne, second by Haschak, and carried on unanimously on roll call vote (*7 Ayes – Haschak, Carter, Kanne, Hansen, Norvell, Ahlstrand/PAC and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 1 Absent – Duenas*): IT IS ORDERED that staff’s recommended Carbon Reduction Program Policy and Call for Projects are approved. [Excerpt below:]

Carbon Reduction Funds and Expenditure Deadlines

Federal Fiscal Year	2022	2023	2024-2026
Regional Allocation	\$ 161,211	\$ 164,435	TBD
Obligation (E76) Deadline*	09/30/2025	9/30/2026	TBD
Expenditure Deadline*	9/30/2030	9/30/2031	TBD
* https://dot.ca.gov/programs/local-assistance/fed-and-state-programs/carbon-reduction-program			

Director Hansen was excused from the meeting at approximately 2:55 p.m.

13. Recess as Policy Advisory Committee – Reconvene as RTPA – Ratify Action of Policy Advisory Committee. **Upon motion** by Carter, second by Haschak, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (*5 Ayes – Haschak, Carter, Kanne, Norvell and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 2 Absent – Duenas and Hansen*): IT IS ORDERED that the actions taken by the Policy Advisory Committee are ratified by the MCOG Board of Directors.

14. Reports - Information

- a. Caltrans District 1 – Projects Update and Information. Director Ahlstrand introduced Julia Peterson, Clean California Coordinator and Project Manager, who reported on the three recently awarded Local Agency Clean California grants in Mendocino County under Cycle 2 at \$7.75 million to Anderson Valley Unified School District, City of Fort Bragg, and City of Willits. All work must be completed by June 2026. The communities are very enthusiastic. Related events include the Dump Days vouchers given out to date and coming up next on December 15 at Harwood Hall in Laytonville and December 16 at Caspar’s transfer station; these are available to anyone, though primarily meant for underserved residents.

The Covelo downtown project was paused while waiting for certain parts and supplies, expected to resume shortly. The protective barrier during construction is temporary, to be exchanged for speed humps covering a larger area. Director Haschak noted results in Covelo have already slowed traffic speeds as desired. Appreciation and positive comments were given by Council members. Ms. Peterson invited contact anytime to discuss Clean California. Ms. Barrett noted Caltrans' project Milestones report included in the agenda packet.

- b. Mendocino Transit Authority. MTA is working with MCOG staff on a five-year update of their Short Range Transportation Development Plan; the consultant will produce draft recommendations for changes to MTA's services.
- c. Great Redwood Trail Agency. Director Haschak reported that GRTA hired a General Manager, Elaine Hogan from Blue Lakes in Humboldt County, noting her expertise in trail construction and administration practices.
- d. MCOG Staff - Summary of Meetings. Ms. Barrett referred to the written report.
- e. MCOG Administration Staff
 - i. *Covelo SR 162 Corridor Multi-Purpose Trail Project*. Ms. Barrett reported the contractor crew is getting ready to wrap up for the season after finishing a segment of paving work, weather permitting, that was delayed until conclusion of a process for recent archeological finds. With exception of the bridge over Mill Creek, the entire trail will be walkable this year and fully completed next year. Along with Clean California improvements, the area has been much refreshed. Some photos have been posted to MCOG's website.
 - ii. *California Transportation Commission (CTC) Town Hall Meeting Hosted by MCOG in Fort Bragg, April 17-18, 2024*. Ms. Barrett reported CTC staff's request for a community meeting. Additional to CTC's regular business meetings, the town halls are periodically held in smaller, more remote communities. It is an opportunity to highlight presentations, projects and needs from all over the region. MCOG will host the two half-days to include a tour, a meeting open to the public, and a reception for Commissioners. Staff is involved in planning meetings with CTC staff. Director Gjerde had suggested some venues to consider.
 - iii. *Miscellaneous*. None.
 - iv. *Next Meeting Date*. Monday, December 4, 2023.
- f. MCOG Planning Staff
 - i. *Feasibility Study - Mendocino Transit Authority's Ukiah Transit Center*. Deputy Planner Ellard reported an update of status. MTA's board had selected the preferred site north of the Kohl's store on Orchard Avenue. The consultant team presented some architectural renderings of the site at MTA's October 25 meeting and will present the draft study at MTA's December 6 meeting. The final study will be completed in January.
 - ii. *Grant Award Announcements and Reports*. Ms. Ellard reported recent awards and updates: 1) \$100,000 of Rural Planning Assistance grant funds to update and expand the existing Local Road Safety Plans to qualify for federal project funds; staff will hire a consultant for this short-term scope of work due by next May or June. 2) \$215,000 previously reported for the Noyo Harbor Multimodal Circulation Plan, currently awaiting notice to proceed from Caltrans. 3) Family Resource Center of Potter Valley, working closely with MCOG staff, was invited by California Air Resources Board to apply for a Sustainable Transportation Equity Project (STEP) grant to implement a shared-mobility microtransit service to-from Ukiah and locally as recommended in MCOG's Rural Mobility Solutions study; if awarded MCOG would be a sub-applicant to assist with outreach and other tasks.

iii. *Miscellaneous.* None.

- g. MCOG Directors. Director Gjerde reported the County of Mendocino and City of Fort Bragg were co-sponsoring a ribbon cutting November 16 for the Pudding Creek Bridge rehabilitation project on SR-1. It will be invitational only due to space limitations onsite, but a video recording will be made available. Executive Director Barrett planned to attend.
- h. California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG) Delegates. Director Haschak reported a board retreat would be held in Riverside, which he would not be attending, though he plans to attend the annual forum in February.

15. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 3:17 p.m.

Submitted: NEPHELE BARRETT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By Janet Orth, Deputy Director & CFO