

MENDOCINO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

APPROVED MINUTES

Monday, October 7, 2024

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

General Public Teleconference by Zoom

ADDITIONAL MEDIA:

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

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 1:36 p.m. with Directors present: John Haschak, Greta Kanne, Josefina Duenas and Michael Carter in Ukiah; Dan Gjerde in Fort Bragg; Chair Gjerde presiding. Tatiana Ahlstrand (Caltrans/PAC) arrived in Ukiah later in the meeting and did not participate in voting. Directors Bernie Norvell and Jeff Hansen were absent.

Guests: Brant Arthur and Connor Wolf of Sonoma Clean Power were present for Agenda #9.

Staff present in Ukiah: Nephele Barrett, Executive Director; Janet Orth, Deputy Director & CFO; Loretta Ellard, Deputy Planner; and Jody Lowblad, Administrative Assistant.

Staff present by Zoom: Lisa Davey-Bates, Transportation Planner; 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 requests.

3. Convene as RTPA

4. Recess as RTPA – Reconvene as Policy Advisory Committee

5 - 7. Consent Calendar. Upon motion by Carter, second by Kanne, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (5 Ayes – Haschak, Carter, Kanne, Duenas and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 3 Absent – Norvell, Hansen and Ahlstrand/PAC): IT IS ORDERED that consent items are approved.

5. Approval of August 12, 2024 Minutes – as written

6. Technical Advisory Committee Recommendation of September 18, 2024: Approval of Second Amendment to Fiscal Year 2024/25 Transportation Planning Overall Work Program (OWP) – To reduce Davey-Bates Consulting’s Planning Services funding to reflect the new contract amount approved August 12, 2024, and to add to the narrative of tasks for

Work Element 5 - Mendocino County Sea Level Rise Roadway Impact Study grant project, as requested by Caltrans. This amendment moves funds to Project Reserve, with no change to the FY 2024/25 OWP total funding of \$1,583,251. The Executive Director is authorized to sign certifications and a revised OWP Agreement as needed and forward to Caltrans as required.

7. Adoption of Resolution Approving the FY 2024/25 Project List for the California State of Good Repair Program – Mendocino Transit Authority – Ukiah Transit Center

Resolution No. M2024-10

Approving the FY 2024/25 Project List for the
California State of Good Repair Program
(Reso. #M2024-10 is incorporated herein by reference)

8. Public Expression. Steve Henderson, a.k.a. Gizmo, expressed concern for the frequency of roadway traffic collisions at the Calpella interchange of US-101 and SR-20. Car insurance rates appear to be rising as result of accidents in the area. Also this location is near a wood pellet factory, where stacks of fuel constitute a fire hazard near the freeway entrance.

9. Presentation and Discussion: Transportation and Mobility Needs Assessment – Sonoma Clean Power. Chair Gjerde introduced Brant Arthur, Program Manager and Connor Wolf, program specialist, who gave a slide presentation. This is the third assessment they have done, following residential and commercial communities and agricultural needs. As an electricity provider they can support solutions such as e-bikes or bicycle fleets. For this study, they worked with national consultant EV Noire, as well as community partners. Highlights included:

- Introduction to Sonoma Clean Power
- Service territory and local programs that address climate impacts
- Strategic Action Plan addressing ten vulnerable census tracts, with four in Mendocino County, as well as numerous second-tier communities
- Community partners NAACP, Bikeable Santa Rosa, and North Bay Electric Auto Assn.
- Transportation survey methods and results with eight key findings around issues such as car dependency, lack of diverse transportation modes, electric vehicle (EV) ownership across various demographics, home charging access, barriers to using public transit, and bicycle safety.

Questions and discussion included:

- How could Sonoma Clean Power better partner or coordinate its efforts with MCOG and MTA? (Gjerde) By sharing survey results, working on transportation electrification and other new opportunities. (Arthur)
- The presentation is full of good information. The Senior Center in Willits wants to purchase a Meals on Wheels vehicle. Are there grants for electric vehicles? This would be a great example in the local community. (Haschak) Yes, SCP offers incentives to nonprofits, at \$15,000 to purchase or lease a light-duty vehicle and \$22,500 for larger vehicles, e.g. pickup truck or van that can carry loads, for both vehicle and charger. Contact SCP for assistance. (Arthur)
- This is educational for disadvantaged communities with immigrants and farmworkers who must commute to work. It is almost impossible for them to purchase a second-hand electric car. Other regions of the country have come to different conclusions to similar problems. Thanks for this useful information. (Duenas)
- This is perfect timing with MCOG's Regional Transportation Plan update and outreach. (Barrett)

The Chair invited public comment.

Steve Henderson, a.k.a. Gizmo, asked 1) about EV charging for apartment buildings, does Sonoma County have a policy or how do they address this issue? 2) Does SCP advise or work with PG&E?

Mr. Arther discussed state regulations for new construction, including percentage of spaces for EV charging in multi-unit housing. It may be cheaper to build out workplace charging. Better solutions are needed currently. PG&E is critical to many installations and connections. Certainly they have issues in common; SCP has a team that works at the state level for this.

There were no further comments and the Chair thanked the presenters. No action was taken.

10. Adoption of Resolution Revising Allocation of Fiscal Year 2024/25 Local Transportation Funds and State Transit Assistance to Mendocino Transit Authority, Superseding Resolution #M2024-05 – to augment Senior Centers Transportation Program funding. CFO Orth summarized her written report, recapping the matter of funds over-allocated in Fiscal Year 2022/23 to MTA due to federal coronavirus relief funding displacing local funds, as reported over the past several months. Approximately \$2-3 million must be recovered and reallocated, so staff has been meeting with MTA and expert advisors to identify options. It was agreed the first priority was to increase funding to the senior centers transportation contracts, which suffered a severe cut in MCOG’s 2024/25 budget. MTA therefore submitted a revised claim and staff prepared a revised budget resolution. Since MTA has previously received the funds, MCOG would not be reimbursing additional cash but MTA would be expected to pay out the increased amount in full to the program.

In board discussion, Director Haschak supported the recommendation and asked how the funds would be spread among the centers. There is an established formula for this; while MTA controls the contracts, MCOG can specify the programming and use of funds. Director Kanne asked if MTA could handle the additional cost. MTA had agreed this was manageable on a monthly basis.

MCOG staff will bring further options to the Executive Committee later in October for a recommendation to the full board on remaining reallocations to be made.

The Chair called for public comment.

- Richard Baker, Executive Director of Willits Senior Center, spoke in appreciation of staff, MTA’s efforts and the proposal, noting the most vulnerable clientele were impacted by the budget cuts.
- Jill Rexrode, Executive Director of Redwood Coast Seniors, also appreciated the proposed funding and said it would make a big difference to them.
- Liz Dorsey, Executive Director of Ukiah Senior Center, submitted a written comment in agreement with the other center directors present.

Upon motion by Haschak, second by Carter, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (5 Ayes – Haschak, Carter, Kanne, Duenas and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 3 Absent – Norvell, Hansen and Ahlstrand/PAC): IT IS ORDERED that the resolution is adopted and staff is authorized to issue revised allocation instructions to the Acting County Auditor-Controller/Treasurer-Tax Collector.

Resolution No. M2024-11

Revising Allocation of Fiscal Year 2024/25 Local Transportation Funds and State Transit Assistance to Mendocino Transit Authority, Superseding Resolution #M2024-05 (Reso. #M2024-11 is incorporated herein by reference)

Local Transportation Fund (LTF)		
MTA Operations	2,721,637	
Unmet Transit Needs	0	
Senior Center Operations	518,407	
	600,000	

Transit Planning	0	
Total LTF		3,240,044 3,321,637
State Transit Assistance (STA)		
MTA Operations	1,197,778	
MTA & Senior Center Capital	0	
Capital Reserve Fund	0	
Total STA		1,197,778
Capital Reserve Program		
Current Year - MTA	0	
Current Year – Senior Centers	0	
Long Term – MTA and Seniors	0	
Total Capital Reserve		0
Total Transit Allocations		4,437,822 4,519,415
2022/23 Ineligible LTF Returned by MTA		81,593

11. Technical Advisory Committee Recommendation of September 18, 2024: Allocation of Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program – Partnership Program Funding for County of Mendocino Voter Opinion Polling Regarding a Potential Transportation Sales Tax Measure. Executive Director Barrett summarized her written report, noting that due to time sensitivity, another funding source was needed than the next cycle of local planning funds. She proposed MCOG’s Partnership Program from federal STBG funds, of which MCOG’s policy allocates \$100,000 annually to the fund for regional projects as needed. The fund has an estimated available balance of \$720,000. She noted examples of past allocations from the fund, primarily for capital projects. The need and potential to match with State Senate Bill 1 Local Partnership Program funds for “self-help” counties that have enacted dedicated transportation sales taxes, make this a good candidate. The committee unanimously recommended approval of \$55,000 for this project to conduct voter opinion surveys for a ballot measure. Board discussion included:

- 80 percent of California cities and counties have a local transportation sales tax; consequences of not having one are evident in deteriorating roads. Supports this allocation. (Gjerde)
- Sonoma and Humboldt counties also anticipate enacting such a tax. (Barrett)
- This would cover just the unincorporated areas. Would a survey look at support for different levels of sales tax or types of project expenditures to be funded? (Haschak) Yes. A survey would need to be designed, but those are commonly asked questions in similar surveys.
- Would the consultant advise on the best time to bring to a ballot? (Haschak) Yes, a consultant in this specialty would recommend on favorability, timing, and related aspects.
- On social media, lack of road repair is a top issue; it is appropriate to do the polling. (Kanne)

The Chair invited public comment.

Dave Shpak of Gualala gave compliments to staff and the committee for bringing this forward. The action is timely, even past due. If MCOG allocates this funding, the survey should be distributed widely so as to get the best “bang for the buck.”

Upon motion by Haschak, second by Carter, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (5 Ayes – Haschak, Carter, Kanne, Duenas and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 3 Absent – Norvell, Hansen and Ahlstrand/PAC): IT IS ORDERED that, as recommended by the Technical Advisory Committee, MCOG approves the allocation of \$55,000 from the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Partnership Program to conduct voter opinion polling for a potential transportation sales tax in unincorporated Mendocino County.

Director Ahlstrand (Caltrans/PAC) arrived at approximately 2:40 p.m.

12. Adoption of Resolution Authorizing the Execution of the Master Fund Transfer Agreement (MFTA) for the Period of January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2034 – Caltrans. Ms. Orth referred to her staff report, briefly describing the necessity of approving a new ten-year agreement to receive state and federal funds for MCOG’s planning activities, to be effective January 1, 2025. Staff had reviewed the draft MFTA, noting some additional detail to the reporting requirements, otherwise finding nothing new of concern or difficulty. The final agreement will be provided in early December after receipt of this executed resolution and will require counsel’s signature. It has been initially reviewed by County Counsel. Staff recommends approval.

Chair Gjerde asked for clarification of the process; staff thought it would not be necessary to bring the final agreement back to the board. The resolution authorizes the Executive Director to sign. There was no public comment on the item.

Upon motion by Kanne, second by Duenas, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (5 Ayes – Haschak, Carter, Kanne, Duenas and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 3 Absent – Norvell, Hansen and Ahlstrand/PAC): IT IS ORDERED that the resolution is adopted.

Resolution No. M2024-12

Authorizing the Execution of the

Master Fund Transfer Agreement (MFTA)

For the Period of January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2034

(Reso. #M2024-12 is incorporated herein by reference)

13. Recess as Policy Advisory Committee – Reconvene as RTPA – Ratify Action of Policy Advisory Committee. **Upon motion** by Carter, second by Kanne, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (5 Ayes – Haschak, Carter, Kanne, Duenas and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 2 Absent – Norvell 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 commented on the map of State Highway Operations & Protection Program (SHOPP) projects on US-101 between Ukiah and Willits, provided in the agenda packet, and invited questions. Directors Kanne, Carter and Duenas offered feedback.
- b. Mendocino Transit Authority. Executive Director Jacob King indicated nothing to report. Director Gjerde noted Mr. King’s Transit Manager of the Year award from the California Transit Association. (Applause.)
- c. Great Redwood Trail Agency. Director Haschak reported on various trail projects and a restoration project, and was enthused to see segments being completed.
- d. MCOG Staff - Summary of Meetings. Ms. Barrett referred to the written report. Ms. Orth noted a Brown Act webinar was attended by Administrative Assistant Jody Lowblad. No significant changes have been made by the Legislature to the current rules. MCOG is in compliance with the Brown Act Open Meetings law for meeting notices.
- e. MCOG Administration Staff

- i. *RuralREN North – California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Decision Modifying Rural Regional Energy Network Approved in Decision 23-06-055 – Sept. 26, 2024.* Ms. Barrett reported good news of the approval and budget allocation for three years and one quarter (2024 through 2027), originally a four-year program. Partners are Redwood Coast Energy, Lake Area Planning Council, and Sierra Business Council. Total funding for all four partners is \$33.1 million from Pacific Gas & Electric ratepayers, who now will receive a benefit from public goods charges collected over many years. The CPUC officially changed the name to Northern California Rural REN when the original RuralREN was divided in two by this decision. Staff is working with the partners on a Memorandum of Agreement, bylaws and other documents, expecting to bring items back to the Council for approval in November or December.
 - ii. *Miscellaneous.* None.
 - iii. *Next Meeting Date – Monday, November 4, 2024 –Transportation Tour to Covelo.* There was a brief discussion of plans for the tour. Director Duenas announced this may be her last meeting, pending the November election.
- f. MCOG Planning Staff. Deputy Planner Ellard reported on the following items.
- i. *Work Element 3 – 2026 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) & Active Transportation Plan (ATP).* Community engagement has started. Staff had researched various mapping tools and settled on one provided by GreenDOT with an online survey of travel behaviors, priorities, and concerns. Flyers include a QR code leading to MCOG’s web page with links for participants. Staff has been attending various events and publicizing the project. She answered questions about the process. A Spanish translation will be offered.
 - ii. *Work Element 5 – Mendocino County Sea Level Rise Roadway Impact Study.* Official notice to proceed was received, so procurement of a consultant and other scheduled tasks will start. County of Mendocino will be a key partner.
 - iii. *Work Element 9 – Noyo Harbor Multimodal Circulation Plan.* This project has been underway since June. The consultant Fehr & Peers was hired. Partnerships include coordinating with the existing Blue Economy project and gathering surveys. Walking tours in the harbor are scheduled for November.
 - iv. *Miscellaneous.* None.
- g. MCOG Directors. None.
- h. California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG) Delegates. Director Haschak reported on the September 30 board meeting, which discussed three strategic priorities: 1) transportation funding to replace gas taxes, 2) housing policy reform and saving grant funds from budget cuts, and 3) transition to zero emission vehicles (ZEV) and alternative fuels. The next meeting is now scheduled for November 14-15 in Sacramento.

15. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 3:11 p.m.

Submitted: NEPHELE BARRETT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By Janet Orth, Deputy Director & CFO