

MENDOCINO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Approved MINUTES
Monday, February 7, 2022

Teleconference Only
Pursuant to Brown Act and Assembly Bill 361

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 / Roll Call. The meeting was called to order at 1:36 p.m. with Directors Jim Brown, John Haschak, Tess Albin-Smith, Tatiana Ahlstrand (Caltrans/PAC), and Dan Gjerde present by Zoom teleconference; Chair Gjerde presiding. Director Scott Ignacio was excused by prearrangement; Director Greta Kanne absent. [Clerk's note: the Public Appointee seat was vacant.]

Staff present: Nephele Barrett, Executive Director; Janet Orth, Deputy Director & CFO; Loretta Ellard, Deputy Planner; Lisa Davey-Bates, Transportation Planner; James Sookne, Program Manager; and Danielle Casey, Program Coordinator.

Note: Public comment was invited via email and online comment form; staff monitored for incoming comments throughout the meeting, reporting periodically.

2. Adoption of Resolution Making Continued Findings Pursuant to Assembly Bill 361 to Conduct Public Meetings Remotely for MCOG's Legislative and Advisory Bodies During the COVID-19 State of Emergency. Upon motion by Albin-Smith, second by Brown, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (*4 Ayes – Brown, Albin-Smith, Haschak, and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 2 Absent – Kanne and Ignacio*): IT IS ORDERED that the following resolution is adopted.

Resolution No. M2022-01

Making Continued Findings Pursuant to Assembly Bill 361
to Continue Public Meetings Remotely
for MCOG's Legislative and Advisory Bodies
During the COVID-19 State of Emergency
[Reso. #M2022-01 is incorporated herein by reference]

3. Election of Officers – Chair and Vice Chair. Deputy Director Orth introduced this item, and conducted the election by the usual method, consistent with Robert's Rules of Order. She opened the nominations for the office of Chair; Director Gjerde was nominated. With no further nominations, nominations were closed for the office of Chair.

Upon motion by Brown, second by Albin-Smith, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (*4 Ayes – Brown, Albin-Smith, Haschak, and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 2 Absent*): IT IS ORDERED that **Director Gjerde is re-elected Chair.**

Nominations were opened for the office of Vice Chair; Director Ignacio was nominated. With no further nominations, nominations were closed for the office of Vice Chair.

Upon motion by Haschak, second by Albin-Smith, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (*4 Ayes – Brown, Albin-Smith, Haschak, and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 2 Absent*): IT IS ORDERED that that **Director Ignacio is re-elected Vice Chair.**

4. Convene as RTPA**5. Recess as RTPA – Reconvene as Policy Advisory Committee**

6 - 7. Consent Calendar. Upon motion by Haschak, second by Brown, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (5 Ayes – Brown, Albin-Smith, Haschak, Ahlstrand/PAC, and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 2 Absent): IT IS ORDERED that consent items are approved.

6. Approval of December 6, 2021 Minutes - as written**7. Appointments to Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC)**

- *Jacob King, Mendocino Transit Authority, for “Representative of local Consolidated Transportation Services Agency” – reappointed through April 2025*
- *Christine Sookne, Redwood Coast Regional Center, for “Local social service provider for persons of limited means” – appointed through April 2023*

8. Public Expression. None.

9. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Recommendations of November 17, 2021 – continued from December 6, 2021: Public Hearing: Consideration and Finding of Negative Declaration of Environmental Impact, followed by Possible Adoption of Resolution Approving the 2022 Mendocino County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) & Active Transportation Plan (ATP). Executive Director Barrett announced this was a previously noticed and continued hearing.

The TAC had recommended approval of the draft RTP & ATP and Negative Declaration at their November meeting. Deputy Planner Ellard summarized changes made to the document according to board direction at the December Council meeting (refer to written staff report). The revised Proposed Final plan was posted on MCOG’s website. The time extension allowed staff to consider how best to address public comments received. Additions were made as requested by Chair Gjerde following a meeting with legislators on the federal infrastructure bill, to ensure that future electric vehicle charging projects would qualify for new federal funds. Staff also reported an error in the Willits map, which would be corrected and posted in the appendix.

The Chair invited public comments. Mr. Dave Shpak thanked the board and staff for including his comments as best as could be done given constraints of the document, and expressed appreciation for several people involved in certain projects, and for the work that went into developing the plan. The hearing was closed at 1:52 p.m.

In board discussion, Director Gjerde thanked staff for making the last-minute revisions to strengthen positioning for electric transportation investments. Director Haschak agreed the changes presented today reflected board discussion and make a better document.

Upon motion by Haschak, second by Brown, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (5 Ayes – Brown, Albin-Smith, Haschak, Ahlstrand/PAC, and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 2 Absent): IT IS ORDERED that MCOG finds there is no substantial evidence that adoption of the 2022 Regional Transportation Plan and Active Transportation Plan will have a significant effect on the environment and the CEQA Document – Initial Study/Negative Declaration is approved.

Upon motion by Haschak, second by Brown, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (5 Ayes – Brown, Albin-Smith, Haschak, Ahlstrand/PAC, and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 2 Absent): IT IS ORDERED that the following resolution is adopted.

Resolution No. M2022-02

Adopting the 2022 Mendocino County Regional Transportation Plan
and Active Transportation Plan

(Reso. #M2022-02 is incorporated herein by reference)

10. Public Hearing: Unmet Transit Needs for Fiscal Year 2021/22 – Including Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) Recommendations of January 12, 2022.

Deputy Director Orth reported proof of publication of the legal notice from Ukiah Daily Journal, published on January 7, included in the agenda packet. Additional outreach included three other local newspapers, MCOG's website and email to two lists of subscribers and interested parties.

Upon motion by Haschak, second by Brown, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (5 Ayes – Brown, Albin-Smith, Haschak, Ahlstrand/PAC, and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 2 Absent): IT IS ORDERED that this public hearing on 2022/23 Unmet Transit Needs was properly noticed.

The Chair opened the public hearing at 1:58 p.m. Ms. Orth gave a summary of the annual process starting with the January 12 SSTAC unmet transit needs workshop and submitted as testimony a list of 17 identified needs, including five from the group and 12 from Mendocino Transit Authority (MTA) public outreach throughout the past year. Additionally, staff submitted a letter received from Westport Municipal Advisory Council requesting consideration of "restoring some level of public transit between Fort Bragg and Westport."

The Chair invited public comment. Dave Shpak of Gualala, noting the Gualala Downtown Streetscape project would include public transit stops downtown along the state highway route, submitted that rather than locating a bus stop directly in the corridor where shelter, convenience and visibility are lacking, those stops should be located off-highway with access to amenities such as shopping and services, as the safest and best option.

With no further testimony received, Chair Gjerde asked about the expected timeline for MTA's analysis; it would be received in late March and move through committees, ending with board action in June. Ms. Orth then reviewed staff's recommended action.

The public hearing was closed at 2:03 p.m.

Director Brown moved the staff recommendation, seconded by Haschak. **Discussion on the motion:** clarification of what is included on the list. **The motion carried** unanimously on roll call vote (5 Ayes – Brown, Albin-Smith, Haschak, Ahlstrand/PAC, and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 2 Absent): IT IS ORDERED that MCOG receives as testimony all needs submitted by the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC), Mendocino Transit Authority (MTA), written testimony, and verbal testimony heard in the public hearing; the testimony heard includes Unmet Transit Needs that appear to qualify under MCOG's adopted definitions, and those needs are directed to Mendocino Transit Authority for analysis and for further review and recommendations by the Transit Productivity Committee and Social Services Transportation Advisory Council.

Staff further reported an additional SSTAC recommendation to develop a Ukiah area transit center or hub. MTA Executive Director Jacob King briefly discussed initial plans with Caltrans of interregional routes to include Ukiah as one of the hubs where various multimodal transportation services could meet.

11. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Recommendations of January 19, 2022:

Approval of Resolution Adopting First Amendment to 2022 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP). Program Manager Sookne reported status of the RTIP. City of Fort Bragg requested that the implementing agency be changed from the City to Caltrans for its South Main Street Bicycle & Pedestrian Access Project. Caltrans has an overlapping project and this would result in efficiency, cost savings and less disruption of the corridor during construction. Additionally, Caltrans requested construction funds to be reprogrammed from FY 2022/23 to 2023/24. The TAC recommended these amendments.

Upon motion by Haschak, second by Ahlstrand, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (5 Ayes – Brown, Albin-Smith, Haschak, Ahlstrand/PAC, and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 2 Absent): IT IS ORDERED that the following resolution is adopted.

Resolution No. M2022-03

Adopting the First Amendment to the 2022 Regional
Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)
[Reso. #M2022-03 is incorporated herein by reference]

[#12 and #14 were taken out of agenda order pending availability of the presenter.]

13. Annual Appointments to Standing Committees

- a. Executive Committee. According to MCOG bylaws, the Chair and Vice Chair are members of this committee with addition of a third member reflecting a county-city balance. Director **Albin-Smith** agreed to continue as the third member of the Executive Committee.
- b. Transit Productivity Committee. According to the bylaws, appointments are made by the Chair. Chair Gjerde again appointed **himself and Director Brown**.
- c. California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG). Director **Albin-Smith** agreed to continue as the delegate, with Director **Haschak** continuing as alternate.

Upon motion by Brown, second by Haschak, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (5 Ayes – Brown, Albin-Smith, Haschak, Ahlstrand/PAC, and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 2 Absent): IT IS ORDERED that the Council approves the above slate of committee appointments.

15. Reports - Information

- a. Caltrans District 1 – Projects Update and Information. Director Ahlstrand reported delay of a community meeting on the Hopland ADA project due to some staffing turnover; the meeting will be rescheduled. The Clean California grant opportunity has closed, and she hoped to have an announcement of awards by March 1. It was also noted that Caltrans will move forward with two Caltrans-implemented projects in Mendocino County, first in Boonville and the second year in downtown Covelo.
- b. Mendocino Transit Authority. There was no news to report.
- c. North Coast Railroad Authority. Director Haschak reported a meeting on January 24 including closed session items. The final meeting as NCRA is approaching, before converting to the Great Redwood Trail Authority. Board membership will be the same as for NCRA.
- d. MCOG Staff - Summary of Meetings. Ms. Barrett referred to the written report.
- e. MCOG Administration Staff
 - i. *Status of Covelo SR 162 Corridor Multi-Purpose Trail Project*. Ms. Barrett noted there had been concerns with meeting a critical deadline but was now happy to report that the right-of-way certification was completed and construction funding allocated by the CTC. Director Haschak thanked staff for attending the Round Valley Municipal Advisory Council meeting and for keeping the public informed, as they are enthused about the project. Ms. Barrett appreciated the community for their support and noted plans for some public art on the trail.
 - ii. *50th Anniversary of MCOG – 2022 Recognition/Celebration*. Administration staff offered a few ideas to recognize the occasion and educate the community about MCOG's role.
 - iii. *Miscellaneous*. Ms. Orth made a brief financial report, noting the Fiscal Year 2020/21 audit is underway, 2021/22 sales tax revenues are coming in 7.5 percent above the budget estimate for the year to date, and 2022/23 budget development will begin in February with the Executive Committee meeting.

Ms. Barrett expressed gratitude to all of the staff who worked on the Regional Transportation Plan, which is one of MCOG's largest in-house projects and guides planning for the next four years.

iv. *Next Meeting Date.* Monday, March 7, 2022.

12. Regional Energy Network Ad Hoc Committee Recommendations of January 21, 2022. Ms. Barrett briefly summarized her written report of recent activity, then introduced Stephen Kullmann, Director of Demand Side Management, Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA).

- a. Presentation by Redwood Coast Energy Authority – Information. Mr. Kullman gave a slide presentation on Becoming a Rural Regional Energy Network (REN), covering background on the several entities working to form the RuralREN, advantages of a REN, a map of participating rural organizations in California, and a five-year \$96 million budget of six partners and seven programs to be administered by RCEA. MCOG and the Lake Area Planning Council, as late comers, would be able to participate as subcontractors initially, with the intent to join as full partners when feasible. He overviewed REN programs and next steps, with the final business plan filing due March 4, 2022, to begin operations in January 2023 on approval of the California Public Utilities Commission. Questions and brief discussion followed. Ms. Barrett reported letters of support received from MCOG member agencies to date; Director Brown reported a letter on its way from City of Ukiah.

The Chair invited public comment. Eileen Mitro of Ukiah expressed support for joining a REN and asked whether letters of support from community organizations would be of interest. Staff noted order of priority, and Mr. Kullmann affirmed that more letters would be welcome. Ms. Mitro asked about incentives and technical support for energy efficiency and installing electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. Mr. Kullman explained that in California energy and transportation programs are managed through separate agencies, although that is beginning to change due to overlapping conditions. This could be applicable where the REN might provide support to research and apply for funding, but not otherwise be involved with EV infrastructure through the REN. Director Gjerde reported a current state grant opportunity for EV chargers and suggested collaboration with RCEA in a multi-county proposal.

- b. Approval of Memorandum of Understanding to Participate in RuralREN Program – Action. **Upon motion** by Brown, second by Haschak, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (*5 Ayes – Brown, Albin-Smith, Haschak, Ahlstrand/PAC, and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 2 Absent*): IT IS ORDERED that, as recommended by the climate ad hoc committee, the Memorandum of Understanding between Mendocino Council of Governments, Lake Area Planning Council, and Redwood Coast Energy Authority to Provide Regional Energy Network Programs is approved and the Executive Director is authorized to sign the MOU.

The Chair resumed the Reports agenda.

- f. MCOG Planning Staff
- i. *Feasibility Study - Mobility Solutions for Rural Communities of Inland Mendocino County.*
Ms. Ellard hoped to have more to report at the next meeting on this grant-funded project.
 - ii. *Miscellaneous.* None.
- g. MCOG Directors. Director Gjerde appreciated that MCOG continues to take on new priorities. There were no further reports.
- h. California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG) Delegates. No report.

14. Recess as Policy Advisory Committee – Reconvene as RTPA – Ratify Action of Policy Advisory Committee. Upon motion by Albin-Smith, second by Haschak, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (*4 Ayes – Brown, Albin-Smith, Haschak, and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 2 Absent*): IT IS ORDERED that the actions taken by the Policy Advisory Committee are ratified by the MCOG Board of Directors.

16. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 2:56 p.m.

Submitted: NEPHELE BARRETT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By Janet Orth, Deputy Director