

MINUTES

MENDOCINO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Held Remotely via Zoom Meeting/Teleconference

January 19, 2022

Members Present

Jeremy Ronco, City of Willits
Jason Benson, City of Ukiah
Mark Cliser, Co. DPBS
Jacob King, MTA
Paul Andersen, City of Point Arena
Tasha Ahlstrand, Caltrans
Alicia Meier, County DOT
Chantell O'Neal, City of Fort Bragg

Members Absent

Mitch Stogner, NCRA (*Non-Voting*)
Barbara Moed, AQMD

Staff & Others Present

Nephele Barrett, MCOG Administration
Loretta Ellard, MCOG Planning
James Sookne, MCOG Planning
Charlene Parker, MCOG Planning
Danielle Casey, MCOG Administration
Alexis Pedrotti, MCOG Planning
Lisa Davey-Bates, MCOG Planning
Tim Eriksen, City of Ukiah
Destiny Preston, Caltrans
Patricia Rabano, Round Valley Indian Tribes
Tina Tyler-O'Shea, Blue Zones
Kyle Finger, Caltrans

1. **Call to Order/Introductions** – Nephele called the meeting to order at approximately 10:03 a.m. Individuals present were identified.
2. **Public Expression** – Chantell inquired about the Regional Energy Network (REN) program. Nephele said discussions on a regional role in climate protection started at MCOG meetings a few months ago, and an adhoc committee was formed to look into establishing a regional climate protection agency or participating in a rural REN. She said RENs were created by the California PUC as a way to deliver energy efficiency programs (*funded by rate-payer fees collected on PG&E bills*) in areas where those programs are not readily accessible. Staff learned that an effort to form a rural REN was already underway by the Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA) in Humboldt County, and Mendocino and Lake counties were invited to participate. Since RCEA was so far along in the process, MCOG's participation would initially be as a subcontractor under RCEA. Staff took this information to the MCOG Board, and the Board approved moving forward with the adhoc committee to work out details.

Nephele said MCOG is asking local agencies for letters of support so TAC members may be hearing about that. The adhoc committee will be receiving a presentation on the REN this Friday, and she offered to share that and other background information with the TAC. The committee's recommendation will be presented at the February 7 MCOG meeting. If approved, actual work would not start until 2023, but there would be preparation to get ready for implementation.

Nephele noted the City of Ukiah has its own municipal electric utility, so not all REN activities would be available to Ukiah customers, however, they would receive some benefits as PG&E gas rate payers.

3. Input from Native American Tribal Governments' Representatives – Patricia Rabano, Round Valley Indian Tribes, asked about who to contact with questions about the Covelo trail. Nephela said she or James Sookne could answer questions. She said project partners are diligently working on the Right of Way certification in order to meet requirements to get construction funding allocated at the next California Transportation Commission (CTC) meeting. She expressed appreciation for support from the Round Valley Indian Tribes and agreed to provide regular updates to Patricia, per her request.

4. Approval of Minutes of 11/17/21 – A minute correction was noted by Alicia to reflect that County DOT staff did not attend the November TAC meeting. **Motion by Jason Benson, seconded by Chantell O'Neal, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (8 ayes – Meier, Cliser, Ahlstrand, King, Andersen, Ronco, Benson, O'Neal) to approve the minutes of 11/17/21, as corrected.**

5. Blue Zones Project – Update – Nephela explained that Blue Zones is a project sponsored by Adventist Health which looks at common characteristics from areas in the world that have longer than normal life expectancy, for implementation of Blue Zones projects in program areas. She is on the steering committee for this Mendocino County project.

Tina Tyler-O'Shea, Blue Zones Executive Director, provided a project update. She reviewed that Blue Zones representatives gave a presentation at the last TAC meeting, and after the presentation site visits and walk audits were conducted in Fort Bragg, Willits and Ukiah. In addition, focus groups and listening sessions were held to gather community input. Policy summits were held and a draft blueprint was developed for the work that will be happening over the next four years. One of the policy focus areas is the built environment, and to achieve the Blue Zones certification in the built environment, they will be working with community partners to develop various policies and plans, and projects. The draft blueprint has been sent to the steering committee and will be sent to Blue Zones LLC and national partners for their approval. Once approved, a series of inland and coastal kick-off events will be planned, and a ribbon cutting event will be held at the Alex Rorabaugh Center in Ukiah.

Nephela thanked Tina for the update, and Tina offered to forward the built environment summit report to TAC members.

6. 2022 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) – Proposed First Amendment – James reviewed his staff report. He said Fort Bragg's South Main Street Bicycle and Pedestrian Access Project (on State Route 1) was originally programmed in the 2014 RTIP and has been included in each RTIP since. Funding for the environmental phase was allocated in May 2020, and funds for design and right of way lapsed in December 202. Construction funding is currently programmed for FY 22/23. He noted the lapsed funds are not lost to the region, but won't be available until the next STIP cycle.

James explained that following adoption of the 2022 RTIP, the City of Fort Bragg submitted a request to change the implementing agency on this project from the City to Caltrans, as the City's project is similar to a Caltrans project in the same area. Changing the implementing agency will reduce impacts to the City's staff time to develop a project on the State right-of-way, and allow for one design contract and one construction contract, thereby reducing overall costs and disruption to Main Street businesses and residents. Caltrans plans to fund the design and right of way phases without utilizing STIP funds.

In addition to changing the implementing agency, Caltrans has requested that construction funds be moved from FY 22/23 to FY 23/24.

Chantell said it makes sense to combine the two projects and make Caltrans the implementing authority, noting it would alleviate numerous challenges the City has faced with the project. Nephele said once the project becomes a Caltrans project there are a number of ways cost increases could be funded, but that would need to be clarified in a coop agreement.

Motion by Jason Benson, seconded by Tasha Ahlstrand, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (8 ayes – Meier, Cliser, Ahlstrand, King, Andersen, Ronco, Benson, O’Neal) to recommend approval of the First Amendment to the 2022 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) to the MCOG Board.

7. **Draft FY 2022/23 Overall Work Program – Review Funding Requests** – Lexi reviewed her staff report which included a summary of funding needs and expected revenues for the FY 2022/23 Overall Work Program (OWP). Funding needs total \$891,798, compared to estimated revenue of \$600,061, a shortfall of \$291,737. Lexi noted that although additional Local Transportation Funds (LTF) could be requested, she used the same amount that was initially used in last year’s work program. Four applications were received from local agencies (one each from the City of Fort Bragg and the County Department of Transportation, and two from the City of Ukiah).

Nephele discussed staff’s proposed “transit project reserve” which could fund either an updated Transit Development Plan (TDP) or a transit hub/transit center study for a multi-modal project in the Ukiah area. She noted MTA has submitted a Caltrans Sustainable Communities grant application for the TDP update, and grant awards are expected at the end of March, per Tasha. If not approved for grant funding, it will be important to fund this needed update through the work program. If the grant is awarded, the transit hub/transit center is an important regional multi-modal project to consider, which would also look at bicycle and pedestrian access to the transit center.

Applicants were invited to review their applications which were included in the agenda packet. Chantell reviewed the City of Fort Bragg’s “Central Business District Parking Evaluation” project; Alicia reviewed the County’s “Combined Special Studies” application; and Tim reviewed the City of Ukiah’s “Truck Route Study” and “School Street Multimodal Transportation and Beautification Study.”

Discussion ensued with applicants responding to questions. It was suggested that Ukiah’s “School Street Multimodal Transportation and Beautification Study” could be submitted as a grant application in the next Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grants cycle, and Tim agreed. The possibility of requesting increased LTF funds was mentioned, and there was a suggestion to consider reducing all local agency requests by a small percentage (i.e. 10%) as has been done in the past, to which no objections were noted.

Nephele thanked members for their cooperation, and said the discussion gives staff guidance on how to proceed. The draft OWP will be brought back to the next TAC meeting, and MCOG staff will reach out to Ukiah to help with a Caltrans grant application in the fall.

8. SB 743 Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) – Local Thresholds – As a follow up to MCOG’s SB 743 VMT study, Nephele asked if local agencies had adopted local VMT thresholds. Mark said the County has not, but they are using the screening tool that was developed. A big concern will be if there is a project that requires mitigation. Nephele noted mitigation is different in rural areas where there are fewer options available, and said the Rural Counties Task Force is discussing regional mitigation banks. Mark asked to be kept in that loop.

Tim didn’t think Ukiah had adopted a local threshold, and Jeremy didn’t think Willits had, but he wasn’t certain. Chantell said Fort Bragg has not adopted a threshold. She relayed an incident where the City had an application for a small retail store (Dollar General) and the project analysis was inconsistent with the regional study. She noted concern that guidance received from the consultant (Fehr & Peers) who worked on the analysis conflicted with guidance in the regional study prepared by Fehr and Peers. Paul said Point Arena had not adopted a local threshold, but would be looking to MCOG for advice. Nephele suggested bringing this item to the TAC every few meetings to check on the status.

9. Staff Reports

9a. 2022 Regional Transportation Plan/Active Transportation Plan – Nephele reported the final 2022 RTP/ATP was presented to the MCOG Board at their December meeting, and was continued to the February 7 meeting. She said there were some questions about the Rail element, and some additional public comments are being addressed. She noted the project will still be on schedule if adopted in February.

9b. Local Road Safety Plans (LRSP) – Nephele noted we are nearing the end of this project, and said agencies should have received an email from Divya (TJKM) with a memorandum identifying potential projects and requesting feedback by January 31. She encouraged agencies to review the information and provide feedback as requested. Alicia and Jeremy asked that the email be forwarded to them, and staff agreed. Nephele noted the HSIP applications that will come out of this process as one of the major benefits of the project.

9c. Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) Grants - James advised the agreement has been executed with HCD, and local agencies may start the reimbursement process. He said REAP 2.0 will have about \$30 million for rural and tribal applications, in a competitive program. The application is expected to be out by the end of February and more information will be forthcoming but the main thing is that projects must have a nexus between infill housing and reducing VMT. Nephele said MCOG staff will work with local agencies to get the retroactive invoices started.

9d. Clean CA Grant Program – Applications Due 2/1/22 – Nephele said applications for this grant program are due February 1, and projects should be easily implementable or shovel ready due to the tight deadline for completion. She noted local projects are moving forward from the City of Fort Bragg and from the Round Valley MAC, with the water district as the applicant for the MAC. She also thought two projects were moving forward from Caltrans District 1 under the State program. Tasha said Caltrans staff is currently working with the Covelo community to determine the scope of that project. She said she is participating in the evaluations for the local grant program and is looking forward to seeing what applications are received.

9e. Feasibility Study – Mobility Solutions for Rural Communities of Inland Mendocino Co. – Nephele advised this mobility solutions study will look at alternatives to traditional fixed routes transit in rural areas (including Hopland, Potter Valley, Brooktrails, Laytonville, and Covelo) and we'll be working closely with MTA on the study. An RFP was advertised for this project and consultant proposals are due this Friday. She said a consultant selection committee is being formed and asked Mark if he could participate, and he responded affirmatively.

10a. Next Meeting – 2/16/22.

10. Miscellaneous

County DOT – Covelo ATP Application – Alicia said she is planning to submit an ATP grant application for a project in Covelo, assuming the County doesn't have a lot of storm damage projects. She's hoping to start collecting information early and asked who at MCOG should be contacted for assistance. Nephele said Loretta, James, or Danielle could be contacted. She encouraged all applicants to access the ATP technical assistance resources available, noting the City of Willits received a technical assistance grant for their rail trail application.

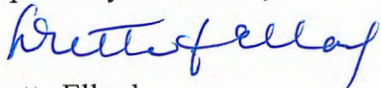
Alicia said she wants to start with getting walking and biking counts, and early planning. Nephele agreed, and also noted the need for demonstrating community involvement (through MAC meetings, school board meetings, and tribal meetings, etc.). In response to an inquiry from Tina, Alicia said the County project would be infrastructure, but she is open to non-infrastructure components if that would make it more competitive. Tina mentioned her involvement with the previous non-infrastructure grant and offered her assistance as a resource.

Nephele said MCOG staff will be working with Caltrans on an ATP application for the Gualala Downtown Streetscape project, and a virtual site visit with CTC staff will be held to review the project. She said there is also the potential to add a non-infrastructure component if that would make the project more competitive.

Nephele advised that MCOG has bike and pedestrian video counters available, but there is a fee for processing the video.

11. Adjournment – 11:51 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Loretta Ellard
Deputy Planner

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