

MENDOCINO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

MINUTES

SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

November 28, 2022

Teleconference - Remote Zoom Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dawn White, Mendocino Transit Authority
Christine Sookne, Redwood Coast Regional Ctr.
Jacob King, Mendocino Transit Authority

MEMBERS ABSENT

Sheila Keys, Redwood Coast Regional Center
Richard Baker, Willits Harrah Senior Center
Jill Rexrode, Redwood Coast Seniors

STAFF PRESENT

Nephele Barrett, MCOG Executive Director
Janet Orth, MCOG Deputy Director & CFO
Jody Lowblad, MCOG Administrative Assistant
Dean Meester, Caltrans District 1

MEMBER VACANCIES

Potential “handicapped” transit user
Potential transit user at least 60 years of age
Local social service provider for the handicapped
that provides transportation

1. Call to Order & Introductions. The meeting was called to order at 1:05 p.m. with self-introductions, Nephele presiding.

2. Public Expression. None.

3. Minutes. The meeting minutes of May 17, 2022 were provided for information. No action was taken.

4. Annual Review of SSTAC Membership. Janet reviewed openings on the membership roster. There were three vacancies and three seats due to expire in April 2023. Jacob nominated Dawn, with Luis as Alternate, for reappointment to the expiring CTSA seat, which is intended for MTA staff. The “potential transit user” seats have been chronically vacant; recently there has not been a concerted effort to fill them. Jacob noted that post-Covid, MTA is better positioned now to recruit for those positions and offered to put up flyers and refer any interested parties to MCOG staff. Janet confirmed that staff can nominate members at any time. Dean asked about requirements of the “potential transit user” seats; discussion of the value of hearing from both current transit riders and those who might consider it if their transit needs were met.

Cris of RCRC had served a partial term and indicated her willingness to be reappointed. It was her understanding that Sheila of RCRC would not continue serving, leaving a seat open. Discussion of possible recruits for the remaining agency vacancies. Duties of membership were included in the agenda packet. Appointments are to be confirmed at MCOG’s February board meeting on Consent Calendar.

Recommendation:

Upon motion by King, seconded by Sookne, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (*3 Ayes –White, Sookne and King; 0 Noes, 3 Absent*), the SSTAC nominated Dawn White and Luis Martinez (Alternate), Mendocino Transit Authority, for reappointment as “Representative of local Consolidated Transportation Services Agency” and Christine Sookne, Redwood Coast Regional Center, for reappointment as “Local social service provider for persons of limited means” through April 2026.

5. Information: Feasibility Study – Mobility Solutions for Rural Communities of Inland Mendocino County. Nephele gave a verbal report of this grant-funded work in progress under MCOG’s FY 2022/23 Transportation Planning Overall Work Program. A consultant, AMMA Transit Planning, has been engaging the communities of Covelo, Laytonville, Brooktrails, Hopland and Potter Valley through in-person community listening sessions and other methods to identify potential mobility solutions other than traditional transit services for each locale, such as expanded Dial-a-Ride, vanpools, or rideshare. Outreach has been successful, with good turnout and 339 survey responses received, including some in Spanish. The project originated with unmet transit needs on the annual list. While a final report will be made in August 2023, proposals will be accelerated to take advantage of upcoming grant cycles to fund any preferred solutions. No action was taken.

6. 2023/24 Unmet Transit Needs Workshop and Recommendation – *Compile a list of Unmet Transit Needs and identify other transportation needs and potential solutions.* Janet reviewed the annual process of identifying needs, and the adopted definition, as detailed in the agenda packet. Today’s workshop is the first step of the funding cycle for the coming fiscal year. Items to be reviewed were needs compiled by MTA from public input during the past year, the previous year’s list and analysis for reference, and any other new information. Discussion of unmet needs included the following.

MTA’s list of four new needs was available from public input at their board meetings. Jacob described needs on the list from MTA’s October board packet and shared screen for discussion. The group reviewed the previous year’s MTA analysis for status of ongoing needs. Discussion included several needs that will be addressed by 1) MCOG’s mobility study in remote communities, 2) Ukiah Transit Center currently under study, and 3) MTA’s post-pandemic restoration of services in progress, funded in 2022/23.

Other highlights reported were the Far North Transit Working Group’s efforts to develop interregional service between Humboldt, Lake and Mendocino Counties deploying all-electric busses, and current grant funding opportunities through the federal Transit & Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP), a \$4 billion fund with small and rural focus this cycle.

The developing list included:

- MTA’s list
- Ukiah Senior Center Wednesday service
- Westport/north coast limited service
- Affordable public transit link to Humboldt County (stopping in Piercy, Leggett, Laytonville)
- Mobility solutions/transit/micro-transit service to Covelo, Laytonville, Brooktrails, Hopland, Potter Valley
- Restore evening service in Ukiah Valley for people to get to/from work
- Anderson Valley service to the coast with same-day return

Non-Service Needs

- Ukiah Transit Center
- MTA Administration Building

Staff will bring any additional public testimony received to the February public hearing. Six needs were recommended for the list. It was agreed to also recommend the four new needs from MTA’s public outreach, for a total of ten needs, and the two additional recommendations.

Recommendation:

Upon motion by King, seconded by Sookne, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (3 Ayes –White, Sookne and King; 0 Noes, 3 Absent), the SSTAC recommended submittal of the attached list of ten (10) Unmet Transit Needs as testimony for MCOG’s public hearing, and two additional recommendations to develop a Ukiah transit center and a new MTA administration building.

7. Discussion: Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Program – *The next Call for Projects is anticipated to be released via the [BlackCat Transit Data Management System](#) in mid-late 2023.* Nephele gave an update of status and will keep members informed. The grants are for both capital and operational service for the elderly and disabled. Most of the local senior centers, as well as agencies such as Consolidated Tribal Health, have been successful with the program. She encouraged Ukiah Senior Center to apply for the Wednesday service unmet need.

In related discussion, Janet reported the new AB 49 law now allows federal funds to be counted toward the required fare revenue ratio. Nephele noted this could help the senior centers transportation programs. Jacob described his work on the bill’s development and how this transit agency relief will help MTA and others to meet the requirement while ridership remains low post-pandemic. So the legislation is a win for all. Nephele planned to host another senior center workshop in early 2023 to assist with these issues.

Jacob reported that while MTA has not yet been able to secure the appropriate insurance coverage for senior centers contracts, MTA is allowed to do their vehicle inspections, though not maintenance. There may be changes coming in 2023. No action was taken.

8. Miscellaneous / Information / Announcements. The FTA will host a webinar November 30 on the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) 2023-2026 Strategic Plan; Dawn plans to attend.

Jacob reported working with Cal ICP, a Caltrans program, on a contactless payment system for MTA's fixed routes, as a demonstration project funded by a TIRCP grant. Riders will be able to use any credit card to pay fares while boarding the bus. A similar system will be provided for DAR service. Another MTA project will soon issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for electronic fare boxes, which will provide more accurate data on riders, miles and hours, as well as more efficiency in processing the data. These upgrades are expected to make transit more attractive to new riders.

9. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

Submitted by Janet Orth, Deputy Director

Attached:

FY 2023/24 SSTAC recommendations



MENDOCINO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

FY 2023/24 Unmet Transit Needs
Recommended by
MCOG's Social Services Transportation Advisory Council

Identified at Annual SSTAC Workshop
(not in any order of priority)

November 28, 2022

Needs Identified by SSTAC:

1. Wednesday service for Ukiah Senior Center transportation
2. Westport/North Coast limited service
3. Affordable public transit link to Humboldt County, stopping in Piercy, Leggett, Laytonville
4. Mobility solutions/transit/micro-transit service for Covelo, Laytonville, Brooktrails, Hopland, and Potter Valley
5. Restoration of evening service in Ukiah Valley for people to get to/from work
6. Anderson Valley service to the coast with same-day return.

Needs Identified by Mendocino Transit Authority (MTA):

1. Bus stop at Waugh Lane & Talmage Avenue, for both northbound and southbound Ukiah Local Route 9
2. Saturday service between Ukiah and Willits, round trip
3. Saturday service for Willits Local Route 1
4. Brooktrails connection for commuters AM and PM.

TOTAL of 10 Recommended Unmet Transit Needs

Additional SSTAC Recommendations:

1. Develop a Ukiah Transit Center for multimodal connections and coordinated services.
2. Develop a new Mendocino Transit Authority administration building.