

MENDOCINO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

APPROVED MINUTES

Monday, August 14, 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 1:30 p.m. with Directors present: Dan Gjerde, Mike Carter, and Josephina Duenas in Ukiah; Bernie Norvell in Fort Bragg; Jeff Hansen in Point Arena; and Tatiana Ahlstrand (Caltrans/PAC) in Eureka. Greta Kanne was excused. John Haschak joined from a location without agenda notice and therefore did not vote.* Chair Gjerde presiding.

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

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. – *Clerk's note: a quorum was not present in the primary location as required to approve any requests.*

3. Convene as Convene as RTPA

4. Recess as RTPA – Reconvene as Policy Advisory Committee

5 - 8. Consent Calendar. The Chair invited comments; none were heard. Upon motion by Carter, second by Norvell, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (*6 Ayes – Carter, Hansen, Norvell, Duenas, Ahlstrand/PAC and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 2 Absent – Kanne and Haschak**): IT IS ORDERED that consent items are approved.

5. Approval of June 5, 2023 Minutes – as written

6. Approval of July 10, 2023 Executive Committee Minutes – as written

- 7. Approval of First Amendment to Fiscal Year 2023/24 Transportation Planning Overall Work Program (OWP)** – *To carry over and reprogram planning funds unexpended in 2022/23, for Work Elements 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 12, 13, and 14 and Project Reserve. Total OWP funding increased from \$894,365 to \$1,086,672, an increase of \$192,307. The Executive Director is authorized to sign certifications and a revised OWP Agreement as needed and forward to Caltrans as required.*
- 8. Fiscal Year 2023/24 RTPA Budget Amendment: Adoption of Resolution Revising Allocation of 2023/24 LTF, STA, and FY 2022/23 Carryover Capital Reserve Funds to Mendocino Transit Authority** – *To move \$705,462 of Capital Reserve funds from Long-Term to current year 2023/24 for purchase of a zero-emission, battery-electric bus with charging infrastructure, providing a local match for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5339 program funding, at a total cost of approximately \$1.2 million.*

Resolution No. M2023-07

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

- 9. Public Expression.** None.

10. Presentation and Acceptance of Draft (Proposed Final) Feasibility Study - Mobility Solutions for Rural Communities of Inland Mendocino County – AMMA Transit Planning. Ms. Ellard summarized the item, referring to her written staff report. She noted a good public engagement process throughout the study and by the project’s Technical Advisory Group. Proposed solutions have been refined and adjusted for today’s presentation. The final report is not expected to be approved by MCOG, only accepted, as solutions would be projects of both MCOG and MTA. Executive Director Barrett explained how the five communities of Covelo, Laytonville, Brooktrails, Potter Valley and Hopland were selected for study. They represent a range of remoteness and are places that repeatedly appear on the annual unmet transit needs list; it is recognized that these are not the only remote communities in the county. Positive feedback was heard from the public on recommendations made, a result of close collaboration among stakeholders. Ms. Barrett introduced the AMMA team of four present on the teleconference. Ms. Heather Menninger and Ms. Selena Barlow gave a slide presentation. Highlights included:

- Why MCOG undertook this study
- How the team developed its recommendations
- Participants, contributors and partners
- Challenges of serving rural residents with public transit
- Existing transportation resources
- Innovative solutions for rural mobility
- Framework for recommendations and key findings
- Action Plan for services with estimated costs, potential funding sources
- Countywide mobility programs to consider
- Recommended roles and responsibilities
- A three-year implementation plan.

Discussion included:

- Appreciation for this detailed presentation, agreement with characterization of needs. Thanks for the program, looking forward to implementing some of the recommendations. (Haschak)

- Thanks to AMMA for a job well done, MTA’s input shows in this report. Going in the right direction identifying community needs. MTA has a lot to offer in these solutions. (Jacob King, MTA)
- FTA Section 5310 funding is primarily for elder and disabled services, so percentages of those served need to be identified. (Gjerde, King)
- California Air Resources Board (CARB)’s Clean Mobility program is an opportunity in the transition to electric transportation, as solid-state lithium batteries that increase vehicle ranges will cause a renaissance to happen. (King)
- Local Transportation Funds (LTF) can be used as long as it does not take away LTF for those currently served. More funding bills and new sources are coming, but will take time. Steps in the process can phase these in. Still coming out of pandemic, fare revenues not restored yet. (Gjerde, King)

Public input was invited, including:

- Saprina Rodriguez, MTA Chair: Questions about North Coast Opportunities (NCO)’s role and who is served by 5310 funds. Concern for use of LTF; could be solving one problem while creating another. MTA is using existing LTF funds as best they can. There may be impacts of unintended consequences, as well as potential efficiencies. This study validates the need for public transit services, so more funds are needed. AMMA response: Appreciates those points. Services proposed for LTF funding are minimal and very modestly priced.
- Dr. Andy Coren, Mendocino County Health Officer: Appreciates this work, suggestion of Medi-Cal as another funding source for perinatal transportation services, and could make referrals. Thanks for a heroic effort, offered his help. AMMA response: Medi-Cal reimbursement funds may be available, though the process can be difficult to navigate.

Ms. Barrett responded to comments about limited LTF funds, acknowledging the issue and noting efficiencies and possible cost savings, and other funding sources to be explored in the upcoming Short Range Transit Development Plan update. Implementation will take more steps and decision making by MCOG and MTA.

Upon motion by Norvell, second by Carter, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (*6 Ayes – Carter, Hansen, Norvell, Duenas, Ahlstrand/PAC and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 2 Absent – Kanne and Haschak**): IT IS ORDERED that the draft final “Feasibility Study – Mobility Solutions for Rural Communities of Inland Mendocino County is accepted, as Volume 1 – Five Communities’ Transportation Needs Assessment; Volume 2 – Mobility Solutions Research and Analysis Report; and Volume 3 – Rural Mobility Action Plan” with the funding note in Volume 3 to be edited to list all contracts and subcontracts as required, and with the title of Volume 3 to be changed to “Final.”

11. Technical Advisory Committee and Executive Committee Recommendations of May 24, 2023 and July 10, 2023. Ms. Barrett introduced both items, summarizing her written staff report. Staff worked with the TAC and Executive Committee to develop recommendations. She explained significant changes to State priorities, away from capacity increasing projects and toward multimodal transportation. The proposed criteria and revised materials reflect those changes. In board discussion, Chair Gjerde suggested clarifying edits to Project Rating Criteria; staff agreed. Public comment was invited and none heard.

- a. Approval of 2024 Regional/State Transportation Improvement Program (R/STIP) Policies and Priorities.
- b. Adoption of Resolution Establishing General Policies for the Commitment of Regional Improvement Program Shares for the State Transportation Improvement Program

Upon motion by Norvell, second by Carter, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (6 Ayes – Carter, Hansen, Norvell, Duenas, Ahlstrand/PAC and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 2 Absent – Kanne and Haschak*): IT IS ORDERED that, as recommended by the Technical Advisory and Executive Committees and staff, 1) the revised STIP funding criteria and score values, application, scoring sheet, and instructions are approved as amended and 2) the resolution updating MCOG’s STIP funding policies to reflect current state and local conditions and priorities is adopted.

Resolution No. M2023-08

Establishing General Policies for the Commitment of Regional Improvement Program Shares for the State Transportation Improvement Program
(Reso. #M2023-08 is incorporated herein by reference)

12. Discussion and Possible Direction: 2024 State Transportation Improvement Program

(STIP) Fund Estimate and Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP). Program Manager Sookne summarized his written staff report. The California Transportation Commission’s target estimate totals \$11,731,000 for the region, to be adopted at their August meeting. Ms. Barrett clarified direction sought at this stage. About \$2 million needs to be reserved for the Gualala Downtown Streetscape project.

Chair Gjerde suggested waiting for proposals to come in and then decide. Ms. Barrett noted steps in the process to keep to a required timetable: TAC to recommend on projects in October, staff to present a draft RTIP for board review and discussion in November, and adoption in December. It would be reasonable to hold off on deciding an amount to reserve and wait for other funding needs to emerge. Staff likes to let applicants know amounts available, but it is not necessary to know the final amount.

In further discussion, Director Gjerde had not heard any preferences to move away from the two earmarked projects, the County’s North State Street Intersection/Interchange and Gualala. Sookne clarified that North State Street is now fully allocated, so only Gualala’s project needs to be earmarked now. Discussion of \$3 million reserved in the 2022 RTIP; Ms. Barrett explained reasoning to reduce to \$2 million. Staff received the direction they needed. No action was taken.

13. Amendment of Local Transportation Fund (LTF) Reserve Policy Adopted April 2, 2001.

Ms. Orth summarized staff’s recommendation as described in her written report, with a brief history of the reserve fund, how accounting of the revenues has changed from cash basis to accrual, thereby moving dates that reports are made, and the availability of data online. The proposed amendments would eliminate unnecessary steps and allow more timely withdrawals when needed for cash flow, subject to ratification by the Council and annual fiscal audit. Mendocino Transit Authority is the beneficiary of the reserve fund when LTF revenues fall short of budget allocations, as is the case for FY 2022/23. The Council had adopted a budget that set aside more than the policy’s minimum allocation to the LTF Reserve, so that the funds are available to make whole the allocation to MTA for public transit. There were no questions or comments made.

Upon motion by Carter, second by Duenas, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (6 Ayes – Carter, Hansen, Norvell, Duenas, Ahlstrand/PAC and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 2 Absent – Kanne and Haschak*): IT IS ORDERED that staff’s proposed amendments to the LTF Reserve Policy are approved, in order to facilitate efficient and timely withdrawals for eligible uses of the fund, consistent with current fiscal conditions and the Transportation Development Act.

14. Recess as Policy Advisory Committee – Reconvene as RTPA – Ratify Action of Policy Advisory Committee. Upon motion by Carter, second by Duenas, and carried unanimously on

roll call vote (5 Ayes – Carter, Hansen, Norvell, Duenas, and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 2 Absent – Kanne and Haschak*): IT IS ORDERED that the actions taken by the Policy Advisory Committee are ratified by the MCOG Board of Directors.

15. Reports - Information

- a. Caltrans District 1 – Projects Update and Information. Director Ahlstrand reported a second cycle opening for Climate Adaptation Planning grants with no local match required. Grant awards will be announced August 31 for Sustainable Transportation Planning, and a FY 2024/25 call for applications will open in October, due in January. The Clean California program will announce another round of project awards in December, with 24 applications received, five of those from Mendocino County. A recent dump day in Willits was a success, with the equivalent of 19 semi-truckloads worth of waste collected. More events are planned in Ukiah, Boonville and other countywide locations this fiscal year. The Ukiah-based special persons program crew has collected 7.6 semi-truckloads worth of litter along the highway. The Covelo Downtown construction project has been awarded and will be built this season. District 1 is working with MTA to apply for a Clean California partnership grant for a transit stop in Redwood Valley. An open house August 16 will discuss proposed changes to the Willits Bicycle Safety Enhancement project for a Main Street/State Route 20 “road diet” including bike lanes.
- b. Mendocino Transit Authority. General Manager King reported on MTA’s Short Range Transit Development Plan update now ongoing; a community workshop in July was well attended with good input received. The zero-emission battery-electric busses have been in service for over a year, full-time in Willits and planned for Fort Bragg next year. MTA received a new all-electric 35-foot bus, however due to supply-chain delays has not yet received the charging infrastructure for it.
- c. Great Redwood Trail Agency. (Director Haschak had to leave the meeting at 3:00 p.m. and left a report in the chat panel read by staff.) GRTA held two outreach meetings in Alderpoint and Hopland at the end of July. There was a lot of talk about job opportunities, especially at the Alderpoint meeting. On Thursday, August 17, the agency will conduct interviews for the Executive Director position.
- d. MCOG Staff - Summary of Meetings. Ms. Barrett referred to the written report. Ms. Ellard noted a correction that she did not attend CALCOG’s Legislative Day in Sacramento.
- e. MCOG Administration Staff
 - i. Covelo SR 162 Corridor Multi-Purpose Trail Project. Ms. Barrett reported continuing construction and hopes for completion within the current season. There have been complications with biological and cultural resources in the area, but there is progress.
 - ii. RuralREN (Regional Energy Network). Ms. Barrett gave a synopsis of the REN organizations in California and how this one is different; it is the first to include both public agencies and community based organizations. Previously, at MCOG Board direction, staff had explored ways to have a regional role in climate action. The RuralREN was under development, led by Redwood Coast Energy Authority, who offered Mendocino and Lake regions a chance to join in 2022. The California Public Utilities Commission took action on June 29, 2023 to approve the RuralREN formation and business plan as proposed. Some of its programs will be similar to Sonoma Clean Power’s rebate programs, but funded with utility providers’ public goods charges. A wide array of other programs include residential, commercial, public sector, finance and workforce education and training. The launch is

- anticipated in early 2024. MCOG has support of the other member organizations with expertise. The goal is to serve hard-to-reach customers. She expected to have more details at the next Council meeting.
- iii. *Miscellaneous*. None.
 - iv. *Next Meeting Date*. Monday, October 2, 2023.
- f. MCOG Planning Staff
- i. *Feasibility Study - Mendocino Transit Authority's Ukiah Transit Center*. Deputy Planner Ellard gave a brief update, noting three locations remaining under consideration after evaluation of a range of potential sites. Input from MTA is anticipated at their next board meeting.
 - ii. *Miscellaneous*. Ms. Ellard reported several items, including a Safe Streets For All grant program cycle, and Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning grants. – *refer to #15a*
- g. MCOG Directors. (Ms. Barrett again read Director Haschak’s report.) CALCOG reported \$5 billion in funding for transit operations and capital funding. Guidelines will be out by September 30 and funding will flow to regional agencies in January. Also, thanks to Caltrans for the Free Dump Day in Willits—it was very popular.
- h. California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG) Delegates. See above report.

16. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 3:19 p.m.

Submitted: NEPHELE BARRETT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By Janet Orth, Deputy Director & CFO