

MINUTES

MENDOCINO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Primary Location

MCOG Office – 525 S. Main St., Ukiah (Upstairs Conference Room)

Teleconference Locations

City of Willits – Public Works/Engineering Office, 380 E. Commercial St., Willits

City of Fort Bragg – Engineering Office, 416 N. Franklin St., Fort Bragg

Caltrans District 1, 1656 Union St., Eureka

Co. of Mendocino - Planning & Building Services, 860 N Bush St., Ukiah

August 23, 2023

Members Present

Alicia Meier, County DOT
Tim Eriksen, City of Ukiah
Dusty Duley, City of Willits
Mark Cliser, Co. DPBS
Chantell O’Neal, City of Fort Bragg
Paul Andersen, City of Point Arena
Jacob King, MTA
Jason Benson, City of Ukiah
Dean Meester, Caltrans

Members Absent

AQMD Representative

Staff & Others Present

Nephele Barrett, MCOG Administration
Loretta Ellard, MCOG Planning
Lisa Davey-Bates, MCOG Planning
James Sookne, MCOG Planning
Alexis Pedrotti, MCOG Planning
Jesus Rodriguez, MCOG Planning
Michael Villa, MCOG Administration
Kyle Finger, Caltrans
Olivia Grupp, City of Willits
Lucy Bartholomew, Blue Zones

1. Call to Order/Introductions – Nephele called the meeting to order at approx. 10:04 a.m.
2. Public Expression – None.
3. Input from Native American Tribal Governments’ Representatives – None.
4. Approval of Minutes of 6/21/23 – Motion by Dean Meester, seconded by Dusty Duley, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (6 ayes – O’Neal, Benson, Duley, Meester, King, Cliser), to approve the minutes of 6/21/23 .

5. 2024 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)/Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) – Fund Estimate & Call for Projects

James highlighted the approximately \$11.7 million allocated for Mendocino County from fiscal years 24/25 to 28/29, with about \$11.324 million available for new or ongoing projects after setting aside PPM funds for MCOG. Nephele covered the scope of project phases that could be funded and emphasized the necessity of full funding for each phase, possibly through a combination of STIP and local funds.

Alicia Meier sought clarity on the Project Study Reports (PSRs) required for the application process and the deadline for PSR submission, which was set before the RTIP adoption date, giving a window until December 4th. Nephele noted the uncertainties surrounding the Gualala downtown streetscape project due to a financial shortfall announced by Caltrans, leaving the project's financial commitment pending further information. It was advised to submit project applications based on individual needs and the board would make a final decision during the RTIP review.

Alicia asked about discussion of the selection process. James then elaborated that, after receiving applications, the TAC will score, weight, and rank them to form a recommendation. The MCOG board will then make the final decision on which projects to program, potentially involving negotiations if there are numerous submissions. The application has been adjusted to align with the scoring criteria, albeit resulting in a lengthier form. The deadline for submissions remains on September 29th, and staff are available for inquiries during the application development period. The discussion concluded with plans to continue the conversation in October.

6. Federal Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP) Funding – Request from Mendocino County Dept. of Transportation to Revise Funding Awards

James presented the Mendocino County Department of Transportation's proposal to redirect funding initially earmarked for the Ackerman Creek bridge project to the North State Street interchange project. James noted that while \$93,000 of the Fiscal Year (FY)19-20 funds had been successfully reallocated to the new project, around \$76,000 from FY 2021-22 was yet to be reassigned. The TAC was urged to make a decision to avoid future stress and potential last-minute amendments to the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP). The financial nuances and the strategic importance of federalizing the North State Street project, which envisions the construction of two roundabouts potentially costing over \$12 million, James highlighted the urgency to secure federal funds for future construction phases. Alicia noted the project's readiness to embark on National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance with the recently acquired portion of the HIP funds, which would streamline environmental studies and position the project favorably for future federal grants. Dusty Duley came to a consensus towards allocating the unassigned funds to the North State Street project, recognizing its substantial benefit to the North State Street corridor.

Motion by Dusty Duley, seconded by Benson, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (7 ayes – Meier, O'Neal, Benson, Duley, Meester, King, Cliser), to recommend that the MCOG board award the funds to the county for their North state street project.

7. Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) Funding

James provided insights on the Carbon Reduction Program, highlighting its primary objective of lowering carbon emissions. He emphasized the need for a project selection strategy that aligns with state plans, focusing on rail and transit, active transportation, and zero-emission infrastructure. James mentioned the possible incorporation natural gas as a part of the federal guidance, a point which was met with skepticism from Nephele considering the potential higher costs and the state's likely preference for electric solutions.

Loretta asked on the necessity of establishing a minimum project size, taking into consideration the limited amount of funds available. Nephele acknowledged that guidance from Caltrans was anticipated to shape the strategy. Nephele asked about the strategy development procedure and whether it would involve the creation of scoring criteria. Nephele decided to reconvene with a more detailed strategy proposal in a forthcoming TAC meeting, hoping to foster a better understanding and possibly finalize the strategy then.

8. Staff Reports

8a. FY 2023/24 Overall Work Program – First Amendment

Alexis presented the Fiscal Year 23-24 Overall Work Program First Amendment. Alexis highlighted that it was previously approved by the board on August 14th. The amendment detailed carryovers from the closeout of the 22-23 fiscal year into various work elements, with a majority involving MCOG staff or direct expenses and involving different local agencies as well. Alexis also mentioned some projects under different cities, noting specific carryovers for each. Loretta Ellard asked if Alexis could mention the reserve plan. Alexis highlighted the reserve, potential grants, and the necessity for keeping a reserve.

8b. SB 743 Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Screening Tool – MCOG to Discontinue Paying Annual Hosting Fee

Nephele Barrett noted that after the VMT Screening Tool they were afforded the opportunity to try out the tool, which was already operational, to gauge its efficiency and provide feedback. However, no feedback regarding concerns or issues had been reported, deciding to transition to the new tool.

8c. RuralREN (Regional Energy Network) – Update

During the meeting, attention turned to the update on the Rural Regional Energy Network (Rural REN). The update highlighted MCOG's involvement in the network, having entered into an MOU with the Redwood Coast Energy Authority in February 2022. The network aims to deliver energy efficiency programs through various avenues such as rebate and financing programs, codes and standards development, and workforce initiatives. The CPUC approved the Rural REN in June, asking for collaborative efforts across multiple counties, including Mendocino, Lake, and Humboldt, to strategize on the implementation of these programs with a target initiation date in 2024. The initiative was noted to be a learning curve for MCOG, venturing into previously unexplored territories.

8d. Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) – Update

James reported that full or partial invoices had been received from all agencies except for Fort Bragg. The discussion acknowledged Point Arena's completion of their fund utilization while encouraging other agencies to continue their spending initiatives. A focus was placed on strategizing the reallocation of other funds to foster eligible projects, ensuring the optimal use of resources before their expiration next year.

8e. Mobility Solutions for Rural Communities of Inland Mendocino County – Feasibility Study

Loretta updated the meeting on the concluding Mobility Solutions Study for Rural Communities in Inland Mendocino County. She noted the MCOG board's approval on August 14th of the consultant's recommendations which included implementing different transportation solutions in various areas: a deviated fixed route in Brook Trails, increased bus frequency on route 65 in Hopland, and a new hybrid dial-a-ride shuttle service in Covelo and Laytonville. Potter Valley would see the initiation of a community van service potentially integrated with the shuttle service for weekly travels to Ukiah. Other recommendations featured a volunteer driver mileage reimbursement program to be overseen by NCO and a new online community ride board to enhance connectivity in the region.

8f. MTA Ukiah Transit Center – Feasibility Study

Loretta reported that the Mendocino Transit Authority (MTA) Ukiah Transit Center's top three potential sites for the project had been narrowed down, with the consultant set to present them to the MTA board the following week. The top contenders included a location north of Orchard Avenue, a spot on Mason Street, and the former Savings Bank building on East Perkins. Loretta encouraged Jacob to share any thoughts on the progression of the project. Jacob responded with a sense of anticipation and eagerness to

witness the board's reaction to the proposed sites during the upcoming meeting.

8g. Safe Streets & Roads for All (SS4A) – Planning Grant Application Submitted

Loretta reported on the MCOG staff's recent submission of a planning grant application in line with the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) initiative. The submission came as a response to the Technical Advisory Committee's (TAC) recommendation to update the local road safety plans, aiming to fulfill the criteria for accessing upcoming federal funds under the SS4A program. It was noted that the outcome of this application is anticipated to be received by October.

9. Miscellaneous

Loretta sought to confirm preferences concerning the mode of attendance, whether in-person or via Zoom, with some members expressing a desire to return to in-person meetings.

Dusty brought up the forthcoming city council meeting where the Caltrans Road Diet discussion would take center stage, an issue generating significant local interest. Dusty outlined the main concerns expected to surface during the council meeting: apprehensions about potential congestion due to reducing two lanes to one and a desire for a more expansive approach to the road diet project. He mentioned that while the city had initially envisioned the lane reduction coupled with hardscaping to enhance the lane diet initiative, this element was currently missing, thereby possibly not fully realizing the benefits of the lane diet.

8a. Next Meeting – 10/25/23, if needed.

10. Adjournment – approx. 11:49 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jesus Rodriguez
/jr