

Approved 8/19/20

MINUTES

MENDOCINO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Held Remotely via Zoom Meeting/Teleconference

May 20, 2020

Members Present

Jason Benson, City of Ukiah
Tasha Ahlstrand, Caltrans
Alicia Meier, County DOT
Dusty Duley, City of Willits
Tom Varga, City of Fort Bragg
Richard Shoemaker, City of Point Arena
Jacob King, MTA

Staff & Others Present

Nephele Barrett, MCOG Administration
James Sookne, MCOG Administration
Alexis (Lexi) Pedrotti, MCOG Planning
Danielle Casey, MCOG Administration
Loretta Ellard, MCOG Planning
Monica Galliani, MCOG Administration
Chantell O'Neal, City of Fort Bragg
Tim Eriksen, City of Ukiah
Kyle Finger, Caltrans
Sonja Burgal, Walk & Bike Mendocino

Members Absent

Mitch Stogner, NCRA (*Non-Voting*)
Barbara Moed, AQMD
Jesse Davis, County DPBS

1. **Call to Order/Introductions** – Nephele called the meeting to order at approx. 10:00 a.m. Individuals present on the Zoom meeting/teleconference were identified.
2. **Public Expression** – Monica advised that no public comment had been received.
3. **Input from Native American Tribal Governments' Representatives** – This is a standing agenda item to allow input from tribal representatives. There were no tribal representatives present.
4. **Approval of 2/19/20 Minutes** – Motion by Dusty Duley, seconded by Tasha Ahlstrand, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (7 ayes), to approve the minutes of 2/19/20.
5. **FY 2019/20 Overall Work Program – Third Quarter Status Report** – Lexi reported that FY 2019/20 Rural Planning Assistance (RPA) carryover provisions have been revised by Caltrans to allow 40% carryover (instead of 25%) due to COVID 19 impacts on agencies' ability to expend funds.

She reviewed the third quarter progress report and noted the City of Fort Bragg did not submit a report for W.E. 15 (Mill Site Reuse & Rezoning). Tom said he would submit a report, and Tasha asked that Caltrans also receive the report. Information only.

6. Final FY 2020/21 Overall Work Program - Lexi reviewed her staff report, summarizing the Final OWP includes projects recommended by the TAC in the Draft, as well as carryover projects. In addition, a proposed new work element has been added to assist local agencies in development of Local Road Safety Plans (W.E. 11); required appendices have been added; and a 2.98% CPI increase (plus an increase in insurance costs) has been applied to DBC’s one-year contract extension for MCOG planning staff, as approved by MCOG on 3/2/20.

A brief discussion ensued with staff responding to questions. The proposed Final FY 2020/21 Overall Work Program totals \$968,745 as follows:

W.E.	Agency	Project	Amount
1	MCOG	Regional Government & Intergovernmental Coordination	\$114,500
2	MCOG	Planning Management & General Coordination (Non-RPA)	\$ 97,559
4	MCOG	Sustainable Transportation Planning	\$ 10,000
6	Co. DOT	Combined Special Studies	\$ 54,000
7	MCOG	Planning, Programming & Monitoring (PPM) <i>(added Carryover \$)</i>	\$ 83,024
8	MCOG	Fire Vulnerability Assess. Emergency Preparedness Grant <i>(Carryover)</i>	\$ 35,001
9	MCOG	Regional and Active Transportation Plans Update	\$ 65,500
10	MCOG	Pavement Management Program (PMP) Update	\$150,000
11	MCOG	Local Road Safety Plans (LRSP)	\$188,000
12	Ukiah	Sidewalk Maintenance & ADA Curb Ramp Inventory	\$ 45,000
14	MCOG	Training	\$ 13,000
15	Fort Bragg	Transportation Planning for Mill Site Reuse & Rezoning <i>(Carryover)</i>	\$ 41,361
16	MCOG	Multi-Modal Transportation Planning	\$ 32,000
18	MCOG	Geographic Information System (GIS) Activities	\$ 3,000
20	MCOG	Grant Development & Assistance	\$ 25,000
----	MCOG	<i>PROJECT RESERVE</i>	\$ 11,800
		Total	\$968,745

Motion by Tom Varga, seconded by Alicia Meier, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (7 ayes), to recommend that MCOG approve the Final FY 2020/21 Overall Work Program.

7. Active Transportation Program (ATP) Cycle 5 – Nephele reviewed her staff report. She advised the application period for ATP cycle 5 is now open, and the California Transportation Commission (CTC) has extended the deadline to September 15, 2020.

She explained the purpose of this agenda item is to discuss agencies’ potential ATP applications, including priority projects identified in the “Mendocino County Pedestrian Facility Needs Inventory and Engineered Feasibility Study” completed last year. She reviewed that projects in that plan were scored with criteria similar to the Active Transportation Program scoring criteria, so that should help make projects more competitive. Discussion ensued as follows:

MCOG/Caltrans – Nephele advised that MCOG staff is working with Caltrans on an application for the Gualala Streetscape project.

City of Point Arena - Richard advised that Point Arena is considering two potential projects: (1) a sidewalk project at City Hall/Senior Center, and (2) a major \$1.2 million sidewalk safety project on

Mill Street, for which the City has started development work (*they are at 30% design – funded with General Fund monies*). If the Mill Street project will not score well under the ATP program, the City will pursue the City Hall sidewalk project.

Nephele noted both projects were grouped with other projects in the Pedestrian Needs Study, and suggested City staff review the scoring to see if including the entire grouping would increase the score. Richard agreed, and said they would be looking for assistance from MCOG. Nephele said the SB 1 Local Partnership Program Competitive Program should also be looked at for the Mill Street project.

City of Willits – Dusty said Willits is interested in applying for the Walnut/So. Main Street/Highway 20 intersection crossing enhancement project, which was the City's top ranked project in the Pedestrian Needs Study. It has two schools on one side, and Safeway and other destinations on the other side, and was originally identified in the Safe Routes to Schools Plan. He noted the City has received a rezone application to support potentially 160 apartment units, increasing the need for the project. In addition to the apartment complex possibly increasing the ATP score, the possibility of the pedestrian improvements being a VMT (Vehicle Miles Traveled) mitigation measure was noted.

Nephele stated Highway 20 will remain under Caltrans authority after relinquishment, and if MCOG helps with the application Caltrans may also want to be involved. Dusty agreed to discuss the project with Caltrans before applying, and Tasha said Caltrans will be happy to help as they are able. Dusty advised the Willits City Council approved the relinquishment at their last meeting.

City of Fort Bragg – Tom said Fort Bragg is interested in applying for a connection from Redwood Avenue in downtown Fort Bragg to the coastal trail (#FB-4 in the Pedestrian Needs Study). Chantell said the trail is most easily accessed at Alder Street (an unsignalized intersection) and this connection would funnel users to Redwood Avenue, a lighted intersection in downtown. She welcomed assistance from MCOG. Nephele thought this project would be competitive considering high usage of the trail.

City of Ukiah – Tim said Ukiah plans to apply for phase 4 of the rail trail, as well as a possible sidewalk/crossing project on Leslie Street near the senior center and a school, and a possible sidewalk project on Betty/Lorraine streets. He asked if local agencies will be competing against each other, and Nephele responded affirmatively, advising that projects will compete in both a statewide competitive program and a set-aside for small urban and rural counties.

Nephele noted the rail trail and Leslie Street projects are included in the Pedestrian Needs Study but was unsure about Betty and Lorraine Streets and whether they have a high number of pedestrian usages. She said the ATP program might not be the right fit for all these projects and encouraged City staff to look at the time investment needed on this extensive application. She offered MCOG's assistance to further discuss these projects outside today's meeting.

County Department of Transportation – Alicia said her department is down three staff positions and overloaded with storm damage and fire damage projects and unable to submit any applications this cycle. She hopes to be able to focus on ATP projects in the future. Nephele asked if other County departments (such as General Services Agency, or whatever agency handles parks) could be potential ATP applicants, and Alicia agreed that could be a potential option.

State Parks – Tasha said Caltrans worked with State Parks in the past on the Haul Road project and asked Tom if he knew if State Parks planned on applying this cycle. Tom did not know but offered to reach out to State Parks’ staff (Loren). Nephele said the MCOG Chairman mentioned this project and there is a lot of interest in it. Tasha noted the project was not competitive in past cycles, but Caltrans would be willing to help again if it’s a high priority.

Walk & Bike Mendocino – Sonja Bural advised that WBM is working on an Urban Greening Grant application for the rail trail, phase 4, for connectors to So. State Street, Norgard Lane, and Plant Road on the south end, and asked if a connector project would be eligible for ATP funding. Nephele did not think the connectors on their own would be a competitive project (i.e. fewer destinations, lower usage, no public input, etc.) but said MCOG staff is available to discuss further outside today’s meeting.

Nephele summarized that MCOG staff will be reaching out to local agencies to help where needed.

8. Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Cycle 10 – Loretta reviewed her staff report and advised HSIP applications are due 9/4/20. She explained two application categories are available this cycle: Benefit Cost Ratio, and Funding Set-asides. There are four set-asides (Guardrail Upgrades; Pedestrian Crossing Enhancements; Installing Edgelines; Tribes). She advised State funds will be available for Cycle 10 projects due to SB 137 which allows exchanging federal funds for state funds.

A discussion ensued. Nephele asked members to relay the information about tribal set-asides to their tribal contacts. Dusty asked if the City’s Walnut Street crossing project would be a better fit under the Pedestrian Crossing Enhancements program rather than ATP, and if the City could apply for HSIP for a project that crosses a state highway. Nephele responded that staff would need to follow up on this. *(See related note at end of meeting re: HSIP).*

8a. Local Road Safety Plans (LRSP) – Loretta reviewed her staff report and noted the FY 2020/21 OWP includes a project for the development of Local Road Safety Plans for local agencies. She reported the County, City of Ukiah, and City of Point Arena have been awarded LRSP grant funding, and the Cities of Willits and Fort Bragg are expected to be awarded funding in the fall. MCOG staff plans to conduct an RFP process in the fall to hire a consultant to develop the individual plans.

Discussion ensued, and Nephele said she learned at an RTPA meeting that agencies could request additional funding beyond the \$72,000 limit. Dusty said Caltrans staff has advised the City of Willits that their application is expected to be funded in October.

Nephele reminded agencies to submit their allocation requests for these funds.

9. COVID-19 Related Issues – Impacts on Programs & Projects – Nephele reported MCOG staff is continuing to work mostly from home, with transition back to the office not yet determined.

The anticipated drop in statewide revenue was discussed, and Nephele noted transportation revenue will not be as impacted as other programs, due to protected SB 1 funds. She said the California Transportation Commission will have allocation capacity information at their June meeting, and will adopt a final allocation capacity in August. There is currently no proposed “allocation plan” but that could happen in the future, so agencies should submit allocation requests sooner rather than later.

Nephele advised that “timely use of funds” policies have been revised and she will forward that information to members. Some extensions will be automatic, while others will need to be requested. In response to an inquiry about “Maintenance of Effort” requirements, Nephele said she has not heard that requirements have been relaxed but there is a lot of interest in it.

Nephele reported that transit has received CARES stimulus funding, and a third round of stimulus funding is expected to include funding for counties and cities.

10. Staff Reports

10a. Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP) – New Apportionments – Nephele reported MCOG has received a third round of federal Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP) funding. She noted the first two rounds were awarded to Ukiah’s downtown streetscaping project. She advised that this federal funding cannot be exchanged for state funds, so it would be logical to add it to an existing project that’s already federalized since the amount (\$93,208) is likely not enough for a stand-alone project. Eligible projects must be a rural minor collector or above.

She said this item is on the agenda for a report only and asked if any local agencies had existing federal projects that could use the funds (which are available for allocation until 2024). No projects were mentioned. This item will be brought back to the next TAC meeting.

10b. SB 1 Program – Local Streets & Road Program; Local Partnership Program – Nephele reported these two programs have had time extensions due to the Shelter-in-Place. The Local Streets & Roads program deadline has been extended to July 15, and the Local Partnership Competitive program has been extended to June 30. She has not been able to find the extension date for the Local Partnership Formula program but will research it and send out updated information.

She said she is still looking into Fort Bragg’s question about performance metrics and paperwork for the LSR program and said MCOG staff will be available to help with the new required PPR form.

10c. MCOG’s Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) – Amendment to add Housing Duties – Nephele reported that AB 101 funding is available to regional agencies for planning-related housing production, and there is interest among local planning agencies for MCOG to pursue the funding, potentially for sub-allocation. However, before staff can work on that, MCOG’s JPA needs to be amended to add housing duties. She reported the JPA amendment was approved by the MCOG Board in April, and has been ratified by the cities of Ukiah, Point Arena, and Fort Bragg. Consideration by the City of Willits and Board of Supervisors is in process. After ratification by all, staff will work with planning agencies on an initial application, which can be up to the 25% of the total amount available (*although she does not expect to request that much initially.*)

10d. SB 743 Vehicle Miles Traveled Regional Baseline Study – Loretta reported that Rod Brown (Fehr & Peers) is scheduled to give a remote presentation of the final report at MCOG’s June 1 meeting. She said he is working with local agency staff to schedule the training on the VMT analysis screening tool in June, and the final report is scheduled to be accepted by MCOG on June 1.

Nephele advised the screening tool will need a host agency, so MCOG will pay Fehr & Peers to host it initially, while options with Caltrans are being considered. Caltrans does not have the ability to host it at this time but may in the future.

Brief discussion ensued and Nephele advised that MCOG plans to submit a Caltrans planning grant application in the next cycle to update MCOG's traffic model. She said the consultant's presentation to the MCOG Board will be very informational and should be available for later viewing on the County's YouTube channel. Loretta noted the final report was provided to SB 743 TAG members and invited others to contact her to request a copy.

10e. Fire Vulnerability Assessment & Emergency Evacuation Plan – Loretta and Nephele reported that the consultants (Category Five Professional Consultants) will be making a presentation of the draft final plan documents at the June 1 MCOG board meeting. To allow sufficient time for board members' review and comment on these significant documents, the board will not be asked to accept the final plan until their August 17 meeting. Staff is still reviewing draft documents, and the project has been carried over for completion early in the next fiscal year. Due to COVID 19 restrictions, the planned public forums have been moved to a remote public forum, with the date pending.

11. Miscellaneous

11a. Next Meeting – June 17, if needed.

Tom Varga – Retirement – Tom announced that he will retire from the City of Fort Bragg on June 30. He said the new director will be John Smith, and Chantell O'Neal will likely be Fort Bragg's primary representative on the TAC. Staff and members offered their congratulations.

HSIP – In follow-up to discussion earlier in the meeting, Kyle Finger (Caltrans) said his understanding is that Caltrans can initiate HSIP projects, but local agencies should be the applicant. As there was still some uncertainty, Nephele said more follow-up could occur after the meeting.

10. Adjournment – 11:23 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Loretta Ellard
Deputy Planner

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